

Quarterly Protection Overview

Quarter 2 2023

This report aims to provide a comprehensive overview of the protection situation and protection response in Lebanon, with a view to highlight key trends, gaps in assistance, and shed light on important sector priorities and recommendations for key stakeholders. The document includes protection, gender-based violence, and child protection trends across population groups in Lebanon.

Methodology

This report draws on contributions from various assessments and protection partner analysis at national and sub-national level. Sources include UNHCR, UNRWA and IRC protection monitoring; PWG North Protection Monitoring reports; GBV and Child Protection (CP) Information Management System (IMS) findings; Inter-Agency referral trends; and partner-specific assessment findings and insights from core and working group members, sub-national coordinators, and co-coordinators across the sector.

There are several limitations to this report. Aside from UNHCR protection monitoring findings, sources do not provide nationally representative data and should be understood as indicative. Protection monitoring tools are not standardized across population groups and the sector relies on secondary data sources shared by partners rather than analyzing primary data.¹

Context Overview

Political and socio-economic

On 7 May 2023, the Arab League agreed to reinstate Syria's membership after a 12-year suspension, signaling a step toward reintegrating the Government of Syria into the regional community. The decision also calls for addressing refugee displacement and drug smuggling. A ministerial group consisting of Jordan, Saudi Arabia, Iraq, Lebanon, Egypt, and the Arab League's Secretary General are due to liaise with the Syrian government to seek solutions.² The decision was met with mixed reactions in the region and internationally. Nevertheless, it has further invigorated discussions in Lebanon and is being cited to try to legitimize some positions on the refugee return file among Lebanese decision-makers.

The 7th Brussels Conference 'Supporting the future of Syria and the Region' was held on 14 and 15th June 2023. Lebanon's caretaker Foreign Minister expressed the need for increased tangible support from the international community. The international community reaffirmed solidarity, recognizing Lebanon's generosity and hospitality, and demonstrating a continued commitment to support Lebanon. At the same time, it stressed the need to address underlying political, economic, and financial challenges through comprehensive reforms. While governments positioning regarding Syria crisis political dynamics was mixed, there was a greater call by many including civil society for greater seriousness about accountability mechanisms and civilian protection in Syria. In June, the United Nations General Assembly also adopted a draft resolution to establish an independent body to clarify the fate of the missing and forcibly disappeared in Syria, determine their whereabouts, and provide adequate support to the victims and families of the missing.³

¹ Attention is paid to ensure that sensitive information related to specific incidents such as GBV cases is not included in the report.

² UNDSS update May 2023.

³ LBCI (29 June 2023), [The United Nations General Assembly adopts a draft resolution to establish an institution to reveal the fate of missing and forcibly disappeared persons in Syria](#) (Arabic), Lebanon

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Municipal elections that were originally set for June were postponed in April, resulting in discontent amongst a number of municipal council members, who stressed that they are now obliged to continue their work and sustain themselves despite none of the required financial support required to continue to manage.⁴

In Q2 there was relative stabilization of the parallel market (91-93,000 LBP/USD) that helped to clarify expectations related to imports including fuel, food and other resources. At the end of June, there was a 6-7,000 LBP difference between the parallel market and Sayrafa Rate. In May, displaced Syrians receiving cash assistance for basic needs, food and protection from humanitarian agencies were able to retrieve their assistance in their preferred currency (LBP/USD). This came after concerns were raised in June that cash assistance would be suspended resulting in significant concerns from the refugee community at the end of the Q2 period.

Electricite du Liban (EDL) is seeking to collect payments from Palestine refugee camps and informal settlements in Lebanon where it says a high proportion of Palestine refugees in Lebanon and displaced Syrians do not pay for electricity connected to the grid. Several proposals have been suggested by EDL but no impact has been observed so far.

Institutional, legal, and normative

On 2 May, the Minister of Interior and Municipalities (MoIM) issued a circular No. 42 asking Governors to register displaced Syrians in municipalities and villages. The circular further ordered Mokhtars not to process legal documentation and for property owners not to rent property (residential and commercial) to displaced Syrians prior to proof of municipal registration. This can have a negative impact on the ability of refugees to register life events including birth. A further letter was issued in this regard by the Ministry of Justice (MOJ) to all public notaries not to issue any document or contract for any displaced Syrian without proof of municipal registration. The MOIM circular can be seen as an attempt to further organise the presence of refugees in the country.⁵

On the 15th of May 2023, the Directorate General of General Security (DG-GS) issued a decision regarding the suspension of regularization of residency status for Syrians who entered Lebanon irregularly starting 16 May 2023 and a decision related to exit formalities for displaced Syrians who have no valid residency in Lebanon. Based on the decision, the status regularization for displaced Syrians who entered Lebanon irregularly before 24 April 2019 and who did not regularize their status before the decision was issued, are no longer able to do so inside the country but must do so at GSO border centers and pay overstay fees upon exiting. Those who do not pay the overstay fees before exiting will be issued a re-entry ban for one-year. Those who pay the overstay fees and exit Lebanon can then re-enter Lebanon provided they meet the eligibility requirements for re-entry, and can provide required supporting documents, including a valid national identity card, and/or passport, and a family booklet if they are travelling with family. There is a valid concern that currently most of those who decide to exit Lebanon and pay the overstay fees will not be eligible for re-entry given existing eligibility requirements and supporting documents required. The deadline for both memos has been extended until 31st December 2023. In June 2023, GSO also extended the July 7, 2022, memo relating to regularization of Syrian nationals who overstayed their visas and residencies in Lebanon, until 31/12/2023. Together these regulations limit the number of Syrians who can benefit from legal residency and make it increasingly difficult for partners to identify eligible individuals for legal aid.

The Embassy of the Syrian Arab Republic in Beirut announced the suspension of receiving regular and urgent passport applications due to technical reasons, starting from 15th May 2023 and until further notice. This means that although there were already significant challenges, minors between 15 and 18 years, who already lack identification documents, can no longer apply for passports at the Syrian embassy.

In Q2, Lebanon was downgraded by the US Government and placed on a Tier 2 watch list regarding its counter-trafficking response.⁶ The IOM Migrant Presence Monitoring shows a marked increase of migrants coming from

⁴ ALEF (January 2023), [Peacebuilding and Social Stability Challenges fFaced by Municipalities within a Context of Ongoing Crises in Lebanon, Lebanon](#)

⁵ Legal actors' updates, 2023

⁶ U.S. Department of State (2023), [2023 Trafficking in Persons Report https://www.state.gov/reports/2023-trafficking-in-persons-report/](https://www.state.gov/reports/2023-trafficking-in-persons-report/)

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“new” African countries which have not had a large previous migrant population in Lebanon, such as Kenya, Cameroon, Ghana, and Sierra Leone. This is also corroborated by Ministry of Labor (MoL) work permit data from 2022. Operational partners have noted several serious protection cases from these nationalities, including cases of trafficking. **The global gender report at the World Economic Forum released in June 2023, also saw Lebanon drop 13 places on the gender equality ranking (132/146)** which reflects the toll of the crisis on women’s economic participation, education, health and political empowerment.

Priority Protection Risks (*threats, effects, coping*)

A shrinking Protection Space

Raids, arrests combined with group deportations of Syrians by the Lebanese Armed Forces (LAF) and LAF-military intelligence in April and until mid-May had a significant impact on refugee communities across Lebanon causing feelings of fear and anxiety. Simultaneously, a series of discriminatory restrictive measures were announced and implemented across municipalities, which although not new, include a call for a census of displaced Syrians. In parallel, there was the issuance of several GSO extensions and decisions related to refugee legal residency which had the effect of further restricting access to legal residency.⁷ The combination of these factors, on top of already heightened exposure to socio-economically driven protection risks, contributed to an overall shrinking of the protection space in Lebanon in Q2.

- **Raids, arrests, and deportations**

Raids, arrests, and other operations resulting in group deportations by the Lebanese Armed Forces (LAF) across the country had a significant impact on Syrian and to some extent Palestine refugees from Syria and their families. There were concerning cases reported by partners of family separation, deportation of a minor, and a significant increase in anxiety and fear and restriction of free movement was reported. Partners observed reduced access to some of their services in Q2 with measures being taken by refugees to avoid interaction with Lebanese authorities, including restricting movements overall. Further, partners reported that this resulted in lower attendance rates at community centres, secondary health care facilities and access to livelihoods. Although collective advocacy efforts were largely successful in terms of halting the group deportations following raids (with the last reported incident on May 11), in June self-imposed restricted movement continued to be reported by refugees particularly those without legal residency and documentation, although to a lesser extent than earlier in the quarter with activity attendance largely resumed to pre-April levels. Despite a small number of Palestine refugees from Syria being subject to arrest and deportation, those without legal residency are reported to have been afraid to leave the camp. Partners reported that refugees faced difficulties in determining which documentation allows for safe passage due to inconsistent requests at checkpoints. Legal residency continues to be regarded by refugees as critical for their protection. To this end, in May, legal residency requests and queries related to the LAF deportations and raids were significantly higher than usual through partner frontline staff and hotlines (the national call center for UNHCR saw a 152% increase in calls compared to April, with 75% related to legal residency and 19% for housing attestations) – while these slowed into June specific requests for legal residency continue to remain higher than previous months.⁸ Further, legal partners report that for those displaced Syrians unable to obtain legal residency through the UNHCR certificate they feel greater pressure to find a sponsor leading to high prices being charged for sponsorship and situations of exploitation reported. There have been some cases of individuals reporting to GSO for regularisation despite not being eligible and then becoming at risk of deportation. This highlights the importance of adequate counselling and awareness raising on eligibility for residency and regularisation.

⁷ In July 2023, the reversal of a decision related to minors accessing legal residency through their civil extracts took place as well as further extensions of some of these GSO decisions which were issued in May.

⁸ In the context of ongoing raids and deportations of displaced Syrians, the UNHCR National Call Center answered a total of 9,564 calls related to **legal protection** in May, which represents a 152 per cent increase in these types of calls compared to April. The vast majority (75 %) were related to legal residency issues and 19 per cent to requests for housing attestations.

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While group deportations came to a halt by mid-May, individual arrest and deportations at military checkpoints continue to take place primarily in the northern border regions – as has been previously the practice. Partners with a presence in Wadi Khaled report that a number of these individuals subsequently return to Lebanon paying smugglers around \$50-300. LAF security-motivated raids on informal settlements particularly in the Bekka also continued, with some accompanied by vehicle, ID and WIFI router confiscations, however these have not resulted in subsequent deportation. Despite this practice being consistent with previous reporting periods, community sources report a persistent climate of fear following such incidents to a greater extent than before the events of April and May. GBV partners have also raised concerns about the knock-on effect that these events have had on GBV survivors feeling safe to report incidents of violence. While seeking redress is not a new challenge for GBV survivors, case management agencies say GBV survivors are even more worried to approach police stations or the judiciary. A similar trend is also observed for men without legal residency.

Response gap:

- **Legal Residency:** increased demand for legal residency as a protective factor in Q2 converged with reduced GSO capacity to process legal residency requests. Limited GSO capacity, predominantly due to a shortage in staffing as well as increased numbers of Lebanese processing passports, has reduced the number of available slots for legal residency processing across GSO centers particularly in the North and Beqaa. **Increased institutional support to GSO centers is required alongside the scale up of legal aid for legal residency.**
- **Case management:** Protection partners responded by providing individual case management and complementary services for households of deported members, this required prioritizing the highest risk cases due to capacity limitations. Protection case management including for legal and physical protection cases remains a necessity in the current protection landscape.

- **Restrictive measures**

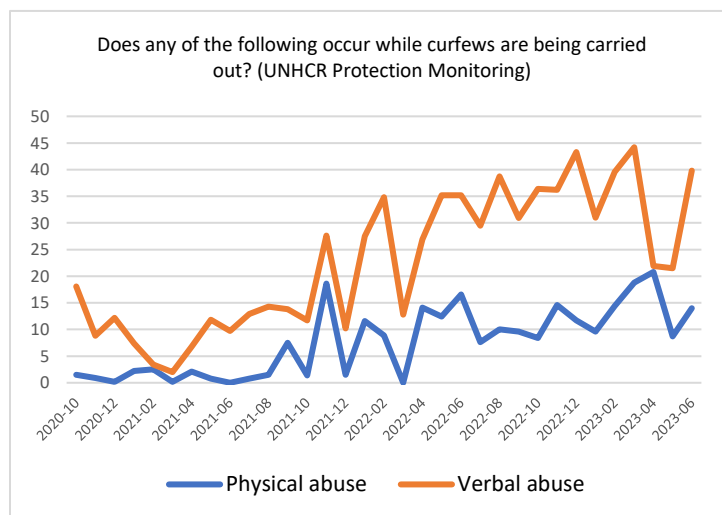
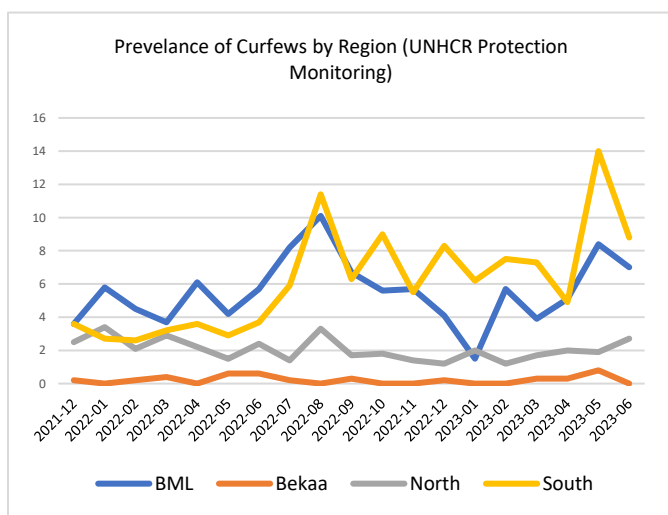
While protection monitoring and restrictive measure reporting does not itself indicate a significant shift in trends of restrictive measures overall either in terms of implementation or tangible impact on the refugee community, community members and partners continue to emphasise the lasting impact of the April and May raids, arrests and deportations, in driving heightened feelings of fear and anxiety during and after the occurrence of restrictive measures. **There were three main restrictive measures observed in Q2; curfews** leading to restrictions of free movement, **introduction of new fees** and **active checkpoints erected**.⁹ **The main reasons provided by the community for such measures are;** due to lack of legal residency, discrimination due to nationality or religion and inter-communal tension related to jobs, competition over resources but also related to other issues.¹⁰

⁹ UNHCR and IRC Protection Monitoring, May and June 2023

¹⁰ UNHCR Protection Monitoring, June 2023

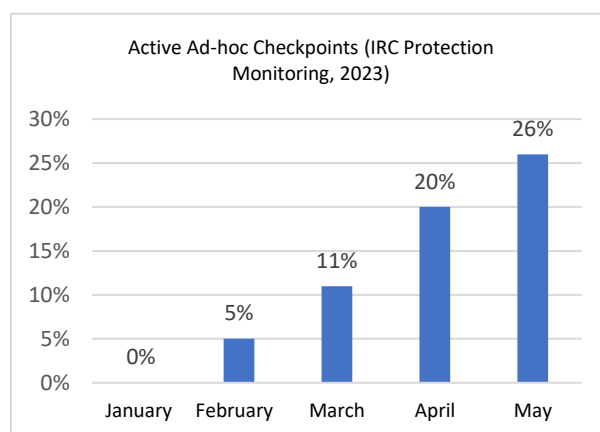
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Since 2022, active curfews have been predominantly imposed in the South and Beirut and Mount Lebanon regions, with an increase in curfews observed by partners in Q2. 48 newly identified curfews are reported to have been introduced by municipalities in BML this year with the majority of these in Q2. These curfews are reported to be security related, with the municipal police and ‘politically affiliated groups’ reportedly engaged in their enforcement. After a 6-month period of relatively loose enforcement, stricter enforcement was observed in 2023.¹¹ Further overall, where curfews are in place refugees have reported a **spike in verbal and physical abuse** occurring, this saw an uptick in June. According to IRC, as a result of curfews refugees have had to limit their movement, limit access to services, and limit their access to work, especially those on night shifts.¹²



Of those refugees and Lebanese individuals who participated in IRC Protection Monitoring in April and May, 26 per cent reported the recent implementation of active checkpoints in their areas. This was mainly observed in the Bekaa (45%), followed by the North (32%).¹³

During municipal registration exercises, municipalities were commonly reported to request accompanying measures, particularly requesting **refugees to regularize their legal residency or face threat of eviction or deportation** and requesting to collect a municipal service fee. The introduction of municipalities requesting service fees for refugees living in their jurisdiction started to be reported by refugees approximately eight months ago and since then a gradual incline can be observed of refugees living in municipalities in the South with these requests.¹⁴ Since 2023, there are 27 municipalities in the South known to have newly introduced fees. An active partner in the south reported that the range of fees varies by area (2 million LBP in Saida district to \$100 in El Nabatieh District).



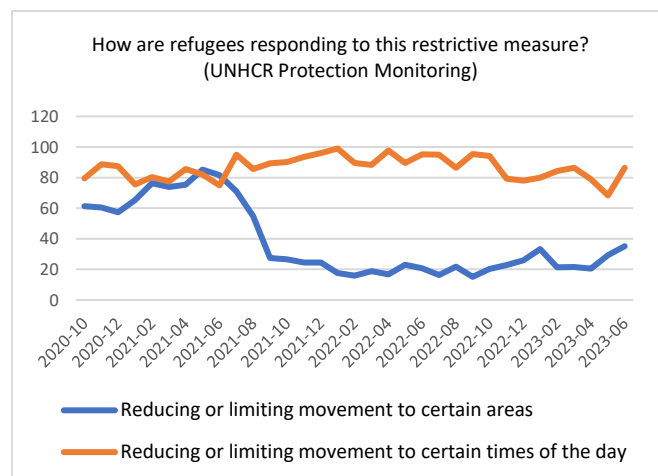
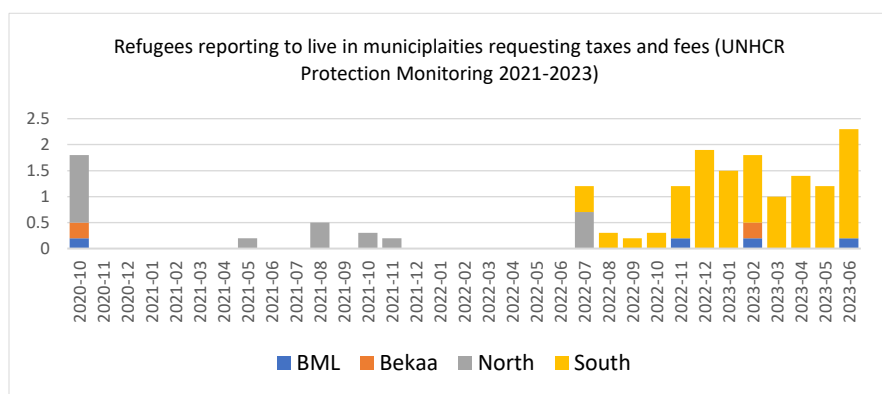
¹¹ UNHCR Protection Monitoring, 2020-2023

¹² IRC Protection Monitoring, 2023

¹³ IRC Protection Monitoring, 2023

¹⁴ UNHCR protection monitoring. It is important to mention that the graph does not reflect the number of municipalities levying these fees but instead the number of refugees reporting to live under this measure as a part of protection monitoring

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Overall, there are various effects on refugees following the implementation of restrictive measures; some of the commonly reported penalties for not abiding by restrictive measures are **fine, threat of deportation (which increased significantly in Q2) arrest within 48 hours and confiscation of transportation and documentation** however around a third report no penalties imposed.

In June, we also see a rise in refugees reporting to reduce or limit their movement to certain areas or to certain times of the day in response to restrictive measures. Partners report that this has reduced livelihood access, visiting friends and family. Despite these harmful impacts, the percent of Syrian refugee households who indicate a generally supportive environment with support received from Lebanese community members was 5 per cent in Q2 only marginally down from 7 per cent in Q1.¹⁵

- **Deprived access to basic needs and services leading to protection risks and harmful coping strategies including eviction, debt accumulation, access challenges and deteriorating mental health**

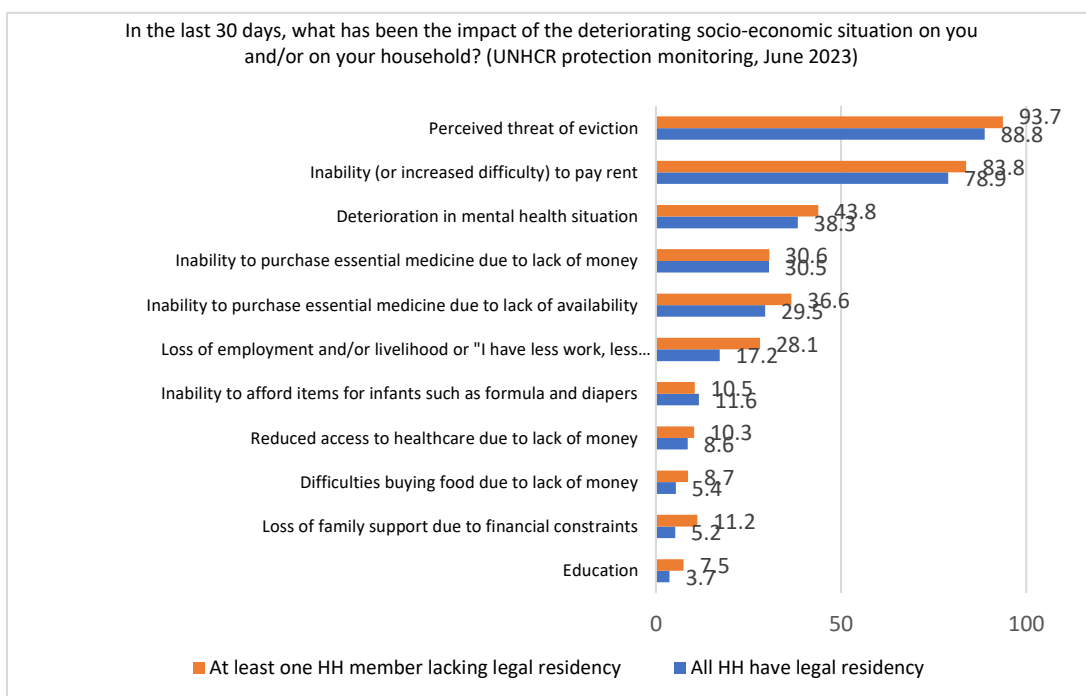
The gap between the average Syrian refugee household income and the Standard Minimum Expenditure Basket persists, with households reporting in May that they earn two thirds of what is required to meet basic needs, which without humanitarian assistance would widen. Across all regions, households whose rent and utilities amounted to over 50-80 per cent of their total income steadily rose since 2023. **The impacts of poverty are various; perceived threat of eviction and continued difficulty pay rent** particularly seen amongst households with a person with disabilities and female headed households¹⁶, **deteriorating mental health, inability to pay for medication and reduced access to health services** (with 14% and 8% higher rates for households with a least one persons with disabilities). A similar trend is also identified for older persons.¹⁷ Interestingly households which **all have legal residency** report a slightly improved situation across all indicators particularly those related to 'loss of employment' and 'loss of family support due to financial constraints' compared to those without.

¹⁵ UNHCR protection monitoring, June 2023

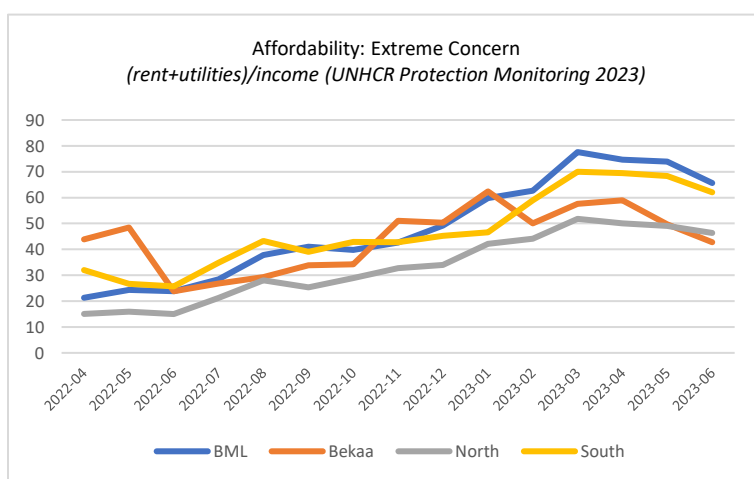
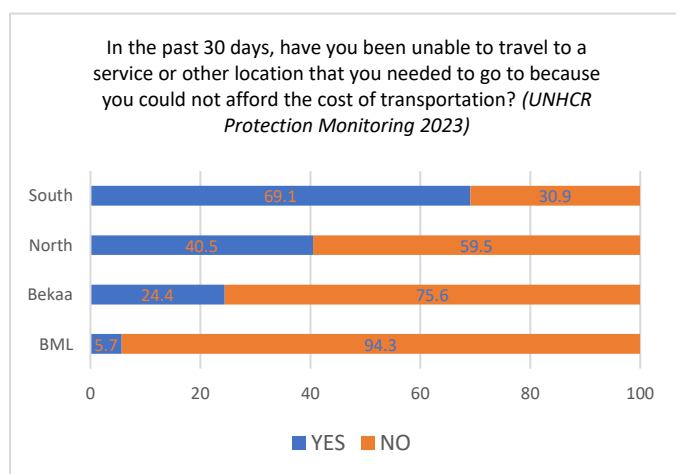
¹⁶ This looks at perceived eviction threat due to socio-economic situation, the actual percentage of those who report living under eviction notice in Q2 is 3.6per cent

¹⁷ UNHCR Protection monitoring, Q2, 2023

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Further, unaffordable transportation costs are significantly limiting access to services in the South and North. 26 per cent who reported inability to access services due to transportation costs said they were unable to go to the market (70% in South), hospital (78% in BML) and visit family and friends (71% in Bekaa).¹⁸



In Q2, the number of Syrian refugee households living under an eviction threat (3.6%) has remained stable compared to Q1, with most incidents due to **inability to pay rent**.¹⁹ The cohorts most affected are those households with a person with disabilities and those living in non-residential shelter types. Partners report that Q2 has seen a spike in **property owner requests to pay rent in USD or its LBP equivalent**, findings from partner focus group discussions in the North in May demonstrate that 42 per cent of refugees in Akkar and 58 per cent in North have had their property owner ask them to pay rent in USD or its LBP equivalent in the quarter.²⁰ **The top three impacts were reported as;** increased debt, lack of food particularly reported by men, need for humanitarian assistance and psychological

¹⁸ UNHCR Protection monitoring, May 2023

¹⁹ Those living under threat of eviction due to the socioeconomic situation are approx. 8 per cent

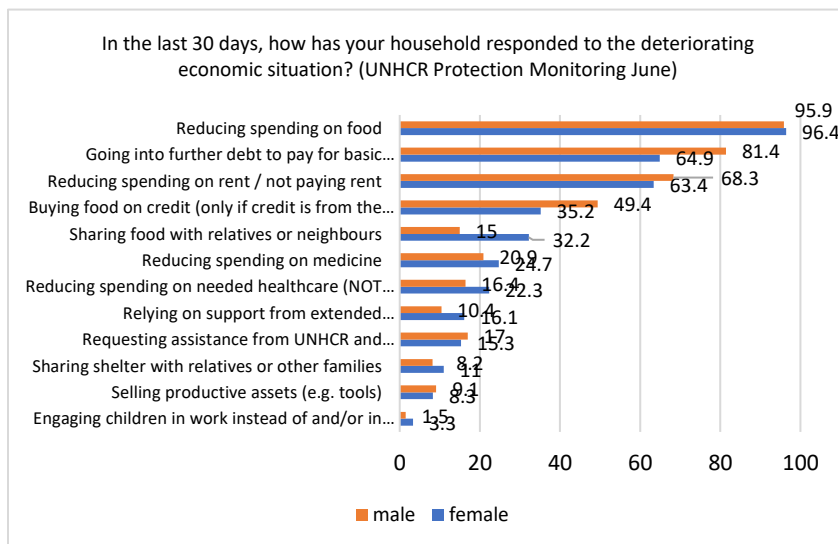
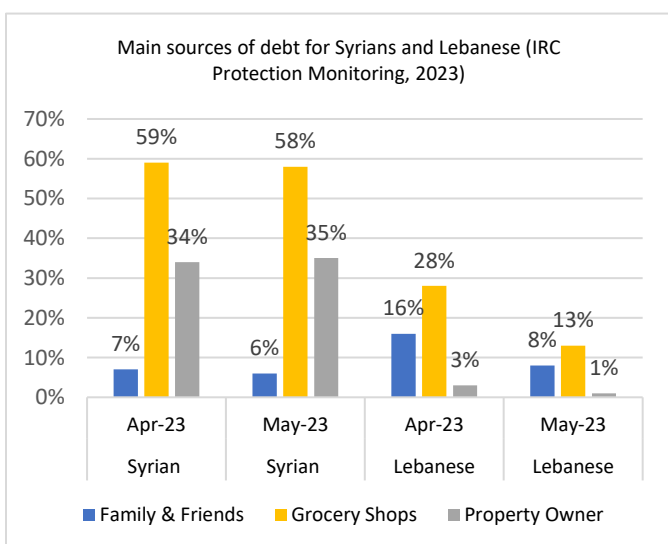
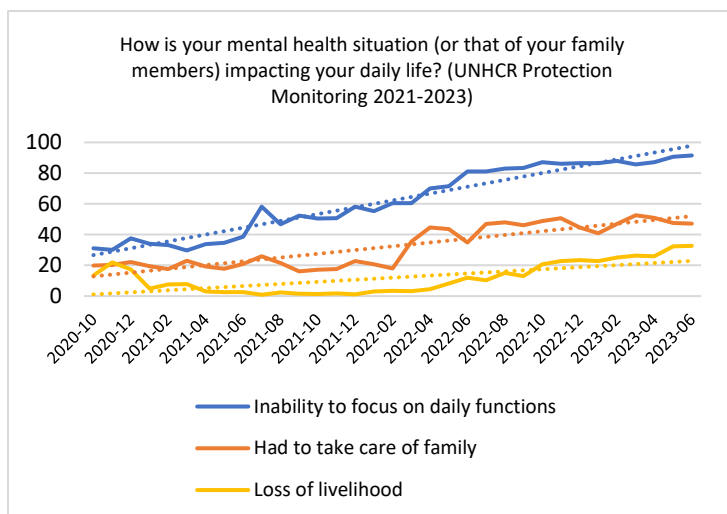
²⁰ Protection Monitoring Task Force, Monthly Thematic, North

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distress.²¹ Despite this, most report that their relationship with their property owner has remained stable, while a quarter reported daily harassment to leave. Positively however, most evicted households continue to draw on their own resources and capacities to find accommodation by themselves (79.6%) with around a quarter moving in with extended family.²²

Taken together, **the tangible effects of the socio-economic situation on Lebanese and refugee women, men, girls and boys are significant. Their declining mental health situation** is reported across the country impacting people's ability to **focus on daily functions**, their inability to **care for dependents** in the home and **their loss of livelihoods**. Further, in the North, since October 2022 there has been unprecedented rates (23% of respondents) of refugees reporting that someone in their home is **experiencing aggression, feelings of anger or harm to others**, compared to a 5.5 per cent national average.²³ Partners supporting migrants also indicate limited services for MHPSS are available.

To cope, there has been a sharp increase reported of those **requesting assistance** from humanitarian organizations (March: 26% compared to June 47.5%) in the north, as well as particularly from **older persons** more than adults who also report **greater reliance from extended family and relatives** than previously. While not strictly representative data, the below graph from IRC protection monitoring in May demonstrates that displaced Syrians are accumulating higher levels of debt compared to the Lebanese community, especially rent and market related debt.²⁴ Interestingly, however female headed households while they do resort to debt also appear to rely on other measures to a greater extent than men including sharing food with relatives, relying on support from extended family/relatives, sharing shelters with relatives/other families and a slight increase in engaging children in work.²⁵



²¹ Protection Monitoring Task Force, Monthly Thematic, North

²² UNHCR Protection Monitoring, 2020-2023, these results are compiled since 2020 as observations are low

²³ UNHCR protection monitoring, Q2, 2023

²⁴ IRC Protection Monitoring, May, 2023

²⁵ UNHCR Protection Monitoring, Q2, 2023

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- **Exploitation**

Protection partners across the sector continue to report concerns regarding exploitation specifically related to labor and especially child labour in agriculture, child marriage, forced begging, and forced sex in exchange for sale. However, due to the nature of these incidents it is difficult to assess the scale and scope of the issue. **Labour exploitation** is being mainly observed by partners working in this field in domestic, construction and agriculture sectors where persons experience long working hours, minimal or no pay, no breaks, are coerced and controlled at work through confiscation of papers, verbal and physical abuse and threats. Individuals subject to such exploitation are often unwilling to protest abuse or seek support from legal actors due to the fear of losing their employment or the shelter that the employer offers or for fear of being reported to the authorities due to their irregular legal status. **Forced child labour is mainly being reported in relation to agriculture, sexual exploitation and begging or being forced to collect garbage.** This is often driven by household's limited access to livelihoods and the lack of parents' knowledge or awareness about exploitative networks. Children out of school face particularly high risk and are more prone to trafficking and exploitation.

Response gap:

- **Eviction:** Sustainable solutions to eviction due to inability to pay rent are limited and there are increasing reports that property owners are not respecting MOUs with shelter partners after cash for rent assistance is terminated. While protection partners offer important response to cases through legal and protection case management and protection cash, longer term solutions are needed through social protection schemes and livelihood options. Further, ways to strengthen tripartite MOU agreements between the property owner, tenant and shelter partner should be explored.
- **MHPSS:** Increased demand for MHPSS services in parallel to shortage of available services and medication is leading to a major response gap with long waiting lists for specialized service providers reported in parts of the country. Sector frontliners are not always adequately trained on identification and referral, and case workers are often not trained to provide focused individual MHPSS services.
- **Exploitation:** The protection sector should improve the availability of data related to exploitation to inform its response. A first step can be to review existing protection monitoring tools for proxy indicators. It is crucial that there is improved sensitization of trafficking, identification, and referral across humanitarian and protection partners and efforts need to be made to review the approach to supporting victims of trafficking recognizing the difficulties in reaching positive outcomes.

- **Onward movement**

Overall, irregular boat movement and passenger numbers in Q2 2023 are significantly down as compared to the same period last year. In 2023, 8 boat movements with 175 passengers are recorded, compared to 14 irregular boat movements with 1082 passengers. Most passengers are Syrian, but also Lebanese and migrant workers. This decrease in actual boat movements does not correlate with the continued high level of interest individuals report having in taking onward movements. We can speculate that this is due to comparatively worse weather conditions at sea, combined with a higher fear of deportation if intercepted by authorities. **There are multiple drivers of such movements;** socio-economic, safety including marginalization and stigma and more recently reported fear of deportation, fear of the 'future' for their children linked to lack of education, no long-term opportunities for youth, unaffordable health care and medication have been cited as top drivers.²⁶ **For Lebanese engaged in irregular migration** it appears to be driven by an 'inability to meet practical needs locally, rather than a preference to leave Lebanon' in itself.²⁷ This includes socio-economic, education and health needs. These drivers imply that meeting unmet needs at the local level could go some way to curbing onward movement, particularly for the Lebanese community. Further, community dialogue with Lebanese individuals hoping to migrate also report that the general

²⁶ IOM Onward movement monitoring, Q2, 2023

²⁷ Lost hope lost lives: insights into Lebanese irregular migration, IOM report, 2023 p. 8

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lack of safety is also a driver with some facing marginalization and others say they have lost hope for their future in Lebanon.²⁸

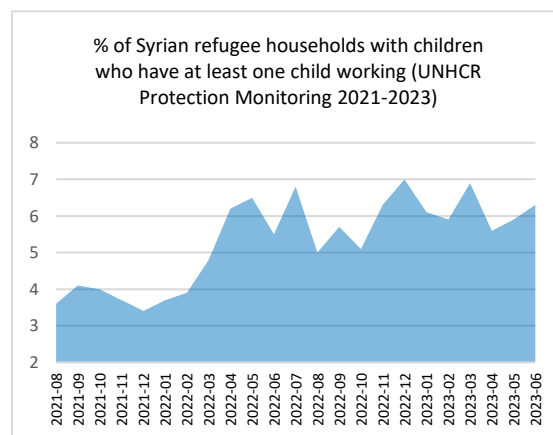
Violence and Coercion against women and children

- **Violence against children at school**

Partner data shows that violence has been repetitively reported in 11 per cent of the second shift schools (36 out of 340) since the beginning of the scholastic year. The situation is alarming in Bekaa, Akkar and North, in particular. Types of violence include corporate, both verbal and physical by teachers as well as school staff toward students.²⁹

- **Violence against children at home**

Since 2022, there has been a notable and persistent prevalence of Syrian households who have at least one working child, with this being around 5-6 per cent. Child labour continues to be reported as the highest violence type in case management, followed by emotional abuse (38%), physical abuse (27%) and neglect, sexual and exploitation (12%). Most partners report higher rates of boys engaged in visible forms of child labour. Labour exploitation by employers particularly impacting children was reported (low wages, verbal abuse, long hours).



Several child protection partners in the North have reported growing concerns of drug use among children and an increased rate of suicidal ideation observed in their caseloads during Q2.

Response gap:

- **Violence at school:** A designated unit under MEHE, the Directorate of Pedagogical School Orientation is responsible for receiving and responding to complaint received related to child protection in schools. However, while referrals are being shared with the DOP, feedback and response to complaints remains severely limited. The Child Protection sub-sector and Education sector are following up with MEHE in this regard and will have a joint Working Group in September to jointly discuss a way forward before the next scholastic year.

- **Gender-based violence including forced marriage, intimate partner violence (IPV) and denied access to resources.**

In Q2, trends on violence against women and girls remain similar to Q1 with emotional and physical violence the highest reported types of GBV by case management actors. Most perpetrators of GBV are the intimate partner, i.e., the husband of the survivor with incidents mainly occurring at their home. Instances of IPV including specific denial of resources in accessing financial resources and services together with physical abuse were reported by GBV case management partners across the country. Inability to pay for transport or denial of access and resources by the family/ intimate partner continues to hinder access to specialized services.

²⁸ Community focus group discussions in North Lebanon by a partner, 2023

²⁹ UNHCR and UNICEF monitoring of violence in schools, 2023

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In a dedicated GBV WG session on menstrual health and hygiene management (MHM), recent studies on access to MHM were presented and gaps in accessing menstrual hygiene items and information were estimated to affect some one million adolescent girls and women in Lebanon. The limited resources and access to menstrual hygiene items have resulted in resorting to less favorable and often unhealthy alternatives, such as females resorting to newspapers as pads, or extending hours of use of menstrual hygiene items, both presenting health concerns for girls and women. Limited access to menstrual hygiene items as well as inappropriate infrastructure such as wash facilities in schools and in shelters were also reported by partners as barriers for girls to retain school attendance. New trends in Q2 include an increase of adolescent girls exposed to child marriage at younger ages, such as 12-year-old girls were identified to be married or already pregnant or child mothers.

Response gap:

- **Partners face challenges in monitoring and supporting adolescent street-working girls** who are at heightened risk of sexual exploitation and forced prostitution with access to services. In the South, efforts will be made to engage with municipalities to monitor the risks and ensure involvement of national authorities to combat sexual exploitation of girls.
- **GBV partners shared challenges in some locations (Akkar/ North specifically) to gain access and response support from the family violence hotline operated by the ISF (#1745).** Capacity and resource constraints of the ISF as well as limited knowledge and awareness of GBV by ISF staff were mentioned as the main gaps and obstacles to the operationalization of the hotline. A follow up meeting will be held with Ministry of Social Affairs (MoSA) GBV sector Lead and partners already supporting ISF in the implementation of the hotline to discuss the challenges and advocate for unhindered and non-

Operational impact, constraints, and adaptations

For a full overview of the Protection sector's Q2 achievements, challenges and priorities and funding update for the quarter please see the [quarter 2 protection sector dashboard](#) published on the Lebanon Information Hub portal. This section aims to pull out major operational constraints and areas of needed improvement.

- **Operational impacts and partner adaptations were shared by sector partners in Q2 in relation to the raids, arrests and deportations reported in April and the beginning of May.** These developments continued to be monitored by sector partners through their ongoing field visits and their hotlines. Various impacts on sector programs were reported in particular; requests for legal counselling and assistance, GSO accompaniment services and housing attestations for access to legal residency increased, self-imposed movement restrictions by refugees led to reduced attendance in activities in community centers and some non-formal education sessions, hotline and frontline staff reported a surge in questions regarding legal residency and safety. In response protection partners reduced situations through their interventions which would lead to refugee gatherings, they put in place adaptive plans to safely continue their work, legal actors prioritized legal aid for legal residency shifting resources from other legal topics and partners monitored the protection situation. The Protection sector stressed the importance of as much as possible maintaining protection by presence whilst balancing the risks for communities. Further, the sector developed the Q1 Protection Overview and a Brief on the Impact of Raids, Arrests and Deportations. This was shared with key protection donors and protection partners.

Recommendations

For the Government of Lebanon

- **Uphold the Government of Lebanon's commitment to respect the principle of non-refoulement.** No individual or group deportations or denial of admissions at the border **should be conducted without due process** which includes a transparent and individual assessment of potential risks and opportunity for individuals to express protection concerns, in alignment with Lebanese and International Laws.
- **The Government of Lebanon should preserve previous commitments to facilitating refugees' access to legal residency.** Importantly this means, ensuring the resumption of UNHCR registration, advocating for

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the suspension and non-extension of the recent GSO decision on 15th May 2023 to facilitate refugees to regularize their entry status in the country and to abstain from their arrest and deportation without due process.

- **The Government of Lebanon should take positive steps to de-escalate harmful anti-refugee rhetoric to promote social stability and the safety of all communities.** This should include taking active steps to transparently communicate the Lebanese support programs which partner with government institutions.
- Restrictive and discriminative measures, such as curfews and movement restrictions, continue to be reported across all regions in Lebanon negatively impacting the protection environment including the free movement and wellbeing of refugees. **The Government of Lebanon should ensure that any measures adopted at local, regional or national level are not arbitrary or discriminatory and respect the rule of law,** in line with Lebanon's international commitments and national legislation.
- The Government of Lebanon should scale up efforts to address the root causes of onward movements, ensure the **protection and rescue of people in distress at sea** and that their assistance and protection needs are met upon return to Lebanon. Further, they should endorse the national standing operating procedures to identify and protect victims of trafficking.
- **The Ministry of Higher Education (MEHE)** should seriously and actively respond to complaints of violence against children in schools, which are predominantly related to corporate violence by teachers and staff, in a prompt and timely manner. Trends of violence and response taken should be shared with parents and humanitarian partners.

For diplomatic missions and donor agencies

- In communications with the Government of Lebanon, diplomatic missions and donor agencies should reinforce the need to uphold Lebanon's commitment to international law, **respecting the principle of non-refoulement and to stop individual and summary group deportations without due process and which lack the relevant legal safeguards.**
- Diplomatic missions and donor agencies should leverage their position to **push the Government of Lebanon to preserve previous commitments to facilitating refugees' access to legal residency.** Importantly this means, ensuring the resumption of UNHCR registration, pushing for the suspension and non-extension of the recent GSO decision on 15th May to facilitate refugees to regularize their entry status in the country and to abstain from their arrest and deportation without due process. Donors can refer to the Protection sector advocacy messages on legal residency.
- Donor agencies should maintain adequate funding levels for **public institutions, protection partners, and other sector interventions which are critical to protection outcomes.** This includes all interventions across sectors which contribute to reducing risk of child labor, child marriage, gender-based violence, trafficking in persons, arrest and deportation, eviction, statelessness and aggravate mental health concerns.
- Persons at risk, particularly those without legal residency or documentation, face challenges reaching and accessing humanitarian services and assistance. **Donor agencies should guarantee that all humanitarian partners fulfil their responsibility to mainstream protection including by actively identifying and mitigating obstacles impeding meaningful.**
- **There is a critical need to expand longer-term sustainable solutions through targeted, inclusive and holistic social protection schemes and through expanding effective livelihood options.** Targeted social protection schemes can address inequities and are easy to communicate and explain to communities.

For humanitarian response decision-makers

- **All sectors must fulfil their responsibility to mainstream protection including by actively identifying and mitigating obstacles impeding meaningful** this includes having dedicated sector indicators to monitor access barriers for persons at risk without legal residency or documentation and agreeing on mitigation measures across all partners in sector working groups.
- **All sectors must demonstrate in their prioritization how their interventions contribute to both** achieving

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assistance and protection objectives (integrated protection programming) which work to reduce risk of **child labor, child marriage, gender-based violence, arrest and deportation, eviction, statelessness and reducing mental health concerns.**

- **It is crucial that there is improved sensitization of trafficking, identification, and referral across all sector partners. The Protection sector** should improve the availability of data related to exploitation including trafficking to inform its response. A first step can be to review existing protection monitoring tools for proxy indicators.