

# Sectarian Politics, Human Security, and the Quest to Prevent Violent Extremism in Lebanon





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# 1 Introduction

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## 1.1 Overview on Security

Lebanon has faced a range of security challenges as a result of the spill over from the Syrian conflict. These have involved, in part, the amplification of radical ideologies and the heightening of tensions between the country's various confessional communities. Since 2011, multiple violent incidents have claimed the lives of both civilians and military personnel - incidents which prompted a security crack-down by the Lebanese state and ushered in a new era of securitisation.

Initially, the Lebanese Armed Forces (LAF) and anti-terrorism units carried out security operations to mitigate the presumed threat of new forms of militancy. While under a national state of emergency, enhanced security measures were implemented across the country.<sup>1</sup> Cyber and military capabilities were bolstered with the assistance of foreign security professionals, border controls were tightened, and rigorous street-level security plans were launched in areas experiencing recurrent clashes.<sup>2</sup> Some of these security plans were met with violence on the part of armed groups, specifically in Tripoli, where clashes involving the LAF resulted in multiple deaths among LAF soldiers and militant groups.<sup>3</sup>

## 1.2 Overview on Human Security

Meanwhile, human security projects have been addressing a more urgent population challenge. The influx of over 1 million Syrian refugees has further strained Lebanon's already weak infrastructure and led to economic and social polarisation between Lebanese and Syrian communities. In line with the Lebanese state's ambiguity toward a sustainable refugee response, higher degrees of securitisation were implemented to manage the refugee crisis.<sup>4</sup>

In the first years of the Syrian conflict, under the Lebanon Crisis Response Plan (LCRP) and the UNHCR-led Regional Response Plan, international organisations implemented projects to deliver immediate aid to refugees, such as food, shelter, and education provision. At the time, the programmes included marginalised Lebanese population in addition to the refugees.

These projects focused on aspects of human security such as health, food, and water security as emergency measures. However, after years of refugee' settlement, new projects on social cohesion, protection, and peace-building have been initiated, with the aim of providing long-lasting positive impact on the lives of both communities.

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<sup>1</sup> Alexander Dziadosz, "Warily, Lebanon Tackles Violent Spillover from Syria." *Reuters*, 13 April 2014, accessed via: <https://www.reuters.com/article/us-lebanon-syria-crisis-insight/warily-lebanon-tackles-violent-spillover-from-syria-idUSBREA3C0AX20140413>

<sup>2</sup> Randy Salazar, "Lebanon made good use of U.S. military aid, don't stop now!" *Annahar*, 15 December 2017, accessed via: <https://en.annahar.com/article/715467-lebanon-made-good-use-of-us-military-aid-dont-stop-now>

<sup>3</sup> Anita Sorrentini, "Tripoli, the Uncertain Stability of Lebanon." *Mediterranean Affairs*, 30 May 2016, accessed via: <http://mediterraneanaffairs.com/tripoli-the-uncertain-stability-of-lebanon/>

<sup>4</sup> Sami Atallah and Dima Mahdi, *Law and Politics of "Safe Zones" and Forced Return to Syria: Refugee Politics in Lebanon*. (Beirut: Lebanese Center for Policy Studies, 2017), accessed via: [https://www.lcps-lebanon.org/publications/1515749841-lcps\\_report\\_-\\_online.pdf](https://www.lcps-lebanon.org/publications/1515749841-lcps_report_-_online.pdf)

Several of these projects fall under a broad human security umbrella. Human security is defined to include seven key pillars: economic, food, health, environmental, personal physical, communal, and personal political security.<sup>5</sup> However, while the projects implemented in Lebanon touch upon themes such as community security and wellbeing, other aspects, such as political empowerment and governance, are not prioritised. In general, the lack of actionable, holistic human security initiatives stems from the Lebanese government's governance gaps and the fragmentation of INGOs and NGOs in project delivery.<sup>6</sup>

Recent projects on the prevention of violent extremism (PVE) have also indirectly touched upon human security pillars. As mapped by International Alert in 2016, most PVE projects implemented in “hotspot areas” were found to promote social cohesion, good governance, and peace-building.<sup>7</sup> However, the impact of such projects remains contested.

A study on youth-centred PVE programmes showed that using PVE as a framework to enhance ‘resilience’ does not seem to impact key vulnerabilities that lead to violent extremism.<sup>8</sup> Despite this, projects that equip beneficiaries with a sense of purpose are found to promote resilience and empower youth to face perceived injustices.

In general, a holistic framing of human security is lacking and the diversity of projects employed by civil society and government —each employing different theories of change— result in lower effectiveness of human security programmes. In addition, the label of PVE has been attributed to several loosely-related initiatives, which has obscured the term and the intended project results.<sup>9</sup>

### 1.3 Overview on Preventing Violent Extremism (PVE)

To address Lebanon's rising security concerns, efforts have been exerted at the national level to mitigate the threat of violent extremism. In March 2018, the National Strategy for the Prevention of Violent Extremism was adopted by the Lebanese government and the Office of the Prime Minister, and endorsed by all ministries. The strategy —originally conceived as an action plan— was a response to a call by the United Nations for member states to develop preventative frameworks that tackle core issues of radicalisation.

The Lebanese strategy offered a definition of violent extremism and nine themes aimed at mitigating violent extremism; among them women empowerment, education improvement, job creation, and urban and rural development. In essence, the government's objectives met those of

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<sup>5</sup> In 1994, a UN Human Development Report was released, outlining 7 key pillars of human security: economic, food, health, environmental, personal physical, communal, and personal political. The core definition of Human Security is “freedom from fear and freedom from want”. United Nations Development Program, “Human Development Report 1994” (New York: UNDP, 2015), pp. 24-33, accessed via: [http://hdr.undp.org/sites/default/files/reports/255/hdr\\_1994\\_en\\_complete\\_nostats.pdf](http://hdr.undp.org/sites/default/files/reports/255/hdr_1994_en_complete_nostats.pdf)

<sup>6</sup> For the case of the Syrian refugee response, see J Nassar and N Stel, “Lebanon's Response to the Syrian Refugee Crisis – Institutional Ambiguity as a Governance Strategy,” *Political Geography* 70, (2019): 44-54.

<sup>7</sup> Lucy Holdaway and Ruth Simpson, “Improving the Impact of Preventing Violent Extremism Programming.” United Nations Development Programme and International Alert, 2 May 2018, accessed via: [https://www.undp.org/content/dam/norway/undp-ogc/documents/PVE\\_ImprovingImpactProgrammingToolkit\\_2018.pdf](https://www.undp.org/content/dam/norway/undp-ogc/documents/PVE_ImprovingImpactProgrammingToolkit_2018.pdf)

<sup>8</sup> Muzna Al Masri and Iliana Slavova, “More Resilient, Still Vulnerable.” International Alert, 2018, accessed via: [https://international-alert.org/sites/default/files/Lebanon\\_PVEProgrammingTripoli\\_EN\\_2018.pdf](https://international-alert.org/sites/default/files/Lebanon_PVEProgrammingTripoli_EN_2018.pdf)

<sup>9</sup> For a critical understanding of PVE measures with brief mention on Lebanon, see Peter Harling, Alex Simon, and Ben Schonveld, “The West's War on Itself.” Synaps, 5 February 2018, accessed via: <http://www.synaps.network/the-west-s-war-on-itself>

human security approaches using long-term development projects that ensure access to basic healthcare, recognition of legal rights, access to employment and services, as well as access to education.<sup>10</sup> However, the failure of the Lebanese state to provide these services to its citizens, and its heavy investment in security to eradicate militancy, has been interpreted and experienced differently across the Lebanese spectrum.

### 1.4 Purpose and Methodology

This paper examines the attitudes and perceptions in six areas across Lebanon on the degree to which human security can be reconceptualised and implemented to align with policies aimed at the long-term prevention of violent extremism (PVE) in Lebanon. Specifically, the research examines links between human security, PVE policies, and traditional security measures, in the extent to which the latter can hinder human security programming and unintentionally increase the threat of violent extremism.

This research in Lebanon is part of the regional project “Towards More Effective Human Security Approaches in the Context of the Emerging Threat of Violent Radicalisation in Jordan, Lebanon, and Tunisia”, funded by the Netherlands Organisation for Scientific Research and led by the West Asia North Africa (WANA) Institute with several local partners and consortium members.<sup>11</sup>

In Lebanon, the LCPS team conducted a total of 54 key stakeholder interviews, 12 workshops, 12 Focus Group Discussions (FGDs), and 6 verification FGDs across six locations in the period between July 2018 and February 2019, with a total of 511 participants. The field research was complemented by two policy labs that brought together 36 senior state officials and experts—including senior security officials, local and international agencies, and community actors—in order to address human security provision in light of Lebanon’s security framework.

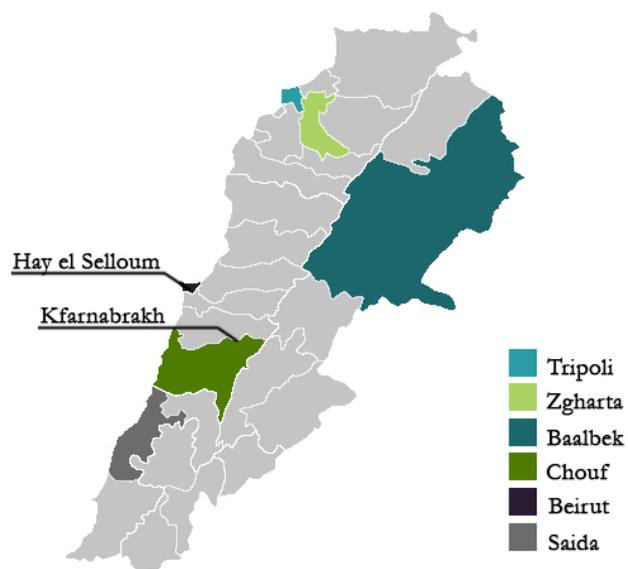
In order to reflect the sectarian and geographical diversity of Lebanese communities, six locations were selected across the country: Baalbek, Hay el Selloum, Saida, Tripoli, Zgharta, and Kafirnabrakh. Each of these communities has a characteristic relationship with the Lebanese state, and by extension, varying types of relationships with Lebanese security forces.

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<sup>10</sup> Lebanese Republic, Presidency of the Council of Ministers, *National Strategy for Preventing Violent Extremism* (2018), accessed via: [http://www.pvelebanon.org/Resources/PVE\\_English.pdf](http://www.pvelebanon.org/Resources/PVE_English.pdf)

<sup>11</sup> For details on the project, see <http://wanainstitute.org/en/project/towards-more-effective-human-security-approaches-context-emerging-threat-violent-extremism>

Figure 1: Six areas of study in Lebanon



## 2 The Examined Communities

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### 2.1 Baalbek

Baalbek is the administrative centre of Lebanon's largest governorate Baalbek-Hermel, and is home to Lebanese, Palestinian, and Syrian populations. The city has been subjected to multiple episodes of conflict in the last decade due to endemic poverty, perpetuated in part by its clan structures and the negligence of local and national authorities. Violence has been exacerbated by the war in neighbouring Syria, with Baalbek having witnessed 1,193 conflict incidents since 2013.<sup>12</sup>

Baalbek is also considered a centre of support for Hezbollah and hence was shelled by ISIS and Jabhat al-Nusra militants on multiple occasions after Hezbollah militants joined the fighting in Syria.<sup>13</sup> Given these internal and external security challenges, the Lebanese government implemented two security plans in the region to reassert control in August 2017.<sup>14</sup>

### 2.2 Hay el Selloum

Hay el Selloum is a southern district of greater Beirut that is home to some of the most vulnerable communities in Lebanon, both Lebanese and Syrian. The area is densely populated and known for its poor infrastructure, including sustained power cuts, limited access to water, and sewage mismanagement.<sup>15</sup> Hay el Selloum is home to large family clans that regularly engage in armed conflict, and is also reported to have a high number of drug traffickers and drug users. Security plans are regularly implemented in the area and are facilitated in part by the security wings of Hezbollah and Amal Movement - the area's two main political parties.

### 2.3 Saida

Saida is located in the South Governorate of Lebanon and is the country's third-largest city. It is also home to a large number of Palestinians who primarily reside in the heavily secured Ain el Hilweh camp. The camp's internal security is managed by a security council comprising several militant groups, while the LAF monitors its periphery.

Over the past decade, extremist groups such as Jabhat Fatah al Sham (formerly known as Al-Nusra Front), Daesh, Fatah al-Islam, and others have reportedly established cells inside the camp.<sup>16</sup> Concerns about the escalation of violence led to the government's controversial decision to build a concrete wall with four watchtowers around the camp in 2017.

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<sup>12</sup> This number comes from a geo-located mapping of conflicts undertaken by Civil Society Knowledge Center at Lebanon Support. The mapping aims to trace conflict by localities all over Lebanon. Geo-located mapping of conflicts in Lebanon, Lebanon Support, accessed via: <https://civilsociety-centre.org/cap/map#defconflict>

<sup>13</sup> "Rockets Slam Historic Lebanese City of Baalbek." *France24*, 6 June 2013, accessed via:

<https://www.france24.com/en/20130606-syria-lebanon-baalbek-rockets-hezbollah-stronghold-historic-ruins>

<sup>14</sup> See, for example, "'Fajr al-Joroud Operation: Army Secures Swift Gains Over Daesh.'" Lebanese Republic: Ministry of Information, 21 August 2017, accessed via: <https://www.ministryinfo.gov.lb/en/15654>

<sup>15</sup> R.R. Habib, Z. Mahfoud, M. Fawaz, S.H. Basma, and J.S. Yeretzian. "Housing Quality and Ill Health in a Disadvantaged Urban Community." *Public Health* 123, no. 2 (2009): 174-81. doi:10.1016/j.puhe.2008.11.002.

<sup>16</sup> "Tensions at Ain El-Helweh (starting August 7, 2014)." Civil Society Knowledge Centre, no. date, accessed via: <https://civilsociety-centre.org/timeliness/4928>

The city was also home to the Salafist cleric Sheikh Ahmad Al-Assir and his followers, who called for 'jihad' against the regime in Syria. State security operations targeting Al-Assir and his militia culminated in three days of combat that resulted in multiple casualties on both sides. After briefly escaping from the scene of clashes between his loyalists and the LAF, Al-Assir was captured in 2015.<sup>17</sup>

## 2.4 Tripoli

Tripoli is Lebanon's second-largest city and has absorbed a large number of Syrian refugees fleeing the war in Syria. The city has been marginalised by the central government for decades, and suffers from a lack of adequate systemic programmes that provide its residents equal opportunities in the form of job opportunities, education, and health care.

Additionally, two prominent security threats presented challenges in the city prior to the implementation of a robust security plan. First, with the onset of Daesh, many militants loyal to Daesh and other Islamic militant factions found refuge in Tripoli.<sup>18</sup> Second, there was a need to address the conflict between Jabal Mohsen —an Alawite, Syrian regime-supporting enclave in the heart of Tripoli— and Bab El Tabbaneh —one of the most impoverished Sunni neighbourhoods in Tripoli. Battles between these two adjacent neighbourhoods were a regular occurrence from 2011 to 2015, often flaring up in response to events in Syria or along the Lebanese-Syrian border.<sup>19</sup>

## 2.5 Zgharta

The town of Zgharta is located in the North Governorate of Lebanon. On 22 September 2017, a woman was murdered in the town Miziara, allegedly by a Syrian man. This sparked outcry in the community, with crowds of people taking to the streets to protest the presence of Syrian refugees in the district.<sup>20</sup> In parallel, Miziara, along with several other towns across the district of Zgharta, evicted their Syrian refugee populations, rendering thousands of Syrian families vulnerable.

Consequently, the LAF was tasked with mediating the conflict in Zgharta, with the army carrying out several arrests and small-scale raids. The majority of Zgharta's population is Maronite Christian, which often colours the conflict in terms of sect and class. Currently, Suleiman Frangieh Jr., the leader of the Marada political party, is the region's dominant political leader.

## 2.6 Kfarnabrakh

Kfarnabrakh is a village in the Chouf region, located in the governorate of Mount Lebanon. As it falls between two large springs —Al-Safa and Al-Barouk— it is primarily an agricultural town,

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<sup>17</sup> "Al- Assir Sentenced to Death for Clashes with Army." *Annahar*, 28 September 2017, accessed via: <https://en.annahar.com/article/672409-al-assir-sentenced-to-death-for-clashes-with-army>

<sup>18</sup> Mona Alami, "The Rise of ISIS in Lebanon." *Atlantic Council*, 2 December 2015, accessed via: <https://www.atlanticcouncil.org/blogs/menasource/the-rise-of-isis-in-lebanon>

<sup>19</sup> Raphaël Lefèvre, "The Roots of Crisis in Northern Lebanon." *Carnegie Middle East*, April 2014, accessed via: [https://carnegieendowment.org/files/crisis\\_northern\\_lebanon.pdf](https://carnegieendowment.org/files/crisis_northern_lebanon.pdf)

<sup>20</sup> "Woman's Murder Prompts Mass Eviction of Syrians from Lebanese Town." *Reuters*, 5 October 2017, accessed via: <https://www.reuters.com/article/us-mideast-crisis-lebanon-refugees/womans-murder-prompts-mass-eviction-of-syrians-from-lebanese-town-idUSKBN1CA18S>

hosting about 8,000 permanent residents and 800 Syrian refugees.<sup>21</sup> The number of residents in Kfarnabrakh increases during the summer and the town is highly dependent on farming, with about 1,800 farmers and their families benefiting from it.<sup>22</sup> The village is home to a majority Druze population (estimated at 65%) and a minority Christian population (estimated at 35%).<sup>23</sup>

Kfarnabrakh witnessed extreme cases of violence and displacement during the civil war (1975-1990). In 1997, the Lebanese government paid reparations to Kfarnabrakh victims and undertook efforts to secure the return of displaced individuals to the village. Today, Kfarnabrakh inhabitants—both Christians and Druze—live in peace. The Municipal Council is mixed, currently headed by a woman close to the Druze main party, the Progressive Socialist Party.

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<sup>21</sup> "KFARNABRAKH: Enhancing Emir Bashir's Canal." United Nations Lebanon, 31 August 2017, accessed via: <http://un.org.lb/english/latest-news/kfarnabrakh-enhancing-emir-bashir-canal>

<sup>22</sup> Ibid.

<sup>23</sup> Ibid.

### 3 Local Understandings of Human Security

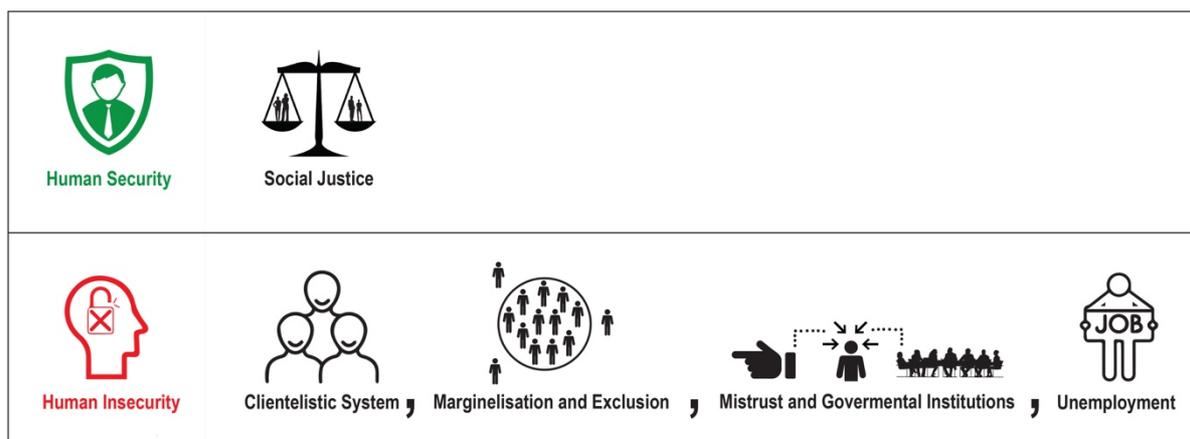
#### 3.1 Main Trends

One main goal of this regional research project is to examine local definitions of human security, and how they can be reconceptualised as a long-term programming response to threats of conflict and violent extremism in the region. To that end, research participants were asked to define human security.

While most were not familiar with human security as a social science concept, they were able to identify the key aspects of human security programming, specifically those aspects pertaining to basic needs. Most participants, across all research activities in studied locations, agreed on the importance of a human security approach in efforts focused on conflict containment and resilience.

Local definitions of human security were generally based on the immediate needs in each location. Two general themes, however, that highlight how human security is understood through gaps in human security programming were reiterated across the various research activities at both the national (policy lab) and local levels (workshops, FGDs, and interviews).

**Figure 2: Trends in Defining Human (In)Security**



The first main theme was **social justice**. This was linked to clientelism in Lebanon, marginalisation, and mistrust in state institutions. The existing **clientelistic system** in Lebanon has generated inequalities of opportunity and outcome. The participants in FGDs, who belong to vulnerable communities, reported a dependency on local political leaders in the provision of services and opportunities, which gave a stark edge to those who are better politically connected or who are subordinates of established political movements.

Social injustice, in the form of lack of opportunities and unfairness in the provision of services, was linked to a sense of **marginalisation and exclusion**, which pushed young males to partake in illegal activities. The participants reported that clientelistic channels dictate access to services, such as public healthcare and education, that should be provided by the state. For example, a

participant in the FGD in Zgharta stated that he had to go through local political leadership to get his children registered in a public school.<sup>24</sup>

This reported injustice translates into a **mistrust in governmental institutions** as some participants expressed their preference for services provided by informal agencies, rather than ones provided by formal ones.<sup>25</sup> This mistrust in institutions has weakened the sense of national identity and caused vulnerable individuals to pledge allegiance to supranational organisations, some of which are based on extremist principles.<sup>26</sup>

The second main theme through which participants addressed human (in)security was **unemployment**. The emphasis on employment was expected given Lebanon's dire economic conditions and high unemployment, standing in 2018 at about 25% nationally and 37% among those under the age of 25.<sup>27</sup> Concerns about unemployment were connected to *wasta* (nepotism). The sense of unfairness created by *wasta* leads to hopelessness and lack of purpose, especially among young men - rendering them easier targets for extremist groups. These men, according to an NGO director in Tripoli, often become involved in organised crime because of the sense of validation and purpose it offers them.<sup>28</sup>

While these two themes were a commonality between the studied locations, significant differences in perceptions and backgrounds were noted, thus preventing the formulation of a general national definition of human security. These differences are highlighted in the following section which will present the perceptions on human security concluded from each of the six locations.

## 3.2 Local Variations in Defining Human Security

### 3.2.1 Tripoli

Participants in Tripoli perceived human security as a **holistic and gradual process**. For them, human security could be achieved in one's lifetime, beginning at childhood and developing further during adulthood when a person can better exercise his or her civic and political rights and become more integrated in society. Accordingly, the importance of family, sound child-rearing techniques, and civic consciousness were mentioned multiple times during the workshop.<sup>29</sup>

Moreover, research participants in Tripoli insisted that a **spiritual aspect to human security** should be added, stressing the importance of openly expressing political and religious opinions. Tripolitans' desire for a politico-religious dimension of human security should be understood in the context of Tripoli's protracted history of political marginalisation and its status as a Sunni-majority city.

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<sup>24</sup> Males' Focus Group Discussion, Zgharta, 10 July, 2018.

<sup>25</sup> Males' Focus Group Discussion, Hay el Sellom, 25 September, 2018.

<sup>26</sup> Verification Focus Group Discussion, Baalbek, 12 February, 2019.

<sup>27</sup> Samar Kadi, "Lebanon's Youth Bearing the Brunt of Unemployment, Regional Instability." *The Arab Weekly*, 6 August 2017, accessed via: <https://thearabweekly.com/lebanons-youth-bearing-brunt-unemployment-regional-instability>

<sup>28</sup> Female interviewee from CBO, interviewed by LCPS in Tripoli, 13 February, 2019.

<sup>29</sup> Workshop's participants, Tripoli, 30 – 31 July, 2018.

**Environmental security** was also highlighted due to Tripoli's high levels of pollution, limited waste management services, and lack of developed public spaces like beaches, for example.<sup>30</sup> This can also be linked to concerns over **health security**. Tripoli's public hospitals are underfunded, and many of them demand that patients deliver payment before being treated. Moreover, the clinics operated by the Ministry of Health open for a set number of hours each day, limiting access to health services, both physical and mental.

### 3.2.2 Baalbek

Research participants in Baalbek highlighted issues related to **political participation** — specifically freedom of expression— in their definition of human security. Participants in workshops stated that holding a political opinion or ideology which is in opposition to the views espoused by the majority of residents leads to social exclusion, causing intellectual barriers in the city that inhibit development in the region.

Human (in)security in socio-economic terms is also understood through the region's history of **deprivation and marginalisation**. For research participants, human security was a combination of legal protection, economic wellbeing, and fulfilment of basic individual needs.<sup>31</sup>

### 3.2.3 Kfarnabrakh

The interpretation of human security in Kfarnabrakh centred on the concept of **social solidarity and peace building**. Those were considered key components given the village's history of communal violence during the Lebanese Civil War. Moreover, participants in Kfarnabrakh emphasised **women's empowerment** in their understanding of human security given the strong presence of women-based local organisations. The participants noted increased stability and better local governance since the election of a female mayor.<sup>32</sup>

### 3.2.4 Hay el Selloum

Participants in Hay el Selloum understood human security as a comprehensive approach to foster a peaceful society through meeting the **basic needs of individuals**. The fact that the area hosts the most vulnerable communities' informal settlements explains this emphasis on basic needs.<sup>33</sup> The area suffers from dilapidated infrastructure, poverty, and poor health.<sup>34</sup>

### 3.2.5 Zgharta

Participants in Zgharta understand human security as the intersection between **national security, human rights, and sustainable development**. Participants stressed the importance of personal and communal security in terms of protection from harm and the social contract that ensures safety and stability. Workshop participants defined human security as a combination of human rights (which are academically different from human security), poverty eradication, and social

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<sup>30</sup> "Tripoli's El Mina Struggles with Pollution, Works on Sewer Network Too Slow." Lebanese National News Agency, 27 January 2017, accessed via: <http://nna-leb.gov.lb/en/show-report/944/nna-leb.gov.lb/en>

<sup>31</sup> Workshop's participants, Baalbek, 19 – 21 July, 2018.

<sup>32</sup> Workshop's participants, Kfarnabrakh, 16 October, 2018 and 23 February, 2019.

<sup>33</sup> "Hay El Sellom." Amel Association International, 16 October 2017, accessed via: <https://amel.org/centers/hay-elsellom/>

<sup>34</sup> R.R. Habib, Z. Mahfoud, M. Fawaz, S.H. Basma, and J.S. Yeretjian. "Housing Quality and Ill Health in a Disadvantaged Urban Community." *Public Health* 123, no. 2 (2009): 174-81. doi:10.1016/j.puhe.2008.11.002.

cohesion.<sup>35</sup> Focus group participants—who hailed from underprivileged groups—had a different understanding of human security, which underscores basic needs, such as health, education, and job security.<sup>36</sup>

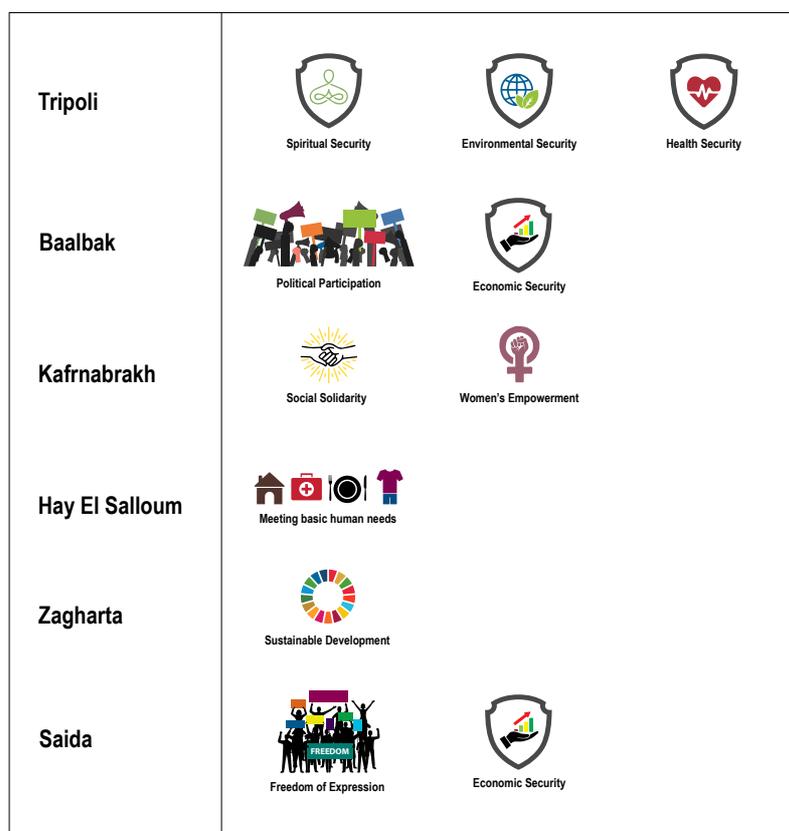
### 3.2.6 Saida

The Saida research sample argued that when **freedom of expression and human rights** are preserved, human security can be achieved. Participants considered freedom of religious expression and belief as an axiom in human security programming and stressed the importance of balancing power between different religious groups.

As they live in a city with a large Palestinian community, participants stressed the importance of securing the **civil and economic rights** of this community, and considered this an integral part of any successful human security programming in their area.<sup>37</sup>

These various local nuances to the definition of human (in)security highlight the challenge of arriving at a Lebanese definition of human security. The local historical and demographic differences result in different prioritisation of human security programming. Nevertheless, the two main themes concerning human security that emerged are social justice and equal and fair access to employment opportunities.

Figure 3: Local Variations in Defining Human Security



<sup>35</sup> Workshop's participants, Zgharta, 8-9 July, 2018.

<sup>36</sup> Females' Focus Group Discussion, Zgharta, 10 August, 2018.

<sup>37</sup> Workshop's participants, Saida, 12-13 September, 2018.

## 4 Trusted Actors in Human Security Programming

The discussion with research participants across Lebanon over trusted actors showed one general trend with several local variations. As a general trend, research participants considered **state institutions** —including the security forces— as the key actor to enhance human security. They demanded that the Lebanese state undertake this role and ensure the provision of services as needed.

But the **state is not always the most trusted actor**. Research participants across regions did not trust the willingness of the state to actively pursue that goal, based on a widespread feeling of public distrust in public administrations<sup>38</sup> and a general perception of the state as failed and corrupt.<sup>39</sup>

Therefore, the research showed that people in various locations tended to resort to different —mainly **para-state**— actors in order to ensure the minimum requirements for a decent living. These actors were typically political parties that are locally active inside their own confessional communities. For example, Hezbollah and Amal Movement are active in Baalbek and Hay el Selloum, where Shia form the majority of the population. In in Kfarnabrakh, a village with a majority of Druze population, PSP is the most active party.<sup>40</sup>

These parties act as brokers between the citizens and the central government. Therefore, they are perceived as the main guarantors of their community shares in the clientelistic structure that reigns over politics in Lebanon.<sup>41</sup>

Apart from this general trend, the local variations are also telling of the clientelistic nature of local services in Lebanon and how it affects perceptions of the most capable and most trusted actor to deliver on human security programming.

**Table 1: Locally Trusted Actors for Human Security Programming**

Area	Main Trusted Actor
Baalbek	Para-state actors
Kfarnabrakh	The municipality
Hay el Selloum	Hezbollah
Zgharta	The Lebanese government
Saida	Para-state actors
Tripoli	Civil society organisations

<sup>38</sup> "Are the Lebanese Corrupt?" Sakker El Dekkene, January 2015, accessed via:

<https://www.sakker.com/console/admin/assets/uploads/files/cdf78-survey-report-jan-29en.pdf>

<sup>39</sup> Helga Kalm, "Lebanon – A Failed State?" International Centre for Defence and Security, 20 February 2015, accessed via: <https://icds.ee/lebanon-a-failed-state/>

<sup>40</sup> As reported by workshop and focus groups participants in each of the three locations.

<sup>41</sup> "Clientelism as the Link between Voters and Political Parties." Lebanese Center for Policy Studies, 1 May 2015, accessed via: <https://www.lcps-lebanon.org/agendaArticle.php?id=48>

Given the long history of negligence and marginalisation in **Baalbek**, as reported by workshop participants,<sup>42</sup> **para-state actors** such as prominent political parties and civil society groups were identified as the actual implementers of human security programmes. However, their methods were cited as inefficient and there were doubts concerning the impartiality, outreach, and actual effectiveness of their initiatives.

In a telling nuance about the interlinkages of CBOs and local governments, participants in **Kfarnabrakh** consider **the municipality** as the most capable actor in ensuring human security. The local party (the Progressive Socialist Party - PSP) was also perceived as playing an important role. The Kfarnabrakh municipality is led by a woman who previously headed a local NGO, which was active in the provision of services in the village. The mayor is also known for her close ties with the PSP, a relationship that also helps in comforting Kfarnabrakh residents.<sup>43</sup> When it comes to the State per se, Kfarnabrakh participants shared the views of all other participants in terms of the State impotence and its unwillingness to intervene in favour of the people.<sup>44</sup>

In **Hay el Selloum**, **Hezbollah**, and to a lesser extent Amal Movement, are the most trusted actors given the absence of the state. Otherwise, had the area not been neglected and marginalised for decades, the state would have been the most capable actor.<sup>45</sup>

Through an extensive clientelistic-based apparatus of service provision and a strong commitment to the protection of the local community, Hezbollah and Amal Movement have succeeded in becoming the most reliable actors in the region, despite the fact that most participants recognised the unconventionality of this situation. Some credit was given to civil society organisations operating in Hay el Selloum. However, the initiatives launched by these organisations were not considered to meet the needs of the local community.

In **Zgharta**, unlike other locations, the **Lebanese government** is relatively trusted in enhancing human security programming, although participants highlighted gaps in the state's approach. This relative satisfaction in Zgharta follows years of social unrest, which stemmed from a history of violent inter-family conflicts. As Zgharta veered away from its violent past, its local leaders embraced state authority and re-subscribed to its security and judicial institutions.

In **Saida**, **para-state actors** such as prominent political parties, Palestinian factions, and civil society groups were identified as the actual implementers of human security programmes, in the absence of the state. Similar to Baalbek, research participants expressed doubts about the impartiality, fairness, and actual effectiveness of initiatives led by these groups.

In **Tripoli**, research participants were unable to identify a trusted actor, except for some **civil society organisations** that were perceived as “doing their best to alleviate the harsh conditions that residents in the city face.”<sup>46</sup> However, according to the stakeholders interviewed in Tripoli, these actors' interventions are not enough, and state intervention is urgently needed in order to improve human security in the city.

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<sup>42</sup> Workshop's participants, Baalbek, 19 – 21 July, 2018.

<sup>43</sup> Female interviewee from local government, interviewed by LCPS in Kfarnabrakh, 16 October 2018.

<sup>44</sup> Workshop's participants, Kfarbanbrakh, 16 October, 2018, and 23 February, 2019.

<sup>45</sup> Workshop's participants, Hay el Sellom, 19 - 20 October, 2018.

<sup>46</sup> Workshop's participants, Tripoli, 30 – 31 July, 2018.

## 5 Human Security and Preventing Violent Extremism

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### 5.1 Drivers of Violent Extremism

One of the main research goals of this project is to examine whether local communities in the three countries associate gaps in human security programming with the rise of violent extremism, and whether better informed human security programmes can achieve PVE goals through locally-devised policy guidelines. In Tunisia, Jordan, and Lebanon, this link is confirmed albeit through different priority areas of human security programming and with various local nuances and entry points.

The project has sought to solicit input on political participation, women's empowerment, employment and education, and social justice as key areas of human security programming for the region. Research findings in Lebanon—and to some extent in Tunisia—<sup>47</sup> have shown that local communities prioritise different key areas.

Two general observations are discussed below. First is the perception that structural marginalisation leads to violent extremism, sometimes by going through personal crises that result from this marginalisation. Second is the prioritisation of employment, education, and health security as key areas of advancing human security in the country.

### 5.2 Drivers of Violent Extremism as Gaps in Human Security Programming

In the six regions examined in Lebanon, research participants believed that **violent extremism is a response to marginalisation and deprivation, both at the individual and community level**. A common sentiment across all regions was that poverty is the premise of all types of radicalisation and extremism.<sup>48</sup> It seemed that participants summarised their structural grievances with the word *poverty*, resulting from unemployment and social injustices in accessing the job market. The fact that poverty is also coupled with limited access to basic needs thus increases one's frustrations with the state.

But responses did not only centre on structural factors. Related identity issues, particularly one's **self-image and sense of victimisation** were discussed as important factors in explaining violent extremism. To understand this, one has to keep in mind the sectarian demographics and politics of Lebanon where sects are separate groups that compete for their share of the social surplus and play out their battles in both the social and political arenas.<sup>49</sup>

Therefore, each community perceives itself as targeted by, and more deprived than, others. This in turn leads to more reliance on the sectarian group to access rights and political and economic gains. The result is the strengthening of the clientelistic nature of services discussed earlier. For

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<sup>47</sup> Findings from Tunisia will be published later on in 2019 by the WANA Institute and the Jasmine Foundation.

<sup>48</sup> As expressed in 11 workshops and 12 Focus Group Discussions across regions.

<sup>49</sup> Fawwaz Traboulsi, "Social Classes and Political Power in Lebanon." Heinrich Boell Stiftung Middle East, 4 May 2014, accessed via: [https://lb.boell.org/sites/default/files/fawaz\\_english\\_draft.pdf](https://lb.boell.org/sites/default/files/fawaz_english_draft.pdf)

human security programming, this means that **sects are the first safeguard and provider of human security for individuals in local communities.**

It follows naturally that when one's group (sect, family, or tribe) is targeted, one feels personally threatened and undergoes a personal crisis. Any group-belonging should offer the individual a sense of pride and self-fulfilment. Thus, when the group he or she belongs to ceases to offer this, individuals seek alternative group identification, which can lead to involvement with extremist groups.<sup>50</sup>

Participants did not offer this socio-psychological explanation. But their points of discussion would lead analysts to this conclusion. For example, in Tripoli, participants viewed violent extremism as a final recourse when faced with innumerable structural inequalities and a lack of opportunities that make them feel insecure. For them, personal insecurity and marginalisation lead to violent extremism as a response to their self-perceived victimisation.<sup>51</sup>

Likewise, in Saida, research participants argued that **injustices and vulnerability distort one's self-image.** To overcome a sense of inferiority, individuals resort to violent extremism to enhance their self-esteem.<sup>52</sup> This falls in line with other research findings on self-identity and extremism.<sup>53</sup> But participants did not elaborate on the detailed process for this transition. Instead, participants in Saida, Kfarnabrakh, and Zgharta argued that fanaticism and **misinterpretation of religion** by biased clergymen can lead to violent extremism, perhaps in response to this personal crisis.<sup>54</sup>

To address psychological and structural drivers of violent extremism, participants in Zgharta argued that any effort to prevent violent extremism must take into account human security as a condition *sine qua non* for all of Lebanon. This holistic perception, however, is based on the local needs of Zgharta.

Although people in **Zgharta** did not feel directly threatened by violent extremism, participants stated that **security problems in Tripoli have had a negative impact on their economic security due to the geographic proximity between the two cities.** Tripoli is the economic hub of the North Governorate. But people from Zgharta have refrained from visiting and working in Tripoli due to the security situation earlier on, which has had an impact on both cities. Tripoli lost a great deal of shoppers, while Zgharta lost out on the viability of shopping in one of the cheapest locations in Lebanon.

Interestingly though, participants in Hay el Selloum stated that human security programming should be the primary strategy for preventing violent extremism. For them, human security can ensure material self-sufficiency and personal satisfaction, which are key to enhancing the resilience of individuals against violent extremism and are key factors for the stability of communities.<sup>55</sup>

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<sup>50</sup> Leen Aghabi, Kim Wilkinson, Neven Bondokji, and Alethea Osborne, "Social Identity and Radicalisation: A Review of Key Concepts." (Amman: West Asia, North Africa, 2018), accessed via: <http://wanainstitute.org/en/publication/social-identity-and-radicalisation-review-key-concepts>

<sup>51</sup> Workshop's participants, Tripoli, 30 – 31 July, 2018.

<sup>52</sup> Male interviewee from Security, interviewed by LCPS in Saida, 12 October, 2018.

<sup>53</sup> Seth J. Schwartz, Curtis S. Dunkel, and Alan S. Waterman, "Terrorism: An Identity Theory Perspective." *Studies in Conflict & Terrorism* 32, no. 6 (2009): 537-59. doi:10.1080/10576100902888453.

<sup>54</sup> Workshop's participants, Kfarnabrakh, 16 October, 2018, and 23 February, 2019; Workshop's participants, Saida, 12-13 October, 2018; and workshop's participants, Zgharta, 8-9 August, 2018.

<sup>55</sup> Workshop's participants, Hay el Sellom, 19 - 20 October, 2018.

### 5.3 Priorities for Human Security Programming and PVE

In order to address long-term PVE needs through a holistic human security programming strategy, participants across the six examined areas in Lebanon stressed three areas: **education, employment, and health care**. Education and employment are directly linked to PVE efforts, as various studies have shown.<sup>56</sup>

Underemployment or **unemployment** lead to a deep sense of under-achievement, marginalisation, and relative deprivation. Individuals overcome these factors by resorting to extremist groups that offer status, role, and a sense of material and psychological achievement. Contrary to the common view usually expressed across the region and —as shown earlier— by participants in Lebanon, poverty per se does not lead to extremism, but rather its indirect consequences like low self-esteem, hopelessness, and identity crises related to one's goals and purpose in life.

Therefore, quality education can improve access to jobs and can increase chances for employment, or at least open spaces for alternative socially and financially rewarding entrepreneurship opportunities to overcome poverty and relative deprivation.

But research participants highlighted that youth —especially males— have limited **education** opportunities due to the increasing cost of private schooling. The quality of education in public schools is significantly deteriorating. This lack of proper education leaves individuals with limited skill sets, and thus limited job opportunities. This is especially the case among low skilled labourers, who become subject to employment volatility, foreign labour competition, and vulnerability to extremist recruitment.

Generally, these grievances relate to social justice and access to opportunity, whether employment or educational ones. But the social justice deficit extends to other service areas that are crucial to human security, such as health security.

Compared to Jordan and Tunisia, research participants in Lebanon emphasised **health security**. Although they referred to it while discussing PVE efforts, participants offered neither a direct nor indirect link to explain health insecurity and extremism. Instead, what is detected from their views is that health insecurity increases their sense of marginalisation and vulnerability. This should be viewed in light of the fact that more than half the Lebanese population does not have any form of health coverage.<sup>57</sup> This proportion is higher in locations such as Tripoli, where 75% of families do not have any form of health coverage.<sup>58</sup>

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<sup>56</sup> See for example, "Preventing Violent Extremism through Education." United Nations Educational, Scientific, and Cultural Organization, 2017, accessed via: [https://unesdoc.unesco.org/in/documentViewer.xhtml?v=2.1.196&id=p:usmarcdef\\_0000247764&file=/in/rest/annotationSVC/DownloadWatermarkedAttachment/attach\\_import\\_03351462-7788-4631-ba6d-e3bd278a8449?\\_247764eng.pdf&locale=en&multi=true&ark=/ark:/48223/pf0000247764/PDF/247764eng.pdf#559\\_17\\_Previewing%20violent\\_E\\_int-final.indd:5067:145](https://unesdoc.unesco.org/in/documentViewer.xhtml?v=2.1.196&id=p:usmarcdef_0000247764&file=/in/rest/annotationSVC/DownloadWatermarkedAttachment/attach_import_03351462-7788-4631-ba6d-e3bd278a8449?_247764eng.pdf&locale=en&multi=true&ark=/ark:/48223/pf0000247764/PDF/247764eng.pdf#559_17_Previewing%20violent_E_int-final.indd:5067:145) and Samantha De Silva, "Role of Education in the Prevention of Violent Extremism." The World Bank, November 2017, accessed via: <http://documents.worldbank.org/curated/en/448221510079762554/pdf/120997-WP-revised-PUBLIC-Role-of-Education-in-Prevention-of-Violence-Extremism-Final.pdf>

<sup>57</sup> Lebanese Republic. Council for Development and Reconstruction. Health Plan, accessed via: <http://www.cdr.gov.lb/Plan/Health/Arabic Report.htm>

<sup>58</sup> Adib Nehmeh, "We Work and Raise Our Voice for Tripoli We Work and Raise Our Voice for Tripoli." United Nations Development Programme, March 2015, accessed via:

This health insecurity leads to a general human insecurity in Lebanon, because all pillars of human security are intertwined, as established by evidence.<sup>59</sup>

In addition to these main three priority areas of human security programming, some local priorities were also stressed in relation to the specific characteristics of each community.

For instance, participants in **Baalbek** stressed **freedom of expression**. Baalbek is historically considered a pluralistic community. But according to some participants, “it is currently losing its political diversity as a result of Hezbollah capture”.<sup>60</sup> They reported that opinions are being imposed on inhabitants, and that dissidents to the overwhelming political discourse are being intimidated and sometimes oppressed through marginalisation.<sup>61</sup> Therefore, a priority area of human security programming for them is establishing a culture of acceptance, ensuring social justice and rule of law, and preserving freedom of expression and personal rights. This was perhaps their way of expressing communal security and personal security.

In **Tripoli**, participants stressed the need to implement a holistic development plan to address — among other problems— the pressing **environmental crisis** in the city, where the seaside landfill has been negatively impacting air quality and leading to other environmental hazards like water pollution. Addressing the environmental crisis has the potential to improve environmental, food, and health security.

In **Zgharta**, **economic security** received more attention, likely due to the fact that the city suffers from high rates of unemployment and a lack of proper planning. Enhancing economic security could foster economic growth in the region and generate opportunities for youth.

Participants in **Saida** gave priority to ‘violent extremism’ **religious discourse** and promotion of a moderate belief system to enhance communal security. In addition, participants called for the provision of a sustainable settlement in which socio-economic and civil rights are granted to Palestinian refugees in Ain el Hilweh. These two specific demands stem from the fact that Saida has in recent years witnessed the rise of extremists who took root with the emergence of Sheikh Ahmad Al-Assir. His group caused clashes in the city which eventually necessitated a military taskforce by the LAF.<sup>62</sup> The proximity with Ain el-Hilweh also plays a role in this, as this camp is known to host a number of extremist organisations that have previously engaged in battles/military actions against LAF.<sup>63</sup>

Apart from these local variations, it is interesting to note that women’s empowerment seemed to be the least salient across all pillars, as none of the identified priorities directly relate to issues regarding women and gender equality. The direct relation between violent extremism and women’s empowerment was also seldom cited. Participants consider **violent extremism a man’s issue**.

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[https://www.undp.org/content/dam/lebanon/docs/CrisisPreventionRecovery/Publications/Tripoli Eng approved for web.pdf](https://www.undp.org/content/dam/lebanon/docs/CrisisPreventionRecovery/Publications/Tripoli%20Eng%20approved%20for%20web.pdf)

<sup>59</sup> United Nations Trust Fund for Human Security, Human Security Handbook (New York: UNTFHS, 2016), accessed via: <https://www.un.org/humansecurity/wp-content/uploads/2017/10/h2.pdf>

<sup>60</sup> Verification Focus Group Discussion, Baalbek, 12 February, 2019.

<sup>61</sup> Workshop’s participants, Baalbek, 19 – 21 July, 2018.

<sup>62</sup> "Al- Assir Sentenced to Death for Clashes with Army." Annahar, 28 September 2017, accessed via: <https://en.annahar.com/article/672409-al-assir-sentenced-to-death-for-clashes-with-army>

<sup>63</sup> "Negotiating Jihad in Ain Al-Hilweh." Carnegie Middle East Center, 25 May 2016, accessed via: <https://carnegie-mec.org/sada/63670>

The responsibility of women in the extremism cycle is limited —according to participants— to their educational and upbringing role.

## 6 State-Centric Security Policies, Human Security, and PVE

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In its discussion, this project refers to the impact of state-centric security policies on the relation between human security programming and PVE measures. The term refers to security policies that take the state as its main ‘referent object’ that it seeks to protect and advocate. The referent object determines the security ‘threats’ and also the ‘means’ to achieve it. These policies prioritise state security regardless of the impact these may have on other reference objects of security like the individual.<sup>64</sup>

In this report on Lebanon, however, the term ‘security plans’ is used due to its local significance in how the Lebanese discourse is shaped with regards to these policies. The term ‘security plans’ refers to periods of increased presence of military personnel in residential areas to quell unrest and achieve certain security objectives such as the eradication of a violent extremist threat.

### 6.1 Security Plans in Instances of Direct Threats

Generally, in Lebanon, security measures are interpreted not only as protection from threats of violent extremism but also as the disciplining tool of the social and political order. In some cases, security measures are used to limit mobility and control “others,” which often means targeting refugees and marginalised Lebanese.<sup>65</sup> In general, **Lebanese people feel safer when state-centric security measures are applied temporarily, even in areas that have histories of violent conflict with the LAF.**<sup>66</sup> In these areas, communities prefer short-term security plans to avoid the long-term securitisation of their spaces.

Usually, depending on the nature of the security threat, the duration and extent of security measures vary. Since violent extremist threat is localised in spaces with histories of conflict, participants perceive the application of security plans as unfair across sects, nationalities, and class, reinforcing self-perceptions of marginalisation. For example, **participants in Tripoli are weary of long-term security plans** because of the political undertones of LAF presence in areas that have witnessed clashes with local groups.<sup>67</sup>

Similarly, in **Saida and Ain Al-Hilweh**, participants felt targeted for being Sunnis.<sup>68</sup> It has also been expressed that the imposition of **security plans is politically driven and not necessarily security-driven**. Therefore, the application of security plans is deemed selective and individuals with political connections are viewed as not being subject to them.

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<sup>64</sup> For a discussion on this, see Barik Mhadeen, *Reconceptualising Security: Why Now?* (Amman: West Asia North Africa Institute, 2018), p. 4-5, <http://wanainstitute.org/en/publication/reconceptualising-security-why-now>

<sup>65</sup> Sima Ghaddar, "Lebanon Treats Refugees as a Security Problem-and It Doesn't Work." The Century Foundation, 4 April 2017, accessed via: <https://tcf.org/content/commentary/lebanon-treats-refugees-security-problem-doesnt-work/?session=1>

<sup>66</sup> This was articulated in all communities, mainly in the 11 focus groups conducted, with slight variations in the extent and duration of application of these measures. For more information on perceptions of security, David Chuter, "Perceptions and Prescriptions: How Lebanese People View Their Security." International Alert, February 2015, accessed via: [https://www.international-alert.org/sites/default/files/Lebanon\\_SSRynthesis\\_EN\\_2015.pdf](https://www.international-alert.org/sites/default/files/Lebanon_SSRynthesis_EN_2015.pdf)

<sup>67</sup> Two male interviewees from CBO and Security, interviewed by LCPS in Tripoli, 31 July, 2018.

<sup>68</sup> Workshop's participants, Saida, 12-13 October, 2018.

However, civilians expressed their reliance on security forces —whether state or non-state ones— which offers them temporary stability and allows them to carry on with their lives despite living with the constant prospect of violence and precarity. At a social level, **women favoured the presence of security forces to quell social unrest as well as delinquency and the discomfort of lawlessness.** This pertains to concerns over women’s protection, particularly because some women defined violence against women as violent extremism.<sup>69</sup> Generally, the research sample felt that security plans were successful, but not sufficient to guarantee long-term peace.

In the case of Zgharta, which has a Christian-majority population, people were vocal in their demand for protection, and this is partially a result of the perpetuation of a narrative which promotes the idea that minorities need protection, particularly given Zgharta’s location in a Sunni governorate. Additionally, residents of **Zgharta** demand that **security plans** are extended to control the movement of Syrian refugees and their access to public space.<sup>70</sup>

This is mainly in relation to a recent incident where a Syrian national raped and killed a Lebanese young woman from Miziara, a village in the caza of Zgharta. This incident generated a wave of anti-Syrian feelings and resulted in a campaign for the eviction of Syrian refugees from populated zones in Zgharta.<sup>71</sup> The LAF presence was generally described in positive terms with no significant resentment.

## 6.2 Security Measures to Maintain Order

Lebanese citizens encourage security measures for the management of lawlessness and social unrest. **In areas where state power is less prevalent, local political parties fill the void and impose their own security plans, which serve to maintain order rather than protect from violent extremist threats.**

In areas such as Hay el Selloum and Baalbek, people expressed satisfaction with security policies because they were viewed as positive steps toward tackling social issues such as drug proliferation, illicit trade, and harassment. Many participants demanded that these security measures be increased and reinforced to counter delinquency and petty crimes.<sup>72</sup>

In areas that host large communities of refugees, such as Tripoli, Hay el Selloum, and Saida, both **Syrian and Lebanese women stated that they feel safer with security forces on the streets,** in light of increased harassment by Lebanese and Syrian men. This feeling of safety, however, is not shared among Syrian males —many of them labourers— who feel that the presence of security forces constrains their movements.

In areas where Hezbollah (and to a lesser extent, Amal Movement) effectively govern, such as Hay el Selloum, security imposed by these parties is also viewed as important, in addition to the state actors that maintain social order.

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<sup>69</sup> Females’ focus group discussions across the six locations.

<sup>70</sup> Females’ focus group discussion, Zgharta, 10 August, 2018.

<sup>71</sup> Nabih Bulos, "In Lebanon, a Rape and Murder Galvanize Anti-Syrian Fervor." Los Angeles Times, 13 October 2017, accessed via: <https://www.latimes.com/world/middleeast/la-fg-lebanon-syria-slaying-2017-story.html>

<sup>72</sup> There was more or less consensus on the continued demand for visible security measures articulated in focus groups and participants in workshops

### 6.3 Selective Implementation of Security Measures

In areas with large Palestinian populations such as Saida and Tripoli, security plans are perceived as a good first step in PVE efforts among Lebanese, but not among Palestinians and other vulnerable Lebanese groups who view themselves as victims of state violence. In general, there are **significant differences in the perceptions of state-security policies between the Lebanese and the Palestinians.**<sup>73</sup> Security policies in these cities have been surgical and targeted, and hence are not viewed as imposed security plans affecting all inhabitants.

The situation inside the Palestinian camps is different as these policies are part of the residents' daily lives. Thus, while the Lebanese generally showed support for security plans, the Palestinians and some of the city's vulnerable groups expressed resentment toward these plans. These findings should be understood in the context of the state's decades-long security policies affecting Ain Al-Hilweh camp—the most recent developments being the construction of watchtowers and secured entrances to control and regulate movement.<sup>74</sup>

### 6.4 State Security Policies and Human Security Programmes

All of the six communities examined in this project favoured moderate security measures to compliment long-term human security projects given Lebanon's volatile political climate. During periods of direct conflict, there was a strong preference for security plans in order to suppress further violence.

However, **in the long run, there was a preference for holistic human security programming within an effective and non-discriminatory security approach.** This would meet PVE needs, and also enhance long-term resilience since human security tackles social and economic marginalisation, and other forms of human insecurity.

In locations with a history of clashes with the Lebanese state such as **Tripoli and Saida** (and within Saida and Ain Al-Hilweh specifically), residents had diverging opinions in this regard, whereby **some considered human security to be a key entry point to preventing violent extremism, while others insisted that security can never be guaranteed without imposing hard security measures.** While the efficacy of human security approaches was acknowledged by local communities, research participants stated that hard security measures are indispensable in that endeavour.

In areas that suffer from lawlessness —like Baalbek— it was stated that human security and hard security measures should go hand in hand to ensure a comprehensive approach toward preventing violent extremism.<sup>75</sup> However, some of the participants stated that hard security policies should be prioritised in the short-term in order to ensure fertile grounds for the implementation of human security programmes, but discontinued once relative peace is achieved.

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<sup>73</sup> Males' and females' Focus Groups Discussions, Saida, 7 September, 2018; Workshop's participants, Saida, 12-13 October, 2018; and male interviewee from Security, interviewed by LCPS in Saida, 12 October, 2018.

<sup>74</sup> Mohammed Zaatar, "Construction of Wall around Ain Al-Hilweh in Full Swing." Daily Star, 21 November 2016, accessed via: <http://www.dailystar.com.lb/News/Lebanon-News/2016/Nov-21/382203-construction-of-wall-around-ain-al-hilweh-in-full-swing.ashx>

<sup>75</sup> Workshop's participants, Baalbek, 19 – 21 July, 2018.

In areas marginalised by the state, like in Tripoli, people view the imposition of long-term hard security measures as part of the **institutional violence** committed against them.<sup>76</sup>

To summarise, hard security measures are not viewed consistently across Lebanese communities and therefore require different implementation methods according to each locality's history with the state and its security forces. In general, **the presence of security forces alleviated perceived direct threats to Lebanese people, but had undesirable results for marginalised Lebanese and Palestinians who suffered under the over-securitisation of their living spaces.** However, due to threats such as extremism, communities say they require the temporary presence of security forces but not long-term securitisation programmes. In all locations, human security projects are seen as complementing hard security, which are essential for long-term resilience to conflict and extremism.

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<sup>76</sup> Workshop's participants, Tripoli, 30 – 31 July, 2018.

## 7 Policy Recommendations

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Members of communities targeted in this study suggested that multiple practical measures be adopted to enhance human security programming in a way that contributes to PVE measures. The following policy recommendations are based on suggestions put forward by research participants in the different communities. These are followed by general recommendations that reflect strategic measures that can address programming gaps discussed in the six communities.

- Enhancing economic security through supporting and assisting productive sectors, especially agriculture and the agro-industry. This was seen as a crucial step towards solving the unemployment gap by generating more jobs and increasing the income of families, especially in rural areas. Participants in Baalbek highlighted the potential benefits of the legalisation of cannabis as the industry can spur waves of development across Bekaa's agricultural regions. This effort would be based on the collaboration of the Ministries of Agriculture and Industry and the private sector, while the parliament works toward passing a legalisation law.
- Improving public education, specifically at the primary and tertiary levels, by: (a) enacting measures of compulsory education, (b) reforming the quality of education in public schools, and (c) launching national campaigns to match acquired skills with the needs of the labour market. This would be a combined effort by the Ministry of Education and state oversight agencies, as well as local and international NGOs working on education programmes.
- Advocating for communal security by regulating religious discourse given the fact that some mosques and sermons are informal and propagate hate speech. This effort should be undertaken by the official religious institutions alongside the Ministry of Interior and Municipalities, through an increased supervision over the establishment of informal mosques.
- Empowering the role of oversight agencies to restrain clientelistic channels and existing favouritism within state institutions. This measure should be taken by the Presidency of the Council of Ministers by building the capacity of state oversight agencies. This would ensure impartiality in the provision of public services as well as mitigating the role of nepotism in access to the civil service.
- Finding a sustainable solution for security concerns in the Ain Al-Hilweh camp. The proposed recommendations significantly diverge in this regard. Palestinians demanded better human security in the form of civil and socio-economic rights, namely the right to work and the right to property. Some Lebanese called for the implementation of hard security measures. Finding a sustainable solution to these concerns requires an effort to be led by the Ministry of National Defence alongside state security agencies as well as the Palestinian administration and factions within the camp, along with the CBOs working in the camp.
- Reforming state security strategies to allow for equal implementation of the law to ensure the prosecution of criminals regardless of their political cover. This endeavour should be

based on a political dialogue that would ensure the independence of the security agencies whose duties should not be limited by political interference.

- Overseeing the reintegration of prisoners and convicts back into society in ways that prevent them from recommitting unlawful activities. This entails a modernisation of Lebanese prisons to mitigate the negative psychological effects on inmates, as well as the creation of tailored programmes for the integration of former-inmates into society mainly through providing them with job opportunities. These efforts should be led by the Ministry of Interior and Municipalities as well as the local community-based organisations.

### 7.1 Strategic Recommendations for Human Security and PVE Programming

- Offering a clear definition of violent extremism, and disseminating it widely is a key element for the success of aligning human security programming with PVE needs. Although the national strategy for preventing violent extremism<sup>77</sup> has defined the term,<sup>78</sup> the definition is often dismissed as too broad. Other actors, including the security sector, offer divergent and contradictory definitions. Addressing PVE needs through human security programming requires a firm definition of the term, in order to identify specific target populations for PVE efforts and for human security programming.
- A national coordination mechanism between the state, international organisations, civil society, and the private sector is essential for effective human security programming. According to research participants, INGOs could offer technical assistance, funding, and oversight of implementation. The state should closely monitor the programmes and lead this coordination mechanism. The private sector and CBOs should implement projects and generate knowledge from the field. However, establishing this coordination mechanism should be part of a national human security coordination programme.
- The success of long-term human security programming requires all actors to invest in sustained presence and engagement in local communities. This allows them a deeper understanding of local priorities for human security programming and allows for effective policy design and implementation. The above-mentioned coordination mechanism should invest in this sustained and localised presence.

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<sup>77</sup> Lebanese Republic, Presidency of the Council of Ministers. National Strategy for Preventing Violent Extremism. 2018, accessed via: [http://www.pvelebanon.org/Resources/PVE\\_English.pdf](http://www.pvelebanon.org/Resources/PVE_English.pdf)

<sup>78</sup> "The definition of 'violent extremism' varies according to the approach adopted. Therefore, the Strategy will adopt a definition of 'violent extremism' that includes the following three points: 1. The spread of individual and collective hatred that may lead to structural violence. 2. The rejection of diversity and non-acceptance of others, and the use of violence as a means of expression and influence. 3. A behaviour that threatens values that ensure social stability." Ibid.



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