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MARITIME AND LAND CORRIDORS IN THE "MIDDLE EAST"

WHERE DOES LEBANON FIT IN?



The Waste Crisis in North Lebanon
Tripoli's Landfill Has Reached the End of Its Life, and Srar Refuses to Take on the Crisis

Regulatory Authorities in Lebanon
Between High Costs and Overlapping Powers. Millions of Dollars in Losses

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Published by Information International, *The Monthly* deals with research, economic, financial, social and cultural issues that concern Lebanese citizens and officials. It also publishes periodic public opinion polls on the topics in question.

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Editorial



A Railway between Sunni and Shia'a so we don't miss the Train

By Jawad N. Adra

This article was published in *The Monthly* editorial, issue no. 58 April-May 2007

Some comments from a descendant of Al-Saifa of A'kkar (accused in school history books of being traitors) on the previous editorial in issue no. 57, "Saints, Traitors, Villains, and Fools with Two Airports", call for further examination.

In January 2007, we ran a leader suggesting that Lebanon may soon have two presidents, two parliaments and two prime ministers, so why not two airports? Since "Hariri International Airport" can easily be closed (as happened on January 23, 2007), a good "planner" will make sure that an alternative is available.

"René Mouawad International Airport" is almost ready, and planes can easily be diverted. In the future, as cantonization becomes more probable and alliances shift, a third airport might be called for.

What does this have to do with current fights and debates about democracy, peace, "Shia'a" and "Sunni"?

As always, ideologies are a cover-up, a decoy and a cause that people live by and die for. Before and after World War I, Pan-Arabism and independence were convenient banners to fight the Ottomans and ensure that minorities ran to the "West" for protection. The "ideological wars" went on. In order to fight communism, we sometimes resorted to the "Arab Nation" and at other times to "Islam".

Today, our leaders are hiding behind banners of "Freedom, Sovereignty and Independence" on one side and "Arabism, Dignity and Accountability" on the other.

Friends, enemies, crises and wars were and still are made under those banners.

During World War I, T.E. Lawrence befriended King Faisal I to oust the Ottomans, blew up the Hijaz railway and participated in paving the way for British and French dominance in the region. Consequently, coups d'état were launched in the region, from Husni Al-Zaim and Gamal Abdel Nasser to Abdel Karim Qasim and the Ba'ath Party in Syria and Iraq, and on to Libya and Sudan. The leaders of the Arab Revolt and their descendants were butchered mercilessly.

In the meantime, the Sykes-Picot Agreement (with modifications) and the Balfour Declaration were implemented and have perhaps yet to achieve their full potential, while "we the people" of the region were fighting each other and our leaders were studiously abiding by the instructions of external forces.

Even when T.E. Lawrence had something to say on Iraq against his government, his allies in the region were praising Great Britain for gaining positions in the newly founded states.

"The people of England have been led in Mesopotamia into a trap from which it will be hard to escape with dignity and honour. They have been tricked into it by a steady withholding of information. The Bagdad communiqués are belated, insincere, and incomplete. A recent proclamation about autonomy circulated with unction from Bagdad.

We say we are in Mesopotamia to develop it for the benefit of the world. How far will the killing of ten thousand villagers and townspeople this summer hinder the production of wheat, cotton, and oil? How long will we permit millions of pounds, thousands of Imperial troops, and tens of thousands of Arabs to be sacrificed on behalf of a form of colonial administration, which can benefit no body but its administrators?"

Even when T.E. Lawrence expressed his doubts about the geographical rationale of Sykes-Picot, his allies were singing its praises and queuing for positions in the newly founded states.

"Actually it not only seriously compromises the political future of the Arab Provinces, but also seriously jeopardizes the peace of the Near and Middle East and will result in serious local disorder which all agree, will spread to Kurdistan, Mesopotamia and Palestine, and perhaps to the entire Moslem world".

What does all of this have to do with airports, trains, "Sunni" and "Shia'a"?

All the governments since T.E. Lawrence have abided by his legacy; they neither restored the Hijaz railway nor attempted to undo his work. We can lecture as much as we like about the "Arab Nation", but we never attempt to get a simple railway working again. Now we will claim success because "René Mouawad Airport" will soon be operational, but there will be no railway, not even between Tripoli and Beirut.

Just in case a railway is built, T.E. Lawrence wrote a manual on how to demolish it, from Ras Ba'albeck to the Arabian Desert.

"I therefore went west to Ras Baalbek on June 10th and dynamited a small plate girder there.

The effect on the traffic was of course very slight but the Metowila [Shi'a] of Baalbek were most excited and it was to arouse them that I did it. The noise of dynamite explosions we find everywhere the most effective propagandist measure possible.

It was still necessary for us to cut the railway between Deraa and Amman.

After long experiment, we found this the cheapest and most destructive demolition for a line with steel sleepers [Tulip System]".

Why all those wars, and why the "Sunni"-"Shia'a" schism now? Apparently, T.E. Lawrence had his eyes on the "Shia'a" [Metowila] long before Mr. Bush invaded Iraq. The "Shia'a" of Ras Ba'albeck were happy that an "Inglizi" was liberating them from the tyranny of Turkey.

T.E. Lawrence of Scotland, of England, of North Wales, of Westmeath, of Arabia, of Dorset later apologized for many of the promises he made. Apparently, he was duped by his government.

"Lawrence had written that he had been led to believe that the British Government meant to live up to its promises to the Arabs, and that it was because of this belief he had encouraged the Arabs. He wished to inform the Arabs and the British public that he regretted what he had done because the government evidently had no intention of living up to the promise it had authorized him to make to the Arabs".

Promises are easily made and broken. Men of substance will learn from history, but what can hollow men do except repeat with T.S. Eliot:

We are Hollow men

We are stuffed men

Leaning together

Head piece filled with straw. Alas!

Between the idea

And the reality

Between the nations

And the act

Falls the Shadow

King Faisal I, descendant of the Prophet, leader of the Arab Revolt and signatory to an agreement with Chaim Weizmann for a Jewish homeland in Palestine, was left wandering in a hotel in Paris on 18 January 1919 at 2 a.m. T.E. Lawrence pleaded Faisal's case to Balfour, who had "simply forgot" to invite him to the meeting. The Paris Peace Conference gathered victorious nations but not petty zu'ama. The vacuum created by inept Arab regimes that depend on the West to survive is now being filled by Turkey, Israel and Iran.

A government unwilling or unable to connect the "Sunni" of A'kkar with the "Shia'a" of Sour by a railway: what use would it have for two airports? Faisal, Jamal Pasha, Saddam Hussein, Bush and Ahmadinejad have the answer, while both our "pro-government and opposition leaders" have yet to learn from history. Soon the country will be in worse turmoil and they will all be left in the lobby of a hotel or at a train station where there is no train.

Quotations in italics are from The Letters of T.E. Lawrence of Arabia,

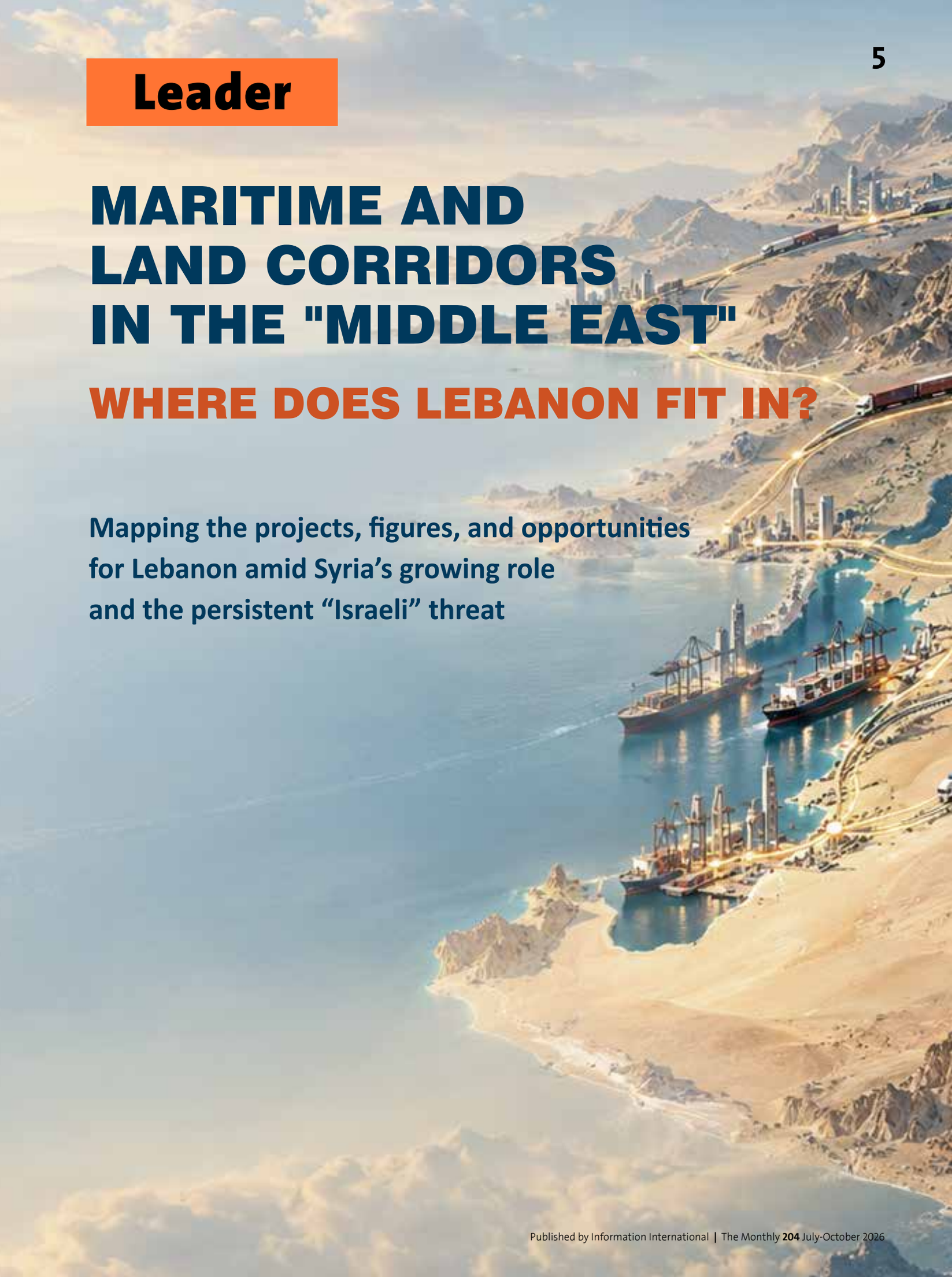
David Garnett (ed.), 1938.

Leader

MARITIME AND LAND CORRIDORS IN THE "MIDDLE EAST"

WHERE DOES LEBANON FIT IN?

Mapping the projects, figures, and opportunities for Lebanon amid Syria's growing role and the persistent "Israeli" threat



The Monthly Magazine examines the ongoing changes in the Middle East's maritime and land corridor network, from the Suez Canal and the India-Middle East-Europe Economic Corridor to Iraq's Development Road and Syrian and Gulf projects. It provides a concise overview of the routes, scale, costs, implementation stages, and economic capacities of these projects.

It also examines Lebanon's position within this network, focusing on the ports of Beirut and Tripoli, Beirut and Qlayaat airports, railway projects, oil and gas pipelines, and storage facilities. The aim is to determine whether Lebanon can become a trade link connecting Iraq and Syria to the Mediterranean, or whether implementation delays, Syria's growing role, and the continuing "Israeli" threat will leave it outside the region's emerging corridors.

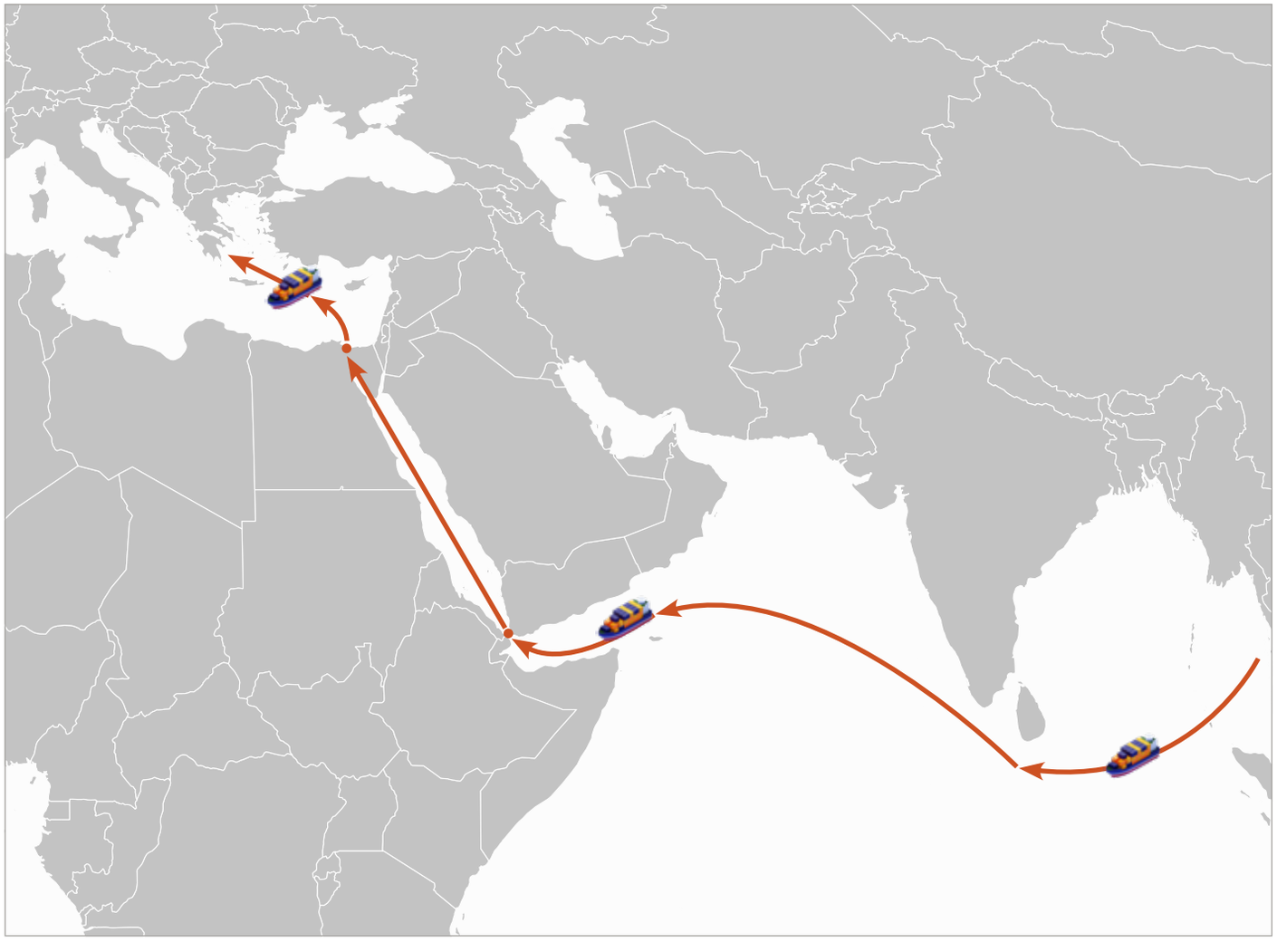
The Middle East has long been an arena of competition between parallel corridors rather than a single project: the Suez Canal, Iraq's Development Road toward Turkey, the India-Middle East-Europe Economic Corridor, the International North-South Transport Corridor, the Gulf Railway, and the Iraq-Syria route to the Mediterranean.

Lebanon is not currently an integral part of any formally agreed global corridor. However, it has a realistic opportunity through the Tripoli-Abboudiyeh railway line, oil and gas pipelines, the ports of Beirut and Tripoli, and Qlayaat Airport.

First: The Current State of Existing Corridors and Projects

1. The Suez Canal: The Operational Corridor Against Which All Others Are Measured

Asia → Red Sea → Suez Canal → Mediterranean Sea → Europe

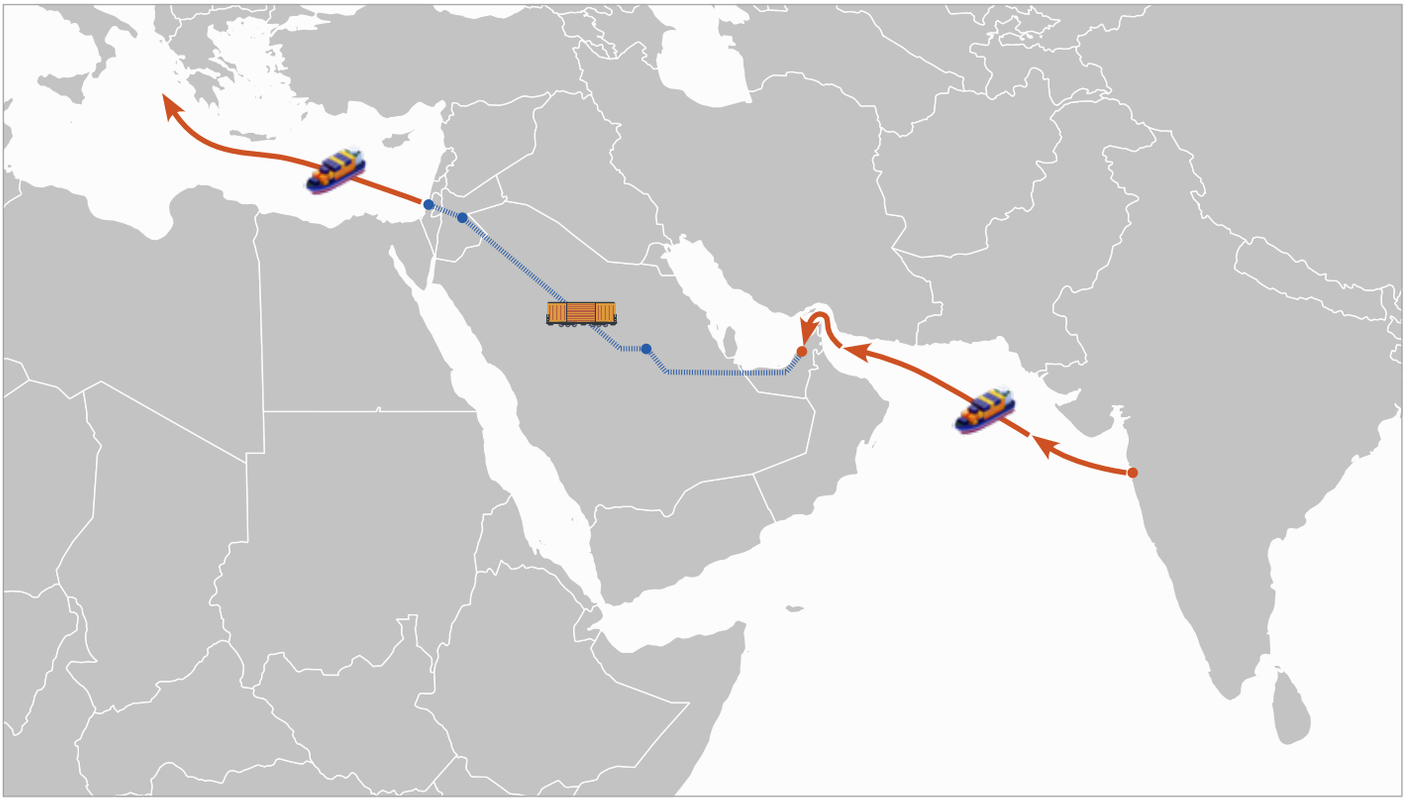


The canal opened in 1869 and was expanded in 2015. It is the shortest direct maritime link between Asia and Europe. Land routes therefore do not compete with it in terms of volume, but rather in terms of speed, flexibility, and the ability to avoid chokepoints.

Indicator	Value
Estimated share of global trade	Approximately 13%
Number of transiting ships in 2023, the peak year	26,434 ships
Revenue in 2023, a record high	USD 10.25 billion
Revenue in 2024 following Red Sea disruptions	USD 3.99 billion, a decline of approximately 61%
Number of transiting ships in 2024	13,213 ships, a decline of approximately 50%

2. The India-Middle East-Europe Economic Corridor (IMEC)

India by sea to the UAE, then by rail through Saudi Arabia and Jordan to "Israel", followed by sea transport to Europe



A memorandum of understanding for the project was signed at the G20 summit in New Delhi on 9 September 2023 by India, the United States, the UAE, Saudi Arabia, France, Germany, Italy, and the European Union. Jordan and "Israel" are essential transit hubs, but they are not signatories to the memorandum. The project represents an American response to China's Belt and Road Initiative, launched in 2013.

Item	Status
Investment	No finalized budget. Estimates for the railway segment are approximately USD 20 billion.
Time and cost	Political and research estimates suggest a 40% reduction in transport time and a 30% reduction in cost, although these figures have not yet been commercially demonstrated.

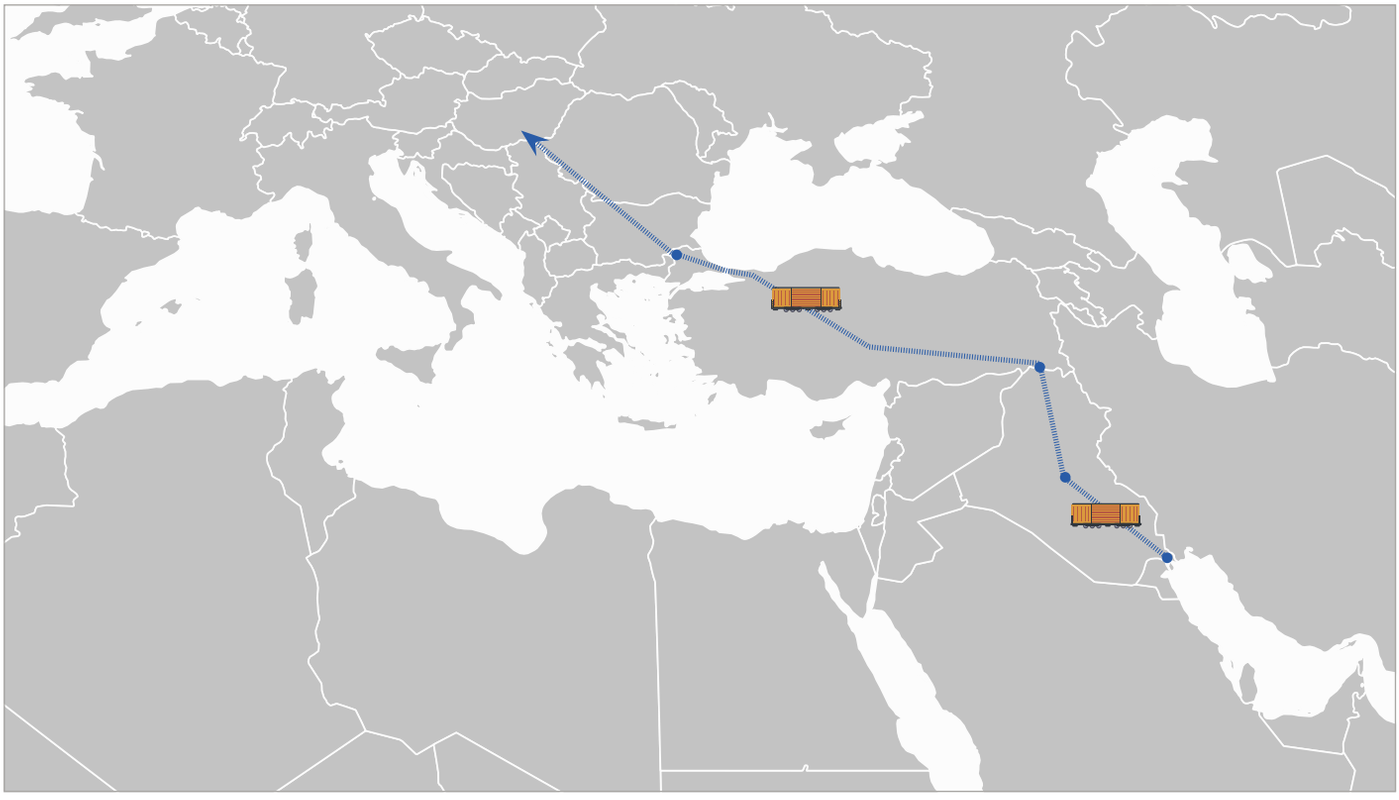
Item	Status
Implementation	Some sections are operational or under development, but the integrated corridor has not begun operating as a unified network.
Relevance to Lebanon	The route passes through “Israel” and does not include Lebanon in the signed memorandum.

The practical land corridor between the Gulf and “Israel”: During disruptions to Red Sea shipping, trucks used a route from the UAE and Saudi Arabia through Jordan to “Israel”. Although this route cannot match the Suez Canal in freight volume, it demonstrates that existing roads, customs arrangements, and agreements can create a corridor before the full IMEC project is completed.

Lebanon is not included in this route. Moreover, its passage through “Israel” makes it, politically and security-wise, an option that cannot be directly linked to any Lebanese project.

3. Iraq’s Development Road: From Al-Faw to Turkey

The Grand Faw Port, followed by land and rail transport across Iraq to Turkey and then Europe



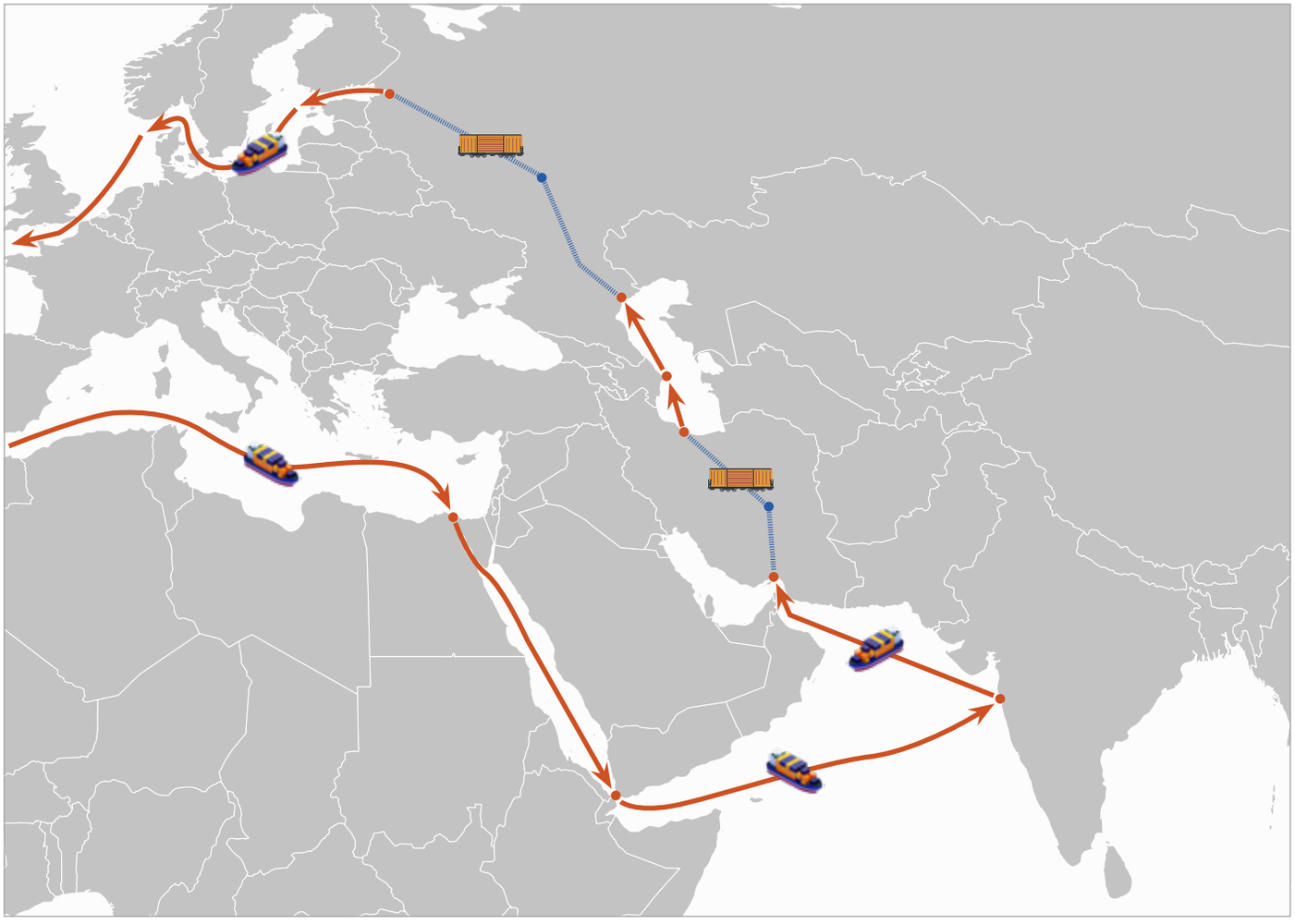
Iraq launched the project in 2023. On 22 April 2024, Baghdad, Ankara, Doha, and Abu Dhabi signed a four-party memorandum of understanding on cooperation. The project comprises the Grand Faw Port, a railway, and a road network connecting the Gulf to the Turkish border.

Item	Value
Length	Approximately 1,200 km within Iraq
Announced cost	USD 17 billion
Grand Faw Port, Phase One	Five berths completed; phased operations scheduled for 2026
Target capacity in 2028	Approximately 3.5 million twenty-foot equivalent units (TEUs) annually, according to Iraq’s target

Item	Status
Long-term objective	Up to 99 berths, with an estimated capacity of 99 million tonnes annually
Weaknesses	Security, financing, connection to the Turkish network, and competition from existing routes

4. The International North-South Transport Corridor (INSTC)

India → Iran → Azerbaijan → Russia → Europe

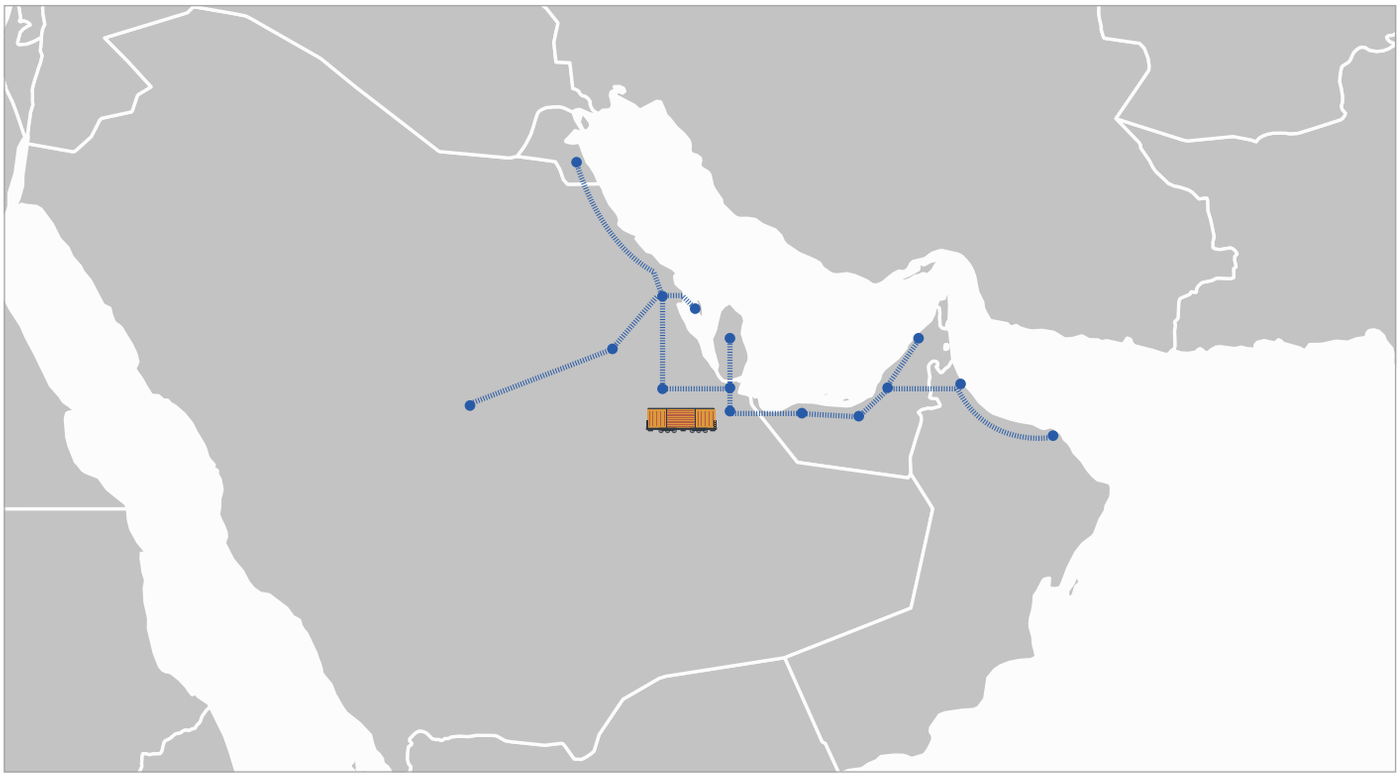


The corridor was established through an agreement signed by India, Iran, and Russia on 12 September 2000, after which its membership expanded. It combines maritime, rail, and road transport, providing Russia, Iran, and India with a shorter route than the detour through the Suez Canal. The corridor has, of course, been affected by the recent Russian-Ukrainian war.

Item	Value
Length	Approximately 7,200 km
Freight volume in 2024	Approximately 26.9 million tonnes
Theoretical savings	30–40% in time and cost for some trial shipments
Obstacles	The incomplete Rasht-Astara section, sanctions, and differing customs systems

5. The Gulf Cooperation Council Railway

A unified railway network linking the six Gulf states



The project is a regional railway network connecting Kuwait, Saudi Arabia, Bahrain, Qatar, the UAE, and Oman. National sections are progressing at varying speeds, while the target for full operation was reaffirmed for December 2030.

Item	Value
Length	Approximately 2,177 km
Progress announced in 2026	Up to 50% of network components and national sections
Target operational date	December 2030
Cost	An early estimate of approximately USD 15 billion. Higher figures combine the regional network with national railway projects.
Significance	Connecting ports with industrial zones and reducing reliance on trucks

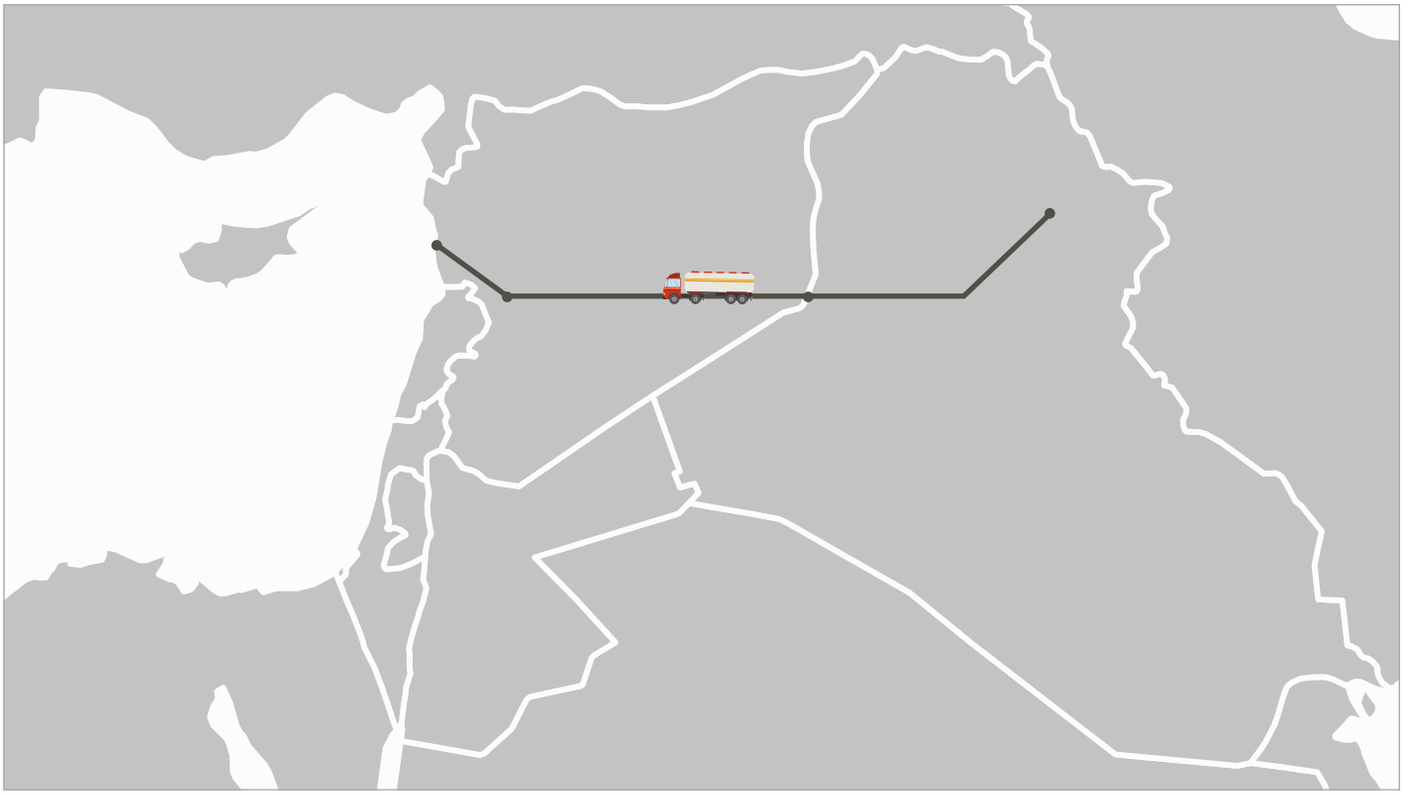
6. The Iraq-Syria Corridor to the Mediterranean

From Iraq, across Syrian territory, to Baniyas on the Mediterranean

In 2026, Syria moved from the idea of being a transit country to actual land transport operations: Iraqi fuel oil was transported by tanker trucks to the coast and re-exported from Baniyas. In parallel, studies began for a new oil pipeline because the historic Kirkuk-Baniyas line is outdated.

Indicator	Value
Road transport	Unloading capacity of approximately 900 tanker trucks per day
New pipeline	Initial estimates suggest a cost of at least USD 15 billion, a construction period of approximately four years, and a targeted initial capacity of up to 2 million barrels per day

Indicator	Value
Companies involved in the study	Chevron, TI Capital, and UCC Holding
Ports	Baniyas for energy; Latakia operated by CMA CGM; Tartus under a concession to DP World



Following the disruption of navigation through the Strait of Hormuz due to the war on Iran, Vortexa data showed that Syria exported approximately 720,000 tonnes of fuel oil in June 2026, most of Iraqi origin. This accounted for around 28% of Middle Eastern exports of this product that month, after Syrian exports had previously been almost nonexistent.

According to Kpler data, three Aframax-class tankers carrying approximately 1.42 million barrels departed Baniyas between June and July, heading for the US market. Part of the first cargo was unloaded in the Bahamas, with the remainder delivered to ports on the US Gulf Coast.

7. The Maritime Silk Road and Chinese Corridors

There is no single route called the “Silk Road.” Rather, it is a network of investments in ports, railways, and industrial zones connecting China with the Indian Ocean, the Gulf, the Red Sea, the Suez Canal, and the Mediterranean. Key locations in this context include Khalifa Port, Jebel Ali, Duqm, Djibouti, Port Said, and Piraeus.

Meanwhile, the Middle Corridor, which runs through Central Asia, the Caspian Sea, and Turkey, serves as a partial alternative to the Russian route.

Route	Countries or hubs	Economic status
Maritime route	China, India, the Gulf, the Red Sea, Suez, the Mediterranean, and Europe	Operational and reliant on existing ports; affected by security conditions around Bab el-Mandeb and the Suez Canal
Middle Corridor	China, Kazakhstan, the Caspian Sea, Azerbaijan, Georgia, Turkey, and Europe	Partially operational; capacity is far below that of the maritime route, but it offers greater diversification
China-Pakistan Economic Corridor	China, Pakistan, and Gwadar Port	Investments worth tens of billions of dollars

The proposed Ben Gurion Canal, intended to connect the Mediterranean to the Red Sea through “Israel”, is not part of China’s initiative. It remains an old, uncontracted proposal, and no actual work has begun on it.

Comparative Overview: Key Figures

Project	Length or capacity	Cost or revenue	Status in 2026
Suez Canal	13,213 ships in 2024	The Suez Canal recorded estimated revenue of USD 4.2 billion in 2025, compared with USD 3.99 billion in 2024 and USD 10.25 billion in 2023. This indicates that the recovery remained limited and that annual revenue was approximately USD 6 billion below its peak-year level.	Operational
IMEC	Multimodal maritime and rail route	Approximately USD 20 billion, an unfinalized estimate for the railway segment	Agreements signed and some sections under development
Development Road	1,200 km	USD 17 billion	Phased implementation
INSTC	7,200 km; 26.9 million tonnes	No unified figure	Partially operational
Gulf Railway	2,177 km	Approximately USD 15 billion, an early estimate	National sections under development
Iraq-Syria corridor	900 tanker trucks per day	USD 15 billion or more for the proposed pipeline	Road transport operational; pipeline under study

Methodological note: Future figures are estimates, not realized commercial activity, and may change depending on financing, security, and the course of the war.

Second: Lebanon: Existing Assets and an Incomplete Corridor

Lebanon benefits from the short distance between the Mediterranean and the Syrian border, but it lacks three essential elements: an operational railway connection, long-term transit agreements with Syria and Iraq, and security guarantees that would allow insurance and financing costs to be assessed reliably.

Its opportunity should therefore be evaluated as a complementary corridor, rather than as a direct competitor to the Suez Canal or Al-Faw.

Beirut Port: A New Investment Surge

Item	Before expansion	Target
Port area	Approximately 1.2 million m²	Reorganization and investment in additional areas
Container yard area	Approximately 45 hectares	Approximately 75 hectares
Container capacity	1.2–1.3 million TEUs annually	3 million TEUs by 2028
Announced CMA CGM investment	Not applicable	USD 100 million; groundbreaking on 11 September 2026, with implementation scheduled to take 16–18 months
Storage	600,000 m² of stacking area	A new quay, cranes, storage areas, an automated gate, and a customs inspection zone

This project represents Lebanon’s strongest recently announced logistics investment. However, it strengthens Beirut’s role as a container port before transforming it into a land-transit hub. The absence of a railway and continued road congestion limit the transition from maritime cargo handling to a regional corridor.

Tripoli Port: The Closest Gateway to Syria and Iraq

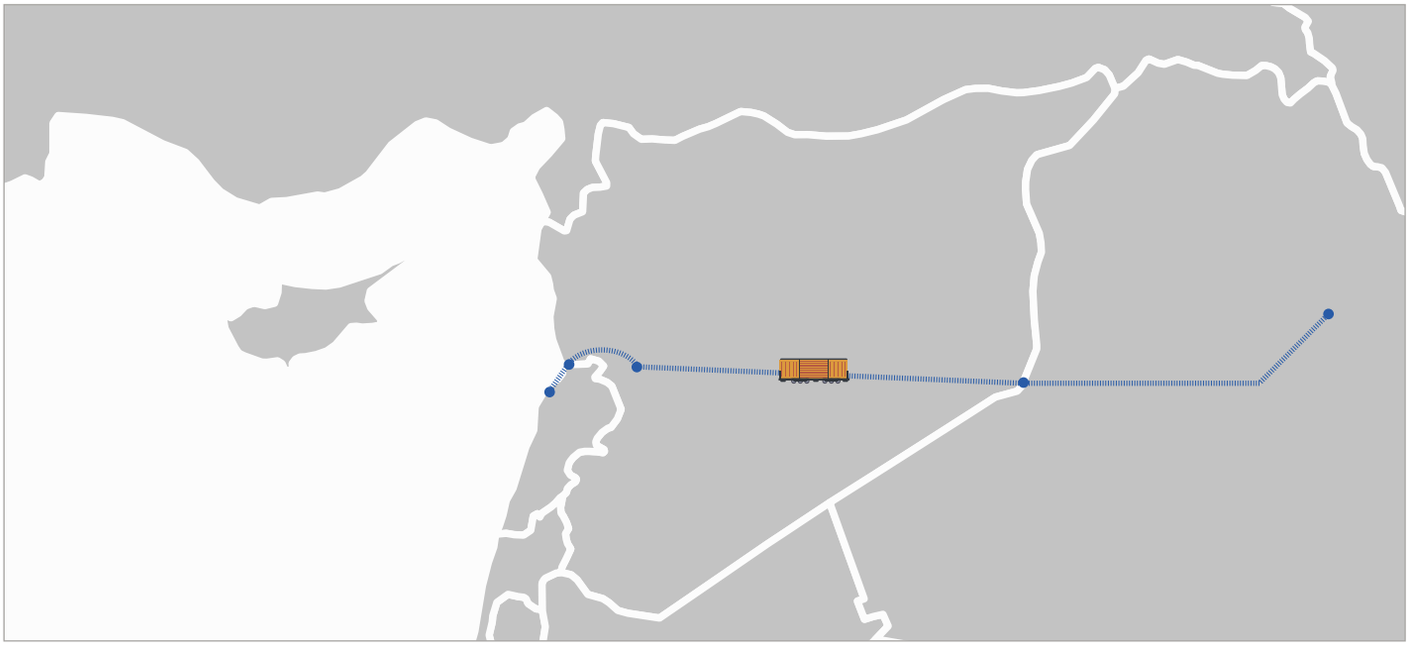
Item	Value
Approximate total area	3 million m², including approximately 2.2 million m² of water area
Existing land area	Approximately 320,000 m², plus around 420,000 m² designated for expansion and the special economic zone
Reference container capacity	Approximately 400,000 TEUs annually, according to earlier estimates
Traffic in 2022	Approximately 825 ships, according to a logistics assessment database
Commercial operator	CMA CGM, following its acquisition of Gulftainer Lebanon's operations

Tripoli Port's advantage lies not in its current size, but in its proximity to the Abboudiyeh border crossing and the city of Homs, as well as the possibility of integrating it with the suspended railway, the special economic zone, Qlayaat Airport, and the oil facilities in Beddawi.

In June 2026, the port received the container ship CMA CGM EUGENIE, with a capacity of approximately 15,000 TEUs and a length of 366 metres. It was the largest container ship to dock there since the port was established. This demonstrates the port's ability to accommodate large cargo vessels, although the promised projects have yet to be completed.

Third: Railways and Energy: Where Has Implementation Actually Begun?

The Tripoli-Abboudiyeh Railway



The potential connection from Iraq, through Syria, to Tripoli Port

Item	Status
Length of the Lebanese section	Approximately 35 km from the port, through Abdeh and Tall Abbas, to Abboudiyeh
Contract value	USD 860,250
Scope of work	Updating the design and preparing the implementation file, not a contract to construct the railway

The real opportunity will materialize only if the study is followed by a construction tender and a Lebanese-Syrian operating agreement. A study alone will not generate freight traffic or transit revenue.

On 14 September 2026, a Lebanese delegation comprising the head of the Public Railway and Public Transportation Authority and the appointed consulting firm discussed with the Syrian side extending the railway connection from Tripoli Port to Homs.

Oil and Gas Facilities

Asset	Figure or status
Historic Kirkuk-Tripoli pipeline	Historical nominal capacity of approximately 410,000–450,000 barrels per day; current capacity is zero
Tripoli storage tanks	Commonly cited design capacity of approximately 430,000 m³, equivalent to around 2.7 million barrels; actual readiness requires technical investment
Marine loading	Initially 3,000 m³/hour, rising to approximately 6,000 m³/hour after upgrades, equivalent to a theoretical 453,000–906,000 barrels per day
Gas pipeline to Deir Ammar	Egypt's TGS began rehabilitation in July 2026, with four weeks of work followed by two weeks of testing
Zahrani facilities	Inspection of tanks and moorings and rehabilitation of six boats; no comprehensive expansion contract has been announced

No published contract currently specifies the transit fee for Iraqi oil or Lebanon's share of the proceeds. Consequently, the revenue figures being discussed are negotiating scenarios, not established entitlements.

The Arab Gas Pipeline

The pipeline connects Egypt with Jordan, Syria, and Lebanon, with additional regional extensions and connections.

For Lebanon, the crucial section is the Dabousiyeh-Deir Ammar link. The plan proposed in 2026 involves purchasing liquefied natural gas in cooperation with Jordan and Syria, transporting it to Aqaba, and then exchanging it within the Syrian network to deliver gas to Deir Ammar.

Contracts and testing, rather than the mere existence of the pipeline, will determine the extent of the benefits Lebanon can obtain.

The Design Capacity of Lebanon's Land, Maritime, and Air Infrastructure Is Not the Same as Its Available Capacity

Asset	Design or historical figure	Actually available in 2026
Kirkuk-Tripoli pipeline	Historically 410,000–450,000 barrels per day	Zero; the pipeline is shut down and damaged
Tripoli oil terminal	Theoretical system limit of up to 900,000 barrels per day	Not verified before inspection of pipelines, buoys, and pumps
Marine loading	Initially 3,000 m³/hour and 6,000 m³/hour after upgrades	To be determined following safety, weather, and mooring tests
Tripoli storage tanks	Commonly cited design capacity of 430,000 m³	Net operational capacity has not been published
Beirut Port	Current capacity of 1.2–1.3 million TEUs; target of 3 million	Actual traffic is below capacity
Tripoli Port	Reference capacity of approximately 400,000 TEUs	Actual container volumes are lower; general cargo predominates
Qlayaat Airport	A 3,000-metre runway capable of accommodating commercial aircraft	Annual capacity cannot be confirmed without a regular operating schedule

Competing Oil Pipelines

Pipeline	Route	Status and implications for Lebanon
Kirkuk-Ceyhan	Iraq-Turkey-Mediterranean	A direct competitor to exports through Syria and Lebanon; operations are affected by disputes among Baghdad, Erbil, and Ankara
Kirkuk-Baniyas	Iraq-Syria	Historic and outdated; a new pipeline is being considered rather than merely repairing the existing one
Kirkuk-Tripoli	Iraq-Syria-Lebanon	Suspended; requires a survey, reconstruction, and a tripartite agreement
Eastern Mediterranean	Offshore gas fields toward Egypt or Europe	Multiple projects rather than a single unified pipeline; dependent on borders, security, and markets
IMEC energy and digital infrastructure	Gulf-Jordan-"Israel"-Europe	Includes proposals for hydrogen and data cables alongside transport infrastructure

Fourth: Airports and the Northern Logistics System

Rafic Hariri International Airport, Beirut

Item	Value
Runways	Three runways measuring 3,250, 3,395, and 3,800 metres
Recent peak	8.84 million passengers in 2018
Traffic in 2024	Approximately 5.62 million passengers
Role	Lebanon's main international airport and the hub of Middle East Airlines (MEA); it has previously faced closures and attacks
Logistics limitation	No railway connection to ports or industrial zones

President René Moawad Airport, Qlayaat

Item	Value
Location	Akkar, approximately 5–6 km from the Syrian border and around 100 km north of Beirut
Runway	3,000 metres long and approximately 45 metres wide
Status in 2026	A rehabilitation process and conversion into a second civilian airport were launched on 6 June 2026. Partial operations are targeted for October 2026. Regular commercial service will be the real test.
Initially announced destinations	Istanbul, Mersin, and Dubai, followed by Athens, Cairo, and Medina
Most suitable role	Air freight, agricultural and light industrial services, and low-cost flights, rather than a complete substitute for Beirut Airport

A northern logistics triangle could be developed around Tripoli Port, Qlayaat Airport, and the special economic zone. However, its success would require a dedicated freight highway, customs warehouses, a cold chain, and railway connections.

The airport's proximity to Syria is a commercial advantage, but it also makes the airport part of the region's security and border calculations. Furthermore, Akkar's road infrastructure and public services cannot accommodate a large increase in freight truck traffic. The figure of 5,000 jobs that Prime Minister Nawaf Salam promised would be created through the airport's operation is also considered inflated. Unsupported by the airport's actual staffing needs, at least during its initial operations and before the construction of railways and the establishment of regional commercial contracts.

Tripoli Special Economic Zone

The zone was established under Law No. 18 of 2008 to develop trade, industry, services, and storage. Its first phase covers approximately 55 hectares adjacent to the port, with the possibility of future expansion. However, it has not yet become a fully operational production and export zone on the scale originally promised.

Its real value will emerge when it is integrated with the container terminal, railway, Qlayaat Airport, and digital customs systems.

Component	What exists	Gap
Legal framework and authority	Legal framework and board of directors	Slow selection of an operator and development of operational infrastructure
Land	Initial area of approximately 55 hectares	Roads, electricity, water, and warehouses need to be developed
Port	Expansion potential and suitable water depths	Limited actual container volumes
Railway	Contract to update a study for a 35 km line	No financing or construction contract

Northern Connectivity Distances

Route segment	Approximate distance
Tripoli-Abboudiyeh	35 km
Tripoli-Homs	Approximately 90–110 km, depending on the route
Tripoli-Qlayaat	Approximately 25–30 km by road
Beirut-Tripoli	Approximately 85 km by road
Baghdad-Baniyas or Tripoli	More than 800 km, depending on the route

These distances are approximate and not the result of engineering surveys. Actual railway and pipeline routes may be longer to avoid difficult terrain, residential areas, and border regions with sensitive security conditions.

How Long Would Tripoli's Storage Tanks Take to Fill, Theoretically?

Daily pumping rate	Time to fill 2.7 million barrels
100,000 barrels	27 days
300,000 barrels	9 days
450,000 barrels	6 days
900,000 barrels	3 days

Fifth: Syria and the Companies: Who Is Doing What?

Syria has advanced because it has combined an existing flow of supplies from Iraq, coastal ports, and international operating companies. However, the appearance of these companies' names does not mean they are all implementing the same corridor.

Syria's emergence on the regional map has coincided with the US-Iran war and its impact on shipping through the Strait of Hormuz.

Entity	Location or project	Classification	Actual role
CMA CGM	Beirut, Tripoli, and Latakia	Port operator, not railway contractor	Operating container terminals and investing in Beirut Port's expansion
DP World	Tartus	Regional competitor to Lebanese ports	Long-term development and operating concession

Entity	Location or project	Classification	Actual role
Egypt's TGS	Gas pipeline to Deir Ammar	Actual implementation	Maintenance, rehabilitation, and field testing
Rafic Sami Khoury and Partners	Tripoli-Abboudiyeh	Consulting contract only, worth USD 860,250	Updating the design and preparing the implementation file
Chevron	Iraq-Syria pipeline	Not implementing projects in Lebanon	Technical and financial studies under announced arrangements
TI Capital	Iraq-Syria pipeline	Study phase	Financing arrangements and investment studies
UCC Holding	Iraq-Syria pipeline	Study phase	Member of the study and financing group
BIBUILT	Tripoli and Zahrani	Information technology contract worth USD 39,543	Maintenance of unloading, inventory, and management systems
Connection Services	Oil facilities	Small technical contract	Data connectivity and wireless communications
KPC Trading	Électricité du Liban	Fuel supplier, not tank contractor	Supply of approximately 88,000 tonnes of gas oil
Bureau Veritas	Fuel shipments	Inspection company	Sample testing and compliance verification

Why Is Syria's Role More Advanced?

- Baniyas Port has actually received Iraqi products transported by tanker trucks and re-exported them by sea.
- The ports of Latakia and Tartus have entered international operating concessions, while Lebanese-Syrian connectivity remains at the committee and study stage.
- Syria has a railway network approximately 2,852 km long. However, reports indicate that only around 1,052 km were operational as of 2011, 15 years ago. Syria therefore has an advantage, but reconstruction and investment are still required.
- The frequently cited capacity of 900 tanker trucks per day is not a permanent substitute for a major pipeline, but it demonstrates that demand and a commercial route already exist.



Baniyas Port

Sixth: From Assets to Revenue

How Can Assets Be Turned into Revenue?

Time frame	What is required	Potential return
Within 2 years	Put Qlayaat Airport into operation, update the railway study, and digitize customs	Increased freight traffic and reduced pressure on Beirut
Within 3–5 years	Build the 35 km railway and conclude a transit agreement with Syria	Transit, cargo-handling, and storage fees
Within 5–10 years	Connect to Homs and Iraq and rehabilitate oil and gas facilities	A regional role in energy and container transport
Permanent requirement	Security guarantees, insurance, and transparent management	Turning promises into long-term contracts

How Much Could Lebanon Earn, in Figures?

Lebanon does not automatically receive a share of Iraqi oil. Realistic sources of revenue would instead include transit, storage, pumping, and marine loading fees, as well as port activity, employment, and taxes.

The following table presents several hypothetical scenarios, in millions of US dollars per year.

Volume in transit	USD 0.50 per barrel	USD 1 per barrel	USD 1.50 per barrel	USD 2 per barrel
100,000 barrels per day	18.3	36.5	54.8	73.0
300,000 barrels per day	54.8	109.5	164.3	219.0
450,000 barrels per day	82.1	164.3	246.4	328.5

These are hypothetical gross revenues before accounting for maintenance, insurance, rehabilitation costs, the investor's and operator's shares, and debt servicing. If a private investor finances the infrastructure, a substantial portion of the fee could go to that investor during the early years.



Assessing Unused Capacity

The importance of an expansion cannot be measured by increases in design capacity alone. If Beirut raises its capacity to 3 million TEUs annually while actual traffic remains below one million, the priority should be attracting transit shipping lines and securing land connections, rather than simply adding berths.

The same applies to Tripoli: land is available, but the railway, border crossings, and demand are the actual constraints.

Potential Benefits by Asset

- Beirut: Consolidating its position as an Eastern Mediterranean container hub, with capacity potentially reaching 3 million TEUs, provided roads and customs procedures improve.
- Tripoli: An alternative maritime gateway for Syria and Iraq. Its value will begin to materialize after the railway is built, not before.
- Qlayaat: Air freight, low-cost flights, and services for northern Lebanon and western Syria, using its 3,000-metre runway.
- Oil and gas: Transit, storage, and loading fees, as well as potential savings in the operating costs of the Deir Ammar power plant, without any automatic ownership stake in Iraqi crude.
- Zahrani: Strategic reserves and services for southern Lebanon, subject to a comprehensive and transparent rehabilitation contract.

Seventh: Timeline and Readiness Assessment

Comparing project names and costs is not enough. The fundamental distinction is between an operational corridor, a signed project, and a study that has not secured financing. The following table presents these developments in chronological order.

Project	Milestone	Status in September 2026
Suez Canal	Opened in 1869; expanded in 2015	Operational, with traffic below its 2023 peak because of Red Sea risks
INSTC	India-Iran-Russia agreement signed on 12 September 2000	Partially operational; railway and customs links remain incomplete
Gulf Railway	Gulf initiative approved in the first decade of the 2000s; new target set for 2030	National implementation progressing unevenly; no fully integrated regional operation
IMEC	New Delhi memorandum signed on 9 September 2023	Political framework; no finalized comprehensive financing or unified timetable
Development Road	Launched by Iraq in 2023; four-party memorandum signed on 22 April 2024	Al-Faw is progressing; the railway and road require extensive financing and implementation
Grand Faw Port	Five berths handed over in 2024; phased operations scheduled for 2026	Initial infrastructure in place; target of 3.5 million TEUs in 2028
Iraq-Syria corridor	Road transport to Baniyas and pipeline studies in 2026	Road route operational; new pipeline still under study
Beirut container terminal	CMA CGM expansion groundbreaking on 11 September 2026	Under implementation; USD 100 million investment, with completion expected in 16–18 months
Tripoli-Abboudiyeh	Tender issued on 19 May; results published on 24 August 2026	Consulting contract worth USD 860,250; no construction contract yet
Deir Ammar gas pipeline	Maintenance by TGS in July-August 2026	Rehabilitation and testing underway; operations depend on purchase and transit contracts
Qlayaat	Rehabilitation process launched on 6 June 2026	Partial operations targeted for October 2026; success will be measured by the regularity of flights and freight services
Tripoli and Zahrani storage tanks	Inspections and logistics committees in August 2026	No comprehensive expansion contract announced

Readiness Scale

Score	Definition	Examples
5: Commercially operational	Demonstrated flows and revenue	Suez Canal; Iraqi road transport to Baniyas
4: Actual implementation	Work underway under a funded contract	Beirut container terminal expansion; rehabilitation of the Deir Ammar gas pipeline
3: Study contract	Limited financial commitment preceding construction	Tripoli-Abboudiyeh railway; Iraq-Syria pipeline
2: Political memorandum	Agreement without full implementation financing	IMEC; parts of the Development Road
1: Concept	No agreement or financing	Ben Gurion Canal in its commonly discussed form

Why Do Corridors Stall After Agreements Are Signed?

A political memorandum does not automatically determine who owns the land, who finances a bridge, or who pays the difference in tariffs. Projects typically encounter difficulties when moving from the map to five implementation challenges: land acquisition, railway gauge standardization, sovereign financing, customs rules, and guarantees for uninterrupted flows.

Bottleneck	Implementation question
Financing	Who pays the construction costs, and who guarantees a minimum level of traffic?
Standards	Are railway gauges, signalling systems, and load limits compatible across countries?
Borders	How long does customs clearance take, and who sets the tariffs?
Security	Who secures the route, and who compensates for interruptions?
Operations	Will there be a single operator or multiple national companies?

Eighth: The Israeli Threat and the Limits of Lebanon's Opportunity

The Israeli threat is not a marginal external factor. It directly affects the cost of every project. Previous wars have demonstrated that Beirut Airport, bridges, roads, and energy facilities can be targeted.

As long as this threat persists, investors must price in the possibility of facility shutdowns, not merely the cost of construction. The Israeli threat also affects neighbouring countries across the region, not Lebanon alone. Attacks have also severely damaged old gas pipelines passing through Syria.

Risk	Economic impact
Attacks on ports or the airport	Disrupted flows and higher insurance premiums
Destruction of bridges and railways	The entire corridor can be severed at a single point
Threats to oil and gas pipelines	Reluctance to provide long-term financing
Trade shifting to Syria and Turkey	Loss of freight traffic before Lebanese infrastructure is completed
Dominance of a single operator, CMA CGM, in Beirut, Tripoli, and Latakia	Commercial decisions may favour one port over another

Conclusion

Lebanon is not on the map of major corridors as a founding partner, but geographically, it is not excluded from them. Its realistic opportunity is to become a secondary Mediterranean gateway for the Iraq-Syria corridor and a hub for containers and services, rather than an independent corridor in its own right.

Recent developments in Beirut, the Tripoli railway study contract, and the Qlayaat rehabilitation process improve Lebanon's

position. However, they are insufficient without railway construction, transit agreements, and financing that accounts for the risk of war.

Lebanon's potential accession to the network of ports along the India-Middle East-Europe Economic Corridor could be a useful entry point for cooperation and commercial connectivity among ports situated along the route, if the project is ultimately completed.

Lebanon may be able to serve as an additional and alternative gateway for Syria and Iraq, but it cannot compete with the major corridors. Furthermore, the anticipated revenues, which have not been examined in detail relative to the media hype exaggerating the importance of these projects and their returns for Lebanon, may be modest compared with the needs of Lebanon's exhausted economy, particularly amid widespread corruption in state institutions and a system driven by sectarian power-sharing and political dependency.

The volume of Iraqi oil transported by truck to Baniyas is likely to decline when normal navigation through the Strait of Hormuz resumes, because the Syrian route is more expensive than direct exports from the Gulf. Nevertheless, this corridor is unlikely to close entirely. It has become an alternative outlet that gives Iraq strategic diversification and could become permanent if costly road transport is replaced by a new pipeline.

Methodological Notes

The figures were compiled from official data, infrastructure operators, international agencies, and reliable press reports. The analysis distinguishes between actual traffic, design capacity, and future estimates.

The maps do not represent engineering routes or official political boundaries. Financial figures denominated in US dollars do not account for inflation or changes in financing costs. The scenarios for Lebanese fees are illustrative calculations, not contractual terms.

The term "twenty-foot equivalent unit" (TEU) refers to a standard shipping container measuring 20 feet in length.

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Public Sector

THE WASTE CRISIS IN NORTH LEBANON

TRIPOLI'S LANDFILL HAS REACHED THE END OF ITS LIFE, AND SRAR-AKKAR REFUSES TO TAKE ON THE CRISIS

The waste crisis in Tripoli and North Lebanon is no longer a looming possibility. The deadline for closing the Tripoli landfill expired on August 31, 2026, without an alternative site being secured or a treatment plant capable of processing the waste being brought into operation. Nearly a month after the deadline, the landfill is still being used out of necessity, while the government's attempt to transfer the waste to the Srar landfill in Akkar has failed, even for a transitional period of no more than six months.

The figures show that the problem extends beyond a dispute over where waste should be dumped. Tripoli and the cities served by the Federation of Fayhaa Municipalities generate more than 450 tonnes of waste daily, while the sorting plant remains shut down, the landfill is full, contracts are temporary, and proposed alternatives face local opposition and lack the technical capacity to handle North Lebanon's waste.



450 Tonnes a Day in Search of a Place to Go

The Federation of Fayhaa Municipalities provides services to Tripoli, Al-Mina, Beddawi and Qalamoun. These cities generate more than 450 tonnes of waste daily, including over 100 tonnes originating from outside Tripoli.

This amounts to approximately:



3,150 tonnes per week



13,500 tonnes per month



164,000 tonnes per year

These quantities are not currently being processed through an integrated sorting and treatment system. The Tripoli plant has been out of operation for years, and parts of its equipment have been damaged or stolen. As a result, most waste is dumped directly into the landfill, including recyclable materials and organic waste that could otherwise be treated.
If sorting and treatment successfully recovered 70 to 80% of the waste, the quantity requiring landfilling would fall from 450 tonnes to just 90–135 tonnes per day.

A Landfill Designed for Three Years That Has Been Used for More Than Seven

Tripoli's coastal landfill consists of three cells designed to receive approximately 450 tonnes of waste daily for three years. The project involved reclaiming around 65,000 square metres of sea, constructing a 750-metre breakwater, installing a leachate treatment plant with a capacity of 80 cubic metres per day, and laying networks to collect leachate and gases.

At a rate of 450 tonnes per day over three years, the landfill was designed to accommodate approximately:

493,000 tonnes



of waste

The new cells began operating in early 2019 and were expected to reach the end of their operational life around 2022. Instead, they remained in use until 2026, for more than seven and a half years, exceeding twice their designed lifespan. Batco, the company operating the landfill, had previously announced that the old dump had already reached its maximum capacity in 2012, meaning the state had been aware of the problem for more than a decade.

In August 2026, the Council for Development and Reconstruction informed the Federation of Fayhaa Municipalities that the landfill would close on August 31 after reaching its maximum capacity. However, the deadline passed without a formal closure being implemented or an alternative site beginning to receive waste.

Since collection has continued and no widespread piles of rubbish have appeared in the streets, it can reasonably be inferred that the existing landfill is still being used out of necessity or that waste is being accommodated through temporary arrangements whose details have not been disclosed. This means that September alone added approximately 13,500 tonnes to a site that had reportedly reached the point where it could no longer accept more waste.

Srar: From Proposed Solution to Point of Confrontation

The Srar landfill in Akkar emerged as the leading alternative. The initial plan called for transferring Fayhaa's waste there for a transitional period of approximately 18 months, while the Tripoli sorting plant was brought back into operation and a permanent system was established.

The proposal, however, encountered opposition from Akkar's municipalities and local representatives. In mid-September, Prime Minister Nawaf Salam held a meeting lasting approximately two and a half hours with the heads of five municipalities surrounding Srar and the head of the Western Dreib Municipalities Union. Environment Minister Tamara Zein and the president of the Council for Development and Reconstruction also attended.

During the meeting, a proposal was put forward to receive Tripoli's waste for just six months, alongside financial assistance and service projects for the villages surrounding the landfill. The municipal heads rejected the offer, arguing that roads, sanitation and public services were the region's rights, not compensation conditional on accepting waste.

The municipalities demanded compensation for damage they said had accumulated over 33 years of landfill operations. Some municipal heads went so far as to threaten to resign rather than approve the proposal.

On September 25, the municipalities surrounding Srar issued a statement confirming that:

- No agreement had been reached to receive Tripoli's waste.
- Claims that a financial payment had been agreed upon were unfounded.
- There was no approval to bring in waste from outside Akkar.
- The sorting plant and landfill had to operate under clear environmental safeguards.

Consequently, as of September 29, 2026, the government's attempt to use Srar as a temporary alternative had failed.

Can Srar Handle Tripoli's Waste?

The new sanitary landfill at Srar has a designed capacity of approximately one million cubic metres, equivalent to roughly 700,000–900,000 tonnes, depending on the degree of waste compaction.

The main problem, however, lies in the capacity of the sorting and composting plant, which does not exceed 250–300 tonnes per day. Meanwhile, sources indicate that the Srar dump currently receives between 300 and 500 tonnes of waste daily from Akkar, although no publicly available daily weight records exist to establish the exact figure.

If Fayhaa's more than 450 tonnes of daily waste were added, the total volume arriving at Srar would be as follows:

Akkar waste	Fayhaa waste	Total daily waste
300 tonnes	450 tonnes	750 tonnes
400 tonnes	450 tonnes	850 tonnes
500 tonnes	450 tonnes	950 tonnes

This would mean that the potential daily intake would be between two and a half and nearly four times the plant's processing capacity, leaving a surplus of approximately 450–700 tonnes per day that could end up being dumped directly.

> **At an intake of 750–950 tonnes per day, the landfill's theoretical capacity could be exhausted within approximately two to three years if the waste were not sorted and treated before being landfilled. Srar would thus shift from a project intended to process Akkar's waste into a new central landfill for North Lebanon, one that could quickly reach capacity in its turn.**

Transportation Distance and Cost

The distance between the Tripoli and Srar landfills is approximately 45–50 kilometres one way, or 90–100 kilometres for a round trip, along the route through Tripoli, Abdeh and Aboudiyeh-Mnejez to Srar.

If 450 tonnes of waste were transported daily using trucks with a capacity of 15 tonnes each, this would require:

- 30 loaded trips per day.
- 60 truck movements in both directions.
- Approximately 2,700–3,000 kilometres of daily fleet operation.
- Nearly one million kilometres per year.

If each truck carried 20 tonnes, approximately 23 loaded trips per day would still be required.

A payment of approximately $25 per tonne for accepting the waste has been discussed. If this figure were adopted, the cost would amount to:

- $11,250 per day.
- Approximately $337,500 per month.
- Around $4.1 million per year.
- Approximately $6.2 million over 18 months.

These figures do not necessarily include fuel, drivers, trucks, maintenance, insurance, vehicle washing or leachate treatment. However, in their latest statement, the municipalities surrounding Srar denied that any final financial agreement had been reached.

Contracts: Collection Continues, but the Landfill Has Reached Capacity

Lavajet is responsible for street sweeping, waste collection and transportation in the Fayhaa cities, while Batco operates the Tripoli landfill. These are separate contracts: the collection contract does not cover landfill operations, and Batco's contract does not automatically transfer to Srar.

Lavajet has been operating in Fayhaa for approximately 26 years. Its original contract has expired, but services have continued through exceptional extensions to prevent waste from accumulating. The municipalities attempted to launch three new tenders, but none resulted in a final award.

On September 10, 2026, the Council of Ministers issued Decision No. 7 to establish a transitional arrangement preventing the interruption of waste collection and street-cleaning services. It also decided to dedicate a cabinet session to discussing the waste file and related issues. However, the decision ensures the continued removal of waste without answering the fundamental question: where will it be dumped?

The tender published by the Public Procurement Authority covers street sweeping, cleaning, collection and transportation in Tripoli, Al-Mina, Beddawi and Qalamoun for three years, renewable for an additional three years. It remains listed as "active," with no award result or final contract with a new company published. October 15, 2026, is listed as the expected handover date.

Lavajet is therefore likely to continue operating on an interim basis, while Batco remains responsible for the Tripoli landfill until a different decision is issued.

In Srar, the management of the existing site and the collection of waste from a large number of Akkar municipalities are linked to Al-Amana Al-Arabiya and Al-Amana Al-Dawliya. Meanwhile, the Ministry of Environment, through the United

Nations Office for Project Services and with European funding, is overseeing a project to rehabilitate the sanitary landfill. However, no contract has been published between the Federation of Fayhaa Municipalities and the entity operating Srar.

A New Medical Waste Plant, Not a Household Waste Facility

One positive development in September was the announcement of a €2.5 million European grant, to be implemented by the United Nations Development Programme, to establish a medical waste treatment plant in North Lebanon. The project is being developed in partnership with the Federation of Fayhaa Municipalities and Tripoli Governmental Hospital.

The project represents an important step towards treating hazardous waste generated by hospitals and healthcare centres. However, it does not address the household waste crisis, which involves more than 450 tonnes daily, because the project is designed to handle an entirely different waste stream.

Divided Responsibility and the Absence of a Decision

The state bears primary responsibility because it knew in advance that the Tripoli landfill was a temporary facility with a designed lifespan of three years. Nevertheless, it allowed the site to remain in use for more than seven years without preparing an alternative. It also failed to establish a workable transitional plan before the August 31 deadline, or to determine the future of the sorting plant and the location of a new landfill.

The municipalities and the Federation of Fayhaa Municipalities also bear part of the responsibility because of:

- The shutdown of the sorting plant and the failure to protect its equipment.
- The failure of three consecutive tenders.
- Reliance on a single waste collection contractor for approximately 26 years.
- Failure to control the more than 100 tonnes of waste arriving daily from outside Tripoli.
- A shortage of vehicles and waste containers, with the city needing approximately 300 new containers.
- The lack of regular public disclosure of waste weights, costs and contracts.

Transferring the crisis to Akkar cannot be considered a solution without establishing the processing plant's capacity, the landfill's remaining capacity, how leachate will be managed, where funding will come from and which body will be responsible for oversight.

A Postponed Crisis, Not a Resolved One

As of September 29, 2026, the state of waste management in North Lebanon can be summarised through the following figures:

- Fayhaa generates more than 450 tonnes of waste daily.
- A landfill designed for three years has been used for more than seven.
- Approximately 13,500 additional tonnes entered the waste stream in the month following the expiry of the closure deadline.
- The Tripoli sorting plant remains shut down, and the proposed new solution would take a year and a half to two years.
- Srar already receives between 300 and 500 tonnes of waste daily.
- Srar's treatment plant has a capacity of no more than 250–300 tonnes per day.

- Transferring Fayhaa's waste would raise the potential daily intake to 750–950 tonnes.
- Transportation would require 23–30 loaded truck trips every day.
- The proposed tipping fee would amount to more than $4 million annually.
- The proposal to send waste to Srar for six months was rejected, and no agreement has been signed.

The conclusion is that North Lebanon is not facing a crisis involving a single landfill, but the failure of an entire system: collection under temporary contracts, a non-operational sorting plant, virtually no treatment, a full landfill and an alternative site that refuses to accept additional waste.

Unless the current period is used to restart sorting facilities, implement waste separation at source, establish transparent contracts and regulate the quantities arriving from outside each municipal union, the closure of the Tripoli landfill will lead either to waste piling up in the streets or to the opening of a new dump that reproduces the same crisis in another area.

What is happening today is not a solution to the waste crisis, but an attempt to buy time: from three years to seven in Tripoli, and from a proposed 18-month arrangement to a six-month attempt in Srar, while more than 450 tonnes of waste continue to search for somewhere to be dumped every day.



Public Sector

LEBANON'S NATIONAL SOCIAL SECURITY FUND

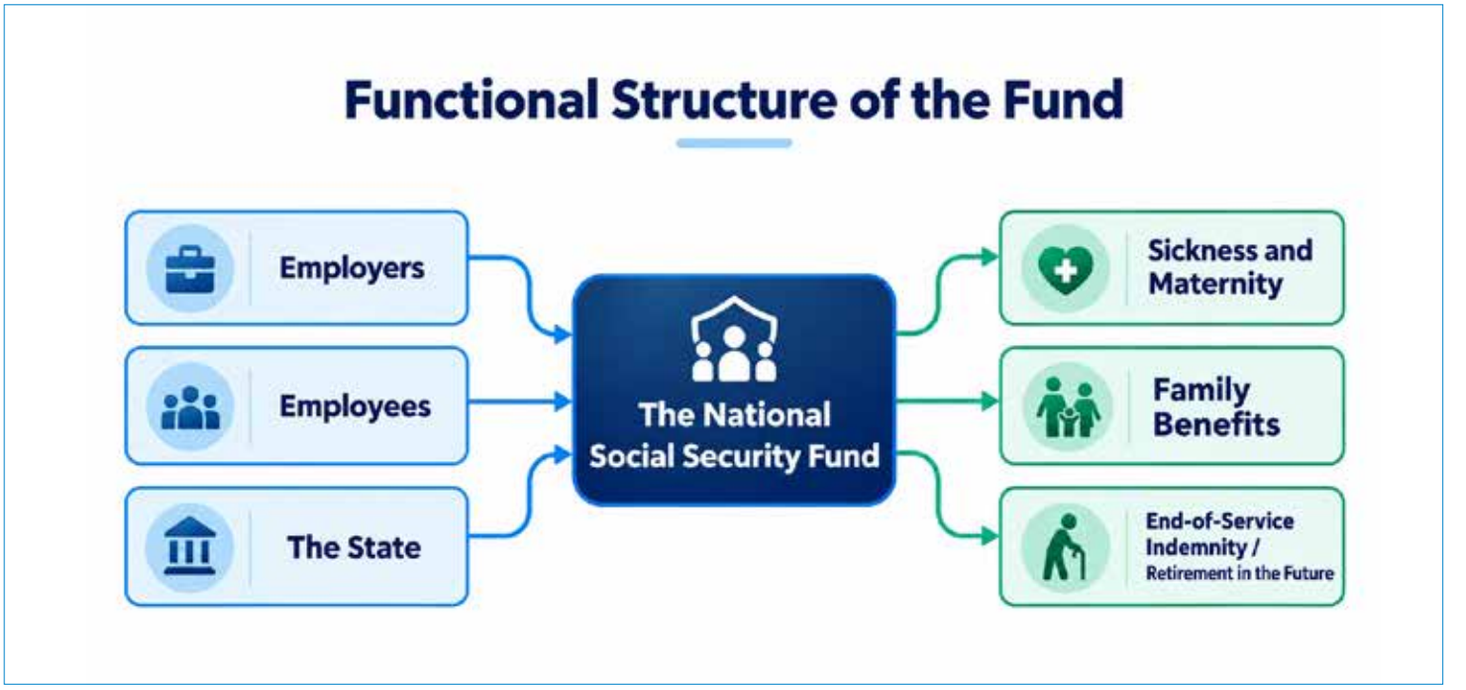
The National Social Security Fund (NSSF) has gradually begun to recover the role it played before the crisis by increasing its reimbursement rates for a number of benefits, while expanding medicine coverage and improving reimbursement amounts for medicines and outpatient treatment. These steps mark an important shift after years in which the value of NSSF benefits fell to almost symbolic levels because of the collapse of the currency and rising medical costs. However, a full return to its former role depends on regularly updating rates, speeding up the processing of claims and payment of dues, and ensuring that hospitals do not impose large additional charges on insured people. Before the crisis, the NSSF Fund covered 90% of the actual amount paid by the patient.



1. What Is Social Security?

Institutionally, social security is a compulsory, contribution-based system that distributes the cost of social risks among employees, employers, and the state. It therefore differs from social assistance, which is funded primarily through taxes and targets the poorest groups regardless of their contribution records.
The National Social Security Fund in Lebanon was established under the Social Security Law, brought into force by Decree No. 13955 dated 26 September 1963. It gradually began actual operations in the mid-1960s.

Figure 1. Simplified structure of the NSSF: funding from employers, employees, and the state supports three functionally and financially independent branches.



2. Coverage: What Do the Figures Mean?

The NSSF's official website indicates that the number of people covered for healthcare is much larger than the number of employees, because a healthcare beneficiary may be the insured person or an eligible member of their family.

Indicator	Description / significance	Value
Employees	Registered employees	409,078
Special categories	Doctors, mukhtars (local officials), students, public-transport drivers, etc.	Approximately 110,000
Healthcare beneficiaries	Insured people and eligible family members, subject to the applicable conditions	1,273,097
Contracted hospitals	Survey conducted in September 2025, as announced in January 2026	Approximately 150
Non-contracted hospitals	Only 9% of hospitals in Lebanon are not contracted, out of approximately 165 hospitals	Approximately 15
Medicines covered	Published list following its expansion in July 2025	Approximately 4,500

Source: National Social Security Fund – Information International.

3. The NSSF Fund and Hospitals: A Contract Does Not Always Mean Compliance

The NSSF contracts with hospitals that accept its rules, rates, and approval and payment procedures. In a survey conducted by the NSSF in September 2025 covering around 150 contracted hospitals, the Fund announced compliance rates of 90% to 95% in a number of areas. At the same time, violations were recorded at some major hospitals, particularly in Beirut. These included refusing to admit certain insured people or charging them high additional amounts.

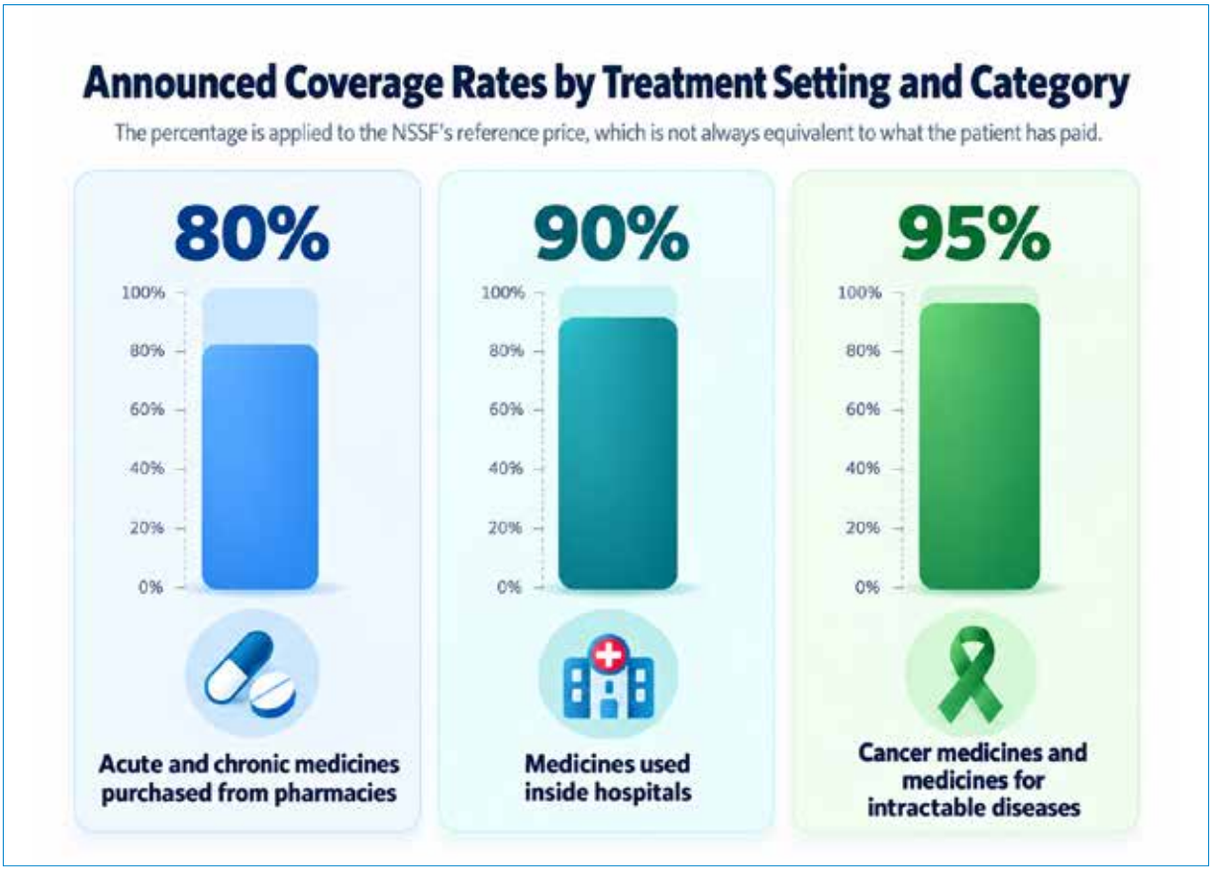
Having a contract with the NSSF does not automatically mean that an insured person receives all their entitlements. Problems may arise regarding bed availability, prior approvals, NSSF rates, services and supplies not covered, or additional charges requested by some hospitals.

4. How Medicine Coverage Works

During 2025, the NSSF expanded the list of covered medicines and increased reimbursement amounts and coverage rates. However, the reimbursement percentage is not necessarily applied to the price actually paid by the patient. Instead, it is applied to the NSSF rate, which is based on the medicine's reference price or the price of the lowest-cost equivalent alternative.

This mechanism aims to encourage the use of lower-cost alternatives and control pharmaceutical spending. However, it may shift the price difference to the patient if they choose a brand-name medicine that costs more than the reference price used by the Fund. The NSSF adopts the medicine list approved by Lebanon's Ministry of Public Health. In other words, the Fund pays for the least expensive formulation approved by the Ministry.

Figure 2. Announced coverage rates by treatment setting and category:
The percentage is applied to the NSSF's reference price, which is not always equivalent to what the patient has paid.

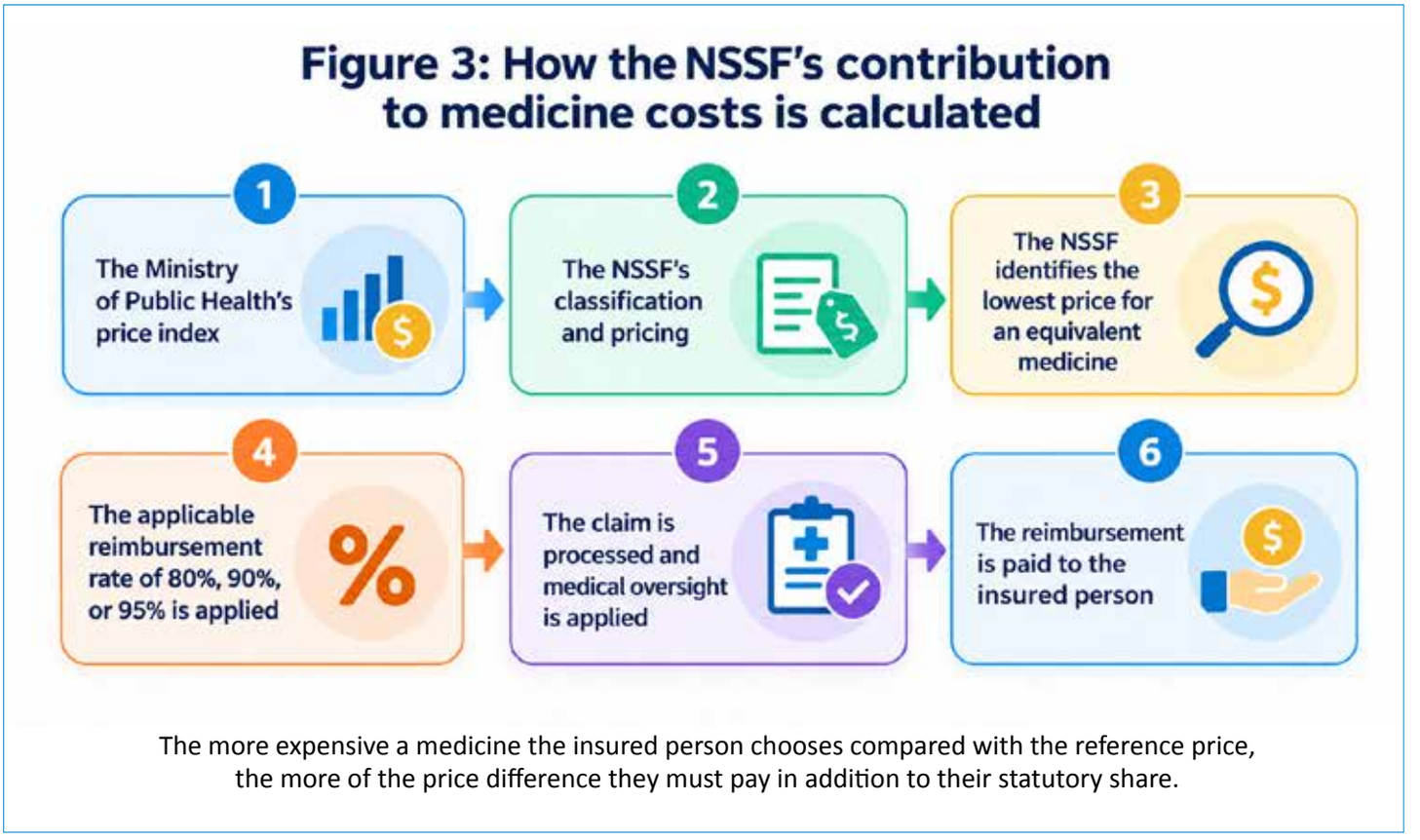


Example

If a patient pays LBP 1.5 million for a medicine, while the reference price of the alternative accepted by the NSSF is LBP 1 million, reimbursement at a rate of 80% amounts to LBP 800,000.
The patient would then pay LBP 700,000, made up of:

- LBP 200,000, representing the patient's share of the reference price.
- LBP 500,000, representing the difference between the price of the chosen brand and the approved reference price.

Figure 3: How the NSSF's contribution to medicine costs is calculated



The more expensive a medicine the insured person chooses compared with the reference price, the more of the price difference they must pay in addition to their statutory share.

5. Pension Law: From End-of-Service Indemnity to a Monthly Pension

Social Security and Pension System Law No. 319/2023 provides for replacing the end-of-service indemnity system, under which an insured person receives a single lump-sum payment, with a monthly pension that continues after retirement age. The aim is to provide insured people with a regular income instead of a payment that may lose its value or be spent over a short period.

However, enactment of the law does not mean that it takes effect automatically. Implementing decrees are needed to determine contribution rates, how accumulated entitlements will be transferred, how pensions will be calculated and indexed, how funds will be managed and invested, and what transitional rules will apply to insured people. These decrees have not yet been completed, and decisions on them are expected to face difficulties over the coming years because of financial and administrative complexities and the need to secure sustainable funding. The end-of-service indemnity system therefore remains in force until the decrees are completed and the new pension system is actually implemented.

Conclusion

The National Social Security Fund is the backbone of Lebanon's contribution-based social insurance system. The renewed increases in medicine and hospital reimbursement rates indicate a relative recovery in its purchasing power, but they do not eliminate the gap between the rules on paper and their implementation, nor do they mean that insured people have regained the level of protection available before the crisis.

Reforming the pension system represents an important structural change, but it remains an incomplete implementation project. In the coming period, the NSSF's strength should be measured against four interconnected criteria: broader coverage, adequate benefits, reliable delivery of services to beneficiaries, and transparent data and governance.

The NSSF is not a hospital, a pharmacy, or an assistance fund. It is an institution that collects contributions, purchases healthcare services, and organizes the social rights of insured people. In practice, it is a mutual solidarity fund among members of society. Contributions are pooled to finance healthcare and social needs that not all members will experience at the same time. An insured person may not directly benefit from some NSSF services, particularly if they do not need treatment or hospitalization, but their contributions help meet the healthcare and medicine needs of another insured person. This solidarity among contributors gives social security a national and social dimension that goes beyond direct individual benefit.



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Public Sector

REGULATORY AUTHORITIES IN LEBANON

BETWEEN HIGH COSTS AND OVERLAPPING POWERS MILLIONS OF DOLLARS IN LOSSES

A regulatory authority is a specialized oversight body that brings together the public and private sectors. Its members are appointed by the government through a decree issued by the Council of Ministers. Under the laws establishing them, these authorities enjoy financial and legal independence and have decision-making powers within their respective areas of jurisdiction.

By law, certain decision-making powers are transferred from the relevant minister and their advisers to the authority as a collective body, making it the entity authorized to regulate the sector and take the decisions specified by law.

In Lebanon, the laws establishing regulatory authorities reflect what is known as the confessional convention, whereby the boards of certain authorities often consist of six members, allowing representation of the six major religious sects in accordance with the principle of equal representation between Christians and Muslims.

The Role of Regulatory Authorities

The primary responsibility of a regulatory authority is to regulate the sector for which it was established and to develop the frameworks and regulations necessary to ensure the implementation of applicable laws.

The authority prepares studies, plans, and regulations, provides opinions on proposed projects, and contributes to decision-making and the implementation of measures permitted by law. It also regulates competition within the sector, establishes frameworks for procurement and licensing, and monitors their proper implementation and compliance with the applicable conditions and laws.

Some authorities are also empowered to set tariffs and fees for the services provided, as in the electricity, telecommunications, and aviation sectors, and to establish mechanisms for collecting them. They are also responsible for studying ways to develop their respective sectors and improve service quality.

The authority is also required to prepare an annual report on its activities and responsibilities and submit it to the relevant minister, in preparation for its presentation to the Council of Ministers in accordance with the applicable legal procedures.

What Does the Law Say?

Lebanon does not yet have a unified law governing all regulatory authorities. Instead, each authority is established under a separate law specific to the sector it is responsible for regulating.

The legislative framework for regulatory authorities began to take shape in 2002, with the adoption of three laws providing for the establishment of regulatory authorities in key sectors:

- Law No. 462, concerning the regulation of the electricity sector.
- Law No. 481, concerning the administration of the civil aviation sector.
- Law No. 431, concerning the regulation of the telecommunications sector.

Law No. 161, concerning the Capital Markets Authority, was subsequently adopted in 2011. In 2020, Law No. 178 was passed to regulate the cultivation of cannabis, in addition to other laws providing for the establishment of oversight and regulatory bodies that have either never materialized or have not been fully activated as intended.

The Cost of Regulatory Authorities

For a number of regulatory authorities, the remuneration of the chairperson and members is determined by a decree adopted by the Council of Ministers. One example is Decree No. 581/2022, which set the remuneration of the chairperson and members of the National Electricity Regulatory Authority and the Directorate General of Civil Aviation.

According to the figures stated in this decree:

Chairperson: LBP 716,000,000 per month, equivalent to approximately USD 8,000.
Member: LBP 626,500,000 per month, equivalent to approximately USD 7,000.

As for the Authority for the Regulation of Cannabis Cultivation, remuneration was set as follows:

Chairperson: LBP 625,000,000 per month, equivalent to approximately USD 7,000.
Member: LBP 582,000,000 per month, equivalent to approximately USD 6,500.

Financial regulations vary from one authority to another. Some operate under special financial systems that determine the remuneration of their chairpersons and members, although these amounts generally fall within similar ranges.

An Example of Annual Costs

Assuming that an authority consists of one chairperson and five members, and using monthly remuneration figures of USD 8,000 for the chairperson and USD 7,000 for each member, the cost would be as follows:

The five members:

USD 7,000 × 12 = USD 84,000 per year for each member

USD 84,000 × 5 = USD 420,000 per year for all five members

The chairperson:

USD 8,000 × 12 = USD 96,000 per year

Therefore, the total annual remuneration for the chairperson and members amounts to:

USD 420,000 + USD 96,000 = USD 516,000 per year for each authority

These figures cover remuneration only and do not necessarily include employee salaries, operating and administrative expenses, or other expenditures required for the authority to carry out its duties.

The More Important Question: What Do These Authorities Achieve?

This brings us to the central issue that warrants discussion and accountability:

How productive are these authorities compared with the level of remuneration and public funds spent on them?

If a regulatory authority has been established to exercise independent regulatory and decision-making powers, it should have a clear and measurable impact on sector development, service improvement, competition regulation, consumer protection, increased revenue, or reduced waste and costs.

Therefore, simply establishing an authority and granting its chairperson and members substantial remuneration is not enough. Clear and transparent performance indicators must be established to evaluate its results and compare them with the costs borne by the public treasury.

This raises a broader political and administrative question:

If regulatory authorities fully perform their duties independently and effectively, what role will remain for the relevant minister and first-category civil servants in managing and regulating the sector?

The objective should not be to create a new administrative layer on top of the ministry. Rather, it should be to establish a clear separation between policymaking on the one hand and sector regulation and oversight on the other. This would prevent overlapping powers and duplication of responsibilities while ensuring that the cost of each authority is justified by the results it delivers.

Ultimately, the success of regulatory authorities should not be measured by the number of laws that established them or the amount of remuneration paid to their members, but by what they actually deliver for citizens, the economy, and the sectors they are responsible for regulating.

Public Sector

ACCIDENTS, CRIME, AND SUICIDE

Despite the war that broke out again in March 2026 and the displacement of more than one million people from their homes, the available figures do not show a general surge in the reported crime indicators. The figures for the first eight months of the year point to near stability in road accidents, alongside a decline in road fatalities, an increase in suicide deaths, and mixed trends in theft indicators. These findings call for each indicator to be examined separately, without linking displacement to crime or assuming that an increase in one indicator means an increase across all indicators.



Road Accidents

The number of road accidents remained virtually unchanged between January and August, with 2,130 accidents in 2025 compared with 2,131 in 2026. However, the number of fatalities fell from 362 to 298, a decrease of 17.7%, while the number of injuries dropped from 2,460 to 2,374, a decline of 3.5%. The stability in the overall number of accidents does not mean that traffic patterns remained unchanged. The war and displacement may have reduced traffic in some areas while increasing it in others.

August Records the Highest Monthly Total

Indicator	January	February	March	April	May	June	July	August	Total
Road accidents	260	263	198	241	249	282	305	333	2,131
Road fatalities	31	29	38	44	24	33	45	54	298
Road injuries	281	309	195	267	272	318	360	372	2,374

The number of accidents rose from its lowest level in March, when 198 were recorded, to 333 in August, an increase of 68.2%. June, July and August together accounted for 920 accidents, or 43.2% of the eight-month total, and 132 deaths, representing 44.3% of all fatalities. The monthly averages were approximately 266 accidents and 37 deaths.

During the three summer months, accidents rose from 282 to 305 and then to 333, while fatalities increased from 33 to 45 and then to 54. This is a descriptive comparison and does not establish the cause of the increase.

Five Years of Decline Followed by an Increase

These results should be viewed against the backdrop of several exceptional years. Road accidents declined from 3,132 in 2021 to 2,113 in 2022 before rising to 3,317 in 2025. This period coincided with the effects of COVID-19, the economic collapse and the fuel crisis, followed by a partial economic and tourism recovery in 2025.

Indicator	2021	2022	2023	2024	2025	Change in 2025 vs. 2024
Road accidents	3,132	2,113	2,303	2,365	3,317	+40.3%
Road fatalities	419	359	439	442	520	+17.6%
Road injuries	3,470	2,366	2,726	2,655	3,833	+44.4%

Road accidents increased from 2,365 in 2024 to 3,317 in 2025, a rise of 40.3%. The number of fatalities also increased, from 442 to 520, or 17.6%. These figures cover entire calendar years, whereas the 2026 comparison is limited to the corresponding first eight months.

Comparison of January–August 2025 and 2026

Indicator	January–August 2025	January–August 2026	Percentage change	Numerical difference
Road accidents	2,130	2,131	+0.05%	+1
Road fatalities	362	298	-17.7%	-64
Road injuries	2,460	2,374	-3.5%	-86

The comparison shows an increase of just one accident, alongside 64 fewer fatalities and 86 fewer injuries.

Crime

Despite the war and displacement, theft indicators show divergent trends. Aggravated theft increased from 2,633 cases in the first eight months of 2025 to 2,809 during the same period in 2026, a rise of 6.7%. Meanwhile, car thefts fell from 229 to 156, a decline of 31.9%.

Annual Comparison, 2021–2025

Indicator	2021	2022	2023	2024	2025	Change in 2025 vs. 2024
Aggravated theft	5,940	4,769	3,152	2,782	3,776	+35.7%
Stolen vehicles	1,605	1,212	1,147	719	307	-57.3%

Vehicle theft declined annually from 1,605 cases in 2021 to 307 in 2025, a decrease of 80.9%. Aggravated theft, by contrast, resumed its upward trend in 2025 after declining between 2021 and 2024. These figures represent the full-year totals for each year.

Comparison of January–August 2025 and 2026

Indicator	January–August 2025	January–August 2026	Percentage change	Numerical difference
Aggravated theft	2,633	2,809	+6.7%	+176
Stolen vehicles	229	156	-31.9%	-73

Aggravated theft increased by 176 cases, while vehicle theft declined by 73 cases.

Monthly Distribution of Recorded Indicators

Indicator	January	February	March	April	May	June	July	August	Total
Stolen vehicles	28	14	18	18	17	25	27	9	**156**
Recovered vehicles	4	5	3	1	3	2	6	-	**24**
Net stolen vehicles	24	9	15	17	14	23	21	9	**132**
Carjacking incidents	4	2	1	4	2	3	3	1	**20**
Aggravated theft	375	320	307	327	339	363	416	362	**2,809**
Pickpocketing	58	34	51	35	40	47	52	44	**361**
Robbery, excluding carjacking	50	38	58	64	59	50	55	52	**426**
Drug-use reports	59	75	42	37	46	69	69	79	**476**
Drug trafficking and promotion reports	37	57	38	39	35	27	43	39	**315**
Kidnappings for financial ransom	3	7	-	-	2	3	1	1	**17**
Armed robberies	-	-	-	-	-	-	1	-	**1**
Fatalities in criminal homicide incidents	12	11	20	14	12	18	11	9	**107**

Aggravated theft peaked in July, with 416 cases, followed by January with 375 and June with 363. A total of 156 vehicles were stolen and 24 recovered, leaving a net total of 132 stolen vehicles. The figures also recorded 107 fatalities in criminal homicide incidents.

Suicide in Lebanon:

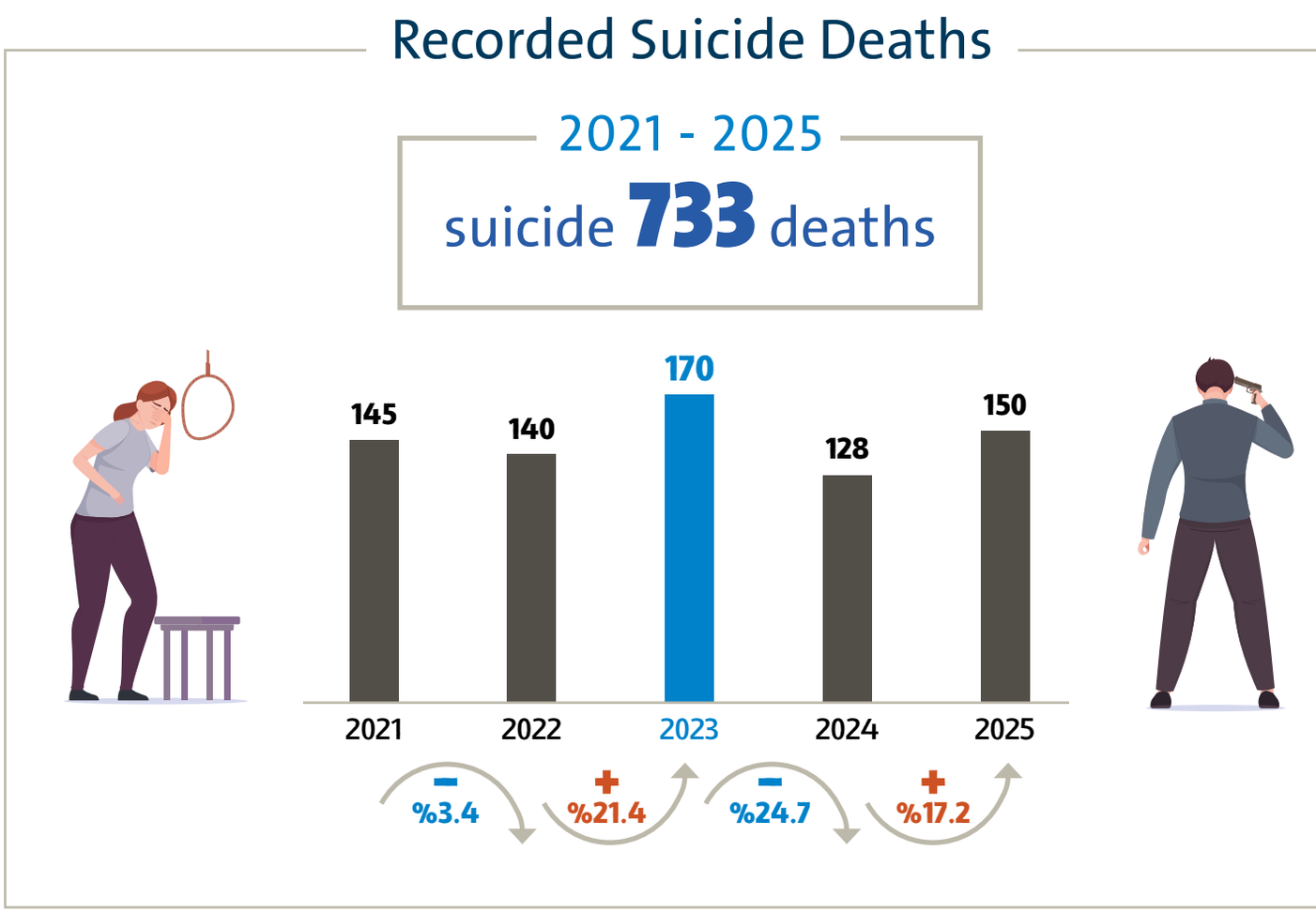
733 Deaths Over Five Years and a 10.4% Increase Through August 2026

Recorded suicide deaths in Lebanon have brought the issue back into focus amid overlapping economic and social crises, wars, displacement and instability. Although these circumstances increase pressure on individuals and families, the figures alone cannot establish the causes of individual cases or link changes in the numbers to any single factor.

Between 2021 and 2025, 733 suicide deaths were recorded, averaging approximately 147 deaths per year. The number peaked in 2023, at 170 deaths, and reached its lowest level in 2024, at 128 deaths, before rising to 150 deaths in 2025.

Year	Recorded suicide deaths	Change from previous year
2021	145	-
2022	140	-3.4%
2023	170	+21.4%
2024	128	-24.7%
2025	150	+17.2%
Total	**733**	-

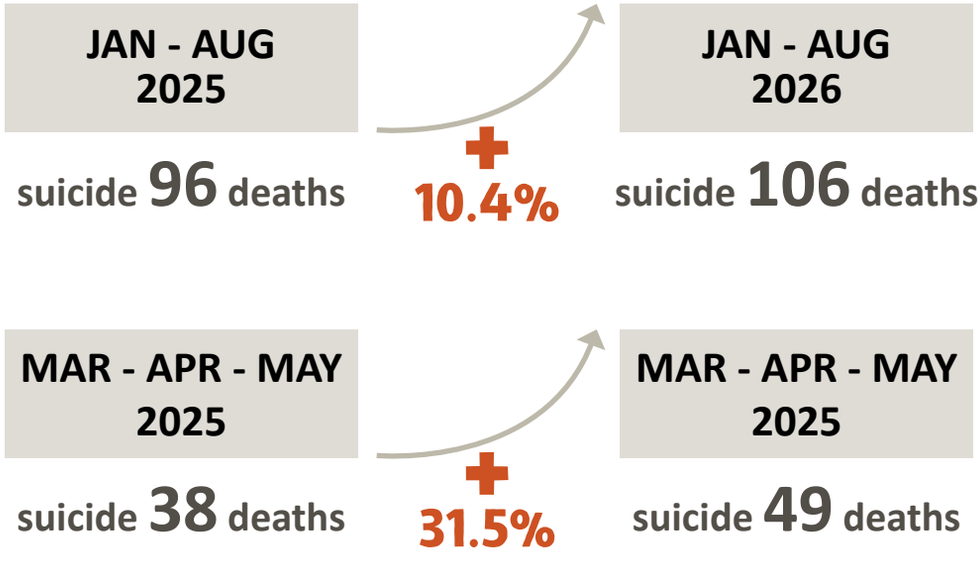
Source: Information International, based on Al-Amn magazine, published by the Internal Security Forces Directorate General.



Comparison of the First Eight Months

Indicator	January–August 2025	January–August 2026	Difference
Suicide deaths	96	106	+10 (+10.4%)
Suicide attempts	71	56	-15 (-21.1%)

The increase in suicide deaths coincided with a decline in recorded suicide attempts, from 71 to 56, or 15 fewer cases, representing a decrease of 21.1%.



Actual figures are likely to be somewhat higher than the official figures, depending on how the cause of death is recorded.

Between January and August 2026, 106 deaths were recorded, compared with 96 during the same period in 2025, an increase of 10 deaths, or 10.4%.

During March, April and May 2026, there were 49 deaths, compared with 38 during the same months in 2025, an increase of 28.9%.

April recorded the highest monthly total during the period, with 23 deaths, compared with 12 in April 2025. The increase in that month alone amounted to 11 deaths, exceeding the net increase of 10 deaths recorded over the full eight-month period, as declines in some months offset part of the increase.

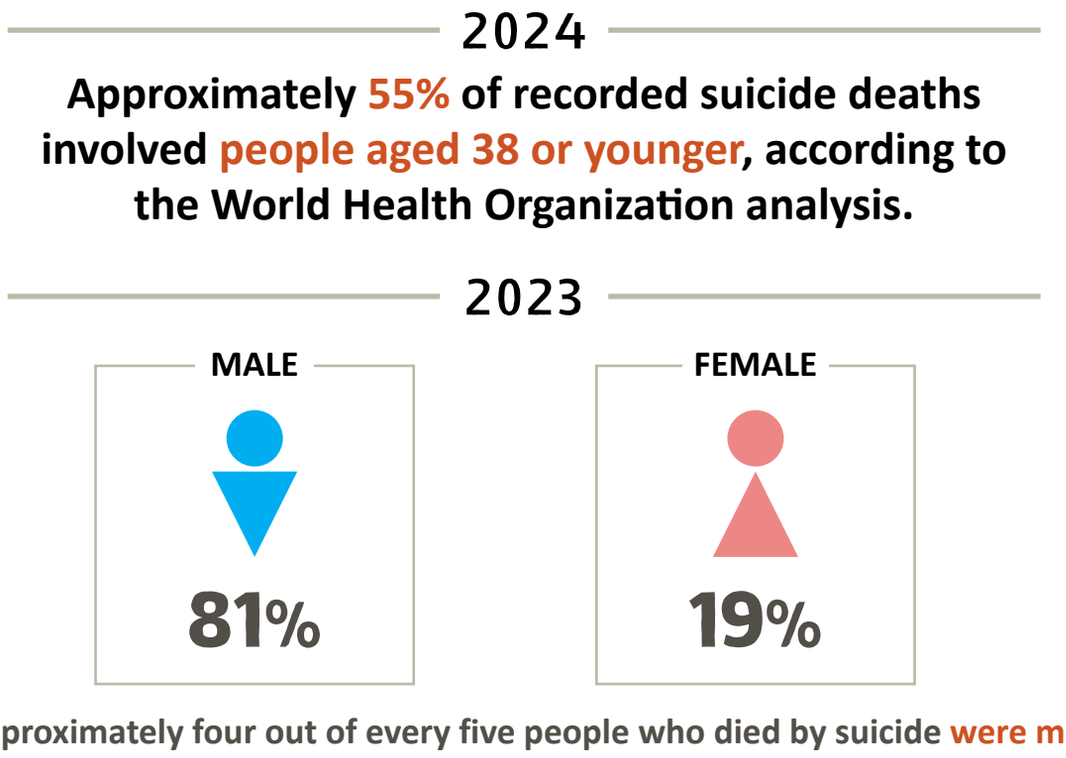
Month	Suicide deaths, 2025	Suicide deaths, 2026	Difference	Suicide attempts, 2026
January	11	11	-	12
February	9	10	+1	3
March	12	14	+2	5
April	12	23	+11	4
May	14	12	-2	8
June	11	12	+1	7
July	17	13	-4	6
August	10	11	+1	11
Total	**96**	**106**	**+10**	**56**

Young People and Men Account for a Large Share of Deaths

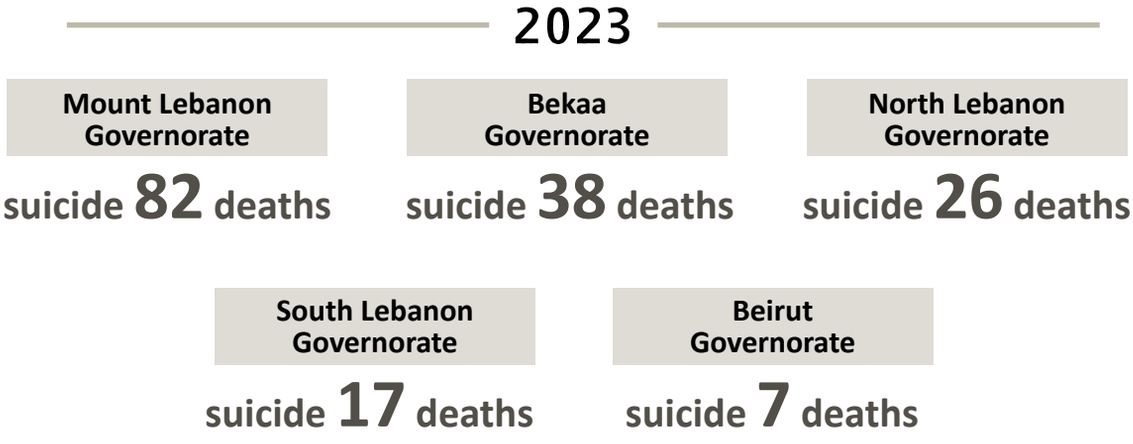
The age distribution shows that the 23–32 age group recorded the highest number of deaths, followed by those aged 33–42 (Figure 3). According to an analysis attributed to the World Health Organization, approximately 55% of recorded suicide deaths in 2024 involved people aged 38 or younger.

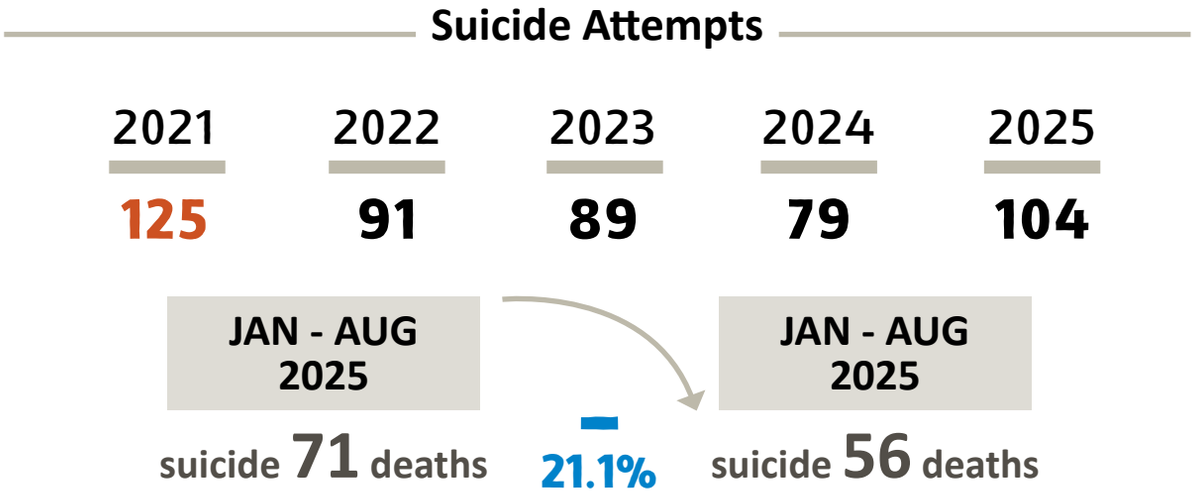
In 2023, males accounted for 81% of recorded deaths, compared with 19% for females. In other words, approximately four out of every five people who died by suicide were male. Across the years 2011–2018 combined, males accounted for approximately 67% of deaths, compared with 33% for females.

These differences do not mean that women are less affected by psychological difficulties. Mortality data alone do not measure levels of depression, anxiety, psychological distress or the need for support.



At the governorate level, Mount Lebanon recorded the highest number of deaths in 2023, followed by the Bekaa, North Lebanon, South Lebanon and Beirut (Figure 4). However, comparing absolute numbers is not sufficient to determine which governorate has the highest suicide rate. That would require calculating deaths relative to the population of each governorate.





In addition to fatalities, 125 suicide attempts were recorded in 2021. The number declined gradually to 79 in 2024, before rising to 104 in 2025 (Figure 5).

During the first eight months of 2026, 56 attempts were recorded, compared with 71 during the same period in 2025, a decrease of 15 attempts, or 21.1%. Thus, recorded suicide deaths increased during the period while recorded attempts declined. This comparison alone does not establish the reasons for the divergence.

Support Services and Rising Demand for Help

The national hotline 1564 provides psychological support and referrals to mental health services. It is operated by Embrace in partnership with the National Mental Health Programme at the Ministry of Public Health and is available 24 hours a day, seven days a week.

The National Mental Health Programme also offers Step by Step, a free and confidential psychological support programme for people living in Lebanon. It is available through an application or website and aims to help people cope with stress and difficult emotions.

Call figures for the national hotline indicate a change in demand for support. Calls increased from 6,132 in 2020 to 12,515 in 2025, while 3,625 calls were recorded during the first three months of 2026.

Year or period	Number of calls to national hotline 1564
2020	6,132
2021	9,859
2022	12,481
2023	11,076
2024	9,514
2025	12,515
January–March 2026	3,625

The increase in calls reflects greater awareness of available services, a willingness to seek help and a decline in the stigma people may impose on themselves or fear from society. The number of calls does not necessarily equal the number of people seeking support, as the same person may contact the hotline more than once.

Ensuring that support is available and accessible remains essential to prevention, alongside monitoring the figures and understanding their limitations.

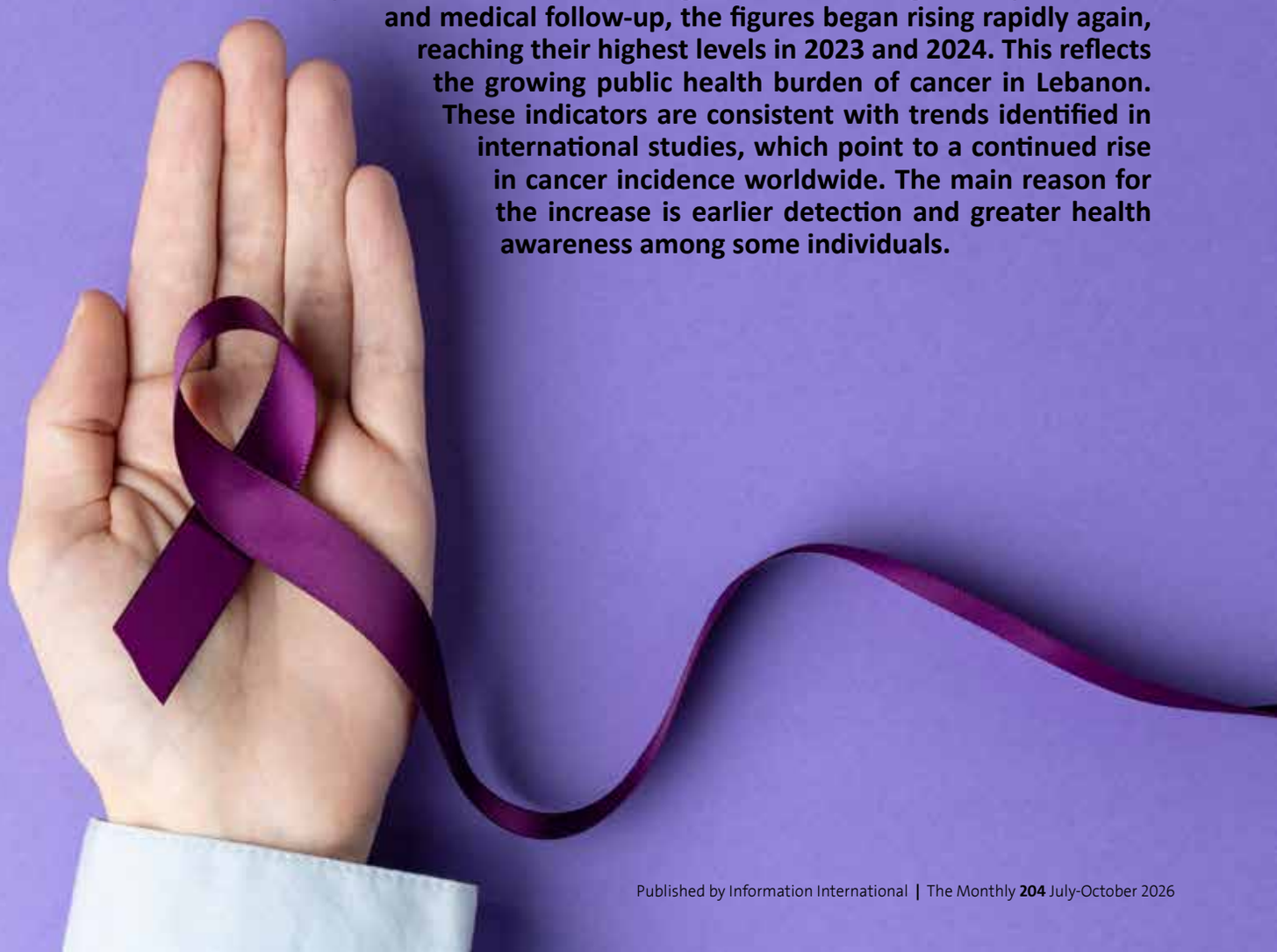
Public Sector

LEBANON RECORDS MORE THAN 157,000 CANCER CASES OVER A DECADE

NEW DATA SHOWS A 36% RISE IN ANNUAL REGISTERED CASES BETWEEN 2014 AND 2024,

WITH SMOKING REMAINING A MAJOR RISK FACTOR.

Data from the National Cancer Registry at Lebanon's Ministry of Public Health indicates a significant increase in the number of new cancer cases over the past decade. The number of registered cases rose from 12,752 in 2014 to 17,396 in 2024, an increase of approximately 36% over ten years. Following a decline in 2020 due to the repercussions of the COVID-19 pandemic and the resulting decrease in diagnostic procedures and medical follow-up, the figures began rising rapidly again, reaching their highest levels in 2023 and 2024. This reflects the growing public health burden of cancer in Lebanon. These indicators are consistent with trends identified in international studies, which point to a continued rise in cancer incidence worldwide. The main reason for the increase is earlier detection and greater health awareness among some individuals.



Alongside these figures, the role of the Children's Cancer Center of Lebanon stands out. The center announced that it has treated more than 5,100 children since its establishment in 2002, currently provides treatment for approximately 400 children annually, and receives an average of around 300 new cases each year, with a cure rate exceeding 80%. These figures illustrate the burden posed by childhood cancer alone and confirm that a significant share of specialized care is concentrated in a single institution that receives the majority of childhood cancer cases in Lebanon.



Nevertheless, these statistics must be interpreted with some methodological caution. The National Cancer Registry relies on two data collection systems: routine reporting by physicians and healthcare institutions, and verification through medical laboratories, particularly pathology laboratories. However, this source may not cover all cancer cases. Some tumors, particularly blood cancers such as leukemia, are not always diagnosed through conventional tissue biopsies. Instead, diagnosis often relies on blood tests, biopsies, or immunological tests. The system nevertheless depends on hospitals, laboratories, and physicians complying with the requirement to provide the Ministry of Public Health with complete and timely data. This may result in differences in registration completeness between institutions, particularly given the economic and logistical crises Lebanon has experienced in recent years.

Furthermore, there is a lack of oversight and enforcement regarding the accurate recording of causes of death in hospitals. This undermines studies of the number of deaths attributable to cancer. In the next phase, the ministry intends to link its data with records from the Ministry of Interior, where deaths are registered, to support studies examining cancer mortality rates.

Some cases may also not be registered immediately or may reach the National Cancer Registry with delays, particularly when patients receive their diagnoses or treatment outside Lebanon, or at institutions that fail to complete reporting procedures within the prescribed deadlines. For this reason, Ministry of Public Health figures represent the best available official source for monitoring cancer trends in Lebanon. However, they should be understood as the minimum number of cases registered within the national system, as the actual number is unknown to any responsible authority in Lebanon. This is the situation in many developing countries.

The increase in cancer cases recorded in Lebanon is consistent with findings from recent international studies, most notably a study published in The Lancet based on data from the Institute for Health Metrics and Evaluation (IHME). The study indicated that Lebanon is among the countries experiencing the fastest growth in the number of new cancer cases over recent decades. It identifies smoking as the most influential factor behind this increase, ahead of many other risk factors,

amid high rates of cigarette and waterpipe consumption and widespread exposure to secondhand smoke, particularly among children. Data indicate that smoking is associated with dozens of diseases, including numerous types of cancer as well as cardiovascular and respiratory diseases. Reducing tobacco consumption is therefore one of the most important preventive interventions for curbing the growing cancer burden in Lebanon, alongside addressing other environmental factors and improving early detection programs.

Number of Cancer Cases in Lebanon

Year	Number of cases	Change from previous year	Percentage change
2014	12,752	N/A	N/A
2015	13,442	+690	+5.4%
2016	11,936	-1,506	-11.2%
2017	14,792	+2,856	+23.9%
2018	14,117	-675	-4.6%
2019	15,064	+947	+6.7%
2020	13,382	-1,682	-11.2%
2021	13,674	+292	+2.2%
2022	14,178	+504	+3.7%
2023	17,027	+2,849	+20.1%
2024	17,396	+369	+2.2%

The 10 Most Common Types of Cancer in Lebanon

Cancer type	Female	Male	Total
Breast cancer	32,387	779	33,166
Bronchial and lung cancer	5,353	9,538	14,891
Prostate cancer	N/A	11,295	11,295
Skin cancer	4,198	6,483	10,681
Colon cancer	5,116	5,492	10,608
Bladder cancer	2,121	8,294	10,415
Non-Hodgkin lymphoma	3,331	4,014	7,345
Thyroid cancer	3,213	1,223	4,436
Stomach cancer	1,639	2,007	3,646
Rectal cancer	1,461	1,831	3,292

The 10 Most Common Types of Cancer Among Children Aged 0–4

Cancer type	Number of cases
Acute lymphoblastic leukemia	223
Brain and nervous system cancer	152
Kidney cancer	55
Non-Hodgkin lymphoma	54
Eye cancer	53
Connective and soft tissue cancer	45
Myeloid leukemia	40
Leukemia of unspecified type	33
Bone cancer	22
Adrenal gland cancer	19

Total Annual Cancer Cases Over 10 Years, 2014–2024. All age groups

Year	Female	Male	Annual total
2014	6,641	6,111	12,752
2015	6,991	6,451	13,442
2016	6,136	5,800	11,936
2017	7,638	7,154	14,792
2018	7,630	6,487	14,117
2019	7,958	7,106	15,064
2020	7,160	6,222	13,382
2021	7,555	6,119	13,674
2022	7,784	6,394	14,178
2023	9,308	7,719	17,027
2024	9,265	8,131	17,396
Total	**84,066**	**73,694**	**157,760**

Data from Lebanon's National Cancer Registry for the period 2014–2024 indicate that cancer incidence rises markedly with age, with the majority of cases concentrated among people over 50. The 75-and-over age group recorded the highest number of cases, at 30,137, representing approximately 19.1% of all registered cases. By contrast, cases among children and adolescents remain relatively limited compared with those in older age groups. This is consistent with global epidemiological patterns showing a strong association between advancing age and increased cancer risk.

It should be noted that approximately 7,000 cases, representing 4.4% of all registered cases, have no specified age group. This reflects the lack of high levels of precision in the statistics overall.

FEMALE



84,066

2014 - 2024

157,760

Cancer Cases

MALE



73,694

Age group	Female	Male	Total
0–4 years	383	423	806
5–9 years	319	457	776
10–14 years	336	426	762
15–19 years	508	594	1,102
20–24 years	708	730	1,438
25–29 years	1,182	1,022	2,204
30–34 years	2,092	1,280	3,372
35–39 years	3,365	1,526	4,891
40–44 years	5,190	2,060	7,250
45–49 years	7,198	3,095	10,293
50–54 years	9,380	4,913	14,293
55–59 years	10,463	7,155	17,618
60–64 years	10,531	9,008	19,539
65–69 years	8,983	10,016	18,999
70–74 years	7,630	9,665	17,295
75 years and over	12,112	18,025	30,137
Unspecified	3,686	3,299	6,985
Total	**84,066**	**73,694**	**157,760**

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LEBANESE TRAVEL PATTERNS: RISING DEPARTURES AND FLUCTUATING RETURNS

A CUMULATIVE GAP OF 674,000 BETWEEN 2018 AND 2025, PEAKING IN 2023 AND 2024

Data on Lebanese travel movements show that departures exceeded arrivals throughout 2018–2025, with the cumulative gap reaching 674,183 and a marked increase in 2023 and 2024. This trend points to a widening gap between those leaving the country and those returning. However, the cumulative figure cannot be treated as the number of permanent emigrants, since border-crossing movements include temporary visits and frequent travel.

According to annual data published by Lebanon's General Security Directorate, 2023 recorded the largest gap, at 180,133, compared with 17,721 in 2020, the lowest level over the eight-year period. The decline in 2020 is consistent with the restrictions imposed during the COVID-19 pandemic, although it is not sufficient evidence of a decline in the desire to emigrate.

Annual Gap Between Departures and Arrivals of Lebanese Nationals

Year	Net departures
2018	33,129
2019	66,806
2020	17,721
2021	79,134
2022	59,269
2023	180,133
2024	172,728
2025	65,263
Total	**674,183**

Source: Lebanese General Security Directorate data.

The gap increased by 203.9% in 2023 compared with 2022, reaching nearly three times its previous level. It then declined by 4.1% in 2024, to 172,728. Together, the two years accounted for 52.3% of the cumulative gap over the period, indicating that more than half of the total was concentrated in just two years. In 2025, the gap fell to 65,263, a decrease of 62.2% compared with 2024.

This sharp increase raises questions about the impact of war and crises on decisions to travel and settle abroad. However, the figures alone cannot distinguish the effects of war from economic or family-related factors, nor can they establish the reasons behind each traveller's departure. The relationship therefore remains an interpretation requiring additional data, and the gap cannot be directly translated into the number of people who emigrated because of the war.



2026: Winter Departures and Summer Returns

Between 16 January and 15 September 2026, Lebanese nationals made 1,393,394 arrivals and 1,407,034 departures, resulting in a net departure balance of 13,640, equivalent to approximately 1% of arrivals.

Travel Movements of Lebanese Nationals in 2026

Period in 2026	Arrivals	Departures	Net balance
16 Jan–15 Feb	167,846	175,525	7,679 more departures
16 Feb–15 Mar	95,725	104,549	8,824 more departures
16 Mar–15 Apr	71,211	88,285	17,074 more departures
16 Apr–15 May	107,931	102,363	5,568 more arrivals
16 May–15 Jun	178,110	167,428	10,682 more arrivals
16 Jun–15 Jul	241,996	183,475	58,521 more arrivals
16 Jul–15 Aug	286,166	260,402	25,764 more arrivals
16 Aug–15 Sep	244,409	325,007	80,598 more departures
Total	**1,393,394**	**1,407,034**	**13,640 more departures**

The detailed figures reveal clear fluctuations throughout the year. During the first three periods, departures exceeded arrivals by 33,577. The trend then reversed over the following four periods, from 16 April to 15 August, when arrivals exceeded departures by a total of 100,535. The largest surplus of arrivals occurred between 16 June and 15 July, reaching 58,521, a pattern consistent with Lebanese nationals returning for summer visits.

Between 16 August and 15 September, departures rose to 325,007, compared with 244,409 arrivals, producing a net departure balance of 80,598. This difference erased most of the surplus of arrivals accumulated during the spring and summer, bringing the overall balance for the period back to a modest surplus of departures.

Accordingly, the narrowing of the gap during part of 2026 is not sufficient to conclude that emigration is declining or that expatriates are returning to settle in Lebanon. However, it does point to the varying effects of the crises on Lebanese people in general.



Detailed Arrivals and Departures by Traveller Category

Period: 15 December 2025 to 15 September 2026

Period	Lebanese arrivals	Lebanese departures	Arab arrivals	Arab departures	Foreign arrivals	Foreign departures	Total arrivals	Total departures
15 Dec 2025–15 Jan 2026	230,111	243,081	243,081	211,386	111,870	118,858	585,062	573,325
16 Jan–15 Feb	167,846	175,525	179,580	207,522	75,984	79,666	423,410	462,713
16 Feb–15 Mar	95,725	104,549	92,844	161,919	38,012	51,143	226,581	317,611
16 Mar–15 Apr	71,211	88,285	83,613	122,525	16,199	24,642	171,023	235,452
16 Apr–15 May	107,931	102,363	106,350	120,210	32,394	27,037	246,675	249,610
16 May–15 Jun	178,110	167,428	156,823	181,278	60,743	49,186	395,676	397,892
16 Jun–15 Jul	241,996	183,475	183,884	194,786	127,416	76,206	553,296	454,467
16 Jul–15 Aug	286,166	260,402	214,882	235,163	171,856	148,332	672,904	643,897
16 Aug–15 Sep	244,409	325,007	220,708	253,498	121,573	178,374	586,690	756,879
Total	**1,623,505**	**1,650,115**	**1,481,765**	**1,688,287**	**756,047**	**753,444**	**3,861,317**	**4,091,846**

Source: Lebanese General Security Directorate data.

Foreign Nationals' Presence Remains Stable Relative to Arab Nationals

With arrivals of foreign nationals exceeding departures by approximately 2,603, the figures suggest that some foreign workers may be returning to the Lebanese labour market, whether as domestic workers or employees of companies.

Meanwhile, the departure of large numbers of Syrians through Beirut Airport to their countries of employment has contributed to a gap of approximately 206,000 between Arab nationals departing Lebanon and those entering the country between January and mid-September 2026.



QLAYAAT
IN AKKAR

Name Etymology

Qlayaat is the plural of Qulay'a, a diminutive of the Arabic word qal'a, meaning "castle" or "fortress," and thus referring to a small fortress. The town's name is associated with its historic castle, a fortress dating back to the Crusader period, around which the surrounding village developed.

Qlayaat in Akkar should not be confused with Qlayaat in Keserwan District, near Rayfoun and Ajaltoun, which lies at an elevation of approximately 1,050 metres and is about 35–39 kilometres from Beirut.

Location

Qlayaat is located in the Akkar Plain, in Akkar Governorate, near the coast. The town covers an area of approximately 8.68 square kilometres and lies 108 kilometres from Beirut via Abdeh, Balanat al-Hayissa and Tall Maayan. It is best known for being home to René Mouawad Airport, also known as Qlayaat Airport.

Housing and Population

Registered Voters

Gender	Total	Percentage
Male	1,526	50.1%
Female	1,518	49.9%
Total	**3,044**	**100%**

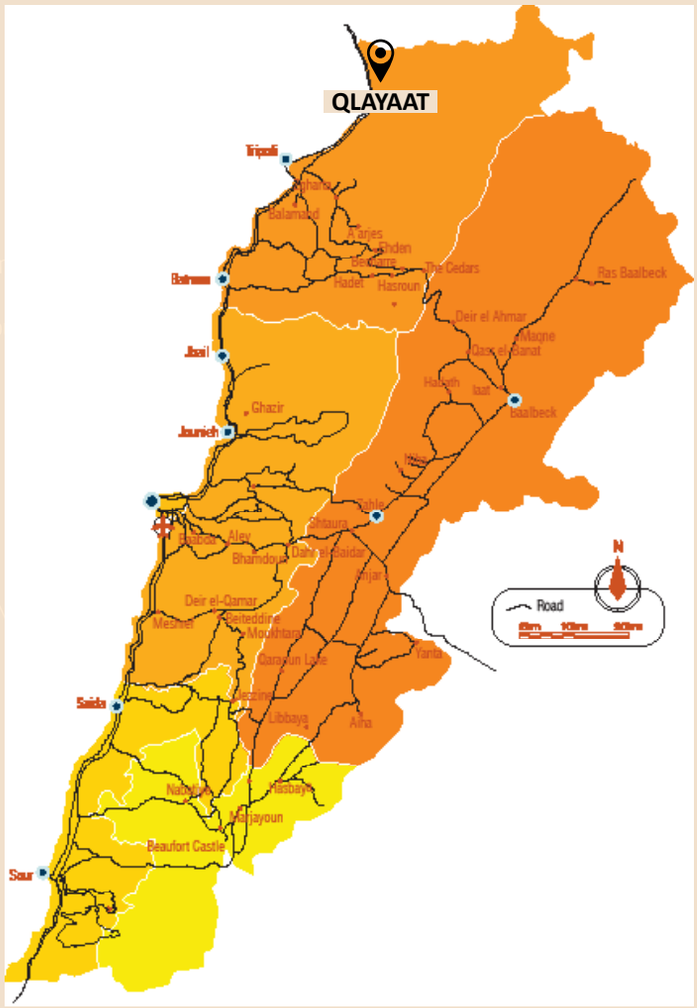
Of the registered voters, 98.6% are Sunni Muslims and 1.1% are Alawites.

Local Government

The town has a municipal council and two mukhtars (local administrative officials).

Economic Life

Qlayaat, a small village whose economy relies on agriculture, including potatoes, vegetables, citrus fruits, tobacco and tombac, as well as small craft workshops, is preparing for an economic transformation with the anticipated reopening of René Mouawad Airport next month.



The village could become a destination for major companies, travellers and expatriates returning from abroad, creating new employment and investment opportunities in the town and its surrounding areas.

Main Families

Khashfeh, Hakoum, Darwish, Danhesh, Ibrahim, Ahmad, Hussein, Merhi, Marrash, Issa, Saeed, Shatiewi, Fadl, Qaddour, Khodr, Khalaf, Suleiman, Othman, Mahmoud and Abdullah.

THE THOUM AND FEJEL FAMILIES

Two families whose names were incorrectly registered

The Thoum family has 27 registered entries, comprising 7 males and 20 females.

Religious denomination	Male	Female	Total
Greek Orthodox	1	4	5
Greek Catholic	4	9	13
Sunni	2	6	8
Unspecified	–	1	1
Total	**7**	**20**	**27**

The Thoum family is predominantly Greek Catholic (48.1%), followed by Sunni (29.6%), Greek Orthodox (18.5%), and unspecified (3.7%). The family is associated with the Mousaitbeh area of Beirut Governorate.

Governorate	Male	Female	Total
South Lebanon	–	2	2
North Lebanon	3	9	12
Beirut	–	2	2
Baalbek-Hermel	4	2	6
Mount Lebanon	–	1	1
Bekaa	–	4	4
Total	**7**	**20**	**27**

The Fejel family, meanwhile, has two registered entries, both belonging to women, in the Tabbaneh area of Tripoli.

Both names originated from registration errors made by the mukhtar (local civil registrar). The original family name Toum (التوم) was wrongfully recorded as Thoum (الثوم) in the town of Al-Qaa, in Baalbek-Hermel Governorate. Similarly, Fejel (فجل) is the incorrect spelling of Fahl (فحل) in Tripoli.

Some minor spelling errors may be corrected when discovered, particularly when they are limited to a small number of records. This is the case with the Fejel family, where the error affects only two records belonging to women, and the surname is not passed on to their children. The situation is different for the Thoum family, whose name appears in 27 records, including seven belonging to males, meaning that it could persist and be passed down to future generations.

As a result, the error becomes entrenched in official records and is carried over into official documents and the records of children and grandchildren. Eventually, the incorrectly registered name becomes the officially recognized surname, making correction increasingly complicated over time.

In this way, an error becomes the norm, and the same family appears in statistical records under different names, as though they were separate families, when in fact the only difference between them is a letter that was added or replaced during registration.

WARAQ

ART ON PAPER FROM LEBANON AND BEYOND

NEW EXHIBITION IN NABU MUSEUM

The exhibition gathers a century of that work, in drawing, watercolor, ink, gouache, pastel, silkscreen, and mixed media. Some sheets were quick studies caught in a single afternoon. Some were kept in studio folders for a lifetime. Some were finished works in their own right, signed and built to last.

The works selected across these galleries cast light on the journey of the page through places and ideas: from the Parisian ateliers where the first Lebanese moderns learned to draw, through the mountains and coast they came home to render, into portraits and interiors, and onward to the liberated Arabic letter and the foundational poems of pre-Islamic Arabia.



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