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Title: The Syrian Refugee Crisis and its Impact on Lebanon

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Master in International Studies

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Centre for Research in Anthropology - ISCTE

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E POLÍTICAS PÚBLICAS

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Acknowledgments

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“It isn’t enough to talk about peace. One must believe in it. And it isn’t enough to believe in it. One must work at it.”

Eleanor Roosevelt

Abstract

The impact of the Syrian war was significant on Lebanon, however, the Syrian refugee's influx to Lebanon was more significant although the Syrian refugee in Lebanon are living in a very difficult situation. In 2011, the Syrian war started and nearly half of the Syrian population was forcibly displaced seeking refuge in neighboring Lebanon which was already struggling from many external interventions, civil wars, occupations, assassinations, and economic problems. Lebanon was the most affected country due to the high number of refugees compared to the citizens. Although not a signatory to the Convention (1951) on the Status of Refugees, the Lebanese Government initially applied an open-border policy but shifted its approach in late 2014. The tension between Lebanese and Syrians historically existed since the Lebanese Civil War in 1975, but it increased after the Syrian War and reached its maximum after the Lebanese Revolution in 2019. The government should take action toward this as many Lebanese are demanding a solution to this long-lasting situation. The international community should step up as well and take responsibility for a better future for both Syrians and Lebanese to avoid any unexpected consequences.

Keywords: Syrian refugees; Lebanon; economic crisis; refugee's difficult conditions; policies; international community.

Resume

O impacto da guerra síria foi significativo no Líbano, no entanto, o afluxo de refugiados sírios ao Líbano foi mais significativo embora os refugiados sírios no Líbano vivam numa situação muito. Em 2011, a guerra síria começou e quase metade da população síria foi deslocada à força, procurando refúgio no vizinho Líbano, que já enfrentava muitas intervenções externas, guerras civis, ocupações, assassinatos e problemas económicos. O Líbano foi o país mais afetado devido ao elevado número de refugiados em comparação com os cidadãos. Embora não seja signatário da Convenção (1951) sobre o Estatuto dos Refugiados, o Governo Libanês aplicou inicialmente uma política de fronteiras abertas em linha com a sua longa relação histórica com a Síria, mas mudou a sua abordagem no final de 2014. A tensão entre libaneses e sírios existia historicamente desde a guerra civil libanesa em 1975, mas tensão aumentou após a guerra na Síria mas atingiu o máximo após a revolução libanesa em 2019 e as crises económicas no país que afectaram grande parte das famílias libanesas devido à desvalorização da moeda que levou à diminuição dos salários, escassez de muitos bens, inflação, e crises bancárias que também privaram o povo libanês das suas próprias poupanças. O governo deveria tomar medidas nesse sentido, já que muitos libaneses exigem uma solução para esta situação duradoura. A comunidade internacional também deve intensificar-se e assumir a responsabilidade por um futuro melhor tanto para os sírios como para os libaneses, a fim de evitar quaisquer consequências inesperadas.

Palavras-chave: Refugiados sírios; Líbano; crise econômica; as difíceis condições dos refugiados; políticas; comunidade internacional.

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Introduction

Relevance, key concepts and purpose of the dissertation

The dissertation analyses The Syrian refugee crisis and its impact on Lebanon after the Syrian war that started in 2011. It analyses the difficult situation that the refugees are passing through in Lebanon which was one of the most affected countries due to the influx of Syrian refugees to the country where most of them were illegal. It also studies the Lebanese economy before and after the arrival of the Syrian refugees with the impacts on several aspects such as the demographic, health, and infrastructure with the policies that the Government of Lebanon took regarding the difficult situation that both Syrians and Lebanese are facing. Lebanon hosts the highest number of refugees per capita in the world, with the Government estimating that 1.5 million Syrian refugees reside in the country, of which just over 855,000 are registered with the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR 2021). A recent report by UNICEF covering Lebanese, Palestinians, and Syrians shows that 77 percent of families do not have enough food (UNICEF 2021). The Syrian refugees arrived in a deeply unequal society and these inequalities have been aggravated and deepened during the time the Syrian refugees have been in Lebanon. The economic crises especially after the 17 October revolution exacerbated the conflict and tension between Lebanese and refugees increased since refugees nowadays are working in the black market with no contracts, low salaries, residing with no legal residence, using the country's infrastructure without paying bills, and taxes (living in tents) and this what I'll talk about later in the research in the impact of Syrian refugees on Lebanon.

In terms of the structure of the thesis, we will start with a brief background of the Syrian conflict and its spillover into Lebanon. This will be followed by the Lebanese unstable economic situation even before the influx of refugees. Then, we will talk about the arrival of the Syrian refugees in 2011 focusing on the mismanagement from the Lebanese government. We will then proceed to the late Lebanese policies after 3 years from the Syrian arrival and the huge impact of that on Lebanon. After that, we will shed light on the major problems that Syrians are facing in Lebanon with the calls from the Lebanese government toward the safe return of the Syrian refugees and the EU with the international community responses. Finally, the remaining pages of the dissertation are devoted to the Syrian current situation with the possible solutions and

recommendations to end the Syrian refugees suffering in addition to helping the Lebanese citizens overcome the impacts of the Syrian war on their country.

Research question and hypothesis

The research aims to tackle the following question: What are the difficulties that the Syrian refugees are facing nowadays with the impacts of a large number of refugees in Lebanon and how to overcome the situation? focusing on the Syrian refugee's current difficult situation and crises, the impact of the refugee crises on the Lebanese economy, infrastructure, labor market, and demographic changes in case of resettlements. The objective is to provide plans and policies including negotiations with the international community to overcome those negative impacts and to improve the life of the displaced Syrians themselves.

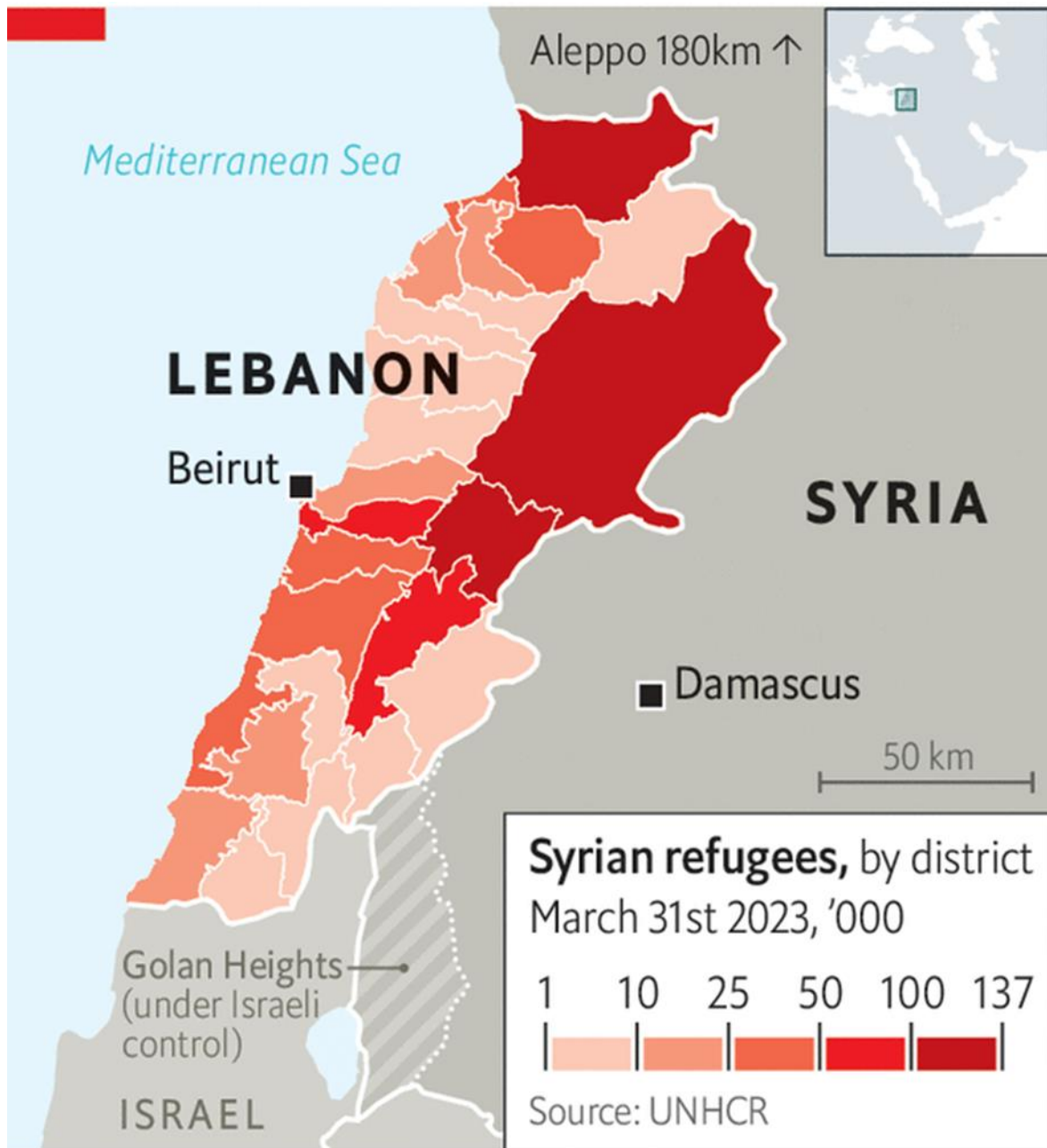
Structure of the thesis

The thesis structure is divided into five main dimensions: the Syrian conflict's main actors with the origin of the conflict and the arrival of the Syrian refugees to Lebanon; the Lebanese government responses at the beginning of the Syrian conflict and throughout the upcoming years until now; the impact of the Syrian refugees on Lebanon; the Lebanese government latest announcements regarding the situation of the Syrian refugees especially after the economic crises in 2019; and the EU and international community responses regarding the resolution of the current Lebanese crises including the Syrian refugee's major impact on Lebanon.

Methodology and sources

We used qualitative methods whilst gathering information and some quantitative data. We focused on the analysis of texts, both academic and non-academic authored by topic experts or issued by international organizations, reviewing secondary data, trends, figures, and statistics from literature, articles, and reports focusing on the influx of Syrian refugees to Lebanon from sources such as the World Bank, United Nations (UN), United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR), Vulnerability Assessment of Syrian Refugees (VASyR), International Labor Organization (ILO), and literature review about Policies of Exclusion: The Case of Syrian Refugees in Lebanon by Gabriel Fauveaud, Faten Kikano, and Gonzalo Lizarralde. We resorted to the Research by DAVID, A., M.A. MAROUANI, C. NAHAS, and B. NILSSON (2019) about “The economics of the Syrian refugee crisis in Neighboring countries. The case of Lebanon”,

AFD Research Papers Series, No. 2019-102, March. We also used the article: The Demographic Changes and Human Security of Syrian Refugees by Luna Shamieh, a researcher with solid research capabilities in the fields of refugees studies, ISIS, and human security, with several publications in the field. In addition, we relied on other research such as The Syrian displacement crisis and a Regional Development and Protection Programme: Mapping and meta-analysis of existing studies of costs, impacts, and protection 4 February 2014 by Roger Zetter, Héloïse Ruaudel, Sarah Deardorff-Miller, Eveliina Lyytinen, Cameron Thibos, and Finn Skadkær Pedersen. All the literature reviews with the numbers and statistics from other documents, helped us in understanding and discussing the Syrian refugee's current difficult situations with the impact on Lebanese different sectors before the Syrian conflict and after the influx between 2012 and 2014 the year of the exclusion policy by the government.



The Economist

¹ THE ECONOMIST. *Lebanon's government is squeezing out Syrian refugees*. Online. The Economist. 2023-05-04. Available from: <https://www.economist.com/middle-east-and-africa/2023/05/04/lebanons-government-is-squeezing-out-syrian-refugees>. [viewed 2023-12-03].

Literature Review

Let's start by clarifying the definition of a refugee, as stated in the 1951 Geneva Convention "A refugee is any person who has a well-founded fear of being persecuted for reasons of race, nationality, religion, social group or political opinion." Refugees are people who have been forced to flee their homes and have crossed an international border to find safety in another country.²

As argued by (Qasmiyeh 2016)³, In this highly complex and under-resourced crisis, refugee-refugee humanitarianism is filling a significant gap, providing material, emotional, and spiritual support to individuals, families, and groups who have been displaced – often for the second or third time – by the ongoing Syrian conflict. Such support is highly valued by many ‘new’ refugees. Here, we can agree that with the absence of a government policy and strategy to manage the Syrian refugee influx to Lebanon and with the fear of the Lebanese citizens from the increase of the refugees, the camps of the previous refugees in Lebanon were the last resort for the Syrians.

The impact of refugees is different from that of migrants in terms of timing of arrival and of flow composition (Docquier and Machado, 2015).⁴ Here we can agree that there's a big difference between migrants and the influx of refugees to another country since most of the refugees were forced to move to other countries with high flow to avoid wars in a very short time, while migrants usually are not forced to travel while rejection/approvals from the host country can happen, unlike the refugees that need support and can't return to their country. We can agree also that Managing the high influx of refugees in a short time directly after the beginning of the Syrian war will be difficult. Countries in general will not be prepared, and most of the refugees in Lebanon entered illegally due to the opened borders at the beginning of the Syrian war and the

² UNHCR. *WHO WE PROTECT Refugees*. Online. [n.d.]. Available from: <https://www.unhcr.org/about-unhcr/who-we-protect/refugees>. [viewed 2023-12-05].

³ FIDDIAN-QASMIYEH, Yousif M. Qasmiyeh. *Refugee Neighbours and Hostipitality*, online. ResearchGate. January 2016. Available from: https://www.researchgate.net/publication/289673582_Refugee_Neighbours_and_Hostipitality

⁴ FRÉDÉRIC, Docquier, and Machado Carneiro JOËL. *Crise des réfugiés : quelques clarifications s'imposent !* Online. Dial.pr. October 2015. Available from: <https://dial.uclouvain.be/pr/boreal/object/boreal:182083>. [viewed 2023-12-03].

late Lebanese planned policy in 2014 which we'll talk about later in the chapter concerning Lebanese government policies in 2014 page 19,

As explained by Thibaut Jaulin,⁵ Lebanon, at this time, was perceived as an 'emigration country'. Yet, at a later stage, it also became a country of immigration, as refugee populations began to flee there. Thus corroborating Jaulin's thesis that Lebanon's nationality law has been influenced by its demographic movements. Furthermore, Jaulin has illustrated how the intricate legal debate on the inclusion of the Lebanese living abroad into the Lebanese census is part of a "fabrication of demographic statistics" reflecting political interests.⁶ Naturalisation also took place in 1994, when the government of the Sunni leader Rafiq al-Ḥarīri issued a decree that naturalized 150,000 individuals, two-thirds of them Muslims and probably about half of them Sunni.⁷ In this respect, Jaulin has noticed how "the discretionary power of the executive over the naturalization has contributed to changing the Lebanese citizenship into a resource to be distributed by political leaders. Naturalization has, thus, been a key instrument for the development of political clientele."⁸ According to Maktabi, citizenship in Lebanon "enables the regime to dominate in compliance with its overall objective: the maintenance of its rule in accordance with its implicitly and explicitly expressed state-idea."⁹

In the research on how the different policies and school systems affected the inclusion of Syrian refugee children in Sweden, Germany, Greece, Lebanon, and Turkey, the authors stated that the numbers of school-age children in Lebanon and Turkey were even greater than in Germany, which meant that the school system in these two countries became even more

⁵ JAULIN, Thibaut. « *C'est bien la loi d'un pays à forte émigration* » *Principes de la ...* Online. Open Edition Journals. 2015-06-22. Available from: <https://doi.org/10.4000/remmm.9077>. [viewed 2023-12-03].

⁶ JAULIN, Thibaut. *Démographie et politique au Liban sous le Mandat*. Online. OpenEdition Journals. August 2009. Available from: <https://journals.openedition.org/histoiremesure/3895>. [viewed 2023-12-03].

⁷ HOURANI, Guita. *Naturalized citizens: political participation, voting behavior, and impact on elections in lebanon (1996–2007) - journal of international migration and integration*. Online. SpringerLink. November 2011. Available from: <https://link.springer.com/article/10.1007/s12134-011-0203-7>. [viewed 2023-12-03].

⁸ JAULIN, Thibaut. *Citizenship, migration, and confessional democracy in lebanon*. Online. sciencespo. December 2014. Available from: <https://www.sciencespo.fr/ceri/sites/sciencespo.fr/ceri/files/Citizmigr2014.pdf>. [viewed 2023-12-03].

⁹ MAKTABI, Rania. *The lebanese census of 1932 revisited. who are the lebanese?* Online. Academia.edu. November 1999. Available from: <https://www.academia.edu/25838460>. [viewed 2023-12-03].

overburdened. In European countries, almost all refugee children of the compulsory school age were included in education after a period of a maximum of three months.¹⁰ Here we can see that European countries tend to oblige children to register in schools unlike in Lebanon and this is a very important thing for the sake of the society and the refugees themselves. The authors also stated that the lack of financial support, proper housing, clean water and electricity, and the inadequate conditions of the camps in which the majority of Syrian refugee families live are very important to understand the problems with children entering education. The research stated that the most important difference between the European countries and Syria's neighboring countries is the huge number of children that were or still are outside the formal school system receiving no or only limited education and this is due to the lack of infrastructure and the huge influx of refugees to neighboring countries compared to Europe.

Syrian refugees face challenges related to social cohesion with Lebanese nationals. Lebanese perceive Syrian refugees as a political and economic threat; many Lebanese nationals even support the curfews and political restrictions on the movement and entry of Syrian refugees.¹¹

The influx of refugees is affecting the age structure, population rate, and socio-economic structure of the communities. It is also affecting the sectarian and religious balance in Lebanon.¹²

The author Filippo Dionigi 2017¹³ stated that the Lebanese confessional system, therefore, remains a crucial component of Lebanese statehood to which all refugee populations migrating to Lebanon inevitably had to relate when fleeing to Lebanon and refugee populations have been recruited in these struggles or engulfed into their unmerciful mechanics. From here we can agree

¹⁰ CRUL, Maurice, Frans LELIE, Özge BİNER, Nihad BUNAR, Elif ELİF, et al. *How the different policies and school systems affect the inclusion of syrian refugee children in sweden, germany, greece, lebanon and turkey - comparative migration studies*. Online. SpringerOpen. April 2019. Available from: <https://comparativemigrationstudies.springeropen.com/articles/10.1186/s40878-018-0110-6>. [viewed 2023-12-03].

¹¹ HARB, Charles. *Social cohesion and intergroup relations: syrian refugees and lebanese nationals in the bekaa and akkar*. Online. AUB ScholarWorks. June 2014. Available from: <https://scholarworks.aub.edu.lb/handle/10938/21203>. [viewed 2023-12-03].

¹² SHAMIEH, Luna. *Demographic changes and human security of syrian refugees meştekinése*. Online. Folyóiratok. 2015. Available from: <https://folyoirat.ludovika.hu/index.php/magyrend/article/view/3561/2842>. [viewed 2023-12-04].

¹³ DIONIGI, Filippo. *Statehood and refugees: patterns of integration and segregation of refugee populations in lebanon from a comparative perspective*. Online. University of Bristol. 2017. Available from: <https://research-information.bris.ac.uk/en/publications/statehood-and-refugees-patterns-of-integration-and-segregation-of>. [viewed 2023-12-04].

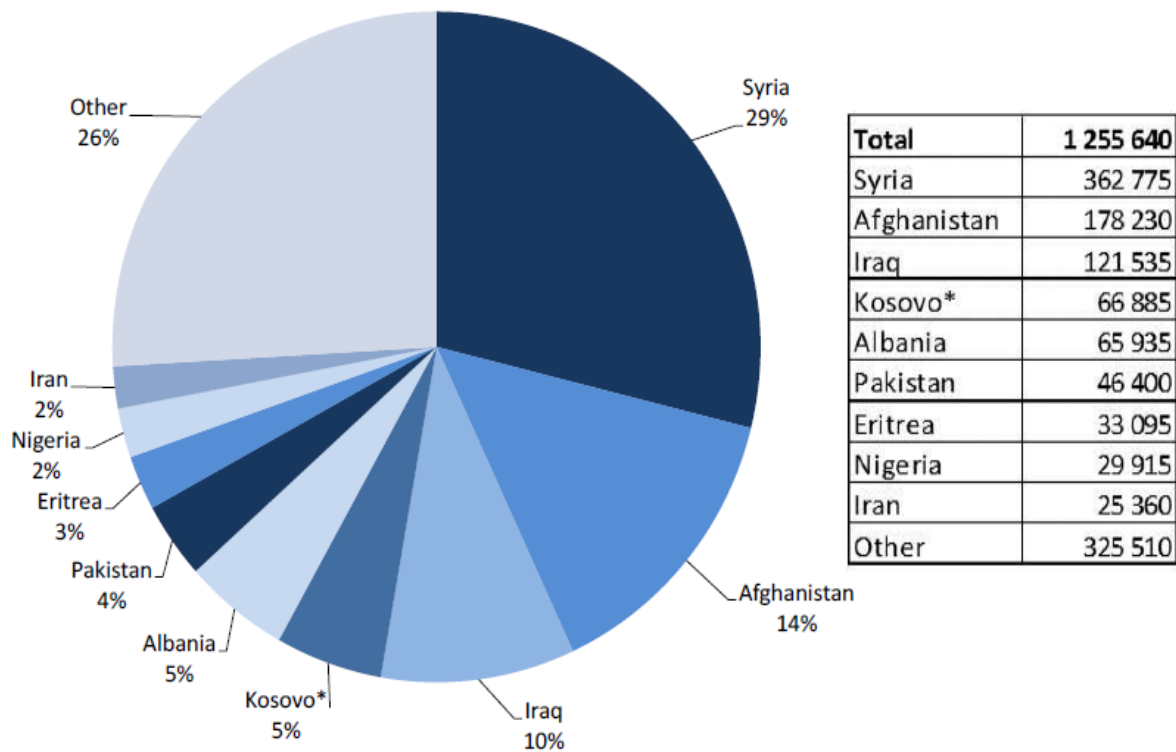
on the importance of the refugee's presence in the country with resettlements that can affect the political system in Lebanon.

Overview of the Syrian conflict

The Syrian war which started in 2011 was one of the most extremely difficult conflicts of the twenty-first century. There are so many opinions about the reasons for this war, is it internal or is it due to external factors especially after the Arab Spring began in 2011. We all agreed that many countries interfered in this war concerning their interests and goals. This after all led to the bloodiest war for more than a decade which took the lives of more than a million citizens, people faced scary views in front of their eyes, bombs, and deaths everywhere in the country with many citizens displaced asking for asylum in Europe or nearby countries especially Lebanon, Turkey and Jordan. According to the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR), until the end of 2016, there were 65.6 million forcibly displaced people worldwide, of which 22.5 million were refugees.¹⁴ The vast majority of these refugees have settled in neighboring countries, such as Turkey, Lebanon (our area of study), Jordan, Iraq, and Egypt, with a small percentage of them seeking refuge elsewhere, predominantly in Europe. In 2015, 1 255 600 first-time asylum seekers applied for international protection in the Member States of the European Union (EU), a number more than double that of the previous year. The number of Syrians seeking international protection has doubled in 2015 compared with the previous year to reach 362 800¹⁵.

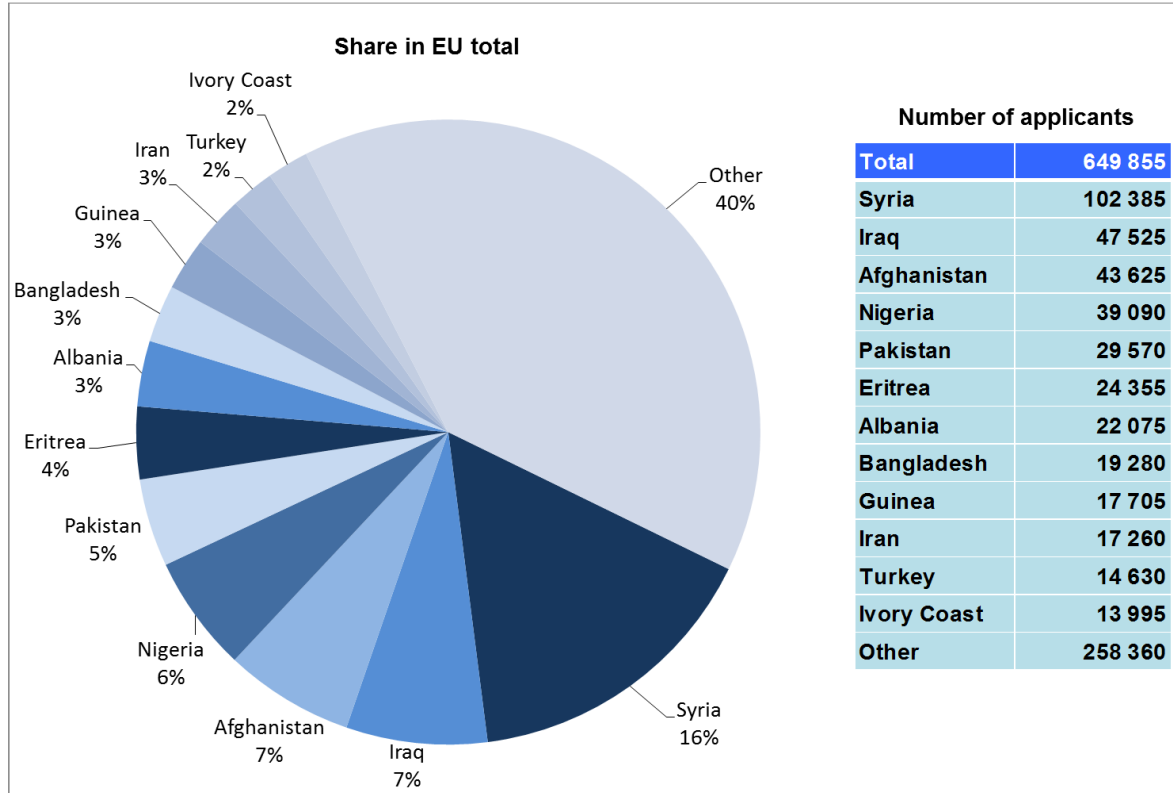
¹⁴ EDWARDS, Adrian. *Forced displacement worldwide at its highest in decades* / UNHCR. Online. UNHCR. 2017-06-19. Available from: <https://www.unhcr.org/news/stories/forced-displacement-worldwide-its-highest-decades>. [viewed 2023-12-04].

¹⁵ EUROSTAT. *Asylum in the EU Member States Record number of over 1.2 million first time asylum seekers registered in 2015 Syrians, Afghans, and Iraqis: top citizenships*. Online. 2016-03-04. Available from: <https://ec.europa.eu/eurostat/documents/2995521/7203832/3-04032016-AP-EN.pdf>. [viewed 2023-12-04].



First time asylum seekers in the EU Member States by country of citizenship, 2015¹⁶

¹⁶ EUROSTAT. *Asylum in the EU Member States Record number of over 1.2 million first time asylum seekers registered in 2015 Syrians, Afghans, and Iraqis: top citizenships*. Online. 2016-03-04. Available from: <https://ec.europa.eu/eurostat/documents/2995521/7203832/3-04032016-AP-EN.pdf>. [viewed 2023-12-04].



In 2017, this figure decreased to 650 000, and Syrians accounted for 16% only.¹⁷

¹⁷ EUROSTAT. *Asylum in the EU Member States 650 000 first-time asylum seekers registered in 2017* Syrians, Iraqis, and Afghans continued to be the top citizenships. Online. 2018-03-20. Available from: <https://ec.europa.eu/eurostat/documents/2995521/8754388/3-20032018-AP-EN.pdf/50c2b5a5-3e6a-4732-82d0-1caf244549e3>. [viewed 2023-12-04].

Nowadays, Syria is led by Bashar Al-Assad from 2000 after the death of his father Hafez Al-Assad who served as president of Syria from 1971 to 2000. It all started in March 2011 as Arab Spring demonstrations overthrew governments across the Middle East, a group of children in Daraa, southern Syria were arrested and allegedly tortured for scrawling graffiti on a school reading "The people want to topple the regime." Syrians protest in cities across the country, demanding the government enact reforms and release political protesters.¹⁸ First, people were asking for democracy concerning freedom of expression, establishing opposition parties to participate in ruling, and cancellation of the emergency law which gave the right for the government and its security services to arrest any citizen for security reasons even without a lawsuit or judicial decision. The government made several changes like the cancellation of the emergency law: Syrian President Bashar al-Assad has signed decrees ending 48 years of emergency rule. The move was a formality after the government passed a law lifting emergency rule (BBC, April 2011)¹⁹. The Government freed some of the opponent's leaders in prison, increased wages, and modified the constitution. Syrians vote in a referendum on a new constitution which President Bashar al-Assad, fighting an eleven-month-old revolt against his rule, says will pave the way for a multi-party parliamentary election within three months. Syria's opposition dismisses Assad's reform pledges as too little, too late, saying the 46-year-old leader must step down (Reuters 2012), on the contrary protesters increased to reach every city. Some of the soldiers formed a free army and battles started with the government, especially in 2012 onwards, a group of Syrian military officers defected and formed the Free Syrian Army²⁰. The free army was supported with weapons, financing, all type of equipment including medical ones, and tunnels that helped them move and get support. Between August and October 2011, Top U.S. and European leaders called for Assad to step down, saying Syria's future "must be determined by its own people." But in October, Russia and China veto a U.N. Security Council resolution supported by the United States that would call for an immediate halt to violence and immediate

¹⁸ THOMPSON, Nick. *Syria's war: Everything you need to know about how we got here* / CNN. Online. CNN. 2015-10-08. Available from: <https://edition.cnn.com/2015/10/08/middleeast/syria-war-how-we-got-here/index.html>. [viewed 2023-12-04].

¹⁹ BBC NEWS. *Syria protests: Bashar al-Assad lifts emergency law*. Online. BBC News. 2011-04-21. Available from: <https://www.bbc.com/news/world-middle-east-13161329>. [viewed 2023-12-04].

²⁰ THOMPSON, Nick. *Syria's war: Everything you need to know about how we got here* / CNN. Online. CNN. 2015-10-08. Available from: <https://edition.cnn.com/2015/10/08/middleeast/syria-war-how-we-got-here/index.html>. [viewed 2023-12-04].

sanctions.²¹ External actors started to intervene, radical and armed groups were established and battles increased between all those groups until ISIS arrived and things started to get worse more and more. Suicide bombers killed 44 people in Damascus in blasts that bear the "blueprints of al Qaeda. In February the leader of al Qaeda, Ayman al-Zawahiri, praised Syrians for waging "jihad." The message comes as thousands of rebels join more extreme groups now operating in the country, including Jabhat al-Nusra, a group with close links to al Qaeda's affiliate in Iraq. (CNN 2016). Moreover, ISIS called for an Islamic state in Iraq and Syria but their acts and terms never belong to Islam at all, killing everyone who disagrees with their strict rules like preventing smoking, closing barbershops, closing night places and internet shops, and murdering according to the religion. On the other hand, Syrian citizens were not used for those actions but were obliged to follow these rules due to the occupation of their lands and the huge support that ISIS and other rebel groups received. In my opinion, these acts changed the opinions of several citizens toward the revolution since most of the citizens didn't accept what ISIS and the extreme groups had done to their country. Syrians used to have an open society, they were seeking freedom and democracy concerning freedom of expression, establishing opposition parties to participate in the ruling, cancelation of the emergency law which gave the right for the government and its security services to arrest any citizen for security reasons even without lawsuit or judicial decision, but the oppositions and the extremist groups acts were even worst regarding the freedom concerns as the above examples that ISIS imposed on the citizens especially in the north region between the borders of Syria and Iraq. On the other hand, we can admit that the revolution changed to be a sect fighting and superpower war on the land of Syria supported by extremist groups from all over the world with huge funds to worsen the situation more and more in Syria. During all this, thousands of people faced extremely violent practices, millions of citizens were killed from all sides, and many citizens faced psychological problems and disorders that led them to stay in the country if there was no chance of seeking asylum in the nearby countries such as Lebanon or Turkey which host a lot of refugees because of their proximity to Syria. NGOs started providing aid to refugees such as the United Nations program that supported refugees financially or by accommodations, schools, and health aid. Most of the

²¹ THOMPSON, Nick. *Syria's war: Everything you need to know about how we got here* / CNN. Online. CNN. 2015-10-08. Available from: <https://edition.cnn.com/2015/10/08/middleeast/syria-war-how-we-got-here/index.html>. [viewed 2023-12-04].

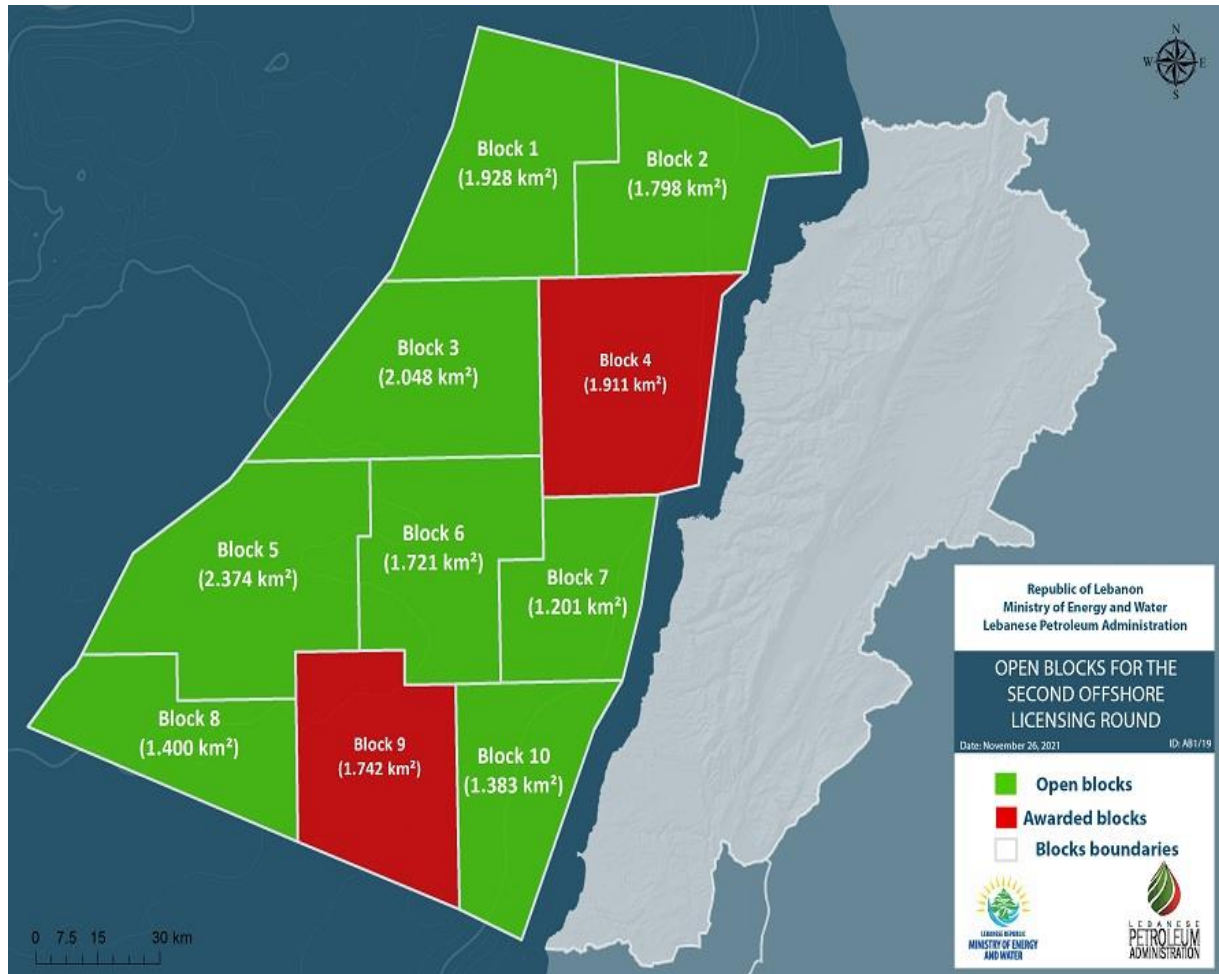
Syrians weren't satisfied with the refugee conditions in Turkey, Jordan, and Lebanon, since they are unable to obtain work permits, are subjected to hate crimes, and have limited access to health care.²² After that, the Syrian refugees started seeking asylum in Europe by crossing the sea borders between Turkey and Greece through smuggling under very difficult circumstances.²³ On the other side, most of the Syrians remain living in very difficult situations in tents since most of them don't have the capabilities to move abroad.

²² GOWAYED, Heba. *Racism and the blocked refuge of the displaced of the middle east*. Online. Arab Center Washington DC. 2022-04-28. Available from: <https://arabcenterdc.org/resource/racism-and-the-blocked-refuge-of-the-displaced-of-the-middle-east>. [viewed 2023-12-04].

²³ FRONTEX. *Profiting from misery – how smugglers bring people to Europe*. Online. www.frontex.europa.eu. 2016-02-18. Available from: <https://www.frontex.europa.eu/media-centre/news/focus/profitting-from-misery-how-smugglers-bring-people-to-europe-aUY2f>. [viewed 2023-12-04].

Lebanese economy between the civil war and the arrival of Syrian refugees

This photo shows the opened petroleum blocks for offshoring from the Lebanese Petroleum Administration website²⁴



²⁴ LEBANESE PETROLEUM ADMINISTRATION. *Open Blocks*. Online. www.lpa.gov.lb. 2021-11-26. Available from: <https://www.lpa.gov.lb/english/licensing-rounds/second-licencing-round/open-blocks1>. [viewed 2023-12-04].

As a result of its location at the crossroads of three continents, the area that is modern-day Lebanon is rich in cultural and religious diversity. This region was subject to various foreign conquests for much of its history, including by the Romans, Arabs, and Ottomans. Following World War I, France acquired a mandate over the northern portion of the former Ottoman Empire province of Syria. From it the French demarcated the region of Lebanon in 1920, and it gained independence in 1943. Since then, Lebanon has experienced periods of political turmoil interspersed with prosperity built on its historical position as a regional center for finance and trade. Then, the country's 1975-90 civil war, which resulted in an estimated 120,000 fatalities, was followed by years of social and political instability.²⁵

we will present the economic situation in Lebanon before 2010 to compare it to the situation after the Syrian refugee's arrival. Although Lebanon was classified as an upper middle-income country (world Bank 2013). But even before the Syrian war, Lebanon suffered from several economic challenges including the civil war in 1975, the assassination of Prime Minister Rafik Hariri in 2005, and in my opinion this was the main factor in changing the region policy for a new middle east. The effects of the Hariri assassination continue to be felt even over a decade later. The assassination came as a shock to the people of Lebanon. A string of assassinations began throughout Lebanon which saw around 20 people either killed or nearly killed in attempts to prevent an investigation into the Hariri murder and to silence serious opposition. "The assassination of Hariri in Lebanese politics was a number of things," Paul Salem, the president of the Middle East Institute in Washington DC, told NOW. "He was sort of a central anchor in the contradictions and multiple communities of Lebanese politics."²⁶ "Rafik Hariri is the beginning of a slew of assassinations. If you include from February to June alone, you have Rafik Hariri killed, you have Basil Fleihan killed, you have George Hawi killed and you have Samir Kassir killed," Chatah stated.²⁷ The situation in Lebanon has drastically worsened since Hariri's assassination. Impunity has increased and one of the worst economic crises that the world has

²⁵ CIA THE WORLD FACTBOOK. *Explore all countries- lebanon*. Online. www.cia.gov. 2023-11-14. Available from: <https://www.cia.gov/the-world-factbook/countries/lebanon/>. [viewed 2023-12-04].

²⁶ FRAKES, Nicholas. *The effects of the Hariri assassination continue to be felt even over a decade later - Nowlebanon*. Online. Nowlebanon. 2023-02-14. Available from: <https://nowlebanon.com/the-effects-of-the-hariri-assassination-continue-to-be-felt-even-over-a-decade-later/>. [viewed 2023-12-04].

²⁷ FRAKES, Nicholas. *The effects of the Hariri assassination continue to be felt even over a decade later - Nowlebanon*. Online. Nowlebanon. 2023-02-14. Available from: <https://nowlebanon.com/the-effects-of-the-hariri-assassination-continue-to-be-felt-even-over-a-decade-later/>. [viewed 2023-12-04].

seen in over a century has decimated the Lebanese economy, forcing countless people into poverty as the country's politicians continue to fail at ensign the crisis. The wars in Lebanon especially the 15 years of civil war and external occupations after the Israeli-Lebanese war in 1982 and 2006, in addition to the global financial crises in 2008/2009. Then after the civil war in 1990, the World Bank funded Lebanon with donations from Paris meeting with a long-term plan that was established by the government including a health system, infrastructure, and housing (Central Administration of Statistics, 2019). All the support was useless since the war leaders who killed Lebanese people throughout the years and destroyed Lebanon (the hub country of the Middle East), were given all the government positions to rule the country. Lebanon also performed a fixed exchange rate regime and the central bank stabilized the value of the Lebanese pound (LBP) at 1500 to the US dollar although all the conflicts that Lebanon faced caused an increase in inflation, and a decrease in foreign investments and trust. Moreover, the Lebanese economy is dependent on imports with a huge trade deficit and political disruption that led to electricity shortage in all Lebanese cities with all regions benefiting only from a limited 3-12 hours period of government-provided electricity per day at the beginning of the Syrian war and reached for only one to three hours a day on average.²⁸ "Lebanon's electricity crisis is leaving people in the dark and dramatically reducing people's access to critical rights such as food, water, education, and health care," said Lama Fakih, Middle East and North Africa director at Human Rights Watch. "The dire situation in Lebanon illustrates why access to safe, clean, and affordable electricity isn't merely an amenity, but is a human right that the state has must fulfill."²⁹ This all summarizes the economic condition of Lebanon before the influx of Syrian refugees who worsened the conditions even more.

²⁸ HUMAN RIGHTS WATCH. *Lebanon: electricity crisis exacerbates poverty, inequality*. Online. Human Rights Watch. 2023-03-09. Available from: <https://www.hrw.org/news/2023/03/09/lebanon-electricity-crisis-exacerbates-poverty-inequality>. [viewed 2023-12-04].

²⁹ HUMAN RIGHTS WATCH. *Lebanon: electricity crisis exacerbates poverty, inequality*. Online. Human Rights Watch. 2023-03-09. Available from: <https://www.hrw.org/news/2023/03/09/lebanon-electricity-crisis-exacerbates-poverty-inequality>. [viewed 2023-12-04].

Syrian refugee's arrival in 2011

In 2011, Lebanon didn't deal with the conflict as a serious conflict, at the beginning, by keeping its borders with Syria open, allowing the influx of large refugee numbers with illegal status or plans. Syrian refugees arrived in an already weak country experiencing a downward economic trend and affected it more and more with their huge number arrivals. Due to the Lebanese experience with the Palestinian camps, they prohibited building organized Syrian camps so refugees lived in different houses and unorganized shelters in very bad conditions. To understand Syrian refugees' conditions in Lebanon, we used the Vulnerability Assessment of Syrian Refugees (VASyR) run annually by the UNHCR, UNICEF, and the WFP. According to VASyR 2020, less than 20 percent of Syrian refugees hold legal residency which have a negative impact on all aspects.³⁰ One of the main aspects is the labor market which according to the ILO and FAFO (2020) study, 95 percent of the surveyed Syrians lacked a work permit valid in Lebanon.³¹ They work with low wages and this, in my opinion, caused the tension to increase between Syrians and Lebanese, due to the government policy which lacks any organization for the refugees entering the country. Social assistance had been an important source of income for Syrian refugees in the form of e-cards that were reported as the main household source of income (21 percent), followed by informal debt (17 percent) and ATM cards from the UN or other humanitarian organizations (15 percent, up from 7 percent in 2019) (VASyR 2020).³² Cash assistance means that Syrians can have other work with low wages and prevents the Lebanese from work opportunities. Most refugees work informally whereby 92 percent have no work contract and over half (56 percent) work on a seasonal weekly or daily basis (International Labor Organization).³³

³⁰ VASYR. *Vulnerability Assessment of Syrian Refugees in Lebanon*. Online. Ialebanon. 2020. Available from: https://ialebanon.unhcr.org/vasyr/files/vasyr_reports/VASyR%202020.pdf [viewed 2023-12-04].

³¹ INTERNATIONAL LABOUR ORGANIZATION. *Impact of COVID-19 on Syrian refugees and host communities in Jordan and Lebanon*. Online. International Labour Organization. 2020. Available from: https://www.ilo.org/wcmsp5/groups/public/---arabstates/---ro-beirut/documents/briefingnote/wcms_749356.pdf. [viewed 2023-12-04].

³² VASYR. *Vulnerability Assessment of Syrian Refugees in Lebanon*. Online. Ialebanon. 2020. Available from: https://ialebanon.unhcr.org/vasyr/files/vasyr_reports/VASyR%202020.pdf [viewed 2023-12-04].

³³ INTERNATIONAL LABOUR ORGANIZATION. *Impact of COVID-19 on Syrian refugees and host communities in Jordan and Lebanon*. Online. International Labour Organization. 2020. Available from: https://www.ilo.org/wcmsp5/groups/public/---arabstates/---ro-beirut/documents/briefingnote/wcms_749356.pdf. [viewed 2023-12-04].

Lebanese Government Policies in 2014

Taking into consideration, that the international regime for refugee protection was developed mostly after World War II when Europe had to cope with a large-scale refugee and humanitarian crisis. The most important instruments in International Refugee Protection is the 1951 Geneva Convention relating to the Status of Refugees, and its 1967 Protocol. The Convention defines the term “refugee”, his/her rights and obligations in the country of asylum and, perhaps most importantly, establishes the principle of nonrefoulement, according to which “refugees should not be forcibly returned to a territory where their lives or freedom would be threatened” (UNHCR, 2017a, p.16). applies only to persons who became refugees as a result of events occurring before January 1st, 1951, the need to broaden the concept led to the drafting and adoption of the 1967 Protocol, which removes the temporal and geographic limitations set out in the Convention. (neither Lebanon nor Syria signed them) and it's not related to the Gross domestic product GDP of the country since Yemen the poorest country in the Arab region signed both documents and African countries also. This probably was after the 1967 six-day war displacing Palestinians, Syrians, and Egyptians which many of them displaced to Lebanon, especially Palestinians from 1948 al-Nakba and ratification of any convention dealing with displaced people will add more displaced people and bring more tension to an already small and divided country. According to the 1951 Convention, a refugee is “any person who owing to well-founded fear of being persecuted for reasons of race, religion, nationality, membership of a particular social group or political opinion, is outside the country of his [or her] nationality and is unable or, owing to such fear, is unwilling to avail him [or her]self of the protection of that country; or who, not having a nationality and being outside the country of his [or her] former habitual residence as a result of such events, is unable or, owing to such fear, is unwilling to return to it” (UNHCR, 2017a, p.262). Lebanon did not ratify the 1951 refugee convention; hence, it works in accordance with the Memorandum of Understanding signed with the UNHCR. Additionally, Lebanon does not have a comprehensive legal framework regarding immigrants. The agreement between Lebanon and the UNHCR granted asylum seekers the right to reside in the country for three months, during which the UNHCR is to issue a final decision on refugee claims. Recognized refugees can

stay for six to nine more months, during which a permanent solution must be reached.³⁴ The official position of the Government of Lebanon regarding the ultimate solutions to asylum-seekers does not contemplate any form of local integration, as this is considered “unconstitutional, and therefore not an option” 26 (LCRP, 2018, p.16). Rather, the only durable solution in their perspective is the safe return to one’s country of origin, or the resettlement to a third country. However, UNHCR is present in the country, coordinating the refugee response in the wake of the Syrian crisis, working with over 60 organizations (multiple Non-Governmental Organizations (NGOs), other UN agencies, and the Lebanese Government) to provide essential relief supplies. (Charles, 2017). Not being a party of the 1951 refugee convention, the Lebanese government did not allow the UNHCR to build formal tents. The fear of another permanent refugee population has led the Lebanese government to introduce policies. Lebanon is also a country with a delicate religious and 18 sectarian balance. The demographic in question may be religious affiliation, as the vast majority of Syrians are Sunni Muslims. Lebanon, known for its religious diversity in the region, has struggled to keep peace between its 18 religious sects. Today, Christians make up nearly a third of the population, while the other two-thirds are almost equally split between Shiites and Sunnis.³⁵ With the influx of Syrian refugees, many Lebanese fear that granting resettlements and the right to work for Syrians will encourage integration which will upset the delicate sectarian balance. It should also be noted that, due to a deep political deadlock (which led to the postponement of parliamentary elections twice) and the historical relations between Lebanon and Syria, no specific legislation or policy relating to the status of Syrian refugees in the country has been issued until October 2014 (approximately 3 years after the start of the refugee influx), when the Council of Ministers adopted a comprehensive policy on Syrian displacement (Janmyr, 2016). The timing of this decision is probably related to the incursion and attacks that the Islamic State in Iraq and Syria ISIS and other jihadist fronts perpetrated in Lebanon too, which caused the deaths of several Lebanese soldiers and an overall tightening of the security situation. Lebanon was suffering the effects of the spillover of the war in Syria, and “looming threats to the country’s security, and political, economic, and social

³⁴ UNHCR. *UNHCR country operations plan 2004 - lebanon | UNHCR australia*. Online. UNHCR Australia. 2004. Available from: <https://www.unhcr.org/au/media/unhcr-country-operations-plan-2004-lebanon>. [viewed 2023-12-04].

³⁵ MROUE, Bassem. *Lebanese premier warns Syrian refugees pose a danger to the small nation's balance*. Online. AP News. 2023-09-07. Available from: <https://apnews.com/article/syrian-refugees-lebanon-border-crossing-48d374204cf05e55a0d2412c16f59491>. [viewed 2023-12-04].

stability appeared to be a good reason to put a halt to the influx of refugees” (Lebanon Support (LS), 2016, p.8). The national Government closed the official border crossing points with Syria and the Council of Ministers approved a 'Policy Paper on Syrian Refugee Displacement', which was the first official statement issued by the Lebanese Government since the beginning of the crisis. The paper included new regulations preventing Syrians from entering Lebanon and put restrictions on residency and work permits (both issuance and renewal) for Syrians already in the country. These regulations aimed to reduce the number of Syrians in Lebanon, but now after all these years, it's very difficult or even impossible to manage and control this huge number of refugees without any documents and statistics while both migrant smuggling and human trafficking are still taking place in Lebanon even after the Lebanese government policies. This has been the case even before the influx of Syrian refugees into the country in 2011 and afterward, as it is an origin country (it has historically been a country of emigration) and a destination one too, for economic migrants, mostly domestic labourers (European Commission, 2016) and refugees (Syrians, Palestinians, and Iraqis). It is a transit country as well, with many Syrian refugees looking to be smuggled out of Lebanon to try to reach Europe (European Commission, 2016). Consequently, this has pushed people to resort to other (irregular) means to reach safety. For example, they turn to migrant smuggling, use false documents (e.g. visas to third countries that serve as ‘proof’ of onward travel, making their stay in Lebanon temporary, i.e., a transit location), bribe authorities or use unofficial entry points situated along the Syria-Lebanon border (European Commission, 2016). However, the government has repeatedly refused to adopt the internationally acknowledged notion of “refugee”, instead opting for the term “displaced person” for fearing to undertake obligations that such a status could bring about (Dionigi, 2016).³⁶ The term “displaced” is also “suggestive of a less permanent status” (Janmyr, 2016, p.61)³⁷ especially after what happened with Palestinians who moved to Lebanon and participated in the civil war in addition to their camps that prevent anybody from entering them.

³⁶ DIONIGI, Filippo. *The syrian refugee crisis in lebanon: state fragility and social resilience*. Online. Researchgate. February 2016. Available from: https://www.researchgate.net/publication/296702476_The_Syrian_Refugee_Crisis_in_Lebanon_State_Fragility_and_Social_Resilience. [viewed 2023-12-04].

³⁷ JANMYR, Maja. *Precarity in exile: the legal status of syrian refugees in lebanon*. Online. ResearchGate. October 2016. Available from: https://www.researchgate.net/publication/311419575_Precarity_in_Exile_The_Legal_Status_of_Syrian_Refugees_in_Lebanon. [viewed 2023-12-04].

According to this, the sudden influx of Syrian refugees into a small country that is already suffering from economic crises due to the civil war, external occupations, and regional neighbors' civil war exacerbated the crises of Lebanese infrastructure, health system, labor market, and GDP with major problems in the trade sector. The international community is responsible for supporting the safe return of refugees to their homeland or to a third country since the Lebanese government is rejecting to grant them nationalities fearing the changes that will have effects on the native citizens who are fleeing the country due to the economic crises. Moreover, since Lebanon does not have a comprehensive legal framework regarding immigrants and since the main agreement between Lebanon and the UNHCR only granted asylum seekers the right to reside in the country for three months, during which the UNHCR is to issue a final decision on refugee claims then there must be a solution for the refugees themselves and the Lebanese people who are fleeing the country or living in very difficult situations in Lebanon and Syria. Recognized refugees can stay for six to nine more months, during which a permanent solution must be reached and this didn't happen at all in Lebanon which supports the Lebanese government policy. We can agree that the Lebanese government and the political parties bear the main responsibility for the situation of the Syrian refugees in Lebanon since the policy related to the status of Syrian refugees and the management strategy of them in the country had been only issued until October 2014 (approximately 3 years after the start of the refugee influx) and this in my opinion was the main reason that led refugees to reside in the country without a residence permit, a working contract, tax evasion, and increased tensions between Lebanese and Syrians, but we can agree also that the refugees situation can't be kept like this.

Syrian Refugees Impact on Lebanon

According to the statements from the international donor meetings in London and Brussels (2016 to 2021), it focuses on the costs that Lebanon has incurred as a result of the refugee crises, the cost estimated to be 13,1 billion dollars only between 2012 and 2015.³⁸ Despite these costs, the Lebanese government's statement stated that there is additional hospitality to the Syrians who were welcomed at the beginning of the Syrian conflict. Moreover, due to the request of the Government of Lebanon, the World Bank, in collaboration with the UN, the EU, and the IMF, has undertaken a rapid Economic and Social Impact Assessment (ESIA) of the Syrian conflict on Lebanon for the 2012-2014 period, results showed that the conflict may cut real GDP growth by 2.9 percentage points each year resulting in large losses in terms of wages, profits, taxes or private consumption and investment. Higher prices affected the citizens also especially in housing with a 44% increase in rents that was reported between June 2012 and June 2013 during the beginning of the Syrian conflict.

Impact on health system

According to the World Bank in 2013, the conflict in Syria impacted Lebanon's health system, increased demand for health care services, increased unpaid commitments of the Ministry of Public Health (MOPH) to contracted hospitals, decreased health workers including specialists and nurses, increased communicable diseases (the number of measles cases, for example, increased from 9 in 2012 to 1,456 in 2013) in addition to the emergence of previously absent diseases and increased epidemics such as waterborne diseases, measles, and tuberculosis which witnessed a 27% increase in tuberculosis rates since 2011.³⁹ Lebanese citizens have had decreased access to health services because of the reduced quality of care, overcrowding, and increased waiting time. Lack of water and sanitation infrastructure and other bad environmental conditions also generated significant risks of increased infections. Thus, demand for health

³⁸ BRUN, Cathrine, Ali FAKIH, Maha SHUAYB, and Mohammad HAMMOUD. *The economic impact of the syrian refugee crisis in lebanon what it means for current policies*. Online. World Refugee & Migration Council. September 2021. Available from: <https://wrmcouncil.org/wp-content/uploads/2021/09/Lebanon-Syrian-Refugees-WRMC.pdf>. [viewed 2023-12-04].

³⁹ WORLD BANK. *Lebanon: Economic and Social Impact assessment of the syrian conflict*. Online. world bank. September 2013. Available from: <https://www.worldbank.org/content/dam/Worldbank/document/MNA/LBN-ESIA%20of%20Syrian%20Conflict-%20EX%20SUMMARY%20ENGLISH.pdf>. [viewed 2023-12-04].

services has markedly increased during the beginning of the Syrian conflict. In December 2012 alone, 40 percent of healthcare visits were for Syrian refugees. In addition, strong demand for hospital services is crowding hospitals, thus generating financial pressure on hospitals, increasing costs, and generating medication and employee shortages. Over time, the impact of delayed health care will affect all Lebanese citizens and the displaced Syrians, particularly the vulnerable. Since fall of 2019, Lebanon has been experiencing multisector crises. Allegations of corruption, the October 17 revolution, the economic crisis, the COVID-19 pandemic, the Beirut port blast, the fuel tank explosion, and many other challenges put the country in a chronicle of tragedies.⁴⁰ With an annual inflation of 84.9% in 2020 and a 90% loss of the Lebanese pound value, the World Bank identified the Lebanese economic crisis as one of the 3 most severe in the world since the mid-19th Century.⁴¹ The Bloomberg Healthcare Efficiency Index ranked Lebanon 23rd in the world healthcare efficiency in September 2018.⁴² there has been massive emigration of healthcare workers, negatively impacting the healthcare system. The decrease in fee value, workers' trapped savings in banks, the difficulty in getting to the workplace due to fuel and electricity shortages, and the lack of basic medications have forced healthcare service providers to search for better opportunities abroad. As hundreds of doctors leave the country, many units like the pediatric cardiac critical care, fetal medicine, and brachytherapy now lack the capacity to provide services and this has serious implications for patient care and on-the-job training for the next generation of healthcare workers. More than half of young doctors or residents in the country now prefer to undertake their residency abroad, where better research and training opportunities are available.⁴³ hospitals are experiencing shortages of drugs, medications and medical supplies, as well as electricity cuts, which may force them to shut down. For example, on

⁴⁰ ABDALLAH, Wael, Khalil KHALIL, Bernard NAJIB, Nadine KASSIS, and David ATALLAH. *Beirut blast: creating our expectations through heartbreak* | *Future Science OA*. Online. Future Science OA. 2020-11-09. Available from: <https://doi.org/10.2144/fsoa-2020-0171>. [viewed 2023-12-04].

⁴¹ DERHALLY, Massoud, and Deena KAMEL. *Lebanon's crisis among the worst since mid-19th century, World Bank says*. Online. The National. 2021-06-01. Available from: <https://www.thenationalnews.com/business/economy/lebanon-s-crisis-among-the-worst-since-mid-19th-century-world-bank-says-1.1233228>. [viewed 2023-12-04].

⁴² REPUBLIC OF LEBANON MINISTRY OF PUBLIC HEALTH. *Health system resilience in lebanon: a consistent progress amidst political instability- june 2019*. Online. moph. June 2019. Available from: <https://www.moph.gov.lb/en/view/9724/health-system-resilience-in-lebanon-a-consistent-progress-amidst-political-instability-dr-walid-amma>. [viewed 2023-12-04].

⁴³ NASSAR, Malek, Wael ABDALLAH, Bernard NAJIB, Khalil KHALIL, and David ATALLAH. *Weakening of the Lebanese health sector*. Online. 2023. Available from: <https://doi.org/10.26719/emhj.23.022>. [viewed 2023-12-04].

14 August 2021, the American University of Beirut Medical Center was obliged to shut down due to fuel shortage and this may have caused the death of 40 adult and 15 child patients who were on ventilators.⁴⁴ The economic crisis has only intensified an already overburdened healthcare sector and impacted the ability of all public funds to provide adequate social protection and healthcare coverage. The actual coverage of these public funds has become negligible due to the depreciation of the currency. stocks of drugs have dropped by 50% since the beginning of the crisis, resulting in more than 70% of the Lebanese population with no access to critical medications.⁴⁵

Demographic impact

After December 2014 in Lebanon, more than one in every four people is a Syrian refugee or a Palestinian refugee. The number of people living in Lebanon which has 1,421 informal settlements, has sharply soared by a minimum of 30% since March 2011 possibly by nearly 1.5 million as reported by Government estimates in a state of only four million Lebanese. This number of refugees is very high compared to the national citizens themselves. Although the size of the Lebanese diaspora varies wildly but the most reliable statistics from the Lebanese government put the figure at 15.4 million so it's very difficult for Lebanese people and the government itself to accept resettlements of Syrian refugees and at the same time the national citizens are fleeing due the conflicts in the region which the Syrian war being the main reason for this. The country's demographic is very important to the people, politicians, and all government sectors since it affects Lebanon's secular constitution which is so sensitive from 1932. Back then, Christians were the majority but the most of Christians majority left during the Civil War. Simultaneously, higher birth rate among Muslims and the presence of large numbers of Muslim refugees from Palestine and Syria, means the internal demographic has changed and no one will agree on refugee resettlement and granting them Lebanese nationality. There is a lingering fear that the influx and stay of Syrian refugees in Lebanon might destabilize the religious fabric in

⁴⁴ NASSAR, Malek, Wael ABDALLAH, Bernard NAJIB, Khalil KHALIL, and David ATALLAH. *Weakening of the Lebanese health sector*. Online. 2023. Available from: <https://doi.org/10.26719/emhj.23.022>. [viewed 2023-12-04].

⁴⁵ EL-JARDALI, Fadi, Reem MASRI, and Zeina SLEEM. *Rethinking lebanon's healthcare system amid the economic crisis*. Online. The lebanese center for policy studies. 2023-07-27. Available from: <https://www.lcps-lebanon.org/articles/details/4799/rethinking-lebanon's-healthcare-system-amid-the-economic-crisis>. [viewed 2023-12-04].

favor of Sunnis, therefore making them the majoritarian sect and reinforcing sectarianism. Indeed, according to Hove and Mutanda (2015, p.560).⁴⁶ Moreover, living in Lebanon without a resident permit affects all aspects of life. Tens of thousands of babies born during Syria's crisis have ended up undocumented, and stateless in terms of legal rights and protections. Few have been given a birth certificate from the Syrian state. Most newborns and toddlers have not been properly registered with the state and lack any official documentation to identify them, as they flee with their families to neighboring countries.⁴⁷ In 1925, Article 3 of the Lebanese law stated that foreigners legally resident in the country for more than an uninterrupted five years, persons married to a Lebanese woman and resident in Lebanon for one year, or those who have given services to the country, could obtain Lebanese nationality upon request through a presidential decree.⁴⁸ As a result, the only way to become Lebanese was by having a Lebanese father or by marrying⁴⁹ a Lebanese man or through a decree issued by the President of the Republic, who according to the Lebanese confessional system is always a Christian. Thus, all Syrian and Palestinian refugees will affect both, the native citizens in the country who are very low compared to the historic influx of the refugees to Lebanon, and the political regime. In my opinion, resettlements are not accepted by the Lebanese government nor the citizens and this will lead to more catastrophic conditions if the international community insists on keeping the refugee status as it is or if they suggest a resettlements solution.

⁴⁶ HOVE, Mediel, and Darlington MUTANDA. *The syrian conflict 2011 to the present: challenges and prospects*. Online. Sage Journals. 2014-12-05. Available from: <https://journals.sagepub.com/doi/abs/10.1177/0021909614560248>. [viewed 2023-12-04].

⁴⁷ AHMAD KHALIL AND KAREN LEIGH. *Syrian babies, born refugees, left without a state*. Online. Syria. 2014-04-11. Available from: <https://deeply.thenewhumanitarian.org/syria/articles/2014/04/11/syrian-babies-born-refugees-left-without-a-state>. [viewed 2023-12-04].

⁴⁸ GENERAL SARAY, HIGH COMMISSIONER OF THE REPUBLIC OF FRANCE TO THE COUNTRIES OF SYRIA, GREATER LEBANON, THE ALAOUITE AND THE DRUZES'DJEBEL. *Decree no15 on lebanese nationality*. Online. Refworld | The Leader in Refugee Decision Support. 1925-01-19. Available from: <https://www.refworld.org/pdfid/44a24c6c4.pdf>. [viewed 2023-12-04].

⁴⁹ Consider that in Lebanese law marriage is regulated by Personal Status Law which is under the authority of religious institutions, therefore marriage can only be stipulated between persons of the same religious sect.

Impact on the labor market

According to World Bank⁵⁰, the influx of Syrian refugees increased the labor supply by between 30 and 50 percent with a large impact on women, youth, and unskilled workers. This sudden increase in the number of individuals looking for jobs at the same time during the economic crises is expected to have major effects on labor market outcomes. The ILO study on the effect of Syrian refugees on local labor markets finds that “Syrian workers are accepting lower incomes, work for longer hours and without social benefits; this has led to decreasing wages and a reduction of job opportunities” for all employees. Most Syrian refugees work as informal laborers, whereby 92 percent of workers do not have a contract. As a consequence, the majority of Syrian refugees are working with negligible working benefits or protection⁵¹ In Lebanon, 88 percent of Syrian refugees who are employed are paid 40 percent less than the minimum wage. According to the ILO. "The negativity stems from the fact that people believe [Syrian] refugees are being provided international assistance and fresh US dollars, while the Lebanese currency keeps losing value, there's also something of an open border with Syria and it's really difficult to keep track of who is going back and forth, who is here for protection, and how that impacts the people who can never go back because they would be at risk," an aid worker told DW, speaking off the record.⁵²

Impact on infrastructure

Informal settlements are where the poorest refugees end up since they represent the cheapest housing solution. Family members who arrived from Syria used to rent a piece of land and build

⁵⁰ WORLD BANK. *Lebanon: Economic and Social Impact assessment of the syrian conflict*. Online. world bank. September 2013. Available from: <https://www.worldbank.org/content/dam/Worldbank/document/MNA/LBN-ESIA%20of%20Syrian%20Conflict-%20EX%20SUMMARY%20ENGLISH.pdf>. [viewed 2023-12-04].

⁵¹ INTERNATIONAL LABOUR ORGANIZATION REGIONAL OFFICE FOR THE ARAB STATES. *Assessment of the impact of syrian refugees in lebanon and their employment profile*. Online. International Labour Organization. 2013. Available from: https://www.ilo.org/wcmsp5/groups/public/--arabstates/--ro-beirut/documents/publication/wcms_240134.pdf. [viewed 2023-12-04].

⁵² SCHAER, Cathrin, Razan SALMAN, and Mohamad CHREYTEH. *Lebanon's threat to send Syrians home: Fact or fiction? – DW – 10/18/2022*. Online. dw.com. 2022-10-18. Available from: <https://www.dw.com/en/lebanons-threat-to-send-syrians-home-political-stunt-or-traumatic-reality/a-63480284>. [viewed 2023-12-04].

the settlement that shelters them all and this was to isolate themselves from cities and citizens which perceive them as a security threat.

June 16, 2019 photo, shows a Syrian refugee riding a motorcycle among tents at a refugee camp in the eastern Lebanese border town of Arsal, Lebanon.⁵³



⁵³ DEEB, Sarah El. *In Lebanon, Syrian refugees face new pressure to go home*. Online. Crux. 2019-06-20. Available from: <https://cruxnow.com/church-in-the-middle-east/2019/06/in-lebanon-syrian-refugees-face-new-pressure-to-go-home>. [viewed 2023-12-04].

Also, Refugees usually obtain power and water through illegal connections to the official supply, straining local services and infrastructure and disfiguring the environment with connected wires and pipes. They also produce their own electricity through private generators and buy water from water tanks distributed in trucks. These activities are indirect sources of air, noise pollution and, escaping from paying bills and taxes to the government. According to the World Bank, Solid waste generation has doubled in several cities, which is contributing to groundwater contamination, and pollution of water resources. As a result, since 2011, wastewater pollution has increased by 33%. Both municipal revenues and expenditures are expected to see a major shortfall in 2013 and 2014. This will further restrict the capacity of municipalities to deliver basic services and fund minimum maintenance of their already dilapidated assets. Regions with a high influx of refugees such as Akkar, Zahleh, and Baalbek, will witness a traffic increase of more than 50 percent on some roads, resulting in accidents and the rapid deterioration of the transport network. The neighborhood's sudden overpopulation had a negative impact on services and infrastructure. As detailed in a report by UN-Habitat, electricity and water shortages are frequent. Garbage has piled up as a result of the increasing amount of waste produced (and because waste collection has been increasingly sporadic following Lebanon's 2015 waste crisis).⁵⁴ economic crisis, currency deterioration, electricity shortage, and hike in the price of oil have left many Lebanese citizens and even Syrian refugees themselves facing darkness and danger.

Impact on economy

First, Lebanon borders with Syria the neighboring country which has a civil war affected the Lebanese economy and cross-border trade since the beginning of the Syrian war. No political relations with Israel, imply that all Lebanese exports leave by air or by sea implying higher costs. Secondly, tourism was affected due to security reasons from wars in the region. The negative consequences of the Syrian war on Lebanon's foreign trade led to a decrease of 20% in Lebanese exports. When GDP growth is considered, the scenario of lowered exports yields a decrease in the GDP growth rate by about 8.3 p.p. (relative to the Reference scenario) between 2011 and 2018. Lebanon's GDP decreased from US\$52 billion in 2019 to US\$21.8 billion in 2021, marking a 58.1 percent contraction, the highest contraction in a list of 193 countries with the

⁵⁴ UNHABITAT. *Neighbourhood profile & strategy NABAA Bourj Hammoud, Lebanon*. Online. March 2017. Available from: https://unhabitat.org/sites/default/files/documents/2019-08/un-habitat_2017.05.08_nps_nabaa_web.pdf. [viewed 2023-12-04].

most severe crises globally since the mid-nineteenth century (World Bank, 2021) exacerbated by the COVID-19 pandemic and the Port of Beirut explosion. The 2021 Vulnerability Assessment of Syrian Refugees (VASyR) found that 88% of Syrian refugee households are living in extreme poverty, with around half of refugee households being food insecure in 2021. With a 404% and 372% increase in food and non-food prices respectively since October 2019, inflation has significantly impacted people's capacity to afford basic needs. Additionally, without work permits the refugees accept lower wages due to high competition. Moreover, most of the refugees are not employed and those refugees are relying on the NGO's money support which is in dollar while Lebanese citizens are relying on Lebanese currency which creates tensions especially after the Lebanese lira collapsed, and after the Lebanese citizens were deprived of their deposits since the economic crises began in 2019. Till now, disputes between politicians and banks about the size of losses and who should pay have stalled any agreement. Yet the scale of Lebanon's crisis, the worst since its 1975-1990 civil war, dwarfs most other global examples. Lebanese government debt was, by some estimates, an eye-watering 500% of gross domestic product in 2021, while the same sectarian leaders who ran the nation into trouble still wield influence now. Lebanon's pound has lost more than 90% of its value since the crisis erupted in 2019.⁵⁵ An earlier plan, drawn up in 2020, was torpedoed by banks, the central bank, and ruling politicians over objections to the way losses were calculated and shared. IMF talks collapsed. In May 2023, The United Nations delayed a decision to use dollars for some of the cash aid it provides to Syrian refugees in Lebanon, after objections from senior Lebanese officials who said it could increase tensions with hard-pressed Lebanese citizens.⁵⁶ The United Nations said in a statement that it had taken a decision, based on Lebanese requests, to temporarily stop the use of dollars alongside Lebanese pounds in the aids next month, while discussions continue on the appropriate way to provide aid. This request from the Lebanese authorities was to avoid the increase of tension between Lebanese and Syrians since the Lebanese pound has lost more than 98 percent of its value since the economic collapse began in 2019 and most of the Lebanese families are paid in lira so the Humanitarian Coordinator for Lebanon, Omran Reda decision with other UN officials

⁵⁵ NAKHOUL, Samia, Tom PERRY, and Timour AZHARI. *Lebanon's savers to bear burden under new rescue plan*. Online. Reuters. 2022-02-03. Available from: <https://www.reuters.com/markets/rates-bonds/lebanons-savers-bear-burden-under-new-rescue-plan-2022-02-02/>. [viewed 2023-12-04].

⁵⁶ NAKHOUL, Samia, Tom PERRY, and Timour AZHARI. *Lebanon's savers to bear burden under new rescue plan*. Online. Reuters. 2022-02-03. Available from: <https://www.reuters.com/markets/rates-bonds/lebanons-savers-bear-burden-under-new-rescue-plan-2022-02-02/>. [viewed 2023-12-04].

will have a great effect on the country so the agencies themselves changed their decision after their meeting on Friday with the Prime Minister Najib Mikati and Social Affairs Minister Hector Hajjar. Hajjar said in a press conference that his ministry had not been properly informed of the decision to provide aid in dollars, which he said would increase tensions between the refugees and the Lebanese. A government source said that Mikati was also unaware of the decision to provide aid in dollars.⁵⁷ Hajjar renewed the call to all international communities for the refugee's safe return and not their survival, stating to pay this aid in Syria so that the displaced are eager to return to their country and not to stay because the numbers have greatly increased recently, especially with the newborns. In March 2023 Bashir Khoder, the governor of Baalbek-Hermel in Lebanon, sparked widespread controversy on social media in the country after a statement in which he criticized some calls for increased aid to the displaced Syrians in Lebanon. In a coordination meeting for the associations, which was called by the "Dar Al-Fatwa" in the Lebanese region of Baalbek, the coordinator of the displaced camps in the Aarsal region demanded an increase in the contributions for the displaced, and held the governor Khoder responsible for their difficult conditions, asking him to work to improve them. The words of the displaced camp coordinator elicited a response from the Lebanese governor, who said, "The governor's job is the highest administrative position in the Lebanese state, while my salary is less than that of the displaced Syrian in Lebanon". He added, "Syrians receive benefits that Lebanese do not, and this exodus cannot be forever apart from racism. there is a great burden on Lebanon. Speaking about the suffering of public sector employees in Lebanon, Khoder said that the Lebanese employees' salary is low, "All the burden is on us, we are not able to carry more responsibilities on our shoulders ".He added, "In light of the crisis, I am willingly ready to work for free for Lebanon, because it is my country, but we are not ready to work for free for other matters, and we cannot bear more after a crisis that has been going on for 12 years". From the video clip that the governor posted on his Twitter account, it was noted that the applause rose between one phrase and another while the governor delivered his speech, and the governor's name was trending on Twitter in Lebanon. Many praised the governor's performance and his "courage" in dealing with the sensitive issue of Syrian refugees. Some believed that the time had

⁵⁷ REUTERS. *UN delays dual-currency cash help to refugees in crisis-hit Lebanon*. Online. Reuters. 2023-05-27. Available from: <https://www.reuters.com/world/middle-east/un-delays-dual-currency-cash-help-refugees-crisis-hit-lebanon-2023-05-27/>. [viewed 2023-12-04].

come for the refugees to return to their safe countries, especially in light of the disastrous living conditions that the Lebanese suffer from. Others considered that the governor "put his finger on the wound...and the displacement is supposed to have a time limit...and he cannot stay forever"⁵⁸. Others expressed their hope that "the first task of the new president upon his election will be" to save Lebanon from the demographic catastrophe and the existential threat posed by the refugees, as they put it. Some called on him to solve the problem of his salary with his state and government, which brought him and the Lebanese to this situation because of corruption in the country, and they reached what they reached. Syrian refugees in Lebanon are believed to make up nearly a quarter of the country's population of six million, the highest proportion in the world. The deteriorating economic conditions in Lebanon have led to eighty percent of the population becoming in a state of poverty.⁵⁹ Basic public services are failing, and increasing numbers of Lebanese are migrating, especially those who are highly skilled. Exchange rate change and pass-through effects implying high inflation, which is estimated to be the 3rd highest globally after Venezuela and Sudan.

⁵⁸ BBC NEWS. *Bashir khoder, governor of baalbek-hermel in lebanon: "my salary is less than that of the displaced syrian in lebanon"*. Online. BBC News. 2023-03-18. Available from: <https://www.bbc.com/arabic/trending-65001112>. [viewed 2023-12-04].

⁵⁹ BBC NEWS. *Bashir khoder, governor of baalbek-hermel in lebanon: "my salary is less than that of the displaced syrian in lebanon"*. Online. BBC News. 2023-03-18. Available from: <https://www.bbc.com/arabic/trending-65001112>. [viewed 2023-12-04].

Syrian refugee's difficult conditions in Lebanon:

An estimated 90 percent of Syrian refugee households live in extreme poverty, up from 55 percent in early 2019. The U.N. says these households are living on less than half the Lebanese minimum wage. This means deprivation of basic human needs, including food, safe drinking water, sanitation, health, shelter, and education.⁶⁰ The challenge is best illustrated by the fact that there are now more Syrian children in need of a public education than there are Lebanese children in public schools. The public school system has been historically under-resourced, which has led most Lebanese to prefer to educate their children in private schools.⁶¹ According to the Norwegian Refugee Council NRC IN 2020⁶², there was 58% of children out of formal education and family economic pressures are increasingly resulting in children leaving school to work. Moreover, many of those who were in formal education attended afternoon classes in public schools, and due to the movement of many Lebanese to public schooling, the slots now are limited for refugee kids. To avoid a crisis like in the Aegean and Mediterranean seas in 2015-2016, the international community needs to prevent a catastrophic breakdown in Lebanon and a displacement that could further destabilize Europe and beyond. For that, there must be a focused effort on peace in Syria to create conditions for refugee returns, reconstruction, and the lifting of fear. There's an urgent humanitarian imperative for the international community to support Syrian refugees in Lebanon. Refugee Protection Watch's research found that 70 percent of Syrians in Lebanon have received no humanitarian assistance since the beginning of 2021 and just 0.8 percent of Syrian refugees in Lebanon are willing to return to Syria.⁶³ Given the economic situation in Lebanon and conditions in Syria, 58 percent of Syrian refugees in Lebanon surveyed

⁶⁰ KARASAPAN, Omer, and Sajjad SHAH. *Why Syrian refugees in Lebanon are a crisis within a crisis* / Brookings. Online. Brookings. 2021-04-15. Available from: <https://www.brookings.edu/articles/why-syrian-refugees-in-lebanon-are-a-crisis-within-a-crisis/>. [viewed 2023-12-04].

⁶¹ UNHCR. *UNHCR - lebanon - refugees from syria: lebanon - march 2015*. Online. UNHCR Operational Data Portal (ODP). March 2015. Available from: <https://data2.unhcr.org/en/documents/details/45826>. [viewed 2023-12-04].

⁶² NORWEGIAN REFUGEE COUNCIL (NRC). *The obstacle course: barriers to education for syrian refugee children in lebanon*. Online. March 2020. Available from: https://www.nrc.no/globalassets/pdf/reports/the-obstacle-course-barriers-to-education/executive-summary---the-obstacle-course_barriers-to-education.pdf. [viewed 2023-12-04].

⁶³ REFUGEE PROTECTION WATCH. *RPW study: "I have not known the taste of safety for ten years."* – REFUGEE PROTECTION WATCH. Online. November 2021. Available from: <https://refugeeprotectionwatch.org/rpw-study-i-have-not-known-the-taste-of-safety-for-ten-years/>. [viewed 2023-12-04].

by Refugees Protection Watch said they want to go to a third country. Due to the absence of a safe route, refugees are traveling by sea to Europe through smugglers and fees are reaching 5000\$ or more in very dangerous situations. More than 1,500 people including Lebanese citizens attempted the journey in the first 11 months of 2021, compared to 270 in 2019. Many Syrian families have drowned in the Mediterranean or found themselves nearly frozen to death in wintery forests on the borders of the EU and the preliminary findings of the 2021 Vulnerability Assessment of Syrian Refugees in Lebanon (VASyR) reveal that nine out of ten Syrian refugees still living in extreme poverty.⁶⁴ The majority of refugees, practiced negative coping strategies to survive, such as begging, borrowing money, reducing health expenses, and not paying rent. The survey of VASyR indicates that in 2021, more family members took poorly paid jobs and high-risk jobs or extra shifts to make the same income as the previous year. Prices have skyrocketed - Between October 2019 and June 2021, the cost of food increased by 404 percent- and finding a safe shelter is a very difficult struggle, with 60 percent of Syrian refugee families living in a dangerous, or overcrowded shelters. The survey also highlights that one out of five girls between the ages of 15 and 19 years were married. “The escalating crisis in Lebanon is putting the most vulnerable children at risk, including refugees, as more and more families are being forced to resort to negative coping measures, including sending their children to work in often dangerous and hazardous conditions, marrying off their young daughters or using violent discipline,” said UNICEF Representative in Lebanon Yukie Mokuo. Banks have put monthly limits on withdrawals which limits cash flows and the humanitarian aid for refugees is being affected. UNHCR spokeswoman Lisa Abu Khaled said that the UNHCR is obliged to identify the groups most in need, as resources do not meet all needs. The UNHCR warned that "the situation is grave", especially in Lebanon, which is experiencing an economic crisis, and where 9 out of 10 Syrian refugees live in extreme poverty. According to the summary of the assessment of vulnerabilities of Syrian refugees, many families have had to adopt strict and negative coping strategies related to food, 74 percent of refugee families in Lebanon have reduced the amount of food they consume daily. 69 percent had to reduce the number of meals per day. 50 percent of them depend on borrowing from shops or help from relatives or friends. 41 percent of families,

⁶⁴ VULNERABILITY ASSESSMENT FOR SYRIAN REFUGEES IN LEBANON (VASYR). *2021 vulnerability assessment for syrian refugees in lebanon (vasyr)*. Online. UNHCR Operational Data Portal (ODP). 2021-01-25. Available from: <https://data2.unhcr.org/en/documents/details/90589>. [viewed 2023-12-05].

and adults had to reduce food consumption to make it available to younger age groups, especially children. The inter-agency vulnerability assessment confirmed the great difficulties refugees face in meeting their basic non-food needs such as blankets, mattresses, kitchen sets, and sanitary supplies.⁶⁵ The situation is very difficult since most of the refugees are living in camps, fragile, and insecure accommodations, including tents in informal settlements and other types of sub-standard shelters such as garages, work-site sheds, and unfinished buildings. These shelters are often exposed to the wind, rain and snow, and lack appropriate sanitation. Most of the essential needs are not provided and they face difficulties in the winter season during rainy and snowy days especially since most of the camps are in the Bekaa valley and the North where the weather is more extreme and the temperature is very low in most of the days. The rest of the refugees according to the UNHCR report in March 2015 pay rent that averages about USD 200 per month, which cumulatively amounts to a monthly injection of USD 33 million to Lebanese property owners. Increased demand for shelter has raised the price of accommodation in some areas, negatively affecting Lebanese renters and this has worsened since the economic situation nowadays is completely different after the revolution of 2019 and after the Lebanese citizens were deprived of their deposits in banks which totals 100 billion dollars. Moreover, 48 percent of water supplied by the public system is lost through seepage. Wastewater networks are extremely poor. In some areas, they are non-existent. Over 92 percent of Lebanon's sewage runs untreated directly into water-courses and the sea. Solid waste treatment facilities are in short supply. National institutions such as Water Establishments and the Ministries of Water and Energy and Health, lack the capacity to address these difficult challenges. The increased demand that refugees place on the fragile infrastructure has been immense. Thus, refugees remain in extremely precarious conditions in terms of living standards (safety, livelihoods, healthcare, and education are not guaranteed). This hostile and unfavorable environment has often forced them to skip meals or decrease their daily food consumption, remove children from school, engage children in labor (child labor situations), prostitution, forced (child) marriage, human trafficking (for the purpose of forced labor or sexual exploitation), among others.

⁶⁵ UNHCR. *UNHCR - lebanon - refugees from syria: lebanon - march 2015*. Online. UNHCR Operational Data Portal (ODP). 2015-04-07. Available from: <https://data2.unhcr.org/en/documents/details/45826>. [viewed 2023-12-05].

Sectarian tensions

Lebanon is considered a small country compared to the huge influx of refugees leading to a high per capita concentration of refugees which also faced previous refugee influx from Palestine in 1948 and 1967. Although Syrian refugees traveled to different parts of the world, the most significant influx was towards the neighboring countries. Lebanon's case is the worst having now the highest per capita concentration of refugees. Demographic changes in Lebanon are possible to bring the country back to the brink of civil war that erupted in 1975 as a result of internal and external factors. One of the factors is the distribution of power in the political system in accordance with the population demographic distribution and the other is the Palestinian liberation organization in Lebanon with a high numbers of refugees who were able to gain power and control in the region which also led the Syrian troops to enter Lebanon in June 1976 with the aim of restoring peace, but also to curb Palestinian growing influence and mobilization and which led to increase tensions between Syrians and Lebanese who considered the intervention as an occupation and only the Taif agreement was considered the basis for ending the civil war allocating the political functions for the major sects, Islam and Christianity since Lebanon is a multi-ethnic and multi-religious country, bringing together Arabs and Armenians, and, in religious terms, comprising a total of 18 recognized religious sects, such as Sunni Muslims (27%), Shia (27%), Maronite Christians (21%), Greek Orthodox (8%), Druze (5,6%), among others (Central Intelligence Agency World Fact book, data as of 2012). This agreement ended the civil war but divided the country and the political system's power on sects and religions that led for many obstacles which increased by the influx of refugees that will affect the political system and sects power in the country. The National Pact (al-Mithāq al-Waṭani) emerged superimposing over the formal constitution a sectarian distribution of offices between Christians and Muslims in government, parliament, and the rest of the state bureaucracy. Christians – with control of the presidential office and the majority of seats in the parliament – retained a prevalent share of power in the state. The Sunni groups were given control of the office of the prime minister, whereas the Shi'i community was given the chair of the parliament. The pact also

established that Lebanon's geopolitical role would be balanced between independence from the West and autonomy from regional dynamics as Pan-Arabism and the Cold War.⁶⁶

The presence of the refugees is distributed across the country's provinces, North Lebanon is composed of two main regions; Tripoli and Akkar. There are more than 27 border villages with Syria along with three official crossing points. This makes this region the most targeted area. Mount Lebanon area is predominantly Christian with high standards of living which includes 4 Palestinian camps. In Bekaa, there are three main areas of refugee concentration: Aarsal, Central Bekaa, and Baalback. This area was known for the trade with Syria, which has ceased to exist affecting the economic situation in the region. This is the area of the highest concentration of refugees. In South Lebanon, this area includes five Palestinian refugee camps (Ein E-Hilweh, Mieh Mieh, Bourj Shemali, Rashidieh, ElBuss) with 23 unofficial gatherings,⁶⁷. Citizens living there fear that the influx of Syrian refugees and their resettlements will affect their way of living and presence. In truth, the name "Syrian" was often associated with "vulgarity, [and] low social and economic status" (Mroueh, 2014)⁶⁸, A myriad of other factors has further denigrated their 'image' among the Lebanese, such as the infiltration of the Islamic State of Iraq and Syria ISIS- is a Salafi-Jihadist militant organization that seeks to establish an Islamic caliphate in Iraq and Syria and Jabhat Fateh Sham- a Syrian based jihadist group from Syria into the outskirts of Aarsal, from August 2014 until late July 2017 (Chehayeb, 2017).⁶⁹ During this period, several Lebanese police officers and soldiers were kidnapped, with some being later killed by Islamists, and suicide

⁶⁶ DIONIGI, Filippo. *Statehood and refugees: patterns of integration and segregation of refugee populations in Lebanon from a comparative perspective*. Online. LSE Research Online. November 2017. Available from: https://eprints.lse.ac.uk/85631/1/Dionigi_Statehood%20and%20refugees_2017.pdf. [viewed 2023-12-05].

⁶⁷ OCHA. *Governorate profile - south lebanon 04 march 2014*. Online. UNHCR Operational Data Portal (ODP). 2014-03-07. Available from: <https://data.unhcr.org/en/documents/details/39813>. [viewed 2023-12-05].

⁶⁸ MROUEH, Mahmoud. *Anti-Syrian sentiment in Lebanon*. Online. openDemocracy. 2014-09-15. Available from: <https://www.opendemocracy.net/en/north-africa-west-asia/antisyrrian-sentiment-in-lebanon/>. [viewed 2023-12-05].

⁶⁹ CHEHAYEB, Kareem. *Analysis: what a battle on the lebanese border could mean for syria*. Online. Syria. 2017-07-21. Available from: <https://deeply.thenewhumanitarian.org/syria/articles/2017/07/21/analysis-what-a-battle-on-the-lebanese-border-could-mean-for-syria>. [viewed 2023-12-05].

bombings also took place, killing 5 people and wounding 30 more (Chehayeb, 2017).⁷⁰ The extremist armed group Islamic State (ISIS) has committed widespread and systematic abuses in areas under its control in Syria, Iraq, and Libya. ISIS has also claimed responsibility for deadly attacks in nearly 20 other countries, including Afghanistan, Egypt, France, Indonesia, Tajikistan, and the United Kingdom. Human Rights Watch documents these abuses and their impact on the general population.⁷¹ This increased tensions even more and more between Syrians and Lebanese who considered their land and children in danger, they fear that those militants will move to their cities and will cause the Syrian war to develop and expand into Lebanon. Nowadays the town and its suburbs are free from ISIS and other Islamist groups' presence, after an operation that cleared the area. Lebanon has been an independent state since 1943, having previously been under French control. Being a confessional state. Hence, this change is negatively perceived by the Lebanese people and has led to abuse and discrimination against all refugees, and the lack of acceptance of refugees.

⁷⁰ CHEHAYEB, Kareem. *Analysis: what a battle on the lebanese border could mean for syria*. Online. Syria. 2017-07-21. Available from: <https://deeply.thenewhumanitarian.org/syria/articles/2017/07/21/analysis-what-a-battle-on-the-lebanese-border-could-mean-for-syria>. [viewed 2023-12-05].

⁷¹ HUMAN RIGHTS WATCH. *Isis*. Online. Human Rights Watch | Defending Human Rights Worldwide. [n.d.]. Available from: <https://www.hrw.org/tag/isis>. [viewed 2023-12-05].

Lebanon urges international support for the quick and safe return of Syrian refugees

Lebanon is experiencing the most economic problems in its history, and finding a solution for the refugees in the country was the most important topic recently. In fact, politicians and other social groups are increasingly “calling for refugees to go home” (HRW, 2018, p.1) in addition to the lack of international support for the Syrian refugee crisis, more specifically the shortage of funding that the region has had to grapple with in the past years has even worsened the situation more. President Aoun has also said that the country “can no longer cope with the social and financial costs” (HRW, 2018, p.1). moreover, The historic financial problem, the 2019 revolution, the pandemic, and the massive blast at the port of Beirut. In addition to weak government structure, corruption with no justice, and failure to undertake reforms to unlock foreign assistance. GDP is declining year after year and the Lebanese pound devalued day after day, inflation is increasing with unemployment reaching high rates. Recently and as all previous Lebanese demands, The Lebanese labor minister on Friday 10 June 2022 called for international support for Lebanon in securing a quick and safe return of Syrian refugees inside the country to their homeland, the National News Agency (NNA) reported. "Lebanon can no longer bear the burden of hosting Syrian refugees as the country has suffered heavy economic losses, not to mention its high unemployment and crime rates, as a consequence of hosting the largest number of displaced per capita," Mustafa Bayram was quoted by NNA as saying. The Lebanese minister stated this in the virtual participation of the 110th session of the International Labor Conference held in Geneva. "It is the right of Syria to take back its citizens for them to rebuild their country with international organizations giving them aid inside their country," Bayram noted. In October 2022, Lebanon's president also announced that his country would begin sending the Syrian refugees back across the border. Lebanese authorities said they were ready to repatriate around 15000 Syrian refugee every month. The announcement led human rights organizations to condemn the proposed plan although the president's announcement does not apply to the return of 15000 refugee every month since it applies to voluntary returns and only 0.8 percent of refugees are willing to return as we stated above according to the Refugee Protection Watch research. Human Rights Watch's Majzoub explained how the voluntary returns are supposed to work: "People sign up, Lebanon's General Security sends the lists of names to the Syrian government to see if there are any security issues. The Syrian government sends back the list of people that they don't want, and then General Security sends the rest on buses to Syria." In an interview with DW,

Issam Charafeddine, Lebanon's minister for displaced people, confirmed this. "We started working on this issue a month ago ... and we presented a list of 483 families to General Security." The plan for voluntary returns has been delayed several times due to covid-19 pandemic, political problems between elected parties, foreign interference by rights groups protests, and UNHCR unwillingness to help in sending the refugees back to Syria as Charafeddine calls. According to Human Rights Watch's Majzoub. "We don't have any evidence that people are being forced to sign up to return." Proceeding from this, the EU supports Syrian refugees to live in their own country on the basis of UN Security Council Resolution 2254⁷² and the 2012 Geneva Communique⁷³. Moreover, the EU works closely with the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR) on the conditions that are needed for organized returns to be safe by monitoring the situation. On the other hand, UNHCR continues to assess the situation but as of now is not supporting or facilitating returns. The agency has formulated a number of protection safeguards that need to be in place in Syria before they engage in facilitating return. These include significant reduction in hostilities, guarantees that returnees will not face harassment and detention, as well as government mechanisms for addressing housing, land, and property issues. In April 2023, The campaign against Syrian refugees in Lebanon continues and has reached the point where the Minister of Social Affairs in the caretaker government, Hector Hajjar, requested the organization of an international conference devoted to discussing this file, "beginning with an in-depth reading of the multiple reasons for the presence of Syrians in Lebanon, and starting from them to search for serious solutions for them." with a view to their return to Syria or resettlement in a third country.⁷⁴ Hajjar's words came during his meeting with the European Union Commissioner for Crisis Management, Janiz Lenarcic, and his accompanying delegation, as he explained that "Lebanon has provided great support to the displaced for eleven years," considering that the description of displacement does not apply to all

⁷² UNITED NATIONS. *Security council unanimously adopts resolution 2254 (2015), endorsing road map for peace process in syria, setting timetable for talks*. Online. UN Press | Meetings Coverage and Press Releases. 2015-12-18. Available from: <https://press.un.org/en/2015/sc12171.doc.htm>. [viewed 2023-12-05].

⁷³ UNITED NATIONS. *Final communiqué of the action group for syria (geneva communiqué)*. Online. UN Peacemaker. 2012-06-30. Available from: <https://peacemaker.un.org/node/1581>. [viewed 2023-12-05].

⁷⁴ SHABARO, Asrar. *"Syrian refugees" in Lebanon are on fire..demanding an international conference*. Online. Alhurra Arabic. 2023-04-04. Available from: <https://www.alhurra.com/lebanon/2023/04/04/اللاجئون-السوريون-في-لبنان-نار-حامية-مطالب-بمؤتمر-دولي>. [viewed 2023-12-05].

Syrians in Lebanon, as "a large portion Some of them move between the two countries freely and hide behind the status of a displaced person to benefit financially." Lenarcic stated that on June 14-15, the European Union will host the seventh Brussels conference on supporting the future of Syria and the region, "and it will be very important to ensure a meaningful response in Lebanon." The political and economic crisis in Lebanon led to widespread poverty, the collapse of public services, and the increase in societal tensions. However, humanitarian aid is not a sustainable solution in the long term, as Lenarcic said in a press conference, "Rather, it is emergency aid to preserve life. What Lebanon needs is reforms, the election of a president of the republic, a fully empowered government, and an agreement with the international community, especially with the International Monetary Fund," and this agreement will pave the way in front of financial aid to come to Lebanon, including European aid that can help Lebanon recover from the crisis it is going through. Hajjar explained, "The displaced Syrians have benefited over the years from subsidized foodstuffs from the Lebanese state's treasury, which is fed by Lebanese taxes, in addition to benefiting from subsidies on medicine, electricity and fuel. Lebanon has also borne great burdens on the environmental level, with the high cost of removing waste, which has increased dramatically. Not to mention the pressure on the sewage networks. We cannot forget the cost of maintaining security and controlling the land and sea borders in an attempt to prevent infiltration into Lebanon and illegal immigration across the sea to Europe."⁷⁵ For all the reasons mentioned by the Minister of Social Affairs, he repeated in a tweet his call for holding an international conference with the participation of all concerned parties "with the aim of identifying the real displaced Syrians, distinguishing them from "residents" for economic or other reasons, determining their numbers, and working on an integrated plan to return them to their country or resettle them in a third country." Sharaf El-Din asserted, in an interview with Al-Hurra website, that "if there had been a Lebanese political decision to return the displaced, we would have done so, whether the United Nations agreed or not. Lebanon is legally covered because it did not sign the 1951 Convention relating to the Status of Refugees." During his visit to Brussels last month, the Lebanese parliamentary delegation was informed that deputies in the European

⁷⁵ SHABARO, Asrar. "Syrian refugees" in Lebanon are on fire..demanding an international conference. Online. Alhurra Arabic. 2023-04-04. Available from: <https://www.alhurra.com/lebanon/2023/04/04/اللاجئون-السوريون-في-لبنان-نار-حامية-مطالب-بمؤتمر-دولي/>. [viewed 2023-12-05].

Parliament would present a draft resolution related to the return of Syrian refugees to their country. security services in Aarsal informed that between 20 and 30 Syrian families are caught daily trying to sneak into Lebanese territory in the vicinity of the town

Supporting the future of Syria and the region Brussels conference, June 2023

The overarching objective of the Brussels Conferences is to ensure continued support to the Syrian people, both in Syria and in the wider region. As was the case at previous years' conferences, Brussels VII will equally address critical humanitarian and resilience issues affecting Syrians in Syria and neighboring countries, and those which impact communities hosting Syrian refugees in the region particularly Jordan, Lebanon and Turkey, as well as Egypt and Iraq. The Conference also provides an interactive platform for dialogue with civil society and NGOs active in Syria and the region. The high level ministerial segment of the conference on 15 June gathered representatives of 57 countries, including EU member states, and over 30 international organizations, including the United Nations, in addition to the EU institutions.⁷⁶ "The Syrian conflict is with us for more than 12 years. It is a long-lasting crisis with unspeakable suffering of millions of people. This was made even worse first by the dramatic and damaging earthquake in February, and because the global situation is worsening – not only due to the Russian aggression against Ukraine, but also with the new conflicts erupting – the latest one is in Sudan. But here we are again in Brussels conference, for the seventh year, discussing the needs, and making pledges for continued assistance. We are the biggest donor for the Syrian people, the EU needs and wants to make sure that their situation remains high on the international agenda." Josep Borrell, High Representative for Foreign Affairs and Security Policy.⁷⁷ The conference succeeded in mobilizing aid to Syrians inside the country and in the neighboring countries, through international pledges totaling €5.6 billion for 2023 and beyond, including €4.6 billion for 2023 and €1 billion for 2024 and beyond. With over then €30 billion support from 2011 till now from the EU.⁷⁸ "Unfortunately, there has been very little progress over the past year in order to resolve the Syrian conflict," European Union foreign policy chief

⁷⁶ EUROPEAN COUNCIL. *Supporting the future of syria and the region - brussels seventh conference, 15 june 2023*. Online. June 2023. Available from: <https://www.consilium.europa.eu/en/meetings/international-ministerial-meetings/2023/06/15/>. [viewed 2023-12-05].

⁷⁷ EUROPEAN COUNCIL. *Supporting the future of syria and the region - brussels seventh conference, 15 june 2023*. Online. June 2023. Available from: <https://www.consilium.europa.eu/en/meetings/international-ministerial-meetings/2023/06/15/>. [viewed 2023-12-05].

⁷⁸ EUROPEAN COUNCIL. *Supporting the future of syria and the region - brussels seventh conference, 15 june 2023*. Online. June 2023. Available from: <https://www.consilium.europa.eu/en/meetings/international-ministerial-meetings/2023/06/15/>. [viewed 2023-12-05].

Josep Borrell said in Brussels today, Thursday (June 25, 2023), during his announcement of the amount at the international donors' conference for Syria. Moreover, the German government pledged more than one billion euros to deal with the refugee crisis in Syria and the region, divided between the German Foreign Ministry and the Ministry of Development. German Minister of Development and International Cooperation Svenia Schulze said, "Forgetting the Syrian crisis now would be a grave mistake." But the Ministry announced its support for the steps taken by Turkey, Lebanon and Jordan, which have received 5.6 million Syrian refugees without mentioning their miserable conditions in those countries in addition to the racism that they facing in the host countries. According to Schulze, the combination of the civil war, huge displacement, catastrophic drought and earthquake will have dire consequences for people in the region and beyond. from this points we must agree that another solution must be discussed from the international community in order for the refugee's safe return to their country and not just insisting on one solution which borell admits that it's difficult to happen. On the other hand, the US State Department said that the United States announced additional aid to Syria worth \$920 million during the Brussels conference. The ministry added in a statement that the new package raises the total US humanitarian aid to Syria and the region to \$1.1 billion this year and about \$16.9 billion since the beginning of the Syrian war. From here we can ask why this total amount of support is being delivered to the NGO's and the international organizations in addition to the hosts countries instead of supporting the refugees themselves directly with direct support to have a house, good living conditions, and suggesting other solutions to return back to their home. Moreover, is this total amount of support is reaching to the refugees and their families in total and is the international communities are supporting the refugees without corruptions and workaround ways? This is a very important question and Syrians can't always stay in this conditions and from the other sides the international communities are still taking advantages of this situation.

Syrian current situation and the latest earthquake

More than a decade of humanitarian crisis and hostilities has left children in Syria facing one of the most complex emergencies in the world. Around two-thirds of the population require assistance because of a worsening economic crisis, continued localized hostilities, mass displacement and devastated public infrastructure. The Syrian pound (SYP) was devalued, there were increases in the prices of basic commodities, shortages of fuel, gas and electricity, and the continuing impact of COVID-19. The ongoing economic crisis is worsening negative coping mechanisms, Female-headed households, older people without family support, people with disabilities and children were disproportionately impacted. Around 90 per cent of families in the country live in poverty, while more than 50 per cent are food insecure.⁷⁹ Amid the conflict, many children and families have been forced to flee to safer areas, resulting in considerable internal displacement. The collapsing health care system, lack of access to safe water, poor sanitation and increasing food insecurity has resulted not only in increased vulnerability to fast-spreading waterborne and vaccine-preventable diseases, but also sparked a dramatic increase in malnutrition among children. An estimated more than 600,000 children under the age of five are stunted, the result of chronic undernutrition, leaving them at risk of irreversible physical and psychological damage. The conflict has also brought one of the largest education crises in recent history, with a whole generation of Syrian children paying the price of conflict. Education facilities are overstretched, and many schools cannot be used because they have been destroyed, damaged, shelter displaced families or are being used for other purposes. According to Unicef latest report in 14 July 2023, there is about 2.4 million children out of school inside Syria and there is almost 7 million inside Syria also in need of humanitarian assistance. Refugees and asylum-seekers were highly vulnerable as they did not have access to subsidized food and fuel. Humanitarian needs deepened, with 76% of people unable to meet their basic needs by the year-end based on the Multi-Sector Needs Assessment (MSNA) launched in August 2021. Food insecurity grew, with Syria ranking among the ten most food insecure countries in the world by mid-2021. An estimated 12.8 million people were considered severely food insecure. A water crisis, induced by climate change and other factors, emerged in northern Syria in 2021. In

⁷⁹ UNICEF. *Syrian crisis*. Online. 2023. Available from: <https://www.unicef.org/emergencies/syrian-crisis>. [viewed 2023-12-05].

addition to the health risks it posed, it also impacted agriculture and food security. Education continued to suffer the effects of the crisis. The MSNA estimated that over 7 million children (3-17 years) needed education support and 18% of children were not attending any form of pre-tertiary education in the 2020-2021 academic year. According to the Ministry of Education, 5,700 schools were either damaged or destroyed, over 120,000 teachers required capacity development, and an estimated 180,000 educational personnel have left the education system. The combined impact of the economic crisis, COVID-19, and the soaring cost of living had a significant impact on the provision of humanitarian assistance and services. Limited bank liquidity resulted in restrictions on cash withdrawals for individuals and institutions, and daily limits were imposed for converting hard currencies to Syrian pounds. Other challenges included delays by international banks in processing payments to local suppliers as a result of coercive measures. Financial transactions, which previously took one or two days could sometimes take weeks or months, affecting the ability to source goods in the local market and restricting operational mobility. Syria Economic Monitor is a semi-annual economic publication of the World Bank. It aims to provide an update on key economic developments, outlook, risks, and policies in Syria and situate them in the conflict context. According to the World Bank semiannual economic publication of winter 2022-2023, Syria continues to rank among the top countries in terms of violent deaths and multiple domestic and external shocks are adversely affecting the economy. Macroeconomic conditions have substantially deteriorated since the start of the war on Ukraine. With nearly half of oil consumption about one-third of cereal consumption imported, higher commodity prices, triggered by the Ukraine war, have weakened the fiscal and external positions, and are fueling inflation. Subject to high uncertainty, real GDP is projected to contract by 3.2 percent in 2023, following a 3.5 percent decline in 2022. Conflict, high input costs, and water scarcity are projected to limit crop production. In addition, fuel shortages are expected to further weaken manufacturing and disrupt transportation and services. A prolonged war on Ukraine could push up commodity prices even higher, negatively affecting Syria's position as a food and energy importer. Inadequate health facilities could exacerbate the impact of rapidly spreading contagious diseases. The 2022 Syria Joint Damage Assessment (DA) which is the sixth World Bank Group assessment conducted during the ongoing conflict in Syria; however, it is the first conducted jointly with the European Union. provides an overview of the effects of the ongoing conflict in Syria on the population, physical infrastructure, and quality of service delivery in

selected cities. Conducted by the World Bank, with the financial support of and in collaboration with the European Union, the 2022 Syria DA finds that as of January 2022, total damage across the assessed cities and sectors was estimated at US\$ 8.7–11.4 billion. Of the total damage estimate, 68% of damage or US\$5.80–7.8 billion was attributed to the Physical Infrastructure sectors, 30% or US\$2.7–3.3 billion to damage in the Social Sectors, and 2% or US\$175-278 million to Cross-Cutting sectors. The functionality of agrifood value chains was the most distorted by the conflict. Syria’s wholesale vegetable markets have been damaged, with 82% of markets assessed as either partially damaged or totally destroyed in the conflict. Significant damage to physical infrastructure, deteriorating public services, and growing danger have led millions of Syrians to flee the country, reducing the prewar population by almost 18 percent to 17.5 million¹ and internally displacing 6.7 million Syrians in 2021.⁸⁰ 2 By September 2021, the crisis had claimed more than 350,200 lives.⁸¹ Around 13.4 million people need humanitarian assistance, including 5.9 million persons in acute need.⁸² The city analysis reveals that Aleppo incurred the brunt of the damage, followed by Idlib, Homs and Ar-Raqqa. Many camps and informal settlements remain overcrowded, mostly in the Idlib and Aleppo governorates. In the northeastern governorates, more than 100,000 individuals live in camps, many without services or any immediate prospect to return home. Although humanitarian organizations operating in these areas provide basic resources and services, these are often unavailable in other parts of the country while many returnees struggle to get sufficient humanitarian assistance.⁸³ Before 2011, Syria was a fast-growing, lower middle income country. The Syrian economy had expanded since the turn of the century, albeit from a low base. Real GDP rose at an annual rate of 4.3 percent, on average, from 2000 to 2010, entirely driven by growth in the non-oil sectors. The conflict has led to a substantial contraction of Syria’s economy. Between 2010 and 2019, Syria’s real GDP

⁸⁰ OCHA. *2021 humanitarian needs overview: syrian arab republic (march 2021) [EN/AR]*. Online. ReliefWeb. 2021-03-31. Available from: <https://reliefweb.int/report/syrian-arab-republic/2021-humanitarian-needs-overview-syrian-arab-republic-march-2021-enar>. [viewed 2023-12-05].

⁸¹ UNITED NATIONS. *Syria: 10 years of war has left at least 350,000 dead*. Online. UN News. 2021-09-24. Available from: <https://news.un.org/en/story/2021/09/1101162>. [viewed 2023-12-05].

⁸² UNHCR. *Syria: UNHCR operational update, june 2021*. Online. ReliefWeb. 2021-07-18. Available from: <https://reliefweb.int/report/syrian-arab-republic/syria-unhcr-operational-update-june-2021>. [viewed 2023-12-05].

⁸³ EUROPEAN ASYLUM SUPPORT OFFICE. *Syria Internally displaced persons, returnees and internal mobility Country of Origin Information Report*. Online. European Union Agency for Asylum. April 2020. Available from: <https://euaa.europa.eu/sites/default/files/publications/easo-coi-report-syria-idps-returnees-internal-mobility.pdf>. [viewed 2023-12-05].

shrank by 52 percent. The most severe contraction took place in 2012 and 2013, when economic activity fell by over 26 percent each year as the conflict intensified and spread across the country. The country registered marginal growth in 2018 and 2019 but economic conditions deteriorated again after 2020, however, following persistent conflict, a deepening economic crisis in neighboring Lebanon, and the COVID-19 pandemic which limited economic activity. Crude oil production plunged from 416,000 barrels per day (bpd) in 2010 to 79,000 bpd in 2021, owing largely to damaged energy infrastructure networks and occupied fields from PKK in the north east of Syria which is rich in crude oil fields. There were significant losses in agricultural production as a result of damage to irrigation systems, severe droughts, and shortages of labor, seeds, fertilizer, and fuel. Industrial production also declined following shortages in fuel and power, limited access to capital, destruction of physical infrastructure, and the relocation of major manufacturing bases. The service sector suffered as economic activity declined, security threats prevented tourism, and economic sanctions were imposed. International trade declined severely, especially exports, due to conflict and international sanctions. The persistent trade deficit has resulted in a drawdown of foreign exchange reserves. In addition, due to sanctions and conflict, Syria has suffered major capital flight, while capital inflows have ceased, adding to the loss of foreign reserves. On balance, foreign reserves have declined severely from US\$19.5 billion in 2010 to less than US\$1 billion in 2020. Syria further tightened import restrictions and capital flows in 2021 due to the scarcity of foreign reserves. The conflict has brought about a steep increase in prices. With depressed export revenues and the decline in international reserves, the official exchange rate of the Syrian pound has declined. This currency depreciation has triggered sharp domestic price increases since the conflict. In dollar terms, revenues dropped by about 75 percent between 2010 and 2021, largely due to losses in oil and tax revenues, the collapse of international trade due to sanctions, a growing informal economy, and weak tax collection capacity. The conflict and international sanctions have caused significant losses in the banking sector. Domestic banks had to reduce their operations as the economy shrank, sanctions tightened, investments dried up and the conflict affected businesses. Assets in Syrian banks are estimated to have declined from US\$45.5 billion in 2010 to US\$16.9 billion in 2020. Before the conflict, extreme poverty in Syria – as measured by the 2011 US\$1.90 purchasing power parity (PPP) international poverty line – was virtually non-existent. Regionally, poverty was concentrated in the Northeast, home to 56 percent of Syria’s poor, and in which approximately

one in five inhabitants was living in poverty. The sanctions are affecting all the citizen's despite of their political opinion whether they are with the regime or on the opposition side and from this we must admit that the sanctions are not a way that will have a major effect on the regime since its imposed from years and no major changes happened unless the increased poverty of the Syrian citizens. According to the world bank report of 2022-2023, Poverty in the Southern and Central regions declined between 1997 and 2004, driving overall poverty rates in Syria down in 2003–2004. This can indicate why the most extreme battles were in the north region of the country with the most displaced people are living in the camps and the rural areas in Idlib, Aleppo, and Hasakah. Prior to the conflict, Syria's road network had rapidly expanded to keep pace with the growing population. Generally, secondary roads were in good condition, and construction was underway to extend the major highway network to join Latakia and Aleppo. In the prewar period, the purchase of vehicles grew each year by an average of 13 percent. In terms of rail transport, Syria had one of the Middle East's most extensive railway systems prior to the war. The major rail routes connected Syria's main cities, and a freight only line for phosphates connected Homs to the port of Tartous. During the first decade of the 21st century, trains carried goods and passengers throughout the country, and transported over 3.5 million passengers and more than 8 million tons of goods in 2010. Concerning maritime transport, Tartous and Latakia ports also grew significantly in container activity prior to the war, with incoming and outgoing containers at Tartous port doubling between 2005 and 2010. Prior to the war, Syria owned 138 diesel electric train engines and 10 diesel-hydraulic train engines. In terms of rail cars, Syria had 483 passenger carriages (358 passengers, 19 restaurants, 45 sleepers, and 33 baggage vans) and 5,151 freight cars. There are 20 border crossings between Syria and its neighboring countries: nine with Turkey, four with Iraq, two with Jordan and five with Lebanon. The assessment indicates that approximately 11 percent of intra-city roads were damaged as of September 2021, out of which around 4 percent were destroyed and require major repair, and 7 percent were partially damaged and need maintenance to restore service delivery and access. In addition to conflict-related damage and neglect, armed groups have reportedly looted railway stations for scrap metal. Road network availability at the city level generally decreased between 2011 and 2021 due to road damage. Moreover, Across the 14 cities studied in 2021 about 1,150,000 people, or 23 percent of the population, are unable to reach a health care facility within 20 minutes, and about 550,000 people, or 11 percent of the population, are unable to reach a health care facility within 30

minutes. Notably, no neighborhoods in Idlib are within 30 minutes of an operational health care facility. Access to schools varies within cities and depends on the number of operational schools and on road damage. Across the 14 cities, 18 percent, or over 900,000 children and others must travel over 10 minutes by car, a standard threshold for education accessibility. Similarly, 2 percent, or over 100,000 people have no access to education facilities in their neighborhood. As of August 2021, the only border crossing authorized by the United Nations was the Bab al-Hawa crossing with Turkey. Between July 2014 and July 2021, 37,405 trucks passed through this border post.

Moving to the electricity sector in Syria operated as a vertically integrated, state-controlled model under the Ministry of Electricity. The Public Establishment for Electricity Generation and Transmission's (PEEGT), Prior to the conflict the Electricity sector was growing. Between 2002–2007 demand grew at a rate of approximately 7.5 percent per annum - driven by a growing economy, subsidized energy tariffs, and an influx of Iraqi refugees. 99 percent of the population had electricity and approximately 85 percent of consumers were residential and industrial (the other 15 percent were commercial and government consumers). The assessment identified power plants, dams, substations, towers, transformers, and administrative offices as the main assets of the Electricity sector, and found some cities substantially more damaged than others were most the damage was to power plants and substations. Aleppo has one power plant, one dam, and 16 substations, much of which were destroyed in the conflict. Aleppo's⁸⁴ thermal power plant is the largest in the country, with a capacity of 1,100 MW, and has been damaged and out of service for the past few years. The conflict has severely affected electricity service delivery. With two major power plants partially damaged and one completely destroyed, approximately 20 percent of the country's generation capacity is affected, and this has led to load shedding; while damage to transmission and distribution infrastructure (substations and towers) has greatly affected service delivery. Also, the conflict has led to fuel shortages, causing some assets to operate below full capacity. The challenges currently faced by the sector relate mainly to damaged transmission and distribution networks, particularly in areas outside of government control, while fuel for power

⁸⁴ Based on geographical location, and knowing that the link between area-specific damage and overall functionality (or service availability) is unclear, as power grids are typically interconnected country-wide. Fuel shortages also affect generation capacity. The status of transmission infrastructures between main load centers (cities) also plays a critical role in service delivery, but was beyond the scope of this assessment, which focused only on selected cities.

stations is difficult to obtain due to the country's dwindling oil and gas production. Moving to Water resources in Syria. Syria has an arid climate and receives most of its precipitation during winter. Syria depends on transboundary rivers (Tigris, Euphrates, Orontes, and Yarmouk) for most of its surface water. Groundwater is a major source of water, and it is over exploited. Before 2011, Syria had high-quality WSS services, with good coverage, managed by the state. There are 366 facilities, mainly wells (153), water towers/tanks (158) and pumping stations (25) distributed among 14 main cities. Aleppo has the highest number of facilities with 198, followed by Idlib (30) and Homs (27). The total damage to known assets is 17 percent. 26 wells were partially damaged and 13 destroyed. Wells are in Aleppo (6 wells) and Idlib (7 wells). In Idlib, 16 wells of the 23 wells are partially damaged. Where wells are still operational, there is a lack of diesel for the pumps which reduces the wells' operating time. It was reported that the "El Jadida" water treatment plant in Al-Raqqa was destroyed between May 2015 and May 2016, but it is not known whether it functioned prior to the conflict. The assessment found that the sewage treatment plant in Daraya (41,000 cubic meters per day) was partially damaged, and as of February 2021 did not function. Aleppo and Idlib have the most physical infrastructure damage, but all cities in the assessment have been affected by a shortage of power to operate water facilities. Most of the pumps, cables, valves, and transformers in the pumping station were reportedly stolen in 2019. In most areas, water delivery requires pumps, and thus a power infrastructure. Delivery thus relies on the electric grid, generators and fuel. Services are disrupted mainly by lack of electricity, and also by damage to wells and water towers, and some cities have developed back-up plans, and deliver water with water trucks. Water trucks provided an important secondary source of drinking water in all cities between October 2018 and August 2021, but rising diesel prices and increasing demand makes the use of trucks increasingly unaffordable. However, water supply is declining at source as river flows in the Euphrates fall, well levels drop, and water quality and infrastructure decline since Syria's challenges also include a lack of skilled people to operate critical physical infrastructure, lack of finance, and weak financial and asset management. Escalating violence in Syria has devastated the country's cultural heritage sites since 2011 also, like the ancient souk, or marketplace, in Aleppo. The Syrian government had invested heavily in restoration of Aleppo's ancient city and historical buildings, with 49 sites reporting some degree of rehabilitation or restoration between 2018 and 2021. The Aleppo Citadel is damaged yet functioning. The citadel, a UNESCO World Heritage site, was one of Syria's major tourist attractions prior to 2011. In

2012, the outer gateway was repeatedly shelled, and in 2015 an explosion damaged some of the citadel's ancient, inner-city walls. The Ancient City of Palmyra was destroyed during its occupation in 2015 and 2017. The most seriously damaged sites within the ancient city include the Temple of Bel, the Temple of Baal Shamin, the Arch of Triumph, and columns in the Valley of Tombs. The Palmyra Museum was vandalized and looted. In October 2019 French and Portuguese tourists visited the Ancient City of Palmyra; however, the site is largely destroyed. Before the conflict, the Tourism sector in Syria employed 20 percent of the workforce and cultural tourism had much potential for development. With the conflict, this share has dropped nearly to zero. This deprives affected communities of vital opportunities to develop and sustain their livelihoods, and of sources of foreign income.

Moving to the agriculture sector, the agricultural labor force accounted for 14.5 percent of total employment in 2010, given that 44 percent of Syria's population lived in rural areas. Prior to the Syrian conflict, the country played an important role in global agricultural trade, connecting supply routes between Eastern Europe, Central Asia, Russia, and the Gulf Cooperation Council countries.⁸⁵ Extensive irrigation projects, indirect water subsidies, and direct wheat subsidies led to intensive wheat production in the 1990s. A 2017 Food and Agriculture Organization (FAO) report estimated that 65 percent of cereal production relied on irrigation in 2011⁸⁶. In the Syrian Arab Republic, the food security situation continued to deteriorate in late 2020, with around 12.4 million individuals estimated to be acutely food insecure, by far the highest number ever recorded (WFP, 2021).⁸⁷ Despite the crisis in Syria, agriculture remain a key part of the economy. The sector accounts for 26 percent of GDP and provides a critical safety net for 6.7 million Syrians (FAO, 2017). However, losses in agricultural productivity, following problems with irrigation, movement of livestock to neighboring countries, and security constraints, have made agricultural livelihoods increasingly precarious. These challenges have been exacerbated by the abrupt breakdown of centralized agriculture support systems for crops and livestock, and a bad fire

⁸⁵ FATHALLAH, Hadi. *Syria and regional food security*. Online. carnegie endowment for international peace. 2019-02-05. Available from: <https://carnegieendowment.org/sada/78286>. [viewed 2023-12-05].

⁸⁶ FOOD AND AGRICULTURE ORGANIZATION OF THE UNITED NATIONS. *Counting the cost: Agriculture in Syria after six years of crisis*. Online. fao. 2017. Available from: <https://www.fao.org/3/i7081e/i7081e.pdf>. [viewed 2023-12-05].

⁸⁷ WORLD FOOD PROGRAMME. *Syrian arab republic annual country report 2020 country strategic plan 2019 - 2021*. Online. WFP. 2020. Available from: <https://docs.wfp.org/api/documents/WFP-0000125415/download/>. [viewed 2023-12-05].

season in 2019. Farmers are facing shortages of agricultural inputs (seeds, fertilizers, fuel for irrigation pumps, etc.) or are unable to afford them due to soaring prices (FAO, 2017). The Syrian war has resulted in at least US\$3.4 billion in damage⁸⁸ and US\$12.9–18.1 billion in losses to the agrifood sector⁸⁹. Based on FAOSTAT data, average nitrogen use decreased by 83 percent, while that of potash decreased by 75 percent during 2011–2019 compared to 2005–2010. Diesel shortages have also increased the cost of growing crops, and the cost of diesel alone sometimes exceeds farmer’s profits. Moving to the housing sector, Across the 14 cities it is estimated that the war has affected up to 210,000 housing units, with total damage reaching US\$2.3–2.8 billion. The remote assessment classified approximately 30,000 units as totally destroyed, and up to 180,000 units as partially damaged. A large share of Aleppo’s housing stock has been destroyed, with up to 135,000 housing units damaged during the conflict, representing 21 percent of housing stock in the city and around 70 percent of all damaged housing stock across the 14 cities. Daraya has lost most houses relative to its original housing stock, with up to 43 percent of its housing stock damaged. The assessment indicated that most health workers (70 percent) have left the country, and more than half of health infrastructure has been damaged or destroyed, greatly limiting the availability of care. The assessment indicated also that Before the conflict, Syria was on the verge of achieving its education targets under the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs). In 2009/2010, primary school enrollment stood at 93 percent, equal to the average for the MENA region, and 67 percent for secondary school, exceeding the MENA average of 60 percent. Estimated 2.5 million children, or one-in-three of the school-age population (ages 5–17), were already out of school by the end of 2019⁹⁰. As families try to cope with the impacts of the conflict, children - in particular boys - have had to seek informal labor to meet their families’ essential needs. Out-of-school children are particularly vulnerable to exploitative child labor,

⁸⁸ FOOD AND AGRICULTURE ORGANIZATION OF THE UNITED NATIONS. *Counting the cost: Agriculture in Syria after six years of crisis*. Online. FAO. 2017. Available from: <https://www.fao.org/3/i7081e/i7081e.pdf>. [viewed 2023-12-05].

⁸⁹ FOOD AND AGRICULTURE ORGANIZATION OF THE UNITED NATIONS. *Counting the cost: Agriculture in Syria after six years of crisis*. Online. FAO. 2017. Available from: <https://www.fao.org/3/i7081e/i7081e.pdf>. [viewed 2023-12-05].

⁹⁰ THE INFORMATION MANAGEMENT UNIT (IMU) OF THE ACU IN COOPERATION WITH SAVE THE CHILDREN INTERNATIONAL AND EDUCATION CLUSTER IN TURKEY AND WITH THE PARTICIPATION OF 13 SYRIAN NGOS SPECIALIZED IN EDUCATION. *Joint education needs assessment for out of school children (JENA) — december 2019 - syrian arab republic*. Online. ReliefWeb. 2020-07-27. Available from: <https://reliefweb.int/report/syrian-arab-republic/joint-education-needs-assessment-out-school-children-jena-december-2019>. [viewed 2023-12-05].

child marriage and recruitment into military forces. 82 percent of communities perceived child labor as a key factor preventing school attendance⁹¹. Schools in Syria do not provide a safe and secure learning environment. This is due, in part, to damage to schools and their use for other purposes, for example, to host internally displaced people (IDP). Families report security fears as the main reason for students missing, or dropping out of school.

On February 6, 2023, a powerful earthquake devastated vast areas of southern Turkey (officially the Republic of Turkey) and war-torn northwest Syria, leaving millions of people in the region struggling to rebuild their lives. The powerful earthquake struck near the cities of Nurdağı and Gaziantep in Gaziantep Province, just outside the regional capital, which hosts millions of Syrian refugees. Also, the situation in northwest Syria and Syria as all has worsened since the disaster from displacement to hunger and healthcare institutions that are already suffering due to the war effects on citizens houses and infrastructure since the quake severely impacted the cities of Aleppo, Latakia, Hama, and Idlib, causing significant damage and resulting in the collapse of numerous buildings and the destruction of water systems. In addition, 3.7 million children in Syria need continued humanitarian assistance, according to UNICEF. Johan Mooij, World Vision’s Syria response director said that: “Half a year has passed since the devastating earthquake struck northwest Syria and southern Turkey, and Syrians are dealing with its aftereffects, on top of ongoing distress caused by conflict, an economic downturn, a cholera outbreak, and harsh weather conditions,” Here we can see that the earthquake has exacerbated the effects of the ongoing war which According to the U.N. Refugee Agency (UNHCR), the earthquake has impacted an estimated 15.73 million people in Syria and Turkey. Without missing that Turkey already hosts the largest number of refugees in the world which counts to 3.6 million according to the UNHCR and which are at an increased risk of poverty, child labour, or child marriage aftermath the earthquake and which will also affect the Syrian refugees and family relatives in Lebanon. The disaster damaged the residences of at least 855,000 Syrians, with 265,000 people now needing dignified shelters after losing their homes, according to the U.N. Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs (OCHA).

⁹¹ OCHA. *2021 humanitarian needs overview: syrian arab republic (march 2021) [EN/AR]*. Online. ReliefWeb. 2021-03-31. Available from: <https://reliefweb.int/report/syrian-arab-republic/2021-humanitarian-needs-overview-syrian-arab-republic-march-2021-enar>. [viewed 2023-12-05].

A USGS map of the February 6, 2023, earthquake that struck Turkey and Syria shows the earthquake in red. Subsequent aftershocks are marked in orange. The size of the circular marker indicates the intensity of the shock. (2023 graphic courtesy of USGS).⁹²



⁹² OMER, Sevil. 2023 *Turkey and Syria earthquake: Facts, FAQs, how to help*. Online. WORLD VISION. 2023. Available from: <https://www.worldvision.org/disaster-relief-news-stories/2023-turkey-and-syria-earthquake-faqs>. [viewed 2023-12-05].

According to the world vision, the earthquake impacted millions of survivors in turkey and Syria which are in urgent need of humanitarian support. Cities suffered widespread destruction with nearly 50000 buildings including buildings, schools, and hospitals now are too damaged to enter. In northwest Syria, one third of the 601 health centers are not functioning and another 70 are now damaged according to OCHA. The earthquake has worsened the situation even more after all the economic problems that Syria is already facing during the war alongside the sanctions that are imposed on the regime and which are affecting all the citizens apart from their political opinions. the loss of safe housing is causing many families to live in temporary shelters inside Syria similar to their situation in Lebanon and from here a permanent solution must be done for the safe return of the refugees combined with a plan to rebuild the infrastructure in the country with a new constitution and new government that must contain all the political parties in Syria. Temperatures exceeding 104 degrees Fahrenheit in summer has also led to devastating fires, with over 40 incidents triggered by soaring temperatures between July 15 and 17. In 2023, more than 180 fire incidents have been reported, resulting in five deaths and damage to more than 220 tents.⁹³ Moving to the international humanitarian organizations response, UN convoys have crossed into northern Syria through the Bab al-Hawa crossing delivering shelter and relief supplies.⁹⁴ The World Health Organization (WHO) has also sent health supplies to reach 400,000 people impacted by the earthquake and the UN World Food Programme (WFP) has delivered food assistance which reached almost 1.7 million people in the two countries but this isn't enough comparing to the huge destruction caused by the earthquake and the war together.

⁹³ OMER, Sevil. *2023 Turkey and Syria earthquake: Facts, FAQs, how to help*. Online. WORLD VISION. 2023. Available from: <https://www.worldvision.org/disaster-relief-news-stories/2023-turkey-and-syria-earthquake-faqs>. [viewed 2023-12-05].

⁹⁴ UNITED NATIONS. *Türkiye-Syria earthquake response*. Online. 2023. Available from: <https://www.un.org/en/turkiye-syria-earthquake-response>. [viewed 2023-12-05].

European Parliament resolution on the situation in Lebanon

On July 2023, the European Parliament issued a resolution on the current situation in Lebanon shedding the lights on the Syrian refugees and the general situation which is extremely alarming and deeply concerning owing to the political, economic, social, financial and health crises, and the state of institutional breakdown. Starting from the inflation of electricity, gas and water prices which peaked at nearly 600 % in June 2022 whereas the majority of the Lebanese population live in poverty and the authorities are failing to ensure everyone's right to an adequate standard of living. Moreover, the rise in poverty have led to difficulties in accessing basic rights, such as healthcare and housing, and to increased emigration. Also, the Speaker of the Parliament of Lebanon Nabih Berri refuses to hold open voting rounds to elect a President contrary to the provisions of the Lebanese Constitution which led to a 10 months of blocking presidential elections in a time of dire that need for a president to implement the necessary reforms, prevent total collapse and restore the state institutions and the democratic system. In addition, Lebanon was due to hold municipal elections on 31 May 2023 but they were postponed for the second year in a row although the economic hardship, austerity policies and widespread corruption have sparked several waves of protests in recent years, the largest of which took place around the anniversary of the 17 October Revolution, which began in 2019. Shedding the lights also on the Beirut port explosion on 4 August 2020, which is still the world's largest non-nuclear explosion, killed over 220 people including over 20 EU citizens, wounded 7 000, displaced 300 000 people and destroyed or damaged 74 000 homes and until now after three years of the explosion, the domestic investigation into the causes that led to it has been actively obstructed. Regarding the Syrian refugees and the presence of more than one and a half million Syrians in Lebanon, in addition to some 15 800 refugees of Ethiopian, Iraqi, Sudanese and other origins registered with the UN High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR) and approximately 207 700 Palestine refugees, the EU declared that this has a great impact on the Lebanese economy and has contributed to its multi-dimensional crisis although Palestinian refugees in Lebanon continue to face substantial challenges and restrictions, with the majority of them living in poverty (alongside the Syrian refugees), and relying on the assistance of United Nations Relief and Works Agency for Palestine Refugees in the Near East (UNRWA) as their main source of livelihood. The EU parliament admitted that according to the Human Rights Watch reports, a number of refugees have been detained and deported to the Syrian-Lebanese border and handed over to the Syrian

authorities which considered as unsafe strategy for the refugees that escaped from the Syrian regime. The EU parliament also mentioned Riad Salameh, the Governor of Lebanon's Central Bank since 1993 who is a subject of an international arrest warrant issued in May 2023 at the request of France and Germany on charges of money laundering, fraud, forgery, embezzlement and participation in a criminal association. On 28 March 2022 Euro just confirmed that authorities from France, Germany and Luxembourg had seized properties and frozen assets of Mr Salameh worth EUR 120 million whereas Mr Salameh denies wrongdoing and refuses to resign although most of the Lebanese are living under the poverty line and were deprived from their deposits in banks in which Salameh is considered the main responsible of the crises alongside the Lebanese elites and government. Salameh mandate ends in July 2023 whereas Monaco's Prosecutor General is conducting a money laundering investigation against Prime Minister Mikati who was named to compose the government which is responsible for the reforms, and who also features in the Pandora Papers; so how Lebanon is going to resolve all this issues with the same regime that already did that and how the Lebanese will overcome their obstacles alongside the difficult situation of the refugees in the country? The EU parliament Considered Lebanon's present situation to be caused by politicians across the ruling class and by illegally armed parties obstructing the democratic and constitutional process and calls for their disarmament; calls on Lebanon's political elite to take their share of the responsibility for the current situation in the country.⁹⁵

Second, Urges the Lebanese Parliament to elect a president in the shortest possible timeframe in order to begin addressing the political, economic, social, financial and health crises, and the state of institutional breakdown.

Third, regrets that the municipal elections scheduled for May 2022 were postponed for the second time in two years, leading to a further political stalemate and increasing the dysfunction of the state institutions; urges the Ministry of Interior and Municipalities to commit to holding the municipal elections within the next six months and proceed with the preparations accordingly.

⁹⁵ EUROPEAN PARLIAMENT. *JOINT MOTION FOR A RESOLUTION on the situation in Lebanon / RC-B9-0323/2023 | European Parliament*. Online. 2023-07-11. Available from: https://www.europarl.europa.eu/doceo/document/RC-9-2023-0323_EN.html. [viewed 2023-12-05].

Forth, calls for an international humanitarian task force under the auspices of the UN to support the implementation of humanitarian assistance and oversee the use of funds.

Fifth, calls for the EU to offer Lebanon the deployment of a comprehensive EU administrative advisory mission in order to address the urgent need to counter the accelerating breakdown of public administration and basic services by providing an action plan and related necessary support.

Sixth, calls on the Lebanese government to swiftly implement key governance, economic and financial reforms that will ensure political and economic recovery, including the credible regulation of key economic sectors such as the electricity sector; welcomes the adoption of amendments to the Lebanese banking secrecy law as a key step towards unlocking international macro-financial assistance, namely from the International Monetary Fund; invites the country to continue implementing reforms.

Seventh, calls on the Council to apply targeted sanctions under the framework adopted by the Council on 30 July 2021 against all of those who are infringing the democratic and electoral process in the Lebanese institutions, or obstructing the domestic investigation into the Beirut port explosion or an upcoming international fact-finding mission, and seize their assets in the EU.

Eighth, recalls that a transparent, independent, neutral and effective investigation into the Beirut port explosion is a priority and must be ensured.

Ninth, encourages the EU Member States to assist families of the victims of the Beirut port blast in exploring the possibilities for presenting lawsuits in foreign national courts as well as explore the possibilities for prosecuting politicians accused of atrocities under universal jurisdiction.

Tenth, investigation and fighting corruption.

Eleventh, highlights the need to promote sustainable solutions to tackle the food insecurity and energy crises and the need to provide direct humanitarian support, in line with the recommendations of the Food and Agriculture Organization; calls for the EU's humanitarian support to be coupled with support for farmers and agricultural workers and other forms of support for local food production, as well as investment in infrastructure for generating renewable energy in the country.

Moreover, the EU parliament Stresses that conditions are not met for the voluntary, dignified return of refugees in conflict-prone areas in Syria; recalls the vulnerability of the refugee population in Lebanon and stresses the need to provide adequate, predictable and multi-layered funding to agencies working with refugees in order to ensure the full provision of essential services to refugee communities in the country; calls on the Commission to work on improving the humanitarian situation in Syria in order to address the root causes of the refugee crisis; stresses that the return of refugees should be voluntary, dignified and safe, according to international criteria; calls for humanitarian aid to continue to be provided to the Lebanese population and refugees, with strict controls; calls on Lebanon to become a party to the 1951 UN Refugee Convention and to its 1967 protocol; calls for the creation of an international task force with the participation of the EU, UN and Lebanese authorities to address the refugee question; expresses its concern about the escalation of anti-refugee rhetoric by Lebanese political parties and ministers; urges Lebanon, in the event of any action taken on migration, to refrain from deportation and imposing discriminatory measures and inciting hatred against Syrian refugees; calls, in this regard, for the EU and the Member States to continue to provide funding for UNRWA and Syrian refugees. In my opinion, recalls from the EU parliament to provide adequate, predictable and multi-layered funding to agencies working with refugees in order to ensure the full provision of essential services to refugee communities in the country will keep the situation as it is without any solution for the refugee's difficult situation or Lebanon current crises and will increase the tensions even more between the Lebanese and Syrians on the other side. We can agree that the return of the refugees should be voluntary, dignified and safe, according to international criteria but conferences and actions toward their current status must be held between all the parties to reach an agreement with the continues of the humanitarian aid at the same time. Moreover, the calls from the EU parliament on Lebanon to become a party to the 1951 UN Refugee Convention and to its 1967 protocol is essential for the sake of the human rights but due to the experience that Lebanon is currently having with the Syrian and the Palestinian refugees then it's very difficult to convince all the political parties in Lebanon to join the UN refugee convention since all the difficulties and the requests concerning the refugees current situation is not being taken into consideration and Lebanon is being abandoned although the refugees number will exceed the Lebanese citizens in the near future if the situation stays like this.

Conclusion

We can conclude that there must be a focus effort to reach peace in Syria and to create the living conditions for the refugee's return to their homeland which can't stay like that and since most of the refugees in Lebanon are living in shelters and tents. Another alternatives, if their homeland infrastructure is still destroyed with no political solution according to the United Nations declarations then the international community with the United Nations must improve the refugees conditions even by supporting them to live in a third capable country (that can provide them with the basic needs) different from Lebanon or to develop a conference discussing their needs and the difficult situation that they are having especially in Lebanon, or holding new negotiations between all the Syrians parties regarding a resolution for their current crises. Another matter is that due to the Lebanese economic crises with the absence of a safe route, refugees are traveling by sea to Europe through smugglers with very dangerous situations that will also affect Europe as well by receiving more refugees. Therefore, the increase of refugees traveling through smugglers operations will increase the danger that the refugees will face in the sea and will increase the number of refugees in Europe if their conditions weren't improved in their homeland Syria or in any other third country, so the majority of refugees will practice negative coping strategies to survive. The Syrian refugees are facing a very difficult situation in Lebanon especially nowadays regardless of the international community or the Lebanese government decisions and actions. At the end, Lebanon is facing an extreme economic crises and can't resettle this high number of refugees in the country like most of the European countries did, since the number of Syrian refugees in any European country compared to the native citizens is considered very low unlike Lebanon which most of its citizens are fleeing the country due to the economic crises and which the refugees in it could exceed the Lebanese citizens themselves in the near future. Therefore, insisting on keeping the Syrian refugee's conditions as it is without any conference or solutions as stated in the alternatives above, will increase the tensions between the Lebanese and Syrian more and more and will affect all the region and Europe as well. After 12 years of the Syrian conflict, Syrians deserve a better future and we are all responsible for this, we are all responsible to take a fast response and actions to improve their lives and to avoid keeping them as refugees for their whole lives. The Syrian conflict must be solved between the Syrians themselves with a conference that can be held for this matter. Even though Syrians are welcomed in most of the countries that they visited but they can't stay away from their homeland. We all can travel and

then get back for a visit to our homeland but they are deprived from this. If all the concerned parties and countries unites for a better future for the Syrians and if all Syrian people unites for a better future for their families, then we can reach a solution since every war must come to an end.

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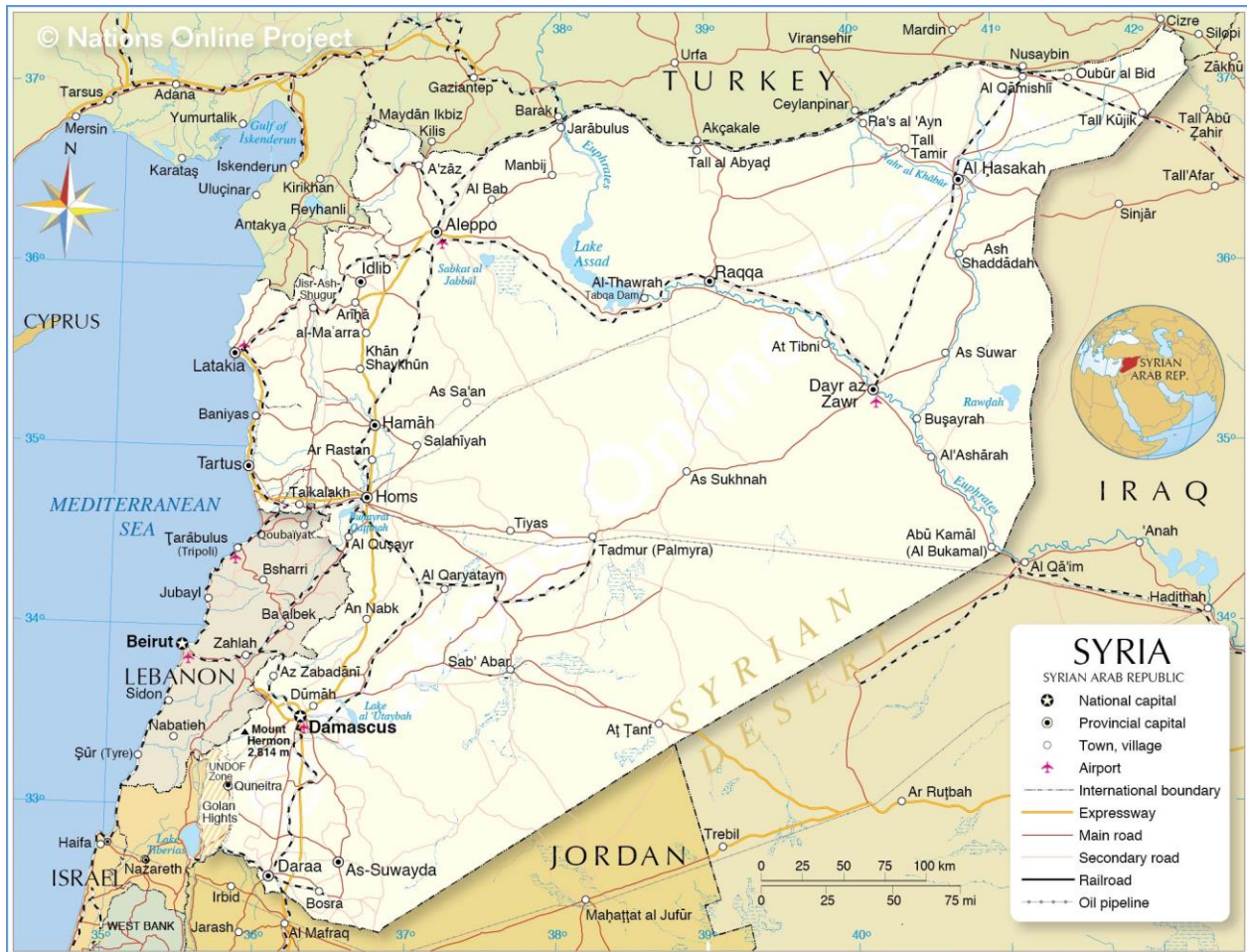
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Annexes

Annex A: Nations Online Project. Political Map of Syria, Middle East.

<https://www.nationsonline.org/oneworld/map/syria-map.htm>



Annex B: Mappr. Where is Lebanon? Lebanon districts map.

<https://www.mappr.co/location/lebanon/>

