



Advancing Alternative Migration Governance



Displaced Syrians in Lebanon: Protection amidst Crises

AUB final report

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Acronyms and Abbreviations

AUB	American University of Beirut
CAMALEON	Cash, Monitoring Evaluation, Accountability & Learning, Organizational Network
CAT	Convention Against Torture
CDC	Centres for Disease Control and Prevention
COVID – 19	Corona Virus Disease
DRC	Danish Refugee Council
ECDC	European Centre for Disease Prevention and Control
EPI	Expanded Program on Immunization
GoL	Government of Lebanon
GSO	General Security Office
HLP	Housing, Land and Property
HRW	Human Right Watch
ICLA	Information, Counselling and Legal Assistance
IFYC	Infant and Young Child Feeding
ITS	Informal Tented Settlement
LCRP	Lebanon Crisis Response Plan
LPC	Lebanon Protection Consortium
MHC	Mobile Health Clinics
MoL	Ministry of Labour
MoPH	Ministry of Public Health
NRC	Norwegian Refugee Council
PHC	Primary Health Centre
PIN-SK	People in Need – Slovakia
RHUH	Rafik Hariri University Hospital
SEED	Socio-Economic Enhancement and Development
SI	Solidarités International
UNHCR	United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees
WASH	Water, Sanitation and Hygiene

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PART I

1. Introduction

This report details the protection practices for displaced Syrians in Lebanon by giving a general overview of the challenges displaced Syrians face through a literature review and by researching two different geographical locations: the coast, specifically the city of Saida, and the Bekaa, an inland valley bound by the Lebanese and anti-Lebanese mountain ranges. In this work package that looks at protection issues at the borderlands of Europe, Lebanon was unique as it doesn't act as a point of transition in migrants' journeys, rather an endpoint itself, as resettlement is often granted to a minority of the displaced Syrian population. While the concept of entry and exit points isn't applicable to Lebanon, the Bekaa valley often serves as a point of entry as it's closer to the Syrian border, while large coastal cities are more often a destination. Moreover, the most common shelter type in large coastal cities such as Saida includes residential and non-residential shelters (such as factories, garages, workshops, farmhouses, etc.), while in the Bekaa valley Informal Tented Settlements (ITS), i.e. non-permanent shelters, are dominant. This dictates a difference in communal relations, employment opportunities, security in shelter and access to services such as healthcare and education.

In our discussion of protection, we refer to the Sphere Standards (2018:36) of the humanitarian charter, which we have translated into the research design (table 1). Our interrogation seeks to dissect protection, which is broad and multi-faceted, by focusing on three main areas: legal protection, medical protection, and accommodation. These three areas act as our entry point in our reflection on the gaps in protection measures in practice by mapping out experiences through a bottom-up approach directly from displaced Syrians themselves. We also decided to assess the current needs and challenges of displaced Syrians and compare them with their needs when entering the country, to understand protection practices when 'entering' versus 'staying', that could serve as a parallel to the assessment of 'entry' versus 'exit' practices occurring in the borderlands of Europe. Although a more comprehensive approach involves multiple stakeholders, such as NGOs and other humanitarian actors, we faced numerous challenges in accessing and receiving timely responses from these actors. In fact, due to the multiple crises the country is facing, it was increasingly challenging to recruit NGOs and other humanitarian actors to take part in this study due to their overwhelming situation, as they faced a lack of personnel and have received diminished financial assistance relative to the early years of the Syrian crisis. Therefore, we conducted our investigation on Lebanon's protection, relying on displaced Syrians experience on the ground.

Sphere Protection Principles			
Principle 1	Principle 2	Principle 3	Principle 4
Enhance people's safety, dignity and rights and avoid exposing them to further harm	Ensure people's access to impartial assistance, according to need and without discrimination	Assist people to recover from the physical and psychological effects of threatened or actual violence, coercion or deliberate deprivation	Help people to claim their rights
Legal protection		Accommodation	Healthcare
On-the-ground observation of protection practices			

Table 1. Translating the Sphere Protection Principles into an ADMIGOV research design

Source: Pallister-Wilkins et al. (2021) "Protection in a Hostile Environment: An on-the-ground study into protection practices in Lesbos and Athens". Available at URL <http://admigov.eu>

Alongside the three areas of interrogation, we discuss three temporal periods that have affected the condition of displaced Syrians and the general population in Lebanon:

1. Materialization of the economic crisis and political crisis [October 17, 2019]:

On October 17th, 2019, protests started arising throughout Lebanon in response to a deteriorating economy and frustration with a corrupted state. This had a domino effect leading to mass manifestations, and closure of Beirut's Central District (BCD), followed by restriction on dollars withdrawal (the main foreign currency used in Lebanon), the temporary closure of banks, and subsequent unofficial capital control measures – it's important to note that the state didn't issue a capital control law but banks imposed such measures as they saw fit.

2. COVID-19 and Economic Crisis [February 21, 2020]:

The coincidence of the pandemic along with a deepening economic crisis lead to the closure of commercial activities, loss of jobs opportunities and income cuts as a series of lockdowns were put in place along with a progressively devaluating currency (Inter-Agency Coordination, 2020). As the purchasing power of the Lebanese Lira fell, the prices of basic food supplies rocketed given that Lebanon imports 80% of its food, determining an increase on poverty rates. A report in August 2020 shows that almost 55% of the Lebanese population are in poverty, while 90% of the displaced Syrians are living below the Survival Minimum Expenditure Basket (SMEB) and are in extreme poverty (ESCWA, 2020; VASyR, 2020). Further, 9 out of 10 displaced Syrian households were in debt in 2020, with food, rent, and health as the main reasons (VASyR, 2020).

3. Beirut Port Explosion [August 4, 2020]:

The August 4th Beirut Port explosion exacerbated the already precarious condition of the country. The blast destroyed a big portion of the city killed many, rendered thousands homeless, and limited food and medical supplies. The state's disaster response proved inadequate and lax, with many NGOs, private firms, and volunteers taking up relief efforts, starting from rescuing people affected, to cleaning rubble, replacing windows and doors, and assessing building damages, as well as offering temporary residence for people who lost their homes. The explosion paralyzed the country and caused a spike in COVID-19 cases as focus was on rescue and relief.

To translate our research findings into protection indicators, we interpret our findings in relation to the four principles of protection outlined in the Sphere Standards (see Table 1). At the end of each chapter on legal, medical, and accommodation protection, we summarise our findings from both primary and secondary sources and relate them to the four protection principles, highlighting weaknesses and failures. We aim to identify gaps and areas of improvement in protection practices in Lebanon.

Report Structure

This report is structured as follows. In the introductory chapter, we give a general overview of Lebanon's humanitarian governance structure, clarifying the subject of our study. The chapter introduces the research design that foregrounds the relationship between our top-down literature review and bottom-up research, highlighting three temporal periods of importance to our discussion with the three areas of protection: legal, medical, and accommodation. Chapter 2 provides a historical backdrop that contextualizes the particular situation of displaced Syrians in Lebanon by providing a brief overview of the Lebanese government's disposition towards displaced Syrians and noting phases of marked change in attitude and laws governing entry and stay. The chapter then delves into more recent historical events as the issue of protection in Lebanon has been compounded by multiple crises affecting displaced Syrians and the general population. Chapter 3 explores legal protection through a comprehensive literature review that outlines laws, agreements, decisions, and categorizations mandated by the GoL (Government of Lebanon) for displaced Syrians. We highlight the situation on the ground by shedding light on legal protection in practice. We conclude the chapter by highlighting the impact of COVID-19 on legal protection and summarizing our review and findings. Chapter 4 discusses medical protection, emphasizing access to services, healthcare provision by humanitarian actors, use of healthcare services, gaps in medical protection, and medical protection in practice. We then conclude the chapter with a summary of our review and findings and highlight the healthcare situation amidst COVID-19. Chapter 5 looks into accommodation through types of shelter, highlighting the conditions of different shelter types, ability to self-isolate, access to WASH, and changes in dynamics at the household level as a result of COVID-19. We then delve deeper into our case studies in a section portraying accommodation in practice. Finally, we conclude by focusing on the continuities or discontinuities in protection practices that arise in our research.

1.1 Protection in Lebanon

Protection is a broad term often practised by many formal and informal organizations, states, and humanitarian actors through local, national, and global efforts. However, protection remains hard to define or encompass through a fixed set of tools and approaches, and the situation on the ground can often be elusive to researchers, humanitarian actors, governance sectors, and the general public. Protection of displaced Syrians in Lebanon is challenging as the country faces a deep socio-economic crisis and political pressures amidst a pandemic and suffers from inadequate and out-dated infrastructure falling short of basic service provision while it hosts the highest ratio of displaced persons to the national population worldwide (UN-Habitat, 2020; UNHCR, 2020a). The humanitarian governance framework of displaced Syrians in Lebanon hasn't been consistent, starting from 'a policy of no policy', with little state involvement, that transitioned to a closed-door policy with strict visa requirements, instances of deportations, raids, curfews, and evictions, characterized by increased state involvement. Particularly in its early years, humanitarian governance in Lebanon can be perceived as having a dual structure, where the state and UNHCR sometimes work separately and in dissonance. This is explicit in that the Lebanese government has declared its right to sovereignty "regarding the determination of displaced Syrians' status according to Lebanese laws and regulations" (LCRP, 2019: 4). Since the country has not ratified the 1951 Refugee Convention nor its 1967 Protocol, displaced Syrians are referred to as "temporary displaced persons" rather than refugees (LCRP, 2019; Lebanon Support, 2020). This has been met with opposition from several humanitarian actors, such

as the UNHCR and other NGOs, that have argued that refugee status is vital for garnering aid and the necessary protection measures and status recognition (Janmyr, 2018). The increased role the GoL took is evident in the LCRP (2019), where "The Government of Lebanon [...] refers to individuals who fled from Syria into its territory after March 2011 as temporarily displaced individuals and reserves its sovereign right to determine their status according to Lebanese laws and regulations" (LCRP, 2019: 4). As such, the following official categories are attributed to displaced Syrians and are still valid today:

- 1. Persons displaced from Syria:** which can, depending on context, include Palestinian refugees from Syria as well as registered and unregistered Syrian nationals.
- 2. Displaced Syrians:** referring to Syrian nationals, including those born in Lebanon to displaced Syrian parents.
- 3. Persons registered as refugees by UNHCR,** those have received a registration certificate and must renew it yearly after an initial free two-year period.
- 4. Palestinian refugees from Syria,** referring to 28,800 refugees across Lebanon.
- 5. Palestinian refugees from Lebanon,** referring to 180,000 refugees living in 12 camps and 156 gatherings.

However, to avoid confusion in the exclusivity of each category, we understand "Persons displaced from Syria" to include all the other categories (1-4) except for "Palestinian refugees from Lebanon". This means that it includes "persons displaced from Syria", "displaced Syrians" born to displaced Syrian parents in Lebanon, as well as "persons registered as refugees by UNHCR", and "Palestinian refugees from Syria." While we acknowledge the importance and necessity of using the term refugee, we will adopt the descriptive term displaced persons. Moreover, to avoid confusion in terminology, we will use quotations for the official categories employed in Lebanon. As such, "displaced Syrians" that are subject of this report include "Syrians registered as refugees by UNHCR", displaced Syrians unregistered with UNHCR, and "Palestinian refugees from Syria".

Lebanon's weak operational and financial response to the Syrian crisis has led to several singular and collective humanitarian actors at international and national levels to make up for this governance gap. While necessary, this has produced a decentralized web of relations and aid networks that has increased in complexity as the Syrian crisis protracted. To tackle this issue at the regional level, the 3RP (Regional Refugee and Resilience Plan) was devised in 2014 to increase coordination between national and international actors and focus on long-term development goals rather than an emergency type response (Beaujouan & Rasheed, 2020). At the national level, the Lebanese Crisis Response Plan (LCRP) was initiated in 2014 to join the UN and the GoL (Government of Lebanon) efforts in delivering humanitarian assistance to displaced Syrians and other vulnerable groups and invest in services and economies to help stabilize the country. Increased coordination between local and international humanitarian actors, such as the WFP, UNHCR, and UNICEF, has been in effect to increase efficiency and avoid duplication of basic assistance and service delivery. As of 2016, the WFP and UNHCR-UNICEF have jointed their efforts in providing one common e-card that can be used in WFP contracted local shops throughout the country. These efforts mark a notable increase in horizontal coordination between humanitarian actors, however, vertical coordination remains limited, noticeable in the lack of homogeneous execution of national plans through local efforts, and the lack integration of the 3RP into national plans (ibid.).

Another main challenge experienced in the coordination and delivery of humanitarian assistance is geopolitical, resultant from the GoL's no-camp policy for displaced Syrians. This situation has created an uneven landscape of aid and service provision, where humanitarian actors face increasing difficulty in providing much-needed assistance to displaced Syrians scattered throughout the urban fabric in contrast to those in informal camps (UN-Habitat, 2020). Further, displaced Syrians experience varying treatment and rules based on their area of residence. Although UNHCR leads efforts on protection, the GoL and municipalities hold the power to affect protection measures. One clear example is the

curfews to limit the movement of displaced Syrians pre and during COVID-19 by different municipalities. Moreover, as the socio-economic situation in Lebanon worsens, conflicts between locals and displaced Syrians are rising. By the end of 2020, locals chased out displaced Syrians from the town of Bcharre after an incident, and a dispute led to setting fire to a Syrian informal tented settlement in Minieh, North of Lebanon.

1.2 Methods

Methodological approach

The singularity of conditions the country is passing through since October 2019 has conditioned our methodological choice to focus on the Syrian community's needs and challenges and secondary resources. Therefore, this work relies on a literature review, qualitative in-depth phone interviews, a secondary literature review, and first-hand knowledge of the field. The research incorporates qualitative data collection through phone interviews that included both closed and open-ended questions regarding participants' experiences of access to legal, medical, and shelter protection. It aims at understanding the protection measures available to displaced Syrians, assessing their current basic needs and experience when entering the country, legal protection and knowledge of rights, their housing status and their experience in their area of residence, protection in employment and education, as well as in medical care, and their views of plans or decisions to exit Lebanon. Moreover, the research compares protection data from desktop work and protection in practice as experienced by Syrians displaced. It considers three temporal periods:

- Pre-pandemic
- During pandemic
- During the economic and political crises

The participant recruitment process was facilitated by the Dutch Refugee Council (DRC) in Lebanon, which provided us with the contacts of focal points in the area of study. Participants are displaced Syrians older than 18 years residing in Bar Elias and Saadnayel in Zahle, and the Ouzai shelter (before eviction) in Saida. To highlight the two main typologies of accommodation present in the country, we have focused on two particular case studies that represent the rural tented and informal settlements and the urban building structure in a city neighbourhood.

Questionnaire piloting

The survey questionnaire features 61 questions corresponding to 7 sections (see appendix I). It was piloted with 24 displaced Syrians equally divided amongst the two case studies – Zahle & Saida – and between males and females when possible. The interviews took place from October 2020 until January 2021. All interviews followed the interview guidelines drafted by the University of Amsterdam. Before the phone interviews, the interlocutors were briefed on the project's objectives, and an information letter was read to all interlocutors, who then provided oral consent to participate. It is important to note that access to the ITSs was not authorised due to national and local municipal restrictions, along with the ethical underpinnings of this study. The American University of Beirut's Institutional Review Board¹ office granted ethical approval for the project.

¹ The Human Research Protection Program (HRPP) at AUB is responsible to safeguard the rights and welfare of human subjects participating in Biomedical and Social and Behavioral Sciences (SBS) research activities conducted under the auspices of AUB/AUBMC. The IRB, that is the core component of HRPP, is the committee formally designated by HRPP to review and approve the conduct of research involving human subjects who are recruited to participate in research activities conducted at AUB/AUBMC and/or by AUB/AUBMC faculty, students and staff, regardless of the funding source or the location of the research.

	Males	Females	Total
Bar Elias & Saadnayel in the Bekaa Valley	7	5	12
Saida (previously residents of the Ouzai shelter)	6	6	12

Table 2. Distribution of participants in our study

Literature Review Resources

This work builds upon the results of the Horizon 2020 RESPOND project on protection and migration. Several resources were consulted to gather data and establish a framework to identify gaps in the knowledge base on protection. The literature review focused on academic literature, including both published work and dissertations, official government documents, as well as ‘grey literature’ from the inter-and non-governmental sector that were consulted and cited where relevant for factual background. It includes UNHCR and UNOCHA reports, and the joint report by UNHCR, UNICEF and WFP - VasYr (2018, 2019, 2020), which provides the basic data to develop the Lebanese Crisis Response Plans – LCRP (2019), and guide NGOs and other humanitarian actors’ efforts and programs. Lebanon Support reports (2016, 2017, 2018, 2019, 2020) as part of the RESPOND project were used as the basis of our interrogation into protection, delving into legal policies, migration governance, and refugee protection regimes, as well as other academic articles by Janmyr (2016), and Janmyr & Mourad (2018), and Fakhoury (2017). The work of several NGOs, such as the DRC, NRC, HRW, and SI, SEED, were reviewed to understand the impacts of COVID-19 and the economic crisis on displaced Syrians. Other sources include online newspaper articles from the Daily Star, Aljazeera news, the Middle East Institute, and others, which provided updates on displaced Syrians' current situation.

Data Analysis

Data analysis was undertaken using NVivo10, which is a qualitative data interpretation and analysis tool. All interviews were recorded, then transcribed and coded, using a two-staged approach involving both manual coding, and the use of the NVivo software. A hybrid inductive-deductive approach was taken within the thematic analysis of the data. An inductive (or ‘Grounded’) approach was taken because researchers were seeking to gather new knowledge of the reality and experiences of the participants coping with challenging circumstances. The data illuminated key themes and trends, which were coded and thematically analyzed. However, a deductive strategy was also utilized given the extensive research and analysis already published. This existing knowledge, along with the guidelines and research aims found in this project's mandate, also guided the analysis to ensure the research objectives were being met. Because the data and participants' security was paramount, all data was meticulously examined for any participant identifiers (and subsequently removed), and data was also stored on encrypted computers accessible only to the researchers.

Case Study

A case study approach was used as a strategy of enquiry to facilitate the study of a phenomenon that is difficult to separate from its context, whilst it was also important to study the subject within it to understand the dynamics of the setting (Stake, 2005). Two case studies are profiled, Bar Elias and Saadnayel in Zahle, the Bekaa Governorate's capital city, and the coastal city of Saida, South of Beirut (fig 1). The localities selected compare two settlement typologies of Syrians displaced in Lebanon: the Informal Tented Settlement (ITS) in the agricultural valley of the Bekaa, and the inhabitation of a built structure at the outskirts of a main city on the southern Lebanese coast in Saida. The selection of the areas depended on the past knowledge of the site conditions that the project's principal investigator has of the areas. In Saida, we initially targeted displaced Syrians in a collective urban shelter (the Ouzai shelter). However, throughout our data collection, we learnt that in October 2020, displaced Syrians were evicted from the shelter and are now dispersed throughout the city and in other country's locations.

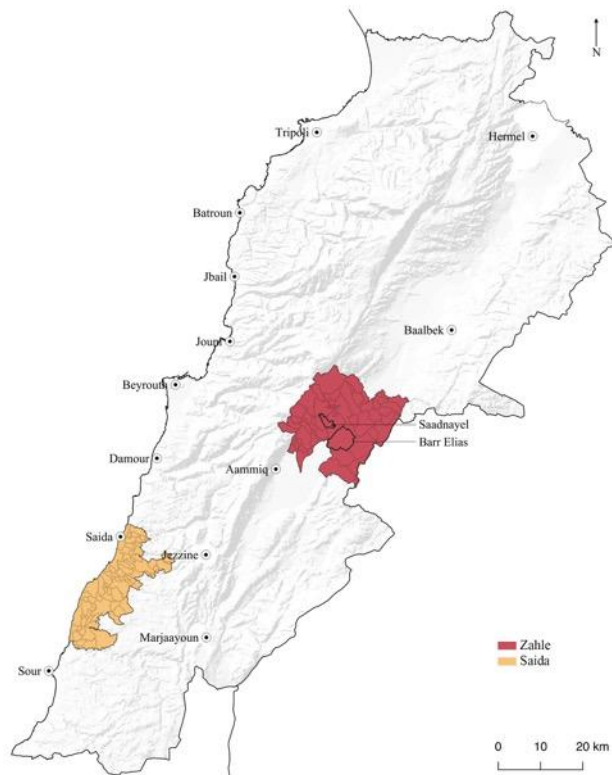


Fig. 1. Location of study sites, Saida and Zahle

The Bekaa Valley: Bar Elias and Saadnayel in Zahle



Fig. 2. The Bekaa Valley and Informal Tented Settlements

The Bekaa is a governate of Lebanon bound by the Lebanon and Anti-Lebanon mountain range to the East and West, respectively. It includes three districts: Rashaya, West Bekaa, and Zahle. Zahle has 243,000 displaced Syrians as per the LCRP population package data in 2020², and 179,000 Lebanese. The land is predominantly agricultural, and most ITSs can be found along with cultivated fields (fig. 2).

Bar Elias: Lying only 15 Kilometres from the Syrian border, Bar Elias has welcomed displaced Syrians since the start of the Syrian Civil War in 2011. According to the UNHCR Lebanon Interagency Coordination Sector, Bar Elias is one of the most vulnerable localities in Lebanon due to the high

²https://www.dropbox.com/sh/htj0iign0031xq4/AACLIWhcrgQm325DeFGA8PZ9a/9.%20Data%20%20Population%20Package?dl=0&preview=1-2020_LCRP_Population_Package_191028_sourcesUpdated.xlsx

presence of displaced Syrians and the general lack of access to basic needs and livelihoods opportunities (fig. 3).



Fig. 3. Informal Tented Settlement in Bar Elias

Saadnayel: It is situated strategically near the crossroads between the Beirut–Damascus highway and the main road connecting the northern and southern Bekaa. Thus, it has always been a node for transportation and commerce, especially when it comes to shops and vendors located on the international road (UNDP, 2018).

Bar Elias hosts around 30,000 UNHCR registered displaced Syrians, and Saadnayel hosts 17,000³. Both municipalities of Saadnayel and Bar Elias have received aid from international organizations since the beginning of the Syrian crisis in 2011 (Al Ayoubi, 2018). Displaced Syrians living in Bar Elias and Saadnayel are mainly located close to public and private schools (fig. 4), informal vocational centres, the municipality headquarters and the primary health care centre (DeJong et al., 2017).



Fig. 4. A school in one of the ITSs in Saadnayel

³ <https://data2.unhcr.org/en/documents/download/64929>

Population size & ITSs layout: The ITSs are defined by the 2015 Lebanon Shelter Sector Strategy as an “unofficial group of temporary residential structures (fig. 5), often comprising of plastic-sheeting and timber structures and can be of any size from one to several hundred tents” (Sanyal, 2017, p.118). 12 out of the 120 ITSs in Saadnayel are abandoned, with a population spanning from 5 to 448 inhabitants.



Fig. 5. Informal Tented Settlement in Saadnayel

In Bar Elias, there are 219 ITSs with 52 of them deactivated in the past years. The number of tents within the ITSs ranges from 1 to 203, with a population ranging from 5 to 958 inhabitants. Dependent on the size of the ITSs, the support of humanitarian organizations, and involvement of the municipality, their layout may be more organized and well managed by the community in congruence with aid actors, or more haphazard and spontaneous (fig. 6, 7).

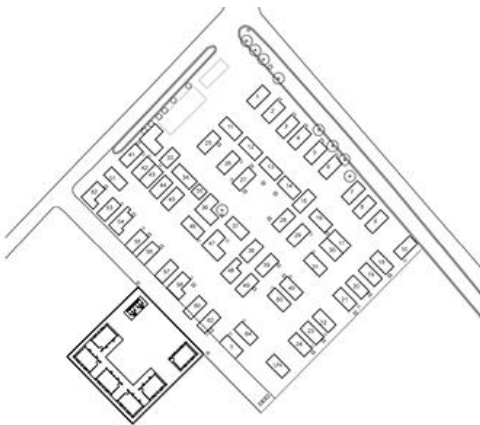


Fig. 6. The layout of an established ITS in Bar Elias



Fig. 7. A medium sized ITS in Saadnayel

The Coastal City of Saida

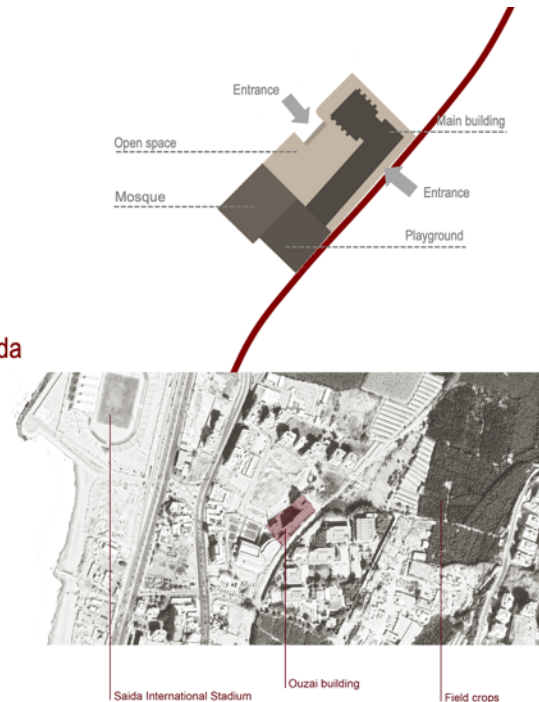
The coastal city of Saida is the third-largest in Lebanon, and its metropolitan area hosts around 1.25 million inhabitants. In 2012, the Ouzai building in the city of Saida became home to Syrians fleeing their homes, mostly from the governate of Hama and Idlib and Deir el Zor (Zaatari, 2015). Displaced Syrians resided in an unfinished building, what was to be the Imam Ouzai University for Islamic Studies, situated at the Northern periphery of the city (fig. 8). During our data collection, we learnt that displaced Syrians were evicted from the Ouzai shelter in October 2020. Nonetheless, the participants gathered for Saida were all living in the Ouzai shelter, and many relocated to apartments or non-residential shelters throughout the city of Saida after their eviction.



Fig. 8. Ouzai shelter in Saida

Ouzai building in Saida

This building complex of a frozen real estate development at the outskirts of Saida was to become a campus for the Al Imam Al Ouzai University, or Ouzai.



Population Size & Layout: The complex includes an unfinished L-shaped building that surrounds a vast courtyard type playground with a mosque nearby (fig. 9). Estimates in 2013 show that the complex hosted 850 displaced Syrians, or approximately 170 families (Wood, 2013). However, the SB overseas organization that has been working in the shelter estimates that 1500 displaced person were living in the shelter in 2016.

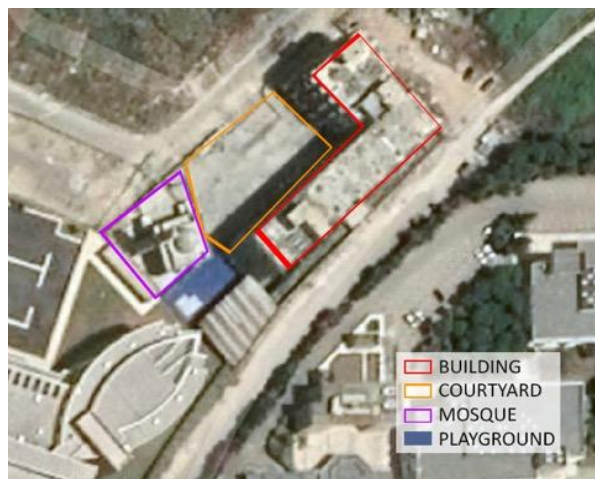


Fig. 9. Map of the Ouzai shelter in Saida

2. Protection Amidst Multiple Crises

BREIF HISTORICAL OVERVIEW

The Syrian crisis, which began in 2011, caused an influx of displaced persons fleeing into Lebanon, which today hosts the largest number of refugees per capita in the world (UNHCR, 2020a). The number of registered refugees by UNHCR reached over a million in 2014, touching on Lebanon's social, economic and political strife (Fig. 10). This was the time in which Syrians, that at the beginning were seen as temporary guests, became a threat to be contained (Uzelac, Meester, 2018). Indeed, Lebanon has repeatedly reiterated that it is not a country of asylum, rather one of transit (Fakhoury, 2017; Lebanon Support, 2020), a stance visible in multiple facets of the governance of displaced Syrians, from the lack of formalization of camps, to the halting of UNHCR registration of refugees as of 2015, and referral of refugees as displaced persons since 2011, and more recently as "temporarily displaced persons," rather than as refugees (LCRP, 2019). This is believed to be a result of the fear that usage of the term refugees insinuates permanence as it previously has with Palestinian refugees, and will make the international refugee law applicable (Janmyr & Mourad, 2018).

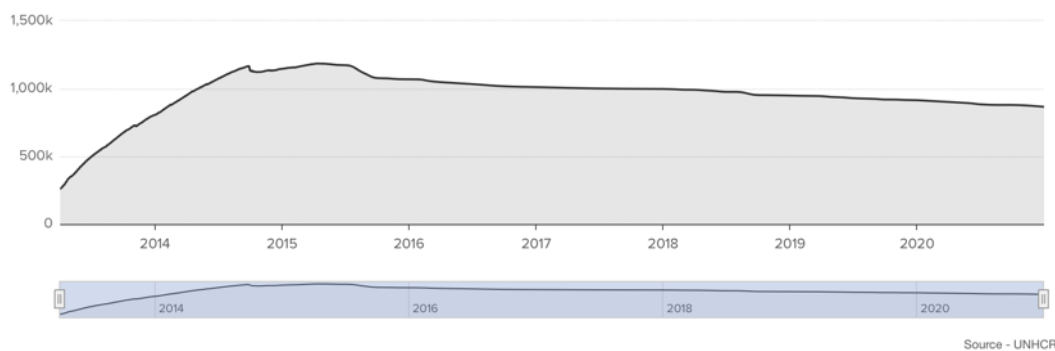


Fig. 10. Registered Syrian refugees by date. Retrieved from UNHCR website

Research on displaced Syrians in Lebanon argues that since the state tightened its policy on asylum and residency in 2014, and with constantly changing regulations thereafter, the lack of clarity and coherence in granting refugees legal status left them in the dark over reasons for rejection or their entitlement to humanitarian aid (Human Rights Watch, 2016: 21-23). This ambiguity leads to increased informality in migrants' status and experiences (Lebanon Support, 2016). Janmyr's study of the hierarchy of protection for various categories of Syrian refugees in Lebanon finds that this lack of clarity adds an 'additional layer of uncertainty for already-precarious displaced Syrians refugees (Janmyr 2018: 412).

Yassine et al. (2019) note, refugees and migrants also create their social infrastructures of support – helping facilitate the arrival of other refugees through networks of kinship and places of origin (Fiddian-Qasmiyeh, 2020). Moreover, institutional ambiguity around the refugee response allows the state to expel refugees where it deems useful and evades responsibility overall (Baumann, Kanafani, 2020). A study conducted in 2015 in the Bekaa valley by Al-Masri highlights the role of local patronage networks in providing some safety to refugees, noting, however, that these vital relations are 'not in themselves free of exploitation' (Al-Masri, 2015).

Open door policy - emergency phase [2011-2015]

Prior to the Syrian crisis, Lebanon and Syria signed a treaty of cooperation in 1991, allowing free movement of people, goods, and freedom of work and residence for nationals in both countries (Lebanon Support, 2016). Due to the lack of national refugee law, displaced persons entering Lebanon had the option of registering as displaced persons as facilitated by the Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) between UNHCR and GoL signed in 2003, which provides the mechanism for the "issuing of temporary residence permits to asylum seekers" (Lebanon Support, 2016). However, this MoU

reiterated Lebanon as a country of transit rather than one of asylum (Fakhoury, 2017; Lebanon Support, 2020) and permitted UNHCR to resettle refugees over a period of one year (Lebanon Support, 2016). It's important to note that registration wasn't mandatory, and many speculate that the official number of refugees given by UNHCR and the GoL was hardly reflective of reality. With the onset of the Syrian conflict in 2011, the "open door" policy remained in operation during what can be perceived as an emergency phase, and Syrians admitted into Lebanon held the status of "displaced persons" rather than refugees (Fawaz et al., 2018). During this phase, UNHCR was the primary body in charge of refugee admission, reception, and registration. Once displaced Syrians' numbers became alarming in 2013, hitting the 1 million mark in 2014, discussions by officials, locals, and government bodies catalysed, leading to increased governmental interference mainly in attempts to decrease the number of displaced Syrians and increase the formality, control, and monitoring mechanisms of admission, registration, and residency renewal.

Closed door policy – joint UNHCR and GoL governance phase [2015-present]

In October 2014, the Council of Ministers adopted the first comprehensive policy on Syrian displacement to decrease the number of displaced Syrians in the country (Fawaz et al., 2018). The General Security Office (GSO) was in charge of implementing this policy by limiting peoples influx from Syria across the Lebanese border, encouraging displaced Syrians to return to Syria, and increasing control and monitoring of displaced Syrians in Lebanon (Janmyr, 2016). During this period, the LCRP (Lebanese Crisis Response Plan) was initiated to ensure humanitarian assistance and protection while benefiting Lebanon and helping to stabilize its economy. In 2014, the Ministry of Labour limited the professional sectors accessible to Syrians to construction, agriculture, and environment/cleaning (Lebanon Support, 2020).

The policy was aimed at: 1) reducing arrivals at the border, 2) reinforcing internal security and 3) protecting Lebanese citizens by strict law enforcement among refugees.

The first objective of the policy was given shape in January 2015 through the GSO circular which tightened the regulations on Syrians attempting to enter Lebanon by severely restricting the inflow of people on the run from conflict and increasing the documentation requirements for those seeking employment in the country. Additionally, obstacles were put in the way of those seeking to maintain legal status in Lebanon. UNHCR was asked to end the registration of new displaced Syrians and residency documentation renewals are required every six months costing 200 USD.

Additionally, the documentation required for renewal was expanded to include an expensive housing commitment document and a pledge not to engage in paid work of any sort.

The government of Lebanon has repeatedly said that individuals who are suspected to be working, or opt to maintain their ability to work, irrespective of the reasons for having sought refuge in Lebanon, will not be considered as "displaced" anymore (the term that Syrian refugees are being referred to by the government of Lebanon).

While this provision formally changed in 2017 and refugees were allowed to apply for work permits in construction, agriculture and waste management, without

compromising their status as displaced, GSO offices across the country have not been implementing the changes structurally. As application for work permits is complex and costly, only 1,500 Syrians currently hold work permits in Lebanon.

As a consequence of these measures, the proportion of refugees without valid residency permits increased to 76% by mid-2018. The numbers with valid work permits are negligible, as are the number of those in legal employment. Being a Syrian refugee and trying to make ends meet inevitably means breaking at least some of the laws set up to frame the response.

Fig. 8. October Policy. Table retrieved from Uzelac, Meester, 2018

In May 2015, UNHCR effectively stopped registering Syrians entering the country as refugees, and since 2015, Syrians entering Lebanon are “recorded” rather than “registered,” and are referred to as “temporary displaced persons” (Janmyr & Mourad, 2018; Fawaz et al., 2018). The new policy included novel short term visa requirements (ex. for tourism, study, business, property owners) and long-term residency requirements, making it increasingly hard for Syrians to enter or stay in Lebanon (Lebanon Support, 2019). These policies include an annual residency renewal fee (300,000 LBP) and municipal costs and fees for the notary public. The manifestation of this policy mandated that Syrians seeking legal residency would be considered under the migrant worker category, subjecting displaced Syrians to the highly contested sponsorship (kafala) system, which gives considerable power to employers (ibid.). This phase was marked with increased restrictions on entry, stay, and residency renewal but also increased illegality. VASyR (2020) showed that 80% of displaced Syrians lacked legal documents, and as a result, were subject to arrest, penalties, imprisonment, and deportation by the General Directorate of General Security according to Lebanese laws (Chapter IX of the 1962 Law of Entry, Stay, and Exit; the Lebanese Constitution, the Lebanese Penal Code; and the Criminal Procedural Code).

1962	Law Regulating the Entry and Stay of Foreigners in Lebanon and their Exit from the Country.
1991	Lebanon-Syria Treaty of Cooperation, allowing free movement of people, goods, and freedom of work and residence for nationals in both countries.
2003	UNHCR-GoL Memorandum of Understanding, which provides the mechanism for the “issuing of temporary residence permits to asylum seekers” (Lebanon Support, 2016).
2011	Beginning of Syrian refugee influx into Lebanon
2011 - 2014	An “open door” policy due to bilateral agreements between Lebanon and Syria, as well as MOU between UNHCR and GoL. Once refugee numbers became alarming in 2013, hitting the 1 million mark in 2014, a shift in attitude towards governance of displaced Syrians ensued.
2014	The Ministry of Labour limited the professional sectors accessible to Syrians to those of construction, agriculture, and environment/cleaning
January 2015	The policy paper on Syrian displacement by the Council of Ministers in 2014 that came into effect the following year aimed to decrease the number of displaced Syrians in the country. The GoL effectively suspended the registration of Syrians with UNHCR as of May 2015, and all Syrians that entered Lebanon between January and May 2015 were de-registered.

March 2017	General Security Office (GSO) published a decision in March 2017 by the Government to waive the overstay and residency renewal fees for displaced Syrians registered with UNHCR prior to 1 January 2015, who had not renewed their residency based on tourism, sponsorship, property owner or tenancy in 2015 or 2016.
September 2017	General security permitted a period until March 2018 for Syrians to legalize their status without leaving the country to change sponsors, even if they had overstayed their residency permit.
February 2018	Decision 421/2017 for 2018 by the State Council, and Lebanon's High Administrative Court , which nullified the 2015 decision by General Security that amended conditions of entry and residence of displaced Syrians. As such, it removed power from GSO to carry out such amendments.
April 2019	Following governmental decisions, Syrians displaced that have entered Lebanon irregularly after 24 April 2019 have been subject to deportation and handed over to the Syrian immigration authorities.
October 2019	Protests started arising throughout Lebanon in response to a deteriorating economy and frustration with a corrupted state, leading to the resignation of the government.
March 2020	First lockdown issued in response to COVID-19, including curfews, and restrictions on movement of vehicles. Many municipalities issued more restrictive measures on displaced Syrians, especially in ITSs.
August 2020	Beirut Port explosion that killed many, damaged a historic core of Beirut city, rendered thousands homeless, and limited food and medical supplies.

Table 3. Timeline of key events

PROTECTION AMIDST MULTIPLE CRISES

Amidst a global pandemic, an economic crisis, political unrest, and the August 4th Beirut Port explosion, the idea of protection is a mere fantasy for most people in Lebanon, who feel unsafe even in their homes and workplace. The economic crisis that materialized in October 2019 was expressed through mass demonstrations throughout the country in reaction to a deteriorating economy, mass forest fires striking through the country (that the government was unable to put out, requiring international aid) and a corrupt government. A series of economic and political events followed, including the restriction of foreign currency withdrawal – still intact today – unofficial capital control measures imposed singularly by banks and the Lebanese Lira's devaluation (at the time of writing, it has devaluated by 80%). The anti-government protests led to the resignation of the Prime Minister (PM), leading to a deadlock and another PM's eventual appointment in January 2020, who lacked peoples' confidence in his capacity to instigate change. As the first case of COVID-19 reached Lebanon in February 2020, the government issued a series of complete lockdowns that had a detrimental effect on the economy's already weak state. Curfews were imposed throughout the country, but certain municipalities discriminately imposed tighter and stricter curfews specifically on displaced Syrians, fearing that the virus would spread faster in ITS and other informal residences (due to overcrowding and lack of proper WASH). The restrictions on mobility greatly affected the model of aid transfer, with many humanitarian actors and NGOs not being able to access and reach displaced Syrians in need.

On August 4th 2020, one of the largest non-nuclear explosions ever recorded in history happened in the port of Beirut, destroying the city's core, killing many, damaging properties, and leaving thousands homeless. Terror took over the city, hospitals were overflowing with patients, and everyone was in a state of panic. The state's delayed response to the disaster leads communities, NGOs, and institutions to take up humanitarian relief initiatives to make up for the gap in governance. These efforts included fundraising initiatives for basic supplies, cleaning and separating rubble and construction materials, damage and structure safety assessments, offering housing to victims, and rebuilding initiatives. This perhaps sheds light on the people's sovereignty and strength, offering aid and relief even after experiencing extreme trauma. The threat of COVID-19 became more pronounced as many were rendered homeless, where a spike in cases was experienced after the explosion. The port's destruction limited basic food supplies, which endangered vulnerable and displaced persons likely to face food insecurity (Yassine, 2020). After the Beirut explosion, the PM and government resigned due to failures in protecting people in Lebanon and responding with a proper relief strategy.

PART II

3. Legal Protection

In light of the COVID-19 pandemic, the recent Beirut Port Explosion, the economic crisis, and political unrest, this section attempts to identify the legal protection measures currently in place for displaced Syrian and changes to those measures amidst the multiple crises Lebanon is facing. For this purpose, it is crucial to enumerate the relevant actors in dealing with displaced Syrians in the country. The state of Lebanon acts primarily as a coordinator of services and security gatekeeper (Kagan, 2012) with the Ministry of Social Affairs (MOSA) coordinating the protection and assistance efforts of International and National organizations operating in Lebanon, and the General Security Office of the Ministry of Interior monitoring borders, carrying out the admission and regularization of the status of foreigners and dealing with detention and deportation (Bidinger et al., 2014). Therefore, the MOSA co-leads the Lebanon Crisis Response Plan (LCRP) and the UN Humanitarian Coordinator. The humanitarian refugee response component of the LCRP is co-led by UNHCR, while the resilience component is co-led by UNDP. UNHCR collaborates in executing the UNHCR-led Regional Response Plan for Syria. Both agencies collaborate with the Government of Lebanon and humanitarian and development actors. A number of thematic sectors are also co-led by UNHCR, namely protection, health, basic assistance, shelter, as well as providing support to other sectors, including WASH, Social Stability and Education (UNHCR, 2019). Under the Law on Associations inherited from Ottoman times, non-profit non-governmental organizations can freely form and operate in Lebanon. Due to the lack of formal official response to the Syrian crisis, NGOs filled in a large gap in governance by undertaking awareness-raising programs, delivering aid, holding training and vocational programs, building education centres and programs, and providing WASH and mental health services. 54 NGOs operate in connection with displaced Syrians in Lebanon under the Regional Response Plan led by UNHCR (Akram et al., 2015). However, any registered NGO in Lebanon can provide services and assistance to displaced Syrians, making it difficult to monitor activities and avoid duplication of service provision (ibid.).

3.1 Legal Protection Framework

The legal framework of protection in Lebanon is upheld by the Lebanese constitution, international treaties, immigration legislation, and policies and decrees that ensure access to asylum, temporary protection, and prohibit refoulement (Lebanon Support, 2018). In fact, Lebanon is bound by the Convention Against Torture (CAT, and its optional protocol of 2008, which upholds the principles of non-refoulement (Lebanon Support, 2020). Lebanon has not ratified the 1951 Refugee Convention relating to the Status of Refugees nor its 1967 protocol, and the protection mechanisms for refugees remain weak. However, Lebanon is part of a number of human rights treaties like the 1984 Convention Against Torture, the 1965 International Convention on the Elimination of all Forms of Racial Discrimination, the 1966 International Covenant on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights, the 1989 Convention on the Rights of the Child, and the Arab Charter of Human Rights (Bidinger et al., 2014). All the same, a comprehensive domestic legal framework to guide authorities working for refugees is lacking, and there is no legal distinction between refugees and other types of migrants. In Lebanon, refugees and all other foreigners fall under the Law which regulates the Entry, Stay, and Exit from Lebanon passed in 1962 (Akram et al., 2015). Article 26 of the Law states that "any foreign national who is the subject of a prosecution or a conviction by an authority that is not Lebanese for a political crime or whose life or freedom is threatened, also for political reasons, may request political asylum in Lebanon." Furthermore, article 31 states that "when a political refugee is deported from Lebanon, he or she will not be returned to a country in which "his or her life or freedom is threatened" (Janmyr, 2016). Chapter IX of the 1962 law also subjects any illegal presence or entry of foreigners to arrest, penalties, imprisonment, and deportation by the General Directorate of General Security (Lebanon Support, 2019). Therefore, it's clear that refugees receive no protection from the Law if they lack necessary documentation. Further, lacking a legal status interferes with displaced Syrians' mobility as

many start avoiding checkpoints, which in turn affects their income-generating possibilities. Additionally, access to healthcare is also affected by this lack of mobility as a result of illegality (NRC, 2014).

3.1.1 Legal Status

Entry/Temporary Residence Permits

Syrians entering Lebanon benefit from a temporary residence permit based on the 1994 Bilateral Agreement between Lebanon and Syria. During the open-door phase lasting from 2011 till 2014, Syrians entering the country received an "entry card" at one of the official GSO posts, which would act as their residency visa valid for 6 months, and could be renewed for another 6 months free of charge, and afterwards for a fee of 300 Lebanese Lira for every two 6 month periods (NRC, 2014). Syrians who entered without passing through an official GSO post would need to apply for a "petition for mercy" to legalize their stay (ibid.). The closed-door policy phase lasting from 2015 till today, characterized by increased interference by the GoL, and that was put into effect with the policy paper on Syrian displacement, had several consequences on displaced Syrians' legal status. It first halted any registration of displaced Syrians as refugees by UNHCR as of 2015 and enforced strict entry regulations along with novel visa requirements (prior, Syrians could freely enter Lebanon based on bilateral agreements between Syria and Lebanon). It also initiated a de-registration wave for any Syrian that had entered the country between January and May 2015 (Fawaz et al., 2018). In June 2014, as part of their increased monitoring and control initiative at the border, the GoL invoked article 1(C) of the 1951 Convention (that it has not signed) to justify the need to de-register refugees on the basis of their commutes to Syria – arguing that they shouldn't be considered as fleeing danger or persecution if they were able to return to their country (Janmyr, 2018). Since 2015 and still in effect today, admission for Syrian nationals is accessible via visa categories, including sponsorship, tourism, business, land ownership and tenancy, as well as transit⁴. Syrian refugees must provide supporting documentation and any requirements specified by the visa type (LCRP, 2019). However, seeking refuge in Lebanon is not among the valid reasons for entry, other than in 'exceptional circumstances' approved by the Ministry of Social Affairs (MoSA). Such criteria may be a scheduled doctor's appointment of critical patients, a scheduled appointment at a foreign country's embassy, or documentation showing the presence of a Lebanese spouse or a mother residing in Lebanon. Syrians fleeing persecution, conflict, and violence in Syria must fall within the exceptional humanitarian criteria to be admitted (ibid.).

Registration

"Syrians registered as refugees by UNHCR" receive a UNHCR registration certificate, which is valid for two years since its issuance. It entitles refugees to international protection and humanitarian assistance, enabling them access to various services including, education, health, and legal counselling. However, it hasn't implied any formal status that the Lebanese government recognizes, nor has it exempted refugees from penalties associated with irregular entry or a lack of residency in Lebanon. In fact, the UNHCR certificate of registration does not grant the status of asylum seeker. Registered refugees received aid from UNHCR depending on the assessed situation and were requested to sign a pledge not to work (which was later changed to a "pledge to abide by Lebanese laws and regulations), since they receive aid by UNHCR (Lebanon Support, 2016).

According to UNHCR, by mid-2016, 1 in 2 refugees were not able to renew their residency permit and were living outside the law (Mencutek, 2017). In reality, the GoL's strict actions and closed-door policy proved only to change the label given to displaced Syrians by increasing the number of economic migrants and decreasing "Syrians registered as refugees by UNHCR" (Janmyr, 2018). Moreover, these restrictions have, in fact, resulted in more Syrians working without official contracts, giving way to

⁴ <https://general-security.gov.lb/ar/posts/33>

increasingly clientelistic networks and practices of bribery and corruption (Lebanon Support, 2015; Mencutek, 2017). In 2017, the General Security Office (GSO) issued a circular to waive overstay and residency renewal fees of Syrian refugees registered before January 1, 2015 (Fawaz et al., 2018). Subsequently, decision 421/2017 by the State Council and Lebanon's High Administrative Court removed power from the GSO to make decisions on displaced Syrians, limiting its efforts solely to implementation. In 2018 and 2019, the GoL initiated a series of crackdowns on the informal labour market, targeting workers with inadequate documentation and shop owners, who often faced temporary arrest (Chehayeb and Sewell, 2019).

3.2 Legal protection during the materialization of the economic and political crises

Many displaced Syrians are not able to pay 300,000 LBP to renew their residency. According to VASyR (2019) around 74% of displaced aged 15 and above were still without valid residency, (Fig. 11) growing to 80% in 2020 (VASyR, 2020). Moreover, only 31% of registered Syrians have at least one member with legal residency (VASyR, 2020).

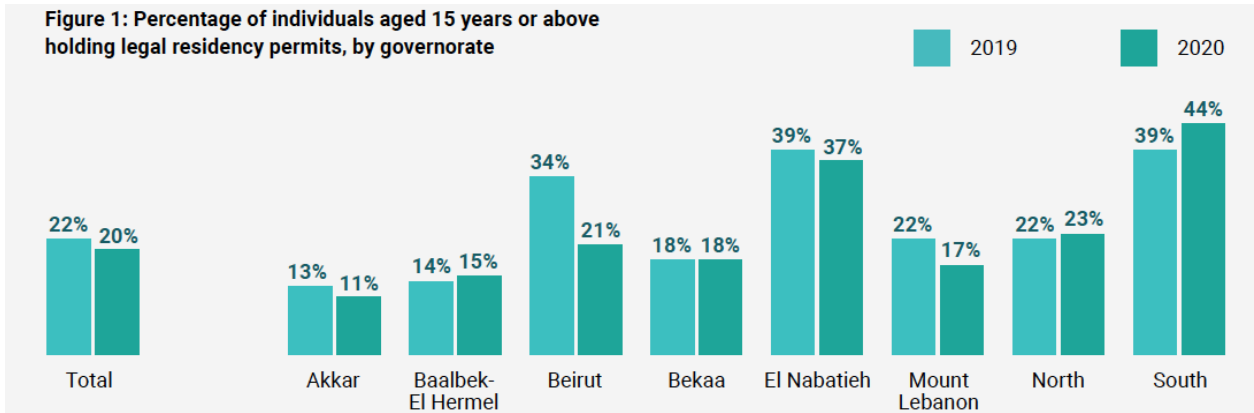


Fig. 11. Legal residency permits for Syrians’ displaced aged 15 and above. Retrieved from VASyR (2020)

Although registration applies to new-borns, around 2/3 of the babies born to Syrian parents since 2011 are without birth certificates (VASyR, 2019). In 2019, 30% of births were registered, falling to 28% in 2020 (Fig. 12) mostly due to the restrictions as a result of the Covid-19 pandemic (VASyR, 2020). A lack of birth registration is highly problematic in application for resettlement, return to the country of origin, or in receiving aid and services.

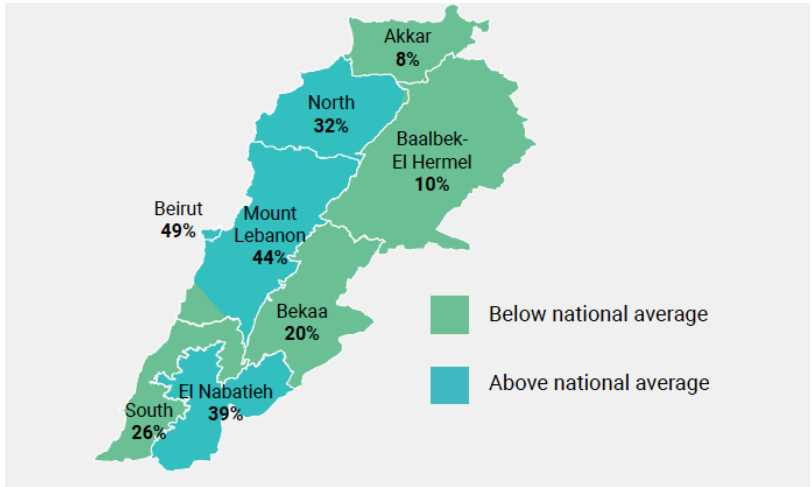


Fig. 12. Percentage of Syrian children born in Lebanon with births registered at the Foreigners’ Registry, by governorate. Retrieved from VASyR (2020)

3.3 Legal protection during COVID-19

Lockdown, social distancing, and hygiene measures are the most widely used expedients adopted by countries worldwide to prevent the spread of COVID-10. Across the globe, similar public health measures have profound implications for millions of people's livelihoods, especially for vulnerable and displacement-affected populations. Lebanon's situation is compounded because of the layering of the pandemic onto the on-going economic crisis and the political instability experienced since 2019 (Durable Solutions Platform et al., 2020). In mid-March, the Lebanese Government imposed its first lockdown to combat and prevent the pandemic in the country. The related restrictions on movement and social distancing measures severely impacted displaced Syrians' already vulnerable condition, disrupting their livelihoods and access to support. The shortcomings of social distancing orders and lockdown are evident in most vulnerable districts in Lebanon, where communities feel their lives have been upended with little protection or access to support. Economic and COVID-19 crises pushed almost the entire refugee population below the Survival Minimum Expenditure Basket (SMEB). Inflation substantially impacted food (174% increase since October 2019) and non-food costs (175%), with half of the Syrians now facing food insecurity (VASyR, 2020).

The COVID-19 pandemic spread within a context already heavily weakened by multiple crises, and it serves as the country's third level of constraint amid on-going political and economic challenges (Fouad et al., 2021). The Lebanese Government attempted to implement a centralised approach by establishing a National Committee for COVID-19. The National Action Plan Against Coronavirus (COVID-19), published in April 2020, was presented as a holistic approach conducted "to prevent infection, save lives, reduce risks, and ensure an effective response" (Disaster Risk Management Unit, 2020, p.4) in parallel to the action plans of governorates and municipalities (Moawad et al. 2020).

Lockdown and curfews have been imposed several times due to the spike of coronavirus cases, experienced sharply post the August 4th Beirut Port explosion and December holiday. Several municipalities have implemented more restrictive timing to Syrians, limiting their shopping for basic food supplies or buying medicines. In fact, the practice of imposing curfews discriminately on displaced Syrians has been in effect since 2014 in approximately 45 municipalities throughout Lebanon (Saadi, 2014). In certain areas, the limitation has also been imposed on humanitarian aid workers impeding their ability to reach and help vulnerable populations, which has severely impacted Syrian livelihoods.

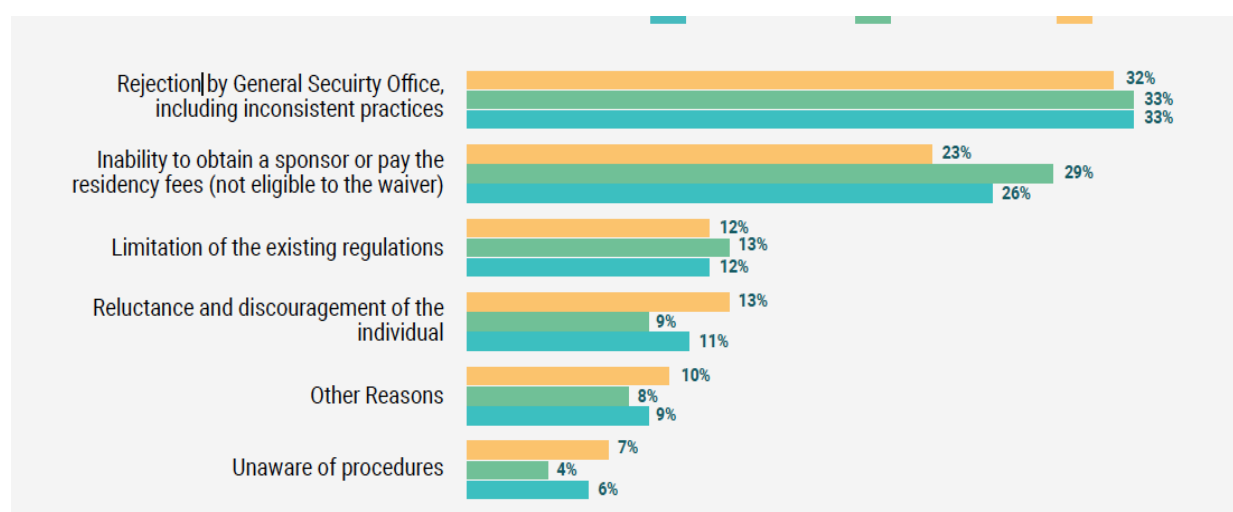


Fig. 13. Reasons for not holding residency permit. Retrieved from VASyR (2020)

The General Security Office halted the processing of residency and work permit applications with the issuance of lockdowns (DRC et al., 2020). Regardless, many factors are affecting the ability of displaced Syrians to legalize their stay (Fig. 13). With 9 out of 10 households in debt, residency renewal fees are challenging to pay for most displaced Syrians (VASyR, 2020). Expenditures on legal documentation were reportedly less by 45% among "Syrians registered as refugees by UNHCR" in early 2020 (UNHCR, 2020a).

On the other hand, Syrians lacking legal documentation experienced restrictions on movement, difficulty getting employed, and changing their illegality status (ibid.). Displaced Syrians not registered with UNHCR faced hardships in attaining residency due to the GSO's rejection in obtaining a sponsor or renewing their sponsorship (VASyR, 2020). Moreover, displaced Syrians without legal documents often decide to remain in their neighbourhood, fearing the ubiquitous checkpoints found throughout the country where they may be detained, questioned, and penalized accordingly (ibid.). The lack of documentation has also affected the likelihood of displaced Syrians seeking medical care in case of illness or symptoms due to their fear of being detained at official checkpoints (NRC, 2020b). Also, 5 out of 7 covid-19 treatment governmental hospitals surveyed by NRC (2020) reported that it was mandatory for displaced Syrians to provide documents of UNHCR certification prior to getting treatment, and one hospital requested residency documents along with identification documents (ibid.).

3.4 Legal protection in practice

OFFICIAL STATUS

Twenty-two out of twenty-four respondents reported being registered with UNHCR with an asylum seeker status, while only 5 reported having the Lebanese residency permit (Table 4). Prior to registering, many displaced Syrians were advised by relatives, friends, and neighbours to register with the UN because they would provide various forms of assistance to them. Although many Syrians expressed the desire to acquire the Lebanese residency permit primarily for safety and security reasons, many are unable due to changes in Lebanese law making it more difficult, the high cost of renewal, and other contributing factors.

ENTERING LEBANON

This section will outline the different methods Syrians use to enter Lebanon; the challenges experienced; and whether they received any assistance from any persons or entities in entering. For those entering Lebanon legally, no significant issues were reported. However, those who entered illegally faced more challenges, specifically detention (Fig. 14).

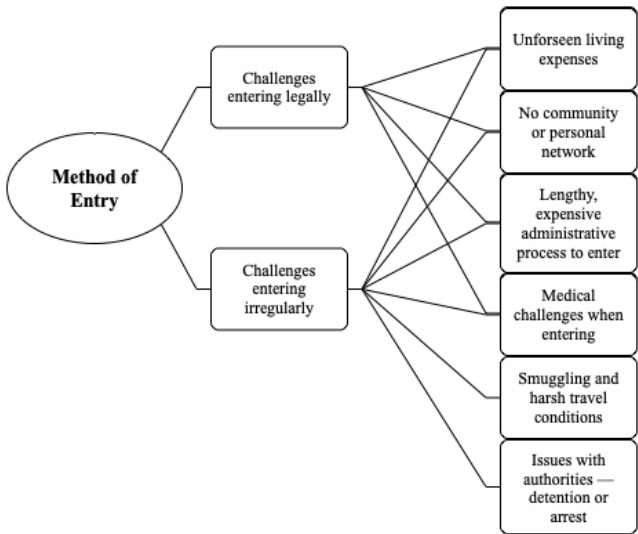


Fig. 14. Methods of entry and challenges.

Experience Entering: Displaced Syrians entering Lebanon legally faced no significant challenges (fig. 15). However, nine respondents who stated they entered illegally were mostly smuggled in. Furthermore, over half of these respondents entered Lebanon in 2015 or later, thereby necessitating the need to enter illegally after the border closure (fig. 16). Many, especially during winter, experienced harrowing conditions under distressing circumstances.

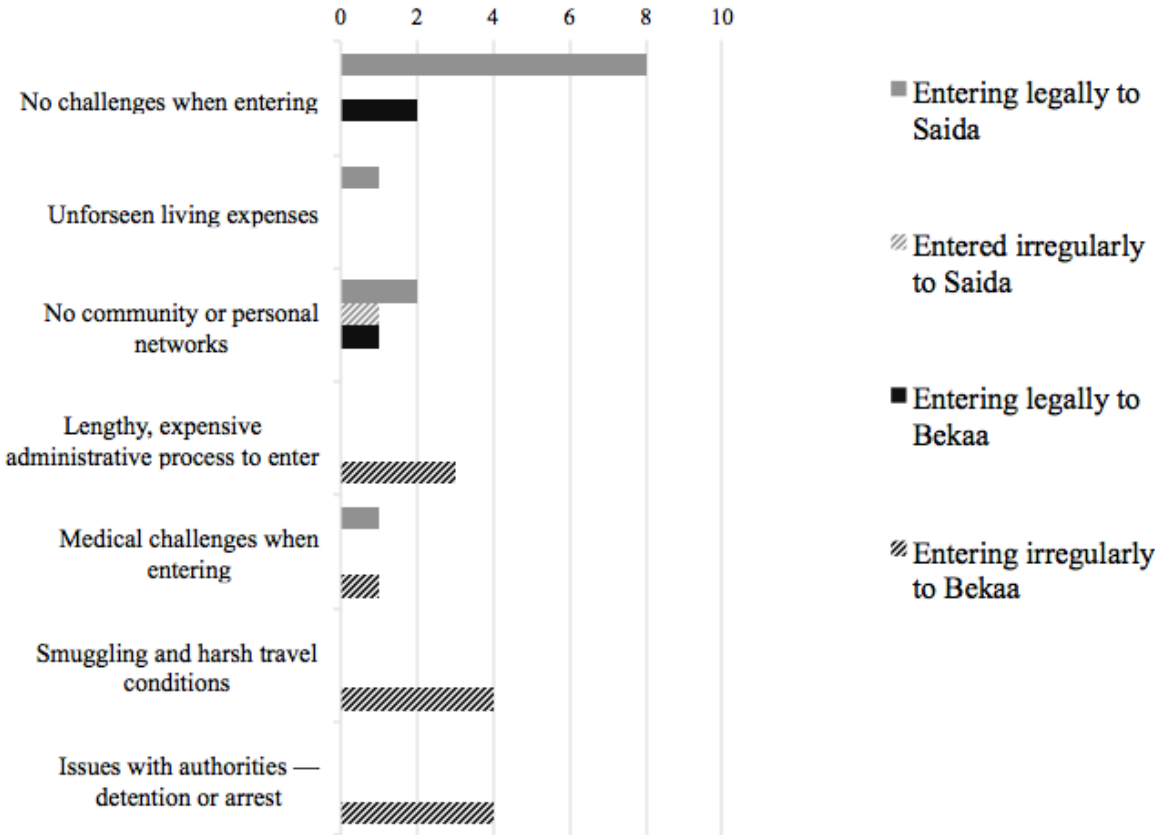


Fig. 15. Challenges experienced when entering either legally or irregularly in the Bekaa and Saida

"I saw a smuggler and paid him 100,000 LBP to cross the Syrian border into the Lebanese border, and I didn't see him again."

Four respondents had serious altercations with authorities ranging from being detained to (as described by one participant) being shot upon by authorities. Notably, when Syrians are detained by Lebanese authorities, oftentimes their identification papers are confiscated and only returned until they obtain a Lebanese residency permit. Subsequently, being detained without *any* identification documents creates more issues with authorities.

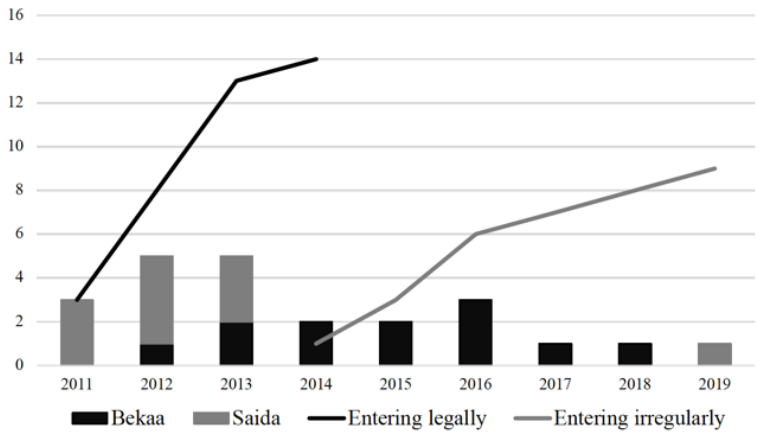


Fig. 16. The frequency over time and type of entry in Saida and Bekaa.

Assistance while Entering: Over a third of respondents stated that they received no assistance when entering the country. However, upon entering, many required secure shelter to settle. Some respondents stayed with family upon arrival while others arriving at ITSs received assistance from neighbours. One camp supervisor helped set up a tent for a newly arrived family. One woman recounts her experience entering Lebanon illegally with her children and receiving assistance from fellow travellers.

PROTECTION IN ASYLUM PROCESS

Official Status	Method of Entry		Total
	Legal (n=14)	Illegal/Irregular (n=9)	
Asylum seeker	9	8	17
Asylum seeker / residency permit	4	0	4
Lebanese residency permit only	1	0	1
None	0	1	1

Table 4. Method of entry and Syrian's official status

Participating in Formal Registration Process: The vast majority of Syrians registering with the UN received no assistance in the process. Two respondents explained that the UN completed all their paperwork for them. Displaced Syrians that did obtain a Lebanese residency permit reported that the UN assisted them by filling out paperwork, acting as sponsor for permit, and paying the renewal fees. Also three respondents reported being informed by the General Security department to obtain a Lebanese residency permit.

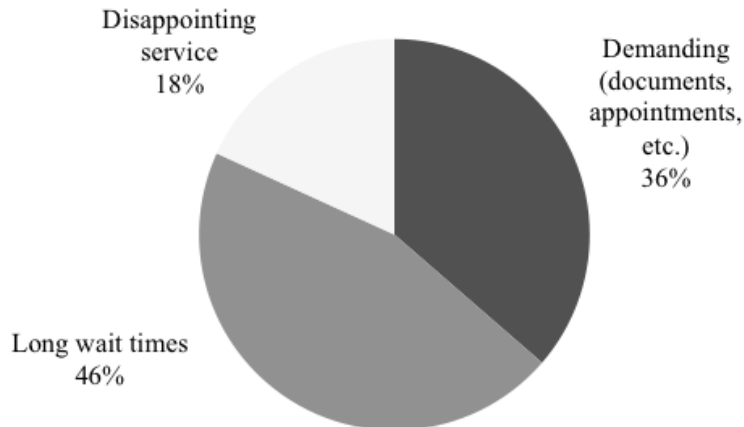


Fig. 17. Reported aspects that made registering for the UN asylum seeker difficult

Almost three quarters of Syrians registered with the UN stated that for the registration process was easy and straightforward. Yet, some respondents did express challenges with the registration process and found it difficult (fig. 17). In particular, they found the process was demanding due to the number of documents the UN requested, updating their biometrics, the costs of transportation to the UN office, the difficulty of bringing all their children to the office, and the long wait time for an appointment or receiving a decision on their application. Syrians with the Lebanese residency permit also expressed challenges obtaining information from the General Security department and the expensive yearly renewal of the permit.

Expectations about Registration Process: Less than one half of Syrians registered with the UN reported that their expectations were met regarding the registration process. However, just under half of the

respondents stated that their expectations weren't met, the majority being females (fig. 18). A number of respondents wished that the UN would provide them with asylum abroad, and assist them with the Lebanese residency permit. One participant was also dismayed by the lack of checking-up or following-up from the UN.

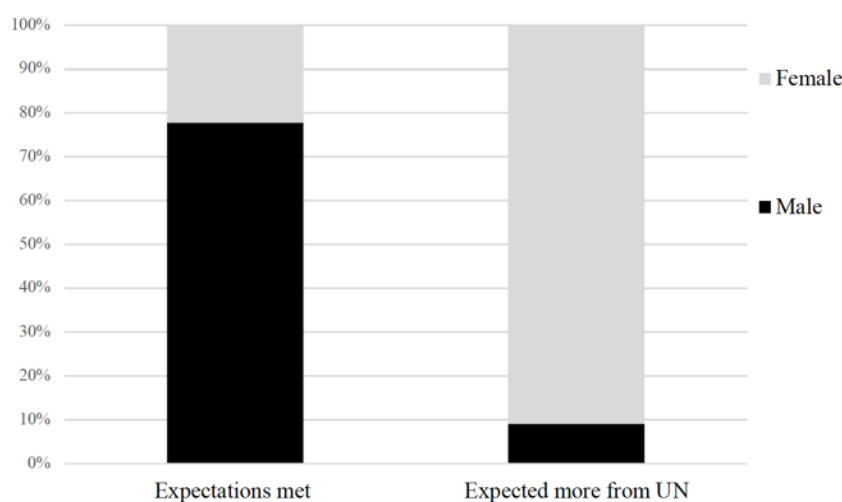


Fig. 18. A gender analysis of whether expectations were met registering as a UN asylum seeker.

Professionalism of UN Staff (and General Security Staff): Overwhelmingly, Syrian's experiences with staff at the UN were positive with many saying they were treated with respect. Many respondents also shared moments of the UN staff paying particular attention to their needs. Elderly persons and those with children were sometimes given a wheelchair, wait times at the office expedited, and other small gestures which made their experience easier. However, three respondents did recall a negative experience with UN staff. For the minority of Syrians with a Lebanese residency permit, their experiences with the General Security staff were lukewarm, and reported experiencing ambivalence for their needs and occasional yelling by staff. However, they were also described as "polite and helpful" by one respondent.

INFORMATION AND AWARENESS OF REGISTRATION, RIGHTS, AND OBLIGATIONS

Information on the Formal Process of Registration: The overwhelming majority of respondents reported that they had no information about the formal process of registration or were never informed. A few respondents could not recall whether they were told because they registered many years ago. Four respondents did report they did receive information. Specifically, they knew about UN hospitalization assistance and information on how to use the UN food card. One woman recalled that she used to visit the offices frequently to obtain information.

Information on Important Aspects about Registration: Over three quarters of registered displaced Syrians reported having no information about important aspects of registration like the lengths of time, options available in case of rejection, or the difference between subsidiary status and refugee status. With information regarding the rejection of the registration application, respondents' answers varied from having no options if rejected to "no one gets rejected."

LEGAL STATUS PERCEPTIONS AND IMPLICATIONS

Asylum Seeker Perception and Implications: Half of the respondents registered with the UN as asylum seekers stated that there was no change in their perceptions of who they are. They claim that their identity is the same and that nothing is different for them. However, the majority of Syrian with asylum seeker status reported a change in their perceptions and identity. They explain that they now feel like a 'refugee,' uprooted, vulnerable to whims of authorities and Lebanese locals, sub-human, and without a home.

“As a refugee, there is no stability, and this is very tied with the army, the locals; as Syrians there is no stability.”

In fact, being registered with the UN as an asylum seeker has had significant implications to the lives of many Syrians in Lebanon. Firstly, many respondents reported being in a state of ‘bare life’ — merely existing by right of having life with no political rights or freedoms.⁵ Without the UN official status, many Syrians state that they would not be alive. They have no control over the events in their life, and they are not entitled to the rights and freedoms as anyone else in the world would be. Furthermore, they possess a sense of detachment in their daily lives, and a general feel of insignificance as they are displaced from their home.

“[My children] are still eating thyme and olive oil dry sandwich for breakfast. What about their rights? What about refugee’s rights?”

“It has implications. My wife and I are sick, and we need medical assistance. If I’m not a refugee, maybe I would have received that medical assistance.”

In addition to displaced Syrians’ experience as ‘bare life,’ they also experience discrimination, as reported by the respondents, through verbal harassment from locals and authorities, social exclusion, and the inability to seek any legal redress if they are mistreated. Nevertheless, two respondents commented on their access to basic services and support the asylum seeker status provides by the UN, and a further three participants stated that it has no implications nor made any change in their daily life. With regards to how the asylum seeker status impacted their settlement in a new environment, almost half the respondents stated it had no impact whatsoever. However, five respondents claimed that they do not feel settled, that their house is not a home, and that they may be refouled at any time.

Lebanese Residency Permit Perceptions and Implications: In terms of perceptions and identity, the Lebanese residency permit made no real changes, however, the status has been significant because it provides them a sense of safety and security from the precarity of being irregular or illegal in the country.

“Now I feel safe. Having the residency permit is safe. Now, I feel like someone is responsible for me.”

Syrians with the Lebanese residency permit report no significant implications of their status other than protection from arbitrary search and investigations by authorities. However, they still report no change with regards to discrimination from locals. Nevertheless, over half the respondents who obtained the Lebanese residency permit have described an improved difference in their living environment. As compared to those with only asylum seeker status, a few respondents claimed that they feel more settled and more secure (fig. 19).

⁵ Agamben, G. 1995. *Homo Sacer: Sovereign Power and Bare Life*. Stanford University Press.

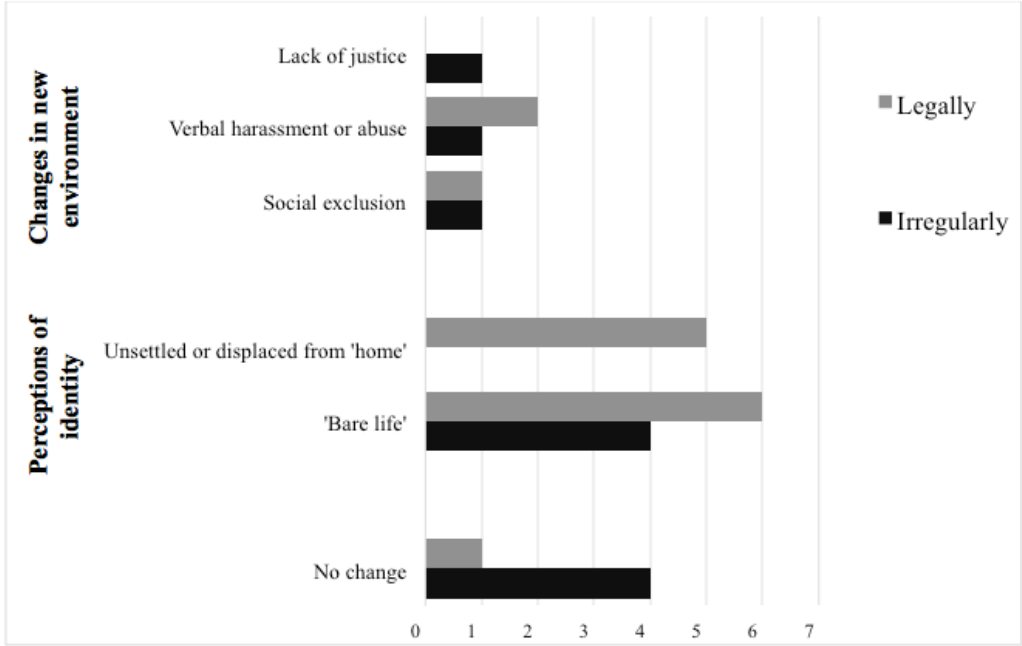


Fig. 19. Implications of official asylum seeker status on displaced Syrians' perceptions portrayed amongst method of entry.

Protection in Detention and Deportation: Approximately one third of participants (fig. 17), all male, have experienced detention while living in Lebanon (female participants reported their husband's detention). While oftentimes detention was routine and brief, some Syrians experienced difficult conditions and experiences. Furthermore, displaced Syrians interviewed had not reported any serious situations whereby they may be refouled back to Syria.

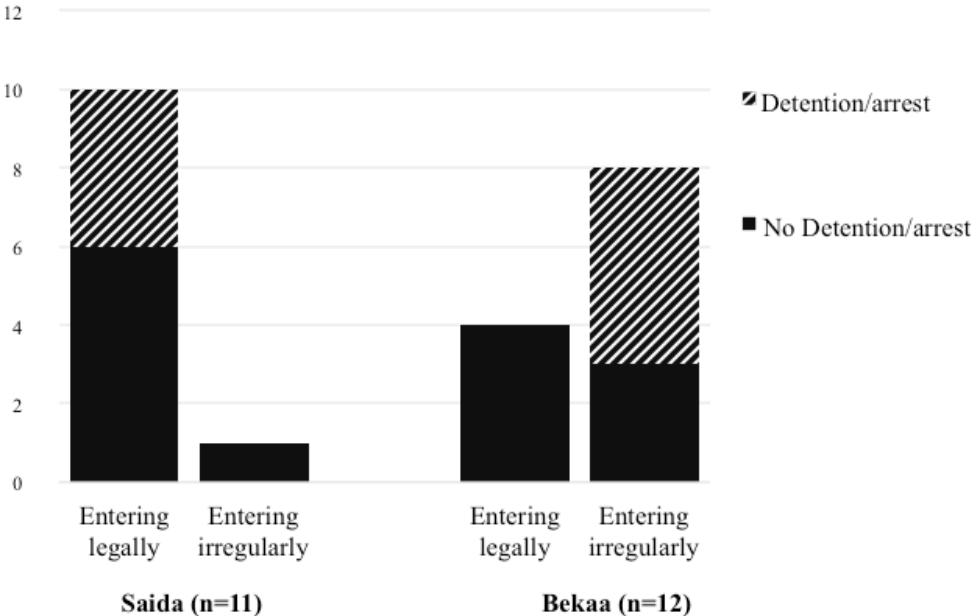


Fig. 20. The legality of entry and detention/arrest in Saida and Bekaa.

Figure 20 illustrates the type of entry into the country and the likelihood of detention or arrest. Primarily, those entering legally settled in Saida where those entering irregularly settled in the Bekaa and were more likely to experience detention. For those that entered Saida legally also experienced detention or arrest. This is likely because they are often stopped by authorities and detained when in public places. Two thirds of Syrians interviewed who entered the country legally did not experience detention. However, for those that entered irregularly, roughly half experienced some form of

detention or arrest. Although they were largely arrested when entering the country via smuggling, others were detained in ITS raids, arbitrarily stopped while walking, or at the airport. Some also reported being arrested multiple times. Detention, according to participants, lasted from only a day, to a few days, weeks, or even months.

Most arrests and detentions were routine with participants stating that they were treated respectfully (fig. 21). More often, displaced Syrians were detained so as Lebanese security officers may conduct a background check. They were often advised to acquire the Lebanese residency permit upon release. However, two participants did report extreme examples of maltreatment while in custody including abuse, humiliation, and torture.

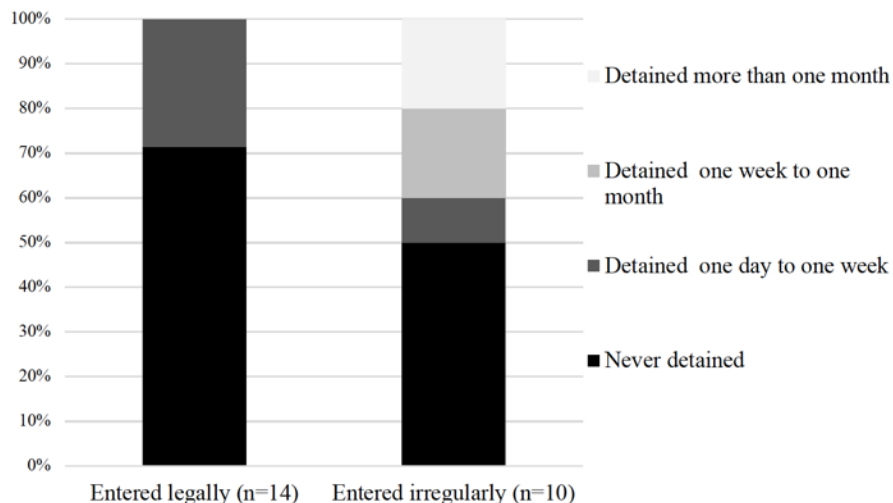


Fig. 21. The legality of entry and duration of detention

Figure 18 shows the type of entry into Lebanon and the duration of detention. Those who have entered legally are less likely to experience detention, and those they entered irregularly often experience long detention times. One woman stated that her husband was detained five years ago, when they were entering the country irregularly, and she presently does not have any information on his whereabouts.

‘When I first entered Lebanon, because I entered illegally by smuggling, I was held for one week They moved me between Dahr Al Baydar and Beirut. After that, they released me, but they kept my ID, and I’ll have it back once I receive my residency permit.’

Half of the displaced Syrians who experienced arrest or detention did not have access to a lawyer. For those that did, most refused their service with one participant saying he did not want to pay the legal fees. One participant did hire a lawyer but expressed his dissatisfaction with his legal representation. Furthermore, no participant reported receiving any relevant legal information. One stated that he should plead not guilty of any smuggling charges, and another was informed that he must obtain the Lebanese residency permit.

Deportation, Refoulement, and Return: No Syrian refugee interviewed reported receiving a return order, a decision for deportation, or any other mandate to return to Syria. However, if there was ever a change in policy or practice with regards to the refoulement of displaced Syrians in Lebanon, two thirds of participants said they would not return to Syria — especially if the country is still insecure and unsafe — or hope to continue on to a third country.

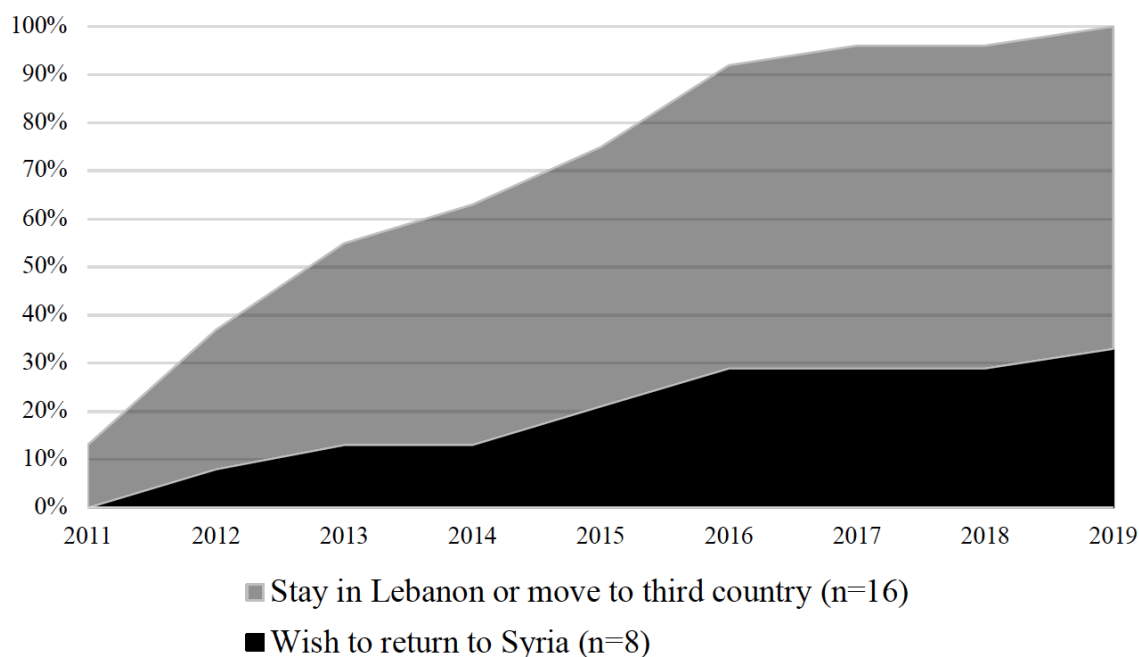


Fig. 22. Year of entry into Lebanon and reported opinion about returning to Syria or not.

Figure 22 also shows the rate of entry into Lebanon and the participant's opinions about return to Syria. Additionally, half also relayed that they would not be able to cancel the order for deportation if ever placed. Conversely, one third of displaced Syrians in Lebanon have expressed a desire to return to Syria. For those open to returning, two elaborated that their return would be contingent on a safe Syria.

LEGAL PROTECTION: IN SUMMARY

In summary, legal protection for displaced Syrians lacks a formal domestic legal framework or laws that would guide authorities and humanitarian actors alike. In the open door policy emergency phase, displaced Syrians weren't obligated to register with UNHCR, the main authority that would assist them in settling, receiving aid, and providing services. Accordingly, Syrians entering Lebanon would often have to find their own way, relying on other displaced Syrians they entered Lebanon with or through non-formal support mechanisms. At the end of this emergency phase, and when the number of displaced Syrians became alarming, Lebanese authorities took matters into their own hands through the Policy Paper on Syrian Displacement, namely to "decrease the number of displaced Syrians in Lebanon." This mandated the need for Syrians to apply for a residency permit to be considered "legal", and it effectively halted the registration of displaced Syrians "as refugees by UNHCR." The consequences of this action resulted in acts of smuggling Syrians into Lebanon, which would often be a dangerous and life-threatening journey. Syrians entering Lebanon post-2015 often had issues with authorities, had to pay to enter, and endured harsh travel conditions. Having an asylum seeker status was found to impact the perceptions of a little less than half of our respondents, who reported feeling like a 'refugee', 'uprooted', 'vulnerable', and 'without a home'. Displaced Syrians with a residency permit reported feeling 'safe and secure' and protected from authorities' arbitrary search and investigations. However, attaining a residency permit proved difficult for the majority of the respondents, confirming VASyR findings, where changes in Lebanese laws and costly fees were communicated as the main obstacles in attaining residency. The 1962 law of Entry, Stay, and Exit from Lebanon, which applies to all foreigners and refugees alike, dictates penalties and arrest in the case of illegality, and creates a space of terror for the majority of 'illegal' Syrians, often limiting their mobility, their ability to seek help in case of any adverse events and to seek healthcare services they are entitled to as a displaced population. Further, with the onset of COVID-19, the GSO effectively

halted residency and work permit issuance, making it increasingly hard for capable displaced Syrians to change their status of illegality. With the consecutive lockdowns and often increasingly strict curfew measures placed on Syrians, especially those within ITS, a lack of mobility resulted in worsening the ability of displaced Syrians to seek employment and provide basic needs for them and their families.

If we return to the four principles of protection:

1. Enhance people's safety, dignity and rights and avoid exposing them to further harm
2. Ensure people's access to impartial assistance, according to need and without discrimination
3. Assist people to recover from the physical and psychological effects of threatened or actual violence, coercion or deliberate deprivation
4. Help people to claim their rights.

Concerning legal protection, we realise major gaps in the policies mandated by the GoL and major setbacks experienced as of 2015 when registration of displaced Syrians "as refugees by UNHCR" effectively halted and novel visa requirements were implemented. This resulted in a state of "illegality" for the majority of displaced Syrians in Lebanon, from irregular entry cases to lack of legal documentation such as the acquisition of a residency permit, which exposes displaced Syrians to harm according to Lebanese Laws. Further, a lack of legality makes it harder for displaced Syrians to simply move around from fears of being searched and detained by authorities, which in turn decreases access to employment opportunities, healthcare, and seeking alternative accommodation. On the other hand, the majority of respondents didn't know their rights and obligations as asylum seekers, nor were they informed on registration processes.

4. Medical Protection

The arrival of Syrians to Lebanon has constituted a challenge to the health system in Lebanon. Sethi et al. (2017) noted that in 2016, only 56% of the funding required to tackle the health care needs of the Syrian crisis in host countries was obtained; this resulted in insufficient delivery capacity which impacted the health needs of both displaced Syrians and host communities. The current Primary Healthcare Centres (PHC)⁶ network at the Ministry of Public Health (MoPH) is widely distributed across the country, with 235 PHC centres and some 800 dispensaries. It is estimated to serve some 1 million vulnerable Lebanese and non-Lebanese, including displaced Syrians. Health care services to Syrians such as vaccines, medications for chronic diseases, and mental health services are provided free of charge through PHCs and mobile health clinics that are managed by the MoPH, UNHCR, WHO, and other non-governmental organizations (Blanchet et al., 2016). UNHCR also runs a “referral care” mechanism system for secondary and tertiary care through primary health care centres. Nevertheless, the majority of displaced Syrians do not have regular access to basic water, sanitation, hygiene services or infrastructure (UNHCR, 2020f), increasing risk of exposure to infectious and preventable diseases, as well as other health issues (Fouad et al. 2021). Indeed, displaced Syrians with limited legal or illegal status are scared of crossing checkpoints to access healthcare facilities and fearing arrest, which deters them from seeking medical help (IRC and NRC, 2015).

Access to primary health care services: UNHCR supports the MoPH in their effort to strengthen their health system and reinforce response capacity. Registered and non-registered displaced Syrians have access to primary health care centre services, meaning care that does not need hospital admission. These include general medical consultations for acute and chronic diseases, maternal and child health, mental health, reproductive and antenatal/postnatal and contraception as well as family planning service are available at subsidized fees. Moreover, routine vaccinations, medications for acute and chronic diseases and reproductive health commodities are provided free of charge.

In areas where access to primary health care is hindered due to expensive transportation or lack of legal status, mobile health clinics (MHC) through NGOs are available to provide free consultations and medications, and refer patients to primary health care centres. Syrians who are registered with UNHCR have access to essential health services in these PHC with a very minimal fee such as 3,000LL for consultations. Access to secondary and tertiary care must be made through the primary health care centres in coordination with UNHCR. For hospital bills above \$100 USD, UNHCR will cover 75% of the treatment costs while the individual must cover the remaining 25% unless they meet vulnerability criteria such as being victims of gender-based violence, whereby 100% of costs are covered⁷. The maximum amount that displaced Syrians would pay in case of treatment is \$800 USD. Depending on the situation and the attitude of certain hospitals and PHCs, Syrians who are not registered with UNHCR have access to some subsidized health services such as vaccination for children, however, some PHCs might ask for equal contribution of health care treatments similar to Lebanese patients (UNHCR, 2017). Between 2019 and 2020 a larger proportion of families residing in non-permanent shelters reported requiring PHC (75%), compared to those in residential (47%) or non-residential (51%) shelters.

⁶ Primary health care (PHC) refers to health care that does not require hospital admission. This includes services such as: vaccination, medication for acute and chronic conditions, non-communicable diseases care, sexual and reproductive healthcare, malnutrition screening and management, mental healthcare, dental care, basic laboratory and diagnostics as well as health promotion. Primary healthcare fixed outlets are either primary health care centers (PHCCs) that are part of the Ministry of Public Health’s (MoPH) network or dispensaries outside the MoPH’s network; other types of primary health care fixed outlets include private clinics and pharmacies. Primary health care mobile outlets are referred to as mobile medical units. (Vasyr, 2020).

⁷ <https://www.refugees-lebanon.org/en/section/4/health>

4.1 Medical Protection during COVID-19

The Lebanese government's response to COVID-19 included the issuance of consecutive lockdowns and curfews to control the spread of the virus. While this worked to control the number of cases until the government could increase COVID-19 treatment facilities, spikes in cases occurred after the Beirut explosion and again in early January, and hospitals couldn't cater to the needs of ill patients, especially severe cases as the ICUs were saturated. As a consequence of a deteriorating economy, currency devaluation, and the Beirut Port explosion, there have been shortages in medical supplies since the onset of virus, ranging from lack of basic protective equipment to pharmaceuticals (HRW, 2020b). On the other hand, shortages in skilled medical personnel increased the pressures in dealing with the pandemic, as many were getting ill themselves or seeking more lucrative opportunities abroad (ibid.). As the crises continue, civil unrest is stirring as lockdowns are pushing people further into poverty, considering the prices of basic food supplies have more than tripled in the past year. For displaced Syrians who are increasingly finding themselves jobless, reliance on external aid is more acute, for many it's their only means of income.

Self-isolation: 70% of households interviewed by Solidarités International reported that they would not be able to effectively self-isolate. When asked for the primary reason why they could not, 88% of households stated that their tent does not have the space to isolate a single person from other household members. 8% reported that the primary barrier to self-isolation would be that they must work to have an income, while a further 5% reported that household duties would prevent self-isolation (SI, 2020). The majority of Syrians in Lebanon are facing challenges to follow risk reduction practices such as hygiene and disinfection. 50% of the Syrians interviewed by Socio-Economic Enhancement and Development (SEED) in Tripoli practice regular hand washing while only 39% of the interviewees of the LPC survey stressed personal hygiene and hand washing with 26% focused more on the sanitation and sterilization of the spaces. The results of the poll show that Syrians' main concerns and priorities are on hygiene items (detergents, bleach..) and protective elements such as masks and plastic gloves. However, they require financial assistance and water availability, mainly in the areas where water trucking is the only water resource (LPC, 2020). Under the pressure of the Syrians influx in an overstretched situation, communities have thus become more dependent on alternative sources such as water delivery by truck, which in turn has created an unregulated parallel water supply market, further weakening the formal water providers (OXFAM, 2017). Moreover, the restricted freedom of movement under the lockdown, coupled with the fear of being stopped at checkpoints, has dissuaded a great number of displaced Syrians from seeking healthcare services (Rahme, 2020).

Mental health: Mental health in times of Coronavirus in Lebanon remains unaddressed (Fouad et al. 2021). The pandemic and the lockdown are having critical consequences on vulnerable people's mental health and psychosocial well-being. UNHCR reports that the COVID-19 pandemic has exacerbated old vulnerabilities while steadily increasing the intensity of these realities among vulnerable groups, and triggering a wide range of mental health conditions, which may lead long-term psychosocial consequences' (UNHCR, 2020g). Based on SEED report, around 80% of respondents declared that the household's adults are experiencing an increase in stress and anxiety, fear, and sadness. More than 50% highlighted an increased feeling of loneliness and hopelessness. Furthermore, 84% of respondents declared that the household's children feel increasingly sad due to the current situation. 28% of children have an increased feeling of stress and anxiety, and 16% are experiencing fear (SEED et al. 2020).

Use of PHCs during the COVID-19 pandemic: With the emergence of COVID-19, primary health care centres function as the primary access point for patient treatment. PHCs are used as a "tier 1" response, as most centres do not have the human resources to handle all Covid-19 cases. Continuity of protection services for vulnerable children, acute medical conditions, maternal and infant health

services, as well as mental health services are obtainable at the PHCs (UNOCHA, 2020). 57% of households reported using PHC services in 2020 relative to 63% in 2019.

Access to PHCs and hospital care during COVID-19 pandemic: Theoretically, registered and non-registered displaced Syrians have access to free or subsidized health services. However, with the structural constraints such as their freedom of movement and recent economic crisis it's challenging for them to access healthcare. Actually, many PHCs and government contracted hospitals deny access to displaced Syrians without UNHCR certificates and other legal documentation (NRC, 2020b). Only 10% of hospitals and PHCs contacted in an NRC (2020b) study reported admission to displaced Syrians without documentation. Further, unregistered children are often denied access to healthcare services in the case they lack a birth registration certificate and/or registration at a Nofous department (a local government registry office) (NRC, 2020b). In many cases, displaced persons, including children, elderly, and immuno-compromised individuals, have comparatively limited access to extended medical help, clean water, and safe and nutritious food, resulting in a population that is prone to various communicable and non-communicable diseases (Kassem, 2020). 26% of displaced Syrians were unable to procure medicine by July 2020 (UNHCR, 2020d), and 10% of households reported not being able to access PHCs in 2020 (VASyR, 2020). Barriers to accessing PHCs in 2020 (Fig. 23) were mostly financial, with an inability to pay for drugs as the main barrier, followed by doctors' fees, and finally transportation costs (ibid.). Generally, the quality of services was reported to be average or good, but there were some fears of not being treated for being Syrian, of the PHC being too crowded, and of stigmatization for living in unhygienic ITSs (NRC, 2020a).

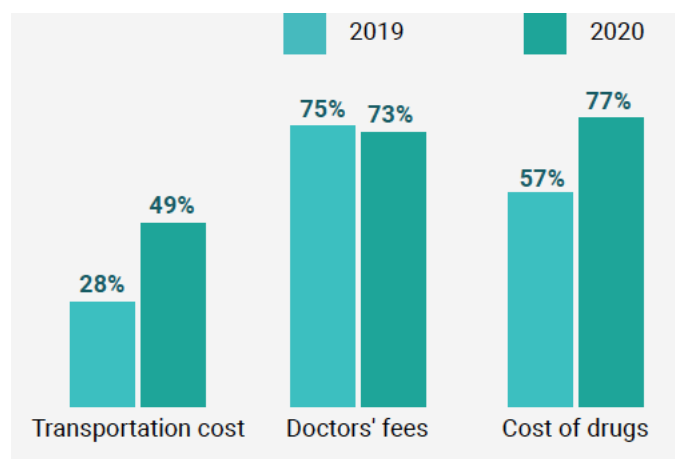


Fig. 23. Barriers in accessing Primary Health Care. Retrieved from VASyR (2020)

COVID-19 cases among displaced Syrians: By the end of 2020, UNHCR announced that 2,339 displaced Syrians were COVID-19 positive, including 1,949 recovered with 90 deceased (UNHCR, 2020e). More than 90% of cases were reported in urban settings, with a total of 157 cases reported in informal tented settlements (ibid.). As part of their efforts, UNHCR utilized a phased approach to add hospital beds and intensive care units in hospitals across Lebanon (ibid.). Further, an agreement took place between UNHCR with the Rafic Hariri University Hospital (RHUH) to treat COVID-19 cases among displaced persons (Yassine, 2020). UNHCR protection monitoring throughout 2020 indicated that the level of knowledge of displaced Syrians continued to improve on how to recognise COVID-19 symptoms, prevention measures as well as how to access information. However, the August 4th port blast has put an overwhelming weight on Lebanon's delicate health care system, as three medical clinics were damaged during the August 4 explosion in Beirut (Yassine, 2020). At that time, RHUH was at its greatest capacity limit and extra facilities were required as the number of COVID-19 cases were on the rise (ibid.). With more than 80,000 Lebanese rendered homeless post the Beirut Port explosion, including displaced Syrians and migrant workers, the threat of the spread of COVID-19 became more pronounced particularly for people residing in urban settings.

4.2 Medical protection in practice

Access to adequate medical protection is a major hurdle for the majority of displaced Syrians in Lebanon. Many suffer from an array of medical conditions and sometimes often require hospitalization. However, a number of obstacles are often encountered in which many displaced Syrians must contend with. Furthermore, for many Syrians, their mental and emotional wellbeing has also been negatively impacted (fig. 24).

EXPERIENCE WITH PROFESSIONAL HEALTHCARE

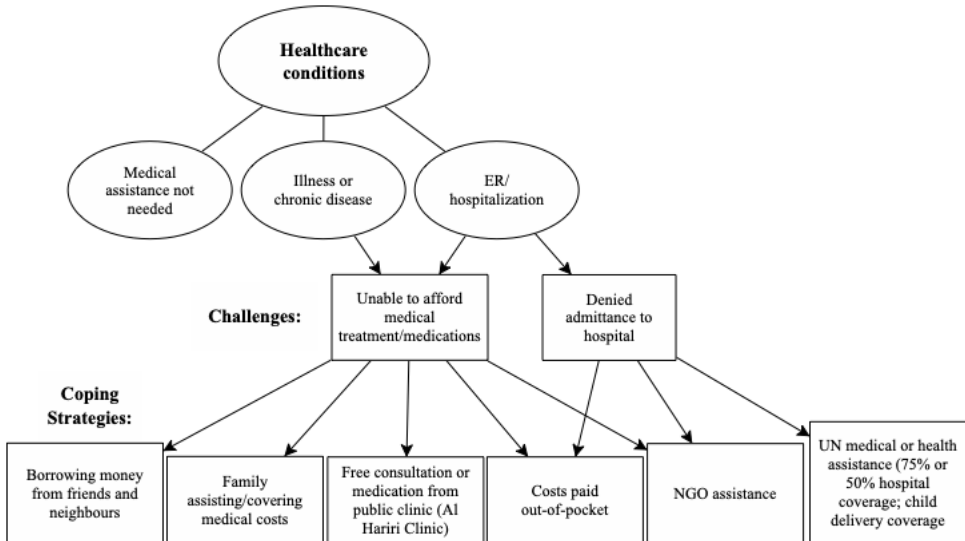


Fig. 24. Healthcare conditions, challenges, and coping strategies.

Medical Needs when entering Lebanon: Three respondents reported they needed medical assistance when entering the country. Two respondents delivered children soon after entering Lebanon with one reporting they received assistance with hospital bills by the UN. One Syrian stated that she needed therapy upon arrival. This individual settled in ITS in the Bekaa, was pregnant when entering Lebanon, and did not know the whereabouts of her husband. She recalls being fortunate to have met a local Lebanese who provided therapy treatment and a trusting relationship.

“I received help from a lady called Hala... I was sick when we arrived to Lebanon and I needed therapy. I went to her and she treated me. She listened to me like a close friend. I trusted her, and I told her everything that was bothering me.”

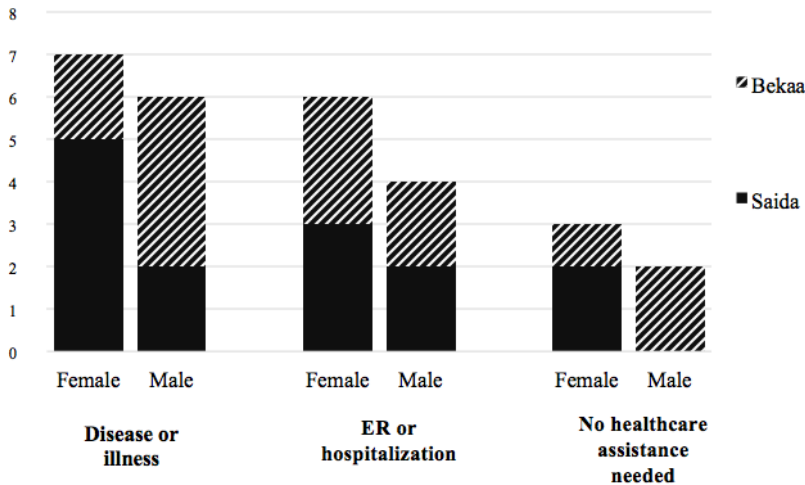


Fig. 25. Healthcare conditions with respect to gender and location.

Figure 25 shows that many women living in Saida and men living in the Bekaa have reported suffering from disease or illnesses. These consist of asthma, diabetes, rheumatism, hypertension, kidney stones, hemorrhoids, back issues, psychological challenges, and other physical injuries sustained from the war in Syria. Furthermore, just under a half of participants also reported needing hospitalization. The primary reason for hospitalization was child delivery, however, others required emergency care for physical injuries like broken bones, lacerations, or burns. Also, a few participants reported stroke and regular blood transfusions for needing hospitalization. Furthermore, as figure 26 shows, women in general disproportionately suffer from illness and require hospitalization or emergency room care more.

Medical Needs when staying in Lebanon: For many respondents having resided in the country for an extended period of time, medical needs now involve the treatment of chronic illness with medication. Furthermore, the concurrent crises in Lebanon have made medications more expensive and harder to find. Only a few respondents were able to pay for their medicine out-of-pocket. Although the UN does provide assistance with hospital bills, they do not provide assistance with medication. Therefore, to cover these medication payments, Syrians will turn to friends and neighbours to cover these expenses. One participant has even gone to his local Sheikh for assistance but reported it was still not enough.

“I buy medicines from my own money, but lately I’m not buying anymore because it increased in price.”

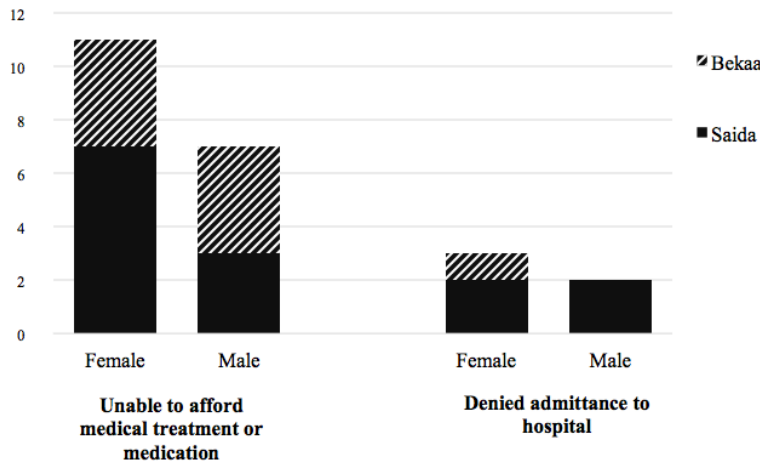


Fig. 26. Challenges obtaining healthcare with respect to gender and location.

Many displaced Syrians seeking medical care must overcome a number of obstacles that prevent them from receiving the care they need. Syrians mainly pay out-of-pocket for medical treatment and medications (one reported getting medication from Syria). Yet, with many displaced Syrians suffering financially, and with the rising costs and shortages of medication, many participants reported delaying or foregoing treatment and medication. Figure 26 shows that women, especially in the Bekaa, struggle to afford such medical treatment or medications. Moreover, some displaced Syrians have been denied admittance to hospitals, particularly in Saida, in cases of emergencies. Two participants reported being denied in cases of urgent care like lacerations and burns, and one explained he was unable to receive hospitalization for his child because of inadequate documentation.

Reception and satisfaction with professional healthcare: A third of respondents also expressed medical challenges faced in the family, namely, chronic diseases which require paying for medication and/or ongoing treatment, mental or physical disability, and major medical assistance like hospitalization. In terms of chronic diseases which require medication or treatment, many Syrians (or members of their

family) reported suffering from kidney stones, asthma, blood cancer, diabetes, high blood pressure, and the effects of a stroke. Regular medication and/or treatment is often too expensive to pay, and many forego purchasing their medication. Furthermore, given the economic and financial crisis of Lebanon, many medications are often out of stock, extremely expensive, or unavailable to purchase.

Registered and non-registered displaced Syrians have access to essential healthcare services – available at a subsidized fee or free of charge, depending on the type of professional healthcare received. The majority of the respondents share the same experience of expecting but not receiving assistance from the UN to pay their medical bills fully. Respondents reported the UN to have covered between 50%-75% of their medical fees. Seventy-two percent of Syrians interviewed required professional healthcare- for rheumatism, stroke, hospitalization, surgery, or diabetes. Unable to secure their fees, respondents either had to pay for everything or partially or sought help within their social network.

“I spoke with the UN, but they won’t cover the entire surgery fees. They said that I would have to pay half the amount and even if I worked for an entire year I wouldn’t be able to collect that amount of money. If I had that amount, I would escape to Turkey and get her the treatment there.”

“Once, an iron ladder fell on my daughter and her head was cut open, we took her to the nearest hospital, they refused to treat her because the UN doesn’t cover ER fees, my daughter was bleeding.”

“My husband had a stroke. He need hospitalization, but no one helped me with the hospital fees, I paid everything, even the UN didn’t help me.”

Although part of their medical fees was covered, Syrians still couldn’t pay the remainder.

MENTAL HEALTH

There was also the feeling of distress expressed by respondents—fear of losing their children and spouses for not being able to afford to pay the medical expenses. One respondent stated that he could not pay 1,000,000 Lebanese Lira (equivalent to almost USD 670 before the lira’s devaluation, at the rate of 1,500) for his wife’s surgery; he feared losing her as he lost his child. Feelings of exhaustion, stress, isolation, depression, sadness, and general anxiety were expressed when asked about their mental health. The poor living conditions and not earning sufficient to afford their basic needs caused respondents to be feeling pessimistic. The statements below represent the difficult situation respondents feel that has affected their well-being.

“I’m always stressed, and stress makes me lose my concentration and forget about things. I feel pessimistic because I don’t have a constant income to live and feed my kids. Sometimes I walk in the street alone and I just tell God all my worries.”

“I’m always under stress and I overthink a lot. I’m always sad. I feel sad for my kids because they’re not living well, and they’re not enrolled in a school. I worry about my husband because he doesn’t have a stable job or income. I feel mentally stressed and this is affecting my health.”

“Yes, I felt pessimistic because I was living in my house in my country and suddenly, I lost everything. We came to Lebanon asking for help, but we weren’t provided with that. When I lived in Ouzai camp, we used to receive boxes of food supplies, and we lived for free and we didn’t pay rent. Now, I pay rent and I have to secure food for my children.”

EMOTIONAL AND ECONOMIC SUPPORT

Moral, emotional, economic support was mentioned when asked the type of support respondents received. The similar experiences that respondents often share collectively since entering Lebanon have resulted in establishing and sustaining connections to rely on each other when support is needed. Thus, living in the same village or neighborhood, Syrians formed a tight-knit community. Only one respondent received therapy sessions from the UN, which was provided at no cost to support Syrians and their family after undergoing difficulties.

EFFECT OF MEDICAL STATUS ON EMPLOYMENT

One-fifth of displaced Syrians responded to their physical and health as obstacles for not finding a job. Two respondents reported having encountered physical pain in their neck and back that resulted in not continuing to work. One seamstress expressed that she had to stop working after suffering from a neck injury.

MEDICAL PROTECTION: IN SUMMARY

In summary, medical assistance is available to registered and unregistered displaced Syrians. PHCs are available to all displaced Syrians and vulnerable Lebanese alike, while secondary and tertiary health care are run by UNHCR through a “referral care” system. Ideally, UNHCR would cover 75% of the hospital bill in case it exceeds \$100 USD, and the patient would cover the remaining 25%. Nonetheless, it’s exceedingly hard for patients to cover a bill of \$100, or 25% of the hospital fees, a finding confirmed by the majority of our respondents. During the hyperinflation of the Lebanese Lira starting in 2019, hospital bills and medication costs became extremely unaffordable as they are often priced in USD. In COVID-19, self-isolation posed a main challenge in prevention of the virus spread, and a generally under emphasized issue was the mental health of displaced Syrians that greatly deteriorated. Respondents shared that their mental health was actually influencing their well-being, and in many cases their tight-knit community helped them cope with challenges. A study by NRC (2020) showed that only 10% of hospitals surveyed admitted Syrians without legal documentation, further emphasizing the link between access to healthcare and legal status. Moreover, most displaced Syrians lacking legal documentation feared leaving their house considering the extensive curfews put in place especially towards displaced Syrians. Nonetheless, contrary to initial fears of COVID-19 spread being acute in ITS, displaced Syrians in urban settings were the majority of those who contracted the virus. Post the Beirut port explosion, shortages in medical supplies, medications, and COVID-19 protective gear were extremely severe, and a spike in COVID-19 was experienced. Those with chronic diseases faced great challenges in finding their medications and affording them.

If we return to the four principles of protection:

1. Enhance people’s safety, dignity and rights and avoid exposing them to further harm
2. Ensure people’s access to impartial assistance, according to need and without discrimination
3. Assist people to recover from the physical and psychological effects of threatened or actual violence, coercion or deliberate deprivation
4. Help people to claim their rights.

In relation to medical protection, we realise major gaps in the continuity of aid assistance that is sometimes entirely unavailable to displaced Syrians, or isn’t enough to cover their expenses. There is also a lack of access to healthcare for those lacking legal documentation, who constitute almost 80% of displaced Syrians. While mental health services are provided free of charge by UNHCR, many displaced Syrians don’t actively use this service due to their lack of knowledge. During overwhelming periods of stress such as the Beirut Port explosion, and the devaluation of the Lebanese Lira, aid assistance remained the same although medical care became highly unaffordable.

5. Accommodation

Displaced Syrians in Lebanon face an on-going deterioration in their socio-economic conditions. The country's desperate economic crisis is exacerbating their unsustainable living. Displaced persons used to rely on social capital, and resources that are embedded in social networks, to manage their experience of protracted displacement. The availability of a group network allows Syrians in Lebanon to reduce the cost of rent and finding more affordable accommodation, or to improve their livelihoods by looking after each other's children, thus allowing parents to work (Uzelac et al., 2018). Furthermore, the social network decries the vulnerability of the individual strengthening his/her position towards exploitative or unreliable employers or landlords. COVID—19 and related lockdown measures disrupted the social network of Syrian communities generating unbearable difficulties for them to navigate and manage their livelihoods. Social distancing orders are disrupting and cutting down the bonding and bridging, key components for the effective use of social capital, making individuals and families more vulnerable. Social gathering between households in ITS have been reduced.

The GoL has adopted a no-camp policy, that forced displaced Syrians to find their own accommodation through personal networks or by chance. Due to this policy housing options for Syrians displaced are: renting house, squatting non-residential structures, finding a place in Palestinian refugees camps, living with local hosts, and joining Informal Tented Settlements. At the beginning of the Syrians crisis, NGOs helped with rental assistance that was not sustainable in the long run, or provided families to fix temporary shelters, and/or to share housing with other refugees (Bidinger et al., 2012). The GoL's no camp policy resulted in non-permanent shelters (ITSs) to locate on private lands, where rent is paid either directly to landowners or through a community representative (shawish) (Sanyal, 2017). This leads to more patron-client relationships that are often less transparent and participatory than traditional humanitarian forms of aid (ibid.). There are three main shelter types found in Lebanon (Fig. 27): non-permanent shelters (ITS), residential shelters (apartments, villas, or accommodation designed for living), and non-residential shelters (factories, workshops, garages, unfinished buildings, farms, and other). In 2020, 21% of displaced Syrians lived in non-permanent shelters (ITS), whereas 67% lived in residential shelters, and 12% resided in non-residential shelters (VASyR, 2020).

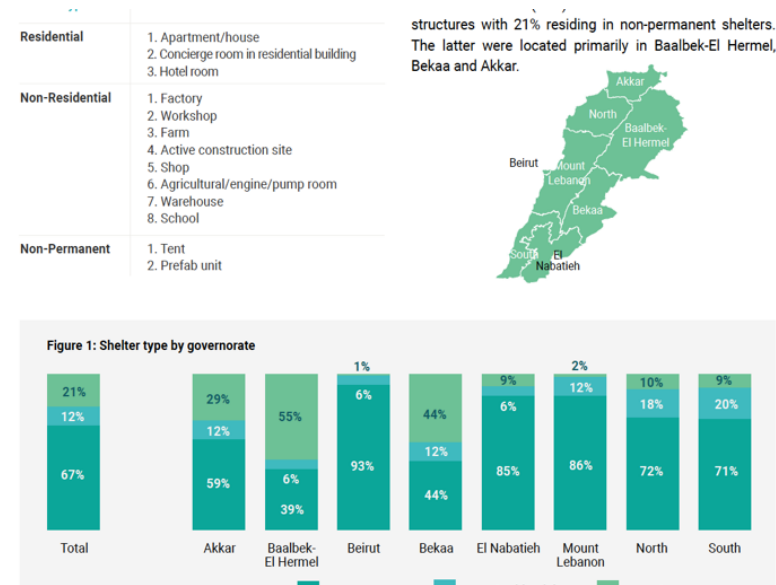


Fig. 27. Syrians shelter types in Lebanon. Retrieved from VASyR (2020)

While LCRP actors focus on those residing in informal tented settlements, the majority of displaced persons residing in vulnerable and densely populated urban areas are often not sufficiently targeted by humanitarian actors and aid delivery mechanisms (UN-Habitat, 2020).

For Syrians living in residential buildings, 45% of these buildings are below the humanitarian standards, and the same applies for those who are living in non-residential buildings such as garages and factories (VASyR, 2020). Water and sanitation services are highly needed in non-residential buildings, such as factories, garages, and the like (Fouad et al., 2016). Displaced persons receive only 7 to 9 gallons of water a day; which is way behind the recommended 26 gallons a day by the World Health Organization. In fact, overcrowding and inadequate hygiene in camps complicate physical distancing, exposing displaced persons to major health risks (Action Against Hunger, 2020). 87% of ITS shelters have substandard conditions, such as lack of sealed windows and doors, leaking roofs, damaged toilet facilities, non-functional water and sanitation pipes, and others, and 13% have dangerous conditions. In contrast, 24% of non-residential shelters are dangerous, more so than in ITS. Finally, cost of rent was recorded highest for residential shelters, followed by non-residential shelters, and finally in ITS (fig. 28).

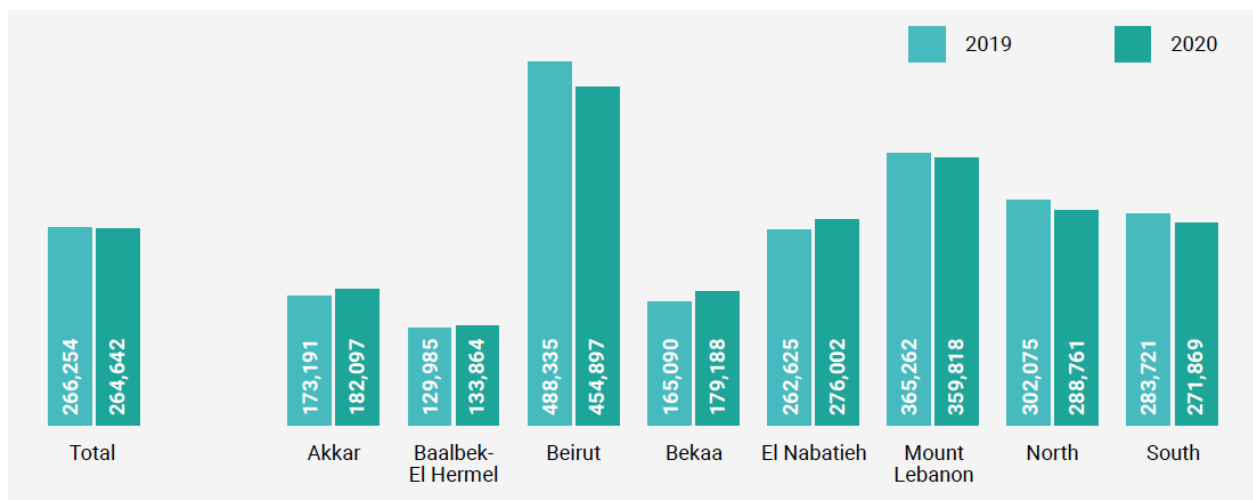


Fig. 28. Rental fee by governorate in Lebanese Lira. Retrieved from VASyR (2020)

5.1 Accommodation during the economic and political crises

At the community-level, an increase in discrimination has been identified. Compared to January – September 2019, beneficiaries' access to safe spaces has decreased on average by 34% in the last quarter of 2019. Factors that can explain this situation include roadblocks, intermittent closure of services, self and imposed restriction of movements, fear of arrests and harassments, and the shift of priorities more towards survival due to the deteriorating economic situation (Inter-Agency Coordination, 2020). Moreover, some ITSs remained in full lockdown with restriction of mobility and additional curfews limiting movements out of the settlements. During the pandemic displaced Syrians dependence on international aid increased exponentially.

5.2 Accommodation during COVID-19

Due to encampment measures and restrictions on movements the job opportunities decreased for both legal and informal work. The threat of COVID-19 has led at least 21 Lebanese municipalities to introduce discriminatory restrictions against displaced Syrian that do not apply to Lebanese residents – ostentatiously to fight the Coronavirus (HRW, 2020). Therefore, Syrians ability to generate an income had been negatively affected by the pandemic with 74% of those interviewed by SI saying that they have lost income and therefore, their ability to pay monthly rent (SI, 2020). To pay for basic needs, more displaced persons need to borrow money, with 9 out of 10 families in debt by the end of 2020 due mostly to securing food, secondly rent, and thirdly health (VASyR, 2020). Funding gaps come with increasing needs; for example, 90% of displaced Syrians are now reportedly in extreme poverty (ibid.).

ITs present all the conditions (i.e. crowded places, impossible to socially distance, no good access to medical support and sanitation) that allow the spread of COVID-19 (Kassem and Jaafar, 2020). When respondents were asked on COVID-19 and its consequences on the relations between the members of an household in the SEED et al. (2020) assessment, 90% declared that the pandemic and the lockdown had affected relations between the household's members (both positive and negative). Of them, 100% agreed that the current situation is exacerbating tensions within the household. In addition, 12% disclosed an increase in intimate partner violence, 29% an increase in violence towards children and 8% a rise in neglect of children (ibid.). Displaced Syrians living in informal settlements lack access to basic WASH services. Moreover, the tents are not well equipped for adverse weather conditions (UNHCR, 2016).

Since March 2020, discrimination, stigmatization and bullying are increasing tensions between host and hosted communities. Based on a multi-sectoral needs assessment, 22% of the respondents feel there is a change in the relations between locals and Syrians (DRC, 2020). Since displaced persons are perceived as a threat to the community's health, the curfew imposed at the national level has being extended to constrain and limit Syrians mobility outside the ITs. At least 18 municipalities in the Bekaa valley – where nearly a third of all displaced Syrians in Lebanon live – have mandated restrictions other than curfews that only target the displaced persons' population. Restrictions on access to villages and towns, financial penalties for not wearing masks or gloves, and confiscation of vehicles to limit movement options are some of the additional measures imposed on Syrians' community (DRC et al, 2020). In Bar Elias, for example, displaced persons must appoint someone to procure and provide for the basic needs of their informal tented settlement and coordinate such movements with the municipality (HRW, 2020b).

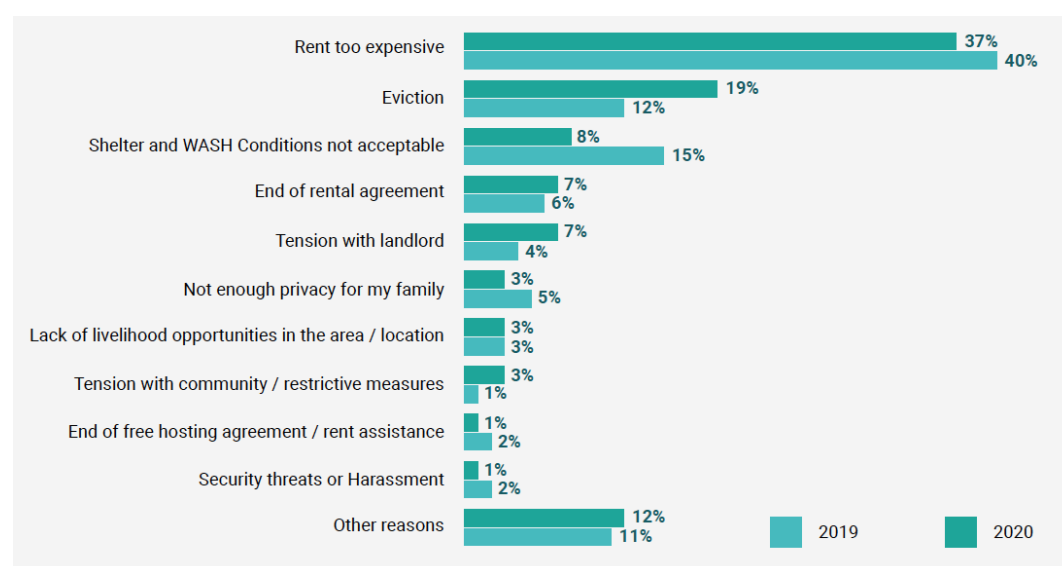


Fig. 29. Reasons for changing accommodation in the past year. Retrieved from VASyR (2020)

At the community-level, 64% of the respondents reported discrimination in access to services, resources and opportunities (SEED et al., 2020). An increase in exacerbated challenges with local authorities such as harassment and arbitrary arrest and detention was recounted by 42% of the interviewees as well as land/house eviction voiced by 30% are major protection concerns resulting from the pandemic and the lockdown (ibid.). Eviction threats have steadily risen from 3% in 2018 to 5% in 2020, with 15% of households changing their accommodation in 2020, mainly due to rising prices of rent, and secondarily due to eviction, which increased from 12% in 2019 to 19% in 2020 (VASyR, 2020) (Fig. 29).

5.3 Accommodation during the Beirut Port explosion

The Beirut Port blast greatly affected the displaced Syrian population, with almost 41 dead after the explosion, and two still missing, six months after the blast (Azhari, 2021). An NGO called Basmeh and Zeytouneh helped almost 4,000 affected families after the blast, but has been receiving incessant calls everyday for food, rent, and medical aid assistance (ibid.). A recurring phenomenon recounted by Timour (2021) is husbands abandoning their families due to the dire economic situation, leaving women to cater for the entire household (ibid.). Further, many Syrians were rendered homeless after the explosion, others with unsealed doors and windows, and in some cases without walls (Osman, 2020). Moreover, Syrians often were the last to receive refurbishment services for their homes (Azhari, 2021). A director of a Lebanese-based NGO also shares that displaced Syrians were some of the worst off post the explosion, having been rendered homeless twice (ibid.).

5.4 Accommodation in practice

Shelter needs when entering Lebanon: The primary need displaced Syrians had when entering the country was securing a safe place for settling. Almost half the respondents stated that they needed safe and secure shelter, in particular, for their children. These needs were often met by a number of different actors, and no respondent reported meeting this need on their own. In ITSs, some respondents received shelter assistance in the form of nylon covers for their shelter needs from the UN & NGOs, and often aid from neighbors would help respondents settle in. For those who did not directly go to an ITS upon entering Lebanon, a number of respondents were able to use their family connections in Lebanon to secure shelter for their initial period of entry. However, with the need of safe and secure shelter imperative for many Syrians entering Lebanon, the need to leave Syria and seek refuge was also reported. Many stated that they sought safety and protection from the war; escaping the war was their most basic need.

INFORMAL TENTED SETTLEMENTS (ITSs)

Experiences living in ITSs: The majority of displaced Syrians residing in ITSs live in the Bekaa valley. Three participants live in makeshift shelters built from wood, plastic, nylon, and other materials. Many Syrians found it easy to simply settle and set up a camp. Some had sought their relatives' location and settled there, while others followed the group they were travelling with. Others used the personal networks (family and friends in Lebanon) to inquire about suitable locations or connecting them with camp supervisors. In some instances, difficulties occurred with the camp supervisor in permitting them to settle or camp fee arrangements. However, displaced Syrians utilized the personal networks to mediate. Displaced Syrians living in camps they must pay the camp fees. Generally, fees are reported to range from 750,000 LBP to over 1,500,000 LBP annually, however, one Syrian refugee unable to work in agriculture for which the Bekaa valley is known for, was required to pay a monthly camp fee of 250,000 LBP.

Coping with Food and Basic Needs in ITSs: Almost three quarters of respondents said they are fully dependent on UN assistance for food and basic needs. Others meet their own needs by working in the 'valley' and also storing foodstuff from harvesting. Others have the know-how to harvest greenery from the land. Other respondents reported needing to borrow money from family, friends, or the camp supervisor to meet their food and basic needs.

Feelings of Security in ITSs: Nearly all respondents reported they feel secure in their ITS. Reasons for feeling secure are knowing the community, familial relations with neighbours, and solidarity with one another. Only one respondent expressed insecurity due to the deteriorating economic crisis in Lebanon (fig. 30).

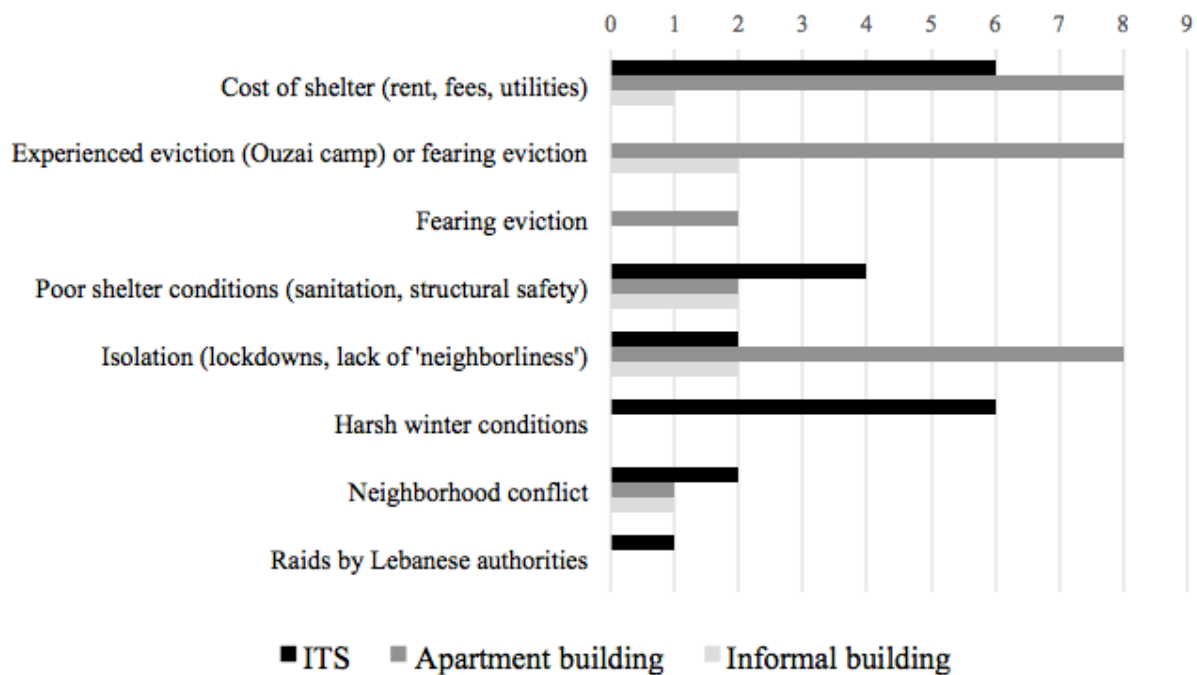


Fig. 30. Reported shelter challenges between ITSs, apartments, and informal shelters.

Experiences in Reception and coping in Environment: Displaced Syrians settling in ITSs recalled receiving a warm and welcoming reception. Many were shown around and provided tips and local know-how by neighbours. Only one respondent recalled have no welcoming reception when entering the ITS. Many Syrians also reported difficulties in their ITS environment. Namely, difficulties with the camp supervisor and with Lebanese authorities entering the camp. Also, winter conditions made living in tented shelters challenging. However, almost a third of respondents living in ITSs reported no difficulties in their new environment.

Neighbours in ITSs Shelters: Syrians living in ITSs unanimously report that they know or are aware of their neighbours. Moreover, the quality of contact with their neighbours is high. Almost all respondents expressed awareness of all their ITS neighbours and the many familial-like connections they have with them. However, one challenge with close neighbourly relations can be the social pressure to hide their difficult conditions. Many Syrians in ITSs did not report much assistance received from neighbours. This is likely because many neighbours are in the same circumstances as they are. However, they do relate instances of sharing food among each other, sharing blankets when it is cold, and forging reciprocal relations to assist one another.

Experiences in ITSs Neighbourhoods and Wider Community: All respondents reported liking the neighbourhood they resided in. The familiarity and closeness with residents and the time spent to adapt has made many to say ITS life is “nice.” Furthermore, all respondents reported feeling comfortable and safe walking around their neighbourhoods. Only one participant expressed concern about the present situation and rise in robberies. Another mentioned that she does not go out at night. Over half of the respondents reported willingness to engage with the wider community.

APARTMENTS AND INFORMAL SHELTERS

Experience Living in Apartments or Informal Shelters: The majority of respondents reported living in an apartment in or near Saida. Three respondents live in an informal or abandoned building in Saida and in the Bekaa, and one respondent lives in an apartment in the Bekaa. For those living in an informal shelter, they acquired this shelter through employment connections. One woman was also provided an apartment from an NGO providing shelter for widowed women. Displaced Syrians living in

apartments or informal buildings report paying between 250,000 LBP and 750,000 LBP without utilities. The majority of respondents are not receiving any rent assistance. While some are meeting their monthly payments, others are falling into debt with the landlord and are fearing eviction. Respondents not being able to meet rental fees borrow money from family or friends, negotiate a cheaper rent with the landlord, or use other financial support from the UN (i.e., winter assistance). Others have NGOs covering rent or have their children abroad remitting money (fig. 31).

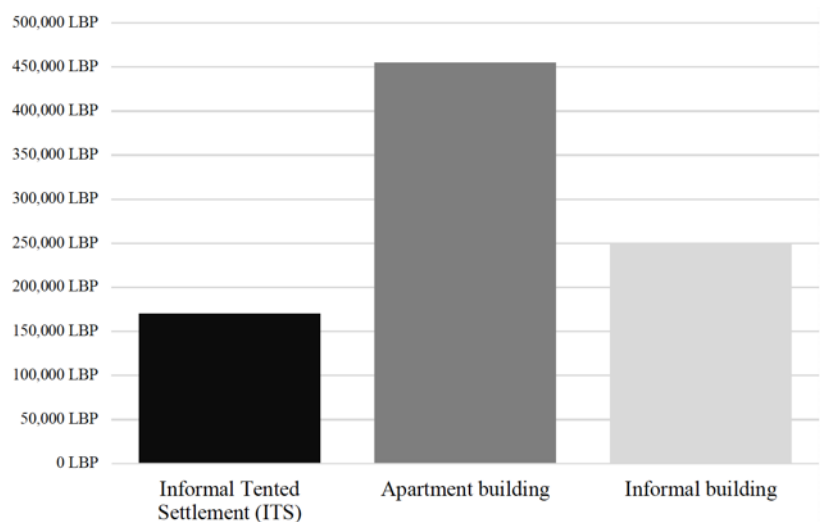


Fig. 31. Comparison of average cost of shelter (rent/fee) in Lebanese Pounds (LBP).

Coping with Food and Basic Needs: Compared to displaced Syrians living in ITSs, those residing in apartments or informal buildings do not rely as heavily on UN assistance to meet their food and basic needs. Instead, many are compelled to only buy the bare necessities from supermarkets which is often incumbent on their employment status. A few Syrians are fortunate enough to have close relation with their neighbors (Lebanese and Syrian) who assist or share food. However, due to rising prices and unemployment, more Syrians are needing to borrow money and accrue debt. Many now owe money to local shops due to buying basic needs on credit.

Feelings of Security Living in Apartments or Informal Shelters: The vast majority of Syrians living in apartments or informal shelters report feeling safe, secure, and without problems. However, a few respondents did feel insecure because they are a single woman living alone. Also, one woman feels insecure because she is an older woman, however, she feels better when her grandson is with her. And one family living in an informal shelter expressed her concerns about the stability of her shelter and whether her children might get hurt.

Experiences in Reception and Coping in Environment: Reception into the new urban environment for those living in apartments or informal shelters was less inviting than ITSs. Over half the respondents said they received no welcoming nor did they meet any neighbours soon after moving in. However, five respondents did receive a welcome or pleasantries from neighbours; two were relatives living next door and one lives in an apartment in the Bekaa. Syrians living in apartments are going into debt with local shop owners and their landlords. As obtaining employment has become more difficult with crises in Lebanon and COVID-19, three respondents have reported that their young children work to assist with living expenses. They are often selling gum or tissues on the streets. Nevertheless, a number of Syrians have expressed the importance of adapting to the new environment.

Neighbours in Apartment Shelters: All Syrians living in apartments are aware and have met their neighbours. For some, their neighbours can be relatives or other Syrian families. Yet, most neighbours are Lebanese or Palestinian. No respondents reported any serious difficulties with their neighbours.

Those living in informal shelters explain that they do not have neighbours. Conversely, contact with apartment neighbours is much lower compared to ITSs. Over half of the respondents reported have no or very little contact. A few respondents explained that COVID-19 had impacted this, while one expressed the difficulty of being a good host when meeting basic needs are difficult. Only a few reported having minimal or “not too much” contact with neighbours, who are sometimes other Syrian families.

“Right now, I can’t afford to invite people in my house. I can’t even afford to serve them coffee. That’s why I don’t build relationships with anyone so that no one visits me.”

Experiences in Apartment Neighbourhoods and Wider Community: Respondents living in apartments tend to be more impersonal about their experiences in their neighbourhood. Most explain that they feel safe and are grateful for “good people” for neighbours. However, they do feel unfortunate that they do not have closer ties with them. They feel comfortable that there are no issues with the neighbourhood and their children are safe. All displaced Syrians living in apartments report feeling comfortable and safe to walk around the neighbourhood. However just under half reported that they avoid going out at night. One respondent said they don’t go out because of COVID-19. Moreover, all respondents living in apartments reported that they have no issue with engaging with the wider community. Many explain they are quite sociable, and many did report their ease of engagement with the community.

A SECOND HOME: WHAT RESPONDENTS LIKE ABOUT LIVING IN LEBANON

Over three quarters of respondents overwhelmingly stated that the safety and security they feel in Lebanon is what they like. Half of all respondents felt safe and secure living in their current neighborhood or ITS. However, many caution that they do not go out at night. Displaced Syrians also enjoy the tight-knit community found in ITSs. Oftentimes, relatives of the same family are living within the same ITS, and neighbours develop familial relationships over sharing food and conversations. One respondent — given the close historical ties between Lebanon and Syria — stated his historical interconnection with Lebanon.

“Lebanon is a part of my life. I studied between 1985 – 1990, I lived the civil war just like the Lebanese... I love this country. It’s like my own country... We are mixed with the community, and this is our home.”

Accommodation in the Bekaa: Saadnayel and Bar Elias in Zahle

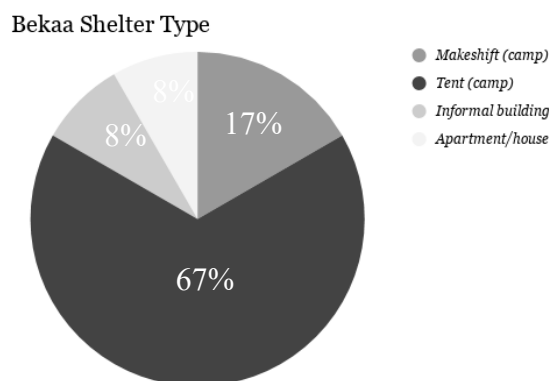


Fig. 32. Bekaa Shelter Types

Living conditions: The most common type of shelter in the Bekaa are Informal Tented Settlements (fig. 32,33) that are often highly dependent on aid from NGOs, and WASH programs to ensure health and well-being of the displaced persons (fig. 34, 35). However, in Saadnayel, problems with drainage have been occurring especially in the rainy season, where septic tanks overflow and flood the tents. In both Saadnayel and Bar Elias, improper living conditions has forced many owners to abandon their tents, and displaced persons are seeking alternatives that can meet their needs (Najjar, 2019). The extreme weather conditions in the Bekaa valley, characterized by very hot summers and cold winters make it harder for displaced persons to cope, considering that ITSs are regulated to a limited set of construction materials that must be temporary (such as nylon sheets, metal roofing, wooden or metal poles, etc...).



Fig. 33. Bird-eye view of an ITS in Bar Elias



Fig. 34. Inside of an ITSs in the Bekaa valley

Six respondents living or have lived in ITS reported shelter need in terms of structural integrity and furniture items. They stated that they required furniture to sleep on, blankets and pillows, and other household items like an oven to cook with (fig. 34). Additionally, in wintertime, Syrians living in ITS risk having their tents flooded with water during rains (fig. 35), and they require diesel for staying warm. They reported that they met these needs by using blankets and burning wood or other materials to stay warm. They also use their own money to purchase supplies to make renovations to their shelter. Finally, one woman explains that adapting and sacrificing given the difficult circumstances is how they coped with living the ITS.

“It wasn’t that good as well. We lived with the insects in the same room. But we said that we have to adapt. It’s not our country in the end, and we have to sacrifice.”



Fig. 35. ITSs conditions in winter

Another challenge for displaced Syrians living in camps is the camp fees they must pay. Generally camp fees are reported to range from 750,000 LBP to over 1,500,000 LBP annually, however, one Syrian refugee, because he is unable to work in agriculture for which the Bekaa valley is known for, was required to pay a month camp fee of 250,000 LBP.

Communal spaces and relations: Community spaces are informal and are often managed by individual initiatives. Like pocket gardens, they can include moveable seating, herbs for food collection, or shading plants to protect from harsh weather (Fig. 36). These spaces are often ephemeral and are rundown with seasonal changes or as a result of neglect. Almost all respondents expressed awareness of all their ITS neighbours and the many familial-like connections they have with them. Only three respondents said they do not mix with them often and consider them more like acquaintances, and one reported no contact. For most Syrians living in ITSs in the Bekaa, there are frequent visits, chatting, and sharing meals with neighbours. Many also reported taking short trips to the ‘valley.’ One respondent living in an apartment in the Bekaa expressed a lot of contact with Lebanon and Syrian neighbours, highlighting the difference in community experience with respect to location.



Fig. 36. ITS community spaces

Evictions: Bar Elias has been a recipient of evicted displaced persons from areas such as its neighbour, Zahle (Al Ayoubi, 2018). Community tensions appeared in Zahle as the number of displaced Syrians increased since the onset of the crisis in 2011, as a result of competition in the labour market and perhaps due to sectarian and religious reasons (ibid.).

COVID-19 Impact: With the onset of COVID-19, conditions have been hard on displaced persons in ITS. Due to lockdown, restrictions on travel, and social distancing requirements, displaced persons haven’t

received necessary aid from NGOs, and especially vulnerable populations with health conditions and the need for regular health supplements. In informal shelters and apartments, a few respondents expressed that they weren't receiving adequate assistance from the UN, unlike 'others' living in camps. In Bar Elias, in addition to lockdown and curfew, the municipality halted displaced persons' movement altogether by making it mandatory for displaced persons to select a representative of the community to secure the basic needs of the ITS and to inform them of their choice (HRW, 2020b). Respondents shared the difficulty in acquiring jobs due to both COVID-19 and the economic situation, making it difficult to make ends meet.

Accommodation in Saida

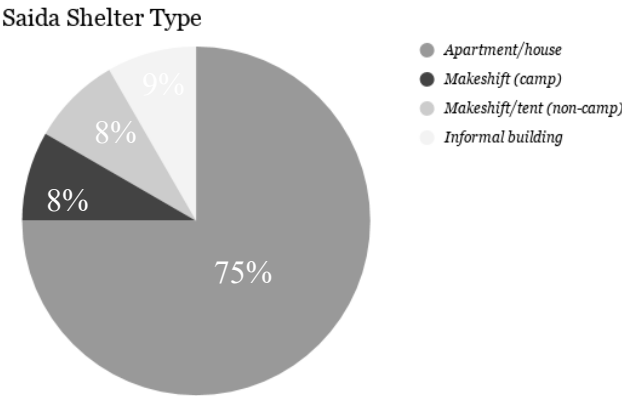


Fig. 37. Saida Shelter Types

Living conditions: Before being evicted, displaced Syrians were living in an unfinished building (fig. 38). The community with the help of local international aid worked to make this shelter a liveable space, by sealing windows with temporary materials (fig. 39), connecting electricity to the complex (fig. 40), and creating separations between rooms. Each family would reside in one room, but crowding increased over the years. Communal toilets (fig. 41) were available for each floor (4 in total), and in 2013, UNHCR rehabilitated these toilets and installed 3 water tanks.



Fig. 38. Building façade of the Ouzai shelter



Fig. 39. Temporary closures and windows.



Fig. 40. Electric wires in Ouzai shelter

Nonetheless, an entire family was often granted only one room, and overcrowding was a main challenge in the shelter (fig. 42). After eviction in October 2020, displaced Syrians that relocated to informal shelters have expressed dismay about the poor and dangerous structural quality of their shelter. On the other hand, Syrians living in apartments are not coping well with the concomitant financial strains of paying rent and affording food and daily expenses given the rising prices and economic crisis.



Fig. 41. Communal toilets in Ouzai shelter, Saida.



Fig. 42. Communal space in Ouzai shelter, Saida

Community spaces and relations: The Ouzai shelter gained the interest of multiple stakeholders as it hosts many displaced Syrians in one complex. The French NGO *Première Urgence-Aide Médicale Internationale* built a playground for the children in the complex (fig. 43). Moreover, the L-shaped building surrounding the courtyard creates a safe place for children to play, while their parents can easily monitor them and make sure of their safety. After eviction, the majority Syrians living in apartments expressed a sense of loneliness or lack of ‘neighbourliness’. However, when seeking employment in their new urban environment, most respondents seemed to share a positive experience with their neighbors in Saida after being forced to leave the Ouzai Shelter:

“I always ask my friends and neighbors to spread the word about me, that I’m a good and available worker. Sometimes that helps and I get opportunities based on their referrals.”



Fig. 43. Playground in the Ouzai shelter in Saida.

Evictions: Before the eviction, the complex was peculiar as it hosted displaced persons that shared familial and village ties, resulting in a communal and safe atmosphere. At that time, the community didn't face many tensions with the Saida community, and some Syrian owned shops opened up in the ground level of the Ouzai shelter (Zaatari, 2015). In 2015, displaced persons faced the threat of eviction as the university owners wanted to reclaim their land and restart building (ibid.). However, the evictions didn't immediately follow as the Ministry of Social Affairs intervened and struck a deal with the owner permitting displaced persons to remain. Around October 2020, displaced Syrians were evicted from the shelter as the university owners reclaimed their land in a bid to secure their construction permit and continue building the grounds (as disclosed by a municipal member).

After being evicted in October 2020, displaced Syrians coped with finding new shelter. A number of them now live in apartments around Saida and are struggling to cope with rent and utility payments. Previously they did not pay high rental fees, but they now face monthly rent bills between 250,000 LBP to 600,000 LBP. A few respondents rely on meeting rent needs by paying out-of-pocket, where others have used UN cash assistance for other needs to pay the rent. Over half the respondents evicted from Ouzai said they searched and found their current shelter by themselves, with some listening to former neighbours' advice about the cheapest rent. Syrians living in apartments in Saida encountered new challenges such as high costs since moving from the Ouzai shelter. Additionally, displaced Syrians who formerly lived at the Ouzai shelter in Saida reported receiving many food-donation boxes from various NGOs. However, since all residents have been evicted from the Ouzai camp, they do not receive this much-needed food supply anymore.

COVID-19 Impact: The increased density in living quarters is particularly alarming as COVID-19 pandemic dictates the necessity of social distancing, proper sanitation, and hygiene. In March 2020, UNHCR and Saida's Municipality gave out hygiene kits and detergents to people in the Ouzai shelter, and PCR tests were carried out as per UNHCR reports⁸. Since their eviction, displaced Syrians have relocated to apartments, non-residential shelters, and camps mostly in the city of Saida, often as a family unit. Respondents share that this change, while costly, allows more opportunity to socially

⁸ <https://www.dailystar.com.lb/News/Lebanon-News/2020/May-28/506548-pcr-testing-campaign-begins-at-ouzai-syrian-refugee-center.ashx>

distance than their previous mode of living. On the other hand, COVID-19 and the economic situation have decreased employment opportunities.

ACCOMMODATION: IN SUMMARY

The GoL's no camp decision led to the scattering of displaced Syrians throughout the country, in ITS, informal shelters (non-residential buildings), or residential shelters. Therefore, it became increasingly hard for humanitarian actors to track displaced Syrians and provide them with necessary aid. Alongside this, duplication of aid services was the main issue prevalent in humanitarian assistance practices, as some popular ITS received more than one donation at once, while others would be forgotten, a scenario respondents shared. Further, displaced Syrians residing in dense cities were rarely targeted by aid services. In ITS, almost 90% of conditions were substandard, while a quarter of non-residential shelters had dangerous conditions, definitely sought after due to the lower rent prices than in residential shelters. During the 2019 economic and political crises, evictions rates rose, and after the onset of COVID-19, many changed their type of accommodation due to rising rents that became unaffordable. There's a marked difference in community relations in the Bekaa and Saida. In the Bekaa, most respondents shared that they had close community ties with their neighbours, which often helped them cope with challenges. This was the case even in apartment type shelters in the Bekaa. However, in Saida, most respondents reported being lonely, marking a difference between city living and rural living. During COVID-19, discriminatory practices towards displaced Syrians increased, such as discrimination in access to services, harsher restrictions on movement and curfews, harassment and arbitrary detention, and eviction threats. In effect, it's often hard to separate the coincidence of the economic situation from COVID-19 impacts, as they both exacerbated conditions and hostilities between host and displaced populations. The Beirut Port blast highly affected displaced Syrians, with many deaths and damages to their homes. Their already dire conditions further worsened by the blast, with many feeling forgotten or abandoned after it, having to rebuild their lives and homes and start from scratch.

If we return to the four principles of protection:

1. Enhance people's safety, dignity and rights and avoid exposing them to further harm
2. Ensure people's access to impartial assistance, according to need and without discrimination
3. Assist people to recover from the physical and psychological effects of threatened or actual violence, coercion or deliberate deprivation
4. Help people to claim their rights.

Concerning protection in accommodation, we find many issues with lack of security in shelter, lack of adequate living conditions, and lack of homogeneous aid delivery mechanisms. As the economic situation deteriorated and COVID-19 limited employment opportunities, displaced Syrians were often forced to change accommodation due to their inability to meet the rent. This change often came with 'dangerous conditions' occurring in non-residential (informal) shelters, exposing displaced Syrians to potential harm. Eviction rates increased noticeably since 2018, an alarming situation as the vulnerability of displaced Syrians increased in that same timeframe. Post the Beirut explosion, assistance often came last to Syrians' and their homes, revealing discrimination in assistance.

5.5 Challenges, needs, and employment

As the economic situation worsens in Lebanon amidst the COVID-19 pandemic, this section briefly explores the needs and challenges faced by displaced Syrians outside of the three areas of protection tackled in the previous chapters. It also expands on the issue of (un)employment in practice, representing those findings with respect to type of shelter and location of accommodation.

In our assessment of the challenges faced (fig. 44), and how to cope with them, we found that for the majority of Syrians, the family unit is often the most important entity to buffer against the hardships of living in Lebanon. Nonetheless, challenges within this family unit were reported. Firstly, almost half of the respondents stated the challenges of providing the basic necessities for their children. Most importantly, food security and providing adequate nutrition for their children was the highest reported challenge for families. Syrian parents are also struggling to provide childcare items like diapers and milk, which have become unaffordable given the economic crisis in Lebanon. For single mothers struggling to meet basic needs, many children have been required to earn extra money either selling gum on the street or salvaging discarded items from trash bins.

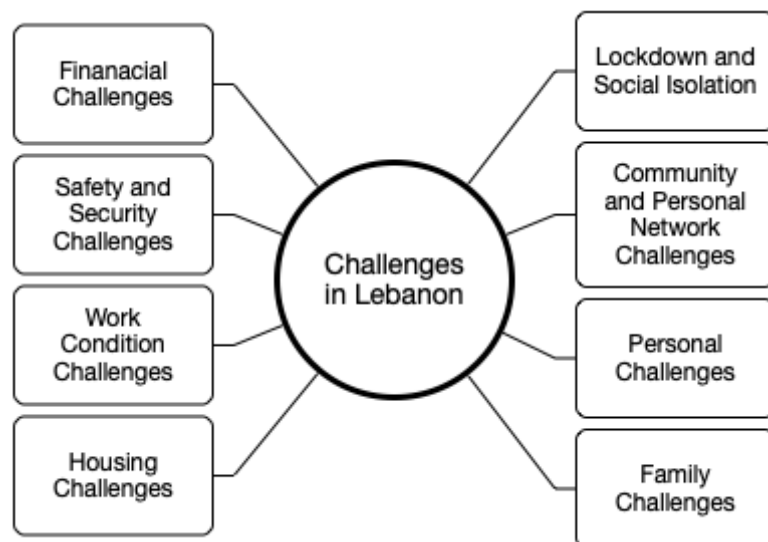


Fig. 44. Challenges faced by respondents

Displaced Syrians also expressed the importance of education for the children, and they have cited several challenges that prevent their children from entering school. The inability to afford education is a primary challenge for childhood education. Although the UN provides assistance in education services, respondents have expressed challenges in meeting the transportation costs for their children to attend school. Furthermore, given the unaffordable costs of education for Syrians, parents are confronted with choice of deciding which children can attend and who cannot. Additionally, many schools which provide education to Syrian children often bifurcate their school day into morning and afternoon classes with Syrian children attending the latter. However, some parents with older daughters have expressed discomfort in allowing their children to return home at night.

ASSISTANCE WITH CHALLENGES

Displaced Syrians interviewed made a few recommendations which they perceived would help a number of challenges they are experiencing. Resoundingly, respondents have expressed frustration and confusion at the decisions by the UN mainly in term of aid or assistance distribution. Many Syrians have been confounded by the start-stop, start again distribution of various aid and rationale for receiving or discontinuing aid. Also, the criteria for who receives and does not receive assistance and why was frustrating. Therefore, having clear and comprehensive information regarding UN assistance or service would assist Syrians. Furthermore, given the economic crisis and rising prices, many Syrians

report that they are not provided enough money by the UN to meet their basic needs. Therefore, UN financial aid needs to be adjusted for the inflation of the local currency.

“I used to receive help from the UN. They stopped helping me for four years without mentioning the reason, but now they’re helping me again.”

“The UN helps with the food supplies card, but it’s not enough now that everything is expensive in the supermarkets.”

5.5.1 Needs when entering and staying in Lebanon

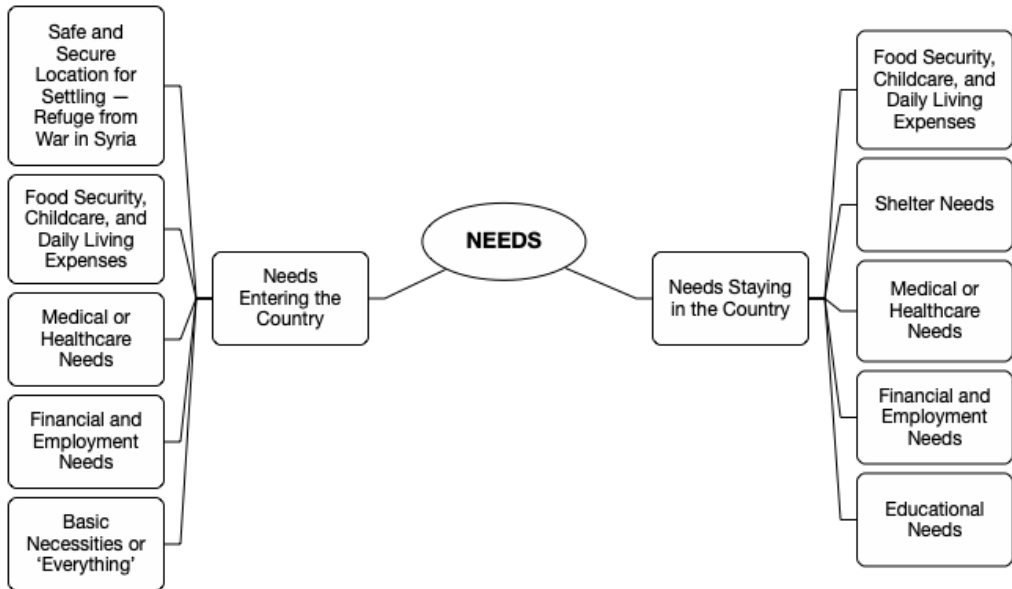


Fig. 45. Needs entering and staying in the country.

NEEDS WHEN ENTERING LEBANON

Food Security and Childcare Needs: Approximately one fifth of respondents stated that food and water security was an essential basic need when entering the country. One respondent requiring food security stated they had to meet these needs themselves, while others received food donations and assistance from local Lebanese and from neighbors. One respondent claimed they received the UN food assistance upon arrival (including school and hospital fees and nylon coverings for shelter), but it subsequently ended three months later. Three respondents entering the country (one also requiring food security) reported childcare as their basic need.

“I received intensive help from the UN when I first entered. They provided nylon covers, paid school fees, hospital fees when my wife gave birth, but then slowly the UN started cutting out on those expenses until completely stopping in 2014.”

Financial and Employment Needs: Three respondents stated that their basic needs when entering the country were finding employment to earn money. Two of these participants stated that they needed money to remit back to Syria for their families. Although they met their needs themselves by searching for work, one respondent stated that they could borrow money from family or friends if they need to.

Basic Necessities or ‘Everything’: For the respondents who stated that they required ‘everything’ upon entering Lebanon, many of them received assistance from family and friends while others sought help from a local Sheikh and NGOs already working at the ITSs.

NEEDS STAYING IN THE COUNTRY

After displaced Syrians became settled into their new environment, some of the basic needs changed over the course of time (fig. 45). Yet, food security and childcare still remained top needs for many Syrians. Education, healthcare, and paying rent became more salient. This section explores needs outside of the three areas of protection discussed in the preceding chapters.

Food Security, Childcare, and Daily Living Expenses: Almost half of all respondents reported that food security was a basic need they struggled to meet. Many Syrians have forgone meat or yogurt and often only buy bare essentials like bread, potatoes, thyme, and olive oil. When meeting their food needs themselves, displaced Syrians are using the little money they earn from employment directly to food supplies. However, a majority of displaced Syrians rely solely on the UN's cash assistance (food card) to meet the food security needs. Many Syrians reported that the monthly food stipend provided by the UN is not sufficient given the rapidly rising prices. Many Syrians have used other cash aid provided by the UN (i.e., winter heating) to help compensate for shortfalls in food.

"Al Omam [UN] is the only organization that is helping me. It's providing me with food supplies."

"The UN gave us 900,000 LBP for winter heating, but we bought food with it."

Displaced Syrians also rely on their family and friends for meeting their food security needs either by accepting foodstuffs like rice or grains or borrowing, and receiving money. Over one third of displaced Syrians reported that they need money for daily expenses and childcare needs (primarily milk and diapers). Five respondents reported paying for these needs out-of-pocket either from their savings or from employment, and no respondent reported any assistance for meeting their childcare needs. Syrians stated that they receive assistance in meeting daily living expense needs by using the UN's cash assistance (food card) or borrowing money from friends or neighbours.

Education Needs:

Similarly, a number of Syrians have expressed educational needs for their children. Although the UN does assist in school fees, it does not cover the relatively small costs of transportation (school bus) to school. This, according to over half the respondents who reported educational needs as a priority, hindered their ability to send their children to school. One participant reported their child attending an educational association for free.

"My kids are not enrolled in school now, and that's because I don't have money to sign them up in a school bus."

"I can't afford 15,000 LBP per week for a school bus."

Employment Needs: For displaced Syrians stating they had employment needs when entering the country, most still report this same need. Now, these respondents report employment needs to meet the daily living expenses including food. Furthermore, those with employment needs have stated that COVID-19 and lockdowns have made finding a job more difficult.

5.5.2 Employment in Practice

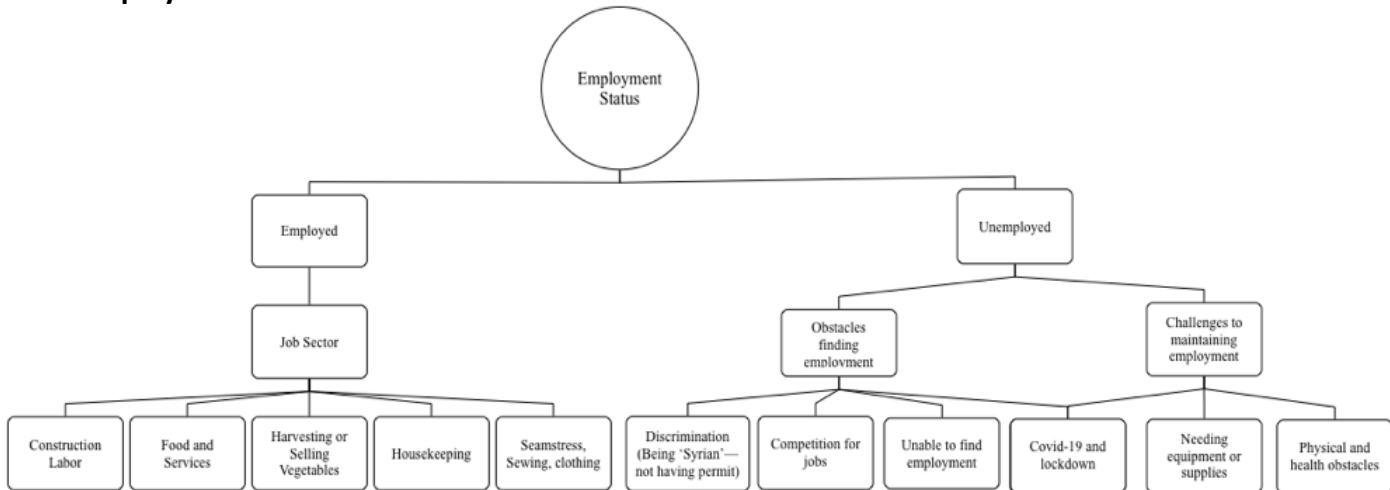


Fig. 46. Employment status, sector, and challenges.

EMPLOYMENT STATUS

Findings from the interviews show that 22 (92%) out of 24 displaced Syrians were unemployed, the remaining two being employed or self-employed (Table 5). Of those unemployed, 9 are seasonal or sporadic workers (41%) – who expressed difficulty in their living situation due to the inconsistency of their employment status. Construction labor and harvesting or selling vegetables were the main sectors in which displaced Syrians worked upon their arrival to Lebanon.

“When I first entered the camp, I worked with the camp supervisor in harvesting vegetables in the valley, 3 days per week. But then, I stopped working because my kids are too young to be left alone, and I don’t work in winter.”

“I’m a housewife, I don’t work. My husband searches every day for an opportunity to work. If he finds something, he works and he gets us money and food. If he didn’t find an opportunity, he comes back home and we don’t eat.”

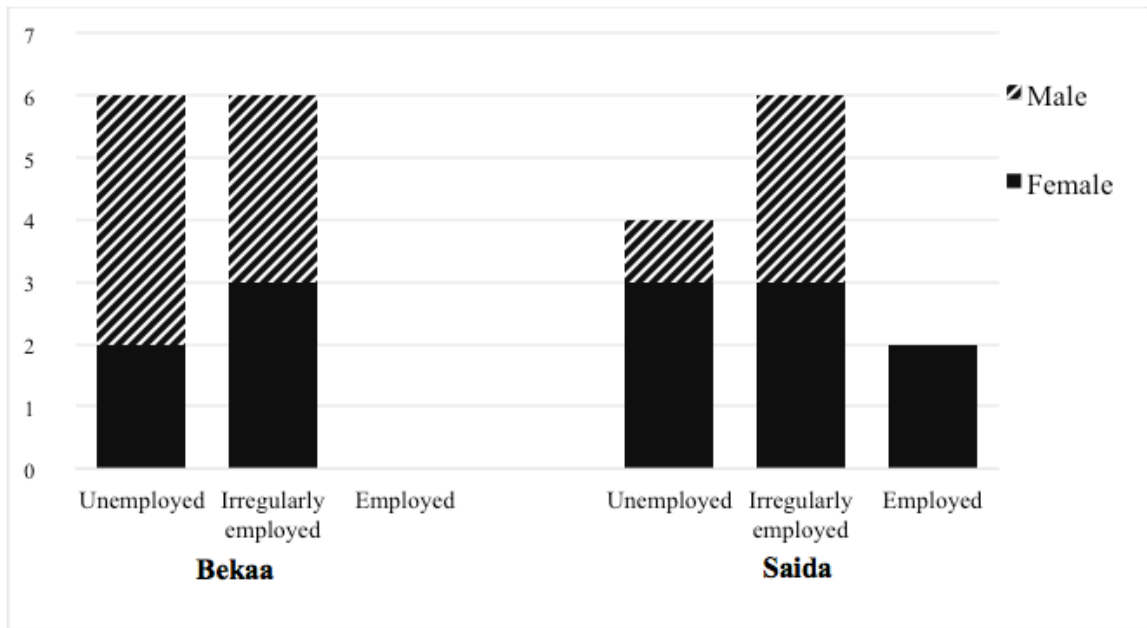


Fig. 47. Employment status with respect to location and gender.

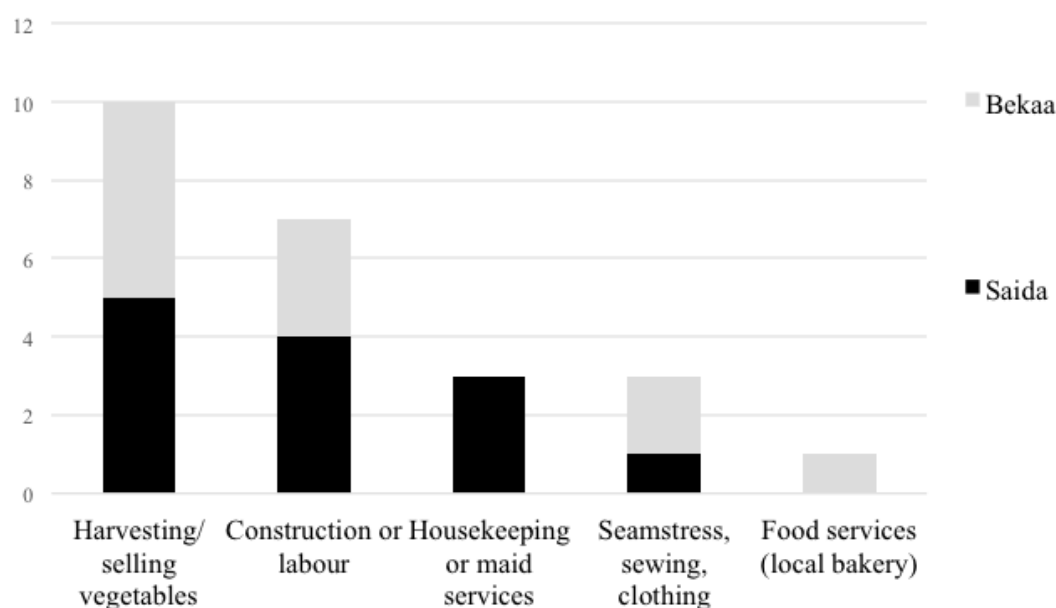


Fig. 48. Participants' employment sectors in the Bekaa and in Saida.

CHALLENGES AND OBSTACLES FACED IN EMPLOYMENT

Compatibility with Skills and Comfort with Work: The kind of work displaced Syrians were working in before seeking refuge in Lebanon changed; some found the work to be compatible while others felt incompatible with their skills. A majority of participants interviewed found themselves taking on diverse types of work to make ends meet. However, the type of work taken was not in line with what they were accustomed to in Syria.

"No, it's not compatible. I was a farmer in Syria. I sell what I plant, and I eat as well from what I plant. But I had to work and feed my family."

"I used to be a farmer in Syria. Now I work in anything that I find and can get me money."

Half of the respondents shared that if they were given a choice, they would rather be doing something else. The main reason stems from having a consistent income to be able to sustain a living in Lebanon.

"No, I'm not comfortable, and I wish someone could help me find a job with constant income to support my husband and children."

The other half that responded, 'I like the work,' referring to the treatment they received when working and that it permits them to support their spouse and children. When Syrians were working, respondents were relieved to be earning an income despite working long hours for a minimal wage (7:00 am till 4:00 pm for 20,000LBP in agriculture).

Duration of Finding a Job: The duration and experience of finding employment in Lebanon differed between respondents. While some found the process to be 'easy and not taking long,' others expressed that finding work was rather difficult and took considerable time. Other respondents expressed a 'lack of opportunities' and 'no luck' when not finding a job.

Obstacles or Problems Finding Work

The lockdown, deterioration of the economic situation, and political manifestations, disrupted displaced Syrians' opportunities in finding work. This situation has led them to experience difficulty sustaining a living – paying monthly rent, feeding their children properly, and meeting other living expenses. Mostly, dietary changes have taken a toll, whereby one respondent shared that she's not being able to afford to buy milk for her infant, and anis was given instead.

"I used to go to the field to work, and I used to work as housekeeper to make money. Now, with corona and the lockdown, I'm not able to work and thus I can't feed my children."

"I wanted to work as a cleaning lady and my sister-in-law helped me find a job, but everywhere we go they tell us that they don't need anyone at the moment. And it's getting more difficult to find a job with Corona."

I used to find a lot of opportunities. Now, the economic situation is difficult, so bosses are not looking for workers, and if they do, they're paying a low fee"

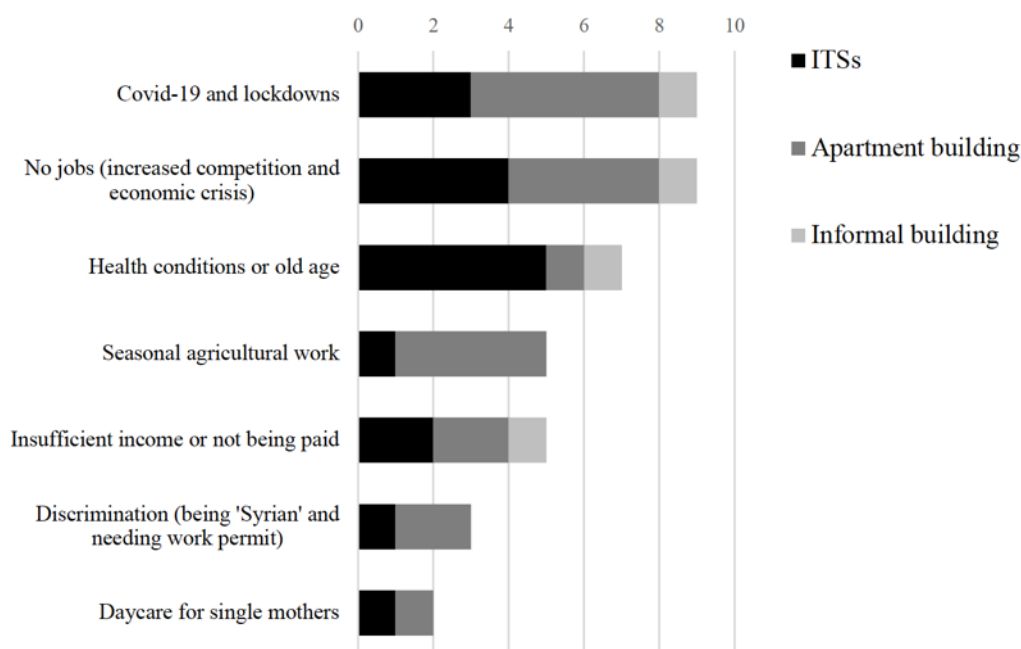


Fig. 49. Obstacles finding or maintain employment and the type of shelter displaced Syrians reside in.

Figure 49 further elaborates on the obstacles and challenges displaced Syrians face, whether it's finding or maintain work, and the type of shelter they are currently living in. Covid-19 and a lack of jobs exacerbated by the rising unemployment rate are the most common challenges. Furthermore, Covid-19 impacts those living in apartment buildings while health and old age is a major obstacle for those living in ITSs. Moreover, seasonal, agricultural work (whether harvesting or selling vegetables) appears to dominantly impact those living in apartment buildings. This may be due to the need for more consistent work to be able to pay costly monthly rent, or due to the increased availability of agricultural work outside the city, such as in the more rural Bekaa valley. Moreover, a lack of legal documents such as a work permit was an obstacle faced by three participants, who reported feelings of discrimination.

PART III

7. Conclusion

The status and legal governance framework of displaced Syrians in Lebanon appeared to be the most discussed and recurring issue in the extensive literature review conducted as part of this study. This can be explained by the fact that illegality can be met with severe penalties, feelings of insecurity, and threats from unknown evictions or labour crackdowns. It also limits individuals' mobility and freedom and, in turn, their access to healthcare or opportunities to change their illegal status and increases dependencies on communal, formal, or informal aid mechanisms. Lebanon's iteration that it's not a country of asylum rather one of transit is apparent in their lack of formalization of both refugee status and allocation of official Syrian refugee camps. The state's weak governance and sectarian politics of dependence on non-state actors have been contended to reflect their response and polity decisions regarding Syrian displacement (Fakhoury, 2017). This is attributed to the lack of a formal and legal asylum framework, which in turn jeopardizes the protection of displaced Syrians in Lebanon from access to basic needs, attaining legal status, access to healthcare, and proper accommodation.

The emergence of the COVID-19 pandemic and the Beirut Port explosion have exacerbated the already deteriorating economic situation, causing waves of extreme political unrest and government resignation. The blast, which damaged the country's trading hub and surrounding neighbourhoods, placed Lebanon at a threat from shortages of basic food supplies, increased reliance on external or international aid, and caused a spike in COVID-19 cases as many were left homeless. Hospitals were overwhelmed with casualties, having also sustained damage. Displaced Syrians in Lebanon are struggling particularly because of the high unemployment rate (39%), increased competition for work, COVID-19 and lockdowns, hyperinflation, acquiring debt (90% of households), and high cost of living (food supplies have more than tripled since the beginning of the economic crisis) (VASyR, 2020). Our study found that 22 out of 24 interviewees were unemployed and were relying on UN assistance, borrowing money, or relying on remittances from abroad.

Our findings on legal protection, medical care, and accommodation confirm our secondary literature review. This chapter proceeds as follows: we discuss the most prevalent findings of accommodation typologies and challenges faced through a temporal lens, looking at needs and challenges displaced Syrians faced when entering versus staying in Lebanon, in ITS and in informal and apartment shelters. We then shed light on safety and security issues, particularly in relation to illegality and single motherhood. We also draw conclusions on medical protection, and finally, we explore which challenges have, in fact, pushed displaced Syrians to seek alternatives, particularly in their wishes to resettle.

Informal Tented Settlements: tight-knit community and substandard living conditions

When entering Lebanon, most respondents shared the necessity of finding 'safe' shelter and seeking to flee from the war. Syrians that entered the country in groups would often settle at the same ITSs and receive help from their camp neighbours who would donate sponges and blankets, foodstuff, and other items to get the family started. Some participants received shelter assistance in the form of nylon covers from the UN. NGOs were also reported to have donated nylon covers and blankets. One participant who settled in the Bekaa was able to secure housing outside of an ITS and relied on his network of friends and relatives to help secure housing for him. He was also able to meet his needs by ensuring work quickly when he arrived. Generally, almost all of the displaced Syrians settling in ITSs recalled receiving a warm and welcoming reception. Many were shown around and provided tips and local know-how by neighbours.

As the protracted Syrian crisis now enters its tenth year, many needs of those in ITS have changed since first entering. Their most prevalent difficulties include the costs of rent and utilities, the lack of informal shelters' structural integrity, inadequate warmth for winter, and lack of employment. Six participants living or have lived in ITSs reported shelter needs in terms of structural integrity and furniture items. They stated that they required furniture to sleep on, blankets and pillows, and other household items like an oven to cook with. Additionally, in wintertime, Syrians living in ITSs risk having their tents flooded with water during rains, and they require diesel for staying warm. They reported that they met these needs by using blankets and burning wood or other materials to stay warm. They also used their own money to purchase supplies to make renovations to their shelter. To meet the needs of having adequate shelter, particularly in winter, many displaced Syrians rely on UN assistance, with some Syrians reported using UN cash assistance to purchase diesel to stay warm. Further, those in ITS notably faced greater employment challenges mainly due to health problems and old age, and secondarily due to a lack of jobs, and thirdly due to COVID-19 and lockdowns. In fact, almost three quarters of respondents rely entirely on UN assistance for food and basic needs. Those living in ITSs in the Bekaa valley are required to pay annual camp fees and cover part of the amount through agricultural work. Although the majority of them receive UN basic assistance (85%), they also rely on stored food items from harvests and/or gather their own food from the land (20%). 40% of participants also reported or borrowing money from family, friends, camp supervisors, or local shops. Although there are familial and community relations, most displaced Syrians don't rely on each other for monetary assistance, acknowledging that they all share dire circumstances. Finally, nearly all displaced Syrians living in ITSs feel safe and secure in their environment.

Apartment and non-residential shelters: loneliness, danger, debt, and unemployment

Displaced Syrians living in Saida who have been recently evicted from their urban collective shelter housing (Ouzai shelter) now face high rent prices, lack of access to aid, and difficulty finding adequate and affordable shelters. However, to meet many of these challenges, a high number of Syrians reported that employment was a significant hindrance. The rising unemployment rate, devaluation of the currency and, consequently, salaries, and the rising prices of food and living items, has impacted displaced Syrian's ability to cope with their challenges. Nearly all respondents in Saida are struggling to meet rent and utility demands as they have been evicted from the Ouzai shelter and resettled in apartments. 50% of respondents found their new shelters themselves, while others relied on information from other Ouzai shelter residents (10%), an NGO called "Al Yad Al Karima, and those participants living in informal shelters (20%) all used work connections to find their current residence. When settling into their new environment, over half the participants said they received no welcome, nor did they meet any neighbours soon after moving in. Unlike ITS, the majority of displaced Syrians living in apartments are not receiving any assistance from the UN, although they now must meet the costs of rent, and many are falling into debt with the owners, friends, and family. Participants reported using other UN assistance (i.e., diesel winter assistance) or remittances abroad to pay for rent. Furthermore, those recently evicted from the Ouzai shelter don't rely heavily on food assistance from the UN. Instead, they can only buy the cheapest necessities out-of-pocket or borrow money from shop owners, family, or friends. However, those residing in apartments and informal shelters were strongly impacted by COVID-19 as the main obstacle in finding and securing employment, unlike those in ITS. The majority of displaced Syrians living in apartments reported feeling safe, secure, and without problems. However, single women with children reported feeling insecure, and those living in informal shelters expressed the lack of safety of their accommodation, a finding that confirms our secondary literature review. While tight-knit relations are low in apartments and informal shelters, a few respondents shared that they were lucky enough to be able to borrow from their Lebanese, Syrian, or Palestinian neighbours.

Safety and security – illegality and single motherhood

Generally, displaced Syrians reported feeling safe in the country; however, the current crises have increased concern over safety and security in the country. Four single mothers, their concerns are heightened, given their vulnerability of being alone. Over half of female participants are single parents, either widowed, separated, or their husband's whereabouts are unknown. Women face compounded difficulties being the lone breadwinner while struggling to meet their basic needs, and women who do work must balance with work and leaving the children home alone. Moreover, women tend to have less employment experience, with many reporting being 'housewives' with little prior education and skills. Also, it has been distressing for Syrian women not to know the whereabouts nor conditions of their spouse. As some women have experienced being abandoned by their husband, others have simply gone missing.

Displaced Syrian's precarious legal status also creates feelings of insecurity, particularly with arbitrary searches at checkpoints by authorities, especially if they lack legal documentation, namely, the Lebanese residency permit. Syrians draw upon their community and personal networks like family, friends, and neighbours to cope with difficulties. Unfortunately, COVID-19 has hindered many from maintaining or forging new social networks since too many displaced are facing similar struggles and can't be resorted to for help.

Foregoing medical care: high cost of hospitalization and medication

Professional medical treatment or hospitalization, if needed, is partially covered by the UN. However, even with assistance, displaced Syrians still struggle to meet the reduced expenses. The high costs of medicine, professional treatment, and hospitalization have left 38% of respondents unable to afford the medical treatment or being denied access to the hospitalization in case of emergency. Medication has become more expensive, and many are not available or extremely hard to find. Although the UN provides much-needed assistance for hospital fees, birth, and occasionally, therapy, displaced Syrians still struggle to afford even the reduced costs. Many (29%) are left paying the charges either out-of-pocket and/or are incurring debts. 17% of Syrians were able to receive assistance from family, friends, or neighbours. 17% of interviewed Syrians also reported NGOs— Syrians recalled only 'Doctors without Borders' and 'Caritas' — assisting with hospital fees and medications, while 8% of participants reported visiting a free, public clinic (Al Hariri Hospital).

Moreover, 20% of our respondents lacking documentation were denied admittance into hospitals, dominantly in Saida. Finally, the overwhelming majority of participants have expressed pessimism, stress, anxiety, and despair from difficult experiences and a general sense of hopelessness at their current conditions. Unfortunately, very few reported turning for help, yet those who relied on family, friends, and fellow neighbours for support.

Mental health: the need for clarity in times of uncertainty

The multiple crises of the country are determining personal, emotional stress and fatigue. Syrians reported feeling mentally exhausted, tired, empty, pessimistic, desperate, and demoralized. However, when asked for their opinion about what may assist them with facing their challenges, Syrians reported that consistent, concise, and clear information from the UN regarding assistance and/or aid would be helpful. Furthermore, given the rising prices of food and other essential items, UN financial support needs to be adjusted for the currency inflation as prevailing financial aid was reported to barely cover food supplies.

Protection gaps

Protection gaps for displaced Syrians entering Lebanon were also reported. For those entering legally, either via bus or private car, mainly to Saida, the majority experienced no challenges when entering the country. However, a few participants did report struggling with their existing medical conditions, little community and social networks, and unforeseen living expenses. However, because of the change in Lebanese law in 2014-2015, those arriving before 2014 entered legally (and more

frequently), and those entering post-2014 had to enter irregularly. For those entering irregularly, they mainly went to the Bekaa and were smuggled in enduring harsh travel conditions. They also encountered and have altercations with Lebanese authorities while travelling.

For displaced Syrians entering the country legally, over two-thirds experienced no arrest, and for Syrians entering irregularly, half experienced detention or arrest. In total, one-third of participants experienced detention. Reported detentions lasted from a few hours to a few days or a few weeks. However, one woman reported that her husband was detained five years ago when irregularly entering the country and has not heard from him since. Also, those entering irregularly, and being in more urban spaces like Saida, increased the likelihood and/or duration of detention. Still, most detention experiences were routine, and participants were released often with instructions to obtain the Lebanese residency permit. Two participants recalled extreme examples of maltreatment in custody, abuse, humiliation, and torture.

Furthermore, only one participant detained reported receiving a lawyer but felt the lawyer was ineffective. Others claimed they had access to a lawyer but declined service, with one saying he did not want to pay the fees. Additionally, no displaced Syrian reported receiving a return order, decision for deportation, or any other form of refoulement (although there have been recorded cases). However, two-thirds of participants explicitly stated they would not return to Syria, especially if the country is unsafe or insecure.

Meaningfulness in life, hopelessness and future plans

Prior to the war in Syria, many displaced Syrians in Lebanon similarly related a number of dreams and life goals they had (and achieved) in Syria. These were (in order of frequency) ensuring a happy and prosperous future for their family; ensuring their children had a good education and were raised well; to buy some land and/or build their own house; harvest their own farmland; and maintain a decent living with good financial stability. However, with the onset of the war, many of these dreams changed. The majority of these changes were feelings of hopelessness given the momentousness of having to start anew.

“Now my goal has disappeared. Even my house in Syria was destroyed. If I ever went back to Syria, I would have to start from scratch.”

“There are no goals. I’m just trying to live day-by-day. I don’t think of the future. I’m waiting until things subside in my country to return.”

Nonetheless, a number of displaced Syrians reported new dreams or goals since leaving Syria. These are (in order of frequency) to emigrate abroad; to seek a good education for their children; to return to a safe Syria; just meeting their basic needs in the country; to improve their standard of living; to keep the family together; and remaining committed to their worship and prayers (fig. 50).

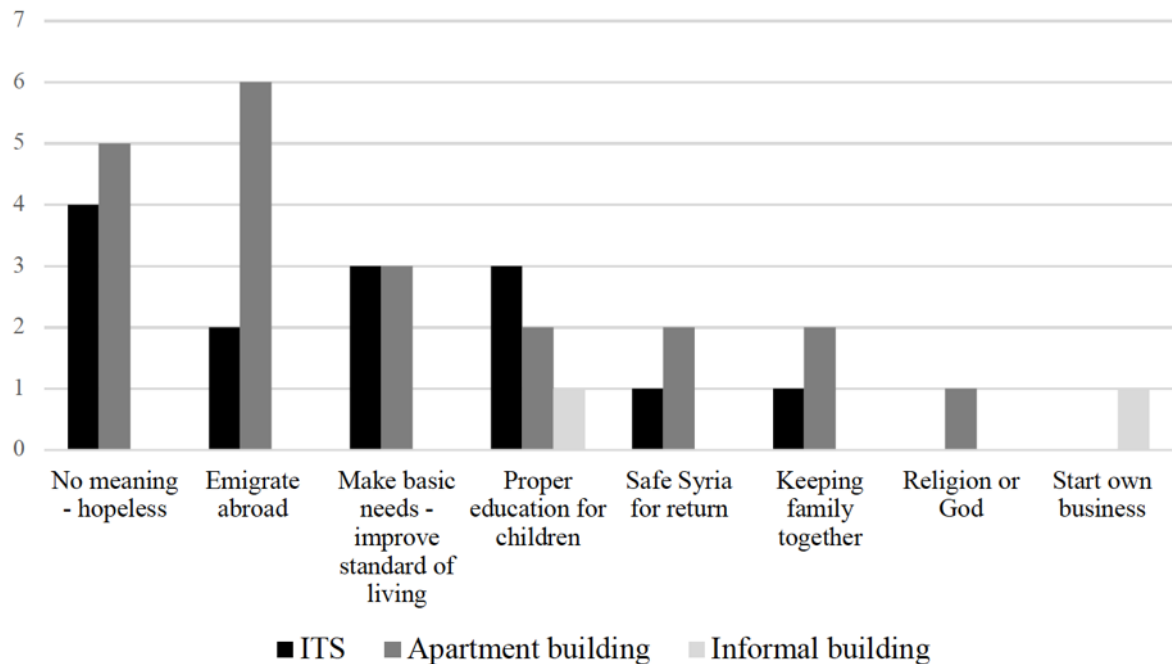


Fig. 50. Dreams or aspirations since settling in Lebanon between ITSs, apartment buildings, or informal buildings.

In fact, Lebanese are now seeking emigration due to the economic crisis, lack of opportunities and good living conditions, and lack of security in the country, which is mirrored among displaced Syrians. Prospects for displaced Syrians in Lebanon are weak as they have not received the necessary protection measures. Indeed, 62% of displaced Syrians reported a desire to move to another country or return to their home in Syria, showing a notable increase of people seeking to relocate to a third country with respect to 2018 (WFP, 2020). The main reasons for seeking relocation or return were mostly due to lack of income generating opportunities and means of attaining food, emphasizing the importance of food security in decisions to migrate (WFP, 2020).

We hope that our critical literature review and findings shed light on the gaps in protection practices, and the measures that can be improved in the governance of displaced Syrians in Lebanon. By highlighting the areas of protection – legal – medical – accommodation – and how they relate to the sphere principles, we hope to have revealed some major areas that need immediate attention as the situation of Syrians continues to worsen amidst multiple crises in Lebanon.

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9. Appendix

I. WP4 QUALITATIVE SURVEY

1	Current conditions: I would like to know more about yourself and your current situation in Lebanon.
2	Please tell me about your life here, what do you like about your life here? What is challenging for you? What do you think would assist you with those challenges? Matha tathon sayosa3idak fi mowajahat hathihi alta7adiyat?
3	Family life ? children
4	Housing
5	Work and study conditions, how do you spend your day?
6	Community/ personal network
7	Safety and security

II. NEEDS

Special focus on protection needs that relate to children and families, disability, gender and, also, to asylum seekers who live in camps.

1	Which were your more basic needs while entering the country? Could you elaborate on how these most basic needs were met and by whom? Which were the needs that you had to meet yourself and how?
2	Which were your more basic needs while staying in the country? Could you elaborate on how these most basic needs were met and by whom? Which were the needs that you had to meet yourself and how?

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III. PROTECTION IN ENTERING THIS COUNTRY

1	Can you describe your experience in entering this country? Did you get help from your own migrant networks, local people, volunteers, facilitators, NGO, police, etc..

IV. PROTECTION IN BECOMING AN ASYLUM SEEKER/REFUGEE -ASYLUM PROCESS

Are you registered with UN

Do you have residency permit

1	Are you participating in any formal process of registration and/or asylum? If so, can you describe it? Who asks you to do what and when?
2	Are you aware or did you become aware about your rights and obligations (iltizametak) as an asylum seeker (ka taleb lojoo2) and how did that happen?
3	Did you have enough information (ma3loomet) (written or oral) on the formal processes (3amaliya il rasmiya) in which you participated (sharaket fiya)?
4	Were you aware of important aspects of these processes including their length in time or the options that were available in case of a rejection of the registration application (talab il tasjeel) or a decision that was not satisfactory (e.g. the difference between subsidiary status instead of refugee status)?
5	Describe your experience of this official process? In the case of registration, were your expectations about the registration process met?

6	How easy was it for you to apply for registration?
7	Describe the officers' behavior? Did they pay attention to your needs or to the needs of other people that you know (in particular, needs in terms of gender, age or illness)?
8	Did you get any support (in terms of legal advice, childcare, etc.)? If so, who provided the support?
9	Do you have family members staying in other countries than your home country? If so, have you tried to re-unite with them? If so, did you get assistance with this? What was the outcome?
10	What is your official status (e.g. asylum seeker) now?
11	How do you perceive it? Is it a kind of new identity?
12	Are you familiar with the implications that this status has on your life?
13	Does this status make any difference in the new environment that you have currently settled?

V. PROTECTION IN SETTLING IN LOCAL SOCIETY

If lived in one area and moved to another, very important to know why

1	Please, describe your current place of residence.
2	In case you live in a camp, could you describe the process of settling there?
3	Where do you reside (ISO box, tent, other)?
4	How did you get shelter?
5	How do you get food
6	How do you cope with basic needs in your everyday life
7	Do you feel secure in this environment? If no, why?
8	In case you live in an apartment/ house, how did you find it? Iza bit22esh bi bineye aw bet, keef l2eeto?
9	Do you pay for it yourself or do you receive help with the rent and from whom?

10	With whom do you live?
	How long have you lived there
11	What have you done to make this space feel like home, including furnishings and decorations, etc.?
12	Describe your experience of settling in the new urban environment. How were you received?
13	What is it like to live in your current neighborhood?
14	Do you have contact with your neighbors?
15	Do you know who lives next to you?
16	Do you feel comfortable walking around in this neighborhood
17	Do you feel you have opportunities to engage with the wider community?

18	Do you interact with your neighbors? Do you get help from them?
19	How do you cope with difficulties in adjusting in the new environment?
20	What gives you meaning (purpose, goal in life, importance, motivation) in life today and before you came to your new country (for example religion, ideology, or another worldview)?
21	How do close people around you affect your relation to what gives you meaning? Did this change since you left your country?
22	Have (or are you) participated (ing) in an “integration program”, and If so, what is your experience of it?
23	Do you think that such programs provide a better framework in dealing with your needs?

VI. PROTECTION IN EMPLOYMENT AND EDUCATION

1	Do you work now or have worked earlier in Lebanon? If yes, please describe your job/s and what it is like to work here.
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2	How long did it take you to find a job and how did you find it?
3	Have your jobs been compatible with your skills and education?
4	Do you feel comfortable doing these types of work or would you rather do something else?
5	Have you experienced obstacles or problems with finding a job or at work?
6	How have you coped with these problems? Have you turned to anyone for help or assistance? If yes, how were you assisted?
7	Have you attended any trainings, courses? If yes, please try to detail them (who pays for it? how difficult is it to access these courses? who do you need to speak to? Is it obligatory or optional to attend?)

VII. PROTECTION IN MEDICAL CARE

1	Has it happened since your arrival here that you felt pessimistic or depressed or experienced a difficult situation and needed help? If so, what did you do to handle the situation? Who did you turn to for help? Did it help, and if so, in what way?
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2	<p>What is your experience of seeking and getting professional help regarding a particularly difficult health issue you may have had since arriving here?</p> <p>Did you feel that the medical care you received was satisfactory?</p> <p>Were you familiar with the ways you were treated and, if not, did you get any help by the professionals who offered their assistance?</p>

VIII. PROTECTION IN EXIT

1	In case you were issued a return order / decision on deportation, could you do anything to cancel this order / decision?
2	Were you assisted by anyone in executing or cancelling the return order (IOM, NGOs, free legal advice
3	Did you experience detention (or administrative detention)?
4	How have you been treated, and by whom?
5	Did you have any information on your legal possibilities and remedies, by whom?

6	Did you have access to a lawyer?