



Tripoli

DISTRICT SNAPSHOT

SECTION 1: TENSIONS SUMMARY

Tripoli district is one of the most prevalent tensions' hotspots in Lebanon due to long-standing socio-economic and political challenges, contributing to overall instability. The ongoing economic decline has left many struggling to meet basic needs, fueling frequent protests and clashes. Political challenges exacerbated by the diversified political actors in the district amidst strong dependence on geopolitical developments also contribute to unrest, and violence. One major factor contributing to the complex tensions landscape is the district's security situation which continues to deteriorate, with an increasing propensity for violence and the use of arms. Indeed, Tripoli district consistently records the highest number of safety and security incidents in Lebanon, highlighting its volatile environment.



16 cadastres out of **17** are characterized as **high** or **moderate** tensions levels as of Q4 2024

Tripoli district's tension landscape is primarily shaped by the following drivers:

- **Socio-economic challenges and marginalization**, with high unemployment rates and widespread poverty exacerbating frustration and instability across the district.
- **A large presence of displaced Syrians**, which has increased pressure on local resources and heightened inter-communal tensions in multiple localities.
- **A history of political and sectarian conflicts**, particularly between Jabal Mohsen and Tabbaneh, where tensions have historically escalated into violence. While the situation has calmed in recent years, the risk of renewed clashes remains, especially given the recent geopolitical developments.

SECTION 2: TENSIONS OVERVIEW

Tripoli has faced long-standing socio-economic and political challenges, contributing to overall instability. High unemployment, widespread poverty, and limited access to essential services have placed significant strain on communities. Despite the district's considerable resources, their distribution remains uneven, leading to competition for resources, grievances, and impacting the social stability landscape.

These factors have created a significant ground for social unrest and violence, contributing to tensions. Historically, Tripoli's tensions landscape has been shaped by regional and geopolitical conflicts. Its proximity to Syria and sectarian composition has led to influx of refugees, and contributed to inter-communal tensions, especially between the Sunni dominant Bab al-Tabbaneh and the Alawite dominant Jabal Mohsen neighborhoods. The Syrian conflict further exacerbated these divisions, with external actors influencing local dynamics. The tensions date back to the Lebanese Civil War (1975-1990) and intensified in 2007-2008 following the assassination of former Prime Minister Hariri but were further exacerbated by the Syrian conflict, as it mirrored the broader Sunni-Alawite divide in the region. The feud has manifested in repeated cycles of violence, with clashes often triggered by regional developments and the involvement of various militant groups.

Persisting economic hardship, compounded by Lebanon's financial crisis, has positioned Tripoli at the forefront of social movements. The city played a central role in the 2019 protests, driven by grievances over deteriorating living conditions, arbitrary arrests, and state inaction. Economic pressures have only intensified, with measures such as the removal of street vendors continuing to trigger tensions, sometimes escalating into armed

clashes. Additionally, kiosk owners have increasingly faced demands for illegal fees from certain groups, further exacerbating economic vulnerabilities.

Service-related issues, such as the persistent inadequacy of electricity, healthcare, and education, have further fueled unrest. These tensions, which were most visible during the early stages of the multi-faceted crisis in 2019, continue to simmer, as the underlying causes remain unaddressed. While other districts have seen some improvement across these issues since the height of the crisis, Tripoli remains largely mired in its pre-existing and ongoing grievances, illustrating the uneven distribution of recovery across the country.

Additionally, Tripoli accounts for a significant portion of Lebanon's safety and security incidents, reflecting both local governance challenges and the proliferation of arms. Law enforcement operations targeting crime and smuggling often escalate into violence, while informal security arrangements, such as the 'City Guards' group, have emerged in response to gaps in security provision. Over time, the group developed a working relationship with the Information Branch of the Internal Security Forces (ISF), which provided support for some of their activities. In December 2023, the group announced a new security plan for the area, developed in coordination with Tripoli Municipality. However, the plan was later halted following intervention from the head of the Lebanese Armed Forces Intelligence (LAFI) in the North, who expressed concerns that its implementation could pose risks and negatively impact dynamics in the city.

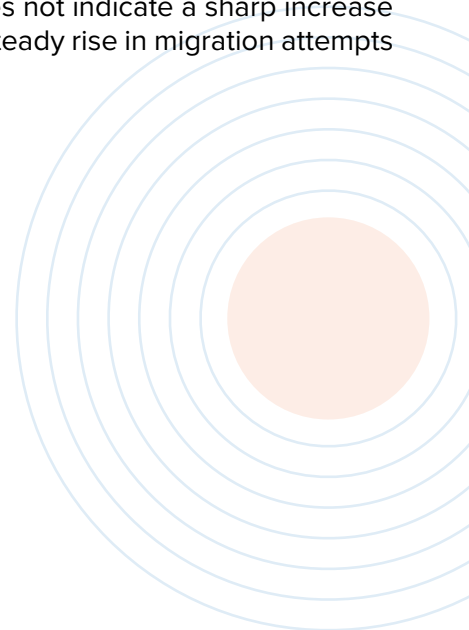
The widespread availability of small arms in Tripoli continues to contribute to recurrent clashes. Additionally, celebratory gunfire has become increasingly common in recent years, a practice widely viewed by community members as a growing concern and a potential security threat.

Personal and family disputes, often linked to economic distress, frequently turn violent due to weakened state institutions and limited access to justice. Since the financial collapse, these tensions have increased, reflecting broader societal instability.

Although not directly affected by the geopolitical conflict with Israel, Tripoli has witnessed protests in solidarity with Gaza, organized by Lebanese and Palestinians. However, it is important to highlight that intra-Lebanese tensions have arisen in the city throughout the period of hostilities in the south, often linked to the disagreement over the engagement in the war. Additionally, there was a prevailing concern that the presence of IDPs, between September and November 2024, increased the area's vulnerability to potential targeting.

Beyond Tripoli, marginalization in neighboring Akkar and Miniyeh-Danniyeh further fuels discontent, with many residents commuting to the city to voice grievances. Within the district, displaced Syrians are primarily concentrated in areas such as El-Zeitoun, Qoubbe, Tabbaneh, Zahriyeh, and Tall. Tripoli, which hosts one of the largest Syrian communities in the country, has been an epicenter of inter-communal tensions involving host community and displaced Syrians population.

At the same time, the city has become a major departure hub for irregular migration toward Europe, particularly to Cyprus, Greece, and Italy. Given the clandestine nature of these movements, official records likely underestimate the true scale of the phenomenon. While data from late 2023 and early 2024 does not indicate a sharp increase in departures, European authorities—particularly in Cyprus—continue to report a steady rise in migration attempts during this period.



Key Tensions Drivers	Analysis
 <p>Economic hardships, unemployment and competition over jobs</p>	<p>Continued economic decline and high unemployment rates have intensified social unrest and protests, as people struggle to meet their basic needs. Economic hardships have also led to heightened competition for low-skilled job opportunities, fueling tensions between host communities and displaced Syrians and deepening divisions between neighborhoods. Another driver of rising vertical tensions is the authorities' campaign to remove illegal kiosks, which many community members view as their only source of income. Meanwhile, inter-communal tensions over job competition have escalated, particularly as many businesses in the area are perceived to be owned or managed by displaced Syrians. This has led to increased operations by the General Security Office (GSO) to shut down these businesses for operating illegally. Economic hardship, unemployment, and job competition remain key tension risks for the Tripoli district in Lebanon.</p>
 <p>Safety and Security</p>	<p>Security concerns in the city are at an all-time high, with several triggers contributing to the instability, including rising crime rates, thefts, robberies, and ongoing disputes. Additionally, there were growing concerns in the past few years about the inclusion of youth from the city in extremist groups, particularly with reports of young people going missing. While it remains unconfirmed, rumors suggested that some of these individuals may have become involved with such groups. In addition, in certain areas in the city, there have been sporadic reports regarding the existence of extremist sleeping cells.</p>
 <p>Personal and family disputes leading to armed clashes</p>	<p>Personal and family disputes, worsened by socio-economic deprivation, competition over scarce resources, and the absence of effective rule of law, continue to escalate into armed clashes. These conflicts significantly contribute to safety and security incidents in Tripoli, including crimes and both armed and unarmed confrontations. As underlying tensions remain unresolved, such localized clashes are likely to persist.</p>
 <p>Pressure on services and resources leading to tensions</p>	<p>The influx of Syrians has placed a significant strain on Tripoli's infrastructure, fueling rising tensions among residents. Communities are struggling with the lack of basic urban services, including waste management issues, water shortages, and electricity problems. The limited capacity of municipalities and the inadequate provision of services further hinder access to essential resources. In Tripoli, frustration over deteriorating living conditions has led to frequent public expressions of discontent, with socio-economic grievances driving protests and unrest. The worsening strain on resources, coupled with the prolonged absence of effective solutions, risks further exacerbating tensions in the city.</p>
 <p>Intra-Lebanese tensions</p>	<p>Political and sectarian conflicts have deeply affected Tripoli for years, with the most prominent being the longstanding tensions between Jabal Mohsen and Tabbaneh. The potential for increased conflict between these communities remains high. The historical animosities and recent socio-economic pressures on the population of Tripoli could escalate tensions further, leading to more frequent and intense clashes. On another note, there is also intense political competition in the city, which reaches its peak during election seasons. In addition, regional dynamics involving foreign countries could further inflame local tensions, leading to more frequent and intense conflicts. Support by foreign actors to local groups also has the potential to fuel inter-Lebanese tensions.</p>
 <p>Onward movements</p>	<p>Tripoli has seen a rise in onward movements, with many attempting irregular immigrations by sea to escape worsening economic conditions. The city has been severely impacted by the deteriorating economic and protection situation, with record numbers of displaced Syrians, Lebanese citizens, and Palestinians turning to dangerous sea crossings in search of safety and stability. Although the number of such movements has decreased, there is a risk they could increase again if the situation worsens. These movements highlight several critical issues: 1) a lack of rule of law, 2) the high number of smugglers operating with impunity, considering this as a business, 3) the extreme desperation of people in the city, who are willing to try again even after previous failed attempts, and 4) the potential for renewed attempts if conditions continue to deteriorate. It's also important to note that these movements have contributed to rising vertical tensions in the city. Several failed attempts, including tragic incidents that resulted in passenger deaths in previous years, have fueled further tensions where protests have been organized by families of victims.</p>

SECTION 3: TENSIONS HOTSPOTS

Over the past few years, almost all areas in Tripoli were classified as tensions hotspots due to the tensions' triggers listed above. Even less volatile areas such as Al Maarad and Dam w Farez were classified as hotspots from a security perspective due to frequent targeting by theft incidents. Mina Tripoli and the areas located in the old souks are also hotspots due to pressure on resources as well as the competition over jobs to note that these areas are overpopulated. However, as of December 2024, 16 cadasters out of 17 are characterized as high or moderate tensions level (11 high and 5 moderate). Out of those, key hotspots include:

Tripoli

Lebanon's second-largest city faces ongoing tensions driven by socio-economic hardships, political fragmentation, and the widespread presence of weapons, creating a persistently volatile environment. The city has recorded the highest number of tensions incidents nationwide between January 2023 and July 2024, far surpassing other areas.

A large portion of incidents in Tripoli are safety and security related. A significant number of these safety and security incidents are violent, with Tripoli reporting a much higher proportion of violence compared to the national average.

Beyond tensions related to safety and security, Tripoli experiences high levels of tensions related to economic and labor issues, service provision, and state-citizen relations. Public grievances often manifest through road blockages, demonstrations, and displays of arms. Police operations targeting building violations and consumer protection enforcement are also common, reflecting the desperate search for alternative means of livelihood. Additionally, inter-communal tensions remain high, with the city ranking first in incidents related to displaced Syrians.

Qoubbeh

On the outskirts of Tripoli, mirrors many of the city's socio-economic and security challenges but suffers even more due to extreme deprivation. Safety and security incidents dominate the tensions landscape, with armed clashes being the most common. The low number of unarmed clashes underscores how quickly disputes escalate into violence, often involving arms. State-citizen relations form the second-largest category of incidents, with many cases linked to tensions surrounding Qoubbeh Prison, including arrests and related conflicts.

Abou Samrah

The locality which is currently reporting the third most incidents in the Tripoli district, also experiences high levels of safety and security incidents. However, Abou Samrah also records a higher number of service-related and inter-communal incidents. Service-related conflicts often manifest as disputes over electricity generator operations and protests regarding inadequate health and education services. Inter-communal tensions, driven by the high concentration of displaced Syrians, frequently escalate into clashes triggered by personal disputes or police operations targeting illegal businesses run by Syrians. **Aley** Aley city is the center of Aley district and witnesses personal disputes, inter-communal tensions, and restrictive measures imposed by local authorities. It represents a microcosm of the Aley district, also taking into consideration the large Syrian community living here and the heterogenic demography.

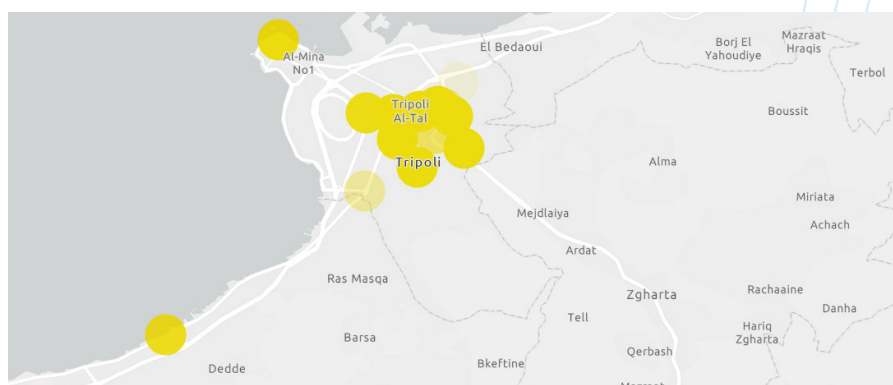


Figure 1: Heat map of reported safety and security incidents