



Photo by Christopher von Toggenburg

profile: shu'fat camp

jerusalem governorate

Overview

Shu'fat camp is located on the outskirts of Jerusalem. The Israeli settlement Pisgat Zeev, illegal under international law, is located to the camp's north. The camp was established by UNRWA in 1965 in order to provide improved housing for the roughly 500 refugee families living in Mu'askar camp in the Old City of Jerusalem. Today, approximately 12,500 Palestine refugees are registered as living in Shu'fat camp. However, UNRWA estimates that the actual number of residents in the camp is around 24,000.

Shu'fat camp was illegally annexed by Israel after the 1967 hostilities when Israel unilaterally established new municipal boundaries for Jerusalem. Camp residents still hold Jerusalem IDs and, unlike West Bank ID holders, are allowed to reside in Jerusalem. Because the Israeli Ministry of the Interior has a policy of revoking Jerusalem IDs from Palestinians who do not have their 'centre of life' in Jerusalem, the camp has become a popular place of residence for Palestinians (non-refugees) with Jerusalem IDs who might not otherwise afford the high living costs of Jerusalem. This has contributed to the extreme overcrowding in the camp.

In 2003, Israel began the construction of the West Bank Barrier in East Jerusalem, routing it so that Shu'fat camp and surrounding areas ended up on the 'West Bank side' of the Barrier. This cut off Shu'fat residents from East Jerusalem. Today, residents have to pass through a crowded checkpoint to access Jerusalem.

UNRWA in Shu'fat camp

General information

- **Established:** 1965
- **Size:** .203 sq km
- **Population before 1967 (OCHA):** 3,368
- **Estimated population (PCBS):** 9,850
- **Registered persons (UNRWA):** 12,000
- **Estimated density:** 50,000 per sq km
- **Places of origin:** Lydd, Jerusalem, 30 villages in Ramleh, Gaza and the area west of Hebron

UNRWA in Shu'fat camp

Main UNRWA installations:

- Three schools
- One health centre

UNRWA employees working in Shu'fat camp:

- 139
- Education: 101
- Health: 14
- Relief and Social Services: 2
- Sanitation services: 17
- Administration: 6

Education

There are three schools in Shu'fat camp, two girls' schools and one boys' school, which collectively serve approximately 1,500 students. Schools in Shu'fat provide schooling through the tenth grade, as opposed to the ninth grade as in other camps, in order to address Jerusalem ID concerns should students attend the tenth grade in the West Bank. Dropout rates for the Shu'fat Boys' School are some of the highest in the West Bank. School faculty members work closely with social workers and parents to encourage these students to return to school.

The boys' school was built in 1999 and has a library and both a computer and science laboratory. The boys' school was rehabilitated in 2014 and now has multipurpose rooms, as well as a renovated playground. In 2014, UNRWA built a new compound where both girls' schools now reside. The new compound has the same facilities as the boys' school. However, there is a lack of organized after-school activities, which would otherwise benefit the children of Shu'fat camp.

Relief, Social Services and Emergency Response

Through its Social Safety Net Programme, UNRWA supports abject poor families with food assistance. UNRWA also works with various community-based organizations (CBOs) in the camp to support development programmes for women, children, youth and persons with disabilities. The social needs of Shu'fat camp are numerous. Residents of Shu'fat are subject to poor access to municipal services, overcrowding and poor living conditions, high rates of crime, and recurrent conflict-related violence and protection threats. In response, UNRWA has implemented the Healthy Camp Initiative (see Spotlight), which aims to improve the environment, living conditions and overall quality of life for residents.



Photo by Christopher von Toggenburg

Health

The health centre in Shu'fat camp was built in 1964 and 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 five times per week.

The centre lacks an x-ray machine, which is only available in Jerusalem. Physiotherapy is not available in the health centre but is provided in the Community-Based Rehabilitation Centre. Respiratory diseases and gastrointestinal infections are ailments specific to Shu'fat camp. Staff members attribute the presence of these illnesses to the poor water and air quality issues caused by overcrowding in the camp that overburdens the sanitation systems.

UNRWA is currently rebuilding its health centre in Shu'fat camp, which is expected to be completed in 2015. This will enable UNRWA to maximize its services and implement the Family Health Team approach. This new approach focuses on the family with the aim of providing comprehensive, continuous care. The Family Health Team will improve patient flow and reduce the number of daily consultations that each doctor performs, though this number is likely to remain above 100. An electronic health information system for patient files will also be implemented. This system will increase the accuracy of data and health information, as well as health service efficiency in the centre.

Environmental Health

UNRWA has been providing garbage collection services in the camp since the Jerusalem municipality stopped this service at the outbreak of the first intifada. In the areas surrounding the camp, the municipality has continued to collect solid waste but only to a limited extent. As a result, residents of the surrounding areas often dispose their waste in the camp. This, combined with rapid population growth, has led to increased waste accumulation. UNRWA has responded by procuring two tractors, two mobile compactors, and a forklift truck and moving the multiple solid waste collection points to a single, rehabilitated site.

The 13 sanitation workers, in addition to collecting solid waste, also maintain the dilapidated and insufficient sewerage and storm-water network in the camp. The sanitation foreman manages the team of sanitation workers and conducts daily water examinations and food installation inspections.

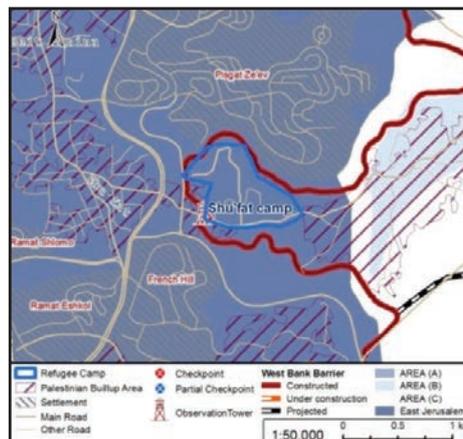
Main Challenges

Access and the West Bank Barrier

After the construction of the West Bank Barrier, two options remain to access Jerusalem: one checkpoint located between Shu'fat camp and Jerusalem and a second checkpoint that can be reached only after a long and circuitous route through the bordering West Bank municipality of Anata. As a consequence, access to Jerusalem during rush hour is particularly difficult. Access to medical and other emergency services is also hindered.

Sewerage and Storm Water Network

In the absence of the Jerusalem municipality, UNRWA constructed a sewerage and storm-water system in the 1980s. Due to the rapid population rise, the network quickly became insufficient, with sewage pipes frequently clogging and adding to the unsanitary conditions of the camp. Residents responded by building their own sewage lines, sometimes connecting them to storm-water channels. In times of flooding, storm water mixed with sewage overflows into streets and shelters, causing health concerns. UNRWA has prepared a sewerage network investment plan for Shu'fat camp to be implemented as soon as funds are in place.



Security

With the camp under the effective control of the Jerusalem municipality, Palestinian Authority security forces have no jurisdiction in Shu'fat camp. Instead, responsibility for law enforcement rests with the Israeli authorities. Residents frequently complain of a security vacuum and a lack of law and order, attributing this to a rise in drug dealing and other illicit activities taking place openly.

Clashes between Palestinian youth and Israeli forces manning the checkpoint occur frequently, often involving the use of tear gas, skunk spray and plastic-coated metal bullets. UNRWA has on several occasions been forced to close its schools and clinics due to skunk spray and tear gas canisters landing in its premises.

Overcrowding

Shu'fat camp has become dangerously overcrowded and lacks a proper plan to adequately and safely accommodate the increasing population. The rapid growth of the camp population, together with the inability of the camp to expand outside its original borders, has led to unauthorized 'vertical' construction. The original housing units built by UNRWA in 1965, which were designed with foundations to hold two floors, now reach between three and six floors. Moreover, makeshift overhead electricity cables and water lines have been installed by residents, increasing security hazards. Finally, many of the streets of the camp are narrow and inaccessible, preventing access to emergency services.

Spotlight: Healthy Camp Initiative

The Healthy Camp Initiative – introduced in 2013 in Shu'fat camp – is a community-driven planning initiative aimed at identifying community needs and solutions to camp priorities. Building on a foundation of community participation, the Healthy Camp Initiative brings together relevant community leaders and CBOs to identify priorities for collaborative action. The Healthy Camp Initiative rests on the premise that each camp must be viewed as having not only its own distinct needs and problems, but also capacities and leadership.

UNRWA initiated the Healthy Camp Initiative with a participatory rapid needs assessment conducted by Al-Quds University and with the participation of several CBOs, which allowed the Agency to identify priority problems and gaps in services. Priorities identified by the assessment

included solid waste management, school dropout rates for boys, violence in and around schools, domestic violence, substance abuse, and general safety and security. UNRWA has subsequently worked with the community to develop an integrated and complementary plan to address these concerns. This has included enhancing solid waste management through additional equipment, environmental awareness-raising, enhanced engagement with parents to reduce the dropout rate, and strengthening after-school activities provided by CBOs. UNRWA will also be implementing the Child and Family Protection Initiative to address issues related to domestic violence.



Photo by Dominiek Benoot

“These girls have power”



Photo by Kelly McDermott

Hanna Hammad and Su'ad Julani are both sixteen years of age, though they conduct themselves with a composure and grace that is far beyond their years. They are in the tenth grade at the Shu'fat UNRWA Girls' School, but they are no ordinary students. Hanna and Su'ad head the Shu'fat Girls' School Parliament, a body of elected representatives from each class between grades six and ten that represents and serves as the governing body for their fellow classmates. The school principal, Jihad Ahmad Mustafa, sits proudly next to her students as they relay to us their life stories and goals. “These girls have power,” Jihad tells us. “They are leaders, and the other students listen to and respect them.”

The school parliament is composed of ten girls, and together they work to better their school and community. They serve as liaisons between their fellow students, the school principal and the UNRWA Camp Service Officer. If a problem is brought

to the attention of the school parliament, the girls notify their superiors, who then work with the girls to solve the issue. The girls also strive to educate the students of their school in regard to human rights. They hold awareness meetings, take class trips and produce advertisements in the name of education and youth empowerment. They also serve as peer counsellors, and, as Hanna says, “If we notice a student going through a hard time, we meet with her and encourage her. We give her an outlet for her energy.” The school parliament is thus not only an educational entity, but a mental and social support system as well.

Su'ad is soft-spoken but fiercely intelligent. The only daughter in her family, she was raised with six brothers. She remembers playing in the street as a young child, for there were no parks or open spaces available for her and her brothers to play in. “I dream of becoming a social worker,” she says as she smiles. She gestures to Jihad and the school social worker, Shareen Sarhan, who has recently joined us, citing them as her inspiration.

Hanna, mature beyond her years, fondly recalls her childhood memories and notes that her family has supported her academically since a young age. She grew up in a home with four sisters, two brothers and parents who encouraged her to pursue her dreams. “My father always encouraged me,” she says, “and he has always promised me that he will send me to the best university.” Hanna dreams of one day becoming a doctor.

Su'ad and Hanna are lively, positive and ambitious, but they are also well informed of the troubles their people face. “The barriers, the checkpoints, the occupation – they all negatively affect our lives here in Shu'fat,” says Hanna. The girls also note overcrowding and water and electricity shortages as issues affecting their daily lives. These girls are no strangers to adversity, but their dreams are stronger than their plight. At the age of only sixteen, they have become leaders in their community. If the present is any indicator, Hanna and Su'ad will accomplish much in their life.

General Overview West Bank Refugee Camps

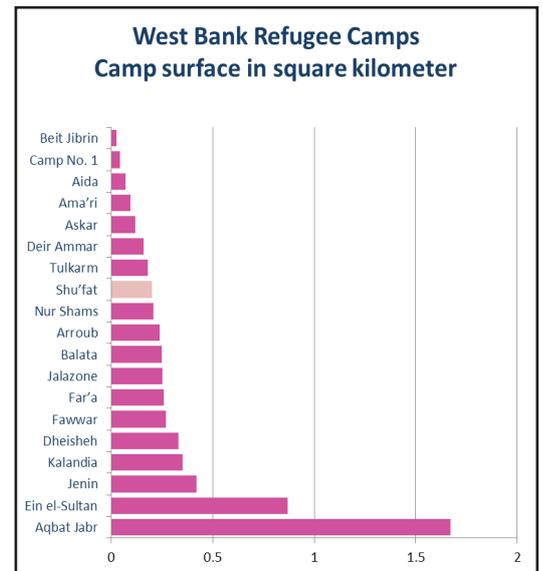
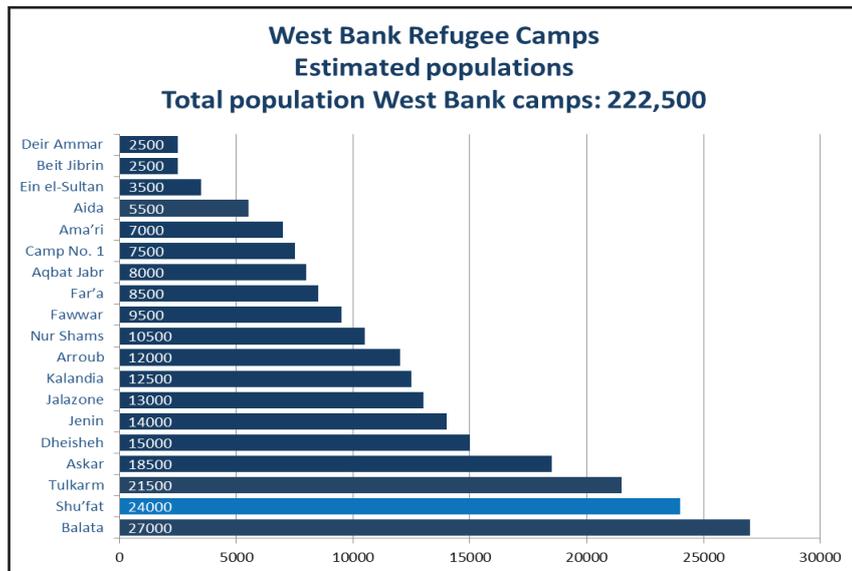
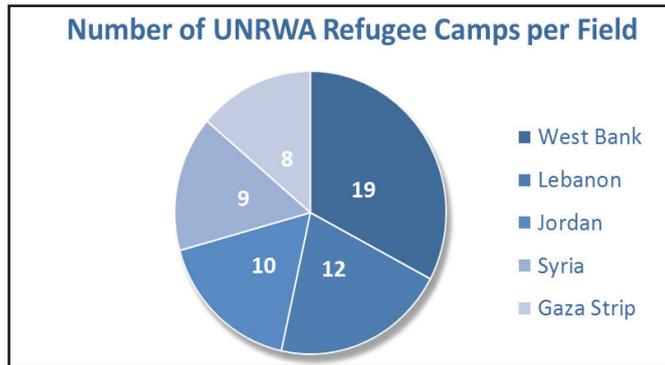
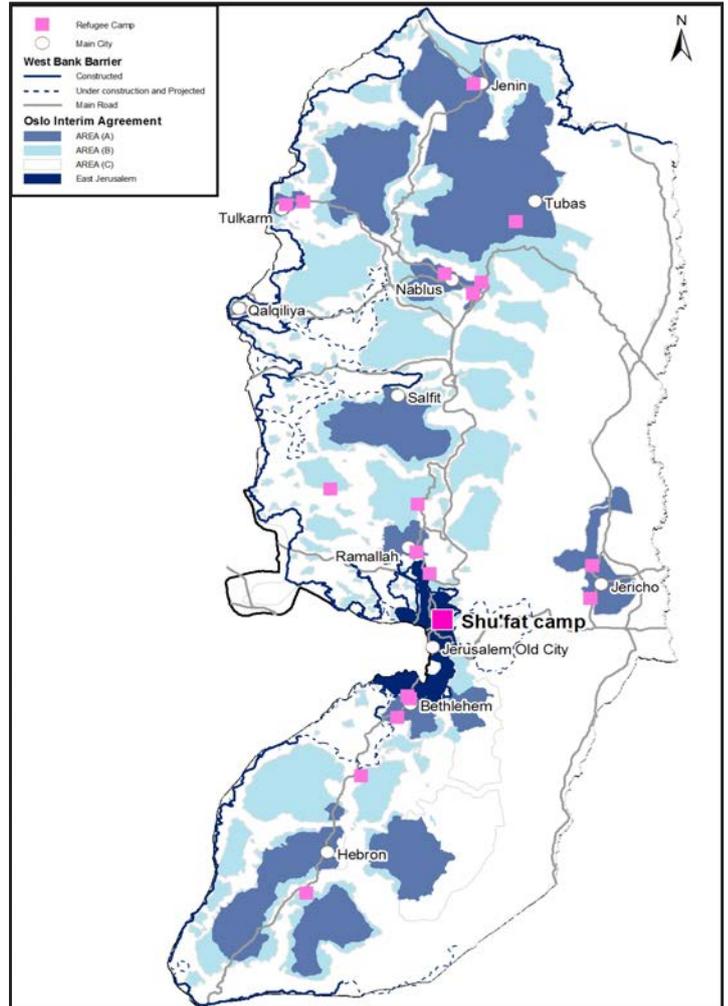
Who is a Palestine Refugee?

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 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.



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 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.