



profile: nur shams camp

tulkarm governorate

Overview

Nur Shams camp is located in the northern part of the West Bank and is roughly three kilometres east of Tulkarm City. The first refugees of the camp took shelter in the Jenin area until a snowstorm destroyed their tents and forced them to relocate to the Tulkarm area. From this incident, Nur Shams camp was established in 1952.

The economic situation in the camp is characterized by high levels of unemployment due to the absence of work opportunities in the area. Overcrowding is another issue in Nur Shams camp, in addition to the lack of activities for children and youth. UNRWA educational staff members have recognized this issue and in response offer after-school activities and additional skill development classes. Due to these extra efforts, the schools in the camp have received several recognitions of merit.

An open sewerage channel that runs from Nablus to Tulkarm borders the camp. In winter, the sewage flow swells due to rainwater. Subsequent floods cause damage and health hazards. An UNRWA maintenance initiative aims to resolve this issue by building a sewerage pipeline leading to a treatment plant in Israel.

UNRWA in Nur Shams Camp

General Information

- **Established:** 1952
- **Size:** 0.21 sq km
- **Population before 1967 (OCHA):** 3,125
- **Estimated population (PCBS):** 7,350
- **Registered persons (UNRWA):** 10,500
- **Estimated density:** 50,000 persons per sq km
- **Places of origin:** Villages in the Haifa region

UNRWA in Nur Shams Camp

Main UNRWA installations:

- Two schools
- One health centre
- One distribution centre

UNRWA employees working in Nur Shams camp: 114

- Education: 79
- Health: 17
- Relief and social services: 3
- Sanitation services: 10
- Administration: 5

Education

There are two UNRWA schools in the camp, one for girls and one for boys. Collectively, they serve more than 1,700 students. The buildings, constructed in 2001 and 2004, are in good condition and have a number of specialized facilities, such as a library and a computer and science laboratory. Furthermore, remedial classes in Arabic and mathematics are offered on Saturdays. Through cooperation with international organizations, the school has acquired the capacity to offer training in animation and media. Psychosocial counselling is available at the schools as each school has its own counsellor. However, there is a lack of organized after-school activities, which would benefit the children of Nur Shams camp.

Health

The Health Centre in Nur Shams provides primary health care, including reproductive health, infant and child care, immunizations, screening and medical check-ups, and treatment of communicable and non-communicable diseases. Psychosocial counselling and family and child protection are also available at the health centre. A dentist is available twice per week and the centre also has access to an x-ray machine. The centre, however, is too small and lacks physiotherapy services. UNRWA has prioritized construction works to expand the Health Centre.

The Centre has recently implemented the Family Health Team approach. This new approach focuses on the family with the aim of providing comprehensive, continuous care. The Family Health Team has improved patient flow and reduced the number of consultations that doctors perform, though this number remains above 100 consultations per day. An electronic health information system (e-Health) for patient files has also been implemented. This system has increased the accuracy of data and health information, as well as health service efficiency in the Centre.

profile: nur shams camp



Relief, Social Services and Emergency Response

Through the Social Safety Net Programme, UNRWA provides quarterly food parcels to some 830 impoverished refugees, which is the equivalent of 8 per cent of registered persons in the camp. Social workers in the camp also conduct home visits to identify cases which require additional support. By partnering with organizations in the camp, UNRWA seeks to support vocational training and to offer services to vulnerable members of the community, such as women and persons with disabilities. For example, the Women's Centre has a kindergarten that was established with the support of the relief and social services programme.

Furthermore, the Emergency Cash-for-Work Programme assists food-insecure families by offering them two- to three-month work opportunities inside the camp. The family receives a cash subsidy in return for their work, helping them to meet their basic food needs. The projects they work on are designed to benefit the camp community as a whole. Cash-for-work labourers have supported construction and maintenance work at various camp facilities, including the Disability Centre, the Women's Centre and the Youth Centre.

Environmental Health

The sanitation foreman conducts daily water examinations and manages the team of sanitation workers. Nine sanitation workers are employed in the camp. The workers collect solid waste from shelters and maintain the sewerage network in the camp. The management of solid waste poses a particular challenge, as the amount of waste is growing in parallel with the population.

MAIN CHALLENGES

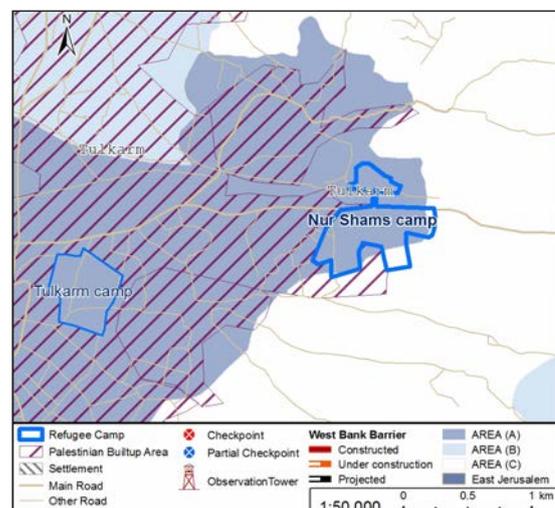
Overcrowding

Given the limited land available in the camp, residents can only build upwards and into the streets of the camp to accommodate the growing population. This has made many streets in the camp

inaccessible for cars, which is particularly hazardous in cases of emergency. Many families live in dangerous conditions, as initial shelters were not constructed to support additional floors. The camp has almost no open spaces, and children have no place to play except for the school playgrounds. Crowded living conditions strain relations within the home and directly impact the residents' well-being and health. Overcrowding also affects services in the camp that are often overburdened. For these reasons, UNRWA has rehabilitated 53 shelters and reconstructed 12 shelters in Nur Shams camp in recent years and has prioritized the reconstruction of the camp services office and environmental health storage space.

Unemployment

Unemployment increased dramatically after the West Bank Barrier was constructed and particularly affects youth and female-headed households that are vulnerable to poverty and food insecurity. Unemployment among women is high, with almost 50 per cent of the female labour force looking for work.



profile: nur shams camp

Spotlight: Educational Halls, UNRWA Girls' School

The UNRWA Girls' Preparatory School in Nur Shams camp is one of the leading schools in regards to academic achievement levels in the West Bank. The school serves over 400 students and employs 20 teachers, many of whom have been recognized by international competitions and awards for their work.

In 2013, the school began the implementation of a plan, the 'Specialized Learning Hall Project'. Typically, elementary and preparatory schools assign students of the same grade level to a specific classroom. The students attend all of their classes in the same room, while the teachers rotate to instruct the various subjects. The UNRWA Girls' Preparatory School in Nur Shams camp, however, felt that students would be better served by classrooms dedicated to a specific subject. As a result, the school created specialized learning halls – classrooms each specifically utilized for the instruction of a particular subject.



The school has classrooms for English, Arabic, science, social science, math, religion, geography, history and technology. These halls increase the learning capabilities of the students through various means. As classrooms are only utilized to instruct one subject, they can be decorated with teaching aids and various posters and games that are specific to a single subject. Previously, teachers had to carry their teaching aids with them, which limited their creativity as instructors. Furthermore, students move from class to class throughout the day and thus have the opportunity to expend their energy in between classes. Since the implementation of the specialized learning halls, teachers have noticed a drastic change in the school's environment. Students are more enthusiastic and alert, and teachers have been able to enhance their instruction methods by creating a classroom environment that is specific to their subject. The specialized learning halls inspire creativity and encourage the exchange of ideas.

"I Have Been Given the Opportunity to Serve and Enhance My School."



Bushra Ra'iq Hussein is no ordinary 14-year-old girl. Born in 1999 in Nur Shams refugee camp, Bushra is the youngest of seven children. "My brothers and sisters did not attend university," she says, "but I hope to be the first to change that." Though young in age, Bushra is rich in experience and determination. She speaks with poise and confidence as she relates to us her dreams, her ambitions, as well as her fears.

"October 23," she says. "That's when he was killed," and she embarks on the story of her older brother's capture and subsequent death by the Israeli security forces (ISF) in 2007. Twenty-nine years old at the time, her brother had spent the previous six years in an Israeli prison before being released. Three months later, he was captured and killed. During those three months, Bushra remembers Israeli soldiers coming to her house on a nightly basis as they inquired as to the whereabouts of her brother. "It became normal," she says. "They didn't

even scare me anymore." Her brother's death left a lasting impression on her family, particularly on her father. "He became very nervous and protective," she says. She continues, "He always wants to know where I am or why I am late, but I know it is because he loves me and is worried for me."

Despite her family's concern for her safety, Bushra's family has also been integral to her academic success, as have various faculty members at the UNRWA Nur Shams Girls' Preparatory School. "I'm in my final year here," says Bushra, "and I don't want my time here to end." She speaks of the numerous teachers who have inspired and encouraged her, including the school principal. It was these teachers who noticed Bushra's talent for public speaking, when in seventh grade she frequently volunteered to read aloud in class. "That year the school brought in famous Palestinian poets to perform their work for the students," says Bushra, "and I began reading and performing their poetry as well." And so began Bushra's journey as a poetry reciter. She has since performed at various poetry and literary events and has had the opportunity to work with numerous Palestinian poets.

Bushra, however, does not simply recite the work of others; she also creates her own. "I love to write, draw and make films," she says. She has written several short stories, a number of which have been printed and are accessible in her school's library. She is currently working on a series of short stories whereby she visits elderly people in the surrounding areas and records folklore tales from their childhood. Bushra is not only artistically gifted; she is also a leader in her community. She is president of her school's student parliament and thus serves as a liaison between the student community and school administration. When we ask what her favorite part of being head of the parliament is, Bushra responds, "I have been given the opportunity to serve and enhance my school." Bushra hopes to attend university, where she plans to study chemistry or English, though she assures us that she will keep writing. "I would like to publish something of my own one day," she tells us.

Well-spoken, intelligent and charismatic, Bushra thanks us and walks back to gather her belongings, for class is done for the day. The possibilities are endless for this 14-year-old, but wherever her future may lead her, one thing is certain: Bushra Ra'iq Hussein is unstoppable.

profile: nur shams camp

General Overview West Bank Refugee Camps

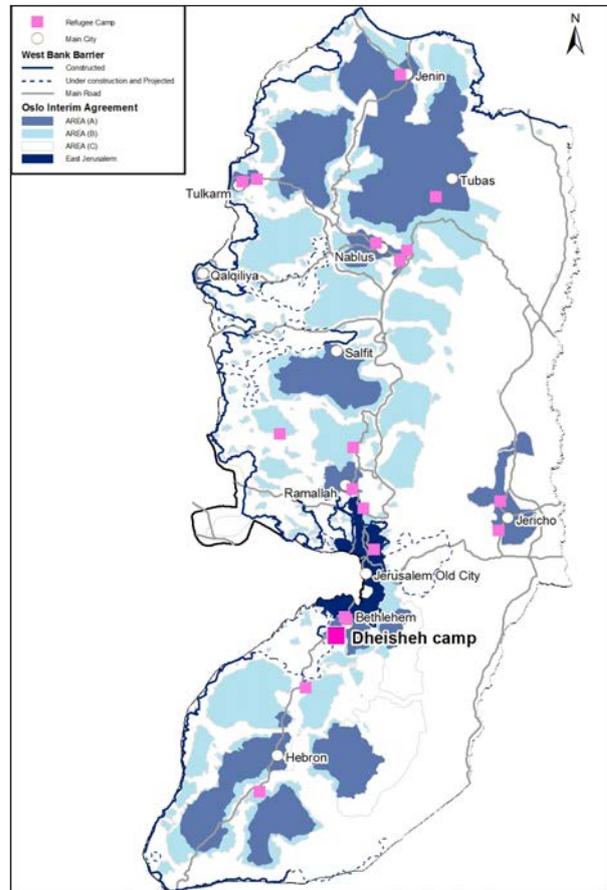
Who is a Palestine Refugee?

A Palestine refugee is defined as any person whose normal place of residence was Palestine during the period from 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.

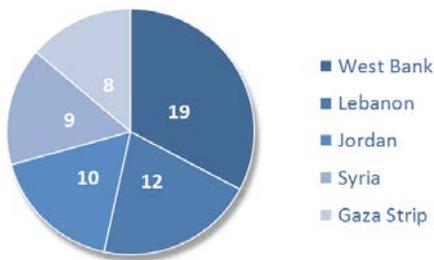
Palestine Refugee Camps

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.

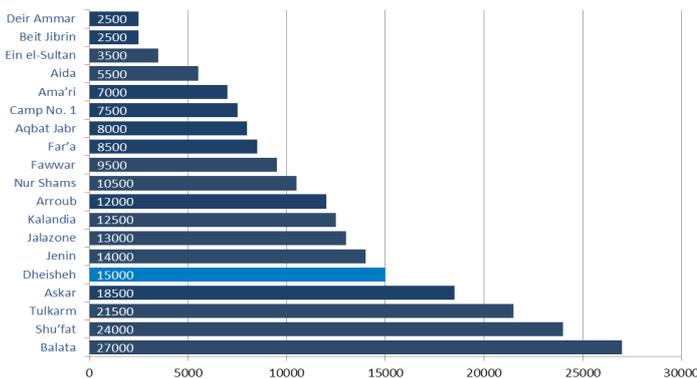


Number of UNRWA Refugee Camps per Field

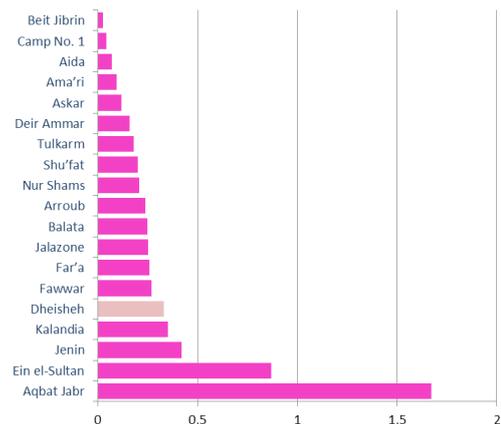


West Bank Refugee Camps Estimated populations

Total population West Bank camps: 222,500



West Bank Refugee Camps Camp surface in square kilometer



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 mandated to provide assistance and protection to some 5 million registered Palestine refugees. Its mission is to help Palestine refugees in Jordan, Lebanon, Syria, West Bank and the Gaza Strip achieve their full human development potential, pending a just and lasting solution to their plight. UNRWA services encompass education, health care, relief and social services, camp infrastructure and improvement, and microfinance.