

7.6.3. Socio-economic conditions

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Around 90 % of Syrian refugees were reported to live in ‘extreme poverty’715 or below the poverty line.716 Many Syrian refugees were housed in informal and illegal camps717 and small-scale settlements,718 facing poor living conditions with insufficient health structures or safe drinking water719 and being subject to curfews and other limitations to freedom of movement. 720 Lack of legal residency permits, concerning 93 % of all Syrian refugee households, restricted freedom of movement and access to basic services, healthcare and work, as well as access to justice.721 Some Syrian refugees secondarily displaced by the hostilities in autumn 2024 had lost legal documentation, making the renewal of their rental contracts difficult. Without legal residency, Syrians were vulnerable to exploitation on the housing market, with landlords charging inflated rents, subjecting them to arbitrarily evictions, and favouring Lebanese tenants over Syrians.722

While Syrians in Lebanon worked in a variety of domains, discrimination723 and strict requirements regarding the issuance of residency papers and work permits have made it difficult for Syrians to find formal employment.724 Moreover, Syrian refugees were vulnerable to exploitation at the workplace and child labour was frequent within the refugee community.725 In May 2024, the General Directorate of General Security announced a series of new measures and rules, including the prohibition for Lebanese nationals ‘to employ, shelter, or provide housing for Syrians residing illegally in Lebanon’. The Directorate also demanded the closure of ‘all illegal establishments and shops managed or invested by Syrians’, threatening ‘appropriate measures against anyone who employs foreign workers in violation of the residency system and the labour law’.726 Moreover, it disallowed UNHCR-registered Syrians from practising any remunerated work outside the employment sectors specified for them.727 Syrian refugees also had few property rights.728

Syrian refugees continued to be affected by restricted healthcare access due to various factors such as limited availability, conflict-induced disruptions in the provision of services, cuts in humanitarian funding, and prioritisation of Lebanese nationals. Both the North and South Governorates were affected by insufficient availability and unaffordability of medical services. In areas of Baalbek/the Bekaa Valley, humanitarian aid was frequently distributed at collective shelters, resulting in limited access to support for Syrian refugees accommodated in privately rented housing.729 Severe shortfalls in humanitarian funding has led to a decrease in aid for Syrians in Lebanon.730 UNHCR announced that it would discontinue its support for hospitalisation costs for refugees in the country by the end of 2025.731 Similarly, both UNHCR and the WFP have significantly reduced the number of Syrians eligible for cash assistance.732

A large proportion of Syrian children were reported to be lacking access to education.733 Following public calls in 2024 for restrictions on access to schools for Syrian refugee children, 734 the authorities, ahead of the 2024–25 school year,735 introduced documentation requirements for children.736 As of the first quarter of 2025, UNHCR noted that public schools across the country excluded Syrian children who did not have legal documentation (either legal residency or a UNHCR registration certificate). However, even some children holding valid documentation faced difficulties accessing education,737 with multiple municipalities denying even UNHCR-registered refugees access to public schooling if they lacked legal residency.738 Moreover, numerous Syrian refugees were unable to afford the cost of schooling and transport fees for their children, while others could not register their children at schools due to limited capacity.739 Children prevented from attending school were vulnerable to risks such as child labour and work-related abuse.740

Mass displacement due to Israeli bombardment in autumn 2024 resulted in collective shelters becoming overwhelmed, leaving numerous people on the streets.741 Many facilities effectively turned into ‘Lebanese-only’ spaces,742 compounding refugees’ struggle to secure basic needs such as food, housing and medical care.743 Restrictions on returns to certain municipalities and inflated rents charged in urban zones limited Syrian refugees’ prospects of finding safe shelter, resulting in prolonged displacement.744 At the same time, it was noted that discrimination was not universal, with some Lebanese accepting Syrian refugees into their homes, while some NGOs kept their shelters accessible to everyone.745

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