overview

Nur Shams camp is located in the northwest of the West Bank and is roughly three kilometres east of the centre 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 a high level of unemployment due to the absence of work opportunities in the area. Unemployment rates remain a challenge inside all camps with 17% recorded by PCBS’s Labour Taskforce Report, Q4 2022. Overcrowding is another issue in Nur Shams camp, in addition to lack of activities for children and youth. An open sewerage channel runs from Nablus to Tulkarm bordering the camp. In winter, the sewage flow swells due to rainwater. Subsequent floods cause damage and health hazards.

Registered population

13,519

Children 0-18 year (2,116 female 2,324 male)

4,440

education

There are two UNRWA schools in the camp, one for girls and one for boys, serving a total of 1,536 students - based on 2021/22 scholastic year data. The buildings, constructed in 2001 and 2004, are in good conditions and have a number of specialized facilities such as a library and a computer and science laboratories. Psychosocial counselling is also available, with each school having its own counsellor.

2 Schools

1 girls’

1 boys’

1,536 Students

821

715

52 Education staff: teachers, school principals, deputy school principals and school counselors

health

The health centre in Nur Shams provides primary health care including reproductive health, infant and child care, immunizations, screening and medical check-ups, treatment of communicable and non-communicable diseases and psychosocial counselling services. A dentist is working twice per week and the health centre is equipped with an x-ray machine. However, the health centre is too small and lacks physiotherapy services. UNRWA prioritizes construction works to expand the health centre and is currently seeking for funds.

1 Health centre

16 Health staff (Doctors, Specialist, Pharmacists, Dental Surgeons, Nurses and Paramedics )

1,202 Patients with non-communicable diseases provided with care

417 Pregnant women provided with Antenatal Care

1,459 Children 0-5 years provided with Child Health Care

*all data presented is unrwa annual data for 2022 unless stated otherwise
Nur Shams camp residents are exposed to multiple protection threats, linked to the incursions by Israeli Security Forces (ISF) into the camp that often result in clashes. During these incursions ISF routinely deploy live ammunition, tear gas, and other forms of weaponry targeted at camp residents. ISF often enter into the camp during the night, causing damage to Palestinian homes and property while generating fear, anxiety and high levels of stress.

Many residents of the camp, both women and men, seek employment in Israel even in the agricultural sector, due to the lack of locally available employment. When access and movement restrictions are applied at the nearby checkpoints, it is common that parents are prevented from returning home to the camp – particularly during the peak agricultural season. This situation presents numerous protection challenges for children in particular, with children often left unaccompanied or unsupervised for extended periods.

In 2022 alone, the ISF has conducted 20 incursions in the camp and detained 59 persons including 3 children. No fatality has been recorded in the camp in the recent past, but 2 persons were injured by live ammunition in 2022.

- 2 Injuries caused by live ammunition
- 59 Detainees, including 3 minors

Infrastructural & Camp Improvement

UNRWA Sanitation Foreman conducts daily water examinations (residual chlorine test) and manages a team of eleven sanitation labourers (4 temporary staff through various sources of funds), who collect solid waste from shelters and maintain the sewerage network in the camp. The construction of a transfer station outside the camp was completed in 2020 with fourteen solid waste containers and only one tractor. The management of solid waste continues to pose a particular challenge as the amount of waste is growing in parallel with the population.

Given the limited land available in the camp, residents can only build upwards and on to the streets of the camp to accommodate the growing population. This has left many streets in the camp inaccessible to cars, which is particularly problematic in cases of emergency. In addition, many families live in dangerous conditions because their shelters were not constructed to support additional floors. The camp has almost no open space and children have no place to play except for the schools’ playgrounds. Crowded living conditions strain relations within homes, which directly impact residents’ well-being. For all the aforementioned reasons, UNRWA has been constructing and rehabilitating shelters in Nur Shams since 2013. Yet, needs continue to increase and additional funding is essentially required.

- 1 Shelters rehabilitated/reconstructed
- 2,321 Tons of solid waste removed in camps
- 100% Sewerage connection
- 11 Sanitation labourers

Rehabilitation of storm water and sewerage networks. The networks were never rehabilitated and have become incompatible with the camp’s population density and the geographical nature of Nur Shams.

- Reconstruction of Nur Shams Girls’ and Boys’ Schools as no maintenance has been done for years. The roofs in the schools have cracks which leads to frequent rainwater leakages, posing various hazards to students’ wellbeing.
- Shelter rehabilitation for the most vulnerable.
- Reconstruction of CSO Office.
- Reconstruction of Nurshams health centre

Camp Profile: Nur Shams Camp

- Identified poor households* (5,679 individuals)
- Female-headed household identified poor
- 18% of the identified poor households benefit from the e-card (Social Safety Net Programme and Emergency Cash Assistance)
- 226 Households
- 1,249 Individuals
- 57 Female-headed household

Through the Social Safety Net Programme, UNRWA provides cash assistance to around 732 impoverished refugees each year, which is equivalent to 5.4 per cent of the registered population in the camp. Moreover, through the Emergency Appeal (EA), an additional 517 individuals receive emergency cash assistance (ECA).

Social workers conduct home visits to identify cases which require additional support. In addition, UNRWA Crisis Intervention Unit provides financial assistance to residents whose shelters have been damaged after incursions to repair broken doors, windows, etc. It also refers the victims to services such as mental health counselling and legal assistance.

* Poor Households are identified using UNRWA’s standard criteria, the Proxy Means Testing Formula (PMTF).