

# PROTECTION

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The main indicators assessing the protection space of Syrian refugees in Lebanon through the VASyR are in relation to legal residency and to civil documentation. Legal residency, birth registration and marriage documentation are examined, with a focus on births and marriages that occurred in Lebanon. Protection indicators also include those related to safety and security, as well as community relations. Indicators specific to child protection assessed through the VASyR include child labour and child marriage.

- **The rate of legal residency among the Syrian refugee population continues to decline.** Only 22% of individuals aged 15 years and above have legal residency, compared to 27% in 2018. Rates reach up to 45% for men between the ages of 45 and 49. Across all age groups, **a higher proportion of men have legal residency, as compared to their female counterparts.**
- **Positive outcomes are noted in terms of birth registration for children born in Lebanon,** with improvements across all the steps in the process. Almost all (97%) have a doctor's or midwife certificate, and 30% are registered with the Foreigners' Registry (compared to 21% in 2018).
- **Curfews were the most commonly reported security issue** with 14% of families being affected, mainly in the Southern governorates.
- **Competition for jobs was cited by many (51%) as one of the main drivers of tension between the refugee and host communities,** an increase from 38% in 2018. Less than half (43%) cited no tension.

## LEGAL RESIDENCY

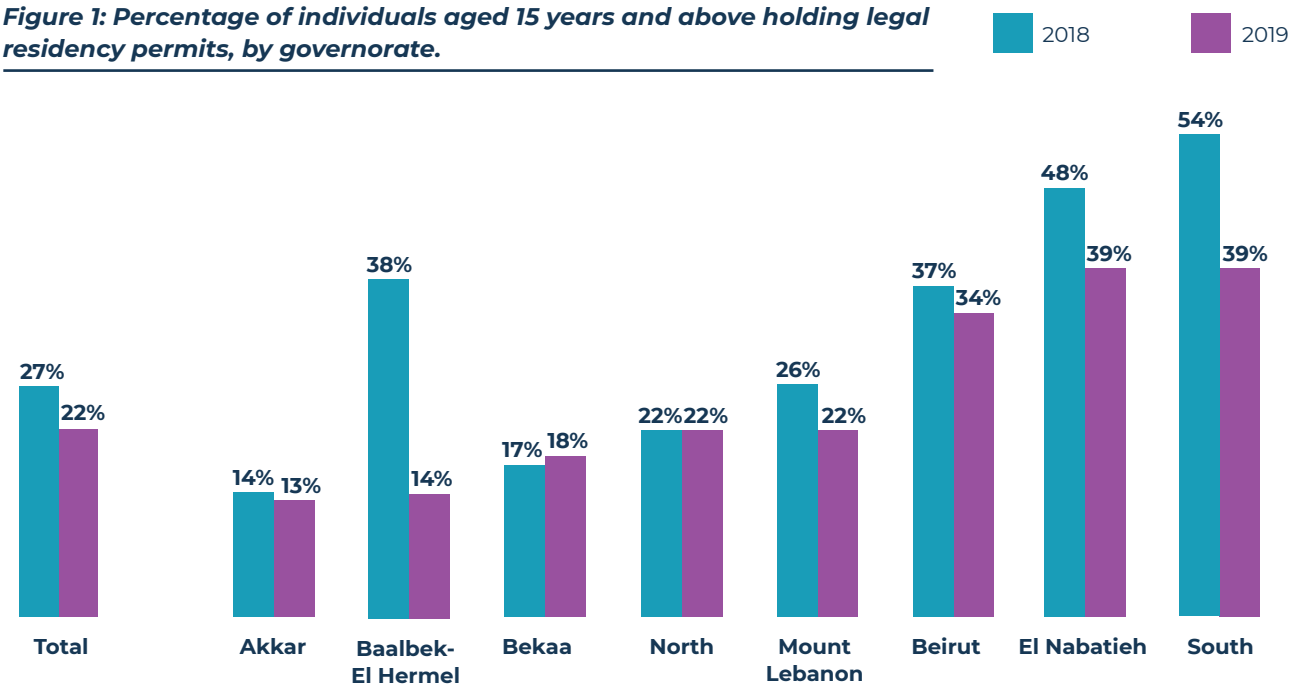
Based on the current regulations, Syrian refugees can renew their residency permits either on the basis of registration with UNHCR, through a pledge of responsibility by a local sponsor, courtesy permit (if the mother or wife are Lebanese), or through other categories such as property ownership, tenancy, student visa, etc. Additionally, those who had entered legally to Lebanon as of 2015 had to do so based on one of the entry categories and could only renew their legal stay within the limitations set for this specific entry category (such as tourism, medical

visit, transit etc.). Each category has its own requirements, fees and residency duration. In all cases, it is not possible to switch from a residency permit based on one of these categories to the residency permit based on UNHCR certificate.

In 2017, the residency fees were waived for Syrian refugees registered with UNHCR prior to 1 January 2015 and who did not previously renew their legal residency based on categories such as tourism, sponsorship, property ownership, or tenancy.

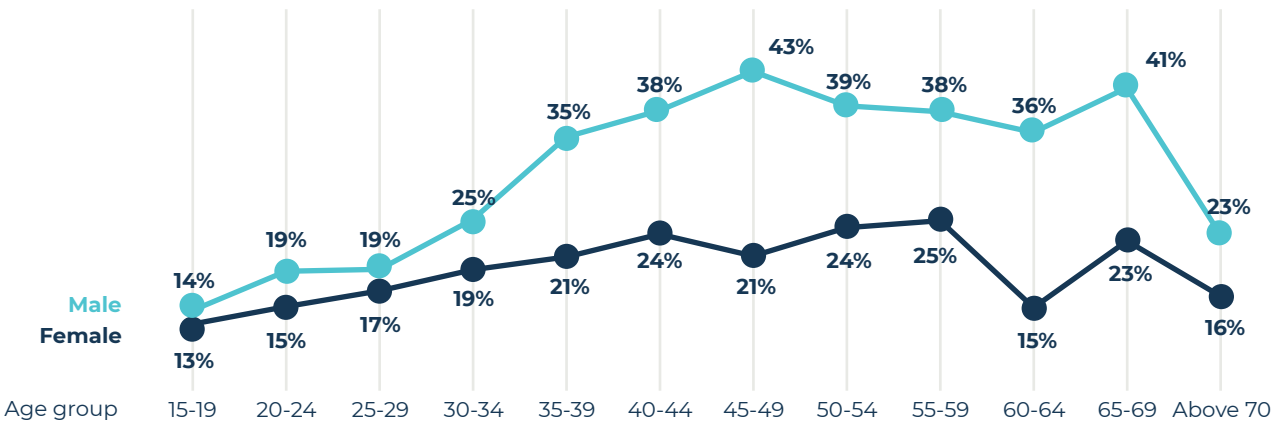
Results from 2019 show a decline in the percentage of individuals above the age of 15 years holding legal residency to 22%, from 27% in 2018. Regionally, Baalbek-EI Hermel, EI Nabatieh and the South exhibited the largest decrease, while rates in Akkar remain the lowest.

Figure 1: Percentage of individuals aged 15 years and above holding legal residency permits, by governorate.



Examining the rates of legal residency by age group, youth and younger adults (under the age of 25) have notably lower rates of legal residency than their older counterparts. In fact, rates reach up to 43% for men aged 45 to 49 years. Women across all age groups have lower rates of legal residency as compared to men. Poorer individuals and those living in non-permanent shelters were also less likely to hold legal residency permits. Among individuals with a disability, over three quarters (77%) did not have legal residency permits.

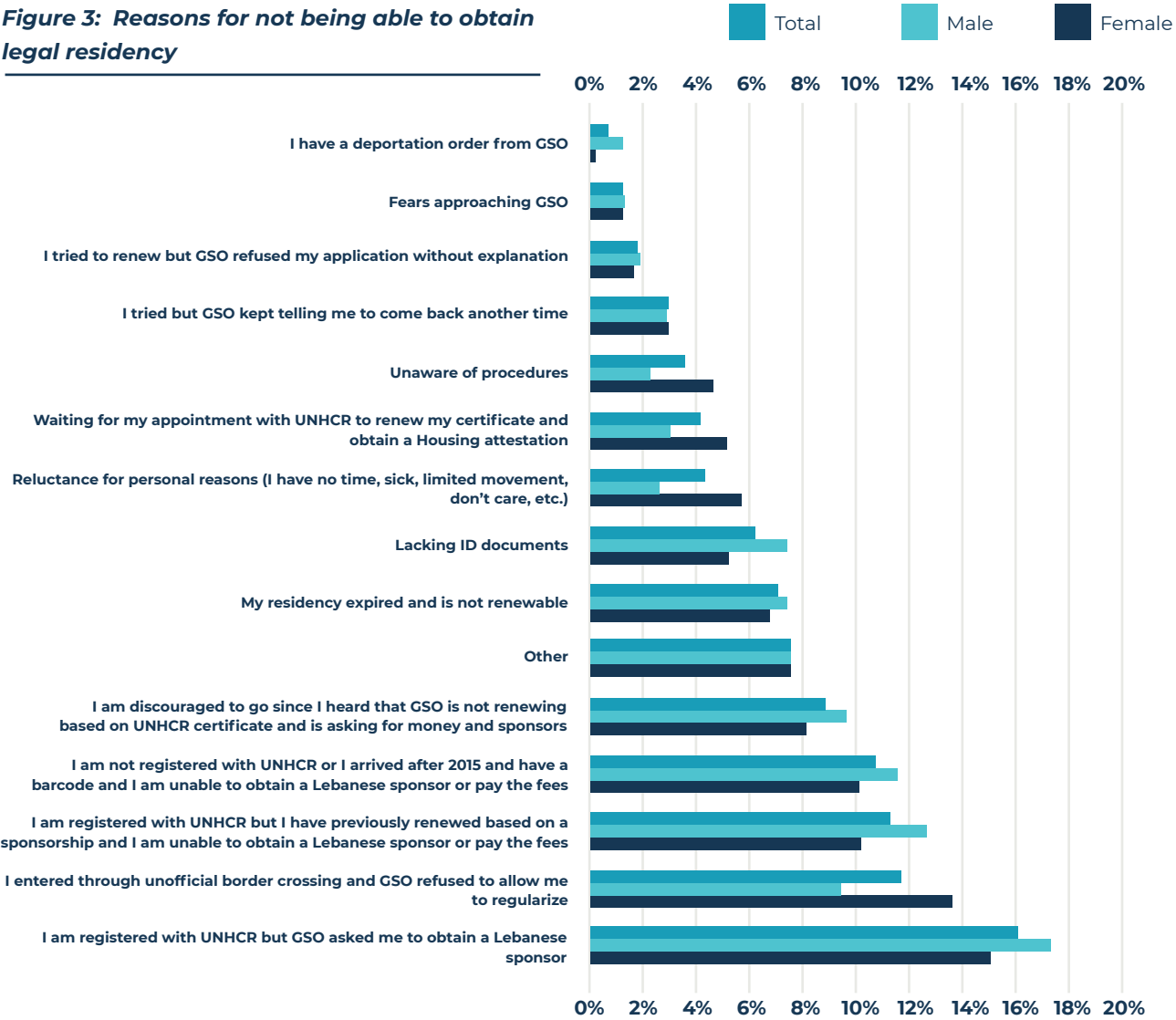
Figure 2: Percentage of individuals aged 15 years and above holding legal residency permits, by gender and age group



At a household level, there is a significant decrease in the legal residency rates, with only 10% of households having all members holding legal residency (18% in 2018) and 33% having at least one member with legal residency (39% in 2018).

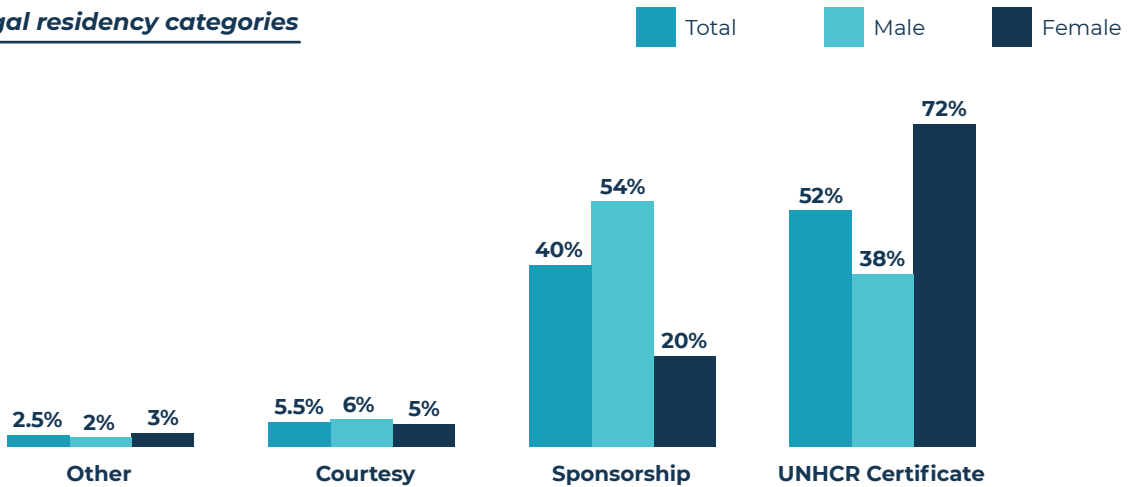
Being asked to obtain a Lebanese sponsor while registered with UNHCR was cited among the most common reason for not having legal residency. Another challenge was obtaining a Lebanese sponsor for those that needed one. Entering through unofficial borders was also commonly cited as a barrier to obtaining legal residency.

Figure 3: Reasons for not being able to obtain legal residency



For those with legal residency, the majority (52%) had legal residency through their UNHCR registration certificate. This legal residency was much more common among women than men, while men were more likely to have legal residency through sponsorship.

Figure 4: Legal residency categories

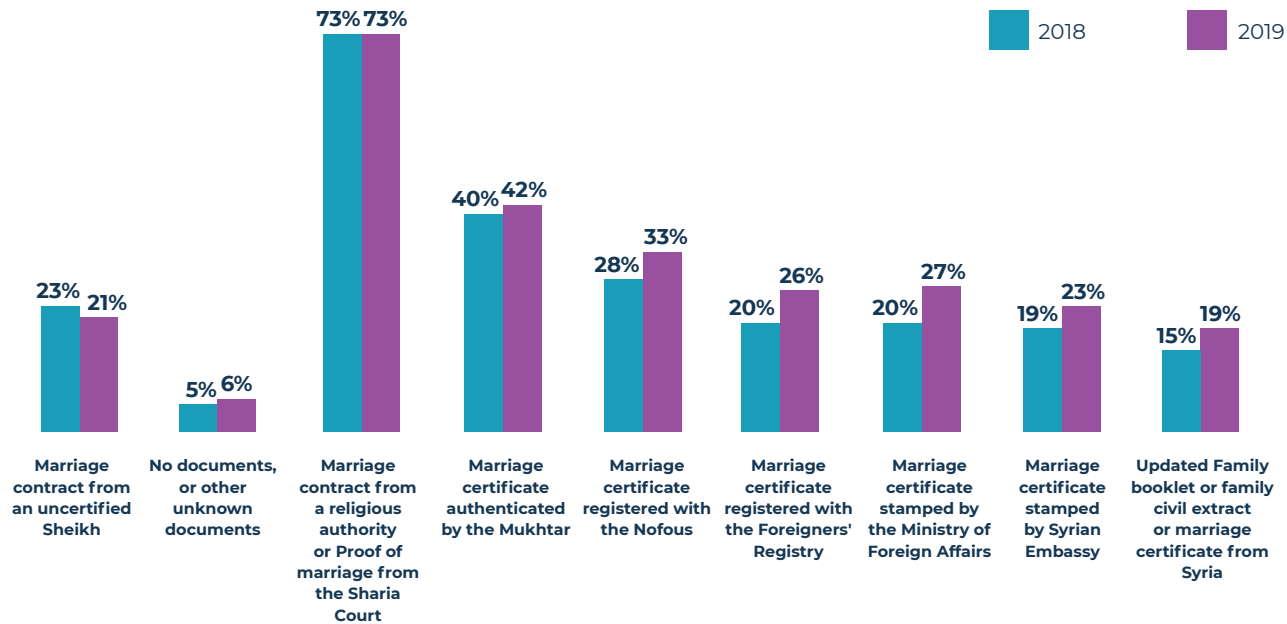


MARRIAGE REGISTRATION

There was a slight improvement in the rate of marriage registration for those who got married in Lebanon, with three quarters meeting the minimum needed documentation of either a marriage contract from a religious authority

or proof of marriage from the Sharia Court. In 2019, 26% of those surveyed have registered their marriage with the Foreigners' Registry (compared to 20% in 2018). Still, 27% of marriages have no legal documentation (21% have a marriage contract from an uncertified Sheikh and 6% have no documentation).

Figure 5: Percentage of individuals having completed the various steps of marriage registration, for marriages taken place in Lebanon.



BIRTH REGISTRATION

Significant improvements were noted across all seven steps of the birth registration process for Syrian refugee children born in Lebanon. The rate of births registered with the Foreigners' Registry increased to 30% from 21% in 2018. The highest rate of birth registration with the Foreigners' Registry was among families living in Beirut while the lowest were among families living in Bekaa, Akkar or Baalbek El Hermel. No differences were noted in birth registration rates when comparing boys and girls.

Figure 6: Percentage of children born in Lebanon with births registered at the Foreigners' Registry

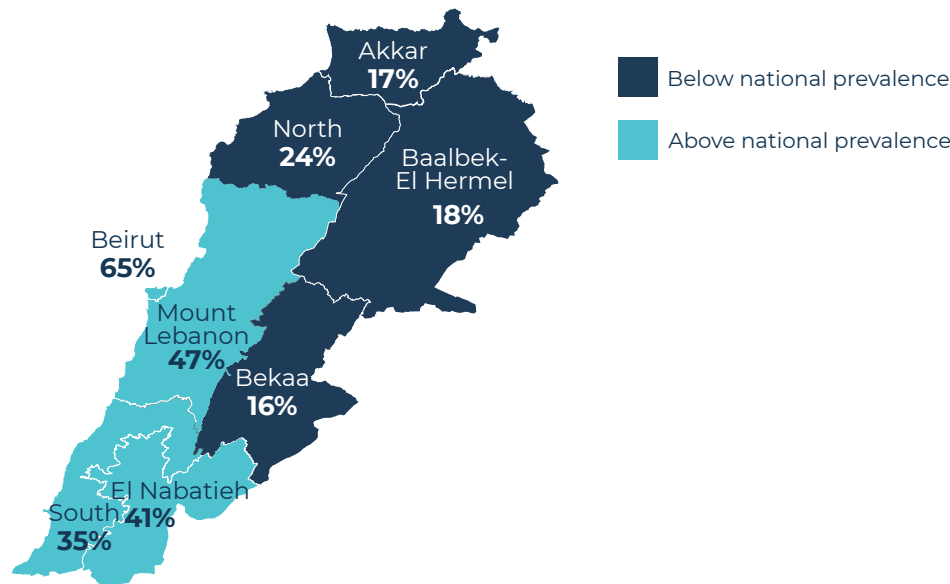


Figure 7: Percentage of individuals having completed the various steps of birth registration, for births that took place in Lebanon

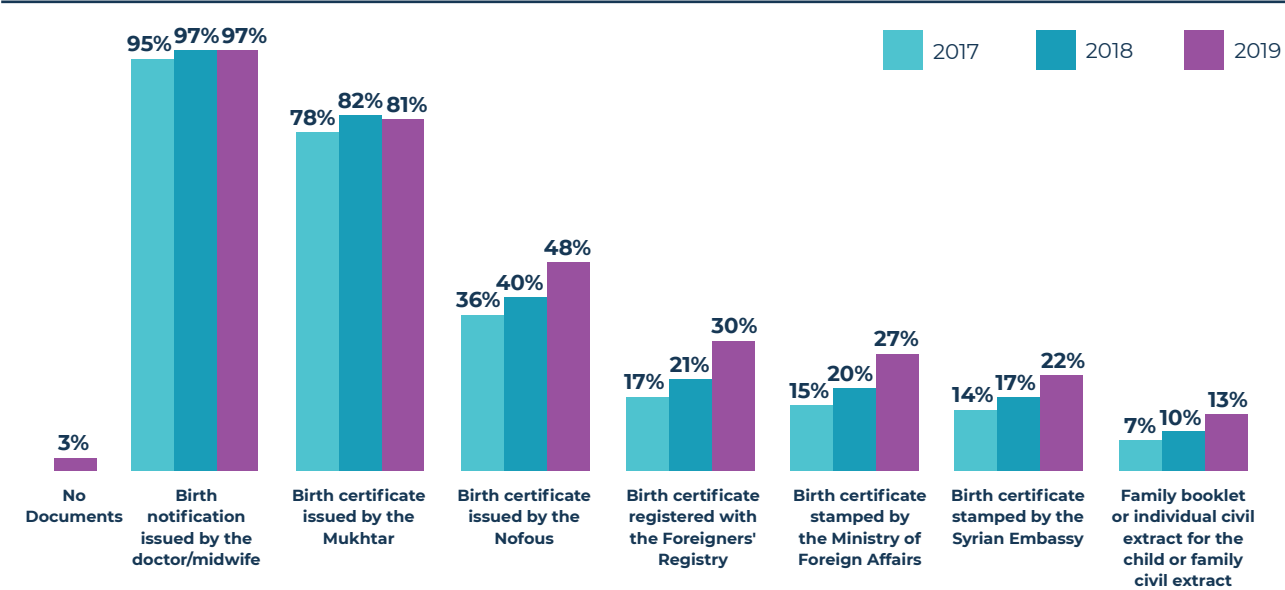
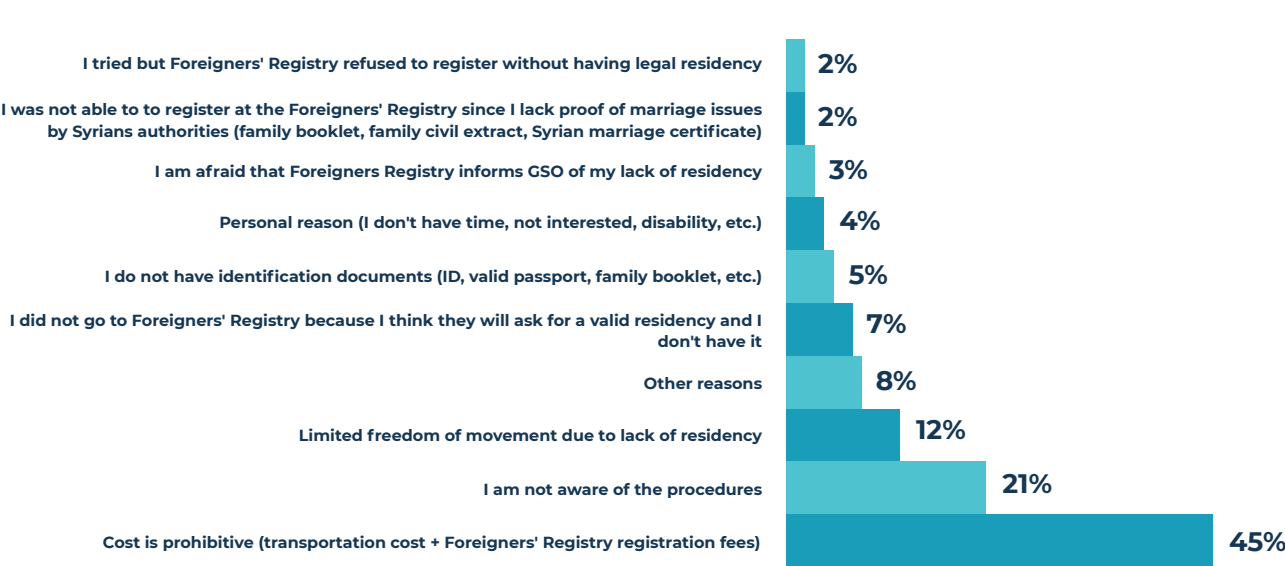


Figure 8: Reasons for not registering at the Foreigners' Registry, among those who reached the level of the Nofous



For those who were able to register the births at the Nofous, but not the Foreigners' Registry, cost was cited as the main barrier mainly in relation to transportation. A significant portion (21%) of those interviewed were unaware of the procedures related to registering after the Nofous level pointing to a need for increased sensitization.

SAFETY AND SECURITY

Fourteen percent of families reported that there were curfews imposed in the area where they lived, 12% cited this as a safety/security issue. Curfews were most common in the Southern governorates, with almost half of families in El Nabatieh (46%) and the South (43%) reporting curfews in the area where they live. Akkar and Beirut had minimum reporting of curfews among refugee residents.

Curfews were mainly being imposed by the municipality (94%), with a few reports of the local community (6%) and non-state actors (7%) imposing curfews.

It is important to keep in mind the interview for this assessment likely took place with the head of households or other adult members. Individual interviews with household members did not take place and, as such, incidents related to physical or sexual harassment are likely to be underreported.

Figure 9: Percentage of households who experienced any of the following safety/security incidents during the previous three months<sup>1</sup>

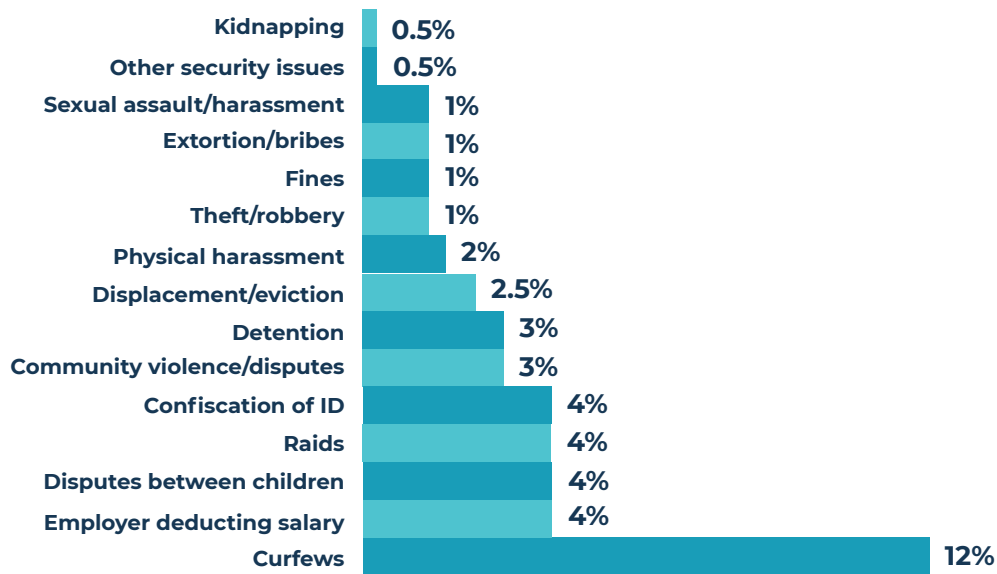


Figure 10: Percentage of households reporting a curfew being imposed on them in the area where they live, by governorate<sup>2</sup>

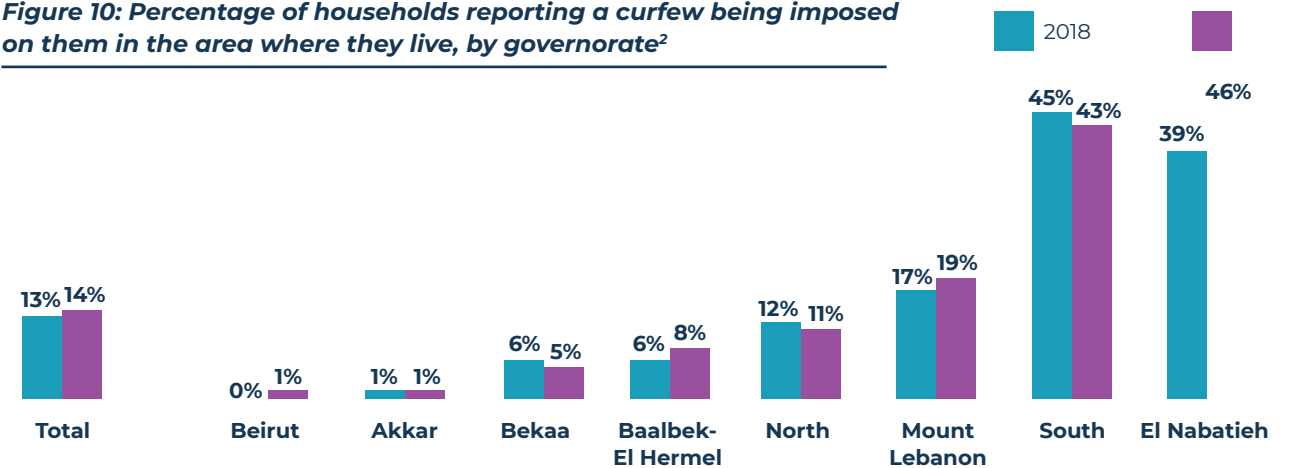
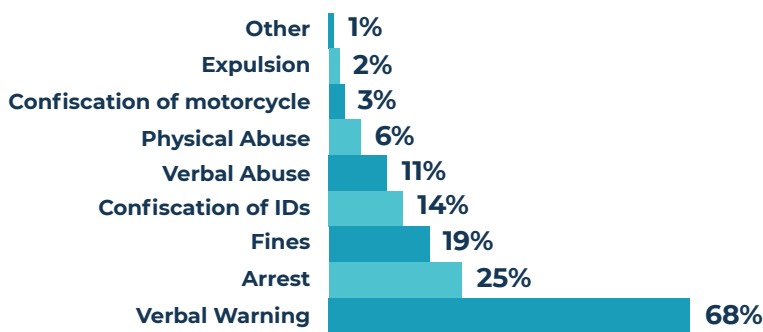


Figure 11: Reported sanctions in case of a breach in curfew, among families that reported curfews in the area where they live



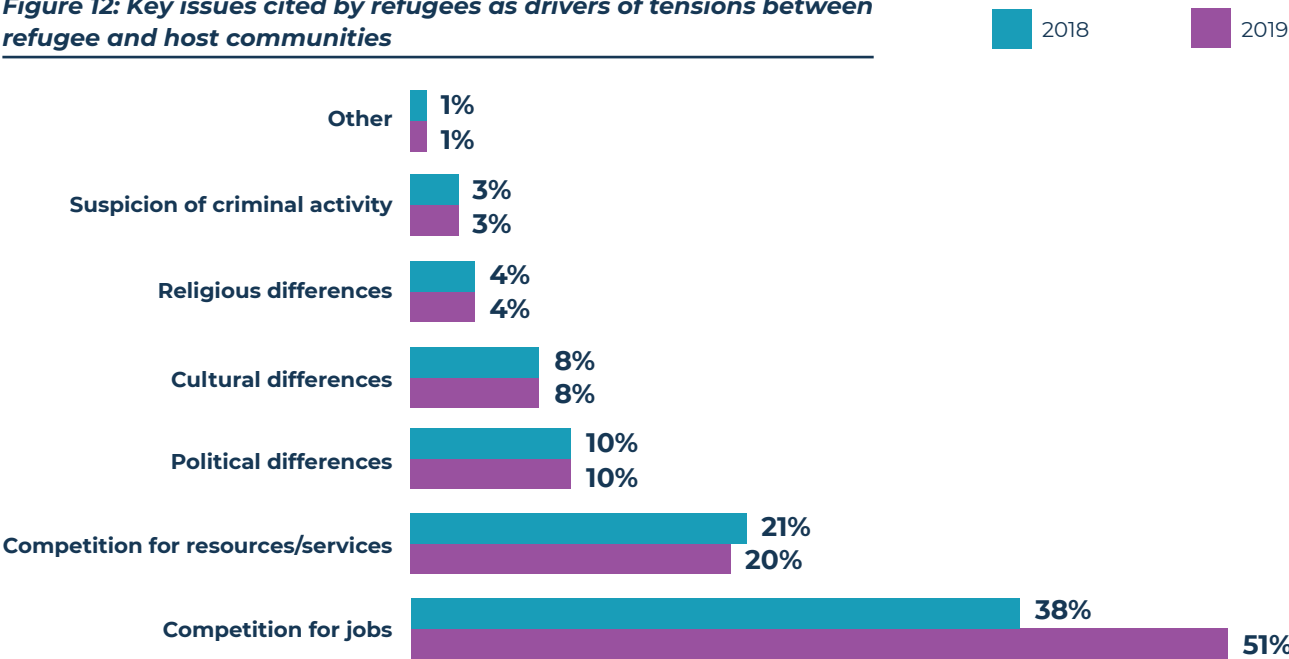
COMMUNITY RELATIONS

Most refugee families rated their relationship with the host community as positive (54%) or neutral (41%) with few rating it as negative (5%). As mentioned above, the nature of the assessment being at a household level may have led to underreporting of negative relationships. More than half of interviewed

households did, however, cite possible reasons for community tensions, with 51% stating competition for jobs as one of the main drivers (compared to 38% in 2018). Other cited reasons remained at a similar prevalence from 2018, with the exception of job competition, which increased significantly over the last year.

<sup>32</sup> Figures 9 and 10 are based on two separate questions resulting in the percentage of curfews being different,

Figure 12: Key issues cited by refugees as drivers of tensions between refugee and host communities





# CHILD PROTECTION

This section explores child protection issues faced by Syrian refugee children, specifically child labour, child marriage, and violent discipline. The findings detailed below show that Syrian refugee children are at risk of being exposed to exploitation and abuse.

## KEY FINDINGS

- The percentage of children between 5 and 17 years old who are engaged in child labour remain very similar to last year's rate at 2.6%. It must be noted that child labour may frequently be underreported and peaks during agriculture season, which did not overlap with this year's data collection.
- Boys are still at a higher risk of child labour than girls, 4.4% and 0.6%, respectively.
- Of children who are engaged in labour, 27% are working in agriculture.
- Twenty-seven percent of girls aged 15 to 19 were married at the time of the survey, very similar rate to 2018 results at 29%. The highest rate of child marriage was in the North governorate, 34%.
- Around 1 out of 2 children aged between 1 and 14 experienced some form of physical aggression and 6 out 10 experienced some form of psychological aggression.

## CHILD LABOUR

**Child labour** is defined as a child having performed either economic activities or household chores during the last week for more than the age specific number of hours, or exposure to hazardous conditions during economic activity or household chores.

- Economic activities: aged 5-11: 1 hour or more; aged 12-14: 14 hours or more; aged 15-17: 43 hours or more
- Household chores: aged 5-14: 28 hours or more; aged 15-17: 43 hours or more.

- Hazardous conditions: any exposure to the following conditions during economic activity or household chores: carrying heavy loads, working with dangerous tools, exposed to dust, fumes, or gas, exposed to extreme cold, heat or humidity, exposed to loud noise or vibration, required to work at heights, required to work with chemicals, exposed to other things bad for his/her health.

The share of children aged 5-17 involved in child labour has remained relatively stable since 2018 (2.6% in 2019 compared to 2.1% in 2018). Of these children involved in child labour, a significantly higher proportion are involved in economic activities (6%) rather than household chores (0.4%). However, there is a clear gender difference, with boys having higher rates of child labour as compared to girls (4 % and 0.6%, respectively). Similarly, there are varying rates of child labour across governorates (see figure 13). Out of those in child labour, 23% were engaged in labour during school hours.

Figure 13: Child labour (5 to 17 years old) by governorate

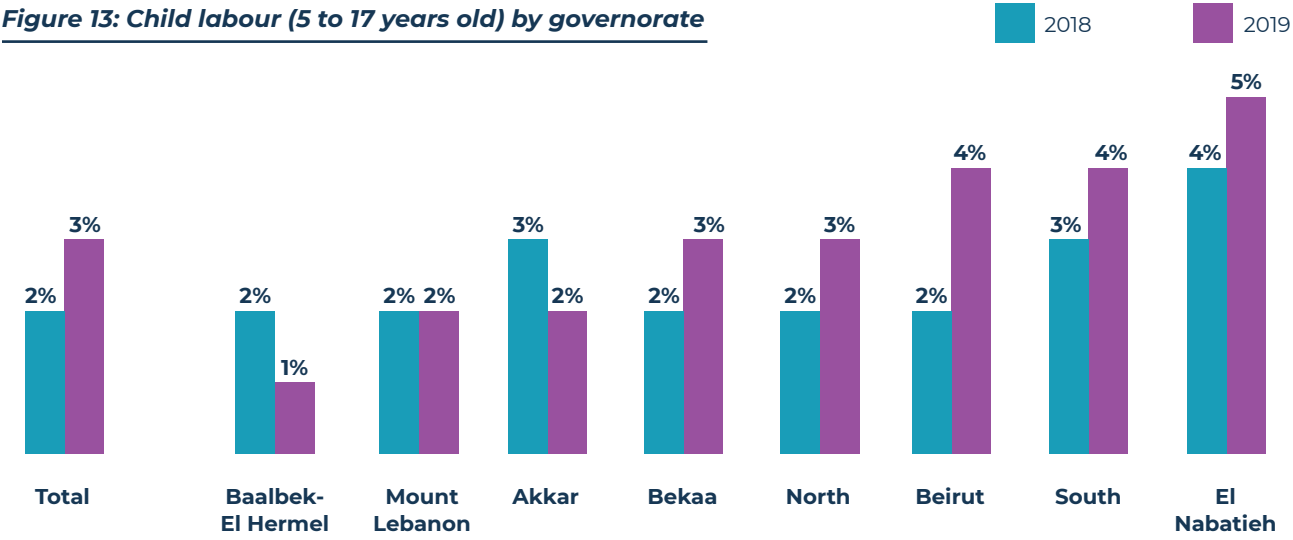
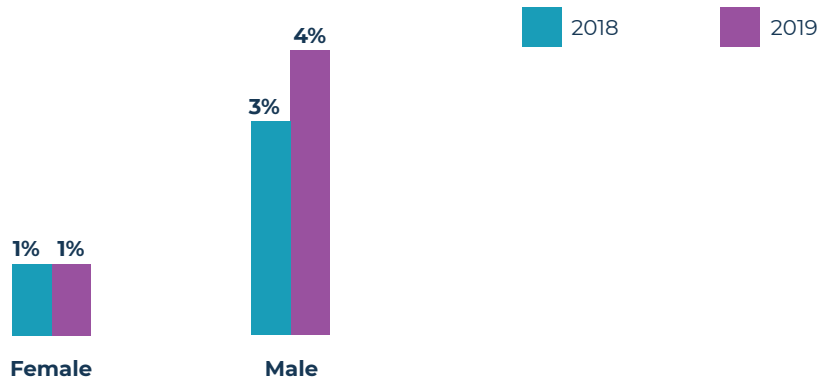


Figure 14: Child labour (5 to 17 years old) by gender



Children who are reportedly working spend an average of 46 hours in economic activities spanning a wide range of sectors (see figure 16), or 49 hours doing household chores. In addition, 23.3% work during school hours (25.7% for boys, and 9.7% for girls).

Figure 15: Child labour details

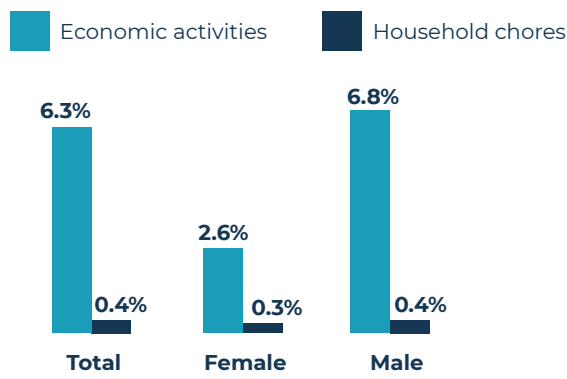
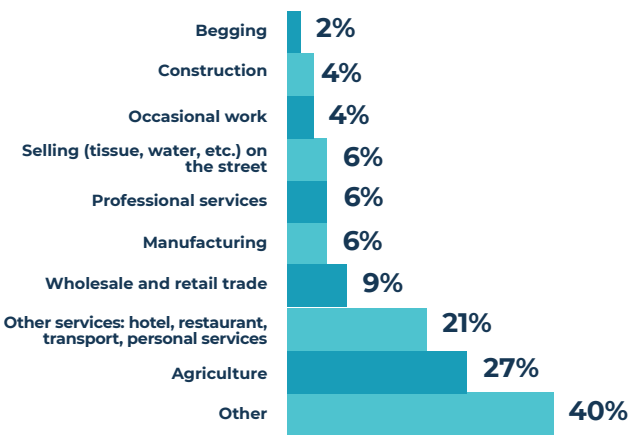


Figure 16: Child labour, per sector



## CHILD MARRIAGE

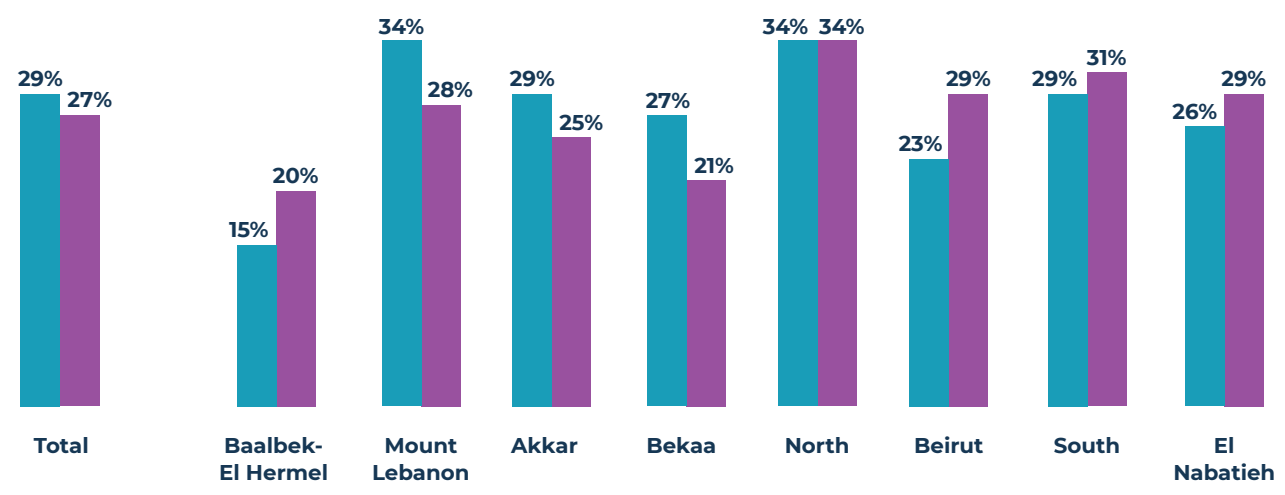
Child marriage was measured as children between the ages of 15-19 who were married at the time of the assessment.

Twenty seven percent of girls aged 15-19<sup>1</sup> were married at the time of the survey, almost the same as 2018 (29%). There was variability in rates of child marriage across governorates as can be seen in figure 17.

<sup>3</sup> For data on other age groups, refer to the VASyR Vault: <http://ialebanon.unhcr.org/vasyr>

Figure 17: Children between the ages of 15-19 who are currently married

2018 2019



VIOLENT DISCIPLINE

Violent discipline is any form of psychological, physical, or severe aggression.

**Psychological aggression:** if the child is shouted, yelled or screamed at; called an insulting name (dumb, lazy, etc.)

**Any physical aggression:** shook him/her; spanked, hit, or slapped; hit him/her on the bottom; hit or slapped on any part of the body.

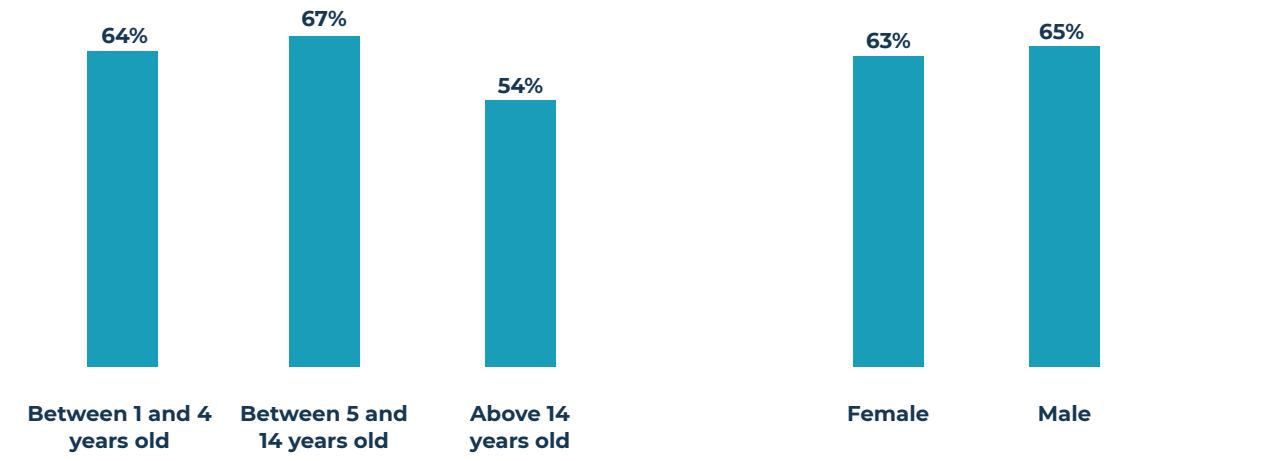
**Severe physical aggression:** hit or slapped on the face

**Non-violent discipline:** took away privileges; explained behavior; gave something else to do.

While 77% of parents reported using positive parenting techniques, rates of the use of violent discipline methods were still high with 64% of households reporting that children from 1-18 had experienced any type of violent discipline in the last year. This percentage shows a considerable decrease in violent discipline from 2018 which had rates of 73%. The most common form of discipline reported, (58%) was

the use of psychological aggression, followed by any physical aggression (49%); while a much lower proportion of parents used severe aggression (12%). Rates of violent discipline were lower for younger children (1-4 years old) in comparison to older children (5-14 years old), however these rates decreased for the oldest children (above 14 years), see figure 18.

Figure 18: Children under 18 years old that have experienced at least one form of violent discipline



# Voices from the field

*This box summarises discussions about the results of VASyR 2019 held in all field offices. It is based on the contextual knowledge of key actors in the field, as opposed to quantitative data.*

## Legal residency

Regarding varying rates of legal residency regionally, the VASyR workshop participants highlighted that refugees residing in the South are more inclined to obtain legal residency due to local governance pressures.

In Akkar, on the contrary, lower legal residency rates were attributed to difficulties in finding sponsors, restrictions on movement and the lack of needed documentation (i.e. IDs).

The discussions highlighted the possibility that many refugees are discouraged from approaching the General Security Office and initiating the process due to fear of arrest or lack of trust in the process.

From a gender perspective, the low rate of legal residency among women was highlighted as a concern in increasing their risk of exposure to sexual and gender-based violence. Legal residency was said to be prioritized more by men, who are more likely to be at risk at checkpoints when moving around for work, and therefore place a high importance on obtaining residency.

## Birth registration

Among workshop participants, concerns were raised regarding the number of births that were left completely undocumented. For these families, economic challenges may have prevented them from obtaining legal birth certificates and they will continue to face challenges in trying to register the births.

## Safety & security

Participants linked the high reported rates of curfews in Nabatieh and the South to high security restrictions. The higher rate of curfews in Mount Lebanon compared to Beirut was attributed to a higher density of refugees in this area and increased tensions due to competition for jobs. In the North of the country, low rates of curfews in Akkar were assumed to be the result of community cohesion in this area.

## Child protection

Workshop participants noted that child labour was deployed as a coping mechanism particularly due to the fact that children are more mobile, as they are less likely to be subject to detention and ID controls at checkpoints. Children were said to be the only breadwinners for many families.

Child labour was said to be underreported due to its illegal nature and stigma attached, as well as due to the perceived normalization of child labour. As observed by discussion participants, parents may be particularly reluctant to self-report child labour if the Shawish is the employer.

Workshop attendees pointed out that child labour follows distinct patterns around the country: while street work was more common in urban areas (North, Mount Lebanon), working in agriculture was more prevalent in Akkar and the Bekaa. The timing of VASyR 2019 (April/ May) was said to impact the reporting of seasonal child labour in the agriculture sector, where the bulk of work is typically carried out later during the year.



Annex 4: Legal residency and birth registration

	Legal residency			Birth registration
	Number of individuals (above 15 years old) with legal residency	Households with all members having legal residency	Households with at least one member having legal residency	Households with no members having legal residency
Total	22%	10%	33%	67%
Governorate				
Akkar	13%	4%	21%	79%
Baalbek-El Hermel	14%	6%	22%	78%
Beirut	34%	17%	48%	52%
Bekaa	18%	8%	27%	73%
El Nabatieh	39%	23%	56%	44%
Mount Lebanon	22%	11%	33%	67%
North	22%	10%	32%	68%
South	39%	21%	59%	41%
Gender of the head of household				
Female	15%	8%	18%	82%
Male	23%	11%	36%	64%
Shelter type				
Non-permanent shelter	14%	5%	24%	76%
Non-residential	21%	11%	31%	69%
Residential	25%	12%	36%	64%

## Annex 5: Drivers and community tensions

	Reported key issues that drive community tensions						
	Competition for jobs	Competition for resources/services	Political differences	Religious differences	Cultural differences	Suspicion of criminal activity	Sexual harassment of women
Total	51%	20%	10%	4%	8%	3%	0%
Governorate							
Akkar	46%	21%	5%	2%	11%	1%	1%
Baalbek-El Hermel	46%	10%	1%	0%	5%	3%	0%
Beirut	56%	25%	23%	11%	11%	3%	0%
Bekaa	14%	4%	0%	0%	1%	2%	0%
El Nabatieh	59%	47%	19%	6%	12%	3%	1%
Mount Lebanon	69%	21%	18%	7%	10%	4%	0%
North	63%	30%	12%	6%	9%	2%	0%
South	62%	37%	12%	9%	24%	9%	1%
Gender of the head of household							
Female	37%	13%	5%	2%	6%	2%	0%
Male	54%	21%	11%	5%	9%	3%	0%
Shelter type							
Non-permanent shelter	32%	12%	4%	1%	5%	2%	0%
Non-residential	54%	24%	11%	6%	11%	6%	0%
Residential	56%	22%	12%	5%	9%	3%	0%