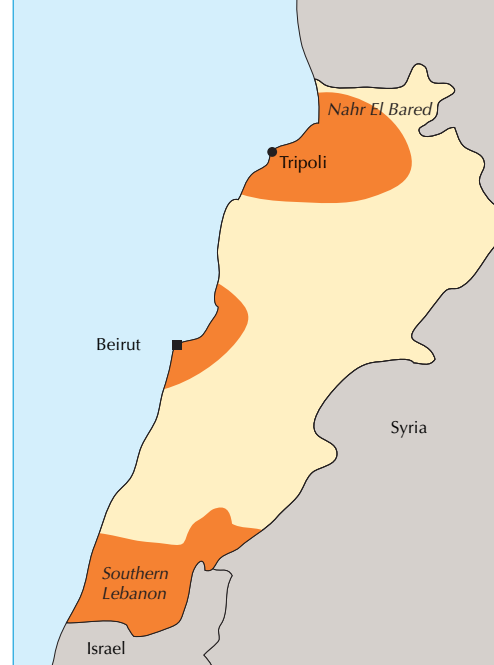


Lebanon

Quick facts

Number of IDPs	90,000–390,000
Percentage of total population	2%–9%
Start of current displacement situation	1975 (civil war); 2006 (Israel-Lebanon war); 2007 (Nahr el Bared); 2008 (intra-Lebanese conflict)
Peak number of IDPs (and year)	1,000,000 (2006)
New displacement in 2008	3,600
Returns in 2008	Undetermined
Causes of displacement	International and internal armed conflict, generalised violence, human rights violations
Human development index	78



The number of IDPs in Lebanon in 2008 was uncertain; in addition to the recorded figures, hundreds of thousands of people were still waiting for compensation for property lost, the full reconstruction of their destroyed homes and the rehabilitation of areas still affected by explosive remnants of war, and reconciliation between the warring parties.

Of the hundreds of thousands displaced by civil war and Israeli invasions up to 2000, the government reported 16,750 still displaced in 2006, while according to government and UN estimates, between 40,000 and 70,000 people were still displaced in February 2008 by the 2006 war between Israeli forces and Hezbollah. Around 24,000 Palestinian refugees were in May 2008 still displaced in northern Lebanon by the 2007 siege and destruction of Nahr el Bared refugee camp and the accompanying fighting between the Lebanese army and militants of Fatah al Islam. Finally, around 660 families, or an estimated 3,600 individuals, were temporarily displaced in mid-2008 by fighting between Lebanese factions in the city of Tripoli, but a peace plan signed by all the parties enabled their return during the year.

IDPs and returnees are thus spread across various areas of the country, but particularly in cities including Beirut. During the civil war many rural communities were displaced into cities, while in the 2006 war, over 80 per cent of people living south of the Litani river moved north, with only those unable to leave (such as elderly people) remaining. The majority of those displaced have sought assistance and shelter from their respective communities, while also receiving some support from national and international agencies.

The protection of IDPs in Lebanon should be considered in a context of continuing insecurity and an economy devastated by repeated conflicts. Surveys have highlighted protection problems faced by different displaced populations, though the findings are likely to be valid for other groups. Psychological trauma has been prevalent among the population at large. People affected by short-term displacement have identified inadequate sanitation and malnutrition as problems.

The impact of war continues in areas of displacement and return. South Lebanon, the southern suburbs of Beirut, and the Bekaa valley bore the brunt of the 2006 conflict and have

historically been among the most deprived areas of Lebanon. Two years after the 2006 conflict ended, there were still delays in compensating people whose houses had been totally destroyed, and delays in their reconstruction. Cluster sub-munitions have contaminated vast areas of farmland in the south. Five children were killed and 78 injured by explosive remnants of war between August 2006 and July 2008.

The siege of Nahr el Bared has had severe consequences for Palestinians and Lebanese living in and around the camp; the destruction of their homes and livelihoods and their ongoing displacement has left them in makeshift shelters. The immediate concern of displaced Palestinians remains the reconstruction of Nahr el Bared, which may be completed in mid-2011 subject to adequate funding.

The perpetrators of displacement and associated human rights abuses have so far enjoyed relative impunity. There have been no criminal prosecutions for acts committed during the 1975–1990 civil war, which included killings, enforced disappearances and arbitrary detentions by various militias and Syrian and Israeli government forces. Similarly, those displaced by more recent events have limited hope of seeing the perpetrators prosecuted.

The Lebanese government has established several coordination structures for northern and southern areas and districts of Beirut to help the recovery and reconstruction efforts of IDPs and returnees. Hezbollah and other organisations have provided significant assistance, social services and reconstruction support. The country's political and economic crisis in 2008 has diverted attention from the plight of those forcibly displaced, and limited the effectiveness of the government's response. Nevertheless reconstruction must go on if the return process is to be sustainable, while those still displaced deserve the continuing protection of the international community.