



**MIGRANT WORKER VULNERABILITY**

**BASELINE ASSESSMENT REPORT**

**BEIRUT, LEBANON**

**MAY – JULY 2020**

## OVERVIEW

On 4<sup>th</sup> August 2020, a large explosion occurred at the port of Beirut, Lebanon, injuring more than 5,000 individuals and causing over 150 deaths. The humanitarian impact of this explosion, which occurred amid an economic crisis and the ongoing global COVID-19 pandemic, is multi-layered, demanding and urgent.

Prior to the explosion migrant workers in Beirut have tended to be an overlooked population group. Between May and July of 2020, IOM initiated a Migrant Worker Needs & Vulnerability Assessment to understand the impact of the 2019 economic crisis and the 2020 health pandemic, on the protection, social, economic, financial and health situation of migrants living in Lebanon. This analysis uses recent data on migrant vulnerability to outline underlying COVID-19 related issues encountered by migrant workers in Beirut, prior to the explosion. To date, a total of 734 migrant workers were assessed, of which, 297 were assessed in Beirut, defining the geographical scope of this analysis. It forms the most recent baseline information on the basic needs and vulnerabilities to better understand how and where needs existed before the explosion to assess which vulnerabilities may have been exacerbated a cross Beirut as a result of the explosion.

**NOTE: These interviews were conducted remotely by IOM staff (assessments took place within the COVID-19 national lockdown measures) and thus this report may present perspectives of those registered with the Embassies and willing to partake in interviews. As a result, this is a not a representative but an indicative sample.**

## MIGRANT PROFILES

Of the 297 surveyed migrants reportedly from the Governorate of Beirut, 95 per cent of the respondents did not receive any form of assistance from humanitarian organizations. This indicates that the surveyed migrant workers do not fall under the typical humanitarian caseload. However, due to COVID-19 and the recent explosion, their needs and vulnerabilities are likely to be acutely affected. Particularly, when considering other factors such as sex, country of origin, employment, family status, dependents at country of origin, and possession of passport, such indicators can give insight into how the vulnerabilities and needs of migrants in Beirut have been further impacted by the explosion.

### SEX



**FEMALE**  
49%



**MALE**  
51%

### AVERAGE NUMBER OF INDIVIDUALS LIVING IN THE SAME HOUSE IN BEIRUT



5 for female  
migrant  
workers



6 for male  
migrant  
workers

### LEGAL DOCUMENTS

**25%**

of all surveyed  
migrants **did not**  
have legal  
documents

**58%**

of all surveyed  
migrants **did not**  
have their passports  
with them

### EMPLOYMENT STATUS

**74%**

Total  
Unemployment

**35%**

Unemployed  
female migrants

**39%**

Unemployed  
male migrants

### RECEIVED HUMANITARIAN ASSISTANCE

**95%**

of all surveyed migrants  
**did not receive any**  
humanitarian assistance

### SUPPORT NETWORK

**70%**

of all surveyed  
migrants **had**  
dependents in  
their home  
country

**84%**

of all surveyed  
migrants **were**  
alone

### COUNTRY OF ORIGIN

Country of Origin	Female	Male	Total
Bangladesh	83	143	214
Ethiopia	50	2	52
Sri Lanka	10	5	15
Nigeria	2		2
Nepal	1		1
Sudan		1	1

### LEGAL STATUS

Legal Document	Female	Male	Total
Passport	51	74	125
No legal documentation	48	25	73
Passport with employer	20	39	59
Temporary certificate issued by embassy	22	19	41
Work Permit	14	16	30
Residency permit	1	5	6

# Migrant Worker Vulnerability Baseline Assessment Report Beirut, May – July 2020

## REPORTED VULNERABILITIES PER CADASTER (PRIOR TO EXPLOSION)

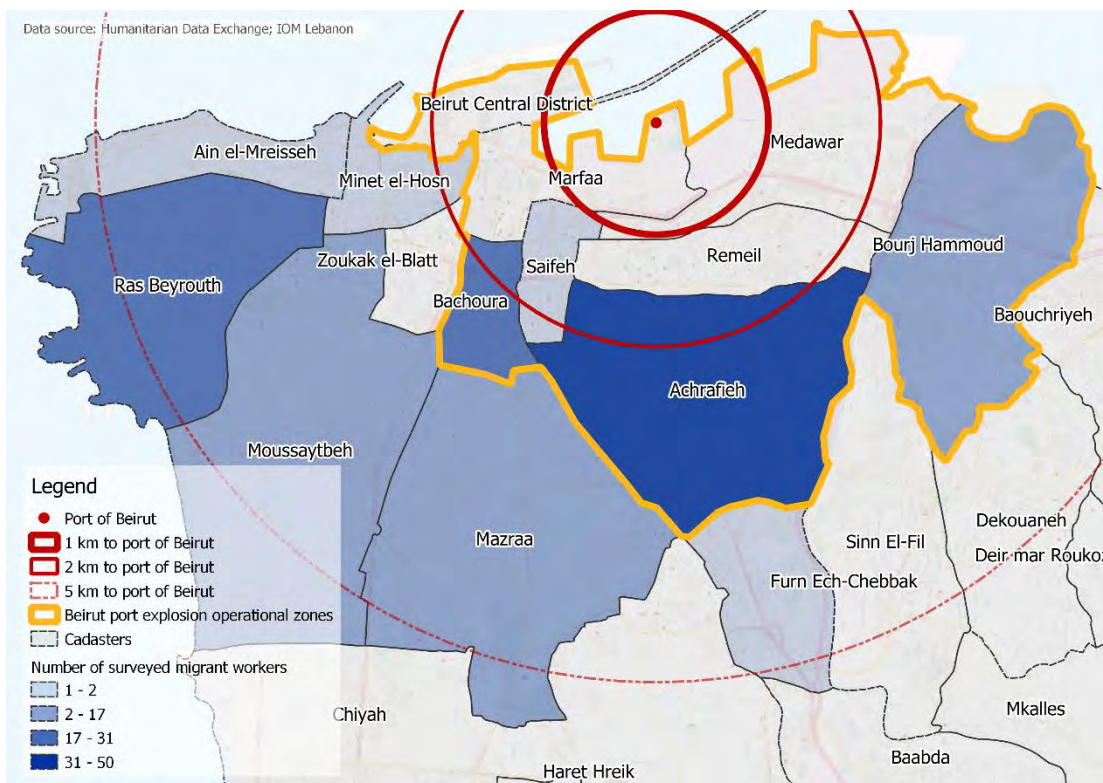
The map and information below shows the locations of migrant workers as reported by them prior to the explosion. Of the 297 total assessed respondents, 135 were in the Beirut Governorate, and 87 of those whom IOM has collected data on were reported to be within the “OCHA operational zone.” The “OCHA operational zone” boundaries were developed to help coordinate and collaborate relief efforts of the Beirut explosion at the operational level (UNDAC). The remainder of this report, however, looks at information for all 297 respondents that IOM surveyed in Beirut.

- Of the migrant workers that reported their location in the “OCHA operational zone”, 58 per cent reported to live in Achrafieh (23% female and 34% male), 30 per cent were in Bachoura (16% female and 14% male), 10 per cent in Bourj Hammond (2% female and 8% male) and 2 per cent in Saifeh (1% each).
- In terms of country of origin, in Achrafieh, 40 per cent of the migrant worker population reported they were from Bangladesh, 11 per cent from Ethiopia and 6 per cent from Sri Lanka. In Bachoura, 22 per cent of the migrant worker population are from Bangladesh, 7 per cent are from Ethiopia and 1 per cent is from Sudan.
- Across the four municipalities, 84 per cent of migrant workers reported they were not aware of services available in their area. The zones with the highest number of respondents were in Achrafieh (44) and Bachoura (22), of which 84 per cent and 91 per cent responded they were not aware of services in their area, respectively.
- In total, 15 per cent of respondents in Achrafieh, and 22 per cent of respondents in Bourj Hammoud, consider the quality of their non-drinking water as unacceptable, and 15 per cent and 13 per cent for unacceptable quality of drinking water, respectively.

NOTE: Given that this is a small proportion within a limited sample, this data are not representative but merely for illustrative purposes. The mapped sample represents 190 migrants whose addresses could be assigned to a Cadaster.

Source of Drinking Water	Bottled Water	Tap Water	No. of respondents
Achrafieh	60%	38%	50
Bachoura	88%	15%	26
Bourj Hammoud	78%	22%	9
Saifeh	0%	50%	2

Top three priority needs in relation to COVID-19	Return to country of origin	Food Assistance	Work/ Livelihood opportunities
Achrafieh	32%	25%	20%
Bachoura	46%	49%	32%
Bourj Hammoud	33%	26%	4%
Saifeh	50%	25%	25%

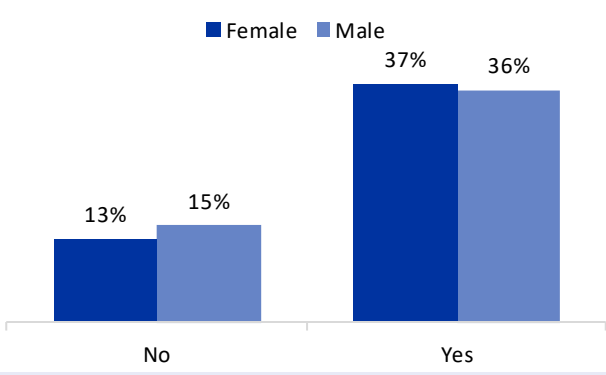


Disclaimer: This map is for illustration purpose only. The boundaries and the names shown, and the designations used on this map do not imply official endorsement or acceptance by IOM.

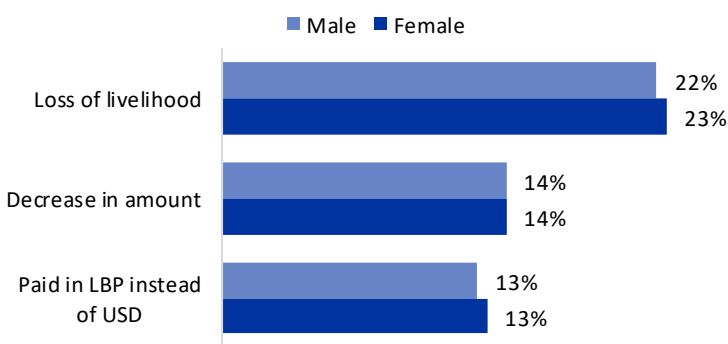
### SOCIO-ECONOMIC CHALLENGES

- A total of 83 per cent of all migrants that were surveyed reported difficulty buying food due to lack to financial means in the last 30 days due to COVID-19.
- Loss of employment and livelihood was reported by 78 per cent of all surveyed migrants. Seventy-four per cent of migrants who lost their jobs or livelihood had dependents in their home country.
- Further still, 27 per cent of all migrants surveyed were unable to or faced increasing difficulty in paying rent for the previous month.
- In general, 36 per cent of total migrants surveyed reported to be affected by reduced freedom of movement and mobility as a result of COVID-19 containment measures.

Percentage of migrant workers having change in salary/income recently



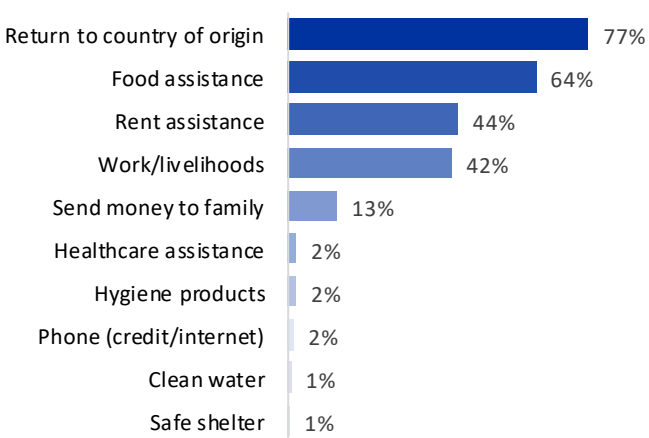
How did the salary/income changed?



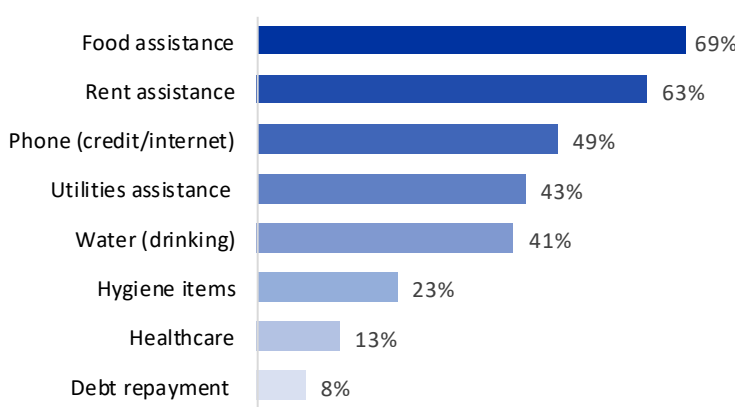
### PRIORITY NEEDS AND ASSISTANCE

- The main priority needs identified by the migrant workers that were interviewed in Beirut are linked to the socio-economic challenges highlighted above.
- In terms of COVID-19, 77 per cent of migrants cited return to country of origin, 64 per cent cited food assistance, 44 per cent cited rental assistance, 42 per cent identified livelihood opportunities and 13 per cent cited sending money to family in their top needs. Aside from return to country of origin, the main priority needs identified by migrants and COVID-19 specific priority needs are similar, demonstrating the prevalence and severity of needs.
- The priority needs identified include food assistance, rent assistance, phone and internet credit, utilities assistance and drinking water. These five priority needs did not vary between male and female migrants that were interviewed. This underlines that concerns around access to finances and basic costs for living are main challenges faced by migrant workers in Beirut that were surveyed.

Top three priority needs related to COVID-19 as percentage of migrant workers



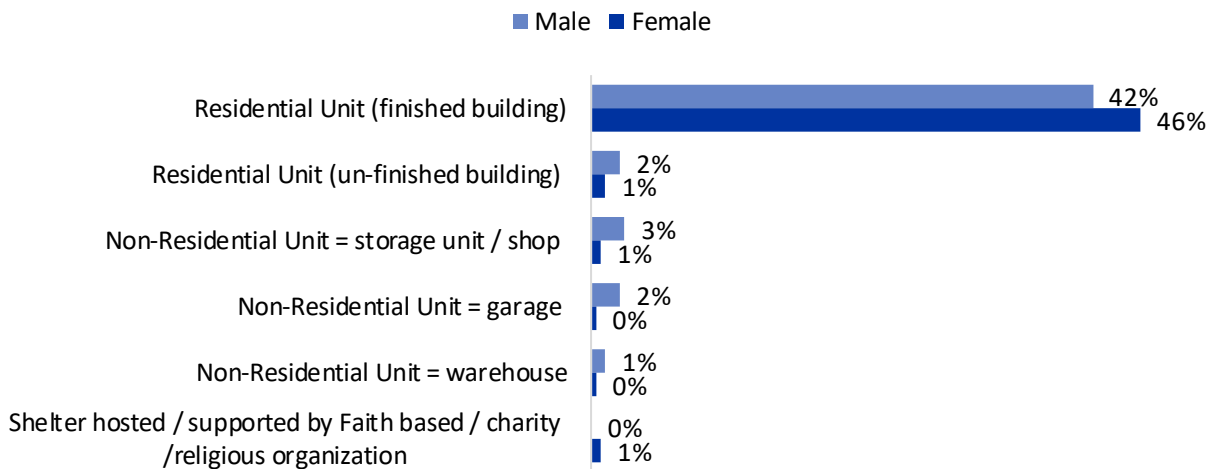
Top five priority needs on a monthly basis as a percentage of migrant workers



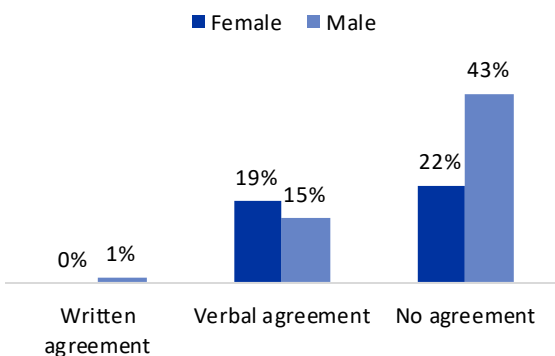
### SHELTER OVERVIEW

- Many of the surveyed migrants (74%) were paying their rent at the time of the assessment. Most migrant workers used either their salary (27%), money from their families abroad (25%), their savings (22%) or borrowed money (22%) to pay for their rent.
- More than half (53%) are currently paying rent for their accommodation, however 72 per cent of migrants have also seen a change in their income and salary recently and employment status, which suggests there may be difficulties in future covering accommodation costs.
- However, among migrant who did not pay for their rent, more than half (66%) did not have the money to do so. Fifty-one per cent were males and 49 per cent were females, with most of them being nationals from Bangladesh (70%) or Ethiopia (26%).
- In general, 68 per cent of migrants had no tenancy agreements while 27 per cent had only verbal agreements. This raises concerns with regards to protection in a context where shelter may be limited due to complete or partial destruction.

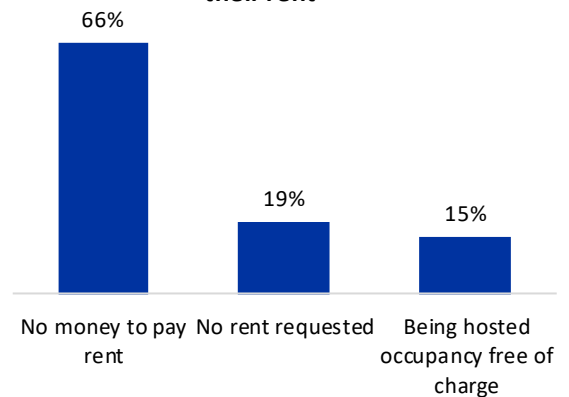
**Type of shelter (percentage of migrant workers)**



**Type of rental agreement of migrants who faced difficulties in paying rent**



**Reasons why migrants did not pay for their rent**

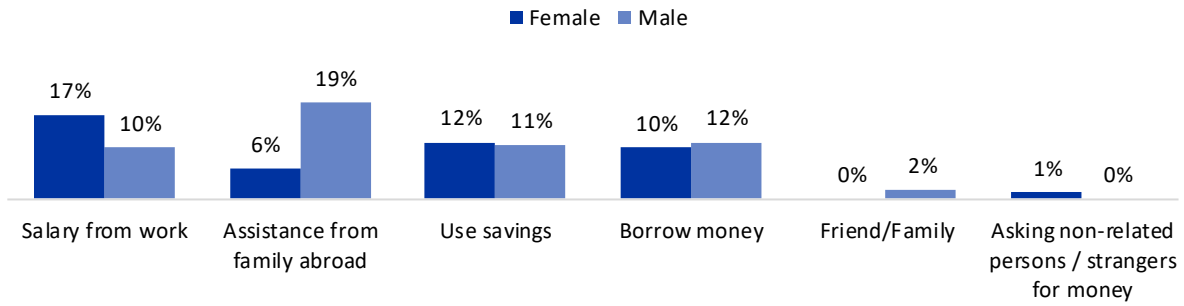


Disclaimer: Please note for Shelter Type and Rental Agreement information, the numbers do not add to the total as some migrants chose not to answer these questions. The total for residential unit is 289, and for rental agreement is 281 as opposed to 291

### SHELTER OVERVIEW

- The graph below shows that migrant workers are using a variety of means to cover rental costs in the context of changing salaries and economic landscapes including borrowing money and using their savings.
- Reliance on assistance from family members abroad was most common among male migrants shows the extent of the negative economic impact of COVID-19, whereby rather than sending remittances migrants are reliant on assistance from their family abroad. Logistically accessing these resources may be difficult in the context of damaged infrastructure post the recent explosion.

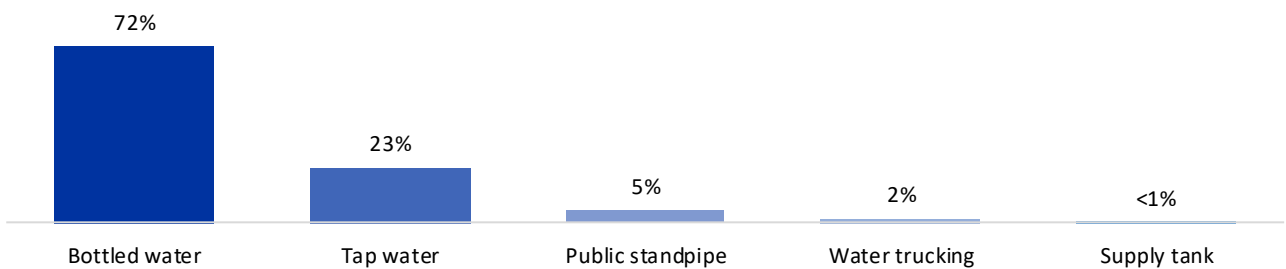
How do you pay the cost of the rent?



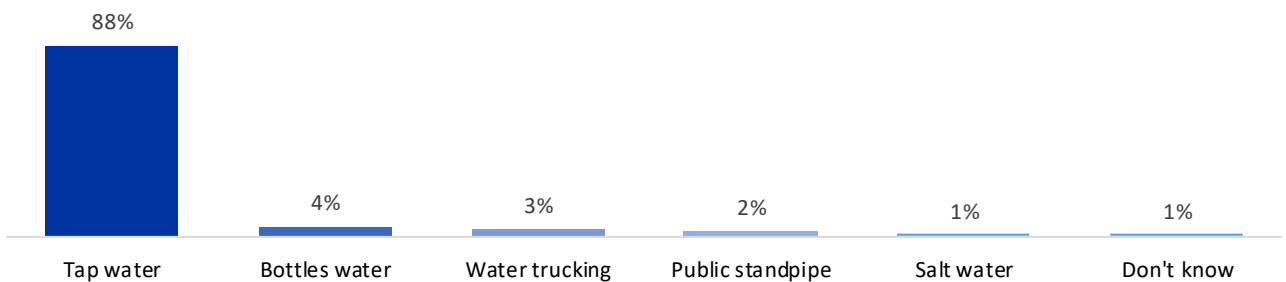
### WASH OVERVIEW

- A total of 83 per cent of the surveyed migrant workers have access to enough water per day, and 90 per cent reported the quality of the water is adequate. Of those migrants (17 %) that do not have adequate access to drinking water, 55 per cent use bottled water and 31 per cent use tap water from the municipality. This is a higher proportion of migrant workers using the municipal supply for drinking water than those who say they have adequate supplies of water (20%).
- It is likely that the infrastructure damage caused by the explosion has severely affected the municipal supply of water, particularly to migrant workers who rely on this source for drinking water and cooking.

Sources of drinking water for migrant workers as percentage of total



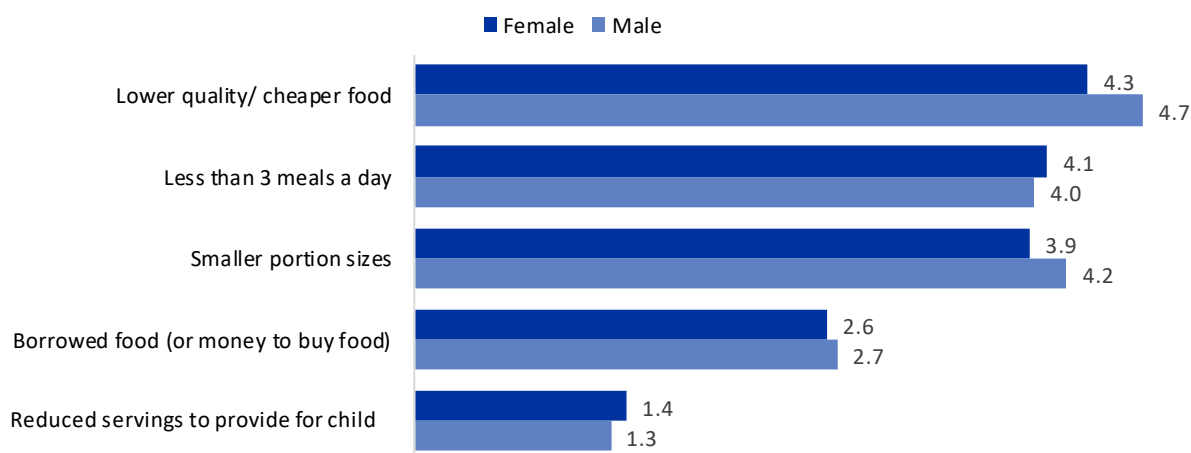
Sources of non-drinking water for migrant workers as percentage of total



### FOOD AND NUTRITION

The below table shows the different coping mechanisms that surveyed migrants cited to deal with the socio-economic challenges due to COVID-19. On average, 83 per cent of male and female migrants bought lower quality or cheap food for four days a week. Additionally, more female migrants (82%) in comparison to male migrants (79%) reduced the number of meals consumed per day for on an average of four days a week. In addition to eating fewer meals per day, 81 per cent of male and female migrants in Beirut also reduced the quantity of food consumed per meal for four days a week on average. More female migrants (75 %) in comparison to male migrants (65%) borrowed food or money in the previous week. These findings are consistent with the key priority needs identified by migrant workers in Beirut reporting food assistance as a top priority.

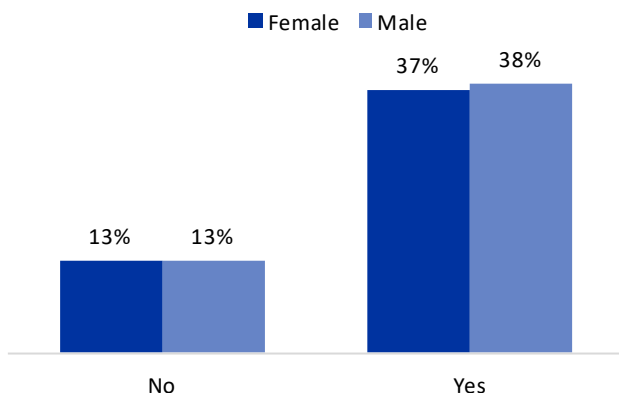
**Nutrition: average number of days with restrictions or limitations on food consumption in the past week, by sex**



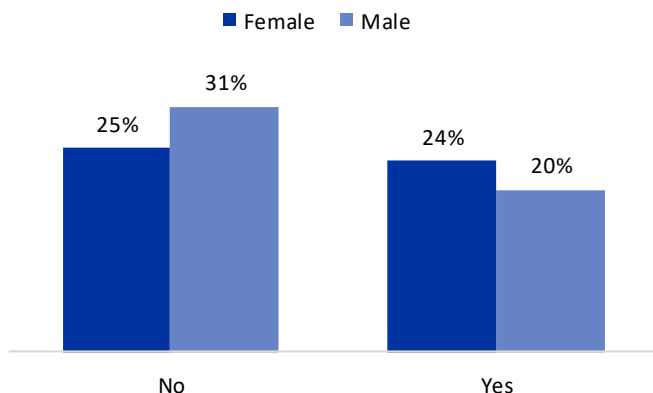
### HEALTH

- Of the migrant workers surveyed in Beirut, 14 per cent (36) reported having existing medical conditions, of which 20 are female and 16 are male. In the case of medical emergencies, 26 per cent (13% female and 13% male) were unwilling to seek healthcare services, which could be illustrative of potential issues concerning legal status, access and stigmatization.
- All migrant workers in the assessment reported to be aware of the COVID-19 pandemic.
- In general, 55 per cent (155) of surveyed migrant workers do not know who to contact when they or members of their household experience COVID-19 related symptoms.
- Close to half (44%, 130 individuals) of the surveyed migrant have had difficulty accessing personal protective equipment (masks, gloves, sanitisers, soaps) when in need.
- Prior to the explosion, 86 per cent of the surveyed migrant workers were practising social distancing (maintaining at least 1m between each other).

**Percentage of migrant workers willing to seek healthcare during an emergency**



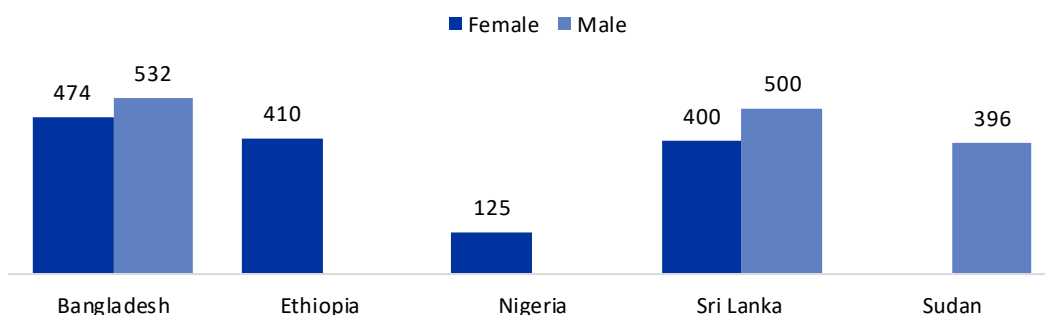
**Percentage of migrant workers in need of, but were not able to access personal protective equipment**



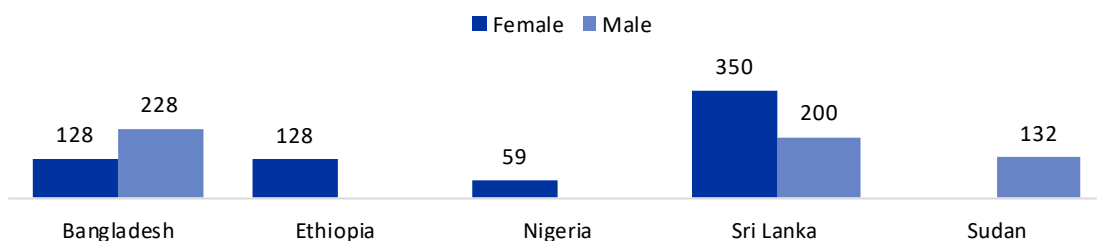
### CASH

- Of the surveyed migrants, 35 per cent of all unemployed migrants reported that they were in debt prior to the explosion. Female migrants from Sri Lanka pay the highest monthly amount in debt repayment while males from Bangladesh pay the highest average monthly debt repayment.
- On average, among the migrant workers surveyed who are in debt, male migrant workers have USD 528 debt, while female have USD 428 debt. The debt repayment is also higher among the surveyed males than females (respectively average USD 225 and USD 130).
- Debt is a strong indicator of exploitation and trafficking, as creditors might demand labour or services from migrants in exchange for payment.

**Total debt over of migrant workers from last three months in USD, by nationality and sex**

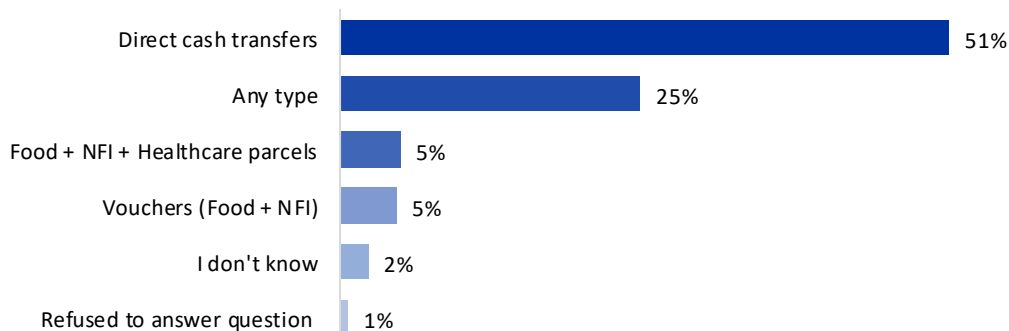


**Average monthly debt repayments of migrant workers in USD, by nationality and sex**



- Almost all (99 per cent of respondents) migrant workers that chose direct cash transfers cited flexibility to respond to their actual needs as their reason for preferring cash.
- Given that 25 per cent of respondents cited 'any type of assistance' raises protection concerns as it reflects the acute level of needs of migrant workers who may become vulnerable to exploitation. As a result of the explosion, it is likely that the humanitarian needs of migrant workers will increase.

**What humanitarian assistance would migrant workers prefer? (as percentage)**

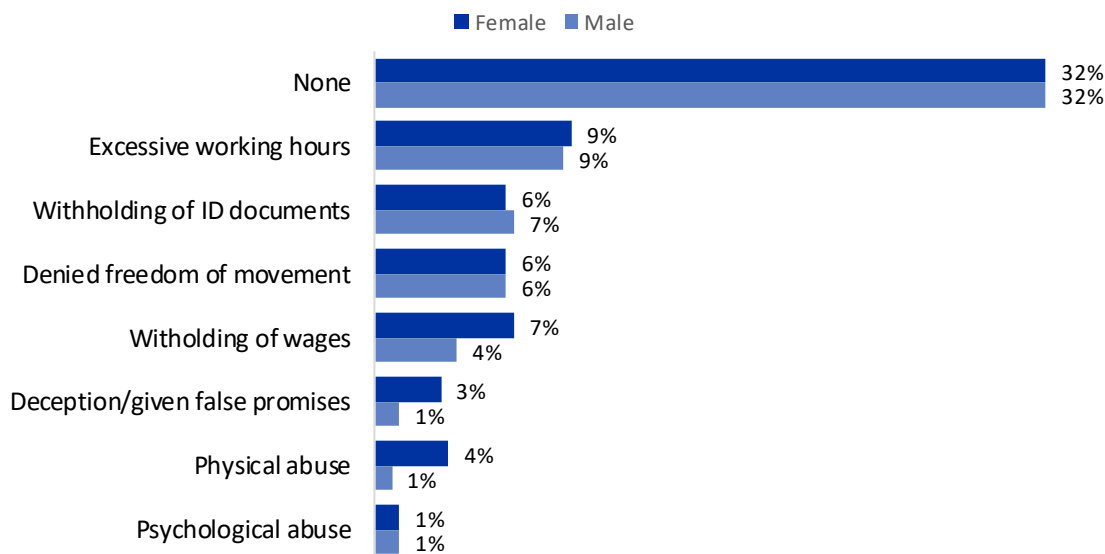




### PROTECTION OVERVIEW

While almost two-thirds (64%) of the migrants interviewed did not report any abuse occurring before, during or after their migration process, 18 per cent reported excessive working hours, 13 per cent reported that their personal documents were withheld, and another 12 per cent reported that they were denied freedom of movement. Eleven per cent reported that their wage was withheld. Other abuses reported included deception and false promises, physical abuse and psychological abuse. The differences across gender are shown in the graph below. While there are few differences, some abuses are reported more frequently by female migrants, such as wage confiscation, false promises and physical abuse.

**Percentage of migrant workers who reported suffering abuses and injustices, by sex**

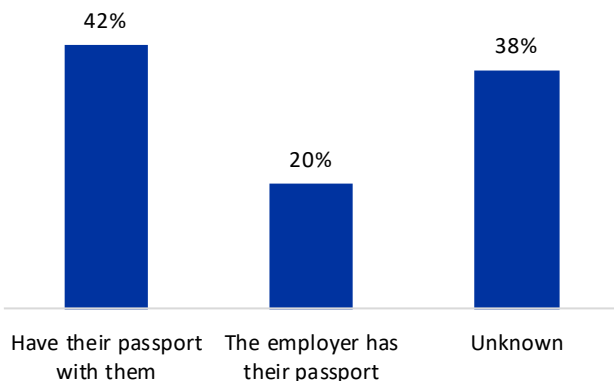


As mentioned previously, 20 per cent of interviewed migrants did not have their passports because their employer was in possession of them. Most of these migrant workers were reportedly from Bangladesh (98%). Around one third of migrants without a passport were females (34%) and two thirds (66%) were male.

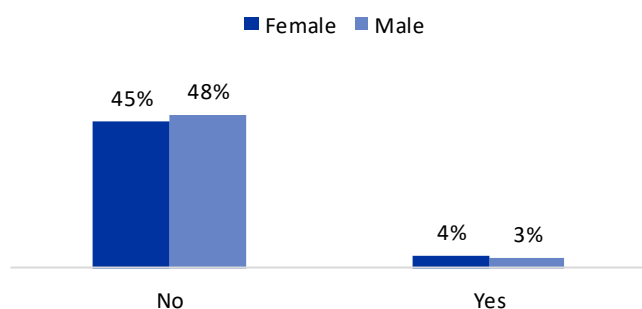
Five per cent of surveyed migrant workers reported that they had to accept socially degrading, exploitative, high risk or illegal jobs to meet their livelihood needs, indicating a continued presence of active criminal organizations despite COVID-19-related mobility and work restrictions. Among them, 92 per cent were from Bangladesh and 8 per cent were nationals from Ethiopia.

Seven per cent of migrants reported that someone had approached them to offer them a job opportunity in Lebanon or abroad. All of them (18 migrants) were nationals from Bangladesh.

**Passport**



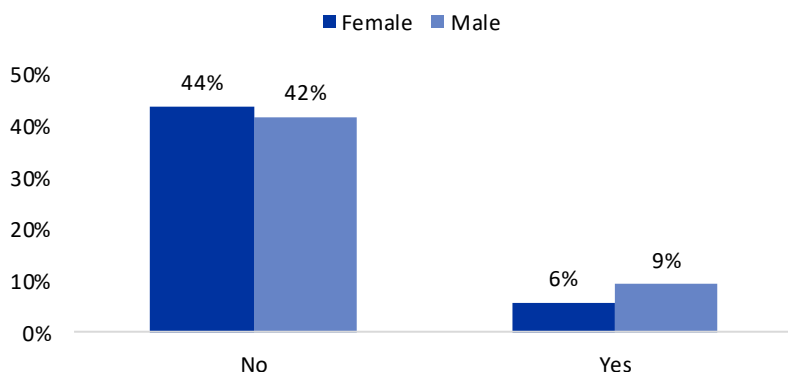
**Offered job opportunities in Lebanon and/or abroad**



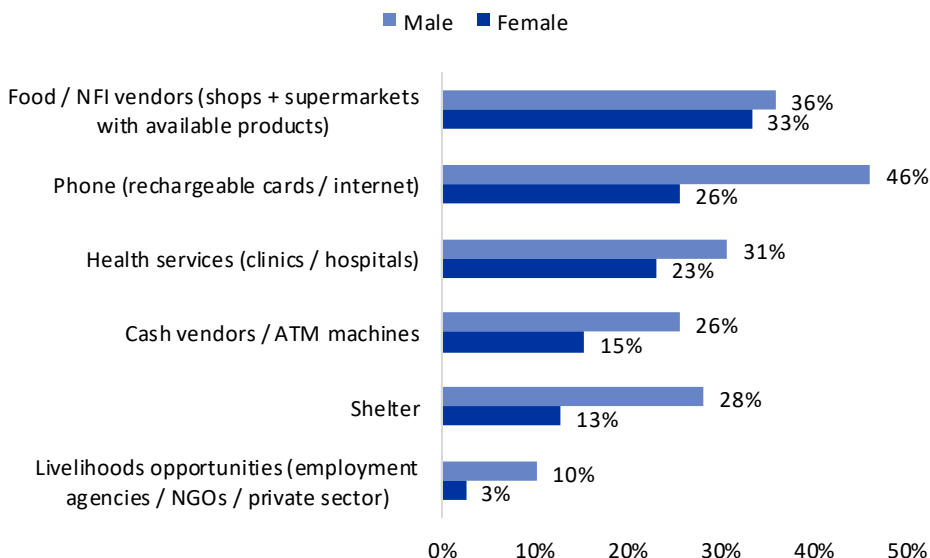
### ACCESS TO SERVICES

- Even though both male (44%) and female migrant (42%) workers were almost equally unaware of the services available to them, female migrants were less aware of specific services available to them in comparison to their male counterparts.
- The disparity between male and female migrant workers in terms of awareness of phone and data services highlights communication needs. It shows that female migrant workers are potentially less likely to be in contact with their support network, and as a result may be more vulnerable to misinformation.
- Given that all migrant workers cited loss of livelihood and socio-economic challenges as their main challenge/priority need, both male and female migrant workers reported the lowest level of awareness around services available to access livelihood opportunities such as employment agencies and NGOs. This shows both a priority area for assistance as well as a need for increased access to information and awareness raising amongst migrant workers.
- Only 13 per cent of female migrant workers and 28 per cent of male migrant workers who said 'Yes' to the first question, were aware of shelter services available to them. The ratio of those aware of shelter services available is much smaller for all migrant workers who participated in this assessment, this raises the concern as the shelter needs for migrant workers are likely to be exacerbated due to the infrastructure damage from the explosion.
- Awareness of access to health care services is extremely low among migrant workers prior to the explosion (28% and 13% for males and females, respectively). This highlights an increased risk in terms COVID-19 but also injuries or health needs due to the explosion.

Are you are aware of access to services available in your area?



Self-reported awareness of services available to migrant workers



Disclaimer: Please note that the Type of Services is a follow up question to Awareness for Accessible Services and reflects a small sample of 39 respondents who responded 'yes'. Respondents were allowed to provide more than one choice, therefore the numbers are more than 100 per cent.

