

Real-Time Monitoring and Mapping of Tensions-related Incidents in Lebanon



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1. INTRODUCTION

Over the last three years, intra-Lebanese relations, which were previously very positive, have been deteriorating. In 2018, 4 percent of Lebanese cited negative relations between different communities. As of August 2021, 31 percent of respondents now report negative relations. Tension between Lebanese are now at similar level to Syrian-Lebanese relations and are increasingly resulting in various incidents.

Since December 2020, UNDP, Beirut-based Triangle and its partner COAR, have set up a comprehensive real-time monitoring and mapping of intra-Lebanese tensions through a predetermined analytical methodology. The data and analysis of this monitoring aims to enhance understanding on the contextual developments and ultimately inform national and local decisions on possible prevention and mitigation measures.

2. SUMMARY OF METHOD

The project uses a customized and overarching methodological framework to guide the monitoring, combining quantitative and qualitative data, analysis, and triangulation of sources.

- **Incident Mapping and Verification** - quantitative data is collected via a network of field coordinators, using open sources, proximity, and triangulation means. Biases in reporting were mitigated by cross-checking and triangulating between the data of field-based coordinators. Once data collection is completed, data is further verified.
- **Quantitative findings then guide qualitative analysis**, supported by iterative qualitative interviews, as well as snowball sampling to identify key informants who are able to provide insights on specific incidents and events.
- **Analytical framework:** The monitoring team uses a typology of tensions which identifies the predominant vectors of intra-Lebanese social tensions. The typology considered in this framework are the following types of tension: inter-sectarian tensions; intra-sectarian tensions; Pro- and Anti- 'Establishment' tensions; service provision tensions; Crime; and Geopolitical tensions. Each incident recorded by the team was categorized according to this typology (see Annex 1).

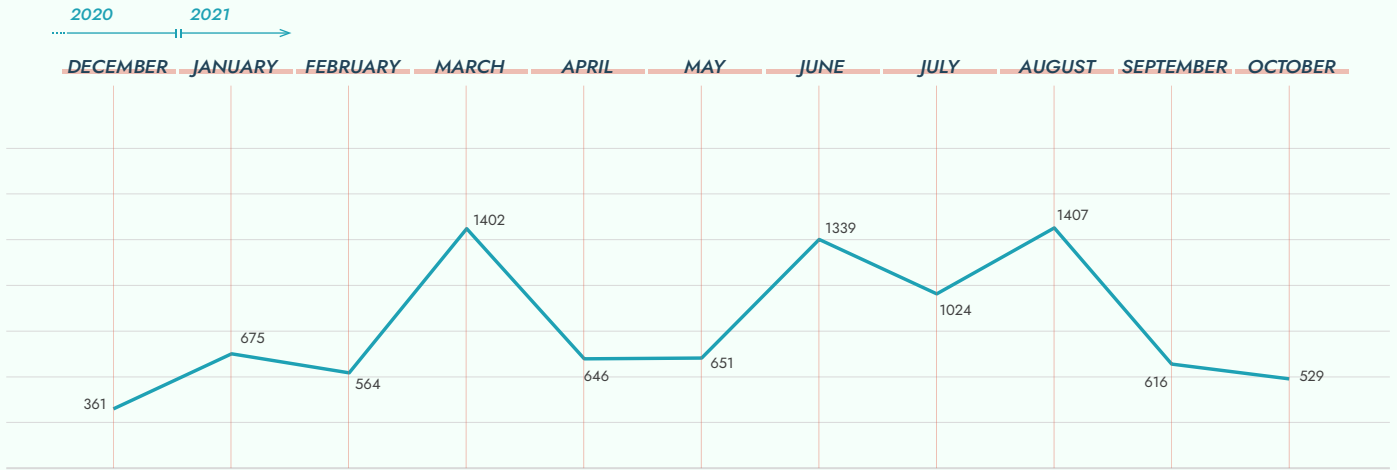
3. OVERVIEW OF INCIDENT DATA

A total of 9214 incidents were recorded during the reporting period from December 2020 to October 2021. These incidents are mainly driven by four main sources of tensions: insecurity and lack of rule of law, discontent with state institutions and political establishments, economic deterioration, and reduced provision of services.

The majority of incidents were classified as community *insecurity and lack of rule of law* (3105 incidents), followed by *discontent with state institutions and political establishments* (2431), *economic deterioration* (2359),

FIGURE 1
NUMBER OF RECORDED INCIDENTS PER MONTH

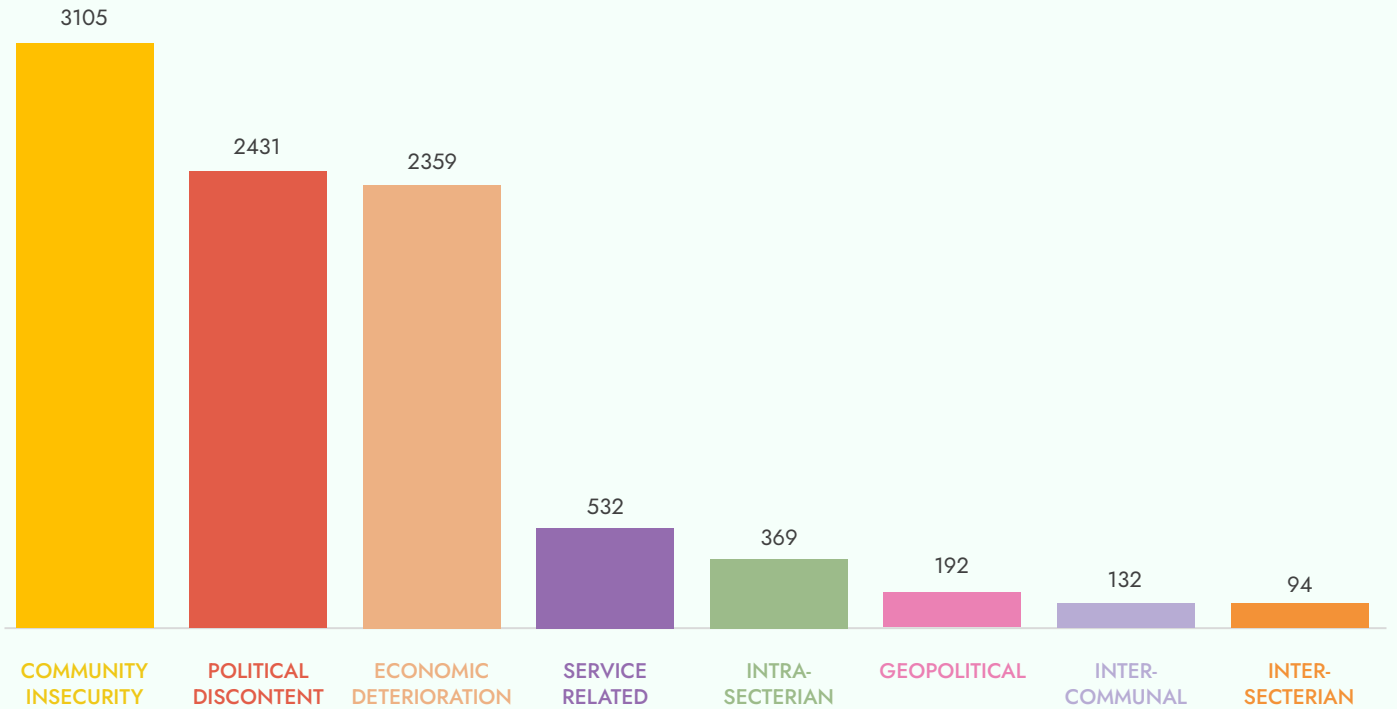
(DECEMBER 2020-OCTOBER 2021)



and *reduced provision of services* (532). The most prevalent incidents were roadblocks (2609), thefts (1407) and demonstrations (873). **Overall, tensions for almost a third of total incidents (33 percent) were between individuals or within and across communities, rather than directed to authorities.**

FIGURE 2
THEMES OF RECORDED INCIDENTS

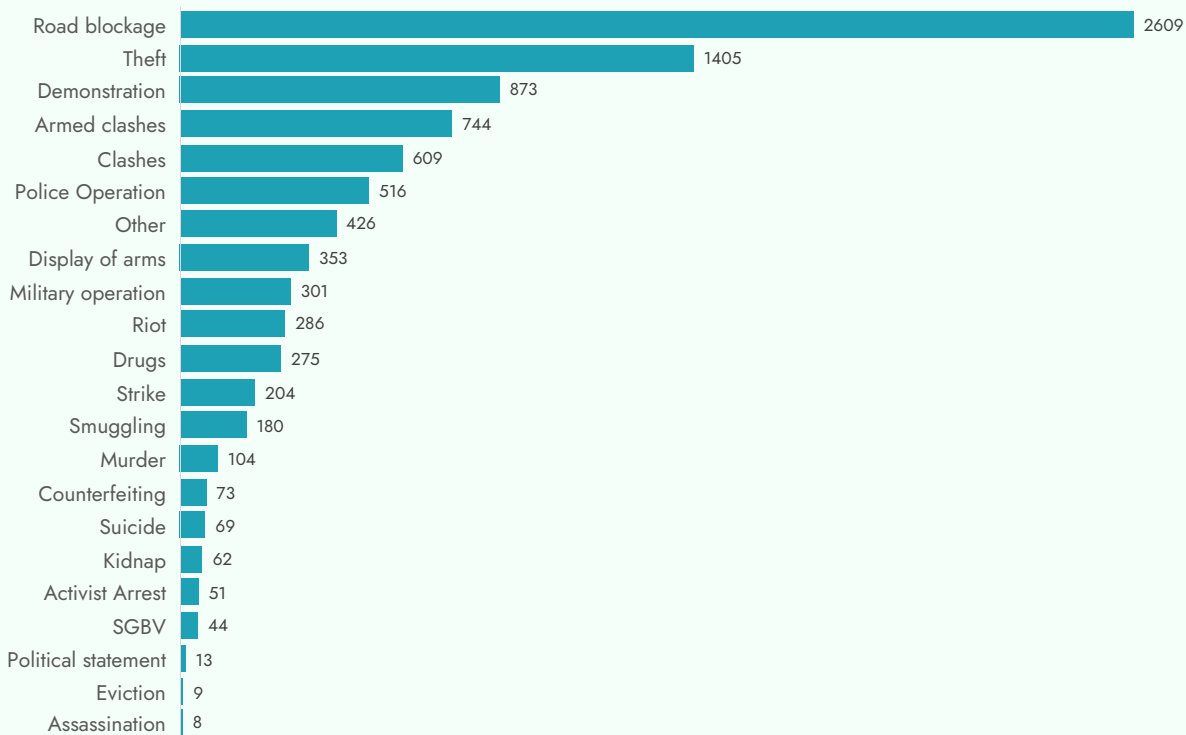
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Almost a quarter of incidents (2,273 out of 9,214) escalated into violence. Of these violent incidents, 1,353 involved clashes, 286 riots, 115 violent thefts, 104 murders and 62 kidnappings. The majority of such incidents were classified as under the typology insecurity and lack of rule of law. The use of arms was noticeable with 744 of the 1,353 clashes involving arms, and 353 incidents involved the display of arms (such as shooting in the air). Violent incidents peaked in June (345 incidents) and August (373 incidents), coinciding with the acute shortage of fuel with caused fuel-related clashes across the country.

The number of **incidents that resulted in casualties** peaked in January (247) and August (345). August also recorded a peak in the number of incidents that resulted in fatalities (67). Economic-related tensions resulted in the second-highest casualty rate, with almost all casualties recorded in January, coinciding with the extension of the pandemic lockdown measures.

FIGURE 3
TYPES OF RECORDED INCIDENTS
 (DECEMBER 2020-OCTOBER 2021)



Overall, Incidents peaked in January, March and during the summer due to specific political and economic events. These included the extension of the strict COVID-19 lockdown measures in January, the devaluation of the lira and lifting of subsidies on basic food commodities in March, and the progressive lifting of subsidies and shortages of basic items – mainly fuel - in June and August. Incidents during March, June, July, and August made up more than half of the incidents (5,175 out of a total 9214 incidents). Notably, discontent with state institutions

and political establishments was a major point of tension for incidents in March (909 out of a total 1402 incidents). Incidents related to the economic deterioration and the decreased provision of services peaked during the summer, following a continuous increase since the beginning of the year (see figure 3).

Road blockage was the most common type of incident recorded in 2021 (2,609). The number of road blockages was significantly higher than the rest of the incidents recorded. Notably, road blockage numbers were nearly double the number of theft incidents during the same time period (1,405).

4. ANALYSIS OF INCIDENT REPORTING

SUMMARY

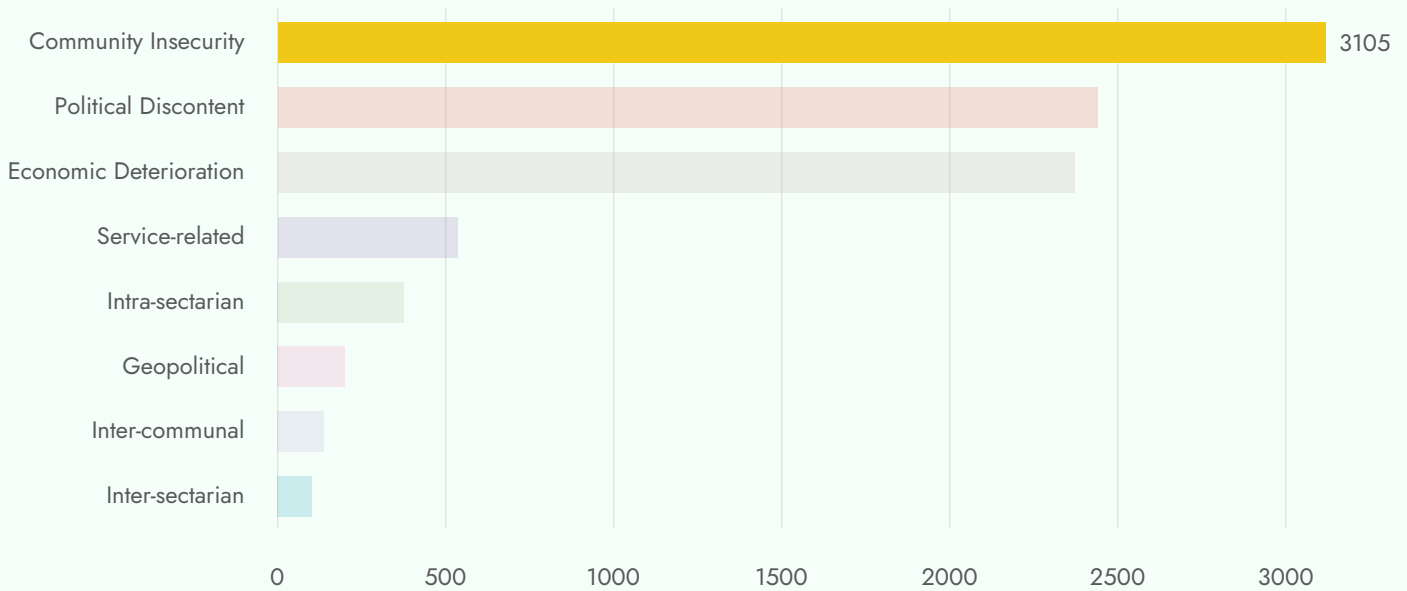
- **Community insecurity and lack of rule of law is the primary driver of tensions. Such incidents also have the highest propensity to violence.** Incidents include petty theft, vehicle theft, house robberies and the use of arms, creating fear and reducing trust in security agencies. Many communities have formed community watch groups to protect themselves where some are increasingly taking the shape of armed militia-like groups. Moreover, several communities have enforced restrictive measures such as curfews, especially against Syrian refugees.
- **The increasing propensity to violence is a significant risk to security and stability in Lebanon.** The ARK/UNDP Perception survey reveals that *some 57 percent of the population now consider that “violence is sometimes necessary, when your interests are threatened”*. A quarter of reported incidents were violent (2273 out of 9214), out of which 59 percent resulted in casualties, and 9 percent in fatalities. In March 2021, spikes of violent incidents were recorded as clashes took place between customers in supermarkets, and again in June, July, and August 2021 when clashes took place at petrol stations over access to fuel. Violent incidents related to lack of electricity were also recorded as protestors broke into power stations and clashes occurred between residents and generator owners. While such tensions and incidents declined noticeably in October as shortages of fuel and other basic items eased - the recorded incidents reflect an overall increasing propensity to violence.
- **Economic deterioration was the main driver for about one quarter of all incidents, mainly related to the lifting of fuel subsidies.** Economic-related tensions emerged in January 2021 as the Government of Lebanon put in place stricter COVID-19 lockdown measures which impacted the ability of the population to secure an income. Again, as of March 2021, the lack of access to basic commodities further exacerbated tensions within and between communities, especially in rural impoverished areas. The removal of subsidies also led to discriminatory measures against non-Lebanese, specifically Syrian refugees who were denied access to certain goods or supermarkets in several areas. The proliferation of a parallel black market resulted in hoarding and smuggling of subsidized goods. In a bid to curb this, police operations increased throughout the reporting period. In some communities, citizens took matters into their own hands in a new “Robin Hood” phenomenon, by stopping trucks and redistributing the goods to their communities.

- **Incidents related to discontent with state institutions and political establishment made up almost a third of all incidents and had the lowest propensity to violence.** Political discontent incidents mainly took the form of non-violent roadblocks and demonstrations. Three main points of tensions were associated to political discontent: deteriorating living standards, the exchange rates of the Lebanese Lira, and a general perception of lack of accountability by the government. Most of these incidents occurred in March, when the value of the local currency plunged to a then record low of LBP 15,000.
- **Service-related incidents accounted for only a small percentage of the total incidents, however, steadily increased throughout the reporting period.** Frequent and prolonged electricity cuts, caused by lack of access to fuel, was the main point of tension for service-related incidents, with spikes recorded in June, July, and August 2021. The lack of access to fuel also affected other service delivery such as healthcare, as hospitals struggled to provide treatment due to power cuts and shortages of medical items. Water provision was also impacted, including pumping and transportation, especially in southern communities. Critically, 14 percent of incidents escalated violently, developing into riots and clashes. This is concerning as service-related tensions are expected to continue to rise, coupled with a high propensity to violence.
- **The North, Mount Lebanon and South governorates were more affected by social tensions than other governorates.** The North governorate saw the highest concentration of incidents (2344 out of 9214 total incidents) and violent incidents were 83 percent more likely to occur than in Beirut. Of the North governorate's six districts, the majority of incidents (67 percent) took place in Tripoli, including three-quarters of the most violent. Mount Lebanon saw the second highest number of incidents recorded (1962 incidents out of 9214) across the country. The majority of these incidents (735 out of 1962) were concentrated in the Baabda district, mostly in Beirut's southern areas such as Bourj El-Brajneh, Chiyah, and Haret Hreik. The South governorate accounted for the third highest percentage of incidents (1197 incidents out of 9214) across Lebanon. The majority of incidents (816 out of 1197 incidents) took place in the district of Saida, with a high prevalence of violence.
- Moving forward, as the socio-economic situation continues to degrade, there is a high that intra-Lebanese tensions continues to rise, particularly at the community level.

4.1. COMMUNITY INSECURITY AND LACK OF RULE OF LAW

The majority of recorded incidents were classified as community insecurity and lack of rule of law. Such incidents accounted for 3105 out of a total 9214 incidents (34 percent). Such incidents peaked during the winter and again in April, accounting for approximately half of all incidents during these months. Although peaks in community insecurity have been observed, the number of incidents largely remained steady throughout the reporting period.

FIGURE 4
NUMBER OF RECORDED INCIDENTS UNDER COMMUNITY INSECURITY
 (DECEMBER 2020-OCTOBER 2021)



Thefts made up the majority of incidents at the community level (1398 incidents out of a total 3105). Concept-frequency analysis shows that 40 percent of thefts at community level were vehicle thefts, followed by petty thefts (25 percent) and house and shop robberies (13 percent). Items such as electric cables, manhole covers, and barbed-wire fencing related to 16 percent of thefts at the community level. These items - mostly stolen in the North governorate - are considered profitable because they can either be sold in US dollars or for its black-market rate equivalent in Lebanese Lira.

Community Insecurity incidents had the highest propensity to violence. Thirty-nine percent of incidents driven by community insecurity involved violence (903 incidents). These tensions also resulted in the highest percentage of casualties and fatalities across the year. About 14 percent of incidents driven by insecurity resulted in casualties, and five percent resulted in fatalities. Most of the year’s armed clashes were also driven by community insecurity, 298 out of a total of 744.

Almost eight percent of all thefts (115 out of 1398 incidents) were violent and committed at gun or knife point, some even leading to murder, showing the prevalence of arms at the community level. While violent thefts decreased throughout the year, halving by September, individuals are increasingly carrying weapons. The recorded incidents of someone displaying an arm increased steadily during the reporting period. A quarter of all violent incidents (209) driven by insecurity and lack of rule of law involved someone displaying an arm. Other incidents involving weapons took the form of armed clashes between individuals and were usually associated with personal disputes over

trivial matters such as road rage. Throughout the period, there were 298 armed clashes at the community level. The majority of such crimes driven by insecurity and lack of rule of law are aimed at fellow community members.

Sixty percent of insecurity incidents at community level took place between individuals and communities. The remaining 40 percent were directed against authorities. Statistical regression also showed that incidents directed at fellow community members were about four times more likely to be related to incidents classified under community insecurity. The growing number of crime and insecurity incidents across Lebanon is causing fear-based responses within communities. Heightened perception of lawlessness with little regard for upholding the rule of law within communities is further driving community insecurity incidents in a dangerous feedback loop.

Areas outside of Beirut had higher risk of witnessing incidents related to community insecurity. While the highest share of community insecurity incidents occurred in Mount Lebanon and the North (29 and 28 percent respectively) and Baalbek-Hermel (12 percent), incidents that escalated to violence were more likely to occur in communities outside the capital city. Statistical regression shows that communities in the North governorate were almost two times more likely to witness violent incidents, compared to communities in Beirut.

FIGURE 5
TYPES OF RECORDED INCIDENTS UNDER COMMUNITY INSECURITY
 (DECEMBER 2020-OCTOBER 2021)

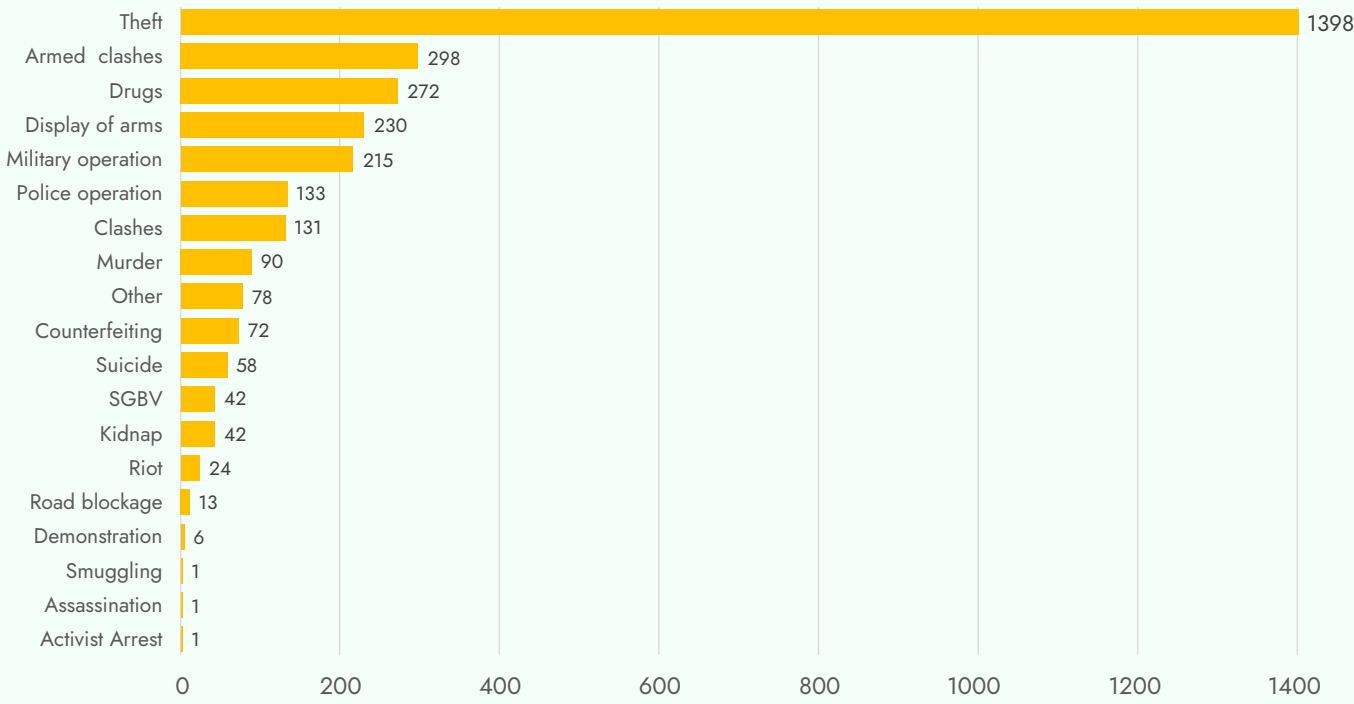
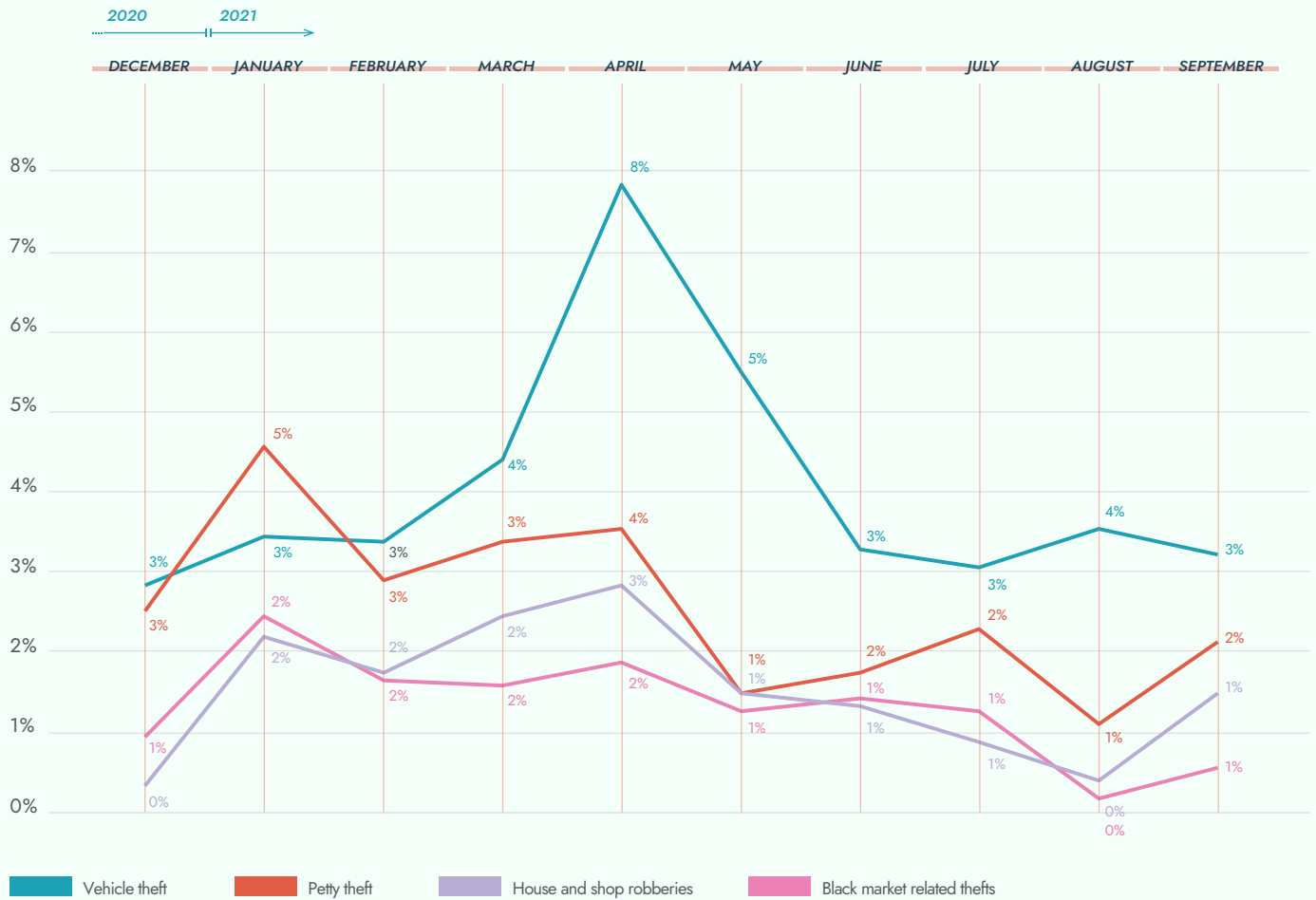


FIGURE 6
CONCEPT FREQUENCY: TENSIONS RELATED COMMUNITY INSECURITY THEFTS
 (DECEMBER 2020-OCTOBER 2021)



Community watch groups are forming as a result of the perceived ineffectiveness of security services

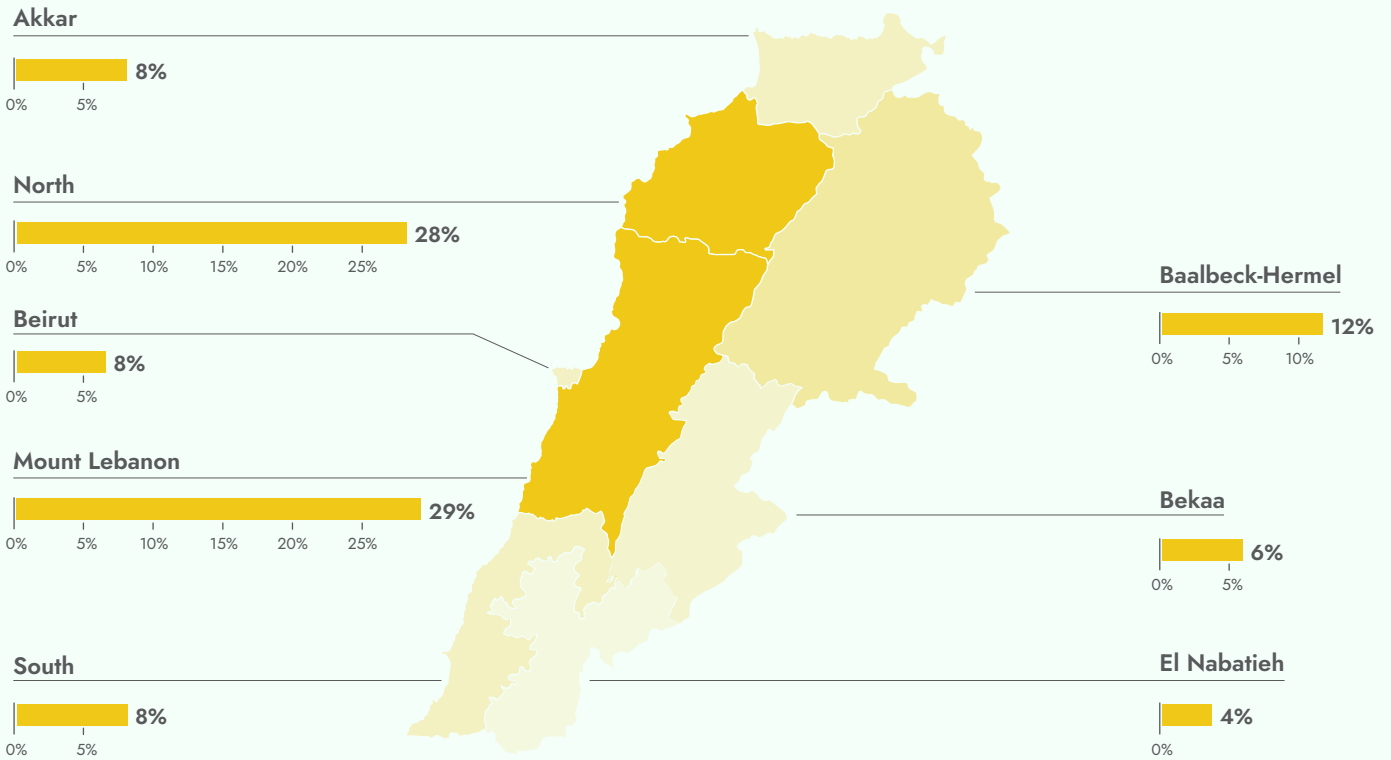
- some of which are armed. Qualitative verification shows that these incidents came as a response to dire challenges within communities such as fuel queues, rising thefts, and increased perception of weakening state apparatuses. In total, 45 incidents related to vigilantism and community watch groups were recorded. State institutions are increasingly lacking the financial resources to provide policing services and maintain law and order - especially in rural areas. Army also saw higher desertion rates, estimated in the thousands, due to the financial and fuel crisis which affected the standard of living of personnel. At the beginning of October, official reports indicated that 289 members and four officers with Internal Security Forces had fled their jobs because of the financial crisis and the crash of the Lebanese pound that left their salaries with little value¹. Many governmental personnel stopped reporting to duty due to the inability to purchase fuel to travel to work². They also face new challenges such as

1 https://www.mtv.com.lb/en/news/live_feed/1222381/bassam-mawlawi-to-mtv-289-members-and-4-officers-of-the-security-forces-have-fled-due-to-the-economic-and-living-situation-and-because-the-conditions-of-service-are-difficult

2 <https://today.lorientlejour.com/article/1277984/soldiers-are-increasingly-deserting-the-lebanese-army.html>

black-market traders, riots, the vandalization of governmental institutions and smuggling. Some communities are therefore taking matters into their own hands through existing tribal and clan relations in certain areas.

FIGURE 7
GEOGRAPHIC DISTRIBUTION OF COMMUNITY INSECURITY INCIDENTS
(DECEMBER 2020-OCTOBER 2021)



Forward-looking Analysis



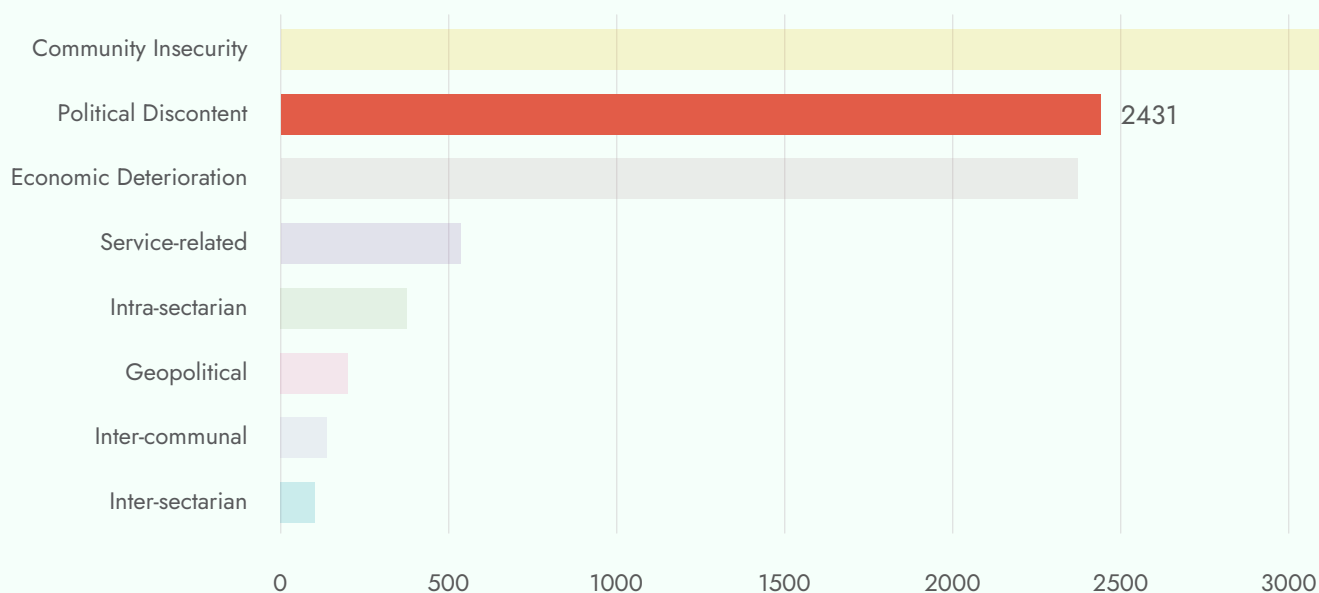
The desperate and opportunistic nature of many of these incidents reflects the population’s increasing destitution. The high number of thefts also reflect the increasing incapacity of security services, including municipal police, to control or deal with rising crime levels. As the crisis reverberates across the country, state institutions are increasingly lacking the required resources to provide services and to fulfil their side of the social contract. Consequently, to fill the vacuum created by the absence of security services, communities are finding ways to protect themselves.

These structures may increasingly start to mimic local armed militias as they take up arms under the claim of protecting their communities. This poses several risks. Firstly, communities may become almost completely controlled or governed by these groups, thereby eliminating the role and hegemony of official services. Secondly, as arms proliferate and communities come under the control of armed watch groups, competition over power and territory control may rise, leading to recurrent armed confrontations and to the marginalization of both communities and certain individuals and groups.

Moving forward, with a deteriorating economic situation, individuals will likely continue to resort to alternative and mostly illegal means of coping. Petty theft, thefts of vehicles and robberies of houses, shops and establishments are all expected to continue. As security services become increasingly incapable of curbing rising crime levels, trust between citizens and the state also risks diminishing, therefore contributing to an overall atmosphere of insecurity.

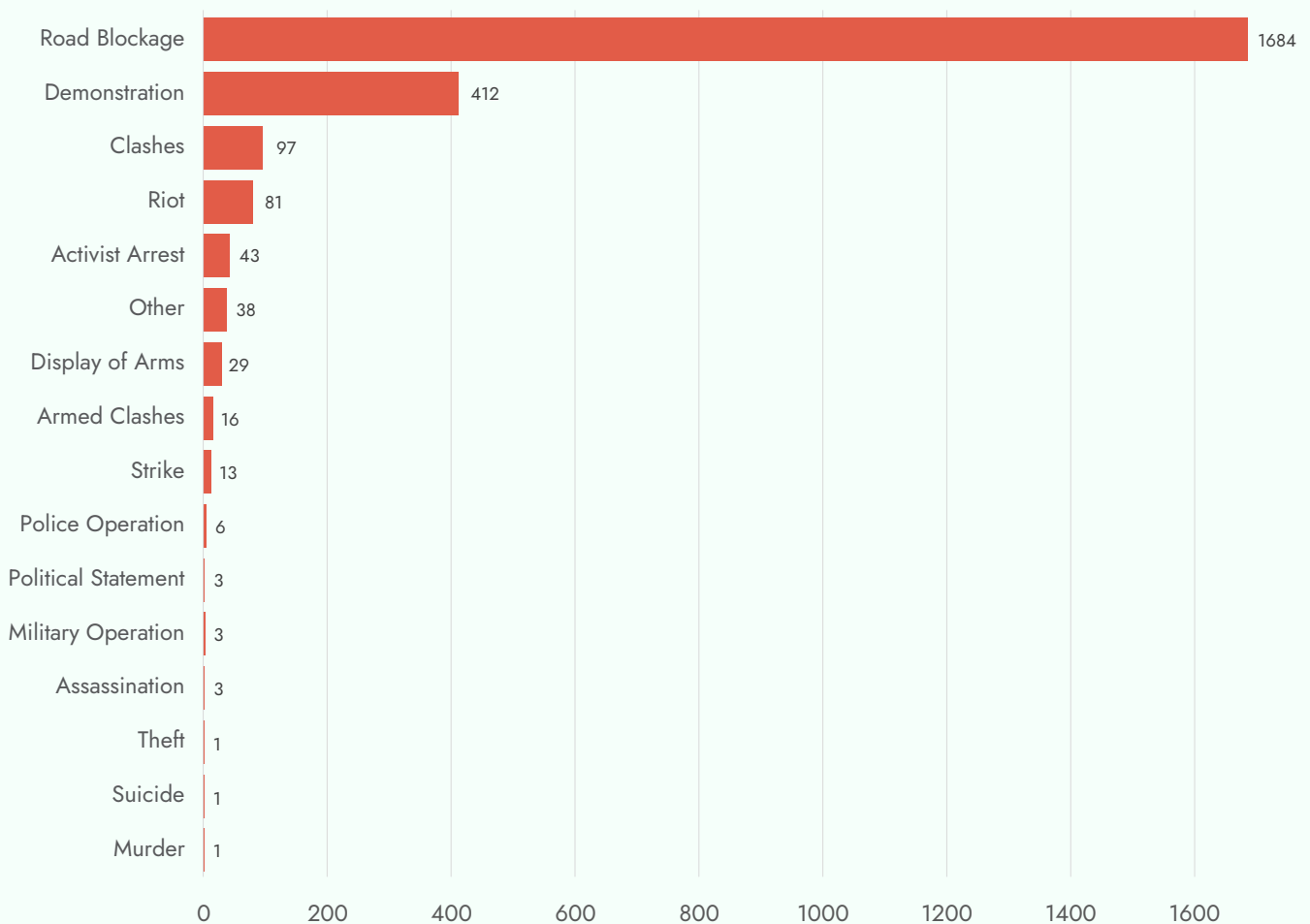
Incidents classified under discontent with state institutions and political establishment (political discontent) made up almost a third of all incidents (2431 incidents out of 9214). Concept-frequency analysis shows that tensions were associated with three main concepts: the worsening living standards (related to 67 percent of incidents), followed by the exchange rate (41 percent) and the Beirut Port explosion (11 percent). Other minor points of tension included arrests, banks, and more generally the government. Roadblocks and demonstrations made up the majority of incidents (2096 incidents out of a total 2431) directed to the political establishment and state institutions. Statistical regression shows that political discontent incidents were around 50 percent more likely to occur in Beirut than in other areas of the country. As the capital of the country, Beirut has always enjoyed a diverse political, religious, and civil society landscape, rendering it the centre of social action and movements, as well as popular mobilization.

FIGURE 8
NUMBER OF RECORDED INCIDENTS UNDER DISCONTENT
WITH STATE INSTITUTIONS AND POLITICAL ESTABLISHMENTS
 (DECEMBER 2020-OCTOBER 2021)



Deteriorating living standards was the most prevalent point of tension for incidents classified under discontent with state institutions and political establishments. Concurrent with the lifting of subsidies, protests and roadblocks against the deteriorating living standards were more prevalent during the summer months. Qualitative data shows several factors exacerbated the situation: the unaffordability and acute shortage of basic commodities, rising poverty levels without any social safety net, and the general absence of state services. The population largely attributed declining living standards to failures of the existing political system and its persistent inability to implement reforms. Anger of the populace was almost entirely (98 percent) directed towards state institutions and political establishments.

FIGURE 9
TYPES OF RECORDED INCIDENTS UNDER DISCONTENT WITH STATE INSTITUTIONS AND POLITICAL ESTABLISHMENTS
(DECEMBER 2020-OCTOBER 2021)

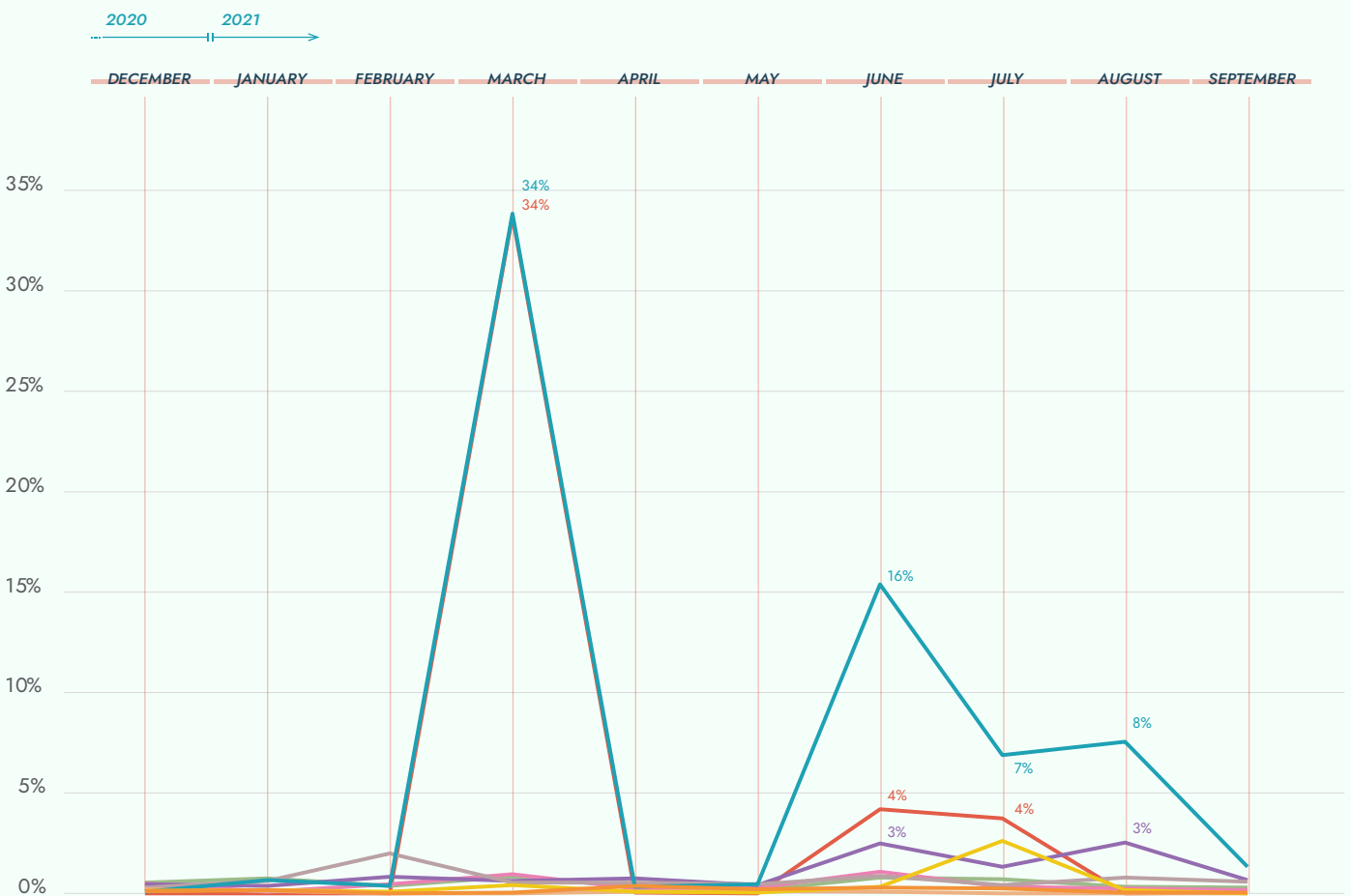


Overall, most incidents expressing political discontent (79 percent) occurred in March when the value of the lira plunged to a record low. Concept-frequency analysis shows almost half of the incidents (42 percent) classified under discontent with state institutions and political establishments were related to the exchange rate.

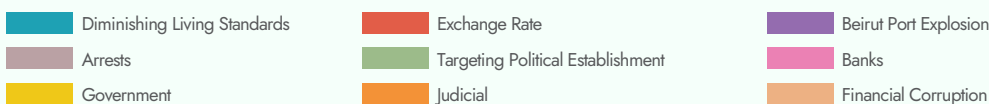
Country-wide protests and roadblocks were related to the government’s perceived inability to halt the local currency’s depreciation which has now lost more than 90 percent of its value. Also, several currency rates allowed for the proliferation of a black market in which suppliers’ exploitation of civilians weakened the prospects of consumer protection. Concept-frequency analysis also shows banks were related to 4 percent of all political discontent incidents after banking institutions-imposed measures and informal capital controls which restricted people’s access to

FIGURE 10
CONCEPT FREQUENCY: TENSIONS RELATED TO POLITICAL DISCONTENT

(DECEMBER 2020-OCTOBER 2021)



Diminishing Living Std.	0%	1%	0%	34%	0%	0%	16%	7%	8%	1%
Exchange Rate	0%	0%	0%	34%	0%	0%	4%	4%	0%	0%
Beirut Port Explosion	0%	0%	1%	1%	1%	0%	3%	1%	3%	1%
Arrests	0%	1%	2%	1%	1%	0%	1%	0%	1%	1%
Targeting Establishment	1%	1%	0%	1%	0%	0%	1%	1%	0%	0%
Banks	1%	0%	0%	1%	0%	0%	1%	0%	0%	0%
Government	0%	0%	0%	0%	0%	0%	0%	3%	0%	0%
Judicial	0%	0%	0%	0%	0%	0%	0%	0%	0%	0%
Financial Corruption	0%	0%	0%	0%	0%	0%	0%	0%	0%	0%



deposits. Banks were generally perceived as being part of the 'existing system' and closely linked to the political elite and political parties' patronage networks.

A general lack of accountability strengthened existing grievances and created new ones. Concept-frequency analysis shows 11 percent of incidents classified under discontent with state institutions and political establishments were related to the Beirut Port explosions. Other points of tensions included lost and diverted public funds, corruption, as well as prominent public and judicial scandals. Qualitative data shows a general lack of accountability for major events exacerbated tensions between the populace and the state. It is also lead to an absence of trust in accountability mechanisms and rendered the perception of the judicial system as highly politicized. Incidents of this type of increased splits between different groups.

Incidents driven by discontent with state institutions and political establishments had the lowest propensity to violence. Out of all violent incidents during this reporting period (2273 incidents in total), only 10 percent (223 incidents) were classified under discontent with state institutions and political establishments. In fact, statistics show that the likelihood of political discontent incidents - such as protests - to escalate to violence was statistically insignificant. The number of casualties and fatalities that arose from political discontent incidents were also minimal. Tensions driven by discontent with state institutions and political establishments rarely took place between individuals and communities. In contrast, violent actions related to economic deterioration and community insecurity mainly took place between individuals and communities, such as clashes at petrol stations or violent thefts. Despite this low propensity to violence, there was a strong correlation between demonstrations, roadblocks, and activists' arrests in incidents classified under discontent with the political establishment.

Forward-looking analysis



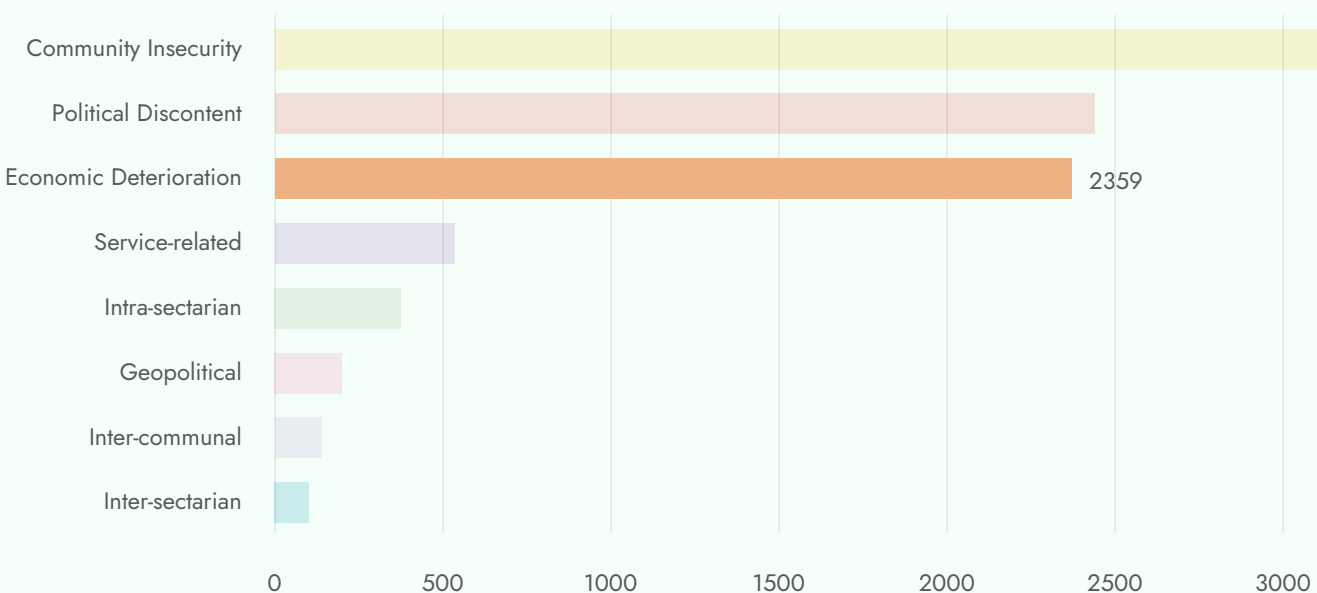
Data from this reporting period shows that inter-sectarian and intra-sectarian incidents were minimal, representing only one and four percent respectively of the total number of incidents. Despite the low numbers, certain incidents – such as Tayouneh and Maghdouche – critically escalated sectarian tensions. These incidents exemplified the speed at which incidents can take on a sectarian form, bringing to the forefront the unresolved residues and grievances of the civil war. Although incidents of inter- or intra-sectarian nature were minimal, the isolated incidents have resulted in a wide effect on tensions. The occurrence of such incidents is likely to increase in the upcoming period.

Worryingly, the sectarian violence could fill the void left by the state services' inability to curb mounting violence because of the economic deterioration. This in turn, could leave space for vigilantism and social and sectarian barricading. Indeed, it is estimated that thousands of soldiers have deserted the army due to their loss of purchasing power, high cost of living, and devaluation of their salary. With no clear roadmap for economic recovery, there are fears that state security services could disintegrate.

4.3. ECONOMIC DETERIORATION

A total of 2,359 incidents were classified under economic deterioration, constituting about 26 percent of total incidents. Economic incidents were related to subsidies, labour, smuggling and lockdown measures. While incidents related to insecurity and lack of rule law remain the highest recorded incidents, qualitative data indicates that economic deterioration remains the single most prevalent crosscutting typology that influences in a direct and indirect manner the proliferation of social tensions. Increased poverty is one of the main factors related to the surge in criminal activities such as theft and robberies, contributing to widespread communal insecurity. Similarly, the deteriorating economic situation was a key point of tension, resulting in the popular anger towards the current establishment and exacerbated discontent with the political elite.

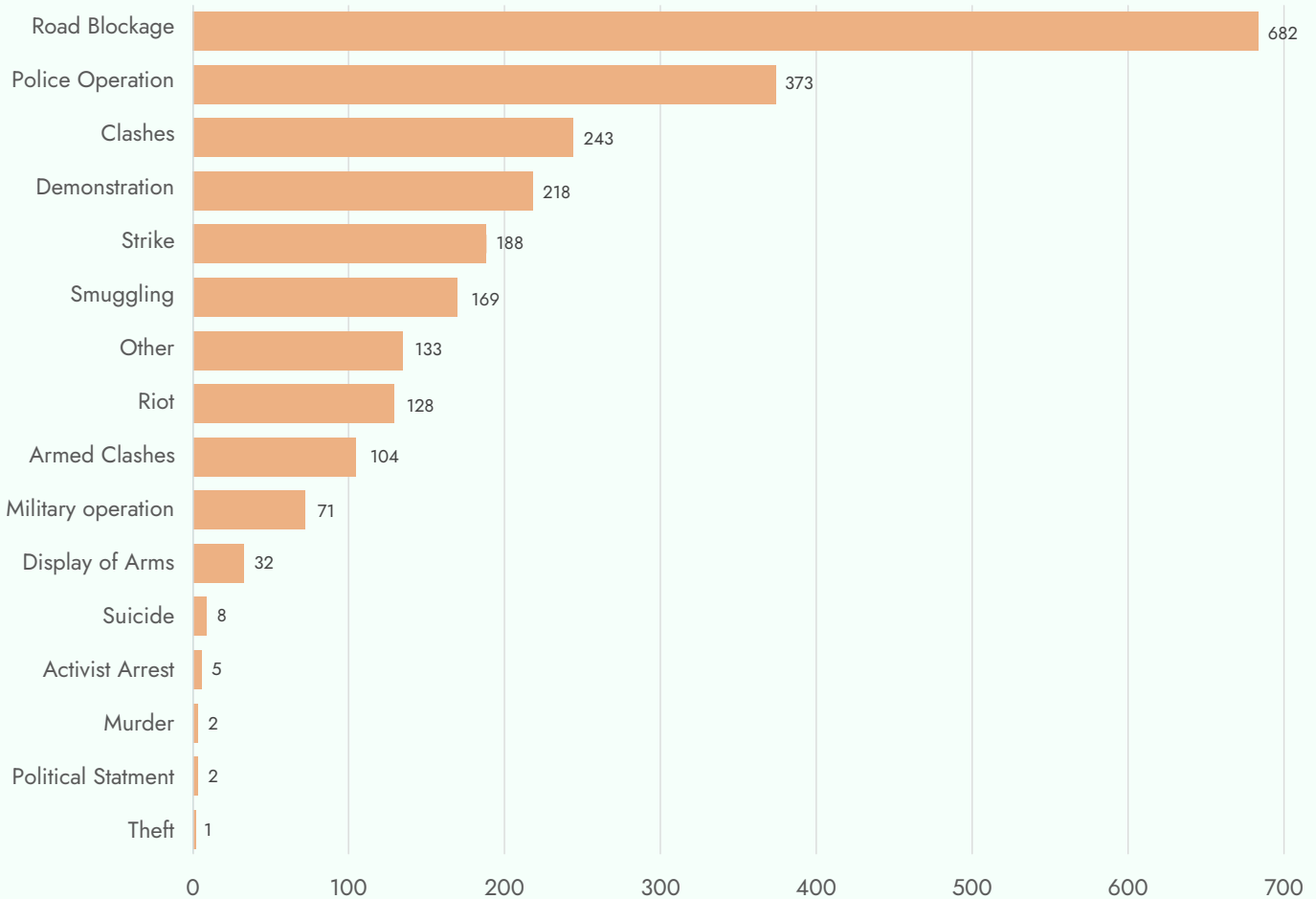
FIGURE 11
ECONOMIC DETERIORATION
 (DECEMBER 2020-OCTOBER 2021)



The lifting of subsidies was the main point of tension and related to 66 percent of all economic-related incidents. From the onset of the reporting period, demonstrations, and roadblocks (900 out of 2359 economic related incidents) took place to protest the lifting of subsidies. Concept-frequency analysis shows incidents related to subsidies increased steadily throughout the year. They reached a peak in June 2021, concurring with the gradual lifting of subsidies on basic food and non-food items. Qualitative data shows popular anger was fuelled due to the subsequent hyperinflation in prices. By August 2021, the price of a large pack of bread, set at 1,500 LBP before the economic crisis, had climbed to 4,250 LBP. Overall, the prices of food items had increased by nearly 300 percent year-on-year³. In a similar trend, the price of medication had more than tripled by August 2021, when the

³ Trading Economics, 'Lebanon Food Inflation', August 2021. Available at: <https://tradingeconomics.com/lebanon/food-inflation>

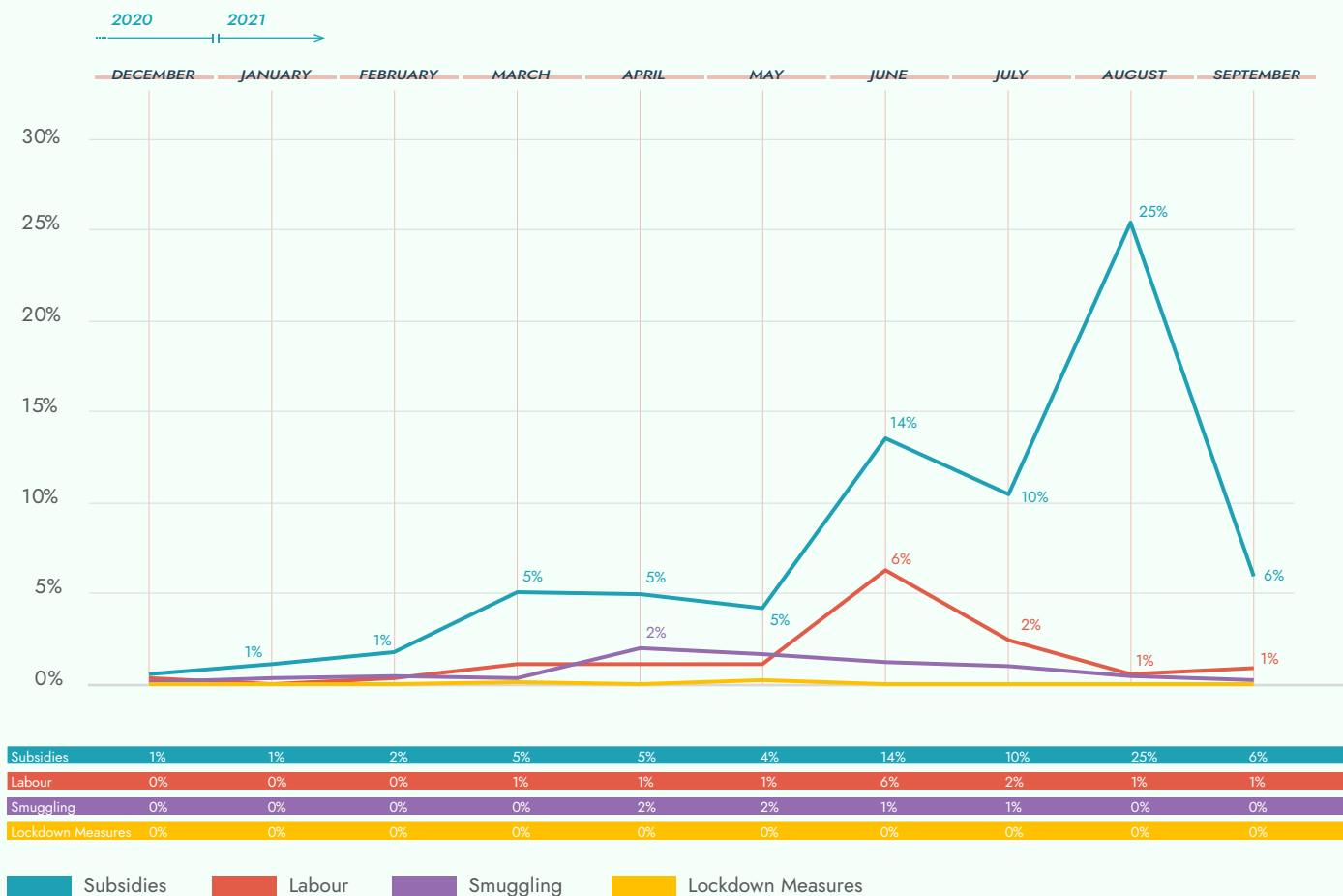
FIGURE 12
TYPES OF RECORDED INCIDENTS UNDER ECONOMIC DETERIORATION
 (DECEMBER 2020-OCTOBER 2021)



Ministry of Health stopped subsidizing medicine priced at less than 12,000 LBP. The absence of a social safety net and an acute shortage of basic items further aggravated the economic situation. Economic-related incidents come amidst a staggering rise in poverty levels as, according to the World Bank, more than half of the population is likely below the national poverty line⁴. Qualitative data shows rising destitution levels are pushing individuals to resort to alternative means of coping, many of which are illegal such as theft, murder, and other crimes. A parallel black market has flourished amid the breakdown of the system, which individuals and communities have been forced to resort to for the most basic items. Meanwhile, the state’s increased ineffectiveness has allowed certain groups to benefit from this exploitative black market which became the sole alternative source of basic items.

⁴ World Bank Group, ‘Lebanon Sinking (To the Top 3)’, Spring 2021. Available at: <https://documents1.worldbank.org/curated/en/394741622469174252/pdf/Lebanon-Economic-Monitor-Lebanon-Sinking-to-the-Top-3.pdf>

FIGURE 13
CONCEPT FREQUENCY: TENSION RELATED TO ECONOMIC DETERIORATION
 (DECEMBER 2020-OCTOBER 2021)



Fuel was the main point of tension associated to subsidies, accounting for the majority of incidents (66 percent). Concept-frequency analysis shows that 1595 incidents out of a total 1716 subsidy-related incidents was associated with fuel. Fuel-related incidents reached a first peak in June 2021 when prices of fuel, gas, and diesel increased by 30 percent following the government’s decision to subsidise fuel imports at an exchange rate of 3,900 LBP/USD, rather than the original 1,500 LBP rate⁵. A second ultimate peak occurred in August 2021 when fuel prices increased by 65 percent, following the central bank’s refusal to finance subsidies and to open credits for imported items⁶. As of September 2021, fuel costs alone (40 litres) exceeded the set value of the NFI-SMEB (Non-Food Items’ Survival and Minimum Expenditure Basket) and represented 61 percent of the national minimum monthly wage of 675,000 LBP, which remains unchanged⁷. Shortages of fuel, and its increased prices, created

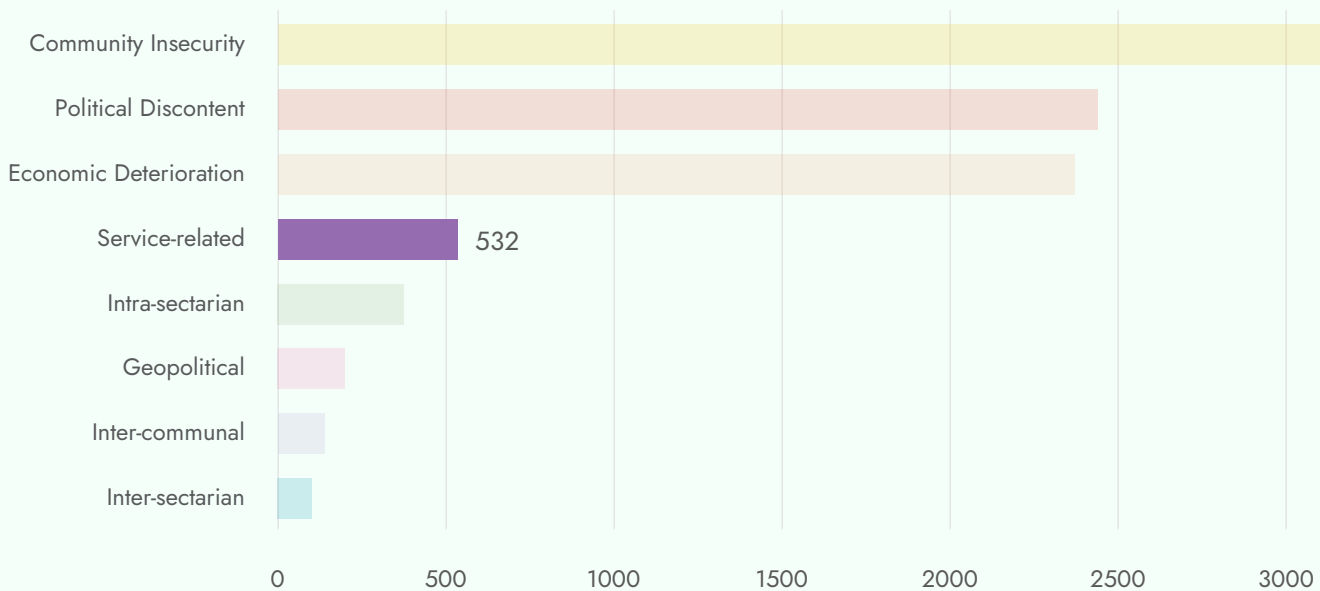
⁵ IPT, ‘Fuel Prices’, June 2021. Available at: <https://www.iptgroup.com.lb/ipt/en/our-stations/fuel-prices>

⁶ Ibid.

⁷ Lebanon Food Security Sector, ‘Emergency Response Plan’, July 2021.

Available at: <https://fscluster.org/lebanon/document/emergency-response-plan-erp-food>

FIGURE 14
NUMBER OF RECORDED INCIDENTS UNDER
LACK OF ACCESS TO OR INADEQUATE QUALITY OF SERVICES
 (DECEMBER 2020-OCTOBER 2021)



long queues at petrol stations, and affected people’s mobility and access to their livelihoods. Other services - such as electricity, water, health, internet, and telecommunications – were also affected (see *Lack of Access to and Inadequate Quality of Services* section). Critically, acute fuel shortages were points of tensions for clashes at petrol stations over car refuelling (304 incidents, 87 of which were armed), specifically between June and September 2021 when the fuel crisis reached its height, causing six fatalities and 137 injuries.

A black market proliferated due to shortages of fuel, medicines, and other subsidised items. As a result, some suppliers hoarded and smuggled these items to make more money, resulting in further shortages, long queues at petrol stations and clashes between customers. Police operations (373 incidents out of a total 2359) increased March onwards as state security services and the consumer protection department raided food, medicine, fuel, and cement suppliers suspected of hoarding subsidized items, with some selling the goods at higher prices than those set by the government. In several recorded incidents, protestors broke into supermarkets and petrol stations, accusing the owners and staff of hoarding subsidized items. Incidents often turned violent as protestors clashed with the owners and staff.

Statistical regression showed economic-related incidents were more than six times more likely to involve a police operation than other incident types. It comes as authorities tried to control the black market that made essential goods unaffordable for much of the population. Smuggling was also prevalent, with concept-frequency analysis showing it to be related to 8 percent of all economic-related incidents. Qualitative data analysis shows subsidized items – such as fuel, oil, and sugar - were smuggled across the border to Syria where higher profit

margins could be made. The most notable incident related to hoarding was Tleil's explosion in Akkar. In a series of civilian-led raids targeting hoarders of fuel and other subsidised items, a group of protestors found a large quantity of fuel stored in a tanker in Tleil area. Security forces confiscated the fuel and distributed it to the residents. But as residents gathered to get a share of the fuel, someone reportedly sparked a lighter, causing the tanker to explode, killing 33 civilians, and injuring more than 80. The incident exacerbated tensions on multiple levels, including between civilians and suppliers (perceiving them as hoarders), as well as between the populace and the current establishment perceived as the cause of the economic crisis. The Tleil incident had a significant impact on the political and sectarian arenas, creating tensions between political parties of different sects.

Incidents involving citizens confiscating supply trucks and diverting the resources to their communities – dubbed Robin Hood activism – proliferated as a result of acute shortages of subsidized goods. Concept-frequency analysis shows truck-stopping was related to a fifth of all economic incidents (20 percent), mostly in Akkar and the North governorate. Qualitative data shows residents of various towns prevented the trucks – almost always carrying subsidized items such as fuel and baby milk - from continuing to their destination. During the incidents, citizens argued that their communities were suffering from severe shortages and that they deserved the goods. In a new “Robin Hood” phenomenon, in some instances protestors hijacked the trucks and redistributed the transported goods to their communities. In a similar tactic, the LAF also started redistributing goods seized from hoarders and smugglers to community members in need. While the confiscation of trucks started as spontaneous acts, worryingly these incidents increasingly became organized and structured, especially in the North and Akkar governorates.

Labour disputes were related to 15 percent of all incidents classified under economic deterioration, according to concept-frequency analysis. Qualitative verification shows that these disputes were mostly related to employees demanding an adjustment of their wages and announcing strikes until their demands were met. People also protested the extension of Covid-19 lockdown measures which left many workers unable to secure an income and the state's failure to provide any meaningful support, despite growing levels of destitution.

Incidents related to economic deterioration were more likely to occur in areas outside of the capital, mostly manifesting among community members. Residents in the South were about twice as likely to witness incident related to economic deterioration, in comparison to residents living in the capital city. Similarly, these incidents were 75 percent more likely to occur in the North, and 54 percent more likely in Bekaa. Two main factors help explain this finding. Firstly, the capital has enjoyed an abundance of developmental efforts in comparison to other governorates throughout the years following the civil war. This created an upper middle-class that has been able to sustain through the current crisis better than others. Secondly, many residents of the Bekaa, North and South governorates commute to the capital on a daily basis for work and were therefore more impacted by the fuel crisis than residents of Beirut. Notably, economic-related incidents were 61 percent more likely to be directed to fellow community members, rather than to authorities. Clashes, some of which were armed, were prevalent at the community level. During the reporting period there were 243 clashes and 104 armed clashes classified under economic deterioration.

4.4. LACK OF ACCESS TO OR INADEQUATE QUALITY OF SERVICES

Forward looking analysis

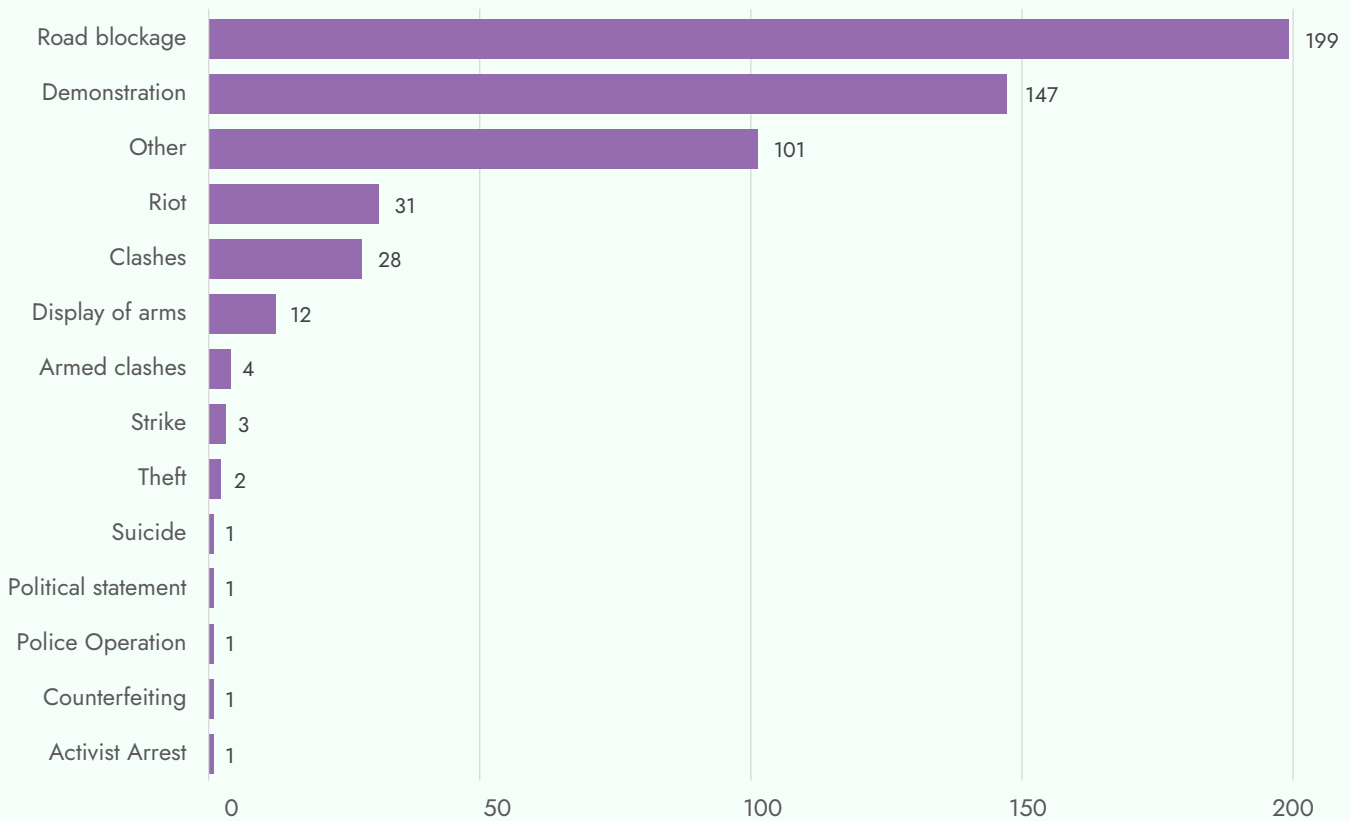


Economic-related incidents show that resource scarcity risks escalating tensions from an individual to a community level, especially in the most deprived areas. It also risks developing into sectarian tensions between adjacent communities, specifically those with unresolved underlying tensions and historical grievances. With the lifting of subsidies, commodities are becoming less scarce. However, an evident surge in theft has manifested across all areas in Lebanon. In some instances, local authorities - or residents of areas affected with similar crimes - have wrongfully accused foreigners. Moving forward, as the socio-economic situation continues to deteriorate, economic-related incidents and tensions are expected to rise, risking aggravating negative intra-communal tensions further through general atmospheres of insecurity and lack of trust of 'outsiders.' This situation is coupled by the inability of security services to curb the mounting theft-related incidents and other types of crimes, leaving communities to fend for themselves.

Incidents classified under lack of access to, and inadequate quality of services increased dramatically during the reporting period. Roadblocks and demonstrations characterized the majority of all service-related incidents (346 incidents out of a total 532). These were almost all directed to the authorities (on average 89 percent). While only 17 service-related incidents of this type were recorded in December 2020, they had increased by ten-fold in August 2021. Incidents related to lack of service provision accounted for only 6 percent of total incidents, yet their peaks were significant: 36 incidents in June, 108 incidents in July, and 177 incidents in August. The main concepts associated to service-related incidents were electricity, health, water, and communication. Service-related incidents were more prevalent areas outside of Beirut. They were more than two times more likely to occur in the South than in the capital city. Similarly, service-related incidents were 79 percent more likely to occur in the North. This portrays the inequality in access to services across the country.

Frequent and prolonged electricity cuts, caused by shortages of fuel, was the main point of tension for service-related incidents. Concept-frequency analysis shows electricity was related to more than half of all service incidents (277 out of total 532). Qualitative data showed that citizens took to the streets, blocking roads to protest against electricity blackouts which lasted more than 72 hours in some areas such as Tripoli and Akkar. Electricity outages impacted all facets of life and while electricity generators are available, only a minority of the population can afford using them. While it is an illegal practice, generators are commonly used by those who can afford it to fill gaps in the state's coverage. A monthly 5-ampere subscription — only enough to power simple electrical items such as lights and fans — now costs around 1 million LBP in certain areas. Other families have been completely cut off from the grid, receiving no state electricity.

FIGURE 15
TYPES OF RECORDED INCIDENTS UNDER
LACK OF ACCESS TO OR INADEQUATE QUALITY OF SERVICES
 (DECEMBER 2020-OCTOBER 2021)



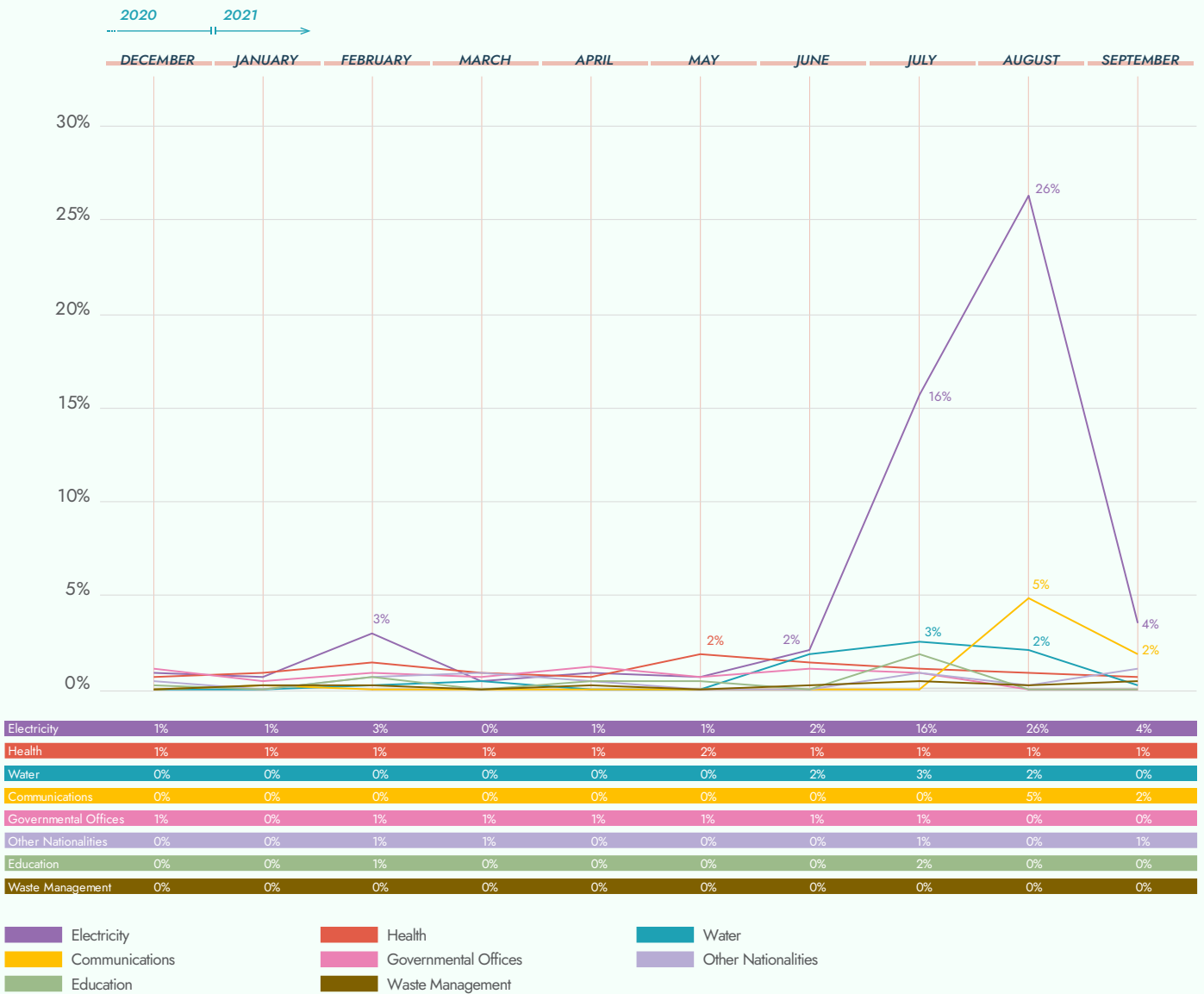
Fuel shortages also affected the provision and quality of other services, especially water. Concept-frequency analysis shows 8 percent of all service incidents were related to water, amid reports that about three quarters of the population (71 percent) was at immediate risk of losing access to safe supply. Notably, 37 percent of these water-related incidents were concentrated in the Nabatieh governorate. Fuel shortages also affected other services – mainly communications and government offices – which were each associated to 8 percent of the total service-related incidents.

Decreased access to health services and their deteriorating quality was the second main point of service-related tensions. Concept-frequency analysis shows that health was related to 10 percent of all service incidents. Qualitative data shows that these incidents were characterized by demonstrations in front of hospitals to demand better treatment. Doctors and hospital employees at several hospitals also protested for an increase in their wages and benefits.

Almost 14 percent of all service-related incidents escalated violently (75 incidents out of a total 532). Qualitative data shows that these violent incidents were mostly related to the decreased provision of electricity. Such incidents were characterized mostly by riots (26 incidents). Civilians broke into various power stations and

forcibly switched on the power to supply their areas with electricity; 17 incidents were recorded in the Mount Lebanon governorate, 3 in Akkar, 3 in the North; with the rest scattered among other governorates. Service-related incidents also accounted for 27 clashes - of which four were armed - mainly between generator owners and civilians over subscription fees. Other clashes occurred between civilians and hospital staff over inadequate healthcare services and the refusal of some hospitals to admit patients.

FIGURE 16
CONCEPT FREQUENCY:
TENSION RELATED TO LACK OF ACCESS TO OR INADEQUATE QUALITY OF SERVICES
 (DECEMBER 2020-OCTOBER 2021).



5. PROPENSITY TO VIOLENCE

A key risk highlighted in this report is the degree to which the propensity to violence within individual incidents increased steadily throughout the reporting period. A quarter of all incidents escalated to violence (2273 incidents out of a total 9214). Violent incidents peaked in June (247) and again in August (345) due to multiple factors, generally related to specific events.

Statistical regression shows violence affected communities outside of Beirut more. Violent incidents were more than twice as likely to occur in the North and 40 per cent more likely in the South, than in Beirut. Out of the four main tension drivers, community insecurity incidents had the highest propensity to violence. Yet, overall, incidents related to the economic deterioration recorded the highest casualty and fatality rate, with 17 percent of incidents resulting in casualty, and two percent resulting in fatalities.

Propensity to violence is expected to further increase in the upcoming period. The high number of armed clashes — prevalent at the community level — shows the prevalence of arms across Lebanese society. With 31.9 percent of Lebanese civilians thought to possess firearms,⁸ these arms could increasingly be used in individual and communal disputes. So far, communal disputes have been promptly contained; however, sectarian, and political rifts risk escalating to violent disputes with the upcoming election.

TABLE 1 - MULTIVARIABLE ANALYSIS OF VIOLENT INCIDENTS

Variable	p	aOR	95% CI
Governorate (vs Beirut*)	<0.001		
Mount Lebanon	<0.001	0.63	0.51 - 0.79
North	<0.001	1.83	1.50 - 2.23
South	0.441	0.92	0.73 - 1.14
Bekaa	0.297	0.89	0.71 - 1.11
Community insecurity	<0.001	0.21	0.17 - 0.25
Economic and labor	<0.001	0.12	0.10 - 0.14
Existing vs alternative systems support	<0.001	0.05	0.04 - 0.07
Service-related	<0.001	0.08	0.06 - 0.10

⁸ Aron Karp, "Estimating Global Civilian-Held Firearms Numbers," Small Arms Survey (2018), <http://www.smallarmssurvey.org/fileadmin/docs/T-Briefing-Papers/SAS-BP-Civilian-Firearms-Numbers.pdf>

Overall, 39 percent of violent incidents in Lebanon were related to community insecurity, 24 percent to economic deterioration, and 10 percent to political discontent. The most prevalent violent incidents included armed clashes (707 incidents), general clashes (589), displays of arm (256), riots (256), violent thefts (100), murders (94) and kidnappings (55). As the situation continues to deteriorate, the number of these violent incidents are expected to continue to increase.

FIGURE 17
RECORDED VIOLENT INCIDENTS BY DRIVER
(DECEMBER 2020-OCTOBER 2021)

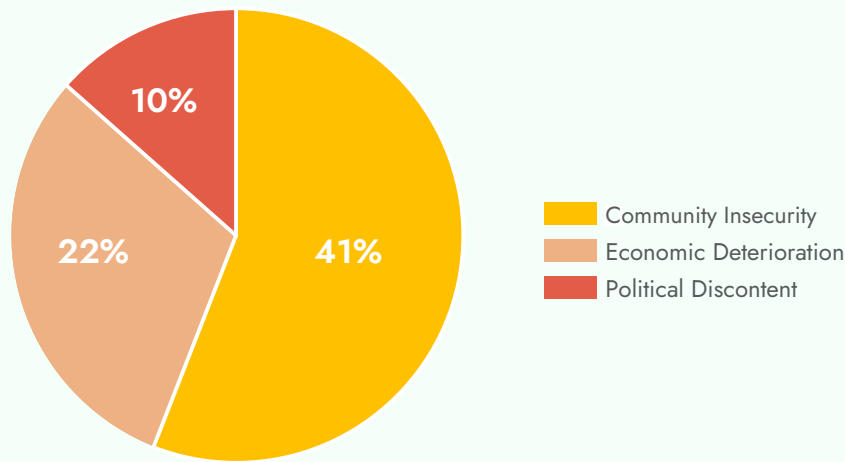
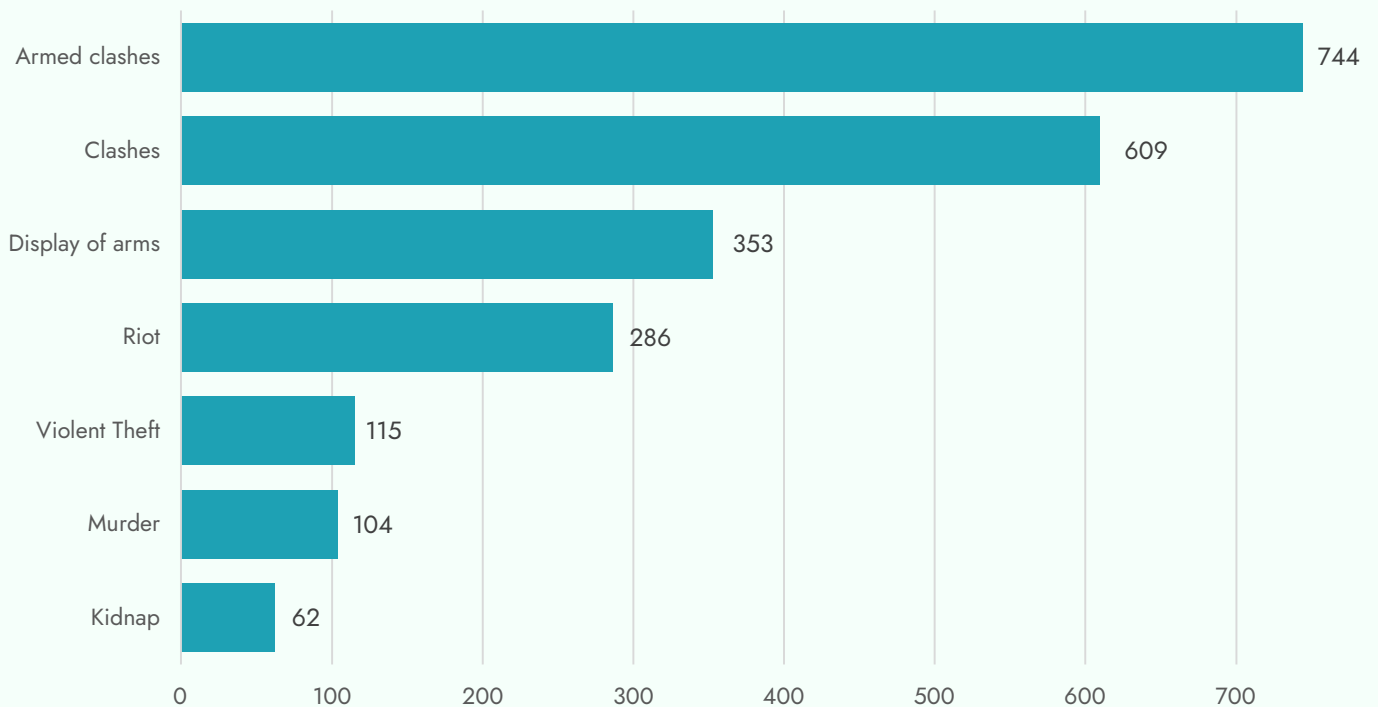


FIGURE 18
NUMBER AND TYPE OF RECORDED VIOLENT INCIDENTS
(DECEMBER 2020-OCTOBER 2021)



ANNEX

APPROACH & METHODOLOGY

1. OBJECTIVES

UNDP contracted a consortium led by Triangle and COAR to set up a comprehensive real-time monitoring and mapping of intra-Lebanese tensions to inform national and local decisions on possible prevention and mitigation measures, as well as providing suggestions for in depth academic research themes.

In particular, the consortium was required to:

- provide the team with a monitoring system able to identify, explain, categorise, and map trends of intra-Lebanese tensions;
- identify opportunities for thematic deep dives/research on strategic arising trends that needs further analysis;
- provide a comprehensive understanding on some key identified issues (Quantitative & Qualitative); and
- deduct from this analysis recommendations on conflict-sensitive approaches and mitigation options to be shared with field and programmatic actors, as well as informing stakeholders at a strategic level.

2. METHODOLOGY

Triangle and COAR in close collaboration with UNDP designed a customized and overarching methodological framework to guide the design and implementation of tensions monitoring in Lebanon. The Social Tensions Monitoring of Incidents project uses a robust bespoke approach, combining quantitative and qualitative data, analysis, and triangulation of sources.

A. INCIDENT MAPPING AND VERIFICATION APPROACH

Quantitative data was collected via a network of ten field coordinators, located throughout Lebanon, who use open sources, proximity, and triangulation means. Biases in reporting were mitigated by cross-checking and triangulating between the data of field-based coordinators. Data was collected daily but analysed monthly. Quantitative findings then guide qualitative analysis, which employs the grounded theory approach to sociocultural research. Grounded theory relies on iterative qualitative interviews, as well as snowball sampling (when appropriate) to identify further key informants who are able to provide insights on specific incidents and events. For the purpose of this report, semi-structured interviews were conducted with 10 key informants to gauge insights that would complement the data and offer a deeper comprehension of the findings. Interviews were conducted with economic, political, health and security experts.

VERIFICATION SYSTEM

Once data collection is completed, field coordinators and desk-based research analysts assigned each collected incident a verification code from 1-3, where each number represents a form of verification (See Table 1). Incidents were confirmed with more than one form of verification.

TABLE 2: VERIFICATION CODE

VERIFICATION SCORE	DEFINITION
1	Field coordinator has confirmed the incident through proximity [proximity means witnessing either the incident itself, or the aftermath of the incident].
2	Triangulation: Incident confirmed by at least three independent sources.
3	Incident confirmed through open sources .

B. ANALYTICAL FRAMEWORK

Given the current Lebanese context, UNDP recognised the need to critically examine the precise definition of ‘social tensions’. Previously, there has been a focus on understanding social tensions in Lebanon from the lens inter-sectarian relations and relations between Lebanese and refugee populations (both Syrian and Palestinian). However, due to the political and economic crisis which has unfolded since October 2019, social dynamics in Lebanon are changing, creating new vectors and drivers of social tensions. During this project the monitoring team, comprised of UNDP, Triangle and COAR, has defined and categorized these new multiple vectors of social tension, through a Typology of Tension.

TABLE 2: TYPOLOGY OF TENSION

VECTOR	DEFINITION	EXAMPLE
Inter-Sectarian Tensions	Conflict between sects.	Conflict or confrontational political demonstrations between two political parties of different sects; major disputes or incidents between individuals or families from different sects.
Economic Deterioration	Conflict related to economic deterioration and labour disputes	Roadblock or confrontational political demonstration related to economic and financial policies such as lifting of subsidies, worsening living conditions or labour dispute over closure of businesses.
Intra-Sectarian Tensions	Conflict within sects.	Political party supporters attacking protesters from their own community, activists protesting political parties. Horizontal: tensions within the sect such as clashes between two different Christian or Druze political parties
Discontent with Political Establishment	Conflict resulting from anger/resentment against the state, state institutions and other symbols of central authority including banks.	Violence against the LAF; attacks on banks. Horizontal: clashes between different factions of the military, or between powerbrokers inside of a formal institution

Service-related Tensions	Conflict related to competition over service provision and resource allocation.	Individuals competing over resources, especially expected in suburban and rural areas; people competing over water and land rights, or the power of municipalities; importers fighting over contracts for certain goods; individuals fighting over their place in the queue at a petrol station; service-based protests such as waste management
Community Insecurity	Conflict with roots in organised or petty crime.	Ransom, robbery, murder, rape
Geopolitics	Regional developments and conflict which cause groups of people to align themselves to regional power balance. These may intersect with sectarian tensions but have their origins in conflict or other developments outside of Lebanon.	Regional tensions between various players such as Iran, Turkey, Israel, Gulf, West; peaks in violence with roots in religion and beliefs, international policies (ex. US sanctions on various political figures), creation of proxy groups in Lebanon

C. VALIDITY AND CONCEPT FREQUENCY ANALYSIS

Naturally, there can be considerable overlap between different typologies within a single incident. Care is taken to disaggregate different components of individual incidents, as relevant, and analysts categorize incidents based on what is the dominant typology at play. The typology of each incident was originally categorized by the recording field monitor or desk-based researcher, based on their assessment of the most prevailing typology. However, the categorizations of new incidents were reviewed by a team of experts on a biweekly basis for cross-checking purposes.

Incidents were also coded using a concept frequency system for further analysis. Primary codes include services, anti-establishment, economic-related, subsidies, theft, and violence. Within each code, a set of related keywords is identified, and these are searched within incident descriptions to create new coding classifications. These codes were used in data analysis for the purposes of exploring dynamics not covered specifically by the typologies (such as violence), or as a cross-checking measure to ensure that incidents that demonstrate multiple interlinked dynamics are adequately incorporated into data analysis.

D. STATISTICAL DATA ANALYSIS

Quantitative data was treated and processed using research and data processing software. For the bivariate analysis, percentages were compared between categorical variables using the Chi-square test (cross-tabulation). Multiple logistic regressions were conducted, taking each of the four typologies and the presence/absence of violent incidents as dependent variables. Covariates that showed a p-value less than 0.25 in the bivariate analysis were taken as independent ones in the multivariable models. P<0.05 was considered statistically significant.

E. LIMITATIONS AND CONSTRAINTS

Our results cannot infer causality since the study is cross-sectional in nature. A residual confounding bias is possible since not all factors associated with the main vectors and drivers of conflict and with the violent incidents were taken into consideration in this study. Although the sample size was sufficient, the numbers of incidents in each governorate was acceptable for some variables but low for others, therefore, results at geographic level have a higher margin of error.

