



R=P Two-Day Webinar

## THE IMPACTS OF THE ONGOING SOCIO-ECONOMIC AND HEALTH CRISIS ON SYRIAN REFUGEES IN LEBANON

*Beirut, Lebanon*  
July 15 – 16, 2020

CONCEPT NOTE

[Refugees = Partners](#) is holding a two-day Webinar on the socio-economic impact of the recent developments in Lebanon, the economic crisis, the October 2019 uprising, and the COVID-19 pandemic on the livelihood of Syrian refugees. In addition to the economic effects of Coronavirus on both Lebanon and Syria, highlighting the interconnection between the Syrian and Lebanese economic systems.

### I. BACKGROUND

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The COVID-19 pandemic has taken the world by storm, and has cataclysmically affected economic growth, already costing the global economy trillions of dollars. Countries that had already been afflicted with economic deterioration, political regional and national instability and social unrest, such as Lebanon and Syria have been further exacerbated by the global outbreak of COVID-19. Curfews had been implemented as a means to reduce the spread of COVID-19. While these mandatory preventative measures have proven to be effective in flattening the curve of infected persons, they have also aggravated the deteriorating conditions and insecurity of Lebanon's most vulnerable populations, pushing them further into poverty. The rise in the number of persons under the poverty lines has also been reinforced by weak social protection systems and policies that are meant to support households that lose their primary sources of income, among many other benefits.

One such vulnerable population in Lebanon is that of Syrian refugees. The exacerbated socio-economic condition of Syrian refugee households had been deteriorating well before both the COVID-19 pandemic as well as the collapse of the Lebanese economy. Following their arrival in 2011, Syrian refugee households have faced considerable challenges and barriers in their pursuit of dignified living conditions and decent employment in Lebanon.

In addition, Syrian and Palestinian refugees have been also subject to numerous governmental and municipal restrictions. The Government of Lebanon (GoL) and the General Security Office (GSO) have imposed institutionalized barriers on refugees' access to legal status and working permits, among many others. The institutionalized challenges in legal employment have led Syrian refugees to seek work in the informal labor market, where they are prone to exploitation. Municipalities have also implemented restrictions on the movement of refugees by implementing discriminatory curfews that particularly target refugees. The various restrictions on refugees have aggravated their already poor living conditions, forcing them to adopt negative coping mechanisms, such as taking on more debt and changing consumption habits to reduce household expenditure.

During the COVID-19 nationwide lockdown, Syrian refugee households have lived under additional and even harsher curfews and circumstances that have negatively affected their daily lives and prevented them from accessing healthcare and their livelihood (work, income, food, rent, etc.). The implementation of curfews has also fueled tensions between refugees and their host communities, leading to increase in incidents of violence, harassment and marginalization.

The economic collapse and political turmoil in Lebanon may arguably be amplified by the additional decline in the growth of Syrian economy due to the interconnectivity between the Syrian economy and the Lebanese economy, especially in the context of the recent developments in the implementation of sanctions on Syria.

Presently, the GoL has eased the lockdown and curfews on Lebanese and non-Lebanese. However, the worsening economic situation in Lebanon and devaluation of Lebanese Lira (L.L.) to the US dollar (\$) contributing to the surge in the inflation of prices, making it extremely difficult for vulnerable communities to access food in Lebanon, intensifying civil unrest.

The aim of this webinar is to address the following: (1) What are the residual effects of the implementation of discriminatory curfews and deteriorating economic condition on the livelihoods and daily lives of Syrian refugees and what steps should be taken to mitigate these residual effects? (2) How will the additional deterioration of the Syrian economy impact the already crumbling economy in Lebanon?

## II. WEBINAR DETAILS

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[\*\*\*Refugees = Partners\*\*\*](#) invites you to share your knowledge, expertise, and to take part in discussions on the socioeconomic and precarious legal status of Syrian refugees in Lebanon during the recent developments, the economic crisis, the October 2019 uprising, and the COVID-19 national lockdown

The two-day webinar offers an opportunity for academics and humanitarian actors in the field to engage in a substantive discussion on the impact of economic deterioration on vulnerable communities within the framework of the interconnection between the Syrian and Lebanese

economy. Additionally, the webinar will endeavor to develop an inclusive strategy and policy recommendations to mitigate the adverse effects and ease the burden brought on by the worsening economic situation on Lebanese and non-Lebanese communities alike.

### III. Format

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**Refugees = Partners** Webinar will be a two-day event, composed of two panel discussions, one panel a day, three hours each discussion.

#### 1st Day Webinar:

**“THE SOCIOECONOMIC IMPACT OF RECENT DEVELOPMENTS IN LEBANON ON THE LIVELIHOOD OF SYRIAN REFUGEES”**

**Date:** Wednesday 15 July at 5:00 pm [Beirut time]

#### **Moderator**

Elham Barjas | Refugees=Partners Project

#### **Speakers**

Dr. Fadi Al-Halabi | Multi Aid Programs - MAPS  
Dr. Rouba Mhaisen | Sawa for Development and Aid  
Dr. Maha Shuayb | Centre for Lebanese Studies

#### 2nd Day Webinar:

**“INTERCONNECTIONS BETWEEN THE LEBANESE AND SYRIAN ECONOMIC CONDITIONS”**

**Date:** Thursday 16 July at 5:00 pm [Beirut time]

#### **Moderator**

Rabe Banna | Syrian Center for Policy Research (SCPR)

#### **Speakers**

Dr. Jad Chaaban | The American University of Beirut (AUB)  
Rabie Nasser | Syrian Center for Policy Research (SCPR)  
Dr. Kanj Hamade | The Lebanese University

## IV. Expected Outcome

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- Policy brief