



# WELCOME TO LEBANON —

## STAFF ORIENTATION HANDBOOK

UN LEBANON  
COUNTRY TEAM

# CONTENT

<b>Disclaimer</b>	<b>01</b>
<b>Welcome to Lebanon</b>	<b>03</b>
<b>Our Values</b>	<b>04</b>
<b>Living in Lebanon</b>	<b>05</b>
General Info	07
Climate	09
Standard Time	09
Environmental	10
Currency	10
Accommodation	11
Transportation	13
Security	15
Health Services	17
Communication	18
Lifestyle	19
Education	21
Nannies & Helpers	22
<b>Admin Guidelines</b>	<b>23</b>
<b>Other Info</b>	<b>25</b>

## DISCLAIMER

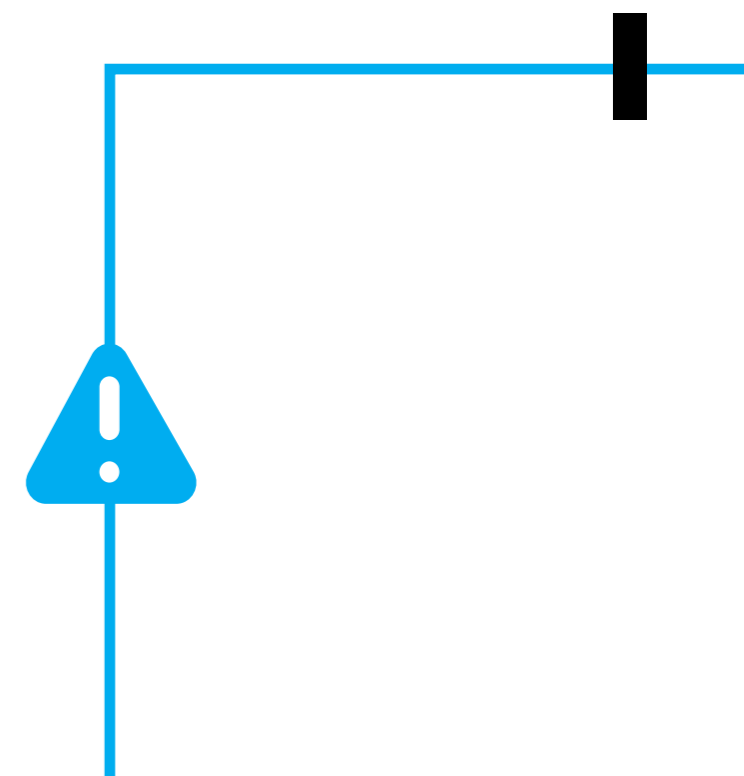
The United Nations in Lebanon provides this guide for information purposes only. This booklet is developed and maintained through joint efforts from the different UN agencies present in Lebanon and contains informal and unofficial recommendations, knowledge shared and suggestions. This content contains data, advice, opinions and statements from various third-party resources. This guide is intended for use by the UN staff and contractors and / or their spouse / domestic partners only. You may not, except with expressed written permission from the UN Lebanon, distribute or commercially exploit the content. Nor you may transmit it or store it in any other website or other form of physical or electronic.

UN does not represent or endorse or guarantee the accuracy or reliability of any advice, statement, or other information provided in the document. The designations employed and the presentation of the material in this publication do not imply the expression of any opinion whatsoever on the part of the secretariat of the United Nations concerning the legal status of any country, territory, city or area or of its authorities, or concerning the delimitation of its frontiers or boundaries.

The findings, interpretations, and conclusions expressed in the materials are those of the various authors of the materials and not those of the UN Lebanon as an organization. Reliance upon any such opinion, advice, statement, or other information shall also be at your own risk. The UN Lebanon shall not be liable to you or anyone else for use of any content herein, regardless of cause for damages resulting there from.

Reference to these Service Providers do not constitute or imply their endorsement, recommendation or in consideration of further businesses with the UN in Lebanon. Prices quoted here are intended to serve merely as a guide. Staff members should contact the Service Provider directly and / or seek independent recommendations in deciding which Service Provider is best suited for the staff member's needs.

If you have had good or bad experiences, or you feel that certain information should be included in this document, then please share this with your Human Resource and/or Administrative Units so that this dynamic document can be modified accordingly.



*We thank our UN Online Volunteer  
"Lucia Jamgotchian" for designing  
this One UN Welcome Booklet.*

# WELCOME TO LEBANON

On behalf of all the staff working for the United Nations in Lebanon, we would like to welcome you to the United Nations team that work across the country. We look forward to welcoming you in person to your office in Lebanon.

In the meantime, here are a few tips and guidelines to help you in your preparations for your visit. This guide is an informative tool that will help you get acquainted with Lebanon. It provides you with relevant information, useful links and contacts, introduction to the country, accommodation and housing, medical care, education, culture, etc...This handbook will guide you through Lebanon's diverse facets and help you prepare and settle in.

If you have any further questions, please do not hesitate to contact the Administrative and Human Resources Units who will do their best to guide you.

**Click on the below link to access UN Lebanon site:**

<https://un.org.lb/english/home>

## OUR VALUES

*The purpose of applying these values is to create a code of behavior that builds a unified culture and supports the vision and mission of the UN*

**The United Nations has a large presence in Lebanon, with more than 25 agencies.**

In our daily work there are standards to which we are all held in our role as international civil servants of the United Nations, including the ethical standards expected of us, and the principles of accountability that guide us. The main corporate values that defines behavior expected of all UN personnel, regardless of function or level.



Accountability



Respect



Integrity



Transparency



Professionalism

# LIVING IN LEBANON

## Area

10, 452 km<sup>2</sup>

## Population

Around 6.007 million  
including refugees/  
displaced

## Capital City

Beirut

## Languages

Arabic (official), French,  
English and Armenian

## Currency

Lebanese Pound (LBP)

## President

Michel Aoun



# GENERAL INFORMATION

Lebanon is a democratic republic with a parliamentary system of government within the overall framework of confession. Its constitution is based on the separation of executive, legislative, and judicial power, with a president elected for a six-year term. The 128 members of parliament are elected by universal adult suffrage for a four-year term.

8

REGIONAL  
ADMINISTRATIVE  
DISTRICTS /  
MOHAFAZAAT

25

CAZA /  
SUBDIVISIONS

37

FEDERATIONS OF  
MUNICIPALITIES

900+

MUNICIPALITIES  
WITH MUNICIPAL  
COUNCIL

## MOUHAFAZA

## CAZA

Beirut

X

Akkar

Akkar

North Lebanon

Batroun, Bcharreh, Koura, Minieh-Danniyeh, Trablous (Tripoli), Zgharta

Baalbek/Hermel

Baalbek, Hermel

Mount Lebanon

Aaley ,Baabda, Chouf, Jbayl (Byblos), Kesrouane, Matn

Beqaa

West-Beqaa, Rachaiya, Zahleh

South Lebanon

Tyr (Sour), Jezzine, Saida

Nabatiyeh

Bent Jbayl, Hasbaiya, Marjaayoun, Nabatiyeh

## CLIMATE



Lebanon has a Mediterranean climate - hot and dry in summer (June to August), cool and rainy in winter (December to February). In summer humidity is very high along the coast and daytime temperatures average 30°C, with night temperatures not much lower. Winter is mild, with daytime temperatures averaging 15°C. In the mountains, summer days are moderately hot (26°C on average) and the nights cool. Winters are cold, with snowfall above 1300m.

Also, remember, temperatures can vary considerably in different parts of the country depending on altitude, prevailing winds and other factors.



WINTER  
OCTOBER  
MARCH



SUMMER  
APRIL  
SEPTEMBER



INTERNATIONAL  
DIALING CODE  
**+961**

## ENVIRONMENTAL

Lebanon is the smallest country in continental Asia with an overall 10,452 sq km geographic area. Its land boundaries total 484 km with two border countries: Israel - 81 km, and Syria 403 - km.

The country has a coastline that stretches for 225 km and a narrow plain terrain known as (Bekaa Valley) which separates Lebanon from Syria. The terrain mean elevation is 1,250 meters with the lowest point being the Mediterranean Sea at 0 meters and the highest point being Qornet el Sawda at 3,088 meters. The country's climate is known to be Mediterranean (mild to cool, wet winters with hot, dry summers; the Lebanon Mountains experience heavy winter snows.

Land use is reported to be 63.3% Agricultural, 11.9% Arable land; 12.3% Permanent crops; 39.1% Permanent pasture, 13.4% forest, and 23.3% other.



## CURRENCY

The Lebanese unit of currency is the Lebanese Pound which is divided into 100 piasters. There are ATMs throughout Lebanon in all the major cities and in most towns; however, the country has been experiencing high levels of currency fluctuation in since 2019. Please contact your Operations/HR focal point to advice you on the latest financial matters.

Tipping is widely expected (10% of bill) in Lebanon particularly in the better hotels and restaurants and by drivers of hired cars.

Notes are available in denominations of: LL1,000; LL5,000; LL10,000; LL20,000; LL50,000; and LL100,000. In addition to the notes in circulation there are also a few coins (piastres) of LL50, 100 and (more commonly) 250 and 500.

You can click on the link below to view the list of banks in Lebanon:

[www.bdl.gov.lb/downloads/download/82/en](http://www.bdl.gov.lb/downloads/download/82/en)

# ACCOMMODATION

In regard to accommodation, some of the most popular areas for expats are: Downtown, Gemayzeh, Ashrafieh, Hamra, and Verdun. subject to the security situation.

For a list of UN cleared hotels across the country, please refer to [Annex I: List of cleared hotels](#)  
Some of the recommended hotels:

- [Alife Hotel](#)
- [Royal tulip hotel](#)
- [Citea appart hotel](#)
- Key appart hotel
- [Sodeco suites](#)
- [Sofitel le Gabriel](#)

## PRIVATE ACCOMMODATION

If you want to find your own place to rent, try below links, or ask your colleagues once you have arrived. It is strongly recommended to consult Admin on the draft lease and obtain advice on conditions including applicable municipality taxes and the diplomatic clause.

The following websites can help you in identifying an apartment:

- [ebhotels.com](#)
- [propertyfinder.com.lb](#)
- [olx.com.lb](#)
- [welcomebeirut.com](#)

*Kindly note that it is important for staff wishing to move into a private accommodation to consult with the security section in the agency.*

## UTILITIES

Your rental amount will most probably not cover electricity, telephone, Internet, or cable television service. These are all additional charges, which you should consider when calculating your monthly budget. In addition to the rent, expect to pay common charges for the building, which cover the electricity of the common areas of the building, fees for the concierge and fuel for the generator. This is subject to negotiation with landlord.

## LEASE TERMS

The minimum lease duration in Lebanon is generally one year, where tenants usually have to pay a minimum of 6 months' rent in advance and in some cases even one year. In addition, an amount of one month rent is usually required by the landlord as a security deposit in case of property damage. Additionally, tenants who sign a one -year contract has the right to hold onto the property for three consecutive years. Thereafter, the landlord is entitled to end the contract, or to renegotiate. For rental contracts with a diplomatic clause, individuals have the right to terminate the lease before the end of the agreement. In the event of early termination of the lease, the landlord shall reimburse the tenant the monetary value of the remaining months of the contract.

Also, it is important to note that the maximum reasonable rental level in Lebanon is \$4,000 for single staff and \$5,000 for married with an additional 10% for D level positions and 20% for ASG level positions.

*For accurate calculation, please refer to this link:  
[Rental Subsidy Calculator](#)*



# TRANSPORTATION

## AIRPORT

Rafik Hariri International airport is located in the southern suburbs of Beirut, less than 10km away from downtown. A taxi from the airport to downtown Beirut can be anywhere between \$20-\$30 and make sure to agree on the price before stepping in the taxi.

## PUBLIC

All public transportation vehicles in Lebanon have a red license plate. For transportation within Beirut, you have 3 options: "Service" car (taxi off the street with a lower cost than the private taxi), private taxi or minibus. However, only Taxis are securely advised to use as a mean of transportation.

## BUYING A NEW CAR

You can buy a new car or a motor bike in Lebanon from any brand. The car dealers have well equipped showrooms and their after-sale services is excellent. Some sell motor bikes.

Below is a link to all new car and motor bike dealers in Lebanon. They sell new cars and motor bikes as well as under warranty used cars and motor bikes with maintenance programs and centers:

<https://wheelers.me/en/lebanon/cars/dealers/all?page=1>

**Note on diplomatic advantages:** The Ministry of Foreign Affairs (MOFA) provide duty exemption only to SM with level P4 and above. A white diplomatic residency card is therefore attributed to the SM and his/her family members. The SM is allowed to purchase vehicles VAT free in Lebanon. MOFA will allocate a diplomatic plate for his/her car.

## DRIVING LICENSE

You will need a driving licence to drive in Lebanon. If you are Lebanese, you will use your Lebanese driving licence. If you are a non-Lebanese national, you can either use your own international driving licence or get your country driving licence and contact the "Vehicle Registration Department" in Beirut, Zahle, Tripoli or Saida to obtain a "Driving Permit".

## PRIVATE TAXIS

The average cost of a Taxi fare within Beirut is \$10. The following taxis are recommended as they are clean, safe and reliable.

[ANNEX II: List to UNDSS cleared taxis](#)

*These are the specific taxi companies that are cleared by UNDSS. If you use any other local taxi driver, please kindly refer to UNDSS for clearance.*

# SECURITY

The UN Security System in Lebanon is divided into two UN area of operation. One is the southern area of the country which lies to the south of Litani River (SLR) under the responsibility of the peace keeping force (UNIFIL) according to the UN resolution 1701/2006. The rest of the country is called North Litani River (NLR).

UNDSS SIOC +961 33 49870, +9615428112/3, for NLR area and UNIFIL SIOC +961 79990960, +961 1926320 for SLR area, are a good source of information and security support that compliments your agency Security.



Individual security is foremost a personal concern. It is strongly recommended that you always exercise caution, remain alert and follow these simple rules during your stay in Lebanon:

- Always carry a UN ID.
- Use only vetted Taxi Service(ANNEX II: List to UNDSS cleared taxis)
- Avoid counting/displaying large amount of cash.
- Switch directions and walk towards a busy area and call for help if you feel threatened.
- Avoid late night walk (alone).
- Always let someone know about your whereabouts.
- Remember that you are empowered to report any incidents of sexual harassment, domestic violence, or sexual assaults (which are criminalized in Lebanon)
- If confronted by a criminal; don't resist.
- Avoid Political/Religious discussions.
- Do not take pictures of individuals without permission.
- Do not take pictures of Military, Police and Govt Installations.
- Avoid confrontations as they quickly escalate.
- Be on alert when approaching your car or using an ATM - look around you for any suspicious activity.
- Avoid leaving valuable personal belongings and critical document/valuable items in your vehicle especially if taken by a "Valet Parking" or in the hotel / conference room.
- Avoid being distracted. Criminals often work in pairs; one person gets your attention while the other steals your purse, wallet, or shopping bag.

## HEALTH SERVICES

Doctors and hospitals often expect immediate cash payment for services. Staff can use credit card or cash, Lebanese Pounds and USD, to pay for the services. Also, Cigna is well recognized in hospitals, listed in the next section, in case of emergency. Most hospitals are well equipped, and doctors are generally well qualified. Also, the majority of medical staff speak both French and English.

[Please refer to Annex III for a list of UN cleared Clinique's and doctors.](#)

For COVID related special measures, please contact your HR/Operations focal point.



## COMMUNICATION

Upon arrival, you may purchase a SIM card from any of the two main cell phone providers in the country: [Touch](#) and [Alfa](#).

Although you might find it challenging to find fast Internet in Lebanon, there are many internet providers in Lebanon that offer DSL (Digital Subscriber Line) and wireless internet services. The standard DSL monthly subscription prices vary depending on the speed and the monthly consumption (in GB) you select.

Below you may find the list of major Internet providers in Lebanon:

- [Ogero](#)
- [IDM](#)
- [TERRANET](#)
- [Cyberia](#)
- [MOBI](#)



# LIFESTYLE

## LEISURE ACTIVITIES

There are plenty of leisure activities that could be done in Lebanon. The following also provides information about the different events and cultural events happening. Below are some useful links:

- [Beirut](#)
- [Lebtivity, Facebook Page](#)
- [Agenda Culture](#)
- [Beiruting, Facebook Page](#)
- [Livelovelebanon, Facebook Page](#)
- [Destination Lebanon](#)

## SHOPPING

### Grocery

- [Spinneys](#)
- [Carrefour](#)
- Zomato [iOS](#) | [Android](#)
- Toters [iOS](#) | [Android](#)

### Shopping Malls

- [ABC Mall Achrafieh, Dbayeh, Verdun](#)
- [Beirut Mall Tayouneh](#)
- [Le Mall Sin El Fil, Dbayeh, Saida](#)
- [City Mall Geant East Suburbs](#)
- [Beirut Souks Downtown](#)
- [City Center Hazmieh](#)
- [Dunes Center](#)



## EDUCATION

Education is highly valued in Lebanon. All Lebanese schools are required to follow a prescribed curriculum designed by the Ministry of Education. It has one of the most educated and technically prepared populations in the Middle East. Below a link that will provide you with a variety of private schools in different regions in Lebanon:

[Higher Education Site](#)

[Private Schools Site](#)

You can view the list of private universities in Lebanon by clicking on the link below:

<http://www.higher-edu.gov.lb/french/Universities.html>

[http://www.higher-edu.gov.lb/arabic/Guides/Other-Guides/List\\_univ.pdf](http://www.higher-edu.gov.lb/arabic/Guides/Other-Guides/List_univ.pdf)

## NANNIES & HELPERS

Nannies and House Helpers are available through professional services delivery companies that are accredited and registered. So, check the information pertaining to that service with admin department.

Link below shows an example of an accredited and registered company:

*Home Care Lebanon*

*Sami El Solh Boulevard-Youssef Centre, Badaro, Beirut*

*01-388 344*

[www.homecarelebanon.com](http://www.homecarelebanon.com)



# ADMINISTRATIVE GUIDELINES

## VISA PROCEDURE

Whether you have an UNLP or not, please contact your administrative or Human Resources focal point to confirm the visa rules that apply in your particular case.

## MINISTRY OF FOREIGN AFFAIRS IDENTITY CARDS

### For UN Staff:

In Lebanon, International staff of recognized agencies are entitled to Ministry of Foreign Affairs Identity Cards which replace Residency Cards and Work Permits and indicate staff's status as an UN International Staff Member:

- Levels P-4 and above are issued with MOFA Diplomatic White Identity Cards.
- Levels P-3 and below are issued with MOFA Blue Identity Cards.

### For Dependents:

- Dependent Spouses intending to work in the country are not entitled to MOFA Cards, it is the responsibility of the employer to issue their Residency Cards.
- Dependent Children over the age of 21 intending to work in the country are not entitled to MOFA ID Cards.
- Dependent Children over the age of 21 with student status in Lebanon are entitled to MOFA ID Cards upon provision of University/College attestation of their student status.

Upon arrival to the duty station, you need to apply for the Ministry of Foreign Affairs (MOFA) ID for yourself and your eligible dependents by filling forms provided to you by the HR or Administrative Office which are also available in ESTAD. The MOFA ID is your residency permit in Lebanon. To apply for their MOFA card, please contact your Admin/HR.

## VAT REFUND

Officials of the United Nations Organizations who carry United Nations "Laissez-Passer" of category "P4" and above can benefit from VAT refund paid on goods and services acquired exclusively for their personal use, with the exception of food and current perishable consumer goods, alcohol, tobacco, cellular phone bills, cellular phones, petroleum.

*For further information, please contact the Admin/HR focal point at your respective agency.*

## SHIPMENT OF PERSONAL EFFECTS

For International staff members (either temporary or fixed term appointment), who may want to import their personal effect, please consider the below:

- From P1 and up to P3, Staff members don't have access to the duty exemption
- From P4 and above, Staff members can have access to duty exemption benefit. International Staff of P/D category can import a shipment of used personal effects without paying customs charges.

*For more info on the administrative guidelines, please contact the Administration section.*

## OTHER INFORMATION

### LANGUAGES, BASIC WORDS & PHRASES

Hello

*Marhaba*

Thank you

*Shookran/Merci*

How are you

*Kifak(male), Kifik(female)*

Well (health)

*Tamem*

Stop it

*Khalas!*

You're welcome

*Ahlan, tekram(male),  
tekramé(female)*

### WHAT TO WEAR

For meetings and official activities taking place in Lebanon, normal business attire is expected. During the rainy season, the pavements can become a bit slippery and so, if walking to and from the Office ensure you have shoes with a decent grip.

It is considerably colder in the mountains and in the north, so remember to bring warm clothes in winter. Sturdy shoes may also be required if going to the field and in particular to informal settlements as these can get very muddy.

### WORKING DAYS AND UN HOLIDAYS

The official working days in Lebanon are Monday through Friday. Lebanon's weekend is on Saturday and Sunday. Government offices close on Saturdays and some companies close also on Saturday. Everyone closes on Sunday except shopping malls, restaurants and supermarkets.

Lebanon has around 17 official holidays per year (one of the highest numbers in the world), not all of which coincide with the list of ten official UN holidays. In addition to national holidays, Lebanon recognizes all Christian and Muslim holidays (This schedule is subject to the government administrative decisions every year).

*Lebanese useful contact:*

1. Red Cross: 140
2. Fire & Rescue: 175
3. Civil Defense: 125
4. Airport Info: 150 / +961 1 628000
5. General Security: 1717
6. Internal Security/Police: 112
7. Domestic violence hotline: 1745
8. UNDSS/SIOC:

Email: [unsiclebanon@un.org](mailto:unsiclebanon@un.org)

Number: +961 5 428112 / +961 3 349870