**REPORTS ON DISCRIMINATION, SEGREGATION AND THE RIGHT TO ADEQUATE HOUSING**

QUESTIONNAIRE

**BASIC INFORMATION**

1. Name of Individual, Organization, Institution, Agency or State: Public Works Studio

Type of Entity\*

National Government or federal governmental ministry/agency

Inter-governmental organization or UN agency

Local or regional government, agency, representative or mayor

Association, tenant union or housing cooperative

NGO network, umbrella organization

Community-based NGO

Academia

Foundation

National human rights organization, ombudsperson

Real estate, urban planning or construction

Real estate investor or investment fund

Trade Union

Other:

2. Categorization of your Work

Please select one or more responses, as appropriate.

Public administration

Advocacy

Funding

Legal Assistance

Networking

Policy

Research

Technical Assistance

Training

N/A

Other:

3. City/Town: Beirut

4. State/Province: Beirut

5. Country (please indicate your region or “international” if focus the work of your organization covers multiple countries); Lebanon

**HOUSING DISCRIMINATION**

7. What specific forms of de facto or legal discrimination or barriers towards equal enjoyment of the right to adequate housing do the following groups face in your country (please provide evidence with examples, studies, reports and relevant statistical information):

**• Migrants, foreigners, refugees, internally displaced persons**

- **Migrant workers’** presence in Lebanon is governed by a Kafala system that strips them of their civil rights. A large migrant community live independently from their employer’s houses, which is considered illegal and consequently produces vulnerability in their access and security of housing. With the current economic collapse and COVID-19 state measures, the migrant community (mainly from Ethiopia, Bangladesh, Sri Lanka, Nigeria, Sieralleone..) is increasingly subjected to evictions and abuse.

A detailed report based on the Housing Monitor data in [English](https://housingmonitor.org/en/content/migrant-workers-and-refugees-are-facing-dilemma-specter-eviction-hovers-economic-crisis) and [Arabic](https://housingmonitor.org/content/%D8%A8%D9%8A%D9%86-%D8%B3%D9%86%D8%AF%D8%A7%D9%86-%D8%A7%D9%84%D8%AD%D9%82-%D9%81%D9%8A-%D8%A7%D9%84%D8%B3%D9%83%D9%86-%D9%88%D9%85%D8%B7%D8%B1%D9%82%D8%A9-%D8%A7%D9%84%D8%A3%D8%B2%D9%85%D8%A9-%D8%A7%D9%84%D8%A7%D9%82%D8%AA%D8%B5%D8%A7%D8%AF%D9%8A%D8%A9-%D8%B4%D8%A8%D8%AD-%D8%A7%D9%84%D8%A5%D8%AE%D9%84%D8%A7%D8%A1-%D9%8A%D9%87%D8%AF%D9%91%D8%AF-%D8%A7%D9%84%D8%B9%D9%85%D8%A7%D9%84-%D8%A7%D9%84%D8%A3%D8%AC%D8%A7%D9%86%D8%A8).

- **Over one million Syrian refugees** are not recognized as ‘refugees’ in Lebanon, and obtaining residencies is made very difficult, which subjects Syrian refugees to constant risk. This is fueled by a [political discourse that vilifies refugees](https://publicworksstudio.com/ar/articles/%D8%A8%D8%B4%D8%B1%D9%91%D9%8A%D8%8C-%D9%83%D9%8A%D9%81-%D9%8A%D8%B9%D9%85%D9%84-%D8%A7%D9%84%D8%AE%D8%B7%D8%A7%D8%A8-%D8%A7%D9%84%D8%B3%D9%8A%D8%A7%D8%B3%D9%8A-%D8%B9%D9%84%D9%89-%D8%AA%D8%B4%D8%B1%D9%8A%D8%B9-%D8%A7%D9%84%D8%AC%D8%B1%D9%8A%D9%85%D8%A9-%D8%A7%D9%84%D8%AC%D9%85%D8%A7%D8%B9%D9%8A%D8%A9) encouraging abuse by the host population. Repeatedly, forced evictions of camps in rural areas took place, as well as urban mass evictions. The UNHCR has also stopped registering refugees, so very few actually have documentation that could protect them. Moreover, several villages applied a [curfew for Syiran refugees](https://reliefweb.int/report/lebanon/measures-impacting-refugees-lebanon-curfews-january-2020).

- Housing, Land and Property Issues of Syrian Refugees in Lebanon from Homs City - Implications of the Protracted Refugee Crisis:<https://data2.unhcr.org/en/documents/details/67943>

- Our Homes Are Not for Strangers” Mass Evictions of Syrian Refugees by Lebanese Municipalities:<https://www.hrw.org/sites/default/files/report_pdf/lebanon0418_web.pdf>

-   In Constant Fear Of Eviction - An Analysis Of Shelter Insecurity For Vulnerable Refugee Households In Lebanon During Covid-19:<https://www.nrc.no/globalassets/pdf/reports/in-constant-fear-of-eviction/in-constant-fear-of-eviction_lpc-irc_july-2020.pdf>

- The Consequences of Limited Legal Status for Syrian Refugees in Lebanon: [the-consequences-of-limited-legal-status-for-syrian-refugees-in-lebanon.pdf (nrc.no)](https://www.nrc.no/globalassets/pdf/reports/the-consequences-of-limited-legal-status-for-syrian-refugees-in-lebanon.pdf)

- **Palestinian refugees** are still living in camps since 1948, where basic services are lacking. In 2001, a law was passed [hindering Palestinian refugees from owning land](http://www.lpdc.gov.lb/property-ownership/the-palestinian-refugee-and-the-property-ownership/56/ar%23). In 2007, Nahr el Bared camp in Northern Lebanon was bombed by the Lebanese Army and razed to the ground. Although a reconstruction process was put in place, 30% of the original population did not return, and a big number lives in inadequate housing conditions.

<https://www.unrwa.org/sites/default/files/lebanon_protection_brief_october_2017.pdf>

UNRWA Protection brief: Palestininans living in Lebanon, 2017

<http://www.lpdc.gov.lb/labor/the-palestinian-worker-in-the-lebanese-labor-marke/49/en>

LPDC explaining labor law and its implications on Palestinians

- **Internally displaced people:** Lebanon has suffered several wars as well as disproportionate development that focuses on the capital and disregards the peripheries. Since the 50’s migration started from southern villages to Beirut, which resulted in creating large informal neighborhoods. In fact, [more than 50%  of the population lives informally in Lebanon](https://data.worldbank.org/indicator/EN.POP.SLUM.UR.ZS). The 1975-1990 war resulted in displacement and segregation of neighborhoods in the capital, and divided Beirut into a Christian east and Muslim west. Beyond the capital, forced displacement [caused segregation of the Lebanese population across the country](https://books.openedition.org/ifpo/13222?lang=en), where one third did not return after the war ended. Reconciliation after the 15 years war was never properly carried out and the amnesty law passed in 1991 resulted in the same warlords ruling the country. In less than a month, the 2006 Israeli Invasion of Lebanon [led to the destruction of historic cores in several southern villages](https://www.routledge.com/Lessons-in-Post-War-Reconstruction-Case-Studies-from-Lebanon-in-the-Aftermath/Al-Harithy/p/book/9780415571050) creating unsustainable urban sprawl.

**• Women, children or older persons**

**- Women and Children:** Under the Lebanse Personal Status law, [women and children are discriminated upon](https://www.hrw.org/report/2015/01/19/unequal-and-unprotected/womens-rights-under-lebanese-personal-status-laws). Lebanese women cannot pass nationality to their children or to their foreign spouse. Also divorce, children’s custody and property rights are governed by 15 different religious laws and autonomous courts, where no holistic civil code is enforced. Inheritance laws subject many women to evictions, since they are minor shareholders in shared properties, which in many cases have led non-residing men to sell their majority shares for real estate development.

# Case studies:

# [Housing, Displacement and The Elderly: Intersectional Spatial Narratives](https://www.relief-centre.org/graphic-stories)

# [Um Yumna’s Eviction: *The Suburbs: A Destination For The City’s Most Vulnerable*](https://www.relief-centre.org/um-yumnas-eviction)

# [Um Hassan's New House: *The Costs Of Staying In The City*](https://www.relief-centre.org/um-hassan)

**- Older persons:** A new rent law issued in 2014 and amended in 2017 has stripped many old tenants from their human right to housing. This law is especially discriminatory against older persons since it applies to rental contracts before 1992, raising them to market value and then terminating the contracts within the span of 9 years. Driven by the intent to provide more prime land for real estate development, this law targets the retired and the elderly, whose resources have dilapidated across the years, making them one of the most vulnerable social groups and extremely susceptible when uprooted it from their communities and familiar surroundings. Moreover, the same law discrimanites against Palestinian and non-Lebanese tenants renting before 1992, excluding them from an alleged fund (that was never activated) to cover market value rents for low income tenants.

# [Lebanon: Rejecting the New Rent Law: An Open Letter to the Parliament and a march](https://por.habitants.org/news/habitantes_do_oriente_medio/lebanon_rejecting_the_new_rent_law_an_open_letter_to_the_parliament_and_a_march)

**• Persons with disabilities**

In the year 2000, Law 220 passed making important commitments to persons with disabilities, however it remained largely a dysfunctional law. In most buildings and public domain, accessibility is not ensured.

Rehabilitations following the devastating explosion on August 4 2020 in Beirut’s Port, does not account for accessibility.

The new rent law issued in 2014 and amended in 2017 does not account to persons with disabilities.

• **LGBTQ persons**

Lack or inadequacy of safe and sustainable shelter is a precursor to **human rights violations**, disproportionately impacting the LGBTQ community. Unpublished researach by Oxfam and Helem (first LGBTQ rights organization in the Arab World) point to **a growing housing crisis among LGBTQ individuals**, especially in Beirut and Mount Lebanon - the governorates considered safest for sexual and gender non-conforming people. The Beirut Blast was a major compounding factor, as it affected the areas of Gemmayzeh and Mar Mikhael, arguably Beirut’s most LGBTQ-friendly areas, and devastated Qarantina and Burj Hammoud which host the majority of Beirut’s LGBTQ working class, including refugees, trans individuals, and sex workers. Around 15% of Helem’s homelessness cases involved youth escaping family homes after being outed or a confrontation with parents. These included cases of forced marriage, domestic abuse, home imprisonment, conversion therapy, and psychological torture. Moreover, LGBTQ individuals face discriminatory practices along their housing trajectories.

**• Low income persons, including people living in poverty**

Although Lebanon is binded by the [constitution and international treaties](https://housingmonitor.org/content/%D8%A7%D9%84%D8%AA%D8%B2%D8%A7%D9%85%D8%A7%D8%AA-%D9%84%D8%A8%D9%86%D8%A7%D9%86-%D8%A7%D9%84%D8%AF%D9%88%D9%84%D9%8A%D8%A9-%D8%A8%D8%A7%D9%84%D8%AD%D9%82-%D9%81%D9%8A-%D8%A7%D9%84%D8%B3%D9%83%D9%86-%D8%A8%D9%8A%D9%86-%D8%A7%D9%84%D9%86%D8%B5%D9%91%C2%A0%D9%88%D8%A7%D9%84%D8%AA%D8%B7%D8%A8%D9%8A%D9%82) to ensure the right to housing, the total lack of a housing policy places the majority of the population at risk, systematically violating a basic human right. People living in poverty have no options to secure and adequate housing. They mainly live informally in dense poverty pockets on the suburbs of major cities. Notwithstanding, tenants in informality are subjected to evictions, which constitutes a major form of violence, since these neighborhoods are their last resorts to shelter within an environment denying the basic right to housing.

[Situation of the Human Right to Adequate Housing in Lebanon](http://www.hlrn.org/img/documents/UPR_HR2AH_final.pdf)

**• Residents of informal settlements; persons experiencing homelessness**

**Residents of informal settlements:** there is no official recognition of informality in Lebanon, as such residents are banned from carrying out maintenance work to the houses. This is especially the case in Palestinian camps, that are heavily securitized and where entrances of some have checkpoints by the Lebanese army banning building material to enter the camps.

On the other hand, evictions linger in informal neighborhoods, especially those on prime land or that impede the construction of highways, such as [the case of Shabriha](https://legal-agenda.com/%D8%A7%D9%84%D8%A3%D8%B1%D8%B6%E2%80%AD-%E2%80%AC%D9%84%D9%85%D9%86%E2%80%AD-%E2%80%AC%D9%8A%D8%B2%D8%B1%D8%B9%D9%87%D8%A7%E2%80%AD%E2%80%AC-%D8%A3%D8%B5%D8%AD%D8%A7%D8%A8%E2%80%AD-%E2%80%AC%D8%A7/) in South Lebanon.

Municipal land is rarely used for the public good and, when it is, it is mainly for the benefit of religious institutions. Some of the informal building practices have taken place on municipal land, and these pose valuable opportunities for local authorities to devise and implement affordable housing programs. Instead, without obtaining a court order, the municipality of Beirut very recently attempted to [illegally and forcefully evict households living on municipal last since the 1950’s](https://publicworksstudio.com/ar/badawi-eviction). Residents claimed ownership to houses they built or informally bought, whereas the municipality claims ownership to the land, which it opted to grant to the church that now plans to convert it into a parking lot.

**Homeslessness:** Making the housing crisis invisible is connected to the low level of homelessness in the country. This is mainly due to the fact that there are no housing regulations whatsoever enforcing adequate and dignified housing standards. As such, anything can be rented in the country, ranging from abandoned and unserviced buildings to garages with no windows and proper ventilation. Nonetheless, homelessness is on the rise, however, the phenomenon is made even more invisible by forcibly removing homeless people from central neighborhoods to the peripheries. This practice mimics planning practices and the construction of highway networks that fly over low income neighborhoods, rendering them invisible while creating borders that disconnect neighborhoods from each other.

8. Discrimination in housing can affect various dimensions of the right to adequate housing and other human rights. Could you provide more details regarding the specific areas in which housing discrimination is experienced? Below are examples of various forms of discrimination that can be experienced in relation to different dimensions of the right to adequate housing:

*Accessibility*

1. Lack of access to affordable land with services is one of the central housing problems in the country that affects several segments of the society. Given minimum lot regulations (no less than 1000 sq.m. in the suburbs of the capital), and the existing price of land, it is virtually impossible for low income households to access small lots on which they could build their houses*.*

1. Marginalization is experienced by different Lebanese regions – so called «peripheral» – due to the dysfunctionality of the urban planning system, planning practices, and the lack of land use management. In fact, 85% of Lebanese territories are still unplanned, and in such areas, many low-income land owners are deprived from obtaining construction permits (a high percentage of plots doesn’t meet the minimum allowed area for construction specified by building regulations; many plots are co-owned by many people – mainly heirs – and there is an inability to obtain the signatures of all co-owners on the construction permit, etc.) Consequently, many buildings are being illegally built to achieve the need of housing, and are unconnected to the public water distribution, electricity and sewage system. The lack of design and planning standards in many of these buildings is also a reason for depriving some from good ventilation and access to natural light. The public water distribution system is also inefficient by itself; supply is frequently interrupted, and the network coverage is inconsistent across the country, even in the planned areas: water does not reach towns, neighborhoods and refugee camps equally, similarly to the electricity supply.
2. Lebanon did not implement any social housing programs yet, therefore, we cannot talk about any discrimination in accessing such housing. However, in relation to housing for rental, discrimination is noted in an article within the new rent law issued back in 2014. As per this article, non-Lebanese old tenants, among which the Palestinians form the majority, were discriminated against, with an impossibility for them to benefit from the low-income tenants’ financial support fund.

1. To date, Lebanon has not devised any policy that guarantees housing services or housing provision to homeless people or domestic abuse survivors. Lebanon also lacks a national disaster management plan and strategy, with a lack of any emergency housing provision. Historically, such provisions, whether they are formal or informal (such as occupying vacant buildings, squatting on unused land, etc.), were exclusively provided or supported either by international organizations who choose a limited number of beneficiaries, or by sectarian parties and religious bodies, who often create schisms in the community by singling out their selected constituents and beneficiaries.

After the recent Beirut port blast, the residents have witnessed similarly the involvement of INGOs, NGOs, sectarian parties and religious bodies in the relief efforts (renovation, provision of shelter and/or provision of cash for rent, etc.), which caused discrimination on the basis of religion, sect, nationality and housing tenure (tenants with written rent contracts, tenants with no written rent contracts, owners, etc.), and fed into clientelist relations at the expense of collective rights.

Check Public Works’ article on clientelism:

<https://publicworksstudio.com/en/node/83>

1. In 2000, Lebanon adopted Law 220 on the Rights of Disabled Persons (Law 220/2000), several years before the adoption of the CRPD. The law is mainly built around a set of rights integrating persons with disabilities such as establishing a quota of accessible housing units in residential projects for these persons. Few big development projects complied with the law, mainly those registered after its enforcement, however, the majority of old and new residential buildings in the country do not provide such quota, making the accessibility of housing for persons with disabilities limited. Additionally, all old residential buildings and a high percentage of new ones do not comply with the minimum criteria of accessibility, including reserved parking spaces, accessible entrances, availability of wheelchair ramps, and adequate elevators and toilets, which makes it hard for persons with disabilities and old people to access housing in such buildings or limits their access to the upper floors.

*Habitability*

1. With the lack of affordable housing policies and regulations for adequate housing provision, landlords take advantage to make more profits from apartments by providing different rental arrangements – including systems in which a large number of families/individuals pool to rent one small apartment – without incurring costs for maintenance. The unmaintained unit becomes overcrowded and in very bad conditions, and is mainly accessed by the most vulnerable social groups, such as the poor, migrant workers and Syrian refugees. In and by themselves, the housing conditions of migrant workers are a serious housing problem given the very low standards of living to which these workers –mostly men- are confined.

On another level, the poor housing conditions of Palestinian refugees living in camps and gatherings has been exacerbated by a series of government policies which deny the right of Palestinian refugees to improve their housing, under the pretext of resisting Palestininan naturalization and safeguarding their right of rertuen. In fact, the government has prohibited the entry of building materials into official refugee camps since the late 1990s, a discriminatory measure only taken in relation to Palestinian camps. While all the buildings in the camps require regular maintenance, no materials used for new buildings, renovation, and repair works are allowed in the camps, which has led to deterioration in the state of houses and the physical infrastructure.

Additionally, the recent Beirut port blast revealed a discrimination against tenants to obtain permits for restoration of damaged buildings. [The problem of obtaining permits](https://publicworksstudio.com/ar/articles/authorities-intervention-blast) is due to the exclusive right the owner has to submit a permit application, or the need to attach the application with a written consent of the owner allowing the tenant to repair. In the event that the landlord refuses to repair or prevents the tenant from repairing, the tenant is facing a serious risk of displacement.

1. Maintenance is not formalized in the country and often become a point of tension between tenants, landlords and local authorities (which several recent incidents of homes collapsing on their residents can testify to). A famous accident happened in 2014, where a [building in Fassouh Neighborhood in Beirut fell](https://beirutwalls.wordpress.com/2012/02/08/%D8%A5%D9%86%D9%87%D9%8A%D8%A7%D8%B1-%D9%85%D8%A8%D9%86%D9%89-%D9%88%D8%A5%D8%AC%D8%B1%D8%A7%D8%A1%D8%AA-%D8%B3%D9%84%D8%B7%D8%A9/) killing 27 people. It is estimated that [16 thousand buildings](https://al-akhbar.com/Community/225634) have not been renovated in BEirut since the 1970’s

1. Exposure to other risks which render housing uninhabitable is also observed. Reported threats of evictions to migrants, LGBTQ and refugees communities include sexual and gender based violence, as well as extra-legal measures taken by landlords, such as cutting off water and electricity supply, and locking up tenants or breaking in.

*Affordability*

Lebanon lacks affordable housing policies and regulations for adequate housing provision, and housing finance mechanisms, in the form of loans for homeownership, are the main (and in fact only) housing policy adopted. However, and despite limited subsidies, public and private finance mechanisms are inaccessible to the vast majority of the population, which is not eligible to access loans or acquire them. Almost all banks charge fees for processing loans that range between several hundred to over a thousand dollars. They also systematically require life and home insurance as well as other guarantees (including primary and sometimes secondary collaterals), proofs of steady income, and are restricted to specific income and age groups. And while the Public Corporation for Housing is designed to provide particular facilities for families unable to access regular bank loans in order to purchase or built a house, it also restricts area of the apartments to be purchased, and also applies a number of restrictions (e.g. age, years of citizenship, etc.), requires life and disability and home insurance, among other restrictions.

*Security of tenure*

1. In relation to inheritance: there are three main legal frameworks for inheritance in Lebanon, each operating under a different understanding of Family Law and, by extension, of inheritance rights. This institutional pluralism places members of different sects on unequal grounds before the law when it comes to inheritance. It also extends beyond inheritance to include marriage, divorce and child custody, all matters that are intertwined with housing and tenure security. In some sects, gendered laws further discriminate along the lines of gender, often placing women in a position of weakness with regards to their tenure security.

1. In relation to ownership: the issued property law (Decree 296) in May 2001, prohibits Palestinian refugees from the ownership of property and deprives them of the right to transfer their already purchased apartments and deeds to their children. This restriction on the right to own property greatly diminishes the possibility for Palestinians to be guaranteed a degree of security of tenure outside of camps, leaving a majority of them to remain in overcrowded and often unsanitary gatherings.

1. In relation to compensation for loss or damage of housing: Following the recent explosion in Beirut Port, a discrimination in aid distribution was witnessed between tenants and owners, and also between citizens and foreigners (including migrant workers and Syrian refugees). The unclear compensation scheme by the government caused disputes between tenants and owners over their right to receive aid from the army and the higher relied council, while the aid distribution process by the NGOs wasn’t monitored to ensure that they reach all the affected people without discrimination. Other examples of compensation witnessed discrimination, such as the compensation by the Lebanese authorities to the Palestinian refugees in **Shabriha gathering**, who were told to evict their homes for the sake of extending a highway. The compensation was not enough for them to secure their tenure / housing elsewhere.

1. In relation to the differential treatment in land or title registration, permission of housing construction: Check details above in “Accessibility” section and below in “location” section.

*Availability of services, materials, facilities and infrastructure*

Discrimination in relation to the access to services is tightly linked to the access to land and to the marginalization experienced by different Lebanese regions due to the [dysfunctionality of the urban planning system](https://www.jadaliyya.com/Details/38061/Master-Planning-in-Lebanon-Manufacturing-Landscapes-of-Inequality), planning practices, and the lack of land use management. (For more details check the “Accessibility” section above). Note that with COVID-19, it became obvious how the health care services are centered in the capital and big cities. The hospitals in other Lebanese regions do not have the necessary equipment and staffing to give proper health care.

*Location*

1. While there is a so-called «freedom of choice» of the place of residency in the country, housing options are often chosen in conformity to sectarian affiliations or origins, or even imposed. In fact, local officials and municipalities in some towns/villages impose bans on selling or renting properties to some religions, sects, nationalities or social groups discreetly, or announce it publicly (e.g. Hadath town). Some local officials have also decreased the construction exploitation ratios in their villages/towns in order to [prevent mass construction projects and/or the attraction of undesirable social groups](https://www.jadaliyya.com/Details/38068/The-Apprehensions-of-the-Past-in-Building-the-Future-Do-the-Master-Plans-for-Damour-and-Dibbiyeh-Encourage-Return) (e.g. Damour town), while in other villages and towns only locals are allowed to buy property.

In particular, Palestinian refugees are largely deprived of access to rent in many Lebanese areas, and are confined spatially to Palestinian camps.

The country also witnessed curfew enforcements imposed on Syrian refugees in some towns, making the presence of refugees in public spaces illegal during the night (e.g. Bourj Hammoud in 2015). Also a number of municipalities ban renting out apartments to Syrians.

1. Poor urban planning practices resulted in a number of environmental and spatial injustices that became manifest over time. For example, with high exploitation ratios near the power plant of Zouk Mikael, construction of residential buildings proliferated, and rent prices or property purchase prices became cheaper due to the pollution, which attracted the low-income social groups to live there. [Dense Neighborhoods became exposed to major health risks](https://www.jadaliyya.com/Details/38069) such as respiratory diseases. Another example is in [Koura Caza, where in the absence of any legal control to deter the activity of quarries](https://www.beyondcement.org/), the quarries were expanded, causing the deterioration of the productivity and value of neighboring lands, and exposing the residents of the caza to air, water and soil pollution, in addition to noise and the risk of landslides. Such scenes are recurrent in the country, and people – the most disenfranchised – are exposed to environmental health risks (e.g. living near dumpsites in Bourj Hammoud, Tripoli, Saida, Costa Brava,), flooding (e.g. living in Hay el Sellom next to Al Ghadir river or in informal neighborhoods of Ouzai), etc.
2. Concerning security in towns or neighborhoods, policing and law enforcement are concentrated around politicians’ housing, public institutions, in high-end neighborhoods or gated communities and between demarcation lines to prevent riots. There is no security to protect the dwellers in low-end neighborhoods, informal settlements and refugee camps, coupled with poor urban services and infrastructure – particularly inadequate street lighting, poor road surface quality and road closures – which also constitute physical and security constraints. Generally, some towns/neighborhoods are feared, and their residents are discriminated against. Feelings of insecurity stem mainly from issues related to crowding, the presence of conflicts and troublemakers, as well as alcohol consumption, drug abuse, recurrent car accidents and stealing.

*Cultural adequacy*

Syrian refugees are discriminated against. Lebanon witnessed curfew enforcements imposed on Syrian refugees in some towns, making their presence in public spaces illegal during the night. There are also informal restrictions on the entrance of Syrian families to some public gardens and playgrounds. Similar restrictions are witnessed on the entrance of Lebanese citizens to such spaces in some towns/ areas based on their gender or religion.

9. Are there any particular current laws, policies or practices in your country, region or town/community that contribute to or exacerbate discrimination in relation to the right to adequate housing?

1. A highly controversial law that passed in 2014 and amended in 2017 puts the **elderly population** benefitting from rent control contracts prior to 1992 under an imminent threat of eviction. Their rents are meant to match exorbitant market prices that far exceed the majority’s pensions or assets. It also leaves the elderly population unprotected from eviction even if they were to afford the rent increases, as the main purpose of the law is for the benefit of real estate investment and speculation; taking the form of demolishing old buildings and pooling land for highrises [that remain mostly vacant](https://lcps-lebanon.org/featuredArticle.php?id=319).

In addition, the 2017 law ending the previous rent control explicitly denies the benefit of rent support to low income **non-Lebanese tenants**, knowing that a portion of the contracts currently under rent control are for Palestinian tenants.

2.Non-unified, religious personal status laws that rule matters of marriage, divorce, and inheritance in Lebanon have, over generations, largely contributed to the disparity in the right to adequate and secure housing between men and women by denying women an equal right to inheritance and inequitable asset distribution and spouse benefits post-divorce. This matter is in itself exacerbated by the absence of any civil personal status law, thus making discriminatory religious laws as the only governing laws.

3.The absence of supervision over housing providers and their compliance to safe housing regulation has allowed for a large segment of the rental market to thrive in dire, inhumane, and unsafe conditions. Multiple housing arrangements with the unregulated and unsupervised housing market seems to be the only provider of “affordable”, yet inadequate housing near and within urban areas, catering mainly to marginalized and vulnerable populations of migrants, refugees, and LBTQ community members.

4. Residents of informal areas live in precarious conditions, and often have no access to formal mechanisms of reporting, and thus are pushed into cycles of exploitation.

5. Interventions and responses in the areas affected by the Beirut port blast of August 2020, by both the government and the NGOs, including the distribution of compensations, relief packages, and renovations, have not taken into account the unequal power dynamics between local landlords and tenants who belong to vulnerable social groups, such as migrants and refugees - which creates exploitative vulnerable housing conditions. The repercussions of these post-explosion “aid” practices are already evident by increasing rents for refugee and migrant tenants.

10. Can you explain exemptions in national law that allow (certain) public, private or religious housing providers to give preferential or exclusive access to housing to members of a particular group, for example based on membership, employment contract, public service, age, disability, civil status, sex, gender, religion, income or other criteria?

Religious institutions provide affordable housing in dowery land **(Waqef)**, often exclusively,  to their constituents.    Lebanese government allows **dedicated housing loans through special protocols for members of the judiciary system, armed forces and security forces.** Housing projects were built in the early 1930’s under the French mandate, **exclusively for the Armenian refugees**. Land was purchased to build permanent housing, funded by several private and religious institutions. The Armenian community is now an integral part of the population in Lebanon. They have also maintained an Armanenian identity in several neighborhoods (such as Burj Hammoud), and cities (such as Anjar) across Lebanon.  This inclusionary response is in stark contrast in addressing the needs of  Palestinian refugees for adequate housing. They still live in camps under inadequate living conditions, and their presence is governed by discriminatory laws and practices in accessing land and housing.

11. In case there may be differential treatment of particular groups in relation to housing, please explain why such treatment could be justifiable according to international human rights standards - for example positive measures benefiting a particular group to overcome systematic discrimination or disadvantage-or if it would amount to discrimination?

The current housing situation of Palestinians, living in overcrowded and under-serviced camps across the country, presents a clear example of how the preferential treatment of Armenian refugees at the time was necessary to help the community access secure tenure and dignified housing over generations to come.

**SPATIAL AND RESIDENTIAL SEGREGATION**

12. What forms of spatial segregation along racial, caste, ethnicity, religion, nationality, migration status, heritage, economic status/income or other social grounds can be observed in urban and urban-rural contexts in your country?

In addition to the decade old patterns of sectarian division that Beirut is infamous for, we are witnessing the emergence of a new form of segregation, largely based on socioeconomic class. Beirut is a city with very few gated communities, yet nevertheless exhibits severe forms of socio-spatial segregation. According to Alaily-Mattar (2008), she argues that this segregation is best conceptualised as a layer, through which affluent residents expand their “gated activities” over the totality of the city, rather than remaining within one isolated area (2008:265). This form of segregation is not necessarily manifest in the physical urban fabric but rather with “the players, with their ways of life, their circulation patterns, their values, and their goals.” (ibid:270).

Additionally, security and geographies of fear play an important role in driving segregation in Beirut, and it is a reflection of and catalyst for social and political divisions. The divided city along sectarian and socioeconomic lines expresses itself materially in security mechanisms (such as checkpoints, security cameras, and barbed wire) as well as residentsʼ routes and destination choices. Together, these practices in turn reinforce the segregation that first produced them.

Yet the most obvious physical manifestation of segregation is that related to Palestinian refugee camps and informal settlements.

Rural migration, refugees from the south and from Palestine, as well as migrant workers from neighbouring countries all fueled the so-called city’s “misery belt”, which gained visibility from the 1960s (DGU 1973, Tabet 2001). These neighbourhoods with poor living conditions housed the successive waves of rural migrants as well as foreign refugees and workers whose numbers were estimated at some 60,000 persons at the beginning of the 1975 civil war. The majority of them were non-Lebanese. In fact, estimates at the time considered that one quarter of the population residing in Lebanon was non-Lebanese and that two thirds of these foreigners were Palestinians (Bourgey and Pharès 1973). These population movements generated a new urban geography of segregation for Beirut as well as its suburbs and other major cities, which grew denser. These informal neighborhoods were in most cases in all Lebanese cities an offshoot of Palestinian refugee camps.

13. What impacts do these forms of spatial and residential segregation have on affected communities? Please point to indicators such as rates of poverty, un-employment and under-employment; prevalence rates of malnutrition; disparities in access to services and facilities (such as access to schooling, health care or other public benefits); disparities in access to infrastructure (lack of and/or poor quality provision of water, sanitation, transportation, energy, waste collection and other utility services); rates of exposure to environmental health risks (poor air quality, flooding, toxic ground exposure, etc).

These forms of segregation have mostly affected dwellers of camps, informal settlements, and the new suburbia (refer to next answer for the suburbia phenomenon). The indicators are lack of employment opportunities, of access to services and facilities (with the exception of Palestinian camps that include such facilities inside the camps, run by UNRWA, albeit with poor conditions), and access to infrastructure. A severe effect has been exposure to environmental health risks. In the new suburbia, poorly planned urbanization paved the way for the emergence of residential neighborhoods in proximity to industrial zones and waste dumps, which has gravely affected the health of many residents over the years. In many camps and informal settlements, overcrowding and poor construction / housing conditions has resulted in respiratory problems, along with numerous reports on the contamination of potable water.

14. Have any particular historical or current laws, policies or practices in your country, region or town/community caused or exacerbated segregation?

It would be a mistake to assume that Lebanese cities and their “chaotic” growth is the result of the absence of any regulations or planning interventions. On the contrary, planning the city has always been a major objective of the successive governments since the Independence (1943) and until the Civil War (1975-1991). Major urban planners from Europe, like Constantinos Doxiadis (1958), Father Lebret IRFED's Team (1959-64), Michel Ecochard (1961-64), the Atelier Parisien d'Urbanisme (1977) and recently the Institut d'Aménagement et d'Urbanisme de la Région Ile de France (1983-86 and 1991 onwards) have made various urban proposals for Beirut, its suburbs, and other major cities.

Ecochard's plans are the most representative of the State's effort. They attempted to plan new infrastructures and to remodel city centers in modern forms, with complete disregard to existing urban fabrics and social practices. This was mainly manifested into a highway grid that was gradually realized by the Lebanese government over the years. These highways played a crucial role in dividing neighborhoods, towns, and landscapes, and creating ruptures.

More recently, the 1990s reconstruction policies gave birth to the “suburbia”. Middle income residents were evicted from Beirut through market forces emerging from neoliberal policies and legislations. They were pushed to new suburbs, previously rural towns. With no public transport plans, these new suburbia are segregated from their economic and social networks in the city they were displaced from, and from services and public amenities.

The all-time policy to not grant Palestinian refuges civic rights has exacerbated their segregation within camps. And the Kafala system that governs the lives of migrant domestic workers in Lebanese has created a form of in-house spatial segregation with a 5sqm maids room enshrined through the Lebanese 2004 building law.

15. In your view, what factors (current or historical) are the principal *drivers* of spatial and residential segregation in urban and urban-rural contexts in your country?

State policy on the issue of housing and urbanism more generally can be best described as divisive and discriminatory, not designed to serve the public. In other words, its fundamental mechanisms and resources tend to target certain groups of citizens and exclude others; at the very least it caters to some more than others. As a result, official policies over the past three decades have focused on housing loans for the purpose of home ownership. These are policies that generally benefit social groups of middle-class financial status or higher up. These are the citizens able to make a down payment and who can afford relatively high payments in relation to their wages.

Meanwhile, the kinds of remedies for housing problems that concern those most in need of state support have all but disappeared, particularly once the state ceased to play any role in affordable housing. Additionally, public institutions that put and implement visions for equitable urban planning have been all dismantled.

On another level, the civil status of residents, which places more than 20% of residents in Lebanon in an illegal situation, largely plays a role in segregation. The inability of residents to vote at the place of residence also hinders any possibility for mobilization for basic rights.

16. Are there examples in your country of where spatial and residential clustering has been a result of voluntary choices of residence by members of particular groups?

The violence associated with the Lebanese civil war (1975-1990) at times took the form of sectarian cleansings that resulted in mass displacement, forcing people to flee their homes in “mixed” areas to seek refuge in areas under the control of militias corresponding to their sectarian affiliation. Thus, west Beirut became predominantly Muslim while east Beirut became predominantly Christian. Meanwhile, those Palestinians living in east Beirut who had survived the violence of Christian militias against their camps were forced to flee to west Beirut. Thousands of Shiite families, fleeing the violence on the Lebanese-Israeli border and the eventual Israeli occupation of southern Lebanon in 1982, also sought refuge there.

In the wake of the Taif Agreement, there followed a more or less peaceful period during the 1990s that allowed the reconstruction of downtown Beirut to begin, along with attempts to resolve the mass displacement caused by the civil war. However, in 2005, violence returned to the city in the form of a series of assassinations and bombings, only to be followed by a new Israeli war on Lebanon in July 2006. Then, in May 2008, the ghost of the civil war returned, as what had appeared to be only sporadic episodes of sectarian violence unexpectedly erupted into full-scale battles in Beirut and its peripheries, as well as other areas of Lebanon. The violence lasted for five days and came to be known as the May 7 events.

17. The preservation of cultural identity, the right to self-determination of indigenous peoples and the protection of minority rights are examples of grounds for which groups may choose to live separately. Can you comment on how these forms spatial/territorial separation are evidenced in your country, if these communities they are subject to discrimination and suffer adverse consequences from spatial segregation such as through disparities in access to services, infrastructure, living conditions, etc.?

These forms of separation are best evidenced in Lebanon through Palestinian camps and Armenian neighborhoods. Both refugee communities, creating zones of identity distinct from the surroundings, have been key as part of their discourse around nationality. Yet their spatial and social separation is rather fluid, with no clear boundaries, as both camps and Armenian neighborhoods became over the year the place of residence of many low-income groups from diverse nationalities, and host major popular markets in the city.

In the particular case of Palestinian camps, the political pressure and discrimination inflicted on Palestinian refugees in Lebanon has had significant impacts on their everyday life. The exclusion of Palestinians from the Lebanese political system and economic sector has led to unemployment and high density, which are the roots of social problems in all the camps, and the inability to access adequate services and infrastructure.

18. In your view, are certain forms of observed residential separation/voluntary clustering compatible with human rights law and if so why? (for example to protect rights of minorities or to respect the freedom of choice of individuals to decide with whom to live together).

In the context of communities that have suffered expulsion from their countries, such as the Armenians and the Palestinians, clustering was a choice related to the preservation of an identity. However, and as explained about, when this separation is also layered with legal and social discrimination as in the case of Palestinian refugees, it becomes a situation that contradicts with human rights. In fact, many Palestinians today have left the camps in pursuit of a better life, and many aspire to leave.

19. Are there any laws or policies requiring certain individuals (and their families) to live in particular housing provided to them or in a particular geographical area (e.g. asylum seekers, migrants, IDPs, refugees, ethnic, religious, linguistic or other minorities, indigenous peoples, persons with disabilities, public service and military personnel)?

There are two forms of policies that have resulted in requiring individuals to live in certain geographic areas:

* A 2001 law prohibits Palestinian refugees from owning land in Lebanon, including through inheritance.
* Although illegally, municipalities in Lebanon have been imposing a curfew on Syrian refugees residing within their jurisdiction. The curfews restrict refugees’ movements and contribute to a climate of discriminatory and retaliatory practices against them. In 2014, Human Rights Watch identified at least 45 municipalities across the country that have imposed such curfews. These curfews push Syrians to not live within these areas.

20. In your view, what are the principal *barriers* to diminishing spatial, including residential segregation?

* Absence of Equitable development
* Financialization of land and housing
* Civil laws that do not grant equal rights to all residents
* The inability to vote in the place of residence
* Absence of a land policy that curbs speculation and applies fair taxations

**MEASURES AND GOOD PRACTICES TO CURB DISCRIMINATION AND REDUCE SEGREGATION**

21. What laws, policies or measures exist at national or local level to prevent or prohibit discrimination in relation to the right to adequate housing?

None.

22. Have your State, regional or local Government adopted any positive measures, such as measures of affirmative action, to reduce discrimination, segregation or structural inequality in relation to housing? To what extent have such initiatives been successful to address housing discrimination and segregation?

No.

23. Have any particular laws, policies or measures been implemented to limit or reduce residential segregation? To what extent have such policies raised human rights concerns?

There are no policies to limit residential segregation. Human rights Watch and Amnesty International have reported on human rights violations resulting from spatial segregation in Lebanon.

24. What is the role of the media, as well as other non- governmental organizations, of religious and governmental institutions, in fostering a climate that reduces or exacerbates discrimination in relation to housing and segregation?

-Mainstream media narratives favours more politically connected landlords and real estate companies

-Religious inheritance and divorce laws exacerbating discrimination against women

-Religious institutions are exempted from taxes in exchange for providing social housing, nonetheless in practice Waqf land is being rented to private actors to generate profits.

25. Which institutional mechanisms exist to report, redress and monitor cases of discrimination or segregation in relation to the right to adequate housing and how effective have they been to address discrimination?

There is none at the public official level.

A local communal initiative, by Public Works Studio, the [Housing Monitor](https://housingmonitor.org/) is attempting to partially fill this gap and push for housing rights based on evidence based advocacy.

26. In your view, what are the principal barriers to seek justice for discrimination/segregation in relation to the right to adequate housing?

-Legal status of residents, which include Kafala system and recognition of refugees

-Lack of housing and land policies

-Personal status laws, which include inheritance and marital status

-Voter registration laws that adhere to place of origin instead of place of residence

27. Can you specify how individuals and groups subject to structural discrimination or experiencing segregation can submit complaints to administrative, non-judicial or judicial bodies to seek relief? Please share any leading cases that have been decided by your courts or other agencies in this respect.

-refugees and migrant workers face difficulties seeking help through the Lebanese judicial system, as most of them do not possess legal residency, and as a result hesitate to report any harassment/ violations out of fear of being arrested or detained.

- Most refugees and migrant workers have verbal rental contracts with their Lebanese landlords. These agreements, while legal, are difficult to prove in practice and leave these groups/individuals in a weaker position regarding legal recourse.

- Refugees and migrant workers rely mostly on nonprofits and NGOs for legal assistance, which usually entails some form of re-negotiation of leasing terms, in an attempt to postpone eviction deadlines and come up with a new payment plan. However while these mitigation efforts have usually been successful in reducing the threat of eviction, a complementary cash assistance is sometimes required in order to help the tenant maintain security of tenure (even if it is short-term).

**DATA ON DISCRIMINATION IN HOUSING AND SPATIAL/RESIDENTIAL SEGREGATION**

28. Is any data on housing disparities, housing discrimination and spatial segregation collected and publicly available? If so where can it be accessed? Are there any practical or legal barriers to collect and share such information in your country?

No, please check above

29. Can you kindly share any studies or surveys by local, regional or national Governments or by other institutions to understand better housing disparities, housing discrimination and spatial segregation and how it can be addressed (e.g. title and link, or kindly submit document).

Studies shared above. There are no official studies.

30. Can you provide information and statistics related to complaints related to housing discrimination, how they have been investigated and settled, and information on cases in which private or public actors have been compelled successfully to end such discrimination or been fined or sanctioned for non-compliance?

Not applicable.