

**Refugee Review Tribunal  
AUSTRALIA**

**RRT RESEARCH RESPONSE**

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**Questions**

- 1. Is there any evidence that civilians in the areas surrounding Nahr El-Bared provided food, blood and petrol to the LAF during the fighting in mid-2007?**
- 2. Is there any evidence as to whether businesses closed down or whether they continued to be operational during the 3 month conflict at Nahr El-Bared?**

**RESPONSE**

**1. Is there any evidence that civilians in the areas surrounding Nahr El-Bared provided food, blood and petrol to the LAF during the fighting in mid-2007?**

No reports were located stating that civilians provided food, petrol, or blood supplies to the Lebanese Armed Forces (LAF) during the siege of Nahr El-Bared; one report was located which claimed that armed civilian militia groups took part in the operation. Several reports were located which reflected a high level of support for the military operation against Nahr El-Bared, and for the LAF in general, as the army provides employment for many young men in the poor villages and towns of predominantly Sunni northern Lebanon. Other sources from the time of the conflict report a general sense of hostility toward the Palestinian population of Nahr El-Bared among the Lebanese population (for civilian militia groups taking part in the operation against Fatah al-Islam, see: Makarem, G. 2007, 'Lebanon crisis: Refugees attacked as right wing militias stalk the streets', *Socialist Worker Online*, 29 May <http://www.socialistworker.co.uk/art.php?id=11790> – Accessed 25 September 2009 – Attachment 4; for reports of support for the military in the region around Nahr El-Bared, see: Ghaddar, H. 2007, 'Bebnin's sacrifice', *NOW Lebanon*, 29 August <http://www.nowLebanon.com/NewsArticleDetails.aspx?ID=11350> – Accessed 8 September 2008 – Attachment 1; and: Famarzi, S. 2007, 'Village Gives Sons to Lebanon Army', *The Guardian*, (source: *Associated Press*), 3 August – Attachment 11; for the hostility toward

Palestinians, see: 'Lebanese Troops Tighten Siege of Refugee Camp; Death Toll Nears 50' 2007, *FOX News*, (source: *Associated Press*), 21 May <http://www.foxnews.com/story/0,2933,274153,00.html> – Accessed 25 September 2009 – Attachment 3; and: Hermez, S. 2007, 'Cheering to the beat of the Palestinians' misery', *Electronic Lebanon* website, 25 May <http://electronicintifada.net/v2/article6948.shtml> – Accessed 25 September 2009 – Attachment 5).

An overview of the source information informing the introduction above is set out below.

According to a May 2007 report from *Socialist Worker Online*, militia groups took part in the operation against Fatah al-Islam at Nahr El-Bared: "Near the camps, Future Movement gunmen opened fire on those fleeing the siege. Some Palestinians are being stopped in the streets and humiliated by police, the militias and the army. Stories of random killings of refugees are beginning to trickle in from the north" (Makarem, G. 2007, 'Lebanon crisis: Refugees attacked as right wing militias stalk the streets', *Socialist Worker Online*, 29 May <http://www.socialistworker.co.uk/art.php?id=11790> – Accessed 25 September 2009 – Attachment 4).

In August 2007 *NOW Lebanon* provided a report on the manner in which fighting at Nahr al-Bared had affected Akkar's nearest town, Bebnin. According to the report: "Bebnin has sent 150 soldiers to the camp, 11 of whom were killed and 27 wounded". The report also relates that "Akkar's attachment and dedication to the army is complemented by a fierce loyalty to Hariri and the Future Movement, which has been further strengthened since Syria's withdrawal from Lebanon":

Mustafa is from Bebnin, Akkar's closest village to the besieged refugee camp, and one which has made some of the greatest contributions – and sacrifices – to the army's campaign. Bebnin has sent 150 soldiers to the camp, 11 of whom were killed and 27 wounded. "We all fought with the army when Fatah al-Islam insurgents reached our village the first day of the confrontation, and many civilians used their personal weapons to stop the terrorists from getting to the village," the father added. He spoke with tears in his eyes, but it is clear that his faith and confidence in the Lebanese army is absolute.

The relationship between the army and the Akkar region, including Bebnin, is deeply rooted in Lebanese history. As one of the poorest regions in Lebanon, generations of Akkar's young men have turned to the army as the most stable source of fixed income available. Today, every home in Bebnin has at least one or two soldiers in the army. "Every young man's or child's ambition is to join the army," Khalid al-Masri, a member of the Municipal Council of Bebnin, told *NOW Lebanon*. "They realise that education is getting them nowhere and life is becoming more and more difficult for poor people."

...Akkar's attachment and dedication to the army is complemented by a fierce loyalty to Hariri and the Future Movement, which has been further strengthened since Syria's withdrawal from Lebanon (Ghaddar, H. 2007, 'Bebnin's sacrifice', *NOW Lebanon*, 29 August <http://www.nowLebanon.com/NewsArticleDetails.aspx?ID=11350> – Accessed 8 September 2008 – Attachment 1).

A 3 August 2007 report from *Associated Press* emphasises the strong links between the Lebanese Armed Forces, claiming that men from the "impoverished towns" of northern Lebanon "form the backbone of the force" fighting at Nahr El-Bared. This report also notes that the conflict "has rallied unprecedented support for the military from all of the country's sharply divided factions and religious sects", and that "the fighting has transformed the military into a symbol of unity and pride for the country":

Three months of fighting at the Nahr el-Bared camp has for the first time made the military popular in Lebanon – but for impoverished towns like Bibneen, the army has long been a way of life and a source of income for youth who otherwise can find no work.

The toll paid by Bibneen is evident at its cemetery. “Do not count as dead those killed for the sake of God, for they are alive with their Lord,” reads a Quranic verse carved into the six soldiers’ tombstones, standing amid the weeds and litter. A seventh Bibneen resident killed in the battle is buried in the nearby city of Tripoli.

Young men from Bibneen and other Sunni towns and villages of northern Lebanon form the backbone of the force that is waging the army’s drawn-out, two-month fight in the Palestinian camp.

Some 2,300 men from Bibneen – a town of 36,000 – are in the army, 150 of them deployed at Nahr el-Bared. The Lebanese army’s Fifth Brigade, which is doing much of the fighting at the camp, draws many of its soldiers from Lebanon’s predominantly Sunni north, particularly Akkar province where Bibneen is located.

Walid Sabsabi, 23, and his 20-year-old brother Ghazi followed their father Mohammed into the army. “People of Akkar like serving in the army. They’re renowned for their bravery,” said their father.

...The Nahr el-Bared conflict, in which at least 130 soldiers have been killed and more than 400 wounded, has rallied unprecedented support for the military from all of the country’s sharply divided factions and religious sects. It is also the first real combat test for Lebanon’s weak military in nearly two decades.

...But the fighting has transformed the military into a symbol of unity and pride for the country (Faramarzi, S. 2007, ‘Village Gives Sons to Lebanon Army’, *The Guardian*, (source: *Associated Press*), 3 August – Attachment 11).

A May 2007 report sourced from *Associated Press* states that: “Lebanese in Tripoli cheered the Lebanese troops Sunday, a reflection of the anger over militants in the camp – and of lingering bitterness toward Palestinians, whom some blame for sparking the civil war” (‘Lebanese Troops Tighten Siege of Refugee Camp; Death Toll Nears 50’ 2007, *FOX News*, (source: *Associated Press*), 21 May <http://www.foxnews.com/story/0,2933,274153,00.html> – Accessed 25 September 2009 – Attachment 3).

In May 2007, the Electronic Lebanon website reported on a then-circulating online petition expressing public support for the LAF and “hatred for the Palestinian refugees”:

What is more disturbing is that the petition, with over 10,000 signatories thus far, echoes the general mood in the country, where we have seen people take to the streets in support and celebration of the army; and where people are expressing their hatred for the Palestinian refugees by uttering such things as: “Let the army finish us from the Palestinians once and for all.” In other words, the “salvation” that we are to be guaranteed of by our support of the army in this petition is a salvation from the Palestinians. In our habitual, almost instinctive resort to religious imagery, this petition claims the army as Jesus Christ and the Palestinians as all things evil.

In Lebanon we have seen this before. In the 1970s it was the Christian Phalange party among others who resorted to this language; today we are hearing it across sectarian lines. Perhaps, as proof of a lack of any moral direction, the Lebanese national narrative will once and for all be determined through the claim of a common Palestinian enemy (Hermez, S. 2007,

‘Cheering to the beat of the Palestinians’ misery’, Electronic Lebanon website, 25 May <http://electronicintifada.net/v2/article6948.shtml> – Accessed 25 September 2009 – Attachment 5).

A September 2007 report from *Time* magazine relates that some members of the civilian population near Nahr El-Bared were watching for Fatah al-Islam members who might have escaped from the camp:

At Ayoun al-Samaq, a spring on the Bared River three miles upstream from the camp, several residents of nearby Jdeidet al-Qaitta village kept a wary eye on the dense green orange orchards and banana plantations that flank the river. “We know that there are Fatah al-Islam men in the area and we are taking precautions,” said Jihad al-Ajl. A truck full of soldiers was parked on a small bridge over the river. Other troops could be seen scouring the undergrowth and olive groves on the steep slopes of the valley.

The crackle of sporadic rifle fire could be heard a few hundred yards downstream as soldiers hunted for a militant who had been spotted a couple of hours earlier. “He took a tractor driver hostage with a pistol and hoped to get away,” Ajil said. As the tractor rounded a corner before the river bridge, the militant saw an army checkpoint a hundred yards ahead and jumped from the vehicle. “He disappeared into the bushes. He’s armed with a pistol, but God willing we will catch him,” Ajil said (Blanford, N. 2007, ‘Beirut Routs Bin Laden Allies’, *Time* magazine, 4 September <http://www.time.com/time/world/article/0,8599,1658604,00.html> – Accessed 27 August 2008 – Attachment 2).

## **2. Is there any evidence as to whether businesses closed down or whether they continued to be operational during the 3 month conflict at Nahr El-Bared?**

Several reports were located which provided instances of businesses closing down during the conflict at Nahr el-Bared, or of local residents leaving the area for the duration of the conflict. In addition, comprehensive reports from the Internal Displacement Monitoring Centre (IDMC) and the Lebanese Government provide analysis of the economic cost of the conflict, and the damage to businesses within the camp and in the surrounding municipalities. Extracts from these reports follow below (for reports of business closures, see: ‘Lebanese Troops Tighten Siege of Refugee Camp; Death Toll Nears 50’ 2007, *FOX News*, (source: *Associated Press*), 21 May <http://www.foxnews.com/story/0,2933,274153,00.html> – Accessed 25 September 2009 – Attachment 3; Ghaddar, H. 2007, ‘Bebnin’s sacrifice’, *NOW Lebanon*, 29 August <http://www.nowLebanon.com/NewsArticleDetails.aspx?ID=11350> – Accessed 8 September 2008 – Attachment 1; and: ‘Local people against rebuilding of Palestinian refugee camp’ 2007, *IRIN News*, 10 September <http://www.irinnews.org/Report.aspx?ReportId=74204> – Accessed 24 September 2009 – Attachment 8; for the IDMC and Lebanese Government reports, see: Internal Displacement Monitoring Centre 2008, *Lebanon: Displaced, again*, IDMC website 23 July [http://www.internal-displacement.org/8025708F004BE3B1/\(httpInfoFiles\)/8D8B19A96BDE25F1C125748F0051715D/\\$file/Lebanon++July+2008.pdf](http://www.internal-displacement.org/8025708F004BE3B1/(httpInfoFiles)/8D8B19A96BDE25F1C125748F0051715D/$file/Lebanon++July+2008.pdf) – Accessed 7 August 2008 – Attachment 6; and: Government of Lebanon 2008, *A Common Challenge, A Shared Responsibility – The International Donor Conference for the Recovery and Reconstruction of the Nahr el-Bared Palestinian Refugee Camp and Conflict-Affected Areas of North Lebanon*, 23 June [http://www.lpdg.gov.lb/NBC\\_DConf/GoL-NBC-Donor-Conference-Report\\_2008-07-04.pdf](http://www.lpdg.gov.lb/NBC_DConf/GoL-NBC-Donor-Conference-Report_2008-07-04.pdf) – Accessed 24 September 2009 – Attachment 7).

*Associated Press* reported on 21 May 2007 that “[m]any of the streets in Tripoli near the camp were empty, with shops closed and residents remaining inside to avoid getting hit by fire from the camp” (‘Lebanese Troops Tighten Siege of Refugee Camp; Death Toll Nears 50’ 2007, *FOX News*, (source: *Associated Press*), 21 May <http://www.foxnews.com/story/0,2933,274153,00.html> – Accessed 25 September 2009 – Attachment 3).

The abovementioned August 2007 report from *NOW Lebanon* comments on the closure of businesses near Nahr El-Bared, and resentment among Lebanese who have lost their livelihoods because “the Palestinians are receiving more aid and assistance from international relief agencies”:

“Everyone is feeling sorry for the Palestinians who have lost their homes and businesses, but look at us, my fishery has been closed for three months now, and I lost my only source of income. My son is fighting at Nahr al-Bared and was injured, and no one is feeling sorry for me. How am I going to survive?” asked Eid.

...Today, amidst the current crisis in the North, Bebnin’s residents state that the Palestinians are receiving more aid and assistance from international relief agencies, while their deteriorating economic situation goes unnoticed. “Although [the Palestinians] are responsible for receiving the militants, they still get most of the aid,” contended Eid. “Why do we have to bear the consequences of their mistakes?” (Ghaddar, H. 2007, ‘Bebnin’s sacrifice’, *NOW Lebanon*, 29 August <http://www.nowLebanon.com/NewsArticleDetails.aspx?ID=11350> – Accessed 8 September 2008 – Attachment 1).

A September 2007 article from *IRIN News* quotes a Lebanese business owner whose business was closed for 106 days during the conflict:

“The camp can be rebuilt but it must be put under control of the Lebanese army,” said Lebanese Rifat Fatfat, whose home-ware business on the road leading to the edge of Nahr al-Bared lost an estimated US\$10,000 during the 106 days it was closed.

...Palestinian Khaled Saadi saw his market shop in Nahr al-Bared lose up to three quarters of its business in the run-up to the outbreak of the conflict (‘Local people against rebuilding of Palestinian refugee camp’ 2007, *IRIN News*, 10 September <http://www.irinnews.org/Report.aspx?ReportId=74204> – Accessed 24 September 2009 – Attachment 8).

A September 2007 report from *Agence France-Presse* states of a Lebanese resident of an area adjacent to Nahr el-Bared that: “Fatfat returned home on September 13, the first day of the Muslim fasting month of Ramadan. Like many area residents, she had fled the fighting, which raged for more than three months” (‘Lebanese still fear return of fugitive Islamists’ 2007, *Agence France Presse*, 20 September – Attachment 10).

The Internal Displacement Monitoring Centre produced a report in July 2008 which analyses the damage to the Nahr El-Bared camp and its surrounding area, and the socio-economic impact of this damage. The report states that “[t]he conflict resulted in a large scale destruction of businesses in the camp and surrounding area”, and that businesses in the camp “are virtually not operational since the beginning of the fighting at end-May 2007 and for the rest of the year 2007”. Six surrounding municipalities were affected by the conflict: Muhammara, Bebnine, Bhanine, Minieh, Beddawi and Deir Ammar, and an “assessment by World Bank suggests 6000 residential and commercial units damaged or destroyed” in these municipalities. The report also quotes Lebanese government figures claiming that: “The

direct damages sustained in these areas are mainly in housing and businesses that have been partially or totally destroyed”; and that an indirect effect of the conflict has been the “closure of businesses and cessation of economic activities near the conflict zone”. Extended extracts from this report follow:

A short-lived ceasefire was followed by three months of fighting, during which more than 20,000 Palestine refugees living in Nahr el-Bared camp and about 10,000 other Palestine refugees and Lebanese living in adjacent areas were forcibly displaced (UNRWA, 4 June 2007; Reuters, 23 May 2007). In total, according to the government, the conflict resulted in the displacement of over 30,000 people and the death of 50 civilians, 179 soldiers and over 220 Fatah al-Islam members (GoL, 23 June 2008). The battle for control of the camp and use of heavy artillery caused massive destruction in Nahr el-Bared camp and adjacent municipalities, which are densely populated residential areas (Lebanese Republic, 10 September 2007). All buildings in Nahr el- Bared camp were either entirely destroyed or severely damaged. (UNRWA, 26 June 2008)

...The conflict in NBC is also having a significant socio-economic impact. The conflict resulted in a large scale destruction of businesses in the camp and surrounding area. The amount of destruction in businesses reaches US\$15.2 million for businesses in the old and new camp. Moreover, businesses suffered also from losses in equipment and inventories, reaching US\$12.5 millions.

Aside from assets losses, the conflict in NBC is having a strong economic impact on the camp and the surrounding region. Nahr el Bared is one of the most economically integrated camps in Lebanon with a wide range of interaction and externalities with the region. NBC has a dense trade and services activity and is a labour provider to the surrounding areas. The camp is close to a major transport network linking Tripoli to Syria and the coast to the hinterland of Akkar. Therefore, many of businesses at NBC are oriented toward: (i) servicing the transport sector (reparation and maintenance), (ii) servicing travelers and drivers (food and beverage), (iii) providing neighboring villages and Akkar with goods and services.

The survey of businesses gives an assessment of the level of activity inside NBC, where more than 433 businesses have been affected. Based on the survey, we estimate that prior to the conflict, 443 businesses were censused in NBC. Over 69 percent of these businesses were owned, the rest being rented. These businesses are entirely operated by Palestinian nationals, and are mainly self operated entities, since they employed altogether 450 people, including the owners. Most of the businesses are in the services sector (94 percent) and, more specifically, retail trade (79 percent). With the extent of destruction, these businesses are virtually not operational since the beginning of the fighting at end-May 2007 and for the rest of the year 2007 (132-133).

#### **...Nahr el Bared surrounding areas, infrastructure affected by fighting (2007)**

- Six municipalities were affected: Muhammara, Bebnine, Bhanine, Minieh, Beddawi and Deir Ammar
- Damage is estimated at 28 million USD, excluding housing and infrastructure within NBC and adjacent areas
- Initial assessment by World Bank suggests 6000 residential and commercial units damaged or destroyed
- Health and education infrastructure severely damaged
- Water wells and reservoirs damaged, some needing complete reconstruction



**Lebanese Republic, Presidency of the Council of Ministers, “Relief and Early Recovery for the Municipalities around NBC”, 10 September 2007**

“The region surrounding the NBC sustained serious damages over the period of the conflict. Six municipalities, which are among Lebanon’s poorest, were mainly affected. These include: Muhammara, Bebnine, Bhanine, Minieh, Beddawi and Deir Ammar. Several rockets were fired into these areas and neighboring villages causing human casualties and material damage. The direct damages sustained in these areas are mainly in housing and businesses that have been partially or totally destroyed. Indirect damages include: (i) the interruption of labor supply and inaccessibility to some farming fields, (ii) lack of access to the sea and damages to boats and fishing nets by the fishermen of Abdeh and Tripoli (iii) closure of businesses and cessation of economic activities near the conflict zone and (iv) the interruption of circulation on the highway had detrimental effect on all businesses directly or indirectly involved in the transport sectors.

The immediate vicinity of NBC includes two municipalities, Muhammara, and Bebnine. These have sustained direct and indirect damages during the fighting, both within their strict boundaries and in the parts of the so-called ‘New camp’ that is under their jurisdiction.

The direct damage wrought by the NBC crisis on the population of the six adjacent municipalities runs well above the USD28million. This excludes the cost of housing and infrastructure reconstruction within the NBC and the adjacent areas (i.e. new camp), as well as losses in economic output, jobs, and the long-term direct and indirect costs to the economy including lost revenues in tourism, agriculture and industry.”

**Lebanese Republic, Presidency of the Council of Ministers (Summary from World Bank Technical Note), 10 September 2007**

“Nearly 6,000 residential and commercial units were damaged or destroyed. Even for building which have not been fully demolished, their structural integrity is at risk. Moreover, considering the extent of the damage, it would be justified to level the residential buildings to provide much improved urban planning and higher quality buildings. Also at least 433 small enterprises – especially single family artisans, shopkeepers – were also totally or partially destroyed by the heavy bombing and rocket explosions.

Health and education infrastructure was severely damaged, with 3 hospitals and 4 clinics requiring either reconstruction or extensive repair, and over 15 schools, mainly kindergarten, destroyed or damaged. With the education and health facilities hit in the UNRWA compound the damage almost doubles. The loss of public building (community centers, mosques) represents the second largest loss after the housing sector. Other infrastructure services like water supply, electricity and telecommunications, were less extensively impacted.

Among the infrastructure networks the water and sanitation sector suffered most. Water wells and reservoirs providing water for domestic needs and industry were damaged, most of which will need complete reconstruction. The small-scale industries and the few medium-scale enterprises locate in the vicinity of the old camp were affected. Roads sustained minor damage mainly as a result from the intensive use of heavy military vehicles. Other infrastructure services like power and telecommunications suffered minimal disruption. Civil administration was affected, with office buildings and records destroyed. More problematic is the impact of chemical pollution on the ground water. An environmental health assessment will be required as soon as situation allows (168-170) (Internal Displacement Monitoring Centre 2008, *Lebanon: Displaced, again*, IDMC website 23 July [http://www.internal-displacement.org/8025708F004BE3B1/\(httpInfoFiles\)/8D8B19A96BDE25F1C125748F0051715D/\\$file/Lebanon+-+July+2008.pdf](http://www.internal-displacement.org/8025708F004BE3B1/(httpInfoFiles)/8D8B19A96BDE25F1C125748F0051715D/$file/Lebanon+-+July+2008.pdf) – Accessed 7 August 2008 – Attachment 6)

A report issued by the Government of Lebanon in June 2008, titled *A Common Challenge, A Shared Responsibility – The International Donor Conference for the Recovery and Reconstruction of the Nahr el-Bared Palestinian Refugee Camp and Conflict-Affected Areas of North Lebanon*, also provides an analysis of the economic cost of the conflict at Nahr El-Bared. This report notes the manner in which the areas surrounding the camp itself became targets for Fatah al-Islam attacks as the LAF took up positions in them, and claims that: “The inaccuracy of the militants’ weapons (small arms and basic missiles, including rocket propelled grenades) and the repeated targeting of the army’s positions led to considerable damage to portions of the surrounding communities”. The report further states that: “The trade and business sector in the region of Bebnine-Abdeh and Muhammara has sustained heavy damage as well”; and that: “Up to 460 Palestinian and Lebanese businesses employing over 1600 people in the two municipalities have stopped operations since the beginning of the conflict”. The report states that in “February 2008, the Lebanese NGO ‘Mada’ released the results of its survey estimating that 58% of Lebanese households and 68% of Lebanese businesses in the surrounding municipalities reported that the NBC crisis negatively affected their financial situation”; extended extracts from this report follow below:

NBC constitutes an integral part of the social and economic geography of its surroundings. While much of the direct physical damage resulting from the conflict was geographically bounded within the camp proper, any recovery strategy for the camp must be conceived in the context of the surrounding area that also suffered direct and indirect impacts from the violence. (13)

...Social and economic relationships between camp residents and nearby Lebanese communities that were close and amenable prior to the conflict deteriorated as a result of the violence. The local economy was devastated by forced closures of businesses. Crop losses ensued as a result of access restrictions to fields, and the interruption of a major trading route with Syria decreased trade. Additionally, the Lebanese tourism industry and therefore the economy as a whole was once more severely impacted as tourist numbers declined for a second summer in a row due to fears associated with the security situation in Lebanon. In the camp itself (the “first ring” or epicenter of the crisis), destruction of housing units, business assets, transport and public service delivery infrastructure was complete. (19)

...Along with the Beddawi Camp and the “New Camp”, the six municipalities closest to NBC constitute the “second ring” of impact around the epicenter of the crisis. These are the municipalities of Muhammara, Bebnine, Bhanine, Minieh, Beddawi and Deir Ammar with a registered population of 85,057 persons (Please see Table 2). Each municipality suffered direct and indirect damage from the conflict. The most evident direct consequences of the fighting include human casualties, damaged housing stock and partially or totally destroyed business assets. Indirect consequences from the conflict in these municipalities are diverse and include: (i) the interruption of labor supply and inaccessibility to the means of agricultural production; (ii) lack of access to the sea and damage to boats and fishing nets; (iii) closure of businesses and cessation of economic activities near the conflict zone; and (iv) the interruption of traffic circulation on the main north-south highway running through the area had a detrimental effect on all businesses reliant on the transport of goods and services. (20)

...The municipalities surrounding NBC sustained considerable physical damage during the fighting. As the militants fought from inside the camp, the Lebanese army took up positions surrounding the camp. These positions became targets for the militants. The inaccuracy of the militants’ weapons (small arms and basic missiles, including rocket propelled grenades) and the repeated targeting of the army’s positions led to considerable damage to portions of the surrounding communities. The extent of such damage varies greatly between the



municipalities depending upon their proximity to the camp boundaries. Damage consists of destroyed housing, destroyed crops and greenhouses and damaged roads. In addition, the municipality of Deir Ammar suffered from repeated attempts by militants to damage the electrical power plant located there.

The military conflict has also led to the accelerated degradation of the local infrastructure during the crisis. Local roads and sewerage networks were severely damaged as a result of military operations. The bulk of the road network in Bhanine, Beddawi, Minieh, Muhammara, Bebnine and Deir Ammar municipalities will require repair and rehabilitation. (31)

...Due to the extent of destruction, the camp's business sector was severely affected. The economic loss from this interruption is sizable and difficult to estimate. The complete destruction of NBC also eliminated an important and vibrant economic hub for the region. Prior to the conflict, NBC was renowned for its vibrant informal economy. It enjoyed the advantages of its location on the coast, along the main road in the north, and close proximity to the Syrian border. Additional advantages of conducting commerce within NBC enabled individuals and businesses residing in the camp to provide less expensive services, markets and labor to the surrounding Palestinian and Lebanese areas. (32)

The fishing sector in Bebnine-Abdeh and Tripoli was severely affected throughout the conflict. In total, the losses to the fishing sector are estimated at US\$3.5 million in terms of turnover and at US\$2.9 million in terms of value-added and income. The trade and business sector in the region of Bebnine-Abdeh and Muhammara has sustained heavy damage as well. Up to 460 Palestinian and Lebanese businesses employing over 1600 people in the two municipalities have stopped operations since the beginning of the conflict. Continued closures of much of the "New Camp" and the weak financial circumstances of returned families to the area have made restarting other businesses quite difficult. (33)

...Nearly two thousand enterprises constituted the backbone of the formal and informal economy in the region prior to the crisis. Lebanese-run businesses, Lebanese consumers and Palestinian entrepreneurs have developed mutual dependence on NBC through historically established trade channels among the villages north of Tripoli and the densely populated NBC.

An element of uncertainty now exists over the consequences of the camp's reconstruction. Both Palestinian and Lebanese entrepreneurs are concerned about the "bridging" phase until the completion of NBC reconstruction. Rents will be higher in the interim period for those few buildings available to house businesses. Also, Lebanese customers are discouraged from entering the camp vicinity and "New Camp" areas because of movement restrictions, security related issues, heightened social and political tensions which result from the repercussions of the crisis on Lebanese-Palestinian relations.

...As of February 2008, the Lebanese NGO "Mada" released the results of its survey estimating that 58% of Lebanese households and 68% of Lebanese businesses in the surrounding municipalities reported that the NBC crisis negatively affected their financial situation, resulting in higher prices and economic stagnation. Most participants reported being impacted directly by damage to personal property or indirectly through a reduction in productivity. (36)

...At the regional level, the crisis compounded the vulnerability of the already fragile Akkar economy. During the crisis, the region suffered from a particular shortage of basic consumer goods and raw material with the interruption of transportation along the main north-south highway. In addition, fighting in Tripoli in the early days of the conflict damaged several buildings, interrupting commerce in the city. The interruption of economic activity at the regional level took many forms, including: (i) the interruption of labor supply and

inaccessibility to agricultural land; (ii) a three month lack of access to the sea for fishermen in Abdeh as well as damage to boats and fishing assets; (iii) businesses near the fighting closed, and; (iv) the interruption of the circulation of traffic on the highway had a detrimental effect on the economic vitality of the region. Together with the removal of NBC from the economic equation of the country's north, these temporary and more long-term impacts have compounded existing vulnerabilities in the already poorest region of Lebanon. (38)

...Physical damage to residential and commercial buildings as well as to infrastructure throughout the adjacent municipalities is significant (42) (Government of Lebanon 2008, *A Common Challenge, A Shared Responsibility – The International Donor Conference for the Recovery and Reconstruction of the Nahr el-Bared Palestinian Refugee Camp and Conflict-Affected Areas of North Lebanon*, 23 June [http://www.lcdc.gov.lb/NBC\\_DConf/GoL-NBC-Donor-Conference-Report\\_2008-07-04.pdf](http://www.lcdc.gov.lb/NBC_DConf/GoL-NBC-Donor-Conference-Report_2008-07-04.pdf) – Accessed 24 September 2009 – Attachment 7).

A September 2007 report produced by the Lebanese Republic Presidency of the Council of Ministers, also provides detail on the economic impact of the conflict on municipalities near Nahr El-Bared:

The sub-region surrounding the camp has sustained damage. The municipalities of Muhammara, Bebnine-Abdeh, Bhanine, Miniyeh, Beddawi and Deir Ammar are the most affected by the conflict. The municipalities of Muhammara and Bebnine-Abdeh are the ones which sustained the largest amount of damages, since the land of the so-called “New camp” is under the jurisdiction of these municipalities. The fishing sector of Bebnine-Abdeh has stopped activity since the beginning of the fighting, while fishermen of Tripoli had serious disruption in their businesses. In total, the losses of the fishing sector are estimated at US\$3.5 million in terms of turnover, and at US\$2.9 million in terms of VA and income. The trade and business sector in the region of Bebnine-Abdeh and Muhammara has sustained heavy damages. Up to 460 businesses employing over 1600 people in the two municipalities have declared stopping operations since the beginning of the fighting (Lebanese Republic Presidency of the Council of Ministers 2007, *Preliminary Economic Impact Assessment of the Conflict at Nahr el Bared – Nahr El Bared Crisis Appeal: Post Conflict Relief, Recovery and Reconstruction*, Internal Displacement.org website, 10 September [http://www.internal-displacement.org/8025708F004CE90B/\(httpDocuments\)/6D43F64D76FDBA95C1257448003A4662/\\$file/leb\\_gov\\_prelim-eco-impact-assess-conflict-nahf-el-bared\\_sept07.pdf](http://www.internal-displacement.org/8025708F004CE90B/(httpDocuments)/6D43F64D76FDBA95C1257448003A4662/$file/leb_gov_prelim-eco-impact-assess-conflict-nahf-el-bared_sept07.pdf) – Accessed 24 September 2009 – Attachment 9).

## List of Sources Consulted

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