

Lebanon UPR Report 2020

Rights of Syrian Refugees

Joint Presentation between:

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- Syrian League for Citizenship
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- Violation Documentation Center in Syria
- International Humanitarian Relief
- Access Center for Human Rights
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1. Introduction

The right to seek refuge in Lebanon is enshrined in the Constitution (Paragraph B of the preamble). Based on information collected by international organizations, Lebanon hosts 938,531 Syrian refugees registered at the UNHCR and 31,000 Palestinian refugees from Syria to Lebanon (PRS). The Lebanese government estimates a further 550,000 persons with Syrian nationality living in Lebanon and not registered with UN agencies.ⁱ

Although it took note of Recommendations 26 and 27 in the UPR Working Group on Lebanon's report (A/HRC/31/5 2015), related to the signature and ratification of the 1951 Convention relating to the Status of Refugees and its 1967 Protocol and ensuring their effective implementation, Lebanon has not yet signed the 1951 convention.ⁱⁱ

Moreover, Lebanon had accepted Recommendation 195 to take into particular consideration the vulnerable situation of migrants and refugees in the country, in particular women and children and took note of Recommendations 39, 208, 209, 210, 214, and 217 on developing a specific legal framework defining and protecting rights and freedoms of refugees with a view to better ensure their basic human rights and living conditions, and strengthening the efforts to ensure the protection and dignity of Syrian refugees. However, Syrian refugees continue to suffer all sorts of violations, in the absence of a national framework, local legislation, or administrative measures to address the specific needs of refugees and asylum seekers.ⁱⁱⁱ

Since the beginning of demonstrations and protests in Lebanon on 17 October 2019, hate speech and incitement against Syrian refugees expanded dramatically, led by some authorities and political parties, aiming to mobilize public opinion and blame refugees for the deteriorating economic and political situation in the country. However, several protests, events, and sit-ins supporting Syrian refugees against hate campaigns, discrimination, and xenophobia also took place in the country during that period.

2. Civil and Political Rights

Despite the large number of refugees on Lebanese soil, the Lebanese government's response is still below par, as it refuses to deal with them in line with its international obligations or international treaties and agreements that it adhered to related to respecting and protecting human rights, including the protection of children in accordance with the Convention on the Rights of the

Child (55.2% of the Syrian refugees in Lebanon are children (UNHCR, 2019)), and the Responsibility to Protect Agreement (RtoP). Many Syrian refugees remain exposed to various types of violations in all political, civil, social, and cultural fields. Refugees are also subject to restrictions on freedom of expression and organization. Security services continue to monitor their movements and place them under constant threat of summons, arrest, and deportation.

Recommendations:

- The Lebanese state must abide by the articles and clauses of the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights, especially articles that would contribute to preserving the dignity and rights of Syrian refugees in Lebanon.
- The Lebanese state must adhere to the international agreements it has ratified and give effect to.
- The Lebanese state must abide by its obligations under international humanitarian law and other humanitarian obligations, regardless of international political positions and processes.
- The Lebanese state must isolate refugee policies from internal political polarization.

1.2 Right to Life, Liberty, and Personal Safety (Ending and Criminalizing Torture)

Although it accepted Recommendations 34, 35, 111, 112, 113, 114, 115, 116, 117, 118, 119, 120, 121, and 122, which call for criminalizing torture and the establishment of a national mechanism to prevent torture with the authority to visit detention centers, monitor the situation of detainees, improve prison conditions, and prosecute perpetrators of torture and despite being a party to the Convention Against Torture (CAT) and its Optional Protocol, Lebanon keeps failing to fulfil its obligations. It continues to systematically practice torture against Syrian refugees during their detention, arrest, and investigation, in addition to the inhumane conditions in places of detention, that neglect the minimum rules for treatment of prisoners or detainees. In July 2017, a number of Syrian refugees were reported killed during raids by the Lebanese army on two unofficial Syrian refugee camps in the town of Aarsal in northeastern Lebanon, in addition to the several deaths in detention that resulted from the raid, according to eyewitness accounts documented by Human Rights Watch. Indeed, a statement by the Lebanese army on 4 July 2017 confirmed that four Syrians had died in detention after the aforementioned raids, during which Amnesty International had documented the arrest of at least 350 people.^{iv}

Arbitrary detention of Syrian refugees and raids on their camps and places of residence occur systematically and on a wide scale. Amnesty International found that illegal evictions, continuous raids on refugee camps, and mass arrests make life unbearable for many refugees in Lebanon. Many are forced to return to Syria, despite constant risks involved in the return.^v On 11/6/2019, a statement by the Internal Security Forces said that 38 Syrian nationals, including 8 women and 17 children, had been arrested in the town of Soueiri in West Bekaa for entering Lebanon illegally.^{vi} In the same context, Save the Children reported the arrest of 47 Syrians for not having legal documents in the country. It should be noted that at least 73% of Syrian refugees in Lebanon did not obtain legal residency due to inconsistent renewal procedures and high costs.^{vii}

Recommendations:

- Put a stop to acts of torture and mistreatment of Syrian refugees during detention and allow Lebanese and international human rights organizations access to places of arrest and detention and investigate the treatment of detainees held by various Lebanese authorities.
- Redress victims of torture and arbitrary detention, put an end to impunity, hold accountable those responsible for deaths and torture in places of detention, and refer them to the appropriate jurisdiction in accordance with relevant laws and legislation.
- Establish legal mechanisms to monitor and put an end to arbitrary arrest, detention, and raids against the homes of Syrian refugees.
- Pass legislation that provides for the participation of human rights and human rights organizations in the policy-making process related to refugees.

2.1 Right to Legal Personality

Lebanon took note of Recommendations 154 and 157 that call for legal and administrative steps to ensure that authorities register all refugee children born in Lebanon, issue them the necessary documents, and make the necessary legislative amendments to allow children born in Lebanon to obtain their right to legal recognition through birth certificates. Nevertheless, Syrian refugees still have restricted status in Lebanon, as they continue to be considered as IDPs in an attempt to eliminate their civil and political rights. Failure to obtain residency documents contributed to the disruption of this right with regard to birth registration and marriages taking place on Lebanese soil.

Since 2017, the General Directorate of Personal Status has issued a number of positive decisions and circulars (on 12/9/2017 - 2/3/2018 - 3/3/2018 - 12/3/2019 - 9/17/2017),^{viii} with the aim of simplifying the procedures regarding the execution of marriage, divorce, and birth documents belonging to Syrian citizens and occurring on Lebanese soil. Although these procedures will contribute significantly to the registration of births and marriage contracts since 2011, linking them to obtaining a valid residence card for marriage and linking birth registration to the presentation of papers and documents duly legalized from Syria or the Syrian embassy in Lebanon, has significantly hindered the application of these procedures. Many Syrian refugees in Lebanon lack duly authenticated residency cards, family cards, or family data, and face great difficulty in obtaining them from Syria or the Syrian embassy in Lebanon, as they require large sums of money. Syrian refugees also face extortion and fraud to be able to obtain such documents, due to the absence of a legal representative or first-degree relative authorized to follow these procedures in Syria and obtain these documents in a regular manner.^{ix} Studies indicate that 52% of Syrian refugees married in Lebanon lack any documents to prove their marriage. Moreover, 83% of the Syrian children born in Lebanon were not registered.^x

It should also be noted that Palestinian refugees from Syria still suffer from many restrictions due to the non-recognition of their legal personality as refugees, which also significantly prevents them from exercising many of their civil and political rights. These restrictions are reflected in several arbitrary practices in renewal of residency and freedom of movement procedures, making the residency of many illegal and exposing them to constant risks and lack of protection. The Lebanese government still does not recognize them as either war refugees or Palestinian refugees and does not treat them like Syrian refugees who are considered by Lebanon as "displaced."^{xi}

Recommendations:

- Recognize the legal personality of Syrian refugees as refugees, through the signature and ratification of the 1951 Convention on the Status of refugees and its 1967 Protocols.
- Work to facilitate legal procedures for Syrian refugees, in particular civil affairs procedures such as marriage, divorce, and birth registration.
- Recognize the legal personality of Palestinian refugees from Syrian into Lebanon as refugees.

2.3 Right to Freedom of Movement, Residency, and Travel

Although Lebanon took note of Recommendations 215 and 216 regarding improving the status of refugees by facilitating their registration, renewing their residence permits, and continuing efforts to provide them shelter and an effective administrative system for their registration and protection, in partnership with UNHCR, entry and residence requirements for Syrian refugees issued at the beginning of 2015 remain valid, which prevented many asylum-seekers from actually entering Lebanon, knowing that the State Shura Council had removed these conditions and declared them unlawful, as they fall outside the jurisdiction of the issuing authority (State Shura Council Resolution No. 421/2017 - 2018, Dated 8/2/2018).^{xii} Syrian refugees face increasing obstacles to obtaining valid residence permits. Around 73% of Syrian refugees in Lebanon are without residence permits, due to the high residency fees (USD200), complicated procedures, papers, and conditions required by the Lebanese General Directorate of General Security (GDGS) that do not apply to most Syrian refugees, or the severe delays in examining and processing applications by the relevant authorities.^{xiii} Refugees without valid residency permits face various types of violations and exploitation, including the risk of detention, repeated harassment, and limited access to basic services such as education, health care, work, and registration of births and marriages. On 3/31/2018, the Lebanese General Directorate of General Security (GDGS) issued a decision to settle the situation of Syrian and Palestinian nationals, which eliminated some restrictions imposed on residency for Syrian refugee children between the ages of 15 and 18 years.^{xiv}

Lebanese authorities in many areas continue to impose a curfew on Syrian refugees, accompanied by punitive measures.^{xv} Some municipalities have banned Syrian refugees from walking in the streets or other forms of movement at night until the early hours of the morning. The International Federation for Human Rights (FIDH) had criticized a sign posted by Faraya Municipality, Keserwan District, prohibiting foreign workers and their families from walking on its highway, day and night.^{xvi}

Recommendations:

- Facilitate the entry and exit of Syrian refugees into Lebanon and their residency in the country.

- Facilitate the registration of Syrian refugees and provide them with legal residency permits, renewing them without obstacles.
- Take necessary legal measures guaranteeing the freedom of movement for Syrian refugees and repeal all curfew decisions imposed against them.

2.4 Forced Deportation and Safe and Voluntary Return

Lebanon took note of Recommendation 206, calling for legal and administrative measures to ensure the principle of non-refoulement and the fair and appropriate treatment of persons in need of international protection. The Lebanese authorities are obligated by law not to forcibly transfer any person to Syria, based on paragraph B of the Preamble of the Lebanese Constitution, international norms, and the 1984 Convention against Torture, which Lebanon joined in 2000. Article 3 of the convention states that "no State Party shall expel, return ("refouler") or extradite a person to another State where there are substantial grounds for believing that he would be in danger of being subjected to torture. In addition, they are obliged by the Law of Entry and Exit of Foreigners into Lebanon of 1962, which adopts the principle of non-refoulement or returning persons to places where they are at risk of persecution, torture, or inhumane or degrading treatment or punishment. Despite these obligations, the Higher Council for Defense issued a decision (50/أع/م ج أ/س/50) on 15/4/2019, followed by a decision by the Lebanese Director of General Security (43830/ع.ق.م) on 13/5/2019, to deport Syrian citizens entering Lebanon through unofficial crossings.^{xvii} The National News Agency reported that 301 Syrians had been deported between 7 May and 20 May (197 by the army, 100 by ISF, and four by GDGS), in implementation of the aforementioned decisions. The deportees were handed over via al-Masnaa crossing to the Syrian Immigration and Passports Department in Jdaidet Yabous.^{xviii}

All these decisions are considered in violation of the Lebanese Penal Code, which limits decisions to deport foreigners who did not enter through official crossings to the criminal courts, following a fair trial that allows the foreigner to provide the appropriate defense against the deportation penalty (Article 32 of the Law on Entry, Residence, and Exit issued on 7/10/1962, and Articles 71, 88, and 89 of the Penal Code). Most deported Syrian citizens are subjected to arrests and torture upon return and surrender to the Syrian authorities. A Washington Post report on 2/6/2019 said that more than 2,000 Syrian citizens had been arrested and tortured after returning from Lebanon.^{xix} A report issued by a group of human rights organizations stated that on 26 April 2019, 16 Syrians, some of whom were registered as refugees, were deported upon their arrival at Beirut airport.^{xx}

International law prohibits indirect refoulement, which occurs when states use indirect means to compel individuals to return to a place where they would be at risk of serious human rights violations. However, in July 2018, the Lebanese government announced that refugees could return to Syria under an agreement with the Syrian government, and asked the GDGS to facilitate that return. GDGS registered the names of those wishing to return and carried out their transfer to the border crossings. None of them will be allowed to return before obtaining prior approval from the Syrian government. On 2/13/2020, the Lebanese GDGS issued a statement indicating the voluntary return of 1,093 Syrian refugees from different regions in Lebanon to the Syrian territories.^{xxi} The Lebanese authorities estimate the number of returnees to Syria between 55,000 and 90,000 refugees.

Nevertheless, Amnesty International has shed doubt on the voluntary nature of the refugees' return to their country of origin. Although the Lebanese government does not physically force refugees to register their names or ride the busses to leave to the borders, the Lebanese government's unfair procedures and policies, especially the difficulty in obtaining residency and resulting obstacles related to work, health, and education, in addition to the tragic and miserable living conditions suffered by Syrian refugees in the camps, which lack the minimum essentials for a dignified living, shed many doubts on the ability of Syrians to actually give free consent.^{xxii} On 3 November 2017, the Minister of State for Refugee Affairs said that around 20 refugees, including at least two children, were killed by Syrian regime forces after their return.^{xxiii}

Although international human rights law grants refugees the right to return to their countries, the question is linked to the prior approval of the Syrian government. Statements made by GDGS indicated that the Syrian government had refused to return some of the refugees who were wanted for security reasons.

Recommendations:

- Urge Lebanon to abide by the ratified international agreements and treaties, which require that no person be forcibly transferred to Syria, which could lead to the risk of arbitrary detention and the risk to life.
- Ensure that refugees arrive in Syria according to a more stringent review process in line with international refugee law standards, especially the principle of non-refoulement and human rights standards.^{xxiv}

2.5 Eviction from Homes and Attacks on Camps

Although Lebanon ratified ICESCR in 1972, according to which the Lebanese state recognized the right of every person living on its territory to obtain adequate housing and an adequate standard of living without discrimination and despite the duty of the Lebanese authorities to protect and respect human rights, several cases of attacks, setting fire of tents and camps, and evictions and flight were recorded without any significant intervention by the Lebanese authorities to stop the attacks or protect refugees.

Some municipalities continue to evict refugees in an arbitrary manner and without concern or observation of procedures stipulated in the enforced laws. A Human Rights Watch report indicated that some Lebanese municipalities have conducted an operation to forcibly evict thousands of refugees as part of a mass expulsion, without legal basis or regard for due process. Tens of thousands are still subject to evacuation.^{xxv} According to UNHCR, at least 3,664 Syrians were evicted from more than 13 towns and cities from early 2016 until the first quarter of 2018. The Lebanese army evicted an additional 7,524 from the vicinity of the Rayak military area in the Bekaa.^{xxvi} In the town of Zgharta in North Lebanon, banners were hung calling for Syrians to leave the area for good and immediately.

In light with the security measures taken by the Lebanese government to confront the Covid-19 epidemic, some municipalities deported refugees residing in their areas, where 3 families were deported by the municipalities in Nabatiyeh District, Saida District, and Mount Lebanon Governorate.^{xxvii}

Recommendations:

- Respect obligations related to the right to adequate housing for all without discrimination.
- Stop all attacks and violations targeting Syrian refugee camps.
- Stop all deportations, forced evictions, and demolishing camps.

2.6 Freedom of Opinion, Expression, and Belief, and Hate Speech

Addressing hate speech does not entail restricting or prohibiting freedom of expression, but rather preventing its escalation into actual danger, especially incitement to discrimination, aggression, and violence, which is prohibited by

international law.^{xxviii} Although Lebanon is obligated to prohibit speech and expression that constitute incitement to discrimination, hostility, or violence, according to Article 20 of ICCPR, which states that "any advocacy of national, racial or religious hatred that constitutes incitement to discrimination, hostility or violence shall be prohibited by law," incitement and hate speech against Syrian refugees increased dramatically, especially among some government officials, in an attempt to evade their responsibilities and hold the Syrian refugees responsible for the economic and security situation in Lebanon.^{xxix} This rhetoric and campaigns carried calls for the expulsion of Syrian refugees from the country and some municipalities in specific, the removal of camps, and the imposition of curfews. Leaflets inciting on the deportation of Syrian refugees under the slogan "Syria is Safe for Return and Lebanon Can no Longer Tolerate [them]" were distributed widely.^{xxx} The incitement extended calling for the expulsion of Syrian workers from their workplaces and replacing them with Lebanese nationals, as part of a series of campaigns (Love Lebanon and Employ Lebanese, Lebanese Before All). Inspection teams from the Lebanese Ministry of Labor carried out extensive campaigns beginning on 10 July 2019, with ISF support, targeting shops, establishments, hotels, restaurants, industrial workshops, maintenance and auto repair workshops, and municipalities where Syrians are employed. It closed and imposed fines on dozens of shops and workshops that employ Syrians, under the pretext of not obtaining regular work permits.^{xxxi} Several cases of raids on refugee workplaces, their closure, and the expulsion of their workers by youth belonging to a particular political party were recorded, involving several instances of assaults and bullying. Banners spread in several towns in southern Lebanon, calling for Syrians to be removed and returned to their country.^{xxxii} In the town of Nabatieh al-Fawqa, banners threatened to cut off the hands of Syrian workers and a petition was signed to prevent Syrians from working in the town.

In contrast, several demonstrations and sit-ins in different regions of Lebanon took place to protest hate speech against Syrian refugees.^{xxxiii} A group of Lebanese journalists, writers, activists, artists, lawyers, and intellectuals issued a statement, declaring their absolute condemnation of the campaign against Syrian citizens in Lebanon.^{xxxiv} On 8/22/2019, a group of Lebanese NGOs announced an initiative to confront hate speech, discrimination, and racism, condemning the perpetrators and calling for their legal prosecution, in addition to defending any victim of such speech.

Recommendations:

- Adhere to international treaties that prohibit any advocacy of hatred in all its forms.

- Stop all incitement campaigns and hate speech against Syrian refugees.
- Prosecute people and entities that incite hatred and hostility against refugees.

2.7 Right to Protection

2.7.1 Early Marriage of Syrian Refugee Girls

Although Lebanon took note of Recommendations 37, 92, 130, and 132 that call for the elimination of the practice of child, early, and forced marriage, the adoption of a draft law on underage marriage, and prohibiting child marriage and despite its ratification of the Convention on the Rights of the Child and the Additional Protocol to Prevent Child Sexual Exploitation, the restricted legal status limits the ability of Syrian refugees to obtain protection and assistance, increases the risk of exploitation and abuse, and does not offer legal recourse. Child rights in Lebanon are violated blatantly and persistently, especially the phenomenon of early marriage of Syrian refugee girls. This violation results from the absence of a specific minimum age for marriage in legal texts, consistent with the obligations contained in the CRC. Early marriage adversely affects girls and sets the ground for all violations of the human rights of women and girls. It conflicts with the CRC, which affirms the right of the child to development, protection, and participation. Although Lebanon is not a party to the 1951 Refugee Convention, which stipulates the responsibility of host governments to protect refugees, the Lebanese state remains responsible for the protection of children on its territory from all forms of violations, including early marriage, in accordance with international law.

A 2016 survey conducted by the United Nations Population Fund, the American University of Beirut, and the Sawa Association for Relief and Development, which included about 2,400 refugee women and girls in the West Bekaa region, indicated that more than a third of those surveyed, who were between the ages of 20 and 24 years, were married before they turned 18.^{xxxv} A study by the Issam Fares Institute for Public Policy and International Affairs also indicated that 22% of Syrian refugee women in Lebanon between the ages of 15 and 19 were married, based on data and statistics from the United Nations Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs (OCHA).^{xxxvi}

Recommendations:

- Prohibit child marriage, secure the best interests of children, and issue a law prohibiting child marriage by setting a minimum age.
- Eliminate the practice of child, early, and forced marriage.

- Lifting restrictions on the employment of Syrians and providing better income opportunities for refugee families.

2.7.2 Sexual Exploitation and Violence and Gender-Based Violence

Lebanon had accepted recommendations 126 and 136 to combat family violence, sexual harassment, and exploitation of women and move forward in strengthening measures to protect children and women from all forms of violence. It also took note of the need to put in place measures to protect refugees and women and girl asylum-seekers from economic and sexual exploitation and gender-based violence, including sexual abuse, as well as child and forced marriage and discrimination. However, failure to ratify the Refugee Convention and their denial of legal protection make refugee women vulnerable to all forms of exploitation and sexual and gender-based violence. Moreover, the policy adopted by the Lebanese government restricting refugees and refugee women in their livelihoods and welfare has led to patterns of exploitation and human trafficking, whereby women are forced to beg, work within prostitution networks, be exploited by employers, or perform activities akin to forced or compulsory labor, without compensation. Camps are considered the primary locations where refugee women are exposed to various forms of harassment and, whether on the roads, when using the lavatories, or aid distribution centers.^{xxxvii}

In a report on the situation of Syrian refugee women in Lebanon, Amnesty International reported that deficiencies in international aid and the Lebanese authorities' discriminatory policies have created conditions facilitating the exploitation and abuse of women refugees in the country. The report highlights how the Lebanese government's refusal to renew residency permits for refugees and the accompanying lack of international funding leaves women refugees in an unenviable position, at risk of exploitation from influential people, including landlords, employers, and even police officers.^{xxxviii} Recently, the media reported that 75 girls, mostly Syrian, had been rescued from torture, maiming, and forced abortion by a human trafficking ring.^{xxxix} Violence against refugee women occurs at various levels within the private sphere or the family. As stated in the report of the United Nations Population Fund (Syria Regional Response Hub, 2016), 22% of young refugees in Lebanon accept the use of violence within the family,^{xi} where many Syrian refugee women are subjected to violence and beatings by a family member. Lack of a valid residency permit or refugee card is one of the biggest hindrances and limitations to the ability of women to seek competent authorities and benefit from the Lebanese domestic violence law, for fear of being arrested or subjected to humiliating or degrading treatment.^{xii}

Measures taken by the Lebanese government to confront the spread of COVID-19 virus, led to an increase in cases of domestic violence of women inside the home during quarantine periods, while it is difficult to report incidents as it is impossible to leave the camps to file complaints.^{xlii}

Recommendations:

- Enact appropriate legislation, policies, and mechanisms to provide refugee women with the necessary protection from the risk of exploitation and sexual and gender-based violence in the public and private spheres (including the family).
- Facilitate the legal presence of Syrian refugee women to facilitate their recourse to the authorities in the event of violence and exploitation.
- Enforce laws for the protection of women and minors in Lebanon on Syrian refugees.

3. Economic and Social Rights

3.1 Right to Work

Although Lebanon took note of Recommendation 215 related to enabling refugees, including Palestinians, to access some sectors of the formal labor market, Lebanon does not follow policies to protect workers in general. It continues to rely on old laws (the Labor Code was issued on 23/7/1946)^{xliii} and the Minister of Labor's discretionary powers that ignore the human aspect of refugee life. Added to the deteriorating economic and financial conditions facing the country, the very high rate of unemployment, poverty, and decrease in purchasing power, the Lebanese government's [labor] plan^{xliiv} adopted detrimental practices that directly targeted Syrian refugees, such as closures, expulsions, and imposing high and severe financial penalties and fines. These campaigns included establishments, shops, hotels and restaurants, factories, industrial workshops, municipalities, and all business sectors in Lebanon.

Recommendations:

- Amend the Labor Law to exclude refugees subject to the definition of asylum according to international standards by facilitating their access to work permits in liberal professions or most of them and reducing their fees.
- Work to obtain refugee cards to act as work permits not related to the kafala system.

- Set a plan to study the Syrian labor force in Lebanon and how to direct its presence to support productive and vital sectors in the Lebanese economy, taking into consideration the human rights standards of Syrian workers and the interest of the Lebanese economy.

3.2 Role of Humanitarian Aid: Shift Towards Development and the Economic Integration of Refugees

Lebanon failed to adopt clear response plans to the presence of Syrian refugees since the beginning of their arrival in Lebanon. Instead of using the response plan, adopted four years later, to mitigate the consequences of asylum and enhance sustainability in the country, government policies inflamed the conflict, depicting it as a struggle between Syrian refugees, on one hand, and their Lebanese hosts, on the other, on the infrastructure and the labor market. It treated the Syrian issue with a security approach and it was exploited by and used for extortion and bargaining by political parties, contributing to strengthening and increasing tensions between the two societies to the detriment of the existing social safety nets between refugees and host communities. The role of humanitarian aid in refugee social development and economic integration became absent, as restrictions on humanitarian workers began to be imposed. On 7/6/2018, Lebanon decided to freeze applications related to UNHCR staff and Syrian activists alike and placed restrictions on residence and work permits. This constitutes additional pressures and challenges imposed on Syrian refugees in Lebanon who are exposed to government policies against their presence, especially in terms of the difficulty in their ability to reside legally, putting them under constant threat of arrest, deportation, expulsion from housing, gender-based and sexual violence, and child abuse.^{xlv}

Recommendations:

- Develop plans and programs with approaches to transforming refugees from a burden on Lebanese society into a productive force that contributes to improving the humanitarian situation of refugees and the development needs of Lebanon simultaneously, especially in the areas of infrastructure, energy, food security, social stability, and the labor market.
- Facilitate development projects in support of Syrian refugees by investing in improving infrastructure and livelihoods and providing job opportunities for both refugees and the host community.
- Facilitate investment and business creation for refugees to expand employment opportunities in the Lebanese economy to accommodate both the refugee and local community workforce.

3.3 Education

Although Lebanon accepted Recommendations 179, 180, and 181 that call for strengthening and expanding the educational infrastructure in order to provide quality and comprehensive education for all children on its territories, and to establish free and compulsory education for all, in terms of implementation, it has not worked to provide equal opportunities for hundreds of thousands of Syrian refugee children as with their Lebanese counterparts. In 2019, participation rates in education for Syrian refugee children between 6 and 14 years reached 69%, dropping to 22% for children between 15 and 17 years. In addition, 44% of children with disabilities between the ages of 6 and 14 years suffer from obstacles to their access education.^{xlvi}

Recommendations:

- Ensure Syrian refugees' access to education in all age groups and geographical distribution and implement successful strategies in cooperation with international organizations concerned with education and providing the basic needs of children and persons with disabilities.

3.2 Health: Right of Syrian Refugees to a Healthy Environment

Although Lebanon took note of Recommendation 217 that calls for strengthening efforts to ensure the protection and dignity of Syrian refugees, especially with regards to healthcare, and although the Lebanese Constitution protects the right to a healthy environment on its territory, Lebanon denies Syrian refugees their right to a healthy environment. Refugee camps suffer from the lack of infrastructure or its poor quality, causing great suffering from high humidity and heat in the summer and severe cold in the winter, in addition to poor ventilation and the spread of disease, especially due to the proximity of waste collection places to the camps, and the lack of safe drinking water, leading to an unhealthy environment and the prevalence of chest, digestive, and chronic diseases. However, there has been a significant decrease in sustainable medical and health assistance and protection from diseases and epidemics. Open air waste-burning, used by Lebanon, also constitutes a dangerous practice leading to increased health problems in the short and long terms, specifically emissions that cause heart diseases, cancer, asthma, and other respiratory diseases.^{xlvii}

Recommendations:

- The Lebanese state should provide an opportunity for Syrian refugees to benefit from health services and hospitalization at the expense of the Ministry of Health.
- Provide conditions for a healthy environment in the camps and combat rampant diseases and epidemics in Syrian refugee camps and gatherings.
- Treat all kinds of waste using modern methods of sorting and recycling and in a manner that does not harm the environment or the country's residents.
- Improve camp condition by providing the requirements to be suitable for living, ensuring a decent and healthy life for Syrian refugees.
- Eliminate restrictions and obstacles to improve camp conditions and their health situation.

3.5 Poverty, Deprivation, and Living Conditions

An assessment conducted by UNHCR, WFP, and UNICEF^{xlviii} showed that more than 75% of Syrian refugees in Lebanon live below the poverty line and 58% of Syrian families live in extreme poverty on less than USD2.87 per person per day. This led to the development of negative coping strategies. In food, they range between eating lower-quality or cheaper food to skipping one or more daily meals. In terms of livelihood, they range from relying on loans to child labor. More than half Syrian refugee families live in overcrowded shelters, whose conditions are below humanitarian standards or at risk of collapse.^{xlix}

Recommendations:

- Respect human rights, including the obligations related to the right to adequate housing for all, without discrimination against Palestinian and Syrian refugees, and improve their living conditions and allow the entry of building materials into the camps.
- Facilitate procedures for giving Syrian refugees legal residency documents in Lebanon and facilitate their access to services, education, and health care.

ⁱ Amnesty International, "Why Are Returns of Refugees from Lebanon to Syria Premature," Public Statement (MDE 18/0481), 12 June 2019, available at: <https://www.amnesty.org/download/Documents/MDE1804812019ENGLISH.pdf>.

ⁱⁱ UN Convention on the Status of Refugees, available at: <https://www.unhcr.org/1951-refugee-convention.html>.

ⁱⁱⁱ International Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Racial Discrimination, available at: <https://ohchr.org/EN/ProfessionalInterest/Pages/CERD.aspx>.

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- v <https://www.amnesty.org/en/latest/news/2019/06/lebanon-wave-of-hostility-exposes-hollowness-of-claims-that-syrian-refugee-returns-are-voluntary/>.
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- xi <http://www.annd.org/data/item/pdf/211.pdf>, p. 90.
- xii <https://www.legal-agenda.com/article.php?id=5684>.
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