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RESTORING DIGNITY:

RESPONSES TO
THE CRITICAL
NEEDS OF
VULNERABLE
PALESTINE
REFUGEES
IN LEBANON
2012 - 2016

28 September 2011

UNRWA LEBANON FIELD OFFICE



FATHER AND SON IN NAHR EL BARED CAMP

I. EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

The presence of Palestine refugees in Lebanon dates back to 1948 when around 100,000 Palestinians fled their homeland during the Arab-Israeli war. They eventually settled into a number of camps and gatherings throughout the country, primarily near the urban centres of Beirut, Tripoli, Saida, Tyre and the Bekaa. Since 1950, the United Nations Relief and Works Agency for Palestine Refugees in the Near East (UNRWA) has been providing health, education and emergency relief services for the displaced Palestine refugees in Lebanon. In recent years, UNRWA has also sought to rehabilitate shelters and to upgrade water, drainage and sanitation services in the camps as part of its Field Infrastructure and Camp Improvement Programme (FICIP).

There are currently 425,000 Palestinians registered with UNRWA in Lebanon in the twelve official camps and forty-two gatherings across the country; however, the actual number of Palestine refugees currently residing in Lebanon is estimated to be between 260,000 and 280,000. Palestine refugees in Lebanon continue to experience great hardship and poverty in their daily lives. Lacking many basic rights and excluded from state services, they depend on UNRWA to provide for their most basic health, education and relief needs. Living conditions within the twelve camps in which the majority are confined have also continued to steadily deteriorate, with infrastructure placed under increasing strain by a growing population with no room to expand. In the absence of a resolution to their long-standing plight, refugees face an increasingly bleak and

uncertain future, with few prospects and little hope of improvement.

The AUB/UNRWA survey, published in December 2010, brought to light the dire situation facing the Palestine refugees in Lebanon. According to the survey, two-thirds of Palestine refugees are considered to be poor (subsisting on less than US\$ 6 per day), while 6.6% are classified as living in extreme poverty, meaning that they are unable to cover their basic daily food needs. Early school leaving and low levels of educational qualifications (only one-third of Palestinians have the Brevet, the official exam taken at the conclusion of Grade 9), coupled with restrictions in their ability to participate in the Lebanese labour force (56% are jobless) means that many families exist in a state of persistent economic insecurity.

PALESTINE REFUGEES IN LEBANON FACTS AND FIGURES

Population:	260,000 – 280,000
No. of Official Camps:	12
No. of Gatherings:	42
Refugees in Camps:	62%
Living on less than US\$ 6/day:	66.4%
Living on less than US\$ 2.17/day:	6.6%
Jobless:	56%
Low-skilled labor force (primary education or below):	46%
Never attended School:	10.2%
Households lacking sufficient living space:	55%
Households with at least one chronic illness:	72%
Households with at least one disability:	15%

Source: AUB Socio-Economic Survey of Palestine Refugees in Lebanon

REBUILDING HOPE...

Ali Hasan was among the Palestine refugees whose homes were rehabilitated in Bourj El-Shemali thanks to a generous donation from the UAE Red Crescent for the repair of approximately 350 shelters, completed in August 2011. Ali used to reside with his wife and four children in a two-room shelter with metal sheeting for a roof. His wife Fatmeh says: "The heat was unbearable in the summer, and the cold bored into the bones in winter; this is apart from the water leaking on my children while they slept". It was one of many shelters that are still roofed by metal sheets in Bourj El-Shemali.

Fatmeh's two young sons and two young daughters slept in one room, while their parents slept in the other. Very often she would stay up all night, especially on stormy nights, to make sure that her family was safe: "I lived in constant fear for my family. I was afraid the house would collapse on our heads at any moment. People usually go to sleep to rest. For me, sleeping hours were more like a nightmare. But rebuilding our home changed our life". After rebuilding it, the house became three rooms instead of two, and it has become healthy and safe. For the first time in her life, Fatmeh knew the meaning of sleeping all night and tasted it: "Today I know what it means to have a good night's sleep. It is a blessing I thank God for. I also thank UNRWA and the UAE Red Crescent, because they changed our life".

The rates of chronic illness and disability among the Palestine refugee population in Lebanon are indicative of the overall health status of the community; both impact on the livelihoods of individuals and create a potential burden for the families affected. According to the AUB/UNRWA survey, one-third of the Palestine refugee population is estimated to have a chronic illness. Furthermore, the percentage of household expenditure allocated to health increases significantly when a family member is chronically ill or disabled, straining already limited financial resources.

Poor nutrition is closely correlated with ill-health and poverty and the AUB/UNRWA survey states that 55.7% of households are considered vulnerable to food insecurity, reporting an inability to afford more food when food was insufficient. A lack of adequate food leads to malnourishment which is known to cause stunting and poor cognitive and psychomotor development in children. This can bring about both increased health risks and impaired learning ability.

In spite of the growth of local camp populations, the surface areas of the camps have not increased since they were first established. Housing conditions within the Palestine refugee camps continue to be dire, with thousands of



STUDENTS AT UNRWA SCHOOL

families residing in rundown and hazardous shelters. 40% of households have water leaking through the roof or walls; 8% live in shelters with roofs and/or walls made from corrugated iron, wood or asbestos. Camp infrastructure is also decayed, including a lack of adequate drinking water, corroded sewerage pipes and deteriorating and congested roads and alleyways. The overcrowded living conditions and haphazard maintenance of housing are in part responsible for the poor health of the refugee population; they have been linked to poor physical and mental health and a disproportionately high level of chronic illness among Palestine refugees.

There are positive signs of change in the Lebanese government's policies towards the Palestinian refugee population. In the Ministerial Statement issued in July 2011, the government committed itself to providing for the humanitarian and social rights of Palestinians in Lebanon. Whilst rejecting settlement in all its forms, it expressed its specific support for the reconstruction of Nahr el-Bared Camp and for the strengthening of UNRWA's budget to enable it to fulfill its humanitarian role.

Notwithstanding these positive commitments and the introduction of reforms as reflected

in recent amendments to the Labour Law and Social Security Law (approved by the Parliament on 17 August 2010), refugees are still deprived of many of their basic socio-economic and human rights. Taken as a whole, the Palestinians' chronic marginalisation has the potential to threaten social stability in the country. Combine this with an overwhelmingly young and disenfranchised population – half of whom is under 25 years of age – and the situation is apt to boil over into conflict. As the sole neutral service provider in a highly volatile environment, UNRWA therefore faces unique challenges.

In light of the findings presented in the AUB/UNRWA survey, UNRWA Lebanon has redesigned its programmes to better identify and address the needs of the poorest among the Palestine refugee population. With the linkages highlighted between poverty, education, chronic illness, employment and shelter conditions, the Agency has been able to redefine its criteria for beneficiary selection to make sure that the most vulnerable refugees are assisted. These targeted interventions will help to make the greatest impact to alleviate poverty among Palestinians in Lebanon while simultaneously contributing to greater peace and stability within the country.



FAMILY HOME IN NAHR EL BARED CAMP



CONTAMINATED WATER AT RASHIDIEH CAMP

II. APPEAL

This appeal focuses primarily on the urgent needs for 2012. However, the Agency would also like to bring attention to its funding requirements for the subsequent years in order to encourage donors to take a long-term view towards addressing the high rates of poverty and substandard living conditions among the population. Without this assistance, Palestine refugees would be subject to increased poverty and marginalization. The support of the international community is crucial in ensuring that UNRWA can discharge its mandate and bring about lasting improvements for the beneficiaries it serves.

The relief and recovery needs for Nahr el-Bared Camp (NBC) are distinguished from those of the other camps and the gatherings throughout Lebanon. The prolonged displacement of nearly 27,000 residents from the camp after its complete destruction in the summer of 2007 has resulted in an acute humanitarian crisis among the population. Refugees from NBC suffer from increased health problems, particularly in the form of mental illness. In addition, the restrictions on movement into and out of the camp imposed by the Lebanese authorities have led to the stagnation of the community's once-thriving economy. This has further increased the financial burden on displaced families.

In regards to the reconstruction of Nahr el Bared, the Agency still faces a shortfall of US\$ 195 million dollars (or 60% of the total budget). UNRWA is not requesting funding for the reconstruction of the camp under this appeal. However, it is important to note that NBC relief and recovery

activities are intrinsically linked to the rebuilding of the camp. The need for basic health, food and shelter provisions of the displaced population will remain an urgent funding priority for the Agency until the camp has been fully reconstructed.

For the 11 other camps and the gatherings in Lebanon, UNRWA is planning a number of interventions between 2012 - 2016 to improve the living conditions and alleviate poverty among the Palestine refugee population. This will include:

- The rehabilitation of substandard shelters to improve the living environment for around 4,150 families throughout Lebanon;



STUDENTS IN TRADE COURSES

- Major infrastructural improvements to upgrade water and sewerage networks, household connections and roads for 14,667 families in Ein el-Hilweh Camp;
- Ensuring the availability of safe drinking water for 14,833 families in Shatila, Burj el Barajneh, Dbayeh, Mar Elias, Beddawi, El Buss, Mieh Mieh and Wavel Camps;
- Increased coverage for tertiary health care services and medications for 4,100 refugees suffering from acute or chronic illnesses;
- Food assistance for 70,000 of the most vulnerable Palestine refugees;
- Improved access to UNRWA services for 945 refugees with disabilities;
- Emergency and community support to 600 individuals;
- Enhanced vocational training and job placement services for 2,800 youth;
- Improved primary, secondary and university education for Palestinian youth.

For 2012 activities in Nahr el-Bared Camp (amounting to US\$ 15.8 million), UNRWA recently received confirmation of a donation of US\$ 5,440,000. This leaves a funding shortfall for 2012 of US\$ 10,336,000. From the 2012 budget requirements to support vulnerable Palestine refugees in Lebanon (amounting to US\$ 27.5 million), the Agency has positive indications that it will receive US\$12.5 million from donors. Thus, UNRWA is seeking an additional US\$ 15 million to carry out relief and recovery activities for vulnerable Palestine refugees throughout Lebanon in 2012. Overall, the Agency has secured around 40% of its funding needs for 2012. The Agency is seeking approximately US\$ 26 million to meet its funding shortfall for next year.

We hope additional funding will be mobilized to allow the Agency to implement projects in the areas of infrastructure, health care, education, employment and relief services for all Palestine refugees living in the camps throughout Lebanon.



SUPPORT TO CHILDREN WITH DISABILITIES

The tables below detail the priorities and funding needs for NBC and the other camps in 2012 and beyond:

2012 BUDGET REQUIREMENTS FOR NBC DISPLACED FAMILIES

Rental cash subsidies for displaced NBC residents	US\$ 6,440,000 ⁽¹⁾
Maintenance of plots and collective centres	US\$ 80,000
Leased land and electricity in the adjacent areas	US\$ 1,050,000
Coverage of other shelter management costs	US\$ 40,000
Provision of in-kind food assistance for displaced families	US\$ 2,420,000
Transportation for UNRWA school students	US\$ 95,000
University scholarships for 58 students	US\$ 45,000
Subsidization of hospitalization and medications costs	US\$ 4,220,000
Coverage of NMU management costs	US\$ 1,370,000
Donor visibility	US\$ 16,000
TOTAL	US\$ 15,776,000⁽²⁾

⁽¹⁾ Around 85% of the funding under this component has been covered by a recent donation from the European Union. The Agency estimates that an additional US\$ 1,000,000 is requested to provide rental cash subsidies to displaced NBC residents in 2012.

⁽²⁾ Considering the aforementioned secured funding, the Agency is requesting US\$10,336,000 to meet its 2012 budget requirements for NBC displaced families.

2012 BUDGET REQUIREMENTS FOR VULNERABLE PALESTINE REFUGEES IN LEBANON

Shelter for approx. 750 Palestine refugee families	US\$ 8,000,000 ⁽³⁾
Infrastructure improvements in Ein el-Hilweh Camp	US\$ 6,500,000 ⁽⁴⁾
Safe drinking water for residents in eight camps	US\$ 3,000,000 ⁽⁵⁾
Hospitalization support for tertiary care patients	US\$ 3,000,000
Food assistance to 70,000 Palestine refugees	US \$2,400,000
Support for people with disabilities (PWDs)	US \$600,000
Assistance for emergency and community needs	US\$ 200,000
Delivery of semi-professional and trade courses	US\$ 800,000
Education support for Palestine refugee youth	US\$ 3,000,000
TOTAL	US\$27,500,000 ⁽⁶⁾

⁽³⁾ This component has been fully covered by a recent donation from the European Union.

⁽⁴⁾ With a potential donation of US\$ 2 million, UNRWA is seeking financial support for US\$ 4.5 million for this component.

⁽⁵⁾ With a potential donation of US\$ 2.5 million for 7

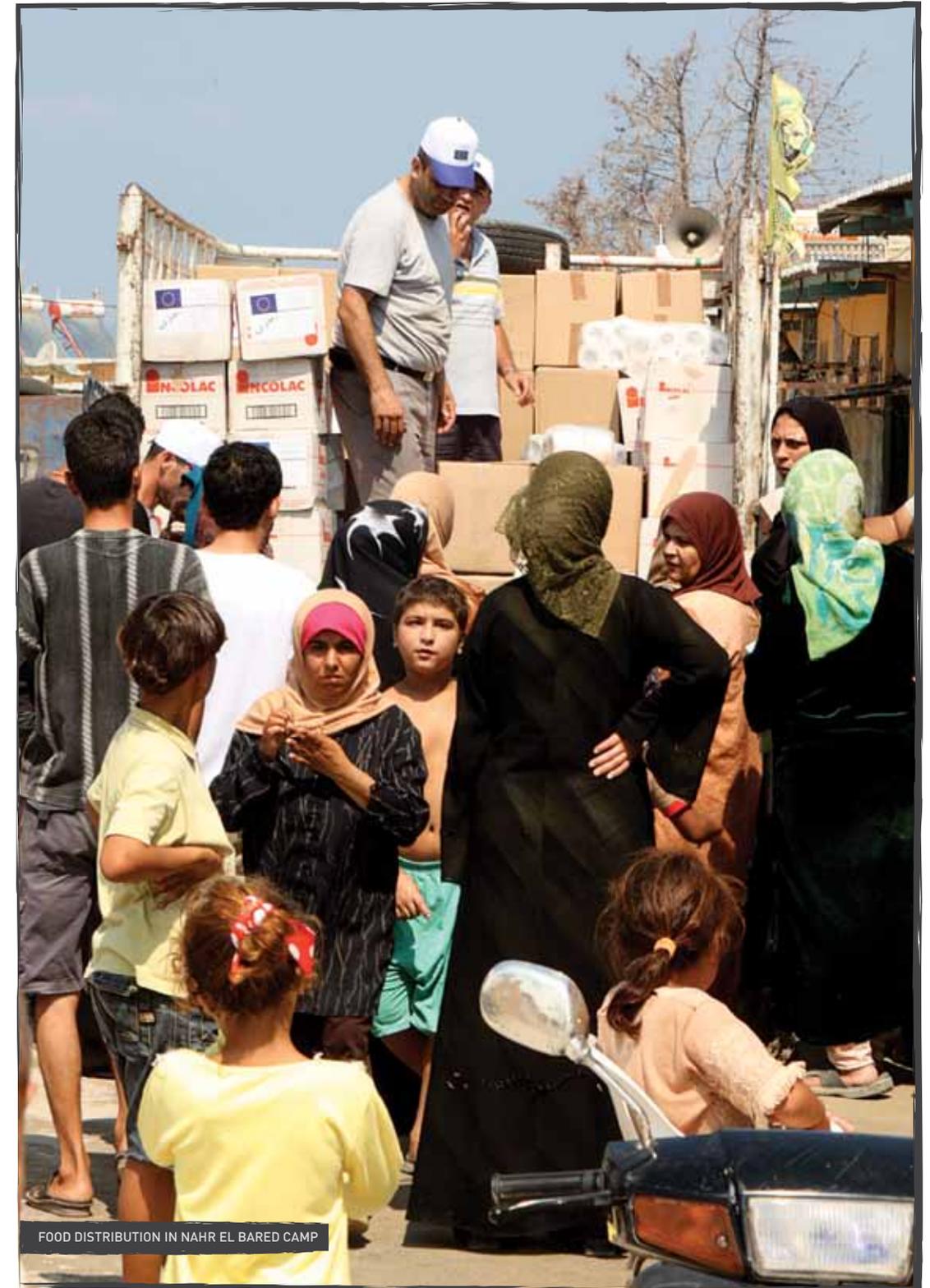
camps, only US\$ 500,000 would be required for el-Buss camp.

⁽⁶⁾ Taking into consideration the discussions with the above mentioned donors, US\$ 15 million are still urgently needed to cover the 2012 needs of vulnerable refugees who reside in Lebanon. This figure is exclusive of the funding needed for Nahr el-Bared Camp.

POVERTY ALLEVIATION INTERVENTIONS FOR ALL PALESTINE REFUGEES IN LEBANON 2013-2016

In order to meet its commitment to provide ongoing support and basic services to Palestine refugees in Lebanon, UNRWA will continue to seek funding for relief and recovery activities in subsequent years. A projected 2013 budget for Palestine refugees in NBC has been provided; however, these figures are dependent on the pace of reconstruction and are subject to change. For funding activities to support all other Palestine refugees in Lebanon, requirements for 2013 - 2016 are as follows:

Palestine refugees displaced from NBC (2013 only)	US\$ 14,500,000
All Palestine refugees in Lebanon (excluding NBC)	US\$ 88,800,000
TOTAL	US\$103,300,000



FOOD DISTRIBUTION IN NAHR EL BARED CAMP



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