

## OVERVIEW

Few countries have felt the impact of displacement and migration as dramatically as Lebanon. At the height of Syria's civil war, multiple sources estimated that the country of nearly five million citizens hosted about 1.4 million Syrian refugees and some 31,500 Palestinian refugees who once lived in Syria. Lebanon is also host to more than half a million Palestinian refugees who have lived there since 1949.

Many of these refugees are children — more than half of those registered with UNHCR are under 18. They are deprived of basic services, including health care and education, and are most vulnerable to human trafficking and other abuses.

## ECONOMIC IMPACT

The economic burdens of the refugee crisis are heavy, and still escalating. The World Bank estimates Lebanon has incurred losses of \$13.1 billion since 2012. Unemployment remains especially high in some of the country's poorest regions while a growing number of Lebanese workers have found themselves replaced by Syrian laborers willing to accept lower wages.

## IMPACT ON CHRISTIANS

Lebanon has long been a haven for Christians in the Middle East — now believed to number about 40 percent of the population. Lebanon has a government that is sympathetic to Christian concerns; Christians are well represented politically and constitute the largest percentage of the population in the region. Yet, regional, political and economic instabilities are catalysts for the emigration of young and educated Lebanese Christians. The institutional church is very strong in Lebanon. It is home to four of the six patriarchs of the Catholic Eastern churches, which are dynamic communities. Their activities include effective social services ministering to the needs of the poorest of the poor.

## CNEWA'S PRESENCE

CNEWA's presence in Lebanon extends back to our earliest days, including uninterrupted activity during the worst of the nation's 15-year civil war. Founded to support these churches and fund their works, CNEWA's activities in Lebanon reflect this vibrancy. We assist the local

churches in providing emergency relief where needed, particularly to those fleeing war in Syria and Iraq who have no food or money. CNEWA provides funds to church-sponsored social centers to assist in providing medical and hospital care for the poor. We continue to provide microcredit loans for small businesses to encourage job creation and discourage emigration. We provide grants for seminaries and formation programs, and continue our longstanding support of child care centers and centers for those with special needs — many of them drawn from the refugee population.



**CNEWA works with Lebanon's many churches to offer the sacraments and to support the country's poor, including those seeking refuge from the violence in neighboring Syria and nearby Iraq. Our help includes:**

- Partnering with the Melkite Greek Catholic Archeparchy of Zahleh to support needy students from Lebanese and Syrian families
- Support to the Good Shepherd Sisters for their clinic in Jdeideh
- Assistance to the Syriac Catholic Patriarchate and the Maronite Society of St. Paul for their programs to care for Iraqi and Syrian refugees
- Help for pastoral programs, including funds for the formation of lay leaders studying at Our Lady of Protection Center, and annual subsidies for the formation of Maronite, Melkite and Syriac Catholic seminarians