



reporting period: 1 october 2022 to 1 may 2023

operational context

As of March 2023, the total number of UNRWA registered Palestine Refugees in Lebanon is 489,292 persons.¹ In addition, UNRWA records show a total of 31,400 Palestine Refugees from Syria residing in Lebanon. However, registration with UNRWA is voluntary; deaths as well as emigration remain often unreported, and refugees can continue registering newborns as they move abroad through the UNRWA online registration system. An identity verification process to be carried out in Lebanon in the second half of 2023 is expected to yield more accurate numbers of Palestine Refugees that are in-country and alive. In 2017, the Lebanese Palestinian Dialogue Committee together with the Palestine Central Bureau of Statistics carried out a census among Palestinians living in Lebanon and reported a total of 174,000 persons. About 200,000 Palestine Refugees access UNRWA services in Lebanon every year. The Agency's current estimation is that no more than 250,000 Palestine Refugees currently reside in the country. Having more accurate data will greatly support future programme planning and fundraising efforts with a priority on targeted cash assistance.

Poverty rates among Palestine Refugees are high with 80 per cent reported to be living below the national poverty line (adjusted for inflation) as of March 2023. Data modelling confirmed that without the distribution of quarterly cash assistance (at a total value of US\$ 18 million in two rounds since December 2022), poverty would stand at 93 per cent.²

The very high rates of poverty among Palestine Refugees are a result of decades of structural discrimination related to employment opportunities and denial of the right to own property in Lebanon, compounded by the most recent economic, fiscal and monetary crisis in the

host country. In this context, UNRWA has more than ever become the main reference for humanitarian assistance and basic services for Palestine Refugees. The top priorities voiced by the refugee community are cash assistance and hospitalization coverage. As of March 2023, 30 per cent of total household expenditures was reportedly spent on food alone.

Health and Hospitalization

While Primary Health Care (PHC) services are provided free of charge directly through UNRWA's 27 PHC clinics, UNRWA relies on the Lebanese health care system for secondary and tertiary care (including medicines) and hospitalization. During this reporting period, the Agency provided a total of 524,618 PHC consultations and subsidized hospital admissions for secondary and tertiary services for 12,184 patients, including providing specialized mental health and psychosocial support to 611 patients.

The collapse of the local currency and ensuing foreign exchange shortages in the monetary market, and the inability of the government to continue importing critical goods at subsidised rates led to triple-digit price increases and acute shortages of important medical supplies and medication. In late 2022, the Ministry of Public Health announced that non-Lebanese patients would no longer have access to any remaining subsidies on medication, including highly expensive cancer medications. UNRWA

¹ [UNRWA registered population dashboard](#)

² UNRWA High Frequency Crisis Monitoring Survey, Lebanon, December 2022 and March 2023

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data currently records just over 500 cancer patients, at least 201 of whom have been unable to continue their treatment due to unavailability and/or unaffordability of prescribed medication in Lebanon. The Agency's budget availability permits coverage of 50 per cent of cancer medication, while assistance is made available by a third party to fully cover treatment for all children. UNRWA Lebanon has now facilitated procurement of 18 cancer medications in the international market at affordable costs for Palestine Refugees to ensure their continued access to life-saving support.

Relief and Social Services

Stabilizing the community with cash assistance provides some levels of dignity and independence to address basic needs. During the reporting period, the Agency provided multi-purpose cash assistance to more than 160,000 Palestine Refugees, as well as winterisation support to 12,587 Palestine Refugee families. Socio-economic data collected in early 2023 indicates that these multiple rounds of assistance have begun to have a positive impact on overall poverty levels. This proves the very high effectiveness of the Agency's cash assistance with an injection of over US\$ 9 million quarterly into the community, covering 160,000 persons or at least 65 per cent of the estimated Palestine Refugee population in Lebanon. This is producing tangible impact on households across the community through economic multiplier effects as the assistance is being distributed in US currency and consistently.

UNRWA also offers psycho-social support services delivered through a cadre of professional social workers. Adopting an integrated case management approach, social workers supported 554 individuals during the reporting period. In Q1 2023, the total caseload stood at 223 open cases, supporting 128 adults and 95 children, with a continually growing demand for these services.

At the end of February 2023, UNRWA launched an interactive bilingual mobile platform (eUNRWA) to enhance registration services for Palestine refugees. Through eUNRWA, Palestine Refugees and other eligible persons can view their registration information, update their address and contact details, submit and track registration applications, and download their new Family Registration eCard. Palestine Refugees no longer need to spend time and money to register at UNRWA area offices but can do so from anywhere in the world at any time.

Education and Youth

UNRWA Lebanon currently provides educational services to 39,982 students for grades 1 to 12, including around 5,000 Palestine Refugees from Syria, at 63 schools. Additionally, 714 youth are currently enrolled in vocational and technical training at the Sibli Training Centre.

The Lebanon Field Office is undertaking a series of critical interventions to address a crisis in learning attainment. Unified mid-year exams taken by students in February 2023 showed a decreasing trend in student achievement, as they progress through the primary and preparatory education cycles, reaching a nadir at Grade 9, where only 38 per cent of students appeared on track to succeed at the national Brevet exams.³ UNRWA Lebanon is discussing an action plan for immediate intervention and longer-term strategic change, including suspending the automatic promotion policy, strengthening teacher capacity through training, guidance and supervision, revision of teacher recruitment practices, and a review of the curriculum and parallel UNRWA and host government textbooks. Strengthening result-based accountability for both students and teachers, to improve learning achievements at the school level, will be key in turning around the negative trend, while also recognising that improving learning outcomes passes through enhanced participation of education stakeholders into policy making and management at school level. The changes in direction have been welcomed by staff and community members and extensive communication outreach will accompany reform activities.

Providing support to adolescents and youth is a key strategic commitment of the Agency. The Sibli Training Centre offers semi-professional and trade courses, on two levels: for 9th grade students (Brevet certificate) and for 12th grade students (holders of Lebanese baccalaureate). Additionally, the Agency provides an integrated package of services that empowers youth and adolescents with employability and entrepreneurial skills as well as access to digital economy opportunities through its Digital Innovation Lab.

Protection

The lack of governance in Palestine refugee camps and the absence of a judicial and law enforcement system, as well as a stalled judicial system in the country contribute to an increase in protection risks that remain unattended. Frequent outbreaks of armed clashes and other forms of violence in the camps threaten children's safety and school attendance. During the last six months, UNRWA has offered legal aid services to 4,240 Palestine Refugees via phone and consultations.

Palestine Refugees from Syria (PRS), particularly those who lack legal residency or who lack any official identity documents are at heightened protection risk. These individuals often struggle to move freely around the country, are unable to work in the formal sector and face

5 UNRWA Statistics Bulletin | UNRWA

6 83.2 per cent school year 2021/22

7 53 schools- 26.2 per cent of enrolled students are in non-purpose-built buildings

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face difficulties in undertaking official processes, such as sitting for exams or opening bank accounts. The start of 2023 has seen increases in anti-Syrian refugee rhetoric alongside an increase in raids and summary deportations. This is having a significant impact on the refugees' ability to move and earn a livelihood, and access services outside the camps (approximately 56 per cent of PRS live outside camps). To date, UNRWA is aware of four Palestine Refugees from Syria who have been summarily deported. Refugees have increasingly expressed fear of being targeted for arrest and deportation by the Lebanese authorities.

Field Infrastructure and Camp Improvement

Palestine Refugees living in the twelve camps in Lebanon suffer from overcrowding, poorly built habitat and lack of public infrastructure and space. The camps have become a sub-standard, undignified and dangerous living environment that is attractive only to the most vulnerable communities in Lebanon, with the proportion of Palestine Refugees in camps in Beirut and the North being around 50 per cent or even below. The Field Infrastructure and Camp Improvement Programme (FICIP) is prioritizing the improvement of the physical and social environment of the camps through a community-driven planning approach – Camp Improvement Plans (CIP), which places the community at the centre of urban planning and design processes. Throughout 2022, 41,704 Palestine refugees benefited from 28 interventions focusing on the revitalization of open spaces, rehabilitation of shelters, installation of environmental and energy-saving solutions, and the improvement and maintenance of infrastructural networks, including water and electricity in camps. These interventions included the construction of sewage and drainage networks in Rashidieh camp; the rehabilitation and expansion of electrical and water networks in Burj Barajneh camp; and the development of community spaces such as the Women Programme's Centre and elderly centre, also in the Rashidieh camp.

To enhance its operational efficiency in response to decreases in power supply from the national grid and over reliance on generators, compounded by increasing fuel prices in the local market, UNRWA is increasingly investing in greening the power supply. The Agency is installing solar panels at pumping stations in camps that supply water to camp residents, as well as at schools and health centres.

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Fulfilling the Promise – Nahr el-Bared Camp

Since its near complete destruction in 2007, the reconstruction of the Nahr el-Bared camp (NBC) has remained UNRWA largest ongoing project in Lebanon. Out of the original displaced population of approximately 6,000 Palestine refugee families (27,000 residents), to date 4,029 families (16,775 residents) have been provided with new housing and a pathway to return to the camp. In support of the NBC community's economic revival, 1,047 reconstructed shops have been handed over to NBC traders and around 8,500 jobs have been created within the scope of the camp's reconstruction works.

Currently more than 700 families continue to wait for reconstructed shelters. Together with partners, UNRWA has reviewed the obstacles for completion of the construction works that in addition to lack of funding have impaired the timely completion of the project. An action plan to close the project, which is in its 15th year, is underway in coordination with the Lebanese Palestinian Dialogue Committee.



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

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UNRWA is the United Nations Relief and Works Agency for Palestine Refugees in the Near East. The United Nations General Assembly established UNRWA in 1949 with a mandate to provide humanitarian assistance and protection to registered Palestine refugees in the Agency's area of operations pending a just and lasting solution to their plight. UNRWA operates in the West Bank, including East Jerusalem, The Gaza Strip, Jordan, Lebanon and Syria. Tens of thousands of Palestine refugees who lost their homes and livelihoods due to the 1948 conflict continue to be displaced and in need of support, nearly 75 years on. UNRWA helps Palestine Refugees achieve their full potential in human development through quality services it provides in education, health care, relief and social services, protection, camp infrastructure and improvement, microfinance, and emergency assistance. UNRWA is funded almost entirely by voluntary contributions.