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Community Perceptions Report

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Working for
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1. Executive Summary

Between September and November 2024, the rapid escalation of the war resulted in a significant displacement of people, with large numbers of Internally Displaced Persons (IDPs) relocating to areas considered relatively safer. This movement, combined with pre-existing tensions between different groups and communities in Lebanon, has increased pressure between host and displaced communities over basic needs, services, and healthcare, while exacerbating economic difficulties, particularly in securing shelter. The perceptions of the local communities, collected using the CPT (Community Perceptions Tracker), indicate that many IDPs harbored feelings of humiliation and loss of dignity. Nevertheless, many displaced persons expressed gratitude for the hospitality extended to them by host communities.

The CPT findings also highlight significant psychological distress among both IDPs and host communities as the conflict evolved, with increasing anxiety, safety concerns, and fear of further escalation. The rising cost of living, particularly for rent, further intensified financial pressures as people struggled to sustain themselves on low or no income. The data collected between September and November showed that IDPs experienced heightened feelings of marginalization due to insufficient aid, and perception of aid bias. By November, host communities' tension towards IDPs increased significantly, as sectarian discourse augmented as the conflict progressed. The CPT data reflects that one of the origins of this tension is the host community's fear of IDPs not returning home.

The war also severely impacted Lebanon's economic situation, disrupting individuals' jobs and disturbing harvest seasons. This hindered individuals' access to their livelihoods and independence resulting in great barriers to access essential services, particularly education for children, as most public schools were repurposed as shelters. This situation forced some parents to enroll their children in private institutions, exacerbating their resources.

Syrian refugees, who were internally displaced in Lebanon due to the war, also faced discrimination in receiving aid and accessing shelters, forcing them to occupy public spaces and exposing them to additional hate speech. Additionally, many Syrian refugees have expressed fears of deportation, citing the possibility of facing severe human rights abuses upon their return to Syria. Finally, participants perceived the government's efforts as insufficient and inadequate in effectively responding to the war.

The findings in this report are based on community perceptions and reflect the subjective experiences and viewpoints of the local communities. These perceptions provide valuable insights into community sentiments, but may not always align with, for example, the actual aid delivered, availability of programming, or actual policies on access to shelters. These sentiments can be influenced by fear, uncertainty, and social dynamics. The report aims to document and reference these perceptions to inform response efforts, while acknowledging that they are not necessarily representative of the entire population. Nevertheless, practitioners, humanitarian agencies, and government authorities should factor these perceptions into their decisions, as they shape community trust, influence social cohesion, and impact the effectiveness and acceptance of interventions. Therefore, the findings should be interpreted alongside other data sources for a more comprehensive understanding of the situation.

Community-led Recommendations

To Civil Society Organizations and UN agencies:

- Foster dialogue between host and displaced communities through peacebuilding programs, focusing especially on youth, and encourage mutual understanding, and most importantly establish channels to prevent misinformation and false perceptions.
- Engage youth in affected areas in volunteering and community service initiatives to foster a sense of purpose, strengthen social cohesion, and support their mental well-being as a positive coping mechanism.
- Partner with mental health professionals to provide support, especially to populations impacted by displacement and post-war trauma.
- Initiate public health campaigns and increased access to vaccines, hygiene, and sanitation services to prevent disease outbreaks, particularly in shelters and areas with high numbers of IDPs.
- Conduct regular needs assessments to identify gaps in emergency response and monitor the living conditions of IDPs, recognizing that their displacement is dynamic. Frequent assessments are crucial to account for movements, returns, and evolving needs.
- Coordinate with response actors, notably international agencies, the government, and local authorities, to ensure effective and equitable distribution of aid and avoid duplication of efforts.

To Local Authorities:

- Collaborate with humanitarian actors to assess and address gaps in the provision of essential services for IDPs in shelters and private residencies, including water, sanitation, electricity, and heating. Prioritize solutions tailored to the specific needs of each community to ensure equitable access.

To GoL:

- Strengthen humanitarian coordination, and work closely with Civil Society Organizations (CSOs) and local authorities to ensure effective and equitable distribution of aid and avoid duplication of efforts.
- Monitor and increase transparency and quality of aid distribution to prevent any discrimination or bias, while ensuring marginalized groups such as non-Lebanese IDPs are not excluded from shelters or from receiving aid.

To EU and other Programs:

- Prioritize funding for inter-communal dialogue, especially post-conflict, to promote social cohesion.
- Prioritize programs focused on rebuilding and economic development post-conflict.
- Advance programs providing mental health support for both displaced individuals and host communities, and grant services that help people cope with trauma, and anxiety resulting from the conflict.
- Support capacity-building initiatives for both local authorities and communities to enhance emergency preparedness, crisis management, and response mechanisms, reducing reliance on reactive measures.
- Fund and sustain community centers that serve as essential hubs for meal preparation, aid distribution, and temporary shelter for IDPs before they secure stable housing.
- Streamline funding and aid distribution processes to prevent delays that force CSOs to cover emergency needs from their own limited resources. Improve coordination to avoid excess aid going to waste or remaining unused.

2. Background

Project

ALEF – act for human rights is implementing the WE'AM project (Working for Engagement, Acceptance and Mediation), funded by the EU and led by OXFAM, and which aim is to contribute to a people-centered recovery in Lebanon, in line with 3RF and particularly its Pillar 3 that supports a socially cohesive environment. Considering the multi-layered crisis and societal divisions in the country, the project aims at focusing on three key dimensions: drivers of tensions at the community level; conflict prevention processes and awareness raising; and mainstreaming of community level social cohesion into programming, with particular focus on the EU. The project multi-stakeholder participatory approach helps build consensus among civil society, community groups, religious leaders, political, media, private sector actors, donor community, and the wider audience, to produce recommendations to mainstream social cohesion into EU community-based development programs.

As part of the project, the Working Group for People Affected by the Syrian Crisis (WG PASC), a network of 32 local CSOs facilitated by ALEF, has been collecting timely community perceptions on social tensions, and on the reform processes Lebanon is expected to undertake to address the crisis. WG PASC has been using Oxfam's Community Perception Tracker (CPT) approach to capture, analyze, and understand the perceptions of communities in the 6 areas prioritized by the consortium (Beirut, Tripoli, Akkar, Baalbek, Saida and Barja). PASC's focuses on monitoring social tensions and sentiments of people around the reform processes and its application, through the network's regular day-to-day engagement with their beneficiaries and programming. PASC's strong presence on the ground allows for the tracking of the perceptions of not only crisis-affected communities, but also local service providers, local authorities, wider civil society and UN agencies' staff, and other community groups in a timely manner. PASC members have been collecting perceptions during their day-to-day activities. As such, the nature of every organization's programming might, in some instances, affect the themes of the data collected. For example, a number of PASC organizations work on countering GBV and others work with Syrian refugees. Thus, the local community's engagement with these members and the scope of their activities might be a reason behind why these relevant issues are discussed and then noted down using the CPT, thus influencing the perceptions collected whether directly or indirectly.

To further understand drivers and triggers of social tensions at the national level and the impact of the reform process and its connection to social cohesion, ALEF has been analyzing

on quarterly basis the perceptions (qualitative data) collected by PASC using the CPT against incidents, news reports, and other secondary sources to produce quarterly perception reports around social tensions and the reform process. ALEF has been conducting monthly meetings with PASC members using the CPT, in order to discuss any observations, recurrent trends, and potential improvements to the process. Additionally, the findings and recommendations of this report have been validated with PASC and project partners, in order to ensure that the findings are in accordance with observations from the field.

This community perceptions report is the fifth of the series and covers the period between 01 September and 30 November 2024.

Community Perceptions Tracker (CPT)

The CPT utilizes a mobile tool to gather community perceptions during crises, aiding organizations in understanding the beliefs and perceptions of affected communities. Its goal is to give crisis-affected communities the opportunity to shape programs and policies that could potentially impact their lives and contribute to bottom-up change.

Context

During the period spanning September through November 2024, the war reached an unprecedented level of escalation, increasing displacement and further straining economic, social, and political stability in Lebanon, worsening the scarcity of resources already present due to the multilayered crises plaguing the country. This was articulated in key events:

During this quarter, Israel expanded its airstrikes, especially in the Beirut Southern-Suburb and other areas, and shifted to broader attacks on villages, cities, and infrastructure, increasing the threat to civilian populations and essential infrastructure. This marked the start of a significant escalation in the exchange of hostilities between the two sides, especially Israel's aerial bombing throughout Lebanon – disproportionate to Hezbollah's attacks against Israeli targets. As of November 28, the Ministry of Public Health (MoPH) had recorded 3,961 deaths, of which 226 are children and 241 healthcare workers.¹ Nearly 84% of these deaths occurred after September 15.²

Amid ongoing and relentless Israeli airstrikes in the South, Nabatiyeh, Bekaa, Baalbak-Hermel, and Beirut's southern suburb, Israel declared the start of a military ground operation in the South, on October 1. **The escalation, exacerbated by eviction threats issued by the Israeli Army, increased civilian displacement** from the South, the Bekaa, and Beirut's Southern Suburb to relatively safer areas. By November 24, nearly 900,000 people were internally displaced and seeking refuge, mainly in the North and Chouf area. **The sudden influx of displaced individuals into different villages in Lebanon strained the capacity of local governments to provide adequate living conditions to those in collective shelters in their jurisdiction.**

1 UN OCHA (2024, November 28). Lebanon: Flash Update #48 – Escalation of hostilities in Lebanon, as of 28 November 2024. Retrieved from: <https://www.unocha.org/publications/report/lebanon/lebanon-flash-update-48-escalation-hostilities-lebanon-28-november-2024>

2 UN OCHA (2024, December 5). Lebanon Flash Updated #49 – Escalation of hostilities in Lebanon, as of 5 December 2024.

Despite the government's development of an emergency response plan, economic difficulties, insufficient resources, and the exclusion of foreign nationalities, hindered the plan's effectiveness, **forcing a big number of IDPs, especially non-Lebanese, to occupy public spaces.**³ The rise in the number of displaced led to **tensions between IDPs and host communities, as well as confrontations between IDPs and Internal Security Forces (ISF) amid fears of property encroachment.**⁴ The ISF had, in fact, been evacuating IDPs who settled in abandoned buildings or makeshift houses in public properties, sparking criticism and protest.⁵ Similar clashes occurred in Ain el Remmaneh⁶ and Tripoli⁷ as some **locals were suspicious of vehicles displaying Hezbollah-related images.**

Amid this escalation, Caretaker Education Minister Abbas Halabi announced the **closure of public and private schools** until October 7,⁸ followed by the **postponement of the academic year** until November 4, as some public schools were either repurposed as shelters, or inaccessible.⁹ The school year for public schools resumed¹⁰ amid the already-existing tensions with private schools who had already previously resumed schooling widening the inequality between private and public students. The following day, however, a strike caused significant damages to the Saint Charbel School in Jiyeh, wounding seven individuals and compelling students to leave the school before the end of their first day back,¹¹ raising concerns about the mental health consequences of such experiences on students.

On November 26, the Lebanese government and the Israeli government reached an agreement with regards to a ceasefire, that came into effect on November 27 at four in the morning after being accepted by the warring parties.¹² However, less than 48 hours after the declaration of the cessation of hostilities, **Israel began breaching the agreement on multiple occasions**, including targeting a group of journalists and injuring two of them in Khiam,¹³ and attacking areas in Kfarchouba, Shebaa,¹⁴ and Hasbaya.¹⁵ Following the ceasefire agreement, and as of November 28, 22,214 IDPs were still in shelters, whereas 580,000 had returned to their villages.¹⁶

3 L'Orient le Jour (2024, October 24). Échauffourées à Afqa entre déplacés et police. Retrieved from: loj.com

4 Ibid.

5 Al Jazeera (2024, October 31). Lebanon's displaced find solidarity and community in empty hotel. Retrieved from: <https://www.aljazeera.com/features/longform/2024/10/31/lebanons-displaced-find-solidarity-and-community-in-an-empty-hotel>

6 Lebanon Files (2024, September 23). Clashes in Ain el Remmanane. Retrieved from: lebanonfiles.com

7 LebanonOn (2024, September 25). بالفيديو - توترات أمنية في طرابلس. إيقاف سيارات تحمل صور حزب الله وتفتيش نازحين. Retrieved from: <https://www.lebanonon.com/news/277415>

8 L'Orient Today (2024, September 26). Closure of schools and universities been extended until Oct. 7. Retrieved from: loj.com

9 L'Orient Today (2024, October 6). Start of public-school year postponed to Nov. 4. Retrieved from: loj.com

10 This is Beirut. (2024, November 5) Israeli Shelling in Southern Lebanon, Barja, Jiyeh, and the Beqaa. Retrieved from: thisisbeirut.com

11 Ibid.

12 Al Jazeera (2024, November 27). Israel-Hezbollah ceasefire takes effect in Lebanon. Retrieved from: <https://www.aljazeera.com/news/2024/11/26/biden-announces-israel-hezbollah-ceasefire-agreement>

13 Al Mayadeen (2024, November 27). Lebanon state media says Israeli fire wounds 2 journalists in south. Retrieved from <https://english.almayadeen.net/news/politics/lebanon-state-media-says-israeli-fire-wounds-2-journalists-i>

14 MTV (2024, November 28). Artillery Shelling Targets Shebaa. Retrieved from: <https://www.mtv.com.lb/en/News/Local/1525901/watch--artillery-shelling-targets-shebaa>

15 MTV (2024, November 28). An Israeli tank targeted the outskirts of Kfarchouba with two shells. Retrieved from: <https://www.mtv.com.lb/en/News/Live-Feed/1525754/nna--an-israeli-tank-targeted-the-outskirts-of-kfarchouba-with-two-shells>

16 Relief Web (2024, December 2). IOM Lebanon Emergency Response – Update #4. Retrieved from: <https://reliefweb.int/report/lebanon/iom-lebanon-emergency-response-update-4-15-28-november-2024>

Lebanon’s ongoing presidential vacuum and parliamentary deadlock continue to affect the political and socio-economic situation in the country. The absence of a Lebanese president led Parliament Speaker Nabih Berri to lead the ceasefire negotiations, sparking controversy with other political parties viewing Berri’s interference as a violation to his constitutional jurisdiction.¹⁷

The Lebanese economic situation has further deteriorated during this quarter. The World Bank reported that **unemployment reached 50%, with the GDP expected to shrink by 6 to 8%.** Caretaker Minister of Agriculture Abbas Hajj Hassan reported that **the war has damaged 70% of the agricultural sector** due to the use of cluster and phosphorus bombs.¹⁸ **This damage not only deepens Lebanon’s economic challenges but also threatens its food security amid already-dire circumstances.**¹⁹ Moreover, the damage assessment conducted by the World Bank put the total economic losses of the war at \$8.5 billion, with \$2.5 billion housing damage.²⁰

17 Kataeb.org (2024, November 21). Power Vacuum Enables Speaker Berri’s Unchecked Negotiation Role Retrieved from: <https://en.kataeb.org/articles/power-vacuum-enables-speaker-berris-unchecked-negotiation-role>

18 L’Orient-Le Jour. (2024, November 25). Agricultural sector seriously impacted by the war: Abbas Hajj Hassan. Retrieved from: <https://today.lorientlejour.com/article/1436874/agricultural-sector-seriously-impacted-by-the-war-abbas-hajj-hassan.html>

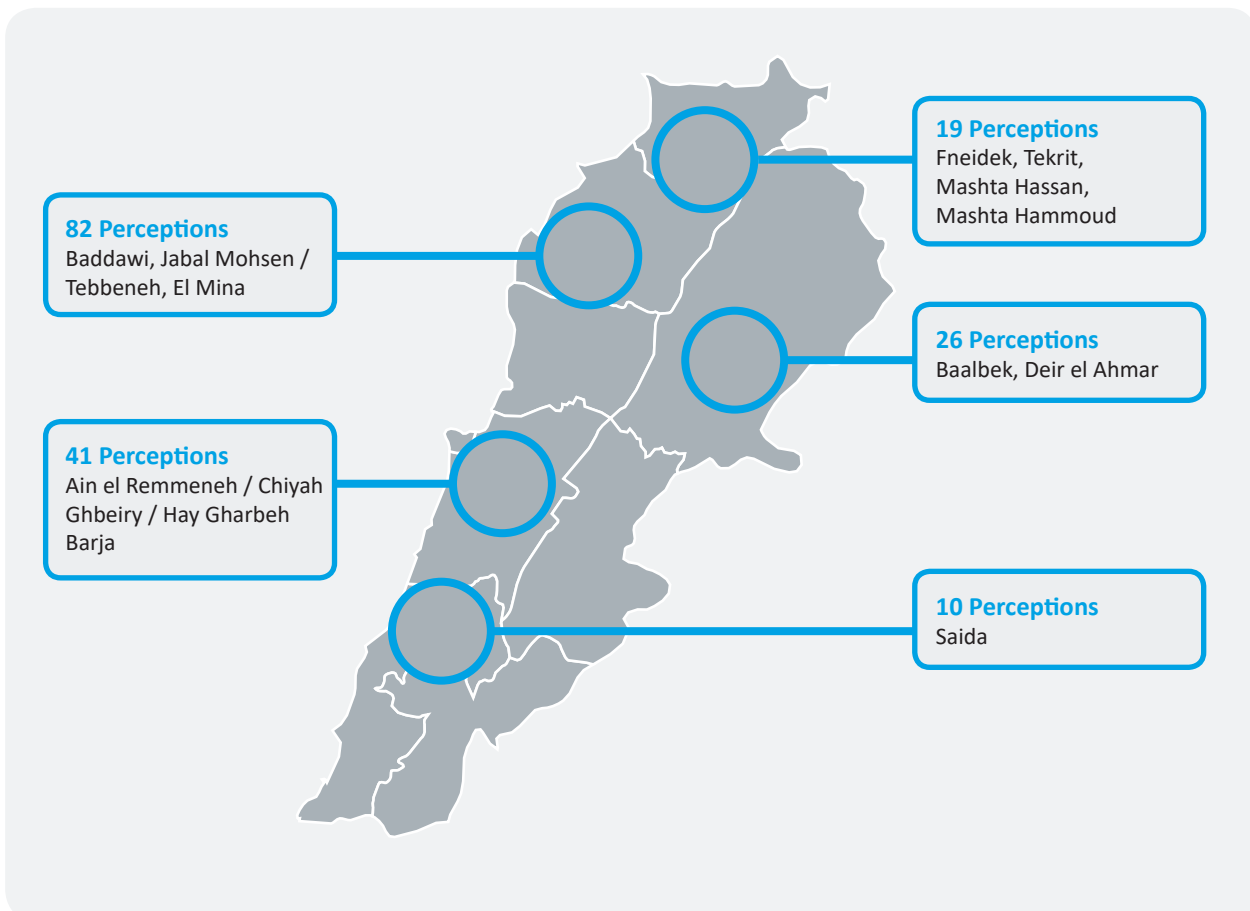
19 Ibid.

20 The New Arab (2024, November 25). Economic, material damage in Lebanon could be far worse than what is reported. Retrieved from: <https://www.newarab.com/news/economic-material-damage-lebanon-far-worse-reported>

3. Detailed Data

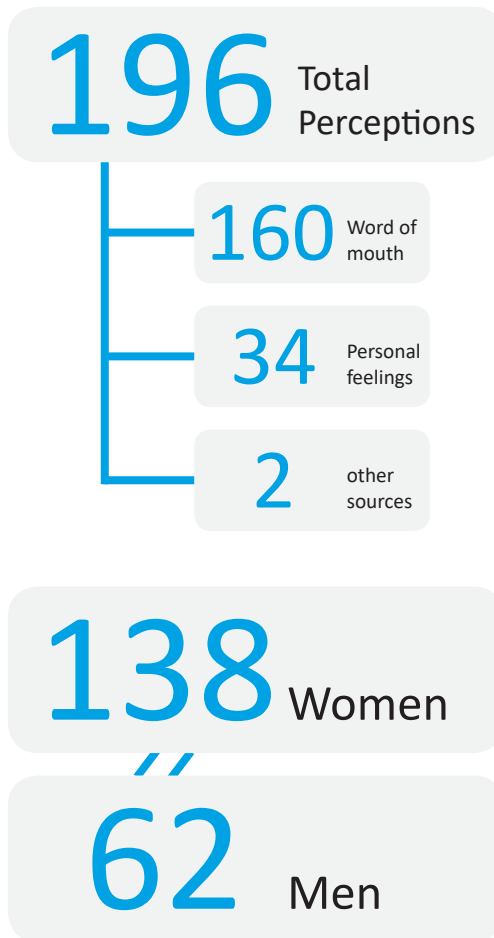
Sources of Perception

The CPT covers six key regions in Lebanon – Tripoli, Akkar, Beirut, South, Mount Lebanon, and Baalbek-El Hermel – each of which has specific areas of focus. In Tripoli, the project’s attention centers on Baddawi, Jabal Mohsen/Tebbeneh, and El Mina. Akkar’s focus includes Fneidek, Tekrit, Mashta Hassan/Mashta Hammoud. The project’s focus in Beirut lies in Ain el Remmeneh/Chiyah, and Hay el Gharbeh/Ghbeiry. Saida is the central focus in the South, Barja in Mount Lebanon, and Baalbek City and Deir El Ahmar in Baalbek-el Hermel.



In the sixth quarter of the project, spanning September through November 2024, a total of 196 perceptions were collected. The primary sources of information that influenced or shaped the perceptions collected were word of mouth, based on what the community around is saying (160), and personal feelings, based on one's own beliefs (34), with the remaining 2 based on other sources.

138 perceptions were collected from women, while 62 perceptions were collected from men. Notably, 21 participants identified facing difficulties in areas such as hearing, seeing, mobility, remembering/concentrating, communication, and self-care, while the majority reported no disabilities. It's important to note that the sum of perceptions disaggregated by gender or disability does not necessarily equal the total number of perceptions collected because perceptions were gathered from both individuals and groups. Geographically, 82 perceptions were from the North, 32 perceptions were from Mount Lebanon, 26 perceptions were from Baalbeck – el Hermel, 19 perceptions were from Akkar, 10 perceptions were from the South, and 9 perceptions were from Beirut.

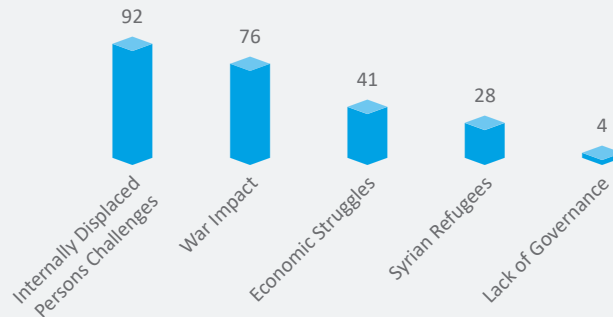


While the sample of perceptions collected in this report may not be statistically representative of the entire population, it provides valuable insights into the prevailing sentiments within the targeted communities. The findings, when viewed in conjunction with broader sentiments shared by PASC and the members of the consortium and corroborated by evidence gathered through ongoing monitoring by ALEF, offer a meaningful reflection of the challenges and concerns faced by both local communities. This triangulation of the collected perceptions enhances the relevance of the report, providing a nuanced understanding of community dynamics that can inform programmatic decisions and policy responses. Despite its limitations, the report captures key trends and perceptions that align with larger patterns observed by humanitarian actors operating across Lebanon, making it a useful tool for shaping responsive and context-sensitive interventions.

Trends Identified

An important observation from this quarter's findings is the **substantial influence of the local context and community discourse on individuals' attitudes, views, and perceptions towards drivers of tensions**. This is evident by the fact that 160 perceptions stem from word of mouth.

TRENDS



Internally Displaced Persons Challenges:

With the intensification of the war leading to a surge in the number of IDPs across Lebanon, concerns related to internal displacement emerged as the most frequently cited trend, appearing in 92 out of the 196 recorded perceptions. Among these, IDP participants expressed frustration, in 11 perceptions, regarding difficulties in securing housing. Of these, 10 perceptions pointed to high rent prices and steep deposit requirements posing financial barriers and hindering individuals' ability to access accommodation. The remaining perception noted that overcrowded shelters limited IDPs' ability to find comfortable spots.

"We left Baalbeck and came to Tripoli where we are staying under a tree. My son and I are sick, and we are freezing from the cold but we cannot go anywhere. Any house for rent, requires 6 months deposit and each month costs 600\$. We cannot afford it." (Syrian Woman, adult, Jabal Mohsen - Tebbeneh).

"We lived some of our worst days. We fled under the bombardment, and now we are staying in cramped spaces with multiple families. But everything is better than having a bomb fall on your head." (Woman, adult, Baalbeck).

Individuals in shelters also reported significant challenges with aid distribution. Four perceptions noted that the aid provided was insufficient to meet the needs of all families and individuals in the shelters. This insufficiency left many IDPs struggling to secure their basic necessities, including food, water, electricity, and medication, as expressed in 13 perceptions. Additionally, 6 perceptions emphasized the inadequate winter preparedness in shelters, with most inhabitants lacking proper winter clothing, blankets, thick mattresses, and reliable sources of heat.

"The aid is arriving late, and I am forced to buy food and canned goods for the children because they are starving. But the people in Jabal Mohsen are treating us well." (Man, adult, Jabal Mohsen – Tebbeneh).

"The aid provided is not enough, there are basic necessities for women and children that we do not have access to." (Man, adult, Saida).

“We try to say that we are fine, and that our situation is better than that of others, at least we haven’t lost anyone from our family. But we are not okay. Psychologically, we are very exhausted. On top of that, we are entering winter without being prepared. We haven’t brought winter clothes or blankets with us, and young children might get sick, and we cannot afford a doctor’s consultation.” (Woman, adult, Saida).

Discrimination further compounded the difficulties IDPs faced. Six perceptions highlighted the barriers non-Lebanese individuals – particularly Syrians and migrant workers – encountered in accessing shelters, forcing many of them to resort to public spaces, jeopardizing social stability. Moreover, 1 perception noted that IDPs staying in apartments did not receive aid, as most resources were directed to those in shelters, leaving them unable to secure their basic needs. Sectarian discrimination also emerged as a critical issue, with 3 perceptions reporting that individuals wearing hijab experienced stigmatization, including being subjected to suspicious and hostile looks. Furthermore, 1 perception raised serious concern about young girls, in shelters, facing Gender Based Violence and sexual assault.

“Any kind of assistance is only reaching the schools, while people staying in houses, like us, haven’t received anything. We are in dire need of assistance, anything that could help us. We came to houses that are not furnished, and we have nothing, absolutely nothing.” (Woman, adult, Ain el Remmaneh - Chiyah).

“I am not leaving my house because when they see me wearing a hijab, they start talking negatively, and they discriminate against me. This really bothers me.” (Woman, adult, Ain el Remmaneh - Chiyah).

“There are cases of sexual assault in the shelter we are staying at, and I am very worried about my daughter. We live in fear because of the war, and in fear that something might happen to one of us. I just want this war to end, so we can go back home.” (Woman, adult, Hay el Gharbeh - Ghbeiry).

Nevertheless, 5 perceptions positively highlighted the hospitality of host communities, especially in Tripoli.

“We are grateful to the people of Tripoli for all the help and their hospitality during these circumstances. Truly, thank you from the bottom of our hearts; they welcomed us and never made us feel like strangers.” (Woman, old, Tripoli).

The CPT shows that IDP participants were significantly concerned about the progression of the war and the possibility of further escalation, as reflected in 13 perceptions. Seven of those perceptions underscored the emotional struggles of family separation during the conflict, highlighting that many young individuals fled their villages while their parents remained behind. The perceptions show that this separation caused profound anxiety about the safety and wellbeing of family members, deeply affecting psychological health. In fact, 7 perceptions emphasized the severe psychological distress experienced by IDPs, particularly those who were forced to flee amidst heavy bombardments. The data shows that these individuals became extremely sensitive to sonic booms, airplanes, and loud sounds.

"We are separated. My father is in one place, while my family is in another, and my friends are somewhere else. Nowhere is safe anymore, and I am scared I might lose one of them." (Woman, young, Ain el Remmaneh - Chiyah).

"I have recurrent nightmares every night about how fled under the bombs and how the drones were following us. And here I constantly hear the drones, and I keep having anxiety attacks and tremors." (Woman, adult, Ain el Remmaneh - Chiyah).

Finally, 3 perceptions strongly emphasized the urgent need for IDPs to return to their villages, as they associated this with restoring their dignity.

"I will go back to Tyre, no matter the situation or the way. I can't continue living here. I had my own room, my life, and my boring routine that I miss. But having 20 people in two rooms is unacceptable. I can't adapt to living here, and I don't want to adapt to this situation." (Woman, young, Saida).

The CPT also shows that displacement affected host communities, placing additional strain on their ability to sustain themselves. Two perceptions highlighted the struggle of participants hosting multiple displaced families within their homes, yet doing so willingly to support others.

"I am hosting ten displaced persons, and they don't want to go to overcrowded shelters. I don't have enough mattresses, and my economic situation is very bad. But I don't have choice, they need us." (Man, adult, Jabal Mohsen - Tebbeneh).

Participants in the CPT attributed the rise in prices of goods and services to the large influx of IDPs into certain cities, as evident in 10 perceptions. This created financial challenges for, both, IDPs and the host communities. The fear that IDPs might not return to their villages once the war ends has exacerbated this concern. The host community, recalling previously perceived challenges with Syrian refugees, in 1 perception, feared potential competition for job opportunities with IDPs.

"Everything became so expensive after the war started and the Shiaa were forcefully displaced here to the North. Business owners are taking advantage of the situation and increasing their prices." (Woman, adult, Mina).

"The village here is filled with displaced persons, and people are saying they came here to stay, and they will not return to their villages. They will take all jobs available from us, just like the Syrians did and we will be the ones to suffer from it." (Woman, adult, Tekrit).

An additional concern, expressed in 8 perceptions, was the spread of viruses such as COVID-19 and Cholera, attributed in the CPT to the increasing population in certain areas due to the arrival of IDPs. This has contributed to the stigmatization and discrimination of IDPs within these communities.

"Diseases are spreading again because of this displacement, because there is a general lack of hygiene, which leads to many diseases, and we can't treat them. I heard that there are cases of COVID-19 returning and spreading among us." (Woman, adult, Tekrit).

However, this discrimination intensified when Israel began targeting buildings housing IDPs. As indicated in 1 perception, fear emerged among host communities that their villages could become targets due to the presence of displaced persons. Another 8 perceptions in November reflected concerns about their presence in large numbers of IDPs and the resulting clashes.

“I am concerned that we will become Israeli targets because of all these people coming out to villages from the South.” (Woman, adult, Tripoli).

Frustration with IDPs became more pronounced, as members of host communities reported in 2 perceptions observing IDPs discarding the food assistance provided to them. They interpreted this behavior as dissatisfaction with the aid received.

“Can you believe that the food donated to the Shiaa coming from the South is being thrown in the garbage? I saw it with my own eyes, and on social media. Lebanese people are dying from hunger here and no one cares.” (Woman, adult, Mina).

Sectarian discourse increased from 1 perception in September to 7 perceptions in November as the situation persisted. Participants expressed animosities, particularly towards the Shiaa displaced communities.

“We don’t want any displaced here, even the Shiaa.” (Man, adult, Jabal Mohsen - Tebbeneh).

“People are really concerned about the displacement to the North. We are hearing on social media that this invasion is going to lead to societal problems, and they Shiaa will have power in the North. Then, we will become targets because of them.” (Man, young, Jabal Mohsen – Tebbeneh).

War Impact and Safety Concerns

The impact of the war and its consequent safety concerns were the second most cited trend during this quarter, evident in 76 perceptions. Participants in the CPT articulated the psychological impact of the ongoing conflict, describing heightened anxiety and a persistent sense of uncertainty and fear, as evident in 43 perceptions. In 1 perception, participants even claimed that their psychological distress translated into physical pain. Three perceptions indicated that some individuals were so fearful they avoided leaving their homes, while 4 perceptions revealed that either they or their children experienced recurring nightmares every night.

“I’ve been suffering from spasms in my eyes and body because of the situation, and I feel constantly drained. I am unable to help myself, and I don’t know when this nightmare will end.” (Woman, adult, Mina).

“The war is restricting our mobility, and we don’t even have enough money to leave and stay somewhere safer and calmer. I’m so tired and every day feels like this will be the last day of my life.” (Woman, young, Baalbek).

As a result, some parents expressed hesitation, in 5 perceptions, about sending their children to school, fearing for their safety and wellbeing amidst the conflict. Others' concern was rooted in the possibility that the conflict will fully disrupt the school year, depriving their children of education. They feared that this would pose a significant setback for their children's academic progress; a concern reflected in eight perceptions.

"The minister of education is completely detached from reality, while we live anxiously in fear. He wants to open the schools, and while I am concerned about our children's future, I am more concerned about their wellbeing and safety..." (Woman, adult, Saida).

Participants expressed a heightened fear about their ability to secure basic needs amid the war, coupled with the rising prices of highly-demanded goods and services, as reflected in 6 perceptions. This exacerbated existing financial difficulties, particularly as the war had disrupted many individuals' jobs and, consequently, their incomes.

"I cannot find any jobs, no one wants to hire anyone because of the war. Those who had construction work, do not want to continue their project, and those who needed employees, do not want them anymore." (Man, adult, Baalbek).

Economic Struggles

Economic struggles emerged as the third most cited trend in this quarter's CPT, expressed in 41 out of the 196 perceptions. Participants emphasized their inability to afford basic needs and services, including electricity, rent, water, and essential medication - a concern noted in 13 perceptions. These perceptions also highlight the burden of medical expenses and consultations, limiting access to necessary healthcare. The conflict further intensified this issue, as the healthcare sector, in some areas, was either overwhelmed or completely inaccessible. The growing pressure on individuals' ability to access essential goods and services heightened competition for limited resources, particularly with the presence of IDPs. The data suggests, in 10 perceptions, that the housing crisis and the exponential rise in rent prices, attributed to displacement, placed additional financial strain on individuals, who were already struggling to afford their basic cost of living due to low incomes.

"We can barely afford our basic necessities. Everything is so expensive and there are food shortages." (Woman, adult, Baalbek).

"People are truly heartless; our landlord wants to kick us out because it is more financially beneficial for him to rent his place to IDPs. We don't have anywhere else to go, and my husband is too sick to work." (Woman, adult, Mina).

"I have liver and thyroid cancer, and my health is deteriorating. I can't afford the costs of the surgery. Family, neighbors, and friends helped with a part of the amount. This breaks my heart, and I keep crying. I don't know what to do." (Woman, adult, Jabal Mohsen).

Additionally, participants expressed particular concerns about tuition fees, evident in 5 perceptions. Many individuals who were adamant about enrolling their children in school had no choice but to send them to private schools, as public schools were repurposed as shelters. Some also feared the war would be prolonged and were reluctant to let their children miss an entire school year.

"I either sacrifice my children's future, or I have to cut back on my own expenses to put them in a semi-private school so they can at least get an education. Otherwise, their future will be destroyed." (Woman, young, Baddawi).

These circumstances placed considerable strain on individuals' psychological wellbeing, as they endure immense financial pressure during stressful and uncertain times, noted in 3 perceptions. Participants also expressed feelings of hopelessness and vulnerability, with many wishing for the war to end so that they can resume their routines.

Challenges faced by Syrian Refugees

During this quarter, Syrian refugees faced two primary challenges: the first being internal displacement, and the second being the fear of deportation by the Lebanese government, as stated in 28 perceptions. The CPT revealed that IDPs of Syrian nationality faced significant discrimination in accessing shelters. They believe that the aid was primarily dedicated to Lebanese IDPs, leaving them feeling severely marginalized. Five perceptions indicate that they were forced to stay in public spaces, often without any belongings. The conflict impeded their access to aid and basic needs, forcing them to struggle in making ends meet.

"The car distributing aid was completely filled, but just because we're Syrians we did not receive anything. It is as if we don't deserve it, even though there were ten Syrian families and about twenty Lebanese families." (Syrian Man, adult, Hay Gharbeh - Ghbeiry).

"We are concerned they might stop supplying us with food and medicine because we, as Syrians, will be sidelined. They will only help the Lebanese, as they do not consider us humans." (Syrian Woman, young, Tekrit).

"No schools or shelters accepted the Syrians, and the first people to blame for anything that happens are the Syrians." (Syrian Man, adult, Hay Gharbeh - Ghbeiry).

During September and October, Syrian refugees suffered the brunt of hate speech, with 4 perceptions expressing negative views about the presence of IDPs of Syrian nationality. Two of these perceptions even went as far as accusing them of being spies. This represents the deep-rooted resentment and suspicion towards Syrian refugees in Lebanon, which was further exacerbated by their displacement.

"They shouldn't allow any Syrian to stay in the country anymore, because there are the traitors and spies among them." (Man, adult, Baalbek).

Simultaneously, Syrian refugees were concerned about the risk of deportation, with 3 perceptions highlighting their fear of being sent back to Syria where some are wanted by the Syrian regime or are have evaded military conscription.

“We are all wanted, either by the regime or for military service. Otherwise, we wouldn’t endure this humiliation and hardship. We’re afraid of being deported because none of us have residency permits.” (Syrian Man, young, Beirut).

Lack of Proper Governance

The lack of proper governance was the fourth trend in the CPT, cited in 4 perceptions. Participants expressed growing dissatisfaction with the government’s response plan to the war and the displacement crisis, feeling that its efforts were insufficient. One perception asserts that the government did not contribute to service provision or assist in meeting the basic needs of IDPs. Two perceptions specifically attributed all efforts to Civil Society Organizations, claiming that the government remained inactive and indifferent to the wellbeing of its citizens. Finally, one perception criticized the decisions of Caretaker Minister of Education, Abbas Halabi, regarding the resumption of the school year amid the severe ongoing bombardments and attacks.

“We’ve only been here for one week, and we are already suffering. We don’t know where to go, or where to sleep, or how we will eat. The government is not concerned about us, it is as if nothing happened to us. Thank God for the organizations that are working in place of the government.” (Man, adult, Saida).

“It seems the education minister does not live with us in the same country. What academic year does he fear students will lose? How can any parent feel comfortable sending their children to school during these circumstances? And how are my children expected to engage in online learning when we have no internet access and only one phone in the household?” (Woman, adult, Saida).



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