



Lebanon is faced with a massive influx of Syrian refugees, ongoing political instability, high unemployment levels, over-stretched public services, and increased extremist activity.

This country profile is based on the analysis of security incidents and concerns shared by ten aid agencies through the Aid in Danger project. It provides a unique insight into the environment in which aid agencies work.¹

Reported concerns affecting aid delivery in Lebanon



- **Aid delivery disruption:** By locals and beneficiaries over beneficiary lists, aid contracts and aid activities.



- **Crime:** Violent crime – armed/unarmed robbery, sexual violence, stray bullets, arson. Petty crime – burglaries, break-ins, fraud, thefts.



- **Operational space:** NGO staff member arrests and detention; refugee camp closures.



- **Killed, injured, kidnapped (KIK):** Two NGO staff members injured and two physically assaulted since January 2015.



- **RTAs:** 24% of all reported road traffic accident (RTA) incidents caused NGO staff injuries.



- **Weapons use:** 19% of NGO-related security incidents involved weapons use.²

Some changes to the country-typical patterns have been identified in recent months (October-December 2017)



- One aid worker was sexually assaulted and killed since October 2017.



- The main threats continue to be related to **operational space** and **RTAs**.



- No reports of NGO staff members being threatened over beneficiary lists, aid contracts and aid activities, or of beneficiaries being arrested.

¹ All decisions made on the basis of or with consideration to such information remain the responsibility of the organisations taking such decisions. Staff are advised to secure travel briefings prior to travel.

² Weapons use reported in 31 incidents of aid-delivery disruption, conflict, crime, KIK, terrorism and unrest: 100% weapons use in terrorism incidents, 80% in conflict incidents; 35% in crime incidents; 22% in KIK incidents; 20% in unrest incidents; 11% in aid-disruption incidents.

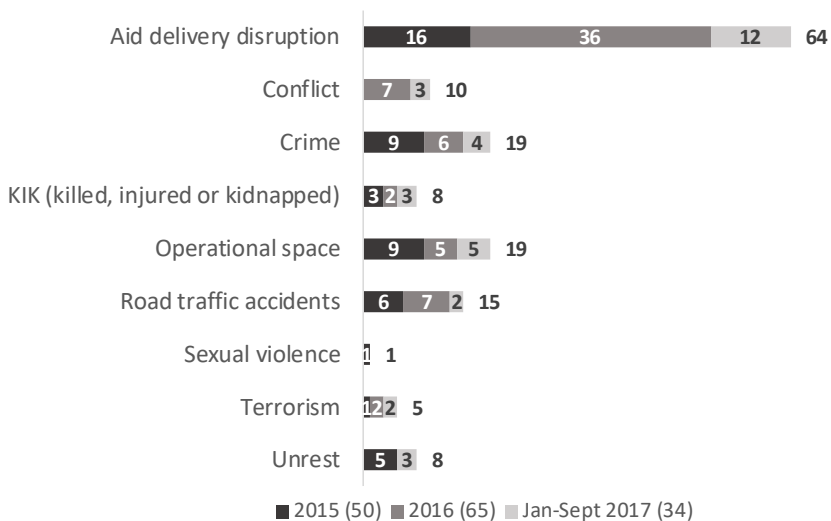
Long-term threat patterns and recent changes

Based on data for January 2015-December 2017



Long-term threat patterns, January 2015-September 2017

A high number of incidents involved threatening behaviour towards NGO staff members over aid delivery practices.



Aid delivery disruption: NGO staff members were threatened over beneficiary lists, aid contracts and aid activities.

Conflict: Active clashes/fighting between rival families, mostly in north Lebanon, Beirut and Beqaa governorate.

Crime: Violent crime, including armed/unarmed robberies; petty crime, including break-ins, burglaries, fraud and thefts.

KIK: Mostly unarmed assaults by fellow staff members, beneficiaries and authorities.

Operational space: Arrests and detentions, mostly at airport immigration and in residency documentation checks and searches; IDP camp closures by authorities.

Road traffic accidents: 73% of reported RTA incidents did not cause NGO staff injuries.

Sexual violence: Sexual assault of a female NGO staff member in the street by a male.

Terrorism: Security measures taken after SVIED and other IED attacks.

Unrest: Security measures taken during civil unrest, rioting, demonstrations.

Recent concerns affecting aid delivery, October-December 2017

Few incidents have been reported since October 2017; no reports of threatening behaviour towards NGO staff members over aid delivery practices.



Aid delivery disruption: Syrian beneficiaries arrested over allegations of illegal border crossings, narcotics possession.

Conflict: No incidents identified.

Crime: No incidents identified of violent or petty crime; NGO property damaged.

KIK: INGO staff member sexually assaulted and killed (see [Sexual violence](#) on p. 3 for further information).

Operational space: Hezbollah officials issued stop-working order at a project site claiming permit needed from them. Incidents of threatening behaviour towards NGO staff members.

Road traffic accidents: No NGO staff member deaths or injuries were reported.

Sexual violence: INGO staff member sexually assaulted and killed See [Sexual violence](#) on p. 3 for further information.

Terrorism: No incidents identified.

Unrest: Civil unrest led to security measures being taken.



Aid delivery disruption: Disruptions by locals and beneficiaries over beneficiary lists, aid contracts and aid activities.



- Disruptions caused by food insecurity, high unemployment levels, over-stretched public services, massive influx of Syrian refugees.
- 91% of Syrian refugee households and 10% of Lebanese households are reportedly food insecure in some way.³
- Tensions between Syrian refugee and host communities over competition for jobs.



- Three-quarters of aid delivery disruption incidents involved threatening behaviour towards NGO staff members over beneficiary lists, aid contracts and aid activities. In addition:
- Two NGO staff members were physically assaulted by beneficiaries and locals during aid programme activities.
- Several Syrian beneficiaries were arrested for failing to present legal identification and residency papers in raids on refugee camps by state authorities.



Sexual violence: From local males.



- Sexual assault of female NGO staff member by local male.
- Female international staff member at DfID sexually assaulted and killed by an Uber driver.



Operational space: Arrests and detentions of NGO staff members; threats and intimidation; refugee camp closures.



- Legal documentation issues are a concern – risk of fines, arrests, detention, exploitation and deportation.
- Increased Hezbollah member interference in NGO activities.



- Over half of operational space incidents reported NGO staff member arrests or detentions at airport immigration, during random documentation checks, over social media postings or after an RTA incident (see [RTAs](#) on p. 5 for further information). In addition:
- Actual and attempted physically assaults of NGO staff members in the context of operational space (see [KIK](#) on p. 8 for further information); NGO deminer injured during demining activities.
- Threats and intimidation towards NGO staff members reported after failed job application and by disgruntled contracted drivers.
- Male NGO driver physically assaulted in a road rage incident (2015-12).
- Lebanese authorities ordered the closure of three IDP camps, affecting approximately 1,600 beneficiaries (2015-08).
- Hezbollah officials issued stop-working order at a project site claiming a permit was needed from them, as well as from Lebanese authorities and the Interior Ministry (2017-10).

³ <https://www.acaps.org/country/lebanon/crisis-analysis>

Long-term threat patterns and recent changes

Based on data for January 2015-December 2017



Crime: Violent crime – armed/unarmed robbery, sexual violence, stray bullets, arson. Petty crime – burglaries, break-ins, fraud, thefts.



- Increase in gender-based assaults and violent crime directed towards Syrian refugees.
- Organised criminal gangs operate sophisticated drug-smuggling networks throughout Lebanon, using the Mediterranean coast as a gateway to Europe.
- Petty crime is most common in densely populated urban centres.



- Violence associated with organised gangs reported in the Arsal area and Beqaa Valley, where many makeshift refugee camps are located. Reports of locals carrying assault rifles and explosives, including hand grenades and mortar rounds.
- Tripoli is a hub for petty crime, with foreigners being the main target.



- Agency-reported crime incidents included actual and attempted armed robberies, break-ins, burglaries, fraud, sexual violence (see [Sexual violence](#) on p. 3 for further information) and thefts. In addition:
- Fraudulent activity by NGO staff members.

Type of location

- **Roads:** A third of crime incidents occurred on the roadside: actual and attempted armed robbery of NGO staff members in NGO vehicles in Beqaa (2015-10, 2015-12); stray bullets injured an NGO staff member and damaged three NGO vehicles.
- **Project sites:** Arson attack damaged tents; cash stolen from project centre.
- **Residences:** Burglaries and break-ins. Personal assets taken; no NGO staff members were present.
- **Offices:** Break-ins and thefts.

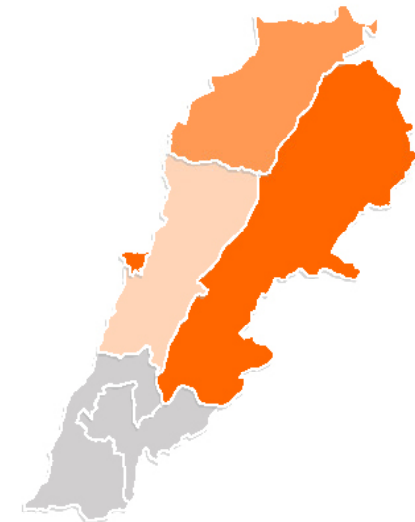


Weapon use in crime incidents

- **Unarmed:** In two-thirds of reported crime incidents the perpetrators were unarmed.
- **Armed:** Five reported crime incidents involved firearms use; occurred during road travel.

Aid in Danger project reported locations

■ 9 or more reported incidents ■ 3-8 reported incidents ■ 1-2 reported incidents



Long-term threat patterns and recent changes

Based on data for January 2015-December 2017



Road traffic accidents (RTAs): Poor infrastructure and aggressive driving behaviour.

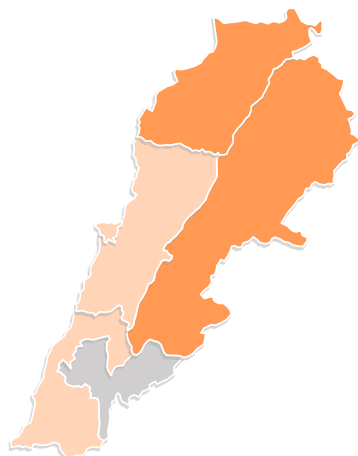


- High vehicle density – over 1.5 million registered vehicles for population of 5 million.
- Aggressive driving behaviour can be common in cities, including Beirut and Tripoli.
- Enforcement of traffic laws can be minimal, with speed checks and drink-driving violations rarely reported. Government reports indicate a seatbelt-wearing rate of 15%.
- Verbal abuse, deliberate obstruction, and general road rage are commonplace.
- Driving at night in rural areas can be dangerous.
- Routine vehicle breakdowns pose risks to NGO staff members, because emergency breakdown cover is not nationwide.



- 17 vehicle aid-worker-related RTA incidents were identified by the Aid in Danger project.
- 24% of reported RTA incidents caused NGO staff injuries.
- There were no reports of RTAs causing NGO staff member deaths.
- Five children injured in NGO-related RTAs.
- An NGO staff member was detained for three days following an RTA that injured a civilian. Released after family of injured victim claimed responsibility and liability.
- Male NGO driver was physically assaulted in a road rage incident.

Aid in Danger project-reported locations of RTAs



Aid in Danger project identified RTA incidents, by year

	2015	2016	2017
Fatal injuries	0	0	0
Major injuries	0	0	0
Minor injuries	0	4	0
No injuries	6	3	4
Total incidents per year	6	7	4

Long-term threat patterns and recent changes

Based on data for January 2015-December 2017



Unrest: Widespread demonstrations and clashes with police can disrupt the delivery of aid.



- Unrest is driven by a precarious political power-sharing agreement, the presence of Hezbollah, and growing inequality.
- Typical locations include southern suburbs of Beirut, including Dahieh, al-Hamra district, and Hay al-Sellom, as well as more central locations such as Riad El Solh Square. Also Jabal Mohsen and Bab al-Tabbaneh districts in Tripoli.

Demonstrations

- Demonstrations are mostly peaceful; however, they can turn violent if politically tinged movements involve Hezbollah's presence.
- Parliamentary elections scheduled in May 2018 have the potential to turn violent and bystanders could be affected.



- 80% of unrest incidents reported demonstrations, including restricted NGO staff movements due to demonstrations by You Stink campaigners (2015-08) and denial of access to an NGO warehouse by aid-supply personnel drivers demonstrating outside an NGO office (2015-01). In addition:
- Civilians attempted to block UNIFIL patrols and attacked peacekeepers. No injuries to UN peacekeepers reported; severe damage to UNIFIL vehicles (2017-02).

Clashes with police

- Responses by security forces are generally forceful. Riot police use of batons, shields and tear gas are common.
- The 2015 demonstrations over water shortages saw hundreds injured. Recently, demonstrations outside the US Embassy in Beirut saw water cannons and tear gas used in response to projectiles thrown by demonstrators.



- No reports were identified that involved NGO staff members being directly affected by clashes with police; however, NGO programmes in Beirut were suspended following rioting (2015-08).

Long-term threat patterns and recent changes

Based on data for January 2015-December 2017



Conflict and terrorism: SVIEDs and other IED attacks targeting cafés, churches, municipality buildings and military checkpoints.



- Proximity to the Syrian conflict and its history of sectarian violence make the threat of terrorism high.
- Hezbollah's role in fighting Islamic State (IS) in Syria, the large Shia population in Lebanon and the proximity of the conflict in Syria have precipitated this violence.
- Despite recent collaboration between Hezbollah and the Lebanese Army, the armed wing of Hezbollah continues to pose risks for NGO staff and operations.
- In October 2017 two Syrians were arrested and prosecuted over suspected allegiance to the al-Nusra Front and IS.



- Areas of concern include the Aarsal region – reported suicide bombings in the summers of 2016 and 2017.
- Other areas of concern include Qaa and the wider Beqaa Valley; urban centres include Beirut and Tripoli.
- The recent thwarting of a suicide attack outside a Costa Coffee shop in Beirut shows targets include areas where foreigners congregate.
- Hezbollah's strongholds are in southern Lebanon and Dahiyeh (south Beirut), where government control is minimal.



- No reports were identified of terrorism-related incidents causing NGO staff member deaths or injuries, or NGO property damage.
- Five incidents involving explosive weapons use targeting cafés, churches, municipal buildings, and military checkpoints led to NGO staff member hibernation and monitoring.
- End of February 2017, UNRWA suspended operations in the Ain al-Hilweh Palestinian refugee camp due to violent clashes between Islamist militants and the Palestinian Fatah faction.



Reported KIK incidents (9)

The table below lists KIK incidents reported between January 2016 and December 2017. KIK incidents are any incidents that resulted in a staff member being killed, injured or kidnapped. KIK includes beaten, kidnapped, killed, missing, tortured, and wounded.

2017-12	Beirut	Female INGO staff member at DfID sexually assaulted and strangled by an Uber driver. Not believed to be work related.
2017-04	Beirut	NGO staff member shot by stray round. No further information is available.
2017-03	Location unknown	Attempted physical attack on NGO staff member by local community member.
2017-02	Location unknown	Male INGO staff member physically assaulted by beneficiary.
2016-11	Location unknown	NGO deminer injured during demining activities.
2016-03	North Lebanon	INGO staff member physically assaulted by the landlord of an informal settlement where the NGO planned to start activities.
2015-12	North Lebanon	Male NGO driver physically assaulted in a daytime road rage incident.
2015-11	Beqaa Valley	NGO staff member physically and verbally assaulted by local community members during aid activities.
2015-03	Beqaa governorate	NGO staff member physically assaulted by an individual working for local authorities.

Weapons use in KIK incidents



- 20% of KIK incidents involved weapons use.
- NGO staff member shot by stray round; NGO deminer injured during demining activities.