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# Unwrapping the rights to work for Syrian and Palestinian refugees in Lebanon

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## Methodology:

The "Access" Center team, to prepare any papers issued by it, depends on international standards that include accuracy, objectivity, impartiality and the protection of endangered resources. Field investigations and communications are conducted through secure, encrypted and open source programs with refugees, and communication is done directly with individuals individually, in a way that guarantees independency in the statements they made, and in a manner that guarantees the identity of individuals at risk between them. The interviews are based on the same list of questions about the same facts to verify the authenticity of the information presented, in the original language of the interviewees without any material compensation. The information available in our database is consulted with our partners from the Lebanese and Syrian human rights organisations whether these are active and reside inside Lebanon, or those that operate inside and reside outside of Lebanon.

In this report, the team at the "Access" Center performed a special analysis of the data collected from public sources, whether the information is from primary sources (interviews, live testimonials, surveys, etc.) or information from secondary sources (the Internet, books, reports or Previously researched, etc.) and also the analysis of media reports and official data to ensure their accuracy and accuracy, and the center is always working to maintain direct contact with the High Commissioner for Refugee Rights and foreign embassies and various organisations to assist in advocacy campaigns or pressure in the same direction.

The "Access" team does its best to respect the standards of impartiality, objectivity, accuracy and integrity of the information included in its publications and publications, despite a number of serious challenges that the team faced in the activity to accomplish reports and publications, the least of which is the risk of researchers who participated in preparing it to be harassed or prosecuted arbitrary by the Lebanese security services. The latter used to harass and prosecute human rights activists residing in Lebanon, whether they were Lebanese, Syrians, or others, who openly object to the ongoing systematic, systematic violations of Syrian refugees in Lebanon.

These harassment ranges from arbitrary summonses to investigation centers without respecting the applicable legal procedures (i.e. without these summonses being based on a decision issued by the Public Prosecution or any other judicial body) where they are deprived of legal rights guaranteed to them by Article / 47 / of the Law The principles of the Lebanese criminal trials (the right to contact their families and see a lawyer), and between denying them the right to obtain or renew legal residency in Lebanon (for Syrian and foreign activists)

Note that the General Directorate of Lebanese Public Security formally waved this residence deprivation policy in a statement<sup>1</sup> published on its official website on 6/17/2019, in which the associations that denounced the procedures for deporting the Syrian refugees were threatened that "they are going to take all legal measures and review the competent judiciary to stop the procedure and arrest the employees of this organisation" or those.

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<sup>1</sup> General Security statement regarding some organisations, 17/06/2019. <https://tinyurl.com/y4z38nmb>



## Introduction:

Lebanon has been known as a country hosting refugees since 1948, when it hosted 500,000 Palestinians on its territory<sup>2</sup>, and they have contributed greatly to the Lebanese economy, especially in the informal work sector, and Lebanon has adopted since the 1960s a policy of open door for Syrian citizens to enter daily and seasonal employment as a result of the two countries' consensus (Syrian and Lebanese) for that. During the Lebanese civil war, and after many Lebanese emigrated and the local Labour force decreased, other Syrians flocked to fill this deficit. And as a result, the Lebanese economy relied heavily on Syrian and Palestinian Labour, especially in the fields of agriculture, construction, and services, where available estimates indicate that foreign employment historically constituted about a quarter of the Labour force contributing to the Lebanese economy in general before the civil war in Lebanon and beyond, and before the Syrian war.<sup>3</sup> and beyond. As an example, in 1972, Syrians represented 90% of construction workers in Lebanon.<sup>4</sup>

As a result of the violence that confronted the peaceful movement in Syria in 2011, and after the Syrian situation turned into a regional war zone, the Syrians were forced to leave their countries in search of safety and some stability, so they were distributed in neighboring countries according to their regions, and Lebanon received the largest number of refugees compared to the number of its population. (It should be noted that Lebanon continued to describe the situation of Syrians as "displaced" in contravention of the internationally accepted international legal definition.) At the beginning of 2015, the Lebanese General Directorate of General Security issued a decision regulating the entry and exit of Syrians to and from Lebanon. New administrative mechanisms were put in place to obtain residency permits for Syrians in Lebanon without taking into account the state of war raging in their countries fleeing from them. Noting that this decision by the General Security is illegal according to the decision by the State Council.<sup>5</sup> which considered this decision's issuing party lacks the capacity, as the law exclusively restricts the right to issue such a decision to the Council of Ministers. Unfortunately, and in violation of the constitution, the State Council's decision was not enforced, and the Lebanese authorities' treatment of Syrians remains according to the General Security decision.

It is estimated that approximately 270,000 Palestine refugees live in Lebanon<sup>6</sup>, along with approximately 42,000 Palestinian refugees from Syria registered with the United Nations Relief and Works Agency (UNRWA)<sup>7</sup>, while Lebanon hosts about 1.5 million Syrians, including 926 717 Syrian refugees registered with UNHCR as of February 2019, and the Lebanese government claims that there are about 550,000 people living in Lebanon who are not registered with the UNHCR.<sup>8</sup>

The influx in the number of refugees in Lebanon led to increased pressure from the Lebanese authorities on Syrian refugees And the Palestinians in general, which negatively affected their living conditions In Lebanon, depriving them of their basic rights.

<sup>2</sup> The Situation of Palestinian Refugees in Lebanon, UNHCR, February 2016. <https://tinyurl.com/te628cn>

<sup>3</sup> Ibid.

<sup>4</sup> Syrian Workers in Lebanon: An Assessment of Their Rights and Reality, CLDH, 2013. <https://tinyurl.com/qlxseod>

<sup>5</sup> State Council Court Decision, N°321/2017-2018 issued on 8/2/2018. Governing body: President of the court, Henry el Khoury and the two counselors of the court: Maria Afif Amtaoui and Hiba Barid. <https://tinyurl.com/v16hjp7>

<sup>6</sup> The Situation of Palestinian Refugees in Lebanon, UNHCR, February 2016. <https://tinyurl.com/te628cn>

<sup>7</sup> Ibid.

<sup>8</sup> World Report, Human Rights Watch, 2019. <https://tinyurl.com/tmgdhto>



And due to the absence of the Lebanese government's role in organizing and managing the refugee situation, including managing the work file, 30% of Syrian refugees in Lebanon as a whole work in rural areas with salaries that do not exceed two hundred dollars per month. In addition to the material and material assistance provided by the United Nations and the countries that have supported Lebanon to host it for refugees, and civil society organisations working in the relief sector, whose work is based on supporting refugees in Lebanon through collecting donations from individuals and groups from outside the country, which were reflected in revitalizing and raising the economy of Lebanon in many ways.

For example, during 2016 the Syrians spent nearly \$ 378 million in Lebanon on housing rentals.<sup>9</sup> Only, according to the United Nations, while their spending on food is estimated at \$ 400 million annually, in addition to Lebanon receiving more than a billion and a half dollars annually since the beginning of the crisis as international aid For refugees, thousands of job opportunities were created for citizens based on that aid, in addition to the increase in supply and demand in the Lebanese markets for various commodities, the real estate market is active (selling or leasing) and improving the infrastructure for some Lebanese regions and villages (such as Bar Elias) and the increase in the number of Lebanese schools due to State grants and other gains for the Lebanese economy.<sup>10</sup>

## Refugees living conditions:

The economic situation of refugees is still deteriorating due to the many difficulties imposed on them by the Lebanese government. Where it is estimated that 69% of the Syrian refugees are still living below the poverty line (51% of Syrian families are extremely poor). 65% of the Palestinian refugees also live below the poverty line, along with 90% of the Palestinian refugees from Syria (who are most vulnerable and lack the resources to cover their basic needs.)<sup>11</sup>

In 2019, the funding requirements needed to support Syrian refugees in Lebanon were estimated at 2.62 billion Dollars but only 30% of them were provided.<sup>12</sup>

The legal status of refugees “especially Syrians among them”, which Lebanon imposes illegally constitutionally and according to international conventions and treaties, makes it difficult for refugees to find employment opportunities or move freely between regions, forcing them (including children and women) to work in the informal sectors in poor conditions and low salaries and without any guarantees, in order to meet their basic needs and obtain their daily food, which has led to families becoming increasingly dependent on debt as 88% of Syrian families of 4 persons owe an average of 1,016 USD.<sup>13</sup>

The situation, according to UNHCR statistics, 81% of the Syrian refugees registered in Lebanon are women and children and are the most vulnerable group, as the fear of men from arrest or deportation causes them to send their children and wives to work because they are less likely to be arrested and investigated. The difficult living conditions push them to resort to early marriage, as 22% of Syrian women between the ages of 15 and 19 were married before the age of eighteen, and this is in addition to the child Labour deployed in refugee communities throughout Lebanon.

As for the issue of food security among refugees, 90% of Syrian refugees still show varying degrees of food insecurity, especially in the areas of Baalbek-Hermel and Akkar, where the largest percentage is

<sup>9</sup> Nasser Yassin, 7/5/2017, Twitter post. <http://archive.md/hpQFO>

<sup>10</sup> UNHCR, 2019 <https://www.unhcr.org/>

<sup>11</sup> Ibid.

<sup>12</sup> Inter-Agency Coordination Lebanon, 2019 Quarter 3 Funding Update, as of 30 September 2019. <https://tinyurl.com/tm4hyd8>

<sup>13</sup> Lebanon Crisis Response Plan (2017-2020), 2019. <https://tinyurl.com/uf7vutx>



concentrated.<sup>14</sup> While the situation is worse among Palestine refugees from Syria, where UNRWA's assessment indicates that 100% of them are targeted for basic assistance (regularly and seasonally). They are increasingly relying on negative coping strategies for food. The study revealed that 94.5% of them suffer from food insecurity in general, and 63% of them suffer from food insecurity in a very high degree.<sup>15</sup>

## Legal status for Syrian refugees in Lebanon:

The behavior of the Lebanese authorities towards Syrian workers can only be understood through the framework of political relations between the two countries defined by the regulatory framework for Syrians in Lebanon. From the mid-1960s to the year 2005, there was a large influx of professional Syrian workers, especially the profession of construction and agriculture, as a result of various factors. The Lebanese Civil War continued the movement of workers from Syria to Lebanon due to Lebanon's need for manpower to work for reconstruction, and at the same time the Syrian economy began facing structural difficulties, and thus both countries benefited together. Lebanon used the Syrian workers as a flexible and inexpensive professional workforce to rebuild the country, at the same time, reduce pressure on the Labour market in Syria.

The rights and privileges of Syrians residing in Lebanon are based on three bilateral agreements signed between Lebanon and Syria<sup>16</sup> during which the working conditions were facilitated for citizens of either one of them with the other, including an agreement to facilitate visa procedures:

**1. An agreement regarding the organisation of transport of people and goods:** In 1993 the agreement was signed between the two countries where Article 2 of the agreement states the following: "Each of the two parties shall strive to facilitate the process of transporting people and goods to, from and through their countries." This agreement was part of the 1991 Brotherhood, Cooperation and Coordination Treaty signed between the two countries.

**2. The Agreement on Economic and Social Cooperation and Coordination:** Article 1 of this agreement includes the following: "Freedom of movement of people between the two countries" and "Freedom to stay, work, employ and practice economic activity in line with the laws and regulations in force in each country."

**3. Bilateral agreements in the field of work:** which were signed in 1994, where Article 4 of it stipulates that "workers in both countries enjoy the treatment, privileges, rights, and other obligations of the state, in accordance with the laws, regulations, and guidelines applied in both of them, to entrust the Minister of Labour of both countries to continue their efforts to find the means to guarantee the rights of workers in both countries, and it also adds that every worker in either country must be granted a temporary work permit if the job is seasonal or a card that allows obtaining a work permit.

Thus, it was clearly stated in the bilateral agreements between the two countries that the worker should benefit from the same legal treatment as the resident workers. Despite all of this, only a small number of

<sup>14</sup> Ibid.

<sup>15</sup> Survey on the Socio-Economic Situation of Palestinian Refugees in Lebanon in 2015, UNRWA and AUB, 3 June 2016. <https://tinyurl.com/upn3a3w>

<sup>16</sup> Syrian Workers in Lebanon, CLDH, 2013. <https://tinyurl.com/qlxseod>



Syrians have an official work permit, which exposes them to Labour exploitation, abuse and threats, in addition to pushing them to accept job offers as important.

Conditions were cruel and inappropriate. With the beginning of 2015, the Lebanese government effectively closed the borders to Syrian refugees and imposed new conditions on them that made obtaining or even renewing residency complicated.

And it seems that the individual and / or collective interests of the Lebanese political parties have caused many obstacles for the Syrian refugees, as pressure has been exerted on the refugees through the ministries concerned with achieving justice and giving the refugees their rights to stay in Lebanon, in order to push for organizing the return process under the name of "voluntary", and the most prominent thing that refugees suffer in Lebanon is their lack of security in terms of security, and the economic part, from the difficulty of finding work to obtaining a work permit within the framework of the laws that are announced from more From a ministry that intersects with each other to put pressure on refugees to push them into the return process.

### **The main pathways for Syrian refugees to obtain residency in in Lebanon are:**

- 1) Apply on the basis of a valid registration certificate to the UNHCR (with a pledge not to work to obtain residency).
- 2) Obtaining a pledge of bail by a Lebanese citizen and once obtained, the beneficiary cannot return to obtain residency through the commission, or as a student, or even by means of other sponsorship.
- 3) Apply on the basis of enrollment at the school / university (with a pledge not to work to obtain residency).
- 4) Through a house rental contract and proof of financial solvency through a bank account or money orders.
- 5) Obtaining a courtesy residence permit given to female Lebanese citizen's husband, son, or daughter.<sup>17</sup>

The General Security's decision to extract legal residencies and their work permits requires that, when applying for residency, the application be attached to a letter of pledge not to work that the applicant of residence will sign with the clerk of justice, with the exception of obtaining residency on a third-class job guarantee, which is the only way for those who have a job opportunity or the opportunity to place their residency on a company or institution, and employers' awareness that most refugees do not have legal documents and that they are not in a position to seek protection from authorities<sup>18</sup> because there is no legal residence when seeking protection or filing a complaint with police stations or the internal police services against the violator or the aggressor, which leads to opening ways to allow them to exploit refugees.

### **Legal status of Palestinian refugees:**

The organisational framework for Palestinians working in Lebanon dates back to 1944 when the Ministry of Labour issued a decision to classify Palestinian refugees as foreigners, and accordingly required a work permit from them, and accordingly, they were asked to pay the Social Fund without obtaining any benefit because they were stateless, and the Palestinian decision also prevented From working in some professions such as law and medicine, and then another decision was issued in 1982 to impose additional

<sup>17</sup> General Security, Courtesy Residency. <https://tinyurl.com/qvpgae4>

<sup>18</sup> Ibid.



restrictions on the professions that Palestinians can work in, which in fact left them with construction and agricultural occupations only.

Since 2005, Palestinian refugees have been granted the right to work in about 70 professions previously prohibited to them, under Article 3 of a ministerial decision issued on a regular basis by successive Labour ministers. Since that year, the most significant change occurred in 2010 when the Labour law was amended to waive work permit fees for Palestinian refugees from Lebanon (Law No. 129) and to enable them to access some of the benefits of the National Social Security Fund (Law No. 128), so they were exempt from The condition of reciprocity, stipulated in Article 59 of the Labour Law, that is, if their country of origin provided the same benefits to Lebanese workers, the Palestinians were therefore excluded before 2010 because they did not have a state that could provide reciprocal treatment to Lebanese citizens,<sup>19</sup> even though they were paying the full amount.

Despite the slow changes that occurred over the decades, the Palestinians in Lebanon still do not have the right to work in more than 20 professions, including engineering, medicine, accounting and law, and they must pay the same amount that the Lebanese pay to the National Social Security Fund, but no they are entitled to any sickness or maternity leave or family allowances, and they can only obtain end-of-service compensation and work related injuries.

In a study prepared by the International Labour Organisation and the Palestinian Employment Committee in Lebanon in 2012, less than 2% of them have work permits, as it is extremely difficult to obtain them not only because it requires a written contract documented by the refugee registration card, employer documents, and evidence of the declaration submitted to The National Social Security Fund, but because of the high costs they must pay to obtain a work permit, in addition to the fees that they must pay in the National Social Security Fund, as well as renewing the work permit annually. Therefore, despite improvements in the legal framework for Palestinian refugees from Lebanon, they still suffer from discriminatory practices that make it difficult to access work, especially formal work, decent working conditions, and social protection.

## Legal status of Palestinian refugees from Syria:

Palestinian families in the camps have taken it upon themselves to host 45% of the Palestinian refugees from Syria to their already overcrowded homes in camps with random buildings not fully serviced, such as the Sabra, Shatila, Nahr al-Bared and Ain al-Hilweh camps, and the social and economic situation of the Palestinians has increased even though their condition is difficult The basic standard of living has made it difficult for Palestine refugees from Syria to find effective coping strategies, which has severely worsened their economic situation.

The legal status of Palestinian refugees from Syria differs from refugees of Syrian citizenship, as well as from Palestinians in Lebanon, as they do not have the same regulations and rights at work, and at the same time they lack the informal social network related to employment that Syrians created as workers starting in the 1950s, Very few of them work as paid workers, usually between \$ 100 and \$ 300 per month, while UNRWA's aid organisation suffers from lack of funding and weak resources for extended periods of time<sup>20</sup>, especially in late 2018 as the United States of America limited UNRWA support or Its contribution to support the UNRWA organisation responsible for the relief of Palestinian refugees stood.

<sup>19</sup> Survey on the Socio-economic Status of Palestinian Refugees in Lebanon in 2015, UNRWA and AUB, 3 June 2016. <https://tinyurl.com/s2lv7s9>

<sup>20</sup> Palestinian Refugees from Syria in Lebanon, Anera, April 2013. <https://tinyurl.com/rylxvkq>





The organisational framework for Palestinian refugees coming from Syria to Lebanon is defined by several laws similar to Syrian refugees in Lebanon, where the Lebanese Labour law does not exclude non-Lebanese workers, but it adopts the principle of preference for Lebanese citizens. Data regarding Palestinians from Syria appear in accordance with Ministerial Resolution No. 17561 issued on 09/18/1964, and unlike Palestinian refugees from Lebanon, as they are considered foreigners and are not exempt from work permit fees and are prohibited from working in several sectors, such as administrative and commercial professions open to Palestinian refugees From Lebanon.

Palestinian refugees from Syria also face complex residency procedures, and they also face restrictions on their freedom of movement in the movement of entry and exit from Palestinian refugee camps, which limit access to economic opportunities outside of camps.<sup>21</sup>

Ultimately, the complexity of protecting foreign workers is governed by parallel and / or contradictory systems from the Ministry of Labour and the Directorate of Public Security, moreover, granting work permission can be very political and inconsistent in practice, as the Ministry of Labour has established discrimination in the Labour market through Syrians and Palestinians organize low-paid work, low-paid Labour, and try to lift protection from occupations most of them work in.

## Working conditions - between law and reality:

The Lebanese Labour Law, as revised in 1996, states the following:

**Article 44:** The salary cannot be lower than the official minimum wage previously set by the Multilateral Committee. In January 2012, the minimum wage was set at 675,000 Lebanese pounds per month (or \$ 450).

**Article 31:** Working time cannot exceed 48 hours per week.

**Article 34:** Every male worker has the right to a break of at least one hour every six consecutive hours, and every female worker every five hours.

**Article 36:** Every employee has the right to a weekly break of at least 36 consecutive hours.

**Article 62:** Workplaces must be arranged to ensure the safety of employees.

## Working conditions on the ground:

Refugees in the informal sector: Because of the difficulty in obtaining work or residence permits, many refugees of all kinds go to informal work with low wages and without an employment contract or any of the worker rights stipulated in the law, which makes them in a weaker position. They are usually paid less than the minimum wage, in addition to being subjected to poor working conditions full of exploitation and abuse and risks in the absence of social or health security, and that in most cases the wages are paid in cash and without documents, and in practice it may be difficult to prove this oral contract So it does not provide protection for workers, between Syrians and Palestinians, payments are spread on a daily basis, and this is a very worrying practice.<sup>22</sup>

<sup>21</sup> Syrian Workers in Lebanon, CLDH, 18 December 2013. <https://tinyurl.com/qlxseod>

<sup>22</sup> Discussion Paper: Dignity at Stake - Challenges to Accessing Decent Work in Lebanon, Leaders Consortium, 2018. <https://tinyurl.com/wg46hpg>



The working conditions of the Syrians and their restrictions: The problem of the Labour market in Lebanon has been linked to the Syrian workers in the first place, followed by the rest of the foreign workers, there are no official figures that show the numbers of foreign workers accurately, but there are estimates that indicate about 400 thousand Syrian workers, knowing that the Syrian refugees registered with the UNHCR The High Commissioner for Refugees Affairs is 980 thousand, and the number of Syrian workers who have a work permit at the beginning of the campaign was only 1700, and it is on a daily rise.<sup>23</sup>

With the worsening of the social and economic situation, the Lebanese Ministry of Labour worked to control the foreign workforce by issuing many decrees and decisions aimed at organizing the workforce in Lebanon. Including the plan of the Lebanese Minister of Labour, "Camille Abu Suleiman", which began implementation on December 20, 2019, which includes a series of measures, including giving a month to violators to settle their conditions, activating the Ministerial Inspection Authority and liberating seizure of the violating employer with a value of a maximum of one million five hundred thousand pounds, stressing that The goal of the plan is to protect the Lebanese workforce, implement laws, and enhance social security.<sup>24</sup>

The plan requires compliance with the non-employment of foreign workers in the jobs, professions, trades and jobs that are restricted to the Lebanese, which are currently subject to resolution in accordance to decision N°29/1 issued in 2018<sup>25</sup> and the necessity of obtaining a work permit for foreign workers in the professions they are entitled to work in, in addition to employing the Lebanese in the place of foreigners in professions that are restricted to the Lebanese only.<sup>26</sup>

In a statement, the Ministry of Labour indicated that the inspection that it conducted from July 10, 2019 to September 10, 2019 included: 2177 institutions, 111 closings, 1814 seizures, and 421 warnings, while Ministry figures show that the numbers of Syrians obtaining work permits are between 2016 As of May 23, 2019 it is only 1733.

In a study on the conditions of Syrian workers in Lebanon in the construction, food services, and agricultural sectors, it was found that 75% of Syrians were earning less than the minimum wage, and that some workers in the field of agriculture in the Bekaa were receiving \$ 0.66 an hour, and in general the verbal contract was for work Agriculture in the Bekaa Valley has been the benchmark since before the crisis. Today workers are organized by the responsible shawish, with males earning about \$ 1.33 an hour, while female workers and children earn half of that amount.<sup>27</sup>

The ILO assessment also revealed that Syrians work in unsafe and unsanitary conditions, and that the majority suffer from one or more health conditions, or are linked to hazards in the workplace. Where more than half of the Syrian workers reported back or joint pain (56%) and extreme fatigue (54%), 60% of them reported to the ILO that they were exposed to extreme heat or cold, and other work-related health

<sup>23</sup> DW, Foreign Labour Campaign: Racism or Regulation? August 2019. <https://tinyurl.com/wc7z3pt>

<sup>24</sup> NNA, Abou Sleiman Launches a Campaign to Combat 'Illegal' Foreign Labour, 3/6/2019.

<https://tinyurl.com/y37houcs>

<sup>25</sup> Decision available on the Ministry of Labour's website

<sup>26</sup> Ilda Ghosn: Foreign Labour: The Ministry Likes Combat and Not Regulation <https://tinyurl.com/wjvqx2q>

<sup>27</sup> The Labour Sector in Lebanon: Legal Framework, Challenges, Opportunities. Oxfam. 2017.

<https://tinyurl.com/utbvjoe>



problems such as wounds, burns, fractures, and respiratory problems, while other exposures Related work hazards were: Chemical 17%, high places without reserves 30%, dangerous too 32%.<sup>28</sup>

As for the details of employment and salaries for Syrians, knowing that 62% of them do not have any type of contract and that only 4% have a written contract and 34% have an oral contract<sup>29</sup>, the survey conducted by the American University revealed that about 75% of Syrian workers are employed in Hourly, daily, weekly or seasonal; only 23% is paid on a regular monthly salary. As a result, most Syrian workers work with little benefits or protections. Health insurance is practically absent among Syrian workers, and those who benefit from it do not exceed 1%.<sup>30</sup>

## Working conditions of the Palestinian refugees:

As for Palestinian workers, the ILO and CEP study found that despite their long presence in Lebanon and their contribution to the Lebanese economy, 50% of them earn less than the minimum wage<sup>31</sup>, and the unemployment rate among Palestinian refugees from Syria reached 52%, which is more than twice the unemployment rate among Palestinian refugees from Lebanon is 23%. As the arrival of Palestinians from Syria poses additional serious challenges to the current Palestinian community, which places already limited restrictions on access to Labour markets, while only 6% of Palestinians from Lebanon hold work permits, and less than 1% of Palestinian refugees from Syria.<sup>32</sup>

As for the conditions of employment for salaries, in detail, it is more acute among Palestinians from Lebanon and Palestinians from Syria compared to Syrian refugees. Where the study conducted by the American University of Beirut referred to previously highlighted that the vast majority of the workforce is informally and less than 14% have an employment contract, I am Palestinians from Syria 97% of them have oral agreements. And that 53% of Palestinian workers from Syria receive their salaries daily, and 48% of the Palestinians working in Lebanon receive their salaries daily.<sup>33</sup>

## Child refugee workers:

The number of children participating in the employment of refugee children in Lebanon has increased significantly since the beginning of the Syrian crisis, as the impact of the war on the Lebanese economy has exacerbated the economic and social hardships of families. As increasing numbers of children work long hours for low wages, they often do dangerous work, expose them to violence, exploitation and abuse, and deny them education, and this can lead to long-term negative impacts on their development. According to UNESCO, there is more According to UNESCO, more than 380,000 refugee children between the ages of 5 and 17 are registered with the United Nations High Commissioner for Lebanon, and it is estimated that less than 50% of children of primary school age can access public primary schools, and that less than 4% Of teenagers attending high school.<sup>34</sup>

<sup>28</sup> Assessment of the Impact of Syrian Refugees in Lebanon and Their Employment Profile, ILO, 2013.

<https://tinyurl.com/v94kdyg>

<sup>29</sup> Discussion Paper: Dignity at Stake, Leaders Consortium, 2018. <https://tinyurl.com/wg46hpg>

<sup>30</sup> Survey on the Socio-economic Status of Palestinian Refugees in Lebanon in 2015, UNRWA and AUB, 3 June 2016. <https://tinyurl.com/upn3a3w>

<sup>31</sup> The Labour Sector in Lebanon, Oxfam. 2017. <https://tinyurl.com/utbvjoe>

<sup>32</sup> Survey on the Socio-economic Status of Palestinian Refugees in Lebanon in 2015, UNRWA and AUB, 3 June 2016. <https://tinyurl.com/upn3a3w>

<sup>33</sup> Ibid.

<sup>34</sup> Ali al Amin, 'Working 11 Hours Daily to Survive...' <https://tinyurl.com/r79e2nc>



Families are increasingly dependent on child Labour as a coping mechanism. Eliminating the root cause of harmful practices for children remains a continuing challenge, including child Labour, child marriage and violent discipline. Figures released by the High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR) indicate that approximately 37,000 Syrian children and 4,500 Palestinian children participate in child Labour in Lebanon.<sup>35</sup>

Among the most prominent reasons leading to this are the absence of the breadwinner, or his inability to work, and the inability of most Syrians outside the camps to operate explicitly as a result of Lebanese laws and the difficulty in obtaining work permits as we mentioned earlier. An example of this: One of the children who escaped with his family from Syria to Lebanon, Muhammad Issawi, was deprived like any other education, and works in a supermarket in Beirut, and he confirmed in a statement to "Al-Suriya Net" that he was one of the outstanding in the school, but he had to work for about 12 An hour a day to help his family pay the house's \$ 500 monthly rent.<sup>36</sup>

## The legal framework for child Labour in Lebanon:

The articles of the Lebanese Labour Law promulgated on September 23, 1946 and its amendments are clear, as it absolutely prohibits the use of minors before they complete the age of thirteen, and it also prohibits their use in industrial projects and cumbersome and harmful work as described in Tables 1 and 2 attached to the Labour Law.<sup>37</sup>

Regarding relatively dangerous work, Decree No. 8987 states that some types of hazardous work are acceptable to children over the age of 16, provided that they receive full protection of their physical, mental and moral health, and that they receive appropriate education or vocational training for those work.

Considerations for identifying and characterizing this hazardous work include: the type of activities (construction, demolition, drilling, construction, etc.) equipment / tools used (comfort hazards, etc.), work environment (exposure to chemical or biological hazards, hot / cold weather, hot / cold weather) Conditions, etc.), duration of work (long working hours, more than 6 hours per day or without adequate rest periods), timing (night shifts between 7 pm and 7 am), distance to work relationship with the employer (exposure to verbal or physical abuse).<sup>38</sup>

In 1991, Lebanon ratified the Convention on the Rights of the Child in May of 1991 and Death legislation to make laws more consistent with the principles of the Convention on the Rights of the Child.<sup>39</sup> However, in the reality of the situation in which Syrian children live in Lebanon, these important laws are not applied in large measure, and therefore the employment of refugee children in Lebanon is still considered one of the biggest phenomena that pose a threat to the social reality in Lebanon. According to the assessment of the impact of Syrian refugees in Lebanon are affected,<sup>40</sup> 36% of males work between 16

<sup>35</sup> In Focus: Child Labour in Lebanon, Lebanon Inter-Agency, November 2018 <https://tinyurl.com/qpfz7k>

<sup>36</sup> Ali al Amin, 'Working 11 Hours Daily to Survive...' <https://tinyurl.com/r79e2nc>

<sup>37</sup> Lebanese Labour Code, Article 21-25 <https://tinyurl.com/v2v4g28>

<sup>38</sup> In Focus, Lebanon Inter-Agency, November 2018 <https://tinyurl.com/qpfz7k>

<sup>39</sup> In 1991, Lebanon formed a deputy committee to legislate in accordance with the Convention on the Rights of the Child. In 1994, it formed the Higher Council for Childhood in charge of developing plans and programmes regarding the situation of children in Lebanon.

<sup>40</sup> Assessment of the Impact of Syrian Refugees in Lebanon and Their Employment Profile, ILO, 2013. <https://tinyurl.com/v94kdyg>



and 17 years and 14% work between 13, 15 and 1.5% between 5 and 12 years compared to the female share compared to 4.8%, 3.2% and 0.2%, respectively.

The reasons why female participation is less because they are subjected to another practice are early marriage as an alternative coping strategy. However, housework is also considered child Labour if set up for more than 28 hours (for children ages 5 to 14 years) and 43 hours (for children ages 15 to 17) per week. The average number of children in child Labour is 55 hours a week at home chores. 18% are mostly girls, engaged in housework and 82% in economic activities. Yet among girls engaged in economic activities 61% work in agriculture that requires overwhelming efforts.

In a study prepared by the Ministry of Labour and the American University of Beirut last June, the study showed that 75% of the displaced Syrians in Lebanon working in agriculture. The study was conducted on 12,708 refugees living in camps in Baalbek and Bekaa, and it turned out that the number of working children is 4,377 Children, 287 between 4 and 8 years old and 4,090 between 8 and 18 years old, and studies show that 30 percent were injured while working.<sup>41</sup>

According to the International Labour Organisation, the fight against child Labour actually began in Lebanon in 2000 when the government of Lebanon represented by the Ministry of Labour signed a memorandum of understanding with the International Program on the Elimination of Child Labour of the International Labour Organisation as part of the work program agreed in partnership with the ILO Regional Office for Arab States in Beirut.<sup>42</sup>

Ultimately, in conditions of extreme poverty and families that depend on child Labour as the only coping strategy available to them to ensure accompaniment, especially families that lack the head of the family. Child Labour can have many social and economic impacts including lost opportunities for education and development, lower profits in the future, and poor health. Child Labour may prevent them from going to school and thus create better life chances.

There is also evidence that can link child Labour to negative health outcomes (asthma, dry cough, silicates and tuberculosis), as well as harmful effects that affect growth in height and weight, as well as their addiction to stunting, wasting and anemia risks. Work experiences can also pose psychological and emotional challenges for children, which can expose them to higher levels of stress and greater emotional and behavioral challenges. They can also be subjected to severe sexual and verbal abuse, which may lead to severe psychological damage.<sup>43</sup>

## Employment of women refugees:

With the start of the war in Syria and the displacement of large numbers of refugees, the participation of women in providing basic livelihoods and taking responsibility for their homes has increased dramatically due to the difficult economic conditions in which they were placed. Besides, after nearly 9 years of war, the loss of the breadwinner between the forcibly disappeared, dead, disabled and missing due to the military actions in Syria, or their inability to find a job due to official security prosecution, has increased the percentage of women in the Labour market and holds them responsible Carry out the daily tasks necessary for the lives of their families.

<sup>41</sup> Rahil Dandash, '75% of Syrian Children in the Bekaa Work in Agriculture' <https://tinyurl.com/y2um856w>

<sup>42</sup> Tackling Child Labour in Lebanon: Mapping Strategies and Initiatives, ILO <https://tinyurl.com/rod6l3w>

<sup>43</sup> Survey on Child Labour in Agriculture in the Bekaa Valley of Lebanon: The Case of Syrian Refugees, AUB, MOL, ILO, FAO, UNICEF, IDRC. June 2019. <https://tinyurl.com/vrudrm8>



## Employment of women refugees:

With the beginning of the war in Syria, large numbers of families have been displaced. Another reason that led to responsibility by women is the difficulty in settling the legal status of refugee men in Lebanon. Lack of valid residency limits access to employment opportunities as they do not accept work away from home due to fear of checkpoints and random investigations. While women and children are less likely to require proof of residency at checkpoints or random investigations by local authorities as men and adolescents fear arrest or deportation, they are afraid of leaving the home not only for work but also for daily missions.

Therefore, it can be concluded that these conditions changed the traditional role of women over time. Despite this, increased responsibilities for women have not been accompanied by equal opportunities because of cultural barriers that are still far from being eliminated entirely.

On the one hand, and in a positive way, it allowed her to acquire a more active and influential role in her family and society. On the other hand, and due to the absence of the necessary measures to protect them, these circumstances exposed them to a series of risks and flagrant violations of their rights, including exploitation, in addition to a major psychological disorder, as it became a burden inside and outside the home. Women still carry most of the household chores in addition to securing home requirements, childcare and home services.

Until 2011 and the beginning of the peaceful movement, women were participating in only 22% of the workforce, according to the World Economic Forum. According to the VASyR evaluation of the vulnerability of Syrian refugees in Lebanon<sup>44</sup>, 18% of refugee families in Lebanon are headed by women and 70% of them work in the agricultural and domestic services sectors or in factories.<sup>45</sup>

**Agriculture:** 70% of women working in agriculture are divided between 34% in Akkar and 36% in the Bekaa. And the Bekaa, for example, many refugee women, whether mothers or minors, work in the field of agriculture, where they start work every day at 7 am and they earn 6 thousand Lebanese pounds for every five / six hours of work, while the agent, who is often the shawish of the camp where workers live on two thousand Lebanese pounds instead of a work insurance.

**Factories:** Work in factories extends for long hours, but wages are better. They earn 16,000 Lebanese Liras for 10 hours of work. Work in factories is also organized and facilitated most of the time by Shawish, who provides transportation to and from the workplace and the camp. And that work in the factories of work is mostly seasonal during the summer, so women enter the debt circle with shawish in winter and then work to pay those debts in the summer.<sup>46</sup>

According to the Syrian Refugee Vulnerability Assessment in Lebanon, unemployment is a greater challenge for women, with an employment rate of 61% compared to 35% for men. Moreover, female-headed households are more at risk than their male counterparts, with 45% of them living in non-permanent shelter rather than residential shelter compared to 33% of male households.<sup>47</sup>

<sup>44</sup> Vulnerability Assessment of Syrian Refugees in Lebanon, VASyR 2018 <https://tinyurl.com/s2xczke>

<sup>45</sup> Assessment of the Impact of Syrian Refugees in Lebanon and Their Employment Profile, ILO, 2013. <https://tinyurl.com/v94kdyg>

<sup>46</sup> Farming Workshops in the Bekaa: Stories of Exploitation of Girls, Al Modon, 30 April 2016. <https://tinyurl.com/rdufw54>

<sup>47</sup> Vulnerability Assessment of Syrian Refugees in Lebanon, VASyR 2018 <https://tinyurl.com/s2xczke>



Finally, a large number of women are running activities inside their homes to generate income to help their families with very little income that is not recognized by their clients. These activities often include sewing, embroidery, hairdressing and dairy production. Among the most important reasons for the spread of this phenomenon, is that the interaction of women in the surrounding society is still heavily conditioned by cultural barriers and norms around the honor of women, especially the honor of men. Even if the husband is leaning toward the wife looking for a job opportunity, community pressure may prevent her from looking for work outside the home. If a woman works outside the home, the community will realize this and the man will lose his face, value and role. This may increase his frustration, which has negative repercussions on relationships within the family. Another reason women prefer to work at home in addition to the bias of the host community is sexual harassment and sometimes sexual exploitation in the workplace. Women also feel afraid of being harassed on the way to work or from home to work.<sup>48</sup>

### Testimonies of some cases that attempted to obtain a work permit:

The legal status of refugees in general is subject to long, complicated, and sometimes contradictory procedures that hinder obtaining official documents, for example, procedures for obtaining work permits are often subject to parallel and contradictory regulations by the Ministry of Labour and the Lebanese Public Security Directorate, and sometimes granting this leave has a political dimension. It is inconsistent in practice and full of loopholes and contradictions between regulations and application, or varies from region to region and between a security branch and another!

For example, Article 7 of the Lebanese Labour Law, it excludes specific categories of protection provided by law, such as agricultural workers, and domestic workers who work in private homes or in businesses owned by families, and Article 8 adds some other categories, however, those categories are still included in the Obligations and Contracts Act under the General Civil Code of 1932, she can appeal to the courts to protect her fundamental rights only if she can show written communication or prove the existence of an oral contract.<sup>49</sup>

### The following are many of the testimonies monitored and documented by the Human Rights Access Center, which demonstrate those incapacitating requirements faced by refugees to obtain a permit or permission to work:

- **First Certificate:** All workers for the delivery service of the company they work in which is located in Mount Lebanon have been informed of the need to obtain a third-class work permit, otherwise they will be suspended from work, according to the new plan of the Minister of Labour, and the owner of the company has been informed of the importance of organizing foreign workers. The company's lawyer took all the procedures to obtain the required work stays, where two workers were able to obtain a work permit after paying \$ 635 in addition to the cost of conducting medical examinations, which is a tuberculosis examination and a copy of the chest at a cost of \$ 50 dollars as a prerequisite to complete the procedures for obtaining a work permit, While the third worker who works in the same institution with the same job asked him for \$ 850, in addition to conducting medical examinations as he was considered to be of the first category, and because he did not have the ability to pay these sums he did not obtain the necessary work permit.

<sup>48</sup> Women, Work & War: Syrian Women and the Struggle to Survive Five Years of Conflict, Care Organisation. 2016. <https://tinyurl.com/smbytel>

<sup>49</sup> Discussion Paper: Dignity at Stake, Leaders Consortium, 2018. <https://tinyurl.com/wg46hpg>



- **Second Certificate:** An interview was conducted with a Syrian refugee working in the delivery service at a company located in Mount Lebanon, he applied for a work permit in person and not through a lawyer, but the request was rejected after 20 days despite having a valid residence.

- **Third certificate:** Ahmed is a worker in a home furniture store. He submitted an application for a **work** permit from the Ministry of Labour. He was asked to possess a valid residence from the General Security and to secure a Lebanese sponsor. Without any response until he hired a lawyer to obtain the leave, after it became clear to him that submitting the applications personally was facing great difficulties

- **Fourth Certificate:** Abu Yazan, a vegetable seller who rented a small store in Tripoli, was raided by a General Security patrol in his shop, and they warned him to close it because he did not have a work permit and an enterprise license, and they withdrew his identification documents, including personal identification. As he went a week later to review them, they arrested him and sent a patrol to close the shop with red wax. Abu Yazan was detained for about a week, then released after the efforts of the primary owner of the vegetable store, and they asked him to obtain a third-class work permit. Abu Yazan collected the money and went to the General Security to start the residency procedures, so they told him: You must leave for Syria, after which the shop owner submits an official request to bring you to Lebanon as a worker, and there is no guarantee that your request will be approved. When he told them that he could not return to Syria because of the security situation, he did not care. Abu Yazan was forced to leave work for a month and then decided to reopen the shop due to force majeure, sometimes by stealth and covering from the owner of the store again, exposing his life and livelihood to danger.

- **Fourth Certificate:** "M." A Syrian worker works in a vegetable and fruit shop in the city of Shhim in the Chouf District. In 2018, his workplace was subjected to a raid by the security forces, which led to his closure because his owner was Syrian, and the papers of "M." In order to extract and pay fees for a first-class work permit, as the latter had a valid residence in Lebanon through the United Nations, which does not allow him to work. Except that the capabilities of "M." Materialism does not allow him to obtain a work permit from this category, especially after the store was closed and because he was just a worker.

A year later, M. recovers. His **papers** after submitting photocopies and a residence permit, and in return he was given a departure card because he was unable to pay the work permit fees. He continued for several months to receive phone calls from the General Security as a result of the failure to implement the decision to leave and was notified of the court's appearance on February 27, 2020, when he was given a red paper to leave the country.

- **Sixth testimony:** It was the status of "A." The legal in Lebanon is legal and he has residency through a sponsor. When he became a worker, he moved to residency on the sponsorship of the company he works for. On October 17, 2019, a survey by the Laboratory came and found Osama behind the computer, so the officer wrote in his report that he was a interior designer. But after a few days, the factory closed due to the economic crisis. On 12/19/2019 he was summoned to the General Security, where they asked him to pay an amount of 1,800,000 to settle his legal status, which obliges him to renew the residence on work permit. But currently "A." is unemployed and unable to pay this amount. If he does not pay, he will be given a two-month departure card.

- On June 15, during the political conference of the municipalities affiliated with the "Free Patriotic Movement" party, the current head and former Minister of Foreign Affairs and Expatriates, Gibran Bassil, asked the municipalities to take the position of "state and government" regarding the issue of displacement, adding that the municipalities "always A key pillar in implementing these plans. "Considering that it is among the powers of the municipalities not to allow Syrians to work except for agriculture, cleaning, and construction, and stressing that due to the lack of inspection bodies in the ministries of Labour and the economy, he called on the municipalities to control illegal Labour, withdraw





licenses and prevent the opening of unauthorized stores for the Syrian worker to open them, and that "it is not right The Ministry of the Interior may intervene against a mayor who applies the laws."<sup>50</sup>

## Domestic and international laws / international conventions and treaties that protect human rights:

Migrants' rights in the Lebanese constitution: There is a large group of international treaties to protect workers and the rights of foreign workers, and Lebanon has ratified some of the treaties, however, it does not seem to be implemented effectively and therefore, the situation of Syrian workers in Lebanon is always threatened in violation of human rights.

In the Lebanese constitution, the Universal Declaration of Human Rights, adopted in 1948, is referred to as the basis for all human rights treaties. As stated in the preamble to the Lebanese constitution, "Lebanon is a founding and active member of the United Nations, and abides by its covenants and the Universal Declaration of Human Rights. The government should embody these principles in all fields and regions without exception." The first article of the declaration states that all human beings are "equal in dignity and rights."

Moreover, according to Article 7 "Everyone is equal before the law and they have the right without any discrimination to equal protection of the law against any discrimination that violates this declaration and against any incitement to such discrimination." It also guarantees freedom from slavery and forced Labour, and the right to equality in Remuneration for equal work, the right to rest and influence, and the right to work in safe and fair conditions.<sup>51</sup>

According to Lebanon joined the International Labour Organisation in 1948 and ratified the Convention on the Elimination of Forced and Compulsory Labour, Anti-Discrimination in Work and Occupation, the Minimum Age to Join Work and the Worst Forms of Child Labour. Lebanon also ratified the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights in 1972 and entered into force in 1976. Lebanon also ratified the International Covenant on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights in 1972. The Covenant reaffirms the principle of non-discrimination, including on Basis of nationality. Economic, social and cultural rights "apply to everyone, including non-citizens, such as refugees, asylum seekers, stateless persons, migrant workers, and victims of international trafficking, regardless of legal status and documents."<sup>52</sup>

Women and Children: The Convention on the Rights of the Child stipulates the right of the child to be protected from economic exploitation and from any act that is potentially dangerous or interferes with a child's education, child health, or physical, mental and spiritual development, and the International Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women, And the right to work, equal working hours, and the right to maternity leave, as well as equal pay for equal work.

Workers' rights in Lebanese law: Article 15 of the Lebanese Labour Law states: The employer, whether male or female, single, immigrant, divorced or widowed, is not entitled to live with a minor employed with him!

<sup>50</sup> NNA, Bassil in Municipality Convention: 'We Won't Let a Lebanese Unemployed and Syrian Migrants Working Illegally.', 15 June 2019. <https://tinyurl.com/rjj655d>

<sup>51</sup> Syrian Workers in Lebanon, CLDH, 2013. <https://tinyurl.com/qlxseod>

<sup>52</sup> Ibid.



Article 44 of the Lebanese Labour Law stipulates: The minimum wage should be sufficient to meet the necessary wage requirements and the needs of his family, provided that the type of work is taken into consideration and it must not be less than the official minimum wage.

## Impact of laws and decisions on the human rights of Syrians and Palestinians:

Refugees face great difficulty obtaining a "work permit" work permit from the Lebanese Ministry of Labour, making legal work in Lebanon almost impossible. The Ministry of Labour has issued a new campaign to regulate foreign workers in Lebanon with the creation of incapacitating conditions to legalize the situation, those conditions issued by Resolution No. 151/1 of 20 December 2019,

As, according to this decision, a Syrian worker who wishes to regularize his status must pay a work permit fee for the previous two years, even if he is not working! Here, we should ask: How can a refugee who wants to work legally pay a fee for the previous two years? He was originally unemployed, and even if he worked, he did not receive the legal conditions of work, because he does not receive the financial compensation according to the minimum wage, and his rights to wages are not protected.

In a refugee's life, a person works to secure the sustenance of his day, so where does this fee come from? The decision considered that all Syrians in Lebanon work on Lebanese territory with the exception of those whose date of entry into Lebanon was proven to be less than two years old (ignoring that since 2015, Syrian citizens cannot enter Lebanon only within specific conditions), and therefore it excludes a category of Syrians who do not apply to a case Asylum, does this decision mean that it is a message that there is no real desire and intention to organize the work of Syrian refugees in Lebanon?

The decision considered that all Syrians in Lebanon work on Lebanese soil, with the exception of those whose entry date has been proven.

As for those who entered Lebanon with educational competence in a legal way (engineers, doctors, pharmacists and others), they need to obtain approval from either the Ministry of Labour, or the Ministry of Health, each according to its jurisdiction, and from the conditions of their work there is a residence and a Lebanese sponsor, and it should be noted that The sponsorship system approved by the General Directorate of Public Security at the beginning of 2015, which is the conditions for Syrians entering Lebanon, which has been abolished by the State's Council, has allowed for increased human rights violations, the least of which is the exploitation of some sponsors who demand very large amounts of refugees, below \$ 1,000 for workers, and \$ 1500 for holders of certificates,<sup>53</sup> and the arrival center monitored many cases that contain a contradiction in the application of the law from the public security authority and informing the refugees about their inability to obtain work permits except in three sectors identified by the Ministry of Labour for them, they were classified as a third category upon their request to obtain Legal residence of the General Directorate of General Security: (Agriculture, Construction and Home Services), and the arrival center has monitored many cases in which some were forcibly removed as we indicated in the report previously published on the website on "Forced Deportation of Syrian Refugees from Lebanon" in August 2019 taking advantage of the lack Valid residency permits.<sup>54</sup>

This confirms that all these difficulties faced by refugees in obtaining formal work residency in Lebanon expose them to many violations of their basic rights, and opposes Lebanon's commitment to international agreements and laws. These violations begin with the refugees having to stay in Lebanon illegally in Lebanon without legal residency papers, which deprives them of their right to move and move even in the

<sup>53</sup> Orient News, 'What Are the Conditions for Labour Imposed by the Lebanese Government on Syrian Refugees?' April 2019. <https://tinyurl.com/sgdembm>

<sup>54</sup> Report on the forced deportation of Syrian refugees from Lebanon, ACHR, 2019. <https://tinyurl.com/rvmprm4>



vicinity of their camps and homes for fear of arrest and forced detention at checkpoints of the Lebanese security authorities (Lebanese Army, General Security, Intelligence, etc.) and amounts to forced deportation.

Although Lebanon has ratified and / or signed the above international agreements and laws, and indicated its applications in the constitution, these legal provisions are far from being duly applied, it is clear that there is a wide gap between the formal legal framework for Syrian and Palestinian workers in Lebanon and the reality they face on Lebanese territory. This fuzzy legal situation creates an unstable state of survival. Therefore, Syrian workers who do not have “work permit” work permits from the Lebanese Ministry of Labour are on the margins of legal and health protection, do not receive minimum wages and other basic rights, and are unable to resort to the judiciary or the police to claim their rights, due to the complexities imposed by the Lebanese authorities, the most important of which is that they must obtain legal residence permits that they have been denied due to arbitrary laws.<sup>55</sup>

Lebanon may benefit from the presence of refugees in Lebanon by granting them basic rights and obtaining them from their duties, for example: refugees can be integrated into the host community, and they are given work rights and legal home rental contracts, in exchange for fees and taxes imposed<sup>56</sup> Therefore, the dominant discourse that carries the Syrian refugees the economic crisis that Lebanon is going through is inaccurate because this crisis on the level of public debt, inflation and other indicators has structural causes and nothing to do with the Syrian and Palestinian refugees, as it promotes some Lebanese politicians fleeing their responsibilities towards the Lebanese people .

#### Recommendations of the Access Center for Human Rights to the Lebanese government:

- Stressing the need for Lebanon to abide by the international agreements and treaties it has signed or ratified.
- Creating a non-discriminatory monitoring mechanism to reduce waste and measuring the percentage of development brought about by projects working with refugees and their positive impact on Lebanese society and refugees.
- Establish clear and considered legal mechanisms that allow refugees who wish to work to obtain a prior "work permit" to obtain legal work permits and facilitate their procedures in the public security departments.
- Repealing Ministry of Labour Decision No. 151/1 issued on December 20, 2019, and issuing laws regulating foreign employment, in a manner that does not contradict international treaties and agreements.
- Stressing the application of laws by requiring workers to obtain work permits legally, and applying Lebanese laws to protect human rights, ranging from facilitating their access to legal residencies and securing health coverage, to determining the number of working hours, until delivery of fair wages without Distinguish between workers.

<sup>55</sup> Syrian Workers in Lebanon, CLDH, 2013. <https://tinyurl.com/qlxseod>

<sup>56</sup> Al Modon, Syrian Refugees: Partners in Lebanese Economy, not a burden, 3 August 2019. <https://tinyurl.com/v7soa4m>



- Granting directorates - or representative centers for the Ministry of Labour - the authority to issue work permits, and not to confine them centrally to the Ministry of Labour, which is reflected in the speed and ease of completing transactions.
- Excluding Syrian workers from some of the conditions necessary to obtain work permits, which require a review of the Syrian embassy in Beirut.

