

Here we go again: New US-backed Israeli War of Aggression against Lebanon and the continued Obstruction of Freedom of Movement by the European Border Regime

by Anja Pilchowski, 02 April 2026



Figure 1: View over the Palestinian refugee camp Burj al-Shamali near Tyre/Sour, where thousands of people fear for their lives. On the one hand because of the Israeli military attacks and on the other hand because of the insufficient supply of food, since the south was separated from the rest of the country by targeted destruction of infrastructure. Photo by Anja Pilchowski.

At the beginning of this year, I found myself back in Lebanon. I originally went there to take part in an event in Tripoli commemorating all the people who were killed by the European border regime while migrating. And drawn once again to its beauty and the uniqueness of its people, I ended up spending almost the entire February visiting landmarks from the South to the North and the East to the West, (re-)connecting with friends and former colleagues, and exploring activities that support marginalised people. The atmosphere was heavy; people were still exhausted, rents remained high due to the ongoing pressure on the housing market, the economic infrastructure in the south had been destroyed by the war of aggression in autumn 2024, and the fear of yet another war of aggression was lingering in the air. Israel ensures that people know it has power over them, by constantly hovering over Lebanese territory with drones (which circle the skies almost 24/7, scanning licence plates, infiltrating and tracking mobile phones and taking photos of people's faces), by launching ~15,000 attacks following the 27 November 2024 ceasefire (Loysa, 2026), and by spreading rumours that it will attack full scale again soon.

People from southern Lebanon - who had been continuously attacked by the Israeli military due to their proximity to the border - continued fleeing northward. In February

2026, I met a taxi driver in Beirut who had relocated his multi-generational family from Bint Jbeil in the south to Beirut, with no option to return, as Israel had destroyed both family homes. During our conversation, he showed me videos and pictures of his devastated village. Israel destroyed houses, crucial infrastructure and sprayed agricultural sites with white phosphors, making sure that people have no other option than leaving without being able to return. And Khadija from Odaisseh has been displaced multiple times since October 2023, moving from her southern village to Beirut and back to Odaisseh following the November 2024 ceasefire. After spending several months rebuilding her family home - a home she sees as her only true refuge and identity, a home her father built over 35 years and paid for by working outside Lebanon - continued attacks by the Israeli military also forced Khadija to flee to Marwanieh in 2025 and leave the South behind (Reliefweb, 2026).

The late Palestinian poet, professor, and activist Refaat Alareer from Gaza once summarised that ceasefire agreements with Israel usually mean that Palestine - or in this case Lebanon - ceases and Israel continues to fire.

And now, on 2 March 2026, the Israeli military launched a new war of aggression against Lebanon targeting especially South and East Lebanon as well as Dahieh - with the particular threat to turn Beirut's southern suburb Dahieh into a Khan Younis. Two days later, on 4 March, the Israeli military issued another warning, ordering all residents in Dahieh and those living south of the Litani River to evacuate, triggering a new wave of forced mass displacement. On 12 March, the Israeli military issued yet another displacement order. This time covering all of southern Lebanon south of the Zahrani River, placing approximately 14 percent of Lebanon's total land area under evacuation orders - "the forcible transfer of civilians, when not justified by imperative military necessity and the security of the civilians involved, is prohibited and, in certain circumstances, may amount to a war crime" (International Commission of Jurists, 2026).

Until now, Lebanon has not joined international bodies like the International Criminal Court (ICC) to bring documented war crimes before them. Palestine's 2015 ICC accession led to warrants for Netanyahu and Gallant, showing accountability potential. For Lebanon, it could deter aggression, frame Israeli attacks as crimes under UN Charter, and signal commitment to international law (Al Jazeera, 2026). But what value does international law hold, when the majority of Israeli officials claim that international law does not apply to Israel, an international arrest warrant against Netanyahu is not enforced, and states such as Germany continue to provide military support instead? Rules seem to be binding for some, yet negotiable or even inapplicable for others.

On 13 March, the Israeli military carried out heavy bombardments on Beirut again and also targeted areas like Raouche and Hazmieh previously untouched in earlier attacks; the day before the Israeli military even killed displaced people at the Ramlet al Baida beach with an air strike. It furthermore dropped leaflets containing QR codes all over the city, urging residents to cooperate with Israeli authorities since the "new reality" will be brought to Lebanon due to its "great success" in Gaza mocking the ongoing genocide there (Haaretz, 2026). Local media strongly advised the public not to scan these codes.

People in Lebanon describe the pattern of Israel's current war of aggression against their country as a pattern similar to the past two and a half years in Gaza: broad evacuation orders, repeated displacement of thousands of families and individuals, double-tap strikes, and systematic bombing of densely populated areas as well as critical infrastructure like power grids, roads, healthcare facilities and emergency services. Four weeks into the war of aggression, the Israeli military has killed over 1,300 people - including over 50 deliberately targeted medical workers, among them personnel from the Lebanese Red Cross, Popular Ambulance Authority, Nabatieh Emergency Medical Services, Islamic Health Authority, Islamic Risala Scout Association and Lebanese Civil Defense - as well as several journalists, such as Ali Shoeib, Fatima Ftouni, and Mohammed Ftouni, who were covering the war. Among the victims were also university staff, including Hussein Bazzi, Director of the Faculty of Sciences at the Lebanese university, and Professor Mortada Srour. In addition, more than 3,700 people have been injured, and over 1,000,000 people displaced amounting to approximately one-fifth of Lebanon's total population (Gherbal Initiative, 2026b; International Commission of Jurists, 2026; L'Orient Today, 2026a; Reuters, 2026). Alongside the predominantly Arabic-language media coverage (شكراً على جهودكم), there are journalists such as Courtney Bonneau, Priyanka Navani, Sophia Maier or Bruno Thevenin who report in English, German or Spanish.



Figure 2: Destruction of residential buildings in Dahieh caused by the Israeli military. Photo from February 2026. Photo by Anja Pilchowski.

On 15 March, coordinated Israeli attacks began on the town of Khiam, with an anticipated expansion to all regions south of the Litani River - marking what appears to be the beginning of a new phase of Israeli occupation. Following a series of previous aggressions, the Israeli military launched yet another ground invasion in southern Lebanon, citing the need for a buffer zone - although Israeli officials have long promoted their vision of a 'Greater Israel', making buffer zones seem less like protective measures and more like expansionist steps. On 22 March, the Israeli military continued to destroy crucial junctures such as the Qasmiyeh Bridge in southern Lebanon, further isolating the south and entrapping people who were unable or unwilling to leave. The destructions also include(d) attacks on fuel stations, water tanks, solar panels, and health care facilities like Governmental Hospitals in Hasbaya, Nabatieh, Tebnine, Bint Jbeil and the Hospitals Salah Ghandour, AlNajda AlShaabiya, Ragheb Harb and Jabal Amel. As of 30 March, the Israeli military has illegally occupied around 30 Lebanese border villages in the South

(L'Orient Today, 2026b) and completely destroyed the over 400 years old village of Deir Seryan.

There are protests in Lebanon and worldwide calling for an end to the Israeli war of aggression against Lebanon. Demonstrations opposing the attacks on Gaza, Lebanon, Iran, and Syria are also taking place within Israel itself, although they face heavy police brutality. Updates can be followed on Instagram via the accounts of [radical.bloc.tlv](#), [oren_ziv](#), [btselem](#), [the.andrey.x](#), [972mag](#), [breakingthesilenceisrael](#), [jordan_valley_activists](#), [resistancesolidaritynetwork](#), [zochrot](#) or [mesarvot](#).

What is the Lebanese government doing?

The current Lebanese government led by President Joseph Aoun and Prime Minister Nawaf Salam, struggles to confront Lebanon's overlapping crises including financial collapse, degraded public services, corruption, housing crisis (intensified by bombed houses in the South, East and Beirut's southern suburb Dahieh and a building safety crisis in Tripoli) and the continued Israeli military attacks that have devastated civilian areas and strained already fragile state capacities for years. The Lebanese government has illegalised Hezbollah's activities but has yet to develop an alternative strategy for addressing the war of aggression. The Lebanese army failed to establish lasting governance in the southern territories and was ordered by the Lebanese government to retreat. On 10 March, the rapper Jaafar Touffar was arrested after criticising the Lebanese government's handling of the new Israeli war of aggression. In a video posted just before his arrest, Jaafar Touffar challenged the government's order for the army to retreat amid clashes at the southern border. The Freedom of Opinion and Expression Coalition condemned the arrest as a violation of constitutionally protected speech, noting Touffar received an unexplained summons by phone and complied without knowledge of the issuing authority (The Public Source, 2026). On 31 March, residents of the border village Rmaich protested in a final attempt to block the Lebanese Army's withdrawal, pleading with soldiers to remain as a bulwark against Israeli incursions. But the troops proceeded with their retreat, leaving the villagers to face the security vacuum alone.

The United Nations Interim Force In Lebanon (UNIFIL) peacekeepers, who are still present in the south, are helping civilians along the Blue Line by supporting relief efforts, donating blood for a hospital facing shortages, and escorting dozens of women, children, and elderly people to safer areas north of the Litani River. The mission is also keeping humanitarian access open in south Lebanon, assisting the Lebanese Red Cross, and adjusting its operations to carry out its UN mandate despite ongoing danger (UNIFIL, 2026). On 29 March, a UNIFIL peacekeeper was killed while another was critically injured when a projectile exploded at a UNIFIL position near Aadchit el Qsair.

With the second mass displacement of over one million people in less than 1.5 years, the Lebanese government continues to operate in a survival mode without taking a grip and is rather seeking an agreement with US-Israel than a thorough and well-resourced defence and provision plan. The past few decades have brought Lebanon to its knees - much to the liking of the empires which created that very survival mode. As the researcher Jasmin Diab outlined, there is no central body which has mapped the available resources



Figure 3: Every car is a sanctuary now. Photo taken in Beirut by Anja Pilchowski.

and matched the needs of displaced people with these available resources (Tahrir Institute for Middle East Policy, 2026). The response to the current war of aggression is horizontal rather than vertical: local communities usually organise themselves, whilst NGOs network with one another; strong and robust networks were established following the 2019 uprising. Where links between non-governmental organisations are stronger, those affected are better cared for; other areas are completely neglected by both state and non-state actors.

Displaced people are sleeping in cars, tents, hotels, rented apartments, with family and friends, or in public schools or other public buildings like theatres or cinemas that have been converted into shelters. The Lebanese Disaster Risk Management (DRM), together with the Lebanese Red Cross (LRC), attempts to

manage this displacement crisis and is providing shelter and displacement monitoring through the 961 Maps platform (961 maps, 2026). However, there are not enough accommodations to shelter all the displaced people. The journalist Priyanka Navani asked on Instagram why the Lebanese government had not set up large tent camps to house the displaced, as was the case following the earthquake in Türkiye in spring 2023. Instead, the focus is on collective survival and fragmented support rather than on a coordinated, well-structured response. And while the government tries to provide basic support like shelters, food security, health support, or multipurpose cash assistance for Lebanese people by allocating 90 million USD in international aid to UN agencies, Lebanon Humanitarian Fund (LHF), Unicef, World Food Programme and Mercy Corps (Gherbal Initiative, 2026a), migrants and refugees are mostly falling outside this scope.

Current developments especially for refugees and migrants

Migrants and refugees in Lebanon face severe limitations: they cannot return to their countries of origin due to closed airports, hindered right to return or ongoing genocides in their own countries like Sudan. And unlike Lebanese citizens who can retreat to second homes or access public shelters, these shelters remain inaccessible to refugees and migrants. December 2025 figures indicate that approximately 150,000 migrant domestic workers are currently residing in Lebanon. These vulnerable groups typically arrive through the Kafala system and come from Cameroon, Ivory Coast, Ethiopia, other African countries, and other Asian countries (Deutsche Welle, 2025). There have been increasing reports of migrants being evicted from their homes because they could no longer pay

rent following the loss of their jobs. Now they are largely confined to their self-organised support networks, relying on community solidarity and informal aid systems for survival.

Palestinians in Lebanon have been registered as refugees since their displacement following the Nakba. They have long been denied access to essential public services, including healthcare and education in schools and universities, as well as the right to practice certain professions. Due to restrictions on property ownership, most Palestinians continue to live in refugee camps. These limitations have trapped many in a cycle of marginalisation, as they are also denied the right to return to Palestine and rebuild their lives. Since their expulsion from Palestine during the Nakba, Palestinians have faced repeated Israeli attacks and remain especially vulnerable due to their concentration in refugee camps such as Beirut-Shatila, Burj Barajneh, Burj Shemali, Beddawi, Nahr El-Bared, Ein El-Hillweh, or Al Rashidieh. On 4 March, two Palestinians in the Beddawi camp near Tripoli were killed by an Israeli airstrike. Prior to 8 December 2024, Syrians constituted the largest group among refugees and migrants in Lebanon since 2011. Although many Syrians have returned to Syria, either voluntarily or by force, most have remained in Lebanon due to a lack of alternatives or by choice. They continue to face discrimination, economic hardships, and exposure to violence, challenges often intensified by a lack of legal residency that restricts their access to work, healthcare, and education while increasing the risk of arrest or forced eviction. Syrians are frequently among the first to be displaced, forcibly evicted from their homes to make space for better-paying tenants. Excluded from adequate shelter and humanitarian assistance, Syrians are left again to fend for themselves and rely on self-organised forms of support. And since many Syrians work in agriculture particularly in the south, some have already been killed in Israeli attacks.

The arrival of people from Sudan began in the 1950s and 1960s. During this period, the labour market in Lebanon, which was experiencing economic growth, was in need of workforce. This need coincided with the availability of labour from Sudan, particularly from North Sudan. Another phase of migration began in the late 1990s, at intervals that coincided with periods of instability and war in central and west Sudan, with the arriving people working in the hospitality and construction sectors. Between May and July 2022, the IOM counted 11,539 Sudanese people residing in Lebanon as part of its Migrant Presence Monitoring programme (IOM, 2022). The people encountered live predominantly in Beirut, Baabda, El Meten, Aley, Sour, and Saida districts in community flats, respectively unofficial shelters. Their secondary displacement during the current war has left most Sudanese people particularly vulnerable, as they are turned away from government shelters, crammed into unofficial shelters like the *Sudanese Club* in Beirut-Hamra, and overlooked by most NGOs, which prioritise Lebanese people or larger refugee groups like Syrians or Palestinians (CNN, 2026). Additionally, anti-Black racism deepens exclusion by restricting access to resources and opportunities, trapping marginalised Sudanese in already dire conditions.

Freedom of Movement obstructed by the European Border Regime

With Israel invading from the south again and Syria closing its borders to non-nationals in the north and east, the only way to escape without navigating bureaucratic barriers is to

turn toward the White Sea. According to Article 13 of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights, freedom of movement is a human right. But leaving Lebanon is often obstructed by restrictive visa procedures or criminalised pathways. The fact that the majority of people in Lebanon have no access to visa procedures has led to dangerous journeys toward Europe via the White Sea. People board boats that are often unseaworthy, overcrowded, and lacking experienced navigators. These conditions significantly increase the risk of shipwrecks.

The shipwreck of 17 March 2025 illustrates these structural failures (Alarm Phone, 2025). On 15 March 2025, Alarm Phone received reports of a boat that had departed from Lebanon and was in distress near Cyprus. Cypriot authorities were alerted and urged to initiate a search and rescue operation. Despite repeated follow-ups, no details were provided, and authorities later stated that they had searched the area without success. Given Cyprus's documented history of pushbacks to Lebanon, concerns arose that the boat may have been forcibly returned or neglected. On 17 March 2025, it was confirmed that the boat had sunk. Two people survived, seven bodies were recovered, and many others - out of approximately 23 people on board - remain missing. The identification of the two survivors, Bassam and Raad, happened by coincidence, as hospital staff did not follow official protocols but confirmed that the individuals had received treatment and were later discharged. No information was provided regarding their situation after release or about the seven recovered bodies. Only through media coverage published on 30 December 2025 - "Surviving a Shipwreck, Drowning in the System" by the Cyprus Investigative Reporting Network - did it become known that the two survivors were released without psychological or financial support from the Cypriot state, and that six of the seven recovered bodies were transferred to Syria at the relatives' expense, while one person was buried in Cyprus. Political parties including AKEL (Progressive Party of Working People), Volt Cyprus, and The Greens Cyprus have called for an investigation into the circumstances surrounding the shipwreck. Serious concerns remain regarding whether Cypriot authorities were aware of the boat's position before it sank, particularly given that its estimated coordinates had been communicated and that the area is subject to extensive surveillance. The claim that the boat could not be located is widely questioned. According to Rygiel (2016), there is an increased outsourcing of border control in the European context through the exercise of political power, e.g. through bilateral treaties. The crackdown on people on the move not only prevents them from reaching their preferred destinations but also discourages them from fleeing severe life-threatening situations. They are left in death zones with no other option but to risk their lives when continuing to move. One organisation that appears in bilateral treaties involving Tunisia, Senegal, or Lebanon is the International Centre for Migration Policy Development (ICMPD). The ICMPD is strongly involved in policy-making in support of externalisation of the EU's borders. According to Georgi (2007) the ICMPD was founded in 1993 by Austria and Switzerland as a small, three-year pilot project based in Vienna/Austria to promote intergovernmental dialogue and conduct practical research aimed at responding to the new challenges of migration from East Europe to West Europe. In 2004, it was already an international organisation with ten member states, about forty employees and an annual budget of about 3.5 million euro. Although the ICMPD has been involved in the development of the European migration regime in many ways over the past years, it is

almost unknown. "ICMPD advises countries in the background, creates international networks and also becomes active itself in border regions of the EU. ICMPD is an organization that is known to only a few, but at the same time has become an important player in EU migration policy" (FragDenStaat, 2023, para. 1).

Dutch authorities together with the ICMPD are aiming to establish Lebanon as a driver of regional border management with a project that supports Lebanese border agencies in professionalisation of border management capacities. The project started in March 2022 and lasted until November 2025 (ICMPD, n.d.-a). Furthermore, in collaboration with the Danish Migration Management Programme, funded by the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of Denmark, the ICMPD is implementing the project "Central Migration Data Management Solution for National Institutions in Lebanon". The goal of this project, whose duration is from December 2024 until January 2027, is to improve Lebanon's migration governance by developing a centralised data management system. The project aims to assist Lebanese national institutions in enhancing inter-agency coordination, boosting technical capacities, and ensuring effective and sustainable migration management in Lebanon (ICMPD, n.d.-b).

And as the number one donor, also the EU recognised very early on that Lebanon plays a crucial role in keeping migrants out of Europe. The President of the European Commission, Ursula von der Leyen, together with the Cypriot minister Nikos Christodoulides announced on 2 May 2024 "a financial package of EUR 1 billion for Lebanon that would be available from this year until 2027. (...) [This financial package shall contribute to] security and stability (...) [and] will support the Lebanese armed forces as well as the general and internal security forces. This will be mainly focused on providing equipment, training and the necessary infrastructure for border management. In addition, it would be very helpful for Lebanon to conclude a working arrangement with Frontex, particularly on information exchange and situational awareness" (European Commission, 2024).

Based on the announcement above and Lebanon's Right to Access Information Law (Law No. 28/2017), the Gherbal Initiative submitted a request to the Lebanese authorities on 23 February 2026, asking for the following:

- Receipt and allocation of funds

Confirmation of whether the Ministry of Finance received the full amounts mentioned in the agreements, including the date and amount of each disbursement. A detailed explanation of how these funds were recorded in the state budget or in any special accounts. A breakdown of the amounts transferred or allocated to each beneficiary ministry, administration, or entity, with the relevant dates and amounts.

- Implementation and contracting

Identification of the implementing entities for each programme, including the Internal Security Forces, border management, recovery projects, and administrative reform. Clarification of whether any of these funds were transferred to third parties, such as international organisations, consulting firms, or contractors, including the names of those entities and the value of the related contracts.

- Procurement procedures

Clarification of whether any public procurement procedures were carried out for the implementation of the projects financed under these agreements. If so, Gherbal requested confirmation that these procedures complied with Lebanon's Public Procurement Law (Law No. 244/2021), including the procurement method used, whether tender notices were published and where, the names of the successful bidders and contract values, and copies of the tender documents, evaluation reports, and award decisions.

The Beirut-based Gherbal Initiative is a civil society organisation dedicated to compelling opaque public administrations to disclose and visualise their budgetary data, effectively serving as Lebanon's answer to platforms like Germany's *Frag den Staat* (Ask the State). By translating complex state balance sheets into user-friendly infographics, Gherbal bridges the gap between citizens and a secretive Lebanese government, turning raw, often withheld administrative data into public knowledge.

How to help our siblings in Lebanon

Lebanon is a country in which a variety of externally imposed crises overlap. This condition has become so deeply entrenched that many people have grown accustomed to the unbearable. Lebanese resilience is not necessarily only a particular strength, but above all the lack of alternatives and a necessity for survival (Loysa, 2026). And now, with the current war, the cost of living has sharply increased as supply chains are disrupted, infrastructure is damaged, and imports become more expensive. Prices for basic goods like food, fuel, and medicine have surged, while many people face job losses or reduced income. As a result, everyday expenses are becoming harder to afford, pushing more households into financial strain and making it difficult for most people to meet their basic needs. But many people on the ground have not given up and continue to work day and night to sustain their communities. They are refusing to be divided. I saw Lebanese people support Syrians, Syrians support Ethiopians, Ethiopians support Palestinians, Palestinians support Sudanese, queer people support Shia Muslims, Shia Muslims support Sunni Muslims, Sunni Muslims support Christians, and Christians support Druze and Alawi - each community reaching across lines of origin, faith, and identity.

But since International organisations have withdrawn both financially and organisationally, especially after 8 December 2024 when the al-Assad regime was ousted and Syrians were no longer the primary targets of international support, and later, when USAID was dismantled in July 2025, huge gaps in humanitarian assistance have been created. Yet, this circumstance allowed an (re-)opening for community-embedded and grassroots initiatives to break away from Western paternalism and to (re-)establish a more decentralised, community-informed approach to the multiple crises they face. And together with capacity-building – which is crucial for crisis response to equip local communities with the necessary skills, resources and organisational strengths – these grassroots initiatives are constantly expanding their expertise in order to respond efficiently, avoid duplication of effort and carry out sustainable, long-term work. **At the same time, we, as the international community, now have an obligation to support these**

revitalised and newly emerging poppies of local solidarity. Since the people and their children fled without collecting essentials, they need access to food and basic cooking utensils, safe drinking water, basic first aid kits and medication, hygiene items, safe sanitation solutions, baby formula, diapers, clothes, tents or materials for makeshift shelters, mattresses, blankets, and support with covering rent.

In Tripoli

The NGO **Cedar Centre for Legal Studies** launched its “Stronger Together” campaign, distributing food packages, drinking water, and hygiene kits while also providing psychosocial support to displaced people. **Tarablos Tastajib**, a grassroots movement based in Tripoli, has mobilised volunteers to support displaced families in Tripoli and nearby areas such as Dennieh, Minieh, Miziara, Qalmoun, and Koura; in their first phase, they focused on the support of displaced people in public shelters and have since shifted their focus to informal shelters. They are distributing food & water, mattresses, blankets & pillows as well as hygiene kits, baby formula and diapers for kids and elders. Also in Tripoli, the NGO **Utopia** partnered with Oxfam Lebanon and Order of Malta Lebanon to distribute mattresses and pillows and provide meals across collective shelters. The NGO **Development, Culture, and Leadership (DCL)**, also located in Tripoli, with years of experience in the rapid implementation of emergency response plans, together with **Ahali Al Madina** (experience with shelters, displaced families in rented accommodations, and direct distributions of food, water, clothing, hygiene supplies, mattresses, blankets, and other essentials) and **Jabal Mohsen First Responders** (experience with emergency response and rescue operations drawing on its volunteer base, search-and-rescue expertise, and crisis response history) are about to team up in order to deliver rapid reactions to field incidents, shelter management and logistics support, volunteer mobilisation for relief, and referrals for vulnerable cases.

The following organisations and initiatives are operating in Beirut:

Reman Organization, a migrant-led group, is supporting internally displaced migrants through the distribution of food and essential commodities, while also securing safe sleeping spaces. In Beirut's Geitawi neighbourhood, **Nation Station**, a long-standing community kitchen, has shifted its focus to preparing and distributing meals for displaced people. At the same time, **SIDC** and **Mosaic** have launched a new shelter project to house individuals who have lost their homes due to gender-based violence. Other local actors are stepping in with equally vital efforts.

Tota Beirut, a queer bar, has partially transformed into a hub for collecting and distributing funds and essential supplies, while **Egna Legna Besidet**, a collective of Ethiopian domestic workers, is providing hot meals, baby formula, diapers, blankets, and clothing to internally displaced people. In refugee camps such as Bourj el Barajneh, **Association Makani** continues its food-centered model of economic empowerment. Meanwhile, the migrant-led group **Tres Marias** in Bourj Hammoud is organising the distribution of warm meals to displaced people. In Dahieh, **Humans of Dahieh** has established a war relief project, delivering critical supplies including medicines, mattresses, food, and water to displaced



Figure 4: Coffee is a connecting element and also the small coffee meetings help to keep the initiatives for displaced people going. Photo by Anja Pilchowski.

and war-affected communities. In collaboration with digital content creators and videographers Hmayed and Hsen Farhat, they are also distributing tents, food, and even provisions for animals left behind in South Lebanon. The **Reclaim our Rights (ROR) collective**, endorsed by *Migrant Workers Action (MWA)*, is supporting migrants in unofficial shelters (community housing) by distributing food, hygiene kits and other urgent supplies. MWA notes that many donors restrict how their funds can be used, making it difficult to cover rent directly. But paying rent for migrants who currently lack access to employment remains a crucial way to ensure safe housing.

In Saida, the NGO **Cap Anamur** together with the local organisation PARD, which coordinates aid in schools, provides food and hygiene supplies in particular for the displaced people in Saida and South Lebanon.

Across Lebanon

The NGO **Beit el Baraka** generally ensures a sense of dignity to Lebanese families that have been deprived of their most basic needs and rights. During the current war of aggression, the organisation provided several thousand cooked meals, several hundred blankets, more than 12 tons of dry food, 1,200 liters of cooking oil, and several thousand cans of food. It has also recently begun reaching people in the cut off south who chose to remain in their homes. The intersectional feminist collective **Jeyetna** also operates across Lebanon and is committed to menstrual justice. Since the war began, they have focused on distributing period pads, water bags, and other essential supplies to women and girls. Suicidality often rises during war because of intense trauma, loss, displacement, economic hardship, and fear. In this context, access to psychosocial support becomes critical. The NGO **Embrace** runs Lebanon's National Lifeline (1564) and provides a vital, confidential resource for people in crisis, offering emotional support, risk assessment, and connection to mental-health services that can help reduce isolation and prevent suicidal acts during wartime stress. The **Juzur Initiative** collaborates with a number of volunteers and focal points across Lebanon. They provide food & water, shelter, cooking & heating material, clothes, and hygiene and emergency items to displaced families in Beirut, Mount Lebanon and North & South Lebanon. **Beit Afal Assumoud** works with Palestinian refugees and other vulnerable people across Lebanon through community support, psychosocial services, vocational training, and educational activities. Its work is active in several camp areas, including Nahr El Bared in North Lebanon, Rashidieh in the south, and Burj Al Barajneh in Beirut, with programs such as mental health support, reproductive health, youth activities, and cultural projects.

The need to support people in Lebanon will be long. It will not stop even if the Israeli war of aggression against Lebanon ends tomorrow. People are exhausted, social cohesion is eroding, and homes and agricultural lands have been permanently destroyed. At the same time, sectarian tensions and anti-migrant sentiments are being fueled by the spread of post-factual news and AI-generated content on social media (very much to the liking of the ruling empires) while the response of the Lebanese government remains insufficient and non-inclusive. Yet, local communities and informal networks of non-governmental actors continue to absorb shocks again and again. The grassroots initiatives and local NGOs do not intend to normalise the absence of the Lebanese state, but are truly committed to ease the daily suffering of the most affected people (Tahrir Institute for Middle East Policy, 2026).

If possible, please donate to one of the NGOs/ initiatives listed above or to another organisation you trust. Or keep an eye out for fundraising events in your local area – there is often a Lebanese diaspora nearby you. Every penny you can spare is urgently needed in Lebanon.

The recently established NGO "Hamburg Solidarisch e.V." of which I am a board member, is about to launch its first fundraising campaign to support people in Lebanon. You can read more on our webpage www.hamburg-solidarisch.de or Instagram account *hamburgsolidarisch*. And if you are interested to donate, we can even issue you a donation receipt in case you reside in Germany. We will publish all our activities during the fundraiser to ensure complete transparency.

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