UNHCR
The UN Refugee Agency

Protection Monitoring

Situation of Syrian Refugees in Lebanon

4th Quarter 2025

Methodology

Since 2019, UNHCR—in partnership with multiple organizations—has conducted monthly Protection Monitoring (PM) surveys with Syrian refugees across Lebanon. As of January 2024, this activity was centralized and implemented by INTERSOS, with a representative sampling methodology based on the presence of the Syrian refugee population at both national and regional levels. PM surveys aim to gather information on refugees' situation, analyze protection trends, assess gaps, and inform responses. This supports evidence-based advocacy and programming under the Lebanon Response Plan (LRP) and incorporates UNHCR's Age, Gender, and Diversity (AGD) approach to identify vulnerabilities. Referrals for specialized services are made as needs arise.

Between October 2024 and March 2025, coinciding with the escalation of conflict between Israel and non-State armed groups in Lebanon and the resulting large-scale movement of internally displaced persons in Lebanon, regular surveys with Syrian refugees were paused due to security concerns, limited accessibility, and the need to prioritize rapid needs assessments to inform the emergency response. UNHCR resumed regular PM surveys with Syrian refugees in April 2025, following a comprehensive review of methodology and tools.

This report presents a protection analysis of trends affecting Syrian refugees in Lebanon during the fourth quarter of 2025 (October-December). Data was gathered through two primary methodologies:

- **Household Surveys (HHS): 4,316 HHS** were conducted across all governorates in Lebanon, covering **20,989** household members including youth, women-headed households, and households with older persons or persons with disabilities. Of these, 24% were in person and 76% remote via phone.
- **Key Informant Interviews (KII): 107 KIIs** (64% male, 36% female) were conducted to verify findings, complement quantitative data, and provide deeper qualitative insights.

Additionally, protection monitoring outcomes are validated by triangulation with community sources, field expert insight, protection observations, UNHCR monitoring of displacement and cross-border movements, and a range of secondary data published by other UN or INGO partners during the reporting period.

Cover Photo: Two Syrian refugee sisters stand beside their family's tent in an informal settlement in North Lebanon.

Credits © UNHCR/Road2Films

Key Highlights

Most refugees still lack legal status, but regularization offers an avenue for some

As in past years, the prevalence of families with at least one member above 15 years lacking legal status is high (83%), with consistent references to an inability to find a sponsor, financial barriers, and irregular entry as obstacles. Critically, a set of government decisions in November facilitating regularization of residency for foreigners based on sponsorship or work permit created conditions for legal stay. Yet, two requirements—legal entry to Lebanon and engagement in the formal labor sector—bar many refugees from accessing this possibility.

Barriers to meet basic needs, including food and shelter, mounted throughout 2025

The economic vulnerability of refugees markedly deteriorated throughout 2025, with the proportion of those reporting an inability to meet half of basic needs increasing from 44% in Q2 to 72% in Q4. Concurrently, only 2% reported meeting more than half of needs such as rent and food. As a result, 92% of families reported debt, 40% reduced food expenses, and 14% reduced needed healthcare, consistent with Q3. In this context, the inability to pay rent is widespread. 77% of respondents were unable to pay their most recent rent, either partially or in full, as average monthly rent reportedly rose from 171 USD in Q2 to 200 USD in Q4.

Humanitarian assistance was progressively less available to refugees in 2025

In parallel to rising economic strain, humanitarian funding cuts continued to significantly reduce assistance for refugee and Lebanese families throughout 2025, threatening household stability and protection. In Q4, 40% of respondents reported not receiving humanitarian assistance in the past year (up from 23% in Q2), while 24% reported a lack of resources among providers (from 19% in Q2).

Access to enrolment in formal education improved in Q4, but children still face barriers

Despite initial parental concerns that access to education for the 2025-2026 school year would be restricted in the same manner as for 2024-2025, the Ministry of Education and Higher Education in Q4 facilitated refugee enrollment for those with and without documentation (including post-2024 arrivals). Consequently, afternoon shift enrolment reached roughly 104,000 students—a 30% increase compared to 2024/2025 but below prior years (156,000). As a result, the proportion of households reporting lack of legal residency as a top barrier for enrolment declined from 48% in Q3 to 23% in Q4, with families instead pointing to costs and transport distances.

Administrative measures and raids continue to impact refugee security

Refugees were impacted by 765 reported administrative measures (restricted movement, checkpoint arrests, data collection, taxes/fees, restrictions on livelihood and rent, and tent demolitions) throughout 2025—a 35% increase from 2024 (567)—with greatest peaks in Q3. In parallel, throughout 2025, at least 388 raids were reported—a 34% increase from 2024 (290)—with greatest peaks again in Q3.

Interest in voluntary return to Syria continues but is impacted by factors in Syria

Since the fall of the Assad regime, 501,604 Syrians have been inactivated from UNHCR's registration records in Lebanon. Return intentions remain highly individualized, based on personal barriers, family considerations, and practical concerns for dynamics in Syria and Lebanon. Of those in Lebanon in Q4, roughly 5% indicated an intention to return imminently—40% within 1-3 months, 18% "immediately" (within 30 days)—with 99% planning to do so permanently. Of those expressing reluctance to return, concerns are consistent with past quarters, with 95% referencing barriers inside Syria—lack of shelter, livelihoods challenges, and security concerns.

Support is inaccessible for a growing rate of refugees with low mobility or disabilities

Access to services for older people and people with disabilities became steadily more limited in 2025, with 49% of relevant families countrywide reporting an inability to obtain needed care for a family member (up from 30% in Q2), primarily due to financial constraints (94%).

Exposure to risks increasingly impacts women and children

The socioeconomic and protection environment continues to impact refugee families and children, with 30% of households reporting child labor as a primary child protection concern, including worst forms of child labor. Of reported cases, boys remain disproportionately affected (82%). In parallel, recognizing that stigma, fear of reprisal, and normalization of certain forms of violence can lead to significant underreporting of GBV, preliminary findings from the Gender-Based Violence Information Management System (GBVIMS) for 2025 show an 11% increase in reported GBV incidents compared to 2024, predominantly by intimate partners.

Operational Context: Regional Developments and Population Movements

Regional developments

2025 was a highly dynamic year for the region, Lebanon, and the Syrian population. While Q1 reflected a transition following Lebanon's November 2024 ceasefire with Israel and the December 2024 fall of Assad, Q2 and Q3 were marked by increased administrative measures against Syrians in Lebanon, announced facilitation measures for voluntary return, large-scale cross-border movement including arrivals to Lebanon due to violence in Syria in March and May, and impacts of significant funding cuts to humanitarian aid. In Q4, as return movements slowed amid the winter season, some positive developments emerged, including an October MEHE decision to facilitate increased access to formal learning, a November announcement by the Ministry of Labor (MoL) and General Security Office (GSO) about measures for regularization of Syrians and other foreigners who legally entered Lebanon and are engaged in formal sector employment, and a December GSO extension of measures facilitating voluntary returns to Syria.

At the same time, developments in Syria—including renewed clashes, sectarian tensions, and sensitivities around the anniversary of Assad's fall—intensified fears of instability spreading across the border. Although Lebanon saw no direct incidents, these dynamics heightened concerns about border security, displacement risks, and the broader regional context shaping its security environment.

In Q4, Lebanon was impacted by an intersection of regional developments:

Further extension of facilitation measures for voluntary return to Syria. The 1 July waiver by GSO of exit fees, overstay fines, and re-entry bans for Syrian and Palestinian refugees returning to Syria via official land border crossing points, set to expire on 31 December following an initial extension, were again extended to 31 March 2026.

Lower cross-border movement during winter months. While Syrians continued to return to Syria from or via Lebanon, interest and confirmed or presumed returns reduced in Q4, with many citing weather conditions as a compounding factor to their concerns over conditions within Syria (shelter unavailability, limited job prospects, and insecurity). Those fleeing sectarian violence and insecurity in Syria also approached Lebanon at significantly lower rates than in the first half of the year.

Ongoing hostilities by Israel. One year from the cessation of hostilities declaration in November 2024, ceasefire violations in Lebanon continued throughout 2025, with UNIFIL reporting "over 10,000 Israeli air and ground violations," notably targeting south Lebanon but also impacting areas in the west.

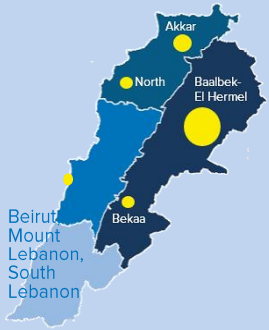
Funding cuts in humanitarian aid. With 2026 budget projections, organizations continued to downscale operations, with ongoing impact to the Lebanon humanitarian response.

Post-2024 arrivals from Syria

*Following a year of change, **115,006**[1] Syrians—driven by preemptive fear, instability, shifting sectarian dynamics, and targeted violence—had entered Lebanon by the end of Q4, up from 98,988 in Q1. These movements, concentrated in December 2024 and March 2025, are dynamic, pendular, and reflect internal relocation in Lebanon.*

While the population in Bekaa and Baalbek-Hermel remained stable in Q4, a slight increase was observed in Akkar and North[2]. Protection Monitoring indicates this rise was likely driven by deteriorating security in Syria, with families reporting fleeing armed violence and entering Lebanon irregularly.

As in prior quarters, post-2024 arrivals in Q4 continued to express concerns of:



1. Lack of legal status
2. Shelter needs
3. High health costs
4. Scarce livelihoods
5. Gender-based violence
6. Social tension

Throughout 2025, the need for legal status and documentation persisted. Only a small portion of post-2024 arrivals reported entering Lebanon regularly, rendering the remaining at heightened risk of exploitation by landlords and employers, fraud schemes, arbitrary detention, and abuse due to lack of status. Consequently, some post-2024 arrivals and protection partners have noted community reticence to share personal information, impacting their ability to seek assistance. Men and adolescent boys also continue to cite fears of crossing checkpoints, instead self-restricting movement with impacts to already limited livelihood prospects. Women and girls similarly report self-restrictions, impairing access to services, including for GBV and child protection.

In parallel, post-2024 arrivals staying in north Lebanon faced particularly acute shelter needs, residing in overcrowded shelters, tents, warehouses, or unfinished structures with poor insulation, limited privacy, and inadequate WASH services[3]. Women describe heightened stress related to overcrowded conditions, lack of privacy, and increased exposure to harassment. For those in rental spaces, rising rent, heating costs, and fears of eviction—notably in North and Akkar—were identified as major stressors in the winter.

For children, parents reported signs of psychosocial distress, limited access to education despite the positive MEHE decision facilitating access to learning and engagement in hazardous work and other forms of child labor.

Overall, post-2024 arrival families express feeling trapped, caught between fear of returning to Syria and poor housing and livelihoods conditions in Lebanon, compounded by limited humanitarian assistance and social tensions with Lebanese and long-staying refugee communities.

Returns and intentions to return to Syria

*At the close of Q4, **501,604** Syrians had been inactivated from UNHCR's records in Lebanon due to verified or presumed return—a noted increase from Q3 (294,912).*

In December, the Government of Lebanon announced an extension of its border facilitation measures waiving exit fees and overstay penalties to 31 March 2026. UNHCR's facilitated Voluntary Return Programme continued with its two modalities—self-organized and organized—while refugees also pursued spontaneous returns.

*At the end of Q4, **54,673** refugees were supported through UNHCR's programme (11% of inactivations), while another **446,930** (confirmed or presumed) spontaneously returned. Since the launch of UNHCR's facilitated return programme on 1 July, 140,000 refugees expressed interest, with only 12% in November and December, attributed to the start of the winter season.* [4]

Despite these dynamics, refugees continue cite the top three barriers to return as:

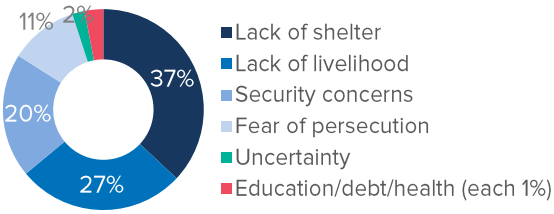
1. Lack of shelter
2. Limited livelihoods
3. Security concerns

Intentions to return to Syria continue to be highly individualized, based on personal sentiment, family considerations, and practical concerns tied to dynamics in both Syria and Lebanon. Of those remaining in Lebanon in Q4, roughly 5% indicated an intention to return imminently—40% within 1-3 months and 18% "immediately" in the next 30 days—with 99% planning to do so permanently. Top support needs to enable return included transport (33%), cash assistance (31%), and housing (24%)—largely consistent with Q3.

Among refugees supported by UNHCR for voluntarily return, 84% are returning to areas of origin—34% to Homs, 18% to Idlib, 13% to Damascus and Rural Damascus, 13% to Aleppo and 10% to Hama. The majority (84%) of those approaching UNHCR indicate they plan to return in complete families, while adult family members who remain in Lebanon are predominantly male income-earners.

As in past quarters, return intentions remain heavily influenced by conditions inside Syria. Among those expressing reluctance to return, refugees sustain similar concerns as in past quarters, with 95% of respondents referencing barriers in Syria, including lack of shelter (37%), livelihoods challenges (27%), and security concerns (20%), with livelihood concerns rising by 5% from Q3. Community sources similarly emphasize conditions in Syria as a primary deterrent, citing destroyed homes, lack of shelter, high

Top barrier to return to Syria - % reporting



upfront rental costs, fear of insecurity, and limited access to basic services (electricity, water, and functioning schools).

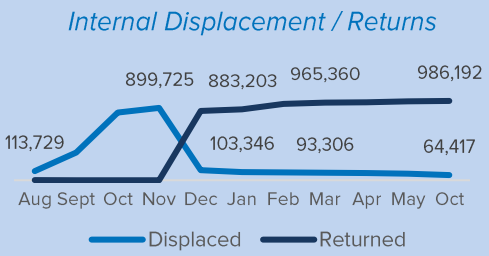
Of the 5% of families who reported considerations in Lebanon as the primary factor preventing return, 32% cited having a Lebanese spouse, while debt also persists as a consistent factor. Community sources also cite conditions in Lebanon that continue to influence return decisions positively or negatively, noting in particular the lack of job opportunities during winter, rising household expenditures for heating and electricity, and the increasing transportation costs for return.

Refugees also continue to consistently express a need for information to make informed decisions, largely along the same lines as their barriers to return—shelter conditions (20%), livelihood opportunities (21%), security situation (21%) in Syria—as well as conditions for access to services, security, education, and legal requirements.

> *Syria is our land. We want to return, but only when it feels possible to start again – Syrian refugee*

Displacement within Lebanon

*In Q4, one year from the ceasefire with Israel, **64,417** internally displaced people[5] were recorded by end October, including **post-ceasefire displacement** due to ongoing Israeli military activity and presence in south Lebanon.[6] Of those who returned to their areas of origin after the ceasefire, 21% of Q4 respondents reported returning to a new location, with 72% returning to a pre-conflict address.*

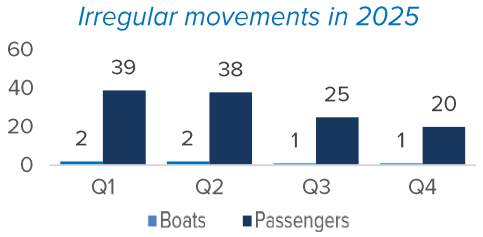


Of Q4 respondents who reported being internally displaced, roughly 80% were outside their governorate of origin. Primary barriers and considerations impacting return continue to be lack of finances, destroyed or inaccessible homes, better housing options in areas of displacement, and fear of conflict resumption. Displaced families, notably those living in substandard accommodation, face particular risks during the winter. This situation was exacerbated by a 62% reduction in funding for winter preparedness activities by LRP partners compared to previous years.[7]

Irregular Onward Movements

*Actual and attempted boat departures from Lebanon in Q4 2025 decreased by **86%** compared to Q4 2024, while total movements since the start of the year (6) dropped by **93%** compared to 2024 (83 movements), indicating a dramatic reduction in irregular boat movements as a mechanism for departure.*

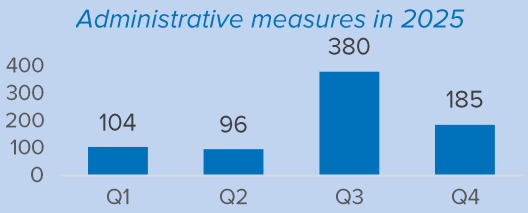
During Q4, one irregular movement was recorded with 20 Syrian passengers—consistent with equally minimal movements in prior quarters. Overall, 2025 saw a significantly lower number of movements compared to recent years, with 112 passengers (mostly Syrian) across six movements. Per IOM, towards the end of Q4, onward movements comprised only 1% of total departures[8].



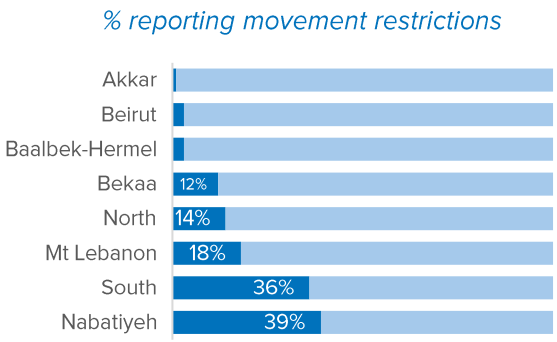
Refugees note that irregular onward movements are no longer considered a viable option given increased risks and costs, greater awareness of smuggler scams, tightened GSO and Lebanese Armed Forces (LAF) security control in Lebanon, the end of conscription in Syria, and reduced motivation to depart by sea. Instead, refugees cite a growing prioritization of legal visas, return to Syria, or continued stay in Lebanon.

Administrative Measures

Reported administrative measures in Q4 ***(185) decreased by 51%*** *from Q3 (380), though levels remain well above the first half of 2025. Measures predominantly affect Syrian refugees and are related to movement restrictions, curfews, checkpoint enforcement, data collection, imposition of municipal IDs, restrictions on livelihood and rental of accommodations, and imposed taxes. Reported penalties vary from verbal warnings to physical abuse, asset confiscation, arrests, and deportation.*

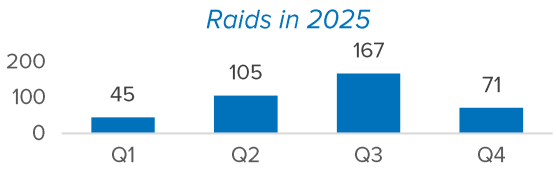


Countrywide, movement restrictions were most frequently cited. While the proportion of respondents reporting such restrictions remained stable at 16%, geographic variations is observed, with governorates in the south—Nabatiyeh (39%) and South (36%)— consistently most affected, reflecting tightened checkpoint protocols, curfews, and escalating tensions and hostility in these areas. By contrast, Akkar (1%), Beirut (3%), and Baalbek (3%) reported very limited restrictions. Where movement restrictions are imposed, 65% of men, compared to 35% of women, report being impacted. In parallel, lack of legal residency remained a primary driver of self-imposed movement restrictions amid fear of arrest, detention and deportation.



Beyond movement restrictions, 6% of respondents countrywide reported an imposition of taxes (comparable to Q3), while one-third (34%) of respondents in Baalbek-Hermel cited such fees—a 10% increase for the governorate from Q3. Where such taxes were imposed, respondents associated their impact with debt accumulation (44%) and reduced food consumption (40%).

Additionally, throughout 2025, at least 388 raids were reported (a 34% increase from 2024 (290)), resulting in the arrest of 2,600 Syrians, of whom 60% were deported. Quarterly trends in 2025 showed a sharp escalation from 45 raids in Q1 to 105 in Q2, peaking at 167 in Q3 due to intensified security campaigns, before declining to 71 in Q4.



> We try to hide our solar panels whenever we hear about a new raid – Syrian refugee, Maqne

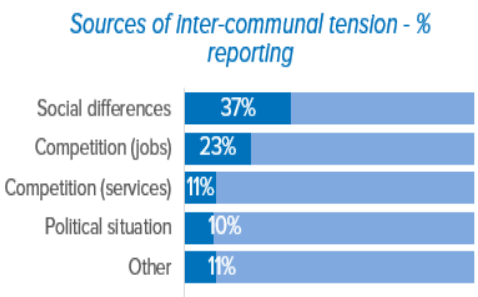
Protection Trends

Social tensions and community support

Since the start of the year, the percentage of respondents reporting social tension has risen to ***7%*** *(from 4% in Q3). Both respondents and key informants indicate a progressive deterioration in relations between refugees and Lebanese communities. While incidents are largely non-violent and limited*[9]*,* ***3%*** *of respondents reported experiencing violence in the past 30 days, and key informants consistently cite incidents of verbal abuse, discrimination, and occasional physical altercations.* ***37%*** *of respondents cited political, cultural, and/or religious differences as the key drivers of tension (consistent with Q3, 33%),*[10] *alongside a host of issues:*

1. Social differences
2. Competition—jobs
3. Competition—services
4. Political situation

Alongside political, cultural, or religious differences, respondents note that competition over employment (23%, up 2% from Q3) and services (11%, up 3% from Q3) and strain over regional political changes (10%, *vis* 7% from Q3) continue to drive tensions. Similarly, key informants point to economic strain and job competition, rising rents, exploitative labor practices, and lack of legal residency as factors undermining social cohesion. In particular, lack of documentation compelling many refugees into the informal labor market foments further competition and resentment by Lebanese who perceive refugees as accepting lower wages.



> *Trust between Lebanese residents and us is very low; small disputes can escalate into violence quickly – Syrian refugee, Haret Saida*

In this context, percentages of respondents reporting tensions vary by governorate, with greatest frequency in Mount Lebanon (10%), North (9%), and Baakbek-Hermel (9%), and lower rates in Nabatiyeh and South (6%, respectively), Beirut (4%), and Akkar (1%), Conversely, however, key informants report that South and Nabatiyeh experience more intense and entrenched tensions due to political sensitivities, past security incidents, administrative measures against Syrians, and prolonged mistrust.

Similarly, only 6% of refugees reported receiving assistance from host communities in Q4, down from 10% in Q3 and the lowest level of support recorded in 2025.

Among refugees, intra-community tensions, particularly between long-staying communities and post-December 2024 arrivals, persisted throughout 2025. Since Q1, monitoring has identified tensions over perceived political affiliation, unequal access to humanitarian aid, and sectarian alignments. Nevertheless, while dynamics persist, there is no indication of escalation.

> *Even among Syrians, newcomers and long-time residents don't get along because of politics, religion, and just being different – Syrian refugee, Haour Taala*

Legal residency

The proportion of refugees age 15+ without legal residency stood steady in 2025, with 83% reporting lacking documentation in Q4. In parallel, 69% reported having children born in Lebanon, of whom 80% hold birth registration issued in Lebanon (+7% from Q3). Absent documentation, refugees face elevated risk of arrest, detention, and deportation; barriers to access basic rights and services including healthcare and education; exploitation and unsafe working conditions; increased isolation; and fewer options for work and housing.

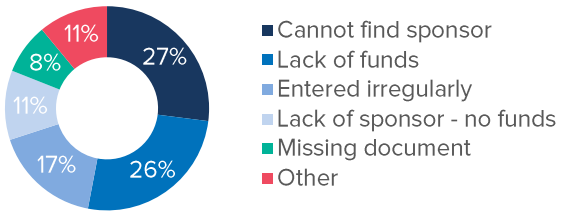
In mid-November, the GSO and Ministry of Labor (MoL) released a series of decisions on ***regularization of legal stay*** *of foreign nationals based on sponsorship or work permit. These measures apply only to those who initially entered Lebanon* ***regularly*** *through official crossing points and are working in the* ***formal sector****—a challenge for many refugees. Syrians meeting these conditions must obtain a new sponsorship or work permit based legal residency before 31 March 2026.*

Barriers to legal status include:

1. Cannot find a sponsor
2. Lack of funds
3. Irregular entry
4. No sponsor - lack of financial means
5. Missing documents

Refugees continued to report significant challenges obtaining or renewing residency. The primary barrier—inability to secure a sponsor (27%)—remained consistent throughout 2025, alongside financial constraints to cover associated costs including transport reported by 26% of households (a one-year renewal can cost up to 150 USD, while fines reach 200 USD excluding overstay costs). In addition, 17% of reported entering Lebanon irregularly as a barrier to documentation.

Top reason for lack of legal status - % respondents without residency



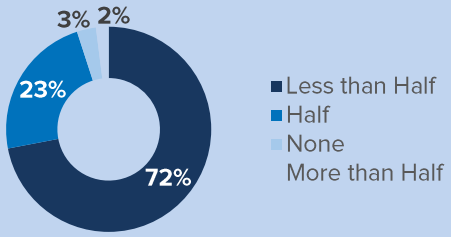
Of those lacking residency, 39% cite concerns over restrictions (barriers to movement and fear of arrest, detention, or deportation), resulting in self-restricted movements to avoid checkpoints, impacting access to livelihoods and services. Another 25% cite concerns over re-entry bans if departing temporarily to Syria, barriers accessing services, and barriers accessing jobs (11%, 7%, 7%, respectively). Of note, 34% reported no concerns.

> *I wish the Lebanese authorities would simplify the process and make it cheaper for Syrians to obtain legal papers. I just want to earn my education degree – Female refugee, Chouf*

Access to shelter, basic services, and livelihood

Economic vulnerability of refugees markedly deteriorated in 2025. The proportion of those reporting an inability to meet half of basic needs increased sharply over the year—from 44% in Q2 to 72% in Q4. Concurrently, only 2% reported meeting more than half of needs. As a result, 92% of families report debt, 44% took on additional debt in the last 30 days, 40% reduced food expenses, and 14% reduced needed healthcare, consistent with Q3. Priority needs remain:

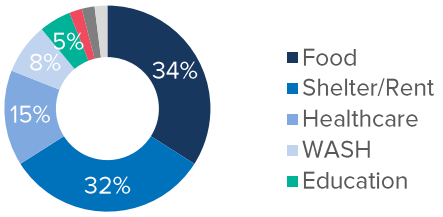
Ability to Meet Basic Needs



1 Food 2 Shelter 3 Healthcare

In Q4, mirroring trends throughout 2025, refugees identified food (34%), shelter (32%), and healthcare (15%) as top needs while citing multiple barriers to access basic services, including financial constraints, long distances to services, and administrative challenges, particularly for those lacking legal documentation. Focus on primary needs continues to come at the expense of critical but underprioritized services, with only 5% citing education as a top need.

Top household needs

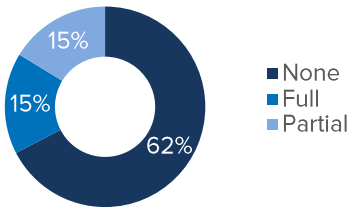


Moreover, humanitarian funding cuts continue to significantly reduce assistance for refugees and Lebanese families, threatening household stability and protection. In Q4, 40% of respondents reported not receiving humanitarian assistance in the past year (up from 23% in Q2 and 33% in Q3), while 24% reported a lack of resources among providers (from 19% in Q2). Key informants similarly report a widening gap between needs and available services, notably shelter, healthcare, female hygiene items, and mental health services.

Access to Shelter

With 84% of refugees reporting to live in rental space in Q4, an increase in average monthly rent from 171 USD (Q2) to 200 USD elevates the already pressing issue of access to stable shelter. Of those in rental accommodation, 91% pay cash, 6% work in exchange for accommodation, and 4% were hosted for free, while 62% reported not being able to meet their rental payment in the prior month, a substantial increase from Q3 (45%). Critically, in some areas, including those with post-2024 arrivals, refugees report rents as high as 400 USD.

Ability to pay rent - % respondents in rental accomodateion



Such limited financial resources raise risks and threats of eviction and exploitation by landlords, including pressure to return to Syria. In Q4, roughly 3% of households reported facing eviction in the last 30 days.

Separately, and consistent throughout 2025, 15% of refugees continue to report residing in tents or Informal Tented Settlements (ITS)—with the highest proportions in Baalbek (49%), Bekaa (38%), Akkar (31%). These families are exposed to harsh living conditions (notably in the winter months) and protection risks such as lack of privacy, inadequate facilities, unsafe drinking water and poor sanitation, risks of malnutrition for children, and risk of eviction. Such conditions elevate vulnerabilities for women, girls, and persons with disabilities.

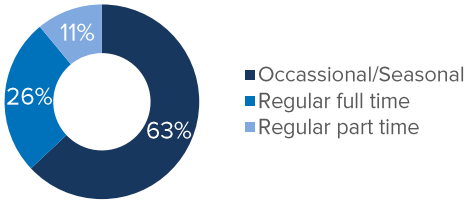
> *The rent went from $100 to $400 almost overnight. It feels like we are being punished for being new arrivals – post-2024 arrival, Jabal Mohsen*

Access to Livelihoods

Livelihood opportunities for Syrians remained limited and poorly paid. Countrywide, and consistent with past quarters, 20% of households reported no source of income.

Of those engaged in income-generating activity, only 26% are employed full-time (down from 38% in Q2), with 50% of all employed working in construction, manufacturing, waste collection; 22% in the service, retail, or office industries; and 21% in agriculture or forestry. Those without legal status

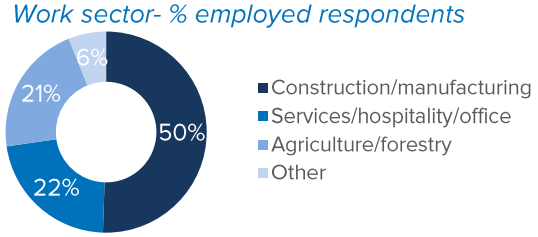
Work type - % employed respondents



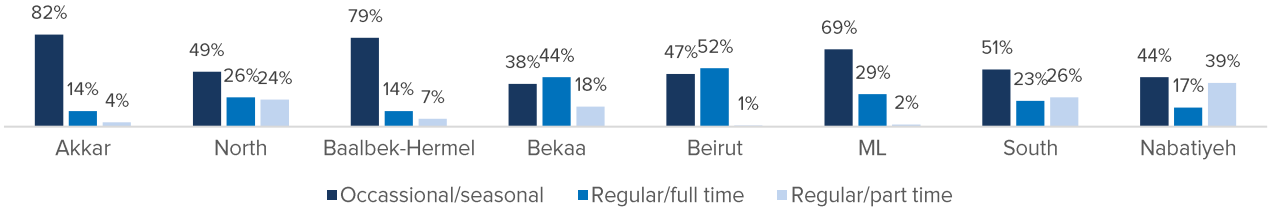
face compounded barriers, with those commuting to work (notably men) subjected to strict control at checkpoints.

Of note, the irregular and/or informal nature of employment for many refugees, compounded by their irregular entry into Lebanon, limits the ability of many to access the possibility for regularization based on work, announced by GSO in November.

Work sector- % employed respondents



Work type by governorate - % employed respondents

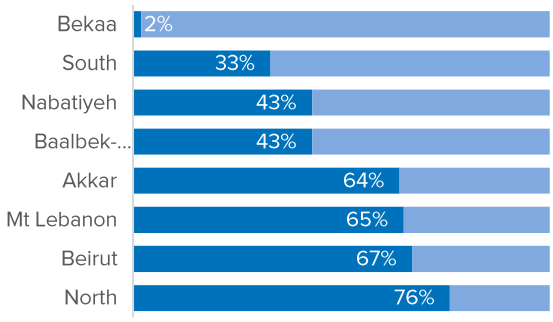


Access to Healthcare

Access to healthcare also remains a primary concern, with 48% of respondents citing an inability to access care and continuing to report barriers including financial constraints (95%), distance to providers, lack of legal status, and limited specialized services (rehabilitation, physiotherapy, home-based care, and psychotherapy).

In parallel, access to services for older people and people with disabilities is steadily becoming more limited, with 49% of relevant families countrywide reporting an inability to obtain needed care for a family member (up 19% from Q2, and up 9% from Q3), primarily due to financial constraints (94%). Such access is highly dependent on geographic location, with greatest barriers reported in North (76%) and Beirut (67%). In this context, Protection Monitoring indicates that people with specific needs strongly rely on family (87%) and community support (40%).

*% older persons and persons with disabilities not accessing need healthcare**

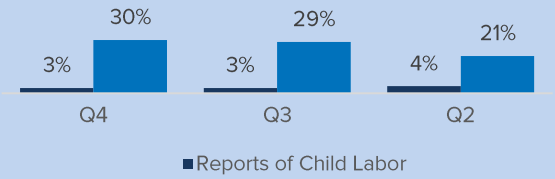


**Percentage for Bekaa is disproportionate low and will be interrogated in future monitoring*

Child Protection

*Child labor remains a growing child protection concern for families, reported by **30%** of respondents (from 21% in Q2). While only **3%** of families with children continue to acknowledge at least one working child, perceptions of risk are much higher. Of children reportedly working, boys remain disproportionately affected (82%), often working in retail, agriculture, and street vending, while girls were most likely to engage in agriculture. Primary reasons for child labor include:*

Reports v. Perceived Risk of Child Labor



1. Insufficient caregiver income
2. Caregiver physically cannot work
3. Child unable to attend school

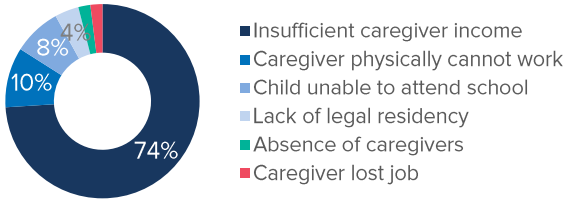
Among families reporting child labor, insufficient caregiver income remains predominant and growing, from 67% in Q3 to 74% in Q4, followed by inability of caregivers to work (10%), reflecting limited livelihood options alongside barriers to education.

Key Informants continue to report that households often conceal child labor for fear of losing humanitarian assistance. Despite an overall low reporting rate, key informants and UNHCR community sources reported child labor as a widespread issue, with Protection Monitoring respondents reporting engagement in wholesale and retail (20%), agricultural work (18%), street vending (12%), manufacturing (10%), mechanics (9%), and hospitality (7%). Community sources similarly continue to highlight that children are engaged in the worst forms of child

labor, with boys and girls as young as six working in agriculture, construction, or waste collection under harsh physical and psychological conditions, long hours, and exposure to hazards and physical and verbal abuse.

For those citing child labor as a risk in their area, Beirut (52%), Mount Lebanon (46%), and North (30%) reflected greatest levels of concern.

Primary reason for child labor - % respondents with a working child



Child protection response monitoring by the Child Protection Working Group indicates child labor issues were present in 36% of cases addressed through case management in Q4, after emotional abuse (38%), with neglect (19%) and domestic violence (16%) also represented in smaller proportions.[11]

> *With the curfew, new waste taxes, and rising rents, many families don't know how to make ends meet. The situation is very stressful, especially for children who dropped out of school to work – male refugee, Hermel*

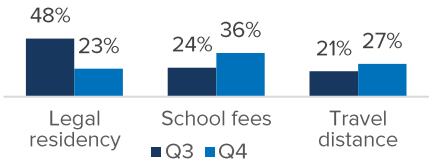
Education

In Q4, elaboration of the Ministry of Education and Higher Education SOP for second-shift schools facilitated refugee enrollment (including post-2024 arrivals) for school year 2025-2026—registration was permitted for those holding legal residency, UNHCR certificate, or an official General Security receipt indicating residency renewal has begun. Students without documents were able to register and be added to a list submitted to MEHE and shared with GSO for follow-up. As a consequence, afternoon shift enrolment reached roughly ***104,000*** *students—a* ***30%*** *increase compared to 2024/2025 but below prior years (156,000). In this context, learning barriers include:*

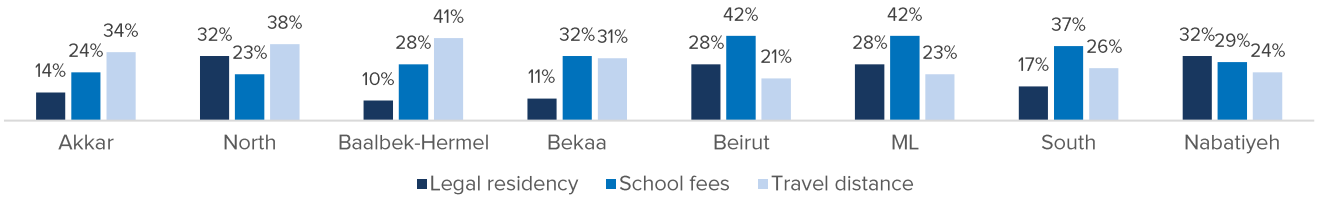
1. School fees
2. Travel distance
3. Legal residency

As a direct result of the new MEHE policies for 2025-2026, the proportion of households reporting lack of legal residency as a top barrier for enrolment declined from 48% in Q3 to 23% in Q4. With this barrier removed for many, both school-associated costs and transportation needs increased as top barriers, to 36% and 27% respectively. Overall, such proportions indicate that barriers beyond pure administrative access prevent children from engaging in formal education.

Top barrier to enrolment - % reporting



Top barriers to enrolment by governorate - % reporting



For those considering return to Syria, the Syrian Ministry of Education opened its schools to all children and showed flexibility to accept late registration for any student,[12] following certain documentation requirements or a knowledge test for placement in the absence of relevant certificates.

> *Children often face significant barriers to education, including high transport costs, school fees, or lack of documentation, forcing them to drop out and work instead – Syrian refugee, Aaqbieh*

Gender-based violence

*Recognizing that stigma, fear of reprisal, and normalization of certain forms of violence can lead to significant underreporting of GBV, preliminary findings from the Gender-Based Violence Information Management System (GBVIMS) for 2025 show an **11%** increase in reported GBV incidents compared to 2024. Women and girls continue to constitute the majority (**97%**) of GBV survivors in 2025; however, there is a slight increase in reported percentages of men and boy survivors (3%) compared to 2024 (2%).*

*Note: GBVIMS data is based solely on reported cases and may not reflect the true prevalence of GBV in the population. All reported figures for 2025 are **preliminary**, pending final publication.*

For women and girls, physical assault (38%), psychological/emotional abuse (38%) and sexual assault (12%) constitute highest reported incidents, followed by denial of resources and opportunities (7%), rape (3%), and forced marriage (2%).

For men and boys, psychological/emotional abuse (44%) and physical assault (33%) continued to be the most frequently reported incidents in 2025. However, reported sexual assault incidents increased to 15% in 2025 from 13% in 2024, while rape reporting remained consistent (7%).

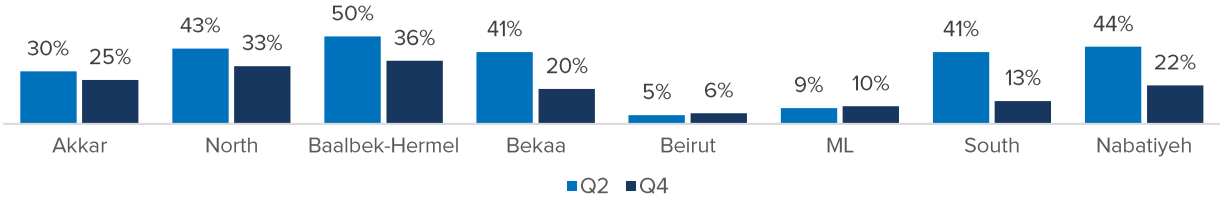
Place of incident in 2025 indicates most reported GBV incidents continued to occur in private settings, primarily within the survivor's (62%) or perpetrator's residence (20%). Reported perpetrators are predominantly intimate partners (current/former) (61%), family members (8%), or others (landlords, employers, strangers) (31%).

Mental health and psychosocial support

Despite the continued instability of the protection environment, the proportion of those reporting mental health and psychosocial distress remained stable between Q3 and Q4 at **18%**, though lower than Q2 (29%)—*while partners and community sources consistently report distress driven by livelihood scarcity, irregular legal status, household decisions related to return to Syria, and other sources of strain. Top sources of distress include:*

1. Economic hardship
2. Personal issues
3. Situation in Syria

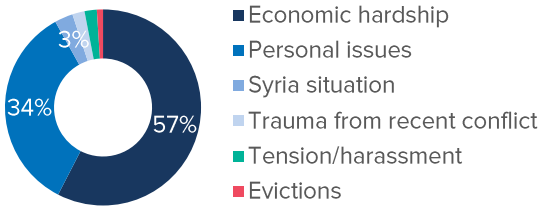
% reporting mental health symptoms



Of those citing mental health symptoms, reporting by governorate remains generally consistent between Q3 and Q4, but still therefore reflecting a (sometimes sharp) decrease from Q2 in nearly all governorates. Highest rates continue to be observed in Baalbek-Hermel (36%), followed by North (33%), Akkar (25%), and Bekaa (20%). Consistent with Q2 and Q3, Beirut and Mount Lebanon reported the lowest levels (6% and 10%, respectively).

At the close of Q4, 57% of respondents with a mental health condition cited economic hardship as the lead cause of psychological distress (compared to 70% in Q2), with the greatest proportion remaining in Baalbek (90%). Other contributors included personal issues (divorce, child custody disputes, family conflict and forced marriage), which rose nationally from 18% in Q2 to 34% in Q4, most notably still in Akkar (40%). Though a smaller percentage, some also continue to report distress due to the situation in Syria and inter-household tensions related to return decision making, alongside distress from eviction threats, trauma from the 2024 war, and community tension.

Top contributor to distress



Countrywide, women (24%) reported at least one symptom of psychological distress more than men (14%), consistent with past quarters.

For more information, please contact arjupin@unhcr.org

Endnotes

[1] Post-Dec 2024 Arrivals Inter-Sectoral Response Dashboard.
[2] Lebanon - Syrian Returns and Movements Snapshot - 30 November 2025
[3] Protection Monitoring Task Force of Northern Lebanon, *Protection needs assessment of post December 2024 arrivals from Syria in Northern Lebanon*, October 2025.
[4] UNHCR - Supported Voluntary Repatriation of Syrian Refugees in Lebanon - December 2025.
[5] Lebanon: Displacement Tracking Matrix: Mobility Snapshot - Round 88. IOM - October 2025
[6] Lebanon Protection Sector, Situation of Internally Displaced Persons in Lebanon, September 2025.
[7] At a Glance: Lebanon Winter Preparedness and Response 2025-2026. LRP - October 2025
[8] Lebanon - Cross Border Movement Update (22-26 December 2025). IOM
[9] Real-Time Monitoring and Mapping of Intra-Lebanese Tensions.
[10] This may include any sociopolitical developments taking place in neighboring countries.
[11] Child Protection Working Group Dashboard, Case Management Services, accessed on 16 March 2026; a case may be managed to address multiple risks simultaneously.
[12] UNHCR, Syria is Home - FAQ, accessed 3 December 2025.