



K. The Displaced and Development

Forced displacement is considered by most Lebanese to be the most serious effect of the war, with far reaching and lasting consequences. In all, 810,000 citizens, or 28 percent of the resident population, were affected by the successive waves of displacement. With the cessation of military operations, some 450,000 persons were still displaced comprising 90,000 families, of which 70,000 could be considered genuinely concerned. Among these, 45,000 families were occupying other people's homes and another 12,000 were living in very poor conditions and accommodations.

The main cause for displacement was the deterioration in the security and political situation. This posed a direct threat to people's lives and sources of livelihood, and forced them to move to other regions chosen on the basis of religious, family and political criteria. These immediate causes overlapped with economic and social considerations, as rural-urban migration in search of work was not a new phenomenon. There is reason to believe that prolonged displacement can not be explained entirely in terms of the inability of families, for security reasons, to return to the places where they lived before the war. Economic and social considerations have played a role in determining the pace of return.

Displacement produced large-scale demographic shifts resulting in total or partial segregation on religious/sectarian basis. These shifts altered the demographic features of both the areas of origin and areas of destination, affecting in the process the unity of the society and creating real problems at the level of social integration. In addition, the economy suffered from the segregation of the labor market, the increase in the rate of emigration abroad, and the impoverishment of displaced families, reflected in the loss of resources, incomes and jobs; and from the deterioration of conditions affecting housing, education, health care and other services.

Based on this, there is a broad agreement that a radical and effective solution to the problem of displacement requires a comprehensive and integrated development policy; and that real and sustainable development is not feasible until such a solution is found.

1. Displacement in figures

Since the outbreak of the war in 1975, and up to its end in 1990, 810,000 citizens were affected by waves of forced displacement as follows²:

1975 - 1976 = 300,000 persons
1977 - 1981 = 150,000 persons
1982 - 1985 = 200,000 persons
1989 - 1990 = 160,000 persons

Displacement was associated with large-scale destruction of villages, towns and housing units, rendering immediate return impossible, and prolonging forced displacement for years after the cessation of military operations. The number of villages and towns affected numbered 949, of which 174 villages were totally or partially destroyed (Table III-42). The number of destroyed or damaged housing units was 45,020, which further exacerbated the housing problem in Lebanon.

Table III-42: Damaged villages and houses bymohafazat, 1975-1990

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(Number, percent)

	Mount Lebanon	South Lebanon	Beirut	North Lebanon	Bekaa	Total	Percent
Damaged villages and towns:							
- Affected by displacement	404	274	-	162	109	949	
- Total destruction	45	24	-	1	1	71	
- Partial destruction	81	17	-	2	3	103	
Destroyed and damaged houses:							
- Partial destruction	6,410	4,424	573	673	235	12,315	27.3
- Total destruction	14,778	4,845	2,576	1,053	409	23,661	52.6
- Damaged	4,630	3,231	344	499	340	9,044	20.1
Total	25,518	12,500	3,493	2,225	984	45,020	100
Percent	57.3	27.8	7.8	4.9	2.2	100	

Source: Ministry for the Displaced, The Return of the Displaced in Lebanon, 1996 (in Arabic).

A sample survey of the displaced families indicated that the most seriously affected region was Mount Lebanon, followed by the South, as the following table shows.

Table III-43: Displacement by mohafazat of origin and destination, 1975-90
(Number, percent)

Mohafazat	Displaced families		Arriving families	
	Number	Percent	Number	Percent
Beirut	5,460	7.7	14,274	20.2
Mount Lebanon	43,880	62	37,284	52.7
North Lebanon	2,961	4.2	2,657	3.8
South Lebanon	16,780	23.8	11,152	15.8
Bekaa	1,645	2.3	4,116	5.8
Abroad	-	-	1,243	1.7
Total	70,726	100	70,726	100

Source: Ministry of the Displaced, The Return of the Displaced in Lebanon, 1996 (in Arabic).

2. Consequences of displacement

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It is difficult to identify all the negative consequences of displacement at the political, social and economic levels in the immediate and long term. A brief summary of the main consequences of displacement is given below.

At the *political level*, displacement caused the country to split along religious lines, resulting in the loss of identity between geography and the national entity. It also led to greater homogeneity between the sectarian and regional notions, and strengthened the feeling of belonging to the sect/region, which impaired national and social integration.

At the *economic level*, displacement was accompanied by the destruction of productive assets and widespread neglect of agricultural land as farmers - who constituted 55 percent of the heads of displaced families - were denied access to their holdings. The industrial sector sustained direct losses as forced displacement affected the labor force and prevented workers from reaching the work place, especially in large plants which were not relocated, contributing to exacerbate regional and economic imbalances.

At the *social level*, problems emerged in integrating the displaced - who felt alienated as a result of their moving from generally rural socio-cultural surroundings to a different and mostly urban setting in poor housing accommodations - in the societies of receiving areas. The move put severe strain on displaced families especially when displacement was associated with the death of a family member. It also contributed to the disintegration of social ties, lowering of social and moral standards, and in multiplying problems confronting youth.

Studies carried out on the displaced indicate a general deterioration in their living conditions. Their participation in economic activity fell below the national average and unemployment in their ranks increased. They were also exposed to extensive impoverishment, with an estimated 50 percent among them not able to meet their very basic needs; and 12.5 percent living in absolute poverty and unfit accommodations. The standard of education of the displaced population also fell below the national average, with 50 percent and 24 percent of them reported as not having gone beyond elementary and intermediate levels, respectively.

In addition, many *legal problems* arose as a result of the displaced being deprived by force of their property or its exploitation, the unlawful occupation of houses, confiscation of property, disadvantageous contracts, and many other legal disputes at a time when resorting to courts was not possible.

3. Outcome of efforts to return the displaced

The Ministry for the Displaced was established in 1992. It was followed by the establishment of the National Fund for the Displaced which finances the return process and related projects. The programme for returning the displaced to their villages is conditional on ensuring the material and political prerequisites. The issue, however, goes beyond the jurisdiction of the Ministry for the Displaced. It requires coordination of efforts with the Council for Development and Reconstruction and the services ministries to provide the physical infrastructure and services needed to resettle the displaced in their villages. It also requires a politically - supportive environment.

The Ministry for the Displaced, which is directly responsible for implementing the return operation, has formulated a work programme for this purpose that attempts to achieve the following:

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- Removal of rubble and rehabilitation of the infrastructure in the villages of return,
- Evacuation of occupied houses and their return to lawful owners,
- Assisting returnees to repair and rebuild their houses,
- Arranging reconciliation in the villages and areas of return to provide the psychological climate needed for confidence - building and stability.

The Ministry for the Displaced accomplished by the end of March 1996 to bring about reconciliation in five villages of Mount Lebanon; other reconciliations were being arranged. The Ministry also drew up a special programme to rebuild in different villages 54 places of worship damaged during the war.

Table III-44: Work accomplished by the Ministry for the Displaced, end of March 1996

Item	Total (Number)	Work accomplished (Number)	Cost (US\$ million)
Removal of rubble	61 villages	-	5.4
Infrastructure	-	-	47.5
Evacuation of houses	41,446	-	200.7
Repair of houses	17,329	12,341	66.7
Reconstruction of houses	4052	677	80.6
Total			400.9

Source: Ministry for the Displaced, *The Return of the Displaced in Lebanon*, 1996 (in Arabic).

It is worth noting that 50 percent of the outlays by the Ministry have gone to finance the evacuation of occupied houses; and that the number of evacuations was twice the number of rebuilt or repaired houses, see Table III-44. This reflects a weak link between the two processes.

This imbalance is evident in the detailed figures which the Ministry for the Displaced published in November 1995. According to these figures, payments for evacuation were made to 60,262 beneficiaries, which means that the number of beneficiaries and the number of houses evacuated were not the same. In this connection, it is worth recalling that a report issued by the Ministry for the Displaced in 1992 estimated the number of houses occupied at 26,987 houses, which is far below payments for the number of houses that had been evacuated (41,446) by end of March 1996.

The planned programme for 1996 provides for an increase in the allocation for the removal of rubble to US\$156 million, and equal amounts (US\$108 million) for repair and evacuation. This could reflect an attempt to rectify the previous imbalance in allocations - though a partial one.

The record shows that, until now, the programme of return has been slow and partial. In both regions of the Bekaa and North Lebanon, the process has been spontaneous and a result of individual and local initiatives; there is no exact information on the number of returnees there. Official efforts have focused mainly on districts of Mount Lebanon, Beirut and East of Saida. The rate of success has been highest in the villages East of Saida (around 80 percent). In contrast, the process of

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return has been slow and partial, especially in the cazas of Ba'abda, Aley, and Chouf, where the proportion of returnees did not exceed 18.75 percent as of mid-1995. The problem in Beirut and its suburbs is more complicated, due to political, social and developmental reasons, since the majority of the displaced there are from areas in South Lebanon.

4. Displacement in relation to sustainable human development

Notwithstanding the considerable efforts, financial and moral, that are being exerted at the official and non-governmental level to expedite the return of the displaced, some basic observations are made in this connection.

In its practical application, the official approach is predicated on a dual and narrow perspective, namely: that the solution to the problem of the displaced lies in the reverse process, i.e., in returning; to make up losses by compensation; and, the social fabric, which suffered a severe setback, could be restored through reconciliation. This approach, however, provides only a temporary solution as it lacks the basic ingredients characteristic of the sustainable human development approach and methodology.

First: In view of the magnitude and complexity of the issue, there is need for a medium and long-term strategy to resolve the problem of the displaced in a satisfactory and lasting manner.

The solution to this problem does not lie only in compensating the displaced and assisting them to restore their houses. It is also not enough to link their return to the availability of the physical and social infrastructure, without taking into consideration the changes that have taken place, both in the setting and in the people themselves, over two decades. Even without the war, the targeted regions would be very different today; the war added new complications.

The success of efforts to resettle the displaced where they were living before the war is conditional on the existence of elements that would attract the Lebanese in general to these areas, and that would provide adequate incentives for the displaced and other citizens, especially in urban conglomerates. This means that these areas should open up and provide the prerequisites associated with living in urban settings, where the displaced have lived for many years and that transformed their life styles.

But what is needed above all is a strategy to develop these regions in the medium and long term to steer the process of physical reconstruction and provide the human, social and legislative conditions to encourage the displaced to return, and to attract the young in particular. The Ministry for the Displaced has recently undertaken increased efforts in this direction.

This approach respects people's choices, and the principle of freedom of movement and choice of the place of residence, school and work. As for the participation mechanisms, which are an integral part of the development approach, 152 committees in 138 villages were formed to expedite the return of the displaced and ensure participation and coordination between people and official and civil parties active in this domain. Additional means are needed to enable these committees to discharge their role effectively.

Second: Success in solving the problem of the displaced does not depend solely on the formulation of an integrated plan; it is also conditional on the proper

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implementation of the programme adopted. Compensation by means of cash payments to individuals, especially those occupying other people's houses, and the allocation of a smaller proportion of available funds to repairing and rebuilding, has not generated a rapid and efficient process of return - the amounts disbursed appear to be disproportionately large compared to the results achieved. The criteria and their application, as well as frequent exceptions made, have also been questioned repeatedly.

By supporting and raising the beneficiaries' income, the method adopted, however, has been closer to the function of social safety nets. This policy has been justified by the need to absorb political pressures, and to deal with the direct social and political consequences of displacement. But this has meant postponement of dealing with the causes at the root of the problem and finding lasting solutions.

Third: The government has been facing difficulties in implementation due to the overall economic and social conditions prevailing in the country, the unsatisfactory state of the public administration, and the lack of coordination between the various agencies and institutions concerned with the programme for returning the displaced. For example, in the initial stages effective coordination was lacking between the concerned ministries, municipalities, non-governmental organizations and village committees, to avoid duplication and waste, and ensure the proper and timely functioning of public facilities and services at the village level. There have been initiatives to remedy the situation in the past few years.

Furthermore, there is no follow-up on the part of the government to ensure that funds are utilized for the designated purpose, or whether they merely help the displaced to establish themselves where they are.

The success of efforts to return the displaced and reintegrate them in their original societies depends largely on the creation of integrated development activities and achieving administrative decentralization. Hence, the need to re-orient the return process in line with the concept and methodology of sustainable human development.

**DON'T STOP HERE .. THERE IS MORE TO READ IN CHAPTER THREE
GO TO SECTION L:
PRESERVATION AND MANAGEMENT OF THE ENVIRONMENT**