



Lebanon Situation Report

April 24, 2023

Background

Information about the outbreak of cholera, food security, and the economic situation is summarized in Anera's last [Situation Report \(January 2023\)](#).

Overview

Lebanon has faced a devastating crisis for over three years. The Beirut port explosion, the COVID-19 pandemic, the worsening economic crisis, and political instability have all contributed to failures in the economy and the operation of public and private institutions. The country is experiencing the highest inflation rate in the world,¹ increasing unemployment, and high poverty rates, with shortages in fuel, water, and electricity. In 2023, the World Health Organization reports that 2.3 million people are in need of humanitarian assistance and 1.3 million require health assistance.² The crisis is severely damaging life and infrastructure in [Lebanon](#).

Economy

Lebanon's economic situation continues to worsen. The World Bank has now called the crisis "among the most severe crisis episodes globally since the mid-19th century."³ In January, the Lebanese government devalued its currency to stabilize the free-falling Lebanese pound without success and has failed in electing a president since October 2022.⁴ Inflation rose to 124% in January. As of the end of February, the costs of miscellaneous goods and services increased by 20%, restaurant and hotel bills climbed 18% since December, and health costs increased by 11%.⁵

With 98% of the value of the Lebanese pound being lost, the government is now turning to "dollarization" to ease inflation.⁶ However, few people have access to dollars to purchase everyday items. This alternative has only widened the divide between the minority who earn some or all of their income in dollars and the majority earning exclusively pounds. On March 20, the exchange rate of the US dollar against the

¹ [Lebanon has the highest cost of living in the world: report | LBC Group](#)

² [Lebanon Outbreak and Crisis Response Appeal 2023 | WHO EMRO](#)

³ [What's going on in Lebanon?](#)

⁴ [Ibid.](#)

⁵ [Lebanon inflation soared 124% in January as economic crisis continued | The National News](#)

⁶ [Lebanon adopts 'dollarization' as currency, economy crumble | AP News](#)

Lebanese lira reached a new historic record: 119,500 LBP for sale and 12,000 LBP for purchase.⁷ The country's currency has reached an all-time low of around 110,000 Lebanese pounds to one US dollar.⁸ Without a leader and its currency in free fall, the Lebanese people, especially already marginalized communities, are plunging deep into poverty.

Poverty

Poverty and crime have been on the rise due to the economic crisis. Over 80% of the population lives in poverty⁹ and residents face increasing thefts of items like power cables, solar panels, wifi routers, and vehicles, causing increased anxiety.¹⁰ The crisis and increased poverty have devastating effects on public services. Schools are struggling to operate. There are electricity and internet cuts, shortages in medicine and medical supplies, and the army and the social protection system are severely underfunded.¹¹ Marginalized groups, including refugees, persons with disabilities, children, elders, migrant workers, and LGBTQ+ communities are disproportionately affected, especially in education, security, and health.¹² In refugee camps, there is overcrowding and poor infrastructure, and many buildings are at risk of collapsing, especially after the recent Syria-Turkey earthquake.¹³ Lebanon hosts nearly 900,000 registered refugees, and another estimated 500,000 live informally.¹⁴ The Lebanese government has not granted citizenship to most,¹⁵ and only 16% are legal residents, meaning most are vulnerable to harassment, arrest, detention, and deportation; nine out of 10 refugees are estimated to be living in poverty.¹⁶

Protests

The economic crisis and political deadlock have led to widespread chaos on multiple levels. Recently, an attempt to help Muslims fasting for Ramadan by delaying the start of daylight savings time briefly divided Lebanon into two different time zones.¹⁷ Families have confronted a grave cost-of-living crisis during Ramadan, and the traditional iftar dinner is estimated to be unaffordable to 80% of the people in the country.¹⁸

⁷ [Dollar exchange rate in Lebanon reaches new record high! | mtv](#)

⁸ [Lebanon crisis: The Syrian refugees recycling to stay alive | BBC News](#)

⁹ [Lebanon Events of 2022 | Human Rights Watch](#)

¹⁰ [Clashes in Lebanon's Palestinian refugee camp as security void looms | AL-MONITOR](#)

¹¹ [Lebanon Events of 2022 | Human Rights Watch](#)

¹² [Ibid.](#)

¹³ [Clashes in Lebanon's Palestinian refugee camp as security void looms | AL-MONITOR](#)

¹⁴ [Lebanon Events of 2022 | Human Rights Watch](#)

¹⁵ [Clashes in Lebanon's Palestinian refugee camp as security void looms | AL-MONITOR](#)

¹⁶ [Lebanon Events of 2022 | Human Rights Watch](#)

¹⁷ [What time is it? In Lebanon, no one is sure. | The Washington Post](#)

¹⁸ [How will rising prices hurt Ramadan celebrations? | Al Jazeera](#)

As the Lebanese economy crumbles, people have risen in protest. On March 22, crowds gathered in the streets of Beirut and attempted to break through a fence leading to the government headquarters.¹⁹ Retired soldiers and depositors initiated the protest after local banks imposed capital controls and limited access to their savings.²⁰ Out of anger at the worsening state of the local currency, protesters threw stones at officers, and security forces responded to the protest by firing tear gas at the crowds. People and their families are struggling to meet basic needs and blame the political and business elite for not taking action to solve the crisis.²¹

Violence

On April 6, the Israeli military reported that 34 rockets had been launched from Lebanon into Israel, leading to the most violent confrontation between the two countries since 2006.²² Although Israel intercepted 25 of the rockets, at least three people sustained injuries in the rocket fire.²³ The attack is suspected to be a response to the recent assaults by Israeli forces on Palestinian worshippers at Al-Aqsa during Ramadan. Israel responded with limited aerial attacks on Lebanon and Gaza, because they believed Palestinian fighters were behind the attack.²⁴ These events signal the possible spread of the violence in the Palestinian territories across the region.

Clashes in Ein El Hilweh Palestinian Refugee Camp

On March 2, deadly clashes took place in the Ein El Hilweh Palestinian refugee camp near the city of Saida in southern Lebanon.²⁵ According to Lebanon's official National News Agency, the fighting occurred between the Palestinian political party Fatah and Islamist groups, after one member of Fatah was killed.²⁶ At least seven others were injured. The clashes occurred because the head of the Lebanese General Security, Abbas Ibrahim, stepped down the day prior, causing further political instability in the country.²⁷ Thirteen violent incidents happened in the camp in 2022, the highest ever among Palestinian refugee camps.²⁸ The clashes on March 2 started around dawn, but sporadic gunfire continued until later.²⁹ Despite conflicts, the Lebanese army cannot enter Palestinian refugee camps by convention. As a result, Palestinians need to handle

¹⁹ [Tear gas, clashes as Lebanese outraged over economic crisis | Al Jazeera](#)

²⁰ [Lebanese take to streets as anger over economic meltdown grows](#)

²¹ [Ibid.](#)

²² [Who fired rockets into Israel from southern Lebanon? | Al Jazeera](#)

²³ [Ibid.](#)

²⁴ [Middle East round-up: Rockets fly between Lebanon and Israel | Al Jazeera](#)

²⁵ [Clashes in Lebanon's Palestinian refugee camp as security void looms | AL-MONITOR](#)

²⁶ [Ibid.](#)

²⁷ [Ibid.](#)

²⁸ [Ibid.](#)

²⁹ [Clashes kill one in Lebanon Palestinian refugee camp: Fatah | Arab News](#)

security issues on their own, and there are many areas vulnerable to increased crime and violence.³⁰

Anera's Work in Lebanon

Livelihoods

To respond to the multidimensional crises, Anera is prioritizing the livelihoods of refugees and vulnerable Lebanese communities. In collaboration with UNICEF, Anera launched a program in December 2021 to provide youth with a package of in-demand professional, soft, and employability skills and to link them to cash-for-work opportunities in the private sectors. In September 2022, Anera and UNICEF extended the program to support the water and sanitation (WASH) sectors by referring youth for employment with WASH organizations. In January 2023, the program was amended once again to provide an additional 4,449 youth with support packages and an additional 938 youth with cash-for-work opportunities. These interventions offer courses, training programs, life skills sessions, and employment support services for the participating youth. Youths' families, members of municipalities and other local authorities, and tutors' family members and local community-based organization staff also benefit from this project and its activities.

Rooftop Gardens

To target food-insecure refugees and other vulnerable families in Lebanon, Anera is providing rooftop gardens and agricultural training to improve their immediate food security, nutritional needs, and livelihoods. Rooftop gardens combat the challenges of arid soil, limited space, and water scarcity in Lebanon's refugee communities and beyond. These interventions increase families' food security and nutritional balance, enabling them to grow healthy produce. They are also a livelihood opportunity, with families bringing excess produce to markets and using additional income to address other needs for the family. This project links participants to other Anera projects that could benefit them, such as literacy and vocational courses, youth volunteering activities and healthcare awareness sessions on a range of topics.

Food Security

In 2023, Anera is working with the World Food Programme to implement a food assistance programme in Lebanon. The program works specifically in the Bekaa Governorate, benefitting an estimated total of 5,366 households (21,464 beneficiaries). The targeted area of coverage includes the Rachaya, West Bekaa, and Zahle districts. Each household receives food parcels with commodities such as rice and beans.

³⁰ [Ibid.](#)