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PLIGHT OF THE RIGHTLESS: THE SEQUEL

Mapping and understanding statelessness in Beirut and Mount Lebanon

FROM THE RESEARCH SERIES
"MAPPING AND UNDERSTANDING STATELESSNESS IN LEBANON"

June 2023

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ABSTRACT

This research examines the issue of statelessness in Beirut and Mount Lebanon, with the aim of expanding the existing knowledge from Siren's previous studies on statelessness in Tripoli (2019) and Akkar (2021), and achieving a comprehensive nationwide understanding of this often-neglected question.

Through a combination of qualitative and quantitative research methods, this study maps and analyzes the statelessness phenomenon, its causes, consequences, as well as the many vulnerabilities faced by stateless of Lebanese origins. The findings reveal the presence of over 5,000 stateless individuals living between Beirut and Mount Lebanon. A large number of these individuals reside in informal settlements and low-income neighborhoods around the capital city, as well as in several hotspots around Iqlim el Kharroub and coastal Chouf.

Drawing upon these findings, the report provides recommendations to stakeholders who should be involved in finding solutions to statelessness in Lebanon. These recommendations serve as valuable resources for policymakers, humanitarian organizations, and advocates working towards the protection and inclusion of stateless individuals.

TRIPOLI STUDY
2019

AKKAR STUDY
2021

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ABOUT EU CIVIL PROTECTION AND HUMANITARIAN AID

The European Union and its Member States are the world's leading donor of humanitarian aid. Relief assistance is an expression of European solidarity with people in need all around the world. It aims to save lives, prevent and alleviate human suffering, and safeguard the integrity and human dignity of populations affected by natural disasters and man-made crises.

Through its Civil Protection and Humanitarian aid Operations department (ECHO), the European Union helps millions of victims of conflict and disasters every year. With headquarters in Brussels and a global network of field offices, the EU provides assistance to the most vulnerable people on the basis of humanitarian needs.

ABOUT SIREN ASSOCIATES

Siren is a not-for-profit international development consultancy that helps organizations from across the public and social sectors become more effective, accountable and inclusive. Siren's multidisciplinary teams leverage systems thinking to understand complex problems and tailor context-relevant solutions, particularly in low-resource and conflict-prone settings.

ABOUT INTERSOS

INTERSOS is a humanitarian organization established in 1992, which operates on the frontline of emergencies, providing assistance to those affected by armed conflicts, natural disasters, and marginalization, focusing on the protection of the most vulnerable. Their humanitarian workers operate within 23 different countries to ensure that people have dignified access to their basic needs, wherever they are. In Lebanon, INTERSOS has been present since 2006. In all Governorates of Lebanon, with four bases of operations, INTERSOS' experience and expertise encompasses psycho-social support, specialized case management, shelter services and emergency response for vulnerable populations, as well as legal aid for stateless individuals.

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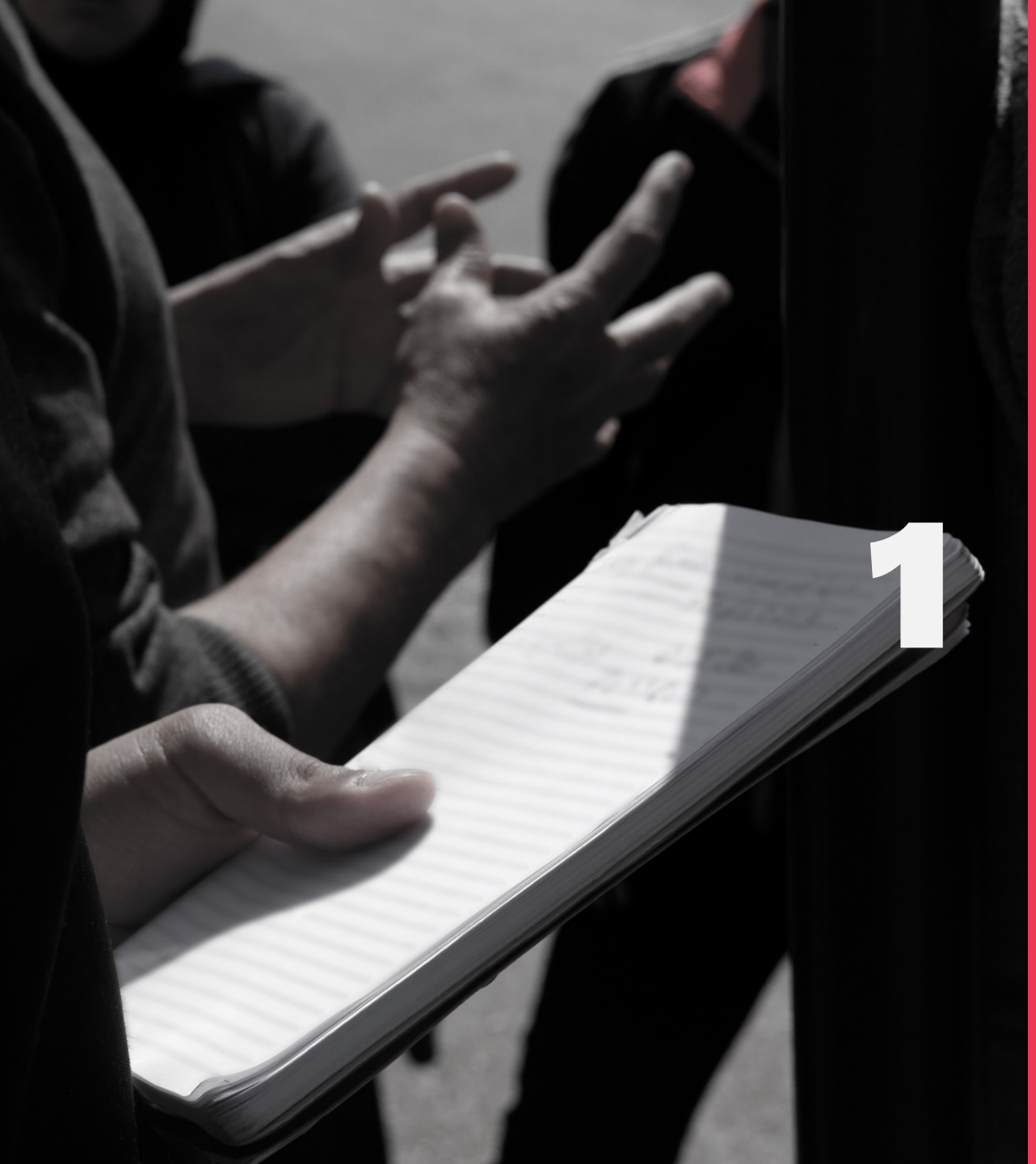
"The plight of the rightless is not that they are not equal before the law, but that no law exists for them."

HANNAH ARENDT
THE ORIGINS OF TOTALITARIANISM



1 EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

BACKGROUND AND METHODOLOGY

- Statelessness refers to the condition of an individual who is not recognized as a citizen by any country. Stateless persons lack the rights and privileges that are attached to citizenship, leaving them vulnerable and often facing significant difficulties in their daily lives.
- In Lebanon, statelessness has been a long-standing issue affecting a significant number of individuals and families. The country has faced challenges in effectively identifying, protecting, and resolving the statelessness situation. As such, there is no formal census nor mapping of stateless communities in Lebanon, and very little policy efforts have been engaged by the authorities and other actors to address this issue definitively.
- Furthermore, the Lebanese legal framework pertaining to statelessness is outdated and ill-equipped to address this issue. Stateless persons in Lebanon are labelled as either *Maktoum el Qayd* (MeQ), when they inherited their status or their birth was not registered, or *Qayd el Dars* (QeD), when their nationality is under study by the authorities.
- Replicating the previous mapping efforts in Tripoli (2019) and Akkar (2021), Siren Associates, commissioned by INTERSOS, undertook a new field research covering Greater Beirut and Mount Lebanon. Like the previous ones, this study aims at understanding the causes, consequences and social impact of statelessness in these 2 governorates, which form the social, political and economic heart of Lebanon.
- The research consisted of 3 surveys (stateless persons, parents of stateless children and a Lebanese control group) totaling 1,034 respondents, 4 focus group discussions (2 with stateless individuals from diverse profiles, 1 with migrant domestic worker mothers and 1 with stateless with disabilities), 28 key informant interviews with various experts and stakeholders, and 55 in-depth interviews with *mukhtars*.
- The extensive fieldwork identified respectively 4,116 stateless persons in Greater Beirut and 1,138 in Mount Lebanon, amounting to 5,254 stateless individuals mapped in these two regions.
- 93% of the identified stateless individuals are actually located in 6 main areas across Greater Beirut and Mount Lebanon, living variously in informal settlements, low-income neighborhoods, camps and their adjacent gatherings in and around Beirut, as well as in significant hotspots around Iqlim el Kharroub and Coastal Chouf within Mount Lebanon.

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EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

DIVERSE ORIGINS

- The origins of statelessness run along the rich migratory history of Lebanon, ever since its emergence in 1920. The country has constantly been a destination for migrants and refugees from various backgrounds. Beirut and its metropolitan area became the main recipient due to its relative liberalism and the abundance of opportunities that it could offer. Many of the areas they settled in have ultimately converged into statelessness hotspots, given the administrative and political flaws and loopholes that have recurrently barred these communities from accessing citizenship.
- The background of stateless communities is extremely diverse. Among the stateless in Lebanon are Kurds, Syriacs and Assyrians, whom had sought refuge in Beirut, persons of nomadic origins (mainly Dom) representing more than half of stateless individuals in Greater Beirut, in addition to Bedouins in coastal Chouf and Dom in Iqlim el Kharroub. Armenian and Christians communities, as well as Christian and Shi'a Palestinians from the "7 villages" were also granted Lebanese citizenship at different points in time.

CAUSES & CONSEQUENCES

- Nonregistration by parents remains the primary cause of statelessness. In this respect, 34% of the adult respondent stateless persons in Greater Beirut, and 47% in Mount Lebanon, did not have their births registered by their parents.
- Stateless respondents who inherited their status from their stateless fathers account for 29% of cases in Greater Beirut, and 24% in Mount Lebanon.
- Under-study cases meanwhile account for 33% of those in Greater Beirut, and 26% in Mount Lebanon.
- Stateless communities face great difficulty obtaining formal documents that enable them to enjoy basic political and civic rights, access education or healthcare, or enjoy legal protection in regards to housing and ownership. The effects on livelihoods are severe, a situation which is today exacerbated by the acuteness of the financial and socioeconomic crisis the country has plunged into in recent years.
- Stateless persons resort to coping mechanisms and informal workarounds to ease their daily ordeals, ensure freedom of movement or access property. As such, a significant proportion of stateless individuals in these two areas are holders of a laissez-passer, as a result of the greater proximity of these communities to the public administrations of the political center.

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EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

EXTREME VULNERABILITY

- The fieldwork uncovered statelessness' harsh emotional and psychological impact on those who fall into this category. A large proportion of respondents expressed the need for psychosocial support.
- Societal judgement and discrimination against stateless persons push many to avoid openly disclosing their situation. Meanwhile, their entangled status causes extreme tension and pressure on their family environment.
- The vulnerability attached to statelessness is amplified by additional layers of complication. Girls and women are victims of gender discrimination, making it especially difficult to secure an education or access the job market.
- Migrant domestic workers (MDWs), whose children have been identified among the stateless persons in Greater Lebanon and Mount Lebanon (nonregistered from Lebanese fathers), are confronted by a triple vulnerability. In addition to gender stigma, MDWs – who are predominantly female - are victims of the Kafala system, a sponsorship system that facilitates modern slavery and gives those entrapped within it a precarious legal status that prevents them from registering their children of Lebanese descent.

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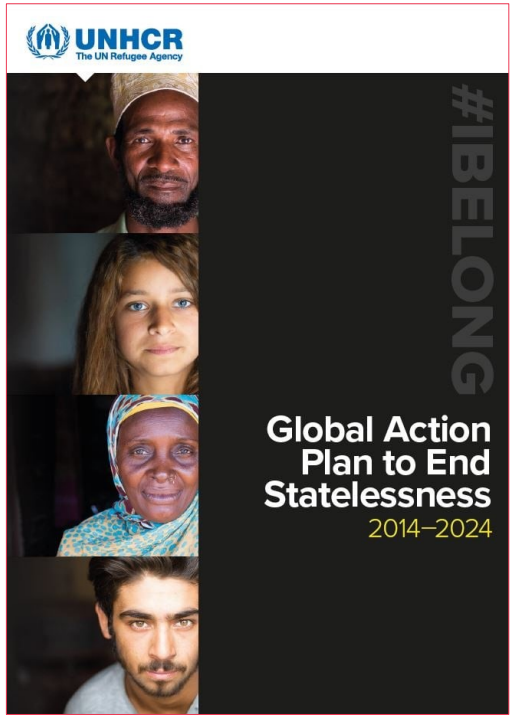
2

CONTEXTUAL BACKGROUND

THE GLOBAL OUTLOOK

Statelessness affects millions of individuals worldwide, leaving them vulnerable and deprived of basic rights and protections. The decade-long effort of the #IBelong campaign launched by the UNHCR is still in progress towards achieving the colossal goal of ending the condition worldwide.



#IBelong
UNHCR The UN Refugee Agency

According to UNHCR, some 4.4 million stateless people were reported residing in 95 countries at the end of 2022. The true global figure is estimated to be significantly higher[1]. Statelessness can arise from various circumstances: either being born stateless if their parents are themselves stateless, or due to the restrictive nationality laws and processes of the country they are born in. Others may become stateless due to conflicts, changes in borders, gaps in nationality laws, or discriminatory practices.

Such a condition enhances vulnerability, causing a lack of citizenship due to the absence of documentation; an absence of legal protection with limited access to justice and judicial guarantees; the denial of basic human rights, including the right to nationality, the right to vote, the right to work and to freedom of movement; and hampering access to essential services such as education and healthcare.

UNHCR has a specific mandate to end and prevent statelessness globally. The #IBelong campaign of 2014-2024 aims to mobilize governments, civil society, and the international community to take action. It calls for the reform of discriminatory nationality laws, the establishment of safeguards to prevent childhood statelessness, and the provision of legal pathways to acquire or confirm nationality. Despite the decade-long huge effort so far, a lot remains to be done.

Box 1. Statelessness in international law

- Statelessness occurs when a person does not possess legal recognition or documentation from any state, and therefore lacks the rights and protections associated with citizenship.
- The 1954 Convention, along with the 1961 Convention on the Reduction of Statelessness, provide a framework for states to prevent and reduce statelessness, grant protection and assistance to stateless persons, and establish procedures for acquiring nationality.
- The right to nationality is protected under international law through various international legal instruments. The most significant is the Universal Declaration of Human Rights (UDHR), which, although not a binding treaty, has been widely recognized as reflecting customary international law. Article 15 of the UDHR states: "Everyone has the right to a nationality".

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1. UNHCR. Refugee Population Statistics Database, last update 14 June 2023.

AT THE NATIONAL LEVEL

The roots of statelessness in Lebanon stem from its formation in the 1920s. The French Mandate, followed by national authorities as of 1943, struggled to grant effective citizenship to its population, be they native residents, migrants, or emigrants originating from Greater Lebanon.

Looking into statelessness means diving into the puzzle of Lebanon's rich migratory history. Upon the collapse of the Ottoman Empire, the foundations of what eventually became independent Lebanon in 1943 were set through the French Mandate. The High Commissioner was handed the authority of administrating Greater Lebanon in 1920.

The people living across these territories came from various sectarian backgrounds, many belonging to religious minorities, such as the Maronites or the Druze, who found a safe haven in Mount Lebanon. After the Armenian genocide of 1915, surviving communities managed to seek refuge into Greater Lebanon.

Land of abundant passage and migration, Greater Lebanon further welcomed Kurds, Syriacs, Assyrians, Chaldeans, Greeks, consolidating the cultural mosaic Lebanon will become famous for: a cosmopolitan Babylon inherited from the social fabric of the Ottoman era.

When the High Commissioner decided to grant Lebanese citizenship to "all persons residing across the Greater Lebanon territories", he brought together a patchwork of religious communities, ultimately creating a nationality of cosmopolitan roots[1].

In 1925, the High Commissioner enacted the nationality law formally granting Lebanese citizenship to persons born in the territories now forming Greater Lebanon (Article 1), and ensuring that right for emigrants of Lebanese origins.

However, the birth of the Lebanese nationality struggled with political considerations attached to the establishment of Greater Lebanon. Many of the residents, mainly among Muslim communities, boycotted the 1921 and 1932 census which constituted the initial waves of access to citizenship under the French Mandate. Additionally, administrative and technical complications prevented the registration of all residents entitled to the Lebanese nationality. Thus, many groups fell into statelessness, initiating a domino effect still visible to this day.

After the civil war, Decree 5247 of 1994 opened the door to citizenship according to naturalization provisions. Despite the Decree being framed as addressing statelessness, a much smaller proportion of the 202,527 individuals (36% according to some estimates[1]) represented stateless persons. As such, the Decree failed to ultimately end statelessness in Lebanon, leaving many communities and newer generations after them in the same legal limbo.

The backdrop of such condition has been exacerbated since 2019, as the country is going through one of its worst social and economic crisis. The spiraling of Lebanese socio-economic indicators dramatically increased poverty levels, with a paralyzing effects on the state's public institutions, and hitting vulnerable groups such as stateless communities the hardest.

There are still no formal figures capturing the extent of statelessness in Lebanon to date. Fortunately, this is starting to change.

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1. Melkar El Khoury, Thibaut Jaulin (2012). EUDO Citizenship Observatory: Lebanon Country Report, Robert Schuman Center for Advanced Studies, September 2012.

TOWARDS A NATIONWIDE MAPPING

Although formal statistics on the extent of statelessness in Lebanon remain unavailable, this ongoing research series was initiated in 2019 to identify and understand the issue of statelessness in the city of Tripoli. It expanded its scope in 2021 to include the northernmost region of Akkar, and is now concentrating on the governorates of Beirut and Mount Lebanon, including Keserwan-Jbeil.

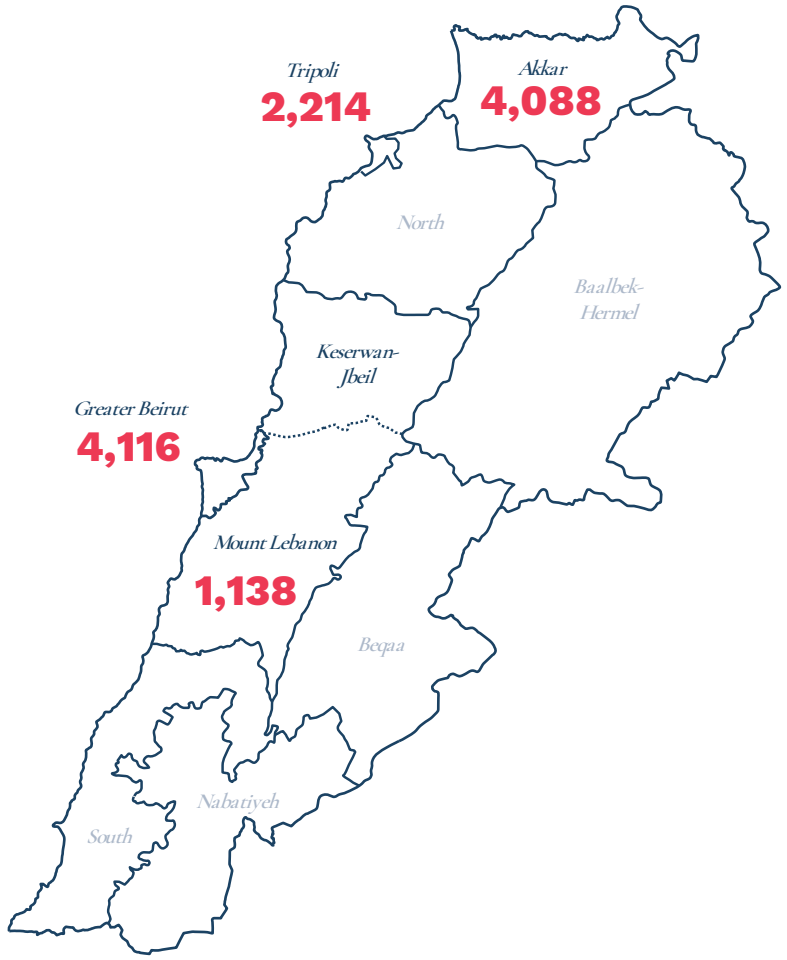
Over the past 20 years, numerous studies, reports, and campaigns have shed light on the plight of stateless individuals across Lebanon and have denounced the intricate administrative and judicial procedures required to obtain citizenship. Given the prominence and persistence of this issue, Siren and its partners have dedicated time to mapping and exploring all facets of statelessness in the country.

In pursuit of this goal, two prior studies were conducted: one in collaboration with MARCH in 2019, and another with UNHCR in 2021, focusing respectively on the northern city of Tripoli and on the Akkar Governorate.

Building upon these previous successes, Siren has now joined forces with INTERSOS to map and understand statelessness in the governorates of Beirut and Mount Lebanon, including Keserwan-Jbeil. The objectives of this endeavor include defining the causes, categories, and profiles of stateless individuals of Lebanese origin, as well as determining their numbers, locations, and vulnerabilities.

With the completion of these 3 studies in Tripoli, Akkar, Beirut, and Mount Lebanon, Siren and its partners have taken a significant step toward achieving a comprehensive nationwide mapping of statelessness. The resulting map showcases all validated estimations of stateless individuals identified in the field over the years, amounting to a total of 11,556 stateless individuals of Lebanese origins.

The distribution of cases across the 4 mapped governorates supports Siren's initial estimate of there being 27,000 stateless persons across the entire country. Further mapping efforts remain for the regions of the Beqaa (including Baalbeck-Hermel) and the South (including Nabatiyeh).



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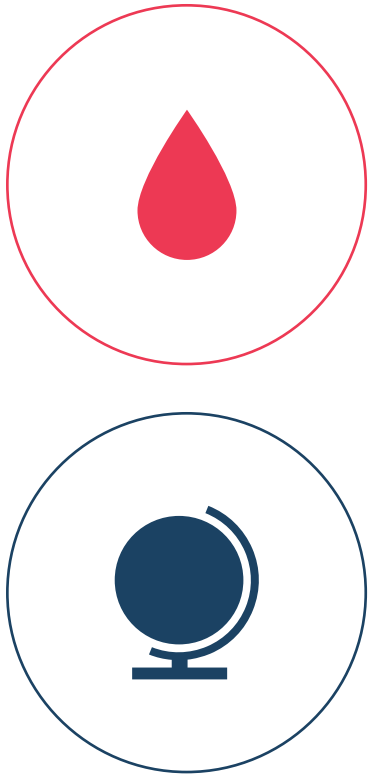
THE NATIONALITY LAW AND STATELESSNESS

The origins of statelessness in Lebanon can be traced back to the Lebanese nationality law. This law is notable for its reliance on patrilineal affiliation by blood, which denies mothers the right to pass citizenship to their children. This practice stands in contrast to the international obligations that Lebanon has committed to uphold.



- Nationality laws in Lebanon recognize both Jus Soli (right of soil) and Jus Sanguinis (right of lineage) principles to grant citizenship. Yet, the prevalence of the patriarchal lineage to transmit nationality has caused restrictions in the way Lebanon applies its nationality legislation.
- The 1925 nationality law grants Lebanese citizenship to persons born in Greater Lebanon and to those who "did not acquire a foreign nationality, upon birth, by affiliation" (Article 1-2), as well as those born to "unknown parents or parents of unknown nationality" (Article 1-3).
- Only one of the clauses stems from Jus Sanguinis considering Lebanese "every person born of a Lebanese father" (Article 1-1), thus attaching the newborn's identity to a formal civil registry (or the *Qayd* in Arabic), exclusively under their father's lineage.
- Gender discrimination continues to bar Lebanese women from transmitting the nationality to their children, adding another layer of difficulty to prevent statelessness to this day.

Box 2. Lebanon's international obligations

- As per its international obligations, Lebanon must respect and protect the right to nationality and ensure that its laws and practices do not lead to statelessness or arbitrary deprivation of nationality.
- Lebanon is party to many human rights treaties and conventions, whose provisions provide specific protections for the right to nationality:
- Article 24 of the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights (ICCPR) recognizes the right for everyone to acquire a nationality.
- Article 7 of the Convention on the Rights of the Child (CRC) recognizes the right of every child to acquire a nationality.
- Article 29 of the Arab Charter on Human Rights recognizes the right for everyone to acquire a nationality.

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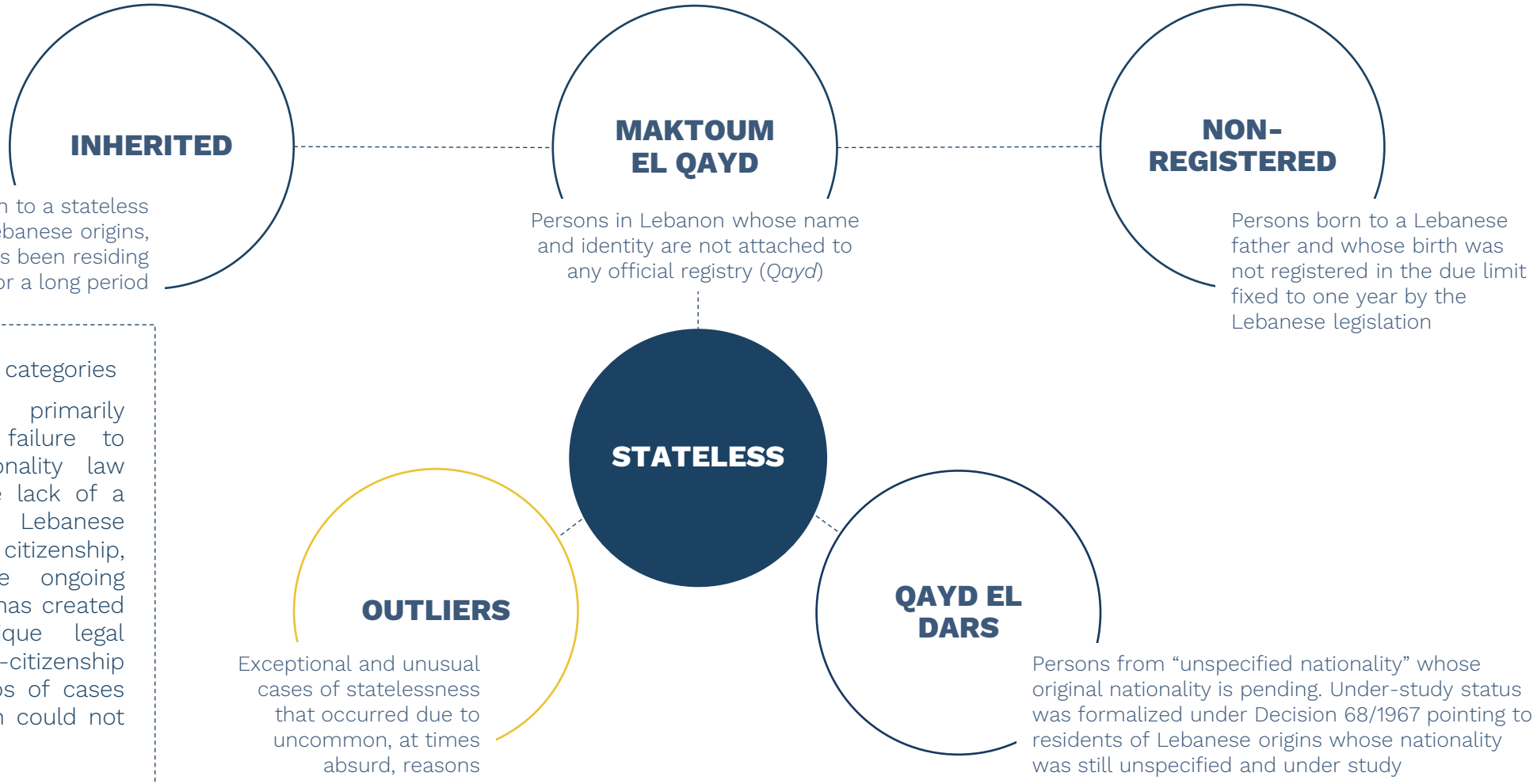
THE STATELESSNESS LEXICON

This study relies upon a technical lexicon specific to the statelessness phenomenon in general and relating to the Lebanese context in particular.



Box 3. Statelessness categories

Statelessness is primarily attached to the failure to comply with nationality law provisions. Yet, "the lack of a solid definition of Lebanese identity and citizenship, together with the ongoing political stalemate, has created a series of unique legal categories of non-citizenship used to label groups of cases on which a decision could not be reached"[1].

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1. Melkar El Khoury, Thibaut Jaulin (2012). EUDO Citizenship Observatory: Lebanon Country Report, Robert Schuman Center for Advanced Studies, September 2012.

THE STATELESSNESS LEXICON

This study relies upon a technical lexicon specific to the statelessness phenomenon in general and relating to the Lebanese context in particular.

IDENTIFICATION DOCUMENTS ISSUED BY THE GDGS

Laissez-passer

Biometric *laissez-passer* passports are provided to stateless individuals for international travel. They are valid for up to three years for under-study cases and one year for MeQ with the possibility of renewal for up to three years with approval from the General Security.

Under-study card

Granted for under-study cases and their children, for local travels.

Courtesy Residence

Granted to under-study individuals, their spouses, husbands, and children, as well as to families of Lebanese citizens, immigrants who were born in Lebanon but are not registered there, and other citizens for various reasons.

IDENTIFICATION DOCUMENTS ISSUED BY MUKHTARS

Ta'arif card

An identification document granted by *mukhtars* to Lebanese stateless. The criteria for granting them are randomly and discretionary set by the *mukhtars* themselves.

Ta'arif certificate

It is an updated form of the *ta'arif* card. The template was created by governors and used by *mukhtars* as an identification document for persons which legal status is problematic, such as Lebanese stateless.

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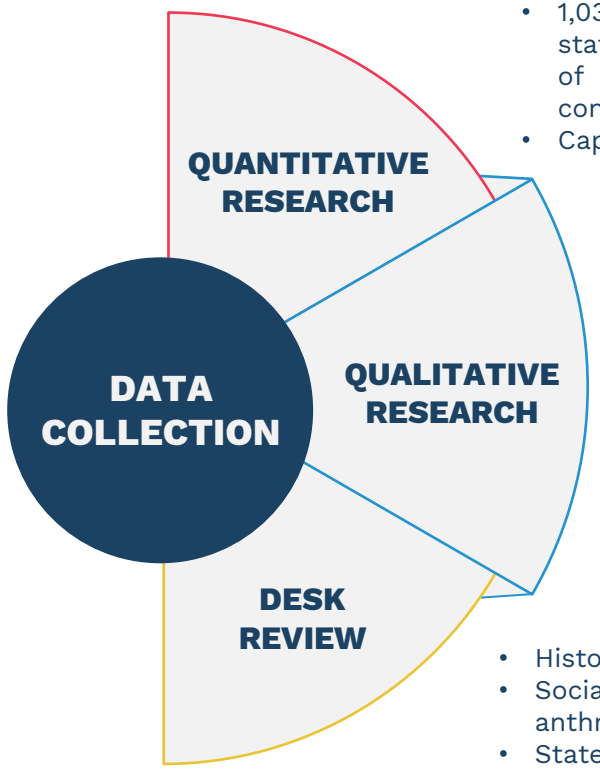
3 METHODOLOGY

DATA COLLECTION

The methodology employed for this study involved a comprehensive desk review of existing literature and legal framework, followed by an extensive field deployment that encompasses all regions of Greater Beirut and Mount Lebanon. This approach utilizes a combination of qualitative and quantitative methods to ensure a thorough analysis.



- 1,034 validated surveys (out of 1,090) with adult stateless individuals (main questionnaire), caregivers of stateless children (parent questionnaire), and control population (control questionnaire)
- Capture and recapture methodology

- Field observations with daily team debriefs
- 28 key informant interviews (KIIs)
- 459 contacted *mukhtars*
- 55 in-depth *mukhtars* interviews
- 2 focus group discussions with stateless individuals
- 2 focus group discussions with vulnerable stateless people (1 with migrant domestic worker mothers and 1 with households including stateless individuals with disabilities)

- Historical and legal background
- Social, economic, demographic and anthropological analyses
- Statelessness contextual analysis
- Tripoli (2019) and Akkar (2021) studies

MAIN SURVEY

A questionnaire conducted with one adult stateless individuals (18+) from each of the stateless household identified.

PARENT SURVEY

A questionnaire conducted with parents or legal guardians of stateless children within each stateless household identified, in order to capture underage stateless individuals' data without directly engaging with them.

CONTROL SURVEY

A questionnaire conducted with adult Lebanese citizens (18+) in order to compare their situation with that of stateless individuals.

UNAVAILABLE AND REJECTIONS

Cases of stateless individuals who were unavailable or refused to be interviewed, were systematically captured in order to have a comprehensive mapping of the actual number of stateless individuals in Greater Beirut and Mount Lebanon.

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FIELD SURVEYS

Between April and May 2023, an exhaustive field survey was conducted, systematically adhering to the district divisions within the governorates of Beirut and Mount Lebanon, including Jbeil-Keserwan. The survey was divided into four distinct phases to ensure the broadest coverage.

PILOT SURVEY
March 2023

SURVEYORS TRAINING
March 22-23, 2023

SURVEY DEPLOYMENT
March 27 - May 12, 2023

In March 2023, a pilot survey was conducted as the initial phase to assess the quality, structure, and design of the questionnaire. It involved 11 participants. Upon successful testing, the surveys were deemed ready for broader distribution.

After conducting a series of interviews, a total of 28 surveyors were recruited. They participated in a two-days training program, which covered the context of statelessness in Lebanon, historical facts and figures, surveying techniques, research ethics, and field security. In addition, INTERSOS provided trainings on gender-based violence, child protection and prevention of sexual exploitation and abuse.

The surveys were carried out from March 27 to May 12, 2023. Deployment occurred in four consecutive phases. After the completion of the data collection, capture and recapture methods[1] were implemented on June 5 and 6, 2023, covering two regions in each of the previously deployed phases.

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1. The capture and recapture method is a scientific technique used to estimate the size of a hidden population. Surveyors are sent out a second time to recapture individuals from the studied population, and by comparing the proportion of recaptured individuals to the total number captured, researchers can estimate the size of the entire population.

FIELD DEPLOYEMENT

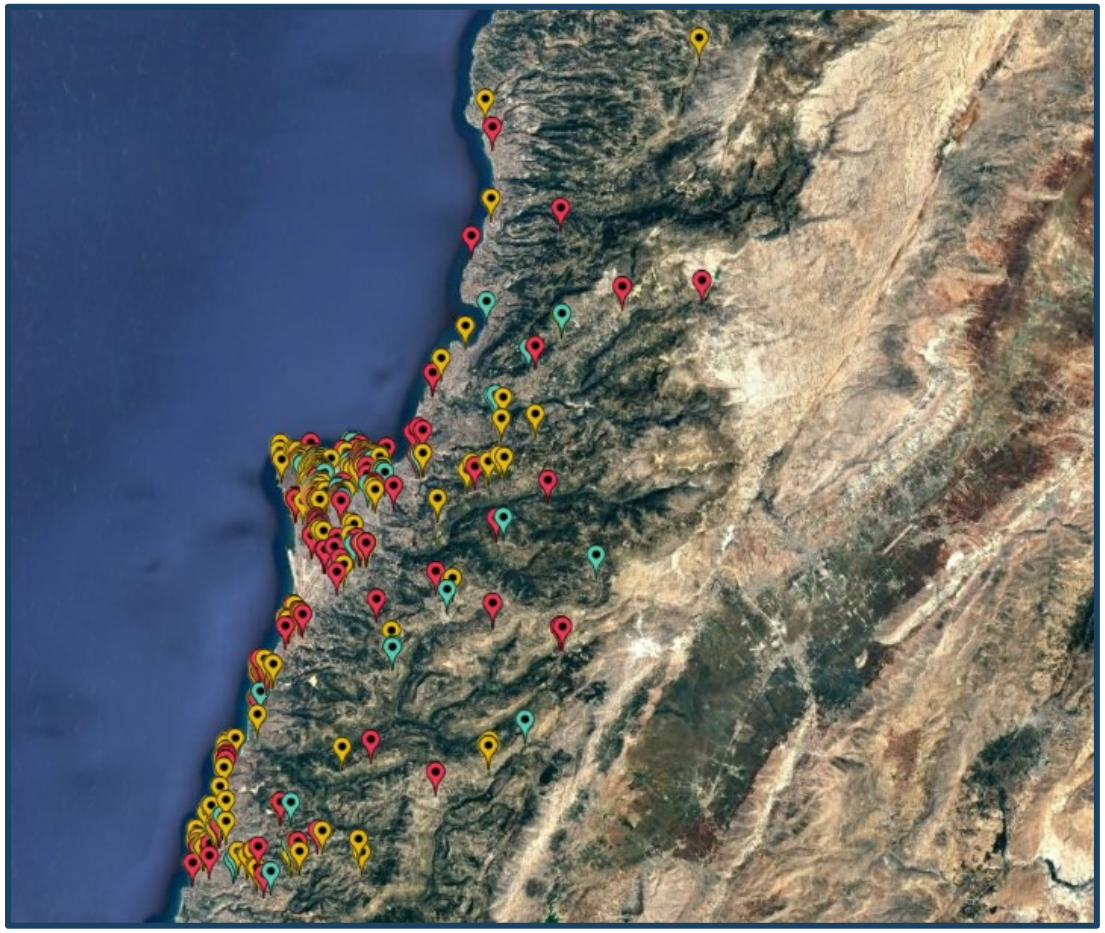
Upon the conclusion of the field deployment phase, a total of 1,090 surveys were carried out across both governorates. The map below provides a visual representation of the survey distribution and the geographical scope of the study. Out of these surveys, 1,034 were validated and included as part of the final sample for this report.

1,034
surveys

Main survey

Parent survey

Control survey



Between March 27 and May 12, the surveyors completed a total of 570 surveys with adult stateless individuals (547 validated) and 336 surveys with parents of stateless children (315 validated). Furthermore, 184 control surveys were carried out with local citizens (172 validated), ensuring alignment with the geographic distribution of the main and parent surveys.

The validation of surveys consisted in eliminating duplicates to ensure that only one stateless person from each household was surveyed. This process was completed in both the main and parent surveys.

In addition, 195 households with at least one stateless individual were either unavailable or rejected to participate in the survey during the field deployment. The team systematically captured relevant data in order to have a comprehensive mapping of the actual number of stateless individuals in Greater Beirut and Mount Lebanon.

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FIELD CHALLENGES

Like for previous studies, conducting field research presented the team with several challenges. However, by adapting their methodologies to the realities of the field, the team succeeded in achieving a comprehensive coverage despite the demanding circumstances.

POLITICAL AND SECURITY CHALLENGES

Political situation

The team encountered difficulties in gaining access to specific politically sensitive areas, particularly the Southern suburbs of Beirut. These areas are known for their intricate political dynamics that necessitate obtaining authorization for entry. However, by employing the appropriate methodologies, the team was able to estimate the number of cases within these aforementioned regions.

Security and safety

In certain disadvantaged areas within Greater Beirut, the team encountered street violence that potentially jeopardized their safety. Nevertheless, the team consistently devised tactics to navigate these challenging areas safely, seeking assistance from local gatekeepers and relying on the support of local authorities and reputable organizations such as Tahaddi Center in Hay el Gharbi.

METHODOLOGICAL CHALLENGES

Snowball and door-to-door

The team faced challenges implementing the door-to-door technique specifically in accessing households in particular areas due to security measures. In such circumstances, the team adapted their approach by conducting interviews with stateless individuals on the streets. Furthermore, in urban areas, the snowball methodology proved to be slow due to the limited interpersonal connections among people.

Project scope

Given that the covered geographical areas are larger than those of previous studies, and with over half of Lebanon's population residing in Beirut and Mount Lebanon, identifying stateless individuals necessitated diverse research methodologies, including a combination of snowball techniques and door-to-door approach, which allowed to successfully carry out fieldwork.

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FIELD CHALLENGES

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OTHER CHALLENGES

Negative perceptions

During the fieldwork conducted in certain areas, the team faced instances of rejection stemming from feelings of shame and fear. In some stateless households, there was a reluctance to openly discuss their situation, as they preferred to keep it hidden. Despite being connected to various factors, as elaborated in the report, the team overcame this challenge.

Anti-Syrian refugee sentiment

The prevailing sentiment against Syrian refugees had a detrimental impact on the field deployment. In certain regions, local residents impeded the work of surveyors, mistakenly assuming that they were assisting Syrians in obtaining nationality. However, the surveyors were trained to effectively communicate the purpose of the research, thereby overcoming any negative reactions encountered during fieldwork.

Refugee camps

Camps are made of a diverse mix of different nationalities. One of the key challenges faced by the team was the differentiation between stateless individuals of Lebanese origin and other stateless groups. This distinction was particularly complex due to the intricate nature of backgrounds and legal statuses. The team was able to overcome these issues by triangulating information based on local key informants, gatekeepers and people from the local community.

Religious dimension

The data collection phase intersected with the holy month of Ramadan. During that period, respondents were tired and more resistant to the surveyors.

Respondents' fatigue

The multiplicity of organizations working in the sector made it more challenging to convince respondents to participate in the survey.

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GENERAL PROFILE OF STATELESS RESPONDENTS

The main survey targeting adult stateless persons in Greater Beirut and Mount Lebanon gathered 547 responses. The profile characteristics pointed in majority to stateless married men from the Sunni community.

Fig 1. Respondents' gender

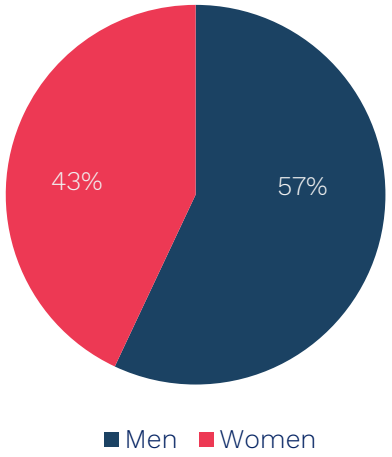


Fig 2. What is your family status?

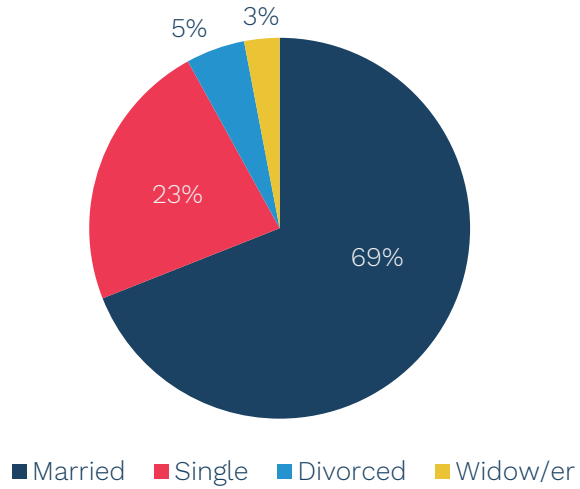
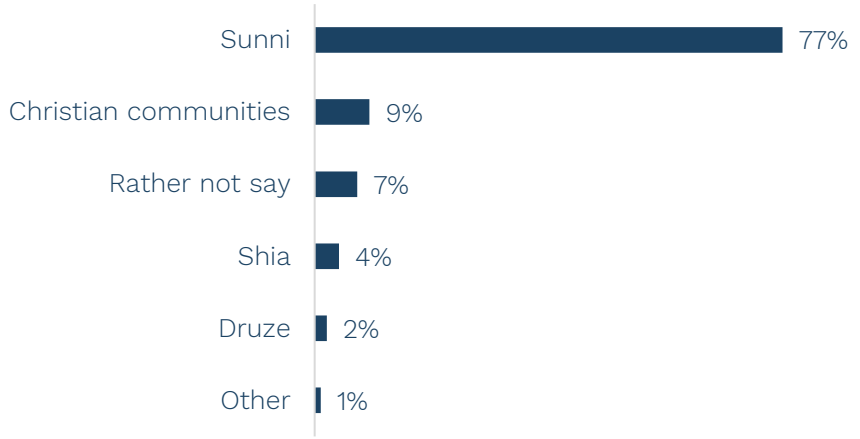


Fig 3. Which sect do you belong to?



- The average age for all respondents is 38.5 years old, distributed between 57% of men and 43% of women.
- The large majority of surveyed stateless are married (69%). The length of their married respondents' union is on average 13 years, with an average of 3.5 children per family (same as for Lebanese form the control group survey).
- A majority of the respondents belong to the Sunni community with 78%, followed by a much smaller groups, such as members of Christian communities (Chaldeans, Assyrian, Armenians, Greek Catholics and Orthodox...) totaling 9%, and 4% Shia, while 7% of respondents dismissed this question.

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4

NUMBERS AND HOTSPOTS

VALIDATING ESTIMATIONS

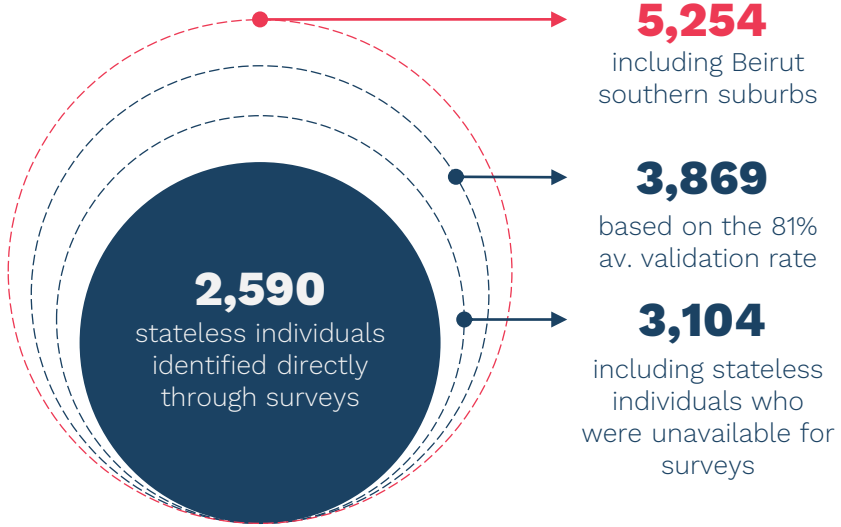
In line with the results from both Tripoli and Akkar, the research has successfully uncovered the presence of 5,254 stateless individuals of Lebanese descent in Greater Beirut and Mount Lebanon, reaffirming the reliability of previous estimates.

Surveys were conducted to determine the number of stateless individuals residing in Greater Beirut and Mount Lebanon. By compiling data from respondents' households, the team identified a total of 2,590 stateless individuals. From the main questionnaire, 1,819 stateless people were identified, and an additional 714 stateless children were identified from the parent questionnaire. Furthermore, the team captured information about 57 adult stateless family members who were not present during the survey but were living in the same household.

In addition, the team encountered during field deployment 195 households with at least one stateless individual in which members either declined or were unavailable to participate in the survey. Surveyors were trained to systematically capture information from these cases, and it was estimated that there were 514 stateless individuals in these households.

To ensure the reliability of the data, the team employed a combination of snowball sampling and door-to-door techniques, which added credibility to the figures mentioned above. Later, capture and recapture methods were implemented in both Beirut and Mount Lebanon, resulting in a weighted average validation rate of 81%. This enabled the estimation of a total of 3,869 stateless individuals residing in the two regions.

Finally, through triangulation of information from key informants, field observations, literature, and administrative data, the team was able to overcome the limited access to Beirut's southern suburbs. This triangulation process allowed to confirm with confidence the presence of an additional 1,385 stateless individuals in these areas.



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BREAKDOWN BY GOVERNORATE

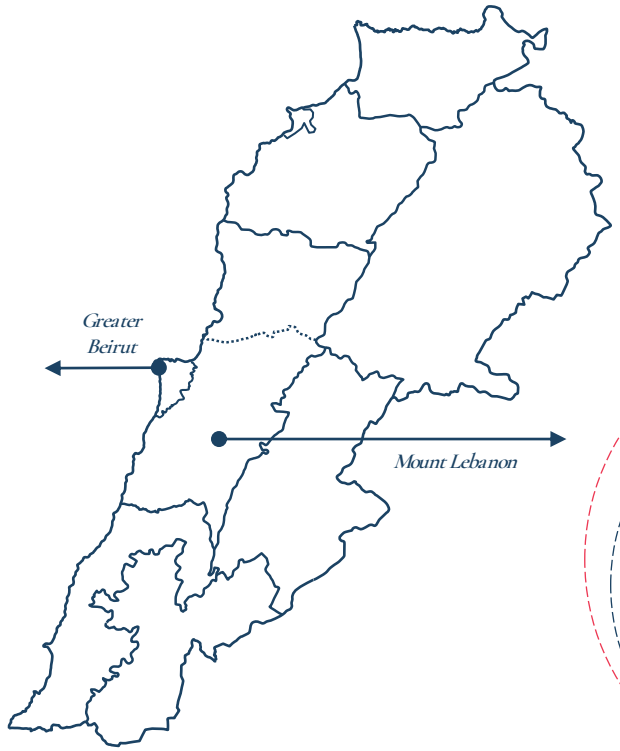
As for the regional breakdown, two third of stateless people were identified in the urban metropolitan area of Greater Beirut, compared to one third in rural regions of Mount Lebanon districts. With the Southern suburbs, four out of five stateless is residing within Greater Beirut.

4,116
including Beirut southern suburbs

2,731
based on the 77% validation rate

2,103
including stateless individuals who were unavailable for surveys

1,777
stateless individuals identified directly through surveys



813
stateless individuals identified directly through surveys

1,138
based on the 88% validation rate

1,001
including stateless individuals who were unavailable for surveys

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BREAKDOWN BY REGION

The table below presents the geographical breakdown of the 3,104 stateless individuals identified through surveys completed with adult stateless and parents of stateless children. Additional figures showcase numbers of stateless individuals in households which were either unavailable or refused to participate in the study.

		Main surveys	Parent surveys	Number of stateless individuals from main surveys	Number of stateless individuals from parent surveys	Unavailable stateless individuals	Total of stateless individuals
Greater Beirut	Eastern districts of Beirut City	8	9	16	11	4	31
	Western districts of Beirut City	73	23	215	64	79	358
	Northern and Eastern suburbs	73	89	189	171	94	454
	Informal settlements, Palestinian camps and adjacent gatherings	165	72	574	205	110	889
	Southern Suburbs and coastal peri-urban area	76	35	248	84	48	380
Mount Lebanon	Iqlim el Kharroub	68	27	294	73	83	450
	Coastal Chouf	51	32	194	107	54	355
	Upper rural Chouf	7	3	27	6	7	40
	Upper rural Baabda and Aley	5	13	10	25	11	46
	Upper rural Metn	11	1	31	1	18	50
	Keserwan and Jbeil	10	11	21	24	6	51
Total		547	315	1,819	771	514	3,104

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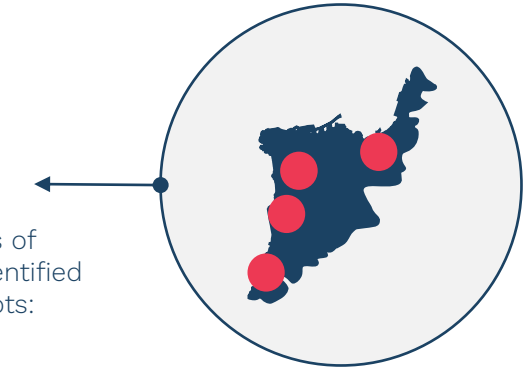
IDENTIFIYING HOTSPOTS

93% of all the identified stateless individuals are located in 6 main areas across Greater Beirut and Mount Lebanon. In Beirut, hotspots revolve around informal settlements, slums, camps and their adjacent gatherings, as well as low-income neighborhoods. In turn, Mount Lebanon's hotspots are found in Iqlim el Kharroub and Coastal Chouf.

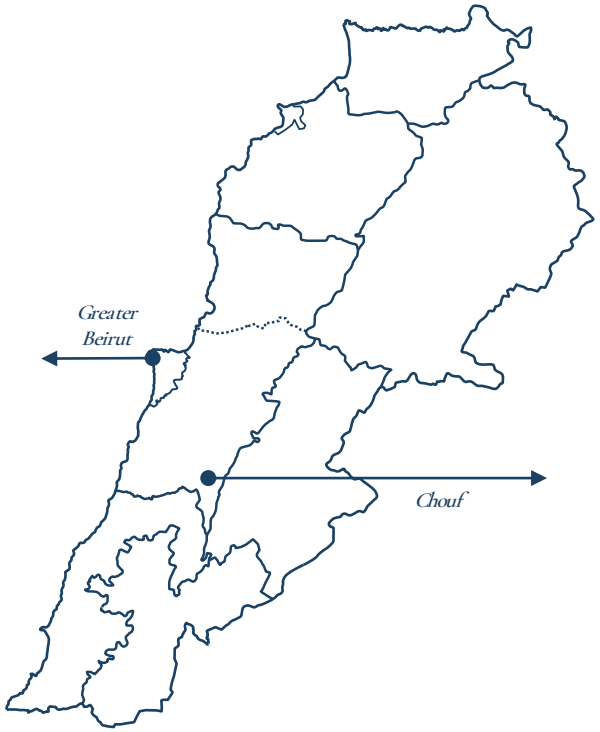
2,081

stateless persons of Greater Beirut identified in 4 major hotspots:



- **889** in informal settlements, Palestinian camps and around
- **454** in North and Eastern suburbs of low-income
- **380** in the Southern suburbs and coastal peri-urban area*
- **358** in neighborhoods of West Beirut

** with limited deployment in the Southern suburbs*



218

stateless persons reside in the remaining regions of Beirut and Mount Lebanon

805

stateless persons of Mount Lebanon identified in 2 major hotspots, both located in the Chouf District:

- **450** in villages of Iqlim el Kharroub
- **355** in the Coastal Chouf area

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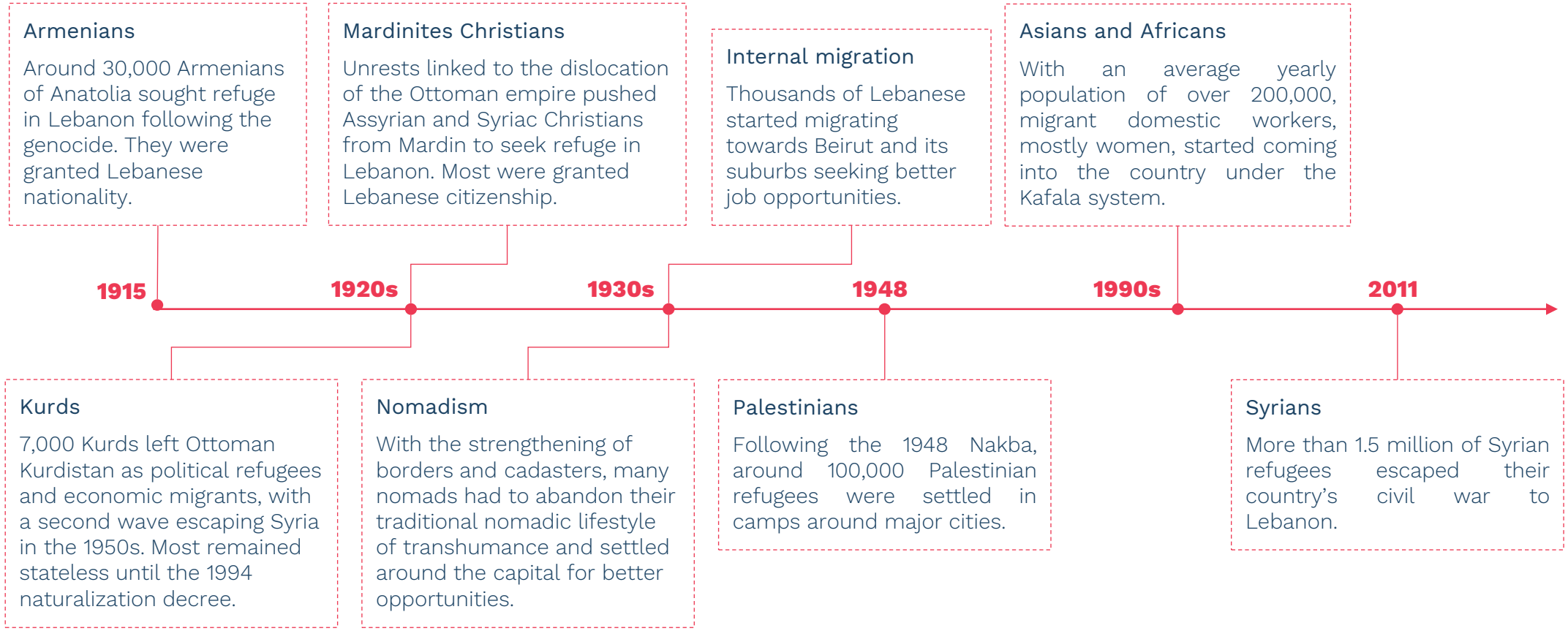
5

DIVERSE ORIGINS

MIGRATORY WAVES TO LEBANON

During the last century, Lebanon witnessed many waves of migration. While some people came as refugees fleeing violence, others came as migrant workers. In parallel, the period is also marked by internal migration and gradual sedentism of nomadic groups. Statelessness is deeply intertwined with these phenomena.



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STATELESSNESS HOTSPOTS OF BEIRUT

Since its creation in 1920, Lebanon has been a magnet for migrants and refugees from various backgrounds, drawn to Beirut and its metropolitan area for its relative liberalism and abundant opportunities. As a result, numerous individuals have settled in these areas, contributing to the formation of low-income neighborhoods and slums. These regions witness the convergence of statelessness hotspots.

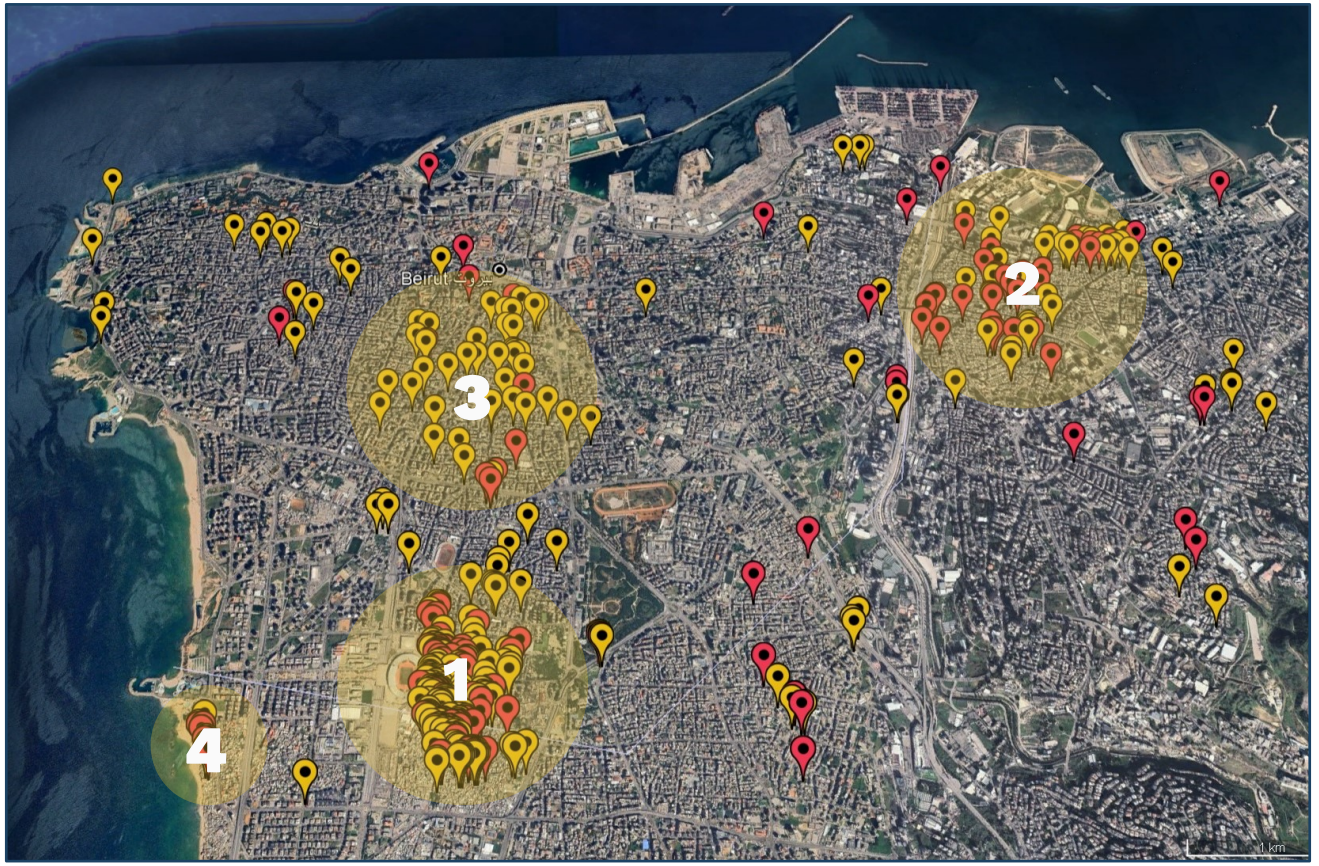
Main survey

Parent survey

By 1920, Beirut had begun to establish itself as a thriving metropolis, rapidly integrating into the global economy under the influence of the French Mandate. Its cosmopolitan nature and economic prosperity became a magnet for international refugees, nomadic populations, and economic migrants from rural Lebanon. These individuals played a significant role in the formation and expansion of slums, informal settlements and low-income suburbs within the city.

The phenomenon of statelessness predominantly stems from these waves of migration. Consequently, areas with high concentrations of stateless individuals can be found in informal settlements such as Hay el Gharbi, Horch and Jnah.

Additionally, Palestinian camps and nearby settlements like Sabra and Chatila, as well as low-income neighborhoods and suburbs like Bachoura, Basta, Burj Hammoud, and Nabaa, also harbor significant numbers of stateless individuals.



1. Horch, Sabra, Chatila and Hay el Gharbi 2. Burj Hammoud and Nabaa 3. Bachoura and Basta 4. Jnah

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PAST REFUGEES, PRESENT STATELESS

Unlike Palestinian refugees, Armenian and other Ottoman Christians as well as Shia Palestinians of the "7 villages" were granted Lebanese citizenship at different points in time. Nevertheless, the research unveiled some marginal stateless cases from these historical refugee groups.

47 STATELESS OF ARMENIAN ORIGINS

Settling upon arrival in Karantina, the 30,000 Armenian refugees escaping the genocide of 1915 resettled in Burj Hammoud. While most of them were later naturalized, several statelessness cases were identified. Interestingly, many other Armenians who declared to be stateless were holding Armenian passports. These cases were not taken into account in the survey.

32 STATELESS INDIVIDUALS OF SYRIAC OR ASSYRIAN ORIGINS

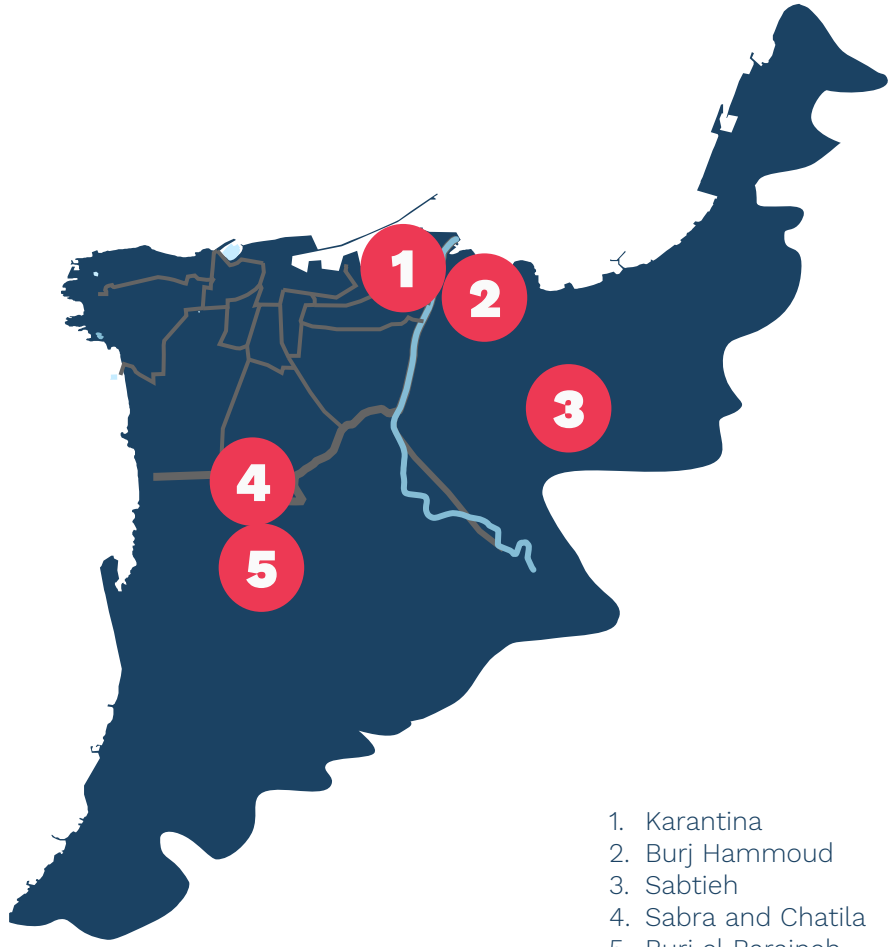
Christians refugees from Mardin coming to Beirut in the 1920s settled in Karantina and in other areas. Most of them were naturalized, and while the majority recently emigrated, the community currently lives near Sabtieh and Bouchrieh.

14 STATELESS INDIVIDUALS OF THE "7 VILLAGES"

32,500 mostly Shia Palestinians of the "7 villages" were naturalized through the 1994 naturalization decree. Interestingly, the 14 captured stateless were all Sunni. Most live in the Palestinian camps of Sabra, Chatila and Burj el Barajneh.

Box 4. The "7 villages"

Initially considered part of Lebanon in 1920, the "7 villages" later fell under the jurisdiction of Mandatory Palestine through the Paulet-Newcombe agreement of 1923, which defined the precise borders between French and British Mandatory territories. Despite the overwhelmingly Shia population of these villages already being registered as Lebanese, they fled to the Lebanese hinterlands during the Nakba alongside Palestinian refugees.



1. Karantina
2. Burj Hammoud
3. Sabtieh
4. Sabra and Chatila
5. Burj el Barajneh

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THE FATE OF KURDISH REFUGEES

Many Muslim Kurds from Mardin, similar to Syriacs and Assyrians, sought refuge in Beirut. However, unlike the former two groups, the Muslim Kurds were granted under-study cards due to concerns among the elites regarding the potential religious imbalance resulting from their naturalization. The majority of them were eventually naturalized in 1994, while only a few remain stateless and reside in neighborhoods with a strong traditional Kurdish presence.

160 STATELESS OF KURDISH ORIGINS

The Kurdish community numbered around 7,000 people during the 1940s. Kurds were motivated to migrate due to economic opportunities, family ties, and political reasons, including escaping Kemalist Turkey and establishing dissident parties. In the 1950s and 1960s, a second wave of approximately 50,000 Kurds fled Syria, particularly after the el Hasaka census which resulted in many losing their Syrian citizenship.

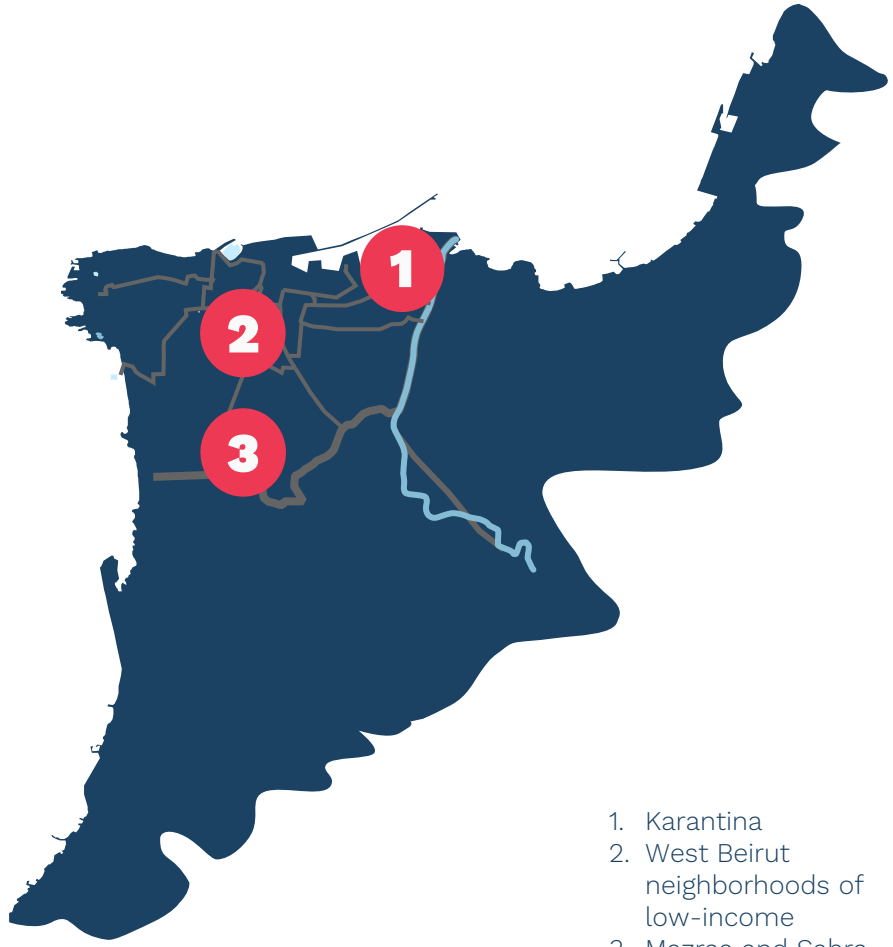
In contrast to Christians, Kurds remained stateless until the naturalization decree of 1994 when almost all of the 32,000 Kurds holding under-study cards were granted citizenship.

During the civil war, Kurds were displaced from Karantina and relocated to low-income neighborhoods such as Bachoura, Basta, Zokak el Blat, Burj Abi Haidar, and Mazraa.

Many Kurds acquired Turkish citizenship following Erdogan's foreign policies. Interestingly, they self-identify more as Turks than as Kurds.

Box 5. The Kurds and the under-study

In 1961, the Lebanese government introduced the "Unspecified Nationality" card for stateless. Children born to this category were to be granted Lebanese citizenship upon registration. Concerns about the increasing number of Kurds and their potential impact on the Lebanese population pushed authorities to replace it with under-study cards in 1962. The document served as an annually-renewable residence permit by the General Security.



1. Karantina
2. West Beirut neighborhoods of low-income
3. Mazraa and Sabra

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FORCED SEDENTISM

People of nomadic origins represent more than half the stateless individuals in Greater Beirut. Their vulnerability to statelessness was already demonstrated in Akkar (2021). Their settlement in Beirut is linked to their forced sedentism, deprivation, and the choice of informal settlements that have contested property rights.

179 STATELESS OF BEDOUIN ORIGINS

Many Bedouin tribes lived a seasonal pastoral life on today's Greater Beirut territory using lands for grazing. Modernity and cadastral delimitation forced them to find alternative ways of living. Like Kurds, many settled in Karantina, with the opportunity of working in the city's slaughterhouse nearby, hence their toponymic surname of "Arab el Maslakh". Displaced by sectarian unrests during the civil war, they founded a slum in Jnah's abandoned resorts of Saint-Simon. Wealthier Bedouins moved to modern buildings in Khaldeh and Sebnay where others of their kin were already living.

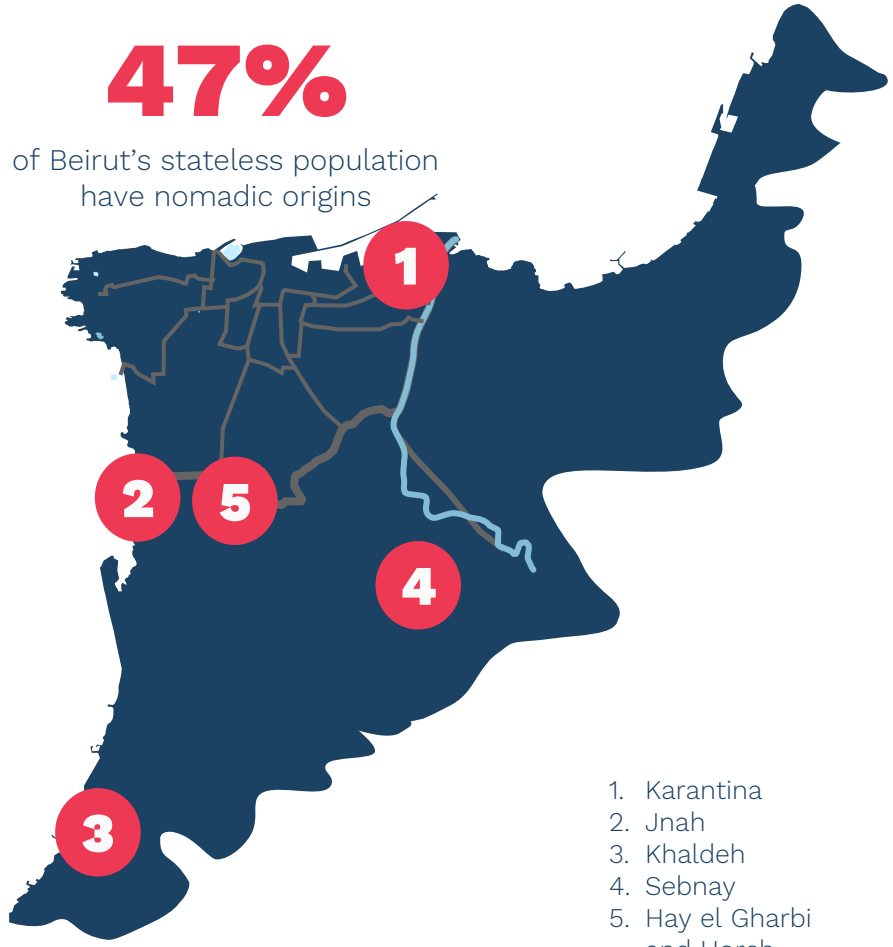
In contrast with Wadi Khaled in Akkar, many Bedouins of Beirut were included in the 1932 census. The rest were granted under-study cards and naturalized in 1994. Those who failed and remained stateless reside in Jnah and Khaldeh, and were identified by this survey.

817 STATELESS OF DOM ORIGINS

Beirut and its suburbs have a long tradition in hosting Dom communities. Forced to sedentary lifestyle by modernism, most of them settled as squatters in informal settlements built on lands of contested property rights such as Horch and Hay el Gharbi, in the vicinity of Sabra and Chatila. These areas constitute the main hotspots for both Dom and stateless populations of metropolitan Beirut, as revealed throughout this research.

47%

of Beirut's stateless population have nomadic origins



1. Karantina
2. Jnah
3. Khaldeh
4. Sebnay
5. Hay el Gharbi and Horch

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ATTRACTING ECONOMIC MIGRANTS

Beirut attracted a large number of rural migrants who steadily came in waves inflating its suburbs. The most deprived settled in slums that formed a belt of poverty around the capital city. Such areas witnessed later the arrival of other international migrant groups. These areas are hotspots for stateless people.

Most of the rural migrants settled in low-income neighborhoods or slums that developed near industrial zones like Burj Hammoud, Nabaa and Choueifat. Others flourished around quarries like Biaqout and Roueissat[1].

Migrants often chose to live with their family or clan members, from the same region of origin. These settlements took over their residents' regional identities. In this respect, Hay el Selloum, Ouzai, Roueissat or Biaqout saw the influx of mainly Shia villagers from the Beqaa and the South, usually from the same clan (Zeaiter for Zeaitriyeh for instance). Many Shia stateless adults and children were found in these areas.

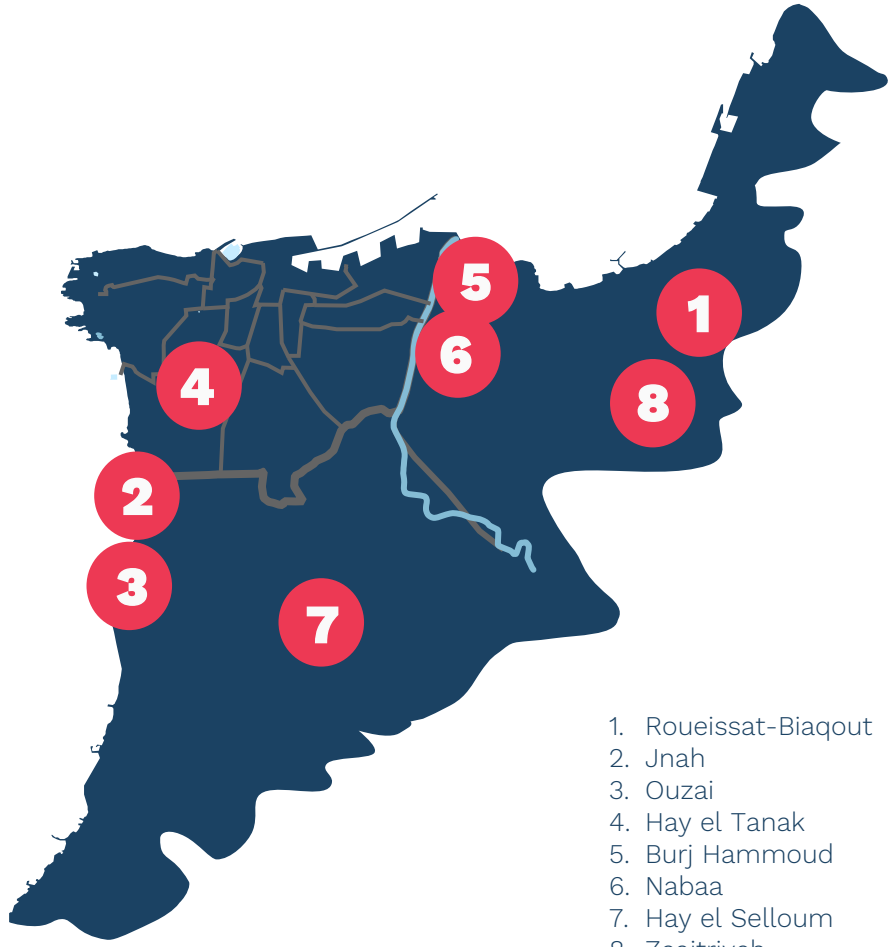
Other neighborhoods like Nabaa are religiously mixed areas. Statelessness cases are spread all across these different areas.

Box 6. Hay el Tanak – Wata Msaytbeh

Spreading from the Cola bridge towards Mar Elias refugee camp, this slum is the only one to be found within the administrative boundaries of Beirut city. In addition to other profiles, Hay el Tanak was traditionally the hotspot of Druze migrants from the mountains[1]. Interestingly, the team identified one of the few Druze stateless cases there.

Box 7. New waves, new unions

Similarly to internal migration, Beirut attracted since the 1990s international economic migrants from Asian and African countries. This mainly female population tend to settle in low-income neighborhoods, essentially Burj Hammoud and Nabaa. Unions between these women and Lebanese men resulted in new cases of stateless children[2].



1. Roueissat-Biaqout
2. Jnah
3. Ouzai
4. Hay el Tanak
5. Burj Hammoud
6. Nabaa
7. Hay el Selloum
8. Zeaitriyeh

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1. Mona Fawaz, Isabelle Peillen (2003). The case of Beirut, Lebanon. Understanding slums: Case Studies for the Global Report on Human Settlements 2003. Massachusetts Institute of Technology. UN-HABITAT.
2. Cf. Section 9 of this report.

STATELESSNESS IN MOUNT LEBANON

Except for coastal Chouf and Iqlim el Kharroub, Mount Lebanon has less than 200 stateless people scattered all across various towns and villages. These are usually exceptional or older cases of statelessness.

Main survey

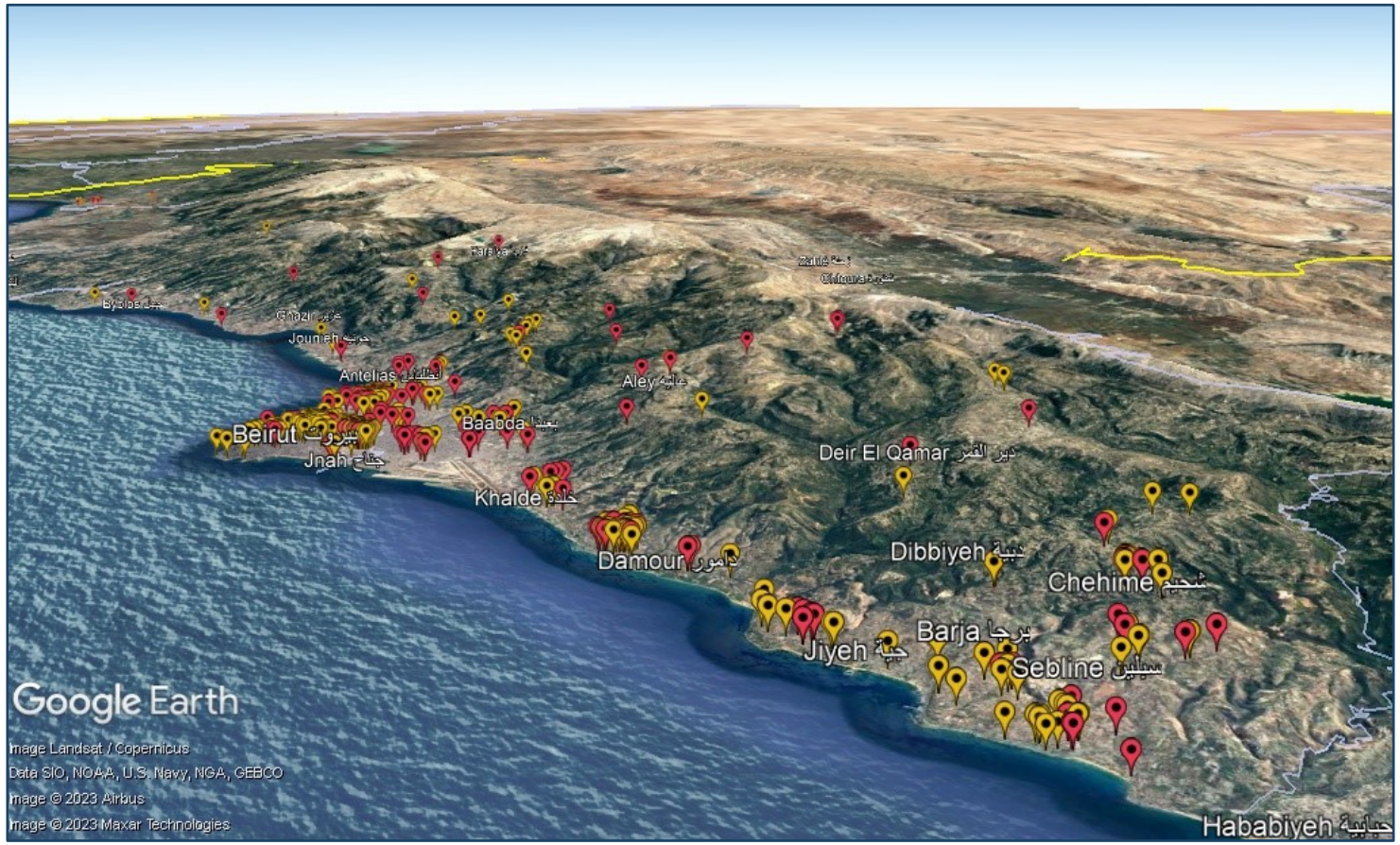
Parent survey

Coastal Chouf and Iqlim el Kharroub are the two main hotspots of statelessness in Mount Lebanon.

In contrast, the predominantly Christian and Druze areas are considerably less affected by statelessness. The few cases encountered remain an exceptional phenomenon.

Other than the original villagers, many of the stateless were identified of Bedouin origins, most being members of clans that settled in rural Aley and Chouf long time ago.

Finally, newcomer Bedouins from Wadi Khaled were also identified around Broummana in the Metn, working as concierges in wealthy villas and compounds.



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NOMADISM AND STATELESSNESS IN THE CHOUF

Coastal Chouf and Iqlim el Kharroub are not only hotspots for statelessness. In fact, the vast majority of the stateless there were identified as being of nomadic origins.

BEDOUINS IN COASTAL CHOUF

At least 40% of the 355 stateless individuals censed in Coastal Chouf, mainly in the vicinity of Naameh and Haret el Naameh, were identified as of Bedouin origins.

Forced to sedentism by modernity, many Bedouins were not able to afford housing within Greater Beirut. Hence, many settled in regions that witnessed exponential urbanization such as Naameh and Saadiyat.

In the meantime, other Bedouins migrated from the Beqaa to work as farmers at the agricultural lands of Damour and Jiyeh. The el Hrouk tribe originally from Faour in Zahleh district is the most concerned by statelessness.

DOM IN IQLIM EL KHARROUB

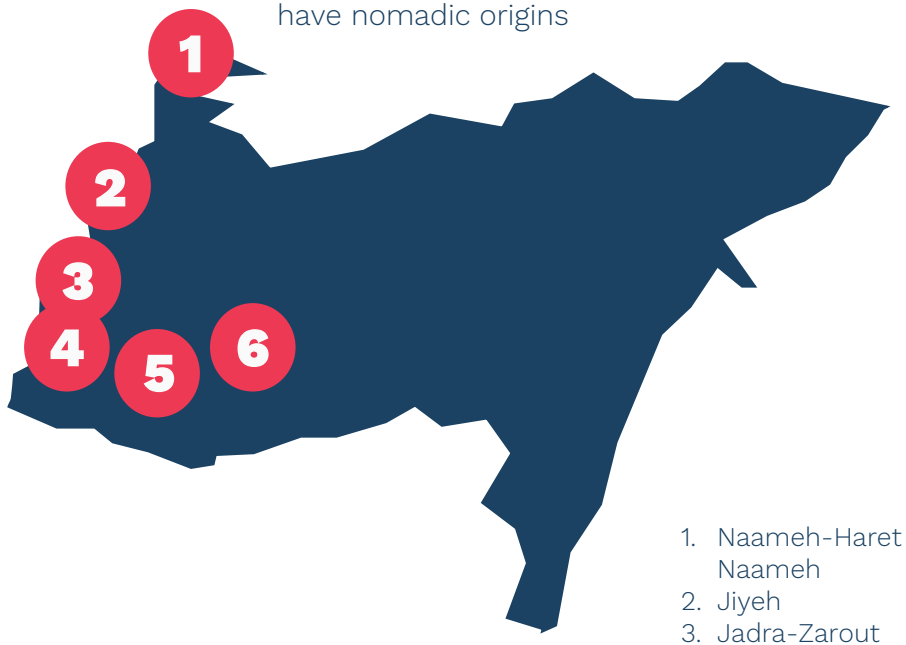
86% of Iqlim el Kharroub's stateless population was identified to be of nomadic origins. Among them, at least 74% were from the Dom community. Most live in and around Wadi el Zayni, Ketermaya, Jadra and Chehim.

Many have relatives in Beirut's Dom communities. According to them, those who are in better conditions tend to move out to these areas.

In Wadi el Zayni, Dom people live among Palestinians, while in Chehim, they live in harmony within the town in rental units of the old houses.

76%

of Chouf's stateless population have nomadic origins



1. Naameh-Haret el Naameh
2. Jiyeh
3. Jadra-Zarout
4. Wadi el Zayni
5. Ketermaya and Mgheiriyeh
6. Chehim

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6

CAUSES AND CATEGORIES

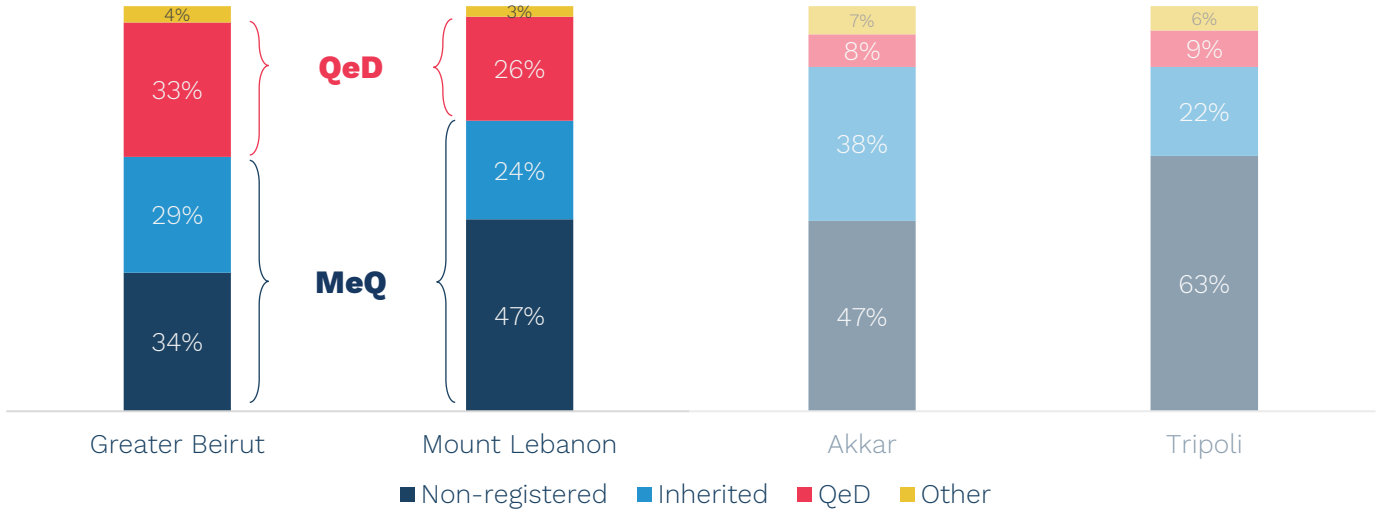
SAME YET DIFFERENT

In line with previous findings, non-registration remains the primary cause of statelessness among adult respondents. However, in contrast with Tripoli and Akkar, both Greater Beirut and Mount Lebanon stand out with a sizable concentration of under-study cases. This phenomenon sheds light on the cosmopolitan nature of urban areas.

Statelessness profiles are more diverse in Greater Beirut and Mount Lebanon compared to Tripoli and Akkar. Although the numbers align with national data, with the majority of respondents belonging to the *Maktoum el Qayd* category in both regions, specifically from the non-registered subcategory, there is a significant prevalence of under-study cases, particularly in Greater Beirut, accounting for 33% of all cases.

This specific wide-ranging distribution in Beirut and Mount Lebanon can be attributed to factors such as ethnicity or family dynamics, as indicated by the available data.

Fig 4. Stateless distribution by categories[1]



Box 8. The under-study (*Qayd el Dars*) category

Under-study cases of statelessness in Lebanon are rooted in historical waves of migration that extend back to before the creation of the country in 1920. The category refers to those whose nationality is originally "unspecified" because they lost it and could not obtain a new one. The concept itself is not legally defined under Lebanese law. The formal designation is derived from the historic "unspecified nationality" status that was later mentioned in the 1962 Law & Entry legislation (article 19).

As a result, the General Directorate of the General Security (GDGS) enacted the under-study status which was later recognized as per Decision 68 of 1967, pointing to residents of Lebanese origins whose nationality was still "being studied". They have to request residence permits granted by the GDGS.

Onwards, special registries were set up at the GDGS to register those included in this category and record their births, marriages and deaths, mirroring the mode of personal status registries. This type of classification was acknowledged by Courts' jurisprudence.

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1. Stateless individuals under 18 are not included in this sample which means that the actual number of non-registered stateless across the country is higher. The "Other" category refer to outlying cases such as absence of the father, family issues, etc.

SAME YET DIFFERENT: IN FOCUS

When looking closer at the different regions within each governorate, clear differences appear: under-study are overproportioned in Beirut's informal settlements (with a predominantly Dom population), while non-registration is strongest in its northeastern suburbs.

Under-study

The under-study category is widespread among the Dom population, who mostly reside in informal settlements in Greater Beirut (64%). The exclusion of stateless individuals with nomadic roots from Lebanese recognition traces back to the 1932 census, which overlooked their constant movement and their absence of adequate identification documentation, leading to statelessness. Moreover, among Dom respondents, 39% have an under-study grandfather and 61% have an under-study father, further reinforcing the historical pattern of this category of statelessness.

Non-registration

Eastern Beirut and the northeastern suburbs of the city, predominantly Christian regions, have the highest concentration of non-registration cases. When asked about the reasons for not being registered at birth, respondents brought up negligence and family issues as the main factors. It is worth noting that the dynamics between rural and urban regions differ when analyzing the reasons behind non-registrations.

Fig 5. Why was your birth not registered?

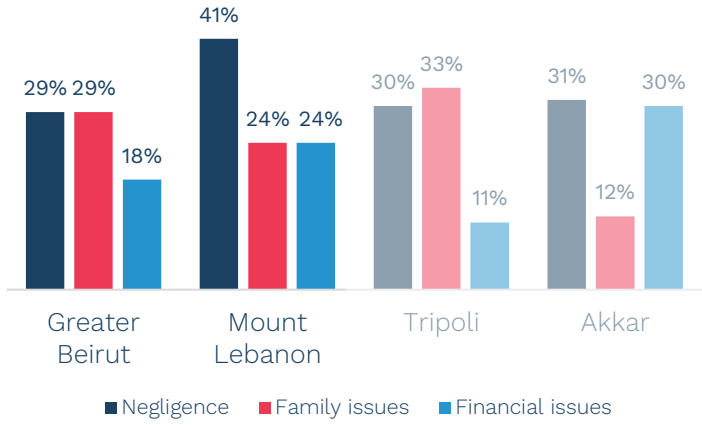

Fig 6. Statelessness distribution in selected Greater Beirut regions

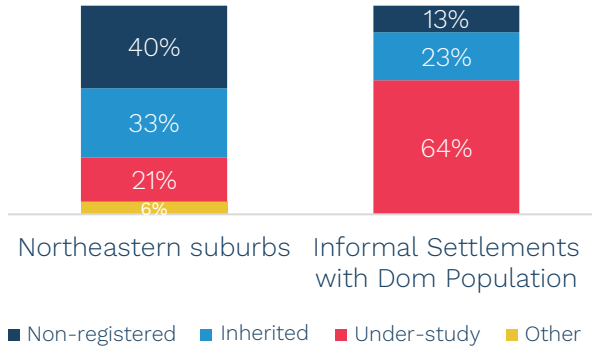

Figure 5 illustrates that economic factors play a significant role in contributing to non-registration by parents in rural regions (such as in Akkar with 30% of cases). Family problems[1] appear to be a more prevalent driver of non-registration in densely populated urban areas (accounting for 21% of non-registered cases in Beirut, and 30% in Tripoli. This may be due to the relative diminishing of traditional values and easing of restrictive customs in these areas.

An average of 28% of non-registered respondents across all governorates stated that negligence is the main cause behind their non-registration. When asked who they blame the most for their situation, a majority of respondents in Greater Beirut and Mount Lebanon blamed only their parents (48%), compared to 19% blaming both their parents and the State. Negligence remains a prominent cause of non-registration across various regions, emphasizing the need for community awareness campaigns in high-risk areas.

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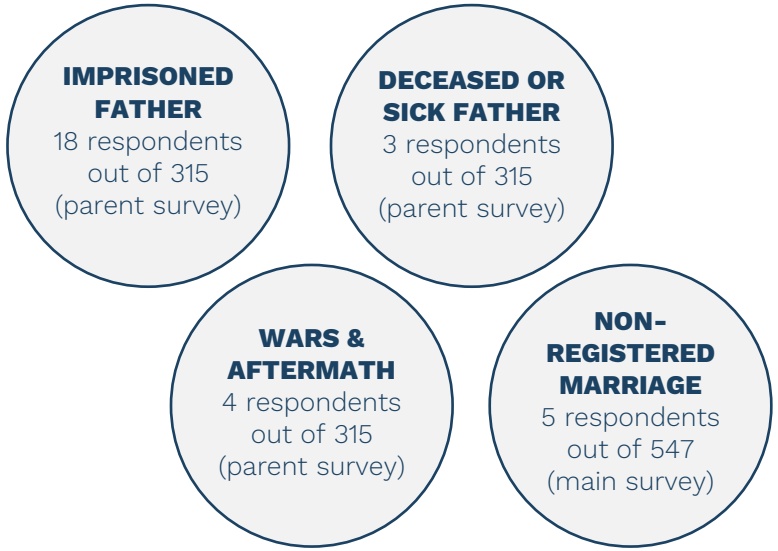
1. Family problems need to be understood as declared by stateless respondents. They include issues such as divorce, or bad terms between spouses or siblings among others.

OUTLYING CASES

Although the number of exceptional cases of statelessness was relatively small, they are still noteworthy due to their unique context. These cases, though statistically insignificant, provide valuable insights into the diverse origins of statelessness, warranting further analysis.

Field research unveiled that a minority of parents of stateless children encountered registration obstacles for various unconventional reasons.

Among these findings, 18 parents reported not registering their children due to the different wars the country witnessed and their aftermath. Furthermore, 3 parents of stateless children attributed their inability to register their children to unfortunate circumstances, such as the father's death or illness. Another five adult stateless respondents revealed that their marriage was not officially registered at the time of their children's birth, leading to their non-registration.



Box 9. Statelessness across the borders[1]

Another notable phenomenon involves a small group of stateless individuals of Syrian origins who migrated to Lebanon many years ago and have since established residence in the country. During the outbreak of the Lebanese war, some of them became involved with Christian militias, which has now created obstacles for them to return to Syria and resolve their statelessness, given the political implications involved. Presently, they encounter numerous challenges in registering their own and their children's statuses in Lebanon.

> When the civil war started, I had to seek refuge in Germany and couldn't register my newborn. By the time I came back, it was already too late.
>
> — Kurdish stateless man, Basta

> My father passed away before registering my brothers and I , so I had to use my cousin's identification to register my own children.
>
> — Stateless man, Bachoura

> I cannot vote, I cannot travel, simply because my parents' marriage was not registered.
>
> — Stateless daughter, Achrafieh

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1. The phenomenon of Syriac stateless individuals was encountered on the field but they were not taken into account for the survey given their evident Syrian origins.

PERSONAL STATUS LAW AND STATELESSNESS

The sectarian nature of Lebanon's personal status system poses a significant risk of statelessness, particularly in diverse urban areas like Greater Beirut, where interreligious marriages, relationships, and liberal practices are more prevalent. This phenomenon affects all sects to some extent.

Sects and statelessness

The sectarian basis of marital regulations is discordant with some liberal practices of cosmopolitan places like Beirut and Mount Lebanon. In this respect, the research encountered cases where Druze men choosing spouses outside of their community faced challenges in registering their marriage, and hence their children too, since the Druze faith forbids exogamy. This was corroborated by interviewed lawyers. While the majority of these cases were usually resolved, a few persist and contribute to non-registration. Similarly, many Christians, especially among Catholic sects, reported experiencing long divorce processes, making registration of children from second relations or non-registered marriages more difficult.

Flawed solutions

Field observations have revealed that in such cases, individuals often resort to converting to another religion as a misguided solution to their problems. For example, Druze individuals may embrace Islam to legitimize their marriage, while Christians may embark into new relationships before finalizing their divorce. However, these practices have proven ineffective in preventing statelessness.

Box 10. Illegitimacy as a solution

Although one of the suggested solutions to register children born out of wedlock is to register them as "*laqit*", literally "foundling", this concept is not embraced by parents because of the stigma that they believe it creates for their child, even for the cases of religiously married parents who failed at registering their marriage.

DIVORCE
8 cases of Christian parents with non-registered children

MIXED MARRIAGES
6 cases out of 15 of Druze parents with non-registered children

Box 11. Personal status law in Lebanon[1]

Article 9 of the Constitution granted sects autonomy in the regulation of personal status such as marriage, divorce, inheritance, and parental custody. With the inexistence of a unified civil law for marriages, couples seeking divorce are bound by different rights and obligations that follow their respective sects, and depend on the decisions made by their respective religious tribunals. This unique system is referred to as personal federalism, where an individual's rights and statuses are determined by their religious affiliation rather than their territorial location.

Box 12. The practice of *mutaa*'

The *mutaa*' as a temporary marriage practiced by some among Shia was identified as a potential risk for children's non-registration. One case was identified through surveys and later corroborated through triangulations between KIIs, field observations and surveyors.

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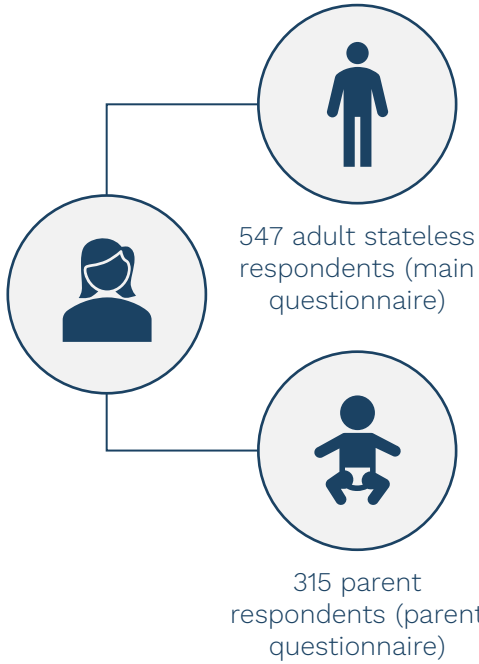
1. Khoury, C. (2020). Beyond Religious Marriages: Civil Marriage, Civil Family Laws, and the Enhancement of Women's Rights in Lebanon. Kohl: a Journal for Body and Gender Research, 77-89.; and Messarra, A. (2003). La gouvernance d'un système consensuel: le Liban après les amendements constitutionnels de 1990. Beirut: Librairie Orientale.

THE MOTHER'S SIDE

While it is natural for all fathers to be either Lebanese or stateless of Lebanese origins (given the country's nationality law and the purpose of this study), a closer look at the mother's side confirms Beirut and Mount Lebanon's cultural and ethnical diversity compared to results from Akkar and Tripoli. In fact, fewer than half of the mothers of stateless individuals are Lebanese, with a noteworthy result: 18% of non-registered children are born to a Lebanese father and a migrant domestic worker mother.



547 adult stateless respondents (main questionnaire)

315 parent respondents (parent questionnaire)

	GREATER BEIRUT	MOUNT LEBANON	AKKAR	TRIPOLI
Born to a Lebanese mother	45%	40%	57%	75%
Born to a Syrian mother	13%	11%	11%	8%
Born to a Lebanese mother	41%	42%	54%	76%
Born to a Syrian mother	23%	33%	36%	24%
Born to a migrant domestic worker mother[1]	19%	5%	-%	-%

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1. Cf. p.68 of this report for a full analysis of this specific category.

DOCUMENTATION AND PAPERWORK

Another distinctive characteristic of Greater Beirut and Mount Lebanon is the proportion of stateless individuals holding a laissez-passer: 16% and 20% respectively, in contrast to a significantly lower rate of 4% in Akkar for example. This disparity reflects the regional dynamics between stateless individuals and administrative authorities.

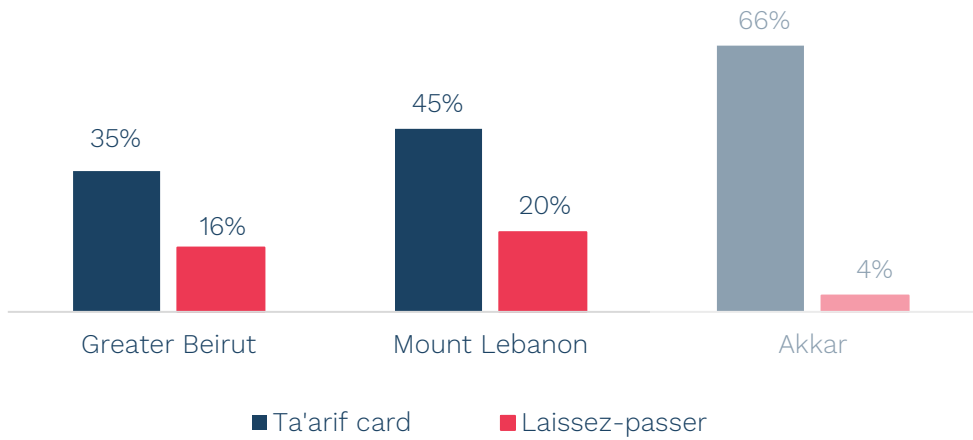
Typically, local authorities are the main source of information for stateless people. However, 56% of *mukhtars* interviewed in Greater Beirut and Mount Lebanon showed an unwillingness in handling statelessness cases. This is mainly due to the fact that *mukhtars* have little to no interaction with stateless persons. Actually, in urban areas of Beirut, social networks are weaker than in rural areas, since most of the inhabitants originated from other regions. Therefore, *mukhtars* are often unaware of stateless cases in their vicinity. As for rural areas, many regions have little to no cases, which explains *mukhtars*' reluctance to deal with such an unfamiliar topic as statelessness.

Consequently, the alternative option is to turn to the General Directorate of the General Security (GDGS), who can only provide them with a *laissez-passer* as an identification document, serving as a substitute for a passport for international travel.

The *laissez-passer* constitutes a travel document for stateless individuals granted by the GDGS. This particular prerogative was originally mentioned in the 1962 Law and Entry legislation, with Article 19 allowing the GDGS to issue the travel document to persons of "unspecified nationality". The service was extended to stateless categories known as *Maktoum el Qayd* and under-study (*Qayd el Dars*) who can apply for a *laissez-passer*, as per very tight and complex conditions listed under GDGS Circular of 1st March 2017[1].

That said, this type of document is not always acknowledged by immigration departments in foreign countries, which limits the travel options of stateless persons.

Fig 7. What identification document do you have?



Box 13. *Ta'arif* cards and certificates

The issuing of new *Ta'arif* cards was banned by the Ministry of Interior and Municipalities several years ago, preferring the resort to *Ta'arif* certificates (*Ifedet Ta'arif Essem*), as per the new template from 17 August 2021.

A majority of respondents hold either one of these documents (38% have cards and 21% certificates), which are both issued by *mukhtars*.

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1. General Security Circular (2017). Guidelines for issuing biometric passports for QeD and MeQ categories, 1 March 2017.

7

THE RIGHT TO HAVE RIGHTS

EDUCATION: LEGAL MECHANISMS

Despite not being party to the 1954 Convention to end statelessness, Lebanon has enabled mechanisms to ensure access to education to stateless persons. That said, the complexity of the process and socio-economic factors heavily disrupt the feasibility of undocumented children to effectively enroll in schools.

Lebanon guarantees a "free education" to all as per article 10 of its Constitution, which also engulfs the UN Declaration of Human Rights (UNDHR) that specifies under article 26 (1) that "everyone has the right to education. Education shall be free, at least in the elementary and fundamental stages".

Lebanon's obligations also entail the respect of the Convention of the Right of the Child (CRC), which it is party to since 1991. By passing Law No. 150/2011 on Compulsory and Free Education, Lebanon has thus met the requirements under article 28 (a) of the CRC urging states to "make primary education compulsory and available free to all".

As such, the Lebanese education sector formally acknowledges the right for stateless children to enroll, attend classes and even pass official examinations and degrees until the end of the secondary cycle.

However, registration processes within schools are chaotic and unclear. Starting 2010, the Ministry of Education and Higher Education (MEHE) started developing the registration process of MeQ and under-study children in public schools.

Every year, MEHE now issues circulars towards the beginning and end of the academic year regarding the registration process and organization of official exams in schools[1], incorporating all the required documents for pupils to formally register.

The circulars hence cover Lebanese and non Lebanese students, in addition to Palestinian refugees, MeQ and under-study children.

Despite the comprehensiveness of the mechanism, stateless children in Lebanon continue to face significant obstacles in accessing education, as they often fall through the cracks of existing policies. These difficulties are attached to the cost in time and money needed to obtain formal required documents by stateless households.

MEHE's present mechanisms detail the type of documents needed for enrolling children in public schools, such as valid residence permits for under-study children (some schools will tolerate an expired one) or *Ta'arif* cards issued by the *mukhtar* for MeQ cases. Some schools even go further and ask for all documents be legalized at the MEHE, in addition to family health bulletins showing for vaccination status of the children.

A significant proportion of parents of stateless children cannot afford these procedures, hence end up dropping the idea of accessing schools altogether.

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1. El Nashra (2023). The Ministry of Education issues an administrative memorandum regarding the dates for accepting registrations for the official exams for the year 2023 [in Arabic], 22 February 2023.

EDUCATION: SEVERED LANDSCAPE

The survey has confirmed once again how problematic it is for stateless children to access to education. Moreover, the dropout ratios that emerged from Beirut and Mount Lebanon are much greater, indicating that proximity to the Lebanese economic center does not guarantee a better chance of enrolling in schools.

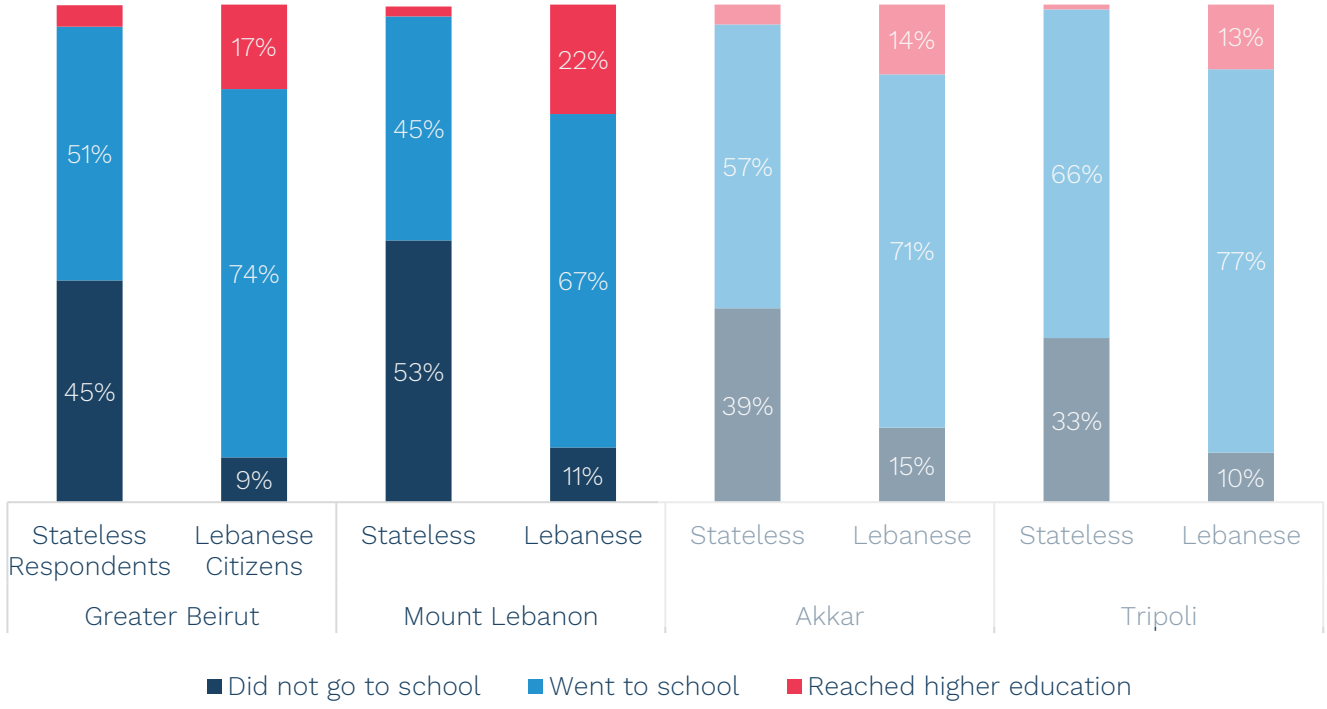
The disparity between stateless persons and Lebanese nationals in terms of education is significant across the four areas mapped to date.

That said, where in Tripoli and Akkar, the proportion of stateless who didn't receive any education is respectively three times and twice as large than Lebanese citizens, the proportion is five times greater for the stateless individuals living in Greater Beirut and Mount Lebanon.

Reaching higher education also appears as a far fetched project for stateless individuals, with bigger difficulties noticeable in Tripoli on that level.

Different factors explain the staggering situation of such a severed education landscape for stateless persons. On one hand, family issues prevented a significant proportion of respondents (35%) from being registered in school, due to negligence, ignorance or gender discrimination. A lack of financial capabilities was mentioned by 29% of respondents in both areas, while 18% blamed their lack of identification documents and their statelessness. Smaller proportions among older respondents mentioned the war (7%), or stressed their lack of belief in the education system facilitating access to the job market and enjoying the fruit of their degrees (4%).

Fig 8. Which level of education did you reach? (Stateless and Lebanese respondents)



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EDUCATION: A GENERATIONAL ADVANCEMENT

While access to education was lower for stateless adults, stateless children captured from the parents' survey seemed to enroll into schools in higher proportions. Parents appear more aware of the importance of education, despite the fact that not all schools are enabling access to stateless children.

The rate of stateless children going to school is similar across the surveys conducted in Greater Beirut and Mount Lebanon, with 55% and 57% attending respectively. This is aligned with the previous mapping from Akkar which showed the same rate of 55%.

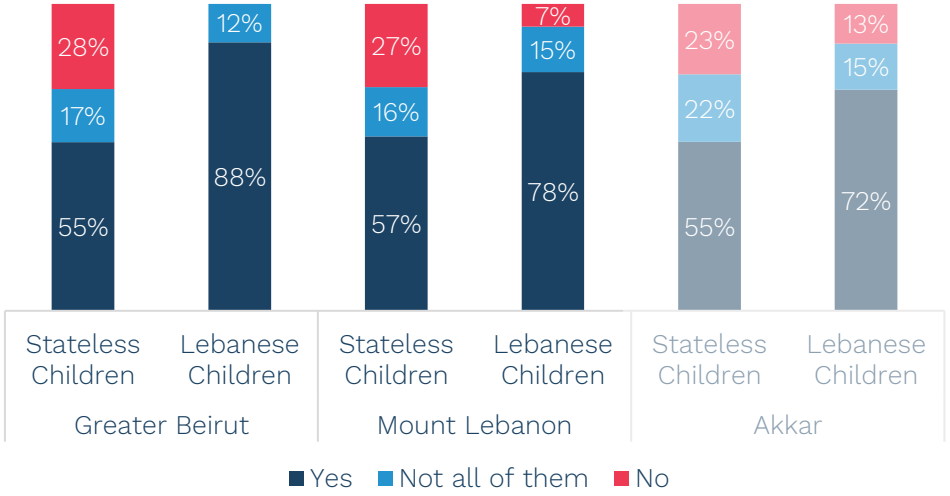
The numbers remain much lower than for Lebanese children across the 3 areas, yet they appear higher than the stateless adults survey, indicating a clear generational advancement on that level.

Among those not sending their children to schools, the reasons parents invoked mainly hinted at the lack of awareness that access to education was a right even for MeQ and under-study children.

At the same time, most of the schools visited in Greater Beirut and Mount Lebanon also showed a complete dismissal of the right of stateless children to enroll, without actually realizing the discriminatory character of such policy. For example, the team found that some schools in several villages of Iqlim el Kharoub were not admitting stateless children.

In other places such as in the Metn district or in Chatila, stateless children were reported to be treated differently than their Lebanese peers. Some schools even request double the tuition fees, considering stateless children as "foreigners". In addition, some schools are threatening their stateless students with expulsion if they remain unable to provide identification documents, considering *ta'arif* cards "unofficial". Finally, the fieldwork revealed that many stateless students, even though attending school, were unable to receive formal certifications for their curriculum years.

Fig 9. Are your school-aged children (3-18) going to school?



> The priority is for Lebanese students, then refugees. If we still have empty places, then we will let you in and admit your stateless children.
>
> — School principal in Burj Abi Haidar

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EDUCATION: ORIGINS AND RELIGION

The survey also indicated how ethnic, religious and geographical variables play a role in determining whether stateless children can access education. For instance, the Dom communities, especially in some regions, have lower enrollment rates than stateless from other cultural or religious backgrounds such as Druze or Christians.

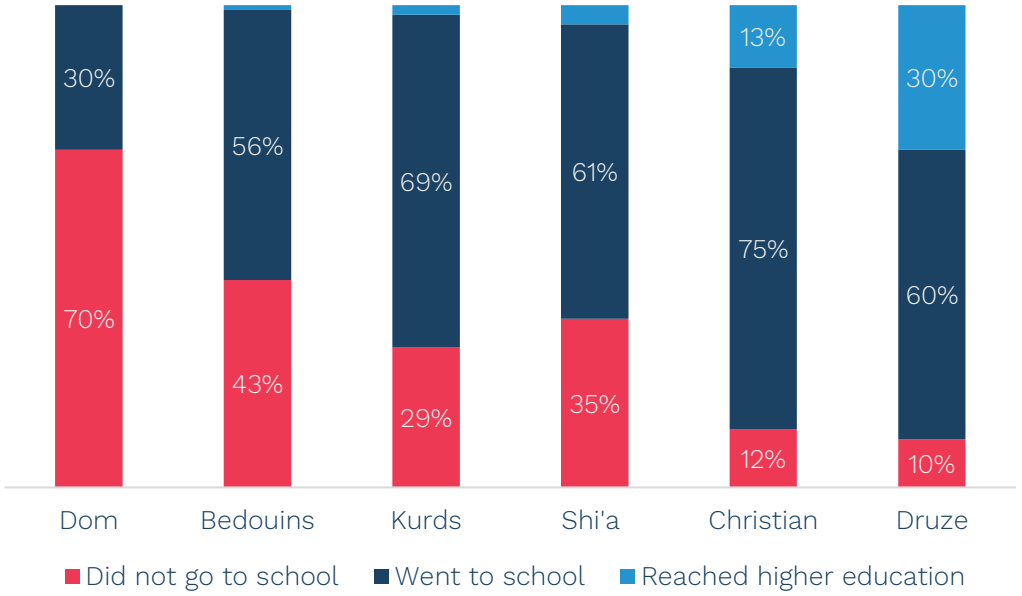
Looking at the cultural backgrounds of stateless persons, Dom appear to have the highest illiteracy rates with 75% out of stateless Dom having not attended school, compared to 43% among Bedouins and 29% among Kurds. In comparison, only 12% of Christians and 10% of Druze among the stateless population did not go to school.

Geographically, the highest rates of illiteracy were measured in Iqlim el Kharroub (Chouf), informal settlements, Palestinian camps and adjacent gatherings in Greater Beirut, which represent high density spaces gathering Dom communities.

> They are *Nawar*, they are dirty. We can't admit them in our school.
>
> — School teacher, Iqlim el Kharoub

> I faced many difficulties with my former husband, to the point where I had to take my children out of school
>
> — Lebanese mother to non-registered Dom children

Fig 10. Which level of education did you reach?



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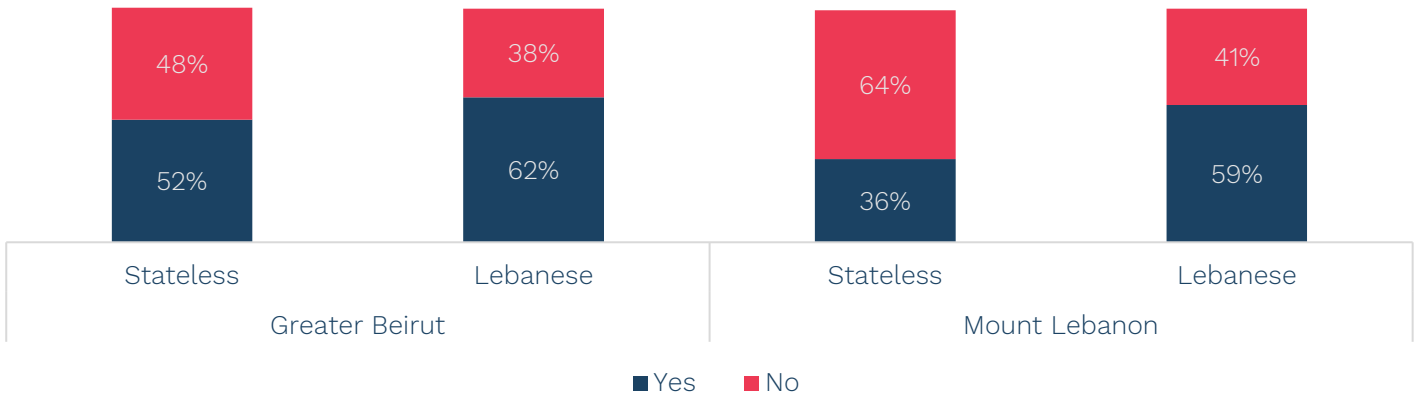
HEALTHCARE: AMPLIFIED CHALLENGES

With the severe multidimensional crisis Lebanon is going through, the vulnerability of stateless persons with regard to access to healthcare has significantly increased, knowing that even Lebanese citizens are also facing growing hardships in that area.

Fig 11. Do you have access to healthcare?



The survey showed better chances for stateless persons in Greater Beirut to access healthcare, with a rate of 52% able to access it. This proportion fell to 36% for stateless living in Mount Lebanon.

Greater Beirut has a higher density of civil society organizations offering aid services and medical support, such as Tahaddi center providing medical aid for stateless in Hay el Gharbi (informal settlements with Dom population). As a result, 80% of the respondents who reside there stated having access to medical care.

Among the respondents who are unable to obtain healthcare, 44% in Greater Beirut and 53% in Mount Lebanon pointed to their lack of identification documents, whereas respectively 19% and 12% blamed this on their financial situation.

Box 14. Healthcare coverage in Lebanon

Despite many attempts to implement universal health coverage (enlisted as an official 2030 goal under the National Health Strategy Vision), granting basic coverage to all Lebanese, the situation today disregards the right of the population to access healthcare.

The National Social Security Funds (NSSF) is considered the largest social insurance provider in the country, but its recent demise due to the financial crash has left greater proportions of Lebanese uncovered, particularly in healthcare and old-age benefits.

These benefits are granted through the realm of formalized employment, so even working stateless persons who overwhelmingly engage in informal sectors, won't enjoy any of these services.

The MoPH does subsidize heart-related illnesses and medications related to cancer treatments, but stateless persons, irrespective of their categories, are not included in these programs due to their lack of national documentation.

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World Health Organization (2016). Lebanon's Health Profile 2015.

HEALTHCARE: SHALLOW SUPPORT SYSTEMS

52% of the stateless respondents declared that they don't receive any medical care. For those able to access healthcare, their ultimate resort will be free clinics and dispensaries, with only a small proportion being able to afford private care.

Given that stateless persons fall outside the fields of both the NSSF and private insurance companies, they resort to dispensaries, free clinics or out of pocket medical acts, for which their lack of documentation does not constitute an issue.

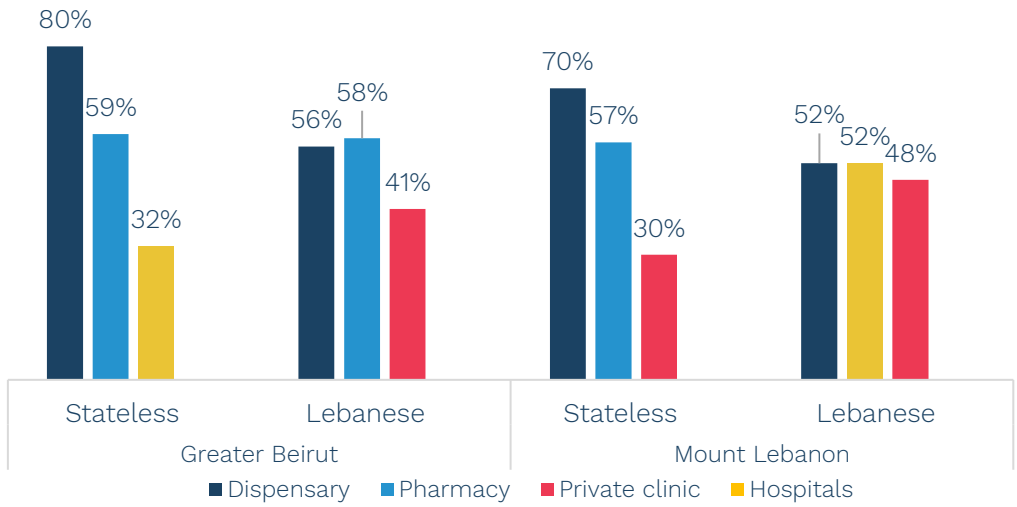
As such, a higher proportion of Lebanese citizens (44%) can access hospitals and private clinics, compared to only 14% of stateless respondents who can afford to cover their own expenses. When asked whether they could afford to cope financially with a medical emergency, 98% of stateless respondents considered it impossible or very difficult, compared to 28% of Lebanese citizens.

In case of emergency, 41% of stateless respondents said they would seek a way to finance it, mostly from family (56%) or from their local surroundings (23%).

Moreover, the ongoing crisis has pushed supporting organizations to cut both financial and medical aid, hence further impacting the sustainability of healthcare support to vulnerable communities. Findings from focus group discussions highlighted the reduction and sometimes the termination of assistance programs by civil society groups.

Only 12% of respondents seeking help in regards to a medical emergency would resort to NGOs. In Akkar, the proportion was only 4%, indicating the higher proximity of such support networks in Beirut and Mount Lebanon, despite a slight coverage rate among stateless communities.

Fig 12. How do you access healthcare services?
(Top three choices by respondents - multiple selection)



Box 15. Social security in Lebanon

Medical care in Lebanon is organized in a dual system, with the National Social Security Funds (NSSF) on one hand (established by Decree No. 13955 of 26 September 1963), and private insurance companies on the other.

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World Health Organization (2016). Lebanon's Health Profile 2015.

LIVELIHOODS: MIXED RESULTS

Results related to employment brought a striking finding, showing a higher proportion of working stateless persons than working Lebanese in Greater Beirut. That said, stateless persons continue to be ill-paid while enduring harsh work conditions.

Despite the shrinking job market across Lebanon, it seems that Greater Beirut and Mount Lebanon's need for cheaper labor has opened the door for more stateless to access jobs than in other regions.

As a consequence, the employment rate of stateless persons in and around the capital (54%) was higher than for the Lebanese (44%), whereas the situation continues to be reversed in the other mapped districts.

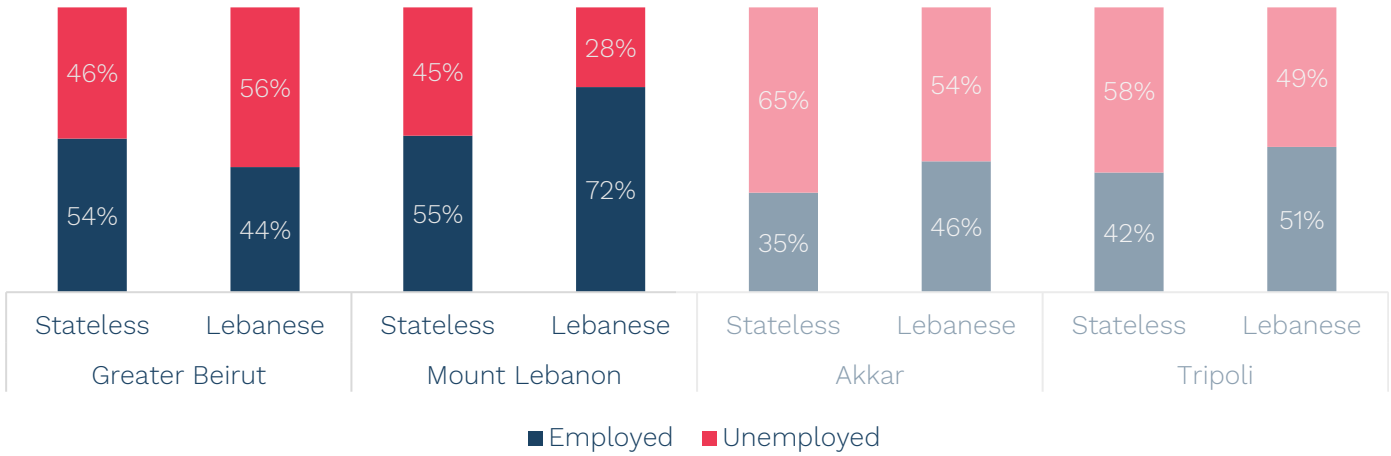
Most respondents with a job live in specific areas such as West Beirut Districts (71%) and the Christian Majority North and Eastern Suburbs (63%).

However, work opportunities for stateless are usually in the informal sectors with lower working standards and pay, like horse grooming and shoe cleaning.

Also, despite being gathered under the same category, stateless daily workers are offered less-well remunerated jobs than their Lebanese peers. This explains the income gap between the two groups.

Finally, many of the respondents working as beggars considered it as a profession.

Fig 13. Employment Rate



	Stateless	Lebanese
Average monthly income of daily workers	**7.8 million LBP**	17.8 million LBP
Average monthly income of private sector employees	**12.47 million LBP**	16.2 million LBP
Perception of being exploited at work	**50%**	19%

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FREEDOM OF MOVEMENT: BARRIERS AND BOUNDARIES

Given their condition, stateless individuals have to deal with the fear of checkpoints, despite displaying high mobility rates in Greater Beirut and Mount Lebanon. Gender inequality on this matter was also uncovered through the survey findings.

In both governorates, stateless people have similar conditions concerning their freedom of movement. Respectively, 91% and 84% of stateless in Greater Beirut and Mount Lebanon are able to leave their village or district either daily, weekly, or monthly. The rates are higher among Lebanese respondents, whom don't have to deal with the risk of undergoing identity checks by security forces.

On the other hand, freedom of movement also bears a gender dimension, with women reporting being significantly less mobile than men.

The ongoing economic crisis seems to have had an impact on the movement of stateless people, with 39% of respondents blaming their lack of mobility on high transportation fees.

20% of stateless women don't leave their village, and **43%** don't leave their governorate.

5% of stateless men respondents don't leave their village, and **20%** don't leave their governorate.

62% of stateless respondents are holders of a type of document recognized by the authorities, be it a residency permit, an under-study card or a *laissez-passer*. Yet 25% among those point to their fear of checkpoints, mainly because security personnel on many occasions come to dismiss these forms of documentation, hence increasing the mental pressure for stateless persons when having to move around. As a result, 61% avoid moving while 21% have learnt how to avoid checkpoints.

> - What is that?
> - Your State gave it to me.
>
> A conversation between an under-study woman and security personnel on a checkpoint while showing her under-study card.

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OWNERSHIP: LIMITED OPPORTUNITIES

As undocumented persons, stateless individuals cannot own nor register any type of property. However, a significant part of the community have settled on communal or collective land, according to customary land rights. That said, the majority managed to register property through proxies.

Most stateless respondents do not own any property, with 79% in Greater Beirut and 73% in Mount Lebanon.

Among those who stated owning property items, the majority mention real estate assets such as houses or land, with smaller proportions for vehicles.

When asked whether such property was actually formerly registered, 18% of stateless respondents claim the item is actually registered in their own names, knowing that under-study cases have the right to register only movable goods. Mainly, stateless persons actually resort to proxy measures such as registering the item under a relatives' name (65%), which appear as the most common coping mechanism on such matters for stateless communities across the different mapping efforts conducted so far.

17% of respondents who own some kind of property stated having no papers in relation to this item whatsoever.

21% of stateless in Greater Beirut own at least one property.

26% of stateless in Mount Lebanon own at least one property.

18% claim to have registered the property in their own name.

16% have nonregistered properties, including *machaa'*.

Box 16. Property rights in Lebanon

Decree 11614 issued on 4 January 1969 on Acquisition of Real Property Rights for Non-Lebanese, forbids "any person who does not hold a nationality issued by a recognized country" to own any real estate (article 1).

Yet, stateless respondents indicate "owning properties" when referring to squatted settlements, despite the fact that unauthorized occupation of registered property, private or public, does not grant the occupant any property rights whatsoever, no matter for how long the settlement lasted.

That said, the Lebanese context recognizes "customary land rights", known as *machaa'* (communal or collective), referring to the "enjoyment of some use of land that arises through customary, unwritten practice rather than through written codified law"[1].

As de facto custodians of these unregistered parcels, stateless communities manage to escape the legal grip regulating State public property (Decree no. 144 of June 10th, 1925) and State private property (Decree no. 275 of 25 May 1926).

Moreover, while Lebanese law does not recognize "squatter's rights", Lebanese courts have been relatively tolerant of such occupation in cases of "extreme need"[2], such as may be expected in the case of stateless.

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1. UN Habitat (2022), Legislative and administrative land and property rights framework. Lebanon, p. 18.
UN Habitat, UNHCR (2014). Housing, Land & Property Issues in Lebanon, Implications of the Syrian Refugee Crisis, August 2014, p. 25.
2. Ruwad Frontiers (2011). Invisible Citizens, a legal and policy study on statelessness in Lebanon, p.50.

HOUSING: THE EVICTION THREAT

A significant portion of respondents live in apartments or houses when located outside Palestinian camps or Dom settlements. 25% are custodians over the occupied property (machaa') while the majority have rental leases. A surprisingly high rate are subject to eviction notices, making them vulnerable in terms of their housing rights.

Fig 14. What is the nature of your residence?

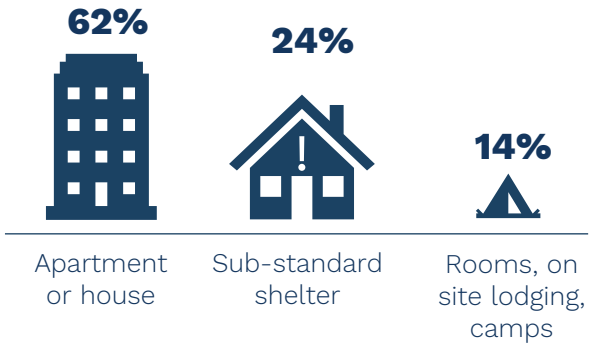


Fig 15. What is the type of your housing contract?

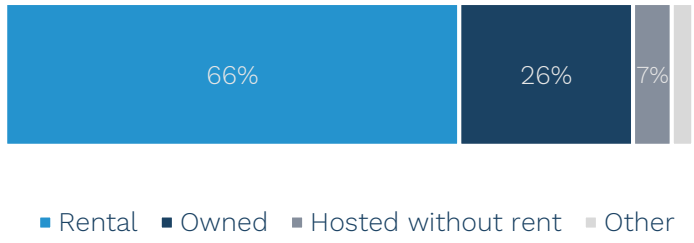
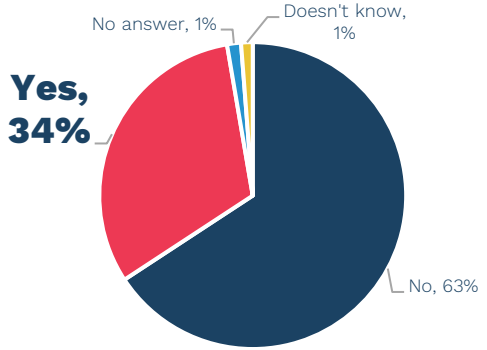


Fig 16. Are you living under notice to vacate? (361 respondents)



The majority of respondents across all areas indicated living in a house or a flat.

25% endure unsanitary and undignified housing conditions in sub-standard shelters, with no running water, nor sewage evacuation, living under unhygienic premises, mainly in and around Palestinian camps (Sabra, Chatila, Burj el Barajneh) and Dom settlements in Hay el Gharbi.

Almost two thirds of the respondents have rental leases to their homes. Given their lack of documentation, households members lack legal security.

A smaller yet still significant portion live in what they consider "owned" houses. Since they cannot formally register any property, most of these situations (62%) fall under customary land rights (*machaa'*), while 34% stated the property was under someone else's name.

Only 6 respondents declared actually owning a registered house or flat in their name (4%), which could be the result of informal arrangements.

Otherwise, the majority of respondents are particularly vulnerable, namely lessees out of whom 34% are under an eviction notice from their landlord.

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DAY TO DAY CONCERNS: COMMON DIFFICULTIES

The Lebanese crisis is affecting stateless and Lebanese alike. Respondents from both survey sets worry greatly about their basic needs and access to healthcare. Interestingly, Lebanese citizens prioritize safety over employment or education.

Given the scope of the multidimensional crisis, both Lebanese and stateless respondents worry about their basic needs with a higher ratio for Lebanese (77%) compared to 64% for stateless individuals.

The issues of education and employment are not listed among the top three priorities for any of the groups, as respondents placed as a matter of priority basic needs and access to healthcare. In the Akkar mapping, basic needs were the second most listed priority, behind access to healthcare. On the other hand, 27% Lebanese respondents prioritized security conditions compared to only 9% for stateless individuals.

When asked to rank what they would consider as being their prioritized rights, access to healthcare comes first for both Lebanese and stateless respondents, in light of the crumbling of the national economy and its impact on the medical sector.

In second and third ranks, stateless persons prioritize education, followed by livelihoods, whereas Lebanese respondents are more concerned with safety issues as they have more access to basic services, followed by employment.

Fig 17. Top three prioritized rights of respondents

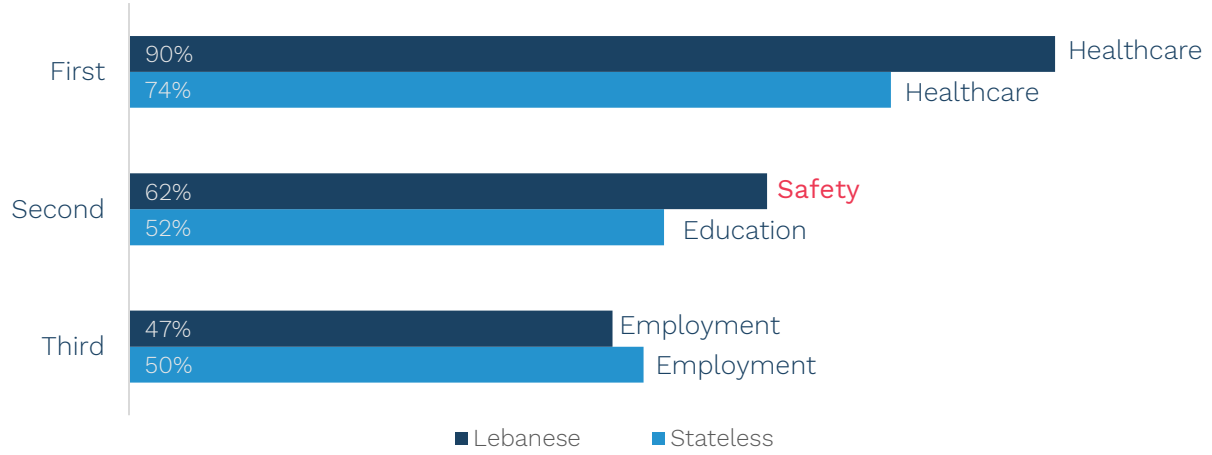
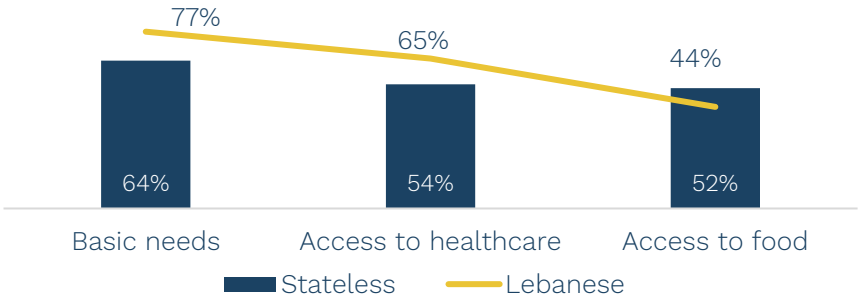


Fig 18. Daily worries of respondents (multiple answers)



> I would rather feed my family than pay to grant the nationality to my children.
>
> — Father of two nonregistered children, focus group discussion

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8

COPING WITH THE CONSEQUENCES

ACTING RESPONSIBLY

Against popular belief, stateless persons in Beirut and Mount Lebanon avoid fraudulent practices, even when this type of behavior would help them mitigate some emergency situations, such as borrowing identity cards for healthcare. Stateless individuals also prefer non-violent means, even in the face of perceived injustice.

When asked whether they would "borrow" someone's ID in case of a medical emergency, only 17% of stateless respondents from Greater Beirut and Mount Lebanon indicated being prepared to resort to this fraudulent measure. This is a significantly smaller proportion than what was observed in Akkar, where 34% of respondents declared being ready to resort to such practices.

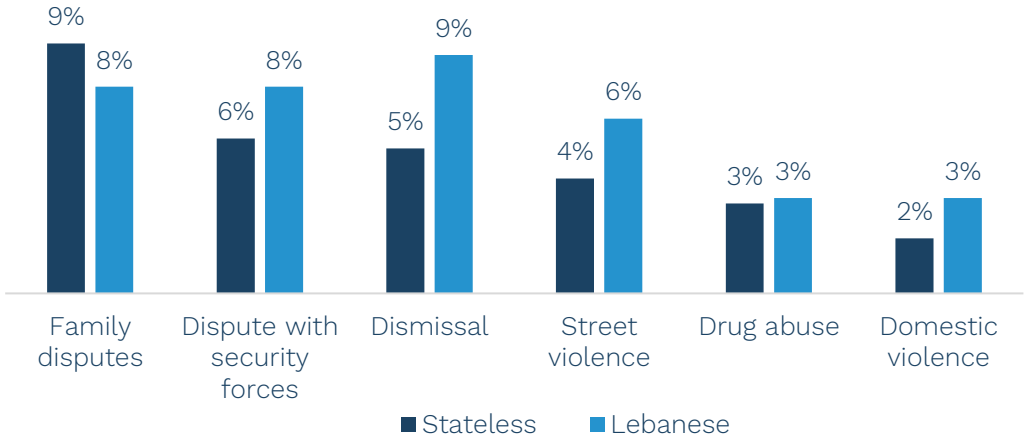
At 7%, the proportion of respondents who use the same approach to go through checkpoints is also smaller in Greater Beirut and Mount Lebanon of respondents, than in Akkar, where it is 15%.

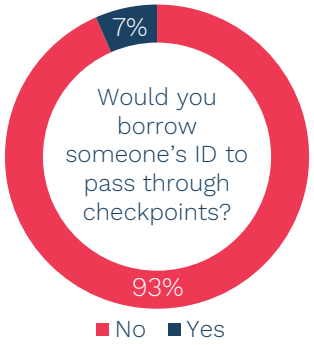
Asked whether they would be tempted by the idea of registering their children under someone else's name to grant them citizenship, 88% of respondents rejected this option, while 11% admitted having thought of this but without acting upon it.

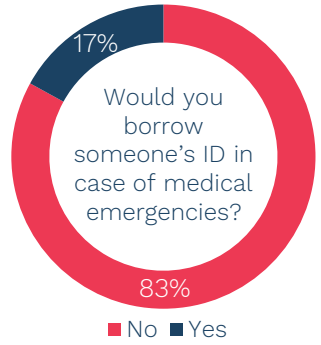
Stateless persons also favor non-violence when dealing with difficult situations, such as cases of unpaid wages. Only 16% of respondents said they would use violence in an attempt to make things right.

Generally speaking, stateless individuals avoid troubles so as not to worsen their already precarious condition. When asked about facing particular troubles such as disputes, drug abuse or street violence in the past year, the results show a very small proportion of respondents reporting such issues. Just 9% of stateless responses reported experiencing family disputes, which was the most commonly reported issue.

Fig 19. Problems endured during the last year







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DEALING WITH SECURITY FORCES

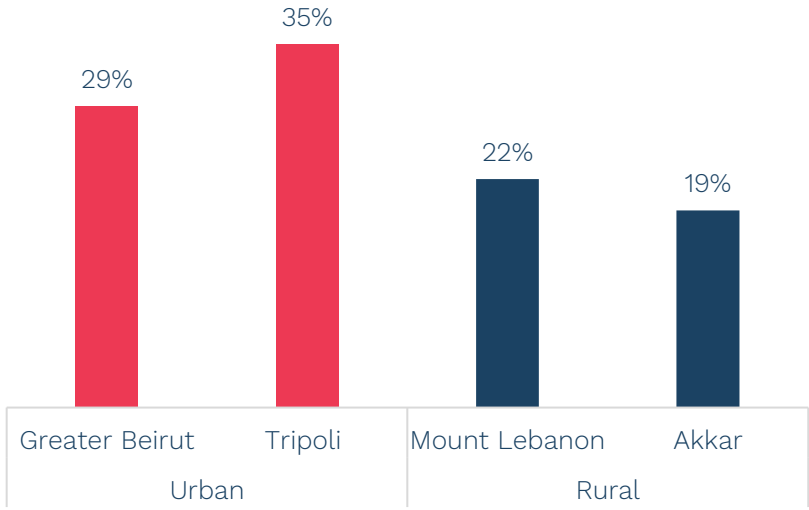
Despite a general tendency to stay away from trouble, stateless persons are subject to arrest or summoning at the hands of security forces, particularly within urban settings.

72% of stateless respondents had never been arrested nor summoned by security forces. Arrest rates seem to be higher in urban environments. In this respect, 29% of Greater Beirut and 22% of Mount Lebanon's respondents stated that they had been in custody, corroborating previous findings from Tripoli (35% of respondents arrested) and Akkar (19%). In rural areas, disputes generally can be solved through traditional and tribal interventions, where members can turn to persons of reference — sometimes a religious figure — in the case of a dispute.

Moreover, those arrested or summoned generally fit a profile that exposes them to more troubles, compared to the average rate of stateless respondents. They are usually men (83% in Greater Beirut and 79% in Mount Lebanon). Furthermore, among those who were arrested, 15% had family feuds, 13% had issues with security forces, while 9% had a history of drug abuse, compared to only 3% among the general sample. That said, the proportion of women arrested or summoned in the previous Akkar mapping was 35%, indicating a different dynamic when it comes to gender.

On the other hand, a significant proportion of respondents (36%) felt they were treated differently during their interrogation and stigmatized because of their stateless condition.

Fig 20. Stateless arrest rate by governorates



Proportion of women among arrested or summoned respondents

> They don't deal with us the way they do with someone who has an ID.
>
> - Stateless man, Jounieh

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HARDSHIPS OF ACCESSING CITIZENSHIP

No progress has been made on regulations and procedures to facilitate access to citizenship for stateless of Lebanese origins. Those courageous enough to engage on this bumpy road face slow, costly and complex journey, with little guarantee of success.

The drive for stateless persons to initiate the process to acquire the Lebanese nationality seems to be much lower in Greater Beirut (53%) and Mount Lebanon (60%) than in Akkar (73%).

The cases initiated in Mount Lebanon and Greater Beirut are also more recent than those in Akkar, with 47% and 40% of those launched after 2015 respectively. They were mostly launched with the support of lawyers, with a smaller proportion resorting to specialized NGOs.

Respectively 63% and 65% of respondents from Greater Beirut and Mount Lebanon who had initiated a procedure declared having paid financial fees and costs, ranging between a hundred and a few thousands of USD, depending on how long ago their procedure started and what step they are currently at.

Among the respondents who had initiated this process, only 15% and 22% respectively in Greater and Mount Lebanon had reached the final stages of the procedure. The largest proportion falls however among those who either don't know what stage they are at or remain blocked (35% in Greater Beirut and 44% in Mount Lebanon), which is much higher than in Akkar (23%) and Tripoli (9%).

Fig 21. When did you initiate your nationality procedure?

	Prior to 1994	1994 - 2005	2006 - 2015	Since 2015
GREATER BEIRUT	4%	24%	30%	40%
MOUNT LEBANON	2%	19%	26%	47%
AKKAR	6%	23%	26%	35%

Fig 22. Where is your case pending?

GREATER BEIRUT	24%	10%	5%	14%	15%
MOUNT LEBANON	20%	2%	2%	9%	22%
AKKAR	32%	8%	3%	12%	20%

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DEPENDING ON ASSISTANCE

Despite being the most vulnerable, stateless persons often face significant challenges in accessing assistance and support from non-governmental organizations (NGOs) and civil society organizations (CSOs), particularly in rural areas. Consequently, they tend to rely more on their local community's solidarity for support.

Stateless respondents expressed a genuine level of trust towards NGOs and CSOs (57%), a proportion higher than Lebanese respondents (48%). Yet, stateless communities in general do not appear as significant beneficiaries of support and aid programs of CSOs and NGOs in the country. Focus group discussions and fieldwork uncovered many situations where organizations would reduce their support to stateless persons after finding out about their condition. Some stateless also claimed that organizations would prefer to prioritize refugees, excluding them from their support programs.

In parallel, stateless persons give greater importance to their local networks, considering their community among the top three choices of social belonging. In this respect, 79% of stateless respondents trust their local communities, while 22% would seek help from residents in their neighborhood in case of a medical emergency.

On the other hand, stateless persons in Lebanon need special attention and support in terms of legal aid, given the complexity of the procedures pertaining to citizenship acquisition. In the last six months, only 4% of respondents had actually received legal aid from organizations, showing a clear gap in the coverage.

Among respondents who had initiated such proceedings, one fifth did so through organizations such as Tahhadi, Jensiyati Karamati or Ruwad el Houkouk, mainly in urban areas among the informal settlements and Palestinian camps of Greater Beirut, with a poor outreach in rural areas.

8%

of respondents tried in the past to acquire citizenship through an organization.

4%

of respondents received legal help from an organization during the last 6 months.

> No one looks at us Lebanese stateless. For them, we don't exist. We are unknown of this world.
>
> - Stateless woman, Focus group discussion

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RELYING ON MUKHTARS

Mukhtars are among the primary authorities responsible for handling issues related to stateless individuals., it seems that many mukhtars either lack a comprehensive understanding of their own role and the rights of stateless individuals, or deliberately choose to remain ignorant for discriminatory reasons.

In depth interviews were conducted with 55 *mukhtars* in Greater Beirut and Mount Lebanon, during which their knowledge was evaluated with regards to statelessness and the rights attached to this condition under the Lebanese legal and administrative framework.

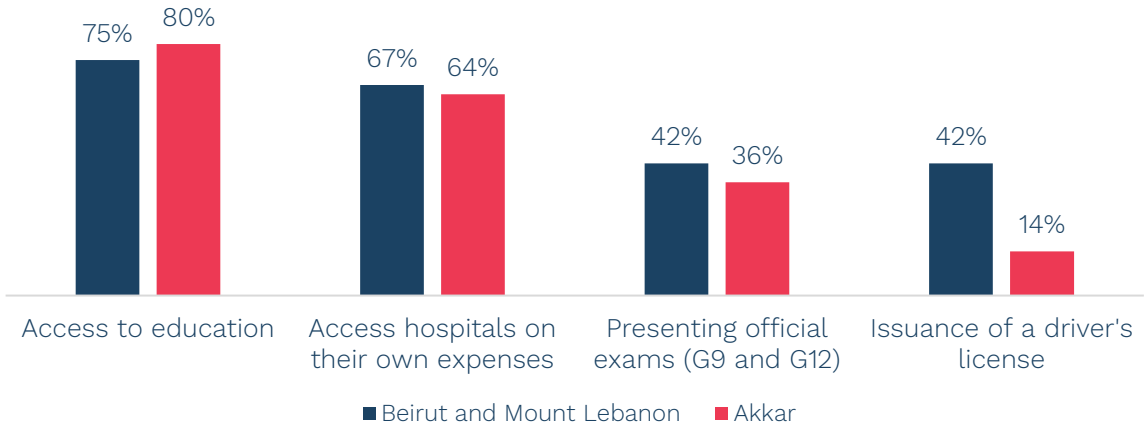
The result of the assessment showed a rather limited knowledge, an observation very similar to the situation in Akkar.

Mukhtars are key figures in enabling stateless persons to access basic documents that can be issued for them. The lack of awareness of *mukhtars* hence increases the risk of depriving stateless persons of their rights and of support.

Among the limited identification documents that can be issued by *mukhtars* are the *Ta'arif* cards or certificates, which are key formalities to allow access to some of their rights and the ability to move freely.

As such, a large proportion of *mukhtars* (67%) refuse to grant *Ta'arif* cards for various reasons such as fear of liability, uncertainty of person's origins, or discrimination. The proportion was only 13% in Akkar, where *mukhtars* showed more leniency to issue the documents, relying on personal family connections or geographic proximity.

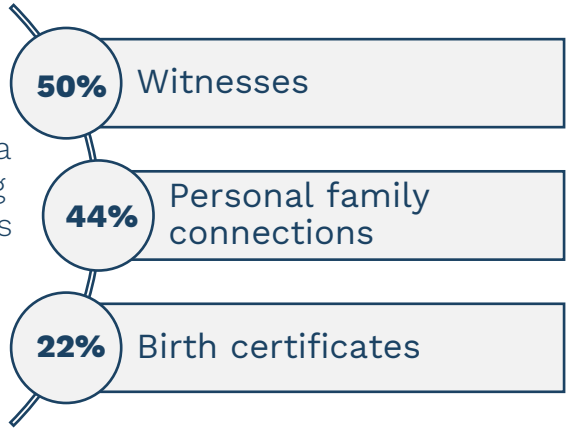
Fig 23. *Mukhtars* knowledge on the rights of stateless persons in Lebanon



67%

of contacted *mukhtars* do not grant *Ta'arif* cards for stateless

Main criteria for granting *Ta'arif* cards (multiple)



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RELYING ON MUKHTARS

Fieldwork additionally revealed mukhtars' lack of awareness about stateless cases around them. Cooperation of mukhtars is essential, yet stateless individuals denounced the limited cooperation supporting them in their ordeal.

Mukhtars seem to be unfamiliar with the true numbers of stateless persons in their own region, often underestimating by half the number of cases in their vicinity. Many of the *mukhtars* met on field claimed that their neighborhood was "clean", a clear indication of discrimination towards stateless people.

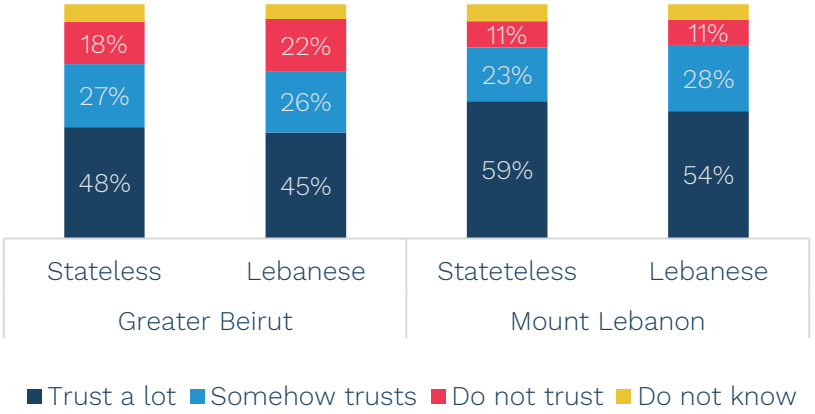
Moreover, cases encountered in Burj Hammoud were double the estimations of *mukhtars* in the neighborhood, whereas in the Chouf, the differentiation amounted to around 500 cases, as *mukhtars* considered that a big proportion got naturalized in the 1994 decree.

Despite the shortcomings, stateless persons express a great deal of trust in *mukhtars*, particularly in rural areas where closer-knit community favor stronger personal connections.

On the other hand, more than half of interviewed *mukhtars* were not willing to work and cooperate with stateless individuals. This prevents stateless persons from obtaining crucial identification documents, further perpetuating their deprivation of rights and hampering their access to services.

> There are no cases here, everyone is "clean", legal, and registered.
>
> - *Mukhtar*, Aley

Fig 24. How much do you trust your *mukhtar*? (Stateless respondents)



56% of *mukhtars* are not willing to work with stateless individuals

24% of *mukhtars* have a negative perception over statelessness

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THE RIGHT TO KNOW THEIR RIGHTS

Discrimination from mukhtars also affects stateless individuals' knowledge of their rights and their willingness to pursue them.

Findings from both fieldwork and focus group discussions, shed light on the lack of awareness among stateless individuals about their fundamental rights. Many of them do not know how to access healthcare services, obtain valid identification documents, or understand the process of acquiring citizenship. Interestingly, under-study individuals appeared to have a better understanding of these issues compared to other stateless individuals.

It is noteworthy that government authorities, NGOs, and CSOs have made limited efforts to raise awareness about the importance of ending and preventing statelessness and finding solutions to the problem.

Given that *mukhtars* often lack knowledge about statelessness and tend to dismiss the presence and needs of stateless individuals, the latter often lose out on an important avenue through which they could become more aware of their rights and how to attain them.

> Stateless individuals don't know their rights (access to education, driver's license issuance), neither obligations (marriage and children registration).
>
> - Surveyor

10%

of respondents who did not enroll in the 1994 naturalization decree, were not aware of it.

22%

of respondents who did not attempt to obtain citizenship did so because they were unsure of whom to turn for assistance.

> It is important to raise awareness about this issue, so stateless individuals know and understand their rights.
>
> - Lebanese woman wife of a stateless man, Burj Abi Haidar

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ESCAPING UNCERTAINTY

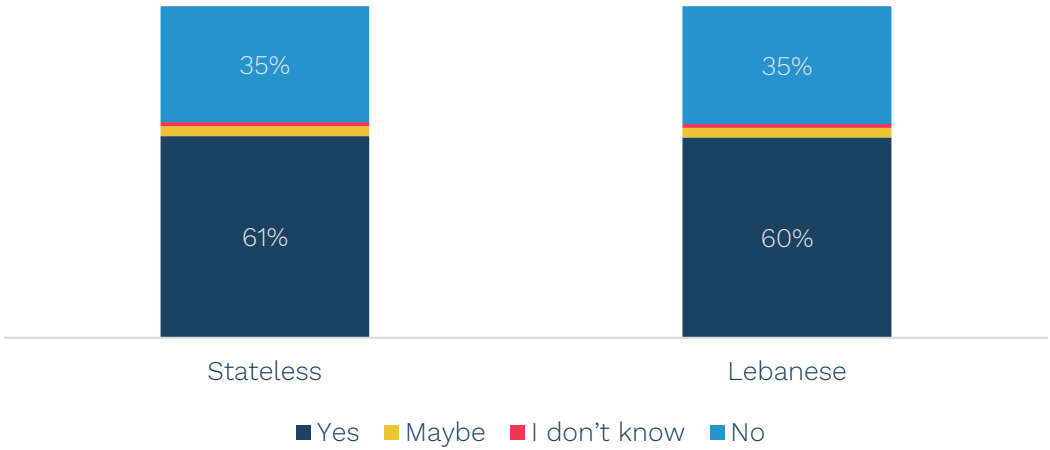
In the current Lebanese context, where poverty has reached unprecedented levels, both stateless individuals and Lebanese citizens indicated their readiness to emigrate. Stateless individuals are motivated by the desire to obtain citizenship elsewhere, while Lebanese citizens aim for improved living conditions abroad.

Both stateless and Lebanese respondents showed willingness on the question of potential emigration, with 64% and 63% respectively answering "yes" or "maybe" when asked if they would leave Lebanon given the opportunity.

Among the stateless respondents who indicated their willingness to leave the country, only 8% would consider using "illegal routes." This percentage was notably higher in the Akkar survey, where 25% favored said routes. This difference can be attributed to several factors:

- The existence of traditional illegal migration routes in the North, making them more accessible and top of mind to those in Akkar.
- Varying legal statuses observed in Greater Beirut and Mount Lebanon, where a higher proportion of individuals under study exists. As such, they possess more formal documents, which increases hope in obtaining emigration visas or submitting asylum requests to foreign countries.

Fig 25. If you had the opportunity to emigrate, would you do it?



> I just want to travel to a country than can grant me citizenship.
>
> — Stateless man, Mgheiriyeh

> I love my country and don't want to emigrate, but I would do it for the sake of my children's future.
>
> — Understudy man, Hadath

> I prefer to leave illegally so I can pretend to be a refugee and get more help.
>
> — Stateless man, Hay el Gharbi

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9 VULNERABILITIES

9

VULNERABILITIES

Children of the Kafala

HIDDEN IN PLAIN SIGHT

Field research has uncovered a noteworthy phenomenon—a high proportion of non-registered children born to migrant domestic worker mothers who endure the country's oppressive Kafala system. These women face a triad of vulnerabilities encompassing gender, legal status, and statelessness.

One of the most remarkable findings from the field research was that 1 in 5 cases of birth non-registration in Beirut and Mount Lebanon can be attributed to children born to migrant domestic worker mothers.

Up until 2022, Lebanon played host to approximately 250,000 migrant domestic workers (MDWs)[1]. However, by the end of the same year, this number plummeted to 135,000 due to the compounded crises that the country has experienced[2]. Within Lebanon, women MDWs typically reside within their employer's residence, enduring the withholding of their passports. Consequently, their *Kafeel* (sponsor) assumes responsibility for their legal status and livelihood. These women primarily originate from South-Asian countries such as The Philippines, Sri Lanka, and Bangladesh, as well as African nations like Ethiopia, Cameroon, and Kenya.

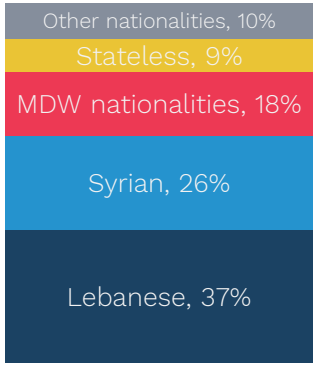
While a fortunate few manage to establish decent lives with their employers, many others encounter discrimination within Lebanese society. Additionally, there are instances where women become mothers to non-registered children, fathered by Lebanese individuals. This specific group faces three different layers of vulnerability: gender discrimination or abuse, the exploitative Kafala system, and mothering stateless children.

Various factors contribute to these pregnancies, each presenting obstacles for a conventional registration of their children.

18%

of cases of non-registered children in BML are born to MDWs mothers[3]

Fig 26. Nationality of mother of non-registered children[3]



Box 17. What is the Kafala System?

- The Kafala is a sponsorship system that binds migrant workers to their employers (or *Kafeel*). This system regulates economic migration in Arab countries such as the Gulf Cooperation Countries, Jordan and Lebanon.
- Article 7 of Lebanese Labor Law explicitly exempts those working under the Kafala system from any legal protection, thus facilitating exploitation, forced labor, and human trafficking.

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1. B. Jana (2023) Lebanon: Honorary Consuls Exploiting Women Migrant Workers - Daraj.
2. Amnesty International, 2019.
3. Surveys with parents of stateless children (315 responses)

UNDERLYING CAUSES

Non-registration of children born to migrant domestic worker mothers can be attributed to four main causes: non-registered marriages, birth out of wedlock, the absence of the father, or nonconsensual relationships. These arise due to the legal framework governing the work of these women, rendering them more susceptible to such circumstances.

Through focus group discussions (FGDs) with MDWs, four significant reasons for the non-registration of children were uncovered.

1. The first cause revolves around non-registered marriages. These are unions recognized religiously by a Sheikh but lacking official certification from the state. As a result, parents are unable to register their children as legitimate.
2. The second cause encompasses children born out of wedlock. This includes various forms of casual relationships outside of marriage, as well as children born as a result of the mother's involvement in sex work. Such cases also often involve the absence of the father, which further complicates the registration process, if it is even possible.
3. The absence of the father is the third cause for child non-registration. During the focus group discussions, several women stated that their partners abandoned them upon learning about the pregnancy, while others mentioned their partners being imprisoned.
4. The fourth cause of non-registration arises from nonconsensual relationships, namely rape. Recent reports suggest that nearly 70% of migrant domestic workers who have experienced sexual harassment reported being abused by their male employers[1]. Unfortunately, due to their exclusion from Lebanon's sexual harassment law, there is little accountability in these cases. Consequently, sexual violence against them continues to persist.

> It is horrible that I cannot register my child under my own name. How is [being registered as a] 'child of rape' the only alternative? He is my son, plain and simple.
>
> — Kenyan mother to a non-registered child

Box 18. Sexual harassment law 205 in Lebanon

In 2020, Lebanon passed sexual harassment Law 205, which criminalizes sexual violence towards Lebanese individuals. However, this law fails to mention MDWs, which gives space to more abuse towards them, with no accountability. This being said, it has been shown that 68% of MDWs in Lebanon have faced sexual violence in the past few years.

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1. Diab, J. L., Yimer, B., Birhanu, T., Kitoko, A., Gidey, A., & Ankrah, F. (2023). The gender dimensions of sexual violence against migrant domestic workers in post-2019 Lebanon.

SECOND CLASS MIGRANTS

Migrant domestic worker women and their children are often relegated to a second-class status due to their association with the Kafala system. They have to deal with a cumbersome and inaccessible birth registration process compared to other foreigners who also give birth in Lebanon.

Migrant domestic worker women encounter significant challenges when attempting to register the birth of their children, primarily stemming from the lack of cooperation and involvement from their respective consulates on one hand, and from the Lebanese Law on the other.

The birth registration process is both lengthy and expensive, involving the procurement of multiple ministerial signatures, in addition to paperwork typically held by their *Kafeel* or by the recruitment agency.

Obtaining these documents is often impossible for MDWs and, given the hurdles in obtaining the required documentation, they sometimes choose to resort to different measures to prevent their children from becoming stateless.

One commonly explored option is attempting to leave the country and register the child abroad, a no less complicated route. In fact, in-depth discussions with MDWs revealed a quite intricate in-country process for the option of registering the newborn abroad.

63%

of undocumented MDWs in Lebanon, are unable to register their children compared to

10%

of documented MDWs who are unable to[1]

Box 19. Birth registration process for foreigners in Lebanon

The child's birth certificate and the parents' identification documents are all that are needed for foreigners to register their children who were born in Lebanon. The *mukhtar*, Ministry of Foreign Affairs, and Ministry of Interior are required to sign those. After the documents have been translated, they are sent to the respective embassy.

> The problem isn't simply the Kafala system, it's the whole Lebanese law. Lebanese women can't even stand up to men or register their kids, so imagine how we, migrants, get treated.
>
> — Kenyan mother to a non-registered child

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1. Insan Association (2016). The Case of Children of Migrant Workers in Lebanon.

AN INTRICATE PROCESS

At first glance the process is simple, but practically it is fraught with pitfalls. Obstacles such as uncooperative officials, legal issues, and even theft and deceit, can make this process extremely challenging for MDWs.

First, the hospital where the mother gave birth is required to issue a birth certificate. According to respondents, the Rafic Hariri University Hospital has been cooperative on this front, with Médecins Sans Frontières often providing financial assistance on case by case basis.

Next, the MDW goes to the *mukhtar* with 2 Lebanese witnesses to certify that she is a single mother. The *mukhtar* signs the birth certificate and issues an affidavit stating the she is a single mother raising a child on her own. The MDW then has to get the affidavit certified by a notary, in the presence of the same witnesses. After that, the signed documents must be certified by the Ministry of Foreign Affairs.

Finally, the MDW gets the document translated by a sworn translator and send them to the relevant embassy, which issues a *laissez-passer*. The MDW's documents are then sent to the General Security for them to check her legal records; if they are clean, she is then able to get her plane ticket, go back to her country of origin, and register her child there.

However, this seemingly straightforward path is strewn with pitfalls. The vulnerable situation that these women find themselves in makes this last resort close to impossible.

For instance, *mukhtars* or notaries in charge of the paperwork can choose not to cooperate with the MDW, be it for racism, discrimination, or simply because they do not deal with issues related to statelessness.

Unexplained delays do occur too, with some paperwork taking several months after having reached the Ministry of Foreign Affairs. Other recent hurdles are the ongoing strikes within the Lebanese public administration, in light of the current crisis, which are halting most of these processes. Also, in the event an MDW's legal record is not clean, new legal procedures requiring more money, time and lawyer support would be activated.

FGDs revealed cased of mothers being robbed by lawyers or recruitment agencies or others being misled by charitable institutions into thinking that the only alternative is abandoning the child to be registered as an orphan.

> The lawyer took all the money and did nothing. General Security tried to deal with this by telling her to either give the money or work on the child's registration. She agreed then disappeared.
>
> — Ethiopian mother to a non-registered child

> 10 years ago I paid the agency to secure a lawyer. They took everything and told me to leave the country. I had no money to leave, and here I am still here today.
>
> — Kenyan mother to a non-registered child

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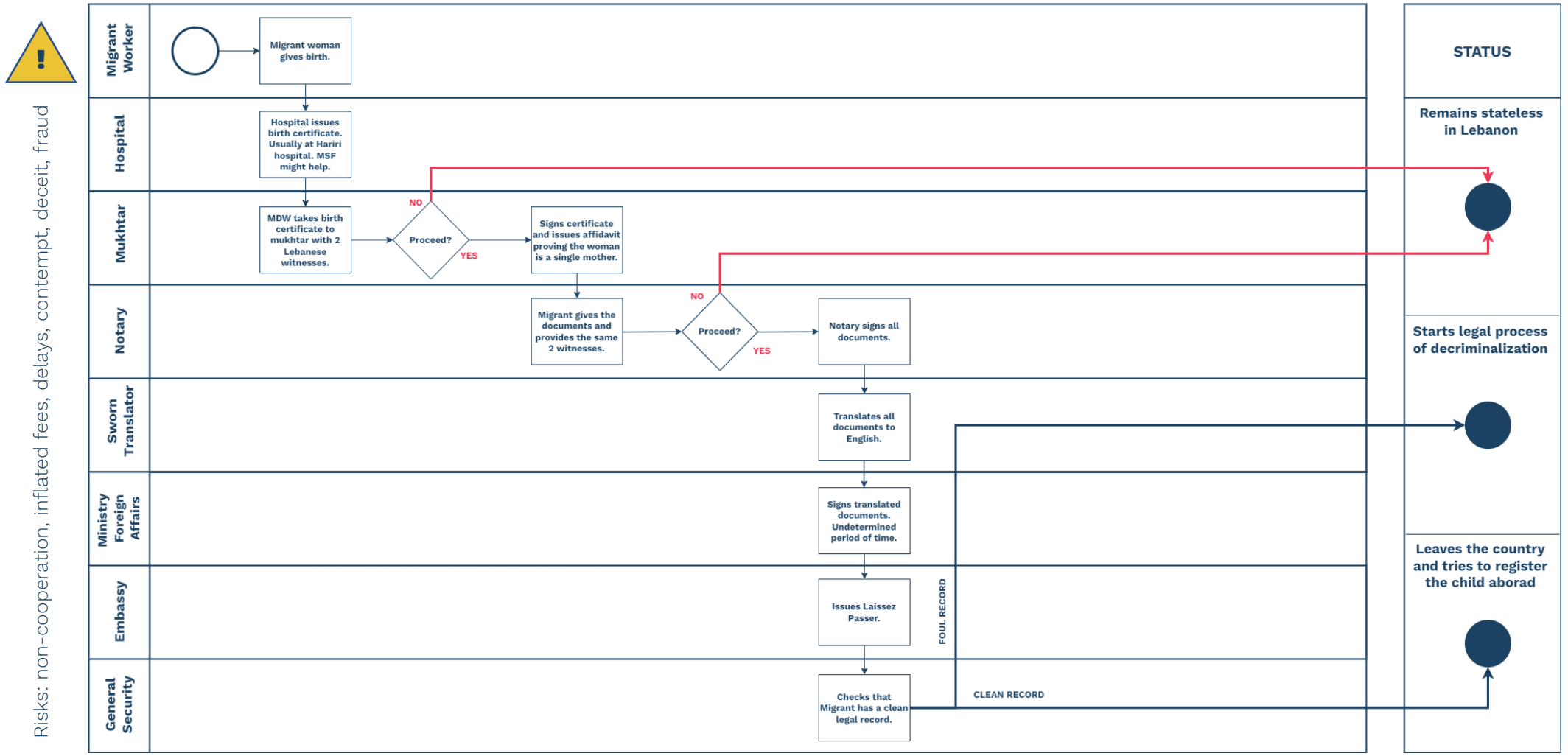
AN INTRICATE PROCESS: THE FLOW

The process flow below shows the in-country procedures for the registration of a child born to a MDW woman in Lebanon.



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AGAINST ALL ODDS

Despite their difficult situation, MDWs remain determined in their efforts to safeguard their children's rights, including ensuring access to education and vital healthcare services.

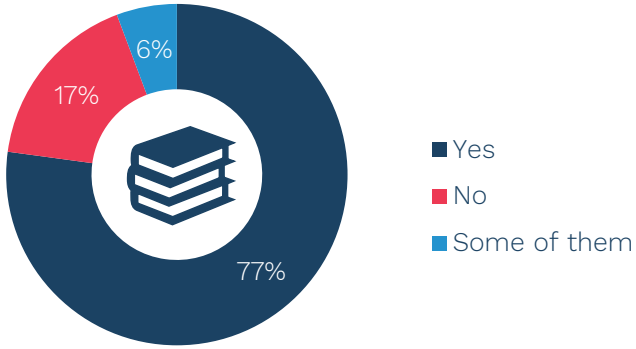
Fieldwork, KIIs and focus group discussions revealed that migrant domestic worker mothers to non-registered stateless children face multiple layers of discrimination related to their origins, status and condition. Their situation puts them in a more vulnerable situation than other parents of stateless children, preventing them of accessing theirs and their children's rights.

Nevertheless, and against all odds, MDWs mothers manage to provide for most of the basic needs of their children, whether in relation to food, medical care, or education. In this respect, many of the interviewed mothers through surveys or in focus groups affirmed that the health and education of their non-registered children is a top priority, no matter the challenges. They demonstrated their willingness to sacrifice anything to provide their children with these basic yet crucial necessities.

For instance, 46 (98%) of the 47 households with non-registered children born to a MDW mother (parents survey) had at least one of their children vaccinated at birth, compared to 73% of the other surveyed households with non-registered children.

In terms of education, 83% of households with non-registered children born to a MDW mother between the ages of 3 and 18 have at least one child enrolled in school, higher than the 72% of the other households.

Fig 27. Do your children aged between 3 and 18 go to school?



> I drop off my son at school pretending I am his nanny, in order to spare him from his classmates' bullying for having a "black maid" as a mother...
>
> — Ethiopian mother to a non-registered child

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9

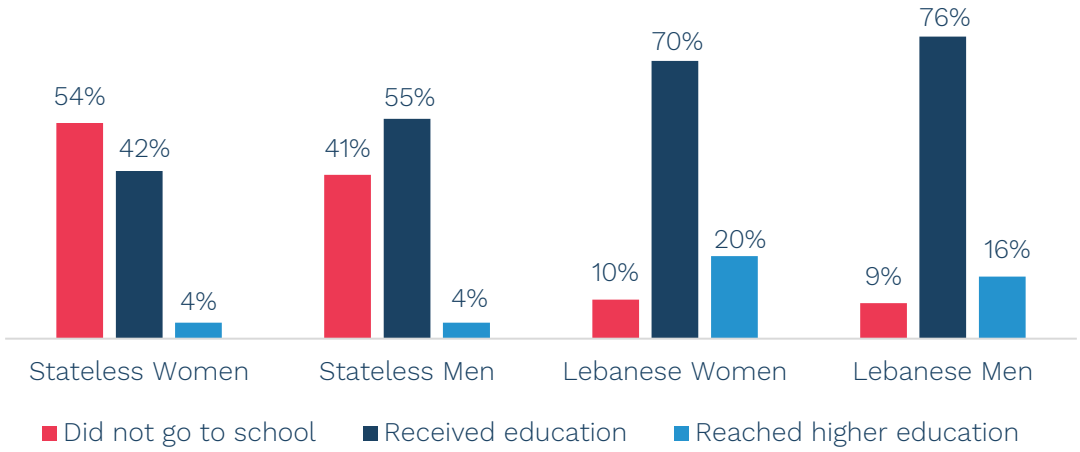
VULNERABILITIES

Gender, disabilities, ethnicity

DOUBLE VULNERABILITY: WOMEN DISEMPOWERMENT

Stateless women face multiple challenges, leading to compounded vulnerabilities and marginalization, due to their legal status and gender. They encounter significant disparities in income, access to education, and employment opportunities.

Fig 28. Did you receive education?



Deep-rooted cultural biases often limit women's access to education, as societal norms prioritize the education of men. When compared to stateless men, as well as Lebanese men and women, stateless women have shown to be the most vulnerable regarding education with 54% of stateless women respondents having not gone to school. This shows that these women are not only at a disadvantage due to their legal status, but also due to gender discrimination; creating a form of double vulnerability.

Average monthly salaries of stateless respondents

Stateless women face multiple challenges and are often marginalized. They experience gender disparities in employment rates, with stateless men employed at almost 3 times the rate of stateless women. As a result, women's salaries consistently fall behind men's, contributing to economic inequality and making them more vulnerable to various difficulties. Limited access to education further hampers their chances of improving their socio-economic situation. Overall, stateless women find themselves in a disadvantaged position, facing multiple obstacles in their quest for socio-economic empowerment.

Fig 29. Do you work?

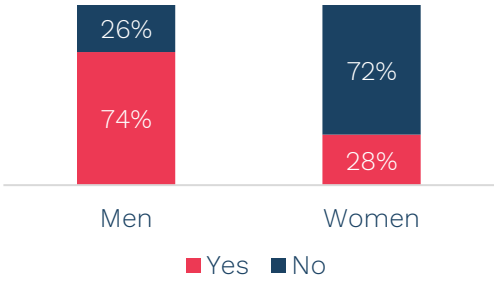
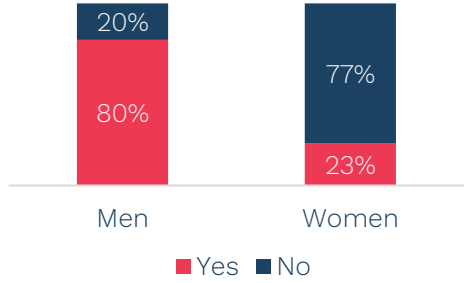


Fig 30. Main source of income in the household



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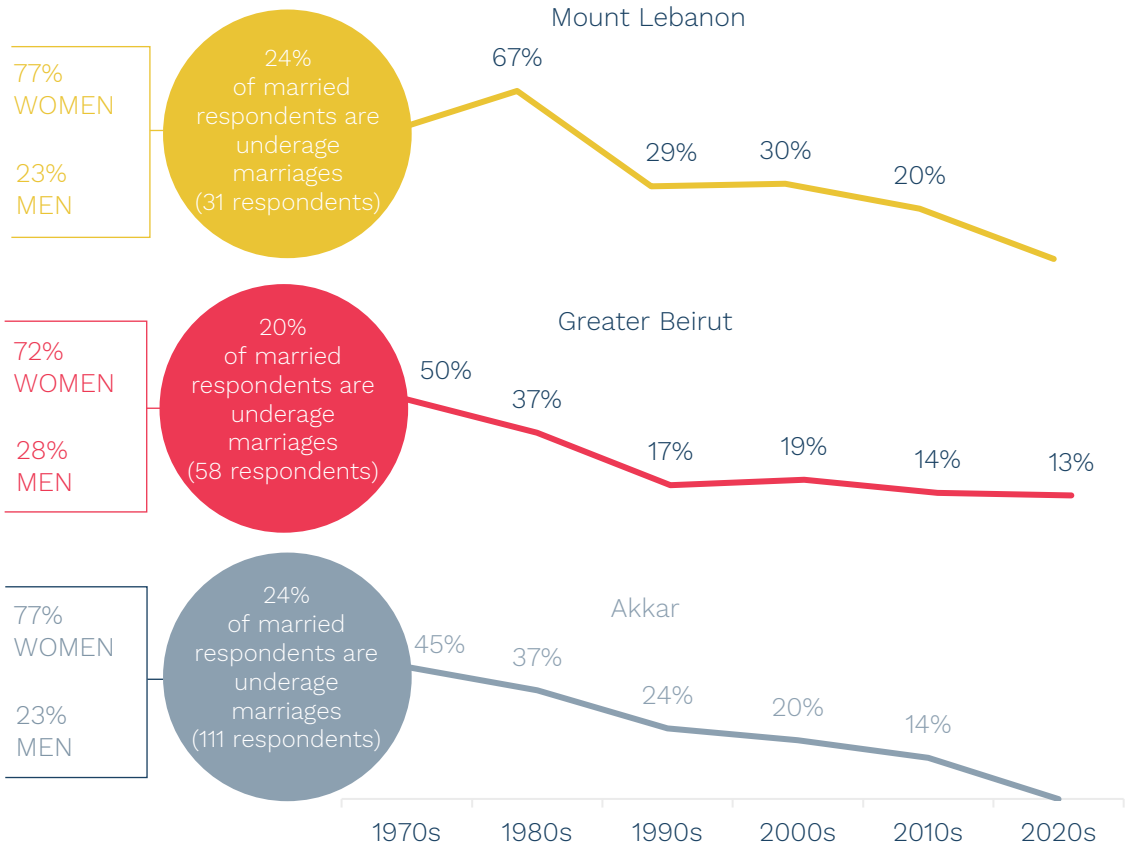
CHILD MARRIAGE: A DOWNWARD TREND

The present mapping conducted in Beirut and Mount Lebanon confirms a trend noticed in Akkar in relation to a decline in underage marriages. Still, the majority of the underaged stateless getting married are girls.

Fig. 31 Share of underage marriages among married stateless over the decades



Over the last decades, there has been a notable decline in underage marriages across the different mapped regions. Respectively, the ratios of underage marriages fell from 67% to almost none in Mount Lebanon, from 50% to 13% in Greater Beirut. The same phenomenon was observed in 2021 during the mapping of Akkar.

Respondents expressed a strong determination to break the vicious cycle of underage marriage that older generations experienced. Underage marriages disproportionately affect girls and women, imposing lasting consequences on their lives, as they are generally unable to access education and employment opportunities.

70% of the recorded underage marriages are concentrated in Greater Beirut, particularly among the Dom population residing in areas with informal settlements such as Hay el Gharbi.

> I was the victim of my parents' decision. I won't do the same mistake to my children.
>
> — Stateless woman, Hay el Gharbi

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HIDDEN STRUGGLE: STATELESS WITH DISABILITIES

While stateless individuals with disabilities deal with struggles similar to those faced by any other disabled person, they face extra challenges accessing healthcare and education.

Fieldwork helped uncover another hidden struggle among stateless households, those with physical or mental disabilities. In addition to stateless persons with disabilities (PwDs) encountered during the survey process, key informants highlighted the need to look after these communities. The doctor of the Tahaddi health center in Hay el Gharbi hence emphasized that the majority of his patients with disabilities were from the Dom population. This might be linked to high rates of endogamous marriages in this population. Moreover, the PwDs met showed little awareness of their rights in terms of healthcare, namely the support provided by the MoPH and MoSA. During a focus group discussion held with stateless persons, the different services granted to PwDs by national authorities were not known.

Ultimately, MoPH ceased to subsidize hospitalization as the financial crisis grew stronger, seriously impacting the ability of PwDs to afford medical care and social support. Some organizations were mentioned as providing hearing aids, wheelchairs, and walkers. However, some others allegedly refuse to support stateless PwDs because of their legal condition.

Stateless PwDs are also barred from receiving an education, with many schools failing to enroll them. This was portrayed during the field work as well as focus group discussions. Several people disclosed how stateless children — particularly those with special needs — are no longer welcome in public schools.

In this struggle, Lebanese and stateless PwDs are directly affected by the impact of the socioeconomic crisis, as their ability to access aid, special care and services is now jeopardized.

> My child has down syndrome. He needs a scan for his heart but I can't afford it. How is that supposed to make me feel? Or him?
>
> — Mother of a child with special needs, focus group

> If I did not know anyone from the school's administration, my children would be deprived of an education!
>
> — Mother of a stateless girl with special needs, focus group discussion

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DOM STATELESSNESS: MARGINALS AMONG MARGINALS

The research found that Dom statelessness has distinct characteristics with its own specific dynamics, requiring special attention with adequate and targeted solutions.

The Dom people, Indo-Iranian nomadic tribes who migrated to the Levant centuries ago, have settled in various regions of Lebanon. The research found that Beirut and Mount Lebanon are home to at least 1,236 stateless individuals of Dom origin, residing in Sabra, Horch, Hay el Gharbi, and Iqlim el Kharroub. These Dom stateless individuals make up 40% of the total stateless population identified in the study. Notably, these numbers are significantly higher than those in Akkar, where the Dom account for 24% of the total stateless population. While only a few still live in tents in Beirut and Mount Lebanon, over half of them reside in substandard housing scattered throughout informal settlements.

The Dom people often face negative perceptions from society and are derogatorily referred to as “Nawar” or “Ghajar”. They live on the fringes of society, maintaining their own customs and language. Within their communities, traditions like endogamy and early marriages persist, contributing to their long history of stigmatization.

Box 20. Endogamy and disabilities

The high rates of endogamous marriages across Dom communities such as Hay el Gharbi, favors higher rates of disabilities and congenital malformations, as confirmed by medical KIs.

> Stop naturalizing *Nawar*!
>
> — Lebanese man in Naameh, talking to a surveyor

15%

of adult stateless respondents identified as of Dom origins, declared to be Dom.

16%

of adult stateless respondents identified as of Dom origins pretended to be Bedouins

Box 21. Outdated marital customs

Throughout fieldwork in Iqlim el Kharroub, some members of the Dom community shared their marriage customs, saying that “here, we buy our brides”, explaining how men pay a dowry of around 40 million LBP for marrying a woman. Those who do not have the amount usually resort to abducting the bride.

Stigmatization is evident in the way many Dom respondents deny their own heritage, with some even pretending to be Bedouins, which is often seen as more esteemed. As a result, many of them have adopted Bedouin customs, including the practice of the “*Diwan*”.

In addition, to their traditional occupations such as playing music, collecting metal, or begging, the research team discovered that some Dom individuals living in urban areas were involved in illegal activities like drug dealing and prostitution.

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DOM STATELESSNESS: MARGINALS AMONG MARGINALS

The combination of being stateless and of Dom origins doubles the vulnerabilities. The difference between Dom stateless and others stateless range from their salaries to their access to healthcare, as well as their high rate of early marriages, which in turn adds to the negative perceptions about them.

Stateless persons of Dom origins tend to live in informal settlements where undignified lodgings are the norm. In this respect, 54% of the Dom stateless live in sub-standard shelters.

In addition, 54% of Dom stateless encourage their daughters to get married to improve their situation, which is considerably higher than among the non-Dom respondents (31%). Moreover, 32% would encourage their daughter to get married even if she were underage.

Another aspect of their vulnerability within the general stateless population is shown through their salaries. In fact, data revealed that Dom stateless respondents earn on average 7,650,000 LBP per month, which is almost half of the amount earned by non-Dom stateless which is around 13,500,000 LBP.

> You think they would ever help us *Nawar*? They would Never!
>
> — Dom stateless man in Hamra

54%

of Dom stateless live in sub-standard shelters within informal settlements and Palestinian camps

30%

of underage marriages among married Dom stateless respondents, compared to 8% among non-Dom respondents

44%

Dom stateless earn 44% less than other stateless respondents

Fig 32. Do you have access to healthcare?

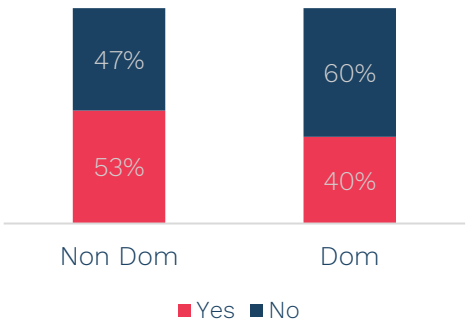
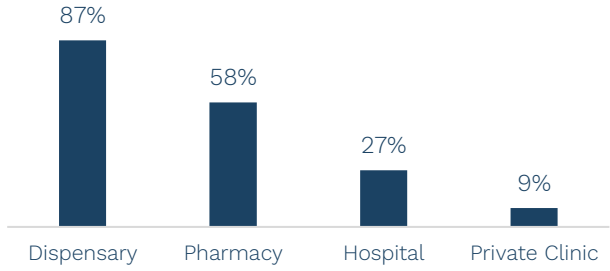


Fig 33. How do you access healthcare? (multiple selection)



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10

PERCEPTIONS

SHAME AND STIGMA

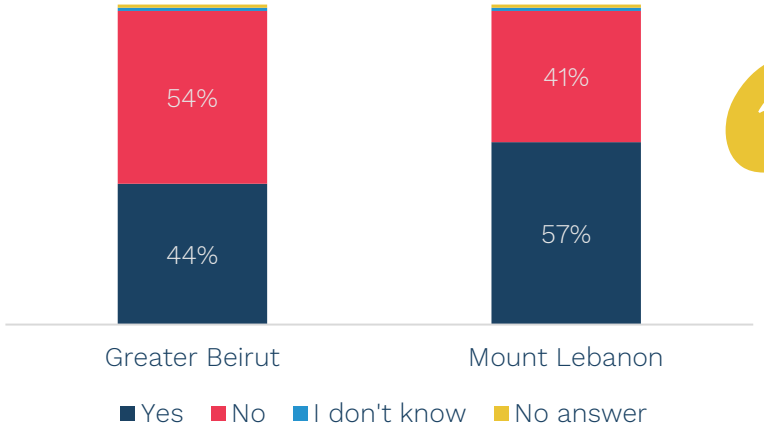
Stateless individuals tend to conceal their condition, burdened by the weight of social discrimination. Shame and fear of stigma are the main factors behind their tendency to avoid disclosing their statelessness openly.

Respectively 44% and 57% of stateless respondents in Greater Beirut and Mount Lebanon said that they hide their status. Surprisingly, this proportion is higher in rural areas, with 55% of respondents in Greater Beirut and Mount Lebanon stating that shame prevents them from talking more openly about their statelessness. Among other reasons mentioned by respondents who prefer to hide their condition was fear of social stigma (21%) and emotional distress (9%).

When looking from a cultural perspective, the Bedouin community appears the most sensitive to this issue, with a higher proportion than the general sample hiding their reality. 59% state that shame is the main reason for hiding it, compared to 40% among Kurdish stateless and 39% among Dom.

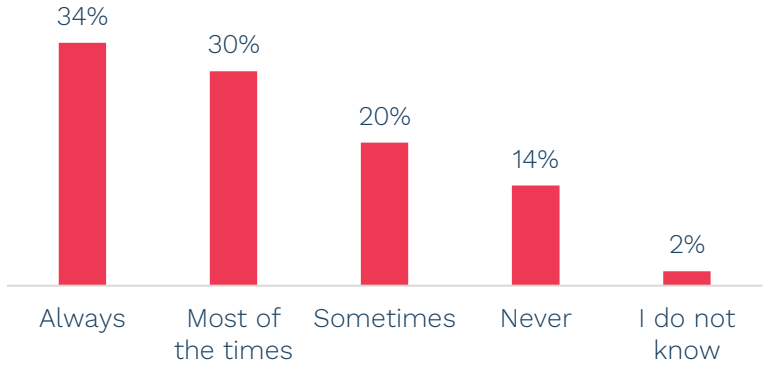
Regardless of whether stateless individuals publicly mention their status, a significant majority of respondents (84%) feel that social perception changes “always”, “most of the times” or “sometimes”, when others know about their statelessness. This applies also to stateless children, with 16% of respondents claiming that their children were stigmatized at school.

Fig 34. Do you avoid saying that you are stateless?



> Don’t tell anyone about my legal status, especially my neighbors!
>
> – Stateless man, Sin el Fil

Fig 35. Do you feel people's perception change when they know about your situation?



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SHAME AND STIGMA

Shame is not similarly felt across the various regions of Beirut and Mount Lebanon, and is often closely related to the local community's perception of statelessness.

Statelessness is perceived differently across regions. In the predominantly Sunni neighborhoods and informal settlements, stateless persons and the local community perceived this condition more favorably than in other areas. Furthermore, Dom people across regions demonstrated a high level of comfort with statelessness (which was particularly helpful for finding stateless individuals on the field).

In contrast, statelessness was almost a taboo topic in wealthier neighborhoods, or within the Shia, Christian, or Druze communities. As a consequence, stateless people living in these communities tend to avoid revealing their status, with the Shia respondents hiding it the most (57%) compared to Sunni respondents (47%).

In this respect, whereas statelessness is perceived as a "legitimate cause" in Sunni areas, Christians tend to associate stateless with Syrians, denying them the right to access Lebanese citizenship. This tendency was prevailing in the Metn district, where former member of parliament and interior minister Michel el Murr's central role in the 1994 Decree is still recalled by locals.

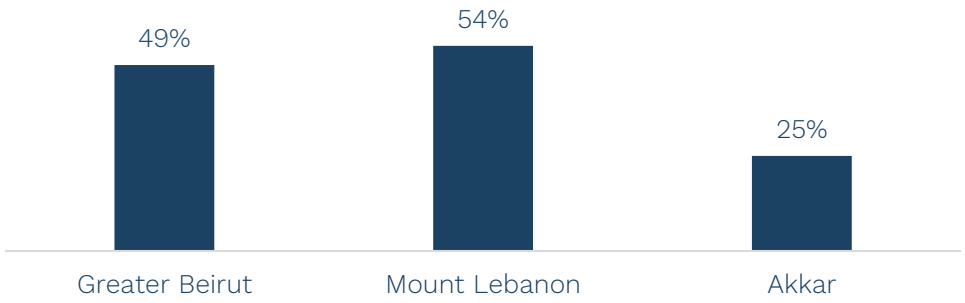
The team faced cases where stateless people denied being stateless. This happened in places like Burj el Barajneh refugee camp with a women refusing admitting being stateless, or in Burj Hammoud where a stateless man became angry when approached by surveyors, insisting that they share the identity of the person who revealed his status to the team.

24%

of adult respondents declared to avoid divulging their statelessness status because of shame

> Don't tell anyone I told you about him, people should definitely not know that their neighbor is stateless.
>
> — Brother of a non-registered stateless man, Dekwaneh

Fig 36. Percentage of people who do not disclose their status due to shame



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A MULTIFACETED IMPACT

In addition to the impact on access to rights and services, statelessness has an impact on the daily lives of those affected. The effects are multidimensional, with a particularly heavy psychological toll.

74% of stateless respondents feel that their condition is also affecting their family environment. This adds greater strain to an already fragile unit, with 65% of respondents stating that this situation causes tension within the family, along with other impacts.

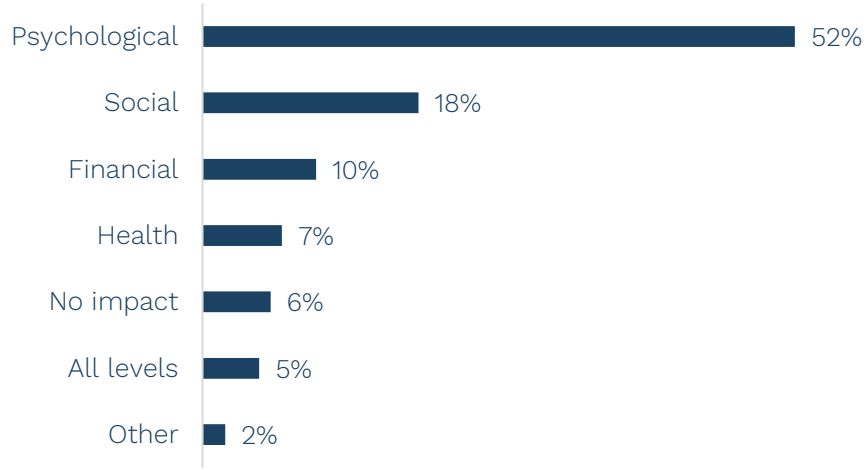
Tension **65%**

Shame **22%**

Exploitation **9%**

When asked about other impacts of their condition, 52% of stateless respondents mentioned the psychological effects, and 18% mentioned social effects. Suicidal expressions and thoughts were also noted during the fieldwork. 87% of respondents openly expressed a need for psychological support, which was a much higher proportion than observed in Akkar (40%).

Fig 37. On which level is statelessness affecting you the most?



> I started using drugs with my son.
>
> - Stateless woman, focus group discussion

87%

of respondents declared needing for psychological support

> I got to a place where I wanted to put an end to my life.
>
> – Stateless man, Jounieh

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LACK OF TRUST

Stateless persons lack trust in political institutions and local authorities, as opposed to their generally positive perceptions of security services. Furthermore, respondents have expressed an attachment to their Lebanese belonging, with 94% having never tried to obtain another nationality.

For stateless respondents, the security services, in particular the Lebanese Army, come as the most trusted authorities, in line with previous findings in other areas. However, the level of trust is slightly lower in Greater Beirut and Mount Lebanon in comparison to Akkar. As such, 67% of stateless respondents would resort to the ISF if their wallet was stolen, a proportion close to the Lebanese respondents response (75%).

On the other hand, stateless respondents show little trust in national and local institutions or the MPs of the areas they reside in.

41% of respondents blame the state for their situation, while 56% say their family and parents are mostly responsible. Inherited cases tend to point to the state whereas non-registered individuals tend to blame their parents.

Additionally, stateless respondents expressed an attachment to their Lebanese roots, with 94% having never tried to seek another nationality and 52% preferring national belonging over any other form of belonging such as to the sect or the tribe.

> If I only had the Lebanese nationality, I would have joined the Lebanese Army.
>
> – Stateless man, Chatila, April 19

Fig 38. How much do you trust the following authorities?

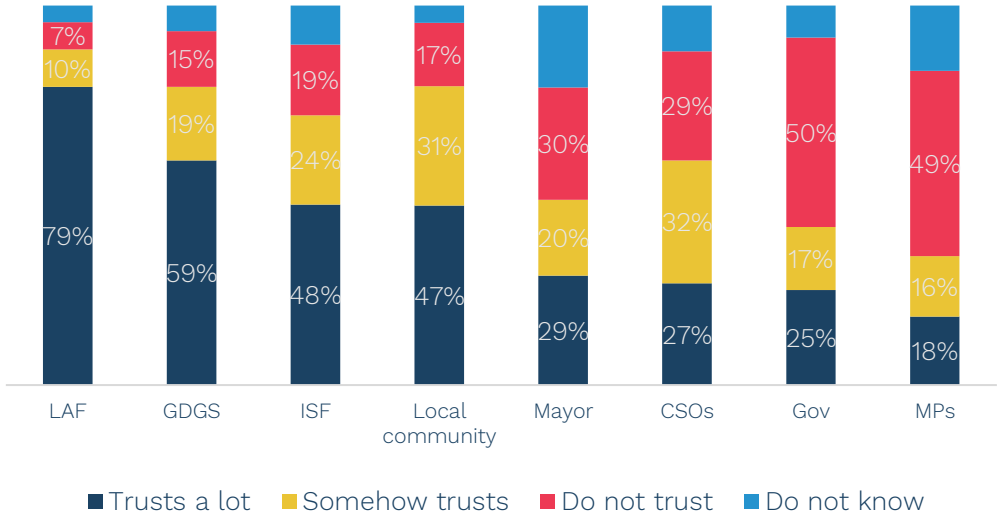
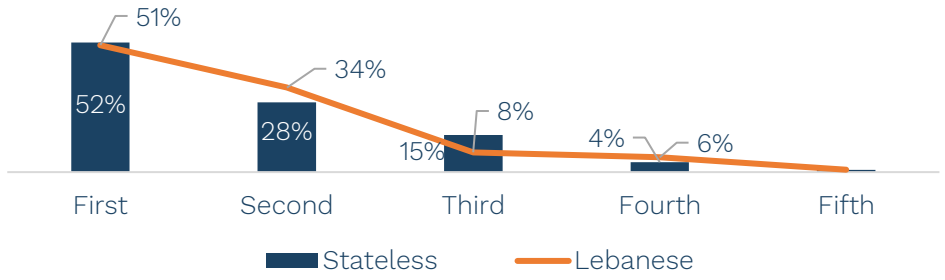


Fig 39. Stateless respondents' ranking of belonging to the nation (out of 5 belongings)



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CONCLUSIONS

LEBANON AT RISK OF PERPETUATING STATELESSNESS

By covering Greater Beirut and Mount Lebanon, this study brings the number of geographic areas covered to four, after addressing statelessness in Tripoli (2019) and Akkar (2021). While the field mapping confirms initial estimates, it also highlights the inaction of authorities when it comes to preventing and ending statelessness.

CONSISTENT ESTIMATES

- With respectively **4,116** and **1,138** stateless persons mapped in Greater Beirut and Mount Lebanon, the uncovered number of stateless individuals now stands at roughly **11,500** across the four geographic areas covered by the different studies since 2019.
- These findings are consistent with Siren's previous estimates on the total stateless population in Lebanon that do not exceed **27,000** persons. This is contrary to unrealistic approximations from other sources, which sometimes reach **80,000** persons.
- Consequently, this research's more limited estimated size of the stateless phenomenon helps to defuse the political and sectarian considerations that have been attached to the issue, which have blocked progress toward its definitive resolution.
- Under such context, developing concrete and efficient policy solutions to address the different administrative ramifications entangling thousands of stateless men, women and children of Lebanese origins seems feasible.

POLICY SOLUTIONS IN REVERSE

- Despite Lebanon's constitutional and international obligations to defend and respect the right to nationality, there has been no tangible progress in addressing statelessness in recent years.
- The 2020 legislative proposal to hand over to MoIM the handling of registration procedures for nonregistered MeQ persons without the need for a court order has not been pursued.
- As a result, this category of statelessness continues to grow, putting at the risk the future of younger generations.
- On the contrary, Lebanese authorities changed direction recently with regard to nationality rights. For instance, some members of parliament were preparing a bill that aimed to ban the naturalization of stateless children born after 2011, out of fear of naturalizing Syrians. The legislative proposal has not yet been discussed by Lebanon's parliamentary commissions. While MPs' fears might be understandable from a sectarian demographic perspective, such propositions constitute a barrier to the right of stateless persons to acquire citizenship, especially non-registered children, in addition to contravening to the country's legal obligations.

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EXTREME VULNERABILITY IN THE HEART OF LEBANON

While fieldwork debunked old stereotypes on stateless persons, it uncovered the growing vulnerabilities that they face, which have been exacerbated by the multidimensional crisis. The study revealed the existence of new and previously underestimated waves of statelessness in the country, namely the children of migrant domestic worker mothers (MDWs) born to Lebanese fathers.

DEBUNKING OBSOLETE MYTHS

- The study has shed light on a number of specificities, one of which is related to the high level of attachment that stateless persons in Greater Beirut and Mount Lebanon have to their Lebanese roots. Evidencing this, a majority of surveyed stateless have found the courage to initiate the lengthy procedure of citizenship acquisition, despite its complexity. Also, a significant proportion of respondents proclaimed their preference to national belonging over other forms of attachment like the tribe, family or sect.
- Furthermore, the view that stateless persons are prone to fraudulent behaviors as a consequence to their status fails the test of field research. They seem to be aware that their precarious legal status makes them more vulnerable than citizens to harsh punitive measures. The study showed that stateless persons generally avoid trouble and resist resorting to fraudulent practices to facilitate access to services.
- The study also revealed a lack of knowledge and awareness among a large segment of *mukhtars* about the condition of statelessness. This is concerning as *mukhtars* serve as stateless persons' initial point of contact with the state and are key to facilitating their integration into the state and its bureaucratic procedures.

PERPETUATION OF VULNERABILITY

- The country is undergoing one of its worst financial and socioeconomic crisis, which is severely affecting all segments of the Lebanese population and increasing the vulnerability of stateless persons.
- The impact of the socioeconomic situation was tangible throughout the fieldwork, as livelihoods were severely degraded and access to services further deteriorated. Moreover, a significant proportion of stateless households are at risk of losing access to shelter, with 34% of stateless renters currently facing eviction.
- Gender discrimination exacerbates vulnerability. While statelessness limits access to services like education and employment for all, women face higher risks of exploitation and are susceptible to negative coping mechanisms, such as underage marriage, even though this trend is declining.
- The children of MDWs born of Lebanese fathers appeared as a surprisingly large cohort, accounting for 1 in 5 of the nonregistered children identified. The victims of the Kafala face multiple challenges, which increase their exposure to risk due to the combination of their legal status, existing gender norms and racial discrimination. The Dom form the largest stateless group in the mapped areas (at least 40% of all). They continue to endure cultural and racial stigma, living on the margins of informal settlements around the capital city.

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RECOMMENDATIONS

RECOMMENDATIONS

PRESIDENCY OF THE COUNCIL OF MINISTERS (PCM)

Short-term recommendations

- Recognize and acknowledge that statelessness needs to be addressed on a national level to support the wellbeing and dignity of stateless.
- Promote for the recognition of the legal responsibility of the Lebanese authorities for the historical causes of statelessness in the nation.
- Work on finding long-lasting solutions for historical cases of statelessness as well as on preventing new cases through adequate measures and adapted policies.
- Engage proactively through organizing round table discussions among stakeholders related to statelessness, such as *mukhtars* and ministries, in order to coordinate their roles and obligations among each other.

Medium-term recommendations

- Adhere to both the 1961 Convention on the Reduction of Statelessness and the 1954 Convention pertaining to the Status of Stateless Persons. A necessary step to bring Lebanese legislation into compliance with international standards for eliminating statelessness.

PARLIAMENT

Short-term recommendations

- Introduce legislation requiring a temporary exemption for late birth registration requirements, enabling all people born in Lebanon after the one-year cutoff to administratively register their births.
- Make legislative changes to the civil registration system to streamline the birth registration procedure, including the digitalization of the civil registry records and procedures in accordance with international standards to guarantee that all children born to Lebanese fathers in Lebanon are registered.
- Propose changes to Lebanon’s nationality legislation that ensure the implementation of current protections against statelessness at birth.

Medium-term recommendations

- Introduce legislative reforms that eliminate gender discrimination from Lebanon's nationality laws in accordance with the principle of equality in rights guaranteed by the Lebanese constitution.
- Require the Lebanese government to ratify both the 1954 Convention related to the Status of Stateless Persons and the 1961 Convention on the Reduction of Statelessness.
- Abolish the Kafala sponsorship system and ensure that the Labor Law protects and includes migrant domestic workers and their rights.

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RECOMMENDATIONS

MINISTRY OF INTERIOR AND MUNICIPALITIES (MoIM)

Short-term recommendations

- Standardize the requirements for issuing *ta'arif* certificates to stateless people while instructing *mukhtars* to follow current law and provide *ta'arif* certificates to anyone who meets the criteria and has Lebanese ancestry.
- Coordinate with other pertinent ministries, such as the MoPH, MoEHE, and MoSA, to guarantee that *ta'arif* certificates are a nationally recognized identification document.
- Enforce a waiver of the under-study card renewal enabling those living with under-study status to get legitimate identification documents.

Medium-term recommendations

- Conduct a comprehensive mapping of all stateless people living on Lebanese grounds and provide adequate paperwork so that those who are stateless can get official identification documents and access fundamental rights.
- Implement the use of digital management systems that help all necessary parties to work more cooperatively and effectively; that promote transparency when dealing with stateless people; and that provide a working framework for the government, security agencies, local governments and *mukhtars*.
- Offer *mukhtars* ongoing training on the many rules, processes and regulations related to statelessness and nationality acquisition.

MUNICIPALITIES

Short-term recommendations

- Recognize the fundamental rights of stateless people and assist them in their efforts to get citizenship.
- Encourage *mukhtars* to map statelessness in their area and contact stateless persons to offer support.
- Advocate on behalf of the stateless with the appropriate national authorities.

MUKHTARS

Short-term recommendations:

- Retain a thorough understanding of all the services and rights available to stateless people and uphold their responsibilities towards them.
- Retain a good relationship with stateless people to provide them with informed advice.
- Inform people about the value of birth registration in order to prevent future non-registration cases.

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RECOMMENDATIONS

MINISTRY OF JUSTICE (MoJ)

Short-term recommendations

- Ensure the judicial system's comprehensive follow-up on pending cases and give judicial courts instructions to speed up all existing cases.
- Ensure that all stateless people are given legal assistance while going through court proceedings.
- Implement existing nationality law provisions to make sure no child is born stateless.

GENERAL PROSECUTOR OFFICE (GPO)

Short-term recommendations

- Instruct the competent judicial chambers to continue stateless suits and to act understandingly and leniently.

MINISTRY OF PUBLIC HEALTH (MoPH), MINISTRY OF EDUCATION AND HIGHER EDUCATION (MoEHE), MINISTRY OF SOCIAL AFFAIRS (MoSA)

Short-term recommendations

- Identify all individuals who are stateless and grant them access to pertinent rights and services based on the identification documents they have, such as healthcare, education, and social safety.
- Brief and instruct institutions such as schools, dispensaries, and hospitals, about stateless people's rights to access these institutions.
- Monitor the institutions' compliance with decisions taken by the ministries, and sanction those who do not abide to them.
- Implement digital case management technologies to enhance communication with stakeholders and offer relevant rights and services.
- MoPH specifically: raise awareness regarding the necessity of children's registration upon birth, in order to avoid statelessness through non-registration.

MINISTRY OF FINANCE (MoF)

Short-term recommendations

- Provide financial resources to the Bar Association, NGOs and other relevant groups to ensure that stateless people have access to rights and social services similarly to Lebanese citizens.
- Provide financial support for free legal aid schemes so that stateless people do not have to pay to access legal services.

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RECOMMENDATIONS

GENERAL DIRECTORATE OF THE GENERAL SECURITY (GDGS)

Short-term recommendations

- Treat ongoing legal processes connected to stateless litigation as a matter of high priority.
- Clarify and publish the process of registering births and marriages (including of Lebanese men to foreign wives), as well as the criteria for granting citizenship, in order to make the processes more transparent and accessible.
- Facilitate the process of retrieving documents from MDWs' countries of origins, through embassies.
- Enact a moratorium on arresting and deporting MDWs who are mothers to stateless children.

INTERNATIONAL ORGANIZATIONS (IOs)

Short-term recommendations

- Raise awareness and mobilize a larger audience around statelessness issues, and help the appropriate authorities in ending this phenomenon.
- Continue to advocate for the rights of stateless people within the various institutions of the Government of Lebanon, helping the state to uphold its duty to protect stateless people and prevent statelessness.
- Collaborate with civil society groups in their efforts to prevent and end statelessness in Lebanon, and support stateless populations.
- Empower stateless people by:
    1. Ensuring their access to specific facilities and services, such as Community Development Centers and supported Public Health Centers to participate in psycho-social support, skills training, and life skills activity programs.
    2. Creating an updated referral method for stateless people to access services, including those at the national level.
    3. Taking into account the variety, age, and gender issues that this study revealed.
- Design programming for stateless groups and individuals that goes beyond legal aid, providing services such as psycho-social support as well as in-kind and financial assistance to stateless individuals, with the aim of addressing statelessness in a comprehensive way.
- Enhance coordination between local and international organizations to improve ways of providing assistance for stateless individuals.
- Build on former success stories, lessons learned and best practices of organizations such as Tahaddi focused on educating and providing healthcare while trying to empower the local community.
- Propose programming to donors that targets individuals based on vulnerability rather than nationality, ensuring that projects are inclusive to stateless persons.
- Promote, coordinate through and foster alliances such as the New Global Alliance to End Statelessness, focusing on the #IBelong campaign, on its global, regional, and national levels.

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RECOMMENDATIONS

CIVIL SOCIETY ORGANIZATIONS (CSOs)

Short-term recommendations

- Raise public awareness of the issue of statelessness in Lebanon, particularly within the public administration, healthcare, and education sectors.
- Raise awareness among the military and security forces about statelessness and the importance of recognizing stateless persons' identification documents and upholding their human rights and dignity.
- Raise awareness of the responsibilities and rights of mukhtars while dealing with stateless people. Help *mukhtars* in staying up-to-date regarding new laws and regulations regarding statelessness, and provide them with enhanced training.
- Empower organizations helping MDWs to provide them with the adequate legal aid for cases with non-registered children.

ACADEMICS

Short-term recommendations

- Conduct research related to the minority populations within stateless cases, such as the Dom populations or MDWs, in order to better understand the unique aspects of statelessness they hold.
- Continue to raise awareness of the issue of statelessness in Lebanon and bring academic perspectives to the conversation about statelessness with decision-makers.
- Use, foster, promote and coordinate research with local actors on statelessness through the MENA statelessness platform under the UNHCR #IBelong campaign, which is part of the global alliance working towards ending statelessness.

MEDIA

Short-term recommendations

- Raise awareness about statelessness in order to fight prejudice and discrimination, and support those who are stateless in their fight for citizenship.
- Raise awareness about the gravity of the statelessness issues and struggles, while also raising awareness about the prevention of non-registration.
- Improve access to information regarding statelessness, so that stateless individuals can learn about their rights.

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GLOSSARY AND REFERENCES

GLOSSARY

- **Affidavit:** An affidavit is a sworn written statement used as legal evidence, commonly used in court proceedings and immigration cases.
- **Employment:** In this study, employment is understood as a professional activity attached to a regular remuneration that would stem from a stable employer or activity.
- ***Macha'at:*** Land that follows the Ottoman estate system; thus, considered land commonly owned by people in the area, mostly rural regions. Today, large portions of these lands are still not registered under any official cadaster.
- ***Maktoum el Qayd (MeQ):*** Persons in Lebanon whose name and identity are not attached to any official registry (*qayd*).
- ***Mukhtar:*** Translates to the "chosen one" - a local elected official at a neighborhood level in charge of processing formal procedures for citizens, residents and stateless vis-à-vis central authorities. Its office and duties are regulated by the *Mukhtar* Law enacted in 1947 and amended in 1997.
- ***Muta'a:*** *Mut'ah* is a temporary form of contractual marriage practiced in Shia Islam, characterized by a predetermined duration and automatic dissolution at its conclusion. It is distinct from permanent marriage, as it is bound by specific conditions and motivations such as companionship, financial support, or sexual gratification.
- **Nonregistered:** Persons born to a Lebanese father and whose birth was not registered within the one year deadline, after which the birth can only be registered through a lengthy and very costly procedure.
- ***Qayd el Dars* (QeD) or under-study cases:** Persons of unspecified nationality whose original nationality is pending and case under study by the General Directorate of the General Security.
- **Stateless:** Individuals who are not "considered as a national by any state under the operation of its law" as defined under international law.

ACRONYMS

BML: Beirut and Mount Lebanon
CSO: Civil Society Organizations
FGD: Focus Group Discussions
GDGS: General Directorate of the General Security
Gov: Government
GPO: General Prosecutor Office
IO: International Organizations
ISF: Internal Security Forces
LAF: Lebanese Army Forces
LBP: Lebanese Pounds
MDW: Migrant Domestic Worker
MeQ: *Maktoum el Qayd*
MoEHE: Ministry of Education and Higher Education
MoF: Ministry of Finance
MoIM: Ministry of Interior and Municipalities
MoJ: Ministry of Justice
MoPH: Ministry of Public Health
MoSA: Ministry of Social Affairs
MP: Member of Parliament
NSSF: National Social Security Funds
PCM: Presidency of the Council of Ministers
PwD: Persons with Disabilities
QeD: *Qayd el Dars*

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June 2023