

Swiss Cooperation in Lebanon

General overview

Embassy of Switzerland to Lebanon and Syria



Information to Syrian refugees about access to services and justice
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Context

Lebanon, a small country in the Middle East, has been repeatedly exposed to regional conflicts and internal tensions. Different communities have sought safety and protection in Lebanon. With a population of ca. 6 million, Lebanon is today the country with the highest number of refugees per capita worldwide, including mostly Syrians and Palestinians. It is also home to a large number of migrant workers (see figures in box below).

Over the past 10 years, the Syria crisis has been putting significant additional strain on the fragile stability and on already weak infrastructure and public services. Since 2019 Lebanon has been facing an unprecedented political, financial and economic crisis that was further aggravated by the Covid-19 crisis and the Beirut port explosion on August 4, 2020. In 2022, Lebanon was downgraded by the World Bank to a lower middle-income country. According to

Facts and Figures

Lebanese population	ca 4 Mio
Registered Syrian refugees (SR)	831,000
Registered and unregistered (SR)	ca. 1.5 Mio
Palestine refugees from LEB (PRL)	175,000
Palestine refugees from SYR (PRS)	30,000
Other refugees (mainly from Iraq)	18,000
Migrant workers	130,000
Unemployment rate (youth) (2022)	47.8%
Human Development Index (2021)	0.706

People living below poverty line: total population: ca. 80% (2021); SR: 91% (2021); PRS: 87% (2021); PRL: 73% (2021).

UNESCWA, the percentage of Lebanon's population living in multi-dimensional extreme poverty has more than doubled since the onset of the economic crisis (from ca. 15% in 2019 to ca. 35% in 2021). Around 90% of Syrian refugees live in extreme poverty (55% before the crisis).

Swiss Cooperation Program Middle East 2019-2024

The Swiss response in Lebanon is based on the Regional Cooperation Program Middle East 2019-2024 that also guides the responses in Iraq, Jordan, Syria and Turkey. Switzerland contributes to protect and empower conflict-affected and vulnerable persons, save and reconstruct lives, reduce fragility, prevent and transform violent conflicts and generate sustainable development perspectives.



Map of Lebanon

Domains of intervention

Switzerland focuses on four domains of intervention: Protection and Migration; Education and Income; Water and Sanitation; as well as Conflict Prevention and Peace Promotion. Switzerland further transversally promotes Good Governance as well as Gender Equality and Women's Empowerment. The Swiss response is aligned with the three response plans in Lebanon: the Lebanon Crisis Response Plan; the Emergency Response Plan; and the Reform, Recovery and Reconstruction Framework.

Protection and Migration Domain

Domain objective: Conflict-affected and vulnerable persons (including refugees, migrants and vulnerable Lebanese) live in safety and dignity and enjoy their fundamental rights in line with International Human Rights Law, Refugee Law, Humanitarian Law and other international bodies of law.

The Protection and Migration domain focuses on the improvement of relevant laws and policies, their effective implementation and concerted advocacy, as well as on equitable access to specialized protection services.

Education and Income Domain

Domain objective: Conflict-affected and vulnerable children and youth access and complete compulsory quality education, and young people and vulnerable families have opportunities to earn a decent living.

The Education and Income domain strengthens pathways to compulsory education and its completion, and works on aspects of inclusion, protection and quality of education. It also improves income generation and access to employment opportunities. By combining education and income, Switzerland emphasizes their interconnectedness and mutual reinforcement.

Conflict Prevention and Peace Promotion Domain

Domain objective: Conflicts are prevented, managed and resolved peacefully in the Middle East.

The Conflict Prevention and Peace Promotion domain is based on three subfields: actors participate in dialogue platforms and initiatives aiming at preventing conflict, achieving sustainable peace and reconciliation; actors participate in or contribute to dialogue platforms and initiatives aiming at preventing conflict, achieving sustainable peace and reconciliation inclusively; and policy, legal and institutional frameworks underpin peace and reconciliation processes/agreements.

Water and Sanitation Domain

Domain objective: Targeted populations across the region are less vulnerable to water scarcity, water-borne diseases, water-related conflict and water-related mismanagement.

The Water and Sanitation domain works on life-saving aspects, such as improved and equitable access to safe water and adequate sanitation. On the systemic level, it strengthens good governance and sustainable water and sanitation systems and services. Furthermore, it engages in advocacy and evidence-based policy dialogue.

Approach

The implementation of the Cooperation Program follows a whole-of-government approach. The different offices of the Swiss Federal Administration with their specific mandates mutually complement each other through comprehensive and complementary interventions. Principles of Human Rights-Based Approaches, Do No Harm and Conflict-Sensitive Program Management are at the core of these interventions.

Instruments

Mandates of the federal actors in Lebanon

Federal Department of Foreign Affairs

State Secretariat

- Peace and Human Rights Division: promotes peacebuilding, protection of civilian population, policy dialogue and human rights.

Swiss Agency for Development and Cooperation

- Humanitarian Aid: alleviates suffering and protects vulnerable groups before, during and after crises or natural disasters
- Global Cooperation: fosters water management and leverage the potential of migration for development via global policy dialogue.
- Development Cooperation: promotes poverty reduction and sustainable development.

Federal Department of Justice and Police

State Secretariat for Migration:

- Supports refugee-hosting countries in their efforts for protection of persons in need.

The Swiss support is being implemented through the deployment of experts, un-earmarked or project-specific financial contributions to multilateral, international and national organizations, and self-implemented projects with dedicated project teams.

Financial contributions

Since 2011, the Swiss Cooperation has contributed CHF 590 million to the response to the Syria crisis in the region, over 120 million of which in Lebanon. An overall budget of 272 million is planned over the timeframe 2019-2022 for the Cooperation Program across the whole region.

Total budget to Lebanon planned for 2022: CHF 23 Mio.

Further information

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