

Lebanon



Quick facts

Number of IDPs	At least 76,000
Percentage of total population	At least 1.7%
Start of current displacement situation	1975
Peak number of IDPs (Year)	800,000 (2006)
New displacement	0
Causes of displacement	Armed conflict, generalised violence
Human development index	–



In 2010 there was no new internal displacement in Lebanon, but the number of people remaining internally displaced was still unclear. There were at least 76,000 IDPs, with some estimates suggesting as many as several hundred thousand. Their displacement had been caused by three periods of conflict or violence: the 1975-1990 civil war and the related interventions by Israel until 2000 and by Syria until 2005; the 33-day war of 2006 between Israel and Hezbollah; and the armed conflict that led to the destruction of the Nahr el-Bared camp for Palestinian refugees in 2007. In addition, Lebanon has regularly witnessed localised sectarian violence resulting in brief displacement, as was the case in Tripoli in 2008.

After the civil war ended, the government set the end of 2002 as the date by which all IDPs should return to their homes. However the US Committee for Refugees and Immigrants estimated in 2004 that between 50,000 and more than 500,000 people were still displaced. No common understanding was ever reached by the Lebanese on the definition and number of IDPs. The Ministry of Displacement (MoD) was established to address the situation of the people displaced due to the civil war, and it provided assistance to enable IDPs to rebuild their homes; however, the lack of effective reconciliation or remedy for past human rights violations stood in the way of their achievement of durable solutions.

The UN estimated in 2007 that from 40,000 to 70,000 people were still internally displaced due to the war of 2006. In 2010 information gathered by IDMC indicated that only very few people were still displaced following the 2006 war, but no information was available on how the rest had achieved durable solutions.

In addition about 26,000 Palestinians remained displaced in 2010 by the destruction of Nahr el-Bared camp in 2007. At the end of the year, nearly 16,000 Palestinians displaced by the destruction of the camp were living in the area adjacent to the camp, with over 10,000 of these still living in temporary accommodation. Another 10,000 Palestinians displaced by the destruction of Nahr el-Bared were still living in the nearby Beddawi camp.

In 2010, IDPs in Lebanon continued to face a range of problems in a society which remained divided along sectarian lines, with an economy which had been devastated by repeated conflicts. Many continued to live in damaged houses or in temporary shelters without adequate water or electricity

supplies. This was particularly true for those displaced from Nahr el-Bared: the entire camp was destroyed in the 2007 fighting between the army and members of the militant Fatah al-Islam organisation, and its reconstruction had since been relatively slow, with the first planned group of 143 buildings, intended for over 430 families, still to be completed by the end of 2010.

In 2010, IDPs and returnees were dispersed in 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 fled north, with only those unable or unwilling to leave remaining. This area of southern Lebanon still witnessed small-scale skirmishes and remained contaminated by unexploded ordnance, both of which continued to stand in the way of sustainable returns. Many IDPs had received monetary compensation instead of assistance with the reconstruction of their pre-war homes, and a large number of these people had settled in the southern suburbs of Beirut, often in inadequate accommodation, instead of returning to the south.

The Lebanese government does not have an overall national policy on internal displacement, despite having established several mechanisms to address the recovery and reconstruction needs of IDPs and returnees, and so its responses to the different displacement crises, and the assistance which it has provided to different displaced communities, have not been consistent.

The UN and international NGOs have continued to assist reconstruction efforts. The international community established a reconstruction fund following the 2006 war, and UNDP has administered the fund; meanwhile UNRWA led the reconstruction of Nahr el-Bared.

While also receiving support from national and international organisations, the majority of IDPs sought assistance and shelter from their respective communities. Sectarian organisations including the Courant du Future and most notably Hezbollah provided significant assistance after the 2006 war, including social services and reconstruction support to affected communities, particularly in Beirut's southern suburbs and south Lebanon.