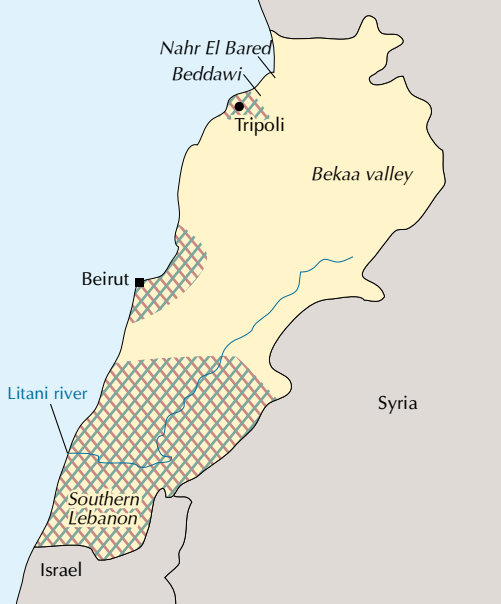


Lebanon



Quick facts

Number of IDPs	90,000–390,000
Percentage of total population	2.1–9.3%
Start of current displacement situation	1975
Peak number of IDPs (Year)	800,000 (2006)
New displacement	0

A number of internal displacement situations have persisted in Lebanon since the 1975–1990 civil war, invasions and an 18-year occupation of southern Lebanon by Israel; a 33-day war in July 2006 between Israel and Hezbollah; the destruction in 2007 of the Nahr el Bared camp for Palestinian refugees; and localised sectarian violence in 2008.

The number of IDPs in Lebanon in 2009 remained uncertain. Of the hundreds of thousands displaced by civil war and Israeli invasions up to 2000, who numbered over 800,000 at one point, the government reported in 2006 that fewer than 17,000 people were still displaced. The outstanding issues facing them related mainly to compensation and in some villages to reconciliation.

There were no clear figures in 2009 on the number still displaced as result of the 2006 war. According to government and UN estimates, between 40,000 and 70,000 people were still displaced in February 2008.

By the end of 2009, around 24,000 Palestinian refugees from the Nahr el Bared camp in northern Lebanon were still displaced, with most of them living in a new settlement adjacent to the camp and the remaining 2,000 or so families living in the neighbouring Beddawi refugee camp. Meanwhile, the majority of people displaced in mid-2008 by fighting between Lebanese factions in the city of Tripoli quickly returned after all the parties signed a peace plan in 2008.

In 2009, IDPs and returnees were dispersed across various areas of the country, but particularly in urban areas. During the civil war, many rural communities were displaced into towns and cities, while in the 2006 war over 80 per cent of people living south of the Litani river moved north, with only those unable or unwilling to leave remaining. The majority of those displaced have sought assistance and shelter from their respective communities, while also receiving support from national and international organisations.

In the context of an economy and society devastated by repeated conflicts, the various internally displaced populations faced a range of problems in 2009. Psychological trauma was prevalent among IDPs, and many continued to live in damaged homes or in temporary shelters without adequate water or electricity supplies.

The people facing most difficulties were those displaced by the war of 2006 and the destruction of Nahr el Bared. South Lebanon, the southern suburbs of Beirut, and the Bekaa valley bore the

brunt of the 2006 conflict. Three years after the conflict ended, delays in reconstruction and compensation payments were still reported. According to a study released at the end of 2008, more than one in five families which suffered housing damage during the 2006 war had been unable to return to permanent housing, and many others appeared to have had to return to their severely damaged or partially destroyed homes; compensation provided had rarely been sufficient to rebuild homes.

The contamination of vast areas of farmlands by unexploded ordnance (UXO) including cluster bomblets continued to place lives at risk and hinder returns in southern Lebanon. In September 2009, work to clear UXO from the 2006 war was still ongoing, but the funding had dried up to the extent that completion of the work was expected to take a further decade.

The siege of Nahr el Bared had had severe consequences for people living in and around the camp; the destruction of their homes and livelihoods and their ongoing displacement had left most of them living in makeshift shelters in the adjacent “new camp”. In February 2009, the first part of a rebuilding effort to house 500 families began, which was scheduled to take about a year to complete. As of late 2009, reconstruction of Nahr el Bared was proceeding, but had been delayed by legal hurdles, political wrangling and a shortage of funds.

Most of the perpetrators of displacement and associated human rights abuses have enjoyed impunity. There have been no criminal prosecutions for acts committed during the civil war including killings, enforced disappearances and arbitrary detentions by various militias and Syrian and Israeli armed forces. Similarly, people displaced by more recent events have limited hope of seeing the perpetrators prosecuted.

The Lebanese government does not have a national IDP policy but has established several institutional mechanisms to address the recovery and reconstruction needs of IDPs and returnees in northern, central and southern Lebanon. The lack of a national policy has at times led to differences in the assistance provided to different displaced communities. The UN and international NGOs continue to assist reconstruction efforts, while Lebanese organisations including Hezbollah’s social institutions have also provided significant assistance, social services and reconstruction support. UNDP administers the reconstruction fund established by the international community following the 2006 war, whereas UNRWA is involved in the reconstruction of Nahr el Bared.