

Flygtningenævnets baggrundsmateriale

Bilagsnr.:	561
Land:	Libanon
Kilde:	UK Home Office
Titel:	Country Policy and Information Note - Lebanon: Palestinians
Udgivet:	juni 2018
Optaget på baggrundsmaterialet:	6. september 2018



Home Office

Country Policy and Information Note

Lebanon: Palestinians

Version 1.0

June 2018

Preface

Purpose

This note provides country of origin information (COI) and analysis of COI for use by Home Office decision makers handling particular types of protection and human rights claims (as set out in [the basis of claim](#) section). It is not intended to be an exhaustive survey of a particular subject or theme.

It is split into two main sections: (1) analysis of COI; and (2) COI. These are explained in more detail below.

Analysis

This section analyses the evidence relevant to this note – i.e. the COI section; refugee/human rights laws and policies; and applicable caselaw – by describing this and its inter-relationships, and provides an assessment on whether, **in general**:

- A person is reasonably likely to face a real risk of persecution or serious harm
- A person is able to obtain protection from the state (or quasi state bodies)
- A person is reasonably able to relocate within a country or territory
- Claims are likely to justify granting asylum, humanitarian protection or other form of leave, and
- If a claim is refused, it is likely or unlikely to be certifiable as 'clearly unfounded' under section 94 of the Nationality, Immigration and Asylum Act 2002.

Decision makers **must**, however, still consider all claims on an individual basis, taking into account each case's specific facts.

Country of origin information

The country information in this note has been carefully selected in accordance with the general principles of COI research as set out in the [Common EU \[European Union\] Guidelines for Processing Country of Origin Information \(COI\)](#), dated April 2008, and the Austrian Centre for Country of Origin and Asylum Research and Documentation's (ACCORD), [Researching Country Origin Information – Training Manual, 2013](#). Namely, taking into account the COI's relevance, reliability, accuracy, balance, currency, transparency and traceability.

The structure and content of the country information section follows a [terms of reference](#) which sets out the general and specific topics relevant to this note.

All information included in the note was published or made publicly available on or before the 'cut-off' date in the country information section. Any event taking place or report/article published after this date is not included.

All information is publicly accessible or can be made publicly available, and is from generally reliable sources. Sources and the information they provide are carefully considered before inclusion.

Factors relevant to the assessment of the reliability of sources and information include:

- the motivation, purpose, knowledge and experience of the source
- how the information was obtained, including specific methodologies used
- the currency and detail of information, and
- whether the COI is consistent with and/or corroborated by other sources.

Multiple sourcing is used to ensure that the information is accurate, balanced and corroborated, so that a comprehensive and up-to-date picture at the time of publication is provided of the issues relevant to this note.

Information is compared and contrasted, whenever possible, to provide a range of views and opinions. The inclusion of a source, however, is not an endorsement of it or any view(s) expressed.

Each piece of information is referenced in a brief footnote; full details of all sources cited and consulted in compiling the note are listed alphabetically in the [bibliography](#).

Feedback

Our goal is to continuously improve our material. Therefore, if you would like to comment on this note, please email [the Country Policy and Information Team](#).

Independent Advisory Group on Country Information

The [Independent Advisory Group on Country Information](#) (IAGCI) was set up in March 2009 by the Independent Chief Inspector of Borders and Immigration to support him in reviewing the efficiency, effectiveness and consistency of approach of COI produced by the Home Office.

The IAGCI welcomes feedback on the Home Office's COI material. It is not the function of the IAGCI to endorse any Home Office material, procedures or policy. The IAGCI may be contacted at:

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Information about the IAGCI's work and a list of the documents which have been reviewed by the IAGCI can be found on the Independent Chief Inspector's pages of the [gov.uk website](#).

Contents

Analysis	6
1. Introduction	6
1.1 Basis of claim	6
1.2 Points to note	6
2. Consideration of issues	6
2.1 Refugee Convention.....	6
2.2 Credibility.....	6
2.3 Applicability of Article 1D of the Refugee Convention	7
2.4 Exclusion under Article 1F of the Refugee Convention	8
2.5 Establishing status	8
2.6 Assessment of risk	10
2.7 Protection	14
2.8 Internal relocation.....	15
2.9 Certification	15
Country information.....	17
3. Overview.....	17
4. Status and ‘categories’ of Palestinians	17
4.1 Overview	17
4.2 Registered Palestinians.....	18
4.3 ‘Non-registered’ Palestinians.....	19
4.4 ‘Non-ID’ Palestinians	20
4.5 Palestinians from Syria.....	21
5. Lebanese citizenship law.....	22
6. Demography	23
7. Socio-economic situation.....	25
7.1 Overview	25
7.2 United Nations Relief and Works Agency services (UNRWA).....	26
7.3 Accommodation.....	29
7.4 Education	30
7.5 Health	33
7.6 Employment	36
7.7 Vulnerable groups	40
8. Refugee camps.....	41

8.1	Conditions in camps	41
8.2	Governance of camps	44
8.3	Security in refugee camps	46
9.	Treatment by state	49
9.1	Discrimination / harassment	49
9.2	Protection	51
10.	Treatment by non-state groups	54
10.1	Hezbollah (aka Hizballah and Hizbullah)	54
10.2	Other armed groups	57
11.	Documents	58
11.1	Identification documents	58
11.2	Documents required to travel	61
11.3	Consequences of lack of documents	62
11.4	Work permits	63
12.	Freedom of movement	64
12.1	Within Lebanon	64
12.2	Travel into / out of Lebanon	67
Terms of reference		74
Bibliography		76
	Sources cited	76
	Sources consulted but not cited	78
Version control		79

Analysis

1. Introduction

1.1 Basis of claim

- 1.1.1 Fear of persecution from state or non-state actors because the person is a Palestinian.

1.2 Points to note

- 1.2.1 Palestinian refugees in Lebanon who were receiving protection and / or assistance from the UN Relief and Works Agency for Palestine Refugees in the Near East (UNRWA) are excluded from the protection of the Refugee Convention under Article 1D unless such protection has ceased for any reason.
- 1.2.2 Exclusion under Article 1D of the Refugee Convention does not automatically exclude a person from humanitarian protection. Whether a person is entitled to humanitarian protection will depend on the facts of the case. For general guidance, see the [Asylum Instruction on Humanitarian Protection](#).
- 1.2.3 This note **must** be considered alongside the [Asylum Instruction on Article 1D of the Refugee Convention: Palestinian refugees assisted by the United Nations Relief and Works Agency \(UNRWA\)](#), which provides details on how to consider asylum claims made by stateless Palestinians whose habitual place of residence is the Occupied Palestinian Territories or in Jordan, Lebanon, and Syria.
- 1.2.4 Where a person does not qualify for asylum or humanitarian protection, and is not excluded from the Refugee Convention under Article 1D, it is open to them to apply for leave to remain as a stateless person. This cannot be done at the same time as the asylum claim is being pursued (see the [Statelessness guidance](#)).

[Back to Contents](#)

2. Consideration of issues

2.1 Refugee Convention

- 2.1.1 Palestinians claims fall within 'nationality', namely that they are stateless, i.e. without nationality.
- 2.1.2 Establishing a convention reason alone is not sufficient to be recognised as a refugee. The question to be addressed in each case is whether the particular person will face a real risk of persecution on account of their actual or imputed convention reason.

[Back to Contents](#)

2.2 Credibility

- 2.2.1 For information on assessing credibility, see the [Asylum Instruction on Assessing Credibility and Refugee Status](#).

- 2.2.2 Decision makers must also check if there has been a previous application for a UK visa or another form of leave. Asylum applications matched to visas should be investigated prior to the asylum interview (see the [Asylum Instruction on Visa Matches, Asylum Claims from UK Visa Applicants](#)).
- 2.2.3 Decision makers should also consider the need to conduct language analysis testing (see the [Asylum Instruction on Language Analysis](#)).

[Back to Contents](#)

2.3 Applicability of Article 1D of the Refugee Convention

- 2.3.1 Article 1D of the Refugee Convention is one of the exclusion clauses in the Refugee Convention but its overall purpose is to ensure the continuing protection of Palestinian refugees until their position is settled in accordance with relevant United Nations General Assembly resolutions.
- 2.3.2 Palestinian refugees in Lebanon who were previously assisted by UNRWA and continue to be eligible for such assistance but who seek asylum outside the area of UNRWA operation are excluded from the scope of the Refugee Convention unless they can show that UNRWA assistance or protection has ceased for any reason, which includes where a person ceases to receive protection or assistance beyond their control or independent of their volition.
- 2.3.3 A Palestinian eligible for UNRWA protection or assistance and previously registered with UNRWA, or (though not registered) in receipt of UNRWA protection or assistance, is not entitled to Refugee Convention refugee status simply by leaving the UNRWA areas of operation and claiming asylum elsewhere.
- 2.3.4 Situations where UNRWA protection or assistance may cease beyond the person's control or independent of their volition may include the following circumstances:
- where there is a threat to life, physical integrity or security or freedom, or other serious protection related reasons.
 - situations such as armed conflict or other situations of serious violence, unrest and insecurity, or events seriously disturbing public order.
 - more individualised threats or protection risks such as sexual and/or gender-based violence, human trafficking and exploitation, torture, inhuman or degrading treatment or punishment, severe discrimination.
 - arbitrary arrest or detention.
- 2.3.5 Additionally, practical legal and / or safety barriers to accessing UNRWA assistance may mean that UNRWA assistance is in practice no longer available and may include:
- being unable to access UNRWA assistance because of long-term border closures, road blocks or closed transport routes
 - absence of documentation to travel to, or transit, or to re-enter and reside, or where the authorities in the receiving country refuse their re-admission or the renewal of their travel documents

- serious dangers such as minefields, factional fighting, shifting war fronts, banditry or a real risk of other forms of violence or exploitation
- 2.3.6 Palestinian ‘refugees’ resident in Lebanon who were not receiving or eligible to receive protection or assistance from UNRWA **are not excluded** under Article 1D. These cases should be considered on their merits under the Refugee Convention.
- 2.3.7 Further guidance on handling Palestinians assisted by UNRWA is set out in the [Asylum Instruction on Article 1D of the Refugee Convention: Palestinian refugees assisted by the United Nations Relief and Works Agency \(UNRWA\)](#).

[Back to Contents](#)

2.4 Exclusion under Article 1F of the Refugee Convention

- 2.4.1 There are a number of armed groups operating in Lebanon, including the military wings of Palestinian groups such as Hamas and the Palestinian Liberation Organisation. Some of these groups may be involved in terrorist activities (several are proscribed under the UK Terrorism Act 2000¹) or are responsible for serious human rights abuses in Lebanon as well as neighbouring countries and areas including Syria, the Occupied Palestinian Territories and Israel (see [Treatment by non-state groups](#)).
- 2.4.2 If there are serious reasons for considering that the person has been involved with these groups then decision makers must consider whether any of the exclusion clauses under Article 1F are applicable.
- 2.4.3 If the person is excluded from the Refugee Convention under Article 1F, they will also be excluded from a grant of humanitarian protection.
- 2.4.4 For further guidance on the exclusion clauses and restricted leave, see the Asylum Guidance on [Exclusion under Articles 1F and 33\(2\) of the Refugee Convention](#), [Humanitarian Protection](#) and the guidance on [Restricted Leave](#).

[Back to Contents](#)

2.5 Establishing status

- 2.5.1 Palestinian refugees are considered ‘foreigners’ in Lebanon and are unable to acquire Lebanese citizenship (aside from in certain limited circumstances (see [Lebanese citizenship law](#))). However most Palestinians are registered as refugees with UNRWA and/ or the government. They are legally resident, have identity documents and are generally able to access travel documents to enter and leave the country (see [Documents](#)).
- 2.5.2 While most Palestinians resident in Lebanon (PRL) are ‘refugees’ registered or are entitled to register with UNRWA (and the Lebanese government) a small minority are not. Additionally a minority of the UNRWA-registered Palestinian refugees are from Syria (see [Status and ‘categories’ of](#)

¹ Abdallah Azzam Brigades, al-Nusrah Front (proscribed as an alternative name for Al Qa’ida), Asbat Al-Ansar, Hamas Izz al-Din al-Qassem Brigades, Hezbollah, Islamic State of Iraq and the Levant (ISIL; aka ISIS, DAISH) are listed on the Home Office’s list of proscribed terrorist organisations, updated December 2017, [url](#)

[Palestinian](#)), and their circumstances differ from PRL. The experiences and treatment of each of these groups by the state and non-state groups varies.

2.5.3 The four 'categories' of Palestinian refugees living in Lebanon are:

- **UNRWA (and government) registered Palestinian refugees (PRL)**
- **Non-UNWRA-registered Palestinian refugees**
- **Non-ID Palestinian refugees**
- **Palestinians from Syria (PRS)**

A brief description of each is set out below.

a. UNRWA (and government) registered Palestinian refugees (PRL)

2.5.4 There are approximately 450,000 Palestinians registered with both UNRWA and the Lebanese authorities, although the actual number remaining in Lebanon is estimated to be between 174,000 to 300,000. Registered Palestinian refugees are those who were displaced in the Arab-Israeli conflict of 1947-49. Their descendants are also eligible for registration with UNRWA (see [Status and 'categories' of Palestinian, UNRWA](#) and [Demography](#)).

2.5.5 All registered Palestinian refugees have the right to receive full support services from UNRWA and are issued with an official 'Identification Card for Palestine Refugee' by the Lebanese government (see [Status and 'categories' of Palestinian, Demography; UNRWA](#); and [Documents](#)).

b. Non-UNWRA-registered Palestinian refugees

2.5.6 There are the approximately 40,000 Palestinian refugees who are registered with the Lebanese authorities but not with UNRWA. The majority arrived in Lebanon after being displaced from Palestine in 1967 due to the Arab-Israeli war. Their descendants are also recognised as non-registered Palestine refugees. They are all issued with an 'Identification Card for Palestine Refugee' by the Lebanese government (see [Documents](#)). Non-Registered Palestine refugees began to receive support from UNRWA in January 2004 and have been given the same residency permits as those registered with UNRWA (see ['Non-registered' Palestinians](#)).

c. Non-ID Palestinian refugees

2.5.7 Approximately 3,000 to 5,000 Palestinians are not registered with UNRWA or with the Lebanese authorities. These Palestinians are, largely, those who left Jordan in the 1970s due to the dispute between the government of Jordan and the Palestinian Liberation Organisation. There are also others who travelled to Lebanon to take part in the Lebanese civil war between 1975 and 1990.

2.5.8 Non-ID Palestinians, including their descendants, are considered illegal immigrants in Lebanon and do not generally possess valid identity documentation. However, some non-ID Palestinians have acquired identity papers from popular committees (armed militia groups providing security) in the UNRWA refugee camps. Approximately half non-ID Palestinians are registered with UNRWA in another country, such as Jordan, but are unable to transfer their registration to UNRWA in Lebanon (see [Status and](#)

[‘categories’ of Palestinian](#), [Demography](#); [UNRWA](#); [Documents](#); and [Refugee Camps](#)).

- 2.5.9 Owing to their status, non-ID Palestinians face restrictions in accessing basic services, such as education and health care, and in their freedom of movement. UNRWA, however, provides basic primary services to undocumented Palestinians even though they are not registered with the organisation (see [‘Non-ID’ Palestinians and Documents](#)).

d. Palestinians from Syria (PRS)

- 2.5.10 There are approximately 30,000 UNRWA-registered PRS in Lebanon who have fled Syria since 2011 as a consequence of the conflict. Many more fled to Lebanon but have subsequently left to seek opportunities in third countries, including Western European states.
- 2.5.11 Around 40% of PRS, as of September 2016, were estimated not to have legal residency. Many faced difficulties to regularise their legal status in Lebanon as the General Security Office has recently changed residency permit regulations. A lack of residency impedes access to government services and movement within Lebanon.
- 2.5.12 While many PRS live without legal status, they all can generally access basic UNRWA services. However this support has been reduced since 2015, worsening their already poor socio-economic circumstances and increasing their vulnerability to forced eviction, gender-based violence and has reduced their ability to maintain their legal status in the country (see [UNRWA](#)).
- 2.5.13 PRS have been prohibited from entering Lebanon since 2014 apart from those with a verified embassy appointment or a flight ticket to a third country. Some have also reportedly returned to Syria due to the poor living conditions in Lebanon. PRS are reported to limit their movement as they fear being caught and deported (see [Palestinians from Syria](#)).
- 2.5.14 The UNHCR concluded in its paper of December 2017 that PRS who entered Lebanon but subsequently left would generally not be readmitted to the country (see [Freedom of movement](#)).

[Back to Contents](#)

2.6 Assessment of risk Refugee camps

- 2.6.1 The vast majority of Palestinians reside within the 12 UNRWA refugee camps or in ‘gatherings’ – refugee communities outside of, but often alongside, the UNRWA refugee camps. The refugee camps are governed by Palestinian groups – the Palestinian Liberation Organisation and Hamas - which operate paralegal systems outside of the control or reach of the Lebanese authorities enforced by ‘popular committees’ and ‘security committees’. The popular committees are a mechanism to resolve disputes between factions and individuals, as well as being a contact point for the Lebanese government. The security committees are used to maintain ‘peace’, with specific factions patrolling areas under their control. The Lebanese government does, however, regulate movement into and out of some of the camps (see [Demography](#) and [Refugee camps](#)).

- 2.6.2 Living conditions in camps are generally poor, overcrowded and, although generally stable, sometimes violent. However conditions vary within and between camps with those in the south generally poorer than those in the north, while camps in Beirut are more integrated into surroundings areas than those elsewhere (see [Refugee camps](#)).

[Back to Contents](#)

State treatment

- 2.6.3 Palestinians in Lebanon face generally discriminatory treatment by both the Lebanese state and non state actors, the degree and nature of which varies between the 'four' different groups and individual circumstances.
- 2.6.4 Since Palestinians are considered 'foreigners', yet lack nationality of another country, they face legal restrictions in accessing state services, such as medical treatment and education. Palestinian refugees are also barred from employment in many fields and face restrictions in buying property (although the law is enforced 'flexibly' and in practice they are, for example, able to buy land informally) (see [Socio-economic situation](#)). Instead, they largely depend on basic services - health, education and accommodation - provided by UNRWA. The assistance provided by UNRWA to PRS has been reduced in recent years, from about US\$200 in 1975 to US\$110 today, exacerbating their already poor socio-economic circumstances (see [UNRWA](#)).
- 2.6.5 Lebanese law does not specifically target Palestinians, however the impact of state restrictions has led to the Palestinian community facing socio-economic marginalisation: experiencing high levels of unemployment and poverty, and poor infrastructure and housing conditions generally. This is, however, partially offset by the support provided by UNRWA (see [Socio-economic condition](#)).
- 2.6.6 The security forces have been reported in recent years to, on occasion, arbitrarily arrest and detain some Palestinians, with those from Syria who entered Lebanon illegally and who are without legal status being most vulnerable to arrest. The country evidence does not, however, establish that arrests are systematic or widespread of Palestinians with ID documents and residency in Lebanon (see [Treatment by state](#)).
- 2.6.7 In the case of [KK, IH, HE \(Palestinians - Lebanon - camps\) Lebanon CG \[2004\] UKIAT 00293](#), heard 24 May 2004, promulgated 29 October 2004, the Immigration Appeal Tribunal considered whether poor living conditions in the refugee camps in Lebanon amounted to a breach of Article 3 of the ECHR and if there was a real risk of persecution under the Refugee Convention. The Tribunal summarised the country evidence as described by UNWRA:
- '... Palestinian refugees in Lebanon... do not have social and civil rights and have a very limited access to the government's public health or educational facilities, and no access to public or social services. The majority rely entirely on UNRWA as the sole provider of education, health and relief and social services. They are considered as foreigners and prohibited by law from working in some seventy-two trades and professions which has led to high levels of unemployment among the refugee population. It seems that popular committees in the camps representing the refugees regularly discuss these problems with the Lebanese government or with the UNRWA officials. As we

say, UNRWA provides services and administers its own installations and has a camp services office in each camp which residents can visit to update records or raise issues about services with the camp services officer who will refer petitions etc. to the UNRWA administration in relevant areas. It is said that socio-economic conditions in the camps are generally poor. There is a high population density and there are cramped living conditions and an inadequate basic infrastructure as regards matters such as roads and sewers. As we have noted above, some two-thirds of registered refugees live in and around cities and towns.’ (para 83)

- 2.6.8 The Tribunal went on to find that ‘to the extent that there is a discriminatory denial of third category rights in Lebanon for the Palestinians, this does not amount to persecution under the Refugee Convention or breach of protected human rights under Article 3 of the ECHR [European Convention on Human Rights].’ The Tribunal also held that conditions in camps at that time did not amount to a breach of Article 3 of the ECHR (para 106).
- 2.6.9 In the country guidance case of [MM and FH \(Stateless Palestinians, KK, IH, HE reaffirmed\)](#), heard 29 June 2007 and promulgated on 4 March 2008, the Asylum and Immigration Tribunal (AIT) observed that it had ‘not been presented with any new or significant evidence that should cast doubt on the decision reached by the Tribunal in KK.’ (para 126)
- 2.6.10 It went on to find that:
- i) ‘The differential treatment of stateless Palestinians by the Lebanese authorities and the conditions in the camps does not reach the threshold to establish either persecution under the Geneva Convention, or serious harm under paragraph 339C of the Immigration Rules, or a breach of Articles 3 or 8 under the ECHR.
 - ii) ‘The differential treatment of Palestinians by the Lebanese authorities is not by reason of race but arises from their statelessness.
 - iii) ‘The decision in [KK, IH, HE \(Palestinians-Lebanon-camps\) Jordan CG \[2004\] UKIAT 00293](#), is reaffirmed.’ (Headnote)
- 2.6.11 The country situation since the promulgation of [MM and FH](#) in 2008 has not substantively changed. The available evidence considered in this note (see [Bibliography](#) for full list of sources) does not establish that there has been a significant and cogent change in the treatment of Palestinians by the government or in the conditions in refugee camps generally. Therefore the findings of the AIT in [MM and FH](#) continue to be generally applicable.
- 2.6.12 In general, PRL are not at risk of treatment amounting to persecution or serious harm by the state. Additionally, while conditions in refugee camps continue to be poor they do not amount to a breach of Article 3 of the ECHR / Article 15 of the Qualification Directive.
- 2.6.13 However, PRS who entered the country illegally or other non-registered Palestinians without documentation are likely to face restrictions on their movement and access to services, and be more vulnerable to arrest, detention and ill-treatment given their lack of identity documentation and residency status. Once they leave Lebanon, they are also unlikely to be readmitted into the country by the government.

Non-state treatment

- 2.6.14 A number of non-state groups operate in Lebanon. Most powerful is Hezbollah, a Shia group which maintains an extensive security apparatus, political organisation and social service network in Lebanon. The group also controls movement within areas of its control, operating check-points in some Shia-majority areas and reportedly areas around the international airport in Beirut. Hezbollah maintain significant influence over parts of the country, and in some areas the government is unable to enforce law (see [Treatment by non-state groups](#)).
- 2.6.15 In addition, a number of other armed groups exist, including Palestinian groups which primarily operate and govern most of the UNRWA-camps (see [Treatment by non-state groups](#)).
- 2.6.16 The country evidence does not indicate that Hezbollah generally targets, discriminates against or forcibly recruits Palestinians (Hezbollah primarily draws its members from the Shia community; most Palestinians are Sunni), preferring to 'entice' individuals to its cause. However, sources indicate that should a person become of adverse interest to Hezbollah, it has the complete capability to locate and detain them within Lebanon (see [Treatment by non-state groups, Hezbollah](#) and [Protection](#)).
- 2.6.17 Palestinian and some non-Palestinian groups compete for influence within refugee camps and sometimes fight each other for control. Some Palestinian civilians have faced harassment, threats, abuse and arbitrary detention, and may be caught in the cross-fire of factional disputes. However, information on abuses by these armed militias, or other non-state armed groups, is limited and does not indicate that it is widespread or frequently aimed at Palestinian civilians (see [Treatment by non-state groups](#) and [Refugee camps](#)).

Assessment

- 2.6.18 Palestinian refugees face legal obstacles which have resulted in their social and economic marginalisation. They are also vulnerable to abuses by non state actors. However, the nature and degree of treatment varies between different Palestinian 'groups' and individuals.

UNRWA (and government) registered Palestinian refugees (PRL)

- 2.6.19 Palestinian refugees resident in Lebanon and eligible to be, or registered with, UNRWA fall within the scope of Article 1D of the Refugee Convention.
- 2.6.20 In general such persons are not subject to treatment that by its nature and / or repetition is likely to amount to persecution or serious harm. They are therefore likely to be excluded from the Refugee Convention under Article 1D as they receive assistance from UNRWA which has not ceased to be available for any reason.
- 2.6.21 However, each case will need to be considered its merits, some persons may be able to demonstrate that they face an individualised risk where UNRWA assistance ceases to be available.

Non-UNWRA-registered Palestinian refugees

- 2.6.22 Palestinian refugees not registered with UNRWA but registered with the Lebanese government do not fall within the scope of Article 1D of the Refugee Convention since they are not, or eligible to be, registered with UNRWA (although they may have received some assistance from UNRWA).
- 2.6.23 In general, while such persons face some restrictions in their access to services, employment and freedom of movement, this is not likely by its nature or repetition to amount to persecution or serious harm.

Non-ID Palestinian refugees

- 2.6.24 Non-ID Palestinians do not fall within the scope of Article 1D of the Refugee Convention since they are not eligible to be registered with or receive assistance from UNRWA (although in practice they may have received some assistance from UNRWA).
- 2.6.25 In general, such persons are likely to face discrimination in accessing services and documentation, and restrictions on their employment rights, ability to purchase property and to move freely into and within Lebanon. These limits on fundamental rights are likely by their nature and repetition to amount to persecution or serious harm.

Palestinians from Syria (PRS)

- 2.6.26 Palestinian refugees registered with UNRWA in Syria (PRS) who have fled to Lebanon potentially fall within the scope of Article 1D of the Refugee Convention since they have received assistance from UNRWA.
- 2.6.27 However, in practice PRS face discrimination and restrictions on their movement within and into Lebanon, and may be vulnerable to deportation to Syria. While PRS are likely to receive some assistance from UNRWA, it is limited, and this combined with the restrictions on their movement within and into Lebanon, is likely to mean that in practice UNRWA support ceases to be available for reasons beyond the person's control or volition. Therefore such persons are likely to no longer be excluded from the Refugee Convention under Article 1D.
- 2.6.28 Since PRS have already been recognised as refugees by the UN, they are likely to qualify for asylum.
- 2.6.29 However, all cases must be considered on their facts, with the onus on the person to demonstrate their status in Lebanon and the risk they face.
- 2.6.30 For further guidance on assessing risk, see the [Asylum Instruction on Assessing Credibility and Refugee Status](#).

[Back to Contents](#)

2.7 Protection

- 2.7.1 Where the person's fear is of persecution and/or serious harm from state actors, effective protection is not likely to be available (see [Protection](#))
- 2.7.2 Where the person's fear is from a non-state group, the availability of protection will depend on from which group the person is of interest. Persons fearing Hezbollah are unlikely to be able to obtain effective protection from the state, UNRWA or Palestinian groups. However, in some cases, persons

who fear other non-state armed groups, including Palestinian factions within camps and gatherings, may be able to obtain protection from other Palestinian groups operating in the camps depending on their specific circumstances. However, while the state may be able to provide protection it is unlikely to be willing to do so in practice (see [Treatment by non-state groups](#) and [Protection](#)).

- 2.7.3 Each case, however, will need to be considered on its specific facts, with the onus on the person to demonstrate that they are unable to obtain protection.
- 2.7.4 For further guidance on assessing the availability or not of state protection, see the [Asylum Instruction on Assessing Credibility and Refugee Status](#).

[Back to Contents](#)

2.8 Internal relocation

- 2.8.1 Palestinians face restrictions in their freedom of movement, with entry and exit controls operated by the government which may be tightened during periods of heightened security. Palestinians registered with the government require permission to change their place of residence (see [Freedom of movement](#)).
- 2.8.2 The government maintains checkpoints, mostly in military and other restricted areas, while Hezbollah also has checkpoints in Shia-dominated areas. Palestinians without legal status and ID documentation may not be allowed through checkpoints, sometimes facing arrest and detention, and are unlikely to be able to relocate. Palestinians who have legal status in Lebanon are generally able to move within the country (see [Documents](#) and [Freedom of movement](#)).
- 2.8.3 Where the person faces a risk of persecution from the state, internal relocation is not reasonable.
- 2.8.4 Where the person faces a risk of persecution or serious harm from a non-state actor, internal relocation may be reasonable but will depend on:
 - the person's legal status in Lebanon
 - the non-state group, the nature of its interest in and capacity to pursue the person
 - the person's individual circumstances
- 2.8.5 Each case will need to be considered on its specific facts, with the onus on the person to demonstrate that internal relocation is not reasonable.
- 2.8.6 For further guidance on internal relocation, see the [Asylum Instruction on Assessing Credibility and Refugee Status](#).

[Back to Contents](#)

2.9 Certification

- 2.9.1 Where a claim is refused, it is unlikely to be certifiable as 'clearly unfounded' under section 94 of the Nationality, Immigration and Asylum Act 2002.
- 2.9.2 For further information and guidance on certification, see [Certification of Protection and Human Rights claims under section 94 of the Nationality, Immigration and Asylum Act 2002 \(clearly unfounded claims\)](#).

[Back to Contents](#)

Country information

Date updated: 19 June 2018

3. Overview

- 3.1.1 A US Congressional Research Service paper of September 2017 summarised the situation of Palestinians in Lebanon:

‘Palestinian refugees have been present in Lebanon for more than 60 years, as a result of displacements stemming from various Arab-Israeli wars. Like Syrian refugees, Palestinian refugees and their Lebanese-born children cannot obtain Lebanese citizenship. Unlike Syrian refugees, Palestinian refugees are prohibited from accessing public health or other social services, and Palestinian children cannot attend Lebanese public schools. Palestinian refugees and their descendants cannot purchase or inherit property in Lebanon, and are barred from most skilled professions, including medicine, engineering, and law.’²

[Back to Contents](#)

4. Status and ‘categories’ of Palestinians

4.1 Overview

- 4.1.1 The US Congressional Research Service noted in September 2017 that most Palestinians in Lebanon are stateless with the exception of approximately 30,000 Christians who arrived in 1948 and were granted Lebanese citizenship³.
- 4.1.2 The Australian Department of Foreign Affairs and Trade (DFAT), Thematic Report: Palestinians in Jordan and Lebanon, March 2015, based on a range of sources including information from those within Lebanon (DFAT Report 2015), observed:

‘Most Palestinians in Lebanon are subject to a legal loophole—they are considered by Lebanese law to be foreigners, and while foreigners in Lebanon have numerous civil rights guaranteed by law, most of these rights are dependent on the existence of reciprocal arrangements with the foreigner’s home country. Because Palestinians in Lebanon are stateless, they are excluded from many of these rights. In some areas [...] Palestinians have been given special dispensation in order to partially close this loophole.

‘[...] DFAT understands that the reciprocity principle was originally designed to protect Lebanon’s interests, and was not an ‘anti-Palestinian’ measure. While the difference might appear semantic, the Palestinian leadership, ideologically at least, support the principle behind the laws’ maintenance. Lebanon—and the Palestinian community—insist that they do not want Palestinians to remain in Lebanon indefinitely; Palestinians aim to fulfil their ‘right of return’ as soon as possible. For this reason, Lebanon—with Palestinian acquiescence—has traditionally prevented any measure that

² US Congressional Research Service, ‘Lebanon’ (p21), 20 September 2017 [url](#)

³ DFAT, ‘Thematic Report: Palestinians in Jordan and Lebanon’ (paras 4.32), March 2015 [url](#)

might induce Palestinians to permanently stay in Lebanon. Thus, while the restrictions placed on Palestinians are acknowledged, they are acknowledged in light of preventing ‘tawtin’, or resettlement.’⁴

4.1.3 Of the stateless Palestinians, the UN High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR) identified 4 sub-categories:

‘Based on their legal status and registration with the United Nations Relief and Works Agency for Palestine Refugees in the Near East (UNRWA), Palestinian refugees in Lebanon can be categorized into four groups:

- **“Registered” refugees (“Palestine refugees”)**, which are registered with UNRWA and the Lebanese authorities;
- **“Non-registered” Palestinian refugees**, which are not registered with UNRWA, but are registered with the Lebanese authorities;
- **“Non-ID” Palestinian refugees**, who are neither registered with UNRWA nor with the Lebanese authorities; and
- **‘Palestine refugees from Syria**, who have arrived in Lebanon since 2011.’⁵

[Back to Contents](#)

4.2 Registered Palestinians

4.2.1 UNRWA defines Palestinian refugees as “persons whose normal place of residence was Palestine during the period 1 June 1946 to 15 May 1948, and who lost both home and means of livelihood as a result of the 1948 conflict.”⁶ The same source also stated that ‘UNRWA services are available to all those living in its area of operations who meet this definition, who are registered with the Agency and who need assistance. The descendants of Palestine refugee males, including adopted children, are also eligible for registration.’⁷

4.2.2 The DFAT Report 2015 clarified: ‘UNRWA only registers Palestinians displaced during the 1947–1949 Arab–Israel war, as well as their descendants. Palestinians displaced as a result of the 1967 Arab–Israel war are thus ineligible for registration with UNRWA (though UNRWA may provide them with services when necessary).’⁸

4.2.3 The American University of Beirut (AUB) / UNRWA socio-economic survey of Palestinians in 2015 observed:

‘Registered Palestine refugees are those registered with UNRWA and are usually also registered with the Directorate General of Political and Refugees Affairs (DPRA).[...] They are registered in the UNRWA registration system and are included on the registration card of their family. They also usually hold an “Identification Card for Palestine Refugee” issued by DPRA,[...]’

⁴ DFAT, ‘Thematic Report: Palestinians in Jordan and Lebanon’ (paras 4.28–4.29), March 2015, [url](#)

⁵ UNHCR, ‘The Situation of Palestinian Refugees in Lebanon’ (p2), February 2016, [url](#)

⁶ UNRWA, ‘Palestine Refugees’, undated, [url](#)

⁷ UNRWA, ‘Palestine Refugees’, undated, [url](#)

⁸ DFAT, ‘Thematic Report: Palestinians in Jordan and Lebanon’, (para 4.35), March 2015, [url](#)

which is the officially recognized identification card for Palestine refugees in Lebanon (not Palestine refugees from Syria).'⁹

[Back to Contents](#)

4.3 'Non-registered' Palestinians

4.3.1 Palestinians '... not registered with UNRWA but registered with [Department of Palestinian Refugee Affairs] DPRA are customarily called "Non-Registered" refugees. They also hold the "Identification Card for Palestine Refugee" issued by DPRA.'¹⁰

4.3.2 The UNHCR paper of February 2016, citing a number of sources, noted, in regard to the Lebanon government's handling of Palestinian 'refugees', that:

'Lebanon's regulation of Palestine refugees' status reportedly dates back to 1959, when the Department of Palestinian Refugees Affairs (DPRA) was created.[...] This department is in charge of registering and issuing civil documentation, including travel documents, to Palestine refugees in Lebanon.[...] The Minister of Interior's Ordinance No. 319 of 2 August 1962 details the process for the regularization of residency for Palestinian refugees, in which they are considered to be "foreigners who do not carry documentation from their countries of origin, and reside in Lebanon on the basis of [residency] cards issued by the Directorate of Public Security, or identity cards issued by the [DPRA]".[...] However, while the possession of a valid residency or identity card is required to regularize their residency status, there is no clear provision defining what categories of Palestinian refugees are entitled to such a card.[...] Palestine refugees are reportedly denied citizenship in Lebanon.[...]

'The Directorate of Political Affairs and Refugees (DPAR), which is part of the Ministry of Interior,[...] reportedly maintains the records of Palestinian refugees registered in Lebanon. Newborns are reportedly registered with the family's original place of registration, regardless of where in Lebanon they were born. Those registered with DPAR and UNRWA are issued a personal ID card which states that s/he is a Palestinian refugee in Lebanon.[...]

'A refugee's registration with DPAR is reportedly only cancelled in three specific events, namely, (i) in the case of a refugee's death and upon request of the General Security to DPAR to cancel the person's registration following their death, or (ii) if the refugee obtains the nationality of a third country, or (iii) if the refugee has submitted an application to the General Security to have his/her registration cancelled.[...]'¹¹

4.3.3 The DFAT report 2015 noted: '... up to 40,000 Palestinians in Lebanon are recognised as Palestinian refugees by [the] Lebanese authorities, but are not

⁹ American University of Beirut / UNRWA, 'Survey on the Socioeconomic Status of Palestine Refugees in Lebanon 2015' (p23), June 2016, [url](#)

¹⁰ American University of Beirut / UNRWA, 'Survey on the Socioeconomic Status of Palestine Refugees in Lebanon 2015' (p23), June 2016, [url](#)

¹¹ UNHCR, 'The Situation of Palestinian Refugees in Lebanon' (p4), February 2016, [url](#)

officially recognised by UNRWA. Most of these arrived (or are descended from those who arrived) as a result of the 1967 Arab–Israel war.¹²

4.3.4 The same report explained that these Palestinians did not register with UNRWA:

‘... primarily because they had sufficient means and did not require the assistance UNRWA provided. However, these and all other Palestinians in Lebanon were encouraged to register with the Directorate-General for Palestinian Affairs (DGPA), when it was established in 1959... All Palestinians registered with the DGPA are issued with an identity card. The DGPA is responsible for issuing Palestinian identification cards as well as birth, death and marriage certificates.’¹³

4.3.5 The UNHCR paper of February 2016 observed, citing a range of sources, that: ‘UNRWA started assisting this non-registered refugee population as of January 2004.[...] Non-registered Palestinians are reportedly granted the same residency permits afforded to those who are registered with UNRWA; [...] however, they are issued a different travel document (Laissez Passer), valid for one year and renewable three times.[...]’¹⁴

4.3.6 The USSD report for 2017 noted:

‘The Directorate of Political and Refugee Affairs continued to extend late registration to Palestinian refugee children under age 10. It previously was the directorate’s policy to deny late birth registration to Palestinian refugee children who were above age two. Children between age 10 and 20 were registered only after the following were completed a DNA test, an investigation by the DGS [(Directorate of General Security)], and the approval of the directorate.’¹⁵

[Back to Contents](#)

4.4 ‘Non-ID’ Palestinians

4.4.1 The DFAT 2015 report observed a small number of Palestinians:

‘... referred to as ‘non-ID’ Palestinians are recognised by neither UNRWA nor Lebanon. Most of these are Palestinians (and their dependants) who fled Jordan in the 1970s as a result of hostilities between Jordan and the [Palestinian Liberation Organisation] PLO. Others came to Lebanon amidst its civil war [between 1975 and 1990]¹⁶ to fight. Non-ID Palestinians are considered illegal immigrants in Lebanon.

‘Lebanon has not allowed Palestinians who are registered with UNRWA in another country (for instance, Jordan) to transfer their registration to UNRWA in Lebanon. This affects approximately half the non ID Palestinians. DFAT understands that some non-ID Palestinians have acquired identity papers from popular committees in the camps. In these cases, UNRWA will comply with popular committee requests.

¹² DFAT, ‘Thematic Report: Palestinians in Jordan and Lebanon’ (paras 4.34), March 2015, [url](#)

¹³ DFAT, ‘Thematic Report: Palestinians in Jordan and Lebanon’ (paras 4.34), March 2015, [url](#)

¹⁴ UNHCR, ‘The Situation of Palestinian Refugees in Lebanon’ (p10), February 2016, [url](#)

¹⁵ USSD, ‘Country Report on Human Rights Practices for 2017’ Lebanon, (section 2d), April 2018, [url](#)

¹⁶ BBC, ‘Lebanon Profile Timeline’, 06 December 2017, [url](#)

'Non-ID Palestinians are not legally entitled to attend any schools, including UNRWA schools. Some non-ID Palestinians attend UNRWA schools informally, though do not receive certification at any level, as ID is required to do so.'¹⁷

- 4.4.2 USSD human rights report for 2017 stated: 'The majority of undocumented Palestinians were men, many of them married to UNRWA-registered refugees or Lebanese citizen women, who could not transmit refugee status or citizenship to their husbands or children.'¹⁸
- 4.4.3 The UNHCR observed that: "Non-ID" Palestinians... are reported to lack legal status in Lebanon, with wide-reaching implications for their ability to exercise their human rights and access basic services.'¹⁹
- 4.4.4 Amnesty International noted in their 2017/18 country report that: 'At least 3,000 Palestinian refugees who did not hold official identity documents faced further restrictions denying them the right to register births, marriages and deaths.'²⁰
- 4.4.5 The AUB/UNRWA survey 2015 noted:

'Those who are not registered with DPRA in Lebanon and have expired identification documents are called "non-IDs." Some of those non-IDs are registered with UNRWA in other fields... 'Non-IDs' have limited access to UNRWA services and face challenging socioeconomic conditions due to their lack of valid documentation, which leads to their ineligibility to work. This current status also means their movements are restricted and they cannot leave camps or travel outside of Lebanon. Children are often unable to obtain any education beyond preparatory levels, which is the highest level available in some camps.'²¹

[Back to Contents](#)

4.5 Palestinians from Syria

- 4.5.1 Since the conflict began in 2011, Palestinians refugees from Syria (PRS) have fled to Lebanon. Initially border entry procedures were eased to allow entry but from August 2013 entry criteria were tightened, restricted the entry of PRS. The AUB / UNRWA also observed:

'PRS currently residing in Lebanon face challenges in regularizing their legal status or residency. Since the arrival of PRS in the country, the General Security Office (GSO) has issued several circulars enabling PRS to renew the required residency permit. Most of these circulars have been valid for a period of one to three months, and many were issued with some intervals between them, during which time theoretically no renewal was possible. The renewal of residency was free of charge for the first year. During 2014 and part of 2015, the cost of renewing legal residency documents was US\$ 200

¹⁷ DFAT, 'Thematic Report: Palestinians in Jordan and Lebanon', March 2015, [url](#)

¹⁸ USSD, 'Country Report on Human Rights Practices for 2017', Lebanon (section 2d), April 2018, [url](#)

¹⁹ UNHCR, 'The Situation of Palestinian Refugees in Lebanon' (p5), February 2016, [url](#)

²⁰ Amnesty International, 'Lebanon 2017/2018', 22 February 2018, [url](#)

²¹ AUB / UNRWA, 'Survey on the Socioeconomic Status of Palestine Refugees in Lebanon 2015' (p23), June 2016, [url](#)

per person per year for those who have exceeded one year of stay. It seems likely that many PRS did not approach the GSO for fear of arrest and deportation or due to the length and cost of the process. Since 17 October 2015 several memos have been issued periodically allowing for a renewal of residency documents, free of charge. Some PRS with expired residency permits have been issued a departure order, though it is noted that these have not been enforced.²²

4.5.2 The Finnish Immigration Service report of 2016 noted:

‘According to UNRWA, since October 2015 Palestinians did not have to pay the 200 USD fee in order to renew their residency in Lebanon. This rule was renewed in March 2016. Hence, if a person has entered Lebanon before May 2014 and has a residence permit, he or she can renew the permit for free.[...]

‘According to Lebanese and international aid workers working with PRS in Lebanon and interviewed by HRW, almost all of PRS, as well as Syrian refugees, were without legal status in Lebanon in 2015. [...] According to Norwegian Refugee Council, in early 2016 only 14% of PRS had valid residence permits.[...] There are no official statistics on people without residence permits. It remains to be seen if the change made by Lebanon in October 2015 concerning renewing residence permits for PRS will affect this.’²³

4.5.3 DFAT’s ‘Thematic report on conditions in Syria’ of October 2017 observed that: ‘An estimated 20 per cent of displaced Palestinians from Syria [in Lebanon] are not registered [with UNRWA or the Lebanon government].’²⁴

[Back to Contents](#)

5. Lebanese citizenship law

5.1.1 The law on nationality is set out in Decree No 15 on Lebanese Nationality, 19 January 1925, amended in 1934, 1939 and 1960²⁵.

5.1.2 A Finnish Immigration Service fact finding mission report on Palestinians in Lebanon and Jordan, based on interviews with 6 sources (4 of which were undertaken on a visit to Beirut between 25 and 29 April 2016) and publicly available information, dated September 2016 noted:

‘In general, no Palestinian, or a foreigner, is entitled to Lebanese nationality.[...] Lebanese nationality can only be derived from one’s father. Women can only transfer nationality to a child if he or she is born out of wedlock and recognized by the Lebanese state while still a minor.[...] Therefore, children born to a Palestinian, i.e. state-less, father are not eligible for the Lebanese citizenship.’²⁶

²² AUB / UNRWA, ‘Survey on the Socioeconomic Status of Palestine Refugees in Lebanon 2015’ (p8), June 2016, [url](#)

²³ FIS, ‘Fact-Finding Mission Report: Syrian and Palestinian (in Lebanon and exiting Syria) refugees in Lebanon’, (Para 3.7), 29 September 2016, [url](#)

²⁴ DFAT, ‘Thematic Report On Conditions In Syria’ (para 3.54), 23 October 2017, [url](#)

²⁵ An English translation is available on refworld, [url](#)

²⁶ Finnish Immigration Service (FIS), ‘Fact-Finding Mission Report: Syrian and Palestinian (in

5.1.3 The US State Department's (USSD) human rights report on Lebanon for 2017 noted:

'Citizenship is derived exclusively from the father, resulting in statelessness for children of a citizen mother and a noncitizen father when registration under the father's nationality is not possible. This discrimination in the nationality law particularly affected Palestinians and, increasingly, Syrians from female-headed households. Additionally, some children born to Lebanese fathers did not have their births registered due to administrative obstacles or a lack of understanding of the regulations. The problem was compounded since non national status was a hereditary circumstance that stateless persons passed to their children. There were no official statistics on the size of the stateless population.'²⁷

5.1.4 The Finnish Report of 2016 also noted:

'Two interlocutors interviewed give additional conditions that have to be met [to obtain Lebanese citizenship]. According to Aina, wealthy people may be able to pay for citizenship. Women can get citizenship if they marry a Lebanese man and they have two children.[...] According to the UNRWA, if a Lebanese man marries a Palestinian woman, she can apply for citizenship after they have had a child. There might be a time limit for having a child, though the source did not indicate how long this would be. UNRWA emphasizes that this is one aspect of the law and that there are also other elements present.[...]'²⁸

[Back to Contents](#)

6. Demography

6.1.1 Based on the 4 categories of Palestinian identified above, sources estimated the number in each group to be the following (although numbers change with fluctuations in births and deaths, and migration):

- **Registered** (with UNRWA and the Lebanese government): circa 458,000²⁹
- **Non registered** (i.e. not with the UNRWA but who registered with the Lebanese government): 35,000 to 40,000^{30 31}
- **Non-ID** (i.e. not registered with either UNRWA or the Lebanese government): >3,000 to 5,000^{32 33 34}

Lebanon and exiting Syria) refugees in Lebanon', 29 September 2016, [url](#)

²⁷ USSD, 'Country Report on Human Rights Practices for 2017', Lebanon, (section 2d), April 2018, [url](#)

²⁸ FIS, 'Fact-Finding Mission Report: Syrian and Palestinian (in Lebanon and exiting Syria) refugees in Lebanon', 29 September 2016, [url](#)

²⁹ USSD, Country Report on Human Rights Practices for 2017 – Lebanon, April 2018, [url](#)

³⁰ UNHCR, 'The Situation of Palestinian Refugees in Lebanon', February 2016, [url](#)

³¹ FIS, 'Fact-Finding Mission Report: Syrian and Palestinian (in Lebanon and exiting Syria) refugees in Lebanon', September 2016, [url](#)

³² AUB / UNRWA, 'Survey on the Socioeconomic Status of Palestine Refugees in Lebanon 2015' (p23), June 2016, [url](#)

³³ UNHCR, 'The Situation of Palestinian Refugees in Lebanon' (p10), February 2016, [url](#)

³⁴ FIS, 'Fact-Finding Mission Report: Syrian and Palestinian (in Lebanon and exiting Syria) refugees in Lebanon' (para 2.3), September 2016, [url](#)

- **Palestinian Refugees from Syria (PRS)** (registered with UNRWA): 32,000 (N.B. the numbers declined by around 10,000, from 41,413 to 32,000, between 2015 and 2016 as Palestinians left for third countries).^{35 36} An estimated 20 per cent of displaced Palestinians from Syria are not registered.³⁷

- 6.1.2 The actual number of ‘registered’ (with the UNRWA and/or the DPRA) Palestinian refugees living in Lebanon in 2015 was estimated to be between 174,000 to 300,000^{38 39 40 41} because registration is voluntary⁴² and ‘UNRWA does not take into account all Palestinians who have emigrated or died’⁴³.
- 6.1.3 DFAT observed in October 2017 that: ‘There was a significant drop in the number of Palestinian refugees from Syria between 2014 and 2016 as many attempted to flee to Europe. In-country contacts suggest that this was a result of the deteriorating living conditions within Lebanon.’⁴⁴
- 6.1.4 The AUB / UNRWA survey 2015 reported that 54.8% of PRS lived in refugee camps while 63% of Palestinians from Lebanon (PRL) lived in camps⁴⁵. The remainder live in areas outside of the camps ‘in unofficial refugee communities (commonly referred to as “gatherings”).’⁴⁶
- 6.1.5 The 12 official refugee camps^{47,48} are:

• Beddawi	• Ein al-Hilweh	• Nahr al-Bared
• Burj Barajneh	• El-Buss	• Rashidieh
• Burj Shemali	• Mar Elias	• Shatila
• Dbayeh	• Mieh Mieh	• Wavel

- 6.1.6 These ‘camps are located across Lebanon. The largest camps, in which Palestinian groups are most active, are Ein al-Hilweh, near Saida, and Nahr

³⁵ USSD, Country report on Human Rights Practices for 2016 (section 2d), March 2017, [url](#)

³⁶ UNRWA, PRS in Lebanon, [url](#)

³⁷ DFAT, ‘Thematic Report on conditions in Syria’, (para 3.54), October 2017, [url](#)

³⁸ AUB / UNRWA, ‘Survey on the Socioeconomic Status of Palestine Refugees in Lebanon 2015’ (p23; footnote 10), June 2016, [url](#)

³⁹ UNHCR, ‘The Situation of Palestinian Refugees in Lebanon’ (p2), February 2016, [url](#)

⁴⁰ USSD, International Religious Freedom Report for 2016 – Lebanon (Section I. Religious demography), August 2017, [url](#)

⁴¹ USSD, Human Rights Report 2017 (section 2d), April 2018, [url](#)

⁴² AUB / UNRWA, ‘Survey on the Socioeconomic Status of Palestine Refugees in Lebanon 2015’ (p23), June 2016, [url](#)

⁴³ DFAT, ‘Thematic Report: Palestinians in Jordan and Lebanon’ (paras 4.2), March 2015, [url](#)

⁴⁴ DFAT, ‘Thematic Report on conditions in Syria’, (para 5.53), October 2017, [url](#)

⁴⁵ AUB / UNRWA, ‘Survey on the Socioeconomic Status of Palestine Refugees in Lebanon 2015’ (p9), June 2016, [url](#)

⁴⁶ DFAT, ‘Thematic Report: Palestinians in Jordan and Lebanon’, March 2015, [url](#)

⁴⁷ UNRWA, ‘Where we work’, [url](#)

⁴⁸ NB, the information on the UNRWA website for each of the camps appears to pre-date 2014.

al-Bared, near Tripoli.^{49 50} UNRWA only provides services to the camps – it does not administer or police them⁵¹ (see [Refugee Camps](#)).

6.1.7 A large number of Palestinians live outside of the official refugee camps in ‘gatherings’:

‘Most gatherings are located adjacent to camps or in areas where Palestinian agricultural workers used to work (i.e. temporary shelters were erected decades ago that, over time, have become suburbs). Their infrastructure is provided by the relevant Lebanese municipal authority, which frequently does not invest adequately in the Palestinian communities.

‘Gatherings are not always exclusively Palestinian. Some gatherings are merely suburbs in which the majority of residents are Palestinian.’⁵²

6.1.8 The Finnish Immigration Service noted, ‘UNRWA does not know how many [Palestinians] leave Lebanon. In 2015, the number of PRS who stopped receiving UNRWA’s benefits decreased by 6,000 people. Some of them returned to Syria. There are networks in the Palestinian refugee camps that facilitate leaving.’⁵³

[Back to Contents](#)

7. Socio-economic situation

7.1 Overview

7.1.1 DFAT observed in 2015 that:

‘Palestinians in Lebanon have restricted access to the job market, social services (including health) and education. As a result, the Palestinian community in Lebanon is marked by high poverty rates, and poor infrastructure and housing conditions. In 2012, the International Labour Organization rated 66 per cent of Palestinians as poor (living on less than six US dollars (USD) per day), compared to 35 per cent of Lebanese nationals.

‘Lebanon’s economy is dominated by small businesses; 95 per cent of Lebanese businesses employ 10 people or less. Many of these businesses trade primarily in the informal economy. Approximately 40 per cent of the Lebanese workforce, compared with approximately 80 per cent of the Palestinian workforce, work informally.

‘On average, Palestinian families have one more child than Lebanese families, further stretching resources. Palestinian women in Lebanon have a lower workforce participation rate than Lebanese women— 15 per cent compared with 21 per cent.’⁵⁴

⁴⁹ DFAT, ‘Thematic Report: Palestinians in Jordan and Lebanon’ (paras 4.13), March 2015, [url](#)

⁵⁰ See ‘Demographics’ in the ‘Survey on the Socioeconomic Status of Palestine Refugees in Lebanon 2015’ for more detail about the distribution.

⁵¹ UNRWA, ‘Where we work’, [url](#)

⁵² DFAT, ‘Thematic Report: Palestinians in Jordan and Lebanon’ (paras 4.23–4.24), March 2015, [url](#)

⁵³ FIS, ‘Fact-Finding Mission Report: Syrian and Palestinian (in Lebanon and exiting Syria) refugees in Lebanon’, 29 September 2016, [url](#)

⁵⁴ DFAT, ‘Thematic Report: Palestinians in Jordan and Lebanon’ (paras 4.6–4.9), March 2015, [url](#)

- 7.1.2 The USSD human rights report for 2016 stated that ‘according to a study conducted by the American University of Beirut in 2015, 65 percent of Palestinian refugees in the country lived in poverty, compared to 90 percent of PRS. The study estimated unemployment at 23 and 52 percent for Palestinian refugees and PRS, respectively.’⁵⁵
- 7.1.3 The USSD country report on human rights 2017, mentioned:
 ‘Palestinian refugees were prohibited from accessing public health and education services or owning land and were barred from employment in many fields, making refugees dependent upon UNRWA as the sole provider of education, health care, and social services. A 2010 labor law revision expanded employment rights and removed some restrictions on Palestinian refugees; however, this law was not fully implemented, and Palestinians remained barred from working in most skilled professions, including almost all those that require membership in a professional association.’⁵⁶
- 7.1.4 The Finnish Immigration Service reported that ‘socio-economic problems are the biggest ones for all Palestinians. UNRWA has to use its budget also for Palestinians from Syria and Iraq. Also, cuts in foreign aid have decreased the ability of local NGOs to provide services.’⁵⁷
- 7.1.5 UNRWA reported on its website:
 ‘Around 53 per cent of the Palestine refugees in Lebanon live in the 12 recognized Palestine refugee camps, all of which suffer from serious problems, including poverty, overcrowding, unemployment, poor housing conditions and lack of infrastructure. Three other camps were destroyed during the course of the Lebanese Civil War, while a fourth was evacuated many years ago.
 ‘The ongoing conflict in Syria has forced many Palestine refugees from that country, including men, women and children, to flee to Lebanon in search of safety. UNRWA is working to adjust to their numbers and their needs - including for education, health care, shelter and relief.’⁵⁸
- 7.1.6 The Congressional Research Service report of 7 December 2017 noted, ‘Some observers worry that government policies limiting nationality, mobility, and employment for refugees and their descendants risk creating a permanent underclass vulnerable to recruitment by terrorist groups.’⁵⁹

[Back to Contents](#)

7.2 United Nations Relief and Works Agency services (UNRWA)

- 7.2.1 According to the United Nations Relief and Works Agency for Palestine Refugees (UNRWA) website, the agency provides ‘assistance and protection for some 5 million registered Palestine refugees to help them achieve their full potential in human development.’ Their services ‘encompass education, health care, relief and social services, camp infrastructure and improvement,

⁵⁵ USSD, ‘Country Report on Human Rights Practices for 2016’, (section 2d), March 2017, [url](#)

⁵⁶ USSD, ‘Country Report on Human Rights Practices for 2017’, (Section 2d), April 2018, [url](#)

⁵⁷ FIS, Syrian and Palestinian (in Lebanon and exiting Syria) refugees in Lebanon, 26 Sept 2016, [url](#)

⁵⁸ UNRWA, ‘Where we work’, [url](#)

⁵⁹ CRS, ‘Lebanon’, (p 21), [url](#)

microfinance and emergency assistance, including in times of armed conflict.’⁶⁰

7.2.2 The AUB / UNRWA survey report 2015 stated:

‘UNRWA is the main service provider for Palestine refugees in Lebanon, providing basic and secondary education, comprehensive primary healthcare, financial support for secondary and tertiary care, emergency relief and infrastructural support amongst other social interventions and support activities. It has also been acting as the lead coordinating agency and primary provider of aid to [Palestinians Refugees from Syria] PRS in the country.’⁶¹

7.2.3 The USSD 2017 observed that: ‘Undocumented Palestinians, who were not registered in other fields, were not necessarily eligible for the full range of services provided by UNRWA. Nonetheless, in most cases UNRWA provided primary health care, education, and vocational training services to undocumented Palestinians.’⁶²

7.2.4 The UNHCR report 2016:

‘Palestine refugees from Syria have access to UNRWA schools, health clinics and hospitalization through referrals, as well as humanitarian assistance.[...] However, their lack of legal status and up-to-date civil registration documents as well as restrictions on movement, reportedly negatively impacts access to services.[...] A vulnerability assessment conducted by UNRWA in July 2014 showed that 95 per cent of Palestine refugees from Syria were dependent on UNRWA cash assistance to cover expenses related to food and housing.[...] However, as a result of insufficient funding for UNRWA’s activities in Lebanon, cash assistance for housing reportedly had to be suspended in July 2015, exacerbating refugees’ vulnerability.[...] Palestine refugees from Syria are reportedly at risk of forcible eviction, dropping out of school, pressure to seek high-risk employment, GBV, reduced ability to maintain legal status and increased likelihood of unsafe return to Syria or dangerous onward movement to Europe.[...] Palestine refugees from Syria have reportedly repeatedly protested against insufficient access to services.[...]’⁶³

7.2.5 The FIS report of 2016 noted:

‘UNRWA’s cash assistance is the main source of income for PRS. The organization believes that some PRS have left Lebanon and returned to Syria because of the high living expenses and otherwise bad situation in Lebanon. 89% of PRS are poor and 9% are extremely poor. 63% of PRS are severely and 31% are moderately food insecure.[...]

‘UNRWA has given a cash assistance of 27 USD per person and a housing assistance of 100 USD since February 2014. Due to funding shortages the housing assistance was suspended in July 2015. UNRWA started a new

⁶⁰ UNRWA, [url](#)

⁶¹ AUB / UNRWA, ‘Survey on the Socioeconomic Status of Palestine Refugees in Lebanon 2015’ (p22), June 2016, [url](#)

⁶² USSD, Country report on Human Rights Practices for 2017, (Section 2d), April 2018, [url](#)

⁶³ UNHCR, ‘The Situation of Palestinian Refugees in Lebanon’ (p15-16), February 2016, [url](#)

monthly assistance of 100 USD to replace these. It was distributed from March to June 2016. In June 2016 it was announced that assistance of 100 USD per family to cover the basic needs will be extended until October 2016 and assistance 27 USD per person will continue until end of 2016.[...]

‘According to UNRWA, PRS are more vulnerable than the PRL. A lot of PRS live with PRL, most of them live in the Palestinian refugee camps (according to UNRWA 55% [...]), some live also in villages in Beqaa Valley where there are many Syrian refugees. There are different reasons why people would move to the camps. People might choose their location also if people from their area in Syria or their relatives live there already. Between the groups there can be some jealousy if PRS get more assistance than PRL.[...]

‘Also UNRWA brings out personal contacts in the camps that get PRS moving in there. The rents in the camps are the cheapest in Lebanon. Also, if a person has entered Lebanon illegally, he or she might decide to live in the camps as the Lebanese authorities do not have control of them. UNRWA only provides housing related services in the 12 official camps.’⁶⁴

- 7.2.6 USSD human rights report for 2017 noted: ‘Palestinian refugees who fled Syria to Lebanon since 2011 received limited basic support from UNRWA, including food aid, cash assistance, and winter assistance. Authorities permitted their children to enroll in UNRWA schools and access UNRWA health clinics.’⁶⁵

- 7.2.7 The Danish Institute for International Studies 2016 report noted:

‘When it comes to the protection of individual rights, however much UNRWA wants to promote protection in this respect, its capacity to do so is very limited. The host countries in which UNRWA operates have very different approaches regarding how to handle the Palestine refugees [...] While UNRWA is aware of all the problems relating to human and social rights and tries to confront the Lebanese government on the issues, the reality is that the UN agency only can point out the problems – it can in no way enforce solutions. It is thus obvious that Palestine refugees are exposed to a protection gap [...].’⁶⁶

- 7.2.8 The Lebanese Center for Human Rights highlighted in 2016 that: ‘Since 2015, due to a steep drop in funding, the agency has had to reduce the financial support provided to PRS families, who would still fall out of the assistance programs of UNHCR. This has contributed to an increasing number of families living in poverty to 89% of PRS in Lebanon, and to 9% of those who live in extreme poverty, three times as much as the PRL.’⁶⁷

- 7.2.9 The Forced Migration Review, ‘Syrians in displacement’ issued in February 2018 noted:

‘As UNRWA has been forced by lack of funds to apply austerity measures over the last few years, a decline in services has been evident. In fact,

⁶⁴ FIS, Syrian and Palestinian (in Lebanon and exiting Syria) refugees in Lebanon, 26 Sept 2016, [url](#)

⁶⁵ USSD, ‘Country Report on Human Rights Practices for 2017’, Lebanon, (section 2d), April 2018, [url](#)

⁶⁶ DIIS, ‘The neglected Palestinian refugees in Lebanon and the Syrian refugee crisis’, 2016, [url](#)

⁶⁷ Lebanese Centre for Human Rights, ‘Legal Challenges facing Palestinian Refugees in Lebanon’, (p40), 2016, [url](#)

UNRWA's average annual spend per refugee has dropped from about \$200 in 1975 to around \$110 today. Moreover, while UNHCR seeks durable solutions such as resettlement for the registered Syrian refugees, UNRWA does not offer equivalent opportunities to the Palestinian refugees from Syria or Lebanon under its mandate as this may mean them losing their right of return.⁶⁸

- 7.2.10 More details of the services provided by UNRWA and its partner organisations, see [UNRWA's website](#).

[Back to Contents](#)

7.3 Accommodation

- 7.3.1 The UNHCR report 2016 noted 'UNHCR Housing opportunities for Palestine refugees are [...] limited to (i) Palestine refugee camps where living conditions are reportedly substandard; (ii) renting a residence outside of Palestine refugee camps where rental rates are unaffordable for many; [...] or (iii) relying on semi-legal, informal and unprotected agreements with Lebanese associates, who reportedly buy property or keep property bought pre-2001 on their behalf.[...]'⁶⁹

- 7.3.2 DFAT observed in 2015:

'Until 2001, Palestinians (and other foreign Arabs) could acquire property in Lebanon. However, in 2001 the law was changed, preventing stateless people owning land. Additionally, changes of property ownership that related to 'resettlement' (i.e. making permanent the Palestinian presence in Lebanon) were also prohibited by the change in law. Thus, Palestinians are effectively barred from owning, selling or bequeathing property.

'This law is flexibly enforced. For instance, DFAT understands that some Palestinians have been allowed to bequeath property, whereas others have not. Likewise, contacts familiar with the issues facing Palestinians report that Palestinians continue to buy and sell property, including outside the refugee camps. However, these exchanges—which include the issuance of notarised contracts—are not registered with the relevant Lebanese agency. Given the costs involved, some Lebanese nationals will likewise not register their newly-bought property. Palestinians may legally rent property in Lebanon... Palestinians do not face any legal restrictions in renovating property they already own outside the camps. They are bound by the same laws that apply to foreigners.'⁷⁰

- 7.3.3 The Finnish Immigration Report of 2016 also observed that as a consequence of Law no.296 there has been an increase in informal rental agreements. However, Palestinians are able to own property within Palestinian refugee camps and some enter into an arrangement with Lebanese nationals 'who buy property on their behalf'.⁷¹

⁶⁸ Forced Migration review, 'Syrians in displacement', (page 11) February 2018, [url](#)

⁶⁹ UNHCR, 'The Situation of Palestinian Refugees in Lebanon' (p6-7), February 2016, [url](#)

⁷⁰ DFAT, 'Thematic Report: Palestinians in Jordan and Lebanon' (paras 4.61-4.62; 4.64), March 2015, [url](#)

⁷¹ FIS, 'Fact-Finding Mission Report: Syrian and Palestinian (in Lebanon and exiting Syria) refugees in Lebanon' (section 2.5), September 2016, [url](#)

- 7.3.4 The Finnish Immigration Report of 2016 noted ‘PRL can move outside the camps if they can afford it, often meaning if they receive more salary. Due to limitations regarding work this is not usually the case. If people move outside of the camps, the distance to UNRWA’s services might be too long. Camps also offer social networks for PRL which are absent outside of the camps.[...]’⁷²
- 7.3.5 USSD report for 2017 noted: ‘Palestinians who owned and registered property prior to the 2001 law entering into force could bequeath it to their heirs, but individuals who were in the process of purchasing property in installments were unable to register the property.’⁷³
- 7.3.6 DFAT reported in October 2017 that: ‘UNRWA has now withdrawn cash assistance for housing for Palestinian refugees from Syria, which was the main source of income for many individuals from this cohort.’⁷⁴

[Back to Contents](#)

7.4 Education

7.4.1 DFAT reported in 2015:

‘Palestinians in Lebanon tend to attain the same levels of education as those Lebanese nationals in a similar economic situation. However, a number of laws and other factors [...] work to prevent the Palestinian community from attaining higher education levels (and thus better economic outcomes). Rates of illiteracy among Palestinians are approximately the same as for the wider Lebanese population. That said, Palestinians in Lebanon attain a lower level of education than the wider Lebanese community. For instance, per capita, approximately twice the number of Lebanese nationals are enrolled in secondary schools as compared with Palestinians. A 2012 survey of Palestinians in Lebanon revealed that the highest level of education, achieved by approximately half the Palestinian population, was the completion of primary school. Twelve per cent of Palestinians in Lebanon had completed secondary school (a figure up from six per cent in 1999), and approximately five per cent had completed tertiary studies (though these figures might be skewed, as better educated Palestinians are more likely to have emigrated).’⁷⁵

7.4.2 DFAT 2015 also stated:

‘By law, 10 per cent of public secondary school places are reserved for foreigners in Lebanon, including Palestinians. However, state schools will give priority to Lebanese nationals when filling places. Wealthy Palestinians can enter their children in private schools. UNRWA provides education to registered Palestinians in 80 pre- and primary schools and six secondary schools. Many of these schools are overcrowded, and 60 per cent operate on a double shift scheme.

⁷² FIS, ‘Fact-Finding Mission Report: Syrian and Palestinian (in Lebanon and exiting Syria) refugees in Lebanon’ (section 2.5), September 2016, [url](#)

⁷³ USSD, ‘Country Report on Human Rights Practices for 2017’, Lebanon (section 2d), April 2018 [url](#)

⁷⁴ DFAT, ‘Thematic Report On Conditions In Syria’ (para 3.55), 23 October 2017, [url](#)

⁷⁵ DFAT, ‘Thematic Report: Palestinians in Jordan and Lebanon’ (paras 4.27), March 2015, [url](#)

‘Numerous credible contacts have assessed that the quality of education UNRWA offers is lower than the quality of the Lebanese public school system.

‘Lebanon’s one public university (for which fees are heavily subsidised by the state) is the Lebanese University. Palestinian students may enrol in the Lebanese University. Although up to 10 per cent of students at the Lebanese University may be foreigners, including Palestinians, priority is usually accorded to Lebanese students.

‘Palestinian students enrolled at the Lebanese University do not enjoy the same rights as Lebanese students. They are not allowed to vote in student elections, nor do they benefit from health coverage provided by the National Social Security Fund... Lebanon has numerous private universities. Palestinians do not face any legal restrictions in enrolling in private universities, provided they are able to pay the high tuition fees. (Fees at the Lebanese University are approximately 200 US dollars (USD) per year compared to upwards of USD 5000 for private universities).

‘DFAT understands that approximately 1200 Palestinians graduate from university each year. [...]. Several hundred scholarships for tertiary education are offered to Palestinian students by various organisations each year.’⁷⁶

7.4.3 However, according to UNHCR report 2016 noted:

‘Palestine refugees are reportedly denied access to Lebanese public schools, leaving them to pursue their education either in one of the 69 UNRWA schools (both primary and secondary) or in private schools, which are, however, beyond the financial means of most. UNRWA schools are reportedly often dilapidated and face severe overcrowding. Drop-out rates are reportedly high for a variety of reasons, including the need to work in order to earn an income. Access to higher education is reportedly limited for Palestine refugees because many cannot afford the high costs; some refugees do not see any purpose in completing an education which does not grant access to employment. For Palestinians without legal status (i.e. “non-ID” Palestinians and many Palestine refugees from Syria), secondary school education is reportedly inaccessible due to their inability to take the intermediate schooling exam.’⁷⁷

7.4.4 The Lebanese Center for Human Rights noted in their 2016 report that:

‘The majority of PRS children who go to school have access to UNRWA primary and secondary education within the camps; a very small percentage goes to Lebanese public schools. Nevertheless, the lack of regular legal status reportedly means that they are unable to register for official school exams and thus to obtain official school certificates (Brevet and Baccalaureate certificates). Without the prospects of obtaining official school certificates, many reportedly drop out of school.’⁷⁸

⁷⁶ DFAT, ‘Thematic Report: Palestinians in Jordan and Lebanon’ (paras 4.54-4.60), March 2015, [url](#)

⁷⁷ UNHCR, ‘The Situation of Palestinian Refugees in Lebanon’ (p8), February 2016, [url](#)

⁷⁸ The Lebanese Center for Human Rights, ‘Legal Challenges facing Palestinian Refugees in

7.4.5 The Finnish Immigration Service report of September 2016 noted:

‘UNRWA provides schools for free for both PRL and PRS. [...] UNRWA does not provide kindergartens for Palestinians. There are private organizations that have some kindergartens.

‘Despite Palestinians theoretical access to higher education, in real life it might be hard for them to get a higher education. 97 per cent of school-aged children were in elementary schools and 61 per cent of PRL children were enrolled to secondary schools. 12 per cent of PRL above 25 years have a baccalaureate and 6 per cent have university degrees. PRL can enroll to Lebanese universities, but there are quotas for Palestinians. “In scientific Faculties (Medicine, engineering, pharmacy) 10 per cent quota is reserved for Foreigners (which include Palestinians), while entrance to other faculties is based on entrance exam results.”

‘UNRWA has been improving the education sector and schools. Still, the schools do not have enough facilities for the large number of children; some classes can have 45 to 50 children. According to Aina, the schools do not encourage people to continue their schooling and the results are not very good. In the past, in the 1960s and 1970s UNRWA’s schools used to be the best ones, but the level has gone down.

‘The number of children dropping out of school is rising; even 12 year old children can drop out of school. Boys drop out more often out of school than girls. In the end more girls receive education but the problem is that there are not enough jobs available for girls. Some parents take their children out of school and put them to work if they are in need of money. Beit Atfal Assumoud tries to do awareness raising among the parents about the negative causes of this.

‘Many educated Palestinians leave for abroad as they are not allowed to work in many highly skilled professions in Lebanon. Those who stay in Lebanon do not often work in the professions they have the training for, but in lower wage professions.’⁷⁹

7.4.6 The same report stated:

‘[...] not all children go to school; some families do not put their children to school, for example if they need them to work or help at home. Cost of schooling (transportation and materials for example) and need to work are the most common obstacles to schooling. Other reasons for not enrolling to a school are inability to register to a school, not liking school, low achievements, disabilities or illnesses and marriage.

‘88% of elementary school-aged children are at UNRWA’s elementary schools, 70% of preparatory school-aged children are in preparatory schools and 36% of secondary school-aged children are in secondary schools. School attendance is lower outside the Palestinian refugee camps.

Lebanon’, (p41), [url](#)

⁷⁹ FIS, ‘Fact-Finding Mission Report: Syrian and Palestinian (in Lebanon and exiting Syria) refugees in Lebanon’ (section 2.7), September 2016, [url](#)

Therefore, costs such as transportation might create an obstacle for those children to attend.

‘UNRWA’s schools used to have two shifts, morning and afternoon, where PRL and PRS students were separated. Now the organization is decreasing them and only four schools have two shifts, others have mixed classes. In this way UNRWA hopes to tackle bullying and discrimination faced by PRS at school.

‘If a PRS is in Lebanon without a valid residence permit, the person will not get his or her exams approved by the Ministry of Education, not even if the person did the exams in an UNRWA school. However, they can attend to the exams. The situation improved slightly from last year because this year, in 2016, students were informed in advance that they could sit for exams. The situation still leads to the fact that PRS children cannot study after finishing schools upheld by UNRWA.’⁸⁰

7.4.7 The socio-economic survey of Palestinians in 2015 conducted by The American University of Beirut/UNRWA, noted:

‘PRS have a lower enrolment rate than PRL, and the reasons for non-enrolment range from distance from schools and universities, to restrictions on mobility, and a lack of means to purchase school supplies. PRS enrolment is significantly higher for camp residents (93.7 per cent) compared to students residing in areas outside the camps (82.6 per cent), indicating the negative impact that restrictions on movement and a lack of access to means of transportation may have on children accessing education outside of camps.’⁸¹

[Back to Contents](#)

7.5 Health

7.5.1 The DFAT 2015 report mentioned the following:

‘Access to public health care for foreigners in Lebanon is dependent on reciprocal arrangements with the foreigner’s home country. This effectively excludes stateless Palestinians. Palestinians may access private health care, but relatively few can afford this.

‘UNRWA provides basic health care for registered Palestinians, and will pay for emergency hospital treatment. Should an acute or chronic problem require a stay in hospital, UNRWA will subsidise the cost. UNRWA has informed DFAT that the maximum subsidy is currently USD 5000, or 40 per cent of the treatment cost, whichever is less. This contribution is often substantially inadequate, however UNRWA has additional funds for a very small number (around six to twelve per annum) of ‘special hardship cases’. UNRWA does not provide secondary or tertiary health care but does subsidise the cost in some cases.

⁸⁰ FIS, ‘Fact-Finding Mission Report: Syrian and Palestinian (in Lebanon and exiting Syria) refugees in Lebanon’, (section 3.17), September 2016, [url](#)

⁸¹ The American University of Beirut, ‘The survey on the socio-economic status of Palestine Refugees in Lebanon 2015’, (page 10), June 2016, [url](#)

'Palestinians who have legal work must pay tax. Part of this tax is a contribution to the National Social Security Fund (NSSF). The NSSF is a social security mechanism for Lebanon's private sector. It includes a superannuation-like end-of-service payment, insurance for work-related injuries and other health issues, family and education allowances and maternity benefits. Until a September 2010 change in the law, Palestinians did not have any access to NSSF benefits, even if they were legally employed and paid into it. Since September 2010, Palestinians have access to the end-of-service payments and insurance for work related injuries. Palestinians remain ineligible for other NSSF benefits. A 2012 study by the International Labour Organization found that approximately five per cent of Palestinians had access to health care coverage, due to the restrictions mentioned in this paragraph and the fact that many Palestinians (and Lebanese) work in the informal sector.'⁸²

7.5.2 The UNHCR report of 2016, 'The Situation of Palestinian Refugees in Lebanon' stated:

'Palestine refugees reportedly do not have access to Lebanese public health services and rely mostly on UNRWA for health services, as well as on non-profit organizations and the Palestinian Red Crescent Society.

'UNRWA reportedly provides comprehensive primary health care such as general medical checks, preventative maternal and child care, radiology and dental care, free of charge. However, not all medical services are available at all UNRWA health clinics and as a result refugees may have to visit other clinics outside the camps, e.g. for dental treatment or laboratory tests.

'[...] In light of high levels of unemployment and poverty, refugees, especially those suffering from chronic diseases and those in need of complex medical procedures, may be unable to bear the high costs of treatment. Many refugees reportedly have to rely on assistance from relatives, friends, NGOs, or charities, sometimes running up debts.

'Health services available to Palestine refugees in Lebanon are reported to be chronically underfunded and insufficient to cover existing and growing health needs. Furthermore, living conditions in the camps are reportedly linked to a multitude of physical and mental health problems among refugees. The situation of elderly persons and persons with disabilities is reportedly of particular concern.'⁸³

7.5.3 The Finnish Immigration Service Fact-Finding mission reported:

'Private health care is very expensive in Lebanon. Only 5.5% of PRL have a private health insurance that they have paid for themselves, the rest are dependent on health care provided by different organizations. Payment of health care costs is difficult for many Palestinians. According to UNRWA tertiary health care is often too expensive for Palestinians.

'In the Palestinian refugee camps only primary health care is available, secondary and tertiary health care are available outside the camps.

⁸² DFAT, 'Thematic Report: Palestinians in Jordan and Lebanon' (paras 4.51-4.53), March 2015, [url](#)

⁸³ UNHCR, 'The Situation of Palestinian Refugees in Lebanon', February 2016 [url](#)

Secondary and tertiary health care is provided by UNRWA through the Palestine Red Crescent Society and public and private hospitals.

‘There are five hospitals, altogether 27 health care facilities, in Lebanon that are meant for Palestinians, but these do not have all treatment, such as kidney treatment or heart operations, available. Because of shortage in funding, not all medical services, such as dental care or laboratory tests, that are part of UNRWA’s Primary Health Care are available in all camps. Health care and social benefits provided by DPRA [Department of Political and Refugees Affairs] have also been cut.

‘[...] UNRWA does not provide for all the equipment that patients need to buy, for example for pace makers. According to Aina, lack of adequate maternal health is a problem for Palestinians.

‘Over 90% of children in Palestinian refugee camps have dental problems because of the bad quality of the drinking water and because their diet includes too much sugar. In general tap water is not potable but on average almost a third of PRL use it for drinking.

‘According to Aina, UNRWA does not provide mental health care for Palestinians. The organization started a mental health workshop in Lebanon in 2014 in order to train its staff on mental health issues. It has also cooperated with the National Institution of Social Care and Vocational Training/Beit Atfal Assumoud, organization represented by Aina, in providing mental health services in the refugee camps.

‘There are no services available for the elderly other than the ones provided by NGOs. Especially elderly people without children can be segregated from the society and left without a caretaker.

‘NGOs can assist people with health care costs. For example, the National Institution of Social Care and Vocational Training/Beit Atfal Assumoud cooperates with Health care society and can pay for example 10 to 15 per cent of the costs of an operation. This is given in addition to the amount that UNRWA pays. The percentage is offered all Palestinians whose operation costs exceed 1,000 USD.

‘[...] According to the UNRWA, there is at least one family member with a disability in 10 per cent of Palestinian households. In Lebanon there is limited access and availability of specialized rehabilitation services. Awareness of the needs of people with disabilities is not adequate, nor are their rights sufficiently protected. Palestinians do not fall under Law 20/2000 which recognizes the rights of Lebanese nationals with a disability.’⁸⁴

7.5.4 The report further mentioned:

‘PRS are entitled to the same services provided by UNRWA as PRL. Access to the services might be their biggest obstacle in receiving health care. If a PRS does not have residence permit and is living in the Palestinian refugee camps in order to avoid the Lebanese authorities, it can be hard for him or her to access secondary or tertiary health care. In the camps there is only

⁸⁴ FIS, ‘Fact-Finding Mission Report: Syrian and Palestinian (in Lebanon and exiting Syria) refugees in Lebanon’, (section 2.6), September 2016, [url](#)

primary health care available. The camps are surrounded by Lebanese check points, hence, it is hard for people without permits to get out of the camps.

‘According to UNRWA, 5% of PRS do not have access to UNRWA’s hospitalization services. The most common reason is that the person has not registered at UNRWA. The cost of transportation and the distance to services were also mentioned as obstacles. Both of the latter reasons were most common in Beqaa. UNRWA covers all of costs of the delivery of a baby for PRS.’⁸⁵

[Back to Contents](#)

7.6 Employment

7.6.1 The Finnish Immigration Service, ‘Fact-Finding Mission Report: Syrian and Palestinian (in Lebanon and exiting Syria) refugees in Lebanon’, September 2016 noted:

‘The Lebanese Ministry of Labor imposed employment restrictions on foreigners in Lebanon in 2015. It requires employers to justify formally that the given task or profession cannot be done by a Lebanese citizen [...] The same restrictions that are in place concerning Syrian refugees also apply to PRS [...] Only 48% of PRS are working. Men are almost twice as much likely to work as women.

‘Over half of PRS families do not have any family members who work. The situation varies between areas, the percentage is the highest in north of Lebanon and Beqaa and lowest in the capital, Beirut. Also households headed by women are more likely to have no family members working (80% of the households).’⁸⁶

7.6.2 In regards to employment, the DFAT report ‘Thematic Report: Palestinians in Jordan and Lebanon’ of March 2015 mentioned:

‘[...] participation rates in the workforce are similar for Palestinians and Lebanese nationals, though Palestinians tend to join the workforce at a younger age. Of those Palestinians that actively seek work, the overall employment rate is 92 per cent. However, this high rate masks a prevalence of informal and/or low-paying jobs, a preponderance of short-term or seasonal jobs, and frequently poor work conditions. The Palestinian workforce in Lebanon is estimated to make up approximately five per cent of the total workforce, or 15 per cent of the foreign workforce.’

‘Only one in five employed Palestinians work in the formal sector (which, in Lebanon, requires a written contract). This compares with approximately three in five employed Lebanese nationals.’⁸⁷

7.6.3 Furthermore, in 2015, DFAT reported :

⁸⁵ FIS, ‘Fact-Finding Mission Report: Syrian and Palestinian (in Lebanon and exiting Syria) refugees in Lebanon’, (section 3.15), September 2016, [url](#)

⁸⁶ FIS, ‘Fact-Finding Mission Report: Syrian and Palestinian (in Lebanon and exiting Syria) refugees in Lebanon’, (section 3.10 – 3.11), 29 September 2016, [url](#)

⁸⁷ DFAT, ‘Thematic Report: Palestinians in Jordan and Lebanon’, (paras 4.25 – 4.26), March 2015, [url](#)

‘Palestinians have long faced restrictive employment conditions in Lebanon. Until 2005, the Interior Minister maintained a list of professions reserved for Lebanese nationals. A reform of that system in 2005 eliminated a ban on Palestinians holding most clerical and technical positions.

‘However, more than 20 syndicated professions in Lebanon, such as medicine, law, engineering, nursing, accounting, pharmacy and teaching, remain largely off limits to Palestinians. Employment in these professions requires membership in the relevant syndicate, and such memberships are usually only available to Lebanese nationals (usually according to the by-laws of the various syndicates).⁸⁸

- 7.6.4 The report stated that there are some syndicates that allow foreign members to join based on reciprocity arrangements between their home countries and Lebanon, which therefore excludes stateless Palestinians. However, one Palestinian lawyer joined the Lebanese syndicate as a member of the Arab Lawyers Union, as a member from ‘Palestine’. It is noted that ‘few Palestinians are aware of their (limited) employment rights’.⁸⁹

- 7.6.5 The report also noted:

‘Foreigners require work permits to be employed in Lebanon. Most work permits are job-specific, and are organised by the employer upon hiring a Palestinian (or other foreigner). However, it is possible for an individual Palestinian to obtain a non-specific work permit. Palestinians who have work permits and are employed in legal work enjoy the same protections as Lebanese nationals.

‘When a Lebanese national or foreigner (including Palestinian) is legally employed, the employer must pay part of the employee’s salary into a social security fund. However, Palestinians, by law, only enjoy limited benefits from this fund. Because of this, many Palestinians do not seek work permits and work informally.

‘There are other jobs, such as in agriculture and construction, that do not require foreigners to obtain work permits. Approximately three per cent of Palestinians are engaged in agricultural work and just under 20 per cent in construction work. However these numbers might trend downwards due to the influx of Syrians in Lebanon.

‘UNRWA is the main source of skilled employment for Palestinians in Lebanon. Palestinian and international NGOs also employ Palestinians in the refugee camps. They also run micro-credit projects. UNRWA has long advocated for more open work rights for Palestinians in Lebanon, so far with limited success.

‘The bans and other difficulties of Palestinians finding legal employment has led to a situation where Palestinian (including skilled Palestinians such as doctors) have accepted illegal positions with less pay and no security. In

⁸⁸ DFAT, ‘Thematic Report: Palestinians in Jordan and Lebanon’ (paras 4.40 – 4.41), March 2015, [url](#)

⁸⁹ DFAT, ‘Thematic Report: Palestinians in Jordan and Lebanon’, (section 4.42), March 2015, [url](#)

some cases, skilled Palestinians work for a ‘front man’, a Lebanese national who is officially employed, but has the Palestinian do the work for him.’⁹⁰

7.6.6 Additionally, the report mentioned:

‘Approximately 80 per cent of employed Palestinians work in the informal sector. This compares with approximately 40 per cent of employed Lebanese nationals. Palestinians (and Lebanese) employed informally have few legal protections and are vulnerable to abuse or arbitrary dismissal without access to legal redress.’⁹¹

7.6.7 The report also observed the following:

‘[...] because of the bureaucratic difficulties in obtaining work permits for Palestinians, combined with the negligible benefits for Palestinians of the mandatory National Social Security Fund, relatively few Palestinians will seek work permits, even for professions in which they are legally able to be employed. This makes them vulnerable to abuse and arbitrary dismissal. Because of their willingness to work informally, Palestinians are frequently paid less and required to work longer hours than Lebanese nationals.

‘[...] The National Social Security Fund covers Palestinian members for workplace injuries, but this coverage does not extend to hospitalisation. DFAT is aware that insurance companies will offer cover for workers in construction industries—even if they don’t have work permits—and that, in the case of workplace injuries, the insurance companies will make required payments. However, insurance companies will typically not cover agricultural workers, who are considered to be casual workers. As such, they do not enjoy any benefits or entitlements.’⁹²

7.6.8 The UNHCR affirmed the above in its 2016 report, adding that further changes in Lebanese law in 2010 granted Palestine refugees the opportunity to gain some formal employment in the private sector, formally reserved for Lebanese nationals. However, 36 professions are still legally prohibited to Palestine refugees, such as medicine, farming, fishery and public transportation.⁹³

7.6.9 The UNHCR 2016 report further noted that annual work permits are available at no cost. However, ‘obtaining a work permit reportedly involves a lengthy administrative process, for which the refugees depend on the goodwill of their employers, thus limiting the effectiveness of these legal changes. According to ILO, the number of Palestine refugees holding a work permit is very low.’⁹⁴

7.6.10 Furthermore, the same report mentioned that ‘child labour is reported to be common in and around refugee camps, with some children working as armed guards.’⁹⁵

⁹⁰ DFAT, ‘Thematic Report: Palestinians in Jordan and Lebanon’, March 2015, [url](#)

⁹¹ DFAT, ‘Thematic Report: Palestinians in Jordan and Lebanon’, (section 4.49), March 2015, [url](#)

⁹² DFAT, ‘Thematic Report: Palestinians in Jordan and Lebanon’, (section 4.77), March 2015, [url](#)

⁹³ UNHCR, ‘The Situation of Palestinian Refugees in Lebanon’, (p5), February 2016, [url](#)

⁹⁴ UNHCR, ‘The Situation of Palestinian Refugees in Lebanon’, (p6), February 2016, [url](#)

⁹⁵ UNHCR, ‘The Situation of Palestinian Refugees in Lebanon’, (p6), February 2016, [url](#)

- 7.6.11 The USSD 'Country Report on Human Rights Practices for 2017' Lebanon, published April 2018 observed:
- 'The law allows a special account to provide end-of-service indemnities or severance pay to Palestinian refugees who retired or resigned. These benefits were available only to Palestinians working in the legal labor market. Palestinians did not benefit from national sickness and maternity funds or the family allowances fund. UNRWA continued to bear the cost of any medical, maternity, or family health-care expenses (excluding worker's compensation).' ⁹⁶
- 7.6.12 The USSD report for 2016 stated, 'the law provides for benefits only from 2010 onward. According to an American University of Beirut study, less than 3.3 percent of Palestinian refugees in country had an official employment contract by a public notary, which enables them to apply for a work permit.' ⁹⁷
- 7.6.13 According to The American University of Beirut, Survey on the 'Socio economic Status of Palestine Refugees in Lebanon 2015':
- 'The PRL unemployment rate stands at 23 per cent (a significant increase from the 2010 rate of 8 per cent); this rate is around 31 per cent for women. The PRS unemployment rate, in comparison, is at an alarming 52.5 per cent, 48.5 per cent for men and a staggering 68.1 per cent for women. Around 80 per cent of employed PRL are self-employed and wage labourers [...] Not only are PRL and PRS struggling with unemployment, the majority of those who are employed work in low-paying, low-skilled jobs that are more often than not subject to harsh, exploitive and insecure working conditions.' ⁹⁸
- 7.6.14 The Finnish Immigration Service report noted that 'reciprocity treatment is not a possible category for Palestinians as the state of Palestine cannot take workers into it'. Along with the professions mentioned above, those which are prohibited to all Palestinians include nursing, the profession of law, engineering and tourist guides. Additionally, 'Palestinians cannot work in any public profession or serve in the Lebanese army. According to UNRWA, there have been exceptional cases where a person has been able to practice some prohibited professions.' ⁹⁹
- 7.6.15 The report further added:
- 'In reality the access to the work force is more difficult. According to Statistics from the Palestinian Central Bureau of Statistics, 42.5% of PRL work in Lebanon. For women the percentage is 15.2%. Discrimination against Palestinians is widespread and the real number of professions that Palestinians can practice is a lot smaller than what is officially announced.
- 'Palestinians can face discrimination in hiring but also in workplace: it can be harder for them to access higher ranking positions and they can be paid less than Lebanese colleagues. All Palestinians do not have written contracts

⁹⁶ USSD 'Country Report on Human Rights Practices for 2017' Lebanon, (Section 2d), April 2018, [url](#)

⁹⁷ USSD 'Country Report on Human Rights Practices for 2016' Lebanon, March 2016, [url](#)

⁹⁸ The American University of Beirut, Survey on the Socioeconomic Status of Palestine Refugees in Lebanon 2015', (p10), June 2016, [url](#)

⁹⁹ FIS, 'Fact-Finding Mission Report: Syrian and Palestinian (in Lebanon and exiting Syria) refugees in Lebanon', (section 2.4), 29 September 2016,

(only 14%) or employment benefits, which makes them more vulnerable. Women have more limited access to work than men. Lack of right to work affects many spheres of life and makes life very hard for Palestinians.

‘Those young and educated Palestinians who stay in Lebanon do not often work in the professions they have the training for, but for example as fruit sellers, in agriculture or in construction sites. With the influx of Syrian refugees, everyone is fighting for the same jobs. Syrians might work for lower wages; their daily wage could be for example four USD instead of seven USD that was paid before.’¹⁰⁰

- 7.6.16 In regards to PRS, the Finnish Immigration Service report observed: ‘The same restrictions that are in place concerning Syrian refugees also apply to PRS. The situation of PRS is more difficult than for PRL, since PRS need to pay fees for work permits and more profession (several administrative and commercial professions) are prohibited to them than for PRL.’¹⁰¹

[Back to Contents](#)

7.7 Vulnerable groups

- 7.7.1 The UNHCR paper of February 2016, citing a number of sources, noted:
- ‘Difficult social conditions as a result of overcrowding, unemployment and poverty reportedly contribute to the prevalence of gender-based violence (GBV) and the use of violence against children in the Palestine refugee community. Women participating in GBV sensitization sessions with UNRWA largely consider GBV to be a problem within their community. Nevertheless, many forms of GBV and violence against children, particularly domestic violence and corporal punishment against children, are reported to typically remain unchallenged culturally, nor are they spoken about widely; consequently, the implementation of prevention and response programmes has proven to be challenging.
- ‘Specialized service providers for responding to incidents of GBV or child abuse are reported to be scarce and their capacity limited, particularly within the camps. The lack of awareness about available services, in addition to safety concerns and fear of stigmatization, reportedly hinder access to existing services for survivors or persons at risk of abuse. Safe shelters for survivors of or persons at risk of GBV are reportedly not available; and confidentiality is challenging, given the crowded conditions of the camps and lack of privacy within the community. Accessing services outside the camps is reportedly hampered both due to limited awareness and the strain on available services in the country.’¹⁰²
- 7.7.2 Similarly, The Finnish Immigration Service reported the above, mentioning limited safety as well as limited access to legal aid for victims of GBV or child protection incidents.¹⁰³ The report also noted that early marriage is becoming

¹⁰⁰ FIS, ‘Fact-Finding Mission Report: Syrian and Palestinian (in Lebanon and exiting Syria) refugees in Lebanon’, (section 2.4), 29 September 2016, [url](#)

¹⁰¹ FIS, ‘Fact-Finding Mission Report: Syrian and Palestinian (in Lebanon and exiting Syria) refugees in Lebanon’, (section 3.11), 29 September 2016, [url](#)

¹⁰² UNHCR, ‘The Situation of Palestinian Refugees in Lebanon’, (p9), February 2016, [url](#)

¹⁰³ FIS, ‘Fact-Finding Mission Report: Syrian and Palestinian (in Lebanon and exiting Syria) refugees

increasingly common and if married underage, girls are more prone to domestic violence and abuse.¹⁰⁴

7.7.3 The UNHCR report of 2016 also noted:

‘One in ten Palestinian households in Lebanon is reported to have at least one family member with a disability. According to reports, there is a strong correlation between disability and poverty in Palestinian communities in Lebanon. Their reported social marginalization is reportedly further exacerbated by the limited access to and limited availability of specialized rehabilitation services, as well as the general lack of awareness in relation to the needs and rights of persons with disabilities in Lebanon. Women, children and elderly persons with disabilities are reported to be particularly vulnerable to discrimination, exploitation and violence. Furthermore, Palestine refugees and other non-nationals are not granted access to specialized services on the same basis as Lebanese nationals.’¹⁰⁵

7.7.4 Amnesty International’s report, ‘Amnesty International Report 2016/17 – Lebanon’ on 22 February 2017, noted the following:

‘Syrian and Palestinian refugee women from Syria faced serious human rights abuses, including gender-based violence, exploitation and sexual harassment, particularly in public places. Refugee women heads of households were especially at risk of harassment by men if they had no adult male relatives residing with them. Many refugee women from Syria lacked valid residence permits and, as a result, feared reporting sexual harassment or other abuse to the Lebanese authorities.’¹⁰⁶

[Back to Contents](#)

8. Refugee camps

8.1 Conditions in camps

8.1.1 The Canadian Immigration and Refugee Board noted in their information response, ‘Lebanon: Treatment of Palestinians by society and authorities; state protection; treatment of Sunni Palestinians from refugee camps near Beirut by Hezbollah (2012-December 2013)’, 10 December 2013:

‘Sources report that the camps are overcrowded and are characterised by high health risks, water contamination and high rates of poverty. Human Rights Watch characterises the social and economic conditions of the camps as "appalling". On 12 July 2013, Al Jazeera reported that "Palestinian refugee camps [in Lebanon] are isolated communities, alienated from their surroundings.”’¹⁰⁷

8.1.2 The 2015 DFAT report noted the following:

in Lebanon’, (section 2.6), 29 September 2016, [url](#)

¹⁰⁴ FIS, ‘Fact-Finding Mission Report: Syrian and Palestinian (in Lebanon and exiting Syria) refugees in Lebanon’, 29 September 2016, (section 3.18.3), [url](#)

¹⁰⁵ UNHCR, ‘The Situation of Palestinian Refugees in Lebanon’, (p10), February 2016, [url](#)

¹⁰⁶ Amnesty International, ‘World Report 2016/17 – Lebanon’, (page 231) 22 February 2017, [url](#)

¹⁰⁷ The Canadian Immigration and Refugee Board, ‘Lebanon: Treatment of Palestinians by society and authorities; state protection; treatment of Sunni Palestinians from refugee camps near Beirut by Hezbollah (2012-December 2013)’, page 2, 10 December 2013, [url](#)

'[...] UNRWA provides services ranging from maintenance and development of basic infrastructure, to schools and medical clinics in or adjacent to the camps and sometimes to the informal Palestinian communities. However, registered Palestinian refugees in informal communities can access services in the official camps.

'[...] Electricity is provided to camp residents by Lebanon through private contracts. DFAT was told by those knowledgeable about the situation that few electricity bills are paid, however the power is not cut off, either to the individuals' homes or the camps generally.'¹⁰⁸

8.1.3 Furthermore 'The camps are generally poor and overcrowded and sometimes violent. Lebanon argues that a prohibition on building new camps or expanding or improving existing camps is designed to prevent an implicit 'destruction' of the principle of the 'right of return' to Palestinian villages in pre-state Israel. ... An influx of Palestinian refugees from Syria has increased demand for space and services in camps (as throughout Lebanon).'¹⁰⁹

8.1.4 The same DFAT report also stated: 'Palestinian camps and gatherings in the south of the country tend to be poorer than those further north. This trend is mirrored in other measurements, such as illiteracy rates.'¹¹⁰

8.1.5 The source further reported:

'[...]Standards of living are varied within camps; DFAT has seen a home (consisting of four small rooms), owned by a divorced mother, with air-conditioning and a wireless internet connection. However, conditions are generally poor; DFAT has also observed multiple family members living in small, dark rooms. UNRWA will give additional assistance to 'special hardship cases', which includes building or renovating homes and covering the expenses of medical care additional to what other Palestinians receive in a small number of cases each year.'¹¹¹

8.1.6 The FIS report September 2016 stated:

'In the Palestinian refugee camps the Lebanese state offers only a limited amount of services. Palestinian refugees rely mainly on UNRWA as a service provider. There are no INGOs that would offer services in the long run. The camps suffer from water and sanitation problems. Unofficial and self-installed electric cables are a regular cause of death in the camps. The camps have never had sustainable infrastructure built in them. The Lebanese authorities have placed restrictions on building materials. One needs permissions for the materials and for construction work and they are hard to get.'¹¹²

8.1.7 The USSD human rights report for 2017 observed:

¹⁰⁸ DFAT, 'Thematic Report: Palestinians in Jordan and Lebanon' (paras 4.19-4.20), March 2015, [url](#)

¹⁰⁹ DFAT, 'Thematic Report: Palestinians in Jordan and Lebanon' (paras 4.14), March 2015, [url](#)

¹¹⁰ DFAT, 'Thematic Report: Palestinians in Jordan and Lebanon' (paras 4.15), March 2015, [url](#)

¹¹¹ DFAT, 'Thematic Report: Palestinians in Jordan and Lebanon', March 2015, [url](#)

¹¹² FIS, 'Fact-Finding Mission Report: Syrian and Palestinian (in Lebanon and exiting Syria) refugees in Lebanon' (section 2.5), September 2016, [url](#)

‘... The amount of land allocated to the 12 official Palestinian refugee camps in the country has changed only marginally since 1948, despite a four-fold increase in the population. Consequently, most Palestinian refugees lived in overpopulated camps, some of which were heavily damaged during past conflicts. In accordance with agreements with the government, Palestine Liberation Organization (PLO) security committees provided security for refugees in the camps, with the exception of the Nahr el-Bared camp.’¹¹³

- 8.1.8 The UNHCR report 2016 observed that all 12 of the refugee camps suffer from serious overcrowding, poor housing conditions and insufficient infrastructure. This together with the restrictions on movement of building materials into the camps, has severely limited the ability of improvement to Palestine refugee housing conditions. Furthermore, UNHCR mentioned that ‘UNRWA’s Camp Improvement Initiative is reportedly affected by chronic underfunding.’¹¹⁴

- 8.1.9 The DFAT 2015 report noted:

‘[...] There is de facto property ownership in the refugee camps. Most homes in the camps were built by UNRWA, which passed ownership of each property to its resident. These residents may sell this property or otherwise rent it out. While Lebanese law does not effectively operate inside the camps, a paralegal system has been established. The popular committees in each camp operate a registry of property ownership [...] Both major and minor renovations inside camps require prior Internal Security Forces (ISF) approval, due to concerns that material may be used for military purposes. Palestinians apply for permits to renovate their houses; UNRWA is involved when projects are implemented under its shelter programs.

‘[...] In the event that a permit is granted for a Palestinian applicant, security services usually put in place tight verification measures, to the point of counting the cement bags or checking the quantity of stones that the applicant brings into the camp.

‘[...] As a result of these restrictions, Palestinians have been known to smuggle construction materials into camps, which means that improvements happen, albeit informally. If caught, Palestinians may be arrested and the materials confiscated.’¹¹⁵

- 8.1.10 The American University of Beirut noted the following in their report, ‘The survey on the socio-economic status of Palestine Refugees in Lebanon 2015’ ‘[...] in May 2015, due to financial constraints, UNRWA announced a suspension of cash for housing assistance to PRS, effective in July 2015. This suspension in aid comes at a time when PRS are becoming increasingly vulnerable, with UNRWA cash assistance representing the main source of income for 92.6 per cent of the population, according to the survey.’¹¹⁶

¹¹³ USSD, ‘Country Report on Human Rights Practices for 2017’, Lebanon (section 2d), April 2018 [url](#)

¹¹⁴ UNHCR, ‘The Situation of Palestinian Refugees in Lebanon’ (p6), February 2016,

¹¹⁵ DFAT, ‘Thematic Report: Palestinians in Jordan and Lebanon’ (paras 4.63 - 4.64; 4.66-4.67), March 2015 [url](#)

¹¹⁶ American University of Beirut, ‘The survey on the socio-economic status of Palestine Refugees in

8.2 Governance of camps

8.2.1 The 2015 DFAT report noted that:

‘Camps are not generally subjected to Lebanese law and order but have a paralegal system enforced by “popular committees” and “security committees” in each camp. The effectiveness of these arrangements varies: for example, in Burj Barajneh it functions fairly well; in Rashidiyah not as well; and in Ein el-Hilweh it functions poorly. The popular committees consist of representatives of each faction present in the camp. Due to the rivalry between the PLO, the umbrella organisation for most Palestinian factions, and Hamas, some camps have two popular committees. The popular committees act to create and enforce the paralegal system that exists in each camp and cooperate with UNRWA and other aid agencies in administering and servicing the camp. They are not democratic—members represent their faction (and their factions’ interests), not those of their constituents. The popular committees are a means with which to resolve problems that arise between individuals belonging to different factions. The popular committees are also the chief contact point for the Lebanese Government. When an individual from a camp requires permission from the Lebanese state—such as to bring in building materials—he or she liaises with the popular committee, who negotiates with the state on his or her behalf.

‘The security committees are an extension of the popular committees, and are used to enforce peaceful relations in the camp. Generally speaking, armed faction members will patrol specific areas in a camp controlled by that faction.’¹¹⁷

8.2.2 In addition, the report mentioned:

‘[The] system includes the maintenance of prisons within camps. Many decisions are reached through discussion between factions and influential figures within the camp. DFAT understands that there is usually relatively good cooperation within the security committee in relation to petty thieves and those accused of drug offences (i.e. factional issues are put to one side). There is little information available in relation to the independence, legitimacy or equity of legal processes under these systems.

‘When a fugitive believed to be located in a camp is wanted by Lebanese security forces, the latter sometimes negotiate with the camp’s popular committee(s) to have them handed over. This is a complicated and not-always-successful process, which is largely dependent on the fugitive’s factional connections within the camp and how strong that faction is.

‘Credible DFAT contacts have said that, if the alleged crime is serious enough, Lebanese security forces will attempt to pressure the entire camp as a means of convincing the popular committee to hand over the fugitive.

Lebanon’, (page 8), June 2016, [url](#)

¹¹⁷ DFAT, ‘Thematic Report: Palestinians in Jordan and Lebanon’, (paras 4.21–4.22), March 2015, [url](#)

Some camps—particularly Ein al-Hilweh—offer a place of refuge for Lebanese and Palestinians wanted by Lebanese security forces.’¹¹⁸

8.2.3 DFAT’s 2017 report on Lebanon noted:

‘Lebanese law is in practice not generally implemented in the camps, which have an informal legal system enforced by ‘Popular Committees’ and ‘Security Committees’. Popular Committees consist of representatives of each faction present in the camp. Due to the rivalry between the PLO, the umbrella organisation for most Palestinian factions, and Hamas, some camps have two Popular Committees. The Popular Committees act to create and enforce the informal system in each camp and cooperate with UNRWA in administering and servicing the camp. They are not democratic—members represent their factions and their factions’ interests. Popular Committees often resolve problems that arise between individuals belonging to different factions. Popular Committees are also the primary contact point for the Lebanese government. Security Committees are an extension of the Popular Committees and enforce peaceful relations in the camps. Armed faction members will generally patrol specific areas in a camp controlled by that faction.

‘Camps viewed as security threats by the Lebanese government, such as Ein al-Hilweh, have fences surrounding them and strict entry and exit controls enforced by the Lebanese authorities (these camps often host Palestinian and non-Palestinian fugitives wanted by the Lebanese security forces, necessitating security measures). Camps in Beirut are more integrated into the surrounding suburbs, although Lebanese authorities often control movement into and out of the camps.’¹¹⁹

8.2.4 The USSD report for 2017 observed:

‘Because of an agreement struck decades ago between the Lebanese government and late Palestinian leader Yasser Arafat, Lebanese security forces do not enter Palestinian camps (except Nahr el-Bared camp); they remain outside the entrance and check vehicles and identification. As a result the camps, particularly Ain el-Helweh, had the reputation of being lawless enclaves, and authorities stated that foreign and local jihadists found refuge within them.

‘The Palestinian factions that theoretically provided security in the camps often fought each other for control, and these groups generally controlled the justice systems in the camps. Governance varied greatly, with some camps under the control of joint Palestinian security forces, while local militia strongmen heavily influenced others. Essentially, Palestinian groups in refugee camps operated an autonomous and arbitrary system of justice outside the control of the state. For example, local popular committees in the camps attempted to resolve disputes through informal mediation methods but occasionally transferred those accused of more serious offenses (for example, murder and terrorism) to state authorities for trial.’¹²⁰

¹¹⁸ DFAT, ‘Thematic Report: Palestinians in Jordan and Lebanon’, (paras 4.69–4.71), March 2015, [url](#)

¹¹⁹ DFAT, Lebanon report 2017 (paras 3.6 – 3.7), October 2017, [url](#)

¹²⁰ USSD, Human Rights Report 2017 (section 1e), April 2018, [url](#)

8.3 Security in refugee camps

8.3.1 The DFAT Report 2015 stated :

‘Within refugee camps, Palestinian youth, social and political groups operate extensively. While there are no laws prohibiting their operation, unstated red lines exist in regards to certain subjects—most Palestinian factions have armed representatives in each camp, and too-strongly criticising the wrong people can lead to violent repercussions. In the same way, DFAT understands that, on occasion, personal disputes between individuals can sometimes escalate into a factional dispute.

‘The level of freedom Palestinians have within the camps often depends on the camps themselves. Some camps—such as Ein al-Hilweh—are more internally militarised and radicalised with Islamist militias. Freedom of speech is more curtailed in camps where Islamic factions are more influential, such as Al-Buss, Burj al-Shemali and Rashidieh. Outside the camps, Palestinians, like Lebanese nationals, face few legal restrictions against expressing their opinions.’¹²¹

8.3.2 In addition, the DFAT 2015 report stated:

‘Palestinian camps and other communities are often highly militarised, with a prevalence of armed Palestinian militias. Extremist groups can also be found in some camps. By convention, Lebanese security forces have refrained from exercising their authority in Palestinian camps, with the significant exception of the 2007 confrontation between the Lebanese Armed Forces and Fatah al-Islam in Nahr al-Bared camp. That conflict resulted in the deaths of an estimated 169 soldiers, 287 Palestinian fighters and 47 civilians. Since then, Lebanese security forces have retained control of movement into and out of the camp, and have maintained a presence inside the camp during its continuing reconstruction.’¹²²

8.3.3 The UNHCR 2016 report stated that different factions often rule different camps¹²³. It further stated:

‘Lebanese security forces reportedly control the camp entrances, checking vehicles and identities at armed checkpoints. It is reported that “[I]n the camps, all the Palestinian factions, including Leftist groups, Islamist factions, or Fatah, have weaponry and militiamen at their disposal, and have their own security apparatus.” Political divisions and competition over influence among armed factions in the camps reportedly result in political killings and sporadic factional fighting among both Palestinian and non Palestinian groups, often affecting the civilian population. Inter-Lebanese conflict is reported to occasionally seep into Palestinian refugee camps as (Lebanese) armed militants seek a haven in the camps, or collaborate with Palestinian armed factions. There are also reported concerns over infiltration of the camps by radical Islamist groups such as the Islamic State of Iraq and Ash-

¹²¹ DFAT, ‘Thematic Report: Palestinians in Jordan and Lebanon’, March 2015, [url](#)

¹²² DFAT, ‘Thematic Report: Palestinians in Jordan and Lebanon’, March 2015, [url](#)

¹²³ UNHCR, ‘The Situation of Palestinian Refugees in Lebanon’ (p2), February 2016, [url](#)

Sham (ISIS) and Al-Qa'eda. Finally, criminal networks involved in drug smuggling, trafficking of weapons and prostitution further reportedly add to insecurity. The 2015 UNRWA-AUB socio-economic survey found that the majority of both Palestine refugees in Lebanon (61 per cent) and Palestine refugees from Syria (57 per cent) reported feeling insecure in the camps due to their physical and social environment.¹²⁴

8.3.4 The UNHCR 2016 report continued:

'Palestinian individuals may reportedly be at risk of being subjected to harassment, threats or abuse at the hands of militant factions in the camps. As the Lebanese authorities have no access to the camps (with the exception of Nahr El-Bared Camp), those at risk can reportedly not seek protection from the Lebanese authorities. Whether or not the concerned individual could seek protection from political factions or inter-factional popular/security committees in the camp reportedly depends on the individual's political affiliations and/or connections with influential persons or families.'¹²⁵

8.3.5 Additionally, the report added: 'According to reports, both state security forces and Palestinian factions subject Palestinian refugees to arbitrary arrest and detention, with the latter reported to be operating their own detention facilities in the refugee camps. Palestinian factions in the refugee camps reportedly run their own system of justice which functions outside of state control.'¹²⁶

8.3.6 The 2017 report by the USSD stated that 'Nongovernmental entities, such as Hizballah and Palestinian militias, also operated unofficial detention facilities, but no information about these facilities was available.'¹²⁷

8.3.7 Furthermore, 'Several Palestinian factions formed a joint security force to help maintain stability and security within the Ain el-Helweh camp, but Islamist groups increasingly challenged this force for control of the camp in 2015. Beginning in August a large number (reportedly more than 30) of extremist militants surrendered to the LAF outside Ain el-Helweh because of reported cooperation between the army and Palestinian factions within the camp.'¹²⁸

8.3.8 The report further noted that 'An estimated 17 Palestinian factions operated in the country, generally organized around prominent individuals.'¹²⁹

8.3.9 For further general and security information about Nahr El-Bared, Rashidieh, Shatila, and Ein El-Hilweh camps see pages 19-23 of [UNHCR 2016](#).

8.3.10 UNRWA noted in an October 2017 Protection Briefing that:

'In the absence of Lebanese government presence in most of the 12 Palestine refugee camps, Palestinian political factions and armed groups

¹²⁴ UNHCR, 'The Situation of Palestinian Refugees in Lebanon' (p17 – 18), February 2016, [url](#)

¹²⁵ UNHCR, 'The Situation of Palestinian Refugees in Lebanon' (p19), February 2016, [url](#)

¹²⁶ UNHCR, 'The Situation of Palestinian Refugees in Lebanon' (p18), February 2016, [url](#)

¹²⁷ USSD, 'Country Report on Human Rights Practices for 2016', (section 1c), March 2017, [url](#)

¹²⁸ USSD, 'Country Report on Human Rights Practices for 2016', (section 1e), March 2017, [url](#)

¹²⁹ USSD, 'Country Report on Human Rights Practices for 2016', (section 3), March 2017, [url](#)

exert some form of control. As a result, no single recognised authority exercises responsibility, including with respect to law enforcement. This has created an insecure environment, with recurrent physical threats, sporadic fighting among non-state armed actors (such as the repeated clashes in Ein El Hilweh refugee camp) and limited access to safety and justice for all camp inhabitants, including Syrian refugees or other populations such as migrants and Lebanese citizens.¹³⁰

8.3.11 The Finnish Immigration Service report of 2016 noted:

'... the security situation in Palestinian refugee camps has not changed according to Hanafi [a professor at the American University in Beirut]. Most of the problems, as elsewhere in the country, have to do with scarce resources and humanitarian issues that have decreased even further.

'The refugee camps are lawless environments where there are no Lebanese authorities and the rights of the people cannot be guaranteed. There are criminals, Palestinians, Lebanese and Syrians, who have moved to the camps in order to escape from the authorities. Armed and political groups can abuse the vulnerability of Palestinian youth and children and their lack of positive future prospects in recruiting.

'[...] The committees and the Lebanese police cooperate, for example the committee can look for people who are wanted by the police.

'The situation is bad in Ain al-Hilwa refugee camp. Islamist groups and Fatah have been in several clashes with each other. For example in July 2015 Palestinian groups Jund al-Sham and Fatah fought there. There was also a grenade attack into the home of a member of the Palestinian Security Forces in September 2016.

'Palestinian refugee camps have become kind of safe havens also for extremist groups fighting in Syria. According to Hanafi, the groups do not pose a threat to civilians, because they are more interested in fighting in Syria than concerning themselves with issues in Lebanon.

'Palestinians can in general move to live in another camp, except if they are wanted by the Lebanese authorities. Islamists, however, cannot move to another camp.'¹³¹

8.3.12 The UN Security Council noted in November 2017 that:

'While the security situation in the majority of Palestine refugee camps in Lebanon remained generally stable, violence in the Ein El Helweh camp between extremist groups and the joint Palestinian security forces remains of serious concern. Between 17 and 23 August [2017], 8 people were killed and 86 injured and around 400 families were displaced following intense clashes. Heavy weapons were reportedly used, including mortars and rocket-propelled grenades. Extensive damage to infrastructure, particularly shelters, created a precarious humanitarian situation. Basic service delivery in the

¹³⁰ UNRWA, 'Protection brief: Palestinian refugees living in Lebanon', October 2017, [url](#)

¹³¹ FIS, 'Syrian and Palestinian (in Lebanon and Exisiting Syria) Refugees in Lebanon', September 2016, [url](#)

camp by the United Nations Relief and Works Agency for Palestine Refugees in the Near East (UNRWA) had to be suspended temporarily.’¹³²

8.3.13 BBC Monitoring reported:

‘The Lebanese army says it has arrested a man suspected of being behind deadly clashes that erupted in Lebanon’s Shatila Palestinian refugee camp, media outlets reported on 8 March [2018].

“The intelligence directorate has arrested Mohamed Abou Zahra, also known as Abou lyad Zahra, the prime instigator of the clashes yesterday [7 March] inside Shatila camp which killed one person and injured others,” the army command was cited as saying in a statement carried by Lebanon’s National News Agency (NNA) and privately owned news websites.

‘The statement said the man had been referred to the judiciary and that further investigations are underway to track down other suspects.

‘Fighting erupted on 7 March between members of two groups in the Palestinian camp, Fatah al-Intifada and al-Saeqa.

‘It comes after similar clashes in the densely populated Ain el-Hilweh Palestinian refugee camp, Naharnet news website reported.

‘The website recalled that Lebanese army forces do not intervene in clashes occurring in Lebanon’s twelve Palestinian camps.’¹³³

[Back to Contents](#)

9. Treatment by state

9.1 Discrimination / harassment

9.1.1 The DFAT report published on March 2015 noted:

‘...DFAT assesses that Palestinians in Lebanon are subject to a high level of official, if indirect, discrimination. While Lebanese law generally does not specifically target Palestinians, legislative restrictions prevent the Palestinian community from substantially bettering its position or prospects. However, Lebanese law is flexibly enforced. If Lebanese law was inflexibly enforced, the level of direct discrimination against Palestinians would be considerably higher. For instance, stateless people in Lebanon cannot buy, sell or bequeath land, yet Palestinians do so informally.’¹³⁴

9.1.2 It is also noted:

‘Lebanese nationals perceived as a security threat by Lebanese security forces will receive the same level of interest and treatment as Palestinians perceived as national security threats.

‘It is generally considered that complaints made against Lebanon’s various security forces, including the police, for abuse of people in custody will not

¹³² UN Security Council, ‘Report of the Secretary-General on the implementation of Security Council resolution 1701 (2006): reporting period from 22 June 2017 to 6 November 2017’ (paras 45 – 46), 16 November 2017, [url](#)

¹³³ BBC Monitoring, Source: BBC Monitoring, 8 March 2018, available on request.

¹³⁴ DFAT, ‘Thematic Report: Palestinians in Jordan and Lebanon’, (paras 4.30–4.31), March 2015, [url](#)

result in punishment. As in many other areas of Lebanese society, the constant liaising and negotiations between confessions acts to resolve many of the problems resulting from such accusations, if they arise. Palestinians generally have much less of this unofficial protection, and are frequently vulnerable to abuse by security forces.’¹³⁵

9.1.3 The DFAT report on Lebanon of 2017 echoed its 2015 report:

‘Overall, DFAT assesses that Palestinians face a high risk of official discrimination. While legislation does not necessarily specially target Palestinians, Palestinians face a lack of access to basic rights and barriers that restrict their ability to participate equally with Lebanese (or other foreigners who are not restricted by a ‘stateless’ status) in social, political and economic life. Palestinians face a similar risk of societal discrimination as others within Lebanon, a country that is highly sectarian.’¹³⁶

9.1.4 The USSD ‘2016 Country Reports on Human Rights practices – Lebanon’ 03 March 2017, reported:

‘The most significant human rights abuses during the year were torture and abuse by security forces, harsh prison and detention center conditions, and limitations on freedom of movement for Palestinian and Syrian refugees.

‘Other human rights abuses included [...] systematic discrimination against Palestinian and other refugees and minority groups [...].’¹³⁷

9.1.5 The report added, ‘state security forces and autonomous Palestinian security factions subjected Palestinian refugees to arbitrary arrest and detention.’ In addition, ‘refugees regularly reported abuse by members of political parties and gangs, often without official action in response. Additionally, LAF raids on settlements often resulted in harassment and destruction of personal property.’¹³⁸ However, the USSD human rights country report of 2017 does not make specific reference to Palestinians being arbitrary arrested and detained by the security forces. The report mentioned a ‘lack of governmental action to investigate abuse of refugees’. In addition, according to local NGOs, most cases involving arbitrary arrests involved vulnerable groups such as ‘refugees, migrant workers, drug users, and LGBTI individuals’, and that ‘civil society groups reported authorities frequently detained foreign nationals arbitrarily.’¹³⁹

9.1.6 According to the Finish Immigration Service Fact-Finding mission report, ‘Syrian and Palestinian (in Lebanon and exiting Syria) Refugees in Lebanon’ 29 September 2016:

‘If a person, a Syrian refugee or a PRS, is caught at a check point without a residence permit, the consequences might vary. It is possible that nothing happens to the person, he or she might be arrested for two weeks and investigated or given a departure order or be threatened with it. According to

¹³⁵ DFAT, ‘Thematic Report: Palestinians in Jordan and Lebanon’, (4.72 – 4.73), March 2015, [url](#)

¹³⁶ DFAT, Lebanon report 2017 (para 3.11), October 2017, [url](#)

¹³⁷ USSD, ‘2016 Country Reports on Human Rights practices’, (Exec Summary), 03 March 2017, [url](#)

¹³⁸ USSD, ‘2016 Country Reports on Human Rights practices’, (Section 1d and 2d), 03 March 2017, [url](#)

¹³⁹ USSD, ‘2017 Country Report on Human Rights practices’, (Executive Summary and 2d), April 2018, [url](#)

UNRWA, at least when it comes to PRS, the above mentioned departure orders have not been implemented. Refugees interviewed by HRW have reported mistreatment, such as beatings while arrested or in detention. In addition, a person's papers can be sent to the Syrian Lebanese border where the person would then have to pick them up. Many are scared to do it as there is fear that he or she would be asked to leave the country.'¹⁴⁰

9.1.7 The UNHCR report of 2016 mentioned the following:

'According to reports, both state security forces and Palestinian factions subject Palestinian refugees to arbitrary arrest and detention, with the latter reported to be operating their own detention facilities in the refugee camps. [...] The Committee against Torture (CAT) found that torture was a pervasive practice that was routinely used by the armed forces and law enforcement agencies, most often in pre-trial detention. Evidence gathered throughout the country indicated a clear pattern of widespread torture and ill-treatment of suspects in custody. Human rights and civil society actors reported of "persistent reports" of torture and ill-treatment of Palestinians, among others, in pre-trial detention.'¹⁴¹

9.1.8 The Finnish Immigration Service noted:

'The economic consequences of Syrian refugees to Lebanon have been substantial and they are being blamed for the bad economy. The attitudes towards refugees are negative.

'[...] According to UNRWA, PRS face the same discrimination in Lebanon as Syrian refugees. Also, the Syrian accent can be distinguished from the Lebanese one. There is discrimination and bullying also at UNRWA's schools and the organization is trying to answer this by having more mixed classes.'¹⁴²

[Back to Contents](#)

9.2 Protection

9.2.1 The Danish Immigration Service report of a fact finding mission that took place from 25 May to 6 June 2014 noted:

'Regarding the possibility to obtain the protection of the authorities if a Palestinian residing outside the refugee camps is exposed to threats or harassment by a militant group, a Western embassy explained that if someone gets in trouble with powerful and influential individuals or families or groups such as Hezbollah, the possibility to get protection from the authorities is limited.

'[...] On the question of whether a Palestinian who lives outside of the camps can get protection from the Lebanese authorities in the event that he has a conflict with Hezbollah, the source [Marie Daunay, President, Lebanese Centre for Human Rights (CLDH)] said that no one can protect [an individual]

¹⁴⁰ FIS, 'Syrian and Palestinian (in Lebanon and exiting Syria) Refugees in Lebanon' 29 September 2016, (section 3.8), [url](#)

¹⁴¹ UNHCR, 'The Situation of Palestinian Refugees in Lebanon', February 2016, (p18 – 19), [url](#)

¹⁴² FIS, 'Syrian and Palestinian (in Lebanon and exiting Syria) Refugees in Lebanon' 29 September 2016, (section 3.19), [url](#)

against Hezbollah as it is the most powerful of all groups in Lebanon. 'Although Hezbollah is cooperating with the Lebanese army's intelligence, it would not need to rely on Lebanese authorities if it was interested in tracing a person it wanted to apprehend as it is a very effective organisation with a powerful and well-functioning intelligence [apparatus]. The Lebanese authorities would not be able to protect a person if he or she is wanted by the organisation.'¹⁴³

9.2.2 The 2015 DFAT report noted:

'In part due to the powers the Lebanese state has devolved to its various confessions, an individual's access to protection and due process can depend on his or her confession. Bureaucratic processes, treatment by law enforcement and judicial authorities and employer–employee relationships are frequently ad-hoc. Family, personal and confessional connections will frequently improve access and service.

'Palestinians are effectively excluded from this confessional structure. Although Palestinians are mostly Sunni, the Sunni hierarchy in Lebanon does not speak for or aim to protect Palestinian interests. This is also true of the various Palestinian Christian and Lebanese Christian denominations.

'As a result, Palestinians lack many of the unofficial protections that Lebanese nationals are afforded by their place in their confession's community and the quality of connections they have both within and without that confession. This has a substantial impact on the quality of employment, judicial processes and interactions with bureaucracy.'¹⁴⁴

9.2.3 Furthermore, the 2015 DFAT report mentioned:

'Because of their lack of confessional protection, it is often easier for the judicial system outside of the camps to accuse Palestinians of crimes, and Palestinians found guilty of crimes will tend to receive heavier punishments, according to DFAT contacts. However, the treatment of Palestinians by individual law enforcement and judicial authorities frequently lacks consistency. UNRWA provides a measure of legal aid, and attempts to help Palestinians in legal difficulties.'¹⁴⁵

9.2.4 The 2017 DFAT report on Lebanon noted:

'The ability of Lebanese authorities to provide effective protection depends on the area concerned. Several areas in Lebanon are not under effective state control, owing to the broader security situation. These include areas of effective Hizballah control and Palestinian camps, from which Lebanese authorities are largely absent. The level of state protection varies considerably in areas where Hizballah predominates, including a significant proportion of southern Lebanon, some areas of southern Beirut and parts of northern Beka'a governorate. Areas where Hizballah's control has led to the

¹⁴³ Danish Immigration Service, 'Stateless Palestinian Refugees in Lebanon' 25 May to 6 June 2014, (p11 – 12), [url](#)

¹⁴⁴ DFAT, 'Thematic Report: Palestinians in Jordan and Lebanon', March 2015, (paras 4.10–4.12), [url](#)

¹⁴⁵ DFAT, 'Thematic Report: Palestinians in Jordan and Lebanon', March 2015, (paras 4.74), [url](#)

effective exclusion of the state include Hizballah training camps and sensitive installations in the southern suburbs of Beirut.¹⁴⁶

9.2.5 It is noted that the USSD 2017 report mentioned that ‘the government lacked the capacity to provide adequate protection for refugees. Refugees regularly reported abuse by members of political parties and gangs, often without official action in response. Additionally, LAF [Lebanese Armed Forces] raids on settlements often resulted in harassment and destruction of personal property.’¹⁴⁷

9.2.6 The Finnish Immigration Service noted in their 2016 report that ‘those [Palestine] refugees that do not have a residence permit cannot report crimes against them to the authorities as they will check first the person’s legal status’.¹⁴⁸

9.2.7 In regards to Palestinians who live inside the camps, The Danish Immigration Service mentioned in their 2014 report ‘Stateless Palestinian Refugees in Lebanon’:

‘Nadim Houry (HRW) informed the delegation that if a Palestinian living in a refugee camp gets into trouble with militant groups such as Palestinian armed factions or Hezbollah, he or she cannot be sure to get protection from the Palestinian camp authorities and the popular committees in the camp. The source explained that the security situation and the possibility of getting protection vary from camp to camp depending on which Palestinian groups, or which constellation of political factions, are running the popular committees. In some camps, it is PLO who is in charge while Hamas, jihadi groups or other Palestinian factions are dominating in others. In light of this, whether a person can get protection in a camp depends among other things on which groups he gets into trouble with and whether the security authorities in the camp are able or willing to protect him.’¹⁴⁹

9.2.8 Furthermore, ‘if a [...] PRL is involved in a conflict with an influential individual or a powerful group such as Hezbollah, he has no possibility to obtain protection unless he is well-connected to groups or individuals with some powers to negotiate on his behalf or to help him.’¹⁵⁰

9.2.9 The DFAT report of 2017 commenting on the judicial system in Lebanon, including Palestinian camps, noted:

‘Lebanon’s legal system developed largely during the French mandate. It retains substantial influences from French civil law. Notably, religious sects remain generally free to administer personal status and family laws on behalf of their own communities. Lebanon’s court system is divided into civil (including criminal), administrative, military and religious courts. Each has independently appointed judges and appellate courts. A Constitutional

¹⁴⁶ DFAT, Lebanon report 2017 (para 5.1), October 2017, [url](#)

¹⁴⁷ USSD, ‘2017 Country Reports on Human Rights practices – Lebanon’, (section 2d), April 2018, [url](#)

¹⁴⁸ FIS, ‘Syrian and Palestinian (in Lebanon and exiting Syria) Refugees in Lebanon’, (section 3.8), 29 September 2016, [url](#)

¹⁴⁹ Danish Immigration Service, ‘Stateless Palestinian Refugees in Lebanon’, (page 22), 25 May to 06 June 2014, [url](#)

¹⁵⁰ Danish Immigration Service, ‘Stateless Palestinian Refugees in Lebanon’, (page 22), 25 May to 06 June 2014, [url](#)

Council, established under the Taef Accord, hears cases relating to the constitutionality of laws. Judges are required to hold a legal degree, and to undertake formal judicial studies. The Minister for Justice, currently a Sunni, appoints judges with the intention of ensuring roughly equal representation from different sectarian and religious groups. DFAT understands individuals can access legal representation and, if unable to fund this representation, are entitled to court-appointed representation if the case goes to trial. The Bar Association provides legal aid but will provide legal assistance before trial only in extreme circumstances. As with other aspects of Lebanese life, DFAT understands *wasta* can influence judicial proceedings. A lawyer can request the removal of a judge where questions of impartiality arise. Given the prominence of politics and religion in Lebanese society, however, impartiality can be difficult to obtain.

‘The Military Court, which has broad jurisdiction, has tried civilians. According to Human Rights Watch, the Military Court has tried civilians in cases involving espionage, treason, draft evasion, unlawful contact with the enemy (Israel), weapons possession, crimes against the interests of the military, the ISF, or the General Directorate of General Security. The Military Court also has jurisdiction over cases of conflict between civilians and military or security personnel, or the civilian employees of the Ministry of National Defense, army, security services, or military courts. In practice, the Military Court exercises jurisdiction over all cases of interaction between civilians and the security services. Civil society groups have raised concerns regarding the operations of the Military Court, including in cases where human rights lawyers and activists have had charges brought against them under the Military Court for speaking out against the LAF’s use of torture. Unlike other judicial organs, the Minister for Defense directly appoints Military Court judges, who are not required to hold a law degree or any legal training. Access to proceedings in the Military Court is restricted. Military and intelligence officers often enjoy *de facto* immunity from criminal prosecution.

‘Hizballah and Palestinian camps run autonomous, informal legal systems, including prisons, in areas under their control. There is little information available in relation to the independence, legitimacy or equity of legal processes under these systems.’¹⁵¹

[Back to Contents](#)

10. Treatment by non-state groups

10.1 Hezbollah (aka Hizballah and Hizbullah)

- 10.1.1 Hezbollah (party of God)¹⁵², ‘is a Shia Islamist political, military and social organisation’ that holds considerable power and influence within Lebanon¹⁵³. Hezbollah retained significant influence over parts of Lebanon with the government reportedly unable to enforce the law in Hezbollah-controlled southern suburbs of Beirut. The group reportedly operated unofficial

¹⁵¹ DFAT, Lebanon report 2017 (paras 5.10 – 5.13), October 2017, [url](#)

¹⁵² For more information about the group see the USSD Country Reports on Terrorism, Chapter 6. Foreign Terrorist Organisations, ‘Hizballah’, July 2017, [url](#)

¹⁵³ BBC News, ‘Profile: Lebanon’s Hezbollah Movement’, 15 March 2016 [url](#)

detention facilities, practiced extrajudicial arrest and detention, and maintained check points in certain Shia-majority areas¹⁵⁴.

10.1.2 The Council on Foreign Relations [an independent think tank] mentioned:

'Hezbollah is a Shiite Muslim political party and militant group that the United States and European Union consider a terrorist organization. With significant support from Iran and Syria, Hezbollah maintains an extensive security apparatus, political organization, and social services network in Lebanon, where the group is often described as a "state within the state." Hezbollah's raison d'être, resistance to Israel and Western involvement in the Middle East, has made it an effective proxy for Iranian foreign policy while earning the group some support from beyond its Shiite base. But as it has become increasingly embroiled in the Syrian civil war, where its fighters have fought for the Assad regime, it has alienated some of its Lebanese constituents and reportedly prompted deadly reprisals in Beirut from partisans of the predominantly Sunni Muslim Syrian rebels. The U.S. government and its European allies consider Hezbollah a global terrorist threat and a menace to Mideast stability.'¹⁵⁵

10.1.3 Freedom House's report, 'Freedom in the World 2018 – Lebanon', published on 16 January 2018, reported the following:

'The last elections for the 128-member National Assembly were held in June 2009. The Sunni-led March 14 coalition won 71 seats, while the rival March 8 coalition, backed by the Shiite militant group Hezbollah, took 57 seats. Although the elections were conducted peacefully and judged to be free and fair in some respects, vote buying was reported to be rampant, and the electoral framework retained a number of fundamental structural flaws linked to the country's sectarian political system.'¹⁵⁶

10.1.4 The 2014 Danish Immigration Service Report observed:

'On the question of whether a Palestinian who lives outside of the camps can get protection from the Lebanese authorities in the event that he has a conflict with Hezbollah, the source [Marie Daunay, President, Lebanese Centre for Human Rights (CLDH)] said that no one can protect [an individual] against Hezbollah as it is the most powerful of all groups in Lebanon. Although Hezbollah is cooperating with the Lebanese army's intelligence, it would not need to rely on Lebanese authorities if it was interested in tracing a person it wanted to apprehend as it is a very effective organization with a powerful and well-functioning intelligence [apparatus]. The Lebanese authorities would not be able to protect a person if he or she is wanted by the organization.'¹⁵⁷

10.1.5 In regards to recruitment, the Immigration and Refugee Board of Canada, in an information response of 29 October 2016 stated:

¹⁵⁴ USSD, Human Rights Report 2017 (sections 1a, c and d; and 2d), April 2018, [url](#)

¹⁵⁵ CFR, 'Hezbollah', 3 January 2014, [url](#)

¹⁵⁶ Freedom House, 'Freedom in the world 2018- Lebanon', 16 January 2018, [url](#)

¹⁵⁷ Danish Immigration Service, 'Stateless Palestinian Refugees in Lebanon', (page 12), 25 May to 6 June 2014, [url](#)

‘According to sources, Hezbollah does not "forcibly" recruit its members. In correspondence with the Research Directorate, a professor of politics at the University of Otago, New Zealand, whose research focuses on the history and politics of Lebanon, stated that to his knowledge, Hezbollah has not engaged in forced recruitment since 2013, despite their loss of manpower due to casualties in the Syrian conflict. In a telephone interview with the Research Directorate, a professor of political science at Florida Atlantic University, whose research focuses on political Islam in the Middle East, also indicated that forcing individuals to join Hezbollah is not part of the organization's recruitment strategy [...]. Sources reported that Hezbollah uses a system of "enticements" when conducting membership drives within Lebanon's Shi'a community [...]. The Professor of political science stated that Hezbollah holds mobilization campaigns where speeches are delivered to members of Lebanon's Shi'a population, including university students [...]. The same source indicated that during speeches, Hezbollah emphasizes the benefits that it can provide to its members, including financial assistance for university tuition, loans for small business owners, and government job placements [...]. The Professor of political science further noted that Hezbollah has their own student unions within Lebanese universities which regularly promote these enticements to students [...]. According to the Professor of politics, Hezbollah "are able to offer reasonable salaries in local terms".

‘In correspondence with the Research Directorate, a professor of international history at the London School of Economics and Political Science, who researches armed conflict in the Middle East, stated that there is "anecdotal evidence" that Hezbollah "has started forcibly recruiting since it has become more involved in the Syrian conflict" [...]. According to the Professor of international history, forced recruitment occurs mainly in rural areas where Hezbollah has strong influence such as southern Lebanon and the Beqaa valley. The source also indicated that there are "talks of disappearances" of those individuals who refuse to join Hezbollah but that to the source's knowledge, no reports have arisen in which family members of said individuals have been subject to harassment.’¹⁵⁸

- 10.1.6 The same response added: ‘According to the US Department of States' Country Reports on Human Rights Practices for 2014, "[g]overnment forces were usually unable to enforce the law in the predominantly Hezbollah-controlled southern suburbs of Beirut".’¹⁵⁹
- 10.1.7 According to various sources, the Immigration and Refugee Board Canada reported that Hezbollah is able to locate wanted individuals within Lebanon. It added, ‘Hezbollah would have almost no problem locating a person, if they were serious about the matter. They have supporters throughout the country, including support from Aounists [Lebanon's dominant Christian party, the Free Patriotic Movement, led by General Michel Aoun] in Christian areas’. In

¹⁵⁸ IRBC, Hezbollah response, 29 October 2015, [url](#)

¹⁵⁹ IRBC, ‘Hezbollah response, 29 October 2015, [url](#)

addition, 'Hezbollah dominates security at the airport, so the group would be able to track anyone directly from entry to Lebanon'.¹⁶⁰

10.1.8 The report further mentioned 'The Professor of political science similarly indicated that "Hezbollah has the capacity to locate wanted individuals" by working with partner intelligence agencies, Christian allies, and Shi'a informants who are supportive to the party. The same source noted that if the wanted individual is perceived as a "real threat," the party will do "whatever it takes" to locate the individual, adding however that this is a "rare occurrence"'.¹⁶¹

10.1.9 The FIS report noted:

'Because of the closeness of Hizbollah and the GS, Hizbollah can find anyone in Lebanon through the GS. According to Sari Hanafi, professor at the American University in Beirut, Hizbollah could find people in the Palestinian refugee camps as well. Lebanese security officials could not oppose Hizbollah. As a result, Hizbollah can be a threat to the Syrian refugees. It can kidnap people to its secret prison without publicity. Hizbollah does not deport Syrian refugees, but it can hand them over to the Syrian officials in Lebanon.'¹⁶²

10.1.10 Janes noted in a post updated in March 2018 that:

'Hizbullah's manpower has increased sizably following the 2006 war with Israel and the start of the Syrian civil war in 2011. It has up to 45,000 fighters, of which 21,000 are full time. Around 5,000 of its fighters are in Syria. Hizbullah militants are considered to be among the best trained in the world, with each fighter receiving a month-long basic training with additional specialisation in areas such as use of artillery, IEDs, firing missiles, anti-tank weapons, or sniping. The conventional combat skills of fighters, as opposed to the asymmetric warfare skills, have been dramatically boosted by their experience in the Syrian civil war, where Hizbullah is estimated to have suffered more than 1,500 fatalities. Hizbullah overwhelmingly draws its members from Lebanon's Shia community. It has built militias from among members of other sects, which are mainly used within their own domestic communities and as auxiliary forces.'¹⁶³

[Back to Contents](#)

10.2 Other armed groups

10.2.1 In addition to Hezbollah, there are a number of other armed groups documented to operate in Lebanon:

- Asbat al-Ansar, or League of Partisans. Also rendered as Usbat, Isbat or Esbat al-Ansar (a domestic Sunni extremist Islamic group)
- Fatah al-Islam (Militant Sunni jihadist group operating out of Palestinian refugee camps)

¹⁶⁰ IRBC, Hezbollah response, 29 October 2015, [url](#)

¹⁶¹ IRBC, 'Hezbollah response, 29 October 2015, [url](#)

¹⁶² FIS, 'Syrian and Palestinian (in Lebanon and Exisiting Syria) Refugees in Lebanon', September 2016, [url](#)

¹⁶³ Janes, 'Lebanon', Nonstate armed groups, updated 7 March 2018, subscription only

- Abdullah Azzam Brigades (militant Islamist group)¹⁶⁴
- 10.2.2 Daesh (Islamic State) and al-Nusrah Front were known to have presence in the country, in particular ‘exploiting [Syrian] refugee informal settlements’,¹⁶⁵.
- 10.2.3 A number of Palestinian armed factions operate with the refugee camps, which are usually divided between the Palestinian Liberation Organisation and Hamas¹⁶⁶. The USSD noted that in 2016 that ‘Terrorists also operated out of Lebanon’s 12 Palestinian camps, particularly the largest, Ain el-Helweh.’¹⁶⁷
- 10.2.4 CPIT was unable to find specific information about the targeting of Palestinians by these groups in the sources consulted (see Bibliography for full list).

[Back to Contents](#)

11. Documents

11.1 Identification documents

11.1.1 The AUB/UNRWA survey 2015 observed:

‘The Identification Card for Palestinian Refugees is the official identification card issued by DPRA [(Department for Palestinian Refugee Affairs)] for Palestine Refugees in Lebanon. These cards can be issued to people who were registered in the Lebanese Government censuses (إحصاءات) held in 1951/52 and in 1961 and to their descendants. Some of those who came after the second census [1962 onward] were able to register with DPRA on a case-by-case basis, following a decision by the Ministry of Interior.’¹⁶⁸

11.1.2 DFAT noted in its 2015 report:

‘Lebanese citizens are required to hold national identity cards—these cannot be acquired by refugees. The Directorate-General for Palestinian Affairs (DGPA) issues blue identity cards to most Palestinians registered with the Lebanese state, regardless of whether they are also registered with UNRWA. An exception is those 1948 Palestinians that chose not to register with UNRWA receive white identity cards. A 2012 study revealed that 96 per cent of Palestinians hold documentation attesting to their registration with both the Lebanese state and UNRWA. Palestinians may also be holders of ‘NR’ cards (not registered with UNRWA). 1948 Palestinians may receive five-year passports, which can be easily renewed. These passports can also be issued for one or three years. A 2012 study revealed that 95 per cent of Palestinians hold these passports, known as wathika (‘paper’, in this context, ‘passport’). 1967 Palestinians may receive one-year laissez-passers, as can white card holders. Palestinians registered with the Lebanese state that

¹⁶⁴ Janes, ‘Lebanon’, Nonstate armed groups, updated 7 March 2018, subscription only

¹⁶⁵ USSD, Terrorsim report 2016, Lebanon, 17 July 2017, [url](#)

¹⁶⁶ DFAT, ‘Thematic Report: Palestinians in Jordan and Lebanon’ (para 4.18), March 2015, [url](#)

¹⁶⁷ USSD, Terrorsim report 2016, Lebanon, 17 July 2017, [url](#)

¹⁶⁸ AUB / UNRWA, ‘Survey on the Socioeconomic Status of Palestine Refugees in Lebanon 2015’ (p23; footnote 10), June 2016

obtain citizenship in another country become ineligible to receive Lebanese passports or laissez-passers.¹⁶⁹

- 11.1.3 The UNHCR 2016 report mentioned that 'Non-registered Palestinians are reportedly granted the same residency permits afforded to those who are registered with UNRWA; however, they are issued a different travel document (Laissez Passer), valid for one year and renewable three times'.¹⁷⁰

- 11.1.4 The report continued:

'A valid legal status is a prerequisite for most civil registration processes in Lebanon such as the registration of births and marriages. Difficulties in obtaining legal residency documents are reported to have a wide-reaching impact on Palestine refugees from Syria. Of particular concern is the registration of new-borns, marriages and divorces. According to reports, the majority of children born in Lebanon to parents who are Palestine refugees from Syria will unlikely be able to complete all the necessary steps for birth registration with the Lebanese authorities, raising concerns about the emergence of a new undocumented population.'¹⁷¹

- 11.1.5 The Finnish Immigration Service report 2016 noted: 'Palestinians in Lebanon (PRL) are registered under the Department of Political and Refugees Affairs (DPRA). It works under the Ministry of Interior. DPRA registers births, marriages, deaths and changes of address for PRL.'¹⁷²

- 11.1.6 The report also mentioned:

'PRL have to register their children within a year from birth in order to get a birth certificate. If it is done later, it might be more difficult. In any case, it is a long and expensive process.

'Children are registered in the same place of registration as the rest of the family.

'All Palestinians that are registered with DPRA are given ID cards. A person must apply for the card personally. It will only be renewed if there is a change in the person's situation, he or she gets married, divorced or dies, for example. A lost ID can be renewed after the loss has been reported to a court.

'[...] PRS can also get a residence permit to Lebanon and previously they needed to pay 200 USD/year in order to renew it. This was too much for many and hence many did not renew the permit. Also according to UNRWA, many PRS did not seek to renew their residence permits because of the cost or because they do not want to be in touch with the GS because of fear of arrest or deportation and because the process takes a lot of time. According to Amnesty International's report, some PRS in Lebanon have not been

¹⁶⁹ DFAT, 'Thematic Report: Palestinians in Jordan and Lebanon', (paras 4.86–4.88), March 2015', [url](#)

¹⁷⁰ UNHCR, The Situation of Palestinian Refugees in Lebanon, (page 10), February 2016, [url](#)

¹⁷¹ UNHCR, The Situation of Palestinian Refugees in Lebanon, (page 14 – 15), February 2016, [url](#)

¹⁷² FIS, 'Syrian and Palestinian (in Lebanon and exiting Syria) Refugees in Lebanon' (section 2.1), 29 September 2016, [url](#)

allowed to renew their residency. PRS cannot in practice get a sponsor in Lebanon.’¹⁷³

‘According to UNRWA, since October 2015 Palestinians did not have to pay the 200 USD fee in order to renew their residency in Lebanon. This rule was renewed in March 2016. Hence, if a person has entered Lebanon before May 2014 and has a residence permit, he or she can renew the permit for free.

‘According to Lebanese and international aid workers working with PRS in Lebanon and interviewed by HRW, almost all of PRS, as well as Syrian refugees, were without legal status in Lebanon in 2015. According to Norwegian Refugee Council, in early 2016 only 14% of PRS had valid residence permits. There are no official statistics on people without residence permits. It remains to be seen if the change made by Lebanon in October 2015 concerning renewing residence permits for PRS will affect this.’¹⁷⁴

11.1.7 The Lebanese General Directorate of General Security website stated that it requires the following documents for Palestinian Refugees without papers:

- ‘The file of the refugee in question held by the Palestinian liberation organization in Lebanon
- A document issued by the competent mayor identifying the refugee and his place of residence: the attendance of 2 witnesses is required. This document could also be delivered by a representative of the Palestinian liberation organization in Lebanon
- A birth certificate
- A marriage certificate if the refugee in question is married
- If the refugee is a minor, then he has to have in hand the marriage certificate of his parents
- 3 ID photos that are recent, colored (4.3*3.5 cm), and certified by the mayor.
- A fiscal stamp of LBP 1000’¹⁷⁵

11.1.8 The DFAT 2017 report noted, ‘different forms of identification have varying levels of security features. DFAT understands that it would be difficult to obtain a fraudulent national identity card or passport, but that other forms of identification are less secure. The validity of these less secure forms of identification can normally be verified with the relevant Lebanese authority.’¹⁷⁶

[Back to Contents](#)

¹⁷³ FIS, ‘Syrian and Palestinian (in Lebanon and exiting Syria) Refugees in Lebanon’ (paras 2.1 - 3.7) 29 September 2016, [url](#)

¹⁷⁴ FIS, ‘Syrian and Palestinian (in Lebanon and exiting Syria) Refugees in Lebanon’ (paras 3.7), 29 September 2016, [url](#)

¹⁷⁵ Lebanese General Security, undated accessed on 15 March 2018, [url](#)

¹⁷⁶ DFAT, ‘Lebanon’, October 2017, [url](#)

11.2 Documents required to travel

11.2.1 DFAT noted in October 2017 that:

'The General Directorate of General Security issues travel documents to Palestinian refugees in Lebanon who are registered with UNRWA, as well as the refugee bureau, and who have a General Security authorization. A Palestinian refugee who obtains a foreign nationality is no longer considered a Palestinian refugee applicant, and must follow the procedures applying to all other foreigners residing in Lebanon to obtain a visa and residency permit.

'The Directorate for Political Refugees/ Palestinian Department (DGPR) centrally registers all civil status matters regarding Palestinians. Birth and marriage certificates have the same format as the Lebanese certificates, including reference to the family registration. DFAT understands it can be difficult for foreign governments to obtain DGPR verification of documents.

'Palestinian Refugee Section at the General Directorate of General Security issues Laissez-Passer for Palestinians born in Lebanon. The Laissez-Passer is brown in colour and includes bio data details. In most cases, the Laissez-Passer records only the year of birth. The full date of birth for Palestinians is usually included in birth certificates.'¹⁷⁷

11.2.2 With regards to travel documents and transit passes for Palestinians the Lebanese General Directorate of General Security stated on its website:

'Documents requested:

- A refugee ID card held by the Palestinian citizen residing in Lebanon as well as a certified photocopy of the latter
- An extract of individual civil status issued by the general security
- 4 ID photos certified by the mayor
- A travel approval delivered by the parents or the legal guardian
- A document issued by the competent mayor identifying the refugee and his residence: the attendance of 2 witnesses is required
- An attestation that proves he is not a member of the UNRWA, or on the contrary case an affiliation card

'Fees:

- A travel document associated with the latter held by one of the parents
- A travel document for a Palestinian refugee – 1 year – LBP 60 000 [circa 28 GBP]¹⁷⁸
- A travel document for a Palestinian refugee – 3 years – LBP 180, 000 [circa 84 GBP]^{179, 180}

¹⁷⁷ DFAT Lebanon report 2017, October 2017, (paras 5.33 – 5.35), [url](#)

¹⁷⁸ HM Revenue and Customs Guidance, 'May 2018: monthly exchange rates', 23 April 2018, [url](#)

¹⁷⁹ HM Revenue and Customs Guidance, 'May 2018: monthly exchange rates', 23 April 2018, [url](#)

¹⁸⁰ Lebanese government, DGS, Travel documents, undated, [url](#)

11.3 Consequences of lack of documents

11.3.1 According to the UNCHR 2016 report:

‘Without valid documentation and legal status, “non-ID” Palestinians reportedly face severe restrictions on their right to freedom of movement and access to services, risk being arrested and detained, and are unable to complete civil registration procedures for vital events such as birth, marriage, divorce and death. UNRWA provides primary health care, education, and vocational training services to undocumented Palestinians, despite the fact that they are not registered with the agency.’¹⁸¹

11.3.2 The report added:

‘The GSO [General Directorate of General Security] has, according to reports, intermittently issued temporary identity cards to “non-ID” Palestinians since 2008. However, these Special Identification Cards (SICs) only serve as proof of identity and the holder cannot register vital events such as births, deaths, marriages and divorces, nor be recognized as a refugee in Lebanon. Moreover, very few “non-ID” Palestinians are reportedly able to obtain and maintain a valid card, which further hinders its effectiveness. The GSO reportedly does not issue SICs to Palestine refugees who are holding passports issued by the Palestinian Authority, or Egyptian travel documents or Jordanian passports, regardless of whether these documents are still valid, and without taking into account whether the holder might be able to renew those documents and/or enter the country that issued the travel document. Individuals who are in the possession of such documents are reportedly asked to apply for a residency permit on the same basis as other foreigners living in Lebanon, which incurs annual costs. However, many “non-ID” Palestinians reportedly face difficulties in renewing expired Palestinian Authority or Egyptian travel documents, further preventing them from applying for regular residency permits with the Lebanese authorities. Furthermore, it has been reported that not all members of the Lebanese Internal Security Forces (ISF) are familiar with SICs, which can be problematic at checkpoints and thus hinder freedom of movement within Lebanon.’¹⁸²

11.3.3 According to the 2016 Finnish Immigration Service:

‘Both Syrian refugees and PRS can face difficulties if they do not have a valid residence permit. Then, for example, a person cannot get marriage, divorce or birth certificates. Growing up without birth certificates poses people to protection concerns. It can also decrease the ability to get services offered only to family units. According to a survey by UNHCR in 2014, 72% of the refugee children born in Lebanon did not have birth certificates. Norwegian Refugee Council researched birth registration also in 2014 and found that 92% of the refugees they interviewed could not register their children’s birth in Lebanon.

¹⁸¹ UNHCR, ‘The Situation of Palestinian Refugees in Lebanon’, (page 11), February 2016, [url](#)

¹⁸² UNHCR, ‘The Situation of Palestinian Refugees in Lebanon’, (page 11 – 12), February 2016, [url](#)

‘One does not need to have a residence permit in order to start the birth registration process, but many families decide not to approach authorities if they do not have the permit. A marriage certificate of the parents, on the other hand, is needed for birth registration. 14% of people interviewed by Norwegian Refugee Council did not have any document to prove the marriage. NRC advises refugees to start the birth registration procedure in Lebanon, so that they can finish it eventually at some point in Syria.

‘According to HRW and NRC, some refugees have returned to Syria in order to get birth certificates. Some refugees pay for another person to get identity documents from Syria and pay a broker to get fake documents. If refugees get documents from Syria through a middle man, the documents can be fake but the refugee does not necessarily know this.

‘PRS without residence permits also cannot have an exam approved at school. Even if they have done the exams in UNRWA’s school, the Ministry of Education will not approve them and hence, they will not get into a university.’¹⁸³

[Back to Contents](#)

11.4 Work permits

11.4.1 The Finnish Immigration Service report noted:

‘If a Palestinian wants to work in Lebanon, he or she needs a work permit. UNRWA has explained the process of obtaining the permit. The following documents are required for the employee:

“[a] work contract signed by him/her and his/her employer, a Palestine refugee registration card, employer’s documents (identity card, commercial registration and notification), and evidence of declaration to the Lebanese National Social Security Fund.”

‘For the employer, the following documents are required:

“[a] Palestinian refugee registration card, articles of incorporation, commercial registration and notification, evidence showing that he/she employs at least three Lebanese with his/her share of the capital being at least LBP 100 million (USD 6 700).”

‘The application is sent to the Minister of Labor if the permit falls under category one, “employers and employees whose salaries are three times the minimum wage and above”, or to the Director General of the Ministry of Labor if it falls under category two, “a salary that is between double and three times the minimum wage”, or three, “a salary ranging between the minimum wage and its double”. The work permit is valid for one year at a time. Work permits under categories two and three are renewed by the head of the department in the Ministry.

‘Work permits became free of charge in 2010 (Law No. 129 of 2010).

¹⁸³ FIS, ‘Fact-Finding Mission Report: Syrian and Palestinian (in Lebanon and exiting Syria) refugees in Lebanon’, (3.18.1), September 2016, [url](#)

“As for work permits for employers, they remained at 25% of the usual fees i.e. around LBP 450 thousand (US\$ 300). Additionally, Palestine refugees were exempted from the Reciprocity of Treatment condition stipulated by article 59 of the labor law with regards to obtaining compensation in-lieu of dismissal and for arbitrary dismissal.”

‘According to a study by UNRWA published in 2016, the changes have not significantly improved the working conditions for PRL. Still, only 6% of PRL have a work permit.

‘According to Konrad-Adenauer Foundation (KAS), Lebanese Ministry of Labor restricted the refugees’ access to work force in 2015. Since then employers have had to make sure that a task cannot be done by a Lebanese citizen before offering it to refugees. This applies to Palestinian refugees too.

‘Palestinian workers have partial access to National Social Security Fund. In 2010 (Law No. 128 of 2010) those Palestinians that hold work permits were entitled to benefits paid to a worker at termination of contract (8.5% of the wage), but not to the sickness and maternity fund (9% of which 2% are covered by the employee) nor to the family allowances fund (6%).’¹⁸⁴

[Back to Contents](#)

12. Freedom of movement

12.1 Within Lebanon

- 12.1.1 The 2016 USSD report mentioned that ‘The law provides for freedom of internal movement, foreign travel, emigration, and repatriation, and the government generally respected these rights for citizens but placed extensive limitations on the rights of Palestinian refugees and Syrian, Iraqi, and other refugee populations.’¹⁸⁵
- 12.1.2 The Finnish Immigration Service noted in their 2016 report, ‘Syrian and Palestinian (in Lebanon and exiting Syria) Refugees in Lebanon’, that ‘if refugees or PRS are in Lebanon illegally, it can be harder for them to move in and out of the Palestinian refugee camps as they need a permit for it. Permit holders often need to have legal status in Lebanon. UNRWA has observed that especially adult males are at risk of detention.’¹⁸⁶
- 12.1.3 The 2015 DFAT report stated:

‘Camps viewed as security threats by the Lebanese security forces, such as Ein al-Hilweh, have fences surrounding them and strict entry and exit controls enforced by the Lebanese security forces (these camps often host Palestinian and non-Palestinian fugitives wanted by the Lebanese security forces, necessitating security measures). Camps in Beirut are more

¹⁸⁴ FIS, ‘Fact-Finding Mission Report: Syrian and Palestinian (in Lebanon and exiting Syria) refugees in Lebanon’, (paras 2.4), September 2016, [url](#)

¹⁸⁵ USSD ‘Country Report on Human Rights Practices for 2017’ Lebanon, April 2018, [url](#)

¹⁸⁶ FIS, ‘Syrian and Palestinian (in Lebanon and exiting Syria) Refugees in Lebanon’, 29 September 2016, [url](#)

integrated into the surrounding suburbs, though the Lebanese security forces attempt to control movement into and out of the camps.’¹⁸⁷

12.1.4 The DFAT report also stated:

‘Palestinians may legally live anywhere in Lebanon if they can afford to pay rent and other fees, such as municipal fees, on an equal footing with Lebanese citizens. Palestinians may rent property in Lebanon, on an equal footing with foreigners. However, [...] Palestinians may not legally buy property in Lebanon. Palestinians who live outside camps in properties rented or bought prior to 2001 are not considered to be living illegally.

‘Palestinians in some refugee camps are under movement and residency controls. For instance, restrictions to freedom of movement remain in place for Palestinians in Nahr al-Bared camp, including a military-administered permit system. Palestinian camps in southern Lebanon are fenced, with a limited number of entrances and exits. Restrictions are imposed on these camps at night.

‘Many non-ID Palestinians will reportedly not leave their camps, for fear of being arrested for not having identification.’¹⁸⁸

12.1.5 The UNHCR 2016 report, ‘The Situation of Palestinian Refugees in Syria’ stated:

‘According to UNRWA, Palestinian refugees registered with DPAR enjoy freedom of movement within the country. The directorate, however, has to approve the transfer of registration of residence for refugees who reside in camps. According to UNRWA, the directorate generally approves such transfers.

‘Many Palestine refugee camps reportedly face entry and exit controls that are prone to be tightened, in particular during periods of heightened security measures, and which result in restrictions on movement in and out of camps. These restrictions on movement can reportedly limit access to employment and essential services and can also expose Palestine refugees to increased risk of arrest and detention.’¹⁸⁹

12.1.6 The report further noted:

‘The lack of legal status and valid documentation reportedly exposes Palestine refugees from Syria to the risk of arrest, temporary detention and departure orders. Male adults are reported to be particularly at risk of being detained, and to have their documents confiscated at checkpoints within Lebanon or when crossing borders between Lebanon and Syria. For fear of arrest and deportation, Palestine refugees from Syria reportedly feel compelled to limit their movements. Movement in and out of camps (notably Nahr El-Bared Camp, Ein El Hilweh and the camps in Tyre Area) is reportedly particularly restricted without valid documentation.

¹⁸⁷ DFAT, ‘Thematic Report: Palestinians in Jordan and Lebanon’, March 2015, [url](#)

¹⁸⁸ DFAT, ‘Thematic Report: Palestinians in Jordan and Lebanon’, (paras 4.82–4.84), March 2015, [url](#)

¹⁸⁹ UNHCR, ‘The Situation of Palestinian Refugees in Lebanon’, (page 4 – 5), February 2016, [url](#)

'In May 2014, around 40 Palestine refugees from Syria were reportedly arrested at Beirut International Airport after they tried to leave the country with allegedly falsified documents; they were reportedly forcibly returned to Syria.

'Palestine refugees from Syria who have left Lebanon are, according to reports, generally not readmitted to Lebanon.'¹⁹⁰

12.1.7 The Finnish Immigration Service 2016 report stated:

'People also try to leave Beqaa Valley because the living conditions there are bad, especially in the winter. Partly due to bad housing conditions and inadequate sanitation and water services, people in Beqaa are more prone to acute illnesses. People can in general move to better areas, also outside the camps, if they have more salary. Finding better accommodation is not likely, since the work situation for Palestinians has not improved and it is harder to get more salary. People are allowed to access UNRWA's services from outside the camps but the physical distance can be a real obstacle. Also, social networks are not available outside the camps.'¹⁹¹

12.1.8 Furthermore, the report observed:

'Palestinians receive their travel documents from the Lebanese General Security (GS) if they have an ID card issued by the DPRA and an UNRWA card. The travel document costs 250,000 Lebanese Lira, which is approximately 170 USD. Registered PRL can apply for a travel document that is valid for three years, Non Registered Palestinians for one that is valid for one year.

'Palestinians can use their Palestinian travel document for travel in and out of Lebanon if it is for multiple uses despite the Lebanese passport renewal. According to UNRWA there was an announcement in April 2016 that the travel document would be accepted again at airports while the Lebanese authorities adapt their system. UNRWA has not encountered cases where a Palestinian would have faced problems concerning this.

'The website of the GS stated in early 2016 that updated versions of the Palestinian travel documents are in use and that new biometric travel documents will be adopted. In the meanwhile, "[t]here will be no more renewals when it comes to the Palestinian travel documents."

'If a Palestinian is abroad and does not have the travel document, the have to go to the Lebanese embassy. It is a complex and time consuming process. When entering Lebanon, the person will be questioned for hours. One cannot enter Lebanon without the travel document.'¹⁹²

12.1.9 The USSD report, 'Country reports on Human Rights Practices for 2017' observed that, 'According to UNRWA, Palestinian refugees registered with the Interior Ministry's Directorate of Political and Refugee Affairs could travel

¹⁹⁰ UNHCR, 'The Situation of Palestinian Refugees in Lebanon', (page 15), February 2016, [url](#)

¹⁹¹ FIS, 'Fact-Finding Mission Report: Syrian and Palestinian (in Lebanon and exiting Syria) refugees in Lebanon', (3.13), 29 September 2016, [url](#)

¹⁹² FIS, 'Fact-Finding Mission Report: Syrian and Palestinian (in Lebanon and exiting Syria) refugees in Lebanon', (2.2), 29 September 2016, [url](#)

from one area of the country to another. The DGS, however, had to approve the transfer of registration of residence for refugees who resided in camps. UNRWA stated the DGS generally approved such transfers.’¹⁹³

12.1.10 The report also noted:

‘Fighting in 2007 destroyed the Nahr el-Bared Palestinian refugee camp, displacing approximately 30,000 residents, of whom approximately 27,000 were registered Palestine refugees. Many of the displaced resided in areas adjacent to the camp or in other areas of the country where UNRWA services were available. As of October approximately 53 percent of displaced families returned to newly reconstructed apartments in Nahr el-Bared camp.’¹⁹⁴

12.1.11 The Finnish Immigration Service 2016 report stated:

‘If a PRS is legally in Lebanon he or she can change the place of residence freely. However, if they are being threatened their ability to move depends on the area. New people are often noticed in the camps. PRS move a lot inside Lebanon because they search for cheaper accommodation.

‘There are also other reasons for movement inside Lebanon. For example, when UNRWA had evacuated Nahr al-Bared refugee camp in order it to be demolished, it was taken over by PRS overnight who came to live there. In August 2015 during the fighting in Ain al-Hilwa refugee camp many PRS fled from there and moved to different places inside Lebanon. People also change their place of residence because of security reasons.’¹⁹⁵

12.1.12 The DFAT 2017 report also noted that the ‘Palestinian Refugee Section at the General Directorate of General Security issues Laissez-Passer for Palestinians born in Lebanon. The Laissez-Passer is brown in colour and includes bio data details. In most cases, the Laissez-Passer records only the year of birth. The full date of birth for Palestinians is usually included in birth certificates.’¹⁹⁶

12.1.13 The USSD report for 2017 noted: ‘UNRWA reported that the DGS issued some PRS departure orders despite their having paid the renewal fee. Legal status in Lebanon was critical for protection, as it allowed refugees to pass through checkpoints, including to and from camps, complete civil registration processes, and access and remain within the educational system.’¹⁹⁷

[Back to Contents](#)

12.2 Travel into / out of Lebanon

12.2.1 The 2015 DFAT report mentioned that ‘In practice, Palestinians have been denied entry to Lebanon in all but exceptional circumstances since September 2013, due to the large numbers of Syrian refugees entering

¹⁹³ USSD, ‘Country Report on Human Rights Practices for 2017’, (section 2d), April 2018, [url](#)

¹⁹⁴ USSD, ‘Country Report on Human Rights Practices for 2017’, (section 2d), Lebanon, April 2018, [url](#)

¹⁹⁵ FIS, ‘Fact-Finding Mission Report: Syrian and Palestinian (in Lebanon and exiting Syria) refugees in Lebanon’, (section 3.13), 29 September 2016, [url](#)

¹⁹⁶ DFAT, Lebanon, 2017, [url](#)

¹⁹⁷ USSD, Human Rights Report 2017 (section 2d), April 2018, [url](#)

Lebanon. Palestinians wishing to leave Lebanon must obtain an exit permit and may be required to pay a fine.’¹⁹⁸

12.2.2 The 2017 DFAT report noted that:

‘Hizballah exercises substantial control over Beirut’s Rafic Hariri International Airport (the international airport is located in an area where Hizballah has substantial influence). Hizballah may therefore be aware of citizens who have sought asylum elsewhere returning to Lebanon. Hizballah is unlikely to target a returning individual unless that person presented a direct threat to its authority. Hizballah’s influence over Beirut’s Rafic Hariri International Airport would therefore create no problems for the majority of returnees. More broadly, airport security screening is not rigorous, due to understaffing.’¹⁹⁹

12.2.3 The UNHCR reported in 2016 that:

‘Palestine refugees in Lebanon who are registered with the Lebanese authorities and who wish to travel from and to Lebanon need to acquire Palestinian travel documents issued by the Lebanese General Directorate of General Security, or General Security Office (GSO). While such documents allow them to leave and re-enter the country, Palestine refugees from Lebanon are, however, reported to be confronted with various limitations in applying for visas to third countries due to their status as Palestine refugees. Those who leave Lebanon without Palestinian travel documents are reportedly readmitted to the country but would be considered to have left the country illegally and would be subjected to detention (between one week to three months) and/or fines (1,250 to 7,500 Lebanese Pounds) upon return, in line with applicable legislation.

‘Palestine refugees who are registered with both UNRWA and DPAR can reportedly obtain travel documents valid for one, three or five years.’²⁰⁰

12.2.4 Furthermore, the report stated:

‘At the onset of the conflict in Syria, it was reported that Palestine refugees from Syria were initially allowed entry into Lebanon using their ID cards or travel documents issued by the relevant Syrian authorities, provided they had obtained a Syrian exit visa in advance. However, since August 2013, entry restrictions were reportedly introduced for Palestinian refugees from Syria and individuals started being screened for entry at the border. The restrictions reportedly resulted in the denial of entry of some Palestine refugees from Syria between August 2013 and April 2014.’²⁰¹

12.2.5 The report also mentioned:

‘Since May 2014, additional entry restrictions have reportedly been imposed as the Ministry of Interior announced a stop to the issuance of visas for Palestine refugees from Syria at the border. Since then, entry at the border is reportedly only granted with either a verified embassy appointment in Lebanon, or a flight ticket and visa to a third country: conditions that the

¹⁹⁸ DFAT, ‘Thematic Report: Palestinians in Jordan and Lebanon’, (section 4.85), March 2015, [url](#)

¹⁹⁹ DFAT Lebanon report 2017, (section 5.19), October 2017, [url](#)

²⁰⁰ UNHCR, ‘The Situation of Palestinian Refugees in Lebanon’, February 2016, (page 5), [url](#)

²⁰¹ UNHCR, ‘The Situation of Palestinian Refugees in Lebanon’, (page 12), February 2016, [url](#)

majority of Palestine refugees from Syria are unable to meet. Individuals who are able to meet these conditions are reportedly usually only issued with a 24-hour transit visa. In addition, limited numbers of Palestine refugees from Syria are reportedly able to secure a visa to enter Lebanon by obtaining prior approval from GSO. This reportedly requires a sponsor in Lebanon and cannot be processed at border posts, but has to be done in Syria prior to travelling. Access to Lebanon for “humanitarian reasons” or in order to seek international protection is reportedly not possible.

‘Some Palestine refugees from Syria have reportedly sought to enter Lebanon through irregular border crossings, placing them at risk of exploitation and abuse, in particular due to the fear of arrest and/or deportation. Under current regulations, irregular entry into Lebanon is reported to be an obstacle to regularizing one’s legal status at a later time.’²⁰²

- 12.2.6 According to the Finnish Immigration Service of 2016 ‘In general, the process to enter Lebanon is the same for PRS as it is for Syrian nationals. However, it can be harder for PRS. According to UNRWA, one of the biggest problems concerning PRS in Lebanon is access to the country. Also, regulations concerning PRS are not publicly communicated by the GS. In the beginning of the Syrian conflict PRS could enter Lebanon easily, though this was not formally announced by the GS.’²⁰³

- 12.2.7 The report further noted:

‘According to Amnesty International, there were several restrictions in place of which one had to be met. These restrictions were enforced arbitrarily to some extent. A PRS had to have “a valid pre-approved visa which required an application made by a guarantor in Lebanon; a valid visa and ticket to a third country – meaning they were only transiting through Lebanon; a scheduled medical or embassy appointment; or if they were able to prove they had family already legally in Lebanon (a family member had to send a valid copy of their residency permit to the authorities as proof)”.

‘The entry of PRS to Lebanon was further restricted in May 2014. Now there are only three categories for Palestinians under which they can seek to enter Lebanon compared to the seven categories that the Syrian refugees have. If a PRS is allowed to enter Lebanon, he or she receives a 24 hour transit visa.

‘The first category for Palestinians is people with a confirmed appointment in an embassy for example for resettlement or visa application. The Schengen visa process is not handled in the respective embassies but it has been outsourced to an external company, which processes the application first. Their list goes to the GS at the border. The GS can still deny access to Lebanon for a person on security grounds.

‘Security reasons can be, for example, if one used to have problems in Lebanon, during or before the Syrian war, or if one was illegally in the country in the past and has received a notice to leave the country. A person

²⁰² UNHCR, ‘The Situation of Palestinian Refugees in Lebanon’, (page 13), February 2016, [url](#)

²⁰³ FIS, ‘Fact-Finding Mission Report: Syrian and Palestinian (in Lebanon and exiting Syria) refugees in Lebanon’, (section 3.2), 29 September 2016, [url](#)

can clear his or her record through the GS or through a contact. There have been only few cases of clearances that the UNRWA is aware of.

'The second category is people with a valid visa to a third country or a plane ticket. Even then, however, entry to Lebanon can be denied on security grounds.

'A third category, a very rare one, for entry is for a PRS to get a PRL as a sponsor in Lebanon. PRS cannot ask another PRS to be a sponsor. UNRWA is only aware of very few cases where a PRS has got a sponsor, though the organization has limited knowledge of them. The visa has to be applied for in advance and not at the border control.

'UNRWA is working in order to get humanitarian access for PRS to be included in the list.

'Amnesty International reported in July that also PRS with an entry permit from the GS, PRS with a one-year or three-year residency visa or PRS with an exit and return permit would be allowed in since May 2014. Still, fulfilling these requirements would be very hard.

'Whereas the entry is more likely for Syrian refugees with an embassy appointment, not all PRS with the permit are allowed in. People might try to enter several times. If people are refused entry, they might not be informed of the reason. According to IOM, 98% of the Palestinians who have a valid airline ticket are allowed to enter the country. Amnesty International published a report in July 2014, according to which PRS might be barred from entry into Lebanon despite of having a valid airline ticket.

'According to Aina, the Lebanese border has been closed for PRS since 2014. PRS could cross the border as well if they would have an appointment at an embassy. The Palestinian embassy in Beirut and the GS are working together for humanitarian cases to cross but the border is not often open to them.

'Also according to UNRWA, the number of PRS entering Lebanon since May 2014 has been very low. Most PRS entered Lebanon in 2012 and 2013. As a consequence, some people seek to enter the country illegally. It exposes the person to the risk of exploitation and abuse and can be an obstacle to regularization of the person's legal status later on. Some PRS have been able to enter Lebanon after paying bribes at the border.'²⁰⁴

12.2.8 For more information on previous restrictions, see the [Finnish Immigration Service Fact-finding mission report](#).

12.2.9 Additionally, the 2016 Finnish Immigration Service report observed:

'Palestinians need a visa to travel to Turkey by sea or air, but they are not able to get the visa. It is possible that illegal travel by boat to Turkey increases because the new visa regulation for Syrians. IOM refers to information by UNRWA, according to which it is hard for both PRS and PRL to get a visa to Turkey. Palestinians in general have limited access to many

²⁰⁴ FIS, 'Fact-Finding Mission Report: Syrian and Palestinian (in Lebanon and exiting Syria) refugees in Lebanon', (section 3.2), 29 September 2016, [url](#)

countries as these do not accept the Palestinian travel documents or do not grant visas for Palestinians. Hence, people resort to human smuggling. If they are caught by the Lebanese authorities they face detention.²⁰⁵

12.2.10 The 2016 Finnish Immigration Service report stated:

‘Palestinians can use their Palestinian travel document for travel in and out of Lebanon if it is for multiple uses despite the Lebanese passport renewal. According to UNRWA there was an announcement in April 2016 that the travel document would be accepted again at airports while the Lebanese authorities adapt their system. UNRWA has not encountered cases where a Palestinian would have faced problems concerning this.

‘The website of the GS stated in early 2016 that updated versions of the Palestinian travel documents are in use and that new biometric travel documents will be adopted. In the meanwhile, “[t]here will be no more renewals when it comes to the Palestinian travel documents.”

‘If a Palestinian is abroad and does not have the travel document, they have to go to the Lebanese embassy. It is a complex and time consuming process. When entering Lebanon, the person will be questioned for hours. One cannot enter Lebanon without the travel document.’²⁰⁶

12.2.11 Furthermore:

‘According to IOM, the Lebanese authorities do not grant Palestinian travel documents to PRS. A person might be able to renew the travel document at the Syrian embassy in Beirut. Also according to Aina, PRS are not able to get an ID or a Palestinian travel card from the Lebanese officials.

‘According to UNRWA, PRS can get the Palestinian travel document at the Syrian embassy in Beirut. UNRWA has advised people to do so and they have succeeded. However, the organization does not know how often this is done.’²⁰⁷

12.2.12 DFAT’s report on Syria, published in October 2017, noted: ‘While there are some exceptions that allow Syrians to enter Lebanon, displaced Palestinians from Syria now require either proof of an appointment with an embassy in Lebanon or proof of onward travel in order to enter Lebanon. Some have been able to enter outside of these regulations, possibly through bribery.’²⁰⁸

12.2.13 The UNHCR concluded in its paper of December 2017 that:

‘UNHCR notes that neighbouring countries [to Syria], including Lebanon and Jordan, have severely restricted the entry of Palestinian refugees from Syria.[...] Most publically available information on entry restrictions relates to Palestinian refugees seeking to enter Lebanon or Jordan coming directly by land from Syria; however, it is UNHCR’s understanding that these

²⁰⁵ FIS, ‘Fact-finding Mission Report: Syrian and Palestinian (in Lebanon and exiting Syria) refugees in Lebanon’ (section 3.4), 29 September 2016, [url](#)

²⁰⁶ FIS, ‘Fact-finding Mission Report: Syrian and Palestinian (in Lebanon and exiting Syria) refugees in Lebanon’ (section 2.2), 29 September 2016, [url](#)

²⁰⁷ FIS, ‘Fact-Finding Mission Report: Syrian and Palestinian (in Lebanon and exiting Syria) refugees in Lebanon’, (section 3.5), 29 September 2016, [url](#)

²⁰⁸ DFAT, ‘Thematic Report on conditions in Syria’, (para 3.54), October 2017, [url](#)

restrictions apply equally at all entry points (land border, airport, or seaport) and irrespective of whether an individual has previously resided or transited through Lebanon or Jordan, respectively. Based on available information, UNHCR concludes that Palestinian refugees from Syria who entered and subsequently left Lebanon or Jordan, respectively, would generally not be readmitted to Lebanon or Jordan for the purpose of seeking international protection or taking up residency.²⁰⁹

12.2.14 The same UNHCR paper, based on a number of sources, noted:

‘Since May 2014, Palestinian refugees from Syria have only been allowed entry in limited circumstances. They can obtain a limited entry visa (transit visa, usually valid for 24 hours) at the border for purposes such as an embassy appointment in Beirut (must be verified) or for the purpose of transiting through Lebanon en route to a third country (requires flight ticket and visa for a third country). This does not entitle Palestinian refugees to residency in Lebanon. In addition, a small number of Palestinian refugees from Syria have been able to secure a visa for Lebanon by obtaining prior approval from the Lebanese General Security Office. This requires a sponsor in Lebanon and cannot be processed at border posts.[...] UNHCR has been made aware by a United Nations entity of a Palestinian refugee from Syria who had been returned from a third country to Lebanon after exiting Lebanon legally. On re-entry to Lebanon through established borders, the individual was reportedly immediately deported to Syria, as he did not have an embassy appointment or a flight ticket/visa to a third country; the deportation was carried out despite the fact that prior to his exit he had resided legally in Lebanon.’²¹⁰

12.2.15 The USSD report for 2017 noted:

‘Since 2014 entry visas for PRS were granted at the border only to persons with either a verified embassy appointment in the country or a flight ticket and visa to a third country. Most of these individuals were issued a 24-hour transit visa. Additionally, limited numbers of PRS secured a visa for Lebanon by obtaining prior approval from the DGS, which required a sponsor in the country and could not be processed at border posts. UNRWA estimated that approximately 3 percent of the PRS in the country arrived in 2016.’²¹¹

12.2.16 UNRWA’s October 2017 Protection Briefing noted that:

‘Compared to the policy applied to Syrian nationals, tighter conditions are applied to PRS [...] For example, Syrian nationals can, in principle, enter with ‘humanitarian’ visas, while this is not available to PRS. Some PRS have consequently sought to enter Lebanon through irregular border crossings, placing them at additional risk of exploitation and abuse. Under current regulations, irregular entry into Lebanon is also an obstacle to later regularize one’s legal status. [...]. PRS are finding it increasingly difficult to maintain their legal residency in Lebanon. Since October 2015, several memoranda have been issued by the GSO, few of them accessible to the

²⁰⁹ UNHCR, Returns paper, (page 1), December 2017, [url](#)

²¹⁰ UNHCR, Returns paper, (page 1 – 2), December 2017, [url](#)

²¹¹ USSD, Human rights report 2017 (section 2d), April 2018, [url](#)

public, allowing for a free-of-charge renewal of residency documents, with the exception of those who entered irregularly. Starting in July 2017, it was specified that unlimited free-renewal is available for 6 months for those PRS who entered Lebanon before September 2016, with no penalty charge for delays. In addition, visa renewal has been allowed for PRS who have turned 15 in Lebanon using easily accessible documentation. However, the July 2017 memorandum excludes persons who entered Lebanon after September 2016, as well as those who entered irregularly and those with an exit order. A considerable number of PRS are therefore still unable to regularize their stay in Lebanon. Since the arrival of the PRS in Lebanon, UNRWA has observed that the terms and conditions of these memoranda have been applied inconsistently across the country. In addition, the prohibitive cost meant that some PRS did not renew their documents and were then considered illegally present in Lebanon by the authorities. As of September 2016, almost 40% of PRS present in Lebanon did not hold valid residency documents, with at least 18% stating that it was due to their previous inability to pay the fees.²¹²

- 12.2.17 The 2018 Human Rights Watch annual World Report noted that: ‘In 2017, Lebanon continued to impose entry regulations on Syrians that effectively barred many asylum seekers from entering Lebanon. Human Rights Watch has also documented isolated forcible deportations of Syrians and Palestinians back to Syria, putting them at risk of arbitrary detention, torture, or other persecution.’²¹³

[Back to Contents](#)

²¹² UNRWA, ‘Protection Context:Palestine refugees living in Lebanon’ (page 2), October 2017,[url](#)

²¹³ Human Rights Watch, ‘World Report 2018: Events of 2017’, 18 January 2018, [url](#)

Terms of reference

A 'Terms of Reference' (ToR) is a broad outline of what the CPIN seeks to cover. They form the basis for the [country information section](#). The Home Office's Country Policy and Information Team uses some standardised ToRs, depending on the subject, and these are then adapted depending on the country concerned.

For this particular CPIN, the following topics were identified prior to drafting as relevant and on which research was undertaken:

Overview

Status and 'categories' of Palestinians

- Overview

- Registered Palestinians

- Non-Registered Palestinians

- Non-ID Palestinians

- Palestinians from Syria

- Lebanese Citizenship Law

Demography

Socio-economic situation

- Overview

- United Nations Relief and Works Agency Services (UNRWA)

- Accommodation

- Education

- Health

- Employment

- Vulnerable groups

Refugee Camps

- Conditions in camps

- Governance of camps

- Security in refugee camps

Treatment by state

- Discrimination / harassment

- Protection

Treatment by non state groups

- Hezbollah (aka Hizbollah and Hizbullah)

- Other armed groups

Documents

- Identification of documents

- Documents required to travel

- Consequences of lack of documents

- Work permits

Freedom of movement

- Within Lebanon

- Travel into/ out of Lebanon

[Back to Contents](#)

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[Back to Contents](#)

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Home Office, Proscribed terrorist groups or organisations, last updated 22 December 2017, <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/proscribed-terror-groups-or-organisations--2>. Last accessed 26 April 2018

Version control

Clearance

Below is information on when this note was cleared:

- version **1.0**
 - valid from **19 June 2018**
- ### Changes from last version of this note

First version in CPIN format.

[Back to Contents](#)