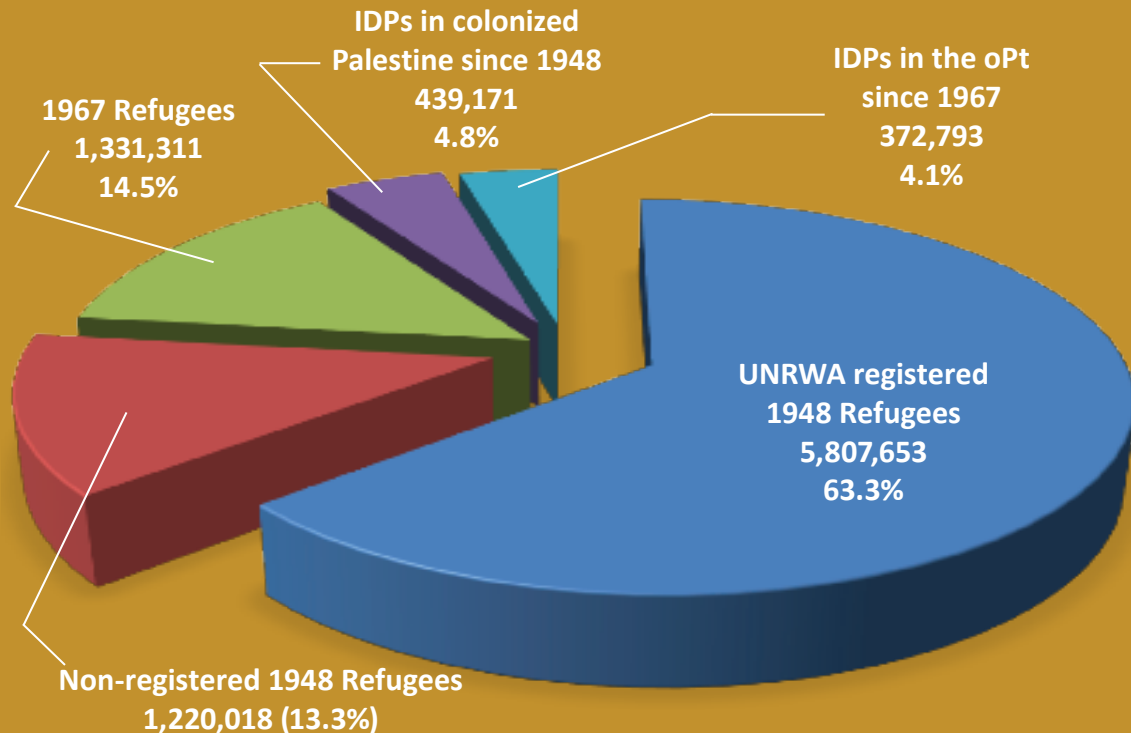


74 YEARS OF

Ongoing Nakba Ongoing Resistance

DISPLACED PALESTINIANS TODAY

By the end of 2021, at least 65.5% (9.17 million) of the entire Palestinian people worldwide (14 million) were forcibly displaced persons. Among them were at least 8.36 million Palestinian refugees and 812,000 internally displaced persons (IDPs).



MAIN WAVES OF PALESTINIAN DISPLACEMENT AND TRANSFER

British Mandate (1922 – 1947): 100.000 – 150.000 Palestinians displaced

NAKBA (1947 – 1949): 750.000 – 950.000 Palestinians displaced
representing 85% of Palestinians living in what has become Israel

Under Military Rule (1949 – 1966): 35.000 – 45.000 Palestinians displaced
In the period 1950 – 1956: up to 20.000 Palestinian bedouins in the Naqab were displaced by Israel

1967 War: 400.000 – 450.000 Palestinians displaced,
approximately 193.500 were 1948 refugees

Since 1967, Israel has been exacerbating a coercive environment through the implementation of policies of forcible transfer and displacement all over Mandatory Palestine, including:

1. Denial of Residency
2. Discriminatory Zoning and Planning
3. Land Confiscation and Denial of Use
4. Instalment of a Permit Regime
5. Denial of access to natural resources and services
6. Suppression of Resistance
7. Segregation and Institutional Racism
8. Non-State Actions (with the complicity of Israel)
9. Denial of Reparations (voluntary return, property restitution, compensation and non-repetition of violations)

Each one of these policies is implemented through laws and practices that deny or inhibit the enjoyment of the most basic human rights. Furthermore, while any one of the policies creates a coercive environment in itself, the reality is that Palestinians face multiple policies at the same time. Through these policies, Israel displaces and transfers indigenous Palestinians while facilitating the colonization of Palestinian land by Israeli-Jews.

The definition of 'force' “is not restricted to physical force, but may include threat of force or coercion, such as that caused by fear of violence, duress, detention, psychological oppression or abuse of power against such person or persons or another person, or by taking advantage of a coercive environment.” Article 6(e) of The Rome Statute Elements of Crimes.

The essential component is that the displacement must be involuntary, with the person(s) in question being deprived of genuine choice in the decision to leave their homes and communities.

UNRWA AND PALESTINIAN REFUGEES

The United Nations Conciliation Commission for Palestine (UNCCP) was established by UNGA Resolution 194 in 1948 to provide protection and promote a durable solution for Palestinian refugees. The UNCCP has failed to provide the basic international protection accorded to all other refugees and has been effectively defunct since the early 1950s.

The inactivity of UNCCP has forced UNRWA, originally established to carry out direct relief and works programs for Palestinian refugees, to incorporate some protection activities within its mandate in order “to safeguard and advance the rights of Palestine refugees under international law.” UNRWA’s original mandate, set by UNGA Resolution 302 of 1949, has been repeatedly renewed in light of the ongoing Palestinian refugee question.

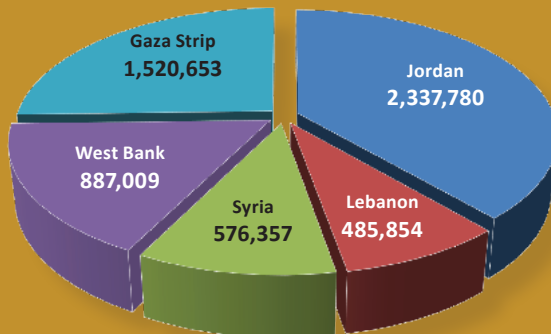
UNRWA supports 6.4 million registered Palestinians, in the occupied Palestinian territory, Lebanon, Jordan and Syria.

To implement its mandate, UNRWA depends on voluntary contributions from the United Nations’ member states. Hence, it is completely subject to their political will and interests, which have led to the financial crisis suffered by UNRWA.

While the Palestinian refugee population has witnessed an exponential growth and a growing demand for the provision of school, healthcare, relief, and other services, political funding conditions imposed by donor states have put a significant administrative and operational burden on UNRWA which have in turn led to a decrease in the quality and quantity of services provided to refugees as well as UNRWA’s efficacy and effectiveness.

The recent call by the Commissioner-General of UNRWA for the involvement of other UN institutions to provide services to Palestinian refugees is not the solution to its financial crisis. Transferring UNRWA’s responsibilities and services to other international agencies and organizations would only lead to the erasure of the political dimension surrounding the Palestinian refugee issue and turn it into a humanitarian case only. This would fulfil Israel’s desire to liquidate UNRWA and the refugee question altogether.

UNRWA Registered Palestinian



The solution to this crisis lies in the responsibility of the international community to ensure the provision of humanitarian assistance and rights-based protection to Palestinian.

Financing UNRWA’s essential programs to ensure basic human rights must be made a mandatory obligation of the international community. In cases where voluntary donations are insufficient, the UN must compel Member States to contribute to the funding of UNRWA’s budget.

The Agency must also be granted greater flexibility in the allocation of its funds. Without sufficient and stable financial resources, UNRWA is unable to secure key services for Palestinian refugees, and without the freedom to direct these funds to priority areas, significant improvements to the situation of Palestinian refugees cannot be realized.

CONDITIONAL FUNDING TO UNRWA

- Under the guise of anti-terrorism measures and under the pretext of guaranteeing the neutrality of its services, donor States are imposing political conditions aimed at de-legitimizing the services Palestinian refugees are entitled to and at reducing the number of Palestinian refugees receiving such services.
- The Framework Agreement imposed by the US administration pushes for a depoliticized approach to the Palestinian refugee issue that violates the staff 's and beneficiaries' freedom of expression, freedom of political affiliation, and right to education.
- These unacceptable political conditions infringe on UNRWA's mandate, which can only be altered by the General Assembly of the UN, hence overriding its authority. More importantly, these conditions are in breach of the fundamental principle of neutrality that must govern humanitarian aid and action.
- Pushing UNRWA to limit its service provisions to certain beneficiaries while excluding others, which in turn enables donor states, in particular the USA, to transform UNRWA into a security agency promoting their political agenda and Israel's so-called security.
- Ultimately, these political conditions are clear attempts to eliminate the current status of Palestinian refugees and UNRWA itself, as the remaining witness of the international responsibility for the plight of the Palestinian people and their displacement.

PALESTINIAN REFUGEES' RIGHTS VIOLATED BY USA-UNRWA FRAMEWORK AGREEMENT

- The Framework Agreement's counter-terrorism measures label Palestinian political and resistance factions as terrorist groups and organizations, which not only contradicts the legitimate right of the Palestinian people to struggle for self determination and resist their colonizer, but violates the principles of humanity, impartiality, and neutrality by requiring UNRWA to deny assistance to those who may have been associated with these factions.
- The Framework Agreement's obligations on UNRWA staff to "uphold the Agency's neutrality" and not "take sides in hostilities or engage in controversies" include "guidelines on the use of social media", leading to the invasive monitoring of and attacks on private social media accounts of UNRWA staff, directly violating their right to freedom of expression by greatly restricting their political activity and opinions in the public sphere – a highly damaging restriction given that UNRWA was founded to assist and protect Palestine refugees within a very specific context of an ongoing conflict.
- The Framework Agreement additionally violates the right to education by imposing obligations to neutralize and decontextualize UNRWA's educational curriculum of any national, historical, and Palestinian content, thereby depriving Palestinian children of their awareness of their human rights and their ability to later engage in political participation for the purpose of realizing their people's right to self-determination.

Related BADIL's publications on UNRWA crises



Want to know more?

BADIL's Survey of Palestinian Refugees and Internally Displaced Persons: 2019 - 2021 provides a comprehensive overview for everyone interested in the Palestinian cause, and more specifically in the Palestinian refugees and IDPs rights and protection to which they are entitled.

Find the Survey and other BADIL publications online at:

www.badil.org

