



Lebanon Situation Report

October 28, 2021

Background

The immediate background to the crises and increasingly dire humanitarian situation in Lebanon is summarized in Anera's last [Situation Report \(September 16\)](#). Information on Anera's work on food insecurity in Lebanon is available in Anera's blog post, [Combating Food Insecurity in Gaza and Lebanon](#).

Overview

As of August 2021, Lebanon's consumer price index had risen 137.8% from the previous year. Lebanon now has the highest annual rate of inflation in the world.¹ **The UN estimates that 3 million people live below the poverty line, which equates to 78% of Lebanon's population.** As much as 36% of the population lives in extreme poverty, due to the ongoing economic crisis.²

As a result of the economic hardships, **90% of Syrian refugees in Lebanon now face extreme poverty.** The worsening economic situation caused child labor and child marriage to increase among Syrian refugees, and 20% of Syrian girls between the ages of 15 and 19 are married. This year, rates of school attendance for Syrian children between the ages of 6 and 14 dropped 25%

On October 1, the UN and its humanitarian partners announced the creation of a \$383 million Emergency Response Plan. The UN plan will be implemented over the next 12 months to provide assistance and protection to citizens and migrants, reaching around 1.1 million people. Through the Emergency Response Plan, the UN will implement 119 projects in sectors such as education, health, food security, nutrition, water and sanitation, and protection for women and children.³

At the beginning of October, the International Monetary Fund (IMF) and the Lebanese government announced that they will resume talks for an economic recovery package. Their ability to come to an agreement is a prerequisite for much of the development aid offered by other countries. In order to resume talks and potentially come to an agreement, the Lebanese government must update its own plan for economic recovery. The IMF is encouraging Lebanon to implement reforms by addressing excessive spending, financial crimes, and corruption. In addition, the IMF urges Lebanon to implement mechanisms for accountability and transparency.⁴ While the resumption of talks could potentially lead to unlocking international aid from the IMF and countries

¹ [Lebanon's inflation rate is worse than Zimbabwe's and Venezuela's | Al Jazeera News Network](#)

² [\\$383 million humanitarian plan to address 'living nightmare' in Lebanon | UN News](#)

³ [\\$383 million humanitarian plan to address 'living nightmare' in Lebanon | UN News](#)

⁴ [Lebanon and IMF to restart technical talks on rescue funds | Al Jazeera News Network](#)

across the world, the Lebanese government must implement many changes before this can occur. In the meantime, citizens and migrants continue to suffer from poverty, food insecurity, fuel and electricity shortages, and many other challenges as a result of the economic crisis.

Fuel and Electricity

As Lebanon's currency rapidly devalued over the past few months, shortages of fuel have created significant challenges for the people of Lebanon. Since the formation of a new government on September 10, Lebanon has gradually lifted subsidies, resulting in several raises in the price of fuel. As a result, electricity cuts now last between 20 and 22 hours each day. Lebanon's state power company, Electricite du Liban, faces dwindling fuel reserves, and it warns of a potential blackout across the country. In addition, the price to purchase and use generators continues to increase, preventing the people of Lebanon from relying on their electricity.⁵

In September, Iranian fuel began arriving from Syria in order to address severe fuel shortages in Lebanon. The first shipment delivered 33,000 metric tonnes of gasoil. While many believe Iranian fuel will mitigate the fuel shortages, Lebanon's decision to accept the fuel is not without risks due to the US sanctions on Iran. Some experts argue that fuel imports will not meet the surging demand for fuel and that the issue of affordability remains. Due to the controversial nature of Iranian fuel, private hospitals refrained from purchasing the fuel to prevent backlash.⁶ As a result, many hospitals are still in need of fuel in order to continue operations and provide critical patient care.

Egypt, Lebanon, Syria, and Jordan are holding talks about providing Lebanon with natural gas from Egypt and electricity from Jordan, which will be funded by the World Bank.⁷ On October 6, Jordan agreed to begin providing Lebanon with electricity by restarting an electricity line between Jordan and Syria.⁸ Much like imported Iranian fuel, cooperation with Syria was met with disapproval from many, as it violates US sanctions against the Bashar al-Assad regime. However, the US has indicated its intention to issue a waiver or ignore the sanctions to provide much-needed relief for Lebanon's energy sector.⁹ As this deal is implemented, it is likely to begin to ease the suffering caused by fuel shortages and subsequent blackouts.

On October 9, Lebanon's two main power plants shut down due to the shortage of diesel fuel. The shutdown created a blackout of state electricity throughout the country. In response, residents of Akkar protested at Electricite du Liban's regional office, and residents of Tripoli burned tires and blocked roads.¹⁰ On October 10, the army supplied fuel to the two power plants, effectively putting the electricity grid back online.¹¹ However, according to an energy researcher at the American University of Beirut, the

⁵ [Lebanon's dark days | The Globe and Mail](#)

⁶ [Hezbollah-brokered Iranian fuel arrives in crisis-hit Lebanon | Al Jazeera News Network](#)

⁷ [Why Israeli gas and Syrian sanctions relief may turn on Lebanon's lights | Atlantic Council](#)

⁸ [Jordan, Syria, and Lebanon discuss electricity cooperation | Al-Monitor](#)

⁹ [Why Israeli gas and Syrian sanctions relief may turn on Lebanon's lights | Atlantic Council](#)

¹⁰ [Fuel shortage forces shutdown of main Lebanese power plants | Al Jazeera News Network](#)

¹¹ [Lebanon electricity back online after army supplies fuel | Al Jazeera News Network](#)

varied frequency is ruining the electrical grid, as power plants have not generated enough electricity to reach stability within the grid.¹²

Internet

On October 6, a Lebanese parliamentary committee announced that the country's telecommunications and internet sector could collapse in a matter of days, mostly as a result of fuel shortages. In addition, the sector faces thefts of spare parts and transmission poles and an inability to purchase spare parts due to price surging. In the past few months, telecom services have been suspended intermittently in various regions of Lebanon.¹³

Food Security

According to UN estimates, nearly 25% of Lebanon's population could not meet their dietary needs by the end of 2020. The demand for food assistance is at an all time high, with 25% reliant on food assistance from the World Food Programme.¹⁴

In the past two years, the World Food Programme estimates that the price of food has increased by 628%. As fuel shortages continued and the price of fuel rose over the past few months, grocery stores had to increase food prices in order to cover the cost of fuel. In addition, the economy ministry announced an increase in the price of bread, which is the sixth increase this year. The ministry increased the price of bread due to soaring transportation costs and the weakening local currency.¹⁵

Mental Health

Between August 2020 and August 2021, the number of people seeking psychological care in Lebanon surged due to the compounding effects of the Beirut blast, COVID-19, and the economic crisis. Mental health services are largely out of reach for those who do not have access to free services, as most insurance does not cover mental health care.¹⁶ Many citizens who witnessed the blast report symptoms of trauma such as anxiety, nightmares and insomnia. Due to the current crises, as well as the civil war, the 2006 war with Israel, bombings and assassinations, and other factors, millions of people living in Lebanon are at high risk for PTSD.¹⁷

COVID-19

As of October 25, there have been 637,809 cases of COVID-19 and 8,498 deaths since the beginning of the pandemic in Lebanon. On average, Lebanon is now reporting 557 new cases each day, which is only 12% of Lebanon's peak daily cases. To date, Lebanon has administered more than 3,189,658 vaccine doses, which is enough for around 23.3% of the population of Lebanon to be fully vaccinated.¹⁸

¹² [Fuel shortage forces shutdown of main Lebanese power plants | Al Jazeera News Network](#)

¹³ [Lebanon's telecom, internet sector could collapse within days | Arab News](#)

¹⁴ [UN urges Lebanon to implement reforms as extreme poverty grows | Al Jazeera News Network](#)

¹⁵ ['Unprecedented' hunger in Lebanon as fuel crisis hikes food costs | Al Jazeera News Network](#)

¹⁶ [Blast and financial crisis weigh heavily on the mental health of Lebanese | Reuters](#)

¹⁷ ['Nothing but a pot of mlukhiye': Trauma, mental health in Lebanon | Al Jazeera News Network](#)

¹⁸ [Lebanon: the latest coronavirus counts, chart and maps | Reuters](#)

Anera's Response

Medical Donations

Between June 1 and September 30, Anera donated \$4.7 million worth of medications and medical supplies to Lebanon, with an additional \$4.2 million in donations slated for delivery in the coming months.

Water, Sanitation, and Hygiene (WASH)

In order to improve the WASH practices of refugees in camp settings, Anera and UNICEF implemented an initiative in Palestinian refugee camps. Through the program, Anera carried out community mobilization activities in collaboration with local sub-partners and mass media. In 2021, Anera emphasized the importance of COVID-19 precautionary measures and vaccine awareness, environmental hygiene, and menstrual hygiene through the use of mass media. To date, Anera has distributed 2,900 COVID-19 prevention kits, 7,000 hygiene kits, and 8,500 cloth menstrual pads to camps in Lebanon.

Livelihood Opportunities

In response to the economic hardships, Anera refocused its youth cash-for-work programs to meet the needs of those affected by the economic crisis, COVID-19, and the humanitarian crisis. The new aim of the programs is to directly provide short-term paid employment opportunities (when internships are unavailable) through programs that address humanitarian needs, while positioning the participating youth to enter the labor market. The cash-for-work opportunities target students and graduates of Anera's vocational education programs. **Throughout 2020, Anera created 2,600 paid-on-the job training positions through its employment programs.** In addition, Anera facilitated the preparation and delivery of 96,000 hot meals, the production of 1.6 million face masks, the installation of plumbing in homes, the repair of homes damaged by the Beirut blast, and the establishment of COVID-19 isolation centers and sanitation gates at entrances to camps and towns, all through the use of its cash-for-work employment programs. So far in 2021, Anera has supported **1,742 youths** through cash-for-work opportunities in the sewing, healthcare, IT, construction, agriculture, and environmental and community mobilization sectors.