



Survey on Perceptions of Syrian Refugees in Lebanon

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Background:

Syrian refugees are becoming increasingly vulnerable while worries are rising among Lebanese host communities. In addition to that, dynamics in relationships between refugees and host communities are changing as the Syrian crisis continues. Recently, the ministry of interior implemented additional measures on Lebanon's borders to control the movement of Syrian nationals, in efforts to manage the influx of Syrians into the country. For all these reasons, a group of professors and students at the Political Science Institute at USJ has decided to and undertake a field study on the perception of safety among Syrian refugees and Lebanese host communities.



Objectives of the study:

- Measure Syrian refugee perception on safety and security, access to services, and analyze the causes behind those perceptions.
- Measure perception of the Lebanese community with regards to Syrians, access to services, and perceived threats to local communities.
- Instant information about tension levels in the country.
- Involve students and professors to further research issues related to Syrian refugees in Lebanon.
- Other projects and further research will follow.

Sampling:

A team of 21 Lebanese and Syrian students and 3 professors have gone around the country, stopped in more than 120 cities, towns, villages, and remote areas and filled about 1800 questionnaires (1200 Syrians and 600 Lebanese) measuring perceptions of safety among Syrian

refugees and Lebanese. Two questionnaires were used, one for the Syrians and one for the Lebanese, consisting of about 50 questions. The sampling was done according to UNHCR data, in every city/town/village according to type of Syrian residence, knocking on doors with random selection in every household.



Syrian Questionnaire Covered:

- Gender/Age/Region of origin/Occupation/etc.
- Registration with UNHCR/General Security
- Safety level
- Feelings towards authorities (Police, GS, Army, Municipality)
- Feelings towards UNHCR, NGOs
- Feelings towards Lebanese
- Exposure to threat/insult/assault/blackmailing + source + response
- Subject to Raid/Search/Arrest/Eviction/etc.
- Movement restriction
- Checkpoints/Curfews/Random checks and patrols
- Problems accessing services (Health, Education, Electricity, etc.)
- Friendships in Lebanon
- Similarities between the 2 cultures
- Feeling welcomed?

Lebanese Questionnaire Covered:

- Gender/Age/Region of origin/Occupation/etc.
- Safety level
- Positive/Negative impact from Syrian refugees
- Feelings towards Syrians: hatred/fear/respect/compassion
- Interaction with Syrian refugees
- Exposure to threat/insult/assault/backmailing + source + response
- Perceptions toward checkpoints/Curfews/Random checks and patrols
- Syrian impact on public services
- Syrian friendships
- Similarities between the 2 cultures
- Willingness to hire a Syrian refugee

- Willingness to have Syrian refugees in neighborhood
- Willingness to send kids to school with Syrian refugees
- Willingness to marry a Syrian refugee

Results:

The sample was relatively young with 19% between age 18 and 24, 34% of the respondents between age 25 and 34, 25% between 34 and 44, 14% between 45 and 54, and 8% above 55. The syrian town origin varies, with, on top of the list: Homs, Halab. Edleb, Damascus, Deraa, and Hama... 62% of Syrians work with an average salary of \$393.

Syrian refugees are most worried about security, then comes the economy and then legal papers.

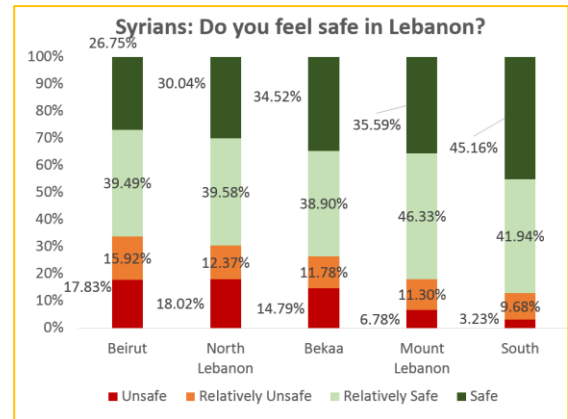
With regards to legal papers, 70% of Syrian respondents don't have legal papers in Lebanon while 79% are registered with UNHCR. The main cause for not having papers is the need for a Lebanese sponsor and high cost.

On safety, 34% of Syrians in Beirut do not feel safe, while 30% in the North don't feel safe, 27% in Bekka, 18% in Mount Lebanon, and 13% in the South. In addition, 87 to 91% believe that legal papers impacts their safety.

293 personal/family assaults were reported out of 1200 syrian respondents. 86% of these cases where explicitly blamed on Lebanese offenders. 43% offenses were verbal insults.

46% of Syrian Refugees have reported to have been in trouble in Lebanon, and 69% did nothing about it.

37% of Syrians had problems with



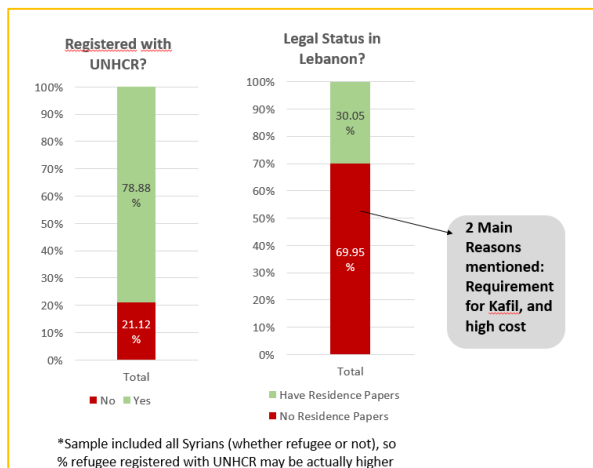
checkpoints, with regional variation between 50% in North Lebanon and 16% in Mount Lebanon. Main cause is non-renewal of legal papers.

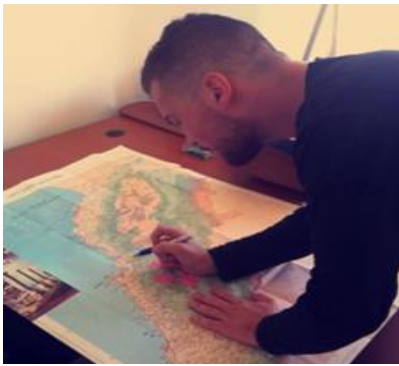
71% of respondents said that checkpoints are important to them, and 46% of them said that the main reason is to go to work, while 9% mentioned access to services.

When asked about services, 28% said they don't have access to services and 27% said that they have access "sometimes". Furthermore,

37% said they are treated worse than others when accessing services.

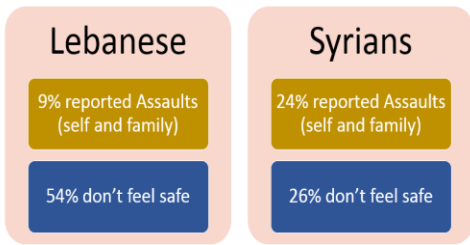
76% of Syrians in Beirut don't feel welcome in Lebanon. In North Lebanon and Bekaa more than 60%. In Mount Lebanon and South about 50%.





Almost 50% say that situation is getting worse. Statistics show that relations with authorities and Level of safety are getting worse over time.

Women feel slightly safer than man (31% for men VS 36% for women), and are less likely to have legal papers (35% for men VS 24% for women). Furthermore, women have less problems on checkpoints than men.



Analysis

The data reflects a vicious cycle in which Syrian refugees are trapped, leading to lack of safety with the situation getting worse over time. The cost of papers and the difficult conditions associated to legal registration at General Security are causing a large proportion (70% according to our survey) not to renew their papers. This is impeding their mobility and especially on check points. In addition, this is causing labor without permits (62% of respondents work). Work conditions do not seem to help them

sustain their needs and resolve their legal papers issues, which probably alienates the Lebanese community who complaints about Syrians taking jobs.

sponsorship, and lower costs.

Papers will solve checkpoint problems; they will make Syrians less vulnerable and will encourage them to file complaints to the police or any other authority in case of offenses which they currently don't do out of fear of being arrested. Papers will also facilitate mobility and access to services.

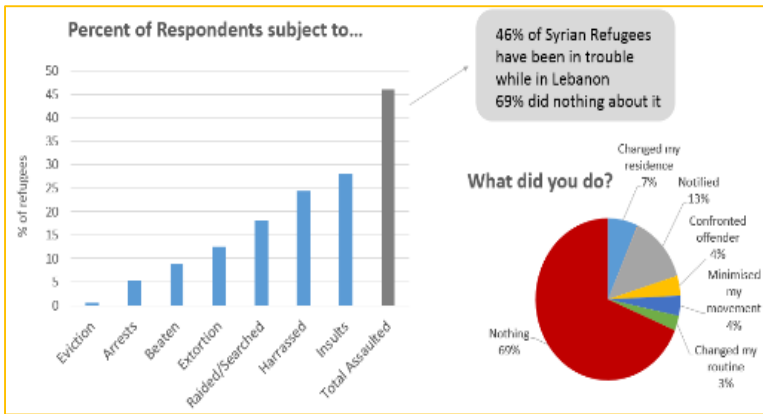
Working conditions: reinforce labor law towards Syrians. Encourage equal treatment of Syrian and Lebanese neighbor.

Municipalities should not be allowed to override the law and determine wages. Prohibition of work leads to illegal labor and harsh work conditions which is reinforced by municipal control over wages. This increases hostility from the Lebanese side and frustration from the Syrian side. Low salaries paid to Syrians are taking jobs away from the Lebanese population and do not provide to the Syrian families, especially as they have expenses, including rent.

Expand Job market: more Research needed on labor.

Initiate a study related to skills within the Syrian population, and job opportunities on the Lebanese market, comparing demand and supply, wages, work conditions, needs, etc. Provide funding to expend the job market in light of such study.

Security/Municipal Role: municipal community policing with



More than half of the Syrians live in apartments. Safety is highest among those who live in apartments and lowest among those who live in camps.

Around 50% of Lebanese don't feel safe in most regions. Assaults were reported by 13% of the Lebanese, with a lot of people saying they "heard stories".

Policy Implications

Legal papers: loosen conditions for issuance of Syrian Refugee legal papers and renewal. Cancel



reinforcement and human rights.

Municipalities should get support, training, and funding to better police neighborhoods and develop partnerships with civil society and Syrian community. At the same time, Municipalities should not be allowed to impose selective curfew or security measures, which is against human rights and causes havoc and "story telling".

Create a transparent complaint mechanism allowing to keep the finger on the pulse.

Syrian refugees should have a complaint mechanism that has a human face, is close to them, and represents the state at the same time.

Special attention to collective shelters and Camps

Addressing vulnerability of Syrians shelters, camps and places of residence that are below standards.

Community-level Projects: Reinforce projects between refugees and host communities.

Projects that engage both parts, involve skills and talents from both sides. Create youth clubs, diversify opportunities for socialization (especially women and youth).

Encourage joint Lebanese-Syrian teamwork on refugee projects.

This was experimented by researchers on this project as team of surveyors included Lebanese and Syrian students. It limits bias from both ends, enhances trust with both populations and gets better results.

Research, strategy and funding

Funds are needed to better know the landscape, develop strategies and implement them. Research and strategy are sine qua non conditions for funding.



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