



Commentary

# Rebuilding Lebanon Sustainability Post-War 2024: Lessons from Emerging Countries

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## KEYWORDS

*conflict, national security and war, sustainable development, environment and development and sustainability.*

## ARTICLE HISTORY

Received: 27 January 2025 | Accepted: 10 March 2025 | Published: 3 April 2025

## 1. Introduction

The financial and monetary crisis that affected the Lebanese economy in 2019 and the war between Lebanon and Israel, which took place in September 2024, caused remarkable damage to the economy, particularly in destroying the infrastructure, raising the unemployment rate, and intensifying environmental degradation, including deforestation and pollution. Following the financial crisis and post-war periods, the country must adopt recovery programs to achieve economic growth, as the main objective of a sustainable economy is to maintain economic development, environmental preservation, and social equity (Barbier, 2013).

This commentary paper examines Lebanon's potential to implement sustainable economic measures for reconstruction following the 2024 conflict. Based on the experiences of Afghanistan (2002) and Iraq (2003) in maintaining sustainable recovery solutions following the post-war period, this commentary paper covers different aspects that Lebanon should apply to achieve a sustainable economy.

## 2. Insights From Global Literature

Wars have a significant impact on countries at different levels, such as economic recession, social welfare,

and green infrastructure. Post-war periods are usually followed by fiscal deficits, high debts, and a damaged industrial base, as the country faces severe challenges to maintain sustainable growth. According to Collier et al. (2003), to avoid future instabilities, recovery programs should focus not only on economic growth but also on reducing poverty and inequalities. Adopting recovery programs without considering poverty and inequalities will only provide temporary relief, as it will remain impossible for the country to achieve any long-term remarkable growth. Furthermore, Bouvier (2012) emphasises that recovery programs should prioritise inequality issues and focus on social welfare and justice, especially for displaced citizens. According to him, if these measures were not considered, recovery programs might be inadequate and won't achieve economic sustainability.

In addition, the country must collaborate with international associations to ensure that the recovery process is carefully adopted and that it fits the national criteria. The recovery programs should focus on restoring environmental sustainability and social welfare to guarantee future stability and long-term growth. Ignoring them might lead to more conflict (Barbier, 2013). This idea was also confirmed by Unruh and Williams



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(2013) in their analysis of the post-war situation. According to these authors, the main objective of recovery programs in the aftermath should focus on both social subsidies and support to the displaced citizens. Moreover, war impacts the environment and increases pollution and the spread of diseases, as chemicals from bombs and missiles can significantly impact natural resources, land, and agriculture, which leads to deforestation. Consequently, economies that are dependent on agriculture and natural resources will struggle to achieve a fast recovery (Nguyen et al., 2023). Suarez et al. (2018) similarly emphasize the importance of solving environmental issues in post-war recovery. According to these authors, the government should apply different methods to maintain a sustainable economy, placing particular emphasis on green technologies, renewable energy sources, and agriculture. This approach is based on the idea that recovery is about maintaining long-term resilience and environmental well-being rather than just simply returning to unsustainable practices.

This literature can be easily applicable to the Lebanese case, especially in the southern area of the country, since the infrastructure has been destroyed as well as the increase in deforestation and pollution. In addition, many displaced citizens lost their homes and their jobs, with a total absence of recovery programs, which will delay economic growth and sustainability.

### 3. Global Approaches to Post-War Economic Recovery: Key Strategies and Lessons Learned

Following the war in Afghanistan (2000) and Iraq (2003), these two nations started adopting recovery programs as part of rehabilitation initiatives to rebuild and re-boost their economy. Those initiatives and the circumstances of each one apply to Lebanon's situation. The recovery strategies of each country are illustrated in Table 1 and Table 2.

Based on the recovery programs adopted in Afghanistan and Iraq, focusing on rebuilding infrastructure, controlling corruption, maintaining transparency in public sectors, encouraging agriculture and industrial sectors, as well as supporting displaced populations, the same programs should be applied in Lebanon to achieve

a long-term sustainable economy. Afghanistan and Iraq took advantage of these programs while collaborating with international aid and foreign support and were able to accomplish sustainable post-war growth (Barrat, 2013).

### 4. Challenges and Strategies for Lebanon's Post-War Recovery

Concerning Lebanon, the main focus should be rebuilding its infrastructure, including roads, airports, water systems, and electricity grids. However, the country faces the challenge of supporting thousands of displaced citizens, as most have lost their homes, land, and jobs. Therefore, the Lebanese authorities should provide shelters, healthcare services, and education, as well as increase job opportunities. If the Lebanese government cannot deal with the situation, long-term sustainability will not be easily achieved (Bouvier, 2012; Collier et al., 2003). Furthermore, strong governance and transparency were key factors of success for Afghanistan and Iraq. Hence, the Lebanese government should apply strict policies and law regulations to control corruption and rebuild transparency in public sectors.

Moreover, the recent war has left a significant impact and damage on the agriculture sector as well as many populated areas being destroyed. In order to protect natural resources, the government must start allocating funds and subsidies to stimulate green infrastructure. This includes but is not limited to solar, renewable energy, and reforestation, especially in the South, which has been affected by deadly chemicals and bombs, a region that serves as the primary agricultural hub of the country. Additionally, Lebanon should collaborate closely with international partners to ensure that recovery efforts are aligned with the country's long-term objectives (Suarez et al., 2018). The World Bank, the European Bank for Reconstruction and Development (EBRD), and the United Nations Development Program (UNDP) have the capacity to provide financial and technical support for these initiatives. In order to address the urgent needs of displaced citizens, it is essential that Lebanon prioritize the following areas: housing, healthcare, education, and job creation. This effort should be facilitated with the assistance of the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR) and the

Table 1: Recovery Program for Afghanistan

Area	Strategy	Insights
Healthcare, education, and humanitarian assistance	Significant rehabilitation and humanitarian assistance programs with a focus on education and healthcare.	Afghanistan relies on ongoing international assistance to meet fundamental needs and humanitarian issues.
Infrastructure, public services	Prioritize the reconstruction of infrastructure, including highways, educational institutions, and healthcare facilities, to increase service accessibility and elevate living standards.	The restoration of infrastructure is essential for revitalizing the nation's economy and enhancing the daily life of the citizens.
Agriculture, food security	Initiatives to improve food security, promote sustainable farming practices, and revitalize the agricultural industry.	Agriculture is essential for creating employment and guaranteeing food security.
Security, rule of law	Strengthening the police and security forces to ensure long-term stability and prevent rebellion.	Improving security and governance frameworks is essential for enduring peace and stability.
Education, social equity	Measures to reconstruct educational frameworks and guarantee that children, particularly females, have access to education.	Educational changes are essential to ensure a prosperous future and mitigate poverty levels over time.
Gender equality, social inclusion	Gender equality initiatives, ensuring the inclusion of women in the recovery and political processes.	Women's empowerment in governance and economic roles is central to building a resilient society.

Source: [United States Institute of Peace \(2005\)](#) and [National Defense University \(2019\)](#).

World Bank. The implementation of anti-corruption measures and public financial management reforms is imperative to strengthen governance, a process that is supported by the International Monetary Fund (IMF), which Lebanon requested assistance multiple times in April 2022 to solve its economic and financial crisis. The revitalization of Lebanon's agricultural sector, with support from the Food and Agriculture Organization (FAO) and the European Union (EU), is essential for ensuring food security and facilitating economic recovery. By collaborating with international partners, Lebanon can foster long-term stability and promote sustainable growth.

## 5. Conclusion

Given the fact that the war in Lebanon has left its own consequences, the main focus is to adopt recovery programs that promote and stimulate both economic growth and long-term sustainability. Drawing from the experiences shared in Afghanistan and Iraq, Lebanon must implement strict policies to recuperate its well-

being on all levels, such as economic development, social welfare, poverty, green infrastructure, etc. Focusing on the southern area of the country, the government should protect the displaced citizens, encourage investment in the damaged lands, and restore the confidence and trust of the citizens. Moreover, laws and regulations must be applied in the public sector to regain transparency and to control corruption.

By applying the above-mentioned recovery programs and collaborating with international institutions, the Lebanese economy will become more resilient and productive. As a result, Lebanon can achieve long-term sustainability.

## Funding Statement

The author received no financial support for the research, authorship, and/or publication of this commentary paper.

Table 2: Recovery Program for Iraq

Area	Strategy	Insights
Oil industry, energy	Focus on oil exports	Encouraging oil exports to boost the economy.
Governance, anti-corruption	Efforts to combat corruption and rebuild transparency.	Measures to restore transparency in public sectors and to eliminate corruption.
Infrastructure, housing, healthcare	Investments in infrastructure including the primary sectors	Investing in the primary sectors such as healthcare and education for the welfare of citizens.
Employment, private sector development	Fostering private sector opportunities and generating jobs.	Job creation and the development of small enterprises are critical for reducing unemployment in post-conflict and boosting economic activity.
Agriculture, rural development	Rehabilitating agriculture to promote food security and jobs in rural areas.	Restoring agricultural activity in conflict-affected areas will ensure citizen re-engagement in the economy and will decrease the unemployment rate.

Source: [Center for Strategic and International Studies \(2017\)](#), [Goenaga \(2017\)](#) and [Italian Institute for International Political Studies \(2020\)](#).

### Conflict of Interest

The author declares that he has no competing interests related to the conduct of this study. He has strived to maintain objectivity and impartiality in the conduct and reporting of this research.

### Cite as

Accary, J. (2025). Rebuilding Lebanon Sustainability Post-War 2024: Lessons from Emerging Countries. *Journal of Sustainable Economies*, 1(1), 55–59. 10.51300/JSE-2025-134

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