

## MIGRATION IN THE EASTERN MEDITERRANEAN: Country Report and Migration Profile for Lebanon

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### Economic Collapse and Poverty Crisis

Lebanon has been in a severe financial crisis since 2019, with the Lebanese pound losing more than 90% of its value and inflation reaching 221.3% in 2023.

Unemployment rose from 11.4% in 2019 to 29.6% in 2022, with youth unemployment at 47.8%. A World Bank study found that poverty tripled in key regions, rising from 12% in 2012 to 44% in 2022.

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### Mass Displacement and Migration Outflows

Ongoing conflict, including Israeli air strikes and internal instability in Lebanon, resulted in the displacement of more than 1.2 million people since October 2023, many of whom have since returned home despite persisting violations of the ceasefire by Israel. Between September and October 2024, 440,000 people fled to Syria, of which 29% were Lebanese and 71% Syrian. Emigration remains high, with 195,433 Lebanese leaving the country between 2018 and 2021, mainly to Europe and the Gulf.

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### EU Migration Policy and Funding for Border Control

In May 2024, the EU announced a €1.03 billion deal with Lebanon, focusing on economic reforms, basic services and border security to curb migration. Around 25% of the funds will support security forces to prevent irregular departures. Lebanon has also received €3.5 billion in EU aid since 2011, mainly to address the Syrian refugee crisis, but conditions for refugees and migrants remain precarious.

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### Increase in Irregular Migration and Deportations

Attempted boat crossings from Lebanon to Cyprus increased sharply in 2024, with 61 cases recorded by mid-year, already close to the 65 cases recorded for the whole of 2023. Lebanon has intensified deportations of Syrians, with forced returns increasing despite the risk of persecution and remaining uncertainty in Syria. Lebanese and Palestinian refugees are also attempting irregular migration due to deteriorating conditions.

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