

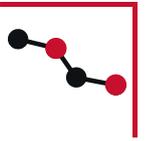
# Lebanon Crisis Update

February 2026 ■ ■



Source: AFP

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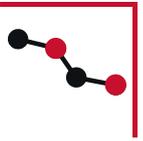


The Monthly Lebanon Crisis Update provides an overview of economic and political developments to alert the international aid response to new and emerging challenges that could impact the humanitarian situation in Lebanon. In the context of the multiple crises affecting Lebanon, the update tracks the impact of political developments on the economy, relevant international developments, updates on service delivery and governance issues, and analysis of the drivers of humanitarian need as they develop. The report also aims to provide nuanced forecasting on contextual shifts relevant to shifting needs and the implementation of humanitarian programming. The report draws upon a desk review of currently available literature, analysis of relevant quantitative data, and key informant interviews with a range of experts and individuals with knowledge of Lebanon's economy.

The Lebanon Crisis Analytics Team (LCAT) provides reactive and in-depth context analysis to inform the aid community in Lebanon. The information and analysis contained in this report is therefore strictly to inform humanitarian and development actors and associated policymaking on Lebanon.

*This study/report is made possible by the support of the European Union Humanitarian Aid. The contents of this report are the sole responsibility of the LCAT and do not necessarily reflect the views of the European Union.*





Source: Reuters

## Conflict Updates :

**The dynamics of the unfolding Hezbollah-Israel conflict signal a high risk of further escalation with serious humanitarian consequences.**

- On March 2, Israel launched a widescale bombardment campaign targeting Hezbollah military leadership, infrastructure, and financial institutions.<sup>1</sup> Tel Aviv said that it will pursue its military operations until Hezbollah is disarmed and dealt a “devastating blow,” raising the possibility of a prolonged conflict.<sup>2</sup>
- On March 5, Israel called for the evacuation of Beirut’s densely populated southern suburbs, echoing the mass displacement tactics it deployed during the 2023-2025 Gaza War.<sup>3</sup> This unprecedented escalation signals the possibility of even more intense bombing than during the September 23 to November 27, 2024 conflict (the 66-Day War).
- Through March 5, Israel had conducted an average of 86.7 airstrikes a day, or approximately 30% less than its daily average during the 66-Day War.<sup>4</sup> In comparison to the previous conflict, Israel’s airstrikes have been more focused on the southern suburbs of Beirut, where it has concentrated nearly 12% of its total fire.<sup>5</sup> Meanwhile, Israel’s campaign has so far directed proportionally less fire in the Bekaa Valley than in the 66-Day War.<sup>6</sup> Israel’s strikes have killed at least 123 people and wounded 683 others.<sup>7</sup>

<sup>1</sup> Israeli military via Telegram, [@idofficial](#) March 2, 2026; Israeli military via Telegram, [@idofficial](#) March 2, 2026;

Israeli military via Telegram, [@idofficial](#) March 2, 2026

<sup>2</sup> Israeli military via Telegram, [@idofficial](#) March 2, 2026

<sup>3</sup> Israeli military spokesperson Avichay Adraee, [@AvichayAdraee](#) March 5, 2026

<sup>4</sup> LCAT logs all Israeli airstrikes across Lebanon reported by Lebanon’s National News Agency. Israel conducted 347 airstrikes from March 2 to 6, 2026, for a daily average of 86.75. Israel conducted 7,973 airstrikes from September 23, 2024 through the beginning of the Cessation of Hostilities on November 27, 2024, for a daily average of 120.8

<sup>5</sup> In the conflict between September 23 to November 27, 2024, Israel directed 6.52% of its 7,973 strikes in the southern suburbs of Beirut. From March 2 through March 5, 2026, Israel has conducted a total of 347 strikes, 41 of them in the southern suburbs of Beirut.

<sup>6</sup> From March 2 to 6, 2026, Israel conducted 41 strikes in the southern suburbs of Beirut, 21 in the Bekaa, 172 south of the Litani in the the LAF’s first phase disarmament zone, and 108 in the LAF’s second phase disarmament zone. Another 5 strikes have been conducted elsewhere.

<sup>7</sup> National News Agency, [الصحة: 123 شهيدا و683 جريحا نتيجة العدوان الإسرائيلي حتى مساء اليوم](#), March 5, 2026;

LCAT does not have full daily casualty figures from the 66-Day War, but can extrapolate at least 3,121 deaths between September 23-November 27, 2024, or 47.3 a day.



- Israel also launched a ground incursion along the border, saying that it was seeking to establish a buffer zone.<sup>8</sup> So far, the campaign has been confined to areas immediately along the border, with Khiam – approximately five kilometers from the boundary – representing the deepest point of incursion.<sup>9</sup> While Tel Aviv has said its operation is limited in scope,<sup>10</sup> Israeli leaders have been vague as to their ultimate military objectives.
- Israel disputes the Lebanese Armed Forces' (LAF) January 8 announcement that it had disarmed Hezbollah south of the Litani River,<sup>11</sup> raising the possibility that Tel Aviv could attempt a wider ground invasion to seize the entirety of the southern border area. On March 4, Israel issued an evacuation notice for all areas south of the Litani.<sup>12</sup> However, Israel issued a similar notice during the 66-Day War and ultimately did not press its ground offensive that far north.
- Hezbollah stated that it had conducted 61 operations against Israel through March 5, 17 of them against Israeli troops on Lebanon territory.<sup>13</sup> Notably, the organization claimed it had launched rocket and UAV attacks on an Israeli defense firm headquartered at Ben Gurion International Airport<sup>14</sup> in Tel Aviv and an Israeli naval base in Haifa.<sup>15</sup> Israel acknowledged two long-range rocket attacks by Hezbollah in the center of the country.<sup>16</sup>
- The US reportedly gave Lebanon assurances that Israel would not target Beirut's Rafik Hariri International Airport or seaport, with the caveat that this policy could change if Hezbollah escalated its attacks.<sup>17</sup> Meanwhile, Lebanese Minister for the Displaced Kamal Shehadi stated on March 5 that no such guarantees had been provided.<sup>18</sup> An attack on these facilities would have significant economic impacts, disrupting trade to the import-dependent country.
- On March 2, a UAV struck a British airbase in Cyprus, with Cypriot authorities telling the media that Hezbollah was likely responsible.<sup>19</sup> Hezbollah has not commented on these claims, which would mark a highly unusual escalation on its part that could put further international pressure on Lebanon.

<sup>8</sup> France 24, [Israel defence minister says he ordered troops to seize new positions in Lebanon](#) March 3, 2026

<sup>9</sup> L'Orient Today, [Israel pushes deeper into south Lebanon, issues mass evacuation threats south of Litani River](#) March 4, 2026;

Asharq Alawsat, [Israeli Forces Enter Several Lebanese Villages after Evacuation Order](#) March 4, 2026;

<sup>10</sup> Israeli military via Telegram, [@idfofficial](#) March 3, 2026;

Times of Israel, [Katz: Deployment into southern Lebanon intended to prevent 'direct fire' on Israeli communities](#) March 3, 2026

<sup>11</sup> Israeli Foreign Ministry, [@IsraelMFA](#) January 8, 2026

<sup>12</sup> Israeli military spokesperson Avichay Adraee, [@AvichayAdraee](#) March 4, 2026

<sup>13</sup> LCAT logs all Hezbollah claims of responsibility for attacks against Israel. LCAT counts each individual attack, while Hezbollah statements on its individual operations often note multiple attacks in different localities, which leads to a discrepancy from media totals and those provided by LCAT.

<sup>14</sup> Central War Media of the Islamic Resistance via Telegram, [@mmirleb](#) March 4, 2026;

Israel Aerospace Industries via LinkedIn, [@IAI](#) March 6, 2026

<sup>15</sup> Central War Media of the Islamic Resistance via Telegram, [@mmirleb](#) March 3, 2026;

Central War Media of the Islamic Resistance via Telegram, [@mmirleb](#) March 4, 2026

<sup>16</sup> Times of Israel, [No reports of injuries in latest concurrent Iranian missile and Hezbollah rocket fire](#) March 4, 2026;

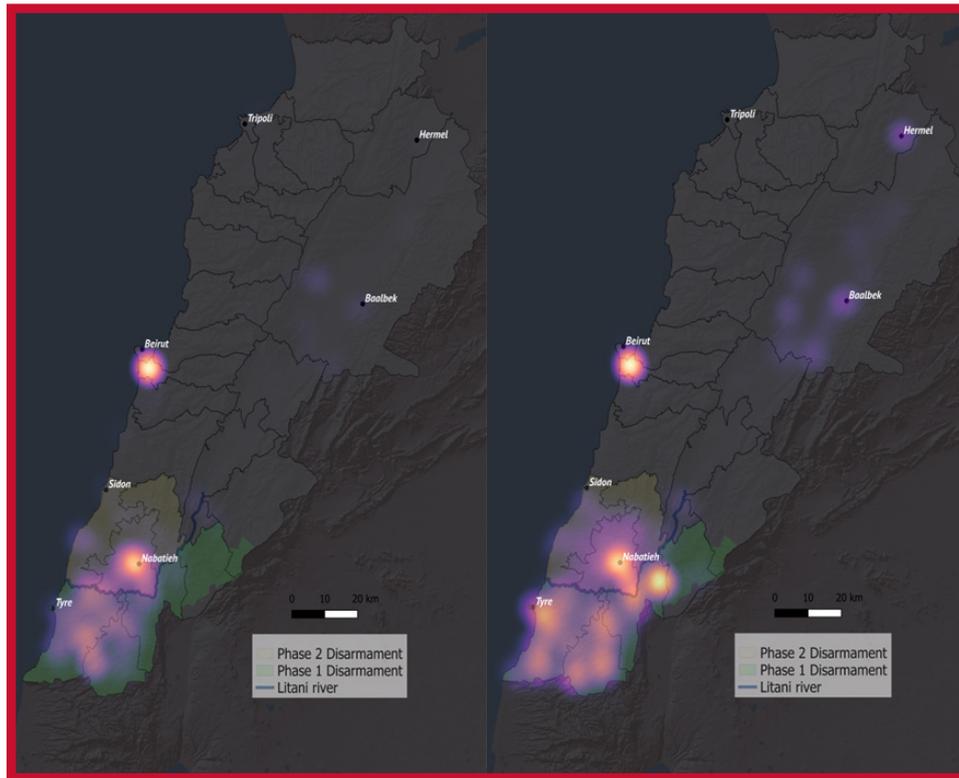
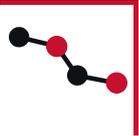
Times of Israel, [Hezbollah fires on Tel Aviv as Israel threatens Iranian officers in Lebanon](#) March 4, 2026

<sup>17</sup> The National, [US guarantees Israel will not strike Beirut airport but Hezbollah rockets test red lines](#) March 3, 2026

<sup>18</sup> L'Orient Today, [Israeli army claims its bombing of Hezbollah infrastructure in Beirut's southern suburbs | LIVE](#) March 6, 2026

<sup>19</sup> Reuters, [Iranian-made drone hits British air base in Cyprus](#) March 2, 2026;

The Guardian, [Hezbollah said to have launched drone that struck UK RAF airbase in Cyprus](#) March 2, 2026



**Figure 1:** Heatmaps of Israel's strikes in Lebanon between March 2 and 6, 2026 (L) versus throughout the September 23–November 27, 2024 conflict (66-Day War)

## Israel's large-scale forced displacement of residents in southern Lebanon and the southern suburbs of Beirut risks exacerbating intercommunal tensions.

- As of March 6, the Ministry of Social Affairs reported that 512 public shelters had been opened, which were housing 110,162 people.<sup>20,21</sup> These preliminary numbers will likely swell after Israel's call for the evacuation of Beirut's southern suburbs.<sup>22,23</sup>
- Israel's mass evacuation notices have targeted Shia-majority areas, which bore the brunt of its bombardment in the 66-Day War, widely perceived in Lebanon as a form of collective punishment.<sup>24</sup> Israel claims to be striking not only Hezbollah's military targets but also affiliated civilian infrastructure such as Al-Qard al-Hasan microlending branches,<sup>25</sup> likely in an effort to drive a wedge between Hezbollah and its political base among the Shia community.<sup>26</sup>
- Israel's March 5 evacuation notice for Beirut's southern suburbs directed predominantly Shia residents toward Tripoli and Mount Lebanon<sup>27</sup> – home to Sunni, Christian, and Druze communities – which could strain Lebanon's fragile intercommunal ties.

<sup>20</sup> Lebanese Government Disaster Management Unit, [WhatsApp Channel](#), Accessed March 6, 2026

<sup>21</sup> By comparison, by the end of the 66-Day War, 188,119 internally displaced persons (IDPs) had sought shelter in 1,015 public facilities. International Organization for Migration, [Mobility Snapshot - Round 65](#) November 25, 2024

<sup>22</sup> Israeli military spokesperson Avichay Adraee, [@AvichayAdraee](#) March 5, 2026

<sup>23</sup> Israeli military spokesperson Avichay Adraee, [@AvichayAdraee](#) March 4, 2026

<sup>24</sup> The New Arab, [For Israel, 'eradicating Hezbollah' means community erasure for Lebanese Shia](#) October 30, 2024;

Daraj, [When Hagari and Adraee Declare War on the "Shia"](#) October 16, 2024;

Foreign Affairs, [Israel Brings Its Gaza Strategy to Lebanon](#) November 1, 2024

<sup>25</sup> Israeli military via Telegram, [@idfoffical](#) March 2, 2026

<sup>26</sup> Wall Street Journal, [Israel Targets Hezbollah's Political Base With Strikes on Lebanese Bank](#) October 21, 2024

<sup>27</sup> Israeli military spokesperson Avichay Adraee, [@AvichayAdraee](#) March 5, 2026



- In the 66-Day War, hundreds of thousands of displaced Shia Muslims relocated to destination areas populated by Sunni Muslims, Druze, and Christians with no reports of significant intercommunal tensions.<sup>28</sup> Nevertheless, humanitarian actors should remain alert to the potential for political- and sectarian-driven tensions, particularly if the conflict is prolonged.
- Additionally, Israel has reprised its military tactic of targeted assassinations in destination localities minimally linked to Hezbollah, which further raises risks of intercommunal tensions. On March 4, an Israeli airstrike targeted a hotel housing IDPs in the predominantly Christian-populated Beirut suburb of Hazmieh.<sup>29</sup> That same day it conducted two strikes on residential buildings in the Aley and Chouf districts,<sup>30</sup> ostensibly safe areas that hosted IDPs in the last conflict.
- During the 66-Day War, Israel carried out at least 15 strikes on destination areas that caused casualties among IDPs,<sup>31</sup> sparking fears among host communities that the presence of displaced people could lead to bombardment.<sup>32</sup> At the time, municipalities in destination areas introduced security-related measures,<sup>33</sup> but there were no significant efforts to expel IDPs.<sup>34</sup> In an early sign of a reprise of these security-related measures in the current crisis, the Kesrouan district municipalities of Zouk Mosbeh and Faraya called on residents to report cases of providing housing for IDPs.<sup>35</sup>
- A spate of mysterious phone calls from foreign numbers threatening buildings, including the municipality headquarters for the east Beirut suburb of Jdeideh, could contribute to an atmosphere of fear and suspicion.<sup>36</sup>

### Hezbollah's isolation constrains its ability to challenge the Lebanese state's decision to disarm it and ban its military activities.

- Following Hezbollah's rocket fire into Israel, Lebanon's government on March 2 proscribed Hezbollah's security and military activities, and tasked the LAF and security agencies to take measures to prevent the organization from conducting military operations against Israel.<sup>37</sup> It also demanded that the party surrender its arsenal and confine its work to the political sphere, a direct challenge to Hezbollah's core identity as a military resistance movement against Israel.

<sup>28</sup> Mercy Corps, [Lebanon at War: Cessation of Hostilities](#) December 16, 2024

<sup>29</sup> National News Agency, [غارة استهدفت فندقاً في الحازمية](#), March 4, 2026;

L'Orient Today, [Israeli army widens attacks, strikes Mount Lebanon and Baabda: What happened overnight](#) March 4, 2026

<sup>30</sup> National News Agency, [استهداف شقة بعيد منتصف الليل في عرمون ومجمع سكني في السعديات وسقوط إصابات بين شهيد وجريح](#), March 4, 2026

<sup>31</sup> LCAT logged all incidents of Israeli shelling reported by the National News Agency, noting when such strikes caused casualties among IDPs in destination areas

<sup>32</sup> On September 26, an MP from the Kesrouane-Jbeil Governorate warned against granting entry to figures or munitions that would expose his constituency to danger, an implicit reference to fears that Hezbollah officials might be hiding among IDPs. Since then, this sentiment has been echoed by politicians in the Batroun, Zgharta, and Chouf districts. In the Chouf district, where Israeli strikes have targeted IDPs in Barja and Wardaniyeh, a politician from a local influential party said that Hezbollah should refrain from visits to destination areas to ensure the safety of both the displaced and host communities. An AFP article quoted residents in different areas of Lebanon speaking of fears of renting to displaced persons.

National News Agency, [وطن الإنسان: نحذر من تسرب أفراد يتسبون بقصف أماكن تواجههم فيعرضون المجتمعات المضيفة والنازحين للخطر](#), September 26, 2024;

Asharq Alawsat, [المخاوف تحاصر المجتمعات المضيفة، لبنان... لا مناطق آمنة في لبنان...](#) October 15, 2024;

National News Agency, [يزيك لاهل منطقة البترون](#), October 14, 2024; National News Agency, [عبدالله: الغارات الاسرائيلية لن تثبتنا عن واجبتنا الوطني](#), October 12, 2024;

Alarabiya, [Fleeing Israel's bombs, Lebanon's displaced met with suspicion](#) October 8, 2024

<sup>33</sup> The mayors of the Metn town of Baabdat and the Kesrouane town of Daraya said that local authorities were coordinating with Lebanese Army Intelligence to run security.

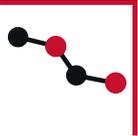
Al-Modon, [خوف البلديات "الأمنة" من النازحين: خطوات وقائية ومراقبة مشددة](#), October 18, 2024; National News Agency, [يزيك لاهل منطقة البترون](#), October 14, 2024

<sup>34</sup> L'Orient Today, [In a shattered country, the influx of displaced people has awakened old demons](#) October 18, 2024

<sup>35</sup> National News Agency, [بلديتا زوق مصبح وفاريا طالبتا بالإبلاغ الإلزامي عن حالات الإيواء أو تأجير النازحين](#), March 2, 2026

<sup>36</sup> Nida al-Watan, [بعد اتصال تهديد... إخلاء مبنى بلدية الجديدة والمجالس المحاورة](#), March 4, 2026

<sup>37</sup> National News Agency, [سلام بعد انتهاء جلسة مجلس الوزراء: حظرفوري لنشاطات حزب الله الأمنية والعسكرية والزامه بتسليم سلاحه وخصر عمله في المجال السياسي](#), March 2, 2026



- Hezbollah, which has two affiliated ministers in the Council of Ministers, rejected the government's decision and called on the Council of Ministers to avoid steps that would increase domestic tensions.<sup>38</sup> However, the party has so far ruled out resigning from the government.<sup>39</sup> On March 4, Hezbollah Secretary-General Naim Qassem called on Lebanon to "unite to prioritize confronting [Israel], and then we can discuss our differences and come to an agreement about them."<sup>40</sup>
- Hezbollah's decision to reignite hostilities with Israel has drawn widespread anger from across Lebanon's political spectrum, further isolating the party.<sup>41</sup> Notably, it has reportedly widened differences with key ally Parliament Speaker Nabih Berri,<sup>42</sup> leader of the Amal Movement, Lebanon's other main Shia Muslim political party.
- Without the support of Berri and other major allies, Hezbollah would struggle to challenge the Lebanese government's legitimacy or attempt to unseat it through mass protests or armed action, like it did in Lebanon's political crisis from November 2006–May 2008.<sup>43</sup> Furthermore, Israel's ongoing bombardment, which is leading to the mass displacement of Hezbollah supporters, makes such a move logistically impractical.

### Hezbollah's entry into conflict with Israel upends Lebanon's efforts to disarm the party, a key demand of international powers.

- Since summer 2025, Lebanese leaders have sought to balance international demands to disarm Hezbollah with plans that avoid provoking the party and triggering domestic tensions. On February 16, the Council of Ministers tacitly accepted an LAF plan,<sup>44</sup> without significant objections from Hezbollah-affiliated ministers,<sup>45</sup> to disarm the group between the Litani and Awali Rivers. The plan has a four-month timeline, extendable to eight depending on "political and military conditions" on the ground,<sup>46</sup> which is widely interpreted as a concession to Hezbollah. The LAF faces logistical challenges, ranging from shortages of manpower<sup>47</sup> to equipment,<sup>48</sup> while LAF Commander in Chief Rodolphe Haykal is hesitant to directly confront Hezbollah in a bid to avert potential civil strife.<sup>49</sup>

<sup>38</sup> National News Agency, [رعد ردا على سلام: كان اللبنانيون ينتظرون قراراً يحظر العدوان فإذا بهم أمام قرار حظر رفض العدوان](#) March 2, 2026

<sup>39</sup> L'Orient Today, [Cabinet cracks down on Hezbollah... will it be enough to calm Israel?](#) March 3, 2026

<sup>40</sup> National News Agency, [قاسم: المشكلة في خرق السيادة الدائم وفي الاحتلال بالأجواء وبالوصاية وصواريخ حزب الله هي رد على 15 شهراً من الانتهاكات](#) March 4, 2026

<sup>41</sup> L'Orient Today, [Wave of condemnation against Hezbollah after overnight attacks](#) March 2, 2026

<sup>42</sup> Reuters, [Hezbollah's entry into Iran crisis deepens its isolation at home](#) March 4, 2026

<sup>43</sup> In May 2008, Hezbollah spearheaded an armed challenge to political rivals and the government at the time with the support of Amal Movement. At the time it had political backing from the Free Patriotic Movement, which is now politically distanced from Hezbollah, and the armed support of the Amal Movement.

<sup>44</sup> Presidency of the Council of Ministers, [رئيس الجمهورية ترأس جلسة مجلس الوزراء في قصر بعيدا: إعطاء الموظفين بكافة أسلاكهم والمتعاقدين 6 رواتب إضافية مع كامل متماماتها للعسكريين](#) February 16, 2026

<sup>45</sup> L'Orient Today, [Haykal requests four to eight months extension for second phase of disarmament plan](#) February 16, 2026;

Nida al-Watan, [سلاح "الأمر الواقع" يُسلم بالأمر الواقع](#) February 18, 2026;

Al-Modon, [Government and the street: A game of brinkmanship with weapons and elections?](#) February 18, 2026

<sup>46</sup> Presidency of the Council of Ministers, [رئيس الجمهورية ترأس جلسة مجلس الوزراء في قصر بعيدا: إعطاء الموظفين بكافة أسلاكهم والمتعاقدين 6 رواتب إضافية مع كامل متماماتها للعسكريين](#) February 16, 2026; SkyNews Arabia, [مرفص: يجب الضغط على إسرائيل لوقف انتهاكاتهما في لبنان](#) February 17, 2026

<sup>47</sup> Lebanese Industry Minister Joe Issa al-Khoury said that the LAF's staffing for the second phase of disarmament is only 30% of the force used in the first phase. It had deployed 10,000 troops south of the Litani.

Nida al-Watan, [عيسى الخوري: الجيش بحاجة إلى شهر لتقييم الانتشار شمال اللبطني والتزام «الحزب» بالدولة يبدأ بتسليم سلاحه](#) February 18, 2026

The National, [By day and by night: Unifil and Lebanese army seek to firm up control of south Lebanon](#) February 21, 2026

<sup>48</sup> L'Orient Today, [Second phase of disarmament plan: Was the international community persuaded?](#) February 19, 2026

<sup>49</sup> L'Orient Today, [Ban on Hezbollah's military activities: Will the army be able to implement the Cabinet decision?](#) March 4, 2026;

Al-Jadeed via X, [@aljadeednews](#) March 2, 2026; Al-Jadeed via X, [@aljadeednews](#) March 2, 2026



- Although the renewed Hezbollah-Israel hostilities prompted the Council of Ministers to task the LAF with immediately seizing Hezbollah's arms, this appears improbable in the near term amid Israel's intensifying bombardment. So far, the LAF has relied on containment measures<sup>50</sup> aimed at preventing the organization from accessing, transporting, or using its arms.
- The LAF announced on March 4 that it had detained 26 people for possessing illicit arms.<sup>51</sup> Such actions are likely to be viewed as more symbolic than substantive by the US and Israel. A concerted LAF effort to seize Hezbollah's heavy arms appears unlikely in the immediate term, especially considering Israel's intensified bombardment.
- Israel's military campaign poses significant, if not insurmountable, challenges to the Lebanese government's March 2 directive to the LAF to stop Hezbollah military operations. The following day, as the Israeli military widened its encroachment on Lebanese territory, the LAF redeployed from the border.<sup>52</sup> This reverses the LAF's achievements in asserting operational control over Lebanese territory south of the Litani and disarming Hezbollah,<sup>53</sup> with the border strip now once again a battlefield between Hezbollah and Israel.

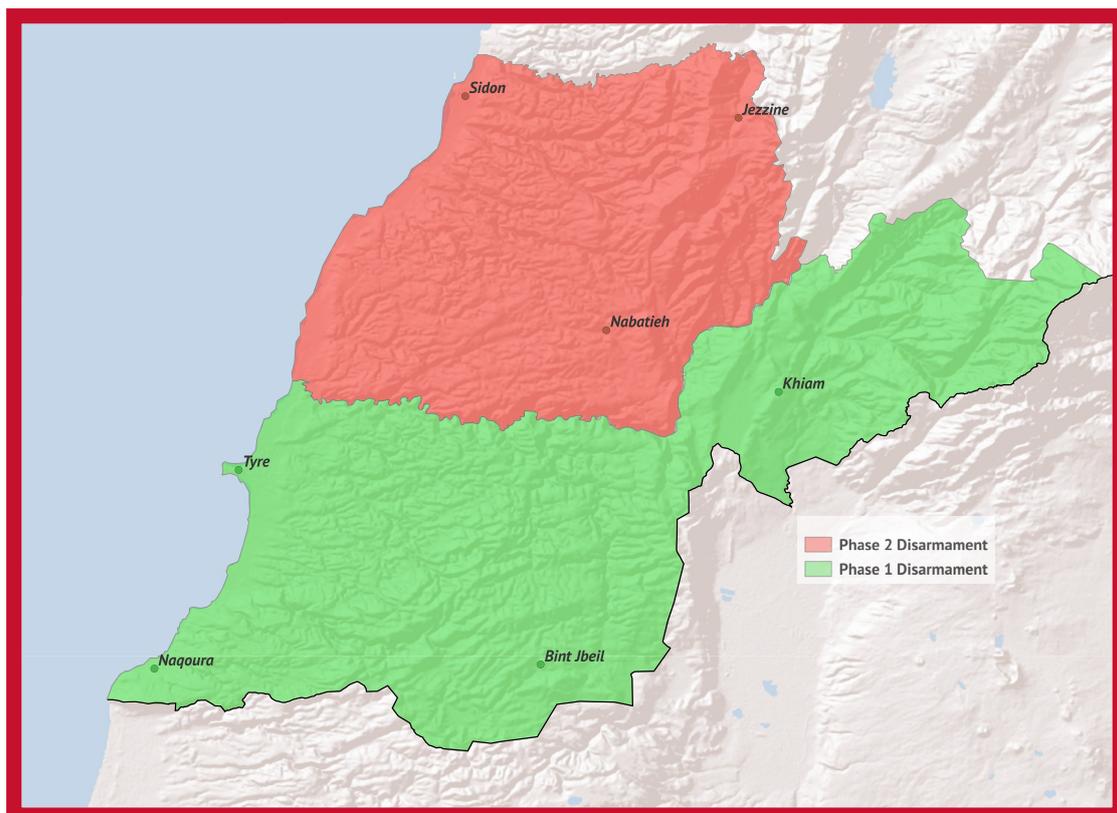


Figure 2: The boundaries of the LAF's zones for disarming non-state arms.

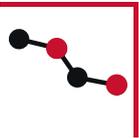
<sup>50</sup> Al-Akhbar, [هيكل يترك الباب مفتوحاً أمام الاتصالات: نحتاج إلى وقت طويل لحصص السلاح | إحياء المبادرات: اتفاق أممي جديد مع «تجميد» سلاح المقاومة](#), February 17, 2026;

L'Orient Today, [Second phase of disarmament plan: Was the international community persuaded?](#) February 19, 2026

<sup>51</sup> Lebanese Armed Forces, [بيان من قيادة الجيش – مديرية التوجيه](#), March 4, 2026

<sup>52</sup> The National, [Lebanese army conducts arrest campaign targeting non-state actors, including Hezbollah](#) March 4, 2026

<sup>53</sup> Lebanese Armed Forces, [تحقيق أهداف المرحلة الأولى من خطة الجيش لحصص السلاح](#), January 8, 2026



## Lebanon is seeking international support to press Israel toward a ceasefire – or at least to show restraint – but such backing appears contingent on stronger measures against Hezbollah.

- On March 3, Aoun told envoys from the US, France, Qatar, Egypt, and Saudi Arabia that the Council of Ministers' decision to ban Hezbollah's military activities was "final and irrevocable," while calling on them to press Israel to halt its military campaign.<sup>54</sup> US Ambassador to Lebanon Michel Issa conveyed Washington's skepticism over Beirut's measures, saying that "the government's position came a little late, and issuing statements is easy, but taking action is more difficult."<sup>55</sup>
- A negotiated end to the Israeli military campaign will depend on US diplomatic efforts and pressure on Tel Aviv, just as in past conflicts. Washington is reportedly seeking further Lebanese Council of Ministers decisions against Hezbollah and the start of swift implementation of its challenging disarmament plans.<sup>56</sup>
- The Council of Ministers has reaffirmed its support for civilian-led talks with Israel and ordered the apprehension of Iran's Islamic Revolutionary Guard Corps (IRGC) operatives.<sup>57</sup> While politically symbolic, neither move is likely to relieve international pressure on Lebanon regarding Hezbollah's arms. Civilian-led talks with Israel, a possible de-escalatory pathway, had a faltering start and were shelved in mid-December. Meanwhile, Lebanon's security services likely lack the resources to apprehend IRGC officers, who are embedded within Hezbollah's military echelon.
- On March 5, France floated a diplomatic initiative for ceasefire,<sup>58</sup> which was reportedly rejected by Israel for falling short of its demand for Hezbollah to publicly abandon and renounce its arsenal.<sup>59</sup> While a broader agreement with Hezbollah regarding its arms appears unlikely for the time being, regional events are unfolding at an unprecedented pace and the resolution of the conflict with Iran might make such a breakthrough possible.
- Amid challenges to securing a ceasefire in the immediate term, Lebanese authorities have entreated Washington to restrain Israel from military escalations. On March 5, Lebanon reportedly asked the US to prevent Israel from targeting the main highway to Beirut's Rafik Hariri International Airport.<sup>60</sup> Even such a limited initiative, far below the threshold of a ceasefire, might be difficult to achieve amid unfolding military escalations between Israel and Hezbollah and regionally.

## Looking Forward

The current conflict is fast-moving and difficult to predict, and will have a profound impact on Lebanon's political situation and its economy. For a closer look at trajectories that the conflict could take over the coming weeks and months, please see LCAT's recent Flash Report, "[Lebanon Conflict Scenario | March 2026](#)".

<sup>54</sup> Lebanese President Joseph Aoun via X, [@LBPresidency](#) March 3, 2026

<sup>55</sup> MTV, [السفير ميشال عيسى: موقف الحكومة جاء متأخراً بعض الشيء وإصدار البيانات سهل أما اتخاذ الإجراءات فهو أكثر صعوبة](#), March 2, 2026

<sup>56</sup> Al-Modon, [لبنان وإيران والحرب البتية: سيناريو هوات الهجوم وفرض الوقائع](#), March 5, 2026;

Nida al-Watan, [«الحزب» يعلن العصيان على الحكومة بـ«الحرب المفتوحة»](#), March 4, 2026

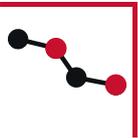
<sup>57</sup> National News Agency, [سلام بعد انتهاء جلسة مجلس الوزراء: حظر فوري لنشاطات حزب الله الأمنية والعسكرية والزامه بتسليم سلاحه وخصر عمله في المجال السياسي](#), March 2, 2026;

Presidency of the Council of Ministers, [الرئيس سلام يتأخر في السراي الحكومي](#), March 5, 2026

<sup>58</sup> French President Emmanuel Macron via X, [@EmmanuelMacron](#) March 5, 2026

<sup>59</sup> L'Orient Today, [Lebanon: Macron pushes for cease-fire, meets Israeli rejection](#) March 5, 2026

<sup>60</sup> LBCI via X, [@LBCI\\_NEWS](#) March 5, 2026



Source: L'Orient Today

# Economic Updates:

## Key Events and Development

### 2026 FEBRUARY

The US Department of the Treasury sanctions the Lebanese-licensed gold trading firm Joud SAL, asserting that it is affiliated with Hezbollah and operating under the umbrella of Al-Qard Al-Hasan.<sup>61</sup>



11

Central Bank Governor Karim Souhaid meets for a second time with French investigative judges heading up a probe into the Lebanese Central Bank.<sup>62</sup>



13

The Council of Ministers approves a 25% gasoline tax, raises public sector wages, and submits a proposal to parliament to increase value-added tax (VAT) from 11% to 12%.



16

Electricite du Liban (EdL) announces that it collected some USD 10 million in arrears and USD 4 million in outstanding fines between April 2025 and January 2026.<sup>63</sup>



18

Lebanon's State Security uncovers USD 500,000 in uncollected fees at Tripoli port, triggering a judicial investigation into a port official and 18 shipping companies for tax evasion and negligence dating back to 2010. Sixteen of those companies have been ordered to settle the outstanding amounts and additional restitution may be ordered.<sup>64</sup>



19

<sup>61</sup> Asharq al-Awsat, [واشنطن تُحيط محاولات «حزب الله» للالتفاف على العقوبات المالية](#), February 11, 2026

<sup>62</sup> L'Orient Today, [Souhaid meets investigating judges again in France](#) February 13, 2026

<sup>63</sup> L'Orient Today, [EDL announces \\$10 million in recovered payment arrears over a 10-month period](#) February 18, 2026

<sup>64</sup> Al-Araby al-Jadeed, [تهرب ضريبي بنصف مليون دولار في مرفأ طرابلس شمالي لبنان](#), February 19, 2026;

National News Agency, [امن الدولة يكشف تهرباً ضريبياً بنصف مليون دولار في مرفأ طرابلس](#), February 19, 2026



## Context/Analysis

### Suboptimal progress hindering International Monetary Fund (IMF) support

#### IMF delivers progress assessment

An IMF delegation visited Beirut from February 10-13 to assess the government's progress on implementing reforms needed to unlock state financial aid. The visit followed the Fund's September 2025 call for quicker and "more ambitious" actions consistent with international and IMF standards.<sup>65,66</sup> Among the most pressing IMF-mandated reforms are a financial restructuring plan, the adoption of a new modernized tax system, and fiscal consolidation.

Despite Lebanese officials' positive assessment of their IMF meetings,<sup>67</sup> the Fund continues to stress the need for reforms in line with international standards that protect small depositors and respect the hierarchy of claims, and not aimed at protecting entrenched interests, including commercial banks and associated political stakeholders.<sup>68</sup> Central to this are the Bank Resolution Law (BRL) and the draft Financial Stabilization and Depositor Recovery (FSDR) law, also known as the Financial Gap Law.<sup>69</sup> The IMF views the current High Banking Authority (HBA) framework under the BRL as needing further refinement,<sup>70</sup> specifically the inclusion of amendments to ensure the HBA's independence from banking lobbies. IMF standards also require that commercial banks bear the primary responsibility for covering losses.<sup>71</sup>

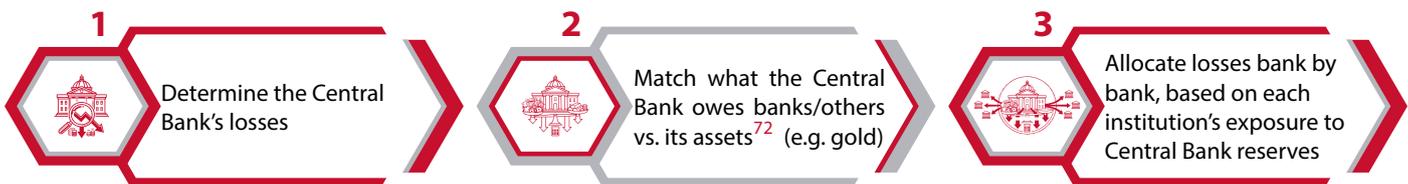


Figure 3: IMF procedure for resolving banking crises

Under IMF and international standards, commercial banks are the first to absorb losses using their remaining capital and shareholders' equity (see Figure 3). Banks that are unable to do so would be liquidated or merged. If banks' capital proves insufficient to cover depositor losses, additional instruments – such as swaps or maturity bonds – would be deployed to cover the remainder.

Some commercial banks are already lobbying against the current version of the FSDR law, and should the government adopt the IMF's principles, the banks may escalate their efforts to obstruct legislation and implementation.

<sup>65</sup> The International Monetary Fund, [IMF Staff Concludes Visit to Lebanon](#) September 26, 2025

<sup>66</sup> The International Monetary Fund, [IMF Staff Concludes Visit to Lebanon](#) February 13, 2026

<sup>67</sup> Asharq al-Awsat, [«صندوق النقد» يبحث في بيروت خطوات تؤدي إلى اتفاق معه](#), February 10, 2026

<sup>68</sup> The International Monetary Fund, [IMF Staff Concludes Visit to Lebanon](#) February 13, 2026

<sup>69</sup> In its current version, the FSRD would allow small depositors to retrieve up to USD 100,000 in 4 years, while larger depositors would receive an initial tranche of USD 100,000 in the same 4 years, with the remainder paid out in the form of long-term bonds of up to 20 years' maturity. Mercy Corps Lebanon, [January Crisis Update](#) February 6, 2026

<sup>70</sup> The authority overseeing Lebanon's Bank Resolution Law (BRL) is the High Banking Authority (HBA). This two-tier body, established under the 2025 law, handles the restructuring and liquidation of banks. It includes a first chamber for sanctions (convened by the Central Bank Governor, with full voting for the Banking Control Commission (BCC) president) and a second chamber for restructuring decisions (where the BCC president advises without voting). L'Orient Today, [Parliamentary subcommittee greenlights bank resolution law](#) July 21, 2025

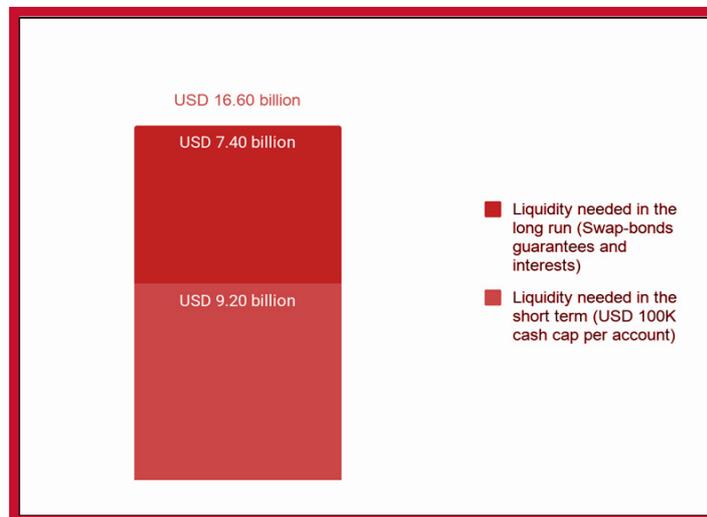
<sup>71</sup> L'Orient Today, ['Illegitimate' deposits: IMF set to impose its logic](#) February 13, 2026

<sup>72</sup> Central Bank assets include foreign reserves, precious metals, shares in other institutions, and investments in financial tools.

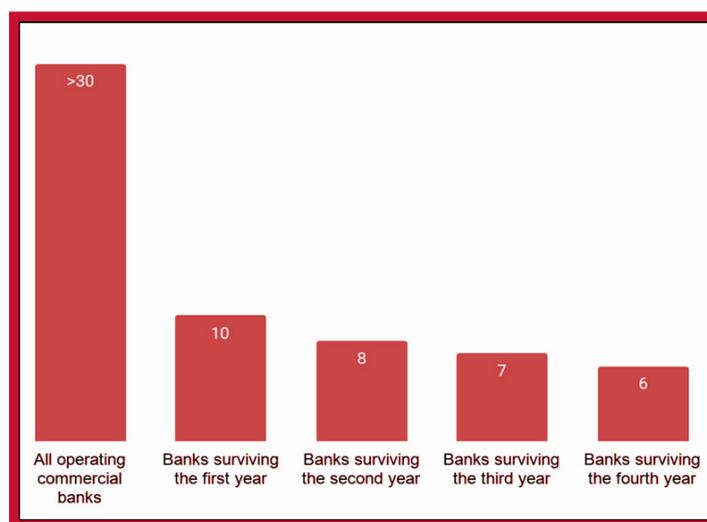


### The response by the Association of Banks in Lebanon

Seeking support for their official positions on the current restructuring plans, the Association of Banks in Lebanon (ABL) commissioned a confidential assessment of plans to restructure the financial sector, which they would presumably use as a basis for lobbying efforts.<sup>73</sup> The study, carried out by the Ankura Consulting Group, found that as few as 6 out of some 30 banks would survive the implementation of the FSRD in its current form. Banks are preparing to aggressively push for extending the repayment period beyond 4 years, adjusting the cash returns caps below USD 100,000, and issuing claims on Central Bank reserves. They may also insist on liquidating Central Bank gold reserves to cover deposit recovery costs – an approach that the IMF would accept only if the proceeds were to be invested in revenue-generating tools or assets.<sup>74</sup> The following figures, based on the report commissioned from Ankura, show how many commercial banks would survive implementation of the current version of the FSDR and what the liquidity costs would be.



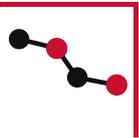
**Figure 4:** Liquidity needed from commercial banks to cover the cost of trapped deposits under the proposed FSRD Law.  
Source: Ankura's [report](#) on commercial bank restructuring.



**Figure 5:** Number of banks capable of meeting their liquidity obligations within four years of implementing the Financial Gap law.  
Source: Ankura's [report](#) on commercial bank restructuring.

<sup>73</sup> L'Orient Today, [Only a handful of banks would survive restructuring, a study commissioned by ABL says](#) February 20, 2026

<sup>74</sup> L'Orient Today, [Financial gap: IMF partially opens the door to a potential sale of a part of BDL's gold reserve](#) February 17, 2026



## Lebanese leaders face tight IMF deadline

The IMF has given Lebanese authorities two months to either complete the required reforms or formulate a comprehensive plan to see through fiscal and tax reforms, bank restructuring, and recovering deposits.<sup>75</sup> For various reasons, however, the government is unlikely to achieve this within this timeframe. Although the 2026 Budget Law has already passed, the FSRD is being reviewed and amended by the parliament and amendments to the FSDR draft law may not align with the IMF's vision. More generally, however, although calls for tax reform are not a major point of political contention in Lebanon, passing such reforms would likely represent a challenge for the Council of Ministers and parliament – successive governments have failed to implement structural tax reforms in line with global standards.

In the short term, political efforts will likely be directed toward resolving the banking crisis, funding public sector salaries, disarming Hezbollah, and the coming parliamentary elections. Nevertheless, Lebanese officials may still be able to make a strong showing by April if Finance Minister Yassine Jaber delivers on his pledge to finalize a five-year program by the next IMF visit – one that includes draft legislation and substantive reforms to the country's fiscal and financial systems.<sup>76</sup>

## New regressive taxes impacting the most vulnerable

### Promised public sector salary increases

On February 16, the Council of Ministers approved a “temporary” pay increase for both active and retired public sector employees and outlined new indirect tax measures to finance the measure.<sup>77</sup> Starting March 1, civil servants and retirees will receive a supplement equal to six times their pre-crisis base salary<sup>78</sup> in addition to supplements paid out over the past six years. This brings their salaries to the equivalent of 20 times their pre-2019 base salaries (at the LBP/USD 1,500 exchange rate). These supplements are capped at LBP 50 million or USD 560 and will not be factored in when calculating pensions. The government has previously promised wage and pension increases to both groups, a decision at odds with IMF recommendations.<sup>79</sup> The Gathering of Public Sector Unions called on the government and parliament to increase wages beyond the approved caps.<sup>80</sup> Before the February 16 decision, the unions demanded that base salaries be immediately increased to at least 50% of their pre-crisis levels, followed by 10% increases every six months.<sup>81</sup>

<sup>75</sup> Asharq al-Awsat, [النقد الدولي يمهل لبنان شهرين لاستكمال موجبات الاتفاق معه](#) February 14, 2026

<sup>76</sup> *ibid.*

<sup>77</sup> Presidency of the Council of Ministers, [جلسة 16 شباط 2026](#) February 16, 2026

<sup>78</sup> LBP-denominated and indexed to the LBP/USD 1,500 exchange rate. These base salaries now amount to only 2% of their pre-crisis levels. However, civil servants are receiving temporary benefits and bonuses. These additions are often multiplications of base salaries.

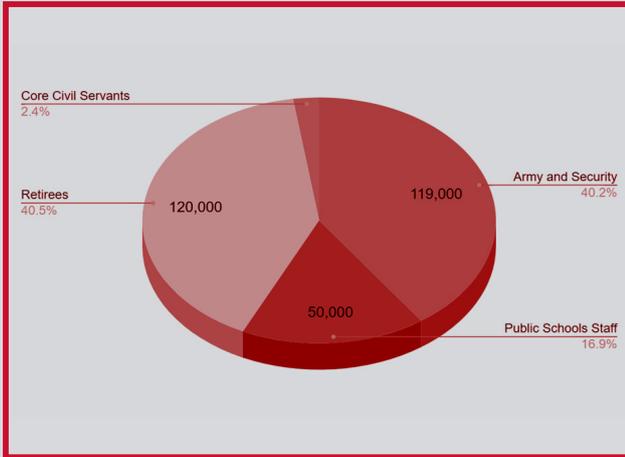
<sup>79</sup> The IMF is calling on the government to reduce expenditures, including public-service wages.

<sup>80</sup> L'Orient Today, [Public sector unions warn of escalation over salary adjustments](#) February 13, 2026

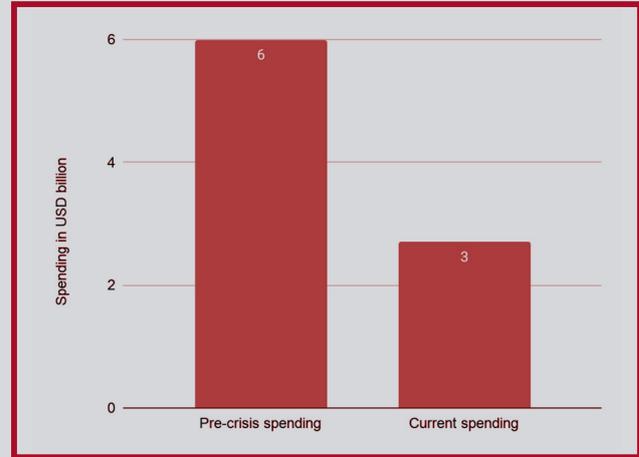
<sup>81</sup> Asharq al-Awsat, [الحكومة اللبنانية بين مطرقة زيادة الرواتب وسندان الخزينة المنهكة](#) February 1, 2026



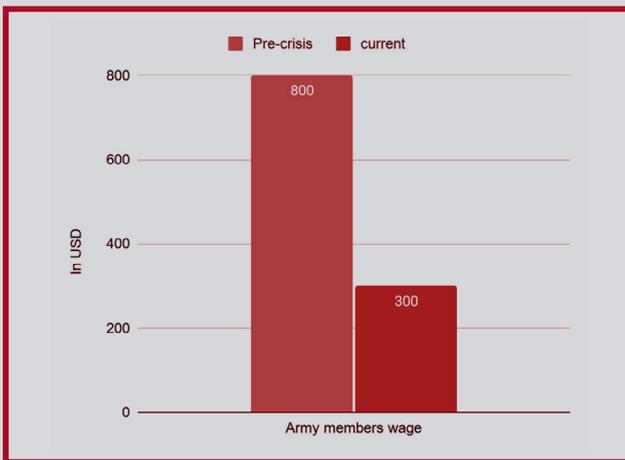
## The public sector in six years of crisis



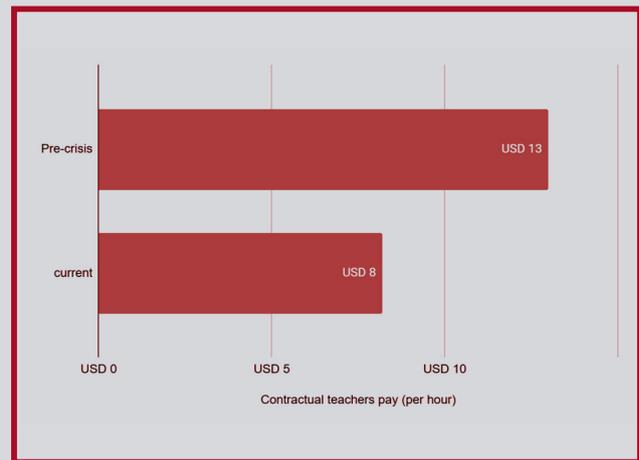
**Figure 6:** Breakdown of current public-sector employees and retirees.  
Source: [Office of the Prime Minister](#).



**Figure 7:** Current and pre-2019 wage bills (Pre-2019 exchange rate: LBP/USD 1,500, 2026 exchange rate: LBP/USD 89,500).  
Source: [LBCL](#).



**Figure 8:** Current and pre-2019 LAF wages (Pre-2019 exchange rate: LBP/USD 1,500, 2026 exchange rate: LBP/USD 89,500).  
Source: [LCAT Desk Review](#).



**Figure 9:** Contractual public schools teachers' current and pre-2019 wages.  
Source: [The Contractual Teachers' League in Lebanese Primary Public Schools \(CTLP\)](#).

## Wage increase funding places burden on the most vulnerable

To fund civil service wage increases, which are estimated to be between USD 620-800 million annually,<sup>82</sup> the government plans to implement new indirect taxes. Finance Minister Yassine Jaber is arguing that wages already account for more than 50%<sup>83</sup> of public spending and that Lebanon must avoid "repeating the mistakes of the past"<sup>84</sup> i.e. increasing public sector salaries without first securing revenues to cover them. Two taxes were implemented by decree: excise duties on gasoline (a total of LBP 320,000 per 20 liters of 95- and 98-octane fuel) and new taxes on shipping containers (USD 50 on standard-sized containers and USD 80 on larger ones). The government has also proposed increasing the value-added tax (VAT) from 11% to 12%. VAT is applied to items such as water and electricity consumption, telecommunications, and luxury goods and services, but exports and some transport operations are exempt.

<sup>82</sup> National News Agency, [جاءت: 50% من الموازنة بوابت وكان لا بد من اتخاذ خطوات لتأمين الأموال الضريبة على القيمة المضافة تحتاج إلى قانون ولن تطبق فوراً](#), February 17, 2026

<sup>83</sup> *ibid.*

<sup>84</sup> The Finance Minister Yassine Jaber refers to the 2017 public salary scale adjustment, in the leadup to the 2019 economic crisis. [L'Orient Today, Public-sector wage increase: Who will foot the bill?](#) February 17, 2026



The increase awaits parliamentary debate. Strong public and union backlash, including protests and a public-sector strike, has framed the VAT and fuel tax hikes as regressive and driving inflation, especially given weak price-monitoring and high tax evasion rates.<sup>85</sup> The government is weighing whether to drop the 1-point VAT hike in favor of alternative funding mechanisms, though no final decision has been announced as of publication.<sup>86</sup>

The government is also stepping up collection of existing taxes<sup>87</sup> via enhanced enforcement on customs evasion, maritime public property fees, quarry regulation, and tighter controls to prevent smuggling at illegal crossings.<sup>88</sup> Nonetheless, these plans lack a clear methodology to quantify projections and results, or even to address tax imbalances (see callout).

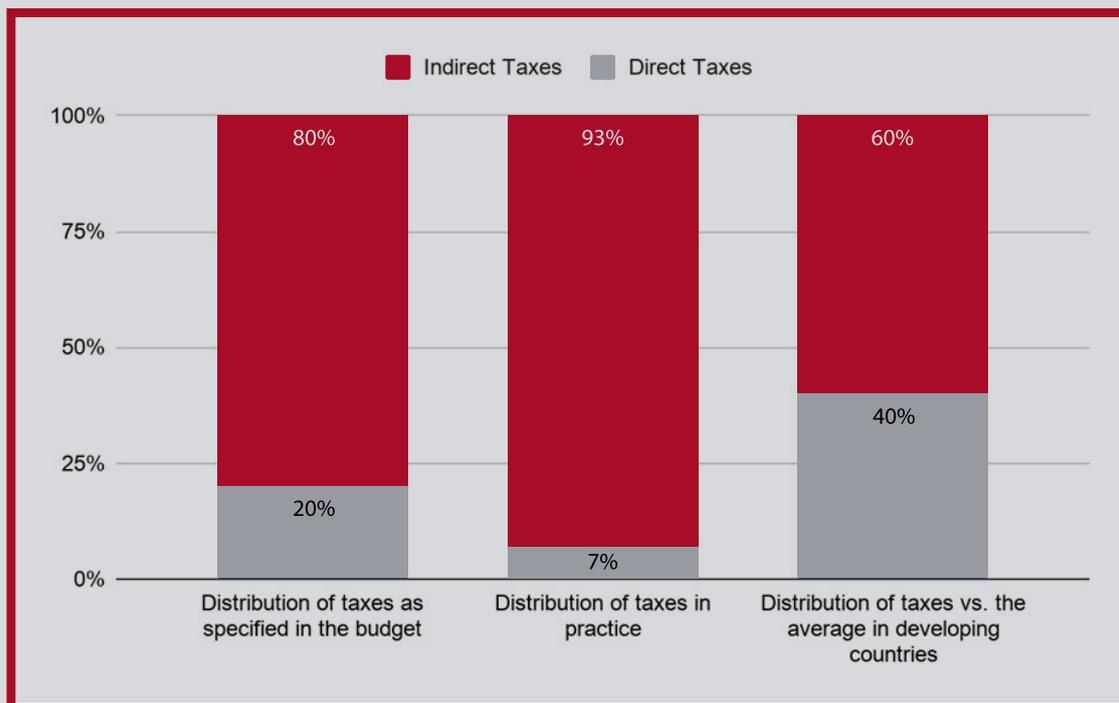


Figure 10: Distribution of the Tax Base in Lebanon.  
Source: LCAT Desk Review

This figure shows the discrepancies between Lebanon’s tax system and those in developing countries. In practice, Lebanon’s government has a substandard tax collection rate and tax evasion rates are high. As a result, indirect taxes such as VAT account for a larger share of the tax base than both the average in developing countries and as set out in Lebanon’s national budget.

An improved tax system would prioritize direct tax collection from individual and corporate revenues over indirect taxes, which place an equal financial burden on all earners. To boost tax revenues without overburdening average or vulnerable consumers, strategic tax and fiscal reforms in line with the IMF recommendations are needed.

<sup>85</sup> Al-Jazeera, [Lebanon’s tax hikes draw anger from economically frustrated public](#) February 23, 2026

<sup>86</sup> Annahar, [PM Salam splits the unions to finance salary increase for military personnel](#) March 3, 2026

<sup>87</sup> Asharq al-Awsat, [وزير المال اللبناني يبتز حزمة الضرائب: الرواتب تلتهم نصف الموازنة](#) February 17, 2026

<sup>88</sup> The government is reportedly planning a crackdown on tax and customs evasion. For the first time, the government has issued collection orders against illegal quarries, a 17% tax on companies that benefited from the Central Bank’s Sayrafa platform on related profits, and an intention to address tax exemptions on 30% of imports that could generate revenues if re-applied.



The new taxes will disproportionately burden consumers, who bear the brunt of resulting inflation. This approach fails to tackle the root cause of the government’s budget woes: chronic fiscal inefficiency. Worse, it perpetuates a vicious cycle: increased public sector salaries prompt higher taxes, driving up prices and eroding those very salary gains. Formal and informal low-wage private workers suffer most, with wages stagnant while inflation erodes their purchasing power.

Fuel prices rose by 23–25% on February 16, a figure that will fluctuate given that the tax is a fixed amount rather than pegged to fuel prices. Given the Lebanon’s dependence on imports, plans to raise VAT could, together with the fuel tax hike, boost inflation by 3–5 percentage points.<sup>89</sup> To put the immediate effect of the fuel tax into perspective, LCAT reviews what will change for the public transportation sector in the following case study:

Taxi drivers will need to spend roughly USD 160 more per month on fuel due to the tax increases.<sup>90</sup> While it remains unclear how this will affect the transportation sector in Lebanon, communal taxis<sup>91</sup>(Service) reportedly have already adjusted their rates to factor in the new fuel taxes, without waiting for a unified directive from the Ministry of Public Works and Transportation.<sup>92</sup>

Before the Fuel Tax	After the Fuel Tax
Estimated Service driver monthly fuel expenditure before the tax on gasoline <sup>93</sup>	Estimated Service driver monthly fuel expenditure after the tax on gasoline
USD 640	USD 800
Old Service ride price	New Service ride price as reported by some drivers
LBP 200,000 (~USD 2.22)	LBP 300,000 (~USD 3.33)
Old monthly transportation costs for a working individual using Service <sup>94</sup>	New monthly transportation costs for a working individual using Service
LBP 8 million (~USD 88.89)	LBP 12 million (~USD 133.33)

Source: LCAT Desk Review

*Note: Monthly transportation costs for a working individual using the new rates account for around 43% of the current official minimum wage.*

<sup>89</sup> L’Orient Today, [Public-sector wage increase: Who will foot the bill?](#) February 17, 2026

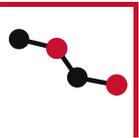
<sup>90</sup> National News Agency, [جمعية المستهلك: الضرائب الجديدة تعبير عن سقوط إدعاءات الإصلاح وعلى الحكومة إما تصحيح المسار وأما الرحيل](#) February 17, 2026

<sup>91</sup> Shared taxi rides in Lebanon are known as a “Service”. The price of one Service ride is generally unified among drivers and officially fixed by the Ministry of Public Works and Transportation.

<sup>92</sup> MTV Lebanon, [Watch: After Fuel Hike, Chaos Erupts and Taxi Drivers Urged to Act February](#) February 19, 2026

<sup>93</sup> LCAT estimated monthly fuel costs for taxi and Service drivers based on the extra costs of fuel per month as reported by the Consumer Association (USD 160).

<sup>94</sup> This assumes transportation to and from work/school for an individual, 5 days a week for a month (2 rides per day).



Prior to February’s tax increase, prices reportedly increased by 10-15%.<sup>95</sup> The Economy Minister has launched the “Sawa bel-Siyam” (Together through Fasting) initiative aimed at curbing food prices in the largest supermarkets during Ramadan through consumer protection inspections<sup>96</sup> and wholesale price controls.<sup>97</sup> Given persistent price hikes since September 2024 and the current regional conflict, however, such measures are unlikely to either lower the Consumer Price Index (CPI) or cause prices to fall.

Sawa bel-Siyam Initiative			
Price reduction <b>15 %</b> starting at	Over <b>21</b> Food Items	At <b>27</b> Supermarkets and franchises	In <b>180</b> Retail selling points across the country

**Title:** Overview of the “Sawa bel-Siyam” initiative by the Ministry of Economy.  
**Source:** [Press release by the Minister of Economy Amer Bsar](#).

## Looking Forward

The current conflict in Lebanon comes as the country has barely begun recovering from the previous Israel-Hezbollah 66-Day War that caused USD 6.8 billion in damages and USD 7.2 billion in economic losses.<sup>98</sup> Access to liquidity, public services, and overall quality of life have worsened since the last war, particularly for displaced communities who were the most burdened by lost jobs, drained savings, and financial losses.

Lebanon will likely experience economic repercussions that vary based on local and regional factors, the conflict’s trajectory, and its duration. The following table summarizes the key economic dynamics and repercussions of three possible conflict scenarios, which are analyzed in depth in LCAT’s latest Lebanon [Conflict Scenario Report](#) (March 2026):

<sup>95</sup> The New Arab, [ارتفاع الأسعار يرهق اللبنانيين في رمضان](#) February 15, 2026

<sup>96</sup> National News Agency, [وزارة الاقتصاد تواصل جولات «سوا بالصيام» في النبطية لضبط الأسعار وسلامة الغذاء](#) February 16, 2026

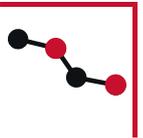
<sup>97</sup> National News Agency, [وزارة الاقتصاد أطلقت مبادرة «سوا بالصيام» لتخفيض أسعار مواد غذائية أساسية](#) February 13, 2026

<sup>98</sup> The World Bank, [Lebanon’s Recovery and Reconstruction Needs Estimated at US\\$11 Billion](#) March 7, 2025



<b>Light economic impact due to a short-term escalation</b>	
<p>Changes in economic indicators are limited to affected areas. Except for tourism and southern agriculture, economic activity proceeds almost normally further from the concentrated attacks.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● Slowdown of economic activity nationwide due to logistical hurdles and closures</li> <li>● Severe impacts to economic activity in southern and eastern Lebanon</li> <li>● Severe impacts to agriculture and tourism sectors</li> <li>● Limited impacts nationwide due to hike in fuel prices from regional conflict</li> <li>● Fuel, foodstuffs, and medicine availability through stable import facilities</li> <li>● Minimal inflation in both conflict-stricken and host areas</li> <li>● Exchange rate stability due to controlled LBP liquidity and limited government spending</li> </ul>
<b>Severe economic impact due to a medium-term escalation</b>	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Increasing unemployment rates due to fewer economic activities in affected areas and their surroundings affect cash liquidity among IDPs</li> <li>- An acute depreciation in available currency due to emergency government spending and hyperinflation causes a catastrophic drop in purchasing power and increases poverty among displaced populations.</li> <li>- Long-term IDPs experience a drop in purchasing power as their savings dwindle</li> <li>- As IDP numbers rise, economic tensions increase between displaced persons and host communities with limited resources.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● Significant economic losses nationwide due to decreasing output and unattended damaged infrastructure</li> <li>● Continuing inflation in host areas</li> <li>● Prices of essential resources increase due to declining stocks and import barriers</li> <li>● Minimal fluctuation in the LBP/USD exchange rate should the government mobilize LBP funds on emergency spending.</li> </ul>
<b>Catastrophic economic impact due to a major escalation amid worsening regional conflict</b>	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- A major drop in GDP severely worsens economic and financial conditions for non-displaced households</li> <li>- Peaking intercommunal economic tensions over tightening resources lead to opportunistic and discriminatory parallel markets</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● Severe slowdown of economic activity nationwide</li> <li>● Absence of economic activity in southern and eastern Lebanon</li> <li>● Nationwide resource deficiency caused by damaged critical import and trade infrastructure</li> <li>● Acute inflation due to sharply declining resources</li> <li>● Emergence of parallel markets for essential minimal survival resources</li> <li>● Acute fluctuations in the LBP/USD exchange rate should the government increase emergency LBP spending</li> </ul>

*Table 1. Economic impact based on conflict scenarios.  
Source: LCAT*



Source: AFP

# Political Updates:

## Key Events and Development

2026

FEBRUARY

Lebanon's military court finds alleged drug kingpin Noah Zeaiter guilty of four misdemeanors and sentences him to one month in prison.<sup>99</sup>



3

Prime Minister Salam conducts a two-day visit to southern Lebanon.<sup>100</sup>



7-8

Kuwait places eight Lebanese Hospitals on its list of organizations, companies, and financial institutions affiliated with terrorist organizations.<sup>101</sup>



8

A delegation from the Lebanese Forces – an opponent of the overthrown Assad regime – visits Damascus to meet with the Syrian Minister of Information.<sup>102</sup>



12

The Internal Security Forces conduct a raid in Beirut's Chiyah area targeting illegal arms trafficking. The operation results in multiple arrests and weapons seizures, is aimed at combating organized crime, and is not officially linked to any political party or a broader disarmament effort.<sup>103</sup>



13

Former Prime Minister Saad Hariri announces that the Future Movement may run in the next national election.<sup>104</sup>



14

Eyad Alhazza officially assumes the office of the Syrian Chargé d'Affaires in Beirut, filling a diplomatic gap dating back to 2022.<sup>105</sup>



24

MP Paula Yacoubian files an appeal with the State Council to annul the Lebanon-Cyprus maritime border agreement, arguing that it bypassed the required parliamentary approval.<sup>106</sup>



27

<sup>99</sup> Asharq al-Awsat, لبنان: قطار محاكمات «إمبراطور المخدرات» ينطلق بأحكام مخففة, February 3, 2026

<sup>100</sup> L'Orient Today, Salam, on 2nd day in south Lebanon villages, pledges infrastructure rehabilitation February 8, 2026;

L'Orient Today, Salam warmly welcomed in the south, pledges reconstruction February 7, 2026

<sup>101</sup> Asharq al-Awsat, الكويت تُدرج 8 مستشفيات لبنانية على قائمة الإرهاب, February 8, 2026

<sup>102</sup> Asharq al-Awsat, القوات اللبنانية في دمشق: مرحلة جديدة من العلاقة مع سوريا, February 15, 2026

<sup>103</sup> Asharq al-Awsat, إجراءات أمنية لبنانية لتجفيف مصادر السلاح غير الشرعي, February 13, 2026

<sup>104</sup> The National News, Saad Hariri suggests return of Future Movement to run in Lebanon's elections February 15, 2026

<sup>105</sup> Eyad Alhazza via X, @AlhazzaEya30821 February 24, 2026

<sup>106</sup> National News Agency, يعقوبيان: تقدمت بمراجعة طعن أمام شوري الدولة لإبطال مرسوم اتفاق ترسيم الحدود البحرية بين لبنان وقبرص, February 27, 2026



## Context/Analysis

### Lebanese-Syrian Relations

On February 6, Lebanon and Syria signed an agreement to repatriate over 300 convicted Syrian inmates from Lebanese prisons.<sup>107</sup> Officials in both Damascus and Beirut characterized the deal as an initial step toward rebuilding bilateral relations. This action paves the way for cooperation on other issues such as border demarcation, trade, security, refugee returns, and cases of missing Lebanese nationals believed to have been seized and imprisoned in Syria under the Assad regime.<sup>108</sup>

Deputy Prime Minister Tarek Mitri connected the agreement to broader cooperation on refugee returns, noting that 550,000 Syrian refugees had been removed from United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR) records following verified and presumed returns.<sup>109</sup> Many Lebanese political leaders now view improved bilateral relations as a pathway to facilitating large-scale refugee repatriation.<sup>110</sup>

### Lebanese Prisoners

Renewed engagement between Beirut and Damascus, particularly over the prisoners' file, has placed a spotlight on the situation of Lebanese inmates. Most of these prisoners are Sunni Muslims from Saida, Tripoli, and Bekaa and were detained over their alleged involvement with armed groups during the Syrian uprising. Perceived disparity in treatment between Syrian and Lebanese prisoners prompted hunger strikes from prisoners and protests from their families across Lebanon.<sup>111</sup> The Lebanese military court has since moved to expedite these long-delayed cases and hearings, reprioritize files, and review release requests in a bid to address prolonged pretrial detention. The acceleration, which judicial sources attribute to recent appointments, is meant to reduce prison overcrowding and respond to mounting pressure from detainees' families.<sup>112</sup>

However, activists note that expedited trials affect only 30 to 40 unconvicted detainees, while around 120 have already received "harsh" sentences including life imprisonment.<sup>113</sup> Many detainees argue that their arrests and trials – between 2012 and 2016 – were politically motivated, claiming that they were prosecuted for supporting the Syrian opposition and convicted of terrorism charges despite not fighting the LAF.<sup>114</sup> With the shift in Syria's political landscape, the detainees and their families are demanding retrials as well as passage of a law that reduces required time served by half and replaces life sentences and death penalties with fixed-term imprisonment.<sup>115</sup>

<sup>107</sup> The Associated Press, [Deal signed for Lebanon to transfer 300 Syrian prisoners to their home country](#) February 6, 2026

<sup>108</sup> Anadolu Ajansi, ['We're building relations of trust and shared interest with Syria,' Lebanon's deputy premier says](#) February 17, 2026;

Al-Thawra al-Souriya, [الدوحة تجدد دعمها لسوريا وترحب بخطوات المصالحة الوطنية - صحيفة الثورة السورية](#) February 25, 2026

<sup>109</sup> World Food Program, [WFP Lebanon Country Brief, February 2026](#) February 18, 2026

<sup>110</sup> The New Arab, [Will a prisoner deal thaw relations between Lebanon and Syria?](#) February 19, 2026;

Anadolu Ajansi, ['We're building relations of trust and shared interest with Syria,' Lebanon's deputy premier says](#) February 17, 2026

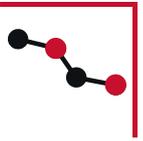
<sup>111</sup> Almodon, [حراك الإسلاميين: «العدالة الانتقالية» أولاً في لبنان والخارج](#) February 22, 2026

<sup>112</sup> Asharq al-Awsat, [القضاء اللبناني يسرع إجراءات البت بملفات الموقوفين الإسلاميين](#) February 23, 2026

<sup>113</sup> Lebanon Debate, [تجركات عاجلة في ملف الموقوفين الإسلاميين... خطوة واحدة فقط تكفي الجمود](#) February 25, 2026

<sup>114</sup> Almodon, [حراك الإسلاميين: «العدالة الانتقالية» أولاً في لبنان والخارج](#) February 22, 2026

<sup>115</sup> Lebanon Debate, [تجركات عاجلة في ملف الموقوفين الإسلاميين... خطوة واحدة فقط تكفي الجمود](#) February 25, 2026



## Looking Forward

### Potential Extension of the Parliament's Mandate

In preparation for a plenary session, scheduled for March 9,<sup>116</sup> Parliament Speaker Nabih Berri called a meeting of the Bureau of the Chamber of Deputies on March 6 to discuss a draft law addressing postponement of elections and extending current parliamentary terms by two years.<sup>117</sup> The move signals that the draft law could soon be put up for debate and a vote. A precedent already exists for such a move, as the parliament previously extended its mandate on three occasions, each time using security concerns, among other factors, as a justification. During this two-year hiatus, a new electoral law could be passed and discussions held on full implementation of the Taif Agreement.<sup>118</sup>

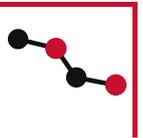
In the event the parliament's term is extended, it would effectively "freeze" the current political configuration and keep Prime Minister Nawaf Salam's government in power longer than it would have had elections been held in May.

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<sup>116</sup> Almodon, [جلسة عامة الاثنين والهيئة تجتمع الجمعة: البرلمان يمدد لنفسه؟](#) March 5, 2026

<sup>117</sup> *ibid*

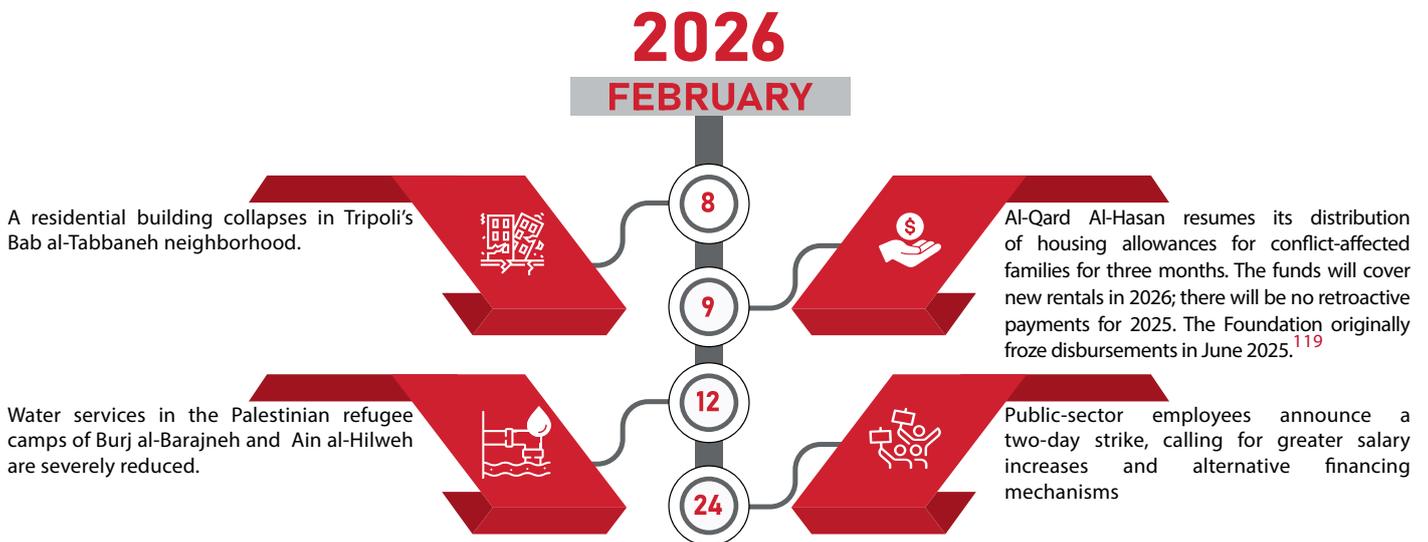
<sup>118</sup> Key Informant Interview with Political and Electoral Expert Dr. Chantal Sarkis, held on February 27, 2026



Source: AFP

# Access to Services Updates:

## Key Events and Development



<sup>119</sup> Annahar, [القرض الحسن تستأنف دفع تعويضات «بدل الإيواء الجديد»... ماذا عن الترميم والأثاث؟](#) February 6, 2026; L'Orient Today, [Al-Qard al-Hasan resumes housing aid payments for three months](#) February 6, 2026



## Context/Analysis Services

### Water crisis in two Palestinian camps

The Palestinian refugee camp of Burj al-Barajneh is facing acute water shortages due to generator failures and disputes between United Nations Relief and Works Agency (UNRWA) and local committees over repair costs and fuel provisioning. Residents report that the available water is highly saline, untested, and the source of health complications, forcing families to spend more than USD 100 per month to purchase fresh water. In the Ain al-Hilweh camp, the water supply was also reduced to three hours per day due to fuel shortages.<sup>120</sup>

### Public Sector and Union reactions to the tax Increase

On February 24, the Association of Public Administration Employees launched a two-day strike rejecting a sixfold salary increase approved by the Council of Ministers. The Association is demanding a tenfold wage increase, higher transport allowances, and a four-day work week.<sup>121</sup> They criticized the decision to finance the raise through increased taxes and official fees, arguing it would exceed the salary cost itself.<sup>122</sup> The Cabinet's decision also sparked broader opposition by unions and the public – several demonstrations were held and roads across Beirut in response.<sup>123</sup>

### Deadly Building Collapse in Tripoli:

On February 8, a residential building collapsed in the Tripoli neighborhood of Bab al-Tabbaneh, killing 14 and injuring 8. The collapse, which came on the heels of another collapse only two weeks earlier, triggered protests and condemnation from political and religious figures. In response, the government ordered the evacuation of 114 at-risk buildings within one month, that housing allowances be provided for affected families, and the opening of temporary shelter centers. Notably, the building that collapsed on February 8 had not been formally placed on the list of at-risk structures. Survivors stated that residents had twice requested municipal inspections due to widening cracks in the building, but these were not carried out, reportedly due to backlogs of similar complaints.<sup>124</sup>

Authorities tasked ministries<sup>125</sup> with registering families displaced by the evacuation order in the Aman program, covering medical expenses, reinforcing or demolishing structures, and inspecting infrastructure networks.<sup>126</sup> Municipal officials estimated that between 700 and 1,000 buildings require inspection, with approximately 980 families – around 4,000 people – threatened by damaged structures across Bab al-Tabaneh, Jabal Mohsen, Dahr al-Mugar, Zahriya, and other neighborhoods. By February 26, authorities had evacuated 229 families from 21 buildings, placed 64 families in temporary shelters, and begun work to reinforce nine buildings.<sup>127</sup>

<sup>120</sup> Al-Araby al-Jadeed, لبنان: أزمة مياه في مخيمين فلسطينيين, February 12, 2026

<sup>121</sup> Anadolu Ajansi, لبنان... موظفو القطاع العام يعلنون الإضراب الثلاثاء والأربعاء, February 24, 2026

<sup>122</sup> Lebanon24, إضراب موظفي الإدارة العامة اليوم وغدا... والأسعار تآكل التصحيح النسبي في الأجور, February 24, 2026

<sup>123</sup> Al-Araby al-Jadeed, اللبنانيون في الشارع مجدداً اعتراضاً على رفع المحروقات والضرائب, February 17, 2026

<sup>124</sup> Legal Agenda, إاضحية في انهيار مبنى آخر: طرابلس تنتظر العدالة وتنفيذ خطة الحكومة, February 10, 2026

<sup>125</sup> Education Minister Rima Karami announced the completion of an assessment to determine whether schools in the area meet required safety standards.

<sup>126</sup> Legal Agenda, إاضحية في انهيار مبنى آخر: طرابلس تنتظر العدالة وتنفيذ خطة الحكومة, February 10, 2026

<sup>127</sup> L'Orient Today, Government orders evacuation of 114 buildings in Tripoli after collapse kills 14, February 9, 2026

<sup>128</sup> Anadolu Ajansi, طرابلس اللبنانية.. ميان متداعية تهدد حياة المواطنين, February 26, 2026



Despite two collapses within two weeks, many families have refused to relocate to designated shelters.<sup>128</sup> State housing allowances of USD 1,000 total for three months fall short of covering typical costs, with landlords demanding USD 300 to USD 500 per month with six months' rent paid in advance in addition to bills, with high unemployment and poverty making even subsidized relocation unaffordable.<sup>129</sup> This shortfall is compounded by a lack of crisis-induced rent price regulation, echoing circumstances during the 2024 Hezbollah-Israeli.<sup>130</sup>

Bab al-Tabbaneh and adjacent neighborhoods such as Jabal Mohsen – long marked by recurrent armed clashes, entrenched poverty, and waves of rural migration – comprise 60-70-year-old concrete buildings constructed under weak engineering oversight, many of which have been informally expanded. Exposure to conflict and seismic activity, water seepage into foundations, and inadequate maintenance have accelerated structural deterioration. Meanwhile, most tenants in structurally unsound buildings are protected by rent control, meaning many landlords cannot fund repairs using rental income alone.<sup>131</sup> These systematic factors, combined with an exploitative rental market and reactive, inadequate, and overdue state assistance that fails to address root causes, have forced many vulnerable households to accept that unsafe housing is the only alternative to homelessness.

## Looking Forward

### IDPs, Emergency Response, and Resource Strains

Already hundreds of thousands of people have been displaced from their homes following Israeli evacuation orders for all of southern Lebanon and the southern suburbs of Beirut. The state response has been hampered by the unprecedented scale and pace of evacuation orders. Within days, Israeli warnings expanded from more than 50 villages in southern Lebanon to over 100 villages across the South and Bekaa, before extending on March 6 to large parts of Beirut's southern suburbs, affecting an area home to more than 700,000 residents.<sup>132</sup> The escalation is expected to disproportionately affect migrant workers as well as Syrian and Palestinian refugees, who were largely excluded from 2024 government aid efforts.<sup>133</sup>

During the 66-Day War, the Lebanese state converted approximately 60% of public schools into communal shelters,<sup>134</sup> interrupting the education of some 2 million children.<sup>135</sup> The Ministry of Education is taking similar action during the current conflict, designating about 900 public schools as potential collective shelters – some 73% of all public schools, of which 325 (26%) are already in use as shelters.<sup>136</sup> Many IDPs opt to rent private accommodation, but given the strain that had on their savings during the 2024, many families will be forced to move to collective shelters, placing additional pressure on public services and resources in host communities.

<sup>128</sup> Authorities also opened the Hospitality Institute in Mina, which can accommodate around 40 families, and directed some displaced residents to the Quality Inn at the Rashid Karami International Exhibition Center.

Legal Agenda, [إضحية في انهيار مبنى آخر: طرابلس تنتظر العدالة وتنفيذ خطة الحكومة](#), February 10, 2026

<sup>129</sup> Anadolu Ajansi, [طرابلس اللبنانية.. ميان متداعية تهدد حياة المواطنين](#), February 26, 2026;

Al-Araby al-Jadeed, [لبنان: إخلاء مباني طرابلس المتصدعة خطة متكاملة واستغلال للأزمة](#), February 13, 2026

<sup>130</sup> Al-Modon, [تجار الحرب يرفعون اجار الشقق: ابتزاز النازحين يسقف بأوبهم](#), September 26, 2024

<sup>131</sup> Legal Agenda, [إضحية في انهيار مبنى آخر: طرابلس تنتظر العدالة وتنفيذ خطة الحكومة](#), February 10, 2026

<sup>132</sup> Human Rights Watch, [Israeli Military Calls for Evacuating Southern Lebanon](#), March 5, 2026;

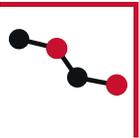
L'Orient Today, [Mass evacuation, intense Israeli strikes on Beirut's southern suburbs, as Cabinet bans IRGC activity in Lebanon: Everything you need to know this Friday](#), March 6, 2026

<sup>133</sup> ACAPS, [Lebanon: Humanitarian consequences of the Israeli military offensive \(Briefing Note 5 March 2026\) - Lebanon](#), March 5, 2026

<sup>134</sup> Save the Children, [Lebanon: At least two children killed every day in five weeks of war](#), October 29, 2024

<sup>135</sup> UN Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs (OCHA), [Lebanon: Flash Update #48](#), November 28, 2024

<sup>136</sup> UNICEF, [UNICEF Lebanon Humanitarian Flash Update No.2 \(Escalation of Hostilities\) - Lebanon | ReliefWeb](#), March 5, 2026



Meanwhile, the Ministry of Public Health announced that it will provide full coverage for wounded citizens in public and private hospitals, including those not covered by the National Social Security Fund, with 100% coverage for medical services in public hospitals and emergency care.<sup>137</sup> The Ministry of Social Affairs (MoSA) announced that, in cooperation with the World Food Programme (WFP), it will begin transferring cash assistance to 50,000 displaced families on March 6 and launch an online registration platform for aid delivery. The MoSA also reported that several Arab countries have signalled that they plan to establish humanitarian air bridges to Lebanon.<sup>138</sup> By March 4, MOSA distributed 79,255 hot meals, hygiene kits, and more than 50,000 mattresses to displaced populations.<sup>139</sup>

Humanitarian actors have been quick to mobilize their emergency responses to cover gaps in state assistance, working on the ground to provide IDPs with basic kits, medicine, food aid, health services, blankets, and other needs,<sup>140</sup> but they are operating under severe funding gaps<sup>141</sup> – constraints already felt before the escalation that forced humanitarian actors to scale down operations. WFP’s food distribution dropped by half between December 2025 and January 2026, serving 49,000 individuals versus 100,000 the prior month. Absent additional funding, the response capacity will remain limited. This threatens to leave affected communities without adequate assistance as needs increase, with the winter weather potentially exacerbating shelter conditions and access challenges for aid workers.<sup>142</sup>

<sup>137</sup> Ministry of Public Health, [وزير الصحة أعلن زيادة التغطية الاستشفائية والدوائية خلال فترة الحرب وطمأن إلى أن الدواء متوافر](#) March 3, 2026

<sup>138</sup> Sawt Beirut International, [لمواجهة تداعيات موجة النزوح.. وزيرة الشؤون الاجتماعية تكشف خطة الطوارئ](#) March 5, 2026

<sup>139</sup> Ministry of Social Affairs, [اليوم الثالث من الاستجابة الطارئة للإعتداءات الأخيرة على لبنان](#) March 4, 2026

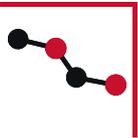
<sup>140</sup> UNFPA, [Lebanon Crisis: Regional Conflict - Flash Update \(March 3, 2026\) - Lebanon | ReliefWeb](#) March 4, 2026;

International Medical Corps, [Middle East Regional Response Situation Report #1 | March 3, 2026 - Lebanon | ReliefWeb](#) March 4, 2026

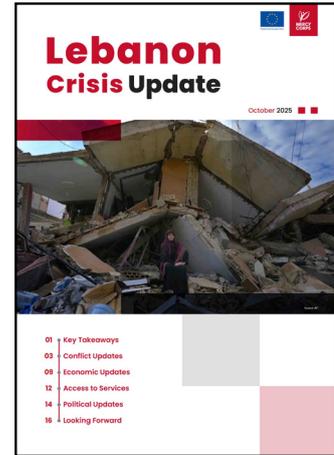
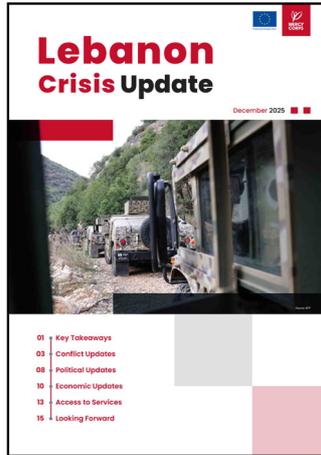
<sup>141</sup> UNICEF is reporting that its three-month Preparedness and Response Plan would require USD 48.29 million to reach 1 million people in need, with only USD 3.24 million of those funds available.

UNICEF, [UNICEF Lebanon Humanitarian Flash Update No.2 \(Escalation of Hostilities\) - Lebanon | ReliefWeb](#) March 5, 2026

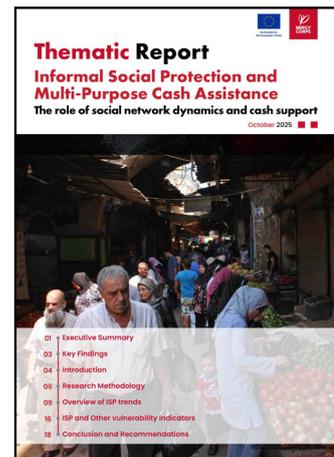
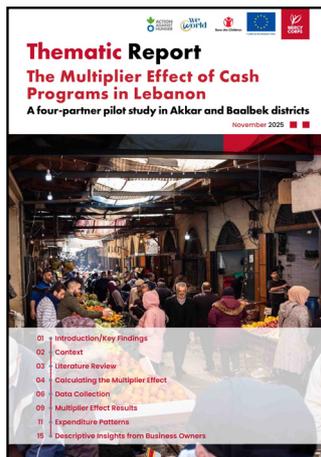
<sup>142</sup> ACAPS, [Lebanon: Humanitarian consequences of the Israeli military offensive \(Briefing Note 5 March 2026\) - Lebanon | ReliefWeb](#) March 5, 2026



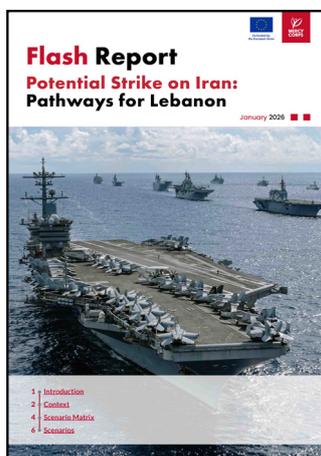
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