

Alert note*Lebanon, July 2023*

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Forum: Lebanon

Type of emergency: Protracted Crisis
Date of emergency (if rapid onset):

1. The nature of the emergency

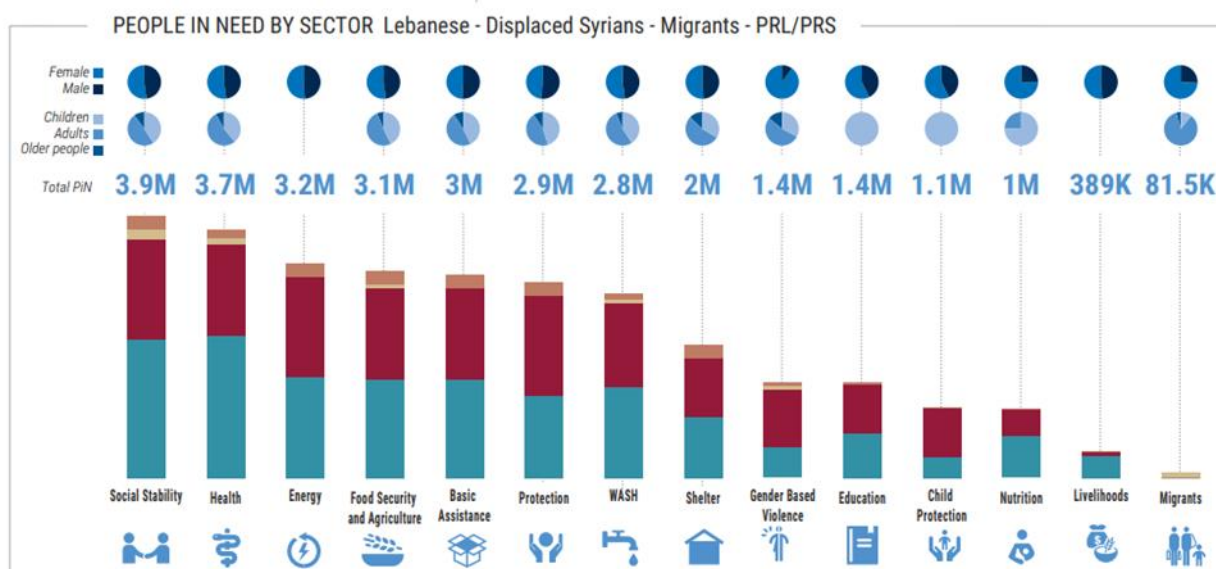
The situation of the refugees in Lebanon has been exacerbated by a series of disasters ranging from the beginning of an economic crisis, the outbreak of COVID-19, and the devastating 2020 Beirut blast. Lebanon has the world's highest number of refugees per capita. The country hosts around 500,000 Palestinian refugees, 500,000 migrant workers from different nationalities and 1.5 million Syrian refugees of whom about 78% lack legal status (UNHCR) and 89 per cent live below the extreme poverty line¹. Combined with the political deadlock in the country and the inability to reach a common understanding of how the country should proceed, the economic crisis only worsened to extreme lengths. As a result, the Lebanese currency continued to depreciate while inflation increased. Of course, this meant that more people fell into poverty and those already classified as vulnerable are now in a much more difficult position.

The current estimated population of displaced Syrians in Lebanon is around 1.5 million,¹⁸² including 760,130 women and 739,870 men. Among them, around 45 per cent are children under 15 (687,130 children) and 2.3 per cent are older people above the age of 60 (35,920). In 2022, families across Lebanon continued to face depleted purchasing power, affecting vulnerable peoples' ability to meet their basic needs. 94 per cent of Syrians surveyed through Protection Monitoring in 2022 reported that they had difficulties buying food due to lack of money, while 81 per cent reported an inability or increased difficulty in paying rent. Displaced Syrians are among the hardest hit by the ongoing economic crisis. 55 per cent of Syrians within the working age group remain outside the labour force, with women LFPR as low as 19 per cent. Construction and agriculture are the two main employment sectors in which displaced Syrians can engage, yet many of those working are still unable to cover the costs of their food and non-food essential needs. On average, Syrian households were only making 21 per cent of the monthly SMEB value from employment. The unemployment rate stands at 33 per cent, while the LHPR stands at 45 per cent. 90 per cent of Syrian households live below the SMEB, when excluding assistance. 59 per cent of household expenditures are represented by food, gas, rent, hygiene and electricity. The quality of food consumption decreased in 2022: 43 percent of Syrians had an 'acceptable' food behaviour, compared to 54 per cent in 2021 and 51 per cent in 2020.

The 2022 VASyR estimates that 91 per cent of the total displaced Syrian population needs assistance to meet their basic needs. This equates to 1,365,000 individuals living in poverty. A large proportion of families were reducing spending on health and education as well as selling assets. According to the IPC results, 799,000 displaced Syrians are expected to be facing high acute food insecurity in the January-April 2023 projection period.²

¹ <https://unscol.unmissions.org/nine-out-ten-syrian-refugee-families-lebanon-are-now-living-extreme-poverty-un-study-says>

² OCHA. (n.d.). Lebanon emergency response plan 2023 in Lebanon. United Nations. <https://lebanon.un.org/en/230731-lebanon-emergency-response-plan-2023>
 UN. (n.d.). file:///C:/Users/Lenovo/Downloads/Escalating_Needs_Lebanon.pdf.



PEOPLE IN NEED BY SECTOR Lebanese - Displaced Syrians - Migrants - PRL/PRS – UN

The current situation in Lebanon continues to exacerbate existing vulnerabilities to protection risks and shocks and undermines positive coping strategies for displaced persons from Syria and other persons at risk especially for older persons, female headed households and persons living with a disability.

It also strains the coexistence between host community and refugees, as both are experiencing extreme levels of poverty and vulnerability, and the host community unfortunately, uses such opportunities to insight hate speeches and harmful violence in some instances.

As a result, there are major shortages when it comes to three sectors: Basic needs, Healthcare, and Education. In terms of basic needs, WFP and the World Bank conducted a study that showed that Lebanese households are facing increasing challenges accessing basic needs, with more than 60% of households resorting to crisis coping strategies including reducing expenditure on health and education, withdrawing children from school and selling productive assets.³ High levels of inflation, coupled with a loss in income generating opportunities as well as shortages in essential goods and services, have challenged the ability of vulnerable populations to meet their basic needs.

When it comes to Healthcare, the sector has greatly suffered over the past few years as masses of medical professionals have left the country. According to UNICEF, an estimated 40% of doctors – including neonatologists and obstetrician-gynecologists – and 15% specialized Neonatal Intensive Care Unit (NICU) nurses and 30% of midwives have left the country, leaving a huge gap in the health system. A hiring freeze by health facilities and limitations on imports of medications and equipment have further affected the ability to provide even the most basic health care – with 58% of hospitals reported drug shortages and 39% of hospitals reported shortages in medical consumables⁴.

As for education, the sector is in peril; at least 1.2 million children across Lebanon have had their education disrupted for more than one year. With the country slipping deeper into an economic crisis, a safe and systematic school reopening in Lebanon is difficult to imagine. The lack of resources to pay teachers' salaries has exacerbated the lack of access to education for some of the most vulnerable children. The increased cost of financing education for families is preventing many children from returning to school. As private school tuition is fast becoming unaffordable for many families, the number of children attending public school is set to continue increasing; adding pressure on the Lebanese public school system, and contributing to a reduced number of Syrian and Palestinian refugee children able to enrol in second shift.⁵

³ WFP and World Bank (2021). Lebanon m-VAM Vulnerability and Food Security Assessment, March April 2021.

⁴ <https://www.unicef.org/lebanon/worsening-health-crisis-children>

⁵ Save the Children, https://resourcecentre.savethechildren.net/pdf/lebanon_education_crisis_spotlight_31.03.2021.pdf/

During 2023, prices of basic goods in the country are expected to continue increasing in parallel with further depreciation of the local currency. Without support, vulnerable and poor families, and individuals, particularly women, the elderly, and persons with disabilities, will continue struggling to meet their basic needs in a dignified and safe way.

2. The impact and scale of the emergency *(please include your source of information)*

The political and economic situation in Lebanon has reached a critical stage, bordering on a large-scale emergency that threatens to push the country into collapse. Lebanon is teetering on the brink of becoming a failed state⁶. As the prices of essential goods continue to surge, and the local currency further depreciates during 2023. The impact is disproportionately severe on vulnerable and impoverished families, particularly women, the elderly, and individuals with disabilities, who are struggling to meet their basic needs in a dignified and safe manner.

The repercussions of the unstable political climate have spread throughout the entirety of Lebanon, but certain regions are bearing the brunt of the crisis, including the north of Lebanon, the Beirut Governorate, and the Bekaa area. Even some parts of the South are experiencing alarming levels of poverty.

The dire economic situation is evident across all sectors, profoundly affecting the community. Health facilities are facing a hiring freeze and limitations on medical imports, resulting in severe shortages of medications and essential medical supplies, with 58 percent of hospitals reporting drug shortages and 39 percent experiencing shortages in medical consumables⁷.

The education sector is also in peril, with over 1.2 million children having their education disrupted due to frequent strikes in public schools caused by insufficient funds to pay educators fair wages. Simultaneously, private school tuition has become unaffordable for many families.

The ongoing crisis in Lebanon has exacerbated vulnerabilities to protection risks and shocks, particularly affecting displaced persons from Syria and other at-risk groups, such as older individuals, female-headed households, and persons with disabilities. Syrian and Palestinian refugees are resorting to harmful coping strategies to survive, and households are struggling to support vulnerable family members, especially those living in the lowest expenditure classes and non-permanent shelters.

Access to basic needs has become increasingly challenging for Lebanese households, with more than 60% adopting crisis coping strategies, including cutting back on health and education expenses, pulling children out of school, and selling productive assets⁸.

High number of individuals are facing dramatic challenges with accessing safe and sufficient quantities of water for drinking and domestic use. The recent cholera outbreak in Lebanon has further highlighted that the water infrastructure in the country is on the verge of almost total collapse. The country is also facing a sanitation crisis. Most wastewater treatment plants are no longer functioning due to electricity cuts and unaffordability of fuel to run the back-up power generator⁹.

The combination of economic crises and political instability has led to an increase in gender-based violence (GBV) and crime rates affecting both Lebanese citizens and refugees. Negative inter-communal relations have risen significantly, with women and girls living in female-headed households and sub-standard shelter conditions feeling increasingly insecure.

Employment in the informal sector has suffered significant challenges due to recent developments, leading to closures and job losses, particularly affecting women, who bear the brunt of the economic downturn. Female labor force participation in Lebanon remains low, and refugee women have even fewer opportunities to join the workforce. The lack of financial inclusion for women further exacerbates the situation. The decline in income adversely affects community resilience, as households struggle to afford essential goods, impacting local markets.

The sharp depreciation of the Lebanese pound, soaring inflation, and subsidy cuts on essential items have severely diminished people's purchasing power, especially for those receiving salaries in Lebanese pounds. As of February 2023, annual inflation reached 190 per cent. The cost of the food Survival Minimum Expenditure Basket (SMEB) per person in February 2023 in LBP increased by 48% from January 2023. Food

⁶ Lebanon: UN expert warns of 'failing State' amid widespread poverty | OHCHR

⁷ <https://www.unicef.org/lebanon/worsening-health-crisis-children>

⁸ WFP and World Bank (2021). Lebanon m-VAM Vulnerability and Food Security Assessment, March April 2021.

⁹ <https://lebanon.un.org/en/230731-lebanon-emergency-response-plan-2023>

inflation since October 2019 has increased by 11,300 per cent and by 4,400 per cent the energy inflation¹⁰. Vulnerable households have limited means to preserve their purchasing power, leading to negative coping strategies and informal employment, leaving them vulnerable to exploitation and reliant on international assistance.

Given the current context, it is crucial to support and protect people's livelihoods, invest in decent employment, and focus on economic recovery and market systems to mitigate the impact of the crisis.

3. Local and national capacity

ACT Alliance has been working in Lebanon since 2011, now helping/planning to help people affected by the Beirut Port Explosion and overlapping crises in the country. ACT Forum members include Act Church of Sweden, Diakonia, DSPR- JCC, MECC, DCA, NCA, HEKS-EPER and CA.

ACT Alliance works in all affected areas around Lebanon and has assessed the impact of the economic crises to better respond to the needs and vulnerabilities.

In collaboration with relevant stakeholders, the ACT Lebanon Forum has identified a gap in basic assistance, food security, PSS and protection, health, education, livelihoods. The ACT Lebanon forum members will be contributing to bridging the identified gap.

The ACT Lebanon Forum is planning on submitting a funding proposal to ensure that the affected persons' basic needs are met with regards to basic assistance and unconditional cash, business support, food vouchers, health assistance to chronic disease, PSS to vulnerable groups specifically women, children, the elderly and persons with disabilities, restoring businesses, providing training and livelihood opportunities to women in order to enhance their social protection, and supporting children to go to school as well as men in alleviating their burdens and creating a safe space for capacity building.

To ensure that the humanitarian response is well coordinated and complementary, the ACT Lebanon Forum and ACT members will take part in meetings with all relevant sector stakeholders, UN working groups and Local/International NGO Forums, and establish an open line of communication with crisis affected persons and communities to ensure a humanitarian response based on participation and feedback.

The Forum has its updated EPRP and it is currently being utilised in this alert to respond.

4. Key needs and gaps

Our members have conducted their own needs assessments along with an overview of the UN agency assessments.

The capacity of the country to cope with all these overlapping shocks is expected to continue decreasing in the absence of the implementation of comprehensive long-term development plans and structural reforms. In July 2022, the country was downgraded to a lower middle-income country for the first time in 25 years. The crisis has been characterized by a near collapse of the banking sector and a brutal contraction of the Gross Domestic Product (GDP) which has decreased from US\$ 55 billion in 2018 to US\$ 21.3 billion as projected for 2022.

In January 2023, it is estimated that a total of 3.9 million people need some form of humanitarian assistance in Lebanon. This figure includes 2.1 million vulnerable Lebanese, 1.5 million Syrians refugees, 81,500 migrants living in Lebanon, and the 211,400 Palestine refugees in Lebanon and from Syria (PRL and PRS). While there are some variations among the population, notably in terms of protection risks, overall the severity and magnitude of humanitarian needs is primarily driven by people's inability to meet their basic needs and access basic services. This is compounded by harmful coping strategies, which result in heightened protection risks.

Today's needs rely on basic assistance, food security, PSS and protection, health, education, WASH and livelihoods. All while focusing on advocating for Climate just projects and creating more advocacy around the topic with the support of the ACT Climate working group.

The dire situation is further compounded for affected people with vulnerabilities. The intersecting crises the country is experiencing have disproportionately hit and affected vulnerable groups, people with specific needs, and disadvantaged communities, such as female-headed households, children, youth, older people, the LGBTIQ+ community and people with disabilities, and refugees and migrant workers.

¹⁰ OCHA. (n.d.). Lebanon emergency response plan 2023 in Lebanon. United Nations. <https://lebanon.un.org/en/230731-lebanon-emergency-response-plan-2023>

Please indicate whether you are considering:

	Indicate your intention with an X below
Rapid Response Fund (<i>intended for small and medium scale emergencies</i>)	
Appeal (<i>intended for large scale emergencies</i>)	X

If you indicate an intention to launch an appeal, the secretariat will activate an Emergency Steering Committee meeting within two working days on receipt of this alert.

Capacity details of forum members with the intention to respond are given below.

ACT Member	Geographical focus	Sectors of expertise	Support required	Estimated Budget range (USD)
MECC	All over Lebanon	Health, Education, Livelihood, MSME support, PSS.	funding	1,049,200
DSPR-JCC	Beirut, South	Education, rehabilitation, PSS, Health, Livelihood	funding	303,400
HEKS-EPER	South	Livelihood	funding	177,700

5. Potential responses

The ALF implementing members (HEKS/EPER, MECC and DSPR-JCC) of this alert are reputable organizations that have strong roots in the community either directly or through their partners.

MECC has been operating in the humanitarian relief operations since its inception in 1974 with the start of the civil war in Lebanon and played a major emergency role and responded to other crisis as they emerged (Gulf Crisis, Syria Crisis and its effect on Lebanon with Syrian refugees, COVID-19 pandemic, Lebanon economic collapse, Beirut port explosion). MECC has also taken part in previous humanitarian relief operations implemented as an ACT appeal in the different geographical areas in and outside Lebanon.

For this intervention, MECC will be supporting host communities and refugees alike in basic needs by providing medication support as well as blood tests (for cancer patients as well as vulnerable people) and multi-cash purpose and unrestricted vouchers for unmet basic expenses and to create a circular economy, they also have seen the increase of prices in diapers for elderly and will be supporting in diaper distribution. As the educational sector is further deteriorating, they will be supporting in paying outstanding tuition fees directly to the school. They will also equip the schools with solar panels and PCs for the computer science classes. To support SMEs and the circular economy, they will be supporting vulnerable beneficiaries with vocational training and grant support. Finally, as a way for coexistence and coordination, MECC will hold networking meetings with churches and congregations on advocacy topics.

Since the 1970s, HEKS/EPER has been implementing projects in partnership with local partners in Lebanon. For the appeal, HEKS/EPER will work through its longstanding partner Najdeh in its vocational training centre in Saida, which has been operational for 15 years. HEKS has successfully implemented vocational training projects with Najdeh since the 1980s. HEKS/EPER Thematic Advisory Services support the project. Stakeholders have been consulted in preparing this project through a detailed needs assessment.

The DSPR-JCC has a long-standing history of organizing their efforts and utilizing decades of experience to provide developmental and humanitarian assistance to refugees in Lebanon. The JCC has a deep understanding of the local context and maintain positive relationships with local and international churches, authorities, and NGOs that focus on similar sectors. HEKS/EPER will be providing vulnerable

Lebanese and Refugees with vocational trainings in Beauty/hairdressing and Solar Panel Installation in the Saida Ein el Helwe camp.

As part of this project, the DSPR-JCC will work closely their partners to ensure ongoing communication regarding prioritized cases, localities, and methods of assistance. They will utilize established referral pathways and mechanisms to maximize the allocation of resources and achieve the project's maximum benefit. The JCC has the necessary experience, knowledge, and resources to successfully implement this project and continue their critical work in the sector. DSPR-JCC will be providing Palestinian refugees with medication vouchers, empower the local dispensary of the Dbayeh Palestinian refugee camp, provide recreational activities for the residents of the camp to support the moral and well-being, renovate and rehabilitate extreme bad condition/humid eroded houses with necessary works to improve the living conditions of its residents, provide multi-purpose cash to Palestinian refugees and finally, support in tuition fee payments for students of the Palestinian camps.

The Forum will be supporting vulnerable populations in Livelihood, health, basic needs, MHPSS as needed based on the needs assessment.

The Forum is requesting 1,530,300\$ to be able to support more than 13,000 beneficiaries in need of dire support.