

Protection Monitoring Findings

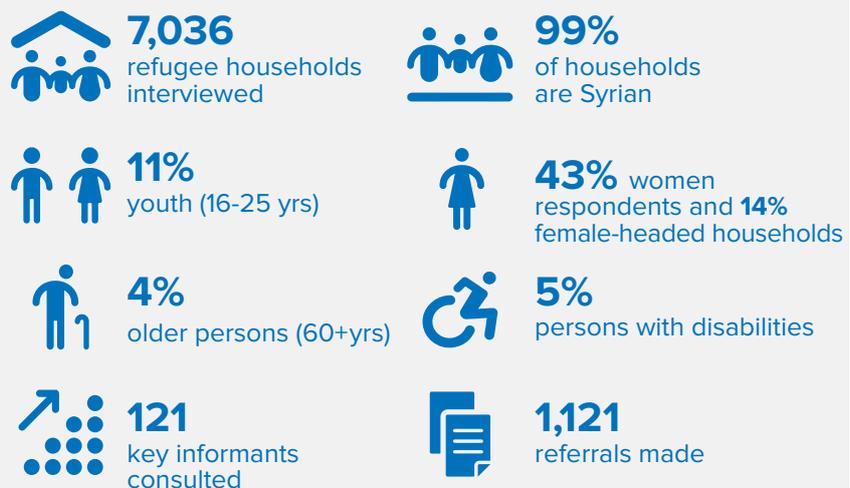
Lebanon – 3rd Quarter 2022



Key highlights

- The average refugee household income, including humanitarian assistance, was less than half of the SMEB this quarter. Such insubstantial household budgets are driving large gaps in basic needs. In this context the numbers of refugees reporting difficulty paying rent and inability to afford medicines increased to record high levels.
- Refugees are increasingly entering into debt to address basic needs gaps, however this is pushing household debt to new unsustainable levels. Household debt is almost five times the amount of livelihoods income that refugee households generate each month.
- Rates of legal residency continued to decrease this quarter, with just 10% of refugee households reporting that all their members have legal residency.
- This quarter we saw a large spike in incidents of social tension, which likely were linked to access to bread, however reports have continued at high rates following the bread crisis suggesting the onset of a new more hostile climate for refugees in Lebanon.
- The number of refugees living under restrictive measures increased significantly in BML and the South.
- Mental health issues amongst children and adults continue to increase, with nearly all reported instances being caused by the family's economic situation.

Key numbers July to September 2022¹

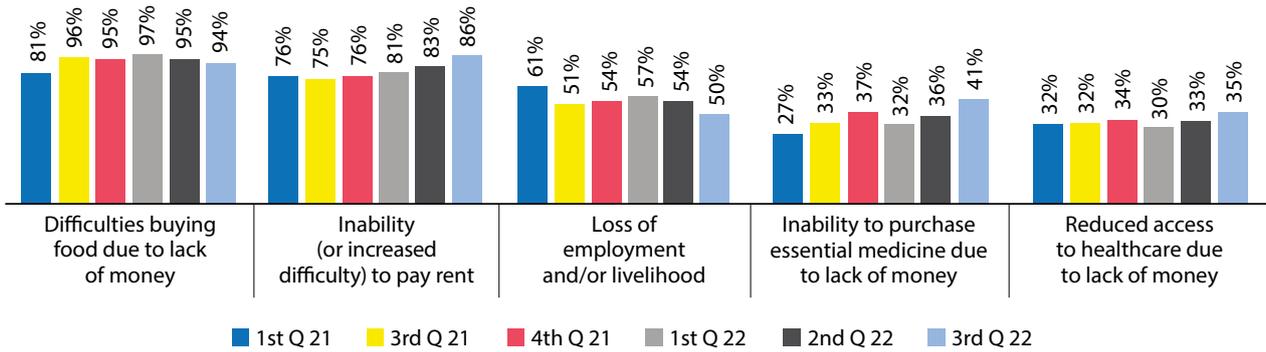


¹ UNHCR conducts protection monitoring with partners on an ongoing basis to analyse trends in the protection environment and risks facing refugees. UNHCR's protection monitoring partners Intersos and SHEILD conduct interviews with refugee households to elicit their feedback on the overall protection environment in Lebanon. The sampling of households and findings presented are representative both at the regional and at the national level. In addition, partners conduct a number of interviews with key informants of different profiles to complement the quantitative analysis from the household interviews. When needs for specific services, assistance or information are identified during interviews, UNHCR's protection monitoring partners refer the individuals concerned accordingly.

This report provides a summary of the protection monitoring findings from all regions of Lebanon in the 3rd quarter of 2022. The feedback from refugees is used to inform UNHCR's advocacy, and programmatic interventions with the aim of improving refugees' access to protection and essential services, assistance, and information.

Impact of the socio-economic situation

Most widely reported impacts of the socio-economic situation



- A central aspect of protection monitoring is to assess how refugees are managing the deteriorating socio-economic situation by asking refugees what impacts they have experienced, and what coping strategies they have employed in the last 30 days.
- Refugees continued to report large gaps in basic needs and in some instances these gaps widened to record high levels. Nearly all refugees faced difficulties feeding their household (94%), a record high rate of 86% struggled to pay rent, half of all refugees reported decreasing livelihoods, a record high rate of 41% could not afford essential medicine, and over a third of households (35%) suffered from reduced access to healthcare.

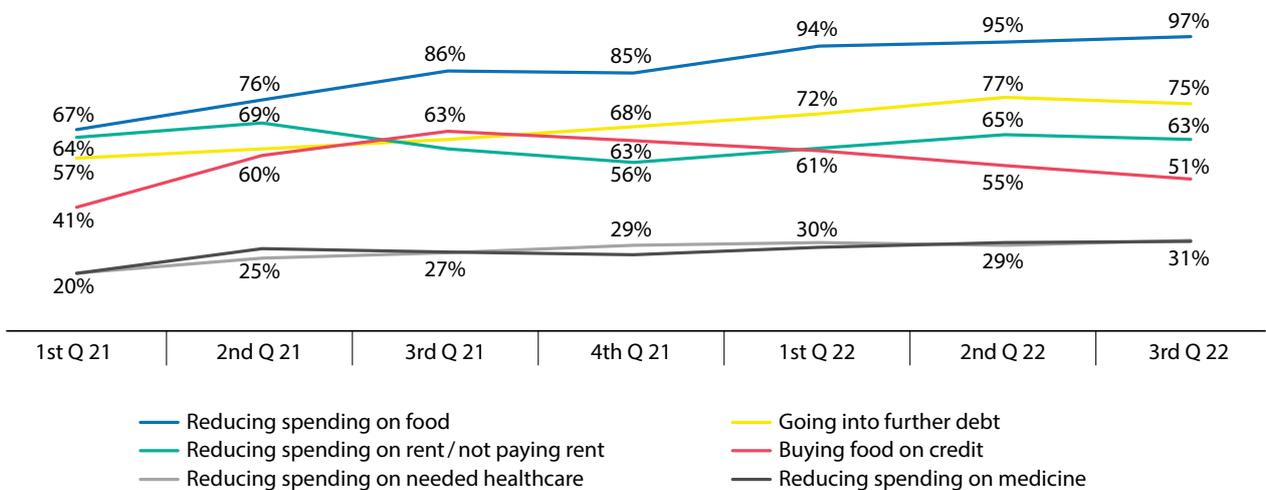


Before, we used to feed our children bread only since there is no alternative and it was the cheapest food, but now we are not able to afford the bread.

- Refugee, Abbasiye

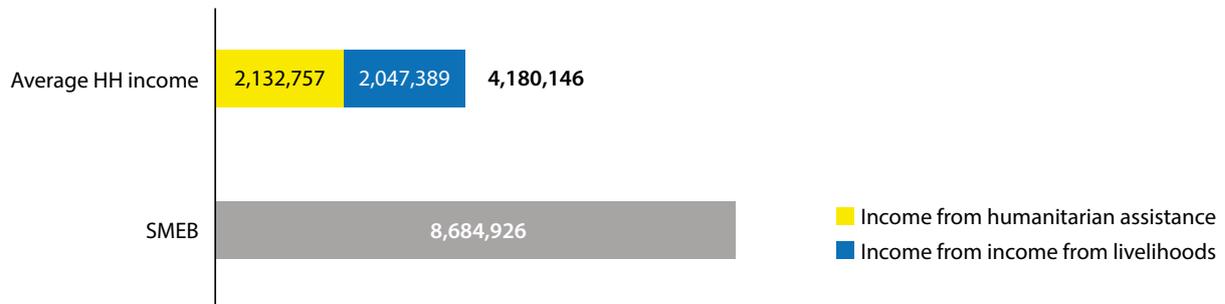
- These same gaps are also reflected in the leading coping mechanisms employed by refugee households. A lack of money has meant that nearly all households (97%) have reduced their spending on food, that 63% are reducing their spending on rent, and that 31% are reducing their spending on health services and medicine.

Leading coping mechanisms



- A closer look at refugee households' income highlights the stark challenges refugees face in the current socio-economic climate and brings into focus the vital need for humanitarian assistance.
- The average refugee household income for the quarter was just 4,180,146 LBP, which is less than half (48%) of August's Survival Minimum Expenditure Basket (SMEB). Without humanitarian assistance included in refugee household income then refugee households would have had less than a quarter (24%) of what is needed for a family of five to meet their basic needs.

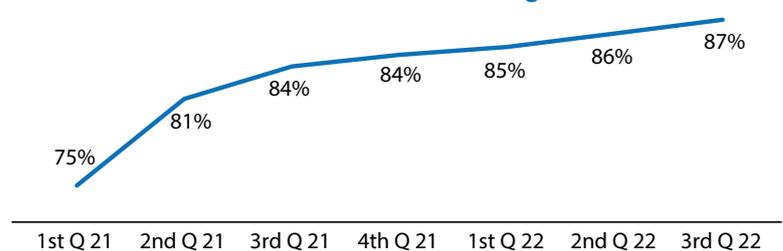
Average household income compared to SMEB (LBP)



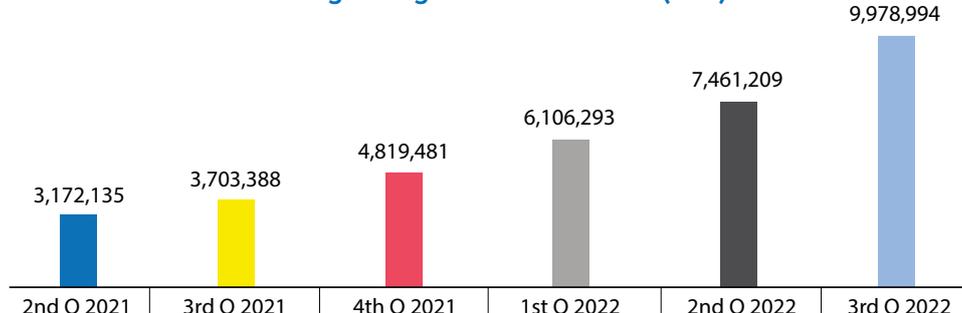
- Given these large gaps its unsurprising to see that going into debt to meet basic needs remains a leading coping strategy. In fact, this quarter a new record high 87% of households relied upon some form of borrowing.
- The degree of household borrowing is very concerning as the average household debt is almost five times (4.8x) the amount of livelihoods income that refugee households generate each month. Thus, refugees are addressing large gaps in their basic needs by taking on debt at unsustainable levels. Given this debt-to-income ratio it is likely that access to credit will decrease in the future, and should this happen, refugees will have lost an essential coping strategy.

• Key informants have highlighted that food shops are more reluctant to lend credit now, and that debt in these stores is being converted to USD. As a result, refugees are no longer borrowing from food shops (as reflected in the continuing drop in this form of borrowing since Q3 2021). Instead, refugees turn to this form of credit when no other option is available.

Households resorting to at least one form of borrowing



Average refugee household debt (LBP)



Babies whose parents are unable to buy diapers use plastic bags instead.

- Syrian Refugee, Chaat

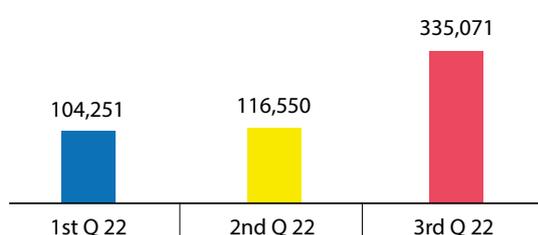
- Over the quarter, these financial hardships have resulted in a variety of other negative impacts for refugees. For example, 21% of households reported being unable to afford nutritional formula, diapers and other basic needs for their infants, 32% of households have been unable to attend a needed service (such as education, groceries and school) because of their inability to afford transport, and 38% reported being unable to afford needed healthcare or medicine.



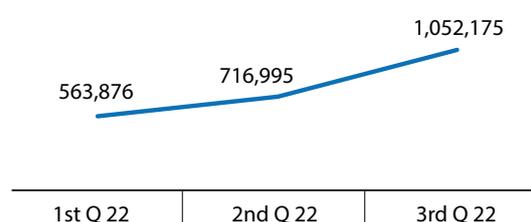
I am diabetic, and I have to get my insulin from a center in Beirut but the transport to get there is so expensive, so I am not taking it regularly now.

- Syrian Refugee, South Lebanon

Average monthly household spending on telephone and Internet (LBP)



Average household cost of electricity (LBP)



- Adding to households' financial difficulty has been a 187% rise in telecommunication costs this quarter and a 47% increase in electricity costs. These and other rising costs will continue to drive growing gaps in basic needs, further debt reliance and will make humanitarian assistance increasingly vital in the coming quarters.



We can't stop recharging the phone. If we lose the SIM, we won't be able to receive SMS and calls from UNHCR.

- Syrian Refugee, South Lebanon

Education and child labour



We had to send our children to work so that we would not die of hunger.

- Syrian Refugee, Chaat

35%

of households reported having school aged children not attending school

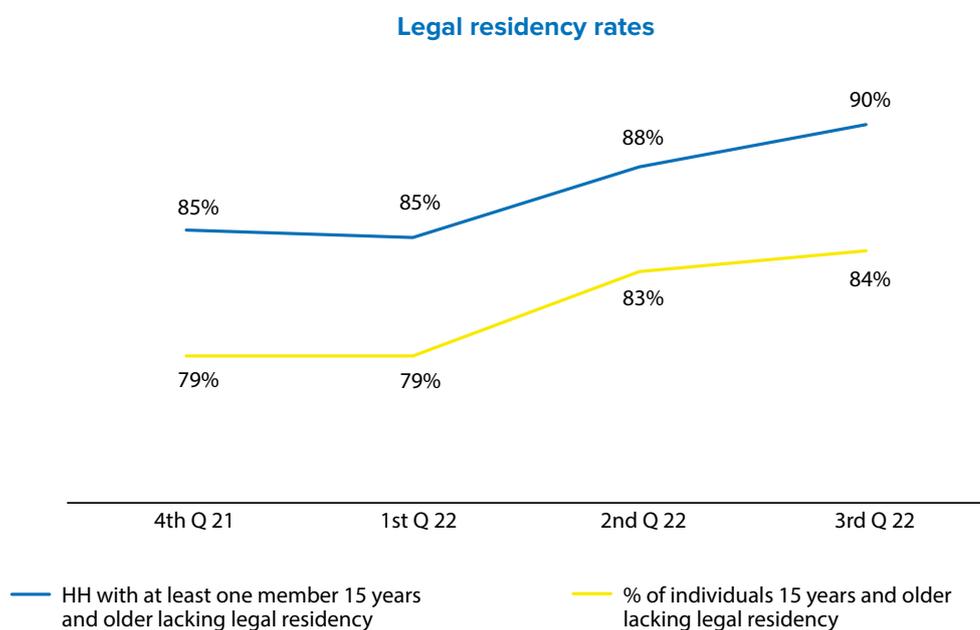
6%

households reported having at least one child engaged in child labour

- The number of households with children out of school climbed to over 1 in 3 this quarter (35%). Nearly all drop-outs were linked to financial hardship, with increases in school related costs (69%) and unaffordable transport (18%) the most widely reported causes.
- The percentage of households with children reporting child labour continued again this quarter at 6%. Only 76% of children engaged in child labour are still attending school.
- The large majority of these working children continue to be boys (81%). Children continued to be most commonly working in agriculture (27%), in street selling (19%), in wholesale and retail (18%), in construction and manufacturing (18%), and with mechanics (10%).
- It is likely that figures related to child labour are underreported due to families' being reluctant to disclose such practices

Legal residency

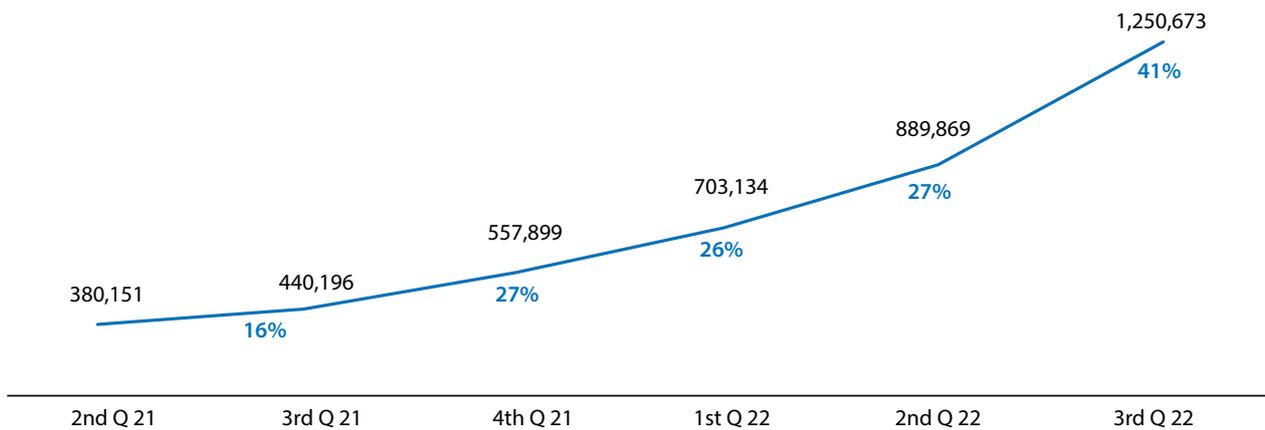
- Rates of legal residency continued to reach new record lows this quarter with just 10% of refugee households reporting that all their members 15 years and older have legal residency.
- While insufficient financial resources continues to be a leading factor for the majority of those lacking legal residency, the inability to find a Lebanese sponsor continues to grow (24% this quarter). This growing barrier is likely tied to Lebanon's financial crisis, as host community members are less willing to hire non-essential labourers.



Rent and Evictions

- A record high rate (86%) of refugees reported inability (or increased difficulty) to pay rent this quarter.
- Rental costs continue to increase sharply, with the average household's rent costing 41% more than it did the previous quarter, and 231% more than when we began tracking this data in the second quarter of 2021.
- Only 35% of households were able to make their last rent payment.
- A little less than 0.8% of all households were actually evicted during the quarter. Key informant interviews highlight that refugees are avoiding eviction by borrowing to cover costs of rent, negotiating with landlords and through cash assistance provided by the humanitarian community.

Average household rent (LBP) and percentage increase



Social Tensions and Restrictive Measures



Some Lebanese started shooting in air, because of the big number of Syrian refugees at the bakery, to make them scatter. So, children and other refugees felt afraid, and they went away without getting the bread for the families.

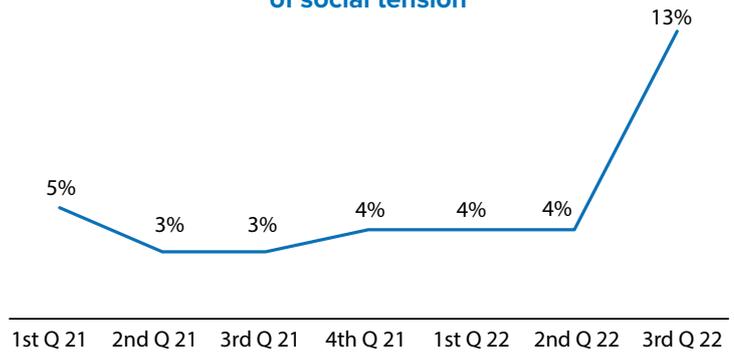
- Syrian Refugee, Bissariye

- Social tensions surrounding access to subsidized bread were a defining element of the protection landscape this quarter. With affordable grain in extremely limited supply during the first part of the quarter, some Lebanese leaders placed the spotlight on Syrians as the cause of shortages, alleging Syrians were hoarding and reselling bread. In long bread queues across the country Syrians were threatened, and physically and verbally harassed. They also faced discriminatory practices such as being turned away by shop keepers, only being allowed to buy limited amounts of bread, or having to wait in deprioritized lines until host community members were served. While the bread crisis dissipated during the middle of the quarter, refugees remained a focus for scapegoating by some public figures who made unsubstantiated claims that Syrians were receiving large amounts of assistance and were overall burdens on their community.
- Within this context, reports of households experiencing incidents of social tension increased 9 percentage points from the average for all previous quarters. This rise was likely most directly linked to incidents of tensions surrounding access to subsidized bread. In fact, 96% of all recorded incidents related to access to subsidized goods occurred this quarter. As of September, incidents of social tensions were reported by

1 in 10 refugee households, which remains well above the previous baseline. This suggests that growing anti-refugee rhetoric alongside deepening economic troubles within Lebanon have significantly escalated social tensions between host and refugee communities.

- Within this context many key informants have highlighted a growing prevalence of assault and other crimes targeting Syrians (these issues increased 68% this quarter), however Syrians are often reluctant to report such incidents due to a lack of legal residency and fear of reprisal.

Households reporting experiencing incidents of social tension

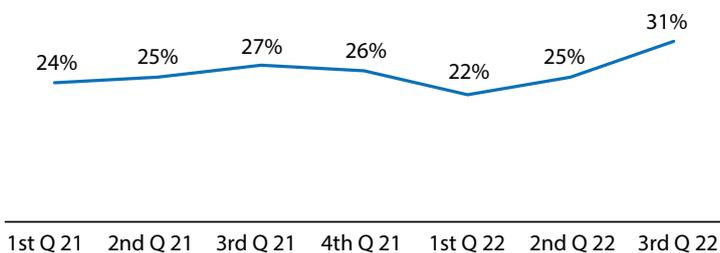


- Restrictive measures grew alongside these rising social tensions. The number of refugees reporting to live under restrictive measures grew 29% in Beirut and Mount Lebanon (from 7 to 9%) and 167% in the South and Nabatiye (3 to 8%) when compared to last quarter. UNHCR’s monitoring shows a steep increase in movement restrictions recorded in the same quarter: with 61 new measures recorded compared to 22 in the second quarter and 8 during the first. Correspondingly, the majority of these new movement restrictions were implemented in the South and Nbatiye (61%) as well as Beirut and Mount Lebanon (18%). Over half (56%) of the movement restrictions implemented this quarter were temporary measures surrounding Ashura celebrations. While the remainder were mostly introduced in response to security incidents occurring in the municipality.

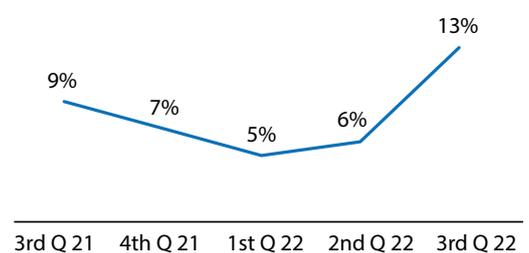
- UNHCR also received reports on various types of measures affecting refugees. Refugee data collection was undertaken by local authorities throughout the country, although these were most widely occurring in the South. Also throughout the country, municipalities struggling to cover basic services began applying new fees and taxes to refugee communities. Finally, in the Bekaa new rules and limitations were imposed on refugees living in informal settlements (such as bans on WiFi and solar panels, restrictions on overnight guests) and enforcement of existing measures were renewed (such as demolition of unauthorized tents).

Mental Health

Adults reporting mental health issues



Households reporting children with mental health symptoms



- Mental health issues were reported at record high rates this quarter, with 31% of adult respondents reporting symptoms and 13% of households reporting children with symptoms. In nearly all cases mental health issues were reported as being caused by the family’s economic situation (98%).