

# EMERGENCY OPERATIONS CENTRE BEIRUT

## ASSESSMENT & ANALYSIS CELL

### Analysis of vulnerabilities and affected areas in Greater Beirut

Thematic Analysis - September 2020

On 4 August a large explosion occurred in the port of Beirut, killing at least 191 people and injuring over 6,500. Around 40,000 buildings were damaged, up to 300,000 people may have lost their homes, and at least 70,000 their job (OCHA 25/08/2020, UNDP in OCHA 17/08/2020, BBC News 15/09/2020, Al Jazeera 24/08/2020). The cause of the blast is pending investigation but has been attributed to 2,750 tons of ammonium nitrate which was inadequately stored in port warehouses (The Guardian 05/08/2020).

A number of cadastres of Greater Beirut are affected, some of which are home to vulnerable or poor Lebanese, migrant workers or refugee communities. The explosion occurred while Lebanon faces a deep economic and political crisis, and rising COVID-19 cases. Protests based on mistrust of the Lebanese government and overall administration have been taking place for months in Beirut prompting the Government to step down on 10 August 2020. Poverty has risen in recent months; 2.7 million residents are now poor and 1.1 million are extremely poor (ESCWA 19/08/2020).

Poverty, unaffordable housing, and barriers to accessing healthcare were pre-existing issues for vulnerable host, migrant, and refugee communities. Inequalities in accessing services and opportunities based on gender, age, sexual orientation, and a minority background were also highlighted.

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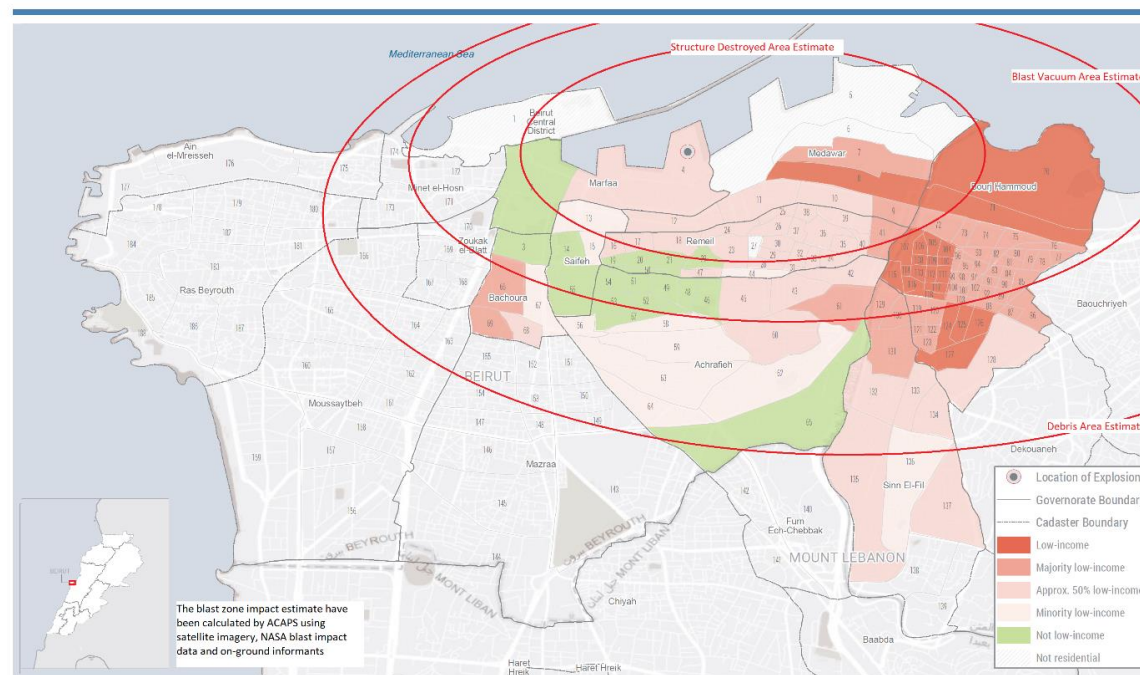
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LEBANON

OCHA Beirut : Economic Vulnerability by Operational Zones

As of 9/4/2020



Source: OCHA, UN HABITAT, ACAPS for the blast zone impact 04/09/2020 . See full map on page 21

#### About this report

This report presents a comprehensive review of secondary and primary data available **on the most affected areas and the main vulnerable groups within the population** affected by the blast. It was developed by ACAPS, REACH, MapAction, Mercy Corps, and OCHA/UNDAC, with support from the Lebanese Red Cross and Emergency Operation Cell partners. **A first analysis on the main sectoral needs for the affected population** is available here.

## Overview and humanitarian situation

On 4 August a large explosion occurred in the port of Beirut, killing at least 191 people and injuring over 6,500. As of 25 August, several people, including refugees, remain missing (ICRC 25/08/2020, Timour Azhari 25/08/2020; BBC News 15/09/2020). At least 14 refugees were confirmed dead as of 21 August, and around 250 were injured, 57 of them severely (OCHA 25/08/2020). The exact causes of the explosion are pending investigation. So far the blast has been attributed to 2,750 tons of improperly stored ammonium nitrate in one of the port warehouses (The Guardian 05/08/2020).

**The explosion had a significant impact on several cadastres<sup>1</sup>** in Beirut city/ governorate and adjacent municipalities and cadastres in Mount Lebanon governorate. According to the latest assessments, the most affected areas are:

- **In Beirut governorate:** Saifi cadastre; Medawar cadastre (especially the traditionally poor neighbourhood of Karantina, or Khodr, and the bar district of Mar Mikhael); Rmeil cadastre (especially Geitawi); Achrafieh cadastre; Marfaa cadastre (including Nouveau Secteur, also known as Downtown, and Marfaa neighbourhood; Bachoura cadastre (particularly the smaller neighbourhood of Basta El Tahta); Zqaq al Blatt cadastre; Mazraa cadastre; Moussaitbeh cadastre; Dar El Mreisseh cadastre; and Minet El Hosn cadastre
- **In Mount Lebanon governorate:** Municipalities of Bourj Hammoud, Bauchriyeh, Sin El Fil, Aamaret Chalhoub, Jdaidet El-Matn and Zalqa (all in Metn district)

As of 20 August, Achrafieh, Bachoura, Mazraa, Rmeil, Medawar, and Saifi cadastres were reportedly the most affected areas in Beirut governorate, while Bourj Hammoud and Bauchriya are likely the most impacted in Mount Lebanon governorate. These cadasters are also the areas where most needs assessments have been conducted.

However, the geographic coverage (beyond the cadastres) and sample size of these assessments varies. The assessments provide a snapshot, but are not fully representative of the whole affected population in Greater Beirut. Further assessments are underway and findings around most affected areas and priority needs are likely to change.

People in these areas have lost homes and businesses including restaurants, bars, and hotels, while already confronted with a deep economic crisis (OCHA 05/08/2020, BBC 06/08/2020, NYT 05/08/2020). According to UNDP, a total of 200,000 housing units were affected in Beirut. An estimated 40,000 buildings were damaged, including 3,000 severely damaged (OCHA 17/08/2020). Over 15,000 businesses – around 50% of Beirut establishments – have been damaged, the majority in the wholesale, retail, and hospitality sectors. At least 70,000 people were left unemployed. (UNDP 25/08/2020, OCHA 17/08/2020, OCHA 25/07/2020). Around 300,000 people are displaced, staying with families, friends, fellow citizens, and some in public shelters, though the elderly, migrant workers and refugees will likely need humanitarian support (Beirut Crisis Shelter 08/2020).

**The explosion came amid a deep financial, economic, and political crisis.** Recent data revealed that 1.1 million people in Lebanon are extremely poor, while 2.7 million are poor (ESCWA 19/08/2020). In Beirut governorate at least half of each refugee population group was living below the poverty line prior to the worsening of the socioeconomic crisis in September 2019 (OCHA 21/06/2019). With so many houses, belongings, and jobs lost in the blast, this sudden economic shock adds to months, if not years, of financial challenges for the poorest households due to economic recession and further unemployment driven by COVID-19 mitigation measures (ESCWA 19/08/2020). Protests occurring in Beirut since October 2019 surged following the explosion, with people calling for the resignation of the government. The government of Hassan Diab (Prime Minister) resigned on 10 August, following resignations by several cabinet ministers, leaving Lebanon in a politically precarious situation (BBC 10/08/2020).

**Coping capacities of people and services were already stretched** by the Syrian refugee crisis, economic, fiscal, and financial crises, and recent increase in confirmed COVID-19 cases, further worsening the public health and economic situation. Poor households, refugees and migrant workers are particularly vulnerable as they have less resources to repurchase or replace damaged or destroyed belongings (including documentation and furniture), reconstruct damaged shelters (often rented), and buy food and essential items. These groups often live in densely populated neighbourhoods of Greater Beirut with limited access to services, including water, sanitation, and healthcare. Of the approximate 500,000 people living in Beirut governorate in 2019, 36,000 were vulnerable Lebanese, 36,000 Syrian refugees, and 5,770 Palestinian refugees (OCHA 21/06/2019).

<sup>1</sup> Cadastre or quarters are the smallest administrative area in Lebanon (Admin 3), after districts (Admin 2), and governorates (Admin 1). Cadastres are further divided into smaller areas commonly known as neighbourhoods. For more information on Lebanon's administrative division see Appendix I.

Hyperinflation was making food, fuel, and electricity, as well as other non-food items, more expensive even before the explosion. Inflation reached 90% in June 2020, local currency has been losing value, and consumers' purchasing power rapidly decreasing (The National 25/07/2020; L'OLJ 24/08/2020). As the Beirut port is only partially operational, with reduced storage capacity, some imports were redirected to Tripoli – a port with less capacity (France24 20/08/2020). This will likely put further upward pressure on prices of food and basic commodities, which have been rising steadily through the economic crisis.

**Vulnerable groups of people** within the population faced increased barriers to accessing services and livelihood opportunities well before the blast. These pre-existing challenges could leave individuals in the following groups even more vulnerable to the impact of the blast: women, children, people with chronic and non-communicable diseases, people with disabilities, poor households of any nationality, the elderly, minorities, members of the LGBTIQ+ community, refugees, and migrant workers.

## Underlying vulnerabilities

Initial assessments show that the extent of the humanitarian impact and severity of needs of the people affected by the blast depend on underlying vulnerabilities. Poor households, particularly refugees, migrants, people with special needs, and female-led households, were more likely to report acute basic needs such as food or healthcare and less access to essential services. The majority of households with members presenting special needs (e.g. chronic illness, disability) reported not being able to afford healthcare.

### Info gaps and limitations

These assessment findings do not include latest data from some of the potentially most vulnerable neighbourhoods affected by the explosion. 90% of operational zones<sup>1</sup> where the majority of residents are considered poor and 80% of operational zones where all the residents are considered poor have not yet been properly assessed. Currently it appears that the operational zones with the least poor residents are the ones that have been assessed the most (more information on assessments' coverage can be found [here](#)).

In order to better understand vulnerabilities of affected areas, UN HABITAT Economic Vulnerability map, developed with data collected before the blast, was also used to support this analysis.

## Vulnerability profile of the affected population

In this section, with the data available ACAPS analysed how different pre-existing underlying vulnerabilities are or might be aggravated by the explosion. We consider how specific groups are likely to be more vulnerable than others.

Lebanon has a population of 6.9 million (est.) people residing within a densely populated area of 10,400 square kilometres. It hosts the highest per capita refugee population in the world – up to 30% of the population are refugees and at least 5% are migrants from a number of African and Asian countries, the majority from Ethiopia (UN 2019, ILO 2016).

Over 3.2 million people were considered in need of humanitarian protection assistance in 2020. The main vulnerable groups in the country included:

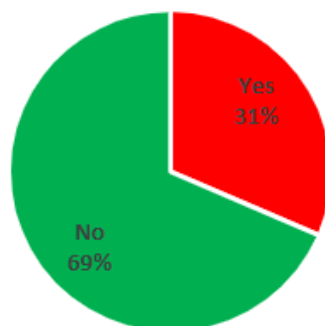
- **1.5 million vulnerable Lebanese** (living in poor housing conditions with limited income/job opportunities and no, or very limited, access to health, education, and water and sanitation services) (IACL March 2015).
- **1.5 million Syrian refugees**
- **250,000-400,000 migrants** – most of them women (predominantly from Ethiopia) working as domestic helpers
- **180,000 Palestinian refugees already residing in Lebanon**
- **27,700 Palestinian refugees from Syria** (LCRP 2020).

Approximately 500,000 people live in Beirut governorate (this excludes the outer cadastres in the suburbs like Bourj Hammoud and Sin El Fil) including around 36,000 vulnerable Lebanese, 36,000 Syrian refugees, and 5,770 Palestinian refugees (OCHA 21/06/2019).

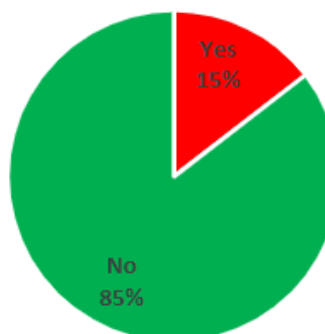
Across the population for which post-explosion assessment data is available, (predominantly Rmeil, Karantina in Medawar cadastre, Gemmayzeh in Saifi cadaster, Geitawi neighbourhood in Rmeil, and Basta El Tahta), 31% of households reported having an injured member, 15% reported having a displaced member, and 1% reported having a missing member of the household (UNICEF 17/08/2020).

## % of HH who reported having

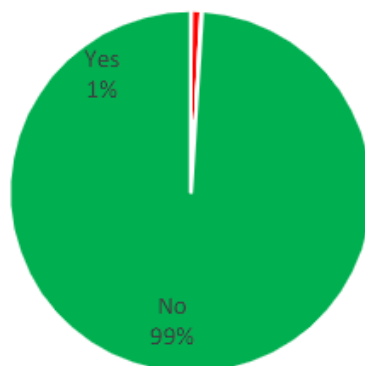
### A Injured Member in the HH



### A Displaced Members in the HH



### A Missing Members in the HH



(UNICEF 17/08/2020)

## Factors of vulnerability

### Economic vulnerability: poverty and lack of livelihoods

The explosion occurred at the time of a severe economic crisis, driven by linked financial, banking, and monetary crises. Currency devaluation and unemployment have led to increased poverty, with 55% of the country's total population (6.9 million est.) currently facing poverty. This corresponds to an estimated 1.1 million people living below the poverty line and 2.7 million living in the upper poverty line. This is an increase compared to 2019, when poverty rate was at 28%; extreme poverty increased from 8% in 2019 to 23% in 2020 (OCHA 7/08/2020; ESCWA 08/2020).

Palestinian refugees are most affected by economic exclusion. Data from 2019 showed 90% of Palestinian refugees from Syria and 65% of Palestinian refugees from Lebanon living below the poverty line. 51% of Syrian refugees were reported to live below the poverty line (OCHA 21/06/2019).

Across the affected populations in Beirut and El Metn districts, the poorest neighbourhoods are Karantina (or Khodr), Nor-Sis, and Nabaa in Bourj Hammoud, and Medawar cadastre<sup>2</sup>. See the map on page 21 for socioeconomic vulnerability information (UN Habitat, Map Action 08/2020).

Across the affected population (predominantly from Karantina, Badawi, Geitawi, Gemmayzeh, and Bourj Hammoud) 53% of assessed people had no work, rising to 74% for Syrian refugees. Informal employment was the dominant means of income, with the majority being daily or temporary labourers (HelpAge 14/08/2020).

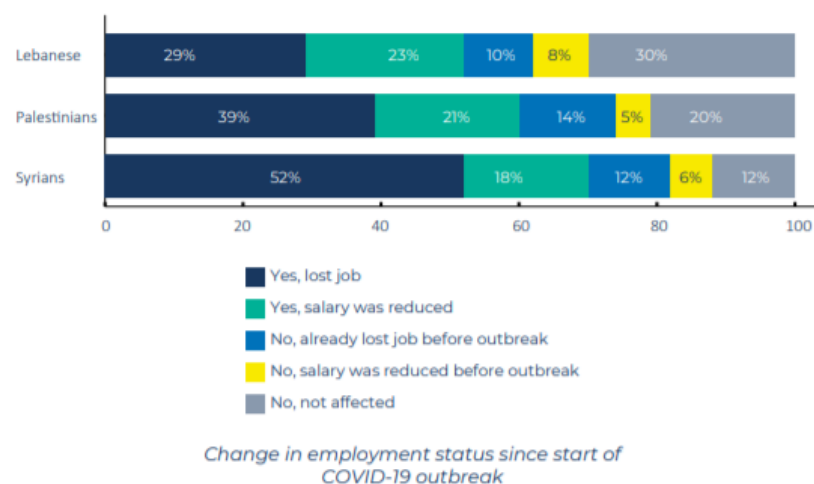
The worsening economic situation combined with the strict movement restrictions due to COVID-19 significantly affected livelihoods and access to income generating activities, particularly for those engaged in daily work and the informal sector (predominantly refugees). An irregular worker could earn around LBP 1 million per month before the economic crisis — once equal to USD 660, it's now worth USD 140 (WFP 18/08/2020).

As of July 2020, nearly 90% of Syrians and almost 80% of Palestinians across Lebanon had either lost their jobs or had their salaries. In May 2020, 70% of Syrian refugee families reported having no working members in the last week, a steep increase from 44% reported in February 2020, before COVID-19. Some 61% of Syrians working in the construction sector, one of the main sectors Syrians are permitted to work, reported losing their jobs (IACL 07/2020).

<sup>2</sup> Operational zones 5-10, 97-103, 124-127

The overall negative impact of the combination of conditions is also felt by Lebanese: **70% have lost their jobs or had salaries reduced**. 33% of households interviewed by CARE in May 2020 reported that their income had decreased by 50% since March 2020; 41% of women and 29% of men reported losing their jobs after the COVID-19 outbreak (CARE 05/2020). The current economic contraction is estimated to result in a 14-19% reduction in women's employment (UN Women 06/2020). This should be of significant concern given women's participation in the economy already stands at only 29% and that Lebanon ranks 139 among 153 countries on economic participation and opportunity based on the World Economic Forum' Global Gender Gap Index (2020) (ILO 18/12/2019).

An estimated 220,000 jobs were lost from the private sector between October 2019 and January 2020 (CARE 05/2020).



Source: IACL 07/2020

The currency has been continuously losing value in 2020, driven by an economic crisis and US dollar shortage. Although the official exchange rate is LBP 1,500 to the USD, the black market rate is around LBP 7,000-LBP 8,000 as of August (FT 10/08/2020). Banks use semi-official rates – significantly lower than black market rates – for card-based cash assistance.

**Access to food:** Food prices have soared due to the economic crisis and COVID-19 and almost tripled between June 2019 and June 2020. Prices further increased just after the port explosion. Assessed households reported having no savings. Non-Lebanese households, households with a member needing chronic medication, households in rented accommodation, and households with more children were more likely (in that order) to put "food" as a priority need (LRC 13/08/2020). Multiple assessments in recent years have shown higher food insecurity among female-headed (led) households (VASR 2019).

In certain parts of Lebanon, especially in poorer urban settings and rural areas, women are more likely to be food insecure, more likely to be unemployed, have less access to social protection, are more likely to be a survivor of GBV, more likely to not have legal residence (as a refugee or migrant), and more likely to not have access to adequate shelter (particularly if they are a female headed households). This makes women less able to cope with shocks – they are less likely to have savings, a bank account or extensive social networks beyond their family. Women have limited access to public spaces, and challenges accessing urgent social protection – all things critical in enabling individuals and families to respond to disasters such as the Beirut explosion (UN Women 17/08/2020).

Food intake since the explosion has been decreasing, with the majority of assessed populations in need of food assistance immediately after the blast. (50% in Nabaa, 70% in Bourj Hammoud, 80% in Karantina, 95-100% in Geitawi, and 70-90% in Karm el Zaytoun) (ACTED 7/08/2020). Food insecurity is likely to particularly affect people with special needs such as female-led households, people with disabilities, and the elderly. Local support networks and NGOs have mobilised to provide food assistance to those in need.

**Access to NFIs:** Poor and vulnerable households (refugees, migrants, female-led households) are more likely to be more affected by the current crisis due to increasing prices of basic services and commodities, the inability to pay for the reconstruction or repairs of their houses, and because they have little or no financial buffer against shocks. Poor families reported not being able to relocate and having to stay in unsafe houses. Those displaced had to shelter with their relatives or in collective shelters. Those who chose not to move report being in unsafe locations, facing security issues and are having to arrange systems to guard their homes at night, in the absence of an official security system (Save the Children 08/2020).

The fallout from the explosion will likely lead to a significant number of vulnerable households falling below, or further below, the poverty line and being forced into using negative coping mechanisms. 99% of refugee households assessed by DRC in April 2020 reported not having any savings. Many of the refugee households are already in overwhelming debt. All households reporting some savings expected them to deplete in less than one month (DRC 20/05/2020).

**Increasing economic vulnerability is reported within the refugee community and the host community, leading to social tensions.** Competition for jobs is the most commonly cited cause for rising tensions between host and refugee communities, as well as between Lebanese communities. (UNHCR 2/06/2020, Tension Monitoring System, ARC Perception Survey Wave VII findings January 2020).

## Shelter vulnerability

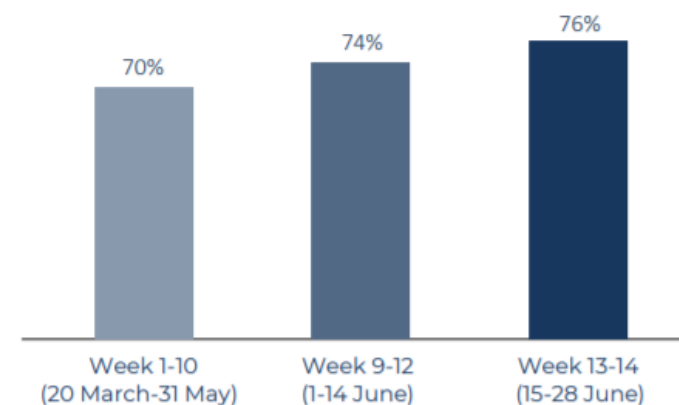
Affordability and availability of construction materials are the main concerns in meeting shelter needs after the explosion, particularly for the most economically vulnerable people (ACTED 08/2020). Underlying poverty makes it harder to reconstruct or repurchase lost belongings.

The residential area surrounding Beirut's port is densely populated with vulnerable Lebanese, Syrian, and Palestinian households affected by the blast, living in poor urban neighbourhoods.

- **Karm el Zeytoun** in a residential area of Achrafieh, is a high-density poor neighbourhood where many Syrians have settled because of the affordable prices and opportunities for informal employment. High levels of community disputes have been reported in this area. In a February 2020 study, over 32% of Lebanese and over 11% of non-Lebanese households reported facing community tensions and disputes (UN-Habitat 2020).
- **Bourj Hammoud**, including the neighbourhoods of Nabaa, Arax, Maraache and Adana, where a high concentration of Syrian refugees have settled, is characterised by a chaotic urban structure. Shelters were built haphazardly and are not connected to government services.
- **Karantina** is a low-income commercial and semi-industrial neighbourhood east of the Port of Beirut and adjacent to the North-South highway, with a high concentration of refugees (ACTED).

**Extensive shelter damage reported across the city will likely contribute to increased evictions.** Syrian refugees and other populations in a vulnerable situation have been increasingly unable to pay their rent since the deepening of the economic and financial crises as well as the beginning of COVID-19 containment measures (IACL 07/2020). Paying for rent, or reconstruction materials, will become increasingly difficult for poor households (refugees and non-refugees) following the blast.

**A sharp increase in individual evictions and households at risk of evictions was reported in the first half of 2020.** This related to all population groups in Lebanon, including Palestine refugees, Lebanese nationals, refugees from other nationalities, and migrants. 2,236 Syrian refugees (552 families) were evicted in the first half of 2020, a 62% increase compared to the first half of 2019. 17,316 Syrian refugees (3,802 families) were at risk of eviction as of June 2020 (IACL 07/2020). In April 2020, **73% of households in rented accommodation considered themselves at risk of eviction if the COVID-19 crisis were to continue** (DRC 04/2020). Risk of eviction is likely to increase as the economic crisis in Lebanon continues and purchasing power diminishes.



*Inability (or increased difficulty) to pay rent among Syrian refugees*

Source: IACL 07/2020

**Supporting sustainable, mid-term accommodation tenure security for vulnerable households should be a priority of the response.** Aid agencies involved in Syrian refugee response have significant experience providing in-kind (sealing-off kits) and cash-based shelter assistance (Cash for Rent), while tens of thousands of Syrian refugee families benefit from Multi-Purpose Cash Assistance programmes that partially cover rent expenses. Similar programmes can cover or address the needs of vulnerable Lebanese and Palestinians. Given moderate winter conditions in the affected area, the need for winterisation assistance is not expected apart from door, window, and roof repair (no fuel needs are expected).

Damaged buildings are leading to protection concerns. Most respondents experienced damages to their windows (93%) and doors (88%). Regarding damages to household doors, this is concerning especially for women (90%) and older people (87%) as this increases protection risks regarding their perceived sense of safety in their own home (HelpAge 14/08/2020).

## Health vulnerability and populations with special needs (chronic diseases, disability)

People with disabilities and special needs have been consistently neglected by the state. The current crisis is likely to worsen an already dire situation.

56% of households assessed predominantly in Ashrafieh, Rmeil, Medawar, and Bachoura reported chronic diseases such as diabetes, hypertension, heart disease, and others. 10% reported household members with physical or mental disability.

Households with a member needing healthcare and medication for a chronic conditions, households with a member with a chronic medical condition, households with a member with a physical or mental disability, and households where the head of household is

female were more likely (in that order) to put "medication" or "healthcare" as a priority need (LRC 13/08/2020).

Following the explosion, 34% of the assessed population in Baddawi, Bourj Hammoud, Gemmayzeh, Geitawi, and Karantina neighbourhoods reported that their family has difficulties accessing health services, and 45% reported difficulties accessing medicines (Hefpage 14/08/2020).

**Access to mental health services has also been challenging.** Constraints include limited awareness, mobility restrictions, and barriers to accessing available services. Social stigma and misconceptions about mental health have prevented women and men from seeking support and specialised assistance.

**Lebanon has seen a steady increase in suicide and suicide attempts since 2016.** In the first quarter of 2019 the number of incidents exceeded the average of previous years. Although there are no conclusive findings in the Lebanese context, feelings of increased anxiety and induced stress attributed to environmental factors such as the economic situation might exacerbate risks related to mental health conditions. An SGBV impact assessment conducted in November 2019 reported high levels of stress among women and girls interviewed throughout the civil unrest (CARE 05/2020).

## Gender

**Emerging data suggests that more men died than women, likely because the majority of port workers and day labourers around the port area were men** (UN Women 17/08/2020)

**Approximately 81,000 women of reproductive age are among the 300,000 people displaced by the blast** (UNFPA 13/08/2020)

**An estimated 3,900 women who are currently pregnant in the affected areas by the blast will need antenatal, obstetric, and neonatal services in the coming months** (UNFPA 13/08/2020)

**Up to 42% of households with pregnant and lactating women (78 out of 184) report a need for maternal and newborn health services** (LRC 13/08/2020)

The Beirut explosion has occurred in a context with structural gender inequalities: Lebanon ranks 145 out of 153 in the global World Economic Forum Gender Equality Index and ranks 139 on women's economic participation. The economic crisis has been rolling back any gains in gender equality. Prior to the blast, it was estimated that economic contraction rates would result in a 14-19% reduction in women's overall employment in Lebanon. This will most likely increase as the explosion impacts the economy (UN Women 07/2020).

**Given the low representation of women in public institutions and decision-making bodies, gender aspects of the response are at risk of being overlooked.** While the number of female members in the government task force for the response is not yet established, only 18% of the government inter-ministerial response committee members are women (UN Women, NCLW, UNFPA, WHO 07/2020).

**Many Lebanese, Syrian, and Palestinian families uphold clear gender-based division of roles and responsibilities within their households.** Women and adolescent girls perform the domestic tasks, including childcare. Following the blast, women are likely expected to carry out additional unpaid work including caring for the elderly, persons with disabilities, and dependant family members affected by the explosion. This kind of additional workload already led to physical and emotional distress for women, negatively affecting their wellbeing following the COVID-19 outbreak. Such impacts are likely to increase, leading to more negative coping mechanisms and mental health issues (CARE 05/2020).

**Women's access to livelihood opportunities, control over income earned, and access to basic services has systematically decreased in recent months due to movement restrictions and the shrinking economy.** 57% of men and only 11% of women interviewed following the COVID-19 outbreak reported having control over their income. 64% of the women reported that this line of questioning was not applicable to them as they had no personal source of income and were dependent on their husband's income. However, deteriorating economic conditions have pushed some women to engage in income generating activities. When women do generate income to contribute to their households, the result is often greater personal financial freedom and an increased say in household decision making (CARE 05/2020).

**Women and men report that the harsh economic conditions have forced families to make hard decisions, with women neglecting some of their own needs to put other family members' needs first.** A gender analysis of the impact of the economic, financial and COVID-19 health crises found 85% of women and only 57% of men surveyed were eating smaller portions for their meals. Additionally, the risk of child marriage for girls had increased as families try to reduce their financial burden by decreasing the number of people they have to feed (CARE 7/08/2020).

**Risks of sexual exploitation and abuse,** particularly among women, girls, and the LGBTIQ+ community increases as people are unable to meet their basic needs and shelter together in overcrowded households (CARE 05/2020). Key informants (both women and men) reported that men staying at home because of COVID-19 negatively affected the family dynamic and increased tensions in the household, including incidents of abuse against women and children (CARE 05/2020)

In 2019, 23% of women surveyed had either experienced 'sextortion' (coerced sex in exchange for government services) or knew someone who had. The threats of exploitation and abuse are severe, especially with increasing economic vulnerabilities and proliferation of local and international relief actors (Transparency International 11/12/2019).

**Access to sexual and reproductive health services has reduced since the beginning of the COVID-19 pandemic.** Access to sexual and reproductive healthcare, including maternal health and contraception, has decreased as Lebanon's health service providers are overstretched due COVID-19. There was a 45% decrease in the number of women

accessing reproductive health services at public health centres between March and May 2020, compared to the same period of 2019 (UN Women 07/2020). This is likely due to a combination of women's fear of being infected with the virus, movement restrictions, lack of transportation to services and economic constraints.

While access to other healthcare services in public health centres began to increase again since May 2020, women's access to reproductive health services continues to decline. There is a further risk of deteriorating access to health services as the COVID-19 cases increase and the state imposed lockdown is in place (UN Women 07/2020).

Poor women and girls also increasingly struggle to afford menstrual hygiene needs. Shortfalls in women's dignity items were reported after the explosion and the cost of basic hygiene kits is rising due to the blast and overall economic crisis (Save the Children 08/2020).

### Age related vulnerabilities

#### National population age disaggregation:

- 0-14 years: 25.6%
- 15-24 years: 17.4%
- 25-64 years: 49.7%
- 65 years and over: 7.3% (UN 2019)

**Elderly people:** The blast destroyed the traditional neighbourhoods of central Beirut, where a very high number of older people were living, some in poverty or with limited savings (IRC 14/08/2020). The blast has left thousands of them without shelter, food, income, or the ability to practice physical distancing. Elderly people renting under the old rent law (meaning low-cost rent) whose homes were partially or completely destroyed are at risk of becoming homeless. **Some elderly people refused to relocate from their homes and decided to remain in unsafe locations** (Operational actors in Lebanon).

A joint multi-sectoral needs assessment conducted following the blast in the quarters and neighbourhoods of Ashrafieh, Rmeil, Medawar, Bachoura, Saifi, Karantina, Nouveau Secteur, the Port, and Mina El Hosn, found out that older women living alone make up a significant percentage of the people who remain in the radius of the blast site, and of those immediately affected by the blast. Of the overall sample, a significant number of the women interviewed (522) – 13% - reported living alone. Of these, 74% are age 60 or older (UN Women, OCHA, ACTED 22/08/2020)

68% of people aged 50+ assessed predominantly in Karantina, Badawi, Geitawi, Gemmayzeh, and Bourj Hammoud have one disability or impairment in 2020 (HelpAge 14/08/2020).

**It is very difficult for older people to access the healthcare and medications they may urgently need.** Many hospitals and pharmacies in central Beirut were destroyed, particularly in the areas close to those most in need after the explosion (HelpAge 13/08/2020).

**Girls and boys:** According to UNICEF, 6.7% of Syrian children and 5% of Palestinian children were engaged in some form of work in 2016. Boys are at higher risk of child labour than girls, except in agriculture, where Syrian refugee girls are the more significant share of full-time child workers. Girls and boys mostly work in the informal economy and risk further exposure to mistreatment, exploitation, and abuse. (Save the Children 2020). Also children of vulnerable Lebanese households are engaged or at risk of child labour.

In 2017, a high percentage of children involved in economic activities was reported in Nabaa neighbourhood, where over 53% of children in Lebanese households and over 60% of children in non-Lebanese households were reported involved rather in economic activities or household chores (the latter not to be considered, however, as child labour) (UN Habitat 2017).

**Forced and early marriage of girls** is the second most common form of gender-based violence in Lebanon. Adolescent girls are at high risk of early marriage with 14% of Syrian girls aged between 14 and 17 years married, compared to 1% of boys. (VASYR 2019). This risk will likely increase given the most recent crises will put increased pressure on many household incomes (IRC 14/08/2020).

Girls and adolescent girls risk dropping out of school during the economic crisis and the competing priorities with girls' education.

### Sexual orientation

Gender equality issues within Lebanon include obstacles in equal access to healthcare for the LGBTIQ+ community.

Achrafieh and the surrounding areas are an important residential area for the LGBTIQ+ community; it is recognised as one of the least homophobic and transphobic areas in Beirut, and is close to LGBTIQ+ organisations. The explosion displaced hundreds of LGBTIQ+ people who will now face high levels of housing discrimination because of their gender or sexual identity (UN Women).

Rights and freedoms of LGBTIQ+ people in Lebanon are often violated as a result of a conservative society and discriminating legal system. In Lebanon, same sex relationships are penalized and lead to imprisonment. LGBTIQ+ people experience institutional discrimination and, sometimes, harassment and abuse in their households, communities, and work environments.

In times of crisis, family and social networks in Lebanon have been of critical importance and a way for women and men to find protection and support. This is not always the case for **LGBTIQ+ people, who often experience rejection and are forced to leave their family homes, leading to marginalisation from their communities.** LGBTIQ+ organisations and community centres in Lebanon are normally a refuge for some people. The economic crisis has overwhelmed these organisations, and with the COVID-19 lockdown measures these services have diminished significantly. With less services available, members of the LGBTIQ+ community are more in need of support from the humanitarian sector (CARE).

### Religious and political affiliation

Lebanon is host to 18 officially acknowledged religious groups<sup>3</sup> and has a well-established sectarian system that has historically played a significant role in the social, political and economic life of the country. Sectarianism and political confessionalism influence many aspects of Lebanese well-being, including aspects of gender equality and family law (CARE 05/2020).

Tensions are often reported between dominant religious groups leading to discrimination or stalemates on issues such as legal status and registration. As political representatives are elected on the basis of their religious affiliation, they serve as de facto representatives of their religious communities, rather than seeking a common national interest. This has a direct impact on minorities, who are seldom represented or considered as a priority (Minority Rights Group International 12/2014).

Compared to the larger Christian, Sunni and Shi'a denominations, many of the smaller religious groups find themselves under-represented or altogether excluded from the country's sectarian power sharing system.

Following the blast and consequent protests against the government, on 30 August Lebanon's President Michel Aoun called for the proclamation of Lebanon as a secular state. This a first step to change the country's political (and perhaps social) system, that later has proved to be inefficient and not representing the population's need and will for change (France 24 31/08/2020).

### Specific vulnerable groups

**Refugees:** Refugees remain one of the most vulnerable groups in Lebanon and report consistent issues with accessing basic services and livelihoods. High poverty rates and unstable employment make refugees particularly vulnerable to economic shocks including the consequences of the explosion.

**At the time of the blast, there were estimated 14,600 refugees within 2.5km and 125,600 refugees within 5km from the explosion** (UNHCR 08/2020). Refugees in affected areas include 10,884 households, namely:

- 1,435 households within 2 kilometres of the explosions' site;
- 2,451 households within the 2-2.5 kilometres' range;
- 5,908 households within the 2.5-3 kilometres' range;
- and, 1,089 households within the 3-4.5 kilometres' range (OCHA 17/08/2020).

As of 14 August, the deaths of 13 refugees were confirmed; 224 refugees were injured, 141 were reported missing 46 reported homeless, and 30 were in urgent need of relocation. (OCHA 17/08/2020). Syrian refugees living in Karantina, relying on the affordable accommodation and proximity to the port for work, are particularly exposed to the intense damage and the impact on their livelihoods.

95% of working Syrians are engaged in the informal sector with no social or legal protection. Refugees are only officially permitted to work in construction and agriculture. Rates of poverty, child labour, child marriage, and other negative coping mechanisms are much higher among the refugees than among Lebanese.

In a 2019 assessment, 78% of Syrian refugees surveyed above the age of 15 did not have legal residency. Their lack of residency has far reaching consequences on all aspects of their life in Lebanon, including challenges in securing housing, accessing livelihoods, and continual risk of arrest and detention. Rates of legal residency are lower among youth and women than middle aged men. Needing to obtain a Lebanese sponsor was the highest reported barrier to regularising their status (VASYR 2019).



Source: VASYR 2019

**Migrant workers:** Between 250,000-400,000 labour migrants live in Lebanon, mostly women from African and Asian countries, predominantly Ethiopia (IOM 7/08/2020). Their rights are tied to the kafala system<sup>1</sup>, with very little to no protection by labour law, putting them at risk of exploitation and abuse with very little power to negotiate or hold their employers accountable (CARE 7/08/2020).

<sup>3</sup> The 18 religious groups are: Alawite, Armenian Catholic, Armenian Orthodox, Assyrian Church of the East, Chaldean Catholic, Coptic Orthodox, Druze, Greek Catholic, Greek Orthodox, Isma'ili, Jewish, Roman Catholic, Maronite, Protestant, Sunni, Shi'a, Syriac Catholic and Syriac Orthodox.

**Many migrant domestic workers lived and worked in households in the affected areas.** Circumstances were already becoming difficult. As poverty increased with the economic crisis, some migrant workers had lost their jobs and were living on the street. Some have been made homeless by the blast. Assessments are attempting to understand how many migrant workers are without a home following the explosions. Embassies and consulates reported that four migrant workers died in the blast and at least 128 were injured. Several individuals remain missing and there is concern they are not being included in the official count of fatalities and people affected by the blast (OCHA 7/08/2020).

**Prior to the explosion, the economic and COVID-19 crises had pushed many migrant workers into unemployment, poverty, and homelessness.** 32% of migrants reported experiencing threats of abuse, violence, exploitation and trafficking. A further 77% reported having no source of income – many lost their jobs since the start of the economic crisis in October 2019 or because of the COVID-19 lockdowns. (IOM 7/08/2020) Abuse of migrant workers and a number of suicide attempts have been reported by the media over the last months, indicating the risk of abuse and exploitation by employers and lack of access to services such as mental health support. Since COVID-19, many workers found themselves unemployment and with no possibility of going back home due to global travel restrictions (IOM 7/08/2020).

**Domestic workers are not protected by labour laws and are excluded from national COVID-19 policy responses such as wage subsidies, unemployment benefits, or social security and social protection measures.** Where access to COVID-19 testing or medical treatment is available, they may not come forward due to fear of detention or deportation, especially those with irregular status or whose residency permit has expired and did not manage to leave the country (CARE 05/2020).

**IDPs as a result of the explosion: an estimated 300,000 people have lost their homes and are displaced** including up to 100,000 children across Greater Beirut. Of those displaced, already vulnerable groups such as children, the elderly, people with disabilities, and chronically ill people are at higher risk of neglect and protection concerns.

In Karantina, 1,000 displaced people, mostly Lebanese, were staying in designated evacuation centres. An estimated 70% of the population has left the area (ACTED). Schools, currently on summer break, have been opened as shelters (UNICEF 6/08/2020).

**Populations with specific needs:** People with disabilities are one of the most vulnerable and socially excluded groups in many crisis-affected communities around the world. They may be hidden in homes, overlooked during needs assessments, and not consulted in the design of programmes. A needs assessment conducted by UNICEF and Women's Refugee Commission in 2017 confirmed that women, children, and youth with disabilities in Lebanon and their caregivers also face a range of GBV-related risks including: child marriage among girls with disabilities, intimate partner violence against women with disabilities, sexual harassment by male community members, and risk of exploitation by family members who forced them to engage in begging on the street.

73% of Syrian refugee households in Lebanon have at least one member with specific needs. Across the Syrian refugee population, 6% of individuals had a disability (visual, hearing, physical, intellectual and/or speech impairment), 14% had a chronic illness, and 15% had a temporary illness (VASyR 2019).

## Negative coping mechanisms

It is too early to clearly identify new coping strategies emerging after the blast. Some behaviours of concern have been observed, such as people remaining in their damaged homes, despite the potential danger posed by the damage and physical integrity of the structures, and the lack of security. Understanding the reasons behind this choice would help determine whether this is an emerging negative coping strategy, e.g., because people affected have no financial means to move elsewhere, or because they need to remain in the area (discussions with operational partners 22/08/2020).

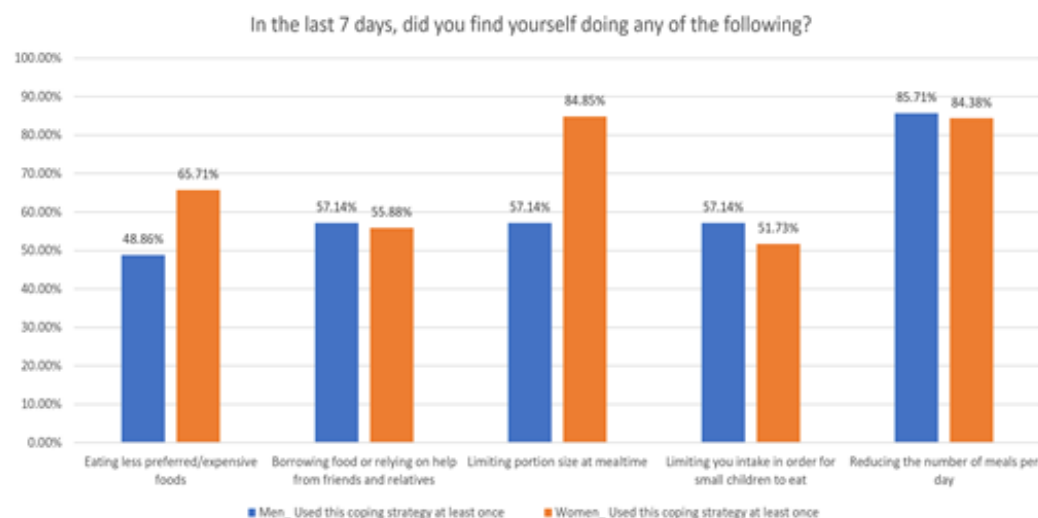
Information regarding coping mechanisms adopted by vulnerable groups before the blast is quite extensive. This data will likely give a good idea of what to expect as households deal with the financial repercussions of the explosion.

## Refugees and host communities

In May 2020, two-thirds of those surveyed by WFP among Syrian, Lebanese, and Palestinian communities had implemented coping strategies to meet their needs. 25% of Syrians had **exhausted their coping capacity**, compared to 19% of Palestinians and 12% of Lebanese (WFP 14/06/2020). This recent research outlines the challenges many households were already facing, and shows that the additional shock comes when some sections of the population are badly equipped to deal with further stress.

**Reducing spending on food items** was the most reported coping strategy for surveyed Syrians, Palestinians, and Lebanese. This is a coping strategy households usually resort to only after they have used up other, less detrimental strategies.

**Spending savings, requesting financial help from family and friends, and taking on debt by taking money out on credit** were also very common coping mechanisms. Syrians were less likely to have savings to spend compared to Palestinians and Lebanese, and more reported to having sent children to work (a particularly concerning coping mechanism) and to have sold domestic assets (WFP 14/06/2020). If the assets sold allowed for the production of marketable goods (e.g. sewing machines, agricultural equipment) and previously provided a guaranteed source of income, a sustainable and long-term solution to the financial difficulties of the households will now be even more out of reach (CGAP 10/02/2020).



Source: WFP 14/06/2020

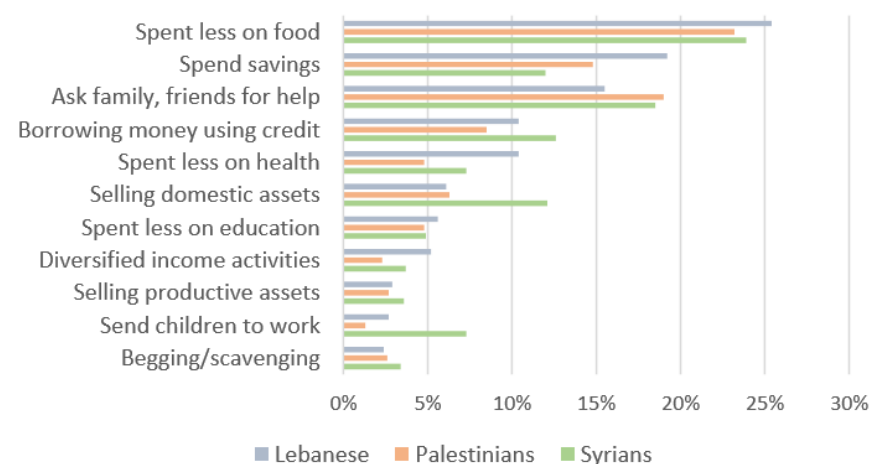
Qualitative research has also revealed that lower income Lebanese and Syrians are **less likely to make use of formal financial services**, using more informal methods to obtain and manage cash such as converting cash to gold, making requests to family and friends, and using informal groups for savings (CGAP 10/02/2020). **Reliance on social networks**, from relatives to acquaintances, emerged as a self-made “social safety net” for Syrians and Palestine Refugees from Syria (PRS) in 2015 (Merits Partnership and Oxfam 2015).

Coping capacities thresholds used in the 2019 Vulnerability Assessment for Syrian Refugees show that **25% of Syrian refugee households in Beirut governorate** were already using **crisis coping strategies**. These included withdrawing children from classes, selling productive assets, child marriage, and restricting expenses for education and health. **11% of households were relying on emergency coping strategies**, such as begging, making school children contribute to income generation, accepting high risk employment, and selling properties in Syria (VASyR 23/12/2019). It is expected that several households’ livelihood coping strategies will move from a crisis to emergency phase following the blast.

## Gender and age differences

Key informants surveyed in May 2020 highlighted how both men and women were adopting **food and nutritional coping strategies to cope with harsh economic conditions**. Both groups most often reported to have **reduced the number of daily meals**. Women were more likely to have restricted portion sizes for meals at least once in the previous week compared to men, who were equally likely to have limited their portion sizes, but women also limited their food intake to guarantee food for their children, and asked for food and help from their social network (CARE 05/2020).

Chart 10: Main livelihood coping strategies applied



Source: CARE 05/2020

**Child labour** has been a household emergency coping mechanism. This is true both in refugee and host communities. Official numbers of working children are likely much lower than actual numbers, with many cases going unreported. In 2016 5% of Palestinian children were engaged in a work activity in some capacity, while the percentage for Lebanese children was slightly higher nationwide (6%) (Inter-Agency Coordination Lebanon 2018, Save the Children 08/04/2020). More recent data regarding Syrian refugees shows that the percentage of children between 5 and 17 years old involved in child labour in Beirut governorate stood at 4% in 2019, a two-percentage point rise compared to 2018. Countrywide, boys are more likely to be involved in labour compared to girls, with a proportion of 4.4% and 0.6%, respectively (VASyR 23/12/2019). The figures for children involved in household chores are considerably lower compared with more visible and public economic activities carried out by minors (VASyR 23/12/2019). This might hint to widespread underreporting of children’s domestic work burden. Amid deepening economic crisis, a rise in child marriage, a crisis coping strategy to decrease financial pressure, was of concern among key informants. In 2019 a survey found that almost **30% of Syrian refugee children between 15 and 19 in Beirut governorate were married** (VASyR 23/12/2019), a six percentage point rise compared to 2018. Parents of school children and university students might also face more difficulties in paying tuition fees as their income is reduced due to job loss and increasing cost of commodities due to inflation (Al Araby 10/03/2020, discussions with operational partners 19/08/2020). As a result, students from poorer families run **a higher risk of dropping out**.

## Community perceptions

Generally, the information-flow within communities is high with a lot of information being spread through social media and community volunteers. There is no vetting of this information however, and concerns are being raised about the accuracy of the information being circulated.

There is a perceived lack of information coming directly from governmental actors, which is further hampered by a general mistrust in information from governmental sources (discussions with operational partners). The potential for rapid spreading of dubious and false and even misleading information is huge.

Access to information during the COVID-19 outbreak varied, with the vast majority of Lebanese and Syrians relying on TV news and social media. Men rely mainly on TV news while women and adolescents' access online media for their information and receive information from NGOs and word of mouth. Women reported they also rely on other family members while 3% of women reported they have no access to information. At the same time, only around 1 out of 3 women have regular access to a private phone (UN Women). This is in line with a technology access report from 2017 which found then that only one third of the female interviewees reported having a phone in their possession (CARE 05/2020).

While a lot needs to be done to have safe access to accurate information in a timely manner, information should be disseminated in a way that allows for people with disabilities such as hearing or visual impairments to be able to access relevant information in an equitable manner. This includes people who may have limited access to technology.

### Community perception on the response to the blast

The aid response is generally being perceived as uncoordinated and poorly targeted. Posts in social media report multiple assessments being conducted on households and emergency aid being delivered multiple times or to persons not in need. Residents seem instead to appreciate the spontaneous solidarity and recovery efforts which were locally mobilised after the explosions, particularly through the work of volunteers (discussions with operational partners 19/08/2020, CS Monitor 12/08/2020). Similarly, multiple sources mention the preference of local communities to receive aid and assistance from Lebanese civil society and other non-governmental sources, fearing corruption and misuse of aid funds at the institutional level (CBC 06/08/2020).

This builds on a more long-term mistrust in the government (The Washington Post 23/10/2020). In a 2019 perception survey 91% of residents believed that corruption was present at state level on a medium to large scale. On the other hand, citizens were suspicious of the institutional appetite for reforms as only about a quarter of respondents believed in medium to large-scale governmental efforts to tackle corruption (Arab Barometer 11/2019).

## Community perception on needs and services

As for 7 August, 70% of the population in Nabaa, Bourj Hammoud, and Karantina did not have access to cash. In addition to this, most shop owners usually hold debts and will not be able to repay them in these areas, which leads to the need of these communities for cash assistance.

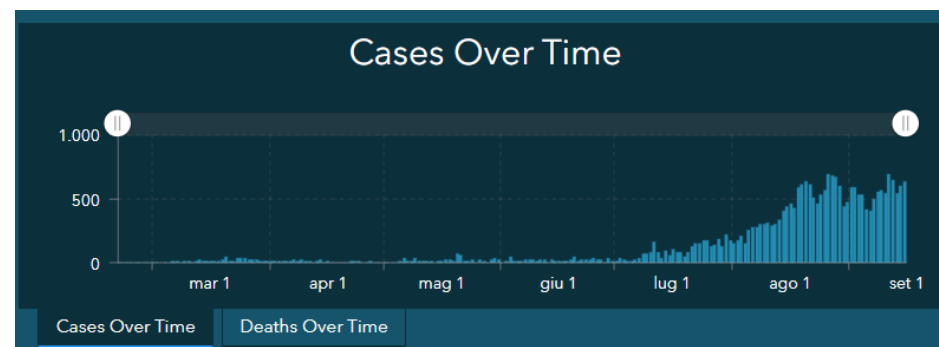
In addition to basic needs for food, cash and in-kind assistance, people clearly expressed concerns about their mental health, particularly, older people and Syrian refugees, according to a joint needs assessment covering 800 people in Baddawi, Bourj Hammoud, Gemmayzeh, Geitawi and Karantina between 11-17 August.

## COVID-19

It is likely that displacement, damage to hospitals and health facilities, the increased strain on Lebanon's health sector, lack of quarantine options and PPE, and lower compliance with COVID-19 safety measures among a population already struggling with multiple challenges will exacerbate the spread of the disease.

Lebanon faced a sharp increase in reported COVID-19 cases in the weeks leading up to the Beirut port explosion. Two-thirds of all confirmed cases in Lebanon occurred during the 30 days leading up to 4 August. The country had recorded a total of 26,083 confirmed cases as of 17 September, with community transmission widely reported. 17 August saw a record with 456 new cases in only one day. Following this, the government of Lebanon announced a two-week lockdown starting from 21 August, with a curfew from 06:00 and 18:00. Bars, gyms, cafes and shopping malls will be closed but groceries shops and restaurants will remain open during the day. Social gathering and events will also be halted (The Daily Star Lebanon 18/08/2020).

### COVID-19 caseload from March to September



Source: Lebanon MoPH, accessed 17 September 2020.

On 4 August, Lebanon's main coronavirus hospital, Rafik Hariri University Hospital, announced that it was on the verge of reaching full capacity in its critical care ward. **Pressure on both public and private hospitals is at an all-level high, with the number of new cases surging rapidly** (ACTED 7/08/2020, OCHA 7/08/2020, Alahed 4/08/2020, MoPH 9/8/2020).

Lebanon reported its first COVID-19 positive case on 23 February 2020. The Lebanese authorities introduced a number of measures to seek to control the disease from 16 March, including movement restrictions, curfews, shop closures and temporary suspensions of flights. These measures will be increasingly difficult to maintain as the country deals with overlapping displacement, health, economic and political crises (CARE 05/2020).

On 25 August, Lebanon's Syndicate of Owners of Restaurants, Cafes, Nightclubs and Pastry shops announced they would defy the lockdown orders, citing the dire economic crisis in the country (The Daily Star 25/08/2020).

Health, shelter, and protection actors are working to increase infection prevention and control measures in response activities, avoid activities involving overcrowding and maintain COVID-19 preventive measures. Shelter actors have put guidelines in place for enumerators conducting needs assessments to try to mitigate against the spread of the virus (discussions with operational actors, 9/08/2020). However, the crisis poses major challenges.

**Displacement** of affected people and overcrowding in the aftermath of the explosions increases the risk of the spread of COVID-19. 300,000 people were displaced by the explosion. Early needs assessments have found that almost all families surveyed in affected areas have taken in friends or relatives, with most households taking in between 2 to 10 additional people (Shelter actors 10/08/2020).

The emergency in Beirut has caused many **COVID-19 precautionary measures to be relaxed**, raising the prospects of even higher transmission rates and larger caseloads in the coming weeks. It is difficult to maintain social distancing and other COVID-19 prevention measures when faced with competing priorities: local clean up and community support initiatives, the need to travel further to access services made more scarce by the destruction, and the daily challenges posed by political and economic upheaval (OCHA 7/08/2020).

**The current crisis has put further strain on a health sector already struggling to cope with the impact of COVID 19.** At least three hospitals have been rendered partially or fully inoperable (WHO 14/08/2020). These facilities previously served 120,000 people. Following the port blast, Rosair, Karantina and Saint George Hospitals were so severely damaged that they had to shut down and send patients to other facilities. Geitawi and Rizk Hospitals were damaged but remain open. Hospitals have been overwhelmed with casualties, with many intensive care units (ICUs) already near their max capacity due to COVID-19. Sixteen primary healthcare centres serving some 160,000 people have sustained some damage. The explosion also destroyed 10 containers of vital PPE at Beirut port (OCHA 7/08/2020, UNICEF 7/08/2020, ACTED 7/08/2020).

Interviews conducted by CARE in May 2020 found that the COVID-19 outbreak and economic crisis in Lebanon has

- Reduced women's access to healthcare, especially sexual and reproductive health (SRHR) care. 42% of interviewed women said they could not access family planning solutions and SRHR services due to COVID-19 and economic difficulties. 83% of them reported that fear of COVID-19 transmission is a barrier for them
- Disproportionately impacted jobs for women, half said they had lost their job compared to 21% of men
- Increased gender-based violence (according to 54% of interviewed women).

54% of women interviewed thought they needed more information about COVID-19, compared to 29% of men, with most women wanting to get their information through social media (CARE 05/2020).

## Economic crisis

**The explosions at Beirut port, which affected several neighbourhoods across the capital, threaten to plunge Lebanon's acute financial, economic, and banking crises deeper. In the absence of an injection of foreign currency into the economy, the value of the Lebanese pound is expected to further depreciate, and hyperinflation to set in.**

The economic outlook is dependent on the nature and extent of the financial aid that has been pledged to Lebanon and how much of that aid will be contingent on the introduction and implementation of reforms, as previously stipulated by the International Monetary Fund (IMF), and other donor countries (IMF 09/08/2020). Some external actors may, however, look to fast-track financial support packages to Lebanon and remove any conditions placed on tangible reforms being carried out, with the onus being placed on providing urgent support to the economy following the events of 4 August.

An August 9 donor conference convened by France raised just under USD 300 million worth of pledges for humanitarian aid. French President Emmanuel Macron said the aid would not be conditioned on "political or institutional reform," while the conference's final communique said the assistance would be "directly delivered to the Lebanese population." Participating donors such as the IMF and the US called for Lebanese authorities to conduct reforms (Reuters 09/08/2020). The US is reportedly concerned any aid routed through the Lebanese government will end up with Hezbollah (Wall Street Journal 26/08/2020). **French President Emmanuel Macron on 1 September said he would host a donor conference in October to rally international aid for rebuilding Beirut as part of his initiative to encourage political and economic reforms in Lebanon** (Al-Jazeera 02/09/2020).

Lebanon launched negotiations with the IMF in May 2020 for an estimated USD 10 billion aid package, however the talks have since stalled. During the August 9 donor conference, IMF managing director Kristalina Georgieva reiterated her institution's demands for Lebanese authorities to conduct reforms before they could unlock billions in aid (IMF 09/08/2020). Meanwhile, an official representing the US, which holds veto power at the IMF, said on August 19 that Washington would not provide any long-term assistance unless Lebanon committed to reforms (US Department of State 19/08/2020). **France has swung into an action with an ambitious roadmap aimed for a new Lebanese government to enact key reforms.** One of the first items of France's initiative is for a new Lebanese cabinet, within two weeks of its formation, to adopt a formal agenda for resuming negotiation with the IMF. **Analysts note this might be difficult to achieve in such a short time-frame, while Lebanon's politicians have yet to form a cabinet as of writing** (Al-Arabiya 03/09/2020, Al-Jazeera 02/09/2020).

**The cost of the damage that the explosions caused to the city's infrastructure is estimated to be around several billions of dollars** (ACAPS). Lebanese President Michel Aoun said that preliminary estimates of the bombing damage exceed USD 15 billion (The Daily Star 13/09/2020). It is not clear, however, whether these estimates factor into the equation the loss of income and livelihoods as a result of the blasts. Economists forecast the explosions could cause a 25% contraction in Lebanon's GDP (Reuters 09/08/2020).

As for the significant destruction that the explosions caused to Beirut Port, this raised immediate concerns over the scale of the impact of loss of functionality of Lebanon's primary port and secondary-effects for the rate of imports for essential commodities into Lebanon and the in-country supply chains. Beirut Port accounts for over 80 percent of Lebanon's imports and exports, and generates a purported USD 250 million per year in port fees (Arabian Business). Lebanon's main port was also a major transit hub.

The damage caused to Beirut Port's grain silos and the port's warehouse capacity is concerning, although officials at Lebanon's second biggest port, in the northern city of Tripoli, are confident that there is enough spare capacity at Tripoli Port and in land to compensate for the damage caused at Beirut Port (Financial Times 10/08/2020). While the Beirut port explosions destroyed docks used to export bulk goods, such as wheat, livestock and metals among others, the container terminal was relatively spared of damage and is still operational (Le Commerce du Levant 18/08/2020). Anger felt toward the political elite predates the outbreak of the prolonged anti-establishment protests in October and the onset of Lebanon's economic meltdown that has taken a heavy toll on large sections of the population. The resignation of the government headed by Hassan Diab is unlikely to satisfy the demand for reform both inside and outside Lebanon (Reuters). The continued political uncertainty and absence of reform that hangs over Lebanon will continue to negatively impact the economy. Foreign currency shortages, the continued

devaluation of the Lebanese pound (LBP or LL, as Lebanese Lira), and rising commodity prices will place the country and its people under immense pressure unless urgent action is taken to address the country's failing economy.

In the immediate wake of the Beirut port explosions, the value of the Lebanese pound on the black market rose to LBP 8100 per USD from LBP 7050 (Lira Rate), with local media attributing the trend to humanitarian aid inflow and measures by Lebanon's central bank (The Daily Star 07/08/2020). Hours after the blasts, the central bank issued a circular for money transfer companies, such as Western Union's authorized dealer OMT, to issue remittances in dollars instead of paying out in Lebanese pounds at a below-market rate of LL 3800 (The Daily Star 07/08/2020). It is unknown how long the central bank will maintain the new remittance instructions. Since February 2019, the central bank has instructed money transfer companies to pay out in Lebanese pounds in order to boost its foreign currency reserves (Al-Mashreq 04/02/2020). In the short term, the inflow of both formal and informal donations and aid could act as a temporary stabilising force on the currency.

Aid transfers into Lebanon, both "informal" philanthropic donations and diaspora support, as well as formal aid flows, have and will continue to face challenges related to **financial service providers** (FSPs) and access to liquidity. Given the instability of the LBP being witnessed in the black market, recipients will by and large prefer to be paid in USD cash rather than LBP or dollar transfers from Lebanese banks. However, liquidity shortages have led to significant delays for FSP and customers trying to access transfers in USD. Lebanese banks may require large transfers to also be paid out at the 3850 rate, although "fresh money" accounts are available. Already there have been reports of insurance companies transferring USD to Lebanese accounts, but Lebanese banks not considering these transfers as "fresh money", but rather ordinary or "loller" accounts, that are only withdrawable in LBP at 3850. Some aid agencies may be required by law to buy LBP through the banking system. It is likely that short term USD cash liquidity issues will be addressed in the coming weeks, as new cash is flown into the country by FSPs to deal with the heightened demand. However, humanitarian organisations should expect logistical delays, especially as the country shifts into a two-week lockdown due to the recent surge in COVID-19 cases.

Lebanon's Syndicate of Owners of Restaurants, Cafes, Nightclubs and Pastry shops, as part of their announced plan to defy the government-mandated lockdown measures in response to the country's dire economic situation, said that it would refuse in future to pay taxes to the government. The food and beverage sector in Lebanon, was already hit hard by the country's economic and financial crises before being beset with additional COVID-19 and explosion-related burdens, with some 785 establishments shutting down between 1 September 2019 and 1 February 2020.

Since October 2019, Lebanon has faced dramatic political and financial challenges which have culminated in an unprecedented economic recession, further compounding existing vulnerabilities among the country's population – Lebanese, migrant workers, and refugees alike. The value of the LBP has tumbled, losing 85% of its value, as of the end of July 2020 (ACTED). As of 26 August, the LBP is at 7,700 against 1 USD (Lira Rate).

According to WFP, the price of the "minimum survival food basket" (consisting of a monthly per capita ration of the amount of food, e.g., rice, bulgur, pasta, white beans, sugar, sunflower oil, salt and canned meat, had already increased by +116% between September 2019 and June 2020 (of which +34% between May and June alone), in a context where the Lebanese pound experienced a sharp depreciation on the parallel foreign exchange market.

On the 2nd of September 2019, Lebanon declared a "state of economic emergency" as a result of the country's long-standing structural problems, including the crippling public debt. The country is suffering from accumulating economic problems which have led to a deep and wide-reaching social, political and economic crisis that led thousands of protestors to the streets on 17th October 2019 (CARE).

The negative trajectory of the Lebanese economy accelerated in the second quarter of 2020 due to the aggravation of a series of interrelated factors. The lack of available foreign currency to meet the demand of importers that include fuel and food importers loomed large with concerns that this would lead to decreased imports and increased shortages of basic commodities. The devaluation of the Lebanese pound, rising commodity prices, rising unemployment, and decreased income was contributing to a sudden and swift reduction in people's purchasing power.

## Political instability

**Governance of Lebanon appears volatile in the short term due to lack of agreement between political leaders with regards to the formation of a new government and when this will take place.** On 10 August, the Lebanese government resigned amid violent protests calling for the change of authority following the explosion. Many people have accused the country's leaders of culpability through their alleged negligence and corruption (BBC 10/08/2020). This has followed a previous resignation of several members of the government and the parliament (TRT World 09/08/2020; CNN 08/08/2020). French President Emmanuel Macron visited Beirut in early September to kick-start a roadmap of reforms to unlock foreign aid after Lebanese politicians agreed on the nomination of Mustapha Adib as the Prime Minister-designate (Washington Post 01/09/2020).

**Analysts warn that Macron's roadmap has gaps and that it will be difficult to achieve key components of it within ambitious deadlines** (Al-Arabiya 03/09/2020). As of time writing, the country's rival political leaders have failed to form a new cabinet by the hoped-for mid-September deadline in Macron's initiative (Reuters 18/09/2020). Negotiations on the cabinet have stalled over the Amal Movement and its allies Hezbollah demanding to name Shiite ministers, with France scrambling to break the impasse and keep Adib from resigning as PM-designate (Reuters 18/09/2020). Power in Lebanon is shared between leaders representing the country's different religious groups, a system coming under criticism from Lebanon's protesters. The outgoing cabinet was formed 84 days after the resignation of its predecessor, one of the quickest government formations in recent Lebanese history.

At the same time Macron is spearheading his roadmap, the US has ramped up its actions against Hezbollah and its political allies. The US on September 8 sanctioned two ex-ministers from political parties allied to Hezbollah, a move interpreted as a message to parties close to Hezbollah to drop their links to the organization (US Treasury Department 08/09/2020; Arab News 10/09/2020). The following week, the US sanctioned a Hezbollah official involved in the organization's construction enterprises (US Treasury Department 17/09/2020). Hezbollah's leader Sayyed Hassan Nasrallah on September 17 said the US sanctions aimed to obstruct efforts to form a cabinet (Reuters 18/09/2020). Even with the formation of a cabinet, future rifts and political crises might emerge within the government or between political leaders amid foreign involvement in Lebanon's political processes.

The Beirut port explosions have already sparked large protests. On August 8, clashes between demonstrators and security forces erupted in central Beirut (ECHO 9/08/2020). **An Amnesty International investigation found that "Lebanese army and security forces, as well as unidentified men in civilian clothes, shot at unarmed crowds,"** during the protests following the Beirut port explosions (Amnesty International). A Human Rights Watch investigation found that Lebanese security forces had used excessive and at times, lethal force, including the use of live ammunition, bird shot and rubber bullets against protesters, leading to hundreds of injuries (Human Rights Watch 26/08/2020).

**Meanwhile, protesters have conducted symbolic acts of a violent nature since the Beirut port explosions.** On August 10, protesters in downtown Beirut burned an effigy of President Michel Aoun hanging from a noose (Bloomberg 10/08/2020). Days earlier, demonstrators set up mock gallows in Downtown Beirut while a popular hashtag on Twitter rallying protesters said "prepare the gallows" (Al Jazeera 09/08/2020).

Lebanon's parliament on August 13 approved a State of Emergency for Beirut, which grants the Lebanese Armed Forces powers over civilian affairs, such as banning gatherings that threaten security, setting curfews, censoring media, and imposing house

arrests (The Daily Star 13/08/2020). On August 17, the State of Emergency, which was first declared by the cabinet in the aftermath of the Beirut port explosions, was extended until September 18, a move heavily criticised by civil rights activists (The Daily Star 17/08/2020). Amid the political negotiations, protests against the political elite, which are likely to continue and involve further violence, potentially leading to unrest. Lebanese authorities called for a two-week lockdown and curfew to stem the spread of the COVID-19 virus, which could decrease protests in the short term.

## Limitations

- This analysis focuses on providing profiles of the areas most affected by the explosion, as well as an overview of pre-existing vulnerabilities among the population and contextual factors aggravating the impact of the explosion. It offers an overarching impression of the difficulties faced by vulnerable groups and needs before and after the blast. It does not provide, or attempt to provide, the level of detail necessary for in-depth planning of sectoral response.
- Owing to lack of clarity around names and boundaries of administrative divisions within Beirut governorate, profiles of areas affected might contain some imprecision, especially the English spelling of cadastres or smaller neighbourhoods, and the exact location of informally or traditionally recognised neighbourhoods within the cadastre.
- In some assessment reports, data collection teams reported signs of stress and disorientation among the assessed population. Although data collectors were generalists and not attempting to diagnose medical conditions, the stress observed may have contributed to overall inconsistencies and gaps in collected data (HelpAge 14/08/2020).

## Information gaps

- Little information is available on the impact of the explosion on vulnerable groups or on negative coping mechanisms people are forced to resort to after the explosion.
- More research is necessary to track increases in SGBV caseload and severe mental health issues.

- An understanding of the impact of the response through a gender perspective is largely missing because of a lack of sex- and age disaggregated data. There is also limited baseline information about LGBTIQ+ people, who are often invisible from statistics and data, making it very hard to measure the impact of the multiple, ongoing crises on them and to plan ways to protect them.
- Up-to-date figures on child labour for Lebanese and Palestinian communities are missing, making future comparisons with baseline data more difficult.
- There is not enough information on the numbers of refugees or migrant workers affected by the explosion. No reliable baseline data showing the numbers of people in these two categories living and working in the direct area of the blast was found. Anecdotal reports suggest that some migrant workers were abandoned by the families they worked for following the explosion, leaving them with no shelter, livelihood, and reportedly often no documentation. More assessments are needed to investigate the scale of needs.
- There is limited information on how the community perceives the response and those involved in it, who they trust, where they get information, and their preferences as they attempt to recover. Lebanese media is increasingly reporting about the proliferation of assessments and response organisations. There are also high levels of anger against government authorities trying to respond to the crisis.
- The 'Underlying Vulnerabilities' section lacks latest assessment findings from some of the potentially most vulnerable neighbourhoods affected by the explosion. 90% of operational zones<sup>4</sup> where the majority of residents are considered poor and 80% of operational zones where all the residents are considered poor have not yet been adequately assessed. Currently it appears that the operational zones with the least-poor residents have been assessed the most (more information on assessments' coverage can be found here). In order to better understand vulnerabilities of affected areas, UN HABITAT Economic Vulnerability map, developed with data collected before the blast, was also used to support this analysis.

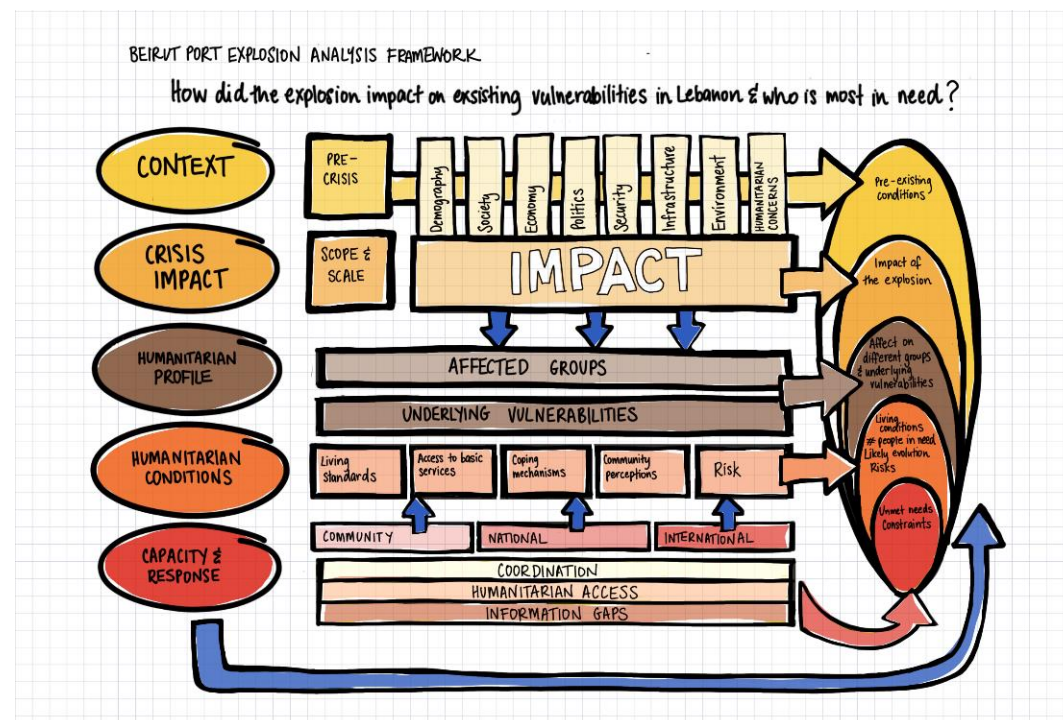
<sup>4</sup> The operational zones were developed to help coordinate relief efforts and facilitate data collection at the operational level. Level 3 Administrative boundaries in Lebanon 'Cadastres' were divided into Zones which can

be defined as a cluster of built-up plots separated by the road network within the Administrative Level 3 – Cadastres of Lebanon.

## Methodology

The conclusions forming the basis of this situation analysis have been reached using a range of complimentary methods:

- Review of secondary data to understand the pre-crisis context, the crisis impact, humanitarian conditions, profile of affected people and response capacity. This built on the Assessment & Analysis Cell secondary data review published 12 August 2020, as well as situation reports published by the UN, humanitarian organisations and media
- Analysis of early data collected from over 4,000 households in 10 cadastres between 7 to 13 August 2020 under the MSNA led by the Lebanese Red Cross (LRC) and
- partners. Data collection is still ongoing and further analysis will be made available at a future date. In this report, the analysis conducted by ACAPS and partners of LRC data was focused on having an overview of the overall needs and conditions of the affected population. More granular analysis is likely to be conducted by the LRC or other partners.
- Regression analysis<sup>5</sup> of this multi sector needs assessment data to identify statistically significant relationships between needs, population groups and areas
- Analysis of needs assessment reports provided by 8 operational agencies
- Two rounds of key informant interviews conducted between 09 to 20 August with 14 humanitarian or development experts living and working in the affected area (4 female, 10 male; 10 Lebanese, 4 expatriates) to gather qualitative information on affected areas, priority sectors and protection concerns and to assist with triangulation of information
- Joint analysis, technical advice and review of key aspects of the report by experts in the Assessment & Analysis (A&A) Cell of the Emergency Operations Centre (EOC), subject matter experts from humanitarian sectors, members of the Lebanon Humanitarian INGO Forum and analysts and academics working on Lebanon



<sup>5</sup> A statistical method that attempts to determine the strength and character of the relationship between one dependent variable (usually denoted by Y) and a series of other variables (known as independent variables)

## About the Assessment & Analysis (A&A) Cell

On 5 August 2020, the United Nations established an Emergency Operations Centre (EOC), led by OCHA and experts from the UN Disaster Assessment and Coordination (UNDAC) team to conduct rapid analysis of the situation on the ground and help coordinate emergency response activities in response to the Beirut Port explosion.

The A&A Cell of the Emergency Operations Centre asked ACAPS and partners MapAction, Mercy Corps, OCHA/UNDAC, REACH, UN Environment and other operational actors, to collate information for a situational analysis. This report aims to provide a summary of existing information on the crisis, the pre-crisis context and underlying vulnerabilities of affected communities to inform response planning and the design of more detailed assessments.

The A&A Cell wishes to thank the Lebanese Red Cross (LRC) and other operational actors who have provided rapid assessment data and information on needs.

The A&A Cell is continuing to gather information on previous and ongoing assessments and maintaining an assessment register accessible to all actors for reference.

As datasets become available from the assessments of operational partners, the A&A Cell aims to conduct further data and gap analysis activities through an analysis framework developed for the Beirut context. Outputs will be shared with all actors, when they come available, to assist in delivering aid and inform on response planning.

The A&A Cell has also developed a remote methodology for key informant interviews which can be used by actors to reduce the reliance on face-to-face interviews, thus useful for the Covid-19 context.

Engagement continues with the municipality of Beirut, the LRC and UN-HABITAT to develop a system that intends to visualise ongoing response activities. The A&A Cell also continues to support the LRC-led multi-sectoral needs assessment.

Partners are encouraged to share any assessments, reports, and datasets with the A&A Cell so they can continue to provide coordinated support.

## Annex I: Profiles of areas affected

Lebanon is divided administratively into three main levels – provinces or governorates (Admin 1), districts (Admin 2), and cadastres (Admin 3).

Districts are divided into municipalities and cadastres (*ahya'*), though municipalities sometimes correspond to districts, as is the case for Beirut, or to cadastres, for instance Bourj Hammoud or Sin El Fil. Cadastres contain smaller areas, traditionally but not administratively recognised as neighbourhoods or sectors (*manatiq*).

Analysis following the explosion is at the cadastre-level as much as possible. The area immediately impacted by the explosion is considered Greater Beirut; this includes Beirut governorate as well as cadastres in Mount Lebanon governorate.

### Greater Beirut

Beirut is the capital city of Lebanon and is also one of the country's eight governorates (*muhafazat*). Administratively, Beirut is a municipality divided into 12 cadastres (Map Action 06/08/2020; Lebanese Arabic Institute). Beirut is a seaport facing the Mediterranean. Before the blast, 85% of all food imports transited through the Beirut port (UN Habitat 10/2011; WFP 06/08/2020).

Beirut as referred to today is often (technically) Greater Beirut, an area including adjacent municipalities such as Bourj Hammoud (in the Metn district of Mount Lebanon governorate), or Furn El Chebbak and Dahiyeh (in Baabda district of Mount Lebanon governorate). Greater Beirut has an estimated population of over two million, almost a third of Lebanon's total population (6.8 million) (The World Bank; The World Bank 30/09/2014). Most of Lebanon's population is concentrated in the coastal areas, particularly in Greater Beirut and Tripoli (North governorate).

**Greater Beirut is a multi-confessional (and multi-faith) and multicultural urban area**, with sharp socioeconomic differences seen across its neighbourhoods and cadastres. Beirut has long been a key commercial and cultural hub. Its urban development, demographic composition, and architecture are the result of cultural and economic exchanges as a result of trade, refugee and migration flows from abroad, and internal displacement caused by conflict (UN Habitat 10/2011). Today, some areas of Greater Beirut are still known for their faith or cultural-based demographic composition. Among them, the (mostly) Christian cadastres of Achrafieh and Medawar, the Armenian municipality of Bourj Hammoud, the (mostly) Shia'a municipality of Burj Al Baranjeh, the (mostly) Christian Maronite district of Baabda, and the (mostly) Sunni area/neighbourhood of Tarik El Jdedeh (Lebanese Arabic Institute). Although these areas are still largely associated with particular religious communities, they are inhabited by a diverse mix of nationalities and religions.

Beirut experienced major reconstruction following the Lebanese Civil War in 1990, and after the 2006 conflict with Israel. Modern buildings are often adjacent to traditional houses, and rich modern neighbourhoods are next to older, poorer areas.

Provision of services, including electricity, and the level of critical infrastructure is not homogenous throughout the city. Disparities are found between the city centre and the suburbs, and among neighbourhoods in the city centre. Some areas host crowded, low income housing, often home to migrant workers, refugees and informal sector workers (e.g., Karantina or Karm El Zeitoun neighbourhoods in Beirut municipality or Nabaa in Bourj Hammoud).

## Profiles of select areas affected by the blast

Ongoing assessments have identified these 'most affected' areas based on the degree of damage to buildings and critical infrastructure, combined with geographical areas of pre-existing vulnerability where residents have less capacity to self-recover or find alternative living arrangements.

Cadastres (and traditionally/informally recognised neighbourhoods) most affected by the blast include:

- **In Beirut governorate:** Saifi cadastre (and, within the cadastre, smaller neighborhoods such as Gemmayzeh); Medawar cadastre (including the traditionally poor neighbourhood of Karantina, or Khodr, and Mar Mikhael); Rmeil cadastre (especially Geitawi); Achrafieh cadastre; Marfaa cadastre (including Nouveau Secteur, also known as Downtown, and Marfaa; Bachoura cadastre (including Basta El Tahta); Zqouq al Blatt cadastre; Mazraa cadastre; Moussaitbeh cadastre; Dar El Mreisseh cadastre; and Minet El Hosn cadastre
- **In Mount Lebanon governorate:** municipalities of Bourj Hammoud, Bauchriyeh, Sin El Fil, Aamaret Chalhoub, Jdaidet El-Matn and Zalqa (all in Metn district)

**Marfaa cadastre (PCODE 10450):** Marfaa neighbourhood, in Marfaa cadastre, is the epicentre of the explosion. It contains the commercial port of Beirut. Marfaa cadastre also includes the neighbourhoods of Majidieh, Nejme, and Nouveau Secteur also known as *centre ville* (downtown). Marfaa cadastre is a business, commercial, and administrative hub, not a major residential area. (BBC 10/08/2020).

Nouveau Secteur is a modern neighbourhood, almost entirely rebuilt following the Lebanese Civil War. The development of Nouveau secteur was undertaken by the Lebanese company Solidaire, with reconstruction works starting in the late 1990s. The administrative centre of the Lebanese capital, the area is home to the Lebanese Parliament in Place de L'Etoile (Nejme Square), Beirut City Hall, and the Grand Serail, head cadastres of the Prime Minister. Nouveau Secteur also hosts a number of diplomatic

buildings including UN offices, as well as monuments, religious buildings, and tourist attractions including art galleries and souks (shopping centres) (Living Lebanon; BBC 10/08/2020; L. Bucciatti-Barakat, Téoros [Online], 25-2 | 2006).

Nouveau Secteur has been the site of protests against the Lebanese government for months, and especially since the blast, accusing it of negligence for leaving the stock of ammonium nitrate without maintenance in the port of Beirut, which possibly led to the explosion (BBC 07/08/2020).

**Medawar cadastre (PCODE 10610):** includes the affected neighbourhoods of Rmeil, Karantina (also known as Khodr), Jisr Hadid, and Mar Mikhael.

- **Karantina** is a poor commercial and semi-industrial neighbourhood, close to Beirut's commercial port. Its population is around 4,638 people, most of whom are income-poor (ACTED 07/08/2020). In early 2000, a study from Greenpeace found Karantina was among the most polluted neighbourhoods in Beirut because of waste producing industrial sites in the area, a slaughterhouse, and waste treatment plant. Both the slaughterhouse and treatment plant no longer exists (The Daily Star 02/11/2004).
- Interviews by the Lebanese Red Cross in Karantina on 13 August, found 82 out of 93 assessed households had no savings and 34 reported having received no income in the past two weeks. 73 out of the 93 reported having a family member with COVID-19 symptoms (LRC Assessment 13/08/2020).
- **Mar Mikhael** is a vibrant residential and commercial neighbourhood of Beirut city. It attracts tourists with its cafes, restaurants, and art galleries. It was close to the blast and reported some damage to houses and commercial buildings. Damages in this important commercial hub, will affect Lebanon's economy (it contains the headquarters of Electricite du Liban and several other prominent companies). Owners of shops, restaurants, and cafés risk not being able to rebuild due to the current financial crisis; this will affect people employed in the restaurant and hospitality businesses there, including many informal workers.

**Achrafieh cadastre (PCODE 10650)** includes Achrafieh, Mar Mitri, Nasra, Corniche El Nar, Hotel Dieu, Sioufi, Adlieh (Plais de Justice), and Ghabi (Karm El Zeitoun) neighbourhoods. Achrafieh is known as the Christian cadastre of Beirut as historically it was populated mainly by Greek Orthodox and Maronite communities. It includes residential neighbourhoods, with several services, cafes, shops and restaurants. Université Saint-Joseph de Beyrouth (one of the main universities in the city) and several other schools and colleges, hospitals, and health clinics are found in Achrafieh. It is one of the oldest cadastres of Beirut, but the few traditional buildings still standing after the civil war are often next to modern constructions and expensive apartments. Damage from the blast,

on top of Lebanon's financial crisis, is affecting service provision in the area (water and sanitation, electricity, education, and healthcare).

- **Gharb** neighbourhood, also known as **Karm El Zeitoun**, unlike most neighbourhoods in Achrafieh is poor, the cost of housing is lower than in the rest of the cadastre. Gharb hosts a number of Syrian refugees who could not afford to rent an apartment elsewhere (ACTED 07/08/2020).

Interviews by the Lebanese Red Cross in Achrafieh on 13 August found 1,808 out of 2,216 households assessed had no savings and 933 had received no income in the past two weeks (LRC Assessment 13/08/2020).

**Saifi cadastre (PCODE 10510)** includes areas commonly known as Gemmayzeh, Mar Maroun and Yesouieh neighbourhoods.

- **Gemmayzeh** is a lively commercial and tourist hub, with bars, restaurants, art galleries, and some residential streets. Gemmayzeh has a population of around 1,668 people. Like Mar Mikhael, the damage to Gemmayzeh will likely affect Lebanon's economy and owners of shops, restaurants, and cafés risk not being able to rebuild their activities due to the current financial crisis, threatening the livelihoods of informal service sector workers who were employed there.

**Rmeil cadastre (PCODE 10550)** is next to Saifi and Medawar cadastres. Traditionally, it includes the neighbourhoods of Mar Nkoula, Hikmeh, Mustashfa El Roum, Geitawi, and Qobayat. Mar Nkoula (Mar Nicolas), Hikme, and Moustashfa El Roum, all of which are particularly densely populated (although clear data on population figures per cadastres or smaller areas is lacking).

- **Geitawi** is a residential neighbourhood. Though not among the neighbourhoods hardest hit by the blast, damage to homes was reported. The Hospital Saint George and Lebanese Hospital of Geitawi are located here. Traditionally Geitawi has been home to Armenian and Lebanese communities, as well as many foreigners.

Interviews by the Lebanese Red Cross on 13 August found 203 out of 483 assessed households in Rmeil had at least one family member needing chronic medication or healthcare (LRC 13/08/2020). Although the numbers are not representative of the needs of the total affected population in Beirut and Rmeil, they indicate that people in Rmeil are likely to need health and protection assistance, including psychosocial support.

**Zqouq al Blatt cadastre (PCODE 10410)** is close to Minet El Hosn and Marfaa cadastres. It was possibly affected by the blast due to its proximity to the explosion. It is a residential area, not densely populated, with 12,669 people living in the traditionally known Serail neighbourhood and around 6,015 in Batrakieh.

**Mazraa and Mousaitbeh cadastres (PCODE Mazraa 10310/PCODE Moussaitbeh 10210)** are commercial areas of Beirut, with some residential buildings. Besides possible damage to houses affecting residents, damage to commercial buildings and roads, telecommunications, and WASH infrastructure risk having an impact on the livelihoods of Lebanese owning and working in businesses in the area.

**Dar El Mreisseh cadastre (PCODE 10110)** includes neighbourhoods or smaller areas traditionally known as Ras Beirut, Ain Mreisseh, and Jamia. It is adjacent to **Minet El Hosn cadastre (PCODE 10250)**. Dar El Mreisseh is a residential area and commercial and touristic hub of Beirut. The blast risks having an impact on businesses in the area.

**Bourj Hammoud municipality and cadastre (PCODE 22111)** is located in the Metn district of Mount Lebanon governorate. Many people consider Bourj Hammoud to be part of Beirut city. It is often known as the Armenian neighbourhood. Bourj Hammoud is characterised by narrow streets and the tangled electric wires that build a net across the municipality buildings. It is a highly densely populated area (116,509 people in 264.53 hectares), and includes the vulnerable neighbourhoods of Nabaa, Arax, Maraache and Adana (ACTED 07/08/2020). Bourj Hammoud hosts at least 10,000 Syrian refugees, many living in Nabaa, as well as thousands of migrant workers. These districts are known for the poor living conditions of their communities. Even before the blast, service provision in Bourj Hammoud was particularly poor, with waste management being one of the main problems (UN HABITAT 03/2017).

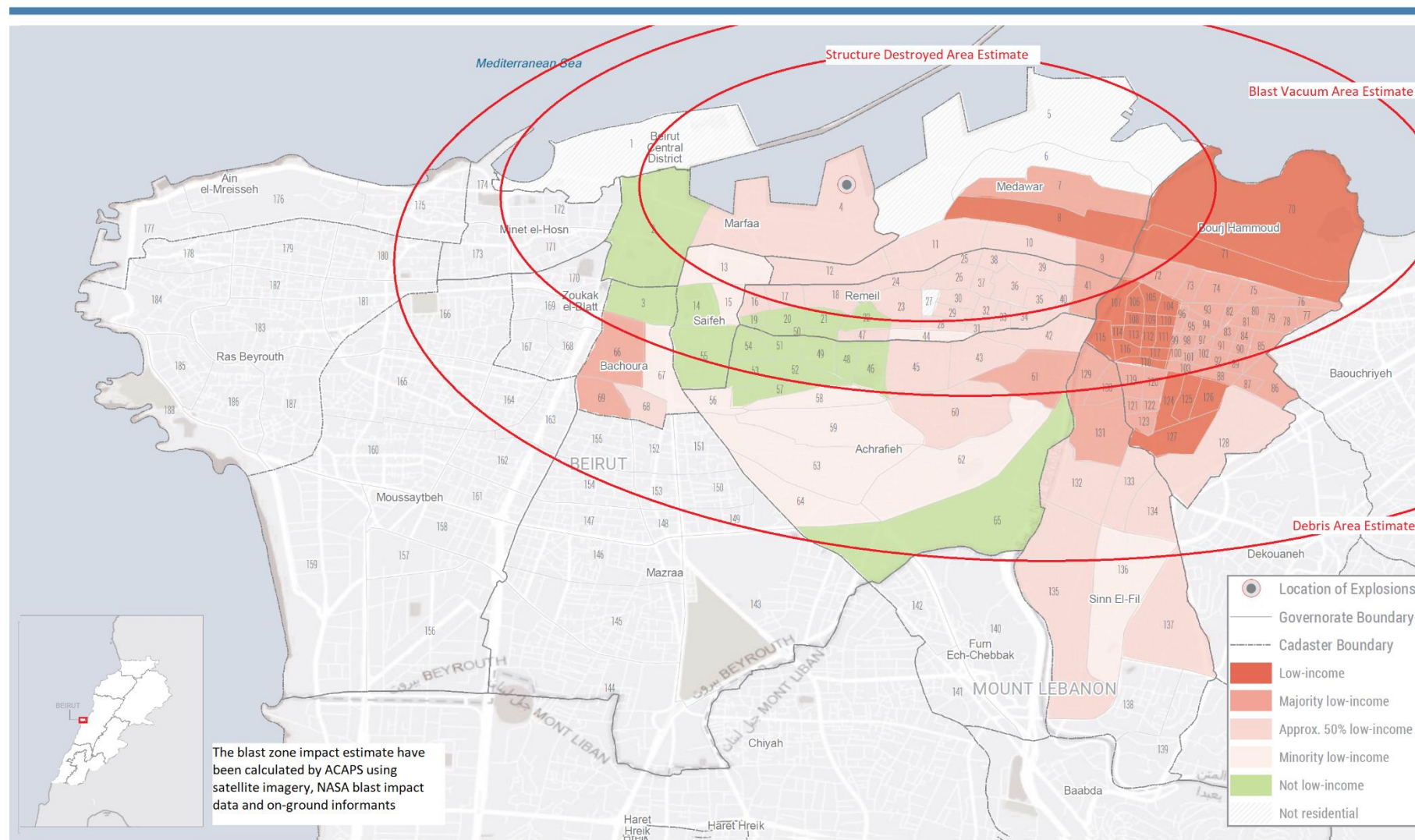
**Sin El Fil municipality and cadastre (PCODE 22155)** is in Metn district of Mount Lebanon, to the south of Bourj Hammoud. It is mainly a residential district but not densely populated as Bourj Hammoud. Sin El Fil is often considered a suburb of Beirut city.

As of 9/4/2020



LEBANON

## OCHA | Beirut : Economic Vulnerability by Operational Zones



The boundaries and names shown and the designations used on this map do not imply official endorsement or acceptance by the United Nations.  
 Creation date: 04 Sep 2020 Sources: OCHA, HDX, UNHABITAT, Govt. of Lebanon, ESRI Feedback: [www.unocha.org](http://www.unocha.org) [www.reliefweb.int](http://www.reliefweb.int)

Source: OCHA, UN HABITAT, ACAPS for the blast zone impact 04/09/2020