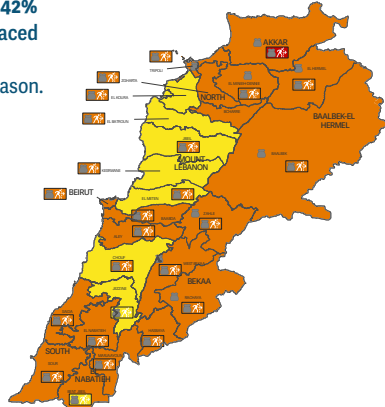**ACUTE FOOD INSECURITY | The four-year economic and financial crisis is affecting the food security of all population groups despite significant improvements expected in 2024.**

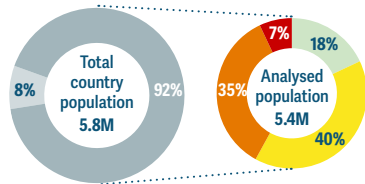## PEAK 2023 (JANUARY–APRIL)

2.3M people or **42%** of the analysed population faced high levels of acute food insecurity during the lean season. Of them, 0.4 million were in Emergency (IPC Phase 4).

1.5M Lebanese residents (**38%** of the analysed resident population)

0.8M Syrian refugees (**53%** of the Syrian refugee population in Lebanon)

This was 0.3 million more people than during the 2022 peak in September–December driven by the worsening financial crisis. It included a 0.1 million increase in people in Emergency (IPC Phase 4).

Total country population 5.8M — 92%, 8%

Analysed population 5.4M — 7%, 35%, 40%, 18%

Source: IPC TWG Lebanon, December 2022.

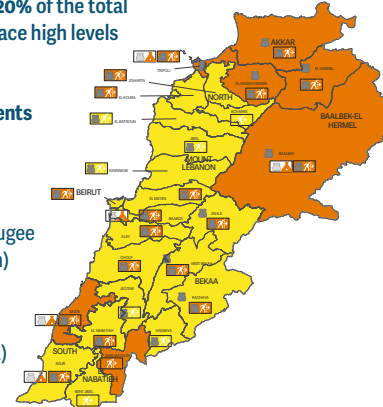## PROJECTION 2024 (APRIL–SEPTEMBER)

1.1M people or **20%** of the total population are projected to face high levels of acute food insecurity:

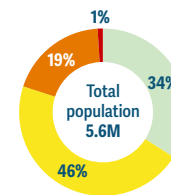**0.6M Lebanese residents** (**15%** of the resident population)

0.5M Syrian refugees (**33%** of the Syrian refugee population in Lebanon)

0.05M Palestine refugees in Lebanon (PRL) (**27%** of the PRL)

12 100 Palestine refugees from the Syrian Arab Republic (PRS) (**40%** of the PRS in Lebanon)

The 49 percent projected reduction in the number of people in IPC Phase 3 or above can be attributed to expected exchange rate stability, higher employment and a steady supply of subsidized wheat. However, if the conflict in Palestine (Gaza Strip) persists, food insecurity may deteriorate given Lebanon's dependence on imports and tourism.

Total population 5.6M — 1%, 19%, 46%, 34%

Source: IPC TWG Lebanon, December 2023.

DRIVERS OF THE CRISIS 2023–2024

Economic shocks Record high depreciation of the local currency in early 2023 continued to lead to soaring inflation – due to Lebanon's high import dependency – and especially impacted households with limited access to US dollars.

Annual food inflation reached 352 percent in March 2023 with the greatest impact on vulnerable Lebanese and Syrian refugee households dependent on local currency incomes. The employment rate among the Lebanese resident population improved from 44 percent in September 2022 to 55 percent in May 2023 and then slightly declined in October (IPC, December 2023).

Annual food inflation declined following interventions from the Central Bank that stabilized the Lebanese pound in April/May, but it still stood at 212 percent by November 2023 (WFP, January 2024). A stable summer with over 2 million tourists brought much-needed foreign hard currency, allowing for the payment of salaries to civil servants (IPC, December 2023).

Conflict/insecurity Following the escalation of hostilities from October in Palestine (Gaza Strip), violent cross-border incidents along Lebanon's southern border increased. By mid-January 2024, over 83 000 people had been displaced, 300 000 farm animals destroyed and 460 hectares of farmland burned (OCHA, January 2023). An increase in intercommunal tensions between Lebanese and Syrian communities since early 2023 is largely attributed to competition for low-skilled jobs. Violent clashes in the country's largest Palestine refugee camp resulted in over 4 000 people evacuating their homes, heightening their humanitarian needs (IPC, December 2023).
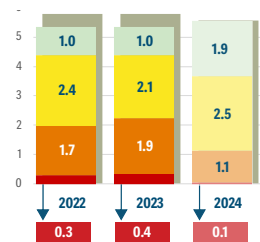
DISPLACEMENT

1.4M forcibly displaced people by 2023

74 000 IDPs

1.3M refugees and asylum-seekers

Source: IOM, December 2023.

Source: UNHCR Nowcasted estimate, December 2023.

Peak numbers of people (in millions) by phase of acute food insecurity, 2022–2024

2022	2023	2024
1.0	1.0	1.9
2.4	2.1	2.5
1.7	1.9	1.1
0.3	0.4	0.1

Source: Lebanon IPC TWG.

An emerging food crisis This is only the second year that Lebanon has been included as a food crisis following the first IPC analysis that was carried out in September 2022. Before that, food security analyses had only covered the Syrian refugee population in the country (*see Spotlight on Displacement, page 18*).

Currency devaluation since the start of the financial crisis in October 2019 has had grave consequences given the country's high reliance on imports for most of its food and non-food needs. The damage to Lebanon's main grain silos during the Beirut port blast in August 2020, coupled with strikes by public sector workers, strained the country's food import capacity (WFP, September 2022). The first IPC analysis in September 2022, which provided the January–April 2023 peak figure, followed a period of high political and economic instability in the country and the surge in global food and energy prices that followed the war in Ukraine. Slightly improving macroeconomic conditions in 2023 were expected to lead to improvements in 2024.

ACUTE MALNUTRITION

Around 25 500 children under 5 years old were estimated to be suffering from acute malnutrition in 2022 (UNICEF, 2022). This situation was mostly driven by limited access to healthcare, substandard water quality, acute food insecurity and inadequate child-feeding practices (*see regional brief, page 132*).

Legend: 1 - None/Minimal | 2 - Stressed | 3 - Crisis | 4 - Emergency | 5 - Catastrophe/Famine | Population analysed | Population not analysed | Total population | At least 25% of households meet 25–50% of caloric needs from humanitarian food assistance | At least 25% of households meet ≥50% of caloric needs from humanitarian food assistance | IDPs/other settlements classification | Refugees