



Home Office

# Country Policy and Information Note

## Lebanon: Palestinians

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# Executive summary

In general, the treatment faced by Palestinians by non-state actors – or by ‘registered’ and ‘non-registered’ Palestinians by state actors – does not, by its nature or repetition, even when taken cumulatively, amount to a real risk of persecution and/or serious harm. The onus is on the person to demonstrate otherwise.

‘Registered’ Palestinians are likely to be excluded from the Refugee Convention by Article 1D, as persons eligible for UNRWA assistance.

However, state restrictions on the fundamental rights of ‘non-ID’ and Palestinians from Syria (PRS), taken cumulatively, are likely to qualify these persons for asylum. While PRS might be considered as excluded from the Refugee Convention under Article 1D, this is likely no longer the case given that UNRWA support has likely ceased to be available for reasons beyond the person’s volition due to their inability to return to Lebanon, having left, and their vulnerability to deportation to Syria.

Lebanon’s stateless Palestinians began arriving in 1948 from what is now Israel, and 2011 from Syria. The now-estimated 183,255 to 250,000 mostly Sunni Muslims, reside across Lebanon in 12 UNRWA camps, nearby gatherings, and other localities. Lebanese laws deny citizenship to most Palestinians, therefore relatively few have naturalised.

The state’s laws restrict Palestinians’ access to many areas of daily life to varying degrees, depending on their ‘categories’. This also determines entitlement to UNRWA services, which most Palestinians rely on for basic needs. ‘Non-ID’ Palestinians and PRS suffer disproportionately from employment restrictions, compounded by their relatively lacking freedom of movement and access to UNRWA services.

The Country Guidance cases, [KK, IH, HE](#), and [MM and FH](#), found that Lebanon’s discriminatory denial of Palestinians’ third category rights and its refugee camp conditions do not amount to persecution and/or serious harm. [MM and FH](#) also attributed Lebanon’s differential treatment of Palestinians to statelessness, not race.

Violent clashes periodically occur between armed factions operating within refugee camps, including Hezbollah which controls parts of Lebanon over the state, occasionally injuring Palestinians, or disrupting their access to UNRWA services.

In the case of [H.A. v the UK](#), the European Court of Human Rights held that absent prior involvement with, and previous violent targeting by, armed factions, any previous refusal of recruitment attempts by extremist armed factions would not give rise to a risk of treatment in breach of Article 3 of the ECHR.

‘Non-ID’ Palestinians and PRS with a well-founded fear of persecution from the state would not be able to seek protection or relocate to escape that risk.

While a well-founded fear of persecution from non-state actors can unlikely be established, where a well-founded fear of persecution from Hezbollah is established, in general, neither protection nor relocation will be viable means to escape that risk.

Where a claim is refused, it is unlikely to be certifiable as ‘clearly unfounded’.

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# Assessment

## About the assessment

This section considers the evidence relevant to this note – that is information in the [country information](#), refugee/human rights laws and policies, and applicable caselaw – and provides an assessment of whether, **in general**:

- a person is reasonably likely to face a real risk of persecution/serious harm by state or non-state actors because they are Palestinian
- that the general humanitarian situation is so severe that there are substantial grounds for believing that there is a real risk of serious harm because conditions amount to inhuman or degrading treatment as within [paragraphs 339C and 339CA\(iii\) of the Immigration Rules](#)/Article 3 of the [European Convention on Human Rights \(ECHR\)](#)
- a person is able to obtain protection from the state (or quasi state bodies)
- a person is reasonably able to relocate within a country or territory
- a grant of asylum, humanitarian protection or other form of leave is likely, and
- if a claim is refused, it is likely or unlikely to be certifiable as ‘clearly unfounded’ under [section 94 of the Nationality, Immigration and Asylum Act 2002](#).

Decision makers **must**, however, still consider all claims on an individual basis, taking into account each case’s specific facts.

## Points to note

Palestinian refugees in Lebanon who were receiving protection and/or assistance from the United Nations Relief and Works Agency for Palestine Refugees in the Near East (UNRWA) are excluded from the protection of the Refugee Convention under Article 1D unless such protection has ceased for any reason.

Exclusion under Article 1D of the Refugee Convention does not automatically exclude a person from humanitarian protection. Whether a person is entitled to humanitarian protection will depend on the facts of the case. For general guidance, see the [Asylum Instruction on Humanitarian Protection](#).

This note **must** be considered alongside the [Asylum Instruction on Article 1D of the Refugee Convention: Palestinian refugees assisted by the United Nations Relief and Works Agency \(UNRWA\)](#), which provides details on how to consider asylum claims made by stateless Palestinians whose habitual place of residence is the Occupied Palestinian Territories, Jordan, Lebanon, or Syria (see also, [Exclusion](#)).

Where a person does not qualify for asylum or humanitarian protection, and is not excluded from the Refugee Convention under Article 1D, it is open to them to apply for leave to remain as a stateless person. This cannot be done at the same time as the asylum claim is being pursued (see the [Stateless guidance](#)).

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## 1. Material facts, credibility and other checks/referrals

### 1.1 Credibility

- 1.1.1 For information on assessing credibility, see the instruction on [Assessing Credibility and Refugee Status](#).
- 1.1.2 Decision makers must also check if there has been a previous application for a UK visa or another form of leave. Asylum applications matched to visas should be investigated prior to the asylum interview (see the [Asylum Instruction on Visa Matches, Asylum Claims from UK Visa Applicants](#)).
- 1.1.3 In cases where there are doubts surrounding a person's claimed place of origin, decision makers should also consider language analysis testing, where available (see the [Asylum Instruction on Language Analysis](#)).

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### 1.2 Exclusion

- 1.2.1 Decision makers must consider whether there are serious reasons for considering whether one (or more) of the exclusion clauses is applicable. Each case must be considered on its individual facts and merits.
  - a. [Applicability of Article 1D of the Refugee Convention](#)
- 1.2.2 Article 1D of the Refugee Convention is one of the exclusion clauses in the Refugee Convention. It excludes persons receiving protection or assistance from organs or agencies of the United Nations (other than the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR)) from the Refugee Convention, but its overall purpose is to ensure the continuing protection of Palestinian refugees until their position is settled in accordance with relevant United Nations General Assembly resolutions.
- 1.2.3 Palestinian refugees in Lebanon who were previously assisted by the United Nations Relief and Works Agency for Palestine Refugees in the Near East (UNRWA) and continue to be eligible for such assistance but who seek asylum outside the area of UNRWA operation are excluded from the scope of the Refugee Convention unless they can show that UNRWA assistance or protection has ceased for any reason, which includes where a person ceases to receive protection or assistance beyond their control or independent of their volition.
- 1.2.4 A Palestinian eligible for UNRWA protection or assistance and previously registered with UNRWA, or (though not registered) in receipt of UNRWA protection or assistance, is not entitled to Refugee Convention refugee status simply by leaving the UNRWA areas of operation and claiming asylum elsewhere.

- 1.2.5 Situations where UNRWA protection or assistance may cease beyond the person's control or independent of their volition may include the following circumstances:
- where there is a threat to life, physical integrity or security or freedom, or other serious protection related reasons
  - situations such as armed conflict or other situations of serious violence, unrest and insecurity, or events seriously disturbing public order
  - more individualised threats or protection risks such as sexual and/or gender-based violence, human trafficking and exploitation, torture, inhuman or degrading treatment or punishment, severe discrimination
  - arbitrary arrest or detention
- 1.2.6 Additionally, practical legal and/or safety barriers to accessing UNRWA assistance may mean that UNRWA assistance is in practice no longer available and may include:
- being unable to access UNRWA assistance because of long-term border closures, road blocks or closed transport routes
  - absence of documentation to travel to, or transit, or to re-enter and reside, or where the authorities in the receiving country refuse their re-admission or the renewal of their travel documents
  - serious dangers such as minefields, factional fighting, shifting war fronts, banditry or a real risk of other forms of violence or exploitation
- 1.2.7 Palestinian 'refugees' resident in Lebanon who were not receiving or eligible to receive protection or assistance from UNRWA **are not excluded** under Article 1D. These cases should be considered on their merits under the Refugee Convention, unless there are serious reasons for considering whether one (or more) of the other exclusion clauses is applicable. Each case must be considered on its individual facts and merits.
- 1.2.8 Further guidance on handling Palestinians assisted by UNRWA is set out in the [Asylum Instruction on Article 1D of the Refugee Convention: Palestinian refugees assisted by the United Nations Relief and Works Agency \(UNRWA\)](#) (see also [Other points to note](#)).

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#### b. Exclusion under Article 1F of the Refugee Convention

- 1.2.9 There are a number of armed groups operating in Lebanon, including (but not limited to) the military wings of Palestinian groups such as Hamas and the Palestinian Liberation Organisation. Some of these groups may be involved in terrorist activities (several are proscribed under the UK Terrorism Act 2000, see [Proscribed terrorist groups or organisations](#)) or are responsible for serious human rights abuses in Lebanon as well as neighbouring countries and areas including Syria, the Occupied Palestinian Territories and Israel (see [Treatment by non-state actors](#)).
- 1.2.10 If there are serious reasons for considering that the person has been involved with these groups then decision makers must consider whether any of the exclusion clauses under Article 1F are applicable.

- 1.2.11 If the person is excluded from the Refugee Convention under Article 1F, they will also be excluded from a grant of humanitarian protection (which has a wider range of exclusions than refugee status).
- 1.2.12 For guidance on exclusion and restricted leave, see the Asylum Instruction on [Exclusion under Articles 1F and 33\(2\) of the Refugee Convention](#), [Humanitarian Protection](#) and the instruction on [Restricted Leave](#).

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## 2. Convention reason(s)

- 2.1.1 Nationality. Most Palestinians are stateless i.e. without nationality.
- 2.1.2 Establishing a convention reason is not sufficient to be recognised as a refugee. The question is whether the person has a well-founded fear of persecution on account of an actual or imputed Refugee Convention reason.
- 2.1.3 For further guidance on the 5 Refugee Convention grounds see the Asylum Instruction, [Assessing Credibility and Refugee Status](#).

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## 3. Risk

### 3.1 General approach

- 3.1.1 In general, Palestinian refugees in Lebanon who are registered with UNRWA and/or the Lebanese authorities are not at risk of treatment amounting to persecution or serious harm by the state.
- 3.1.2 In general, Palestinian Refugees from Syria (PRS) and 'Non-ID' Palestinians are likely at real risk of treatment amounting to persecution or serious harm by the state.
- 3.1.3 Palestinian residents in Lebanon are categorised into four 'groups', determined by their registration (or eligibility for registration) with UNRWA and the Lebanese authorities, when they entered Lebanon and from which country they arrived from. Palestinian refugees face legal obstacles which have resulted in their social and economic marginalisation. However, the general nature and degree of treatment varies between the different Palestinian 'groups'. See below and [Palestinian population, legal status and 'categories'](#) for more information on the different classifications of Palestinian groups.

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### 3.2 Risk from the state to UNRWA (and government) registered Palestinian refugees (PRL)

- 3.2.1 Palestinian refugees resident in Lebanon and registered with UNRWA, or eligible to be, who comprise the majority of Palestinians in Lebanon, fall within the scope of Article 1D of the Refugee Convention.
- 3.2.2 In general such persons are not subject to treatment that is by its nature and/or repetition, even taken cumulatively, likely amount to persecution or serious harm. They are likely to be excluded from the Refugee Convention under Article 1D as persons eligible to receive assistance from UNRWA which has not ceased to be available for any reason.
- 3.2.3 However, each case will need to be considered on its merits. Some persons may be able to demonstrate that they face an individualised risk where UNRWA assistance ceases to be available. For more information see [‘Registered’ Palestinians](#).

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### 3.3 Risk from the state to Non-UNRWA-registered Palestinian refugees

- 3.3.1 Palestinian refugees neither registered with UNRWA nor eligible to be, but who are registered with the Lebanese government do not fall within the scope of Article 1D of the Refugee Convention (although they may have, at some stage, received some assistance from UNRWA).
- 3.3.2 In general, while such persons face some restrictions in their access to services, employment and freedom of movement, this is not likely by its nature or repetition, even taken cumulatively, to amount to persecution or serious harm. The onus is on the person to demonstrate otherwise. For more information see [‘Non-registered’ Palestinians](#).

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### 3.4 Risk from the state to Non-ID Palestinian refugees

- 3.4.1 The estimated 3,000 - 5,000 non-ID Palestinians do not fall within the scope of Article 1D of the Refugee Convention since they are not eligible to be registered with or receive assistance from UNRWA (although in practice they may have received some assistance from UNRWA).
- 3.4.2 In general, such persons are likely to face discrimination in accessing services and documentation, and restrictions on their employment rights, ability to purchase property and to move freely into and within Lebanon. These limits on fundamental rights, taken cumulatively, are likely by their nature and repetition to amount to persecution or serious harm. For more information see [‘Non-ID’ Palestinians](#).

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### 3.5 Risk from the state to Palestinians from Syria (PRS)

- 3.5.1 Palestinian refugees registered with UNRWA in Syria (PRS) who have fled to Lebanon, estimated in 2023 to number approximately 32,000, potentially fall within the scope of Article 1D of the Refugee Convention since they have previously received assistance from UNRWA.
- 3.5.2 While PRS are likely to receive some assistance from UNRWA, it is

generally more limited, and they may face more severe discrimination compared with most other Palestinian refugees. Significantly, PRS face additional restrictions on their movement within and into Lebanon, and may be vulnerable to deportation to Syria. Due to PRS' likely inability to return to Lebanon having left, UNRWA support in practice ceases to be available for reasons beyond the person's control or volition. Therefore, such persons are likely to no longer be excluded under Article 1D of the Refugee Convention.

- 3.5.3 Since PRS have already been recognised as refugees by the UN, they are likely to qualify for asylum.
- 3.5.4 However, all cases must be considered on their facts, with the onus on the person to demonstrate their status in Lebanon and the risk they face. For more information see [Palestinians from Syria](#).

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### 3.6 Risk from non-state actors

- 3.6.1 While Palestinian refugees are vulnerable to discrimination by non-state actors, which has included blocking access to basic goods such as food and fuel, in general this treatment is not sufficiently serious by its nature and/or repetition, even when taken cumulatively, to amount to persecution or serious harm.
- 3.6.2 A number of non-state groups operate in Lebanon. Most powerful is Hezbollah, an Iran-backed armed and political Shia group which maintains a vast political and military network in Lebanon. Hezbollah has effective control over southern Lebanon, southern Beirut, and parts of Beqaa. The group also maintains significant influence of Lebanon's international airport in Beirut. The country evidence does not indicate that Hezbollah generally targets or discriminates against Palestinians and, while Hezbollah is reported to have used intimidation, harassment, unlawful detention, and violence against its Shia critics and opponents, sources indicate that it remains tolerant of criticism from non-Shias (most Palestinians are Sunni). However, should a person be of adverse interest to Hezbollah, it has the capability to locate and detain them within Lebanon (see [Presence of Hezbollah \(aka Hizballah/Hizbullah\)](#)).
- 3.6.3 In addition, a number of other armed groups exist, including Palestinian groups which primarily operate and govern most of the UNRWA refugee camps. Palestinian factions and some non-Palestinian groups sometimes enter into violent clashes with one another inside the refugee camps. The groups' critics and opponents have faced harassment, threats, abuse and arbitrary detention, and Palestinian civilians may be caught in the cross-fire of factional disputes. However, information on abuses by these armed militias, or other non-state armed groups, indicates that they are not generally aimed at Palestinian civilians (see [Presence of Other armed groups](#) and [Refugee camps](#)).
- 3.6.4 The country evidence does not indicate that Hezbollah (which draws a predominantly Shia support base) and other armed groups generally forcibly recruit Palestinians. Some sources indicate that Palestinian children in refugee camps were recruited and used as child soldiers during 2021 and 2022, however more recent information, including the scale and extent of

such recruitment, could not be found in the sources consulted (see [Vulnerable groups](#), [Presence of Hezbollah \(aka Hizballah/Hizbullah\)](#), and [Presence of Other armed groups](#)).

3.6.5 In the case of [H.A. v The United Kingdom \(Application no. 30919/20\)](#), heard on 14 November 2023, promulgated on 5 December 2023, the European Court of Human Rights (ECtHR) considered whether the refusal of previous recruitment attempts by extremist armed factions gave rise to a risk of treatment in breach of Article 3 of the European Convention on Human Rights (ECHR). The ECtHR held that absent particular individual circumstances, such as prior involvement with an extremist group and having been subjected to previous targeted acts of violence, in general, the refusal of recruitment attempts by extremist armed factions would not give rise to a risk of treatment in breach of Article 3 of the ECHR.

3.6.6 Sources indicate that long-standing anti-Palestinian societal attitudes exist in Lebanon, exacerbated by the arrival since 2011 of those displaced by the Syrian war. However, the associated societal discrimination is not sufficiently serious by its nature and/or repetition, even when taken cumulatively, to amount to persecution or serious harm. Furthermore, the mobilisation in recent years of wider Lebanese society in solidarity with Palestinian protests against discriminatory state policies, indicates a co-existence of sympathetic sentiment towards Palestinians, part of Lebanon's socio-economic, cultural, and political tapestry for over 70 years (see [Societal attitudes](#)).

3.6.7 For further guidance on assessing risk, see the Asylum Instruction on [Assessing Credibility and Refugee Status](#).

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### 3.7 Humanitarian situation in refugee camps

3.7.1 While conditions in refugee camps are reportedly poor, they do not amount to inhuman or degrading treatment as per [paragraphs 339C and 339CA\(iii\) of the Immigration Rules/Article 3 of the European Convention on Human Rights \(ECHR\)](#).

3.7.2 For more information see [Overview of situation for Palestinians and Country Guidance](#) and [Refugee Camps](#).

3.7.3 For guidance on Humanitarian Protection see the Asylum Instruction, [Humanitarian Protection](#).

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### 3.8 Situation for Palestinians in Lebanon overview and Country Guidance

3.8.1 There are estimated to be between 183,255 to 250,000 Palestinians residing in Lebanon. Most Palestinians in Lebanon have never been afforded entitlement under the law to Lebanese citizenship and therefore remain stateless. This includes many who arrived from what is now Israel as early as 1948 during the Arab-Israeli war, and their descendants. Lebanon, neither a signatory to the 1954 and 1961 stateless conventions, nor the 1951 Refugee Convention, treats even its long-standing Palestinian residents as refugees and/or foreigners, despite them lacking the nationality of another country (see [Background and recent history](#), [Lebanese citizenship law](#),

[Status and statelessness](#)).

- 3.8.2 Approximately 45% of Palestinian refugees in Lebanon reside in 12 UNRWA-leased refugee camps, where living conditions are generally poor and overcrowded. Governance and security within the camps is enforced by 'popular committees' and 'security committees' belonging to Palestinian groups and factions, including the Palestine Liberation Organization (PLO), Hamas, and Fatah. Although most camps are generally stable, violent clashes have occurred in 2022 and 2023, particularly in Ein el-Hilweh, the largest of the camps (estimated to house upwards of 63,000 registered refugees) and in the Mieh Mieh camp. While the camps are generally outside the control or reach of the Lebanese authorities, movement into and out of some of the camps, particularly those in southern Lebanon, is regulated by them. Palestinian refugees not residing in the designated camps, reside instead either in adjacent gatherings or neighbourhoods across national territories (see ['Categories' of Palestinians](#), [Demography](#), [Refugee camps](#)).
- 3.8.3 Lebanese law does not specifically target Palestinians. However, the impact of the authorities restricting their access to state services such as healthcare and education, barring them from employment in multiple fields, and from acquiring new property and land, has led to Palestinians facing socio-economic marginalisation: experiencing high levels of unemployment and poverty, and poor infrastructure and housing conditions generally. This is, however, partially offset by the support services provided by UNRWA, which Palestinians largely depend upon. In recent years, Lebanon's severe economic crisis (which saw rampant inflation while the Lebanese pound lost 95% of its value) has exacerbated the Palestinian community's poverty levels and reliance on UNRWA for basic services. Simultaneously, forced closures of UNRWA installations, often due to inter-factional violence and protests linked to the socio-economic situation, have disrupted access to these services, while UNRWA's own financial difficulties threaten future provision (see [Daily life](#), [Security in refugee camps](#), [Other armed groups](#)).
- 3.8.4 Available evidence indicates that during 2022 and 2023 a small number of Palestinians were arbitrarily arrested and detained, with those from Syria who entered Lebanon illegally and who are without legal status the most vulnerable to arrest and deportation to Syria. The country information does not, however, support that arrests of Palestinians with ID documents and residency in Lebanon are common or likely (see [Treatment by state actors](#), [Freedom of movement](#)).
- 3.8.5 In the case of [KK, IH, HE \(Palestinians – Lebanon – camps\) Lebanon CG \[2004\] UKIAT 00293](#), heard 24 May 2004, promulgated 29 October 2004, the Immigration Appeal Tribunal considered whether poor living conditions in the refugee camps in Lebanon amounted to a breach of Article 3 of the ECHR and if there was a real risk of persecution under the Refugee Convention. The Tribunal summarised the country evidence as described by UNRWA:
- '... Palestinian refugees in Lebanon... do not have social and civil rights and have a very limited access to the government's public health or educational facilities, and no access to public or social services. The majority rely entirely on UNRWA as the sole provider of education, health and relief and social services. They are considered as foreigners and prohibited by law from

working in some seventy-two trades and professions which has led to high levels of unemployment among the refugee population. It seems that popular committees in the camps representing the refugees regularly discuss these problems with the Lebanese government or with the UNRWA officials. As we say, UNRWA provides services and administers its own installations and has a camp services office in each camp which residents can visit to update records or raise issues about services with the camp services officer who will refer petitions etc. to the UNRWA administration in relevant areas. It is said that socio-economic conditions in the camps are generally poor. There is a high population density and there are cramped living conditions and an inadequate basic infrastructure as regards matters such as roads and sewers. As we have noted above, some two-thirds of registered refugees live in and around cities and towns.’ (para 83)

- 3.8.6 The Tribunal went on to find that ‘to the extent that there is a discriminatory denial of third category rights in Lebanon for the Palestinians, this does not amount to persecution under the Refugee Convention or breach of protected human rights under Article 3 of the ECHR [European Convention on Human Rights].’ The Tribunal also held that conditions in camps at that time did not amount to a breach of Article 3 of the ECHR (para 106).
- 3.8.7 In the country guidance case of [MM and FH \(Stateless Palestinians, KK, IH, HE reaffirmed\)](#), heard 29 June 2007 and promulgated on 4 March 2008, the Asylum and Immigration Tribunal (AIT) observed that it had ‘not been presented with any new or significant evidence that should cast doubt on the decision reached by the Tribunal in KK.’ (para 126)
- 3.8.8 It went on to find that:
- i) ‘The differential treatment of stateless Palestinians by the Lebanese authorities and the conditions in the camps does not reach the threshold to establish either persecution under the Geneva Convention, or serious harm under paragraph 339C of the Immigration Rules, or a breach of Articles 3 or 8 under the ECHR.
  - ii) ‘The differential treatment of Palestinians by the Lebanese authorities is not by reason of race but arises from their statelessness.
  - iii) ‘The decision in [KK, IH, HE \(Palestinians-Lebanon-camps\) Jordan CG \[2004\] UKIAT 00293](#), is reaffirmed.’ (Headnote)
- 3.8.9 The country situation since the promulgation of [MM and FH](#) in 2008 has not substantively changed. The available evidence considered in this note (see [Bibliography](#) for full list of sources) does not establish that there has been a significant and cogent change in the treatment of Palestinians by the government or in the conditions in refugee camps generally. There are not, therefore, ‘very strong grounds supported by cogent evidence’ to justify a departure from the Tribunal’s findings in [MM and FH](#).
- 3.8.10 For further guidance on assessing risk, see the Asylum Instruction on [Assessing Credibility and Refugee Status](#).

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## 4. Protection

- 4.1.1 Where the person has a well-founded fear of persecution from the state they will not, in general, be able to obtain protection from the authorities.
- 4.1.2 Where the person has a well-founded fear of persecution from non-state actors, including 'rogue' state actors, decision makers must assess whether the state can provide effective protection.
- 4.1.3 The availability of protection will depend on who or which group the person is of interest to. Persons fearing Hezbollah are unlikely to be able to obtain effective protection from the state, UNRWA, or Palestinian groups. However, in some cases, persons who fear other non-state armed groups, including Palestinian factions within camps and gatherings, may be able to obtain effective protection from other Palestinian groups operating in the camps depending on their circumstances. While the state may be able to provide effective protection in some parts of Lebanon, it is unlikely to be willing to do so in practice (see [Treatment by non-state actors](#) and [Protection](#)).
- 4.1.4 However, each case must be considered on its facts, with the onus on the person to demonstrate that they are unable to obtain effective protection.
- 4.1.5 For further guidance on assessing state protection, see the Asylum Instruction on [Assessing Credibility and Refugee Status](#).

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## 5. Internal relocation

- 5.1.1 Where the person has a well-founded fear of persecution or serious harm from the state, they are unlikely to be able to relocate to escape that risk.
- 5.1.2 Where the person has a well-founded fear of persecution or serious harm from a non-state actor, internal relocation may be reasonable, depending on:
- the person's legal status in Lebanon
  - the non-state group, the nature of its interest in, and its capacity to pursue, the person
  - the person's individual circumstances
- 5.1.3 Palestinians face restrictions in their freedom of movement, with entry and exit controls operated by the government which may be tightened during periods of heightened security. The government maintains checkpoints around Palestinian refugee camps and in other restricted areas, while Hezbollah has control in Shia-dominated areas. Palestinians without legal status and documentation risk arrest and detention at checkpoints, and are unlikely to be able to relocate. Palestinians who have legal status in Lebanon are generally able to move within the country and the Lebanese General Directorate of General Security (GDGS) has made provision for issuing travel documents to both 'registered' and 'non-registered' Palestinians (see [Documents](#) and [Freedom of movement](#)).
- 5.1.4 While the onus is on the person to establish a well-founded fear of persecution or real risk of serious harm, decision makers must demonstrate that internal relocation is reasonable (or not unduly harsh) having regard to the individual circumstances of the person.

- 5.1.5 For further guidance on considering internal relocation and factors to be taken into account, see the Asylum Instruction on [Assessing Credibility and Refugee Status](#).

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## **6. Certification**

- 6.1.1 Where a claim is refused, it is unlikely to be certifiable as 'clearly unfounded' under section 94 of the Nationality, Immigration and Asylum Act 2002.
- 6.1.2 For further guidance on certification, see [Certification of Protection and Human Rights claims under section 94 of the Nationality, Immigration and Asylum Act 2002 \(clearly unfounded claims\)](#).

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# Country information

## About the country information

This contains publicly available or disclosable country of origin information (COI) which has been gathered, collated and analysed in line with the [research methodology](#). It provides the evidence base for the assessment.

The structure and content of this section follow a [terms of reference](#) which sets out the general and specific topics relevant to the scope of this note.

This document is intended to be comprehensive but not exhaustive. If a particular event, person or organisation is not mentioned this does not mean that the event did or did not take place or that the person or organisation does or does not exist.

Decision makers must use relevant COI as the evidential basis for decisions.

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Section updated: 4 March 2024

## 7. Palestinian population, legal status and 'categories'

### 7.1 Background and recent history

7.1.1 In May 2019, Amnesty International (AI) published a report entitled 'Seventy+ Years of Suffocation' which stated: 'During the 1948 Arab-Israeli war hundreds of thousands of Palestinians fled or were expelled and displaced from their homes in what is now Israel. A large group of them sought refuge in neighboring Lebanon. Seven decades on, Palestinian refugees and their descendants, who are also considered refugees, still live in official and informal camps across the five governorates of the country.'<sup>1</sup>

7.1.2 For more information on the camps, including their locations and life inside the camps, see [Demography](#), [Daily Life](#) and [Refugee camps](#).

7.1.3 In May 2018, Medical Aid for Palestinians (MAP), 'a non-political, non-religious, non-sectarian humanitarian organisation'<sup>2</sup> which 'works in partnership with Palestinian communities to uphold their rights to health and dignity',<sup>3</sup> published a report entitled 'Health in Exile: Barriers to the Health and Dignity of Palestinian Refugees in Lebanon', citing various sources, which stated:

'Around 100,000 Palestinians originally fled to Lebanon at the time of the Nakba ["catastrophe" in Arabic, refers to the mass displacement and dispossession of Palestinians during the 1948 Arab-Israeli war'<sup>4</sup>].... They were joined by later waves of refugees following the 1967 war, and the 1970 fighting in Jordan... From 1948 to today, the lives of Palestinians in Lebanon have been blighted by repeated conflict, from the Lebanese Civil War (1975-1990), including massacres in the camps of Tel al Zaatar (1976) and Sabra and Shatila (1982) and the brutal "War of the Camps" (1984), to the Nahr al Bared conflict (2007). More recently, the ongoing conflict in neighbouring

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<sup>1</sup> AI, '[Seventy+ Years of Suffocation](#)' (chapter 3: Lebanon), May 2019

<sup>2</sup> MAP, '[Frequently Asked Questions](#)', undated

<sup>3</sup> MAP, '[About MAP](#)', undated

<sup>4</sup> United Nations, '[About the Nakba](#)', undated



Syria has forced Palestinian refugees to flee across the border in search of safety, with an estimated 32,000 remaining in Lebanon (as of the end of 2016).<sup>5</sup>

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## 7.2 Lebanese citizenship law

7.2.1 Lebanese citizenship law is set out in [Decree No 15 on Lebanese Nationality](#), published on 19 January 1925, amended by regulations in 1934 and 1939, and by law in 1960<sup>6</sup>.

7.2.2 The Australian Department of Foreign Affairs and Trade (DFAT) published a 'Country Information Report: Lebanon' on 26 June 2023 which stated:

'Article 1 of the Nationality Law (1925) states that a person is considered Lebanese if they were born of a Lebanese father; or were born in Lebanon and did not acquire a foreign nationality upon birth by affiliation; or were born in Lebanon of unknown parents or parents of unknown nationality... A child born of a foreign father can obtain a birth certificate, however the birth will be registered in the DGPS' [Directorate General for Personal Status] Foreigner Events Department, even if the mother is Lebanese. Lebanese women cannot pass on citizenship by descent.'<sup>7</sup>

7.2.3 On 26 January 2020, The National, a journalistic publication which 'reaches an influential, English-speaking audience to deliver the latest in news, business, arts, culture, lifestyle and sports, while leading the region [the Middle East] in analytical content and commentary'<sup>8</sup>, published an article entitled 'A matter of identity: The families who are affected by Lebanon's nationality law' which stated:

'Lebanon's French-Mandate-era nationality law dates back to 1925 and has only been changed once, in the 1960s, to allow women married to foreigners to keep their citizenship, as it was previously stripped from them. The current law bars women from passing on citizenship to their children and husband, if he is not Lebanese. Meanwhile, men can grant full citizenship to their foreign spouses after one year of marriage and their children are automatically considered Lebanese.

'... In 1990, the Lebanese Constitution was amended to make sure "there will be no ... settlement of non-Lebanese in Lebanon". Palestinians made up the overwhelming majority of refugees in the country at the time. To this day, all the major political parties, even outspoken defenders of the Palestinian cause such as Hezbollah Secretary General Hassan Nasrallah, agree on the issue of non-resettlement unanimously. In a TV appearance in May [2020], Nasrallah referred to naturalisation as a "danger" and a "threat". This idea was echoed in a tweet last year [2019] by Lebanon's former Foreign Minister Gebran Bassil, who said opposing the naturalisation of Syrians and Palestinians in Lebanon was necessary to "defend the existence of Lebanon and to defend the rights of the Palestinian and Syrian people" against a set

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<sup>5</sup> MAP, '[Health in Exile: ... Palestinian Refugees in Lebanon](#)' (p1,4), May 2018

<sup>6</sup> Lebanese Republic, '[Decree No 15 on Lebanese Nationality...](#)', 19 January 1925

<sup>7</sup> DFAT, '[Country Information Report: Lebanon](#)' (para 5.32), 26 June 2023

<sup>8</sup> The National, '[About Us](#)', undated

of “conspiracies aimed at moving from their home countries and resettling them in a land that is not theirs”.<sup>9</sup>

- 7.2.4 The Forced Migration Review (FMR) of the Refugee Studies Centre at the Oxford Department of International Development, the objective of which is ‘to establish a link through which practitioners, researchers and policy makers can communicate and benefit from each other's practical experience and research results’,<sup>10</sup> published an undated article entitled ‘Stateless Palestinians’ which stated: ‘Procedures to allow non-residents to apply for naturalisation in Lebanon... do not apply to stateless Palestinians.’<sup>11</sup>
- 7.2.5 In June 2020, the Danish Immigration Service (DIS) published a report entitled ‘Palestinian Refugees Access to registration and UNRWA services, documents, and entry to Jordan’, with an appendix attached comprising the minutes of a DIS/UNRWA meeting held at UNRWA’s Amman headquarters on 3 March 2020, which stated: ‘There are Palestinians with Lebanese citizenship... Almost all of them were Christian Palestinians, but a considerable number were Sunni Palestinians and even some Shiites that were registered with UNRWA [United Nations Relief and Works Agency for Palestine Refugees in the Near East] coming from border towns.’<sup>12</sup>
- 7.2.6 In June 2020, Oxford University Press published the second edition of a book written by legal scholars Dr. Francesca Albanese (currently the Special Rapporteur on the situation of human rights in the Palestinian Territory<sup>13</sup>) and Professor Lex Takkenberg, entitled ‘Palestinian Refugees in International Law’, citing various sources, which stated: ‘Besides those Palestinians – mainly wealthy Christians and others with family connections – who acquired Lebanese citizenship between 1952 and 1958, the vast majority of Palestinians in Lebanon remain without citizenship, and in a precarious situation.’<sup>14</sup>
- 7.2.7 On 17 May 2023, the Higher Presidential Committee of Church Affairs in Palestine (HCC), the first dedicated committee, established under a presidential decree on 24 May 2012, to oversee legal, property, and institutional matters concerning churches and Christian places of worship<sup>15</sup>, published an article entitled ‘The Nakba of the Birthplace of Christianity: The Case of Palestinian Christian Refugees in Lebanon’ which stated: ‘With a significant part of Lebanese Christians having immigrated under the Ottoman and French occupations, some members of the Christian parties in control of the country agreed to provide several Palestinian Christians with citizenship after 1948. Between 1949 and 1952, around 31,000 Palestinian Christians were granted Lebanese citizenship.’<sup>16</sup>
- 7.2.8 On 19 May 2023, the Congressional Research Service (CRS), ‘a research entity... that provides policy and legal analysis to committees and members

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<sup>9</sup> The National, [‘...The families who are affected by Lebanon's nationality law’](#), 26 January 2020

<sup>10</sup> FMR, [‘About Us’](#), undated

<sup>11</sup> FMR, [‘Stateless Palestinians’](#), undated

<sup>12</sup> DIS, [‘Palestinian Refugees Access to registration and UNRWA services...’](#) (p48), June 2020

<sup>13</sup> United Nations Office of the High Commissioner, [‘Francesca Albanese’](#), undated

<sup>14</sup> F P Albanese, L Takkenberg, ‘Palestinian Refugees in International Law’ (p212), June 2020

<sup>15</sup> HCC, [‘About Us’](#), undated

<sup>16</sup> HCC, [‘... The Case of Palestinian Christian Refugees in Lebanon’](#), 17 May 2023

of both chambers of the United States Congress',<sup>17</sup> published a report entitled 'Lebanon', citing various sources, which stated that: 'Like Syrian refugees, Palestinian refugees and their Lebanese-born children cannot obtain Lebanese citizenship, even though many are the third or fourth generation to be born inside Lebanon...'<sup>18</sup>

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### 7.3 Status and statelessness

7.3.1 On 17 October 2007, AI published a report entitled: 'Lebanon: Exiled and suffering: Palestinian refugees in Lebanon' which stated: '... [V]irtually all stateless people in Lebanon are Palestinian refugees, and most Palestinian refugees are stateless.'<sup>19</sup>

7.3.2 An undated section of MAP's website, entitled 'The Issues', states: 'Since then [the Nakba in 1947-8], most Palestinians have not been granted Lebanese citizenship, instead remaining stateless.'<sup>20</sup>

7.3.3 On 20 June 2019, the European Network on Statelessness, 'a civil society alliance of over 180 organisations and individual experts in 41 countries... committed to ending statelessness',<sup>21</sup> published a blog entitled 'A visit to Lebanon' which stated

'... Lebanon is not a signatory to either the 1961 Convention on the Reduction of Statelessness or the 1954 Convention relating to the Status of Stateless Persons, creating a fundamental legislative gap in the legal framework and thus denying nationality to thousands of people in Lebanon. Simply put, the country is lacking any binding legal commitment to prevent or eradicate statelessness.

'... Lebanon is neither a party to the 1951 Convention relating to the Status of Refugees.'<sup>22</sup>

7.3.4 On 23 July 2019, Middle East Eye, 'an independently funded digital news organisation covering stories from the Middle East and North Africa',<sup>23</sup> published an article entitled 'Palestinian refugees in Lebanon denounce new "inhumane" work restrictions' which stated:

'... [F]or the past 72 years Lebanese laws and regulations have failed to address the civil status of Palestinians.

'The lack of clear status for Palestinians is in large part due to longstanding sectarian tensions in the country, with Christian political parties long opposing steps to integrate the majority Sunni Muslim Palestinian community in Lebanese society, fearing that doing so would upend the sectarian balance of power.

'As a result, depending on the legislation, Palestinians can be treated as

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<sup>17</sup> ecoi.net, '[Source description: Congressional Research Service \(CRS\)](#)', 7 October 2019

<sup>18</sup> CRS, '[Lebanon](#)' (p11), 19 May 2023

<sup>19</sup> AI, '[Lebanon: Exiled and suffering: Palestinian refugees in Lebanon](#)' (p16), 17 October 2007

<sup>20</sup> MAP, '[The Issues](#)' (Lebanon), undated

<sup>21</sup> European Network on Statelessness, '[About Us](#)', undated

<sup>22</sup> European Network on Statelessness, '[A visit to Lebanon](#)', 20 June 2019

<sup>23</sup> Middle East Eye, '[About us](#)', undated

refugees, foreigners, or stateless persons.<sup>24</sup>

- 7.3.5 Dr. Albanese and Prof. Takkenberg's June 2020 'Palestinian Refugees in International Law' stated: 'Palestine refugees are also considered a "special category of foreigners" not benefitting from specific refugee rights nor being allowed to naturalise...'<sup>25</sup>
- 7.3.6 On 26 November 2020, Frontiers, a publisher of community-driven and peer-reviewed academic journals<sup>26</sup>, published an article written by Yafa El Masri, a doctorate student at the department of Geosciences at the University of Padua, Italy<sup>27</sup>, entitled '72 Years of Homemaking in Waiting Zones: Lebanon's "Permanently Temporary" Palestinian Refugee Camps', citing various sources, which stated: 'Palestine refugees are categorized as "stateless," meaning that they lack citizenship of a recognized state. And since the Lebanese state has no specific consideration or hospitality regulation for their particular statelessness, Palestinian refugees in Lebanon receive the treatment of foreigners with no recognized state documents, thus depriving them from access to the most basic life elements: labor maker, health and education.'<sup>28</sup>
- 7.3.7 On 4 February 2021, Deutsche Welle (DW), a German broadcaster<sup>29</sup>, published an article entitled 'Palestinians in Lebanon: "The world has forgotten us"' which stated: 'In Lebanon, Palestinian refugees pass on their refugee status to their children.'<sup>30</sup>
- 7.3.8 On 30 July 2021, Peace Direct, 'an international charity dedicated to supporting local people to stop war and build lasting peace in some of the world's most fragile countries',<sup>31</sup> published a blog entitled 'Palestinians of Lebanon: Generations of refugees denied integration and basic rights' which stated:
- 'Palestinians are considered by Lebanese authorities as "refugees"... Some argue that the Palestinians, smaller in numbers [than Syrians in Lebanon], possess a "special" status, falling under the mandate of the United Nations Relief and Works Agency for Palestine Refugees in the Near East (UNRWA). They have their own international agency...
- '... Meanwhile, some populist Lebanese politicians are increasingly arguing that a refugee status is not inherited, implying that Palestinians born in Lebanon should not be considered as refugees but children and grandchildren of refugees.'<sup>32</sup>
- 7.3.9 On 20 March 2023, the United States Department of State (USSD) published a report entitled '2022 Country Report on Human Rights Practices: Lebanon', covering events in 2022, (the USSD 2022 Country Report) which stated: 'There were no official statistics on the size of the stateless

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<sup>24</sup> Middle East Eye, '[Palestinian refugees in Lebanon... 'inhumane' work restrictions](#)', 23 July 2019

<sup>25</sup> F P Albanese, L Takkenberg, 'Palestinian Refugees in International Law' (p214), June 2020

<sup>26</sup> Frontiers, '[About us](#)', July 2023

<sup>27</sup> Frontiersin.org, '[Yafa Talal El Masri](#)', undated

<sup>28</sup> Yafa El Masri, '[...Lebanon's...Palestinian Refugee Camps](#)' (p5), 26 November 2020

<sup>29</sup> DW, '[Who We Are](#)', undated

<sup>30</sup> DW, '[Palestinians in Lebanon: "The world has forgotten us"](#)', 4 February 2021

<sup>31</sup> Peace Direct, '[About Us](#)', undated

<sup>32</sup> Peace Direct, '[Palestinians of Lebanon...](#)', 30 July 2021

population. The country contributes to statelessness, including through: discrimination against women in nationality laws; discrimination on other grounds, such as ethnicity, religion, or disability, in nationality laws or their administration in practice; and discrimination in birth registrations.<sup>33</sup>

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## 7.4 'Categories' of Palestinians

7.4.1 In February 2016, the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR) published a report entitled 'The Situation of Palestinian Refugees in Lebanon', citing various sources, which stated:

'Based on their legal status and registration with the United Nations Relief and Works Agency for Palestine Refugees in the Near East (UNRWA), Palestinian refugees in Lebanon can be categorized into four groups:

- "Registered" refugees ("Palestine refugees"), which are registered with UNRWA and the Lebanese authorities;
- "Non-registered" Palestinian refugees, which are not registered with UNRWA, but are registered with the Lebanese authorities;
- "Non-ID" Palestinian refugees, who are neither registered with UNRWA nor with the Lebanese authorities; and
- 'Palestine refugees from Syria, who have arrived in Lebanon since 2011.'<sup>34</sup>

7.4.2 Dr. Albanese and Prof. Takkenberg's June 2020 'Palestinian Refugees in International Law' stated: 'Among these stateless Palestinians, only those registered in Lebanon – and holding a Lebanese ID – according to Lebanese regulations are considered legal residents... Ultimately only those registered with DPRA [Directorate of Political Affairs and Refugees] – i.e. Palestinians falling in the first two groups – are considered legally resident...'<sup>35</sup>

7.4.3 The different 'categories' of Palestinians are covered in more detail in the sections below.

7.4.4 For more information on the role of UNRWA for Palestinians in Lebanon, see [United Nations Relief and Works Agency in the Near East \(UNRWA\) services](#).

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## 7.5 'Registered' Palestinians

7.5.1 An undated page on UNRWA's website, entitled 'Palestine Refugees', states: 'Palestine refugees are defined as "persons whose normal place of residence was Palestine during the period 1 June 1946 to 15 May 1948, and who lost both home and means of livelihood as a result of the 1948 conflict"... The descendants of Palestine refugee males, including adopted children, are also eligible for registration.'<sup>36</sup>

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<sup>33</sup> USSD, '[2022 Country Report on Human Rights Practices: Lebanon](#)' (p23), 20 March 2023

<sup>34</sup> UNHCR, '[The Situation of Palestinian Refugees in Lebanon](#)' (p2), February 2016

<sup>35</sup> F P Albanese, L Takkenberg, 'Palestinian Refugees in International Law' (p212,213), June 2020

<sup>36</sup> UNRWA, '[Palestine Refugees](#)' (Section: Who are Palestine refugees?), undated

- 7.5.2 Dr. Albanese and Prof. Takkenberg’s June 2020 ‘Palestinian Refugees in International Law’ stated: ‘They [“1948 refugees”] are... registered with DPRA and hold a DPRA-issued “Identification Card for Palestine Refugee”, which officially confirms their legal residence in Lebanon.
- ‘While registration gives Palestine refugees legal residence... in practice, they remain foreigners in the country.’<sup>37</sup>
- 7.5.3 On 14 April 2022, the United Nations Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs (UNOCHA) published a report entitled ‘Increasing Humanitarian Needs in Lebanon’ which attributed UNRWA’s definition of Palestine refugees to the UNHCR’s first ‘category’ of Palestinians, namely ‘registered’ refugees, and referred to them as ‘Palestine Refugees in Lebanon (PRL)’<sup>38</sup>.
- 7.5.4 The USSD 2022 Country Report stated that Palestinian refugees who are registered with UNRWA are considered foreigners under Lebanese law<sup>39</sup>.
- 7.5.5 DFAT’s June 2023 country report stated: ‘For political reasons, both Lebanese authorities and the PRLs themselves have long opposed moves to naturalise PRLs. Accordingly, despite their longstanding presence in Lebanon, PRLs remain excluded from key aspects of social, political, and economic life.’<sup>40</sup>
- 7.5.6 The 3 March 2020 DIS/UNRWA meeting minutes, published in an appendix to DIS’s June 2020 report, stated: ‘UNRWA explained that recently some Palestine Refugees in Lebanon have attempted to deregister from UNRWA, hoping that this would allow for them to fall under UNHCR’s mandate... UNRWA has communicated that deregistration in itself will not remove the individual from falling under the mandate of UNRWA.’<sup>41</sup>

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## 7.6 ‘Non-registered’ Palestinians

- 7.6.1 UNOCHA’s April 2022 report defined ‘non-registered’ Palestinians in Lebanon as: ‘Those not registered with UNRWA who were displaced as a result of the 1967 and subsequent hostilities, and who are registered with the Lebanese Government (referred to as “Not-Registered” or NR by UNRWA) (numbers unknown)’.<sup>42</sup>
- 7.6.2 The UNHCR’s February 2016 report stated:
- ‘Lebanon’s regulation of Palestine refugees’ status reportedly dates back to 1959, when the Department of Palestinian Refugees Affairs (DPRA) [renamed as “Directorate of Political Affairs and Refugees” (DPAR) by the Lebanese government in 2010] was created... The Minister of Interior’s Ordinance No. 319 of 2 August 1962 details the process for the regularization of residency for Palestinian refugees, in which they are considered to be “foreigners who do not carry documentation from their

<sup>37</sup> F P Albanese, L Takkenberg, ‘Palestinian Refugees in International Law’ (p213), June 2020

<sup>38</sup> UNOCHA, [‘Increasing Humanitarian Needs in Lebanon’](#) (footnote 132 (p26)), 14 April 2022

<sup>39</sup> USSD, [‘2022 Country Report on Human Rights Practices: Lebanon’](#) (p21), 20 March 2023

<sup>40</sup> DFAT, [‘Country Information Report: Lebanon’](#) (para 3.11), 26 June 2023

<sup>41</sup> DIS, [‘Palestinian Refugees Access to registration and UNRWA services...’](#) (p55), June 2020

<sup>42</sup> UNOCHA, [‘Increasing Humanitarian Needs in Lebanon’](#) (footnote 132(p26)), 14 April 2022

countries of origin, and reside in Lebanon on the basis of [residency] cards issued by the Directorate of Public Security, or identity cards issued by the [DPRA]”. However, while the possession of a valid residency or identity card is required to regularize their residency status, there is no clear provision defining what categories of Palestinian refugees are entitled to such a card.

‘... Newborns are reportedly registered with the family’s original place of registration, regardless of where in Lebanon they were born.

‘... A refugee’s registration with DPAR is reportedly only cancelled in three specific events, namely, (i) in the case of a refugee’s death and upon request of the General Security to DPAR to cancel the person’s registration following their death, or (ii) if the refugee obtains the nationality of a third country, or (iii) if the refugee has submitted an application to the General Security to have his/her registration cancelled.’<sup>43</sup>

7.6.3 Dr. Albanese and Prof. Takkenberg’s June 2020 ‘Palestinian Refugees in International Law’ stated:

‘Approximately 35,000 refugees from Mandate Palestine and their descendants (i.e. “1948 refugees”), are not registered with UNRWA in Lebanon. They are often referred to as “NR”. Their lack of registration with UNRWA has various causes: they may have not been in need of humanitarian assistance in 1948, and hence not met UNRWA’s registration and eligibility criteria; they may have taken refuge outside UNRWA’s area of operations in 1948 and moved to Lebanon later on; or they may have arrived to Lebanon not in connection with the 1948 events (e.g. 1967, 1970). They are nonetheless registered with the Lebanese authorities and as such they hold the same DPRA-issued Identification Cards issued to registered Palestine refugees. The majority of them have a proof of nationality document from the Palestinian embassy in Lebanon. Lebanese authorities treat them similarly to UNRWA-registered refugees...’<sup>44</sup>

7.6.4 The USSD 2022 Country Report stated:

‘Children of Palestinian refugees faced discrimination in birth registration, as bureaucratic and administrative procedures at the Directorate of Political Affairs and Refugees (DPRA) made it difficult to register these children after the age of one year. According to the law, birth registration of children older than one year requires a court procedure, in some cases an investigation by the DGS [General Directorate of Security], and final approval from the DPRA. Where paternity is in doubt or the applicant is age 18 years more, he or she may also be required to take a DNA test. The birth registration process can take more than a year to complete and is extremely complex to navigate, especially for the DPRA-registered parents of Palestinian refugee children.’<sup>45</sup>

7.6.5 The 3 March 2020 DIS/UNRWA meeting minutes, published in an appendix to DIS’s June 2020 report, stated:

‘UNRWA began maintaining Palestine Refugees registration records in May

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<sup>43</sup> UNHCR, [‘The Situation of Palestinian Refugees in Lebanon’](#) (p4), February 2016

<sup>44</sup> F P Albanese, L Takkenberg, ‘Palestinian Refugees in International Law’ (p216), June 2020

<sup>45</sup> USSD, [‘2022 Country Report on Human Rights Practices: Lebanon’](#) (p24), 20 March 2023

1950 and the initial registration process closed in June 1952. Therefore, in Lebanon individuals who wish to register with UNRWA who were not included in the initial registration will need prior approval from the Lebanese authorities before they can obtain an UNRWA registration. Persons residing outside of Lebanon, who wish to register with UNRWA in Lebanon, can apply for a preapproval through a Lebanese embassy. The Lebanese authorities also check against UNRWA registrations to see if the registration files match.<sup>46</sup>

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## 7.7 'Non-ID' Palestinians

7.7.1 UNOCHA's April 2022 report defined 'non-ID' Palestinians in Lebanon as: 'Palestinian refugees who lack identity documents and are neither registered with UNRWA nor with the Lebanese authorities (referred to as "Non-IDs"), likely to be an estimated 5000'.<sup>47</sup>

7.7.2 In September 2020, UNRWA published a report entitled 'Protection brief: Palestine refugees living in Lebanon', citing various sources, which stated: 'There are an estimated 4,000 Non-ID Palestinians in Lebanon. These are Palestinians who began to arrive in Lebanon in the 1960s and do not hold formal valid identification documents recognized by the GoL [Government of Lebanon]... they do not have valid legal status in the country.'<sup>48</sup>

7.7.3 Dr. Albanese and Prof. Takkenberg's June 2020 'Palestinian Refugees in International Law' stated:

'This non-homogenous group includes: 1) Palestinians in Lebanon since the late 1960s and 1970s who are not registered with either the Lebanese authorities or UNRWA in Lebanon, although they may be registered with UNRWA elsewhere; they may have some form of documentation to prove their Palestinian identity, either from one of UNRWA's "fields" of operations (e.g. Palestinians holding valid or expired Jordanian IDs, who are unable to return to Jordan or the West Bank if the holder was originally from there prior to 1988; 2) Palestinians from the Gaza Strip with Egyptian TDPRs [Travel Documents for Palestinian Refugees] who are not allowed either to stay in Egypt or to return to Gaza (those who left Gaza before 1967); 3) Palestinians expelled by Israel from the oPt post-1967 and not allowed to return; 4) Palestinians from any Arab country (e.g. Iraq, Egypt) who for various reasons are unable to return there. As such, these Palestinians fall in the category of "[f]oreign nationals who do not hold identity papers from their country of origin [ ... ], residence cards issued by the General Directorate of General Security [Sûreté Générale] or identity cards issued by [the DPRA]".

'... As a result [of the harsher restrictions they face compared with Palestinians registered with Lebanese authorities and/or UNRWA in Lebanon], many have confined themselves to the camps, out of reach of the Lebanese authorities.'<sup>49</sup>

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<sup>46</sup> DIS, '[Palestinian Refugees Access to registration and UNRWA services...](#)' (p48), June 2020

<sup>47</sup> UNOCHA, '[Increasing Humanitarian Needs in Lebanon](#)' (footnote 132(p26)), 14 April 2022

<sup>48</sup> UNRWA, '[Protection brief - Palestine refugees living in Lebanon](#)' (p3), September 2020

<sup>49</sup> F P Albanese, L Takkenberg, 'Palestinian Refugees in International Law' (p217), June 2020



- 7.7.4 The USSD 2022 Country Report stated: ‘UNRWA estimated that 3,000 to 5,000 Palestinians remained unregistered with either it or the government... The government does not recognize their legal status in the country... [A]nd [they] encountered obstacles completing civil registration procedures.’<sup>50</sup>
- 7.7.5 DFAT’s June 2023 country report stated: ‘... [This] category is a group of between 3,000 to 5,000 Palestinians who arrived in Lebanon with the Palestine Liberation Organization after its defeat in the Black September conflict in Jordan. This group is effectively stateless: they are not registered with the United Nations Relief and Works Agency for Palestine Refugees in the Near East (UNRWA); they are spread across the country; and they do not have any designated advocates.’<sup>51</sup>

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## 7.8 Palestinians from Syria

7.8.1 UNOCHA’s April 2022 report defined Palestinians from Syria in Lebanon as: ‘Palestinian refugees from Syria (PRS), who have arrived in Lebanon since 2013 and who may or may not have regular status in Lebanon.’<sup>52</sup>

7.8.2 UNRWA’s September 2020 ‘Protection brief’ report stated:

‘In 2011, at the onset of the Syrian conflict, the General Security Office (GSO) initially facilitated access of PRS to Lebanon. However, these measures were never formalized by the GSO and in August 2013 and May 2014 facilitating measures were removed and additional restrictions imposed... Since then [January 2015], entry visas are only granted at the border to PRS with either a verified embassy appointment in Lebanon or a flight ticket and visa to a third country. Most are issued with a 24-hour transit visa. In addition, a very limited numbers of PRS can secure a visa for Lebanon by obtaining prior approval from the GSO, which requires a sponsor in Lebanon and cannot be processed at border posts.

‘Some PRS have sought to enter Lebanon through irregular border crossings, placing them at additional risk of exploitation and abuse both during the crossing and once they arrive in Lebanon.

‘Irregular entry into Lebanon is an obstacle to later regularizing one’s legal status and while several memoranda have been issued by the GSO since October 2015, allowing for a free-of charge renewal of residency documents, persons who have entered irregularly are exempted. A considerable number of PRS are therefore still unable to regularize their stay in Lebanon. In addition, lack of awareness has meant that some PRS have not renewed their documents and are therefore considered by the authorities as illegally staying in Lebanon.

‘The General Directorate of General Security announced on 17 July 2020 [sic] that Arab citizens and foreigners who entered Lebanon irregularly and those whose legal residency and work permit have expired are able to regularize their status between 31/07/2020 to 31/10/2020. However, regularisation is only possible by securing a sponsor and a work permit.

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<sup>50</sup> USSD, [‘2022 Country Report on Human Rights Practices: Lebanon’](#) (p24), 20 March 2023

<sup>51</sup> DFAT, [‘Country Information Report: Lebanon’](#) (para 3.8), 26 June 2023

<sup>52</sup> UNOCHA, [‘Increasing Humanitarian Needs in Lebanon’](#) (footnote 132(p26)), 14 April 2022

Hence, the impact on PRS is expected to be minimal.

‘... A survey conducted during the first half of 2020 indicated that 34 per cent of PRS in Lebanon do not hold valid residency documents.

‘... On 24 April 2019, a series of decisions announced by the High Defence Council in Lebanon resulted in stricter enforcement of national laws and the promulgation of a new regulation affecting refugees. The decision to deport Syrians who entered the country illegally after 24 April 2019, coupled with departure orders issued to Syrians and PRS without valid residency who entered before that date, has resulted in an increased fear of deportation among PRS. UNRWA recorded the first cases of PRS deportations, including of two women and four minors, in late 2019 and early 2020.

‘... In recent years, UNRWA has also recorded a number of spontaneous returns by PRS families and individuals to Syria. In 2019, UNRWA recorded the return to habitual residence of 2,240 PRS individuals. The numbers for 2020 were significantly lower, including due to COVID-19 containment measures.’<sup>53</sup>

- 7.8.3 On 13 February 2023, UNRWA published a ‘Protection Monitoring Report – Quarter 4 (Q4) 2022’, citing various sources, which stated:

‘Lack of residency was repeatedly raised by PRS as a major issue affecting them. For many, this is due to their entering the country irregularly after January 2014, after which date they have only been able to enter regularly in an extremely limited number of circumstances. Renewing residency was also a major concern for those PRS who were eligible for it. While the most recent figures for residency among PRS date from April 2021 and indicate that 51 per cent did not have residency, this is likely to have risen as transport and other associated costs have increased and government offices have often been shut.’<sup>54</sup>

- 7.8.4 CRS’ May 2023 report stated: ‘The Syria conflict displaced not only Syrian nationals, but also an estimated 27,700 Palestinian refugees from refugee camps inside Syria. PRS are not eligible for services provided by UNHCR, and must instead register with the United Nations Relief and Works Agency for Palestine Refugees in the Near East (UNRWA) to receive continued emergency support.’<sup>55</sup>

- 7.8.5 DFAT’s June 2023 country report stated: ‘Even later arrivals, such as PRSs who came after 2016, cannot get residency in Lebanon at all.’<sup>56</sup>

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## 7.9 Demography

- 7.9.1 MAP’s May 2018 report stated: ‘Some 450,000 Palestinian refugees are registered with UNRWA in Lebanon, but in late 2017 the results of a census were announced stating that 174,422 Palestinian refugees were living in camps and gatherings in Lebanon (the number living outside of the camps and gatherings is not known) as well as a further 18,601 Palestinians who

<sup>53</sup> UNRWA, ‘[Protection brief - Palestine refugees living in Lebanon](#)’ (p2), September 2020

<sup>54</sup> UNRWA, ‘[Protection Monitoring Report – Quarter 4 \(Q4\) 2022](#)’ (p7), 13 February 2023

<sup>55</sup> CRS, ‘[Lebanon: Background and U.S. Relations](#)’ (p11), 19 May 2023

<sup>56</sup> DFAT, ‘[Country Information Report: Lebanon](#)’ (para 3.8), 26 June 2023

had fled to the country from Syria.<sup>57</sup>

7.9.2 On 16 October 2019, the Central Administration of Statistics (CAS) - Lebanon, the Lebanese Palestinian Dialogue Committee (LPDC), and the Palestinian Central Bureau of Statistics (PCBS), published a joint detailed report of the 2017 census findings, entitled 'Population and Housing Census in the Palestinian Camps and Gatherings in Lebanon 2017'. Describing the census as '... an ambitious project',<sup>58</sup> the census was carried out across the following locations:

- Palestinian Camps: '... a geographic area that has been placed at UNRWA's disposal by the Lebanese host Government or leased by UNRWA for the purpose of housing Palestinian refugees and building facilities to address their needs. Areas not allocated for that purpose are not considered official camps.'<sup>59</sup>
- Adjacent Gatherings (to the camps): '... considered an extension to the official camps due to wars, displacement and the need to expand the camps areas due to population increase.'<sup>60</sup>
- Other Gatherings: 'Areas where Palestinians live within the neighborhoods of villages and urban areas across national territories.'<sup>61</sup>

The report, however, also acknowledged it '... possibly excluded some "other places of residence on the Lebanese territory"', and that only when a full population census of Lebanon is taken will isolated Palestinian refugees there also be included<sup>62</sup>.

7.9.3 The same source published the following, undated, map showing the locations of the 12 Palestinian refugee camps and Palestinian gatherings in Lebanon:

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<sup>57</sup> MAP, '[Health in Exile:...Palestinian Refugees in Lebanon](#)' (p5), May 2018

<sup>58</sup> CAS, LPDC & PCBS, '[Census in the Palestinian Camps... Lebanon 2017](#)' (p1), 16 October 2019

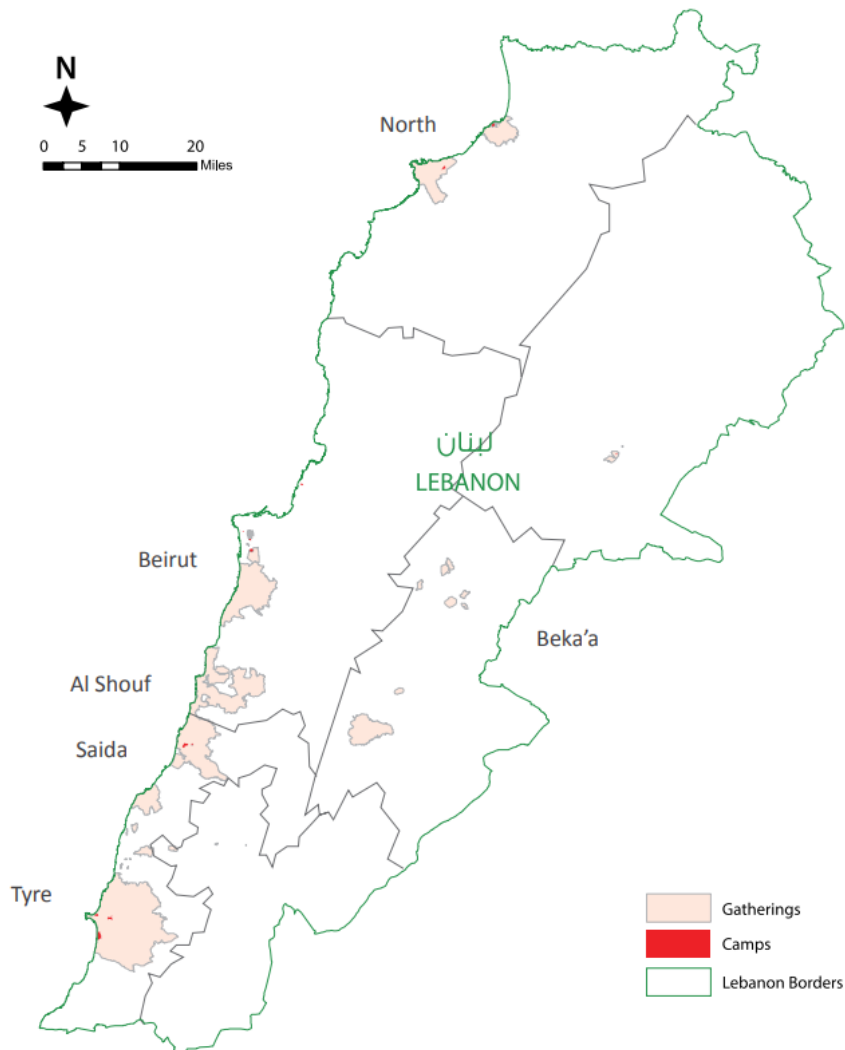
<sup>59</sup> CAS, LPDC & PCBS, '[Census in the Palestinian Camps... Lebanon 2017](#)' (p31), 16 October 2019

<sup>60</sup> CAS, LPDC & PCBS, '[Census in the Palestinian Camps... Lebanon 2017](#)' (p33), 16 October 2019

<sup>61</sup> CAS, LPDC & PCBS, '[Census in the Palestinian Camps... Lebanon 2017](#)' (p34), 16 October 2019

<sup>62</sup> CAS, LPDC & PCBS, '[Census in the Palestinian Camps... Lebanon 2017](#)' (p7), 16 October 2019

Chart (Map) 1.4 showing the locations of 12 Palestinian Refugee Camps and the Palestinian Gatherings in Lebanon.



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#### 7.9.4 The same source noted the following other salient points:

- the census counted 183,255 Palestinian refugees across 168 localities in refugee camps, adjacent gatherings, and other gatherings. 23 of the other gatherings had fewer than 15 households each, totalling 554 individuals, while 10 localities (consisting of six camps, two adjacent gatherings, and two other gatherings) held a combined 29,216 households, totalling 119,208 individuals<sup>64</sup>
- the highest number of Palestinian refugees (35.3%) were based in Saida, followed by the North (24.7%). The smallest numbers of Palestinian refugees were found in the Mount Lebanon (7.5%) and Beka'a (4.7%) regions. Of the 183,255 Palestinian refugees, 165,549 (90.3%) were Palestinian refugee residents in Lebanon (PRLs), while 17,706 were Palestinian refugees coming from Syria (PRSS)<sup>65</sup>

<sup>63</sup> CAS, LPDC & PCBS, '[Census in the Palestinian Camps... Lebanon 2017](#)' (p38), 16 October 2019

<sup>64</sup> CAS, LPDC & PCBS, '[Census in the Palestinian Camps... Lebanon 2017](#)' (p8), 16 October 2019

<sup>65</sup> CAS, LPDC & PCBS, '[Census in the Palestinian Camps...](#)' (p78-79), 16 October 2019

- while the four ‘categories’ of Palestinians were acknowledged, for the purposes of reporting, the census split Palestinian refugees into just two categories. Namely, PRLs comprising both registered and non-registered Palestinians, and PRSs comprising Palestinian refugees displaced from Syria and the non-ID refugee population<sup>66</sup>
- Ain el-Hilweh Camp, accommodates 11.1% of all refugees and 11.3% of the PRLs. Adjacent gatherings at Ain el-Hilweh, and other gatherings at Mount Lebanon, both account for more than 10% of PRSs, which also indicates that significant numbers of the refugees have settled away from the refugee camps<sup>67</sup>
- Palestine refugees in Lebanon were found to be a young population, with approximately 39% under the age of 20, and 50% under the age of 25 (26 for females)<sup>68</sup>

7.9.5 UNRWA’s September 2020 ‘Protection brief’ report stated that the approximately 55% of Palestine refugees who do not reside in the 12 official Palestine refugee camps, instead reside in gatherings or cities in Lebanon<sup>69</sup>.

7.9.6 In July 2023, the United Nations Relief and Works Agency (UNRWA) updated their ‘Where We Work: Lebanon’ webpage, stating:

‘As of March 2023, the total number of UNRWA registered Palestine Refugees in Lebanon is 489,292 persons. In addition, UNRWA records show a total of 31,400 Palestine Refugees from Syria residing in Lebanon. However, registration with UNRWA is voluntary; deaths as well as emigration remain often unreported, and refugees can continue registering newborns as they move abroad through the UNRWA online registration system. In 2017, the... census among Palestinians living in Lebanon... reported a total of 174,000 persons. A total of 45 per cent of Palestine Refugees are estimated to live in the country’s 12 refugee camps. About 200,000 Palestine Refugees access UNRWA services in Lebanon every year. The Agency’s current estimation is that no more than 250,000 Palestine Refugees currently reside in the country.’<sup>70</sup>

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Section updated: 4 March 2024

## 8. Daily life

### 8.1 United Nations Relief and Works Agency in the Near East (UNRWA) services

8.1.1 Yafa El Masri’s article, published by Frontiers on 26 November 2020, stated: ‘UNRWA, referred to in the local Palestinian community as “the witness to the Palestinian crisis,” is a UN agency established solely for the assistance and employment of Palestinian refugees... UNRWA provides a space of living for Palestine refugees by renting the area of refugee camps from the Lebanese government and private property owners, in addition to the

<sup>66</sup> CAS, LPDC & PCBS, [‘Census in the Palestinian Camps...’](#) (p29-30), 16 October 2019

<sup>67</sup> CAS, LPDC & PCBS, [‘Census in the Palestinian Camps... Lebanon 2017’](#) (p8), 16 October 2019

<sup>68</sup> CAS, LPDC & PCBS, [‘Census in the Palestinian Camps... Lebanon 2017’](#) (p10), 16 October 2019

<sup>69</sup> UNRWA, [‘Protection brief - Palestine refugees living in Lebanon’](#) (p2), September 2020

<sup>70</sup> UNRWA, [‘Where We Work: Lebanon’](#), updated July 2023

provision of basic services such as health and education.<sup>71</sup>

- 8.1.2 UNRWA's undated 'Palestine Refugees' webpage states: 'UNRWA services are available to all those living in its area of operations who meet this definition [see ['Registered' Palestinians](#) for UNRWA's definition], who are registered with the Agency and who need assistance.'<sup>72</sup>
- 8.1.3 Dr. Albanese and Prof. Takkenberg's June 2020 'Palestinian Refugees in International Law' stated that since 2004, UNRWA had continued to assist some 'non-registered' Palestinians as they too are refugees from Palestine with no assistance from Lebanese authorities<sup>73</sup>.
- 8.1.4 DW's February 2021 'The world has forgotten us' article stated: 'The United Nations Relief and Works Agency for Palestine Refugees in the Near East (UNRWA) is responsible for the Palestinian refugees in the 12 official camps in Lebanon. This is because Lebanon does not accept any costs for the Palestinians.'<sup>74</sup>
- 8.1.5 On 18 January 2022, UNRWA published a report entitled 'Palestine refugees in Lebanon: struggling to survive', citing various sources, which stated: 'UNRWA remains the lifeline of Palestine refugees in Lebanon. However, the Agency is facing an ongoing financial crisis resulting from a chronic budget shortfall and austerity measures enforced for several years. As a result, the Agency's ability to maintain and expand its protection and assistance role, and deliver quality services, is constantly at risk.'<sup>75</sup>
- 8.1.6 DFAT's June 2023 country report stated: 'PRLs are unable to access Lebanese public education, health or social services, and are generally dependent on UNRWA and NGOs for most aspects of their lives.'<sup>76</sup>
- 8.1.7 The USSD 2022 Country Report stated:  
'Undocumented Palestinians [also called 'non-ID' Palestinians] not registered in other countries where UNRWA operates, such as Syria or Jordan, were usually ineligible for the full range of UNRWA services. In most cases, and as part of its discretionary power to include vulnerable groups of Palestinians on an exceptional basis, UNRWA nonetheless provided primary health care, education, and vocational training services to undocumented Palestinians. The majority of these were men, many of them married to UNRWA-registered refugees or Lebanese citizen women, who could not transmit refugee status or citizenship to their husbands or children.'<sup>77</sup>
- 8.1.8 The same source stated: 'Palestinian refugees who arrived from Syria since 2011 received limited basic support from UNRWA, including food aid, cash assistance, and winter assistance, such as cash to purchase fuel for heating. Authorities permitted children of PRS to enroll in UNRWA schools and access UNRWA health clinics.'<sup>78</sup>

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<sup>71</sup> Yafa El Masri, '[...Lebanon's...Palestinian Refugee Camps](#)' (p5), 26 November 2020

<sup>72</sup> UNRWA, '[Palestine Refugees](#)' (Section: Who are Palestine refugees?), undated

<sup>73</sup> F P Albanese, L Takkenberg, 'Palestinian Refugees in International Law' (p216-217), June 2020

<sup>74</sup> DW, '[Palestinians in Lebanon: "The world has forgotten us"](#)', 4 February 2021

<sup>75</sup> UNRWA, '[Palestine refugees in Lebanon: struggling to survive](#)' (p13), 18 January 2022

<sup>76</sup> DFAT, '[Country Information Report: Lebanon](#)' (para 3.11), 26 June 2023

<sup>77</sup> USSD, '[2022 Country Report on Human Rights Practices: Lebanon](#)' (p24), 20 March 2023

<sup>78</sup> USSD, '[2022 Country Report on Human Rights Practices: Lebanon](#)' (p22), 20 March 2023

8.1.9 On 26 June 2023, the Federal Office for Migration and Refugees (Germany) (BAMF) published 'Briefing Notes' which stated: 'On 22.06.23, the United Nations Relief and Works Agency for Palestine Refugees in the Near East (UNRWA) announced that without short-term funding, the agency's approximately 700 schools and 140 health centres in Lebanon would have to cease operations from around September 2023.'<sup>79</sup>

8.1.10 On 27 July 2023, UNRWA published a report entitled 'Annual operational report 2022' which stated:

'Through the 2022 Syria, Lebanon and Jordan EA [emergency appeal], UNRWA continued to provide humanitarian assistance, including emergency cash, health, education and protection assistance to 30,134 PRS registered with the Agency in Lebanon and PRL impacted by the socio-economic crisis. During the reporting period [the 2022 calendar year<sup>80</sup>], cash grants for basic needs were provided to all PRS in Lebanon... with one-off emergency top-up payments provided to 9,606 PRS families in need.

'... In the face of rampant inflation and the depreciation of the LBP [Lebanese pound], in July, the Agency provided cash assistance payments in US\$ in an attempt to stabilise the value of its support... Violent incidents against UNRWA staff continued to pose a significant challenge to service delivery, particularly in health centres, where demand for medicines unobtainable through other health providers spiked.

'... UNRWA installations were closed for a total of 246 working days in addition to 18 days of partial closures. These closures were largely due to demonstrations and sit-ins by Palestine refugees demanding discretionary services such as CfW [cash-for-work], rental allowances, cash assistance or hospitalisation support, or expressing their frustration at the perceived inadequacy of the Agency's level of service provision.'

'... [F]rom January to December 2022... In Lebanon, UNRWA could only provide three rounds of assistance to PRL in need as the level of funding received did not allow for the provision of assistance on a monthly basis as initially planned... [T]argets for EiE [education in emergencies], emergency health, the repair of UNRWA installations, safety and security and environmental health, were not met due to insufficient funding.'<sup>81</sup>

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## 8.2 Accommodation

8.2.1 The CAS, LPDC, and PCBS joint report on the 2017 census, published on 16 October 2019, stated:

'UNRWA, mandated with the duty of providing shelter and services to Palestine refugees, established a number of recognized Camps (which have been repaired or rebuilt from time to time) dispersed in all Lebanese regions for the refugees to reside therein until 2001. Lebanese laws on the right of foreigners to ownership, applicable to Palestinian refugees being Arab nationals, have allowed them the right to own built real-estates, or real-

<sup>79</sup> BAMF, '[Briefing Notes \(KW26/2023\)](#)' (p5), 26 June 2023

<sup>80</sup> UNRWA, '[Annual operational report 2022](#)' (p5), 27 July 2023

<sup>81</sup> UNRWA, '[Annual operational report 2022](#)' (p11,15,107), 27 July 2023

estates dedicated to construction within certain limits. However, this provision was amended in April 2001 and it became virtually impossible for Palestinian refugees to purchase real estate thereafter.<sup>82</sup>

- 8.2.2 A blog entitled 'Housing Programmes in Lebanon', published by Habitat for Humanity Great Britain, 'An international charity fighting global poverty housing'<sup>83</sup>, which, while undated, refers to events in 2019, stated: 'Besides the 12 main camps that Lebanon has ringfenced to host their refugee communities, there are hundreds of smaller settlements scattered all over the country. Many are severely overpopulated and are in a state of general despair, but by making small renovations and improvements to abandoned, temporary, or war-torn homes, Habitat for Humanity in Lebanon has supported over 30,000 people.'<sup>84</sup>
- 8.2.3 UNRWA's September 2020 'Protection brief' report stated: 'Since the adoption of Law 296/2001, Palestine refugees are prevented from legally acquiring and transferring immovable property in Lebanon. This has led to insecurity of tenure as many have been forced into informal rental arrangements and have been deprived of the benefits of property ownership. As a result of the ongoing economic crisis, Palestine refugees are increasingly at risk of evictions.'<sup>85</sup>
- 8.2.4 Yafa El Masri's article, published by Frontiers on 26 November 2020, stated: '... [T]he camp [Borj Alabarajenah refugee camp] is only rented by the UNRWA from the public/private landowners. However, an entire market of property buying, renting, and selling has been established on this space by camp dwellers who are not actual owners of the properties involved in the exchange. Nevertheless, for organizational purposes, sale and purchase activities are recorded at the camp popular committee in a way to protect dwellers from potential property conflicts.'<sup>86</sup>
- 8.2.5 On 12 April 2022, the USSD published a report entitled '2021 Country Report on Human Rights Practices: Lebanon', covering events in 2021, which stated that while Palestinians were legally excluded from buying or inheriting property in Lebanon, and were typically unable to own land, those Palestinians who owned and registered property prior to the 2001 change in the law, were able to pass it on to their heirs<sup>87</sup>.
- 8.2.6 On 26 August 2022, UNRWA published a 'Protection Monitoring Report – Quarter 2 (Q2) 2022', citing various sources, which stated: 'Focal points in Tyre, northern Lebanon and Beqaa areas noted that reports of eviction and/or threats of eviction increased in Q2. However, exact figures are unavailable as many Palestinian refugees are reportedly moving to cheaper accommodation voluntarily when landlords tell them their rent will be increased or required in US dollars, or that they will soon be evicted. This means that many cases go unreported.'

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<sup>82</sup> CAS, LPDC & PCBS, '[Census in the Palestinian Camps... Lebanon 2017](#)' (p173), 16 October 2019

<sup>83</sup> Habitat for Humanity Great Britain, '[Who We Are](#)', undated

<sup>84</sup> Habitat for Humanity Great Britain, '[Housing Programmes in Lebanon](#)', undated

<sup>85</sup> UNRWA, '[Protection brief - Palestine refugees living in Lebanon](#)' (p2), September 2020

<sup>86</sup> Yafa El Masri, '[...Lebanon's...Palestinian Refugee Camps](#)' (p8), 26 November 2020

<sup>87</sup> USSD, '[2021 Country Report on Human Rights Practices: Lebanon](#)' (p29), 12 April 2022



'Focal points in Tyre and the north report that some of those facing eviction have moved in with relatives as a temporary solution, leading to crowded living conditions. In the Beqaa, some are reportedly trying to move into cheaper accommodation inside the area's only camp, Wavel, although there is very little housing available. PRS are considered to be more vulnerable to eviction threats than PRL, who, in light of their long-standing presence in Lebanon, often hold more secure tenure over their property. Popular Committees in the camps were previously said to have interceded and negotiated in cases of threatened eviction, but are now reported to be less willing to do so.'<sup>88</sup>

#### 8.2.7 The USSD 2022 Country Report stated:

'According to UNRWA, poverty rates increased among Palestinian refugee families from 73 percent in July 2021 to 86 percent in March. Many Palestinian refugees experienced significant difficulties paying for essential goods and services including... electricity, and rent. Many received only a few hours of electricity per day and... Increasingly, landlords raised rents and required tenants to pay them in U.S.dollars; Palestinian refugees' income was in Lebanese pounds, a currency that has lost 95 percent of its value since 2019.'<sup>89</sup>

#### 8.2.8 In May 2023, REACH, 'a leading humanitarian initiative providing granular data, timely information and in-depth analysis from contexts of crisis, disaster and displacement'<sup>90</sup> and UNOCHA jointly published a report entitled 'Multi-Sector Needs Assessment: Key Multi-Sectoral Findings'. The findings in the report were based on the multi-sector needs assessment (MSNA) carried out by REACH in 2022 which was based on a sample size of 3,944 Lebanese households, 590 Palestinian Refugees in Lebanon (PRL) households, and 1,125 migrant households<sup>91</sup>. The report stated that 49% of PRL households were found to have unmet shelter needs, as compared with 33% of Lebanese households and 32% of migrant households. Additionally, 18% of PRL households were found to have unmet shelter needs to an extreme severity. The indicators driving the shelter severity score included the percentage of households living under the threat of eviction or an eviction notice, those living without any shelter or living in inadequate shelter, those living in a functional domestic space, and the percentage of households by main source of, and number of hours of access to, electricity<sup>92</sup>.

#### 8.2.9 For further information about accommodation within Palestinian refugee camps, see [Conditions in refugee camps](#).

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### 8.3 Education

#### 8.3.1 MAP's May 2018 report stated: 'High unemployment and underemployment has reversed Palestinian families' traditional support for pursuing education;

<sup>88</sup> UNRWA, '[Protection Monitoring Report – Quarter 2 \(Q2\) 2022](#)' (p6), 26 August 2022

<sup>89</sup> USSD, '[2022 Country Report on Human Rights Practices: Lebanon](#)' (p21-22), 20 March 2023

<sup>90</sup> REACH, '[Who We Are](#)', undated

<sup>91</sup> REACH & UNOCHA, '[Multi-Sector Needs Assessment: Key... Findings](#)' (p5), May 2023

<sup>92</sup> REACH & UNOCHA, '[Multi-Sector Needs Assessment: Key... Findings](#)' (p9,14), May 2023

40% of Palestinian refugee students do not even begin secondary education, a figure 10 times higher than their Lebanese counterparts.<sup>93</sup>

8.3.2 The National's January 2020 article stated: 'Schools in Lebanon are required by law to prioritise the enrolment of Lebanese pupils over foreign students and, as the number of non-citizens has increased since the conflict in Syria, some schools have severely limited registrations for non-Lebanese.'<sup>94</sup>

8.3.3 UNRWA's 18 January 2022 'Palestine refugees in Lebanon: struggling to survive' report stated there were: '... [O]ver 39,000 Palestine refugee students currently attending the Agency's 65 schools spread across Lebanon... UNRWA is currently applying in-class learning and home-based learning on alternating weeks to minimize class sizes and the risk of COVID-19 transmission. The Agency is also working with partners to provide transport subsidies to the students most in need to avoid drop outs due to economic hardship.'<sup>95</sup>

8.3.4 UNOCHA's April 2022 report stated that 19% of PRL school-aged children were reportedly not enrolled in formal learning during the 2020 to 2021 school year, as compared with 12% of Lebanese children and 43% of migrant children. 31% of PRL children with critical educational support needs were located in Saida, with 30% in the North region, and 18% in Sour. COVID-19-related school closures were cited as the cause for 38% of PRL dropouts, and a lack of prioritization of education by parents, an inability to afford education-related costs, and the child working or supporting the household, were each cited in 25% of PRL dropout instances<sup>96</sup>.

8.3.5 UNRWA's 2022 Q4 protection monitoring report stated:

'The economic situation has... impacted access to education, with the cost of transport to school a key obstacle for some families throughout 2022. In the 2021/22 school year, 16 percent of interviewed students who dropped out during the school year cited lack of transport as the primary reason. Due to challenges for Palestinian refugees in accessing the Lebanese public school system and the high cost of the private system, many travel significant distances to access the nearest UNRWA school. This is particularly an issue in the Beqaa, the Wadi Zeini area (Saida) and Beirut. It has a pronounced effect on secondary school students, as UNRWA only runs nine secondary schools across the country.

'Moreover, at the beginning of the school year, class formation took more time than usual. This was because families were no longer able to afford private schools, or, in a small number of cases, were asked to leave public schools as Lebanese students increasingly moved from the private to the public system.

'Another obstacle to educational access was some families' need for the additional income their children could obtain through working. This, alongside transportation costs and other factors, contributed to substantial absenteeism in UNRWA schools in 2022, with many students who were

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<sup>93</sup> MAP, '[Health in Exile:...Palestinian Refugees in Lebanon](#)' (p5), May 2018

<sup>94</sup> The National, '[... The families who are affected by Lebanon's nationality law](#)', 26 January 2020

<sup>95</sup> UNRWA, '[Palestine refugees in Lebanon: struggling to survive](#)' (p13), 18 January 2022

<sup>96</sup> UNOCHA, '[Increasing Humanitarian Needs in Lebanon](#)' (p35,36), 14 April 2022

attending UNRWA schools in October 2022 not sitting exams in January 2023.

‘An additional barrier to educational access continued to be experienced by PRS children without legal residency and/or civil documentation such as certificates of full birth registration. While UNRWA still registers students without such documents, these students’ records with the Ministry of Education and Higher Education (MEHE) often remain “unjustified” unless they are able to obtain these documents. Many PRS are unable to do so, and face problems in sitting official exams and/or receiving educational certificates upon graduation.’<sup>97</sup>

8.3.6 The USSD 2022 Country Report stated:

‘Education for citizens is free and compulsory through the primary phase. Noncitizen and stateless children, including those born of noncitizen fathers and citizen mothers and refugees, lacked this right. The Ministry of Education and Higher Education continued a policy stipulating that non-Lebanese students could not outnumber Lebanese in any given classroom during the regular school shift, which sometimes limited enrollment... although some [refugee children] could attend public school.’<sup>98</sup>

8.3.7 The same source stated:

‘Palestinian refugees continued to face de facto restrictions on accessing national education services. Rising transportation costs associated with increasing use of UNRWA schools constituted a key barrier to accessing education for Palestinian refugee children, many of whom also had to leave school at an early age to earn an income.

‘... According to UNHCR estimates, more than one-half of refugee children aged 3 to 18 were not receiving education. Donor funding to UN agencies covered school-related expenses, such as school fees, books, and uniforms.’<sup>99</sup>

8.3.8 REACH and UNOCHA’s joint May 2023 report stated that 6% of PRL households had unmet education needs as compared with 3% of Lebanese households and 1% of migrant households. The indicators driving the education severity score included, for the school year 2021-2022, the percentage of school-aged children enrolled in school (and commonly cited reasons where not enrolled), the percentage of school-aged children attending school at least four days per week while the schools were open (and commonly cited reasons for not reaching this level of attendance), the percentage of school-aged children accessing distance education while schools were closed (and modalities used by children for online learning), and the percentage of children dropping out of school (and the main reasons reported for dropping out)<sup>100</sup>.

8.3.9 On 5 June 2023, the UN General Assembly and the UN Security Council jointly published a report entitled ‘Children and armed conflict; Report of the

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<sup>97</sup> UNRWA, ‘[Protection Monitoring Report – Quarter 4 \(Q4\) 2022](#)’ (p2-3), 13 February 2023

<sup>98</sup> USSD, ‘[2022 Country Report on Human Rights Practices: Lebanon](#)’ (p31-32,33), 20 March 2023

<sup>99</sup> USSD, ‘[2022 Country Report on Human Rights Practices: Lebanon](#)’ (p21,22), 20 March 2023

<sup>100</sup> REACH & UNOCHA, ‘[Multi-Sector Needs Assessment: Key... Findings](#)’ (p9), May 2023

Secretary-General' which stated: 'One school was attacked by unidentified perpetrators in a Palestine refugee camp... I am disturbed by continued armed clashes in Palestine refugee camps and their negative impact on children's access to education, including school closures in October and November 2022...'<sup>101</sup>

8.3.10 DFAT's June 2023 country report stated that PRLs are unable to access public education and are reliant on UNRWA and NGOs to provide education, nor do unregistered children have access to the basic and fundamental right of education<sup>102</sup>.

8.3.11 UNRWA's 2022 annual operational report, published on 27 July 2023, stated:

'... [B]asic education was extended to 39,144 students (20,237 girls and 18,907 boys), including PRS, during the 2021/22 academic year at 65 Agency schools. TVET [technical and vocational education and training] services were provided to a further 718 youth (271 female and 447 male)... The education needs of 4,795 PRS and Syrian children were served through... UNRWA schools... UNRWA also covered the transportation costs of 12,822 students (6,812 girls and 6,010 boys) so they could continue their education in Agency schools...'<sup>103</sup>

8.3.12 The same source stated: 'Socio-economic turmoil in Lebanon... affected Palestine refugee children's ability to both physically access education and learn in a safe and conducive environment.

'... To enhance the physical environment within Agency schools, UNRWA either constructed, reconstructed or upgraded five schools in 2022 through project funding, including...three in Lebanon.'<sup>104</sup>

8.3.13 On 29 September 2023, the Independent published an article entitled 'Palestinian security force deploys in school compound in Lebanon refugee camp following clashes' which stated:

'A Palestinian security force deployed Friday in a school complex in Lebanon's largest Palestinian refugee camp in the country's south, replacing gunmen who had occupied it since fighting broke out in late July leaving more than 30 people dead.

'... The complex includes eight schools. The U.N. agency for Palestinian refugees, UNRWA, has been urging gunmen from various factions who had dug into position in around the compound to evacuate the area ahead of the school year that is supposed to start in early October.

'... Earlier this week, UNRWA had said that more than 11,000 Palestinian children in south Lebanon were in danger of not being able to join their peers at the beginning of the school year on Oct. 2 [2023] because of the hostilities at Ein el-Hilweh. That amounted to a quarter of the refugee school children.

'UNRWA's director in Lebanon Dorothee Klaus said not only had the schools been taken over by armed groups, but that many of the buildings had

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<sup>101</sup> UN Generaly Assembly & UN Security Council, '[Children and armed conflict...](#)' (p15), 5 June 2023

<sup>102</sup> DFAT, '[Country Information Report: Lebanon](#)' (para 3.11,5.31), 26 June 2023

<sup>103</sup> UNRWA, '[Annual operational report 2022](#)' (p11), 27 July 2023

<sup>104</sup> UNRWA, '[Annual operational report 2022](#)' (p35,46), 27 July 2023

sustained significant damage.<sup>105</sup>

- 8.3.14 For further information about Palestinian children in Lebanon, see [Vulnerable groups](#).

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## 8.4 Health

- 8.4.1 On 6 October 2020, the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP) published a report entitled 'Nothing and Everything to Lose: Results from a Qualitative WhatsApp Survey of Palestinian Camps and Gatherings in Lebanon', which stated:

'... [O]ne man... said that "they stop sick people at checkpoints, and even when we give them proof that they are sick or dying, they insist on IDs, even dead people need permits to pass". Regarding this last point, we found that these delays often meant that some people did not make it to the hospital alive. A young woman in our FGD [Focus Group Discussions] became emotional as she spoke of the tragic death of her father: "my father had a heart attack in the middle of the night and due to the lack of any medical facilities in the camp, we tried to take him to a hospital outside, but they made it hard on us at the checkpoints and he died on the way".<sup>106</sup>

- 8.4.2 On 13 November 2020, a journal entitled 'Migration and Social Protection in Europe and Beyond (Volume 3)' was published which included a chapter entitled 'Access to Social Protection by Immigrants, Emigrants and Resident Nationals in Lebanon', written by Paul Tabar, Andrew Denison, and Maha Alkhomassy, all of the Lebanese American University (LAU) in Beirut, Lebanon, citing various sources, which stated:

'Although Lebanese social protection schemes are heavily fragmented, the National Social Security Fund (NSSF) is the primary provider of... health care... However, only Lebanese who are formally employed or foreigners originating from countries which provide equal or better social protection to Lebanese citizens are eligible to enrol in the fund according to the 1963 Social Security Law... Migrants, including Palestinians... are particularly vulnerable as they are ineligible to enrol in the NSSF.

'For Palestinians living in Lebanon, the United Nations Relief and Works Agency (UNRWA) is the only provider of health coverage. UNRWA currently operates 28 primary health care facilities in Lebanon. It has also formed an arrangement with the Palestine Red Crescent Society hospitals to further provide equal access to secondary health care.<sup>107</sup>

- 8.4.3 UNRWA's September 2020 'Protection brief' report stated: 'Positive changes to the Lebanese legal framework in 2005 and 2010 have in principle improved PRL's right to access... social protection mechanisms... giving them partial access to the National Social Security Fund (NSSF). However, while PRL are required to fully contribute to the NSSF, they are not able to fully benefit from the system, as they are still excluded from family allowance

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<sup>105</sup> Independent, '[Palestinian security force deploys in school compound...](#)', 30 September 2023

<sup>106</sup> UNDP, '[Nothing and Everything to Lose:...](#)' (p27), 6 October 2020

<sup>107</sup> P Tabar, A Denison, M Alkhomassy, '[Social Protection... in Lebanon](#)', 13 November 2020

and the sickness and maternity fund.<sup>108</sup>

8.4.4 The National's December 2021 article stated:

'The LPDC [Lebanese-Palestinian Dialogue Committee, an inter-ministerial body headed by the prime minister's office] has been working on increasing Palestinians' access to [employment within] the healthcare sector in light of the high number of departures of Lebanese doctors and nurses caused by the country's economic crash. In the past month, Parliament voted a law allowing Palestinians to register in the syndicate of nurses.

"This was the first time that a syndicate explicitly changed its law to allow Palestinians to register and this is mainly due to the huge need for medical staff in the country," said Mr El Ayi [project manager at the LPDC].<sup>109</sup>

8.4.5 UNRWA's 18 January 2022 'Palestine refugees in Lebanon: struggling to survive' report stated:

'With the ongoing social and economic crisis, Palestine refugees are facing difficulties in covering their most basic health care needs, which were already inaccessible even before the crisis. There are alarming reports on Palestine refugees who are forgoing essential treatments for chronic diseases due to their inaccessibility and lack of health insurance coverage. The Agency's hospitalization policy covers only a percentage of hospital expenses and an increasing number of Palestine refugees are now unable to cover the remaining cost of care.'<sup>110</sup>

8.4.6 The same source stated:

'UNRWA provides primary health-care services through 27 health centres spread across the country, in addition to subsidizing the costs of secondary and tertiary health care, covering normally 90 and 60 per cent of bills at a broad network of contracted hospitals. The Agency seeks to support hardship cases through an additional fund for chronic and catastrophic illnesses.

'In order to respond to the spread of COVID-19 in the camps, UNRWA established three isolation centers providing 170-bed capacity, as well as ensuring 100 percent coverage of hospitalization expenses.'<sup>111</sup>

8.4.7 UNOCHA's April 2022 report stated: 'Just like Lebanese households, two in three PRL households report that at least one member lives with a chronic illness.'<sup>112</sup>

8.4.8 On 24 November 2022, UNRWA published an article entitled 'Palestine Refugees in Lebanon Fall Further into Abyss' in which its Commissioner General, Philippe Lazzarini, stated: "The humanitarian situation of Palestine refugees in Lebanon is extremely alarming. People are dying a slow death as many are unable to afford medicines or co-share the cost of treatment especially for chronic diseases and cancer. Levels of poverty and unemployment are unprecedented due to one of the worst economic crises

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<sup>108</sup> UNRWA, ['Protection brief - Palestine refugees living in Lebanon'](#) (p1), September 2020

<sup>109</sup> The National, ['Palestinian refugees in Lebanon...limited access to job market'](#), 8 December 2021

<sup>110</sup> UNRWA, ['Palestine refugees in Lebanon: struggling to survive'](#) (p12), 18 January 2022

<sup>111</sup> UNRWA, ['Palestine refugees in Lebanon: struggling to survive'](#) (p13), 18 January 2022

<sup>112</sup> UNOCHA, ['Increasing Humanitarian Needs in Lebanon'](#) (p26), 14 April 2022

in recent history. The spread of cholera is the latest tragic layer that adds to acute hardship and helplessness.”<sup>113</sup>

8.4.9 UNRWA’s 2022 Q4 protection monitoring report stated:

‘Access to healthcare remained a particular concern. Despite UNRWA covering up to 90 per cent of secondary hospitalisation costs, the declining value of the Lebanese lira left most families struggling to afford their portion. Moreover, with the daily decline in the currency’s value, some beneficiaries reported being charged additional fees by hospitals, putting healthcare further out of their reach. UNRWA’s own health facilities have experienced increased demand as some Palestinian refugees who previously sought healthcare through private clinics could no longer afford care or medicines and turned to UNRWA for support. In 2022, UNRWA clinics undertook 884,246 primary healthcare consultations, compared to 584,919 in 2021, a 51 percent increase. The number of people receiving mental health care and psychosocial support at UNRWA health centres also rose from 653 in 2021 to 1,930 in 2022, reflecting increased demand for these services.

‘In addition, many medications that are not covered or are only partially covered by UNRWA - if they are available in Lebanon at all - are too expensive for most. Access to cancer treatment was a major concern throughout the year for Palestinian refugees as some drugs were not readily available in Lebanon. Frustration from community members at not being able to access care led to healthcare centres and UNRWA area offices being occupied or shut down on eight occasions, usually by individuals seeking more assistance with healthcare.’<sup>114</sup>

8.4.10 The USSD 2022 Country Report stated: ‘Palestinians did not benefit from national sickness and maternity funds or the family allowances fund. UNRWA continued to bear the cost of basic medical, maternity, or family health care expenses (excluding worker’s compensation). Informal restrictions on work in certain industries also left many refugees dependent on UNRWA for... health care... Many... struggled to access hospitals due to high transportation costs.’<sup>115</sup>

8.4.11 REACH and UNOCHA’s joint May 2023 report stated that 16% of PRL households had at least one individual with unmet health needs as compared with 15% of Lebanese households and 8% of migrant households. The main indicator driving the health severity score was the percentage of households which reported having at least one member who had not been able to access healthcare when they needed it. The percentage of households by travel time to access a primary healthcare facility was also considered<sup>116</sup>.

8.4.12 UNRWA stated, in their July 2023 Lebanon update:

‘UNRWA has more than ever become the main reference for humanitarian assistance and basic services for Palestine Refugees. The top priorities voiced by the refugee community are cash assistance and hospitalization

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<sup>113</sup> UNRWA, [‘Palestine Refugees in Lebanon Fall Further into Abyss’](#), 24 November 2022

<sup>114</sup> UNRWA, [‘Protection Monitoring Report – Quarter 4 \(Q4\) 2022’](#) (p2), 13 February 2023

<sup>115</sup> USSD, [‘2022 Country Report on Human Rights Practices: Lebanon’](#) (p21), 20 March 2023

<sup>116</sup> REACH & UNOCHA, [‘Multi-Sector Needs Assessment: Key... Findings’](#) (p9,16), May 2023

coverage.

‘Despite the support provided by UNRWA, Palestine refugees are facing significant challenges in covering their share of the hospitalization costs. They are no longer able to cover their cost shares. UNRWA does not currently have the resources to fully cover the health needs of the Palestine Refugees.’<sup>117</sup>

- 8.4.13 UNRWA's 2022 annual operational report, published on 27 July 2023, stated: ‘During the reporting period, UNRWA provided 903,128 PHC [primary health care] consultations... through 27 health centres and health points (HPs)... Some 92,222 medical consultations were extended to PRS while hospitalization support was provided to 982... refugees suffering from COVID-19... and, through the Medical Hardship Fund (MHF), supported 525 PRL... in need of treatment for cancer and chronic diseases.’<sup>118</sup>
- 8.4.14 The same source also stated: ‘Palestine refugees, particularly the 49,753 PRS in Jordan and Lebanon, remained especially vulnerable to NCDs [non-communicable diseases] as those who have fled violence with limited resources endure conditions of prolonged displacement and deepening poverty, and thus struggle to pursue healthy lifestyles.’<sup>119</sup>
- 8.4.15 The report also stated: ‘In Lebanon, SSNP [Social Safety Net Programme] hospitalization coverage declined, possibly as the poorest refugees were unable to absorb the small co-payment required for care. This issue will be explored further by the Agency in 2023.’<sup>120</sup>
- 8.4.16 For information regarding security and closure risks to healthcare facilities in and around Palestinian refugee camps, see [Security in refugee camps](#).

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## 8.5 Employment

- 8.5.1 Al’s May 2019 ‘Seventy+ Years of Suffocation’ report stated:

‘The Lebanese authorities impose severe restrictions on Palestinian refugees’ access to... the Lebanese labour market, thereby contributing to high levels of unemployment, low wages and poor working conditions for this population. Successive Lebanese governments have claimed that removing such restrictions would lead to the assimilation of Palestinian refugees into Lebanese society and therefore impede their right to return.

‘Until 2005, Palestinian refugees in Lebanon were effectively barred from the formal job market and therefore forced to work in informal, generally low-paid, employment.

‘In June 2005, the Minister of Labour issued a memorandum allowing Palestinians born on Lebanese soil and officially registered with the Ministry of Interior and UNRWA to obtain work permits. The development followed a “right to work” campaign organized by the NGO Association Najdeh along with 45 other Lebanese civil society and Palestinian refugee grassroots

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<sup>117</sup> UNRWA, [‘Where We Work: Lebanon’](#), updated July 2023

<sup>118</sup> UNRWA, [‘Annual operational report 2022’](#) (p11), 27 July 2023

<sup>119</sup> UNRWA, [‘Annual operational report 2022’](#) (p33), 27 July 2023

<sup>120</sup> UNRWA, [‘Annual operational report 2022’](#) (p34), 27 July 2023



organizations with the aim of lifting the discriminatory measures against Palestinian refugees. This gave Palestinian refugees access to 70 occupations that had previously been prohibited to them, although the cost of the work permits and the bureaucratic procedures required to obtain them continued to present significant obstacles. The continued application of this measure is subject to the discretion of each individual minister of labour.

'In August 2010, the Lebanese parliament passed further amendments to labour and social security laws to facilitate Palestinian refugees' access to work, including waiving the fees for work permits.

'However, Palestinian refugees are still prohibited from practising over 30 professions in the fields of public service, health care, engineering, law, transport and fishing, among others. Access to these professions is controlled by syndicates. Some syndicates restrict membership and thus the practice of the profession to Lebanese citizens. Others, such as those of doctors, pharmacists and engineers, impose a condition of reciprocity of treatment, meaning that foreign nationals can only access the profession if Lebanese nationals have the right to practise that profession in their country. This condition remains impossible to meet in light of the current international status of the State of Palestine.

'Even in occupations where Palestinian refugees are now entitled to work, they still face discrimination compared to Lebanese co-workers. While everyone is obliged to pay 23.5% of their salary to the National Social Security Fund [NSSF], Palestinian refugees only benefit from it by gaining access to an end-of-service indemnity (equivalent to 8.5% of the value of the payments they have made). Unlike their Lebanese counterparts, they do not receive public health insurance as a consequence of their contributions. The cost of private health insurance falls on either the Palestinian refugee or their employer, who may be discouraged from hiring such an employee as a result. Many Palestinian refugees continue to work in the informal sector, where they are generally forced to accept harsh working conditions, low wages and no legal protection.'<sup>121</sup>

#### 8.5.2 The National's January 2020 article stated:

'A study about Palestinian employment in Lebanon, a project funded by the EU, showed half of Palestinian refugees living in the country earn 500,000 Lebanese pounds [£26.27 GBP<sup>122</sup>] per month or less. That is below the national minimum wage of 675,000 Lebanese pounds [£35.49<sup>123</sup>] per month and 20 per cent less than the average monthly income of Lebanese workers, according to the International Labour Organisation, which produced the study. These kinds of limitations have pushed many people... to work illegally.'<sup>124</sup>

#### 8.5.3 The 3 March 2020 DIS/UNRWA meeting minutes, published in an appendix to DIS's June 2020 report, stated: 'Even holding a job within the informal employment sector now requires a permit from the Lebanese authorities.

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<sup>121</sup> AI, '[Seventy+ Years of Suffocation](#)' (chapter 3: Lebanon), May 2019

<sup>122</sup> XE.com, '[Currency Converter – Lebanese Pounds to British Pounds](#)', 30 November 2023

<sup>123</sup> XE.com, '[Currency Converter – Lebanese Pounds to British Pounds](#)', 30 November 2023

<sup>124</sup> The National, '[... The families who are affected by Lebanon's nationality law](#)', 26 January 2020

During a 2015 survey, only 6 % of those employed held employment permits. The PRS community in Lebanon are in legal limbo with no formalised legal stay... There are extremely limited and poorly paid work opportunities in the camps and the PRS survive on handouts.<sup>125</sup>

8.5.4 UNRWA's September 2020 'Protection brief' report stated: 'PRS, like Syrian Refugees, do not benefit from any labour law facilitation, even the standards applicable to PRL. As a result, 93 per cent of employed PRS work in the informal private sector, leaving them vulnerable to abuse.'<sup>126</sup>

8.5.5 On 8 December 2021, L'Orient Today, 'an independent platform that aims to examine the failure of the Lebanese system and to hold political and economic powerbrokers accountable',<sup>127</sup> published an article entitled 'Labor Minister decrees Palestinians can work in professions requiring syndicate membership' which stated:

'Labor Minister Mustafa Bayram amended on Wednesday [8 December 2021] the regulations regarding professions restricted to Lebanese nationals, allowing Palestinians to work in trade-union regulated professions.

'... The syndicate-regulated professions include fields such as medicine, law and engineering as well as public transport and tourism-related jobs. However, not all of these will be immediately opened to Palestinians under the new decision, as some require either legal changes or changes to the syndicates' bylaws in order for non-Lebanese workers to be allowed...

'... [A]s the new provisions come in the form of a ministerial decree rather than a legislative change, they are subject to changes by Bayram [Labor Minister, Mustafa Bayram] or the next Labor Minister. There are also questions as to whether the syndicates themselves will accept to admit Palestinian members.

'... Palestinians still face discriminatory employment policies, such as their inability to benefit from the full amount of National Social Security Fund coverage that is deducted from their salaries.'<sup>128</sup>

8.5.6 UNOCHA's April 2022 report stated:

'Even before the crises [a complex economic and financial crisis, deepened by a political deadlock, the COVID-19 pandemic and the disastrous impact of the Beirut Port explosions in August 2020, and the spillover of the Syrian crisis since 2011], PRL had limited access to livelihoods due to restrictions on their right to work in several professions, and frequent discrimination within the workplace... Many are dependent on daily/seasonal labour... Palestinian refugees in Lebanon without official identity documents and residency in Lebanon ("non-ID Palestinians") are even more restricted in their livelihood options as they are often unable to move around freely and are even more vulnerable to discrimination in the workplace.'<sup>129</sup>

8.5.7 UNRWA's 2022 Q2 protection monitoring report stated:

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<sup>125</sup> DIS, '[Palestinian Refugees Access to registration and UNRWA services...](#)' (p56), June 2020

<sup>126</sup> UNRWA, '[Protection brief - Palestine refugees living in Lebanon](#)' (p1), September 2020

<sup>127</sup> L'Orient Today, '[Who we are](#)', undated

<sup>128</sup> L'Orient Today, '[...Palestinians can work in professions...](#)', 8 December 2021

<sup>129</sup> UNOCHA, '[Increasing Humanitarian Needs in Lebanon](#)' (p11), 14 April 2022

'Palestinian refugees in north and central areas and Saida are reportedly becoming increasingly reliant on cash from Palestinian political factions. Refugees - particularly young people, including university graduates - were said to be employed by factions in a range of functions, from camp security to administrative and clerical work, in return for payment in US dollars. In many cases, this is the only employment opportunity available. In Ein El Hilweh, where most factions have a very strong presence, focal points suggested that remittances and income from political factions or other groups have been somewhat able to shield the community from the worst impacts of the [economic] crisis.

'... With over half of all PRS thought to be without residency and therefore restricted in their ability to move and obtain jobs, the difficulties described [with accessing basic goods and services, education, employment, and clean water during the economic crisis]... have had a particularly profound effect on PRS families. Eighty-six percent of PRS relied on UNRWA cash assistance as their main source of income in Q1 [quarter 1] of 2022 and they are increasingly struggling to cover basic needs despite this assistance. In Beqaa, focal points [UNRWA staff and local organisations in five Palestinian refugee camps - Beddawi in North Lebanon Area (NLA), Bourj Barajneh in Central Lebanon Area (CLA), Wavel in Beqaa, Ein El Hilweh in Saida and Rashidieh in Tyre - from whom qualitative data was collected via surveys and interviews, upon which findings of the report were drawn, unless otherwise stated<sup>130</sup>] reported cases of more than one PRS family forced to share a house, while nine out of ten PRS reported relying on borrowing money in [the] previous month.'<sup>131</sup>

8.5.8 On 9 March 2023, Freedom House published a report entitled 'Freedom in the World 2023 - Lebanon' which stated: 'Palestinian refugees are...restricted from 39 professions, contributing to widespread poverty, unemployment, and underemployment. In 2019, Lebanese authorities issued new regulations requiring foreigners to possess work permits, further restricting Palestinians' access to the labor market.'<sup>132</sup>

8.5.9 The USSD 2022 Country Report stated:

'The government treats both PRS and Syrians as foreigners. As a result, both groups of refugees faced additional disadvantages in the labor market.

'To be employed in the formal labor market, Palestinian refugee workers need an annual work permit that the employer must request from the Ministry of Labor. This application process was reportedly often lengthy, cumbersome, and marred with uncertainty.'

'A lack of written contracts, paucity of employment benefits, and insecure job tenure [for Palestinian refugee workers] also contributed to unstable working conditions.

'While most non-Syrian Palestinian refugees can get a work permit for free, PRS must pay the same fees for a work permit as other non-Lebanese nationals. PRS are also excluded from participating in the streamlined

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<sup>130</sup> UNRWA, '[Protection Monitoring Report – Quarter 2 \(Q2\) 2022](#)' (p1), 26 August 2022

<sup>131</sup> UNRWA, '[Protection Monitoring Report – Quarter 2 \(Q2\) 2022](#)' (p4), 26 August 2022

<sup>132</sup> Freedom House, '[Freedom in the World 2023 - Lebanon](#)' (section F4), 9 March 2023

application process available to other Palestinian refugees in Lebanon. As with Syrian refugees, PRS may obtain a work permit if their employer provides a contract and covers the full cost. If a PRS worker did not have residency, a work permit could be obtained in conjunction with an employment contract. In practice, however, such arrangements were extremely rare.<sup>133</sup>

8.5.10 The same source stated: ‘... Palestinian refugees consistently reported discrimination in hiring due to excessive bureaucracy and societal stigma according to reports from UN agencies, government officials, and Palestinian advocacy groups.’<sup>134</sup>

8.5.11 REACH and UNOCHA’s joint May 2023 report stated that 96% of PRL households had unmet livelihood needs as compared with 94% of Lebanese households and 97% of migrant households. The indicators driving the livelihoods severity score included the percentage of adults (aged 18+) in households with permanent/temporary/daily jobs, the percentage of households which faced challenges obtaining enough money to meet its needs over the prior 30 days, the percentage of households with outstanding debts (including the size of debts), and the percentage of households per type of priority need reported<sup>135</sup>.

8.5.12 DFAT’s June 2023 country report stated:

‘PRLs are prohibited from working in the Lebanese public sector and in thirty-six specified professions, including medicine, law and engineering; and skilled and semi-skilled jobs such as fishery and public transportation (although they are free to pursue these professions inside the camps). PRLs are permitted to work formally in other professions, however, require an annual work permit and an employment contract to do so. While free of charge [for PRLs], obtaining a work permit from the Ministry of Labour involves a lengthy administrative process, and often depends on the goodwill of the employer. Very few PRLs have either a work permit or an employment contract.

‘These work restrictions have contributed to a low PRL participation rate in the formal economy. Over 85 per cent of the PRL workforce works in the informal sector, with most in menial, low-paying jobs concentrated in commerce and construction, or in occupations such as agricultural labourers, sales, service workers, and cleaners. Informal labour renders PRLs more vulnerable to exploitative working conditions: most receive no health coverage, paid holidays, or sick leave, and do not have any pension entitlements. In general, PRLs do not receive the same remuneration as their Lebanese counterparts for equivalent work. The Syrian conflict and the economic crisis have significantly increased competition for jobs in the informal sector, which has disproportionately affected PRLs.’<sup>136</sup>

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<sup>133</sup> USSD, [‘2022 Country Report on Human Rights Practices: Lebanon’](#) (p20-21), 20 March 2023

<sup>134</sup> USSD, [‘2022 Country Report on Human Rights Practices: Lebanon’](#) (p42), 20 March 2023

<sup>135</sup> REACH & UNOCHA, [‘Multi-Sector Needs Assessment: Key... Findings’](#) (p9,13), May 2023

<sup>136</sup> DFAT, [‘Country Information Report: Lebanon’](#) (para 3.12-3.13), 26 June 2023

## 8.6 Vulnerable groups

### 8.6.1 UNRWA's September 2020 'Protection brief' report stated:

'While Palestinian women subject to personal violence can obtain a variety of protective orders issued by the Lebanese courts, in practice the limited control exercised by Lebanese authorities within Palestinian refugee camps makes it impossible to ensure that such orders are upheld for women residing within camps.

'... They [PRS] are... in general unlikely to approach authorities, including to seek justice, due to fear of detention and deportation, which puts PRS women at heightened risk of continuous abuse.'<sup>137</sup>

### 8.6.2 The same source reported violence within the home as a main child protection issue, with overcrowded living conditions, insufficient economic opportunities, poverty, limited control of the Lebanese authorities within refugee camps, and an environment characterized by insecurity and violence, amongst the factors exacerbating Palestinian refugee children's exposure in Lebanon to violence, exploitation, and abuse. With violence and hitting generally accepted, and commonly used, as a form of discipline in PRL and PRS households, 77% of PRL children and 72% of PRS children, reportedly experienced psychological aggression, while 59% and 55% of PRL and PRS children, respectively, were subjected to some form of physical punishment. It additionally reported a risk of Palestinian refugee children, particularly in the refugee camps, being recruited by armed actors thereby being exposed to armed violence; an increase to approximately 4,500 Palestinian refugee children being engaged in child labour in November 2018, representing 5% of PRL children and 4% of PRS children; and, while data was limited due to its sensitive nature, an anecdotal rise in the number of children involved in substance abuse and violent drug related networks due to a rise in the number of youths turning to the distribution or transportation of drugs<sup>138</sup>.

### 8.6.3 UNRWA's 18 January 2022 'Palestine refugees in Lebanon: struggling to survive' report stated:

'UNRWA interventions for the most vulnerable include the identification and referral of protection cases, the provision of specialized services for victims of gender-based violence and child protection, as well as the provision of mental health and psychosocial support. The Agency also offers legal aid services and engages with duty bearers to advocate for Palestine refugee rights. Special attention is given to the work to eliminate violence against children and gender-based violence in all UNRWA installations, and to strengthen neutrality.'<sup>139</sup>

### 8.6.4 UNRWA's 2022 Q2 protection monitoring report stated:

'Following a statement against the legalization of homosexuality and civil marriage by the Lebanese Mufti ['Muslim legal expert who makes decisions

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<sup>137</sup> UNRWA, ['Protection brief - Palestine refugees living in Lebanon'](#) (p2), September 2020

<sup>138</sup> UNRWA, ['Protection brief - Palestine refugees living in Lebanon'](#) (p3), September 2020

<sup>139</sup> UNRWA, ['Palestine refugees in Lebanon: struggling to survive'](#) (p13), 18 January 2022

based on religious laws<sup>140</sup>], there was significant backlash from Palestinian religious leaders against NGO activities promoting gender equality, alongside accusations that some activities also promoted homosexuality. Women's leaders reported targeting and repression during this period, although subsequently their activities were able to continue.

'The difficulty in maintaining confidentiality and obtaining access to justice for GBV cases continued to be highlighted, particularly in the camps.

'... [C]oncerns related to activities that were seen to promote homosexuality led to some conflation between homosexuality and the broader issues of gender equality and challenges to existing gender norms. The debates also indicated the difficult environment that women face in realising their rights: whilst at the household and social level there may be wide acceptance, in the public, religious and political spheres, when the community is under pressure, progress on women's rights is precarious.'<sup>141</sup>

#### 8.6.5 The same source stated:

'... Focal points continued to emphasise women and children's feelings of unsafety, which have remained high. Their vulnerability to exploitation and abuse has been exacerbated by the economic situation... This is particularly critical for female-headed households, in a context where single, divorced or widowed women are particularly vulnerable to all forms of gender-based violence.

'Focal points in Tyre, Beqaa and the north reported that the prevalence of child labour was increasing as the summer school holidays began, and in response to the economic situation. Focal points in north and central areas noted that child labour was more common among Syrian refugees than Palestinians, but that some PRL and PRS have been involved.

'Common activities for child workers include collecting garbage and plastic, working in supermarkets, gas-stations, and bakeries, or as mechanics and delivery-boys. Some were also said to be involved in organised criminal activity such as theft of public utility equipment like man-hole covers and the delivery of drugs. Children engaged in child labour include school drop-outs as well as some who work after school or during holidays. Focal points in Saida noted that the growing financial and psychosocial pressures on families, which are often manifested in increased child labour, are having effects on children's performance at school and thus their future prospects.

'Child marriage was also mentioned as an ongoing concern in most areas though some focal points described it as more wide-spread amongst Syrian than Palestinian refugees. Among Palestinians, it is said to be more prevalent among PRS than PRL, except in Ein el Hilweh camp in Saida where both PRL and PRS were reported to be involved. Focal points in central Lebanon and Tyre areas speculated that rates of child marriage may be dropping due to families allocating scarce savings to basic needs rather than the costs associated with marriage.'<sup>142</sup>

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<sup>140</sup> Cambridge Dictionary, '[mufti](#)', undated

<sup>141</sup> UNRWA, '[Protection Monitoring Report – Quarter 2 \(Q2\) 2022](#)' (p2,7), 26 August 2022

<sup>142</sup> UNRWA, '[Protection Monitoring Report – Quarter 2 \(Q2\) 2022](#)' (p7-8), 26 August 2022

#### 8.6.6 UNRWA's 2022 Q4 protection monitoring report stated:

'The deteriorating economic situation in Lebanon contributed to a number of overlapping social issues in Palestinian refugee families, which disproportionately threatened the rights and safety of women and children... [R]ates of separation among Palestinian refugees reportedly rose in Q4 in the North... Research into children's safety in the camps between March and June 2022 indicated that children from separated families were among the most vulnerable to other protection risks.

'... In 2022, UNRWA and partners undertook an assessment of child safety in Palestinian refugee communities. Key risks to children's wellbeing identified by children, caregivers, and sector professionals included widespread sexual abuse and harassment; the proliferation of violence both in the streets and in households; drug abuse and dealing; and the multiple effects of the socio-economic crisis on mental health and aspirations for the future. At the same time, limits on access to justice in the camps... mean that many child protection threats go unaddressed.

'... On two occasions during the year [2022], some community members came together to push back on women's rights... issuing statements that they rejected in its entirety the Convention on the Elimination of Discrimination Against Women (CEDAW)... While this rhetoric had a significant impact on women's rights organisations and local organisations promoting these rights, reports in the community indicate that to date it has not significantly translated into restrictions on women's rights at the household or community level. However, the ongoing economic crisis appears to be creating conditions for more conservative perspectives on gender rights to dominate public discourse, particularly on social media.

'... UNRWA social workers also reported a rise in GBV cases over the year, although this was likely also influenced by increasing community awareness of these services following a programmatic change.<sup>143</sup>

#### 8.6.7 On 12 May 2023, the UNHCR published a report entitled 'Lebanon Crisis Response Plan 2023; Social Stability Sector' which reported that 1 in 3 Palestine refugee households reported that female household members avoid certain areas due to feeling unsafe, compared with around 1 in 10 Lebanese and Syrian households<sup>144</sup>.

#### 8.6.8 The UN General Assembly and UN Security Council's joint June 2023 report stated:

'The United Nations verified 67 grave violations against 66 children (63 boys, 3 girls).

'The recruitment and use of 48 children (47 boys, 1 girl), between the ages of 11 and 17, by unidentified armed groups (45), Fath al-Islam (1), Jund Ansar Allah (1) and Hizbullah (1), was verified.

'Children (2) were arrested and prosecuted under military jurisdiction on national security-related charges.

<sup>143</sup> UNRWA, '[Protection Monitoring Report – Quarter 4 \(Q4\) 2022](#)' (p3,5-6), 13 February 2023

<sup>144</sup> UNHCR, '[Lebanon Crisis Response Plan 2023; Social Stability Sector](#)' (p169), 12 May 2023

'A total of 18 children (16 boys, 2 girls) were killed (6) and maimed (12) by unidentified perpetrators as a result of armed clashes (13) and explosive remnants of war (5).'<sup>145</sup>

- 8.6.9 UNRWA's 2022 annual operational report, published on 27 July 2023, stated:

'Most concerningly, the current [socio-economic] crisis has accelerated the rate of poverty among Palestine refugees to near universal level within a very short time span. Crisis monitoring surveys conducted by UNRWA in July 2021, March 2022 and September 2022 found that 93 per cent of Palestine refugees had been pushed into poverty, a 20 percentage point increase in 14 months. The Agency also registered: (i) cases of students dropping out of UNRWA schools due to the need to take paid employment; (ii) an increased number of children suffering from psychological distress; and (iii) increases in cases of child labour, child marriage, child abuse and harassment and violence against girls and women.

'... During the year, emergency interventions were extended to address the impact of the financial and economic crises that continued to affect Lebanon. By way of response, one-off cash assistance of US\$50 [£39.45 GBP<sup>146</sup>] per person per month was disbursed to 129,722 vulnerable PRL... including SSNP beneficiaries, families with children under 18, families with chronically ill members and persons with disabilities.'<sup>147</sup>

- 8.6.10 On 9 February 2023, MAP published an article entitled 'Empowering Palestinian children with disabilities to "achieve their full potential"' which stated: 'Palestinian refugees with disabilities living in Lebanon ['According to household surveys... 32% of Palestine Refugees in Lebanon (PRL)... have at least one member with a disability.'<sup>148</sup>] face widespread social and economic marginalisation, and are frequently denied access to essential services like healthcare and education. Children with disabilities are particularly impacted, with these barriers undermining their rights, and profoundly undermining their prospects for the future.'<sup>149</sup>

- 8.6.11 For more information about how vulnerable Palestinian refugee groups, namely women and children, are impacted in Lebanon, see [Refugee camps](#), [Treatment by state actors](#), and [Treatment by non-state actors](#).

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Section updated: 4 March 2024

## 9. Refugee camps

### 9.1 Conditions in refugee camps

- 9.1.1 UNRWA's undated 'Palestine Refugees' webpage states:

'A Palestine refugee camp is defined as a plot of land placed at the disposal of UNRWA by the host government to accommodate Palestine refugees and

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<sup>145</sup> UN General Assembly & UN Security Council, '[Children and armed conflict...](#)' (p15), 5 June 2023

<sup>146</sup> XE.com, '[Currency Converter – US Dollars to British Pounds](#)', 30 November 2023

<sup>147</sup> UNRWA, '[Annual operational report 2022](#)' (p9,11), 27 July 2023

<sup>148</sup> UNHCR, '[In Focus: Women, Girls, Men and Boys with Disabilities in Lebanon](#)' (p1), 28 July 2023

<sup>149</sup> MAP, '[Empowering Palestinian children with disabilities...](#)', 9 February 2023



set up facilities to cater to their needs. Areas not designated as such... are not recognized as camps. However, UNRWA also maintains schools, health centres and distribution centres in areas outside the recognized camps where Palestine refugees are concentrated...

'The plots of land on which the recognized camps were set up are either state land or, in most cases, land leased by the host government from local landowners. This means that the refugees in camps do not "own" the land on which their shelters were built, but have the right to "use" the land for a residence.

'Socioeconomic conditions in the camps are generally poor, with high population density, cramped living conditions and inadequate basic infrastructure such as roads and sewers.'<sup>150</sup>

9.1.2 Al's May 2019 'Seventy+ Years of Suffocation' report stated:

'The amount of land allocated to official camps has barely changed over the years. Palestinian refugees have therefore been forced to expand the buildings in the camps upwards, which can lead to people living in unsafe structures. Conditions in the camps are overcrowded. Infrastructure and services such as sewage and electricity have been further strained since Palestinian refugees from Syria have been forced to flee the conflict and sought safety in Palestinian camps in Lebanon.'<sup>151</sup>

9.1.3 UNRWA's September 2020 'Protection brief' report stated: 'The camps are overcrowded and are affected by substandard infrastructure, sanitation and housing conditions. In addition, camp inhabitants have limited opportunities to improve their housing conditions, and the movement of building materials into the camps requires the authorization of the Lebanese authorities.'<sup>152</sup>

9.1.4 Yafa El Masri's article, published by Frontiers on 26 November 2020, stated:

'These refugee camps are either public or private properties rented by UNRWA to host the Palestinian refugee population. Refugee camps have been rented on the basis of a 99 yearlong contract, [the] end of which is approaching and is concerningly anticipated by all stakeholders.

'... Refugee camps were immediately built after the exodus of Palestinian refugees as temporary spaces, but tents slowly evolved into concrete structures over the years... [I]n most cases Palestine refugees built their new houses or more permanent structures on the exact spot where their arrival tents stood.

'... These structures, which evolved from tents to concrete and then primitive metal buildings from the first 40 years of the exile, have now been regarded as opportunity to build on, taking the open space of the structure roof as a space to move upwards, therefore establishing second, third and in some cases even fourth additional floors... [R]ecently, camp dwellers have been using this mechanism also to create a source of income.

'... In Palestinian refugee camps in Lebanon... most social events... are

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<sup>150</sup> UNRWA, '[Palestine Refugees](#)' (Section: Where do Palestine refugees live?), undated

<sup>151</sup> Al, '[Seventy+ Years of Suffocation](#)' (chapter 3: Lebanon), May 2019

<sup>152</sup> UNRWA, '[Protection brief - Palestine refugees living in Lebanon](#)' (p2), September 2020

normally crowded, and thus more conveniently hosted on the roofs... because it is the only place to avoid overheating of damp and crowded camp buildings.

'... Because no parks or gardens exist within the camp area due to the lack of space, many camp dwellers have decided to transform their roofs into small-scale gardens...

'... A major problem with this expansion is that the proper construction base was never built to be expandable. The original building structures of these camps on the ground floor were initially built for temporary short term settling with no need for long-term endurance, or for additional concrete layers... Therefore, the entire building is a true safety hazard to its dwellers and its surroundings.

'... Lebanese legislations had prevented the entry of any construction material to any Palestinian refugee camp in Lebanon, strictly until 2007, in an attempt to control the expansion of the camp, not taking into consideration the demographic growth of the refugee population which could be left unsheltered. Even though the law had been eased after 2007, allowing Palestinian refugees to obtain construction permits to bring in construction material, it remains highly difficult for Palestinian refugees to obtain the required construction permits and because it is almost impossible to meet the ministry's construction standards in such exceptional dwelling space. However, smugglers of construction material and cement continues to provide the camp with needed material through unnoticed entry spots during hours of less surveillance. Technically, most camp structures are illegal but exist today due to a network of connections based on bribery.

'... According to UNRWA, 78% of Palestinian households in Lebanon's refugee camps are affected by dampness, 62% suffering from water leakages, 52% suffering from poor ventilation, and 55% are affected by darkness.

'... [I]n the Borj Albarajneh camp alone, 48 people have died in the past 5 years due to electrocution in the pathways. The combination of water flow with high voltage wires often leads to a true hazard, especially in winter times due to heavy rain and thunderstorms.'<sup>153</sup>

#### 9.1.5 DW's February 2021 'The world has forgotten us' article stated:

'The Burj Barajneh camp was originally meant to house 3,500 people. But the UNRWA has officially registered 20,000 Palestinians in the camp, and, with the arrival of more refugees from war-torn Syria, the actual number of residents is believed to be twice as high as that.

'... The lanes in the camp are narrow. Residents often cynically say that not even a coffin can get through them. Wherever you go, a tangle of telephone wires and uncovered electrical cables hangs above your head - residents regularly die from electrocution when it rains.

"Here in the camp, and in the houses, too, you can't really keep any distance," says Kholoud Hussein [an English translator and a project coordinator in a local women's organization who has lived her whole life in

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<sup>153</sup> Yafa El Masri, '[...Lebanon's...Palestinian Refugee Camps](#)' (p5,6-7,8,9), 26 November 2020

the Palestinian refugee camp Burj Barajneh in the south of the Lebanese capital, Beirut]. Sometimes, as many as seven people share two rooms.<sup>154</sup>

- 9.1.6 Peace Direct's July 2021 blog stated: 'The Nahr El Bared camp was destroyed in a fierce battle between the Lebanese army and a fundamentalist group. Refugees were caught in the middle. Reconstruction remains very slow, adding an additional layer to the collective frustration felt by Palestinians.'<sup>155</sup>
- 9.1.7 The same blog went on to state: 'Palestinian camps in Lebanon are ghetto-like settlements, sometimes surrounded by segregation walls, barbed wire and military surveillance. They are overcrowded and unorganized concrete blocks with decadent infrastructure. The narrow alleys named after towns in Palestine are covered with a labyrinth of makeshift electric wires that hide sunlight and are very close to water supplies and sewage pipes.'<sup>156</sup>
- 9.1.8 UNRWA's 18 January 2022 'Palestine refugees in Lebanon: struggling to survive' report stated: 'UNRWA undertakes shelter rehabilitation for the poorest and most vulnerable families; the total number of petitions made by camp residents currently stands in excess of 6,000.'<sup>157</sup>
- 9.1.9 On 7 March 2022, Al-Shabaka, 'The Palestinian Policy Network... launched in April 2010 as the first and only independent, transnational Palestinian think tank',<sup>158</sup> published an article entitled 'The Mobilizing Power of Palestinians in Lebanon' which stated:
- 'Life-threatening disasters also occur in the camps, such as the mysterious explosion that took place in Burj al-Shamali camp in December 2021. This and other explosions often go unnoticed and unreported, either because they occur in areas inaccessible to Lebanese security forces, or because they are considered internal affairs that should be dealt with by the Palestinian factions. Hence, Palestinian casualties are often uncounted, and extensive infrastructural and property damages go unreported. The perpetrators of these crimes are likewise rarely held accountable.'<sup>159</sup>
- 9.1.10 UNOCHA's April 2022 report stated: 'In the Palestine refugee camps, access to safe places for young children to play is a particular concern.'<sup>160</sup>
- 9.1.11 The USSD 2022 Country Report noted only a marginal change since 1948 in the land-area allocated to the 12 Palestinian refugee camps, despite a a four-fold population increase, resulting in most Palestinian refugees living in overpopulated camps, some of which heavily damaged from past conflicts. It further noted that UNRWA was prohibited from installing electricity meters in apartments to collect charges from individual households, as though occupants were permanent residents of the country, instead preferring that UNRWA pay a single bill, consequently limiting Palestinian refugee

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<sup>154</sup> DW, '[Palestinians in Lebanon: "The world has forgotten us"](#)', 4 February 2021

<sup>155</sup> Peace Direct, '[Palestinians of Lebanon...](#)', 30 July 2021

<sup>156</sup> Peace Direct, '[Palestinians of Lebanon...](#)', 30 July 2021

<sup>157</sup> UNRWA, '[Palestine refugees in Lebanon: struggling to survive](#)' (p13), 18 January 2022

<sup>158</sup> Al-Shabaka, '[About Us](#)', undated

<sup>159</sup> Al-Shabaka, '[The Mobilizing Power of Palestinians in Lebanon](#)', 7 March 2022

<sup>160</sup> UNOCHA, '[Increasing Humanitarian Needs in Lebanon](#)' (p16), 14 April 2022

residents' access to electricity<sup>161</sup>.

- 9.1.12 The same source noted that while reconstruction of the Nahr el-Bared Palestinian Refugee Camp, destroyed in fighting in 2007, was around 82% complete at the end of 2022, completion of the project was not fully funded. Of the approximately 27,000 displaced camp residents, UNRWA expected 20,878 to return to the reconstructed camp; as of December [2022], 16,781 had returned. 6,122 indicated they would return to the camp but instead opted to settle elsewhere. Temporary settlements near the camp, which housed those who were displaced, were completely vacated by the end of 2022. UNRWA made cash rental subsidy payments of \$75 USD (£59.21 GBP<sup>162</sup>) per month to the remaining eligible displaced families, using savings in rent and maintenance, until their homes were reconstructed<sup>163</sup>.
- 9.1.13 UNRWA stated in their July 2023 Lebanon update: 'Poverty rates among Palestine Refugees are high with 80 per cent reported to be living below the national poverty line (adjusted for inflation) as of March 2023. Data modelling confirmed that without the distribution of quarterly cash assistance (at a total value of US\$ 18 million in two rounds since December 2022), poverty would stand at 93 per cent.'<sup>164</sup>

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## 9.2 Governance of refugee camps

- 9.2.1 Yafa El Masri's article, published by Frontiers on 26 November 2020, stated: 'Unlike most of the world's refugee camps, and also as an exception to Palestinian refugee camps in the middle east, Palestinian refugee camps in Lebanon are external to the Lebanese government's sovereignty and responsibility. Due to the establishment and then the annulment of the Cairo Agreement - an agreement reached in 1969 between the Lebanese State and the Palestinian Liberation Organization (PLO) to arrange that Lebanese state was governing outside the refugee camps, but the PLO was governing inside the Palestinian refugee camps - Palestinian refugee camps in Lebanon are excluded from the responsibility and control of the Lebanese Government. Therefore, the organization of the camps in Lebanon today is rather autonomous and is organized mostly by the camp popular committees. Almost in every camp, committees formed of camp dwellers are either appointed or agreed upon by representatives of Palestinian Political parties who are active in that camp. Ideally, the role of these popular committees is to supervise matters of camp security, conflict resolution, utilities and general organization. However, these committees are seen as inefficient, adherent to their own political agendas and rather corrupt, rendering refugee lives in Lebanon even more difficult.'<sup>165</sup>
- 9.2.2 UNOCHA's April 2022 report stated: 'Palestine refugee camps, which are often over-crowded with poor infrastructure are de facto under the governance of Palestinian authorities, which can lead to limited access to

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<sup>161</sup> USSD, '[2022 Country Report on Human Rights Practices: Lebanon](#)' (p21,22), 20 March 2023

<sup>162</sup> XE.com, '[Currency Converter – US Dollars to British Pounds](#)', 30 November 2023

<sup>163</sup> USSD, '[2022 Country Report on Human Rights Practices: Lebanon](#)' (p23), 20 March 2023

<sup>164</sup> UNRWA, '[Where We Work: Lebanon](#)', updated July 2023

<sup>165</sup> Yafa El Masri, '[...Lebanon's...Palestinian Refugee Camps](#)' (p5), 26 November 2020

official justice systems, particularly for vulnerable groups.<sup>166</sup>

- 9.2.3 The USSD 2022 Country Report stated: ‘Governance and judicial reach in Palestinian refugee camps varied greatly, with most camps under the control of joint Palestinian security forces representing multiple factions. Palestinian groups in refugee camps operated an autonomous system of justice with little transparency to outsiders and beyond the control of the state.’<sup>167</sup>
- 9.2.4 DFAT’s June 2023 country report stated: ‘Under arrangements with the Lebanese Government, Palestinian authorities have responsibility for the camps, including security, and administration is left to competing Palestinian political factions.’<sup>168</sup>
- 9.2.5 UNRWA stated, in their July 2023 Lebanon update: ‘The lack of governance in Palestine Refugee camps and the absence of a judicial and law enforcement system, as well as a stalled judicial system in the host country, contribute to an increase in protection risks that remain unattended. Levels of violence against children and gender-based violence are reported to be high, but individuals are often reluctant to seek support due to stigma and fears around lack of confidentiality and reprisals.’<sup>169</sup>
- 9.2.6 For more information on gender-based violence, children impacted by violence, and the availability of protection, see [Vulnerable Groups](#) and [Protection](#).

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### 9.3 Security in refugee camps

- 9.3.1 UNRWA’s September 2020 ‘Protection brief’ report stated:  
‘With limited control exercised by Lebanese authorities within Palestine refugee camps, Palestinian political factions are responsible for camp governance and exercise security functions within the camps. The environment in many camps is characterized by insecurity, with sporadic fighting between armed groups, clashes involving drug dealers and occasional violence over personal disputes [sic]. There is limited access to the Lebanese justice system for all camp inhabitants, including Syrian refugees and other populations such as migrants and Lebanese citizens.’<sup>170</sup>
- 9.3.2 Dr. Albanese and Prof. Takkenberg’s June 2020 ‘Palestinian Refugees in International Law’ stated: ‘The lack of an official authority responsible for public services and security creates an unsafe and insecure environment, with various types of violence and few avenues for redress.’<sup>171</sup>
- 9.3.3 UNRWA’s 2022 Q4 protection monitoring report stated:  
‘UNRWA recorded 45 serious violent incidents in Palestinian camps and gatherings in 2022. This was down from the 71 recorded in 2021, although that number was boosted by an abnormal level of violence in Q3 2021.

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<sup>166</sup> UNOCHA, [‘Increasing Humanitarian Needs in Lebanon’](#) (p11-12), 14 April 2022

<sup>167</sup> USSD, [‘2022 Country Report on Human Rights Practices: Lebanon’](#) (p9), 20 March 2023

<sup>168</sup> DFAT, [‘Country Information Report: Lebanon’](#) (para 3.10), 26 June 2023

<sup>169</sup> UNRWA, [‘Where We Work: Lebanon’](#), updated July 2023

<sup>170</sup> UNRWA, [‘Protection brief - Palestine refugees living in Lebanon’](#) (p2), September 2020

<sup>171</sup> F P Albanese, L Takkenberg, ‘Palestinian Refugees in International Law’ (p208), June 2020

'Q4 of 2022 saw a slightly higher number of incidents (14 incidents) than Q3 (10 incidents). Across 2022, 38 incidents involving the use of firearms or explosives were recorded (compared with 59 in 2021); the majority were related to personal disputes but some stemmed from inter-factional rivalry and disputes between criminal gangs. These incidents resulted in seven fatalities and 30 injuries. As in 2021, the violence was concentrated in a handful of camps: 13 incidents occurred in Ein el Hilweh camp in Saida and 11 in Beddawi camp in Tripoli (which were also the two camps recording the highest numbers of incidents in 2021); five incidents occurred in Rashidieh camp in Tyre; four in Burj el-Barajneh camp in Beirut; and two in each of Burj Shemali camp in Tyre and Shatila camp in Beirut. No incidents involving firearms or explosives were recorded in other camps.

'Community interlocutors report that, alongside these violent incidents, Palestinian refugee camps and gathering are experiencing an elevated level of petty crime driven at least in part by deteriorating economic conditions. Robbery of people in the streets, as well as persistent theft of items such as power cables, solar panels, gas bottles, wi-fi routers, and vehicles has led to widespread anxiety among Palestinian refugees. The sale and use of drugs, and the resulting sense of community insecurity, was also mentioned as a particular community concern in and around camps in Beirut. As a result of crime levels, focal points reported that camp residents were worried about their personal safety after dark both in and around camps in the North, Beirut, and Saida, while they particularly worried about violence and insecurity in non-camp areas in the Beqaa, which saw frequent episodes of armed violence in 2022.'<sup>172</sup>

9.3.4 The USSD 2022 Country Report stated: 'In Palestinian refugee camps, self-appointed security committees provided security for refugees through an agreement with the government.'<sup>173</sup>

9.3.5 The UN Security Council's April 2023 report, covering the period 11 October 2022 to 24 March 2023, stated:

'On 12 November, a dispute between groups affiliated with Fatah and Jund al-Sham, an Islamist faction, in Ein El Hilweh camp escalated into heavy shooting, resulting in one fatality and damage to a school operated by UNRWA. On 20 and 23 November, armed clashes in Rashidieh camp near Tyre resulted in three injuries and the temporary closure of UNRWA installations. On 19 December, armed clashes in Shatila camp in Beirut resulted in one fatality and the temporary closure of one UNRWA school. On 27 January, armed clashes in Beddawi camp resulted in one injury. On 2 March, armed clashes between groups from Fatah and Asbat al-Ansar, an Islamist faction, in Ein El Hilweh camp resulted in one fatality and the temporary closure of UNRWA schools and health centres and the suspension of solid waste management.

'... The Palestine refugee community continues to suffer owing to security risks within the camps...'<sup>174</sup>

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<sup>172</sup> UNRWA, '[Protection Monitoring Report – Quarter 4 \(Q4\) 2022](#)' (p4), 13 February 2023

<sup>173</sup> USSD, '[2022 Country Report on Human Rights Practices: Lebanon](#)' (p19), 20 March 2023

<sup>174</sup> UN Security Council, '[...\[S\]emi-annual report of the Secretary-General](#)' (para 49,52), 17 April 2023

9.3.6 On 13 July 2023, the UN Security Council published a report entitled 'Implementation of Security Council resolution 1701 (2006) during the period from 21 February to 20 June 2023; Report of the Secretary-General' which stated:

'On 1 March [2023] at Ein El Hilweh Palestine refugee camp, a personal dispute escalated into heavy shooting between groups affiliated with Fath and Islamist factions, resulting in one fatality, seven injuries and damage to a school operated by the United Nations Relief and Works Agency for Palestine Refugees in the Near East (UNRWA). Following further violence, involving the use of machine guns and hand grenades, all UNRWA facilities in the camp closed until 12 March [2023]. On 29 March [2023], in Mieh Mieh Palestine refugee camp, a personal dispute escalated into shooting between two persons affiliated with Fath and Hamas factions, resulting in one injury. On 6 May [2023], armed clashes involving heavy weaponry between groups affiliated with Fath and the Arab Liberation Front factions in the Beddawi Palestine refugee camp resulted in two injuries.'<sup>175</sup>

9.3.7 UNRWA's 2022 annual operational report, published on 27 July 2023, stated: 'In Lebanon, the volatile security situation in Palestine refugee camps resulted in occasional movement restrictions of Agency [UNRWA] staff.'<sup>176</sup>

9.3.8 BAMF's 'Briefing Notes' of 31 July 2023 stated:

'On the night of 30.07.23, Fatah and an armed Islamist group clashed in the Palestinian refugee camp of Ain al-Hilwa near the southern Lebanese town of Sayyida/Sidon. According to reports, assault rifles, grenades and mortar shells were used in the fighting, which continued until Sunday evening. Official reports say that five Fatah members and one member of the Islamist group died and others were injured.

'The Lebanese military has no access to the Palestinian refugee camps in Lebanon. These are under self-administration and regularly experience escalating violence.'<sup>177</sup>

9.3.9 On 31 July 2023, BBC News published an article entitled 'Lebanon clashes: Thousands flee violence at Palestinian refugee camp' which reported on the same Ein el-Hilweh camp incident which, it stated, left 11 people dead and more than 2,000 people having fled the violence according to the UN. The BBC article reported that gunfire continued beyond and despite a ceasefire having been agreed. The largest camp in Lebanon, the UN said Ein el-Hilweh houses more than 63,000 registered refugees, however others have made higher population estimates. Situated near Sidon, in southern Lebanon, Ein el-Hilweh is outside the jurisdiction of the Lebanese security forces. With rival factions inside the camp being responsible for the camp's security, factional disputes are common<sup>178</sup>.

9.3.10 On 3 August 2023, UNRWA published an official statement entitled 'UNRWA calls for an immediate cessation of fighting in Ein El Hilweh Camp as fighting leaves 13 killed and dozens injured' in which UNRWA's Director in Lebanon

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<sup>175</sup> UN Security Council, '[...Report of the Secretary-General...](#)' (para 37), 13 July 2023

<sup>176</sup> UNRWA, '[Annual operational report 2022](#)' (p12-13), 27 July 2023

<sup>177</sup> BAMF, '[Briefing Notes \(KW31/2023\)](#)' (p5), 31 July 2023

<sup>178</sup> BBC News, '[Lebanon clashes: Thousands flee violence at Palestinian refugee camp](#)', 31 July 2023

also reported that clashes within the camp continued amid a very volatile situation, despite an announced ceasefire. The statement claimed 13 people were killed and over 60 people injured, with thousands forced to flee their damaged or destroyed homes, and that an UNRWA school complex, which outside the summer months educates 3,200 children, was used for the fighting. UNRWA further stated that they had been unable to enter the camp to deliver much needed assistance but that some of its 360 staff living in the camp had continued to respond to needs in the camp, while some were trapped, one was injured, and others had fled. UNRWA noted that refugees of the camp, many having been displaced multiple times in past decades, were reliving trauma and shock, and it called for an immediate cessation to the fighting, and for the protection of all UNRWA schools and other facilities at all times, including during the fighting<sup>179</sup>.

- 9.3.11 On 10 September 2023, France 24 published an article entitled 'Several dead as fighting rages in Lebanon Palestinian refugee camp' which stated that renewed fighting had broken out at the camp just weeks after the worst outbreak of deadly violence in the camp in years. It reported that Lebanon's official National News Agency (NNA) said the ongoing clashes killed two Fatah members, an Islamist, and a civilian outside the camp who was killed by a stray bullet, as well as wounding dozens of others. The fighting was, again, reportedly focused within the UNRWA school compound. Dozens of families were said to have fled as fighting intensified, carrying basic necessities such as bread, water, and medicine, with one camp resident having reportedly stated '... he would "sleep on the streets" with his wife and two terrified children rather than return before the fighting ended. "We were going through hell," he said from a Sidon mosque where his and other families have taken refuge.' Aid workers were seen erecting tents outside the municipal stadium in Sidon to shelter camp dwellers displaced by the fighting; an official at Sidon municipality stated they were coordinating with the Red Cross to set up an initial 16 tents, with the expectation of later setting up more, to accommodate around 250 people. The director of a public hospital adjacent to the camp said it had transferred all its patients to other facilities due to the danger<sup>180</sup>.
- 9.3.12 On 13 September 2023, France 24 published an article entitled 'Main Palestinian factions back Lebanon camp truce' which stated that, while Hamas had stayed out of the fighting, at least nine people had by then been killed and more than 85 wounded in the continued clashes between Fatah and Islamic militants, including fighters and civilians, according to the Palestinian Red Crescent. Senior Palestinian officials had reportedly met late at the Palestinian embassy in Beirut, and released a joint statement expressing their commitment to imminently consolidating the ceasefire, facilitating the return of those forced to flee their homes, and to vacate schools. The statement added that they also agreed to continue to coordinate with the Lebanese state. By longstanding convention, the Lebanese army stays out of the Palestinian camps and leaves the factions to handle security. After a ceasefire was announced by Lebanon's General Security agency after a meeting between its director and Palestinian security

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<sup>179</sup> UNRWA, '[UNRWA calls for...cessation of fighting in Ein El Hilweh Camp...](#)', 3 August 2023

<sup>180</sup> France 24, '[Several dead as fighting rages in...Palestinian refugee camp](#)', 10 September 2023



officials, the next day saw brief clashes and it was said that the situation was tense but largely calm the day after that despite sporadic bursts of gunfire<sup>181</sup>.

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Section updated: 4 March 2024

## 10. Treatment by state actors

### 10.1.1 Human Rights Watch (HRW) published an undated article entitled 'Human Rights Watch Policy on Right to Return' which stated:

'Lebanon provides the clearest example of a host state's denial of rights, use of refugees as political pawns, and illegal discrimination. In Lebanon, many Palestinians are preoccupied with basic survival, overwhelmed by poor physical conditions in the refugee camps, pervasive poverty, high unemployment and underemployment, and inadequate medical services. Successive Lebanese governments have consistently opposed the permanent resettlement of Palestinian refugees in Lebanon, and state policies reflect this stance, denying virtually all social and economic rights. In addition, the state has prohibited the expansion of existing refugee camps, which contributes to overcrowding and illegal and unsafe building of additional stories on existing structures.

'One of the most frequently heard complaints from Palestinians in Lebanon concerns restrictions on the right to work.'<sup>182</sup>

### 10.1.2 DW's February 2021 'The world has forgotten us' article stated:

'The Palestinians in Lebanon have never been recognized by a Lebanese government as having equal rights. This is partly because the Palestine Liberation Organization (PLO) was involved in fighting in the Lebanese Civil War, something that angered various political groups in the country.

'... The Lebanese side has always officially justified... exclusion with the argument that a complete integration of the refugees in Lebanon would make it harder for them to return home. So while the US, for example, would like to see the Palestinian refugees settle permanently in the country, Lebanon does not want them to.'<sup>183</sup>

### 10.1.3 L'Orient Today's December 2021 article stated: 'Attitudes towards the country's Palestinian population – estimated to number about 180,000 currently – have changed from minister to minister.'<sup>184</sup>

### 10.1.4 Al-Shabaka's March 2022 article stated:

'On June 3, 2019, Lebanese Labor Minister Camille Abu Suleiman introduced a campaign titled "Only Your Countrymen Can Help You Stimulate Your Business." The campaign, which claimed to be part of an effort to regulate foreign workers, granted businesses and other institutions a one-month period to "correct" employee rosters and register undocumented non-Lebanese workers. On July 10 [2019], a nationwide crackdown started in which many foreign-owned businesses, particularly Syrian and

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<sup>181</sup> France 24, '[Main Palestinian factions back Lebanon camp truce](#)', 13 September 2023

<sup>182</sup> HRW, '[Human Rights Watch Policy on Right to Return](#)', undated

<sup>183</sup> DW, '[Palestinians in Lebanon: "The world has forgotten us"](#)', 4 February 2021

<sup>184</sup> L'Orient Today, '[...Palestinians can work in professions...](#)', 8 December 2021

Palestinian, were forcibly shut down; and in cases where undocumented or unregistered workers were found, businesses were forced to pay substantial fines. Some Palestinians working in NGOs reported that they had to take mandatory time off work, and even hide in bathrooms during inspection visits from the Ministry of Labor and municipal staff to avoid losing their jobs or causing disruption to their institutions and colleagues.

'... While Abu Suleiman, the Lebanese government, and Palestinian leadership believed this crackdown would pass as had many previous waves of violations against refugees, a significant response emerged from within the camps. On July 15 [2019], Palestinians across the camps called for mass demonstrations and a joint Lebanese-Palestinian march towards parliament the following day.

'... Palestinians continued to organize mass demonstrations and various actions, such as hunger strikes, until late September 2019. Multiple factors led to its dissolution, including... Abu Suleiman's repeated claims that the campaign does not apply to Palestinian refugees. Still, no official announcement has been made that the crackdown on the right to work for Palestinian refugees will end.

'... On December 8, 2021, the Lebanese Minister of Labor, Mustafa Bayram, announced a ministerial decision that would potentially allow Palestinians born in Lebanon and registered with the Ministry of Interior to work in professions previously only open to Lebanese nationals... [I]t was condemned by Lebanese politicians who claimed that it opens the door for *tawteen* [the permanent settlement of Palestinians in Lebanon]<sup>185</sup> and, consequently, will increase unemployment among Lebanese nationals.<sup>186</sup>

#### 10.1.5 UNRWA's 2022 Q2 protection monitoring report stated:

'Q2 saw public statements of anti-refugee sentiment by several prominent Lebanese figures. While these remarks were mainly directed at Syrian refugees, the Maronite Patriarch called for the deportation and resettlement of Palestinian refugees alongside Syrians. Some Palestinian refugees expressed their concern at such rhetoric, but UNRWA interlocutors noted it was tied to long-standing social discrimination against Palestinians in Lebanon, rather than being a new phenomenon.<sup>187</sup>

#### 10.1.6 UNRWA's 2022 Q4 protection monitoring report stated:

'PRS also expressed high levels of concern about statements in the media about the return of refugees to Syria – although as far as UNRWA is aware numbers deported remained low. While there was a slight increase in returns compared to previous years, people linked this to their desire to join families or to seek livelihood opportunities in Syria rather than Lebanon. This is despite ongoing security concerns and the dire economic situation in Syria, which were the main reasons given for PRS arriving from Syria to Lebanon in 2022. While this number decreased significantly after UNRWA stopped recording new arrivals for regular cash payments in August 2022, a small number continued to arrive, highlighting their security concerns in Syria and

<sup>185</sup> Migration Policy Institute (MPI), '[... Palestinian Refugees Face... Displacement...](#)', 3 May 2023

<sup>186</sup> Al-Shabaka, '[The Mobilizing Power of Palestinians in Lebanon](#)', 7 March 2022

<sup>187</sup> UNRWA, '[Protection Monitoring Report – Quarter 2 \(Q2\) 2022](#)' (p5), 26 August 2022

the lack of livelihoods.<sup>188</sup>

10.1.7 The same source stated:

‘The ubiquity of violence and the systemic barriers placed on Palestinian refugees’ exercise of their rights were further highlighted in a large-scale Lebanese Armed Forces (LAF) raid in Nahr el-Bared camp near Tripoli in Q4. On 25 October 2022, the LAF launched an operation to arrest individuals wanted on criminal charges. The raid involved armoured vehicles, military aircraft and a naval vessel, which many camp residents saw as disproportionate to the objective. UNRWA is aware of reports of school children encountering LAF while on their way to school – a potentially traumatizing experience – while one woman was reportedly injured and required leg surgery as a result of being hit by live ammunition. Checkpoint closures on the day of the raid inhibited freedom of movement, including for some Palestinian refugee children who were unable to leave the camp to attend schools.’<sup>189</sup>

10.1.8 In June 2023, UNRWA published an update report entitled ‘Adcom: Lebanon’ following the bi-annual meeting of their Advisory Commission, covering the reporting period 1 October 2022 to 1 May 2023, which stated: ‘To date, UNRWA is aware of four Palestine Refugees from Syria who have been summarily deported.’<sup>190</sup>

10.1.9 DFAT’s June 2023 country report stated:

‘For political reasons, both Lebanese authorities and the PRLs themselves have long opposed moves to naturalise PRLs. Accordingly, despite their longstanding presence in Lebanon, PRLs remain excluded from key aspects of social, political, and economic life.

‘... NGOs and civil society groups allege the government sometimes arbitrarily arrests and detains individuals, particularly... refugees... Typically, these detentions are for short periods and relate to administrative questions associated with the residency or work status of these populations, often lasting between several hours and one or more days. Authorities often fail to observe many provisions of the law, and government security forces as well as armed non-state actors such as Hezbollah continue the practice of extrajudicial arrest and detention, including incommunicado detention.’<sup>191</sup>

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## 11. Protection

11.1.1 The USSD 2022 Country Report stated: ‘Armed members of these forces [Hezbollah and Palestinian militias] controlled access to certain neighborhoods, camps, and other areas where they effectively operated outside the reach and authority of the government.’<sup>192</sup>

11.1.2 DFAT’s June 2023 country report stated:

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<sup>188</sup> UNRWA, [‘Protection Monitoring Report – Quarter 4 \(Q4\) 2022’](#) (p7), 13 February 2023

<sup>189</sup> UNRWA, [‘Protection Monitoring Report – Quarter 4 \(Q4\) 2022’](#) (p4-5), 13 February 2023

<sup>190</sup> UNRWA, [‘Adcom: Lebanon’](#) (p1), June 2023

<sup>191</sup> DFAT, [‘Country Information Report: Lebanon’](#) (para 3.11,4.8), 26 June 2023

<sup>192</sup> USSD, [‘2022 Country Report on Human Rights Practices: Lebanon’](#) (p2), 20 March 2023

'The ability of authorities to provide state protection depends to a large degree on geographic area: several areas of Lebanon are not under the complete control of the state. Government forces are less able to enforce the law in areas where Hezbollah operates (southern suburbs of Beirut, parts of the Bekaa Valley and southern Lebanon), and they do not typically enter Palestinian refugee camps. However, it is not possible to say State security agencies are unable, in all circumstances, to enforce the law in these areas. Civilian authorities maintain effective control over the armed forces and other security forces.'<sup>193</sup>

11.1.3 On 17 September 2023, The Independent published an article entitled 'Fatah gives deadline for handover of general's killers amid fragile truce in Lebanon refugee camp' which stated:

'... Fatah is not opposed to the Lebanese army entering the camp to conduct an operation against the Islamist groups should they not turn over the men accused of killing Fatah military general...

'By tradition, Lebanese soldiers do not enter the Palestinian camps, which are controlled by a network of Palestinian factions. The last time the Lebanese army intervened in one of the camps was in 2007, when it battled Islamist extremists in the Nahr al-Bared camp in north Lebanon, razing most of it in the process.'<sup>194</sup>

11.1.4 See [Security in refugee camps](#) for more information on this topic.

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Section updated: 4 March 2024

## 12. Hezbollah and non-state actors

### 12.1 Presence of Hezbollah (aka Hizballah/Hizbullah)

12.1.1 On 10 October 2023, an Al Jazeera article entitled 'What is Hezbollah? A look at the Lebanese armed group backing Hamas' stated:

'Hezbollah, meaning "Party of God", is an Iran-backed Shia armed and political group that was formed in 1982 to fight Israel's occupation of southern Lebanon.

'It emerged from the armed groups formed by Iran's Islamic Revolutionary Guard Corps in the wake of Israel's invasion of Lebanon in 1982. The group, which finds its support among Shia Muslims, is one of Israel's biggest foes in the region.

'In 2021, leader Hassan Nasrallah claimed Hezbollah had 100,000 fighters... The United States estimates Iran has allocated hundreds of millions of dollars annually to Hezbollah in recent years.

'The group, headed by Nasrallah since 1992, is one of the most influential political blocs in Lebanon's sectarian political system, commanding the support of a large section of the Shia population. The group is often dubbed "a state within a state" due to its vast network of political and military set up

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<sup>193</sup> DFAT, '[Country Information Report: Lebanon](#)' (para 5.1), 26 June 2023

<sup>194</sup> Independent, '[... \[F\]ragile truce in Lebanon refugee camp](#)', 17 September 2023

in a country divided along sectarian lines.<sup>195</sup>

- 12.1.2 On 30 June 2021, Chatham House published an article written by Dr Lina Khatib, ‘the director of the Middle East and North Africa Programme at Chatham House... formerly director of the Carnegie Middle East Center in Beirut and co-founding head of the Program on Arab Reform and Democracy at Stanford University’s Center on Democracy, Development, and the Rule of Law’<sup>196</sup>, entitled ‘How Hezbollah holds sway over the Lebanese state’ which stated:

‘Hezbollah is a hybrid actor, enjoying state legitimacy in Lebanon and operating both within and outside the state without being accountable to the state. It has grown in status to be able to influence and control the state in Lebanon from within state institutions as well as outside them.

‘... Hezbollah’s hybridity can be defined as a status in which it is regarded as an actor from outside the Lebanese state, that does not take orders from the state, but that is granted legitimacy by the state on the basis of playing a supporting role in the defence of the state from external threats. Hybrid status therefore came to mean that Hezbollah acquired power without responsibility. This in turn allowed Hezbollah to have de facto public authority in Lebanon, whether alongside the state, in competition with the state, or in collaboration with the state.

‘... [H]aving hybrid status is ideal for Hezbollah. It can wield power in Lebanon without facing the prospect of civil war or international sanctions on the country. It can intimidate its opponents while using its exceptional status, as the only group other than the Lebanese Armed Forces supporting national defence, to retain the same weapons it uses to intimidate them. And it is the de facto authority in Lebanon without having to address the needs of the country’s citizens at large.’<sup>197</sup>

- 12.1.3 On 17 May 2021, Al Jazeera published an article entitled ‘Protests in Lebanon continue in support of Palestine’ which stated:

‘Protests in solidarity with Palestine continue in Lebanon with marches planned on Monday as Israeli air raids killed nearly 200 people in Gaza.

‘Palestinian refugees and Lebanese civilians travelled to the border with Israel on Sunday for the third consecutive day, proudly waving Palestinian flags and banners of the Hezbollah and Amal [another Shi’a organisation<sup>198</sup>] movements.

‘... Hezbollah has called for a march through its stronghold of Dahieh in south Beirut on Monday night, with the turnout expected to be high considering the area hosts 20,000 Palestinian refugees.

‘Born in what he described as a Hezbollah resistance village in the south of Lebanon, Ali Khiam, 25, told Al Jazeera the Palestinian’s plight is the centre of all Arab causes.

“‘What is happening in Palestine is very harsh and we are here trying to help

<sup>195</sup> Al Jazeera, [‘What is Hezbollah?... the Lebanese armed group backing Hamas’](#), 10 October 2023

<sup>196</sup> Chatham House, [‘How Hezbollah holds sway over the Lebanese state’](#), 30 June 2021

<sup>197</sup> Chatham House, [‘How Hezbollah holds sway over the Lebanese state’](#), 30 June 2021

<sup>198</sup> DFAT, [‘Country Information Report: Lebanon’](#) (para 2.34), 26 June 2023

them in any way by standing here in solidarity, and on social media with our words,” Khamis said, adding he hoped to one day be [sic] able to enter Palestine.<sup>199</sup>

#### 12.1.4 The USSD 2022 Country Report stated:

‘Nonstate armed groups, including Hizballah and Palestinian militias, operated with relative impunity, using intimidation, harassment, and occasionally violence against perceived critics and opponents... These organizations allegedly also operated unofficial detention facilities in which they unlawfully detained individuals, sometimes incommunicado, for indefinite periods of time.

‘... Various nonstate armed groups, such as Hizballah and Palestinian militias, used informer networks, telephone monitoring, and electronic monitoring to obtain information regarding their perceived adversaries.’<sup>200</sup>

#### 12.1.5 DFAT’s June 2023 country report stated:

‘Hezbollah is listed as a terrorist organisation by a number of nations, including Australia. While its primary support base is overwhelmingly in the Shi’a community, Hezbollah has a strong national presence (though its bloc lost its majority in the 2022 parliamentary elections). Unlike the majority of other armed groups, Hezbollah did not disarm following the 1989 Taef Accord [also called the National Reconciliation Document, it ‘... created new power-sharing agreements between Christian and Muslim communities [in Lebanon] and called for the disarmament of various militias, with the exception of Hezbollah...’<sup>201</sup>]. It maintains an armed wing with military strength believed to exceed that of the Lebanese Armed Forces. Supported by Iran, the organisation draws much of its popular support from its opposition to Israel...

‘... Hezbollah exercises effective control over parts of Lebanese territory, particularly in South Lebanon, southern Beirut, and parts of the Beka’a Valley: interlocutors have reported that, in these areas, Hezbollah’s influence and control exceeds that of the Lebanese state. According to in-country sources, Hezbollah works to prevent the emergence of sources of power within the Shi’a community outside of the Hezbollah-Amal duopoly, which might represent a threat to its control. In addition to political activists, perceived adversaries include journalists seeking to report on ‘red line’ topics, including: Hezbollah’s weapons; Hezbollah’s relationship with security authorities; its role in politically-motivated assassinations; and its role in the Syrian civil war. In-country sources report that Hezbollah is particularly attuned to and oppressive of critics within the Shi’a community, its support base. Hezbollah allows adherents of non-Shi’a religions to worship freely in the areas under its control.

‘... DFAT is aware of cases of violence and threats against Shi’a critics of Hezbollah (non-Shi’a criticism of Hizballah is tolerated and criticism by non-Shi’a journalists continues).

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<sup>199</sup> Al Jazeera, [‘Protests in Lebanon continue in support of Palestine’](#), 17 May 2021

<sup>200</sup> USSD, [‘2022 Country Report on Human Rights Practices: Lebanon’](#) (p2,9), 20 March 2023

<sup>201</sup> DFAT, [‘Country Information Report: Lebanon’](#) (para 2.2), 26 June 2023

'... DFAT understands that the ability of an individual within the Shi'a community to criticise Hezbollah depends to a large degree on the extent of the individual's connections (wasta) with powerful or influential people. DFAT assesses that those within the Shi'a community without wasta who criticise Hezbollah face a high risk of societal discrimination, harassment and violence by state or non-state forces.

'... Shi'a individuals identified as being opposed to Hezbollah or Amal are unlikely to be able to escape societal discrimination through internal relocation.'<sup>202</sup>

#### 12.1.6 The same source stated:

'Hezbollah and Palestinian camp authorities run autonomous, informal legal systems in areas under their control. DFAT does not have any specific information in relation to the independence, legitimacy, or equity of legal processes under these systems.

'... Non-governmental entities, including Hezbollah and Palestinian non-state militias, also reportedly operate unofficial detention facilities, but DFAT does not have any information about these facilities.

'... Beirut-Rafik Hariri International Airport is the only operational commercial airport in Lebanon. Along with the Port of Beirut, it is the main entry point into the country. Authorities perform biometric checks (photograph and fingerprinting) at the airport. The airport is located in an area of southern Beirut in which Hezbollah has considerable influence, and the organisation exercises a high degree of influence (but not control) over the airport, both in terms of airport operations (by controlling key official positions connected with the airport) and its ability to close off access to the airport by shutting down the airport road.'<sup>203</sup>

#### 12.1.7 In July 2023, the Center for Strategic and International Studies (CSIS), 'a US bipartisan non-profit organisation providing research on political, economic, energy- and security-related issues for policy decision makers',<sup>204</sup> published a report, citing various sources, entitled 'Understanding Hamas's and Hezbollah's Uses of Information Technology' which stated:

'... [F]or many years Hezbollah has been part of the Lebanese government, effectively governing southern Lebanon, occupying cabinet positions directly and via its allies and often acting as a kingmaker, or at least veto player, for the country's prime minister.

'... Hezbollah... is formally part of the Lebanese government. Despite recent electoral setbacks, Hezbollah dominates many government ministries, including the Port of Beirut. As a result, any major action involving the government of Lebanon requires Hezbollah's blessing. Foreign governments and companies cannot work with the Lebanese government to curtail Hezbollah even though the government is nominally responsible for activities on its soil. The overlap between Lebanese infrastructure and Hezbollah's relationship with the Lebanese government, which in the past worked with

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<sup>202</sup> DFAT, '[Country Information Report: Lebanon](#)' (para 3.35,3.36,3.38,3.39,5.19), 26 June 2023

<sup>203</sup> DFAT, '[Country Information Report: Lebanon](#)' (para 5.12,5.16,5.22), 26 June 2023

<sup>204</sup> ecoi.net, '[Source Description: Center for Strategic and International Studies...](#)', 19 November 2020

the United States and other Western powers, makes it difficult to take action against the group. Disruptions of Hezbollah communications, if not carefully targeted, could spread to Lebanon's broader communications infrastructure. In addition, technology provided to the Lebanese government is likely to end up in Hezbollah's hands.<sup>'205</sup>

#### 12.1.8 The same source also stated:

'Al Manar satellite television is an important means of strategic communication for Hezbollah. Hezbollah began the station in 1991, initially broadcasting only in Lebanon. In 2000, Al Manar became a satellite station. It offers a mix of news, music videos, family dramas, and other content. The station has millions of viewers, both inside and outside of Lebanon, and its viewership has soared during times of crisis... The United States declared Al Manar a Specially Designated Global Terrorist entity in 2006, leading to an array of restrictions, including deterring donations and funding, and alerting other governments to U.S. concerns.

'... Propaganda on Al Manar highlights Hezbollah-run schools and hospitals, camps for kids, and the services Hezbollah provides to the Lebanese Shiite community.'<sup>206</sup>

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## 12.2 Presence of other armed groups

12.2.1 Al Jazeera's 10 October 2023 article stated: 'Palestinian groups in Lebanon include Hamas, the secular party Fatah, and the Popular Front for the Liberation of Palestine (PFLP). Some of these members are based in Palestinian refugee camps in Lebanon including Ein el-Hilweh and Burj al-Barajneh.'<sup>207</sup>

12.2.2 Al-Shabaka's March 2022 article stated: '... Palestinian factions regularly engage in armed clashes within the camps, which last for days and lead to casualties and significant disruption to daily life.

'... Lebanese and Palestinian officials stopped the march [the 16 July 2019 joint Lebanese-Palestinian march towards parliament against a nationwide crackdown in which many foreign-owned businesses, particularly Syrian and Palestinian, were forcibly shut down] based on the long-standing PLO policy that Palestinians will not interfere in the affairs of host countries. This further benefited Palestinian factions aiming to suppress the emergence of new leadership from within the camps, particularly among youth unaffiliated with, and often against, the factions.

'... Mass demonstrations subsequently took place inside the large camps of Rashidieh and Ein el-Hilweh in southern Lebanon, and in Nahr el-Bared in the north.'<sup>208</sup>

12.2.3 On 2 March 2023, Al-Monitor, an independent source of Middle East news and analysis, and whose 'mission is to foster a deeper understanding between the Middle East and the international community by diving deep

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<sup>205</sup> CSIS, '[Understanding Hamas's and Hezbollah's Uses of Information Technology](#)' (p1,8), July 2023

<sup>206</sup> CSIS, '[Understanding Hamas's and Hezbollah's Uses of Information Technology](#)' (p4,6), July 2023

<sup>207</sup> Al Jazeera, '[What is Hezbollah?... the Lebanese armed group backing Hamas](#)', 10 October 2023

<sup>208</sup> Al-Shabaka, '[The Mobilizing Power of Palestinians in Lebanon](#)', 7 March 2022



with analytical pieces',<sup>209</sup> published an article entitled 'Clashes in Lebanon's Palestinian refugee camp as security void looms' which stated: 'Various armed factions have a presence in the camp [Ain al-Hilweh, aka Ein el-Hilweh, the largest Palestinian refugee camp in Lebanon with a population of around 80,000]. In addition to Fatah, there are various Islamist groups, including Jund al-Sham and Usbat al-Ansar.'<sup>210</sup>

- 12.2.4 On 17 April 2023, the UN Security Council published a report entitled 'Implementation of Security Council resolution 1559 (2004); Thirty-seventh semi-annual report of the Secretary-General' which stated:
- 'The presence of Palestinian armed groups outside the Palestine refugee camps continued. Notwithstanding the decision taken in 2006 in the context of the national dialogue, and confirmed at subsequent sessions, to disarm Palestinian militias outside the camps, no progress was made during the reporting period with regard to dismantling the military bases of the Popular Front for the Liberation of Palestine-General Command and Fatah al-Intifada in the country.'<sup>211</sup>
- 12.2.5 CRS' May 2023 report stated: 'A range of armed groups operate in Lebanon's 12 Palestinian refugee camps, which were built between 1948 and 1963 and house Palestinians displaced during various Arab-Israeli wars as well as their descendants.'<sup>212</sup>
- 12.2.6 On 15 June 2023, the US Department of State (USSD) published a report entitled '2023 Trafficking in Persons Report: Lebanon' which stated: 'NGOs and international organizations reported non-state armed groups, including Hizballah, Fatah al-Islam, Jund Ansar Allah, Saraya al-Muqawama, and ISIS, recruited or used child soldiers in 2021 and 2022; refugee children, particularly children residing in Palestinian refugee camps, were especially vulnerable to recruitment or use as child soldiers.'<sup>213</sup>
- 12.2.7 The Independent's 30 September 2023 article reported that in late July 2023, intense street battles in Ein el-Hilweh camp, the largest Palestinian refugee camp in the south of Lebanon, were triggered between members of Palestinian President Mahmoud Abbas' Fatah group and two Islamic militant factions, Jund al Sham and Shabab al Muslim, after Fatah accused the Islamic groups of gunning down a senior Fatah military official. The fighting, which saw gunmen from various factions occupying an 8-school complex in the camp, left more than 30 people dead, many more wounded, and at least 4,000 people having been forced to flee their homes in the camp, with many taking refuge in UNRWA facilities. After previous ceasefire agreements collapsed, on 14 September 2023 the latest ceasefire agreement was reached and hopes were raised of this holding after a security force of 55 armed fighters from factions including Hamas, the Democratic Front for the Liberation of Palestine and Asbat al-Ansar, considered neutral in the recent clashes, were deployed to the badly damaged school complex<sup>214</sup>.

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<sup>209</sup> AI-Monitor, '[About Us](#)', undated

<sup>210</sup> AI-Monitor, '[Clashes in Lebanon's Palestinian refugee camp as security void looms](#)', 2 March 2023

<sup>211</sup> UN Security Council, '[\[S\]emi-annual report of the Secretary-General](#)' (para 49), 17 April 2023

<sup>212</sup> CRS, '[Lebanon: Background and U.S. Relations](#)' (p10), 19 May 2023

<sup>213</sup> USSD, '[2023 Trafficking in Persons Report: Lebanon](#)' (section: Trafficking Profile), 15 June 2023

<sup>214</sup> Independent, '[Palestinian security force deploys in school compound...](#)', 29 September 2023

### 13. Societal attitudes

13.1.1 Dr. Albanese and Prof. Takkenberg's June 2020 'Palestinian Refugees in International Law' stated: 'Jaber Suleiman, who has conducted extensive research on the situation of Palestinian refugees in Lebanon, observes that dealing with them as a security and humanitarian question [as Lebanon has] contributes to feeding a discourse of Palestinians representing a continuous threat to Lebanese security, which in turn leads to justify their discrimination and non-integration.'<sup>215</sup>

13.1.2 Peace Direct's July 2021 blog stated:

'Many Palestinians and Lebanese never overcame their reciprocal negative attitudes. The former feel unwelcomed and mistreated, the latter consider Palestinians as a social and security threat. Even some Lebanese people working for reconciliation and the memory of peace are willing to accept former repentant Lebanese fighters, but not Palestinian ones who have denounced violence just like them. A University Professor confessed this to me after observing it in several workshops.'<sup>216</sup>

13.1.3 Al-Shabaka's March 2022 article stated:

'... On July 31 [2019], demonstrations in Sidon included both Palestinians and Lebanese calling for the rights of Palestinian refugees. Chanting anti-discrimination slogans, this collective mobilization demonstrated the significant impact of Palestinians on the Lebanese market.

'Through their activism, however short and contained within the camps, Palestinians created a space for themselves to stake claims to their own rights - as well as the rights of other refugees and migrants in Lebanon - to equality within the context of the October 17 [2019] revolutionaries' demands. Indeed, the Lebanese revolutionaries even used symbols and songs from the Palestinian struggle. Many donned the Palestinian keffiyeh [often referred to as a kefiyyeh, 'a distinctly Palestinian black-and-white chequered piece of cloth... described by some as the nation's unofficial flag'<sup>217</sup>] and blared the sounds of Palestinian revolutionary songs in spaces where Palestinians would have previously been excluded. In many narratives, the October [2019] revolution was called an Intifada.

'The Hirak [Hirak al-Mukhayyat, or the Movement of the Camps, the summer 2019 mass mobilization in the Palestinian camps against discriminatory Lebanese policies] spotlighted the reality that, despite over seven decades of governmental efforts to isolate Palestinian refugees from Lebanese society, Palestinians remain an integral part of the country's social, economic, cultural, and political fabric – a part that cannot be ignored or trapped behind the walls and checkpoints surrounding the camps. This will remain the case until their right of return to Palestine is fulfilled.'<sup>218</sup>

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<sup>215</sup> F P Albanese, L Takkenberg, 'Palestinian Refugees in International Law' (p211), June 2020

<sup>216</sup> Peace Direct, '[Palestinians of Lebanon...](#)', 30 July 2021

<sup>217</sup> Middle East Eye, '[The Palestinian keffiyeh: All you need to know about its origins](#)', 28 May 2021

<sup>218</sup> Al-Shabaka, '[The Mobilizing Power of Palestinians in Lebanon](#)', 7 March 2022

#### 13.1.4 UNRWA's 2022 Q2 protection monitoring report stated:

'Several violent incidents were... reported in and around shops selling in-demand goods, particularly bakeries and petrol stations, as disputes over access to these commodities escalated. While such confrontations were not limited to Palestinian refugees, Palestinians in Tyre noted that some disputes contained discriminatory overtones, with some bakery owners reportedly demanding identity documents from customers and only selling to Lebanese nationals... These reports are consistent with UNHCR's protection monitoring findings for Q2.'<sup>219</sup>

#### 13.1.5 DFAT's June 2023 country report stated: '... [T]he recent presence of large numbers of Syrian refugees has led some Lebanese to become... less tolerant towards the long-standing Palestinian refugee community.'<sup>220</sup>

#### 13.1.6 UNRWA's 2022 annual operational report, published on 27 July 2023, stated: 'During the reporting period, Palestine refugees faced a deteriorating protection environment due to... pronounced differential treatment against Palestinians reflected by, in particular... deepening economic and political crises in Lebanon that exacerbated decades of social and economic marginalization for Palestine refugees... and precarious legal status for some refugees in Jordan and Lebanon.'<sup>221</sup>

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Section updated: 4 March 2024

## 14. Documents

### 14.1 Identification documents

#### 14.1.1 In April 2023, the Institute for Palestine Studies (IFPS), 'an independent non-profit research institution, unaffiliated with any political organization or government'<sup>222</sup>, published a journal entitled 'Jerusalem Quarterly – Issue 93' which contained an article covering a February 2023 interview with two UNRWA officials. The article stated that UNRWA has maintained family files for registered Palestine refugees since 1 May 1950, to identify refugee status and eligibility for UNRWA services. Since then, they have regularly improved their registration procedures, including having moved from paper to digital records, starting in 1979. They have archived historical registration cards and supporting materials, and have an ongoing project to make the family files accessible via a comprehensive e-archive, an important project to Palestine refugees in relation to their refugee status and associated rights, and to the research community<sup>223</sup>.

#### 14.1.2 DFAT's June 2023 country report stated:

'Palestinian refugee records are kept at the Directorate of Refugee Affairs (DRA) at MoIM's [Ministry of Interior and Municipalities] General Directorate of Political and Refugee Affairs. They form the legal basis for Palestinian refugees to enjoy legal residency in Lebanon and obtain IDs issued by

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<sup>219</sup> UNRWA, '[Protection Monitoring Report – Quarter 2 \(Q2\) 2022](#)' (p5), 26 August 2022

<sup>220</sup> DFAT, '[Country Information Report: Lebanon](#)' (para 3.13), 26 June 2023

<sup>221</sup> UNRWA, '[Annual operational report 2022](#)' (p22), 27 July 2023

<sup>222</sup> IFPS, '[About IPS](#)', undated

<sup>223</sup> IFPS, '[Jerusalem Quarterly – Issue 93](#)' (page 80-83), April 2023

Lebanese authorities.

‘The DRA’s Events Registration Department has adopted special procedures for registering children born of Palestinian fathers registered in Lebanon. To organise a birth certificate, parents or guardians must provide the DRA with a birth attestation from the doctor or midwife who assisted the birth; the father’s Palestinian refugee card; a copy of the parents’ marriage certificate; and an extract of the father’s Palestinian refugee family register. Once the birth certificate is in hand, parents or guardians must submit it to the DRA, along with an extract of the family personal status register for registered Palestinian refugees; a request by the mukhtar of the place of residence; a copy of the father’s Palestinian refugee card; and two photographs of the child. If the declaration is made through a guardian, a copy of the guardianship decision must be presented; if it is made through someone delegated by the family, a copy of the delegation through a notary public must be provided.’<sup>224</sup>

14.1.3 The same source also stated:

‘The act of marriage is not officially recognised until it is correctly registered with the competent authorities at MoIM’s General Directorate of Civil Status... The (religious) marriage contract is the primary document required for registering a marriage:... Registered Palestinian refugees are required to provide their Palestinian refugee ID. Unregistered Palestinians must show a valid passport issued by the Palestinian Authority and an Attestation of Nationality issued by the Directorate General of Palestinian Refugee Affairs, or a valid laissez-passer issued by any foreign country and an entry stamp showing the date of entry into Lebanon.

‘... Lebanese citizens and registered Palestinian refugees who conclude their marriages outside Lebanon can register them through Lebanese consulates. The spouses must present the official marriage certificate issued by the competent authorities in the foreign country to the Lebanese consulate, along with all other required documents as listed earlier.’<sup>225</sup>

14.1.4 Dr. Albanese and Prof. Takkenberg’s June 2020 ‘Palestinian Refugees in International Law’ stated:

‘Until 1982, when the PLO was ousted from Lebanon, Non-ID Palestinians received assistance and support from the PLO. This included issuing an informal ‘proof of nationality’ card (watha’iq ithbat jinsiyyeh) that would facilitate their access to social services and jobs in the refugee camps. This was a proof of identity only, even though it was recognized by the Lebanese authorities, and gave no entitlement to legal residency. In 2006, the PLO resumed the issuance of ‘proof of nationality’ cards. In 2008, on the basis of an agreement between the Palestinian embassy in Lebanon and the Lebanese General Directorate of General Security (GDGS), the latter started issuing, under certain conditions, Special Identification Cards (SICs) (commonly known as bitaqat taarif), which constitute a proof of identity for undocumented Palestinians. In essence, this is equivalent to the PLO issued “proof of nationality” card; while not constituting proof of legal residency, they

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<sup>224</sup> DFAT, [‘Country Information Report: Lebanon’](#) (para 5.42,5.43), 26 June 2023

<sup>225</sup> DFAT, [‘Country Information Report: Lebanon’](#) (para 5.33,5.34), 26 June 2023

are meant to give the holder a proof of identity that was recognizable by the Lebanese security apparatus (hence granting the holder freedom of movement). The cards were issued based on information provided by the PLO, valid for one year and renewable, at no cost. This operation has not achieved significant results, and is presently on hold.<sup>226</sup>

14.1.5 UNRWA's 2022 Q2 protection monitoring report stated: 'The closure of government offices as a result of the ongoing public sector strike impacted the ability of both Palestinians and Lebanese to register civil events and obtain civil documentation, driving licences and passports in Q2. Palestinian refugees reported their frustration at... paying for transport only to find offices unexpectedly closed.

'... [O]ffice closures hampered PRS in obtaining or renewing residency...'<sup>227</sup>

14.1.6 The USSD 2022 Country Report stated:

'... PRS children up to the age of 15 were included under their parents' identity card and residency permit. Thereafter they officially must either obtain identity documents in Syria (at the risk of receiving an exit stamp on their identity documents and potentially losing their Lebanese residency) or obtain a passport through the Syrian embassy at a cost of \$350 [USD, £276.63 GBP<sup>228</sup>], a fee that most PRS could not afford. However, the DGS [General Directorate of Security] permitted PRS children above the age of 15 to use their birth certificates as a substitute identity document until age 18.'<sup>229</sup>

14.1.7 The Lebanese General Directorate of General Security (GDGS) stated on their undated webpage, 'Palestinian refugees without papers':

'Documents requested:

'- The file of the refugee in question held by the Palestinian liberation organization in Lebanon

'- A document issued by the competent mayor identifying the refugee and his place of residence: the attendance of 2 witnesses is required. This document could also be delivered by a representative of the Palestinian liberation organization in Lebanon

'- A birth certificate

'- A marriage certificate if the refugee in question is married

'- If the refugee is a minor, then he has to have in hand the marriage certificate of his parents

'- 3 ID photos that are recent, colored (4.3\*3.5 cm), and certified by the mayor.

'- A fiscal stamp of LBP 1,000 [£0.05 GBP<sup>230</sup>]

'NB: No demand shall be approved, one month after his registration in the

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<sup>226</sup> F P Albanese, L Takkenberg, 'Palestinian Refugees in International Law' (p217-218), June 2020

<sup>227</sup> UNRWA, '[Protection Monitoring Report – Quarter 2 \(Q2\) 2022](#)' (p8), 26 August 2022

<sup>228</sup> XE.com, '[Currency Converter – US Dollars to British Pounds](#)', 1 December 2023

<sup>229</sup> USSD, '[2022 Country Report on Human Rights Practices: Lebanon](#)' (p17), 20 March 2023

<sup>230</sup> XE.com, '[Currency Converter – Lebanese Pounds to British Pounds](#)', 13 October 2023

## 14.2 Documents required to travel

- 14.2.1 Dr. Albanese and Prof. Takkenberg's June 2020 'Palestinian Refugees in International Law' stated: 'Since 2011, the Palestinian Embassy, in agreement with the Lebanese authorities, has been providing Non-ID Palestinians with PA passports/travel documents (without national number). Though not sufficient to secure residency or freedom of movement within Lebanon, it provides Non-IDs the opportunity to travel abroad and apply for temporary residence permits in Lebanon.'<sup>232</sup>
- 14.2.2 DFAT's June 2023 country report stated that under: 'General Security regulations, Palestinians registered with UNRWA are entitled to travel documents valid for either one or five years. Palestinians who are not registered with UNRWA can obtain travel documents valid for either one or three years. Fees payable are similar to those paid by Lebanese. In 2016, biometric passports replaced handwritten travel documents. Passports can be renewed in diplomatic missions abroad.'<sup>233</sup>
- 14.2.3 As of 2 October 2023, the Lebanese General Directorate of General Security (GDGS) stated on their undated webpage entitled 'The instructions related to biometric passports granted to Palestinian refugees in Lebanon' that, starting 1 November 2016, Palestinian refugees in Lebanon are issued a biometric passport registered in the refugees' category<sup>234</sup>.
- 14.2.4 GDGS' undated webpage, 'Travel documents and transit passes', stated:
- 'Documents requested:
- '- A refugee ID card held by the Palestinian citizen residing in Lebanon as well as a certified photocopy of the latter
  - '- An extract of individual civil status issued by the general security
  - '- 4 ID photos certified by the mayor
  - '- A travel approval delivered by the parents or the legal guardian
  - '- A document issued by the competent mayor identifying the refugee and his residence: the attendance of 2 witnesses is required
  - '- An attestation that proves he is not a member of the UNRWA, or on the contrary case an affiliation card
- 'Fees:
- '- A travel document associated with the latter held by one of the parents
  - '- A travel document for a Palestinian refugee – 1 year – LBP 60,000 [£3.26 GBP<sup>235</sup>]
  - '- A travel document for a Palestinian refugee – 3 years – LBP 180,000

<sup>231</sup> GDGS, '[Palestinian refugees without papers](#)', undated

<sup>232</sup> F P Albanese, L Takkenberg, 'Palestinian Refugees in International Law' (p218), June 2020

<sup>233</sup> DFAT, '[Country Information Report: Lebanon](#)' (para 5.44), 26 June 2023

<sup>234</sup> GDGS, '[...biometric passports granted to Palestinian refugees in Lebanon](#)', undated

<sup>235</sup> XE.com, '[Currency Converter – Lebanese Pounds to British Pounds](#)', 12 October 2023

[£9.78 GBP<sup>236</sup>]

'Time delay:

'A week starting the date of conveying the request'<sup>237</sup>

- 14.2.5 For more information regarding the definition of each group of Palestinians, see ['Categories' of Palestinians](#).

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### 14.3 Consequences of lack of documents

- 14.3.1 On 9 July 2020, a joint submission was made to the Human Rights Council by a group of NGOs and non-profit organisations, comprising of the Collective for Research & Training on Development – Action, My Nationality is a Right for Me and my Family (Campaign), Ruwad alHoukuk Frontiers Rights, Salam for Democracy and Human Rights, Equality Now, Global Campaign for Equal Nationality Rights, and the Institute on Statelessness and Inclusion (CRTDA et al), entitled 'Universal Periodic Review 37th Session 3rd Cycle January/February 2021 – Lebanon', which stated: 'Stateless persons cannot move freely and face the risk of arrest for not holding an ID. Usually, stateless persons use a certificate issued by the mukhtar as an identification document. However, this document has no legal value since it relies on the information provided by the persons to mukhtars and on mukhtars acquaintance with them and is not endorsed by any official authority.'<sup>238</sup>

- 14.3.2 UNRWA's September 2020 'Protection brief' report stated:

'Without documentation and legal status in Lebanon, Non-ID Palestinians face restrictions on movement, risk detention and face severe obstacles in completing civil registration procedures. This situation has acute humanitarian consequences, in particular limiting access to public services from Lebanese educational and medical services, bank accounts and access to justice and formal employment. They are also denied the possibility to travel abroad.

'UNRWA has extended a number of Agency services to Non-ID Palestinians, notably its education and primary health care services.

'... Until October 2017, a valid legal status was a prerequisite for most civil registration processes in Lebanon. Difficulties in obtaining legal residency documents had a far-reaching impact on PRS and Non-ID Palestinians. Based on a circular issued by the Ministry of Interior in October 2017, valid legal residency is no longer required for all parties in civil registration of births, marriages, deaths and divorces. The fears and lack of awareness of the community related to the complexities of legalizing their stay remain obstacles for registration of births and marriages with the Lebanese authorities, leading to children not having a legal status, creating long-term difficulties for them.

'In March 2019, a new circular was issued by the Ministry of Interior, no

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<sup>236</sup> XE.com, ['Currency Converter – Lebanese Pounds to British Pounds'](#), 12 October 2023

<sup>237</sup> GDGS, ['Travel documents and transit passes'](#), undated

<sup>238</sup> CRTDA et al, ['Joint Submission to the Human Rights Council... Lebanon'](#) (p11), 9 July 2020

longer requiring costly court proceedings to obtain birth registration of PRS children aged one year or older who were born in Lebanon between January 2011 and February 2019. There is still a need, however, for proof of marriage – for which a legal residency of at least one party is still a requirement.<sup>239</sup>

#### 14.3.3 UNRWA's 2022 Q4 protection monitoring report stated:

'While PRS have long struggled to fully register marriages and births due to the multi-layered system and expense involved, in 2022, PRL also reported delays and struggles. This was largely linked to the closure of government offices, with reports from several areas indicating that people are paying additional amounts to ensure that their files are rapidly dealt with. Lack of birth registration means that some Palestinian refugees cannot register with the Lebanese government, in turn impacting access for PRL to some UNRWA services. Additionally, if a baby is not registered in the first year after his/ her birth, there are extremely limited options to do so later. At the same time, the high cost of transport also impacted Palestinian refugees' ability to obtain documents, particularly in areas like the Beqaa and where offices were closed and people required to come back again.

'... [L]ack of identity documents continued to have an impact on PRS children's ability to register with the Ministry of Education and Higher Education (MEHE) in some areas. Despite the annual governmental waiver enabling students without residency to sit official exams, they remain unable to obtain certificates unless they regularise their residency status. Regularisation is not possible for many and therefore this requirement reportedly deters some PRS students from continuing their studies.

'Maintaining legal residency for children turning 15 continues to be a struggle as, like Syrian refugees, PRS are required to obtain their own identity documents at this age. The choice between the high cost of using brokers and the costs and risks involved in travelling to Syria personally, as well as the high costs of a Syrian passport only able to be obtained by approaching Syrian authorities, mean that acquiring identity cards and maintaining residency is complex for many. As of April 2021, 75 per cent of PRS families who had had children while in Lebanon indicated that their children's births were not fully registered (registration is required in order to obtain identity documents and residency).<sup>240</sup>

#### 14.3.4 DFAT's June 2023 country report stated that: 'Proof of birth in wedlock is required: couples whose marriage is not registered in Lebanon may face difficulties in registering their children. Unregistered children are effectively stateless and are unable to access many basic and fundamental rights, such as education, health, and employment. They are also unable to register their marriages and are thus unable to register their own children.'<sup>241</sup>

#### 14.3.5 For more information regarding the definition of each group of Palestinians, see ['Categories' of Palestinians](#).

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<sup>239</sup> UNRWA, ['Protection brief - Palestine refugees living in Lebanon'](#) (p3), September 2020

<sup>240</sup> UNRWA, ['Protection Monitoring Report – Quarter 4 \(Q4\) 2022'](#) (p6), 13 February 2023

<sup>241</sup> DFAT, ['Country Information Report: Lebanon'](#) (para 5.31), 26 June 2023



## 14.4 Work permits

### 14.4.1 HRW's undated 'Policy on Right to Return' article stated:

'Palestinians, like other foreigners, must obtain annual work permits from the labor ministry in order to be employed legally. Possession of a work permit affords foreign workers protection under Lebanon's labor law with respect to workers rights and benefits. However, these permits are extremely difficult for Palestinians to obtain: permits are issued annually to Palestinians by the hundreds while for other foreign workers in Lebanon they are issued by the thousands. (Hundreds of thousands of Syrian workers in Lebanon, in contrast, require no work permits.) The difficulty in obtaining work permits forces many Palestinians into the underground economy and leaves others open to exploitation by private employers. For example, a Palestinian teacher with fourteen years' experience and a university degree from Egypt told Human Rights Watch that Palestinians can obtain teaching jobs in private schools in Lebanon without a work permit, but they earn salaries significantly lower than their Lebanese counterparts and have no job security or worker benefits. The situation of women workers is particularly difficult. Palestinian women who work in the garment industry in Beirut and Sidon, for example, are paid below the minimum wage and earn half the salary of Lebanese citizens. Because the Palestinians do not have work permits, they do not receive the benefits provided to Lebanese employees, including medical insurance.'<sup>242</sup>

### 14.4.2 See [Employment](#) for further information.

## 15. Freedom of movement

### 15.1 Within Lebanon

15.1.1 DIS's June 2020 report attached email correspondence from Francesca Albanese of 13 April 2020, which stated: '... [I]n south Lebanon some camps are effectively closed-off areas encircled by walls and checkpoints and it is hard if not impossible for camp residents to come in and out...'<sup>243</sup>

15.1.2 UNRWA's September 2020 'Protection brief' report stated:

'The lack of legal residency means that, particularly in the South of Lebanon where the Lebanese Army controls entry and exit to camps, PRS often do not leave the camps in which they are living nor enter them if they live outside, restricting their movement out of fear of arrest, detention and deportation, which poses challenges to accessing basic services and justice functions... Out of this group, 79 per cent reported that their mobility was constrained.'<sup>244</sup>

15.1.3 UNRWA's 2022 Q2 protection monitoring report stated:

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<sup>242</sup> HRW, '[Human Rights Watch Policy on Right to Return](#)', undated

<sup>243</sup> DIS, '[Palestinian Refugees Access to registration and UNRWA services...](#)' (p74), June 2020

<sup>244</sup> UNRWA, '[Protection brief - Palestine refugees living in Lebanon](#)' (p2), September 2020

'The ability to travel within the country... suffered as prices for transport... outpaced incomes.

'... [H]igh levels of theft and robbery, as well as violence in areas surrounding camps in Beirut, Beqaa and the North, left many Palestinian refugees continuing to be afraid for their safety and limiting their movements as a result.

'... As in previous months, the rising cost of fuel and transportation inhibited movement for some Palestinian refugees; some in Beddawi camp were said to be regularly walking the 5-6 kilometres to central Tripoli to save on travel costs. People were reportedly otherwise limiting their transport to essential tasks only, which exacerbated challenges in accessing services and employment.'<sup>245</sup>

#### 15.1.4 The same source also stated:

'Freedom of movement remains a concern for many Palestinian refugees, especially PRS and non-IDs who often lack residency and official documentation. Many are apprehensive about being stopped at checkpoints and given departure orders due to lack of legal status; accordingly, they limit their own movements. This issue is particularly pronounced for those living in camps in the south, where residents must pass through Lebanese Armed Forces (LAF) checkpoints to enter or exit the camps. UNRWA is noting a significant increase in PRS entering Lebanon and residing outside the camps, which may be linked to fears of passing through such check points.

'On the other hand, reports continued that the financial crisis was limiting the LAF's engagement around some Palestinian camps and lessening the authorities' ability to keep people under arrest. Some people in Tyre reported that movement in and out of the camp had become easier.

'... [O]ffice closures hampered PRS in obtaining or renewing residency, thus exacerbating the challenges they face in moving freely, particularly outside the camps. In the Beirut area, focal points reported that the GSO are also repeatedly delaying PRS residency renewals, impacting freedom of movement...'<sup>246</sup>

#### 15.1.5 Freedom House's 9 March 2023 publication stated: 'Noncitizens are subject to much harsher restrictions on movement [compared to citizens].'<sup>247</sup>

#### 15.1.6 The USSD 2022 Country Report stated:

'Nonstate armed groups hindered or prevented movement in areas where they operated. According to the security services, armed members of Hizballah controlled access to some areas, and the Popular Front for the Liberation of Palestine prevented access to a border area.

'... Checkpoints operated by government security forces controlled the movement of persons and material into and out of six of the 12 official Palestinian refugee camps.

'Authorities imposed curfews in several municipalities across the country,

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<sup>245</sup> UNRWA, '[Protection Monitoring Report – Quarter 2 \(Q2\) 2022](#)' (p1,3), 26 August 2022

<sup>246</sup> UNRWA, '[Protection Monitoring Report – Quarter 2 \(Q2\) 2022](#)' (p5,8), 26 August 2022

<sup>247</sup> Freedom House, '[Freedom in the World 2023 - Lebanon](#)' (section G1), 9 March 2023

allegedly to improve security of all communities or for public health concerns.

‘... UNHCR staff reported that restrictions on movement increasingly forced families to send children and young women (whom authorities were less likely to stop but who were more vulnerable to exploitation and abuse) to perform family errands.’<sup>248</sup>

#### 15.1.7 The same source stated:

‘While there is no official limitation of movement for PRS in the country, PRS without legal status faced de facto obstacles, mainly the threat of arrest at checkpoints.

‘... Nonregistered Palestinians faced restrictions on movement, risked arrest or detention...

‘... Refugee children were at greater risk than Lebanese children for exploitation, gender-based violence, and child labor since they had greater freedom of movement compared to their parents, who often lacked residency permits.’<sup>249</sup>

#### 15.1.8 DFAT’s June 2023 country report stated: ‘While free to move throughout the country, PRLs often face entry and exit controls to the camps, which authorities often tighten due to security concerns.’<sup>250</sup>

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## 15.2 Travel into/out of Lebanon

### 15.2.1 Visaindex.com, ‘an online platform for the most up-to-date global passport ranking and visa information’,<sup>251</sup> stated on an undated webpage entitled ‘Traveling to Lebanon’, that nationals from the Palestinian Territories must apply for a visa prior to travel to Lebanon<sup>252</sup>.

### 15.2.2 Dr. Albanese and Prof. Takkenberg’s June 2020 ‘Palestinian Refugees in International Law’ stated: ‘While registration gives Palestine refugees legal residence, a certain freedom of movement within Lebanon and eligibility for a TDPR [Travel Documents for Palestinian Refugees] with a validity of up to five years, in practice, they remain foreigners in the country... and subject to entry and exit controls that are tightened during periods of insecurity.’<sup>253</sup>

### 15.2.3 The USSD 2022 Country Report stated: ‘The law provides for freedom of internal movement, foreign travel, emigration, and repatriation. The government generally respected these rights for citizens but placed extensive limitations on the rights of refugee populations and asylum seekers, most of whom were Palestinian, Syrian, or Iraqi.’<sup>254</sup>

### 15.2.4 UNRWA’s 2022 Q4 protection monitoring report stated:

‘While UNRWA was only aware of one attempt by Palestinian refugees in Q4 to leave Lebanon irregularly by boat, the number of attempts across the

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<sup>248</sup> USSD, [‘2022 Country Report on Human Rights Practices: Lebanon’](#) (p16,19,20), 20 March 2023

<sup>249</sup> USSD, [‘2022 Country Report on Human Rights Practices...’](#) (p20,24,32-33), 20 March 2023

<sup>250</sup> DFAT, [‘Country Information Report: Lebanon’](#) (para 3.11), 26 June 2023

<sup>251</sup> Visaindex.com, [‘About Us’](#), undated

<sup>252</sup> Visaindex.com, [‘Travelling to Lebanon’](#), undated

<sup>253</sup> F P Albanese, L Takkenberg, ‘Palestinian Refugees in International Law’ (p213-214), June 2020

<sup>254</sup> USSD, [‘2022 Country Report on Human Rights Practices: Lebanon’](#) (p16), 20 March 2023

whole of 2022 was much higher than in previous years. UNRWA is aware of at least 20 separate boat departures since June [2022] in which Palestinian refugee [sic] attempted to leave Lebanon. UNHCR records indicate that around 450 passengers on irregular boat departures in 2022 (10 percent of total passengers) were Palestinian refugees, compared to only 10 individuals in 2021 (0.6 percent of the total). In addition, more PRS returned to Syria in 2022 than in 2021, part of which at least can be attributed to the increasingly dire socio-economic situation in Lebanon.<sup>255</sup>

15.2.5 The 3 March 2020 DIS/UNRWA meeting minutes, published in an appendix to DIS's June 2020 report, stated: 'Lebanese authorities will not let a Palestinian who previously resided in Lebanon back in once they have left. There are Palestinians with Lebanese citizenship for whom the situation would be different.'<sup>256</sup>

15.2.6 On 9 March 2020, DIS published a report entitled 'Lebanon: Readmission of Palestinian Refugees from Lebanon' based on information obtained from meetings with 2 diplomatic sources and the Lebanese Ministry of Foreign Affairs and Emigrants (MFA) during a Fact Finding Mission (FFM) to Beirut, Lebanon, from 7 to 10 January 2020, which, referring to all Palestinian refugees from Lebanon living abroad as PRLs<sup>257</sup>, stated:

- following a third country's asylum refusal or residence permit revocation, a PRL can only be voluntarily or forcibly returned to Lebanon if a special approval is obtained from the MFA and the GDGS, irrespective of whether the PRL has a valid Palestinian travel document. A PRL without such approval would likely be denied boarding for any flight to Lebanon due to the likelihood of them being refused entry on arrival in Lebanon<sup>258</sup>
- for a PRL with neither a travel document nor a third-country residence permit, any travel document or laissez-passer application submitted to a Lebanese embassy, whether for voluntary or forcible return, is to be decided (usually within a couple of days) by an MFA's Foreigner Section committee in Lebanon. Factors for consideration include whether entry to the current country of residence was illegal, and whether en route there from Lebanon the PRL passed through any additional countries to which they could be expected to return rather than to Lebanon (but not whether the PRL is to voluntarily or forcibly return to Lebanon). If the MFA approves a travel document application, the GDGS must then verify the PRL's identity and registration in Lebanon before the document is issued (usually within a month). The GDGS rejects only around 1% of all cases approved by the MFA. While the GDGS issue papers documenting any rejection by them, the MFA do not<sup>259</sup>
- in the event that the PRL living abroad holds a valid residence permit in the third country of residence, they can obtain a new, or renew an expired, travel document from a Lebanese embassy and travel to Lebanon without facing any difficulty, even if their travel document

<sup>255</sup> UNRWA, '[Protection Monitoring Report – Quarter 4 \(Q4\) 2022](#)' (p7-8), 13 February 2023

<sup>256</sup> DIS, '[Palestinian Refugees Access to registration and UNRWA services...](#)' (p48), June 2020

<sup>257</sup> DIS, '[Lebanon: Readmission of Palestinian Refugees from Lebanon](#)' (p3), 9 March 2020

<sup>258</sup> DIS, '[Lebanon: Readmission of Palestinian Refugees from Lebanon](#)' (p8,17,19), 9 March 2020

<sup>259</sup> DIS, '[Lebanon: Readmission of Palestinian Refugees from Lebanon](#)' (p7-8,14-15), 9 March 2020

expired a long time ago. Should the PRL in this case not have the documents required (such as ID, UNRWA registration), the embassy can grant a power of attorney so their relatives in Lebanon can obtain the documents on their behalf<sup>260</sup>

- DIS' diplomatic sources stated that post-Lebanon's May 2018 elections, the issuance of travel documents to PRLs abroad had been stopped by the MFA, except for in humanitarian cases<sup>261</sup>
- 1 of DIS' 2 diplomatic sources claimed that the '... Lebanese authorities were very reluctant to allow PRLs to return to Lebanon if they did not have a residence permit in their current country of residence (e.g. rejected asylum seekers or persons whose residency permit have been revoked)'<sup>262</sup>
- DIS' 2 diplomatic sources indicated that the MFA would likely approve PRLs' travel document applications made by PRLs themselves (without the involvement of foreign authorities), but had a tendency to reject applications when the foreign authorities are involved in the return<sup>263</sup>
- DIS' 2 diplomatic sources stated at the FFM meetings on 9 January 2020 that it had not been possible since May 2018 for refused PRL asylum seekers to return to Lebanon (except for in 1 high-profile case involving criminality that 1 of the 2 diplomatic sources was aware of, in which it was claimed the Lebanese authorities permitted return to protect Lebanon's reputation abroad, despite that criminality would ordinarily lessen the prospects of approval for return). However, subsequent to the meeting, the diplomatic sources advised of the 'voluntary' return of up to 23 rejected PRL asylum seekers from several European countries (18 from one of those countries alone). It should be noted that there was a lack of clarity about how exactly 'voluntary' was defined in this context<sup>264</sup>

15.2.7 See the Lebanese Embassy [website](#) for information on Palestinian travel documents issued by Lebanese authorities outside Lebanon.

15.2.8 See paragraph 7.8.2 for information about PRS' eligibility to obtain an entry visa for Lebanon from Syria, or at the Lebanon/Syria border.

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<sup>260</sup> DIS, '[Lebanon: Readmission of Palestinian Refugees from Lebanon](#)' (p7,14), 9 March 2020

<sup>261</sup> DIS, '[Lebanon: Readmission of Palestinian Refugees from Lebanon](#)' (p9,15,17), 9 March 2020

<sup>262</sup> DIS, '[Lebanon: Readmission of Palestinian Refugees from Lebanon](#)' (p9,17), 9 March 2020

<sup>263</sup> DIS, '[Lebanon: Readmission of Palestinian Refugees from Lebanon](#)' (p11,17), 9 March 2020

<sup>264</sup> DIS, '[Lebanon: Readmission of Palestinian Refugees...](#)' (p9-10,16,17,18,19), 9 March 2020

# Research methodology

The country of origin information (COI) in this note has been carefully selected in accordance with the general principles of COI research as set out in the [Common EU \[European Union\] Guidelines for Processing Country of Origin Information \(COI\)](#), April 2008, and the Austrian Centre for Country of Origin and Asylum Research and Documentation's (ACCORD), [Researching Country Origin Information – Training Manual](#), 2013. Namely, taking into account the COI's relevance, reliability, accuracy, balance, currency, transparency and traceability.

All the COI included in the note was published or made publicly available on or before the 'cut-off' date(s). Any event taking place or report/article published after these date(s) is not included.

Sources and the information they provide are carefully considered before inclusion. Factors relevant to the assessment of the reliability of sources and information include:

- the motivation, purpose, knowledge and experience of the source
- how the information was obtained, including specific methodologies used
- the currency and detail of information
- whether the COI is consistent with and/or corroborated by other sources

Wherever possible, multiple sourcing is used and the COI compared and contrasted to ensure that it is accurate and balanced, and provides a comprehensive and up-to-date picture of the issues relevant to this note at the time of publication.

The inclusion of a source is not, however, an endorsement of it or any view(s) expressed.

Each piece of information is referenced in a footnote.

Full details of all sources cited and consulted in compiling the note are listed alphabetically in the [bibliography](#).

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# Terms of Reference

A 'Terms of Reference' (ToR) is a broad outline of the issues relevant to the scope of this note and forms the basis for the [country information](#).

The Home Office uses some standardised ToR, depending on the subject, and these are then adapted depending on the country concerned.

For this particular CPIN, the following topics were identified prior to drafting as relevant and on which research was undertaken:

- Background
  - Recent history
  - Citizenship laws in Lebanon and how applied to Palestinians
  - Question of statelessness and status
  - Numbers and geographical location within Lebanon
- Treatment of Palestinians
  - UNRWA assistance and access to services including accommodation, education, and health services
  - Access to employment
  - Any differential treatment for vulnerable groups
  - Life in the refugee camps
  - State treatment and protection
  - Treatment by Hezbollah, other armed groups, and wider society
  - Documentation required and held
  - Freedom of movement within

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# Version control and feedback

## Clearance

Below is information on when this note was cleared:

- version **2.0**
- valid from **4 March 2024**

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### Official – sensitive: Not for disclosure – Start of section

The information in this section has been removed as it is restricted for internal Home Office use only.

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### Official – sensitive: Not for disclosure – End of section

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## Changes from last version of this note

Updated country information and assessment.

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## Feedback to the Home Office

Our goal is to provide accurate, reliable and up-to-date COI and clear guidance. We welcome feedback on how to improve our products. If you would like to comment on this note, please email the Country Policy and Information Team.

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## Independent Advisory Group on Country Information

The [Independent Advisory Group on Country Information](#) (IAGCI) was set up in March 2009 by the Independent Chief Inspector of Borders and Immigration to support him in reviewing the efficiency, effectiveness and consistency of approach of COI produced by the Home Office.

The IAGCI welcomes feedback on the Home Office's COI material. It is not the function of the IAGCI to endorse any Home Office material, procedures or policy. The IAGCI may be contacted at:

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Information about the IAGCI's work and a list of the documents which have been reviewed by the IAGCI can be found on the Independent Chief Inspector's pages of the [gov.uk website](#).

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