LEBANON

THE ECONOMIC CRISIS CONTINUES TO AFFECT LEBANON FOOD SECURITY SITUATION

IPC ACUTE FOOD INSECURITY ANALYSIS
OCTOBER 2023 – SEPTEMBER 2024

Published on December 7, 2023

CURRENT SITUATION OCTOBER 2023 - MARCH 2024

1.05M

19 percent of the population analysed

People facing high acute food insecurity (IPC Phase 3 or above)

IN NEED OF URGENT ACTION

Phase 5	0 People in Catastrophe
Phase 4	74,000 People in Emergency
Phase 3	976,000 People in Crisis
Phase 2	2,630,000 People Stressed
Phase 1	1,895,000 People in food security

PROJECTION APRIL 2024 - SEPTEMBER 2024

1.14M

20 percent of the population analysed

People facing high acute food insecurity (IPC Phase 3 or above)

IN NEED OF URGENT ACTION

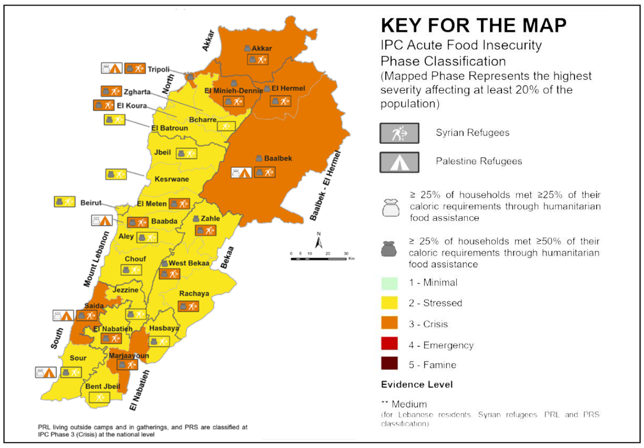
Phase 5	0 People in Catastrophe
Phase 4	64,000 People in Emergency
Phase 3	1,079,000 People in Crisis
Phase 2	2,549,000 People Stressed
Phase 1	1,882,000 People in food security

Overview

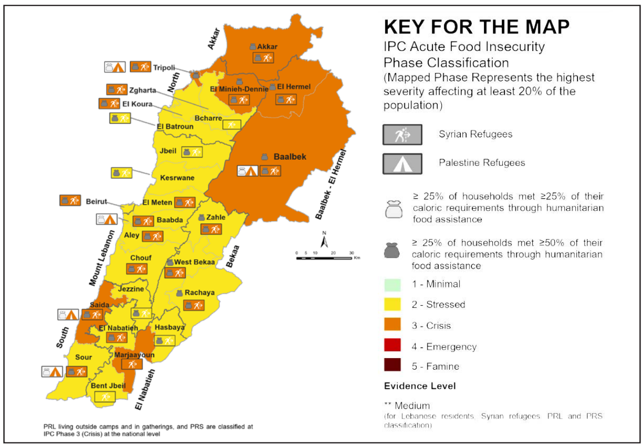
The third IPC Acute Food Insecurity Analysis conducted in Lebanon estimated that for the current period, between October 2023 and March 2024, about 1.05 million Lebanese, Syrian refugees, Palestine refugees in Lebanon (PRL) and Palestine refugees from Syria (PRS) are facing acute food insecurity and are classified in IPC Phase 3 (Crisis) or above, corresponding to 19 percent of the analyzed population. About 74,000 people (1 percent of the population analysed) are in IPC Phase 4 (Emergency) and 976,000 people (18 percent of the population analysed) in IPC Phase 3 (Crisis). About 582,000 Lebanese residents (15 percent of the resident population), 411,000 Syrian refugees (27 percent of the total Syrians in Lebanon), 46,000 PRL (26 percent of the PRL in Lebanon) and 10,600 PRS (35 percent of the PRS in Lebanon) are estimated to be in IPC Phase 3 (Crisis) or above between October 2023 and March 2024. Populations classified in IPC Phase 3 (Crisis) or above require urgent humanitarian action to reduce food gaps, protect and restore livelihoods and prevent acute malnutrition.

The analysis projected that, between April and September 2024, about 1.14 million people are expected to face high levels of food insecurity and are likely to be in IPC Phase 3 (Crisis) or above, corresponding to 21 percent of the analyzed population. A total of 64,000 individuals (1 percent) are expected to face severe food insecurity and were classified in IPC Phase 4 (Emergency), and 1.08 million (19 percent) are expected to be in IPC Phase 3 (Crisis). Specifically, a total of 582,000 Lebanese resident (15 percent of the resident population), 500,000 Syrian refugees (33 percent of the total Syrians in Lebanon), 49,000 PRL (27 percent of the PRL in Lebanon) and 12,100 PRS (40 percent of the PRS in Lebanon) were estimated to be in IPC Phase 3 (Crisis) or above between April and September 2024.

Current Acute Food Insecurity: Oct 2023 - March 2024



Projected Acute Food Insecurity: April 2024 - Sept 2024



Key Drivers

Inflation

Rising inflation continues to be one of the main drivers of food insecurity. In August 2023, year-on-year food inflation was 274 percent, and among the highest food inflation rates in the world.

Expected cuts to humanitarian food assistance

The coverage of humanitarian food assistance for Syrian refugees is expected to decline by 30 percent. Assistance to Palestine refugees from Lebanon is likely to drop. The level of social assistance to Lebanese residents is expected to remain stable, but in kind food assistance is expected to decrease by 30 percent.

Livelihood changes

After seven months of price stability, food prices in USD have also registered rapid increases since April 2023. The cost of the food SMEB per person rose by 23 percent since March 2023. The cost of the non-food SMEB increased by 38 percent in USD term and driven by rent (+107 percent), electricity (+47 percent), and transportation (+37 percent).

Unemployment

Employment among Lebanese slightly declined to 53 percent in October 2023, from 55 percent in May 2023. Syrian and Palestine refugees still face legal constraints when accessing the labour market. Nearly 60 percent of Syrian youth aged between 15 and 24 were not in education, employment, or training and 7 percent of children were engaged in child labour.

CURRENT IPC ACUTE FOOD INSECURITY SITUATION (OCTOBER 2023 - MARCH 2024)

LEBANESE RESIDENTS - CURRENT ACUTE FOOD INSECURITY: October 2023 - March 2024

582,000

15 percent of the population analysed

People facing high acute food insecurity (IPC Phase 3 or above)

IN NEED OF URGENT ACTION

Phase 5	0 People in Catastrophe
Phase 4	41,000 People in Emergency
Phase 3	541,000 People in Crisis
Phase 2	1,694,000 People in Stressed
Phase 1	1,588,000 People in Food Security

SYRIAN REFUGEES - CURRENT ACUTE FOOD INSECURITY: October 2023 - March 2024

411,000

27 percent of the population analysed

People facing high acute food insecurity (IPC Phase 3 or above)

IN NEED OF URGENT ACTION

Phase 5	0 People in Catastrophe
Phase 4	28,000 People in Emergency
Phase 3	384,000 People in Crisis
Phase 2	829,000 People in Stressed
Phase 1	260,000 People in Food Security

PALESTINE REFUGEES IN LEBANON - CURRENT ACUTE FOOD INSECURITY: October 2023 - March 2024

46,000

26 percent of the population analysed

People facing high acute food insecurity (IPC Phase 3 or above)

IN NEED OF URGENT ACTION

Phase 5	0 People in Catastrophe
Phase 4	4,000 People in Emergency
Phase 3	42,000 People in Crisis
Phase 2	90,000 People in Stressed
Phase 1	44,000 People in Food Security

PALESTINE REFUGEES FROM SYRIA - CURRENT ACUTE FOOD INSECURITY: October 2023 - March 2024

10,600

35 percent of the population analysed

People facing high acute food insecurity (IPC Phase 3 or above)

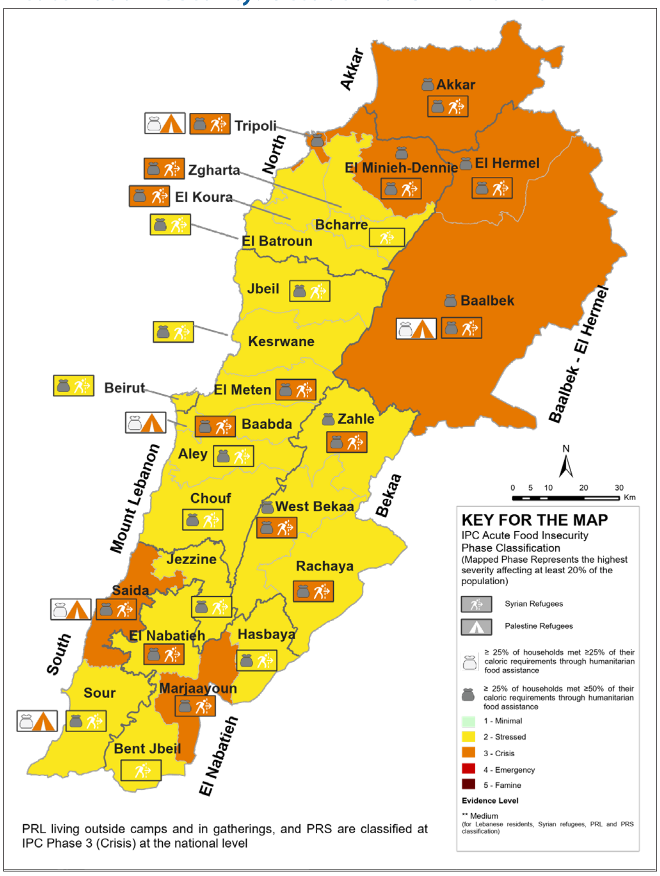
IN NEED OF URGENT ACTION

Phase 5	0 People in Catastrophe
Phase 4	1,500 People in Emergency
Phase 3	9,100 People in Crisis
Phase 2	16,600 People in Stressed
Phase 1	3,000 People in Food Security

The economic and financial crisis that affected Lebanon since October 2019 has significantly undermined the food security situation of those living in Lebanon, a country affected by institutional and social fragility and hosting a high number of refugees. This includes Lebanese residents, Syrian refugees, Palestine refugees in Lebanon, Palestine refugees from Syria as well as other refugee groups and migrant workers. The Acute Food Insecurity (AFI) IPC analysis was carried out in all 26 districts covering four population groups in Lebanon: Lebanese residents, Syrian refugees, Palestine refugees in Lebanon (PRL), Palestine refugees from Syria (PRS). The analysis covered over 99 percent of the population living in the country and produced the IPC current (October 2023 to March 2024) and projected (April to September 2024) acute food insecurity phase classification.

Based on the current classification, 15 percent of the Lebanese population corresponding to about 582,000 people, 27 percent of the Syrian refugee population corresponding to 411,000 people, 26 percent of PRL population corresponding to 46,000 people and 35 percent of PRS population corresponding to 10,600 people are estimated to be in IPC Phase 3 (Crisis) or above requiring urgent humanitarian action to reduce food gaps, diversify food intake, protect, and restore livelihoods and prevent acute malnutrition.

Acute Food Insecurity: October 2023 - March 2024



Of particular concern, the situation of 41,000 (1 percent) Lebanese residents, 28,000 (2 percent) Syrian refugees, 4,000 (2 percent) PRL and 1,500 (5 percent) PRS were classified in IPC Phase 4 (Emergency) requiring urgent delivery of adequate humanitarian food assistance.

Lebanese residents: During the current period, 7 out the 26 districts are classified in IPC Phase 3 (Crisis) including Akkar, Baalbek, El Hermel, El Minieh-Dennie, Tripoli, Saida, and Marjaayoun. The highest incidence of acute food insecurity is observed in four districts: Akkar, Baalbek, El Minieh-Dennie and Tripoli. In Akkar district, 30 percent of the population is classified in IPC Phase 3 (Crisis) or above, while in Baalbek, El Minieh-Dennie and Tripoli districts 25 percent of the population is classified in IPC Phase 3 (Crisis) or above, of which 5 percent in each of the districts is estimated in IPC Phase 4 (Emergency). Additionally, three more districts are classified in IPC Phase 3 (Crisis) including El Hermel, Marjaayoun and Saida with 20 percent of the population classified in IPC Phase 3 (Crisis). The highest occurrence of acute food insecurity is in Akkar district (89,000), followed by Baabda (62,000), Tripoli (50,000) and Baalbek (48,000).

Syrian refugees: In the current period 15 out of the 26 districts where refugees are living are classified in IPC Phase 3 (Crisis). The highest incidence of acute food insecurity is observed in five districts (Akkar, El Hermel, El Minieh-Dennie, Tripoli, and Zahle) where the percentage of the Syrian refugees classified in IPC Phase 3 (Crisis) or above is 35 percent, out of which 5 percent in each of the districts is classified in IPC Phase 4 (Emergency), except for Zahle district. Overall, in six districts Emergency food insecurity levels among Syrian refugees are identified (Akkar, El Hermel, El Minieh-Dennie, Tripoli, Baalbek and Saida). In absolute terms, with 86,000 people in IPC Phase 3 (Crisis) or above, Zahle is the district with the highest number of Syrian refugees who are acutely food insecure, followed by Baalbek (56,000) and Akkar (55,000). In Baabda and El Meten, two districts hosting a high number of Syrian refugees, there are around 47,000 Syrian refugees facing acute food insecurity.

Palestine Refugees in Lebanon and Palestine Refugees from Syria: Palestine refugees in Lebanon residing in camps were analyzed at the district level in five districts (Tripoli, Baabda, Baalbek, Saida and Sour), whereas Palestine refugees in Lebanon residing outside camps and in gatherings and Palestine refugees from Syria were analyzed at the national level. A total of 30 percent of PRL population residing in camps in Baalbek, Saida and Tripoli are classified in IPC Phase 3 (Crisis) or above, out of which 10 percent in IPC Phase 4 (Emergency) in Saida district and 5 percent in IPC Phase 4 (Emergency) in Baalbek and Tripoli. Comparatively, 25 percent of PRL population residing in camps in Baabda district, and 20 percent of PRL population residing in camps in Sour district are classified in IPC Phase 3 (Crisis) or above. At the national level, 25 percent (25,000) of PRL population residing outside camps and in gatherings are classified in IPC Phase 3 (Crisis) or above. Thirty-five percent (10,600) of PRS are classified in IPC Phase 3 (Crisis) or above, of which 5 percent (1,500) are classified in IPC Phase 4 (Emergency).

KEY DRIVERS OF FOOD INSECURITY

Lebanon continues to face an economic and financial crisis that has undermined the food security of Lebanese residents and of Syrian and Palestine refugees. Inflation, currency depreciation, income losses and increasing tensions negatively impacted the capacity to access to food of the different population groups.

Inflation

Rising inflation continued to be the key driver of food insecurity. Lebanon registered triple-digit food inflation for the fourth consecutive year. In August 2023, year-on-year food inflation was 274 percent, and among the highest food inflation rates in the world.

After seven months of price stability, food prices in USD have also registered rapid increases since April 2023. The cost of the food SMEB per person rose by 23 percent since March 2023 reaching USD33.0 in September 2023 surpassing for the first time its cost at the beginning of the crisis back in October 2019 (USD 32.6). This after having remained mostly stable between September 2022 and March 2023, averaging USD27.2 per person per month. As of September 2023, commodities that drove the cost of the food basket were fruits and vegetables[1], cereals, tubers and pulses.[2] The cost of the non-food SMEB increased by 38 percent in USD term and driven by rent (+107 percent), electricity (+47 percent), and transportation (+37 percent).

Currency stabilization and frozen economic recovery

Although 2023 saw a deceleration in the economic deterioration, the current economic output remains notably lower than pre-crisis levels. The International Monetary Fund (IMF) estimated that the size of the economy stood at USD21.8 billion in 2022, a zero percent contraction compared to 2021, and after the country's GDP dropped by more than a half since the start of the crisis, from USD51.6 billion in 2019. In September 2023, an IMF delegation visited Lebanon to assess the economic situation and discuss on key policy matters. The IMF expressed concerns over the "absence of urgently needed reforms," qualifying the economic outlook as "difficult and unstable" despite encouraging policy initiatives taken by the Central Bank and an uptick in activity during the summer season.

The acceleration of the economy's dollarization continued in the second quarter of 2023, with supermarkets listing their prices in USD and a growing number of service sector outlets beginning to accept again electronic payments in "fresh" USD. The Central Bank, having started converting public salaries from LBP to USD at a preferential rate prior to disbursement since 2022, maintained this practice. Similarly, a notable portion of private sector salaries began to be paid, at least partially, in USD.

Food Security Outcomes Indicators

Food Consumption Score: For the Lebanese population, 92.1 percent of households had acceptable food consumption, 6.6 percent were borderline, and 1.3 percent had poor consumption. The highest diet inadequacy rates were recorded in the Akkar and Tripoli districts. These districts also had the highest proportion of poor food consumption, reaching 5.8 percent and 3.1 percent, respectively. Among Syrian refugees, 49 percent had acceptable food consumption, 36.9 percent were borderline, and 14.1 percent had poor consumption. In the Aley and Jbeil districts, the proportion of Syrian refugees with poor food consumption reached 31.7 percent and 22 percent, respectively.

Coping Strategies: When households do not have enough food or lack resources to buy food or to access other essential needs, they adopt strategies and behaviours to manage food shortages. Food coping strategies imply changes in food consumption patterns such as relying on less expensive foods or reducing the number of meals or portion sizes. Around 18.3 percent of Lebanese households and 34.7 percent of Syrian refugees reported having used high food-based coping strategies. Lebanese residents in Beirut and Chouf districts have the highest proportion of rCSI indicating severe constraints at 48.4 percent and 30.4 percent respectively. Among Syrian refugees, Hasbaya and El Koura districts have the highest rates of rCSI, with 69.1 percent and 55.7 percent respectively indicating severe constraints.

Livelihood-based coping strategies (LCS): Livelihood strategies are coping behaviors that cause changes in income-earning activities or involve responses to food insecurity such as asset sales that affect household resilience. Livelihood coping strategies are categorized as stress, crisis, or emergency strategies. While stress strategies indicate a reduced ability to deal with future shocks, crisis and emergency coping strategies reduce future productivity, hindering resilience.. At a national level, 52 percent of Lebanese households adopted stress livelihood coping strategies, 20.79 percent adopted crisis livelihood coping strategies, and 1.88 percent adopted emergency strategies. Tripoli and Beirut districts registered the highest proportion of Lebanese households adopting crisis level livelihood coping strategies, reaching 48 percent and 37 percent, respectively. For Syrian refugees, 62.7 percent of households adopted stress livelihood coping strategies, 21.3 percent implemented crisis strategies, and 4.8 percent adopted emergency strategies. Syrian refugees in El Nabatieh and Hasbaya districts had the highest prevalence of crisis coping strategies at 38.8 percent and 37.6 percent, respectively. Zgharta and Tripoli districts registered the highest rates of Syrian refugee households adopting emergency coping strategies at 15 percent and 14.8 percent, respectively.

Household Hunger Scale (HHS): The Household Hunger Scale (HHS) is a measure that assesses if households have experienced severe food insecurity conditions in the preceding 30 days by measuring the severity of food insecurity, as reported by the households. In addition to the FCS, rCSI and LCSI, the HHS was used to support in the classification of acute food insecurity of Lebanese residents and Palestine refugees. For Lebanese residents, the HHS from the MSNA 2023 indicated an average of 5 percent of resident households suffering from moderate hunger (decrease from 8 percent in August 2022), 0.5 percent with severe hunger and very severe hunger (similar to last year data). The highest districts reporting severe and very severe hunger were Beirut (4.7 percent), and Baalbek (2.3 percent). Among PRL residing in camps in five area, the HHS indicated an average of 10 percent of households suffering from moderate hunger. With 16 percent of households reporting moderate and severe hunger, PRL residing in camps in Baabda district registered the highest prevalence of PRL households reporting hunger episodes, followed by Tripoli (12 percent) and Sour (11 percent) (MSNA 2023).

1 Cabbage prices were up by 137 percent over the past 12 months and apple prices increased by 90 percent over the same period.
2 Yearly inflation of pasta prices reached 44 percent in September 2023, while that of potatoes reached 43 percent, and that of chickpeas 29 percent.

As per the latest mVAM data from 2023, there was an uptick from 10 percent in January to 31 percent in September 2023 in the proportion of individuals receiving their remuneration in USD. This transition aided in stabilizing the purchasing ability of a substantial proportion of households, rendering them less susceptible to the volatility characteristic of the crisis's early phase.

Nonetheless, the depreciation of the local currency still significantly influenced prices in 2023. Vulnerable Lebanese and Syrian refugee households, mainly dependent on local currency incomes, are now facing steeper import costs due to the higher exchange rate, which translates to pricier goods, further diminishing their purchasing power and ability to cover basic necessities. Over the past year, the Lebanese Pound (LBP) saw a depreciation of 112 percent, reaching a record high of 140,000 LBP/USD in March 2023, before stabilizing at around 89,500 LBP/USD since August 2023. This recent stability in the exchange rate was achieved through the intervention of the central bank, bolstered foreign fund availability during summer 2023, and a decrease in the currency in circulation, which dropped to LBP62 trillion at July's 2023 end (down from LBP81 trillion in late June 2023). Despite this improvement, Lebanon now leads the list of countries witnessing the most significant currency value loss over the last 12 months due to this rate of depreciation (WFP, 2023).

Remittances

Remittances from the large Lebanese diaspora residing oversea constituted the largest inflow to the country, accounting for 57 percent of the aggregate external resource flows (World Bank, 2023). Lebanon has become one of the most reliant countries on remittances in the world, with around 36 percent of its GDP in 2022, up from 27 percent in 2021, 26 percent in 2020 and 15 percent in 2019 (World Bank, 2023). These funds play a crucial role in helping households navigate economic difficulties and maintain some financial stability. While it is challenging to determine the extent of remittance receipt by Lebanese families, estimates suggest that between 15 to 30 percent of households relied on remittances as a source of income in 2022, a notable increase from 10 percent in 2018 and 2019. However, only seven percent of households earning less than LBP5 million received remittances, while 60 percent of those earning between LBP20 and 25 million did so, highlighting remittance inequality. Despite being a significant income source and a safety net system for many, it is important to recognize the limitations of remittances, including its high vulnerability to external shocks (Mercy Corps, 2023).

Economic vulnerability

Economic vulnerability and high pressure from debts were also main drivers of food insecurity. A significant share of the population analysed did not have the capacity to afford basic needs having expenditure below the S/MEB thresholds and relied on debts to sustain their consumption and access food, shelter, and healthcare. Preliminary results from the 17 districts, three for which LVAP data were available, showed that 31 percent of the Lebanese did not have the capacity to meet essential needs having expenditures below the MEB[4], of which 22 percent could not afford the SMEB, the absolute minimum amount required to cover survival needs. This despite a significant coverage of cash-based assistance and a significant inflow of remittances from the Lebanese diaspora reaching 36 percent of GDP in 2022 which are important safety nets for Lebanese households. Food (47 percent), dwelling (17 percent), health (8 percent) and education (4 percent) accounted on average for over 75 percent of total expenditures for the average Lebanese family. For 15 percent of the households, however, food accounted for more than 65 percent of total spending.

Syrian refugees have extremely limited resources to access food and other basic needs. Despite the high coverage of assistance, 76 percent of them had expenditures below the MEB and 63 percent below the SMEB [5]. Often residing in sub-optimal conditions[6] and lacking legal residency[7], they face significant barriers in accessing the labour market, lack access to external remittances, and are almost entirely reliant on humanitarian assistance (VASyR, 2023)[8] . Food, rent, electricity, and health services accounted on average for over three quarters of the average household budget and over 90 percent of the Syrian refugees' households incurred into debts to afford these basic needs.

[3] LVAP was available for the following districts: Akkar, Bcharre, Beirut, Chouf, El Batroun, El Koura, El Meten, El Minieh-Dennie, Hasbaya, Jbeil, Jezzine, Kesrwane, Rachaya, Tripoli, West Bekaa, Zahle, Zgharta.
[4] In January 2023 prices, the per capita value of the SMEB was USD 55 and the value of the MEB was USD 67 corresponding to USD 1.8 and USD 2.2 per person per day
[5] Although this represented a slight improvement from last year when 78 percent of Syrian refugees had expenditures below the MEB and 63 percent below the SMEB, most Syrian refugees continued to live in severe poverty.
[6] According to VASyR 2023, 52 percent of the Syrian refugee households were living in a shelter that was dangerous, substandard, or overcrowded down from 60 percent in 2022.
[7] According to VASyR 2023, only 9 percent of the Syrian refugees' households had all members with legal residency and in 69 percent of the households there were no members with legal residency, similar to 2022 figures.
[8] According to VASyR 2023, 31 percent of Syrian refugee households reported humanitarian assistance as their primary income source down from 51 percent in 2022.

Over half of the Syrian refugees' households were late in paying rent, while 3 percent of them were at risk of eviction (VASyR, 2023). Among Palestine refugees, that have limited access to remittances, 44 percent could not afford the MEB and 30 percent were living below the SMEB. Limited access to financial resources resulted in over indebtedness, while access to credit allows population in Lebanon to pay for food, rent, and healthcare, especially for Syrian refugees. The median debt among Syrian refugees was USD257 and was worth 1.5 months of consumption, however, 17 percent of Syrian refugee reported to have debts worth more of six months of consumption.

Job opportunities

According to mVAM data, employment among Lebanese aged between 18 and 64, improved in 2023 as the employment rate increased from 44 percent in September 2022 to 55 percent in May 2023 and then slightly declined to 53 percent in October 2023. Among men, the employment rate rose from 65 to 78 percent between September 2022 and October 2023, while among women, it increased from 21 to 27 percent during the same period.

In LVAP districts, the employment to population ratio of those aged between 15 and 64 was 43 percent (61 percent among men and 26 percent among women) while the unemployment rate was 10 percent (8 percent among men and 13 percent among women).

In LVAP districts, wage employees (58 percent paid monthly and 18 percent on a daily or weekly basis) accounted for three quarters of the employed population, while own account workers and employers constituted 17 and 5 percent of the employed population respectively. Wholesale and retail trade (13 percent), other services (10 percent), and public administration (10 percent) were the sectors with the highest share of employment. About half of the Lebanese workforce reported to work in a business registered with the Lebanese commercial register while 18 percent reported to work for the government or a state-owned enterprise. Regarding employee benefits, 36 percent of the employed had access to health coverage, 29 percent could benefit from paid sick leave, and 29 percent from paid annual leave. Some 26 percent of Lebanese wage employees reported to have received their wages in USD during the month prior to the interview. While 46 percent of the households could rely on a stable income from monthly wage employment, 10 percent of the households relied exclusively on temporary labour.

The percentage of working Syrian refugees increased to 39 percent in 2023 compared to 33 percent in 2022 and 26 percent in 2020. Female employment remained much lower than male employment (15 percent and 65 percent respectively). Among Syrian refugees the unemployment rate dropped from 13 percent in 2022 to 7 percent in 2023. Nearly 60 percent of Syrian youth aged between 15 and 24 were not involved in education, employment, or training, while 7 percent of children between the ages of 5 and 17 were engaged in child labour an increase from 4 percent in 2022 (VASyR 2023).

Temporary labour in the agriculture, construction, and services sectors, was the primary income source after assistance for Syrian refugees. These are the only sectors where Syrian refugees are allowed to work by the Lebanese law. Syrian refugees also face limits on the maximum number of working hours as they are allowed to work maximum 60 hours per month (SIPRI 2021). The average monthly income from employment among Syrian refugee could only cover 31 percent of the SMEB, despite having increased to USD95 in 2023 (from USD60 in 2022 and USD34 in 2021).

Palestine refugees from Lebanon also face legal constraints when accessing the labor market, including restrictions on property ownership, and a limitation of their employment in 39 professions. These conditions not only render Palestine workers vulnerable to exploitation and result in deteriorating living conditions, but also prevent them from positively contributing to the labor market. Consequently, a significant number of PRL rely on the services provided by UNRWA, which in turn has been facing major reductions in funding. PRS, face even ever heavier restrictions combined with social tensions. They may also encounter specific risks related to their displacement and the challenges of obtaining and maintaining a valid legal status within the country.

Humanitarian food assistance

Based on current population estimates, 26 percent of Lebanese residents and 70 percent of Syrian refugees received Humanitarian Food Assistance (HFA). HFA also reached 77 percent of the PRL population and almost all (99 percent) of the PRS population (UNRWA, 2023). During the current analysis period, HFA covered over 50 percent of the caloric requirement for all population groups, except for PRL as the assistance is not mainly directed for food. This analysis includes the HFA provided by MoSA[9], NGOs, WFP, and UNRWA, and which was reported to the Food Security and Agriculture Sector (FSAS).

[9] According to VASyR 2023, 31 percent of Syrian refugee households reported humanitarian assistance as their primary income source down from 51% in 2022.

In total, this included 1.9 million Lebanese, Syrian and Palestine refugees. To ensure a comprehensive assessment of food assistance, the analysis considered the support provided under AMAN, another national social protection program that provides unconditional cash assistance for food and other essential needs. In September 2023, a total of 0.9 million Lebanese received HFA, with an anticipated decrease to 0.6 million starting January 2024.

Despite HFA reaching approximately 30 percent of the most vulnerable Lebanese (with around 70 percent reached with cash-based assistance), in September 2023 cash-based food assistance of USD20 per person (up to a maximum of 6 individuals), covered 61 percent of the food SMEB (or 43 percent of the food MEB)[10]. In addition, multipurpose cash assistance was also being provided to 70,000 Lebanese households (BA Sector, 2023). However, during September 2023, this top-up of USD25 covered only 13 percent of the non-food SMEB. It is important to mention that additional humanitarian food assistance is being provided to Lebanese through community kitchens and religious organizations, that are not accounted for in this analysis.

As of August 2023, AMAN reached almost 322,000 poor Lebanese, that were expected to decrease to 95,000 from September to December 2023 as many families enrolled in the programme have already received benefits for the maximum period of 18 months (MoSA, 2023). AMAN is financed through a loan from the World Bank, that, in May 2024, approved USD300 million additional financing to the programme that will ensure its continuation for a maximum of 160,000 families over 12 months. The new financing was expected to begin in the first quarter of 2024 and to continue throughout the projection period.

Syrian refugees receiving HFA reached 1.17 million in September 2023 and was expected to reduce to 850 thousand from December 2023 and throughout the analysis period. FSAS partners reached around 75 percent of Syrian refugees with HFA (90 percent of which is through cash-based assistance) and top up multipurpose cash assistance was also provided to 180,000 Syrian refugees' households through the Basic Assistance Working Group's partners. Since May 2023, Syrian refugee families have been able to redeem their assistance in USD or LBP receiving USD20 per person for food (up to a maximum of 5 individuals) and USD25 per household for other basic needs[11]. In the same month, the value of cash assistance received by Syrian refugees, intended for food expenses, increased coverage to 76 percent of the SMEB, up from 39 percent in April 2023. However, the non-food portion of the transfer value remained sufficient to cover only 19 percent of the non-food SMEB, consistent with the coverage in September 2023.

The increased value of cash assistance, enabled by the resumption of dual currency disbursement, significantly improved the food security outcomes of assisted Syrian refugee families in the first half of 2023. Their economic capacity to cover basic survival needs, increased from 49 percent to 54 percent, poor food consumption decreased by 8 points, reaching 6 percent, and reliance on negative food-related coping strategies decreased by 13 points (UNHCR, WFP 2023).

Political uncertainity

Lebanon Presidential vacuum continues to persist. In addition, the country has been without a fully functioning government since May 2022, when the current government assumed caretaker functions, following the parliamentary elections. This situation is creating further political deadlock and uncertainty, given the limited ability of the government to formalize any decisions, as well of the parliament to meet and legislate until a new head of state is elected. The last presidential vacuum previously in 2014 lasted for nearly 2.5 years.

Heavy burden on public services

The multiple crises have continued to deeply affect the provision of essential services, such as health, water, electricity, and education (OCHA, 2023). Access to electricity continues to be a major challenge. Despite the implementation of a new public electricity plan starting in February 2023, aimed at increasing the provision of public electricity, following the revision of the tariffs, the electricity provided through the public grid lasted on average 3.6 hours per day between February and September 2023, while that provided through the private generators lasted 7.1 hours per day on average (mVAM 2023). Among Syrian refugees, 9 percent had no access to electricity at all, while the average electricity received through the public grid stood at an average 6 hours per day in June 2023. Only 56 percent of the Lebanese residents and 50 percent of the Syrian refugees had access to a generator or to an alternative source of power as the cost of a basic connection remains unaffordable for most of the population (VASyR 2023, LVAP 2023).

[10] When taking into consideration the transfer value provided by the biggest programmes (NPTP and ESSN), with a total of USD 20 per person per household capped at 6 members.

[11] Prior to October 2019, cash assistance could be redeemed in USD and LBP, which was then limited to LBP due to banking restrictions with the start of the economic crisis. However, in the beginning of 2023, various operational challenges hindered the sustainability of delivering cash assistance to refugees in LBP. Namely the frequent need to adjust transfer values to maintain the level of assistance in a context of high inflation and currency depreciation, in addition to redemption points running out of cash which resulted in crowding and increased waiting times.

Lebanon health system has also been under significant pressure. The previous exodus of doctors and nurses leaving the country continue to affect the ability of the system to deliver the needed services to the different population groups. The removal of subsidies on most medicines previously have rendered them expensive and out of the reach of vulnerable families. In addition, the ongoing dollarization in the country, including the cost of essential services, is pushing the cost of basic medical services upward. According to mVAM 2023 data, nearly 40 percent of the Lebanese resident population faced challenges in accessing the health system. High transportation costs, along with the high costs of healthcare, were the main access barriers to the health system (mVAM, 2023).

A growing number of people are struggling to access clean and adequate water for their everyday needs (WASH Sector, 2022). The recent cholera outbreak in Lebanon at the end of 2022, for the first time since 1993, underscores the deteriorating state of the country's water infrastructure. With public water services failing, individuals have no option but to turn to private vendors. The dominance of private water trucking services means that they can set high prices and largely evade state regulation concerning water quality and cost (OCHA, 2023). While many wastewater treatment facilities are not functional, the remaining ceased operations due to electricity cuts and budget shortages, leading to increasingly severe sanitation issues. The environmental impact of discharging untreated wastewater in its turn is escalating, affecting both coastal and inland areas. This has grave implications for the water quality in water bodies throughout the country (OCHA, 2023).

The education system has continued to be severely affected by the economic crisis. Teacher strikes in public schools, due to the low salaries and prohibitive cost of transportation, where a regular occurrence over the 2022-2023 academic year, leading to a disruption of learning for most of the year (OCHA, 2023). Households have been increasingly reporting to have moved children from private to public schools while there has also been a significant increase in dropout rates as households can no longer afford tuition or transportation costs. According to WFP 2023 mVAM data, 10 percent of the Lebanese resident population reported to have moved their children to a less expensive school while 24 percent reported reducing education expenses. Only 56 percent of Syrian refugees' children between the ages of 6 and 17 attended school in 2023 (VASyR, 2023).

Public sector strikes remained frequent in 2023. Public sector employees have been demanding an increase in salaries, which have been substantially devalued due to the ongoing economic turmoil. The caretaker government endorsed a temporary elevation of the minimum wage for both public and private sector employees, effective from May 1, with the minimum monthly public salary being revised to LBP8 million. Additionally, the minimum wage was amended up to LBP9 million. Despite these interventions, salaries remain a fraction to pre-crisis levels. The public sector is estimated to employ around 10 percent of the total workforce in Lebanon.

Risk of rising malnutrition

The Nutrition sector is supporting the Ministry of Public Health to undertake Lebanon's first ever Integrated Micronutrient, Anthropometric and Child development Survey. This aims to better understand the overall nutritional status of the population, including the most hidden forms of malnutrition, and assess their potential impacts on the wellbeing and development of children, adolescents, and women from all population groups living in Lebanon. The survey results will consequently support evidence informed policy making, programming and response strategies on nutrition and child development across all concerned sectors. VASyR 2023 showed that 75 percent of infants under the age of 6 months were breastfed, with approximately 34% relying exclusively on breastfeeding. The transition from exclusive breastfeeding to introducing solid, semi-solid, soft foods, and other liquids, known as complementary feeding, is a crucial stage in the growth of children and significantly impacts their food security. In 2023, only 17 percent of children aged 6-23 months achieved the minimum required dietary diversity; this emphasizes the challenges related to food security within this vulnerable population. The acceptable meal frequency for children in the same age group experienced a substantial decrease, declining from 51 percent in 2020 to 36 percent in 2021 and further dropping to 7 percent in 2023. Due to the economic crisis, three out of every four children under the age of five live in food poverty (among Lebanese and refugee population). In addition, more than one in every four children under the age of five (among Lebanese and refugee population) – or 85,000 children – live in and suffer from food poverty, being fed extremely poor diets consisting of at most two food groups, often cereal and possibly some milk. Children living in extreme food poverty are especially vulnerable to severe stunting and wasting, the most dangerous forms of undernutrition in early childhood, which can increase children's risk of death by up to 12 times and impair their ability to develop and reach their full potential (UNICEF, 2023).

Child food poverty affects more girls than boys in Lebanon, and while all nationalities are affected, it is more prevalent among Syrian refugees and Palestine refugees. The surveillance of the acute malnutrition program has shown a concerning trend, with the rates of admission to the program doubling from March to May 2023. Around 60 percent of children and 66 percent of pregnant and lactating women admitted to the acute malnutrition program were non-Lebanese (mainly Syrian and Children residing in Palestinian camps). North and Akkar followed by Beirut, Mount Lebanon, Bekaa, Baalbek and Hermel regions had the highest rates of admission to malnutrition program.

Food system and domestic food supply

Lebanese farmers have been holding a crucial place within Lebanon's rich culture and history. They have historically played a pivotal role in ensuring food security and rural development. According to the most recent Data in Emergencies (DIEM) survey of the Lebanese agricultural households, conducted between the 10th of August and the 7th of September 2023, the food security outcomes of their households have notably improved compared to the DIEM survey from the 17th of July to the 8th of August 2022, which took place during the same season. Nevertheless, approximately 26 percent of households still report experiencing recent moderate or severe food insecurity according to the Food Insecurity Experience Scale (FIES), and 8 percent of households experiencing recent food insecurity consistent with IPC phase 3 (Crisis) and above. Nearly all (95 percent) of households have resorted to various livelihood coping strategies (stress, crisis, and emergency) to meet their food needs, with the most prevalent being a reduction in expenses on agricultural inputs (89 percent) and decreased health expenses (73 percent). Most of these households are resorting to crisis livelihood coping strategies (which reported by 86 percent of the total households) due to insufficient food or financial resources to support household members.

The main drivers of these food security outcomes are a high prevalence of household shocks, lower incomes and low levels of humanitarian assistance. Around 90 percent of households reported experiencing shocks in the three months prior to the survey with high food and fuel prices being the most common shocks (cited by 79 percent and 78 percent of the households, respectively). Furthermore, approximately 58 percent of agricultural households report a decline in their primary sources of income. Lower income levels are likely a result of numerous production and sales challenges. About 86 percent of crop producers reported facing production difficulties, including access to fertilizers (81 percent) and insecticides (66 percent). In addition, around 84 percent of livestock keepers reported facing difficulties to purchase mainly feed (88 percent) and accessing veterinary inputs and services (60 percent and 57 percent respectively). Additionally, both crop and livestock producers cite high transportation costs, low sale prices, and lack of demand from typical buyers or traders as common sales challenges. Only about 7 percent of agricultural households mention receiv-ing humanitarian food and cash assistance, a significant decrease compared to previous year (12 percent) (FAO, 2023 – October).

According to FAO, cereal import requirements (i.e. what is needed to cover national consumption of cereals) for the 2023/2024 marketing season were forecasted at 1.9 million tons, about 10 percent below the last five-year average. Based on FAO food balance sheet data, the import requirement of wheat represented half of this volume (about 850,000 tons). In the first eight months of 2023, according to customs data, Lebanon imported around 370,000 tons of wheat, slightly below the 380,000 tons imported during the same period last year. The wheat has been procured from either Ukraine (62 percent) or Russia (38 percent). Local cereal production in 2023 was estimated by FAO at about 134,000 tonnes, nearly 5 percent below the five-year average and in line with last year's output.

Security situation

Since July 30, violent clashes broke out within Ein El Hilweh camp, the largest Palestine refugee camp in the country, situated in Saida city in southern Lebanon. As a result, over 4,000 individuals were forced to evacuate their homes. Although clashes subsided by August 3, the situation remained exceptionally tense. This localized escalation of conflict has heightened the humanitarian needs among camp residents, which were already substantial due to governance issues and the unprecedented financial and economic crises in the country.

Since October 8th, there has been an escalation in cross-border incidents between Israel and Lebanon, leading to the displacement within the southern region and daily clashes have persisted along the Israeli-Lebanese border. As of October 26, the ongoing clashes resulted in 28,965 internally displaced persons (IDPs) seeking safety away from the conflict zone and are being hosted in more than 119 areas across Lebanon, with the majority relocating to cities such as Beirut, Tyre, El Nabatieh, Baabda, Baalbeck, and Chouf.

POPULATION TABLE FOR THE CURRENT PERIOD (OCTOBER 2023 - MARCH 2024)

District	Population	Total population analysed	Phase 1		Phase 2		Phase 3		Phase 4		Phase 5		Area Phase	Phase 3+	
			#people	%	#people	%	#people	%	#people	%	#people	%		#people	%
Akkar	Lebanese	297,886	59,577	20	148,943	50	74,472	25	14,894	5	0	0	3	89,366	30
	Syrian Ref.	156,645	15,665	10	86,155	55	46,994	30	7,832	5	0	0	3	54,826	35
	Total	454,531	75,242	17	235,098	52	121,465	27	22,727	5	0	0		144,192	32
Aley	Lebanese	210,677	84,271	40	105,339	50	21,068	10	0	0	0	0	2	21,068	10
	Syrian Ref.	87,946	26,384	30	48,370	55	13,192	15	0	0	0	0	2	13,192	15
	Total	298,623	110,655	37	153,709	51	34,260	11	0	0	0	0		34,260	11
Baabda	Lebanese	410,718	184,823	45	164,287	40	61,608	15	0	0	0	0	2	61,608	15
	Palestine Ref.	13,832	3,458	25	6,916	50	2,766	20	692	5	0	0	3	3,458	25
	Syrian Ref.	145,924	29,185	20	80,258	55	36,481	25	0	0	0	0	3	36,481	25
	Total	570,474	217,466	38	251,461	44	100,855	18	692	0	0	0		101,547	18
Baalbek	Lebanese	192,906	48,227	25	96,453	50	38,581	20	9,645	5	0	0	3	48,226	25
	Palestine Ref.	1,538	385	25	692	45	385	25	77	5	0	0	3	462	30
	Syrian Ref.	186,973	18,697	10	112,184	60	46,743	25	9,349	5	0	0	3	56,092	30
	Total	381,417	67,308	18	209,329	55	85,709	22	19,071	5	0	0		104,780	27
Bcharre	Lebanese	20,836	10,418	50	9,376	45	1,042	5	0	0	0	0	2	1,042	5
	Syrian Ref.	2,080	416	20	1,352	65	312	15	0	0	0	0	2	312	15
	Total	22,916	10,834	47	10,728	47	1,354	6	0	0	0	0		1,354	6
Beirut	Lebanese	236,109	129,860	55	70,833	30	35,416	15	0	0	0	0	2	35,416	15
	Syrian Ref.	34,981	10,494	30	19,240	55	5,247	15	0	0	0	0	2	5,247	15
	Total	271,090	140,354	52	90,072	33	40,664	15	0	0	0	0		40,664	15
Bent Jbeil	Lebanese	84,781	25,434	30	46,630	55	12,717	15	0	0	0	0	2	12,717	15
	Syrian Ref.	13,070	3,921	30	7,189	55	1,961	15	0	0	0	0	2	1,961	15
	Total	97,851	29,355	30	53,818	55	14,678	15	0	0	0	0		14,678	15
Chouf	Lebanese	207,481	93,366	45	93,366	45	20,748	10	0	0	0	0	2	20,748	10
	Syrian Ref.	68,270	17,068	25	40,962	60	10,241	15	0	0	0	0	2	10,241	15
	Total	275,751	110,434	40	13,4328	49	30,989	11	0	0	0	0		30,989	11
El Batroun	Lebanese	53,354	29,345	55	21,342	40	2,668	5	0	0	0	0	2	2,668	5
	Syrian Ref.	18,258	4,565	25	10,955	60	2,739	15	0	0	0	0	2	2,739	15
	Total	71,612	33,909	47	32,296	45	5,406	8	0	0	0	0		5,406	8
El Hermel	Lebanese	28,732	7,183	25	15,803	55	5,746	20	0	0	0	0	3	5,746	20
	Syrian Ref.	13,151	1,315	10	7,233	55	3,945	30	658	5	0	0	3	4,603	35
	Total	41,883	8,498	20	23,036	55	9,692	23	658	2	0	0		10,350	25
El Koura	Lebanese	72,432	36,216	50	32,594	45	3,622	5	0	0	0	0	2	3,622	5
	Syrian Ref.	22,227	4,445	20	12,225	55	5,557	25	0	0	0	0	3	5,557	25
	Total	94,659	40,661	43	44,819	47	9,178	10	0	0	0	0		9,178	10
El Meten	Lebanese	395,931	217,762	55	138,576	35	39,593	10	0	0	0	0	2	39,593	10
	Syrian Ref.	51,865	15,560	30	25,933	50	10,373	20	0	0	0	0	3	10,373	20
	Total	447,796	233,322	52	164,508	37	49,966	11	0	0	0	0		49,966	11
El Minieh-Dennie	Lebanese	122,065	24,413	20	67,136	55	24,413	20	6,103	5	0	0	3	30,516	25
	Syrian Ref.	76,693	7,669	10	42,181	55	23,008	30	3,835	5	0	0	3	26,843	35
	Total	198,758	32,082	16	109,317	55	47,421	24	9,938	5	0	0		57,359	29
El Nabatieh	Lebanese	146,560	58,624	40	65,952	45	21,984	15	0	0	0	0	2	21,984	15
	Syrian Ref.	31,804	7,951	25	17,492	55	6,361	20	0	0	0	0	3	6,361	20
	Total	178,364	66,575	37	83,444	47	28,345	16	0	0	0	0		28,345	16
Hasbaya	Lebanese	25,759	11,592	45	11,592	45	2,576	10	0	0	0	0	2	2,576	10
	Syrian Ref.	5,489	1,372	25	3,293	60	823	15	0	0	0	0	2	823	15
	Total	31,248	12,964	41	14,885	48	3,399	11	0	0	0	0		3,399	11

District	Population	Total population analysed	Phase 1		Phase 2		Phase 3		Phase 4		Phase 5		Area Phase	Phase 3+	
			#people	%	#people	%	#people	%	#people	%	#people	%		#people	%
Jbeil	Lebanese	27,163	69,413	60	40,491	35	5,784	5	0	0	0	0	2	5,784	5
	Syrian Ref.	4,180	3,789	35	5,954	55	1,083	10	0	0	0	0	2	1,083	10
	Total	31,343	73,203	58	46,445	37	6,867	5	0	0	0	0		6,867	5
Jezzine	Lebanese	27,163	9,507	35	16,298	60	1,358	5	0	0	0	0	2	1,358	5
	Syrian Ref.	4,180	1,045	25	2,717	65	418	10	0	0	0	0	2	418	10
	Total	31,343	10,552	34	19,015	61	1,776	6	0	0	0	0		1,776	6
Kesrwane	Lebanese	230,518	149,837	65	80,681	35	0	0	0	0	0	0	2	0	0
	Syrian Ref.	20,202	7,071	35	11,111	55	2,020	10	0	0	0	0	2	2,020	10
	Total	250,720	156,907	63	91,792	37	2,020	1	0	0	0	0		2,020	1
Marjaayoun	Lebanese	64,527	19,358	30	32,264	50	12,905	20	0	0	0	0	3	12,905	20
	Syrian Ref.	15,355	3,839	25	7,678	50	3,839	25	0	0	0	0	3	3,839	25
	Total	79,882	23,197	29	39,941	50	16,744	21	0	0	0	0		16,744	21
Rachaya	Lebanese	31,737	11,108	35	15,869	50	4,761	15	0	0	0	0	2	4,761	15
	Syrian Ref.	10,456	2,091	20	5,228	50	3,137	30	0	0	0	0	3	3,137	30
	Total	42,193	13,199	31	21,097	50	7,897	19	0	0	0	0		7,897	19
Saida	Lebanese	209,058	73,170	35	94,076	45	41,812	20	0	0	0	0	3	41,812	20
	Palestine Ref.	22,406	4,481	20	11,203	50	4,481	20	2,241	10	0	0	3	6,722	30
	Syrian Ref.	60,060	12,012	20	30,030	50	15,015	25	3,003	5	0	0	3	18,018	30
	Total	291,524	89,664	31	135,309	46	61,308	21	5,244	2	0	0		66,552	23
Sour	Lebanese	197,068	68,974	35	98,534	50	29,560	15	0	0	0	0	2	29,560	15
	Palestine Ref.	22,748	5,687	25	12,511	55	4,550	20	0	0	0	0	3	4,550	20
	Syrian Ref.	40,387	8,077	20	26,252	65	6,058	15	0	0	0	0	2	6,058	15
	Total	260,203	82,738	32	137,297	53	40,168	15	0	0	0	0		40,168	15
Tripoli	Lebanese	201,338	60,401	30	90,602	45	40,268	20	10,067	5	0	0	3	50,335	25
	Palestine Ref	19,181	4,795	25	8,631	45	4,795	25	959	5	0	0	3	5,754	30
	Syrian Ref.	58,041	8,706	15	29,021	50	17,412	30	2,902	5	0	0	3	20,314	35
	Total	278,560	73,903	27	128,254	46	62,475	22	13,928	5	0	0		76,403	27
West Bekaa	Lebanese	67,832	27,133	40	33,916	50	6,783	10	0	0	0	0	2	6,783	10
	Syrian Ref.	95,629	19,126	20	47,815	50	28,689	30	0	0	0	0	3	28,689	30
	Total	163,461	46,259	28	81,731	50	35,472	22	0	0	0	0		35,472	22
Zahle	Lebanese	140,006	49,002	35	70,003	50	21,001	15	0	0	0	0	2	21,001	15
	Syrian Ref.	246,025	24,603	10	135,314	55	86,109	35	0	0	0	0	3	86,109	35
	Total	386,031	73,605	19	205,317	53	107,110	28	0	0	0	0		107,110	28
Zgharta	Lebanese	73,117	29,247	40	32,903	45	10,968	15	0	0	0	0	2	10,968	15
	Syrian Ref.	23,463	4,693	20	12,905	55	5,866	25	0	0	0	0	3	5,866	25
	Total	96,580	33,939	35	45,807	47	16,833	17	0	0	0	0		16,833	17
Palestine refugees	PRS (outside camps)	30,220	3,022	10	16,621	55	9,066	30	1,511	5	0	0	3	10,577	35
	PRL (outside camps)	100,295	25,074	25	50,148	50	25,074	25	0	0	0	0	3	25,074	25
Total	Lebanese	3,864,280	1,588,261	41	1,693,859	44	541,454	14	40,709	1	0	0		582,163	15
	Syrian Ref..	1,500,000	259,759	17	829,047	55	383,623	26	27,579	2	0	0		411,202	27
	Palestine Ref.	210,220	46,902	22	106,722	51	51,117	24	5,480	3	0	0		56,597	27
Grand Total		5,574,500	1,894,922	34	2,629,628	47	976,194	18	73,768	1	0	0		1,049,962	19

Note: A population in Phase 3+ does not necessarily reflect the full population in need of urgent action. This is because some households may be in Phase 2 or even 1 but only because of receipt of assistance, and thus, they may be in need of continued action. Marginal inconsistencies that may arise in the overall percentages of totals and grand totals are attributable to rounding.

PROJECTED IPC ACUTE FOOD INSECURITY SITUATION (APRIL 2024 - SEPTEMBER 2024)

LEBANESE RESIDENTS - PROJECTED ACUTE FOOD INSECURITY: April - September 2024

582,000
15 percent of the population analysed

People facing high acute food insecurity (IPC Phase 3 or above)

IN NEED OF URGENT ACTION

Phase 5	0 People in Catastrophe
Phase 4	31,000 People in Emergency
Phase 3	551,000 People in Crisis
Phase 2	1,707,000 People in Stressed
Phase 1	1,575,000 People in Food Security

SYRIAN REFUGEES - PROJECTED ACUTE FOOD INSECURITY: April - September 2024

500,000
33 percent of the population analysed

People facing high acute food insecurity (IPC Phase 3 or above)

IN NEED OF URGENT ACTION

Phase 5	0 People in Catastrophe
Phase 4	28,000 People in Emergency
Phase 3	473,000 People in Crisis
Phase 2	740,000 People in Stressed
Phase 1	260,000 People in Food Security

PALESTINE REFUGEES IN LEBANON - PROJECTED ACUTE FOOD INSECURITY: April - September 2024

49,000
27 percent of the population analysed

People facing high acute food insecurity (IPC Phase 3 or above)

IN NEED OF URGENT ACTION

Phase 5	0 People in Catastrophe
Phase 4	4,000 People in Emergency
Phase 3	45,000 People in Crisis
Phase 2	87,000 People in Stressed
Phase 1	44,000 People in Food Security

PALESTINE REFUGEES FROM SYRIA - PROJECTED ACUTE FOOD INSECURITY: April - September 2024

12,100
40 percent of the population analysed

People facing high acute food insecurity (IPC Phase 3 or above)

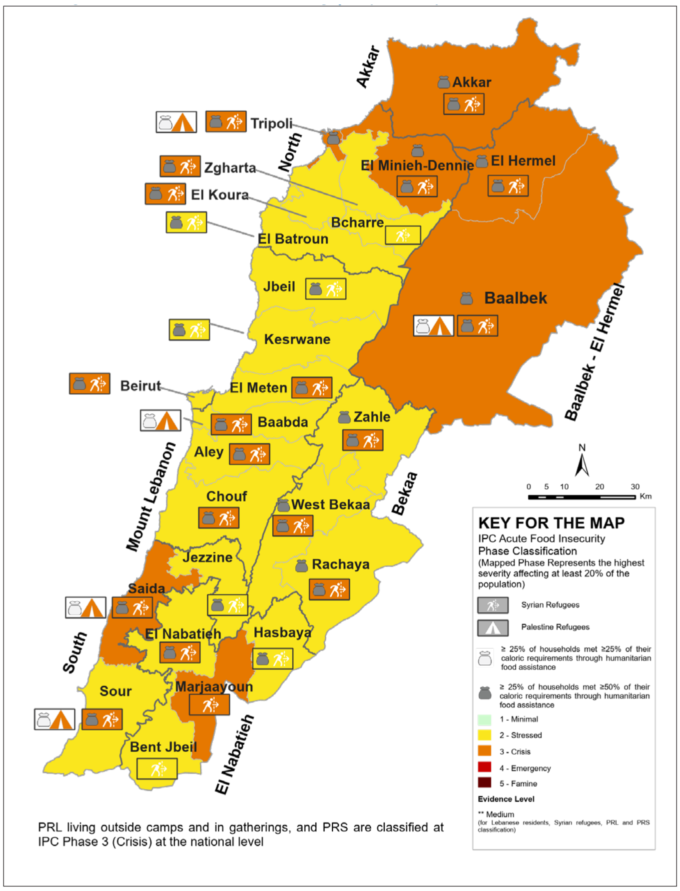
IN NEED OF URGENT ACTION

Phase 5	0 People in Catastrophe
Phase 4	1,500 People in Emergency
Phase 3	10,600 People in Crisis
Phase 2	15,100 People in Stressed
Phase 1	3,000 People in Food Security

During the projected period that goes from April to September 2024, it was estimated that about 1.14 million people corresponding to 21 percent of the analyzed population were expected to face high levels of food insecurity and were classified in IPC Phase 3 (Crisis) or above. This represents a two percentage points increase from the 19 percent estimated to be in IPC Phase 3 (Crisis) or above in the current period (October 2023 to March 2024). It was anticipated that the projected period would be characterized by fragile economic stability and rising inflation, while the decline in humanitarian assistance, would impact especially Syrian refugees.

Lebanese residents: As a result of the assumptions (stabilized economic situation, the summer season, and a similar level of humanitarian food assistance), no changes were expected in the acute food insecurity classification. As such, during the projected period, it was estimated that 15 percent (582,000) of the Lebanese population are classified in IPC Phase 3 (Crisis) or above, out of which 1 percent (31,000) are classified in IPC Phase 4 (Emergency). During the projected period, residents living in seven districts were classified in IPC Phase 3 (Crisis) including Akkar, Baalbek, El Hermel, El Minieh-Dennie, Tripoli, Saida, and Marjaayoun. The highest occurrence of acute food insecurity during the projected period was estimated in Akkar district (89,000), followed by Baabda (62,000), Tripoli (50,000) and Baalbek (48,000)

Projected Acute Food Insecurity: April 2024 - September 2024



Syrian refugees: 33 percent (500,000 people) were projected in IPC Phase 3 (Crisis) or above, a six percentage points increase in comparison to the current period, while the number of Syrian refugees facing IPC Phase 4 (Emergency) was expected to remain the same as the current period reaching 28,000 (2 percent of Syrian refugee population). In the projected period 19 out of the 26 districts where refugees are hosted were classified in IPC Phase 3 (Crisis). The highest incidence of acute food insecurity for Syrian refugees during the projected period was expected in six districts (Akkar, El Hermel, El Minieh-Dennie, Tripoli, Baalbek, and Zahle) where the percentage of the Syrian refugees classified in IPC Phase 3 (Crisis) or above was 40 percent. This was followed by Baabda, West Bekaa, Saida and Rachaya districts where 35 percent of Syrian refugees were expected to face acute food insecurity during the projected period. In absolute terms, with 98,000 people in IPC Phase 3 (Crisis) or above, Zahle was the district with the highest number of Syrian refugees who are estimated to be acutely food insecure, followed by Baalbek (75,000) and Akkar (63,000).

Palestine Refugees in Lebanon and Palestine Refugees from Syria: a total of 49,000 (27 percent) PRL were classified at IPC Phase 3 (Crisis) or above during the projected period, corresponding to 1 percentage point increase compared to the current period, out of which 4,000 people were classified in IPC Phase 4 (Emergency). As for PRS population, 40 percent (12,100) were classified at IPC Phase 3 (Crisis) or above during the projected period, corresponding to 5 percentage point increase compared to the current period, out of which 1,500 were classified in IPC Phase 4 (Emergency). A total of 35 percent of PRL population residing in camps in Saida and Tripoli were classified in IPC Phase 3 (Crisis) and above, out of which 10 percent and 5 percent were classified in IPC Phase 4 (Emergency) in Saida and Tripoli camps respectively. The expected deterioration of acute food insecurity levels among Palestine refugees is associated with the expected increased tension during the projected period.

PROJECTED SITUATION OVERVIEW (APRIL 2024 - SEPTEMBER 2024)

Exchange rate stability was expected to limit food price inflation, while dollarization of services was expected to impact access to basic needs.

Following two years of drastic deterioration, the economic activity was expected to remain at the current level throughout the projected period. The exchange rate was also expected to remain stable with no significant volatility like in past periods. It was anticipated that the central bank and the government collected sufficient foreign currency reserves on the informal market during the 2023 summer season to sustain essential operations, particularly the payment of salaries to civil servants.[13] New inflows of expats were expected in December 2023 and April 2024, allowing the Central Bank to collect additional funds to maintain the exchange rate stability until the beginning of the summer of 2024.

The stability in the exchange rate in turn was expected to positively reflect on food inflation. Given Le banon's high import dependency, any deterioration in the exchange rate directly leads to soaring inflation. Given the expected stability in the exchange rate, any changes in the price of essential food and non-food items would be tied mostly to oscillations in international prices of commodities and products.

On the short term, international food prices were expected to remain stable, following better than expected harvest in major grain producers. As such, stability in food prices was expected to continue in Lebanon for the mid-term outlook (April till September 2024), with a onetime increase of 8 to 10 percent in the cost of the food SMEB once the subsidy on wheat is discontinued in May or June 2024, following the exhaustion of the loan from the World Bank through which the subsidy is currently financed.

[13] Public employees' salaries are estimated at around LBP7.1 trillion monthly at the current exchange rate, corresponding to 80 and 85 USD million dollars at the current exchange rate. The current foreign-exchange resources of the Central Bank would be sufficient to continue paying these salaries in USD at least in the medium term (6-12 months).

However, price of essential services, such as electricity, water, education, and health, among others, were expected to continue rising over the next year to pre-crisis levels in USD terms. The non-food SMEB stood at USD137 per family in August 2023, one third of its value at the start of the crisis in October 2019 (USD403 per family). The newly proposed taxes and fees as part of the 2024 public budget proposal as well are expected to cause some additional upward pressures on inflation in the country, especially affecting services and non-food essential items.

Gasoline prices were projected to stabilize at record-high levels over the near term (USD86 per barrel on the West Texas Intermediate (WTI) benchmark as of October 2023, up from USD70 per barrel in June 2023), thereby affecting local sectors ranging from electricity, transportation, telecommunications, and water.

Continued uncertainty in Lebanon's governance structure likely to further delay the implementation of reforms

As Lebanon continues to face the harsh consequences of the economic crisis, the country is confronted with uncertainty in its governance structure. The Presidential vacuum was expected to persist, at least until early 2024, risking further political deadlock, as both the caretaker government and parliament ability to govern remains limited. The increasing number of vacancies in key positions was expected to continue as the Chief of the Army position will be vacant once the current Chief retires in January 2024. No progress has taken place previously on the reform package required by the IMF staff level agreement. As the political deadlock persist, and with the limited ability of the parliament to legislate, no developments on that front were expected in the short term.

An IMF mission that took place in September 2023 deplored "lack of action on urgently needed reforms", qualifying the economic outlook as "difficult and unstable" despite encouraging policy initiatives taken by the Central Bank and an uptick in activity during the summer season (IMF, 2023).

Key Assumptions for the projection period

- **Currency depreciation:** The stability in the monetary base and in the informal exchange rate along with the recent influx of foreign currencies during the 2023 summer period was expected to continue. However, essential services prices, such as electricity, water, education, and health, among others, were expected to continue rising to pre-crisis levels in USD terms.
- **Inflation:** Inflation was expected to remain within the last six months averages, given the expected exchange rate stability and stable global outlook of commodities in the international market for the next year. Removal of the bread subsidy on its part is expected to push the food SMEB price by up to 10 percent.
- **Humanitarian food assistance:** The coverage of humanitarian assistance for Syrian refugees was expected to decline up to 30 percent. The level of social assistance to Lebanese residents was expected to fluctuate, with In-kind assistance decrease by 30 percent while cash assistance increasing. Assistance to Palestine refugees from Lebanon is likely to drop.
- **Recovery plan:** As the political deadlock continues across the different political levels, it has been assumed that no further progress would be made in the implementation of the structural and financial reforms required under the IMF Staff Level Agreement to access financial aid.
- **Domestic food supply:** The country continues to not have a central grain reserve, making it vulnerable to outside shocks that might affect delivery of wheat and other essential grains. The only available stock reserve remains at the miller's level and can cover needs for 2 months only. In addition, the effect of the bread subsidy removal is expected to take place in May or June 2024, leading to an 80 to100 percent cost increase in bread packages.
- **Conflict:** The analysis assumed that the ongoing clashes on the Southern border will not spiral into a full-scale conflict. Since the end of the analysis, over 20 thousand people have been internally displaced from the Southern region. However, it remains too early to predict what the repercussions could be on the country food security situation, especially in case of further deterioration. If this ends up being the case, the analysis will then be updated accordingly.
- **Tensions:** Increasing tensions were expected in the upcoming months, further affecting the projection analysis period.

Wheat subsidies

The Wheat Supply Emergency Response Project, funded through a USD150 million loan agreement with the World Bank that de-facto continued the subsidization of bread in Lebanon, although the applied exchange rate increased from USD/LBP 15,000 to 30,000 in Oct 2023. A total of 132,000 tons of wheat were imported between January and June 2023, corresponding to 46 percent of the wheat imported in that period, for a total disbursed amount of almost USD40 million. The loan was expected to last until May or June 2024 and the end of the subsidy would lead to an 80 to 100 percent cost increase in bread packages and an increase in the SMEB of approximately 10 percent.

Increasing tensions

An increase in intercommunal tensions has been registered since the beginning of this year. Based on the UNDP led Tension Monitoring System (TMS), inter-communal relations were at their lowest point in May 2023 as 46 percent of respondents reporting negative communal relations. Competition for low skilled jobs was the most-frequently cited source of inter-communal tensions, by both Lebanese and Syrians. In a context of increasing economic vulnerabilities and depleting services, there is a high risk that increasing vulnerabilities and competition for services could further exacerbate tensions. An additional challenge is that over the last three years, job competition is increasing as Lebanese are now taking up jobs in previously disregarded sectors, such as construction and agriculture, due to the deteriorating economic situation.

The continuously deteriorating economic situation in Syria in parallel is pushing more people to leave the country towards European countries, using Lebanon as a stop along the journey. There has also been increased media reports recently on cross Lebanese Syrian border smuggling operations, with the Lebanese army reporting to have stopped a total of 22 thousand irregular entrants in the first eight months of 2023.

An expected reduction in the level of assistance in December 2023 will highly impact Syrian refugees

The level of humanitarian assistance is expected to decline starting December 2023 and impacting mostly Syrian refugees. A decrease of up to 30 percent in the number of assisted Syrian refugee families is expected. For Lebanese, the in-kind food assistance currently provided by WFP, is expected to decrease by 30 percent starting January 2023. However, the provided in-kind assistance will still provide 50 percent of the caloric requirement. However, cash assistance to Lebanese residents is expected to increase, with assistance provided through the ESSN program new loan from the World Bank expected to cover nearly 160 thousand families, up from 90 thousand families assisted through the first loan. However, implementation of the extension of the ESSN program is still contingent on the approval of the loan by the parliament, which faces challenges legislating due to the political deadlock. NPTP assistance, on its part, is contingent on available funding to continue assisting over 70,000 households with regular cash assistance. Palestine refugees in Lebanon on their part assistance is likely to decrease in the projection period, as their multipurpose cash assistance relies on availability of funding that has been decreasing recently, while assistance to Palestine refugees from Syria is expected to remain within similar levels as 2023.

Lebanon's security situation remains uncertain as clashes along its southern border intensified

As war broke out on 7 October in the Occupied Palestinian Territory of Gaza, violent cross-border incidents along Lebanon's Southern Border have been increasing in number and intensity, possibly risking the eruption of a major armed confrontation in the region. As of 23 October, it was estimated that nearly 20 thousand people have already been displaced from Southern Lebanon. Various airlines issued decisions to cancel flights to Lebanon, while the national carrier has instituted contingency measures, reducing by 80 percent their flights. Many foreign embassies have urged their citizens to leave the country while commercial flights were still available.

The IPC analysis took place between 2 October and 13 October and it was assumed that tensions at the southern border would not escalate into a wider conflict. The analysis accounted for the available information, which encompassed several aspects such as access to food and population displacement in districts directly affected by the clashes. Given Lebanon's heavy dependence on imports and tourism; its already failing infrastructures and fragile value chains, and its dependence on remittance, the consequences in the event of further escalation of the conflict would be harsh. As such, continuous monitoring of the situation is of utmost importance, and depending on the evolution of the situation in the upcoming weeks, an update to this IPC analysis shall take place.

POPULATION TABLE FOR THE PROJECTED PERIOD (APRIL 2024 - SEPTEMBER 2024)

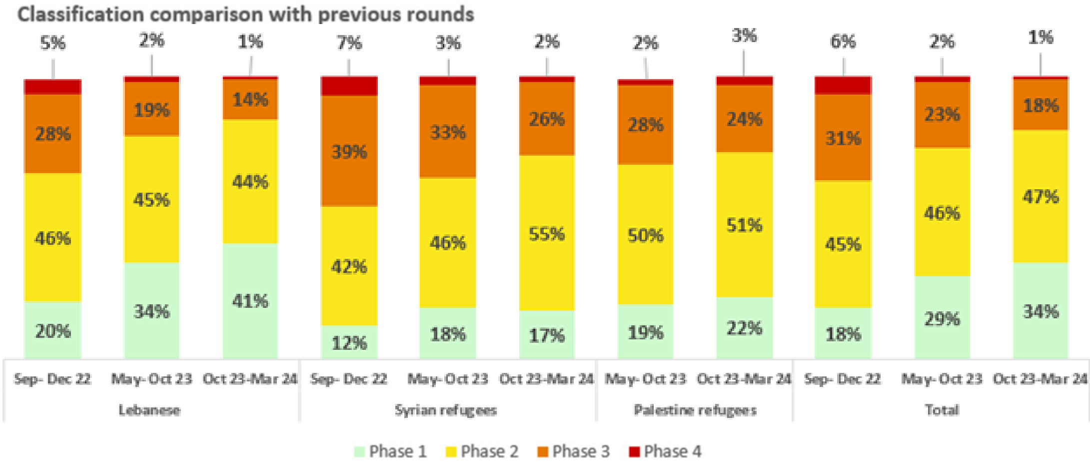
District	Population	Total population analysed	Phase 1		Phase 2		Phase 3		Phase 4		Phase 5		Area Phase	Phase 3+	
			#people	%	#people	%	#people	%	#people	%	#people	%		#people	%
Akkar	Lebanese	297,886	59,577	20	148,943	50	74,472	25	14,894	5	0	0	3	89,366	30
	Syrian Ref.	156,645	15,665	10	78,323	50	54,826	35	7,832	5	0	0	3	62,658	40
	Total	454,531	75,242	17	227,266	50	129,297	28	22,727	5	0	0		152,024	33
Aley	Lebanese	210,677	84,271	40	105,339	50	21,068	10	0	0	0	0	2	21,068	10
	Syrian Ref.	87,946	26,384	30	43,973	50	17,589	20	0	0	0	0	3	17,589	20
	Total	298,623	110,655	37	149,312	50	38,657	13	0	0	0	0		38,657	13
Baabda	Lebanese	410,718	184,823	45	164,287	40	61,608	15	0	0	0	0	2	61,608	15
	Palestine Ref.	13,832	3,458	25	6,224	45	3,458	25	692	5	0	0		4,150	30
	Syrian Ref.	145,924	29,185	20	65,666	45	51,073	35	0	0	0	0	3	51,073	35
	Total	570,474	217,466	38	236,177	41	116,139	20	692	0	0	0		116,831	20
Baalbek	Lebanese	192,906	48,227	25	96,453	50	48,227	25	0	0	0	0	3	48,227	25
	Palestine Ref.	1,538	385	25	692	45	385	25	77	5	0	0	3	462	30
	Syrian Ref.	186,973	18,697	10	93,487	50	65,441	35	9,349	5	0	0	3	74,790	40
	Total	381,417	67,308	18	190,632	50	114,052	30	9,426	2	0	0		123,478	32
Bcharre	Lebanese	20,836	10,415	50	9,374	45	1,042	5	0	0	0	0	2	1,042	5
	Syrian Ref.	2,080	416	20	1,352	65	312	15	0	0	0	0	2	312	15
	Total	22,916	10,831	47	10,726	47	1,354	6	0	0	0	0		1,354	6
Beirut	Lebanese	236,109	118,055	50	82,638	35	35,416	15	0	0	0	0	2	35,416	15
	Syrian Ref.	34,981	10,494	30	15,741	45	8,745	25	0	0	0	0	3	8,745	25
	Total	271,090	128,549	47	98,380	36	44,162	16	0	0	0	0		44,162	16
Bent Jbeil	Lebanese	84,781	25,434	30	46,630	55	12,717	15	0	0	0	0	2	12,717	15
	Syrian Ref.	13,070	3,921	30	7,189	55	1,961	15	0	0	0	0	2	1,961	15
	Total	97,851	29,355	30	53,818	55	14,678	15	0	0	0	0		14,678	15
Chouf	Lebanese	207,481	93,366	45	93,366	45	20,748	10	0	0	0	0	2	20,748	10
	Syrian Ref.	68,270	17,068	25	37,549	55	13,654	20	0	0	0	0	3	13,654	20
	Total	275,751	110,434	40	130,915	47	34,402	12	0	0	0	0		34,402	12
El Batroun	Lebanese	53,354	29,345	55	21,342	40	2,668	5	0	0	0	0	2	2,668	5
	Syrian Ref.	18,258	4,565	25	10,955	60	2,739	15	0	0	0	0	2	2,739	15
	Total	71,612	33,909	47	32,296	45	5,406	8	0	0	0	0		5,406	8
El Hermel	Lebanese	28,732	7,183	25	15,803	55	5,746	20	0	0	0	0	3	5,746	20
	Syrian Ref.	13,151	1,315	10	6,576	50	4,603	35	658	5	0	0	3	5,261	40
	Total	41,883	8,498	20	22,378	53	10,349	25	658	2	0	0		11,007	26
El Koura	Lebanese	72,432	36,216	50	32,594	45	3,622	5	0	0	0	0	2	3,622	5
	Syrian Ref.	22,227	4,445	20	11,114	50	6,668	30	0	0	0	0	3	6,668	30
	Total	94,659	40,661	43	43,708	46	10,290	11	0	0	0	0		10,290	11
El Meten	Lebanese	395,931	217,762	55	138,576	35	39,593	10	0	0	0	0	2	39,593	10
	Syrian Ref.	51,865	15,560	30	23,339	45	12,966	25	0	0	0	0	3	12,966	25
	Total	447,796	233,322	52	161,915	36	52,559	12	0	0	0	0		52,559	12
El Minieh-Dennie	Lebanese	122,065	24,413	20	67,136	55	24,413	20	6,103	5	0	0	3	30,516	25
	Syrian Ref.	76,693	7,669	10	38,347	50	26,843	35	3,835	5	0	0	3	30,678	40
	Total	198,758	32,082	16	105,482	53	51,256	26	9,938	5	0	0		61,194	31
El Nabatieh	Lebanese	146,560	58,624	40	65,952	45	21,984	15	0	0	0	0	2	21,984	15
	Syrian Ref.	31,804	7,951	25	15,902	50	7,951	25	0	0	0	0	3	7,951	25
	Total	178,364	66,575	37	81,854	46	29,935	17	0	0	0	0		29,935	17
Hasbaya	Lebanese	25,759	10,304	40	12,880	50	2,576	10	0	0	0	0	2	2,576	10
	Syrian Ref.	5,489	1,372	25	3,293	60	823	15	0	0	0	0	2	823	15
	Total	31,248	11,676	37	16,173	52	3,399	11	0	0	0	0		3,399	11

District	Population	Total population analysed	Phase 1		Phase 2		Phase 3		Phase 4		Phase 5		Area Phase	Phase 3+	
			#people	%	#people	%	#people	%	#people	%	#people	%		#people	%
Jbeil	Lebanese	115,689	69,413	60	40,491	35	5,784	5	0	0	0	0	2	5,784	5
	Syrian Ref.	10,826	3,789	35	5,954	55	1,083	10	0	0	0	0	2	1,083	10
	Total	126,515	73,203	58	46,445	37	6,867	5	0	0	0	0		6,867	5
Jezzine	Lebanese	27,163	9,507	35	16,298	60	1,358	5	0	0	0	0	2	1,358	5
	Syrian Ref.	4,180	1,045	25	2,508	60	627	15	0	0	0	0	2	627	15
	Total	31,343	10,552	34	18,806	60	1,985	6	0	0	0	0		1,985	6
Kesrwane	Lebanese	31,343	149,837	65	80,681	35	0	0	0	0	0	0	2	0	0
	Syrian Ref.	23,518	7,071	35	11,111	55	2,020	10	0	0	0	0	2	2,020	10
	Total	20,202	156,907	63	91,792	37	2,020	1	0	0	0	0		2,020	1
Marjaayoun	Lebanese	250,720	19,358	30	32,264	50	12,905	20	0	0	0	0	3	12,905	20
	Syrian Ref.	64,527	3,839	25	7,678	50	3,839	25	0	0	0	0	3	3,839	25
	Total	15,355	23,197	29	39,941	50	16,744	21	0	0	0	0		16,744	21
Rachaya	Lebanese	79,882	11,108	35	15,869	50	4,761	15	0	0	0	0	2	4,761	15
	Syrian Ref.	31,737	2,091	20	4,705	45	3,660	35	0	0	0	0	3	3,660	35
	Total	10,456	13,199	31	20,574	49	8,420	20	0	0	0	0		8,420	20
Saida	Lebanese	42,193	73,170	35	94,076	45	41,812	20	0	0	0	0	3	41,812	20
	Palestine Ref.	209,058	4,481	20	10,083	45	5,602	25	2,241	10	0	0	3	7,843	35
	Syrian Ref.	22,406	12,012	20	27,027	45	18,018	30	3,003	5	0	0	3	21,021	35
	Total	60,060	89,664	31	131,186	45	65,431	22	5,244	2	0	0		70,675	24
Sour	Lebanese	291,524	68,974	35	98,534	50	29,560	15	0	0	0	0	2	29,560	15
	Palestine Ref.	197,068	5,687	25	12,511	55	4,550	20	0	0	0	0	3	4,550	20
	Syrian Ref.	22,748	8,077	20	24,232	60	8,077	20	0	0	0	0	3	8,077	20
	Total	40,387	82,738	32	135,278	52	42,187	16	0	0	0	0		42,187	16
Tripoli	Lebanese	260,203	60,401	30	90,602	45	40,268	20	10,067	5	0	0	3	50,335	25
	Palestine Ref	201,338	4,795	25	7,672	40	5,754	30	959	5	0	0	3	6,713	35
	Syrian Ref.	19,181	8,706	15	26,118	45	20,314	35	2,902	5	0	0	3	23,216	40
	Total	58,041	73,903	27	124,393	45	66,336	24	13,928	5	0	0		80,264	29
West Bekaa	Lebanese	278,560	27,133	40	33,916	50	6,783	10	0	0	0	0	2	6,783	10
	Syrian Ref.	67,832	191,26	20	43,033	45	33,470	35	0	0	0	0	3	33,470	35
	Total	95,629	46,259	28	76,949	47	40,253	25	0	0	0	0		40,253	25
Zahle	Lebanese	163,461	49,000	35	70,000	50	21,000	15	0	0	0	0	2	21,000	15
	Syrian Ref.	140,000	24,603	10	123,013	50	98,410	40	0	0	0	0	3	98,410	40
	Total	246,025	73,603	19	193,013	50	119,410	31	0	0	0	0		119,410	31
Zgharta	Lebanese	386,025	29,247	40	32,903	45	10,968	15	0	0	0	0	2	10,968	15
	Syrian Ref.	73,117	4,693	20	11,732	50	7,039	30	0	0	0	0	3	7,039	30
	Total	23,463	33,939	35	44,634	46	18,006	19	0	0	0	0		18,006	19
Palestine refugees	PRS (outside camps)	96,580	3,022	10	15,110	50	10,577	35	1,511	5	0	0	3	12,088	40
	PRL (outside camps)	30,220	25,074	25	50,148	50	25,074	25	0	0	0	0	3	25,074	25
Total	Lebanese	3,864,268	1,575,163	41	1,706,947	44	551,099	14	31,064	1	0	0		582,163	15
	Syrian Ref..	1,500,000	259,759	17	739,917	49	472,751	32	27,579	2	0	0		500,330	33
	Palestine Ref.	**210,220**	**46,902**	**22**	**102,440**	**49**	**55,400**	**26**	**5,480**	**3**	**0**	**0**		**60,880**	**29**
Grand Total		**5,574,488**	**1,881,824**	**34**	**2,549,304**	**46**	**1,079,250**	**19**	**64,123**	**1**	**0**	**0**		**1,143,373**	**20**

Note: A population in Phase 3+ does not necessarily reflect the full population in need of urgent action. This is because some households may be in Phase 2 or even 1 but only because of receipt of assistance, and thus, they may be in need of continued action. Marginal inconsistencies that may arise in the overall percentages of totals and grand totals are attributable to rounding.

COMPARISON WITH PREVIOUS ANALYSIS

The population classified in IPC Phase 3 and above declined from 1.98 million people (37 percent) in September 2022, to 1.35 million people (25 percent) in May 2023 and further decreased to 1.05 million people (19 percent) in October 2023. The population classified in IPC Phase 4 also declined from 306,000 (6 percent) in September 2022 to 74,000 (1 percent) in October 2023. This is mainly driven by the high coverage of HFA, increased availability of foreign hard currency following the summer season and the fragile economic stability.



However, despite a further improvement of the food security situation since May 2023, 19 percent of the analysed population was expected to face IPC Phase 3 (Crisis) and above between October 2023 and March 2024 and 21 percent of the analysed population was anticipated to face high food insecurity from April to September 2024. As such, the needs remain high especially for the highly vulnerable groups.

The September 2022 the acute food insecurity (AFI) analysis followed a period of high political and economic instability and captured the direct aftermath of the economic crisis, the end of the presidential term, the impact of the lifting of subsidies, the surge in global food and energy prices that followed the war in Ukraine, limited availability of bread in the country and a widening gap between the cost of living and the value of assistance, particularly concerning Syrian refugees. The analysis also followed the expansion of humanitarian food assistance (HFA) and social safety nets among Lebanese as HFA coverage almost doubled, from 513,000 people to over 970,000 between February and August 2022. As the data collection period coincided with the expansion of HFA, the mitigating effects of HFA were not fully visible yet as many households just started receiving assistance when the first IPC analysis took place in September 2022.

In May 2023, many of these key drivers of food insecurity have started to ease. High coverage of HFA together with greater availability and access to USD in an increasingly dollarized cash economy, more employment opportunities, and a steady supply of subsidized wheat have contributed to ease access to food and other essential non-food needs in the country.

The current analysis followed a stable summer season characterized by the arrival of over 2 million tourists (up by 20 percent with respect to 2022) that brought much needed foreign hard currency, and by stability in the informal exchange rate whose volatility was a key factor leading to price inflation and food insecurity. In addition, HFA that reached over 2 million Lebanese, Syrian and Palestine Refugees with over 50 percent of the monthly caloric requirements, contributed to relieve food gaps and prevented a further deterioration of food security among the most vulnerable, especially in districts where more than 45 percent of the population analysed received food assistance. This was especially important in the case of Syrian refugees, where the reintroduction of the dual currency withdrawal mechanism and an increase of 78 percent in the transfer value, allowed them to maintain and improve their food security situation.

However, the continued dollarization of the economy, have led to high inflation in USD terms as prices have almost reached pre-crisis levels. In addition, the GDP lost a further 2.5 percent in 2022 and was expected to further decline by 0.5 percent in 2023. The economy has settled on a much lower level of economic activity, in which high level of food insecurity and poverty risks becoming structural without economic growth, considering the current high level of assistance that prevented many vulnerable families of falling deep into food insecurity.

Furthermore, the food security situation in the country remains fragile and subject to significant risks of deterioration over the current and projection periods and requires continuous action to address food insecurity ad safeguard food insecure populations. This includes risks of conflict, political uncertainty, delayed economic reforms, persisting inflation, higher-than-expected international prices, as well as a risk of halting food assistance together with the limited coverage of the basic food needs requirements. As such food insecurity was anticipated to further increase over the outlook period due to the expected assistance cuts, especially affecting refugees.

RECOMMENDATIONS FOR ACTION

Response Priorities

Situation Monitoring: This report, both for the current and projection sections, assumed the "most likely scenario" of no spill over due to the regional tensions and the ongoing war between Israel and Palestine to Lebanon. The analysis period took place between 2 October and 13 October, during which the conflict started, and as such, it was decided to proceed with the analysis assuming the most likely scenario, as it remains early to assume other scenarios and what those would mean in terms of IPC current and projection analysis on the country. Depending on the evolution of the situation in the upcoming short term, an update to the presented IPC analysis in this report might take place. In addition, both the current and projection period analysis assumed a certain level of fragile economic stability, similar to what the country has witnessed over the past six months. Any potential shocks that might render this stability obsolete will need to be monitored, and appropriate updates to the analysis will then be taking place.

Lifesaving and Humanitarian Food Assistance: Urgent action continues to be required to save lives and reduce food consumption gaps of populations categorized as being in Emergency and Crisis (IPC Phases 4 and 3) by improving access to food through appropriate modalities. While a fragile economic stability has been registered over the past few months, this is happening on a lower level of economic activity in which a high level of food insecurity is becoming structural to the system. The current level of food insecurity, although already high, is only sustainable because of the current level of assistance. Although an exact approximation of the impact of assistance cannot be made through this analysis, it is assumed that some portion of households classified in IPC Phase 2 (Stressed) are also vulnerable and are not classified in more severe phases because of the level of assistance delivered. Therefore, it is crucial to monitor the situation and implement activities that help mitigate the potential negative impact on their livelihoods and continue assisting those households to prevent them from moving to higher food insecurity phases.

Any further reduction in the humanitarian response, as projected for next year, especially those affecting refugee populations, along with already inappropriate transfer values or food assistance quantities, which are expected to also decrease for refugee populations, will lead to additional deterioration of the food security of vulnerable households.

As such, it remains crucial that humanitarian food assistance value is set based on needs and gaps. An alignment between the transfer value of cash for food and multi-purpose cash assistance with the market-based Survival Minimum Expenditure Basket (SMEB) values, while regularly updating the assistance provided to all populations based on the monitoring of risk factors and contextual development, can help ensure that food insecurity levels are properly tackled.

Social safety net systems: The gradual and full unification of the different existing social safety nets remains important to ensure appropriate operational implementation and governance. The proper expansion and standardization of such programs, especially as the removal of the last remaining subsidy in the country becomes closer, is required to ensure consistent assistance is provided to extremely poor Lebanese families.

Livelihoods assistance: While the fragile economic stability might have a bottoming of the situation on a lower but more stable economic output for the country compared to the drastic deterioration of the past two years, this new stability remains very fragile. As such, the scale-up of different livelihood support programs, especially those in the agricultural sector, becomes of the outmost important, in order to ensure access to stable income sources and mitigate any loss of purchasing power that the most vulnerable households face. Household have a multitude of essential needs that are competing with their food ones, and as such, strengthening their economy and resilience can position them to better tackle those needs while remaining food and nutritionally secure. Interventions targeting micro, small and medium enterprises and cooperatives are crucial for improved performance and expanded market access, which stimulate local markets and improve local economic growth.

Agricultural asset creation and recovery: expansion of the asset creation and recovery programmes in agriculture especially in rural areas with high reliance on food from own production and in areas with high prevalence of households in IPC Phase 2 (Stress) to protect already volatile livelihoods sources. This could include the scale-up of cash assistance to reach a greater number of small-scale crop producers and livestock keepers to improve access to quality agricultural inputs (fertilizers, pesticides and seeds, feed, veterinary services), as well as the focus on capacity building initiatives.

Further enhance Food Security and Nutrition Information and Monitoring Systems: Interventions to prevent multiple burdens of malnutrition must be scaled up through multi-sectoral approach to improve diets, practices, and services. In addition, as the risk of rising malnutrition rates has been highlighted, monitoring the nutritional status through a national survey is important. This allows timely detection of malnutrition prevalence and adopted feeding practices.

Situation Monitoring and Update

- **Humanitarian and social assistance:** The loss of purchasing power that household might incur, due to different assistance cuts that would decrease the provided transfer value or number of assisted vulnerable households. may limit the effectiveness of humanitarian assistance in keeping the food security situation stable, given a continuously rapid changing context.
- **Prices:** Even if exchange rate stability materializes, food price inflation due to updates in fees and tariffs by the government, as well as removal of the remaining wheat subsidy without alternative assistance framework, may keep the market prices for staples and essential non-food commodities beyond manageable levels.
- **Non-food expenditures:** The continued adjustments of essential non-food services prices, due to the ongoing dollarization in the country, as well as any potential new tariffs that might be introduced, may further increase the stain on households' purchasing power and expenditures in the coming year.
- **Nutrition:** In addition, monitoring of malnutrition is also necessary. The results from the upcoming Lebanon's first ever Integrated Micronutrient, Anthropometric and Child development Survey will help the Ministry of Health and Nutrition partners ascertain the opportunity to conduct an IPC Acute Malnutrition (AMN).

Risk factors to monitor

- Increased inter community tensions as well as tensions against refugees.
- Security situation developments
- Renewed currency depreciation and exchange rate evolution
- Inflation and commodity prices both on the local and international markets.

PROCESS AND METHODOLOGY

The IPC Acute Food Insecurity analysis was conducted for two time periods: 1) Current period: October 2023 – March 2024; 2) Projected period: April – September 2024. The analysis covered all 26 districts of the country. Lebanese residents and Syrian refugees have been analyzed separately at the district level, while PRL residing in camps have been analyzed at area level (5 areas), and PRL residing outside camps and in gatherings, in addition to PRS have been analyzed at national level. A two-days training was provided by IPC Global Support Unit (GSU) experts and the co-facilitators of the IPC analysis (in preparation for their IPC level 2 certification) on the 2nd and 3rd of October 2023, and the analysis was conducted between 4 and 13 October 2023.

Both the training and analysis were held in Beirut, Lebanon with in-person modality. The workshop was attended by 55 experts including Technical Working Group members and analysts from UN organizations, local and international NGOs, technical agencies, and governmental institutions. Most members of this round of analysis and facilitators have local expertise which better supported in understanding the overall context to ensure a contextualized and accurate reflection of food insecurity needs in Lebanon. The data used in the analysis was organized according to the IPC analytical framework and entails food insecurity contributing factors, outcome indicators, and multiple secondary sources.

The main sources of data used for the analysis of outcome indicators included: 1) Lebanon Vulnerability Assessment Panel conducted by the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR) , the United Nations World Food Programme (WFP), and the World Bank and including data from January till May 2023; 2) mobile Vulnerability Assessment and Mapping (mVAM) conducted by the United Nations World Food Programme (WFP) with data from January till September 2023; 3) Multi-Sectoral Needs Assessment (MSNA) by REACH/UNOCHA including data from July to September 2023; 4) The Vulnerability Assessment for Syrian Refugees in Lebanon (VASyR) conducted jointly by the United Nations Children's Fund (UNICEF), UNHCR and WFP including data from May and June 2023; and 5) Palestine refugees vulnerability assessment conducted jointly by WFP and The United Nations Relief and Works Agency for Palestine Refugees in the Near East (UNRWA) including data from December 2022 to January 2023. The review and contextualized Livelihoods Coping Strategies module has been utilized in this round of analysis, ensuring results are coherent with the Lebanon context. Humanitarian Food Assistance data was provided by the Food Security and Agriculture sector with the support of all reporting partners.

Moreover, other data sources providing information regarding the food insecurity contribution factors have been included such as UNHCR protection monitoring for the second quarter of 2023; Overview of communal relations in Lebanon (Tension monitoring) conducted by UNDP; Market monitors by WFP.

Assessing the levels and the broader mitigating effect of Humanitarian Food Assistance (HFA) is a key component of an IPC analysis, as IPC is a snapshot analysis and integrates all aggravating and mitigating factors relevant to the current and projected situation. The IPC protocols are not designed (nor should they be used) to assess or evaluate the impact of any humanitarian food assistance on food insecurity, or to monitor achievements towards program level goals.

HFA that can be considered for an IPC analysis includes direct resource transfers that aim to reduce food gaps, protect, and save lives and livelihoods. Only transfers that are intended to have an immediate positive effect on access to food were considered in the analysis.

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Acute Food Insecurity Phase name and description

Phase 1 None/Minimal	Phase 2 Stressed	Phase 3 Crisis	Phase 4 Emergency	Phase 5 Catastrophe/ Famine
Households are able to meet essential food and non-food needs without engaging in atypical and unsustainable strategies to access food and income.	Households have minimally adequate food consumption but are unable to afford some essential non-food expenditures without engaging in stress-coping strategies.	Households either: • have food consumption gaps that are reflected by high or above-usual acute malnutrition; **or** • are marginally able to meet minimum food needs but only by depleting essential livelihood assets or through crisis-coping strategies.	Households either: • have large food consumption gaps that are reflected in very high acute malnutrition and excess mortality; **or** • are able to mitigate large food consumption gaps but only by employing emergency livelihood strategies and asset liquidation	Households have an extreme lack of food and/or other basic needs even after full employment of coping strategies. Starvation, death, destitution and extremely critical acute malnutrition levels are evident. For famine classification, area needs to have extreme critical levels of acute malnutrition and mortality.)

What is the IPC and IPC Acute Food Insecurity?

The IPC is a set of tools and procedures to classify the severity and characteristics of acute food and nutrition crises as well as chronic food insecurity based on international standards. The IPC consists of four mutually reinforcing functions, each with a set of specific protocols (tools and procedures). The core IPC parameters include consensus building, convergence of evidence, accountability, transparency and comparability. The IPC analysis aims at informing emergency response as well as medium and long-term food security policy and programming.

For the IPC, Acute Food Insecurity is defined as any manifestation of food insecurity found in a specified area at a specific point in time of a severity that threatens lives or livelihoods, or both, regardless of the causes, context or duration. It is highly susceptible to change and can occur and manifest in a population within a short amount of time, as a result of sudden changes or shocks that negatively impact on the determinants of food insecurity.

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Classification of food insecurity and malnutrition was conducted using the IPC protocols, which are developed and implemented worldwide by the IPC Global Partnership - Action Against Hunger, CARE, CILSS, EC-JRC , FAO, FEWS NET, Global Food Security Cluster, Global Nutrition Cluster, IGAD, Oxfam, PROGRESAN-SICA, SADC, Save the Children, UNICEF and WFP.

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