

Leave No One Behind

For an Inclusive and Just Recovery
Process in Post-Blast Beirut



Acknowledgments

Thanks are due to:

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List of Acronyms

(AUB) American University of Beirut

(BCTC) Beirut Container Terminal Consortium

(DGU) Directorate General of Urbanism

(ESCWA) United Nations Economic and Social Commission for Western Asia

(ILO) International Labour Organization

(INGOs) International Non-Governmental Organizations

(LBP) Lebanese Pound

(MOSA) Ministry of Social Affairs

(MSFEA) Maroun Semaan Faculty of Engineering and Architecture

(NGOs) Non- Governmental Organizations

(OEA) Lebanese Order of Engineers and Architects

(PoB) Port of Beirut

(PTSD) Post-traumatic stress disorder

(UN) United Nations

(UNHCR) United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees

(UNICEF) United Nations Children's Fund

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Introduction

The blast and multiple crises

The August 4, 2020 explosion that rocked the Port of Beirut resulted in massive human losses: at least 188 men, women, youth and children were killed, an estimated 6,000 were injured, whereas several remain missing. About 47,000 apartments were damaged in a 2km radius extending throughout half of the city, affecting around 300,000 people. Most affected areas are Gemmayzeh, Karantina, Mar Mikhaïl, Jeitawi, Saint Nicolas, Zokak al-Blatt, and downtown Beirut, with sizable damage in adjacent neighborhoods. Educational and health facilities have not been spared: three large hospitals are out of service and more than one-hundred schools and health dispensaries are severely damaged. Additionally, the blast caused major traumas across all social groups, especially the most vulnerable ones such as children, women, youth, the elderly, LGBTIQ+, migrants and refugees.

The Port's explosion is a major blow to populations that were already struggling to survive multiple compounded crises: a refugee crisis of more than one million Syrians fleeing the war; an economic-financial collapse caused by extremely high indebtedness that translated into a severe liquidity crisis, the de facto devaluation of the LBP with multiple exchange rates and high inflation; a deep-rooted and at turn violent socio-political crisis that led to the resignation of two governments in less than six months; and, not least, a global pandemic which has been soaring in the past weeks.

The impact of these manifold crises on people's livelihoods is catastrophic: recent numbers issued by ESCWA reveal major spikes in poverty due to the "crippling impact of multiple shocks:" more than 55% of the Lebanese qualify as poor (they were 28% in 2019), while extreme poverty is now reaching 28% (it was 8% in 2019). Numbers also underscore acute inequality with the richest 10% owning about 70% of all personal wealth in the country.¹

Two weeks after the blast, the recovery framework is still precarious. While volunteers ran to help out people in the neighborhoods, demonstrating, yet again, an amazing spirit of solidarity, the official response has been slow and uncoordinated, as per previous rounds of reconstruction. The military and the Higher Relief Commission have mobilized to undertake physical damage assessments alongside the Order of Engineers and Architects (OEA) and private consulting firms, which are still ongoing. Meanwhile, a plethora of INGOs, NGOs, and UN-agencies are on the ground conducting their own sets of needs-assessments and deploying their protocols to respond amongst other to protection, relief, shelter and WASH needs.

¹ ESCWA, Poverty in Lebanon, Policy Brief no.15, 2020.



“Leaving no one behind”: Approach and Objectives, Methods and Structure

“Leaving no one behind” is above all ensuring the protection of the human rights of the most vulnerable. People left behind are those most at risk of not enjoying their civil, cultural, economic, political or social rights. Differently put, being left without education, shelter, social protection, security of tenure, and basic services is a human rights violation. Leaving no one behind involves reaching the most underprivileged, - to “reach the furthest behind first” - but also to combat discrimination and rising inequalities within a country and their root causes. In this regard, it is important to note that the pledge to leave no one behind was taken **unanimously** by all UN Member States when they adopted the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development and its 17 Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs)². Beyond an idea, leaving no one behind is thus an obligation that befalls on local, national and international stakeholders.

In most reconstruction plans and actions, the overarching approach is one focused on physical reconstruction and on buildings’ renovation and repair, whereas what is foremost required is a people-centered process of recovery: a holistic approach that prioritizes social, economic and spatial infrastructures of exchange and support, both formal and informal, both tangible and intangible, especially among the most vulnerable groups who are at the most risk of being left behind, and that recognizes the necessity of taking into consideration sustainable management of the environment. Indeed, as argued by the Beirut Urban Lab, community-based recovery is not only

about physical reconstruction but about addressing “the injustices and vulnerabilities that existed before the blast in order to build a stronger community, brought together by multiple social ties, local economic activities and cultural heritage.”³ It is this people-centered approach that it is advocated by this report, and upon which documentation, analysis and recommendations are based.

This report seeks to unravel the inequitable impacts of the blast on the array of social groups who lived, worked, or benefited from services in the severely damaged districts. The purpose is to inform post-recovery frameworks in ways that could help reduce the likelihood of compiling losses on these same groups, consequently exacerbating inequalities through the recovery process. While it presents a holistic analysis at the scale of the city and beyond, the report is careful to recognize different neighborhood geographies. In that regard, the report is articulated around the five intersecting factors identified in UNDP’s 2018 discussion paper to understand who is being left behind and why: (i) discrimination, (ii) geography, (iii) socio-economic status, (iv) governance, and (v) vulnerability to shocks.⁴ A qualitative approach of data collection and analysis is privileged to better account for the interpretive nature of the questions under investigation. The methods used include desk reviews of relevant reports and studies, in addition to field observations in the blast’s neighborhoods, interviews with survivors of the blast, and exchanges with relevant national and international stakeholders, including civil society.

More specifically, the report is structured in three sections:

- 01** An outline of the damages incurred by the blast and the multiple recovery-related vulnerabilities that coexist. But while the threats to recovery are likely to affect everyone, they are nonetheless exacerbated for specific social groups. An emphasis is thus put on how they affect various social groups differentially;
- 02** Using the LNOB framework, the report connects the range of threats with respective social groups and the historical conditions of the neighborhoods in which they are located. To further unpack how these vulnerabilities are spatially contingent on the respective conditions of the neighborhoods where they occurred, the report further focuses its analysis on three neighborhoods: Karantina, Mar Mikhail and downtown Beirut;
- 03** A highlight of how vulnerabilities are exacerbated by the legacies of previous systemic inequalities, and how they were amplified by the multiple crises Lebanon is experiencing.

Finally, the report sketches guiding principles for how recovery/rebuilding should be undertaken to mitigate impacts on various vulnerable groups. The recommendations are not only relevant to the process of recovery in the neighborhoods impacted by the blast in Beirut, but hold lessons for a recovery process at the central levels of government, especially given the political-economic crisis marring Lebanon.



2 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development, <https://sustainabledevelopment.un.org/post2015/transformingourworld>.

3 M. Fawaz, A People-Centered Recovery, AUB: BUL, 15 August 2020.

4 UNDP, *What does it mean to leave no one behind? A UNDP discussion paper and framework for implementation*, Discussion Paper, July 2018



1. Damages in Brief and Differential Vulnerabilities

The blast destroyed several neighborhoods in Beirut and caused severe human losses, too many injuries and countless trauma. In what follows, the physical and human losses are placed in the context of the other compounded crises affecting Lebanon as a whole. While the blast and crises impact everyone, this impact is not equally experienced across social groups. The below section seeks to identify the various types of vulnerabilities that need to be addressed and to showcase them through lived experiences of survivors on the ground.

1.1. What are the damages?

Physical damages within neighborhoods need to be understood at three levels: public physical infrastructure (water and electricity), social infrastructure (schools, hospitals, dispensaries, communal buildings including religious centers, gardens, libraries, sports centers...), and the building infrastructure, including dwellings and businesses.

At the level of public physical infrastructure, a large section of the cargo capacity of the Port of Beirut (PoB) was destroyed in addition to 16 warehouses, which severely impacts the processing of imports and exports.⁵ The blast destroyed an estimated 120,000 metric tons of food stocks that were in the port—about 85% of the country's food reserve, which may exacerbate food safety.⁶ Additionally, water and wastewater facilities have been damaged while the electricity sector was severely affected both in its transmission and distribution networks, with the Achrafieh substation destroyed alongside the Electricité du Liban headquarters.⁷ Low-

grade infrastructure was already notorious in Lebanon, with a dysfunctional electricity sector, water supply shortages, as well as inadequate solid waste and wastewater management.⁸

At the level of social infrastructure, 20 primary health centers, including four major hospitals, and 34 schools were severely damaged, as well as 8 universities and 20 vocational training centers, in addition to dozens of churches and communal facilities, including the municipal libraries of Bachoura and Monot.⁹ Many schools are attended by Lebanese and non-Lebanese children.

In terms of businesses and dwellings, the Order of Engineers and Architects estimates that 6,000 buildings have been damaged, of which 111 have a heritage value (many of which are located in Mar Mikhaïl and Gemmayze), amounting to 50,000 housing units. A dozen buildings collapsed while thirty are under threat of collapse. In downtown Beirut, two-thirds of buildings have had their glass shattered, while three hotels incurred serious damage. In Bourj Hammoud, one street (al-Arid) has been severely affected because of the weak structure of its old buildings that lack concrete columns (23 buildings have been destroyed while 200 need structural assessment). Government figures estimate 300,000 people to have lost their homes. Businesses have incurred huge losses, and many have lost their supplies and equipment. According to ACTED, 50-60% SMEs are unable to resume their operations without aid. The ministry of Tourism estimated that 100,000 jobs in the tourism and service sector have been lost.¹⁰

5 World Bank, A Disaster Event in Beirut, Preliminary Assessment, WB MENA, 9 August 2020.

6 Flash Appeal 2020 Beirut Port Explosion, August 2020.

7 World Bank, A Disaster Event in Beirut., op.cit.

8 Ibid.

9 OCHA, Lebanon: Beirut Port Explosions, Situation Report, no.2, 7 August 2020.

10 Beirut Explosion Impact Assessment, Status Update no.1, August 19, 2020.

1.2. Multiple crises exacerbating inequalities and generating new vulnerabilities

The blast comes on top of multiple and overlapping crises over the past year and the aggravating pandemic that have been exacerbating inequalities and creating further vulnerabilities within and across social groups. The economic crisis had already affected businesses and employment opportunities in the country. The financial crisis eventually materialized into a severe liquidity crisis which translated into the loss of savings in the banks, particularly after flight of capital. It also translated in the increase of prices of staples, inflation and devaluation: the value of the local currency against the US dollar has dropped by up to 350% in unofficial exchange, while the consumer price index increased by 42%.¹¹ As the economic and financial crises unfold, and the pandemic soars, people have been losing their jobs as hundreds of businesses are closing down: Information International reported back in May 2020 that 430,000 Lebanese people are jobless—32% of the workforce. The ILO further estimated that 41% of SMEs were expected to survive the economic crisis. The pandemic and lockdown are further exacerbating unemployment rates. Already, households relying on less than 200\$ per month (1.33\$ per day) reached 86% in Greater Beirut.¹² With this blast, deprivation indicators are expected to plummet significantly, and impact the most vulnerable groups, whose coping strategies have been already largely eroded by preceding crises and have reached damaging levels. Prior to the blast, it was estimated that around one million Lebanese people were in need, of whom 546,000 children.¹³ The most recent ESCWA numbers place this number at 2.7 million¹⁴.

The COVID-19 pandemic in Lebanon is going through a major spike, which is generating

significant fears, especially given the reduction in health capacities after the blast. A significant rise in confirmed infections is noted across age groups and also within vulnerable households. Another 2-week lockdown period has been announced on August 21 to try to control the spread of the virus, but health experts are expecting the worse as numbers are increasing exponentially.

1.3. Everyone is impacted, but...

Lebanon's multi-faceted crises certainly impact everyone, rich and poor, old and young, women and men, healthy and sick, educated and illiterate... "Few in Lebanon will be spared the negative consequences of these multiple overlapping shocks," agrees the ESCWA recent brief. However, this impact varies enormously within and across groups, as discussed below. But before, the emphasis needs to be put on the ways through which the blast has cast its dark imprint on people and places.

Many of the areas damaged by the blast are historic neighborhoods of the capital city that embody extensive layers of lived experiences and memories for many Lebanese and expatriates living inside and outside Beirut, and for many members of the Lebanese diaspora who visit the country regularly. Many people are connected in some way to the persons who lived and worked in these neighborhoods. As such, the losses incurred in these neighborhoods reverberate across many persons and places, well beyond Beirut, connecting a wide community in a collective grief.

Simultaneously, while people were still caring for their wounds and mourning their loved ones, vultures started preying on people's losses. Quickly, rumors about real-estate developers and bankers coming to buy off

damaged properties propagated across the neighborhood. Given trends already in place before the blast, whereby the meltdown of financial institutions had pushed large depositors and bankers to place their capital in real estate, it is expected that interest in placing capital in the districts would be mounting.

Stranded dwellers and business owners, unable to cover the cost of repair and potentially trapped in co-ownership schemes and/or difficult rental arrangements are likely to be coerced to sell their homes. This is all the more so if they can secure a small section of the income in hard currency ("fresh/real" dollars), in a context where people's savings lost more than half their value overnight. Among those, owners who claim property in shares—often because of multiple heirs of original partners—rather than full are likely the most vulnerable because the property law favors the simplification of property claims at the expense of distribution.¹⁵ Those who have been forced to accommodate tenants under rent control without adequate adjustments are also likely to refrain from putting the cost of repair. Similarly, those who claimed heritage buildings would find these properties to be too costly to repair unless they are well off.

As for tenants, their relationship with landlords as well as the type of rent agreements they could claim is likely to have a determining effect in the decision to sell. Tenants on rent control are choosing to stay in structurally unsound buildings for fear of losing the only shelter they could claim. Conversely, tenants struggling with high rates of rent, whose relation with landlords is likely marred with tensions since the unofficial devaluation of the LBP, are likely to resettle elsewhere if they can—or simply leave the country.

The blast's shock was very high, but the scale of the damage was also rapidly exaggerated, prompting heritage experts

to lobby for "freezing" neighborhoods to increase scrutiny over the restoration and rebuilding processes. On August 19th, 2020, the Higher Council of the Directorate General of Urbanism issued a decision to put the severely devastated districts around the port "under study" (taht al-dars). If sanctioned by the cabinet, this decision will impose additional layers of control on building development processes by subjecting all building permits to the approval of the Higher Council of the DGU. The decision would allow the permitting process also to circumvent the outdated zoning regulations that date back to 1954. While well intentioned in its desire to prevent the devastation of urban heritage, earlier experiences in Lebanon urge for caution in assessing the positive effects of this decision. Indeed, there are multiple precedents where passage through the Higher Council of the DGU had allowed for unsupervised exceptions to rule the building development process, ultimately exacerbating vulnerabilities since only well-connected actors can secure exceptions, while recovery is slowed down for others.¹⁶ Instead, it may be adequate to design a range of incentives and subsidies that seek to directly foster the desirable goals (e.g., additional technical and financial support to owners of heritage buildings).

Recovery is also slowed down by the modest financial means of the majority of people and businesses, as well as by the lack of building materials and supplies in the country, given national constraints on imports as related to the government's lack of dollars. As such, many of the people affected by the blast are settling in temporary options, if they are privileged to have access to them, waiting and seeing how things will unfold. Clearly, households with access to income and/or savings, and with extensive family and/or social networks, have much more options than deprived households. According to a CRI report commissioned by UNDP, insurance companies are still waiting to establish the

11 Save the Children, Urban Greater Beirut Household Economy Analysis, July-August 2020.

12 Ibid.

13 Ibid.

14 ESCWA, policy brief 15 op.cit.

15 For more on the organization of property law, see Fawaz, M., Krijnen, M. and El Samad, D. (2018). "A Property Framework for Understanding Gentrification: Ownership patterns and the transformations of Mar Mikhail (Beirut)," City (May 2018).

16 M. Fawaz, (2016). "Exceptions and the Actually Existing Practice of Planning: Beirut (Lebanon) as Case Study," Urban Studies, 54(8): 1938-1955.

cause of the blast to decide if they will compensate for the costs of damages. For instance, if the explosion is attributed to political or war-related considerations, they will not compensate. Even in the case where compensation is considered, only few insurance companies have the financial capability to cover the costs as most “are de-facto in a state of undeclared bankruptcy”.¹⁷

1.4 ...impacts are variable: spotlight on vulnerabilities

The impact of the blast and compounded crises varies across social groups. Not everybody faces the same risk of being left behind, and thus there are various types of vulnerabilities. While vulnerable groups need to be distinguished, many vulnerabilities are intersectional. Accordingly, the distinction in groups that follows is mainly guided by heuristic considerations.

From the outside, it is important to remind and highlight that gender inequalities in Lebanon are notorious for their extreme and structural nature. The legal and institutional system adopts a heteronormative, sectarian, and patriarchal framework through which personal and sexual identities are prescribed, labeled and judged. Within this framework, **women** are discriminated against as evidenced by many reports and studies. On a global scale, Lebanon falls 145 out of 153 in the WEF Gender Equality Index and ranks 139 on women’s economic participation.¹⁸ Prior to the blast, UN-Women estimated that women’s employment in Lebanon would contract by 14-19%, as women are let go more than men. Furthermore, especially in poor urban and rural settings:

“women are more likely to be food insecure, more likely to be unemployed, have less access to social protection, more likely

to be a survivor of GBV, more likely to not have legal residence (as a refugee or a migrant), and more likely to not have access to adequate shelter. (...) Taken in its totality, this makes women less resilient to shocks—they are less likely to have savings, a bank account, extensive social network beyond their family, limited access to public spaces, and access to urgent social protection—all things critical in enabling individuals and families to respond to [shocks] such as the Beirut blast.”¹⁹

Amongst people killed by the blast are 63% of men (port workers, day laborers, migrant workers), adding to the number of **female-led households** who now have to endure much more difficult living conditions. Additionally, among the 300,000 who lost their homes due to the blast, there are 140,000 women and girls, of whom 81,000 are of reproductive age and 48,000 are adolescents.²⁰ These are now living in over-crowded homes, with increased conditions for gender-based violence, such as lack of privacy, lack of lighting, limited and unsegregated wash facilities.²¹ With damaged hospitals and health dispensaries, women are at risk of severe health implications, “especially in the context of the ongoing COVID-19 crises that discourages preventive health seeking behaviors.”²² Women’s mental health issues were already compounded by the multiple crises and the pandemic’s lockdown which increased their childcare and household burdens. Now, the traumatic nature of the blast puts them at increased risk of PTSD.

It is largely expected that **women and young girls** will bear a high cost after the blast. The impacts on young girls living in deprived households is particularly poignant. In Karantina, five girls are running around in the street still full of debris and rubble. They share their experience:

17 CRI, Rapid Socio-Economic Assessment in Areas Affected by the Beirut Port Explosion, August 19, 2020.

18 World Bank, Beirut/Lebanon RDNA Gender, August 2020.

19 Ibid.

20 Flash Appeal..., op.cit.

21 World Bank, Beirut/Lebanon RDNA..., op.cit.

22 Ibid.

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“Abir’s house was completely damaged by the blast... our homes are seriously damaged. Our parents cannot afford to repair them... they are counting on NGOs’ help! We used to go to a school in Achrafieh which is completely damaged... They sent us pictures... We’re now roaming the streets as we don’t have a place to stay in... We saw blood and injured people... Yes, we’re scared, maybe other explosions will happen...? Roula was going to get engaged on August 5...”

A good reminder of the intersectionality of vulnerabilities is illustrated through the experience of 40-year-old Isabelle²³ in Medawar:

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“We’re ten people in this house, which barely fits five. All my family moved in as their building nearby collapsed. The blast injured my two boys... one is still not sleeping and has short-term amnesia. My husband is Egyptian, he works daily jobs and hasn’t been hired for the past five months, with the pandemic and the crisis... I clean offices in downtown, but the company hasn’t called me in weeks. I don’t want to move from my house... I am close to family and the kids are close to school, and if the company calls me for work, it’s nearby, I can manage to leave the kids here and go. No one provides us with aid... maybe because my husband is Egyptian and won’t vote for these political parties. Some friends helped, but it’s not enough. I have a lot of damages in this house.”

In addition to difficult living conditions and constrained opportunities, the blast forced poor households, like Isabelle’s, to host family members and friends who lost their homes or whose homes have been severely damaged, and do not have alternative housing options, thus increasing crowding conditions which certainly does not help virus propagation and

increases risk. Crowding also aggravates the conditions for gender-based violence. Moreover, Isabelle is married to an Egyptian, to whom she cannot pass nationality. As such, her husband and children have residency permits and her husband needs to submit to the kafala system which compels him to have a sponsor to secure a work permit. The family also likely faces **discrimination** in accessing services and aid, which are mainly earmarked for Lebanese.

Migrant workers and refugees are two other salient vulnerable groups. The blast killed 13 refugees, injured 224, while 57 are still unaccounted for. It impacted 37,079 refugee households who live in the 4.5km radius around the Port.²⁴ 11 households, comprising 46 individuals, are without a home. Embassies and consulates reported that 4 migrant workers died in the blast, while 128 were injured and 2 remain missing.²⁵ Both refugees and migrants’ livelihoods and well-being are further compromised by the destruction of Karantina’s public hospital which used to cater for their health needs, where other health facilities did not welcome them as non-Lebanese. The risks posed by this situation is exacerbated by the pervasiveness of COVID-19. Many migrant workers have not been receiving their salaries in the last months due to the economic crisis, and are forbidden from going out and socializing, because of the pandemic. As ILO reports: migrant workers are experiencing “a reduction or non-payment of wages, job termination without the ability to return home, an increased workload, reduced physical mobility, an inability to contact friends and family, and an inability to afford hygiene products and a healthy diet.”²⁶ As such, several migrants are demanding to be repatriated to their home country and have been protesting in front of consulates. This is largely corroborated by accounts on the ground, such as Aya’s, a mid-twenties Ethiopian living in Medawar:

23 All names have been changed to protect the anonymity of interlocutors.

24 Numbers provided by UNHCR as of August 18, 2020.

25 OCHA, op.cit.

26 Kebede A.T., Stave S.E., and Kattaa M., Facing Multiple Crisis. Rapid Assessment of the Impact of COVID-19 on Vulnerable Workers and Small-Scale Enterprises in Lebanon. ILO, May 2020.

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“My arm got injured during the blast. I am terrified by what happened. I live with this poor Lebanese family in Medawar who housed me in exchange for my cleaning services. I cannot find work, and the last family I worked with did not pay me due to the economic crisis. I really want to go back home and I am waiting for the Embassy to help me with repatriation. I need help but no one is providing me with support. I have no money and barely have clothes left. I am not able to sleep, and do not care about eating. My working permit is about to expire, I really hope I’ll manage to leave soon. I don’t have money to pay fees or a ticket to go. I worry I’ll get arrested...”

Several Syrians refugees’ stories provide evidence of their aggravated plight: Riad is a 34-year-old male heading a Syrian household renting an apartment in Karantina with his wife and three children, and his brother. He hasn’t been able to pay the rent for the past months. His house was partially damaged by the blast. He is unable to work due to a medical condition. He relies on UNHCR’s aid to survive. His landlord has been so far understanding but he worries he won’t be patient for much longer. Jouhayna is a 44-year-old Syrian widow who used to live in Bourj Hammoud with her three young children. After the explosion, her landlord kicked them out as he got concerned that he wouldn’t get aid otherwise. She’s been homeless for the past two weeks, staying every few days at a friend’s home:

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“My eldest son is mentally ill since he has been captured and tortured by al-Nusra when we were still in Syria. My youngest son has been injured by the blast. Since we came to Lebanon, I have been cleaning houses. I used to work in the media sector in Syria... but here I can’t do much... Since the pandemic, I can no longer find jobs, people don’t want to let strangers into their homes... And now with the blast, I am expecting the worst. I am borrowing money to insure food to my children. Where can I go for support?”

As Jouhayna’s story informs us, **youth and children** are another distinct vulnerable group, as they experienced horrendous experiences of material destruction, human loss and injury, some not for the first time. Syrian children did not heal from the traumas of the violence in Syria. Up to 100,000 children have been directly affected by the blast²⁷. This trauma come on top of deprivation that was already increasing prior to the blast, as families – Lebanese and non-Lebanese – were being forced to reduce frequency and size of children’s meals, withdrawing children from education and engaging children in work. The effects of the blast will translate in even more children living in precarious conditions, with their safety, education and development at risk. The absence of specific social and psychological support measures exacerbates the risks of short and long-term consequences of trauma in children.

According to ESCWA last estimates of headcount poverty rate, **impoverished Lebanese populations** form about 55% of the population. The blast has hit hardly many of those, especially female-led households, as sadly demonstrated in the account of Majida, a 45-year-old Lebanese widow, mother of four who lost her house in Karantina to the blast:

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“I have no longer the strength to laugh... If we were inside, we would be dead! I was sitting in the street facing the house when the explosion happened. I lost all my belongings except for the television and the washing machine. Thank God, these cost a fortune. I have been living in Karantina for 24 years. My son used to work with Sukleen but he was let go recently. With the revolution, the virus, and the blast, it is much harder for us to make ends meet...I sometimes receive some support from my late husband’s brother, but he’s also not well-off.

I own this house and I want to fix it, but I can’t afford to, and I don’t want to leave. The government should come fix it! Where should I get the money to fix the house! Every new window costs 1,300,000 LBP! Where am I

supposed to get the money from?! With the dollar rate, how am I supposed to renovate? The dollar rate itself is an explosion!...

My son was injured. My neighbor is still in the ICU. A 3-year-old girl in the neighborhood had her face disfigured by the blast. You should see her, ya haram... My neighbor lost an eye... Everyone here experienced material losses and injuries... But I won’t leave, I’m not leaving my house. I will die here with my kids. Where can we go?...”

74-year-old Joumana has been living in Karantina for sixty years. She lost her house and has been sleeping at her children’s home in Barja, close to Saida, but keeps returning to Karantina, hoping she’ll find help to repair her home. Many households have been seriously affected by the blast in Karantina which is home to low-income families who operate small businesses in the neighborhood. The **elderly** is a particularly noteworthy group to be accounted for, especially in the Gemmayze, Jeitawi and Mar Mikhail areas. 62-year-old Sawsan and her husband also own a grocery shop in Gemmayze and live in the same building. They also lost their main source of income because of the blast:

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“I don’t have a place to call home other than this neighborhood! My husband has been running this shop for 50 years! Since we got married, I run this business with him, every day. This is all we have. We don’t have children. This is our life’s project and now look around... it is barely standing... I don’t know how we’re going to get back on our feet. We don’t have insurance, and no one can help us... I don’t know how we’re going to fix all this...”

Yes, we live in the same building. We own the shop and our house. Our house is also damaged. Both of us are injured. We lost four of our friends. So many people died, so many people lost their homes... We reopened the shop and are selling what was spared from the blast. I had to sleep a

couple of nights on the floor in front of my shop until the volunteers helped us fix the doors. I needed to guard what was left... This neighborhood is everything for me. My life is here. I will never leave, this is my home...”

People who live and work in the neighborhood have thus experienced a **double loss**. Hear 45-year-old Hadi who has been living in the neighborhood for the past 25 years with his wife and three children:

”

“The blast injured my wife, and badly damaged my home and grocery store: I may not be able to afford the education of my children this coming year... I am not even sure I will be able to pay my rent which is priced in USD. I have no goods to sell, no car, no home, nothing... I’ve been sleeping in my demolished house to guard it as it has no doors... My family? They relocated to a friend’s house... They are traumatized and need support... I am now looking for a furnished apartment to move into. I want to repair my store and home but I don’t have money... I don’t trust anyone to help me.. You know, I used to employ six people here: three Lebanese and three Syrians who now lost their jobs...”

The LGBTIQ+ local communities are also disproportionately impacted by the blast, especially as the neighborhoods of Mar Mikhail and Gemmayze were considered to be relatively safe spaces for them, especially with the presence of the Helem NGO which caters several services for them in the area, and provides them with access to several shelters. The displacement of hundreds of LGBTIQ+ has been exacerbated by high levels of housing discrimination and the absence of official LGBTIQ+ shelter in the country.

An additional group that needs to be catered for are the Port of Beirut workers who are “distributed among the GEPB (Beirut Port Management Unit) and BCTC (Beirut Container Terminal Consortium), the Army, Public Security, Customs, the pilot station, shipping agents, freight forwarders, transport



Vulnerabilities do not exist in a vacuum. They have been produced and manufactured by institutional and legal systems that structured them and enabled their persistence and tenacity over extended decades.

and logistics companies, handlers, ship chandlers and waste collection companies, and more than a thousand truckers.”²⁸ Several of those were killed and injured, but definite numbers are not yet available. It is not clear how these employees’ legal status impacts them, whether their jobs are temporarily or permanently lost. Beyond Port employees, special consideration should be given to daily workers or to those engaged in informal employment in all affected areas who too often are in a vulnerable position and left unprotected by the existing legal framework.

Several other groups can be distinguished among the most vulnerable: people with physical or mental disabilities; people with mental illnesses and PTSDs—especially in the aftermath of the horrendous blast; and tenants with precarious tenancies (e.g. on old rent, new rent in USD, mortgage payers, tenants in properties owned by absentee landlords, etc.). Evidently, the more vulnerabilities one accumulates, the more precarious their situation will be, and the more risk of being left behind they will carry. As such, in identifying groups who could be left behind, one needs to pay special attention to their compounded vulnerabilities.

Finally, in assessing vulnerabilities, it is important to consider that the effects of the blast are national in scope. As noted by urban geographer Deen Sharp, “the post-war reconstruction neglected the rest of the country and focused on the downtown of Beirut causing to neglect the broader urban fabric and majority of the country’s inhabitants. **Those outside of Beirut** will likely suffer the most acutely from the economic fall out of the blast despite being beyond its physical footprint and must not be left behind”.

28 F. Gemayel, “Life Resumes Timidly at the Port of Beirut”, *Le Commerce du Levant*, 18 August 2020.

2. The Manufacturing of Vulnerabilities

Vulnerability is often described as an individual attribute, associated to the personal circumstances and/or characteristics of specific individuals and measures or quantified accordingly. Without any doubt, individual attributes can weaken temporarily or permanently specific individuals and/or their families, particularly when institutional frameworks fail to provide direly needed protections and compensations. Going beyond these aspects, this report seeks to frame vulnerability as a manufactured condition, one which—in line with how the concept was coined by Lebanese lawyer Nizar Saghieh (2015)—designs institutional and legal framework that deliberately criminalize particular population groups, their presence, labor, or social practices.²⁹

Some of these manufactured vulnerabilities are embodied in the legal frameworks that discriminate against specific population groups (see 2.4). Others are embedded in the design of systems of governance in the country and will be carried through in the post-blast recovery, as they curtail access to information and/or aid (see 2.1). Furthermore, the geography of the city, its general organization and the ways in which it has grown to reflect the primacy of speculative investments over everyday livelihoods exacerbates the vulnerability of large population groups who were already threatened with eviction and/or loss of livelihood (see 2.2). In this section, the individual attributes of vulnerability seeks to be tied with the institutional and legal frameworks that conflate, reproduce, exacerbate, and sometimes simply manufacture disempowerment. Building on the Leave no one behind framework, the examination is conducted through the five intersecting entry points of: governance, geography, socio-economic conditions, discrimination, and shocks/fragility.

²⁹ Nizar Saghieh, Manufacturing Vulnerability in Lebanon: Legal Policies as Efficient Tools of Discrimination, Beirut: Legal Agenda, 19/3/2015.

³⁰ This is despite the fact that the Municipality of Beirut had developed, since 2016, with support from the World Bank, a resiliency plan that should include an emergency response.

2.1 Governance

As of this writing, the recovery response is not operating properly, reflecting the setting that allowed for the blast to occur in the first place. It exacerbates vulnerabilities for all those who will need support to repair and/or return. The weakness of state agencies, including local authorities (e.g., municipalities), planning agencies (e.g., the Directorate General of Urbanism, the Public Housing Agency), and relief agencies (e.g., MOSA, Higher Relief Commission), is particularly concerning. Furthermore, lack of information, ad-hoc decisions, and missing procedures generate highly informal mechanisms of reconstruction for demolished homes, based on individual negotiations and murky concessions. The elements of this system of governance are detailed below, with the focus put on how they generate vulnerability collectively and affect specific vulnerable groups differentially:

An opaque, ad-hoc rebuilding process:

So far, there is no clear process of restoring buildings in the devastated neighborhoods, even if repairs are minor.³⁰ This includes the entire sequence of assessing damage, agreeing on scope of and forms of repair, permitting works, respecting the character and context of the neighborhoods, securing funds and/or building materials, addressing legal challenging, and insuring quality of repair. For the majority of dwellers and NGOs working in the areas, it is unclear how the repairs will be conducted, who will cover the costs, and who will undertake works. An ad-hoc framework was set in place between the Directorate General of Archeology and the Office of the City Governor, organizing the post-blast recovery by mandating an informal restoration authorization (tasreeh)

provided by both agencies. The process was set in place through the pressure exerted by a number of property owners who sought to buttress the structures of their heritage buildings. It led to ad-hoc arrangements being set in place, with the DGA and the Office of the City Governor of Beirut allowing a number of contractors to buttress a few threatened heritage buildings with permits issued from their offices. Property owners are to kick-off the procedure, but this is proving difficult. The governor expected to extend the process to any structural repair, where the presence of an engineer is required. While relatively fast and simple, it is unclear whether (i) the process is scalable given limited capabilities at the DGA, (ii) sufficiently transparent, and (iii) adequately protective of dwellers. It is also likely to place those who have problems with the law, those who have difficult mobility, and/or those who are not property owners at a disadvantage. In any case, the process was not officially announced.

Meanwhile, the Presidents of the OEA, the Order of Lawyers, the Association of Contractors, the Association of Industrialists, and the Order of Expert Accountants announced on August 20th that they are forming a national committee to coordinate the efforts of civil society in the reconstruction with local and international donors.

The value of this announcement is unclear, as is the lack of coordination with authorities legally entrusted with permitting buildings and/or protecting heritage. It nonetheless announces a first coordination effort.

Little cooperation among public agencies, due to lack capability and competence within, which can sometimes lead to competition. By way of example, the decision to develop one survey assessment jointly between the OEA and the Higher

Relief Commission didn't materialize because of reported disagreements over data sharing practices. Instead, there are two parallel damage surveys (Higher Relief Commission with Khatib & Alami, and OEA with Municipality), in addition to multiple rapid needs assessments. It is unclear who these surveys will inform and how but the burden of responding to relief agencies on city dwellers is massive. There are also very little discussions about repair to shared infrastructures (roads, electricity, water networks). Everything seems to rely on volunteer campaigns.

Distrust of all public agencies among residents, non-profit agencies, and donors (local and international), which is generating ad-hoc and uncoordinated processes of channeling funds and organizing repair in the absence of the logical chain of command that could be introduced, had the public hierarchy been functional. At the top, the government's resignation exacerbates the lack of trust in the public sector, as does the poor coordination among public agencies. Lack of trust in the State also leads to heightened insecurity among vulnerable groups who cannot rebuild without subsidies. Fear of forced displacement is rampant, tied either to a larger take-over of the area (with the precedent of Beirut Downtown – see 3.5 below) or individual protection from landlords' decision to sell and/or allow tenants to stay.

Lack of coordination among relief agencies, NGOs, and INGOs: The large number of volunteer organizations with unequal scope of work, experiences, and connections clouds the landscape of recovery. While vibrant and energetic, volunteer work is uncoordinated and misses a mechanism to coordinate overlaps and identify what has been overlooked. A number of highly experienced NGOs have been operating from specific neighborhoods for decades

and/or within sectors, allowing them to play a leading role. Others just came together to respond to the blast.

It is also worth remembering that the NGO sector is not insulated from the political and sectarian organization of society, leading to a likely reproduction of tensions and problems if efforts are not properly channeled. Furthermore, shifting further society towards NGOs, with all the known limitations (e.g. competition over resources, lack of continuity), is likely to generate further vulnerability particularly when NGOs target specific social groups, leaving others behind.

Lack of accountability frameworks, if reconstruction relies on volunteer works: Much of the relief work is so far conducted by ad-hoc, relief agencies. The process is messy, overlapping, and lacks accountability. It is furthermore likely to be stuck at a number of bottlenecks where spontaneous interventions will find it hard to grow, disburse money raised abroad through the Lebanese banking sector, etc.

To demonstrate the difficulty for individuals impacted by the blast to navigate the relief framework, let's take two examples. First, structural assessments: Several initiatives were launched by volunteer teams, including University professors (e.g., AUB's MSFEA), professional bodies (OEA, the Lebanese Order of Engineers and Architects), and independent volunteer groups. In parallel, the Municipality of Beirut benefited from a volunteer assessment from four large private companies who sent engineers for a rapid assessment and drew a list of buildings to be evacuated. Evaluations of structural stability were however not aligned, with in some cases disagreements on whether a building needs to be evacuated or not. Residents were left to choose who they should "trust", and whether they should risk their lives or homes. A second example is building repair: A number of buildings associations were approached by NGOs with offers to restore windows

and doors. Residents have, however, no assurance of quality and/or control and accountability—but they also often have no alternatives. In some cases, decisions have to be made about shifting wood to aluminum—more readily available—without necessary information about the quality of the latter, its adequacy for the style of the building, and ultimately the sense of home and place needed to recover from the trauma.

These contradictions are likely to increase once work scales up, particularly because most of the organizations listed on relief are inexperienced with this work. Having attracted sympathy online, some of these organizations have managed to raise substantial funds overnights through fundraisers. The translation of this capital to actual work will be challenging.

Inability to capitalize on valuable experiences from accumulated earlier tragedies and responses that translate in interesting and fast individual interventions by actors in the private and/or NGO sector,³¹ but fail to scale up due to numerous overlaps, conflicting assessments, and in general numerous counterproductive interventions.

Police harassment is already being reported, with the police force stopping residents and contractors from doing emergency structural buttressing, requesting permits (which in some cases are already secured).

Precedents of bypassing public agencies in previous post-disaster recoveries in Lebanon, including some of the interventions in the post-2006 war reconstruction and the Syrian refugee responses, have demonstrated severe problems with the solution. As examined below (section 3.5), both had led to undermining public authorities, entrenching tensions across communities, and ultimately compromised the possibility of a good recovery.

Inadequate legal framework that places all the responsibility of reconstruction on the landlord and does not sufficiently or at all protect affected groups in the current context. Landlords in some of the districts are nonetheless not necessarily rich individuals, meaning that they are likely to be unable to restore their buildings and/or apartments and potentially lose them to interested investors. The law contains many grey zones when it is not silent or totally inadequate in tackling many of the issues affecting survivors of the blast, whether those whose residence have been impacted, have lost their livelihoods or those whose legal status is precarious.

As it stands, the governance framework is likely to exacerbate the vulnerability of the majority of middle and low-income dwellers, whether tenants, owners, or landlords who will lack information, find the process of securing permits difficult, lack clout to stand in the face of the police, and lack resources to rebuild. They will be forced, in the best-case scenario, to delegate recovery to NGOs with, as things stand, lack of accountability mechanisms. As pointed above, the most vulnerable will be those with modest socio-economic means and those who own property shares, because they are at risk of losing their property. In addition, a delay in recovery will push tenants away and reduce further the incomes of impoverished landlords, precipitating them towards selling property.

Finally, everyone with an informal title, an absentee owner, or a legally dubious condition, will need to be supported (mediation, legal aid...) to avoid harassment, difficulties, being arrested, and other challenges.

2.2 Geography

Most of the neighborhoods that were affected by the blast were in flux, meaning that they had experienced instability for several years before the blast. The trends observed include:

- **Gentrification**, or the forced displacement of resident populations and businesses because better-off residents and businesses have driven the cost of living beyond the means of original residents. There are multiple drivers of gentrification in the affected neighborhoods. In Downtown Beirut, gentrification was driven by the establishment of a real-estate company (Solidere) to manage the post-civil war reconstruction of these districts. In the areas of Mar Mikhail and Gemmayzeh, as well as Jaitawi—to a lesser extent, gentrification was driven by nightlife and service activities. While some have talked about gentrification in Karantina prior to the blast, it is unclear if any population was displaced. The neighborhood was nonetheless experiencing the influx of a number of art- and sports-related activities on large and empty properties.
- **Abandonment**, or the proliferation of a large number of dilapidated buildings and physical structures. A number of buildings were left in these conditions due to the unaddressed effects of civil war, where multiplicity of ownership may have precipitated these conditions. In most others, abandonment was due to the speculative investments of developers who were waiting for a recovery of the real estate market to reinvest in the demolition of buildings and their replacement. The 2018 survey of the Beirut Built Environment Database, from the AUB Beirut Urban Lab, in the districts surrounding the blast shows that 120 buildings had been fully evicted of dwellers. Most of these buildings were left standing with permits filed in their location, waiting for the speculative market to pick up. In total, 310 building permits had been filed in the district between 1995-2020, a little less than 1:10 buildings.³² The trend may be exacerbated by the blast with a new "downward cycle" where tenants, turned off from high rents, leave apartments to impoverished landlords

31 Such as contractors who deployed on day 2 their equipment and began to help people recover losses and consolidate walls.

32 BUL, The Beirut Built Environment Database, AUB: BUL, 2020.



who will be unable to cover the costs of repair, ultimately precipitating property losses for the latter, and homes for the former, and turning the neighborhoods into forcefully abandoned real estate.

- **Vacancy**, is a main outcome of the compiled effects of speculative investments (both in abandoned and unsold units), as demonstrated by the Beirut Built Environment database survey in 2018. In the areas immediately surrounding the blast, the vacancy rates among buildings developed since 1995 were as high as 56% in Beirut Downtown and the Port Area, and 23% in Mar Mikhail/Gemmayzeh. This vacancy is directly caused by the tendency of real estate developers, expatriates, and other investors to place their money in real-estate. Vacancy is exacerbated by regulations that exempt empty apartments from municipal and property taxation.³³
- **Militarized security** is another growing trend in Beirut that affected the neighborhoods, namely translated in the visible presence of a militarized security that closes off large sections of neighborhoods. Downtown and Karantina were severely affected by these trends, with large sections of the districts closed off.
- **The deterioration of the physical infrastructure**, in line with the rest of Beirut, has been occurring for Gemmayzeh/Mar Mikhail and particularly Karantina, which was dealt with as the city's backyard. The blast has intensified the destruction of the public infrastructure. This deterioration tends to be sharply concentrated in pockets of poverty where residents are left behind. These take the form of a building/cluster of buildings typically inhabited by refugees and/or migrant workers, or extend beyond, as in the case of Karantina's clusters.³⁴

- **The loss of heritage and of urban character** are steadily occurring across urban districts. Aside from the poignant loss of heritage associated with the Solidere redevelopment of Beirut Downtown after the Lebanese civil war, the districts surrounding the historic core have gradually seen their heritage layers (e.g., buildings, artisans, streetscapes, trees) devastated by speculative building activities. These interventions have reduced the assets behind the social and economic vitality of these districts, often shifting the nature of their economies from a local cycle of exchange to a speculative, asset based investment based on the ownership of typically luxurious apartments. In this context, buildings with historical architectural value become the sites of negotiation, with argument about what is valuable and how many we can keep, while the overall character and integrated understanding of heritage is eventually lost. These trends have affected almost all neighborhoods of Beirut and beyond. They are particularly salient in the districts of Gemmayzeh, Mar Mikhail, and Ashrafiyyeh today.
- **Generalized impoverishment and loss of livability** with numerous businesses closing since the beginning of 2019 due to economic slowdown and eventually the protests, the financial meltdown, and the COVID-19 pandemic. Beirut Downtown businesses were severely hit, as were numerous others across the city. In Mar Mikhail, many of the creative industries were suffering, others were losing clients. Store closure and the formation of urban pockets of poverty was increasing.

In what follows, these city-wide trends are viewed through the geography of four district-types immediately affected by the blast:

33 Fawaz, M. and Zaatari, A. (2020). No More Vacancy Exemptions, policy brief published with the Lebanese Center for Policy Studies.

34 The kafala system and the impossibility of imagining a long-term livelihood in Lebanon lead many to consider their lives in Lebanon temporary, while poor income leads to terrible housing conditions.

(i) Downtown Beirut: Since 1990, this district of the city was almost exclusively turned into a speculative land reserve, with only small pockets animated by residential and recreational activities such as the Beirut Souks and Saifi Village.³⁵ This role as speculative land reserve was reinforced by the imposed militarized security of its districts, which has steadily increased as of 2005 to peak since October 2019. Militarization had the predicted effect of discouraging visitors, ultimately closing down stores and restaurants, most poignantly around Parliament Square and Maarad Street, where lavish building restorations had occurred in the 1990s. The residential fabric of Beirut Downtown was largely empty, with the Beirut BED survey of completed buildings between 1999 and 2018 showing vacancy rates above 50%.

The adopted modern architecture of large glass panels and high rises was particularly vulnerable to the blast and material losses were severe. The blast is likely to entrench further the trend of a speculative land reserve, particularly because the population of the district is typically wealthy with ties outside Lebanon, potentially choosing to ward off the crisis by going abroad.

The main vulnerable population in this district that may have lost a shelter are migrant workers and/or male refugees who live or work in the construction buildings. Since October 2019, their number is considerably reduced. This population is likely the hardest to reach.

(ii) The Gemmayzeh, Jeitawi, Mar Mikhail Belt have a complicated overlap of functions and roles, as well as populations living in the district. The districts are simultaneously the restaurants/pub areas of the city, the cluster of its creative economy, and the residence of an aging population. Tenancy is also mixed, with the 2014 Gaia Survey finding that the

district's residents were divided among owners and tenants (50% each), but that the vast majority of tenants had old leases (41% of all residents). Since then, the passage of the 2014 rent law and negotiations with developers are likely to have reduced the figure, leaving nonetheless multiple geometries and residential conditions to be assessed separately if one is to understand the differential impacts of the blast (See Annex for Gemmayzeh and Mar Mikhail maps).

The districts were the target of numerous real-estate investments since 2000, particularly because of their appeal to the yuppies, but also the creative classes, had encouraged a rapid gentrification that was eventually halted by the economic crisis. As of 2016, developers who had purchased lots and filed demolition permits evacuated buildings, but didn't move forward with demolition and reconstruction. This has shifted the trend towards speculative investments, in line with what was described above in Solidere.³⁶

An additional problématique for the Gemmayzeh, Jeitawi, Mar Mikhail Belt is the rich cultural heritage of the districts, both tangible and intangible. It includes about 600-800 residences that date back to the late Ottoman/ French Mandate period with stone buildings of which about one-hundred (according to the OEA survey) need rapid repair. Overall, the urban fabric of the districts further displays unique characteristics, including street perspectives, stairs, and more. In addition, the districts have preserved old artisans and a young creative class that supports a solid economy.³⁷ Because of this wealthy heritage, the districts have an important potential in supporting an economic regeneration for the city and its residents, well beyond their boundaries. They are, however, at risk today of falling into the same scenario of Beirut's historic core, where they would become

assets to store wealth, mostly devoid of residents. Conversely, pockets of poverty already existing in the neighborhoods are likely to expand, generating further isolation and disadvantages for those confined to these areas of the city.

Overlapping vulnerabilities in these districts include many of the groups referred to earlier (see 1.4), including:

- An elderly population, many of whom are tenants on old-rent control and/or property owners who retain only shares of property in a family building and/or apartment.³⁸
- Residents of heritage buildings whose repair is subjected to higher scrutiny and requires additional cost and care. Save from setting in place a process to protect and empower them, they are likely to lose their homes because of the hurdles and costs of repair.
- Young professionals who had established residency and/or workshops in the area and were already struggling to pay rents before the blast. They are threatened with permanent displacement if return is prohibitively expensive, and potentially looking to leave the country altogether.
- Small-scale landlords, particularly elderly impoverished ones who will be unable to repair without help and may lose property to vulture investors particularly if their tenants leave and within a context of shared property and skewed property regulations;
- LGBTIQ+: As these districts have been the primary residential area for LGBTIQ+ persons, one of the least homophobic and transphobic areas in Beirut and the country. As hundreds of LGBTIQ+ persons have been displaced from their homes, they continue to face high levels

of housing discrimination due to their gender or sexual identity, particularly transgender and non-binary persons. There are no official LGBTIQ+ shelters in the country.

- Refugees and migrant workers occupy number of apartments in the districts, often paying exploitative rent and living in high density within multi-story buildings. The blurred lines between these groups, and the lack of support to migrant workers will exacerbate their vulnerability.
- Middle-income young Syrians in Jeitawi.
- Individuals with physical and/or mental disabilities have little support in a neighborhood poorly designed to support their needs. They risk severe isolation.

(iii) The **Karantina** Area is the historical backyard of the city, with large swathes of land taken up by industrial and military sites. Low-income populations have lived across the districts for decades, with severe interruptions particularly in the first years of the civil war (1975) where the neighborhoods were recognized as the site of a devastating massacre.³⁹ A rapid assessment of structures indicates that less than 800 households resided in the neighborhood at the time of the blast. They included migrant workers, Syrian refugees, as well as impoverished Lebanese families. Interestingly, the population is religiously mixed with Sunni families—many naturalized in the 1990s, and Christian supporters of the Kataeb party who has offices in the area.

A review of maps and aerial photos shows four residential clusters, located within larger districts of empty land and/or institutional buildings (See Annex for Karantina's map). The lots were historically subdivided prior to the official land pooling regulations: streets

³⁵ For more, see Makdisi, S. "Laying Claim to Beirut: Laying Claim to Beirut: Urban Narrative and Spatial Identity in the Age of Solidere," *Critical Inquiry* 23-3 (1997), pp. 661-690.

³⁶ For an in-depth analysis, see: Krijnen, M. 2016. "The Urban Transformation of Beirut. An Investigation into the Movement of Capital." PhD diss., Ghent University; Krijnen, M. 2018. "Beirut and the Creation of the Rent Gap." *Urban Geography* 7: 1-19.; Krijnen, M., and C. De Beukelaer. 2015. "Capital, State and Conflict: The Various Drivers of Diverse Gentrification Processes in Beirut, Lebanon." In *Global Gentrifications: Uneven Development and Displacement*, edited by L. Lees, H. B. Shin, and E. Lopez-Morales, 285-309. Bristol: Policy Press.

³⁷ Goulordava, K. (2018) *Very Small Enterprises in a Gentrified Neighborhood: A Case Study of Qobayat, Mar Mikhail Beirut*. MUPP Thesis (Urban Planning and Policy), American University of Beirut. Also see, Gaia Heritage's survey of the districts.

³⁸ The Gaia Heritage survey (2014) showed that Mar Mikhail has a much larger aging population than the national average, pointing to the presence of widows in the district. More than 15% of the district are aged above 70 years, compared to a national average of 5%.

³⁹ M. Fawaz and Peillen I., "The Slums of Beirut: History and Development 1930-2002." Paper prepared for the UN Center for Human Settlements, 2002.

are narrow, often still carrying property numbers and not organized as official public domains. Residential lots are small, varying between 100-300m² between houses and apartment buildings. In total, about 100 residential buildings are counted, mostly low (3 to 4 stories). Many buildings had stores on the ground floors, functioning either as repair shops or grocery stores around which the communities' lives were organized, as discussed in people's testimonies we mentioned earlier.

Conversely, institutional lots can be very large. Many are occupied by the Army and buffer with the port. Others house the severely damaged Karantina public hospital, a public park, the Sukleen facilities, and other industrial uses. Only some commercial uses could be counted.

Preliminary interviews indicate that many impoverished landlords lived in this area, some of whom lost all their homes and belonging, and would not be able to rebuild without help. Further investigations of property titles should be conducted to understand the property structures.

Many buildings were severely damaged by the blast, others fully demolished. Given the absence of restoration permits in the district for the period, it is likely that many of these buildings had been restored without permits and proper structural work in the post-civil war era, rendering them more vulnerable to the blast. A visual survey of the zone shows many structural cracks, crumbled walls, and more.

Poor resources and lack of water, etc. means that these neighborhoods are more exposed to the spread of the pandemic. These are exacerbated by the considerable damage to the hospital that served impoverished populations and migrant workers.

Overlapping vulnerabilities in these districts, partially profiled in the earlier part of this report (1.4) include;

- Female-led households, who may be exposed to higher risks of sexual abuse

and/or impoverishment since they are physically vulnerable, as their homes are unprotected, and local communities are largely dismantled.

- Female migrant workers, including women who will share the same risks of other female-led households, but will also lack legal protection in the context of a discriminatory kafala system that often condemns them to a criminalized status (see below).
- Male migrant workers, many living in highly congested conditions with the risk of COVID-19 contamination, increasing now other vulnerabilities.
- Syrian refugees.
- Impoverished families, some of which were kicked out because the landlords want to reap all compensations, not share them with tenants, demonstrating legacies of poor information sharing.
- Populations living near dumps, waste sites, etc.

(iv) The Second Ring Outside the first ring of severe devastation identified by the Higher Relief Commission, Beirut and its suburbs count numerous neighborhoods where damage consisted mostly of windows and doors. Within these districts, there are nonetheless pockets of poverty where damage was more severe. In neighborhoods such as Borj Hammoud or Khandaq el Ghamiq, for instance, several clusters of old and fragile buildings were severely affected by the blast, sometimes leading entire walls to crumble. Many of the affected districts have undergone the same patterns of urban change underscored for the city at large, including high rates of vacancy due to forced abandonment and financialization, a tendency for militarized security –sometimes controlled by local strongmen affiliated to political militias, loss of heritage sites, and, more generally impoverishment. Within these districts, attention should be given to migrant workers, refugees, households benefiting from old rent control, and owners who hold

only partial titles to their homes among the most vulnerable groups threatened with displacement and further impoverishment. To those, one should add mortgage payers, many of whom had lost their employment and will be unable to pay installments in the foreseeable future.

Aside from the loss of the housing infrastructure, the second ring –in line with the rest of the city-, has seen a severe drop in economic activities as the city, more generally, witnessed the erosion of its economic retail activities under the combined weights of the economic and financial crisis and the pandemic.

2.3 Socio-economic conditions

As mentioned above, the explosion comes on the heels of the financial crisis, Lebanon's first default on loan payments, an intensifying economic breakdown started a few years earlier, and the COVID-19 pandemic peaking after months of intermittent and not always comprehensive lockdowns, etc.

Despite numerous studies and claims of introducing social protections, public agencies had failed by August 4 to take any substantial step in that direction. Even the scaled-up National Poverty Targeting Program was shown to operate inadequately towards the most vulnerable groups, often leading to further exclusions.⁴⁰ This is in line with other policy choices that had similarly thrown the burden of the financial meltdown on the middle and lower income classes. With savings lost and income drastically reduced, these same classes, who also bear the burden of an unjust taxation system that favors the rich, will have to find the means to repair homes and workshops if they are to stay in the devastated neighborhoods.

The blast is likely to sharpen the downward trend for many. Indeed, most property owners, residents or landlords, will be

unable to stay/repair, falling into heightened precariousness and/or dependence on non-governmental organizations. Land ownership in most areas (except Downtown) is widely distributed into small property owners with limited means, rather than well-off landlords. These individuals, sometimes holding property in shared ownership, are likely to face severe difficulty in organizing repair. Many of their paying tenants have also lost their sources of income, and are likely not to return, generating further losses of revenue. Within the current political context, they are likely to lose their property, and be further entrenched into political sectarian networks of clientelism.⁴¹

It is important to locate the blast in its socio-economic context outlined in the first section of the report. Aside from the generalized loss of purchasing power, this distinction between households who are able to rely on remittances and/or a foreign income and those who don't is likely to generate new social divisions among households, with those able to secure hard currency considerably better than others. The latter face a spike in costs of food, as the consumer price index sharply spiked in April 2020 by 79%.⁴² Magazines and anecdotes report an increasing number of individuals relying on charity for survival. Everyday experiences in Beirut show children and family routinely looking through trash and the number of street beggars, including women and children, has exponentially increased in middle and upper income districts.

The devaluation of the currency has sharply affected migrant workers, since many work in Lebanon to support family abroad. Aside from direct loss of income, they are unable to send money abroad in the context of informal capital controls that are more stringent against vulnerable population groups. As noted earlier, many find themselves trapped in the country, with insufficient income to leave, illegal statuses, and poor income.

⁴⁰ Bou Khater, L., Poverty Targeting is not the Solution for Much Needed Social Protection, LCPS Policy Brief, March 2020.

⁴¹ It is worth noting that the first survey conducted for structural assessments in Gemmayzeh was signed and posted by the "Engineers of the Lebanese Forces."

⁴² CRI, Rapid Socio-Economic Assessment, op. cit.

The Beirut Urban Lab's investigation of mortgage payments which had defaulted since December 2019 also showed an increase, making residents protected from evictions and bank takeover dependent on the Parliament's decision to suspend evictions temporarily. It is estimated that loan repayments had sharply moved up from 2 to 20% by July 2020. These loans have only a limited effect on the blast area, given that apartment prices were beyond the minimum subsidized prices, but they still affect the area's old apartments.

The sharp socio-economic fall threatens to compound spatial effects, generating further pockets of poverty, abandonment, evictions, and forced displacement particularly in Karantina. Given the proximity of the neighborhood to the city and its role as a space of affordable shelter for low-income city dwellers, a forced eviction will likely weaken communities of refugees, migrant workers, and impoverished Lebanese families. This is all the more the case because the blast affected severely the social infrastructure of the neighborhoods, including the schools, hospitals and dispensaries. This will increase the risks of COVID-19 infections.

2.4 Discrimination

The Lebanese legal framework is rife with discriminatory principles and path dependent procedures that facilitate the criminalization of vulnerable population groups, whether in relation to their presence in the country, their labor, and/or other aspects of their socialization. Thus, numerous population groups face routinely biases, exclusion or mistreatment on the basis of one or more aspect of their identity, such as gender, nationality, ethnicity, age, class, disability, sexual orientation, religion, or other.

Many of the biases and forms of discrimination are sanctioned socially. A substantial percentage of those is nonetheless inscribed in legislative bodies. As noted earlier, Saghieh qualified the legal framework managing the presence of refugees in Lebanon as one manufacturing vulnerability. Saghieh's

argument builds on a thorough study of the multiple, often conflicting regulations issued by public agencies to manage the presence of refugees particularly since the arrival of Syrians in Lebanon in 2012. Saghieh lists Lebanon's resistance to sign the Geneva agreements and recognize its responsibilities vis-à-vis refugees, as well as the way the management of refugee displacement was left to the police and INGOs for years before a response was even approached. He further points to the path-dependent set of regulations that eventually trapped refugees into a criminalized presence and labor, and others. The argument can be extended to migrant workers whose presence is managed by a so-called kafala system that has been widely denounced as restricting their rights and liberties in the country. That being said, Lebanon did vote in favor of the Global Compact for Refugees affirmed by the UN General Assembly in December 2018.

In addition, Lebanese law discriminates against women of all nationalities, a legal practice that doubles-up with the patriarchal society. Similarly, legal frameworks discriminate against members of the LGBTIQ+ communities whose social stigmatization is compounded by the criminalization of their sexual orientation

Based on the foregoing, particular attention needs to be paid on groups such as migrant workers, refugees, LGBTIQ+, or female-led households as they be subjected to discriminatory practice in accessing aid or being granted priority to recover their homes. Furthermore, if landlords refuse to grant access to tenants, as has happened in several instances where they sought—in line with the post-civil war—to maximize “compensations” and not share them with tenants, it is unlikely that either refugees or migrant workers will be able to appeal. Will the framework of compensation even include them? Worse, many of these individuals will find it difficult to return to their areas of residence and recover livelihoods in the context of the heightened presence of police/army and they may prefer to leave for fear of harassment or arrest.

2.5 Shocks and fragility

Marginalized and disadvantaged groups are more likely to be adversely affected by shocks, whether they be economic, conflict or health related, or as in this case the result of a singular explosion causing large-scale devastation in the middle of preexisting compounded crises affecting the social fabric of the country. The effects of the blast have been multiplied by the context of instability and fragility in which it occurred. It exacerbated existing vulnerabilities, while it highlighted systemic failures that resulted in a wider swath of the population being impacted. Many of these intersecting and structural vulnerabilities have been examined above.

Nonetheless, sustained and accrued focus need to be put on the risks posed by the COVID-19 pandemic, one of the main sources of vulnerability for local communities that are now attracting volunteers but also other vulnerable populations seeking to benefit from aid. The risk of the spread of the disease is severely increased, even more so in the case of populations already living in high congestion and deprived from good medical access.

As the recovery process is being delineated and the focus shifts to rebuilding, the mental and physical impacts of the blast, including in those with existing health concerns should not be disregarded or minimized. Concerted interventions to account for these added costs are needed. For instance, psychologists and counselors should accompany surveyor teams to ease the concerns of families and cater to their needs.



3. Legacies of Structural Inequalities and Bad Experiences of Recovery

This section seeks to provide a background of the main principles that have generated the current conditions. Rather than a comprehensive primer of Lebanon, the section points to important patterns that have influenced the impacts of the explosion and the forms in which the response has taken over the past twenty days. They intend to encourage a contextualized approach to the response. Four main forces need to be considered in the context of the recovery.

3.1. Lebanon's version of a Rentier Political Economy with a Sectarian Flavor

The rentier economic system relies on remittances rather than productive sectors, and encourages speculative investments in high-interest monetary placements and an inflated real estate sector. This has destroyed the elements of the service economy and reduced the banking sector to shambles. The financial crisis arrived at a moment where the country was ripped of most of its internal capabilities for recovery and dependent on foreign aid. Amidst the worse financial meltdown, the country has to reinvent its economy and productive capabilities.

Sectarian politics are perceived to have produced a corrupt oligarchy that rendered many State institutions dysfunctional or lacking at best - particularly at the level of planning institutions which are perceived to be serving the political/business/banking elites' interests. The sectarian system is said to use State institutions as a means to reproduce its power, redistributing public money either directly through contracts or by organizing employment⁴³.

The negative balance of payment with decades of loans accumulated, without much to show: despite having borrowed billions to

fix its infrastructure, Lebanon's vital sectors—including particularly water and electricity—are failing.

The unfair taxation system is skewed towards the protection of higher income earners; it collects regressive taxes (e.g. VAT) while allowing the rich to evade their shares. Rather than regulating uses, the tax structure encourages speculative investments (e.g. waiving taxes for vacant real estate in cities). Simultaneously, large-scale corporations routinely benefit from tax exemptions and forgiveness.

The largely informal mode of organizing and managing cities and nation, relies on exceptions and one-time arrangements rather than inclusive legislative texts. This particularly applies to the management of the built environment, whether it is in the classification of heritage buildings or the acquisition of building rights: negotiations dominate processes of decision making while legal texts are deliberately written in conflicting, vague form to empower a variegated management of territories and their populations who are not granted equal rights. As a result, citizens, time and time again, are reduced to securing favors from strongmen because they have no entitlement as citizen. An excellent example of this process is the post-2006 reconstruction detailed at section 3.5.

3.2. Social Hegemonies

- The social system dominated by religious/sectarian institutions, patriarchal family structures, and political patrons that constrain people's agency and opportunities for diverse livelihoods, and discriminates against women, migrants, individuals with disabilities, the elderly, and non-heteronormative individuals.

3.3. A Devastated Natural Environment

- Despite being recognized as its most important asset, Lebanon's natural environment has been devastated by poor protection regulations, rampant privatization, and the failure to set in place a protective framework for its natural and built heritage. Despite the adoption of a Law for the Environment (2004) and the National Land Use Plan of Lebanon's Territories in 2009, which requires the articulation of detailed protection plan, very few measures have been adopted. Instead, the coast has been severely disfigured by illegal privatization practices while numerous forests have lost their main assets.
- The management of solid waste (including rubble from post-disaster events) has been notoriously bad⁴⁴. In 2006, rubble was eventually used as an opportunity to expand the territories of the private real-estate company Solidere whose waterfront was expanded by several folds without benefiting public agencies in any form. Beirut (and Lebanon) have not adopted a serious waste recycling approach and the dozens of facilities built for recycling waste some with international support remain largely dysfunctional. It is in the backdrop of this situation that the rubble generated by the current blast needs to be addressed in the most ecologically sensible way.

3.4. Inequitable Urban and Land Policies

- Decades of inequitable urban policies have failed to set in place a shared infrastructure supporting the urban majority, favoring instead privatization, militarized security, and segregation (e.g. major infrastructural breaks, poor public transportation system, privatization of

public spaces including the city's coast, subsidies to exclusive developments such as downtown or gated communities, scarcity of public service institutions or social spaces where people can interact and meet).

- Inequitable land and housing policies have led to major population displacements, many families stranded with high rents or mortgages, and a highly speculative real-estate market.
- Lebanon has failed to set in place a framework for housing policymaking for decades. Since the end of the civil war in 1990, the housing sector has been increasingly hijacked by speculative investments. These have translated in extremely high levels of vacancy, estimated at 20%. The Beirut Urban Lab survey of the post-civil war buildings shows a rate of vacancy above 50% for Beirut downtown's residential fabric, while other neighborhoods vary between 15-25%.
- Partially the outcome of a skewed economy that relies on remittances and offers very little opportunities for placing capital, these speculative practices are also the direct result of financial strategies adopted by the Central Bank since the late 1990s. They consist of incentivizing foreign investments through the built environment with bundles of facilities and subsidies. Complemented with changes in urban, building, and property regulations, these incentives ultimately lifted the cost of housing in the capital and its vicinities way above the means of 95% of local residents. Within a context where rental is poorly regulated, public transport severely deficient, and public housing inexistent, mortgages offered a solution for a small group of Lebanese middle income earners while the urban majorities were pushed into precarious conditions, renting in deteriorating buildings across the city, squatting or renting in informal

43 See: J. Mouawad, Unpacking Lebanon's Resilience: Undermining State Institutions and Consolidating the System?, IAI Working Papers 17/29, 2017.

44 See: S.N.Tamraz , I.M.Srouf , and G.R.Chehab, Construction Demolition Waste Management in Lebanon, ICSDC 2011.

settlements and/or refugee camps, or commuting for long hours. Since the beginning of the socio-economic crisis and the devaluation of the Lebanese pound, families with mortgages are also increasingly facing challenges to pay back their installments with informal reports putting default at 20% or more. The freeze on eviction/bank seizure imposed by parliament is protecting families until December 2020, but the unforeseen economic improvements may extend the challenges beyond.



3.5. Earlier Experiences in post-disaster recovery: Lessons on what we should not do.

One last aspect of setting the post-blast recovery in context is looking at Lebanon's earlier experiences of post-civil war recovery. By focusing here on large-scale projects, the objective here is to highlight the problems associated with the heavily centralized process of rebuilding delegated in the first case to a private company and, in the second, to a political party acting like an NGO. By no means do these experiences summarize Lebanon's knowhow in post-war recovery. Neighborhoods like Gemmayzeh, Mar Mikhail, or Ashrafiye/Monot had recovered from the war and became vibrant destinations relatively quickly after the end of the battles. Instead, this overview of earlier centralized experiences seeks to deter some of the proposals currently placed on the table.

(i) The 1991 Experience of Post-Civil War Recovery in Beirut Downtown: In 1991, Beirut's historic core was turned into a private real-estate company where all claimants were forced to liquidate their assets into shares. Despite opposition, the project proceeded, inviting investors to join in ownership. The project was justified for the "common good" and claimed it impossible to otherwise rebuild the city's historic core. Thirty years later, with substantial exceptions and subsidies, most of the historic core remains a no-man's land and most of the property is concentrated in the hands of banks. Based on research and a wide review of the literature, six lessons can be presented:

- There are no more guarantees in a privately led recovery than in a publicly led one, there is nothing inherently more effective in the private sector. In downtown Beirut, the private sector didn't display better skills in delivering what it was asked for, namely an active city-center;

- Centralized and heavily politicized reconstruction projects risk to subject recovery to political bargaining, leaving the entire area hostage to political negotiations;
- Crony financial interests and the concentration of wealth in the hand of a small elite of bankers and politicians stripped vulnerable groups from assets and businesses and led to a general impoverishment of society. Numerous families from the city have lost all their assets and the chance to build a business, had they been granted the opportunity;
- The failed development vision affected negatively the city by setting trends of speculative property investments that extended to other sections of the city;
- Major sections of the city were severed from their context; downtown became "outside" the city, first an area for the rich—now a zone to host protests;
- Post-disaster recovery leadership was consistently designed and implemented by Lebanese men who monopolized entirely the process. There was no consideration for participatory, gender-aware or inclusive planning.

(ii) The post-2006 Israel War in Lebanon, in Haret Hreik and South Lebanon.

The aftermath of the 2006 war led to a plethora of non-governmental and governmental actors to directly intervene in Lebanon and provide aid to the devastated communities. Among those, a few countries sent directly their money or workers. Others disbursed money via political figures or agencies. A political party was heavily involved, particularly in cities. In Beirut, it set up an Agency, Waad, that oversaw the entire reconstruction of the neighborhood to reproduce its pre-destruction dense and congested form. Ultimately, most areas were rebuilt and residents returned, but the loss of heritage and the homogenization

of the districts left a lasting negative effect, reflected in the below six lessons:

- The delegation of the recovery to one political party, particularly in Haret Hreik, allowed it to prioritize its interests (e.g., return of high density and poor livability conditions, return of party supporters) over a collective recovery of the neighborhood. It ultimately also worked to undermine state authority at multiple levels. The Municipality was completely sidelined, etc. In addition, the entire reconstruction happened as a legal exception, that is despite the State, and only because of the strength of the political party. Only in 2014, two years after the termination of the project, did parliament pass the "exception law" that allowed dwellers to rebuild (for one time and exceptionally) their homes in violation of building and zoning regulations;
- The politicization of reconstruction increased social tensions, putting communities against each other. Ultimately, the reconstruction consolidated the basis of the current social divides across the national spectrum, confirming one population as the constituency of one political party rather than Lebanese citizens;
- Compensation mechanisms encouraged the demolition of heritage buildings by scaling compensation to the size of the damage—ultimately encouraging homeowners to destroy their homes so they can cash higher compensations. This led to the loss of substantial heritage in South Lebanon. It also generated substantial inequalities across communities;
- The political nature of the reconstruction led to displacement of specific population groups who felt less or no allegiance to the party and had the financial means to leave. Others fell severely under the control of the political factions who built their homes;

- The practice of delegating recovery to NGOs was consolidated through the process, a practice that eventually gained enormously in scope with the influx of Syrian refugees and reduced the capacities of the State to manage its territories and peoples;
- Post-disaster recovery leadership was consistently designed and implemented by Lebanese men who monopolized entirely the process. As with Solidere, no consideration was made for participatory or inclusive planning, issues of disability, etc.

Synthesis and Guiding Principles for an Inclusive and Just Recovery Process

This report has investigated how the Port of Beirut's blast of August 4, 2020 inequitably impacts the array of social groups who live, work and/or benefit from services in the nearby districts, in order to inform a framework of post-recovery that can effectively mitigate the threats of further losses on the most vulnerable groups. It outlined the damages incurred by the blast and how they affect everyone but differentially: several intersecting vulnerabilities need to be identified to adequately understand the range of impacts of the blast and the compounded crises Lebanon is experiencing. The report focused on specific geographies, underscoring how their historical conditions determine vulnerabilities variably. It also highlighted how vulnerabilities are manufactured and produced by a legacy of structural inequalities perpetuated by legal and institutional mechanisms.

Against this background, it is fundamental to derive guiding principles for processes of recovery that need to be deployed to reduce

inequalities and protect vulnerable groups, not merely in the sites of the blast, but beyond.

To ensure a post-blast recovery process that is **inclusive and just**, it is essential to design a holistic response that addresses all different types of vulnerabilities, and incorporates social groups with the most intersecting vulnerabilities. These measures need to integrate the multiple timescales at which a recovery is designed, particularly an immediate –emergency- response and a long-term response. As such, there is a need to collect disaggregated socio-economic and geo-referenced data that identifies people's multiple indicators of vulnerability, namely: age, gender, nationality, race, location of residence and work, income, occupation, education, family status, physical and mental health status, tenure status, etc. This data can help understand which people face multiple compounding disadvantages and identify the barriers to reducing their vulnerabilities. Through the examination of such people-driven data, deprived and marginalized social groups can be empowered through civic engagement, integrated and just policies, interventions and budgets can be voiced and enacted.⁴⁵

In other words, the post-blast recovery process ought to combine this non-exhaustive set of **guiding principles**:

A process that is people-centered and data-driven, rather than building-centered and reconstruction-based; thus, a process that secures temporary shelters, safe spaces, and essential infrastructural and health services for multiple categories of vulnerable groups;

A process that prioritizes keeping-in-place dwellers and businesses, and seeks to reverse/mitigate inequalities that have displaced many inhabitants; thus, a process that directly addresses property tenure matters in ways that address the needs of both landlords and tenants;

A process that identifies the institutional frameworks that produce inequalities and vulnerabilities, and that seeks to change them or mitigate their impacts on the variety of vulnerable groups they target; A process that recognizes and tackles the extreme and structural gender inequalities in Lebanon;

A process that identifies the barriers to return from the perspective of each of the social groups and addresses them effectively; accordingly, participatory decision-making mechanisms must be put in place and include members of the concerned social groups they want to affect;

A process that is centered on human rights, that focuses on identifying and analyzing the needs of rights holders, and the obligations of duty bearers - whether local, national or international - to ensure respect, protection and fulfillment of these rights;

A process that is grounded in accountability; articulated around mechanisms that monitor and ensure that the most vulnerable are in fact benefitting from recovery interventions; that guarantees that judicial and non-judicial recourses for rights violations are accessible and effective;

A process that is national in scale and not just Beirut centric, that takes into account the high levels of uneven geographical development of Lebanon and is informed from mistakes in earlier recovery experiences; in other words, a process that represents a once in a generation opportunity to lay the groundworks for a more inclusive and just Lebanon

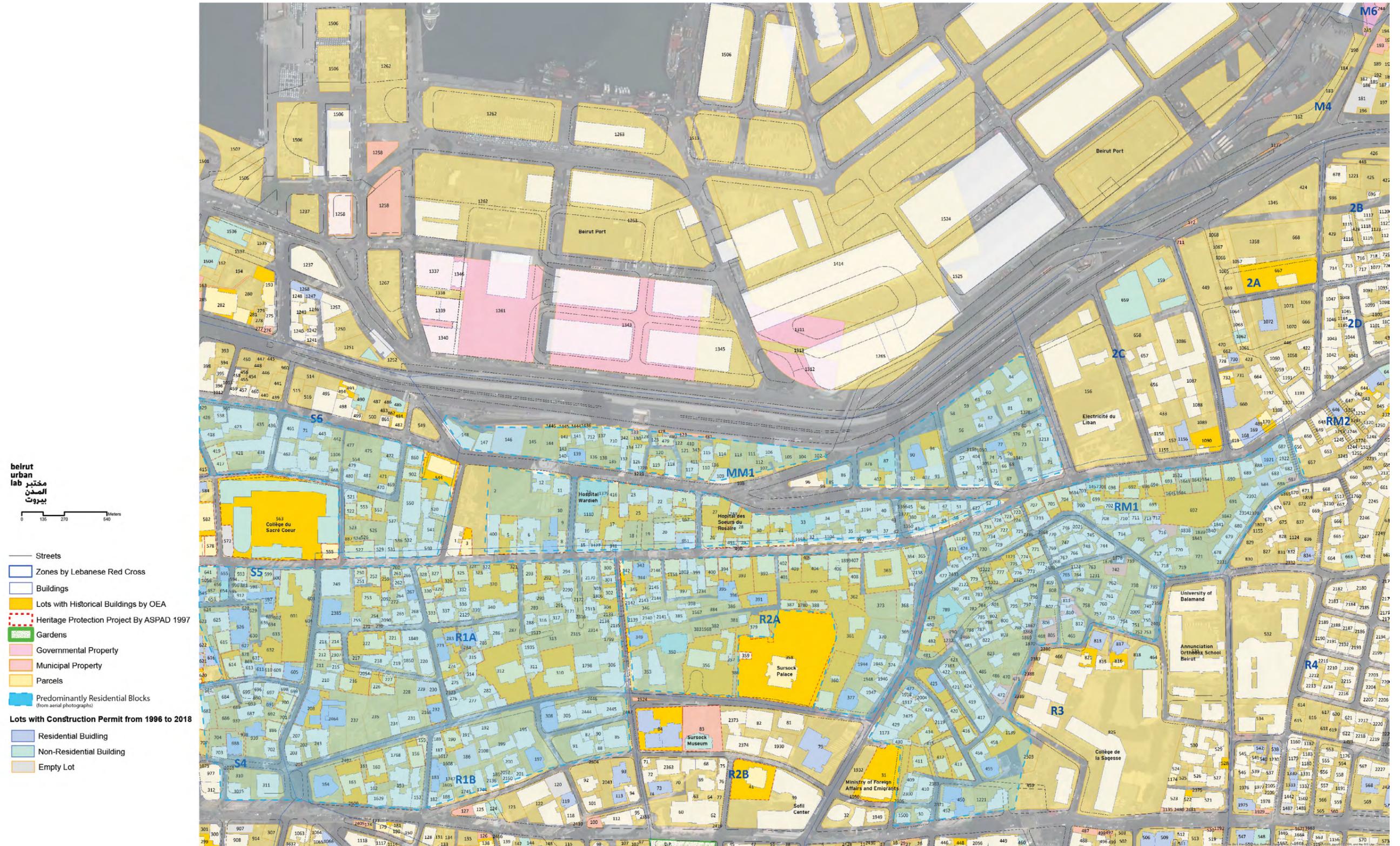
45 UNDP 2018, op. cit., p. 21

Annex: Maps

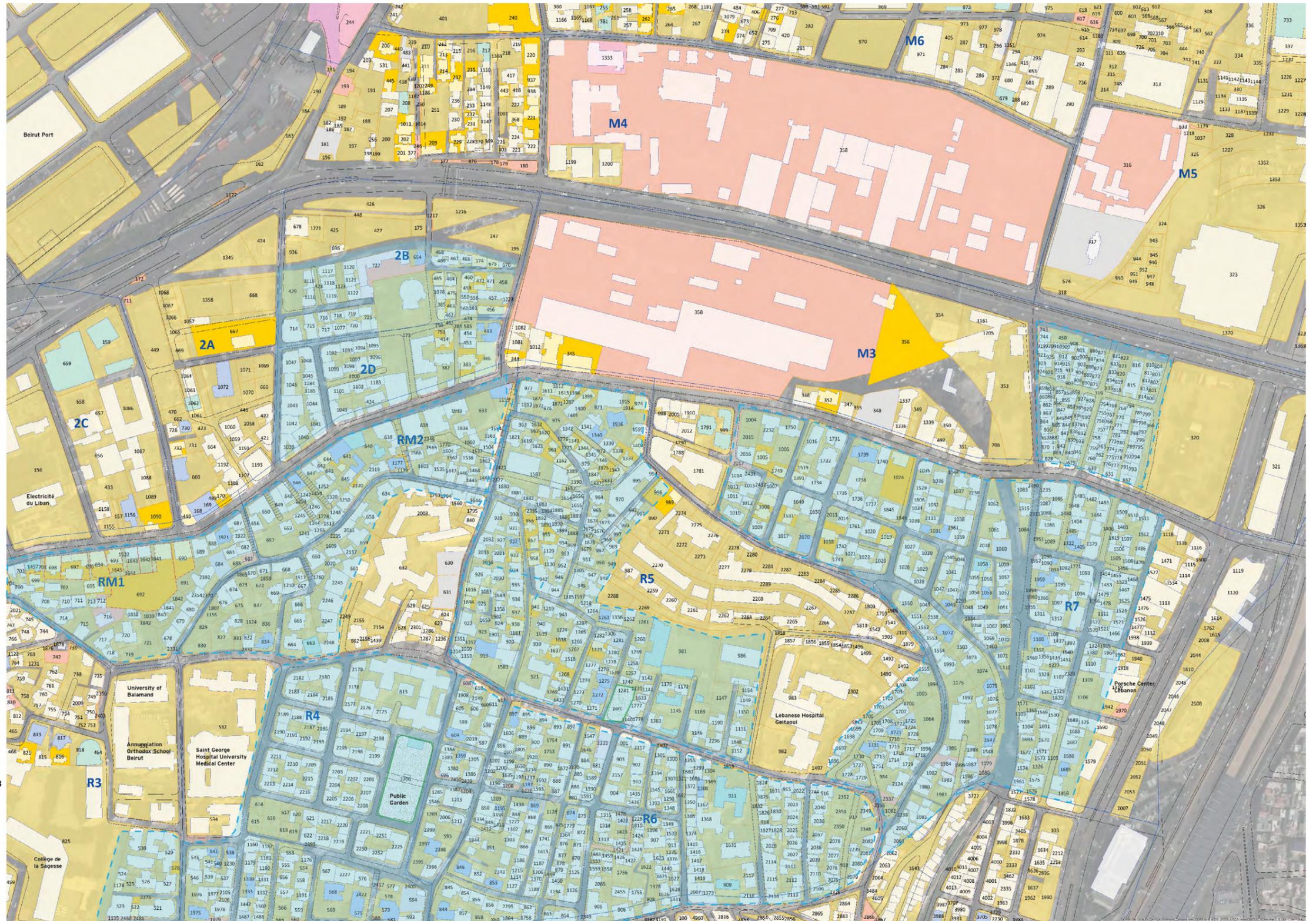
Karantina

- beirut urban lab**
مختبر المدن بيروت
- 0 25 50 100 Meters
- Streets
 - Zoning by Lebanese Red Cross
 - Identified Residential Pockets (from aerial photographs)
 - Karantina Garden
 - Governmental Property
 - Municipal Property
 - Parcels
- Lots with Construction Permit from 1996 to 2018**
- Residential Building
 - Non-Residential Building
 - Empty Lot





Mar Mikhael



beirut urban
lab المختبر
المدن بيروت

0 180 270 540 meters

- Streets
- Zones by Lebanese Red Cross
- Buildings
- Lots with Historical Buildings by OEA
- Heritage Protection Project by ASPAD 1997
- Gardens
- Governmental Property
- Municipal Property
- Parcels
- Predominantly Residential Blocks (from aerial photographs)
- Lots with Construction Permit from 1996 to 2018
 - Residential Building
 - Non-Residential Building
 - Empty Lot



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