



Refugee Documentation Centre (Ireland)
LEGAL AID BOARD

Lebanon - Researched and compiled by the Refugee Documentation Centre of Ireland on Wednesday 16 April 2014

Information on living conditions in Palestinian camps, particularly in Rashidieh; Information on difficulties for Palestinians returning to such camps

Commenting on events of 2013, a report issued in February 2014 by the *United States Department of State* notes:

“The law considers UNRWA-registered Palestinian refugees to be foreigners, and in several instances they received poorer treatment than other foreign nationals. This discrimination was particularly true for women. UNRWA has the sole mandate to provide health, education, social services, and emergency assistance to the 441,543 registered Palestinian refugees residing in the country. The amount of land allocated to the 12 official Palestinian refugee camps in the country has changed only marginally since 1948, despite a four-fold increase in the population. Consequently, most Palestinian refugees lived in overpopulated camps, some of which were heavily damaged during multiple conflicts. In accordance with their agreement, Palestine Liberation Organization (PLO) security committees, not the government, provided security for refugees in the camps, with the exception of the Nahr el-Bared camp” (United States Department of State (27 February 2014) *Country Reports on Human Rights Practices for 2013, Lebanon*, Section 2d Freedom of Movement, Internally Displaced Persons, Protection of Refugees, and Stateless Persons /Protection of Refugees/Access to Basic Services).

A report published in September 2013 by *Minority Rights Group International* points out that:

“The poor conditions in the camps in Lebanon where Palestinian refugees have been living for more than 60 years lead to chronic ill health and mental health problems” (Minority Rights Group International (24 September 2013) *State of the World's Minorities and Indigenous Peoples 2013*, p.209).

This document also states:

“...most of these refugees live in camps and locations that are characterized by water contamination, where health risks are exacerbated by overcrowding” (ibid, p.209).

An undated document issued by the *United Nations Relief and Works Agency* states:

“Rashidieh camp is divided into “old” and “new” sections. The older part was built by the French government in 1936 to accommodate Armenian refugees who fled to Lebanon. The “new camp” was built by UNRWA in 1963 to accommodate Palestine refugees who were evacuated from Gouraud camp in the Baalbek area of Lebanon. Most of the inhabitants of Rashidieh camp originally come from Deir al-Qassi, Alma an-Naher and other villages in northern Palestine. The camp lies on the coast, 5km from Tyre. Rashidieh was heavily affected during the Lebanese civil war, especially between 1982 and 1987. Nearly 600 shelters were totally or partially destroyed and more than 5,000 refugees were displaced. Remaining shelters need serious rehabilitation. Employment opportunities are very limited. Most residents work

seasonally in agriculture and construction. Almost all shelters in the camp are ventilated, and are supplied with water and electricity. Although they all have private toilets, the camp has no sewerage system. UNRWA is awaiting the construction of the main municipal sewer line in order to construct a sewerage system and connect to it. The storm water drainage and water supply system was recently rehabilitated” (United Nations Relief and Works Agency (Undated) *Camp Profiles, Rashidieh*).

No further information on these issues could be found among sources available to the RDC

References

Minority Rights Group International (24 September 2013) *State of the World's Minorities and Indigenous Peoples 2013*

<http://www.minorityrights.org/12071/state-of-the-worlds-minorities/state-of-the-worlds-minorities-and-indigenous-peoples-2013.html>

Accessed Wednesday 16 April 2013

United Nations Relief and Works Agency (Undated) *Camp Profiles, Rashidieh*

<http://www.unrwa.org/where-we-work/lebanon/camp-profiles?field=15>

Accessed Wednesday 16 April 2013

United States Department of State (27 February 2014) *Country Reports on Human Rights Practices for 2013, Lebanon*

<http://www.state.gov/j/drl/rls/hrrpt/humanrightsreport/index.htm#wrapper>

Accessed Wednesday 16 April 2013

This response was prepared after researching publicly accessible information currently available to the Refugee Documentation Centre within time constraints. This response is not and does not purport to be conclusive as to the merit of any particular claim to refugee status or asylum. Please read in full all documents referred to.

Sources Consulted

Amnesty International

BBC News

Electronic Immigration Network

European Country of Origin Information Network

Freedom House

Google

Human Rights Watch

Immigration and Refugee Board of Canada

Internal Displacement Monitoring Centre

International Crisis Group

IRIN News

Lexis Nexis

Minority Rights Group International

Online Newspapers

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Refugee Documentation Centre Query Database

Reliefweb
Reuters
United Kingdom Home Office
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UNHCR Refworld

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