



# General Assembly

Distr.: General  
8 June 2021

English only

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## Human Rights Council

Forty-seventh session

21 June–9 July 2021

Agenda item 3

**Promotion and protection of all human rights, civil,  
political, economic, social and cultural rights,  
including the right to development**

### **Written statement\* submitted by The Palestinian Return Centre Ltd, a non-governmental organization in special consultative status**

The Secretary-General has received the following written statement which is circulated in accordance with Economic and Social Council resolution 1996/31.

[28 May 2021]

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\* Issued as received, in the language(s) of submission only.



## **Palestinian Refugees in Lebanon: Economic conditions and Poverty**

### **Overview**

Palestinian refugees living in the refugee camps in Lebanon suffer difficult economic, financial and political conditions. The poor humanitarian conditions, and situations of racial discrimination, poverty and deprivation are the main reasons that make it difficult for Palestinian refugees to adapt to the bitter reality imposed on them recently.

The Palestinian refugees can be considered one of the most vulnerable segments of Lebanese society. After the collapse of the Lebanese pound's exchange rate against the dollar and the rise in the prices of the basic materials and food as well as the Corona crisis, the economic conditions that face Palestinian refugees in Lebanon have become worse.

According to the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees, there are nearly 400,000 Palestinian refugees in 12 camps and other residential compounds within the Lebanese regions. The Palestinian refugee is deprived of international protection.<sup>1</sup>

The 1951 Convention Relating to the Status of Refugees, which led to the establishment of the UNHCR, clarifies that a refugee is anyone who is found "A refugee is someone who has been forced to flee his or her country because of persecution, war or violence. A refugee has a well-founded fear of persecution for reasons of race, religion, nationality, political opinion or membership in a particular social group."<sup>2</sup>

### **The political and economic status of the Palestinian refugees in Lebanon**

Palestinian refugees in Lebanon live under extremely harsh conditions. They suffer regularly and systematically from discrimination against them. Most Palestinian refugees did not obtain citizenship, and their legal status in Lebanon is considered as a special category of foreigners. Few refugees acquired Lebanese citizenship in the 1950s for the purpose of balancing the country's Christian and Muslim populations. Only Palestinian refugees who took refuge in Lebanon directly in 1948 are granted the right to reside in Lebanon. As for the Palestinian refugees who arrived in Lebanon after that - including those who were displaced in 1967 - they are not entitled to residency, and their residency is considered illegal in Lebanon.

Most refugees in Lebanon are granted a travel document that is valid for one year. As for unregistered refugees, they are only granted a travel document that is valid for three months. Refugees registered with UNRWA receive a travel document that can be renewed three times. As for refugees registered with the Federation of Lebanese Red Crescent Societies since 1948, but not registered with UNRWA in 1950, they also receive travel documents that can be renewed three times.

Palestinian refugees in Lebanon are not entitled to benefit from public health care and other social services, while most of them cannot pay the costs of private health care. Due to insufficient conditions, most of the refugees are unable to enroll in Lebanese schools and universities. Foreigners are allowed to be only ten percent of students in Lebanese public schools. Based on this, UNRWA runs five secondary schools in Lebanon to educate Palestinian refugees. Some departments in some universities also do not accept Palestinian students to study. Palestinian refugees in Lebanon are not entitled to own real estate and property, and there are restrictions imposed on the establishment of buildings in or around

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<sup>1</sup> <https://www.refworld.org/pdfid/4715bc6f826b.pdf>.

<sup>2</sup> <https://www.unrefugees.org/refugee-facts/what-is-a-refugee/>.

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Palestinian camps. Palestinians are not entitled to work in crafts and professional jobs that require special skills.

66.5% of the total Palestinian refugees residing in Lebanon live below the poverty line, while the unemployment rate among Palestinian refugees in Lebanon is 56%.<sup>3</sup>

However that some of legal proposals have been included for years on the agenda of Lebanese parliaments to amend the status of Palestinians refugees regarding the ownership of residential real estate, or the right to work, none of these proposals have been successful.

Recommendations:

- Palestinian Return Centre is deeply concerned about the situations of the Palestinians refugees in Lebanon. PRC calls on the Human Rights Council to work on Supporting Palestinian refugees during this difficult times especially during the corona pandemic.
- The United Nations should take their share in such a humanitarian struggle for survival undergone by Palestine refugees in Lebanon. The need for financial, medical, and humanitarian assistance has become more urgent than ever at this critical stage.
- PRC highlights the importance to urgently find a political solution for the matter of Palestinian refugees in Lebanon. The humanitarian crisis in Lebanon is nothing but a consequence of the absence of a concrete political plan to allow the Palestinians to enjoy their Right of Return as well as their internationally recognized human rights.
- UNRWA, the General Authority for Palestinian Arab Refugees, and the Lebanese Government should be pressurized to take urgent action in order to meet the humanitarian needs of Palestinian refugees in Lebanon.
- The right to move freely for Palestinian refugees is a fundamental human right. Palestinian return centre urge the human rights council to put pressure on the local authorities where Palestinian refugees live to facilitate their movements while traveling especially those who hold the issue of the travel document

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<sup>3</sup> [https://www.unrwa.org/sites/default/files/content/resources/survey\\_on\\_the\\_economic\\_status\\_of\\_palestine\\_refugees\\_in\\_lebanon\\_2015.pdf](https://www.unrwa.org/sites/default/files/content/resources/survey_on_the_economic_status_of_palestine_refugees_in_lebanon_2015.pdf).