Protection Monitoring

Situation of Internally Displaced Persons/Cross population

(Protection Core Group-PM Reference Group)

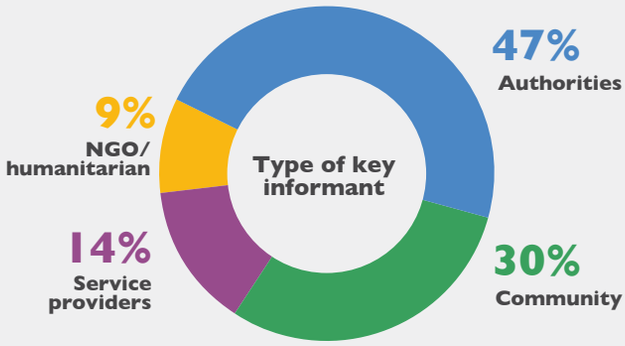
Protection Working Group Lebanon - *National Report February 2025*

Introduction

This report summarizes the key findings and protection risks identified through the Protection Monitoring (PM) initiative for Internally Displaced Persons (IDPs), including returning IDPs, conducted during February 2025. This exercise was initiated in response to the escalation of conflict between Lebanon and Israel in late September 2024, which resulted in significant internal displacement across the country. The exercise was coordinated through the Protection Monitoring Reference Group of the Protection Working Group and implemented by UNHCR, INTERSOS, IOM, SHEILD, DRC, IRC, CARITAS and UNRWA.

The report covers the areas of Beirut and Mount Lebanon (BML), Bekaa, Baakbek-Hermel, El Nabatieh and South Governorates. Data on IDPs and returning IDPs in the North of Lebanon was not collected due to the low numbers of IDPs present there, but information on the situation in the North was provided by the North Protection Monitoring Task Force.

Data was collected through structured questionnaires for Key Informant Interviews (KIIs) and Focus Group Discussions (FGDs). 200 assessments were conducted, including 175 KIIs and 25 FGDs. 60 assessments were conducted in the Bekaa (44 KIIs and 16 FGDs), 66 in BML (63 KIIs and 3 FGDs), and 74 in the South (68 KIIs and 6 FGDs). Approximately 264 participants (both Lebanese and Syrians) took part in the 25 FGDs conducted across the country.



The majority of key informants were representatives of local authorities (47%) and members of the displaced community (30%). Most respondents were Lebanese and secondarily displaced Syrian refugees, with a small number of Palestinian Refugees from Lebanon (PRL). Additionally, this report reflects data gathered through FGD with a group of migrants conducted in BML by IOM and MSD (a local NGO) and groups of Palestinian conducted by UNRWA as part of their regular protection activities. The findings of the report reflect the protection risks and trends more than two months after the ceasefire Lebanon and over following the fall of the Assad government in Syria.

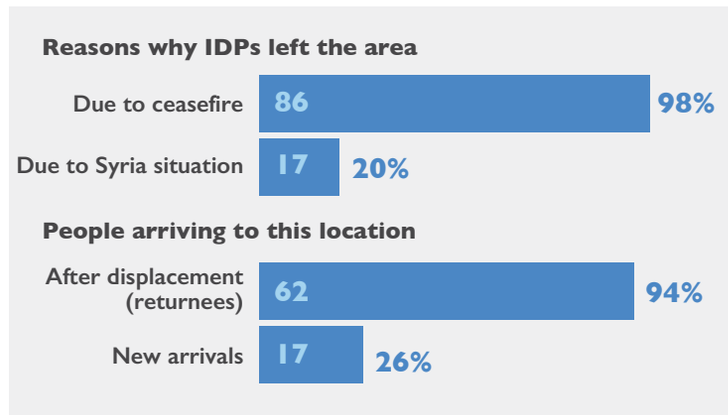
As part of the assessment, key informants were consulted to determine the current status of IDPs — whether they remain displaced within their regions, have recently returned to their places of origin, or whether their areas are currently receiving newly displaced individuals. In this report, the term IDPs is used to cover all these three categories.

Results and Recommendations of the Protection Monitoring Assessments

Internal Displacement Trends and Barriers to Return

Findings:

Displacement persists as a major concern with 98,875 IDPs remaining displaced across different locations as of 27 February 2025.[1] In addition, 949,571 IDPs have begun returning to their communities. These are referred to as "returning IDPs" in this report as many do not have a durable solution to their displacement.



As outlined above, the main reason for returning IDPs to leave their areas of displacement is due to the ceasefire (98% of KII mentioned this reason) while 20% of the KII said that the IDPs left the region as a result of the changed situation in Syria. Most of the arrivals in areas covered during data collection are returning IDPs who returned to their original area of residence, although not necessarily their original residence (reported by 94% of KIIs) while 26% of KII reported that there were newly internally displaced arriving in their location.

In the Bekaa, the situation remains fluid with continued movement of Lebanese, Syrians and other populations who were displaced due to the escalation of the conflict. 52% of KII respondents indicate that Lebanese and Syrian IDPs who were displaced in the Bekaa have since left their region, while 30% of responses indicated that IDPs remain displaced in their region. In addition, 30% of KII respondents indicated that some IDPs, both Lebanese and Syrian, were new to the area in February. Respondents in both the KIIs and FGDs cited that the main reason for departure from areas of displacement was the ceasefire. The main reasons that people remain in displaced included destroyed homes in their place of origin, security restrictions, safety concerns, and financial constraints.

Many IDPs in the Bekaa have experienced repeated displacement within the Bekaa region and Baalbek El Hermel. For instance, Lebanese IDPs who returned to their pre-conflict places or origin in Baalbek and El Hermel often found their homes damaged and looted and as such had to find alternative accommodation close to their damaged homes. Meanwhile Syrian IDPs and returning IDPs faced multiple evictions from Informal Tented Settlements and rental properties, predominantly in central Bekaa.

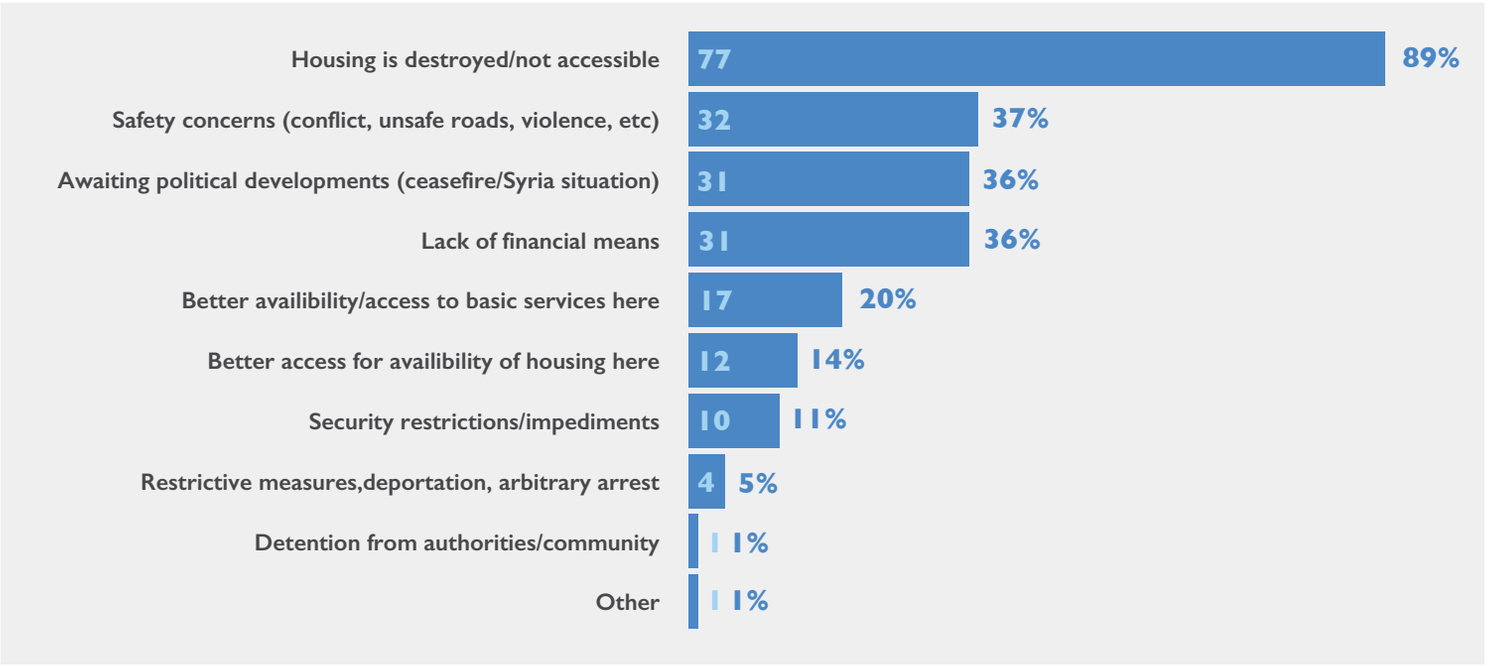
In Beirut and Mount Lebanon (BML), KIIs and FGD participants indicated that IDPs preferred to return to their areas of origin despite significant hardships. Those who returned to their pre-conflict areas of origin, mainly in the South, were often faced with challenges related to damaged/destroyed homes, a lack of available services, limited livelihood opportunities, safety concerns, among others. One Lebanese FGD participant stated that, *"Displaced people who still have one intact, habitable room in their destroyed homes in the South have preferred returning to their villages rather than staying displaced."* Furthermore, KIIs indicated that all Lebanese IDPs in the BML area plan to return to their homes in the Bekaa and the South once the ongoing conflict deescalate. On the other hand, a FGD with Syrians indicated that many do not plan to return to their pre-conflict places of origin. 41% of KIIs in BML also indicated that those who remain displaced are predominantly Syrians. Some reasons for this include financial constraints, discrimination, some areas not allowing Syrians to return, and rental properties being prioritized for Lebanese IDPs.

In the South, 76% of KII respondents indicated that the people currently living in villages are predominantly those who returned to their areas of origin after being displaced during the conflict – which include those who returned to their own homes, as well as those who are hosted by others, renting or in other accommodation arrangements. This is especially the case in villages that are deemed safe and where homes were not completely destroyed. 43% of KIIs indicate that many people whose homes were destroyed remain displaced. Both IDPs of all nationalities struggle to return to their pre-conflict areas of residence in the Southern regions either due to destroyed homes, insecure conditions due to Israeli presence in some border regions, a lack of financial means and community tensions. For instance, tensions resulting from the changes in Syria were reported between Syrians and Lebanese in Qlaiaa and Debbine villages in Marjaayoun district with some Lebanese verbally insulted the Syrians and calling for them to return to Syria.

[1] Mobility Snapshot - Round 78 - 27-02-2025 | Displacement Tracking Matrix

Respondents cited the main reason for IDPs to remain displacement as destruction or inaccessibility of their residence (39%). Safety concerns, political developments in Syria and lack of financial means shared the second biggest reason for them to remain displaced (reported by 37, 36 and 36% of KIIs respectively). This contrasts with findings from IOM IDP intention survey conducted in January that found that internal displacement is primarily driven by safety concerns (80%) and property destruction (18%).[2] Despite the exacerbated challenges for Syrian IDPs and with the change of regime in Syria shortly after the ceasefire in Lebanon, many Syrians in BML, Bekaa, and the South of Lebanon are reportedly not returning to their country of origin due to the continued political instability as well as the lack of services such as healthcare and education. Furthermore, some of the Syrians who did return, returned to Lebanon after a short period of time due to damaged or destroyed homes, political instability, and a lack of available services in Syria.

Reasons to remain in this location as displaced



Migrant FGD respondents indicated that a large number of migrant IDPs are not returning to the homes they lived in prior displacement due to damaged or inaccessible housing, or lack of employment, or having been left behind by their employers at the height of the conflict. As such they are remaining displaced in unofficial collective sites or with other community members. In some cases, male heads of households are leaving their families behind while they travel back to the South to rejoin their previous employers or seek new job opportunities. This dynamic has created additional challenges for migrant families, particularly in terms of stability, access to services, and economic security. The main reasons cited for not returning to post-conflict area of work/residence:

- Many are from areas still experiencing conflict.
- Lack of housing and employment.
- Seeking better opportunities elsewhere.
- Fear of renewed conflict.
- Trauma from past experiences, particularly for those who were left behind in dangerous areas by employers when the conflict escalated.

While requests for assisted voluntary return to countries of origin from migrants have decreased since the ceasefire, many continue to express their interest in returning to their home countries. Costs, legal barriers and access to documentation remain some of the barriers for them to return without assistance.

Recommendations

Facilitate safe returns for IDPs: Ensure populations conflict affected areas are aware of and respect the clearance process of unexploded ordinance. Use existing community centers, municipalities, social media and other platforms to provide displaced people with accurate and relevant information regarding available services and security situations in areas of origin.

Legal aid: Strengthen the identification and referral to legal aid of those IDPs who are unable to return or access assistance (e.g. cash for rent) because they lack documentation (personal identification documents, housing ownership certificates, rental contracts, etc.). Scale up legal aid outreach to areas hosting IDPs and returning IDPs.

Shelter support for returning IDPs: Speed-up needs-based assessment regarding housing rehabilitation and reconstruction for IDPs and prioritize support across population groups for damaged or destroyed homes that are unsuitable for living in to mitigate subsequent risks due to unlivable/damaged infrastructure. Scale up cash for shelter support provided by the Shelter sector aiming at address primary shelter needs of the internally displaced persons (IDPs) such as minor shelter maintenance and payment of utility bills (e.g., water and electricity) while they are hosted or renting accommodations.[3] Prioritize the provision of cash for rent and assistance to most vulnerable IDPs who are unable to return to their pre-conflict places of residence due to financial hardship related to displacement.

Repeated displacement: Help people find alternative shelter. Moreover, implement community-based initiatives that foster peaceful coexistence between Syrians and Lebanese in order to mitigate and reduce tensions.

Facilitate Voluntary Repatriation for Migrants: Embassies and IOM to assist voluntary return and reintegration for migrants who wish to return to their countries of origin: this should ensure that all returns are voluntary, safe and dignified.

[2] IOM Lebanon - IDPs Return Intention Survey | Displacement Tracking Matrix. This difference in results could be due to difference in methodology such as sampling and/or may indicate changing barriers to return over time.

[3] Make reference to the Cash for Shelter SOPs of the Shelter Sector.

Protection Risks

Main protection risks for the IDP at this location

As presented by the graph above, the main protection risk identified amongst the displaced population across the regions was psychological distress (41%), followed by child protection and GBV risks (19% respectively). See also section on coping mechanisms for more information on protection risks that result from negative coping mechanisms.

In the Bekaa and Baalbek-El Hermel region, FGD participants reported a range of protection risks. Adult women reported incidents of robbery, verbal harassment, domestic violence, and discrimination based on gender and nationality. Men reported incidents such as kidnapping, robbery, detention, and exploitation. Children, both Lebanese and Syrians, and particularly girls remain vulnerable to neglect, psychological distress, abuse, and child labour and child marriage. These reflect pre-existing protection risks that were exacerbated by the displacement and impact of the armed conflict. Secondarily displaced Syrians continue to face protection risks due to their precarious legal situation, such as detention and arrest, while both Syrian and Lebanese IDPs highlighted the fear of potential renewed conflict and displacement. Interestingly KII in these regions did not report such protection risks, which highlights the importance of collecting information on protection risks directly from those affected by them.

Although most of the data in BML indicates that Syrian and Lebanese IDPs are not experiencing significant safety and protection concerns, a number of protection risks were identified which largely reflect pre-existing protection issues in this area. Syrian FGD participant stated that they experience verbal harassment in Bourj Hammoud. Women and children are reportedly at higher risk of verbal and physical harassment. Tensions between Syrian IDPs and host communities were also reported by 14% of KII respondents. This was further corroborated by FGDs, which indicated that Syrian parents prevented children from playing outside to reduce potential issues with the host community. In addition, KIIs and FGDs indicate that children live in constant fear of loud noises as a result of the airstrikes in 2024, causing ongoing psychological distress. Moreover, FGDs with Syrian participants revealed incidents of child labor in Bourj Hammoud, with some children as young as six working in supermarkets or collecting garbage on the streets.

In the South, security and protection risks persist. The threat of ongoing armed conflict is constant, particularly for those close to the borders. 32% of KII respondents reported risks of armed conflict as a key risk. Furthermore, 40% indicated concerns regarding security related to movement restrictions, predominantly affecting Syrians as well as unsafe roads and airstrikes. Moreover, violence between IDPs and host communities persists. In terms of arrests and detentions, key informants in the South reported that Syrians are more at risk of such incidents. In addition, over half of KII respondents reported that IDPs, both Lebanese and Syrians, indicate being affected by Housing, Land and Property (HLP) related concerns. Although Syrians face higher rates of eviction threats, according to KIIs, this was also a significant concern for Lebanese IDPs.

Migrant Working Group partners and community leaders report rising protection risks for both displaced migrants and those hosting them. There has been a notable increase in requests for support related to gender-based violence (GBV) and severe child protection (CP) cases, including neglect, mental health concerns, need for alternative care, and family separation. Similar to other population groups, there is also a rise in severe mental health cases among migrants. However, limited options for services for migrants often leave affected individuals with no choice but to rely on community members for support, placing additional financial and emotional strain on those providing assistance. Risk of trafficking and exploitation is high, as migrants seeking new livelihood options and employers have few options, often lacking documentation. For displaced migrants displaced, they continue to rely heavily on community structures in BML to seek assistance, often unaware of the services provided in their areas of displacement.

Recommendations

The following services and interventions should be scaled up in areas hosting IDPs and returning IDPs, with a focus on those geographical areas most affected by displacement and returning IDPs:

Enhance access to GBV prevention and response services: Scale up access to safe spaces for women and girls where they can report incidents of harassment, discrimination, movement restrictions, trafficking, and domestic violence in a confidential setting. This includes access to specialized legal aid should be provided to help survivors and those at risk of GBV and information sessions should be conducted to inform people about the harm that results from gender-based violence, harmful cultural and societal norms including child/ forced marriage and enhance information on access to support and services.

Enhance access to Child protection partners and services: Expand child protection services in order to prevent and respond to incidents of abuse, early marriage, neglect, and child labour. Conduct awareness sessions pertaining to the risks involved in child labour including exploitation and sexual violence of children at the workplace. Liaise with the education sector to enhance retainment of children in schools and facilitate their re-enrolment into schools after displacement across population groups. Enhance outreach on child protection services to migrant populations, ideally also in their own languages, and using the migrants' own network for outreach.

Address rising Community tensions: Support projects that enhance social cohesion in order to address tension between IDPs and host communities. Ensure that projects benefit IDPs and host communities and provide information to host communities on the support provided. Implement social and behaviour change campaigns to promote respect and address discrimination and harassment. Install reporting mechanisms that allow people to report incidents of verbal and physical harassment.

Establish monitoring of potential escalation of conflict and ensure cross-sectoral preparedness programs: Implement early warning mechanisms and systems where authorities provide people with timely updates about potential escalation of conflict, existence of UXO or availability of service through social media messages or other means, in the conflict affected areas including the South. Document and share examples of good practices in the community for preparedness and safety measures to address fears of armed conflict.

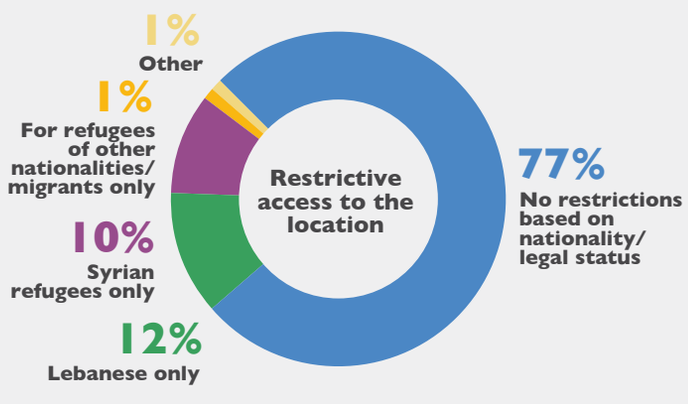
Enhance access to tailored Legal aid programs addressing and the impact of conflict and displacement on Housing, Land and Property issues: Provide legal assistance for people struggling with HLP issues related to rental and property contracts and assistance by protection actors to those at risk of evictions. people, particular Syrian refugees, migrants and refugees of other nationalities, with legal assistance to help them obtain legal residency and reduce the threat and fear of arbitrary arrests. In addition, implement advocacy campaigns to promote fair treatment of Syrians with fair due process for those who have been detained.

Shelter options and access to services

Overall, key challenges facing IDPs and returning IDPs are:

• Overcrowding in housing where IDPS are hosted with other families or have returned to damaged housing and
• High rental costs
• Limited financial resources of families to rent and/or repair damaged housing
• Risks of evictions for those currently renting
• For Syrians, other refugees and migrants, preference to rent to Lebanese

Overall, 77% of KIIs reported no restrictions on access to locations/services in their geographical area which indicators that are significant number of locations without restrictions based on nationality. None-the-less restriction remain in a number of locations - 12 % of KIIs reported that there were restrictions to access shelter and to return to pre-conflict areas of residence for non-Lebanese. This was highest in Bekaa/Baalbek-El Hermel area (30% of KIIs reporting areas being only for Lebanese), followed by the South (23%) and BML (10%).

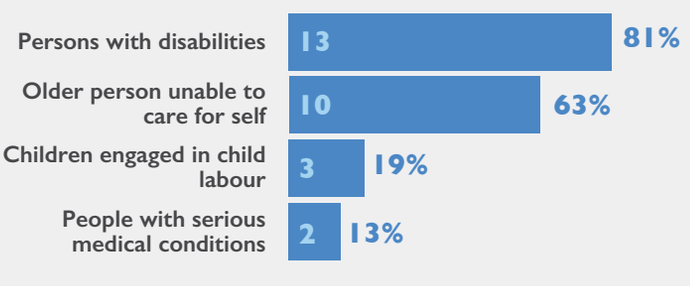


Findings:

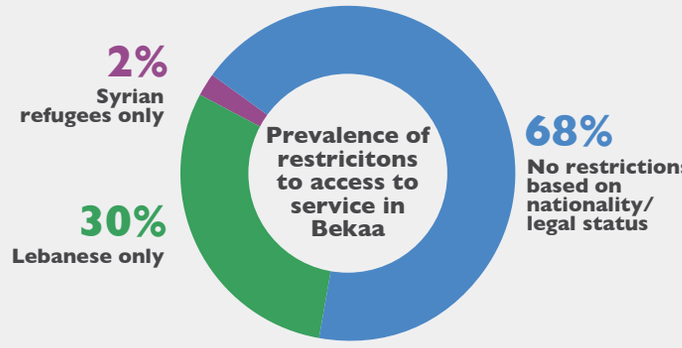
The Bekaa and Baalbek-El Hermel region revealed precarious housing conditions for Lebanese and Syrian IDPs. Overcrowding, unaffordable rent, and limited resources of families were among the top issues with regards to housing. As mentioned above, Lebanese IDPs encountered damaged, destroyed and looted homes in Baalbek and El-Hermel upon returning. Syrian IDPs reported that landlords in central Bekaa have raised rents, exacerbating the difficulty in securing affordable housing.

16% of KII identified accessibility issues for people with specific needs in facilities were IDPs were living. Of those, 81% of those identified persons with disabilities as having accessibility issues, while 63% older persons unable to care for themselves.

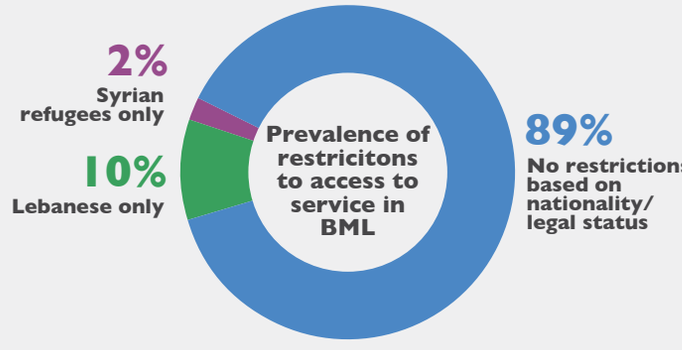
Vulnerable persons unable to access the facilities



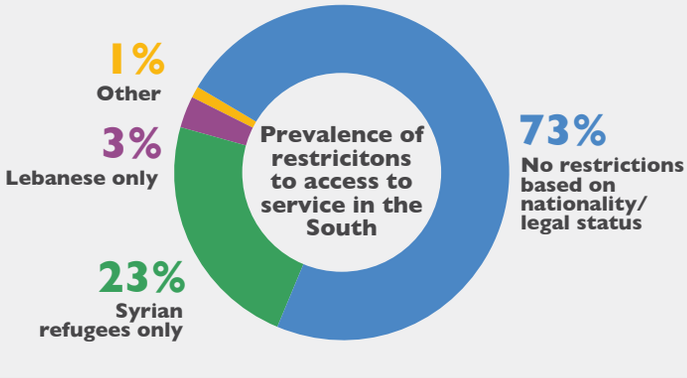
The majority of KIIs in the Baalbek-El Hermel (68%) indicated that there were no restrictions on access to locations or services based on nationality, and almost all the KIIs (93%) reported that available facilities (toilets, water, etc.) are accessible by everyone regardless of their nationality. Yet, 30% of KIIs – almost a third of respondents – reported that the services are for Lebanese only (see below). Some KIIs also reported that Syrians face restrictions on installing long-term power sources like solar panels.



In BML, 45% of KII respondents indicated that remaining Lebanese IDPs in the BML region are staying in shared accommodations with 12% of KII respondents cited the Lebanese IDPs are staying with relatives and friends while 38% of KII respondents indicated that Lebanese IDPs live in collective shelters. Respondents reported that most types of accommodations had functioning bathrooms, sleeping items, and running water. IDPs are in need of winter assistance including heaters, and heating fuel. As reported in FGDs, collective shelters in BML do not accept secondarily displaced Syrian refugees, which forces them to rent low quality accommodation. Although key informants indicated that restrictions are not very prevalent in BML, Primary Health Care (PHC) providers in Bourj Hammoud prioritize Lebanese over Syrians, forcing Syrians to rely on humanitarian aid for medical support. 89% of KII respondents reported that there were no restrictions in accessing service based on nationality in their area of coverage.



The majority of KIIs in the South and El Nabatiyeh (73%) reported that IDPs face no restrictions related to accessing locations or services based on nationality. However, 23% of KIIs reported that Syrian IDPs faced restrictions in accessing both shelters and pre-conflict areas of residence in some villages. Several municipalities are prioritizing the housing needs of Lebanese IDPs over those of Syrian. In some cases, Syrians are barred from renting in villages, forcing them to rent damaged houses in the outskirts of towns. Syrian FGD participants in El Nabatiyeh reported having to pay $500 per month to rent a damaged home. One participant stated, *"The windows are broken, rainwater is leaking in, there is dampness everywhere, and we do not have the money to fix it."* Living in houses that cannot be locked increases the risk of theft and violence including sexual violence - women and children, especially those living in female-headed households are particularly at risk. In addition, data from Tyre District indicates that 17 villages or locations are overcrowded. Moreover, data revealed that several families often share the same living space, further contributing to overcrowding and privacy issues.



The majority of displaced migrants currently reside in Beirut and Mount Lebanon. While some migrants reside in NGO or embassy run shelters, the vast majority of displaced migrants live in shared apartments either renting privately or being hosted by their own community. As explained by FGD participants, these are often overcrowded, and below minimum standard of living. Migrants expressed feeling exposed to arbitrary rent prices and increases. This is compounded with the irregular status of many migrants, particularly of those who decide to escape abusive sponsors (kafeel) as landlords may take advantage of this vulnerable position. The majority of migrants consulted expressed fear of eviction by their current landlords, as well as difficulties with paying rent, which was exacerbated by the conflict and displacement.

Recommendations

Improving the conditions and access to protection services in collective shelters: Where collective shelters are still operational, assess and address overcrowding issues. Improve privacy, accessibility for persons with disabilities and strengthen availability of information on feedback and response mechanisms. Enhance access to protection services such as psychosocial support (PSS) through expanding access to PSS interventions; enhance family reunification services, support for woman-headed households and case management mechanism; and strengthen referral pathways. Undertake individual assessment by protection and shelter actors to identify alternative solutions for IDP families remaining in collective sites.

Address rental price hikes: Help tenants mediate with landlords, implement mechanisms to monitor rent increases (already being monitored in certain areas), and provide protection and shelter services to help IDPs deal with rental price hikes and evictions.

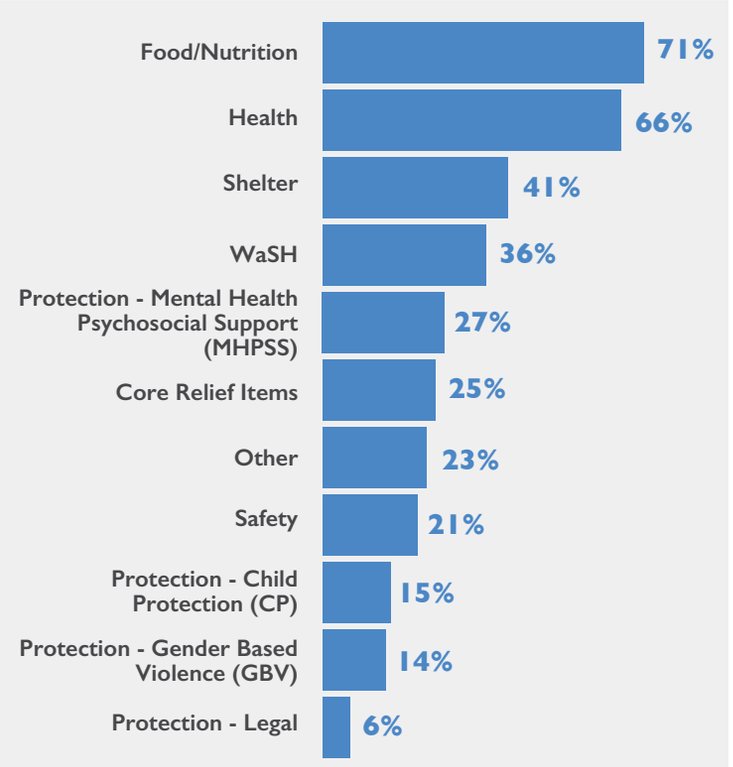
Location access: Monitor and advocate to lift restrictions on secondarily displaced Syrians returning to pre-conflict areas of origin. This can be done through direct advocacy with municipalities and community-based initiatives that foster social cohesion.

Priority Needs and Accessibility to Services

Findings:

The next graph presents an overview of IDPs' priority needs (multiple counting) across the country, while the following paragraphs go into details about Bekaa and Baalbek-El Hermel, BML and the South as reported by KII. Main priority needs of the IDPs are food & nutrition (71%), health (66%),shelter (41%). Among protection needs, the most common protection need was protection including psychosocial support (27%), followed by safety (21% of KIIs). Child protection and GBV were identified as priority needs for IDPs by 15% and 14% of Key Informants respectively while only 5% of respondents identified legal needs.

Priority Needs of IDPs Across Lebanon



In Bekaa and Baalbek-El Hermel key informants indicated that food security (52% of respondents), healthcare (52% of respondents) and Core Relief Items (32% of respondents) support were the most pressing needs. WASH (30%) and shelter (27%) needs were also prevalent in the Bekaa and Baalbek-El Hermel, as reported by KIIs.

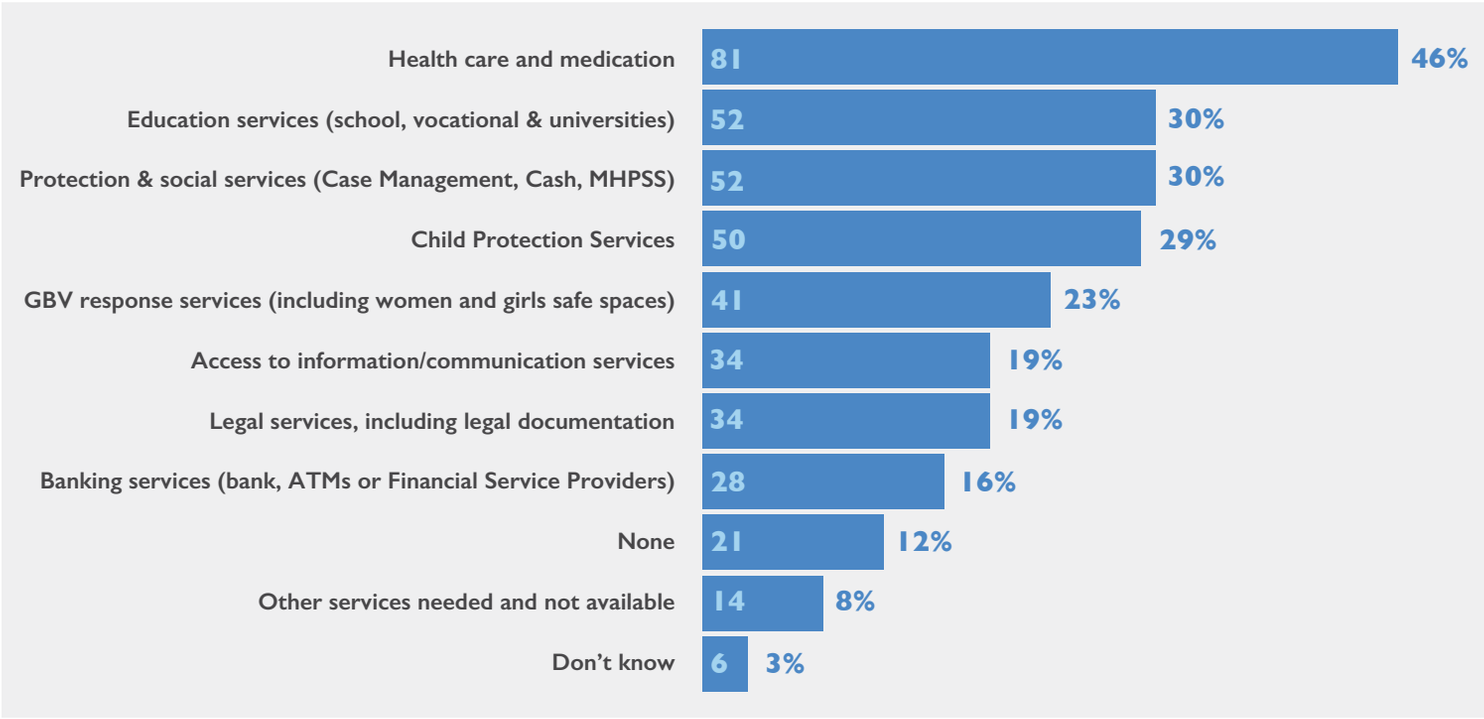
In BML, the top three priorities mentioned by key informants were food (70% of respondents), healthcare (59% of respondents), and winter assistance, diapers, and other non-food items (37% of respondents). Shelter (24% of respondents) was also a concern for IDPs, with reports of damage to roofs resulting in extensive water leakage. IDPs in the BML region were financially unable to meet their needs, as most previously worked in tobacco and agriculture farming in the South and no longer have access to those livelihoods due to the long-term damaging effects of the conflict. While basic needs assistance, such as food, healthcare, and winterization, were more prevalent, IDPs highlighted MHPSS in BML and Bekaa.

In the South, there are comparatively more needs, with the top three priorities reported by key informants being food (85% of respondents), healthcare (82% respondents), and shelter (65% of respondents). Despite not occupying one of the top three spots, other needs such as WASH (54%) are critical. It was noted that IDPs often take cold showers, despite the cold weather, and do not have access to proper heating with one FGD participant stating, "If we didn't die from the war, we would die from the cold." Moreover, 53% indicated that people are in dire need of MHPSS services.

Migrants in BML stressed their priority needs as follows: cash assistance to cover medication and rent; MHPSS; food assistance; legal assistance, particularly on mediation with landlords and former employers as well as representation to obtain civil documentation. FGD participants with children raised the need for education activities, particularly catch-up programs for the missed modules during displacement as well support for school registration. On MHPSS, all participants stressed its importance, with one migrant highlighting "during war, I could not function, I could not go to work. Through the mental health support I received, I was able to open up and build connections. We are still dealing with the trauma". Migrant Working Group partners and community focal points have also reported a noted increase in referrals/requests for support related to severe child protection cases and GBV since the conflict, and the increase in migrants seeking hospitalization support (both financial coverage and also support for admission at ERs where multiple cases of discrimination have been reported where migrants have not been provided timely and dignified care).

Challenges in accessing a wide range of services were identified by key informants including a lack of health care and medication (46%), education services, (30%) Protection (30%), CP (29%) and GBV services (23%).

Unavailable Service



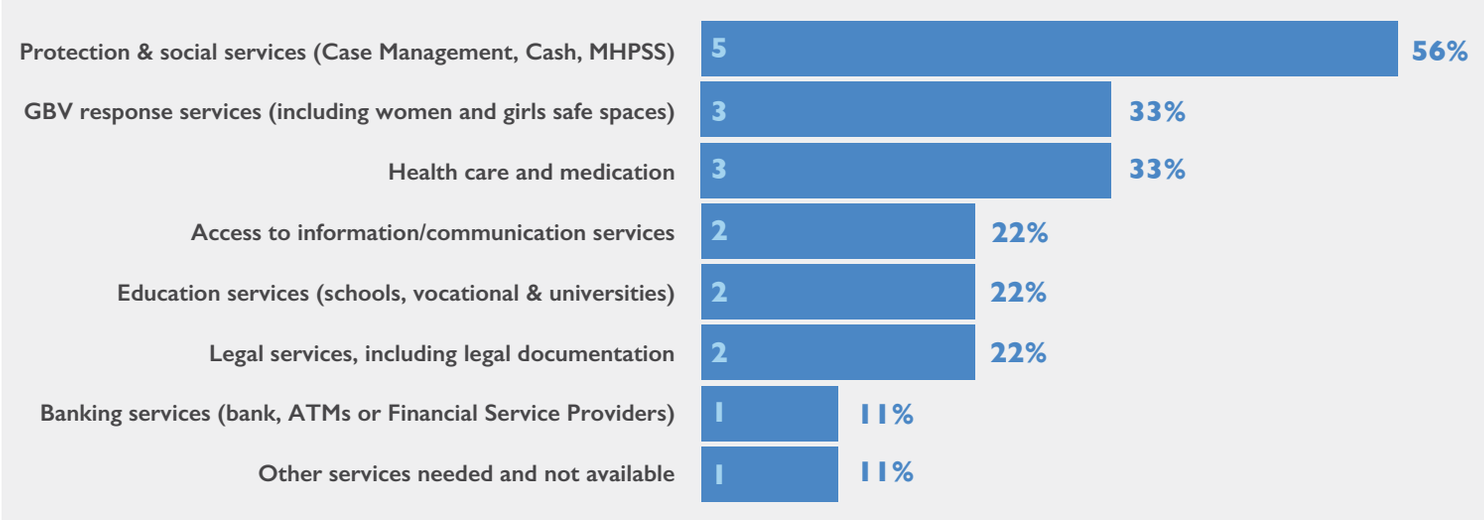
In the Bekaa, both Lebanese and Syrian IDPs face critical hurdles when accessing essential services, such as food, education and healthcare. However, data indicates that Syrians face greater challenges than Lebanese due to discrimination and lack awareness of available services. In Bouday and Hermel, Syrian participants report a severe lack of basic services, forcing them to travel long distances to access them. WASH services are another critical gap, leaving many without reliable access to water as water trucks struggle to reach camp due to accessibility. Financial challenges have also made it difficult for Syrians to access medicine and education. Lebanese IDPs, though to a lesser extent, also face challenges, particularly in El Hermel. However, they often have better access to local support networks than Syrians do and are less dependent on aid than Syrian IDPs, despite reportedly struggling with healthcare and access to food.

In BML, almost a third of the KIIs indicated a lack of Child Protection (CP) services. KIIs also indicated a lack of education services, and healthcare. KIIs and FGDs in Chouf and El Meten highlighted that medication for chronic illnesses is unavailable at PHCs or affordable healthcare providers, critically affecting IDPs, Syrians and migrants. Despite this, FGD participants indicated that humanitarian actors are distributing aid to both Lebanese and Syrian IDPs, including food, hygiene kits, dignity kits, baby kits, blankets, and mattresses.

In the South, IDPs indicated that access to healthcare is severely lacking, particularly concerning the needs of women, children, the elderly, and the disabled. While some indicated that PHCs and pharmacies in the border regions were destroyed during the conflict, others reported that people with chronic illnesses struggle to procure medication due to financial constraints and service limitations, whether in access or awareness. FGD participants in Hasbaya indicated that due to the conflict, residents suffered from waterborne diseases from water contamination and poor hygiene. In addition to health services, the border regions in the South also experience significant challenges in accessing communication services such as phone lines and internet connectivity, which respondents indicated is being resolved by the Lebanese government.

Key informants have reported significant challenges for women to access services, particularly in relation to protection services (56%) , GBV response services (33%), and healthcare (33%). These barriers highlight the need to identify continually improved the access of women to services, particularly protection, GBV and health services.

Unavailable Service for Women



Recommendations

Protection sector should present this information to the Intersectoral Group to inform sectoral strategies to better respond to the needs of IDPs and returning IDPs.

All sectors should analyze gaps of specific groups to access services identified in this report and through service delivery monitoring, particularly regarding nationality, gender, age, disability, and legal status.

Each sector should identify specific actions to addressing gaps for IDPs to access the following key services: food security, shelter, multipurpose cash assistance and healthcare. Coordinate with GBV and Health sectors to address accessibility issues to services targeted to women and girls.

Protection actor should prioritise the provision of and increased coverage of core package of protection, CP and GBV services to locations hosting significant numbers of IDPs and returning IDPs.

MHPSS: Increase the availability of mental health and psychosocial support services in areas hosting IDPs and returning IDPs. In addition, provide information about positive coping mechanisms and MHPSS services within affected communities.

Access to livelihoods: Support people to find sustainable livelihoods by helping them find job opportunities. This may include job finding programmes as well as Technical Vocational and Educational Training (TVET) to upskill people and improve their chances of finding sustainable employment.

Education: Provide financial assistance to people who cannot afford to send their children to school and address documentary barriers for Syrian children to attend school. Implement informal education programmes for children, particularly Syrians and migrants, who are unable to attend school.

Access to protection, child protection and GBV services: Provide information about available protection, GBV and child protection services to communities. Protection, GBV and CP working groups should analyse availability of services in areas hosting IDPs and returning IDPs and work with partners to address gaps and duplication.

Fund protection, CP and GBV services. PWG, CP and GBVWG to provide information to donors on protection risks, access to services and gaps and priorities to advocate for funding for these services in locations hosting IDPs and returning IDPs.

Coping Mechanisms and Strategies

A range of coping strategies were reportedly used by IDPS to address the challenges described above across the Bekaa and Baalbek-El Hermel, BML and the South. KIIs and FGD respondents reported that IDPs resorted to reducing meal quantity and frequency, purchasing food on credit, or relying on humanitarian aid. Although Lebanese IDPs and migrants had better personal support networks and community-based assistance, they still struggled to address their basic needs and address the consequences of displacement and armed conflict. Sharing shelter or moving to less adequate but more affordable housing to reduce costs was another coping strategy applied by Lebanese and Syrian IDPs. Many of them frequently shared accommodation in order to reduce costs, and according to a FGD participant in BML, *"We were one family, and suddenly, we became three families in the same house."* Others were forced to rent lower quality shelter, compromising on hygiene and privacy. Furthermore, financial hardships have resulted in people resorting to self-medication, either with home remedies or over-the-counter medication.

Several harmful coping mechanisms were identified impacting on the well-being of children and other vulnerable individuals in the family household. Child labor was reported by families to have increased as the only solution to support the households' basic needs. One FGD participant in Barja, Chouf district stated that, *"Children, men and women are willing to take any job, even for a low wage, to meet basic needs and pay rent"*. Children are often seen working in insecure and exploitative environments. In some cases, child marriages took place to ease the financial burden on families by daughters being married in order to become the financial responsibility of another family. According to an FGD participant in the South, *"I didn't want to get married at that time. It was really difficult; I couldn't express my feelings when my husband entered my room. They just married me because my family needed to marry me off because of the war."*

Migrants, both those displaced in BML and returning migrant IDPs in the South, primarily rely on their own community networks as a coping mechanism. These networks continue to receive and refer a high number of cases, including gender-based violence (GBV), child protection (CP), and requests for food and health assistance. Additionally, many migrants continue to host fellow community members, often facing a high risk of eviction as a result. The community networks, as reported by key community leaders, are often exhausted financially and mentally, and also require assistance, while reporting it as difficult to maneuver a complex landscape of humanitarian actors with, at times, complex eligibility criteria.

Recommendations

Food Security: Strengthen food security programmes through cash for food assistance and food vouchers. Moreover, support community-based initiatives that create self-reliance and resilience among the community and IDPs.

MHPSS support to community volunteers and frontliners: Provide psychosocial support for migrant, Lebanese and Syrian community leaders, community volunteers and other frontliners who continue to deal with severe protection cases.

Forced or exploitative Labour: Improve mechanisms that protect workers from exploitative labour, including implementation of existing labour laws and monitoring by authorities of labour conditions. Create partnerships with the private sector to address exploitation and provide information to workers on their rights and available services and reporting mechanisms. Identify ways to address fears of refugees and migrants without legal status to report labour exploitation. Provide people with TVET courses to upskill them and improve their chances of finding better quality employment.

Situational Update in the North

While aforementioned data collection tools were not implemented in the North due to the comparatively low numbers of IDPs, cross population protection monitoring was implemented. Most IDPs who were in the North during the course of the conflict returned following the ceasefire. While some returned to their pre-conflict areas of origin, others relocated to areas closer to their areas of origin. Although they still remain displaced, they preferred to be displaced closer to their homes rather than staying in the North. Despite this, there is still a small number of IDPs, both Lebanese and Syrians, living in the North, predominantly those who chose to remain there due to job opportunities.

Update on Palestine Refugees

Palestine Refugees from Syria (PRS) continue to face significant challenges in civil registration, particularly in registering vital life events such as births, deaths, and marriages, as these processes remain linked to legal residency status. PRS students have expressed concerns that universities have imposed enrolment restrictions due to their lack of legal residency leading them to miss on scholarships and the academic year.

Palestine Refugees from Lebanon (PRL) and PRS across Lebanon have increasingly emphasized their reliance on UNRWA's cash assistance as a critical safety net. This concern has been raised during FGDs, with participants highlighting that the irregularity and reduction of cash assistances are causing significant distress. During the reporting period, UNRWA's regular cash assistance for PRS had been delayed due to lack of funds. As a result, PRS have reported incurring debts to cover their basic needs, with delays in repayment further exacerbating tensions. This financial strain may also lead to an increase in eviction cases.

Following the fall of the Bashar al-Assad regime on 8 December, the GSO reportedly issued a memorandum waiving fines for PRS wishing to return to Syria. However, many PRS are adopting a "wait-and-see" approach regarding potential returns.

Moreover, the presence of unexploded ordnance (UXO) has emerged as a critical concern both before and after the ceasefire, posing severe risks to civilians, particularly children and Palestine Refugees. Reports indicate that children and young men in the camps in Tyre are collecting and repurposing UXO fragments as scrap metal, raising significant safety concerns.