

**PROTECTION**  
**CHAPTER**

## METHODOLOGY

The sector chapters were predominantly designed to present the data that exists, and that was shared with the Multi Sector Needs Assessment (MSNA) team. Annex A provides a summary of the assessments and reports reviewed for the chapter. There is much that sector experts know from experience that is not captured in the assessment reports. To capture some of the expert views within the Sector Working Groups (SWGs), MSNA SWG workshops were facilitated by the MSNA team and sector experts. These views are taken into account throughout the document. However, due to the short notice, attendance was limited in some workshops and the views presented in the chapter cannot be considered as representative of all SWG members.

The MSNA team aimed to provide an objective overview of the available data and SWG views and therefore has not altered the data or language used in the reports and assessments.

The following target groups were used for the purposes of data analysis:

- Syrian refugees registered with UNHCR or awaiting registration
- Syrians living in Lebanon who have not been registered with UNHCR
- Palestinian refugees from Syria (PRS)
- Vulnerable local Communities including Host Communities and Palestinians (PRL)
- Lebanese returnees

Analysis was undertaken at the lowest possible geographic levels for the various target groups, depending on the type of information available. Where possible, information was aggregated to; Mount Lebanon and Beirut, South, Bekaa, Akkar, North/T+5, Palestinian Camps, and Outside Palestinian Camps.

### Main Steps



- **Identifying information needs:** In order to identify the relevant research questions for collation, the Thematic Working Group (TWG) combined the indicators of the Syria Regional Response Plan (RRP6) with additional information needs from the SWG. These information needs were used to form the basis of the chapter themes.
- **Secondary data collation:** An assessment inventory was developed and shared for input from as many stakeholders as possible; to encourage sharing of assessment data. A sector focal point was assigned from the TWG and supported the MSNA team to collect data from the sectors. Within the team, analysts were assigned to sector chapters and a number of partners were approached including: INGOs, UN agencies, the Ministry of Social Affairs Lebanon (MoSA), the National NGO forum and the World Bank with requests for assessment reports.
- **Data categorisation:** To facilitate the data analysis component, all data was summarised and categorised into an excel spreadsheet.
- **Analysis and Writing:** The Sector Leads and respective analysts assessed the usefulness of the reports and used them accordingly. For example, a nationwide multi-sector report would have been used to develop broad conclusions, whilst an assessment with a small sample size in one particular location may have been used to provide examples to support/contradict the overall findings.
- **Review and Consultation:** The MSNA team reviewed a number of databases, assessments and reports that were provided by partner agencies. In order to obtain as comprehensive overview as possible a number of consultations were built in with the SWGs.

For more information on the methodology please refer to the main report.

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## SECTION 1

### 1. KEY FINDINGS

#### 1.1 Priority Needs

Based on the data available, the MSNA team has found the following priority needs<sup>1</sup>:

- Strengthening of the legal and administrative refugee framework
- Removal of restrictions to accessing the territory of Lebanon
- Access to registration and assistance, particularly for vulnerable groups and individuals with limited legal status
- Access to civil documentation, including birth and marriage registration
- Advocacy to remove barriers related to obtaining legal status
- Improved access to justice
- Protection from violence and threats to physical safety and security

The participants of the MSNA SWG workshop identified similar priority needs and confirmed the priorities already highlighted during the RRP6 planning<sup>2</sup>:

- A continuous need to ensure unhindered access to the territory of Lebanon for the civilian population who flee the conflict in Syria, specifically Syrian refugees and Palestine refugees from Syria (PRS), through regular and predictable processes averting the risk for more irregular border crossing practice.
- For both Syrian refugees and PRS, there is a continuous need for advocacy to find a solution to the acquisition and the expiration of legal stay documentation and its negative effects in terms of legal safety, freedom of movement, access to civil documentation and access to justice.
- Continuous need to maintain and reinforce access to registration, in terms of outreach and information, inclusive registration modalities for persons with specific needs, as well as adequate resources for the ongoing process of verification/renewal of the registration certificates, to guarantee access to services.
- Access to civil documentation, particularly on birth and marriage certificates
- Access to legal awareness and individual legal assistance, particularly to address specific situations such as cases of arrest and detention, cases with severe protection needs, housing, land and property (HLP) issues.
- Access to awareness on and different forms of intervention on HLP issues.
- Improved access to timely information on services and assistance, particularly for communities in remote locations.
- There is a continuous need to improve the capacity for identification and referral of persons with disabilities and older persons, taking into account their mobility restrictions, possibly affecting access to registration and basic services.
- Access to case-management for persons with specific needs other than children and survivors of sexual and gender-based violence (SGBV).
- Advocacy with the authorities at all levels to uphold the principle of freedom of movement needs to continue, including a dialogue with municipal authorities on the negative effects of the imposed curfews targeting Syrian refugees.
- There is a need to continue the advocacy towards increasing the offer of durable solutions through resettlement/humanitarian admissions.

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<sup>1</sup> It should be noted that the MSNA team's analysis has been built from the data that was available and should not be viewed as representative of the overall situation

<sup>2</sup> The MSNA held a workshop discussion with 11 people from the Protection Sector Working Group with representatives of 8 organisations. Although the full working group was invited to participate, the short notice imposed by the tight deadlines impacted attendance. Therefore, the results of this workshop may not interpret the views of the entire working group. Most of these priority needs, however, reflect the identified priorities during the consultative planning and review of the RRP6.

## 1.2 Priority Target Groups

Based on the data available, the MSNA team has found the following priority groups:

- Most protection concerns discussed within this chapter concern PRS and Syrian refugees, particularly regarding access to territory, evictions, access to civil status documentation and freedom of movement.
- However, information on vulnerable host communities also highlights protection concerns, particularly around physical safety and security.

The participants of the MSNA SWG workshop highlighted the following differences between target groups related to protection concerns:

- It is clear that the specific protection concerns of Syrian refugees and PRS continues to justify a focus on the concerns of these groups. However, the protracted nature of the crisis and tensions among communities justifies a broader approach to those affected by the crisis, including vulnerable host communities and PRS. Meanwhile, all groups continue to have access to a wide range of protective services and activities.

MSNA SWG workshop participants highlighted as well that the definition of vulnerability varies very much according to the specific protection concern. Overall, there is a detailed categorisation of vulnerable groups, which is also captured in the registration process and which is used as the basis for referral and case management. Amongst those, the participants highlighted:

- Female-headed households without other family support
- Persons with disabilities/impairments
- Older persons
- Adolescent girls and boys
- Survivors of human rights violations
- Other groups particularly at risk of exclusion/discrimination, e.g. lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender and intersex(LGBTI)<sup>3</sup>
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Other specifically vulnerable groups include undocumented individuals or those without, or with expired, legal status documentation in terms of mobility and consequent access to services

Some participants highlighted that young men, a group not necessarily captured within the conventional vulnerability criteria, may be in vulnerable situations as being most prone to restrictions on access to territory and freedom of movement, arrest and detention, especially if undocumented

## 1.3 Geographic Priorities

Based on the data available, the MSNA team has found the following geographic priorities:

- Protection concerns related to irregular status and a lack of freedom of movement are highlighted, specifically in areas in the proximity of unofficial crossings and areas with a high number of security incidents and checkpoints, including Aarsal and WadiKhaled.
- Housing/land and property issues, including evictions, are reported countrywide and those in informal settlements (IS) are one of the groups most at risk.
- Information on access to birth certificates indicates that the North and Bekaa have the lowest proportion of certificates for Syrian newborns.

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<sup>3</sup>It was understood during the workshop that children at risk and SGBV survivors are included within vulnerable groups, but are captured under the respective other chapters.

While admitting that a more in-depth overview can be provided by the protection actors in the field through the respective protection working groups (PWGs), the participants in the MSNA SWG workshop highlighted the following characteristics of vulnerable geographical areas:

- Areas with a high refugee concentration
- Areas with complex ethnical-confessional dynamics and where tensions may be increasing
- Areas that are more prone to influxes, such as in the North and the East of the country. At the same time, however, it was recognised that these areas may have seen the largest increase in the presence of humanitarian actors
- Areas where gaps in the presence of humanitarian actors – and protection actors in particular – have been reported. Based on recent mapping exercises and information from the field, such areas may be located in the South of the country, as well as in the North (southern part of Akkar)
- Insecure areas, such as border areas, which are subject to cross-border shelling and airstrikes, and areas traditionally unstable and with recurrent security incidents (e.g. Tripoli)
- Remote areas where refugee populations may be more scattered, distant from the available services and where persons with specific needs may face increasing difficulties in accessing basic services. This may include rural areas and remote ISs
- Areas where freedom of movement for refugees is limited, including due to the presence of checkpoints and curfews
- Areas with vulnerable host communities
- Palestinian camps

#### 1.4 Response Gap Analysis

Based on the data available, the MSNA team was not able to derive conclusions on response gaps apart from a need to strengthen identification of persons with specific needs and ensure continued access to registration and services.

The participants of the MSNA SWG workshop identified the following response gaps:

- According to the recent mapping there is a relatively good presence of protection actors countrywide, but gaps remain, both geographically and in terms of capacity in specific protection interventions.
- From a geographical perspective, there are areas which are underserved. Examples provided were some districts in South Lebanon and the North. In addition, as the information on presence of protection actors was collected at a district level, coverage within a district may vary. Some indications on response gaps have been provided by protection actors in the field (e.g. Southern part of Akkar district). Generally, there is a focus of activities in areas with a high concentration of refugees, which could lead to gaps within other areas.

Regarding the type of activities, the following were highlighted:

- Presence of protection actors in remote areas and outreach to communities
- Increased presence at border crossings
- More efforts by protection actors to further analyse and systematise information on protection concerns, also to better inform advocacy efforts
- Outreach capacity to communities, in order to expand the provision of information on protection services, needs to be further reinforced, with specific attention to remote areas and for the different populations
- Activities related to legal and civil documentation assistance are in need of further strengthening
- The number of actors capable of effectively identifying, referring and carrying out proper case management for persons with specific needs (other than child protection and SGBV) needs to increase
- The necessity to reinforce awareness and capacity building on refugee rights and protection principles targeting national authorities, including law enforcement actors and authorities at municipal level

- Further sensitisation of Lebanese communities on general refugee protection was deemed necessary to improve understanding of the refugee situation and contribute to diffuse tensions
- Better identification and further inclusion of Lebanese communities in existing protection activities, including Lebanese returnees. It was, however, recognised that several protection response activities (e.g. monitoring, legal counselling and awareness, access to community structure) were already including all population of concern and not only refugees
- Participants also identified a gap in the availability of durable solutions, particularly on available resettlement opportunities, which are currently only able to support a small part of the most vulnerable refugee population. It was however recognised that the gap is not directly linked to the capacity of protection sector actors in Lebanon, but rather depends on external factors
- As a broader aspect valid for all sectors, the importance of ensuring that interventions reinforce local capacities through an increased involvement of local actors, institutions as well as civil society was highlighted

## 1.5 Future Developments with Possible Impact on Sector

Based on the data available, the MSNA team has found the following future developments may have an impact on the sector:

- Introduction of a more restrictive policy related to freedom of movement of those with limited legal status, including more requirements to cross checkpoints and more cases of arrest for irregular entry/lack of appropriate documentation
- A significant increase in tensions over resources and subsequent protection concerns, including harassment of Syrian communities and limitations to freedom of movement through curfews

The participants of the MSNA Protection Sector Working Group workshop identified the following future developments may have an impact on the sector:

- Increase in security incidents, in border areas as well as in other locations, possibly impacting humanitarian access for protection partners
- Increased insecurity impacting freedom of movement for the population, both directly and indirectly (establishment of checkpoints and presence of security actors)
- Further restrictions on the Syrian side of the border leading to a decreased access to Lebanese territory for population fleeing the conflict and seeking safety
- Increasing complexity in the overall community dynamics, leading to tensions among and within communities, including for competition over resources
- Any change in the modalities of delivery of humanitarian assistance could fuel tensions if not properly communicated and with maximum outreach to population of concern
- A shortage in funding due to shift of donor attention to other countries affected by humanitarian crises

## SECTION 2

### 2. CONTEXT

Since the beginning of the conflict in Syria in March 2011, Syrian refugees have fled to Lebanon. As of end February 2013, Lebanon hosted the largest number of refugees in the region, with more than 910,000 refugees registered and almost another 50,000 pending registration with UNHCR. This figure is projected to reach nearly 1.5 million individuals by the end of 2014, equivalent to almost 40% of the total population in Lebanon. Refugees are dispersed in more than 1,7600 locations across the country, often following sectarian patterns. Within the registered refugees, women and children represent more than 75% of the refugee population, while a significant segment of the population is represented by persons with specific needs, including older persons, persons with disabilities and other groups at risk.

In addition, UNRWA has recorded the details of some 52,000 Palestine refugees from Syria (PRS) up to the end of 2013. As a consequence of the conflict, Lebanese citizens previously residing in Syria have returned to Lebanon. In 2013 alone, some 17,500 individuals have been recorded by the authorities, but the number is assumed to be higher, given the current lack of systematic recording.

While the Government of Lebanon (GoL) has maintained a commitment to provide protection and assistance to the population fleeing from the conflict in Syria, the impact of this humanitarian situation on the health, education and social safety nets and service provision in Lebanon, as well as the impact on the poor segments of Lebanese society, are considerable. The needs of the affected Lebanese population within the host communities need to be taken into due account.

The protracted humanitarian crisis and the increasing needs of a refugee population rapidly exhausting its coping mechanisms outpace the capacity of single actors to provide adequate responses and require a coordinated approach, including in protection activities. Since 2013, Protection Working Groups co-chaired by UNHCR, MoSA and – more recently – INGOs have been established in several locations (Beirut, Mount Lebanon, Qubayat, Tripoli, Tyre, Zahle), drawing together specialised protection actors to share information on protection issues and challenges emerging from monitoring and consultations with affected populations, and to agree on common response and advocacy strategies. The protection sector now gathers more than 20 participating agencies, including local NGOs, making concerted efforts to coordinate action and coverage. Protection programming and interventions aim at responding to immediate threats and violations, at finding a remedy to protection violations and at creating an environment where rights are respected, including through advocacy interventions.

#### **Syrian refugees in Lebanon – Legal and Administrative framework**

UNHCR characterises the flight of civilians from Syria as a refugee movement. Lebanon is not a State party to the 1951 Convention on the Status of Refugees and its 1967 Protocol, and lacks comprehensive refugee legislation. Specific provisions for refugees and asylum-seekers are incorporated in other legislation on foreign nationals<sup>4</sup>. Since 2012, UNHCR has cooperated with the Lebanese government to revise the 2003 Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) between the General Security Office (GSO) and UNHCR, regulating important aspects of the government's treatment of refugees and asylum-seekers in Lebanon.

As the September National Protection strategy states:

*“Refugees are subject to the same provisions in domestic law that applies to other foreigners. While Syrians currently benefit from favourable bilateral agreements permitting entry and work, the absence of an administrative framework means that those refugees in violation of the 1962 Immigration Law (due to unofficial entry or expiry of legal stay) may lack legal protection against arrest, prosecution and deportation.”*

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<sup>4</sup>Law regulating the entry of foreign nationals into, their residence in and their departure from Lebanon, 10 July 1962

It is to be recognised that despite the absence of a comprehensive legal framework, Lebanon is hosting over 900,000 Syrian refugees and has kept its borders open.

Upon crossing an official Lebanese border crossing point, an individual holding a valid national Syrian identity card or a valid passport receives an Entry Coupon with an entry stamp. The entry stamp grants a legal residency for a period of six months and can be renewed free of charge for another six months at any regional office of the GSO. A prior requisite to renew the document by re-entering Syria has been lifted. This procedure gives any Syrian the possibility of residing in the country for one year without paying any fees. After this period, Syrian citizens, over 15 years of age, must apply for a residence permit renewal at the cost of LBP 300,000 (USD 200), a cost which is considered unaffordable for most of the families.

### **Palestine refugees in Lebanon**

Estimates on the number of Palestinians in Lebanon before the influx of Palestinians from Syria (PRS) range from 260,000<sup>5</sup> to 440,500<sup>6</sup>. A socio-economic study by the American University of Beirut (AUB) in 2010 highlights that Palestinians in Lebanon are largely excluded from key aspects of social, political and economic life and subject to wide-ranging restrictions on housing and work. Since the start of the crisis in Syria, over 52,000 PRS have fled to Lebanon and sought accommodation in various settlements and pre-existing Palestinian refugee camps. PRS entering Lebanon are legally entitled to a visa valid for 15 days and this visa has generally been renewed free-of-charge for three months. Afterwards, a visa renewal is required, at a fee of USD 200. UNRWA has received reports from PRS that have been unable to renew their visa in Lebanon, despite payment of the required USD 200 fee to the GSO. ([PWG 2013/12/09](#), [UNRWA 2013/12/16](#))

### **Lebanese Returnees**

Among the huge numbers of vulnerable displaced persons in the country, Lebanese returnees represent a relevant and largely under-assisted group. These families, most of which had been living in Syria for more than a decade, began to return to Lebanon in large numbers in 2011 as a result of the conflict. In the absence of the support of extended families, some of them may find themselves living in difficult circumstances in their country of origin, less visible and assisted in part due to their Lebanese citizenship and in part due to an absence of accurate information regarding their living conditions and needs. (International Organization for Migration, IOM, December 2013)

A registration and profiling exercise conducted by the Lebanese High Relief Commission and IOM in autumn 2013 found that the conditions of Lebanese returnee households were broadly similar to those of Syrian refugees in terms of material support: most came to Lebanon without their belongings, are unemployed and are either renting accommodation or being hosted by Lebanese families, while some are living in collective centres and tents. The highest concentrations of Lebanese returnees profiled were found in the areas of Baalbek, Hermel and Akkar. Returnees most frequently ranked food, health, shelter and access to work, as their first or second priority needs.

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<sup>5</sup> AUB, Socio-Economic Survey of Palestinian Refugees in Lebanon, December 2010

<sup>6</sup> Registered with UNRWA

## SECTION 3

### 3. DATA SOURCES

At the start of the process, SWGs developed a list of information needs (i.e. those themes that they required information on within their sector). These were built from RRP6 indicators and a consultation within the working group. For the purpose of Phase 1, MSNA analysts reviewed and examined the available data on each theme. See Section 4 for results.

The table below highlights the information needs and whether or not they were met by the available data.

*Table [1]: Information needs and availability of existing data/information*

#### Information Need

Access to territory – constraints at official and unofficial crossings
Access to territory - risk of refoulement
Legal stay/residency permit
Access to timely registration
Main challenges to freedom of movement
Physical safety and security
Access to legal assistance and access to justice
Housing/land and property issues, including evictions
Civil status documentation
Persons With Specific Needs – general concerns and access to services

#### Legend

	No data available to the MSNA team at the time of writing
	Some data available but may be outdated or lack methodological rigour
	The available data addresses the information need

This section aims to highlight the data sources and limitations.

#### Limitations available data

The overall available data that is systematically collected at country level remains relatively limited and some of the existing data is not always considered for public sharing. For sensitive topics, concerns around data protection and data protection protocol may tend to restrict information sharing largely to public documents only.

In 2013 and 2014, some public assessments have become available on specific protection themes, largely in connection to the situation of Syrian refugees in Lebanon, including some dedicated protection

assessments<sup>7</sup> and few other assessments where protection is integrated in overall multi-sector analysis (e.g. Oxfam 2013, Vulnerability Assessment of Syrian Refugees in Lebanon, VASyR, 2013).

The available assessments are mostly based on qualitative data, largely having prioritised focus group discussion (FGD) and consultations with key informants as a methodology, with sometimes limited quantitative components. While this may have been necessary in light of the sensitive nature of the protection themes, the result is a difficulty in determining the extent of certain problems identified as well as comparative trends across the regions.

The available information tends to focus on areas where the assessing agencies were operational or where concentration of newly arrived Syrian refugees had been reported. A majority of the assessments tend to focus primarily on the North and the Bekaa and only marginally cover other areas, thus making it more difficult to provide a comprehensive and balanced analysis for the situation in the whole country.

In addition, available assessments tend to focus on specific thematic issues, largely in line with the profile and expertise of the organisation conducting them (e.g. specific issues pertaining to civil documentation, situation of older persons and persons with disabilities). Only one comprehensive report covering a wider range of protection issues was produced in September 2013. However, as the study itself indicates, the assessment provides a qualitative snapshot as opposed to quantified and general conclusions. Recently, however, more efforts are being undertaken to extend and harmonise countrywide the scope of some of the assessment/monitoring (see after).

Age and gender disaggregation remains extremely limited across the surveys. In addition, inclusion of data on older persons and persons with disabilities is also limited and largely confined to dedicated surveys or to some of the specific registration data sets.

The timeframe for the MSNA did not allow the thorough analysis of all the reports made available by the sector partners, and only some of the reports used have been discussed and presented with the SWG.

Where possible, the MSNA team attempted to separate data regarding registered, awaiting registration, and unregistered Syrian refugees. However, even surveys targeting Syria refugees registered and awaiting registration include unregistered refugees and therefore cannot be separated. Even though the data is presented for overall Syrian refugees regardless of registration status, we can assume there are differences between these groups.

### **Other Protection monitoring tools**

While the number of assessments may be limited, it is important to note that protection monitoring and consultations are regularly conducted through the field presence of specialised protection agencies and partners; through periodical participatory assessments with different age and gender groups; as well as through the presence of outreach volunteers and community focal points. Those sources contribute to provide a regular qualitative overview of protection issues faced by refugees and other persons of concern. This information is not systematised, but is recurrently shared through Protection Working Group meetings and informs the knowledge available to the protection sector. Efforts have now been undertaken to further systematise the information collected by protection monitoring partners.

In addition, further tools and products are being put in place by sector actors to track more systematically certain protection concerns:

- UNHCR and partners are in the process of finalising a protection monitoring system, including a set of core thematic indicators that will be systematically monitored across the country. The monitoring system will be largely based on key informants interviews and will cover the following issues: access to territory, registration, legal status, freedom of movement and arrest/detention, security/violence and exploitation, basic needs and essential services, education/child protection, social cohesion and

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<sup>7</sup> See table at the end of the chapter

livelihoods. In addition, on a regular basis, thematic reports focusing on selected protection issues requiring in-depth investigation will be produced. The results will be made available to the sector.

- Protection agencies such as UNHCR and UNRWA have in place and/or are strengthening a border monitoring presence, particularly in the Northern region (Akkar) and in the East.
- UNHCR monitors trends of arrests and detentions of refugees, collecting data referred by legal partners and other specialised actors, as well as by families of the affected individuals, to then be followed up with interventions in detention centres.
- Since 2014, a monthly thematic assessment, with sets of recurrent questions, is being conducted at UNHCR registration sites, covering significant samples of refugees that are briefly consulted either as new registrants, or during the process of renewal. Although the set of questions is necessarily limited, given time constraints, this exercise has the potential to cover relevant samples of the population, geographically and quantitatively;
- Registration data is recurrently providing a demographic profile of the Syrian refugee population, with reference also to specific needs.

Due to the sensitivity of the subject, not all the information collected from the different protection monitoring initiatives is shared with the wider humanitarian community. Some of the trends and problems identified in the different monitoring systems are generally captured in the Protection Sector Strategy from September 2013, in Protection Working Group records and other public sector documents.

Apart from limited information on protection concerns faced by PRS, there is very limited information on protection concerns among the other target groups.

More information on planned assessments and recommendations for data collection can be found in section 5 and 6.

## SECTION 4

The following section provides an analysis of data according to theme, including a summary table of assessment coverage by target group and geographic region.

### 4. ANALYSIS PER THEME

#### 4.1 Access to Territory – Constraints at Official and Unofficial Crossings

The summary table below shows assessment coverage by geographic area and target group. It does not, however, show the quality of the assessments or the extent of the coverage.

*Table [2]: Assessment coverage by geographic area and target population*

**Summary of assessment findings:** Since the onset of the Syrian crisis, Lebanon has generously maintained an open border policy and has permitted refugees to temporarily but freely settle across the country. Syrian refugees are allowed to enter Lebanon also with an ID card, by virtue of earlier bilateral agreements.

A considerable proportion of Syrians cross into Lebanon through an unofficial border crossing, with estimates ranging from 12.6% for registered Syrians nationwide to 34% according to the assessments focused on certain geographic regions or on the newly arrived Syrian refugees in specific areas of the country, including in areas having recently experienced large influxes as well as in proximity to unofficial entry points (e.g. North and Bekaa). The rate varies according to the region, with higher trends in the North and in the Bekaa.

The main reasons emerging for accessing through unofficial border crossings include fear of arrest or detention due to real or imputed political opposition activities; lack of documentation, affecting some or all family members; lack of financial resources to undertake the journey to official borders; insecurity and dynamics of the flight; proximity to areas where refugees may have acquaintances or family ties. Refugees entering the country through unofficial border crossing are considered by the existing Lebanese laws and policies as irregular residents. While statistical data is currently unavailable, and may come from upcoming UNHCR assessments during the renewal and verification exercise, the regularisation process appears to be unattainable for most of the refugees, given the high costs (approximately USD 600).

While Lebanon continues to maintain its generous open border policy, since July 2013, a reinforcement of the controls at the border by the GSO has been observed or reported. Damaged documents have been more strictly rejected; the purpose for entry more closely examined; addresses have been more thoroughly checked, while some flexibility has been maintained for persons with specific needs and families. The application of these procedures does not appear to be always systematic and rejection trends have varied.

Restrictions are more severe for PRS - since restrictions at the border were introduced in August 2013, a number of refugees from Syria including PRS have been denied entry into Lebanon, and this situation persists. It appears that only PRS meeting certain criteria have been able to enter Lebanon:

- PRS married to Lebanese citizens or PRL
- PRS with a Lebanese mother (with proof of filiations)
- PRS transiting through Lebanon holding a plane ticket and valid visa for the country of destination
- PRS UN staff
- PRS with an official (embassy, medical) appointment.

Table [3]: Assessment coverage by geographic area and target population

	Vulnerable Local Communities (Lebanese and PRL)	Lebanese Returnees	PRS	Syrian refugees	
				Registered	Unregistered
National					
North/T+5					
Akkar					
Mt. Lebanon and Beirut					
Bekaa					
South					
Palestinian Camps					
Outside Palestinian Camps					
<i>*NB – Grey cells indicate that there is at least one assessment available on the specific area or target group. However, the data may not cover the situation for the entire geographic area or target group.</i>					

## Syrian refugees

### National

#### Unofficial crossings

Registration data shows that as of 28 February 2014, 12.5% of Syrians registered with UNHCR entered through unofficial borders, with peaks of 18-20% in the North and in the Bekaa areas.

However, according to the records of newly arrived Syrians collected by some agencies through the Newcomers Programme (NCP) this proportion seems to be higher. Those NCP assessments indicate that of the over 5,000-6,000 households assessed on average during January and February 2014, around 30% reportedly crossed through unofficial crossings. This is slightly higher than the average of 26% unofficial crossings in 2013 captured by the same organisation. The Danish Refugee Council (DRC) NCP covers those newly arrived in Lebanon, primarily in the North, Bekaa and South, and includes data from households that have not (yet) been registered with UNHCR. Through the NCP, another NGO (Solidarités International) reached around 2,000 families in January and February 2014 and showed that 18% of those assessed crossed through unofficial borders. The difference in percentage may be explained by the different geographical coverage<sup>8</sup>.

In the frame of its second assessment on the situation of refugees with limited legal status assessment, the Norwegian Refugee Council (NRC) conducted individual interviews with 417 refugees in the Bekaa, the South and the North regardless of their entry date to Lebanon and status in terms of registration with UNHCR, and found that 34% of them had crossed through unofficial borders.

The discrepancy between the UNHCR, NRC, and NCP data could be explained by the geographic coverage of the data sets, with UNHCR covering the whole registered population in the country, while the NCP data primarily cover the Bekaa region, the North and South and a small part of Tripoli and surrounding districts. It can also be derived from the sample that while UNHCR covers the registered refugees, NCP data covers newly arrived individuals, not registered.

According to the DRC NCP consultations, the main reasons for unofficial crossings are “political opposition activities” (60%), lack of personal documentation (19%), and financial reasons (17%). The main unofficial crossings reportedly occur in Hermel, Aarsal, Ras Baalbek, Al-Qaa and Masharih al-Qaa in the Bekaa region.

<sup>8</sup>Solidarités International’s assessment focuses on the areas of Tripoli and neighbouring districts, while DRC covers a larger part of the country, including areas in proximity to unofficial crossings and where sustained influxes have been reported, such as Aarsal.

## *Akkar and Bekaa*

NRC conducted a qualitative assessment focusing on legal stay documentation and based on key informants consultations between June and October 2013 in WadiKhaled and Aarsal, two locations known for their proximity to unofficial border crossing points. According to the findings, the most commonly cited reasons for crossing through an unofficial border for individuals who hold the required identity documentation were the fear of being arrested by the Syrian border authorities and the inability to access official crossings due to insecurity.

Other respondents mentioned that, although they had their identity documents, members of their family did not and, therefore, they could only all cross into Lebanon together by entering through an unofficial border crossing.

A few of the interviewed refugees mentioned financial reasons as the main reason why they did not cross through an official border crossing. According to the assessment, every Syrian has to pay SYP 550 (or USD 4 at the current exchange rate) at the border to exit Syria.

In the same assessments, respondents that crossed through an unofficial checkpoint because they do not have the required identify documentation to enter Lebanon mentioned the following reasons for not having the required documentation:

- Documents had been lost when their homes in Syria were destroyed during armed attacks and shelling or they were unable to return to retrieve belongings before fleeing the country.
- Many of the refugees mentioned that they would not have entered through official border crossings even if they had identity documentation because they feared being arrested and detained in Syria while trying to cross the border.

## **Entry constraints at official crossings**

### Syrian refugees

#### *National*

Publicly available Protection Working Group minutes report that while maintaining its open border policy, since July 2013, the GoL has reinforced the controls at the border, with scrutiny of damaged documents, purpose for entry more closely examined, more thorough examination of addresses, while retaining some flexibility for specific needs and families. While the border remains open to refugees, the authorities are exercising more caution in checking documents and are restricting access to people without valid passports or ID cards or whose documents are damaged. The Protection Working Group minutes note that individuals arriving with only a civil registry document are generally not permitted to enter unless they are under 15 years of age. The restrictions particularly affect four groups: those with damaged or no identity papers; individuals between 15-18 years old with ID but without parent authorisation; 18-21 year olds with no proof of exemption from military service; and nomadic households.

During a qualitative assessment by ALEF in September 2013, cases of refusal at entry were reported for Syrian individuals with slightly damaged official documentation. Anecdotal evidence within this assessment showed that most cases of refusals concerned single men or men without families. Women and children were mostly admitted. Refusals have also been reported in cases where Syrians temporarily exit Lebanon to renew entry permits.

#### *Bekaa, South, North, Mount Lebanon*

Analysis of protection monitoring activities carried out between November 2013 and January 2014 indicated that of 417 individuals asked in the Bekaa, 77% were not aware of any recent arrival in the community who was denied entry to Lebanon at an official border crossing point. Out of the 1,840 individuals asked in the South, 90.04% reported not to be aware of any recent arrival in the community who was denied entry to Lebanon at

an official border crossing point. Out of the 64 and 46 individuals respectively interviewed in the North and in Mount Lebanon, 87.50% and 88.24% reported not to be aware.

### *PRS*

UNRWA reports that, since August 2013, PRS have faced additional restrictions on entry into Lebanon. Unlike Syrian nationals, PRS are required to obtain an exit visa from the Ministry of Interior in Damascus before leaving the country. While Lebanon's GSO has stated that no additional restrictions have been introduced on the entry of PRS into Lebanon, there have nevertheless been a significant number of PRS who have been denied entry to the country. From UNRWA's monitoring of the situation on the ground, and from direct discussions with PRS, it appears that only PRS meeting certain criteria have been able to enter Lebanon:

- PRS married to Lebanese citizens or PRL
- PRS with a Lebanese mother (with proof of filiations)
- PRS transiting through Lebanon holding a plane ticket and valid visa for the country of destination
- PRS UN staff
- PRS with an official (embassy, medical) appointment.

Additionally, PRS who are able to demonstrate they have PRS family members with valid legal status already staying in Lebanon are also generally able to enter. However, such PRS may not be able to enter if the visa of the family member in Lebanon has expired, which is increasingly the case since many PRS have been in Lebanon for over a year and are unable to afford the LBP 300,000/350,000 (USD 200/233) fee to extend their visa for a further year in country.

## 4.2 Access to Territory – Risk of Refoulement

**Summary of assessment findings:** Article 32 of the Law Regulating the Entry of Foreign Nationals into, their Residence in and their Departure from Lebanon (10 July 1962) sets clear parameters for the legal entry of foreigners into Lebanon. While Syrians had long benefited from favourable bilateral agreements permitting entry and work, the absence of a comprehensive and specific legal framework for refugees means that those refugees in violation of the 1962 immigration law due to unofficial entry or expiry of legal stay (see after) may lack legal protection against arrest, prosecution and deportation.

At the start of the primary influx in 2011, some cases of deportation of Syrians from Lebanon to Syria were reported in the WhadiKhaled area. In August 2012, 14 Syrians were deported by the Lebanese authorities, four of whom reported a fear of persecution by the Syrian authorities. In response to national and international advocacy following the deportations, the GoL has de facto stopped deportations. In September 2013, the National Protection Strategy indicated that the government has not forcibly deported any Syrians since August 2012.

UNHCR reports that Syrians are usually released upon completion of their sentence and there is minimal risk of refoulement, since the authorities have taken a decision not to deport Syrians in light of the ongoing conflict. Although Syrians, who have served their sentences, are still issued with a deportation order upon release, these orders are not implemented by the Lebanese authorities.

Table [4]: Assessment coverage by geographic area and target population

	Vulnerable Local Communities (Lebanese and PRL)	Lebanese Returnees	PRS	Syrian refugees	
				Registered	Unregistered
National					
North/T+5					
Akkar					
Mt. Lebanon and Beirut					
Bekaa					
South					
Palestinian Camps					
Outside Palestinian Camps					
<b>Legend</b>					
	Section not applicable		Data available		
*NB – Grey cells indicate that there is at least one assessment available on the specific area or target group. However, the data may not cover the situation for the entire geographic area or target group.					

### 4.3 Legal Stay/Residency Permit

**Summary of assessment findings:** While the causes of the lack of documentation allowing for legal stay have been documented in several reports, the information on its consequences is still more limited, and available reports mainly focus on the areas of WadiKhaled and Aarsal. As with the other assessments in this report, most information available is qualitative.

Refugees who have entered the country through the official border are given a six-month residency coupon which is renewable for six additional months free of charge. After one year they must renew their residency, either by leaving the country and entering again or by paying a fee of USD 200 for the renewal of the permit for every member above 15 years of age. While the first option may expose refugees to security risks, the fees for the renewal of the permit remain largely unattainable for many families. Seemingly, the regularisation process for families who have entered through unofficial border crossing remains inaccessible due to even higher costs. Recent sample surveys conducted during the process of renewal of the UNHCR registration certificates, as well as other more geographically focused qualitative surveys and protection monitoring visits (WadiKhaled and Aarsal, and Bekka/North and South of Lebanon), revealed that the issue of renewal is a major concern for the population and the main obstacle to the renewal of the residency permit is the high fees. The entry through unofficial borders also has a high impact, and the reticence in approaching the authorities is also cited. A thematic survey has also indicated the tendency to resort to negative coping mechanisms to overcome these challenges, such as resorting to unofficial documents or even forged documentation.

By 31 December 2014, projections indicate over 388,000 refugees might lack legal residency in Lebanon, either because they entered unofficially and did not manage to regularise their stay, or because they entered officially but did not manage to renew their legal stay. This projection does not include those not registered with UNHCR. Although the lack of documentation on legal stay is not a barrier to registration and to receive humanitarian assistance, the consequences of being considered irregular negatively impact freedom of movement, create barriers in obtaining civil documentation, affect access to justice and may create difficulties in accessing public services.

Palestinian refugees from Syria also face difficulties renewing their legal stay due to even more complex entry and legal stay procedures and face similar constraints to freedom of movement, particularly in areas with high security presence, such as at the entry/exit of closed camps.

Table [5]: Assessment coverage by geographic area and target population

	Vulnerable Local Communities (Lebanese and PRL)	Lebanese Returnees	PRS	Syrian refugees	
				Registered	Unregistered
National					
North/T+5					
Akkar					
Mt. Lebanon and Beirut					
Bekaa					
South					
Palestinian Camps					
Outside Palestinian Camps					
<b>Legend</b>					
	Section not applicable			Data available	
*NB – Grey cells indicate that there is at least one assessment available on the specific area or target group. However, the data may not cover the situation for the entire geographic area or target group.					

## Syrian refugees

### *National*

UNHCR registration data projects that, as of the beginning of April 2014, there may be some 245,000 Syrian without valid legal residency in the country. UNHCR projects that some 388,000 Syrian refugees could find themselves without legal residency by the end of 2014.

### *Beirut and North/T+5*

A recent UNHCR survey among 3,170 households who renewed their UNHCR registration in February in Beirut and North and who resided in Lebanon for one year or more found that:

- 63% of surveyed have valid residencies
- 35% of those surveyed had expired certificates or no certificates

The causes of expired certificates/lack of certificates are:

- 57% due to fees
- 21% entered illegally
- 12% afraid to approach authorities
- 2% unaware of procedures
- 8% combination of causes

### *Akkar and Bekaa*

A qualitative NRC assessment conducted between June and October 2013 looked at the reasons for and consequences of limited legal status in WadiKhaled and Aarsal, and a second assessment on the same topic conducted in November and December 2013 looked at a sample of 417 refugees in the North of Lebanon, the Bekaa and the South. The assessments identified three categories of Syrian refugees with limited legal status:

- Refugees who have entered Lebanon through unofficial border crossings and do not possess any identity documents
- Refugees who have entered through unofficial border crossings but have identity documents
- Refugees who entered Lebanon through official border crossings but have not renewed their Lebanese residency permit once it has expired.

During a follow up assessment: 5% of the sample was found to fall under the first category, 29% under the second category and 66 % under the third one.

75 individually interviewed refugees out of the 247 who did enter officially had not approach the authorities to renew their residency permit, and 64 of them cited the high annual cost of renewal (USD200 per person aged 15 years old and above) as the reason for not having done so.

The second NRC assessment highlights the following consequences of a limited legal status as expressed by respondents in WadiKhaled and Aarsal:

- Restrictions on freedom of movement (reported by 75 out of the 218 that have no proof of legal stay)
- Legal challenges, including difficulties in registered births of newborn babies, in approaching the police or other governmental institutions
- Difficulties in accessing basic services, including registering with UNHCR, access to primary and secondary healthcare (reported by 161 out of the 218 have no proof of legal stay), income generating activities, and shelter support

The NRC assessments show as well that, in an attempt to overcome these challenges, refugees often feel compelled to adopt coping mechanisms such as paying bribes to obtain documentation, paying for forged documentation, using other people's documents, or going back to Syria to get the required documents.

Syrians assessed during the NRC assessment in WadiKhaled and Aarsal mentioned getting legal documentation issued by municipalities and Lebanese mukhtars (local leaders) to replace identity documentation for undocumented refugees. Mukhtars reportedly deliver this document for free, as a service for those who do not have legal documentation. However, a few refugees in Aarsal reported that they had to pay a small amount (around LBP 2,000) to get this document from the Aarsal municipality. In practice, refugees in WadiKhaled reported that this kind of document had little positive effect on their life – it was reportedly never accepted for crossing checkpoints, while in Aarsal a few refugees reported being able to cross checkpoints by providing the municipality document.

Respondents to the NRC survey with damaged identity documents are reportedly afraid of being arrested while trying to renew their legal stay. Many of them mentioned that they prefer to have expired residency instead of approaching the authorities for renewal.

In 72% of all protection monitoring visits made in Akkar by the International Rescue Committee (IRC) (total of 54 visits conducted during December 2013), the issue of residency card renewal emerged as a major concern of the monitored population. Residency card renewal remains a critical problem in the 23 villages of WadiKhaled, with the majority of residents in these villages having entered through the unofficial border crossings. In 15 out of the 33 protection monitoring visits conducted by the IRC, all interviewed refugees needed to renew their residency permits.

During protection monitoring activities in Akkar in January 2013, the protection monitoring partner the IRC reported that lack of a legal status remains a critical concern experienced by approximately two-thirds of the monitored population in Akkar (total population monitored 788 refugees). Lack of a legal residency permit increases a person's vulnerability, impacting their freedom of movement and decreasing their basic access to services and registration. Monitoring has shown in Akkar a correlation between those without residency cards and unregistered persons. In January, out of the 39 individual cases of persons directly referred without valid residency cards, 26 of these were also not registered with UNHCR due to restrictions on their movement.

During protection monitoring visits in Akkar in February 2014, out of the 62 refugees without valid legal status in Lebanon, 29 of these entered through unofficial borders while the remaining 33 could not afford residency renewal fees of USD 200.

*There is no specific data available for South.*

## PRS

UNRWA focus group discussions and contact with PRS highlighted legal stay as a key concern. Upon entry into Lebanon, PRS receive a seven-day transit visa that is valid for 15 days at a cost of LBP 25,000 (USD 17). Upon expiry of this transit visa, PRS must transfer to a short-term residency visa (previously LBP 50,000, USD 33, but since early 2013 free of charge). This short-term visa can be renewed free of charge to allow for residency for up to one year in Lebanon. After one year, despite sustained UNRWA advocacy with the Lebanese authorities, PRS, like Syrians are required to pay a fee of LBP 300,000/350,000 (USD 200/233) in order to regularise their status in Lebanon (or if they want to, return to Syria.)

Regularised legal status of PRS is of particular concern in 2014 due to the increasing numbers of PRS whose visas have expired. Many PRS now present came to Lebanon in late 2012 due to a spike in violence around Palestinian population centres in Syria.

#### 4.4 Access to Timely Registration

**Summary of assessment findings:** UNHCR is currently registering some 50,000-52,000 individuals a month, with peaks of over 90,000 during the course of 2013. The average waiting time for registration has decreased to 20-21 days in March 2014. Registration is undertaken in four main UNHCR registration centres (Beirut/Mount Lebanon, Tripoli, Zahle, Tyre), and mobile appointments and registration as well as transport support are in place to reach out to persons with specific needs and to cover remote areas.

The available surveys indicate that the great majority of the refugees are not encountering problems in registering with UNHCR, including recent (2014) UNHCR surveys conducted with samples of new registrants, as well as surveys by other organisations. The presence of unregistered Syrian refugees has been reported, including families who prefer not to be registered. The size of the unregistered Syrian refugee population that is unable or unwilling to register with UNHCR, but is otherwise in need of protection and/or assistance, has yet to be determined. Efforts are made to increase outreach to these groups, and facilitate their registration. Some surveys conducted in 2013, largely localised in the areas of Wadi Khaled and Aarsal covering registered as well as Syrian refugees not registered with UNHCR, indicated security concerns and restricted freedom of movement to the registration centres, especially for those lacking documentation or legal stay permits. Misconceptions regarding the confidentiality of the registration data and various targeting initiatives have also impacted on the understanding of refugees regarding the benefits of registration. Other barriers to registration reported include high costs for transport, a lack of information on procedures and fear of possible consequences of registration. Several unregistered individuals assessed highlighted that they would not register because they do not expect any improvement in their living conditions following registration. Some available surveys (Handicap International/HelpAge ,HI/HA, 2014) show that people with specific needs such as persons with disabilities/impairment may be underrepresented in the registered population, assuming that they may face additional barriers to registration due to lack of mobility.

Table [6]: Assessment coverage by geographic area and target population

	Vulnerable Local Communities (Lebanese and PRL)	Lebanese Returnees	PRS	Syrian refugees	
				Registered	Unregistered
National					
North/T+5					
Akkar					
Mt. Lebanon and Beirut					
Bekaa					
South					
Palestinian Camps					
Outside Palestinian Camps					
<b>Legend</b>					
	Section not applicable			Data available	
<i>*NB – Grey cells indicate that there is at least one assessment available on the specific area or target group. However, the data may not cover the situation for the entire geographic area or target group.</i>					

#### Syrian refugees

##### *National*

An individual can register with UNHCR regardless of legal status or irregular entry. There are four UNHCR registration centres in Lebanon. To register with UNHCR, an individual needs to approach UNHCR for an

appointment or make an appointment through dedicated phone lines existing in specific areas (e.g. Bekaa). On the scheduled appointment day, all the family will need to reach the registration centres in person, but specific procedures are in place to register individuals in absentia in case of serious physical impediments.

In April 2013, UNHCR introduced emergency registration procedures. As a result, by the end of May 2013, waiting periods between the appointment and actual registration decreased significantly to 21-28 days. In the current regular registration procedures, the average waiting period on 21 February 2014 stood at 22 days, in line with global standards.

UNHCR registers an average of 13,000 refugees a week. UNHCR continuously tries to address existing constraints to registration, for instance through a mass information campaign informing people of the registration procedure and its benefits, carrying out ad-hoc mobile registration missions (North, Bekaa) or arranging transport from areas to registration centres (South).

UNHCR registration data shows that 60% of Syrians are new arrivals (i.e. arrived within four months or less from registration date). As a result, 40% were in Lebanon longer than four months before registration. Syrians are estimated to wait an average of 2.5 months from their arrival before requesting an appointment for registration from UNHCR.

An Oxfam assessment in August 2013 on the livelihoods of Syrian refugees in Lebanon showed that the majority of households have registered with UNHCR, or with UNRWA in the case of Syrian Palestinians. 87% of the households were registered, and another 9% of the households either wanted to register or were waiting for their procedures. On the other hand, 4% stated that they did not want to register with UNHCR. The main reason provided was a fear that if they registered with UNHCR, they would not be allowed to go back to Syria.

In addition, an HI/HA assessment in October 2013 on the situation of vulnerable refugees also showed a high registration rate, at 77%. 3% of people assessed were pending registration. 14% were unregistered, while in 6% of the cases the question on registration was not answered.

In February 2014, UNHCR conducted a thematic survey reaching out to 1,318 newly-registered Syrian households. One of the questions related to access to registration and problems registering with UNHCR. While 83.2% of the respondents reported not to face any problems, 5.1% of the respondent stated that they had to call many times to get an appointment (especially in the Bekaa), 4.1% reported to have waited more than a month to get an appointment, and 4.2% reported challenges with the registration centre being too far or too costly to reach.

Analysis of protection monitoring activities carried out between November 2013 and January 2014 shows that 165 out of 2,367 Syrian refugees interviewed countrywide reported on the obstacles that the community face vis-à-vis registration, of which the three main reasons provided are no benefit in the registration, not aware of the procedures, and the transportation to the registration centres being too costly (for respectively 37%, 28% and 8% of the interviewees).

Within the National Protection Strategy from September, it was highlighted that minority populations may be reluctant to register with UNHCR or UNRWA due to concerns for personal security and safety, while others face barriers due to restrictions on movement related to distance, lack of documentation or security checkpoints. In addition, the strategy mentioned that increasingly targeted assistance may also give some refugees the impression that they do not need to register if they are not eligible for certain forms of assistance.

An assessment by the Movement for Peace (MPDL) among households with people with specific needs – defined within the assessment as persons with disabilities, persons with chronic diseases and older persons – in November found that among the 465 households assessed, the proportion of those registered with UNHCR was higher in the South (92%) than in Mount Lebanon (75%). Furthermore, registration rates were higher in urban areas (90%) compared to rural areas (76%).

An assessment by HI/HA highlighted the following constraints to registration with UNHCR:

- Difficulties reaching registration points due to the distance, the lack of transport or money for travel, or due to difficulties bringing all family members to the registration points
- Lack of information about the registration process
- Families/persons do not expect any improvement in their living conditions following registration
- Surveyed refugees who have been excluded from assistance report advising new arrivals against registration, as they do not see the benefits
- Fear possible consequences of registration
- Families feel that they do not have the necessary documentation
- Some persons with specific needs reported feeling that there are no specific services or support provided via UNHCR registration and partners' services to address their particular problem, which discouraged them from attempting to register. In some rural areas of Lebanon, some families explained that the fact that there was a person with limited mobility or in need of constant care has prevented them from accessing the registration point

The assessment report shows that a closer examination of the survey findings revealed that amongst surveyed registered refugees, people with impairment are underrepresented. While they may be registered, their impairment is often not recognised or recorded at the time of registration, particularly for those living with less visible intellectual or sensorial impairments. Older people are significantly under-registered when compared to other groups.

#### *Akkar and Bekaa*

The NRC assessment conducted in June-October 2013 in WadiKhaled and Aarsal mentions that sometimes, access to UNHCR registration centres is hampered due to checkpoints, particularly affecting individuals with limited legal status and therefore limited freedom of movement. The UNHCR registration site in North Lebanon is located in Tripoli, and so refugees based in WadiKhaled have to cross several checkpoints including the Chadra checkpoint to get to Tripoli. The Bekaa UNHCR registration site is located in Zahle, and so refugees based in Aarsal have to cross several checkpoints. UNHCR tries to address these constraints to registration through mobile registration and appointments.

In the same NRC qualitative assessment limited to the areas of WadiKhaled and Aarsal, most of the refugees assessed said that they are too afraid to cross any checkpoint to access UNHCR registration sites. NRC reports that some of the people accessing the information, counselling and legal assistance (ICLA) centre in Bekaa are reluctant to cross checkpoints to reach Zahle for UNHCR registration due to a fear of harassment and arrest (156).

Situation reports in September and October by NRC show that some refugees adopt risky coping mechanisms to be able to cross a checkpoint to register with UNHCR, including using other people's IDs, paying bribes or crossing the Chadra checkpoint unofficially.

In the NRC assessment, anecdotal information indicates the perception among refugees that individuals without documentation cannot register with UNHCR, although undocumented refugees are eligible to register with UNHCR.

During the recent November influx into Aarsal, UNHCR conducted a survey with 140 new arrivals from Aarsal who did not show up at their registration appointments. 14% indicated that security concerns/freedom of movement restrictions prevented them from traveling to the registration centres. Other reasons derived by UNHCR from analysis on registration rates include a lack of documentation and those who do not see the benefit of registration following the introduction of targeted assistance.

Protection monitoring visits in Akkar, in February 2014, indicated that out of 123 unregistered individuals interviewed, the three main reasons for being unregistered related to;

- 19% were undocumented;

- 28% lack knowledge on the procedure;
- 15% missed the registration appointment because of insecurity in Tripoli;

*There is no specific data available for North/T+ 5, South and Mount Lebanon and Beirut.  
There is no specific data available on PRS.*

## 4.5 Main Challenges to Freedom of Movement

**Summary of assessment findings:** The available assessment reports, mostly focused on specific geographic areas, mention several challenges related to freedom of movement linked to general insecurity, sectarian tensions in specific areas and reinforced security measures.

The security measures seem to particularly affect individuals with no personal documentation or individuals who lack a valid stay permit, either due to entry through unofficial border crossings, or due to the expiration of the residency permit. The challenges are connected to the presence of checkpoints, which are perceived as difficult to cross when not in possession of all required individual documentation.

Available assessments provide evidence that individuals who are not in possession of or who have expired legal stay permits tend to self-restrict their movements, avoiding movement because of fear of arrest or detention. This is primarily reported in the North and North Eastern border regions, where the security measures tend to be stricter. Information on arrest and detention at checkpoints remains largely anecdotal, reported to protection monitoring teams and not systematically collected. While protection agencies have systems to collect information on detention cases in official detention facilities, as reported by partners and family referrals, much less is known on the situation and the number of persons arrested/detained at police posts or checkpoints.

Another critical obstacle to freedom of movement cited in the available reports are the curfews for the Syrian refugee population imposed by a number of municipalities across the country, or by non-State actors. While the legal nature of such measures is debated, some thematic monitoring in different regions has been undertaken to better understand the dynamics of the phenomenon and its impact on the daily life of the refugees. The findings showed that the municipalities were generally the main authorities imposing the restrictions, except for some locations, largely communicated by word of mouth. The majority of the respondents indicated the negative repercussions in terms of freedom of movement, loss of economic opportunities, as well as access to services. In addition, the assessment highlighted that there are no emergency contact numbers available to the population during curfew time. Few available reports expand on the treatment of Syrian refugees who are found in breach of the curfews, including arrests/detention, confiscation of documents etc.

According to UNHCR sources, during the last year (February 2013 – January 2014), the names of 1,102 Syrian detainees were referred to UNHCR Detention Unit by partners and field offices. Of these, 191 persons (17% of total referrals) were reported to have been arrested solely for illegal entry/stay.

Restrictions in movement also impact the situation of PRS, especially in relation to the possible lack of valid documentation on legal residency. This is reported to affect particularly freedom of movement around the closed camps. In addition, freedom of movement is affected by arrest of those with valid documentation.

Table [7]: Assessment coverage by geographic area and target population

	Vulnerable Local Communities (Lebanese and PRL)	Lebanese Returnees	PRS	Syrian refugees	
				Registered	Unregistered
National					
North/T+5					
Akkar					
Mt. Lebanon and Beirut					
Bekaa					
South					
Palestinian Camps					
Outside Palestinian Camps					
<b>Legend</b>					
	Section not applicable		Data available		
*NB – Grey cells indicate that there is at least one assessment available on the specific area or target group. However, the data may not cover the situation for the entire geographic area or target group.					

## Syrian refugees

### *Akkar and Bekaa*

Permanent checkpoints (usually official) in Lebanon are often situated at district level borders, while ad hoc checkpoints can be found in a variety of locations. Most of the refugees with limited legal status interviewed during a qualitative NRC assessment in WadiKhaled undertaken between June and October 2013 considered movement restrictions as the largest challenge they face in their daily lives in Lebanon. NRC situation reports in October and September cite arrest at checkpoints of refugees with no proof of legal stay or no documents, in particular in the Bekaa at the Labwe checkpoints and in the North at the Deir Amar checkpoint. Refugees frequently reported that following their release they were given a self-departure order, although the deportations have halted since August 2012. In addition, the assessment shows anecdotal information of Syrians avoiding crossing a checkpoint out of fear of harassment or arrest. In the second NRC assessment on refugees with limited legal status, 161 out of 218 refugees with no proof of legal stay reported not feeling free to move outside and in some cases inside the area they live, and 144 said that was due to official checkpoints. Also to confirm the findings of the situation reports, 42 refugees from the same sample reported during the assessment that they were turned back at checkpoints, 15 were mistreated and 16 were arrested.

An NRC report between June and October 2013 shows that, in order to access WadiKhaled from the rest of the Akkar region, a specific joint Lebanese Army and GSO checkpoint has to be crossed either at Chadra or at Akroum village. The checkpoint at Chadra village (“Chadra checkpoint”) is the one most frequently used, including by public transport, to access WadiKhaled. At both checkpoints, individuals crossing, in particular those identified as non-Lebanese, are usually asked to show their identity documents and proof of their legal stay. The NRC assessment shows that most of those assessed who have been able to cross at least once are women, as it is reported that controls are less strict for women than for men. The general fear of crossing the checkpoint to leave WadiKhaled, as mentioned by all refugees interviewed, seems to be fuelled by the widespread stories and rumours of people being threatened at a checkpoint with arrest and/or deportation.

The NRC assessment also highlights that unofficial checkpoints set up by armed groups affiliated with political parties are reported to be more frequent in the Bekaa and they, as well as the broader political diversity of the area, are perceived by refugees as a serious threat, regardless of their legal status. Accessing the rest of Lebanon from Aarsal requires crossing sectarian boundaries, which adds to the factors impeding refugees

from moving outside of Aarsal. During the assessment by NRC on the consequences of limited legal status, freedom of movement was perceived as a major challenge for refugees living in Aarsal. The fear of being mistreated or arrested at the checkpoint is compounded by the threat of kidnapping (often based on religious or political motives) in other parts of the Bekaa Valley, outside of Aarsal and sometimes at unofficial checkpoints.

## Curfews

There are several reports of municipalities imposing curfews to limit the movements of Syrian citizens: NRC situation reports in September to December 2013 and an ALEF assessment in September 2013 indicate that the following municipalities have imposed a curfew (20:00 to 06:00) on Syrian Nationals.

Governorate	Village
Bekaa	Saadnayel, Kfardinas
Tripoli + 5	Kafarzeina, DarebAchtar, Ehden, Majdlaya, Kfarhata, Kfarlakous, Ardeh, HarefArdeh, etc
South	Most of the villages in the Tyre area
Mount Lebanon/Beirut	Baskinta, Benih (Aley), Betshai-Mardash, Niha, Jezzine, Roum, Ankoun, MazraetYachouh, Mansourieh, Ain Saade, QornetShahwan, Haret Saida, Zekrit
<i>Please note that these are municipalities as reported at the time of the assessment and is not an exhaustive nor updated list</i>	

Harassment of those that do not comply with the curfew was reported in a qualitative assessment by ALEF in September 2013. During the ALEF assessment, the temporary confiscation by municipalities of IDs of Syrians that do not comply with the curfews was reported.

## Detention

### Syrian refugees; registered, awaiting registration and unregistered

Arrest of Syrian refugees for illegal entry, lack of legal stay permit or lack of documentation has been reported.

According to UNHCR sources, during the last year (February 2013 – January 2014), the names of 1,102 Syrian detainees were referred to UNHCR Detention Unit by partners and field offices. Of these, 191 persons (17% of total referrals) were reported to have been arrested solely for illegal entry/stay.

The January 2014 UNHCR Protection update indicated that, as compared to December, there was a 175% increase in referrals (from 16 in January to 43 people in February) of Syrians to UNHCR who were arrested solely for illegal entry/stay. This can indicate a higher number of arrests and/or better access to UNHCR for those arrested. The report states that “Although numbers are still relatively small compared to the number of refugees in Lebanon, it has a serious impact on the freedom of movement for persons of concern as the risk of arrest for illegal entry/stay is perceived as being high.”

An ALEF study in September 2013 states that the Military Tribunal has issued several arrests and deportation orders to defectors of the Syrian Armed Forces and ex-combatants. Although deportation orders are not implemented, defendants are required to remain in prison for an indefinite period of time.

## *Akkar*

During the month of February, UNHCR protection monitoring partner the IRC identified 13 persons who were arrested in Akkar. Out of the 13 individuals, two women were arrested at the Chadracheckpoint because of lack of a residency permit due to unofficial entry into Lebanon

## Palestinian Refugees from Syria

If PRS do not have regular legal status in Lebanon they face grave restrictions on their freedom of movement, especially when entering the closed camps (including Nahr El Bared, Ein el Hilweh, Rashidieh, BurjShemali, El Buss). These camps are closed to foreigners unless they are able to obtain permission from the Lebanese Armed Forces (LAF). This is only granted if the applicant has a valid visa. UNRWA has indicated that this has resulted in an increasing number of PRS not leaving the camps for fear of not being able to re-enter.

UNRWA received assurances from GSO that PRS with expired visas would not be subject to refoulement. However, UNRWA has received several reports of PRS being detained by the LAF or Internal Security Forces (ISF) for having expired visas and then being transferred to GSO. In all cases reported to UNRWA, the PRS have been released by GSO. However, in some cases the documents of the PRS have been retained by GSO pending payment for visa renewal.

During an assessment by UNRWA in October 2013, some female PRS indicated that they limit movement outside the area they are living due to feelings of insecurity.

*There was no specific data available during the MSNA process for vulnerable host communities and Lebanese returnees.*

## 4.6 Physical Safety and Security

**Summary of assessment findings:** Assessments show that the majority of Syrians feel safe in Lebanon. However, some of the available assessments indicate that at least a part of the Syrian population has faced insecurity while in Lebanon (ranging from 5% to 10% of the Syrian population consulted in the available assessments), mainly due to discrimination in the form of harassment and verbal abuse and crime. During the VASyR in May and June, an estimated 10% of the over 1,400 households assessed reported having experienced some type of harassment while in Lebanon during the months prior to the assessment, mainly harassment and extortion.

The overall security situation in the Bekaa and in the north of Akkar, the volatile situation due to inter-communal conflicts in specific areas in and around Tripoli, and communal and sectarian tensions in other locations in the North and East have been consistently reported as affecting the security situation, including the situation of refugees.

Physical safety also remains a concern for the civilian population, especially in areas close to Syria, which are recurrently affected by the spill-over effects of the conflict.

It is also reported that insecurity and tensions in these areas leads to self-imposed limitations in freedom of movement, which increases in the case of lack of legal stay.

23 mines/explosive remnants of war (ERW) incidents have been reported in 2013 and the Mines Advisory Group (MAG) reports the presence of almost 1,400 confirmed minefields and almost 520 cluster munition strike areas in Lebanon, including areas hosting refugees.

Table [8]: Assessment coverage by geographic area and target population

	Vulnerable Local Communities (Lebanese and PRL)	Lebanese Returnees	PRS	Syrian refugees	
				Registered	Unregistered
National					
North/T+5					
Akkar					
Mt. Lebanon and Beirut					
Bekaa					
South					
Palestinian Camps					
Outside Palestinian Camps					
<b>Legend</b>					
	Section not applicable			Data available	
<i>*NB – Grey cells indicate that there is at least one assessment available on the specific area or target group. However, the data may not cover the situation for the entire geographic area or target group.</i>					

### Syrian refugees; registered, awaiting registration and unregistered

#### *National*

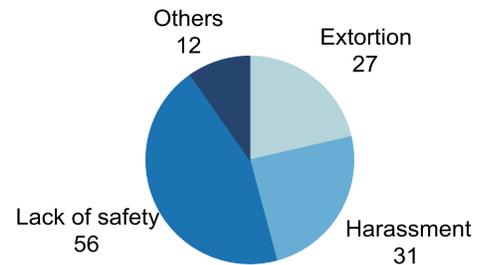
An Oxfam study in October 2013 among 260 households across the country showed that personal safety seemed to be a minor issue in most areas assessed. Around 68% of the respondents feel safe in their new

settlements; 5% feel unsafe, while the remainder feel partially safe. The main reported reasons for not feeling safe were related to prejudice against Syrians (19%) and crime (11%). Sectarian conflicts feature only on a very small scale (3%). This latter fear is concentrated mainly in Tripoli and Akkar. Personal accounts in the focus groups corroborated this picture. Respondents reported the tendency to want to stay out of trouble and avoid problems, although occasionally they get caught in the middle of local conflicts.

A qualitative assessment by ALEF in September 2013, which combined a desk review with on-site visits, found that Syrian refugees are more at risk in places where they are a political or sectarian minority (147).

During the VASyR in May and June, an estimated 10% of the over 1,400 households assessed reported having experienced some type of harassment while in Lebanon during the months prior to the assessment. The main types of insecurity reported were lack of safety (56%), harassment (31%), extortion (27%) robberies (6%) and other factors such as threats and discrimination. 7% of the assessed households reported that insecurity limited the movement of at least some household members.

**Main types of insecurity reported  
Syrian refugees  
VASyR May/June 2013**



During the month of November 2013, UNHCR protection monitoring partner the IRC reported that in seven villages in Mount Lebanon out of the 16 visited, the relationships between refugees and the host community was described as hostile. The main provided reason was competition over job opportunities, where Syrian refugees often accept to work for much lower wages than the host community. This hostility is being emphasised by difference in social and cultural background in certain villages. For more information on insecurity and social cohesion see chapter 8.

#### *Akkar/Mount Lebanon*

Monthly protection monitoring by the IRC highlights several cases of verbal and physical abuse that involved Syrian refugees.

#### All target groups

#### **Mines/ERW incidents**

There is presently little available systematic data on the impact of mines/ERW on the situation of refugees and other persons of concern.

MAG reports the possible presence of almost 1,400 confirmed minefields and almost 520 cluster munition strike areas in Lebanon, including areas hosting refugees.

MAG reports that there have been 23 mine/ERW incidents in 2013, a significant increase compared to 2012. The reasons for this increase include:

- The perception of communities that areas are no longer contaminated
- The fact that not all minefields are demarcated
- The arrival of Syrian refugees who are not aware of the contaminated areas

#### PRS

UNRWA reports that the vulnerability of Palestine refugees is exacerbated by the precarious political and security situation in Lebanon. The northern city of Tripoli, for example, regularly experiences sporadic armed clashes between rival groups loyal to the Syrian regime and the Syrian opposition. In May/early June 2013, at least 24 people were killed and almost 200 injured, and a further 12 people including a 16-year-old Palestinian

boy were killed in clashes that flared in late November/early December 2013. Tensions between factions in the camps can also exacerbate the physical safety concerns of Palestinians.

*There was no specific data available during the MSNA process for Tripoli + 5, Akkar, Bekaa, South and Mount Lebanon/Beirut, or on vulnerable host communities/Lebanese returnees*

## 4.7 Access to Legal Assistance and Access to Justice

**Summary of assessment findings:** There is still limited information systematically collected on the main constraints to access to legal assistance and legal remedies for refugees.

Civil documentation, including birth and marriage certificates, family law and housing/land/property issues are recurrently quoted as the main themes on which legal assistance is offered and sought.

From the available reports, it appears that the main constraints on access to justice are connected to the lack of valid documentation on legal stay. This often hinders individuals from approaching law enforcement actors and other judicial institutions, fearing negative consequences, including arrest and detention.

Table [9]: Assessment coverage by geographic area and target population

	Vulnerable Local Communities (Lebanese and PRL)	Lebanese Returnees	PRS	Syrian refugees	
				Registered	Unregistered
National					
North/T+5					
Akkar					
Mt. Lebanon and Beirut					
Bekaa					
South					
Palestinian Camps					
Outside Palestinian Camps					
<b>Legend</b>					
	Section not applicable		Data available		
*NB – Grey cells indicate that there is at least one assessment available on the specific area or target group. However, the data may not cover the situation for the entire geographic area or target group.					

### Syrian refugees

#### *National*

There are several actors providing legal counselling and assistance. Assistance is mostly offered on civil issues, including civil documentation and family law, but there are also specialised actors supporting criminal cases and offering legal support and representation for individuals in detention.

At the end of December 2013, UNHCR and legal organisations reported 138 cases were legally represented in front of the court. The majority of the cases related to personal status. 215 cases received legal support in detention, mainly in relation to interventions for release of individuals from detention.

During an NRC assessment on the consequences of limited legal status due to the non-possession or expiring of legal stay documentation, Syrian refugees reported that, due to a fear of being arrested, they do not approach the police to report crimes or incidents. Not being able to approach the police or other official institutions may expose Syrian refugees in Lebanon to further risks of abuse, violence and exploitation. This suggests that access to justice for Syrian refugees with limited legal status is compromised.

*There is no specific data available for North/T+5, Akkar, Bekaa, South, Mount Lebanon and Beirut. There is no specific data available for PRS and Lebanese returnees.*

## 4.8 Housing/Land and Property Issues Including Evictions

**Summary of assessment findings:** In Lebanon, most refugees are living with host families or in rented accommodation rather than in collective or publicly provided shelters. The type of accommodation varies. A majority of the refugees are reportedly still living in rented apartments, including in neighbourhoods where the Syrian population had already been residing before the crisis. However, as time progresses and the number of refugees increase, the absorption capacity of the hosting community reaches its limits, affordable accommodation options decrease, and a growing number of Syrian refugees and PRS resort to improvised accommodations. This includes informal settlements on private or public land, as well as sub-standard shelter solutions in the overcrowded Palestine refugee camps, which cannot keep pace with the increasing population and the growing accommodation needs. The number of families resorting to inadequate shelter options such as tents, unfinished houses, warehouses, work-sites, and garages is reportedly on the rise.

Ongoing housing, land and property surveys confirm the anecdotal knowledge that most of the agreements between refugees and landlords are non-formal and are largely verbal, often compromising security of tenure.

With the saturation of the shelter options and the reception capacity, a segment of the refugee population continues to be at risk of eviction. The available data indicates that this proportion is increasing. The causes reported are multiple, while knowledge of land and property rights amongst the population remains scarce.

The inability of the families to pay rent is frequently mentioned as a primary cause for eviction, due to constantly rising accommodation prices in a saturated market ruled by profit, and where power dynamics and political influence also play a significant role. Other emerging causes are tensions with the landowner, tensions within the community, and the action of the municipal authorities increasingly concerned by the rising number of informal settlements. Reports from the Protection Working Groups indicate that the incidence of evictions is increasing in Tripoli and neighbouring districts, Akkar and Bekaa, while a systematic data collection on eviction trends is being launched to collect more systematic data and allow a better analysis.

Table [10]: Assessment coverage by geographic area and target population

	Vulnerable Local Communities (Lebanese and PRL)	Lebanese Returnees	PRS	Syrian refugees	
				Registered	Unregistered
National					
North/T+5					
Akkar					
Mt. Lebanon and Beirut					
Bekaa					
South					
Palestinian Camps					
Outside Palestinian Camps					
<b>Legend</b>					
	Section not applicable		Data available		
*NB – Grey cells indicate that there is at least one assessment available on the specific area or target group. However, the data may not cover the situation for the entire geographic area or target group.					

## Syrian Refugees

### *National*

A UNHCR rapid survey among 1,318 newly registered refugees in February 2014 found that only 10% of those had a written agreement with their landlord, while 73% had only a verbal agreement.

A January 2014 public UNHCR protection update mentioned that 111 protection monitoring visits conducted by the IRC in 52 different villages across Lebanon revealed a heightened risk of eviction for refugees compared to the previous months. These risks are linked to increased and exploitative rents and dwindling refugee resources.

Legal partners are strengthening their cooperation and exchange of information and practice on evictions in different regions, including in the Bekaa and Tripoli. The aim is to collect and analyse information and agree on strategies for the most appropriate way to intervene in threatened or actual eviction cases.

Protection monitoring reports by the IRC highlighted that the number of identified refugees facing risk of eviction has increased significantly between January and February. This increase may be due to better detection on the part of the protection monitoring mobile teams, but it is also likely linked to the scarcity of resources amongst refugees, the length of time refugees have spent in Lebanon and the increase in the rental cost imposed by some landlords. The assessment indicates that some households started facing this problem only recently, after several months or even years of living rent-free.

### *T+5, Akkar, and Bekaa*

Reports from the Protection Working Groups across the country show that the incidence of evictions is increasing in Tripoli, Akkar and Bekaa regions. Evictions take place due to tensions between Syrians and landowners, with the community or because of the inability to pay rent.

*There is no specific data for Mount Lebanon/Beirut and South*

*There is no specific data for vulnerable local communities, PRS and Lebanese returnees.*

## 4.9 Civil Status Documentation

**Summary of assessment findings:** Available analysis on challenges in access to civil documentation for Syrian refugees and PRS are largely focused on the legal stay permit and the acquisition of birth certificates, including the link between the two processes.

UNHCR sources report that among registered refugees, around 75% of newborns between August and December 2013 did not have an official birth certificate by January 2014. **For more information on challenges to birth registration, see chapter 6.B. on child protection.**

Challenges highlighted by some analytical reports and by protection monitoring reports prominently include the lack of awareness by Syrian refugees on the procedures, and sometimes on the relevance, of obtaining a birth certificate for their children born in Lebanon. Other factors mentioned were the lack of awareness by the “mukhtars”, as officers in charge for the identification of individuals, on the procedures and on their role. This was in turn linked to scarce training and despite official instructions produced by the Ministry of Interior. An additional contributing factor is the possibility that mothers may not receive the midwife birth notification. Another recurrently reported barrier is the lack of documentation by the parents, including the marriage certificate, and the possession of a valid legal stay permit, which is requested to complete the birth registration process and officially register the birth with the Foreigners’ Register of the Personal Status Department under the Ministry of Interior.

In addition, monitoring and available assessments, including by UNHCR and by specialised sector partners, have often highlighted the problem of lack of information by persons of concern on the procedures to obtain various type of civil documentation, including birth but also marriage certificates. The cost associated, estimated between LBP 30,000 and 40,000, for both documents may also represent a barrier to access. Protection monitoring identified several informal marriages and highlighted that married couples were often unaware of the implications of these unofficial weddings, i.e. the state does not legally recognise the marriage, the marriage provides no legal protection of rights, the woman cannot legally seek a divorce and births cannot be registered without a formal marriage certificate. A UNHCR survey on birth registration (August- December 2013) reported that 14% of a sample of parents of 4,777 newborns were found not in possession of a proof of marriage required in order to register the birth of the child.

Table [11]: Assessment coverage by geographic area and target population

	Vulnerable Local Communities (Lebanese and PRL)	Lebanese Returnees	PRS	Syrian refugees	
				Registered	Unregistered
National					
North/T+5					
Akkar					
Mt. Lebanon and Beirut					
Bekaa					
South					
Palestinian Camps					
Outside Palestinian Camps					
<b>Legend</b>					
	Section not applicable		Data available		
*NB – Grey cells indicate that there is at least one assessment available on the specific area or target group. However, the data may not cover the situation for the entire geographic area or target group.					

## Syrian Refugees

### **Birth certificates**

#### *National*

The procedure for obtaining birth certification for Syrian refugees is complex, and many Syrian parents are unaware of the steps that are required:

- Step One: birth notification – this is provided by the authorised doctor or midwife who attended the birth.
- Step Two: birth certificate – this is provided by the mukhtar (local leader) working locally to the place of birth. The main documents required for this are the birth notification document and the identity documents of each parent. The cost is around LBP30,000, although some mukhtars will provide this document for free.
- Step Three: registering the birth with the civil authorities. – this involves:
  - ‘Transferring’ the mukhtar birth certificate at the local civil registry in the district of the birth – presentation of Syrian ID cards of parents is sufficient.
  - Registering the birth at the Foreigners’ Register of the Personal Status Department (which comes under the Ministry of Interior). Specific documents are required, such as proof of marriage and identity. In addition, parents must provide proof of legal stay.

If the birth certificate has not been ‘transferred’ at the local civil registry within one year of the birth, it will only be possible to register the birth via a judicial procedure.

From March 2011 to end of February 2014, UNHCR registered approximately 19,500 children born in Lebanon. Currently UNHCR is registering over 2,000 newborns each month.

A survey of 4,777 newborns registered with UNHCR between 1 August and 31 December 2013 showed that 75% of newborns do not have official birth certificates. Low levels of birth registration are predominantly in the North and Bekaa, as parents have limited access to identity documentation, legal stay and lack awareness.

The survey shows that 44% of newborns are unable to obtain official birth certificates as parents lack the documentation required by Personal Status Departments. Barriers to birth registration at the Personal Status Department are lack of identity documents (14%), lack of proof of marriage (14%) and lack of legal stay (34%) (these are not mutually exclusive). Data on barriers to birth registration is available broken down by month, registration site and geographical location.

The survey identifies access to different types of birth documentation (birth notification, mukhtar birth certificate and official birth certificate). 98% of newborns have birth notifications, 74% have mukhtar birth certificate and 25% have official birth certificates. This data is available broken down by month and registration site.

In addition to procedural barriers, 52% parents who were counselled for the survey lacked awareness of the importance of birth registration and how to obtain an official birth certificate. Awareness levels are available broken down by district.

An NRC situation report in January 2014 highlights the cumbersome procedure for obtaining a birth certificate, and shows that refugees from Syria who are now in Lebanon are often not aware of legal procedures and the consequences of not following the necessary procedures to register births. 53% of the refugees interviewed by the NRC do have the possibility of registering a birth without a court process (i.e. they are in possession of relevant documents and the birth was less than one year ago), which indicates the importance of continuing to provide assistance so that refugees have access to and are able to register the births of their babies. The remaining 47% may need legal assistance for birth registration requiring a court process, or do not have the relevant documents.

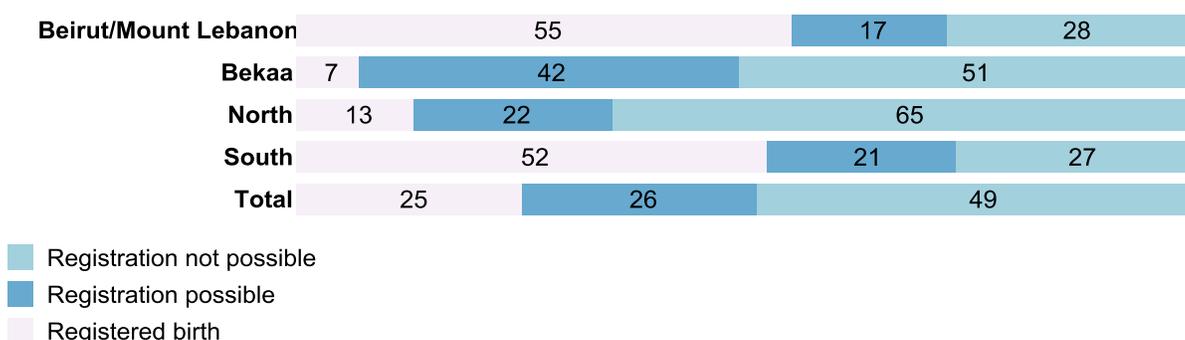
The NRC January situation report showed that there are several challenges related to the role of the mukhtar who delivered the birth certificate, including; the reluctance of some mukhtars to provide a birth certificate to newborn children because of the lack of information about their role and duty in the procedure; because of the fear that Syrian babies would acquire Lebanese nationality as a direct result of the birth certificate being issued; lack of information on which documents are required to issue a birth certificate (additional documents were demanded by some mukhtars); lack of information on the administrative procedure required to get a birth certificate when the birth happened without the support of a certified midwife or doctor; unreasonable fees being requested of the refugees to issue the certificate, and; misunderstanding on the geographical area of competence of each mukhtar.

There have been considerable efforts from humanitarian actors to strengthen awareness on the issue, provide legal assistance, conduct legal analysis and statistical analyses, and advocate to reduce barriers to birth registration. Many of these efforts have produced results, including the acceptance of a family booklet as a proof of the identity of the parents and their marriage.

### *North and Bekaa*

Monitoring of birth registration levels for newborns registered with UNHCR highlights that levels of registration are lowest in the Bekaa and the North, mainly because registration is not possible. Whilst the graph below only indicates the situation in December, statistics gathered by UNHCR between September and December 2013 show a similar trend in terms of geographic areas.

## **Birth registration levels for newborns registered with UNHCR in Decemb 2013**



Protection monitoring reports have recently highlighted a still limited but increasing number of refugees, particularly in Arsaal and in the Akkar region, going to areas in Syria to give birth, which might result in additional challenges in registering births in Lebanon.

### **Marriage certificates**

A UNHCR survey on birth registration (August-December 2013) reported an average of 14% of a sample of parents of 4,777 newbornswere not in possession of a proof of marriage required in order to register the birth of the child.

### *Akkar and Mount Lebanon*

Protection monitoring by the IRC in Akkar and Mount Lebanon identified several informal marriages and highlighted that married couples were often unaware of the implications of these unofficial weddings, i.e. the state does not legally recognise the marriage, the marriage provides no legal protection of rights, the woman cannot legally seek a divorce and births cannot be registered without a formal marriage certificate.

## PRS and PRL

UNRWA reports that PRS wishing to register civil events (births, deaths, marriages) must go through the Lebanese Ministry of Interior's Civil Affairs Office Department of Foreigners in Hamra, Beirut, and Department of Foreigners. If a PRS is considered to be illegally in the country then s/he will be unable to have a birth, marriage or death certificate officially endorsed by the Lebanese government.

*There is no specific data for the North/T+5, South.*

## 4.10 Persons With Specific Needs

**Summary of assessment findings:** There are some quantitative and qualitative assessments which highlight how the needs of persons with specific needs, particularly older persons and persons with disabilities, differ from the general population. The main differences include the more severe consequences of inadequate levels of assistance, challenges in access to services including registration, inability to address basic concerns, and isolation and stigma.

Full comparative analysis between the available dataset from the refugee registration, which records categories of registered persons with specific needs by geographical location, and from surveys conducted by specialised agencies has not been possible. However, findings from dedicated assessments point to the likelihood of higher percentages of persons with disabilities/impairments than was reported in the refugee registration data.

An HI/HA study amongst refugees in Lebanon and Jordan found that over 22% of respondents have a disability/impairment, particularly physical, and sensory, and that older people account for almost 3.5 % of the total sample.

Persons with disabilities, older persons and persons with chronic diseases were found to reside in smaller average family sizes, and tended to face increased difficulties in accessing services when residing in rural areas with no transport facilities, collective centres and tented settlements. The latter was highlighted also by UNHCR participatory assessments. It was also highlighted that persons with specific needs may face fewer coping strategies with a smaller support network as well as less access or proximity to basic services and assistance.

The same survey signals the needs to further strengthen the existing mechanisms to reach out to older persons and persons with disabilities, including for more inclusive registration but also through outreach activities, and to build further the capacity of actors to properly identify and include old persons and persons with disabilities in their assistance programmes. Other studies found that persons with disabilities living in Lebanese communities are able to access UNHCR registration, through a combination of registration “in absentia” and mobile registration centres

Protection monitoring and community outreach initiatives are identifying persons with specific needs, and systems are in place for referral, according to level of risk. However, the system needs to be further strengthened for management and follow-up of the cases.

Table [12]: Assessment coverage by geographic area and target population

	Vulnerable Local Communities (Lebanese and PRL)	Lebanese Returnees	PRS	Syrian refugees	
				Registered	Unregistered
National					
North/T+5					
Akkar					
Mt. Lebanon and Beirut					
Bekaa					
South					
Palestinian Camps					
Outside Palestinian Camps					
<b>Legend</b>					
	Section not applicable		Data available		
*NB – Grey cells indicate that there is at least one assessment available on the specific area or target group. However, the data may not cover the situation for the entire geographic area or target group.					

## Syrian refugees

### *National*

36% of the total refugee population, registered as of 27 February 2014, is recorded in UNHCR's ProGres database as having a specific need. This includes older persons and persons with an impairment, as well as several other categories (children at risk, pregnant/lactating women, single parents, children at risk, persons with serious medical conditions, persons with legal or protection needs etc).

### **Persons with an impairment/disability**

A study by HI/HA in Lebanon and Jordan among over 3,200 registered and non-registered refugees showed that over 22% of respondents have specific needs, including physical, sensorial and intellectual impairments.

The survey showed that groups with and without specific needs have the same basic concerns – a lack of income, availability and quality of shelter, and access to basic healthcare, food and essential household items. However, the assessment shows that the difficulties for those with specific needs, related to addressing basic concerns and accessing adequate levels of assistance, have more severe consequences for their health and living conditions than the general refugee population.

Of those with special needs, 50% experience difficulties in accomplishing simple activities of daily living, which means that they face restrictions in accessing basic services and needs.

According to the HI/HA assessment, UNHCR records only 1.8 % of the registered refugee population under the criteria of persons with disabilities at the time of registration. This figure is considerably lower than global and national estimates. The World Health Organization estimates that 15% of any population will be persons with disabilities. There may be even higher rates of disability in communities that have fled war or conflict, as people acquire new impairments from injuries and/or limited health care. The World Bank estimates that in 2002, 1.4 million people in Syria were disabled, around 8% of the total population. Assessments by HI and MPDL indicate that this might be due to a lack of identification of disabilities at registration, which focuses on visible disabilities or those declared by the individual.

A study by the Women's Refugee Commission (WRC) in 2013 noted that most persons with disabilities living in Lebanese communities are able to access UNHCR registration, through a combination of registration "in absentia" and mobile registration centres. Persons with injuries and new impairments in the North are often admitted to local hospital facilities upon arrival in the country. These individuals and hospital staff may lack information about fast-track procedures and services available upon registration. The study further indicated that the most significant gaps in data among those registered are for persons with hearing, vision and speech impairments.

During field visits by the WRC in July 2013, several families of persons with intellectual impairments who are facing extreme challenges and social isolation as refugees were identified. Some persons with intellectual impairments are prevented by family members from leaving the shelter. Stigma and fear of exploitation may also contribute to families hiding their relative, adding to the isolation of the individual.

The WRC study further noted that persons with new disabilities are generally unable to access longer-term rehabilitation that might in turn support their access and inclusion in community services programmes.

An unpublished MPDL study among 465 households with persons with special needs in November shows that many refugee persons with special needs, particularly those with mental or multiple disabilities, face limited access to appropriate protection services, have a lack of access to affordable shelter, and limited access to appropriate preventative and rehabilitative services or systematic case referral.

Persons with disabilities surveyed during UNHCR participatory assessments reported that they face difficulties

to move around due to road and sidewalk conditions and the lack of public transportation to remote villages. This makes them unable to access the needed information, assistance and services, and even more invisible. Discussions showed that shelter, non-food items, water and sanitation services needed to be more adapted to meet the actual needs. For example, those living in collective shelters, tented settlements and unfinished homes indicated a lack of privacy, unsuitable latrines and dangerous living arrangements. All these factors combined increase their risks of harm and exclusion.

### **Older persons**

There are around 25,000 older persons registered with UNHCR in Lebanon. Some 66% were between the ages of 60-69 years old, and around 300 were over 90 years old. During a participatory assessment by UNHCR, older refugees expressed feelings of isolation, neglect and a sense of being a burden on their families. For example, those living in remote villages face difficulties reaching or knowing about health services around them.

The HI/HA study showed older persons are disproportionately affected by impairments, with 77% of older surveyed refugees having specific needs, compared to 22% of the overall population.

### **Individuals at risk**

Since August 2013 until end of February 2014, UNHCR refugee outreach volunteers identified and supported families at risk. 60% of the cases identified were classified as medium-risk cases (i.e. women with no male support, disabilities) while 10% of the cases were considered to be high-risk (i.e. SGBV cases) and thus requiring an immediate protection response.

### **LGBTI community**

Assessments by Proud Lebanon showed the following challenges specific to the LGBTI community:

- Due to the Lebanese Penal Code currently in force there is a risk of being sentenced to up to one year of detention if charged with having relations that are "contradicting the laws of nature".
- Exposure to stigma and discriminatory attitudes aggravating existing barriers to access to services.

### *Vulnerable host communities*

In 2000, Lebanon adopted Act No. 220 of 2000 on the rights of persons with disabilities. Under that law, the Rights and Access Program in Lebanon identifies persons with disabilities and provides a disability card that enables them to access free or subsidised services from both government and non-state providers, including assistive devices and medical aid. However, the law is not fully implemented and access to education and health facilities remains of concern. The scale of the problem is difficult to estimate as there is a lack of updated data on the number and location of those with disabilities.

As of January 2013, there were 80,703 registered Lebanese persons with disabilities (registered with the MoSA). Beirut 8%, Mount Lebanon 37%, North 18%, South 20%, and Bekaa 16%.

### *Palestinian refugees from Syria*

During the Vulnerability Assessment of Palestinian Refugees from Syria in October 2013, three quarters (76%) of surveyed households had members with specific needs. Across all regions, members with specific needs included those with: physical disabilities (17%), chronic illnesses (60%), temporary disabilities (9%) or other types of needs (12%). The average percentage of household members requiring assistance in the completion of basic activities was 12%.

*There is no geographic disaggregated data available for the North/T+5, Akkar, Bekaa, South, Mount Lebanon and Beirut*

## SECTION 5

### 5. INFORMATION GAPS

In general, due to the nature of protection issues and activities, there is a prevalence of qualitative data collected through monitoring missions, participatory assessments and dialogue with refugees, local communities, and authorities. Sometimes this data is valuable and copious, but it is not generally systematised and consolidated to better infer incidence of phenomena and trends.

Apart from the registration data and few thematic surveys or participatory assessments, there is a general lack of gender and age disaggregated information.

#### 5.1 Target Groups

- There is a lack of updated information on the situation of Lebanese returnees and protection concerns for vulnerable host communities.

#### 5.2 Geographical Focus

- Most information available highlights the situation in the North and the Bekaa, while more limited or no information is available for other areas. The available information tends to focus on areas where the assessing agencies were mostly operational or with the highest concentration of Syrian refugees, or where new influxes had been reported. Thus, a majority of the assessments, including those on legal status, still tend to focus primarily on the North and the Bekaa and only marginally cover other areas, thus failing to provide a comprehensive and balanced analysis for the situation in the whole country. MSNA SWG workshop participants indicated that the recent expansion of protection monitoring and the efforts to better report on a core set of protection themes/indicators was seen as a step in the right direction.

#### 5.3 Themes

- There is limited information on entry constraints at unofficial crossings. While there is more information available on the situation at official crossings, much less is known on the dynamics pertaining to the unofficial border crossing points.
- Analogously, there is mostly anecdotal and inconsistent insight on the possible numbers of non-registered population.
- More detailed and broader information is needed on the consequences of the lack of legal stay documentation in having access to services (beyond documentation). Some of the upcoming assessments may fill this gap.
- There are information gaps on evictions, particularly on the number of evictions, those particularly at risk and the geographic concentrations. Attempts to map more systematically the incidents of eviction around the country are ongoing, primarily through an eviction tracker tool and through the activities of legal aid partners and eviction committees established in some field locations.
- A systematic analysis on the procedures at official and unofficial checkpoints as well as the incidents (arrests, detention, harassment, denial of freedom of movement), particularly with regards to the treatment of those without documents or with expired residency permit. In addition, there appears to be no centralised updated information on the municipalities currently imposing a curfew and the consequences of breaching these curfews.
- There is still relatively little up-to-date information on the number of curfews and the consequent effects on freedom of movement and security. Recent thematic reports (UNHCR) have tried to fill the gap but the continuously evolving situation remains a challenge for a proper mapping of the restrictions.

- There are large information gaps on the location and concentration of mines and ERW.
- There is a general lack of assessments on the possible protection impact of targeted assistance and on its impact on negative coping mechanisms.
- In a more general context, not necessarily connected to data availability, some sector partners indicated the need for more information on the progress and impact of different advocacy initiatives undertaken by some sector partners.

#### 5.4 Planned Assessments

Planned Assessment	Date planned for
Regular public registration updates, UNHCR	Ongoing
Periodical thematic questionnaires addressed to refugees during UNHCR registration (new registrants) and during the renewal/verification processes, UNHCR	On-going
Housing Land & Property Assessment, UNHCR in cooperation with UN-Habitat	April 2014
Eviction monitoring and tracking tool to facilitate mapping and analysis of the data collected and trends	Ongoing
UNHCR and partners (IRC, Oxfam, Mercy Corps, INTERSOS) protection monitoring system, including a set of core thematic indicators that will be systematically monitored across the country	Ongoing
Countrywide assessments on marriage and birth registration, NRC	
Countrywide assessment on the situation of refugees with limited legal status, NRC	April
Countrywide assessment on housing land and property survey, NRC	
Resumption of the second round of registration and profiling of Lebanese Returnees (to be conducted during the summer), IOM	Summer
Rapid assessment on human trafficking assessment, IOM	

## SECTION 6

### 6. RECOMMENDATIONS FOR DATA COLLECTION

Based on the information needs combined with the information gaps and planned assessments, the MSNA team recommends the following:

- There is a significant amount of data collected on protection concerns across the country, through monitoring missions, participatory assessments, and dialogue with refugees, local communities, and authorities. Most information needs are covered, or are planned to be covered, by assessments and monitoring reports. As a result, the main recommendation concern the aggregation, analysis and sharing of the collected data. There is a need to reinforce tools to systematise and consolidate the qualitative data to better infer incidence of phenomena and trends. This tool would promote sharing of data among protection actors, support evidence-based advocacy and enable the identification of incident trends. Within the MSNA, the need for a tool to capture the large amount of qualitative data available was identified in multiple sectors/task forces, including social cohesion, and SGBV. To promote the necessary sharing of data between sectors, harmonisation of the qualitative data tools and procedures is recommended.
- Existing protection monitoring tools should include the information needs and gaps identified within this chapter, and extend the scope of monitoring with more ample geographical coverage. These tools should aim to cover all target groups, including Lebanese vulnerable communities.
- In addition, community-based outreach mechanisms (e.g. community focal points) should continue to be strengthened. Such mechanisms will help to identify concerns and offer an opportunity for increased dialogue with communities and feedback on assistance delivery and programmes.

## ANNEX A

### ASSESSMENTS/REPORTS CONSULTED AND REVIEWED

Organisation	Title of report	Data collection	Area	Methodology
ALEF	Two years on: Syrian refugees in Lebanon	August 2013	North, South, Bekaa, Beirut	Semi-structured interviews with KI, field visits, FGD, media monitoring and literature review
ANERA	Preliminary findings on Education Needs of Palestinian children from Syria in Lebanon	November 2013	Nationwide	Random assessment among 2,385 PRS families, 10 FGDs
DRC	New Comers Assessment	2012 – present		Around 4,500 new comer HH are assessed on a monthly basis.
Handicap International/Help Age (in process of publication)	Situation of vulnerable refugees in Jordan and Lebanon	October 2013	North, Bekaa, Beirut City and Mount Lebanon	1,914 individuals were interviewed. Random cluster sampling for registered refugees. snowball sampling approach to identify and interview non-registered refugees
Internews	Syrian refugees and the information gap	October 2013	Beirut and Tripoli	Interviews with 100 individuals (non-representative sample size)
NRC	The consequences of limited legal status of Syrian refugees in Lebanon	June to October 2013	WadiKhaled and Aarsal	Qualitative assessment: semi-structured interviews and focus group discussions with refugees with limited legal status, and interviews of service providers and local authorities
NRC	Protection context updates	September, October, December	North, Bekaa, South	Data derived from NRC activities and interaction with NRC beneficiaries
NRC	Legal Assistance – Update on birth registration for refugees from Syria	January 2014	Primarily Bekaa, smaller numbers in the North and South	Interviews with 468 beneficiaries who received NRC assistance. 13 pilot cases

MPDL	Assessment on Persons with Specific Needs and Their Households	October – November 2013	Beirut/Mount Lebanon, South	465 household interviews, 45 focus group discussions, 20 key informant interviews
Oxfam	Survey on the livelihoods of Syrian refugees in Lebanon	October 2013	Nationwide	Not protection-focused but with protection mainstreamed elements. Quantitative data collected through a detailed survey with among 260 households. Cluster sampling, lack of sample frame to generate truly random sample. Qualitative data collected through focus groups and interviews with key officials.
UNRWA/WFP	Vulnerability Assessment of Palestinian Refugees from Syria	October 2013	8 Palestinian camps and gathering	Household assessment among 848 households, representative sampling.
WFP, UNICEF, UNHCR, GoL	Vulnerability Assessment Syrian Refugees	May and June 2013	Nationwide	Representative random sample stratified by registration date (and pending registration). Over 1,400 households interviewed.
Women Refugee Commission	Disability Inclusion in the Syrian Refugee Response in Lebanon	Mar-13	North and East mainly	Qualitative analysis through FGD with 80 humanitarian actors and 120 refugees during field visits
UNHCR	Registration Trends for Syrians	Weekly and Monthly	Countrywide	Quantitative, includes several information on appointments, interviews, new registration and renewal/ verification, total population registered and waiting, map of Lebanon with percentage of population by region.
UNHCR	January 2014 Statelessness update (on birth registration)	August – October 2013	Countrywide	Quantitative analysis on a sample of 2,782 individuals between 1 August and 31 October 2013
UNHCR	Snapshots on Birth registration	August –December 2013	Countrywide	Quantitative analysis on a sample of 4777 individuals between 1 August and 31 December 2013
UNHCR- IRC	Protection Monitoring reports	November, December 2013 and January- February 2014	Mount Lebanon and Akkar	Qualitative through Focus Group Discussions, Key informants
UNHCR	Periodical thematic questionnaire	Monthly since 2014	Countrywide	Quantitative, random selection of individual at registration points 8-10 questions based on a theme for the

				month for newly registered individuals. 3 questions on return to Syria and on access to UNHCR standard. Results partially shared in PWG and Inter-agency meetings
UNHCR	Renewal Questionnaire	Monthly since February 2014	Countrywide	Quantitative, for HH undergoing the renewal process 8 standard questions on return to Syria, problems faced in Lebanon, status of residency and reasons. Results partially shared in PWG and Inter-agency meetings
UNHCR	Thematic Monitoring on Curfew	October/ November 2013	Countrywide	Qualitative through Focus Group Discussions (126 interviews) with refugees and hosting communities in all five regions.
UNHCR	Participatory Assessments with Syrian refugees	October – December 2013	Mount Lebanon, South Lebanon, Akkar and Tripoli	Key findings of consultations with Syrian refugee men, women, boys and girls of different ages and diverse backgrounds
UNHCR	Thematic Monitoring on Curfew (draft report)	October/ November 2013	Countrywide	Qualitative through Focus Group Discussions (126 interviews) with refugees and hosting communities in all five regions.