UNHCR
The UN Refugee Agency

Protection Monitoring

Situation of Syrian Refugees in Lebanon

3rd 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 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 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 third quarter of 2025 (July-September). Data was gathered through two primary methodologies:

- **Household Surveys (HHS): 4,606 HHS** were conducted across all governorates in Lebanon, covering **22,976** 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): 120 KIIs** 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: Sara, a 16-year-old Syrian refugee, stands in the kitchen of her home in Masnaa, Lebanon, a few metres from the Syrian border, on 8 December 2024.

Credits: © UNHCR/Ximena Borrazas

Key Highlights

A sharp increase in administrative measures and raids impacted refugee security

With the launch of a large-scale security effort in July, refugees were impacted by 361 reported administrative measures (restricted movement, checkpoint arrests, data collection, taxes/fees, restrictions on livelihood and rent, and tent demolitions)—a threefold increase from Q2—with non-compliance met with responses ranging from verbal notices to arrest and deportation. In parallel, reported raids by security forces targeting Syrian residences increased by 44% from Q2, with 147 incidents resulting in the arrest of over 1,270 individuals, of whom 51% were deported.

Refugees increasingly struggle to meet basic needs, including food and shelter

Amid rising inflation and limited livelihood prospects—with less than 1% of respondents reporting being able to meet all perceived basic needs, 93% reporting debt, and 47% borrowing money for food—the inability to pay rent is widespread, placing thousands at risk of eviction, homelessness, and further debt. 70% 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 188 USD in Q3. In parallel, 15% of households report residing in tents or Informal Tented Settlements, often lacking proper infrastructure, insulation, or privacy and accompanied by protection risks.

Half of refugee households with children fear children will be out of learning

50% of families expressed fear their children will be out of learning in the 2025–2026 school year if the Council of Ministers adopts a similar decision to that issued in 2024, which required Syrian children to hold either valid residency or a UNHCR certificate to enroll. An SOP issued by the Ministry of Education and Higher Education for second-shift schools at the end of Q3 raised further concerns given its similarities to the 2024 decision. *Note: In Q4, elaboration of the SOP facilitated enrolment for all children, with improved overall registration.*

Humanitarian assistance is progressively less available to refugees

The percentage of refugee households reporting receiving some form of humanitarian assistance over the past year declined further from 77% in Q2 to 67% in Q3, with the majority noting that aid has since been discontinued, aligned to corresponding global funding shortages and downscaling of aid programmes.

Interest in voluntary return to Syria continues

Since the fall of the Assad regime, 294,912 Syrians have been inactivated from UNHCR's registration records in Lebanon as of end Q3 due to verified or presumed return, including 70,445 people who crossed under duress during the 2024 escalation of hostilities and chose to remain. Return movements have been facilitated by a July GSO facilitation waiver at border points for those voluntarily returning to Syria and two UNHCR voluntary return programmes launched. Over 100,000 Syrians have contacted UNHCR to express interest in return, though many still raise concerns related to lack of shelter, insecurity, and limited livelihood in Syria, as well as family member reluctance to return, financial constraints, and unpaid debts.

Over one-fifth of refugees report no legal status in Lebanon, rising slightly in Q3

The prevalence of refugee households with at least one member above 15 years lacking legal residency remains very high and rose from 80% in Q2 to 82% in Q3. Despite the criticality of documentation for movement and access to services, refugees cite financial barriers, an inability to find a sponsor, and irregular entry as primary obstacles. Notably, those reporting challenges finding a sponsor as the top barrier rose from 19% in Q2 to 25% of respondents in Q3.

Support remains inaccessible for a growing percentage of those with disabilities

Of households reporting a family member with a disability, 39% reported being unable to access required care and support mechanisms in Q3 (up from 30% in Q2). Among these, nearly all (91%) cited financial barriers as the primary cause, underscoring critical gaps in access to specialized care for vulnerable families.

Exposure to risks impacts children's physical and emotional wellbeing

The socioeconomic and protection environment continues to impact refugee families and children, with nearly one-fifth (18%) of respondents reporting mental health symptoms and worsening psychological distress, particularly among adolescents. Additionally, 21% of households report child labor as a primary child protection concern, including worst forms of child labor. Of reported cases, boys are disproportionately affected (79%).

Operational Context: Regional Developments and Population Movements

Regional developments

In Q3, Lebanon was impacted by an intersection of regional developments:

Announcement of facilitation measures for voluntary return to Syria. On 1 July, the General Security Office (GSO) waived exit fees, overstay fines, and re-entry bans for Syrian and Palestinian refugees returning to Syria via official land border crossing points to facilitate safe, dignified, and voluntarily return. The measures, set to expire on 25 September, were later extended to 31 December. In response, UNHCR launched its Self-Organized Voluntary Return Programme on 3 July and the Organized Return Programme with IOM on 29 July.[1]

Large-scale cross-border movement. Consistent with Q1 and Q2, tens of thousands of Syrians continued to return to Syria from or via Lebanon, though at slightly lower rates, alongside regular pendular movements. Arrivals of those fleeing new sectarian violence and insecurity also persist, though at markedly lower rates than in late 2024 and early 2025.[2]

Continued hostilities by Israel. Despite the ceasefire declaration in November 2024, hostilities and ceasefire violations in Lebanon continue, with regular Israeli airstrikes and military incursions predominantly targeting border areas in southern and eastern Lebanon rising in September. This environment elevates anxiety of both refugees and Lebanese, including fear of renewed conflict.[3] In South and Nabatiyeh, UNHCR recorded 13 Syrians (1 child) harmed by air/drone strikes in Q3.

Funding cuts in humanitarian aid. As organizations continue to downscale operations, the Lebanon humanitarian response has been significantly impacted, with growing hardships and a rise of negative coping mechanisms among refugees.

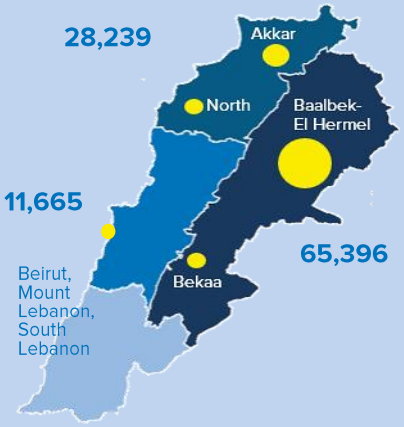
Lebanon's prolonged economic crisis. Rising inflation, stagnant incomes, and reduced purchasing power continue to negatively affect all populations,[4] with 60% of Syrian families living below the Survival Minimum Expenditure Basket (SMEB).[5] These hardships intensify social pressures and competition over limited resources including jobs, housing, and public services.

Post-2024 arrivals from Syria

*Nearly a year since the fall of Assad, Lebanon has witnessed a complex wave of displacement to and from Syria. At the end of Q3, over **105,300** Syrians—driven by preemptive fear, instability, shifting sectarian dynamics, and targeted violence—had arrived in Lebanon,[6] marked by dynamic and pendular cross-border movement or relocation in Lebanon.*

- ***Late 2024/early 2025:*** *Syrians from diverse religious and political backgrounds—predominantly Shia and other minorities—arrive in Lebanon, with many settling in Bekaa and Baalbek-El Hermel.*
- ***March****: A second wave—notably Alawites, Christians, and other minorities—driven by violence in Tartous, Lattakia, Homs, and Hama settle in Akkar and North Lebanon, with pressure on local resources.*
- ***May****: Violence in Sweida and the Damascus suburbs triggers a smaller wave of arrivals from the Druze community, with some entering on humanitarian visas facilitated by Lebanon.*

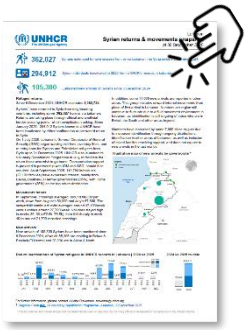
New arrivals per governorate



New arrivals—often entering without documents, shelter, or networks—navigate a landscape of instability, scarcity, and uncertainty, facing issues with:

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

Months since their initial displacement, shelter continues to be an urgent concern. While over 20,000 of these arrivals have found accommodation in some 120 collective shelters,[7] most reside in private homes or improvised shelters,[8] frequently in substandard conditions without WASH facilities, access to electricity, poor hygienic conditions and a constant threat of eviction.[9] Continued lack of legal status and documentation also remains a paramount challenge, rendering these individuals vulnerable to exploitation, arbitrary detention, and abuse. Absent documentation, communities continue to report self-restricting movements, fearing arrest and consequent deportation. Additionally, they raise concerns about the high cost of healthcare, scarcity of livelihood opportunities, and increased job competition fueling tensions between themselves and long-staying refugees. Many resort to informal and high-risk labor, notably child labor, to meet basic needs. In this context, women and children face heightened risks of gender-based violence, as safe spaces are few and protection mechanisms scarce.[10]

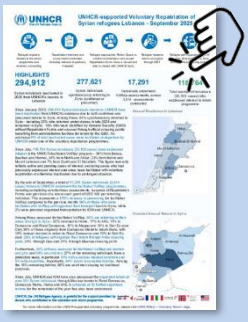


In parallel, awareness of available humanitarian services remains limited, with most post-2024 arrivals relying heavily on host communities, neighbors, or friends, many who are themselves under economic strain. While humanitarian partners continue essential support in and out of collective shelters, funding constraints have led to critical gaps across sectors. In particular, specialized protection services for persons with specific needs have faced weakened referral pathways and coverage as partner capacity reduces.

Despite these ongoing challenges, most post-2024 arrivals intend to stay in their current location, particularly during the winter months, but remain open to relocating within Lebanon for work. While many express fear and skepticism about returning to Syria in the near-term due to ongoing insecurity and fear of persecution, some families have expressed an openness to return if conditions improve or an interest in pursuing movement to other countries if an opportunity arises. Others continue to attempt short-term or exploratory pendular movement to assess conditions or have returned given an inability to sustain their lives in Lebanon.[11]

Returns and intentions to return to Syria

*At the end of Q3, **294,912** Syrians had been inactivated from UNHCR's registration records in Lebanon due to verified or presumed return, including 70,445 people who crossed under duress during the 2024 hostilities in Lebanon.*



On 1 July, GSO announced facilitation waivers at border points for those voluntarily returning to Syria. Subsequently, UNHCR announced two return programmes:

- ***Self-Organized Voluntary Return**: Provides a one-time return cash grant of USD 100 per each returning family member to self-organize return logistics, counselling, support with civil documentation, and a Repatriation Form.*
- ***Organized Voluntary Return (UNHCR-IOM)**: Transportation support and a one-time return cash grant of USD 100 per returning family member, counselling and support with civil documentation, and a Repatriation Form.*

*At the end of Q3, **17,291** individuals were supported through these programmes, while another **277,621** (confirmed or presumed) spontaneously returned. As of Q3, an additional 118,764 contacted UNHCR with interest in the voluntary return programme.*[12]

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

1. Lack of shelter
2. Security Concerns
3. Limited livelihood

Intentions to return to Syria—reflected in UNHCR's regional *Enhanced Refugee Perceptions and Intentions Survey* (September 2025), the Protection Monitoring, analysis of voluntariness assessments, and community feedback—continue to be highly individualized, based on personal sentiment, family considerations, and practical concerns based on dynamics in both Syria and Lebanon.[13]

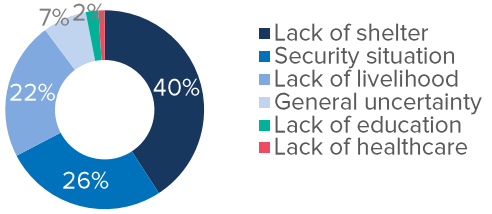
Among refugees assessed by UNHCR to voluntarily return, 83% are returning to areas of origin—35% to Homs, 17% to Idlib, 11% to Damascus and Rural Damascus, 10% to Aleppo and 10% to Deir Ez-zour. The majority (84%) of those approaching UNHCR indicate they plan to return in complete families, while adult family members who remain in Lebanon are predominantly male income-earners.

Among those expressing reluctance to return, refugees raise similar concerns to Q2, with 98% of respondents referencing barriers in Syria associated with immediate needs as the primary obstacle. Top barriers include lack of shelter (40%, down 9% from Q2), security concerns (26%, up 4%), and livelihood challenges (22%).

Refugees also continue to consistently express a need for information on housing, employment, access to services, security, education, and legal requirements to make informed decisions, as well as needed support to facilitate return, including financial assistance, transport, and housing.

In parallel, refugees reference factors in Lebanon that impact their decision-making on return, including challenges enrolling children in school due to government requ irements (*later adjusted in Q4 to facilitate further enrolment)* and access to needed healthcare. As families grapple with these factors, communities report family disputes over return decisions, sometimes resulting in family separation—women and children return to Syria while men remain in Lebanon to earn income—violence in the home, and divorce.

Top barrier to return to Syria - % reporting

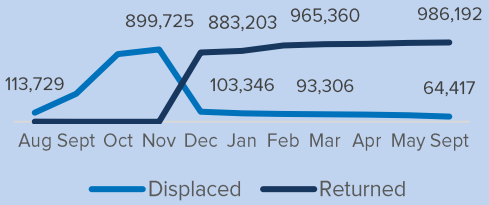


> *Syria is our land. We want to return, but only when it feels possible to start again – Syrian FGD participant*

Displacement within Lebanon

*In Q3, Lebanon continued to struggle with lasting impacts of the conflict with Israel and associated internal displacement. Of some 1 million people internally displaced within Lebanon at the height of hostilities (including an estimated 100,000 Syrian refugees[14]), **64,417** IDPs[15] were recorded by end September. Critically, this includes a small portion of those displaced during the war, as well as **post-ceasefire displacement** due to ongoing Israeli military activity and presence in south Lebanon.[16]*

Internal Displacement / Returns



Protection Sector partner assessments with refugee households that remain secondarily displaced indicate that these households face two predominant challenges: an inability return to pre-conflict places of residence due to lack of housing, as well as safety concerns given ongoing military activity and presence of Israeli forces. Such prolonged displacement may limit access to services and elevate psychological distress.

In parallel, those who returned to their areas of residence—both refugees and Lebanese—often require reintegration support, particularly those who relocated to an area other than their home or village.

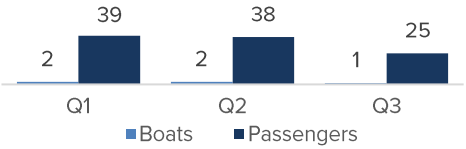
Finally, those displaced post-ceasefire often require short-term assistance, while continued hostilities may result in a more long-term relocation within Lebanon.

Irregular Onward Movements

*Actual and attempted boat departures from Lebanon during Q3 decreased by **92%** compared to Q3 2024, while total movements since the start of the year dropped by 94% compared to the same period in 2024.*

During Q3, one irregular movement was recorded with 25 Syrian passengers attempting to reach Cyprus by sea—a slight decrease compared to equally minimal movements in prior quarters. 2025 has seen the lowest number of movements in recent years.

Irregular movements in 2025



Administrative Measures

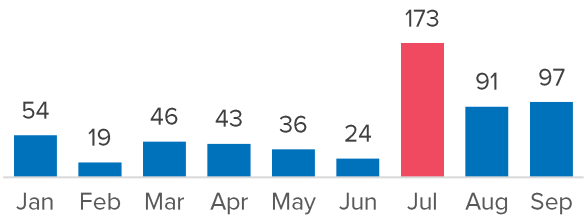
*Throughout Q3, **361** administrative measures by authorities impacting refugees, mainly targeting Syrians, were recorded related to movement restrictions, checkpoint arrests, data collection, taxes and fees, restrictions on livelihood and rent, and tent demolitions—a **threefold increase from Q2**. Refugees violating these measures receive a range of responses, include verbal notice, confiscation of vehicles, physical punishment, arrest, and deportation.*

Among reported measures, the percentage of respondents raising movement restrictions such as curfews and checkpoints doubled from 8% in Q2 to 16% in Q3 countrywide, with greatest frequency in Nabatiyeh (27%), South (24%), and Mount Lebanon (21%), while Beirut (5%) and Akkar (1%) citing minimal measures. These measures range from checkpoints that deny passage of Syrians under any circumstance to isolated or ad hoc incidents. In parallel, regional variations were also observed regarding taxes imposed on Syrians, most

frequently reported in Baalbek (24%), Nabatiyeh (22%) and South (17%). Communities note that these measures exacerbate their vulnerability by restricting access to livelihoods, healthcare, and essential services, particularly for those lacking legal residency.

Additionally, reported raids by security forces increased by 44% compared to Q2, with 147 raids targeting Syrian residences in Q3 resulting in the arrest of over 1,270 Syrians of whom 51% were deported. The greatest spike was recorded in July, coinciding with the launch of a large-scale security effort led by all security agencies and municipal police across all Lebanon. The effort targeted those with irregular or expired residency, those lacking identification documents, and businesses employing individuals without valid work permits.

Administrative Measures per Month



> We fear going out. The municipality closes the village entrances at night – Syrian refugee, Aafsdiq

Protection Trends

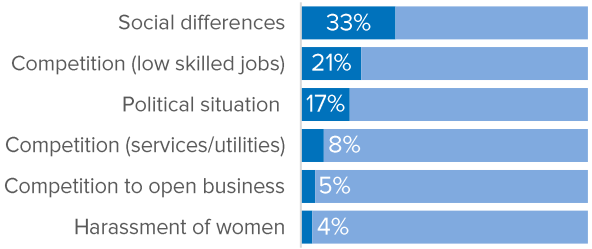
Social tensions and community support

Evolving patterns of displacement in Lebanon in 2025 have intensified sectarian tensions and added complexity to an already fragile relationship between host and refugee communities, though only 4% of households reported an increase in tension in Q3. A third of respondents cited political, cultural, and/or religious differences and/or regional political dynamics as drivers of tension between Lebanese and Syrian communities,[17] with key drivers listed as:

1. Social differences
2. Competition—low skilled jobs
3. Political situation
4. Competition – services/utilities
5. Competition – opening business

Since December 2024, there is growing public pressure on Syrians to return to Syria referencing the fall of Assad, with key informants reporting verbal and physical abuse in some areas, most acutely in the South. Such pressure is mirrored by overall trends in inter-communal tension, wherein the South reports heightened tension between host communities and refugees—driven by economic pressure and sectarian and social differences—while Beirut and Mount Lebanon note tensions largely derive from economic competition and resentment among Lebanese who perceive Syrians as accepting lower wages, exacerbating economic frustrations.

Sources of inter-communal tension - % reporting

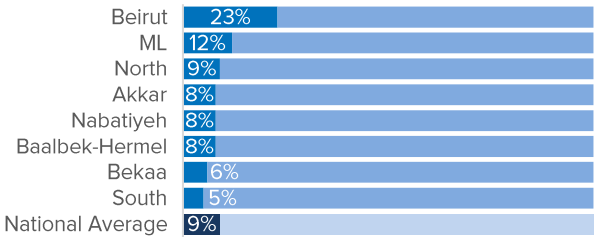


> *You'll find people who hate Syrians just for being here, and others who go out of their way to help. It's really two extremes* – Syrian community representative, Tyre

Similarly, only 10% of refugee households reported receiving support from host communities in Q3, with variations by governorate. Despite economic tensions, families in Beirut noted highest level of support (23%), while the South cited the lowest (5%), likely due to ongoing challenges including damaged infrastructure, ongoing hostilities along the Southern border, and negative attitudes towards Syrians.

Finally, tensions with post-2024 arrivals also continue to be reported, notably in North and Akkar, largely associated with competition over jobs and other scarce resources.

Perceived support from host community - % reporting yes



Legal residency

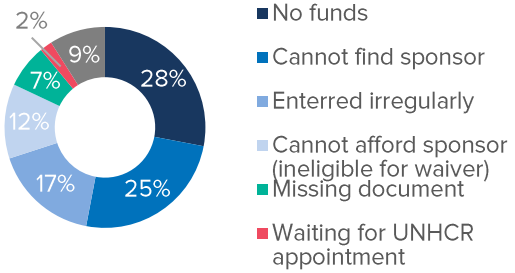
Absent documentation, refugees face elevated risk of arrest, detention, and deportation; barriers to access basic rights and essential services including healthcare and education; exploitation and unsafe working conditions; increased isolation; and fewer opportunities for work and housing. Barriers to legal status include:

1. Lack of funds
2. Cannot find sponsor
3. Irregular entry
4. No sponsor - ineligible for waiver
5. Missing documents

For years, lack of documentation has remained a significant challenge for Syrian refugees, with 82% aged 15+ reporting a lack of legal residency in Q3, up slightly from Q2 (80%). Separately, efforts by MoSA, MoIM and UNHCR to improve birth registration for Syrian children, in line with the National Action Plan on Birth Registration, have shown progress, with rates increasing from 28% in 2020 to 51% in 2025.

Despite these barriers, respondents cited financial and administrative constraints as primary hurdles to obtain or renew residency, with 28% lacking funds to pay renewal fees or transport costs—a one year renewal can cost up to 150 USD, while fines reach 200 USD excluding overstay costs. Others report challenges finding sponsors to extend residency, with the share citing this barrier rising from 19% (Q2) to 25% of respondents in Q3. For another 17%, their irregular entry into Lebanon poses significant barriers to regularization of status. Separately, in some areas, legal aid services have been absent for years, leaving refugees without support for critical documentation processes.[18]

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



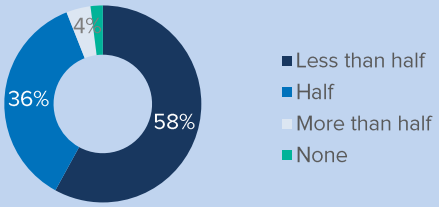
> *Even when refugees are eligible to renew, the process is so expensive that most cannot afford* – Syrian refugee, Tyre

Refugees without legal residency face significant protection and access challenges, with 42% of households concerned about movement restrictions, arrest, detention, and deportation, compelling many without status to self-restrict movement to avoid interaction with law enforcement and authorities. Additionally, 14% of households experience barriers accessing essential services such as education and healthcare.

Access to shelter, basic services, and livelihood

Lebanon's socioeconomic fragility persists,[19] with negative impacts on refugees reflected in an increased proportion of households reporting being unable to meet half of their basic needs—from 44% in Q2 to 58% in Q3—and less than 1% meeting all perceived needs. As a result, 93% of families report debt, 44% report taking on additional debt in the last 30 days, 41% reduced food expenses, 10% reduced needed healthcare/medicine, and 4% accepted degrading, high risk, or exploitative work. Top priority needs:

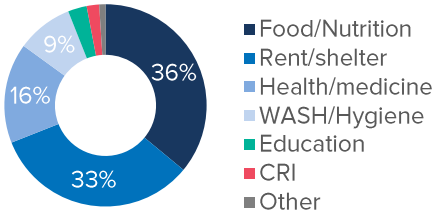
Ability to meet basic needs



1. Food
2. Shelter
3. Healthcare

In Q3, as in Q2, refugees identified food, shelter, and healthcare as top needs. Focus on primary needs continues to come at the expense of critical but under-prioritized services, with only 3% citing education as a top need. Notably, while countrywide, the share of households able to afford half of basic needs declined (42% in Q2 to 36% in Q3), the South and Nabatiyeh saw an increase (38% in Q2 to 64% in Q3), attributed to a rise in seasonal agricultural work and more households taking on further debt (36% in Q2 to 59% in Q3).

Top household needs



> *The living situation is very hard here and in Syria, and we're all tired of it* - Syrian refugee, Aley

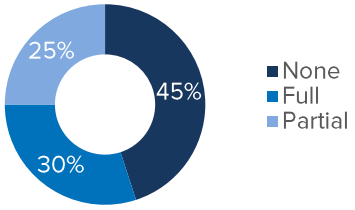
Concurrently, the highest level of acute food insecurity was observed in Baalbek, where 79,000 people—45% of the population—face severe food shortages and 5% experience extreme food shortages, acute malnutrition, and unsustainable coping strategies. Akkar follows with 58,000 people affected, and Baabda with 54,000. In Akkar, 40% of the population experiences serious food insecurity, including 35% facing severe food consumption gaps or adopting harmful coping strategies to meet basic needs and 5% in emergency conditions. In Baabda, 40% of the population experience severe food consumption gaps.[20]

In this context, humanitarian funding cuts have significantly reduced assistance for refugees and host communities, threatening household stability and protection. In parallel, Syrian refugees continued to face multiple barriers to accessing basic services, including financial constraints, long distances to service providers, and administrative challenges, particularly for those lacking legal documentation.

Access to Shelter

With 82% of refugee households reported to live in rental accommodation in Q3, an increase in the average monthly rent from 171 USD (Q2) to 188 USD elevates the already pressing issue of access to stable shelter. Of those in rental space, 45% of households reported being unable to pay their last rental installment, another 25% were able to partially pay, and only 30% managed to pay in full. Such limited financial resources raise risks and threats of eviction and exploitation by landlords, including pressure to return to Syria.

Ability to pay rent - % respondents in rental accomodateion



Separately, 15% of refugees report residing in tents or Informal Tented Settlements (ITS)—highest proportions in Baalbek (46%), Bekaa (41%), Akkar (35%)—with exposure to harsh living conditions 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, while reduced humanitarian assistance may further weaken coping capacities. In North, key informants highlighted exploitative practices in some ITS, with landlords requiring tenants to work on their land alongside paying rent, while others report pressure by municipalities to evacuate their ITS and return to Syria.

Notably, and despite this context, collective eviction notices documented by UNHCR decreased by 72% in Q3 compared to Q2, with 12 notices recorded (44 in Q2) in Bekaa, South and North affecting over 400 households. Similarly, effectuated collective evictions decreased 43% compared to Q2, with four reported (two following notice) impacting 53 households.

Access to Healthcare

Access to healthcare also arises as a primary concern, with refugees reporting facing multiple barriers, including financial constraints, distance to providers, lack of legal status, and limited specialized services (notably rehabilitation, physiotherapy, home-based care, and psychotherapy). Those lacking legal status are particularly impacted by self-restricted movements and barriers to access healthcare due to fear of arbitrary arrest, detention, and subsequent deportation.

In parallel, access to services for older people and people with disabilities remained limited, with 39% of relevant families reporting an inability to obtain needed care for a family member (up 9% from Q2), with greatest prevalence in Akkar (81% up from 77% in Q2) and North (77%, up from 54% in Q2) where high costs were identified as the predominant barrier. In this context, Protection Monitoring indicates that people with specific needs strongly rely on family (79%) and community support (61%).

Livelihoods

Livelihood opportunities for Syrians remained limited and poorly paid. Countrywide, 21% of households reported no source of income. Of those engaged in income-generating activity, only 27% are employed full-time (down from 38% in Q2). Those without legal status face compounded barriers, with those commuting to work (particularly men) subjected to strict control at checkpoints. In parallel, in Q3, respondents report increased competition for job opportunities, notable in North with post- 2024 arrivals and other communities.[21]

> *Employers force them to work for free, knowing they can't complain –*
> Syrian refugee, Hissa

Child Protection

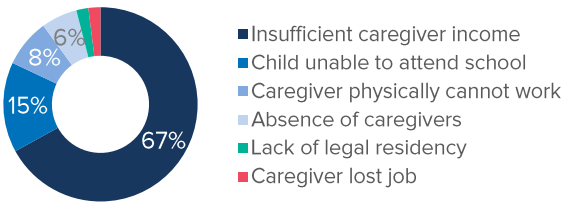
Child labor emerged as the primary child protection concern for families, reported by 29% of respondents (from 21% in Q2). While only 3% of households with children continue to acknowledge at least one working child, the perceived risk is considerably higher. Of children reportedly working, boys are disproportionately affected (79%), often working in street vending, while girls (21%) were likely to engage in agriculture. Primary reasons for child labor include:

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

Among families reporting child labor, insufficient caregiver income is predominant (67%), followed by inability to attend school (15%), reflecting limited livelihood options alongside barriers to education.

Key Informants indicate 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 street vending (23%), agriculture (18%), wholesale and retail trade (17%), and car repair (11%).

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



Other key informants highlight that children are engaged in the worst forms of child labor, with boys and girls as young as seven working in agriculture, construction, or waste collection under harsh physical and psychological conditions, long hours, and exposure to hazards. In July, one refugee household in BML reported that a child was run over by a car while selling items on the street.

Critically, some UNHCR community sources note that Syrian children who arrived after December 2024 are heavily involved in manual labor, including loading and unloading goods, working in supermarkets and grocery stores, selling tissues on the streets, and assisting in car mechanic workshops.

> *Every household has at least one child working because parents can't find jobs.* – Syrian Refugee, Fouwar

Child protection response monitoring by the Child Protection Working Group indicates child labor issues were present in 32% of cases addressed through case management in Q3, after emotional abuse (43%), with neglect (17%) and domestic violence (14%) also represented in smaller proportions.[22]

Education

*Challenges accessing education rose sharply in Q3, reported by **30%** of families (from 17% in Q2). Additionally, **50%** of households expressed fears that their children will be out of learning heading into the 2025–2026 school year if the Council of Ministers adopts a similar decision to the one issued on 17 September 2024, which required Syrian children to hold either valid residency or a UNHCR certificate to enroll in school. Toward the end of Q3, the Ministry of Education and Higher Education issued an SOP for second-shift schools—primarily attended by Syrians—which further heightened concerns and uncertainty among families lacking legal residency, given its similarities to the 2024 decision (*see footnote)[*]. *In this context, learning barriers include:*

1. Lack of valid documentation
2. Cost of enrolment/ material
3. Distance/ transport cost

Compared, to Q2, where one-third of those facing education barriers cited legal obstacles as the predominant issue, almost half (48%) noted this as the top barrier in Q3. In parallel, financial challenges were raised as the top barrier by nearly a quarter of respondents, followed by 21% citing transport costs and long distances.

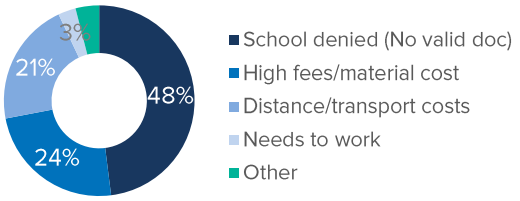
With nearly 50% of families with children reporting concerns of out-of-learning status, many refugee children will face compounding and immediate protection risks and limitations on future opportunities. Importantly, communities note that access to formal education is one factor in the complex decision-making around

[*] In Q4, elaboration of the SOP facilitated refugee enrollment (including post-2024 arrivals), with registration for those holding legal residency, UNHCR certificate, or an official General Security receipt indicating residency renewal has begun. Students without documents could also register and are added to a list submitted to MEHE and shared with GSO for follow-up. As of end-November, afternoon shift enrolment reached roughly 104,000 students—a 30% increase compared to 2024/2025 but below prior years (156,000).

voluntary return to Syria. Of families assessed for UNHCR-facilitated return, 37% cited education as a main motivator, particularly given uncertainties with enrolment for the 2025-2026 school year.

For those considering return to Syria, the Syrian Ministry of Education has opened its schools to all children and shown flexibility to accept late registration for any student.[23] Children grades 1-12 should bring a school certificate with transcript showing passing of the last grade, certified in Lebanon by MEHE, Ministry of Foreign Affairs, and the Syrian Embassy. Those lacking certificates can take a knowledge test in certain subjects (grades 1-8) or seek placement with local education authorities.[24]

Barriers to regular school attendance



Gender-based violence

Recognizing that stigma, fear of reprisal, and normalization of certain forms of violence can lead to significant underreporting of GBV, 20% of households reported some type of GBV risk for them and/or their families, with women reporting greater concern (25%) than men (17%).

Note: Gender-Based Violence Information Management System (GBVIMS) data is based solely on reported cases and may not reflect the true prevalence of GBV in the population.

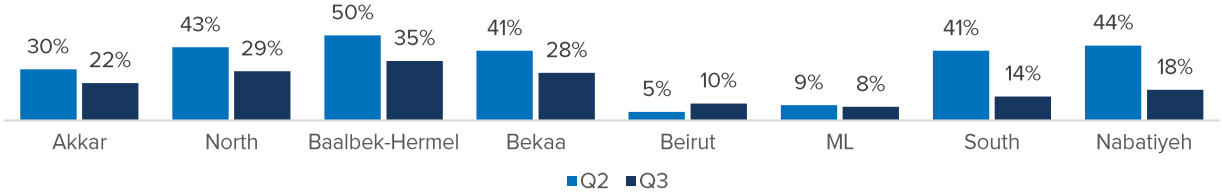
According to the Gender-Based Violence Information Management System (GBVIMS) Mid-Year Report 2025[25], 61% of all recorded GBV survivors in Lebanon are Syrian, with women and girls constituting 97% of survivors. Of those, 12% are below age 18. Of these, the top three reported incidents included physical assault (38%), psychological and emotional abuse (33%) and sexual assault (13%).

Separately, GBV risks and concerns continue to be reported among post-2024 arrivals, given the absence of privacy and gender-sensitive space in collective shelters, increased cyber-violence and abuse towards adolescent girls, and psychological distress and economic vulnerabilities within the home.

Mental health and psychosocial support

*In Q2, roughly **18%** of respondents countrywide reported mental health symptoms—a noted drop from Q2 (29%)—while partners and community sources consistently report increasing levels of distress driven by livelihood scarcity, irregular legal status, household decisions related to return to Syria, and other sources of strain. Additionally, community sources stress worsening mental health for adolescents related to being out of school with no clear educational path and pressure to find jobs to support their families.*

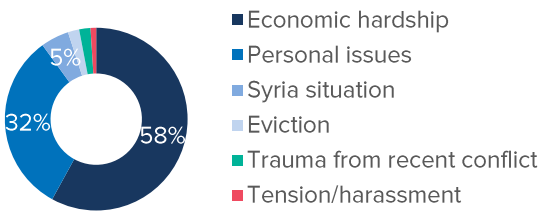
% reporting mental health symptoms



Of those reporting mental health symptoms, highest rates were observed in Baalbek, where 35% reported mild or isolated symptoms, followed by North (29%) reporting psychological distress, and Bekaa (28%). Consistent with Q2, Beirut and Mount Lebanon reported the lowest levels (10% and 8%, respectively).

At the close of Q3, nearly 58% 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 from Baalbek (85%). Other contributors included personal issues (divorce, child custody disputes, family conflict and forced marriage), which rose nationally from 18% in Q2 to 32% in Q3, most notably in Akkar (46%). Though a smaller percentage, some also 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 (25%) reported at least one symptom of psychological distress more than men (14%).

Endnotes

[1] For more information, visit UNHCR's HELP Lebanon website, "voluntary return to Syria".
[2] UNHCR, *Lebanon - Syrian Returns & Movements Snapshot*, 30 September 2025.
[3] ANERA, Lebanon Situation Report, 31 Aug 2025.
[4] World Bank Group, *Lebanon Economic Monitor, "Spring 2025: Turning the Tide"*, 2025
[5] Vulnerability Assessment of Syrian refugees in Lebanon (VaSYR), Preliminary Findings, 2025.
[6] UNHCR, Lebanon - *Syrian Returns & Movements Snapshot,* 30 Sept 2025.
[7] Wash Sector Lebanon, Document - WaSH in Informal Settlements and Collective Shelters.
[8] In particular, in North and Akkar. See for details: Inter-Agency Coordination, *Response to New Arrivals in the North and Akkar*. September 2025.
[9] WASH Sector Lebanon, WaSH in Informal Settlements and Collective Shelters.
[10] UNHCR. *New arrivals from Syria: Protection Overview*. August 2025.
[11] *Ibid*.
[12] UNHCR, *Voluntary Repatriation Programme - Lebanon*, 30 September 2025.
[13] UNHCR, Enhanced Refugee Perceptions and Intentions Survey (ERPIS), September 2025.
[14] UNHCR. *Lebanon Emergency Flash Update #17*. 29 November 2024.
[15] IOM Displacement Tracking Matrix. Mobility Snapshot – Round 88.
[16] Lebanon Protection Sector, Situation of Internally Displaced Persons in Lebanon, September 2025.
[17] This may include any sociopolitical developments taking place in neighboring countries.
[18] Oxfam presentation at the PAMTF meeting on 03 September 2025.
[19] *See* Endnote 4.
[20] Save the Children, *Resilience Composite Index (RCI) Baseline Assessment Report*, July 2025.
[21] UNHCR PMTF Northern Lebanon. *PMTF Monthly Situation Report*. June 2025.
[22] Child Protection Working Group Dashboard, Case Management Services, accessed on 2 December 2025; a case may be managed to address multiple risks simultaneously.
[23] UNHCR, Syria is Home - FAQ, accessed 3 December 2025.
[24] UNHCR, Access to Education for Returnees from Lebanon to Syria, accessed 3 December 2025.
[25] Gender-Based Violence Information Management System (GBVIMS), Mid-Year Report 2025.