



## RESEARCH

# Lebanon's Energy Crisis in Context: Post-war Reconstruction and Political Fragmentation

### RESEARCH QUESTIONS

- ① How can post-war reconstruction address the deep-rooted structural and social inequalities, as well as the clientelistic networks, that currently shape access to electricity in Lebanon's urban contexts?
- ② What are the challenges inherent in the "rebuild-as-was" approach, and how might they affect or emerge within the energy sector?
- ③ What would a reform agenda look like to overcome political fragmentation in the governance of Lebanon's energy sector?
- ④ What actionable solutions and targeted interventions can support an inclusive, sustainable, and just transition of the energy sector amid post-war reconstruction and political fragmentation?

### CONTEXT

Reconstruction presents both a challenge and an opportunity to address Lebanon's deep-rooted structural inequalities, particularly in access to electricity. Decades of inadequate infrastructure and political paralysis, exacerbated by economic instability and the recent financial collapse, have forced most people to rely on costly, short-lived, and harmful energy sources, primarily through informal diesel generator operators.

### GEOGRAPHIC FOCUS

Lebanon, with a focus on the southern suburbs of Beirut (more than 417 buildings destroyed) and Municipal Beirut (two compounds of buildings destroyed). Exploring these two geographies together is key to understanding whether their efforts to improve services in Greater Beirut are coordinated.

### METHODOLOGY

- **Desk reviews** of existing reports, news articles, and existing and proposed laws and decrees (e.g., reconstruction laws, proposed legislation).
- **13 in-depth interviews with representatives** from the public sector, syndicates, think tanks, NGOs, and standard-setting bodies, and conversations with informal actors in the studied area.
- **Site visits** to the southern suburbs of Beirut and Municipal Beirut.
- **The collected data** were thematically analyzed to develop reform recommendations across governance, policy, and economic frameworks.
- **The findings and recommendations** were validated through a policy dialogue involving members of ARI's energy advisory board, the interviewees, and additional stakeholders involved in the energy sector and/or reconstruction.

## Key Takeaways



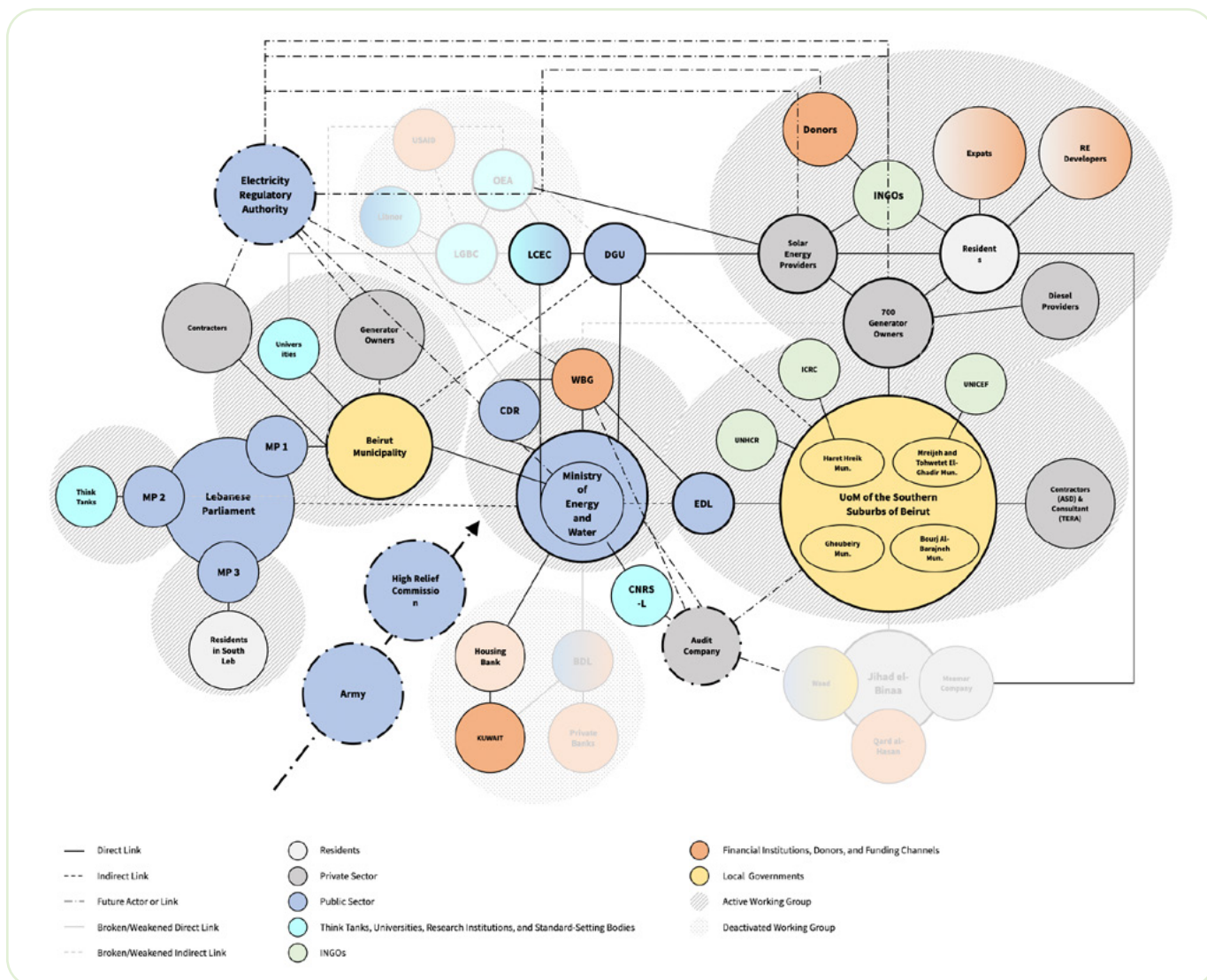
Fragmented governance breeds fragmented policies with far-reaching implications, hindering their practical implementation, particularly when policymakers are disconnected from on-the-ground realities.



Financing strategies should prioritize the amendment of construction laws, consider supporting formal decentralized energy systems, and microfinance for sustainable collectives. Legislation should also consider financial implications on public sector institutions since the country is still suffering from the financial collapse.



Reconstructing “as-was” not only perpetuates poor planning and weak infrastructure but also reproduces already existing inequalities. While public sector institutions are encouraging or conducting infrastructural repair “as-was”, informal political actors remain dominant in the reconstruction of the superstructure, and the informal private sector benefits the most from the current state of disorganization.



## About the Author

Soha Mneimneh is an Urban Planner and Researcher specialized in housing, land management, urban governance, and advocacy planning. She is currently a lecturer at ALBA-Lebanon, a researcher at Columbia University, and a research consultant at ARI.