Rapid Humanitarian Situation Monitoring (RHSM)
December, 2024 | Lebanon

Context & Rationale

The humanitarian situation in Lebanon remains extremely fluid. From 08 October 2023, the country saw a steady increase in conflict incidents, primarily along its Southern border. In September 2024, a significant escalation in hostilities saw a cross-border invasion as well as intense clashes and airstrikes that sparked mass displacement and caused widespread damage to critical infrastructure.[1] At its peak, IOM-DTM estimated the number of displaced persons (IDPs) to be 899,725.[2] The governorates of Baalbek-El Hermel and Beqaa experienced extensive airstrikes and large population movements, with residents often leaving conflict-affected cadastres following short-notice evacuation orders issued by the Israeli army in search of refuge in safer areas. In this context of heightened insecurity, constrained social and economic activities, and massive displacement, REACH conducted data collection in eastern governorates to improve information availability on the needs of affected populations from 11 to 20 November 2024.

The announcement of a ceasefire on 27 November 2024 triggered immediate and large-scale return movement. However, the fragility of the ceasefire and the recent fall of the Assad regime in neighboring Syria may contribute to further instability in the region and population movements. To plan an effective response, humanitarian partners require up-to-date data on humanitarian needs and service functionality in conflict-affected areas. REACH's Humanitarian Situation Monitoring (HSM) supports the monitoring of access to essential services in selected areas over time, enabling coordination forums to make data-driven decisions about prioritizing and targeting assistance.
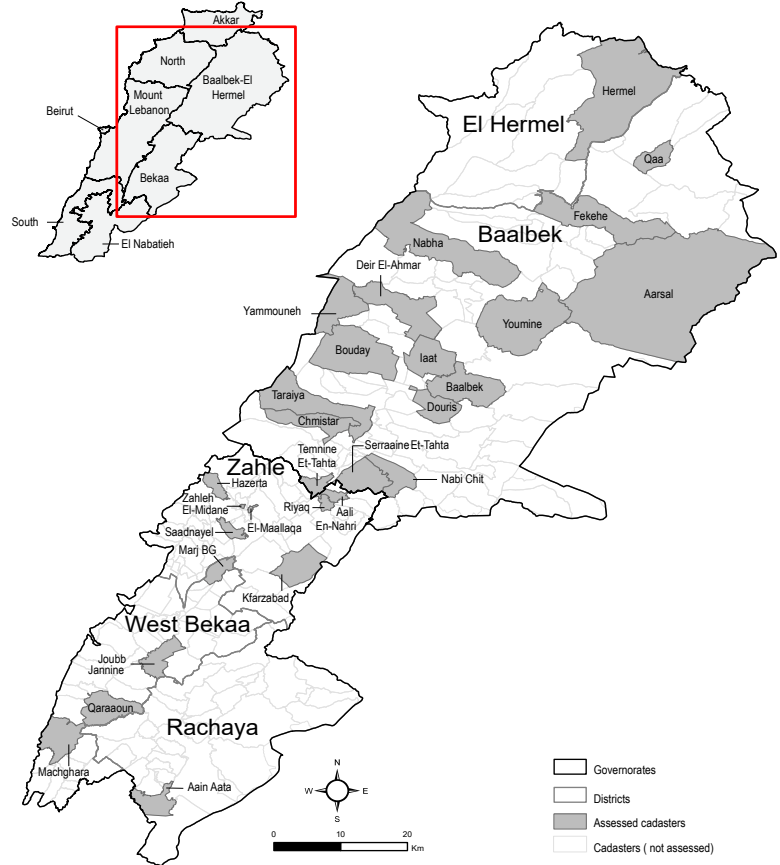
Assessment Coverage

Key Findings

- At the time of data collection, **the priority needs identified were food, cash, health services, and winter heating**. Following the ceasefire, the restoration of economic activity, health services, and improved humanitarian access are expected to reduce the demand for food and health support. However, **infrastructure rehabilitation and winter heating are expected to remain priority needs** in areas affected by damage.

- The cadastres of **Youmine, Baalbek, Bouday, and Serraine El Tahta have high damages and limited access to services**. While conditions may improve with better security and the return of displaced service providers, ongoing population movements linked to developments in Syria could continue to strain local services.

- Insecurity was a major barrier to accessing markets, health facilities, and livelihoods, driving the need for food, medication, and cash.[3] If the ceasefire holds, this barrier is likely to diminish, reducing the severity of needs. However, due to limited cash access from disrupted livelihoods, **restoring livelihoods will be crucial to ensuring sustainable access to services**.

- **High needs for humanitarian assistance were reported across most cadastres, primarily due to insufficient aid meeting household needs.** Although insecurity was a key barrier, the ceasefire is anticipated to improve access to assistance. Continuous monitoring will be essential to address persisting challenges, including lack of awareness about available services.

Methodology Overview

Data was collected through Key Informant Interviews (KIIs) with individuals who hold extensive knowledge and experience within their respective communities. The profiles of the Key Informants included: government officials, education professionals, water utility staff, healthcare providers, and representatives from NGOs involved in emergency support. KIs were selected using a combination of purposive and snowball sampling techniques to ensure diverse and comprehensive representation across sectors.

For geographic coverage, 29 cadastres were selected based on estimated IDP and population density, as well as damage levels.[4] Final scores ranged from 1 to 10, with all cadastres scoring 6 or above included. Data collection took place from November 11 to November 20, 2024, with 3 to 5 key informants interviewed per settlement. The findings are based on an aggregated analysis at the cadaster level requiring consensus from two or more KIs on each specific variable.

Damage, services and AAP indexes

Damage Index: Reflects the proportion of damages across sectors in the cadastres, as reported by KIs.
Access to Services Index: Measures access to essential services like shelter, education, health, water, sanitation, and markets.
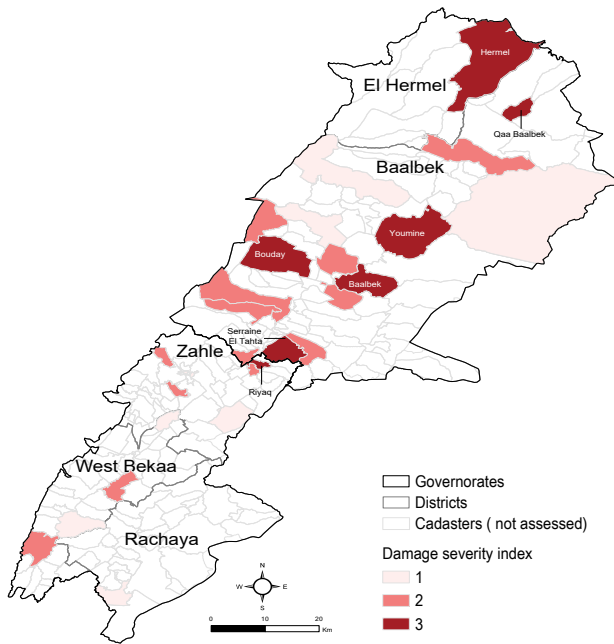**Access to Humanitarian Assistance Index:** Assesses access to humanitarian aid and disruptions in service.

Classification of Damage Levels and Sectoral Deprivation

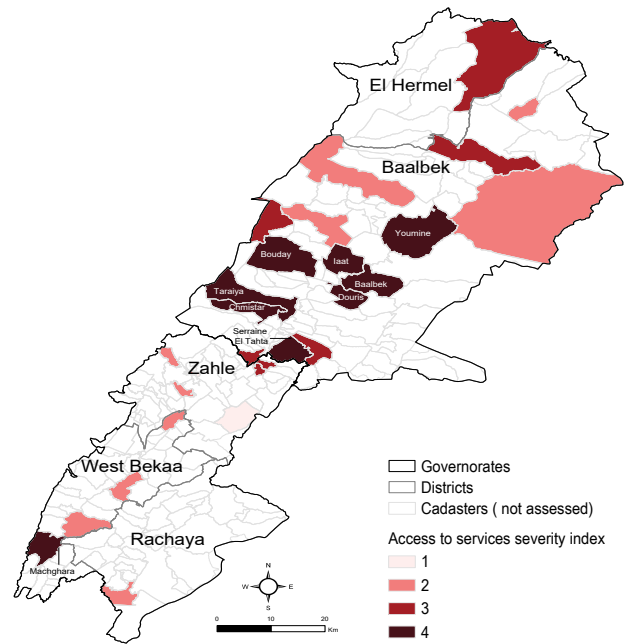| Index	Description
1 (Low)	Minimal/none, mostly cosmetic issues; fully functional. Minor or No deprivation
2 (Moderate)	Partial; Infrastructure remains functional but degraded. Borderline and Stressed deprivation
3 (High)	Severe; large portions non-functional, significant repair needed. Elevated deprivations
4 (Critical)	Total or near-total destruction; infrastructure is non-recoverable. Extreme deprivations

Damage index

Distribution of Cadasters Based on Damage Index Scores

Access to services index

Distribution of Cadasters Based on Access Index Scores

The damage index comprises five indicators on the proportion of different types of infrastructure that has been damaged: market infrastructure, healthcare facilities, education facilities, main roads, and housing infrastructure. It also takes into account different types of damages to houses/dwellings, as well as the status of water and wastewater infrastructure.
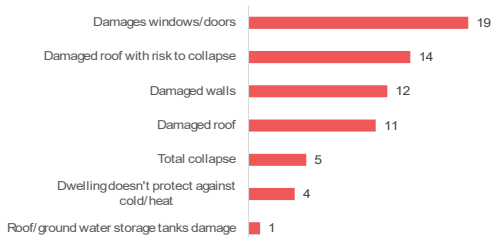
- According to KIs, **residential and market infrastructure tended to have the highest concentrations of damage.** Key informants in Serraaine Et-Tahta, Bouday, and Hermel consistently reported moderate to critical damage to different types of infrastructure, equivalent to a range of between a few buildings and more than half of the total stock. The extent and severity of damage to residential infrastructure was reportedly highest in **Aali En-Nahri, Riyaq, Taraiya, Serraaine Et-Tahta and Bouday cadastres.**

- In contrast, some cadastres scored low on the damage index, and the relatively safety of these areas resulted in a reportedly higher concentration of IDPs, especially in places such as **Kfarzabad, Marj BG, Aarsal and Nabha Ed-Damdoum.**

Number of Cadasters by type of shelter damage

Specifically for shelter damages, the most commonly reported issues across the assessed cadasters include broken windows and doors, damaged walls, and roof destruction. **In five cadasters, which includes** Aali En-Nahri, Machghara, Younine, Qaa Baalbek, and Temnine Et-Tahta, **total building collapses were reported.**

Access to Services Index was derived from questions assessing the proportion of households with access to various services within the targeted cadasters. This includes evaluating access to markets, cash, education facilities, water, sanitation and hygiene (WASH) infrastructure, adequate housing[4], and other essential services.

- The majority of areas assessed, including **Douris, Younine, Baalbeck and Bouday**, scored 3 or 4, indicating high levels of deprivation in access to basic services such as **WASH, healthcare, education, and markets.** This is linked to significant damage to infrastructure and services in these regions.

- Other cadasters, including **Marj BG, Qaraaoun, and Aarsal, showed moderate index (score 2)**, with residents experiencing challenges in accessing essential services.

- Only a few areas, including **Zahleh El-Maallaqa and Kfarzabad, scored 1**, suggesting relatively good access and minimal deprivation in basic services.
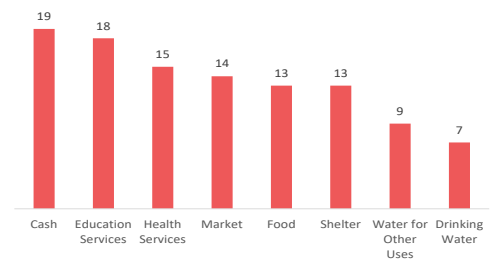
In approximately half of the assessed cadasters, there were reports indicating that less than half of the communities residing in those cadasters, including host communities and IDPs, are able to access basic services. **The most commonly reported inaccessible services were cash, education, health, markets, and food.**

Number of Cadasters with reported lack of access to basic services

Several barriers were identified that hindered access to essential services in conflict-affected areas:

- **Inability to access Cash** was reported to stem from factors such as **closure to banks, Online Money Transfer (OMT) and ATMs due to security concerns** (n=14), **long distances to the nearest cash facilities** (n=9), and **reduced or inconvenient hours of operation** (n=7). These obstacles left many households without the financial means to secure their basic needs.

- **For Education services,** security concerns during travel to schools were the most commonly reported challenge (n=15), followed by **escalations of violence** that compromised the safety of schools (n=14), and the **use of schools as shelters** for displaced families (n=11) were major challenges.

- **Market access** was hindered by **security issues preventing markets from opening** (n=15). **Financial constraints** also limited households' ability to purchase essential items (n=14), along with **physical damage to market infrastructure** (n=11). These challenges have exacerbated shortages of goods and reduced access to critical supplies.

- Challenges in accessing **Health services** were reported to be linked to **financial constraints** due to reduced income (n=18) as many households were unable to find stable employment opportunities during the conflict. **Inability to access cash** (n=11) due to funds being stuck in banks or temporarily abandoned properties further compounded the problem. Additionally, the **closure of health facilities in unsafe areas** (n=9) limited the availability of essential healthcare, leaving affected populations with few options for treatment.

- The inability to access **Food items** was reported to be primarily attributed to **financial constraints** (n=20), **security concerns** (n=14), and **limited food items due to disrupted supply chains** (n=9). This could be related to damaged roads infrastructure which was reported in 6 out of the 9 cadasters.

- For **Shelter access**, the top reported barriers included **high rental costs** (n=10), **damaged shelter infrastructure** (n=9), and **lack of financial means** (n=9). For IDPs, it was reported in 10 cadasters that a main challenge is **overcrowding in collective shelters**. In a conflict-affected setting, these barriers are particularly severe, as high rental costs and damaged infrastructure reduce the availability of habitable spaces.

- The major challenges in **Water service** accessibility were identified as a **lack of bottled water** (n=6), primarily due to limited distribution in the market; **damaged water containers** (n=5); and **physical access constraints** to water stations or network operators (n=4). For **Sanitation services**, the main barriers included **disrupted sewage services** (n=8), **disrupted desludging services** (n=6), **lack of water for toilets** (n=5), and **overcrowded toilets**, particularly for IDPs who are residing in collective shelters (n=6). Moreover, it was reported across 11 cadasters that less than half of the households had access to essential hygiene items. This lack of access left the remaining households without basic hygiene necessities such as soap, detergent, sanitary pads, and shampoo.

These barriers underscore the complex interplay of security, financial, and infrastructural challenges that have hindered access to essential services in conflict-affected areas. If the ceasefire holds, insecurity-related barriers might no longer be a concern, reducing the severity of needs. However, limited access to cash due to disrupted livelihoods was another reported driver of these needs, making the restoration of livelihoods crucial to ensuring that households can sustainably access essential services.
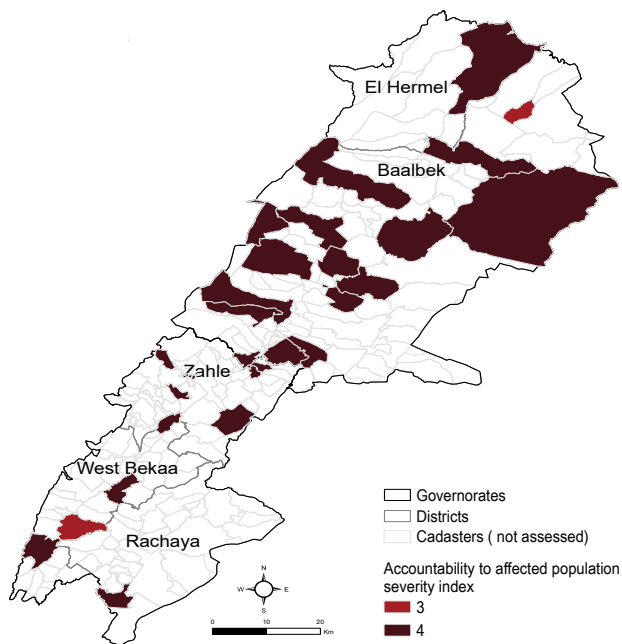
Priority needs

Top five reported priority needs, by cadasters (n=29)

Top priority needs	Number of cadasters
Food support	25
Cash assistance	23
Health support	21
Heat support	14
Shelter support	4

- **Food Needs:**
  Most needed food items included cooking oil (n=18), cash to purchase food (n=16), rice (n=11), and bread and meat (n=6). Food support emerged as a top priority, indicating its critical importance as a principal form of assistance required across both governorates.

- **Cash Assistance:**
  Cash assistance emerged as one of the top needs, particularly required for food and shelter. However, at the time of data collection, cash-based aid was reported to be limited in both governorates. The provision of such assistance should take into account the partial operational capacity of financial providers. With the ceasefire in place, delivering this assistance is expected to become easier.

- **Health Needs:**
  Health challenges were frequently reported, with medicine for chronic diseases cited as the primary need across 25 out of 29 cadasters. This was followed by urgent requirements for healthcare equipment (n=15) and first aid or emergency care services (n=11). Health support is recognized as a top priority need, particularly the provision of medication, which is a key form of assistance in the Beqaa governorate and, to a lesser extent, in Baalbek-El Hermel.

- **Shelter Needs:**
  Shelter needs have been reported in several cadastres heavily impacted by the conflict. These needs are expected to increase in case IDPs return to their areas of origin. The primary shelter needs identified include cash for repair materials and/or labor (reported in 6 cadasters), basic electrical items such as wiring, switches, and sockets (4 cadasters) and roofing materials (2 cadasters). Shelter assistance had already begun at the time of data collection, but additional support is necessary to address the increasing demand for repair and reconstruction.

- **Heating Needs:**
  Heating was reported as a top priority need in affected areas. However, it wasn't asked if this form of assistance is being adequately provided. Given the cold climate in the region, addressing heating needs should be prioritized in upcoming support efforts.

- **Anticipated Needs:**
  Following the ceasefire and the expected restoration of economic activity and health services, alongside the improved accessibility of areas by humanitarian actors, it is likely that the need for food and health services will be mitigated. On the other hand, with displaced persons returning to their areas of origin, the rehabilitation of residential and non-residential infrastructure will likely become a priority (especially in

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Accountability to Affected Populations Index

The Accountability to Affected Populations index gave rise to the highest severity scores, with all but two of the cadastres receiving a score of critical. The index comprises three sets of indicators covering the availability of NGO and government assistance, the extent of disruption to such assistance, and the sufficiency of the assistance provided. Some form of humanitarian assistance was reported in most of the assessed cadastres, and the types of assistance largely mirrored the priority needs of affected populations.

Cadastres of particular concern for a high level of disruption to assistance (mainly that provided by NGOs) and a low level of access to either governmental or NGO aid were Machghara, Aali En-Nahri, Baalbek, Serraaine Et-Tahta and Nabi Chit. It is worth noting that while Qaa Baalbek received a relatively high damage score, the greater availability of both NGO and government assistance, as reported by KIs, ensured it scored relatively better on both the AAP and Access to Services indices.

The main driver of the high AAP severity scores was the sufficiency indicator, with KIs in 14 of the 29 cadastres tending to report that assistance was not at all meeting the needs of households in the area, with insecurity being the main barrier to its delivery at the time of data collection. It is therefore reasonable to expect that the volume of assistance will increase if the ceasefire holds, improving the AAP scores overall.

Top four barriers accessing assistance, by cadaser who reported experiencing challenges (n=29)

As mentioned above, the ceasefire will likely improve access to humanitarian assistance by mitigating the barriers of inaccessibility and insecurity. If assistance does become more available, it will be important to monitor the continued relevance of barriers such as a lack of knowledge of available services and discrimination.
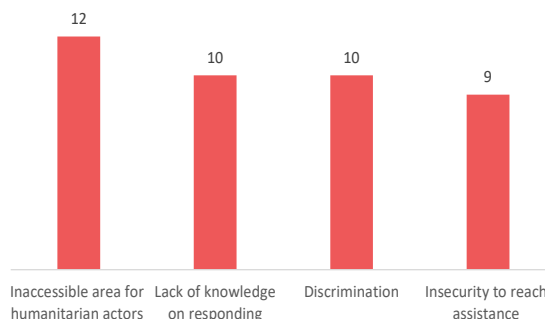
Endnotes

1. World Bank Group, Lebanon: Interim Damage and Loss Assessment (DaLA) (14/11/24): World Bank Document; UN Habitat, Lebanon – Building destruction and debris quantities assessment (29/11/24): Lebanon – Building destruction and debris quantities assessment | UN-Habitat

2. IOM-DTM, Mobility Snapshot – Round 65 (25/11/24): Mobility Snapshot - Round 65 - 25-11-2024 | Displacement Tracking Matrix

3. While cash assistance may be effective to address the need for food, medication and winter heating, price unpredictability has been a consistent challenge in Baalbek-El Hermel and Beqaa through 2024, and resilience of supply chains is a concern in Baalbek-El Hermel in particular, with the implication that in-kind assistance may be a more reliable modality in some cases (WFP Lebanon - Market Functionality Index (November 2024) - Lebanon | ReliefWeb).

4. For the scoring criteria, data utilized included estimated IDP numbers from IOM-DTM, population density from GHS data, incidents reported from ACTED data, and damaged buildings from CRUNY.

5. Adequate housing includes a safe structure (roof and walls), functional services (water, sanitation, energy for cooking and heating), privacy, and protection from external elements.

Contact us:

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ABOUT

REACH Initiative facilitates the development of information tools and products that enhance the capacity of aid actors to make evidence-based decisions in emergency, recovery and development contexts. The methodologies used by REACH include primary data collection and in-depth analysis, and all activities are conducted through inter-agency aid coordination mechanisms. REACH is a joint initiative of IMPACT Initiatives, ACTED and the United Nations Institute for Training and Research - Operational Satellite Applications Programme (UNITAR-UNOSAT).