



the possibility of being employed in government positions. Recently, they were granted the right of owning property. Those several thousand Palestinians who live (again) in **Kuwait**, are under strict surveillance and enjoy only very limited rights; the same goes in general for the Palestinians in **Saudi Arabia**. In **Iraq**, the government provided in-kind assistance to Palestinians until 1958, followed by financial support plus health and other benefits; Palestinians, who numbered some 14,000 in 1969 and over 30,000 in 1998, have social, but no political rights, are treated equally in terms of education and employment (excl. retirement payment), and naturalization is provided. (Following the 2003 US-led invasion and occupation of Iraq, the Palestinian refugees in the country were again displaced into camps on the Jordanian border).

JORDAN

After the 1948 War, when an estimated 100,000 refugees, mostly from the Lydda-Ramle-Jaffa triangle, crossed the Jordan River, five refugee camps were set up in Jordan, followed by another eight after the 1967 War, to accommodate additional refugees, this time mainly from the West Bank. Of the 13 camps, UNRWA recognizes 10, while the other three are taken care of by the government. The governmental Department of Palestinian Affairs works hand in hand with UNRWA to provide the needed services of the camps, especially infrastructure.

Palestinians in Jordan make up some 60% of the population; they are granted citizenship (since the 1954 Nationalities Act, stating that "Any person with previous Palestinian nationality except the Jews before the date of May 14, 1948 residing in the Kingdom during the period from December 20, 1949 and February 16, 1954 is a Jordanian citizen") and carry regular Jordanian passports. As of October 1995, most Palestinian refugees became eligible to receive 5-year passports, but the government has stressed that these are for travel only and do not connote nationality. Palestinians are entitled to vote and to hold office, enjoy full rights to public services, and can work in the government sector. An exception are the ca. 100,000 stateless 1967 refugees from Gaza, and the 'latecomers', whose entry permits have expired; both groups are only eligible for temporary Jordanian passports. However, it should also be noted that especially since the armed clashes between the Jordanian army and the PLO in 1970 ('Black September'), Palestinian refugees are perceived as a potentially destabilizing factor in Jordan's national politics and thus kept under the special scrutiny of state intelligence. In addition, they suffer discrimination in the award of university scholarships and appointments to senior positions in the Government and the military.



LEBANON

The second largest Palestinian Diaspora community lives in Lebanon, mostly originating from the Galilee and coastal towns. The refugees in Lebanon are stateless and face the harshest conditions; the majority of them live in one of the 12 UNRWA-administered camps, but there are thousands also living in "unofficial" camps. A hostile attitude towards them prevails since the 1975 civil war and although they have been allowed to stay on a non-permanent basis they are denied any social rights and in many regards their treatment violates international human rights law. Lebanese authorities restrict construction in refugee camps and no building and other materials needed for repairing and improving housing and sanitation facilities are allowed entry without prior military approval, which is often not granted. Housing conditions are accordingly poor. 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 other professions. Poverty and unemployment is consequently very high and aggravated by the fact that job-seekers have to compete with Syrian guest workers, who do not need to apply for residence or work permits. Since 1982 there have also been attempts to retroactively annul the Lebanese nationality obtained by certain refugees in 1994. Furthermore, refugees cannot own and inherit property without special permission, nor open any business or invest. In 2002, the Lebanese parliament passed an amendment to the National Property Law, which forbids "non-Lebanese persons, who do not possess citizenship issued by a state recognized by Lebanon, to inherit or buy property." Consequently, refugees cannot pass ownership of housing within the camps to their children; instead, the property is handed over to the Lebanese authorities. Any hopes of ever changing this situation were dashed when Lebanese parliament speaker Nabih Berri withdrew a draft legislation in Oct. 2003 that would have lifted the ban on refugees from owning property in Lebanon.



So far, the Lebanese government, which has declined to participate in the multilateral talks on refugees, has made it abundantly clear that it opposes any settlement and/or naturalization of Palestinians in its territory, mainly because of the fragile balance of the Muslim and Christian populations.

