

WASH in South Lebanon
Prisons and detention centers

SHEILD

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Summary

This document presents the findings of an assessment conducted by SHEILD of Water Sanitation and Hygiene needs in the detention centers and prisons in South Lebanon¹.

Since 2009, SHEILD has implemented several activities in the prisons and the detention centers in South Lebanon². The package has been implemented in 4 prisons located in 2 districts, and 2 detention centers.

Prisons in Lebanon are severely overcrowded (the number of prisoners reaches three times the prison's capacity in most cases). In general, the overall capacity of prisons in Lebanon is 3840 inmates but hosting more than 7000 inmates³.

Among the 6 prisons in the south, there are 2 prisons under the ground.

In all prisons and detention centers, there is no proper heating or air-conditioning system, no proper ventilation system or any kind of basic accommodation.

On the medical and social level, the situation is worse: the high levels of humidity and overcrowding are causing skin and respiratory diseases among detainees and inmates while other inmates who already suffer from chronic diseases do not get the proper attention⁴.

There are many problems faced in detention centers and prisons in South Lebanon. On one hand, in detention centers, there is no separation between minors and adults, or between men and women⁵, which may be attributed to the absence of juvenile and women prisons in South Lebanon. Also, detained individuals may stay up to 4 months in detention centers. On the other hand, in prisons, there is a lack of ability in separating prisoners who

¹ SHEILD assessed 4 prisons, in 4 cazas, South of Lebanon, and 3 detention centers.

² MoUs have been signed with MoSA and MoI, and a permission to work in the palace of justice has been obtained from the MoJ.

³ Tyre prison contains 84 beds, but the number of prisoners is 117.

⁴ SHEILD has a new project targeting inmates, the main objective being to reduce sentences.

⁵ Women are located in the detention centers of Saida and Nabatiyeh.

are arrested⁶ and convicted, and others who are sentenced for felonies and misdemeanors.

The average age of minors at the time of breaking the law was found to be mainly between 15 and 18. Nevertheless, there is an emerging tendency for younger offenders, in particular offenders between the ages of 12 and 15, to come into conflict with the law. Regarding the nationality of the offenders, children of Lebanese nationality represented the majority (60 per cent), followed by children of Syrian origin (30 per cent). A smaller proportion of the children (8 per cent) were of Palestinian origin. On the other hand, delinquent juveniles go through a lot of suffering after their detention, especially during the primary interrogation (with the police) and inquest (with the investigative judge) and the trials, and particularly during detention and in the places where the penalties against them are enforced. Objections on the inappropriateness of minor detention centers state that “government centers are not suited for the separation of minors and adults in police stations and detachments, where there is only one detention center that the minor is referred to when arrested”. The efforts are focused on not keeping them there for long and accelerating the primary interrogation then inquest with them up until the trial. At the time of committing the crime, the majority of minors had interrupted their schooling and found themselves already in the world of work. This situation explains the high level of illiteracy, the lack of any professional qualifications among young offenders and the fact that offenders were employed in activities producing irregular or unstable incomes⁷.

Juvenile delinquency appears above all to be directed against property, often as a means of survival, thus, the crime most frequently committed by minors is theft. Regarding the manner of execution of crimes, whether in a group, with other minors, with adults or family members or alone, committing a crime as an individual indicates an impulsive tendency without

⁶ Some arrested suspects may wait years to be prosecuted and may at the end be found innocent after serving several months or years as detained suspects, which is the case of a large percentage of prisoners that can reach more than 50% in some prisons.

⁷ A large number of convicted prisoners do not benefit from the provisions of the penalty reduction law, due to their ignorance of that law or its provisions, or because they do not have the appropriate legal counselor in charge of following up on all requests addressed to the sanctions reduction committees and courts.

premeditation and 75 per cent of crimes committed by minors took that form.

However, a renewed growth of the “gang” phenomenon has been noted and the increased level of participation of adults in crimes committed by minors raises the issue of exploitation of minors by adults for criminal profit – especially after the increase of the number of Syrian refugees in the south of Lebanon⁸. A significant number of prisoners, whether detained or convicted, do not have the proper legal counseling to follow up on their legal file in terms of requesting a hearing or a release or paying a fine in that regard or requesting an appeal, or presenting a request to reduce a sentence and following up on it⁹.

In general, the situation in all the prisons is the same and the problems they are suffering from are almost also the same, in terms of rehabilitation and equipment¹⁰. Other problems that are also urgent include plumbing works, electrical rehabilitation, furnishing and other types of necessary equipment in addition to painting¹¹.

The overall WASH conditions are particularly poor at the GSO and ISF detention places¹². There is also a need to provide greater support to existing WASH services.

With the increase of the number of Syrian refugees at the detention places, (in some detention centers displaced persons have outnumbered the local population), about all centers in the south of Lebanon need support in water, sanitation and hygiene promotion, based on SHEILD’s assessments in the prisons and detention centers.

A large percentage of refugees (40%) are arrested in these overcrowded centers, they are also competing for accommodation with Lebanese, where power cuts and water rationing are the norm and where formal entities lack the capacity. In these locations, a greater emphasis is required on more permanent/sustainable type solutions. Palestinian refugees from Syria are partly being hosted in already overcrowded centers.

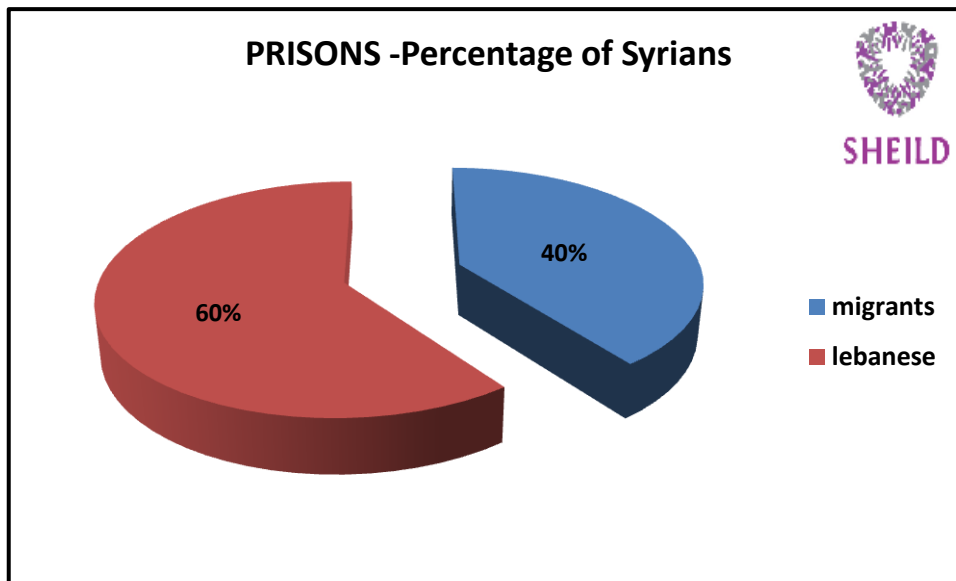
⁸ According to SHEILD assessment in the south of Lebanon, the number of Syrian refugees reached the 37%

¹⁰ SHEILD already provided a few equipment to the prisons.

¹¹ SHEILD did most of the rehabilitation and equipping in 2010, in 4 prisons.

¹² Mainly related to the increased number of the refugees in these centers.

Chronic overcrowding in the centers and the resultant strain on available water and electricity supplies is also leading to tensions and security problems. ISF, GS and the host communities are the most affected by the influx of refugees and returnees typically in the centers. In these particularly vulnerable communities, the limited infrastructure and support services are stretched even further. Public health issues related to WASH such as skin diseases and diarrhea have been reported among Syrian refugee population in the detention centers.



Activities:

The WASH response activities should include the construction of latrines, installation of solid waste bins and water tanks, desludging of latrine pits, distribution of water filters, water quality testing, hygiene promotion and distribution of hygiene and kits, the installation of more permanent WASH facilities such as communal water storage and distribution and construction of septic tanks¹³.

¹³ The average cost per center or prison is \$12000

WASH support to detention centers has mainly been given through small infrastructure projects involving the rehabilitation and extension of existing water schemes, pumping stations and installation of new wells.

Main objectives for WASH and Sanitation:

- Affected populations have equitable access to a sufficient quantity of water for drinking, cooking and personal and domestic hygiene. Public water points are sufficiently close to households to enable use of the minimum water requirement.
- Water is of sufficient quality to be used for all purposes without causing risk to health.
- Centers have adequate facilities to collect, store safely and use sufficient quantities of water for all purposes.

Approach

Achieving the overarching and specific objectives will require the following approach:

- It is essential to include a continued emphasis on short-term emergency interventions which are typically life saving and temporary in nature.
- It is increasingly necessary to adopt longer-term solutions that focus on sustainability and cost effectiveness, which typically add value to and extend existing service provision.

The WASH response should be targeted towards meeting the needs of the most vulnerable first. This can be achieved by using the following criterion to prioritize WASH activities:

- Focus on detention centers with the highest concentration with no/poor water and wastewater services.

Project Area

The districts of Rachaya, Jezzine, Bint Jbail, Nabatiyeh, Marjaayoun, Saida and Tyre