



## UNRWA Advisory Commission Field Visit

### Lebanon Field Office 18-19 June 2014

There will be two groups of 7 individuals (max.). Each group will start with the day indicated below and follow the alternate agenda on the second day. Numbers are limited due to security and logistical constraints.

Transportation will be provided to and from the camps from the Mövenpick Hotel.

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#### Day 1 - Beirut

##### Group 1

**8.30-9.00:** Meet with the Director at the Mövenpick Hotel

**9.00:** Depart for Burj Barajneh Camp

**9.30-10.00:** Meet with Mohamad Khaled, Chief Area Officer for the Central Lebanon Area

*Burj Barajneh and the impact of the crisis in Syria on the Palestine refugees already living in the camps. The arrival of additional refugees from Syria compounds not only the burden on UNRWA services, but also severely strains the coping strategies of the whole community. With this extreme vulnerability come inherent risks to social cohesion and stability.*

**10.00-10.30:** Visit the Health Clinic, briefing by Dr. Najeh Elsadek, Chief Field Health Programme and health staff on regular programmes and emergency health services

*Burj Barajneh Health Centre provides an overview of the challenges faced by Palestine refugees from Lebanon (PRL) and Palestine refugees from Syria (PRS) in accessing essential health services. Palestine refugees in Lebanon, unlike Palestine refugees in other fields, are deprived of most socio-economic rights and cannot provide for the needs of their families. Around 95% of Palestine refugees in Lebanon do not have health insurance or access to the Ministry of Public Health (MoPH)'s coverage for hospitalization or medications for catastrophic diseases such as cancer or multiple sclerosis which are usually offered to Lebanese citizens. The crisis in Syria has compounded the pressure on UNRWA health services and has restricted the capacity of the Agency to provide essential health services.*

**10.30-11.30:** Visit PRS and PRL families in their shelters

*The most overpopulated camp around Beirut, Burj Barajneh is home to hundreds of PRS families. The camp provides a unique view of the social challenges faced by the affected pre-existing community and the newcomers from Syria.*

**11.30-12.00:** Refreshments at Women's Programme Centre, general discussion with Centre staff and youth regarding education and employment challenges

**12.30:** Arrive at Shatila Camp

*Shatila was devastated during the 1982 Israeli invasion of Lebanon and was frequently targeted during the Lebanese civil war, which resulted in the destruction of property and the displacement of refugees. Shatila suffers from overcrowding and extremely poor environmental health conditions. Additionally, the diversity of the population results in significant challenges to social cohesion and fosters tensions between distinct communities.*

**12.30-13.30:** Visit Ramallah School, briefing by Walid Al-Khatib, Chief Field Education Programme and head teacher on emergency education, interact with PRS students

*UNRWA is providing education services to more than 7,400 PRS school age children in its schools throughout the country, of which 14 have been running on double shifts. To accommodate the needs of PRS pupils the Agency hired more than 300 teachers plus support staff, adapted school premises in terms of infrastructure and sanitary facilities, covered the increased running costs, provided teacher trainings as well as textbooks, stationary and school uniforms. This has put an enormous strain on the already limited resources as, even under normal circumstances, UNRWA is struggling to meet the needs of students. It is expected that student enrollment will rise to 8,000 in 2015 and additional schools will be forced to institute the double shift schedule, reducing the quality of education for all students and exacerbating existing tensions in the community.*

**13.30:** Depart Shatila

**14.00:** Arrive at the Mövenpick Hotel

**15.00:** Meet with representatives from Syria Field Office, briefing on the situation in Syria particularly with regard to PRS

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## Day 1 - Southern Lebanon

### Group 2

**8.30-9.00:** Meet with the Director at the Mövenpick Hotel

**9.00:** Depart for Rashidieh Camp

**10:30-10.45:** Meet with Fawzi Kassab, Chief Area Officer for Tyre Area at Ein el Assal School

*Rashidieh lies on the coast 5 km from Tyre and is divided into "old" and "new" sections. The older part of the camp was originally built by the French government in 1936 to accommodate Armenian refugees. The "new camp" was built by UNRWA in 1963 to accommodate Palestine refugees who were evacuated from Gouraud camp in Baalbek. Heavily affected during the Lebanese civil war, many shelters in Rashidieh need rehabilitation and water and sanitation issues present constant challenges.*

**10.45-11.00:** Meet with the Camp Improvement Plan Working Group at Ein el Assal School

*The Camp Improvement Plan (CIP) is a pilot project in Lebanon Field launched in 2012 and still ongoing. The Working Group (WG), or participatory platform, is an integral part of the CIP comprised of representatives from local NGOs operating in the camp, the Popular Committees and the Inhabitants Committee with a special focus on active youth participation. The WG is the central platform for discussion, decision-making and follow-up on implementation of projects with the aim to enhance the community and ensure a broad and representative degree of community input into the planning process, implementation and, upon completion, the handing over of projects to the community.*

**11.00-11.15:** View NFI distribution for PRS

**11.15-11.45:** Briefing on environmental health programme and visit shelters on the seashore

**11.45-13.00:** Depart Rashidieh, stop at view point of Ein el Hilweh in Maghdousheh

*Briefing on the political tensions in Ein el Hilweh camp. The camp is the biggest in Lebanon both in terms of population and area size as many refugees from other camps within Lebanon were displaced to Ein El Hilweh during the civil war. A number of displaced refugees continue to live on the edge of the camp in extremely poor conditions.*

**13.20-13.50:** Zaarout tented settlement, meet with PRS families and briefing on protection issues

*Home to 35 families, Zaarout is an unofficial settlement which was established in the 1980s for those fleeing Tel el Zaatar. Since the Syrian crisis, 15 Syrian families settled in Zaarout in addition to 5 PRS families. Residents in Zaarout suffer from respiratory and skin conditions due to dampness in their shelters. Twenty-five school-age children are registered at an UNRWA school however less than half attend due to high transportation fees. Zaarout is one several unofficial settlements in Lebanon where residents experience some of the harshest living conditions. UNRWA struggles to meet the needs of the refugees living in tented settlements throughout the country.*

**14.30:** Arrive at the Mövenpick Hotel

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**Day 2 - Beirut**

**Group 2**

**9.00:** Depart for Burj Barajneh Camp

**9.30-10.00:** Meet with Mohamad Khaled, Chief Area Officer for the Central Lebanon Area

*Briefing on the living conditions in Burj Barajneh and the impact of the crisis in Syria on the Palestine refugees already living in the camps. The arrival of additional refugees from Syria compounds not only the burden on UNRWA services, but also severely strains the coping strategies of the whole community. With this extreme vulnerability come inherent risks to social cohesion and stability.*

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**13.30:** Depart Shatila

**14.00:** Arrive at the Mövenpick Hotel

**15.00-15.45:** Briefing on Nahr el-Bared, including the handover on 18 June 2014 of newly constructed apartments to 129 families, discussion on the progress to date and current challenges

*The destruction of Nahr el-Bared camp (NBC) in 2007 led to the loss of the homes and properties of the Palestinian community. Over 27,000 Palestine refugees were forced to abandon their homes. The UNRWA Health Centre, schools and relief office were also completely destroyed. Almost seven years later, much of the community remains uprooted and continues to rely heavily on assistance from UNRWA. The effects of this displacement have compounded the already severe socioeconomic conditions facing*

*these refugees and constitute a chronic humanitarian crisis. While UNRWA has continued to provide urgent relief assistance to displaced NBC residents since 2007, shortfalls in available funding have forced the Agency to review its level of relief provision and to target scarce resources to those most desperately in need.*

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## **Day 2 – Southern Lebanon**

### **Group 1**

**9.00:** Depart for Rashidieh Camp

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*Rashidieh lies on the coast 5 km from Tyre and is divided into “old” and “new” sections. The older part of the camp was originally built by the French government in 1936 to accommodate Armenian refugees. The “new camp” was built by UNRWA in 1963 to accommodate Palestine refugees who were evacuated from Gouraud camp in Baalbek. Heavily affected during the Lebanese civil war, many shelters in Rashidieh need rehabilitation and water and sanitation issues present constant challenges.*

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