



<b>5.</b>	<b>REFUGEES</b>
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► **BACKGROUND**

The Palestinian refugee problem was created as the result of two wars (*An-Naqba* of 1948 and *An-Naqsa* of 1967), massacres, and other aggressions perpetrated by Jewish underground and terror groups such as Haganah, Irgun, and Stern. After the **War of 1948**, the UN Conciliation Commission estimated that 726,000 Palestinians had fled outside and 32,000 within the armistice lines. Of the 800,000 Arabs originally situated in the area that became Israel, only some 100,000 remained in their homes, becoming an Arab minority in the Jewish state; some 531 villages and towns were destroyed or resettled with Jews. The total losses in destroyed or confiscated Palestinian property is estimated at US\$209 billion (BADIL Center, Bethlehem).

In 1950, 914,221 refugees were registered with **UNRWA**. In 1967, some 300,000 Palestinians were displaced from the WBGs, including around 175,000 UNRWA registered refugees who became refugees for a second time. Today, the total refugee population registered with UNRWA numbers over 3.6 million, making Palestinians the largest single group of refugees in the world (with a continued 3% increase annually). Some 32.6% of the refugees live inside one of the 59 UNRWA camps.

After **Oslo**, all camps in the WBGs except S PA, but the overall fate of the refugees remains one of the most complex issues still awaiting a

(demographic) threat to Israeli statehood. Israel wants to solve the problem by resettlement in Arab host countries, international efforts to improve the refugee readmission based on humanitarian considerations.

Palestine for all Palestinian refugees of 1948, based on **UNGA Res. 194** (Dec. 1948), which

to their homes and live at peace with their neighbors should be permitted to do so at the earliest practicable date...compensation should

Therefore, they have generally refused the initiation of any projects inside the camps that imply permanence or encourage refugees to remain where they are.

**UNRWA REGISTERED REFUGEES (JUNE 2000)**

	West Bank	Gaza Strip	Jordan	Syria	Lebanon	Total
Registered Refugees	583,009	824,622	1,570,192	383,199	376,472	3,737,494
Increase over 1999	2.3%	3.3%	3.8%	2.3%	1.7%	3.1%
% of total population	29.7	78	32.2	2.5	11.1	30.7
% of total RRs	16	22	42	10	10	100
No. of refugee camps	19	8	10**	10	12	59
RR living in camps (in % of RR)	157,676 (27)	451,186 (54.7)	280,191 (17.8)	111,712 (29.2)	210,715 (56)	1,211,480 (32.4)
RR outside camps	425,333	373,436	1,290,001	271,487	165,757	2,526,014
<u>Facilities:</u>						
Schools	96	168	192	110	74	640
Training Centers	3	1	2	1	1	8
Primary Health Care	34	18	23	23	25	122

UNRWA. (Source: *UNRWA in Figures*, UNRWA Headquarters, June 2000.)



► Some 50% of Palestinian refugees in the Diaspora are not registered with UNRWA because of its narrow definition, according to which refugees are only persons whose normal place of residence was Palestine between June 1946 and May 1948, who lost their homes and means of livelihood as a result of the War of 1948, and who took refuge in Jordan, Lebanon, Syria, the Jordanian-ruled West Bank or the Egyptian-administered Gaza Strip. The definition covers the descendants of those refugees, but does not include refugees who fled elsewhere, those displaced in 1967 (at least 325,000) unless they were already registered with UNRWA, or those who were outside the WBGS in 1967. Also not included are those WBGS Palestinians who overstayed their permits while abroad, and thus have not been allowed to return. There are at least 50,000 such cases.

► **LIVING CONDITIONS**

One of the problems Palestinian refugees face is that Arab states do not grant foreigners full residency status. In **Lebanon**, refugees face the harshest conditions; their Lebanese travel documents are not recognized by most countries in the world, they must obtain work permits issued by the Lebanese authorities and are not allowed to work in the public sector at all, nor in over 70 professions in the private sector. In **Syria**, refugees enjoy the same rights as Syrian citizens with the exception of the right to vote, hold office, or possess Syrian passports. Instead, they hold travel documents, which are not recognized by many governments. In **Jordan**, the situation is best: Palestinians are considered citizens and carry regular Jordanian passports, are entitled to vote and to hold office, enjoy full rights to public services, such as higher education, and can work in the government sector. An exception are the ca. 100,000 refugees from Gaza (under Egyptian control from 1948-1967), who are only eligible for temporary Jordanian passports.

Other problems include overcrowded housing conditions, poor infrastructure (unpaved streets and open sewers), poverty and unemployment. In Gaza, the population density in the camps reaches more than 65,000 per km<sup>2</sup>. Expansion is difficult as the areas designated for refugee camps are limited and most are surrounded by urban areas. UNRWA provides health and education services, runs an income-centers. Some 5.5% of all registered refugees are considered special hardship cases, with the largest shares in Lebanon (10.8%) and Gaza (8.6%). Schools often run on double shifts with an million.

**DISTRIBUTION OF UNRWA REGISTERED REFUGEES BY DISTRICT & CAMPS (RC)**

<b>WEST BANK</b>			<b>GAZA STRIP</b>		
<b>District</b>	<b>Camp (year of est.)</b>	<b>Population</b>	<b>District</b>	<b>Camp (year of est.)</b>	<b>Population</b>
<b>Nablus</b>	Askar (1950)	12,712	<b>Gaza North</b>	Jabalia (1948/49)	99,039
	Balata (1950)	19,196		<b>Gaza City</b>	Shati (Beach) (1949)
<b>Jenin</b>	Camp No. 1 (1950)	5,847	<b>Gaza South</b>		Khan Younis (1949)
	Jenin (1953)	13,361		Rafah (1949)	86,934
<b>Tulkarm</b>	Nur Shams (1952)	7,577	<b>Gaza Central</b>	Deir Balah (1949)	19,903
	Tulkarm (1950)	14,862		Nuseirat (1948/49)	59,969
<b>Ramallah</b>	Deir Ammar (1949)	2,043		Bureij (1949)	28,946
	Jalazon (1949)	8,372		Al-Maghazi (1949)	21,559
	Qalandia (1949)	8,189			
<b>Jerusalem</b>		8,955**			
<b>Jericho</b>	Aqabat Jaber (1948)	4,775			
	Ein Sultan (1948)	2,178			
<b>Bethlehen</b>	Dheisheh (1949)	9,812			
	Aida (1950)	3,895			
<b>Hebron</b>	Beit Jibrin (1950)	1,727			
	Fawwar (1949)	6,419			
	Arroub (1950)	8,470			

\*\* the de facto numbers of the camp population are much higher as an estimated 4,000 refugees have moved into the camp in the past years to avoid losing their residency rights in Jerusalem.

(Source: UNRWA, *Fact Sheet*, 2000.)