



Protecting the vulnerable

Overview

UNRWA's Protection programme aims to safeguard and advance the rights of Palestine refugees. This task is particularly important in Lebanon, where Palestine refugees are marginalized and deprived of many basic human rights and have limited access to state-provided services such as health, education, social services and the judicial system.

With its Protection Programme, UNRWA ensures that protection standards are incorporated in all our operations and that our staff is trained to apply protection principles and human rights concepts when delivering UNRWA services. It aims to prevent violence against vulnerable members of the refugee community, including women and children, and to ensure equal opportunities for people with disabilities. The Agency works in close coordination with the refugee community and specialised partners to fulfill these objectives.

Protection also means engaging directly or indirectly with relevant statutory authorities to further advocate for the rights of Palestine refugees.

UNRWA Lebanon's Response

UNRWA's protection programme which was established in Lebanon at the end of 2009 is implemented by a Protection Officer and Operations Support Officers in all areas of Lebanon. The protection approach of UNRWA is threefold:

- Ensuring that protection needs are addressed in all aspects of programming, project design, policies and procedures, as well as in staff training.
- Delivering services in a manner that promotes the rights of refugees and ensures their security and dignity.
- Promoting the respect and fulfilment of refugees' rights through monitoring, reporting and intervention and highlighting the need for a just and durable solution to the plight of Palestine refugees to the international community.

The right to work

- UNRWA is coordinating with different stakeholders to further the right to work for Palestine refugees.
- The legal amendments to the labour and social security laws approved by the Lebanese Parliament on 17 August 2010 constitute the first positive steps by policymakers on Palestine refugees in years.
- Pending these changes coming into legal effect, the Agency has identified the need to monitor the situation in the labour market for Palestine refugees, provide refugees with information about the new legislation and to coordinate with relevant bodies in order to ensure support for their rights.

Strengthening Child Protection

- The psychological well-being of children in school and the absence of all forms of violence in schools is a key priority of the Protection programme.
- UNRWA will work towards securing a protective environment in schools to prevent violence against children and promote children's rights. Using a community based approach, child-friendly services will be integrated in schools by providing multi-sectoral assistance to child survivors through referral pathways.

Protecting the vulnerable

At a glance

- Lebanese legislative reforms have opened up 70 professions to Palestinians.
- Access for Palestinians to 30 syndicated professions including medicine, law, and pharmacy remains restricted however.
- Nearly 1,000 out of around 3,000 non-ID's have so far been accepted and issued with a Special Identity Card.
- According to research, around 30% of Palestine refugee women have been victims of violence at least once in their lives.
- Amongst the refugee community, all households with a disabled family head (9%) are classified as extremely poor.

Source: AUB/ UNRWA Socio-economic Survey of Palestinian Refugees in Lebanon, 2010

UNRWA's Fundraising Priorities

- Continued advocacy for the right to work
- Prevention of and support to victims of gender-based violence
- Strengthening of child protection mechanisms
- Enhanced access to justice
- Enhanced rights for non-ID's

Budget

Over US\$ 1 million is required every year to conduct protection-related activities for Palestine refugees.

For more information, please contact
UNRWA Lebanon Public Information Office
Tel/Fax: +961 1840468 or email: h.samra@unrwa.org

Fighting Gender-Based Violence (GBV)

- In order to address the high prevalence of GBV, including domestic violence and child sexual abuse, UNRWA has launched a pilot project in Tyre in 2009.
- It is a priority for UNRWA Lebanon for the next biennium to strengthen Lebanon Field's capacity to address GBV with the implementation of a new project in other areas of Lebanon. The objective is to improve UNRWA staff's capacity to detect cases of violence and report them through an internal coordination group (multi-disciplinary team).
- The project will also establish an external referral system and response mechanisms. A component on community outreach and awareness raising is also part of this project.

Equal Opportunities for People with Disabilities (PWDs)

Given the strong correlation between poverty and disability, the inclusion of people with disabilities not only provides equal opportunities but it also means lifting families out of poverty. In particular, UNRWA's disability strategy aims to:

- Increase the physical accessibility of UNRWA schools for children with physical disabilities and advance the inclusion of children with visual impairment.
- Maintain the rehabilitation services provided by two Early Intervention Units in South Lebanon for 275 children with disabilities and their families.
- Improve access to specialist education for children with disabilities.
- Improve access to employment for people with disabilities by further aligning the Agency's employment and vocational training strategy to reflect their needs.

Enhancing Access to Justice

- Palestinians have restricted access to legal services and often lack knowledge about their rights concerning access to employment, property, freedom of movement and other civil matters.
- UNRWA is implementing a three-year legal aid project allowing Palestinians to benefit from legal services provided by accredited Lebanese lawyers.
- The project will also carry out an awareness campaign on the legal entitlements of Palestine refugees, with a particular emphasis on questions pertaining to the labour law and its recent amendments.

Rights and Access to Services for Non-ID's

- Palestinians in Lebanon who do not hold an identification card for Palestinian refugees issued by the Directorate General of Palestinian Refugee Affairs (DPRA) (generally referred to as the 'non-ID's') face serious impediments to their freedom of movement.
- In 2008, the Government of Lebanon issued non-ID's with a Special Identity Card (SIC). UNRWA will continue to strengthen advocacy efforts to ensure full rights and benefits for SIC holders. The Agency aims to extend access to all relevant services to non-ID's.



UNRWA provides assistance, protection and advocacy for some 4.7 million registered Palestine refugees in Jordan, Lebanon, Syria and the occupied Palestinian territory, pending a solution to their plight. The Agency's services encompass education, health care, social safety-net, camp infrastructure and improvement, community support, microfinance and emergency response, including in times of armed conflict. Through these services UNRWA strives to help Palestine refugees achieve a decent standard of living, long and healthy lives, knowledge and skills and full enjoyment of human rights. These goals are formulated according to the UN criteria for human development.



The printing of this publication has been funded by the European Commission's Directorate for Humanitarian Aid and Civil Protection