

## LRP Sector Strategy

### Protection Sector

#### 1. Sector Situation & Strategic Direction

##### 1.1. Situation Analysis

In 2025, the Protection Sector in Lebanon navigated significant contextual shifts, notably following the fall of the previous Syrian government in late 2024 and the cessation of hostilities in Lebanon. These developments prompted the gradual return of displaced Syrians to Syria and Internally Displaced Persons (IDPs) to their homes or alternative housing in their area of origin as well as a gradual shift of the Government of Lebanon's directives towards Syrians in the context of return. However, the protection environment remains strained across population groups, particularly in areas affected by ongoing insecurity (such as the southern border and parts of Baalbek-El Hermel) and amid security incidents in some regions in Syria and at the Syrian border. These conditions have contributed to a notable influx of minority groups from Syria into North Lebanon and the Baalbek - El Hermel after December 2024.

Lebanon is party to key human rights instruments, International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights (ICCPR), United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child (UNCRC), International Covenant on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights (ICESCR), Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women (CEDAW), and Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities (CRPD), under which it has committed to protecting the rights of women, children, and other vulnerable or marginalized groups. Yet, this protection environment remains critically strained by a protracted socio-economic crisis, institutional fragility, and regional volatility, which have deepened intercommunal tensions among displaced populations and host communities. These intersecting challenges have significantly affected the ability and capacity of national systems to deliver adequate protection and assistance. Populations at heightened risk include displaced Syrians, post-2024 arrivals from Syria, vulnerable Lebanese, mostly those affected by internal displacement and marginalized groups, Palestinian Refugees from Syria (PRS), Palestine Refugees in Lebanon (PRL), migrant workers, and others. Their exposure to protection risks is further exacerbated by conflict dynamics, reduced humanitarian funding, and pressure on public institutions. Marginalized groups, such as those facing discrimination and stigmatization and denial of equal opportunity to services, including persons with disabilities, older persons, female-headed households, older persons, and adolescent girls and other vulnerable groups with intersecting identities, face compounded vulnerabilities due to entrenched social exclusion, inequitable access to services, and institutional barriers.

##### **Socio-Economic and Conflict-Related Vulnerabilities**

Lebanon continues to face compounding socio-economic and conflict-related challenges that severely impact vulnerable populations. Economic conditions remain dire, with widespread unemployment, inadequate shelter, and limited access to education and essential services. Wages have not kept pace with the devaluation of the local currency, while the cost of living continues to rise. These pressures, coupled with barriers to legal status and limited coping mechanisms, increase exposure to trafficking, exploitative labor, homelessness, substance use, insecurity and different forms of violence. Mental and physical health are deteriorating, particularly among high-risk groups, including displaced populations, refugees or migrants who face unresolved legal status and scarce livelihood opportunities. Simultaneously, ongoing hostilities and attacks from Israeli Defence Forces in southern and border areas have led to displacement, infrastructure destruction, and restricted access to services, deepening instability. Damage to housing, unexploded ordnance, and insecurity hinder return options for IDPs and increase repatriation needs for migrants. Social tensions have intensified due to shifting displacement patterns, reduced humanitarian assistance, and competition over limited resources. These dynamics disproportionately affect women, older persons, adolescent girls, and children, heightening risks of Gender-Based Violence (GBV), neglect by family members

and caregivers, and disrupted education.<sup>1</sup> Those affected by displacement, hostilities and protracted protection situations continue to demonstrate high mental health and psychosocial needs which the sector aims to address by an integrated approach of Mental Health and Psychosocial Support (MHPSS) within specialized protection services such as case management programs. Political, cultural, and religious divisions have exacerbated inter- and intra-communal friction, with reports of harassment, exclusion, and scapegoating. Specifically in the South and the Bekaa, including in Palestine refugee camps, partners witnessed conflict-related barriers and limited humanitarian space due to restrictive measures imposed by different actors often creating additional and often unpredictable operational barriers for humanitarian organizations to operate. Moreover, funding shortfalls have also weakened the capacity of humanitarian partners to provide essential services such as case management, legal aid, psychosocial support, and safe spaces.

### **Protection Risks and Access to Justice**

Lebanon has established national laws and policies to safeguard human rights; however, gaps in implementation and enforcement continue to undermine comprehensive access to protection, particularly for vulnerable groups. Enforcement mechanisms remain inadequate in cases of family violence, where accountability is relatively limited and survivors face barriers to justice. Individuals with irregular legal status continue to face compounded challenges, as many refrain from reporting protection incidents due to concerns related to their legal situation and related fear of protection threats. Displaced Syrians, Palestinian refugees, and migrants with irregular status remain at heightened risk of protection concerns, including restricted mobility, limited access to services and legal remedies. Increasing documentation requirements and other administrative or security measures have contributed to a more constrained protection environment, which may expose individuals to risks such as exploitation, trafficking or family separation. Structural and systemic barriers, including limited resources and services, unaffordable costs, documentation challenges, and social stigma, continue to impede access to justice and essential services. In addition, the decline in funding has significantly impacted on the conditions in prisons and detention facilities, as well as the situation of people deprived of their liberty, with limited capacity of protection actors for effective detention monitoring, leading to cessation of assistance to individuals held in detention, as well as reduced technical support to detention facilities. This funding shortfall exacerbates the routine detention practices applied to displaced Syrians and Palestinian refugees lacking legal residency or valid documentation. Such detention practices have severe impacts on their physical and psychological well-being, in particular children, necessitating responsive measures to mitigate these effects. Structural barriers, including limited resources and services, unaffordable costs, lack of legal status, documentation challenges, and social stigma, continue to hinder access to justice and essential services. According to the preliminary data of the Vulnerability Assessment of Syrian Refugees in Lebanon (VASyR) and Multi Sectoral Needs Assessment (MSNA) 2025, access to legal residency has continued to decrease with a record 83 per cent of displaced Syrians without legal residency, often after many years of stay in Lebanon. This increases their risk of detention, deportation, and limits their access to services, including education. The proportion of migrants without residency is particularly high in Beirut (37%) and Mount Lebanon (44%), the areas hosting the largest migrant populations and highest concentration of families, compounding risks for children, underscoring systemic exclusion and heightened protection risks, including trafficking, also for migrant households. In this context, advocacy for access to the territory to seek safety and protection, legal status regularization, and the principle of non-refoulement remains central to the sector's strategic objectives.

Efforts led by the Ministry of Social Affairs (MoSA), Ministry of Interior and Municipalities (MoIM) and UNHCR on birth registration, in line with the National Action Plan on Birth Registration, to improve birth registration for Syrian children have shown progress, with rates increasing from 28 per cent in 2020 to over 51 per cent in 2025. However, nearly half still lack full civil documentation, increasing the risk of statelessness. For migrants, 7 per cent of children have no birth documentation, and 37 per cent possess only birth notifications, which are not legally recognized. For PRS, access to civil documentation remains severely constrained due

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<sup>1</sup> Protection Sector Lebanon: [Protection Monitoring summary report February - June 2025. Situation of Internally Displaced Persons \(IDPs\) in Lebanon, cross-population.](#)

to restrictive residency policies and administrative barriers, further heightening protection risks and limiting access to essential services. Barriers such as limited procedural awareness, high costs, complex administrative processes, and lack of foundational documents continue to hinder access to legal remedies and documentation renewal across communities.

**GBV remains a widespread protection concern in Lebanon**, with Intimate Partner Violence (IPV) consistently the most reported type of GBV. Women and girls account for 97 per cent of reported GBV cases, reflecting deep-rooted gender inequalities and systemic barriers to safety and justice.<sup>2</sup> Displaced populations, migrants, and domestic workers face heightened risks of trafficking, exploitation, and domestic violence, driven by economic hardship, displacement, and impunity of perpetrators.<sup>3</sup> The ongoing political and economic crises, compounded by escalation of hostilities since October 2023, have intensified violence against women. In some cases, pressure by family members to return to Syria has triggered IPV and other GBV incidents. Substance use is increasingly recognized as both a coping mechanism and a driver of household violence, yet remains under-addressed in GBV programming. Access to GBV services is limited due to geographic coverage, especially in rural and hard-to-reach areas, high costs for forensic doctors, psychologists, translation and insufficient access to safe shelters due to admission criteria. The ongoing reduction in available funding further compounds these challenges, making it increasingly difficult for GBV survivors and those at risk to access timely and life-saving services. Technology-facilitated GBV, such as online harassment, blackmail, and non-consensual image sharing, is rising, particularly among adolescent girls and marginalized groups. In Northern Lebanon, 15 per cent of women and girls using social media report experiencing sexual cyberbullying. Access to justice and GBV services remains limited due to weak judicial systems, restrictive gender norms, and stigma. Marginalized groups, such as women and girls with disabilities, live-in domestic workers, face additional barriers due to physical, communication and systemic barriers, isolation, movement restrictions and limited access to tailored services. Despite efforts by national and humanitarian actors, significant gaps remain in reaching high-risk groups. The sector continues to advocate for stronger legal frameworks, survivor-centered services, and inclusive programming that addresses both immediate needs and structural drivers of GBV.

**Children in Lebanon continue to experience the enduring impacts of escalation of hostilities, displacement, contamination, and socio-economic instability.** Exposure to trauma, loss, and disrupted development remains widespread, particularly among displaced, migrants, IDPs, stateless children, and post 2024 arrivals. Despite advocacy to reduce barriers to education and related waivers issued for children lacking legal residency or civil documentation, the number of children out of school continues to rise. This exclusion significantly heightens risks of child labour including worst form of child labor, child marriage, family separation, neglect, and exploitation. Displaced Syrian, PRL, PRS, and migrant children are disproportionately affected, with persistent challenges in securing legal status and accessing essential services. Widespread poverty and limited access to protective environments continue to drive negative coping mechanisms within families and communities. These dynamics contribute to increased vulnerability to violent parenting, neglect, street-connected children and child labor, family separation, exploitation of adolescent girls and engagement in survival sex, and psychosocial distress, underscoring the urgent need for strengthened Child Protection (CP) systems, inclusive education pathways, and targeted support for high-risk groups.

### **Returns to Syria and Post-2024 Arrivals from Syria**

Geopolitical developments in Syria have led to significant spontaneous returns of displaced Syrians from Lebanon and the region as well as prompted activities in support of organised return. As of 31 October 2025, nearly 336,000 Syrians have crossed back to Syria from Lebanon since the fall of the former regime in Syria.<sup>4</sup> As of September 2025, 118,764 individuals (22,103 families) have expressed interest in returning, with

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<sup>2</sup> GBV WG, GBV IMS Mid-year Report, 2025: accessible: <https://data.unhcr.org/en/documents/details/118910>.

<sup>3</sup> CARE Lebanon, GBV Safety Audit Report on GBV, SRH, and Shelter Accessibility in Lebanon, accessible: <https://data.unhcr.org/fr/documents/download/117198>.

<sup>4</sup> [Syria situation: Crisis Regional Flash Update #51 | UNHCR](#).

projections of up to 400,000 returns by year-end.<sup>5</sup> Voluntary repatriation is expected to continue into 2026, guided by principles of safety, dignity, and informed decision-making. However, against the background of a restrictive protection environment, the Protection sector plays a crucial role in ensuring that potential push factors influencing returns such as administrative measures, decreased access to education and health services as well as the reduction in cash assistance are identified and analyzed as coercive factors influencing decision-making and voluntariness of returns. While decisions for return remain individualised and circumstantial, the Protection sector will also continue to play an active role to ease barriers for return, by clarifying and supporting expediting legal requirements, school transcripts certification, and the provision of return counselling through dedicated partners (see dedicated section on returns for more details).

Simultaneously, Lebanon continues to receive post-December 2024 arrivals from Syria, **with approximately 103,000 individuals**, primarily Syrians, Lebanese and other nationalities, entering the country since the fall of the previous Syrian government. Lack of legal status for post 2024 arrivals, perceived unequal access to services, as well as self-isolation led to limited access to shelter and other services. Physical impairments and compounded mental health needs require critical and specialized interventions. Prioritized interventions will focus on communication with communities and community engagement through mobile and static approaches, providing individual protection interventions, such as case management, psychosocial support and legal assistance, Protection Cash for highly vulnerable individuals to ensure life-saving interventions, individual support to persons with disabilities, women-headed households and referrals to other relevant services.

### Support to enhancing access to National Protection Systems

Despite persistent challenges, Lebanon has made notable progress in strengthening its national protection framework. Advancements include improvements in civil documentation, such as increased access of children to birth registration, migrant regularization, and the development of several national Standard Operating Procedures (SOPs), policies and guidelines to strengthen the legal and social protection frameworks. The adoption of key national strategies and SOPs, including the National Social Protection Strategy, the Strategy for the Rights and Inclusion of Persons with Disabilities, the Action Plan on Child Marriage (2023–2030), the revised version of the Child Protection Case Management SOPs, the National Strategy for Older Persons (2020–2030) and its implementation plan, the SOPs for the Identification, Assistance and Protection of Victims of Trafficking, demonstrates growing commitment to institutional reform, inter-ministerial referral modalities and rights-based approaches. Efforts to reinforce social protection mechanisms, such as the enrolment into the AMAN programme and the National Disability Allowance, reflect early momentum toward inclusive service delivery. However, gaps in legal identity and services, access to residency permits, and welfare capacity persist, and many vulnerable groups remain reliant on humanitarian and civil society actors. Continued investment and technical support are essential to reinforce these foundations, strengthen implementation capacity, and support a transition toward nationally-led protection responses.

Protection sector partners are engaged in supporting safe, dignified, and informed repatriation, while maintaining a strong protection presence for those unable or unwilling to return. Additional risks remain around high socio-economic constraints, instability, escalation of hostilities, as well as lack of adequate protective legal framework for the different affected population groups that contribute to heightened vulnerability, protection risks and reliance on protection services delivered by sector partners.

## 1.2. Prioritization

Prioritization aims to maintain critical protection interventions, while focusing on long-term sustainability and is informed by the **severity of risks, service availability, access constraints, and the impact of reduced and unpredictable funding**. In alignment with the June [2025 Prioritization Note](#), the Protection

<sup>5</sup> Document - Lebanon - Syrian Returns & Movements Snapshot 30 September 2025: <https://data.unhcr.org/en/documents/details/119200>

Working Group (PWG) will utilize geographical severity mapping to prioritize areas of intervention. These areas include those impacted by displacement, influx of post-2024 arrivals<sup>6</sup> or high number of displaced vs host community population, and will include the following protection interventions:

- South: focus on enhancing access to protection, GBV and CP services for IDPs.
- North, Akkar and Bekaa and Baalbek El Hermel: focus on highly vulnerable Lebanese, displaced Syrians, and post-2024 arrivals from Syria.
- Beirut and Mount Lebanon: maintaining access to available quality services across population groups targeting most vulnerable and marginalized groups.

Core strategic priorities for 2026 include:

- Sustaining and strengthening protection case management services and access to social protection schemes for individuals at heightened risk, including persons with disabilities, older persons without support, women-headed households and other women at risk, children at risk and others facing intersecting vulnerabilities, to ensure continued access to lifesaving, survivor-centered, and rights-based support.
- Expanding access to legal protection, documentation, and justice, recognizing these as foundational to social inclusion, accountability, and long-term stability.
- Ensuring access and mapping of specialized social services tailored to the needs of persons with disability, older persons, and other marginalized groups.
- Maintain an integrated and focused approach on MHPSS within protection programming, particularly for survivors of violence, including GBV, children with high levels of distress and displacement-related distress.
- Reinforcing community-based protection and prevention mechanisms by investing in local capacities and promoting positive social norms, fostering sustainable behavioural change and community ownership.
- Supporting access to durable solutions, including voluntary repatriation interventions, such as resettlement for highly vulnerable individuals, voluntary return as well as developing sector-wide standards for partners supporting Syrians who spontaneously return in close collaboration with the Syria Protection Cluster.
- Enhancing advocacy, coordination, and accountability, with a focus on protection, GBV, and child protection monitoring and mainstreaming across all sectors.
- Advancing localization and national systems strengthening through technical and institution support and strategic collaboration with public institutions, supporting a progressive transition to nationally led responses inclusive of all population groups.
- Work towards enhanced integration of livelihood, protection cash assistance, and self-reliance programming to promote dignity, resilience, and durable solutions.
- Strengthen the collaboration with relevant governmental stakeholders, such as the Ministry of Social Affairs, the Ministry of Justice, Ministry of Labour as well as related bodies, including Internal Security Forces on various issues to strengthen the protection environment and access to justice and protection services across population groups.

In 2026, the Protection sector will focus on advancing its localization strategy, through support to governmental and local civil society actors, enhancing prevention work to achieve sustainable outcomes, fostering stabilization and cost-effectiveness, while ensuring individuals at heightened risk access inclusive and quality protection services.

### 1.3 Risks and Mitigation Measures

During strategic planning discussions, sector members reflected on several critical risks identified in 2025 that may affect the Protection sector's ability to implement its strategy effectively in 2026. These include the potential escalation of hostilities and political instability within Lebanon and Syria, which could necessitate

<sup>6</sup> Post-December 2024 arrivals from Syria.

a renewed emergency response. In addition, the absence of an appropriate legal or policy framework governing the stay of refugees and displaced populations groups including the post-2024 arrivals from Syria may limit access to essential services and affect the protection space thereby challenging the sector's successful implementation of its strategy. Moreover, the socio-economic and political developments as well as intercommunal tensions may also impact further on the protection environment of different communities. Risks posed by those developments are likely to exacerbate existing vulnerabilities. Addressing these risks requires considerable resources from the Protection sector and other sectors. Significant funding cuts expected in 2026, including for access to health services for the non-Lebanese population, place additional constraints on the response. Collectively, these factors pose challenges to maintaining inclusive, coordinated, and rights-based protection interventions.

To mitigate operational and contextual risks, the Protection sector will prioritize emergency preparedness planning at both partner and sector levels and strengthen coordination with the Disaster Risk Management (DRM). This aims at ensuring clear guidance and timely roll-out of prioritized emergency-specific activities as necessary, that equitably serve the most vulnerable in all population groups. In addition, the Protection sector will continue to invest in protection trend monitoring, with increased emphasis on integrating CP and GBV risks, across population groups and reinforce inter-sector collaboration, also contributing to early warning systems and adaptive preparedness programming. Led by the Protection Analysis and Monitoring Task Force, sector-specific risks are identified and presented to different response sectors to maintain the centrality of protection across the response and to support timely course corrections and mitigation measures where required. The sector recognizes the risks associated with increased digitization and underscores the need for ethical data collection within protection analysis and monitoring. It will provide guidance on appropriate protection protocols and recommend relevant mitigation measures.

Based on the identified findings, tailored interventions for those at heightened risk or where the sector identified programmatic gaps will be implemented by dedicated sector members. This will include *inter alia* family reunification support, alternative care arrangements, and additional community engagement interventions to address the needs of unaccompanied and separated children, older persons, Persons with Disability and other vulnerable groups. Capacity building efforts will target national institutions and frontline actors to lead and maintain services, while tension monitoring and engagement with Social Stability sector partners will support conflict-sensitive programming. Legal protection will be enhanced through advocacy for procedural reforms, deployment of mobile legal units, and increased access to documentation services. The sector will also advocate for sustainable, diversified funding, foster the shift to community-based services and strengthen integration of protection within development programming. Coordination with government entities, donors, and service providers will be key to ensuring inclusive and durable protection outcomes.

#### 1.4. Localization

The Protection sector will advance localization by strengthening national leadership, through both MoSA and local NGOs, and progressively transitioning protection responses to nationally led systems, where possible. In 2026, the sector will maintain and strengthen coordination arrangements with MoSA, co-chairing Protection, GBV, and CP coordination meetings, and supporting the Ministry to assume stronger leadership in decision-making and strategic planning within the coordination platforms. Dedicated national MoSA Protection Coordinator and Regional Protection Assistants will gradually increase responsibilities and guidance for the protection coordination of the protection response across locations.

In order to achieve this, the sector will be drafting a multi-year action plan on aligning sectoral activities to national structures, processes and guidelines. This includes a mapping of interagency initiatives aimed at strengthening the national protection system including the Social Development Centers, the National Social Protection Strategy to advance on social protection schemes, including AMAN, the National Disability Allowance as well as the SOPs on identification, assistance and protection of victims of trafficking. Efforts will also focus on strengthening service delivery through Service Delivery Centers (SDCs) as community hubs, supporting digital integration via SDC platforms and promoting economic inclusion

for vulnerable populations across all aspects of the sector's strategy. MoSA's institutional leadership will be reinforced through formalized coordination mechanisms at the sub-national level and active engagement with Community-Based Organizations (CBOs) and local NGOs beyond existing frameworks. These actions will ensure protection interventions remain aligned with national strategies on child protection, gender, older persons, and persons with disabilities. A specific focus will also be placed on enhancing the work to prevent and respond to the considerable risks facing street-connected children.

To enhance local actor participation, the sector has strengthened integration through co-ordination mechanisms, with local NGOs representing 55 per cent of the Protection sector coordination platform, creating space for meaningful participation and decision-making. The sector will also continue to strengthen survivor-centered approaches within national systems, including enhancing the technical and operational capacities of women-led organizations and service providers. Capacity needs and mapping exercises have been completed, alongside the establishment of mapping and profiling databases prioritizing active **Women-Led Organizations (WLOs)**, **Women's Rights Organizations (WROs)**, and **Civil Society Organizations (CSOs)** with a presence in the response. These efforts will focus on enhancing the co-leadership role of national actors within sector coordination structures, promoting shared ownership, accountability and inclusive participation.

Efforts to encourage meaningful engagement and support to local NGOs and CSOs will be upscaled building on the various assessments on WLO engagement conducted in 2025. To ensure accessibility and inclusion, sub-national coordination meetings will be facilitated in Arabic, guidance notes, SOPs and key tools will be translated into Arabic and adapted to local contexts. The sector will maintain advocacy with donors and UN agencies to diversify partnerships and provide flexible, equitable funding for smaller and community-rooted organizations, enabling meaningful engagement in protection coordination and service delivery. Mentorship and coaching initiatives led by larger NGOs, donors and UN agencies will strengthen the technical and institutional capacities of local actors, complemented by peer-learning spaces through different sector coordination platforms and facilitating the coordination with professional syndicates and academic institutions.

The sector will continue to enhance engagement with community structures, including through the finalized Community-Based Protection (CBP) guidance note, which was developed to establish a shared understanding of CBP, identify key protection risks that CBP interventions can address, and define practical guidance and tools to support implementation, particularly in more challenging areas. The co-creation process concluded in 2025, producing a comprehensive guidance note that strengthens the sector's engagement with community structures and supports consistent, contextually appropriate CBP programming.

Through these measures, the sector aims to progressively expand national actors' roles in coordination, decision-making and implementation, ensuring protection interventions are contextually grounded, inclusive, sustainable and aligned with national strategies and systems. This will also include linking localization efforts to longer-term transition planning and exit strategies for international actors, ensuring that local capacities are strengthened and prepared to assume responsibilities, while clarifying handover modalities and continuity plans to support a smooth and sustainable transition of responsibilities to government and local entities.

### 1.5. Mainstreaming Components: Gender, Gender-Based Violence (GBV), Protection, Conflict Sensitivity, Protection from Sexual Exploitation and Abuse (PSEA), & Environment

Protection principles are inherent to the strategy and programmatic scope of the sector. The Protection sector has a **two-fold approach on mainstreaming**. Firstly, the sector aims at harmonizing and strengthening age, gender and diversity mainstreaming within all phases of sectoral coordination and programs. The Protection

sector has made notable progress in mainstreaming gender, GBV, CP, PSEA, and accountability to affected populations (AAP) across its programming.

Key mainstreaming efforts include:

- Dedicated integration of Age, Gender and Diversity and PSEA standards and indicators across interventions;
- Specific PSEA awareness programs integrated into CP, Protection and GBV information and awareness sessions to enhance knowledge on Sexual Exploitation and Abuse (SEA) and reporting modalities;
- Support to GBV mainstreaming across sectors through GBV risk management focal points;
- Support the gradual integration of migrants into the response and address cross-sectoral barriers to humanitarian access through the migrant working group under the Protection Sector.
- Engagement of sector members and coordinators at various disability and inclusion bodies to inform sector priorities and participate in any relevant initiative;
- Cross-population community engagement programs, CBP, and large-scale communication with community (CwC) programs ensure affected communities are involved in planning, feedback and response mechanisms;
- Post-Distribution Monitoring and client feedback surveys implemented across protection programs including protection cash and dignity kits distributions are systematically included as sector standards;
- Close collaboration with conflict sensitivity experts under the Social Stability sector enables cross-sectoral analysis of risks and trends as well as inclusion of conflict-sensitive approaches;
- Protection monitoring addresses needs of all population groups including highlighting risks and gaps in access to services for marginalized groups including based on gender, identity, nationality, race or belonging to a social group;
- Close collaboration with Gender Working group and common analysis on gender-specific data and trends.
- Strengthening AAP and establishment of feedback and complaint mechanisms that are accessible to all population groups, including persons with disabilities and older persons.

Protection programming will be closely informed by appropriate tension monitoring and conflict analysis in a context where perceived bias in aid provision increasingly generates inter-communal tension. In 2026, the sector will continue to operationalize the “do no harm” principle by systematically identifying potential risks and integrating mitigation measures to prevent exacerbating social tensions aiming for equitable inclusion of all social groups including marginalized populations.

Secondly, the sector continues to advance on protection mainstreaming of other sectors through different initiatives, including advocacy with the Inter-Sector Coordination Group (ISCG) and sector coordinators to uphold their responsibility to mainstream protection, gender and apply GBV risk mitigation measures; present quarterly protection monitoring trends across sectors at the ISCG and the relevant humanitarian sectors; supporting capacity-development interventions of sectors and support focal points and coordinators of the sector to enhance mainstreaming of protection through checklists, review of strategies and analysis as well as workplans relating to mainstreaming activities. Support will also be extended to the Ministry of Social Affairs in enhancing their efforts on implementing findings from the recent gender audit including capacity building of MoSA staff on gender-sensitive approaches and programming. Challenges persist in implementation, particularly in reaching and inclusion of Persons with Disabilities (PWD), older persons, and marginalized groups across all activities. Limited reach to include Organizations of Persons with disabilities (OPDs) systematically and the inconsistent use of mainstreaming tools across sectors as well as capacity constraints among local and international specialized NGOs have affected outreach and engagement with persons with disabilities. Strengthening monitoring frameworks, harmonizing materials, and improving coordination will be key sectoral priorities to ensure inclusive, accountable, and sustainable protection outcomes.

## 1.6. Intersectoral Linkages

Inter-sectoral coordination remains a core pillar for achieving a protection-centered and inclusive response. Building on existing collaboration between the Protection and Shelter sectors, joint interventions will continue to address the needs of people at heightened risk of eviction and displacement due to escalation of hostilities, through harmonized operational guidance and the application of joint programming approaches. This collaboration will also support efforts to strengthen risk mitigation, access to dignified shelter solutions and protection services. Given the funding constraints, particularly within the cuts in the secondary healthcare for non-Lebanese populations, the sector will therefore focus on collaboration with the Health sector to highlight risks and find solutions to address access constraints. Furthermore, based on the intensive collaboration with the Cash Working Group in 2025, the Protection sector will advance on alignment to cross-sectoral cash guidelines, contribute to strategic documents and provide technical inputs to ensure that cash-based interventions mainstream protection principles through harmonized targeting of the most vulnerable.

Further collaboration with the Education, Livelihoods, WaSH, Food Security, Nutrition and Social Stability sectors as well as with the national MHPSS taskforce will promote operational coherence and ensure that standards for CP safeguarding and GBV risk mitigation are consistently applied across all sectors. The sector will also advocate for the prioritization of vulnerable communities, systemically marginalized, and those at heightened risks, including migrants and persons with disabilities, in all sectoral planning processes, ensuring accessibility and equity in service delivery.

## 1.7. Transition to Development & Recovery

Building on the efforts under the localization and systems strengthening component, the sector will closely collaborate with development actors in line with the consultations on the Cooperation Framework (CF). This includes a medium to long-term plan of activities to be gradually supported and funded under the CF such as access to justice, social protection and social service delivery for all population groups. Efforts will also focus on capacity building for local actors, closer collaboration and deduplication between NGOs, enhanced coordination with CSOs and public institutions, and protection interventions alignment with national frameworks. As part of strengthening national systems, the CP sub-sector will support the implementation of national CP Policy and SOPs ensuring that all actors use a unified referral and reporting mechanism to enhance the response to children at risk, unaccompanied and separated children and street-connected children. The sector will also strengthen inter sectoral coordination platforms (CP, Education, GBV, Social protection, MHPSS) to promote integrated service delivery and common indicators. As outlined under inter-sectoral collaboration, the Protection Sector will revive its collaboration with the livelihood sector to enhance linkages between survivor-centered case management services and referrals to economic empowerment programs as well as to ensure that economic empowerment initiatives are survivor-centered and contribute effectively to recovery and resilience.

In parallel, the sector will promote integrated programming that bridges humanitarian and development efforts, particularly through joint planning with development actors and relevant government ministries. Protection interventions will support institutional resilience, social stability, and inclusion particularly for marginalized groups such as Persons with Disabilities, female-headed households, and stateless populations.

## 2. Sector Results, Targets, and Budget

### 2.1. Linkages with LRP Strategic Objectives - Opening Paragraph

The Protection sector plays a pivotal role in advancing the strategic objectives of the Lebanon Response Plan (LRP), contributing directly to Strategic Objective 1: *Enhance protection of the vulnerable populations*; Objective 2: *Provide immediate humanitarian assistance to vulnerable populations to ensure critical needs are met* and Objective 3: *Support service provision through national systems including national rapid response capacity*. Through the delivery of life-saving protection interventions, the sector ensures that highly vulnerable and systematically marginalized communities can access humanitarian assistance that meets

their specific needs. In addition to direct service provision, the sector contributes to strengthening national systems by supporting institutional, technical, and human resource capacities. This includes reinforcing the leadership and coordination functions of the MoSA at both national and sub-national levels, thereby enhancing the effectiveness and sustainability of protection programming across the country.

Advocacy and implementation of non-discrimination and cross-population approaches ensure inclusiveness of all affected populations, including vulnerable Lebanese, displaced Syrians, PRS, PRL, migrants and others. Identification and prioritisation of those most at risk of protection violations, including the most conflict-affected IDPs, displaced Syrians, post-2024 arrivals, migrants without legal residency, vulnerable women and girls, persons with disabilities, older persons without support and individuals at risk of stigma or exclusion. In contributing to Strategic Objective 4: *Reinforce Lebanon's economic, social, and environmental stability*, the sector promotes social stability, fosters peaceful coexistence and mitigates risks of tension and violence within and between communities. Through its community-based and conflict-sensitive programming, the sector also strengthens institutional and community engagement, supports inclusive access to national systems, and contributes to broader stabilization efforts. Close linkages between the Protection sector and the Livelihood sector and the alignment to the National Social Protection Strategy and MOSA's vision 2026-2030 on economic inclusion further contribute to this objective.

## 2.2. Sector Outcomes

The objective of the Protection sector is to ensure that ***individuals at heightened risk from affected populations, in all their diversities, live in a safe, dignified, inclusive, and protective environment where their fundamental rights are respected, they are meaningfully engaged, and they have access to quality protection response services***. This result will be achieved through three outcomes outlined below:

**Outcome 1: Affected people have increased knowledge of their rights and have access to an effective justice and protection system.**

**Output 1.1: Individuals at heightened risk are provided with information on their rights and have access to effective legal aid services: protection actors deliver legal awareness and legal aid services**, with a particular emphasis on facilitating access to legal residency and civil documentation, most notably birth and marriage registration. Key legal stakeholders within the sector are actively engaged in advancing the digitalization of civil documentation processes and in addressing policy and procedural barriers that hinder access for affected populations, including displaced Syrians, Palestinian refugees, and migrants. Advocacy initiatives and coordination with relevant authorities aim to mitigate risks related to detention and deportation, particularly for displaced Syrians and other vulnerable groups. Targeted programs are also in place to address the heightened protection risks faced by survivors of gender-based violence, victims of trafficking and exploitation, and children in contact with the law, with a focus on improving access to justice mechanisms. In addition, the sector will implement training and provide technical support to national protection institutions, local NGOs, and community-based organizations. These efforts are designed to promote alignment with international protection standards and best practices, including the identification and referral of protection cases and the promotion of staff wellbeing.

**Output 1.2: Protection legal and policy frameworks and national protection institutions are strengthened:** the sector aims at supporting national protection structures and systems through support to legal and policy reform and/or implementation, institutional capacity and provision of legal services at the national and local levels. This will result in a more effective **national protection system**. This includes access to justice and legal aid, civil registration, Housing, Land, and Property (HLP) rights, legal residency and national laws, policies and services to protect children, and prevent and respond to GBV. Key GBV lead agencies and specialized actors will continue advocacy efforts and technical and institutional support on the Draft Law for the Protection Against Online Gender-based Violence.

**GBV systems strengthening efforts will be achieved through targeted capacity-building** initiatives to enhance the skills of both governmental and humanitarian actors. In line with stabilization objectives and the need for sustainable interventions, technical trainings will support governmental actors and public institutions on survivor-centered and GBV-sensitive service provision. Efforts will be made to integrate technology-facilitated violence across GBV prevention and response services and to enhance GBV actors' capacity to address online GBV. This also includes enhanced collaboration with the Internal Security Forces, Cybercrime Unit to enhance identification, reporting, investigation, and survivor protection in cases of technology-facilitated GBV. This includes capacity building, development of survivor-centered digital safety protocols, and regular coordination to ensure accountability and effective response. These efforts aim to improve accountability and responsiveness within the justice system, particularly for survivors of gender-based violence. Training programs will also be rolled out to build the knowledge and skills of GBV response actors, including non-LRP partners and local women-led organizations, ensuring a more inclusive and community-driven response. At the national level, support will be provided to the MoSA to reinforce its leadership and coordination role in GBV response, including technical capacity strengthening through SDCs. This will involve the mapping of SDCs and available services to be integrated into the sector service mapping tools, with a focus on enhancing access to and provision of case management services across locations and population groups. Further, the sector will support MoSA in the development, revision, and dissemination of national GBV SOPs and other relevant guidance materials, as needed. Finally, proactive engagement with academic institutions will be pursued to support and advance curriculum development, fostering a stronger foundation for protection and GBV programming through education and research.

**CP efforts** will continue to support local and municipal entities in strengthening their social service workforce and legal frameworks to safeguard children, particularly in the context of contingency planning and early action measures in the event of large-scale population displacements. A key priority within this scope is enhancing coordination and response mechanisms to address the notable increase in the number of children with disabilities, ensuring inclusive and equitable access to services, and to ensure that underlying causes to CP risks are addressed comprehensively and with a systems approach linking social protection schemes with CP services.

**Output 1.3: Protection risks are monitored and advocacy and technical support provided to relevant actors to mitigate the risks:** across the sector, strategic focus is placed on monitoring, analysing protection risks through the Protection Analysis and Monitoring Task Force (PAM TF) providing monthly protection updates and quarterly protection snapshot assessing risks across populations to be presented at interagency platforms. Findings on the protection environment are also used for targeted advocacy, ensuring the centrality of protection within the overall response, protection, CP, and GBV mainstreaming and GBV risk mitigation within other humanitarian sectors. To strengthen evidence-based protection programming, the sector will further strengthen the use of the protection analytical framework, supported by a review of existing data sources and the formulation of a targeted data collection plan. Protection monitoring will be conducted regularly, and findings will be consolidated with data from other sources to produce analytical reports and quarterly protection snapshots. The sector will ensure the use of disaggregated data collection and stronger emphasis on tailored analysis by age, gender, disability, and other diversity factors to ensure protection risks are accurately captured and trends are reflected across population groups. Sector partners will also review and refine protection-related questions within key assessment tools to enhance the quality and relevance of protection analysis. In parallel, efforts will be made to improve the measurement and analysis of outcomes, including sharing monitoring tools and methodologies. Through the repository of protection assessments provided

**Outcome 2: Affected people are safe, supported, and empowered in their community to contribute to positive change** – outlines the **community-based protection** approach to strengthen community resilience and ensure community members are able to contribute to: 1) positive change through provision of information, including on protection principles and PSEA, as well as providing information on access to services, legal support, HLP, documentation, and risks from unexploded ordinances and damaged buildings; 2) support to community-based protection networks and initiatives; 3) community-based psychosocial

support and social and behaviour change initiatives to address exclusion and violence against different population groups, including marginalised groups. This will contribute to women, men, girls and boys being meaningfully engaged in protection, safe and supported by their communities. Community engagement programs include support to community structures through outreach, two-way communication, AAP mechanisms, and supporting CBOs through training and mentoring. Technical and/or financial support to community-based organisations and protection initiatives will be integrated into protection programming under outcome 2.

**Output 2.1: Affected people are provided with information services and rights and benefit from inclusive and accessible community protection initiatives** aimed at ensuring community members have access to information on available protection services. It also includes community-based protection mechanisms such as trained volunteer groups, peer-to-peer support and community-level outreach and safe referral modalities. Moreover, in order to reduce violence in families and to transform homes into safe spaces, approaches emphasize on enhancing the capacities of girls, integrating older persons into the family and ensuring access to educational and developmental activities. In addition, the sector includes a robust Communication with Communities modality, including the HELP website, National Call Center and other hotlines operated by different protection partners receiving protection-related calls. In addition, other info sessions are taking place at partner community centers including MoSA SDCs.

Under **Output 2.2: Affected people are engaged in social and behaviour change on protection issues including equality, GBV, and CP**, the focus remains on preventing GBV through sustained community-level engagement, addressing harmful gender norms, and promoting the empowerment of women and girls. **GBV prevention efforts** will continue to advance the GBV sub-sector's strategic objective of reducing the incidence of GBV and fostering an environment free from violence. These efforts are complemented by social and behavioural change interventions that engage men, women, girls, and boys as active participants in transforming attitudes and practices. In 2026, GBV actors will maintain and expand investment in a range of proven prevention programmes, including initiatives aimed at addressing IPV and forced/early marriage. These programmes prioritize women and girls' empowerment, skills development, and the engagement of men, boys, and community leaders as champions of change. Targeted prevention activities will mainly take place at dedicated Women and Girls Safe Spaces, some of which are stand-alone GBV partner centers or embedded into Primary Health Care Centers (PHCCs), SDCs or Community Development Centers (CDCs) ensuring linkages between prevention and response programs.

In 2026, **CP actors** will prioritize the expansion of structured Psychosocial Support (PSS) for children and youth, with the aim of fostering resilience and promoting social stability within both community and school environments. These efforts will be complemented by initiatives that engage caregivers in positive parenting and community dialogue, designed to reduce harmful practices and strengthen family and social support networks. Community-based activities will be maintained across various settings, including in CDCs, SDCs, and collective shelters, engaging girls, boys, and caregivers in protective programming. In hard-to-reach areas, mobile CP interventions will be implemented to ensure access to essential services and information, including on the risks related to unexploded ordnance and structurally unsafe buildings. To further prevent harm and promote protective behaviours, social and behaviour change initiatives will be implemented, such as the Qudwa programme that targets religious and community leaders as key drivers for change. Additionally, CP actors will continue to monitor and report grave violations of children's rights in conflict-affected areas, train duty bearers on International Humanitarian Law (IHL) as it pertains to CP, and mobilize influential community members and families to prevent the occurrence of such violations.

**Output 2.3: Effective and accessible feedback and response mechanisms, including to address PSEA and child safeguarding, are in place across partners:** as a cross-cutting indicator across CP, GBV and Protection actors, all protection actors integrate awareness on SEA risks and reporting modalities into all CwC and community-based Programmes. In addition, all actors record the Complaint and Feedback modalities in the Service Mapping tool and actively collaborate with the PSEA Network.

**Outcome 3: Individuals at heightened risk have access to quality specialized protection response services and durable solutions.**

**Output 3.1: Quality protection, CP, and GBV case management, psychosocial support, protection cash, and other specialised services are available and accessible to individuals at heightened risk** ensures that **quality response services** are accessible and inclusive across the affected population, such as **case management services, meaningful protection cash interventions, specialised support** to individuals at heightened risk of violence, exploitation, abuse, and neglect and supports durable solutions for displaced Syrians, PRL, PRS, and migrants. Targeted protection cash interventions to address protection emergencies and structural violence, exclusion, inequalities are core tools to support protection management interventions. Additionally, the sector will promote quarterly reporting on core cash indicators and explore the impact of cash assistance through partner-led Post-Distribution Monitoring (PDM) and Outcome Monitoring (OM) analysis and presentations. In 2026, the Protection sector will also integrate return-specific activities (see below section on return) to facilitate return of Syrians in safety and dignity. Other durable solutions include access to resettlement and complementary pathways for displaced Syrians and refugees from other nationalities, as well as assisted voluntary repatriation of highly vulnerable migrants, including victims of trafficking, to their countries of origin.

**GBV response will prioritize immediate access to comprehensive, quality, and survivor-centered services**, which will remain a critical priority under the Sub-Sector. GBV actors will ensure inclusive and equitable access to services, including GBV case management and survivor-centered, multisectoral responses through GBV-sensitive psychosocial, health, legal, safety, and security services. For survivors with immediate physical protection needs, safe shelters will remain a critical intervention. The sector will work further on identification of access challenges and admission criteria to enhance access of marginalized groups to safe shelters. Effective and meaningful cash assistance programs integrated within GBV case management will continue to support economically vulnerable survivors in addressing immediate risks and preventing further harm, while promoting financial security and independence. With the aim to strengthen longer-term recovery and empowerment of survivors of GBV, referrals to and integration of economic empowerment programs within GBV case management programs and enhanced engagement with the livelihood sector will be a key focus in 2026.

**CP response actors** will maintain implementing critical CP case management and cash interventions programs in line with the best interests procedures for children at risk of violence, neglect and exploitation as well as for unaccompanied or separated children. With close coordination with MoSA and other relevant national actors and institutions, including those mandated by the MoJ, specialized programs on alternative care will be prioritized in 2026. CP actors will also prioritize the implementation of focused psychosocial support to children at medium to high risk of child rights violations, focused on emotional and peer support. Specific attention will be given to children at heightened risk, including children exposed to violence, neglect and exploitation, including street-connected children through a comprehensive approach, including targeted protection cash interventions linked to case management services. Street-connected children continue to face heightened exposure to multiple protection risks, including violence, exploitation, neglect, family separation and limited access to essential services such as education, healthcare and safe shelter. The CP sub-sector will continue to support ongoing outreach and case management efforts, ensuring alignment with national CP Policy and SOPs led by MoSA, and reinforcing referral pathways for this high-risk group of children. Through strengthened inter-sectoral collaboration with Education, GBV and Protection actors and social protection schemes, the sub-sector will promote integrated, tailored and targeted responses that address both immediate protection risks and the structural factors contributing to children's vulnerability on the streets.

The above approach ensures a balance between investing in strengthening sustainable national protection systems and community capacities (Outcomes 1 and 2) and responding to the humanitarian protection needs created by the escalation of hostilities and displacement (Outcomes 2 and 3). In 2025, the sector also

developed a strategic note on prioritization to guide partners on prioritized protection interventions including a list of protection programs under the sector and sub-sectors.

**Output 3.2: Syrian Displaced and refugees of other nationalities have access to durable solutions such as resettlement and complementary pathways and/or safe and dignified return:** includes activities that allow displaced Syrians and refugees of other nationalities known to UNHCR at heightened risk to access resettlement or complementary pathways. In addition, the below listed activities included under the return are prioritized protection-focused return activities.

**Output 3.3: Migrants have access to safe and dignified return assistance to their countries of origin and access support to reintegrate sustainably in their communities:** this output is mainly linked to efforts in ensuring migrants at heightened risk willing but unable to return by their own means are assisted to return and reintegrate into their country of origin. Activities included under this output include protection assessments to identify their needs, coordination and support with embassies, authorities or to access legal support, legal and medical support (e.g. assess fitness to travel, ensure continuity of health care when required upon arrival) as well as provision of reintegration support.

### 2.3. Return

The Protection sector plays a key role in implementing return-focused activities outlined under the interagency matrix developed by the Durable Solutions Working Group. The sector is also represented at the Technical Working Group on returns to ensure that all activities are aligned, and key results and tasks are communicated to all sector members.

Prioritized return activities under the sector include:

- Expediting and facilitating access to legal aid and civil documentation (such as birth certificates) prior to return.
- Return counselling and large-scale information sharing on returns and return counselling including at dedicated CDCs.
- Provision of information on available services in Syria and community-based messaging tailored to the needs of vulnerable population groups.
- Case management of cases requiring support prior to departure or upon arrival to Syria, including the application of best interests procedures for unaccompanied or separated children, children at risk of violence, persons with disabilities, older persons at risk of abuse or neglect, GBV survivors at risk of violence by an accompanying perpetrator as well as cases of persons with specific needs, including persons with physical and intellectual disability without caregiver as well as persons in need of specialized mental health interventions.
- Protection and border monitoring provided by specialized actors with dedicated capacity and programmatic response. Partners of the sector will play an active role in providing relevant information on risks pertaining to groups at heightened risks or contributing to community-based interventions and assessments.
- After the merger of the Basic Assistance sector and the Cash Working Group, in 2026, the Protection sector will encompass transportation and cash grants for return which used to be part of the Basic Assistance sector. Return cash grants and transportation will now be coordinated through the Protection sector for those opting for facilitated return, including for those with specific needs.

The sector will upscale its coordination efforts with relevant actors in Lebanon and Syria including UNHCR, IOM and coordination structures to enhance cross-border referrals and collaboration. This includes developing relevant Lebanon-specific as well as cross-border guidance on return.

### 2.3. Summary Sector Target and Budget - Closing Paragraph

Based on the outlined strategy, the sector estimates that there are **2,471,937 million** People in Need (PiN) of protection, CP and GBV services.

Based on available capacities and considering needs and expected reduction in funding, the sector aims to support a total of **1,393,599** people in 2026 (940,549 under general protection sector, 205,500 children and caregivers under CP and 250,050 survivors and those at risk of GBV under the GBV sub-sector).

As for the population breakdown and in line with the PiN and severity calculations for the Protection sector, of the total targeted population, 901,889 are displaced Syrians (including return and post-2024 arrivals), 383,430 are Lebanese, 21,815 are PRS, 51,015 are PRL and 26,550 are migrants. In addition, 8,900 people of other nationalities are targeted across the activities. As regards to the gender breakdown, 47 per cent target men and boys and 53 per cent target women and girls.

The total budget required to achieve the sector objective is **\$184,893,488** for Protection, CP and GBV interventions including return-specific interventions.