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CENTRE ON CONFLICT, DEVELOPMENT AND PEACEBUILDING

UNRWA and the Palestine Refugees:

Challenges for Developing a Strategic Vision

Project coordinated by
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LIST OF ABBREVIATIONS

Arab Center for Research and Policy Studies	ACRPS
Centre for Study and Research on the Contemporary Middle East *(now IFPO)*	CERMOC
Centre on Conflict, Development and Peacebuilding *(IHEID)*	CCDP
Committee on the Elimination of Racial Discrimination	CERD
Comprehensive Refugee Framework for Palestinian Refugees	CRF-PR
Consolidated Eligibility and Registration Instructions *(UNRWA)*	CERI
Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women	CEDAW
Convention on the Rights of the Child	CRC
Development Impact Bonds	DIBs
Education in Emergencies	EiE
European Community	EC
European Network on Statelessness	ENS
European Union	EU
Expanded Program of Assistance	EPA
Extraordinary Measures in Lebanon and the oPt	EMLOT
Extraordinary Measures in the oPt	EMOT
Friends of the Friends of the Gavel NETwork	FOFOGNET
Geneva Centre for Security Sector Governance	DCAF
Global Compact on Refugees	GCR
Graduate Institute of Development Studies *(now IHEID)*	IUED
Graduate Institute of International and Development Studies	IHEID

Gulf Cooperation Council	GCC
Human Development Goals	HDGs
Human Rights, Conflict Resolution, and Tolerance	HRCRT
Infrastructure and Camp Improvement Programme	ICIP
Institut français du Proche-Orient *(French Institute of the Near East)*	IFPO
Inter-Agency Standing Committee *(UN)*	IASC
internally displaced person	IDP
International Centre for Migration Policy Development	ICMPD
International Court of Justice	ICJ
International Finance Corporation	IFC
International Labour Organization	ILO
Institute on Statelessness and Inclusion	ISI
Islamic State in Iraq and Syria	ISIS
Israeli Defense Forces	IDF
Jerusalem Media and Communication Centre	JMCC
Joint Data Center	JDC
Lebanese Armed Forces	LAF
Lebanese Palestinian Dialogue Committee	LPDC
Maintain vs. Reduce vs. End Matrix *(analytical tool)*	MRE Matrix
medium-term strategies	MTSs
Microfinance and Microenterprise Programme	MMP
Middle East and North Africa	MENA
monitoring, evaluation, accountability, and learning	MEAL
Multilateral Organisation Performance Assessment Network	MOPAN
New York Declaration on Refugees and Migrants	NYD
non-governmental organization	NGO

occupied Palestinian territories	oPt
Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs *(UN)*	OCHA
Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development	OECD
Palestine Economic Policy Research Institute *(Ramallah)*	MAS
Palestine refugees	PR
Palestinian Authority	PA
Palestinian Central Bureau of Statistics	PCBS
Palestine Liberation Organization	PLO
Palestinian National Authority	PNA
Palestinian Refugee ResearchNet	PRRN
Palestinian refugees from Syria	PRS
Popular Front for the Liberation of Palestine-General Command	PFLP-GC
Post Distribution Monitoring *(survey)*	PDM
preventing violent extremism	PVE
refugee women married to non- refugees	MNR
registered refugees	RRs
registered persons	RPs
results-based monitoring	RBM
security sector reform	SSR
Social Safety Net Programme	SSNP
strategic outcome	SO
Sustainable Development Goals *(UN)*	SDGs
technical and vocational education and training	TVET
Swiss Agency for Development and Cooperation	SDC
United Nations	UN
United Nations Children's Fund	UNICEF

United Nations Conciliation Commission for Palestine	UNCCP
United Nations Development Programme	UNDP
United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization	UNESCO
United Nations General Assembly	UNGA
United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees	UNHCR
United Nations Population Fund	UNFPA
United Nations Relief & Works Agency for Palestine Refugees	UNRWA
United Nations Security Council	UNSC
United Nations Special Coordinator for the Middle East Peace Process	UNSCO
United Nations Special Committee on Palestine	UNSCOP
United States Agency for International Development	USAID
United States of America	US
UNRWA Advisory Commission	ADCOM
Vocational Training Center	VTC
World Food Programme	WFP
World Health Organization	WHO

INTRODUCTION

Riccardo BOCCO and Fritz FROEHLICH

The question of the Palestine refugees is definitely one of the thorniest in the history of the Arab-Israeli conflict. Actually, it has even become more dramatic after the signature of the Oslo Accords in Washington on September 1993. At that time, the Palestinian Liberation Organization (PLO) agreed not to include the famous United Nations General Assembly Resolution 194 of December 1948, stipulating the right of return and/or compensation for the Palestine refugees, as part of the juridical foundations for the peace negotiations between Israel and the Palestinians. In the eyes of most refugees this was seen as a betrayal, as the PLO having bartered their rights in exchange for a 'statelet'—which has not yet materialized—on 22 percent of historic Palestine (Bocco et Mansouri 2008; Farah 2013; Zureik 1996).

In the meanwhile, the mandate of the United Nations Relief and Works Agency for Palestine Refugees (UNRWA)—the Agency created by the United Nations (UN) in December 1949 to assist the Palestine refugees—has been regularly reconducted and not modified. UNRWA has thus become, more than ever, the very symbol of the Palestinian plight and of the refugees' rights (Al Husseini 2005). Presently, UNRWA assists almost 5.8 million refugees (see Appendix 3 on UNRWA Statistics updated to December 2021 at the end of the full report) in its five fields of operations: Gaza, the West Bank, Jordan, Lebanon, and Syria.

During the past years, knowledge developed through academic research and by policy analysts has grown considerably. It is possible to trace a history of this knowledge, as Terbeck (2010) did for the 1990s and the 2000s. Just focusing on the relationships between UNRWA and the Palestine refugees, a wealth of resources has been produced over the past three decades by international (Albanese 2018, 2020; Bocco 2010; Schiff 1995; Tahmaz 2018) and Palestinian researchers (Al Husseini 2010a, 2010b; Al Husseini and Bocco 2015; Farah 2009,2010; Hanafi 2010; Salih 2020), as well as by senior UNRWA staff (Bowker 2003; Grandi 2011; Albanese and Takkenberg 2020; Turkmen 1995). The Palestinian Refugee ResearchNet (PRRN) was set up along with the Friends of the Friends of the Gavel NETwork (FOFOGNET)[1] to support research on Palestine refugees, to create a repository, and to support aspects of the multilateral Refugee Working Group in the Middle East Peace Process.

[1] See: http://prrn.mcgill.ca/prrn/fofognet.html and https://prrn.mcgill.ca/uptodate/uptodate_fofognet.htm where the archives are available. The website coordinator is Rex Brynen, Professor of Political Science at McGill University (Canada).

Other non-academic institutions also have been providing regular and updated information on the Palestine refugees. FAFO,[2] a Norwegian Institute founded by the Norwegian Confederation of Trade Unions in 1982, became the research center in charge of collecting and managing data on the Palestine refugees in the Near East for the Refugee Working Group shepherded by Canada and set up in the aftermath of the 1990 Madrid Peace Conference. Twenty years ago, FAFO also published an important report (co-financed by Switzerland) on the financial issues of the Agency that have become paramount today (Blome Jacobsen 2003).

Established in 1998 and based in Bethlehem, BADIL Resource Center for Palestinian Residency and Refugee Rights is a non-governmental organization (NGO) with special consultative status at the UN since 2006. Over the past decades, BADIL has produced a wealth of legal reports on Palestine refugees and displaced persons.[3]

Furthermore, two books have been published to celebrate the 60th anniversary of UNRWA (Bocco and Takkenberg 2010; Hanafi, Hilal, and Takkenberg 2014) and a more recent one for the Agency's 70th anniversary (Stefanini 2020). These works stand in stark contrast with the Israeli propaganda against UNRWA promoted by an array of researchers who, like Schwarz and Wilf (2020), pretend that the Agency's very existence is part of the problem and not part of its solution.

Last but not least, Prof. Mick Dumper with a number of young researchers at the University of Exeter has set up "UNRWA in Focus,"[4] an interesting website where the reader can find a number of important briefings related to UNRWA and the population it assists in the Near East.[5]

This short review of the literature produced on (and by) UNRWA and the Palestine refugees does not pretend to be exhaustive but is meant to raise the question of knowledge management inside the Agency. Has UNRWA used the abundant knowledge produced over time? In what ways? Why it did not develop a solid Research and Policy Unit, a sort of depository of the Agency's past experiences on which to build up new programs and visions? Losing the memory of its own work is not a specificity of UNRWA; actually, this is the case of most international organizations, whose personnel rotate quite frequently. The Agency has endeavored to digitize its photographic archive and has digitized the family archives, while the original archives should still be stored at a UN location by UNRWA to protect them according to public archival standards. But the administrative archives in Amman—containing internal and external evaluations and reports on projects and programs—have so far not been the object of serious cataloguing and

[2] See: https://www.fafo.no/en/.
[3] See: https://www.badil.org/publications.
[4] See: https://blogs.exeter.ac.uk/unrwainfocus/.
[5] In parallel to our work for the present report, M. Dumper piloted a project in collaboration with the Palestine Economic Policy Research Institute (MAS) in Ramallah, titled: "Strengthening the refugee rights dimensions under the current model of UNRWA member state contributions."

exploitation. Certain international debates about the ethical foundations of aid, decolonizing aid, or fixing aid are largely absent in the Advisory Commission and UNRWA is not part of those discussions.

Finally, it is true that UNRWA has been one of the most efficient and effective humanitarian organizations in the field, mainly because of its Palestinian and Arab civil servants. This is well highlighted by two performance assessments conducted by the Multilateral Organisation Performance Assessment Network (MOPAN) in 2011 and 2018, as well as by other external evaluations conducted by bilateral aid agencies.[6]

Yet we are not aware of initiatives trying to bridge the experiences of local employees and upper management through the creation of knowledge management units, which would mean much more than simple participation in decisionmaking processes. We should mention here that Olof Rydbeck, the Swedish Commissioner-General between 1979 and 1985 (before being replaced by Giorgio Giacomelli), started to compile a history of UNRWA—a project that should be considered for continuation.[7]

Finally, is (dramatically) interesting to remark that during the past eight months, a number of reports have been commissioned directly or indirectly by UNRWA with funding from Switzerland (as in the case of our project), from Norway (through the Christian Michelsen Institute and FAFO), or the Exeter University-MAS project. Most of these initiatives seem to stem from personal initiatives inside the Agency's top management. However, so far there has not been an attempt from UNRWA to coordinate the different projects. This has not prevented the possibility of communication among the researchers and experts involved, most of them generally surprised by this lack of coordination.

The IHEID/CCDP 2022 Report – UNRWA and the Palestine Refugees: Challenges for Developing a Strategic Vision

The present report originated in late 2021, when we were contacted by Roland Steininger, Special Advisor to the Commissioner-General Philippe Lazzarini, both Swiss nationals. The relationship entertained by the Swiss Ministry of Foreign Affairs and the Swiss Agency for Development and Cooperation (SDC) with academic and policy research centers dates back several decades.

The coordinators of this report worked jointly on several projects funded by the SDC, beginning with a three-year project (also co-funded by Sweden and the European Union) on the Palestine refugees and UNRWA in Jordan, the West Bank, and Gaza between 1996 and 1999

[6] See: https://www.mopanonline.org/assessments/unrwa2017-18/.
[7] See: Olof Rydbeck (1990), *I maktens närhet. Diplomat, radiochef, FN-ämbetsman* (*In the vicinity of power. Diplomat, radio chief, UN officer)* and Milton Viorst (1989), *Reaching for the Olive Branch: UNRWA and Peace in the Middle East*.

(Bocco 1997, 1998, 1999; Bocco et Hannoyer 1997). At that time, F. Froehlich was the Deputy Director of the SDC in Jerusalem and R. Bocco was the director of the CERMOC (Centre for Study and Research on the Contemporary Middle East)[8] based in Amman.

Following the beginning of the Second Intifada, the Swiss Ministry of Foreign Affairs convened a meeting in Montreux with the main international stakeholders in Palestine. On that occasion, F. Froehlich launched the idea of setting up a monitoring instrument for analyzing the impact of international aid on the civilian population in the Occupied Territories; a proposition that was warmly accepted by the conference participants. R. Bocco, then a professor at the Graduate Institute of Development Studies (IUED)[9] in Geneva, set up a team of seven researchers (internationals and Palestinians) to produce regular surveys in Gaza and the West Bank. In collaboration with the Jerusalem Media and Communication Centre (JMCC) and the Palestinian Central Bureau of Statistics (PCBS), the team published two reports in 2001 funded by Switzerland. Then, the SDC facilitated the inclusion of seven other main UN agencies (OCHA, UNDP, UNFPA, UNICEF, UNRWA, WFP, WHO)[10] and the Geneva Centre for the Democratization of Armed Forces (DCAF),[11] which cooperated and co-funded seven other reports between 2002 and 2007 (Bocco 2006).

However, the more direct contribution to the UNRWA work came after the Geneva conference of 2004, when the Agency and the Swiss Ministry of Foreign Affairs were able to bring together around 70 donor countries and several multilateral organizations. One of the main recommendations of the meeting was to help the Agency produce evidence-based policies. For that, UNRWA needed a survey on the living conditions of the Palestine refugees registered in the five fields of operation. The IUED won the contract and, in collaboration with the University of Louvain-la-Neuve (Belgium), R. Bocco and F. Lapeyre set up a team of twenty-one international and Arab researchers to investigate the living conditions of more than 11,000 households in Gaza, the West Bank, Jordan, Lebanon, and Syria, in collaboration with the local Departments of Statistics (Bocco, Brunner, Husseini, Lapeyre, and Zureik 2007).

It is therefore not surprising that in the context of UNRWA's renewed financial crisis, the SDC has been willing to fund the work for this report, which is intended to feed into two processes. First, the finalization of the UNRWA Medium Term Strategy 2023-2028. Second, to support a strategic process to feed into discussions with all the Agency's partners and within the fora directed to enhance protection, to secure, and to improve services for refugees in line with the

[8] Today part of IFPO (Institut français du Proche-Orient/French Institute of the Near East).
[9] Today part of the Graduate Institute of International and Development Studies (IHEID).
[10] Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs (OCHA), UN Development Programme (UNDP), UN Population Fund (UNFPA), UN Children's Fund (UNICEF), the World Food Programme (WFP), and the World Health Organization (WHO).
[11] Today called the Geneva Centre for Security Sector Governance.

United Nations General Assembly mandate. Hence these discussions should also tackle the work of the Agency, the need for a more adequate program along with predictable and sufficient donor funding, and enhanced cooperation by all stakeholders concerning UNRWA core services, emergency programs, and development programs.

After agreeing on the scope and the main topics of the report, we set up a team of eight senior international and Arab/Palestinian researchers, the authors of the four main chapters of this volume. Their mandate was agreed upon through a Memorandum of Understanding between the Centre on Conflict, Development and Peacebuilding (CCDP) at the Graduate Institute of International and Development Studies (IHEID) and UNRWA (see the excerpts related to the content and production of the four papers in Appendix 1).

The analytical papers prepared on migration, security issues, socio-economic conditions and legal aspects related to the question of Palestine refugees and UNRWA are attempting to stimulate, feed into, and complement the discussions on the medium-term strategy, its funding, and improvement of the objectives' delivery.

Currently, the people in the Middle East, the Palestine refugees, and UNRWA (like other UN agencies) face the challenges of multiple crises which have strong geopolitical links. Civil wars; unprecedented flows of refugees; the Middle East peace process basically suspended since years; water scarcity; *de facto* separation between the West Bank, East Jerusalem, and the Gaza Strip; economic decline; the Covid 19 pandemic; and the impact of the Russian war on Ukraine all contribute to an extremely adverse environment for development.

UNRWA and its Commissioner-General, together with the senior internationally recruited staff financed by the UN Secretariat and nearly 30,000 area staff, implement a mandate officially handed down by the United Nations General Assembly. However, UNRWA's decades-long budget crises in a way discredits the UN by opening the door to different public perceptions among the Middle East populations and beyond regarding its political intentions.

The paper on legal aspects proves that the international law dimension related to Palestine refugees needs to become a stronger vector for all UNRWA partners, as international law very well sets the parameters for the obligations that the international community has towards Palestine refugees. In this volume, the researchers found the "triple nexus" to be an issue for UNRWA and Palestine refugees as services provided in isolation are not going to satisfy the complex protection needs refugees have. UNRWA services cannot be a substitute for a necessary political process and peacebuilding measures.[12]

"In his report to the Human Rights Council (A/HRC/15/32, July 2010), former independent expert Rudi Muhammad concluded that international solidarity is a precondition to

[12] See: https://legalinstruments.oecd.org/public/doc/643/643.en.pdf.

human dignity, the basis of all human rights, and a human-centred approach to development, has a bridge-building function across all divides and distinctions. It encompasses the values of social justice and equity; goodwill among peoples and nations, and integrity of the international community; sovereignty and sovereign equality of all States, and friendly relations among them."[13]

UNRWA remains one extremely important element within the "value chain" for Palestine refugees but the Agency has no control over Middle Eastern economies nor can it influence government decisions. Hence, one cannot blame or make the Agency responsible for problems beyond its control: there is a collective responsibility.

Over the decades, Palestine refugee camps have basically become slums that are home to a myriad of social and political challenges. Thus, what happens in the camp is an issue for UNRWA; this is the most direct context influencing the lives of refugees but it also concerns host countries. The Agency, which is part of the UN family, does not administer Palestine refugee camps but needs to address with its partners the prevailing complex contexts in the five fields of operation to foster and contribute to a more enabling, safe, and secure environment.

The continuation of a strong relationship with UNESCO is important to deal with many challenges in the field of education, such as conflict, violence, and discrimination. The cooperation with other UNRWA partners like WHO, ILO, WFP, UNICEF must be evaluated and adjusted to better serve Palestine refugees.

The expert research team was also surprised to find very little disaggregation of data concerning Palestine refugees in different reports produced by the host countries, as well as by the UN family including the World Bank. Therefore, we sense there is room for improvement as this will also allow better substantiation of UNRWA's call for budgetary contributions. Modern Risk Assessments, Change Theory, and better alignment and adherence to the Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development (OECD), UN, and European Community (EC) programs and standards are definitely topics for discussion with the main stakeholders.

Migration has many drivers and there have been several recent negative developments in the five fields of UNRWA operations. Palestinian youths are losing perspective and many have started to leave searching for a safer, economically more promising and welcoming country. During the past years, many Palestine refugees did not choose only Middle East countries as alternative places of residence. In fact, Europe has increasingly become an option, notwithstanding the difficulties of reaching the chosen final destination.

Migration, socio-economic development and the legal issues are security- related questions that, during the past three decades, have had a significant impact on the Middle East

[13] See: https://digitallibrary.un.org/record/690228?ln=en.

region's stability and on international politics, also influencing security in Europe and the United States.

A challenge for all UNRWA stakeholders is well-described in the OECD Paper "Humanitarian Development Coherence" published in 2017: "Crises are complex, displacements are prolonged, and in protracted crises, people's needs extend far beyond immediate, life-saving support. Recognising this, the majority of humanitarian and development co-operation donor strategies now explicitly call for coherence between those two separate aid streams. However, today's donor aid architecture often places humanitarian and development teams into two different siloes with their own separate tools, funding cycles and decision-making processes."[14]

Finally, we think that the discussion on UNRWA and its financial needs should be addressed in a more comprehensive manner, since the sheer funding questions do not respond to the political context and sideline the question of common political responsibility. UNRWA's existence is necessarily associated with the continuing plight of Palestine refugees and the absence of a just and lasting solution to their condition. UNRWA thus remains the most concrete and immediate, tangible expression of solidarity and political recognition of Palestine refugees by the international community.

During the almost seven months of work, the project coordinators benefitted from the invaluable help of Dr. Farrah Hawana, researcher at the CCDP, who helped in the organization of the two-day workshop held partly online during late May and quickly distributed detailed minutes of workshop discussions to the papers' authors (See the Appendix 2 for the Workshop Program). She also skillfully assisted in the English and scientific editing of all the papers in this volume.

Last but not least, we are very grateful for the collaboration and assistance at various levels of Roland Steininger and Sam Rose, UNRWA's Director of Planning, and of Marie Gilbrin, Director of the SDC Office in Jerusalem. We also highly appreciated the participation and the constructive comments and critics formulated during the workshop by Ben Majekodumni, Chief of Cabinet of the UNRWA Commissioner-General, and by Nathalie Boucly, Director of the UNRWA's Department of Legal Affairs.

[14] See: https://www.oecd.org/development/humanitarian-donors/docs/COHERENCE-OECD-Guideline.pdf.

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THE UN MANDATE TOWARD THE PALESTINIAN REFUGEES: THE LEGAL IMPERATIVES OF A MORAL RESPONSIBILITY

Francesca ALBANESE and Ardi IMSEIS

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I. Introduction

For most of the past seven decades, the international discourse with respect to Palestinian refugees has been dominated by its humanitarian dimension, focusing on how to cater to refugees' basic needs. The international community has concentrated its efforts primarily on sustaining the main agency responsible for securing these basic needs: the United Nations Relief and Works Agency for Palestine Refugees in the Near East (hereinafter 'UNRWA' or 'the Agency'). After 74 years, UNRWA is now grappling with what has become the most dangerous financial crisis in its history. In recent years, unprecedented donor fatigue toward the Agency, as the main provider for Palestinian refugees, has mounted, giving rise to contentions that UNRWA's core operations and mandate need to be fundamentally adjusted. Regrettably, discussions on UNRWA, including by major donors, have been generally devoid of any serious engagement with the underlying causes of the plight of the Palestinian refugees, and their related ongoing historical grievances. There is little question that so long as the United Nations (UN) avoids dealing directly with these aspects of the unresolved plight of the Palestinian refugees the Palestinian refugee question will be no closer to resolution, and peace and stability in the region will remain elusive.

Three main issues are often glossed over in the discussion concerning Palestinian refugees and UNRWA. First, the catalyst of the refugee problem—the ethnic cleansing of Palestine in 1947-49—is part of a continuing violation of international law and a political reality that demands immediate resolution. Second, UNRWA was established as part of a comprehensive UN framework to resolve the question of Palestine, including refugees. Over time, that framework has unravelled to the point that its only remaining element, UNRWA, is ill-equipped to discharge its own limited economic and social-rights-based mandate due to chronic underfunding. Third, the UN framework, as it presently exists, is unable to address the key rights—civil and political—that must be resolved if a solution to the plight of the Palestinian refugees, including the right to durable solutions, is to be found once and for all. The situation requires a comprehensive understanding, analysis, and strategy, where political dimensions and decisions align with what is required by the applicable law.

Palestinian refugees, like all human beings, are not only entitled to economic, social, and cultural rights, but also to civil and political rights. Adequate protection of Palestinian refugees today requires careful attention to the full panoply of rights they

enjoy under international law. Because of the ongoing violation of these rights, Palestinian refugees rightly and inevitably look to the UN for answers and accountability.

To address these issues, this paper will discuss UNRWA's mandate within the broader context of what the UN regards as its "permanent responsibility for the question of Palestine until it is resolved in all of its aspects in accordance with international law," including toward Palestinian refugees.[15] It will do so by:

- Contextualizing UN mandates and responsibility toward Palestine and the Palestinian people, including the development of the distinctive regime set up for them, of which UNRWA is a part;
- Clarifying the legal, political, and moral responsibilities of the UN toward the Palestinian refugees in light of the evolution of its management of the question of Palestine; and
- Analysing the UN mandate toward Palestinian refugees today and its implications in terms of assistance, protection, and durable solutions.

This will allow for a better appreciation of: (1) what UNRWA is presently mandated to do, (2) how this mandate has evolved over time, and (3) what can be done to further support its mandate in future.

Analysis and recommendations will ensure that such developments remain strictly in line with the UN's broader permanent responsibility, including the core international legal rights of Palestinian refugees—most importantly, their right to international protection and durable solutions. This will also help elevate the discourse on UNRWA and its vital work beyond the current limits of the humanitarian and developmental frameworks within which it operates, situating it and the needed action within the larger context of UN responsibility. Eventually, this will allow UNRWA and others to call upon the UN to fulfil its obligations toward the Palestinian refugees, indicating the parameters and possibilities of future UN action vis-à-vis Palestinian refugees.

[15] This responsibility derives from the pivotal role the UN played in proposing the partition of Palestine in November 1947 against the express wishes of its Palestinian Arab majority, paving the way for the Nakba. This responsibility has been affirmed by the UN General Assembly in countless resolutions since 1992 (e.g., A/RES/71/23) and reaffirmed by the International Court of Justice (ICJ) in 2004. See *Legal Consequences of the Construction of a Wall in the Occupied Palestinian Territory*, Advisory Opinion, 9 July 2004, ICJ Reports 2004, para. 49.

II. Setting the context straight: Palestinian refugees are a "permanent responsibility" of the UN

Though the UN was not directly responsible for the creation of the Palestinian refugee problem, it played a pivotal role in setting the stage for what happened to the Palestinian refugees in 1947/49. The institutional response of the UN toward their plight is what the UN has characterized, since 1992, as its "permanent responsibility for the question of Palestine until it is resolved in all of its aspects in accordance with international law."[16] This is key to determine the obligations of the UN—including UNRWA—toward the Palestinian people, including the Palestinian refugees. Contextualizing who the Palestinian refugees are, and the origins of the UN's responsibility and features of the institutional response they have committed to, will allow for a comprehensive understanding of UNRWA's expected role and needed resources.

Contextualizing the Palestinian refugee question

Standard UN and diplomatic representations of UNRWA often begin with an opaque reference to "the events of 1948" that resulted in the "displacement" of "the refugees" and led to the creation of the Agency. No reference is ever given to the facts and consequences of Palestine's ethnic cleansing during that war, including the forcible expulsion of the majority of the native population of Palestine from 1947 to 1949 and throughout the 1950s at the hands of Zionist paramilitary and military organizations; the usurpation of their property; the barring of their return for discriminatory reasons;[17] and their unilateral denationalization *en masse* by the new state of Israel that had seceded from Palestine.[18] These internationally wrongful acts lie at the heart of the creation of the Palestinian refugee problem and remain unremedied to this day.

Equally neglected is the UN's pivotal hand in giving rise to these events. This includes the work of the United Nations Special Committee on Palestine (UNSCOP) and

[16] UNGA res A/RES/71/23.

[17] Following the expulsion and/or flight of the Palestinian refugees in 1948/49, the government of the new state of Israel barred return of the refugees through the passage of a series of legislation with adverse discriminatory impact on them. This included the *Law of Return (1950)*, according to which only Jewish persons enjoy a right to return to the country; and the *Citizenship Law (1952)*, according to which Palestinian nationality, including that of the Palestinian refugees, was unilaterally annulled without any viable path provided for Palestinian refugees to replace such nationality with new Israeli citizenship. These laws remain in place to this day.

[18] Albanese, F. P., and L. Takkenberg. 2020. *Palestinian Refugees in International Law*. Oxford University Press, p.129, 343.

the 1947 UN Partition Plan that triggered internal strife and tripartite hostilities between British troops, Zionist groups, and Arabs in British Mandate Palestine, as well as subsequent UN responses (i.e., the UN Mediator, the UN Conciliation Commission for Palestine or UNCCP, the Economic Survey Mission, and then UNRWA). Many defend this decontextualization as required for the UN to "depoliticize" its engagement with the issue. But by omitting this crucial context, the opposite is in fact true; one cannot diagnose and treat a problem without first identifying how it emerged, what it is, and why it persists.

In 1922, the League of Nations entrusted the mandate over Palestine to Great Britain, who in turn facilitated European Zionist Jewish colonization of Palestine from the early 1920s. Under article 22 of the League of Nations' Covenant, Palestine (whose population in 1922 was 78 percent Muslim, 11 percent Jewish, 10 percent Christian, and one percent other religion/nationalities[19]) was a "class A mandate" and therefore entitled to become independent pending the completion of administrative steps to be accomplished under the "sacred trust" of the British. However, the British violated their obligation by facilitating only European Jewish settlement and financial and political development in Palestine, at the expense of the local Palestine Arab population. The economic, institutional, and political life of the Palestine Arabs was crushed during the British Mandate. Resistance to British political subjugation was also crushed. Over time, tension between the two groups—native Palestine Arabs and European Jewish colonists—grew, alongside a general resentment toward the British Mandate and its forces.

In 1947, the United Nations, successor to the League of Nations, continued this trend by violating its obligations to help Palestine realize its independence as a class A mandate. It did so by proposing to partition the country into a Jewish State and an Arab State, against the express wishes of its native Palestine Arab majority. Not only were the terms of partition patently illegal and unfair,[20] but based on the UN record, the UN knew or ought to have known that the ethnic cleansing of Palestine, which was triggered by the

[19] British Census, 1922.

[20] Under the partition plan, the Jewish population of Palestine (i.e., one third of the total population) were afforded approximately 56 percent of the country, even though Jews owned no more than 5.8 percent of Palestine at the time. Moreover, by its own terms, the Jewish state to be established under the partition plan would have had a majority Arab population in it—despite recognition by UNSCOP that the Zionists required a Jewish majority state and would have to use force to realize it. Imseis, A. 2021. "The 1947 Plan of Partition for Palestine Revisited: On the Origins of Palestine's International Legal Subalternity." *Stanford Journal of International Law* 57(1): 47.

ensuing war (1947/1949), might occur as a result.[21] The war resulted in the forcible displacement, dispossession, and mass-denationalization of approximately 750,000 Palestine Arabs (not including the internally displaced persons in what became the state of Israel). In no small part because of its role in purporting to illegally partition Palestine against the express wishes of its majority Arab population, the UN subsequently devised political and humanitarian responses aimed at resolving the situation of the Palestinian refugees according to the laws of the time—which included return or resettlement, as well as reparation in the form of compensation for property loss and damage. None of this happened. Instead, both during and immediately after the 1947/1949 war, Israel passed a number of orders and laws and enacted policies that consolidated the dispossession of the moveable and immovable property of the refugees, their denationalization *en masse*, and barred them from returning to their homes and lands.

In 1967, around 350,000 refugees were further forcibly displaced from the remainder of the territory of the former British Palestine Mandate, i.e., the West Bank, including East Jerusalem and the Gaza Strip—which had respectively fallen under Jordanian and Egyptian rule after the armistice agreements signed with Israel in 1949. These refugees are among those whose situation is still to be resolved in line with relevant UN resolutions. While the UN maintains a record of all public and private property that was stolen from the Palestinian refugees, no measures to deliver justice, in either individual or collective form, have ever been taken.

Recurring conflict in the region—starting with the 1956 Suez crisis, the 1967 War, the 1973 Arab–Israeli war, the Lebanese civil war, and the First and Second Intifadas in the occupied Palestinian territories (oPt)—and the general political volatility in the Arab world as of the 2000s have compounded the plight of the Palestinian refugees and prompted a realignment of UN functions toward them. In Jordan, Lebanon, Syria, and the oPt, where the majority of Palestinian refugees have remained, the duration and changing conditions of refugee exile has demonstrated that assistance is a necessary but insufficient condition for their protection. In other parts of the world, primarily the Arab countries to which hundreds of thousands of Palestinians progressively migrated or fled (e.g., Kuwait, Libya, Lebanon, Iraq, and Syria), tragic turns of history have reminded

[21] Ibid., 45-49.

Palestinian refugees of the harsh reality of their protracted situation, and of their continuing need for international protection.

Palestinian refugees and Palestine refugees: Important clarifications

Palestinian refugees are persons who were displaced from Palestine, first in relation to the creation of the State of Israel during the 1947/1949 conflict over British Mandate Palestine, and second in relation to what remained of it in the June 1967 war. This includes their descendants, whose situation is still to be settled in line with relevant UN General Assembly (UNGA) resolutions. In 1948, the UNGA resolved, in resolution 194, paragraph 11:

> that the refugees wishing to return to their homes and live at peace with their neighbours should be permitted to do so at the earliest practicable date, and that compensation should be paid for the property of those choosing not to return and for loss of or damage to property which, under principles of international law or in equity, should be made good by the Governments or authorities responsible.

As noted above, despite being willing to return to their "homes," Palestinian refugees have been prevented from doing so by Israel. Those refugees displaced in 1967 are commonly referred to by the UN as "persons displaced as a result of the June 1967 and subsequent hostilities," or "1967 displaced" *tout court,* instead of "refugees." Yet, besides this misnomer, they are refugees for the purpose of international law. Also in their case, the UNGA expressed the need for them to "return" to their homes and for a "just settlement" of their plight.

Among the totality of Palestinian refugees (about 7 million), some 5.7 million "Palestine refugees" are registered with UNRWA, in Jordan, Lebanon, and Syria, as well as in the Gaza Strip and the West Bank.[22] There are reportedly about one million non-UNRWA-registered 1948 refugees and one million 1967 refugees (the latter were never registered as "refugees" with UNRWA). The UNRWA definition was crafted with the intent to determine eligibility for assistance and service, not entitlement to protection, which was the task of UNCCP.

[22] UNRWA defines "Palestine refugees" 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." UNRWA, *Consolidated Eligibility and Registration Instructions (CERI)*, 1 January 2009, sec. III, A(1).

Distinction is often drawn between "Palestine" and "Palestinian" refugees, where the former refers to refugees under UNRWA's mandate and the latter refers to refugees of Palestinian origin—hence the term is both wider and narrower than "Palestine refugees." In the UN High Commissioner for Refugees' (UNHCR) interpretation of article 1D of the 1951 *Convention Relating to the Status of Refugees*, the term "Palestinian refugee" is used to refer to both 1948 and 1967 Palestinian refugees.

Since 1948, the UN response to the question of Palestine and Palestinian refugees has involved various actors performing a number of functions designed to address specific refugee rights, *viz*. to resolve refugee status (return or resettlement), address material claims (including restitution and reparation), and ensure assistance and protection. The refugees have seen the right of return as an embodiment of the wholeness of their individual and collective rights.

III. The distinctive regime for Palestinian refugees: Origins and nature

The historical facts and the state of the law in 1948 explain the UN response to the Palestinian refugee question in 1948 and, more haphazardly, as of 1967. In 1948, the UN Mediator and former President of the Swedish Red Cross (as such, an individual intimately familiar with the laws and customs of war) first asserted that the Palestinian refugees have the right to return, restitution, and compensation, based on the applicable law of the time. After his assassination in 1948, and following considerable deliberation, the UNGA in late 1948 adopted resolution 194 (III), which incorporated the late UN Mediator's recommendation that the refugees were entitled to choose between returning to their original homes or resettling elsewhere. The resolution also referred to the right to various forms of compensation to be paid in either event. These rights and related claims have only become stronger with the passage of time and the progressive development of international law.

Most importantly, UNGA resolution 194 (III) also established the UNCCP with the aim of negotiating a comprehensive solution to the question of Palestine. This included a settlement of all issues pending between the parties, including the resolution of the refugee problem. Several unsuccessful UNCCP-led peace conferences between Israel and the Arab states took place in the 1950s. Disagreement around the fate of the refugees played an important role, with Israel arguing against repatriation despite being responsible for their forced exile, and the Arab states arguing for repatriation in line with

international law. Meanwhile, mechanisms to provide immediate assistance and relief to the refugees around the region were put in place, the most comprehensive and lasting of which is UNRWA.

In 1949, the establishment of UNRWA, primarily at the initiative of the United States (US), followed and replaced the UN Disaster and Relief Project and the Special Fund for Relief of Palestine Refugees (1948-50).[23] The Economic Survey Mission, which resulted in UNCCP's recommendation to set up UNRWA, was led by the US, whose aim was to promote small and then large-scale resettlement of Palestine refugees in host countries through an economic development model inspired by the Tennessee Valley Authority, a federally owned corporation created by the US Congress in 1933 to support the Tennessee Valley during the Great Depression.[24] One of the not-so-well-known facts about UNRWA is that, in addition to the approximately 750,000 uprooted Palestinians, the Agency initially assisted some 17,000 internally displaced Jews in Israel, in addition to displaced nationals of another two dozen countries, including a significant number of Lebanese and smaller numbers of Algerians, Jordanians, and Syrians.[25] This is why UNRWA's name and mandate refers to *Palestine* refugees, rather than Palestinian refugees. UNRWA continued to assist the Jewish refugees under its mandate until June 1952, when it ceased operations within Israel at the request of the Israeli government.[26]

Like UNHCR, UNRWA was established as a subsidiary organ of the General Assembly under Article 22 of the UN Charter.[27] Like UNHCR, it operates under the authority of, and reports to, the General Assembly.[28] UNRWA was conceived to support and complement the work of the UNCCP. While the UNCCP's "refugee mandate" centered on achieving durable solutions for Palestine refugees through resolution of the Israeli-Palestine conflict, with special emphasis on voluntary repatriation, UNRWA was intended to support the economic welfare and development of the refugees within the host

[23] UNGA 212 (III)), 19 November 1948.
[24] US Department of State, publication 3757, Near and Middle Eastern Series, released February 1950.
[25] UNRWA, *Assistance to Palestine Refugees: Interim Report of the Director of the United Nations Relief and Works Agency for Palestine Refugees in the Near East, GAOR,* 5th session, suppl. 19, UN doc. A/1451/Rev.1, 5.
[26] For information regarding Jewish persons served by UNRWA, see the UN Economic Survey Mission for the Middle East, Final Report, A/AC.25/6, 28 December 1949.
[27] UNHCR is established under article 7 of the UN Charter.
[28] UNRWA does it directly while UNHCR does it through the Economic and Social Council (UNHCR, para. 11).

countries, pending that resolution.[29] The duration of UNRWA's mandate is contingent upon the resolution of the conflict and "the just resolution of the question of Palestine refugees."[30]

The nature of UNRWA's mandate under UNGA resolution 302 (IV) of 8 December 1949 was initially construed to complement that of UNCCP, and therefore did not include the pursuit of international protection along the lines of UNHCR. UNHCR, which was initially set up to find durable solutions for the millions of refugees from Europe, had an explicit legal protection mandate tailored to the circumstances of the refugees it was mandated to assist. Unlike Palestinian refugees, these persons required the regularization of their legal status in the "host country" given they did not wish to return to the countries from which they took refuge. Conversely, Palestinian refugees had been granted safe access and assistance to voluntarily repatriate (which is what the majority of them then demanded), regain control of their possessions left behind in Israel, and be provided with aid in the meantime to survive the harsh conditions in the precarious refugee camps where they were scattered. Their status was recognized through UNRWA and gradually through domestic registration systems in host countries. While UNCCP struggled to advance a mutually agreed-upon solution between the parties, UNRWA merely supported that function under UNCCP's aegis. It partly did so through the implementation of work programmes across the Near East and support to Palestinian refugees migrating across the Arab world for work, in addition to providing continued relief (previously extended by UNRWA's predecessors).

This situation was recognized by the drafters of the 1949 UNHCR Statute and the 1951 Refugee Convention; as there were already institutional arrangements in place for Palestinian refugees, with mandates tailored to their specific situation and needs, there was no reason for duplication between UNCCP/UNRWA and UNHCR. It should be noted that seventy years ago *ad hoc* solutions to refugee problems like UNRWA and UNCCP

[29] UNRWA's original mandate included: "carry[ing] out direct relief and works programmes in collaboration with local governments," "consult[ing] with the Near Eastern governments concerning measures to be taken preparatory to the time when international assistance for relief and works projects is no longer available," and "plan[ning] for the time when relief was no longer needed." UNGA res. 302 (IV), 8 December 1949, para. 7(b). See also UNCCP, "First Interim Report of the United Nations Economic Survey Mission for the Middle East" appended to UNCCP, *Final Report of the United Nations Economic Survey Mission for the Middle East, Part I (The Final Report and Appendices) and Part II (The Technical Supplement),* UN doc. A/AC.25/6, New York, 1949, part I, 14,16.

[30] UNGA res.302 (IV), 8 December 1949. See also General Assembly Resolution 71/91, which extends UNRWA's mandate until 30 June 2020.

were part of the institutional culture of the UN response to refugee situations, not an exception. Even UNHCR and the 1951 Refugee Convention were initially only envisaged for European and Soviet refugees. The territorial-partition-generated refugee crises (such as the Palestinian, Korean, and Indian-Pakistani crises) were all beyond the scope of UNHCR and the 1951 Refugee Convention. Unlike these other situations, however, the Palestinian question has yet to be resolved and millions have remained in limbo, awaiting a durable solution to their fate in line with international law.

The 1951 Refugee Convention was also not meant to exclude Palestinian refugees from the enjoyment of rights as refugees, but merely provides that such rights are to be furnished through either one of the UNCCP/UNRWA or UNHCR institutional frameworks,[31] depending on the circumstances in question. Under the Convention, UNHCR would come into play only in the event that the "protection or assistance" provided by either UNCCP or UNRWA has "ceased for any reason."[32] This regime is the foundation of the complementarity between UNCCP/UNRWA on the one hand and UNHCR on the other for Palestinian refugees.

In practice, in the absence of UNCCP,[33] UNRWA has remained the primary UN entity responsible for Palestinian refugees within its area of operations. According to article 1D of the 1951 Refugee Convention, the continuity of protection for Palestinian refugees must continue until the question of Palestine is definitively settled in line with "relevant resolutions adopted by the General Assembly of the United Nations."

In the absence of a resolution of the Palestinian refugee problem, in the 1960s UNRWA continued to work with the refugees displaced from Palestine by consolidating its human development programs, primarily education and health, and so contributed to building the resilience of the Palestinian refugees.

The main vehicle of UNRWA's support to Palestinian refugees has been through assistance provided via UNRWA's core programmes: education, health, and relief and social services, as well as camp improvement services in more recent years. A number of crises and shocks on the ground have gradually led to the expansion of UNRWA's functions beyond the realm of the provision of these essential services. With the 1956 Suez crisis and Israeli's first occupation of the Gaza Strip, UNRWA activated its first

[31] Article 1D (1).
[32] Article 1D (2).
[33] Although the UNCCP continues to formally exist, it has *de facto* ceased operations since 1964.

protection functions in support of Palestinian refugees, documenting the attacks against the refugees.[34] During the 1967 war and the civil war in Jordan in 1970, UNRWA mainly ensured protection through humanitarian support and assistance. In 1982, the General Assembly affirmed UNRWA's role in protecting Palestinian refugees and other Palestinians of concern, including by documenting the damage to them and their property in connection with Israeli aggression on Lebanon.[35]

A number of UNRWA Commissioners-General have resisted the Agency's qualification of its work as protection. Nevertheless, since the 1980s UNRWA has increasingly engaged in activities going beyond the provision of humanitarian/human development assistance and relief. These have included: medical assistance to the wounded in conflict, the delivery of food, the rebuilding of housing units, the payment of cash assistance, intervention to obtain the release of detained staff and refugees (primarily in the oPt), developing monitoring and reporting on the human rights situation of the Palestine refugees in its area of operation, and assisting non-refugee Palestinians living under Israeli occupation to a limited extent in times of emergency.[36]

In 1988, in response to a request by the UN Security Council (UNSC), UNRWA proposed plans to address the harsh living conditions of the refugees in camps through the Expanded Program of Assistance (EPA), as well as Extraordinary Measures in the oPt (EMOT)—which in 1989 was combined with additional activities for Lebanon, becoming known as Extraordinary Measures in Lebanon and the oPt (EMLOT). Emergency expenditures were sought and used for shelter rehabilitation and utility infrastructure projects and housing (some in response to destruction during military operations) in the oPt and Lebanon. Between 1988 and 1993, and based on UNSC resolution 605, UNRWA also put in place the Refugee Affairs Officer Program, which significantly expanded the work of protection through the increased physical presence of some international staff on the ground (also referred to as "passive protection"). That represented the closest function to international protection that UNRWA had developed to that point (later discontinued in the context of the Middle East peace process). Protection issues have nonetheless remained heavy on Palestinian refugees, especially with the continuous absence of a resolution of their plight.

[34] UNRWA Annual Report to General Assembly, 1956.
[35] UNGA res. 37/ 120.
[36] UNSC res. 605 of 1987 and UN doc, S/ 19443 of 1988.

As Palestinian refugees in need of protection have moved outside UNRWA's area of operations, UNHCR has become increasingly involved. Since the early 2000s, UNHCR and UNRWA have strengthened their partnership to ensure the aforementioned continuity of protection in the spirit of article 1D of the 1951 Refugee Convention, in order to minimize protection gaps in the assistance and protection of Palestinian refugees. Accordingly, UNRWA remains uniquely responsible for these refugees within its area of operations. UNHCR is responsible when these refugees are outside the Agency's geographical areas of operation and are unable to avail themselves of UNRWA's protection for objective reasons. Both international jurisprudence (Court of Justice of the European Union) and the UNHCR interpretation recognize that international protection extends to both 1948 and 1967 Palestinian refugees (hence why it is more complete to refer to Palestinian refugees rather than Palestine refugees).

In sum, in 1948, the protection of Palestinian refugees was expected to be a temporary measure until a just and durable solution was found and implemented—not something that would continue in perpetuity as a substitute for such a solution. Owing to the failure to find a political solution, measures to protect Palestinian refugees have had to evolve to adjust to the most protracted refugee crisis in post-WWII period. So, too, has UNRWA's role.

IV. UN mandate for Palestinian refugees 74 years on: UNRWA as the bare minimum due to Palestinian refugees

Those engaged with UNRWA and Palestinian refugees take the seeming intractability of the Palestinian refugee situation as a given; something rooted in a distant past that cannot be changed today. The UNGA has regularly endorsed, repeatedly extended, and progressively expanded the Agency's mandate in response to developments in the region

that required UNRWA to provide a variety of humanitarian,[37] development,[38] and protection activities based on the needs of Palestine refugees.[39] It has continued to do so for nearly seven decades, causing UNRWA to become a large, active, much debated, and occasionally criticized Agency that currently defines its mandate as promoting the well-being and human development of the Palestine refugees through protection, education, health care, relief and social services, camp infrastructure and improvement, microfinance, and emergency assistance, including in times of armed conflict.[40] After almost eight decades of operations, UNRWA is confronted with an increased demand for services resulting from natural growth in the number of registered Palestine refugees, the extent of their vulnerability, and their deepening poverty, particularly due to recurrent crises and deteriorating socio-economic and humanitarian conditions in its areas of operation.[41] UNRWA's almost complete reliance on voluntary contributions has constantly put it in a mode of cyclical financial crisis, where the predictable and timely delivery of core essential services and special programs are in jeopardy. The desired development of programs and services in line with UN standards and requirements has

[37] E.g., UNGA res. 614 (VII) of 1952 notes a need for "increased relief expenditures" in the UNRWA budget. UNGA Resolution 916 (X) of 1955 notes the "serious need of other claimants for relief [. . .] namely, the frontier villagers in Jordan, the non-refugee population of the Gaza Strip, a number of refugees in Egypt, and certain of the Bedouin." Following the 1967 war, UNGA Resolution 2252 (ES-V) asked UNRWA to "continue to provide humanitarian assistance [. . .] on an emergency basis, and as a temporary measure, to persons in the area who are currently displaced and in serious need of continued assistance." In later years, the UNGA repeatedly restated the Agency's mandate for those displaced in 1967. After the 1982 Israeli invasion of Lebanon, the UNGA extended UNRWA's mandate to encompass those displaced by "subsequent hostilities." UNGA Resolution 37/120 (J) of 1982 explicitly adds protection to the list of UN responsibilities toward Palestinian refugees, urging consultation between the Secretary-General and UNRWA to "undertake effective measures to guarantee the safety and security and the legal and human rights of the Palestine refugees in the occupied territories."

[38] In 1958 and 1959, the UNGA recommended that the Agency increase programs relating to education, vocational training, and self-support—an emphasis that would become an important blueprint for the Agency. From 1992 to 2002, UNRWA collaborated with the Office of the UN Special Coordinator for the Middle East Peace Process (UNSCO) and other specialized agencies of the UN system to contribute to the development of economic and social stability in the oPt. In 1993, after Israel and the Palestine Liberation Organization sign the Declaration of Principles on Interim Self-Government Arrangements, UNRWA began developing its Peace Implementation Programme, which works "to meet Palestine requests for assistance and priorities" during the interim period; UNGA res. 49/35 (1994) notes its "significant success."

[39] UNRWA, "Frequently Asked Questions," http://www.unrwa.org/who-we-are/frequently-asked-questions. UNRWA's mandate was last renewed on 13 December 2019 and until June 2023 by UNGA Resolution A/RES/74/83.

[40] See UNGA resolution 71/91 of December 2016, Assistance to Palestine refugees, UN doc. A/RES/71/91, which renewed UNRWA's mandate until June 2020 (see para 6). See also the Report of the Secretary-General, *Operations of the United Nations Relief and Works Agency for Palestine Refugees in the Near East*, Seventy-first session, agenda item 49, United Nations Relief and Works Agency for Palestine Refugees in the Near East, 30 March 2017, UN Doc. A/71/849.

[41] UNRWA "Statement of UNRWA Commissioner-General to the Advisory Commission," https://www.unrwa.org/newsroom/official-statements/statement-unrwa-commissioner-general-advisory-commissionjune2018.

remained a challenge. Inequality and poverty of Palestine refugees has increased, amidst a general regional context of rising instability.

The current interpretation of the Agency's mandate, which determines the scope and modality of UNRWA's services to Palestinian refugees, appears much narrower than what the Agency has in fact being doing. As discussed above, UNRWA's mandate has not been static and has been conditioned by a number of political and institutional factors. Over time, this has also taken place in a context of evolving global developments in the fields of humanitarian action, international development assistance, and aid coordination.

Political constraints have also critically shaped UNRWA's mandate. These include, but are not limited to, Palestinian and host country opposition to the early works programs envisaged by the Agency in the 1950s (which were in fact prompted by the Agency's early mandate aimed at resettling the refugees); donor pressure to "rectify" the refugee registration rolls by limiting beneficiary numbers and making them a parameter of determining the Agency's budget; and, in later decades, Israel and its main supporters' opposition to the Agency for allegedly fueling the hopes of the refugees to return to their original homes and properties, thereby ostensibly perpetuating the Israeli-Palestinian and broader Arab-Israeli conflicts due to an underlying acceptance that Israel will/should never allow such a return—despite the requirements of international law that it do so. Over time, gross inaccuracies and misrepresentations of the Agency's mandate have grown, including in connection with the racist perception that a return of Palestinian refugees to their homes and lands itself constitutes an anti-Semitic threat to Israel. Often politically motivated, based on racialized stereotypes about the Palestine refugees themselves, and structurally driven by Israel's political agenda, these inaccuracies and misrepresentations have influenced some main donors and prevented constructive discussion on the substance of the Agency's mandate, its work, and its methods of operation (the overwhelming focus of some donors on UNRWA's neutrality and counter-terrorism efforts is just one example). By extension, ensuring a sounder financial footing for the Agency has become more difficult.

A historical examination of the evolution of UNRWA's mandate suggests that the Agency has made valiant efforts to progressively broaden UN responses, including through what it has called its "human development" approach. UNRWA has been a precursor of human development programming internationally, with its education and

primary health care programs being the largest components of its budget since the 1960s. Yet this approach, reflective of the original assumption of the international community's responsibility toward the refugees, has been increasingly overshadowed by virtually constant local and regional tumult, with accompanying political shifts (especially since the start of the Middle East peace process), coupled with a sharp downturn in the refugees' security and socio-economic conditions. The economic development assistance that UNRWA has steadily provided to the Palestinians since the 1950s, seen by many as the "handmaiden of peace building" in the Middle East, is a paradigm that has been forcefully halted by the needs of a refugee population increasingly straight-jacketed politically, frustrated in its entrepreneurship, and more dependent on aid.

UNRWA has also been a precursor of physical protection through "presence." Yet, in 2022, some 74 years after the Nakba, a critical reflection on the actual needs of Palestinian refugees needs to take place. The test for what is needed should not be what the international community is "disposed to pay." Rather, it should be what the international community owes the Palestinian refugees, as part of the Palestinian people, by virtue of the UN's permanent responsibility toward the question of Palestine until it is resolved in all its aspects in accordance with international law. This of course includes securing the rights of Palestinian refugees in line with the international protection and assistance provided in other refugee situations. This means that, pending a just and durable solution, Palestinian refugees must enjoy equal access to social, economic, development, and all other forms of rights.

V. Rights of the refugees and obligations of the international community

The UN mandate(s) toward Palestine and Palestinian refugees have sometimes been marked by a selective interpretation of what international law requires in their case, politicization, and a structural discrimination against Palestinians, including Palestinian refugees. Enduring legacies of a colonial past, these have arguably impacted the response of the international community toward the question of Palestine and its native population. One of the consequences is the exceptionalism in the way Palestinian refugees and their rights are treated, a symptom of the lack of full understanding of the distinctive regime applicable to these refugees and the rights they are entitled to, including to durable solutions.

International law stipulates Palestinian rights—as refugees, as a people, as stateless persons, as civilians in situations of armed conflict, and simply as human beings—as well as the arrangements put in place for their protection while their situation remains unresolved. They have inalienable rights to durable solutions (return/local integration/resettlement), as well as civil, political, economic, social, and cultural rights. As the main lasting embodiment of the UN's responsibility toward the refugees, UNRWA has adopted the mandate to protect the full remit of rights (i.e., beyond economic, social, and cultural rights through service provision) of the Palestinian refugees in accordance with relevant bodies of international law.

The UN General Assembly resolutions affirm UNRWA's protection role, referring to the "valuable work done by the Agency in providing protection to the Palestinian people, in particular Palestine refugees" and encourages the Agency to "make further progress" in addressing the needs and rights of children and women in its operations, in accordance with the Convention on the Rights of the Child (CRC) and the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women (CEDAW). Building on these foundations, UNRWA has developed a more explicit focus on protection as of the turn of the century. UNRWA has taken steps to integrate concepts of protection at all levels of the Agency. In line with the UN responsibility toward the Palestinian refugees, it is only natural that this work continues. This has a number of implications for registration, protection, assistance through services, and durable solutions.

Registration

Palestinian refugees are entitled to "know who they are" and be recognized as such, an entitlement they have as refugees (and descendants of refugees) from the mass displacements of 1947/1949 and 1967. This grants them assistance and protection under various branches of international law. However, a few anomalies must be corrected. Refugee women married to non-refugees ("MNR" in UNRWA documentation) and their children, as well as those displaced since 1967, have been unable to be registered as part of the UNRWA refugee population because of an inexcusable policy of gender discrimination pursued by the Agency that only allows children of Palestine refugee males to be registered. Moreover, while children of MNRs may register for service provision, such registration is in practice scant owing to lack of resources.

The lack of harmonized registration procedures that facilitate the preservation of "Palestinian (refugee) identity" (i.e., being a 1948 or 1967 refugee, including descendants) has rendered many in the Palestinian refugee diaspora "invisible." Across different registration systems in states (some of which are themselves not internally uniform), their numbers, movements, and stories often become muffled or lost. This needs to be corrected through a comprehensive and accurate identification and registration system.

UNRWA's registration system has the potential to become the central repository of evidence of the refugees' historic claims. This would have a huge symbolic and practical impact for the refugees, especially if and when the registration system gets harmonized and synchronised with UNCCP records; this would connect property loss and damages in 1947/1949 to individual refugees and their families/descendants.

Protection

As part of the suggested realignment of the interpretation of its mandate, UNRWA should consider addressing this lacuna by supporting the protection of the Palestinian refugees' most critical rights. For example, mapping the refugees' protection needs—connected to unfulfilled rights—should help determine which issues can be addressed by the Agency and which would be more appropriately dealt with by other actors. UNRWA can help support state compliance in ensuring fair treatment under the law, access to justice, personal security in the camps, freedom of movement, access to public services, and freedom from discrimination. UNRWA does have—and regularly uses—the power to raise certain matters with competent authorities and intervene to promote the enjoyment of rights and improvement of living conditions of the refugees. This should be pursued further.

There is also a well-recognized need for greater refugee participation in matters concerning their wellbeing and the realization of their rights. This would be advanced by the establishment of structured consultation mechanisms between UNRWA and refugee grassroots organizations, through opinion polls, surveys, and refugee "forums" (e.g., preceding meetings of the UNRWA Advisory Commission, or ADCOM). Palestinians, relevant regional and international NGOs, academic institutions, and individual independent experts could participate in specific ADCOM sessions, to enrich discussions,

or even at the UNGA Fourth Committee, as part of a structured involvement of refugees and relevant strategic actors.

Assistance through services

The 2016 New York Declaration on Refugees and Migrants (NYD) and the Global Compact on Refugees (GCR) express a clear preference for delivering assistance to refugees through national and local service providers (such as public authorities for health, education, social services, and child protection), and moving away from parallel systems for refugees wherever possible. In comparison to the NYD's and the GCR's recommended approach, the UNRWA's direct service delivery model is an anomaly; UNRWA is unique amongst UN agencies in having a quasi-governmental service provider status (but no administration of the camps) with a mandate from the General Assembly that provides direct responsibility for the delivery of basic services that are broadly comparable to those provided by governments. This includes directly managing basic education, primary health, and limited social services in parallel to the national systems of the host countries.

Host countries are generally reluctant to take on more responsibility for Palestinian refugees, as they feel this may contribute to relinquishing Palestinian refugee rights and/or permanently resettling them within their borders. There is also the erroneous concern that any further inclusion of Palestinian refugees in the services of host countries would be tantamount to local integration and therefore undermine their historic right to return. Most host countries already provide access to education beyond ninth and tenth grade, access to university education, and also access to health care services to most Palestinian refugees (significant exceptions are Palestinian refugees in Lebanon and 1967 refugees).[42] For Palestinian refugees, their identity is constantly affirmed by the delivery of UNRWA services that has been such a stabilizing force in their lives.

Due to a difficult humanitarian context in most of the areas where it operates, with competing emergencies and priorities, UNRWA has faced increasing challenges even in delivering (and maintaining quality of) the services and programs for which it has historically been responsible. The obligation to provide assistance rests with the

[42] Of note, Palestine refugees in Jordan (with the exception of ex-Gazans) and the oPt are included in national social assistance schemes funded by the same donors that support UNRWA.

international community owing the to UN's permanent responsibility for the question of Palestine. As the embodiment of that obligation, the UN, including UNRWA, should consider developing a comprehensive framework for protection and solutions where all Palestinian refugee rights are considered, in a multistakeholder framework and with Palestinian voices at the center.[43] This would bring the question of Palestinian refugees and the rights out of the "permanent humanitarianism" and closer to the approach proposed to resolve protracted refugee situations in line with the NYD.

While its "assistance" is unsustainable, it must be understood that this is a symptom of the lack of a political solution and therefore cannot be treated as an isolated dysfunction of UNRWA. Instead, assistance should be rethought and shifted so as to develop productive activities, sustain businesses, and incentivize youth to better prepare them to be competitive. Yet, assistance should continue to be seen as transitory and temporary and within a comprehensive protection and solution framework for Palestinian refugees for an agreed period of time. Special annual reports on the protection of Palestinian refugees should be produced, including a political assessment of the prospects for an international solution to the question of Palestine, including Palestinian refugees. Indeed, for any such development to succeed, UNRWA must first realign its mandate and adopt a more comprehensive approach to protection as outlined earlier in this section.

Durable solutions

In accordance with international refugee law and practice, Palestinian refugees are entitled to voluntarily choose between the following three durable solutions (in order of preference as per practice): (1) voluntary repatriation, (2) local integration in a country of refuge, or (3) resettlement in a third country. The rights of refugees to restitution and compensation for property, damage, lost opportunity, and other human capital losses, are indispensable, stem from other bodies of law, and are organically connected to each of these three forms of durable solution. Palestinian refugees need and deserve an international entity engaged not only in supporting their human development, but also one that upholds their full entitlement to human rights, including to return, restitution, and compensation, as well as facilitating other durable solutions that the refugees may want to pursue.

[43] This approach is proposed by Albanese and Takkenberg (cit), chapter 8 section 4.

With the effective winding up of the UNCCP in 1964, a protection gap arose for the Palestinian refugees, given the disappearance of the only UN agency mandated to seek durable solutions on their behalf. The onset of the Oslo process in 1993, and the establishment by the Secretary-General of the Office of the United Nations Special Coordinator for the Middle East Peace Process (UNSCO)—mandated to facilitate final status negotiations between Israel and the Palestine Liberation Organization (PLO)—held the promise that this gap would be filled. Nevertheless, nearly 30 years on, it is an understatement to say that there is "no peace process" to speak of and "no hope for a political solution" in sight, as recently noted by the Secretary-General in his remarks to the Ad-Hoc Committee of the General Assembly for the Announcement of Voluntary Contributions to UNRWA.[44] In these circumstances, UNSCO's inability to revive final status discussions, let alone conclude them in accordance with relevant international law, has meant that the protection gap faced by the Palestinian refugees on durable solutions remains intact and continues to widen.

In an attempt to overcome the current political impasse, it may be critical for UNRWA to approach the Secretary-General to seek ways and means of cooperating with UNSCO on Palestinian refugee issues, including durable solutions, in preparation for the day when final status negotiations eventually materialize. However, it would not be operationally wise for UNRWA to only rely on the prospects of a potential reinvigorated partnership with UNSCO. Other actions are simultaneously required of the Agency if it is to fulfil its function in line with the UN's permanent responsibility for the question of Palestine.

Another option would be to revive UNCCP. But given it is a dead letter, and UNSCO has effectively replaced it and continues to exist despite the lack of any peace process, that does not seem a realistic possibility. In these circumstances, rather than reviving the UNCCP, the NYD and GCR provide a strong basis for UNRWA to extend its existing role in protecting the rights of Palestinian refugees, including contributing to advance solutions

[44] "The perspective of a political solution for your country is more far away than ever. There [is] no peace process taking place. The most relevant global actors, the Quartet, is not able to meet, not even able to meet at ministerial levels. Several countries, even in the region, seem to accept the status quo, and we see settlements moving on – evictions taking place – no hope for a political solution." Secretary-General's Remarks to the Ad-Hoc Committee of the General Assembly for the Announcement of Voluntary Contributions to UNRWA, 23 June 2022, available at: https://www.un.org/sg/en/content/sg/statement/2022-06-23/secretary-generals-remarks-the-ad-hoc-committee-of-the-general-assembly-for-the-announcement-of-voluntary-contributions-unrwa.

based on the overall UN mandate for Palestinian refugees. By doing so, UNRWA would be operating under the general mandate that the UNGA has conferred on both the UNCCP and UNRWA to assist and protect Palestinian refugees, including through the pursuit of durable solutions, arguing that with the *de facto* demise of the UNCCP and the effective side-lining of UNSCO through the moribund Oslo process, it is incumbent on UNRWA to take over at least some of its functions. Importantly, the Agency need not wait for direction from the UNGA to do so. It is well established as a matter of UN law that, "in the first instance it is the function of a subsidiary organ itself to determine its mandate in accordance with applicable procedures"; "should the competence of the organ be questioned…in the parent organ, it would be for the parent organ to decide and its decision would be final."[45] As a result, the Commissioner-General has the competence to, in good faith, determine questions relevant to the Agency's mandate, with the final say left to the General Assembly *if it questions such determination*. In practice, this has allowed the Agency to determine its own competence when compelled for operational reasons to react to prevailing circumstances on the ground. Its mandate is very flexible and the Agency has in the past taken action on its own initiative that has been given *ex post facto* approval by the Assembly.[46]

In pursuing this direction, UNRWA would in fact realign itself more closely with its original mandate and some of its practices over the years. Indeed, UNRWA's initial dual mandate reflected a combination of assistance ("relief") and support for local integration and limited resettlement ("works") as a possible alternative to return (and compensation). Whilst gradually abandoning the works programs, the Agency has continued to support the socio-economic participation of refugees in host countries through its various programs, especially education and vocational training, in addition to advocating with the host governments for an improvement of their living conditions and access to rights (especially in Lebanon, and with respect to the ex-Gazans in Jordan). Through its Placement Offices, the Agency has also provided hundreds of thousands of Palestinian refugees "alternative pathways" to a better life in the Gulf countries. Finally, in exceptional situations, UNRWA has coordinated closely with UNHCR and the PLO to

[45] Bartholomeusz, L. 2010. "The Mandate of UNRWA at Sixty." *Refugee Survey Quarterly* 28 (2, 3): 452, 455-456.

[46] For example, in the immediate aftermath of the 1967 war, the Commissioner-General authorized distribution of emergency supplies to persons not registered with UNRWA and to institutions. This was approved by the General Assembly *ex post facto*. Ibid., 459.

facilitate the resettlement of Palestinian refugees in third countries (e.g., those from Iraq). But there has not been a similar engagement on pursuing concrete steps vis-à-vis the right of return or compensation and reparation, which had made its early (implicit) role with respect to other durable solutions controversial among the refugees.

VI. Critical reflections on the way forward for UNRWA

As Palestinian refugees remain a permanent responsibility of the UN, it is the UN—including through UNRWA in its area of operations and UNHCR outside—that must deliver what is needed to ensure Palestinian refugee rights to safety, access to basic services, and opportunities. The obligation to provide effective registration, legal protection, and assistance continues to be the responsibility of the UN. The current range of services provided by UNRWA to the refugees is the absolute minimum to be granted, pending the realization of a durable solution to their plight in line with relevant international law and practice.

While the UN regime set up for Palestinian refugees was not conceived as a trusteeship, it possesses the features and rationale of a trusteeship. Accordingly, political and financial resources of the Agency should be commensurate with the responsibilities it discharges for the benefit of the Palestinian refugees it serves in an effective trust relationship. If possible, this must be supported through some form of assessed budget process as compared with UNRWA's present voluntary funding process.

UNRWA's strategic direction must gradually and radically evolve from providing humanitarian assistance and support for human development to a more comprehensive response to all aspects of the Palestinian refugee question, including an expanded focus on protection and durable solutions. By doing so, the Agency would build on its existing mandate of protecting the rights of the Palestinian refugees and address the void left by the demise of the UNCCP.

Palestinian refugees need and deserve, like all other refugees, an international entity engaged not only in supporting their humanitarian needs but also in upholding their human rights, including to return, restitution, and compensation, as well as facilitating such other durable solutions refugees may want to pursue. These rights flow from the illegality of the ethnic cleansing of Palestine and have only become stronger with the passage of time and the further advancement of international law.

Implementing the above shift—including by turning UNRWA's registration system into a central repository of documentary evidence of the refugees' historic claims—could gradually pave the way for a broader reconsideration of the Agency's modus operandi, moving away from parallel delivery of some services in some of its "fields" of operations.

The development of a Comprehensive Refugee Framework for Palestinian Refugees (CRF-PR) could be explored as having the potential to reenergize the discourse in support of unmet Palestinian refugee rights and revive a common front among host countries, refugees, and Palestinian leadership. Its key goals would be to address all pending issues concerning the unmet rights of the Palestinian refugees (durable solutions, restitution/compensation, historical justice) within a UN-led institutional set-up, designed in a way that reflects the specificities and complexity of the Palestinian refugee question, the reality in the main host countries and the refugees' evolved/evolving dispersal, and their protection needs. By generating discussion and awareness, the CRF-PR's concrete added value would be to bypass the fact that there is currently no institutional arrangement for pursuing a durable solution to the Palestinian refugee question, to shift political attention towards the refugees, and to create important momentum to "federate" and advocate jointly for a just and durable solution of the refugee question. Giving proper weight to a rights-based approach centered on the refugees, advancing the development of a CRF-PR through a multi-stakeholder platform under the aegis of the UN has the potential to break the current impasse.

Effective protection of Palestinian refugees is, and shall remain, a UN legal, political, and moral responsibility until a just and durable solution to their situation is found. When examined in the broader historical and institutional context, as above, humanitarian aid provided by UNRWA is better understood as the bare minimum that the UN owes the Palestinian refugees. It is neither in the nature of a dole nor is it a substitute for sustained political action. But it is also not ordinary humanitarian aid. This is because the relationship between the UN and the Palestinian refugees is one of a fiduciary nature; if not for UN action in 1947, the Palestinian refugees would not be in the place they are today. Pressure by individual states—or elements within those states—on UNRWA or using reduction of financial contributions to resolve the political conundrum by further reducing services to Palestine refugees (instead of doing what is necessary, i.e., to comprehensively address the needs and rights of all Palestinian refugees), falls outside

the commitment that the UN has taken on vis-à-vis Palestinian refugees. It is also profoundly illogical and politically hazardous, as it will only aggravate existing instability and mistrust toward the UN system.

The international community is legally, politically, and morally obligated to support UNRWA's mandate so as to comprehensively respond to the needs and rights of the refugees based on international law and the unique permanent responsibility of the UN for the question of Palestine. This requires a three-pronged approach involving:

(1) a proper and complete understanding of the legal situation (i.e. legal status and treatment) of Palestinian refugees, including descendants, wherever they are (UNRWA's areas of operation, areas where protection needs are met by UNHCR, and places where Palestinian refugees have found alternative forms of protection— although they are still lacking *just* and durable solutions in line with relevant UN resolutions);
(2) effective support to the goal of realizing protection and solutions for Palestinian refugees along the path marked by international law, i.e., using the rights of Palestinian refugees to mark the perimeter of what is politically permissible; and
(3) engagement to achieve the abovementioned goal and initiate a CRF-PR, where the PA/PLO and UN (UNRWA/UNHCR and UNSCO) partake in discussions to launch "step zero" of the framework, triggering preliminary consultations with refugee communities and civil society on the one hand, and host countries on the other hand, as well as with the donor community.

V. Conclusions

The plight of Palestinian refugees, displaced in 1947/49 and in 1967 and still longing for a just and durable solution, is fundamentally a political issue going to civil, political, economic, social, and cultural rights, that requires resolution in line with international law. Approaching Palestinian refugees and UNRWA solely through humanitarian and human development frameworks or only based on financial considerations, as the UN has done for the majority of its engagement with the issue, is both woefully immoral and fundamentally unjust. It represents a betrayal of the UN's permanent responsibility for the question of Palestine until it is resolved in all of its aspects in accordance with international law.

At this critical point in the life of UNRWA, Palestinian refugees deserve to be lifted from the stagnation and dependence they have been condemned to and forced into. It is time to step up efforts and reignite the discussion, taking full advantage of UNRWA's unique and leading 73-year role in service of the Palestinian refugees.

UNRWA should step up and have a moment of reckoning regarding what the Agency does and what it should do. UNRWA's mandate has evolved under the input of political and institutional factors, shifting realities on the ground and legal developments. The current interpretation of the Agency's mandate, which determines the scope and modality of UNRWA's services to Palestinian refugees, appears much narrower than what the Agency has in fact being doing, and indeed what it can do in the future. A deeper understanding involving diagnostic and "principled pragmatism" in approaching both the Palestinian refugees and UNRWA is called for, including with regard to protection and durable solutions.

The international community and primarily major donors, must treat UNRWA within the larger context of the UN's permanent responsibility, allowing it to move beyond the limits of foreign aid budgets with full respect for the fiduciary obligation assumed by the UN in 1947. This will also help elevate the discourse on UNRWA and its vital work beyond the current limits of the humanitarian and developmental frameworks within which it operates. This will ultimately allow UNRWA and others to help the UN fulfil its permanent responsibility toward the Palestinian refugees in accordance with relevant requirements of international law.

UNRWA'S CONTRIBUTION TO SOCIO-ECONOMIC STABILITY

Jalal AL HUSSEINI and Joseph SABA

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I. Introduction

This paper analyzes the livelihood conditions of those persons covered by UNRWA's mandate[47] (the Palestine refugees) in its five fields of operation (the West Bank including East Jerusalem, the Gaza Strip, Jordan, Lebanon, and Syria). It also aims to determine the extent to which its humanitarian activities have contributed to socio-economic stability. In so doing it, the paper aims to contribute to the Agency's strategic process of promoting its human development and protection mandate in an increasingly challenging environment.

The first section examines the legal status granted by host countries to Palestine refugees and its implications in terms of access to public services and to labor markets. Focusing on the evolution of the Near Eastern political and socioeconomic context over the past decade, it analyzes key data and trends pertaining to the Palestine refugees' livelihoods and poverty levels.

Against this general background, the second section reviews key evolutions in UNRWA's mandate and programs, encompassing education, health care, relief (the Social Safety Net Programme, SSNP) and social services, camp infrastructure and improvement, microfinance, and emergency assistance. It endeavors to assess its effects on the fulfilment of Palestine refugees' socio-economic rights and on their overall stability by asking: To what extent has UNRWA improved livelihoods, alleviated poverty, and provided adequate social services to Palestine refugees in different host-country-specific environments?

The paper then provides a risk assessment analysis of possible alterations to UNRWA's mandate and activities and their related impact in regular or emergency situations. Finally, it develops recommendations designed to inform UNRWA's future programming, and suggests strategies to address the humanitarian and human development needs of Palestine refugees and to track trends over time.

Note on the scope of the study: Target population and available data

In principle, the paper covers all persons eligible for UNRWA services. This first includes persons registered in UNRWA's registration system since 1950 as Palestine refugees (PR), namely "persons whose normal place of residence was Palestine during

[47] UNRWA is the United Nations Relief and Works Agency for Palestine Refugees.

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," as well as their descendants through the paternal line (UNRWA 2009). Although the PR constitute the vast majority of persons eligible for UNRWA services—89 percent of the total caseload of 5,700,000 registered persons in 2021(UNRWA 2021e)—other registered beneficiaries include, since 1950, "economic refugees" who only lost their livelihoods as a result of the 1948 conflict and, since 2003/2004, non-refugee husbands and descendants of registered female persons (UNRWA 2009).[48] The Agency also provides basic services (primary education and health services) to a limited number of miscellaneous non-registered groups; for instance, persons displaced as a result of the 1967 war and subsequent hostilities, and non-refugees residing in refugee camps and communities (only for services that are extended to refugee camps and communities as a whole).[49]

Table 1. Demographic data as presented by UNRWA (2021e).

	Jordan	***Lebanon***	***Syria***	***West Bank***	***Gaza Strip***	***Total***
SELECTED DEMOGRAPHIC DATA						
Registered Refugees (RRs)	2,334,789	482,676	575,234	883,950	1,516,258	5,792,907
Other registered persons	165,116	67,016	90,632	216,018	189,094	727,876
Total registered persons (RPs)	2,499,905	549,692	665,866	1,99,968	1,705,352	6,520,783
Total host country population in 2021*	*10.2 million*	*6.8 million*	*17.5 million*	*3.1 million*	*2.1 million*	--

[48] While the "economic refugees" (also labelled as "other claimants") were registered based on humanitarian grounds, those married to PR were also registered on more ethical grounds; that is, in compliance with international standards promoting the gradual elimination of all forms of discrimination against women. See also: UNRWA 2004, para 23.

[49] Non-registered assisted persons also include persons identified by the Commissioner-General as eligible to exceptionally receive UNRWA services, beneficiaries of the Microfinance and Microenterprise Department and of emergency programs, and UNRWA staff and their family members (see UNRWA 2009).

Registered population, youth (15-24) (%)	17.8	13.2	16.0	17.1	18.4	17.3
Official camps	10	12	9	19	8	58
Persons registered in camps as % of RP (2017) **	17	53	27	25	47	30

Sources: UNRWA 2021e.

* World Bank 2021a.

** UNRWA 2017. These figures do not correspond to the percentages of refugees actually residing in camps, but to the percentages of refugees who were registered in the camps.

Ultimately, however, the scope of the analysis is determined by the availability of data. UNRWA data is not all relevant for the analysis of demographic and socio-economic trends. Data on the size of its caseload refers to registered persons—not necessarily persons currently using any of its services or even living in the fields of operations. Such a lack of consistency between the number of persons registered and those receiving UNRWA services has been observed in Lebanon. Although in 2017 UNRWA's Lebanon Field Office recorded a registered population of 463,664 persons, the census of refugees in camps and communities organized by the Lebanese authorities found that 183,255 Palestine refugees were living in camps and informal gatherings. For its part, UNRWA reported that it provided services to some 210,000 Palestine refugees.[50] Such discrepancies primarily result from the fact that those refugees who emigrate outside UNRWA's fields of operations (mainly towards European countries) and cease to receive its services maintain active registration for political and socio-economic reasons (see the next section.).

[50] Including 29,000 Palestine refugees from Syria (PRS) that remain registered with UNRWA's Syria Field Office (see UNRWA 2021d).

Available demographic and programmatic data are primarily quantitative, collected to meet the operational immediate needs of each of UNRWA's different programs (e.g., number of beneficiaries, number of facilities, budget required to maintain services, etc.).[51] The data do not consistently provide information on mid-term outcomes and longer term impacts of programs.

Data pertaining to the labor market and poverty status of UNRWA-registered persons come from various sources. In the West Bank and the Gaza Strip, the national labor force surveys conducted by the Palestine Central Bureau of Statistics (PCBS) consistently inform on the employment conditions of refugees in general, per gender and per place of residence (camps versus rural and urban). In Lebanon, Jordan, and Syria, data result from *ad hoc* (one-off) surveys carried out by UNRWA or academic institutions/survey agencies on the living conditions of the PR populations at large (in Jordan in 1996 and 2011/2012; in Lebanon in 2010, 2015, and 2017; in Syria in 2017),[52] or on vulnerable sub-group beneficiaries, such as the PR from Syria (PRS) displaced in Jordan (2017) and in Lebanon (2020). However, the dramatic deterioration of political and socio-economic conditions in Syria and in Gaza over the past decade prompted UNRWA to monitor their living conditions in 2021 in terms of school attendance, employment conditions, housing tenure, financial assistance, financial situation, poverty, and food security and to carry out quasi-universal distributions of cash and food assistance to its registered population in the two fields of operation.[53]

II. Different host country statuses for different modes of socio-economic governance

Statelessness versus socio-economic rights

The legal status of the Palestine refugees across the Near East has been reviewed in numerous studies.[54] These studies have highlighted the international views expressed in

[51] Registered persons in poverty that are eligible for the SSNP (distribution of cash-based transfers and in-kind food assistance) constitute the only group for whom UNRWA has developed a comprehensive set of core data. In 2021, they represented 6.8 percent of the total number of registered Palestine refugees, with variations across fields of operation, from 2.6 percent in Jordan and 4.1 percent West Bank to 12.3 percent in Lebanon and 23.7 percent in Syria (UNRWA 2021e).
[52] The only large-scale survey that included all five fields based on similar questionnaires was conducted by the University of Geneva in collaboration with the University of Louvain-la Neuve (Belgium) and UNRWA in 2005.
[53] In Lebanon, an extraordinary COVID-19 cash assistance intervention was carried out by UNRWA in 2020.
[54] For example, see Albanese and Takkenberg 2020.

UN General Assembly (UNGA) resolutions, the regional views expressed by Arab League declarations, and host country views expressed in each state's legislation and practices. The result appears to be a patchwork of overlapping—but not always coherent or consistent—definitions and legal measures, which have resulted in various degrees of inclusion of Palestine refugees in their host communities and local economies. Yet, this patchwork is underlain by key principles that continue to determine how the Palestine refugees are governed across the Near East. The first of these principles is that, in the name of the preservation of their "right of return" as based *inter alia* on UNGA resolution 194 III (of December 1948),[55] the refugees should not be fully assimilated in their host country and maintained as stateless Palestinian nationals awaiting return to their homeland. This principle was *de facto* not applied in the Palestinian territories of the West Bank and Gaza, where refugees and non-refugees have shared the same legal status under various jurisdictions since 1948.[56] It was also not applied in Jordan. In order to encourage Palestinian contributions to the administrative and economic development of the country, Jordan granted full citizenship to all refugee and non-refugee Palestinians living under its sovereignty (this included West Bankers until 1988).[57] In Jordan's narrative, this step was to be interpreted as a functional measure, not a denial of the refugees' status as Palestinian nationals endowed with the "right of return." Rather, Jordan has continued to promote this right, while preserving the two most visible symbols of the refugee's predicament and internationally-recognized rights—namely, the refugee camps and UNRWA. In contrast, Jordan has applied the same stateless status ascribed to Palestine refugees in other host countries to the displaced (refugee and non-refugee) Gazans that came to Jordan in the wake of the 1967 six-day-war (the "ex-Gazans").

In order to mitigate the negative social effects the lack of citizenship could entail for the refugees, from the early 1950s the Arab League adopted a series of resolutions

[55] Resolution 194, paragraph 11 stipulates that "refugees wishing to return to their homes and live at peace with their neighbours should be permitted to do so at the earliest practicable date, and that compensation should be paid for the property of those choosing not to return and for loss of or damage to property…."
[56] Gaza was under Egyptian administrative rule from 1948 to 1967 and Gazans were holders of Egyptians travel documents. It was then under Israeli occupation from 1967 to 1994. Since 1994, Gaza has officially been under the Palestinian (National) Authority (PA). The West Bank was annexed by Jordan in 1950 (see below), with its inhabitants, refugees and non-refugees, becoming Jordanian citizens. Jordan severed all legal and administrative links with the West Bank in 1988; this territory is presently ruled by Israel and the PA.
[57] See Jordan's Law on Nationality of 1954, https://www.refworld.org/docid/3ae6b4ea13.html.

aimed to ensure that they would be treated on par with host country citizens in such socio-economic fields as residence, freedom of movement, travel documents, and labor rights—it being considered that primary education, health care, and relief services would continue to be provided by UNRWA pending the implementation of the refugees' rights based on resolution 194 provisions. In September 1965, the Arab League compiled such provisions in a document entitled the "Protocol on the Treatment of Palestinian Refugees" (commonly called the "Casablanca Protocol"). The Casablanca Protocol stipulated that, while retaining their Palestinian nationality, the refugees had the right of employment on par with host state citizens, the right to leave and return to their host state, to reside in another Arab state and be able to return to it temporarily under the control of its authorities, and to be given valid renewable travel documents. Bearers of these travel documents residing in Arab League states would receive the same treatment as all other Arab League state citizens regarding visa and residency applications (League of Arab States 1965).[58]

In practice, however, the Arab host countries have traditionally adapted their socio-economic treatment of refugees to nationally-defined economic concerns, which are tied to the absorptive capacity of their own economies, and to certain political considerations. These have primarily included their relationship with the Palestinian national movement,[59] the uncertain permanent status of the refugees in the absence of any progress in the Palestinian-Israeli peace process, and, for Jordan, the feasibility of the "Jordan as an alternative Palestinian homeland" scenario promoted by an increasing number of Israelis since the 1980s as a possible solution to the Israeli-Palestinian conflict.

As a result, the actual socio-economic governance of the refugees across the Near East has not only varied, both within and between host countries, but has generally been detrimental to their human and socio-economic rights, thus eroding the common Casablanca Protocol platform. The Arab League itself questioned the validity of the Casablanca Protocol in 1991 when—following the first Gulf war that saw the Palestinian Liberation Organization (PLO) align with Iraq—its resolution 5092 recommended, at the

[58] The Protocol was ratified without reservation by only six Arab states, among them Jordan and Syria. Lebanon, together with Kuwait, ratified it with reservations. Most Gulf countries did not ratify it. See text of the Protocol here: https://www.un.org/unispal/document/auto-insert-194143/.

[59] As noted by the UNHCR, when the Palestinian nationalist movement came into conflict with the governments of the Arab states, the legal status of the Palestinians diminished (see UNHCR 1997f).

initiative of Saudi Arabia and other Gulf countries, that Palestine refugees be subjected to the rules and laws in force in each member state.

In retrospect, Lebanon—which accepted the Casablanca Protocol with significant reservations regarding refugee employment, citing "prevailing social and economic conditions," and about their right to leave and return to the country "in accordance with the laws and regulations in operation"—has been the least welcoming host state, granting the refugees' the status of foreigner. This has resulted in heavy restrictions, including on their right to work in most liberal professions, and to own and inherit property. In contrast, Syria has from the outset been the most liberal host country of all, placing Palestinians on par with its nationals in the economic and social fields, including employment in the public sector.[60]

The situation in Jordan is mixed; while citizenship has enabled refugees to benefit in principle from the same socio-economic rights as the indigenous population, a rampant "Jordanization" of the public sector started in 1970s, following recognition of the PLO by the Arab League and the UNGA as the sole representative of the Palestinian people in 1974. This policy, which has restricted the employment of Palestine refugees in the higher echelons of public administration, accelerated in the 1990s and is considered completed today (Abu Odeh 1999). In past years, public attention has focused on the difficult socio-economic situation endured by the ex-Gazans in Jordan. As non-Jordanian citizens, they have been deprived of employment opportunities in the public sector and in most liberal professions, and barred from social benefits earmarked for Jordanian citizens (such as cash assistance for the poorest citizens, and subsidized higher education and medical public services). [61]

In the occupied Palestinian territories, refugees and non-refugees have been affected by Israeli occupation policies. In Gaza, through the continuous near total blockade of the territory, bloodshed, and destruction of physical infrastructure resulting from repeated armed conflicts with Israel since 2007; in the West Bank, through the massive demolition of Palestinian homes and businesses, seizures of land and property, forcible population transfers, drastic movement restrictions, and unlawful killings. In

[60] This may be explained by the "pan-Arabist" Baath Party ideology endorsed by the Syrian regime, as well as by the fact that Syria records the lowest percentage of registered refugees among the host countries: 3.7 percent compared to 24.5 percent in Jordan, eight percent in Lebanon, 35.5 percent in the West Bank, and 76 percent in the Gaza Strip (see Table 1 above).

[61] As Arab foreign residents, the ex-Gazans may work as engineers and lawyers as employees, and as doctors and nurses in public hospitals—but under restricted conditions.

both territories, the socio-economic damage incurred by Israeli occupation policies has been compounded by restrictions on access to the relatively more rewarding Israeli labor market since the Second Intifada in 2000.[62]

Recent trends: Declining labor market conditions, rising poverty levels

Since the early 2010s, the socio-economic situation of UNRWA's registered population across the Near East has deteriorated overall. On the one hand, the relegation of the Palestinian question in regional and international agendas in the absence of any progress in the peace process, coupled with constant rumours about the gradual extinction of UNRWA, have reinforced fears among host countries of an international consensus in favor of a *de facto* resolution of the refugee issue through uncompensated resettlement. In Lebanon and Jordan, host countries with the highest proportions of Palestine refugees, this led to a consolidation or hardening of the discriminatory policies described above, especially in the field of employment.

On the other hand, the continuous situation of political and socio-economic turmoil that has beset the entire Near East region—including the ongoing adverse effects of the world financial crisis of 2008/2009, the Syria war since 2011 and the population displacement it triggered inside the country and towards Jordan and Lebanon (the PRS), and the outbreak of the COVID-19 pandemic in 2020—has severely affected regional economies to various degrees. Effects have been most severely felt by the most vulnerable segments of host country populations, including Palestine refugee residents, despite national social protection systems, UNRWA assistance, and well-established educational systems. In this respect, high educational attainment is no longer a guarantee for decent and rewarding employment across the region.

Not only does unemployment and economic inactivity affect youth (especially women) significantly more than older generations—and in higher percentages than in any other part of the world (30 percent compared to 13 percent worldwide in 2016/2017)—post-secondary graduates are often more affected than youth with lower educational profiles (Kabbani 2019). As has been reported in Lebanon, many children who graduate from primary school dropout or do not usually seek secondary or higher

[62] Although the absolute number of Palestinians working in Israel increased from some 107 in 1999 to 134,000 2020, it decreased in relative numbers. The percentage of the Palestinian labor force employed in Israel/settlements decreased from 22.9 percent (25.9 percent in the West Bank and 15.7 percent in Gaza) in 1999 to 15.3 percent (20.2 percent in the West Bank and 0.1 percent in Gaza) in 2020 (PCBS 2011, 2020).

education, either because of the costs involved or because of lack of qualified employment opportunities on the local labor market (Anera 2019; ILO 2021).[63]

Available data on the labor market characteristics of Palestine refugees (in terms of economic participation[64] and unemployment[65]) testify to similar patterns with the host population and the Middle East and North Africa (MENA) region at large: low participation and high unemployment rates compared to world averages,[66] especially among women and youth,[67] and stagnating (in the West Bank) or deteriorating (in Jordan, Gaza, Lebanon) living conditions over the past decade. In comparative terms, legal status is a key factor with regard to labor market access. Palestine refugees that are not on par with the host population, as is the case in Lebanon in particular, are worse off than the surrounding host population.[68] The following sections analyze such trends at the general population level, based on available comparative data provided in Annexes 1-3. As mentioned above, some of the refugee-related data result from regular labor force surveys (especially in the West Bank and the Gaza Strip), while other data stem from *ad hoc* surveys conducted since 2011.

Labor market characteristics

In Lebanon and in Syria, the proportion of economically active Palestine refugees are comparatively lower for Palestine refugees than for the host population: 41.8 percent compared 40.3 percent in Lebanon in 2015, and 33.9 percent compared to 41.07 percent

[63] Education levels among the working age population (15+) indicate low levels of attainment: 79.3 percent of Palestinians had less than a secondary education, compared with 56.1 percent of Lebanese and 87.9 percent of Syrian refugees. Informality among Palestinians is estimated at 94 percent and among Syrians at 95 percent (ILO 2021).

[64] Economic participation defines the dynamism of thethe labor force. According the the International Labour Organization (ILO) definition, the participation rate is a measure of the proportion of a country's working-age population to the country's working-age population that engages actively in the labor market, either by working or looking for work (ILO n.d.).

[65] The ILO labor force survey definition of an unemployed person is: a person without a job during any given week, a person available to start a job within the next two weeks, a personactively having sought employment at some point during the last four weeks, or a person having already found a job that starts within the next three months (and who has not worked for cash or in-kind payment more than one hour during the preceding week).

[66] For instance, as found by the World Bank in the mid-2010s, the labor force participation rate in the MENA region was at 48.2 percent compared to a world average of 64.4 percent. The total unemployment rate in the MENA region was at 10.5 percent compared to 6.2 percent worldwide in 2021 (World Bank data based on International Labour Organization, *ILOSTAT database*. Data as of June 2022).

[67] Data disaggregated by gender (see Annex 1 and Annex 2) indicate that economic participation rates of males are three to five times higher than those of females; unemployment rates among females are 1.5 to three times higher than those of males.

[68] The data used in the following sections are based on sources to be found in the statistical annexes at the end of the report: Annex 1 (economic participation), Annex 2 (unemployment), and Annex 3 (poverty).

in Syria in 2018. Unemployment rates amongst Palestine refugees are also comparatively higher. In Lebanon, 23.2 percent compared to 9.3 percent of Lebanese nationals in 2015, and in Syria 12.7 percent compared to 8.8 percent of Syria nationals in 2018. Within the Palestine refugee population, available data for Syria and Lebanon indicate that being a camp dweller does not significantly affect economic participation and unemployment status. In Syria, economic participation rates in 2018 were slightly higher inside camps (35 percent) than outside camps (33.9 percent), while unemployment rates were similar at around 13 percent. Similarly, in Lebanon, in 2017, economic participation of Palestine refugees inside and outside camps was similar at around 43 percent, while the unemployment rate inside camps was slightly lower (18 percent compared to 19.4 percent). [69] Legal status rather than place of residence is the key factor. In Lebanon, the PRS—one third of whom admitted they did not carry valid resident permits in 2020—are labor active as the Palestine refugees from Lebanon, but significantly more prone to unemployment: 49 percent of PRS compared to about 23 percent, respectively .

In contrast, in the West Bank and Gaza, where the Palestine refugees' legal status is similar to that of non-refugees, economic participation rates between refugees and non-refugees were equal in 2021 in the West Bank (at about 46 percent) and even slightly higher for refugees in Gaza (39.8 percent versus 38.7 percent of non-refugees). Refugee and non-refugee unemployment rates were also slightly higher for refugees in the West Bank (16.3 versus 15.2 percent,) and in Gaza (47.4 percent versus 46 percent). However, within the Palestine refugee population, camp refugees of both territories are more prone to unemployment than the non-camp population: 21.1 percent (+4.8 percentage points) in the West Bank and 50.1 percent (+2.7 percentage points) in Gaza.

It is difficult to precisely determine the socio-economic status of the Palestine refugees of Jordan. With the exception of the ex-Gazans, they enjoy citizenship and are therefore not singled out in national statistics.[70] In 2011, a survey on the socio-economic conditions of Palestine refugees in Jordan found that the economic participation of the Palestine refugees (36 percent) was slightly lower than that of the total Jordanian population (39 percent). However, unemployment rates, including that of ex-Gazan

[69] As found by Lebanese Palestinian Dialogue Committee, Central Administration of statistics, Palestinian Central Bureau of Statistics (2019).

[70] Palestinian refugees (registered with UNRWA or not) are said to represent 42 percent of the Jordanian population, according to a 2002 statement by the Prime Minister (al-Ra'i 2002).

refugees, were similar, at about 13 percent (Tiltnes and Zhang 2013; Kvittingen et al 2019).

In retrospect, host and Palestine refugee populations in all UNRWA fields of operation (except the West Bank) have seen their economic participation decline and unemployment increase throughout the past decade. The 2020 outbreak of the COVID-19 pandemic crisis but confirmed this trend in Jordan, Lebanon, and in Syria.[71] This is especially the case in blockade- and war-stricken Gaza, where the unemployment rate among Palestine refugees has increased from 29.8 percent in 2011 to 47.4 percent in 2021. In Lebanon, mainly due to the present economic crisis, it has increased from eight percent to 22 percent during the same period of time. The West Bank—where socio-economic conditions improved in the last decade despite the perpetuation of the Israeli occupation—remains an exception: the Palestine refugees' unemployment rate decreased from 21.6 percent in 2011 to 16.3 percent in 2021 (see Annex 2).

Precarity of employment, economic crises, and poverty

Weak economic participation and unemployment are not the only causes of poverty. The nature of employment matters as well. Governmental discriminatory measures imposed by the various host authorities, coupled with local private sector practices on Palestine refugees, have relegated many of them to informal, precarious, and low-paid jobs that by no means guarantee a sufficient income to meet basic needs. This is especially the case in Lebanon and in Jordan vis-à-vis the ex-Gazans.

In Lebanon, despite the August 2010 amendments to the Labour Law and the Social Security Law waiving work permit fees for Palestine refugees born in Lebanon, less than 3.3 percent of them had an official written employment contract enabling them to apply for a work permit. Most of them (86.5 percent) worked without a contract, based at best on verbal agreements with employers. A majority of them (58 percent) operate in the most menial and daily paid "elementary occupations" and in "craft and related trades" sectors. The employment profile of the PRS was even lower, with 74 percent of them

[71] The COVID-19 pandemic has had a significant impact on unemployment in Jordan. The unemployment rate within the Jordanian population increased from 19.1 percent in 2019 to 24.1 percent in 2021 (Jordanians of Palestinian origin included). Increasing unemployment rates during the same Covid-19 period were also reported in Lebanon (11.4 percent to 14.5 percent) and in Syria (8.8 percent to 10.6 percent). In the West Bank and the Gaza Strip, the impact was less significant: from 15 percent to 16.3 percent in the former, and from 45.1 percent to 46.9 in the latter. Sources here are similar to those displayed in Annexes 1-3 and Tables 1 and 2.

engaged in such sectors (Chaaban et al. 2016).[72] The precarity of Palestine refugee employment in Lebanon has been confirmed in a recent 2020 survey conducted by UNRWA among beneficiaries of its cash distribution interventions.[73] Over three-quarters of those employed had no work contract (38 percent) or verbal agreements (39 percent) with their employer.[74] In Gaza, a majority of refugees (60 percent) worked without contract (29 percent) or based on a verbal agreement (30 percent).[75] In Jordan, the ex-Gazans are more likely to work as irregular, seasonal, or temporary laborers (mainly in the agriculture and construction sectors); only about 70 percent of them have permanent jobs compared to 84 percent of other (citizen) Palestine refugees.[76] In Syria, only 34 percent of Palestine refugees worked without a contract (11 percent) or based on a verbal agreement with their employer (23 percent), which may reflect the relatively fair treatment of Palestine refugees in the socio-economic fields despite lack of citizenship.[77]

Across UNRWA's five fields of operations, camp refugees tend to have a lower employment profile than non-camp refugees despite relatively similar unemployment and rates (as seen above). This may be due to lower educational levels, but even more to the camps' social marginalization resulting from poor environmental conditions, as well as a reputation for social violence and political radicalism. In Jordan, for instance, 52 percent of camp refugees work on the basis of a written contract compared to 72 percent of non-camp refugees. On average, camp refugees also earn lower median wages than non-camp refugees (by 28 percent).[78] More broadly, in Palestine (the West Bank and Gaza Strip), camp refugees have been found to be more vulnerable that non-camp refugees

[72] Subsequent surveys conducted by UNRWA on the PRS in 2020 confirmed those figures.
[73] Namely, the refugees registered under the general SSNP, the PRS, and beneficiaries of extraordinary COVID-19 cash assistance interventions.
[74] Only 13 percent of employed refugees had a written contract for an indefinite period and 10 percent for a fixed period (UNRWA 2021b).
[75] 26 percent of employed refugees had a written contract for an indefinite period and 14 percent for a fixed period (UNRWA 2021g).
[76] However, the lower employment profile of the ex-Gazans is mainly due to the comparatively greater vulnerability of the inhabitants of the Jerash camp (also called "Gaza Camp"), who live relatively far away from Jordan's main employment basins (Amman, Zarqa, and Irbid) and constitute about 18 percent of the total 160,000 ex-Gazan population. For instance, in 2011, 67 percent of the Jerash camp population had a permanent job, compared to 86 percent of other ex-Gazans and 84 percent of other Palestine refugees. In addition, 19 percent of them were day laborers compared to seven percent of other ex-Gazans and seven percent of other Palestine refugees (Kvittingen et al. 2019).
[77] A majority of employed refugees have written contracts, either for an indefinite period (32 percent) or for a fixed period (31 percent) (UNRWA 2021a).
[78] Figures for 2011 (Tiltnes and Zhang 2013).

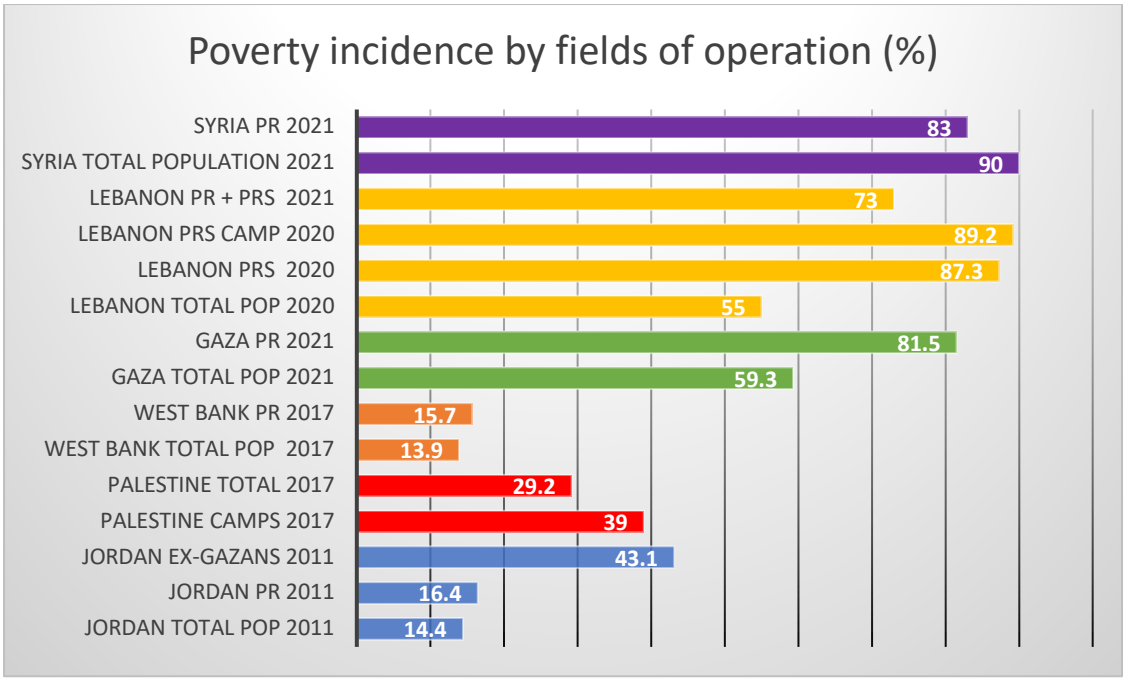
regarding employment (67 percent compared to 62 percent) and monetary resources (51 percent compared to 47 percent) (UN Country Team 2022).

The combination of poor economic participation, unemployment, job precarity, and low incomes—together with other macroeconomic factors, such as low wage levels and high inflation rates,[79] the analysis of which are beyond the scope of this report—contribute to structural poverty among populations. The following chart on the latest available figures (gathered from different surveys and assessments that are assembled in Annex 3) of poverty incidence among host country and Palestine refugee populations first confirms the comparatively more difficult living conditions of both populations in Syria, Lebanon, and Gaza, as compared to those in the West Bank and Jordan. The figures also highlight the deep impact of the discriminatory status imposed by Lebanon on Palestine refugees (including the PRS), as well as by Jordan on the ex-Gazans.[80] Finally, they report higher poverty levels in refugee camps in the cases of Lebanon and Palestine (covering the West Bank and Gaza Strip).[81]

[79] In Lebanon, the inflation rate fluctuated between -3.7 percent and 6.1 percent in the period 2011-2019. It then increased to 84.9 percent in 2020 and 154.8 percent in 2021. In Syria, the inflation rate increased from 4.8 percent in 2011 to 105 percent in 2021. In Jordan, it has fluctuated since 2011 from a maximum of 4.8 percent in 2013 and a minimum of -0.3 percent in 2015, before increasing to 1.3 percent in 2021. In the West Bank and Gaza Strip (considered as one unit by the World Bank), inflation rates have been maintained at below two percent (1.2 percent in 2021) (World Bank n.d.).

[80] In Gaza, the discrepancy between the World Bank assessment of poverty rates among the total population in 2021 (59.3 percent) and the finding of UNRWA's socio-economic situation of Palestine refugees in the Gaza Strip in November 2021 (81.5 percent) is striking and surprising. In 2017, the PCBS found that the total poverty rate in Gaza was 53 percent, while that of the Palestine refugees was 54.1 percent. See sources in Annex 3.

[81] Older data confirm the camps' higher poverty levels, as indicted in Annex 3 of this report. In Jordan, the poverty rate was 30.7 percent compared to 13.5 percent among non-camp refugees in 2011. In the West Bank, it was 23.4 percent compared to 16.9 percent among non-camp refugees in 2011. In Syria, it was 78.2 percent compared to 72.8 percent among non-camp refugees in 2018.



The above-mentioned poverty figures take into account the assistance provided by UNRWA. As the 2017 UNRWA survey on the living conditions of the Palestine refugees in Syria found, such assistance decreased absolute poverty incidence from 90.5 percent to 74 percent (-16.5 percentage points) and abject poverty incidence from 79.5 percent to 50 percent (-29.5 percentage points). The 2020 UNRWA survey on the living conditions of the PRS in Lebanon found that UNRWA emergency assistance contributed to reducing absolute poverty by eight percentage points (from 95 percent to 87 percent) (UNRWA 2018, 2020).

III. UNRWA: From relief to human and economic development?

What role is UNRWA playing against such a grim socio-economic context? While the relevance of its emergency programs has gone unquestioned, declining living conditions of Palestine refugee communities across its five fields of operation—combined with failed hopes in the Israeli-Palestinian peace process—have led donors to question the usefulness of its general, quasi-governmental programs. This section first reviews the evolution of UNRWA's general mandate and activities before assessing its performance and socio-economic impact on refugee communities.

From collective to individual development

UNRWA was created by virtue of UNGA resolution 302 (8 December 1949) as a subsidiary, temporary agency to *collectively* "reintegrate" (or "re-establish") the Palestine refugees into the economic life of the host countries,[82] and terminate relief assistance within a year. Faced with the repeated failure of various collective reintegration plans throughout the 1950s,[83] UNRWA nevertheless maintained the developmental aspect of its mandate by gradually promoting (as early as the mid-to-late 1950s) the *individual* integration of refugees in the local and regional labor markets. Initially components of its relief program—education services, both primary education and technical and vocational education and training (TVET), and health services, both preventive and quality primary health care—developed autonomously to eventually become fully-fledged programs. In 1970, education emerged as the main program budget-wise. Meanwhile, the relief program was maintained but has benefited from a declining number of beneficiaries over time: from universal distribution in 1950 to 6.7 percent of all registered persons in 2020 (see Table 1 above).

Since the late 1980s, two other programs have been introduced, indicating UNRWA's ability to swiftly adapt to new circumstances and the ensuing needs of its beneficiary population. In 1989, in recognition of the fact that it had to respond to additional needs among the refugee population (especially in the West Bank and Gaza Strip, where the First Intifada was affecting the refugee livelihoods) and to new expectations on the part of the international community, the Agency engaged in a revival of the long-forgotten "Works" component of its title by promoting self-support and income generating projects.[84] This first occurred on a small scale within its camp-based social services program, then from 1991 as a fully-fledged entrepreneurship activity open to non-registered persons that would become a Microfinance and Microenterprise

[82] UNRWA was tasked with administering a public works program based on the recommendation of the Economic Survey Mission (September 1949). It was hoped that the involvement of refugees in such a program would facilitate their inclusion in the local labor markets and make them self-reliant.
[83] These plans—supported by UNGA resolutions 302 (1949), 393 (1950), and 513 (1952)—included works; income-generating projects; plans for large scale resettlement plans in the Sinai, the Jordan Valley, and North Eastern Syria (the Jazireh); and emigration towards other Arab oil countries). All relevant UNGA resolutions sought to reassure the refugees and the host countries that these projects were "without prejudice to the provisions of paragraph 11 of resolution 194 (III) of 11 December 1948." However, the refugees massively mobilized against them, which led to their demise in the late 1950s.
[84] See Report of the Commissioner-General of UNRWA for years 1989-90 and following years.

Programme (MMP) in the late 1990s—initially in the Gaza and the West Bank, then in Jordan and in Syria. The program is not operational in Lebanon.

In 2007, UNRWA set up the Infrastructure and Camp Improvement Programme (ICIP) after realizing that the camps needed to be managed not only at the housing unit level as had been the case so far, but also as one urban unit. The ICIP aims at ameliorating the urban management of the camps, notably through the establishment of recreational areas and the strengthening of the refugees' capacity to launch local social activity initiatives. In parallel with these institutional developments, UNRWA has regularly taken emergency action to mitigate the effects of conflicts (most recently in the Gaza Strip and Syria) and/or of strongly deteriorated economic and social conditions (such as during the height of the COVID-19 pandemic) on the lives of its registered population. Such remedial action, usually as short-term interventions, seems to have become the norm in the Gaza Strip and Syria fields of operations where conflicts and their adverse socio-economic effects are protracted.

Throughout the years, UNRWA has developed into a "quasi-governmental" entity directly administering public services (unlike its sister agency the UN High Commissioner for Refugees, UNHCR) to an ever-expanding population of beneficiaries: from 950,000 in 1950 to 6,388,887 in December 2020. These beneficiaries are serviced by a staff that increased from 5,933 employees (of whom 5,800 were local employees, mostly refugees) in 1950 to 28,756 employees (28,563 of whom are local employees/refugees) during the same period (UNRWA 1951, 2021e). However, UNRWA's institutional structure has remained weak. It has no statute (per UNHCR) and its mother agency, the UNGA, has provided relatively weak guidance since the early 1960s, when UNRWA *de facto* became a semi-permanent agency. Generally, UNGA resolutions have retroactively endorsed steps already taken by the Agency. In fundamental ways, the latter's mandate actually approximates that of a trustee; in practice, UNRWA is a trustee for a certain demographic. Other UN trusteeships derive from Chapter VII or from UNGA and UN Security Council resolutions for specific territories and the population within those territories. However, the Palestine refugees are a demographic without a fully recognized state with a defined territory, for which the international community (through UNGA resolutions) has established a *de facto* trusteeship with accountability to the UNGA for Palestine refugees situated in five specific areas. In those fields of operations, the trustee has a mandate grounded in international norms and laws through UNGA resolutions.

Such norms and resolutions have inspired UNRWA's formal reorientation of its overall mandate, as elaborated in its Medium-Term Strategies (MTSs) since 2005.[85] The old "delivery-of-basic-services" mode of operations has been upgraded in the Human Development Framework crafted by the UN Development Programme (UNDP). Aimed at promoting the refugees' full potential as individuals and as members of the community, the Framework reorganized the UNRWA's mandate and activities around Human Development Goals (HDGs) and Strategic Outcomes, instead of around its traditional "siloed" programmatic approach. While two of these outcomes, "Health is protected and disease burden is reduced" (Outcome 2) and "Children complete quality, equitable and inclusive basic education" (Outcome 3), cover respective objectives of the health and education programs, Outcome 4 ("Capabilities strengthened for increased livelihood opportunities") emphasizes strengths rather than needs, recognizes the inherent potential of every person, and adds "developmental" and "participatory" objectives across its programs. Meanwhile, Outcome 1 ("Rights under international law are protected and promoted") emphasizes and institutionalizes the protection dimensions of its general programs as defined by the UN Inter-Agency Standing Committee (IASC),[86] and by relevant international conventions, such as the Convention on the Rights of the Child and the Convention on the Elimination of all forms of Discrimination against Women. This requires the UNRWA staff's constant attention to the satisfactory delivery of services and further reporting about any breach of such rights and advocacy consultations or referrals to relevant authorities for the provision of psychosocial or legal assistance.

Assessing UNRWA's activities

UNRWA as a human development actor?

It is not easy to assess the medium- and long-term impact of UNRWA activities. The main difficulty relates to the scarcity of precise data and information about refugee livelihoods (except for the SSNP beneficiaries) and the precise role UNRWA programs play in the lives of the Palestine refugees, seventy-two years after its establishment. Another

[85] The six-year MTSs (the last of which is the Medium-Term Strategy 2016-2021) have outlined UNRWA's strategic vision and objectives for its programs and operations, with the aim of maximizing the use of resources and impact.

[86] IASC defines protection as: "…all activities aimed at obtaining full respect for the rights of the individual in accordance with the letter and the spirit of the relevant bodies of law (i.e. International Human Rights Law, International Humanitarian Law and International Refugee law)."

difficulty pertains to the evaluation of its programs. While each of these programs is assessed against agreed benchmarks and through *ad hoc* surveys (see below), ultimately outcomes are primarily determined by the (unstable) financial resources at its disposal.

Amidst a controversial 1974 debate opposing UNRWA, which had to curtail services as a result of budgetary shortfall, and with Arab states arguing that the Agency was committed to adapt its services to the growing the needs of its beneficiaries, the UN Legal Counsel stated: "At no time has the General Assembly laid down a mandate for UNRWA which is precise either to the nature and level of services to be rendered by the Agency. From the legal point of view, it is therefore to be concluded that the Commissioner-General has the authority to establish the level of UNRWA services within the resources available to him to carry out those services" (UNRWA 1975). This statement pinpoints UNRWA's intrinsic vulnerability as a temporary agency (with short-term mandates renewed every three years by the UNGA and a budget funded essentially through voluntary contributions) whose basic services mandate owes its existence (since the failure of the 1950s reintegration plans) to the donor and host state stakeholders' lowest common denominator goal: mitigate the adverse socio-economic consequences of refugeeness for the sake of the stability in the Near East, pending the resolution of the refugee issue.

The growing elusiveness of such a prospect, combined with the outbreak of other regional refugee crisis (especially the Syrian refugee crisis since 2011/2012),[87] has eroded donor momentum, despite UNRWA's efforts to revamp its human development and protection mandate. While on the rise in absolute terms, UNRWA's budget had regularly failed to adjust to the growth of the beneficiary population, with yearly per capita contributions (emergency interventions not included) dwindling from US$99.1 per in 1990 to US$75.1 in 2000, to around US$60 since 2010.[88] While the Agency has endeavored to develop specific standards inspired by international and host country norms in its different programs, chronic budget deficits have not allowed it to consistently apply them. Expenditure reductions on a per capita basis have led to decreasing human resources and the trimming of intervention costs, affecting the scope,

[87] Following the outbreak of the Syrian refugee crises in Lebanon and in Jordan in 2011/2012, EU funds devoted to projects targeting vulnerable Palestine Palestine refugees, such as the non-ID refugees in Lebanon (undocumented Palestinians) or the ex-Gazans in the Jerash camp in Jordan, were reoriented towards the response to the Syrian refugee crisis.

[88] See UNRWA, *UNRWA in Figures,* selected years.

quantity, and quality of general programs.[89] Despite program reforms aiming to improve performance and reduce inefficiency, Palestine refugees and host countries concur that the Agency's financial challenges have eroded UNRWA's role as a human development actor and as a social safety net for the poorest refugees, against a general context marked by deteriorating socio-economic conditions.[90]

UNRWA's programmatic incapacity to keep pace with demographic growth and rising levels of need for agency services has led its registered population to seek alternative host country services whenever necessary and/or possible. This has been amply evidenced in the education sector. As a 2005 survey showed, in Jordan and in the West Bank, where refugees have the same legal status as the host population and can therefore access host country services, a majority of refugees attended host country public and private schools. In Jordan, barely half of the refugee population in cities and about 40 percent in towns was enrolled in UNRWA elementary schools.[91] In the West Bank, percentages stood at 38 percent (towns) and 28 percent (villages). In those two fields, however, most camp refugees (84 percent) remained enrolled in UNRWA schools.[92] In turn, the diversity of the Palestine refugees' educational (but also medical) trajectories makes it difficult to obtain standardized data on their human development status.

The same survey also revealed the essentially political nature of the refugees' attachment to UNRWA. When asked what the main advantage of registration with UNRWA was, proof of refugee status (and rights based on UNGA resolution 194) prevailed over access to basic services, with significant regional variations. Jordan was the field of operations where the legal/political dimension of registration with UNRWA was more valued over access to services (76 percent versus 62 percent, respectively),

[89] For instance, ceilings have been imposed on the "hardship case" beneficiaries of the SSNP; stationary items and scholarships are no longer provided to students except on *ad hoc* basis; subsidies for tertiary medical interventions in governmental hospitals are limited to the SSNP beneficiaries, while medical services are understaffed; and maintenance of facilities and waste collection in refugee camps has often been suspended. Moreover, the Agency's evaluation function has been affected by the funding crisis.

[90] The prevailing economic conditions themselves have limited the growth of the microfinance program, which is self-financing and not reliant on program budget funding.

[91] UNRWA operational data are even more conservative. Data from the governorates of Irbid, Zarqa, and Amman indicate that enrolment of refugees in UNRWA schools outside camps has fallen from 21 percent in 1996 to 14% in 2012, with a consequent increase in enrolment in private schools (UNRWA 2014).

[92] In the other fields, a majority of refugees outside and inside camps attended elementary UNRWA schools, with a high of 86 percent outside camps and 93 percent inside camps in Gaza and a low of 54 percent outside camps and 90 percent inside camps in Syria. See Al Husseini, J. et al. (2007),

ahead of Syria (67 percent versus 23 percent), Lebanon (62 percent versus 27 percent), and the West Bank (58 percent versus 26 percent). Because of the size of the Palestine refugee population it hosts (about 65 percent of the total population), the Gaza Strip is the only field where access to services was held as more important than proof of refugee status: 49 percent versus 48 percent, respectively (Al Husseini and Bocco 2009).[93] The primarily political dimension of UNRWA's general service mandate has made it difficult for UNRWA to implement reforms, since any change or reduction in services has been regarded "as an existential threat" (UNRWA 2021f).

Refugees also often acknowledged UNRWA's role as an employer of local employees. Today staffed by some 28,756 employees (28,563 of whom are local employees/refugees), UNRWA is the second most important single employer in the Near East behind the host countries' public sectors. While UNRWA employment has not been sufficient to significantly offset the socio-economic and legal/political causes of the Palestine refugees' vulnerabilities, many (especially in Lebanon, where UNRWA employs about five percent of them, and among ex-Gazans in Jordan) have long relied on it to ensure decent livelihoods and, beyond that, to improve their social status within their community (UNRWA 2021f; Schiff 1995).

Impact and operational performance of UNRWA programs

Over the years, UNRWA was subjected to numerous reviews and internal or external evaluations of its mandate and various programs. Such literature has highlighted the essential role its general "quasi-governmental" programs have played in contributing to guarantee minimum decent standards of living, despite financial challenges and regional instability; in the case of the relief aid (i.e., the SSNP), contributions have been more and more limited.[94]

However, UNRWA's continuously decreasing financial resources (per refugee) and the severe deterioration of the host countries' economic and social situation since the late 2000s have called into question such an overall positive narrative. Ongoing

[93] Note that the option "no advantage in being registered with UNRWA" is stated by less than 10 percent in all fields except in the West Bank (15 percent).

[94] The Social Safety Net Programme, for instance, has admittedly become "small in scale (seven percent of the total number of registrered persons) and represents a modest contribution to particularly poor Palestine refugee families" through distribution of cash and in-kind assistance (valued from US$80 in Gaza to US$169 in Syria, yearly) and preferred access to several UNRWA programs, such as the TVET). In 2021, 391,000 persons (identified through mechanisms that use proxy means testing) benefited from the SSN services (UNRWA n.d., 2020a).

discussions within the donor community about the future of UNRWA have not resulted in any clear operational guidance. Some non-committal donors recognize that, with its wealth of 70 years of experience, the Agency is best placed to decide what services to provide; others argue that it should refocus on basic services and cut extra-humanitarian services, such as solid waste management in refugee camps and TVET (UNRWA 2021f); while a third group advocates for a reorientation of UNRWA's mandate towards contributing more directly to the livelihoods of the vulnerable refugees, especially vulnerable youth and women, whose unemployment rates are comparatively higher. So far, the latter approach has only operated through the TVET program and, to some extent, the microcredit/microfinance program—two relatively small programs, as indicated in the Table 2 below.

Prioritizing programs based on the performance of UNRWA activities could also provide guidance as to the way forward. However, UNRWA's operational reports, do not really offer such guidance.

The analysis of the UNRWA's operational performance indicators as laid out in Table 2 (targets versus actual results of each program) underscores achievements in terms of targets met (e.g., low dropout rates overall, the inclusion of poor SSNP beneficiaries in UNRWA hospitalization, and TVET programs overall),[95] but also in terms of relative failures to meet targets (e.g., number of microcredit loans, employed TVET graduates, overcrowding in classrooms). Failures are generally ascribed to the effects of chronic underfunding and challenging political and socio-economic contexts—most recently, the COVID-19 pandemic ongoing since 2020, and its effects on the refugees concerned are not analyzed. As indicated in UNRWA's *Annual Operational Report 2021*, despite such failures, the number of beneficiaries and interventions is generally on the rise compared to previous years.

[95] In addition, the World Bank also confirmed in 2014 that—notably due to the comparatively high training of the teachers, effective use of time, and an quality accountability system—performance in UNRWA schools was good relative to host schools (Abdul-Hamid et al. 2014).

Table 2. Programmatic data: Basic data (2021) and performance indicators (actual versus targets 2020/21).[96]

	Jordan	*Lebanon*	*Syria*	*West Bank*	*Gaza Strip*	*Total*
Education						
Pupil enrolment *	119,781	39,144	49,431	46,066	298,288	544,170
% of classes exceeding 40 students*						Actual: 53.25 Target: 38.88
Dropout (elem.)*	Actual: 0.21 Target: 2.13	Actual: 0.51 Target:1.87	Actual: 0.42 Target: 0.38	Actual: 0.09 Target: 0.64	Actual: 0.18 Target: 1.07	Actual: 0.22 Target:1.25
Dropout (annual rate)	Actual: 1.14 Target: 8.83	Actual: 1.80 Target:3.27	Actual: 1.67 Target: 0.73	Actual: 0.64 Target: 2.82	Actual: 0.62 Target:1.83	Actual: 1.71 Target:2.84
TVET enrolment	2,879	803	1,296	1,073	1,949	8,000
% Vocational Training Centers (VTC) graduates employed	Actual: 87.53 Target: 85.04	Actual: 66.67 Target: 67.08	Actual: 80.93 Target: 88.53	Actual: 76.09 Target: 74.20	Actual: 58.96 Target: 58.35	Actual: 75.08 Target: 74.39
Health						
Total annual patient visits *	1,347,559	595,777	809,464	894,951	3,352,955	7,000,706
Average daily medical consultation per doctor	Actual: 64.8	Actual: 69.1	Actual: 63.7 Target: 53.6	Actual: 73.2 Target: 63.7	Actual: 60.8 Target: 63.5	Actual: 66.3 Target: 58.8

[96] This table does not include all performance target indicators; for a global overview, see UNRWA 2022a.

	Target: 62.3	Target: 50.8				
Relief (SSNP)						
Social Safety Net as % of RRs*	2.5	12.8	24.8	4.1	6.5	6.9
% of UNRWA hospitalization accessed by SSNP beneficaries	Actual: 15.4 Target: 16.3	Actual: 32.2 Target: 33.0	Actual: 34.6 Target: 36.3	Actual: 1.4 Target: 1.6	Actual: 66.1 Target: 40.9	Actual: 28.4 Target:24.6
% of SSNP students in Vocational Training Centers (VTCs)	Actual:11.41 Target: 11.32	Actual:42.76 Target: 40.58	Actual: 31.22 Target: 25.45	Actual: 17.24 Target: 17.02	Actual: 65.79 Target: 64.16	Actual: 33.88 Target: 34.14
Microfinance and Microenterprise						
No. of clients with loans	Actual:11,900 Target: 12,813	-	Actual: 6,824 Target: 10,044	Actual: 7,016 Target: 8,250	Actual: 3,371 Target: 4,131	Actual: 29,111 Target:35,238
Camp infrastructure and improvement						
% substandard camp shelters rehabilitated out of total substandard camp shelters	Actual: 2.8 Target: 3.5	Actual: 59.8 Target: 66	- -	Actual: 15.7 Target: 15.7	Actual:7.2 Target:7.2	Actual: 14.4 Target: 15.4

Source: UNRWA 2022b

Recent external assessments have provided an overall positive assessment of UNRWA,[97] highlighting how it had demonstrated its ability to efficiently deliver relevant and accountable core services despite daunting challenges, including an inadequate financing and funding model, while improving its managerial methods and external relations. They have also emphasized its advantage based on its incomparable experience with the refugees and their local contexts, which enables it to work across both humanitarian and development activities. Existing challenges notably included a lack of focus on crosscutting issues due the continuous lack of coordination between programs, and the lack of evaluations on service quality.

However, evaluations concurred that it remained difficult to assess UNRWA's socio-economic longer-term impacts on the Palestine refugee population, i.e., the extent to which its programs contribute to meeting their needs. Indicators, targets, and related analyses have kept being primarily defined in accordance with UNRWA's operational capabilities rather than according to such needs.

Assessing UNRWA's services impact requires taking into account similar services delivered by other state and civil society actors to refugee communities, from *zaqat* (public and private almsgiving funds) to national non-governmental organizations and neighborhood solidarity groups operating in the different host countries. It also entails thoroughly assessing the institutional, political, and socio-economic contexts that UNRWA operates within, both in terms of risks and opportunities.

IV. Risks

Risk assessment: Context and challenges

UNRWA's operations are prone to numerous risks, embedded in prolonged, pervasive political, social, and economic instability and exacerbated by global economic and health shocks. The West Bank and Gaza experience protracted occupation, with daily violence and disruptions affecting nearly every aspect of Palestinian life. The deterioration of socio-economic conditions related to the occupation and global crises is compounded by internal political divisions, with fragmented authorizing environments for resource mobilization and allocation. Lebanon, hosting nearly one million displaced Syrians, now

[97] Such as the Internal Oversight Services Evaluation Division. 2021. *Evaluation of the unrwa medium term strategy 2016-2022*, September 2021; and the Multilateral Organisation Performance Assessment Network (MOPAN). 2019. *UNRWA*. MOPAN 2017-2018 Assessments. June 2019.

faces massive economic crises and continued political uncertainty. Syria remains in civil conflict with dire economic prospects. Jordan has been severely impacted by the Syrian war, taking in over one million Syrians while experiencing fiscal, economic, and resource shortage crises. Complicating the equation is the interaction among regional and national risk factors with global climate change, the Ukraine conflict, and the COVID-19 pandemic, with resulting food insecurity, energy shortages, and damaging inflation. These compounding, cascading uncertainties in turn foster physical, economic, and social insecurity with ever-present tensions.

Global funding source risks are manifest, evidenced by cuts or ceilings imposed on UNRWA's budgets by major donors. While support for Palestine refugees continues—notably reaffirmed by recent UNGA resolutions and the 2021 United States-UNRWA Framework for Cooperation—it remains precarious, due in large part to the politicization of humanitarian aid and finite resources for chronic emergencies. Competition for funding to meet growing needs is fierce.

Given its mandate and within the global and regional context, UNRWA's space for strategic manoeuvre and risk management is constrained by three factors: the demands and needs of its beneficiaries reflected in its staffing structures, its donor and host behaviours, and incentives. Donors such as the European Union (EU), the United States (US), and the Gulf Cooperation Council (GCC) countries, as well as international financial and development agencies, tend to look at UNRWA as an entity separate and detached from their other engagements in the region. For example, municipal development in Jordan in past years has been funded by some of UNRWA's largest donors—yet refugee camps that are in many cases integrated or connected, but in any event directly relevant to municipal development, have been excluded. Donor analytical and operational activities and associated budgets tend to silo UNRWA, treating it as somehow separate from all other considerations (e.g., recent studies on Mashreq forced displacement and associated assistance make scant reference to UNRWA). Host countries and their communities resist any change in services—or attempts at partnerships—treating it as a red line. They extrapolate from any such efforts a derogation of Palestinian rights and a comingling of development assistance that diminishes their share of national development resources from the international donor community.

Overall, as noted above, funding for UNRWA has decreased. Particularly in the capitals of major UNRWA donors, political realignments, internal crises of health,

inflation, and food security weigh heavily on decisionmakers whose constituencies are demanding greater attention and resources to domestic needs. In several donor capitals, attacks on UNRWA funding are increasing in velocity and number. In every donor capital, demands for ever greater data and accountability measures increase with commensurate burdens on UNRWA's capacity for compliance.

Multi-dimensional risks threaten limits, alterations, or reductions to UNRWA's service delivery. The risks pose both immediate and longer term negative consequences, if left unattended. In the short term, there is broad consensus that current political and financing positions in UN member countries (and especially among the major UNRWA donor countries) could perpetuate UNRWA's financial crises. In the immediate term, this will likely lead to evermore insufficient service delivery, as Palestinians must pay more for less, often struggling to access their meager salaries and enduring extended power cuts and shortages of critical items, such as clean water and medicines. For host communities, given UNRWA's quasi- governmental role, any demise of UNRWA services would also severely impact the socio-economic situation in each of the five fields—since their governmental and communal responses would be limited by their own absorptive capacities and increasingly stressed resources, which are already overtaxed and likely to further deteriorate.

In the longer term, reduction in service delivery would have lasting negative consequences for refugee human development, welfare, and, more broadly, the human security of the refugees and their host communities. Intertwined with the socio-economic impact of changes in service delivery are the risks entailed by the unpredictable impact of a diminished UNRWA, especially in emergencies, on host countries' socio-political situations, the overall Israeli- Palestinian conflict, and regional stability. Together in the short and long term, these risks and their potential consequences pose existential threats to UNRWA, challenging its legitimacy to discharge its mandate.

The immediate crises, especially the ongoing financial crises, have tended to impose a "tyranny of the immediate" framing that dominates UNRWA's international engagement, with its focus on annual fundraising and day-to-day service delivery and its limited capacity to engage on longer-term issues (since its capacity is consumed by short-term crisis management). The principal issue at hand for risk assessment and response is therefore not so much the lack of overall understanding of the risks, but the absence of

sound policy and strategy recommendations coupled with capacity to implement the needed structural reforms.

The overlapping set of risks laid out above present two apparently competing yet overlapping priorities for UNRWA. The first, and most immediate, is to deal with the financial and service delivery crises and prevent further deterioration. This tends to consume UNRWA's management and staff attention, limiting time and resources for structural changes. The second is the need to embark on substantive changes to UNRWA's overall policies, strategies, structure, and operations in order to meet these challenges. Change is also constrained by limited resources and the tyranny of the immediate. The upcoming UNRWA strategy's challenge is to find a balance between the priorities of the longer term and immediate demands.

Given the plethora of complex and overlapping risks, UNRWA's organizational structure, strategies, and programming would be expected to maximize flexible adaptability; to manage and mitigate the risks, focusing on the triple helix of risk-return-impact; and to achieve and demonstrate efficiencies and impact. Nevertheless, while there have been assessments and evaluations for physical and safety risks and financing gaps, there is little evidence of systematic, ongoing comprehensive risk assessment with related mitigation and response measures relevant to UNRWA's overall risk environment. Understandably, there have been limits but also unmet challenges.

Risk management challenges in crises: Keeping the lights on

Given limited internal resources, UNRWA's efforts to assess and manage risk in crises centers on three interrelated challenges:

1. Improved engagement with the leadership and decision makers of UN member states, host states, and host communities, as well as private institutions and stakeholders. These are the decisionmakers that must implement UNRWA's proposed solutions. The challenge here is that these leaders are either constrained in their ability to make decisions, by their constituencies and alliances, and/or by domestic fiscal constraints.
2. Providing information targeted to serve as incentives for decisionmakers and their key advisers to react more favorably

to supporting UNRWA's mandate. Leaders and decisionmakers are incentivised to provide returns for their constituencies and patrons, leading to the support of policies and resource allocation in the interests of those actors and their constituencies.

3. Demonstrating to host governments, their institutions, and their international supporters the value of UNRWA service delivery to their own interest in shared values of human rights, durable solutions for the refugees, and stability and development in host states and the region.

Meeting the challenges: Towards a more effective risk assessment and response

A first step in meeting the challenges outlined above would be undertaking a more comprehensive risk assessment and risk profile. This would set a basis for better understanding the present situation, the immediate priorities, and the longer term priorities assessed against the risks. That risk profile would then serve as a foundational pillar for implementing an effective theory of change for more sustainable operations. Developing a comprehensive UNRWA risk profile would first involve assessing five key aspects of UNRWA's current engagement:

(i) the extent to which UNRWA has identified risks and integrated risk mitigation at the strategic planning and operational levels;

(ii) the ways in which UNRWA has adapted its organizational structures and operational modalities to work with the refugee communities and their hosts during situations of emergencies, political tension, and instability;

(iii) the extent of partnering with other humanitarian and developmental institutions, including other UN agencies, to leverage its internal risk assessment and security measures;

(iv) how UNRWA's measured results have contributed to mitigating risks in favor of higher-level outcomes related to human development and stability; and

(v) whether UNRWA has the right structures, staff, and tools for outreach and advocacy to assess and address growing risks in major donor capitals.

There are recognized constraints in developing a risk profile. With daily operational services taking approximately 98 percent of staff time and budget, it is often difficult to find resources to assess and manage global risk. Moreover, key institutional and operational issues discourage effectively identifying certain risks, especially political risks. The beneficiary-facing nature of UNRWA in its five fields and at its Amman headquarters, coupled with the potentially broad distribution of risk analyses, could prevent frank assessments, limiting their internal dissemination within the UN system and to donors. Specifically, the analysis and redress of risk have proven difficult when the root factors are overtly political (whether local or regional, including pervasive governance challenges in each of the five fields). Also, the quality of the risk diagnostic—or hard-to-operationalize or missing recommendations in risk analyses—can limit the transmission of risk considerations into strategy and operations. Nevertheless, the existence of a comprehensive risk analysis would strengthen the MTSs and support the theory of change that underpins all the recommendations of this report.

Of particular importance is a thorough assessment of global political risks to UNRWA's resource advocacy. Traditional donor conference approaches of noting refugee needs and the related costs, and warning of dire consequences if the resource goal fails, are increasingly less effective in persuading those decisionmakers in donor capitals who are inclined to decrease resources or retract UNRWA's mandate. A more comprehensive risk assessment would help UNRWA build a stronger, more focused narrative, tailored to external decisionmakers and placing UNRWA in its global context. This assessment would include but go well beyond the regional factors (and the daily drama consuming much attention) that have tended to dominate strategic and operational planning at the Amman headquarters.

As the level of UNRWA's resources is inextricably intertwined with its mandate and service delivery, UNRWA's existence and effectiveness remains tied not only to the refugees' and local communities' needs and aspirations (primarily political), but also to donor goals (stability by maintenance of refugees' human development). The donor goals, in turn, are often overshadowed by their fiscal means and the political winds of the day.

A Theory of Change Approach

Understanding and adapting outreach to donor goals, means, and modalities are at any given time fundamental, not ancillary, to UNRWA's ability to survive and provide services. UNRWA's continued effectiveness in provision of socio-economic service delivery depends on greater impact, advocacy with visibility in donor capitals, improved outreach with beneficiaries and host communities, and stronger partnerships to leverage and complement UNRWA's comparative advantages. Achieving these goals, in turn, requires deeper, more persuasive, evidence-based dialogue informed by a strategic risk analysis of the operational and donor contexts. These efforts necessitate more comprehensive and consistent information and analysis from the field and in cooperation with partners to facilitate comparative analysis and thereby demonstrate efficiencies and effectiveness as well as provide providing contingency risk analysis for the counterfactual.

UNRWA may consider that it does not have sufficient resources and structures to undertake the necessary risk analysis, data collection, analysis, comparison, and dissemination noted above, with the attendant management and administrative consequences. Nevertheless, the basic recommendation of this paper is that UNRWA undertake a theory of change exercise focused on the necessary, specific, and achievable goals outlined above and the practical ways and means to progress toward those goals. The number of staff needed is modest. The skillset of key staff would include the ability to intermediate between the refugees' perceptions and aspirations (where presently there is high skill level), and the donors' purse strings attached to stability and human development. This in turn implies a more senior role for risk analysis and outreach staff with better lines of cross communication. Putting that skillset into play turns in large part on a strategic appreciation by senior management of the relative balance between the regional and the global political context. The following are recommendations toward undertaking a focused theory of change.

Recommendation 1: Enhance engagement and resource mobilization informed by risk analysis and mitigation, and ensure that a comprehensive risk assessment is generated, retained, and managed. This recommendation recognizes that the politically sensitive nature of risk analysis in the region leads to partial coverage of risk factors. To address this, there is a need to develop well-understood and safe channels for obtaining, retaining, managing, and conveying extremely sensitive information. Analysis could be

undertaken as a separate function, possibly paid for and undertaken in partnerships with other agencies and donors.

Recommendation 2: Ensure that field operations feed into and are informed by timely analysis of risk dynamics. This would entail regularly and systematically using risk analysis for strategy and operational decision-making and other forms of timely risk monitoring (e.g., that track shifts in societal perceptions) and dynamics that identify opportunities for enhancing HDGs to support adaptive decision-making at the field level.

Recommendation 3: Strengthen offices in major donor capitals or structure a new "Global Outreach Headquarters" (perhaps in New York or Geneva) with staff capable and informed about key capital development and dynamics. It would supply operations with adequate data for outreach, especially data concerning results, outcomes, and comparative advantages. This staff would be senior management level, playing a leading role in all strategic discussions, and would be informed of major events with potential risk. The outreach staff would be empowered to engage with key partners for advocacy.

Recommendation 4: Toward a theory of change, rethinking what risk mitigation and adaptation looks like. This will require improving but also going beyond results-based monitoring (RBM), less reliance in outreach efforts on immediate, quantitative metrics for results, attribution, and short timeframes. It also requires providing evidence-based arguments, including realistic political economy arguments, to staff of key political leaders in donor capitals in order to incentivize and empower those key political leaders to advocate more strongly for UNRWA. To this end, higher-order outcomes should be consistently demonstrated over time, reflecting the development of monitoring, evaluation, accountability, and learning (MEAL) systems to track these aims.

V. General recommendations

This paper recommends that UNRWA shift from the current siloed, sometimes fragmented, and reactive strategies towards programming, resource mobilization, and partnerships to a more holistic approach, with consistent MEAL systems.

Accordingly, this paper proposes a theory of change, premised on the importance of UNRWA's formulating a coherent, coordinated, and evidenced-based development framework and programmatic approach to promote human capital development, economic opportunities, and service provision for Palestine refugees.

The shift would aim to better understand and demonstrate UNRWA's accomplishments and added value while also strengthening accountability mechanisms. A central driver in the theory of change would be closer partnerships, not only with UN agencies, but also with international financial institutions and capable non-governmental organizations for data, analytics, and evaluations, to provide demonstrable, comparable results and outcomes, contributing to financial resilience and preparedness.

Given the evolving political economy dynamics and the complexities of response to ever-growing needs, traditional approaches and strategy paradigms are inadequate. There is need for a theory of change to address the three chronic socio-economic challenges present across UNRWA's five fields of operations:

1. **Socio-economic service provision:** UNRWA has noted that income decline of 23 percent between 2016-2020 has imperilled human development needs, created further vulnerabilities, and undermined social cohesion within the Palestinian refugee communities and between them and host communities. At the same time, while RBM, as well as *ad hoc* surveys and studies by UNRWA and other agencies, affirm UNRWA's outputs and processes in education, health, relief, and social services (as noted above),there are no consistent, evidence-based benchmarks, data, or analytics spanning the period of the previous UNRWA MTS (2016- 2020). What is required for more persuasive arguments and an evidence-based theory of change is a much more rigorous assessment of efficiency and effectiveness, comparative advantage, risks, and alternatives or counter factuals—whether within the UNRWA refugee demographic or by comparison with the services provided by governmental or other agencies in each of the five fields of operation.
2. **Economic opportunities:** Palestine refugees possess the potential for productive economic gains but are largely excluded from employment, as evidenced by the high unemployment rates in all fields. A myriad set of restrictive laws and policies govern employment and mobility in each field of operations. While some steps have been taken to address these challenges with UNRWA

cooperation, UNRWA acknowledges that it lacks an authorizing environment to engage in advocating or implementing all the reforms needed to address refugee needs. Still, there are opportunities. In particular, the need for greater economic opportunities for refugees calls for UNRWA to forge additional and stronger strategic partnerships, leverage complementarities in authorizing environments, adjust resources, and align training, with realistic labor market demands. There is only modest evidence of such strategic and targeted engagement within existing partnerships. COVID-19, and now commodity shortages and inflation, are likely to compound service delivery and economic opportunity challenges for refugees. Thus a major component of a theory of change would be a realignment and strengthening of partnerships.

3. **Resource Mobilization and Deployment:** External funding and local capacities have not kept pace with growing need for service provision and economic opportunities. UNRWA's budget remains substantially underfunded. In addition, regional governments lack the fiscal space to respond to the multiple shocks they face from COVID-19, international financial and commodity shocks, the Ukraine war, and related inflation. These shocks have further exacerbated service deficiencies for their citizens, placing yet further pressure on UNRWA.

A theory of change in an MTS could encompass three elements:

i. Informing UNRWA's operational and resource mobilization dialogue and response by building more comprehensive and consistently developed (in time and methodology) data, analytics, and independent external MEAL systems.
ii. Building more strategic partnerships for delivery and outreach; and
iii. Diversifying financing modalities.

Given the evolving challenges and needs, and given UNRWA's resources, more collaboration on data collection and analysis between UNRWA and its partners is vital. Greater collaboration on data collection and simplifying data sharing among

humanitarian and development agencies and non-governmental organizations is needed for the timely analysis, monitoring, and assessment of needs, capacities, and comparative advantages. One example might be the ongoing collaboration among agencies with UNHCR under the Joint Data Centre (JDC) umbrella, which encompasses both design and analysis of sample-based and administrative data that could be shared with other UN agencies. More specifically, closer collaboration with other UN agencies[98] and the World Bank in routine data collection efforts could contribute to establishing benchmarks for improving the quality, consistency, measurement, and dissemination of data. The resulting systems would serve not only internal programming, but also provide improved, credible, and evidenced-based outreach for resource mobilization.

Operational evaluation is a particular problem. Resources for conducting UNRWA's central evaluations are very limited and unpredictable. UNRWA budgets about one third of the amount allocated to evaluation by most UN agencies, which is perhaps the main reason for past evaluations not achieving a rating of "good" or higher from the UN Office of Internal Oversight Services. With UNRWA's funding shortfalls becoming worse since 2018, the Agency continues to face the challenge of deciding whether to allocate scarce resources to programs and service delivery, or to support functions such as evaluations. The evaluation function, and the necessary support it provides UNRWA in resource mobilization, has become dependent on additional donor funding. Since 2019, the Evaluation Division has sought to improve both the quantity of evaluations and their quality but faces inadequate funding. UNRWA has conducted several "decentralized" project evaluations managed by field offices and program departments, such as a EU-funded project to assist Palestine refugees from Syria. Nevertheless, these projects are all *ad hoc*. Lack of funding has limited the Evaluation Division's capacity to provide overall technical leadership and support to these decentralized evaluations, which in turn has constrained follow-up, dialogue, and outreach with donors.

UNRWA could take a more active, more participatory role with partner agencies, non-governmental organizations and related channels for information sharing. UNRWA could provide greater input to and realize greater use of ongoing national assessments conducted by partner agencies. For instance, Jordan and Lebanon have well-established

[98] Such as the Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs (OCHA); the World Food Programme (WFP); the UN Economic, Scientific, and Cultural Organization (UNESCO); the UN Children's Fund (UNICEF); and the Office of the UN Special Coordinator on the Middle East Peace Process (UNSCO).

vulnerability assessment frameworks, and conduct needs assessments with the UNDP and UNHCR in Jordan, and with UNHCR, UNICEF, and the WFP in Lebanon. Although these assessments pertain to refugees, they are often deficient in their information about Palestine refugees. The EU and the US undertake some evaluation functions, but their efforts are essentially *ad hoc*, and their methodologies are often difficult to relate to UNRWA's own evaluation processes. With greater UNRWA participation, these assessments and evaluations could better inform the donor community with common and coherent databases and analysis, including of UNRWA data. These efforts would likely lead to greater appreciation of UNRWA contributions. Similarly, OCHA and WFP data and assessments could be leveraged for monitoring the evolution of the welfare situation. Independent analysis and evaluations could be undertaken by the World Bank in cooperation with donor agencies.

There is also a political economy need to establish much broader partnerships for public and donor appreciation of UNRWA's socio-economic comparative advantage. This in turn implies new multimedia strategies for the dissemination of UNRWA data and analysis in cooperation with respected, credible partners. Media commentators often tend to cast UNRWA as a political organization, misunderstanding its mandate as a trustee providing human development and social welfare for a people without an internationally-defined and recognized territory. Disseminating key messages based on comparative data and evidence can take place at donor conferences and in multiple media platforms. The presence of the UNRWA's partner agencies in the work contributes to validation, ownership, and responsibility for the outputs.

The UN Global Compact on Refugees (GCR) identifies that "the mobilization of timely, predictable, adequate and sustainable public and private funding […] is key to the successful implementation of the global compact" (UNHCR 2018). As needs on the ground and approaches to refugee crises shift, UNRWA's resource and response architecture must also adapt, building up financing preparedness capacity. Multi-year, predictable, and flexible financing is not currently sufficient, and is unlikely to become so. The situation therefore requires creative and innovative funding instruments that include, but also go beyond, the traditional external assistance patterns. From a regional context,

while needs have increased and aid (both ODA[99] and non-ODA) to the region has grown, UNRWA's funding has not kept pace with needs.

Where UNRWA service provision is shared or complemented by other agencies, financing preparedness calls for strengthening joint planning, costing, and coordination. UNRWA could test an integrated, joint programmatic financing approach at a sector level, together with other UN agencies and possibly the EU or the US, with a view to creating a joint sector framework and an underpinning, resourced program. An external donor or trust fund might support costing and advice on the most effective implementation modalities. One possibility is water and sanitation for the camps, another could be TVET.

With respect to economic opportunities and finance, private financial markets are taking a strong interest in the social sectors, and in welfare-improving initiatives that do not rely on a continual flow of external finance. Perhaps the most relevant trend in new finance and social innovation is the growth of impact investing (also referred to as social finance), which has developed over the last decade through investments in companies, organizations, and funds that strive to generate social and environmental impact alongside financial return. Impact investments and bonds open a new paradigm of responsible, sustainable, thematic, or impact- first investments. Options that demand to be explored fully for the region include: i) social impact bonds, ii) impact funds, and iii) outcome payments funds. Development Impact Bonds (DIBs) are a potentially promising approach to results-based financing that is currently being tested in Jordan. A DIB is a results-based funding mechanism that allows outcome funders to partner with socially motivated investors and high-performance organizations to address economic opportunities for employment. UNRWA could consider their potential to fill persistent financing gaps, perhaps in certain areas of education where metrics are available.

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[99] ODA is official development assistance.

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https://data.worldbank.org/indicator/SP.POP.TOTL?locations=).

Annex 1: Economic participation: host country population and Palestine refugees, selected dates, %.

<table>
<tr><td colspan="11"><u>JORDAN</u></td></tr>
<tr><td></td><td colspan="4"><u>2011</u></td><td colspan="3"><u>2017</u></td><td colspan="3"><u>2021</u></td></tr>
<tr><td rowspan="6">In labor</td><td colspan="2">Jordanians (including PR)</td><td colspan="2">PR (Jordanians and ex-Gazans)</td><td colspan="2">Jordanians (including PR)</td><td>PR</td><td colspan="2">Jordanians (including PR)</td><td>PR</td></tr>
<tr><td colspan="2">39 (a)</td><td colspan="2">36 (b) (Camp=non-camp)</td><td colspan="2">39.2 (a)</td><td rowspan="3">-</td><td colspan="2">34 (a)</td><td rowspan="3">-</td></tr>
<tr><td>F</td><td>M</td><td>F</td><td>M</td><td>F</td><td>M</td><td>F</td><td>M</td></tr>
<tr><td>14.7</td><td>62.8</td><td>8 : camp
10 : non camp</td><td>63 (survey)
70 : camp
62 : non-camp</td><td>17.3</td><td>60.8</td><td>4</td><td>4</td></tr>
<tr><td colspan="2" rowspan="5"></td><td colspan="2">EX-GAZANS in CAMPS ©</td><td colspan="2" rowspan="5"></td><td>PRS (2017)</td><td colspan="2" rowspan="5"></td></tr>
<tr><td colspan="2">Not available</td><td colspan="2">34 (d)</td></tr>
<tr><td>F</td><td>M</td><td>Jord</td><td>Non-Jord.</td></tr>
<tr><td>8</td><td>69 (Jerash camp)
-76</td><td>32.8</td><td>23.9</td></tr>
</table>

			(other camps)				

SOURCES:

a) Jordan Department of Statistics (DoS), *Employment and Unemployment*. http://www.dos.gov.jo/dos_home_e/main/linked-html/Emp&Un.htm.

b) Tiltnes, A. and H. Zhang, 2013. *Progress, challenges, diversity – Insights into the Socio-economic conditions of Palestinian Refugees in Jordan*. Fafo report, 2013 (42). https://www.fafo.no/en/publications/fafo-reports/progress-challenges-diversity.

a) Ann Kvittingen et al. 2019. *'Just getting by' Ex-Gazans in Jerash and other refugee camps in Jordan.* Fafo Report, 2019 (34). *getting by' Ex-Gazans in Jerash and other refugee camps in Jordan.* Fafo Report, 2019 (34). https://fafo.no/zoo-publikasjoner/fafo-rapporter/just-getting-by.

c) UNRWA. 2017. *Accelerated Verification Exercise Survey of the living conditions of Palestinian Refugees from Syria living in Jordan - Report on Findings*, UNRWA (unreleased).

WEST BANK (e)												
	2011				**2017**				**2021**			
In labor	Non-PR (Total)		PR		Non-PR (total)		PR		Non-PR (total)		PR	
	45.9 (45.5)		44.4		46.3 (45.8)		44.3		45,9 (45.8)		45.5	
	F	M	F	M	F	M	F	M	F	M	F	M

	19.3 (19)	71.7 (71.4)	8	0.3	1 7.4 (17.5)	4.2 73.2)	7.5	7 0.4	16. 8 17. 2)	74.3 (73.6)	18.3	71,4
			CAMP PR				CAMP PR				CAMP PR	
			42.2				43.5				45,7	
								M			F	M
			16.5	68.6			16.4	70			18,2	72,3

SOURCES:

d) PCBS. *Labour Force Surveys 2011, 2018, 2021*. https://pcbs.gov.ps/Downloads/book2605.pdf.

GAZA

	2011				**2017**				**2021**			
In labor	Non-PR (total)		PR		Non-PR (total)		PR		Non-PR (total)		PR	
	38.7 (38.4)		38.2 (f)		43.7 (45.5 (f))		46.5 (f)		38.7 (f) (39.4)		39.8 (f)	
	F	M	F	M	F	M	F	M	F	M	F	M
	8.9 (12.4)	66.8 (63.9)	4.4	2.2	17.4	9.9	4.2	6 8.3	3.6	62.9 (61.2)	19.3 (f) 13 (g)	60.2 (f) 58 (g)

									17.3)			
			CAMP PR				CAMP PR				CAMP PR	
			36.4				45.2				45.7 (f)	
			F	M			F	M			F	M
			13.8	60.5			2.7	7			18.2	72.3

SOURCES:

e) PCBS. *Labour Force Surveys 2011, 2017, 2021*. https://pcbs.gov.ps/Downloads/book2605.pdf.

f) UNRWA. 2021g. *Socio-economic Situation of Palestine Refugees in the Gaza Strip Crisis Monitoring Report – High Frequency Survey Results.* November 2021.

LEBANON

	2012			**2015**			**2019/21**			
In labor	Host country (h)		PR (i)	Host country (h)		PR	Host country 2019 (h)		PR	
	ILO: 43		41.8	ILO: 43		41.8 (i) (2015)	ILO: 43		TO BE PROVIDED BY UNRWA	
	F	M		F	M	F M	F	M	F	M
		64		25	75	16.9 69.2	26	76	11 (j) 2021	60 (j) 2021
						PRS			PRS (k) 2020	
						37.7 (i) (2015)			43.7	

				F	M			F	M
				14.2	66.1			17.8	74.4

SOURCES:

g) World Bank. n.d. *Labour Force participation rate*.

https://data.worldbank.org/indicator/SL.TLF.CACT.NE.ZS?locations=LB.

h) Chaaban, Jad. et al. 2015. *Survey on the Socioeconomic Status of Palestine Refugees in Lebanon*, AUB/UNRWA.

https://www.unrwa.org/sites/default/files/content/resources/survey_on_the_economic_status_of_palestine_refugees_in_lebanon_2015.pdf.

i) UNRWA. 2021b. *Socio-economic Situation of Palestine Refugees in Lebanon Crisis Monitoring Report – High Frequency Survey Results.,* July 2021.

j) UNRWA. 2020b. *Socio-economic Survey on Palestine Refugees from Syria Living in Lebanon.* https://www.unrwa.org/resources/reports/socio-economic-survey-palestine-refugees-syria-living-lebanon.

SYRIA											
	2011			**2018**				**2021**			
In labor	Host country (14 gvts)		PR	Host country (14 gvts) (l)		PR (7gvts)		Host country (14 gvts) (l)		PR	
	Host country est.: 43.4 (l) = ILO est.: 43 (l)		-	ILO est.: 44 (l)		33.9 (m)		ILO est.: 43 (l)		**TO BE PROVIDED BY UNRWA**	
	F	M		F	M	F	M	F	M	F	M
		Host: 71.20		11.87	70.15	15.7	57.9		ILO: 71	13 (n)	58 (n)
						Camps					

	Host country: 14.80 ILO: 15	ILO:71.2		ILO: 16	ILO: 72	35	ILO: 16			

SOURCES:

l) World Bank. n.d. "Labour Force participation rate." https://data.worldbank.org/indicator/SL.TLF.CACT.NE.ZS?locations=SY.

m) UNRWA. 2018. *Living conditions survey of Palestine Refugees in the Syrian Arab Republic*. Unpublished.

n) UNRWA. 2021a. *Socio-economic Situation of Palestine Refugees in the Syrian Arab Republic Crisis Monitoring Report – High Frequency Survey Results*. May 2021.

Annex 2: Unemployment: host country population and Palestine refugees, selected dates, %

<table>
<tr><th colspan="11">JORDAN</th></tr>
<tr><td></td><td colspan="4">2011</td><td colspan="3">2017</td><td colspan="3">2021</td></tr>
<tr><td rowspan="6">Unempl.</td><td colspan="2">Jordanians (a)
(including PR)</td><td colspan="2">PR (b)</td><td colspan="2">Jordanians (a)
(including PR)</td><td>PR</td><td colspan="2">Jordanians (a)
(including PR)</td><td>PR</td></tr>
<tr><td colspan="2">12.9</td><td colspan="2">13 (camps)</td><td colspan="2">18.3</td><td></td><td colspan="2">24.1 (2021)</td><td>-</td></tr>
<tr><td>F</td><td>M</td><td>F</td><td>M</td><td>F</td><td>M</td><td rowspan="2">-</td><td>F</td><td>M</td><td rowspan="2">-</td></tr>
<tr><td>21.2</td><td>11</td><td>-</td><td></td><td>31</td><td>14.7</td><td>22.4</td><td>30.7</td></tr>
<tr><td colspan="2" rowspan="3"></td><td colspan="2">EX-GAZANS (c)</td><td colspan="2" rowspan="3"></td><td rowspan="3"></td><td colspan="2" rowspan="3"></td><td rowspan="3"></td></tr>
<tr><td colspan="2">-</td></tr>
<tr><td>Gaza camp</td><td>Other camps</td></tr>
<tr><td colspan="2"></td><td>15</td><td>11</td><td colspan="2"></td><td></td><td colspan="2"></td><td></td></tr>
<tr><td colspan="11">b) Jordan Department of Statistics (DoS). Employment and Unemployment.
http://www.dos.gov.jo/dos_home_e/main/linked-html/Emp&Un.htm.</td></tr>
</table>

c) Tiltnes, A., and H. Zhang, 2013. *Progress, challenges, diversity – Insights into the Socio-economic conditions of Palestinian Refugees in Jordan*. Fafo report, 2013 (42). https://www.fafo.no/en/publications/fafo-reports/progress-challenges-diversity.

d) Ann Kvittingen et al. 2019. *'Just getting by' Ex-Gazans in Jerash and other refugee camps in Jordan.* Fafo Report, 2019 (34) https://fafo.no/zoo-publikasjoner/fafo-rapporter/just-getting-by.

WEST BANK (d)

	2011				2017				2021			
Unempl.	Non-PR (Total pop.)		PR		Non-PR (Total pop.)		PR		Non-PR (Total pop.)		PR	
	15,9 (17.3)		21.6 (non-PR: 15.9)		18.7 (18.7)		18.8		15.2 (15.5)		16.3	
	F	M	F	M	F	M	F	M	F	M	F	M
	21.1 22.6)	14.5 (15.9)	27.5	20.1	32.1 32.1)	15.6 15.6)	31.6	15.7	28.4 28.9)	12.3 (12.4)	30.3	12.9
			Camp PR				Camp PR				Camp PR	
			22				20.6				21.1	

		F	M		F	M		F	M
		30.3	19.9		28.4	18.8		34.6	17.8

e) PCBS. *Labour Force Surveys 2011, 2018, 2021*. https://pcbs.gov.ps/Downloads/book2605.pdf.

GAZA

	2011				2017				2021			
Unempl.	Non-PR (total)		PR		Non-PR (total)		*PR*		Non-PR (Total)		PR	
	26.8 28.7 (e)		29.8 (e)		42.1 (44.4)		45.5 (e)		46.0 46.9 (e)		47.4 (e)	
	F	M	F	M	F	M		M	F	M	F	M
	43.9 (44.0)	24.6 (25.8)	44	26.5	71.8 69.1)	34.8 36.6)	68.1	37.6	70.6 (e) 65.0)	40.8 (e) (41.9)	62.8 (e) 69.2 (f)	42.5 (e) 50 (f)
			Camp PR				Camp PR				Camp PR	
			29.9				47. 8				50.1 (e)	
			F	M				M			F	M
			44.2	26.5			70.3	40.4			62.2	46.1

f) PCBS. *Labour Force Surveys, 2011, 2017, 2021.* https://pcbs.gov.ps/Downloads/book2605.pdf.

g) UNRWA. 2021g. *Socio-economic Situation of Palestine Refugees in the Gaza Strip Crisis Monitoring Report – High Frequency Survey Results*. November 2021.

LEBANON

	2012				2015/2017				2020/2021			
Unempl	Host country		PR		Host country		PRL		Host country		PR	
	7.8 (ILO) (g)		8 (per 2010-2012) (h)		9.3 (2015) (g) 10.3 (2017) (g)		23.2 (2015) (h)		14.5 (2021) (g)		TO BE PROVIDED BY UNRWA	
	F	M	F	M	F	M	F	M	F	M	F	M
	11.8	6.1	-	-	13.0	8.1	32.4	20.8	18.6	13.1	18.2 (i)	25 (i)
							PRS				PRS (2020)	
							52.5 (j)				49 (j)	
							F	M			F	M
							68.1	48.5			66.6	44.1

h) World Bank. *"Unemployment"* https://data.worldbank.org/indicator/SL.UEM.TOTL.MA.ZS?locations=LB

i) Chaaban, Jad. Et al. 2015. *Survey on the Socioeconomic Status of Palestine Refugees in Lebanon*. AUB/UNRWA. https://www.unrwa.org/sites/default/files/content/resources/survey_on_the_economic_status_of_palestine_refugees_in_lebanon_2015.pdf.

j) UNRWA. 202b1. *Socio-economic Situation of Palestine Refugees in Lebanon Crisis Monitoring Report – High Frequency Survey Results.* July 2021.

k) UNRWA. 2020b. *Socio-economic Survey on Palestine Refugees from Syria Living in Lebanon*. https://www.unrwa.org/resources/reports/socio-economic-survey-palestine-refugees-syria-living-lebanon.

SYRIA

	2011			2018				2021			
Unempl.	Host country		*PR*	Host country		*PR*		Host country		PR	
	8.7 (k)			8.8 (k)		12.7 (2017/8) (l)		10.6 (k)		**TO BE PROVIDED BY UNRWA**	
	F	M		F	M	F	M	F	M	F	M
	21.2	6.1		19.9	6.2	24.2	16.4	23.2	7.7	15.4 (m)	8.6 (m)
						Camp (12.3) / Non-camp (12.8)					

l) World Bank; n.d. *"Unemployment."* https://data.worldbank.org/indicator/SL.UEM.TOTL.ZS?locations=SY.

m) UNRWA. 2018. *Living conditions survey of Palestine Refugees in the Syrian Arab Republic*. Unpublished.

n) UNRWA. 2021a. *Socio-economic Situation of Palestine Refugees in the Syrian Arab Republic Crisis Monitoring Report – High Frequency Survey Results*. May 2021.

Annex 3: Poverty, selected dates, 2011-2021, %

Jordan			
	2011		2017
Host country (including PR)	14.4 (a) 0.04 (extreme poverty)		15.8 (a) 1.2 (Extreme poverty)
P Refugees (including ex-Gazans)	28.5 (b)		
	Camps	Non-camps	
	30.7	13.5	
P Refugees from Gaza (ex-Gazans)	43.1 (c)		

West Bank				
	2011		2017	
Host country	17.8 (d)		13.9 (d) (5.8 deep poverty rate)	
Refugees	18.9 (e)		15.7 (f) (7.6 deep poverty)	
	Camps	Non-camps		
	23.4	16.9		
Gaza				
	2011-2014		2017	2021
Host country	38.8 (d)		53(d) 33.8 deep poverty	59.3 (d')
Refugees	39.4 (e)		54.1 33.5 in deep poverty (f)	81.5 (g) (2021)
	Camps	Non-camps		
	22.2	34.4		
Lebanon				
	2010/2011		2015	2020-2021

Host country	35.1 (2011) (h)		-		28 in 2019 / 55 in 2020 (i)	
P Refugees	66.4 (2010) (j) (6.6 abject poverty)		65 (j) 3.1 in abject poverty		73 (k)	
	Camps	Non-camps	Camps	Non-camps		
	73.2	55	70.8	55.3		
PR from Syria (PRS)			89 (j) (9 in extreme poverty)		87.3 in 2020 (l) 11 in abject poverty	
					Camps	Non-Camps
					89.2	85.5
Syria						
	2013/2014		2018		2020-2021	
Host country	(64.8 in 2013) (82.5 in 2014) (m)		86 (2019) (p)		90 (2021) (q)	
Refugees			74 (n) (50 in abject poverty)		83 (o)	

		Camps	Non-camps	
		78.2	72.8	

SOURCES:

a) UNICEF. 2020. *Geographic Multidimensional Vulnerability* Analysis. Jordan.

b) Tiltnes, A.and H. Zhang, 2013. *Progress, challenges, diversity – Insights into the Socio-economic conditions of Palestinian Refugees in Jordan*. Fafo report 2013 (42). https://www.fafo.no/en/publications/fafo-reports/progress-challenges-diversity.

c) Ann Kvittingen et al. 2019. '*Just getting by' Ex-Gazans in Jerash and other refugee camps in Jordan*. Fafo Report 2019 (34). https://fafo.no/zoo-publikasjoner/fafo-rapporter/just-getting-by.

d) World Bank. 2020. *Poverty & Equity Brief West Bank and Gaza*. April 2020. https://databank.worldbank.org/data/download/poverty/33EF03BB-9722-4AE2-ABC7-AA2972D68AFE/Global_POVEQ_PSE.pdf.

d') World Bank. 2021. *In Gaza, cash grants can change a child's life*. Norwegian Refugee Council. https://www.nrc.no/shorthand/stories/in-gaza-cash-grants-can-change-a-childs-life/index.html#:~:text=The%20World%20Bank%20estimates%20the,some%20sort%20of%20humanitarian%20assistance.

e) PCBS. 2017. Database of Expenditure and Consumption, 2017.

f) Euro-Mediterranean Human Rights Monitor. 2021. ''Suffocation and Isolation: 15 Years of Israeli Blockade in Gaza". January, 2021. https://euromedmonitor.org/en/gaza.

g) UNRWA. 2021g. *Socio-economic Situation of Palestine Refugees in the Gaza Strip Crisis Monitoring Report – High Frequency Survey* Results. November 2021.

h) Central Administration of Statistics & World Bank. 2015. *Measuring poverty in Lebanon using 2011 HBS -Technical Report*.

i) UN News. *Lebanon: Almost three-quarters of the population living in poverty*. 3 September 2021. (ESCWA figures) https://news.un.org/en/story/2021/09/1099102,

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ANALYSIS OF KEY SECURITY TRENDS IN UNRWA'S AREAS OF OPERATION

Imad SALAMEY and Alaa TARTIR

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I. Introduction

UNRWA's[100] areas of operation have been exposed to and challenged by more than 70 years of protracted instability and insecurity, witnessing internal and external violent conflicts that pushed host and refugee populations into a permanent struggle for survival. Instability has also paved the way for difficult socio-economic, legal, and political conditions that exacerbate the frustration of Palestinian refugees. Palestinian refugees within and beyond the occupied Palestinian territories (oPt) face multi-headed security challenges and systematic violations of their basic right to security. Denial of the right to basic security is a feature of almost all refugee camps, as the camp site itself is a representation of insecurity and an outcome of violence in the first place. Even when camps appear to be "stable," they remain far from being "secure" as insecurities are structurally embedded in the very idea of the camp.

This paper aims to analyze key security trends in UNRWA's areas of operation by examining the relationship between service provision to vulnerable populations, stabilization, and radicalization. In other words, the paper critically addresses the question: To what extent does UNRWA's role in service delivery prevent or promote radicalism and violent extremism in the camps? This question is intertwined with a more basic and fundamental question; namely, why does security matter to UNRWA's operations in the first place? As illustrated and argued below, security matters because it enables UNRWA to deliver its services more efficiently and effectively; it protects and strengthens the human security of the vulnerable population, hence contributing to stabilization and to undermining radical appeals; it prohibits violent radical groups from fulfilling needs gaps (or at least minimizes options and opportunities); and it maintains levels of stability, blocks avenues for criminality or radicality, and discourages the ambition, plan, and act of migration.

The paper analyzes key security trends in UNRWA's areas of operation by first conducting a conflict mapping exercise of the different camps in five host country/regions (the West Bank and Gaza Strip, Lebanon, Syria, and Jordan). It then critically examines UNRWA's impact on stabilization, highlighting UNRWA's contribution to achieving human security among the refugees. However, such an assurance cannot be taken as sufficient, given the complexity and the intertwining of conflict drivers within UNRWA's

[100] UNRWA is the United Nations Relief and Works Agency for Palestine Refugees.

areas of operation. Additionally, the paper examines UNRWA's role in preventing violent extremism (PVE) through its educational services and argues that this provision complies with United Nations (UN) values and principles.

Following a programmatic analysis that links UNRWA's operations and services with security and socio-political realities in the camps, the paper presents a tool to assess some of the implications of maintaining the same level of services, versus reducing them or ending them (Maintain vs. Reduce vs. End Matrix, or the MRE Matrix), on security and socio-political stability in UNRWA's areas of operation. Finally, the paper ends by offering some concluding remarks, lessons learned, and policy recommendations to be considered and reflected upon by policymakers and concerned stakeholders.

In sum, the paper concludes that UNRWA's contribution to the achievement of accessible and quality education for the Palestinian refugee population is a necessary but insufficient factor in the prevention of violent extremism. It also concludes that support to UNRWA should not be conditioned by unattainable and politicized demands beyond its mandate. The paper recommends avoiding the "trap of stability," warns about conflating security with stability, calls upon UNRWA to further mainstream human rights within its educational curricula, and urges UNRWA to lead a process to redefine humanitarian intervention and redesign an alternative external aid and assistance framework that recognizes structures of power and relations of colonial dominance while rearticulating processes of development as being linked to the struggle for rights, resistance, and emancipation.

II. Conflict mapping of UNRWA's areas of operation

Throughout the past five years, unstable and violent conditions have directly affected many Palestinian refugee camps in the West Bank and Gaza Strip (various conflicts with and attacks by Israel), Lebanon (Ein El Hilweh, Mieh Mieh, Beddawi camps), and Syria (Yarmouk). The drivers of violence have varied, originating from external as well as internal conflict sources. To better understand current security trends, a conflict mapping exercise of the different camps in five host country/regions (the West Bank and Gaza Strip, Lebanon, Syria, Jordan) was conducted using Wehr's methodology (Wehr 1979). This approach allows us to analyze the security context inside these camps and in their surroundings. It identifies key actors within and outside camps, their respective relations

and interests, the role of the different local leaders, and the interlinkages with transnational conflict dynamics (see Annex 2).

In 2012, UNRWA registered a total of five million Palestinian refugees. About one third of this Palestinian refugee population is spread out across 58 official and 10 unofficial camps in the oPt, Jordan, Lebanon, and Syria (see Annex 3). By December 2020, the number of refugees registered to receive UNRWA services increased to 5,792,907 (UNRWA 2022a).[101] In addition, there are an estimated 10,000 unregistered refugees in Iraq and a further 50,000 in Egypt. Palestinian refugees also make up 68 percent of Gaza's population.

Yet, Palestinian refugees are governed and ruled by political parties, national authorities, host countries, and occupying powers. While UNRWA administers health, education, and other services in the camps, refugees organize themselves politically through popular committees. UNRWA refugee staff is organized within Area Staff Unions and regularly mobilizes around labor rights.

Naturally, Palestinian political movements and factions emerged from the refugee camps and continue to serve as recruiting grounds for supporters. In the oPt, for instance, camps played a major role in the resistance against the Israeli occupation in the First and Second Intifadas. Recent years have also seen the Palestinian Authority (PA) security forces allegedly clash with other militant activists in refugee camps such as Jenin and Balata in the West Bank—these two camps are perceived as the "birth of Fatah's armed wing, the al-Aqsa Martyrs Brigades, during the second intifada" (Tartir 2017a).

Although Palestinian factions like Fatah and Hamas maintain a strong presence in most refugee camps, in Lebanon and Syria some camps have witnessed the rise of competing Salafi-jihadist factions such as Fatah al-Islam, as well as al-Qaeda-affiliated groups. Meanwhile, refugee camps in Syria are host to a number of pro-Syrian government groups such as the Popular Front for the Liberation of Palestine-General Command (PFLP-GC).

In general, the main security actors are branched into internal and external players. Inside camps, armed groups include security forces affiliated with Fatah and the PA, Islamist and Hamas security forces, and other militant and mostly Salafi-jihadist groups. Around the camps, there are typically state-armed forces, such as the Jordanian,

[101] Note that one third of the population is registered in the official camps but does not necessarily live there.

Syrian, Lebanese, and Israeli armies, as well as external non-Palestinian groups, such as Jewish settlers, Sunni Salafi-jihadists, and militant Christian and Shia armed groups, namely the Lebanese Forces, Hezbollah, and Amal militias (see Annex 4).

The interactive relationship between these different actors is complex and varying to the extent that it sets different dynamics in each country, and even within each camp. In this mapping, a general security analysis is drawn for camps in four countries (see Annex 1). It is vital to stress that a conflict mapping of these concerned actors, and the interlinkages between them, is critical for any contextualized analysis, especially in the security domain. Equally important to note is that security conditions and dynamics are often very camp-specific, with different actors often dominant in different locations (at least in Lebanon and the West Bank).

The occupied Palestinian territories: Gaza and the West Bank

The Gaza Strip has a population of 2.1 million inhabitants, including 1.5 million Palestinian refugees. Within the Gaza Strip, there are eight refugee camps: Beach, Bureij, Deir El-Balah, Jabalia, Khan Younis, Maghazi, Nuseirat, and Rafah (UNRWA n.d.).

In the West Bank, there are more than 883,000 registered refugees, with around a quarter living in the following 19 refugee camps: Aida, Am'ari, Aqbat Jabr, Arroub, Askar, Balata, Beit Jibrin, No. 1, Deir 'Ammar, Dheisheh, Ein el-Sultan, Far'a, Fawwar, Jalazone, Jenin, Kalandia, Nur Shams, Shu'fat, and Tulkarm (UNRWA 2022a).

In the Gaza Strip, major common problems faced by refugees living in the camps are related to infrastructure, such as limited water supply (usually contaminated), absence of sewage lines (e.g., Bureij camp, which is located close to Wadi Gaza, an open sewage pond from which raw sewage flows directly into the sea posing a serious health hazard, especially for children), electricity cuts, or the unavailability of construction materials. Furthermore, high population density within these camps undermines quality of life. For example, Jabalia, the largest of the Gaza Strip's eight refugee camps, and Beach camp, the third largest refugee camp in the same area, cover an area of 0.52 square kilometers, together constituting one of the most densely populated areas in the world. It is also important to note that the rate of unemployment is alarmingly high among Palestinian refugees in Gaza due to different blockades imposed on the area—such as the fishing limit enforced by Israel, resulting in the collapse of fishing sector in the Beach, Deir El-Balah, and Nuseirat camps (UNRWA n.d.).

The refugee camps in the West Bank face similar hardships. They are overpopulated, with poor infrastructure (lack of sanitation, electricity, and water supply), and some are geographically isolated. In addition, the population suffers from high unemployment rates because the Israeli government is decreasing the number of work permits issued to refugees (UNRWA n.d.). Furthermore, most of the West Bank camps are near checkpoints or illegal settlements, which increases the likelihood of tensions and eventual clashes with Israeli settlers and the Israeli Defense Forces (IDF).

Following the Oslo Accords, the 1967 oPt were divided into three areas: Area A falling under Palestinian security control, Area B falling under joint Israeli-Palestinian control, and Area C (which constitutes around 60 percent of the West Bank) falling under Israeli control.[102] However, Israel has continuously sought to expand its area of control by protecting the spread of illegal settlements into areas A and B. There has also been ongoing tightening of curfews and security measures, which have worsened the lives of the Palestinians in general, and especially refugees. Moreover, camp residents are directly affected by armed clashes and security measures (such as the situation in Aida camp, which witnesses recurring clashes). In particular, the IDF takes indiscriminate security measures by using tear gas, sound bombs, and plastic-coated metal bullets against protesters, causing serious injuries and fatalities.

The IDF's search and arrest operations bring about clashes and public protests. In some cases, IDF operations are accompanied by armed settlers. For instance, in 2021, riots emerged after the IDF cooperated with armed settlers to force the eviction of Palestinian families from their Sheikh Jarrah neighborhood in Jerusalem, which resulted in the escalation of armed clashes across the West Bank and Gaza Strip. On other occasions, Israel attempts to exert pressure on Hamas in Gaza by targeting tunnels dug across borders with Egypt for smuggling operations. The Rafah Camp, for example, has been recurrently targeted by the IDF due to its close proximity to the Egyptian border.

Ongoing tension within and around camps have involved road closures, movement restrictions, curfews, armed clashes, and blockades that have only worsened the "camp economy" and increased unemployment and economic disparities among the youth. Fewer families can now provide for themselves and, in Gaza, a staggering

[102] For further analysis, please see "Palestine," by Alaa Tartir and Benoît Challand, in the 15th edition (2019) of *The Middle East* edited by Ellen Lust, CQ Press*;* and Joel Beinin and Lisa Hajjar (2014), *Palestine, Israel and the Arab-Israeli Conflict: A Primer*, Washington, DC: Middle East Research and Information Project.

proportion of the population is dependent on UNRWA food and cash assistance programs. Desperation and humiliation, particularly felt among the youth, can be considered a driver for radicalization and extremist recruits.

Lebanon

As of December 2021, 482,676 Palestinian refugees were registered with UNRWA in Lebanon (UNRWA 2022a). It is estimated that around 40 percent (~195,000) of these refugees reside in the county and in one of its 12 refugee camps: Beddawi, Burj Barajneh, Burj Shemali (the poorest camp in Lebanon), Dbayeh, Ein El Hilweh (the largest camp in Lebanon), El Buss, Mar Elias, Mieh Mieh, Nahr el-Bared, Rashidieh, Shatila, and Wavel (UNRWA n.d.).[103]

Most of these camps were built between 1948 and 1967, amid the 1948 Palestinian Nakba. They were preliminarily meant to constitute a temporary shelter; however, they turned into permanent overcrowded camps with unsafe infrastructure and inhuman living conditions. This was further exacerbated after the 1982 Israeli invasion, which caused major destruction in most camps (UNRWA 2022b). The recent Syrian crisis led to another large influx of Syrian and Palestinian refugees that flooded several camps (Centre for Global Education 2020). In general, the Palestinian community in these camps continues to be denied basic human rights, including the rights of movement, ownership, and employment, among others. The situation has only worsened with declining economic conditions and the COVID-19 pandemic. These problems led to the interruption of work, the restriction of movement, as well as the deterioration of the Palestinians' well-being (UNRWA 2022b).

Key security actors around the camps include the Amal movement, Hezbollah, Jamaa al-Islamiyya, Lebanese Resistance Brigades, Popular Nasserite Organization, the Lebanese Forces, and the Lebanese Armed Forces (LAF). Inside the camp, however, typical groups include Fatah, Hamas, militant leftist groups, and Islamist groups that are often backed by external states, and non-state actors, such as Hezbollah.

There are many issues and complex relationships that drive conflict dynamics within and outside the camps, which are mostly centered around the struggle for control and, to a lesser extent, the struggle over identity, ideology, and sometimes political

[103] See also: Palestinian Programme | UNICEF Lebanon.

program (Civil Society Knowledge Center 2015). Tension often escalates leading to armed clashes among different sides, most prominently: Lebanese Army vs. Islamists, Sunni vs. Shia groups, and between different Palestinian factions (L'Orient Today 2021). Sectarian tensions in Lebanon have historically presented the major threat to camp security, especially due to Muslim vs. Christian and Shia vs. Sunni tensions. Local armed actors have taken sides with one Lebanese group over the other, most recently regarding the question of supporting or opposing the Sunni armed jihadist movement in Syria (The National 2021). This division is more broadly linked to the regional polarization that has fragmented the Palestinian political landscape between supporters and opposers of Egypt, Iran, Qatar, Saudi Arabia, and Turkey. It is therefore vital to take into consideration the new emerging and unfolding regional dynamics that have trickled down to the camps and affected their (in)security. The impact of regional dynamics is largely being shaped by the power and positioning of concerned actors and the resources (including arms) being made available to them.

Syria

According to UNRWA statistics, 438,000 Palestinian refugees remain in Syria (UNRWA 2018). In 2021, there were 575,234 registered refugees (UNRWA 2022a). Most refugees reside outside of the 12 refugee camps in the country: Dera'a, Ein el Tal (an unofficial camp), Hama, Homs, Jaramana, Khan Dunoun, Khan Eshieh, Latakia (an unofficial camp), Neirab, Qabr Essit, Sbeineh, and Yarmouk (an unofficial camp).

Since 2011, armed conflict in Syria displaced many refugees, destroyed the Yarmouk camp, and affected many of the refugee population (BBC 2015; UNRWA 2021a). UNRWA installations have been severely damaged in different locations (Centre for Global Education 2020). The conflict has implicated much of the refugee population, driving some factions, such as the PFLP-GC and Al-Sa'eka, to support the Syrian Arab Army or jihadists, and to rally behind opposition armed groups, particularly the Free Syrian Army, Jabhat Al-Nusra, Ahrar Al-Sham, and the Islamic State in Iraq and Syria (ISIS). Hence, the Palestinian armed groups have been largely drawn along the Sunni Islamist vs. the secular leftist spectrum (Batrawi 2020).

The regional and international dimensions of the Syrian conflict are reflected in the camp as well (McCloskey 2020). Iranian and Russian roles are evident in attempts to mobilize Palestinian support for Syria, exerting significant pressure to maintain ally

control in camps and diffuse Sunni radicalism. Turkey, Qatar, and to some extent Saudi Arabia have extended support to Islamist groups, as well as to Fatah, in order to prevent Iranian influence and pro-government forces from taking full control. Although UNRWA institutions themselves do not need to deal with these political-security dynamics *per se*, their programmatic interventions need to grasp and problematize the impact of their intervention on these very dynamics.

Jordan

More than two million Palestinian refugees reside in Jordan, making it the largest refugee host country among all UNRWA areas of operation. There are ten refugee camps in Jordan: Amman New, Baqa'a, Husn, Irbid, Jabal el-Hussein, Jerash, Marka, Souf, Talbieh, and Zarqa. These camps suffer difficult socio-economic conditions, with high unemployment and poverty rates paralleled by weak and lacking infrastructure.

The security situation has been, relatively, more stable in Jordan compared to other areas of operation. The Jordanian security forces hold the upper hand and prevent armed activities within or around camps. There are, however, many unarmed Jordanian political groups with strong linkages to domestic camp actors. They include, for instance, the Islamic Action Front and the Justice and Reform Party who enjoy strong ties to Hamas (Wilson Center 2015). Leftist groups, on the other hand, hold closer ties to traditional Palestine Liberation Organization (PLO) groups (European Forum 2021). Despite relative stability, economic and social deprivation has been responsible for the occasional outbreak of protests (Su 2013). The Jarash camp, for example, remains among the poorest and most volatile refugee settlements in Jordan. In addition, Islamic radicalization among camp youth has remained among the most challenging threats to security conditions. The Syrian conflict, as well as the expansion of ISIS across the Syrian-Iraqi borders, influenced radicalization trends among refugees and recruitment was evident across the different camps. Furthermore, the traditional political division between West and East Bank residents in Jordan worsens inequality grievances. This presents potential for increased tensions, with direct implications on Palestinian camps (McConaghy 2021).

III. UNRWA's impact on stabilization

Comparative research converges in linking stabilization to service delivery provisions, where "stabilization" is often understood as the ability of actors to prevent violence or

the threat of violence. The Center for Strategic and International Studies refers to stabilization as an "inherently political endeavor involving an integrated civilian-military process to create conditions where locally legitimate authorities and systems can peaceably manage conflict and prevent a resurgence of violence" (Center for Strategic and International Studies n.d.). But such conditions for stabilization that legitimize authorities and systems are directly determined by a population's attainment of basic human rights, including the right to food, water, shelter, safety, movement, health, education, and political participation, to mention a few. Deprivation of human rights undermines local authorities, fuels reasons for radicalization, and incentivizes extremist mobilization and violent actions (Goldman 2018).

Besides denying their right to return (UN Resolution 181), Palestinian refugees have survived the difficult "living" environments in the different UNRWA areas of operation. In Syria and Lebanon, authorities have feared "normalizing" displacement and nationalizing refugees, measures which would potentially upset national demographic compositions (sectarian or socio-economic) or justify Israeli occupation. This has driven Lebanon, for instance, to abstain from joining the 1951 Refugee Convention or abiding by its various protocols (UNHCR 2018). Hence, decades of displacement have resulted in harsh living conditions that have bred every reason for radicalization and resentment.

UNRWA's work in the camps has been fundamental for life in the refugee camps and the livelihoods of Palestinian communities. For decades, it has provided essential services to refugee populations, including health and education, among others (United Nations 2018). Despite the consistent effort, however, any assessment would show that UNRWA's services remain inadequate given the complex environment and the basic needs necessary to ensure a dignified human life. This can be demonstrated from two different endpoints: the quality and coverage of services provided, and refugee satisfaction with those services.

It is important to mention that UNRWA's work has been increasingly subjected to requirements beyond its mandate. Some requests have been stretched to an extent requiring UNRWA to demonstrate that its service delivery has contributed to the stabilization of camps. As such, certain politically-loaded evaluations have thoroughly focused on whether UNRWA has helped strengthen, in one way or another, stability against radical appeals within camps (Waldman 2020).

The 2016-2022 UNRWA mid-term strategy evaluation, completed in 2021, analyzes the impact of UNRWA activities on stability (UNRWA 2021b). The evaluation developed a matrix associating UNRWA's work in key service provision with its contribution to achieving the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) triple nexus (humanitarian support, development, and peace) and regional stability (see Annex 8). Service provisions include five strategic outcomes (SOs): the dimensions of human rights (SO1), health (SO2), basic education (SO3), livelihoods (SO4), and basic needs (SO5). The logical implication of these SOs is that they are assumed to ultimately contribute to regional stability outcomes.

Such "triple nexus" assumptions are commonly adopted by a growing set of organizations that establish links between humanitarian support, development, and peace (PNGON 2021). UNRWA's latest evaluation of its health delivery services, particularly the Family Health Team reform, found moderate impact, as health conditions in camps have not significantly improved over the years (UNRWA 2021c, 7). Inefficient staffing and management of services were found to be among the major factors responsible for undermining effective service delivery (UNRWA 2021c, 7-9). Another important aspect revealed in the evaluation is the fact that critical linkages between different service sectors remained solid. Yet, the humanitarian-development nexus was not bridged through service provision (UNRWA 2021c, 7). Emergency response capacities were undermined by lack of resources, and gender sensitive approaches were neglected, thus compromising effectiveness and service delivery (UNRWA 2021c, 9-10). Consequently, if UNRWA service provision (health) was to be linked up to peace nexus outcomes, one may conclude that the impact towards achieving SOs remained negative.

By linking UNRWA service provision to regional stability, one may conclude that UNRWA activities have not been achieving human security nor contributing towards greater regional stability.[104] Therefore, the agency has not been effective in undermining radicalization trends. Yet, as discussed, the complex and overwhelming conflict dynamics within and around camps in UNRWA areas of operation render it unreasonable to consider UNRWA activity as a potential major contributor to regional stability. On the

[104] Human security is achieved when people are considered free from fear and want and their dignity is preserved. See Salamey, I. and M. Noujaim, 2021. "Lebanon Human Security in Defense Strategy." Konrad-Adenauer-Stiftung e. V. (a4e40d79-b8b2-623b-0f37-8cccf1260b7d (kas.de)). Also see: https://www.un.org/humansecurity/human-security and unit/ 4 See UNGA Resolution 66/290: https://www.un.org/en/ga/search/view_doc.asp?symbol=A/RES/66/290.

contrary, the rationale should point in the opposite direction. The assurance of regional stability should be considered a favorable condition that creates an environment conducive to service delivery and the improvement of human rights in camps. Thus, what has been achieved by UNRWA in health and education service delivery provision, within such a difficult and turbulent environment, exceeds all expectations. The factors driving regional stability and instability are far beyond UNRWA's parameter of influence.

The destruction of UNRWA's facilities during the Syrian, Israel-Gaza, or Lebanon-Israel conflicts impeded various service delivery efforts, particularly those related to education and health. Of course, these conflicts were driven by regional dynamics beyond UNRWA's control. These conflicts have also undermined incentives for children, especially boys, to pursue education amidst the struggle for survival. It is thus not reasonable to examine UNRWA's impact on stabilization in isolation of exogenous variables.

Based on that, our assessment indicates that the research question tying service provision to regional stability should be framed differently. It should be raised within the context of regional conflict dynamics that make UNRWA's work least responsible for overall regional stability. This paper has presented the preliminary conflict dynamics in UNRWA areas of operation, revealing the many actors involved and their driving interests regarding stabilization and destabilization. Our conflict analysis has demonstrated that UNRWA's role is, in fact, marginal in relation to the overall conflict dynamic.

Therefore, we suggest that UNRWA's contribution to stabilization must be considered within reasonable bounds of expectations. These expectations should be moderated through assessments that highlight UNRWA's contributions to Palestinian livelihoods in unstable conflict areas. UNRWA's contribution to sustainable development and political (peace) outcomes should only be factored in within a wider endogenous and exogenous regional dynamics. It is critical to separate UNRWA's role from political quarrels, where financial support to the organization is conditioned by unreasonable expectations that link service provision to achieving stabilization in camps and undermining radicalization among the youths. From a security analysis perspective, UNRWA should rather be assessed by its contribution to the human security of the refugees rather than to regional conflict. A human security perspective would measure UNRWA's role in the context of freeing refugee communities from fears and helping them attain dignified living conditions.

Accordingly, measuring the contribution of UNRWA service delivery to livelihoods in refugee camps can take into account all the SOs, but they need to be assessed in relation to displacement and conflict dynamics rather than to normal state service provision. In addition, the relationship to stabilization must be considered within the context of needs assessment and, therefore, to beneficiaries' satisfaction. Stabilization and human security can become a factor when service delivery expectations are frustrated by shortages or inefficiencies, thus pushing for extreme options and alternative venues. An example of such a scenario is refugees resorting to alternative services offered by extremist groups. Almost all active armed groups in camps provide partial economic support packages to their own affiliates and recruits.

Another crucial question to be explored is how the camp situation would be different in the absence of UNRWA service provision and amid a protracted regional conflict. Though it is a hypothetical question, simulation of potential consequences can reveal bleak scenarios. The absence of UNRWA-supported services will most likely increase the state of deprivation and bring the entire social welfare system to the brink. The collapse of the health system, for instance, would increase the vulnerability of the refugee population to all sorts of illnesses and diseases and, consequently, to the appeal of radicalism and violent extremism. From a security perspective, the population and the youth will be easy prey for the manipulation of the different local armed actors and extremist groups. This will not only be driven by the quest for protection, but also by the quest to regain human dignity through extreme action. As a United States Agency for International Development (USAID) study suggested, "violence seems to be more closely linked with a sense of injustice due to economic and political exclusion" (Jones 2017).

It is our conclusion that increasing the coverage and efficiency in UNRWA service provision remains among the critical socio-economic gap-fillers serving Palestinian refugee livelihoods and providing for their human security, thus moderating appeals toward extreme actions. While these services cannot be held responsible for regional conflict or stability, they are essential to accommodate refugees' basic human rights, particularly those related to SDGs. Such needs must be successfully guaranteed without being politicized, for the alterative lies in resorting to informal groups—particularly radical movement networks—that are capable of taking over service provision.

IV. Preventing violent extremism and UNRWA's educational role

The SDGs are established around the principle of "leaving no one behind." For instance, SDG4 aims to ensure "inclusive and equitable quality education and promote lifelong learning opportunities for all." This goal has been delegated to UNRWA, in partnership with the United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization (UNESCO), through implementing and adapting educational programs to develop the full potential of Palestine refugee students, while adopting the host country's curricula, to support refugee integration into host authority schools at secondary level and beyond.

Of course, these programs have come amid mounting challenges. Curricula have been customized to serve the host country's own national population, which enjoys relative stability and statehood. However, they are being delivered to the non-national and displaced Palestinian population facing severe socio-economic hardships and unstable security situations. This not only pertains to irrelevant content in social studies, for instance, but also to the process and prospects of "lifelong learning opportunities for all." For example, educational attainment may be limited to secondary or vocational education rather than higher education. Graduates have no access to host state public funds or public universities. Gaining access to prospective skilled or professional jobs is another career limitation, as is the case in Lebanon where Palestinians are denied labor rights in professional positions (UNRWA n.d.*). Added to these challenges are the frequent interruptions of educational service delivery that have exposed the student population to ongoing violent conflicts in Lebanon, Syria, Gaza, and the West Bank (UNRWA 2021d).

Despite all these difficulties in achieving SDG4 and the major destruction that has befallen various camps, UNRWA has managed to work under harsh conditions, navigating challenges and reaching out to the vulnerable child population (Digital Learning Platform n.d.). Today, UNRWA provides education to more than half a million Palestinian children through more than 20,000 dedicated teachers and staff (UNRWA n.d.). It has managed to introduce various educational components that stress the principles of human rights through its Human Rights, Conflict Resolution, and Tolerance (HRCRT) education program (UNRWA 2013a, 2013b). The Committee on the Elimination of Racial Discrimination (CERD), an independent committee tasked with overseeing the implementation of the Convention on the Elimination of Racial Discrimination, has

reviewed the State of Palestine's implementation of the CERD and issued various recommendations for compliance. Although UNRWA relies on the Palestinian curriculum, it utilizes a robust system that allows it to adhere to UN values and principles in education contents and delivery (UNRWA 2020).

The Education in Emergencies (EiE) program is another component of UNRWA's attempt to cater for the population of displaced children (UNRWA 2021e). The program adopts a holistic approach to respond to new and challenging contexts by "doing things differently" (delivering education in alternative ways), "doing more of other things" (offering more psychosocial support to children), and "doing things that had not been the focus before" (providing safety and security training for students, staff, and parents) (UNRWA 2017). Contributing to lifelong learning, UNRWA has continued to strengthen an externally funded university scholarship program to support young, academically excelling Palestinian refugees.

UNRWA has invested significant effort in navigating an "educationally hostile environment" and mitigating daily challenges that have impeded normal delivery of educational services (UNRWA 2015). Nevertheless, it has been harshly criticized. A 2020 report by Simon Waldman, entitled *UNRWA Future Reconsidered* and sponsored by the Henry Jackson Society, captures the main arguments criticizing UNRWA's educational programming (Waldman 2020) and calling for its entire elimination.

According to Waldman, who bases his analysis on the assessment of an Israeli organization (IMPACT-se), the UNRWA curriculum taught in the West Bank and Gaza Strip advocates for radicalism and denies Israel's existence. It also promotes the idea of pan-Islamism as a counterpart to pan-Arabism. The assessment notes that the curriculum "overstresses" the idea of return to pre-1967 homeland. There are terminologies used such as "martyr" and glorifications of "terrorists" killed, such as Dalal al-Mughrabi. Different stories in different grades narrate animosity to Israel and the Jewish people (Waldman 2020, 24). Beyond these claims, Waldman relies on pro-Israeli British politicians in waging attacks against and criticism of UNRWA's education system or by fetching detailed reviews, such as where the United States Department of State noted that certain books did not display the name of Israel on the map (Waldman 2020, 25). Additional concerns raised are associated with the practice of teachers delivering materials, using language, or displaying images deemed hostile to Israel. In Waldman's

assessment, this is evident proof that UNRWA operations are breeding violent extremism and terrorism.

What is evident is that these criticisms represent a clear attempt to blame the victims of ongoing repression, displacement, and violent bombardment. Waldman refuses to explore the root causes of conflict that have incubated violence and resentment. Instead, his intention is to condition educational programs by pacifying the victims and denying them the right to question the causes of their displacement, or even to think about their roots and their right of return. Of course, Israel and its education curricula—which celebrates Israel's own "national heroes," consolidates identity around the promised land, erases any reference to Palestine from its maps, supports and promotes Jewish settlement, and denies the existence of the Palestinian people or their human rights—slip by unnoticed in the "research work" of Waldman and his articulation of the correlation between UNRWA's education and Palestinian radicalism.[105]

Similar studies have also attempted to politicize the work of UNRWA without conducting an objective and comprehensive assessment or taking into account the context of a protracted conflict dynamic and displacement. These studies have rendered irrelevant the educational attainment of refugees and have ignored the repercussions of this deprivation on future generations.

Holding UNRWA responsible—and conditioning funding on its ability to customize curricula to fit the political agenda of pro-Israeli groups—is not only beyond its capacity and mandate; it could be interpreted to a call for its termination. Hence, dismantling UNRWA represents, in practice, a direct attempt to help breed an environment of extremism among refugees and fuel reasons for growing disparities and frustration among the youth.

Such a discussion is relevant because radicalization research depicts communal feelings of relative deprivation as a major driver for extreme mobilizations. Undermining equitable rights, including the right to education, exacerbates grievances and encourages obstacles preventing equity (Morrison 1971). Such feelings or attitudes are among the strongest incentives for radicalization, particularly when trust and confidence in the

[105] 76 percent of Israeli school textbooks do not indicate any line between Israel and the Palestinian territories, and Palestinian areas are not labelled. Harriet Sherwood, "Israeli and Palestinian textbooks omit borders," February 4, 2013, The Guardian. Also see studies denying claims of anti-semitic content and the incitation of violence in Palestinian textbooks: EU-Funded Report on Palestinian Textbooks Refutes Israeli Claims (insidearabia.com).

prevailing institutional order perishes, thus culminating in the call for dramatic actions to achieve justice. Radicalization research considers that "an absolute standard of deprivation, a gap between expected and achieved welfare leads men to political violence" (Richardson 2011).

According to Nancy Lindborg, violent extremism is primarily driven by "the grievances tied to social marginalization, political exclusion, lack of access to justice or resources, and repression or abuse by state and security services in these counties" (Lindborg 2016). Recruitment, then, is formulated through a set of socialization practices found at work, at school, or in recreational environments. Communication technology acts as a catalyst and a medium that brings together individuals with shared frustrations, mobilizing them to take collective action against the conditions responsible for their misery.

UNESCO's work on the prevention of extremism through education echoes these conclusions. Its various studies have identified major pull and push factors towards radicalization. These studies assert that the denial of human dignity in a protracted conflict environment constitutes a major push factor towards violent extremism and a precondition for recruitment. UNESCO asserted that education is an inalienable human right and an important tool for the protection of vulnerable populations against radicalization.

Table 1. Drivers of violent extremism

Push factors (conditions that are conducive)	**Pull factors (individual motivations)**
• Lack of socio-economic opportunities (poverty, unemployment, corruption, etc.). • Marginalization, injustice, and discrimination (including experience of exclusion and injustice, stigmatization, humiliation). • Poor governance, and violations of human rights and the rule of law (lack of experience in/exposure to processes of dialogue and debate, a culture of impunity for unlawful behavior, violations of international human rights law committed in the name of state security, lack of means to make voices heard or vent frustration, etc.). • Prolonged and unresolved conflicts.	• Individual backgrounds (existential and spiritual search for identity and purpose, utopian world visions, boredom, adolescent crisis, sense of mission and heroism, a promise of adventure and power, attraction of violence, etc.). • Identification with collective grievances and narratives of victimization that provoke powerful emotional reactions, which can be manipulated by charismatic leaders. • Distortion and misuse of beliefs, political ideologies, and ethnic and cultural differences (the attraction of simple world views that divide the

• Radicalization processes in prisons leading to the legitimization of violence. • Etc.	world into "us versus them," etc.). • Attraction of charismatic leadership and social communities and networks (i.e., charismatic recruiter providing access to power and money, a sense of belonging to a powerful group/community, etc.). • Etc.

Source: UNESCO 2017, 21.

It is quite difficult to advocate for moderation and tolerance in an environment where individuals and groups fear for their own existence and are subjected to massive campaigns of violence and forced displacement, taking the form of ethnic cleansing. This is even more relevant when conflict takes a religious or sectarian orientation leaving little room for dialogue or toleration of plurality and coexistence. Denying the displaced population its right to education or setting conditions to accommodate the occupying authorities is not only an attempt to bypass SDG4—it also represents a blunt campaign to exacerbate radicalization and violent extremism among the refugees.

Our assessment demonstrates that UNRWA should be protected from political quarrels, particularly those that attempt to stigmatize Palestinian refugees and blame the victims for radicalism and violence. Furthermore, the UN should help liberate UNRWA from the political pressures that condition particular political agendas that satisfy Israel. The current approach of adopting the curriculum of the host state (the PA) is sufficiently compliant with the UN refugee education policy. If host states' educational programs divert from the UN global guidelines, particularly that of SDG4, then the subject of international pressure or condemnation should be those of host states, such as Syria or Lebanon for example. That said, one should not expect miracles to emerge from educational programs delivered in an environment of protracted displacement, violence, and economic hardship. Defusing radical appeals among the victims begins by providing adequate services to the affected population while seeking justice. UNRWA's contribution to the achievement of accessible and quality education for the Palestinian refugee population is a necessary but insufficient factor for the prevention of violent extremism.

In its PVE work, UNRWA has engaged with UNESCO and can perhaps further benefit from the various UN-sponsored programs in this area—not necessarily through compliance with anti-Palestinian and other politically-loaded agendas, but rather through enforcement of the principle of rights (including that of return) among the youth,

while exploring ways and means beyond the use of violence. UNRWA can more directly tap into the UN plan for PVE (see Annex 9) that identifies major drivers of violent extremism, highlights the mandates for UN intervention, establishes seven priority areas where actions need to be taken, and promotes "dialogue and conflict prevention, strengthening good governance, human rights and the rule of law, engaging communities, empowering youth, gender equality and empowering women, education, skill development and employment facilitation, and strategic communications, the Internet and social media" (United Nations 2016).

UNRWA's PVE programing can utilize teaching and learning that aims to build student resilience in emergency conditions and prevent push factors for extremism. This certainly applies to teachers, as well as young graduates affected by emergency conditions. It is crucial that teaching be developed through a combination of curricula and training that preserves the commitment to moderation and student well-being. The challenges facing teachers are not only related to performing in difficult environments, but also to communicating student issues related to their surroundings. UNRWA's approach to addressing issues of perceived bias in host textbooks has been to encourage critical and rational thinking about their situation, as well as their perceptions of the "other"—particularly with questions such as "why do they live in an emergency?" or "how did it happen and why does it continue?" or "how do views on the causes differ?" and "when will it end?" These emergency conditions will become a primary preoccupation for young students, and teachers need to take this as an opportunity to engage students in a constructive learning exercise. By confronting their conditions, students can become critical thinkers who are positively engaged in constructive change. Thus, teacher training and curricula development that builds the capacities of teachers, while exposing students to critical and constructive learning pedagogies, have been among the most important PVE strategies and need to be continuously strengthened. A variety of curricula have been developed around the world with the aim of strengthening moderation and conflict resolution capacities among students. UNRWA students need these skills, but there is also a need to be realistic about how much progress can be made until bigger political issues have been addressed.

V. Security and socio-political stability vis-à-vis UNRWA's operations and services

As illustrated earlier in the paper, Palestinian refugees within and beyond the oPt face multi-headed security challenges and systematic violations of their basic right to security.[106] The severity of this violation varies over time depending on the level of conflict escalation, fragility levels of stability, or levels of aggression by occupying powers, host countries, national authorities, governing bodies, and non-state armed groups, or also due to the manifestation of power and identity dynamics within the camps.

Violence-driven insecurity could be visible/physical violence and invisible non-physical/symbolic violence. It could cause casualties in a short period of time or create a permanent status of insecurity and fear. It could also cause major "destruction" or induce systematic processes that deny the fundamental pillars for meaningful "construction" in the domains of physical infrastructure, provision of public services and goods, and human capital and development.

The denial of the right to basic security is a feature of almost all refugee camps, as the camp site itself is a representation of insecurity and an outcome of violence in the first place. In the camps in particular, the "appearance of stability" should not be conflated with security; a stable camp does not mean a "secure camp," as insecurity levels are structurally embedded in the very idea of the camp.

In the West Bank (including East Jerusalem) and Gaza Strip, the main source of insecurity continues to be the continuation of the Israeli military colonial occupation. Israel employs various methods of "structural violence and lethal force to subdue Palestinian organized resistance to its project of dispossession, erasure, and elimination," as physical violence is a defining feature of Israel's presence in the oPt. Israel's physical violence is "supplemented by complementary strategies centered on non-physical, yet coercive forms of violence" (Dana 2021, 25), encompassing a complex set of political, economic, social, psychological, and legal pressures alongside forms of symbolic violence.

[106] For a collection of analytical pieces of the challenges (including in the security domain) faced by the Palestinian refugees, please see: *Focus On: Palestinian Refugees*, Al-Shabaka: The Palestinian Policy Network (2017), available at https://al-shabaka.org/focuses/focus-palestinian-refugees/. Further analysis on refugees-related matters can be found here: https://al-shabaka.org/category/refugees/.

Therefore, in a settler colonial context, the overall aim of this symbolic violence is "to disempower, pacify, coopt, exclude, and ultimately enforce surrender on and elimination of the colonized subject" (Dana 2021, 26). Accordingly, the deployment of both physical and symbolic violence became the overarching principle that governed Israel's policies toward the Palestinians since 1967. Through major military assaults on the camps, raids, assassinations, arrests, demolitions, checkpoints, barriers, separation walls, and more tools to solidify its matrix of control and colonial domination, Israel violates the right of Palestinian refugees to security on a daily basis using a multiplicity of tools, vehicles, systems, and structures (Nuseibah 2013).[107] Those violations are monitored and recorded by different local and international agencies, and they constitute the fundamental reason for Palestinian insecurity.

Furthermore, and although the PA in the West Bank and the Hamas authorities in Gaza Strip are mandated to provide security to the Palestinian people (including in refugee camps), they also systematically violate that security, especially in the aftermath of the intra-Palestinian divide in 2007. On one hand, the PA security forces "piloted" their post-2007 security campaigns to ensure and establish rule of law in contentious refugee camps in the occupied West Bank, such as in the Balata and Jenin refugee camps (Tartir 2017a). These security campaigns initially addressed intra-Palestinian dynamics that caused chaos and instability. But once the PA security forces established and solidified their presence and intervention (another level of domination over fragile communities of refugees), the focus of security campaigns shifted to target members of political opposition and armed groups committed to armed resistance against Israel, initiating processes of mass and targeted arrests causing an overall feeling of insecurity in the camps at large (Tartir 2019).

Those security campaigns were violent and aggressive in nature and conducted within an overall authoritarian setting, adding yet another level of security and repression to the lives of the Palestinian refugees in the West Bank camps. Therefore, the PA security establishment did not *only* violate the right of the Palestinian refugees to security provision, but it also failed to protect and deliver security as a public service to the Palestinians (Tartir 2021, 2017b). In turn, this not only kept the Palestinians exposed to Israeli aggression, but also coupled that with another level of repression practiced by

[107] See Nuseibah (2013) for a discussion on Israel's six methods of forcible displacement.

the national authorities—which further exposed, disempowered, and alienated the Palestinian refugees, stripping them of another basic right (Tartir 2017b).

On the other hand, the behavior of the Hamas authorities in Gaza Strip is not remarkably different in terms of the role of governing authorities in violating the basic right to security. Israel, since 2007, continues to tighten its suffocating blockade over the Gaza Strip, Egypt continues to play a key role in sustaining that blockade, the PA continues in its collective punishment measures against the Palestinians in the Gaza Strip, and Hamas—the *de facto* internal governing authority—continues to rule with an iron fist to maintain its domination and prohibit any challenge to it rule. The refugee camps are particularly and historically sites of contention and spaces to be captured by political factions; in Gaza, Hamas controlled and shrank that space politically, militarily, religiously, and economically, all in the service of sustaining its rule. This resulted in the further entrenchment of authoritarian practices and repressive styles of governance, denying Palestinian refugees the basic right to security. If the Palestinian refugees in the West Bank have a two-headed apparatus and structures of repression, then it is four-headed in the Gaza Strip—which makes the dire situation even worse and more detrimental, in turn making the task of reversing these complex dynamics even harder, potentially lengthier, and requiring different sets of policies to deal with.

In Jordan, and as a reflection of an overall feature of the country, Palestinian camps are stable but fragile. Especially in the aftermath of the Syrian war, Palestinian refugees seem to be in “a better place” compared to their Syrian peers, including in the security domain. Although the lives of Palestinian refugees in Jordan are characterized by high exposure to risk, fragility, and vulnerability, they are not seen to be facing "conventional" security challenges such as those stemming from violent conflicts, violent extremist ideologies, recruitment by jihadist extremist groups, radical influences, or confrontation with host countries and authorities. The "apparent absence" of such dynamics does not mean that security needs are fulfilled or addressed; however, it does mean that a "good enough" approach/understanding to security prevails. In that sense, the absence of “hard-core” insecurity challenges became the "status to maintain” but not necessarily to improve by adopting a broader, more holistic, and active understanding of security that goes beyond the "good enough" framework. Yet, the stable although dire conditions, allow UNRWA to focus on the delivery of public services, such as health and education, with minimal levels of disruption. However, a quantitative study would be needed to test

the hypothesis of whether stability (Jordan's version) translates into better quality services in the domains of health and education. If no correlation can be established, then the assumption that "stability is the king" needs to be questioned, and the "good enough" approach to security needs to be revisited.

In Syria, as a result of the overall circumstances in the country, Palestinian refugees face detrimental security challenges caused by national, regional, and international actors. These security challenges are more complex than in other countries because they are more intertwined with the broader dynamics of the Syrian conflict. In other words, they are not just “localized challenges”—they also stem from broader dynamics that kept the Palestinian refugees extremely insecure, deeply dispossessed, and immensely exposed. Certainly, Palestinian camps (or what remains of them) in Syria face slightly different sets of insecurities depending on their location, level of penetration of armed groups, closeness to the Syrian regime, and presence of arms and weapons, to name a few. The helplessness and inability of the international community to address the root causes of the Syrian conflict (and therefore the consequences of that conflict on Palestinian refugees) raises fundamental questions about the sufficiency of any programmatic intervention in making any difference in refugees’ lives while they are deeply insecure.

A decade on, further studies are needed to assess the effectiveness of the UNRWA intervention in the absence of security and in a situation of total collapse. Was it the “best value for money” to pour billions of dollars into what could be argued is a “bottomless pit,” or would it have been more effective to put pressure on the direct actors causing immediate damage and harm in the first place to be responsible (and accountable) for all the harm they have caused? Certainly, this is a moral and ethical dilemma that might not be the responsibility of the UNRWA *per se*—but with the scarce available resources, and the increasingly growing needs, it seems vital to question some basic assumptions related to the efficacy of service delivery in such contexts, in order to avoid unintentionally sustaining an unbearable situation. Studying and examining unintended consequences is part and parcel of studying the effectiveness of humanitarian assistance and intervention, keeping in mind the moral and ethical considerations and the tensions and contradictions they entail.

Finally, in Lebanon, Palestinian refugee hardship continues to deepen with the failure and inability of Lebanese and Palestinian leadership to govern, as well as the

international aid community to address fundamental rights, including in the human security domain. Overcrowded camps rife with poverty, unemployment, and lack of access to education and health services, coupled with a permanent status of tension, fear, and violent clashes, remain the norm (Suleiman 2020). Multileveled discrimination and alienation, as well as the deprivation of Palestinian refugees of the right to own property and the denial of work in a number of professions, translates into major insecurity challenges. The camps, as sites, are in many cases surrounded by walls and checkpoints that not only make them vulnerable ghettoized communities, but also serve as impediments to security, especially with the frequent armed clashes around and within the camps. The presence of armed groups, weapons, and ideological radicalism, all within the overall repressive discriminatory violent context, led to casualties and significant disruption to daily life—although "Palestinian casualties are often uncounted, and extensive infrastructural and property damages go unreported. The perpetrators of these crimes are likewise rarely held accountable" (Abu Moghli 2022). Following the 2019 Palestinian Hirak al-Mukhayyamat ("Movement of the Camps") Abu Moghli concluded that "change in the dire situation of Palestinian refugees [in Lebanon] will not be a result of policymakers' decisions, but in spite of them" (Abu Moghli 2022)

In light of the preceding discussion, the maintenance vs. reduction vs. complete interruption of UNRWA's operations and services have direct consequences for the security and socio-political stability in UNRWA's areas of operation. The MRE Matrix presented below aims to serve as a tool to assess some of the implications of maintaining the same level of services versus reducing them versus ending them, all from a security perspective.

Table 2. MRE Matrix

Maintenance vs. Reduction vs. End (Complete Interruption) of UNRWA's Services			
Country/Area	**Maintain (M) Services As Is**	**Reduce (R) Services**	**End (E) Services**
West Bank	• Sustainability of the status quo. • Gap-filling duty of UNRWA's intervention. • Increasing demand, decreasing resources. • Unchallenged authoritarianism. • Stopping circumstances from becoming worse.	• Further fragilities and humanitarian gaps. • More pressure on PA institutions. • Lower quality of services. • Further erosion of UNRWA's legitimacy. • Palestinians to actively seek alternative avenues to service provision.	• Humanitarian crisis. • Other international organizations to replace UNRWA. • The PA's more active donor-driven role. • Risks of chaos and increased criminality. • More active role for "non-state" actors and NGOs.
Gaza Strip	• Sustainability of the status quo. • Prevention of total collapse. • Maintain current power dynamics. • Primacy of humanitarianism over development. • Unchallenged repression.	• Further erosion of UNRWA's legitimacy. • Political instrumentalization of despair and frustration. • More pressure on Hamas institutions. • Lower quality of services. • Make Gaza more unbearable to live in.	• Closer to total collapse. • Hamas to desperately seek alternatives to service provision. • Further military escalation. • Reinforce role of some regional actors. • Effective demise of UNRWA institutions.
Jordan	• Sustainability of the status quo. • Stable but fragile camps. • Good enough approach to service provision. • Stable base for UNRWA core operations. • Increasing demand, scarce resources.	• More active role by the Jordanian government. • Increased hardship in the camps. • Gaps to be filled by ideological groups • From stability to fragility. • Stronger role of other international organizations.	• Destabilization and risk of social rifting. • Escalating humanitarian crisis threatens stability. • Economic hardships transformed into security challenges. • More policing and repression of the camps. • Jordanian government appeal to international subsidies.

Lebanon	• Sustainability of the status quo. • Gap-filling duty of UNRWA's intervention. • Prevention of further radicalization. • Increasing demand, decreasing resources. • Stopping circumstances from becoming worse.	• Increased hardship in the camps. • Stronger role for armed groups. • More space for regional interventions. • Revival of Palestinian Hirak al-Mukhayyamat. • More active role of PLO and Palestinian factions.	• Closer to total collapse in the camps. • Stronger repressive security control by Lebanese forces. • Solidification of discrimination and social rifting. • Increasing violent clashes within and beyond camps. • Economic hardships transformed into security challenges.
Syria	• Sustainability of the status quo. • Maintain current power dynamics. • Stopping circumstances from becoming worse. • Gap-filling duty of the UNRWA's intervention. • Unchallenged war and war economy.	• Increased hardship in the camps. • Stronger role for armed groups. • More space for regional interventions. • Stronger role of other international organizations. • More active role of PLO and Palestinian factions.	• Total collapse in the camps. • Increasing violent clashes within and beyond camps. • Economic hardships transformed into security challenges. • Further dispossession and dangerous migration. • Solidification of international community failure.

VI. Concluding remarks and lessons learned

It is critical not to fall in the "trap of stability," which implies that UNRWA operations need to ensure stability. UNRWA is neither mandated nor capable of doing that, as it does not have the avenues or tools to ensure stability. Therefore, any arbitrary attempts to directly link UNRWA operations with the provision of stability (in many occasions equated with security) is misplaced and must be resisted and rejected. At best, UNRWA operations could indirectly contribute to processes that aim to ensure stability through the provision of basic health and education services (and to a lesser extent, employment and food assistance provisions). Hence, "indirect inference" could be the relationship between UNRWA and stability. In addition, stability is not always good—it can also mean the sustainability of a dire detrimental status quo that the Palestinian refugees are forced to live within and under. Therefore, having a clear operational definition of what "desired stability" is from the perspective of the refugees themselves, is the first step in deciding what kind of operations might re-enforce and be in line with the "desired stability" of the concerned population—and not in line with that "stability" imposed by host or occupying authorities.

Similarly, the notion of radicalization needs to be problematized, further operationalized, and better contextualized according to each area of operation for UNRWA. For instance, radicalization could be differently perceived in the Syrian context versus the Palestinian context. Radicalization tools are different from one context to another, even within the same country. The magnitude, nature, and levels of radicalization also differ. For instance, does radicalization refer to individual or community radicalization? Does it refer to armed violent radicalization or social ideological radicalization? How do the notions and practices of radicalization and resistance interact with each other? These are some of the questions that require elaborate answers to avoid liberal use of the notion of radicalization, which will likely generate many undesired unintended consequences.

The much-touted, internationally sponsored good governance approach and the security sector reform (SSR) project the PA adopted over the past decades resulted in the growth of authoritarian trends and structures of repression instead of a process of democratization, inclusiveness, and accountability. In other words, the internationally sponsored SSR processes that have been adopted and implemented—the linchpin of the

PA's post-2007 statebuilding project—resulted in the professionalization of Palestinian authoritarianism and repression (Tartir 2018). Thus, structural authoritarianism became part and parcel of the Palestinian political system as the dominance of the Palestinian security establishment extended to political circles, making them even more undemocratic in nature.

The consequences and ramifications of SSR processes tend to take time before being manifested in the social fabric. Although in the short term SSR processes tend to be celebrated by the authorities and their financial backers (and in the case of Palestine, by Israel as a colonial occupier), their fundamental shortcomings mean that longer-term implications will be reflected at the societal level and in structures a decade or so later—which is now. And this is an area of concern. The 2007 PA security campaigns (ironically dubbed *Smile and Hope*) and the ongoing process that followed since then as part of the SSR framework—although meant to establish "rule of law" and "secure stability"—effectively created profound structural problems and deficiencies that only entrenched a culture of fear, tamed and criminalized resistance, and deepened the sense of "othering" as reflected in the deep legitimacy and trust crises in Palestine. Torturing and killing political opponents, arbitrarily arresting critics and detaining them in inhuman conditions, increasing levels of surveillance and decreasing levels of tolerance and plurality, equating the strength of the security establishment with the power of polity, and sustaining the mechanisms of "othering by force" are key ingredients in a recipe for the social rifting of Palestinian society. The Fatah-Hamas divide is a cause and a consequence of this process; further securitization of social spaces will only disempower the Palestinian people, entrench their fragmentation, and weaken their ability to effectively resist the colonial and oppressive structures, thoroughly stripping them of their transformative potential and capability to (re)build their power base. All these dynamics are so vivid and visible in multiple refugee camps in the West Bank, such as Balata and Jenin.

Furthermore, during the peak of security campaigns by PA security forces, the idea was to cleanse the West Bank (refugee camps in particular) of non-PA weapons, to conduct a disarmament process, to arrest those that challenged the PA's authority, and to send a clear message to Palestinian residents of the West Bank that the PA was the sole governing structure and power allowed (Tartir 2017a). Consolidating power in the security sector was, and continues to be, a key objective of the PA security apparatus.

While this might be understood under "normal conditions" as achieving the monopoly of violence that is a key state feature, evidently this is not the case in Palestine. This notion requires further problematization at the policy level. In effect, the PA directly and indirectly worked (with Israel and the donor community) to systematically criminalize resistance, especially that originating from refugee camps. The presence of weapons and small arms in the streets and in the lanes of the refugee camps was a key indicator to the ability of the PA to fulfil its mission.

Hence, the PA adopted a "blanket approach" to confiscate arms, intentionally and deliberately blurring the lines between "the weapons of anarchy" and those of the "armed resistance." This meant that criminals and resistance fighters were equally targeted. One Balata camp resident eloquently asked: "How can a thief be held in the same jail cell as a *muqawim* (freedom fighter)?" (Tartir 2017a). This question encapsulates the impact of this problematic approach. Although UNRWA does not need to deal with such question *per se*, its operations need to revolve around and interact with such dynamics to be locally sensitive.[108] In recent years, the phenomenon of weapons and small arms proliferation is unsurprisingly rising to the surface and causing anxiety to Israel and the PA security establishment (as well as to donors, including in the humanitarian sphere as in the case of UNRWA). This reflects the short-sighted approach adopted by the PA and its financial backers on one hand, while on the other hand it might be a recipe for further fragmentation and insecurity in the absence of a resistance framework adopted by the Palestinian national movement. This is another area of concern because these weapons could be instrumentalized by some political actors, especially in times of transition and leadership vacuum.

Development, *inter alia*, means the enhancement of the capacities and capabilities of the ordinary people (including refugees) to make lasting structural change in their lives. In other words, in the oPt, development means freedom and liberation. However, with the entrenchment of internal and external structures of repression and

[108] In one refugee camp in the West Bank, we asked a respondent who had been arrested for several months in the aftermath of one of the PA security campaigns: "What did UNRWA do when the PA security forces arrested and tortured you?" He answered: "Leave UNRWA alone, they can't even open their mouths about such issues, let alone issuing a statement." Another respondent from another camp in the West Bank said, "security is politics and that crosses UNRWA's red lines." A third respondent from a third camp answered by saying: "UNRWA is a humanitarian organization, but when it comes to our human security and safety, it does not intervene as that is very political. I don't understand it; isn't our safety and basic security is a basic human right. How can we work or raise a family or even eat if we don't feel safe?"

authoritarian dynamics, and the absence of accountability mechanisms, a forward-looking approach for effective developmental and humanitarian aid necessitates the dismantling of these structures of repression and oppression.

An effective external aid framework (including UNRWA's intervention) should start by reinventing the current aid system in practice, conceptually redefining development, utilizing indigenous approaches for livelihood and governance, resisting and rejecting the Israeli matrix of control, and challenging any form of Palestinian authoritarianism. An alternative to the existing external aid and assistance framework should shift toward a model that recognizes structures of power and relations of colonial dominance while rearticulating processes of development as being linked to the struggle for rights, resistance, and emancipation. This implies a shift to people-centered participatory democratic approaches and steadfastness strategies.

Lessons learned/policy recommendations

- The humanitarian–development–peace nexus should be centered in the design and policy implementation of PVE intervention in Palestinian refugee camp communities within and beyond the oPt. Although the overarching nexus implies a certain level of uniformity, UNRWA's programming should be context- and conflict-specific to ensure better responsiveness to local needs, more effective delivery of services, and enhanced focus on human security in the volatile, highly insecure areas of UNRWA's operations.
- Although policy responses tend to prioritize community resilience within a stable context, that framing is akin to a double-edged sword because it risks sustaining the status quo—instead of enhancing the capacities sand capabilities of refugee communities by equipping them with transformative powers and alternative avenues for change.
- Although urgent needs necessitate a focus on short-term intervention, UNRWA's long-term plans and goals must also be invested in and implemented. Indeed, it is crucial to play a gap-filling support role and tackle urgent humanitarian gaps through short-term economic means, but longer-term developmental intervention is important to avoid "being stuck" in a permanent cycle of short-term interventions that is drains scarce resources and is unsatisfying in terms of lifting people from poverty and hardship to realize the full potential. A larger space for budgets and developmental plans is a key indicator to measure UNRWA's success and persistence in preserving "the big picture." UNRWA and its stakeholders must insist on the criticality of this long-term aspect of its operation.

- Examples of post-war reconstruction and intervention illustrate the tension between short-term interventions and long-term plans. On one hand, offering (another) temporary refuge for the refugees is the top priority while rebuilding their destroyed homes, yet addressing the root causes of the "cycles of destruction" is the longer-term inquiry and investment. Gaza refugee camps are a case in point. Certainly, there is also a moral dilemma here (to rebuild and address the visible needs or to address the root issues that caused the destruction in the first place). Although it should not be a binary between these two options, UNRWA and its stakeholders should reconcile this issue by first not framing the two as mutually exclusive issues to be tackled and addressed.
- The issue of "armed groups filling in the gap" is a delicate and sensitive issue that requires a fuller understanding of local context and dynamics, and a blanket approach cannot be adopted. This is not only because camps are different from each other, but also because armed groups in each camp are differ and vary in their ideologies, tactics, end goals, recruitment strategies, and relationships with local civil society and the broader international community. For instance, the set of tools that UNRWA needs to use in a context governed by an ISIS-affiliated armed group should be different than ones governed by Palestinian armed resistance groups. Although the distinction between the two contexts is very clear, previous experiences illustrates that the lines blur and the distinction is not clear enough when it comes to programmatic intervention and policy frameworks.
- Community-led initiatives for political reconciliation and security arrangements within and between the camps should not be dismissed or underplayed. Within the overall political impasse, the dysfunctionality of many political parties, and the dominance of certain local actors, it is vital to entertain "non-conventional platforms" that could contribute to security. Camp local committees and community-led initiatives are cases in point within and beyond the oPt. This approach also extends to the issue of "arms control." The experiences of refugee camps in the oPt, for instance, illustrate the vital importance of better understanding the roles and potential of key stakeholder and actors.
- UNRWA's programmatic intervention tools in the oPt need to center the main source of insecurity: namely, the Israeli military colonial occupation. This means that UNRWA and the larger international community cannot continue to directly and indirectly subsidize the Israeli occupation by filling in the gaps it creates. Holding Israel accountable for all the damages it causes—and paying for these damages in line with international law—should be a central piece in UNRWA's programmatic intervention instead of designing tools and programs to deal with it. Ending it (the Israeli military colonial occupation) must be

reflected in UNRWA's programmatic intervention as a starting point to reverse the realities experienced by the Palestinian refugees in the oPt.

- Holding concerned actors accountable is the theme that UNRWA could and should adopt in its operations, inside the oPt and outside as well. Constantly resuming a gap-filler role is draining and exhausting, including at the UNRWA institutional level. It is time to lay old approaches to rest, and center the notion and practice of accountability as an avenue to change course.

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Annex 1: Terms of Reference (ToR)

Analysis of key security trends in the Agency´s areas of operations
Identify key security trends and risks, including social, political and ideological causes of instability in host countries and in Palestine refugee communities in particular.
Assess the following key questions:

• Assessment of current security and radicalization trends within/around Palestine refugee communities in UNRWA's five areas of operation.

• Evaluation of the plausible impact of UNRWA's service delivery (health, education, social services…) on security/stability of Palestine refugee communities.

• Assessment of the impact of UNRWA's education program - promoting tolerance, human rights, gender equality and more generally UN values – in terms of prevention and mitigation of radicalization trends among Palestine refugee communities?

• Assessment of the linkage between security and socio-political stability within Palestine refugee communities and camps on the one hand and the maintenance, reduction or complete interruption of UNRWA's operations/services on the other.

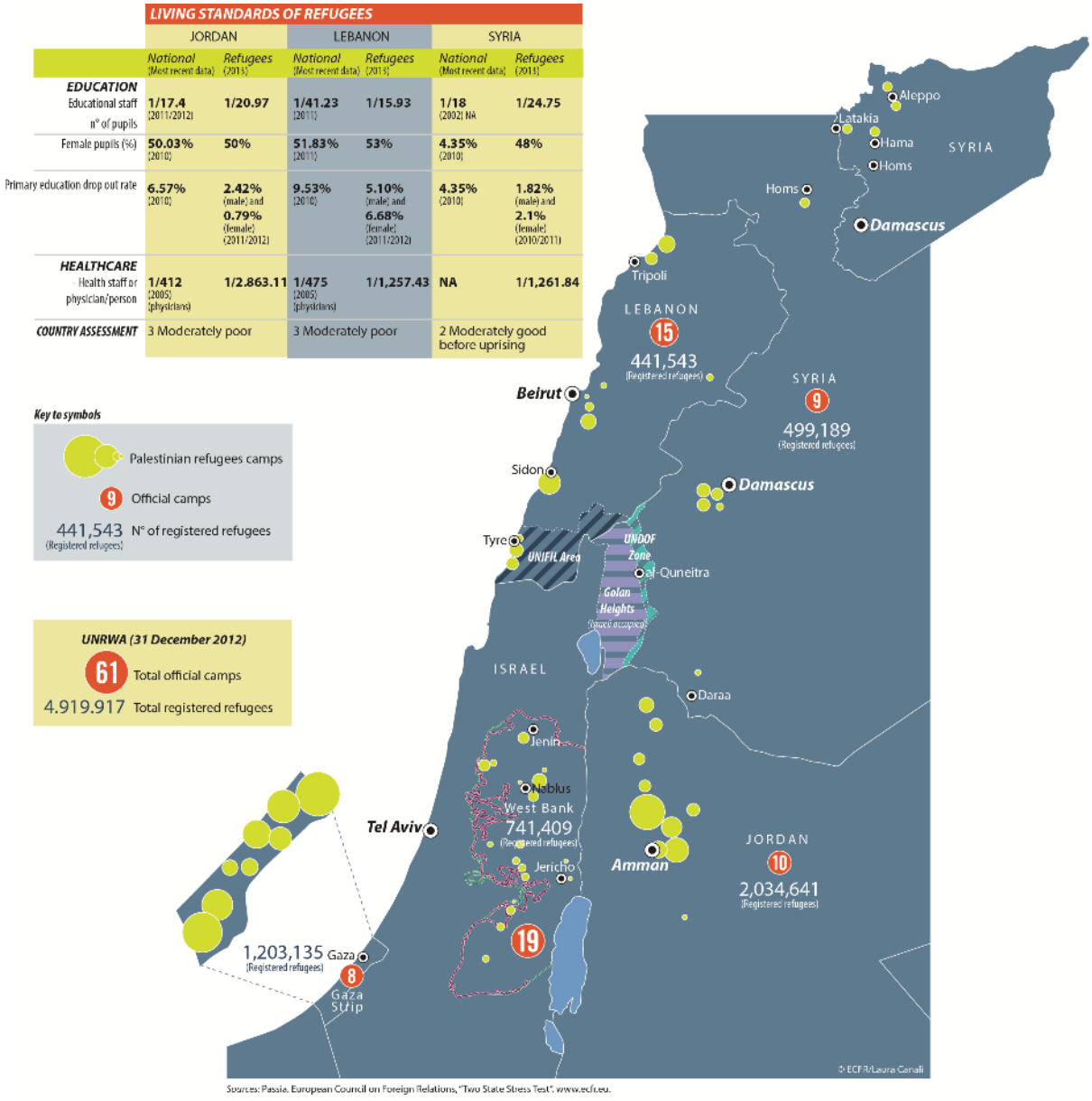
• Identification, in light of past major incidents (for ex. destruction of Nahr El Bared camp in 2007), of lessons learnt and possible policy recommendations in terms of conflict and radicalization-prevention in host and neighbouring countries.

Annex 2: Wehr's Main Mapping Criteria

A	**Background**	
	1	Map of the area
	2	Brief description of the country
	3	Outline history of the conflict
B	**The Conflict Parties and Issues**	
	1	Core conflict parties
	2	Conflict issues
	3	Relationships between the conflict parties
	4	Different perceptions of the causes and nature of the conflict among the parties
	5	Current behavior of the parties
	6	Leaders of the parties
C	**The Context**	
	1	State-level actors
	2	Regional-level actors
	3	Global-level actors

Source: Wehr 1979.

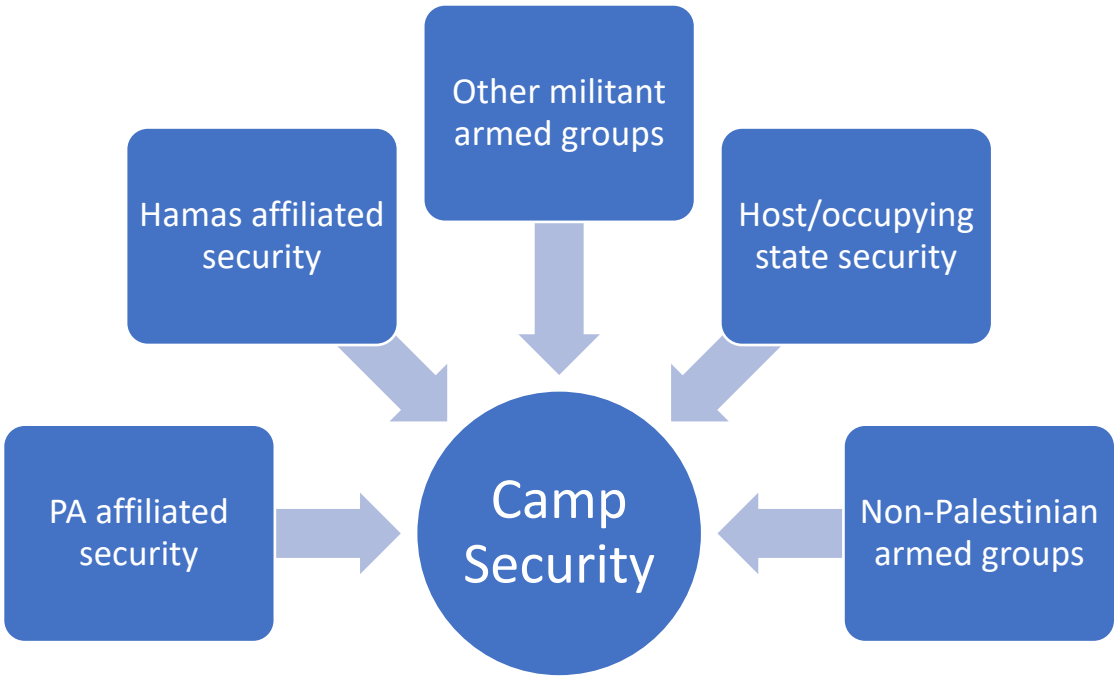
Annex 3: Map of Palestinian Refugee Camps



LIVING STANDARDS OF REFUGEES	JORDAN		LEBANON		SYRIA	
	National (Most recent data)	Refugees (2013)	National (Most recent data)	Refugees (2013)	National (Most recent data)	Refugees (2013)
EDUCATION Educational staff n° of pupils	**1/17.4** (2011/2012)	**1/20.97**	**1/41.23** (2011)	**1/15.93**	**1/18** (2002) NA	**1/24.75**
Female pupils (%)	**50.03%** (2010)	**50%**	**51.83%** (2011)	**53%**	**4.35%** (2010)	**48%**
Primary education drop out rate	**6.57%** (2010)	**2.42%** (male) and **0.79%** (female) (2011/2012)	**9.53%** (2010)	**5.10%** (male) and **6.68%** (female) (2011/2012)	**4.35%** (2010)	**1.82%** (male) and **2.1%** (female) (2010/2011)
HEALTHCARE Health staff or physician/person	**1/412** (2005) (physicians)	**1/2.863.11**	**1/475** (2005) (physicians)	**1/1,257.43**	**NA**	**1/1,261.84**
COUNTRY ASSESSMENT	3 Moderately poor		3 Moderately poor		2 Moderately good before uprising	

Sources: Passia, European Council on Foreign Relations, "Two State Stress Test", www.ecfr.eu.

Annex 4: Key Security Actors



Annex 5: West Bank Refugee Camps

General Overview West Bank Refugee Camps

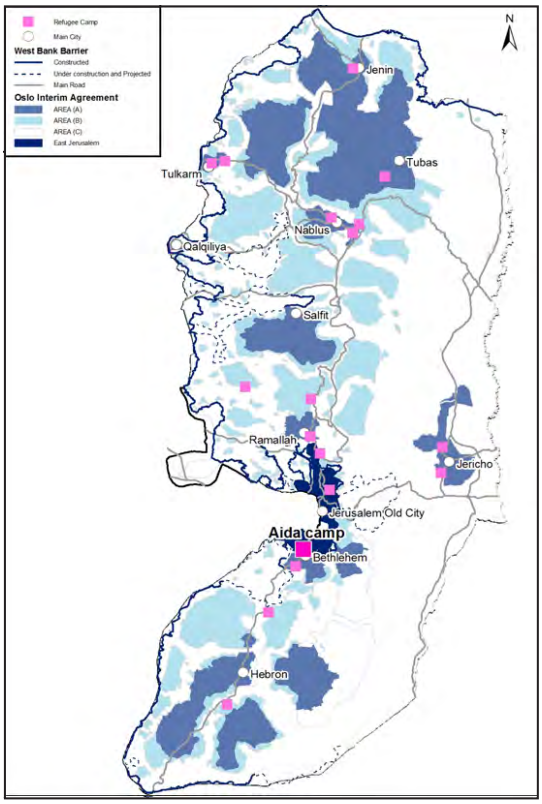
Who is a Palestine Refugee?

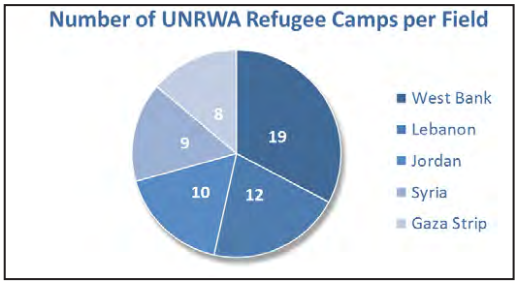
A Palestine refugee is defined as any person whose normal place of residence was Palestine during the period of 1 June 1946 to 15 May 1948, and who lost both home and means of livelihood as a result of the 1948 conflict. The descendants of Palestine refugee males, as well as legally adopted children, are also eligible to register as refugees.

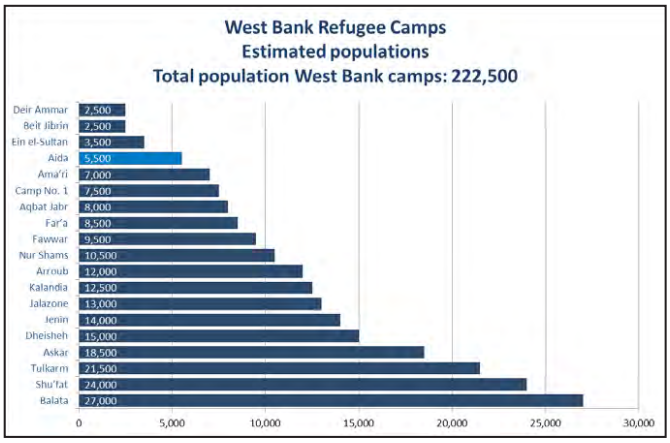
Palestine Refugee Camps

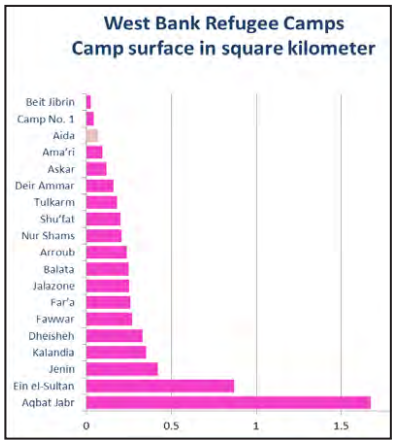
There are 58 Palestine refugee camps located in Lebanon, Syria, Jordan, Gaza and the West Bank. The camps were first established as temporary tented cities for Palestine refugees who fled their homes during the 1948 conflict. For more than 60 years, this unresolved situation has challenged the camps and its residents.

The 19 Palestine refugee camps throughout the West Bank have since developed into urban areas home to more than 200,000 people (almost a quarter of the total registered persons with UNRWA), with the population in each camp varying from 2,500 to 27,000. The camps face challenges related to overcrowding, poor infrastructure, high levels of unemployment, food insecurity, and protection issues.









unrwa
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united nations relief and works agency
for palestine refugees in the near east

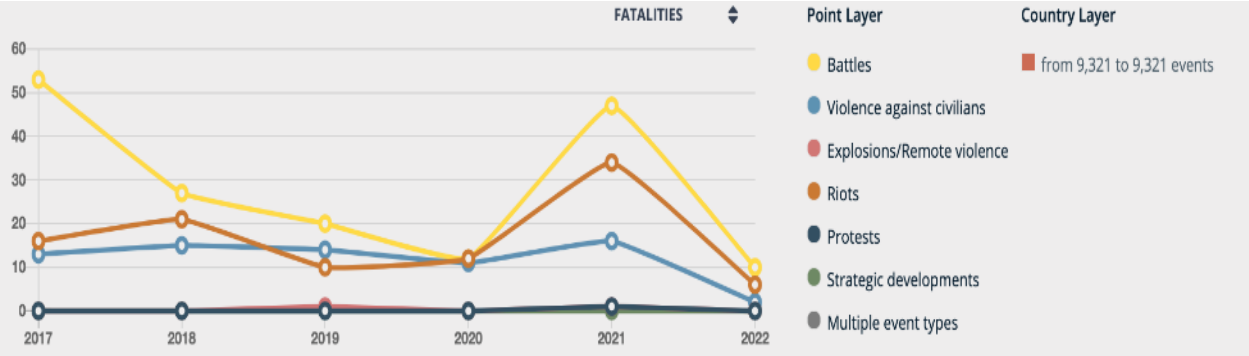
www.unrwa.org

UNRWA is a United Nations agency established by the General Assembly in 1949 and is mandated to provide assistance and protection to a population of some 5 million registered Palestine refugees. Its mission is to help Palestine refugees in Jordan, Lebanon, Syria, West Bank and the Gaza Strip to achieve their full potential in human development, pending a just solution to their plight. UNRWA's services encompass education, health care, relief and social services, camp infrastructure and improvement, microfinance and emergency assistance. UNRWA is funded almost entirely by voluntary contributions.

UNRWA West Bank Public Information Office | wbpio@unrwa.org

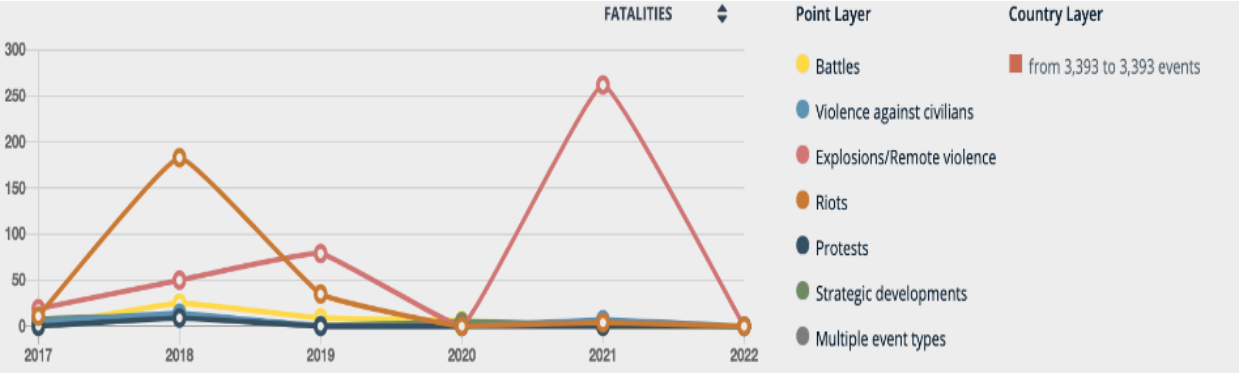
Annex 6: Conflict Trends in the West Bank and Gaza

Fatalities by nature of conflict in the last 5 years in Gaza Strip



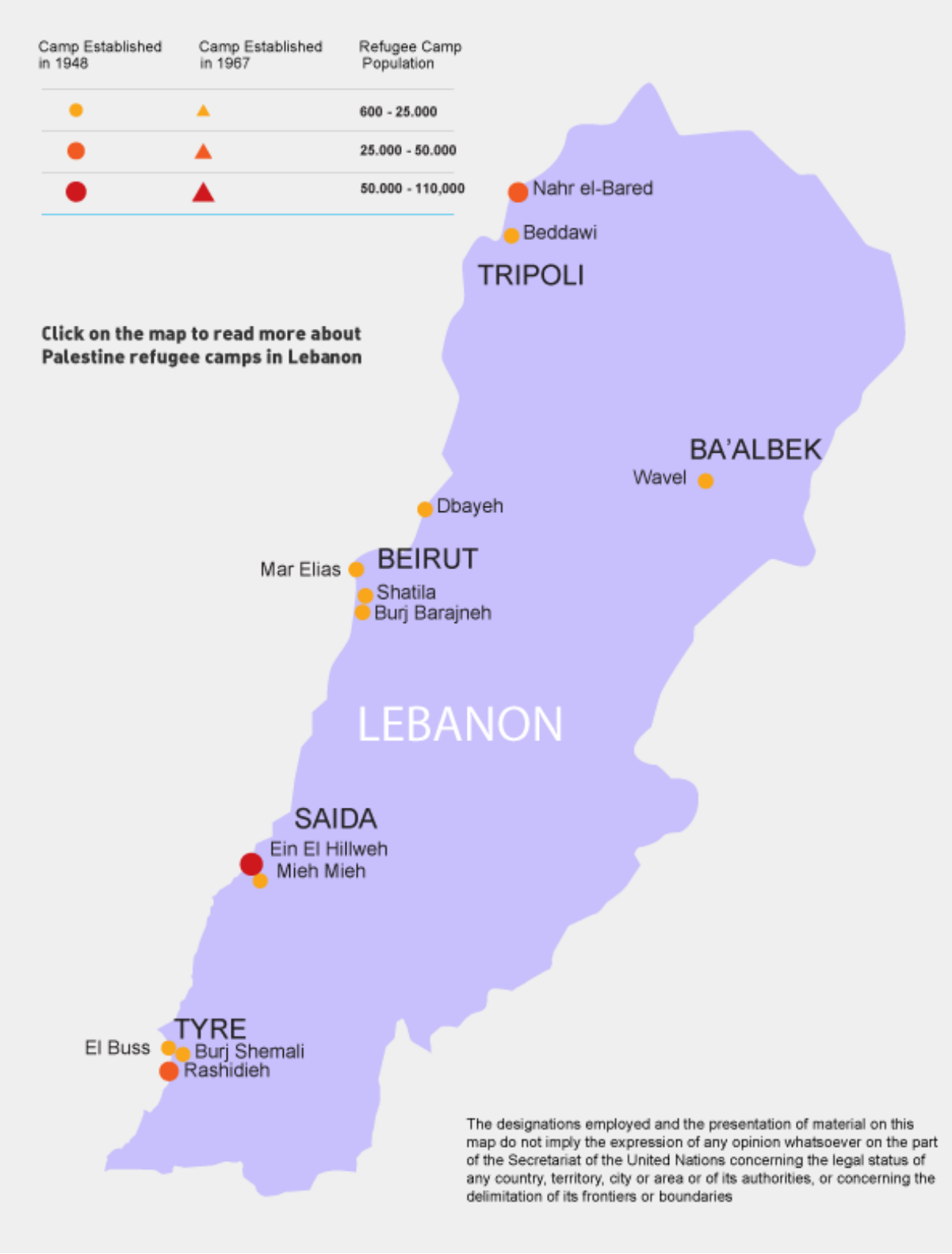
Source: ACLED 2022.

Fatalities by nature of conflict in the last 5 years in the West Bank

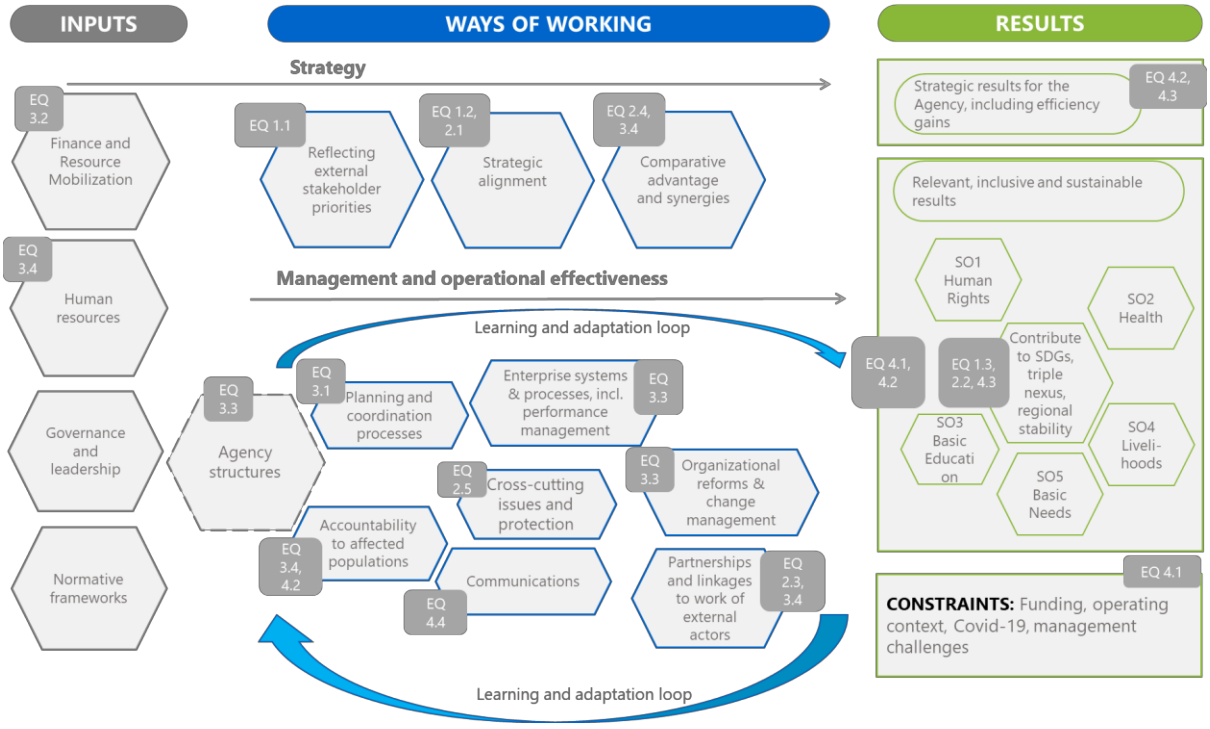


Source: ACLED 2022.

Annex 7: Map of Palestinian Camps in Lebanon



Annex 8: Result Logical Framework of UNRWA's Service Delivery, 2016-2022



Source: Evaluation Matrix developed by the UNRWA MTS 2016–2022 Evaluation Team.

Annex 9: UN Plan of Action to Prevent Violent Extremism

Source: United Nations 2016.

MIGRATION TRENDS OF PALESTINIAN REFUGEES REGISTERED WITH UNRWA

Luigi ACHILLI and Sari HANAFI

Table of Contents

I. Introduction

The objective of this paper is to identify migration drivers among Palestinian refugees, including the rising sense of desperation; the lack of political prospects; economic stagnation; conflict, occupation, and blockade; denial of civil and political rights, as well as social and economic rights; and the lack of employment opportunities.

This paper relies on a comprehensive desk review of literature related to the migration of Palestinian refugees in the last ten years. One of the main obstacles to developing effective policies and programmatic responses on Palestinian mobility is the lack of available, reliable, and comparable data on the phenomenon itself—to the point that one can talk about the statistical invisibility of Palestinian refugees and even, in some cases, as agnotology (i.e., manufacturing ignorance) (Proctor 2008; Stel 2016). In part, this is due to difficulties in conducting research among hidden and hard-to-reach populations, especially in settings afflicted by conflicts or political turmoil, such as the Gaza Strip and Syria. However, another issue has to do with the fact that estimates of the number of Palestinians scattered across the globe and their mobility patterns vary significantly depending on the country of residence and the provider of data. Countries tend to group Palestinians under different statistical categorizations, such as "foreign-born," "foreign citizenship," "unknown/undetermined nationality," or "stateless persons." Considering the length and magnitude of Palestinian displacement, this often leads to inaccurate and incomplete data, not only among countries but also within the same country (Albanese and Takkenberg 2020, 269). Furthermore, data discrepancies are also due to the differential skills, rationales, and resources of data collectors.[109] Finally, the issue of Palestinian refugees being highly politicized, numbers and statistical categorizations can be used to justify or demand relevant policy or political action by involved stakeholders.

This paper seeks to provide a comprehensive understanding of Palestinian mobility trends; yet, readers should be cognizant that a severe lack of data, as well as serious discrepancies among the available data sources, affect the findings of any investigation of this phenomenon. Notwithstanding these limitations, this paper will carry out a comprehensive survey of the existing literature on Palestinian migration

[109] For instance, the quality of any data collected is based on the quality of the field workers' training and the collection method. These are often *ad hoc* data collectors; they are not salaried civil servants but rather depend on funding received from abroad.

trends inside and outside the United Nations Relief and Works Agency for Palestine Refugees (UNRWA) fields of operation.[110] Data triangulation strategies will help increase the validity and reliability of findings. We will start by identifying the size, distribution, and characteristics of the Palestinian refugee population, before addressing the key indicators/drivers for migration, focusing on three aspects: socio-economic drivers (employment, poverty, food insecurity, etc.), legal status (e.g., discriminatory laws, socio-political marginalization), and security drivers.

II. Size, distribution, and characteristics of the Palestinian refugee population

Palestinians still form the largest and most protracted population of externally displaced refugees, and the second-largest displaced population in the world. By the end of 2018, almost eight of around 13 million Palestinians worldwide fell under the category of "Palestinian refugees" (Badil 2019). Among them, roughly 5.5 million were "registered refugees" (UNRWA 2018a). Around 1.7[111] of these—representing 28 percent of all UNRWA-registered persons—lived in one of the 58 official refugee camps located throughout the West Bank, Gaza Strip, Jordan, Lebanon, and Syria. The remaining majority, over 70 percent of registered Palestinian refugees reside within host communities, often in areas adjacent to refugee camps or in one of the six unofficial refugee camps in Syria and Jordan (UNRWA 2018a).[112]

In the West Bank, according to the latest UNRWA records, there are more than 883,950 registered refugees among around 3.2 million inhabitants (UNRWA 2022a). Although the territory hosts the highest number of refugee camps, only a quarter of the total number of registered refugees live in 19 official UNRWA refugee camps (UNRWA 2022b). Almost one quarter of the Palestinian refugee population is younger than 15 years old and, after Gaza, the West Bank has the highest birth rate with around 3.7 children per woman (Badil 2019). The labor force participation rate in the West Bank was about 46 percent among refugees, with little difference between them and non-refugee Palestinians. The unemployment rate, however, is worse among refugees; 19 percent of

[110] We would like to thank Hala Akkawi from the American University of Beirut for her work helping us in the literature review for this paper.
[111] This number refers only to the population registered in camps, not the actual camp population.
[112] It should be noted that, due to lack of registration and documentation as well as the protracted nature of Palestinian displacement, available data on the demographic and socio-economic characteristics of the refugee populations outside UNRWA's area of operations are very scant (Badil 2019, xiv).

the total population of refugees active in the labor market are unemployed (Badil 2019). Compared to the other fields of operation, the refugee population of the West Bank has seen an improvement in socio-economic conditions over the past decade (see Al-Husseini and Saba in this volume).

The Gaza Strip, according to the latest UNRWA records from 2021, has a population of approximately 2.1 million people, including over 1.5 million registered Palestine refugees (UNRWA 2022a). With around 600,000 persons residing in the eight official Palestine refugee camps, Gaza is the territory with the largest camp-based Palestinian refugee population and one of the places with the highest population densities in the world (Badil 2019). To this one should add that, as of 2018, the Gaza Strip has both the youngest refugee population, with 36.2 percent below 15 years old, and the highest fertility rate, with 4.5 birth per woman (Badil 2019). The last two decades witnessed progressive deterioration of the socio-economic situation in the country. Israeli's blockade on land, air, and sea has crippled the economy and had devastating effects on Palestinian refugees' lives at different levels—from freedom of movement in and out of the Gaza Strip to health, schooling, housing, infrastructure, and security. To this, one should add the reluctance of Egyptian authorities to open the border with Gaza in a regular basis. Not surprisingly, the territory has a low rate of workforce participation (46 percent among registered refugees) and an extremely high unemployment rate (52 percent)—one of the highest in the world (Badil 2019). Years of conflict and blockade have left 80 percent of the population dependent on international assistance. According to recent estimates, the number of Palestine refugees depending on UNRWA for food assistance has soared from less than 80,000 in 2000 to more than a million in 2021 (UNRWA 2022b). Access to clean water and electricity remains at critical levels, with clean water available to only five percent of the population and frequent power shortages undermining the availability of essential services, such as water, health, and sanitation.

Of all UNRWA fields, Jordan is the country with the largest number of Palestine refugees. According to UNRWA's 2021 records, there are around 2.3 million registered Palestinian refugees (UNRWA 2022a). About 18 percent live in the ten official Palestine refugee camps throughout the country, making Jordan the host country with the lowest percentage of Palestinian refugees residing in camps. The Palestinian refugee population is young, with around 21 percent below 15 years old. Palestinian refugees in the country enjoy full Jordanian citizenship, except for 140,000 refugees from the Gaza Strip or those

former PLO fighter returnees from Lebanon who hold temporary Jordanian passports that do not entitle them to full citizenship, such as the right to vote and the right to work in government departments. Jordan has the lowest labor force participation rate, about 42 percent (Badil 2019).[113] Palestinian refugees' annual income remains substantially low and poverty high, especially inside the refugee camps. As of 2021, UNRWA statistics show that almost 60,000 registered refugees in the country were provided with in-kind food assistance and cash-based transfers under the Social Safety Net Programme (SSNP) (UNRWA 2022a).

According to UNRWA estimates, the number of Palestinian refugees in Lebanon is around 482,600 as of 2021 (UNRWA 2022a). However, a recent census carried out in the country showed that the number seems to be considerably lower, with less than 175,000 registered refugees actually residing in the country.[114] Almost half the registered Palestinian refugees live in Lebanon's 12 refugee camps. Such a high percentage of camp dwellers is explained by the challenges that Palestinians in the country face at the legal, administrative, and security levels. Since Palestinians in the country do not enjoy citizenship rights, they are barred from working in many professions (including law and medicine), they are not entitled to own property, and their freedom of movement is substantially limited. At the same time, because they are not formally citizens of another state, Palestine refugees do not enjoy the same rights as other foreigners living and working in the country. Not surprisingly, as of 2018, Lebanon's labor force participation rate was about 52 percent, with an unemployment rate (18.24 percent) similar to the West Bank—but substantially worse among Palestinian refugees. According to the General Population Census in the Camps and Palestinian Communities in Lebanon conducted in 2017, the unemployment rate for Palestinian refugees aged between 20-29 years stood at 28.5 percent (Badil 2019).[115]

In 2011, on the eve of the Syrian war, there were around 560,000 Palestinians in Syria. Among them, about 170,000 lived in the nine official Palestinian refugee camps

[113] Please note that the data for Jordan, Lebanon, and Syria indicate the entire population of the countries, including both Palestinian refugees and the host population (Badil 2019).
[114] The census report attributes this difference to the fact that the two bodies concerned with the registration of Palestinian refugees do not follow population dynamics, such as death, emigration, and the acquisition of other nationalities (Amin 2022). See also LPDC's 2019 report, *Population and Housing Census in Palestinian camps and Gatherings in Lebanon-Detailed Analytical Report*.
[115] For more analysis about how the restriction of access to major social and occupational institutions of society tremendously affects the living conditions of Palestinian households in Lebanon, see Hanafi, Chaaban, and Seyfert 2012.

(Badil 2014). As of 2020, there were around 440,000 Palestinians, of which 60 percent have been displaced internally or externally at least once since the outbreak of the war (UNRWA 2022b). The Syrian state granted partial citizenship rights to Palestinian refugees who moved to the country after the Arab-Israeli war and their descendants, by virtue of Law No. 260 of July 1956. The law grants them equal rights and duties regarding employment, trade, and military service, but excludes Palestinians from political rights and the right to own real estate. The government also issued "travel documents," which in theory functioned as any other Syrian passport; yet freedom of movement for Palestinians outside Syria varied considerably, depending on the receiving country and the regional context. According to recent estimates, the labor force participation rate in Syria is about 44 percent (Badil 2019). However, it is worth mentioning that the economic situation of Palestinian refugees in Syria has dramatically changed during the war. The scale of human loss, destruction, devastation, and displacement caused by a conflict that has just entered its eleventh year has been catastrophic and unprecedented. The compounded effects of violence and repeated armed conflict have resulted in deaths and injuries, internal displacement, largescale migration to other countries, lost livelihoods, and serious psychological impact on people, including Palestinian refugees.

III. Key indicators/drivers of migration

Immigration motivators are almost the same across refugee populations in Gaza, the West Bank, Jordan, and Lebanon. In each of these areas, Palestinian refugees deal with insufferable conditions of socio-economic, legal, and political dysfunction; lack of security; environmental problems and the crowdedness of their refugee camps; and the absence of real substantial change that could ensure them a respectable future. To that, one should add the defunding of UNRWA services. In Syria, the outbreak of the conflict and its devasting consequences have even further exacerbated these triggers. While no single factor can be cited as the cause of the increased migration trends among Palestinians living in UNRWA's five areas of operations, together they coincide to create a general feeling of disappointment, hopelessness, and defeat that has prompted many to leave or consider leaving their homes. The spread of the phrases "immigration is the solution" (Haddad 2018) and "the right to emigrate" (Mohsen 2019) among the youth informs us that emigration/immigration is a social fact in Palestinian society and that there is an unruly will to emigrate. According to many Palestinian refugees,

emigration/immigration is the only way forward to address most of their issues at the same time: obtaining a nationality, finding a job, continuing their studies, and seeking stability.

We will highlight six factors that seem to play a role in determining Palestinian migration patterns: socio-economic drivers, legal status, (in)security drivers, defunding of UNRWA's services, the coercive environment, and challenging environmental issues related to climate change.

Socio-economic drivers

The first and foremost reason for emigration in Lebanon, Gaza, and the West Bank is the lack of employment opportunities and high living expenses. In Lebanon, nearly three-quarters of the Palestinian population lived below the poverty line in 2021, an increase of eight percent from 2015 (UNRWA 2021). After the Beirut Port explosion in 2020 and the inflation of the Lebanese lira, Palestinians in Lebanon found themselves burdened with a precarious financial crisis in which the monthly income of Palestinian families in refugee camps, according to Shahed Association, has become less than 500,000lira (the minimum wage equivalent of $15), hence exacerbating their poverty (Shahed Association n.d.). Food security and employment conditions are almost the same as in Syria. There are greater expenditures on health services and medical care, accounting on average for 11 percent of total household expenditures. Although three percent of families reported having a family member that migrated outside Lebanon since 2015 and has not returned, in 2021, 40 percent of families reported having a relative who has considered migrating outside Lebanon—with four percent of them having started serious emigration procedures for at least one family member. The discrepancy between the two figures demonstrates how difficult it is for young people to migrate, which is common in other cases.

In Gaza, individuals are living in poverty conditions (81 percent living below the poverty line) affecting food security and housing, which are similar to those in Syria and Lebanon (UNRWA 2021). Questionably, although a huge chunk of families (80 percent) reported having taken on debt within the last three months (September to November), only three percent reported having received remittances from relatives. Although two percent of families reported having a family member who has migrated outside Gaza since 2015 and has not returned, in 2021, a total of 27 percent of families reported having

a relative who has considered migrating outside Gaza—with eight percent of households having started serious emigration procedures for at least one family member. Even though entire families are emigrating abroad, the youth are the main group that is migrating.

According to the Palestinian Central Bureau of Statistics (PCBS), the results of a Palestinian youth survey showed that about 24 percent of young people (15 to 29 years old) in the Palestinian territories have the desire to immigrate abroad—in the Gaza Strip, it was 37 percent, 22 percent higher than in the West Bank. The PCBS also noted that young males are more inclined to think about emigrating abroad compared to young females. This percentage was 29 percent for young males, compared to 18 percent for young females. (Palestinian Central Bureau of Statistics 2018). These figures are higher than usually found in other surveys, taking into account that there are no particular economic crises or unusual security events in the Palestinian territories. Moreover, the poverty rate between the ages of 19 and 29 reached 30 percent (57 percent in the Gaza Strip and 13 percent in the West Bank) (PCBS 2018). It is worth noting that the post-Oslo period is a stark example of how fragile the Palestinian economy had grown in terms of job creation and labor absorption, in addition to Israeli closures that would almost automatically lead to an upsurge in the unemployment rate (Shikaki 2021).

In the West Bank, unemployment rates have been almost stable since 2018, reaching 17 percent in the first quarter of 2021. Seven percent of wage employees received less than the minimum wage (1450 shekels, or $450) in the first quarter of 2021. Eleven percent of Palestinians in the West Bank face multidimensional poverty,[116] with acute demands caused by monetary poverty; 47 percent of those facing multidimensional poverty request money for housing improvement (10 percent), for education (11 percent), and for health (eight percent) (World Food Programme 2021). While in migration studies there is sufficient evidence of the correlation between the unemployment rate and migration, data is lacking concerning such a correlation in the West Bank.

When it comes to Palestinian refugees from Syria (PRS) in Jordan, 78 percent of them live below the poverty line, and most of them cannot meet their basic needs without

[116] Poverty can be measured also in terms of deprivations people experience in different dimensions. Its areas are monetary, employment, housing, education, safety and use of assets, personal freedom, and health (WFP 2021).

humanitarian assistance (Buswell 2020). For example, unemployment reached 60 percent in 2021 in the Irbid camp, in light of the absence of any development projects (Al-Ghad Newspaper 2021).

Of the Palestinian refugees in Jordan more generally, and particularly in the Jerash camp (Anera 2021), many refugees come from the 1967 territories—so they do not have social security numbers. They cannot enroll in public schools or receive medical treatment in both government and private hospitals. Furthermore, they have no access to government aid. According to a recent Post Distribution Monitoring (PDM) survey conducted in the third quarter of 2021, only 11 percent of surveyed PRS confirmed that, when combined with other sources of income, the quarterly multipurpose cash assistance provided by UNRWA was sufficient to cover their basic needs for food and non-food items for three months. Of these, 29 percent did not have any other source of income (UNRWA 2022c). Even though there are no estimates about the percentage of unemployment among all Palestinian refugees and PRS, it is safe to assume that their situation during and after the Covid-19 outbreak considerably deteriorated.[117]

According to UNRWA (2021a), the percentage of PRS living in poverty in Jordan and Lebanon has increased by eight percent from 2017-2018 levels, reaching 82 percent in 2021. This vulnerable community is experiencing calamitous food security conditions. The numbers tell us that more than half of the surveyed population have reduced their daily consumption and quantity of food, which makes up 50 percent of total household expenditures. It is a disproportionately large amount indicating severe distress within families to manage household budgets and secure food intake. Not only are PRS living in harsh conditions but also in humiliation, where 80 percent reported having borrowed food, 80 percent reported having purchased leftovers from the market, and 54 percent are in debt. Moreover, the employed (37 percent) experience the uncertainty of holding no contract or are employed based on a verbal or collective agreement. This community finds itself forced to migrate to neighboring countries, which provide little in terms of relief or protection for the population. In Jordan particularly, basic services are denied to the population, which also faces deportation to Syria (UNRWA 2017).

[117] In Jordan, because of Covid-19, unemployment rose by 5.7 percentage points to 24.7 percent, with youth unemployment projected to reach almost 35 percent, and the Jordanian economy contracting by 2.2 percent (UNRWA 2020a).

Legal status: Discrimination and marginalization

Discriminatory laws are another substantial motivator for emigration. As Jalal Al-Husseini and Riccardo Bocco point out, "the Palestine refugees have lived under a variety of different national jurisdictions, hence experiencing different living conditions. Formal citizens in Jordan since 1949, the majority of those residing in the other host countries have remained stateless. At the socioeconomic level, they have been subjected to various discriminatory systems, from quasi-parity in Syria to complete marginalization in Lebanon" (Al-Husseini and Bocco 2010, 261).

In Lebanon, restrictive policies have contributed to Palestinian mass migration overseas. Palestinians do not have civil rights in Lebanon, such as voting or owning land and passing it on—most importantly, they are denied the right to work more than 70 jobs (Hanafi, Chaaban, and Seyfert 2012). While *de jure* the number of these jobs decreased, *de facto* the number remains the same. These restrictions deny them from being integrated into Lebanese society (Eloubeidi 2020). For example, even though some Palestinians are exempted from the law that restricts the practice of liberal professions to Lebanese citizens, no more than 729 work permits were given to Palestinians in 2016 (Lebanese Palestinian Dialogue Committee n.d.). Those who work inside their camps expressed that it "negatively impact[s] the[ir] ability to attain an adequate standard of living, namely due to financial issues, competition, and poor working conditions" (Eloubeidi 2020).

This situation also applies to PRS in Jordan. According to Buswell (2020), while Syrian refugees can in theory obtain work permits, the areas in which they have been allowed to work are those requiring low skills, which has put them in competition with Jordanian workers. Because of this and several other hurdles, many work without one, putting themselves at risk, among other things, of exploitation and abuse (International Labour Organization 2015). And even though a recent paper by the International Finance Corporation (IFC) notes that the Jordanian government was working to change this (IFC 2022) and give refugees from Syria more work permits, in more sectors—refugees still cannot work in closed professions without a Jordanian business partner (IFC 2022, 7). Additionally, businesses owned by PRS in Jordan largely remain informal and owners are limited in their ability to access formal financial assistance, meaning they can neither grow their business nor protect it.

Overall, ever since 2013-14, government authorities have progressively restrained Syrian refugees' freedom of movement to and in both Jordan and Lebanon. Most Palestinian refugees from Syria have entered Lebanon irregularly, and this means that they cannot obtain residency, which will contribute to their exposure to many difficulties, including those related to marriage registration. Other difficulties include the registration of births, which require a marriage certificate, and the issuance of identity cards for their children, in addition to the difficulty of obtaining permits to enter the camps and the difficulty of securing livelihoods and access to basic services. As of 2013, Jordan officially prohibits PRS from seeking refuge, which leaves them to migrate through unofficial channels of mobility, constantly faced with the threat of detention and possible forcible return. Due to their status, PRS in Jordan face multiple and multifaceted challenges including poverty, food insecurity, and high unemployment rates. Jordan is already burdened with an enormous number of refugees from multiple conflict-ridden countries and has an estimated average annual cost of hosting Syrian refugees of $1.5 billion (UNRWA 2022a).

The label "stateless person" is equivalent to a neglected insignificant person. Albanese and Takkenberg (2020) clearly consider the Palestinian refugees as a stateless population as well. A number of studies record the precariousness/priority of attaining citizenship among refugees who migrate to Europe, especially those living in post-war Syria.[118] After 2011, PRS realized that they had only been "temporarily" tolerated in Syria and had to try and find a more permanent solution to their refugee-ness and statelessness elsewhere (Tucker 2018). In Lebanon, Lebanese mothers do not have the legal right to pass on their nationality to their children.

(In)security drivers

There are different ways of narrating the lives of Palestinian refugees that grew up in the Arab region. One of them is to see their lives as having been lived through incessant wars in a region, with only brief moments of peace: the Arab-Israeli wars in 1967 and 1973; the Israeli war on the Palestinian territories and the First and Second Intifadas of 1987-1993 and 2000-2005; Israeli wars on Gaza in 2008, 2012, 2014, and 2021; Israeli wars on Lebanon in 1982 and 2006; the Iraq-Iran war from 1980-88; the 1991 invasion of

[118] See for instance, N. Gabiam (2020), the Institute on Statelessness and Inclusion (ISI), the European Network on Statelessness (ENS) (2019), and J. Tucker (2018).

Kuwait; wars on Iraq in 1991 and 2003; war in Syria from 2011-present; war in Yemen from 2014-present; and the war in Libya from 2014-2020. These ferocious wars unleashed a level of mass destruction, suffering, displacement, and ultimately death.

In Lebanon, in addition to the situation of general insecurity, many studies (Atallah 2019; Hanafi 2012; Hanafi and Long 2010) showed that the lack of stable security conditions in very crowded refugee camps is among the main motivators for emigration. According to the interviewed population, it is not a simple cause. Due to the government's neglect of the social, cultural, and legal rights of Palestinians and the non-intervention of Lebanese state security forces in security-related issues in the camps—in addition to the dysfunction of popular committees that exploit/abuse their power—refugees find themselves complaining about chaos and armed conflicts between factions (Atallah 2019). Many have adopted several negative coping strategies to deal with this protracted condition of marginalization, including using drugs and joining gangs, that have even further exacerbated the security conditions in the camps.[119]

In Syria, living conditions are excruciating. Lack of security, compulsory militarization, fear of arrest, and the threat of looting gangs and thieves are among the main causes of youth emigration (The Palestinian Return Center 2022). The violence that swept the country since the outbreak of the war triggered one of the most dramatic refugee crises in modern history. It is estimated that around 11.5 million people fled their homes since 2011. Among them, 6.6 million are internally displaced persons (IDPs) and over 5.6 million have left the country (UNHCR 2019). The Palestinian refugee exodus from Syria unfolds against this catastrophe; quite tellingly, Palestinians refer to this as their second Nakba.

In a study on the tendency of graduates in Gaza to emigrate, it was found that destructive and successive wars on the Gaza Strip and the threat of their recurrence were a motivator as well. The blockade and frequent military offensives carried out by Israel on Gaza have led to unprecedented displacement and dispossession, leading to death, injury, and massive destruction of crucial infrastructure and facilities. As a result, the United Nations (UN) Country Team announced in 2017 that "Gaza will be unliveable in 2020 if the blockade is not lifted" (ESCWA 2018). The announcement failed to compel the

[119] In a report titled "A Future Without Hope," much focus was placed on the subject of drug use in the Burj Al-Barajneh camp. The term "drugs" was repeated 35 times in focus groups. It was one of the main expressions articulated, along with racism, marginalization, discrimination, extremism, and violence (Amin 2022).

international community to take substantive or meaningful action to address what has become a reality for the two million Palestinians in Gaza. As of 2022, the situation in Gaza has not improved. The result is a scale of human loss, destruction, devastation, and displacement caused that is catastrophic and almost unprecedented. Against this background, it is unsurprising that many are exploring the possibility of irregular migration routes to try and leave.

UNRWA's defunding

UNRWA's severe lack of financial resources seems to have played a crucial role in triggering mobility patterns among Palestinian refugees: crippled with an inadequate budget, the agency has struggled to run its programs across the five areas of operation. The severe defunding of UNRWA—especially under the Trump Administration—has had serious consequences for the capacities of the health and education systems in Gaza, Lebanon, and the West Bank where UNRWA is a major provider for the population. In Lebanon, for example, a recent report by the International Centre for Migration Policy Development (ICMPD) notes how the perceived degraded situation in UNRWA schools was mentioned as a triggering factor, especially considering the importance traditionally placed by Palestinians on education as a strategy for upward mobility (ICMPD 2019). As a result, Palestinians unable to cover the tuition fees of private schooling for their children embarked on irregular journeys to Europe and, presumably, other destinations with the hope of ensuring a better education for their offspring.

Most importantly, funding cuts have also led to job cuts. Traditionally, Palestinian refugees have found steady and dependable positions in UNRWA. Many registered refugees living in camps, for example, worked as nurses, cleaning and maintenance staff, teachers, social workers, and low- and middle-cadre administrative staff for UNRWA (Achilli 2015). Over the years, not only have the earnings from these positions become much less desirable than in the past due to the ongoing difficult economic situation of the agency, the likelihood of finding a job there is also considerably lower than in the past. As the ICMPD study reports, in Lebanon, "funding cuts have affected services across the board, and have also led to job cuts of Palestinian refugees employed by UNRWA. Reportedly even those jobs where Palestinians are usually employed are not filled following departure or retirement. (…) Related feelings of anxiety in this regard has been identified as a key factor for emigration decisions" (ICMPD 2019, 7). Although there are

no systematic studies that link the decision to leave with UNRWA's defunding, it is plausible to believe that UNRWA's crippling financial situation plays a crucial role in determining patterns of mobility—also in the other fields of operation (see, for example, Procter 2021).

Coercive environment

Israeli actions and policies inside the occupied Palestinian territories (oPt) are prompting patterns of forced displacement among the Palestinian population, including refugees. For example, from 2015 to 2021, Israeli forces demolished 4,217 structures in the occupied West Bank alone, displacing almost 6,000 people (ACAPS 2021). The methodical eviction of Palestinians from their homes, either by direct or indirect means, has been the first step that accompanies the construction of colonies. Sari Hanafi called this process spacio-cide (as opposed to genocide) (Hanafi 2013), arguing that the Israeli colonial project targets land for the purpose of rendering inevitable the "voluntary" transfer of the Palestinian population primarily by targeting the space where the Palestinian people live. As Badil states, the occupation of Palestine by Zionist forces has gradually transitioned into "a deeply entrenched military occupation" marked by "the unlawful, systematic fracturing and acquisition of Palestinian land by the Israeli occupying forces for the purpose of permanent Israeli settlement construction" (Badil 2017, v). Forcible transfer of Palestinians can occur through a multiplicity of means that range from unlawful killing and direct coercion or threats of force, to the denial of basic rights, the impossibility of securing a livelihood, and the creation of a toxic environment characterized by constant fear of detention and violence.

The Israeli non-governmental organization (NGO) Gisha has produced many reports on the logic of collective punishment that Israel uses against the population of the Palestinian territories. Israel uses the state of exception, where the law has a function of interplay between exclusion and inclusion, because sovereignty does not work merely according to the logic of one-way exclusion. 'Inside' and 'outside' are not mutually exclusive but rather blurred together. Palestinians are excluded from recourse to the law yet remain subject to it. Their lives are regulated and restricted by Israeli laws and military orders that apply even to the private spheres of marriage and children. Palestinian citizens of Israel can no longer marry their West Bank and Gaza kinfolk and compatriots since a recent High Court ruling legitimated a 2003 law barring "family

reunification" for such couples. The case of Palestinian Jerusalemites is the epitome of exclusion/inclusion: included by virtue of the unilateral Israeli annexation of their city and excluded from municipal services, master plans, and civil liberties big and small; they live in a segregated city in which they are residents, but not citizens. (Hanafi 2013; Ophir, Givoni, and Hanafi 2009).

Indeed, according to a recent report of the Secretary-General, such forcible transfer of Palestinians in the oPT "does not necessarily require the use of physical force by authorities, but may be triggered by specific circumstances that leave individuals or communities with no choice but to leave; this is known as a coercive environment for Palestinians" (Human Rights Council 2016, paras 22, 27). The underpinning logic is that Palestinian mobility inside or outside the oPT is involuntary; being Palestinian is being deprived of any real form of agency in the decision to move.

Climate change and challenging environmental issues

The consequences of climate change on migration present humanity with an unprecedented challenge. Relentless literature highlights the environment and displacement nexus (for instance, see Laczko and Aghazarm 2009). Three particularities of the Arab region make people affected by environmental pressures particularly prone to displacement: the dearth of water, the transboundary nature of this water, and creeping urbanization (Hanafi 2016). We therefore expect this pressure to affect not only the Arab population in general, but also the Palestinian refugees living there. Although environmental threats exist in across the region, they are exacerbated in areas of conflict, such as the Palestinian territories.

According to Mazin Qumsiyeh and Mohammed A. Abusarhan, there are some threats particular to the West Bank and Gaza Strip: desertification and soil erosion (due to overgrazing, climate change, infrastructure construction), urbanization and population growth, removal of rocks for construction (stone quarries, etc.), uprooting trees, land degradation (poor planning, soil erosion, etc.), coastal erosion, overexploitation (including poaching, overfishing, etc.), pollution (waste water, solid waste, use of chemical pesticides/insecticides/fertilizers), and colonial residential and industrial settlements, as well as associated infrastructure like the Separation Wall (Qumsiyeh and Abusarhan 2021). We should mention in particular the acute scarcity of water sources in the Gaza Strip. The Israeli NGO Gisha has many reports about the

negative impact of Erez border crossing's closure on the maintenance and improvement of Gaza's water and sewage systems, exacerbating the risk of collapse (Gisha 2022). In this regard, studies suggest that the restrictions and limitations on oPt inhabitants encroach on their capacity to find adequate mitigation and adaptation measures (Mason et al. 2012). Israel's control over water resources, and its refusal to allow Palestinians to import and install wastewater treatment or desalination plants, severely jeopardize Palestinians' capacity to access freshwater, leading to the overuse of available resources, which ultimately contributes to food insecurity in the oPt.

IV. Migration trends within the Arab Region

In this section, the analysis of migration trends is divided in two parts: migration into UNRWA's areas of operation, and migration out of UNRWA's areas of operation.

Migration into UNRWA's areas of operation

Palestinian displacement patterns within UNRWA's areas of operation pertain mainly to refugees who left Syria after the outbreak of the war in 2011. Since the start of the crisis, UNRWA estimates that 120,000 Palestine refugees have left Syria for other countries, including Lebanon, Jordan, Gaza, Turkey, Egypt and increasingly to Europe. The majority suffer from abject poverty and live in precarious legal status (UNRWA n.d.).

According to UNRWA, at the end of 2021 there were 19,000 PRS who had sought support from UNRWA in Jordan. The vast majority found refuge among the host community or in rental premises. Prior to April 2012, PRS could enter the country following the same procedures applied to any other Syrian refugee. However, after that date, Jordan adopted a no-entry policy that has prevented refugees from crossing into Jordan and that has subjected those in the Kingdom to the risk of refoulement to Syria. The irregular status of PRS in Jordan considerably increases their insecurity and protection risks (Human Rights Watch 2014).

In Lebanon, there were around 27,700 PRS as of 2020; 4,000 less than those counted in 2016 (UNRWA 2020a). This decrease is explained by the combined actions of two trends: onward movement to Europe or other countries, and unassisted returns to Syria. Notwithstanding the number of PRS in Lebanon, the large majority face high degrees of vulnerability as a result of protracted displacement and restrictions in

Lebanon. According to UNRWA, almost 90 percent of them live under the poverty line and 95 percent are food insecure (UNRWA 2020b).

PRS have even found a destination in besieged Gaza. According to a recent study, a sizeable number of the 5,000 individuals from Syria who have sought refuge in the Gaza Strip are Palestinian refugees.[120] The majority left Syria by plane via Lebanon and Egypt, entering Gaza either via Rafah, the official border controlled by the Egyptian authorities, or irregularly via tunnels. Through irregular and dangerous journeys, they therefore found refuge in a besieged territory characterized by high levels of poverty, insecurity, and unemployment.

Migration out of UNRWA's areas of operation

Significant numbers of refugees are leaving UNRWA's fields of operations, especially from Lebanon, Syria, and Gaza. Remarkably, UNRWA's Eligibility and Registration Division's annual and biannual reports on Registration Verification point out that the division "regularly receives registration verification requests from outside its fields of operations." The reports show that there are significant numbers of requests being issued by Palestinian refugees who resided in Syria, Lebanon, and Gaza. Those numbers[121] sharply increased from 450 cases in 2019 to 1129 cases in 2020, slightly decreasing to 964 cases in 2021. It is important to note the alarming trend in Gaza, where only 57 cases were recorded in 2019 compared to 428 cases in 2020.[122]

The occupied Palestinian territories

According to recent studies, a growing number of Palestinians, especially young people, are seeking to leave Gaza to reach other destinations, especially in Europe (Procter 2021). To leave besieged Gaza there are two options. The first route is through the Erez crossing, on the eastern edge of the territory, near the border with Israel. The second option is to enter Egypt via the Rafah crossing in the south of Gaza. These crossing are generally closed and only a restricted number of people are allowed to transit through them. Israel has banned Palestinians from leaving Gaza via Israel without an Israeli-issued exit permit. Only those belonging to certain categories, mostly daily laborers, medical patients, and

[120] Conversation with Kjersti Berg in June2022 about her project in Gaza.
[121] Of course, those numbers do not reflect all the number of Palestinian refugees in Europe for multiple reasons, namely illegal emigration and the classification of refugees as stateless in countries included in the Dublin convention.
[122] Quote and data from UNRWA's Eligibility and Registration Division (2021).

aid workers, are eligible for a permit. In January 2022, the Israeli authorities allowed 27,200 Palestinians, mostly travelers, to leave Gaza. This was almost four times more than the monthly average in the previous year, but only five percent of the total volume of exits in 2000, before the imposition of mobility restrictions.

Generally, most Palestinians, especially young men, have tried to leave Gaza to reach European countries via the Rafah crossing. To cross, they are required to meet specific travel criteria issued by Egypt and obtain a pre-registration with Hamas authorities. As of January 2022, the Egyptian authorities allowed around 10,000 people to leave the Gaza Strip (OCHA 2022). Apparently, the list of Palestinians in Gaza registered to leave through the crossing contains hundreds of thousands of applicants. To bypass the waiting and speed up the process, a system of brokering has emerged. By paying a fee, applicants can obtain a document of *tansiq* (coordination), which would enable individuals to skip the long cue and leave sooner (Procter 2021). Not surprisingly, only few have the financial resources and social networks to make the crossing through Rafah.

Jordan

There is a lack of data concerning the mobility of Jordanians of Palestinian origin out of UNRWA areas of operation, but we expect that the main destination is the Gulf monarchies.

Lebanon

According to the Lebanese Palestinian Dialogue Committee (LPDC), between 6,000 and 8,000 Palestinians used to migrate annually (LPDC n.d.). In the last three years, however, 12,000 refugees were recorded as having left the country and never returning, 4,000 of which left in the last few months of 2021. With an increase of at least 30 percent, this number is considerably higher than the average of previous years (Al-Sahli 2022). There seems to be a very clear trend of migration, especially in late 2021. The LPDC census data[123] indicate that about 50 percent of Palestinian immigrants (of all ages, not just young people) have immigrated to Europe, 25 percent to Arab countries, and 10 percent to the United States or Canada. More than 40 percent of all immigrants from Palestinian families in Lebanon are young men, and men are twice as likely to emigrate than young women. Of the 55,473 families surveyed, 5,763 families had one or more immigrant

[123] These data were taken from immigrants' relatives who still resided in Lebanon during the census (2017)

members (about 10.4 percent). However, the nature of the survey does not allow us to count the number families that left with all their members, which constitute the main volume of Palestinian immigrants (Amin 2022).

A recent ICMPD study reveals how Palestinian refugees from Lebanon seem to privilege human smuggling and informal channels of mobility to reach European countries, especially Denmark, Germany, the Netherlands, and Sweden (ICMPD 2019). All stakeholders concur that irregular migration has become more and more widespread among Palestinian refugees from Lebanon wishing to reach Europe. This trend also coincides with the tightening of border controls and increasing restrictive border policies implemented by the European Union (EU) and its member states to address the "refugee crisis" of 2015. Stakeholders concur that this trend is likely to continue in the near future and may even be aggravated if the socio-economic and security situation of Palestinian refugees in the country worsens (ICMPD 2019). This seems to be confirmed by a recent poll carried out among 1,200 Palestinian youth living in camps, which has revealed that more than 70 percent of respondents found migration through irregular channels not only possible but even desirable given their current situation (ARK 2018).

Syria

As we mentioned before, Syria constitutes an acute case. It is estimated that, out of the 560,000 Palestinian refugees in Syria who lived in the country prior to the outbreak of the conflict, approximately 270,000 are internally displaced in Syria, while over 120,000 have fled to neighboring countries—especially to Lebanon, Jordan, Turkey, Egypt, and now increasingly to Europe (UNRWA 2018b). The situation is even bleaker in refugee camps like Yarmouk; by 2019, nobody remained out of the almost 150,000 Palestinians that once populated the camp (UNRWA 2022b).[124]

Crossing international borders and reaching neighboring countries has come at a great cost. Already a few years after the onset of the Syrian war, neighboring countries such as Jordan and Lebanon issued an increasing number of measures that prevented Palestinians from entering legally and subjected some of those already in their territories to harassment, marginalization, and even deportation (Badil 2014). Of the total number of Palestinians who left Syria, it is estimated that the large majority—around 85,000—

[124] It appears that, as of 2021, a few hundred families (both Syrian and Palestine refugee families) have returned to the camp.

sought international protection in Europe (Action Group 2018). Once again, however, Palestinians' unique status has made the journey even more complicated: not only have Palestinians often been subject to severe forms of discrimination in the countries that 'hosted' them, but this differential treatment is also mirrored at the UN level (Sayigh 2013). Unlike the UN High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR), UNRWA does not provide protection to refugees, and its mandate is limited to basic services. All this has had clear negative repercussions on the situation of PRS who have therefore sought refuge outside UNRWA's fields of operation.

V. Migration trends into Europe, the Americas, Asia- Pacific, and Africa

Over the years, war, poverty, and discrimination have pushed the frontiers of Palestinian displacement outside UNRWA's five areas of operations and even beyond the Arab region (Albanese and Takkenberg 2020). The recent political turmoil and conflicts in Iraq, the oPt, and Syria have confirmed this trend. Palestinians seem to prefer European countries over the United States (US), for example, or Canada, which might be because some European countries like Germany, France, and Sweden have opened their borders to Syrian refugees. This is due to a number of significant factors, ranging from the role of diaspora networks and better job markets to higher asylum recognition rates and human rights standards (ICMPD 2019). Europe is also physically closer. Yet, increasingly restrictive policies adopted by Western states vis-à-vis asylum seekers seem to have pushed Palestinian refugees to consider different routes and alternative destinations. According to Albanese and Takkenberg, "significant numbers have recently been seeking protection in Eastern Europe, South and South East Asia, the Western Balkans, as well as West Africa and beyond" (2020, 269).

Palestinians' unique status has made migration even more complicated: not only have Palestinians often been subject to severe forms of discrimination in host countries, but this differential treatment is also mirrored at the UN level. Palestinians do not fall under the broader regulation of refugees, as this is implemented and managed by the UNHCR, but they do have to refer to UNRWA. Unlike UNHCR, UNRWA does not provide *de facto* protection to Palestinian refugees, and its mandate is only limited to basic services. This, for example, has had clear negative repercussions for PRS. The impossibility for Palestinians to get asylum in Europe from one of the Arab host countries meant that their only option was to embark on irregular journeys fraught with danger

and uncertainty. Furthermore, while some successfully obtained asylum in Europe, the majority has faced several bureaucratic challenges to secure support and protection (Graham 2017; Sayigh 2013).

Europe

The recent political turmoil in the Arab region has pushed many Palestinians, including Palestinian refugees, to embark on irregular journeys toward various European countries where the Palestinian community already has well-established roots. The countries from which Palestinians file an asylum claim are mostly European (98.6 percent of cases in 2021). According to a recent report, for example, Europe's northern countries—especially Denmark, Germany, the Netherlands, and Sweden—are generally the top destinations for Palestinian refugees from Lebanon (ICMPD 2019).

Denmark's recent asylum policy changes in 2018 have opened the door to 160 asylum applications by Palestinian refugees residing in UNRWA's areas of operations (Albanese and Takkenberg 2020, 277). A favorable naturalization policy is what has led many Palestinian refugees to choose Sweden over other countries: in 2019 alone, over 3000 Palestinian asylum-seekers categorized as "stateless" obtained citizenship documents in the country—although Sweden no longer considers Syria an unsafe place for refugees. Italy and France have also registered an increase of Palestinian arrivals following the outbreak of the war in Syria. It is estimated that over 1,000 Palestinians have found a refuge in France since 2011. A much larger number of Palestinians seems to have arrived in Germany fleeing the war in Syria; yet, again, data do not offer a clear picture of their real number (Albanese and Takkenberg 2020).

Like elsewhere in Europe, conflict and political turmoil in the Gaza Strip, Iraq, and Syria, as well as the deteriorating economic condition in Lebanon, have led to an increase in asylum applications from Palestinian refugees in Eastern and Northern European countries. Again, lack of accurate data prevents us from drawing meaningful conclusions on Palestinian migration trends in these countries. Moreover, displacement trends are subjected to the vagaries of each state. Since 2013, for example, Hungary has not recognized travel documents for Palestinian refugees issued by Syria but has granted international protection to Palestinians coming from Gaza, as well as registered Palestinian refugees from Jordan and Syria (Albanese and Takkenberg 2020).

Southern Europe has generally experienced a spike in the number of Palestinian refugees and asylum seekers from Syria, most likely due to the irregular nature of their journeys. Main entry points to Europe, located across the Central and Eastern Mediterranean routes, countries like Cyprus, Greece, Italy, and Spain have registered record numbers of Palestinian arrivals. UNHCR records show that high numbers of Palestinians have reached Italian shores, although it remains unclear how many of them have continued their journeys toward other destinations in Europe. Similarly, Cyprus has registered a consistent increase in arrivals of Palestinian refugees and asylum seekers since 2009, ranging between 1,500 and 2,000 per year. Refugees and asylum seekers from the State of Palestine only feature among the top ten nationalities of arrival in Greece in 2018 and 2019 (UNHCR 2022). The number of Palestinian refugees residing and passing through the country is likely to be considerably higher if we include stateless persons, whose majority is presumably represented by Palestinian refugees.

Western Balkan countries have traditionally been transit zones for Palestinian asylum seekers and refugees wishing to enter Europe. However, displacement patterns from UNRWA's areas of operation to Europe vary considerably depending on the fast-changing border control scenarios. The reality across the Western Balkan route changed in early 2016. The EU-Turkey agreement in March 2016, and the decision of many western Balkan countries to close their borders in the winter, considerably stemmed the flow of people (Frontex 2017). Yet, if the number of people crossing irregularly through Balkan countries dropped, the risk faced by Palestinian and other displaced communities of remaining stranded along the route substantially increased (Achilli and Abu Samra 2020). With denial of passage across Bosnia and Herzegovina, Croatia, Kosovo, Montenegro, and North Macedonia becoming the norm, the route's closure turned these counties into asylum destinations for many, including Palestinians. The actual number remains unknown since many Palestinians have gone missing after submitting their applications (Albanese and Takkenberg 2020, 296)

Since legal channels of migration have been largely precluded to Palestinian refugees, Turkey has become a gathering point for Palestinian refugees and asylum seekers fleeing the war in Syria. The conflict substantially increased the already considerable presence of Palestinians in the country. It is estimated that by the end of 2017 almost 4 million refugees resided in Turkey; around 15,000 were Palestinian

refugees. However, the number of Palestinians is presumed to be considerably higher since it seems likely many lied about their origin for fear of being rejected.

The rest of the world

There are large communities of Palestinians in Latin America, Canada, and the US. Many established communities migrated during the second half of the nineteenth century, followed by other waves of refugees after the 1948 and 1967 wars, and again after the first and second Gulf wars. The last wave arrived following the recent political strife in the Middle East, especially after the outbreak of conflict in Syria in 2011 (Albanese and Takkenberg 2020). Generally, data on recent migration trends of Palestinian refugees in the Americas are extremely poor and fragmented. After the outbreak of the Syrian war, Brazil established a humanitarian visa program for war-displaced refugees. In 2018, over 9,000 humanitarian visas were issued and 348 registered Palestinians obtained refugee status; this number is presumably higher if we also include those Palestinians granted refugee status under the category of Syrian refugees. A similar program has been also set up by Argentina, although as of 2018 only a minority of the visas pledged were eventually allocated to people fleeing the Syrian war as of 2018 (Albanese and Takkenberg 2020, 303-307). As for North America, data are poor and there are no recent estimates. For example, there are almost no data on the arrival of Palestinian to the United States after the resettlement of almost 1,500 Palestinians from Iraq in 2009 (Albanese and Takkenberg 2020, 310). Canada has established special resettlement measures for Syrian refugees fleeing the war. Between 2015 and 2020, around 45,000 Syrian refugees arrived in Canada, including Palestinian refugees, although their number remains unknown.

The number of Palestinians in the Asia-Pacific region is generally small. Significant numbers started to arrive around 2010, reaching a peak in 2013. As of July 2017, UNHCR registered around 2,000 Palestinian refugees and asylum seekers in the region, adding to the communities of Palestinians who had arrived in 1948 and 1967 as migrants. Likewise, there are Palestinian communities scattered across the African continent. In recent years, small communities of Palestinian refugees have been recorded arriving in various parts of Africa, including Kenya, South Africa, the Sudan, and West Africa. Available data provide very little information on the characteristics and distribution of this population. In this sense, we agree with Albanese and Takkenberg that the growing presence of Palestinian refugees in parts of the word where they have been historically

underrepresented "is a direct result of the failure to find a just solution to their plight. With no such solution in sight, and with continuing instability in the Arab region, the patterns of displacement, dispossession, denial of agency, and vulnerability that have been the lot of generations of Palestinians are likely to continue" (2020, 322). In sum, while the numbers of Palestinian refugees in these regions is statistically irrelevant, especially when compared to the size of their populations, it is indicative of both the acute condition of distress that prompted their journeys and the obstacles that they face in using legal channels of mobility.

VI. Projection of possible migration trends

The six drivers of migration do not show any sign of abatement: acute socio-economic drivers in terms of employment, poverty, and food insecurity; increase in vulnerability of legal status in terms of discriminatory laws and socio-political marginalization; insecurity drivers; UNRWA's defunding; a coercive environment; and the effects of climate change. The Ukrainian crisis should be added to these drivers, as well as the post-Covid-19 economic crisis. These crises have a tremendous negative impact, not only on the northern host counties but also on sending countries, by exacerbating the socio-economic condition of inhabitants, triggering new migration waves, and increasing the difficulties of non-European citizens to enter the EU states.

In this section, in addition to the PCBS data and other surveys mentioned in previous sections about the propensity to migrate in relationship to specific migration drivers, we will highlight some in-depth data coming from the Arab Index specifically concerning the population in the West Bank and Gaza Strip, as well Palestinians in Jordan. The last Arab Opinion Index 2019-20 survey by the Arab Center for Research and Policy Studies (ACRPS) shows a willingness to migrate among 32 percent of young people in the Gaza Strip (not only refugees), and among 24 percent of the Palestinians in Jordan (unpublished data, ACRPS 2021). This trend is mostly related only to young people. The 2019-20 survey shows a moderate willingness to migrate for all ages (20 and 33 percent, respectively, in the Palestinian territories and among the Palestinians in Jordan). Nevertheless, looking at the five previous Arab Index surveys (2011, 2012-13, 2014, 2015, 2016), we noticed a gradually increased rate of willingness to migrate: from 13 percent in 2011 to 20 percent in 2019-20. The situation among Palestinians in Jordan is the same: willingness to migrate increased from 18 percent in 2011 to 33 percent in

2019-20. When the question was asked about the main reason for migration in 2019-20 Arab Index, Palestinians from Jordan mainly gave economic reasons (92 percent) while in the Palestinian territories, responses were more varied: 70 percent for economic reasons, 13 percent for security reasons, ten percent for education purposes, and five percent for political reasons.

Regarding the best country/region of destination, 45 percent of respondents in the Palestinian territories wished to go to Europe and another 16 percent to North America. Curiously, 21 percent wanted to go to Turkey, while only 7 percent wanted to go to the Gulf. The last small percentage reflects the very restrictive entry policies for Palestinians from the Palestinian territories. When it comes to Palestinians from Jordan, they are much less willing to migrate to Europe (only 17 percent) compared to North America (40 percent). The Gulf and Turkey remain also attractive destinations (respectively 18 and 13 percent). Beyond the Arab Index data and based on other surveys, we expect:

- **Increasing trend in Palestinian migration flows from UNRWA's five areas of operations to other countries, especially in Europe in the event of a significant reduction or complete interruption of UNRWA's service delivery**. The six drivers of migration do not show any sign of abatement. These are: (1) acute socio-economic drivers in terms of employment, poverty, and food insecurity; (2) increase in vulnerability of legal status in terms of discriminatory laws and socio-political marginalization; (3) insecurity; (4) UNRWA's defunding; (5) a coercive environment; and (6) the effect of climate change. To all these drivers, the Ukraine war and the post-Covid-19 economic crisis also have a tremendous negative impact by exacerbating the socio-economic conditions of Palestinian refugees, likely triggering new migration waves in a context marked by the tightening of controls to access European borders and despite the non-welcoming policy of many Gulf monarchies.
- **Growing reliance on informal channels of mobility among Palestinian refugees on the move, with a concomitant increase in protection incidents and human rights abuses during their journeys along irregular routes.** The EU and its member states' policies are overwhelmingly based on implementing a security-based response to irregular migration. Concomitantly with the

externalization of border controls and asylum responsibilities to third countries, the EU has tightened border controls along its southern and eastern borders. This course of policy action, and the recrudescence of political instability in some of the territories that refugees crossed during their displacement, considerably increased the protection risks faced by Palestinians on the move. While it is unclear whether these factors will substantially stem the irregular flow of Palestinian refugees in the long term, in the short term they have ultimately increased Palestinians' vulnerability abuses and violence by multiple actors (e.g., authorities, gangs, militias), as well as their reliance on organizations of facilitators operating in highly insecure and dangerous contexts.

VII. Recommendations

The results of this research have various implications both for programming and policy:[125]

For programming

- **Address migration drivers by combining relief, education, and health approaches with the development approach.** This could be at the level of UNRWA activities but also other levels (e.g., host governments in UNRWA areas of intervention). The current debate on development (vs. relief) entails not only education and health but also job generation, micro-credit, and other policy tools and interventions designed to make refugees independent from humanitarian aid.
- **Expand research and data collection on Palestinian refugees' mobility patterns within and outside UNRWA's five areas of operation.** While this report contributes to understanding the potential factors that may influence refugees' migration trends, there is still a severe lack of data on the phenomenon.

[125] Notwithstanding the specificities associated with the Palestinian case, this paper's analysis and recommendations echo in part those elaborated by other reports on displacement and migration trends. Among these, it is worth mentioning the 2019 UNDP report, "The Scaling Fences: Voices of Irregular African Migrants to Europe." That report presents the results of an extensive study exploring the perspectives and experiences of 1,970 individuals who migrated through irregular routes from Africa to Europe, originating from 39 African countries.

- **Geographically tailor protection programming.** The findings suggest that mobility is often interpreted as a coping mechanism to address major security risks among Palestinian refugees on the move, especially PRS. Therefore, protection programming should specifically continue and be enhanced to address these issues in the locations where they are most likely to occur.
- **Reorient education systems and curricula.** The low demand for white-collar professions, not only in the UNRWA operation areas but also in receiving countries in Europe and North America, requires different orientations for the education systems in both UNRWA and host country educational systems.
- **Raise awareness of the effects of climate change and related challenges.** UNRWA, as well as refugee host countries, should have an awareness campaign about curtailing water consumption and using alternative energy in order to face the challenges of global climate change.
- **Take action to reduce water insecurity and food insecurity.** Such actions include (but are not limited to): the development of flood contingency plans, local increases in rainfall interception capacity, clear water use priorities, more efficient irrigation techniques, increased (sustainable) production of freshwater, prioritization of irrigation for high-value crops, and identification and selection of crop and ruminants for more tolerance to heat and drought.

For policy

- **End the Israeli-Egyptian blockade of Gaza and ensure all duty bearers meet their obligations under international law.** Israel's closure is the dominant factor in the worsening humanitarian situation in Gaza. The international community should therefore demand that Israel and Egypt ensure free mobility of all kinds. Blockade and its associated restrictions collectively punish an entire population in the Gaza Strip. There is a strong need to regularly open border crossings to allow people unimpeded and timely access to healthcare and education services outside Gaza, and the entry of medical items and equipment into Gaza.
- **Alleviate legal restrictions in host countries.** Host governments, particularly in Lebanon, should alleviate restrictions in terms of work permits and the right to own property.

- **Open the labor market of neighboring Arab countries to Palestinian refugees.** Allowing Palestinian access to Gulf states, as well as to other Arab countries (e.g., Algeria and Libya), could have a tremendous effect on them in UNRWA areas.
- **Be less restrictive in terms of family reunification policies and open new channels of legal entry to Palestinian refugees.** In particular, the European and the Gulf governments should be less restrictive in terms of family reunification policies; open new channels of legal entry; reinforce existing channels by granting humanitarian visas and creating humanitarian corridors between transit countries and Europe; expand states' resettlement programs; and facilitate alternative legal routes (such as family reunification, university fellowships and scholarships, training programs, etc.).
- **Avoid discriminatory approaches and promote good governance in UNRWA camps.** Addressing the security drivers in UNRWA areas requires not only less discriminatory approaches by the host government against Palestinian refugees, but also efforts from the Palestinian popular committees in refugee camps (particularly in Lebanon, Gaza Strip and West Bank) to create good governance in the refugee camps (e.g., through fair election process of the members of these committees).
- **Address UNRWA's budgetary crisis.** Donors should address the severe financial crisis currently afflicting UNRWA (which impacts its ability to maintain services to Palestine refugees) and ensure that basic services to Palestine refugees continue in the West Bank, Gaza, Syria, Jordan, and Lebanon.
- **Closely monitor the extent of unlawful forcible transfer throughout the oPt and the variety of means through which Israel pursues this displacement.** Such monitoring efforts by key actors must be simultaneously accompanied by third-party states taking meaningful steps towards the realization of their legal obligation to ensure the cessation of Israeli-perpetrated forcible transfer and to hold to account those responsible for such transfers.
- **Consider climate-related challenges and take swift action to address them.** Socio-economic vulnerability to climate change in the oPt cannot be

disentangled from the socio-political context. Israel's restrictions on importing goods and its near monopoly of water resources should be addressed.

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PAPER ABSTRACTS

THE UN MANDATE TOWARD THE PALESTINIAN REFUGEES: THE LEGAL IMPERATIVES OF A MORAL RESPONSIBILITY

Francesca ALBANESE and Ardi IMSEIS

For most of the past seven decades, the international community has primarily concentrated its support to Palestinian refugees on sustaining the UN Relief and Works Agency for Palestine Refugees in the Near East (UNRWA) while, regrettably, disengaging with the underlying causes of the plight of the Palestinian refugees and related grievances. At this critical point in the life of UNRWA (largely owing to "donor fatigue"), the matter of the Palestinian refugees deserves to be lifted from the stagnation and dependence it has been condemned and forced into. It is time to step up efforts and reignite the discussion, taking full advantage of UNRWA's unique and leading 73-year role in service of the Palestinian refugees.

Approaching Palestinian refugees and UNRWA solely through humanitarian and human development frameworks—or only based on financial considerations, as has been done by the UN for the majority of its engagement with the issue—is both woefully immoral and fundamentally unjust. It represents a betrayal of the UN's permanent responsibility for the question of Palestine until it is resolved in all of its aspects in accordance with international law. The Palestinian refugee question is a political issue, which requires a political solution, in line with international law (i.e., humanitarian and development strategies, though important, are palliatives).

A more fulsome understanding, diagnostic and "principled pragmatism" in approaching both the Palestinian refugees and UNRWA is called for, including with regard to protection and durable solutions. This has a number of implications.

First: Palestinian refugees remain a permanent UN responsibility. If not for the UN decision to partition British Mandate Palestine in in 1947, the Palestinian refugees would not be in the place they are today. The international community is legally, politically, and morally obligated to support UNRWA's mandate so as to comprehensively respond to the needs and rights of the refugees based on international law and the unique permanent responsibility of the UN for the question of Palestine. This requires a proper and fulsome understanding of the legal situation (i.e., legal status and treatment) of Palestinian refugees, including descendants, wherever they are (UNRWA's areas of operation; areas where protection needs are met by UNHCR), and the UN framework set up for them as of 1948.

Second: UNRWA was established as part of a comprehensive UN framework to resolve the question of Palestine that included the UN Conciliation Commission for Palestine (UNCCP) and incorporated both protection and durable solution functions. Not only does that framework remain valid, with all the rights it affords Palestinian refugees, but it has also evolved, impacting UNRWA's mandate and the way it is to be discharged.

Third: The relationship between the UN and the Palestinian refugees is one of a fiduciary nature. The current modicum of support provided by UNRWA to the refugees is absolutely the minimum to be granted, pending the realization of a durable solution of their plight in line with relevant international law and practice. It is neither in the nature of a dole nor is it a substitute for sustained political action. But it is also not ordinary humanitarian aid. While the UN regime set up for Palestinian refugees was not conceived

as a trusteeship, it possesses the features and rationale of a trusteeship. The Agency's political and financial resources should be commensurate with the responsibilities it discharges for the benefit of the refugees it serves in an effective trust relationship.

Fourth: Pressure by individual states—or elements within those states—on UNRWA or using reduction of financial contributions to resolve the political conundrum by further reducing services to Palestine refugees (instead of doing what is necessary: comprehensively address needs and rights of all Palestinian refugees), falls outside the commitment that the UN has taken vis-à-vis Palestinian refugees. It is also profoundly illogical and politically hazardous because it will only aggravate existing instability and mistrust toward the UN system.

Fifth: For the full realization of the UN mandate toward Palestinian refugees, UNRWA's strategic direction must gradually and radically evolve from providing humanitarian assistance and support for human development to a more comprehensive response to all aspects of the Palestinian refugee question, including an expanded focus on protection and durable solutions. By doing so, the Agency would build on its existing mandate in protecting the rights of the Palestinian refugees and address the void left by the UNCCP's demise. For this to happen, a paradigm shift is needed that gives proper weight to a rights-based approach centred on the refugees, advances the development of a multistakeholder platform under the aegis of the UN, and actively (re)engages host countries and donors. A comprehensive approach has the potential to break the current impasse.

In conclusion: The international community (and primarily major donors) must treat UNRWA within the larger context of the UN's permanent responsibility, allowing it to move beyond the limits of foreign aid budgets with full respect for the fiduciary obligation assumed by the UN in 1947. This will also help elevate the discourse on UNRWA and its vital work beyond the current limits of the humanitarian and developmental frameworks within which it operates. This will ultimately allow UNRWA and others to help the UN fulfil its permanent responsibility toward the Palestinian refugees in accordance with the relevant requirements of international law.

UNRWA'S CONTRIBUTION TO SOCIO-ECONOMIC STABILITY

Jalal AL HUSSEINI and Joseph SABA

Since at least 2000, UNRWA has struggled in a vortex of crises to sustain human development and preserve socio-economic stability, as frustrated refugees await an ever-receding "just solution." Since its inception, UNRWA has been remarkably successful in providing education, health, and social welfare services. However, cascading challenges driven by political tensions, global economic declines, pandemics, and food insecurity threaten its ability to maintain service delivery at historic levels of quality and equity. There is broad consensus that the present situation calls for institutional reassessment and realignment. UNRWA's strategic maneuverability remains constrained by a number of factors, particularly the discriminatory legal status accorded Palestine refugees, geo-political dynamics, and UNRWA's particular mandate, as well as its own structures and available resources. Nevertheless, the current dire circumstances also present UNRWA with justifications and opportunities to forge a practical theory of change for effective socio-economic response and adaptation to the multidimensional crises it now faces. The first step is a realistic, evidence-based assessment of the refugees' socioeconomic indicators and their prospects, as well as the risks presented in the present context. That

assessment would inform the likely bounds, needs, and requirements of change; suggest structural and operational options; identify critical resources; and calibrate associated risks.

Understanding the Palestine refugees' living conditions and opportunities across UNRWA's fields of operation requires examining the multiple, variegated legal statuses and the mosaic of socio-economic rights host countries have accorded and denied them since the Nakba (the 1948 "catastrophe"). Endorsed by the Arab League, the legal and socio-economic statuses and rights have been underpinned by two main principles. The first is that, in the name of the preservation of their "right of return" as based *inter alia* on UN General Assembly resolution 194 of December 1948, the refugees should not be fully assimilated (through the granting of citizenship) in their host country. This "positive discrimination" policy naturally had less impact in the West Bank and the Gaza Strip, where refugees and non-refugees have been granted the same legal status. The second principle, upheld in the numerous Arab League resolutions compiled in the 1965 "Casablanca Protocol," stipulates that, while retaining their Palestinian nationality, the refugees should be granted the right of employment, travel, and residence inside and outside the host countries on par with host state citizens. UNRWA's unique role would be to administer programmes addressing the basic needs of those with Palestine refugee status, particularly the vulnerable. UNRWA would also become the symbol of the international commitment to find a just solution to the Palestine refugee issue.

In practice, however, the Arab host countries have adapted their socio-economic treatment of refugees to their own economic and political considerations. Jordan for instance, contravened Arab League principles by granting citizenship to the Palestine refugees as early as 1949, as a move to promote the country's institutional and socio-economic development through their full integration—without, however, denying the "sanctity" of the right of return or questioning UNRWA's mandate. The controversial relations between host countries and the Palestinian national movement since the late 1960s and, later, uncertainties regarding the permanent status of the refugees in the absence of any progress in the Israel-Palesitnian "Oslo" peace process, combined with domestic political economy issues, led Arab countries (including Jordan and Lebanon) to adopt discriminatory measures against Palestine refugees that have primarily affected their access to the labor market, as well as to some essential services.

Since the 2000s, the socio-economic situation of Palestine refugees (and that of their host societies) has deteriorated, due to the hardening of Israeli occupation policies in the West Bank and Gaza, the Syria war and the refugee crises it has triggered in Jordan and Lebanon, the crumbling of the Lebanon economy, and the outbreak of the COVID-19 pandemic. Available labor market-related data (economic participation and unemployment) indicate that, in comparative terms, legal status is a key factor. Palestine refugees not on par with the host population are worse off, in terms of unemployment, in Lebanon and amongst "ex-Gazans" in Jordan more particularly. In contrast, in the West Bank and Gaza, economic participation rates are similar and unemployment rates slightly higher. Within the Palestine refugee population, camp refugees suffer from higher unemployment rates, including in the West Bank and Gaza.

Limits on economic participation and unemployment are not the only triggers of poverty/well-being. Macroeconomic factors, such as low wage levels and high inflation rates, combined with the nature of employment, matter as well. Governmental discriminatory measures imposed by host authorities, coupled with the practices of the local private sector toward Palestine refugees, have relegated many of them to informal, precarious, and low-paid jobs. Poverty figures indicate higher poverty in Syria, Lebanon,

and Gaza, as compared the West Bank and Jordan. They also highlight the deep impact of the discriminatory status imposed by Lebanon on Palestine refugees, as well as by Jordan on the ex-Gazans. Finally, higher poverty levels are reported in refugee camps across the Near East.

What role has and could UNRWA play against such a grim socio-economic context? It is generally admitted that its educational services have guaranteed a decent level of human development for generations of refugees compared with regional indicators. In addition to its health, relief, and camp improvement programs, together with employment opportunities within its services for local staff, have contributed to maintaining greater than subsistence-level living conditions to the most vulnerable refugees. In addition, emergency interventions that are quasi-universal today in war-stricken Syrian and Gaza have been key to their survival.

Operationally, since the mid-2000s, UNRWA has also made efforts to frame and reorient its programs along the UNDP-crafted Human Development Framework and cross-program issues, such as protection and refugee participation. It has also sought to decentralize its international organization while improving the monitoring of its services and increasing their efficiency by clipping non-essential costs. Such progress has not been reciprocated by increases of its main donor country per capita contributions, plunging UNRWA into chronic financial crises. While emergency interventions have been relatively well-funded, donors have questioned the relevance of the general programs that actually function as "siloed" quasi-governmental entities; donors also fail to assess their long-term impact against the current deteriorated socio-economic regional context. UNRWA has not succeeded in integrating its programs with donors' overall regional strategies and has often failed to leverage its success and value with key decisionmaking donor institutions. Donor "fatigue" with UNRWA has also to do with the failed Israeli-Palestinian peace process and the prospect of having to fund its mandate *ad aeternam*. Conversely, donors focused on the immediate crises of the day have been unable to put forward unified recommendations about the long-term orientations (humanitarian or developmental) UNRWA should adopt. They have also consistently treated UNRWA as separate from their other socio-economic interventions in the Near East, thus neglecting the regional scope and impact of its activities.

Looking forward requires thoroughly assessing the institutional, political, and socio-economic contexts UNRWA is called upon to operate in terms of risks and opportunities.

The multidimensional political and socio-economic risks affecting host countries, combined with alterations or reductions to UNRWA service delivery, pose both immediate and longer-term negative consequences if left unattended. In the short term, UNRWA's financial crises will likely lead to evermore insufficient service delivery, as Palestinians must pay more for less, often struggling to access their meagre salaries and enduring extended power cuts and shortages of critical items such as medicines. For host communities, given UNRWA's quasi-governmental role, any demise of UNRWA services would also severely impact the socio-economic situation in each of the five fields. In the longer run, the human security of the refugees and their host communities would be jeopardized. Intertwined with the socio-economic impact of changes in service delivery is the risk of the unpredictable impact of a diminished UNRWA, especially in emergencies, on host countries' socio-political situations, the overall Israeli-Palestinian conflict, and regional stability. In the short and long term, these risks and their potential consequences together pose existential risks to UNRWA, challenging its legitimacy to discharge its mandate.

This situation should prompt UNRWA to further enhance its relations with its stakeholders. First, by improved engagement with decisionmakers of UN member states, refugee host states, and refugee communities, as well as with private institutions. Second, through the provision of evidence-based information targeted to serve as incentives for decisionmakers and their key advisers to react more favorably to supporting UNRWA's mandate for the sake of the protection of human rights, of human development, and of stability in the host states and the region.

A first, practical step in reaching these goals would be to undertake a comprehensive risk and opportunities assessment and profile encompassing the way the Agency identifies risks and adapts to them, and the extent to which it seeks to partner with other humanitarian and developmental institutions, UN agencies, and donor institutions to leverage its internal risk assessment and security measures, and to implement its human development agenda. Ultimately, this and the Agency's regular results-based monitoring could be integrated to forge a theory of change demonstrating high order outcomes consistently over time, reflecting the development of monitoring, evaluation, accountability, and learning (MEAL) systems to track these aims. Such a theory of change would be bound by geopolitical political economy dynamics but should, again, be able to clearly identify areas of cooperation and partnerships with international, regional, and national stakeholders (including the private sector) in the fields of data collection, analysis, and information sharing, as well as joint planning and ventures.

ANALYSIS OF KEY SECURITY TRENDS IN UNRWA'S AREAS OF OPERATION

Imad SALAMEY and Alaa TARTIR

UNRWA areas of operation have been challenged by more than 70 years of protracted instability, witnessing internal and external violent conflicts that drove host and refugee populations into a permanent struggle for survival. Since the beginning of the 1948 Arab-Israeli conflict and the resulting displacement of Palestinian refugees, the West Bank, Gaza, Jordan, Syria, and Lebanon have endured an ongoing state of violence, throughout which the unprotected and vulnerable civilian populations fell victim. As such, various Palestinian camps, which are beneficiaries of UNRWA services, have become targets of major bombardments, massacres, and destruction. Instability has also paved the way for difficult socio-economic, legal, and political conditions that exacerbate the frustration of local communities, particularly Palestinian refugees. This has remained the case throughout the past decade.

In fact, Palestinian-Israeli and Palestinian-Palestinian violent encounters in the West Bank and Gaza only deteriorated conditions within and around refugee camps. Violence in Syria resulted in the destruction of many camps, and the conflict spilled over to camps in Lebanon. In turn, Lebanon, Syria, Turkey, and Jordan witnessed the "displacement of the displaced," as Palestinian refugees sought secondary refuge while fleeing violence in Syria. At the same time, the rise of transnational radical Islamist groups has also implicated UNRWA areas of operation by deepening sectarian fragmentations and mobilizing populations within and around camps. Moreover, growing polarization has been fueled by regional contestations between Israel, Iran, Saudi Arabia, and Turkey that aggravate local tensions and undermine camp security.

Such turbulent conflict dynamics in UNRWA areas of operation have weakened the efficiency of UNRWA efforts. In addition, the unstable and fluid situation is reflected in the fact that each of the 58 camps benefitting from UNRWA services experiences its

own internal and external conflict dynamics; a phenomenon that requires the customization and the contextualization of interventions in each camp. Despite all interruptions and difficult conditions, UNRWA continued to provide its services to Palestinian refugee populations. In 2021, there were 5,792,907 registered Palestinian refugees eligible for UNRWA services, such as education, health, relief, and protection, among others. UNRWA has been able to maintain these services despite instability and declining funds.

UNRWA's impact on the Palestinian refugee population has been quite significant, especially in terms of providing vulnerable populations with the essential human rights stipulated by the UN and guided by its humanitarian, development, and peace nexus. There are evident links that highlight UNRWA's contribution to achieving human security among the refugees. Human security is a condition often cited in research as a significant factor in undermining desperation and pushing individuals towards radicalization and violent extremism. However, such an assurance cannot be taken as sufficient, given the complexity and intertwining of conflict drivers within UNRWA's areas of operations.

UNRWA efforts have been faced by several critical voices calling for cuts in financial contributions. The justifications for such demands have primarily been that UNRWA-provided services have not succeeded in achieving stability in camps nor in undermining radicalization among Palestinian youths. Extremist positions have accused the agency of promoting Palestinian violence against Israel and advocating for fundamentalist views in its education curricula.

This background paper assesses these criticisms in light of various research efforts examining the relationship between service provision to vulnerable populations, stabilization, and radicalization. Most research hypothesizes associations between these variables and concludes that service provision strengthens the human security of the vulnerable population, consequently contributing to stabilization and to undermining radical appeals. Nevertheless, such a linkage is often weakened when the conflict dynamic overwhelms other relevant stabilizers. Under such unstable circumstances, services provide for the critical livelihood and protection of the vulnerable population in order to prevent the dramatic deterioration or total collapse of the system. Alternatives and growing vulnerability can easily play out in favor of extremist pull factors and radical mobilizations.

This paper finds that UNRWA service provision, including educational programing, has contributed to human security among refugees and been performed in compliance with UN values and principles. It argues that support to the agency should be realistic and not conditioned by unattainable and politicized demands beyond its mandate. UNRWA can, however, adapt to new situations by incorporating the mainstreaming of human rights and the prevention of violent extremism (PVE) within its educational curricula. In addition, the paper argues that the denial of the Palestinian refugees' right to basic security is a feature of almost all refugee camps, as the camp site itself is a representation of insecurity and an outcome of violence in the first place. Even when camps appear to be "stable," they remain far from being "secure" as insecurities are structurally embedded in the very idea of the camp.

Security matters, this paper argues, because it enables UNRWA's to deliver its services more efficiently and effectively. It protects and strengthens the human security of the vulnerable population, hence contributing to stabilization and to undermining radical appeals. It prohibits violent radical groups from fulfilling needs gaps (or at least minimizes their options and opportunities). Finally, better security maintains levels of

stability, blocks avenues for criminality or radicality, and discourages the ambition, plan, and act of migration.

The paper presents an initial analytical and methodological tool, called the MRE Matrix. It assesses some of the implications of maintaining the same level of services versus reducing them versus ending them on security and socio-political stability in the areas of UNRWA's operations—all from a security perspective.

The paper recommends avoiding the "trap of stability," warns about conflating security with stability, calls upon the UNRWA to further mainstream human rights within its educational curricula, and urges UNRWA to lead a process to redefine humanitarian intervention and redesign an alternative external aid framework that recognizes structures of power and relations of colonial dominance while rearticulating processes of development as being linked to the struggle for rights, resistance, and emancipation.

Finally, the paper calls for the adoption of a context- and conflict-specific humanitarian–development–peace nexus; warns about the dual use of the notion of resilience; and invites the different stakeholders to reconcile the tension between short-term interventions and longer-term visions, to focus on community-led initiatives for socio-political reconciliation, and to center the notion and practice of accountability in UNRWA's programmatic interventions within and beyond the oPt. A new framework for intervention is well past due. Future strategies for UNRWA offer a conducive avenue to shift gears and change course towards focusing on and centering the human security of Palestinian refugees as a way to get them closer to realizing their rights—including their rights for return, self-determination, and freedom.

MIGRATION TRENDS OF PALESTINIAN REFUGEES REGISTERED WITH UNRWA

Luigi ACHILLI and Sari HANAFI

The objective of this paper is to identify migration drivers among Palestine refugees. To do, the paper relies on a comprehensive desk review of literature related to the migration of Palestinian refugees in the last 10 years. The paper shows how immigration motivators are almost the same among refugees in Lebanon, Gaza, the West Bank, and Jordan. In each of these areas, Palestinian refugees deal with insufferable conditions of socio-economic, legal, and political dysfunction; lack of security; environmental problems; crowdedness of their refugee camps; and the absence of real substantial change that could ensure them a respectable future. To that can be added the defunding of UNRWA services. In Syria, the outbreak of the conflict and its devasting consequences have even further exacerbated these triggers. While no single factor can be cited as the cause of increased migration trends among Palestinians living in UNRWA's five areas of operation, together they have concurred to create a general feeling of disappointment, hopelessness, and defeat that has prompted many to leave or consider leaving their homes.

We identified six migration drivers ordered according to their importance: socio-economic drivers, legal status, (in)security drivers, UNRWA's defunding, coercive environment, and climate change related challenges.

- Socio-economic drivers: the main reason for emigration in Lebanon, Gaza, and the West Bank is the lack of employment opportunities and high living expenses. In Lebanon, nearly three-quarters of the Palestinian population lived below the poverty line in 2021, while in Gaza they amount to 81 percent of the entire population (Crisis Monitoring Report, 2021). Eleven percent of West Bank

Palestinians face multidimensional poverty (WFP and PCBS, June 2021). The percentage of Palestinian refugees from Syria (PRS) in Lebanon and Jordan living in poverty in 2021 increased by eight percent from its 2017-2018 level, reaching 82 percent.

- Legal status: discriminatory laws are a substantial motivator for emigration. Palestinian refugees have lived under a variety of different national jurisdictions, which in some cases led to clear forms of discrimination and socio-economic marginalization. In Lebanon, restrictive policies have contributed to Palestinian mass migration overseas. This situation also applies to PRS in Jordan and Lebanon, who often work without working permits, which puts them at risk of severe forms of exploitation and abuse, among other things (ILO 2015).
- (In)Security drivers: Palestinian refugees have lived through wars in a region with only brief moments of peace—the Arab-Israeli wars in 1967 and 1973; Israeli war on the Palestinian territories and the Second Intifada 2000-2005; Israeli war on Gaza in 2008, 2012, 2014, and 2021; Israeli wars in Lebanon in 1982 and 2006; the Iraq-Iran war from 1980-88; the 1991 Iraq invasion of Kuwait; the wars on Iraq in 1991 and 2003; the ongoing war on Syria since 2011; the ongoing war in Yemen since 2014; and the war in Libya 2014 to 2020. These wars unleashed a level of mass destruction, suffering, and ultimately displacement (if not altogether death).
- UNRWA's defunding: crippled with an inadequate budget, UNRWA has struggled to run its programs across its five areas of operation. This has had serious consequences for the capacity of the health and education system in Gaza, Lebanon, and the West Bank where UNRWA is a major provider for the population. A recent report, for example, noted how the degraded situation in UNRWA schools was often mentioned as a triggering factors for migration by the Palestinian community in Lebanon (ICMPD 2019).
- Coercive environment: Israeli acts and policies inside the oPt have created a coercive environment for Palestinians" (HRC 2016: paras 22, 27). These are prompting patterns of forced displacement among the Palestinian population, including refugees. Forcible transfer of Palestinians can occur through a multiplicity of means ranging from unlawful killing, direct coercion, or threats of force to denial of basic rights, the impossibility of securing a livelihood, and the creation of a toxic environment characterized by the constant fear of detention and violence.
- Climate change and environmental issues: the consequences of climate change on migration present humanity with an unprecedented challenge. A plethora of studies have highlighted the environment and displacement nexus. Three particularities of the Arab region make people affected by environmental pressures particularly prone to displacement: the dearth of water, the transboundary nature of this water, and creeping urbanization (Hanafi 2016). These pressures are likely affecting not only the Arab population in general but also the Palestinian refugees living across the region.

We also identified certain migration trends, both inside and outside the Arab region, and consider potential future migration trends.

Inside the Arab region: Palestinian displacement patterns within the UNRWA areas of operation mainly pertain to refugees who left Syria after the outbreak of the war

in 2011. Since the start of the crisis, UNRWA estimates that 120,000 refugees have left Syria for other countries, including Lebanon, Jordan, Gaza, Turkey, Egypt, and increasingly to Europe (UNRWA 2021). However, significant numbers of refugees are leaving UNRWA's fields of operations, especially from Lebanon, Syria, and Gaza (UNRWA's Eligibility and Registration Division 2021). Finally, smaller communities of Palestinians have found refuge in other countries in the Arab region, including—but not limited—to Egypt and Iraq. Despite lacking an exact figure of Palestinians in these countries, secondary sources show how the instability caused by political turmoil in the region has negatively impacted their number and protection, leading to new cycles of arrival and departure.

Outside the Arab region: over the years, wars, poverty, and discrimination have pushed the frontiers of Palestinian displacement outside the Arab region and into Europe, the Americas, Asia-Pacific, and Africa (Albanese and Takkenberg 2020). The recent political turmoil and conflicts in Iraq, the oPt, and Syria have confirmed this trend. Palestinians seem to prefer European countries over the US, for example, or Canada, which might be because some European countries like Germany, Sweden, and France have opened their borders to Syrian refugees. This for a number of significant factors ranging from the role of diaspora networks and better job markets to physical proximity and higher asylum recognition rates, as well as higher human rights standards. Yet, increasingly restrictive policies adopted by Western states vis-à-vis asylum seekers seem to have pushed Palestinian refugees to consider different routes and alternative destinations.

Projection of possible migration trends: since we are not witnessing any abatement in the six migration drivers highlighted above, we have pinpointed two possible trends. The first is an increasing trend in Palestinian migration flows from UNRWA's five areas of operations to other countries, especially in Europe, as a result of the ongoing impact—and in some cases, exacerbation (e.g., UNRWA economic crisis, climate change)—of the highlighted drivers. The second is a growing reliance on informal channels of mobility by Palestinian refugees on the move, with a concomitant increase in the frequency of protection incidents and human rights abuses during their journeys along irregular routes.

THE CONTRIBUTORS

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APPENDIX 1

EXCERPTS FROM THE MEMORANDUM OF UNDERSTANDING BETWEEN UNRWA AND THE GRADUATE INSTITUTE

Project Description

1. Overall Objective:

UNRWA has embarked on a strategic process to develop a new vision to strengthen its ability to provide services to Palestine Refugees in line with its United Nations General Assembly mandate while adapting to an increasingly challenging environment.
This strategic process primarily rests on a multilateral dialogue, led by the UN Secretariat and UNRWA, to discuss with key stakeholders the Agency´s future operational model and budget. Such as strategic dialogue aims to frame ongoing working-level discussions into a broader discussion pertaining to regional stability, the UN's overall mandates and responsibility for the rights and well-being of Palestine refugees, and the centrality of those rights to regional stability.
To this end, UNRWA has mandated an academic group of experts to produce robust analytical reports on four key topics outlined in the current terms of reference.

2. Project Scope

In line with the above, under the leadership of the IHEID, a team of renowned Middle East Experts will be mandated to generate evidence-based findings and robust analytical reports, drawing on existing data, and risk assessment on the key following topics:

1. The **legal international framework** pertaining to Palestine refugees' rights
2. **Key socio-economic data,** including a synthesis of up-to-date data on the human development status and socio-economic conditions of Palestine refugees in host countries; and provision of risk-assessments pertaining to the regional area of focus: West Bank, including East Jerusalem, Gaza, Jordan, Lebanon and Syria.
3. Analysis of key **security/radicalization trends** in the Agency´s areas of operations.
4. Analysis of existing **migration trends** of Palestine refugees and projection of potential changes in such trends in the event of UNRWA's strategic weakening or implosion.

3. Anticipated Coverage

The scope of the reports will focus predominantly on the work of the Agency over the past five years. They will cover to the extent possible: (i) all fields of UNRWA operations, Gaza, the West Bank, including East Jerusalem, Lebanon, Syria and Jordan; and (ii) all services that the Agency provides to Palestine refugees - health, education, relief and social services, infrastructure and camp improvement, microfinance, protection and emergency assistance.

The reports will document, in line with applicable international human rights and humanitarian law, the Agency´s key contributions to Palestine refugee human development, the broader UN stabilizing and conflict prevention efforts in the Middle East as well as evaluate key contextual socio-economic, security, legal and migration-related dynamics and risks.

4. Specific Objectives

a) Analysis of the legal international framework pertaining to Palestine refugees' rights

b) Analysis of key socio-economic data and provision of risk-assessments pertaining to the regional area of focus: West Bank, including East Jerusalem, Gaza, Jordan, Lebanon and Syria

The report will present key socio-economic data and trends in the regional area of focus. It will rely in part on information and data generated by UNRWA departments and fields, including on program delivery and performance, as well as crisis monitoring mechanisms in place in some fields.
Other data and information will be collected from high quality sources of accurate and timely information within the different fields. Key sources include the Palestinian Central Bureau of Statistics, the World Bank, WFP, UNOCHA, UNICEF and other relevant multilateral organisations and I/NGOs. Where possible analysis should be disaggregated by gender within each geographical location and by age, as relevant. The report should show trends in indicators over the past 5 years, including the impact of the COVID pandemic on socio-economic conditions.
The report will not include new data but rather synthesize existing information, with a focus on overall macro-economic conditions, poverty, food security and labour market conditions, alongside other social data (health, education, housing and WASH), and information on the impact of conflict. It will also analyse UNRWA's contribution to social services and poverty alleviation in different fields of operation, and to employment generation, including to women and youth.

Identify the legal framework applicable to Palestine refugees and the legal obligations that the
UN, including UNRWA, have and/or, should be aware of to realize the rights of Palestine refugees:

UN mandate toward Palestine refugees including UNRWA mandate (content and boundaries) and international agencies' responsibility-sharing; Palestine refugees' legal status and rights, including how the fulfillment of human rights intersects with:

- Maintaining regional stability
- Promoting the human development and human security of Palestine refugees
- Advancing the right of the Palestinian people to self-determination.

A brief assessment of lessons learnt and possible policy recommendations on the way forward.

The report will also provide departments and fields with important data, information and analysis on key issues such as:

- Analysis of current socio-economic conditions and recent trends in UNRWA's five areas of operation, in particular as relate to Palestine refugees. Assessment of the impact of UNRWA's service-delivery (health, education, social services, TVET, Microfinance projects...) on the: socio-economic stability of Palestine refugee communities and fulfillment of socio-economic rights of Palestine refugees.
- Fact-based assessment of the impact of UNRWA's services in terms of maintaining livelihoods, promoting employment, alleviating poverty and providing social services to Palestine refugees.
- Possible policy recommendations for the way forward, including regarding UNRWA's next Strategic Plan (2023-2028).

c) Analysis of key security trends in the Agency´s areas of operations

Identify key security trends and risks, including social, political and ideological causes of instability in host countries and in Palestine refugee communities in particular.
Assess the following key questions:

- Assessment of current security and radicalization trends within/around Palestine refugee communities in UNRWA's five areas of operation.
- Evaluation of the plausible impact of UNRWA's service delivery (health, education, social services...) on security/stability of Palestine refugee communities.
- Assessment of the impact of UNRWA's education program - promoting tolerance, human rights, gender equality and more generally UN values – in terms of prevention and mitigation of radicalization trends among Palestine refugee communities?
- Assessment of the linkage between security and socio-political stability within Palestine refugee communities and camps on the one hand and the maintenance, reduction or complete interruption of UNRWA's operations/services on the other.
- Identification, in light of past major incidents (for ex. destruction of Nahr El Bared camp in 2007), of lessons learnt and possible policy recommendations in terms of conflict and radicalization-prevention in host and neighboring countries.

d) Analysis of migration trends of Palestine refugees

Identify migration drivers among Palestine refugees, including the rising sense of desperation, the lack of political prospects, economic stagnation, conflict, occupation and blockade, denial of civil and political rights as well as social and economic rights and the lack of employment opportunities.

- Assessment of recent (during the past five years) and current migration trends of Palestine refugees into and out of UNRWA's five areas of operation: Gaza, West Bank, including East Jerusalem, Lebanon, Syria and Jordan.

- Identification of key indicators/drivers, by order of relevance, of migration trends of Palestine refugees.
- Review of available trends and data/statistics of Palestine refugees migrating to
- European countries
- Neighboring and regional countries
- Projection/assessment of possible migration trends – and related costs - of Palestine refugees to a) Europe b) Neighboring/other countries as a result of: A significant reduction or complete interruption of UNRWA's service-delivery.
- Identification of lessons-learned and possible policy recommendations, for countries of origin, transit and countries of destination of Palestinian migrants, on relevant options in terms of (cost-) effectively and humanely preventing and mitigating migration of Palestine refugees.

APPENDIX 2

UNRWA and Palestine Refugees: Challenges for Developing a Strategic Vision
Online Meeting hosted by the Geneva Graduate Institute,
22-23.5.2022*

22nd of May 2022
MORNING SESSION:
10:00 - 10:15 Opening by Riccardo BOCCO, The Graduate Institute, Geneva and Roland STEININGER, UNRWA, Amman
10:15-11:00 Presentation of the **MIGRATION paper** by Sari HANAFI, The American University, Beirut. and Luigi ACHILLI, European University Institute, Florence.
11:00 – 13:00 Discussion on Migration Paper
Methodology
Main Observations
What are possible influencers for UNRWA's Program
How to best monitor "migration issues related to Palestine refugees" in the five fields of UNRWA operations
How to define indicators that potentially influence UNRWA's Program
Why UNRWA shall be concerned with the "migration environment " that has influence on the wellbeing of Palestine refugees
Transversal issues for UNRWA
Defining Recommendations to UNRWA/Donors/HC

13:00-15:00 Lunch break

AFTERNOON SESSION:
15:00-15:45 Presentation of **SECURITY Paper** by Imad SALAMEY, The Lebanese American University, Beirut, and Alaa TARTIR, The Graduate Institute, Geneva
16:00- 18:00 Discussion on Security Paper
Methodology
Main observations
What are possible influencers for UNRWA's Program
How to monitor best the "security environment" and
How to define indicators that potentially influence UNRWA's Program
Why UNRWA shall be concerned with the security environment
that has social and economic influence on the wellbeing of Palestine refugees as well as security implications on the life of refugees.
Transversal issues for UNRWA
Defining Recommendations to UNRWA/Donors/HC

18:00 -18:15 Wrap up and next steps

23rd of May 2022
MORNING SESSION
10:00 - 10:15 Opening by Fritz FRÖLICH, International Consultant, Beirut, and Sam ROSE, UNRWA, Amman

10:15 - 11:00 Presentation of the **LEGAL Paper** by Francesca ALBANESE (Special Rapporteur on Palestine, Human Rights Council, Geneva, and Ardi IMSEIS, Queen's University, Kingston (Canada)-
11:00- 13:00 Discussion on Legal Paper
Methodology
Main Observations
What are possible influencers for UNRWA's Program
How to define indicators that potentially influence UNRWA's Program
Why UNRWA shall be concerned with the legal aspects that might have an influence on its mandate as well as on the wellbeing of Palestine refugees.
Transversal issues for UNRWA
Defining Recommendations to UNRWA/Donors/HC

13:00-15:00 Lunch break

AFTERNOON SESSION
15:00 -15:45 Presentation of the **SOCIO-ECONOMIC Paper** by Jalal AL HUSSEINI, Institut Français au Proche Orient (IFPO), Amman, and Joseph SABA, Loyola University, Chicago
16:00- 18:00 Discussion on Socio Economic Paper
Methodology
Main Observations
What are possible influencers for UNRWA's Program
How to best monitor the "socio-economic environment " in the five fields of UNRWA operations
How to define indicators that potentially influence UNRWA's Program
Why UNRWA shall be concerned with the socio-economic environment that has influence on the wellbeing of Palestine refugees
Transversal issues for UNRWA
Defining Recommendations to UNRWA/Donors/HC

18:00 – 18:15 Wrap up and next steps

*The Workshop was also attended by Ben MAJEKODUMNI, Chief of Cabinet of the UNRWA Commissioner-General; Nathalie BOUCLY, Director of the UNRWA's Department of Legal Affairs; Jackie TABAR, UNRWA's Department of Legal Affairs Laurence STRUBIN, Swiss Development Cooperation.

APPENDIX 3

UNRWA Statistics (as of December 2021)

General Statistics		2020	2021	Change %
GFO	Registered refugees	1,476,706	1,516,258	2.7
	Other registered persons*	166,845	189,094	13.3
	Total registered population	1,643,551	1,705,352	3.8
	Registered population - female (%)	49.5	49.4	-0.1
	Registered population - male (%)	50.5	50.6	0.1
	Registered population - youth (%)**	18.2	18.4	0.2
	Registered population - youth, female (%)***	18.2	18.3	0.1
	Registered population - youth, male (%)***	18.2	18.4	0.2
JFO	Registered refugees	2,307,011	2,334,789	1.2
	Other registered persons*	156,119	165,116	5.8
	Total registered population	2,463,130	2,499,905	1.5
	Registered population - female (%)	50.0	50.1	0.1
	Registered population - male (%)	50.0	49.9	-0.1
	Registered population - youth (%)**	17.9	17.8	-0.1
	Registered population - youth, female (%)***	17.8	17.6	-0.2
	Registered population - youth, male (%)***	18.1	17.9	-0.2
LFO	Registered refugees	479,537	482,676	0.7
	Other registered persons*	64,287	67,016	4.2
	Total registered population	543,824	549,692	1.1
	Registered population - female (%)	50.1	50.1	0.0
	Registered population - male (%)	49.9	49.9	0.0
	Registered population - youth (%)**	13.5	13.2	-0.3
	Registered population - youth, female (%)***	13.5	13.1	-0.4
	Registered population - youth, male (%)***	13.6	13.3	-0.3
SFO	Registered refugees	568,730	575,234	1.1
	Other registered persons*	86,999	90,632	4.2

	Total registered population	655,729	665,866	1.5
	Registered population - female (%)	51.2	51.3	0.1
	Registered population - male (%)	48.8	49.7	0.9
	Registered population - youth (%)**	15.9	16.0	0.1
	Registered population - youth, female (%)***	16.1	15.9	-0.2
	Registered population - youth, male (%)***	16.0	16.2	0.2
WBFO	Registered refugees	871,537	883,950	1.4
	Other registered persons*	211,116	216,018	2.3
	Total registered population	1,082,653	1,099,968	1.6
	Registered population - female (%)	50.7	50.8	0.1
	Registered population - male (%)	49.3	49.2	-0.1
	Registered population - youth (%)**	17.4	17.1	-0.3
	Registered population - youth, female (%)***	17.3	17.0	-0.3
	Registered population - youth, male (%)***	17.4	17.2	-0.2
Agency	Registered refugees	5,703,521	5,792,907	1.6
	Other registered persons*	685,366	727,876	6.2
	Total registered population	6,388,887	6,520,783	2.1
	Registered population - female (%)****	50.1	50.2	0.1
	Registered population - male (%)	49.9	49.8	-0.1
	Registered population - youth (%)**	17.3	17.3	0.0
	Registered population - youth, female (%)***	17.3	17.1	-0.2
	Registered population - youth, male (%)***	17.4	17.4	0.0

*** Note 1:** "Other registered persons" refer to those who, at the time of original registration did not satisfy all of UNRWA's Palestine refugee criteria, but who were determined to have suffered significant loss and/or hardship for reasons related to the 1948 conflict in Palestine; they also include persons who belong to the families of other registered persons.

**** Note 2**: The age range applied to 'youth' is 15-24 years**.**

***** Note 3:** The registered population - youth, female/male (%) is based on the total registered female/male youth population out of the total female/male registered population.

****** Note 4:** All Agency-wide percentages and averages are calculated on the basis of weighted averages across all fields of UNRWA operation.

Protection Statistics	2020	2021	Change %

GFO	Percentage of UNRWA interventions on protection issues that prompt a positive response from the authorities*	NA	NA	-
	Degree of alignment with UNRWA protection standards across all aspects of programming (%)**	NA	NA	-
	Number of individuals who received psychosocial support	20,889	19,810	-5.2
	Number of individuals referred to /receiving the direct provision of legal assistance	1,016	939	-7.6
JFO	Percentage of UNRWA interventions on protection issues that prompt a positive response from the authorities	0	64.3	64.3
	Degree of alignment with UNRWA protection standards across all aspects of programming (%)**	NA	NA	-
	Number of individuals who received psychosocial support***	82,000	5,198	-93.7
	Number of individuals referred to /receiving the direct provision of legal assistance	31	263	748.4
LFO	Percentage of UNRWA interventions on protection issues that prompt a positive response from the authorities*	NA	NA	-
	Degree of alignment with UNRWA protection standards across all aspects of programming (%)**	NA	NA	-
	Number of individuals who received psychosocial support	8,527	8,413	-1.3
	Number of individuals referred to /receiving the direct provision of legal assistance	3,896	7,062	81.3
SFO	Percentage of UNRWA interventions on protection issues that prompt a positive response from the authorities*	NA	NA	-
	Degree of alignment with UNRWA protection standards across all aspects of programming (%)**	NA	NA	-
	Number of individuals who received psychosocial support	18,474	46,659	152.6
	Number of individuals referred to /receiving the direct provision of legal assistance	3,090	5,101	65.1

WBFO	Percentage of UNRWA interventions on protection issues that prompt a positive response from the authorities	39.1	62.5	23.4
	Degree of alignment with UNRWA protection standards across all aspects of programming (%)**	NA	NA	-
	Number of individuals who received psychosocial support	596	5,450	814.4
	Number of individuals referred to /receiving the direct provision of legal aid	6	NA	-
Agency	Percentage of UNRWA interventions on protection issues that prompt a positive response from the authorities*	39.1	62.9	23.8
	Degree of alignment with UNRWA protection standards across all aspects of programming (%)**	NA	NA	-
	Number of individuals who received psychosocial support	130,486	85,530	-34.5
	Number of individuals referred to /receiving the direct provision of legal aid	8,039	13,365	66.3
	Percentage of UN SWAP targets met or exceeded	63	69	6.0

*** Note 1**: The result against the indicator, "percentage of UNRWA interventions on protection issues that prompt positive responses from authorities" is only applicable to UNRWA operations in Jordan and the West Bank.

**** Note 2**: The degree of alignment with UNRWA protection standards across all aspects of programming was not measured in 2021 due to the COVID-19 related postponement of protection alignment reviews in all fields to 2022.

*****Note 3:** The number of individuals who received psychosocial support in Jordan represents individuals assisted in the second half of 2021 by the Health programme and in Q4 2021 by the Relief and Social Services programme.

Health Statistics		2020	2021	Change %
GFO	Number of primary health care facilities (PHCF)	22	22	0.0
	Number of PHCF with dental services (including mobile units)	22	24	9.1
	Total number of health staff	946	964	1.9
	Number of health staff - female	599	600	0.2
	Number of health staff - male	347	364	4.9

	Number of annual patient visits	2,683,834	3,352,955	24.9
	Number of hospitalized patients	13,924	14,502	4.2
	Number of non-communicable disease (NCD) cases under care*	98,373	101,009	2.7
	Prevalence of diabetes among population served, 18 years and above*	7.5	7.3	-0.2
	Percentage of diabetes mellitus patients under control per defined criteria*	34.9	31.6	-3.3
	Percentage of women with live birth who received at least four antenatal care (ANC) visits*	90.4	94.0	3.6
	Number of women attending at least four ANC visits*	29,919	31,441	5.1
	Number of women attending postnatal care (PNC) within six weeks of delivery*	37,262	33,433	-10.3
	Percentage of infants 12 months old fully immunized	99.7	99.8	0.1
	Percentage of 18 month-old children that have received all EPI vaccinations*	99.8	98.3	-1.5
	Unit cost per capita *	32.4	36.0	11.1
	Water borne disease outbreaks	0	0	0.0
JFO	Number of PHCFs	25	25	0.0
	Number of PHCF with dental services (including mobile units)	34	34	0.0
	Total number of health staff	680	671	-1.3
	Number of health staff - female	412	406	-1.5
	Number of health staff - male	268	265	-1.1
	Number of annual patient visits**	1,127,805	1,347,559	19.5
	Number of hospitalized patients***	5,330	2,470	-53.7
	Number of NCD cases under care*	78,827	81,355	3.2
	Prevalence of diabetes among population served, 18 years and above*	8.4	7.8	-0.6
	Percentage of diabetes mellitus patients under control per defined criteria*	36.2	35.2	-1.0
	Percentage of women with live birth who received at least four ANC visits*	62.9	72.0	9.1
	Number of women attending at least four ANC visits*	12,156	14,125	16.2

	Number of women attending PNC within six weeks of delivery*	12,857	16,973	32.0
	Percentage of infants 12 months old fully immunized	99.7	99.9	0.2
	Percentage of 18 month-old children that have received all EPI vaccinations*	99.1	97.4	-1.7
	Unit cost per capita *	11.1	11.7	5.1
	Water borne disease outbreaks	0	0	0.0
LFO	Number of PHCFs	27	27	0.0
	Number of PHCF with dental services (including mobile units)	17	19	11.8
	Total number of health staff	285	299	4.9
	Number of health staff - female	148	157	6.1
	Number of health staff - male	137	142	3.6
	Number of annual patient visits****	556,511	595,777	7.1
	Number of hospitalized patients*****	19,500	21,501	10.3
	Number of NCD cases under care*	29,098	30,638	5.3
	Prevalence of diabetes among population served, 18 years and above*	9.0	8.8	-0.2
	Percentage of diabetes mellitus patients under control per defined criteria*	62.5	60.0	-2.5
	Percentage of women with live birth who received at least four ANC visits*	71.2	55.1	-16.1
	Number of women attending at least four ANC visits*	2,890	2,295	-20.6
	Number of women attending PNC within six weeks of delivery*	3,736	3,621	-3.1
	Percentage of infants 12 months old fully immunized	98.3	98.6	0.3
	Percentage of 18 month-old children that have received all EPI vaccinations*	97.1	96.7	-0.4
	Unit cost per capita*	60.9	67.1	10.2
	Water borne disease outbreaks	0	0	0.0
SFO	Number of PHCFs	23	23	0.0
	Number of PHCF with dental services (including mobile units)	21	22	4.8
	Total number of health staff	430	431	0.2

	Number of health staff - female	252	249	-1.2
	Number of health staff - male	178	182	2.2
	Number of annual patient visits	672,008	809,464	20.5
	Number of hospitalized patients	15,503	15,855	2.3
	Number of non-communicable disease (NCD) cases under care*	35,109	35,642	1.5
	Prevalence of diabetes among population served, 18 years and above*	7.9	7.7	-0.2
	Percentage of diabetes mellitus patients under control per defined criteria*	36.0	34.1	-1.9
	Percentage of women with live birth who received at least four ANC visits*	52.5	19.8	-32.7
	Number of women attending at least four antenatal care (ANC) visits*	3,258	1,012	-68.9
	Number of women attending postnatal care (PNC) within six weeks of delivery*	4,721	4,259	-9.8
	Percentage of infants 12 months old fully immunized	99.0	99.1	0.1
	Percentage of 18 month-old children that have received all EPI vaccinations*	99.4	98.7	-0.7
	Unit cost per capita*	24.5	24.3	-1.0
	Water borne disease outbreaks	0	1	1.0
WBFO	Number of PHCFs	43	43	0.0
	Number of PHCF with dental services (including mobile units)	24	24	0.0
	Total number of health staff	651	659	1.2
	Number of health staff - female	408	415	1.7
	Number of health staff - male	243	244	0.4
	Number of annual patient visits	758,746	894,951	18.0
	Number of hospitalized patients	23,067	25,550	10.8
	Number of non-communicable disease (NCD) cases under care*	42,177	42,330	0.4
	Prevalence of diabetes among population served, 18 years and above*	9.4	9.3	-0.1
	Percentage of diabetes mellitus patients under control per defined criteria*	42.3	34.7	-7.6

	Percentage of women with live birth who received at least four ANC visits*	69.3	73.8	4.5
	Number of women attending at least four antenatal care (ANC) visits*	9,410	10,130	7.7
	Number of women attending postnatal care (PNC) within six weeks of delivery*	11,908	11,609	-2.5
	Percentage of infants 12 months old fully immunized	100	100	0.0
	Percentage of 18 month-old children that have received all EPI vaccinations*	100	100	0.0
	Unit cost per capita*	36.1	37.1	2.8
	Water borne disease outbreaks	0	0	0.0
Agency	Number of PHCFs	140	140	0.0
	Number of PHCF with dental services (including mobile units)	118	123	4.2
	Total number of health staff	2,992	3,024	1.1
	Number of health staff - female	1,819	1,827	0.4
	Number of health staff - male	1,173	1,197	2.0
	Number of annual patient visits	5,798,904	7,000,706	20.7
	Number of hospitalized patients	77,324	79,878	3.3
	Number of NCD cases under care*	283,584	290,974	2.6
	Prevalence of diabetes among population served, 18 years and above*	8.2	7.9	-0.3
	Percentage of diabetes mellitus patients under control per defined criteria*	38.7	35.5	-3.2
	Percentage of women with live birth who received at least four ANC visits*	75.5	77.6	2.1
	Number of women attending at least four ANC visits*	57,633	59,003	2.4
	Number of women attending PNC within six weeks of delivery*	70,484	69,895	-0.8
	Percentage of infants 12 months old fully immunized	99.7	99.6	-0.1
	Percentage of 18 month-old children that have received all EPI vaccinations*	99.4	98.2	-1.2
	Unit cost per capita*	26.0	27.8	6.9
	Water borne disease outbreaks	0	1	1.0

* **Note 1**: These statistics are tentative and will be updated in May 2022.

** **Note 2:** The number of annual patient visits in Jordan includes 8,703 visits by PRS.

*** **Note 3:** The number of hospitalized patients in Jordan includes 1,022 hospitalized PRS patients.

**** **Note 4:** The number of annual patient visits in Lebanon includes 66,149 PRS visits.

***** **Note 5:** The number of hospitalized patients in Lebanon includes 3,630 PRS patients.

	Education Statistics	2020-2021*	2021-2022*	Change %
GFO	Number of UNRWA schools	278	278	0
	Number of double-shift schools	195	200	2.5
	Percentage of double-shift schools	70.2	71.9	1.7
	Total number of education staff	9,679	9,443	-2.4
	Number of educational staff - female	6,128	6,035	-1.5
	Number of educational staff - male	3,551	3,408	-4
	Total number of pupils enrolled	286,645	290,288	1.3
	Total number of pupils enrolled: Elementary education	200,932	200,851	0
	Pupils Enrolled: Elementary - female	96,681	96,690	0
	Pupils Enrolled: Elementary - male	104,251	104,161	-0.1
	Total number of pupils enrolled: Preparatory education	85,713	89,437	4.3
	Pupils Enrolled: Preparatory - female	41,622	43,512	4.5
	Pupils Enrolled: Preparatory - male	44,091	45,925	4.2
	Survival rate in basic education (%)**	98.2	99.1	0.9
	Survival rate in basic education - female (%)	99.3	99.5	0.2
	Survival rate in basic education - male (%)	97.1	98.7	1.6
	Percentage of students identified with a disability receiving support meeting their needs	59.1	35.5	-23.6
	Percentage of students identified with a disability receiving support meeting their needs - female	62.1	37.2	-24.9
	Percentage of students identified with a disability receiving support meeting their needs - male	56.8	34.2	-22.6

	Number of Technical and Vocational Education and Training Programme (TVET) trainees (enrolment)	1,949	1,860	-4.6
	Number of TVET graduates***	1,191	1,089	-8.6
	TVET employment rate (1 year post graduation) (%)****	58.4	59	0.6
	TVET employment rate (1 year post graduation) - female (%)	48.5	52.1	3.6
	TVET employment rate (1 year post graduation) - male(%)	62.3	61.8	-0.5
	Cost per pupil: basic education cycle (US$)*****	820.5	849.5	3.5
	Input unit costs per VTC student (US$)******	2,745.00	2,879.10	4.9
JFO	Number of UNRWA schools	169	161	-4.7
	Number of double-shift schools	148	134	-9.5
	Percentage of double-shift schools	87.6	83.2	-4.4
	Total number of education staff	4,643	4,557	-1.9
	Number of educational staff - female	2,351	2,326	-1.1
	Number of educational staff - male	2,292	2,231	-2.7
	Total number of pupils enrolled	119,047	119,781	0.6
	Total number of pupils enrolled: Elementary education	67,500	66,092	-2.1
	Pupils Enrolled: Elementary - female	33,433	32,707	-2.2
	Pupils Enrolled: Elementary - male	34,067	33,385	-2
	Total number of pupils enrolled: Preparatory education	51,547	53,689	4.2
	Pupils Enrolled: Preparatory - female	23,987	25,060	4.5
	Pupils Enrolled: Preparatory - male	27,560	28,629	3.9
	Survival rates in basic education (%)**	92.2	98.4	6.2
	Survival rates in basic education - female (%)	91.2	98.3	7.1
	Survival rates in basic education - male (%)	93	98.5	5.5
	Percentage of students identified with a disability receiving support meeting their needs	71.2	15.4	-55.8

	Percentage of students identified with a disability receiving support meeting their needs - female	72	21.9	-50.1
	Percentage of students identified with a disability receiving support meeting their needs - male	69.6	7.1	-62.5
	Number of TVET trainees (enrolment)	2,879	2,938	2
	Number of TVET graduates***	1,573	1,601	1.8
	TVET employment rate (1 year post graduation)(%)****	85	87.5	2.5
	TVET employment rate (1 year post graduation) - female (%)	69	78.1	9.1
	TVET employment rate (1 year post graduation) - male (%)	95.4	97.7	2.3
	Number of students enrolled in FESA	1,402	1,386	-1.1
	Number of Faculty of Educational Sciences and Arts (FESA) graduates***	310	350	12.9
	FESA employment rate (1 year post graduation)(%)****	93.7	91.1	-2.6
	FESA employment rate (1 year post graduation) - female (%)	92.2	90.6	-1.6
	FESA employment rate (1 year post graduation) - male (%)	100	96	-4
	Cost per pupil: basic education cycle (US$)*****	810.9	806.6	-0.5
	Input unit costs per VTC student (US$)******	1,068.20	1,152.40	7.9
LFO	Number of UNRWA schools	65	65	0
	Number of double-shift schools	2	2	0
	Percentage of double-shift schools	3.1	3.1	0
	Total number of education staff	1,655	1,786	7.9
	Number of educational staff - female	936	1,058	13
	Number of educational staff - male	719	728	1.3
	Total number of pupils enrolled	37,586	39,144	4.1
	Total number of pupils enrolled: Elementary education	22,162	22,271	0.5
	Pupils Enrolled: Elementary - female	10,996	10,975	-0.2
	Pupils Enrolled: Elementary - male	11,166	11,296	1.2

	Total number of pupils enrolled: Preparatory education	9,850	10,549	7.1
	Pupils Enrolled: Preparatory - female	5,170	5,460	5.6
	Pupils Enrolled: Preparatory - male	4,680	5,089	8.7
	Total number of pupils enrolled: Secondary education	5,574	6,324	13.5
	Pupils Enrolled: Secondary - female	3,413	3,802	11.4
	Pupils Enrolled: Secondary - male	2,161	2,522	16.7
	Survival rates in basic education (%)**	96.4	96.6	0.2
	Survival rates in basic education - female (%)	97.3	98.8	1.5
	Survival rates in basic education - male (%)	95.5	95	-0.5
	Percentage of students identified with a disability receiving support meeting their needs	78.7	44	-34.7
	Percentage of students identified with a disability receiving support meeting their needs - female	80.7	48.2	-32.5
	Percentage of students identified with a disability receiving support meeting their needs - male	76.4	40.8	-35.6
	Number of TVET trainees (enrolment)	803	718	-10.6
	Number of TVET graduates***	410	455	11
	TVET employment rate (1 year post graduation) (%)****	67.1	66.7	-0.4
	TVET employment rate (1 year post graduation) - female (%)	60.5	60.5	0
	TVET employment rate (1 year post graduation) - male (%)	72.3	72.3	0
	Cost per pupil: basic education cycle (US$)*****	1,123.60	1,145.10	1.9
	Input unit costs per VTC student (US$)******	4,214.50	4,736.30	12.4
SFO	Number of UNRWA schools	102	102	0
	Number of double-shift schools	61	58	-4.9
	Percentage of double-shift schools	59.8	56.9	-2.9
	Total number of education staff	1,976	1,876	-5.1
	Number of educational staff - female	1,245	1,186	-4.7

	Number of educational staff - male	731	690	-5.6
	Total number of pupils enrolled	50,609	49,431	-2.3
	Total number of pupils enrolled: Elementary education	32,945	31,534	-4.3
	Pupils Enrolled: Elementary - female	16,152	15,354	-4.9
	Pupils Enrolled: Elementary - male	16,793	16,180	-3.7
	Total number of pupils enrolled: Preparatory education	17,664	17,897	1.3
	Pupils Enrolled: Preparatory - female	8,757	9,112	4.1
	Pupils Enrolled: Preparatory - male	8,907	8,785	-1.4
	Survival rates in basic education (%)**	99.1	97.7	-1.4
	Survival rates in basic education - female (%)	99.6	98.5	-1.1
	Survival rates in basic education - male (%)	98.7	96.8	-1.9
	Percentage of students identified with a disability receiving support meeting their needs	33.8	23.5	-10.3
	Percentage of students identified with a disability receiving support meeting their needs - female	32.3	19	-13.3
	Percentage of students identified with a disability receiving support meeting their needs - male	35.2	28.1	-7.1
	Number of TVET trainees (enrolment)	1,296	1,413	9
	Number of TVET graduates***	671	598	-10.9
	TVET employment rate (1 year post graduation) (%)****	88.5	80.9	-7.6
	TVET employment rate (1 year post graduation) - female (%)	85.6	80.5	-5.1
	TVET employment rate (1 year post graduation) - male (%)	94.4	81.3	-13.1
	Cost per pupil: basic education cycle (US$)*****	484.8	467.5	-3.6
	Input unit costs per VTC student (US$)******	1,020.50	974	-4.6
WBFO	Number of UNRWA schools	96	96	0
	Number of double-shift schools	4	2	-50
	Percentage of double-shift schools	4.2	2.1	-2.1

Total number of education staff	2,275	2,215	-2.6
Number of educational staff - female	1,363	1,339	-1.8
Number of educational staff - male	912	876	-3.9
Total number of pupils enrolled	45,883	46,066	0.4
Total number of pupils enrolled: Elementary education	30,035	30,259	0.7
Pupils Enrolled: Elementary - female	18,059	18,236	1
Pupils Enrolled: Elementary - male	11,976	12,023	0.4
Total number of pupils enrolled: Preparatory education	15,848	15,807	-0.3
Pupils Enrolled: Preparatory - female	9,366	9,421	0.6
Pupils Enrolled: Preparatory - male	6,482	6,386	-1.5
Survival rates in basic education (%)**	98.8	99.2	0.4
Survival rates in basic education - female (%)	99.2	99.5	0.3
Survival rates in basic education - male (%)	98.2	98.8	0.6
Percentage of students identified with a disability receiving support meeting their needs	53.2	33.5	-19.7
Percentage of students identified with a disability receiving support meeting their needs - female	60.3	42.1	-18.2
Percentage of students identified with a disability receiving support meeting their needs - male	45.5	24.4	-21.1
Number of TVET trainees (enrolment)	1,073	1,001	-6.7
Number of TVET graduates***	646	679	5.1
TVET employment rate (1 year post graduation) (%)****	74.2	76.1	1.9
TVET employment rate (1 year post graduation) - female (%)	71.2	72.2	1
TVET employment rate (1 year post graduation) - male (%)	76.8	79.5	2.7
Number of students enrolled in ESF	607	680	12
Number of ESF graduates***	148	146	-1.4
Education Science Faculty (ESF) employment rate (1 year post graduation)(%)****	63.9	70.9	7

	ESF employment rate (1 year post graduation) - female (%)	63	66.7	3.7
	ESF employment rate (1 year post graduation) - male (%)	68.2	84.4	16.2
	Cost per pupil: basic education cycle (US$)*****	1,233.00	1,273.20	3.3
	Input unit costs per VTC student (US$)******	5,194.40	5,476.60	5.4
Agency	Number of UNRWA schools	710	702	-1.1
	Number of double-shift schools	410	396	-3.5
	Percentage of double-shift schools	57.8	56.4	-1.4
	Total number of education staff	20,228	19,877	-1.7
	Number of educational staff - female	12,023	11,944	-0.7
	Number of educational staff - male	8,205	7,933	-3.3
	Total number of pupils enrolled	539,770	544,710	0.9
	Total number of pupils enrolled: Elementary education	353,574	351,007	-0.7
	Pupils Enrolled: Elementary - female	175,321	173,962	-0.8
	Pupils Enrolled: Elementary - male	178,253	177,045	-0.7
	Total number of pupils enrolled: Preparatory education	180,622	187,379	3.7
	Pupils Enrolled: Preparatory - female	88,902	92,565	4.1
	Pupils Enrolled: Preparatory - male	91,720	94,814	3.4
	Total number of pupils enrolled: Secondary education	5,574	6,324	13.5
	Pupils Enrolled: Secondary - female	3,413	3,802	11.4
	Pupils Enrolled: Secondary - male	2,161	2,522	16.7
	Survival rates in basic education (%)**	97.3	98.8	1.5
	Survival rates in basic education - female (%)**	97.9	99.2	1.3
	Survival rates in basic education - male (%)**	96.7	98.3	1.6
	Percentage of students identified with a disability receiving support meeting their needs	60.5	32.1	-28.4
	Percentage of students identified with a disability receiving support meeting their needs - female	63.8	34.3	-29.5

	Percentage of students identified with a disability receiving support meeting their needs - male	57.1	30	-27.1
	Number of TVET trainees (enrolment)	8,000	7,930	-0.9
	Number of TVET graduates***	4,491	4,422	-1.5
	TVET employment rate (1 year post graduation) (%)****	74.4	75.1	0.7
	TVET employment rate (1 year post graduation) - female	68.3	68.6	0.3
	TVET employment rate (1 year post graduation) - male	78.8	79.5	0.7
	Number of students enrolled in FESA / ESF	2,009	2,066	2.8
	Number of FESA / ESF graduates***	458	496	8.3
	FESA/ESF employment rate (1 year post graduation)(%) ****	82.6	84.4	1.8
	FESA/ESF employment rate (1 year post graduation) - female (%)	81.3	83.6	2.3
	FESA/ESF employment rate (1 year post graduation) - male (%)	88.3	89.5	1.2
	Cost per pupil: basic education cycle (US$)*****	840.7	857.8	2
	Input unit costs per VTC student (US$)******	2,333.60	2,483.90	6.4

*** Note 1**: Except where indicated.

**** Note 2**: Survival rates, collected at the end of 2021, refer to the 2020-21 academic year. Please note that the JFO survival rate includes Grade 10 while the survival rate for all other Fields and Agency-wide values are calculated through Grade 9.

***** Note 3:** The 2021-20 value of TVET and FESA/ESF graduates refers to graduates from the 2020-21 academic year.

****** Note 4**: The employment rate refers to the percentage of 2019-20 graduates either employed or continuing their studies among active job seekers one year after graduation.

******* Note 5**: Cost per pupil data pertains to the previous academic year.

******** Note 6**: Cost per VTC student data pertains to the previous academic year.

Relief and Social Service Statistics		2020	2021	Change %
GFO	Number of registration offices	16	16	0.0
	Total number of relief and social services (RSS) staff	324	316	-2.5
	Number of RSS staff - female	161	162	0.6

	Number of RSS staff - male	163	154	-5.5
	Number of Social Safety Net (SSN) beneficiaries assisted*	98,935	98,935	0.0
	SSN as % of registered refugees	6.7	6.5	-0.2
	Total annual monetary value of food assistance per beneficiary - PB (US$)**	115.0	NA	-
	Total annual monetary value of food assistance per beneficiary - EA (US$)	95.1	100.1	5.3
	Total number of beneficiaries served through EA cash and food assistance	1,043,173	1,136,351	8.9
	Total annual monetary value per beneficiary: Cash for Work programme (CfW) - EA	964	968	0.4
	Percentage of abject poverty line bridged through UNRWA social transfers - PB	18.2	15.9	-2.3
	Percentage of poor receiving social transfers through the SSNP	8.7	8.8	0.1
	Percentage of poor receiving social transfers through the SSNP - female	4.4	4.4	0.0
	Percentage of poor receiving social transfers through the SSNP - male	4.3	4.4	0.1
	Percentage of poor receiving social transfers through the SSNP - persons with disabilities	1.1	1.1	0.0
JFO	Number of registration offices	17	17	0.0
	Total number of relief and social services (RSS) staff	104	99	-4.8
	Number of RSS staff - female	79	75	-5.1
	Number of RSS staff - male	25	24	-4.0
	Number of Social Safety Net (SSN) beneficiaries assisted	59,308	58,857	-0.8
	SSN as % of registered refugees	2.6	2.5	-0.1
	Total annual monetary value per beneficiary : e-card - PB(US$)	124.8	125.0	0.2
	Total annual monetary value of cash assistance per beneficiary - EA (US$)	360.5	367.8	2.0
	Total number of beneficiaries served through EA cash and food assistance	146,153	18,887	-87.1
	Percentage of abject poverty line bridged through UNRWA social transfers - PB	20.4	20.4	0.0
	Percentage of poor receiving social transfers through the SSNP	14.8	14.6	-0.2

	Percentage of poor receiving social transfers through the SSNP - female	8.0	8.0	0.0
	Percentage of poor receiving social transfers through the SSNP - male	6.8	6.6	-0.2
	Percentage of poor receiving social transfers through the SSNP - persons with disabilities	2.1	2.0	0.1
LFO	Number of registration offices	5	5	0.0
	Total number of relief and social services (RSS) staff	128	117	-8.6
	Number of RSS staff - female	92	85	-7.6
	Number of RSS staff - male	36	32	-11.1
	Number of Social Safety Net (SSN) beneficiaries assisted	61,076	61,544	0.8
	SSN as % of registered refugees	12.9	12.8	-0.1
	Total annual monetary value per beneficiary: e-card - PB (US$)	130.0	130.0	0.0
	Total annual monetary value per beneficiary of cash for food assistance - EA (US$)	324	155	-52.2
	Total annual monetary value of cash assistance (cash assistance for multipurpose) per beneficiary - EA (US$)	355	316	-11.0
	Total number of beneficiaries served through EA cash and food assistance	334,812	84,537	-74.8
	Percentage of abject poverty line bridged through UNRWA social transfers - PB	14.7	17.8	3.1
	Percentage of poor receiving social transfers through the SSNP	36.3	36.1	-0.2
	Percentage of poor receiving social transfers through the SSNP - female	19.7	19.5	-0.2
	Percentage of poor receiving social transfers through the SSNP - male	16.6	16.6	0.0
	Percentage of poor receiving social transfers through the SSNP - persons with disabilities	4.0	4.0	0.0
SFO	Number of registration offices	7	7	0.0
	Total number of relief and social services (RSS) staff	82	87	6.1
	Number of RSS staff - female	52	56	7.7
	Number of RSS staff - male	30	31	3.3
	Number of Social Safety Net (SSN) beneficiaries assisted***	134,995	142,579	5.6
	SSN as % of registered refugees	23.7	24.8	1.1

	Total amount of cash assistance per beneficiary - PB (US$)	16.3	15	-8.0
	Total annual monetary value of cash assistance per beneficiary - EA (US$)	150.7	152.9	1.5
	Total annual monetary value per beneficiary of food assistance (in-kind and cash) - EA (US$)****	128.9	168.0	30.3
	Total number of beneficiaries served through EA cash and food assistance	415,781	417,807	0.5
	Percentage of abject poverty line bridged through UNRWA social transfers - PB	49.2	46.1	-3.1
	Percentage of poor receiving social transfers through the SSNP	31.2	33.5	2.3
	Percentage of poor receiving social transfers through the SSNP - female	18.7	20.0	1.3
	Percentage of poor receiving social transfers through the SSNP - male	12.5	13.5	1.0
	Percentage of poor receiving social transfers through the SSNP - persons with disabilities	1.2	1.5	0.3
WBFO	Number of registration offices	10	10	0.0
	Total number of relief and social services (RSS) staff	169	164	-3.0
	Number of RSS staff - female	89	86	-3.4
	Number of RSS staff - male	80	78	-2.5
	Number of Social Safety Net (SSN) beneficiaries assisted	36,129	36,129	0.0
	SSN as % of registered refugees	4.1	4.1	0.0
	Total annual monetary value per beneficiary: e-card - PB (US$)	144.0	155.4	7.9
	Total annual monetary value of cash assistance per beneficiary through the e-card modality - EA (US$)	145.5	155.4	6.8
	Total number of beneficiaries served through EA cash and food assistance	257,228	23,903	-90.7
	Percentage of abject poverty line bridged through UNRWA social transfers - PB	22.1	22.5	0.4
	Percentage of poor receiving social transfers through the SSNP	13.0	12.8	-0.2
	Percentage of poor receiving social transfers through the SSNP - female	7.0	6.8	-0.2
	Percentage of poor receiving social transfers through the SSNP - male	6.0	6.0	0.0
	Percentage of poor receiving social transfers through the SSNP - persons with disabilities	3.8	3.9	0.1

Agency	Number of registration offices	55	55	0.0
	Total number of relief and social services (RSS) staff	807	783	-3.0
	Number of RSS staff - female	473	464	-1.9
	Number of RSS staff - male	334	319	-4.5
	Number of Social Safety Net (SSN) beneficiaries assisted	390,443	398,044	1.9
	SSN as % of registered refugees	6.8	6.9	0.1
	Total annual monetary value per beneficiary: e-card - PB (US$)	131	134	2.1
	Total annual monetary value of food assistance per beneficiary - EA (US$)	215.9	165.8	-23.2
	Total annual monetary value of cash assistance per beneficiary (excluding CFW in GFO) - EA (US$)	227.1	185.7	-18.2
	Total number of beneficiaries served through EA cash and food assistance	2,197,147	1,681,485	-23.5
	Total annual monetary value per beneficiary: Cash for Work programme (CfW) - EA	964	968	0.4
	Percentage of abject poverty line bridged through UNRWA social transfers - PB	22.3	22.7	0.4
	Percentage of poor receiving social transfers through the SSNP	16.0	16.5	0.5
	Percentage of poor receiving social transfers through the SSNP - female	8.8	9.1	0.3
	Percentage of poor receiving social transfers through the SSNP - male	7.2	7.4	0.2
	Percentage of poor receiving social transfers through the SSNP - persons with disabilities	1.8	1.9	0.1

*** Note 1:** The number of SSN in Gaza in 2021 represents SSN cases assisted through Programme Budget and emergency funds.

**** Note 2:** The total annual monetary value of food assistance per beneficiary - PB was not reported on in Gaza in 2021 as a universal food basket was established. This assistance measure covered all beneficiaries, irrespective of funding source.

***** Note 3:** The number of SSN in Syria reported in 2020 and 2021 represents SSN cases assisted through Programme Budget and emergency funds.

Infrastructure and Camp Improvement Statistics		2020	2021	Change %
GFO	Number of official camps	8	8	0.0
	Number of unofficial camps	0	0	0.0
	Number of shelters rehabilitated - emergency	396	427	7.8

	Number of families benefiting from improved shelter conditions - emergency	424	456	7.5
	Total number of substandard SSN shelters in need of rehabilitation	15,988	15,988	0.0
	Total number of substandard SSN shelters rehabilitated/reconstructed - excluding emergencies	0	0	0.0
	Number of families benefiting from improved shelter conditions - excluding emergencies	0	0	0.0
	Cost per shelter constructed or rehabilitated for SSN (US$)	0	0	0.0
	Percentage of shelters connected to water network	100	100	0.0
	Percentage of shelters connected to sewerage network	96.5	96.5	0.0
JFO	Number of official camps	10	10	0.0
	Number of unofficial camps	3	3	0.0
	Total number of substandard SSN shelters in need of rehabilitation	10,469	10,469	0.0
	Total number of substandard SSN shelters rehabilitated/reconstructed - excluding emergencies	32	0	-100
	Number of families benefiting from improved shelter conditions - excluding emergencies	32	0	-100
	Cost per shelter constructed or rehabilitated for SSN (US$)	25,000	0	-100
	Percentage of shelters connected to water network	100	100	0.0
	Percentage of shelters connected to sewerage network	99.99	99.99	0.0
LFO	Number of official camps	12	12	0.0
	Number of unofficial camps	0	0	0.0
	Number of shelters rehabilitated - emergency including Nahr el-Bared	125	104	-16.8
	Number of families benefiting from improved shelter conditions - emergency	101	87	-13.9
	Total number of substandard SSN shelters in need of rehabilitation	3,633	3,146	-13.4
	Total number of substandard SSN shelters rehabilitated/reconstructed - excluding emergencies	430	487	13.3

	Number of families benefiting from improved shelter conditions - excluding emergencies	430	487	13.3
	Cost per shelter constructed or rehabilitated for SSN (US$)	7,614	7,865	3.3
	Percentage of shelters connected to water network	100	100	0.0
	Percentage of shelters connected to sewerage network	96.8	97.0	0.2
SFO	Number of official camps	9	9	0.0
	Number of unofficial camps	3	3	0.0
	Total number of substandard SSN shelters in need of rehabilitation*	NA	NA	-
	Total number of substandard SSN shelters rehabilitated/reconstructed - excluding emergencies*	NA	NA	-
	Number of families benefiting from improved shelter conditions - excluding emergencies*	NA	NA	-
	Cost per shelter constructed or rehabilitated for SSN (US$)*	NA	NA	-
	Percentage of shelters connected to water network*	NA	NA	-
	Percentage of shelters connected to sewerage network*	NA	NA	-
WBFO	Number of official camps	19	19	0.0
	Number of unofficial camps	4	4	0.0
	Total number of substandard SSN shelters in need of rehabilitation	6,680	6,649	-0.5
	Total number of substandard SSN shelters rehabilitated/reconstructed - excluding emergencies	99	31	-68.7
	Number of families benefiting from improved shelter conditions - excluding emergencies	99	31	-68.7
	Cost per shelter constructed or rehabilitated for SSN (US$)	11,602	36,129	211.4
	Percentage of shelters connected to water network	100	100	0.0
	Percentage of shelters connected to sewerage network	69	71.4	2.4
Agency	Number of official camps	58	58	0.0
	Number of unofficial camps	10	10	0.0

Number of shelters rehabilitated - emergency	521	531	1.9
Number of families benefiting from improved shelter conditions - emergency	525	543	3.4
Total number of substandard shelters in need of rehabilitation for SSNP beneficiaries	36,770	36,252	-1.4
Number of substandard shelters rehabilitated/constructed for SSNP beneficiaries - excluding emergencies	561	518	-7.7
Number of families benefiting from improved shelter conditions - excluding emergencies	561	518	-7.7
Cost per rehabilitated/constructed shelter for SSNP beneficiaries (US$)	9,309	9,556	2.7
Percentage of shelters connected to the water network	100	100	0.0
Percentage of shelters connected to the sewerage network	93.7	93.9	0.2

* **Note 1**: Due to the crisis in Syria, the Infrastructure and Camp Improvement Programme is not in a position to focus on shelter rehabilitation/reconstruction. In addition, not all camps in Syria are accessible; therefore, information on shelters connected to water and sewerage networks is not available.

Microfinance Statistics*	2020	2021	Change %
Number of branches	3	3	0.0
Total number of staff	55	51	-7.3
Number of staff - female	18	17	-5.6
Number of staff - male	37	34	-8.1
Total number of loans awarded annually	1,790	3,371	88.3
Total value of loans awarded annually (US$)	2,231,600	3,675,900	64.7
Number of loans awarded to refugees	1,543	2,821	82.8
Value of loans awarded to refugees (US$)	2,019,900	3,235,800	60.2
Number of loans awarded to women	744	1,362	83.1
Value of loans awarded to women (US$)	766,500	1,373,200	79.2
Number of loans awarded to youth	378	830	119.6
Value of loans awarded to youth (US$)	376,100	695,600	85.0
Total number of loans awarded since programme initiation	128,827	132,198	2.6

UFO	Total value of loans awarded since programme initiation (US$)	167,347,700	171,023,600	2.2
	Number of branches	8	8	0.0
	Total number of staff	140	146	4.3
	Number of staff - female	81	81	0.0
	Number of staff - male	59	65	10.2
	Total number of loans awarded annually	7,199	11,900	65.3
	Total value of loans awarded annually (US$)	6,241,312	9,448,302	51.4
	Number of loans awarded to refugees	4,388	7,227	64.7
	Value of loans awarded to refugees (US$)	4,052,753	6,124,504	51.1
	Number of loans awarded to women	3,865	6,614	71.1
	Value of loans awarded to women (US$)	2,665,606	4,329,519	62.4
	Number of loans awarded to youth	1,915	3,260	70.2
	Value of loans awarded to youth (US$)	1,327,260	2,171,821	63.6
	Total number of loans awarded since programme initiation	140,299	152,199	8.5
	Total value of loans awarded since programme initiation (US$)	156,173,987	165,622,290	6.0
SFO	Number of branches	4	4	0.0
	Total number of staff	69	46	-33.3
	Number of staff - female	47	31	-34.0
	Number of staff - male	22	15	-31.8
	Total number of loans awarded annually	7,834	6,824	-12.9
	Total value of loans awarded annually (US$)	1,810,581	1,313,692	-27.4
	Number of loans awarded to refugees	897	848	-5.5
	Value of loans awarded to refugees (US$)	271,369	199,850	-26.4
	Number of loans awarded to women	3,276	2,856	-12.8
	Value of loans awarded to women (US$)	647,747	465,404	-28.2
	Number of loans awarded to youth	985	834	-15.3
	Value of loans awarded to youth (US$)	201,596	146,592	-27.3
	Total number of loans awarded since programme initiation	141,320	148,144	4.8
	Total value of loans awarded since programme initiation (US$)	67,107,515	68,421,207	2.0

WBFO	Number of branches	8	8	0.0
	Total number of staff	127	101	-20.5
	Number of staff - female	67	55	-17.9
	Number of staff - male	60	46	-23.3
	Total number of loans awarded annually	4,516	7,016	55.4
	Total value of loans awarded annually (US$)	6,179,799	10,977,681	77.6
	Number of loans awarded to refugees	1,372	2,091	52.4
	Value of loans awarded to refugees (US$)	1,763,418	3,058,756	73.5
	Number of loans awarded to women	1,980	3,029	53.0
	Value of loans awarded to women (US$)	2,557,202	4,509,885	76.4
	Number of loans awarded to youth	1,672	2,404	43.8
	Value of loans awarded to youth (US$)	2,106,355	3,483,050	65.4
	Total number of loans awarded since programme initiation	160,557	167,573	4.4
	Total value of loans awarded since programme initiation (US$)	225,302,884	236,280,564	4.9
Agency	Number of branches	23	23	0.0
	Total number of staff	391	344	-12.0
	Number of staff - female	213	184	-13.6
	Number of staff - male	178	160	-10.1
	Total number of loans awarded annually	21,339	29,111	36.4
	Total value of loans awarded annually (US$)	16,463,292	25,415,575	54.4
	Number of loans awarded to refugees	8,200	12,987	58.4
	Value of loans awarded to refugees (US$)	8,107,440	12,618,910	55.6
	Number of loans awarded to women	9,865	13,861	40.5
	Value of loans awarded to women (US$)	6,637,055	10,678,008	60.9
	Number of loans awarded to youth	4,950	7,328	48.0
	Value of loans awarded to youth (US$)	4,011,311	6,497,063	62.0
	Total number of loans awarded since programme initiation	571,003	600,114	5.1
	Total value of loans awarded since programme initiation (US$)	615,932,086	641,347,661	4.1

*** Note 1:** The UNRWA Microfinance Programme does not operate in Lebanon.

Summary of Finance Statistics Profile by Fund Source, (IPSAS)* (US$)					Change %	
	Revenue-2020	Expenses-2020	Revenue-2021	Expenses-2021	Revenue	Expenses
Programme Budget	591,016,749	774,582,269	725,861,026	806,710,680	22.8	4.1
Restricted Funds	24,091,137	22,621,579	24,402,222	24,282,602	1.3	7.3
Microfinance	7,477,031	9,900,329	7,804,404	8,544,078	4.4	-13.7
Emergency appeals**	284,835,767	261,691,483	434,348,436	324,603,185	52.5	24.0
Projects	101,686,634	85,819,911	130,234,636	69,710,486	28.1	-18.8
Inter-Fund elimination	-26,591,190	-26,996,350	-37,899,625	-37,343,070	42.5	38.3
Total	982,516,129	1,127,619,221	1,284,751,101	1,196,507,961	30.8	6.1

	UNRWA Expenditure for PB, Projects and EA (IPSAS)*	2020	2021	Change %
GFO	Programme Budget	310,931,141	334,743,999	7.7
	Projects	36,425,562	20,087,995	-44.9
	Emergency Appeal	101,927,761	160,119,885	57.1
	Restricted Funds	6,051,633	4,589,208	-24.2
	Total	455,336,097	519,541,087	14.1
JFO	Programme Budget	145,399,054	149,758,695	3.0
	Projects	3,314,821	5,326,142	60.7
	Emergency Appeal	22,036,552	17,760,542	-19.4
	Restricted Funds	7,757,204	10,418,671	34.3
	Total	178,507,631	183,264,050	2.7
LFO	Programme Budget	101,691,001	99,018,262	-2.6

	Projects	23,154,220	24,237,157	4.7
	Emergency Appeal	44,499,780	39,896,228	-10.3
	Restricted Funds	1,369,485	3,142,215	129.4
	Total	170,714,486	166,293,862	-2.6
SFO	Programme Budget	46,284,176	43,892,244	-5.2
	Projects	5,241,943	4,398,956	-16.1
	Emergency Appeal	77,675,592	87,645,088	12.8
	Restricted Funds	1,195,377	729,962	-38.9
	Total	130,397,088	136,666,250	4.8
WBFO	Programme Budget	119,553,582	126,246,999	5.6
	Projects	9,365,385	6,188,375	-33.9
	Emergency Appeal	15,193,646	18,188,434	19.7
	Restricted Funds	2,529,876	2,967,267	17.3
	Total	146,642,489	153,591,075	4.7
HQs	Programme Budget	50,723,315	53,050,481	4.6
	Inter-Fund elimination	-26,996,350	-37,343,070	38.3
	Projects	8,317,980	9,471,861	13.9
	Emergency Appeal	358,152	993,008	177.3
	Restricted Funds	3,718,004	2,435,279	-34.5
	Total	36,121,101	28,607,559	-20.8
Agency	Programme Budget	774,582,269	806,710,680	4.1
	Inter-Fund elimination	-26,996,350	-37,343,070	38.3
	Microfinance	9,900,329	8,544,078	-13.7

	Projects	85,819,911	69,710,486	-18.8
	Emergency Appeal**	261,691,483	324,603,185	24.0
	Restricted Funds	22,621,579	24,282,602	7.3
	Total	1,127,619,221	1,196,507,961	6.1

*** Note 1:** Financial statistics are preliminary as the closure of the 2021 fiscal year is not yet complete.

**** Note 2:** Emergency Appeal statistics for 2020 include data on the COVID-19 Flash Appeal and, for 2021, include data on the Humanitarian and Early Recovery Appeal (Gaza and the West Bank).

Human Resource Statistics*		2020	2021	Change %
GFO	Total number of staff	12,148	11,889	-2.1
	Total number of international staff	16	13	-18.8
	Number of international staff - female	5	5	0.0
	Number of international staff - male	11	8	-27.3
	Total number of area staff	12,132	11,876	-2.1
	Number of area staff - female	7,052	6,948	-1.5
	Number of area staff - male	5,080	4,928	-3.0
	Total number of area refugee staff	11,590	11,342	-2.1
	Number of area refugee staff - female	6,729	6,630	-1.5
	Number of area refugee staff - male	4,861	4,712	-3.1
	Total number of area non-refugee staff	542	534	-1.4
	Number of area non-refugee staff - female	323	318	-1.5
	Number of area non-refugee staff - male	219	216	-1.2
	Percentage of area refugee staff	95.5	95.5	0.0
JFO	Total number of staff	6,103	5,963	-2.3
	Total number of international staff	9	9	0.0
	Number of international staff - female	4	3	-25.0
	Number of international staff - male	5	6	20.0
	Total number of area staff	6,094	5,954	-2.3
	Number of area staff - female	3,002	2,974	-0.9
	Number of area staff - male	3,092	2,980	-3.6

	Total number of area refugee staff	5,526	5,288	-4.3
	Number of area refugee staff - female	2,717	2,642	-2.8
	Number of area refugee staff - male	2,809	2,646	-5.8
	Total number of area non-refugee staff	568	666	17.3
	Number of area non-refugee staff - female	285	332	16.6
	Number of area non-refugee staff - male	283	334	18.1
	Percentage of area refugee staff	90.7	88.8	-1.9
LFO	Total number of staff	3,059	2,929	-4.2
	Total number of international staff	13	18	38.5
	Number of international staff - female	8	11	37.5
	Number of international staff - male	5	7	40.0
	Total number of area staff	3,046	2,911	-4.4
	Number of area staff - female	1,571	1,507	-4.1
	Number of area staff - male	1,475	1,404	-4.8
	Total number of area refugee staff	2,882	2,737	-5.0
	Number of area refugee staff - female	1,456	1,386	-4.8
	Number of area refugee staff - male	1,426	1,351	-5.2
	Total number of area non-refugee staff	164	174	6.0
	Number of area non-refugee staff - female	115	121	5.4
	Number of area non-refugee staff - male	49	53	7.4
	Percentage of area refugee staff	94.6	94.0	-0.6
SFO	Total number of staff	3,027	3,018	-0.3
	Total number of international staff	13	18	38.5
	Number of international staff - female	4	8	100.0
	Number of international staff - male	9	10	11.1
	Total number of area staff	3,014	3,000	-0.5
	Number of area staff - female	1,657	1,600	-3.4
	Number of area staff - male	1,357	1,400	3.2
	Total number of area refugee staff	2,272	2,360	3.9
	Number of area refugee staff - female	1,182	1,168	-1.2
	Number of area refugee staff - male	1,090	1,192	9.4
	Total number of area non-refugee staff	741	640	-13.7

	Number of area non-refugee staff - female	474	432	-8.9
	Number of area non-refugee staff - male	267	208	-22.1
	Percentage of area refugee staff	75.4	78.7	3.3
WBFO	Total number of staff	3,866	3,708	-4.1
	Total number of international staff	17	14	-17.6
	Number of international staff - female	9	8	-11.1
	Number of international staff - male	8	6	-25.0
	Total number of area staff	3,849	3,694	-4.0
	Number of area staff - female	2,024	1,965	-2.9
	Number of area staff - male	1,825	1,729	-5.3
	Total number of area refugee staff	3,152	2,860	-9.3
	Number of area refugee staff - female	1,618	1,493	-7.7
	Number of area refugee staff - male	1,534	1,367	-10.9
	Total number of area non-refugee staff	697	834	19.7
	Number of area non-refugee staff - female	406	472	16.3
	Number of area non-refugee staff - male	291	362	24.4
	Percentage of area refugee staff	81.9	77.4	-4.5
HQs	Total number of staff	542	525	-3.1
	Total number of international staff	114	108	-5.3
	Number of international staff - female	55	49	-10.9
	Number of international staff - male	59	59	0.0
	Total number of area staff	428	417	-2.6
	Number of area staff - female	189	185	-2.2
	Number of area staff - male	239	232	-2.9
	Total number of area refugee staff	297	283	-4.6
	Number of area refugee staff - female	126	120	-4.9
	Number of area refugee staff - male	171	163	-4.4
	Total number of area non-refugee staff	131	134	2.1
	Number of area non-refugee staff - female	63	65	3.1
	Number of area non-refugee staff - male	68	69	1.1

	Percentage of area refugee staff	69.3	67.9	-1.4
Agency	Total number of staff	28,756	28,044	-2.5
	Total number of international staff**	193	192	-0.5
	Number of international staff - female**	90	89	-1.1
	Number of international staff - male**	103	103	0.0
	Total number of area staff	28,563	27,852	-2.5
	Number of area staff - female	15,495	15,179	-2.0
	Number of area staff - male	13,068	12,673	-3.0
	Total number of area refugee staff	25,720	24,870	-3.3
	Number of area refugee staff - female	13,829	13,439	-2.8
	Number of area refugee staff - male	11,891	11,431	-3.9
	Total number of area non-refugee staff	2,843	2,982	4.9
	Number of area non-refugee staff - female	1,666	1,740	4.5
	Number of area non-refugee staff - male	1,177	1,242	5.5
	Percentage of area refugee staff	90.0	89.3	-0.7

*** Note 1:** Human resources data has been rounded.

**** Note 2:** The number of Agency-wide international staff in 2020 includes 11 staff based in UNRWA liaison offices. This number includes five females and six males. In 2021, international staff numbers include 12 staff based in Agency liaison offices, including five females and seven males.

Procurement Statistics		2020	2021	Change %
GFO*	Total procurement value of purchase orders, services and construction contracts (US$)	49,678,503	58,462,062	17.7
	Total proportion of total Agency procurement value (%)	22.0	21.1	-0.9
	Total procurement value of construction contracts (US$)	17,547,853	20,136,739	14.8
	Proportion of total Agency construction contracts (%)	56.2	44.1	-12.1
	Total procurement value of purchase order contracts (US$)	11,549,353	15,861,855	37.3
	Proportion of total Agency purchase order contracts (%)	9.8	10.5	0.7
	Total procurement value of service contracts (US$)	20,581,296	22,463,468	9.1
	Proportion of total Agency service contracts (%)	27.0	28.0	1.0

	Procurement value - PB (US$)	10,094,298	11,700,973	15.9
	Procurement value - EA and projects (US$)**	39,584,205	46,761,089	18.1
JFO	Total procurement value of purchase orders, services and construction contracts (US$)	10,380,783	10,460,002	0.8
	Total proportion of total Agency procurement value (%)	4.6	3.8	-0.8
	Total procurement value of construction contracts (US$)	223,483	140,990	-36.9
	Proportion of total Agency construction contracts (%)	0.7	0.3	-0.4
	Total procurement value of purchase order contracts (US$)	437,617	597,528	36.5
	Proportion of total Agency purchase order contracts (%)	0.4	0.4	0.0
	Total procurement value of service contracts (US$)	9,719,683	9,721,484	0.0
	Proportion of total Agency service contracts (%)	12.8	12.1	-0.7
	Procurement value - PB (US$)	9,867,078	9,948,591	0.8
	Procurement value - EA and projects (US$)	513,705	511,412	-0.4
LFO	Total procurement value of purchase orders, services and construction contracts (US$)	36,759,002	31,487,868	-14.3
	Total proportion of total Agency procurement value (%)	16.3	11.3	-5.0
	Total procurement value of construction contracts (US$)	9,622,401	5,573,386	-42.1
	Proportion of total Agency construction contracts (%)	30.8	12.2	-18.6
	Total procurement value of purchase order contracts (US$)	4,531,893	5,583,042	23.2
	Proportion of total Agency purchase order contracts (%)	3.8	3.7	-0.1
	Total procurement value of service contracts (US$)	22,604,708	20,331,441	-10.1
	Proportion of total Agency service contracts (%)	29.7	25.3	-4.4
	Procurement value - PB (US$)	21,814,998	20,348,762	-6.7
	Procurement value - EA and projects (US$)	14,944,004	11,139,107	-25.5
SFO	Total procurement value of purchase orders, services and construction contracts (US$)	11,259,890	30,958,045	174.9
	Total proportion of total Agency procurement value (%)	5.0	11.2	6.2
	Total procurement value of construction contracts (US$)	67,100	606,000	803.1

	Proportion of total Agency construction contracts (%)	0.2	1.3	1.1
	Total procurement value of purchase order contracts (US$)	6,477,261	25,687,942	296.6
	Proportion of total Agency purchase order contracts (%)	5.5	16.9	11.4
	Total procurement value of service contracts (US$)	4,715,528	4,664,104	-1.1
	Proportion of total Agency service contracts (%)	6.2	5.8	-0.4
	Procurement value - PB (US$)	4,917,159	4,004,872	-18.6
	Procurement value - EA and projects (US$)	6,342,730	26,953,173	324.9
WBFO	Total procurement value of purchase orders, services and construction contracts (US$)	20,709,246	38,918,586	87.9
	Total proportion of total Agency procurement value (%)	9.2	14.0	4.8
	Total procurement value of construction contracts (US$)	2,311,472	17,807,446	670.4
	Proportion of total Agency construction contracts (%)	7.4	39.0	31.6
	Total procurement value of purchase order contracts (US$)	8,626,697	8,229,736	-4.6
	Proportion of total Agency purchase order contracts (%)	7.3	5.4	-1.9
	Total procurement value of service contracts (US$)	9,771,077	12,881,404	31.8
	Proportion of total Agency service contracts (%)	12.8	16.1	3.3
	Procurement value - PB (US$)	9,145,277	13,444,167	47.0
	Procurement value - EA and projects (US$)**	11,563,969	25,474,418	120.3
HQA	Total procurement value of purchase orders, services and construction contracts (US$)	96,802,616	107,329,054	10.9
	Total proportion of total Agency procurement value (%)	42.9	38.7	-4.2
	Total procurement value of construction contracts (US$)	1,439,996	1,369,880	-4.9
	Proportion of total Agency construction contracts (%)	4.6	3.0	-1.6
	Total procurement value of purchase order contracts (US$)	86,575,535	95,814,080	10.7
	Proportion of total Agency purchase order contracts (%)	73.2	63.1	-10.1
	Total procurement value of service contracts (US$)	8,787,085	10,145,093	15.5
	Proportion of total Agency service contracts (%)	11.5	12.6	1.1

	Procurement value - PB (US$)	29,059,572	23,720,452	-18.4
	Procurement value - EA and projects (US$)**	67,743,044	83,608,602	23.4
Agency	Total procurement value of purchase orders, services and construction contracts (US$)	225,590,041	277,615,618	23.1
	Total proportion of total Agency procurement value (%)	100	100	0.0
	Total procurement value of construction contracts (US$)	31,212,306	45,634,441	46.2
	Proportion of total Agency construction contracts (%)	100	100	0.0
	Total procurement value of purchase order contracts (US$)	118,198,357	151,774,183	28.4
	Proportion of total Agency purchase order contracts (%)	100	100	0.0
	Total procurement value of service contracts (US$)	76,179,378	80,206,994	5.3
	Proportion of total Agency service contracts (%)	100	100	0.0
	Procurement value - PB (US$)	84,898,383	83,167,817	-2.0
	Procurement value - EA and projects (US$)**	140,691,657	194,447,801	38.2

*** Note 1:** GFO procurement statistics include HQ Gaza data.

**** Note 2**: GFO, WBFO and Agency-wide statistics pertaining to the procurement value of "EA and projects" for 2021 include procurement funded through the Humanitarian and Early Recovery Appeal.

Management and Operational Effectiveness		2020	2021	Change %
GFO	Level of efficiency in completing projects within agreed time and budget (%)	91.0	94.9	3.9
JFO	Level of efficiency in completing projects within agreed time and budget (%)	97.1	97.7	0.6
LFO	Level of efficiency in completing projects within agreed time and budget (%)	94.0	94.7	0.7
SFO	Level of efficiency in completing projects within agreed time and budget (%)	91.0	93.4	2.4
WBFO	Level of efficiency in completing projects within agreed time and budget (%)	92.0	96.3	4.3
Agency	Implementation rate of external audit (UNBOA) recommendations (%)	63.0	57.5	-5.5
	Level of efficiency in completing projects within agreed time and budget (%)*	90.7	94.3	3.6

*** Note 1:** The 2021 Agency-wide value for the level of efficiency in completing projects within the agreed time and budget includes the 89.6 per cent value for HQ-managed projects.