



**UNHCR**  
The UN Refugee Agency

**SIREN**  
ASSOCIATES

# MAPPING AND UNDERSTANDING STATELESSNESS IN AKKAR

SEPTEMBER 2021





## **DISCLAIMER**

Any portion of this publication may not be reproduced or used in any manner whatsoever without the express written permission of Siren Associates except for the use of brief quotations.

This publication is supported by UNHCR Lebanon and does not necessarily represent the views of UNHCR.

All rights reserved. Reproductions and translations are authorized, except for commercial purposes, provided the source is acknowledged.

This document is for general distribution.

## TABLE OF CONTENTS

- I. Executive Summary
- II. Background and Context
- III. Methodology
- IV. People and Places
  - A. Statelessness in Numbers
  - B. Categories and Profiles
- V. Causes and Consequences
  - A. The Why and How
  - B. Access to Rights
  - C. Coping Mechanisms
- VI. Perceptions and Identities
- VII. Double Vulnerability
  - A. Gender Stigma
  - B. Nomads of Lebanon
    - 1. Bedouin: Outliers of a Nation
    - 2. Dom: Wanderers of the Past
- VIII. Conclusions and Recommendations



## ABSTRACT

This study provides an analysis of statelessness among people of Lebanese descent in the northern governorate of Akkar. It starts with an overview of the local context, shedding light on the level of socioeconomic instability, which has been exacerbated by the current global pandemic.

It also introduces the history of statelessness nationally, before diving into the specificities of this issue in Akkar. The results are viewed through a comparative lens, looking at the findings of a previous study on statelessness in Tripoli.

This study on stateless persons of Lebanese origin residing in Akkar relied on both quantitative surveys and insights from key informant interviews, as well of qualitative information gathered from extensive fieldwork. Lastly, the report includes a section on policy recommendations.



I.

# EXECUTIVE SUMMARY



# EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

## Background

- Stateless individuals hold no nationality, and thus are not recognized by any state. Statelessness is a global phenomenon, affecting millions of people worldwide and leading to serious violations of human rights.
- Statelessness is known to be a prominent phenomenon in Lebanon, having been present throughout the country's history. Since the establishment of Greater Lebanon in 1920, successive authorities have failed to provide sustainable solutions for stateless individuals.
- Very little literature has been published on the topic in Lebanon, but in 2019, an innovative study conducted in the city of Tripoli by Siren Associates and MARCH, a local NGO, spearheaded research on statelessness in the country. The study estimated that there are around **2,200** stateless individuals in Tripoli and its surrounding areas, and **27,000** stateless individuals nationwide. Previous national estimates ranged between **80,000** and **200,000** stateless individuals.
- Replicating the promising Tripoli experience, Siren Associates, in partnership with UNHCR, undertook a new mapping exercise based on extensive fieldwork. This time, the study aimed at understanding the causes, consequences and social impact of statelessness in Akkar, which previous studies had indicated as having among the largest numbers of stateless persons in Lebanon. The process involved contacting **180** key stakeholders and conducting **1,102** surveys, which led to the direct identification of **4,088** stateless persons.
- The study found that there are seven main hotspots of statelessness in the governorate, with a few cases scattered across other rural areas. Wadi Khaled appears as the major hotspot in Akkar, accounting for almost **50%** of the total number of identified stateless individuals. The second largest hotspot is Sahel Akkar, a rural border region that is known to be one of the poorest in the governorate.

## People and places

- The stateless population in Lebanon can be divided into two main categories: those who are “under-study” (Qayd El Dares, QeD), and those who are not registered (Maktoum El Qayd, MeQ).
- **The under study** (QeD) status is conferred by the state to a group of stateless persons. They are considered by the Lebanese authorities to be of foreign origin and with undetermined nationality, regardless of any historic or cultural roots in the country. Their situation remains under review by the relevant security services.
- **The Maktoum el Qayd** (MeQ) is a term used to describe persons who are not registered in any official civil registry. This group includes persons born to a stateless father or unknown parents (referred to in this study as “inherited”), or born to parents with a known nationality but who failed to register their child's birth within the one year deadline, after which births can only be registered through a lengthy and costly court procedure (referred to in this study as “nonregistered”).

# EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

- Like in Tripoli, **85%** of stateless individuals in Akkar are not registered (MeQ). However, discrepancies stand out when looking at sub-groups within the broader MeQ category. For example, a majority of the Tripoli stateless are “nonregistered”, while almost half of those in Akkar belong to the “inherited” sub-category. For the latter, their belonging to this category is often related to historic factors, such as their descendants not being registered in the 1932 census.

## Causes and consequences

- In Lebanon, stateless persons are granted some limited rights based on their formal status, mostly through relevant identification documents, such as the *ta'arif cards* or *certificates* (granted by *mukhtars*) or a *Qayd el Dares/under-study* card. These rights include accessing healthcare (at their own expense) and seeking education. Holders of *Qayd el Dares* cards benefit from additional rights, such as being able to own movable goods and access employment, provided they receive authorization from the Ministry of Labor.
- Stateless individuals in Akkar have also developed coping mechanisms and informal workarounds to ensure their freedom of movement and ability to access property. This is dissimilar to the Tripoli context. They also face fewer security threats than stateless persons in Tripoli, who were found to face higher levels of day-to-day violence.
- The study showed that many of the hardships faced by stateless people in Akkar are also felt by the region's other residents, whether they are stateless or not. Issues tied to accessing healthcare, education, and employment are felt by all.
- Furthermore, the regulatory framework governing stateless persons' confirmation and acquisition of nationality is complicated, lengthy, and costly. A sustainable solution to this situation has not yet been realized. The complexity of registering births after the one-year deadline also stands in the way of regularizing the status of those nonregistered persons.

## Perceptions and identities

- Despite being deprived of their legal personality, stateless persons in Akkar show great attachment to Lebanon the country, with the survey showing that stateless persons mostly blame the Lebanese state for their current situation. That said, respondents showed high levels of trust in the army and other security services, while disliking political institutions.
- Stateless persons are highly stigmatized, which generates further shame, embarrassment and distress for them, adding to their vulnerability.

# EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

## Double vulnerability

- The vulnerability of stateless people is also affected by their gender (women), their geographical location (Wadi Khaled) and ethnicity (Dom and Bedouin).
- Gender discrimination is not novel in Lebanon, particularly in the Akkar region. Nonetheless, the findings show that stateless women face specific challenges, such as early marriage, a lack of education, and greater unemployment than men.
- The Nomadic minority, composed of Bedouin and Dom, also face specific challenges, for which they have developed their own coping mechanisms.

## Methodology

- Similar to the work done in Tripoli, the research methodology for this report relied on a thorough literature review, followed by mixed qualitative-quantitative research methods. Thus, fieldwork involved semi structured in-depth interviews with *mukhtars*, key informants, focus groups, and an extensive four-phase field survey with adult stateless individuals and parents of stateless children. This survey combined door-to-door and snowball sampling techniques. A control survey was also conducted with a smaller sample of Lebanese locals.

## Key recommendations

- Lebanese authorities need to set a national policy that aims to identify and protect stateless persons, reduce statelessness by finding durable solutions, and enforce ways of preventing it.
- Lebanese authorities need to amend relevant legislation, such as the nationality law and registration of civil events, in order to reduce, end and avoid statelessness in Lebanon.
- The Ministry of Interior and Municipalities (MOIM) needs to ensure stateless persons' access to basic rights. It should identify and map all stateless persons in Lebanon, make use of available digital resources to issue proper documentation for stateless persons, and allow stateless persons to have formal identity documents.
- Until the issuance of proper documentation by MOIM, authorities need to acknowledge the standardized *ta'arif* certificates as a temporary alternative identification document for stateless persons.
- *Mukhtars* must make efforts to be well informed about the laws and regulations concerning statelessness so they may provide better guidance and generate awareness about civil status matters. Their knowledge should also include the rights and services that are accessible to stateless persons.
- The Ministry of Justice needs to introduce internal guidelines on time frames for court cases related to statelessness and the related fees, and ensure that legal aid is provided to stateless individuals in their judicial proceedings.





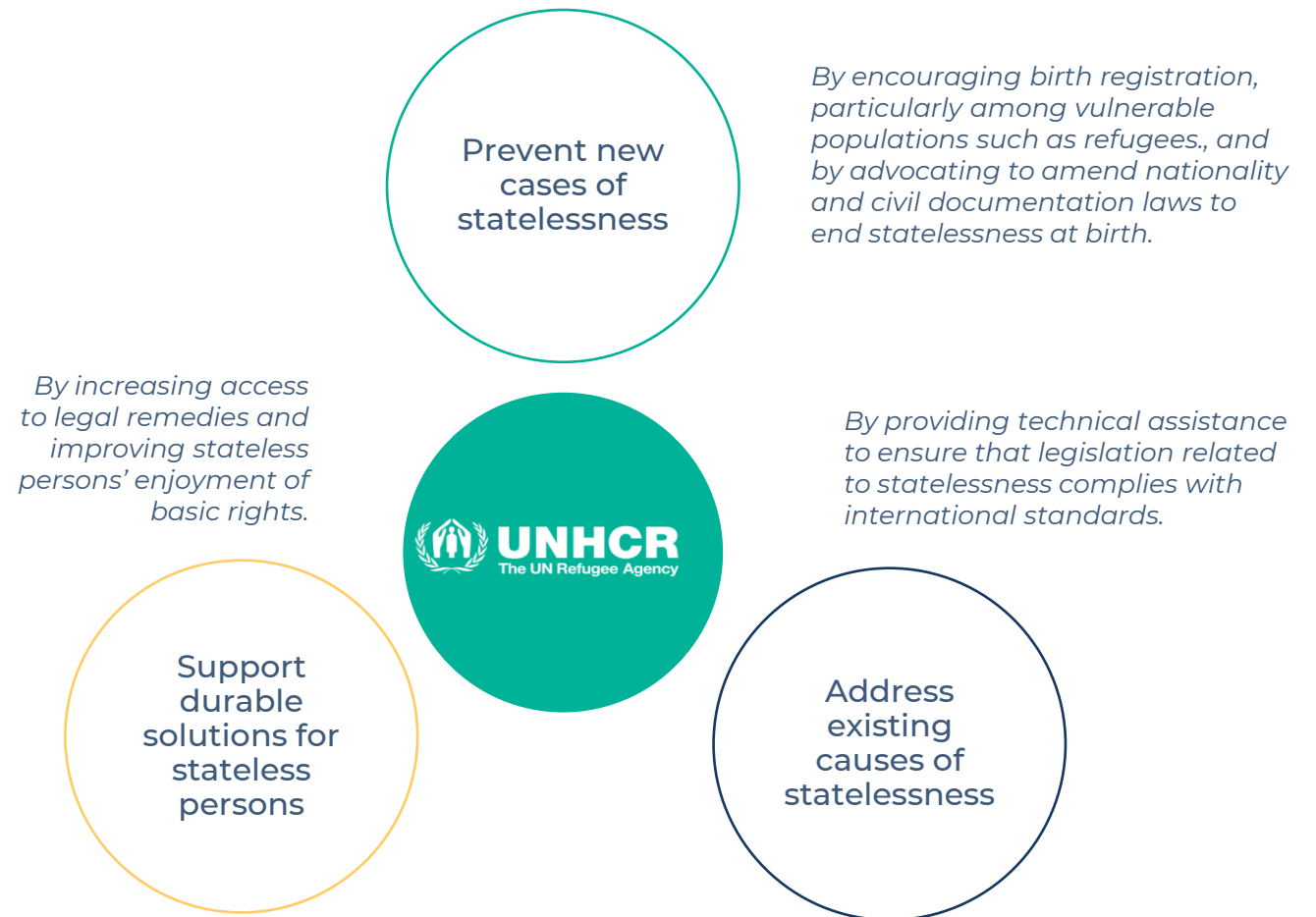
II.

## **BACKGROUND AND CONTEXT**

# UNHCR: A GLOBAL MANDATE

This study aims to help UNHCR better evaluate the scope of statelessness in Akkar, and better understand the underlying causes of this phenomenon, its risk factors, its effects on individuals and their families, and the potential coping mechanisms to address it.

- A decade into the Syrian crisis, Lebanon has become one of UNHCR's largest single-country operations worldwide. In particular, the northern offices of Tripoli and Akkar received the largest initial influx of refugees from Syria, thereby increasing pressure on the governorate's displaced and vulnerable communities, including Lebanese stateless persons.
- In addition to its work with refugees, UNHCR has a global mandate to identify, avoid, and minimize statelessness, and to protect stateless people around the world.
- In order to achieve its goal to end statelessness in Lebanon, UNHCR collaborates with the government, civil society and with other UN agencies and institutions.
- After having mapped statelessness in Tripoli with MARCH in 2019, Siren Associates initiated a new mapping, this time with UNHCR, to uncover and better understand the complex situation further north, where statelessness has been historically prominent.





# STATELESSNESS IN LEBANON: A NATIONAL PHENOMENON

In Lebanon, the issue of statelessness is tied to the establishment of the country. As the situation evolved over the years, Lebanon consistently failed to solve the issue in its entirety.

<b>1920</b>	Creation of Greater Lebanon	<b>1923</b>	The Lausanne Treaty was signed, granting citizenship to Ottoman residents residing in the Lebanese territory	<b>1932</b>	<b>Second wave of statelessness</b> Nationality was granted to 200,000 individuals, while around 60,000 others were omitted from the census and denied citizenship	<b>1954</b>	The UN Convention related to the Status of Stateless Persons was adopted; Lebanon was not yet party to it
<b>1921</b>	<b>First wave of statelessness</b> After the end of WWI and the disintegration of the Ottoman Empire, Greater Lebanon was declared in 1920 and placed under French Mandate. The latter addressed the complex issue of citizenship, with the French High Commissioner ordering a census as early as 1921, whose implementation affected some residents' eligibility for citizenship	<b>1925</b>	Lebanese nationality law was promulgated. It consecrated the principle of " <i>jus sanguinis</i> " (patrilineal affiliation). It was later amended several times over the years	<b>1951</b>	Law for documenting personal status was promulgated	<b>1961</b>	The UN Convention on the Reduction of Statelessness was adopted; Lebanon was not yet party to it

# STATELESSNESS IN LEBANON: A NATIONAL PHENOMENON

Since Lebanon's independence in 1943, the most notable progress achieved on the issue of statelessness was the 1994 naturalization decree. Nevertheless, this partial measure proved to be incomplete and was tainted with accusations of sectarianism and clientelism.

<p><b>1962</b></p> <p>Lebanese authorities created the under-study category, applying it to holders of an undetermined nationality</p>	<p><b>1994</b></p> <p>Naturalization decree was promulgated, granting nationality to 202,527 individuals</p>	<p><b>2011</b></p> <p>Nationality was withdrawn from 200 individuals who were naturalized in 1994</p>	<p><b>2020</b></p> <p>Electronic issuance of individual civil extract was launched, ensuring easier access to civil extracts. This move supported the digitalization of civil registry records</p>
<p><b>1967</b></p> <p>Decision 68/67 acknowledged "statelessness" for first time in Lebanon</p>	<p><b>2003</b></p> <p>State Council decision 484 was issued, accepting the Maronite League's challenge to the 1994 decree</p>	<p><b>2015</b></p> <p>The Law for the Reacquisition of the Lebanese Nationality was promulgated, allowing Lebanese emigrants to acquire the nationality through a special committee</p>	<p><b>2021</b></p> <p>Pilot project was launched on registration automation with the Ministry of Interior and Municipalities and General Security</p>



# STATELESSNESS IN LEBANON: A NATIONAL PHENOMENON

Between the 1921 census and the 1994 Naturalization Decree, statelessness in Lebanon underwent several phases of unsound regulation.

- **The 1921 Census:** After the proclamation of modern Lebanon in 1920, the French Mandate took charge of the territory and carried out a population census in 1921. This mechanism grouped the population into several categories, including those living in the national territory, those living overseas, and those of Lebanese origin. The latter thus created a differentiation between residents of Lebanese origin and those not of Lebanese origin. This later had great implications for those residing in the country regarding their eligibility to obtain citizenship.
- **The 1925 Lebanese Nationality Law,** still valid today, is the main piece of legislation regulating the acquisition of citizenship. It institutionalized patrilineal affiliation by blood lineage as the main principle for becoming Lebanese. Until today, Lebanese women cannot pass on citizenship to their children.
- **The 1932 Census** is one of the main causes of historic statelessness in Lebanon. Many residents living in the Lebanese territory were omitted from the census. Bedouins were among those omitted, as they could not prove their residency for longer than six months. Those individuals who did not obtain nationality were classified as having “undetermined nationality”.
- **The “nationality under study” (QeD)** category was created in 1962 by the General Directorate of General Security (GDGS). It was mainly given to individuals who were previously considered to have “undetermined nationality”. This complicated the matters further, trapping people in that category for several generations as no other proceedings could be taken while the authorities looked into their situation, rendering the QeD a quasi-permanent status.
- **The 1951 UN Convention on Refugees and its 1967 Protocol** were never signed by the Lebanese state. The main reason for Lebanon’s refusal to sign the convention was its inclusion of cessation clauses that could lead to the naturalization of Palestinian refugees who fled to Lebanon in 1948. Equally relevant in relation to the more recent Syrian refugee crisis in Lebanon, the “permanent settlement” of refugees is a thorny issue that many say would erode the country’s fragile sectarian balance.
- **The 1994 Naturalization Decree** meant to rectify the exclusion created by the 1932 Census by granting nationality to the descendants of those who were omitted from it. However, only one third of those naturalized (more than 200,000 persons) were actually stateless. The rest were either Syrian or Palestinian nationals. In addition, bureaucratic hurdles blocked many people from benefiting from the Decree. The Maronite League then challenged the Decree before the State Council, arguing that it had tilted the sectarian balance towards Muslims. This resulted in the withdrawal of Lebanese nationality from more than 200 individuals.

# THE PREQUEL: STATELESSNESS IN TRIPOLI

An innovative study led by Siren Associates and MARCH in the city of Tripoli in 2019 pioneered field research on the issue of statelessness in Lebanon, proposing for the first time realistic estimates of its extent.

**27,000**

estimated stateless people of Lebanese origin around the country

**x2**

The number of stateless of Lebanese origins could **double** in 15 years

**30%**

of stateless people of Lebanese origin in Tripoli live in Tebbaneh

**2,200**

estimated stateless people of Lebanese origin in Tripoli

**22%**

of stateless people of Lebanese origins in Tripoli have very complicated cases

**26%**

of stateless people of Lebanese origin in Tripoli live in Beddawi

**67%**

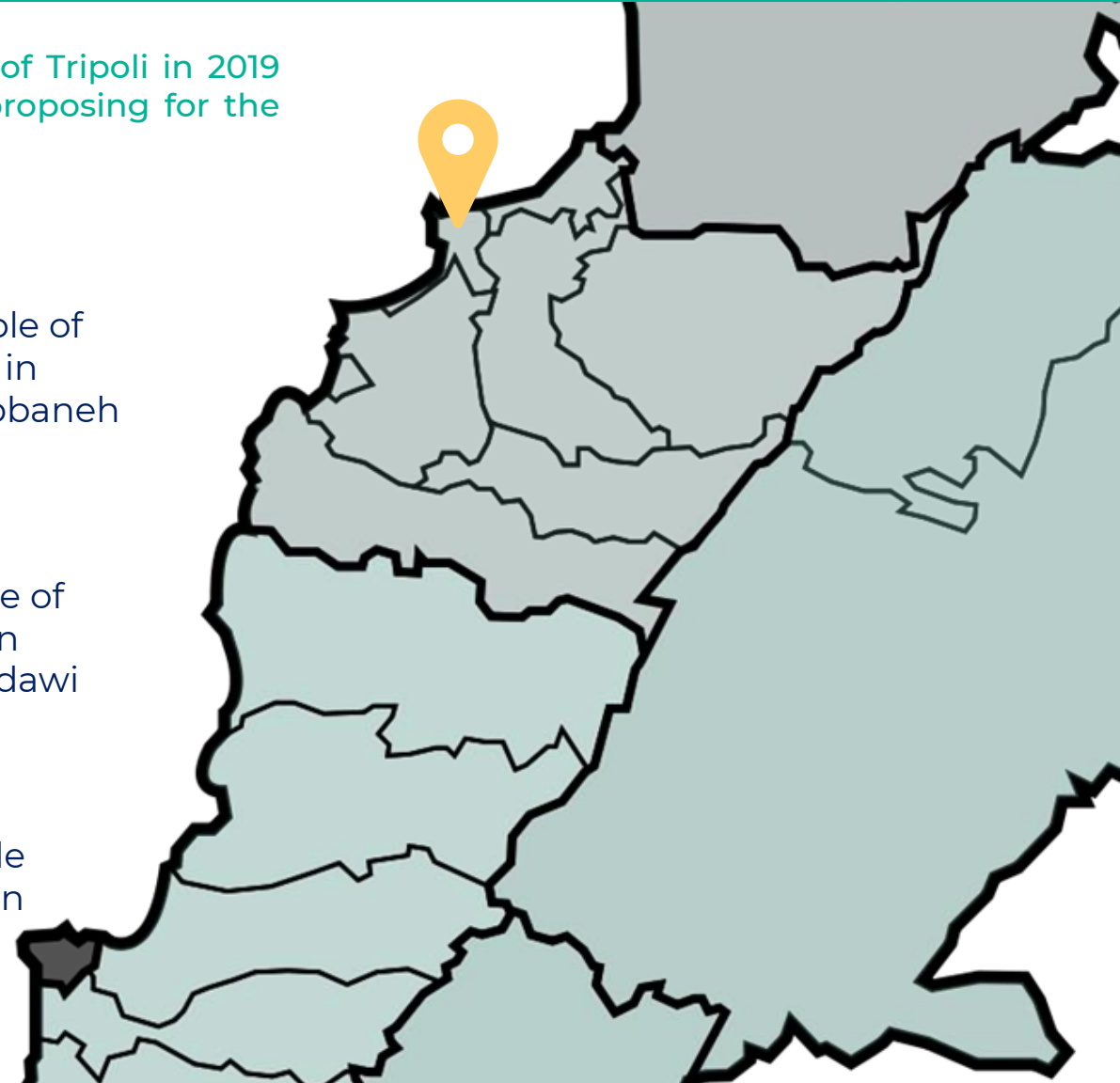
of stateless people in Tripoli are born to a Lebanese father (non-stateless)

**70%**

of stateless people in Tripoli have a Lebanese mother

**20%**

of stateless people of Lebanese origin in Tripoli live in Qobbeh





# THE SEQUEL: AKKAR AT A GLANCE

Replicating the same approach in the neighboring northern governorate of Akkar allowed an expansion of these findings, the consolidation of the results and a stronger basis for building actionable recommendations.

**428,600**

residents

**36%**

are Syrian  
refugees

**59%**

are Lebanese

**5%**

are Palestinian

**66%**

of Lebanese live  
below the  
poverty line

**83,700**

diaspora members  
(*Akkaris abroad*)

**7,878**

informal  
settlements

**37%**

of Lebanese youth  
(15-17) are out-of-  
school

**16%**

of Lebanese children  
are engaged in child  
labor (5-17 years old)

**163**

public  
schools

**21**

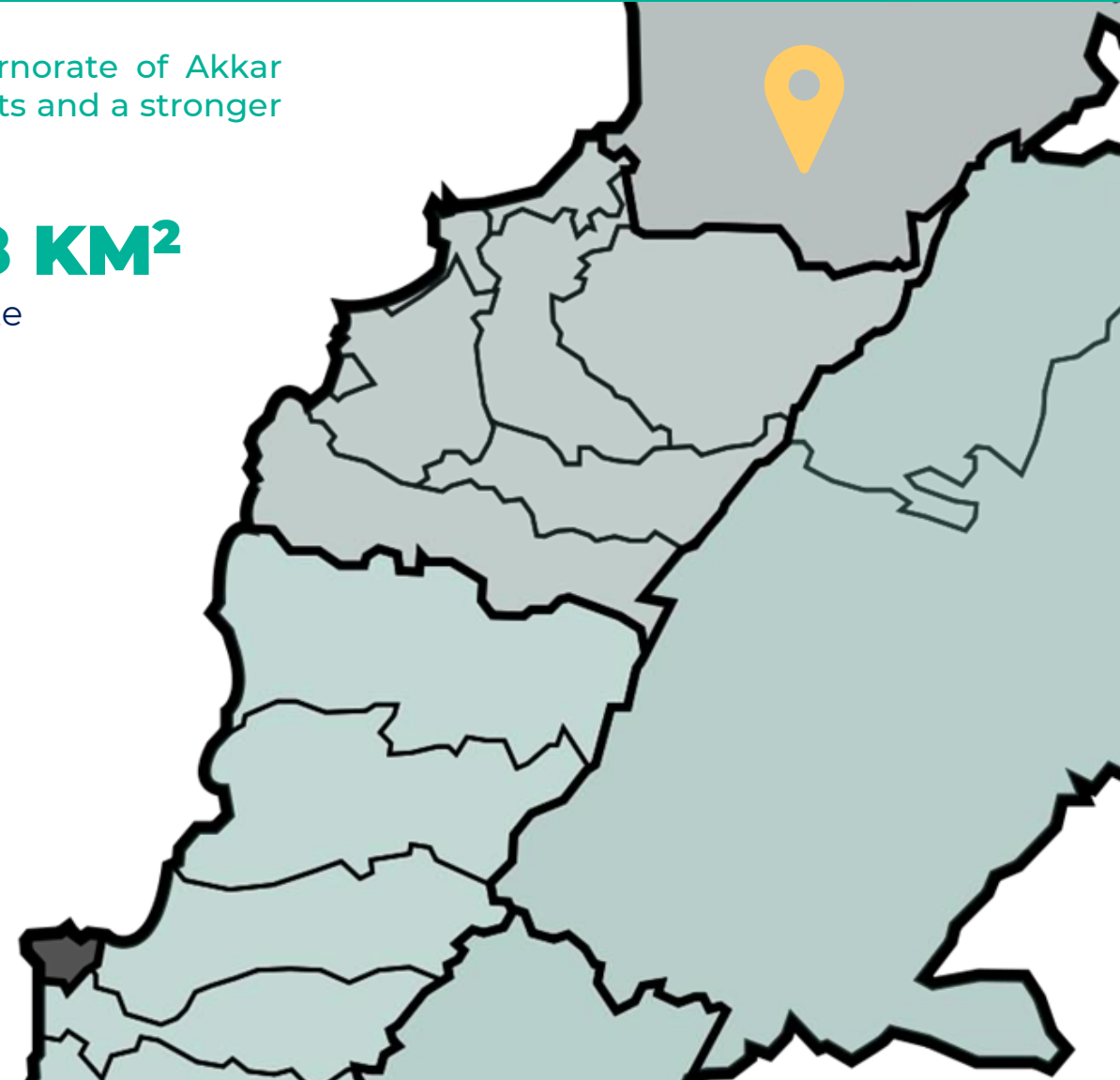
public  
hospitals

**14%**

of Lebanese  
women  
are employed

**788 KM<sup>2</sup>**

area size



# THE CONTEXT: COPING WITH AN EVERGROWING CRISIS

Akkar is one of the most deprived governorates in Lebanon, with many residents having been denied their basic rights for decades. Adding to the traditional hardships, the recent financial crisis, the Covid-19 pandemic and the impact of the Beirut Blast contributed to a huge deterioration in socio-economic conditions.

- Since October 2019, the Lebanese pound has lost around **90%** of its value, affecting people's purchasing power and jeopardizing access to food, shelter and healthcare.
- The Covid-19 pandemic and the successive lockdowns since March 2020 have severely worsened the economic situation, pushing poverty levels up.
- Under such conditions, vulnerable groups have difficulty ensuring their families' basic needs.
- Approximately **30%** of Lebanese living in Akkar resort to severe coping mechanisms to meet their basic needs.
- Yet, Akkar is mostly a rural region where many families tend to be relatively self-sufficient, farming their own vegetables, fruits and even producing dairy products. Some families manage to draw income from their agricultural activity.

“

*We are not deprived. People in Beirut and Tripoli are deprived. In Akkar, we plant and eat our own food.*

- Lebanese villager,  
Hrar, April 28

“

*The economic crisis is affecting everyone in Akkar. But the stateless are particularly hopeless, they are really poor and no one is looking out for them.*

- Mukhtar, Wadi Khaled,  
April 6

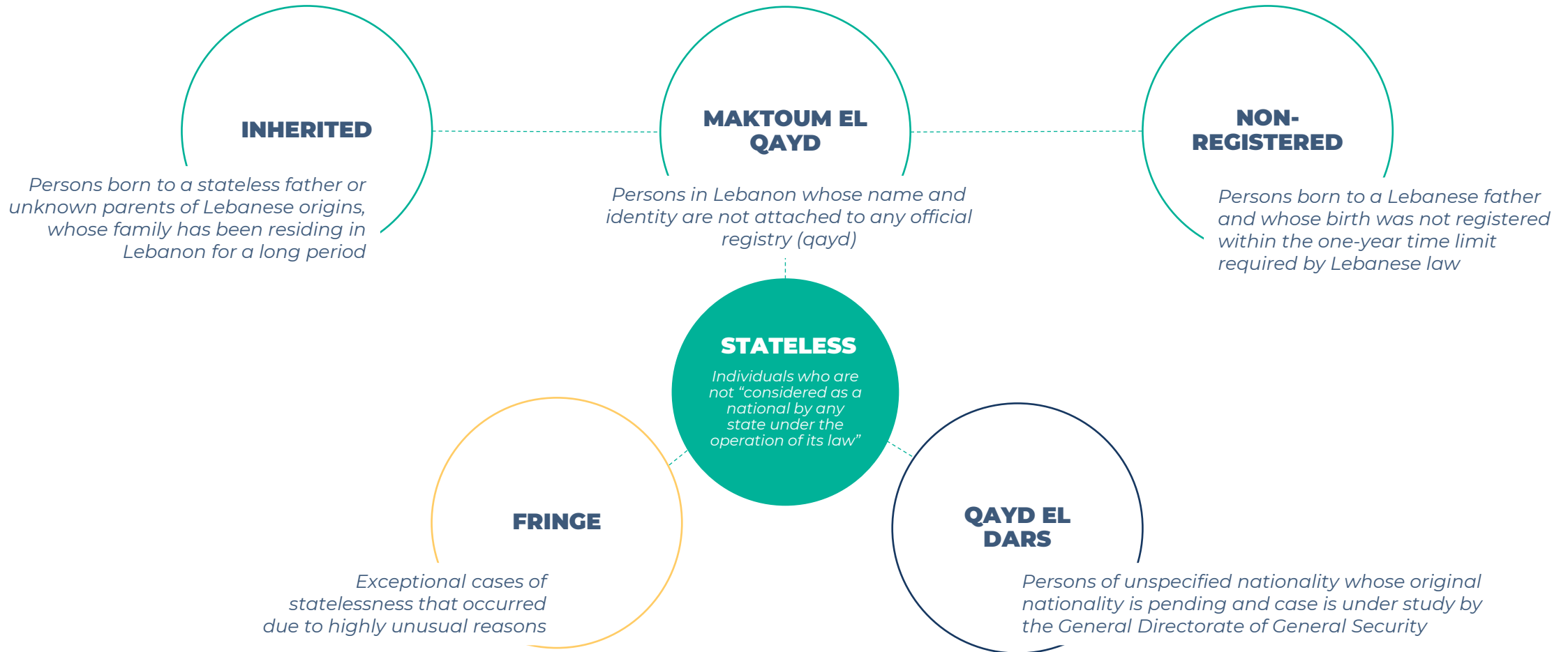
“

*I was poor growing up and that's why I am stateless. Today, I have no money, no nationality and no way to treat my health issues. I am left with nothing.*

- 60 year old stateless woman,  
Aboudieh, March 18

# STATELESSNESS LEXICON

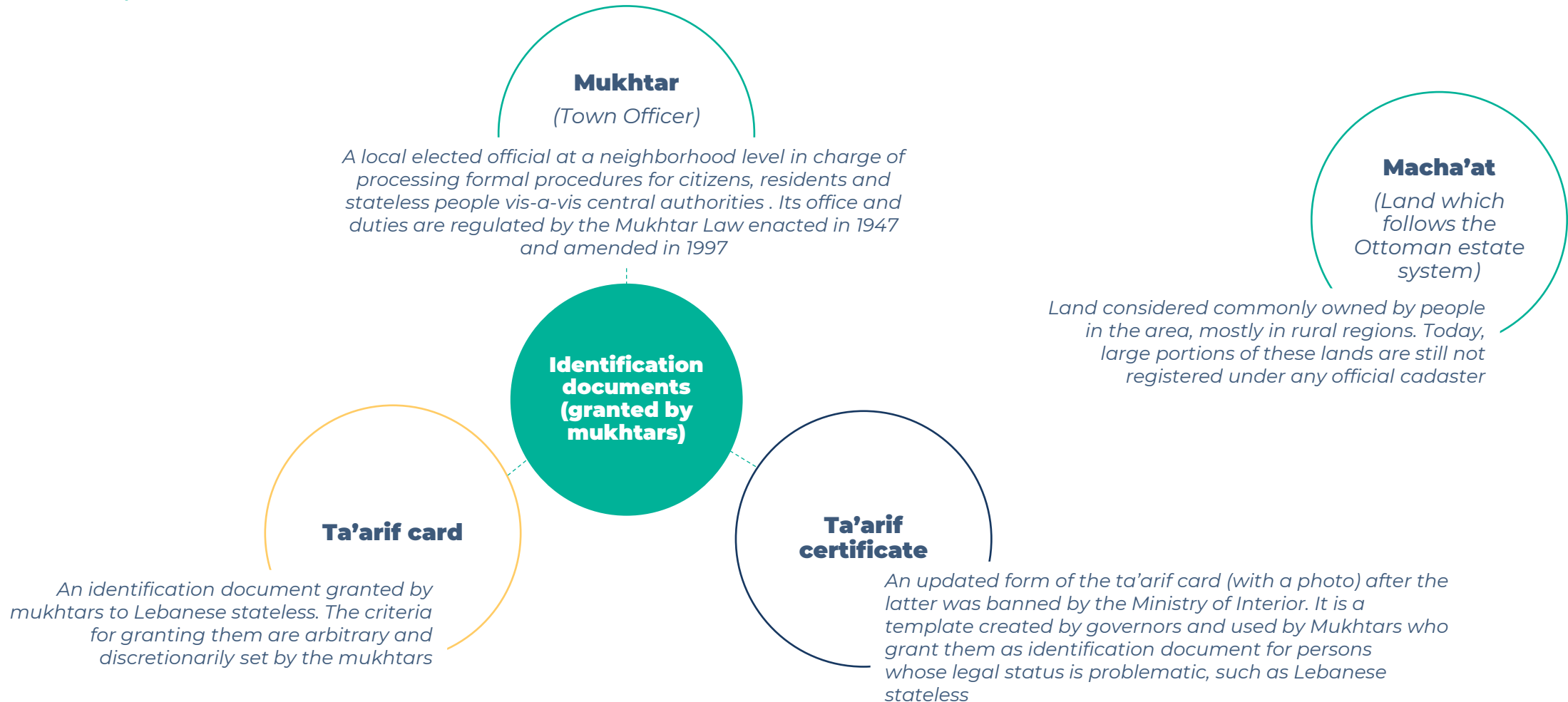
This study relies upon a technical lexicon specific to the statelessness phenomenon in general and relating to the Lebanese context in particular.





# STATELESSNESS LEXICON

This study relies upon a technical lexicon specific to the statelessness phenomenon in general and relating to the Lebanese context in particular.





# METHODOLOGY

# DATA COLLECTION TOOLS

The methodology for this study includes a literature review of available references, in addition to qualitative and quantitative data collection methods that involved extensive field visits to Akkar.

## MAIN SURVEY

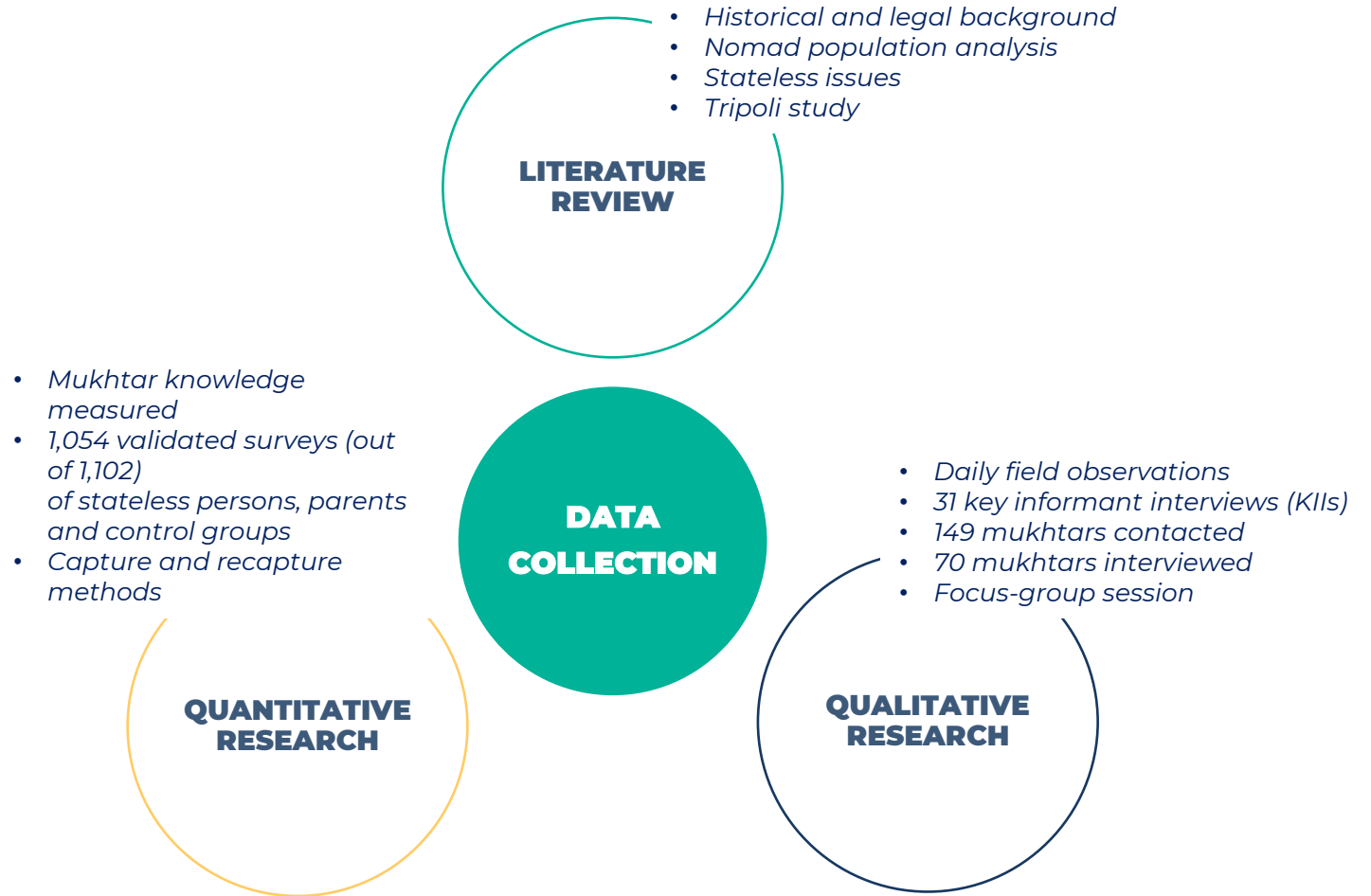
This targeted stateless individuals who are above 18 years old. One interview was conducted per stateless household. *This methodology was tested during a pilot survey in March 2021.*

## PARENTS SURVEY

This targeted the parents or legal guardians of children in each stateless household. The purpose was to assess the case of stateless children, while not interviewing them directly.

## CONTROL SURVEY

This targeted Lebanese citizens aged 18 years and above and residing in Akkar. Its sample size was 30% of the size of the main survey and covered the same geographic distribution in order to be able to compare parameters across the three survey groups.





# METHODOLOGY EXPLAINED

Quantitative and qualitative methods included semi-structured interviews with stateless individuals, *Mukhtars*, local figures, experts, and other key informants, in addition to the three quantitative field surveys.

The study was carried out using multiple data collection tools:

- A **literature review** was done based on the available open sources, such as relevant scientific publications, reports, studies and books.
- **Semi-structured interviews with *mukhtars*** were conducted between January 19 and March 30, 2021, with **70 *mukhtars*** interviewed out of the **149** contacted. *Mukhtars* were selected from across Akkar, representative of the geographical distribution of statelessness (based on an initial mapping from literature and through calls with KIs). An additional pool was then selected for cross-referencing regions where *mukhtars* had shown inconsistency in their estimations.

**149**

*Mukhtars*  
contacted

**70**

in-depth  
interviews with  
*mukhtars*

**31**

key informant  
interviews (KIs)  
conducted

- **Semi-structured key informant interviews (KIs)** were conducted between January 14 and May 15, 2021. **Thirty one** KIs were conducted with people of different backgrounds, such as: education professionals (public and private schools), healthcare staff (dispensaries, hospitals, midwives), ex-*mukhtars*, mayors, relevant public servants and public administration employees, associations, legal advisors, as well as lawyers dealing with stateless cases.
- **A three-part survey of 1,054 respondents**, targeting adult stateless individuals (**586** respondents), parents of stateless children (**218** respondents), and a control group of Lebanese residents in Akkar (**250** respondents). Respondents were identified through direct referencing by *mukhtars* and local community leaders, in addition to snowballing techniques. Surveys were conducted face-to-face and over a period of one month (from April 6 to April 29, 2021). A customized questionnaire was designed for each category, matching the material used for the Tripoli study so as to provide a comparative edge to the study.

# LIMITATIONS, CHALLENGES AND MITIGATION MEASURES

Fieldwork was carried out despite a difficult context and many challenges, mainly related to the multilayered crisis that has hit the country since 2019.

## GENERAL LIMITATIONS

### Covid-19 pandemic

Progress of the study was slowed by national Covid-19 lockdown measures. Despite the fieldwork initially being postponed, the team overcame these obstacles by conducting all KIIs over the phone. The fieldwork was carried out after proper planning and in line with standard sanitary measures, such as providing face masks and sanitizers, conducting outdoor surveys regardless of weather conditions, and doing regular PCR tests for surveyors and supervisors.

### Mobility issues

The team's day-to-day mobility was hindered by geographical factors and by the socioeconomic crisis. Frequent road blocks by protestors and the ongoing fuel crisis limited the mobility of both the team and surveyors during fieldwork. This was coupled with some unfortunate weather conditions that delayed daily briefs, debriefs and data collection.

## FIELD CHALLENGES

### Gender dynamics

Keeping a gender-balanced ratio in the surveys was harder than expected. This was mainly due to local conservatism and traditions. While a balanced ratio was achieved in the main survey and survey of parents, it was more difficult for the control survey. Lebanese respondents were approached on the streets and in shops, mainly because of Covid-19 safety measures. Unfortunately, women do not show up frequently on the streets. Since the study prioritized proportional representation of villages and regions for the control group (to be in line with identified stateless), this made balanced gender representation more difficult to achieve.

### Embarrassment and shame

Many respondents, especially among the Dom, were evasive in their answers or were unwilling to take part in the surveys. While linked to multiple factors, this challenge was successfully addressed as explained later in this report.

# LIMITATIONS, CHALLENGES AND MITIGATION MEASURES

Additional challenges emerged due to the timing and geography of the field deployment, in addition to the presence of many stateless persons of Syrian origins, whose cases were not the prime focus of this study.

## FIELD CHALLENGES

### Field work during the holy month of Ramadan

Because of Covid-19 containment measures, the survey deployment was postponed and then held during the holy month of Ramadan, which was challenging on multiple levels. The surveyors, respondents, and most of the locals were tired and would sometimes be less cooperative. The team tackled these difficulties by adapting the schedule and working conditions according to the needs of the fieldwork's particular context.

### Project duration

The duration allocated for the entire project, and particularly for the fieldwork, was very tight considering the size of Akkar and the need to cover its main areas. Yet, the team overcame these difficulties by working around the clock and investing extra time and energy into all components of this research.

### Syrian nationality and statelessness

The surveyors uncovered many cases of individuals who considered themselves to be stateless in Lebanon, but who had managed to attain Syrian nationality. While they might be also entitled to Lebanese nationality, they did not fall under this study's scope of statelessness, and many of the surveys conducted with these respondents were disqualified from the sample. However, very few might have passed under the fieldwork's radar (less than **5%** according to our estimations, which are based on cross-referencing with local KIs). In addition, the team encountered many people who were stateless of Syrian origin (holders of *ta'arif* cards from Syrian *mukhtars*, for example). These individuals and their households were also not included in this study.

### Unsafe environment

Many stateless live in remote areas near the Lebanon-Syria border, or in the high hinterlands, which were sometimes unsafe for the team to reach.



# MUKHTAR INTERVIEWS

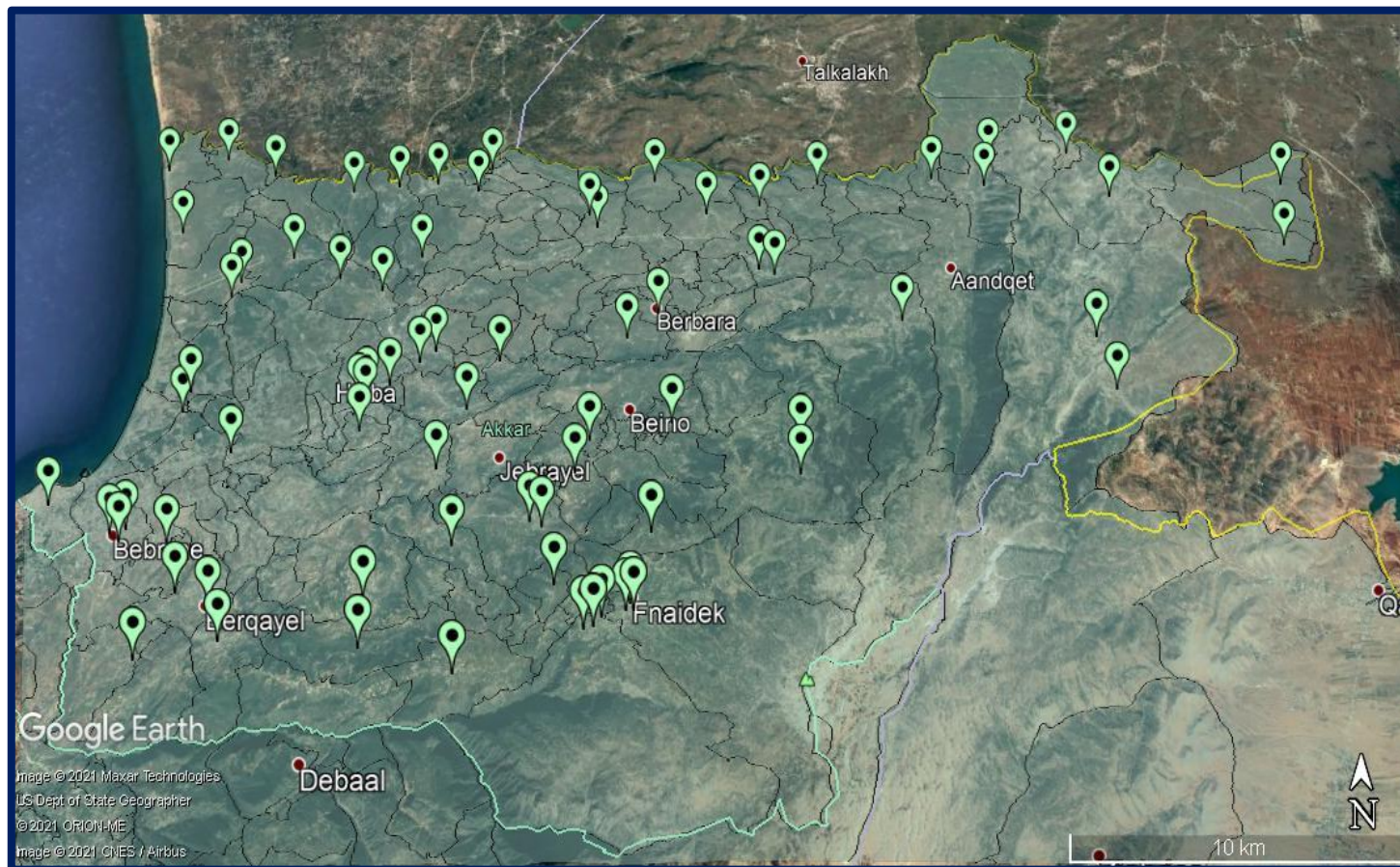
The completion of interviews with local *mukhtars* was the project's first milestone, laying the groundwork for the surveying phase.

# 70

full interviews with *mukhtars*



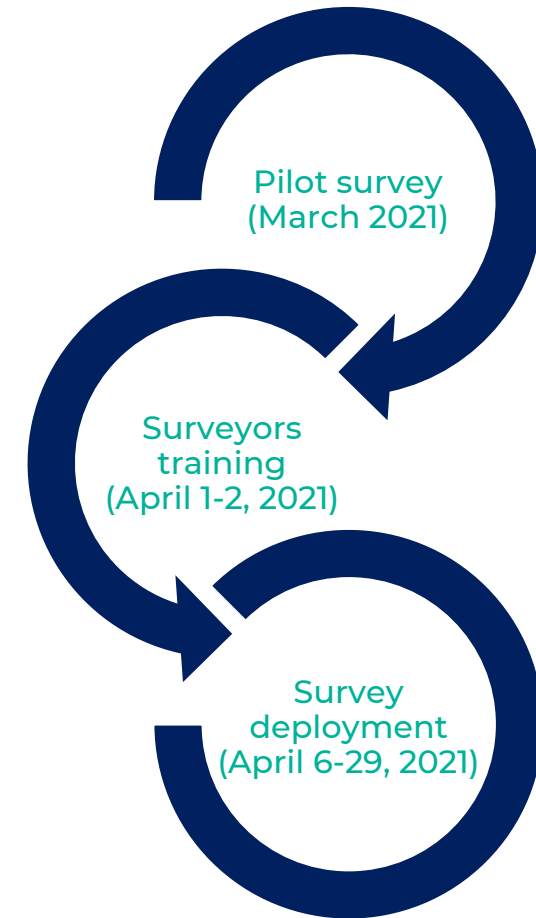
- A total of **149 mukhtars were contacted** (out of 210 officially registered in MoIM records), and **70 agreed to doing a full-length interview**. The others mostly provided rough estimates on the extent of statelessness or declared that they were not knowledgeable on the issue.
- Due to the Covid-19 pandemic and nationwide lockdown, most interviews were conducted over the phone or WhatsApp, despite poor network coverage and regular disruption to internet service.
- This crucial phase enabled the team to collect valuable qualitative information, and identify the most proactive *mukhtars*, who were able to pinpoint and confirm the main hotspots of statelessness in Akkar.
- Interviews also showed that some *mukhtars* have outdated information and very little knowledge on statelessness, despite stating the contrary.



# FIELD RESEARCH

The main field research and surveys occurred over April 2021 and were carried out following Akkar's local districts, which required four phases.

- A pilot survey was initially carried out with **16 respondents** in March 2021, testing the grounds for survey deployment and questionnaire design.
- **Forty six local surveyors** were then hired and underwent a two-day intensive training course on statelessness, surveying techniques, Covid-19 safety measures, and ethical behavior in the field.
- Surveys were conducted from April 6 to April 29, 2021, over four consecutive phases. A capturing/recapturing stage then occurred between May 26-28 in 18 selected towns and villages in Akkar.
- Each phase lasted around a week and focused on one or two regions in Akkar:



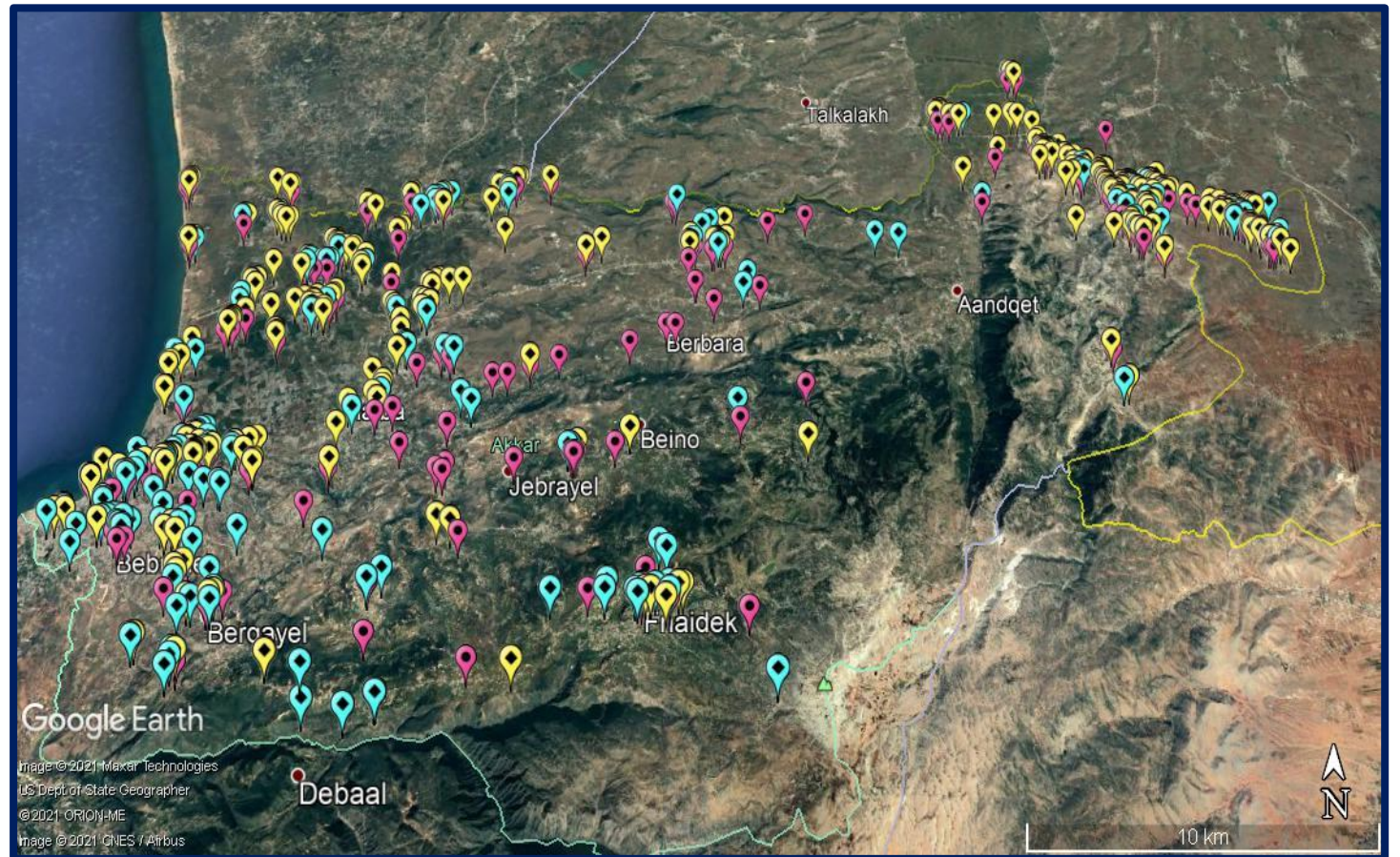


# FIELD DEPLOYMENT

By the end of the field deployment phase, 1,102 surveys had been conducted across all Akkar. The map below highlights survey distribution and geographical coverage. A total of 1,054 were ultimately validated as the working sample for this report.

**1,102**  Control survey  Main survey  Parent survey  
Surveys

- During April 2021, the surveyors successfully completed **617 surveys with adult stateless persons** (586 validated), **229 surveys with stateless children's parents** (218 validated), and **256 control surveys** with locals, in line with the geographic distribution of the main and parent surveys (250 validated).
- Duplicates in the main and parent surveys were removed to ensure that only one stateless person from each household was surveyed.
- Data cleaning also uncovered some erroneous or incomplete control surveys that were disregarded. This did not affect the one-to-three ratio as defined in the methodology.



# GENERAL PROFILE OF STATELESS RESPONDENTS

The survey of 586 adult stateless people in Akkar ensured gender balance. Geographical disparities were observed in their place of residence, with 47% of the respondents living in Wadi Khaled.

Fig 1. Where do you live in Akkar?

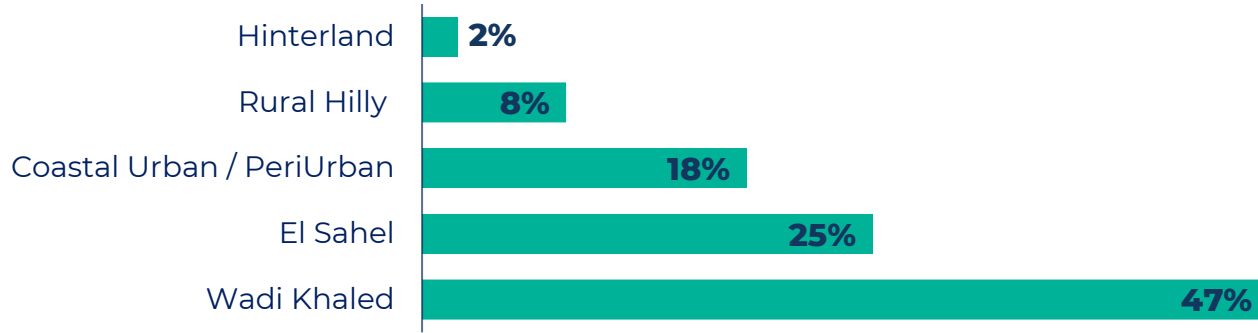
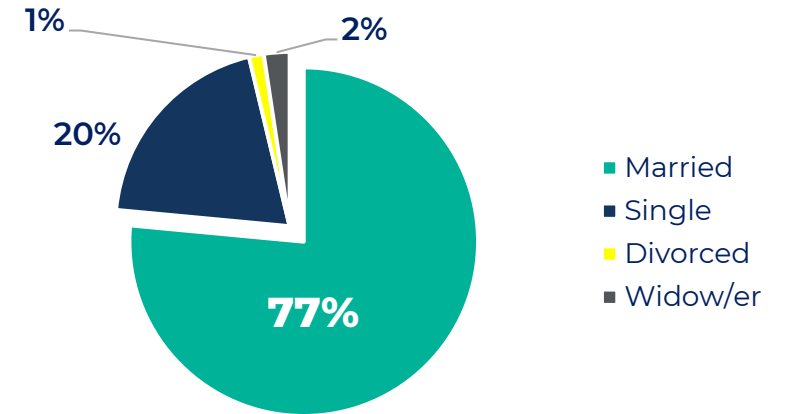


Fig 2. Which sect do you belong to ?



- The average age for all Akkar respondents is **40** years old, equally distributed among gender lines with **50%** women and **50%** men.
- The large majority of surveyed stateless are married (**77%**) with **4%** of married men having a second or third wife. The average length of the union of married respondents is approximately **22 years**, with an average of **4.5 children** per family (**5 children** average for Lebanese).
- Of the respondents, **87%** belong to the Sunni community, followed by a much smaller Alawite group (**6%**). Around **6%** of respondents dismissed this question.

Fig 3. What is your family status?





# GENERAL PROFILE OF STATELESS RESPONDENTS

Education levels of stateless respondents appear to be very low, with a large group who never entered the school system (39%). The low education rates correlate with high unemployment rates among the stateless community in Akkar.

- The majority of respondents had received little or no formal education, with **39%** having never accessed any school system (**74%** among the Dom, **25%** among the Bedouin), compared to **15%** for Lebanese. **Thirty eight percent** had completed primary school (compared to **32%** for Lebanese).
- A large majority of respondents say they are unemployed (**64%**). Yet, only **57%** of this group say they have no income, adding an additional layer of complexity to the socio-professional situation of this particular group.
- The average monthly income of the respondents is as low as LBP344,000, which is equal to **51% of the formal minimum wage**. With the loss of value of the national currency, this amount was equivalent to around **\$19** in September 2021.
- **Sixty percent** of respondents say they have no belongings nor possessions whatsoever.

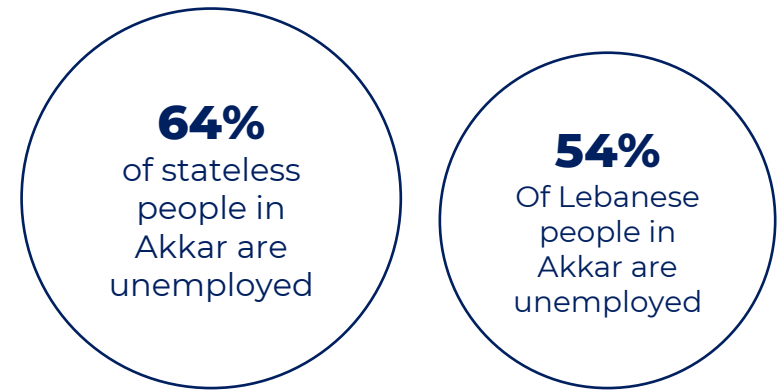
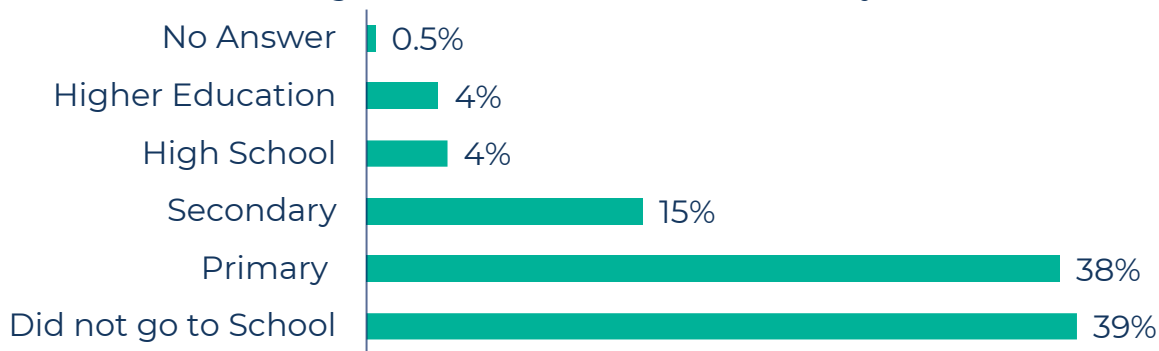


Fig 5. What is your monthly income?



Fig 4. Which level of education did you reach?





# IV.

## PEOPLE AND PLACES



# IV.

## PEOPLE AND PLACES

### A. STATELESSNESS IN NUMBERS



# VALIDATING ESTIMATIONS

By replicating the approach taken in the Tripoli study, the field research found a maximum estimate of 4,088 stateless people of Lebanese descent in Akkar. The figure is in line with the Tripoli results and at odds with common popular beliefs.

- Surveys conducted in April 2021 across Akkar identified a total of **3,213** stateless individuals in the Governorate. This number stems from two main sources:
  - By compiling the declared number of stateless living in the same household with every adult stateless interviewed through the main questionnaire, **2,461** cases were identified
  - By adding the total number of nonregistered children per household surveyed through the parent questionnaire, **752** cases were identified
- The fieldwork also allowed the identification of **64 stateless households** in which members either refused to be surveyed, or were unavailable during field visits. The team was able to determine the number of stateless people in these households by questioning neighbors or relatives. The compiled number in these households added **292 stateless individuals** to Akkar's total identified stateless population.
- The combination of snowball sampling with the door-to-door approach in nearly all towns and villages of Akkar gives these numbers high credibility.
- Capture and recapture techniques generated a validation rate of **86%**. Therefore, the **3,505 identified cases** could actually range up to **4,088 individual** stateless persons in Akkar.



# AKKAR REGIONAL BREAKDOWN

The 3,213 identified cases are shown in this geographical breakdown of the the surveys completed with adult stateless individuals and parents of stateless children. Those figures are aggregated with the number of unavailable individuals and survey rejections.

	Main surveys	Parents surveys	Number of stateless individuals from main surveys	Numbers of stateless individuals from parents surveys	Estimations of unavailable stateless individuals	Total of stateless individuals
Wadi Khaled	275	57	1,428	257	0	1,685
El Sahel	149	41	375	152	69	596
Sahil El Qayte'	85	54	272	157	48	477
Wasat El Qayte'	13	23	43	55	36	134
Jurd El Qayte'	10	14	33	49	19	101
Halba and surroundings	19	10	68	31	9	108
Akroum	3	1	7	1	64	72
El Dreib	28	14	209	45	45	299
El Joumeh	4	4	26	5	2	33
<b>Total Akkar</b>	<b>586</b>	<b>218</b>	<b>2,461</b>	<b>752</b>	<b>292</b>	<b>3,505</b>

# AKKAR REGIONAL BREAKDOWN

As reflected in the previous table, statelessness cases are not equally distributed: around 95% of cases are concentrated in seven main hotspots, with the remaining few cases scattered across other rural areas.

# 804

surveys

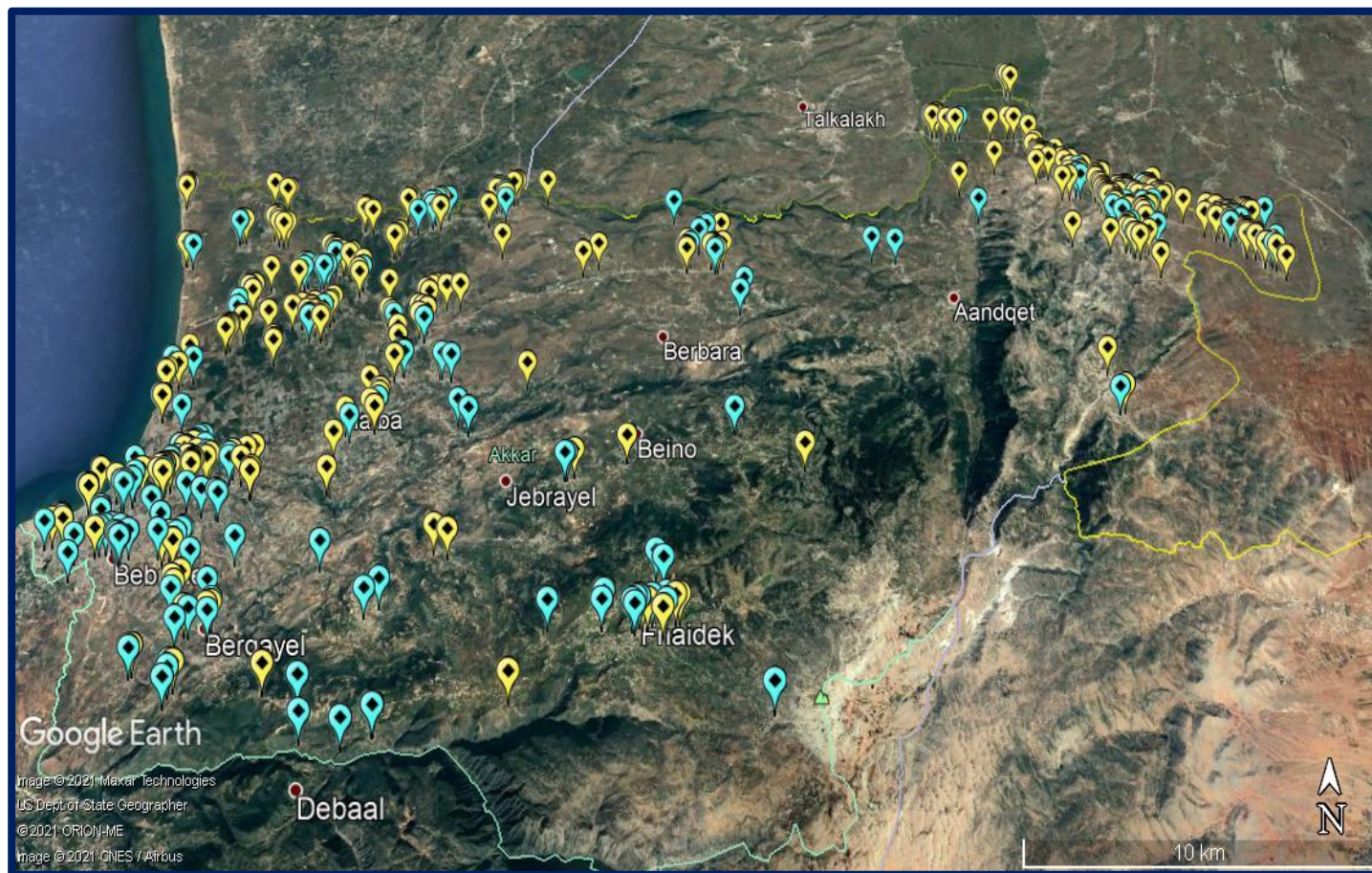


Main survey



Parent survey

- Each of the **586 yellow pins** on this map represents a survey conducted with a stateless adult, while each of the **218 blue pins** represents a survey with a parent of stateless children.
- In total, **804 surveys** were conducted with either a stateless adult or a parent of a stateless child.
- The map clearly reveals seven main hotspots of statelessness located towards the coastal area of Akkar, the southwest and the northeast, and that account for **95% of all statelessness cases**.
- The uncovered area in the center of the map is mostly made up of Christian and Alawite villages (with little to no cases), while the southeast is mostly uninhabited, made up of forests and valleys.





# HOTSPOTS: WADI KHALED

Wadi Khaled appears to be the major hotspot for statelessness in Akkar, accounting for almost half of the total number of cases.

# 1,685

stateless adults  
and children



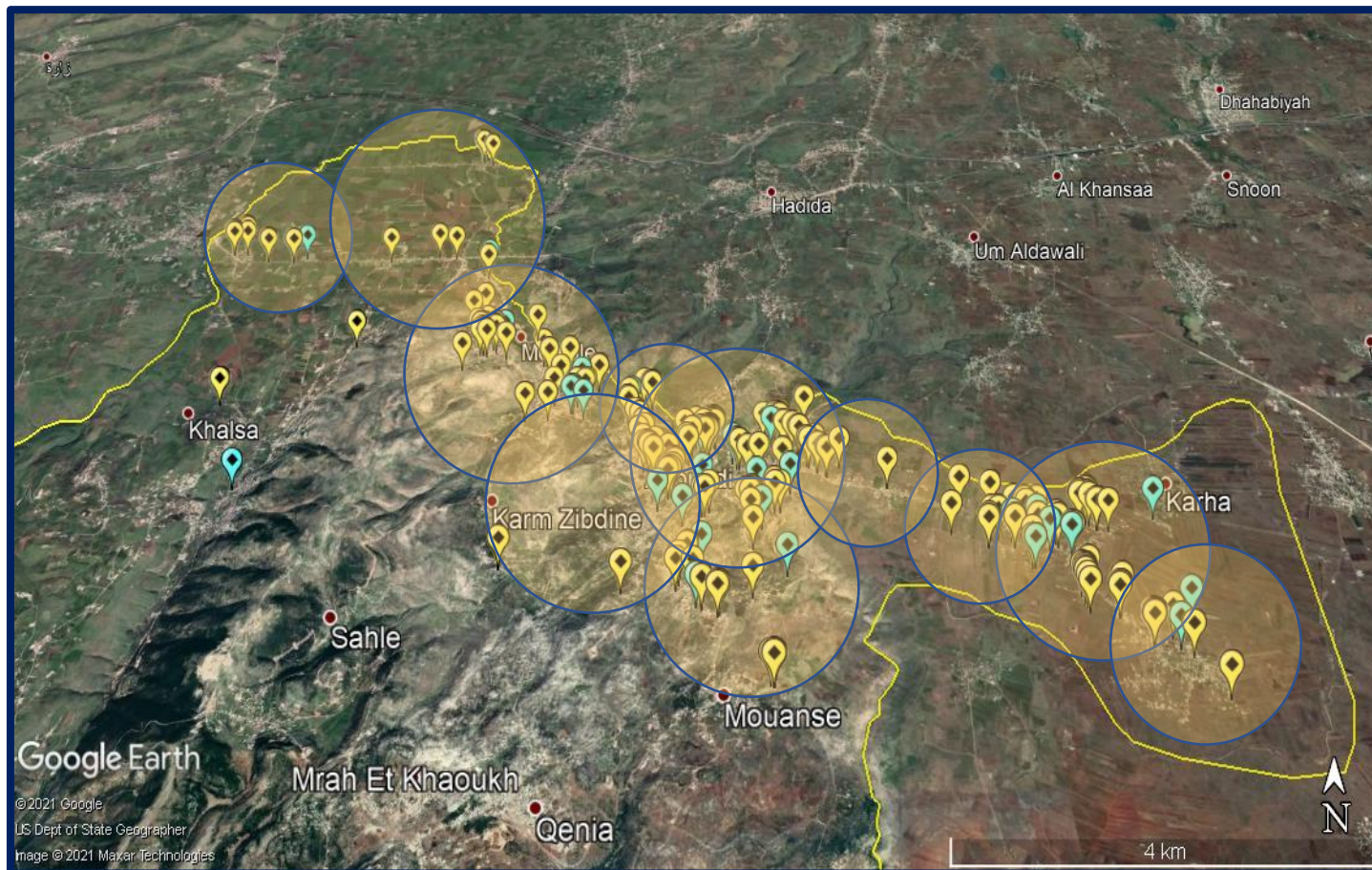
# 48%

of Akkar's stateless  
live in Wadi Khaled

# 30,000

inhabitants living  
in 17 villages

- Wadi Khaled is a valley that opens up to the northeast towards Homs and its hinterland. The region is interconnected with neighboring Syria, with close geographical, cultural, economic and social ties.
- The region is composed of **17 adjacent villages** that together form a single agglomeration in which the vast majority of inhabitants are from Bedouin origins.
- A total of **333 surveys** were conducted in this area, out of which a total of **1,685 stateless** were identified.





# HOTSPOTS: SAHEL AKKAR

The second main hotspot is Sahel Akkar, also a rural border region, which accounts for 596 stateless individuals. It is also one of the poorest regions in its district.

# 596

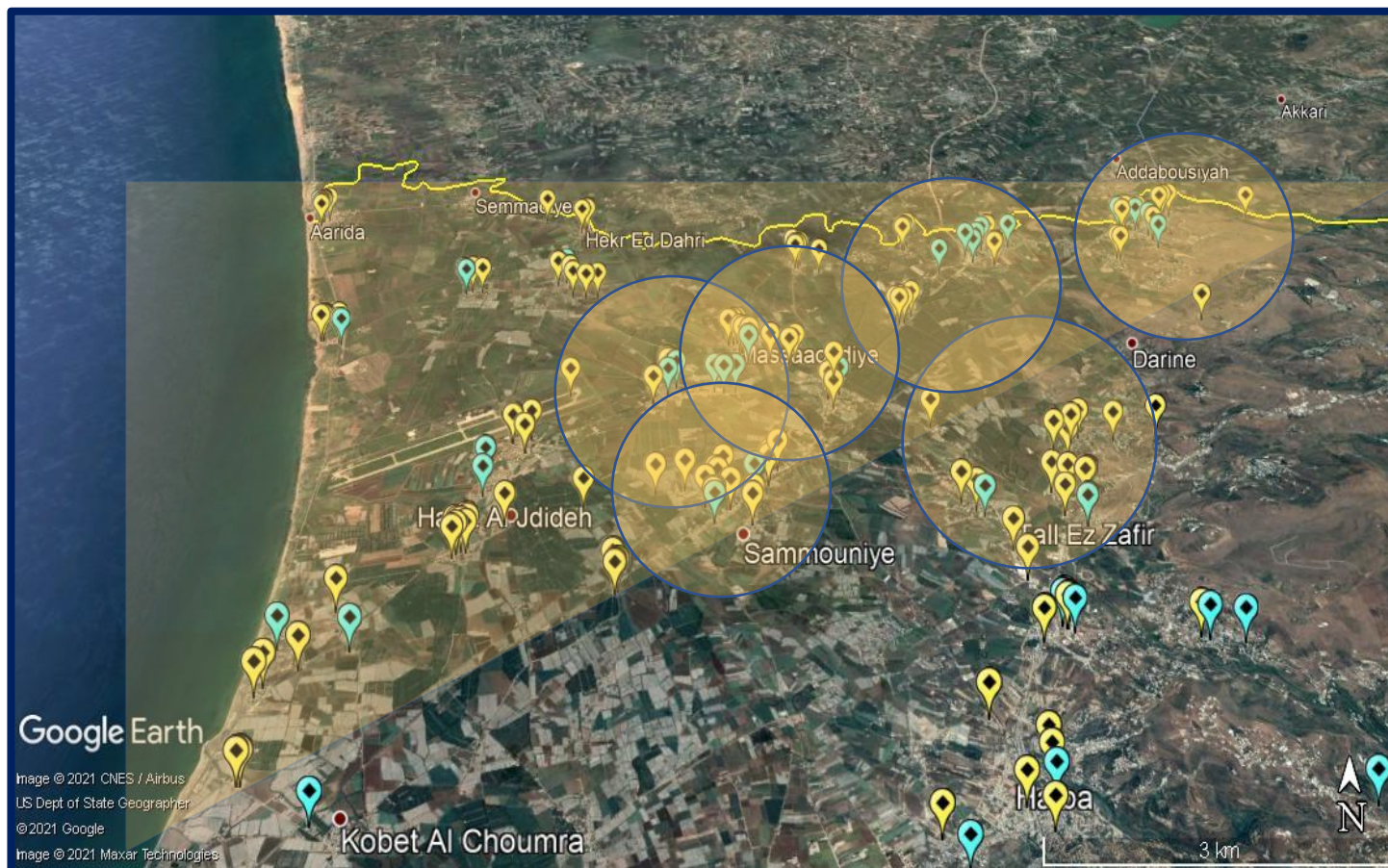
stateless adults  
and children

# 16%

of Akkari stateless live  
in Sahel Akkar



- Sahel Akkar is a coastal agricultural area.
- Most stateless are either located in central villages, such as El Hissa and Massoudieh, or on the border with Syria, from Aboudieh to Arida.
- In addition, a large number of Dom settlements (Kouweikhat, Haouchab, Aboudieh) can be found on the eastern fringes of the plains.
- The Sahel's significant Alawite minority is also affected by statelessness.
- Along with the Sunni community, they amount to exactly **596 stateless individuals**.





# HOTSPOTS: COASTAL QAYTE'

The coastal region of El Qayte', composed of Bebnine and its surroundings, is the main urban and peri-urban zone of Akkar, which explains its overpopulation. It is consequently another major hotspot for statelessness in the governorate.

# 477

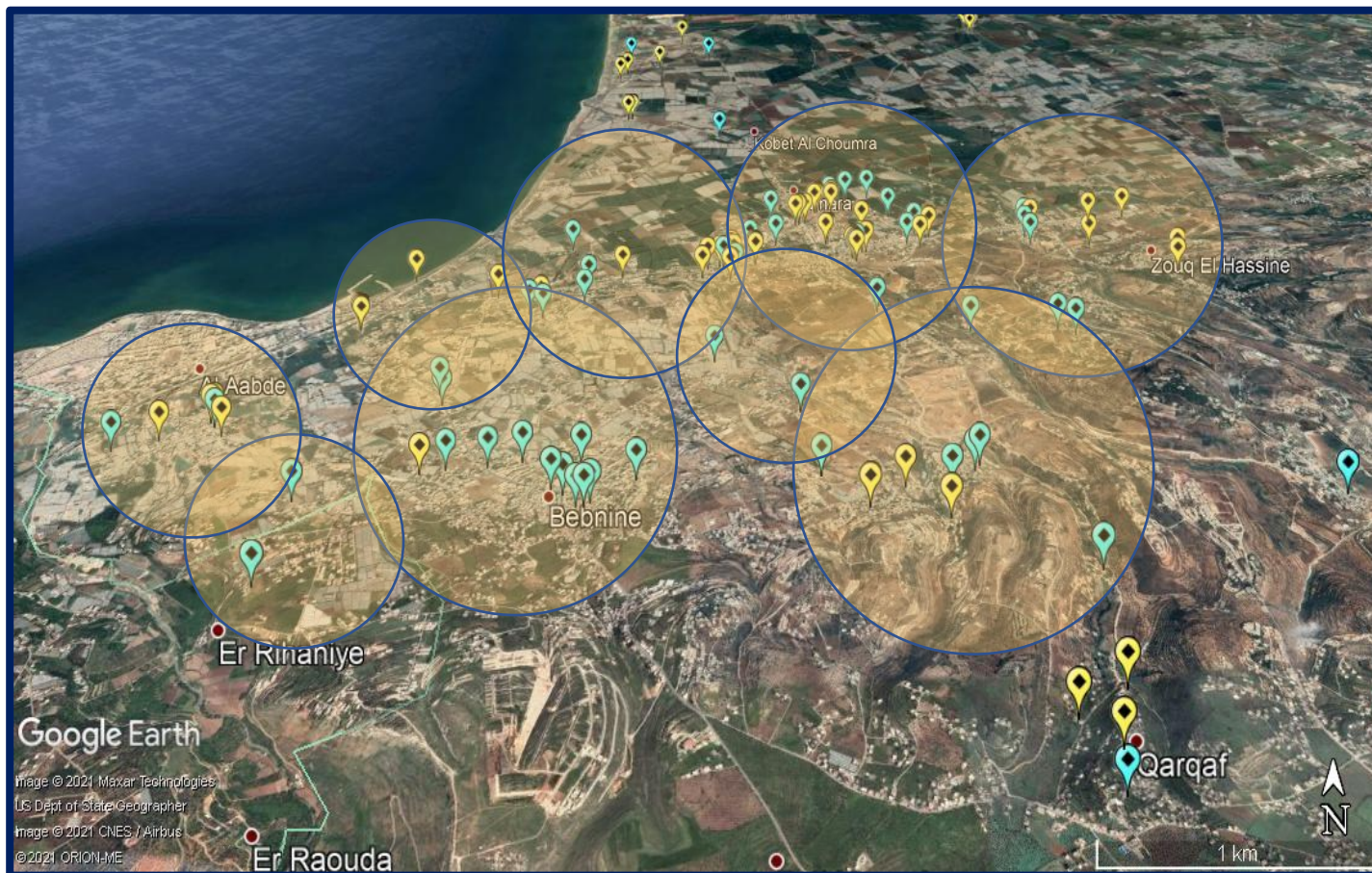
stateless adults  
and children

# 14%

of Akkari stateless live on  
the coast of El Qayte'



- The coastal area of El Qayte' is a densely populated region where, beside locals, many have migrated through the years from the hinterland and other rural regions to live or work.
- It is mainly composed of Bebnine, Abdeh, El Mhammara, Wadi El Jamous, Deir Dalloum, Bourj El Arab, and Qobbet Chomra.
- Exactly **477 stateless individuals** were identified, accounting for **14% of Akkar's stateless** population. Many of the region's stateless are from the Dom minority. Some are established in informal settlements while others live in semi-solid constructions.





# HOTSPOTS: OTHER REGIONS

Four other geographic areas also host a high concentration of stateless individuals. These areas combined are home to almost the same number of stateless persons as in Sahel Akkar alone.

# 599

stateless adults  
and children

# 16%

of Akkari stateless live  
in these four areas



- The village of El Kouweichra is home to nearly **256 stateless**, living around the lake in informal Dom settlements.
- Jurd El Qayte' is Akkar's high hinterland. Fnaidek, one of its biggest towns, is home to almost all the area's stateless; more than **101 individuals**.
- Halba (and surroundings) is the second largest urban and peri-urban region of Akkar. The area known as El Shafat hosts **108 stateless persons**.
- Lastly, the middle-range region of El Qayte' has **134 stateless** individuals scattered around the many towns and villages.



1. EL KOUWEICHRA

2. HALBA AND  
SURROUNDINGS

3. EL JURD

4. WASAT EL  
QAYTE'



# IV.

## PEOPLE AND PLACES

B. CATEGORIES AND PROFILES

# DEEP ROOTS, SHALLOW ROOTS

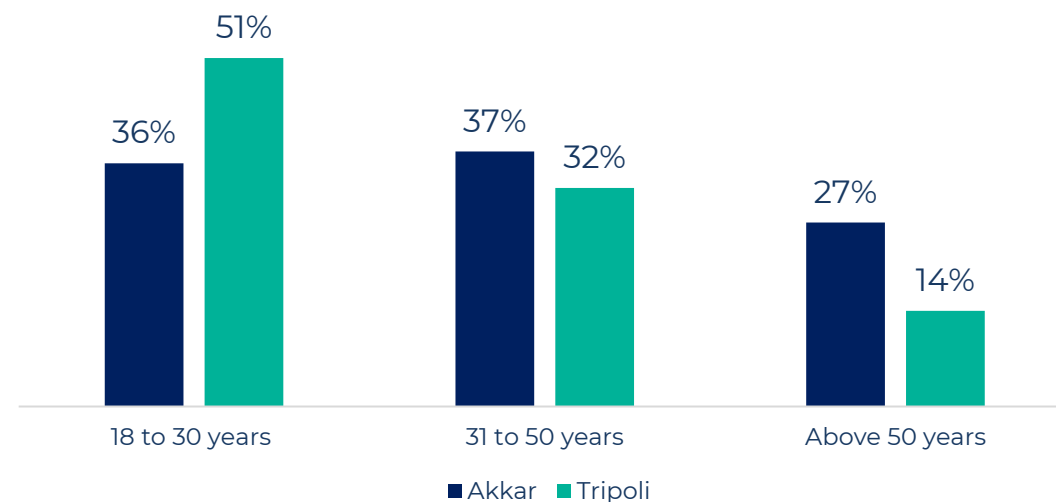
The statelessness phenomenon in Akkar appears to have much deeper historical roots than in Tripoli, affecting a relatively older population, and being more cross-generational.

- The largest age group of interviewed stateless adults in Akkar is 31 to 50 years, compared to 18 to 30 years in the city of Tripoli, clearly indicating older cases of statelessness for the former. It is noteworthy that many of Tripoli's stateless originate from Akkar.
- In fact, **37%** of adult respondents are between **31 and 50 years old**, **36%** between **18 and 30**, and **27%** above **50 years old**. In Tripoli, those figures stand at **32%**, **51%** and **15%**, respectively.
- Still, the overall age distribution for adult respondents shows a relatively young population, with a median age of 40 years, in line with the governorate's average and below the national one.

Fig 6. Proportion of identified nonregistered children from parent survey



Fig 7. Age distribution among surveyed adults



- Another main cause of statelessness in Akkar is the nonregistration of children: **735** stateless cases were identified through the parent survey compared to **427** for Tripoli, bringing an equal proportion of **19%**.

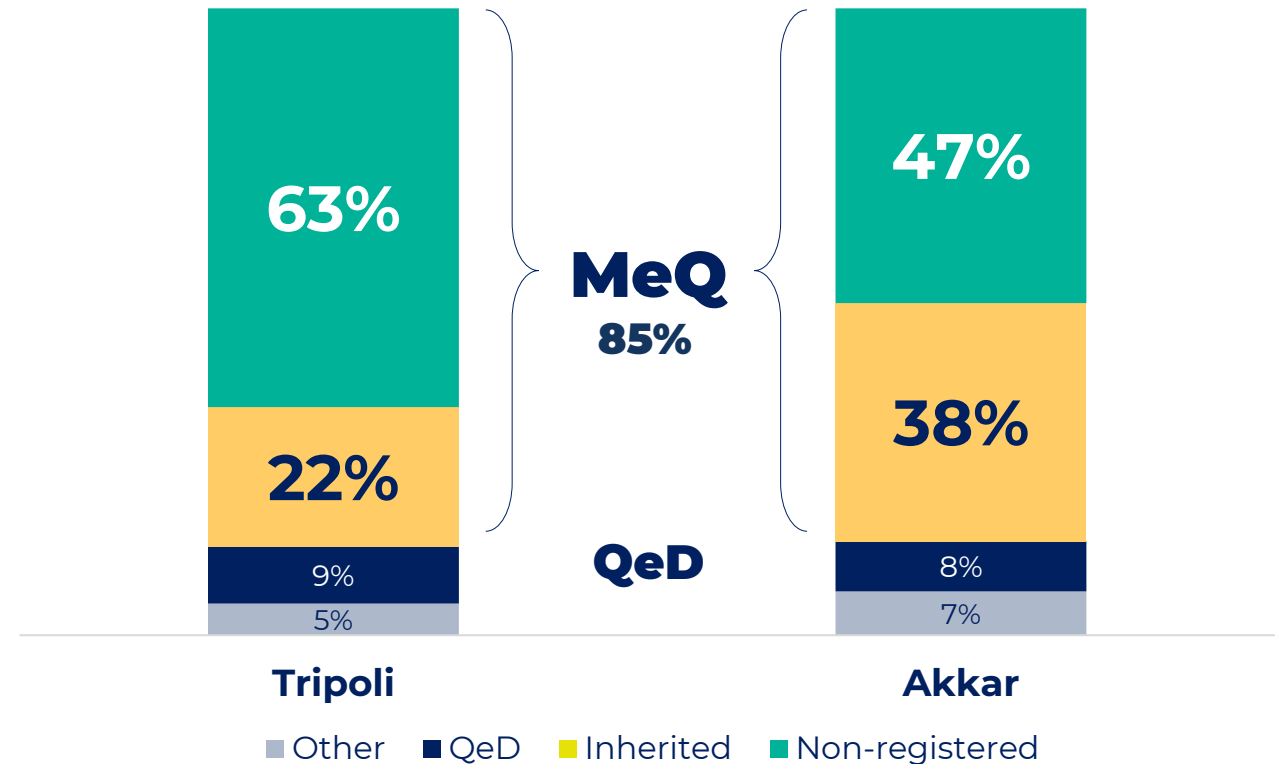


# HISTORICAL INHERITED CASES

While the proportions of the two standard categories of statelessness in Lebanon are identical in Akkar and Tripoli, a closer look into the *Maktoum El Qayd* category reveals a major contrast, confirming the deep-rooted nature of statelessness in Akkar.

- The overwhelming majority (**85%**) of stateless individuals in Akkar are from the *Maktoum El Qayd* (MeQ) category, compared to **9%** from the *Qayd El Dars* (QeD) category. These results are in line with those from Tripoli.
- But a closer look into the MeQ category reveals a major difference: in Tripoli **63%** of MeQ are more recent cases of nonregistered descendants of Lebanese fathers, and only **22%** are historical inherited cases. By contrast, a sizable minority of Akkar's MeQ (**38%**) are hereditary cases, compared to **47%** of nonregistered individuals.
- While nonregistration remains the major cause of statelessness in both regions, these results confirm the historical, cross-generational, and hence more complicated, aspect of the phenomenon in Akkar.
- Another interesting Akkari particularity: **one in four** nonregistered stateless individuals (**26%**) is born from a mixed marriage between a Lebanese father and a Syrian mother. This highlights the region's strong inter-community ties, which are much older than the era of the Syrian conflict and the refugee influx.

Fig 8. Stateless distribution by categories



"Other" would refer to fringe cases such as loss of identification documents, or uncooperative administrations.

# IDENTITY ON PAPER

A majority of adult stateless respondents have at least one kind of identification document, with 9% (mostly women) not having any. However, despite being outdated and no longer officially recognized, the most common document is the *ta'arif card* (66%), revealing the instability of an already precarious situation.

**Ten percent** of stateless Dom\* respondents have laissez-passer passports, compared to only **1%** of stateless Bedouin.

In fact, mobility within and beyond Lebanese national borders constitutes an important feature of Dom movement. Laissez-passer documents (issued by General Security) allow some Dom to travel as far as Africa to learn and perform traditional dentistry, for instance.

**66%**

have a *ta'arif* card

**17%**

have a *ta'arif* certificate

**4%**

have a laissez-passer passport

## STATELESS ADULTS

586 respondents  
(main survey)

**11%**

have QeD cards (issued by General Security)

**9%**

do not have any relevant identification documents

Unlike other stateless individuals, holders of QeD cards can access the labor market with the approval of the Ministry of Labor and can own movable goods.

Of the stateless respondents who do not have any relevant identification documents, **83%** are women (see Gender Stigma section under chapter VII).

# FAMILY TREE

Family structures from the main survey reveal that roughly half of the adult stateless surveyed (47%) are born to a Lebanese father, yet are not registered in official records. Interestingly, 17% of these Lebanese fathers have a history of statelessness, as they were themselves naturalized in 1994, showing that the decree ultimately failed in breaking the curse of statelessness.



Mother's side

**57%**

are born to a Lebanese mother

**25%**

are born to a stateless mother

**11%**

are born to a Syrian mother

**5%**

are born to an under-study mother

## STATELESS ADULTS

586 respondents  
(main questionnaire)

**47%**

are born to a Lebanese father

**34%**

are born to a stateless father (39% of whom are born to a Lebanese mother)

**15%**

are born to an under-study father (35% of whom are born to a Lebanese mother)

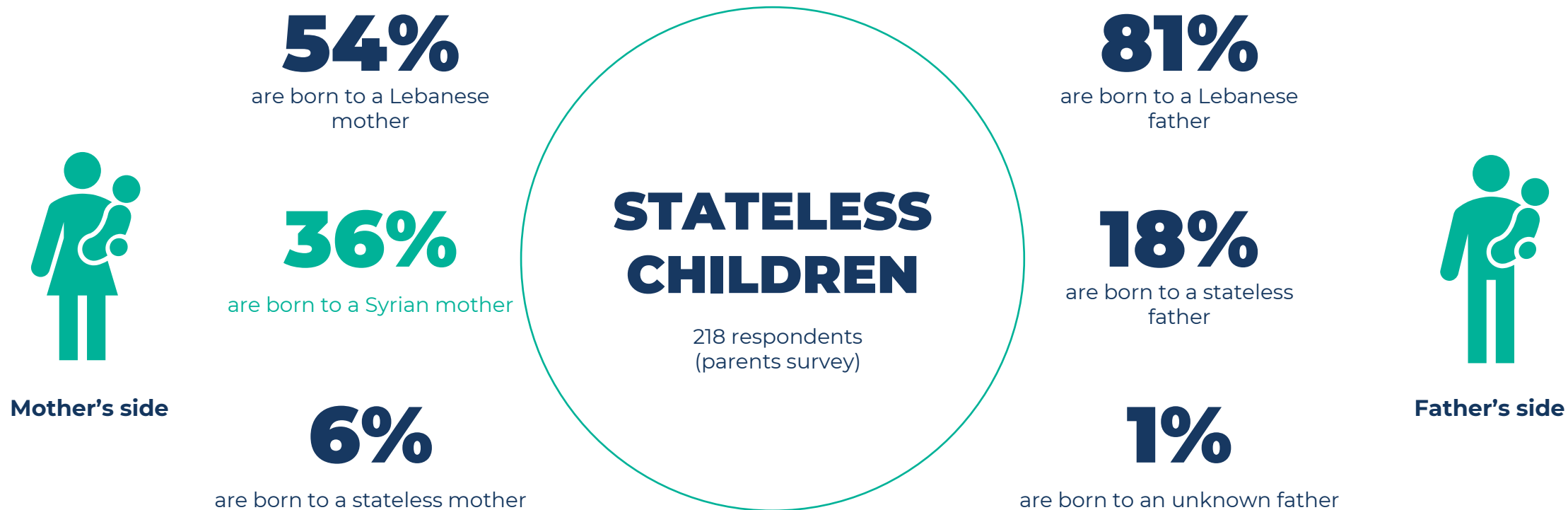


Father's side



# FAMILY TREE

On the other hand, mixed marriages are a more recent cause for the nonregistration of children at birth. While 11% of adult stateless respondents are born to a Syrian mother, 36% of undocumented children have this same descent, yet remain stateless - despite some of them having a Lebanese non-stateless father. They are, hence, at risk of becoming stateless after missing the one year deadline for registering the birth. This shows that mixed marriages represent a potentially growing root cause of statelessness in Akkar.

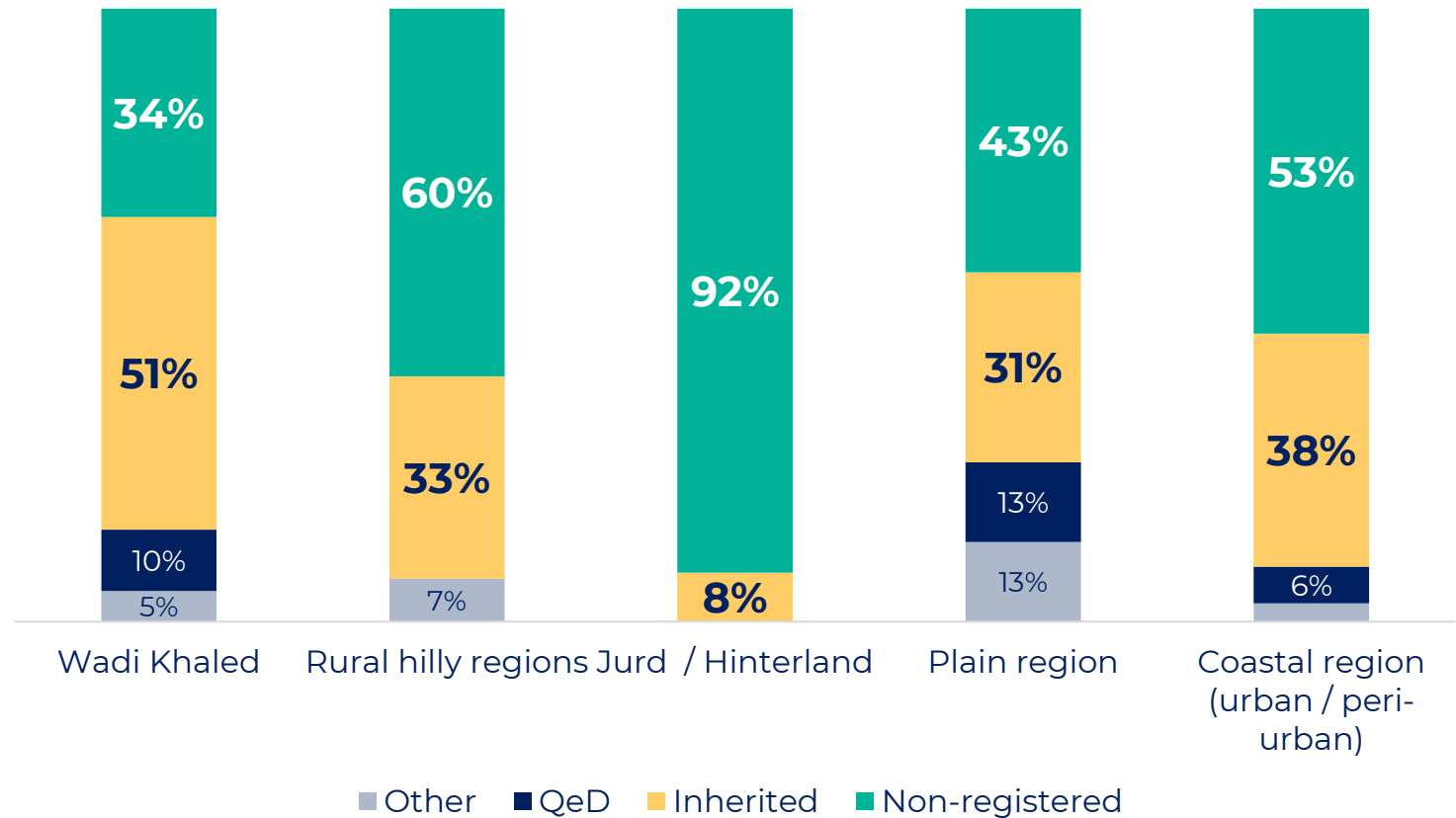


# LOCAL SINGULARITIES

Zooming in on the different regions in Akkar, local particularities emerge. Wadi Khaled is notable for the majority of its statelessness cases being inherited. The hinterland is notable for its overwhelming majority of nonregistered cases.

- Wadi Khaled is the only region in Akkar where the majority of statelessness cases are inherited (**51%**). This is linked to historical factors related to the population's Bedouin origins. Should Wadi Khaled be removed from the equation, Akkar results would align with those in Tripoli.
- Interestingly, the further one moves away from the coast and toward the hinterland, the higher the percentage of nonregistered stateless, going from **53%** to **92%**. This might be due to the fact that the Jurd was a historical refuge for Akkar's outlaws, who would be less likely to seek legal records and certifications.
- The plain and coastal regions are crowded melting pots where different social groups, including the Bedouin and Dom, meet. Sizable groups of MeQ, both non-registered and inherited cases, are also concentrated in both regions.

Fig 9. Stateless categories distribution by region



Akkar is characterized by its contiguous border with Syria, stretching for over 100km through Sahel Akkar and Wadi Khaled. Yet, both regions appear quite distinct from a socio-professional, cultural and economic perspective.

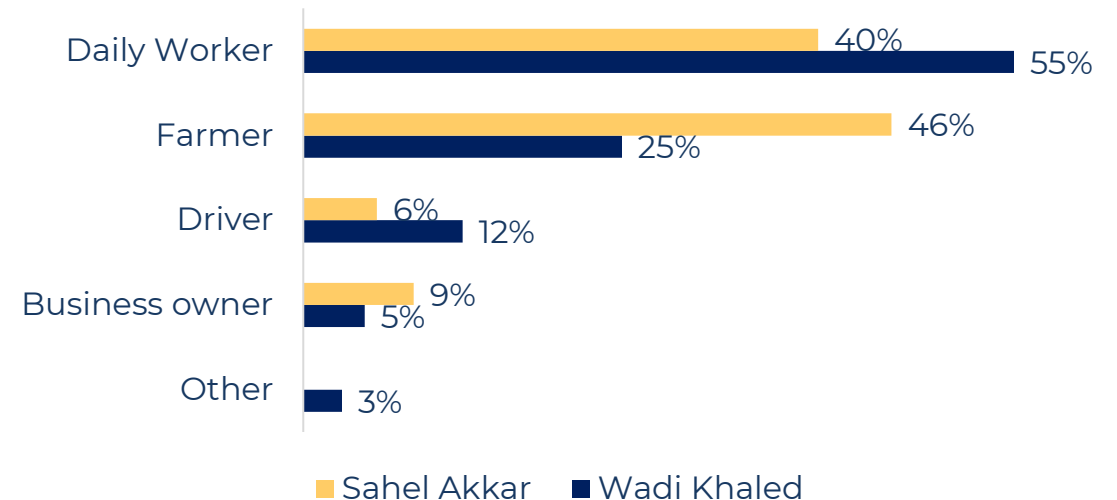
- Looking at socio-professional dynamics in both regions, it appears that stateless persons living in Sahel Akkar are mostly farmers and agricultural workers (**46%**), while the majority of those in Wadi Khaled are daily workers (**55%**). However, several surveyed stateless, local informants and residents of Wadi Khaled expressed that their main income comes from irregular cross-border activities, to and from Syria, as the border in Wadi Khaled is less easy to monitor than in Sahel Akkar.
- Some of Wadi Khaled's Lebanese parents did not register their children due to their unusual geographic location. In fact, they live in a town in Syria, right on the border, and so their children are not recognized by either country. They explain how they come in and out of Lebanon freely thanks to army patrols tolerating their entry. However, they cannot risk bringing their children to the country because of their lack of identification papers.
- Moreover, most of Wadi Khaled's population has Bedouin roots, which explains why **59%** of stateless and **100%** of the Lebanese from that particular area chose the "tribe" as a key determinant of their sense of identity. In Sahel Akkar, only **31%** of the stateless made this selection in terms of self-identity.



*If it weren't for irregular cross-border economic activities, I would have "sold" my children.*

- Stateless man, Wadi Khaled, March 19

Fig 10. What is your line of work?

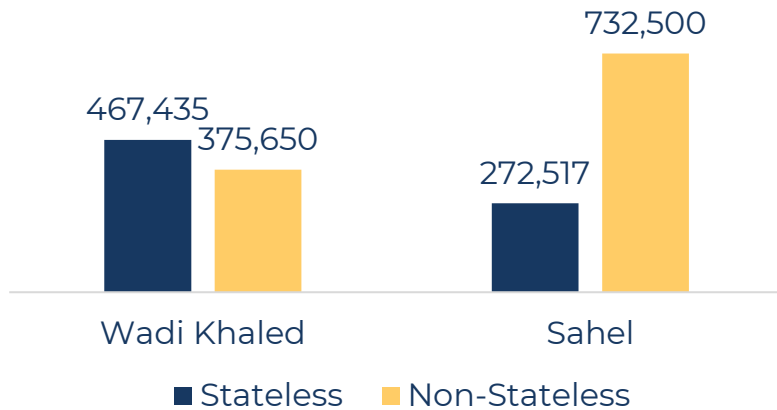




# MARGINALIZED BORDERS

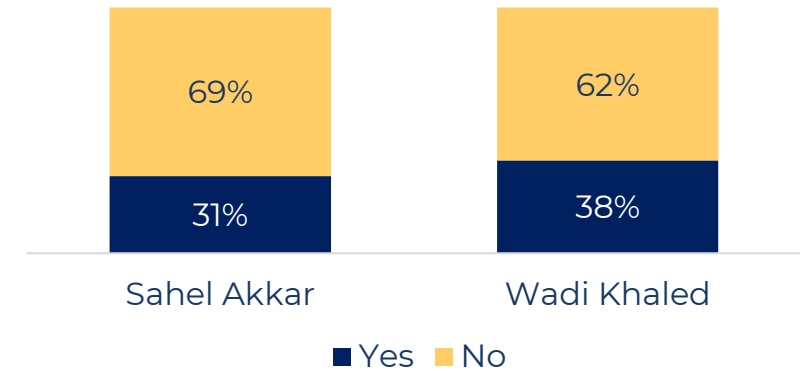
Despite their different dynamics, both border regions are similarly marginalized. Residents, whether stateless or not, lack access to employment and to a decent livelihood.

Fig 11. Average income in LBP



- Both of the border regions are marginalized and deprived. The personal average income of both regions is below the minimum wage except for the non-stateless living in Sahel Akkar.
- Moreover, the majority of the Lebanese and stateless respondents in both regions are currently unemployed (**62%**). The proportion of unemployed stateless rises to **69%** in Sahel Akkar, compared to **42%** for Lebanese.

Fig 12. Are you currently working?



- The population of Wadi Khaled appears largely marginalized and disconnected from Lebanon. Vulnerability is not exclusive to stateless, as local citizens also feel deprived of their basic rights.
- Due to the state's constant absence and lack of development opportunities, neighboring Syria has always constituted a logical gateway for livelihoods, especially toward Homs.



*In the 80s, stateless persons from Wadi Khaled considered the Lebanese nationality a useless piece of paper. It was easier to receive all necessary needs and goods from Syria, simply by using our ta'arif card to cross borders. If we faced any problem, the solution was to bribe Syrian intelligence officers in order to enter Syria.*

- Lebanese man, Wadi Khaled, March 20



# CAUSES AND CONSEQUENCES



# CAUSES AND CONSEQUENCES

A. THE WHY AND HOW



# NEGLIGENCE, STEALING FUTURES

One of the recurrent causes of statelessness, and more specifically nonregistration, is negligence. As in the case of Tripoli, the future of most respondents has been confiscated by their nonregistration at birth because of the carelessness of their parents.

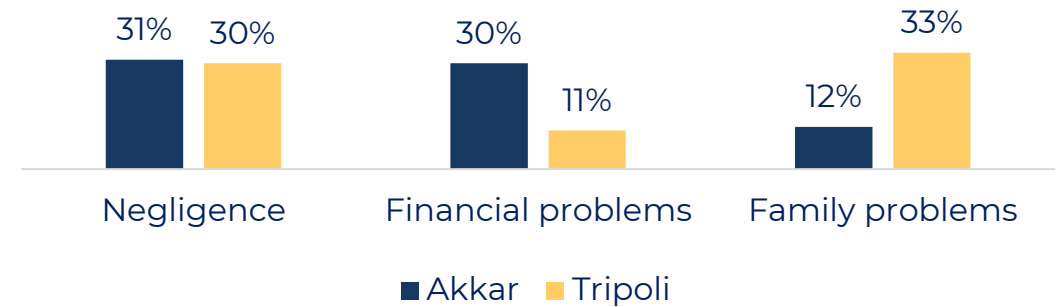
- In Akkar, as in Tripoli, **30%** of the nonregistered stateless respondents declared to be in this situation due to their parents' negligence and/or ignorance. This corresponds with the opinion of **79%** of the interviewed *mukhtars* who think that parents' carelessness is the major cause of statelessness in Akkar.
- That said, such statelessness cases are easier to solve than those that are inherited and can be addressed through the relevant channels. However, the procedure remains quite complex and requires a civil suit, which many people cannot afford. On that, **30%** of Akkar's nonregistered persons say that financial problems are the main reason behind the perpetuation of their condition, whereas financial means are considered less of an issue in Tripoli (**11%**).



*My father used to tell us every year that he will register us, but he never did and we remained stateless.*

26 years-old stateless woman,  
Aboudieh, April 20

Fig 13. Why was your birth not registered?



- Despite mixed marriages being a widely known reason for statelessness, only **12%** of respondents blame their nonregistration on family problems such as divorce, or fathers who would not recognize their children. In Akkar, the financial burden prevails (**30%** of respondents), since it also prevents these families from settling certain fees related to the registration of mixed marriages or regularizing the foreign mother's residency, which can be problematic (if the mother entered the country illegally, for instance).
- In contrast, the majority of Tripoli's nonregistered cases are connected to family problems (**33%**), such as domestic disputes.

# THE CONTROVERSIAL 1994 DECREE

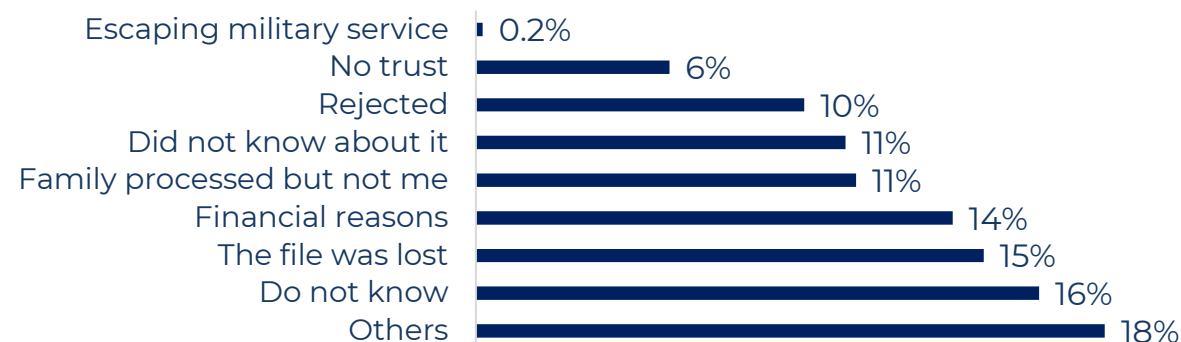
Another significant cause of statelessness is the weight of inherited situations still haunting respondents. This increasingly reflects the failure of the state to address this cause, despite the precedent of the 1994 mechanism.

- The surveyed stateless were asked about the 1994 Decree and the reasons why they were left out of the procedure - a situation affecting **74%** of the adult respondents who were born before 1994.
- Among those respondents, **25%** had filed a claim that was either lost (**15%**) or rejected (**10%**) by the relevant authorities.
- For the others, **16%** had no clue why they missed out on the 1994 procedures, while **11%** did not know about it in the first place, demonstrating the authorities' failure to set up an efficient mechanism to map and identify those needing citizenship papers.
- In addition to the lack of state follow-up, parents' carelessness is also at fault for the **26%** of respondents who were minors in 1994 and whose requests were never filed.
- Financial factors were also stated, with **14%** of respondents saying they were unable to afford to apply for the 1994 mechanism.
- **Eighteen percent** of respondents stated "other" reasons, varying from personal negligence to receiving no feedback over their claim.

## CONTEXT

In 1994, the Lebanese authorities sought to address the issue of statelessness by granting citizenship directly by decree. In theory, it was based on fair eligibility criteria: application forms had to include proof of applicants' connection to Lebanon, such as filiation, or residency or property. But the process lacked transparency and its conditions were unclear. Instead of settling this issue for good, the results were incomplete and the entire process was engulfed by political and sectarian considerations.

Fig 14. Why did you not benefit from the 1994 naturalization process? (429 respondents)



# “THE RULE OF THE FATHER”

The entrenched patriarchal nature of the Lebanese system has a significant impact, leading to countless cases of statelessness.

- The centrality of the male figure in the Lebanese system has entrapped stateless persons in cases where the father is absent or the husband is negligent.
- Among the **nine** surveyed stateless who were not registered through the 1994 mechanism: **five** had husbands unwilling to do the procedure and **three** women could not benefit from it because their fathers were either outside the country or did not want to request it. **One** male respondent also explained how his father’s death prevented him from acquiring citizenship.
- Without the male figure, many women find themselves unable to request citizenship for themselves and their family. As such, the path toward gender equality in Akkar remains quite long.

Fig 15. Why did you not benefit from the 1994 naturalization process?  
(Selected semantic cloud)

My father requested but died  
My father didn't request to the decree  
**My husband didn't register me**  
My father was outside of the country  
My father didn't register the girls



# FRINGE CASES

Finally, fieldwork uncovered what could be considered fringe cases, in which statelessness was generated through outlying factors. Though not all were included in the study's sample, they are worth mentioning.

- Around **10%** of the interviewed *mukhtars* stated that the Halba fire of 1975 caused the destruction of some personal records and created challenges for some to prove their birth and acquire proof of Lebanese nationality. The survey captured this factor for around **1%** of the respondents.
- Other respondents claimed to be stateless because of the carelessness of public officials. For instance, their names were accidentally removed from the *noufous* (family records) or the *mukhtar* refused to register them for personal reasons. While these are technically nonregistered cases, they were added under fringe cases because the cause behind nonregistration is connected to an external factor, other than the parents, also considered as an “exceptional and unusual cause.”



*When my sister died, the mukhtar removed my name from the noufous (family record) instead of hers.*

Stateless woman, Hoeich, April 28



*I am not stateless, I was told I am Maktoumet el Noufous.*

Woman, Tell Ende, April 16

## HALBA NOUFOUS FIRE

(6 out of 586)

## MISTAKES BY PUBLIC OFFICIALS

(5 out of 586)

### FRINGE CASES

These unconventional cases involve citizens whose identification papers cannot be issued for reasons that are unclear to them. Some of them have identification documents but cannot issue an *Ekhray Qayd* (civil registry extract) and their names are not enlisted as voters.

### STATELESS “IN TWO COUNTRIES”?

Many of the encountered Dom stateless are of Syrian origin. They have no identification papers and remain stateless in both Lebanon and Syria. Some of them even have *ta'arif* cards from Syrian *mukhtars* and currently live as stateless in Lebanon.



**V.**

# **CAUSES AND CONSEQUENCES**

B. ACCESS TO RIGHTS

# THE RIGHTS OF THE RIGHTLESS

The strong sense of national identity among stateless persons is not taken into consideration by the state, which only recognizes a handful of their rights.

Rights and services	MAKTOUM EL QAYD	QAYD EL DARS
Access to <b>healthcare</b> and social security	No	No
Public and formal <b>employment</b>	No	Only formal employment upon approval from the Ministry of Labor
Right to <b>education</b>	Primary and secondary school admission and official examination upon authorization by Ministry of Education	Primary and secondary school admission and official examination using the QeD (under-study) card
Right to <b>property</b>	No	Only moveable goods
Freedom of <b>movement</b>	Laissez-passer passport from General Security for international travel <i>ta'arif</i> certificate for local travel	Laissez-passer passport from General Security for international travel Under-study card for local travel
<b>Driver's</b> License	Yes (Laissez-passer passport)	Yes (Under-study card)
<b>Civic and political rights</b>	No	No

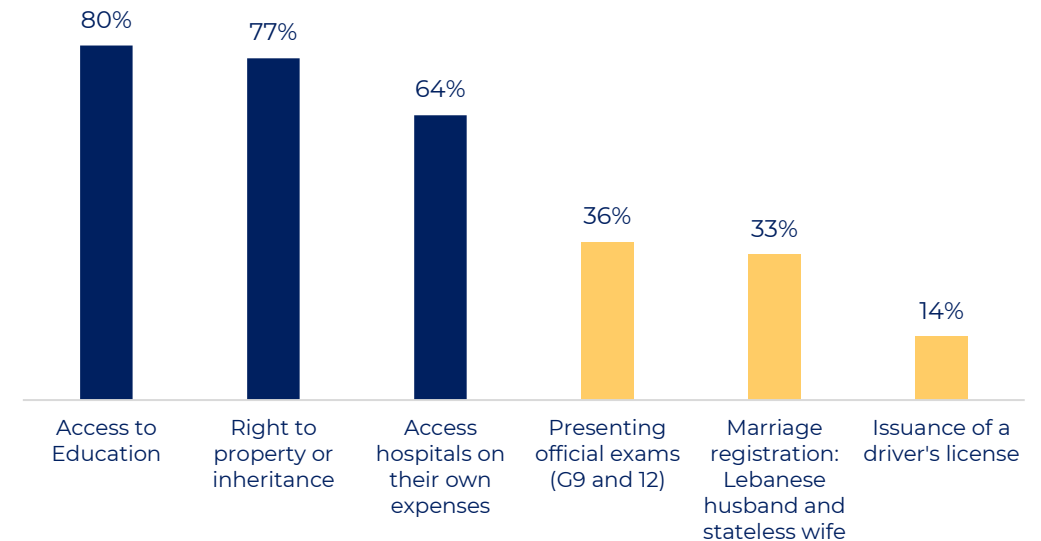


# UNINFORMED GUIDANCE

That said, in addition to these limited rights, stateless people also struggle with misinformation that further prevents them from accessing rights and services.

- Stateless persons are granted only a handful of rights, such as education and some categories of employment. Generally, *ta'arif* certificates issued by *mukhtars*, or QeD (understudy) cards issued by General Security (when applicable) would be enough for stateless to access such services.
- As such, this system places great power in the hands of local elected officials, making stateless persons dependent on the *mukhtar's* knowledge on these issues and the personal relationship they bear with him/her. It has happened that *mukhtars'* mistakes or misconduct deeply hamper the person's status (**4.7%** of respondents).
- Under such circumstances, it is no surprise that stateless respondents highly regard their *mukhtar* (**61%**), as they turn to them for documentation and guidance. However, a sizeable proportion of contacted *mukhtars* (**43%**) had inaccurate knowledge on stateless persons' rights, which accentuates the risk that this community will miss out on such services.
- Furthermore, **13%** of the contacted *mukhtars* do not grant *ta'arif* certificates for various reasons, such as fear of liability. For those who do, they follow two main criteria: their familiarity with the person's parental history (**53%**) and the origins of the stateless person, who would have to be from the *mukhtar's* village (**34%**).

Fig 16. *Mukhtars* who offered a correct response to each of following rights of stateless in Lebanon



**Note:** Stateless persons can access all of the above-mentioned rights, except owning property and inheritance.

**Exception:** Under-study individuals can own movable goods.

# ALL EQUAL BEFORE INJUSTICE

Both stateless and Lebanese living in Akkar face similar hardships, and they share common daily worries. Access to healthcare is the top priority for both.

Stateless and Lebanese respondents were asked to choose three daily worries out of twelve choices, in addition to picking three top rights out of seven options (right to healthcare, education, movement, ownership and inheritance, vote, employment, and security and stability). Many similarities can be observed in both variables, such as worrying about being able to access basic needs and food (no gender or age variations were recorded here).

Fig 17. Top three daily worries for stateless and Lebanese respondents

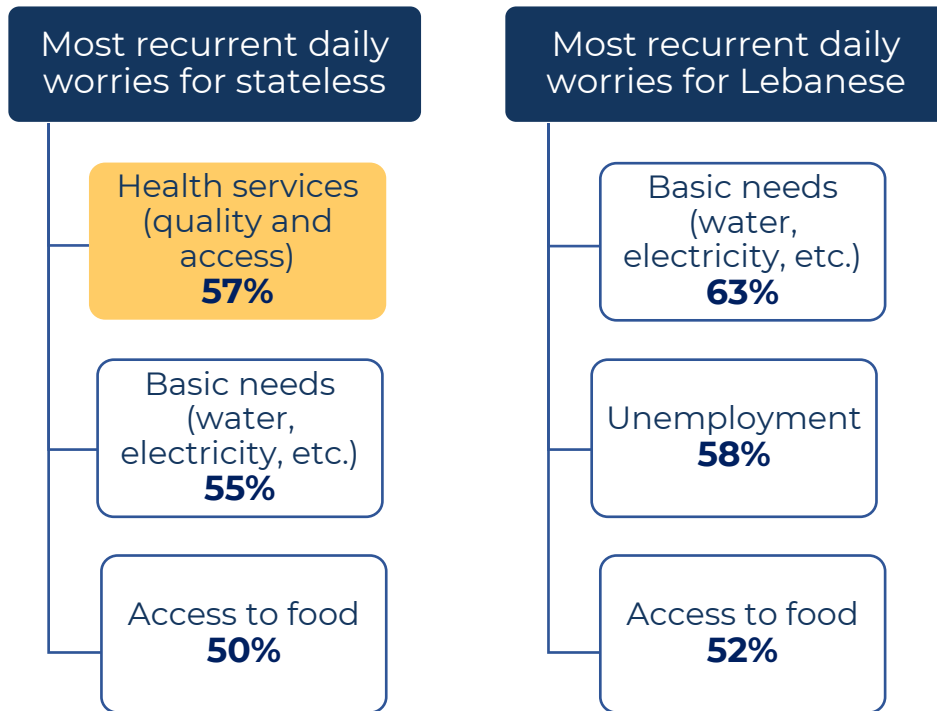
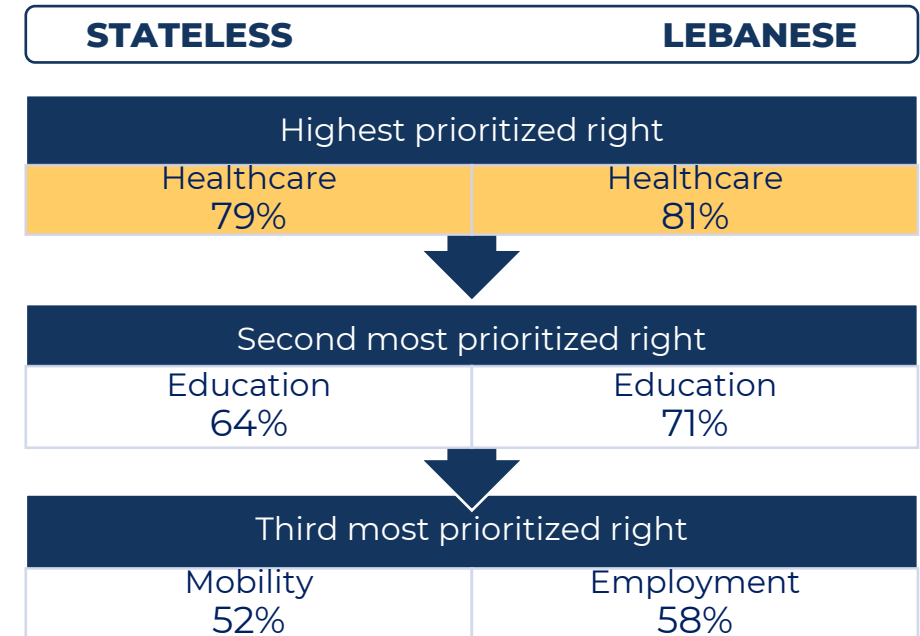


Fig 18. Top three prioritized rights for stateless and Lebanese respondents



# HEALTHCARE STRUGGLES

Access to healthcare is technically more challenging for stateless persons, but Lebanese in Akkar also struggle to access medical services; therefore, possessing citizenship does not necessarily facilitate access. This is mostly due to both groups' limited financial capabilities.

- Stateless people are evidently more affected on the healthcare front than Lebanese, since they can neither benefit from Social Security, nor from support from the Ministry of Public Health (used for specific emergency cases by Lebanese individuals). As such, they widely make use of dispensaries (**79%**), in similar proportions as Lebanese (**80%**).
- **Twenty seven percent** of stateless have access to hospitals, mainly at their own expense (**69%**), despite their dire financial situation. Very few resort to fraud or *wasta* (nepotism).

Fig 19. Rating of right to healthcare for stateless and Lebanese respondents

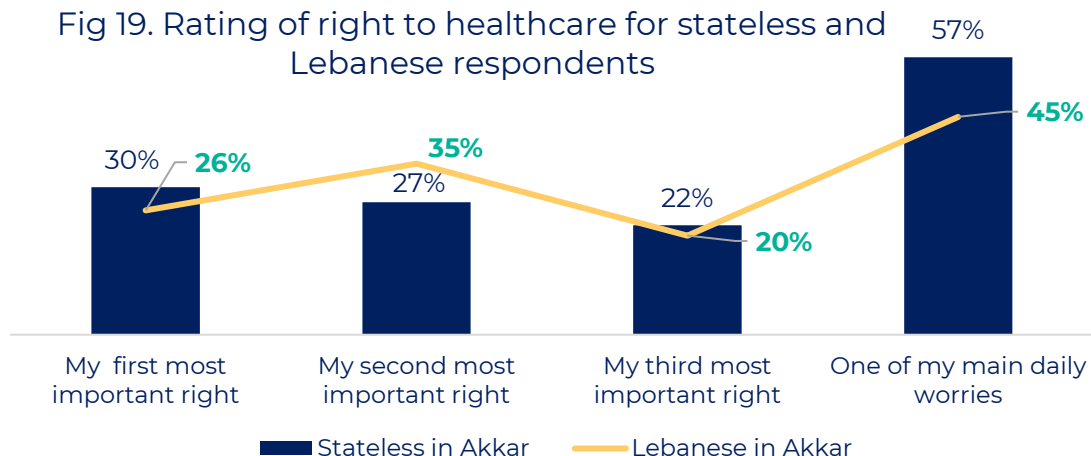


Fig 20. How do you access healthcare?

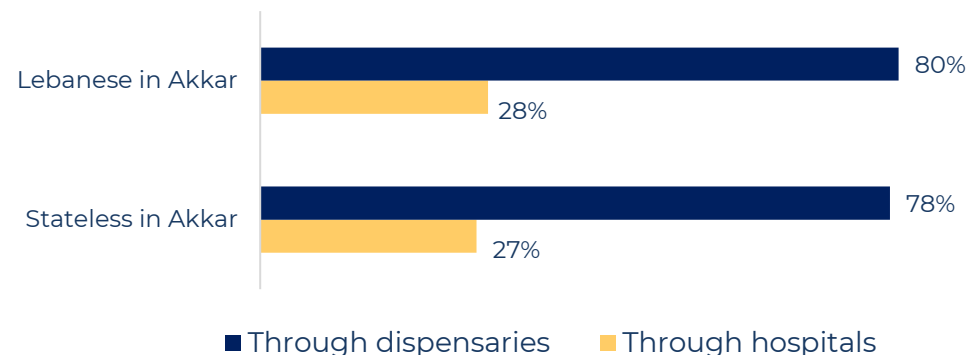
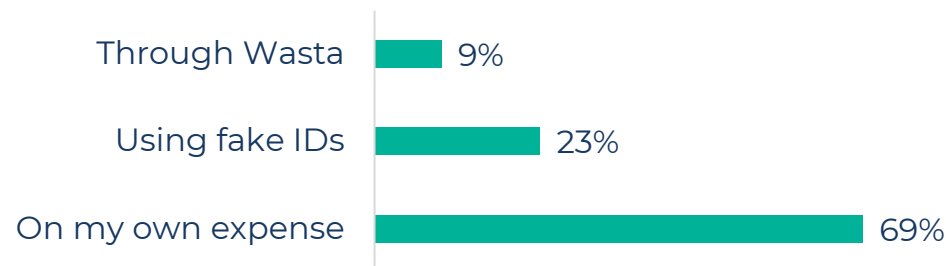


Fig 21. How do you access hospitals? (158 respondents)



# COVID-19 AWARENESS AND PERCEPTIONS

Overall, the national vaccination platform received little traffic from Akkar, despite more engagement from stateless people compared to other marginalized groups, such as Syrian refugees. They both used the platform less than Lebanese because of their lack of concern and care about the virus, which was obvious on the field.

- A clear majority of stateless respondents worry about not having access to proper healthcare in light of the current Covid-19 situation in the country (**60%**, compared to **54%** for Lebanese). A sizable minority (**22%**, compared to **24%** for Lebanese) say they are not that worried but take all the necessary precautions. A small minority (**14%**, compared to **17%** for Lebanese) are not particularly concerned about Covid-19.
- An overwhelming majority of stateless respondents (**84%** compared to **78%** for Lebanese) say they are not registered on the Covid-19 vaccine registration platform, either because: they do not want to get the vaccine (**60%**); they think that a stateless person cannot register (**11%**); they do not know that there is a platform (**13%**); or they do not know how to register (**10%**).
- The unwillingness to get vaccinated seems to originate from: (1) a fear of side effects, (2) a general distrust toward pharmaceutical companies, and (3) an overall disbelief in the pandemic. When it comes to Covid-19, there are clear knowledge gaps among survey respondents, and hesitation, fear, distrust, and disbelief.
- On the other hand, **4%** of stateless respondents indicate having registered on the platform, and another **12%** say they plan on registering.
- Overall, stateless persons seem to be relatively more engaged in registration than other marginalized groups. By the end of April 2021, **134** Syrian refugees in Akkar were registered on the vaccine platform. With around **106,100** Syrian refugees in Akkar, half of whom are above 18, only **0.3%** of adult Syrian refugees in Akkar were registered on the platform at that time - way below the figure from the survey of stateless persons.

Fig 22. Are you worried about accessing healthcare during the pandemic?

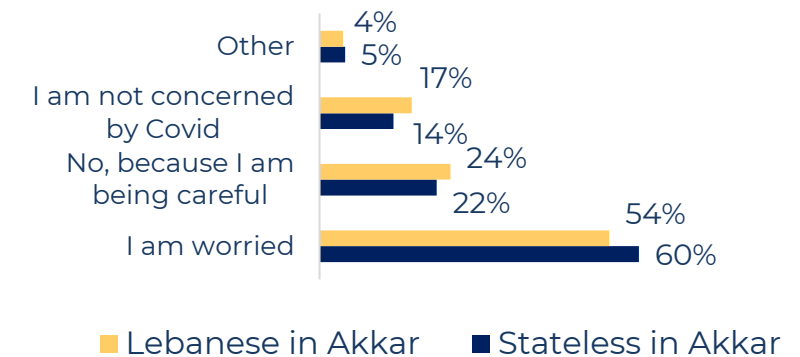
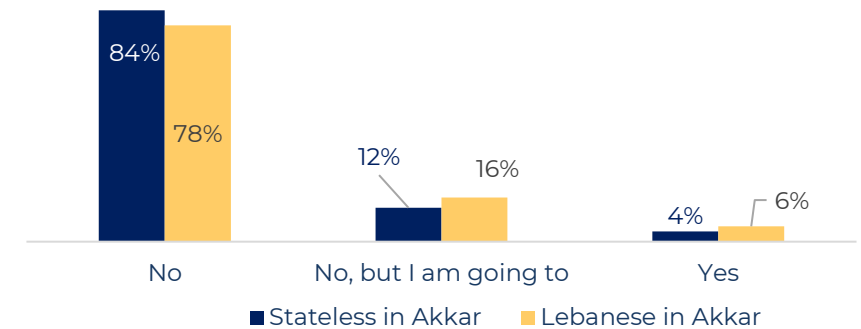


Fig 23. Did you register on the vaccine platform?



Source:

- Impact Open Data. (n.d.). Retrieved May 20, 2021, from <https://impact.gov.lb>
- UNHCR (2021), Retrieved May 20, 2021, from <https://data2.unhcr.org/en/documents/details/82686>



# YOU HAVE THE RIGHT TO REMAIN UNEMPLOYED

Unemployment is a cause of great hardship in Akkar, regardless of statelessness, due to the region's deprivation of services. Wadi Khaled appears as the most affected region across categories.

- The limited access to job opportunities in Akkar is due to the lack of public services, political clientelism and the absence of clear governmental policies protecting the relevant working sectors, namely agriculture. However, stateless people in Akkar suffer from a higher unemployment rate (**65%**) than the Lebanese locals (**54%**) due to their condition, which affects both their level of literacy and consequently their access to employment, even in the non-formal sectors.
- Geographically, unemployment rates among stateless individuals are particularly high in the Jurd (**90%**) and the Sahel (**76%**). In addition, the **4%** who declared receiving aid from political or religious organizations are mostly concentrated in these previously mentioned areas, and Wadi Khaled. Moreover, stateless persons are not entitled to the National Poverty Targeting Program, launched by the Lebanese government based on a World Bank funding.

Fig 24. Unemployment rates per region and category

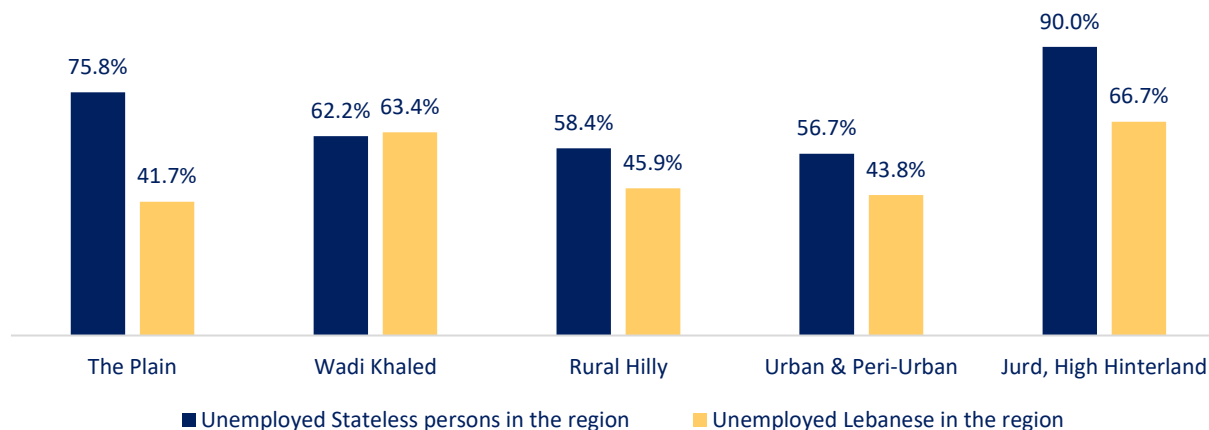
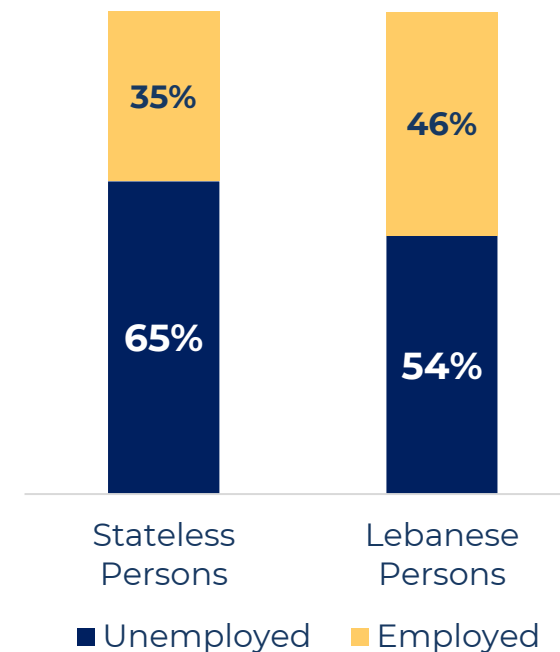


Fig 25. Unemployment rate in Akkar

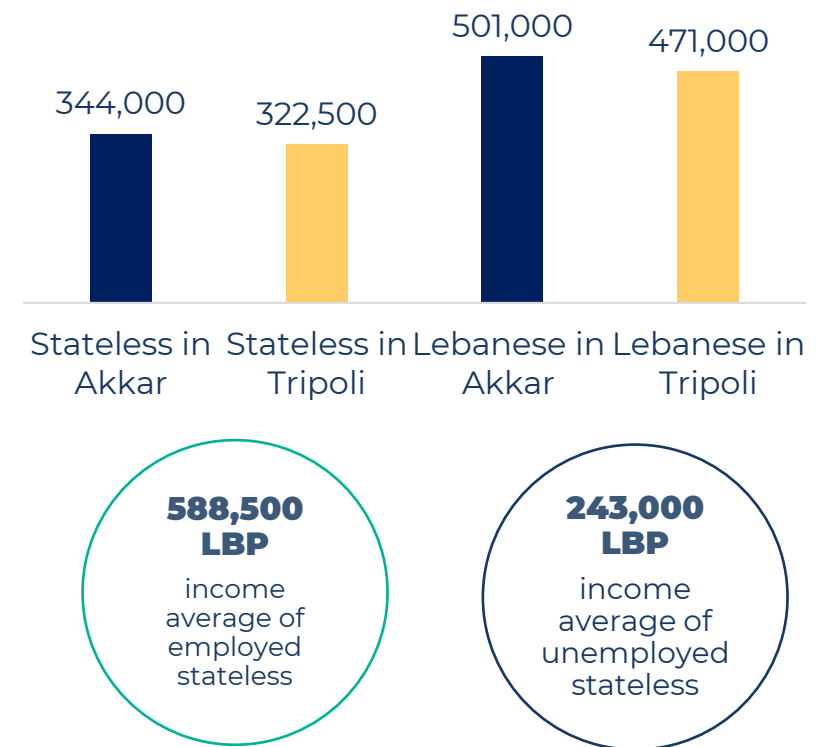


# YOU HAVE THE RIGHT TO REMAIN UNEMPLOYED

In addition to high unemployment rates, the region, like the entire country, is burdened with low average incomes, especially after the deterioration of the Lebanese Pound (LBP). Interestingly enough, respondents who say they are unemployed still say they have some income on a monthly basis.

- The average income of stateless persons in Akkar and Tripoli never exceeds the minimum wage (which was in September 2021 equivalent to less than **\$40** at the market rate). Even the Lebanese in Akkar earn an average income that is lower than the minimum wage.
- Wages in Akkar and Tripoli are very similar. There should be greater disparity, given that the averages in Tripoli were calculated three years ago, before the pound lost 90% of its value.
- **Thirty five percent** of stateless are employed yet receive insufficient income through their labor. The jobs they hold include construction work/metal scrapping (**34%**), farming and agricultural work (**24%**), working as a shop clerk (**14%**), and driving (**8%**). Other jobs involve music and street performance (**4%**) – held by stateless from Dom communities in particular – in addition to irregular cross-border economic activities (**4%**), and being a concierge (**3%**).
- Furthermore, a sizeable portion of unemployed stateless (**44%**) declare earning some income. These stateless individuals are not employed in the sense defined in this study, but have small, daily jobs that secure them a certain income. As such, unemployment does not indicate a lack of labor activity.

Fig 26. Average personal income comparison (in LBP)

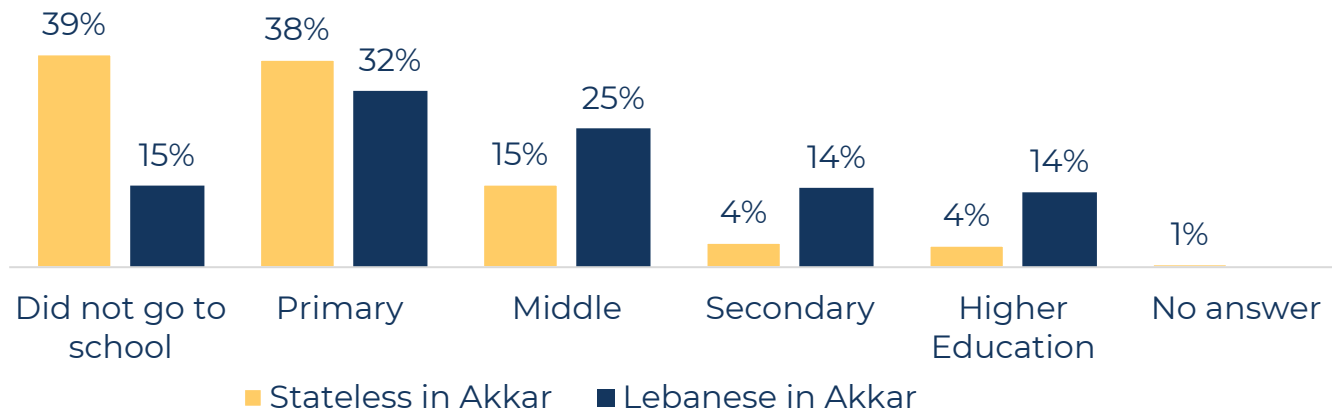


# INACCESS TO EDUCATION

The lack of education across north Lebanon, and more specifically among stateless persons in Akkar, is a deep and recurrent issue, mostly caused by negligence, ignorance and the belief that education is not a priority.

- Lebanese nationals in Tripoli and Akkar have better access to education than stateless people. Exactly **39%** of the stateless in Akkar and **33%** of the stateless in Tripoli did not attend school. Around **40%** of the stateless in both regions dropped out of school at the primary education level (grade 1 to 6), receiving little education. A significant disparity exists among age groups: a much greater proportion (**51%**) of persons over 50 never went to school than those under 40 years old (**28%**).
- The proportion of stateless and non-stateless people who have completed middle and/or secondary school is low for both regions. Furthermore, only **4%** of the stateless in Akkar, and **1%** of the stateless in Tripoli have pursued a higher education, while around **13%** of Lebanese in both regions followed a higher education.

Fig 27. Which level of education did you reach?



*I did not go to school because it was not that common back then.*

63-year-old stateless woman, Massoudieh, April 16



*I did not go to school because of my parents' negligence, they did not register me at any school.*

33-year-old stateless man, Aarqa, April 22

# INACCESS TO EDUCATION

Education is legally accessible (confirmed through ministerial circulars) to stateless in Lebanon. Yet, large proportions of stateless people receive little education, and this trend is often passed on between generations. This might increase following the shift toward online education - a format that is inaccessible to many individuals.

- The survey of parents shows that **46%** of stateless children who are currently not in school say this is due to their lack of identification documents, which is the result of a typical form of misinformation. Their parents believe that it constitutes a real obstacle but in fact, stateless children can regularly pursue proper education through *ta'arif* cards, as confirmed by *mukhtars* and key informants from schools.
- As such, Lebanese children, even those born to a stateless parent (mostly mothers), have a better chance at accessing education, since they do not face difficulties providing identification papers for registration. In this respect, only **9%** of Lebanese children (based on 118 respondents in that status) are outside the school system, in opposition to **24%** of stateless children.

Fig 28. Are your school-aged children (3-18) going to school?

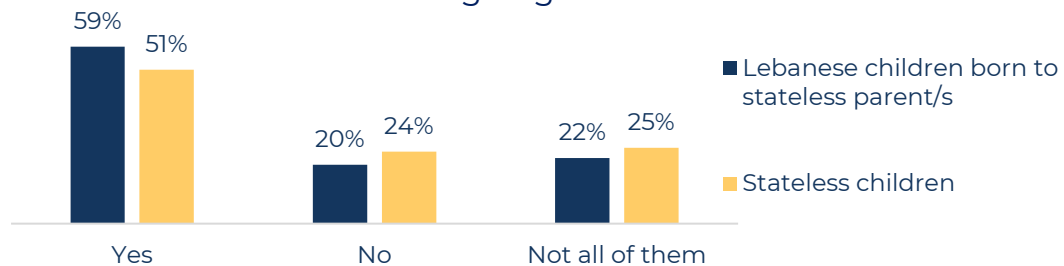
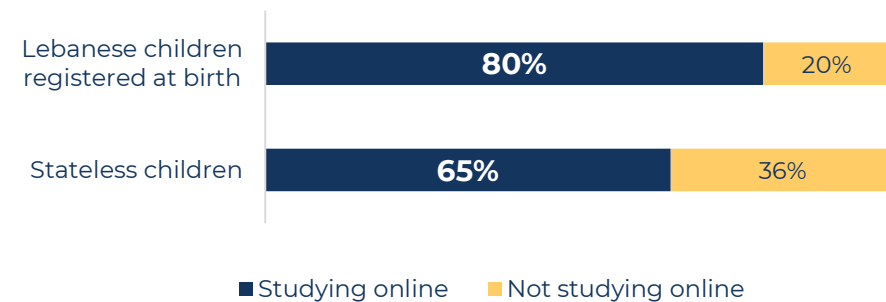


Fig 29. Are your children studying online?



- Among the stateless children who stopped going to school due to Covid-19 (**53%** of the children attending school), **65%** are managing their studies online due to Covid-19 restrictions, compared to **80%** of Lebanese children. This shows again the higher chances of receiving an education when identification papers are in order. It is noteworthy that online classes in Akkar are done through WhatsApp voice messages, pictures and calls due to their accessibility to a relatively large proportion of children. The risk of children not receiving an education is increasing because online education is yet another obstacle for stateless children, added to their parents' possible misinformation, negligence, ignorance and/or limited financial capabilities.





V.

# CAUSES AND CONSEQUENCES

C. COPING MECHANISMS

# OWNING PROPERTY 101

Statelessness deprives people of their right to property due to their lack of legal personality. Yet, innovative workarounds have been developed, opening the door toward property ownership and, more rarely, own name registration.

- Legally, stateless persons cannot own any property, except for Qayd el Dars individuals who can own movable goods. However, Akkar facilitates ownership, since land property can be transmitted by simple contracts as opposed to cadaster registration. That said, stateless persons have identified alternative solutions to own property rights mostly using informal methods.
- For instance, registering property to relatives' names is a classic workaround for stateless people. This practice was also observed in Tripoli, where **47%** of stateless people registered property to their parents' name and **15%** to their spouses, compared to **24%** and **25%** in Akkar respectively.
- A small minority of stateless people in Akkar (**4%**) have found ways to register property to their own names, mostly in Wadi Khaled; this is nonexistent among the stateless in Tripoli.
- Most of these ownership agreements are actually based on unofficial "purchase warrants" (an example of the simple contracts referred to above). According to *mukhtars*, many of these properties are passed on from one generation to another, or bought, merely based on oral acknowledgements or a type of gentlemen's agreement.

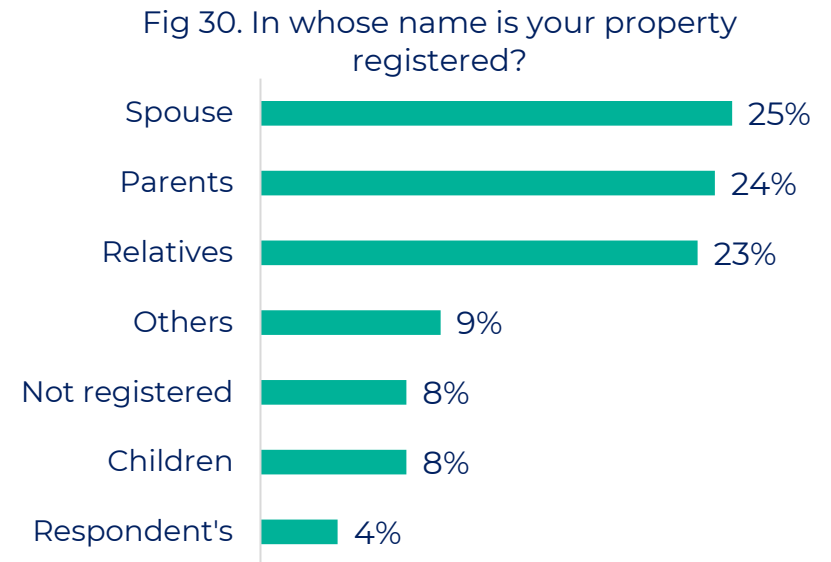
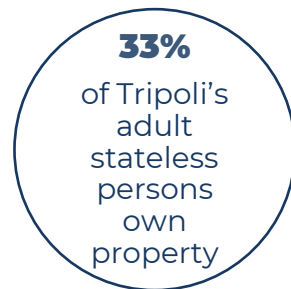


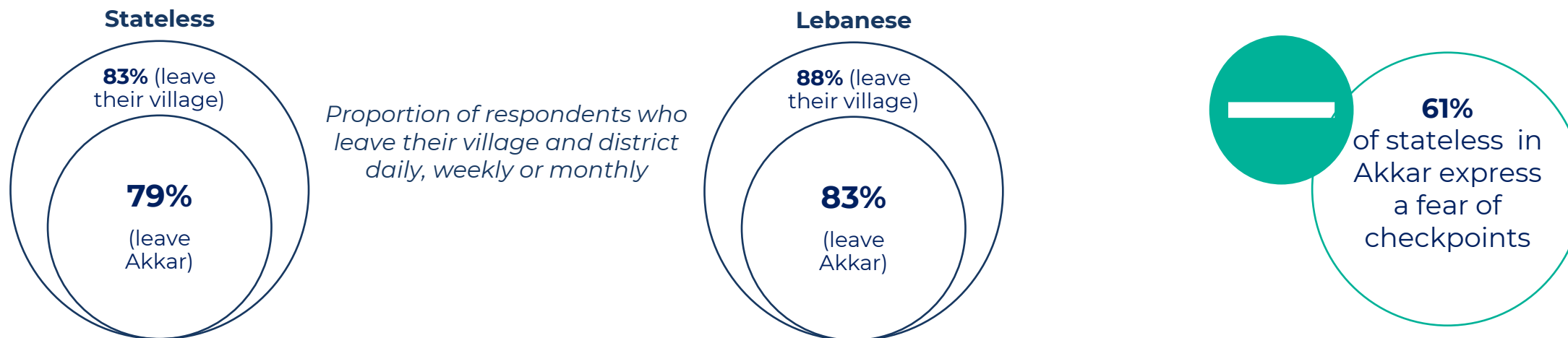
Fig 31. Geography breakdown of stateless property owners



# RECLAIMING FREEDOM OF MOVEMENT

Stateless people are denied legal personality and they struggle to provide identification documents to facilitate their mobility. Yet, in practice, the impact on freedom of movement seems rather minor for the surveyed stateless in Akkar.

- The identification documents requested at checkpoints are usually national identity cards, civil registry extracts or, in the case of stateless people, *ta'arif* and QeD documents. The first two are inaccessible for stateless people, while *ta'arif* and QeD documents sometimes pass at the discretion of the security personnel at checkpoints.
- **Sixty one percent** of stateless in Akkar express a fear of checkpoints, out of which **55%** claim to avoid movement as a result. However, **79%** out of the latter leave their villages daily, weekly, or monthly. This fear of checkpoints is hence managed, as these individuals have to come and go to serve their basic needs and access services.
- Overall, **83%** leave their village daily, weekly or monthly (down to **75%** for women respondents while there are no variations between age groups), while **79%** state that they leave Akkar (**74%** among women). This is similar to the degree to which Lebanese in Akkar say they leave their village (**88%**) and go out of Akkar (**83%**).
- So, despite the potential impact statelessness could cause to freedom of movement, it appears that most stateless in Akkar are able to come and go with relative ease, especially when compared to mobility of stateless persons in Tripoli. The 2019 study found that **60%** of Tripoli's stateless never leave the area, as opposed to **21%** of Akkari stateless who never leave their district. For those who do, as mentioned by *mukhtars* and a majority of respondents, their *ta'arif* certificates are more often than not accepted at checkpoints.



# AVOIDING TROUBLES

When confronted with situations involving hardships, hypothetical or otherwise, the stateless in Akkar tend to avoid any trouble or dispute, and refrain from engaging in fraud, even in dire circumstances.

- When asked about any dispute or trouble, respondents say they have little to no issues on that front, with the highest proportion (**10%**) referring to incidents in relation to being sacked from their job.
- Respondents (similar ratios among men and women) and their families point to the absence of any quarrel with security services (**95%**). Similarly, they do not seem to be exposed to drug addiction (**96%**), domestic violence (**94%**) or street violence (**93%**). These proportions are comparable among the Lebanese respondents. No variations in relation to gender were recorded here either.
- Additionally, respondents were given a hypothetical situation where their employer had decided to withhold their wages. Respondents mostly say they would hold **non-vindictive attitudes**, ranging from passivity (**32%** of stateless compared to **22%** for Lebanese) to peaceful reasoning (**32%** of stateless compared to **42%** of Lebanese).

Fig 32. What would you do in case your employer was to withhold your wages?

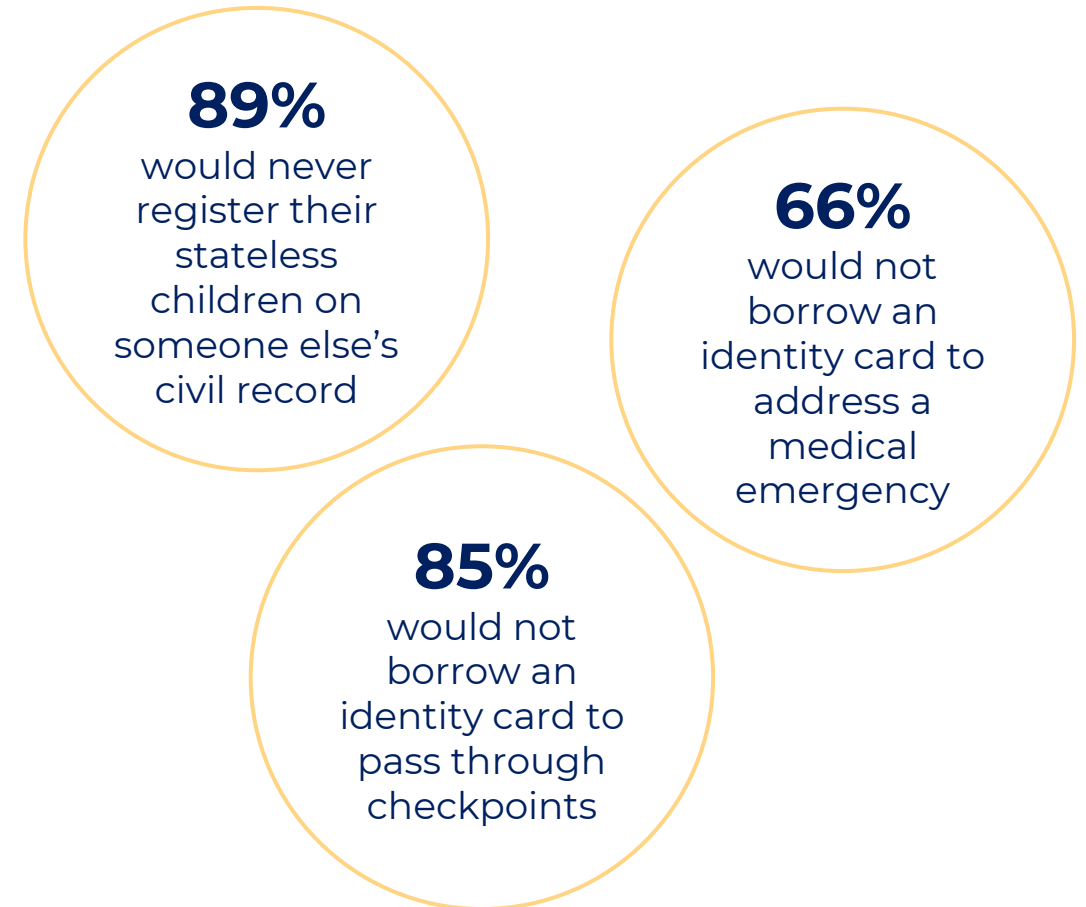




# AVOIDING TROUBLES

Despite bearing social characteristics traditionally known to lead to violence and radicalization (low education, high unemployment, no legal personality), the stateless in Akkar, like in Tripoli, manage the push and pull factors that encourage these behaviors.

- The context in Akkar is very different than Tripoli when it comes to the attitudes and behavior of the stateless. According to the findings in Tripoli, “the higher the number of stateless persons in the family, and the higher the sense of marginalization and deprivation of basic rights, the bigger the temptation for fraudulent behavior as a coping mechanism, and the greater likelihood of violence”.
- For instance, **19%** of stateless respondents in Akkar said they had been arrested at least once (mostly men with **65%**). This is much less than in Tripoli (**35%**). Among those arrested in Akkar, **40%** (equivalent of **8%** of the survey’s sample), overwhelmingly men, said they were subjected to mistreatment, including insults and humiliation, with some reporting beating and ill-treatment by the security services.
- Interestingly, out of these **19%** (112 respondents), only **3%** faced drug issues in the past year, **7%** faced street or domestic violence, and **13%** had quarreled with the security forces. These rates, when considered alongside the qualitative information gathered in the field and the fact that **75%** of those arrested said they are scared of checkpoints, suggest that most arrests of the stateless in Akkar take place at checkpoints.
- Despite their various obstacles and fears, the stateless in Akkar reject fraudulent practices, such as borrowing someone’s identity document to cross a checkpoint (**85%**), or to access medical care in an emergency (**66%**).



# ROCKY BLOCKED ROAD TOWARDS CITIZENRY

Slow and hectic procedural hazards continue to prevent stateless persons in Akkar escaping their condition, with the road described by respondents toward nationality appearing rocky and congested.

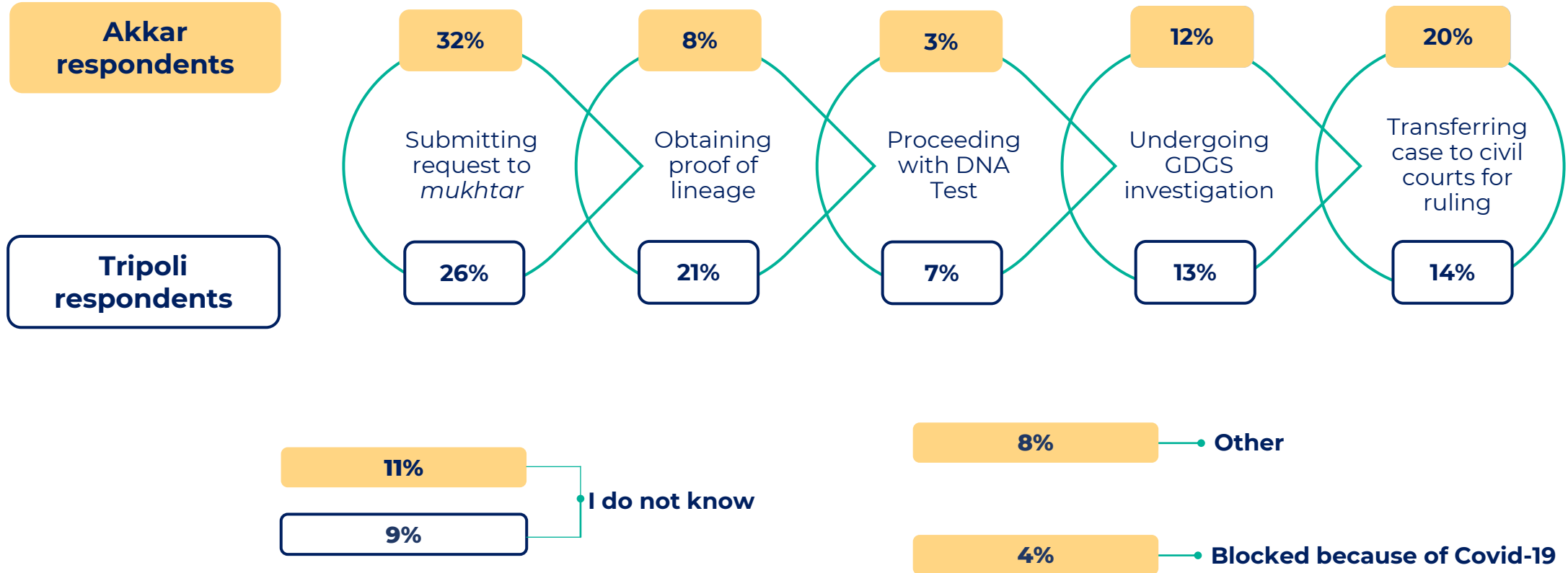
- **Seventy three percent** of the stateless from the main questionnaire say they have engaged in a procedure to acquire the Lebanese nationality in the past (**67%** among women respondents), mostly through local *mukhtars* or personal lawyers. Of those, **50%** are Bedouin from Wadi Khaled, and the rest are from other regions, with the Dom representing **15%** of those who have already engaged in the process. On the other hand, **27%** never bothered, mostly stating financial factors (**46%**) and cluelessness as to who to contact to start the process (**27%**).
- Only **10%** say they can resort to an NGO to assist them in the process, with half of those respondents (21 people) mentioning the NGO “*Ruwad al Houqouq*”. Such proceedings did not have higher success rates compared to other channels of submission.
- Among the initiated requests (426 respondents), **39%** were launched before 2005, and **35%** originated after 2015. The success rates do not vary much when comparing both periods - an indication about how rigid and ineffective the proceedings have remained.
- The respondents who have initiated the procedure have been in the process for an average of 14 years. The procedure involved financial engagement for around **70%** of them, with amounts varying from \$80 to over \$40,000 (at the official rate of 1,505LBP to the USD).
- Looking at the path of those who engaged in such procedure (see next slide), one third of respondents did not go past filing their request at the *mukhtar’s* office, compared to **26%** for Tripoli. Only **3%** of respondents have proceeded with a DNA test, compared to **7%** for in Tripoli, mainly due to its large cost that many openly stated they could not afford.
- Only **22%** actually completed all the administrative steps and are waiting for a ruling, compared to **14%** in Tripoli



Fig 33. When did you initiate your nationality procedure? (426 respondents)

# DROWNING IN A PROCEDURAL MAZE

Fig 34. Which step in your proceedings have you reached so far ? (426 respondents)





**VI.**

**PERCEPTIONS  
AND IDENTITIES**

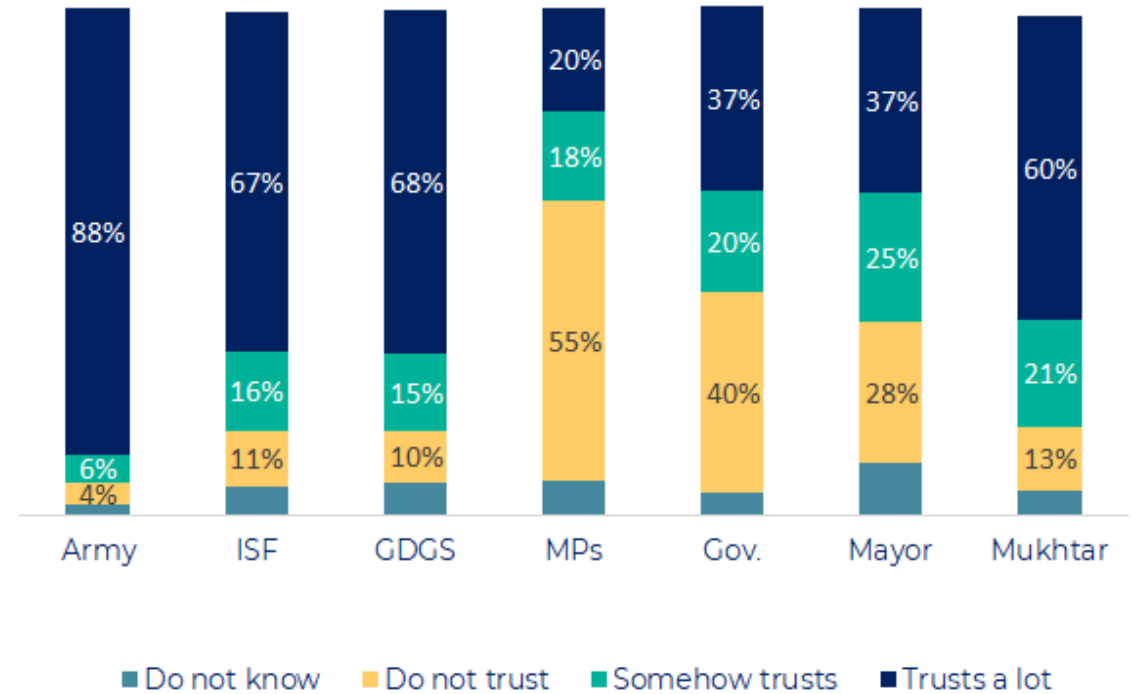


# HEARTS BEAT FOR A NATION

Stateless people struggle with their condition, which they bear no responsibility for. Respondents tend to blame the state for their ordeal, while regarding the army highly alongside other security services.

- The majority of the 586 respondents hold the state responsible for their stateless condition (**52%**), while a smaller group (**44%**) points to their families as the main party to blame. For nonregistered respondents, the percentage blaming their family increases to **62%**.
- The state appears highly criticized, with significant levels of distrust by the stateless toward authorities. Their levels of distrust are lower than those of the Lebanese: **55%** of stateless respondents distrust parliamentarians, compared to **66%** of Lebanese; **40%** of stateless respondents distrust the government compared to **58%** of Lebanese.
- The only state entities escaping such perceptions are the security services, which are highly trusted. The army ranks at the top (**88%** of stateless and Lebanese respondents trust it highly), receiving more positive opinions than *mukhtars* (**60%** highly trusted, compared to **52%** for Lebanese). This is not surprising, knowing Akkar is the main reservoir of recruits for the Lebanese Army.

Fig 35. How much do you trust the following authorities?



**65%**  
of stateless  
would do the  
same

**86%**  
of Lebanese  
would go to **ISF** if  
their wallet was  
stolen

# SHAME AND DESPAIR

Stigmatization has taken a psychological toll on stateless persons, whether at a personal or familial level. Findings show strong emotional factors impacting the mental health of stateless persons, but only a smaller proportion are open to psychological support.

- A clear majority of stateless respondents (**63%**) point to the negative impact statelessness has on their family environment (**58%** among women), highlighting stress, shame and exploitation as major disruptions.
- A large group of respondents also emphasize how emotionally draining their statelessness is, with **46%** indicating a psychological impact because of their situation (**48%** among women). **Sixteen percent** of respondents preferred to elude the question, while **36%** say there is no impact on that level (same ratio among women).
- At the same time, **53%** of respondents (**56%** among women) have no need nor concern for psychological support, thus uncovering the difficulty in approaching such an issue.
- When presented with the option of emigration, the stateless are open to both staying and leaving (**49%** favoring to stay compared to **47%** willing or considering to leave). **Twenty five percent** say they would consider escaping through illegal routes. Interestingly, the inclination toward emigration is greater among the Lebanese group (**62%**).

**40%**

of stateless express a need for psychosocial support

**64%**

of respondents say that statelessness has impacted their **family environment**

**49% STRESS**

**25% SHAME**

**11% EXPLOITATION**

**45%**

of respondents say that statelessness has impacted **them emotionally**

**26% DESPAIR**

**24% STRESS**

**22% EMOTIONAL FATIGUE**

**16%**

Do not know if it has impacted them emotionally



**VII.**

**DOUBLE  
VULNERABILITY**





VII.

# DOUBLE VULNERABILITY

A. GENDER STIGMA



# WOMEN'S DOUBLE TROUBLE

Gender discrimination forms an additional layer of vulnerability within statelessness.

- Figures from the main and control surveys show much higher unemployment rates among women in Akkar than among men, regardless of whether they hold citizenship or not.
- Among the main survey, **78%** of women are married. In addition, **89%** are unemployed. Traditional gender roles that prevent women from working, or confine them to the status of housewives, continue to be present in Akkar.
- Around **76%** of stateless are denied a proper education, regardless of gender, compared to **42%** of Lebanese men. The proportion of Lebanese women in this category stands at **57%**, but is much lower than the proportion of uneducated stateless women in Akkar (**75%**).
- As such, gender discrimination is very prominent in the region, regardless of status, due to the patriarchal system that overlooks women's needs and aspirations.

Fig 36. Breakdown by gender of unemployed Lebanese and stateless respondents



Fig 37. Married respondents

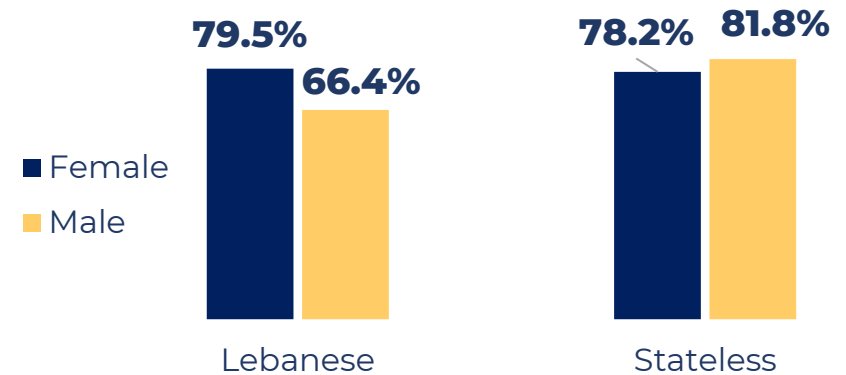


Fig 38. Breakdown by gender of Lebanese and stateless respondents who had no or little education

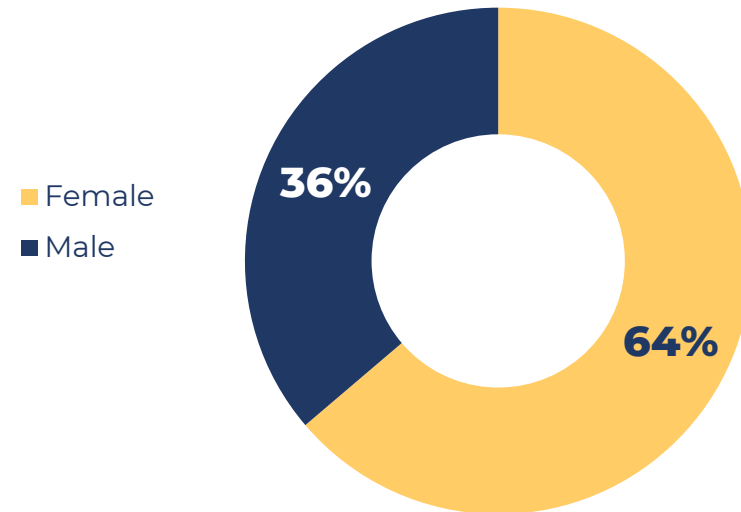


# BORN TO STATELESSNESS

Under the current patriarchal set-up, gender is an influential element for Lebanese fathers when deciding whether or not to register their child's birth. As a result, women have higher chances of ending up nonregistered.

- Nonregistered females account for **64%** of the stateless respondents, while unregistered males account for only **36%**.
- A majority of Lebanese fathers are hence deliberately distinguishing between their male and female children, with a pronounced preference for registering male children.
- “Customs” and “traditions” came among many of the social factors captured by the survey when exploring the reasons for nonregistration. For instance, some respondents said that registering girls did not hold much importance under their customs, or that their registration would be the duty of their future husband.
- The majority of surveyed women showed clear signs of fear or discomfort over the course of the surveys. Many were lost or worried about answering questions without the presence of a male referee, while others were interviewed hidden behind doors because their husbands were at work.
- When asked why her children were not registered, one surveyed woman replied that her husband “*hates girls.*” This is only one of many reported stories about how some men in Akkar stigmatize women.

Fig 39. Breakdown of nonregistered category by gender



*My husband killed my daughters by not registering them.*

Lebanese woman, Tell Ende, April 20

# MARRIAGE AS A SAFETY NET

Stigmatization is being reproduced at the family level, with women encouraging their female family members to get married quickly in order to cope better with statelessness. A smaller minority goes even further by encouraging underage marriage.

- A majority of stateless respondents (**55%**) would encourage their sisters, daughters or grand-daughters to get married to non-stateless men as a way out of their daily struggles. These answers are balanced along gender lines (**53%** female and **47%** male).
- For those respondents, marriage is seen as a way to attain a support system, with the expanded family creating a sense of safety and protection. It can act as an alternative coping mechanism to address statelessness.
- In this respect, regardless of law, ethics or basic rights, women are essentially deprived due to their condition.

**55%**  
of stateless encourage their daughters and sisters to get married to a non-stateless man to improve her condition

Fig 40. "Yes, I encourage my female siblings to get married to improve their situation today"

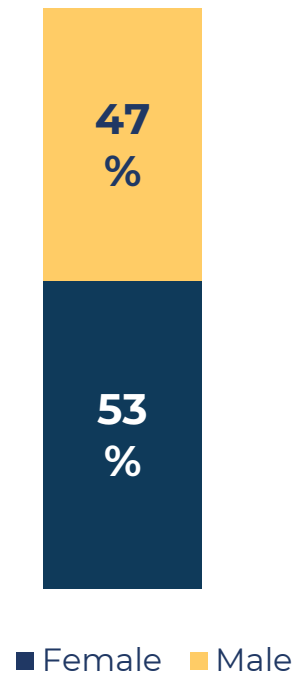
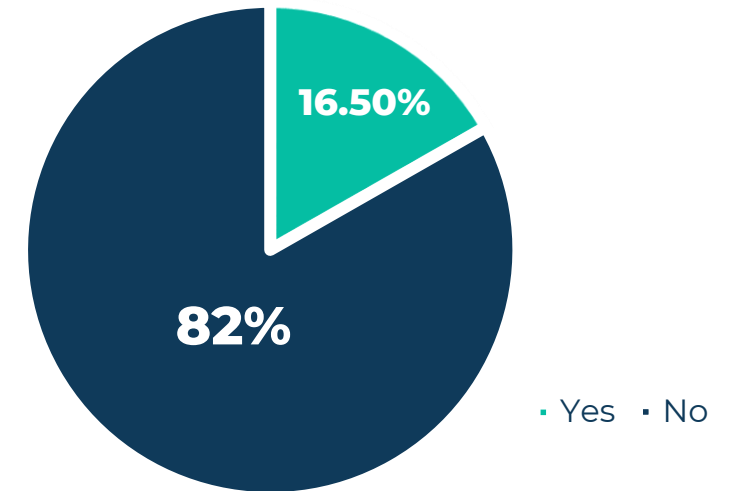


Fig 41. "And if she was underage?"



- Yet, a crushing majority (**82%**) reject the idea of underage marriage to alleviate statelessness conditions.
- Only **17%** of stateless would recommend marriage for their underaged daughters and/or sisters -an opinion that was expressed in equal ratios among men and women.

# YOUNG BRIDES

The marginalization of stateless people has encouraged underage marriage - a trend that is fortunately becoming less prevalent among the younger generations .

Fig 42. A closer look at underage marriages

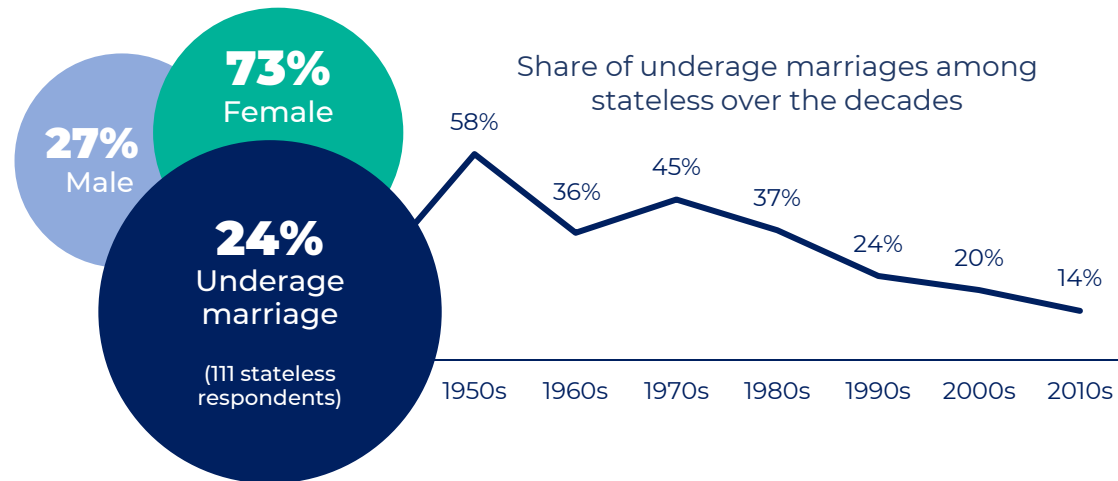
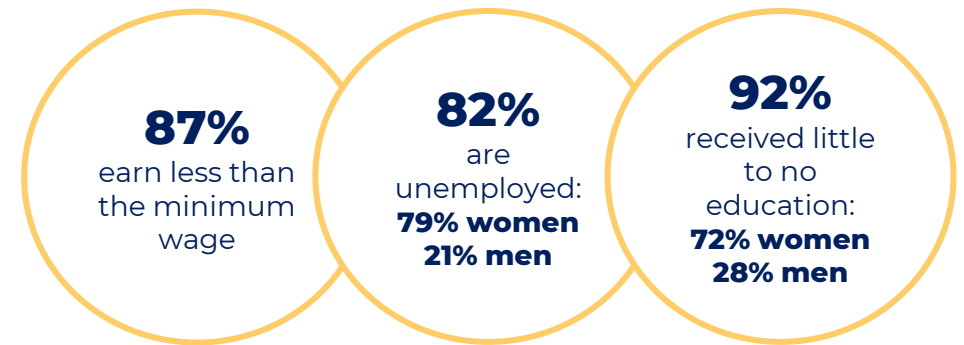


Fig 43. Identified patterns among the stateless who were married underage (111 respondents)



- Field research uncovered **111** stateless respondents who were married before the age of 18, which represent 24% of our sample. The diagram above shows the breakdown of underage marriages among all married respondents.
- As previously mentioned, **82%** out of those who consider marriage to be a solution for their female relatives' statelessness reject underage marriage, confirming the decline of such matrimonial preference in the recent decades.

- Underage marriage is depriving both genders of their rights, with young grooms being less common than young brides. Parents consider marriage as a safety net for their children and a way to ease their household's financial burdens.
- The diagram above shows a pattern of deprivation and lack of education among the **111** stateless respondents who married underage. This, along with the number of cases, proves a correlation between poverty and ignorance on one hand, and underage marriage on the other.





VII.

# DOUBLE VULNERABILITY

B. NOMADS OF LEBANON

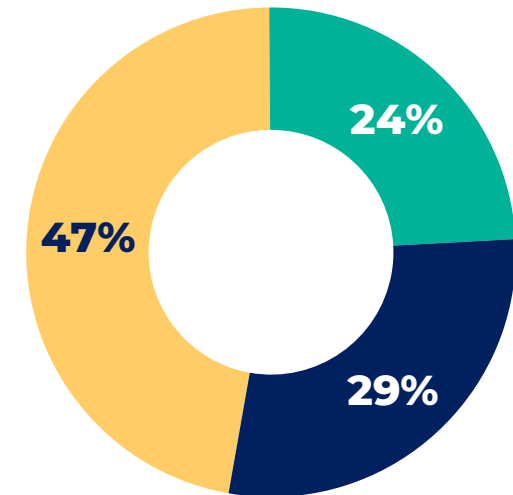
# NOMADISM AND STATELESSNESS: SEEKING CITIZENRY

Seventy one percent of the stateless identified in Akkar have either Bedouin or Dom origins, which represent the only two minorities of nomadic roots in Lebanon. These groups are, therefore, more exposed to the risk of statelessness.

- Lebanon is home to great religious and confessional diversity, which also includes two separate minority groups of nomadic roots: the Bedouin and Dom.
- The presence of nomads in Lebanon is not widely known, but fieldwork created an opportunity to shed some light on the issues faced by these two communities that have historically struggled with statelessness.
- Ever since the founding of modern Lebanon, both groups have been neglected by the state. During the 1932 Census, many nomads could not meet the requirements stipulated by Decree number 8837 to provide proof of residency in Lebanon for a period of more than six months. As a result, they were not included in the census. It was only a few generations down the line that many nomads were able to acquire Lebanese nationality through the 1994 naturalization mechanism.
- Yet, nomadic groups continue to be highly vulnerable to statelessness, as they make up **71%** of Akkar's total number of stateless.
- Thus, the correlation between statelessness and nomadic origins is extremely high, with the Bedouin accounting for **47%** of the identified stateless in Akkar and the Dom accounting for **24%**.

Fig 44. Proportion of nomads within Akkar stateless population

■ Bedouins ■ Dom ■ Other stateless



*Outsiders often have difficulty distinguishing one community from the other because, traditionally, they are both itinerant groups and they tend to live in similar types of housing. Although the two groups exhibit similar sociological characteristics, such as: marginalization, social isolation and suspicion of outsiders, what distinguishes them also fosters different needs.*

Terre des Hommes (2011)



# VII.

## DOUBLE VULNERABILITY

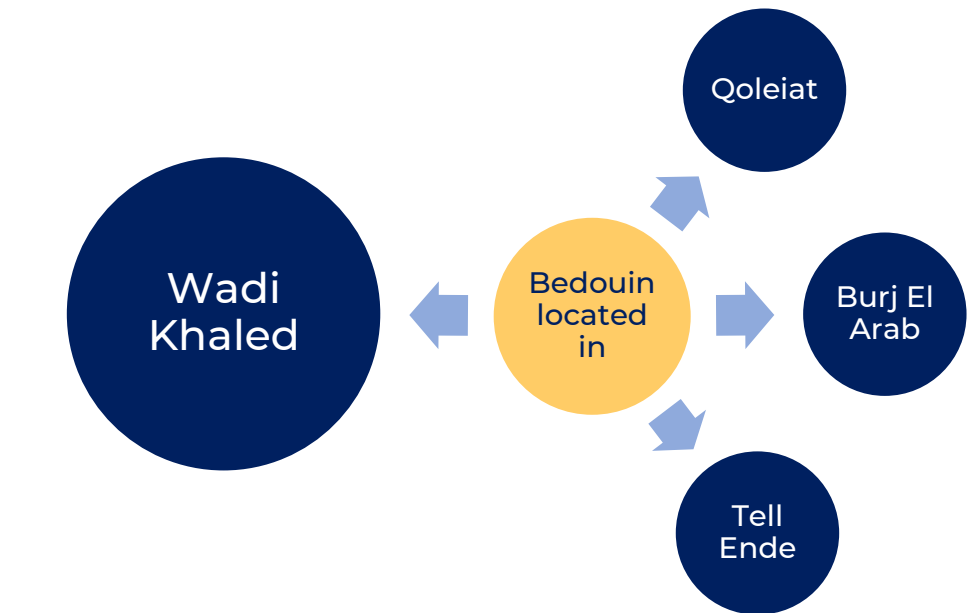
B. NOMADS OF LEBANON

1. THE BEDOUIN: OUTLIERS  
OF A NATION

# THE BEDOUIN OF AKKAR: LIVING A CHALLENGING FORM SEDENTISM

The Bedouin in Akkar mostly live in Wadi Khaled, where they constitute an overwhelming majority. Some Bedouin settled elsewhere as well, mainly in the Sahel region where their distinctive cultural identity appears to be less pronounced.

- Most of Akkar's Bedouin shifted slowly from a pastoral to an agropastoral socioeconomic model, before engaging in regular and irregular transborder trade and other more common sectors.
- Settled in isolated rural areas, many of their villages have kept an informal status to this day, in the form of *macha'at*, (i.e. not listed under any official cadaster). Thus, the state does not provide them with any infrastructure or services.
- In Akkar, Wadi Khaled is by far the largest hotspot for Bedouin, in addition to the Sahel, where Qoleiat, Tell Ende and Burj el Arab host the most prominent Bedouin communities.
- In this respect, the Bedouin are proud of their origins. They have a different dialect, and tend to have distinctive social norms and customs. Yet, these identity markers tend to fade away through sedentism, especially among younger generations, who are better assimilated within the Lebanese tissue.
- That said, the Bedouin continue to be vulnerable to stigmatization by other groups, especially in Wadi Khaled, where many locals from Akkar express animosity towards them.



*Some Bedouin regard themselves as modern, having left behind many of the old social customs that they regard as being at the root of their discrimination. Others remain particularly proud of their tribal identity and history of mobility.*

- Chatty (2011)



# AN EASY SCAPEGOAT: WADI KHALED IN FOCUS

Stigmatization of the Bedouin of Wadi Khaled comes in many forms, regardless of their statelessness, whether from state institutions, or from fellow Akkaris.



*The area is seen as harboring camps and terrorists, when in fact it does not.*

Mukhtar, Wadi Khaled, 20 March



*Wadi Khaled's villagers do not deserve to live in such conditions. They do not have a future and are deprived of their fundamental human rights.*

Surveyor, April 9



*It was my first time in Wadi Khaled. I had the feeling that they just needed someone to listen to them. They have so much to say about their suffering, but no one cares.*

Surveyor, April 13

## Local stigmatization

- Respondents in Wadi Khaled indicated how they were often subject to discrimination, while suffering from geographic stigma that labels Wadi Khaled as unsafe and a hub for “Islamist terrorists.”
- They expressed discomfort as to how their region was depicted in the media and throughout social networks.

## State marginalization

- The region lacks basic services such as electricity, decent access to water and infrastructure.
- During survey deployment, many of Wadi Khaled's inhabitants said they were subject to more scrutiny at the army checkpoints at the district's main entrances. Yet, this did not alter, nor influence, their mobility patterns.

# LEBANON AND WADI KHALED: A LOVE-HATE RELATIONSHIP

Wadi Khaled is composed of Bedouin who are located at Lebanon's geographic and social margins. Sometimes considered a buffer zone along the Syrian-Lebanese borders, the area continues to suffer from statelessness.

- State negligence and porous borders pushed many of Wadi Khaled's inhabitants to turn to smuggling to survive. Smuggling became predominant during the civil war (1975-1990) and was tolerated during the Syrian tutelage period.
- Under these circumstances, according to *mukhtars* and KIs, the Bedouin of Wadi Khaled were not compelled to address their citizenship status. This changed after Syrian troops left Lebanon in 2005, which resulted in more tightly controlled borders as relations between the two countries worsened.
- As the ongoing conflict in Syria cut off the traditional outreach of Wadi Khaled toward Syria, local communities lost their access to a critical coping mechanism. Thus, they were forced to address their status to receive basic services.
- At the same time, since Wadi Khaled started hosting high numbers of Syrian refugees, the Bedouin faced additional ordeals, whether surviving through the tight job market or struggling to access scarce resources.
- Wadi Khaled's local *mukhtars* and figures have, however, become more organized and proactive, regularly updating stateless lists and cases as they openly advocate for their cause in the public scene.

“

*In the past, when I used to have visitors, I always made sure to take them to Homs and Syria. Beirut was not within our reach!*

- Mukhtar from Wadi Khaled, March 20.

“

*[In Wadi Khaled], many public services have been missing. Interestingly, some residents claimed, that before the war in Syria, they did not even miss or need these services.*

- Miettunen & Shunnaq (2020)

# STATELESSNESS IN WADI KHALED: AN INCOMPLETE SUCCESS STORY

The 1994 Naturalization Decree is commonly referred to as “Wadi Khaled’s Decree” among Akkar locals. Ironically, a lot of Bedouin from the area were excluded from it.

- Historically, most of Wadi Khaled’s Bedouin were excluded from the 1932 Census, causing them to remain stateless. Many obtained the *Qayd el Dars* (understudy) status during the second half of the twentieth century.
- The 1994 Naturalization Decree represented a turning point, allowing a majority of stateless persons in Wadi Khaled to finally acquire citizenship.
- But this victory remained mostly partial. According to *mukhtars* and key informants, around **100** families and individuals could not access the mechanism, while an additional **100** families have failed to register their children at birth since then. These numbers were confirmed through the field surveys: Wadi Khaled’s total stateless population is made up of around **1,700** individuals, thus representing almost half of Akkar’s stateless population.
- Among those who fell through the cracks of the 1994 naturalization mechanism, the survey showed that many were actually unaware of its importance, or were unaware of how to initiate the procedure. Some respondents said they were misled by public servants, while others were imprisoned in Syria at the time.
- Moreover, stateless individuals who turned 18 in 1994 were de-facto excluded because of a bureaucratic loophole: as minors’ dossiers were filed alongside their parents’, those who happened to turn 18 as the proceedings were initiated were expected to have presented separate requests from their parents, and thus were never included in the process.

# 1,685

Stateless people live in Wadi Khaled, which represents

# 48%

of the total identified stateless population in Akkar

“

*I am willing to commit a crime in order to get back the nationality and I don't mind going to prison if that is in the interest of my child. I would do anything for my child to have a better future than mine”.*

- Stateless Bedouin father from Wadi Khaled, Halba, March 19



VII.

# DOUBLE VULNERABILITY

B. NOMADS OF LEBANON

2. THE DOM: WANDERERS  
OF THE PAST



# NOMADS OF LEBANON: THE DOM

The Dom are a separate ethnic group but share with the Bedouin marginalization as a common trait. Akkar is home to a large number of Dom families who live in very harsh conditions.

- Dom tribes have Indo-Iranian origins. Also referred to as *Ghajar*, *Nawar*, *Riyess\**, they all speak Levantine Arabic dialect with a Syrian accent. Some of them still use their distinct language referred to as *Domari*.
- They migrated to the Levant centuries ago but maintained a strong sense of belonging to their community. Endogamy is widespread among them.
- Akkar has a significant Dom community. Although present on almost all of its territory, the Dom live in population clusters around the lake of El Kouweichra, on the Kouweikhat hills, around Halba (mainly in Koucha), in Abboudieh and in the peri-urban region of Coastal Qaye’.
- Dom are subject to discrimination, with many preferring to hide their origins to avoid further stigma. They define themselves as “Lebanese,” “stateless” or “*Arab Ruhhal*”, which means Arab Nomads. This allusion to an Arab ancestry is an indication of how Dom attempt to connect their communal attachment with a “prestigious” origin. In this respect, **7% of Dom respondents say they have Bedouin (Arab) origins.**
- Many Dom continue to live according to a nomadic lifestyle. Those who do, wander through the country between the South, Tripoli, the Beqaa and Akkar.
- The Dom are sociologically, economically and culturally diverse. Many families are part of groups of musicians, making a living by performing as drummers and flute players at local weddings. A minority of these people became relatively wealthy but tend to maintain a similar way of living. Some women are clearly distinguishable by their traditional clothing.

## 111 surveyed Dom

The **main survey included 111 Dom**, making up **19%** of the stateless respondents.

While answering the survey, **76%** of Dom respondents did not mention their **Dom origins**, despite being identified by their peers as belonging to the same community.

# DOM STATELESSNESS IN NUMBERS

Demographic estimates from the fieldwork determined that 25% of the stateless in Akkar have Dom origins. While many were naturalized in 1994, a significant minority remain stateless.

- A majority of Dom stateless respondents say they are MeQ (**53%**). Despite many having been naturalized in 1994, they tend not to register their children at birth (**36%** of respondents say they are unregistered). This is partly explained by their traditional way of life, living at the margins of mainstream society.
- The demographic mapping of the research estimated there to be around 850 stateless persons with Dom origins, accounting for at least **24%** of Akkar's stateless persons.
- Dom statelessness remains highly understudied. Terre des Hommes published one of the only studies regarding this issue. It estimated that **28%** of the Dom in Lebanon remain stateless.
- Many of the surveyed *mukhtars* believe that most of the Dom acquired the Lebanese nationality in 1994. Their personal estimations ranged between **75%** and **90%**.

## 850+

of Akkari stateless  
are Dom

Which represents

## 24%

of total stateless  
captured in the field

### The Dom of El Kouweichra, a case study:

Field work suggested that the level of statelessness among the Dom is exaggerated. By canvassing the hotspot of Dom settlements around the lake of El Kouweichra, the team could roughly determine the level of Dom statelessness in the region. Below is a summary of the main findings:

→ Total number of estimated Dom living around the lake: **1,500** persons, regardless of status.

*(This number was calculated by counting all Dom tents and inhabitants on the basis of average members per tent).*

→ The total number of Dom stateless captured around the lake was **256** persons.

→ This makes the proportion of statelessness among Dom in this settlement around **17%**.

→ A limitation should be noted here: many Dom could be of Syrian origins or children born from mixed marriages. The difficulties to precisely determine this is linked to their evasiveness.

### Underage marriage

among adult Dom stateless respondents (**39%**) is significantly higher than among total of stateless (**24%**).

Of the adult Dom stateless respondents, **74%** never went to school – a significantly higher proportion than among all stateless (**39%**).

# THE DOM: A TRICKY EQUATION

Dom statelessness constitutes a challenging category based on how isolated many of their communities are. Thus, their stateless cases can be characterized as highly complex, due to geographical, social and contextual factors.

- According to the main survey, around **66%** of Dom still live in tents. Others chose a hybrid lifestyle, in which tents are placed next to houses. Thus, the sedentism process is gradual and not homogeneous. This contrasts with all other stateless, including the Bedouin, where sedentary housing models are the norm.
- Due to intermarriage, it is very difficult to separate Lebanese from non-Lebanese (mainly Syrian) Dom. Even some *mukhtars* tend to be confused about the question.
- Many hold both Syrian and Lebanese documents. So even if they declare themselves as MeQ in Lebanon, some individuals might hold a Syrian identity document, or the Syrian *ta'arif* card delivered by Syrian *mukhtars*.
- Furthermore, some Dom have chosen to register as “Syrian refugees” in order to benefit from aid, which could explain the suspicious behavior observed by some potential respondents when approached for the study, probably worried that their participation could endanger their aid eligibility. Some even fled during the interview.
- Some of the Dom are so marginalized and isolated that they are unaware of the advantages of acquiring citizenship.
- A certain degree of fatigue towards NGOs and other organizations can be strongly felt among members of the Dom community, expressing disappointment about the level of support offered to their community.



*The Dom are liars, you can't take a trustful word out of their mouth*

- Lebanese villager, El Kouweichra, April 13.



# VIII.

## CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS



# CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

Statelessness has been an enduring feature in Lebanon since the establishment of the country. To this day, it is yet to be solved in a durable and effective manner. The depth of its historical roots led to the emergence of a Lebanese specificity pertaining to statelessness, with multiple ramifications in terms of status and categories.

- Both the status of *Maktoum El Qayd* (MeQ) and *Qayd el Dares* (QeD) in Lebanon constitute very specific categories of statelessness, in which the state actually recognizes the attachment of these communities to the Lebanese territory but as members who are yet to be identified in any formal registry (the *qayd*) that would confirm them as citizens.
- As such, they are not completely disregarded by the Lebanese state, as national regulations formally acknowledge both categories (such as Documenting Personal Status Law of 7/12/1951), thus setting up complex procedures to acquire citizenship that vary between people depending on their circumstances.
- Members of these communities have a designated number of rights and can be granted some identification documents based on their recognition by *mukhtars*. Some can even be granted a very formal *laissez-passer* document by General Security that enables them to leave the country. Yet they remain stateless in the sense that they are not in possession of their full legal personality, despite being entitled to it.
- The fact that these communities are commonly considered “Lebanese stateless” shows the gravity of the Lebanese authorities’ failure to address both the historical and social causes leading to the nonregistration of newborn children. According to the Lebanese Nationality Law, children are entitled to Lebanese nationality if at the time of their birth they are not entitled to any foreign nationality, or are born to unknown parents, or to parents who are stateless themselves or are of unknown nationality.
- The **1994**, Naturalization Decree was passed granting Lebanese nationality to more than **200,000** individuals. Issued during the period of Syrian tutelage over Lebanon, the decree was heavily criticized by those with sectarian and electoral considerations as being unbalanced and unfair. Only **36%** among those who benefited from the decree were stateless persons at the time; hence, it missed the opportunity to resolutely end statelessness in the country.

# CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

Like in Tripoli, the main factor leading to statelessness in Akkar is the nonregistration of births (albeit to a lesser extent, and with a stronger minority of historical cases), disadvantaging children and adults alike, who end up deprived of their fundamental rights.

- Creating solutions that could end this issue in Lebanon once and for all is not an impossible task. This study identified **4,088** stateless individuals in Akkar - nearly double the number of those living in Tripoli, according to our 2019 study (**2,200** persons). This supports earlier estimations that the total size of the stateless population in Lebanon stands at around **27,000** individuals.
- In Akkar, a significant majority of the stateless population come from the Sunni community, with nearly half located in Wadi Khaled. **Seventy one percent** come from ethnic minority groups such as the Bedouin and Dom, which account for a large proportion of the inherited cases of statelessness in the region. The stateless population in Akkar is hit hard by unemployment, and a very large percentage of the population receive little to no education.
- Most stateless people surveyed in this study show **great attachment to the Lebanese identity**, downplaying other primordial ties, such as sectarian and geographical identifiers. However, family and tribal connections remain significant, but not prominent. Unlike the surveyed Lebanese, stateless respondents are less inclined to emigrate. But a quarter of those who are inclined to emigrate are ready to do so through irregular means.
- Surveyed stateless persons pointed to the shared responsibility of **both the state and the parents** in the perpetuation of their condition, clearly criticizing political institutions. Unlike in Tripoli, stateless people's relationship with the army and security services is not an issue in Akkar, and these institutions generally enjoy high levels of public trust, with stateless respondents reporting minimal incidents at checkpoints or arrests. Given the context of sectarian and political polarization in Tripoli, stateless persons there have a higher fear of checkpoints and are subject to much less mobility than in Akkar.
- Yet, this does not change the fact that stateless persons in Akkar **suffer a great deal emotionally and psychologically because of their situation**. They are stigmatized socially, in addition to being trapped in an inextricable and expensive maze of legal proceedings to claim citizenship.

# CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

Relevant authorities have a responsibility to provide effective and durable solutions to end statelessness, ensuring access to rights for MeQ individuals until they acquire full citizenship, while preventing further statelessness in the country.

- **Gender stigma** is as an important factor leading to statelessness among girls and women in Akkar, hindering their access to education, employment and to proceedings related to registration and naturalization for them and their children. The prevalence of male favoritism when it comes to registering children also contributes to female overrepresentation within stateless groups. Gender equality measures are drastically needed in this area to quash discrimination in that regard.
- The Tripoli study recommended in 2019 the promulgation of a “draft law valid for a specific period of time which creates a special administrative process for resolving stateless cases without the need to resort to courts.”
- As a result, a **legislative proposal was prepared in January 2020**, with the intention that the MoIM would directly handle registry additions for nonregistered MeQ persons in Lebanon, without the need for a court order. It is the most recent formal proposal on this issue, that would set up a special proceeding to temporarily (for 5 years) allow either stateless persons themselves, or the General Prosecutor’s Office (for cases it identifies), to claim formal personal status registration. This could lead to full citizenship for the “Lebanese stateless,” who form the bulk of the stateless population in Lebanon. That said, **it would be advisable to remove any reference to a specific timeframe in this draft law or any other legislative framework that would accelerate the process leading to their acquisition of citizenship.**
- Should this or any other legislation and its relevant mechanisms become a reality, Lebanon would still need to undertake the necessary measures to prevent the occurrence of statelessness from any source or kind in the future, in addition to ensuring that domestic laws conform with Lebanon’s obligations under international laws. These include the Convention on the Rights of the Child (for a nationality and identity upon birth when another nationality is not available), the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights, and the 2018 Arab Declaration on Belonging and Identity (supporting “the effective implementation of laws that safeguard the rights of children in the region to enjoy a legal identity.”)
- As such, significant steps are required to develop policy reforms that would help protect stateless persons and reduce and prevent statelessness (both at the local and national levels). Reiterating some of the recommendations that remain unheeded since 2019, below are some key action items for relevant stakeholders, by order of relevance.

# CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

## **PRESIDENCY OF THE COUNCIL OF MINISTERS (PCM)**

### *Short-term recommendations to settle current stateless cases*

- Acknowledge and declare statelessness as a national issue in need of urgent resolution to safeguard the dignity and well-being of these populations.
- Introduce a national policy that aims to identify and protect stateless persons, reduce statelessness by finding durable solutions, and enforce ways of preventing it.
  - Lebanese authorities need to formally bear responsibility for the historical roots of statelessness in the country.

### *Medium-term recommendations to prevent future statelessness*

- Accede to both the 1954 Convention relating to the Status of Stateless Persons and the 1961 Convention on the Reduction of Statelessness.
  - A needed measure to align Lebanese legislation with international standards pertaining to ending and preventing statelessness.

## **PARLIAMENT**

### *Short-term recommendations to settle current stateless cases*

- Introduce legislation enforcing a temporary waiver for late birth registration procedures, allowing all persons born in Lebanon having passed the one year deadline to be able to register their birth administratively.
- Introduce legislative amendments to the civil registration system to simplify the birth registration process, including the digitalization of the civil registry records and processes in line with international standards to ensure that all children born in Lebanon are registered.
- Introduce legislative amendments to nationality laws to ensure the application of existing safeguards to prevent statelessness at birth and for specific cases such as foundlings.
- Exercise legislative oversight over the relevant institutions to ensure enforcement of amended legislation and newly introduced mechanisms in a timely and orderly fashion, aiming at solving the issue of statelessness in Lebanon.
  - Parliament has a crucial responsibility in amending legislation in order to reduce, end and avoid statelessness in Lebanon, while ensuring control over the actions of the executive branches on the matter.

### *Medium-term recommendations to prevent future statelessness*

- Mandate the Lebanese government to accede to both the 1954 Convention related to the Status of Stateless Persons and the 1961 Convention on the Reduction of Statelessness
- Introduce legislative reform to remove gender discrimination from nationality laws in line with the principle of equality in rights guaranteed by the Lebanese constitution.



# CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

## MINISTRY OF INTERIOR AND MUNICIPALITIES (MOIM)

### *Short-term recommendations to simplify the lengthy and complicated civil registration process*

- Unify the criteria for granting *ta'arif* certificates to stateless persons, while instructing *mukhtars* to abide by present legislation and provide *ta'arif* certificates to any individual who qualifies as stateless of Lebanese origins.
- Coordinate with other relevant ministries (Ministry of Public Health, Ministry of Education, and Ministry of Social Affairs and Ministry of Justice) and security agencies (GDGS, Internal Security Forces, Lebanese Armed Forces) to ensure that this *ta'arif* certificate is a nationally recognized and valid identification document.
  - Standardized *ta'arif* certificates are to be considered as a temporary alternative identification document granting stateless persons access to all basic services from the relevant ministry and authority.
- Enforce a waiver of the renewal and overstay fees for the understudy cards paid annually at GDGS allowing all *Qayd el Dars* persons to obtain valid identification documents.
  - The financial cost of proceedings is a fundamental barrier preventing stateless persons in Lebanon from pursuing and finalizing their right to citizenship.

### *Medium-term recommendations to prevent future statelessness*

- Proceed with a complete census of all stateless individuals on the Lebanese territory and issue proper documentation for stateless persons allowing them to have formal identity documents and ensure their access to basic rights.
- Resort to digital case management tools to increase cooperation and efficiency among all relevant stakeholders, to serve as a work framework for the public administration, security services, local authorities and *mukhtars* when dealing with stateless persons and ensure transparency.
- Provide continuous training and knowledge sharing with *mukhtars* on the different laws and regulations relevant to reducing and preventing statelessness.
  - MoIM is the relevant authority to pursue a full identification mapping of all stateless persons in Lebanon. It should make use of available digital resources in order to efficiently manage and solve all identified cases, without delay or discrimination.

# CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

## MUNICIPALITIES

*Short-term recommendations to protect stateless persons*

- Acknowledge the basic rights of stateless persons living under their jurisdiction and provide support in the quest of stateless people to acquire citizenship.
- Support the role of *mukhtars* in mapping and following-up with stateless individuals in the vicinity of their towns and villages.
- Lobby relevant central authorities to uphold the rights of the stateless.
  - Local authorities are the elected representatives who are closest to the ground and can relay the cause and quest of stateless persons to central institutions.

## MUKHTARS

*Short-term recommendations to protect stateless persons*

Maintain sharp knowledge about all rights and services that are accessible to stateless persons, and uphold their duties toward this community.

- Introduce digital management tools to access relevant information regarding statelessness and interact with all relevant public institutions in their efforts to end and prevent statelessness.
- Maintain a strong engagement with stateless persons in order to provide them with well-informed guidance.
- Contribute to raising awareness among stateless communities, in particular among parents of nonregistered children, about the importance of birth registration.
  - *Mukhtars* are the reference point for most stateless persons in terms of accessing identification documents such as the *ta'arif* certificate, in addition to initiating citizenship claims. Yet, many continue to be ill-informed about the condition and rights of stateless persons.

## MINISTRY OF JUSTICE (MOJ)

*Short-term recommendations to settle current stateless cases*

- Provide thorough follow-up on pending cases within the judiciary system and instruct judicial courts to accelerate all ongoing proceedings.
- Ensure legal aid is provided to all stateless individuals in the midst of their judicial proceedings.
- Enact existing safeguards attached to the nationality law that ensure no child is born stateless.
- Introduce internal guidelines on timeframes for related court cases and related fees, such as the clerk fees accompanying the plaintiffs ahead of DNA tests.

# CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

## GENERAL PROSECUTOR OFFICE (GPO)

*Short-term recommendations to settle current stateless cases*

- Instruct the competent judiciary chambers to prioritize ongoing stateless suits and demonstrate understanding and leniency.
  - MoJ and GPO should enforce the standards and conditions for solving personal status registration suits before individual judges, while instructing them to accelerate the pending cases, and only refer problematic claims to the case commissions. Judicial courts should also systematically grant legal aid status under such suits.

## MINISTRY OF PUBLIC HEALTH (MOPH), MINISTRY OF SOCIAL AFFAIRS (MOSA), MINISTRY OF EDUCATION AND HIGHER EDUCATION (MOEHE)

*Short-term recommendations to end current stateless cases*

- Recognize and provide access to relevant rights and services to all stateless individuals on the basis of their given identification documents (*ta'arif* certificates or other documentation).
- Introduce digital case management tools to better coordinate with stakeholders and provide relevant rights and services.
  - Contrary to the current situation where most stateless struggle with access to services, MoPH, MoSA and MoEHE should ensure access to basic rights, such as healthcare, social services and education for all stateless individuals.

## MINISTRY OF FINANCE (MOF)

*Short-term recommendations to settle current stateless cases*

- Provide financial resources to guarantee access to rights and social services for stateless communities.
- Provide financial support for free legal aid for stateless individuals who are in the midst of their judicial proceedings.
  - Legal aid regulations in Lebanon acknowledge the opportunity of state funding through the MoJ, but have never been enforced.

## GENERAL DIRECTORATE OF THE GENERAL SECURITY (GDGS)

*Short-term recommendations to settle current stateless cases*

- Consider ongoing legal proceedings pertaining to stateless suits as a matter of high priority in order to accelerate relevant investigations and speed up the administrative process.

# CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

## INTERNATIONAL ORGANIZATIONS (IO)

### *Short-term recommendations to settle current stateless cases*

- Increase mobilization and awareness around the issue of statelessness and provide support to the relevant authorities in order to end and prevent this phenomenon.
- Continue to lobby the Lebanese authorities to uphold their obligation to protect stateless persons, and end and prevent statelessness on the Lebanese territory.
- Provide support to civil society organizations in their efforts to eradicate statelessness in Lebanon.
- Maintain contact with stateless persons based on an enhanced understanding of the priorities and issues they face.
- Empower members of the stateless community by:
  - Providing them with updated and accurate information, and raising their awareness on their rights.
  - Ensuring their access to certain facilities and services, such as Community Development Centers to participate in PSS, skills trainings and life-skills training activities, as well as supported PHCs.
  - Developing an updated referral pathway of services, including national level ones, available to stateless persons for wider dissemination.
  - Supporting stateless persons to support each other, such as through information sharing and safe identification and referrals.
  - All interventions should be adapted to the age, gender and diversity considerations uncovered through this study.

## CIVIL SOCIETY ORGANIZATIONS (CSO)

### *Short-term recommendations to settle current stateless cases*

- Raise public awareness on the issue of statelessness in Lebanon, namely across sectors such as education, healthcare, public administration and employment.
- Keep supporting and advocating for stateless persons in their quest to acquire citizenship.
- Provide training to security services and the army in relation to statelessness and the need to respect stateless persons' dignity and human rights.
- Provide training to *mukhtars* in relation to their mission and prerogatives when interacting with stateless persons.



# CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

## ACADEMICS

*Short-term recommendations to settle current stateless cases*

- Sustain ongoing efforts in identifying the remaining statelessness hotspots in Lebanon. After Tripoli and Akkar, pursue field studies on this issue, mainly in the Bekaa area and in Greater Beirut.
- Undertake additional research on the Dom population in Lebanon, in terms of their particularity and overrepresentation in the stateless population. Such efforts could help in the design of awareness campaigns targeting the Dom population, based on their specific social and cultural dynamics in relation to statehood and citizenry.
- Maintain mobilization on the issue of statelessness in Lebanon and feed academic insights into the discussion on statelessness with policymakers.

## MEDIA

*Short-term recommendations to settle current stateless cases*

- Inform the general public on the issue of statelessness to combat prejudice and discrimination, and support their cause vis-à-vis public authorities for a fully accomplished legal personality.

# GLOSSARY

- **Stateless:** Individuals who are not “considered as a national by any state under the operation of its law” as defined under international law.
- **Maktoum el Qayd (MeQ):** Persons in Lebanon whose name and identity are not attached to any official registry (*qayd*).
- **Nonregistered:** Persons born to a Lebanese father and whose birth was not registered within the one year deadline, after which the birth can only be registered through a lengthy and very costly procedure.
- **Qayd el Dars (QeD) or under study cases:** Persons of unspecified nationality whose original nationality is pending and case under study by the General Directorate of General Security.
- **Mukhtar:** Translates to the “chosen one” - a local elected official at a neighborhood level in charge of processing formal procedures for citizens, residents and stateless vis-a-vis central authorities. Its office and duties are regulated by the Mukhtar Law enacted in 1947 and amended in 1997.
- **Ta’arif card:** An identification document granted by *mukhtars* to Lebanese stateless. The criteria for granting them are arbitrarily and discretionary set by mukhtars themselves.
- **Ta’arif certificate:** An updated form of the *ta’arif* card after it was banned by the MoIM. It is a template created by governors and used by *mukhtars* who grant them as identification documents for persons whose legal status is problematic, such as Lebanese stateless.
- **Macha’at:** Land that follows the Ottoman estate system; thus, considered land commonly owned by people in the area, mostly rural regions. Today, large portions of these lands are still not registered under any official cadaster.
- **Employment:** In this study, employment is understood as a professional activity attached to a regular remuneration that would stem from a stable employer or activity.

## ABBREVIATIONS

**MeQ:** *Maktoum el Qayd*

**QeD:** *Qayd el Dares*

**UNHCR:** United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees

**PCM:** Presidency of the Council of Ministers

**MoIM:** Ministry of Interior and Municipalities

**MoJ:** Ministry of Justice

**GPO:** General Prosecutor’s Office

**MoF:** Ministry of Finance

**MoSA:** Ministry of Social Affairs

**MoEHE:** Ministry of Education and Higher Education

**GDGS:** General Directorate of the General Security

**ISF:** Internal Security Forces

**IO:** International Organizations

**CSO:** Civil Society Organizations

**LBP:** Lebanese Pounds

# REFERENCES

- Al-Masri, M. (2016). Local and Regional Entanglements: The Social Stability Context in Sahel Akkar. Conflict Analysis Report. UNDP. [https://reliefweb.int/sites/reliefweb.int/files/resources/UNDPConflictAnalysisReport-SahelAkkarEn\\_0.pdf](https://reliefweb.int/sites/reliefweb.int/files/resources/UNDPConflictAnalysisReport-SahelAkkarEn_0.pdf)
- Akoum, R. (2021). Registering Stateless Lebanese in Civil Registry Records, 1st ed.
- Chatty, D. (2011). Bedouin in Lebanon: The Transformation of a Way of Life or an Attitude? *International Journal of Migration, Health and Social Care*, 6(3), 21–30
- Chatty, D.; Mansour, N. & Yassin, N. (2013). Statelessness and Tribal Identity on Lebanon's Eastern Borders. *Mediterranean Politics*, 18:3, 411-426. DOI: 10.1080/13629395.2013.834566
- Convention relating to the Status of Stateless Persons of 1954, Article 1.
- El-Khoury, M.; Jaulin, T. (2012). EUDO Citizenship Observatory Country Report: Lebanon. Pdf.
- Frontiers Ruwad Association. (2011). Invisible Citizens: Humiliation and a Life in the Shadows. A legal and Policy Study on Statelessness in Lebanon. <https://frontiersruwad.files.wordpress.com/2012/01/rs-stateless-english-2011-final.pdf>
- Gilsenan, M. (1996). *Lords of the Lebanese Marches: violence and narrative in an Arab society*, I.B. Tauris & Co, University California Press.
- Hutson, R.; Long, T. (2011). Features of smuggling in Wadi Khaled, Lebanon. *Conflict, Security & Development*. 11:4, 385-413. DOI: 10.1080/14678802.2011.614126
- Impact Open Data. (n.d.). Retrieved May 20, 2021, from <https://impact.gov.lb>
- Maktabi, R. (1999). The Lebanese Census of 1932 Revisited. *Who Are the Lebanese?* *British Journal of Middle Eastern Studies*, 26(2), 219–241.
- Miettunen P.; Shunnaq, M. (2020). Tribal Networks and Informal Adaptive Mechanisms of Syrian Refugees: The Case of the Bani Khalid Tribe in Jordan, Syria and Lebanon”. *Issam Fares Institute for Public Policy and International Affairs, Beirut*.
- Mouawad, J. (2018). Lebanon’s border areas in light of the Syrian war: New actors, old marginalization. *European University Institute*. [https://cadmus.eui.eu/bitstream/handle/1814/52564/RSCAS\\_PR\\_2018\\_03.pdf](https://cadmus.eui.eu/bitstream/handle/1814/52564/RSCAS_PR_2018_03.pdf)
- OCHA. (2018). Lebanon North and Akkar Governorates Profile. [https://reliefweb.int/sites/reliefweb.int/files/resources/North-Akkar\\_G-Profile\\_160804.pdf](https://reliefweb.int/sites/reliefweb.int/files/resources/North-Akkar_G-Profile_160804.pdf)
- Official Website of the Lebanese Army. (n.d.). Conditions of Volunteering. <https://www.lebarmy.gov.lb/en/content/conditions-volunteering>.
- Refugees, UNHCR (n.d.). Refworld. Decree No 15 on Lebanese Nationality including Amendments.
- Salibi, K. (1998). *A House of Many Mensions*. I.B. Tauris, London.
- Siren & March (2019). *The Plight of the Rightless: Mapping and Understanding Statelessness in Tripoli*. March and Siren.V1.3.
- Terre des Hommes (2011): “The Dom People and their Children in Lebanon” [PDF]. Tdh Lebanon and Insan Association. [https://www.insanassociation.org/en/images/The\\_Dom\\_People\\_and\\_their\\_Children\\_in\\_lebanon.pdf](https://www.insanassociation.org/en/images/The_Dom_People_and_their_Children_in_lebanon.pdf)
- Treaty of Lausanne. Summary, Terms, & Facts. Britannica.
- UNHCR (2016): “Statelessness Among Lebanon’s Nomadic Populations” [Microsoft Word Document]. UNHCR.
- UNHCR (2021), Retrieved May 20, 2021, from <https://data2.unhcr.org/en/documents/details/82686>
- UNHCR (2020): “Note on Statelessness in Akkar” [Microsoft Word Document]. UNHCR.
- UNHCR Lebanon. (n.d.). Stateless persons. <https://www.unhcr.org/lb/stateless-persons>
- Waas L. (2014). *Citizenship, statelessness and the numbers game in Lebanon*. Pdf.



**UNHCR**  
The UN Refugee Agency

**SIREN**  
ASSOCIATES



## TEAM

**Research Lead**  
Theodore Caponis

**Research Advisor**  
Karim El Mufti

**Researchers**  
Elias Dahrouge  
Rana Habr  
Wael Akiki  
Amany Houkayem  
Maguy Hajj

**Operations Manager**  
Lamia El Rassi

**Research Director**  
Carole Alsharabati





**UNHCR**  
The UN Refugee Agency

**SIREN**  
ASSOCIATES

