



UPINION

Report: The impact of return policy in Lebanon: Syrian refugee intentions and return prospects

July 2025

Key findings

- **Return intentions and future plans**

- 45% (n=214) of our Syrian community members intend to leave Lebanon for a third country (24% resettlement, 21% undecided on how), while 18% plan to stay in Lebanon in the coming six months. A remaining 12% plan to return to Syria.
- While 50% (n=211) expressed no desire to return to Syria, a non-negligible 37% would consider it if adequate support were provided, indicating a good potential for assistance.
- The majority (74%, n=90) of those considering return estimated needing between \$1500 and \$2000 USD for covering basic needs and re-establishment in Syria.

- **UNHCR return grant programmes**

Context: The UNHCR is making available a one-time cash grant of USD 400 to vulnerable Syrian refugee families registered with UNHCR who are currently residing in Jordan, Lebanon, Egypt, Iraq, or Türkiye and planning to return to Syria.¹ It is intended to support their reintegration upon return. Eligible families will receive a notification via WhatsApp or SMS from UNHCR within two months of returning to Syria if they return(ed) after June 1, 2025.²

- Awareness of UNHCR's one-time return grant reached 44% (n=90), primarily learned through news / social media (36%, n=39).
- The perceived inadequacy of the \$400 UNHCR grant,³ with 40% (n=38) stating it wouldn't influence their decision, highlights a gap between current aid provisions and the financial needs (estimated at \$1500-\$2000 USD above) for successful re-establishment in Syria.
- Despite low - yet consistent - return intentions, these findings suggest that *adequate* financial support could play a crucial role in influencing the decisions of Syrian refugees with limited resources or facing financial barriers to return.

¹ UNHCR (<https://help.unhcr.org/syria/where-to-find-help/cash-assistance/cash-for-returnees/>)

² In addition to the \$400 one-time return grant made available upon return, the UNHCR, in coordination with the Government of Lebanon and other partners, is facilitating the voluntary return of refugees to Syria. Two programs are available: the Self-Organized Voluntary Return Program, which starts July 1, 2025, and provides a USD 100 cash grant per returning family member, and the Organized Voluntary Return Program, which offers transportation support in addition to the cash grant, with a launch date to be announced.

³ Notably, 24% indicated it would make them more likely to consider returning.

- **Impact of GDGS decision**

Context: The General Directorate of General Security (GDGS) in Lebanon announced that from July 1 to September 30, 2025, Syrians and Palestinian refugees from Syria can leave Lebanon via land borders without fees, penalties, or re-entry bans, regardless of legal entry or overstay.⁴

- 71% (n=207) of respondents were aware of the GDGS decision allowing Syrians to leave Lebanon without fines.
- Understanding of the decision varied: 38% (n=146) understood it somewhat clearly, 25% very clearly, while 32% understood it not very clearly or not at all.
- Reactions were mixed: some appreciated financial/legal exemptions (11 responses), but many expressed fear/anxiety about forced repatriation (13 responses) or found it irrelevant due to practical barriers (15 responses).
- Only 7% (n=139) saw it as an opportunity for safe departure; 33% were unsure of its effect, and 30% harbored concerns despite acknowledging an effect.
- A large majority (69%, n=139) had no intention of leaving under the GDGS exemption, and 22% remained undecided.
- Primary concerns included fear of forced deportation and security issues in Syria (20 responses), practical obstacles to return (14 responses), and worries about implementation (12 responses).

- **Evictions in Lebanon and along the Litani river**

Context: Upinion's partners reported an alarming increase in evictions of Syrian refugees along the Litani river. To understand the impact, Upinion investigated the situation within its Syrian community in Lebanon, focusing on the conditions and immediate needs of evicted refugees.

- All respondents were surveyed about whether they had recently received an eviction notice, which concerned 5% (n=191).
- Most individuals (6 out of 8) who received eviction notices had already been evicted, and 7 out of these 8 lacked safe alternative shelter, highlighting a critical need for support. Furthermore, 3 respondents were not given a clear deadline, and 2 were given less than 15 days.
- Key concerns for individuals who received an eviction notice or resided in areas subject to such notices from the Litani River Authority included financial support for rent/housing (11 out of 17), securing a safe place to stay (5 respondents), and support for children (5 respondents).

⁴ <https://help.unhcr.org/lebanon/en/welcome/return-to-syria/>; <https://www.general-security.gov.lb/ar>.

- Crucially, none of these 17 respondents had received legal advice or had their rights explained.
- **Syrian refugees' general concerns and needs in Lebanon**
 - Respondents highlighted pressure to return and fear of forced deportation (21 responses), inability to return due to lack of resources and infrastructure in Syria (27 responses), and lack of safety/insecurity in Syria (20 responses).
 - There was a widespread feeling of inadequate aid and lack of support from aid organizations (19 responses).
 - Significant economic and living hardships in Lebanon were also reported (13 responses).
 - Calls for dignity and alternative solutions, including asylum in another country, were expressed (12 responses).
 - Concerns about children's education were also present (7 responses).
 - Respondents expressed strong need for financial support for basic needs and rebuilding (10 responses), support for vulnerable family members (6 responses), legal and administrative support (5 responses), and resettlement to a third country (2 responses).

Table of Contents

Key findings	2
Table of Contents	5
Introduction	7
Methodology	7
Demographics	8
Representativeness	9
Data findings	10
Insights for international decision-makers from the past month	10
Return intentions: Future plans and GDGS impact	14
Future plans for the next 6 months	14
Return support to Syria	14
Receiving return support	14
Financial assistance for return and re-establishment	15
Available options for return support	16
Awareness of UNHCR Syria return grant	16
Impact of UNHCR grant on return consideration	17
Other factors (n=3)	18
Opinion on informing Syrians about return support	18
Impact of the decision by the General Directorate of General Security in Lebanon	19
Awareness and understanding of the GDGS decision	19
Clarity of understanding and practical steps	20
Understanding and personal impact of GDGS decision	21
Syrian refugees' understanding of what the decision entails	21
Awareness of GDGS decision implementation	24
Emotional response to GDGS decision	25
Direct information from Lebanese government	28
Impact of GDGS decision on current situation	29
Plans to leave Lebanon under GDGS exemption	30
Concerns regarding GDGS decision	31
Evictions and legal rights	34
Receipt of eviction notice	35
Time given for eviction	35

Action taken after eviction notice.....	36
Alternative safe shelter.....	36
Key concerns and information needs regarding evictions for people living in the Litani River area or who were evicted.....	36
Awareness of legal advice and rights.....	37
Support needed to feel more protected.....	37
Usefulness of the information flyer.....	39
Key concerns and information needs of individuals knowing people who live in the Litani River area.....	39
Awareness of legal advice and rights.....	39
Usefulness of the information flyer.....	40
Conclusion and future research.....	41

Introduction

This report summarizes key findings from a Upinion conversation held with its online panel of Syrian refugees in Lebanon conducted between **July 2nd** and **July 17th, 2025**. This conversation focused on critical themes impacting Syrian refugees in Lebanon, including their future plans, considerations for return to Syria, the implications of the General Directorate of General Security (GDGS) decision regarding the suspension of exit fines for Syrians returning home, the UNHCR 100-dollar return grant, and the challenges faced by individuals affected by evictions along the Litani River. The survey targeted Syrian refugees currently residing in Lebanon, aiming to gather their perspectives, concerns, and needs to inform decision-makers such as international organizations and donors.

Methodology

The study's methodology consisted of a conversation held through Upinion's Digital Engagement Platform (DEP), as part of a broader series of monitoring conversations conducted with Syrian individuals in Lebanon over the past four years. Upinion has developed this online platform that allows it to securely connect and stay in touch with marginalised or hard-to-reach communities, including people in crisis and displacement-affected countries. The in-house developed platform enables Upinion to engage real-time with people in the same way they connect with their friends and families, using messaging apps like Facebook Messenger and WhatsApp, which are also widely used by Syrian refugees in Lebanon.

Important to mention is that the DEP enables Upinion to send tailored, neutral information to respondents about relevant services or initiatives in their area, thereby turning the conversation into an information exchange. This sets the study's methodology apart from traditional surveys, as participants become active agents engaged in and influenced by knowledge exchange, rather than being simply providers of data.⁵

Information sharing

⁵ For more information on the recruitment of participants and Upinion's DEP, please contact info@upinion.com.

Information regarding the GDGS decision and UNHCR grants (for those considering return with support) was shared with all respondents to maintain an informed two-way communication loop between Upinion and its communities.

Demographics

It is essential to interpret the results while considering the sample characteristics unique to this conversation.

This sample consists of **233** Syrian nationals who started the conversation, and **187** respondents who completed it. The data collection took place from **July 2nd to July 17th, 2025**.

Of those who provided their demographic information, **59%** (n=214) identified as male and **40%** identified as female, resulting in a male-to-female ratio of 1 : 0.7.

The largest group of respondents (**43%**, n=214) were aged between 36 and 45. Smaller proportions fell within the age ranges of 26–35 (**23%**) and 46–55 (**22%**). Only **6%** of individuals were aged 18-25, **4%** were aged 56–65, and 5 respondents were 65+.

Regarding respondents' areas of residency, individuals in this sample are currently living in North Lebanon (**21%**, n=213), Bekaa (**19%**), Mount Lebanon (**15%**), Beirut (**11%**), or Baalbek-Hermel (**11%**). A remaining **9%** are staying in South Lebanon, **8%** in Nabatieh, and **5%** in Akkar.

Additionally, the majority of respondents arrived before December 2024 (**87%**, n=253). Only **13%** (n=253) had newly arrived in Lebanon (after December 2024), which is reflected in the geographic distribution as newly arrived Syrians primarily found themselves in Akkar and Baalbek-Hermel.⁶

Of the current sample, **5%** (n=233) were in Syria for a visit, and **91%** were still in Lebanon (**4%** preferred not to answer). The following conversation was held only with respondents who had not permanently returned to Syria.

Representativeness

Upinion does not aim to establish statistical representativeness through its findings, as the conversations conducted for research purposes constitute qualitative or quantitative inquiries that do not simulate a reflection of the actual population. When comparing our distribution to actual country distributions, readers are invited to see for themselves how our samples can be reflective of a larger tendency.

⁶ See Upinion report (May 2025):

<https://upinion.com/articles/caught-between-borders-experiences-of-syrians-pushed-away-to-lebanon-after-the-fall-of-assad/>

Data findings

Insights for international decision-makers from the past month

This first question aimed to create a space where Syrian refugees could highlight important recent events they have witnessed or changes in their situation relevant to decision-makers, including international organizations and donors. Based on the responses, here are the main themes highlighted by respondents (n=215):

Pressure to return and fear of forced deportation (21 responses)

Many respondents express significant anxiety about being forced to return to Syria. They mention feeling pressured by the Lebanese government and hearing rumors or news about security campaigns, raids, and quick decisions regarding the evacuation of Syrians. One respondent mentions a specific decision issued on July 1, 2025, giving Syrians in Lebanon three months to leave with the advantage of not paying fees for previous violations. Another describes being stopped and at risk of deportation by the Lebanese army despite having a UN file.

"Yes, there is a big campaign against Syrian refugees... and many people cannot return to Syria."

"I'm hearing news recently about the forced deportation of Syrians."

"The only thing left is the Lebanese General Security's suspension of residency permits for Syrians. This opens the door to illegal immigration and human trafficking, exposing people to fraud and risks."

Inability to return due to lack of resources and infrastructure (27 responses)

Respondents repeatedly state they cannot return because their homes are destroyed, and there is no reconstruction, electricity, or running water in their areas. They lack the financial means to travel, rebuild, or secure a livelihood, with one person mentioning a need for around \$8,000 for a successful return. The grant provided for voluntary return is considered insufficient to cover even transportation costs.

"What does voluntary return mean when there are no homes and reconstruction has not begun?"

"I no longer have a home, no work, and everything is gone."

"The grant provided for voluntary return is not enough to cover the rent of the road, even if it is sufficient upon arrival in Syria, the house is destroyed and there is no furniture, no provisions, and no work to live on."

Lack of safety and insecurity in Syria (20 responses)

A major concern is that Syria is not safe for return, with mentions of kidnappings, arbitrary arrests, killings, robberies, and the presence of terrorist gangs. Specific groups, such as the Alawite and Yazidi Kurdish sects, report facing systematic ethnic cleansing, looting, and discrimination, making their return impossible. One respondent states that some areas, particularly east of the Euphrates, are still unsafe.

"How can I return to Syria when I am going to die?"

"Yes, kidnappings, arbitrary arrests, random killings on the roads, robberies and pickpocketing."

"Syria is not safe for some sects. I am a Yazidi Kurd and I have not been able to return to Syria."

"The government must protect citizens from the gangs that are spreading at an abnormal pace."

Inadequate aid and lack of support from organizations (19 responses)

There is a widespread feeling of being abandoned or neglected by organizations. Respondents report that financial, medical, and educational assistance has been cut off or is very limited, and that a lot of people do not receive any help at all. There are calls for financial aid to be delivered directly to individuals rather than through centers to ensure fairness.

"I have been registered with the UNHCR for three years, but there is no assistance of any kind."

"Services must be provided in all areas: food, drink, housing, medicine, financial support, and all the basics."

"Aid is very limited. I hope there will be financial aid, even if it's small and delivered by hand. It's not given to the centers to distribute because that would be unfair."

Economic and living hardships in Lebanon (13 responses)

Many responses highlight difficult living conditions in Lebanon, including a lack of job opportunities, weak wages, and high prices. Homeowners are reported to be taking advantage of the situation. The suspension of residency renewals for Syrians is also a significant concern, which is seen as a driver for illegal immigration and human trafficking.

"Job opportunities in Lebanon have become very few and wages are weak and do not meet the needs of the family."

"We are living a real nightmare in Lebanon. Our children have no future... Every day there are bullets and problems in Tripoli."

"The situation is becoming increasingly tense these days... We face difficult challenges, and the financial obstacle is the biggest reason."

Calls for dignity and alternative solutions (12 responses)

Many respondents express a desire for dignity and a better life, and some explicitly request resettlement in a third country. There is a plea for decision-makers to consider their situation with humanity and to provide solutions that respect their rights and offer stability.

"We hope for asylum in another country."

"We want more attention and a better life."

"I feel like a human being who deserves to live without war, without killing, without being displaced from my country because I belong to a certain sect."

Educational concerns for children (7 responses)

The education of children is a major source of worry. Schools are reported to be closed for children, and there are rumors that Syrian students will not be registered in public schools next year. A respondent mentions that their children's school told them the current year would be their last.

"Schools are closed for children."

"I am very worried about my children. At the end of the school year, they told us that this year is the last year."

"What matters to us in Lebanon is that the General Security does not forcibly return us to Syria, while in my city I have neither a home nor a job."

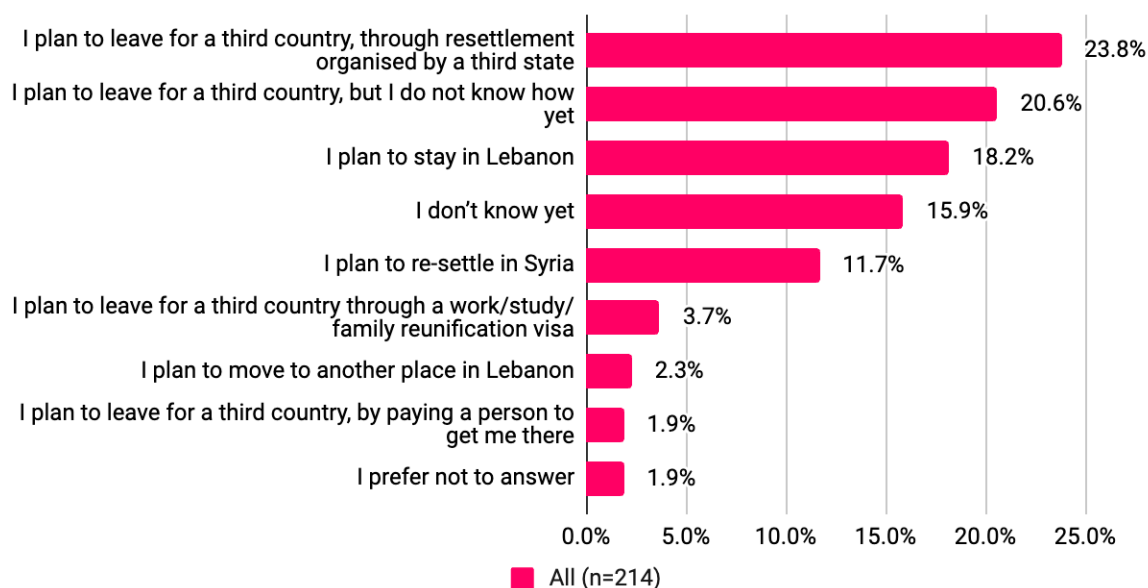
Return intentions: Future plans and GDGS impact

Future plans for the next 6 months

In this question, respondents were asked to indicate their plans for the upcoming 6 months. 18% (n=214) of refugees plan to stay in Lebanon, while a combined 45% intend to leave for a third country, either through resettlement (24%) or by other undecided means (21%). A smaller percentage (12%) plan to return to Syria⁷, and 16% are still undecided about their future plans.

⁷ This number is in line with a conversation conducted by Upinion in May/June 2025.

Figure 1. Future Plans - All Respondents - Single choice

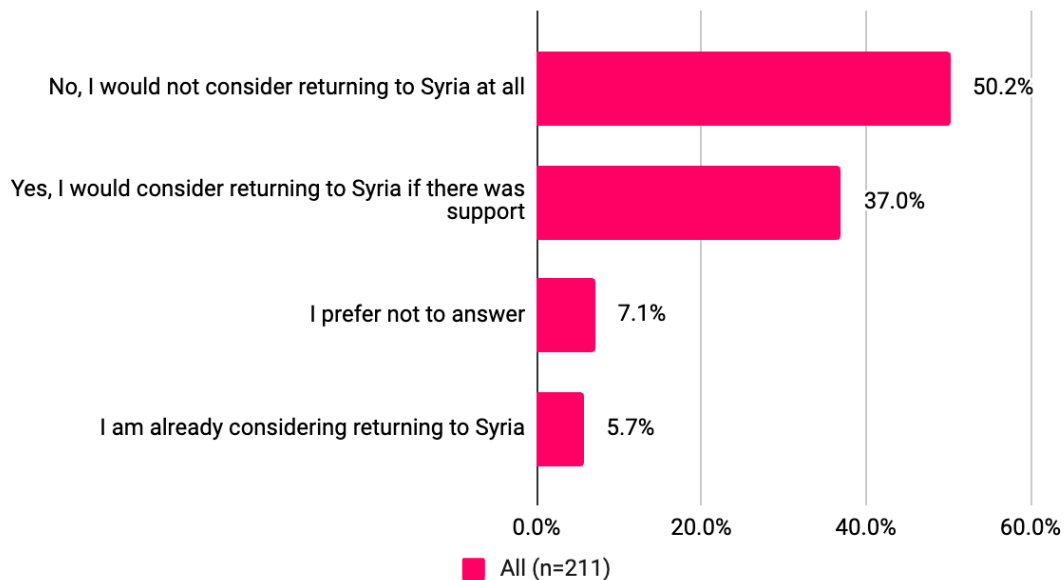


Return support to Syria

Receiving return support

Overall, a large portion of the surveyed population (50%, n=211) expressed no desire to return to Syria. However, a notable 37% indicated they would consider returning if support was provided. A smaller group (6%) was already considering returning irrespective of external factors, while 7% chose not to answer.

Figure 2. Return consideration with support - All respondents - Single choice

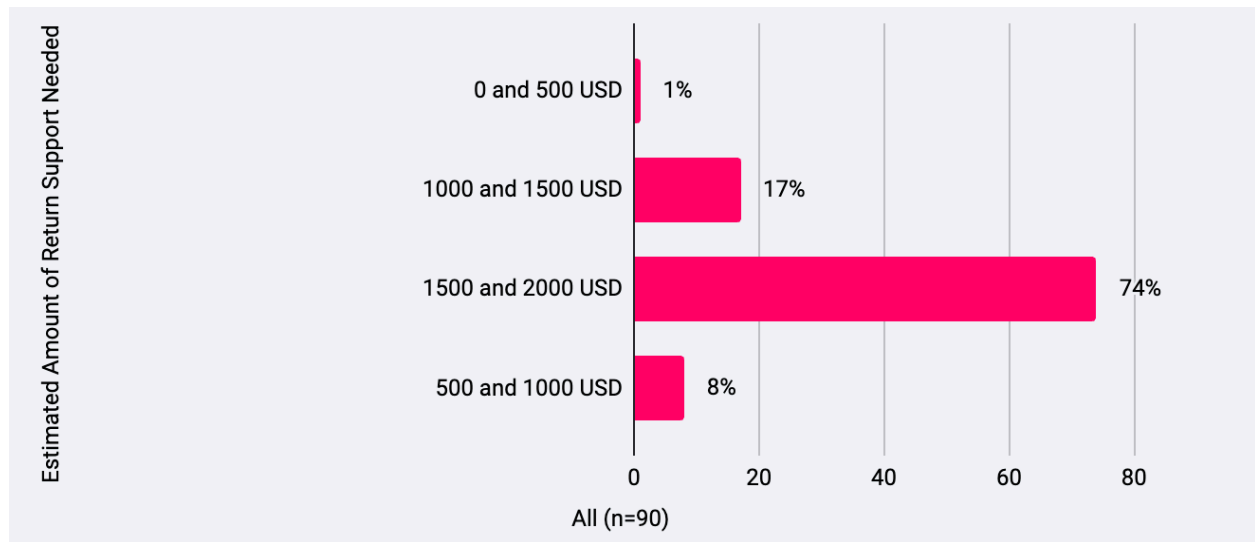


Financial assistance for return and re-establishment

Given that 37% (n=211) of respondents would consider returning with support, the following section of the report will investigate what the key factors influencing the intentions of Syrian refugees in Lebanon to return are, and how different types of support might impact their return prospects.

Respondents were asked to estimate the financial assistance needed to cover their basic needs, secure housing, and re-establish themselves upon returning to Syria, to assess the support required for those considering or open to return. A majority of respondents (74%, n=90) estimated their needs to be between 1500 and 2000 USD. A smaller proportion (17%) estimated their needs between 1000 and 1500 USD, while 8% estimated their needs between 500 and 1000 USD. Less than 1% of respondents estimated their needs to be between 0 and 500 USD.

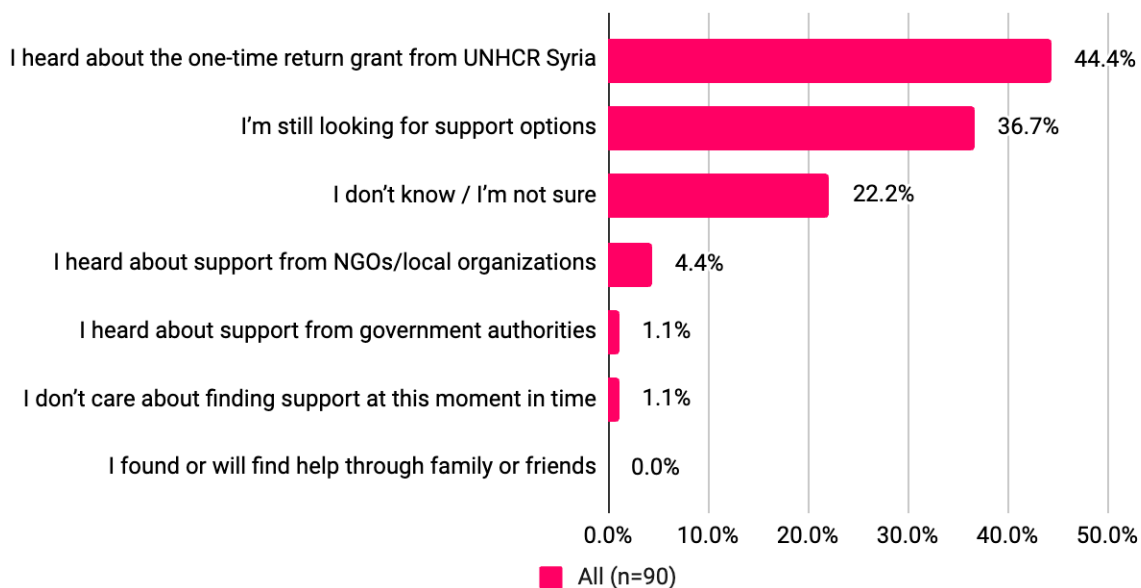
Figure 3. Estimated financial assistance needed for return - Respondents considering return - Single choice



Available options for return support

44% (n=90) of respondents were aware of the one-time return grant from UNHCR Syria. A significant portion, 37%, are still exploring their options, while 22% remain undecided. A mere 4% had heard about support from NGOs or local organizations.

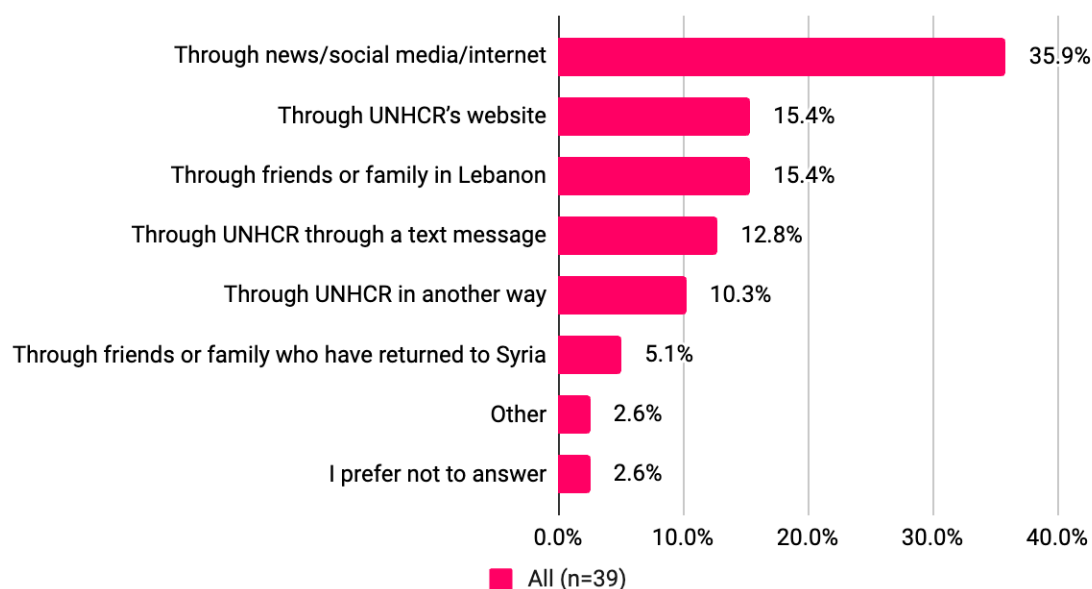
Figure 4. Awareness of return support options - Respondents considering return - Multiple choice



Awareness of UNHCR Syria return grant

Refugees primarily learned about the intervention through news, social media, or the internet (36%, n=39). Other significant channels included friends or family in Lebanon (15%), UNHCR's website (15%), and direct communication from UNHCR via text message (13%) or other means (10%). A smaller percentage (5%) heard about it from friends or family who had returned to Syria.

Figure 5. Source of information for UNHCR return grant - Respondents aware of grant - Single choice



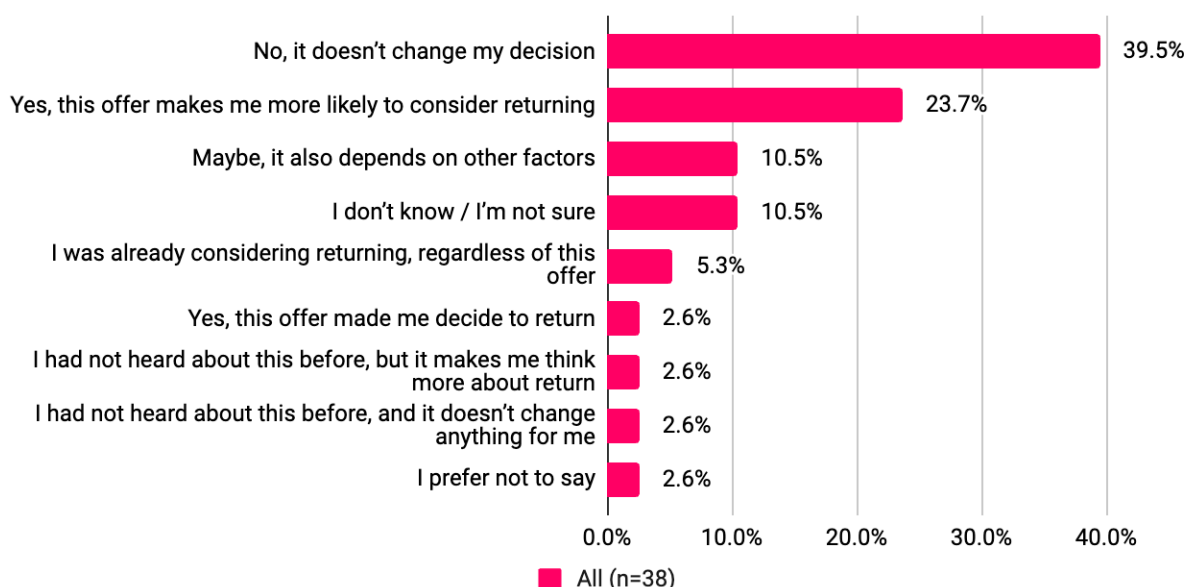
Impact of UNHCR grant on return consideration

Respondents were asked if a \$400 return grant from UNHCR⁸ would make them more likely to consider returning to Syria, in order to understand the impact of financial incentives on repatriation decisions for vulnerable families.

While 40% (15 respondents, n=38) stated the offer does not change their decision, a notable 24% (9 respondents) indicated it makes them more likely to consider returning. Furthermore, 11% (4 respondents) were unsure, and another 11% (4 respondents) said "maybe" depending on other factors, with an additional 5% already considering returning.

⁸ <https://help.unhcr.org/syria/where-to-find-help/cash-assistance/cash-for-returnees/>

Figure 6. Impact of UNHCR grant on return consideration - Respondents aware of grant - Single choice



Other factors (n=3)

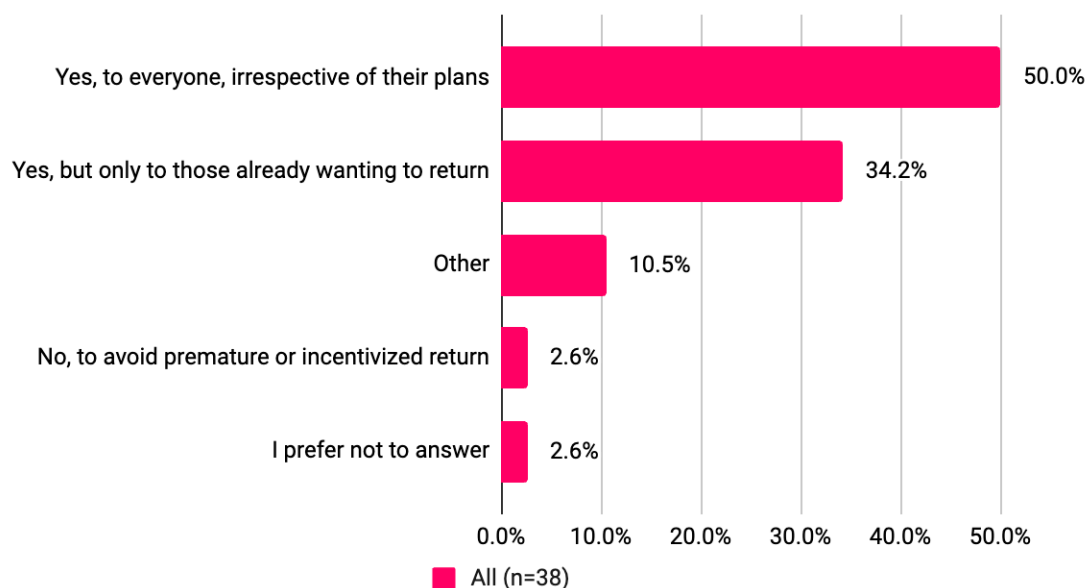
One respondent focused on securing fundamental necessities such as housing, consistent access to water, and reliable electricity, all contributing to overall stability and security. Another sentiment shared was that the financial assistance provided is inadequate, merely covering transportation costs ("road fare") with no substantial benefit beyond that. A last respondent highlighted the need for it to cover a broader range of expenses, including rent and general living costs, especially if employment is secured.

Opinion on informing Syrians about return support

Respondents who were aware of the one-time UNHCR return grant were asked if all eligible Syrians in Lebanon should be actively informed about this type of support, in order to gauge opinions on awareness campaigns.

Half of the respondents (50%, n=38) believe everyone should receive assistance, regardless of their plans. A significant portion (34%) agreed, but limited assistance to those already wanting to return. A smaller group (11%) offered alternative responses, and only 3% opposed assistance to prevent premature or incentivized returns.

Figure 7. Opinion on informing Syrians about return support - Respondents aware of grant - Single choice



Impact of the decision by the General Directorate of General Security in Lebanon

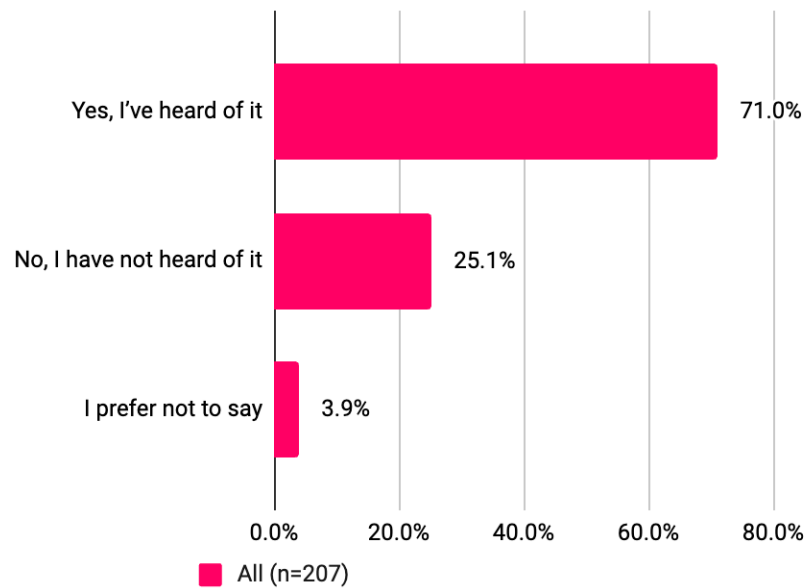
Awareness and understanding of the GDGS decision

Respondents were asked whether they had heard about the recent decision by the General Directorate of General Security that allows Syrians (both with legal documentation and those without) to leave Lebanon without paying a fine, until September 30th,⁹ in order to assess public awareness of this policy change.

A strong majority of respondents (71%, n=207) were aware of the topic, while a quarter (25%) had no prior knowledge. A small minority (4%) chose not to disclose their awareness.

⁹ GDGS (<https://www.general-security.gov.lb/ar/posts/492>): To be noted that the decision's validity was extended from July 15th to September 30th 2025.

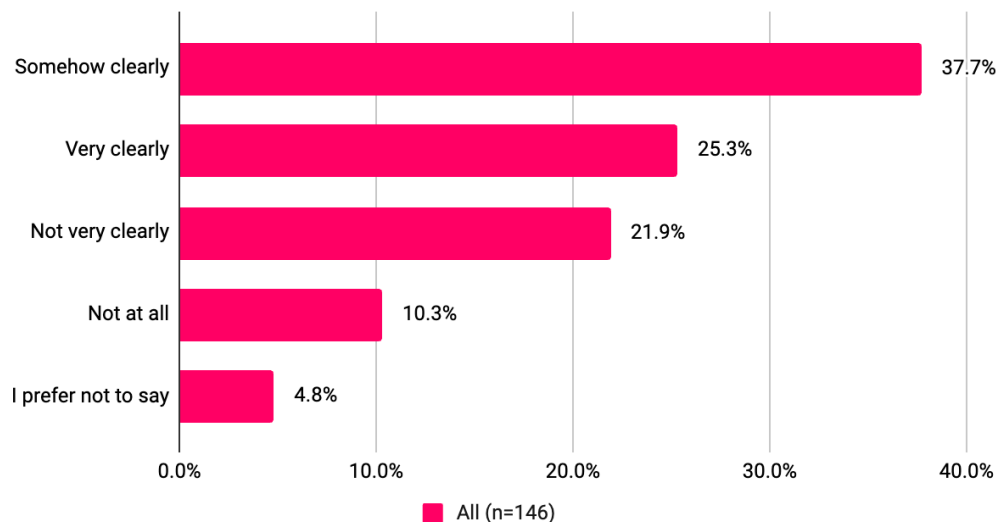
Figure 8. Awareness of GDGS decision - All Respondents - Single choice



Clarity of understanding and practical steps

Respondents were asked about their understanding of the decision's terms and the practical steps involved to gauge clarity. 38% (n=146) of respondents understood the terms of this decision somewhat clearly, with 25% understanding it very clearly, while 22% understood it not very clearly, and 10% not at all.

Figure 9. Understanding of GDGS decision terms - Respondents who have heard of it - Single answer

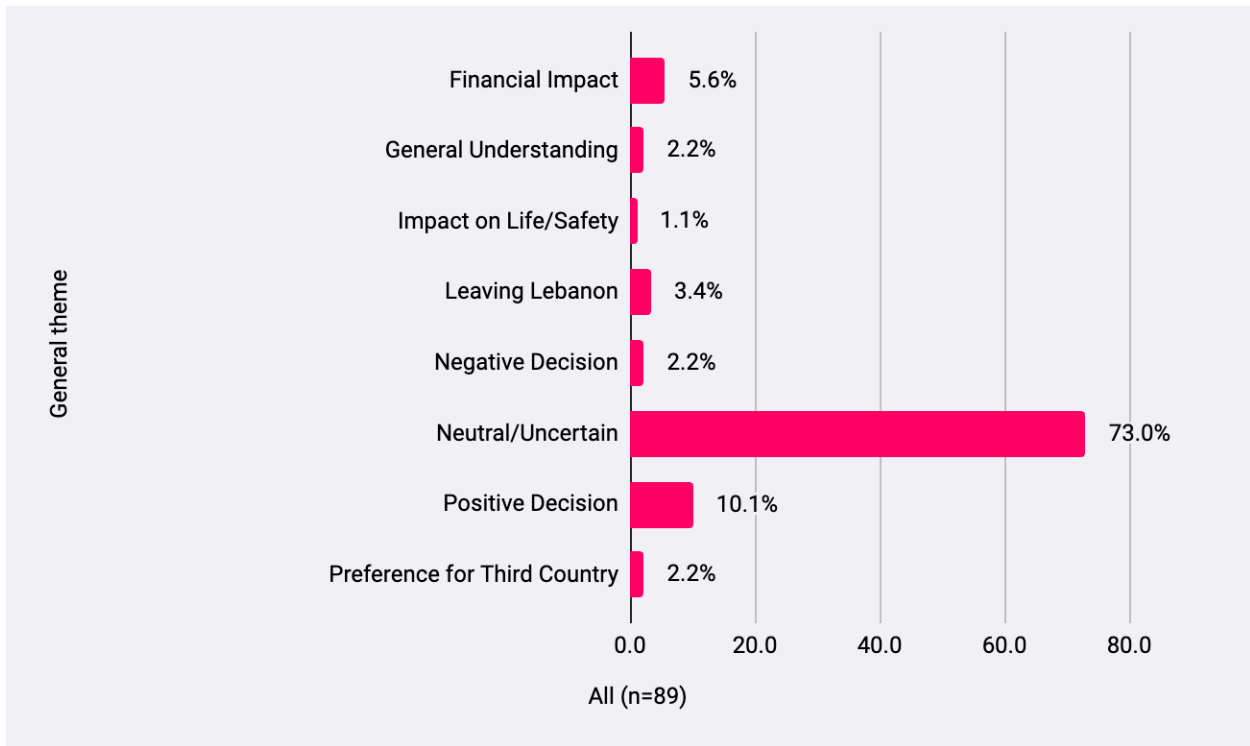


Understanding and personal impact of GDGS decision

Respondents who understood the decision clearly or somehow clearly were asked to describe its meaning and personal impact as Syrian refugees (n=89) to gauge their comprehension and the

perceived relevance of the decision.

Figure 10. Understanding and personal impact of GDGS decision - Respondents with a clear or somewhat clear understanding - Open answers



Syrian refugees' understanding of what the decision entails

The responses to the decision by the General Directorate of General Security in Lebanon reveal a complex and nuanced understanding among Syrian refugees. The analysis identifies several key themes, often contradictory, reflecting the diverse circumstances and perspectives of the community.

Appreciation for financial and legal exemptions (11 responses)

A significant number of respondents view the decision positively, primarily for its financial and legal benefits. They appreciate the exemption from fines and fees for residency violations and the lifting of re-entry bans. This is seen as a practical and helpful measure, especially for those who wish to visit or return to Syria without the burden of penalties.

"The decision is good for those returning to safe areas, and it exempts them from fees and fines."

"This decision is good but not healthy as it encourages people to go and return illegally."

"Return without being banned and without paying any fines for breaking the residence permit."

Fear and anxiety about repatriation (13 responses)

For a large portion of the community, the decision is not a source of relief but a cause for fear and anxiety. Many believe it is a thinly veiled attempt to pressure and deport them. They express deep-seated concerns about the security situation in Syria, fearing kidnapping, persecution, and death.

"I wish to return to my country, but there is extreme fear. I am thinking of returning within this period, if I can return to Lebanon legally, but there is fear."

"The decisions are very important and helpful, but the situation in Syria is not safe, and I fear that I will be kidnapped if I return."

"I believe that this decision is an attempt to deport the largest possible number of Syrians... before issuing subsequent laws that complement this procedure to deport every illegal Syrian."

Inability to return due to practical barriers (15 responses)

For many refugees, the decision is irrelevant or "meaningless" because their circumstances make a return to Syria impossible, regardless of legal exemptions. The primary obstacles cited are the destruction of homes, lack of job opportunities, and the absence of basic services in their home country. This group feels the decision fails to address the root causes of their displacement.

"The decision does not serve me as a Syrian refugee in Lebanon at all."

"My circumstances as an elderly person must be taken into consideration. My house in Syria was destroyed and I had a lathe shop that was robbed."

"I don't care about these decisions. What matters to me as a displaced person is increasing the return amount, creating job opportunities in Syria, and activating the UNHCR's financial and food assistance in my country."

Pressure, marginalization, and lack of stability in Lebanon (13 responses)

This theme highlights the difficult position of refugees in Lebanon, where they face increasing pressure and marginalization. The decision is seen as another tactic by the Lebanese government to rid itself of the "burden" of displacement. Respondents mention feeling marginalized and forced to leave, which creates legal and psychological instability.

"I feel that the Lebanese government is moving to pressure the Syrians, especially after the fall of the dictatorial regime, but no one takes into consideration that most of the Syrians in Lebanon have destroyed their homes and are not suitable for living in Syria."

"This means that I am not safe in my home country, security-wise, nor in the host country, legally. In both cases, the situation will be bad."

Call for international support and alternative solutions (7 responses)

A recurring sentiment is that the international community, not just Lebanon, must take responsibility. Respondents call for financial support to facilitate a dignified return, including funding for housing and livelihoods in Syria. Others express a strong preference for resettlement in a third country as the only safe and long-term solution.

"The international community must shoulder its responsibilities and support the refugees financially so that they can return with dignity and secure housing in the event of their return."

"I prefer to settle in a third country for me and my family"

The impact on specific groups (6 responses)

A few responses highlight the particular vulnerability of specific groups. One respondent, a 41-year-old with a family and an established business in Lebanon, expresses the difficulty of being forced to "start from scratch." Others, who belong to specific sects like the Alawites, express a heightened fear of persecution upon return.

"The decision affects me personally after I reached the age of 41 and established a freelance business, and my children are committed to a school system, so how can I be forced to return and start from scratch, and I am 41 years old..."

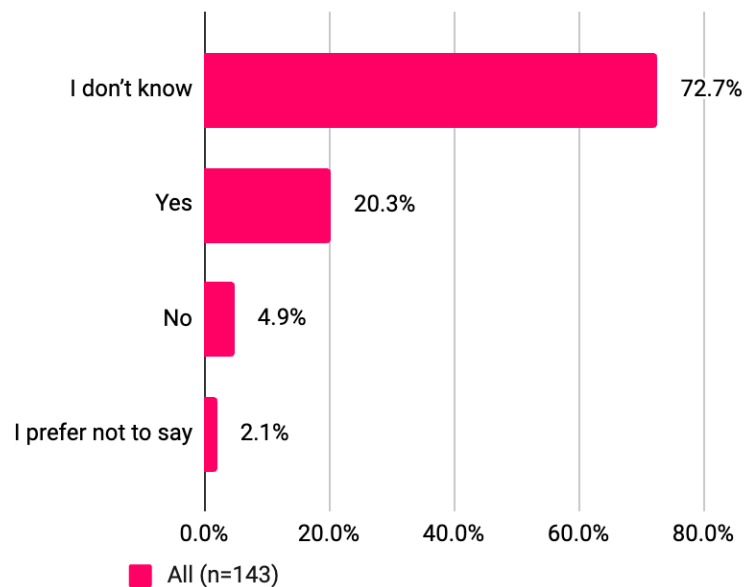
"I am a new refugee who came to Lebanon after the events on the Syrian coast following the fall of the regime."

Awareness of GDGS decision implementation

Respondents were asked whether the decision had been implemented, specifically if individuals had successfully left the country without incurring fines, in order to assess its practical application.

A majority (73%, n=143) were unaware of whether the decision had been implemented. Among the others, 20% believed it was implemented, while 5% stated it was not.

Figure 11. Awareness of GDGS decision implementation - Respondents who have heard of it - Single choice



Emotional response to GDGS decision

In this open-ended question, respondents were asked about their initial feelings upon learning of the temporary decision allowing Syrians to leave Lebanon without paying a fine, in order to gauge their immediate emotional reactions to the news.

The responses (n=142) reveal a wide range of feelings and reactions among Syrian refugees, moving beyond a simple positive-negative binary. This qualitative analysis identifies several key emotional and psychological states experienced by the community.

A mixture of confusion and anxiety (14 responses)

A significant number of refugees express a state of confusion, anxiety, and fear in response to the decision. This is often rooted in uncertainty about their future, both in Lebanon and in Syria. Many respondents feel that the decision is a veiled threat of forced deportation and a tactic to pressure them to leave, rather than a genuine offer of a solution.

"I felt scared because I had no home to return to in Syria if my family and I were forcibly deported."

"More anxiety, fear of the unknown, and inability to make a decision."

"I was confused about this."

"I felt that they just wanted to get rid of the Syrians by any means."

Relief and optimism (10 responses)

Conversely, a notable portion of the community views the decision with happiness, relief, and optimism. This sentiment is primarily held by those who see the decision as a practical and beneficial measure, specifically the exemption from fines and the facilitation of a legal return. For these individuals, the decision removes a significant financial and legal barrier.

"I was very happy."

"Surprising but a relief for many immigrants."

"A good decision to facilitate the affairs of people who want to return."

"I was happy for some refugees who did not have money to pay the fees."

Apathy and irrelevance (18 responses)

A large number of refugees express feelings of indifference or state that the decision is irrelevant to their personal situation. For them, the legal and financial aspects of the decision do not address the fundamental, life-threatening issues they face, such as the lack of security, destroyed homes, and sectarian violence in Syria. This group's priorities are survival and stability, not administrative procedures.

"I don't care about the decision. I have nothing in Syria. I'm looking for a third country, but not the Middle East."

"I didn't feel any feelings because there is no security in Syria and there is no state or law."

"The decision does not apply to me."

"I am not concerned by this decision because I am a new refugee."

Frustration and disappointment (11 responses)

A recurring sentiment is one of frustration and disappointment. This is often linked to the feeling that the decision, while seemingly positive on the surface, is a hollow gesture that ignores the deeper, systemic problems. Some are frustrated by what they perceive as a lack of real change, while others are disappointed by the continued "harsh and racist measures" they experience in Lebanon.

"I felt frustrated because I didn't want to leave."

"I was disappointed that the Lebanese authorities continued to take harsh and racist measures against Syrians."

"I was very affected by the decision because it seemed beautiful and encouraging, but in detail it is difficult and differs from one family to another."

Hope and yearning for a better future (10 responses)

Despite the widespread negative and indifferent feelings, a thread of hope and yearning for a better future runs through the responses. This is often tied to the desire for a safe and dignified life, whether that is in a rebuilt Syria or a third country. This hope is often expressed alongside the recognition of the severe challenges that stand in the way.

"I hope you can help me move to a safe country that respects human rights."

"It's so good. It gives Syrians a chance to go and catch their breath. Syria after 14 years of displacement. It's the mother he misses. Her son. And she misses him."

"I felt hopeful and at peace."

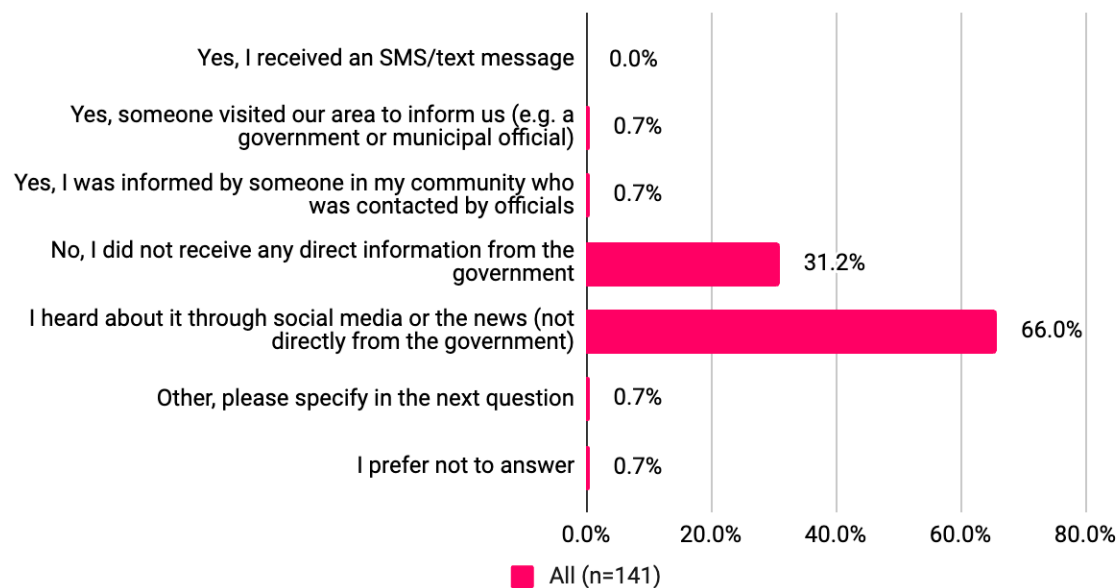
"I was sad... at the same time, my young sons and my husband were missing."

Direct information from Lebanese government

Respondents were asked if they were directly informed by the Lebanese government about this decision (e.g., via text message, official visit, or other means) to understand the communication channels used.

A majority (66%, n=141) of respondents learned about the information through social media or news outlets, rather than directly from the government. Furthermore, 31% explicitly stated they did not receive any information directly from the government.

Figure 12. Source of Information for GDGS Decision - Respondents who heard of it - Multiple choice

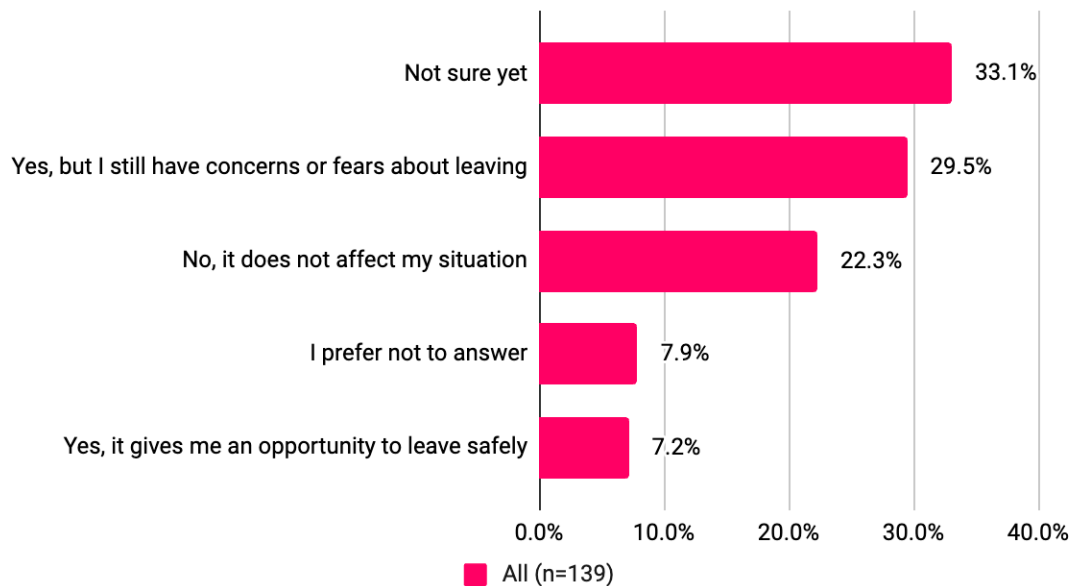


Impact of GDGS decision on current situation

Respondents were asked whether the GDGS's decision affected their current situation in Lebanon, in order to assess the decision's impact.

The GDGS's decision had a varied impact on respondents in Lebanon. A significant portion (33%, n=139) remained unsure of its effect, indicating a lack of immediate clarity or ongoing assessment. For those who felt affected, the impact was largely negative or cautious; 30% acknowledged an effect but still harbored concerns about leaving, and 22% stated it had no impact on their situation. Only a small minority (7%) viewed the decision positively, seeing it as an opportunity for safe departure. Additionally, 8% chose not to disclose their stance. This suggests that while the decision registered with respondents, it did not uniformly alleviate anxieties or provide clear pathways for action, with a substantial portion of the population remaining uncertain or apprehensive.

Figure 13. Impact of GDGS decision on current situation - Respondents who heard of it - Single choice

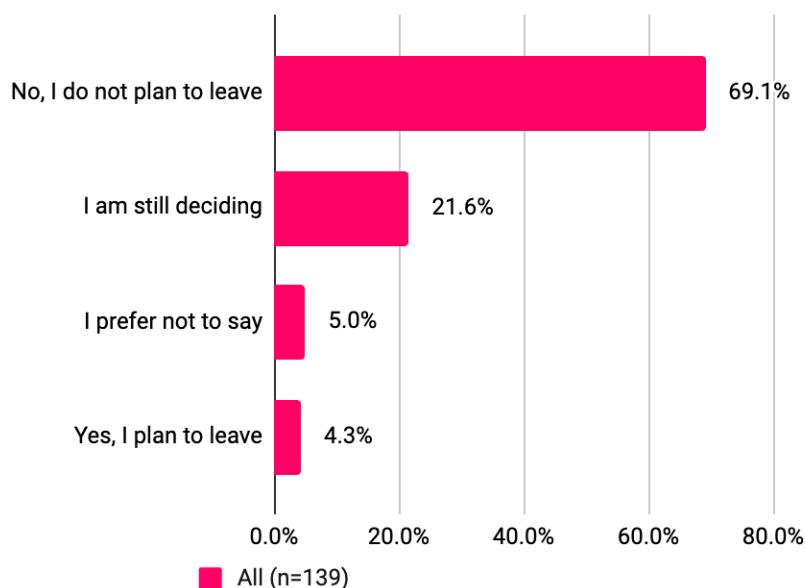


Plans to leave Lebanon under GDGS exemption

Respondents were asked if they planned to leave Lebanon before July 15 under the GDGS exemption, a question targeting individuals who have heard of this decision, and designed to reveal if it impacted their immediate travel intentions or plans.

A large majority of respondents (**69%**, n=139) indicate no intention of leaving Lebanon under this exemption. A significant portion (**22%**) remains undecided, while a small minority (**5%**) had planned to utilize this exemption. Furthermore, **4%** opted not to disclose their intentions.

Figure 14. Plans to leave Lebanon under GDGS exemption - Respondents who heard of it - Single Choice



Concerns regarding GDGS decision

Respondents were asked about their concerns regarding the GDGS's decision to understand potential negative impacts or reservations.

The responses (n=138) show a broad spectrum of emotions and practical anxieties. The analysis identifies several key themes, often overlapping.

Fear and anxiety about forced deportation and security (20 responses)

This is the most dominant theme, with many respondents expressing deep fear and anxiety. Their concerns are not just about the decision itself but about the potential actions that may follow. They worry about being forcibly deported, handed over to the Syrian government, or facing persecution, especially for those belonging to specific minorities.

"Yes, I am afraid of forced deportation."

"I am afraid of returning to Syria because I cannot start from scratch again."

"I am concerned about the internal situation in Syria and the lack of security."

"My fears increased because if this decision was not implemented, I would not return to Syria, and I would also be threatened here with forced travel if the specified period ended."

Apathy, indifference, and resignation (17 responses)

A significant number of refugees express a sense of apathy or indifference to the decision. This is often a form of resignation, as they feel the decision doesn't address their primary concerns or that their situation is so dire that the decision's details are irrelevant. For some, this stems from having a stable legal status in Lebanon, while for others it's a feeling of hopelessness.

"I don't care about this decision at all. I'm Alawite, not Sunni, so I'm not safe in Syria at all."

"I don't care about the decision. I have nothing in Syria. I'm looking for a third country, but not the Middle East."

"I do not care about paying the fine. Our homes are occupied by foreigners in Syria."

"I am not concerned by this decision because I am a new refugee."

Practical obstacles to return (14 responses)

Many responses focus on the practical, logistical, and financial barriers that make returning impossible, regardless of the decision. These include the destruction of homes, lack of infrastructure, inability to find work, and insufficient funds for rebuilding. The decision's focus on fines and legal status is seen as missing the point of their predicament.

"The biggest obstacle to return is the inability to secure housing in Syria due to the massive destruction there."

"There are many concerns that Syria's infrastructure is currently unsuitable for those wishing to return."

"I may not be ready to return because my area in Syria is still destroyed and uninhabitable"

and there is no infrastructure in it."

Concerns about the decision's implementation and legal consequences (12 responses)

A number of refugees are concerned about the practical and legal implications of the decision. They worry that it might not be implemented as promised, leading to fines or arrests anyway. They also fear that the decision's deadline could lead to harsher measures afterward, such as more severe restrictions or new fines for those who remain.

"Yes, I have concerns that after the deadline, the legal procedures may be more severe."

"I don't know for sure whether the decision will actually be implemented or not."

"Fines, residency bans, sponsor changes, and violations. They scare me a lot."

"My fears increased because if this decision was not implemented, I would not return to Syria, and I would also be threatened here with forced travel if the specified period ended."

Hope for a dignified return or resettlement (10 responses)

A small but significant number of responses reflect a sense of hope. This hope is often attached to a desire for a dignified return, made possible by financial and legal support that would allow them to rebuild their lives. For others, hope is tied to the possibility of resettlement in a third country where they can find safety and stability.

"To be honest, I didn't feel anxious, because it's a decision, and I think they will contribute to implementing the decision and providing more facilities."

"I am not afraid of this decision because I am a regular person."

"I prefer to be resettled in a third country."

Feelings of frustration and disappointment (7 responses)

This theme captures feelings of frustration and disappointment towards the Lebanese government and the overall situation. This includes feeling unwelcome in Lebanon, a sense that the decision is a "failed" one, and a belief that they are being treated as a burden.

"I was disappointed that the Lebanese authorities continued to take harsh and racist measures against Syrians."

"I am actually very upset about these decisions."

"I felt that they just wanted to get rid of the Syrians by any means."

Evictions and legal rights

As Upinion's RPW partner had received alarming reports of eviction notices in the Litani River area, Upinion paid specific focus on that area but not solely, given that evictions happen across Lebanon. Respondents were asked about their connection to areas that had received eviction notices from the Litani River Authority, specifically targeting refugee settlements in the Bekaa region, to understand the reach of these notices.

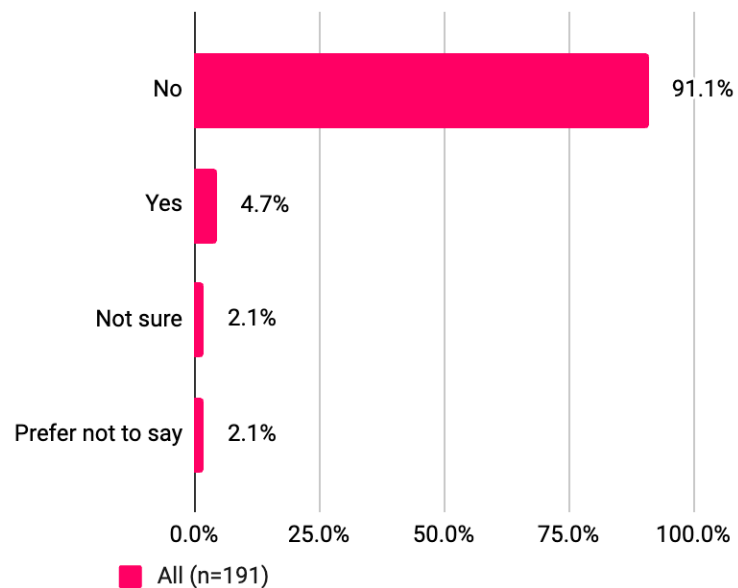
A small proportion of respondents (5%, n=193) currently reside in the designated area. A similar percentage (5%) reported having lived there previously. An additional 7% indicated they know people who currently live in the area. The majority, 81%, reported no direct connection to these areas through current residency, past residency, or knowing someone who lives there.

Receipt of eviction notice

For monitoring purposes, all respondents were asked if their household had received an eviction notice.

A majority (91%, n=191) of respondents reported that their household had not received an eviction notice, while only 5% indicated they had received one. Out of the ones who did, 1 lived in the Litani River area, 3 used to live there but moved, and 6 did not.

Figure 15. Receipt of eviction notice - Respondents who live in the area - Single choice



Of those who knew people living in the concerned areas, 6 respondents said the household had received an eviction notice, 5 were unsure, and 3 said no.

Time given for eviction

Respondents who received an eviction notice and those who knew people that did were asked how much time they were given to leave their shelter.

Of the 8 respondents who personally received an eviction notice, 3 were not given a clear deadline, while 2 were given 15 days, and another 2 were given less than 15 days. One respondent did not know the notice period.

Among the 6 respondents who knew someone who received an eviction notice, the notice periods varied: 3 individuals were given 15 days to leave, 1 individual was given less than 15 days, and 2 individuals were not given a clear deadline.

Action taken after eviction notice

Both respondents who had received an eviction notice and those who knew individuals who received one were then asked about whether they had taken follow up action.

Of the 8 respondents, 6 had already been evicted from their shelters. One chose to vacate their shelter voluntarily after receiving an eviction notice, while another remained in their shelter

despite the notice.

Out of the respondents who knew people who received an eviction notice, one reported that they were evicted. 4 individuals indicated their acquaintances chose to leave voluntarily after receiving the notice, and one individual stated they had not yet left but intended to do so soon.

Alternative safe shelter

Among individuals who were evicted or were soon to be, 7 did not have a safe alternative place to stay, compared to 1 who did.

Similarly, for the 6 respondents who knew others who were evicted, 5 reported that these families had no alternative shelter, and 1 was unsure if alternative shelter was available. This highlights a significant lack of safe alternative housing options for displaced individuals and families.

Key concerns and information needs regarding evictions for people living in the Litani River area or who were evicted

Individuals who had received an eviction notice or resided in areas subject to such notices from the Litani River Authority were asked to identify their primary concerns regarding actual or impending eviction, in order to elucidate the immediate and pressing challenges faced by affected communities.

The primary concerns of the respondents centered around financial support for rent or housing, identified by 11 out of the 17 concerned individuals. Following this, an equal number of respondents (5 each) expressed worries about securing a safe place to stay and obtaining support for their children, including schooling and shelter. Protection from harassment or arrest was a significant concern for 4 respondents. Additionally, 3 respondents were anxious about assistance for returning to Syria, and another 3 were concerned about access to essential provisions like food and basic supplies. Information regarding available services and support was sought by 2 respondents. Finally, emotional or psychological support and transportation to a different location were each desired by 1 respondent.

Awareness of legal advice and rights

Respondents who lived in the Litani River area or who had received an eviction were then asked about their awareness of their rights and whether they had received legal advice regarding this eviction, which could reveal the extent of their understanding and access to legal resources in this situation.

Out of the 17 respondents who had received an eviction notice, none had received legal advice or had their rights explained to them.

Support needed to feel more protected

Respondents who had either lived in the Litani River area or received an eviction notice were subsequently asked about the kind of support they would require to feel safer or more protected.

Financial assistance for basic needs and rebuilding (10 responses)

The most frequently mentioned need is financial support. This is crucial for covering basic living costs such as rent, food, and medicine, as well as for the larger expense of rebuilding a home in Syria.

"Financial support so we can pay the rent and secure food and medicine"

"Enough money for me to return to my country, fix my house and live in it"

"I need money to get a place to live for a while."

Support for vulnerable family members (health, food, medicine) (6 responses)

A significant number of responses highlight the need for support related to the health and well-being of vulnerable family members, including children, the elderly, and those with specific medical conditions.

"My daughter is sick and needs treatment, and here in Lebanon or Syria, I cannot treat her at all."

"I am 68 years old and sick, and my wife is 61 years old and has cancer. She had a kidney removed, and she also has diabetes and high blood pressure."

Legal and administrative support (5 responses)

Respondents also express a need for legal and administrative assistance to navigate their situations. This includes help with residency fees and travel documentation, as well as more general legal aid.

"I hope that my travel file will be reviewed again."

"First, reducing the fees for residency in Lebanon and hospitalization."

"Legal, health, and educational support"

Resettlement to a third country (2 responses)

Some individuals see resettlement to a third country as the only viable solution for their safety and future.

"Resettlement to a third country"

"I need to educate my children in one of the European countries"

Education for children (2 responses)

The education of children is a specific concern, with some respondents linking it to the need for resettlement.

"I need to educate my children in one of the European countries"

"Legal, health, and educational support"

Information and communication (1 response)

One respondent expressed a need for clearer and more reliable information from humanitarian organizations.

"More information and realistic and qualified decisions from local and international organizations, and there is clarity in the decisions."

Usefulness of the information flyer

An information flyer was provided to this group about the support available for people in Lebanon who are facing the threat of eviction or are currently being evicted. It was generally well-received,

with a majority (12 out of 19) of respondents rating it as excellent (5 stars). When considering positive ratings (excellent and good), 15 out of 19 respondents provided a rating of 4 stars or higher. However, a small minority (4 out of 19) found the information less helpful, with 1 respondent rating it average, 1 as poor, and 2 as very poor.

Key concerns and information needs of individuals knowing people who live in the Litani River area

Based on the responses from 14 individuals familiar with those in or near affected areas, financial support for housing emerged as the most significant concern (9 respondents). Protection from harassment or arrest was also a major worry (8 respondents), closely followed by the need for a safe place to stay (6 respondents). Transportation and support for children were concerns for an equal number of respondents (4 each), indicating these are also notable, though less prevalent, issues.

Awareness of legal advice and rights

Respondents who had connections to individuals in the eviction area were subsequently queried on their perception of those individuals' awareness of their rights and whether they had obtained legal counsel concerning the eviction.

7 respondents stated that the concerned individuals did not know their rights, and 7 respondents were unsure.

Usefulness of the information flyer

The same information flyer was provided to this second group, about available support for people in Lebanon who are facing the threat of eviction or are currently being evicted. It was also generally well-received, with a majority of respondents (7 out of 12) rating it as excellent (5 stars). One respondent found it good (4 stars), while three rated it average (3 stars). A single respondent rated the flyer as poor (2 stars).

Conclusion and future research

The findings of this report underscore the complex and precarious situation of Syrian refugees in Lebanon. While some individuals expressed a desire to return to Syria with adequate support, the prevailing sentiment is one of fear, anxiety, and practical inability to return due to destroyed homes, lack of infrastructure, and persistent insecurity. The recent GDGS decision, intended to facilitate exit from Lebanon, has largely been met with confusion and apprehension, viewed by many as a tactic to pressure their departure rather than a genuine solution. This is exacerbated by the ongoing economic hardships and perceived marginalization within Lebanon, creating a climate of legal and psychological instability.

Despite few respondents in this conversation being directly impacted by evictions along the Litani River, critical needs for safe shelter and legal support remain for those evicted all across Lebanon. The widespread lack of awareness regarding legal rights and access to information further complicates their plight. The emotional responses to these situations range from relief to frustration and apathy, reflecting the diverse and often contradictory realities experienced by the refugee community.

Furthermore, the emerging violence in Sweida, southern Syria, introduces another layer of profound uncertainty, reinforcing the deeply held fears about safety and stability upon return. While a consistent number of refugees still plan to return to Syria, a significant portion continues to view it as unsafe, expressing uncertainty and fear regardless of administrative exemptions or limited financial incentives. The growing instability in the region, coupled with the internal pressures in Lebanon, traps many refugees in an untenable limbo.

Upinion will continue to monitor the long-term impacts of the GDGS decision, the evolving security situation in Syria, and its impact on return intentions, and the situation and experiences of those who return (both temporarily and permanently). Noteworthy, Upinion is currently hosting a conversation with affected communities in Sweida to gather the perspectives of affected people on their priority needs, perception of the situation, and pertaining safety and security risks.

More importantly, there is a critical need to explore sustainable and dignified alternative solutions for Syrian refugees in Lebanon, including comprehensive support for those who cannot return due to persistent insecurity and lack of basic necessities in Syria. Understanding the nuanced needs of specific vulnerable groups, such as families with sick members or those from particular sects,

will be crucial in developing targeted and effective interventions. Ultimately, the international community must acknowledge the multifaceted challenges faced by these refugees and collaborate to ensure their protection and the realization of safe, voluntary, and dignified solutions.

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