

SITUATION OVERVIEW



+137K
IDPs in 663 shelters
(97% near capacity)



+1M
self-registered IDPs
with MoSA



Anti-IDP rhetoric and political polarization **sharpened**



SLR area almost isolated
following bridge attacks

During the fourth week of the escalation of hostilities, the crisis deepened through the consolidation of prolonged displacement, rising political polarization, and the widening social effects of insecurity. Developments surrounding the establishment of a large IDP shelter in Karantina, the withdrawal of accreditation of Iran’s ambassador, debate over Lebanon’s positioning in the war, and escalating online and localized tensions linked to displacement, security incidents, and misinformation underscored that internal tensions are being increasingly shaped by political affiliations, sectarian sensitivities, and competing narratives of responsibility.

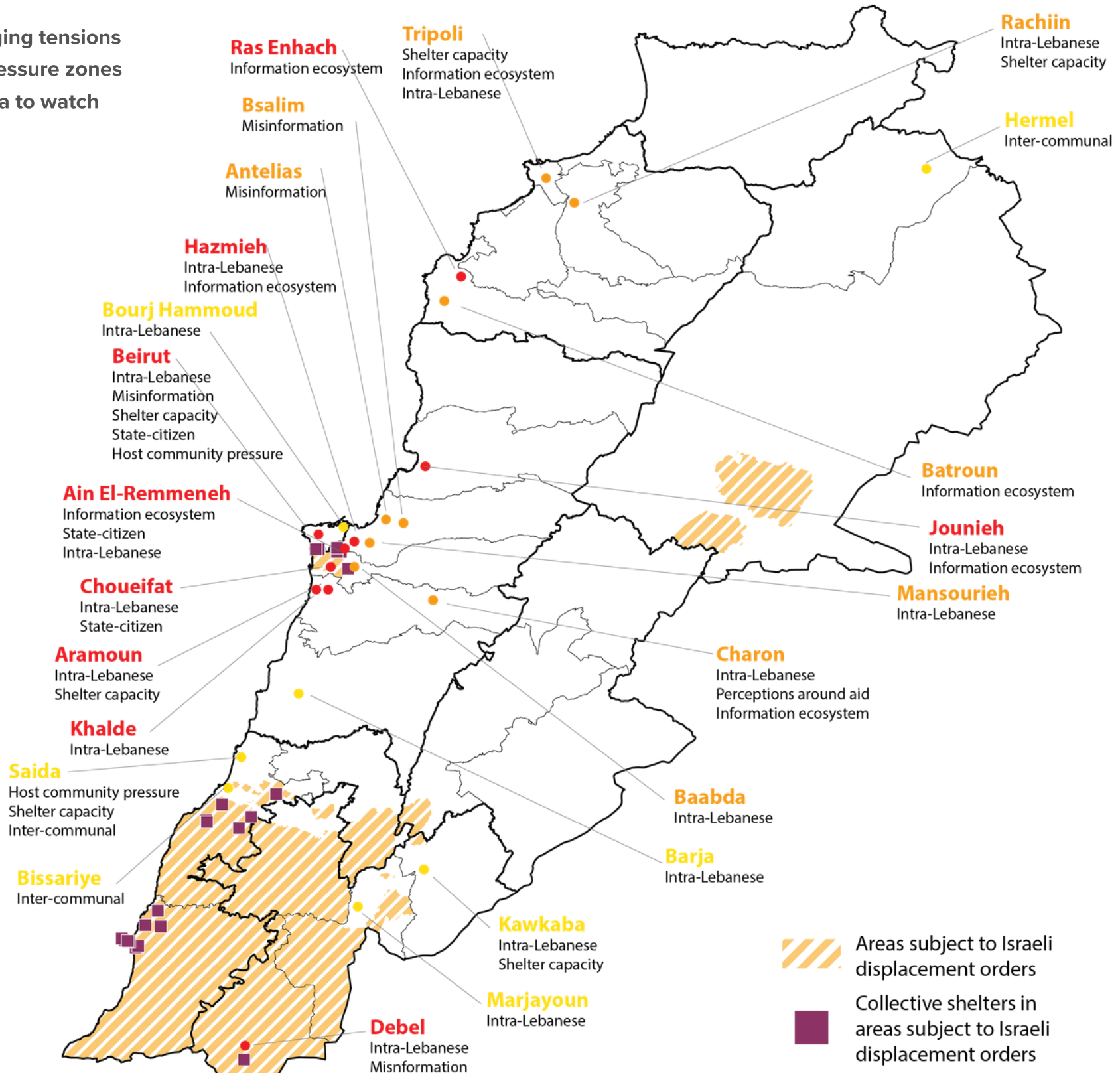
This week was also marked by a stronger overlap between insecurity and social tensions. Attacks on bridges on the Litani River disrupted the Saida – Tyre highway and other main connection roads which pushed the South Litani River (SLR) area toward near-isolation, while concerns over fuel and commodity prices increase, calls by some embassies for their nationals to leave the country and continued targeting of paramedics and civilians reinforced a broader atmosphere of fear, uncertainty, and strained coping capacity. Thus, tension dynamics increasingly reflected the cumulative effects of insecurity on daily life, mobility, and trust in addition to the continuing displacement pressures.

The dominant feature of this week’s online environment was the fusion of displacement-related anxiety, sectarian-based narratives, and political grievance with inflammatory politico-sectarian rhetoric, alongside growing questioning of the role of media coverage in amplifying tensions.

GEOGRAPHICAL HOTSPOTS

Identified hotspots for social tensions during the reporting period

Red = Emerging tensions
Orange = Pressure zones
Yellow = Area to watch



TENSIONS DASHBOARD

■ Critical ■ Emerging ■ Watch

↑ increasing → stable ↓ decreasing

Driver

Status

Trend



Host community pressure



Host community pressure remained **critical** throughout the week and **became more explicitly politicized**. Opposition to the reported establishment of a large IDP shelter in Karantina emerged as a central flashpoint, with the shelter framed in some narratives as a “camp”, reviving civil war memories and triggering politically and sectarian charged rhetoric extending well beyond concerns over capacity. Mis/disinformation about additional shelters being established in Dbayeh and Beirut Downtown further fueled anti-IDP sentiment, while reports on 24 March pointed to anti-IDP rhetoric and a clash between IDPs and host community members in Jounieh following the fall of missile debris. By 27 March, municipal and informal security measures in Ain El Remmeneh (Baabda) were also contributing to tensions between residents and displaced persons.

This suggests that host community pressure is increasingly driven by the framing of displacement as a security, identity, and territorial issue. Municipal decisions such as the relocation of IDPs from Kawkaba, growing calls to restrict hosting following strikes on perceived “safe areas,” and recurrent clashes between IDPs and host communities (e.g., Aramoun) point **to a hardening of local responses and a shift toward more restrictive and confrontational dynamics**.



Shelter capacity pressure



Shelter capacity pressure remained at **critical** levels, although the continued opening of additional collective shelters by authorities reflects **ongoing efforts to absorb rising needs and prevent a more acute saturation crisis**. While the number of designated collective shelters increased from 637 to 663 and occupancy remained high at 96–97 per cent, these figures should be interpreted in light of the authorities’ adaptive expansion of shelter capacity, which has so far helped contain pressure despite persistent and growing displacement needs

However, the internal pressures within the shelter system continued to intensify. The closing of a designated collective shelter in Rachiin (Zgharta) fueled intra-Lebanese tensions, while violent clashes between IDPs were reported again in Aramoun (Aley). Non-sheltered IDPs in Beirut reportedly refused relocation to the North and Bekaa due to security and inter-communal concerns, suggesting that available alternatives are not necessarily perceived as socially or physically acceptable. Shelter pressure is therefore **increasingly shaped by issues of acceptability and constraints on onward movement**.



State–citizen relations



State-citizen relations remained an **emerging** tension driver, but the reporting period suggested **a gradual upward shift in contestation around authority, regulation, and public reassurance**. Municipal responses became more visible and more restrictive, including new regulatory measures announced following the targeting of an apartment in the traditionally perceived “safe area” of Hazmieh, as well as municipal and informal security arrangements in Ain El Remmeneh. These actions reflect efforts by local authorities to manage insecurity and displacement simultaneously, while increasingly carrying risks of being perceived as selective, improvised, or discriminatory by affected populations.

At the national level, the withdrawal of accreditation of Iran’s ambassador triggered strong political reactions, reflected in the absence of four out of five Shia ministers from the 26 March Cabinet session, underscoring how state decisions are increasingly interpreted through broader political and sectarian fault lines. The prohibition of journalistic coverage of hostilities in Marjayoun, concerns over rising fuel and commodity prices, and panic linked to some embassies’ calls for their nationals to leave the country reinforced perceptions that public trust increasingly depends on how well institutions manage both the narrative and the real-life impacts of the escalation.

TENSIONS DASHBOARD

■ Critical ■ Emerging ■ Watch

↑ increasing → stable ↓ decreasing

Driver

Status

Trend



Intra-Lebanese dynamics



Intra-Lebanese dynamics remained **one of the most critical and worsening drivers of tension** during the week. What stands out in this period is **the extent to which political developments fed into localized sectarian and social friction**. The withdrawal of accreditation of Iran's ambassador, reports of arrest warrants against two Hezbollah members for possession of arms, and broader debate around engagement in the war and compensation for damages contributed to a climate of sharper domestic polarization. By 27 March, these dynamics had become sufficiently contentious to affect government-level participation and deepen visible divides across the political landscape, with increasing risks of political deadlock.

These tensions were amplified through online rhetoric and localized incidents. Sectarian-based hate speech continued following misinformation about the alleged presence of an Iranian official in Antelias; disinformation about Israeli soldiers in a church in Debel triggered inter-sectarian tensions; and incidents in Hazmieh, Jounieh, Ain El Remmeneh, Aramoun, and Beirut reflected **how easily insecurity, displacement, and political affiliation are now converging into broader intra-Lebanese divisions**. The uproar surrounding the reported establishment of a large IDP shelter in Karantina also appeared to be initially driven by politically framed narratives, which quickly evolved into broader sectarian and social tensions.

Overall, this week's intra-Lebanese tensions were driven by an accumulation of narratives and incidents that reinforced mutual suspicion around political divisions, security responsibilities, and uneven exposure of different communities to the conflict.



Inter-communal tensions



Inter-communal tensions remained comparatively **less acute** than intra-Lebanese dynamics, but they **remained fragile and highly contingent on local developments**. Despite no significant escalation in direct inter-communal confrontation this week, concerns persisted in areas where displacement, relocation, and local security anxieties intersected. On 23 March, restrictive measures imposed on displaced Syrians during Eid in Bissariye reflected the continued risk that crisis management measures may disproportionately affect non-Lebanese groups and reinforce perceptions of unequal treatment.

The refusal by some non-sheltered IDPs in Beirut to transfer to the North and Bekaa, due in part to inter-communal concerns, also underscored the extent to which perceived social safety and security now shapes displacement options. While inter-communal dynamics did not dominate the week's tensions landscape, the underlying drivers remain present and **may still be readily triggered by rumors, discriminatory measures, or competition over access and protection**.



Information ecosystem



The information ecosystem remained a **critical and intensifying driver of tension** throughout the week. Mis/disinformation not only heightened insecurity but also shaped public reactions to it. Some examples include: fake news circulating around the establishment of shelters in Dbayeh and Beirut Downtown; an alleged LAF raid in Antelias to pursue an Iranian official; the rumored presence of Israeli soldiers in a church in Debel; and continued fake evacuation calls that reportedly triggered panic in Batroun, Tripoli, and Akkar. In addition, the interception of a missile over Kesserwan was initially perceived by some as a targeted attack, fueling fear, clash, and condemnation before the picture became clearer.

This week highlighted how quickly such narratives gain traction, as reflected in high levels of engagement around content related to large IDP shelters in Beirut and the withdrawal of accreditation of Iran's ambassador. By 27 March, criticism of the tone and accuracy of media coverage had itself become a major online narrative, with media increasingly blamed for amplifying tensions during a sensitive period. Taken together, these patterns indicate that the information environment is becoming more than an amplifier, **emerging as a primary arena** for the production and circulation of sectarian rhetoric, anti-IDP sentiment, and political mistrust.

TENSIONS DASHBOARD

■ Critical
 ■ Emerging
 ■ Watch

↑ increasing
 → stable
 ↓ decreasing

Driver	Status	Trend
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Perceptions around aid	■	→
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Perceptions around aid remained an **emerging** tension driver, with this week’s pressures **increasingly shaped by constraints on access and reach**. Recurrent attacks on bridges and the near-isolation of the SLR area, together with access-related challenges reported by aid providers in parts of the South, raised the risk that hard-to-reach communities would perceive themselves as neglected or deprioritized. This was reinforced by continued warnings about prolonged disruption of humanitarian access in border villages.

At the same time, continuing criticism of conditions in outdoor and informal shelters contributed to concerns over the adequacy and equity of assistance.

The continued targeting of paramedics and the cumulative impact on healthcare workers in the South also underscored the vulnerability of frontline responders and risked further weakening public confidence in the response environment. In contrast to previous weeks, when aid-related tensions were more focused on internal shelter issues, they are now increasingly centered on the ability of assistance to physically and safely reach affected populations. The main risk ahead is **that prolonged access constraints could increasingly be interpreted as a sign of unfairness**.

KEY ONLINE NARRATIVES

Online narratives during the week clustered around six main themes:

- 1. Anti-IDP rhetoric intensified** around the reported establishment of a large shelter in Karantina, with some narratives portraying it as a demographically threatening “camp”.
- 2. Panic-generating mis/disinformation around security incidents** spread widely, including rumors and fake evacuation warnings.
- 3. Political polarization deepened** around the withdrawal of accreditation of Iran’s ambassador, Lebanon’s engagement in the war, and debates over compensation for damages.
- 4. Backlash against the media grew**, with criticism of outlets for exaggerating tensions, downplaying solidarity, or fueling polarization.
- 5. Narratives increasingly reflected anxiety** about the direction of the conflict, including uncertainty around ceasefire prospects and concerns over wider regional escalation.
- 6. Growing concern over commodity and fuel prices increase**, combined with embassy advisories for foreign nationals to leave the country, fed a wider narrative of uncertainty and anticipatory panic.

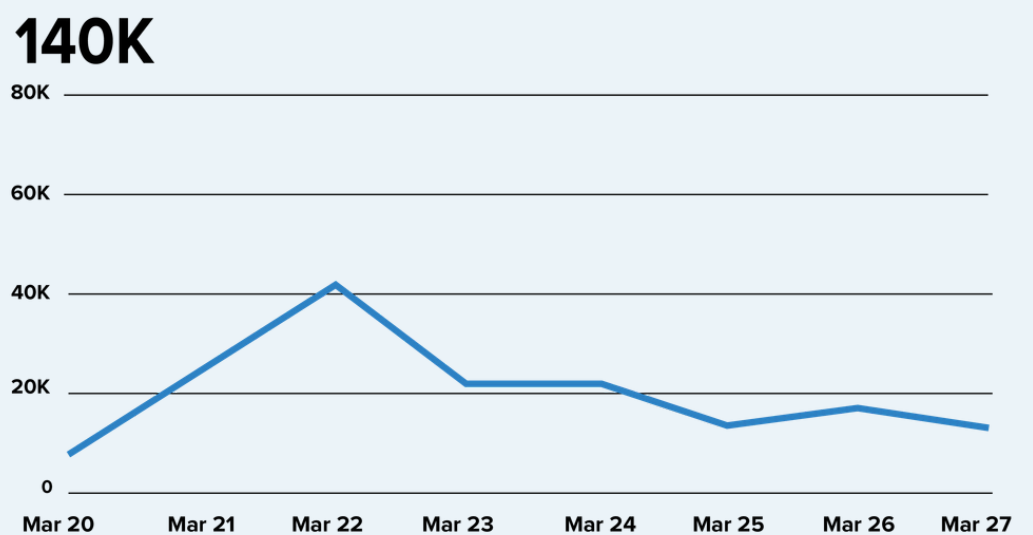


Figure 1: Engagement trend around anti-IDP rhetoric

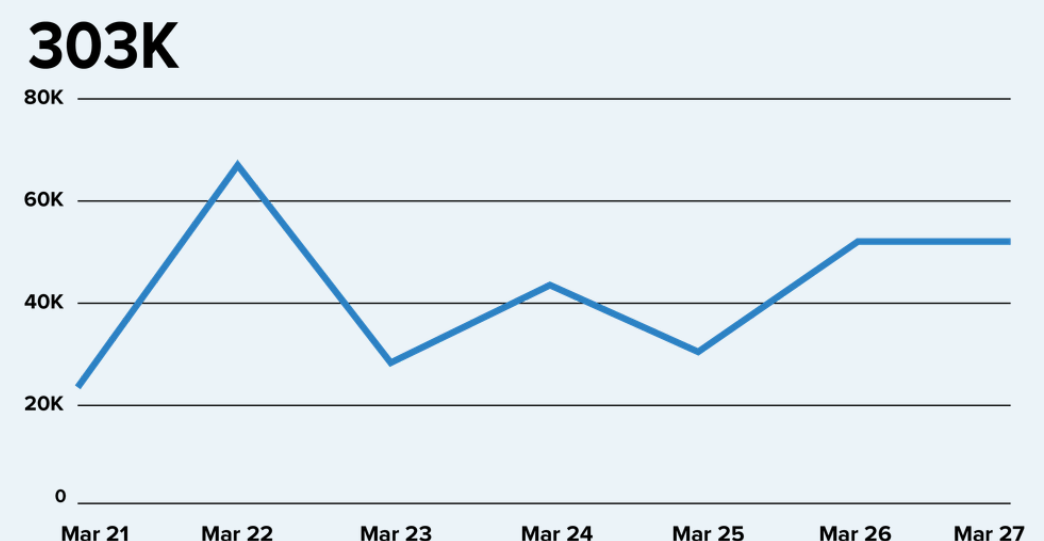


Figure 2: Engagement trend around media coverage perceived as fueling social tensions



KEY CONSIDERATIONS

The following considerations remain relevant and are further reinforced by this week's developments, highlighting priority areas for preventive and response efforts to help mitigate emerging tensions in the period ahead:

- **Ensure fair and inclusive management of collective shelters** by actively involving representatives of hosted communities, addressing grievances promptly through accessible feedback mechanisms, communicating clearly and mainstreaming cultural sensitivity.
- **Promote conflict-sensitive approaches** among national and local authorities, civil society, and service providers—including targeted training and guidance in both Arabic and English, delivered in accessible formats that do not disrupt ongoing emergency operations—particularly in areas experiencing rapid displacement and hosting pressures.
- **Prevent assessment fatigue** among displaced families by coordinating with other actors, minimizing repetitive data collection, and ensuring that assessments are necessary, respectful, and conflict-sensitive.
- **Support dialogue and inclusive engagement** between host communities and displaced populations in emerging tension hotspots, including mediation mechanisms and joint local initiatives that strengthen cooperation around shelter arrangements, services, and shared space
- **Ensure that communities are meaningfully consulted** and that their views inform any relocation decisions, promoting informed, voluntary, and context-appropriate choices.
- **Reinforce accountability and feedback mechanisms**, including accessible channels for communities to raise concerns and address perceptions of bias.
- **Ensure that cash assistance and aid delivery are implemented in a conflict-sensitive manner**, aligned with Government of Lebanon allocation protocols, and supported by clear communication to help prevent tensions among affected communities.
- **Enhance efforts to address mis/disinformation and inflammatory narratives**, including through timely clarification of contested information and support for media literacy, responsible public communication, and access to reliable fact-checking resources.
- **Promote balanced and responsible public messaging**, including support for content that highlights solidarity, coexistence, and positive community interactions, to help counter polarizing narratives.



WHAT TO WATCH

- **Growing pressure to restrict hosting of IDPs, including local screening practices, tighter controls on accommodation, pressure on landlords, and calls for relocation**
- **Escalation of politico-sectarian rhetoric around establishment of large IDP shelters**
- **Increased visible deployment of security forces in sensitive hosting areas and its potential effects on community perceptions and tensions**
- **Expanded restrictions and access challenges risking the isolation of communities in hard-to-reach areas and disrupting humanitarian aid delivery**
- **Further political developments following the withdrawal of accreditation of the Iranian Ambassador**
- **Increased backlash against negative role played by the media in stoking tensions**
- **Social tensions around increased commodities and fuel prices**
- **Risk of further expansion of displacement warnings to areas north of the Litani River**