



PROFILE OF INTERNAL DISPLACEMENT : LEBANON

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PROFILE SUMMARY

Summary

Summary

During the Lebanese civil war (1975-1990), almost a third of the population, both Christian and Muslim, were displaced at one point. About 450,000 persons had not returned to their former home by the end of the war and today 350,000 are still considered displaced (USCR 2000, p.200 & UNDP 1997). While the civil war ended in 1990, the south of the country remained in the hands of the Christian militia SLA (South Lebanese Army) and of Israeli troops for another ten years. Former residents of the south finally started to return home when Israeli troops withdrew in May 2000. In June 2000, the United Nations confirmed that Israel had completed the withdrawal in accordance with UN SC Resolution 425 (1978). The region remains unstable however, due to violent incidents between the Lebanese guerrilla movement Hezbollah and Israel. The point of discord is the Shebaa farms, an area taken by Israel in 1967 from Syria but now claimed by Lebanon with Syria's approval.

At the beginning of the civil war, displacement of Muslims by Christian militias and of Christians by the Palestine Liberation Organization took place in and around Beirut. In the later phases of the war, many Christians were displaced from the mountainous region of the Shouf (Dammers 1998). Israeli interventions of 1978 and 1982 in Lebanon also caused major displacements (both temporary and long-term). Displacement resulted in resettlement along religious lines, exacerbated economic imbalances and contributed to the disintegration of social ties. The large-scale destruction of towns and villages during the civil war prolonged forced displacement for years after the cessation of military operations (UNDP 1997).

Today, the living conditions of the displaced remain poor in general. Many had their homes destroyed and now live in overcrowded houses with friends or occupy houses illegally (Assaf & El-Fil 7 April 2000). Displaced in makeshift shelters around Beirut are described as the poorest of Lebanese society (USCR 2000). Despite their difficult living conditions, many displaced have not returned due to security concerns and also social and economic considerations. Former neighbors of different religious backgrounds find it difficult to live together again. There are few schools and economic opportunities and infrastructure is destroyed. (UNDP 1997).

This is despite the fact that, since the end of the war, the Lebanese government has put the reintegration of the displaced high on its agenda. Already in 1989, the Charter of National Reconciliation or "Taif Agreement" declared the return of the displaced necessary for reconciliation and sustainable peace. The agreement also acknowledged the right of every Lebanese citizen displaced since 1975 to go back to the place from which

she/he was displaced and pledged financial support to enable the displaced to reconstruct their homes and villages (Assaf & El-Fil 7 April 2000). Two main structures were created in 1993 at the government-level to implement the return of the displaced (Ministry of the Displaced 2001):

- The Ministry of Displaced Persons was established to rehabilitate the infrastructure and housing, improve the economic sector, as well as the education, health and social services, and to achieve national reconciliation.
- The Central Fund of the Displaced was formed to finance the return of the displaced.

According to the Lebanese Institute for Human Rights, the implementation of the first plan of return by the Minister for the Displaced Walid Jumblatt, a former militia leader, was characterized by coordination problems and inconsistencies (Assaf & El-Fil 7 April 2000). His successor stated that the issue of compensation of the displaced needed to be moved away from political and sectarian considerations (Daily Star 24 February 2001). He has set the end of 2001 as the target for the return of all displaced to their homes (Assaf & El-Fil 7 April 2000).

This target seems very ambitious. Only 20% of the people counted as displaced as of the end of the civil war have gone back to their former homes. The government paid squatter families to rebuild their homes but the vast majority of displaced have not reclaimed their property (U.S. DOS February 2001). The Director of the Central Fund for the Displaced recently acknowledged that after 25 years, many displaced persons have become part of a new social context and do not want to go back to their former homes (Daily Star 7 February 2001).

The international community supported the government's efforts with the resettlement the displaced. UNDP strengthened the government's capacity to assist the displaced and promoted reconciliation between the different religious communities (UNDP January 2000, p.25). The Lebanese government, as well as non-governmental organizations, such as the Lebanon Conflict Resolution Network and the US-based Institute of World Affairs, organized informal discussions between members of different religious communities to promote return and reconciliation (U.S. DOS February 2001 & LCRN 2001 & Middle East Institute Newsletter September 2000). Many other NGOs, like Save the Children and Caritas, had programs to assist the returnees (Ministry of Displaced 1998).

The Lebanese government and international donors have recently made a special effort in favor of the south. The government has taken measures to make it easier for owners to rebuild their house in the region, while the European Union works with NGO partners to support the displaced and rehabilitate the region (BBC News 31 May 2000 & Daily Star 15 February 2001 & EC January 2001). Some fear however that as long as instability will plague the south, it will be difficult to attract long-term investment to rebuild the region (Daily Star 20 February 2001).

(June 2001)

CAUSES AND BACKGROUND OF DISPLACEMENT

Background of the conflict

From the Independence of Lebanon to the aftermath of the 1967 Israeli-Arab War (1920-1973)

- Independence of Lebanon was declared in 1941
- The U.S. sent marine troops to re-establish the government's authority in 1958, at the Lebanese government's request
- Following the 1967 Arab-Israeli War, Palestinians used Lebanon as a base for activities against Israel
- Instability of Lebanese government in the context of Palestinian and Israeli attacks on one another

1920 1 September - After the League of Nations grants the mandate for Lebanon and Syria to France, the State of Greater Lebanon is proclaimed. It includes the former autonomous province of Mount Lebanon, plus the provinces of north Lebanon, south Lebanon and the Biqa, historically part of Syria.

1926 23 May - [...] Lebanese Republic is declared.

1940 - Lebanon comes under the control of the Vichy French government.

1941 - After Lebanon is occupied by Free French and British troops in June 1941, independence is declared on 26 November. [...]

1943 December - France agrees to the transfer of power to the Lebanese government with effect from 1 January 1944.

1957 - President Kamil Sham'un accepts the Eisenhower Doctrine, announced in January, which offers US economic and military aid to Middle Eastern countries to counteract Soviet influence in the region.

1958 14 July - Faced with increasing opposition which develops into a civil war, President Sham'un asks the United States to send troops to preserve Lebanon's independence.

1958 15 July - The United States, mindful of Iraq's overthrow of its monarchy, sends marines to re-establish the government's authority.

1967 June - Lebanon plays no active role in the Arab-Israeli war but is to be affected by its aftermath when Palestinians use Lebanon as a base for activities against Israel.

1968 28 December - In retaliation for an attack by two members of the Popular Front for the Liberation of Palestine (PFLP) on an Israeli plane in Athens, Israel raids Beirut airport, destroying 13 civilian planes.

1969 November - The Commander-in-Chief of the Army, Emile Bustani, and Palestine Liberation Organization (PLO) Chairman Yasir Arafat sign an agreement in Cairo which aims to control Palestinian guerrilla activities in Lebanon.

1973 10 April - Israeli commandos raid Beirut and kill three Palestinian leaders, close associates of Arafat. The Lebanese government resigns the next day." (BBC News 7 December 2000)

Beginning of Lebanese Civil War and intervention of Syria and Israel (1975-1982)

- In 1975, clashes between Phalangists and Palestinians marked the beginning of Lebanese civil war and Syrian troops entered Lebanon in 1976 to restore order
- Israel launched a major invasion of Lebanon in 1978 to retaliate against Palestinian attacks and then again in 1982 following an assassination attempt of an Israeli ambassador (Operation Peace for Galilee)
- That same year, the Lebanese president was assassinated, the Phalangist militia killed Palestinians in Sabra and Chatila refugee camps in West Beirut, while Israeli troops occupied that part of the city
- International peacekeeping force then arrived in Lebanon at the government's request

"From 1975 to 1991, Lebanon witnessed persistent internal conflict, fomented by wider regional conflict, which resulted in the fragmentation of the country. In the civil war (1975/6), Maronite-dominated militias and army units fought an alliance of the Palestine Liberation Organization (PLO) and the Lebanese National Movement (LNM), whose constituency was largely among the Lebanese Muslims and Druze. The armed Palestinian presence in Lebanon was a major catalyst for the war. The intervention of Syria, initially on the side of the Christian militias, imposed something of a stalemate, consolidating the cantonization of the country into confessional districts. Syria has remained the dominant force in Lebanon ever since." (Dammers 1998, p.185)

"Civil war begins

1975 13 April - Phalangist gunmen ambush a bus in the Ayn-al-Rummanah district of Beirut, killing 27 of its mainly Palestinian passengers. The Phalangists claim that guerrillas had previously attacked a church in the same district. (These clashes are regarded as the start of the civil war).

1976 June - Syrian troops enter Lebanon to restore peace but also to curb the Palestinians.

1976 October - Following Arab summit meetings in Riyadh and Cairo, a cease-fire is arranged and a predominantly Syrian Arab Deterrent Force (ADF) is established to maintain it.

Israel controls south

1978 14/15 March - In reprisal for a Palestinian attack into its territory, Israel launches a major invasion of Lebanon, occupying land as far north as the Litani River.

1978 19 March - The United Nations Security Council (UNSC) passes Resolution 425, which calls on Israel to withdraw from all Lebanese territory and establishes the United Nations Interim Force in Lebanon (UNIFIL) to confirm the Israeli withdrawal, restore peace and help the Lebanese government re-establish its authority in the area.

1978 - By 13 June Israel hands over territory in southern Lebanon not to UNIFIL but to its proxy mainly Christian Lebanese militia under Maj Sa'd Haddad.

Israel attacks

1982 6 June - Following the attempted assassination of Shlomo Argov, Israeli ambassador to the United Kingdom, Israel launches a full-scale invasion of Lebanon, "Operation Peace for Galilee".

1982 14 September - President-elect, Bashir al-Jumayyil, is assassinated. The following day, Israeli forces occupy West Beirut, and from 16 to 18 September, the Phalangist militia kill Palestinians in Sabra and Shatila refugee camps in West Beirut.

1982 21 September - Bashir's elder brother, Amin al-Jumayyil, is elected president.

1982 24 September - The first contingent of a mainly US, French and Italian peacekeeping force, requested by Lebanon, arrives in Beirut. " (BBC News 7 December 2000)

To view UN Security Council's resolutions 425 and 426 of 19 March 1978, which called upon Israel to cease its military action and withdraw its forces from all Lebanese territory and decided on the establishment of the United Nations Interim Force in Lebanon (UNIFIL), see [[External Link](#)]

Country plagued by violence and instability until the formation of a national unity government (1983-1991)

- In 1983 Israel and Lebanon signed an agreement on Israeli withdrawal and on the establishment of a security zone in the south but Lebanon abrogated it in 1987
- Christian South Lebanese Army continued to operate in the South, with Israel's support
- The Lebanese government was marked by instability: a Prime Minister and a President were assassinated and for a few years, Lebanon had two governments, a Muslim one in West Beirut, and a Christian one in East Beirut
- In 1989, the National Assembly endorsed a Charter of National Reconciliation, known as "the Ta'if agreement"

"Buffer zone set up

1983 17 May - Israel and Lebanon sign an agreement on Israeli withdrawal, ending hostilities and establishing a security region in southern Lebanon.

1983 23 October - Twenty-four US marines and 58 French paratroopers are killed in two bomb explosions in Beirut, responsibility for which is claimed by two militant Shi'i groups.

1985 - By 6 June most Israeli troops withdraw but some remain to support the mainly Christian South Lebanon Army (SLA) led by Maj-Gen Antoine Lahd which operates in a 'security zone' in southern Lebanon. [...]

1987 21 May - Lebanon abrogates the 1969 Cairo agreement with the PLO as well as officially cancelling the 17 May 1983 agreement with Israel.

1987 1 June - After Prime Minister Rashid Karami is killed when a bomb explodes in his helicopter, Salim al-Huss becomes acting prime minister.

Two governments, one country

1988 22 September - When no candidate is elected to succeed him, outgoing President Amin al-Jumayyil appoints a six-member interim military government, composed of three Christians and three Muslims, though the latter refuse to serve. Lebanon now has

two governments - one mainly Muslim in West Beirut, headed by Al-Huss, the other, Christian, in East Beirut, led by the Maronite Commander-in-Chief of the Army, Gen Michel Awn.

1989 14 March - Awn declares a "war of liberation " against the Syrian presence in Lebanon.

1989 28 July - Shaykh Abd-al-Karim Ubayd, Hezbollah leader in Jibshit, is abducted by Israeli forces.

1989 22 October - The National Assembly, meeting in Ta'if, Saudi Arabia, endorses a Charter of National Reconciliation, which reduces the authority of the president by transferring executive power to the cabinet. The National Assembly now has an equal number of Christian and Muslim members instead of the previous six to five ratio.

1989 November - President-elect Rene Mu'awwad is assassinated on 22 November and succeeded by Ilyas al-Hirawi on 24 November. The following day, Salim al-Huss becomes Prime Minister and Gen Emile Lahud replaces Awn as Commander-in-Chief of the Army on 28 November.

Civil war ends

1990 13 October - The Syrian airforce attacks the Presidential Palace at B'abda and Awn takes refuge in the French embassy. This date is regarded as the end of the civil war.

1990 24 December - Umar Karami heads a government of national reconciliation.

1991 - The National Assembly orders the dissolution of all militias by 30 April but Hezbollah is allowed to remain active and the South Lebanon Army (SLA) refuses to disband.

1991 22 May - A Treaty of Brotherhood, Cooperation and Coordination is signed in Damascus by Lebanon and Syria and a Higher Council, co-chaired by their two presidents, is established.

1991 1 July - The Lebanese army defeats the PLO in Sidon so that it now confronts the Israelis and the SLA in Jazzin, north of the so-called "security zone".

1991 26 August - The National Assembly grants an amnesty for all crimes committed during the civil war, 1975-1990. Awn receives a presidential pardon and is allowed to leave for France.

1991 30 October - Lebanon participates in the Middle East Peace Conference launched in Madrid. " (BBC News 7 December 2000)

To view the Lebanese Charter of National Reconciliation (1989) [[External Link](#)]

Israeli troops pulled out of South Lebanon after years of fighting against guerrilla groups in Lebanon (1992-2000)

- On several occasions, Israel launched heavy attacks in Lebanon to end threats against its civilians from Hezbollah, the Popular Front for the Liberation of Palestine and Amal
- In 1996, one of the attacks resulted in the death of over 100 displaced civilians
- In May 2000, Israeli troops withdrew from Lebanon, without the assurance that Lebanon would guarantee the security of Israel's northern border

" **1992** 16 February - Shaykh Abbas al-Musawi, Secretary-General of Hezbollah, is killed when Israeli helicopter gunships attack his motorcade on a road south-east of Sidon
By 17 June all Western hostages held by Shi'i groups have been released.

1992 20 October - After elections in August and September (the first since 1972), Nabih Birri, Secretary-General of the Shi'i Amal organization, becomes speaker of the National Assembly.

1991 31 October - Rafiq al-Hariri, a rich businessman, born in Sidon but with Saudi Arabian nationality, becomes prime minister, heading a cabinet of technocrats.

1993 25 July - Israel attempts to end the threat from Hezbollah and the Popular Front for the Liberation of Palestine-General Command (PFLP-GC) in southern Lebanon by launching "Operation Accountability", the heaviest attack since 1982.

1994 21 May - Mustafa Dib al-Dirani, head of the Believers' Resistance, a breakaway group from the Shi'i Amal organization, is abducted by Israeli commandos from his house in eastern Lebanon.

Israel bombs Beirut

1996 11 April - The start of 'Operation Grapes of Wrath' in which the Israelis bomb Hezbollah bases in southern Lebanon, the southern district of Beirut and the Biqa.

1996 18 April - An Israeli attack on a UN base at Qana results in the death of over 100 Lebanese refugees [displaced civilians] sheltering there.

1996 26 April - The United States negotiates a truce and an "understanding" under which Hezbollah and Palestinian guerrillas agree not to attack civilians in northern Israel, and which recognizes Israel's right to self-defence but also Hezbollah's right to resist the Israeli occupation of southern Lebanon. Lebanon and Syria do not sign the 'understanding' but the Israel-Lebanon Monitoring Group (ILMG), with representatives from the United States, France, Israel, Lebanon and Syria, is established to monitor the truce.

1998 1 April - Israel's inner cabinet votes to accept United Nations Security Council (UNSC) Resolution 425 of 1978 if Lebanon guarantees the security of Israel's northern border. Both Lebanon and Syria reject this condition.

Lahhud is president

1998 24 November - Commander-in-Chief of the Army, Emile Lahhud, is sworn in as president, succeeding Ilyas al-Hirawi.

1998 4 December - Salim al-Huss becomes prime minister heading a cabinet which includes no militia leaders and only two ministers from the previous administration.

1999 3 June - The South Lebanon Army (SLA) completes its withdrawal from the Jazzin salient (north of the 'security zone') occupied since 1985.

2000 5 March - The Israeli cabinet votes for the unilateral withdrawal of Israeli troops from southern Lebanon by July 2000.

2000 18 April - Israel decides to release thirteen Lebanese prisoners held without trial for over 10 years but the detention of Shaykh Abd-al-Karim Ubayd and Mustafa Dib al-Dirani is extended.

2000 24 May - After the collapse of the South Lebanon Army (SLA) and the rapid advance of Hezbollah forces, Israel withdraws its troops from southern Lebanon, more than six weeks before its stated deadline of 7 July.

2000 25 May - Lebanon declares 25 May an annual public holiday to be called "Resistance and Liberation Day." (BBC News 7 December 2000)

Renewed violence in South Lebanon despite withdrawal of Israeli army (2001)

- Lebanese soldiers and police force deployed to former security zone, while the United Nations Interim Forces in Lebanon (UNIFIL) increased its area of operations
- Hezbollah guerrillas were not disarmed and continued to patrol along the border with Israel
- The "Shebaa farms", a group of farms close to the poorly-defined border of Lebanon and Syria, have emerged as a potential new flashpoint for conflict between Israel and Hezbollah
- Lebanese paper warned that instability in the south may discourage investment and slow down reconstruction

"Following the withdrawal [of Israeli troops], the [Lebanese] Government deployed over 1,000 police and soldiers to the former security zone. After the withdrawal, Hizballah guerrillas maintained observation posts and conducted patrols along the border with Israel. The United Nations Interim Forces in Lebanon (UNIFIL) also increased its area of operations following the Israeli withdrawal. Palestinian groups operate autonomously in refugee camps throughout the country. The Government did not attempt to reassert state control over the Palestinian camps or to disarm Hizballah." (U.S. DOS February 2001)

According to the UN Secretary General, "[t]he sequence of steps in Security Council resolution 425 (1978) is clear and logical: the Israeli forces must withdraw, there must be no further hostilities, and the effective authority of the Lebanese Government must be restored. Thereafter, the Government of Israel and Lebanon are to be fully responsible, in accordance with their international obligations, for preventing any hostile acts from their respective territory against that of their neighbour. It is relevant to recall in this connection that both Governments have committed themselves, despite misgivings, to respect the Blue Line established by the United Nations for the purposes of confirming the Israeli withdrawal in accordance with resolution 425 (1978).

I believe that the time has come to establish the state of affairs envisaged in the resolution. This requires, first and foremost, that the Government of Lebanon take effective control of the whole area vacated by Israel last spring and assume its full international responsibilities, including putting an end to the dangerous provocations that have continued on the Blue Line." (UN SC 31 October 2000, para.16-18)

"The Lebanese government has ignored UN requests to send its army to establish security in the area, saying it will not serve as Israel's body guard." (BBC News 3 January 2001)

The Shebaa farms

"A group of farms close to the poorly-defined border of Lebanon and Syria has emerged as a potential new flashpoint for conflict between Israel and Lebanese Muslim guerrillas. The Syrian-backed guerrilla group, Hezbollah, says Israel must withdraw from the area of the Shebaa farms - which it says lies on Lebanese territory - or face continued attacks.

Israel says most of the area lies on the Syrian side of the Lebanon/Syria border and that it will only withdraw from the part marked as Lebanese territory on the United Nations maps. [...]

Timur Goksel, a spokesman for the United Nations Interim Force in Lebanon (UNIFIL), told the BBC that the area amounted to little more than 10 square kilometers. He said no-one disputed that the village of Shebaa itself was in Lebanon, but most of the farms fell into an undefined area that may be either in Lebanon or Syria. [...] [UN Secretary-General Kofi Annan] proposed that all sides should adopt the line drawn after the 1974 Yom Kippur war, pending a permanent delineation of the border. This line forms the limit of the area currently monitored by the UNIFIL forces. [...]

Syria agrees with Lebanon that the Shebaa farms area is part of Lebanon. However, Israel points out that it seized the territory from Syria, during the 1967 Middle East War. Mr. Goksel said: 'The UN is saying that on all maps the UN has been able to find, the farms are seen on the Syrian side.' [...]

Despite Israel's withdrawal of troops from Lebanon, Syria still has 35,000 soldiers in the country, mostly near Beirut, in the north, and in the eastern Bekaa Valley. Analysts say that peace between Hezbollah and Israel would not be in Syria's interests, because it would increase pressure on Damascus to withdraw its forces and slacken its control over Lebanon." (BBC News 25 May 2000)

"Hizbullah is walking a very fine line dividing legitimate attempts to liberate the Shebaa Farms from plunging Lebanon into a renewed cycle of violence. [...]

The Shebaa Farms is a powderkeg waiting for a match. Every time Hizbullah attacks Israeli troops in the disputed area, it is flicking lighted matches at that powder keg. [...]

One can argue the merits for and against trying to liberate the Shebaa Farms. But there is one certainly: the country can ill afford at this juncture to juggle both a resistance campaign with a drive to revitalize the economy and inspire renewed investor confidence in Lebanon." (Daily Star 17 February 2001)

"Since his return to power in November [2000], Hariri has visited several countries to drum up foreign investment to revitalize the moribund economy. However, continued instability in the South threatens to undermine his efforts to encourage new investment. Hariri's dilemma is having to balance his drive to rebuild the economy with what, at times, must seem an incompatible public support for the resistance and its efforts to liberate Shebaa." (Blanford in Daily Star 20 February 2001)

For information on the UN endorsement of Israel's withdrawal from southern Lebanon and the reinforcement of the peacekeeping force, UNIFIL, please see "Background information on UNIFIL" [[External Link](#)]

To view Security Council Resolution 1337 of 30 January 2001 extending UNIFIL's mission for a further period of six months, see [[External Link](#)]

For more information on the conflict between Israel and Lebanese guerrilla movements, as well as possible scenarios for the future, see an October 2000 study by the Center of Strategic and International Studies (CSIS) [[External Link](#)]

For more information on Lebanese guerilla groups – Hisballah and Amal, see A.R. Norton's 1999 report for the Council of Foreign Relations, "Hisballah of Lebanon: Extremist Ideals vs. Mundane Politics" [[External Link](#)]

Background on different ethnic and religious groups (2001)

- Today an estimated 70% of Lebanese are Muslims, while most of the remaining 30% are Christian

"Lebanon has not taken a census since 1932. The 1997 estimated population was 3,111,828, but this figure, provided by the Lebanese government, does not include Palestinian refugees and foreign workers, mainly Syrian. An independent 2000 estimate placed the population at 3,619,971. [...]

About 93 percent of the population are Arab (although many Christian Arabs disclaim Arab ethnicity), 5 percent are Armenian, and the remaining 2 percent of the population belong to Kurdish, Assyrian, or other ethnicities. Among Arabs, about 12 percent are Palestinians, the overwhelming majority of whom live in refugee camps. Palestinian refugees are considered stateless, and their future is uncertain. [...]

The government policy of *confessionalism*, or the grouping of people by religion, plays a critical role in Lebanon's political and social life and has given rise to Lebanon's most persistent and bitter conflicts. At the time of Lebanon's independence in the 1940s, there were more Christians than Muslims. In the following years, many Muslims immigrated to Lebanon and had a higher birthrate than the Christians; as a result, Muslims became the majority group in Lebanon. Today, an estimated 70 percent of Lebanese are Muslim, while most of the remaining 30 percent are Christian. Every person's religion is encoded on a required, government-issued identification card. The government recognizes 17 distinct religious sects: 5 Muslim (Shiite, Sunnite, Druze, Ismailite, and Alawite), 11 Christian (4 Orthodox, 6 Catholic, and 1 Protestant), and Judaism." (Encarta Encyclopedia 2001)

Causes of Displacement

Displacement due to civil war and Israeli interventions (1975-1990)

- First large-scale displacement in 1975 was sparked by clashes between Christians and Muslims
- Israeli interventions of 1978 and 1982 caused massive temporary and long-term displacements
- After 1982, conflicts between Shi'a militias and Palestinians, as well as between Christian and Druze militias caused further displacement, particularly in Mount Lebanon
- Disagreements over the 1989 Ta'if accords caused the eruption of heavy fighting between Christian militias and Syrian troops, and between the militias themselves, and led to extensive displacement

"The first large-scale displacement began in 1975 and was characterized by confessional divisions. A quasi homogeneity of religious affiliation was violently imposed in different regions of the country and the capital was divided into Christian and Muslim sectors. In 1985 the largest and most destructive wave of forced internal migration (displacing an estimated 367,000 people) took place in Mount Lebanon. The displacement occurred in tragic conditions and struck a sever blow to the national unity of the country. Further massive displacement was caused by repeated Israeli invasions. The Israeli military operations in 1978 displaced more than 120,000 persons from the south to Beirut's suburbs where they often illegally occupied vacant houses, hotels and plots of land. The Israeli invasion of 1982 caused a temporary massive wave of displacement especially from the capital. While the withdrawal of Israeli forces from Beirut permitted a significant return movement, their withdrawal from Mount Lebanon was followed by severe internal clashes and further displacement." (Assaf & El-Fil 7 April 2000)

"The Israeli invasion of 1978 displaced about 200,000 Lebanese (mostly Shi'a Muslims) and 65,000 Palestinians from the south of the country. Although most of this displacement was temporary, some became effectively permanent, with many people resettling indefinitely, particularly in the southern suburbs of Beirut. [...] The Israeli invasion of 1982 was on a very much larger scale than in 1978, leading to the occupation of the whole of the southern half of Lebanon, up to and including Beirut. Though primarily against the PLO, the invasion also aimed to restructure Lebanese politics. [...] The war saw further displacements from south Lebanon and from west Beirut, which was besieged for more than two months. [...]

The aftermath of the 1982 invasion saw further conflict, mainly between Shi'a militias and Palestinians (who were increasingly besieged in their camps), as well as between Christian and Druze militias in the mountains east and southeast of Beirut (Bhamdoun, Aley and the Shouf). Massacres and atrocities were committed on all sides. The outcome of the latter conflict in particular was further displacement and cantonization, with many Christians (some of whom had been displaced earlier and had returned after the Israeli invasion) expelled from Druze-dominated areas, and later too from other areas further south. [...]

The fragmentation of Lebanon into confessionally based districts was accompanied by growing Syrian hegemony (except over the border districts controlled by Israel). The Syrians, like the Israelis before them, aimed to reconstitute the country politically, efforts that eventually bore fruit in the Ta'if accords of 1989. A key aspects of these accords was the abolition of the constitutional Christian domination of parliament and state. Though

divided among themselves, many Christian politicians (and the militias under their control) were hostile to Syria and opposed the Ta'if accords. In 1989 and 1990 there was heavy fighting between Christian militias and Syrian troops, and between the militias themselves, leading to further extensive displacement, estimated at about 150,000 people. These displacements were mainly from and within the Christian areas comprising east Beirut and the region to the east and north. The defeat of forces of General Aoun, later followed by the 1992 elections, seemed to many to herald the end of a decade and a half of civil war. Freedom of movement returned to the country, but most of the displaced found they could still not go home." (Dammers 1998, p.185)

Israeli intervention caused massive temporary displacement in 1996

"In April 1996, following Hizballah rocket attacks on northern Israel, Israel launched extensive air raids and rocket attacks on Beirut and on a reported 54 villages in southern Lebanon. Estimates of those displaced, many from Beirut itself, were put at 600,000 by the government, but 400,000 or fewer by most independent sources. An informal cease-fire was declared after 16 days and most of the displaced returned home. Undoubtedly, some stayed on in Beirut or in areas they considered safer, but the long-term impact of such large-scale temporary displacement is not so much the immediate creation of permanent IDPs, as that of accelerating rural-urban drift and depopulation of the south, which has seen neither peace nor stability for more than 20 years." (Dammers 1998, p.187)

For more information on the activities of Israeli military forces and Lebanese guerillas during the escalation of military activities that raged in Lebanon and parts of northern Israel in April 1996, see Human Rights Watch's report of September 1997, "Operation Grapes of Wrath", the Civilian Victims [[External Link](#)]

POPULATION PROFILE AND FIGURES

Global figures

350,000 - 400,000 persons are still displaced within Lebanon (2000)

- The number of displaced diminished only slightly since the end of the civil war, more than ten years ago
- There remained about 70,700 displaced households, mainly from Mount Lebanon governorate, as of 2000, according to the Lebanese government

The number of internally displaced persons is difficult to estimate. A UNDP study stated in 1997 that about 450,000 persons were displaced as of 1995. Other organizations refer to that study for their estimates.

End of Year	Estimated number of IDPs	Source
1999	350,000-400,000	(USCR 2000, p.6)
1998	400,000-450,000	(USCR 1999, p.6)
1997	450,000	(USCR 1998, p.6)
1996	450,000	(USCR 1997, p.6)
1995	450,000	(UNDP 1997)

April 2000: "According to the Ministry of the Displaced there are still 70,735 displaced households. 62 per cent of IDP families are from the governorate of Mount Lebanon and 23.7 per cent from the South." (Assaf & El-Fil 7 April 2000)

Since United Nations Mine Action Service (UNMAS) counts an average of 5.7 persons per families in Lebanon, the 70,735 displaced families would amount to about 400,000 internally displaced persons. (UNMAS 7 June 1999, II 3.b)

Resettlement figures

"The pace of return appeared to remain slow in 1999. Although reliable figures remained scarce, some observers estimated that about 20 percent (90,000 people) of the 450,000 still displaced in 1991 had returned to their former homes between 1991 and 1999." (USCR 2000)

Displacement figures between 1975 and 1991

- Several waves of short and long-term displacement took place during the civil war
- Almost a thousand towns and villages have been affected by displacement

- About 450,000 persons remained displaced at the end of the war

"Since the outbreak of the war in 1975, and up to its end in 1990, 810,000 citizens were affected by waves of forced displacement as follows:

1975 - 1976	300,000 persons
1977 - 1981	150,000 persons
1982 - 1985	200,000 persons
1989 - 1990	160,000 persons

[...]

The number of villages and towns affected [by displacement] numbered 949, of which 174 villages were totally or partially destroyed [...]. The number of destroyed or damaged housing units was 45,020, which further exacerbated the housing problem in Lebanon. (UNDP 1997)

"Lebanon's civil war violently fragmented a pluralistic society into fairly distinct sectarian areas. At the height of the civil war, up to a million people were internally displaced, and many people were often displaced briefly during the war.

When the civil war ended in 1991, some 90,000 families, or about 450,000 persons, were displaced." (USCR 2000, p.200)

Geographical Distribution

UNDP study reported in 1997 that majority of displaced population was from Mount Lebanon

- 62 percent of the displaced were from the Mount Lebanon while 52.7% of the displaced arrived in that governate

Displacement by governorate of origin and destination (as of 1995)

The first two columns of the graph below show where the displaced families where displaced from, while the last two columns indicate where the displaced families were located in 1995

Mohafazat	Displaced families		Arriving families	
	Number	Percent	Number	Percent
Beirut	5,460	7.7	14,274	20.2
Mount Lebanon	43,880	62	37,284	52.7
North Lebanon	2,961	4.2	2,657	3.8
South Lebanon	16,780	23.8	11,152	15.8
Bekaa	1,645	2.3	4,116	5.8
Abroad	-	-	1,243	1.7
Total	70,726	100	70,726	100

Source: Ministry of the Displaced, The Return of the Displaced in Lebanon, 1996 (in Arabic).

(UNDP 1997)

PATTERNS OF DISPLACEMENT

General

Majority of displaced were Muslim early in the war and Christian in later phases (1975-1991)

- In the beginning of the civil war, displacement of Muslims by Christian Militias and of Christians by the Palestine Liberation Organization took place in and around Beirut
- In the later phases of the war, many Christians were displaced from the mountainous region of the Shouf

"Before 1975 many parts of Lebanon had predominant confessional groupings, but settlement patterns were complex and intertwined. The civil war led to the wholesale expulsion of Muslims from regions controlled by Christian militias, and substantial displacement of Christians from regions controlled by the PLO [Palestine Liberation Organization] and the LNM [Lebanese National Movement]. Most of these 'population exchanges' took place in and around Beirut, and probably led to the long-term displacement of between 250,000 and 300,000 people, the great majority Muslims.

The later phases of the war saw many Christians displaced from the Shouf, the mountainous region to the southeast of Beirut. The Bekaa region in the east of the country, and to a lesser extent the north of Lebanon, also saw displacement, largely of Christians to areas controlled by the Christian militias, particularly Zahleh and Beirut. An estimated 650,000 Lebanese left the country altogether during this period (a disproportionate number of them Christian). (Dammers 1998, p.185)

"Displacement was associated with large-scale destruction of villages, towns and housing units, rendering immediate return impossible, and prolonging forced displacement for years after the cessation of military operations." (UNDP 1997)

"Lebanon's civil war caused the violent fragmentation of a pluralistic society into fairly distinct sectarian areas. At the height of the civil war, as many as a million people were internally displaced, and many people were often displaced briefly during the course of the war." (USCR 1997, p.61)

Other factors than security may account for long-term displacement (1997-2000)

- According to UNDP, long-term displacement is not only due to the inability of families to return to their former homes for security reasons, but also due to social and economic considerations

"In the past, the United Nations Development Program (UNDP) has questioned the central assumption underlying the Lebanese government's approach to long-term internal displacement: that the solution to the problem lies in reversing the process and returning the displaced to their former homes. In a 1997 report, UNDP said that the goal of returning the displaced disregards the past 20 years of social and economic changes in Lebanon. UNDP argued that these changes, many the result of rural-to urban migration, would have taken place even in the absence of war." (USCR 2000)

"There is reason to believe that prolonged displacement cannot be explained entirely in terms of the inability of families, for security reasons, to return to the places where they lived before the war. Economic and social considerations have played a role in determining the pace of return.

Displacement produced large-scale demographic shifts resulting in total or partial segregation on religious/sectarian basis. These shifts altered the demographic features of both the areas of origin and areas of destination, affecting in the process the unity of the society and creating real problems at the level of social integration. In addition, the economy suffered from the segregation of the labor market, the increase in the rate of emigration abroad, and the impoverishment of displaced families, reflected in the loss of resources, incomes and jobs; and from the deterioration of conditions affecting housing, education, health care and other services." (UNDP 1997)

PHYSICAL SECURITY & FREEDOM OF MOVEMENT

Right to life and personal security

HRW reported that South Lebanese Army and Israel expelled a number of civilians from the south (1999)

- Human Rights Watch reported that families in South Lebanon have been collectively punished by being expelled for the acts or suspected activities of their relatives
- Alleged activities included participation in attacks on Israeli military, membership in military wings of Hizballah and Amal, desertion from or refusal to serve in South Lebanese Army

"Since 1985, hundreds if not thousands of Lebanese civilians have been ordered to leave their homes and villages without notice and with no means of appeal. They have been summarily dumped in a no man's land without any possessions save the clothes on their backs,' said Hanny Megally, executive director of the Middle East and North Africa division of Human Rights Watch. " (HRW 10 November 1999)

"Human Rights Watch has documented how Lebanese men and boys have been forced to serve in the SLA against their will. Their families have been punished, sometimes with expulsion from their homes in the occupied zone, if they evaded or deserted from service in the SLA militia. [...] Human Rights Watch has documented cases of SLA militiamen and their families living rent-free in the homes of residents who were expelled." (HRW May 2000)

"The use of expulsion as a weapon to punish the civilian population in the occupied zone has received scant attention in Israel and internationally during the two decades that it has quietly made a shambles of the lives of the men, women, and children forced to leave their homes and communities. Human Rights Watch documented cases of individuals and entire families who have been collectively punished by being expelled for the acts or suspected activities of their relatives. These have included admitted or suspected participation in attacks on Israeli military personnel and installations in the zone, membership in the military wings of Lebanese political organizations such as Hizballah and the Amal Movement, refusal to cooperate with the occupation security apparatus, and desertion from or refusal to serve in the SLA.

The expulsions come in the context of Israel's long occupation of part of southern Lebanon, and the ongoing confrontation between Israeli and SLA military forces and Lebanese guerrillas fighting to oust the occupiers. Historically, it is Lebanese territory, which has been the primary stage for this military conflict, and it is in Lebanon where the bulk of the military activity and civilian casualties have occurred. Both sides have carried out indiscriminate attacks on civilians in violation of international humanitarian law. [...]

The expulsions and other forcible transfers of Lebanese civilians from the occupied zone are just one of the methods that the occupation authorities utilize to control the civilian population in that territory and thwart the anti-occupation guerrilla forces. The expulsion of civilians from their homes and villages in the zone, like the indiscriminate attacks launched by both sides, cannot be justified by reference to security threats. International humanitarian law categorically prohibits forcible transfers and deportations, which constitute grave breaches of the Geneva conventions and as such are war crimes. [...]

In villages throughout the occupied zone, members of some families have been hounded for months or years to serve as informers for the ubiquitous security apparatus that is maintained by the occupation authorities through the SLA and with the participation and oversight of Israeli intelligence. For those men and women who refused to succumb to the pressure, expulsion has been a last and punishing resort. [...]

The SLA practice of forced conscription of teenaged boys who live in the zone has also been a long-standing nightmare for families who are opposed to the occupation and despise Israel's surrogate militia. Some families moved out of the zone on their own initiative to ensure that their sons would not be forced into SLA service. Others stayed in their villages but sent their sons out when they reached fourteen or fifteen years of age. According to testimony, children have been forcibly pressed into service." (HRW July 1999, "Summary")

As little information is available on the treatment of displaced persons in other regions, please see the following reports for a general picture of the human rights situation in Lebanon:

Amnesty International, Annual Report 2000, Lebanon [[External Link](#)]

U.S. Department of State (U.S. DOS) February 2001, Lebanon, Country Reports on Human Rights Practices 2000 [[External Link](#)]

SUBSISTENCE NEEDS (HEALTH NUTRITION AND SHELTER)

General

Poor living conditions of the displaced despite government measures (2000)

- During the civil war, the government could not provide the displaced with adequate shelter, security, food and medical care
- The displaced now often live in overcrowded houses while the poorest are in makeshift shelters by rivers
- Ministry of Displaced exempted the displaced from water and electricity fees to improve the condition of the displaced

"During the years of conflict nothing could be done to put a halt to numerous instances of illegal occupation of property. The fragmentation and disintegration of the government and the power of the militias made it impossible to provide IDPs with shelter, security, food and medical care.

The disastrous effects of displacement have had ongoing social and psychological consequences. The fact that large numbers of families have had to live in one house has created tension and conflict. Overcrowding has increased the spread of disease. Drug abuse and delinquency have become prevalent among young people. As moral values have generally deteriorated squatting in somebody else's property has come to be regarded as normal. Indeed, some of the displaced even claim the right to squat as one of their legitimate rights. Illegal occupation of property has implicitly been condoned by political factions." (Assaf & El-Fil 7 April 2000)

"With the cessation of military operations, some 450,000 persons were still displaced comprising 90,000 families, of which 70,000 could be considered genuinely concerned. Among these, 45,000 families were occupying other people's homes and another 12,000 were living in very poor conditions and accommodations." (UNDP 1997)

"Many of the displaced are among the poorest in Lebanese society. The poorest of the homeless, called Muhajjaran, mass along the banks of the Awwali and Zahrani rivers in makeshift shelters in unsanitary conditions. In most cases, however, internally displaced Lebanese have found shelter with friends and families, but often live in overcrowded conditions." (USCR 2000, p.201)

"To relieve the displaced of some of their burdens, [...] the Ministry [of Displaced] has given the displaced statements confirming their 'displaced status'. Such statements are to be submitted to the Ministry of Water & Electricity so that it will exempt them from the fees accruing since the date of their displacement." (Ministry of Displaced 1998, "water & electricity fees")

ISSUES OF SELF-RELIANCE AND PUBLIC PARTICIPATION

General

Political, social, economic and legal consequences of displacement (1997)

- Displacement caused the country to split along religious lines, exacerbated economic imbalances and contributed to the disintegration of social ties
- Illegal occupation of houses and loss of property caused countless legal problems for the displaced

"It is difficult to identify all the negative consequences of displacement at the political, social and economic levels in the immediate and long term. A brief summary of the main consequences of displacement is given below.

At the *political level*, displacement caused the country to split along religious lines, resulting in the loss of identity between geography and the national entity. It also led to greater homogeneity between the sectarian and regional notions, and strengthened the feeling of belonging to the sect/region, which impaired national and social integration.

At the *economic level*, displacement was accompanied by the destruction of productive assets and widespread neglect of agricultural land as farmers - who constituted 55 percent of the heads of displaced families - were denied access to their holdings. The industrial sector sustained direct losses as forced displacement affected the labor force and prevented workers from reaching the work place, especially in large plants which were not relocated, contributing to exacerbate regional and economic imbalances.

At the *social level*, problems emerged in integrating the displaced - who felt alienated as a result of their moving from generally rural socio-cultural surroundings to a different and mostly urban setting in poor housing accommodations - in the societies of receiving areas. The move put severe strain on displaced families especially when displacement was associated with the death of a family member. It also contributed to the disintegration of social ties, lowering of social and moral standards, and in multiplying problems confronting youth.

Studies carried out on the displaced indicate a general deterioration in their living conditions. Their participation in economic activity fell below the national average and unemployment in their ranks increased. They were also exposed to extensive impoverishment, with an estimated 50 percent among them not able to meet their very basic needs; and 12.5 percent living in absolute poverty and unfit accommodations. The standard of education of the displaced population also fell below the national average, with 50 percent and 24 percent of them reported as not having gone beyond elementary and intermediate levels, respectively.

In addition, many *legal problems* arose as a result of the displaced being deprived by force of their property or its exploitation, the unlawful occupation of houses, confiscation of property, disadvantageous contracts, and many other legal disputes at a time when resorting to courts was not possible." (UNDP 1997)

PROPERTY ISSUES

General

The majority of the displaced have not reclaimed or rebuilt former property (2001)

- Large-scale destruction of towns and villages during the civil war prolonged forced displacement
- Government paid squatter families to rebuild their homes but the vast majority of displaced have not reclaimed their property
- Minister of the displaced stated that issue of compensation needs to be moved away from sectarian wrangling and attention focused on reintegrating the displaced
- Government authorities took measures to make it easier for owners to rebuild their house in the south, following the withdrawal of Israeli troops

"Displacement was associated with large-scale destruction of villages, towns and housing units, rendering immediate return impossible, and prolonging forced displacement for years after the cessation of military operations. The number of villages and towns affected numbered 949, of which 174 villages were totally or partially destroyed. The number of destroyed or damaged housing units was 45,020, which further exacerbated the housing problem in Lebanon." (UNDP 1997)

"In 1999 and continuing during the year, the Central Fund for the Displaced paid 13,500 squatter families approximately \$65 million (97.5 billion Lebanese pounds) for the reconstruction and rehabilitation of homes that were damaged during the civil war. Although some persons have begun to reclaim homes abandoned or damaged during the war, the vast majority of displaced persons have not attempted to reclaim and rebuild their property." (U.S. DOS February 2001)

"Housing: This is a big issue in the lives of the displaced. First of all, so many families have lost their homes and are occupying someone else's houses or buildings that are neither inhabitable nor made as residences. The level of housing deteriorated, building codes were violated. In some cases more than one family live together. In essence, buildings are everywhere on others' or public properties, the disorder in communities got out of hand." (Ministry of the Displaced 2001, I, vi)

"The war will not end except after the return of the last displaced person to his land and property," said Helou [Minister of State] [...]. Former Aley MP Marwan Abu Fadel also called for a set plan for the return, coupled with a 'comprehensive development plan that would attach the returning residents to their land.' In his remarks, Minister for the Displaced Marwan Hamade said 'we intend to move the issue of compensation away from sectarian wrangling and ensure integration among residents and those returning to their homes.'" (Daily Star 24 February 2001)

According to a resident of the South of the Lebanon, "although there was no central planning before the construction [of the rebuilt village] began, records of the original property deeds were checked and the owners were permitted to build on their respective plots. He added that the authorities had agreed to waive the \$5,000 fee for a construction license for five years to encourage the rebuilding of the village." (Blanford in Daily Star 15 February 2001)

Displaced persons residing in Beirut had to vacate former homes in return for compensation (1999)

- Displaced families protested that compensation payments were lower than promised originally

"Hundred of residents of Beirut neighborhoods gathered Wednesday at the gates of Speaker Nabih Berri's residence in Ain al-Tineh, demanding a solution to their impending eviction by the Ministry for the displaced.

The displaced families, most of which are originally from the south and occupying residences in Clemenceau, Qantari and Hamra, have been given until the end of the month to sign commitments to vacate their premises in return for compensation. [...]

Under the ministry's 1999-2001 plan to return the displaced, \$5000 is being awarded per housing unit, and \$8,000 in the case of residents of the Israeli-occupied zone, due to their inability to return home.

The eviction orders are long-standing, but have usually been delayed due to the Central Fund for the Displaced's inability to make payments. The protesters were especially incensed that payment levels have been altered, since past payments were calculated per family, and not housing unit. [...]

Austerity measures have required paying on the basis of a housing unit, even if multiple families reside there. [...] One solution suggested was constructing inexpensive housing for the displaced." (Ibrahim in Daily Star 19 August 1999)

PATTERNS OF RETURN AND RESETTLEMENT

General

Displaced for 25 years, many do not want to return to their former homes (2001)

- Director of the Central Fund for the Displaced acknowledged that after 25 years, many displaced persons have become part of a new social context
- Budgetary constraints, destroyed infrastructure, lack of schools and economic opportunities, as well as security concerns also account for slow resettlement process
- According to a UN Mine Action Service 1999 report, the presence landmines in areas of return is not a factor preventing return

"The end of the war provided an opportunity for many Lebanese to return to their homes and villages and to start rebuilding their lives. However, this return has been difficult and the majority of displaced have not been able to resettle." (USAID 17 November 2000)

"Masaad [Shadi Masaad, Director of the Central Fund for the Displaced] said that when appointed fund director in 1999, he was provided with two sets of statistics; one prepared by local religious authorities who said that the rate of return was about 12 percent, and another provided by the Ministry of the Displaced which set the rate at about 35 percent. According to him, both figures 'are equally right and wrong' depending on whether return is defined as the ability to return or the actual process of return.

"The problem is not with the houses and their reconstruction, its much more complicated than that' [Masaad said]. He said it would be naïve to expect people to move back overnight after being away from their villages for over 25 years and after having become part of a new 'social context.' 'We can't expect people to give up their work, their children's schools, and go back to what would be a new environment, especially since we haven't provided any employment alternatives for them,' Masaad said. (Ibrahim in Daily Star 7 February 2001)

"The resettlement process is slowed by tight budgetary constraints, destroyed infrastructure, political feud, the lack of schools and economic opportunities, and the fear that physical security still is incomplete in some parts of the country." (U.S. DOS February 2001)

"[R]eturn has been complicated by the reality that thousands of homes, villages and businesses were destroyed or severely damaged during the war. Electricity, water and telecommunications networks were destroyed, directly affecting 1.5 million people and cutting off potable and irrigation water. The abandonment of communities and farms not only affected economic growth, but resulted in severe environment degradation, urban overcrowding and unemployment." (USAID 1997, "Executive Summary")

According to a 1999 assessment report of United Nations Mine Action Service, "the slow rate of resettlement has nothing to do with the possible presence of mines and UXO [Unexploded Ordnance] or the fear of their perceived presence. The speed of the ministry to repair/rebuild housing, relocate communities, provide new health, education and religious services are the reasons for the slow resettlement rate. It remains to be seen whether those resettled will encounter landmines in their local areas." (UNMAS 7 June 1999, II 3.b)

For more information on the Lebanese plans for the return of the displaced, their implementation and evaluation, please see [\[internal link\]](#)

Evacuation of Israeli troops from South Lebanon prompted former residents to return to the area (2001)

- Lebanese government has difficulty to cope with the number of applications for a return to south Lebanon following the evacuation of Israeli troops

"Israel's unilateral military withdrawal from south Lebanon in May, followed by the rapid collapse of the Israeli-backed militia – the South Lebanon Army (SLA) – marked the abrupt end of over two decades of occupation for the civilian population. Families who had fled violence, intimidation and impoverishment in the occupied zone began to return as well as those whom the SLA had summarily expelled from their homes." (HRW December 2000, "Human Rights Developments)

"[T]he liberation of the South and the possibility of people returning to their homes has eased a lot of the pressure that was a problem last year. The only problem we have to deal with is the scope of the issue', including the processing of applications [Shadi Masaad, Director of the Central Fund for the Displaced said], [...] 'because we are not equipped to deal with the 2,500 applications we receive everyday.'" (Ibrahim in Daily Star 7 February 2001)

Rights of the displaced neglected during return process (1999)

- Prominent Lebanese paper reported that low rate of return was due to the government's poor allocation of funds
- Former head of Ministry of Displaced was accused of abuse of authority and embezzlement by former Prime Minister

"The government has supposedly spent \$800 million during the last nine years to secure the return of the displaced. But in reality, 90 percent of this money was distributed to those who inflicted the displacement and not to the displaced victims themselves.

It is a bizarre equation in which those who killed, tortured, stole and committed all kinds of atrocities against their own people were paid for their crimes, while the victims continue to be ignored and their rights neglected. It is well documented that the regime has abused the displaced and manipulated their dilemma to serve the interests of high-ranking officials and foreign forces. A media war last July between Walid Jumblatt [...] and former Prime Minister Rafik Hariri unveiled many scandals that haunted the displaced citizens. Mr. Hariri, for example accused Mr. Jumblatt of forgery, nepotism, favoritism, abuse of authority and embezzlement. In a press release distributed to the media, Mr. Hariri disclosed documents revealing that Mr. Jumblatt submitted a list of 1,250 families (all loyal to him) who were compensated as inhabitants of Kfar Nabrakh, a village in the Chouf. The village's actual inhabitants number no more than 280 families. [...]

The case of the displaced is being dealt with in accordance to biased criteria, and all funds allocated for the return of the displaced are abused and embezzled by the same leaders who precipitated the dilemma. Only 20 percent of the displaced have been able to return during the last nine years, while the funds haphazardly spent so far were initially estimated to cover the return of all the displaced in Lebanon." (Bejjani in Daily Star 28 January 1999)

The 1989 Taif Agreement declared the return of the displaced necessary for reconciliation and sustainable peace (2000)

- Taif Agreement acknowledged the right of every Lebanese citizen displaced since 1975 to go back to the place from which she/he was displaced
- It also pledged financial support to enable the displaced to reconstruct their homes and villages

"The Document of National Understanding (known as the Taif Agreement after the Saudi city in which Lebanese parliamentarians met to agree it) was signed in 1989. It put an end to the fighting and declared the return of displaced persons a necessary condition for permanent reconciliation and sustainable peace: 'The Lebanese territory is one and undivided land for all the Lebanese people. Every Lebanese citizen has the right to live anywhere on this territory under the sovereignty of law; there is no division, no separation and no settlement of people on the basis of their belonging.

The document sought a just and enduring solution to the dilemma of the displaced. It required the government to 'solve completely the problem of IDPs, and acknowledge the right of every Lebanese citizen displaced since 1975 to come back to the place from which he/she was displaced; to establish the legislation that safeguards this right and ensure the means of reconstruction.'

The Taif Agreement thus stressed not only the right of IDPs to return to their place of original residence but also pledged financial support to enable them to reconstruct their homes and villages. This has always been a major issue in all attempts to put an end to conflict in Lebanon. It was one of the main concerns at the Lausanne Conference in 1984. It was also an important feature of the abortive Tripartite Agreement between militias

under the aegis of Syria, which provided for the return of IDPs within a period of 'three months after the formation of a new Cabinet'.

The right of IDPs to return to their homes was formalized in 1990 through an amendment to the 1926 Constitution. The right of Lebanese citizens to unrestricted freedom of movement and residence in all parts of the country was enshrined in the constitution. An implicit corollary was rejection of any kind of partition of the territory of Lebanon." (Assaf & El-Fil 7 April 2000)

To view the Lebanese Charter of National Reconciliation (i.e. Ta'if Agreement) (1989)
[\[External Link\]](#)

NATIONAL AND INTERNATIONAL RESPONSES

National political response

Ministry of Displaced Persons and Central Fund for the Displaced were created to implement return (2001)

- Ministry was established in 1993 to rehabilitate infrastructure and housing, improve the economic sector, as well as education, health and social services, and to achieve national reconciliation
- The Central Fund of the Displaced was formed in order to finance the return of the displaced
- Another coordinating structure, A'idoun, looked at socio-economic elements necessary for long-term return in cooperation with UN Agencies

Ministry of Displaced Persons

"[T]he direct reasons of the program [of return of the Ministry] are:

Objective 1: To rehabilitate the reconstruction sights in the areas of return

Objective 2: To rehabilitate the infrastructure

Objective 3: Housing

a-Repairing the destroyed houses

b-Rehabilitate the partially destroyed houses

c-To reconstruct the totally destroyed houses

d-To evacuate the illegally occupied houses

Objective 4: Resetting the general services, social and educational services and develop them. Provide educational, health and social services. Support the work of local associations.

Objective 5: To rehabilitate the productive economical sectors

Objective 6: Achieving reconciliation." (Ministry of the Displaced 2001, II, B.)

To view the 4/1/1993 law creating the Lebanese Ministry of Displaced:[[External Link](#)]

Central Fund for the Displaced

"The Central Fund of the Displaced was formed in order to finance the return of the displaced. In addition it is supposed to finance the return, and its security, of the displaced to all the Lebanese areas. It also gives grants and loans for similar reasons. The Fund coordinates with the Ministry in a complementary manner. It handles the following:

-Investigate the cases of illegally occupied houses and making payments for the occupiers.

-Assess technical reports to make compensations for rebuilding

Observe the progress of work and assess the second payment in coordination with the Ministry" (Ministry of the Displaced 2001, II, D.)

A'idoun

"It is a nationally implemented program called, UN Reintegration and SocioEconomic Rehabilitation of the Displaced, in cooperation with UNV's, Ministry of the Displaced, UNDP and UNESCO. [...]"

"A'idoun" program is predetermined to remedy any socio economic need for the return of citizens. In the first stage, building of houses was the goal. The biggest challenge of return is to make it a permanent return, as the residents have spent enough time in the city. The fact remains, would they want to return to the rural life where so many of the living conditions are lacking or have been destroyed. It is obvious that making this return permanent should come from [...] a development program which would support the socio economic duties [...]. [A'idoun] worked in cooperation with UNCHS Habitat [...]." (Ministry of the Displaced 2001, II, D.)

Two successive plans of return and their achievements

- First Minister for the Displaced was former militia leader Walid Jumblatt who had played a role in the largest displacement of population during civil war
- According to Lebanese Institute for Human Rights, implementation of return plan was characterized by coordination problems and inconsistencies
- New Minister for the Displaced, Anwar Khalil, who was appointed at the end of 1998, set the end of 2001 as the target for the return of all IDPs to their homes

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"The IDP question is one of the most pressing and contentious post-war issues and for many years it was highly politicized. Though huge funds have been allocated to resettling the displaced, remedies have generally been both ineffective and unjust. [...]"

Initial plan of return

Following ratification of the Taif Agreement, the Ministry for the Displaced was created to deal with the issue of war-displaced persons and a Central Fund for the Displaced founded to finance projects of return. A range of ministries agreed to contribute to the reconstruction of infrastructure in areas of return. While these initiatives seemed promising, the nomination of the former militia leader Walid Jumblatt as Minister for the Displaced was highly controversial. The same war leader who had played a role in the largest displacement (that from Mount Lebanon) was now given national responsibility for IDP return.

The government estimated that \$400m was needed to cover the return of all the displaced in Lebanon. Figures indicate that although \$800m was spent from 1991 to 1999, only 20 per cent of the displaced were able to return to their villages. Only nine per cent of those

who returned were fully reimbursed for expenditure on house reconstruction, the great majority of returnees having to pay for reconstruction from private funds. Overt and blatant mismanagement and embezzlement of funds led to tension between the former Prime Minister Rafic Hariri, the parliamentary speaker Nabih Berri and the Minister for the Displaced.

Shortcomings of the initial plan

Implementation of the IDP return plan was characterized by deficiencies and inconsistency. There was a lack of coordination between the Ministry for the Displaced and the ministries in charge of infrastructure and social services. Cash payments were made to rebuild and restore houses in regions where the infrastructure and social services were inadequate or non-existent. Elsewhere in areas where such services existed, no restoration or reconstruction payments were available. Some returnees proceeded to rebuild properties without receiving payments while some who received reconstruction grants did not return and spent the money on other things.

The absence of planning and coordination for infrastructure projects was a major impediment to return. Some regions were provided with electricity but not with potable water. Many properties remained inaccessible as feeder roads were not rehabilitated. Insufficient attention was paid to building the socio-economic basis for sustainable return, providing social services and encouraging employment. The participation of NGOs was not encouraged despite their experience and wealth of human resources. Reconciliation and practical measures to restore civil peace and coexistence were not prioritized although of vital importance in those villages which had witnessed violent conflicts before and during the displacement.

The major obstacle to return of IDPs – the illegal occupation of their houses – has primarily been resolved by paying squatters to leave. The level of payment has varied enormously from place to place and for properties of a similar nature. Total expenditure on evacuation has taken a disproportionate 61 per cent of all funds allocated for IDP return in the period 1993-1998. [...]

A new approach

The presidential election in October 1998 and the formation of a new government pledged to put an end to corruption have offered new hope that serious efforts can be made to deal with the issue of the displaced.

Anwar Khalil, the Minister for the Displaced appointed in December 1998, has set a target for the return of all IDPs to their homes by 2001. The Lebanese Cabinet has approved his plan, and allocated \$750m to achieve this goal. The Ministry's initial plan was amended in November 1999 to allow payment to the children of IDPs to enable them to construct or purchase dwellings and to recompense IDPs who have repaired their properties at their own expense. The Ministry is continuing to work on the reconstruction of schools, health centres and places of worship. IDPs have been exempted from paying electricity and water bills while reconstructing their property and some zoning regulations have been waived.

Despite austerity measures resulting from a huge budget deficit, the new government has put the issue of return high on its list of priorities. Shadi Masaad, the new head of the Central Fund for the Displaced, has admitted that most past irregularities were the result of political interference: 'direct orders from politicians or as a result of political accords'. One of the most important aspects of the new approach is the depoliticization of the IDP issue. It is to be hoped that electoral and other political considerations will no longer be the main determining factors when funds are allocated to IDPs.

A large backlog of applications, for evacuation and for reconstruction, remain unprocessed. Statistics on the exact number of returnees are not available. Seventy thousand households are still awaiting reimbursement of money they have spent on reconstruction." (Assaf & El-Fil 7 April 2000)

"Barring major complications, the Central Fund for the Displaced will wrap up its task and close by the end of 2001, according to the fund's director. But Shadi Masaad disclosed during a news conference on Tuesday one of the dark secrets of the drive to return the displaced too much time has passed and too many ties have been irreparably broken to expect a complete return. Although the fund has dealt with over 50 percent of evictions, renovation, and reconstruction, the rate of return is still far below that figure." (Ibrahim in Daily Star 7 February 2001)

For a review by the Lebanese government of its achievements to reintegrate the displaced (1.11.1992 to 31.12.1997), see [\[External Link\]](#)

Government and Lebanese NGO organized reconciliation meetings between Christian and Druze communities (2001)

"During the year [2000], the Ministry of the Displaced sponsored several reconciliation meetings between Christian and Druze residents in eight villages throughout Chouf and Aley." (U.S. DOS February 2001)

"An NGO, the Lebanon Conflict Resolution Network (LCRN), has undertaken a number of activities trying to increase understanding and cooperation between returning members of displaced communities and the communities with which they were in conflict." (Salem 21 March 2001)

"[I]n December 1999, with the help of a strongly committed group of young adults from two Lebanese mountain villages: Rramlieh and Majdel Moosh, LCRN was able to conduct a major groundbreaking workshop on collaborative problem solving and reconciliation. The workshop saw the light after more than three months of pre-training negotiation and good offices with the aim of bridging the gulf that has been separating the two villages for eighteen years as a result of the inter-confessional war. [...] The workshop, which lasted two full days, included dialogue and communication skills, empathy exercises, interpersonal, collaborative negotiation skills as well as a facilitated

dialogue on a joint program of action between the two villages. [...] It is difficult to determine the complete success of the initiative or whether the conflict has been buried beyond resurrection. Preliminary signs, however, are greatly encouraging. The participants have continued working together jointly and have attended several mutual social and religious events - something that the village has not seen in almost two decades." (LCRN 2001)

Lebanese government and donors pledged to rebuild the south following Israeli withdrawal (2000)

- In May 2000, Lebanese PM said that his government would allocate \$60 m in emergency aid to the south
- Kuwait and the Council for the South financed the reconstruction of roads, houses and water network
- As of February 2001, the south had seen an outflow of people rather than an increase in investment

"The Prime Minister, Selim al-Hoss, told the 125 MPs present that his government would make a massive effort to rebuild the south.

Estimates of \$1bn have been put on repairing the damage caused by the long border war fought between resistance guerrillas and Israel and its allied Lebanese militiamen. [...]

Mr Hoss has said that his government 'will work seriously and relentlessly to fulfil the needs of the citizens and their demands to rebuild destroyed or damaged houses and secure water, electricity and roads'.

It has promised to allocate 90bn Lebanese pounds (\$60m) in emergency aid to the region. According to Deputy Prime Minister Michel al-Murr, the first payment of \$33m will be allocated to rebuild destroyed or damaged houses.

A further sum of \$3.3m will pay for restoring electricity within a week, and \$10m more will provide water to 70% of the areas within a month, Mr Murr said. He added that the remaining areas will receive help within three months.

The Islamic Development Bank has lent the country \$100m towards the reconstruction of the south.

The Lebanese parliament has also called for an international donor conference to drum up aid for the region." (BBC News 31 May 2000)

"Within days of the collapse of Israel's occupation last May, groups of former residents of Ain Arab began trickling home after an absence of 23 years. There was little to return to. The once pretty village of single-story houses [...] had been almost completely destroyed. [...]

The construction of the village was largely funded by Kuwait which granted each householder \$20,000 to rebuild their homes, about 60 houses in all. Kuwait is also financing the reconstruction of roads and the installation of a water network.

The Council of the South is providing further funds to rebuild another 70 houses for the offspring of the original inhabitants as well as residents who formerly lived in huts, which have long since disappeared. The pace of construction is stunning. Most buildings are taking little more than three months to complete." (Blanford in Daily Star 15 February 2001)

But the South needs more investment:

"Agriculture is the most important sector in the former occupied zone, employing over 60 percent of the population. [...] Employment options are limited in the South. With the exception of small family-owned quarries, industrial activity is characterized by small- and medium-sized enterprises employing a handful of people each. [...] During the occupation the region was devoid of investment as locals either worked on Israeli farms for a stable and decent wage, or left the area. Since liberation, the area has seen an outflow of people rather than an increase in investment." (Follis & Noueihed in Daily Star 15 February 2001)

To see the Government of Lebanon's website on donors' support, please see [[External Link](#)]

UN Response

UNDP strengthened the government's capacity to assist the displaced and promoted reconciliation (2000)

- UNDP's project was designed to assist the displaced, but it also promoted the idea that reconciliation and investment for socio-economic rehabilitation must include residents of the region, the displaced and the returnees
- The second phase of the project aimed to strengthen the return process and focused on reconciliation efforts

1st phase of the project (1994-1997)

"The UNDP-supported project for the Ministry for Displaced Persons concentrated on strengthening the capacity of the Ministry and, most important, examining the socio-economic needs of displaced persons and promoting reconciliation among displaced persons, returnees and the resident population in Mount Lebanon. The objectives of the project were to: (a) conduct a comprehensive socio-economic needs assessment of returnees; (b) facilitate fund-raising by publicizing the project; and (c) produce several information booklets on technical assistance to assist the returnees.

The project was evaluated in October of 1996. The evaluation showed that in addition to achieving its objectives, the project provided assistance to the displaced persons,

returnees and residents in up to 220 villages in Mount Lebanon and coordinated parallel assistance by donors. Support included training, extension services, promoting awareness, and promoting access to credit for enterprise development. The sectors covered by the project include health, education, environment and agriculture, focusing on assistance to women, youth and vulnerable groups. The projects also built capacity in the Ministry to integrate social and economic issues into its concerns and efforts to promote reconciliation and mobilize assistance for the displaced.

While the project was designed to assist the displaced, it promoted the understanding that reconciliation and investment for socio-economic rehabilitation must include residents of the region as well as the displaced and the returnees to avoid nurturing future hostilities. The project determined that youth would be the key target group that would ensure the sustainability of efforts for reconciliation and development; therefore, it promoted forums, joint activities and dialogue between displaced persons, returnees and resident youth." (UNDP January 2000, p.25)

2nd phase of the project (1998-present)

"The second phase of the programme [which started in 1998] emphasized 'pull geographic areas' with geographic, demographic and socio-economic characteristics that would strengthen the return process. This phase also emphasized interventions and projects that aim at reconciliation and reintegration between the displaced/returnees and residents, especially focusing on the youth.

Within this context, a strategy for the second phase was prepared. This strategy included interventions in the economic sector (agricultural development, handicrafts, small credit and income generation), social sector (education, health, environment, youth, women, and vulnerable groups), and small-scale community infrastructure (agricultural roads, irrigation canals, [...] etc.). In addition, the second phase of the programme focused on reintegration and conflict resolution through youth mobilization in villages." (UNDP, "Reintegration and socio-economic rehabilitation of the displaced ", 2001)

To order the UNDP report on "Reintegration & Socio-Economic Rehabilitation of the Displaced" in Lebanon, please see [\[External Link\]](#)

United Nations Interim Force in Lebanon (UNIFIL) clears mines in South Lebanon (2001)

"At the end of July and in early August UNIFIL redeployed southwards and up to the Blue Line. The redeployment proceeded smoothly, with the Lebanese authorities assisting in securing land and premises for new positions. At the same time, in order to free the capacity needed for the move south, UNIFIL vacated an area in the rear and handed it over to the Lebanese authorities.

The clearance of mines and unexploded ordnance was an important concern, especially in connection with the redeployment. UNIFIL also assisted in humanitarian demining activities and set up an information management system for mine action. In Tyre,

Lebanon, a regional mine action cell was established with the help of the United Nations Mine Action Service, which cooperated closely with the Lebanese national demining office." (United Nations 2001, "UNIFIL Background")

Governments and NGOs Response

The EU works with NGO partners to support the displaced and rehabilitate South Lebanon (2001)

"For the period 1995-99 the principal objectives of EU assistance have been to assist Lebanon's post-war institutional and economic reconstruction. [...] Lebanon has also benefited from humanitarian and rehabilitation programmes directed principally to displaced persons affected by civil war, and for the rehabilitation of South Lebanon." (EC January 2001, pp. 30-31)

For more details on the collaboration between the EU and the Lebanese Ministry of Displaced until 1998, please see [\[External Link\]](#)

In June 2000, the European Commission "approved a 1.21 million Euro humanitarian grant in favour of South Lebanon and West Bekaa. This assistance, managed by the European Community Humanitarian Office (ECHO) will allow non-governmental organisations to implement a humanitarian assistance programme, mainly medical." (EC June 2000)

International NGOs have been active to promote return (2001)

- A US-based NGO, the Institute of World Affairs, organized informal discussions between members of different religious communities to promote return and reconciliation
- Many NGOs had programs of assistance to the returnees

Institute of World Affairs

"Behind the scenes, a US NGO is helping the process [of reconciliation] by organizing the painful but necessary discussion that will lead to what officials hope is a lasting solution despite the obstacles.

'There's no longer any affection in our village,' said [...] a Christian from the Chouf village of Breeh, in a recent reconciliation meeting. 'How can I go back to my village when I know I'll be treated as a second-class citizen?'

Breeh, which is still in an early stage of reconciliation, is considered one of the most difficult of the 20 so-called 'reconciliation villages.' Payments for returning the displaced cannot begin in these villages until an overall reconciliation package is agreed upon by the two sides. Around half have already concluded their reconciliations.

Taking on Breeh's case, and reconciliation efforts in two other villages, is the Washington-based Institute of World Affairs. [...] The project, funded by the US State's Department's Office of International Religious Freedom and the Swiss government, aims to 'promote communal tolerance in these villages by initiating and encouraging local efforts in that direction,' according to director Rita Ayoub. [...]

The project starts reconciliation with an 'intra-community' approach, which involves informal discussions between project coordinators and key Christian and Druze individuals and organizations. 'Those meetings aim to reduce hostility and build confidence among people who have influence in their communities, and to gain insight into issue areas that many will only discuss in private.' Ayoub said. The second step is a 'community dialogue,' which brings residents and displaced together at the project's headquarters in Deir al-Qamar. Citizens from the village first use the meetings to vent frustrations from the war but eventually they move on to bringing the community back together.

'Special emphasis is placed on factors that have kept Christians and Druze from returning to their villages,' Ayoub said.

'Fear and mistrust growing out of violence and isolation, and lack of economic incentives, particularly employment opportunities, are among the issues discussed during these gatherings,' she added.

Based on the outcome of community dialogues, a community relations board is formed - in charge of reconciliation, communication, trust building, dispute resolution, and public education." (Ibrahim in Daily Star 19 February 2001)

The key challenge for IWA in Lebanon "involves bringing displaced persons back from the mountains to stay. The demand is on building up small-scale, yet highly focused, projects in the local communities aimed at reintegrating Lebanese, primarily the youth, back into the community." (Middle East Institute Newsletter September 2000)

For more information on the work of the Institute of World Affairs (IWA) in Lebanon, please see [\[External Link\]](#)

Many NGOs provided assistance to the returnees as of 1998 such as:

Caritas, Catholic Relief Organization, Lebanese Red Cross, Médecins du Monde, Médecins sans Frontières, Mercy Corps, Middle East Council of Churches, Operation Mercy, Oxfam, Pontifical Mission, Save the Children, Terre des Hommes, World Vision International, YMCA (Ministry of Displaced 1998)

ABBREVIATIONS AND ACRONYMS

LIST OF ABBREVIATIONS AND ACRONYMS

ADF	Syrian Arab Deterrent Force
EU	European Union
IDPs	Internally Displaced Persons
ILMG	Israel-Lebanon Monitoring Group
IWA	Institute of World Affairs
LCRN	Lebanon Conflict Resolution Network
LNM	Lebanese National Movement
NGO	Non Governmental Organization
PLO	Palestine Liberation Organization
PFLP	Popular Front for the Liberation of Palestine
SLA	South Lebanese Army
UN	United Nations
UN-Habitat or UNCHS	United Nations Center for Human Settlements
UNDP	United Nations Development Program
UNICEF	United Nations Children's Fund
UNIFIL	United Nations Interim Force in Lebanon
UNMAS	United Nations Mine Action Service
UNSC	United Nations Security Council
UNV	United Nations Volunteers
USCR	U.S. Committee for Refugees

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