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PALESTINIAN REFUGEES IN LEBANON: A PHOTOPACK

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SECTION 1

Introduction

BORN OF PALESTINIAN ORIGIN AND CURRENTLY THE GENERAL DIRECTOR OF A HUMAN RIGHTS ORGANIZATION, I AM INVOLVED IN PROMOTING THE CAUSE OF THE 'RIGHT OF RETURN' AND SELF-DETERMINATION AS WELL AS HIGHLIGHTING THE CURRENT SITUATION OF PALESTINIAN REFUGEES IN LEBANON. I AM ALSO CONCERNED WITH PROMOTING CIVIL RIGHTS FOR REFUGEES THROUGH OUR PROGRAMMES IN THE PALESTINIAN HUMAN RIGHTS ORGANISATION, ESPECIALLY THROUGH HUMAN RIGHTS EDUCATION, NATIONAL AND INTERNATIONAL LOBBYING AND ADVOCACY AND INTERNAL DIALOGUE BETWEEN PALESTINIANS AS WELL AS BETWEEN PALESTINIANS AND LEBANESE.

In this context, I welcome the opportunity to collaborate with colleagues in an educational exercise directed to the international community to focus attention on three key issues:

- *who are Palestinian refugees?*
- *what is the current status of Palestinian refugees in Lebanon?*
- *what are the rights of refugees?*

Through the educational tool of this photopack, we seek to highlight the harsh realities of refugee life as well as the grief and the sorrow in one of the best known refugee camps – Sabra and Shatila – infamous for the massacres that occurred there in 1982. Throughout the pack we have been concerned to highlight two key political issues – the call for Lebanon to grant refugees their most basic rights and the call to the international community to establish mechanisms to implement UN resolution 194 on the 'right of return' for Palestinian refugees.

It would not have been possible to complete the work without the support

of the members of the Euro-Mediterranean Human Rights Network, the members of the Network's Human Rights Education Working Group, the Danish Institute for Human Rights and 80: 20 Educating and Acting for a Better World. In particular, it is my pleasure to express my personal thanks to my friends Marit, Theresia and Colm for their help and support.

MR. GHASSAN ABDALLAH,
GENERAL DIRECTOR,
PALESTINIAN HUMAN RIGHTS ORGANISATION
(PHRO)

Editors' Introduction

THIS RESOURCE CAME ABOUT AS A
RESULT OF THE JOINT WORK OF THE
EURO-MEDITERRANEAN HUMAN RIGHTS
NETWORK EDUCATION WORKING GROUP
AND THE PALESTINIAN HUMAN RIGHTS
ORGANISATION IN LEBANON.

The project that finally led to the publication of Biladi had a number of levels and dimensions:

- individuals and organisations from very different backgrounds and contexts learning to work together and share ideas and experiences
- specific interest in sharing methodologies and approaches to human rights education that are learner centred and participative
- an interest in learning more about the situation of Palestinian refugees in Lebanon

- an opportunity to work alongside the people (especially the young people) of the refugee camp – Sabra and Shatila

Sabra and Shatila area is situated in southern Beirut, Lebanon and has a total estimated population of 22,000. The Sabra and Shatila camp was established by the International Committee of the Red Cross in 1949 to accommodate the hundreds of refugees who poured into the area from Galilee in northern Palestine after 1948. It is 1 of 12 current refugee camps in Lebanon with an estimated population of 8,184 – UNRWA figures, 2004. The total number of Palestinian refugees in Lebanon is officially estimated to be 399,152, approximately 10% of Lebanon's total population.

Sabra and Shatila is known internationally because the camp was devastated during the 1982 Israeli invasion of Lebanon and was the scene of a major massacre in September of that year. During the years of conflict the camp was frequently targeted, which resulted in the destruction of property, displacement of refugees and a siege.

We have produced Biladi to share a number of different dimensions of the situation of Palestinian refugees in Lebanon and, specifically, those living in Sabra and Shatila:

- some of the history behind their story
- some details of the circumstances and situations in which they live today
- the specific forms of discrimination and exclusion they experience
- views and perspectives on the massacre and its legacy
- the issue of the right to return to Palestine.

The situation of the Palestinian people and the denial of most of their fundamental human rights are well highlighted internationally. Less so the situation of Palestinian refugees and the difficulties they face on a daily basis. The story of the Palestinians in Lebanon is controversial and contested – it involves not just the Lebanese and the Palestinians but also the Israelis, the Syrians and, of course, the international community. It involves conflicting accounts and views of history, the Lebanese Civil War (1975 – 1990), the rights of refugees, the right to return to their homes and, ultimately, the overall situation of the Palestinian and Jewish peoples.

Biladi is offered as one contribution to engaging with some of these issues and as part of a broader consideration of a human rights understanding of such issues.

Introducing the Project Process

AT THE OUTSET, WE WERE CONCERNED TO INVOLVE AS MANY PEOPLE FROM SABRA AND SHATILA AS POSSIBLE IN ORDER THAT THE FINAL PRODUCT REFLECTED THEIR IDEAS AND PRIORITIES AS MUCH AS THOSE OF THE ORGANISATIONS INVOLVED.

The project therefore went through a number of different phases before completion - brainstorming and planning sessions, children's activities, issue-based workshops, fieldwork and input from participants at a Human Rights Education Summer School.

The different processes involved included:

- project identification and negotiation
- selection of the camp - Sabra and Shatila - the outlining and negotiation of an agreed work plan
- art activities involving camp-based children - the aim of this latter

activity was to inform the people of the camp of the project and its potential contribution and also to ensure involvement from young people. Hundreds of drawings were collected and then sorted out in the workshops (a representative sample have been included in the pack).

- high school students were also involved in the same art activities - a number of young volunteer photographers were asked to photograph aspects of the camp that highlighted key issues for them - social, health, economic, legal and environmental issues etc.



- the final selection of photos was made in subsequent workshops and during the Summer School referred to
- the project also involved discussion and training on the value of images as an educational tool. In developing this element, an action plan on selecting images and content was agreed
- the initial draft was 'tested' locally as well as with participants in the Summer School especially as regards the selection of images and themes. Issues such as the concept of the 'right of return', key terms such as 'homeland, stateless or country' were hotly debated
- throughout the project, it was agreed that non-violence and non party political approaches would guide all discussion.

The final photos chosen relate to the following themes:

- general housing conditions and conditions within the camp
- water services and infrastructure
- social networks and ties
- education and access to health care services
- legal status and the 'right of return'
- remembrance of the massacre in 1982.



These themes were agreed following the testing of the photos using a variety of approaches and activities outlined in the text that follows.

Agreed Project Objectives

- To present and describe the current status of Palestinian Refugees in Lebanon through a selected camp - Sabra and Shatila
- To familiarise an international audience with key aspects of the Palestinian refugee question through the development and use of a non-violent, educational methodology at a variety of levels

- To highlight specific and unique aspects of 'Palestinian refugees'
- To use dialogue, discussion and education as one means of conflict resolution
- To highlight the important issues of the 'Right of Return' for Palestinian Refugees to their homeland - Palestine - and the debates surrounding the issue
- To acknowledge and highlight the suffering of many families in Sabra and Shatila as a result of the massacre.

SECTION 2

Palestinian Refugees – a brief history

PALESTINIAN ARAB REFUGEES ARE PART OF THE INDIGENOUS INHABITANTS OF HISTORIC PALESTINE, A LAND STRETCHING FROM THE MEDITERRANEAN COAST EAST ACROSS THE JORDAN RIVER, AND FROM THE GULF OF AQABA NORTH BEYOND THE SEA OF GALILEE. TODAY THIS GEOGRAPHICAL AREA IS DIVIDED INTO THE STATE OF ISRAEL (ESTABLISHED IN MAY 1948), AND THE WEST BANK (INCLUDING EASTERN JERUSALEM) AND THE GAZA STRIP (WHICH ISRAEL OCCUPIED IN 1967).

Palestinian cities, villages, and most of the 19 official refugee camps in the latter areas were transferred to a self-governing Palestinian Authority in the 1990s under the Madrid/Oslo 'peace process'. The area, however, remains under Israeli occupation with the bulk of the land area under full Israeli military control.

Over the course of the 20th century, the Palestinian people have experienced several periods of major displacement, beginning in 1947-48 during the first Arab-Israeli war, followed by a second major displacement in the 1967 Arab-Israeli war. In 1971 many Palestinians were displaced from Jordan during what is known as "Black September". As recently as 1991 some 350,000 Palestinians were displaced from Kuwait during the Gulf War. In addition, Palestinians have experienced internal displacement in 1974 as well as during the Civil War (1975-1990), when two refugee camps were totally destroyed in the north-eastern part of Beirut.

Additional displacement has resulted from Israeli government policies and practices inside Israel and in the 1967 occupied Palestinian territories, including land confiscation, house demolition, revocation of residency status, and deportation, as well as government policies and armed conflict in various countries of asylum in the region.

Palestinian refugees from 1948 and their descendents comprise the bulk of the

Palestinian refugee population today numbering over 5 million persons and constituting nearly two-thirds of the Palestinian people.

If one includes Palestinians displaced for the first time in the 1967 war and internally displaced Palestinians inside Israel, approximately three-quarters of the Palestinian people have been uprooted from their traditional lands over the past five decades, making Palestinian refugees the largest and one of the longest standing unresolved refugee cases in the world today.

The majority of these refugees reside within 100 miles of their places of origin inside Israel and in the occupied West Bank (including eastern Jerusalem), and the Gaza Strip but are unable to exercise their right to return to their homes and lands of origin. The State of Israel opposes the return of Palestinian refugees based on the desire to maintain Israel as a "Jewish State" characterised by a Jewish majority and Jewish control of the land.

Exploring the History of Palestinian Displacement

Mass exoduses are caused by multiple and complex factors.

The mass exodus of Palestinians, during periods of conflict as well as in times of relative calm, is related directly to the ongoing denial of the right to self-determination and the persistent violation of many of the most basic human rights of the Palestinian people.

The Palestinian right to self-determination first recognised in 1919

The right of the Palestinian people to self-determination was first recognised by the League of Nations in 1919. Palestine (which had been part of the Ottoman empire until its collapse at the end of the First World War) was among a number of non-self-governing Arab territories in the Middle East that were placed under the temporary *'tutelage'* or administration of foreign powers until such a time as the peoples of these territories were deemed *'ready'* for independence.

1947 – the UN agrees to divide Palestine into two states – Arab and Jewish

In early 1947, the British government informed the United Nations of its intention to withdraw from Palestine ending more than two decades of mandatory rule. Despite the fact that the League of Nations had recognised the provisional independence of Palestine, the UN General Assembly decided to establish a special committee of inquiry to formulate recommendations for the future status of Palestine. Repeated requests by key Arab states to obtain an advisory opinion from the International Court of Justice (ICJ) concerning the legal obligation of the UN to recognise the independence of Palestine under the terms of the League of Nations Mandate system were rejected by the General Assembly.

In November 1947 the UN General Assembly adopted a plan (UN General Assembly Resolution 181), based on the recommendations of the majority of the members of the special committee of inquiry, for the division of Palestine into two states – one Arab and one Jewish. The recommendation was adopted despite the wishes of the majority of the inhabitants of the country. Irrespective of unresolved legal issues, and provisions in the plan for the protection of minority rights in each state, opponents of Resolution 181 argued that its terms were inequitable: the proposed Jewish state was allotted 56% of the territory of historic Palestine even though Jewish inhabitants of Palestine comprised less than one-third of the population and owned not more than 7% of the land. The collapse of the UN-sponsored initiative, after key supporters backed away from implementing it by force, and the subsequent war in 1948 led to the depopulation of some 530 villages and displacement/expulsion of some 750,000 Palestinians. Israel has refused to allow the refugees to return to their homes, apart from a very small number of family reunification cases.

The 1922 Mandate for Palestine

In 1922, the League of Nations entrusted the Mandate for Palestine (considered to be "Class A" or closest to independence) to Great Britain. Contrary to the intent and purpose of that temporary system (to administer Palestine and its peoples through to independence) Great Britain also recognised demands of the establishment of an exclusive Jewish state in Palestine.

Under the terms of the 1922 Mandate for Palestine (drafted by the British government and which also incorporated the 1917 Balfour Declaration whereby the British government first recognised demands for an exclusive Jewish state), the British Administration in Palestine was required to *'secure the establishment of the Jewish national home'* in Palestine through Jewish immigration and settlement. As for the majority of the inhabitants of the country (i.e., Palestinian Arabs), who were referred to as the 'non-Jewish communities', the 1922 Mandate only recognised their civil and religious rights rather than political rights, including the right to self-determination.

Ongoing violations and ‘multiple displacements’

1967 Israel occupies additional territory

Some twenty years later, the United Nations Security Council adopted Resolution 242, calling upon Israel to withdraw from the territories it occupied in the 1967 Israeli-Arab war, including eastern Jerusalem, the West Bank, and the Gaza Strip. Several hundred thousand Palestinians, including 1948 refugees, were displaced during the war and have been denied the right to return to their homes and lands in these territories due to Israel’s continued military occupation. Again, only a very small number of Palestinians have been able to return through family reunification. These territories comprise only 22% of the land of historic mandate Palestine. The United Nations has repeatedly affirmed the right of self-determination of the Palestinian people in these territories. General Assembly Resolution 3236 adopted in 1974, for example, reaffirmed the inalienable right of the Palestinian people to self-determination and the inalienable right of Palestinian refugees to return to their homes and lands from which they were uprooted.

The violation of the human rights of Palestinians inside Israel, the 1967 occupied territories, as well as in Arab states such as Jordan, Lebanon, and Kuwait has led to further cycles of displacement. While there are no exact figures to illustrate the impact of these policies, it is estimated that over three decades of Israeli policies of land confiscation, house demolition, revocation of residency rights, and

deportation, have led to the forced displacement of several thousand Palestinians. The 1970 conflict between the government of Jordan and the PLO, the civil war and Israeli invasion of Lebanon in the 1980s, and the 1991 Gulf War, and the violation of basic human rights of Palestinian refugees residing in these areas, including the massacre of several thousand Palestinian refugees in the camps of Sabra and Shatila in Beirut (by Lebanese Christian Phalangists allied with Israel) has led to further displacement, with many Palestinians having experienced multiple displacements in their lifetime.

Mass exodus of Palestinians is accompanied by systematic human rights violations

The mass exodus and displacement of Palestinians is also accompanied by systematic human rights violations. During the 1948 war, the Palestinian Arab population was displaced and expelled in large numbers by Jewish militias and later by Israeli forces after the unilateral establishment of the state of Israel in May 1948. through a combination of tactics that violated basic principles of international law. These tactics included indiscriminate military attacks on civilians (including those fleeing areas of conflict), massacres, looting, destruction of property (including entire villages), and forced expulsion. Israeli military forces later instituted ‘shoot to kill’ policies at the front lines to ‘prevent infiltration’ - i.e., the spontaneous return of refugees to their homes.

Expulsion and internal transfer of Palestinian Arabs continued after the signing of armistice agreements in 1949 between Israel and its Arab neighbours. Israel subsequently adopted a series of laws concerning citizenship and nationality which effectively prevented Palestinian refugees from returning to their homeland, as well as a series of “abandoned property” laws to dispossess refugees of their property and transfer it to full Jewish control. Many of these same violations of international law were committed against Palestinians during the 1967 Arab-Israeli war, leading again to mass displacement and imposed exile.

Facts and Figures on Palestinian refugees in Lebanon

PALESTINIAN REFUGEES IN LEBANON CAN BE DIVIDED INTO THREE GROUPS:

- REGISTERED REFUGEES (RR) ARE REGISTERED BY BOTH UNRWA AND THE LEBANESE AUTHORITIES
- NON-REGISTERED REFUGEES (NR) ARE REGISTERED ONLY BY THE LEBANESE GOVERNMENT (AND NOT BY UNRWA)
- NON-IDENTIFIED REFUGEES (NON-ID) THOSE WHO ARE NOT REGISTERED WITH ANY AGENCY

Registered Refugees (RR) – 399,152

UNRWA figures for 2004 numbers claim that 399,152 Palestinian refugees (approximately 10% of Lebanon's total population) reside in Lebanon.

53% of this number (210,155) live in 12 registered refugee camps scattered throughout the country. The remaining number live in non-registered camps (also called gatherings) and Palestinian communities. (Originally, 16 refugee camps existed in Lebanon, 3 were

destroyed during its civil war and were never rebuilt, 1 was voluntarily evacuated before the war.)

However, Palestinian the Lebanese sources claim that 415,000 Palestinian refugees reside in Lebanon. This number

Palestinian Refugees in Numbers	
Total registered refugees	399,152
Registered camp population	210,155
Official camps (16 of which 3 were destroyed and never rebuilt and 1 was evacuated)	12
Elementary and preparatory schools	82
Secondary schools	5
Enrolled pupils (2001/2002)	40,549
Primary health care facilities	23
Refugees registered as special hardship cases	45,460

includes the 387,000 (approximate) refugees registered with the UNRWA, 35,000 non-registered refugees and 5,000 non-identified refugees. The last two categories – non-registered and non-identified, are defined below.

Non-Registered Refugees (NR) – 30,000-35,000

There are approximately 35,000 refugees unregistered by UNRWA (42,000 according to other international sources). Before 2004 they were able to benefit from some minor services provided by UNRWA (but none of the major services as hospitalisation). Since 2004, a temporary UNRWA project funded by the EU allows NR refugees access to hospital.

Nearly half of these refugees were registered by the Red Cross and, consequently, by the Lebanese Government, while the second half was registered by orders of former Prime Ministers (between 1969-1978).

Non-Identified Refugees Non-ID) – 4,000-5,000

This category includes around 5,000 Palestinians who do not possess any kind of ID. This group of refugees does not benefit from UNRWA services and does not receive any assistance from the Lebanese government.

Theoretically, the overall number of Palestinian refugees in Lebanon falling under the above three categories is around 430,000. However, less than two thirds this number actually live in Lebanon. The events of the Lebanese civil war (1975-90), the Israeli invasion (1992) and the camp wars (1985-87), the difficult economic conditions as well as the Lebanese laws against Palestinian refugees (defined as aliens within Lebanese law) have led to massive migration of Palestinian refugees towards Western Europe in general and Scandinavia in particular.

Though many of the immigrants to Europe have permanently settled down and those in Arab Gulf states have legal work permits, many of those in Europe and all of those in Arab Gulf states still retain their status as Palestinian refugees registered in Lebanon. While Non-ID refugees face the most difficult of circumstances, all Palestinians refugees are subject to discrimination at a variety of levels.



What are refugee rights?

ACCORDING TO INTERNATIONAL LAW, REFUGEES HAVE THE RIGHT TO RETURN TO THEIR HOMES OF ORIGIN, RECEIVE REAL PROPERTY RESTITUTION, AND COMPENSATION FOR LOSSES AND DAMAGES.

There are three basic solutions to refugee problems:

- voluntary repatriation (or return)
- voluntary host country integration
- voluntary resettlement in a third country.

Of these three solutions only repatriation or return is a right recognised under international law. Each of the three solutions mentioned above is guided by the principle of voluntariness or refugee choice. In other words, the starting point in crafting durable solutions to refugee problems is the wish of the individual

refugee. These rights and solutions are accepted norms of international law and refugee practice and have been implemented in numerous other refugee cases, such as Bosnia, Kosovo and East Timor.

The United Nations General Assembly set forth the specific framework for resolving the Palestinian refugee case in UN Resolution 194(III), 11 December 1948. UN Resolution 194(III) reaffirms three basic rights of Palestinian refugees and two primary solutions. The Resolution reaffirms the right of each individual Palestinian refugee to:

- return to his/her home of origin
- real property restitution
- compensation for losses and damages.

The Resolution also affirms two primary solutions for Palestinian refugees:

- the right to return to their homes and receive real property restitution and compensation for losses and damages
- assistance for resettlement in a host state or a third country and real property restitution and compensation for losses and damages.

The General Assembly believed that those refugees who wished to return to their homes of origin should have been able to do so when Israel and its Arab neighbours (i.e., Jordan, Egypt, Lebanon and Syria) signed armistice agreements in 1949 marking the end of the 1948 war.



Aspects of the social reality of Palestinian refugees in Lebanon

Legal and Political Status

The Palestinian people have been stateless for the past fifty-seven years (1948-2005). While the PLO acts as their national representative, the United Nations has assumed direct responsibility for their livelihood. Through a special UN agency – the United Nations Relief and Works Agency for Palestine Refugees (UNRWA), created in 1949) the Palestinian refugee community receives essential social services.

Today, UNRWA offers humanitarian assistance to 3.3 million Palestinians, officially classified as refugees by the agency (UNRWA 2001). However, UNRWA does not provide *protection* for Palestinian refugees, nor does the UN High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR) whose mandate excludes Palestinian refugees from its protection (Article 1d of the Convention Relating to the Status of Refugees).

The absence of a protection mechanism has proven fatal for many Palestinian refugees living under Israeli occupation in

the West Bank and Gaza Strip, and perhaps more surprisingly, has led to negative consequences on those Palestinian refugees currently residing in Lebanon.

In 1989, Lebanon ended seventeen years of civil war, launching a process of national reconciliation and reconstruction to mend both social relations



between the multiple parties involved including the Palestinians and to rebuild its war-torn infrastructure. Unfortunately, the Lebanese government had little interest in reorganising links with its Palestinian community, in large part due to the fact that Palestinian refugees were predominately Sunni Muslims and would tip Lebanon's religious/social balance.

The Lebanese Government also excluded Palestinian refugee camps from its reconstruction program, refusing to rebuild three camps destroyed during the war and disallowing the entry of building materials for the purpose of reconstruction in others (particularly those camps in South Lebanon).

In the absence of an effective protection mechanism, the policies of various Lebanese governments have excluded Palestinian refugees from social reconciliation and physical reconstruction. The Lebanese government has enacted laws severely restricting the civil rights of Palestinian refugees. Examples include restricting the rights of Palestinians in relation to the right to work, to full education and to the right to a fair trial by denying access to legal aid. Other rights are entirely denied - the right to own property and form civil society institutions.

Consequently, Palestinian refugees in Lebanon live in very poor socio-

economic conditions, experience ongoing lack of basic rights, living in dilapidated refugee camps with little hope for the future due to the lack of a mechanism or monitoring body whereby their rights can be protected.

While the situation of Palestinian refugees in Lebanon has increasingly come under discussion among members of the international community, conversations are primarily focused on the 399,152 UNRWA-registered Palestinian refugees (UNRWA 2001). These refugees comprise almost 10% of Lebanon's total population. The majority live in 12 UNRWA registered refugee camps and their peripheries.

Non-Registered Refugees (NR and Non-ID)

However, there exists another class of refugee - those who are not registered with the UNRWA. Two types of refugee fall into this category:

Non-registered refugees (NR) include those refugees who have not been registered with UNRWA, in most cases because they do not meet UNRWA's definition of refugee (loosely defined as those Palestinians who fled in 1948 and their descendents). Non-registered refugees have, however, been registered by the Lebanese Government (Ministry

of the Interior, Directorate for Political and Refugee Affairs). Still, they are termed non-registered refugees because the Lebanese government does not legally define any Palestinian residing on Lebanese soil as a '*refugee*' so this registration is merely recognition of existence.

Non-Identified (Non-ID) refugees include those refugees who have been recognized neither by UNRWA nor the Lebanese government mainly due to the fact that they do not possess any form of valid identification. Non-ID refugees are mainly those who came to Lebanon from Jordan in the 1970s and were registered in Jordan. Later, their IDs expired and they could neither renew them through the Jordanian Embassy in Lebanon nor return to Jordan. They were stuck in Lebanon with expired ID papers which no one recognised. Because the children of Non-ID refugees assumed the same status, this number continues to grow.

When NR and Non-ID refugees are included in the total count of Palestinians who have sought refuge on Lebanese soil, the number of refugees rises from UNRWA's 399,152 to roughly 430,000.

A Brief Look at the Legal Status of Palestinian Refugees

IN LEBANESE LAW, PALESTINIANS ARE NOT DEFINED AS REFUGEES (DESPITE CARRYING REFUGEE PASSPORTS), AND SO, ARE NOT AFFORDED THE BENEFITS TYPICALLY GRANTED TO PEOPLES OF REFUGEE STATUS. RATHER, THEY ARE CONSIDERED AS ALIENS, YET ARE GRANTED EVEN FEWER RIGHTS THAN THEIR ALIEN COUNTERPARTS BECAUSE OF THE “RECIPROCITY POLICY”. THIS POLICY MEANS, BROADLY SPEAKING, THAT CITIZENS OF COUNTRY A RESIDING IN COUNTRY B ARE GRANTED THE SAME RIGHTS AS COUNTRY A WILL GRANT THE CITIZENS OF COUNTRY B RESIDING IN COUNTRY A – AS PALESTINIANS ARE STATELESS THEY ARE PREVENTED FROM ENJOYING SUCH RECIPROCITY RIGHTS.

Their rights in the following areas are either restricted or prohibited:

- the right to work
- the right to own property

- the right to education
- the right to a fair trial
- the right to civil representation
- the right to social services

Political and Legal Status of Palestinian Refugees in Lebanon

Despite Lebanon’s signature on the International Covenant on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights (signed in 1972), the government continues to pass discriminatory laws against Palestinian refugees (defined as aliens within Lebanese law) which overturn the basic rights envisioned therein.

The right to work

Various obstacles prevent Palestinians from working in Lebanon.

- Article 59 of the Law of Work for Aliens (1946) grant alien workers the same work rights as their Lebanese counterparts, including the benefit of

health and social insurance and the right to join syndicates, provided that their country of origin exercise a policy of reciprocity. As Palestinians are stateless, and do not hold nationality of any country able to meet the required principle of reciprocity, they are denied the same work-rights as other aliens employed in Lebanon.

- Ministerial Decision numer 289/1, issued by the Labour Minister Adnan Mrowe in 1982 restricted most of the professions to Lebanese citizens only. Later on, in 1995, Minister Assad Hardan with Ministerial Decision 621/1 defined the professions that are restricted to Lebanese citizens (72 according to local unofficial sources and 46 as to Lebanese sources). Only a few exceptions exist in case of a work permit. While some Palestinian in principle could benefit from such exceptions, they are prevented from doing to, due to the reciprocity policy.
- Palestinian refugees who obtained work permits despite the scant number of permits offered to Palestinians, receive lower wages, cannot be

promoted in their posts, and are not entitled to health and social insurance and other benefits granted to Lebanese employees.

The right to education

Two major obstacles prevent Palestinians from participating in higher learning.

- Palestinian refugees must compete with all other aliens for the scant number of seats left open for non-Lebanese students in Lebanese educational institutes. The number of seats left open for non-Lebanese students has an upper ceiling, but no lower limit meaning that these seats may be allocated to Lebanese students if the need arises.
- In April of 2002, the tuition fees for aliens, extended to Palestinian refugees, were tripled in comparison to the fee charged to Lebanese students (Lebanese University announcement number 8, based on Law 392, effective 8/2/2002). After lobbying of the European Parliament in relation to the ratification of the EU-Lebanon Association Agreement in November 2002, this amendment was abolished.

The right to a fair trial

Lebanese law decree 90/83, article 425 offers Lebanese citizens a state-

appointed lawyer if they cannot afford one. Article 426 offers foreign nationals legal aid under the reciprocity principle. As Palestinians are deemed stateless and do not benefit from this principle, they are deprived of the benefits of a law others are entitled to. In practice, there are two outcomes for Palestinians unable to afford a legal representative:

- The refugee would be tried without a lawyer. As a result, a refugee sometimes receives maximum verdicts.
- With no lawyer to follow up his/her case, a refugee might spend a prolonged amount of time in detention before being put on trial.

The right to civil representation

Palestinians are unable to represent themselves in civil society due to the following:

- Lebanese legislation prevents aliens, including Palestinian refugees, from forming representative bodies (e.g., unions, syndicates, etc.) or electing political representatives.
- This same legislation prevents refugees from registering civil society institutions such as organizations and associations.

The right to own property

A new amendment to Lebanese Property Law deprives Palestinian refugees of the right to own real estate in Lebanon (passed in April of 2001).

- The measure requires those who own property in Lebanon to be citizens of an "established state" with reciprocal treatment for property ownership laws. Because Palestinians are stateless, they are barred from owning real estate in Lebanon.
- Those who currently own land will not be able to pass it on to their children, next of kin or heirs upon death.

The right to civil services

The Lebanese government has renounced any responsibility for Palestinian refugees in regards to civil services. Structural development services within refugee camps are not only withheld, but essentially prohibited by way of a military-imposed ban on the entry of building materials into refugee camps in Southern Lebanon. This ban prevents

- The rebuilding of the three UNRWA refugee camps completely destroyed during Lebanon's civil war;
- The repair of demolished or damaged houses within all camps;
- The reconstruction of new refugee camps or expanding existing ones

plagued by overcrowding due to natural population growth.

In 2004, during the preparations for the visit of Palestinian President Mahmoud Abbas, building materials were allowed into the camps “with previous permission” but this was an exceptional measure that may or may not continue.

In regards to social services, the only known services offered by the Lebanese government is registration, the issuing of travel documents, and the issuing of personal status documents. UNRWA, the PLO, and NGO’s provide all other necessary services. However, the quantity and quality of these services has dwindled following UNRWA’s budget deficit, the reallocation of UNRWA’s resources to the Palestinian National Authority, and the collapse of most PLO institutions following its expulsion in 1982.

Conclusion

The denial of those rights cited above has prevented the Palestinian refugee community from prospering, and has placed them on a course of de-development.

The alien status of Palestinian refugees poses the first major obstacle, and the consistent demand of state reciprocity

included in measures defining alien rights. Palestinians must be recognized as refugees, not aliens, and granted the rights outlined in such covenants as the

1951 Geneva Convention on Refugees, and more broadly, the International Covenant on Social, Economic and Cultural Rights.

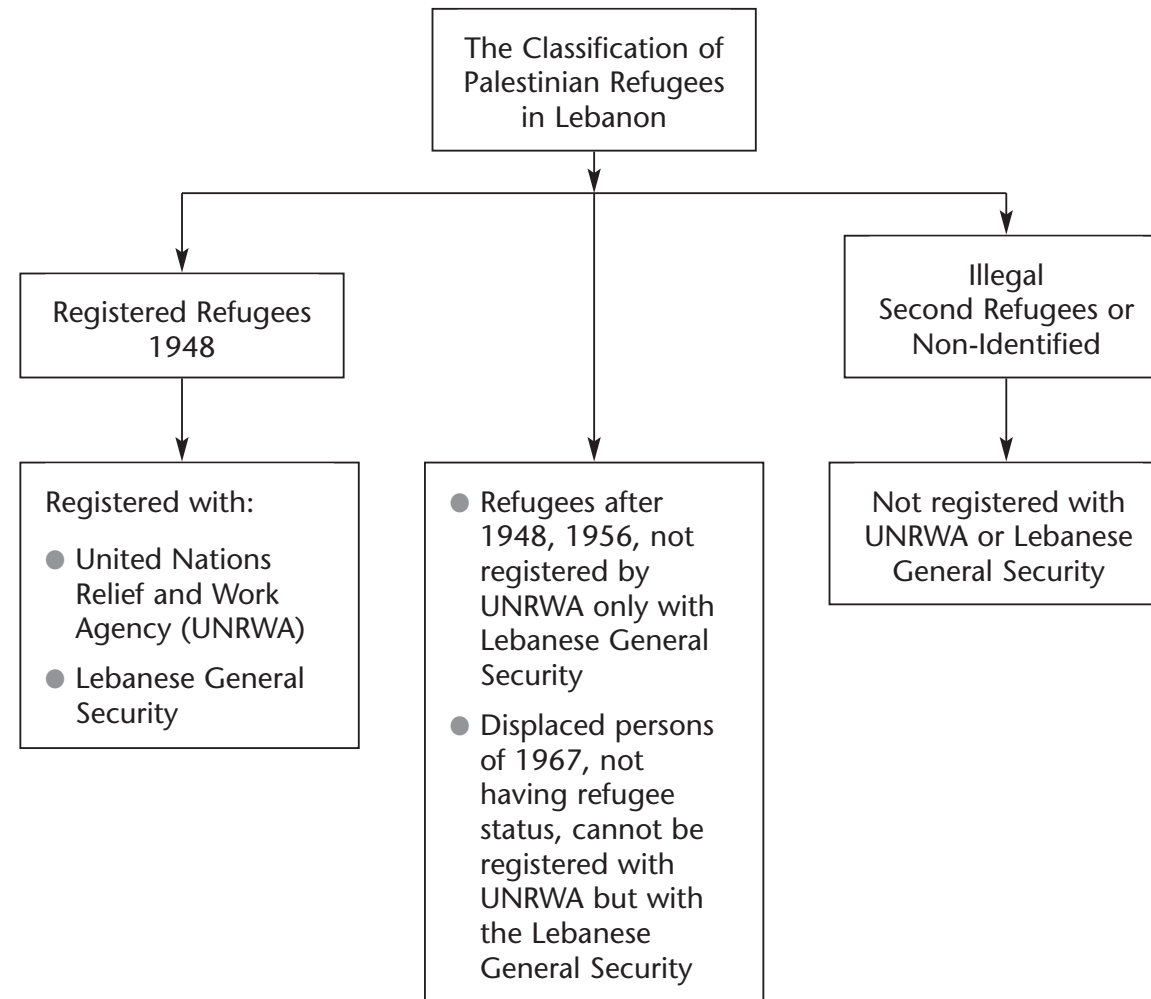


Figure 1: The Classification of Palestinian Refugees in Lebanon.

Exploring the Sabra and Shatila Refugee Camp Massacre

BETWEEN SEPTEMBER 16TH AND 18TH 1982, SEVERAL THOUSAND PALESTINIAN REFUGEES - MEN, WOMEN, AND CHILDREN - WERE KILLED BY LEBANESE CHRISTIAN PHALANGIST FORCES ALLIED WITH ISRAEL, WHILE, IT IS CLAIMED, ISRAELI FORCES LOOKED AND PREVENTED REFUGEES FROM FLEEING THE CAMPS.

The massacre happened within weeks of a US brokered withdrawal of PLO fighters from Lebanon in the late summer of 1982. Left without protection, Israeli-allied Lebanese forces were able to enter the camps of West Beirut without opposition. On September 16, the day the massacre began, General Amos Yaron, commander of Israeli forces in Lebanon - and now Director General of the Israeli Defense Ministry - provided Lebanese Forces Intelligence with aerial photographs to arrange entry into the

camps. Researcher Rosemary Sayigh describes the scene as the massacre unfolded:

'The targeted area was crammed with people recently returned from the places where they had taken refuge during the war, now supposedly over. Schools would soon open, everyone needed to repair their homes, clear the streets and get ready for the winter. There was fear of what the regime of Bashir Gemayel would bring, but there was also determination to rebuild. People felt some security from the fact that they were unarmed, and that all who remained were legal residents. Many of the massacre victims were found clutching their identity cards, as if trying to prove their legitimacy.'

One contingent of the [Lebanese] Special Units commanded by Phalangists, entered the area through the sand-hills overlooking Hayy Orsan, just opposite the Israeli Defence Forces headquarters. At this stage they were almost certainly accompanied by Israeli soldiers, since the dunes had been fortified by the Resistance. Another contingent entered

through the south-eastern edge of the Hursh, between Akka Hospital and Abu Hassan Salameh Street. Apart from co-planning the operation and introducing the Special Forces into the area, the IDF provided several kinds of back-up - they controlled the perimeters and prevented escape through light shelling and sniping, as well as by blocking the main exits; they also used flares to light up the narrow alleys at night.'

When Israel finally ordered the withdrawal of the Lebanese Special Forces two days later on 18 September 1982, the camps had been destroyed and several thousand refugees had either been slaughtered or had disappeared. Today one of the mass graves is used for dumping garbage and another has been paved over for a golf course. An Israeli Commission subsequently found then Defense Minister Ariel Sharon who is now Prime Minister indirectly responsible for the massacre.

And so, in May 1985, Syria gave the green light to begin what became known as the War of the Camps. It started as a

street skirmish-not an unusual event in Lebanon, where a traffic accident can and often does degenerate into a full-scale battle with heavy machine guns and rocket-propelled grenades and turned into a surprise massive assault against the refugee districts of Sabra and Shatila and Burj-el Barajneh.

During this assault, the second massacre at Sabra took place. The Amal movement overran the Sabra refugee camp on May 31, 1985 and took prisoner 700 young Palestinian men, who simply disappeared. There has been no news of them to this day. By October 1985, war had clearly redrawn the boundaries of the Shatila refugee camp - all 200 yards by 200 yards of it - that a shared poverty had previously erased.

**Sabra and Shatila Massacre
1982 By Tomis Kapitan
Encyclopedia of War and Ethics
1996**

After the 1970 civil war in Jordan, the Palestine Liberation Organization (PLO) moved its operations to Lebanon, recruiting fighters from Palestinian refugee camps. Its presence altered the balance of power among Lebanon's sects, and in 1975 the PLO was drawn into a civil war with its Lebanese allies against the Maronite community whose military strength was centred in the Phalangist militia. PLO advances against the



Phalangists led to Syrian intervention in 1976 to restore the status quo.

Diplomatic gains by the PLO during 1979-81 caused concern within Israel's Likud government headed by Menachem Begin. With his Defense Minister, Ariel Sharon, he planned to crush the PLO militarily and draw Lebanon into a peace treaty with Israel. On June 6, 1982 the IDF invaded Lebanon, bombarding refugee camps in southern Lebanon with heavy artillery before moving against PLO forces in West Beirut. It besieged that half of the city for two-months

before the US intervened with a plan to evacuate PLO fighters from Lebanon. This occurred under the auspices of a multinational force on August 21 sent to oversee the evacuation and protect Palestinian refugees who had been left behind. But the multinational force left by early September claiming its mission was accomplished.

Lebanon's new president, Bashir Gemayel, was reluctant to rush into a peace treaty with Israel, but on September 12, he agreed to Israel's request that Phalangist forces eliminate

the 2000 'terrorists' which Israelis claimed were still in the refugee camps. On September 14, Gemayel was killed in a powerful explosion at the Phalangist headquarters in East Beirut, it being uncertain who was responsible. A day later, the IDF moved into West Beirut in violation of the evacuation agreement. Sharon authorised entry of what were presumed to be members of Gemayel's Lebanese Forces (a Phalangist militia) and Saad Haddad's South Lebanon Army into the Sabra and Shatila refugee camps, home to 30,000 Palestinians and some Lebanese. The camps were completely sealed off by Israeli tanks. When the militiamen entered on Thursday evening, September 16, the only resistance they encountered was from a few lightly-armed young boys.

For the next 38 hours, aided by Israeli flares at night, the militiamen raped, tortured, mutilated and massacred civilians. IDF personnel, including General Amos Yaron, IDF Commander in Beirut, were stationed on the rooftop of a seven-story building 200 meters from Shatila, with a clear view of the camps below. Also there were members of the Phalangist intelligence who had radio communication with militiamen on the ground. By Friday morning, evidence that a massacre was taking place was communicated to Israeli Chief of Staff, Raphael Eitan, but he approved a request that the Phalangists remain in

the camps until 5:00 am Saturday. The militiamen finally left the camps at 8:00 am.

The exact number of those who were killed is not certain. On September 22, the International Red Cross gave a figure of 2,400, but the militiamen had buried some bodies before evacuating, and sources among both Phalangists and Palestinians claimed that at least 3,000 people were killed or unaccounted for. Among the dead, none could be identified as members of any PLO military unit.

The massacre was a wild suspension of law and morality, and the interesting normative questions concern the scope and degree of responsibility. The killers entered the camps at the behest of Israeli officials who were certainly aware of Phalangist hostility towards Palestinians. Phalangists had previously massacred Palestinians when the Tel Az-Zater refugee camp was taken in 1976, and Bashir Gemayel had repeatedly described the Palestinians as 'a people too many' in Lebanon. An Israeli commission of inquiry ridiculed the claim that a massacre was not foreseen by Israeli officials, especially after Gemayel's assassination, and concluded that 'indirect responsibility' rested on the shoulders of Sharon, Eitan, IDF commanders, Foreign Minister Yitsak Shamir, and Prime Minister Begin.

Presumably, the qualifier "indirect" was based on the assumption that Israeli soldiers did not actually do the killing. Yet, allowing the revenge-seeking Lebanese Forces into the camps under the fiction that they would clean out "terrorists" suggests complicity if not outright instigation. In other circumstances, those responsible — directly or indirectly — would have been convicted of war crimes.

But Israel was the victor in the Lebanon war, and memories are often short. Within a few years Shamir was Israel's Prime Minister, Eitan a Knesset member, General Yaron was appointed military attaché to the Israeli Embassy in Washington, and Israel's Agricultural Minister, Ariel Sharon, carried chutzpah to remarkable heights in a 1986 New York Times op-ed piece entitled "It's Past Time to Crush the Terrorist Monster."

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Some Common Questions

Who are the Palestinian refugees? How many are there?

The United Nations defines Palestinian refugees as those people (and their direct descendants) who lived in Palestine for at least two years prior to 1948, and were displaced as a result of the 1948 war to Jordan, Lebanon, Syria, the West Bank and Gaza.

Official refugee status is limited to people who were displaced to these five areas where the United Nations Relief Works Agency (UNRWA) was set up to provide humanitarian aid to the refugees.

This rather mechanistic definition excludes many others who were dispossessed by Israeli-Arab warfare and since barred by Israel from returning to their homes. They include those displaced to areas outside of UNRWA's jurisdiction in 1948 (numbering one million today), those displaced in the 1967 war (today, about 600,000) and those internally displaced inside Israel (about 250,000 today).

These groups, plus the 4.1 million refugees currently registered with UNRWA, bring the number of refugees to about five million, or roughly 70% of all Palestinians.

Israel only acknowledges about two million refugees, discounting those not registered with UNRWA and contending that UNRWA figures are greatly inflated. This is one reason there are often hear conflicting figures for the size of the refugee population.

The Palestinian “Right of Return”

The right of return is a prominent issue for all Palestinians, and by far one of the most complex. For the Palestinian refugees in Lebanon, there are many interpretations of this right. For the outsider, the issue as a whole can be complicated to understand. In what follows, we will attempt to explain some of the key points on this issue expressed among the Palestinian refugee community in Lebanon.

What is the Palestinian ‘right of return’?

The historical background of the Palestinian right of return is based on several periods of exodus experienced by the Palestinian people, mainly in 1947-1948 and again in 1967. Today, there are over 5 million Palestinians – Palestinians who were forced to leave as well as their descendants – who are refugees. The right to return to a Palestinian territory is by some Palestinians interpreted as going back to the 1948 status, while some others refer to the territorial status in 1967.

The self-determination and independence of the Palestinian people has been repeatedly endorsed by the international community. Specifically regarding the Palestinian right to return to their homeland, the United Nations General Assembly adopted UN Resolution 194 in 1948. Article 11 of the Resolution states that:

‘[The General Assembly] resolves that the refugees wishing to return to their homes and live at peace with their neighbours should be permitted to do so at the earliest practicable date, and that compensation should be paid for the property of those choosing not to return and for loss of or damage to property which, under principles of international law or in equity, should be made good by the Governments or authorities responsible’

What does it mean?

UN Resolution 194 guarantees the right of Palestinians to return to their homeland, and their choice to do so. If once this right is implemented they choose not to return, they must receive proper compensation. The significant point here is that Resolution 194 must be realised before any negotiations can take place regarding whether or not they will return to their homeland.

What is the legal basis for the right of return?

The strongest legal basis is UN Resolution 194, adopted in 1948. It states that:

'The refugees wishing to return to their homes and live at peace with their neighbours should be permitted to do so at the earliest practicable date ... compensation should be paid for the property of those choosing not to return.'

Resolution 194 offers refugees a choice between repatriation (return to their homes) and compensation (money paid for lost property), or simply compensation.

Resolution 194 has been affirmed by the General Assembly of the United Nations nearly every year since it was passed. A total of eight other UN Resolutions have

called for implementation of the right of return.

Major human rights instruments, including the Universal Declaration of Human Rights, the Fourth Geneva Convention, the Hague Convention, the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights, and several regional conventions all support the right to return and compensation.

Finally, Israel's acceptance into the United Nations in 1949 was explicitly conditioned on its willingness to implement UN Resolution 194

What about the people living there now?

There are a wide range of Palestinian perspectives on what are the effective solutions to this situation. Many Palestinians advocate a solution that will encourage mutual living. This is the most realistic and will encourage a long-term peaceful solution.

Will the Palestinian Right of Return ever be enforced?

While realising the reality of almost four generations of foreigners living in the Occupied Palestinian Territories, most Palestinians are unwavering about their right, and the right of their descendants, to live in their homeland. Once

Resolution 194 is implemented and Palestinians can choose whether or not to return, then negotiations can take place that will address the reality. Until then, Palestinians will continue to advocate for their right to return to their homeland.

SECTION 3

Using the Photos to Explore the Issues

IT IS EASY AND FUN TO LEARN FROM PHOTOGRAPHS AND THE SECRET IS TO LEARN BETTER HOW TO “READ” A PHOTOGRAPH. WHEN YOU LEARN TO “READ” A PHOTOGRAPH YOU WILL BE DEVELOPING THE SKILL OF VISUAL LITERACY AND USING IT TO DEVELOP OTHER, RELATED SKILLS.

Why use photographs in learning?

Photographs are useful to use because they:

- are open- ended, people can interpret them in their own way
- can be read by everyone in their own way
- do not require high levels of literacy
- allow groups to determine for themselves what issues should be discussed
- encourage groups and individuals to recognise that not everyone sees the world in the same way or through the same lens
- when used well, they allow for creative learning outside a fixed agenda

Photographs provide a very rich source of exploration and discovery. In order to fully benefit from them, planning and organised investigation is needed, especially when it is pursued in groups.

The activities presented in the following pages are designed to support such exploration and discovery as well as to stimulate discussion on many of the important issues and challenges introduced in Biladi.

Details of each of the photos are provided on pages ???

Introducing the photographs

The following general activities are useful for introducing the photographs and for helping people to become familiar with them and with what they see happening in them. The activities are also useful for generating individual and group discussion and co-operation. Reviewing and describing photos is also important before identifying and discussing the issues and/or the questions and challenges they raise.

In using Biladi, it is more productive to have people work in pairs or small groups initially and to then compare and contrast choices and descriptions in the larger group.



Selecting

Ask the group to look carefully at the whole set of photos, ask each individual or pair to choose one or two photos which they find particularly interesting or which raise important questions for them. People can then form small groups (of, for example, four or six) and explain to each other their choices. Each small group then selects one or two photos from the group and explains their choice to the full group. Each group does this in turn. This activity can be used to make a list of issues or questions that might need further study and discussion.

Describing and Labelling

Divide the group into pairs and invite each pair to choose one photo and to then describe, in their own words, what is happening in the photo. Ask them to choose some keywords which best describe the photo (e.g. happy, sad, busy, dirty, relaxed, hard-working etc.). Each pair should then share their description and key words with the whole group. A list of group keywords can then be compiled and discussed. Are there words in common? Are the words largely positive or negative or a mixture of both? Is there agreement or

disagreement as to what might be happening in the photos?

Alternatively, ask each pair or group to display their photo on a piece of poster paper on a wall. They could then write keywords describing the photo on stickers which can then be added to the poster. In this way, the entire set of photos can be displayed and described. Ask the whole group to look at all the posters and then share agreements or disagreements on the words chosen to describe particular pictures.

Storytelling

Each group or pair can be invited to choose a photo and to then describe what might be happening through a story - they should include what happened before the photo was taken and what might happen afterwards.

Identifying and Discussing Issues

Once the group is familiar with the pictures and their content, it is easier to proceed to identifying and discussing the issues they raise. The activities below will help assist this process. Choose one or two activities that best suit you or your group.

Ranking Photographs

Display the photographs so that all can see them - make sure the number of each photo is clearly visible. Invite each small group to

rank their choice of four photos (by number) in a diamond pattern. Their ranking could be on the basis of:

- those they like most/least
- the images that surprise them most/least
- which situation is most/least fair?
- which situation best or least illustrates human rights and refugees?

Again, each group can share their choice and the reasoning behind it with the larger group and similarities or differences between groups can then be explored.

Questioning

Give each group or pair a photograph. They should mount this on a larger piece of poster paper so that they can write around the edges of the photo. If this is not possible, the questions can be written on a separate piece of paper. Invite them to write as many questions as they can about the photo. Questions can be directly relevant to the photo or to issues raised by the photo. Encourage the group to ask questions that raise broader issues and challenges.

The questioning process around each photo can then be displayed and shared with the larger group. A group list of the most challenging and interesting questions could then form the basis for further study and research.

What do you feel?

Make a selection of photographs that, in your opinion, raise important or challenging questions. Display the photos. Invite everyone, individually, to note those photos (identified by number) that raise important issues for them about refugees in general and Palestinian refugees in particular. Working in small groups, individuals explain to each other which photos they chose and why. What are the key questions they give rise to? Are the issues chosen by different people the same? Different? Each small group can then present the most important questions they identified to the whole group.

Key Questions

Working in pairs or small groups, invite everyone to choose a photo that poses an important challenge. The challenges could include the following:

- what challenge does the photo raise for Palestinian refugees?
- what challenge does the photo raise for particular groups of refugees – women, young people, older people, men?
- what challenge does the photo raise for Lebanese society?
- what challenge does the photo raise for the international community?

The answers to these questions could then form the basis for additional debate and discussion focused on how such challenges might be met.

The **Investigating the Photographs Worksheet** on page ????? could be used as a basis for many of the activities listed above.

Identifying Human Rights Issues using the Development Compass Rose

The Development Compass Rose is a very simple but most effective tool for identifying important issues in development. It focuses on four basic areas - the Natural Environment (**Natural**), the area of Economics (**Economics**), Social Affairs (**Social**) and politics (**Who Decides**). The Development Compass Rose was developed by the Birmingham, England group – TIDE (teachers in Development Education) who use it as a basic tool to encourage people to look at all aspects of the development process.

Encourage small groups to draw their own Compass Rose on a sheet of paper. Ask them to list the important questions that can be raised under each of the four headings. The questions should relate directly to the issue of Palestinian refugees in Lebanon or elsewhere.

Each group's results could be displayed and shared with the larger group. These could then be compared with the questions listed in our Compass Rose on the page opposite.

What rights do Palestinian refugees have in making decisions about their own lives?

Who makes decisions in the refugee camps?

Do young people have power to make decisions?

What is the role of the UN?

Why are conditions in the camps so bad?

Can nothing be done about the overall environment of the camps?

Is there no effective planning?



Do women have equal rights?

Are relations between the Lebanese and the Palestinians improving?

What social and cultural life is there in the camps?

Do people feel pessimistic about the future?

Why are Palestinians excluded from so many jobs?
How do people survive?
What is their economic future?

Introducing the Photographs



Kids are playing on a hill of garbage where no one thinks to play. This hill is located at one of the western entrances of the camp and it a mixture of houses that were destroyed during the numerous wars that the camp underwent, and the garbage that people gather at that place.

Keywords: Children, Environment, Right to Play, Pollution, Health



Alley located in the northern part of the camp. People are on one of the camp's main streets on a typical day.

Keywords: Alley Streets, Daily Life, Internal Networks



Morning primary school for boys and afternoon for girls they switch around each month because of the large population in the camps - one primary school is not enough for all children.

Keywords: Education, Hope, Future, Gender



Hair Dressing salon for women in the Camp, where women go for beauty therapy as all other women in the world do. Not so highly developed technically but at least it serves the basic needs of beauty for women in the Camps.

Keywords: Beauty, Women, Business



Internet and Video Games Café inside the Camp, young people use it as one means of communication and for spending time with friends in network games in addition to doing research related to school work.

Keywords: Entertainment, Education, Business, Meeting People, Communication



Women working for different NGOs in the Camp discussing work related issues.

Keywords: women at work, civil society, participation, preparation, Gender, development.



Entrance of the camp where Palestinian families live in buildings where they share the same balcony for each floor. Flats inside these buildings are small (2 rooms, kitchen and a bathroom) and each flat currently accommodates at least six people.

Keywords: Living Conditions, Sharing, High Population, Privacy, Living Together



Music shop inside the Camp where people have access to the latest music in the world. The decorations (red) refer to celebrating Valentine's Day within the Camps.

Keywords: Music, Valentine, Up to date, Celebrating, Business



Underground pipes during a maintenance period which sometimes takes months and may not be finished and which can lead to problems such infected water or even making it not available for months at a time

Keywords: maintenance, services, pollution, diseases



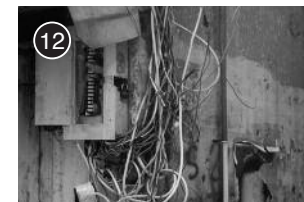
Remembering the Massacre, a woman is holding the photos of her three children and/or close relatives who were killed during the massacre in year 1982.

Keywords: Remembrance, Pain, Tears, Missing



Despite all children do what children do. A group of children are playing in the small "backyard" of their house which is not really a backyard.

Keywords: Start with what you have, enjoy your life, Children, Right to play



The electric network in one alley of the camp shows the dangerous situation - lines enter between each other causing serious danger.

Keywords: Electricity, sources, danger, organization, observation



It is from Chatila Camp "we should remove this photo from the document"



Children in summer are engaged in a recycling project inside the camp as a means of protecting the environment from more pollution.



One over view of the camp shows its different sections and different shapes and the types of houses where the refugees live. Houses vary from those in buildings into those with zinc ceilings and in both cases the standard housing conditions are not of acceptable quality.



A shop for repairing and recycling fridges which could be sold again second hand. Repairing is one of the means that refugees use in order to fully consume what they and repair work is considered one of the active businesses inside the camp - others from outside the camp use such sources inside the camp since they are cheaper.

Keywords: Repairing, Second hand equipments, unable to buy new, business



Students doing home work - reading and writing in the street since streets are considered the only places that kids use in the camp for everything "studying, playing and even working".

Keywords: Education, Educational Environment



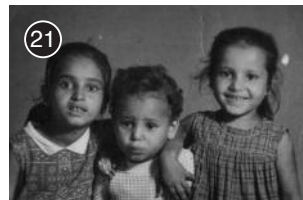
An old lady buying her fresh vegetables from a mobile shop that is typical inside the camp. The wall behind the lady is one of the cemetery walls of people who were martyred during the Camp's war between the Lebanese Amal Movement and Palestinians.

Keywords: Health, Daily life, Business



One inhabitant of Shatila Camp who was killed during the 1982 Massacre - his swelled body - evidence of being dead for days. This photo was taken by the French Associated Press and is from Dr. Bayan Nowayhed Al-Hout (1982) Sabra and Shatila, September 1982 page 709.

Keywords: Killed, Dead for days, Massacre, Genocide, Crime against Humanity



Mohammad Abed Al Salam was married from Arabia Hussien Al Hajj Hassan (Photo no.22), they were living in Palestine but due to 1948 Arab - Israeli conflict (Nakba) they left Palestine and moved to Beirut and settled in Chatila Camp where he continued to produce juice and sell it.

Mohammad and his wife had nine children - Abed Al Salam, Ahmad, Wahida, Khodor, Abbas, Fatima, Abdallah, Salah, Mohammad. Photo no. 20 shows Khodor and Abbas where as Photo no. 21 shows Fatima, Abdallah and Wahida

During the wars, this family lost four sons: Ahmad in 1978 during the first Israeli Invasion to Southern Lebanon, Khodor in 1981 during the Lebanese War "He was at the time married and has one daughter", Mohammad in 1982 during the Israeli Invasion to Beirut in Chatila Camp, Abbas in 1986 during the Camps War "by Amal Movement"

The lady in Photo no. 23 is Abdallah's Wife

In 1984 Abdallah got married to Iman and they had 3 children "Rasha, Mohammad and Yousef. This family lives in Chatila Camp. Their house is rented and consists of two rooms, a kitchen and a bathroom - The kitchen is shown in photo no. 23 where Iman - the wife is preparing coffee for guests "us". Currently, Abdallah is works selling second hand shoes inside Chatilla Camp - he sells the shoes in one corner known as "Souk".

Some Camp Residents Speak

Haytham Diab al-Aqla

On the massacres

'... The massacre became terrible and awful and no one could imagine it. And a person just wants to talk about the scenes he has seen, and particularly what I saw in a house that I entered... the house of Abu Ahmad Surur and his daughter Su'ad who are currently in Belgium. I entered the house and found Abu Ahmad Surur holding his son in his arms and it was clear that he wanted to try to protect him ...

When Mohammed al-Durra died, I started to think about and remember the massacre; how Abu Ahmed Surur wanted to try to protect his son so that the bullets would not reach him. And despite all this, the father of Ahmed Surur was killed and his son as well. He was embracing three fourths of his body in order to protect him, and so the bullet went through the bodies of the father and the son. The limbs were scattered in a dreadful way.

The human mind cannot bear the scenes from the place, I mean seeing around 35 young people being brought out from the shelter and placed by the wall in a group, except for the women who were pregnant and the children who were already killed, but also even the elderly. I mean, there was an old person on al-Dukhi Street and they put his walking stick beside him and booby-trapped him so that if anyone wanted to try to pull him or pull the body the bomb would explode. The situation in Shatila was frightening and dreadful. Even now the camp suffers from the massacre and the problems it brought.

'... there is a man who is called Muhammed Abu Rudainah who has a sister. He lost his whole family – only he and his sister survived. Several times it seems as he talks to himself. He walks the streets and you feel that this is not a normal person – there are conditions you cannot imagine. Not only him, there are many. Surur and the children of Abu Ahmad Surur and many people lost a son or their father or brother died. They have psychological problems.

And there are people who are missing – i.e. they never found their bodies and they were not in the mass grave after the digging was completed by Red Crescent and the civil defence. I knew all the people who lived in Harash and Hay Al-Gharbi and a big number went missing and their corpses have not been found and worst of all, the missing girls, their corpses were not found among the victims.'

On current economic and social conditions

'... The situation in the Shatila camp ought to be better as it is so close to the capital Beirut – it is in the middle (of it). The situation ought to be better in relation to the drains and the sewage - we do not have these services – the sewage is a disaster – especially in the winter. A lot of people buy shoes just in order to be able to reach their houses. Dust/mud is in the streets, garbage and no water – not even drinking water – and the inhabitants are forced to drink whatever they can find. And the income of some families is one or two dollars and some families do not even have enough to

buy a piece of bread, there are no doctors, the Palestinian people in the last 30 years have increased heart and kidney problems ...'

On those without identity papers

'... There are a lot of Palestinians who left in 1967 here in the camp – this is natural. They are old and they crossed the borders and no one stopped them, but their children are an issue, you can't imagine. Especially if they have a daughter who wants to marry or a son who wants to study – there are no limits to the problems if you do not have an identity card ...'

Abu Muhammed

On why we came to Sabra and Shatila camp and on work

'... in Shatila and in Beirut there was work. And with regard to the Palestinian situation, there was work in Beirut. We came to look for work and a place to live here. I am a cook but Palestinians are not allowed to work because people know that you are a Palestinian or it is known that there are a number of professions which Palestinians are not allowed to work in, we Palestinians do not enjoy any rights or anything. If you are a Palestinian, and you read in the newspaper – I, my son read in the newspaper because he wants to work as a driver or guard, they will say, you are a

Palestinian go to the Palestinians. No way (will he get the job) – we (as Palestinian people) share a joint misfortune.

'... First of all, the environment in which we live - the housing, the roads, the sewage, the electricity, the water and the health situation as well as the social situation is very poor. Generally, of course, we suffer from living in this society and from the education/upbringing – we suffer from it all. If someone gets ill, he/she goes to UNWRA and if they don't have medicine, and especially for chronic diseases, UNWRA says there is no medicine, and therefore he goes from door to door looking for a penny or two. If nobody agrees to assist him to get the amount needed and to help him, he will die ...'

'... We were here and they gathered us unjustly and returned us without anything. They made us sit down without food and drink and demolished our houses, destroyed and killed our children. And I, and one of my people, I lost a young boy. I was in Shatila, and afterwards I moved. We lived in the outskirts of the camp and when Israel...the Israeli planes bombed the camp our houses were destroyed in 1982 and we fled to inside the camp where I had relatives and in the night we heard about the massacre...the massacre...we left the camp and there were people who stayed in the camp and among the ones who left some

were killed and some got out.'

'We want to return to our houses. At the moment we suffer from the economical and social situation/conditions.'

Khadiga Toufic Awkar

'... I am 70 years old. When I arrived to Lebanon, I was 15 years old and I was already married for two years and I gave birth too in Palestine...'

On Palestine before 1948

'... Yes, they were saying it was terrible and Iraq was invaded and Lebanon and Syria were invaded, and I don't know anything. My uncle and his wife were saying the world was destroyed.

And when the massacre of Deir Yassine occurred, my uncle found a house in Tyr (Sour) and brought us to it. We thought that in 15 days we would be able to return back to Palestine. We left our clothes, luggage, commodities and properties and we didn't bring anything with us. We hadn't heard or seen any aircraft or any armoured fighting vehicle and no one was killed. Only one house was demolished in Nassira street and Ibn Al-Kassam Hamid was killed in it. When we left, my husband worked in fishing and other related services. His father was an old person. He was just

covering his father's needs and nothing else. There is no good standard of living in Tyr, so we moved to Beirut. My uncle's wife died in Tyr and we moved to this place. My uncle said he didn't want to live in Lebanon and he wanted to return to his country, to his building and house.

On conditions in Shatila when they arrived

'... It was very nice. There were no buildings or constructions, and all these trees weren't available. Shatila camp was made up of tents and the somewhat wealthy people built wooden houses with kitchens and then all these constructions were set up and it was the same for Al-Daouk ...'

On the massacre

'... When they came and committed the massacre, Israel opened the road and the massacre was committed. I entered with my son's wife holding our noses with our hands, looking for our children. We wanted to look for our children. We wore filtering masks while waiting for the removal of the wicks. Because they told us that explosives were still installed. We returned with ten cars of the Civil Defence, we waited until the Intelligence came to dismantle and remove the mines from the dead in order to be able to return. This is our house. In the times of the Amal (militia) it was burned three times, and we

returned to it without anything, no commodities or even a spoon.

We were here and we escaped. And the people were running and screaming and saying: "the massacre.... the massacre...". We escaped and they entered also in Gaza hospital and began slaughtering people and took the young men. They slaughtered whoever they slaughtered and took whoever they took.' Rumours...rumours... We spent these days like in hell'

You will see on the video, the screams, laments and killings. This scatters the heart. A person who lost all his family members, another who lost his son, father, brother, relatives, and neighbours. They didn't leave anyone in the street. The massacres took place in all Doukhi street from the beginning of Bir Hasan to the end of Shatila. The massacres were taking place without any control or awareness - without awareness.

On the current living situation

'... Difficult. There are no jobs. No one is living like a human. The Palestinian is not employed or given a job. People who have degrees are selling vegetables...'

'I choose my country. I swear by God I will return barefoot to Palestine...'



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