

# THE "FORGOTTEN PEOPLE"

Assessing Poverty Among Palestinian Refugees in Lebanon

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**The Palestinian Return Centre** is an independent consultancy focusing on the historical, political and legal aspects of the Palestinian Refugees. The organization offers expert advice to various actors and agencies on the question of Palestinian Refugees within the context of the Nakba - the catastrophe following the forced displacement of Palestinians in 1948 - and serves as an information repository on other related aspects of the Palestine question and the Arab-Israeli conflict. It specializes in the research, analysis, and monitor of issues pertaining to the dispersed Palestinians and their internationally recognized legal right to return.

**Title:** The “Forgotten People”: Assessing Poverty Among Palestinian Refugees in Lebanon

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**Seminar delivered:** 23rd November 2015, Houses of Commons, London

**ISBN: 978 1 901924 56 5**

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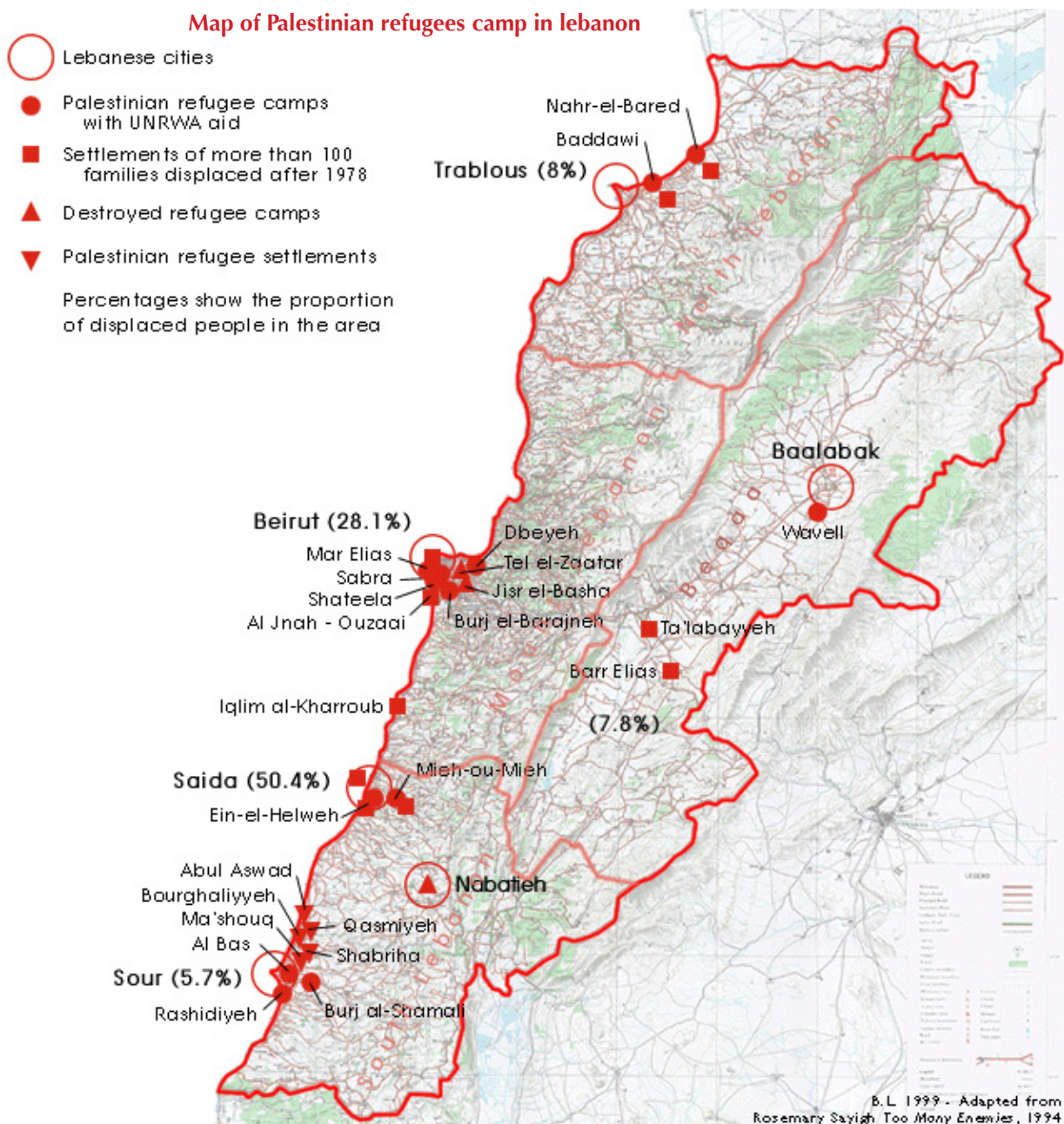
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## Acronyms

ANERA	American Near East Refugee Aid
BADIL	Resource Center for Palestinian Residency and Refugee Rights
Dars	Traditional Houses
FAFO	Institute for Labour and Social Research
Nakba	Palestinian Catastrophe in 1948
PRL	Palestinian Refugees in Lebanon
PRS	Palestinian Refugees From Syria in Lebanon
Tawteen	Resettlement
UNDP	United Nations Development Program
UNHCR	United Nations High Commission for Refugees







Inside Bourj al-Barajneh refugees camp

## Executive summary

This report focuses on the socio-economic conditions of Palestinian refugees currently residing in Lebanon. In the overview it is discussed the origins of the refugee problem and the different ways in which Palestinian refugees are labelled. This report distinguishes between Palestinian refugees in Lebanon (PRL) and Palestinian refugee from Syria (PRS) that now live in Lebanon. The conflict in Syria can be considered to have added a new dimension to the already critical issue of the Palestinian refugees in Lebanon.

In order to produce a more nuanced evaluation of poverty among Palestinian refugees a multi-dimensional approach is used. This approach includes assessment of economic status, food security, health conditions, education and housing and living conditions. At the same time, legal restrictions imposed by the Lebanese government on Palestinian refugees are discussed as they present a fundamental reason causing poverty.

These legal restrictions cause Lebanon to have the highest percentage of Palestinian refugees in the Diaspora living in poverty.<sup>(1)</sup> 160,000 Palestinians are considered poor or extremely poor, that is two-thirds of the total refugees in Lebanon.<sup>(2)</sup> Similarly, two-thirds of PRL are considered to be food insecure.<sup>(3)</sup> Poverty and food insecurity are significantly correlated and most poor and extreme poor experience some degree of food insecurity. A third of PRL is estimated to have a chronic illness and 4% a functional disability.<sup>(4)</sup> In terms of education, it has to be emphasised the rising percentage of early school dropout. This severely affects refugee's chances of employment, which are already reduced due to legal restrictions, which consequently

(1) ANERA, (2013). Palestinian Refugees in Lebanon. [online] Washington, DC.: ANERA, p.5. Available at: <http://www.anera.org/wp-content/uploads/2013/03/LEBRefugeeReport.pdf> [Accessed 3 Nov. 2015].

(2) Chaaban, J., Ghattas, H., Habib, R., Hanafi, S., Sahyoun, N., Salti, N., Seyfert, K. and Naamani, N. (2010). *Socio-Economic Survey of Palestinian Refugees in Lebanon*. [online] Beirut: AUB. Available at: <http://www.unrwa.org/userfiles/2011012074253.pdf> [Accessed 3 Nov. 2015].

(3) Chaaban, J., Ghattas, H., Habib, R., Hanafi, S., Sahyoun, N., Salti, N., Seyfert, K. and Naamani, N. (2010). *Socio-Economic Survey of Palestinian Refugees in Lebanon*. [online] Beirut: AUB. P.46 Available at: <http://www.unrwa.org/userfiles/2011012074253.pdf> [Accessed 3 Nov. 2015].

(4) Chaaban, J., Ghattas, H., Habib, R., Hanafi, S., Sahyoun, N., Salti, N., Seyfert, K. and Naamani, N. (2010). *Socio-Economic Survey of Palestinian Refugees in Lebanon*. [online] Beirut: AUB. p.62 Available at: <http://www.unrwa.org/userfiles/2011012074253.pdf> [Accessed 3 Nov. 2015].

increases levels of poverty. Poor quality housing continues to be a problem in communities where most Palestinian refugees live in Lebanon. A staggering 40% of households have water leaking through their roof as well as other issues.<sup>(5)</sup>

It is estimated almost 45,000 Palestinian refugees from Syria are now living in Lebanon.<sup>(6)</sup> PRS suffer from the same legal restrictions of PRL as well as specific restrictions that apply only to them. For instance the Lebanese government has placed new requirements that in essence deny PRS the ability to renew their temporary residency visas, leaving them without a clear legal status in the country and risk of arrest and deportation. PRS's economic status is extremely critical, as almost 90% of families lack an income.<sup>(7)</sup> Food security is also a major issue; two thirds of families are not able to provide three meals a day. Almost 50% of PRS families have at least one member suffering from a chronic condition.<sup>(8)</sup> The harsh winter in Lebanon is likely to worsen the vulnerability of PRS. As of 2015, 74% of families have at least one child who is not attending school, and many children have witnessed horrible violence in Syria.<sup>(9)</sup> The two main concerns with housing is that PRS live in extremely overcrowded environments as well as having to pay high rents, which most families cannot afford.

In the analysis it is discussed how within Lebanese political discourse Tawteen is the scarecrow that has been used to cause public phobia against conferring civil rights towards Palestinians. At the same time, institutionalization of basic services in the refugee camps has led to the alienation of the refugees from Lebanese society. This has contributed to refugees being denied a political agency as well as being seen as competition for already scarce jobs and resources. Though, it should be emphasized that Palestinian refugees in Lebanon spend about 340\$ million per year.<sup>(10)</sup> This significant contribution should be used as a central argument in further convincing the Lebanese government to lift labor market restrictions on Palestinians.

UNRWA's work for PRL and PRS is extremely important for their survival. However, the recent agency's funding crisis is severely affecting refugees' lives. Although UNRWA should continue to support Palestinian refugees, lack of funding at UNRWA distract from the wider issue: it is the lack of a political solution, not funding, that leaves Palestinian refugees vulnerable. Israel cannot remain indifferent to the plight of the Palestinian refugees, to which it is directly responsible for causing the expulsion of Palestinians during the 1948 War and subsequently denying them the right of return. The international community should pressure Israel to abide to international law as well as work towards an appropriate solution for Palestinian refugees. Any solution should be based on the United Nations Resolution 194 which unequivocally states that refugees wishing to return to their homes and live in peace should be permitted to do so at the earliest possible date, and that compensation should be paid for the property of those choosing not to return and for the loss of or damage to that property.

(5) Ibid

(6) UNRWA, (2015). *Syria Crisis UNRWA*. [online] Available at: <http://www.unrwa.org/syria-crisis> [Accessed 3 Nov. 2015].

(7) Amnesty International, (2015). *Denied Refuge Palestinians From Syria Seeking Safety in Lebanon*. [online] p.9. Available at: <https://www.amnesty.ch/de/laender/naher-osten-nordafrika/libanon/dok/2014/libanon-palaestinensischen-fluechtlingen-aus-syrien-einreise-verweigert/bericht-denied-refuge-palestinians-from-syria-seeking-safety-in-lebanon-.18-seiten.-juli-2014> [Accessed 3 Nov. 2015].

(8) UNRWA, (2015). *profiling the vulnerability of palestine refugees from syria living in lebanon 2015*. [online] Beirut: UNRWA. Available at: [http://www.unrwa.org/sites/default/files/final2\\_6\\_october\\_final\\_version\\_-\\_profiling\\_the\\_vulnerability\\_of\\_prs\\_in\\_lebanon\\_-\\_assessment.pdf](http://www.unrwa.org/sites/default/files/final2_6_october_final_version_-_profiling_the_vulnerability_of_prs_in_lebanon_-_assessment.pdf) [Accessed 3 Nov. 2015].

(9) UNRWA, (2015). *unrwa response and services to palestine refugees from syria (PRS) in lebanon*. [online] Available at: [http://www.unrwa.org/sites/default/files/prs\\_update\\_issue\\_42\\_01\\_jan\\_28\\_feb.pdf](http://www.unrwa.org/sites/default/files/prs_update_issue_42_01_jan_28_feb.pdf) [Accessed 3 Nov. 2015].

(10) Bailey, P. (2015). *Palestinian refugees must not be forgotten*. [online] alaraby. Available at: <http://www.alaraby.co.uk/english/comment/2015/6/19/palestinian-refugees-must-not-be-forgotten> [Accessed 3 Nov. 2015].



### Overview

The 1948 War led to the forced displacement of approximately 750'000 people, the destruction of more than five hundred villages, and the demolition of a dozen towns.<sup>(11)</sup> The impact of that war and the consequences of the Nakba (Catastrophe) are still palpable today. Of the 750,000 people displaced in 1948, around 110,000 eventually settled in Lebanon.<sup>(12)</sup> From the outset, their presence was considered a threat to the country's fragile sectarian political system.<sup>(13)</sup> 67 years later, the Lebanese government still doesn't offer Palestinians the chance to integrate, and it wouldn't even make publicly available statistics for Palestinian refugees in the country.<sup>(14)</sup>

Palestinians are currently the largest refugee population in the world.<sup>(15)</sup> As of the end of 2014, the Palestinian Central Bureau of Statistics reported that Palestinian Diaspora was now 11.8 million, which includes 5.2 million living in Arab countries and around 665,000 living in other foreign countries.<sup>(16)</sup> Currently, the number of Palestinian refugees eligible for services with the United Nations Relief and Works Agency (UNRWA) has increased to just over five million.<sup>(17)</sup> Approximately one-third of registered Palestine refugees, more than 1.5 million individuals, live in 58 recognized Palestine refugee camps; 10 camps in Jordan, 12 in Lebanon, 14 camps in the Syrian Arab Republic (5 of which are not recognized by UNRWA), 8 camps in the Gaza Strip and 19 camps the West Bank, including East Jerusalem.<sup>(18)</sup> Many other Palestinian refugees live in other Arab countries, which do not fall under UNRWA's mandate, such as Iraq, Kuwait, Egypt and Libya.<sup>(19)</sup>

According to UNHCR in 2014 Lebanon was the third largest refugee-hosting country worldwide, with 1.15 million refugees.<sup>(20)</sup> According to UNRWA, about 260,000-280,000 refugees were living in Lebanon prior to the conflict in Syria.<sup>(21)</sup> Those refugees were mainly spread across UNRWA's 12 officially recognized camps<sup>(22)</sup>, 42 informal gatherings<sup>(23)</sup> and the

(11) Rogan, E. and Shlaim, A. (2001). *The war for Palestine*. New York: Cambridge University Press.

(12) Khalili, L. (2005). *Places of Memory and Mourning: Palestinian Commemoration in the Refugee Camps of Lebanon*. *Comparative Studies of South Asia, Africa and the Middle East*, 25(1), pp.30-45.

(13) Pappé, I. (2006). *The ethnic cleansing of Palestine*. Oxford: Oneworld.

(14) The Electronic Intifada, (2010). *Unwelcome guests: Palestinian refugees in Lebanon*. [online] Available at: <https://electronicintifada.net/content/unwelcome-guests-palestinian-refugees-lebanon/8917> [Accessed 4 Nov. 2015].

(15) Un.org, (2015). *United Nations Global Issues - Refugees*. [online] Available at: <http://www.un.org/en/globalissues/briefingpapers/refugees/> [Accessed 3 Nov. 2015].

(16) Imemc.org, (2015). *Number of Palestinians in the World is 11.8 Million, says Statistics Bureau - International Middle East Media Center*. [online] Available at: <http://www.imemc.org/article/66665> [Accessed 3 Nov. 2015].

(17) UNRWA, (2015). *Palestine refugees | UNRWA*. [online] Available at: <http://www.unrwa.org/palestine-refugees> [Accessed 3 Nov. 2015].

(18) UNRWA, (2015). *Palestine refugees | UNRWA*. [online] Available at: <http://www.unrwa.org/palestine-refugees> [Accessed 3 Nov. 2015].

(19) Erakat, N. (2014). *Palestinian Refugees and the Syrian Uprising: Filling the Protection Gap during Secondary Forced Displacement*. *International Journal of Refugee Law*, 26(4), pp.581-621.

(20) UNHCR, (2015). *Global Trends Forced Displacement in 2014*. World at War. [online] Geneva: UNHCR, p.2. Available at: <http://unhcr.org/556725e69.pdf> [Accessed 3 Nov. 2015].

(21) UNRWA and WFP, (2014). *NEEDS ASSESSMENT FOR PALESTINE REFUGEES FROM SYRIA*. [online] UNRWA. Available at: [http://file:///C:/Documents%20and%20Settings/Administrator/My%20Documents/Downloads/PRSNeedAssessmentReportFinal-24062014%20\(3\).pdf](http://file:///C:/Documents%20and%20Settings/Administrator/My%20Documents/Downloads/PRSNeedAssessmentReportFinal-24062014%20(3).pdf) [Accessed 3 Nov. 2015].

(22) UNRWA, (2015). *Lebanon | UNRWA*. [online] Available at: <http://www.unrwa.org/where-we-work/lebanon> [Accessed 3 Nov. 2015].

(23) UNDP, (2015). *Improving Living Conditions In Palestinian Gatherings Host Communities*. [online] Beirut. Available at: <http://www.lb.undp.org/content/dam/lebanon/docs/CrisisPreventionRecovery/Publications/English%20Brochure%20-%20Aug%202015.pdf> [Accessed 3 Nov. 2015].

remainder lives in Lebanese cities and villages. Though, UNRWA's statistics are incomplete since they do not include unregistered refugees who came to Lebanon between 1952 and 1956.<sup>(24)</sup> In addition, those who entered the country after 1970 are considered "undocumented" Palestinian refugees.

It has been estimated that unofficial refugee camps or informal gatherings account for at least 110,000 Palestinian refugees.<sup>(25)</sup> Fafo defined gatherings as neighborhoods located outside the camps where 25 or more Palestinian refugee households live together, constituting relatively homogeneous refugee communities.<sup>(26)</sup> The formation of the first gatherings dates back to the early years of the Palestinian Nakba (1948-1950).<sup>(27)</sup> Most of the gatherings emerged later during the Lebanese civil war (1975-1990), due to fighting, destruction of camps and demographic expansion.<sup>(28)</sup>

It is estimated an almost 20 percent increase in the Palestinian population in Lebanon, spilling over across the border with Syria.<sup>(29)</sup> Prior to the erupting of the Syrian conflict, the Palestinian community in Lebanon, was best described as one of protracted (long term) refugees rather than refugees fleeing from recent conflict. However, the conflict that erupted in 2011 has added a new dimension to the Palestinian refugee crisis that Lebanon already faced. The approximately 45,000 Palestinian refugees from Syria (PRS) that have entered Lebanon have further worsened the already critical conditions that the refugees faced.<sup>(30)</sup>

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(24) The Electronic Intifada, (2010). *Unwelcome guests: Palestinian refugees in Lebanon*. [online] Available at: <https://electronicintifada.net/content/unwelcome-guests-palestinian-refugees-lebanon/8917> [Accessed 4 Nov. 2015].

(25) Ibid

(26) Fafo, (2005). *Falling Behind: A Brief on the Living Conditions of Palestinian Refugees in Lebanon*. [online] Oslo: Fafo. Available at: [http://www.fafo.no/~fafo/media/com\\_netsukii/464.pdf](http://www.fafo.no/~fafo/media/com_netsukii/464.pdf) [Accessed 3 Nov. 2015].

(27) UNDP, (2015). *IMPROVING LIVING CONDITIONS IN PALESTINIAN GATHERINGS Host Communities*. [online] Beirut. Available at: <http://www.lb.undp.org/content/dam/lebanon/docs/CrisisPreventionRecovery/Publications/English%20Brochure%20-%20Aug%202015.pdf> [Accessed 3 Nov. 2015].

(28) Ibid

(29) UNRWA, (2015). *profiling the vulnerability of palestine refugees from syria living in lebanon 2015*. [online] Beirut: UNRWA. Available at: [http://www.unrwa.org/sites/default/files/final2\\_6\\_october\\_final\\_version-\\_profiling\\_the\\_vulnerability\\_of\\_prs\\_in\\_lebanon\\_-\\_assesment.pdf](http://www.unrwa.org/sites/default/files/final2_6_october_final_version-_profiling_the_vulnerability_of_prs_in_lebanon_-_assesment.pdf) [Accessed 3 Nov. 2015].

(30) Ibid



### Methodology

In the recent proposal of the United Nations Sustainable Development Goals, 193 UN states unanimously committed to end poverty in all its forms everywhere.<sup>(31)</sup> In the proposal for the SDGs it is stated that 'Poverty eradication is the greatest global challenge facing the world today'.<sup>(32)</sup> Poverty is generally known to be among the many issues faced by people who are forced to flee their homes and communities because of violent conflict or persecution. Refugees suffer physical, economical and emotional trauma, which have long term effects on their ability to quickly recover.<sup>(33)</sup> When they begin their new displaced lives most of their assets have been lost. It is typically assumed that refugees and poverty are synonymous but it should not be considered inevitable that over time refugees remain poor; at times they can even economically surpass their hosts.<sup>(34)</sup> In fact, as argued by Gaim Kibreab,<sup>(35)</sup> displacement can be an empowering event since the losses and sufferings refugees experience can set free new sources of innovation and creativity. It could also stimulate change and innovative adaptation. However, in most developing countries, as it is in Lebanon, refugee resources are stifled by host governments' unfavorable policies, which severely diminish the ability of refugees to use their skills to construct sustainable livelihoods.

Poverty is more than the lack of income and resources to ensure a sustainable livelihood. Poverty is multifaceted, manifested by conditions that include malnutrition, inadequate shelter, unsanitary living conditions, low educational achievement and the absence of quality schooling, chronic ill health.<sup>(36)</sup> Its manifestations also include limited access to basic services, social discrimination and exclusion as well as the lack of participation in decision-making.<sup>(37)</sup>

This report takes a multi-dimensional approach to poverty, assuming it to be more than just the lack of income or assets but to include a household or individual's education, health, food security and other indicators. It can be asserted that in order to take advantage of their innate capabilities to participate productively in society, refugees require a certain degree of security in non-economic domains such as housing or health.

Therefore the present report assesses poverty along five dimensions: namely economic status, housing, health, food security and education. According to this framework, a Palestinian household is considered to be poor if its members are unemployed or in unstable employment, live in bad housing conditions, are of poor health, suffer food insecurity and do not have appropriate education. Not all, but most of these characteristics define a poor Palestinian household.

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(31) Sustainabledevelopment.un.org, (2015). *Proposal for Sustainable Development Goals ∴ Sustainable Development Knowledge Platform*. [online] Available at: <https://sustainabledevelopment.un.org/sdgsproposal> [Accessed 3 Nov. 2015].

(32) *Ibis*

(33) Segal, U. and Elliott, D. (2012). *Refugees worldwide*. Santa Barbara, Calif.: Praeger, p. 91.

(34) Segal, U. and Elliott, D. (2012), p.92.

(35) Kibreab, G. (2003) Displacement, Host Governments' Policies, and Constraints on the Construction of Sustainable Livelihoods. *International Social Science Journal* 55(175).

(36) United Nations, (2005). *HANDBOOK ON POVERTY STATISTICS: CONCEPTS, METHODS AND POLICY USE*. [online] UN, p.6. Available at: [http://unstats.un.org/unsd/methods/poverty/pdf/un\\_book%20final%2030%20dec%2005.pdf](http://unstats.un.org/unsd/methods/poverty/pdf/un_book%20final%2030%20dec%2005.pdf) [Accessed 3 Nov. 2015].

(37) United Nations Sustainable Development, (2015). *Poverty - United Nations Sustainable Development*. [online] Available at: <http://www.un.org/sustainabledevelopment/poverty/> [Accessed 3 Nov. 2015].

This report is based on desk research drawing on information collected predominantly from organizations such as UNRWA, ANERA, UNDP, BADIL, FAFO, and Amnesty International.

Sources of information will also include data collected in a 2010 study carried by the American University of Beirut, which is the first study to evaluate poverty among refugees in Lebanon in an academically sound and comprehensive way.

In the absence of systematic monitoring and comprehensive registration of all displaced Palestinians, BADIL asserts that it remains difficult, and is sometimes impossible, to produce accurate statistical data reflecting the phenomenon.<sup>(38)</sup> Furthermore, few accurate data is available on the demographic and socioeconomic characteristics of Palestinian refugee populations outside UNRWA's area of operation.<sup>(39)</sup> For these reasons it is difficult to portray an accurate evaluation of poverty levels that is truly representative all Palestinian refugees in Lebanon. Nonetheless, given the limited literature (written in English) that focuses on poverty among Palestinian refugees in Lebanon, this study should be considered of significant importance. The ambition of this report is not to only be an informative source but also to shape policy directed at Palestinian refugees in Lebanon.

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(38) BADIL, (2015). *Survey of Palestinian Refugees and Internally Displaced Persons*. [online] Bethlehem: BADIL, p.v. Available at: [http://www.badil.org/phocadownloadpap/Badil\\_docs/publications/Survey2012.pdf](http://www.badil.org/phocadownloadpap/Badil_docs/publications/Survey2012.pdf) [Accessed 3 Nov. 2015].

(39) BADIL, (2015). *Survey of Palestinian Refugees and Internally Displaced Persons*. [online] Bethlehem: BADIL, p.2. Available at: [http://www.badil.org/phocadownloadpap/Badil\\_docs/publications/Survey2012.pdf](http://www.badil.org/phocadownloadpap/Badil_docs/publications/Survey2012.pdf) [Accessed 3 Nov. 2015].



## Chapter Three:

### Palestinian refugees in Lebanon (PRL)

As of January 2015, the number of refugees registered with UNRWA in Lebanon is 493,134 and many of them live in the 12 recognized Palestine refugee camps.<sup>(40)</sup> However, the actual number of refugees living the country is much less. About 260,000-280,000 refugees were living in Lebanon prior to the conflict in Syria.<sup>(41)</sup> More than half of the refugee population lives in 12 refugee camps (62%) as compared to 38% living in 42 informal gatherings, mainly in camp vicinity; others live in towns and cities across the country.<sup>(42)</sup>

Palestinian refugees living in 42 gatherings are considered to be among the most vulnerable host communities in Lebanon. According to the Danish Refugee Council figures on the population data in gatherings are, as difficult to obtain and impossible to check.<sup>(43)</sup> Nonetheless, a figure is given by the UNDP; they show that these gatherings have around 110,000 dwellers and also host today around 30,000 Palestinian (and Syrian) refugees displaced from Syria, increasing the population by 27%.<sup>(44)</sup> This has been exerting unprecedented pressure on the physical and living environment and available resources. The gatherings fall under the geographical domain of 25 municipalities. Nonetheless, these municipalities do not provide basic urban services in the gatherings.<sup>(45)</sup> Similarly, these areas do not benefit from basic urban services from UNRWA that are provided only within the boundaries of the 12 official Palestinian camps, since they fall outside of its mandate.

(40) UNRWA, (2015). *Lebanon | UNRWA*. [online] Available at: <http://www.unrwa.org/where-we-work/lebanon> [Accessed 3 Nov. 2015].

(41) UNRWA, (2015). *Fields of Operation*. [online] UNRWA. Available at: [http://www.unrwa.org/sites/default/files/unrwa\\_fields\\_of\\_operation\\_map\\_2015.pdf](http://www.unrwa.org/sites/default/files/unrwa_fields_of_operation_map_2015.pdf) [Accessed 3 Nov. 2015].

(42) Chaaban, J., Ghattas, H., Habib, R., Hanafi, S., Sahyoun, N., Salti, N., Seyfert, K. and Naamani, N. (2010). *Socio-Economic Survey of Palestinian Refugees in Lebanon*. [online] Beirut: AUB. Available at: <http://www.unrwa.org/userfiles/2011012074253.pdf> [Accessed 3 Nov. 2015].

(43) Danish Refugee Council, (2005). *Needs Assessment of Palestinian Refugees in Gatherings in Lebanon*. [online] Beirut: Danish Refugee Council. Available at: [http://file:///C:/Documents%20and%20Settings/Administrator/My%20Documents/Downloads/needsassessmentofpalestinianrefugeesingatheringsinlebanon-drcjuly2005-printed%20\(1\).pdf](http://file:///C:/Documents%20and%20Settings/Administrator/My%20Documents/Downloads/needsassessmentofpalestinianrefugeesingatheringsinlebanon-drcjuly2005-printed%20(1).pdf) [Accessed 3 Nov. 2015].

(44) UNDP, (2015). *IMPROVING LIVING CONDITIONS IN PALESTINIAN GATHERINGS Host Communities*. [online] Beirut. Available at: <http://www.lb.undp.org/content/dam/lebanon/docs/CrisisPreventionRecovery/Publications/English%20Brochure%20-%20Aug%202015.pdf> [Accessed 3 Nov. 2015].

(45) Ibid



### 3.1 Legal status

Despite their longstanding presence in Lebanon Palestine refugees do not benefit from key aspects of social, political and economic life. This causes Lebanon to have the highest percentage of Palestinian refugees living in extreme poverty.<sup>(46)</sup> The pre Syrian crisis refugee population has historically suffered from limited rights and limited access to public services and employment. Lebanon is not a signatory of the 1951 U.N. Refugee Convention and its 1967 protocol does not recognize the basic rights and legal obligations to people with refugee status.<sup>(47)</sup>

Furthermore, Lebanon has signed the League of Arab States' Casablanca Protocol in 1965, which obliges Arab countries to grant Palestinian refugees rights to employment, residency and freedom of movement, while maintaining their Palestinian identity by not naturalizing them. However, Beirut didn't live up to its commitments.<sup>(48)</sup>

This shows how Palestinians face important legal restrictions that limit their rights, and have limited right to use state-provided services such as health and education.<sup>(49)</sup> Stateless Palestinians who came from outside Lebanon do not enjoy the rights given to foreigners holding citizenship from another country. Checkpoints restricting access to most of the camps thwart trade and commerce with neighboring communities.<sup>(50)</sup>

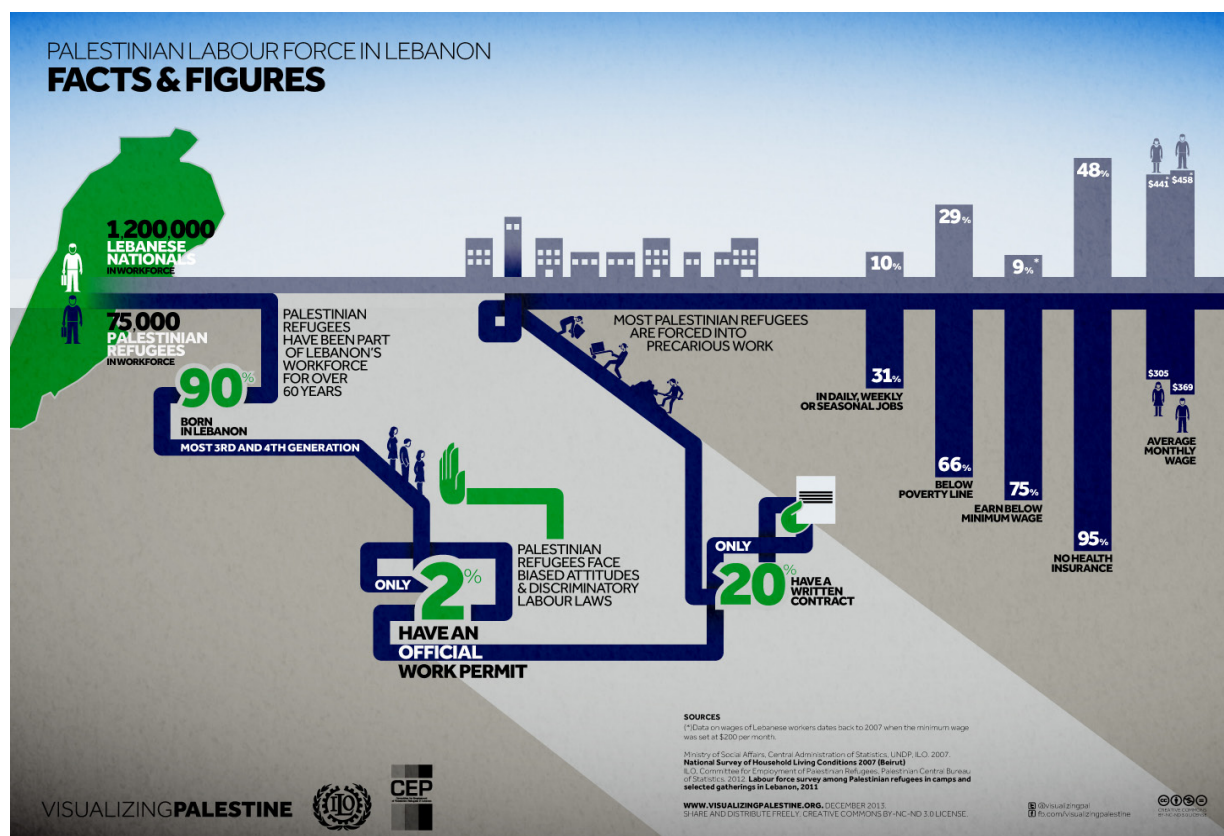
(46) ANERA, (2013). *Palestinian Refugees in Lebanon*. [online] Washington, DC.: ANERA, p.5. Available at: <http://www.anera.org/wp-content/uploads/2013/03/LEBRefugeeReport.pdf> [Accessed 3 Nov. 2015].

(47) Ibid.

(48) Resetdoc.org, (2013). *Human Rights: Palestinian refugees stuck between naturalization and right of return - Andrea Glioti | Reset Dialogues on Civilizations*. [online] Available at: <http://www.resetdoc.org/story/00000022208> [Accessed 3 Nov. 2015].

(49) UNRWA, (2015). *Protecting Palestine Refugees*. [online] Beirut: UNRWA, p.13. Available at: [http://www.unrwa.org/sites/default/files/protecting\\_palestine\\_refugees.pdf](http://www.unrwa.org/sites/default/files/protecting_palestine_refugees.pdf) [Accessed 3 Nov. 2015].

(50) ANERA, (2013). *Palestinian Refugees in Lebanon*. [online] Washington, DC.: ANERA, p.5. Available at: <http://www.anera.org/wp-content/uploads/2013/03/LEBRefugeeReport.pdf> [Accessed 3 Nov. 2015].



These legal issues cause the majority of the camps' population completely dependent on UNRWA and other non-profits - local and international - for everything from schools to humanitarian assistance. Within camps UNRWA provides housing, water, and electricity. UNRWA also provides education, health care services as well as some additional welfare services to Palestinians living in camps. Although a total of 46 Arab organizations and 20 foreign NGOs assist Palestinian refugees in Lebanon, the volume and scope of their assistance pales in comparison to services delivered by UNRWA. In essence, the government does not provide a social safety net for Palestinians living in Lebanon.

### 3.2 Economic status

Prior to the conflict emerging in Syria, the Palestinian refugees in Lebanon were already highly marginalized, with two-thirds considered poor or extremely poor.<sup>(51)</sup> The poverty line (as calculated in 2010) stands at US\$ 6 a day, which allows to cover basic food and non-food requirements of an adult refugee. Two out of three Palestinian refugees subsist on less than \$6 a day<sup>(52)</sup>, which equates to an estimated 160,000 individuals. Poverty among PRL is stagnant to 65%, affecting young refugees most, who continue to lack of access to decent work opportunities.

Poverty has also been estimated at the extreme spectrum of poverty. An extreme poverty threshold of US\$ 2.17 allows purchasing enough food to satisfy the daily basic food needs of an adult Palestine refugee. 6.6% of Palestine refugees spend less than the monetary equivalent necessary to cover their basic daily food needs. This amounts to 16,000 individuals.

Saida and Tyre, in the south of Lebanon, gather more than 81% of all extremely poor refugees, and a third of all poor live in Tyre. The income of a considerable majority of refugees in Lebanon (77%) is under \$500.<sup>(53)</sup> Roughly 56% of Palestinian refugee workers are jobless, leaving only 37% of the working age population employed. Joblessness among refugees has a strong gender dimension: Only 13% of women are employed compared to 65% of men.<sup>(54)</sup> In 2005, a survey commissioned by FAFO found that 44 per cent of Palestinian households fall into the lowest income bracket (earning less than \$2,400 per year) compared to 6 per cent of Lebanese households.<sup>(55)</sup>

In 2015 the unemployment rate<sup>(56)</sup> among PRL reached a historical high of 23.2%. While the rate was comparable to the Lebanese rate of 8% both in 2010 and 2012, this significant increase can be attributed to the influx of Syrian and PRS workers into the Lebanese labour market.

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(51) UNRWA, (2015). *Syria regional crisis emergency appeal*. [online] UNRWA, p.15. Available at: [http://www.unrwa.org/sites/default/files/2015\\_syria\\_emergency\\_appeal.pdf](http://www.unrwa.org/sites/default/files/2015_syria_emergency_appeal.pdf) [Accessed 3 Nov. 2015].

(52) Chaaban, J., Ghattas, H., Habib, R., Hanafi, S., Sahyoun, N., Salti, N., Seyfert, K. and Naamani, N. (2010). *Socio-Economic Survey of Palestinian Refugees in Lebanon*. [online] Beirut: AUB. Available at: <http://www.unrwa.org/userfiles/2011012074253.pdf> [Accessed 3 Nov. 2015].

(53) PRC, Thabit, Wajeb, (2009). *The sixtieth anniversary of the establishment of UNRWA 1949-2009, Poll of Palestinian Refugees in Lebanon and Syria*. PRC, Thabit, Wajeb, p.9.

(54) Ibid

(55) Fafo (2005), 'Falling behind. A Brief on the Living Conditions of Palestinian Refugees in Lebanon. Tiltne, Age A. (ed.), Fafo-report 464. Oslo: Fafo Institute of Applied International Studies. Available at : <http://www.fafo.no/pub/464/464.pdf> [Accessed 3 Nov. 2015].

(56) The unemployment rate is defined as those not working but looking for a job, out of the workforce.

Employment and the type of jobs refugees are engaged in are extremely important predictors of poverty. The precarious and low-pay nature of jobs that Palestine refugees typically hold in Lebanon continues to impose a negative burden on their livelihoods. Most of the employed refugee population occupies low skill jobs and elementary occupations, and they are subject to harsh, exploitive and insecure working conditions.

It is important to emphasise the terrible working conditions of PRL, for most of them Decent Working Conditions are almost nonexistent. According to the International Labour Organization, the vast majority of the PRL labor force works informally with less than 3.3% having an officiated employment contract and less than 2% holding a work permit.<sup>(57)</sup>

### 3.3 Food Security

The World Food Summit of 1996 defined food security as existing “when all people at all times have access to sufficient, safe, nutritious food to maintain a healthy and active life”.<sup>(58)</sup> Poverty is higher for Palestine refugees living inside the camps than those outside them, and low income is a primary cause of high poverty rates among refugees.

Two out of three Palestinian refugees can be considered to be dissatisfied with their diet, more than half (58%) are vulnerable to food insecurity, a third are mildly food insecure, more than a quarter (28%) are moderately food insecure and 15% suffer severe food insecurity.<sup>(59)</sup> Elements affecting food insecurity are similar to those affecting poverty. Regionally refugees in the North are less likely to experience food insecurity than in other areas, especially Tyre. In fact, two thirds of the food insecure live in the South (Tyre and Saida).

Poverty and food insecurity are significantly correlated and most poor and extreme poor also experience some degree of food insecurity. Manifestations of food insecurity in the diet include very low fresh food intake. Fresh fruit intake is remarkably low in the population as a whole as more than half of Palestinian refugees consume fruit less than once per day.<sup>(60)</sup> Other fresh foods, in particular meat, chicken and dairy intakes are also affected by food insecurity. Thus food insecure Palestine households suffer from low quality diets.

It is estimated that approximately one third of the population is not meeting their micronutrient requirements. It is widely recognized that micronutrient deficiencies cause numerous health risks to the development of children, putting the refugee population in Lebanon in danger. Moreover, it is reported that 57% eat sweets and 68% consume sweetened drinks frequently.<sup>(61)</sup> This is also worrying as food insecurity coupled with a diet high in sugar or fat and low in micronutrients increases the burden of chronic diseases, such as diabetes and cardiovascular diseases.

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(57) International Labour Organization, (2012). *Palestinian Employment In Lebanon Facts And Challenges Labour force survey among Palestinian refugees living in camps and gatherings In Lebanon*. [online] ILO and CEP. Available at: [http://www.ilo.org/wcmsp5/groups/public/---arabstates/---ro-beirut/documents/publication/wcms\\_236502.pdf](http://www.ilo.org/wcmsp5/groups/public/---arabstates/---ro-beirut/documents/publication/wcms_236502.pdf) [Accessed 17 Nov. 2015].

(58) Who.int, (2015). *WHO | Food Security*. [online] Available at: <http://www.who.int/trade/glossary/story028/en/> [Accessed 4 Nov. 2015].

(59) Chaaban, J., Ghattas, H., Habib, R., Hanafi, S., Sahyoun, N., Salti, N., Seyfert, K. and Naamani, N. (2010). *Socio-Economic Survey of Palestinian Refugees in Lebanon*. [online] Beirut: AUB. P.46 Available at: <http://www.unrwa.org/userfiles/2011012074253.pdf> [Accessed 3 Nov. 2015].

(60) Ibid

(61) Ibid



### 3.4 Health Conditions

A third of the Palestine refugee population is estimated to have chronic illness and 4% a functional disability.<sup>(62)</sup> Hypertension is particularly common, which is cause for concern taking into account the changing eating habits outlined above. This greatly affects poverty. All households with a disabled head of family live in extreme poverty.

In 2010, 25% of refugee households had an acute illness in the past six months; a third of these had the flu or common cold or other respiratory tract illnesses. 20% had an acute gastro-intestinal tract illness.<sup>(63)</sup> Acute illnesses pose a particular risk for the Palestine refugee population, most of which live around the poverty line, since they often lead to extra-ordinary expenses and periods out of work.

Considering that 95% of the population is without insurance and most of them in precarious employment, they are unlikely to have sick leaves, thus a case of acute illness may push a household into poverty.<sup>(64)</sup> As for mental health, 21% stated that they experienced depression, anxiety or distress.

Because of legal restrictions imposed by the government, Palestinian refugees do not have access to Lebanon's public health system. Those living in refugee camps can get primary health care at UNRWA and non-profit clinics, which are significantly understaffed and underfunded. The ratio of doctors to patients is very low: a doctor at an UNRWA health clinic usually sees 117 patients per day.<sup>(65)</sup>

Not all medical services are provided in every camp. This causes refugees to visit another camp if they need for instance dental work or laboratory tests. There is only one kidney dialysis center, located in Saida.<sup>(66)</sup> Refugees must travel from across Lebanon three times a week for dialysis, which is not covered by UNRWA. Hospital care is often beyond the reach of the refugees since most cannot afford the expense and UNRWA can only offer partial coverage in UNRWA-contracted hospitals.<sup>(67)</sup> Patients, particularly those who suffer from chronic diseases, must seek financial help from family, individuals or local charities to cover hospital expenses.

### 3.5 Education

Education is found to be an important determinant of poverty among refugees. Palestinians with better education are more likely to be employed. UNRWA manages the basic education system in the Palestinian refugee camps in Lebanon. In Lebanon UNRWA manages 67 schools accommodating 38,173 pupils.

A recent ethnographic study<sup>(68)</sup> has drawn attention to the concerns raised by Palestinian families and civil society in relation to the quality of education received by most Palestinian children. In particular it has been emphasised the rising percentage of early school dropout. Structural and institutional reasons have been the cause of this. Firstly, structural factors include the legal

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(62) Chaaban, J., Ghattas, H., Habib, R., Hanafi, S., Sahyoun, N., Salti, N., Seyfert, K. and Naamani, N. (2010). *Socio-Economic Survey of Palestinian Refugees in Lebanon*. [online] Beirut: AUB. p.62 Available at: <http://www.unrwa.org/userfiles/2011012074253.pdf> [Accessed 3 Nov. 2015].

(63) Ibid

(64) Chaaban, J., Ghattas, H., Habib, R., Hanafi, S., Sahyoun, N., Salti, N., Seyfert, K. and Naamani, N. (2010). *Socio-Economic Survey of Palestinian Refugees in Lebanon*. [online] Beirut: AUB. p.62 Available at: <http://www.unrwa.org/userfiles/2011012074253.pdf> [Accessed 3 Nov. 2015].

(65) ANERA, (2013). *Palestinian Refugees in Lebanon*. [online] Washington, DC.: ANERA, p.7. Available at: <http://www.anera.org/wp-content/uploads/2013/03/LEBRefugeeReport.pdf> [Accessed 3 Nov. 2015].

(66) Ibid

(67) Ibid

(68) Al-Hroub, A. (2015). Tracking Drop-Out Students in Palestinian Refugee Camps in Lebanon. *Educational Research Quarterly*, [online] 38(3), p.52. Available at: <http://38.3> [Accessed 3 Nov. 2015].

restrictions faced by Palestinian refugees in Lebanon. For instance, the limited prospects to attend universities, mainly because of lack of funds to pay for fees (the cost of higher education in Lebanon is among the highest in the region) and because most jobs for graduates are effectively denied to Palestinian refugees in Lebanon.<sup>(69)</sup> Secondly, institutional aspects relate to UNRWA's management of its educational programs. The lack of abundant extracurricular activities, such as physical education and arts classes in addition to the limited sports and leisure activities, which are a result of the lack of space and resources, also contribute to high drop-out levels.<sup>(70)</sup> On top of that the situation is exacerbated by the poor sanitary conditions in the camps, which negatively influence the morale and motivation of students, as well as limiting their performance.

Some studies estimate that the majority of dropouts leave school because of low or very low academic achievement<sup>(71)</sup>; the majority of students, who had dropped out, had experienced at least one social or economic risk factor. Moreover, a high percentage of dropouts had parents that had a basic education or less: 87% of dropouts had a father who had received only a basic education or was illiterate.

Another study similarly points to child labour, Lebanese labour laws, early marriage, and school infrastructure, resources, and educational policies as the main reasons for dropping out.<sup>(72)</sup> What is clear is that the root causes of dropping out are varied and interrelated. Palestine refugee students in Lebanon do not tend to drop out for one single reason. Multiple factors are at play, and no single factor can accurately predict who will drop out. The reasons for dropout from schools for boys and girls are similar except for girls, they have the additional factor of suitability, timing, location and security.

It has been suggested that education can help refugees secure more and better jobs. A refugee with a university degree is more likely to be employed than one holding a Brevet (official diploma qualifying entry into secondary) or lower. In addition, of those with a university degree, 70% work as professionals or associated professionals, while those with a Brevet or less work mainly in elementary occupations.<sup>(73)</sup> Employment rates for women who attended further education are also higher.<sup>(74)</sup> Poverty is also significantly higher when the household head has low education (primary and below). Poverty incidence drops to 60.5% when the household head has an above primary educational attainment, and extreme poverty is almost divided by two.

### 3.6 Housing and Living Conditions

Poor quality housing continues to be a problem in communities where most Palestinian refugees live in Lebanon. It is reported that 40% of households have water leaking through their roof or walls, and 8% of households live in shelters where the roof and/or walls are made from corrugated iron, wood or asbestos. Restrictions on the living space have resulted in almost 8% of households reporting living in overcrowded conditions (more than three people live in one room). Bad housing is concentrated in the South, particularly Rashidiyeh and Ain el Helweh camps. 9% of households have reported having no water heater or fridge, compared to 3% among Lebanese households.

(69) Ibid

(70) Al-Hroub, A. (2015). Tracking Drop-Out Students in Palestinian Refugee Camps in Lebanon. *Educational Research Quarterly*, [online] 38(3), p.53. Available at: <http://38.3> [Accessed 3 Nov. 2015].

(71) UNRWA, (2015). *UNRWA School Dropout: An Agency Wide Study* | UNRWA. [online] Available at: <http://www.unrwa.org/resources/reports/unrwa-school-dropout-agency-wide-study> [Accessed 17 Nov. 2015].

(72) Aub.edu.lb, (2011). *UNRWA school dropouts in Palestinian Refugee Camps in Lebanon*. [online] Available at: [https://www.aub.edu.lb/ifi/public\\_policy/pal\\_camps/Documents/research\\_reports](https://www.aub.edu.lb/ifi/public_policy/pal_camps/Documents/research_reports) [Accessed 17 Nov. 2015].

(73) Chaaban, J., Ghattas, H., Habib, R., Hanafi, S., Sahyoun, N., Salti, N., Seyfert, K. and Naamani, N. (2010). *Socio-Economic Survey of Palestinian Refugees in Lebanon*. [online] Beirut: AUB. p.36 Available at: <http://www.unrwa.org/userfiles/2011012074253.pdf> [Accessed 3 Nov. 2015].

(74) Ibid

According to Ugland's study, 60 % of refugees reside in *dars*, which can be described as one room constructions that are built onto as the need arises, and can have auxiliary rooms, balconies and other such structures built out of whatever materials are available.<sup>(75)</sup> The most common building materials in the camps were cement, plastered stone, and building stone. However, 8 % of homes used a material called "eternite" for roofing, which the study found to be linked with higher instances of chronic illness and others still used asbestos which is known to cause illness and even death.<sup>(76)</sup> Sanitation has been a consistent issue since the camps' founding. It is especially problematic for gatherings, where 33 % of households face issues with refuse disposal.<sup>(77)</sup>



## Chapter Four:

### Palestinian Refugees from Syria in Lebanon (PRS)

The crisis in Syria and the resulting influx of refugees to Lebanon has made the country the largest per capita recipient of refugees in the world.<sup>(78)</sup> The conflict in Syria has significantly contributed to the plight of Palestinian refugees. The escalating violence makes movement and access more difficult and causes severe adversity. Lebanon effectively closed its borders to PRS in May 2014. 42,284 PRS are recorded to reside in Lebanon in August 2015, the number has decreased from the recorded 53,070 in April 2014 namely due to emigration from Lebanon to Europe and other countries.

(75) Ugland, O. et al. (2003). *Difficult past, uncertain future: living conditions among Palestinian refugees in camps and gatherings in Lebanon*. [online] Oslo: Fafo, p.186. Available at: <http://almashriq.hiof.no/general/300/320/327/fafo/reports/409.pdf> [Accessed 3 Nov. 2015].

(76) Chaaban, J., Ghattas, H., Habib, R., Hanafi, S., Sahyoun, N., Salti, N., Seyfert, K. and Naamani, N. (2010). *Socio-Economic Survey of Palestinian Refugees in Lebanon*. [online] Beirut: AUB. p.74 Available at: <http://www.unrwa.org/userfiles/2011012074253.pdf> [Accessed 3 Nov. 2015].

(77) Amnesty International, (2007). *LEBANON: EXILED AND SUFFERING: Palestinian Refugees In Lebanon*. [online] Amnesty International, p.9. Available at: <http://file:///C:/Documents%20and%20Settings/Administrator/My%20Documents/Downloads/mde180102007en.pdf> [Accessed 3 Nov. 2015].

(78) WFP, (2015). *Special Focus Lebanon*. [online] p.1. Available at: <http://documents.wfp.org/stellent/groups/public/documents/ena/wfp269259.pdf> [Accessed 3 Nov. 2015].



The arrival of PRS to the country has not spared its existing Palestine refugee gatherings and camps, which suffer from overcrowding and dire living conditions: the majority of PRS – 54.8% – are settled in the 12 camps throughout Lebanon, whereas the remaining 45.2% live in gatherings located in fringe areas around the camps and across the country. <sup>(79)</sup>

This chapter reveals numerous basic needs being unmet among Palestinian refugees from Syria. They don't have enough food. Their inadequate shelters are falling apart. They are affected by adverse climate conditions as in winter, they suffer from the cold. The huge influx of refugees is also having a devastating effect on the housing, financial, and psychological capacities of the camps, where resources were already strained. <sup>(80)</sup> In fact the poor living conditions have been exacerbated by the influx of refugees from Syria (including both Palestinians and some Syrian refugees) who have moved into the camps.

## 4.1 Legal status

In May 2014 the Lebanese authorities put in place new requirements for Palestinian refugees from Syria trying to enter Lebanon. They are required to show - prior to entry - that they meet certain conditions for temporary residence in Lebanon or that they are only temporarily residing in the country to travel elsewhere. <sup>(81)</sup>

The effect of these requirements - which many Palestinian refugees from Syria cannot meet - has been to deny people fleeing conflict in Syria the ability to seek refuge in Lebanon. In addition, from interviews carried by Amnesty International with PRS in May 2014, it seems that some Palestinian refugees from Syria already residing in Lebanon are not being allowed to renew their temporary residency visas, leaving them without a clear legal status in the country and at risk of arrest and deportation. <sup>(82)</sup> This has also been confirmed by non-governmental sources.

Under the new "system" PRS who want to enter Lebanon must hold one of these Lebanese documents: an entry visa approved by the General Directorate of General Security; a Lebanese residency visa of one to three years; or an exit and return visa. <sup>(83)</sup> Securing any of these documents before leaving Syria is extremely difficult. <sup>(84)</sup> The requirements which Palestinian refugees from Syria must meet in order to enter Lebanon do not apply to Syrians.

The limited rights afforded to Palestinian refugees in Lebanon contravene international law, including the International Covenant on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights (ICESCR),

<sup>(79)</sup> Ibid

<sup>(80)</sup> ANERA, (2013). *Palestinian Refugees from Syria in Lebanon*. [online] Washington, DC.: ANERA, p.4. Available at: <http://www.anera.org/wp-content/uploads/2013/04/PalestinianRefugeesFromSyriainLebanon.pdf> [Accessed 3 Nov. 2015].

<sup>(81)</sup> ReliefWeb, (2015). *Lebanon all but bars Palestinians fleeing Syria*. [online] Available at: <http://reliefweb.int/report/syrian-arab-republic/lebanon-all-bars-palestinians-fleeing-syria> [Accessed 3 Nov. 2015].

<sup>(82)</sup> Amnesty International, (2015). *Denied Refuge Palestinians From Syria Seeking Safety In Lebanon*. [online] p.3. Available at: <https://www.amnesty.ch/de/laender/naher-osten-nordafrika/libanon/dok/2014/libanon-palaestinensischen-fluechtlingen-aus-syrien-einreise-verweigert/bericht-denied-refuge-palestinians-from-syria-seeking-safety-in-lebanon-.18-seiten.-juli-2014> [Accessed 3 Nov. 2015].

<sup>(83)</sup> News, L. and Syria, M. (2014). *Machnouk: New entry rules for Palestinians from Syria*. [online] The Daily Star Newspaper - Lebanon. Available at: <http://www.dailystar.com.lb/News/Lebanon-News/2014/May-09/255811-machnouknew-entry-rules-for-palestinians-from-syria.ashx#axzz33IQGMduu> [Accessed 3 Nov. 2015].

<sup>(84)</sup> Amnesty International, (2015). *DENIED REFUGE PALESTINIANS FROM SYRIA SEEKING SAFETY IN LEBANON*. [online] p.3. Available at: <https://www.amnesty.ch/de/laender/naher-osten-nordafrika/libanon/dok/2014/libanon-palaestinensischen-fluechtlingen-aus-syrien-einreise-verweigert/bericht-denied-refuge-palestinians-from-syria-seeking-safety-in-lebanon-.18-seiten.-juli-2014> [Accessed 3 Nov. 2015].

the International Convention on the Elimination of Racial Discrimination (ICERD) and the Convention on the Rights of the Child (CRC), all treaties to which Lebanon is a state party.<sup>(85)</sup>

In an UNRWA report published in October 2015 it is estimated that less than 3% of PRS entered Lebanon irregularly, though more than half did not hold a valid visa during summer 2014.<sup>(86)</sup> This suggests that most of PRS did not enter Lebanon illegally but lost their legal status in the country due to their visa expiring. One of the reasons for losing their legal status is the inability to pay for the cost of the residency papers that amount to US\$ 200 to renew them for each family.

## 4.2 Economic Status

The situation of PRS in Lebanon is among the worse. As of 2013, 90 per cent of families lack an income.<sup>(87)</sup> 89% of PRS live under the poverty line, and 95% of PRS depend on humanitarian assistance for subsistence.

At the same time, Palestinian refugees from Syria are discovering that their money is not worth as much, due to the exchange rate for Syrian pounds plummeting and the cost of living in Lebanon is much higher than Syria. This problem is made worse by the lack of work opportunities open to them in Lebanon. Palestinians from Syria do not have the right to employment in Lebanon as Syrian citizens do, nor do they have the decades-old experience of being migrant laborers in Lebanon like many Syrian citizens do. This greatly contributes to the extreme poverty in which PRS are currently living.

Furthermore, unemployment is widespread among Palestinian families from Syria, regardless of age, gender, educational level, or previous employment status. They have to rely mainly on UNRWA or on the generosity of other poor refugees to sustain them. Although not widely reported, child labor exists and families may resort to it as a means of survival in light of prolonged displacement and exhaustion of their financial sources.<sup>(88)</sup>

## 4.3 Food Security

Hunger is a major issue for these families. Food is simply too expensive for the majority. Two-thirds of all families are not able to provide three meals a day. Almost all families receive food aid from various sources, including host families and local and international organizations.<sup>(89)</sup> In terms of population levels, around 35,000 PRS refugees could not meet their basic food and non-food needs, and 3,500 extremely poor refugees did not meet their essential food requirements.

According to the latest UNRWA survey, 20% of families did not consume milk or dairy products and almost 50% did not consume fruits or meat at during the week prior to the

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(85) Amnesty International, (2015). *DENIED REFUGE PALESTINIANS FROM SYRIA SEEKING SAFETY IN LEBANON*. [online] p.9. Available at: <https://www.amnesty.ch/de/laender/naher-osten-nordafrika/libanon/dok/2014/libanon-palaestinensischen-fluechtlingen-aus-syrien-einreise-verweigert/bericht-denied-refuge-palestinians-from-syria-seeking-safety-in-lebanon.-18-seiten.-juli-2014> [Accessed 3 Nov. 2015].

(86) Ibid

(87) Ibid

(88) Amnesty International, (2015). *DENIED REFUGE PALESTINIANS FROM SYRIA SEEKING SAFETY IN LEBANON*. [online] p.12. Available at: <https://www.amnesty.ch/de/laender/naher-osten-nordafrika/libanon/dok/2014/libanon-palaestinensischen-fluechtlingen-aus-syrien-einreise-verweigert/bericht-denied-refuge-palestinians-from-syria-seeking-safety-in-lebanon.-18-seiten.-juli-2014> [Accessed 3 Nov. 2015]

(89) ANERA, (2013). *Palestinian Refugees from Syria in Lebanon*. [online] Washington, DC.: ANERA, p.3. Available at: <http://www.anera.org/wp-content/uploads/2013/04/PalestinianRefugeesFromSyriainLebanon.pdf> [Accessed 3 Nov. 2015].

assessment period.<sup>(90)</sup> The majority of families reported consuming vegetables, legumes and nuts a few times during the same period.

There four main food-related coping strategies among PRS in Lebanon, they include: reducing the number of meals or portion size, borrowing food from friends or relatives, restricting consumption by adults for young children to eat, and spending full days without eating.<sup>(91)</sup> Since February 2014, UNRWA has been providing PRS with cash assistance for food and housing through ATM cards. During the period, January-May 2015, UNRWA has been able to support an average of 43,360 PRS individuals with food assistance and 11,917 PRS families with housing assistance.<sup>(92)</sup> In Lebanon, eligible PRS received approximately US\$ 30 per person in the January-March period and approximately US\$ 27 per person in the April-May period.

#### 4.4 Health conditions

ANERA reports that UNRWA is the main health care provider in Lebanon for Palestinians. The Palestinian Red Crescent Society, local organizations and private clinics are also extending their services to the refugees from Syria. These health care providers are overwhelmed by the dramatic increase in the number of patients without a proportionate increase in their organizational and financial capacities. This means that families are forced to pay out of their own pockets (when they can afford it) or, in some cases, refrain altogether from seeking care for their acute and chronic conditions.<sup>(93)</sup>

Among PRS families, 6.56% have a pregnant or breastfeeding woman.<sup>(94)</sup> Two out of five pregnant/breastfeeding women live in a household that does not have access to sufficient water for drinking or cooking, a quarter live in a household that does not have access to sufficient water for washing and bathroom use, 7% live in a residence that does not have a bathroom, and one in ten share a toilet with 15 persons or more.<sup>(95)</sup>

Almost 50% of PRS families have at least one member suffering from a chronic condition, 10% of households have at least one member with a physical or psychological disability, and 2.80% have at least one working age member (16-64 years old) in need of support in daily activities.

The four most prevalent chronic conditions are diabetes, high blood pressure, heart disease, and bone and muscle problems.<sup>(96)</sup> During the period January-February 2013 illnesses among Palestinian children from Syria in Lebanon consisted of: flu 39%, diarrhea 18%, Fever 9%, cough 8%, asthma 5%.<sup>(97)</sup>

(90) UNRWA, (2015). *profiling the vulnerability of palestine refugees from syria living in lebanon 2015*. [online] Beirut: UNRWA. Available at: [http://www.unrwa.org/sites/default/files/final2\\_6\\_october\\_final\\_version-\\_profiling\\_the\\_vulnerability\\_of\\_prs\\_in\\_lebanon\\_-\\_assesment.pdf](http://www.unrwa.org/sites/default/files/final2_6_october_final_version-_profiling_the_vulnerability_of_prs_in_lebanon_-_assesment.pdf) [Accessed 3 Nov. 2015].

(91) Ibid

(92) UNRWA, (2015). *2015 syria crisis response syria regional crisis progress report*. [online] UNRWA, p.13. Available at: [http://www.unrwa.org/sites/default/files/2015\\_syria\\_crisis\\_response\\_progress\\_report.pdf](http://www.unrwa.org/sites/default/files/2015_syria_crisis_response_progress_report.pdf) [Accessed 3 Nov. 2015].

(93) ANERA, (2013). *Palestinian Refugees from Syria in Lebanon*. [online] Washington, DC.: ANERA, p.5. Available at: <http://www.anera.org/wp-content/uploads/2013/04/PalestinianRefugeesFromSyriainLebanon.pdf> [Accessed 3 Nov. 2015].

(94) UNRWA, (2015). *profiling the vulnerability of palestine refugees from syria living in lebanon 2015*. [online] Beirut: UNRWA. Available at: [http://www.unrwa.org/sites/default/files/final2\\_6\\_october\\_final\\_version-\\_profiling\\_the\\_vulnerability\\_of\\_prs\\_in\\_lebanon\\_-\\_assesment.pdf](http://www.unrwa.org/sites/default/files/final2_6_october_final_version-_profiling_the_vulnerability_of_prs_in_lebanon_-_assesment.pdf) [Accessed 3 Nov. 2015].

(95) Ibid

(96) ANERA, (2013). *Palestinian Refugees from Syria in Lebanon*. [online] Washington, DC.: ANERA, p.8. Available at: <http://www.anera.org/wp-content/uploads/2013/04/PalestinianRefugeesFromSyriainLebanon.pdf> [Accessed 3 Nov. 2015].

(97) Ibid



The harsh winter in Lebanon further accentuated the vulnerability of PRS. UNRWA was unable to mobilize the resources necessary to provide winterization support to all targeted families.<sup>(98)</sup> Despite this, the Agency worked with partners to provide critical winterization assistance for PRS through the cash transfer programme. All PRS in the Beqaa Valley and living in areas above an altitude of 500 metres received assistance from the International Committee of the Red Cross (ICRC) through UNRWA ATM cards in November 2014. In addition, UNICEF provided US \$ 30 per child for clothing country-wide through UNRWA ATM cards. A contribution from Japan in early 2015 supported all female-headed households with children under the age of 18 with an additional US\$ 40 each for winter needs.

## 4.5 Education

As of 2015, 74% of families have at least one child who is not attending school. Many Palestinian children from Syria have witnessed horrible violence. Going back to school means a return to normal life for these children, but many resist enrollment efforts in Lebanon. Curriculum differences and limited school capacity are the main reasons for non-enrollment. Integration into the Lebanese curriculum is difficult for most refugee children from Syria. Math and science courses are taught in Arabic in Syria, but in Lebanon the courses are taught in English or French at UNRWA schools.

The influx of PRS into Lebanon since 2012 has brought UNRWA schools to run on double shifts to cater to an extra 11,000 school-age children between the ages of 6 and 18. UNRWA has been trying to meet the new demands by providing special classes on a number of core subjects including Arabic, English, and Arithmetic as well as recreational activities. The Agency is also working with partner organisations to implement a cross-cutting psycho-social programme.

However, enrolment is still significantly lower outside refugee camps, this could be due to the fact that most UNRWA schools, where the majority of PRS children are enrolled, are mainly located within refugee camps or their surroundings, but it might be also because they are not able to afford education costs (including transportation costs) along with not being able to register (probably due to arrival in Lebanon in the middle of the school year).<sup>(99)</sup>

An unofficial estimate seems to suggest the majority of PRS are leaving school early. This is due to many PRS deciding to return to Syria as well as seeking job opportunities. At the same time a considerable amount leave school because of low achievement and because they are labeled as 'low achievers' from PRL students. Although UNRWA has teachers and counselors specifically designed to deal with these PRS's issues, it is a problem that necessitates an increased awareness and more time to be dealt with properly.

## 4.6 Housing and Living Conditions

Only a small proportion of PRS families live in a factory/warehouse/garage/shop or tent/hut/barrack, while the majority live in an independent house or apartment. However the issue of

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(98) UNRWA, (2015). *unrwa response and services to palestine refugees from syria (PRS) in lebanon*. [online] Available at: [http://www.unrwa.org/sites/default/files/prs\\_update\\_issue\\_42\\_01\\_jan\\_28\\_feb.pdf](http://www.unrwa.org/sites/default/files/prs_update_issue_42_01_jan_28_feb.pdf) [Accessed 3 Nov. 2015].

(99) UNRWA, (2015). *Profiling the vulnerability of Palestine refugees from Syria living in Lebanon* | UNRWA. [online] Available at: <http://www.unrwa.org/resources/reports/profiling-vulnerability-palestine-refugees-syria-living-lebanon> [Accessed 17 Nov. 2015].

vulnerability arises from the fact that the pay high amounts on rent for poor living conditions since most households are overcrowded and poorly maintained. In worse condition are those families living in a tent/hut/barrack. With respect to type of tenure, the majority of PRS families rent their place of residence (81.69%), whilst 10.43% are hosted for free.

ANERA's January 2013 survey shows that 74% of households interviewed are crowded with more than 10 people. To make things worse, almost 60% of all households are crammed into one room. Many families live without electricity, running water or proper heating. Large numbers of people share toilets and many have to leave their shelters to use facilities, raising the likelihood of illness. Despite the terrible conditions, rents average between \$150-\$300/month. Families live in constant fear of losing their shelter because they cannot afford to keep paying.<sup>(100)</sup>

This is mainly because rental prices have continued to increase, with an average monthly rent per household of US\$ 257. According to URWA, as much as 60 % of PRS families are sharing a household with one or more families and overcrowding is common, with 12 % of PRS families living in extremely crowded conditions of 3.5 sq m or less per person. Overcrowding is expected to increase following the suspension of UNRWA's cash-for-housing assistance in July 2015.<sup>(101)</sup>

One of the most urgent concerns for PRS is shelter, but a housing shortage, combined with the government's disinclination to approve the institution of new refugee camps has made rental prices prohibitively high.<sup>(102)</sup> The increase of refugees has significantly affected the 12 existing Palestine refugee camps, which suffered from high rates of poverty and overcrowding.

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(100) P ANERA, (2013). *Palestinian Refugees from Syria in Lebanon*. [online] Washington, DC.: ANERA, p.5. Available at: <http://www.anera.org/wp-content/uploads/2013/04/PalestinianRefugeesFromSyriainLebanon.pdf> [Accessed 3 Nov. 2015].

(101) UNRWA, (2015). *2015 syria crisis response syria regional crisis progress report*. [online] UNRWA, p.12. Available at: [http://www.unrwa.org/sites/default/files/2015\\_syria\\_crisis\\_response\\_progress\\_report.pdf](http://www.unrwa.org/sites/default/files/2015_syria_crisis_response_progress_report.pdf) [Accessed 3 Nov. 2015].

(102) UNRWA, (2015). *PRS in Lebanon* | UNRWA. [online] Available at: <http://www.unrwa.org/prs-lebanon> [Accessed 3 Nov. 2015].



## Chapter Five:

### General Analysis

This chapter discusses some of the root causes of that have led to high levels of poverty and terrible living conditions in which Palestinian refugees live. Firstly it is presented the issue of Tawteen (Resettlement) in Lebanese political discourse and contributed to the marginalizing of Palestinian refugees. The problem of institutionalization is also shown as a problem that has negatively affected the living conditions of Palestinian refugees. Then, it is shown the significant contribution Palestinian refugees make to Lebanon's economy and how they could be working in complementary roles without competing with the Lebanese population. Finally it is argued that UNRWA's recent funding crisis reveals an approach that is fundamentally flawed and unsustainable. A political solution has been waiting for 67 years, since Israel caused the Palestinian refugee problem, any solution should be based on the recognition and implementation of the right of return, which allows refugees the choice to return to their homes or accept reparations.

### 5.1 Tawteen (Resettlement)

Within Lebanese political discourse Tawteen is the scarecrow that has been used to cause public phobia against conferring civil rights to Palestinians. Tawteen is referred to as the specter of permanent settlement of Palestinians in Lebanon.<sup>(103)</sup> Even discussing the right to work for Palestinian is enough to be manipulated in order to generate fear that it will be the first step towards Tawteen. Seemingly, any consideration of providing Palestinian refugees with civil and economic rights completely omits any debate on long-term rights and becomes merely an issue of short-term interventions on humanitarian or security grounds. Across the political spectrum Tawteen is invoked to demonstrate the extent of one's patriotism and Lebanese nationalism.<sup>(104)</sup> The result is that Palestinian agency is invisible. On the one hand, Palestinians are seen as bodies to be fed and sheltered without political existence; that is the deployment of bio politics by humanitarian organizations. On the

(103) Al Akhbar English, (2015). *Lebanese MPs: The Boogeyman of Tawteen*. [online] Available at: <http://english.al-akhbar.com/node/3020> [Accessed 3 Nov. 2015].

(104) *ibid*



other hand Tawteen characterizes the political discourse. The juxtaposition of bio-politics and Tawteen in Lebanese political discourse renders Palestinian refugees mere figures awaiting return, lacking any political agency. This fully explains why among refugees they refer to themselves as the “forgotten people”.<sup>(105)</sup>

## 5.2 Institutionalization

Since the beginning of the Nakba in 1948, various changes in political leadership have negatively affected those Palestinians living in Lebanese camps.<sup>(106)</sup> Shifting of power between the Palestinian Liberation Organization (PLO), the Lebanese government and UNRWA has severely restricted the upward mobility of refugees.<sup>(107)</sup> Many changes can be said to have only further institutionalized the camps and services. Throughout the years, limited resources and discrimination has led to the alienation of the refugees from Lebanese society. Institutionalization is manifested in various ways: through the founding of aid organizations to provide basic services to refugees, the construction of schools, homes and hospitals, and the institution of an educational system only for refugees.

Furthermore, the camps themselves have endured numerous disrupting changes such as wars, invasions, and lack of resources. The camps in Lebanon have consistently faced inadequate sanitation and services. Constant changes in leadership, organization and responsibilities create significant issues and divert important resources, which once allocated, are difficult to free up. High rates of poverty among refugees make upward mobility very difficult, cementing the refugee’s reliance on aid and services provided by the camps.<sup>(108)</sup> In addition, Palestinian refugees have faced near-constant hostility from the Lebanese, who see them as competition for already scarce jobs and resources.<sup>(109)</sup>

## 5.3 Possible solution to end Lebanese discrimination

Discrimination by the Lebanese government remains the most significant obstacle to increased employment among the refugee population. Prior to 2005, Palestinian refugees were banned from working in more than 70 professions. Currently they are still barred from over 30 professions, including engineering, many health professions, teaching, architecture and many other areas. This is unlikely to change any time soon, according to UNRWA and the International Labor Organization. It should not be considered unexpected that as a result both employment and education greatly affect poverty levels.<sup>(110)</sup>

Notably, it was estimated by the International Labour Organization that Palestinian refugees in Lebanon spend about 340 million US\$ per year.<sup>(111)</sup> This is a significant contribution to

(105) Chaaban, J., Ghattas, H., Habib, R., Hanafi, S., Sahyoun, N., Salti, N., Seyfert, K. and Naamani, N. (2010). *Socio-Economic Survey of Palestinian Refugees in Lebanon*. [online] Beirut: AUB. P. 7 Available at: <http://www.unrwa.org/userfiles/2011012074253.pdf> [Accessed 3 Nov. 2015].

(106) Woznack, D. (2014). Institutionalization in the Palestinian Refugee Camps of Lebanon. *Anthos*, 6(1), p.197.

(107) Woznack, D. (2014). Institutionalization in the Palestinian Refugee Camps of Lebanon. *Anthos*, 6(1), p.198

(108) Ibid p. 199

(109) “Where We Work,” United Nations Refugee Works Association, accessed March 18, 2014, UNRWA, (2015). *Palestine refugees | UNRWA*. [online] Available at: <http://www.unrwa.org/palestine-refugees> [Accessed 3 Nov. 2015].

(110) Woznack, D. (2014). Institutionalization in the Palestinian Refugee Camps of Lebanon. *Anthos*, 6(1), p.206 Bailey, P. (2015). *Palestinian refugees must not be forgotten*. [online] alaraby. Available at: <http://www.alaraby.co.uk/english/comment/2015/6/19/palestinian-refugees-must-not-be-forgotten> [Accessed 3 Nov. 2015].

(111) Bailey, P. (2015). *Palestinian refugees must not be forgotten*. [online] alaraby. Available at: <http://www.alaraby.co.uk/english/comment/2015/6/19/palestinian-refugees-must-not-be-forgotten>

the local economy, particularly for rural areas where most Palestinians live and work. Moreover, the jobs Palestinians usually take can be considered as complimentary to those taken by the Lebanese. This argument should be central in further convincing the Lebanese government to lift labor market restrictions on Palestinians.

Even though Palestinians demand inclusion in the labor and real estate markets as well as free movement, political inclusion and governance of the refugee community is a more contested topic. Neither Palestinians nor Lebanese want the complete assimilation, or Tawteen of refugees into the Lebanese State. The ideal case scenario would be one where 'citizen-refugees' enjoy civil and economic rights as well as the right to space and mobility, at the same time contributing through their consumption and taxes to the Lebanese economy, until their final settlement with right to return. In fact, Palestinian groups throughout Lebanon are virtually unanimous in agreeing they would forego citizenship in return for civil rights such as the freedom to work in every profession and to be treated and compensated equally as Lebanese employees.<sup>(112)</sup>

The Lebanese government cannot still justify marginalizing Palestinian refugees in camps, denying them the possibility to integrate. Lebanon should acknowledge that the Palestinian refugees have basic human rights which the government has a duty to uphold.<sup>(113)</sup> Lebanon should pass legislation that confers civil, social and economic rights to Palestinians.<sup>(114)</sup> Conferring them those rights does not contradict the right of return and is not a prelude to Tawteen. Instead, legal protection is essential to breaking the cycle of poverty and dependence. It would also strengthen their capacity to mobilize towards achieving the right of return.

## 5.4 Funding crisis or Political crisis?

The aid that UNRWA has received from other organizations although vital is not enough to sustain the needs of Palestinian refugees. In fact, UNRWA has announced that as of July 2015, it will have to suspend the cash-for-housing assistance program, unless further financial support is received. This is particularly concerning as the vulnerability of most of the PRS is increasing at a startling rate, both legally and socioeconomically. Monthly post-distribution monitoring (PDM) has illustrated that Palestinian Refugees from Syria have become increasingly more dependent on UNRWA cash assistance in the past year. In recent months, up to 98 per cent of PRS families have said that UNRWA cash assistance is their main source of income, compared to 70 per cent in April 2014. Since then it has been reported far less PRS have any income from work. Regular surveys have also shown that, in order to cope with an acute crisis, fewer PRS families have any savings left to spend or assets to sell.<sup>(115)</sup>

It is critical that UNRWA and other agencies continue to support Palestinian refugees in order to survive during this crisis. However, lack of funding at UNRWA distract from the wider issue: it is the lack of a political solution, not funding, that leaves Palestinian refugees

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alaraby.co.uk/english/comment/2015/6/19/palestinian-refugees-must-not-be-forgotten [Accessed 3 Nov. 2015].

(112) Bailey, P. (2015). *Palestinian refugees must not be forgotten*. [online] alaraby. Available at: <http://www.alaraby.co.uk/english/comment/2015/6/19/palestinian-refugees-must-not-be-forgotten> [Accessed 3 Nov. 2015].

(113) The Electronic Intifada, (2010). *Unwelcome guests: Palestinian refugees in Lebanon*. [online] Available at: <https://electronicintifada.net/content/unwelcome-guests-palestinian-refugees-lebanon/8917> [Accessed 4 Nov. 2015].

(114) Ibid

(115) UNRWA, (2015). *2015 syria crisis response syria regional crisis progress report*. [online] UNRWA, p.12. Available at: [http://www.unrwa.org/sites/default/files/2015\\_syria\\_crisis\\_response\\_progress\\_report.pdf](http://www.unrwa.org/sites/default/files/2015_syria_crisis_response_progress_report.pdf) [Accessed 3 Nov. 2015].

vulnerable. The issue shouldn't be how the steady increase in demand for essential services can be met, but rather how this demand can be reduced.<sup>(116)</sup> This involves addressing the root causes of the Palestinian refugee problem. The issue is worryingly being framed as merely a lack of funding, as often the case, rather than a structural one. The structural aspect is a refugee problem that has been going on for 67 years. Israel's responsibilities for the Nakba have in no way been significantly addressed.

Israel cannot remain indifferent to the plight of the Palestinian refugees, to which it is directly responsible for causing the expulsion of Palestinians during the 1948 War and subsequently denying them the right of return. The international community should be considered equally responsible for letting a crime 67 years old still left unresolved. The United Nations' Resolution 194 unequivocally states that there's an obligation to return the Palestinian refugees to their homeland from which they were expelled in 1948.<sup>(117)</sup> Resolution 194 states that refugees wishing to return to their homes and live in peace should be permitted to do so at the earliest practicable date, and that compensation should be paid for the property of those choosing not to return and for the loss of or damage to that property.<sup>(118)</sup> The international community has long ago established the mechanism for treating the victims of ethnic cleansing, and reparations are often used as the remedy and solution. Reparations here exist in a spectrum of possibilities to allow the victim to decide.<sup>(119)</sup>

To conclude, the Palestinian refugee problem remains unresolved as the right of return, enshrined in international law, is denied by Israel and ignored by the international community. After sixty-seven years refugees continue to be subjected to extreme conditions within host states, particularly in Arab countries. The conditions to which the Palestinian refugees in the Arab world are subjected are in a constant state of flux and may differ from one Arab country to another. Indeed, the plight of Palestinian refugees is adversely impacted by changes to the political climate in Arab countries and the threat of political instability.<sup>(120)</sup>

## Recommendations

- The Lebanese government should work towards finding an appropriate solution for the refugees in line with international law. This means conferring Palestinian refugees social, political and economic rights which would help them escape the extreme poverty and terrible living conditions in which they currently live.
- Advocating for the Palestine Refugees right to decent work, to ensure that Palestine refugees rights are improved and applied, and that an improved understanding of existing rights amongst both refugees and employers is on place.

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(116) Omer-Man, M. and Salaime, S. (2015). *Four simple things Israel can do to help refugees* | +972 Magazine. [online] 972mag.com. Available at: <http://972mag.com/four-simple-things-israel-can-do-to-help-refugees/111518/> [Accessed 3 Nov. 2015].

(117) Andrawous, Z. 2015. *What Jewish Compassion? Israel Still Won't Recognize Nakba* Available at: <http://www.haaretz.com/opinion/.premium-1.674980?date=1441784175052> [Accessed 10 September 15]

(118) Bailey, P. (2015). *Palestinian refugees must not be forgotten*. [online] alaraby. Available at: <http://www.alaraby.co.uk/english/comment/2015/6/19/palestinian-refugees-must-not-be-forgotten> [Accessed 3 Nov. 2015].

(119) Chomsky, N., Pappé, I. and Barat, F. (2015). *On Palestine*. Chicago: Haymarket Books.

(120) Albadawi, S. (2015). Palestinian refugees: stateless, exiled and excluded. *International Humanities Studies*, [online] 2(1), p.41. Available at: [http://ihs-humanities.com/journals/vol2\\_no1\\_january2015/3.pdf](http://ihs-humanities.com/journals/vol2_no1_january2015/3.pdf) [Accessed 4 Nov. 2015].



- UNRWA should continue its support for Palestinian refugees (especially providing better food security, housing conditions, education and health assistance) until an appropriate solution is implemented.
- The Lebanese authorities should drop the discriminatory requirements imposed on PRS which are increasing the vulnerability of refugees and contravene international law.
- It is vital that UNRWA continues to support PRS through cash assistance needed for basic services in order for them survive during this crisis.
- It is imperative that UNRWA provides professional training and provision of employment services in order for refugees to strengthen their employability (i.e soft skills, communication skills, how to prepare a CV, how to be prepared for an interview, etc.), including facilitate their access, especially women, to the job market.
- In line with the UN SDGs the international community should act to eradicate poverty from Palestinian refugees in Lebanon.
- The internationally community should begin addressing the implementation of the Palestinian right of return.
- Israel should recognize its responsibility for the Palestinian refugees' displacement for the past 67 years and accept their full repatriation to their place of origin which is guaranteed by International law and the related UN resolutions. This should include granting them financial and moral compensation for their loss.



# مركز العودة الفلسطيني Palestinian Return Centre

Organisation in consultative status with the Economic and Social Council since 2015

ISBN 978-1-901924-56-5



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