

After the ceasefire: current situation, humanitarian needs, and outlook

OVERVIEW

The recent ceasefire agreement in Lebanon between Israel and the armed group and political party Hezbollah took effect on 27 November 2024, marking the end of 14 months of hostilities between the two parties (BBC 27/01/2025; The Washington Institute for Near East Policy 28/01/2025).

According to the initial terms of the ceasefire agreement, Hezbollah was required to withdraw from the area between the Blue Line – Lebanon and Israel’s unofficial, UN-drawn border – and the Litani River, approximately 30km to the north. Israeli forces were expected to withdraw from Lebanese territory and allow the Lebanese Armed Forces (LAF) to deploy alongside UN peacekeepers. All these measures were to be carried out over a 60-day period from the start of the ceasefire, with the initial withdrawal deadline set for 26 January (BBC 27/01/2025 and BBC 27/11/2024; UN News 26/11/2024).

Accusations and delays in implementation led to the ceasefire’s extension until 18 February. Israel accused the Lebanese Government of failing to fully implement its part of the agreement by not asking Hezbollah to leave southern Lebanon. At the same time, the Israeli army continued maintaining its presence in southern Lebanon in violation of the agreement (WH 26/01/2025; BBC 27/01/2025; France 24 13/02/2025). Until 18 February, the Israeli military had been stationed in several areas in southern Lebanon, occupying parts of Lebanon, enforcing movement restrictions, and preventing people from returning to more than 60 villages in the region (OCHA 24/01/2025; Anera 16/01/2025). On 18 February, as part of the ceasefire terms, Israeli forces withdrew from these border villages, allowing the LAF to take control of the area (AP 18/02/2025).

By the end of February, LAF troops had deployed to Aabbasiyyeh, Bint Jbeil, Blida, Houla, Kafr Kila, Mahbib, Majidieh, Marjayoun, Markaba, Maroun Al Ras, Mays Al Jabal, Odaisseh, Yaron, and multiple other locations in southern Lebanon near the Israeli border (AP 18/02/2025; Times of Israel 18/02/2025). In violation of the agreement, however, Israeli troops remained deployed at five ‘strategic points’ or hilltops – in Al Awaida, Al Aziyah, Al Hamames, Jabal Bilat, and Labbouneh – overlooking areas on both sides the border (AP 18/02/2025; Times of Israel 18/02/2025; CNN 18/02/2025; AJ 18/02/2025).

Despite the ceasefire, Lebanon continues to grapple with severe humanitarian challenges, as widespread destruction has worsened the country’s economic and social crises, further straining essential services and deepening affected populations’ needs (ICRC 04/01/2025). The numerous ceasefire violations add to the uncertainty of an already fragile situation (OCHA

16/01/2025). Israel has repeatedly violated the ceasefire, carrying out over 330 shelling and aerial strikes during the first 60 days of the truce, while also intensifying ground operations in southern Lebanon, including large-scale clearing and property destruction (ACLEDA 29/01/2025). On 27 January, Israeli forces fired on civilians attempting to return home. 17 were wounded and two died (Al Jazeera 27/01/2025). The day before, Israeli forces killed 22 civilians and wounded 123 as they attempted to return home (Reuters 27/01/2025; AJ 26/01/2025; The Washington Institute for Near East Policy 28/01/2025). Israel has also accused Hezbollah of failing to comply with the agreement by not fully withdrawing its combatants and military equipment from southern Lebanon (NYT 18/02/2025; AA 05/01/2025)

ABOUT THIS REPORT

Aim

This report provides an overview of the humanitarian situation in Lebanon following the ceasefire between Israel and Hezbollah. The report examines the impact of the conflict on key civilian infrastructure and sheds light on the continuing needs of the affected population –including IDPs and returnees. The report also explains humanitarian access constraints and response capacities as well as provides a brief forward-looking analysis of potential developments in Lebanon, including challenges related to the current ceasefire and potential impacts.

Methodology

This report is primarily based on a review of publicly available secondary data and information, including analytical reports by humanitarian organisations, think tanks, and media sources. To enhance the analysis and test analytical assumptions, ACAPS also conducted one key informant interview with an expert on Lebanon’s current political landscape.

Limitations

As the situation is rapidly evolving, this report is unable to detail all the current humanitarian impacts of the conflict between Hezbollah and Israel. As such, if unforeseen factors emerge and shift the course of events, the outlook analysis provided here may also not materialise, or only materialise partially.



The most recent United States Agency for International Development (USAID) funding freeze also makes estimating funding gaps for the humanitarian response and response capacities in Lebanon challenging. Uncertainty persists regarding the implementation of both the freeze and the waivers on humanitarian programmes in Lebanon, limiting a clear assessment of the response and potential gaps.

HUMANITARIAN ACCESS CONSTRAINTS

Although the ceasefire is in place and some IDPs have started returning to their homes in southern villages, many areas continue to experience access challenges resulting from the presence of unexploded ordnance (UXO), potential chemical contamination, and severely damaged critical infrastructure and housing (DFS/H2H 12/02/2025; OCHA 24/01/2025; Action Against Hunger, 10/12/2024).

Roads and bridges in affected areas have been destroyed or rendered impassable, limiting the delivery of aid and complicating civilian returns. The collapse of residential and public buildings has also rendered many locations structurally unsafe, increasing the dangers faced by both returning civilians and humanitarian personnel (DFS/H2H 12/02/2025; Action Against Hunger 10/12/2024; OCHA 24/01/2025).

The Israeli army's use of white phosphorus munitions along Lebanon's southern border has further aggravated risks, likely leaving behind chemical contamination that threatens both the environment and the civilian population (AI 31/10/2023; MEM 08/01/2024). UXO and landmine contamination, resulting from the most recent conflict, continue to pose serious security and safety concerns in affected for both civilians and humanitarian personnel (DFS/H2H 12/02/2025; OCHA 24/01/2025; Action Against Hunger 10/12/2024; MEM 08/01/2024).

On 18 February, Israeli forces withdrew from populated areas in southern Lebanon while still maintaining a presence on five hilltops or 'strategic points' (AP 18/02/2025; Times of Israel 18/02/2025; CNN 18/02/2025; OCHA 24/02/2025). On the same day, the LAF started conducting searches for and disposal of UXO, as well as assessments of other safety and security hazards in the areas and villages vacated by Israeli troops (AP 18/02/2025). Municipal and disaster risk reduction authorities estimated that around 20% of residents had begun returning to Lebanon's border villages following the Israeli withdrawal, with the majority yet to return. Return rates are expected to fluctuate in the coming weeks, however, as many households discover their homes destroyed and face challenges accessing essential services in heavily damaged areas (OCHA 24/02/2025).

Despite the ceasefire, lack of safety and security remains a major concern. Israeli airstrikes continue, further undermining humanitarian access and increasing the risk of renewed internal displacement. On 23 February, Israel conducted airstrikes in southern Lebanon, specifically targeting areas near the towns of Al Qalila and Al Ansar (The Guardian 23/02/2025).

HUMANITARIAN CRISIS IMPACT

Internal displacement

Following the ceasefire, a significant movement of IDPs returning to their areas of origin began. By 13 February, a total of 918,769 IDPs had returned to their cadastre¹ of origin, while 115,234 remain displaced (OCHA 18/02/2025). The districts of Baalbek, Nabatiye, and Sour recorded the highest number of return movements (OCHA 06/01/2025; DFS/H2H 12/02/2025).

By 1 February, while the numbers of people still residing in collective shelters has reduced, 3,055 displaced individuals still remain in 38 collective shelters – mostly public and private buildings – across Lebanon (OCHA 01/02/2025; DFS/H2H 12/02/2025). The rest are residing with extended family members or are renting property.

Among the displaced returning to their districts of origin, many remain internally displaced, as their homes have been damaged or destroyed (Anera 16/01/2025). Population movements to and from southern Lebanon remain dynamic, with many families returning temporarily to assess the condition of their properties. In Nabatiye, Saida, and Sour, returns have largely been short-term, as there is extensive damage to homes, public and private infrastructure, and limited access to essential services in these areas. Israeli airstrikes continue to pose significant security risks, preventing sustainable returns and hindering people's ability to meet their basic needs or resume livelihood activities (Anera 16/01/2025; AJ 09/02/2025). One such attack took place on 23 January and targeted six southern Lebanese towns, resulting in injuries to at least one civilian. As justification for the attacks, Israeli officials claimed to be targeting Hezbollah rocket sites (AA 23/02/2025).

By 1 February, the Bekaa governorate was continuing to host seven collective IDP sites, sheltering 48 households (around 234 people) in total. Most of the displaced originate from villages in the southern border areas, where returns remain unsafe (see humanitarian access constraints section). By the same date, Beirut governorate still had nine operational collective sites, Nabatiye governorate had eight, and South governorate had six. In North Governorate, according to Lebanon's Disaster Risk Management Unit, nearly all collective shelters operational between September–November 2024 had been vacated by 1 February, with only one remaining in Tripoli, accommodating ten displaced families (OCHA 01/02/2025).

¹ Cadastre: legally registered home areas (Arab Land Initiative accessed on 02/03/2025).



Housing

The recent conflict resulted in wide-scale destruction of civilian housing, with about 100,000 units across the country damaged or destroyed completely (HRW 17/02/2025). Among these, by 14 November 2024, 18% were classified as completely destroyed and 82% sustained partial damage (GFDRR/WB 14/11/2024).

The south of Lebanon was hit the hardest, especially the villages and towns within 5km of the Lebanon-Israel border. From 8 October 2023 to 23 September 2024, around 80% of Israeli airstrikes targeted areas within 5km of the border (Mercy Corps 23/12/2024). After 23 September, in preparation for what Israel referred to as the 'next phase' of the conflict, Israel escalated its attacks on Lebanon, resulting in the deadliest strikes since the beginning of the conflict (CNN 24/09/2024). From 23 September to 12 November 2024, Israel conducted 6,068 air and artillery strikes, primarily targeting southern Beirut, the Bekaa Valley, and southern Lebanon, with 21% of strikes aimed at the 5km border zone (Mercy Corps 23/12/2024).

The governorates of Bint Jbeil, Marjayoun, Nabatiye, Saida, and Tyre were the worst affected, accounting for 81% of the total assessed damage and losses (GFDRR/WB 14/11/2024). Alongside airstrikes, Israel's ground invasion along Lebanon's southern border also caused extensive property damage, much of which from demolitions, seemingly part of Israel's efforts to create a buffer zone along its border (Mercy Corps 23/12/2024; Times of Israel 27/06/2024). According to ACLED's data, in the first 60 days following the ceasefire, Israeli troops escalated their razing operations in southern Lebanon, with over 260 recorded incidents of property destruction (ACLED 29/01/2025).

In Lebanon, according to The World Bank, the financial impact of physical damage and economic losses from the conflict is estimated at USD 8.5 billion (WB 14/11/2024). The housing sector has suffered the most, with nearly 100,000 units partially or fully damaged, resulting in USD 3.2 billion in losses and damage (GFDRR/WB 14/11/2024).

Lebanon's housing sector was already in difficulty following the 2019 economic crisis. Rising inflation, currency devaluation, and the surging costs of building materials led to the abandonment and incompleteness of many private housing projects across the country (GFDRR/WB 14/11/2024). The Government's reconstruction capacity is extremely limited, and many families have lost their incomes, challenging their ability to rebuild at their own expense (TNH 16/01/2025).

Amid the 14-month conflict between Hezbollah and Israel, the demand for rental accommodation in safer areas of Lebanon surged, leading to increased prices (Al Arabiya 22/11/2024). While the hostilities have ceased, rental prices continue to increase (Asharq Al-Awsat 31/12/2024; Al Manar 06/01/2025). This makes affordable accommodation increasingly inaccessible for shelter-vulnerable populations, especially those whose houses have been damaged or destroyed.

Agriculture and food security

The recent conflict has severely affected the agriculture sector, aggravating food insecurity across the country. Historically, and before the recent conflict, southern Lebanon was an agricultural hub, contributing significantly to the country's food production and comprising around 80% of Bekaa, Nabatiye, and South governorate GDPs. These governorates were also supplying most of the agricultural outputs for local and international markets (GFDRR/WB 14/11/2024). South governorate is a key agricultural hub, producing most of Lebanon's bananas, citrus, tropical fruits, and a significant share of its olive trees. The Bekaa region is a major grape producer. In Nabatiye, agriculture centres on crops such as olives, tobacco, cereals, and various fruits and vegetables (FAO 09/2024; GFDRR/WB 14/11/2024).

The agricultural sector in southern Lebanon was also one of the main sources of income for some of the poorest households, supporting around 60% of households through daily farming (GFDRR/WB 14/11/2024). During the 14 months of hostilities, bombings resulted in damage to land and crops, which, coupled with displacement, deprived 60% of farmers of their main income (Fair Trade Lebanon 07/11/2024). The olive harvest was also severely disrupted. Olive trees account for 22% of the country's total agricultural land, with over half of Lebanese farmers reliant on this crop for their livelihoods. In 2024, the conflict not only damaged olive groves but also prevented nearly 100,000 farmers and their families from accessing their primary source of income (NRC 24/01/2025). Farmers' income losses from the damage to olive production is expected to persist in 2025, as fires caused by the conflict burnt and destroyed around 60,000 olive trees (AA 06/03/2024).

The conflict not only severely affected farmer livelihoods and agricultural assets, but also led to an increase in food insecurity from pre-crisis levels (WFP 22/01/2025). Food insecurity was a pre-existing challenge in Lebanon before the onset of direct conflict between Israel and Hezbollah (FEWS NET 01/03/2024). Since September 2024, however, when the conflict escalated, disruptions to the local economy and agricultural production, alongside displacement and restricted humanitarian access, have become significant compounding factors, directly or indirectly aggravating food insecurity in the country (FAO 03/02/2025). According to the IPC, 1.65 million people in Lebanon will be experiencing Crisis (IPC Phase 3) or above levels of food insecurity between December 2024 and March 2025, compared to 1.26 million before the escalation (FAO 03/02/2025; FAO/WFP 22/01/2025). The highest levels of acute food insecurity have been recorded in the districts most affected by the conflict, including Baalbek, Bint Jbeil, El Hermel, Marjayoun, Nabatiye, and Sour in southern Lebanon (IPC 17/01/2025).

Existing socio-economic vulnerabilities and limited social protections mean that Lebanon's refugee population is especially vulnerable to food insecurity. Approximately 594,000 Syrian refugees (40% of the Syrian refugee population) and 89,000 Palestinian refugees (40% of the Palestinian refugee population) are classified as experiencing IPC 3 or higher.

As for the Lebanese population, around 970,000 Lebanese residents (25% of the population) fall into the same category (FAO/WFP 22/01/2025; ACTED et al. 31/05/2019).

Pre-existing chronic vulnerabilities such as limited household purchasing power and prolonged economic decline mean that markets are still struggling to recover (FAO/WFP 22/01/2025; DFS/H2H 12/02/2025). Although the currency has relatively stabilised since 2024, rising inflation remains a key driver of food insecurity across the country, as persistently high food prices continue to strain household purchasing power (FAO 03/02/2025).

Electricity and WASH

The 14-month conflict between Israel and Hezbollah caused significant damage to Lebanon's critical civilian infrastructure, particularly the electricity and water sectors. Overall, 40 of 118 water facilities or assets were damaged and 12 destroyed, affecting water access for at least half a million people (UNDP 21/01/2025; DFS/H2H 12/02/2025). Most of the damage to water infrastructure was reported in Bint Jbeil, Marjayoun, and Nabatiye governorates (UNDP 21/01/2025; DFS/H2H 12/02/2025). To compensate for the lack of water supply in southern Lebanon, especially in the villages on the border with Israel most affected by Israeli airstrikes, Lebanon's water authorities resorted to delivering water by truck to villages in Bint Jbeil, Marjayoun, and Sour (L'Orient Today 30/01/2025). UNICEF estimates that in 2025, at least three million people in Lebanon will require WASH services, compared to 2.6 million prior the current crisis (UNICEF 12/2024; DFS/H2H 12/02/2025).

Limited access to water has been further aggravated by power shortages and damage to electricity networks. Even before the recent conflict, Lebanon faced severe electricity shortages, with state-run *Electricité du Liban* providing only four–six hours of power per day. The conflict further deteriorated electricity supplies, causing extensive damage to power infrastructure, with over 80% of the grid destroyed (UNDP 21/01/2025; DFS/H2H 12/02/2025).

Following the ceasefire, the South Lebanon Water Authority initiated an emergency plan to 'assess and repair' the damage to water and sanitation networks caused by Israeli attacks. Despite the water authority collaborating with UNICEF and the International Committee of the Red Cross to restore water supply to southern towns, progress has been hampered by funding limitations. The situation is also further aggravated by severe water shortages in the Mount Lebanon governorate as a result of reduced rainfall (Mercy Corps 10/01/2025).

The disruption to WASH services raises the risk of waterborne and water-related disease spread, such as typhoid fever, viral hepatitis, and dysentery (Action Against Hunger 10/12/2024; DFS/H2H 12/02/2025). The extensive damage to water and sanitation infrastructure is also a significant challenge for families attempting to return home, conscious that poor living conditions in places of return expose them to the risk of disease and poor quality of life (Action Against Hunger 10/12/2024; DFS/H2H 12/02/2025).

Health

During the escalation of hostilities between Israel and Hezbollah, Israeli armed forces continuously targeted medical facilities and healthcare workers (AJ 17/11/2024; HRW 30/10/2024). Overall, since 8 October 2023, there have been 161 recorded attacks on healthcare facilities, leading to 241 deaths and 296 injuries among healthcare workers on duty (OCHA 06/02/2025).

According to Médecins Sans Frontières, access to healthcare remains a significant challenge, as many medical facilities, including hospitals and clinics, have been destroyed or damaged (MSF 21/01/2025). According to a UNDP assessment conducted between 5–15 December 2024, health facilities in Baalbek, Bint Jbeil, Nabatiye, and Sour governorates have been most affected (UNDP 21/01/2025).

Although most health facilities have reopened since the ceasefire agreement, three hospitals in Bint Jbeil, Mays Al Jabal, and Salah Ghandour and 26 primary healthcare centres across the country remain closed. 98 primary healthcare centres were destroyed during the conflict and 51 sustained partial damage but were able to resume operations following emergency repairs. In the south of Lebanon, healthcare workers and health facilities are still susceptible to attacks. At least one attack on healthcare was reported since the start of the ceasefire, on 26 January 2025, resulting in injuries to one health worker (OCHA 06/02/2025).

Disruptions to service delivery has led to longer waiting times for patients, decreased access to healthcare overall, and worsening health inequities (GFDRR/WB 14/11/2024). These effects, in turn, could lead to increasing morbidity and mortality, especially for people with chronic health conditions.

Returnees in the south face heightened health risks from UXO and severely damaged infrastructure, all of which pose immediate physical dangers. The destruction of water and sanitation facilities has also severely compromised access to clean water and proper hygiene, creating an environment conducive to the spread of communicable diseases (OCHA 06/02/2025).

Education

The conflict in Lebanon has had severe impacts on the education sector, displacing around 150,000 public and 300,000 private school students during the 2024/2025 academic year. Nearly all schools across the country remained closed during the escalation of hostilities between September–November 2024, disrupting access to education for up to 1.5 million children. The start of the 2024/2025 academic year, which typically begins in the middle of August, was postponed until 4 November, resulting in lost school time (HRW 17/02/2025; GFDRR/WB 14/11/2024; Edarabia accessed 02/16/2025).

The conflict also resulted in physical damage to the education sector. A total of 83 educational institutions were affected across Bint Jbeil, Nabatiye, and Tyre in southern Lebanon, as well as in Baalbek and Baabda in the northeastern and central regions. Of these 83 institutions, at least 60 schools were destroyed (HRW 17/02/2025).

Following the ceasefire agreement, schools officially reopened on 7 January (Anera 16/01/2025). The rehabilitation of schools damaged or used as shelters during the conflict is an urgent need, however, alongside the removal of UXO from surrounding areas (OCHA 06/02/2025).

By 30 January, four schools were still being used as IDP shelters (OCHA 30/01/2025). There also remains uncertainty regarding the number of fully functional schools and the extent to which students and teachers have been able to resume regular in-class learning activities.

Protection

Despite the ceasefire agreement, insecurity caused by continued violations means that protection risks for Lebanon's affected population persist (WFP 08/01/2025; AJ 09/02/2025; AA 20/02/2025).

The Israeli ground invasion along Lebanon's southern border caused widespread damage to critical infrastructure and houses, mostly from demolitions, seemingly as part of Israel's 'deliberate policy' of establishing a de-facto buffer zone (Atlantic Council 07/02/2025; Mercy Corps 23/12/2025). The level of destruction has made it impossible for many residents to return to their villages and homes, aggravating internal displacement (HRW 17/02/2025). Displacement is eroding familial and social support networks, as families and communities can be scattered across different regions, making it difficult to maintain close ties with relatives and neighbours (OCHA 06/01/2025). Weakened support systems also make women and girls more vulnerable to gender-based violence and other protection risks (DFS/H2H 12/02/2025). People with disabilities are also facing greater protection risks, particularly as a result of damaged housing and infrastructure, limited mobility, and barriers to accessing healthcare and essential services (DFS/H2H 12/02/2025).

Children also face increased protection risks, as family separation can lead to abuse, neglect, and even trafficking in some cases (DFS/H2H 12/02/2025; UNICEF 04/12/2024). The Israel-Hezbollah conflict has deeply affected children, leading to prolonged mental distress and lasting trauma, including symptoms such as increased anxiety, withdrawal, aggression, difficulty concentrating, or an inability to sleep (UNICEF 31/10/2024). As families face increasing levels of food insecurity, an estimated 526,000 children in Lebanon are expected to face IPC 3 or above levels of food insecurity by March 2025. There is also concern that children of affected households may be forced into child labour to help families meet their basic needs (STC 20/01/2025).

OUTLOOK

Fragile peace with sporadic attacks

Despite Israel's continued presence in Lebanon and mutual accusations of ceasefire violations, no major escalations have taken place since the ceasefire was agreed (AP 04/01/2025). There is a chance the ceasefire will hold for the near future, with sporadic clashes that are unlikely to develop into wider conflict (AP 04/01/2025; KII 11/02/2025; ACLED 29/01/2025).

During the ceasefire, Israel has continued targeting Hezbollah and its political allies. Israeli officials have also confirmed that Israel will continue to do so in the future, in order to prevent the group from rebuilding and threatening Israel's security (BBC 12/02/2025). On 17 February, Israel targeted a Hamas military commander in the Lebanese city of Sidon (AJ 17/02/2025).

While sporadic clashes are likely to continue, available analyses suggest that Hezbollah is too weak to escalate the conflict; both sides, in fact, are unwilling to resume the fighting (KII 11/02/2025; AJ 09/02/2025). Hezbollah itself is also signalling that it is unlikely to escalate against Israel in the near future, as the group is likely focused on rebuilding its capabilities (CNN 18/02/2025; ACLED 29/01/2025). Any response from Hezbollah will likely be limited because of its current position (AJ 09/02/2025). The group also appears to have less access to weapons after the ousting of President Bashar Al Assad in Syria. The former Syrian president had strong ties with Iran and Hezbollah, allowing Hezbollah to access arms and train its fighters in Syria (AP 14/12/2024; Chatham House 13/12/2024). Since the ousting of Assad, Hezbollah seems to have lost access to the land route used for restocking weapons from Iran through Syria. After months of active conflict between Hezbollah and Israel, the group's military capacities have also taken a heavy toll, with significant losses in personnel (including upper leadership), weaponry, and military bases, further straining its current operational capabilities (AJ 09/02/2025; CFR 27/01/2025).

Similarly, the LAF is not militarily equipped and financially resourced enough to face Israel alone. Lebanon's economic crisis has left the LAF critically underfunded and reliant on international aid and grants, including from the United States, Qatar, and EU countries. During recent escalations, the LAF's primary role was the provision of humanitarian support to civilians in southern Lebanese villages. The LAF's limited capacity suggests it is unlikely to escalate against Israel (The New Arab 14/10/2024; DW 28/09/2024).

Insecurity along the Lebanese-Israeli border

Prior to 18 February, Israeli forces were a key factor in localised violence in areas where they were present. By 18 February, Israeli troops had withdrawn only partially from the south of Lebanon, while still occupying five 'strategic points' along the border (AP 18/02/2025; Times of Israel 18/02/2025; CNN 18/02/2025; AJ 18/02/2024). ACAPS has limited information on whether civilians used to live in or around these locations, but the proximity of Israeli troops to villages and towns in the south could pose a threat to civilian populations in nearby areas, aggravating insecurity and preventing people from returning home out of fear of escalation.

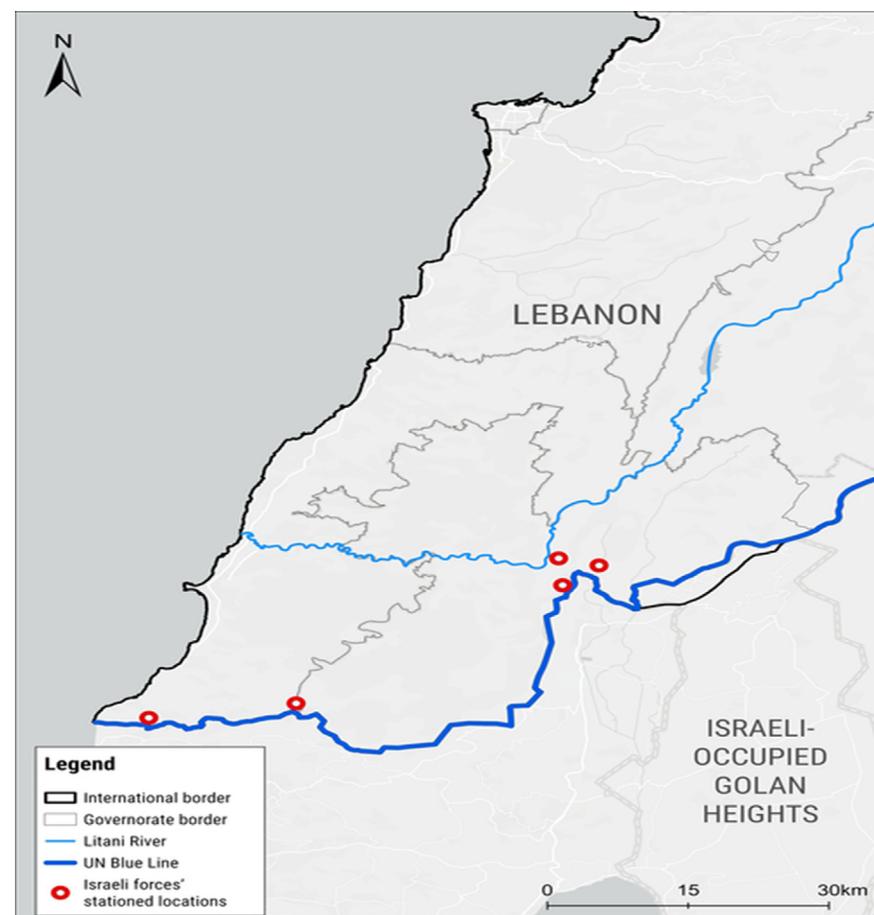
Maintaining the status quo with limited rehabilitation and reconstruction

Both Hezbollah and the new Lebanese Government provided some monetary compensation to residents whose homes were damaged or destroyed. Despite the efforts, assistance remains slow and severely limited, unable to meet the needs of those affected (MEE 04/02/2025; TNH 16/01/2025).

Continued sporadic attacks and security concerns are likely to sustain uncertainty, deterring large-scale reconstruction efforts (MEE 04/02/2025). Limited aid and reconstruction support will likely drive increased economic hardship, particularly for affected communities in southern Lebanon. Also, long-term recovery prospects could remain uncertain, leaving many households in a protracted state of internal displacement. Damage to critical infrastructure, particularly the electricity network, is expected to continue to hinder essential service provision. In case of continuation of conflict, the inability to reconstruct critical infrastructure could persist, likely affecting the availability of healthcare, water, and sanitation.

Lack of reconstruction could also lead to increased social tensions. Business owners in Nabatiye have already organised protests against government inaction and Hezbollah's slow compensation (TNH 16/01/2025). Protests like these are likely to increase in scale, severity, and intensity if reconstruction aid remains limited.

Map: Israeli forces' locations in Lebanon by 5 March 2025



Source: ACAPS using data from Al Jazeera (Al Jazeera 18/02/2025)

Wider escalations

Both Hezbollah and the Lebanese Government have voiced their 'absolute rejection' of Israeli attempts to maintain a presence in the border areas (France 24 13/02/2025; NYT 14/02/2025; AJ 18/02/2025; AP 18/02/2025; ACLED 29/01/2025). Lebanese officials have stated that any Israeli presence on Lebanon's borders constitutes a breach of international law and an occupation of Lebanese territory, with President Joseph Aoun confirming that Beirut has the right to use

all necessary means to secure the complete withdrawal of Israeli forces (AJ 18/02/2025; The New Arab 18/02/2025). Naim Qassem, Secretary-General of Hezbollah, made similar statements, demanding Israel withdraw fully from Lebanese territories (The New Arab 18/02/2025).

While it is unlikely that Hezbollah will escalate in the near future, any military response risks provoking a disproportionate Israeli retaliation, including the resumption of airstrikes on Beirut's southern suburbs or targeted assassinations of senior Hezbollah figures (Atlantic Council 07/02/2025).

If hostilities escalate, the humanitarian and economic consequences could be severe

If hostilities escalate, it would likely lead to increased tensions across Lebanon, heightening the risk of further displacement, major civilian casualties, and damage to critical infrastructure. During the conflict, intensified clashes between Israel and Hezbollah led to Israeli ground incursions and bombardments, resulting in over 4,000 fatalities across Lebanon. During the active phase of the conflict, an estimated 1.2 million people were displaced; at least 1.3 million people were affected at the height of the crisis (AJ 18/02/2024; UNHCR 15/10/2024; OCHA accessed 20/02/2025).

FUNDING AND RESPONSE CAPACITY

International response capacity

While the international humanitarian response in Lebanon is continuing, it is heavily affected by funding constraints. The 2025 Lebanon Response Plan (LRP) highlights growing humanitarian needs, which are also reflected in increased funding needs. The LRP estimates that out of 5.7 million people, 4.1 million – including refugees – require humanitarian aid, with a total funding appeal of USD 3.01 billion (UNHCR 13/02/2025).

Alongside the LRP, on 1 October 2024, the UN, INGOs, and the Lebanese Government issued a USD 425.7 million flash appeal to respond to immediate needs and provide life-saving assistance. To support the emergency response into 2025, the flash appeal, which originally only covered October–December, was extended until end of March 2025 (OCHA 06/01/2025). It is still unclear how much of the appeal will be funded. In 2024, only 60% of the initial USD 425.7 million request was funded (Humanitarian Action 04/12/2024).

Potential impacts of USAID funding freeze on aid programmes in Lebanon

On 28 January, following the executive order suspending US-funded foreign aid, US Secretary of State Marco Rubio announced a waiver for 'life-saving humanitarian assistance', interpreted as essential humanitarian aid, including critical medical treatments, healthcare services, food, shelter, basic subsistence support, and the necessary supplies and reasonable administrative costs required for effective delivery (USDoS 28/01/2025). The extent to which some aid could be categorised as 'life saving' and covered under the waiver remains unclear (ACAPS 07/02/2025). Even in cases where US aid has been classified as 'life saving' and included under the waiver, there remains lack of clarity around how to interpret stop-work orders and what permissions are needed to resume critical programmes. Current staffing cuts further limit humanitarian organisations' ability to carry out even the most essential relief efforts (HRW 21/01/2025).

In 2024, USAID provided Lebanon with USD 219 million in assistance (The New Arab 19/02/2025). Historically, USAID has supported projects on agriculture, critical infrastructure development (including health, education, and WASH), and food security and protection in Lebanon (USAID 13/01/2025; Kataeb 05/02/2025). For the 2025 fiscal year, USAID's Bureau for Humanitarian Assistance had allocated USD 72,245,258 to the LRP for education, WASH, health, protection, and food security (USAID 13/01/2025). By 3 March 2025, the full effect of the freeze on humanitarian response programming remained unclear. The scale of the impact is expected to be significant, however, given how much support Lebanon was previously receiving from USAID (By the East 12/02/2025).

The extent to which the stop-work orders affect different sectors in Lebanon (and elsewhere) is also still unclear. As an example, the White House's waiver for life-saving humanitarian assistance does not explicitly mention WASH services, creating uncertainty around whether such programmes fall under the health category included in the waiver or another classification (USDoS 28/01/2025). As it pertains to agriculture and food security, while the executive order similarly allows exceptions for emergency food aid, the scope of implementation and whether this includes aiding agriculture remain unclear (ACAPS 07/02/2025).

Certain sectors, such as education, are more directly affected by the US stop-work orders, posing an immediate threat to education programmes (ACAPS 07/02/2025). In the past, USAID has supported access to education in Lebanon through UNICEF, helping the Government to enhance reading outcomes for primary-level public school students, strengthen educational institutions, and expand safe learning opportunities for all children, including Syrian refugees. This has been alongside USAID support for school renovations and direct funding opportunities (Kataeb 05/02/2025; USAID 24/09/2014; UNICEF 22/06/2022). More than 10,000 students, including 1,300 university students, have received financial aid since 2010. With the US funding freeze, universities and schools may now face significant challenges continuing to support students previously reliant on USAID scholarships (Kataeb 05/02/2025).

Reconstruction needs and government response

On 7 February 2025, a new Lebanese Government was formed, ending the political deadlock the country had experienced since 2022 (The Washington Institute for Near East Policy 12/02/2025; AP 08/02/2025). The new Government faces many challenges ahead, most notably the immediate reconstruction needs following months of conflict. Recent damage and destruction have significantly raised the already substantial reconstruction costs for Lebanon, potential donor countries, and implementing organisations (Mercy Corps 23/12/2024). According to the World Bank, the impact of physical damage and economic losses from the recent conflict is estimated at nearly USD 8.5 billion (WB 14/11/2024; TNH 16/01/2025).

Lebanon has grappled with numerous crises over the past years, including economic crisis in 2019, the COVID-19 pandemic, the Beirut port explosion in August 2020, and, more recently, 14 months of fighting between Hezbollah and Israel, further straining the country's already fragile infrastructure and response capacity (ACAPS 09/07/2024; WHO accessed 19/02/2025; OCHA accessed 19/02/2025). As a result of the recent conflict, Lebanon's real GDP growth was expected to decline by 6.6% in 2024, with a further projected decrease of 9.2% in 2025 (WB 10/12/2024; UNDP 23/10/2024). The economic situation leaves the Lebanese Government severely constrained in its capacity to address current reconstruction needs (L'Orient Today 04/12/2024; TNH 16/01/2025).