

# VARON 2020

Vulnerability Assessment of Refugees  
of Other Nationalities in Lebanon



**UNHCR**  
The UN Refugee Agency

# **VARON 2020**

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# ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

The Vulnerability Assessment for Refugees of Other Nationalities (VARON 2020) was conducted jointly by the the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR) and the United Nations World Food Programme (WFP). The VARON could not have been achieved without the full commitment and support of national and international staff from each of these agencies.

The VARON team in Lebanon included: WFP (Catherine Saïd and Dina Saleem), UNHCR (Ruba Cheaib and Sarah Osmane). Specific acknowledgement goes to the Inter-Agency unit (Dina El Khoury, Jad Ghosn, Raffi Kouzoudjian) and the agency heads of unit for their continued support.

The team would also like to express its gratitude to the international non-governmental organizations (NGOs) responsible for the field data collection: Caritas, Makhzoumi Foundation, SHIELD (Social, Humanitarian, Economical Intervention for Local Development) and World Vision International. It also wishes to acknowledge the assistance of Humanity and Inclusion (HI), and the Lebanese Red Cross (LRC). HI supported the team in integrating the Washing Group Questions on Disabilities within the VARON survey, conducting the training of enumerators for this set of questions. LRC provided a mandatory training session on COVID-19 for all enumerators involved in the data collection.

Special thanks go to the refugee households who welcomed the survey team and responded to the questions with valuable information for this assessment.

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# SUMMARY OF FINDINGS

## DEMOGRAPHICS

Just over half the population is comprised of Iraqis (54%) and one quarter are Sudanese (26%). Other countries of origin include Ethiopia, Egypt, and Yemen.<sup>1</sup> Overall, households are made up of an average of three individuals, similar to previous years.



Share of households headed by a female

**16%** Iraqi (similar to 2019)  
**25%** Other nationalities (similar to 2019)



Share of households headed by elderly (above 59 years old)

**12%** Iraqi decreased from 17% in 2019  
**1%** Other nationalities (similar to 2019)



## PROTECTION

### Legal Residency

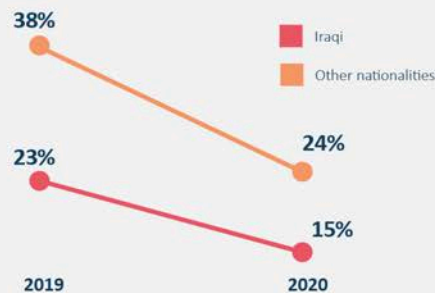
Rates of legal residency have declined since 2019 at both the individual and household level.

79% of all households have no members aged 15 years or older with legal residency permits (2019: 64%)

21% of all households have at least one member aged 15 years or older with legal residency permits (2019: 36%)

→ 15% of all households have all members aged 15 years or older with legal residency permits (2019: 33%)

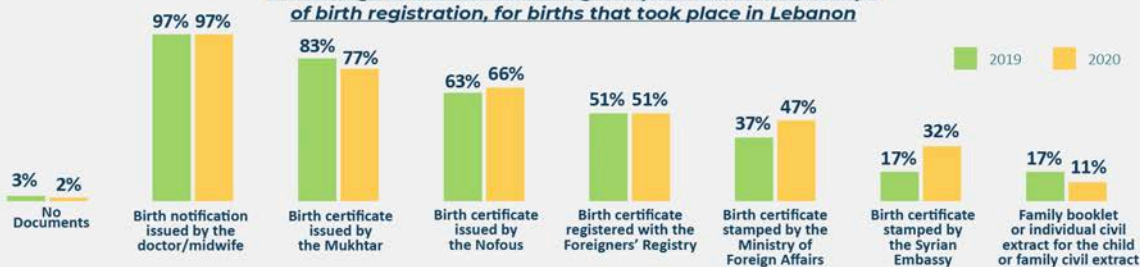
Share of individuals 15 years and above holding legal residency permits



### Birth Registration

Rates of birth registration remained similar to 2019. Iraqis have much higher rates of birth registration with the Foreigners' Registry compared to refugees of other nationalities (65% and 37% respectively).

Percentage of individuals having completed the various steps of birth registration, for births that took place in Lebanon



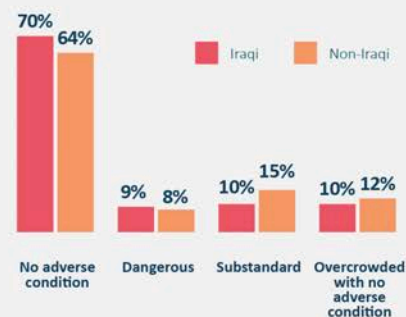
## SHELTER

95% of households live in residential shelters (apartments, houses), with the remaining mainly living in non-residential shelters (ex. garages, farms, shops, etc.) and less than 1% in non-permanent shelters (informal settlements).

Average rent per month, by nationality, in Lebanese Pounds



Shelter Conditions



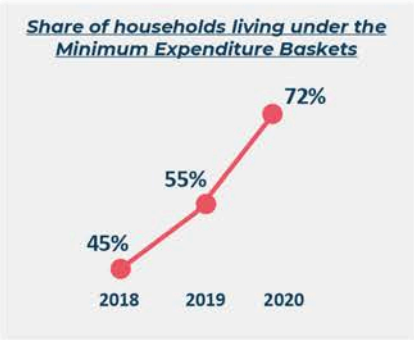
<sup>1</sup> This report refers to refugees and asylum seekers from Iraq as "Iraqi refugees" and refugees and asylum seekers from countries other than Iraq as "refugees of other nationalities".





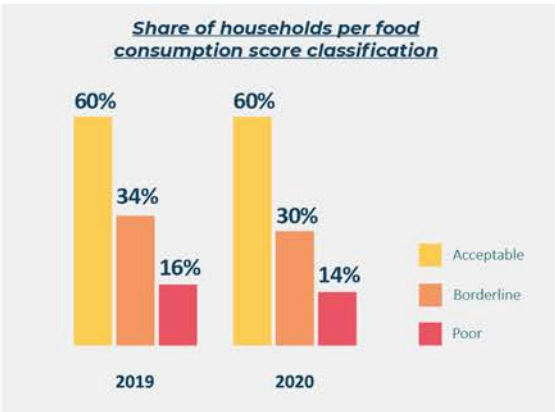
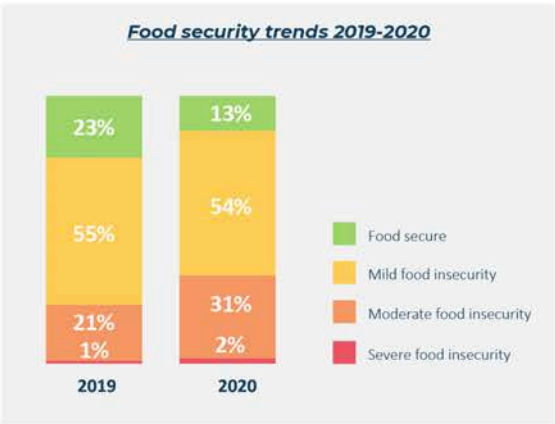
## SOCIO-ECONOMIC VULNERABILITY

Almost three quarters of refugees are living in poverty with expenditures below the Minimum Expenditure Basket (MEB), compared to 55% in 2019 and 45% in 2018. (The MEB is expressed as a per capita monthly expenditure of 481,000LBP, which defines what a refugee family would need to live with dignity in Lebanon).



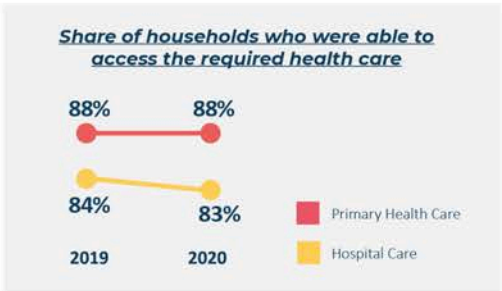
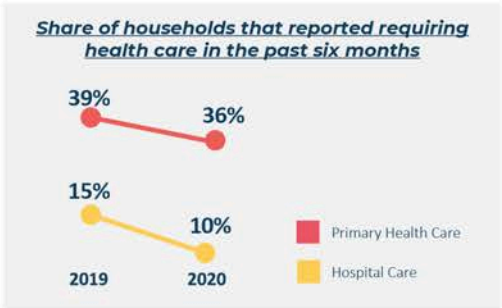
## FOOD SECURITY

One third of households are now food insecure, a ten percentage points increase from 2019.



## HEALTH

Access to both primary and hospital care services remained stable since 2019, with demand for care having slightly decreased.



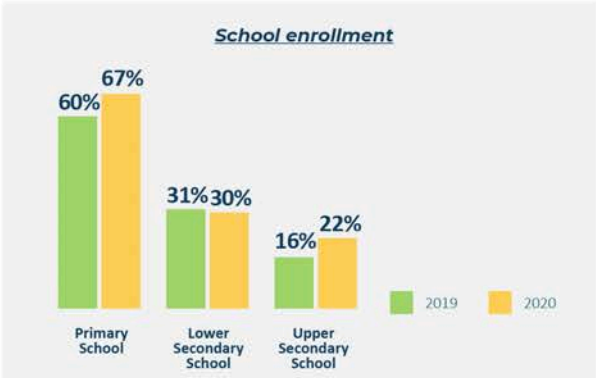
## WATER AND SANITATION

93% of refugees had access to improved sources of drinking water (96% in 2019). Almost all refugees (99.5%) had access to improved sanitation facilities (97% in 2019).



## EDUCATION

Because of COVID-19 related school closures, learning had to be remote at least since March 2020. Of those in school age (ages 6-17) and enrolled, only around 30% had some remote/distance learning, the rest (70%) had only in person learning, which potentially means they did not get any schooling during school closures. This assessment measured enrollment in school, but did not track attendance.



Enrollment in Primary School and Upper Secondary School increased slightly, while enrollment in Lower Secondary school remained stable.

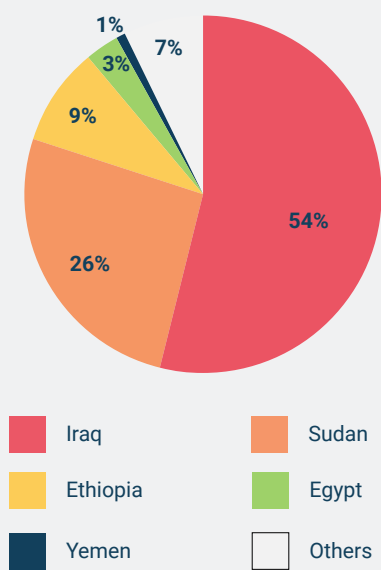
# INTRODUCTION

## BACKGROUND

For over five decades, refugees from the Middle East and Africa have sought protection in Lebanon. These include refugees from Iraq, Sudan, Ethiopia, Egypt, Yemen and other countries, many of which have been in Lebanon prior to the Syrian crisis. The compounded crisis in Lebanon, including economic deterioration and rising inflation, COVID-19 outbreak and the Beirut port blast has impacted all persons living in Lebanon, including refugees of all nationalities.

By the end of August 2020, there were 6,608 registered refugee families from countries of origin other than Syria. Just over half the population is comprised of Iraqis (54%) and one quarter are Sudanese (26%). Other countries of origin include Ethiopia, Egypt, Yemen, and others.

Figure 1. Breakdown of refugees and asylum seekers of nationalities other than Syrian by country of origin



## PURPOSE

The Vulnerability Assessment of Refugees of Other Nationalities (VARON) is an annual survey, with 2020 marking the sixth year of this assessment. Since 2016, the VARON has been a key tool for advocacy and program design.

The 2020 VARON was conducted jointly between UNHCR and WFP, with the support of the Inter-agency Coordination Unit. Data collection took place through UNHCR partners in September 2020 (See Methodology Chapter for more details). UNHCR led the data analysis for indicators concerning demographics, protection, health, and education. The Inter-agency Coordination Unit conducted the analysis for indicators related to shelter, WASH and energy, while WFP led on economic vulnerability, livelihoods, food consumption, coping strategies and food security.

The key objectives of the VARON include:

- **Providing a multi-sectoral update of the situation of refugees from Iraq and other countries in Lebanon through an annual household survey.** The survey covers key indicators related to multiple sectors including protection, shelter, water and hygiene, health, livelihoods, socio-economic vulnerability, food security and more.
- **Enhancing the targeting for the provision of multi-purpose cash assistance.** The data gathered through the VARON, particularly on expenditure, is used to build econometric models, which are used to determine eligibility for multi-purpose cash and food assistance.

# METHODOLOGY





SAMPLING

The assessment surveyed a total of 675 refugee households (1,855 individuals) of Iraqi and other nationalities registered with UNHCR Lebanon. A targeted sample was selected from the total number of households registered in UNHCR database as of July 2020. Sampling occurred through simple random sampling, separately for Iraqi refugees and refugees of other nationalities, to ensure representative results for each population group. The distribution of this refugee population is concentrated in 2 of the eight governorates in Lebanon, with over 80 percent of the population residing in Beirut or Mount Lebanon. As such, no geographical stratification was applied to the sample methodology.

DATA COLLECTION

Data was collected between 19 August and 17 September 2020, through face-to-face interviews conducted at refugee homes. Enumerators employed by UNHCR partners<sup>1</sup> were trained on the data collection tool, contextual background, methodology and ethical considerations and participated in a two-day field testing. Additionally, they were required to attend a two-hour online COVID-19 training provided by the Lebanese Red Cross, which covered key information about the virus, transmission and precautionary methods to adhere to during data collection (details are outlined below) The bulk of the trainings was administered by UNHCR, WFP and UNICEF staff. Trainings on the Washington Group Question Set of Functioning was provided by Humanity and Inclusion. Data was collected and entered on electronic tablets by the enumerators during the interviews, using KoBo toolbox software. The data was then sent to UNHCR's Refugee Assistance Information System (RAIS) Platform.

The survey tool used was the same as the one developed and used for the Vulnerability Assessment of Syrian Refugees (VASyR), with some minor edits that where needed. The questionnaire consisted of around 580 questions that collected data at the household and individual levels, including demographics, legal documentation, safety and security, shelter, WASH, health, food security, livelihoods, expenditures, food consumption, debt, coping strategies and assistance, as well as questions specifically relating to women, children and people with disabilities.

The questionnaire is a household survey conducted typically with the head of household or another adult household member. The interview took around 1 hour per household to complete. The full questionnaire can be downloaded via the following link:  
<https://data2.unhcr.org/en/documents/download/85922>

COVID-19 SAFETY MEASURE DURING DATA COLLECTION

With the support of the Lebanon Crisis Response Plan Health Working Group and WHO, detailed guidelines were put in place to ensure the safety of enumerators and refugee families during the face-to-face data collection. Firstly, prior to the visit, households were screened over the phone to ensure that no member in the households was exhibiting COVID-19 related symptoms and to inform households of the measures that would be taken during the interview. UNHCR field offices and partners also liaised closely with local authorities to inform them of the exercise and measures taken to ensure access to specific areas. During the data collection activity, enumerators were provided with Personal Protective Equipment (PPE), including masks and sanitizing equipment. These were also provided to refugees who participated in the interviews. Enumerators were also equipped with digital thermometers in order to measure body temperature of participants prior to beginning the interview. Interviews took place with one person in the household with safe social distancing and in an outdoor or a well-ventilated area. If these conditions were not met or if any household member was showing COVID-19 related symptoms, the interview was called off.

DATA ANALYSIS

Demographically, Iraqi refugees make up more than half of this refugee population in Lebanon and, as such, weighting was necessary to ensure that this distribution of nationality was adequately represented in the data and subsequent results. Weights were calculated for two groups from this population: Iraqi refugees and refugees of nationalities other than Iraqi.

The weights were calculated using the following formula:

$$w_n = \frac{(N_s/N)}{(n_s/n)}$$

Where wn is the normalized weight, Ns is the total sample frame per nationality, N is the total sample frame, ns is the number of households visited per nationality and n is the total visited households.

Data analysis was conducted using SPSS version 20 and included the following:

- Data cleaning which included removing any outliers and consistency checks.
- Calculation of indirect indicators such as the dependency ratio, food consumption scores, overcrowding index, coping strategies calculation, among others.
- Descriptive statistical analysis.

<sup>1</sup> UNHCR partners that participated in data collection included the Makhzoumi Foundation in Beirut and Mount Lebanon, World Vision International in the Bekaa, Caritas in North Lebanon (including Akkar) and SHEILD in South Lebanon (including Nabatieh).

## LIMITATIONS

1. While previous rounds of the assessment occurred during the same time of the year (May-June), in 2020, the data collection was delayed till August-September due to the COVID-19 outbreak. This may have had implications on indicators that concern behaviors with eventual seasonal variations.

2. The assessment relies primarily on self-reported data, which may give rise to bias. To minimize the impact of this bias, enumerators were trained on providing a comprehensive informed consent to reassure confidentiality, purpose, risks and benefits.

3. Sample sizes for specific age groups may have been be small as the sampling strategy was not conducted for this purpose. Thus, results for such age groups were either not reported or not segregated by nationality.

4. The sampling frame excluded refugees who have never approached UNHCR (unless within a targeted household). It is worth noting that this population creates a consistent data gap on refugees in Lebanon.

5. The questionnaire and respective indicators were subjected to adjustment and changes in order to ensure that the most accurate definition or calculation was being used. This has caused some results not to be directly comparable with previous years.

6. The interview was often conducted with the head of household or any other household adult member. As such, there are no individual interviews carried out with each family member and obtaining accurate information on particularly sensitive topics is a challenge (i.e. child labor or harassment).

7. Due to the geographical level sampling methods, families that have moved to a different governorate or whose address was not updated with UNHCR were not captured in the survey.





# DEMOGRAPHICS

This section provides an overview of key demographic characteristics of refugees in Lebanon. This includes household size, household composition, profile of the head of household, dependency, and individuals with specific needs. For the purposes of this assessment, a household is defined as a group of people who live under the same roof, share the same expenses, and eat from the same pot. The head of household is the main decision-maker.

## KEY FINDINGS

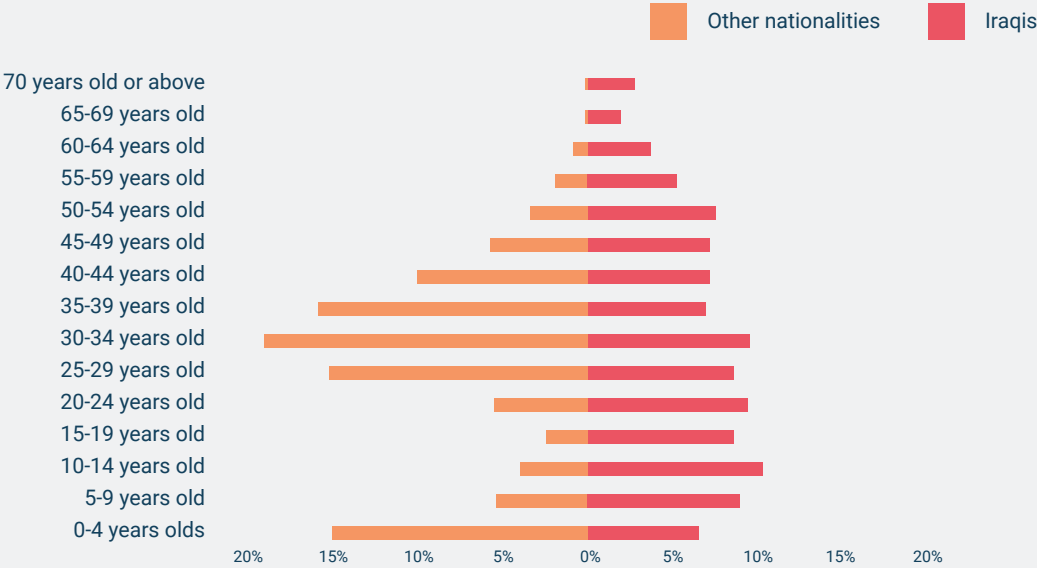
- Household size remained stable with, an average of three individuals per household. Iraqi families had a larger average household size as compared to other nationality refugees (3 compared to 2).
- Twenty per cent of households were headed by a female, similar to 19% in 2019. This share was larger among other nationality households (26%) as compared to Iraqi households (16%).
- Eight percent of individuals have a disability while 18 percent of households have at least one member with a disability.



# POPULATION PROFILE

Overall, the population age breakdown remained similar to previous years with 28 percent of the population aged under 18 years, 66 percent between 18 and 59 years old and 6 percent above 59 years old. There was almost an even split of genders across the population, with slightly more males (53%) than females (47%).

Figure 1. Age distribution by nationality

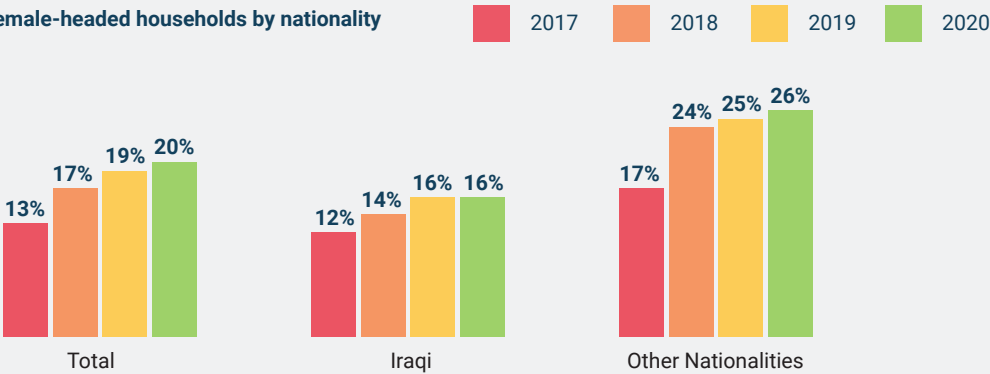


# HOUSEHOLD SIZE AND COMPOSITION

Overall, average household size remained stable at three individuals per household. Most households (84%) had four members or less, 12% had either five or six members, and 3% had seven or more household members. Refugees of other nationalities had a slightly smaller average household size compared to Iraqis (two compared to three).

Twenty per cent of households were headed by a female, compared to 19% in 2019, 17% in 2018 and 13% in 2017. In keeping with previous years, the share of female-headed households was significantly higher for other nationality households, compared to Iraqi households (24% and 16% respectively).

Figure 2. Share of female-headed households by nationality





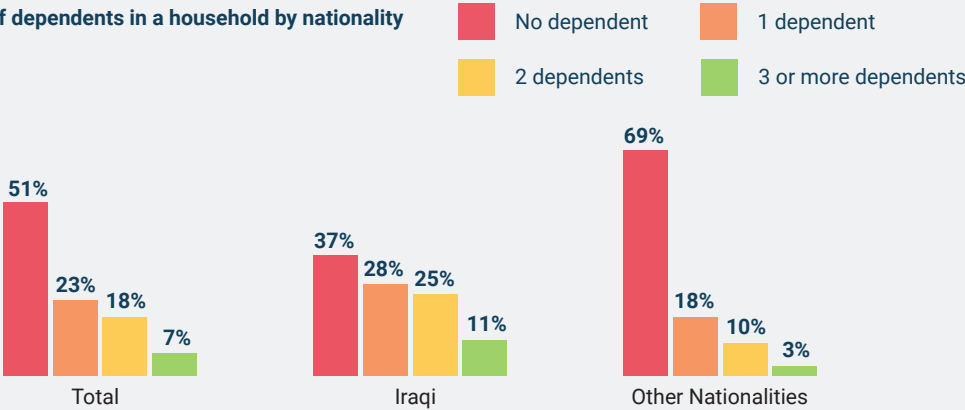
## DEPENDENCY

**Dependents:** Household members aged 14 or younger or above 59 years old.

**Dependency ratio:** Number of dependents in the household divided by the number of non-dependents in the household.

The household dependency ratio remained stable across both population groups at 0.50 for Iraqis and 0.32 for other nationalities. This indicates that Iraqi households had a higher share of dependents as compared to other nationalities. This is likely linked to the larger household size among Iraqi refugees.

Figure 3. Number of dependents in a household by nationality



## SPECIFIC NEEDS

Disability was measured using the “Washington Group Short Set on Functioning” questionnaire<sup>1</sup>. This set of questions focused on measuring difficulty in functioning in six basic actions (capabilities) to determine the presence of a disability. At an individual level, 8% of refugees had a disability. At the household level, 18% of households had at least one member living with a disability.

Examining specific domains of difficulty, among individuals above the age of two, 11 percent reported some level of sight difficulty and 3 percent reported some level of hearing difficulty. Among individuals aged 5 or above, 8 percent reported that they had a lot of difficulty walking or climbing stairs or were unable to do so at all.

Among those aged 5 or above, 19 percent reported feeling worried, anxious, or nervous on a daily basis and 17% reported feeling depressed on a daily basis.

Table 1. Proportion of individuals having reported difficulties in different domains, as per Washington Group Short Set on Functioning

2-4 years old	
Walking	3%
Communication	2%
Picking up small objects	2%
Above 5 years old	
Seeing	11%
Hearing	3%
Walking	8%
Upper body movement	3%
Anxiety (at least monthly)	30%
Depression (at least monthly)	28%

Other specific needs examined included chronic illness, single parent, older person either unable to care for self or older person being the sole caregiver for children<sup>2</sup>. 35% of households had at least one member with chronic illness, 20 percent had at least one single parent, 3 percent had at least one elderly person unable to care for self and 1 percent had an elderly as the sole caregiver for children.

<sup>1</sup><https://www.washingtongroup-disability.com/question-sets/wg-short-set-on-functioning-wg-ss/>  
<sup>2</sup>Specific needs were self-reported by the interviewee.



# PROTECTION

This chapter assesses protection-related indicators. Civil documentation findings examine legal residency and birth registration. Additionally, the chapter includes results on safety and security, as well as community relations.

## KEY FINDINGS

- Only 20.8 percent of individuals aged 15 and above hold legal residency permits. A larger portion of Iraqi refugees (23.6%) report valid legal residency as compared to other nationalities (14.9%).
- A lower share of households reported competition of jobs as a driver of community tensions (33.7% compared to 44% in 2019). Corresponding reports of community tension dropped, with 43.3 percent of households reporting an absence of any tension with the host community compared to 39 percent in 2019.

## LEGAL RESIDENCY

The share of individuals aged 15 years and above reporting legal residency decreased to 20.8 percent in 2020 against 36 percent in 2019. A higher proportion of Iraqis reported having valid legal residency (23.6%) compared to 14.9 percent among refugees of other nationalities.

At a household level, the share of households where all members aged 15 years and above had legal residency decreased to 15.2 percent from 31 percent in 2019. Also

at the household level, 21.1 percent of households had at least one adult member with legal residency, compared to 36 percent in 2019. Respondents cited several barriers to obtaining legal residency, such as the inability to secure a sponsor (31.3%), lack of awareness about renewal procedures (24.6%), which was mainly observed among the Iraqi population (37.2%), and not being able to afford the renewal cost (18.6%), which was higher among refugees with other nationalities (31.8%) than Iraqis (11.7%).

Figure 1. Legal residency status of refugee households

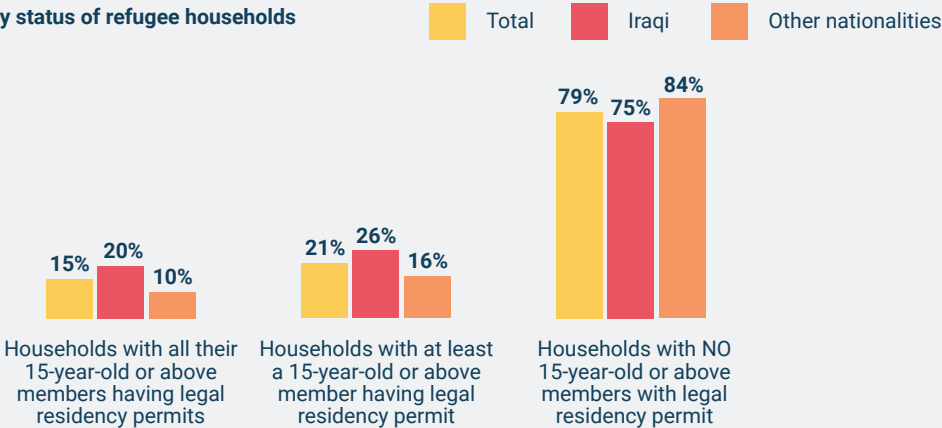
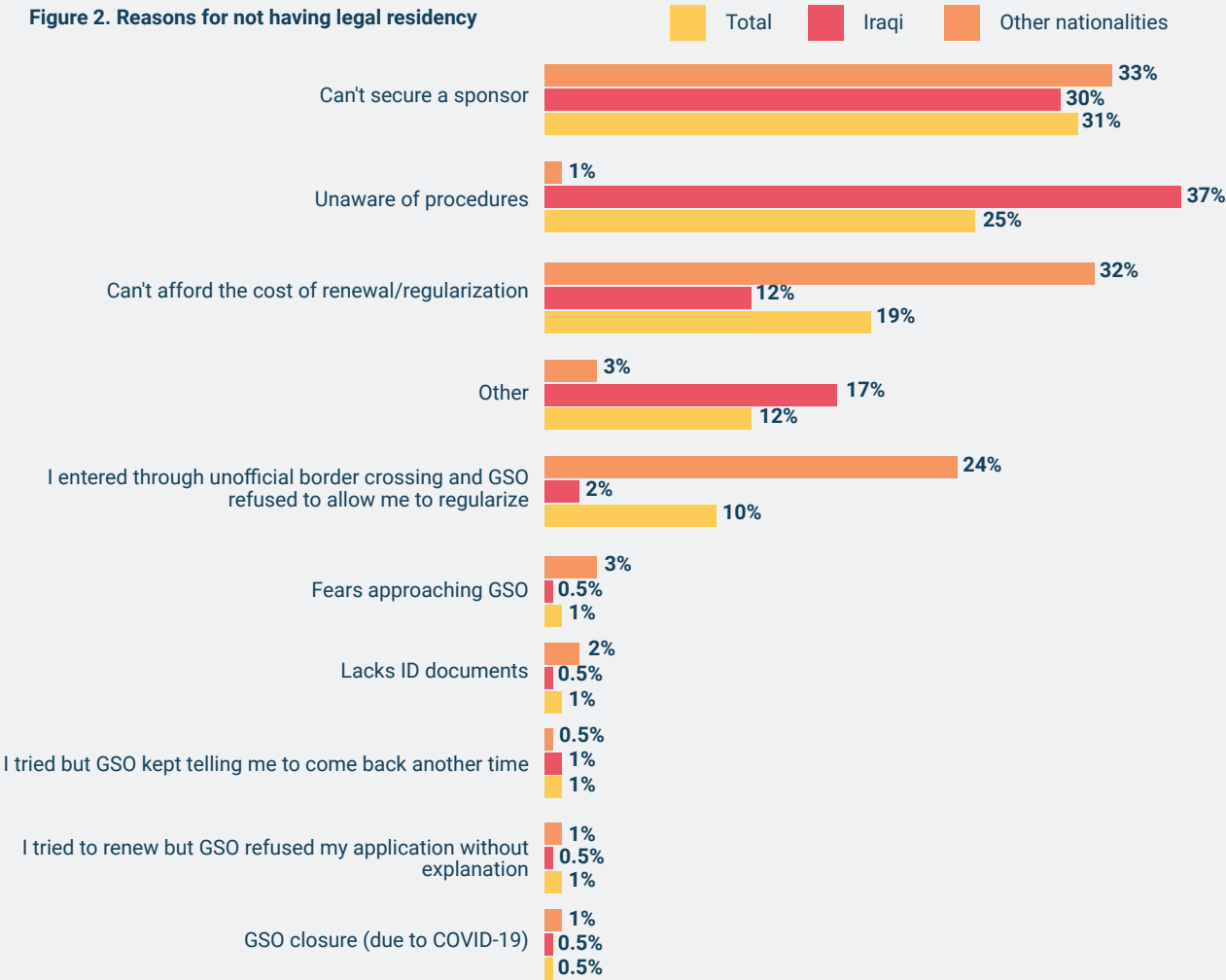


Figure 2. Reasons for not having legal residency



## BIRTH REGISTRATION

Birth registration for foreigners in Lebanon requires the following steps:

- 1. Obtaining a birth notification from a doctor, hospital, or midwife.
- 2. Obtaining a birth certificate from the Mukhtar.
- 3. Registering the birth with the competent local civil registry office (the Noufous).

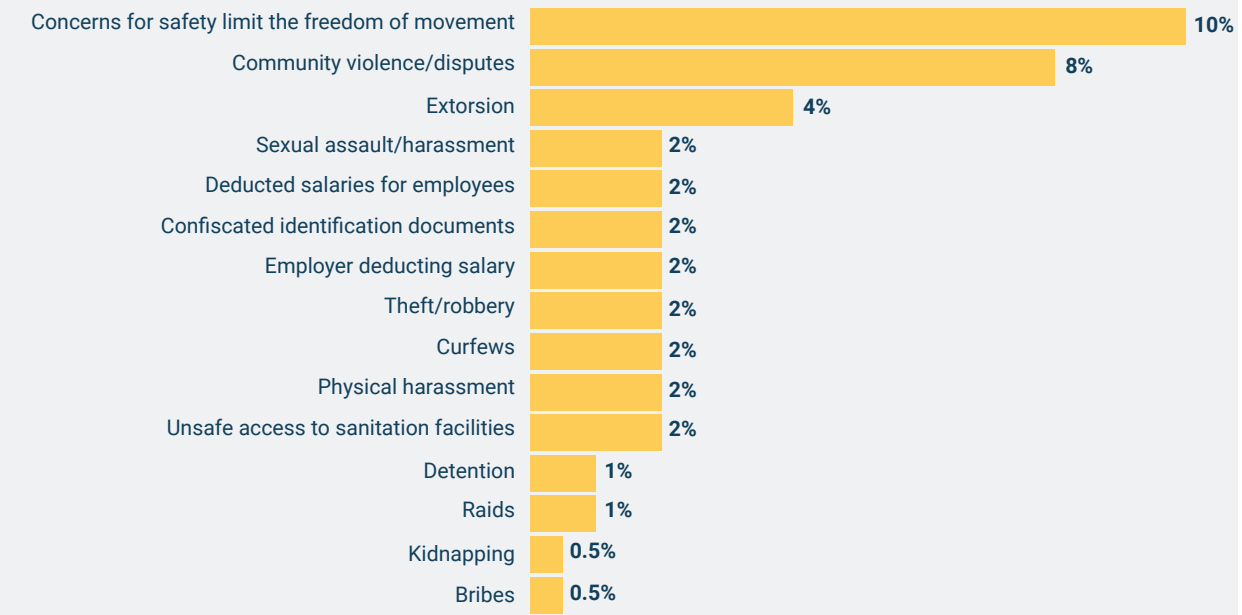
4. Registering the birth with the Foreigners Registry. About 50.8% of respondents reported successfully registering births that occurred in Lebanon through the Foreigners Registry level, compared to 66% in 2019, and 51% in 2018. Almost all families (97.2%) had a birth notification from a doctor or midwife, and 2.2% of births had no documentation.

## SAFETY AND SECURITY

Similar to 2019, a small portion of households reported having experienced a security or safety incident in the three months preceding the interview. The main incidents reported were concerns about the freedom of movement (10%) and community violence (7.5%). Other nationality refugees were more likely to report most types

of incidents, compared to Iraqis. Yet, regarding concerns around freedom of movement, about 15 percent of Iraqi households reported this as an incident versus 4 percent only among refugees of other nationalities. In addition, 6.2 percent of households reported witnessing a physical confrontation in their area involving at least one refugee.

Figure 3. Households reporting having experienced a security or safety incident in the three months preceding the interview



## COMMUNICATION

The vast majority of refugees (97.8%) indicated using SMS to receive information related to refugee services, while about (14%) mentioned using hotlines. In addition, 76.9 percent of those who used SMS mentioned that the information received was helpful in accessing services, while 91.7 percent of those who used the hotlines considered the information to be helpful to access services.

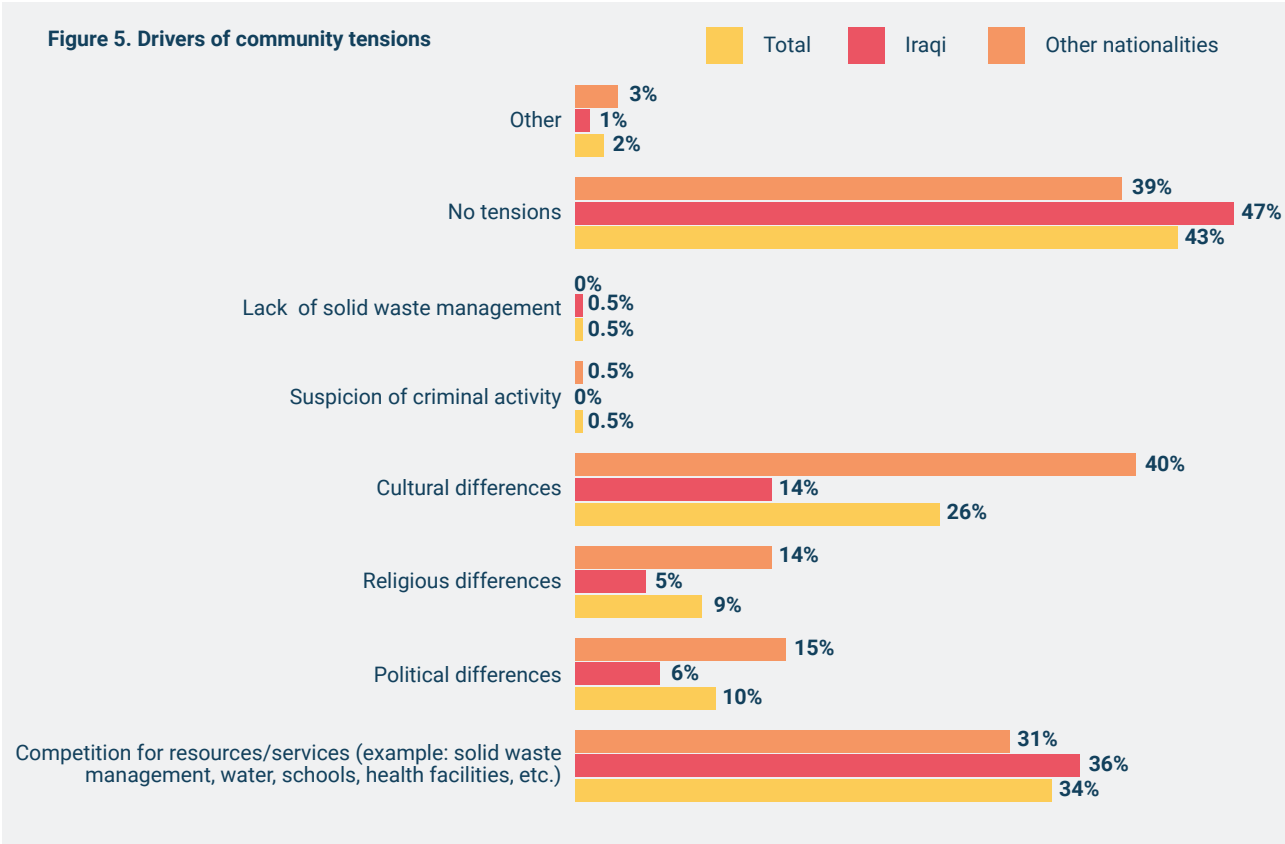
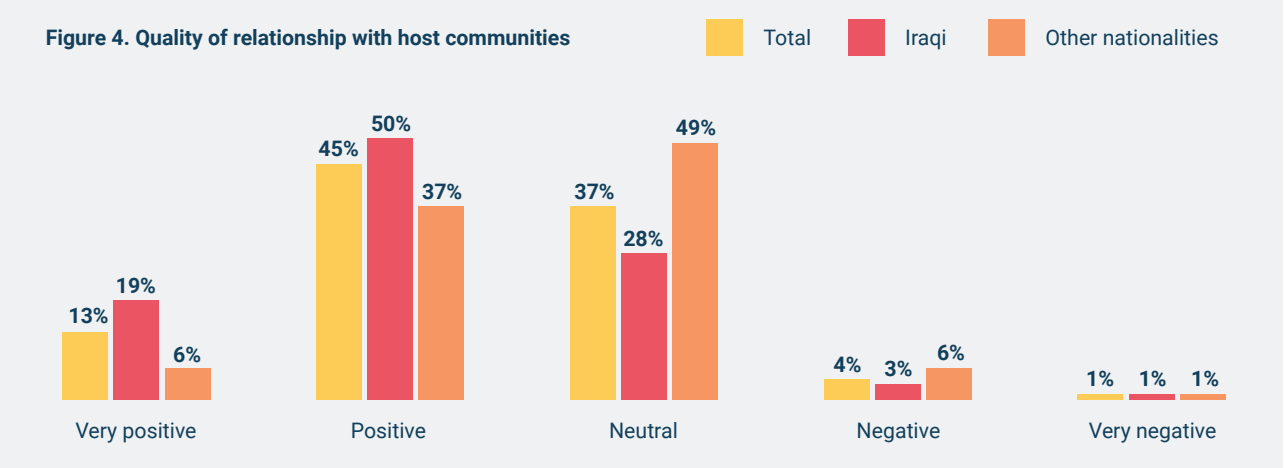
Regarding access to the internet, 56.1 percent of refugee households have access to the internet on their phones, and 55 percent have available internet at home. The majority use WhatsApp (83.6%), a considerable percentage use Facebook (43.5%), while a smaller percentage use Instagram (6.6%), and about 16 percent of refugees do not use any type of social media.



## COMMUNITY RELATIONS

More than half of the refugee households (57.6%) rated the quality of their relationship with the host community as either positive or very positive. The percentage of households reporting very positive or positive relationships with the host community is higher among Iraqi refugee households (68.8%) than among refugees of other nationalities (43.7%). The remaining bulk rated their relationship as neutral, with only a few (4.2%) rating it as negative or very negative. Moreover, the share of families that reported no tensions between the refugee and host

communities increased slightly to 43 percent from 39 percent in 2019. This is coupled with a decrease in the share of refugee families reporting competition for jobs as the main driver of community tensions (33.3% compared to 44% in 2019). Other drivers included competition for resources or services (9.6%), political (10%), religious (8.8%), or cultural (25.5%) differences. Tensions related to cultural differences were higher among refugees with other nationalities (40.2%) than Iraqi refugees (13.8%).



# SHELTER

This chapter presents the findings related to the physical shelters where refugees reside. This includes rental and occupancy agreements with landlords as well the physical conditions<sup>1</sup> of these shelters.

## KEY FINDINGS

- Rent expenses decreased slightly to 438667 LBP per month in 2020. Iraqi refugees continue to pay considerably more for rent compared to refugees of other nationalities (559319 LBP versus 283185 LBP).
- As per the methodology used, 67.6 percent live in no adverse conditions and 12.6 percent in substandard conditions. However, there is an increase in the number of people living in dangerous (8.5%) and in overcrowding conditions (16.5%).

<sup>1</sup> COVID-19 restrictions prohibited enumerators from visually assessing the shelter condition in overcrowded shelters; this has prompted a change in the methodology used to assess shelter conditions in 2020. Change in methodology may explain significant discrepancies when compared to 2019.

Table 1. Shelters occupied by refugee households are classified into three categories as per below

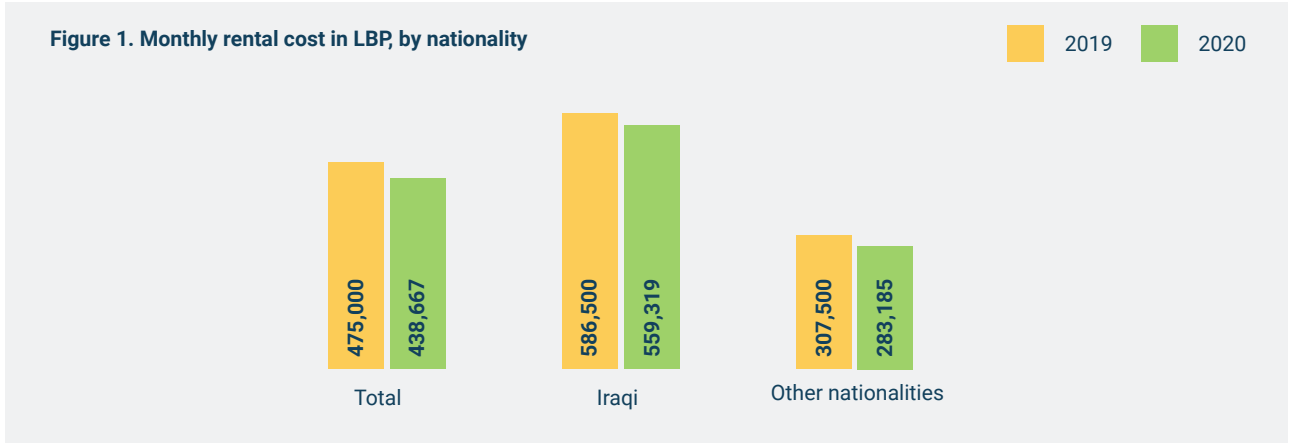
Shelter type	Sub shelter type
Residential	<div><div>• Apartment/house/room</div><div>• Concierge room in residential building</div><div>• Hotel room</div></div>
Non-Residential	<div><div>• Factory</div><div>• Workshop</div><div>• Farm</div><div>• Active construction site</div><div>• Shop</div><div>• Agricultural/engine/pump room</div><div>• Warehouse</div><div>• School</div></div>
Non-Permanent	<div><div>• Tent</div><div>• Prefab Unit</div></div>

SHELTER TYPE, RENT AND OCCUPANCY AGREEMENTS

The vast majority of families (94.8%) reside in residential housing, with three quarters (76.9%) living in apartments or houses and 17.5 percent in concierge rooms within residential buildings. Others are spread scarcely across the different shelter typologies, mainly in non-residential shelters.

Rental expenses decreased slightly to 438667 LBP from 475000LBP reported in 2019. Rent reported by Iraqi refugees was almost double that reported by refugees of other nationalities (559319 LBP versus 283185 LBP). Rental costs have been a determining factor for people’s mobility and choice of accommodation. A total of 16 percent of households had moved accommodation in

the past 12 months (versus 13.9% in 2019), and half of those who moved cited expensive cost of rent as the main reason behind their decision. Conversely, rental cost was cited by 54 percent of families as the determining factor for choosing their current accommodation; this percentage increased as compared to 41 percent in 2019. Another 19 percent stated proximity to work as the main reason, whereas choice of 8 percent was based on proximity to relatives or friends, 3.6 percent were residing in that shelter since they were able to work for rent, while 1.7% have selected their place of residence to be within community with same background (2.7% among Iraqis as opposed to only 0.3% among refugees of other nationalities).



SHELTER CONDITIONS

A higher proportion of families were living in shelters that were overcrowded (<4.5m2/person) compared to 2019 (16.5% versus 11%). The share of families living in dangerous conditions also increased slightly to 8.5 percent from 8 percent in 2019. The share of families living in substandard is 12.6 percent. Shelter conditions seem

to have equally deteriorated for both Iraqi families and families of other nationalities across most parameters. Yet the latrines conditions and bathing facilities seemed more deteriorated for people of other nationalities. The same applies for shelters with inadequate electrical and unsealed windows and doors.

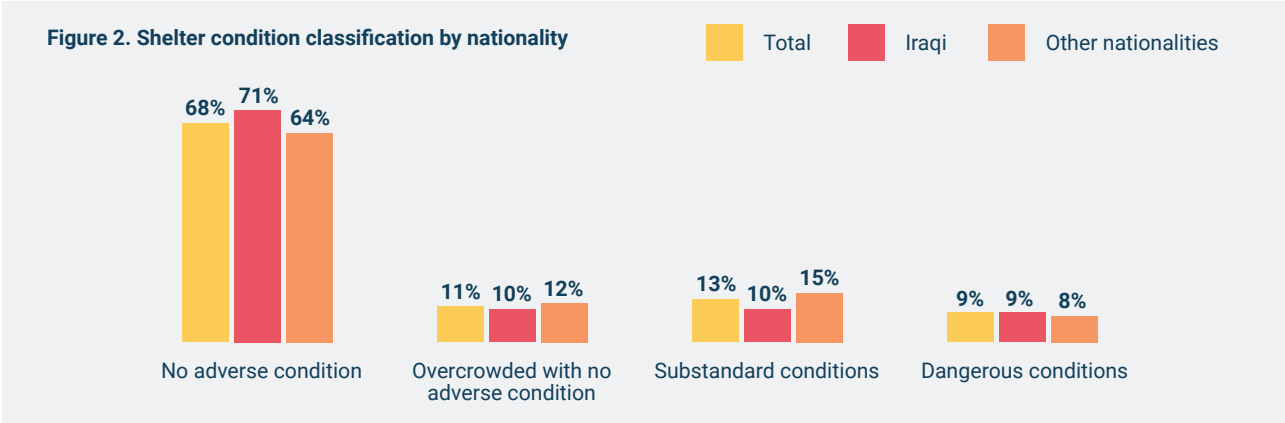
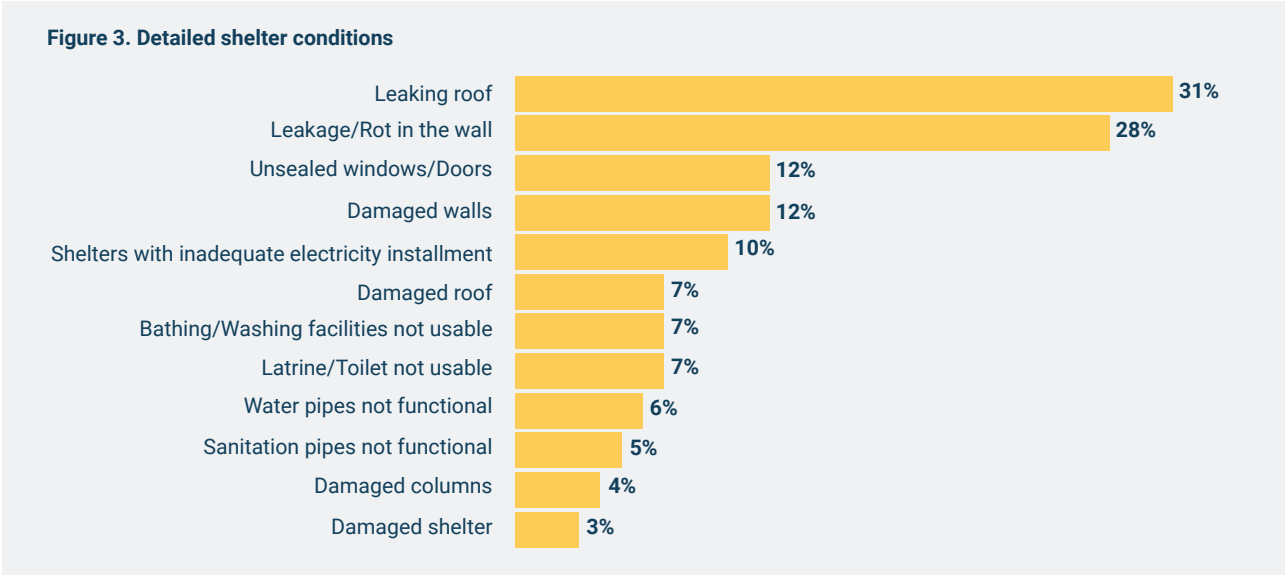


Table 2. Dangers faced in shelters

Type of danger	Total	Iraqi	Other nationalities
Leaking roof	30.9%	28.9%	33.3%
Leakage/ Rot in the wall	27.9%	27.9%	28.0%
Bathing/ Washing facilities not usable	7.1%	4.4%	10.6%
Latrine/ Toilet not usable	7.0%	3.7%	11.1%
Water pipes not functional	6.1%	5.0%	7.4%
Sanitation pipes not functional	4.7%	3.4%	6.3%
Unsealed windows/ Doors	12.4%	10.1%	15.3%
Shelters with inadequate electricity installment	9.8%	7.7%	12.4%
Damaged roof	7.3%	7.7%	6.9%
Damaged walls	12.0%	11.4%	12.7%
Damaged columns	4.4%	4.0%	4.8%
Damaged shelter	3.2%	3.7%	2.6%





A photograph of three children washing their hands in a public water station. A girl in a colorful checkered shirt is helping two younger children, a girl in denim overalls and a boy in a peach shirt, to wash their hands. They are standing at a concrete basin filled with water. In the background, there are modern buildings and string lights, suggesting an outdoor public space.

# WASH

## WATER, SANITATION, AND HYGIENE

This Chapter analyses the water, sanitation, and hygiene situation of refugees in Lebanon looking at safe access to water, and quality of sanitation facilities.

### KEY FINDINGS

- Most refugees (93%) had access to improved sources of drinking water (down from 96% in 2019). Bottled mineral water remained to be the highest source that households rely on for drinking water, though it dropped from 72 percent in 2019 to 67 percent in 2020. Seven percent of households relied on unimproved drinking water sources like public shared water stands/taps.
- Almost all refugees continued to have access to improved sanitation facilities, with 95 percent having access to a flush toilet and 4% having access to an improved pit latrine.



## ACCESS TO DRINKING WATER

**Improved drinking water sources:**

- Household water tap/water network
- Bottled mineral water
- Water tank/trucked water
- Protected borehole
- Piped water to yard/lot
- Protected spring
- Protected well

**Unimproved drinking water sources**

- Public/shared water stand/taps
- Unprotected borehole/well/spring
- Rainwater

**Basic drinking water sources**

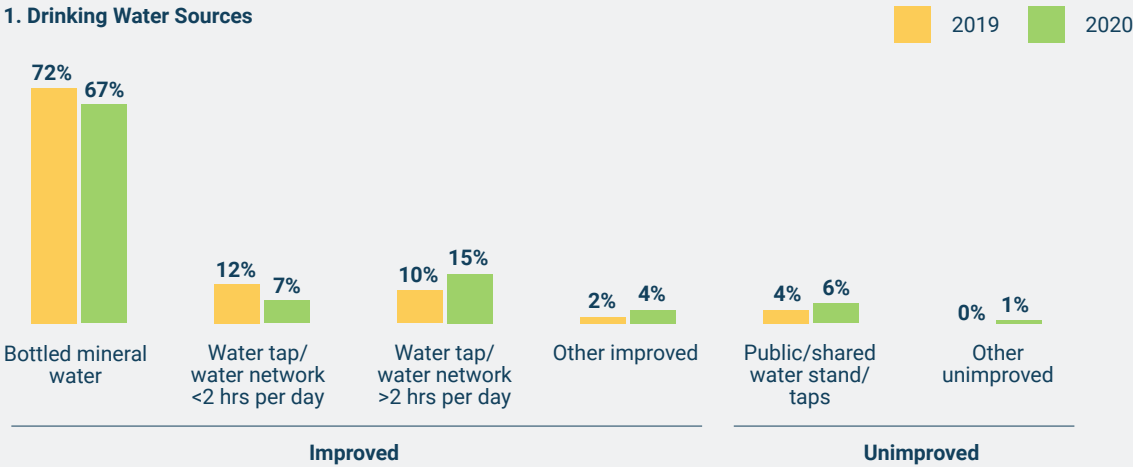
- Water source in dwelling/yard/plot
- Water source within 30 minutes round trip collection time

## SOURCES & ACCESS TO DRINKING WATER

In 2020, 93 percent of refugees had access to improved sources of drinking water, a slight drop from 2019 (96%). Bottled water remained the most common source of drinking water among the refugee population (67%) even though it dropped 5 percent points from 2019. Like last year, the majority of the remaining relied on tap water or a

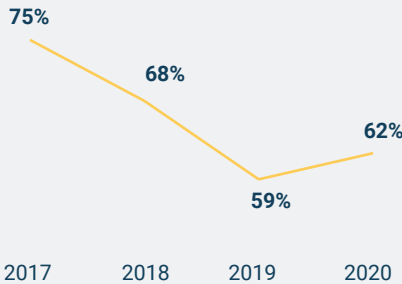
water network which was available for more than 2 hours per day (15%) or less than 2 hours per day (7%). Seven percent were relying on unimproved sources of drinking water namely public or shared water stands or taps, an increase from 4 percent in 2019.

Figure 1. Drinking Water Sources



The share of refugees who were able to access a drinking water source on their premises was 62 percent in 2020, a slight increase from 2019 (59%). This was slightly higher among non-Iraqi refugees (65% compared to 61% for Iraqis) and female-headed households (67% compared to 61% for male).

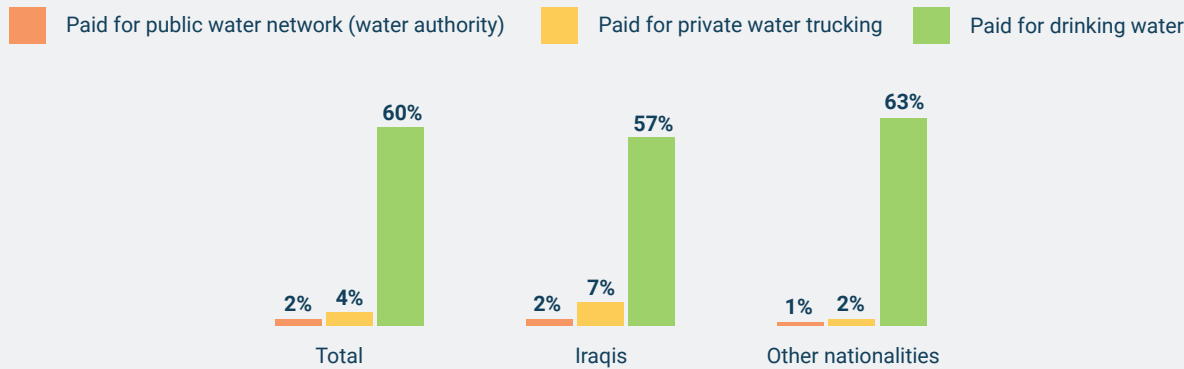
Figure 2. Share of households with access to a drinking water source on premises



## EXPENDITURE ON WATER

In 2020, 60% of refugees reported paying for drinking water in the past month, a decrease of 10% compared to 2019. Only 2% paid for a public water network or a private water trucking (4%). On average, Iraqi refugees were paying LBP 43,271 per month for drinking water (an increase from LBP 31,500 in 2019) and refugees of other nationalities were paying LBP 39,403 per month (2019: LBP 27,000).

Figure 3. Share of households with expenditure on water



## SANITATION FACILITIES

**Improved sanitation facilities**

- Flush toilets
- Improved pit latrines with cement slabs

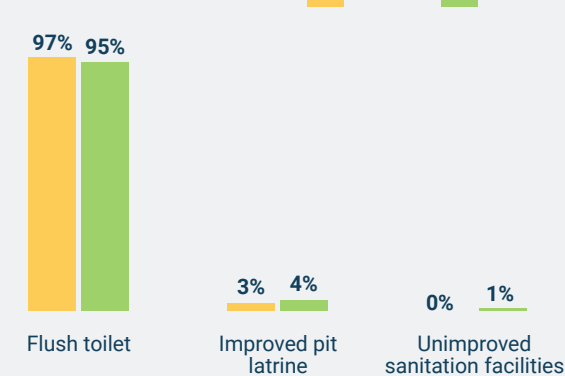
**Unimproved sanitation facilities**

- Traditional/pit latrine with no slab
- Bucket

Most refugees continued to have access to improved sanitation facilities, with 95 percent having access to a flush toilet and 4 percent having access to an improved pit latrine. Flush toilets, however, were more commonly used among Iraqi refugees (96%) compared to other nationalities (92%). Seven percent of other nationalities refugees were relying on improved pit latrines.

Out of all refugee household members, 85 percent had access to an improved sanitation facility that was not shared. This figure is much lower for non-Iraqis (68% compared to 93% of Iraqis).

Figure 4. Sanitation Facilities



## HYGIENE DISTRIBUTION AND COVID-19 AWARENESS

Nineteen percent of refugees reported receiving disinfection kits in the last 30 days prior to the survey (24% of Iraqis and 13% of other nationalities). Eighteen percent reported receiving COVID-19 hygiene awareness raising session on COVID-19 (12% of Iraqis and 25% of non-Iraqis).

A young boy with dark hair, wearing a yellow and blue striped shirt, is looking out of a window at night. The room is dark, and the light from the window illuminates his face and shirt. The word "ENERGY" is overlaid in large white letters on the left side of the image.

# ENERGY

This chapter analyses the access to electricity by non-Syrian refugee households in Lebanon. It also assesses the hours of electricity supplied by the national grid versus private diesel generators.

## KEY FINDINGS

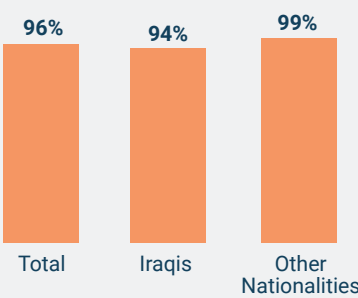
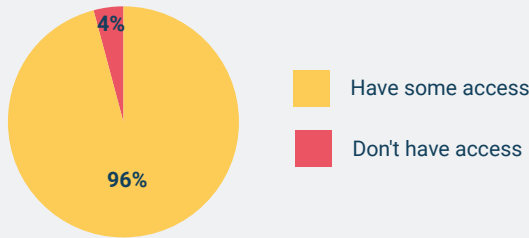
- Ninety-six percent of refugee households had some access to electricity, mainly from the electricity grid and through diesel generators.
- The average daily hours of supply by the electricity grid was 12 hours and 48 minutes and for diesel generators it was 11 hours 12 minutes.
- On average, 4 hours 42 minutes of electricity outage a day.
- Refugees from other nationalities had 2 more hours of electricity outage a day compared to Iraqi refugees (3 hours 42 minutes for Iraqis compared to 5 hours 48 minutes for other nationalities).
- Fifty one percent of households paid directly their electricity bills to Electricité du Liban (EDL) while 38% paid the landlord or had it already included in their rent. For 9.2% of households, no one was collecting electricity bills.
- The use of renewable power, including solar panels and biomass/ biogas was negligible.



## ACCESS TO ELECTRICITY

Overall, 96% of households had some access to electricity, while 4% reported having no access. Female-headed households had a slightly higher access (97%).

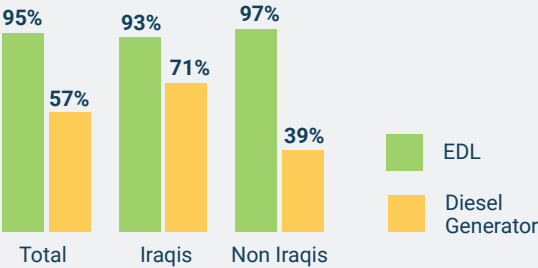
Figure 1: Access to electricity



## SOURCES OF ELECTRICITY

When considering the sources of electricity, 95% of households had access to the grid (Iraqis 93%; Other nationalities 97%) and 57% had access to diesel generators. A significantly higher percentage of Iraqi households had access to diesel generators (71%) compared to refugees from other nationalities (39%).

Figure 2: Source of electricity per cohort

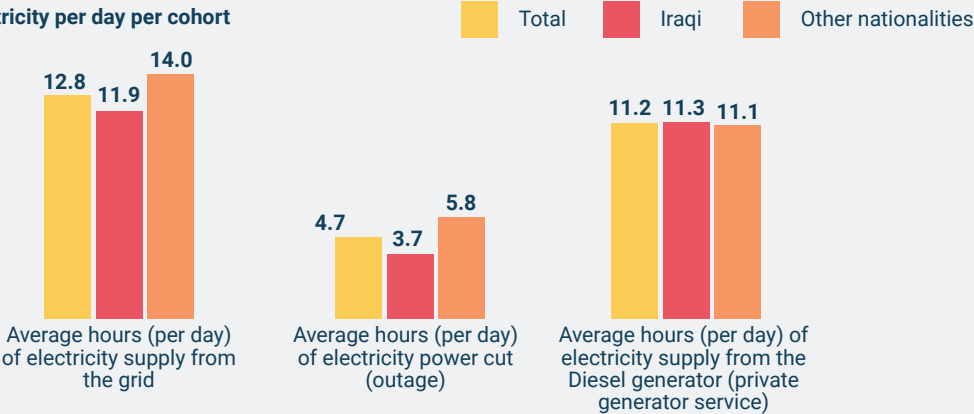


## HOURS OF ELECTRICITY BY SOURCE

In 2020, the average hours of supply by the electricity grid was 12hours and 48minutes and 11 hours 12 minutes from diesel generators. Refugees from other nationalities had on average 14 hours of supply from the electricity grid, 2 hours more than Iraqi refugees (11hours 55 minutes).

On average, households had **4 hours 42 minutes of electricity outage a day**. Households from other nationalities had 2 more hours of power cuts a day compared to Iraqi refugees (5 hours 48 minutes vs. 3 hours 42 minutes).

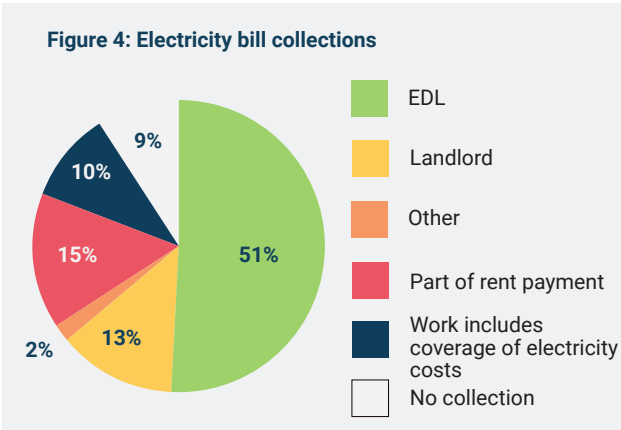
Figure 3: Hours of electricity per day per cohort



## ELECTRICITY BILL COLLECTION

Collection of bills by EDL was at 51% in 2020. Thirty-eight percent of refugee household EDL bills were either collected by the landlord (13.5%) or were already included as part of the rent (25%). No bills were collected from 9% of households.

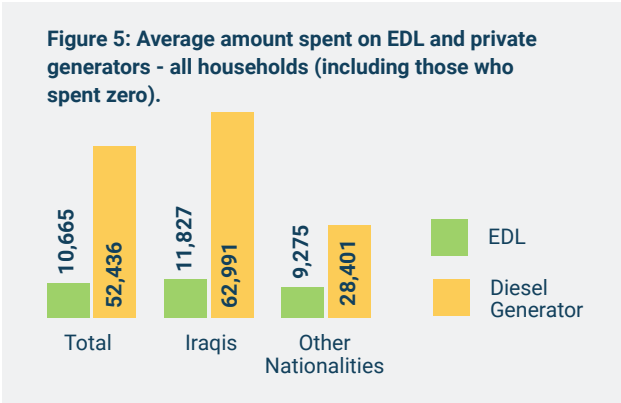
Of the 51% of households where EDL directly collected the bills, 65% paid monthly, whereas 34% paid every two months, with only 1% having settled their bills every 6 months.



## EXPENDITURE ON ELECTRICITY

Out of all visited households, 22% reported an expenditure on electricity from the grid (EDL) in the last 30 days, whereas 31% had an expenditure on generators during the same time period.

Taking into consideration all households (including those who spent zero), the average amount spent on electricity from the grid was LBP 10,665 per family on a monthly basis, whereas the average amount spent on generators was LBP 52,436 per family monthly. Iraqi refugees had a significantly higher expenditure on electricity, compared to refugees from other nationalities (74,818 LBP vs 37,677 LBP).



## ENERGY SOURCES FOR COOKING

The main energy source used for cooking remained gas, as reported by 98% of households:

	Electricity	Gas	Other	No source were used
Total	1%	98%	0%	1%
Iraqis	1%	97%	1%	2%
Other Nationalities	1%	98%	0%	1%

# ENERGY SOURCES FOR HEATING

Half of the refugee households (51%) did not use any source of energy for heating. This percentage was much higher among refugees from other nationalities, where 66% did not use any source of heating.

Electric powered heater was the number one source of heating for refugees reported by 28% of households, followed by Gas (12%).

	Electric powered heater/cooker	Gas	Oil (e.g. furnace oil)	Wood	Other	None
Total	28%	12%	7%	1%	3%	51%
Iraqis	33%	19%	9%	1%	2%	39%
Other Nationalities	22%	3%	5%	0%	4%	66%





# EDUCATION

This chapter describes the school enrollment rates of refugee girls and boys, ranging from 3 to 24 years old.

## KEY FINDINGS

- Overall, 65% of refugees aged 3 to 17 years old were enrolled in formal school. The rate of enrollment was higher among Iraqis (70%) as compared to refugees of other nationalities (48%).
- Enrollment in primary, lower and upper secondary school for children in the respective age groups was found to be 33%, 30% and 22%, respectively.
- The number of girls in primary school remained almost equal to that of boys. For lower and upper secondary school, enrollment for girls as compared to boys, decreased since 2019.



This assessment measured enrollment in school, but did not track attendance. Because of COVID-19 related school closures, learning had to be remote at least since March 2020. In addition, due to COVID-19, grade 9 exams were canceled and students automatically registered to upper secondary grade.

## PARTICIPATION IN FORMAL EDUCATION

Overall, 65% of refugees aged 3 to 17 years old were enrolled in formal school. The rate of enrollment was lower among refugees of other nationalities (48%), compared to Iraqis (70%). The majority (70%) reported being physically present in school at all times, while 9% were enrolled in distance learning. The remaining 21% were enrolled in a combination of in-person education and distance learning.

This potentially means that the vast majority that had only access to in-person learning (70%) did not get any schooling during school closures (as of March 2020).

In 2020, one third (33%) of surveyed refugee children aged 3 to 5 years old were enrolled in formal pre-primary schools, compared to 31% in 2019.

## ENROLLMENT IN PRIMARY AND SECONDARY SCHOOLS

77 percent of primary school age children (6 to 14 years old) were enrolled in primary school in 2020, an increase from 60% in 2019 and closer to the rate in 2018 (76%). The net intake rate in primary education, or the percentage of children 6 years of age who entered the first grade of

primary school also increased to 12% from 7% in 2019 (compared to 12% in 2018). Lower and upper secondary school net attendance ratio was found to be 30% (31% on 2019) and 22% (16% in 2019).

*The **gender parity** index is the proportion of girls enrolled in school over the proportion of boys enrolled in school. A gender parity index over 1 means that school enrollment is higher for girls than boys.*

The number of girls in primary schools remained almost equal to that of boys. For lower and upper secondary school, enrollment for girls as compared to boys decreased since 2019.

Table 1: Gender parity index

	2019	2020
Primary	1.18	1.0
Lower Secondary	1.69	1.0
Upper Secondary	1.22	0.62

The most commonly cited reason for not being enrolled in school was the cost (42%) of either education material (30%) or transportation (12%), followed by being engaged in work (18%). Eight percent cited being married as the reason for not being enrolled in school and 16% cited not being in school age.



# HEALTH

This chapter assesses the ability of refugees to access primary health care and hospital care at the household level and the barriers to healthcare access. Health services are available to refugees through primary health care centers, hospitals, and mobile medical units. The survey does not reflect on the quality of care received. It also addresses the knowledge of refugee households about the access to healthcare services related to COVID-19.

## KEY FINDINGS

- Only 58.6 percent of refugee households indicated knowing where to access related services in case a household member is suspected with COVID-19.
- There was a slight decrease in the proportion of families that reported needing primary health care (36% compared to 39% in 2018). Ability to access maintained the same level with 88 percent of families reporting being able to access the needed care.
- Demand for hospital care decreased to 10.4 percent from 14 percent in 2019. The share of families that were able to receive the needed care was 83 percent, which is similar to 2019.
- Cost remained the biggest barrier to receiving care, for both primary health care and hospital care. This includes doctors' fees, treatment cost, medications as well as transportation costs to health centers or hospitals.

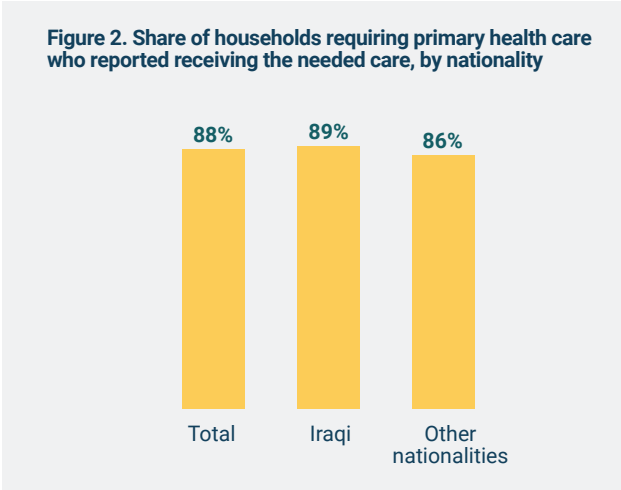
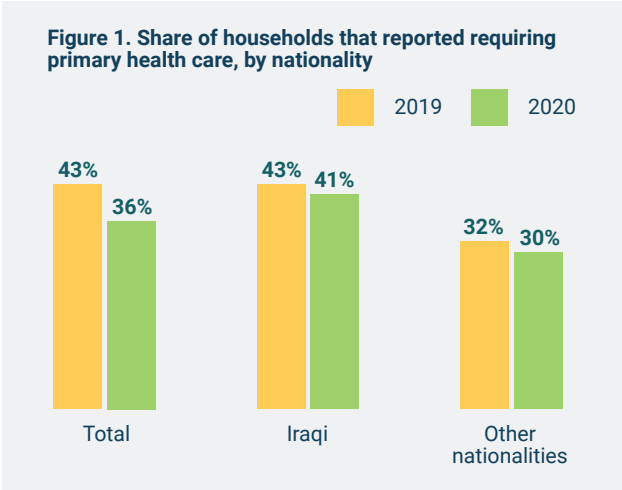
## PRIMARY HEALTH CARE

Primary health care (PHC) refers to health care that does not require hospital admission. This includes services such as: vaccination, medication for acute and chronic conditions, non-communicable disease care, sexual and reproductive healthcare, malnutrition screening and management, mental healthcare, dental care, basic laboratory, and diagnostics as well as health promotion.

A smaller proportion of families reported requiring primary health care (PHC) in the six months preceding the interview (36% compared to 43% in 2019). This decrease was among Iraqi refugees and refugees of other nationalities. The decreased demand can be explained by seasonal variations of incidence of certain diseases and the fact that 2020 VARON was conducted during a different time

period compared to 2019 (during spring 2019 and fall 2020). Other possible reasons might be related to a change in health seeking behaviors due to the ongoing crises and financial hardship where households are not prioritizing health needs and are not considering preventive or primary health care as a necessity. The COVID-19 situation and restrictive preventive measures implemented at different levels might also have impacted health seeking behaviors and therefore the perceived need for healthcare.

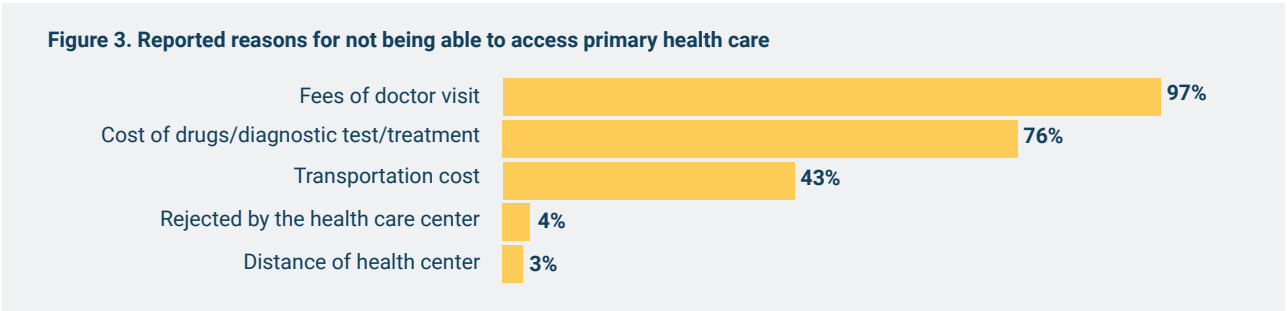
About 41 percent of Iraqi refugees reported needing PHC, down from 43 percent in 2019. Similarly, demand for PHC among refugees of other nationalities slightly decreased from 32 percent in 2019 to 30 percent in 2020.



Trends showed no change in the ability of families to access the needed PHC. Among families that reported needing PHC in the past six months, 88 percent could have access, compared to 88 percent in 2019, 78 percent in 2018 and 62 percent in 2017. Rates of access were higher for Iraqi refugees as compared to refugees of other nationalities (89.3% compared to 88%). Most (75.9%) families reported paying in full for the received PHC, while 16.3 percent reported receiving subsidized care. A small portion (6.6%) reported receiving the carefree of charge. Refugees accessed the care through PHC clinics (43.3%), or by visiting a private doctors’ clinic (31.2%) or a pharmacist (20%). For those who visited a private doctors’

clinic or pharmacy, trust in the physician (59.7%) and closer distance (28.1%) were the main cited reasons.

Similar to previous years, cost continues to be the biggest barrier cited by families who could not receive the needed care. This includes fees associated with doctor visits (cited by 97.3% of families), as well as cost related to the medication, diagnostic tests and/or treatment (76.1%). Transportation cost was also reported as a barrier by 43.1 percent of the families. Additionally, 4.3 percent of families reported that they were rejected by the healthcare provider. Few (2.7%) were unable to receive the care due to the long distance needed to travel to reach a healthcare center.





## HOSPITAL CARE

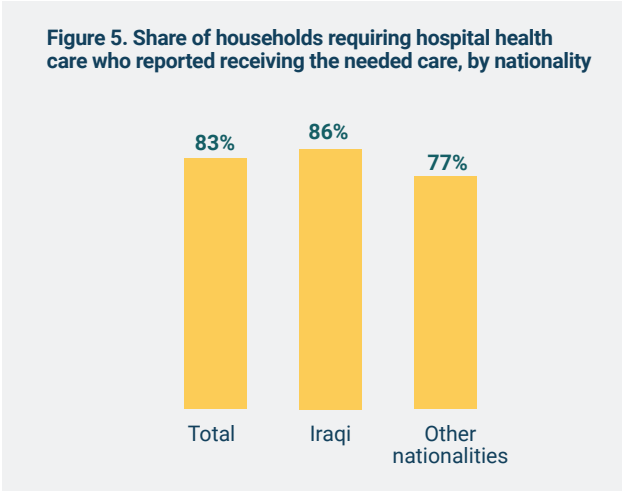
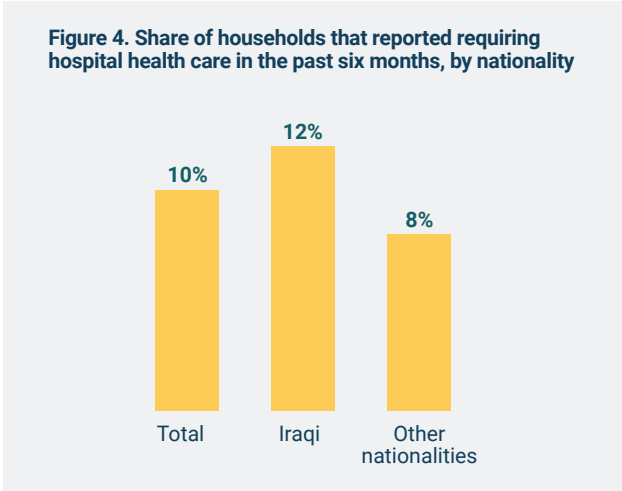
As for the demand for PHC, demand for hospital care also decreased, with 10.4 percent of refugee families reporting that they needed hospital care in the previous six months (15% in 2019). Similar to PHCs, the decreased demand for hospital care can be due to the COVID-19 situation, and restrictive preventive measures implemented at different levels might also have impacted health seeking behavior and the perceived need for healthcare.

The share of families that were able to receive the needed care was 83 percent, with different results across both nationality groups. The percentage of Iraqi refugee households accessing healthcare (86.1%) was higher than that of other nationalities (77.4%).

The majority (75%) of families reported that they paid for the care in full, while 17 percent reported that they received assistance from UNHCR or other organizations to cover a portion of the cost.

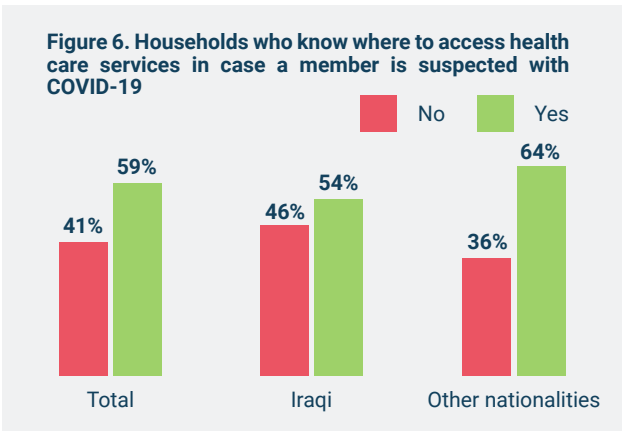
As with PHC, cost was overwhelmingly the most commonly cited reason for not getting the needed hospital care, as mentioned by the 12 families. This included the cost of the actual treatment (100%) but also transportation costs (26.9%). In fact, 17.3 percent of families reported that they have been rejected by the hospital.

Knowledge on accessing emergency care decreased since 2019, with 54.7 percent of families reporting that they are aware of where and how to access medical services in case of an emergency.



## COVID 19

Where a household member is suspected with COVID-19, 58.6 percent of the refugee households indicated knowing where to access related services. This percentage was higher among refugees of other nationalities (64.3%) than Iraqis (54%). Only 27.9 percent of households mentioned receiving information about COVID. These households indicated receiving information about medical services (62.6%), prevention methods (99.2%), symptoms (98.9%) and treatment and quarantine (60.8%).



## CHILD BIRTH AND CHILD HEALTH

The majority of children born in Lebanon to refugee families were born in hospitals (99.2%). Only 6 children (8.9%) of the group age 0-23 months suffered from at least one disease in the past 2 weeks.



# COPING STRATEGIES

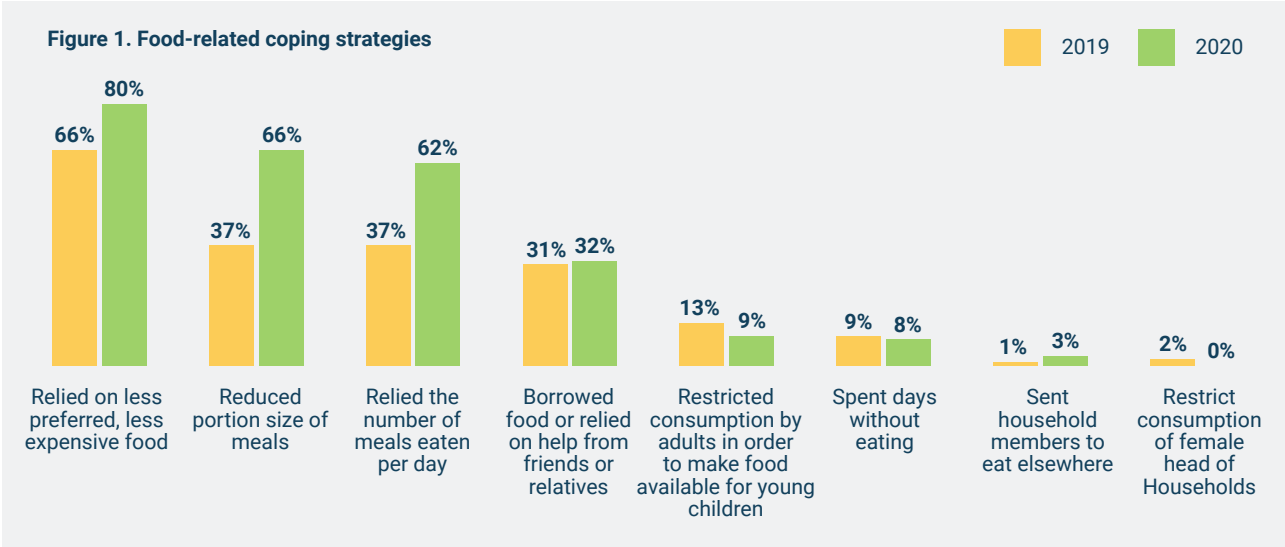
In order to deal with the absence of food and/or the resources to buy it, households may adopt several coping strategies. The following section tackles a broad set of such coping strategies, which are studied using two dimensions, including food-based and livelihood-based coping strategies. Food-based coping strategies allow for an enhanced understanding of the food consumption behaviors of a household lacking food, by studying the frequency and severity of changes it undergoes. Livelihood-based coping strategies is a proxy of a household's coping capacity in the medium and long run by understanding how challenging its situation is, and whether it will be able to mitigate future shocks.

## KEY FINDINGS

- The rCSI (reduced Coping Strategy Index) increased from 10.8 in 2019 to 12.5 in 2020, indicating that more refugees are resorting to food-related coping strategies. The rCSI increased for both Iraqi refugees at 11.83 (up from 9.7 in 2019) and other nationality refugees at 13.32 (up from 12.5 in 2019).
- Seventy-six percent of refugees are applying asset depletion coping strategies. Forty percent of Iraqi refugees are applying stress coping strategies (up from 35% in 2019). Moreover, 39 percent of refugees of other nationalities are applying crisis coping strategies (up from 29% in 2019).

## FOOD-RELATED COPING STRATEGIES

Overall, there was a substantial increase in the share of households resorting to food-related strategies, with the highest increase reported for reducing portion size of meals (29 percentage point increase), followed by reducing the number of meals eaten per day (25 percentage point increase). The most common used food-related coping strategy continued to be one relying on less preferred and less expensive food at 88 percent (up from 66 in 2019).



The reduced Coping Strategy Index (rCSI) includes the five most commonly used food-related coping strategies and their order of severity as a proxy indicator to measure access to food. The higher the rCSI, the more coping strategies households had to endure. As such, the rCSI

increased from 10.8 in 2019 to 12.5 in 2020, indicating that refugee households were further relying on food-related coping strategies. Iraqi refugees reported a higher increase in rCSI than was the case for refugees of other nationalities.

## LIVELIHOOD COPING STRATEGIES

Livelihood coping strategies are categorized into three types of mechanisms and households are asked whether they had to resort to these types of coping strategies at least once over a 30-day period.

Seventy-six percent of refugee households resorted to at least one type of asset depleting coping strategies in the

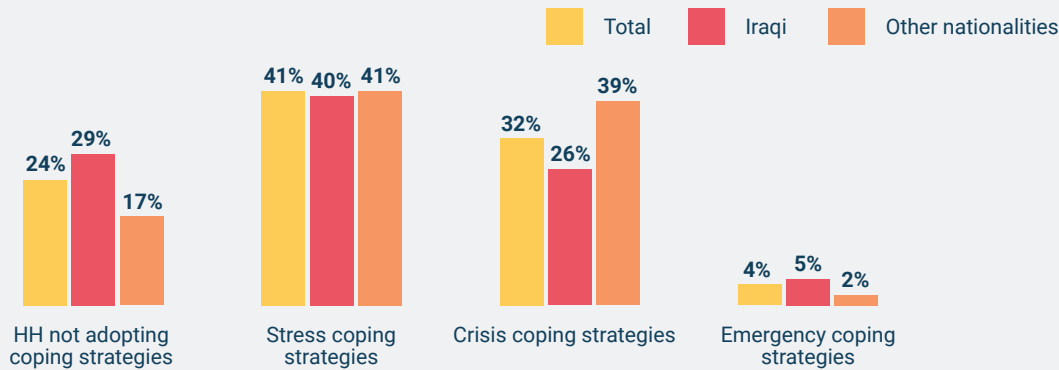
last 30 days, thus approximating the percentage recorded in 2019 (78%). Both Iraqi and other nationality refugees resorted equally to stress coping strategies (40%). Other nationality refugees adopted crisis coping strategies at 39 percent (up by 10 percentage points compared to 2019). Iraqi refugees resorted to emergency coping strategies (5%) more than other nationality refugees (2%).

Table 1. Livelihood coping strategies classifications

Stress coping strategies	Spending household savings, selling household items, buying on credit, debt
Crisis coping strategies	Withdrawing children from school, selling productive assets, marriage of children below the age of 18 years, reducing expenditures on education and on health
Emergency coping strategies	Begging, involving school-age children in income generation, accepting high-risk jobs and selling house or land in the country of origin

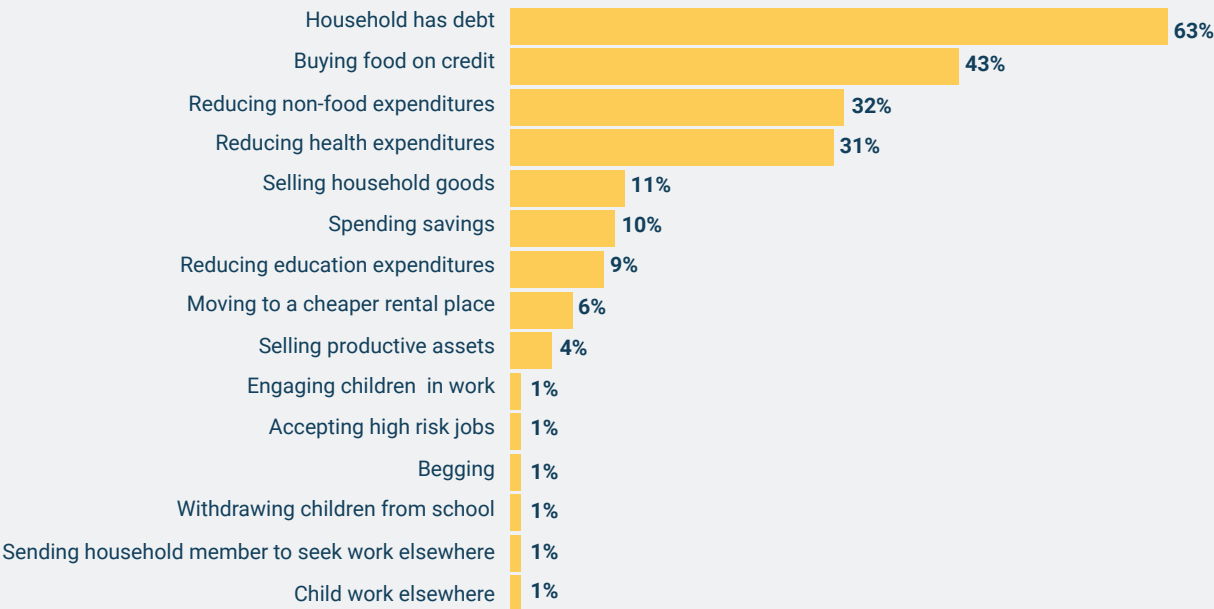


Figure 2. Share of households adopting livelihood coping strategies, by category and nationality



The most common coping strategy adopted was incurring debt at 63 percent (up from 58% in 2019), followed by buying food on credit or borrowing money to purchase food at 43 percent (up from 35% in 2019). The third most common strategy used was reducing essential non-food expenditures (including health and education) at 32 percent.

Figure 3. Use of negative livelihood coping strategies in the past 30 days







# FOOD SECURITY

Food security implies that individuals have physical and economic access to enough quantities of safe and nutritious food at all times<sup>1</sup>. This chapter assesses food security and the extent of food insecurity among refugee households and disaggregates the results by nationality. It also includes indicators that capture the dimensions related to food consumption, which served as a basis for classifying households according to their food security status. Quantity of food was measured by the number of meals consumed, while quality and diversity were captured through the Food Consumption Score (FCS) and Household Dietary Diversity Score (HDDS).

## KEY FINDINGS

- The average number of meals consumed by children under 5 years old in a household on the previous day decreased from 3.2 in 2019 to 2.4 in 2020, and that of adults decreased from 2.2 in 2019 to 1.8 in 2020.
- Forty percent of refugees have unacceptable food consumption (14% poor food consumption and 26% borderline food consumption), similar to last year.
- The percentage of households with food expenditure share greater than 50 percent increased from 23 percent in 2019 to 33 percent in 2020.
- The share of food insecure households increased from 22 percent in 2019 to 33 percent in 2020. Other nationality households were found to be more food insecure than Iraqi households (40% and 28% respectively).



## FOOD CONSUMPTION

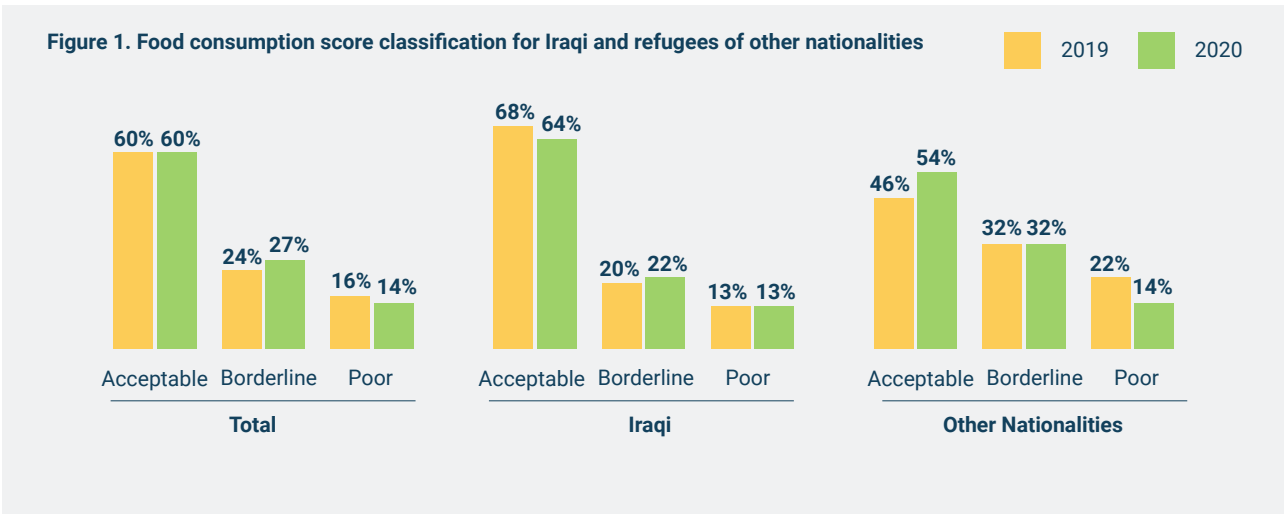
There has been a decrease in the average number of meals consumed by both adults and children under five years old. For adults, the number of meals decreased from 2.2 to 1.8, and for children under five years old, it decreased from 3.2 to 2.4. Iraqi refugees witnessed a lower average number of meals for children under 5 years old compared to other nationality refugees (2.3 vs. 2.5 respectively).

Table 1. Average number of meals consumed per day

	Total	Iraqi	Other nationalities
Adults	1.8	1.9	1.8
Children under 5	2.4	2.3	2.5

The Food Consumption Score (FCS) is a composite indicator that is calculated based on the frequency of consumption of major food groups, considering their relative nutritional importance. A higher FCS indicates a higher probability that the household will achieve nutritional adequacy.

Overall, the share of households with inadequate food consumption remained the same between 2019 (40%) and 2020 (41%). In 2020, other nationality refugees had a higher inadequate food consumption (46%) compared to Iraqi refugees (35%).



The household dietary diversity is a proxy measure which indicates the ability of a household to access food. The number of different food groups consumed is calculated on a weekly and daily basis and categorized into Household Weekly Diet Diversity (HWDD) and Household Daily Average Diet Diversity (HDADD).

In terms of HDADD, the share of households consuming 6.5 or more food groups on a daily basis decreased from

32 percent in 2019 to 24 percent in 2020, with a higher drop among Iraqi refugees (from 40% in 2019 to 26% in 2020). In terms of HWDD, the share of households consuming 9 or more food groups also decreased from 72 percent in 2019 to 64 percent in 2020, with a higher share among Iraqi refugees (74%) compared to other nationality refugees (52%). This indicates that overall dietary diversity decreased on a daily and weekly basis.

Table 2. HWDD and HDADD groups

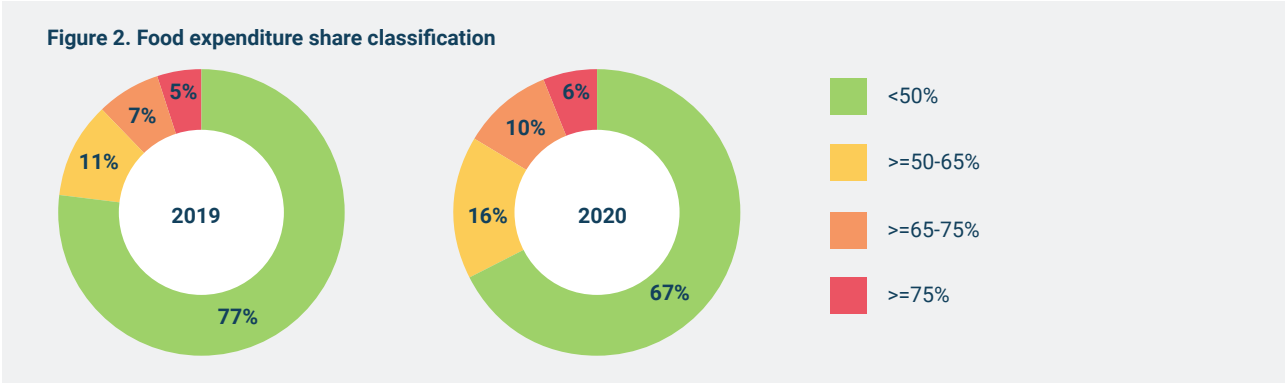
	Household Daily Average Diet diversity			Household Daily Average Diet diversity		
	<4.5 food groups	4.5-6.4 food groups	≥6.5 food groups	≤6 food groups	7-8 food groups	≥9 food groups
Total	27%	49%	24%	7%	29%	64%
IRQ	29%	45%	26%	7%	19%	74%
NonIRQ	24%	54%	22%	8%	40%	52%



## FOOD EXPENDITURE SHARE

Food expenditure share is often used as a proxy for food security. This indicator examines the portion of household expenditures that is allocated for food. Households with a high food expenditure share will often not have enough resources to cover other basic need costs, such as health or education. Food expenditure share is classified as follows: Very high (>75%); High (65%-75%); Medium (50%-65%); Low (<50%).

Thirty-three percent of households had a food expenditure share greater than 50 percent, up by 10 percentage points compared to 2019. This means that in 2020, more household expenditures are allocated for food, leaving less resources to cover other basic needs. Indeed, this reflects the increase in food prices that the country witnessed in 2020 as a result of the inflation that took place.



## FOOD SECURITY

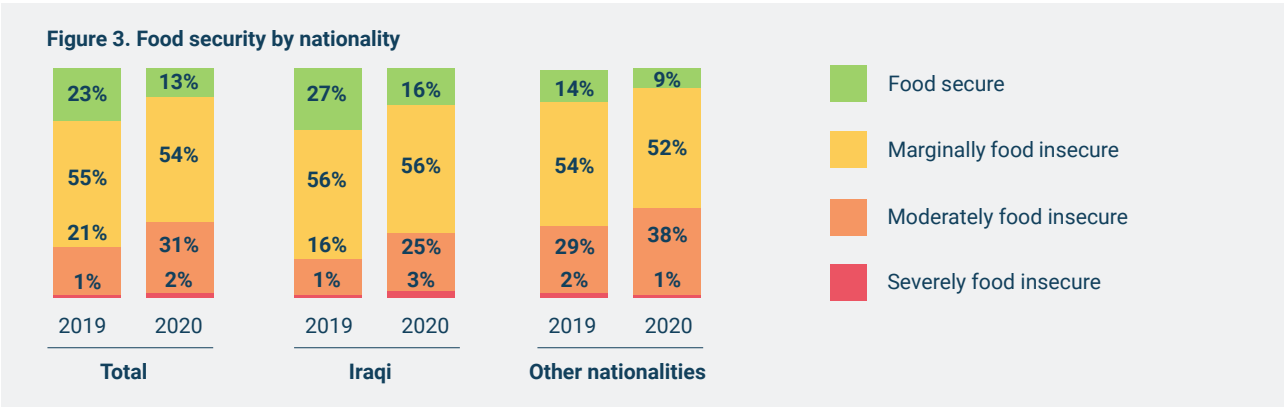
Food security classification is a composite indicator that classifies households into one of four categories: food secure, marginally food insecure, moderately food insecure, and severely food insecure. Food security encompasses three dimensions: food consumption, food expenditure shares, and livelihood coping strategies.

Table 3. Thresholds and point scale for food security classification

	Food Security	Marginal Food Insecurity	Moderate Food Insecurity	Severe Food Insecurity
Food Consumption	Acceptable	Acceptable with food-related coping	Borderline	Poor
Food Expenditure Share	>50%	50-65%	65-75%	<75%
Coping Strategies	Households not adopting coping strategies	Stress coping strategies	Crisis coping strategies	Emergency coping strategies

Overall, food security has deteriorated for all households, with an 11-percentage point increase in the share of food insecure households between 2019 and 2020 (22% vs. 33% respectively). Other nationality households witnessed a

higher share of food insecure households (40%) compared to Iraqi refugees (28%). This indicates that the multifaceted crisis in 2020 has negatively affected the food security situation of the refugee population.







# ECONOMIC VULNERABILITY

In order to assess the economic vulnerability of the refugee households in Lebanon, several variables are taken into perspective. These include the Minimum Expenditure Basket (MEB), debt and the structure and volume of expenditures.

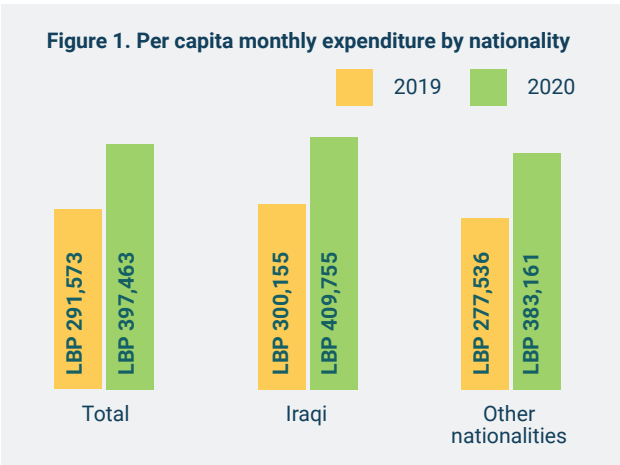
## KEY FINDINGS

- The share of households below the MEB threshold increased from 55 percent in 2019 to 73 percent in 2020.
- Food had the highest share of total expenditures at 43 percent (up from 36% in 2019), followed by rent at 24 percent (down from 31% in 2019).
- Sixty-three percent of refugees are in debt, up from 50 percent in 2019. Other nationality refugees are more indebted (74%) than their Iraqi counterparts (53%). The mean debt for households of other nationalities (including households that did not incur a debt) has increased substantially by 58 percent (LBP 1,043,717 in 2020 up from LBP 658,739 in 2019). Among other nationality households that have contracted a debt, the mean debt per household increased by 49 percent (LBP 1,409,018 in 2020 up from LBP 945,412 in 2019).
- The share of households that have debt greater than LBP 900,000 has increased by 7 percentage points overall (from 25% in 2019 to 32% in 2020) and by 8 percentage points among Iraqi households and by 9 percentage points among other nationality households.
- The main reasons to borrow money were to buy food (53% in 2020 vs 38% in 2019) and to pay rent (33% in 2020 vs 24% in 2019).

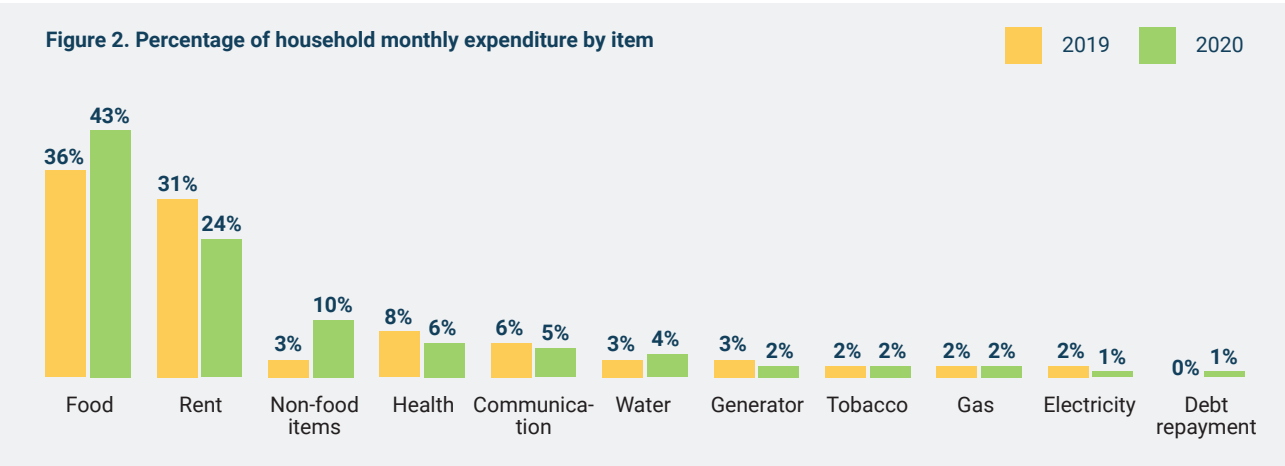


# EXPENDITURES

The average per capita monthly expenditure for all households increased substantially by 36 percent or more than LBP 100,00, with Iraqi refugees reaching a higher per capita monthly expenditure (LBP 409,755) compared to other nationality households (LBP 382,161). This might reflect the inflation of prices of items rather than the volume of items purchased.

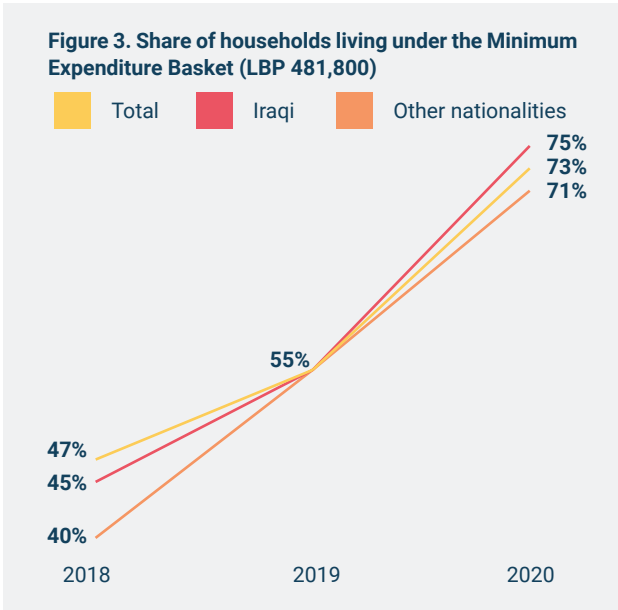


Food had the highest share of expenditures with an increase of 7 percentage points between 2019 and 2020, indicating the inflation of prices of food items. Rent ranked second in terms of expenditures with a decrease of 7 percentage points between 2019 and 2020, indicating that refugees might have moved to cheaper places in 2020. Additionally, the expenditure share of non-food items increased by 7 percentage points, reflecting the rise in prices in 2020. There was also a slight decrease of 2 percentage points in the health expenditure share.



The Minimum Expenditure Basket for Iraqi and other nationality households was adapted from the MEB of the Syrian refugees, with a replacement of the rent component of the basket, as it has been shown in the past that Iraqi and other nationality refugees pay considerably more on rent costs compared to Syrian refugees. Thus, in 2020, the Minimum Expenditure Basket for Iraqi and other nationality refugees was found to be LBP 481,800 per capita per month, up from LBP 264,000 in 2019. This MEB threshold (LBP 481,800) is also higher than that of Syrian refugees in 2020 (LBP 350,200).

The share of households under the MEB threshold substantially increased from 55 percent in 2019 to 73 percent in 2020, with a slightly higher level among other nationality refugees (75%) compared to Iraqi refugees (71%). This reflects the increase in poverty among refugee households who had to endure the multi-pronged crisis in Lebanon over the past year.





## DEBT AND BORROWING MONEY

Sixty-three percent of refugee households reported falling into debt, up by 13 percentage points compared to 2019. Other nationality refugees were in debt more than Iraqi refugees (74% vs. 53% respectively). Overall, the share of households with debt greater than LBP 900,000 increased from 25 percent in 2019 to 32 percent in 2020, with a higher level reported among Iraqi refugees (35%) compared to other nationality refugees (29%).

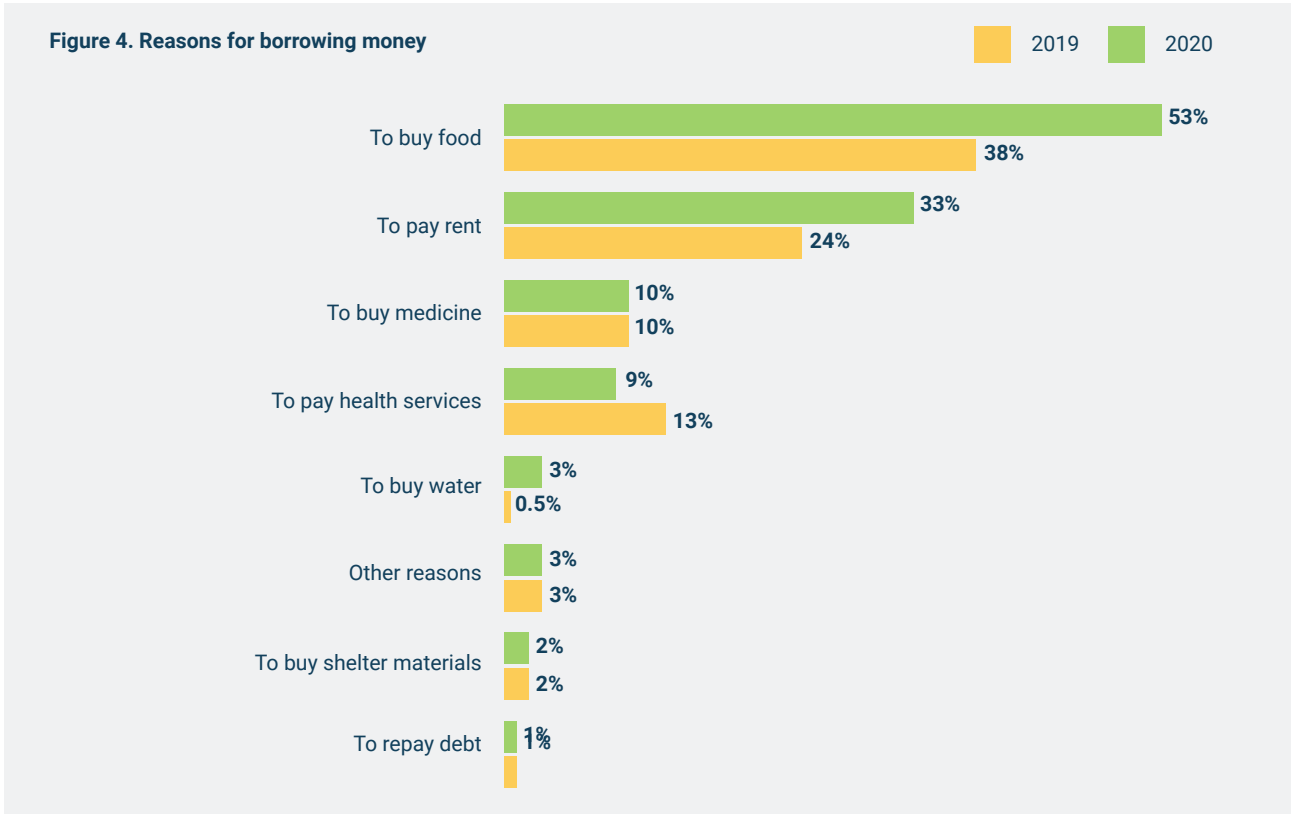
The mean debt per capita for all refugee households increased by 10 percent, reaching LBP 506,762. The mean debt per capita among all other nationality refugee households increased by 46%, reaching LBP 656,000.

The mean debt for other nationality households (including households that do not have debt) considerably increased by 58 percent, reaching LBP 1,044,000 in 2020. Among other nationality refugee households that have a debt, the mean debt per household increased by 49 percent, reaching LBP 1,409,000 in 2020.

Table 1. Debt per household and per capita, by nationality

	Per Household (among all households) (in LBP)		Per Household (only among households with debt) (in LBP)		Per Capita (among all households) (in LBP)		Per Capita (only among households with debt) (in LBP)	
	2019	2020	2019	2020	2019	2020	2019	2020
Total	1,287,000	1,043,000	2,236,000	1,662,000	459,000	507,000	798,000	807,000
Iraqi	1,671,000	1,042,000	3,333,000	1,942,000	466,000	387,000	930,000	721,000
Other nationalities	659,000	1,044,000	945,000	1,409,000	448,000	656,000	643,000	885,000

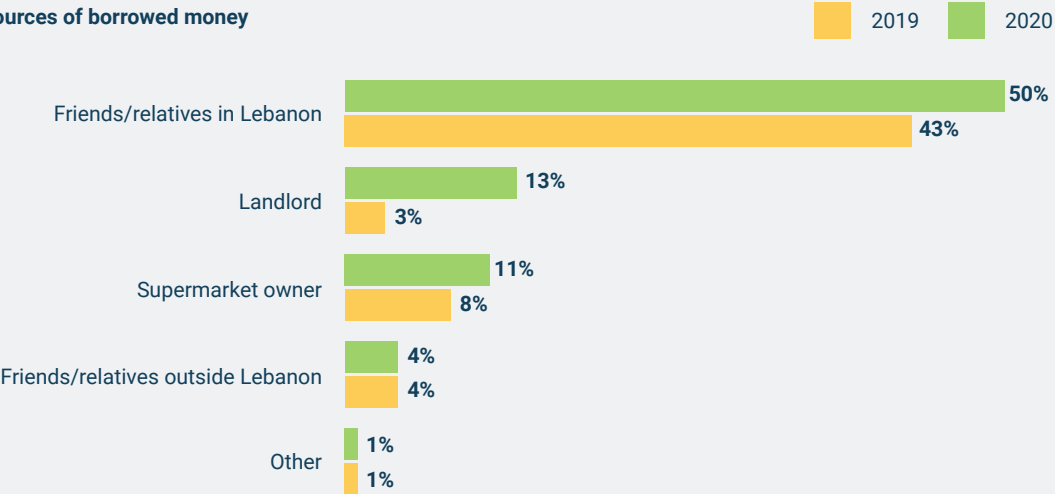
The top reason to borrow money was to buy food at 53 percent, up by 15 percentage points compared to 2019, followed by the need to pay rent at 33 percent, up by 9 percentage points compared to 2019.



Half of the refugee households borrowed money from friends and relatives in Lebanon, up by 7 percentage points compared to 2019. Landlords accounted for the second source of borrowed money, at 13 percent, up by 10 percentage points compared to 2019 (3%); this increment is in line with the increase in households borrowing money to pay rent (33% in 2020 vs. 24% in 2019).

Moreover, a slight increase of 3 percent was seen in the share of households borrowing money from supermarket owners (11% in 2020 vs. 8% in 2019).

Figure 5. Sources of borrowed money







# LIVELIHOODS

This Chapter addresses employment and the source of income. Employment and unemployment levels were probed one week prior to the survey, and covered household members aged 18 years and above, whereas in 2019 it included household members aged 15 years and above. At the household level, the survey investigated the main income sources that households would rely on to cover their living expenses.

## KEY FINDINGS

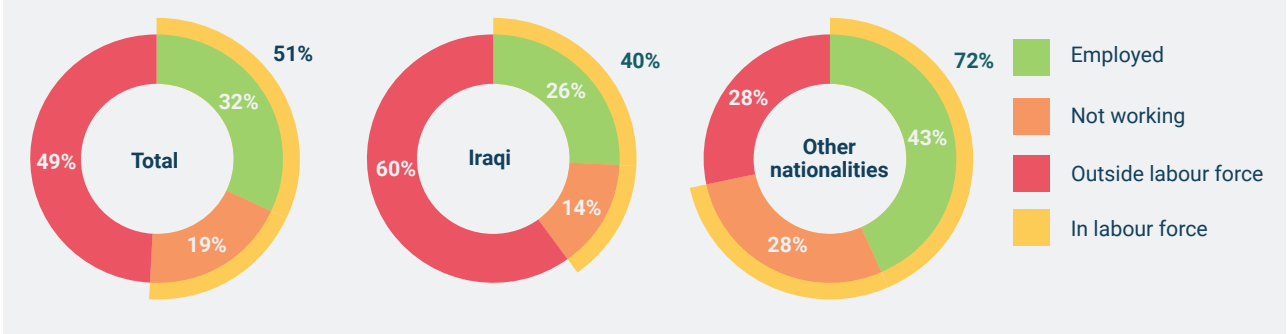
- The employment-to-population ratio decreased from 36 percent in 2019 to 32 percent in 2020 and was higher among other nationality refugees (43%) than among Iraqi ones (26%). The labour force participation rate decreased from 58 percent in 2019 to 51 percent in 2020.
- The average weekly individual income for all sectors decreased from LBP 154,000 in 2019 to LBP 122,000 in 2020.
- The top sector of employment was Other services including restaurant, transport, and personal services at 17 percent, down from 29 percent in 2020.



## EMPLOYMENT STATUS

The labour force represents working age individuals (above 18 years old) who are either working or not working but searching for a job. The labour force participation rate decreased from 58 percent in 2019 to 51 percent in 2020. The employment-to-population ratio decreased by 4 percentage points between 2019 and 2020 (36% vs. 32% respectively), with other nationality refugees reporting a higher level (43%) compared to Iraqi refugees (26%). The unemployment rate remained relatively stable (39% in 2019 vs. 37% in 2020).

Figure 1. Population employment status



The main reason cited for not working was the lack of jobs in the area refugees lived in, at 32 percent (up from 12% in 2019), and prevalent among other nationality refugees (46%) more than Iraqi refugees (26%). The second cited reason was having dependent family members at 22 percent, with higher level among Iraqi refugees (26%) compared to other nationality refugees (12%).

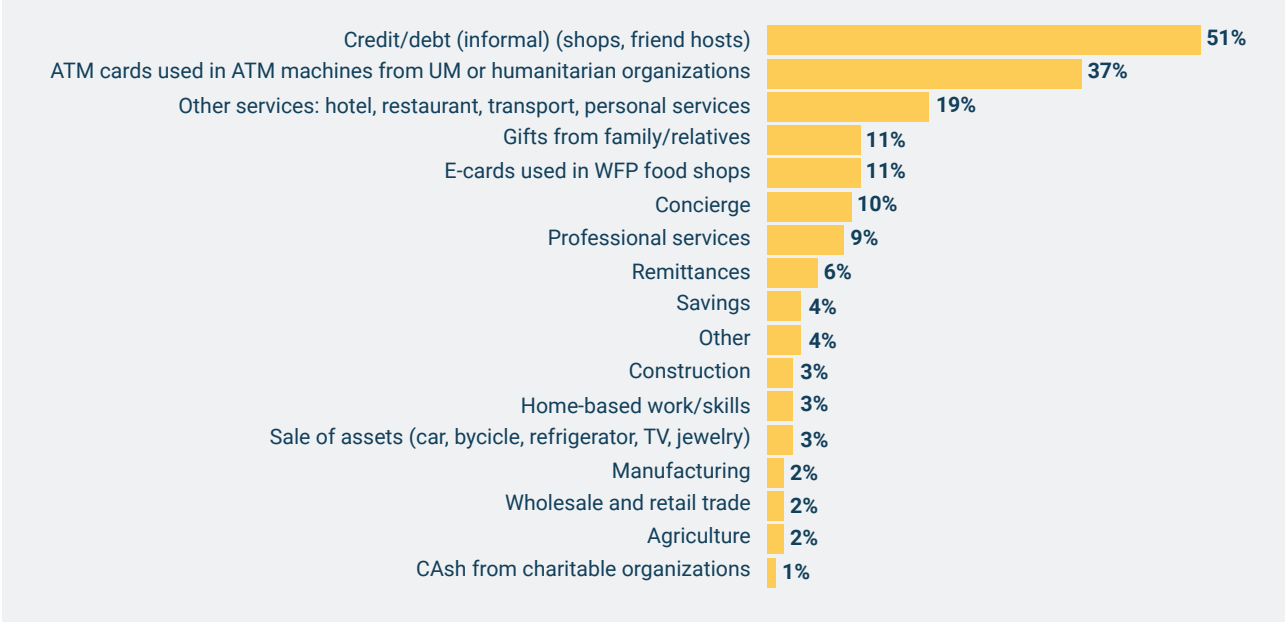
The average individual weekly income from work in all sectors decreased from LBP 154,000 in 2019 to LBP 122,000 in 2020, with a higher level reported among Iraqi refugees (LBP 141,000) compared to other nationality refugees (LBP 101,000).

## SOURCES OF INCOME

The main source of income was Other services including hotel, restaurant, transport, and personal services at 17 percent, down from 29 percent in 2020, as a result of the effect of COVID-19 lockdown measures.

The main three sources of income combined (as shown in the figure below) were informal credit/debt (51%), ATM cards from UN or humanitarian organizations (37%), followed by other services including hotel, restaurant, transport, and personal services (19%).

Figure 2. Main three sources of income (combined)





# RECOMMENDATIONS

## PROTECTION

- Challenges with obtaining legal residency should be addressed through allowing refugees of nationalities to renew their residency based on UNHCR certificates, and an expansion of the fee waiver in place since 11 March 2020. Expanding the fee waiver for legal residency to all categories of refugees is critical for refugee protection. This would in particular allow the increase of refugees' freedom of movement and access to documentation as well as to critical services and to justice.
- Provide alternative procedures for children born to foreign nationals who lack required proof of marriage due to lack of residency, to complete the birth registration process.

## SHELTER

- Additional Cash for Rent programmes could help alleviate the impact of expensive rental costs and reduce the number of families compelled to live in inadequate living conditions.
- Humanitarian actors should expand shelter assistance programmes, including rehabilitation of sub-standard shelter and Cash for Rent is crucial to ensure refugees' right to adequate housing.

## HEALTH

- Increase awareness raising interventions on current medical coverage available to refugees and expand coverage for most vulnerable cases.
- Improve outreach and dissemination of key messages and awareness about COVID-19 among refugees from other nationalities, as only 29% attended information sessions on COVID-19.

## ECONOMIC VULNERABILITY AND COPING STRATEGIES

- With the large increase in the share of the population below the minimum expenditure basket (MEB) (from 55% in 2019 to 73% in 2020) in poverty and the increased number of families who reported having resorted to negative coping strategies, most households require financial resources to urgently and safely meet their basic needs, including food and non-food needs. The basic assistance sector must continue prioritizing regular multi-purpose cash assistance. In addition, it is recommended that partners design and implement large scale cash-based programmes, based on in-depth multi-faceted analyses of transfer modalities, transfer value, and market monitoring and security aspects.
- Efforts should continue to support refugees to be self-reliant through the provision of adequate levels of basic assistance to meet their needs, strengthened support networks to develop positive coping mechanisms, and the promotion of income generating activities that are viable in the current context.

## FOOD SECURITY

- Given the significant deterioration in food security among refugees, the decrease in the average number of meals consumed by both adults and children under five years old, and continued inadequate food consumption, it is recommended to expand horizontally and vertically food and non-food assistance coverage for disadvantaged households.
- More frequent monitoring of food security indicators is needed, in addition to setting thresholds to trigger appropriate mitigation measures at national or subnational levels, including emergency responses. Monitoring activities should also help to better understand access to adequate and nutritious diets and healthcare services and to target and implement assistance programmes.

## LIVELIHOODS

- Support refugee and host communities with the needed skills to enhance their self-reliance, mutual support networks, and to carry out income-generating activities.



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