

FORUM:	Advisory Panel
ISSUE:	Measures to Address Humanitarian Displacement and Refugee Strain in Lebanon
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Introduction

1.4 million of Lebanon's 5.3 million people are internally displaced along with Palestinian and Syrian refugees that entered Lebanon after attacks on their homes forced them to flee (www.unocha.com). Hezbollah, the largest non-state group in the Middle East, began the 2026 Lebanon War between Israel and Lebanon in response to the assassination of Iranian Ayatollah Khamenei, prompting an Israeli invasion that seeks to drive Hezbollah out once and for all. Children are out of school, families are living on the streets, and humanitarian aid is not enough. The fighting must be stopped and civilian lives must return to normal; otherwise, Lebanon's future as a nation will remain unstable or potentially nonexistent.

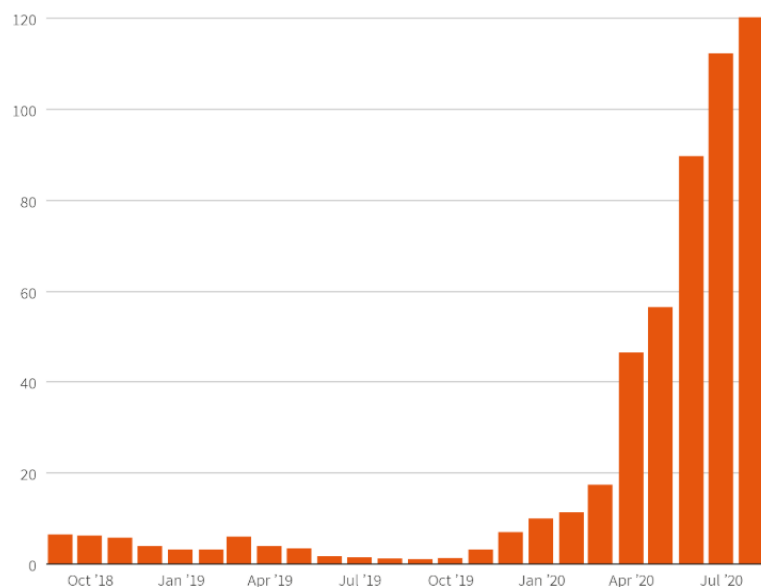
Background

2019 Liquidity Crisis

Since the 1990s, the Lebanese economy remained relatively stable despite a growing public debt as Lebanon grew its tourism industry. However, the country did not collect enough revenue from these tourists to be able to pay back its previous loans, and the government handled the problem by taking out new loans to pay the interest on the old loans. In 2015, the Lebanese Central Bank transferred all their public debt to Eurobonds, which avoided an economic crisis at the time but increased national debt by \$13 billion (www.wikipedia.org). After a series of protests on the banking system in 2019, Lebanese banks unexpectedly closed for two weeks. When they reopened, the banks illegally refused to allow their depositors to withdraw their funds in USD. Inflation skyrocketed

Lebanon's runaway inflation

Inflation has soared since the Lebanese pound started to fall against the dollar in October 2019



Lebanon's inflation rate skyrocketed in October 2019 and has continued to rise ever since

and depositors were cheated out of their money due to the inflation rates, vastly affecting public trust in banking systems. The rise of COVID-19 in 2020 along with the Beirut port explosion cost the Lebanese government billions of dollars while banks continued illegitimate business dealings. As of August 2026, the Lebanese national debt exceeds \$56 billion with little to no hope of recovery.

2024 Lebanon War

The 2024 Lebanese War, although officially beginning in September, was a result of twelve months of Hezbollah and Israel clashing along the Blue Line. Israel assassinated Hezbollah's leader, attacked many suspected Hezbollah militants by exploding their cell phones and pagers, and launched an invasion into Lebanon. Eight hundred Lebanese civilians were reported killed in less than a week while fighting along the border displaced nearly one million citizens. Ceasefire negotiations between Lebanon and Israel proved successful two months later, yet over 2,000 Lebanese lives were lost with thousands displaced while Israel only suffered the loss of 56 soldiers (www.wikipedia.org).

2026 Lebanon War

In March 2026 after the assassination of Iranian Ayatollah Ali Khamenei, Hezbollah began firing on Israel, prompting Israel to send troops over the Blue Line into Lebanon in response. The fighting



A Lebanese man surveys damage after an airstrike in Beirut

quickly escalated to the point that, as one Internally Displaced Person (IDP) claimed, “The strikes used to target a specific area, but now they’re hitting all the areas” (apnews.com). She explained that because of the multiple strikes, Israel’s evacuation notices to the Lebanese were becoming more abrupt, forcing people to leave before they could collect their belongings. While it took months in the 2024 war for one million civilians to be displaced, it took weeks only two years later. Many civilians are living on the streets since the government does not have the resources to support them or provide enough shelter. Peace talks between

Lebanon and Israel were held in Rome, but Hezbollah was excluded. Israel resolved to withdraw their troops provided that the Lebanese military ensured Hezbollah did not reclaim any land. Hezbollah has promised to withdraw peacefully from the area south of the Litani river but claims that any withdrawal north of the Litani river is an internal matter between Hezbollah and the Lebanese government, not Israel. Lebanon may be headed for a second civil war as tensions continue to grow between Hezbollah and the internationally recognized government of Lebanon.

Problems Raised

Insufficient Resources for Refugees

Due to the recent liquidity crisis, the government does not have the funding to provide sufficient



Many refugees lose everything when displaced and are unable to find food or shelter

shelters, food, water, or healthcare to their IDPs.

Lebanon also hosts the most refugees per capita in the world since Syrian and Palestinian refugees constantly enter Lebanon. The government, which has only been in control for one year, is scrambling to provide assistance to their citizens, but has only been able to help 120,000 people (apnews.com).

The other refugees are all reliant on humanitarian organizations or their ability to be able to afford a hotel or apartment; otherwise, they live on the streets.

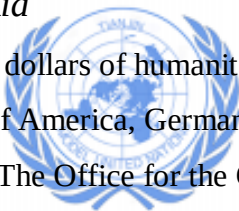
Growing Tensions between Hezbollah and Lebanon

While the Lebanese people considered Hezbollah as more effective than the Lebanese military when Hezbollah effectively drove out Israeli forces in 2000, a recent poll determined that few Lebanese currently side with Hezbollah. Current peace negotiations between Israel and Lebanon have been stalled due to Hezbollah's insistence that any Hezbollah military outposts north of the Litani River are an internal matter and do not concern the Israeli government; Israel continues to argue that Hezbollah will simply use those positions to continue attacking Israel in the future. The Lebanese government formally outlawed Hezbollah in March 2026, and many of the group's former supporters are abandoning them. Hezbollah will not go down without a fight, and many fear that Lebanon will face a second civil war in the future.

International Actions

Humanitarian Aid

Millions of dollars of humanitarian aid are pouring into Lebanon from the European Commission, the United States of America, Germany, Canada, and multiple other nations, as well as food, shelter, and health necessities. The Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs has been collecting \$639.9



million in response to a Lebanese Flash Appeal yet has only been able to collect around 50% of the desired funds (www.unocha.com). The United Nations (UN) has created a Lebanon Response Plan to ensure that parties working to provide food, water, education, shelter, and more to Lebanese refugees can coordinate with one another to better help those in need. CARE International has been funding Lebanese organizations to aid Lebanese civilians as well as providing food, water, and sanitary products. Meanwhile, the United States has been hosting peace talks between Lebanon and Israel to target the root cause of Lebanon's mass displacement. Israel has promised to withdraw provided that the Lebanese Armed Forces (LAF) ensure that Hezbollah does not reclaim any land south of the Litani River; however, Israel has not yet begun to withdraw.

Key Players

Israel

Israel and Lebanon have a long history of conflicts since Hezbollah and Israel have constantly fired on each other or clashed along the border, which has caused much of the internal displacement. Hezbollah uses Israel's continued occupation of the Shebaa Heights to claim that Israel has never fully left Lebanese territory, ultimately leading to more fighting. Israel has stated that their cause for fighting has always been to remove Hezbollah from Lebanon, and while the nation regrets the number of casualties caused, Israel believes that it is necessary for Hezbollah to be removed (www.jpost.com).

Hezbollah

Since it began during Lebanon's civil war, Hezbollah has been one of the largest political parties in Lebanon. While its popularity has drastically fallen after the group started the 2026 Lebanon War, Hezbollah still holds a significant amount of power both militarily and politically. Although the group has been declared a terrorist organization by the European Commission and the United States, it operates as a political party or, in some cases, the government in Lebanon, wielding a significant amount of power. Hezbollah's stated objectives are the complete destruction of Israel and the removal of Western influence from Lebanon. Part of Iran's



Hezbollah began the 2026 Lebanon War by conducting one of its frequent airstrikes into Israel



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Axis of Resistance, Hezbollah often attacks Israel in retaliation to attacks on Iran or in support of Iran-backed groups such as Hamas.

United Nations Interim Force in Lebanon

The United Nations Interim Force in Lebanon (UNIFIL) has been involved in Lebanon since 1978 when Israel invaded the nation during their civil war. Their original mandate was to minimize conflict and restore peace to the border between Lebanon and Israel, but it is currently also tasked with aiding the LAF, providing humanitarian assistance to those in need, and ensuring displaced civilians can voluntarily and safely return to their homes. UNIFIL currently has around 10,000 troops stationed within southern Lebanon, yet the peacekeeping force's mandate is set to expire on December 31, 2026, with a one-year withdrawal period. Lebanese civilians, especially those living near the Blue Line, have expressed concerns as to their safety after UNIFIL has withdrawn; these concerns have yet to be addressed by the UN.

Possible Solutions

Removal of Hezbollah

Hezbollah is directly responsible for the current refugee crisis because when Hezbollah fired on Israel in retaliation to the assassination of Iranian Ayatollah Khamenei, they initiated the 2026 Lebanon War. Many Lebanese citizens have begun speaking out against Hezbollah and calling for its removal. As one Lebanese exile stated, "They were against involving Lebanon in wars that have nothing to do with any Lebanese cause...Israel wasn't attacking Lebanon. There's no issues going on, except some points on the border that could be fixed by negotiations. There's no need to go to war in order to fix these issues, once they sit and talk with Israelis" (www.jpost.com). Because Hezbollah's existence defies UN Resolution 1559 and the group has been outlawed by Lebanon's internationally recognized government, the international community should come together and help Lebanon remove Hezbollah from its borders.

Refugee Led Organizations

Refugee-led organizations (RLOs) in Lebanon started appearing after the 2013 Syrian displacement crisis when communities began mobilizing to help refugees due to the inadequacy of provided humanitarian aid. RLOs are often the most effective humanitarian aid providers because an RLO can help in hours as opposed to international humanitarian aid, which could take weeks to reach



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those in need. However, RLOs receive only a fraction of funding compared to international humanitarian organizations. If more funding were given to RLOs within Lebanon or if NGOs and UNOCHA were to partner with local RLOs, aid could reach refugees considerably faster than it currently does.



Lebanese Spotlight LSL is one of many RLOs working to help refugees in Lebanon

Glossary

Liquidity Crisis

A liquidity crisis occurs when a business or nation does not have enough liquidity, or assets that can be easily sold or converted into cash, to effectively manage their obligations such as repaying loans or providing salaries.

Blue Line

The Blue Line is a border between Lebanon and Israel that was drawn by the UN in 2000 to end border conflicts between Israel, Lebanon, and Hezbollah.

Shebaa Farms

The Shebaa Farms, located near the Golan Heights, have been claimed by Lebanon, Syria, and Israel for dozens of years. Israel currently occupies the territory, but the UN determined in 2000 that the Shebaa Farms belong to Syria. Despite this decision, Syria, Lebanon, and Israel continue to clash over the region's ownership.

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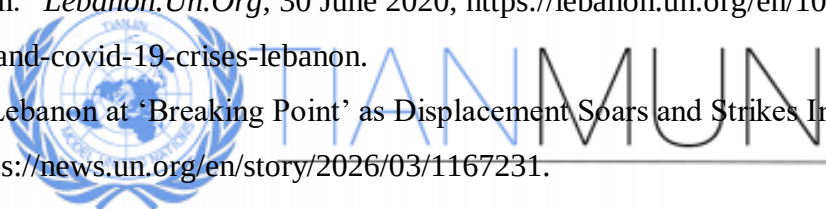
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