

7.6.2. Treatment by state, society and other actors

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Syrian nationals in Lebanon faced stigmatisation involving various stereotypes and frequent attribution of criminal behaviour.689 Human rights organisations noted that in recent years, Syrians were subjected to arbitrary arrests, torture, forced returns,690 discriminatory policies, 691 mob violence, and public calls for their expulsion.692 UNHCR pointed out that the authorities had introduced over 567 administrative measures affecting Syrian refugees in 2024 693 and at least 104 over the first quarter 2025.694 These measures included restrictions on movement, arrests at checkpoints, restrictions on rent and livelihoods, the imposition of taxes, fees695 and municipal IDs,696 as well as orders to demolish their tents.697

The overall number of raids targeting Syrian refugees peaked in the second and fourth quarters of 2024698 before dropping to significantly lower levels during the first quarter of 2025.699 Most raids occurred in the Bekaa Valley.700 UNHCR reported that thousands of Syrians were deported after raids on refugees' residences and arrests made at checkpoints and during intercepted onward journeys by sea.701 Raids and checkpoints led to restrictions of freedom of movement and livelihoods and heightened fears of arbitrary arrest and deportation among Syrians,702 with some refugees interviewed by Amnesty International saying that they were avoiding to go outside their homes, to their workplaces, or to send their children to school.703 Raids on residences were followed by eviction orders issued by the Lebanese Armed Forces (LAF), some of which also targeted refugees with valid residency.704

In April and May 2024, after the LAF found that Syrian citizens were behind the killing of a local official of the Lebanese Forces (LF),705 a major Christian political party,706 several violent incidents were reported, including physical assaults, as well as threats and protests against Syrian refugees. Unidentified groups distributed leaflets calling for the departure of Syrians from certain areas.707 Simultaneously, the authorities intensified their rhetoric against Syrian refugees.708

In May 2024, the General Directorate of General Security announced a series of new measures and rules, including the demand that Syrians without legal residency make arrangements with the border authorities to 'leave Lebanese territory'.709 The authorities also restricted the categories under which Syrian refugees were entitled to apply for residency.710

An intensification of Israeli bombardments from 23 September 2024 in Southern Lebanon, the Bekaa Valley and Beirut's southern outskirts resulted in mass displacement among both Lebanese and Syrians,711 affecting an estimated 1 million people. This was followed by a temporary ceasefire on 27 November that prompted large-scale IDP return movements. However, as of late March 2025, only 64 % of displaced Syrians had returned to their places of residence (in comparison to 82 % of displaced Lebanese). One of the obstacles to return for Syrians were restrictive measures introduced by municipalities and non-state actors in southern Lebanon that expressly banned Syrians from returning to their places of residence.712 In the Bekaa Valley, municipalities threatened Syrians residing in some camps with eviction if they hosted newly displaced family members or friends, while in other cases, Syrians were evicted to make space for Lebanese IDP families.713

Moreover, the collapse of the Assad government in Syria led to changes in perceptions among both Lebanese and refugee communities. Syrian refugees in the south in particular have been facing growing verbal harassment by the local communities urging them to return to Syria, with some reports of physical violence. In addition, there were reported tensions between newly arrived Alawite and Shia Syrians on the one hand and Sunni communities (both Lebanese nationals and long-term Syrian refugees) on the other over perceived ties between the newly arrived Syrians and the former Assad government. In Beirut and Mount Lebanon, a number of violent incidents occurred between newly arrived Syrian refugees and Lebanese IDPs sharing the same collective shelters.714

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