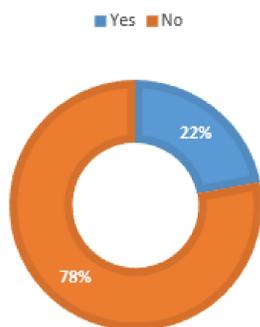


Unpacking the challenges of Lebanon's fragmented migration framework

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SYRIAN REFUGEES WITH LEGAL RESIDENCY



Source: VASyR 2019

Abstract

The national framework for migration governance in Lebanon is still nascent and fragmented. There is an absence of a comprehensive asylum reception regime, in favour of a set of ad-hoc policies and decisions taken from 2014 onwards, with the specific aim of dissuading refugees and asylum seekers from settling in the country.

References

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Introduction

Lebanon is currently hosting the largest number of refugees per capita worldwide, following the eruption of the Syrian conflict in 2011. Despite these figures, the country still lacks formal migration and asylum legal and policy framework. Although it is not a party to the 1951 Geneva Convention, the country has ratified other binding instruments such as the UDHR, which reiterates the importance of non-refoulement, and the non-discriminatory provision of adequate living standards to everyone. However, and in practice, asylum seekers and refugees face a myriad of multidimensional hurdles and formalities affecting their daily lives.

Main Results

- Discriminatory treatment towards asylum seekers and refugees include: difficulties in accessing the border (reception), generalized and gender-related obstacles in regularising their legal status, restrictions in accessing income generating opportunities, education, housing, services and allowances.
- The persistent exclusionary *ad-hoc* policies and practices both at the local and national level are carried out with the aim of dissuading Syrian asylum seekers from staying, and further push them to perceive resettlement or repatriation as their only long-term viable options.

Methods and Material

- Literature review, through desk research including, notably, the examination of policy documents, newspaper articles, (I)NGO reports, and academic literature on the provision of refugee reception in Lebanon, at the macro-level.
- Fieldwork consisting of 75 interviews, at the micro (60) and meso-level (15), with refugees, asylum seekers and stakeholders.

Governorate	Number of registered refugees
Bekaa	339,473
North Lebanon	236,736
Beirut	206,628
South Lebanon	96,761

Source: UNHCR, data last updated August 31, 2020

Lessons Learned

- The Lebanese government should recognise the rights granted to asylum seekers by international conventions and human rights standards.
- An updated Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) should be drafted between the UNHCR and the Lebanese government based on the needs and rights of asylum seekers and refugees.
- A participatory approach, along vertical and horizontal axes, should be adopted in the formulation of a National Strategy, able to respond to the specific needs of refugees, and the host communities.
- State officials should not propagate xenophobic rhetoric as it hinders social cohesion.