



Two PRS children in front of their house in Beddawi Palestine refugee camp, North Lebanon.  
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## protection at unrwa in 2018

### the year in review

#### Protection Environment in Lebanon

##### Key protection issues for Palestine refugees from Lebanon (PRL)

- Right to adequate housing and property
- Right to work and access to employment
- Exposure to child protection and gender-based violence (GBV) risks
- Onward movement to third countries

##### Key protection issues for non-ID Palestinians in Lebanon

- Lack of legal documentation and/or lack of registration with Lebanese authorities for non-ID Palestinians
- Freedom of movement
- Onward movement to third countries
- Barriers to access to services and exposure to child protection and GBV risks

##### Key protection issues for Palestinian refugees from Syria (PRS) residing in Lebanon

- Access to territory and legal stay in Lebanon
- Civil registration
- Freedom of movement and detention
- Onward movement to third countries
- Barriers to access to services and exposure to child protection and GBV risks
- Return to Syria

Of the close to 30,000 Palestinian refugees from Syria currently residing in Lebanon:

- 41 per cent are children and 52 per cent are women
- 31 per cent of households are headed by women
- 85 per cent of households consider UNRWA assistance as the first source of income
- Close to 2,900 new-born babies have been recorded

#### The Situation of Palestine Refugees in Lebanon

- More than five million Palestine refugees are registered by UNRWA in five areas of operation in the Middle East, including over 473,547 registered in Lebanon.
- According to the Lebanese-Palestinian Dialogue Committee (LPDC) census carried out in July 2017, 174,422 Palestinian refugees in Lebanon were found to reside in the 12 official Palestine refugee camps and in 156 gatherings across Lebanon. Using a different methodology, the "Survey on the Socioeconomic Status of Palestine Refugees in Lebanon, 2015" by the American University of Beirut, estimate that between 260,000 and 280,000 Palestine refugees from Lebanon currently reside in the country.
- In addition, there are an estimated 3,000 to 5,000 Non-ID Palestinians in Lebanon. These are Palestinians who began to arrive in Lebanon in the 1960s and do not hold any type of valid identification documents. They are not recognised by the Government of Lebanon and thus do not hold valid legal status in the country.
- Many Palestine refugees have historically been excluded from key aspects of social, political and economic life with the result that they face restrictions on the enjoyment of their human rights. They also have severely restricted access to public services and job opportunities, which leads to marginalization and increased vulnerability.
- More than 60 per cent of PRL and close to 50 per cent of PRS are living in 12 overcrowded Palestine refugee camps with substandard housing conditions, limited work opportunities and restricted freedom of movement. The lack of formal legal authority within the camps has resulted in limited access to safety and justice, especially for survivors of gender-based violence (GBV) and children at risk of violence, exploitation and abuse. Accessing protection services outside the camps is challenging due to limited awareness, mobility restrictions and the strain on available services in the country.
- Palestinian refugees from Syria escaping the conflict and seeking safety in Lebanon have faced limitations in legally accessing the Lebanese territory since August 2013, while those PRS already in the country faced specific protection threats due to their precarious legal status, in relation to legal stay and access to civil registration procedures. The issue of the return of refugees to Syria occupied an important part of the post-electoral public debate in Lebanon. Since July 2018, various initiatives have been put forward to support the return of refugees from Syria. Although the return to Syria for PRS cannot be considered as a durable solution, they have the right to return to their habitual residence in Syria, taking into consideration safety, dignity and voluntariness. The return of PRS to Syria, when this was their place of habitual residence, will not affect their right of return under relevant General Assembly resolutions, in particular resolution 194.

#### Age, gender and diversity related protection concerns

- Women continue to be discriminated against within their community and have more limited access to employment opportunities and services.
- Close to 50 percent of the total Palestine refugee population is less than 25 years old.
- 82 percent of PRL and 77 percent of PRS children aged 1-14 years are subjected to at least one form of violent discipline.
- 1 in 10 Palestinian households in Lebanon have at least one family member with a disability. Women, children and older persons with disabilities are particularly vulnerable to discrimination, exploitation and violence.

## Key protection results in Lebanon, 2018

- More than 460 individuals facing a protection risk were identified and referred to services and support (48 per cent PRS, 25 per cent children and 27 per cent female).
- Almost 8,800 individuals accessed legal services, including awareness raising, counselling, assistance and representation.
- Over 700 people were interviewed in relation to cross-border movements in and out of Syria.
- Close to 658 frontline staff was trained on protection topics, including: safe identification and referral; protection mainstreaming; gender-based violence; child protection and parenting skills.
- Over 7,000 Palestine refugees women, girls, men and boys (18 per cent PRS) were reached through GBV sensitization sessions.
- More than 510 beneficiaries and community members (PRL and PRS) attended awareness sessions on mental health and psychosocial support topics.
- Participation in more than 120 external advocacy visits and protection briefings focusing on the PRL and PRS's human rights' situation in Lebanon.
- More than 1,750 children participated in child protection and psycho-social support activities in UNRWA schools aimed at strengthening their resilience and mitigating child protection risks.
- Over 3,380 caregivers were reached by parent support interventions in UNRWA schools and health clinics.

## UNRWA Protection Response in Lebanon

The Agency's response to an increasingly challenging protection environment in Lebanon focuses on safeguarding and realizing the rights of Palestine refugees, with a particular focus on the needs of the most vulnerable groups. The approach adopted is multidimensional and includes:

- Identification of vulnerable individuals faced with protection concerns, including violence, abuse, neglect or exploitation, and referral to seek solutions that meet their protection needs.
- Documenting, monitoring and reporting protection risks and trends that provide evidence for advocacy and help shape protection programming.
- Engagement in high level advocacy with national authorities, duty bearers, donors and the international community to promote Palestine refugees' rights under international law.
- Coordination with external partners, with the aim of ensuring that Palestinian issues are reflected in the wider humanitarian programming and planning.
- Monitoring cross-border movements of PRS through interviews, surveys and data analysis to contribute to advocacy.
- Mainstreaming protection standards and principles across UNRWA programs through capacity building of staff, implementation of protection audits and technical support for programmatic protection mainstreaming work plans.
- Facilitation of community protection groups across Lebanon to strengthen community-based prevention of GBV and protection activities.
- Provision of GBV case management and psychosocial support to survivors of GBV.
- Capacity building of frontline workers in safe identification and referral as well as prevention and response to GBV and child protection (CP) incidents.
- Provision of legal aid services such as counselling and formal representation services (civil matters) to Palestine refugees, in addition to awareness-raising on the rights of Palestine refugees.
- Provision of emergency protection cash transfers to increase the coping capacity of Palestine refugees facing unexpected and significant shocks and protection risks
- Provision of parent support interventions and coordination and roll out of multi sectorial plan of action to end violence affecting children.
- Coordination and delivery of mental health and psychosocial support service (MHPSS), as well as capacity building for frontline staff on MHPSS assessment, intervention and referral.

## UNRWA Protection Response in Ein el Hilweh Palestine refugee camp: evacuation plans and exercise



"UNRWA schools evacuation exercise, Ein El-Hilweh Palestine refugee camp, Saida. © 2018 UNRWA Photo by Mahmoud Zaidani."

In November 2018, the Protection team in Saida worked with UNRWA's Chief Area Officer and Education Department to run an evacuation drill for the southern compound of schools in Ein El Hilweh camp. The drill follows a joint project started in 2016 between UNRWA, the International Committee of the Red Cross and the Lebanese Red Cross aimed at ensuring safety and security of children when armed clashes break out in the camp. The project improved the physical infrastructure of schools in the southern compound through creating safe spaces where children are protected from bullets and explosive devices, as well as providing training to staff and students on safe evacuation and first aid. The training and subsequent evacuation plans took into account the specific needs of those with disabilities and older students were given responsibilities for assisting these children during evacuations. Four schools (Marj Ben Amer, Hittin, Fallouja and Qibya) participated in the drill on 8 November along with their 2,380 students. Though schools have implemented individual evacuations frequently, this is the first time the four schools implemented an evacuation of the whole compound. Schools implemented the individual evacuation in 6-7 minutes, and the whole evacuation drill for all schools took 16 minutes. After the evacuation drill, a lessons learnt meeting was held between the Protection, Education, LRC, ICRC and school principals. Physical improvements are currently

being implemented in the northern compound of schools in Ein El Hilweh to create safe spaces and a safe evacuation route. Once these are completed, training will be given by LRC to students and staff on evacuation and first aid. UNRWA Education, the Chief Area Officer and Protection will then work with schools to undertake a full evacuation drill of the northern compound. Similar preparation to ensure the safety of students will also be implemented in UNRWA's one school Mieh Mieh camp in Saida in 2019 in light of the recent clashes in that camp.



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for palestine refugees in the near east

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UNRWA is a United Nations agency established by the General Assembly in 1949 and mandated to provide assistance and protection to some 5 million registered Palestine refugees. Its mission is to help Palestine refugees in Jordan, Lebanon, Syria, West Bank and the Gaza Strip achieve their full human development potential, pending a just and lasting solution to their plight. UNRWA services encompass education, health care, relief and social services, camp infrastructure and improvement, protection and microfinance.