

## Humanitarian consequences of the Israeli military offensive

### IMPACT OVERVIEW

On 1 March 2026, Israel launched a military offensive on Lebanese territory mainly targeting southern Lebanon. By 4 March, Israeli air strikes had killed at least 72 people and injured 437 (Megaphone News 04/03/2026). Israel has also deployed ground forces in southern Lebanon beyond the five strategic hilltops along the Blue Line that it has occupied since the November 2024 ceasefire, potentially seizing further territory, impeding access, and causing further displacement (Reuters 03/03/2026; Le Monde 03/03/2026).

On 2 March, Israel issued evacuation orders for more than 50 villages across southern and eastern Lebanon, sparking rapid widespread displacement. Early on 3 March, additional evacuation warnings instructed residents of dozens more southern villages to leave their homes as operations expanded (Amnesty International 03/03/2026). By 4 March, the escalation had displaced an estimated 80,000 people, with more expected as Israeli forces broaden operations and issue further evacuation (NRC 04/03/2026; Al-Araby Al-Jadeed 02/03/2025; OCHA 04/03/2026).

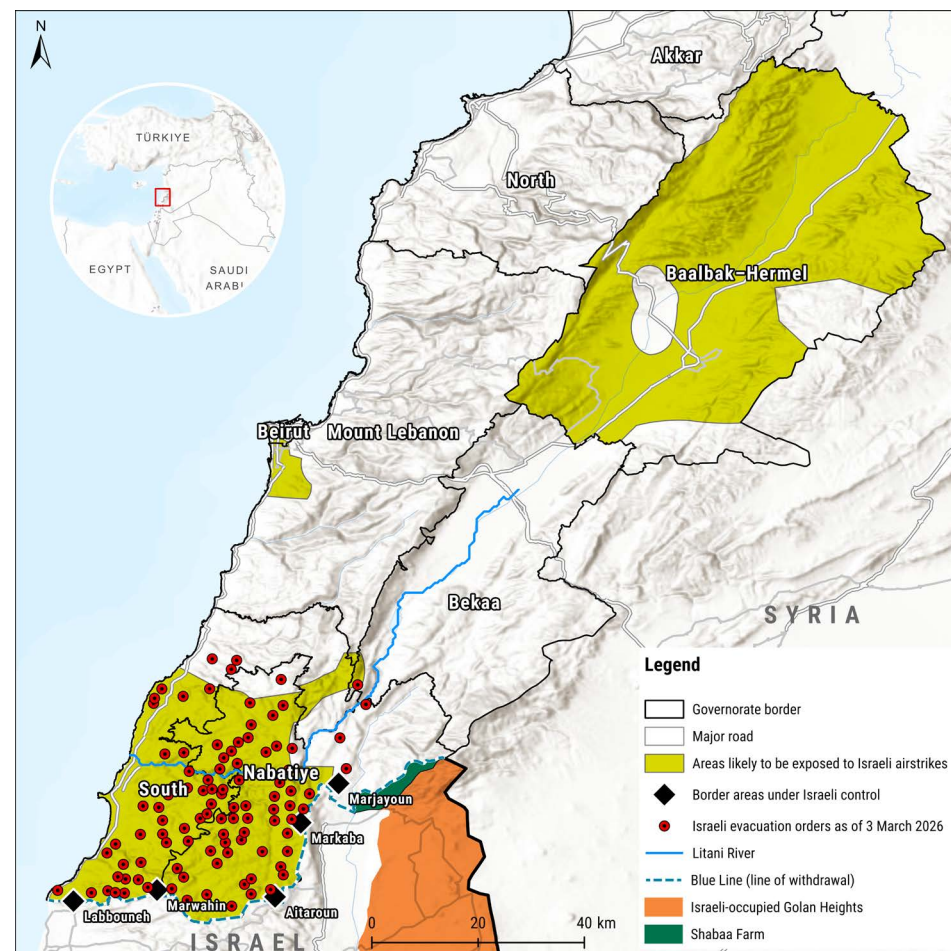
The Israeli attacks came after Hezbollah claimed responsibility for firing rockets into Israel on 1 March. According to Hezbollah, this was in retaliation for Israel's killing of Iran's Supreme Leader Ali Khamenei on 28 February and repeated ceasefire violations. Hezbollah's attack did not cause any casualties or damage (Axios 02/03/2026). Lebanon's Government has banned all Hezbollah military activities in response and ordered the group to surrender its weapons (Asharq Al-Awsat 02/03/2026).

Since the ceasefire agreement between Israel and Lebanon took effect on 27 November 2024, Israel has launched repeated attacks on Lebanon, implementing over 10,000 air and ground violations of the ceasefire (AA 28/11/2025; AJ 07/01/2025 and 26/01/2026). The attacks had killed at least 127 civilians in Lebanon by 24 November 2025 (OHCHR 25/11/2025 and 17/10/2025). Hezbollah has largely refrained from responding to these attacks (NPR 17/12/2025).

#### Disclaimer

This report gives a snapshot of the scale and impact of the conflict in Lebanon at the time of publication, using available secondary data and information. The situation remains dynamic, and further updates to information and data may be needed.

### Areas with likely exposure to air strikes and receiving evacuation orders by 3 March 2026



Source: ACAPS using data from AJ (29/07/2024); L'Orient Today (20/03/2024); Wikimedia (02/08/2006); Amnesty International 26/08/2026; Avichai Adraee X (03/03/2026); OCHA (accessed 04/03/2026)

## ANTICIPATED SCALE AND SCOPE

Israel has not formally stated its overall objective for the military offensive in Lebanon, but the military chief has said Operation Roaring Lion will continue until the threat of Hezbollah is removed (JP 03/03/2026). The operation includes creating a buffer zone along the Blue Line, which would formalise the de facto situation created during the November 2024 military operation, where residents of 62 evacuated border villages have been unable to return even after the signing of the ceasefire (France 24 03/03/2025). The Blue Line is the withdrawal line identified by the UN in 2000 to confirm Israel's pullout from Lebanon. It is not an internationally recognised border but a practical demarcation line between Lebanon and Israel (UN Peacekeeping 05/03/2021). The creation of the buffer zone is expected to prolong displacement and restrict access to agricultural land, which is the main source of livelihood for people in the area (AAH et al. 18/11/2025).

Based on previous targeting patterns, Israeli aerial bombardment is likely to extend deeper into Lebanon, targeting Hezbollah infrastructure and assassinating military leadership. The aerial campaign is likely to focus on the group's strongholds in southern Lebanon, extending north of the Litani River, with Israeli military assessments indicating that Hezbollah has moved some of its assets north. Baalbek-Hermel, Nabatiyeh, and South governorates, as well as Beirut's southern suburbs referred to as Dahiyeh, are all likely to be targeted (ISW 04/03/2026; Reuters 09/12/2025; The Guardian 24/12/2025; AP 08/09/2025; BBC 08/01/2026). As the Israeli aerial campaign intensifies, evacuation orders are also likely to trigger rapid displacement for residents.

If the Lebanese armed forces enforce the government ban on Hezbollah activities, there is an elevated risk of internal sectarian conflict (AJ 02/03/2026; ISW 18/02/2026). The ban, combined with attempts to fully disarm the group, may trigger violent confrontations. Hezbollah's rejection of the ban, its weakened position, and Lebanon's deep sectarian divisions increase the likelihood of political and communal tensions, heightening protection needs.

At its peak, the November 2024 Israeli operations displaced more than 740,000 people, the majority from Baalbek-Hermel, Nabatiye, and South governorates (OCHA 16/10/2024). With Israeli attacks broadly targeting the same areas as during the 2024 escalation, many IDPs have exhausted their coping capacities, increasing humanitarian aid reliance. If renewed displacement occurs, affected communities

are expected to face heightened needs, including for shelter, food assistance, healthcare, and psychosocial support. The rising demand for humanitarian services threatens to overwhelm available response capacity and outpace existing funding.

Health assistance will likely be a priority given the need for urgent trauma care for conflict injuries, mental health support, chronic disease treatment, and care for displaced people, as well as potential damage and access restrictions to health facilities. Until 2025, an estimated 3.5 million people are in need of health assistance, a number likely higher by March 2026 (Health Cluster accessed 05/03/2026).

Education is likely to remain disrupted and livelihoods interrupted, depriving children of access to safe spaces, restricting daily wage workers' access to income, and increasing reliance on humanitarian assistance.

## HUMANITARIAN ACCESS CONSTRAINTS

The recent escalation is worsening already highly constrained humanitarian access. In southern Lebanon, Israel maintains control over five strategic positions near the border south of the Litani River, impeding access to the area and preventing IDP returns (NRC 23/09/2025; ACAPS 10/02/2026). This is also preventing people from reaching their agricultural land, disrupting livelihoods and potentially contributing to food insecurity (UN Peacekeeping 14/11/2025; ACAPS 10/02/2026).

Increased insecurity and safety concerns are likely to lead some organisations to suspend operations in targeted areas. By 2 March, Israeli air strikes had suspended some International Rescue Committee operations, as intensified fighting had led some staff to flee, and evacuation orders and insecurity had disrupted services in the south, in the capital Beirut, and in the Bekaa Valley, where many refugees from Syria remain (IRC 02/03/2026).

Prior to the recent attacks, funding shortfalls had forced organisations to reduce operations in Lebanon. WFP had scaled down its regular in-kind food assistance, reaching 49,000 people (9,800 households) in January 2026, down from 100,000 individuals (22,000 households) in December 2025 (WFP 18/02/2026). Funding gaps are likely to further constrain response capacity, leaving a significant number of affected communities without adequate assistance as needs spike.

Winter conditions and rain in the next weeks, may affect people in temporary shelters and access for humanitarian responders (Tropical Tidbits accessed 03/03/2026).



## Information limitations

Given rapid changes in the context, information is evolving on a daily basis, with significant uncertainty around casualty figures, displacement numbers, and damage assessments. These shifting indicators make analysis difficult and hinder effective humanitarian response planning.

There is limited disaggregated information on the specific protection risks facing older people, children, and people with disabilities, particularly regarding barriers to evacuation, physical access to shelters, assistive service availability, family separation risks, and access to medical and psychosocial support.

There is limited information on the urgent response provided to newly displaced people, including the scale of response coverage, geographic reach, populations included/targeted, and the scope and frequency of aid distribution activities.

Some Syrian refugees have returned to Syria to flee the increased insecurity, but the exact number remained unclear until 4 March (Euronews 04/03/2026).

## CRISIS IMPACT

### Displacement and shelter

Between 2–3 March 2026, Israeli forces issued evacuation orders for more than 50 villages across southern and eastern Lebanon, followed by additional warnings in dozens more villages, sparking widespread displacement and concerns of further displacement (Amnesty International 03/03/2026). By 4 March, the escalation had displaced around 80,000 people into collective shelters, with additional movement reported into Syria (NRC 04/03/2026; RFI 03/03/2026; OCHA 04/03/2026). This is likely to increase as Israeli military operations expand (Al-Araby Al-Jadeed 02/03/2025; Megaphone 02/03/2026). As the Israeli strikes began, people immediately started to move out of southern Lebanon and Beirut to seek safety away from the targeted areas. Others have remained in Beirut and sought refuge in public shelters. On 2 March, the Lebanese Government, in coordination with humanitarian organisations, identified 325 shelters countrywide, with capacity for 43,000 individuals (UNHCR 02/03/2026). Public shelters in Beirut, Sidon, and Tyre are at capacity, forcing many IDPs to spend

nights in their vehicles, on school floors, or on sidewalks, while others are staying at relatives' homes despite overcrowding or in costly private rentals (Al Arabiya Facebook 03/03/2026; Al Modon 03/03/2026).

The 2024 conflict escalation displaced approximately 740,000 people across Lebanon (Asharq Al-Awsat 02/03/2026; OCHA 16/10/2024; UNHCR 23/10/2024; IOM 16/10/2025). Although the majority have been able to return, at least 60,000 remained displaced until February 2026 (NRC 25/02/2026). During displacement, many IDP households avoid using collective shelters by renting private accommodation (DFS 05/01/2026). As a result, many families have exhausted their savings and are unlikely to be able to rent premises during this round of displacement, increasing reliance on collective shelters, which could overwhelm available capacity should additional displacements occur.

During the 2024 escalation of hostilities between Israel and Hezbollah, housing destruction was heavily concentrated in southern Lebanon, particularly in border districts such as Bent Jbeil, Marjayoun, and Tyre, as well as parts of Nabatiye governorate and the southern suburbs of Beirut (Dahiyeh) (HRW 17/02/2025). The hostilities destroyed or damaged over 160,000 houses or approximately 10% of Lebanon's pre-conflict housing stock (NRC 25/02/2026).

The current air strikes are likely to severely affect refugees from Syria and IDPs, particularly given limited access to safe shelter. Factors such as reliance on informal or overcrowded housing, precarious legal status, and constrained access to basic services will heighten exposure. Around 500,000 Syrian refugees live in Lebanon, of whom 111,000 arrived between December 2024 and December 2025. Many are concentrated in Beirut, the Bekaa Valley, and northern governorates, some of which overlap with areas affected by the recent escalation (UNHCR accessed 04/03/2026; WFP 18/02/2026; DFS 05/01/2026; WFP 15/10/2025).

### Protection

The protection environment remains under significant strain, particularly in areas affected by the current Israeli military expansion into southern Lebanon (Reuters 03/03/2026). People either unwilling or unable to leave these areas face protection risks, including direct exposure to strikes, movement restrictions resulting from insecurity, and limited access to essential services. According to Amnesty International,

Israel's pre-attack warnings during its 2024 operations were repeatedly misleading, contradictory, and inadequate – in several cases providing conflicting information, with maps showing smaller danger zones than described in official messages – leaving residents confused about where to go. Some alerts were issued on social media in the middle of the night with little notice, making it difficult for families to evacuate safely (Amnesty International 10/10/2024).

IDPs in Lebanon continue to face high mental health and psychosocial needs as a result of repeated displacement and exposure to conflict and insecurity (MSF 22/09/2025; WHO 22/07/2025). Displaced people are especially exposed to overcrowded shelters, displacement, or economic vulnerability. They also face heightened risks of eviction and exploitation as declined purchasing power renders rental costs unaffordable, forcing them towards informal housing arrangements. IDPs reliant on humanitarian assistance face increasing vulnerability to protection risks, leading them to resort to potentially harmful coping strategies, including child labour and reducing meals (UNHCR 17/12/2025 and 30/09/2025; DRC 26/01/2026).

Syrian and Palestinian refugees, alongside migrant workers, are likely to face significant barriers in accessing humanitarian services, particularly within Government-coordinated aid efforts. During the November 2024 military operations, these groups were largely excluded from shelters, with civic authorities designating many as Lebanese-only. Often denied entry or forced to leave to make space for Lebanese IDPs, they were left with little alternative but to sleep outdoors, exposed to harsh weather conditions (AUB 03/2025; UNHCR 04/07/2025; Alpheratz 11/10/2024). At the same time, these groups have less access to supportive social networks and already face movement limitations and increased documentation requirements, which limit their access to livelihoods, making people more vulnerable to risks such as exploitation, trafficking, and family separation (UNHCR 17/12/2025). Over 80% of Syrian refugees lack legal residency because of steep fees and the complexity of procedures, rendering a significant portion vulnerable to security enforcement and deportation and limiting their access to humanitarian assistance (MBN 23/01/2026).

## Health

Based on previous patterns, the Israeli offensive is likely to increase the demand for health services as a result of injuries and physical trauma while simultaneously restricting access to care. Attacks on health facilities and healthcare providers further undermine functionality, leaving communities with limited medical support at times of heightened need. The targeting of medical infrastructure during the Israeli military campaign in November 2024 severely affected healthcare access in the country. The Israeli military attacked 67 hospitals, 56 primary healthcare centres, and 238 emergency medical teams, killing at least 222 medical and emergency relief workers (AI 05/03/2025). On 21 November, WHO reported that 47% of the attacks on healthcare, including air strikes (65 out of 137), were fatal to at least one health worker (AI 05/03/2025). Beyond immediate casualties, the strikes forced the closure of nearly half of the primary healthcare centres in conflict-affected areas of Lebanon and caused a 40% loss of hospital bed capacity in conflict-affected governorates, including Nabatiye (II 12/08/2025).

## Electricity and communication

During previous campaigns, Israel repeatedly targeted power lines and telecommunication infrastructure, causing widespread electricity outages (Freedom House accessed 04/03/2026; AA 18/06/2024). These strikes not only disrupted essential services but also severely affected people's daily lives, leaving households without heating, lighting, or the ability to preserve food. They also undermined communication systems, restricting people's ability to receive preattack warnings, placing them at greater risk of harm, and increasing the risk of family separation during displacement. Electricity disruptions also affected water pumping stations and wastewater systems, reducing access to safe drinking water and heightening public health risks. Health facilities faced interruptions to critical services, including cold chain storage for vaccines, life-saving medical equipment, and emergency care capacity, particularly where backup generators and fuel supplies were limited (Amnesty International 26/08/2025; Freedom House accessed 04/03/2026; Arab Center DC 02/01/2025).

Damage to mobile networks and internet connectivity constrains civilians' ability to receive timely evacuation instructions. It also increases the risk of family separation during displacement, as family members may be unable to coordinate movement or

share locations. Reduced network coverage further restricts access to emergency services and humanitarian hotlines, potentially delaying life-saving assistance.

Israel supplies Egypt with natural gas, part of which is re-exported to Lebanon for electricity generation. Following the suspension of Israeli gas exports, Egypt has halted its own supplies to Lebanon, cutting off a key source of power (BBC 02/03/2026). This disruption is likely to further undermine power production and increase the frequency of outages. Lebanon already faces chronic electricity cuts from fuel shortages, leaving households and vital facilities – such as airports, water pumping, and sewage systems – without power for extended periods. As a result, reliance on costly private diesel generators has grown, yet many cannot afford them, limiting access to electricity for essential services and daily needs (The National 14/08/2025).

### Food security

The Israeli offensive is expected to severely disrupt winter crop production in southern Lebanon, where the attacks are likely to be concentrated, with many cultivated fields likely to be damaged. Recent incidents underscore this risk; on 1 February 2026, Israeli forces sprayed herbicide north of the Blue Line, contaminating agricultural lands (UN 06/02/2026). The Israeli military campaign in November 2024 resulted in USD 118 million in damages to the agricultural sector concentrated in southern Lebanon, with limited chances for sustained recovery. The air strikes and ground attacks damaged irrigation systems, feeder roads, and storage facilities, limiting food production and affecting food security in an area highly dependent on agriculture (IPC 23/12/2025; FAO 14/04/2025; WFP 19/01/2026).

According to the IPC assessment covering both Lebanese and refugee populations, by December 2025, 874,000 people (17% of the analysed population) were experiencing acute food insecurity in Lebanon. Those most affected were in the northern governorates of Akkar, Baalbek-Hermel, and parts of North, which were classified in Crisis (IPC Phase 3). Before the recent conflict, food insecurity was already projected to rise, affecting 961,000 people (18% of the population) between April–July 2026. Bent Jbeil, Marjayoun, and Sour in the south are expected to go from Stressed (IPC Phase 2) to IPC 3 (IPC 23/12/2025). The current Israeli offensive is likely to affect food security by disrupting access to livelihood opportunities and market activities.

### WASH

There was little information available on water access until 3 March. In 2025, the combination of conflict and economic crisis placed over 3.3 million people in need of emergency WASH support in Lebanon. Around 205,000 Syrian refugees living in informal settlements also depend mostly on humanitarian support for water and wastewater services (UNICEF accessed 03/03/2026; UNHCR 30/06/2025). This escalation is likely to aggravate WASH needs.

In 2022, a cholera outbreak across eight governorates exposed the risk of new disease outbreaks (OCHA et al. 10/12/2022). With health systems compromised, displacement increasing, and shelters overcrowded, insufficient clean water and sanitation facilities may heighten the risk of waterborne diseases such as cholera, hepatitis A, and acute diarrhoea emerging.

Education: on 2 March 2026, the education ministry announced the indefinite closure of schools nationwide given the insecurity and resulting displacement, which has led to many schools currently being used as shelter (L'Orient Today 02/03/2026; LBC 02/03/2026; Asharq Al-Awsat 02/03/2026). Based on Israeli military operations in November 2024, schools are also at risk of damage from Israeli attacks; the previous attacks damaged at least 75 schools and forced 77% of the schools across Lebanon to suspend operations, either because they were repurposed as evacuation centres or given insecurity in the surrounding areas (UNICEF 30/06/2025; HRW 17/02/2025).

The economic losses families are likely to incur during the Israeli offensive may force many to divert limited resources away from education towards essential needs, increasing the risk that children will remain out of school even after hostilities end (UNICEF 02/2025).

Lebanon's education system has faced prolonged systemic disruption. There have been seven consecutive years of disruption because of COVID-19 and conflict, teacher strikes, and resource shortages, leading to considerable cumulative learning loss (STC 30/11/2025). On average, Lebanese students lost 60% of each academic year between 2018–2023, resulting in a significant decline in learning outcomes, particularly among Syrian refugee children who face the greatest barriers to both access to schooling and academic achievement (UOC 05/12/2024).

## AGGRAVATING FACTORS

### Disarmament tensions and communal risks

On 2 March 2026, the Lebanese Government imposed a ban on Hezbollah's military and security activities after the group launched missile and drone strikes against Israel in retaliation for the 28 February Israeli attacks on Iran that killed Ayatollah Ali Khamenei. Hezbollah rejected the ban, a move expected to heighten tensions with the Government. Analysts warn that enforcing the ban could be difficult and might escalate internal friction given Hezbollah's entrenched position (AJ 02/03/2026; TOI 02/03/2026). Frictions were already visible following the Government's 5 September 2025 plan to disarm the group, which Hezbollah dismissed and threatened to resist with violence (Reuters 28/10/2025; DW 22/08/2025). Significantly weakened by the leadership losses and military degradation inflicted by the November 2024 Israeli military operations, Hezbollah did not resist government efforts to disarm the group south of the Litani River. The group, however, could perceive the full disarmament plan and a ban on its activities as an existential threat, triggering violence in response to full implementation (ISW 18/02/2026).

Hezbollah's popularity in Lebanon is sharply divided along sectarian lines, reflecting the country's fragile social fabric and history of civil war (TWI 08/01/2024). In such a context, where mistrust and rivalry between political and religious factions persist, the risk of communal tensions is particularly high (The Independent 14/10/2022; France 24 15/10/2021). The group's current weakened state, which may push Hezbollah to rely more heavily on mobilising its loyal support base to block disarmament and maintain activities, amplifies this danger (Asharq Al-Awsat 25/05/2025; AA 08/08/2025).

These tensions could particularly affect communities fleeing southern Lebanon to seek refuge in areas considered not under Hezbollah's influence. During the 2024 hostilities, displacement forced large numbers of IDPs from southern Lebanon into Beirut and northern areas, creating tensions with host communities (FEWS NET 18/11/2024). Some host community members reported concerns about the perceived affiliation of certain displaced families with Hezbollah, expressing fears that accommodating them could increase the likelihood of Israeli targeting and expose their neighbourhoods to security risks (BBC 30/10/2024). Amid Lebanon's economic crisis, this is likely to heighten competition for housing, jobs, and essential services, further straining the host community that may intensify social friction and elevate risks of social violence for both displaced and host populations (WFP 28/03/2025).

### Lack of recovery and reconstruction fund

According to the World Bank, Lebanon needs an estimated USD 11 billion to recover from the 2024 hostilities, which damaged over 222,000 housing units, schools, and health facilities (WB 07/03/2025; Asharq Al-Awsat 18/03/2025). Yet the Lebanese Government has allocated only USD 90 million, stalling reconstruction and leaving communities in precarious rented housing without durable solutions. The resumption of hostilities, coupled with exhausted coping capacities, means families are likely to become ever more dependent on humanitarian aid for survival (Mercy Corps 09/01/2026). This may also lead to coping mechanisms with negative consequences, such as early marriage and child labour, while increasing households' vulnerability to exploitation.

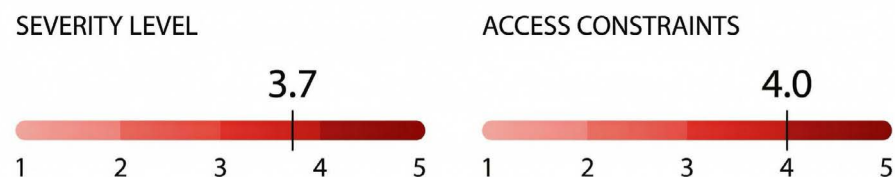
### Weak economy

Lebanon's economy remains fragile following the 2019 financial crisis. From April–October 2025, unemployment was at 27% among the Lebanese, with 34% of workers engaged in informal jobs between 2022–2023. Since 2019, only limited recovery has been achieved. This is aggravated by high costs for essential NFIs, such as fuel, electricity, healthcare, and rent, which continue to erode purchasing power, particularly for low-income households and refugees (IPC 23/12/2025). The national currency has lost over 99% of its value compared to the pre-2019 exchange rate, wiping out household purchasing power. Banks have also restricted access to deposits, at first blocking families from withdrawing their savings entirely, and by today allowing access but with high limitations (Reuters 18/09/2025 US DOS accessed 04/03/2026; Amnesty International 02/12/2024; The National 25/12/2025).

As the crisis deepens, the economy has become increasingly dollarised. Many people in the country, including civil servants, are paid in the local currency. Although the Government has increased wages a few times, the value has not kept pace with inflation and currency depreciation (Amnesty International 02/12/2024). In 2025, the cumulative effects of Lebanon's economic collapse, currency depreciation, and prolonged political instability pushed approximately 60% of the population into poverty (Amnesty International 02/12/2024; STC 23/10/2025).

## SEVERITY/ACCESS SCORES

Lebanon had a score of 3.7 (high) on the INFORM Severity Index by February 2026 and 4 (very high) for access constraints by December 2025.



Source: ACAPS (31/01/2026, 10/02/2026)

## ANNEX

Table 1: Breakdown of affected population data

GOVERNORATE	POPULATION	PEOPLE IN NEED	IDPs	POPULATION DENSITY (PER KM <sup>2</sup> )
Akkar	423,596	373,480	137	537.6
Baalbek-Hermel	457,932	312,917	91	<b>162.1</b>
Beirut	433,249	<b>105,823</b>	529	<b>21,662.5</b>
Bekaa	543,342	277,942	43	400.3
North	790,951	363,711	<b>22</b>	639.9
South	590,078	417,105	25,890	634.5
Mount Lebanon	<b>1,802,238</b>	<b>927,460</b>	11,676	915.8
Nabatiye	<b>383,839</b>	215,469	<b>26,029</b>	349.6
<b>Total</b>	<b>5,416,225</b>	<b>2,993,907</b>	<b>64,417</b>	<b>531.0</b>

Sources: IOM (16/10/2025); UNHCR (02/02/2026); Geo. Ref (accessed 04/03/2026)