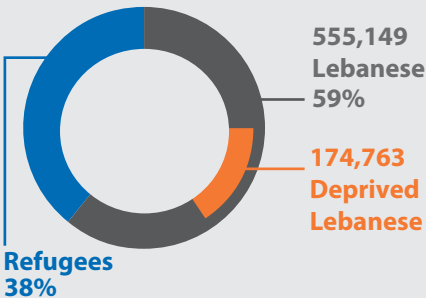


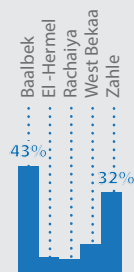
POPULATION OVERVIEW

926,915

People living in Bekaa and Baalbek - El-Hermel Governorates

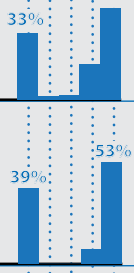


Lebanese



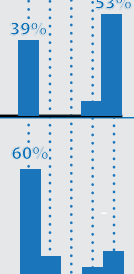
Registered Syrian Refugees

338,577



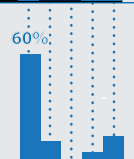
Palestine Refugees

16,863



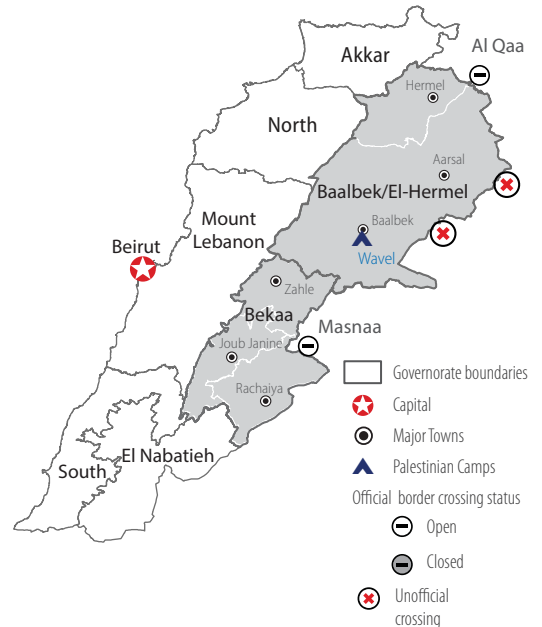
Lebanese returnees

16,326



GENERAL OVERVIEW

The Bekaa valley region is administratively split into two governorates: Baalbek/Hermel (located in the north) and Bekaa (located in the south). Along the Bekaa region lies Lebanon's largest official border crossing with Syria, located in the Masnaa locality. The region is home to 555,149 Lebanese, 23,7 per cent of which are considered deprived, in addition to 338,577 registered Syrian refugees, 16,863 Palestinians and 16,326 Lebanese returnees, as the region makes up the vast majority of Lebanon's 375 km border with Syria. With more than half of its population being refugees, the region is one of the most affected by the Syrian crisis.



Until August 2017, Baalbek's north-eastern border was the site of sporadic armed clashes opposing Lebanese Armed Forces (LAF) and Hezbollah to Islamist Armed Opposition Groups (I/AOG) around the localities of Aarsal, al-Zoueitini, Khreibeh, Qaa and Ras Baalbek. Some border towns were also subject to suicide bombings and Improvised Explosive Devices (IEDs).

This had impacted the humanitarian response as security forces restricted access of humanitarian actors and their operations, enacted Syrian-only curfews, and put hundreds of Syrians under detention in raids on the informal settlements of Ain al-Shaab, Tibeh and Baalbek.

August 2017 marked a significant milestone in the stabilization of the region. Indeed, positions previously held since 2014 by I/AOG Jabhat Fatah al-Sham and ISIS have been cleared by successive operations led by Hezbollah and the Lebanese Armed Forces. Marking the improvement of the security situation, the al-Qaa Jousieh border crossing re-opened in December 2017, after five years of closure. The LAF intermittently conducts military operations against local drug cartels which prevail in some towns, which can seldom lead to unrest.

The sectarian composition of the Bekaa region is mixed: Baalbek/Hermel governorate hosts a predominantly Shiite majority with pockets of Christians and Sunnis; Bekaa governorate hosts a more diverse group of religious sects namely Christians, Sunnis, Shiites and Druze - with no notable majority. Mostly rural, the region's economy relies largely on agricultural production, with accordant employment concentration. 79 UN agencies and NGOs have a presence across the region. Regular inter-agency and sector coordination meetings are held in Zahle, located in Bekaa governorate.

BEKAA	BAALBEK-HERMEL	Total National
Informal Tented Settlements (ITS)		
19,015 Tents	15,894 Tents	46,429
112,314 Syrian Refugees	84,951 Syrian Refugees	262,376
Public Schools		
49 out of 119	41 out of 107	1279
Primary Health Centers		
6 out of 20	3 out of 19	220
Social Development Centers (SDCs)		
6 out of 18	6 out of 18	233
Union of Municipalities/Municipalities		
8/103	10/64	76/1078

HUMANITARIAN & STABILIZATION SITUATION


With 84 per cent of households in Baalbek-Hermel and 77 per cent in Bekaa living under the Survival Minimum Expenditure Basket (US\$ 87), the area witnesses an especially high level of poverty among registered Syrian refugees. This deprivation is combined with significant labor oversupply. The region indeed has amongst the lowest employment-to-population ratios in the country, with 56 per cent of Syrian refugee men not working. A likely consequence is the poor average household monthly per capita income, which ranges between 20 and 30 US\$ in the region, the lowest in all Lebanon.

Competition for lower-skilled jobs, which remains the primary source of tension across all Lebanon¹, is particularly dire in Bekaa, with 92 per cent of respondents identifying it as the primary source of tension between communities, for 62 per cent in Baalbek/Hermel. Nevertheless, 49 per cent of respondents in Bekaa and 34 per cent in Baalbek/Hermel perceive that there are no community tensions².

The Shelter situation is particularly marked by the high prevalence of Informal settlements, which are the most common in Baalbek-Hermel (50 per cent) followed by the Bekaa (38 per cent), which signals dire housing conditions. Overcrowding, which is more prevalent in areas with higher concentrations of informal settlements, is consequently high in the region, as close to half of households live in overcrowded shelters. Over 20 per cent of said refugees in Lebanon are currently residing in one of the Informal Settlements located in the Bekaa region (includes Baalbek/Hermel), of which 48 per cent are located in the Bekaa governorate and 52 per cent in the Baalbek/Hermel governorate².

The region has also been subject to particularly heavy environmental toll. The region is subject to the highest burden on existing solid waste management infrastructure. Available evidence also points out to the region being subject to the highest increases in domestic water demand, wastewater generation, groundwater contamination, due to the region having been subject to a high refugee influx combined with an infrastructure which was facing severe difficulties prior to the crisis. Particularly environmentally vulnerable areas in terms of surface water pollution include Baalbek, Barr Elias, Qabb Elias, Machghara, Saadnayel, Taalbaya, Ghazze due to a high soil infiltration rate³.

Despite a remarkably high proportion of refugees to Lebanese, the PRL community in the region remains small compared to other regions. Indeed, the region hosts 4 per cent of the total PRL population. These live in 10 different groupings, the main one being the Wavel camp, on the outskirts of Baalbek.



Baalbek	10	6		2	10	8	7	7	9	3	6	9
El Hermel	3	2		1	3	2	2	4	2	1	1	2
Rachaya	4	1			6	4	2	5	2	2	1	2
West Bekaa	9			1	8	7	2	10	7	3	4	6
Zahle	8	5		2	9	8	8	11	8	3	5	6

Source: ActivityInfo as of 11/06/2018

* Data not available

79 UN Agencies and partners operating in the area

ABAAD, ACF, ActionAid, ADRA, Al Majmouaa, Al Mithaq, AMEL, Ana Aqra, ANERA, ARCPA, ARCS, AVSI, Avsi-Cesvi, Caritas Lebanon, CISP, DAF, Danish Red Cross/Lebanese Red Cross, Dar El Fatwa, DOT, DRC, FAO, FPSC - Lebanon, GAME, GVC, HelpAge, HI, Himaya, HOOPS, Humedica, ICU, IMC, Injaz, International Alert, Intersos, IOCC, IOM, IR, IR Lebanon, IRC, KAFA, Lebanese Red Cross, LOST, LRI, LSESD, MAG, Magna Lebanon, Makassed, MAP, MAPS, MEDAIR, Medecin du Monde, Mercy Corps, MoSA, Mouvement Social, Nabad, NRC, Order of Malta, OXFAM, RI, SAMS, SAWA Group, SB Overseas, SBO, SCI, SFCG, SIDC, Solidarités, TAAWON, TdH-Italy, TDH-Lausanne, UNDP, UNHCR, UNIDO, UNRWA, URDA, WCH, WFP, WRF, WVI.

Key contacts

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Bekaa Governor: Mr Kamal Abou Jaoude **Baalbek-Hermel Governor:** Mr Bachir Khodr

¹ Regular Perception Surveys on Social Tensions throughout Lebanon Wave II: Narrative Report January 2018, accessible on https://reliefweb.int/sites/reliefweb.int/files/resources/document_41.pdf. Last accessed on 27/07/2018

² VASyR 2017

³ Lebanon Environmental Assessment of the Syrian Conflict & Priority Interventions, MOE/EU/UNDP, 2014