

PROFILING VULNERABLE LEBANESE RETURNEES FROM SYRIA

7 NOVEMBER 2013

INITIAL REPORT ON FINDINGS

BACKGROUND

Among the huge numbers of those in Lebanon displaced by the Syria crisis, Lebanese returnees represent an important and often under-assisted group. These families, most of which have been living in Syria for decades (having moved there for social or economic reasons) began to return to Lebanon as a result of the onset of the crisis in Syria in 2011. They now find themselves living in difficult circumstances in their country of origin, and have gone largely unassisted due to a lack of accurate information regarding their living conditions and needs. In July 2013, the Lebanese High Relief Commission (HRC) and IOM launched a project to register and profile Lebanese returnees to provide better understanding of their priority and long-term needs, in order to inform future interventions.



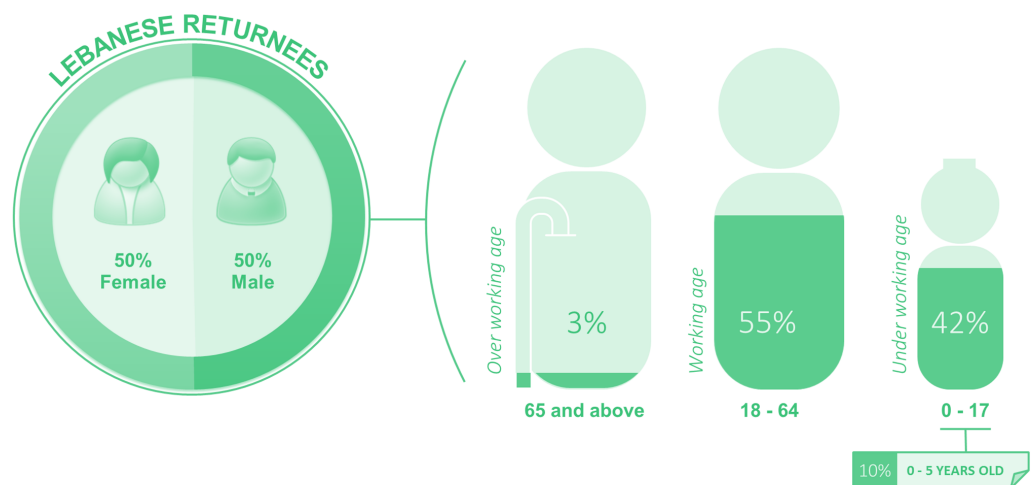
HRC staff interviewed a Lebanese returnee on 16 July in Bekaa Governorate. © IOM 2013

The study found that the conditions of Lebanese returnee households are broadly similar to those of Syrian refugees: most came without their belongings, are unemployed and are either renting accommodation or being hosted by Lebanese families, while some are living in collective centers and tents. They are concentrated in areas already overburdened by the presence of huge numbers of refugees, where opportunities for work are scarce and public services are over-stretched. The registration process was conducted by HRC staff (with training and support from IOM) across all six governorates of Lebanon from July to October 2013. Key findings of the assessment are presented here in brief; a full report will follow by the end of November.

DEMOGRAPHICS

In the initial phase of the project, **17,510** Lebanese returnees (**3,206** households) were registered. As is the case with Syrian refugees, the large majority were in the Bekaa (**62%** or **1,991** HHs) and North Lebanon (**27%** or **867** HHs). Within those governorates, most returnees were in the districts of Baalbek, Hermel and Akkar (**2,282** households). Though they had come

from all across Syria, a majority (**59%** or **1,901** HHs) had come from Homs Governorate. Among the registered returnees, the gender division was roughly equal, while **55%** were of working age (**18-64**) and **43%** were under **18** years old.



INCOME, EMPLOYMENT AND ECONOMIC STATUS

- **69%** of individuals of working age (**18-64**) are unemployed. Of the **31%** with jobs, the majority work on either a seasonal or day-to-day basis. Only **195** individuals aged between **18** and **64** have regular employment (**2%**). In **948** households (**30%**) there is no wage-earner.
- For the majority of households, employment (daily wage or salary) is the main source of income (**1,823** HHs or **57%**). A substantial portion (**919** HHs or **29%**) said that they were dependent on aid from relatives or friends, while **5%** were mostly reliant on agriculture and livestock and **3%** on assistance from the government or aid organizations.
- **82.3%** of households said they did not own any substantial property in Lebanon (whether land, a home, a vehicle, livestock or basic household commodities).

PRIORITY NEEDS

- Returnees most frequently ranked food (**34.1%**), health (**20.4%**), shelter/housing (**14.8%**) and access to work/employment (**14.2%**), as their first or second priority needs. The food items most needed were bread, flour, rice and cooking oil.
- Though education was not frequently cited as a priority concern (perhaps due to the fact that the assessment was conducted over the summer), **31%** of children between the ages of **6** and **18** are not in school (**1,753** individuals). Among children of secondary school age (**15-18**) the figure is as high as **59%**.

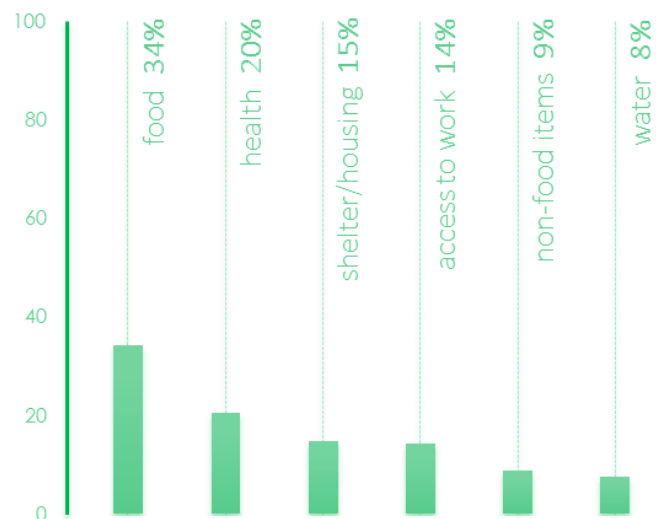
INTENTIONS

- The overwhelming majority of returnees (**75%**) were unsure whether they would return to Syria or settle in Lebanon, responding that they were, “waiting on one or several factors to make a decision.” A further **10%** intend to integrate locally, while **9%** plan to return to Syria.

SHELTER CONDITIONS

- Only a small proportion of returnees are living in properties that they own (**8.8%** or **283** HHs). The majority of families are either renting (**56.8%** or **1,821** HHs) or being hosted by relatives or others (**30.1%** or **965** HHs); many of them face risk of eviction. A total of **80** households are living in public buildings and collective settlements.
- The large majority are living in durable shelter (**2,964** HHs or **91.9%**), while **159** households are living in tents (**5%**) and **65** in improvised shelter (**2%**).
- **22%** of households said they had insufficient access to water, for either personal or business use.

Most frequently ranked first or second priority needs.



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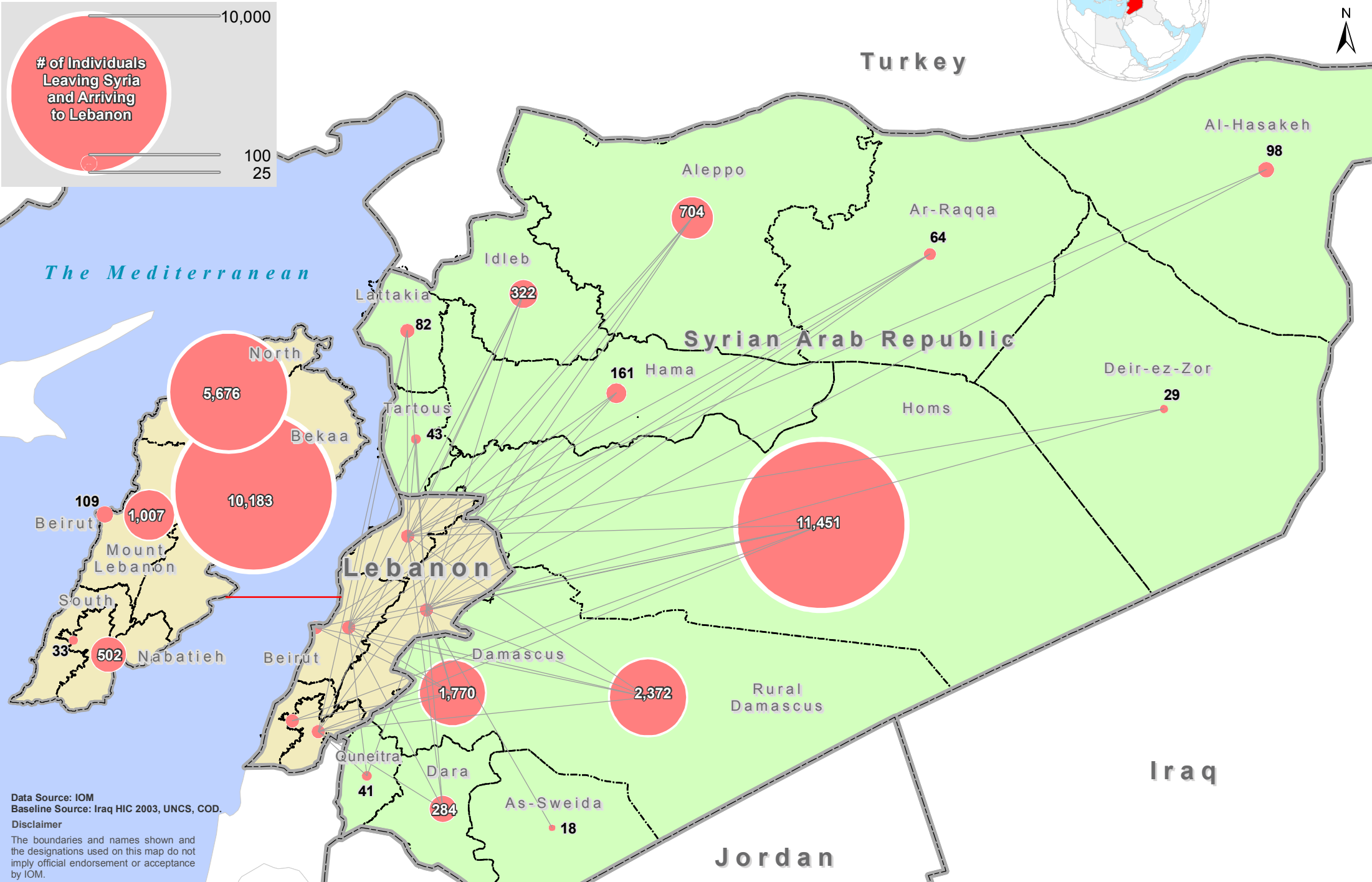


Syria Crisis: Lebanese Returnees from Syria

Registered and Profiled by HRC and IOM between July and October 2013



Date:
7 November 2013



Data Source: IOM
 Baseline Source: Iraq HIC 2003, UNCS, COD.
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