

Implementing CEDAW  
for Palestinian Refugee Women in Lebanon

Aggravation of Pre-existing Challenges: Marginalization and Displacement

Second Supplementary Report

2016

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## Summary

This is the second report on the implementation of the CEDAW Convention for Palestinian refugee women in Lebanon. Following the first supplementary report<sup>1</sup>, this report is an output of a collective effort by NGOs working with Palestinian refugee women in their communities in a variety of development related and emergency activities.

The main argument of this report is expressed in its title "Aggravation of Pre-existing Challenges: marginalization and displacement." Marginalization and displacement are proposed to further existing discrimination of Palestinian refugee women in almost all sections of the report.

The situation of Palestinian refugee women currently residing in Lebanon - whether they are descendents of persons who took refuge in Lebanon in 1948 and early fifties or the emerging Palestinian refugees 'displaced' from Syria - is intertwined with the deteriorating situation of the general refugee population. The prevalent patriarchy represented by the gap in political representation particularly women's presence and leverage within governance institutions and despite the progress made in that regard, accentuates the vulnerability of women who are pushed unprotected into the public sphere to attempt to earn income or to negotiate access to relief assistance. On the other side the rise in the role of NGOs in catalyzing the process of women's empowerment and effective involvement in local governance and other aspects of the political sphere is noted.

Recommendations of the supplementary report include the following:

- Calling upon the CEDAW committee to devise accountability procedures for PLO - and other and organizations yet to enroll in such a structure and UNRWA in addition to the State of Lebanon regarding implementation of CEDAW convention each in the organization's respective domain of responsibility in relation to the convention.
- Calling upon the PLO political structure and organizations yet to enroll in such a structure and other duty bearers each in their respective domain to address the increased vulnerability of Palestinian refugee women currently residing in Lebanon in enhancing the presence of women in political decision-making positions,
- Calling upon the UNRWA and other duty bearers each in their respective domain to address the increased vulnerability of Palestinian refugee women currently residing in Lebanon in easing burden of displacement on the displaced and the host refugee communities,

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<sup>1</sup> See first report published in 2008 using the following web address:  
<http://www2.ohchr.org/english/bodies/cedaw/docs/ngos/NAJDEH.pdf>

- Calling upon all duty bearers to address the reduction in UNRWA services,
- Calling upon relevant duty bearers to generate community specific information relevant to discrimination against Palestinian refugee women currently residing in Lebanon.

## **1 Introductory Note**

1.1 This report is the second report on the assessment of the implementation of CEDAW on Palestinian refugee women in Lebanon. The report addresses initially the period between 2008 - the year where the committee reviewed the third state report and issued general recommendations - and the year 2014 which is the year of submission of the fourth and fifth joint report (CEDAW/C/LBN/4-5) submitted by the State of Lebanon April 25, 2014 to the CEDAW committee for consideration under Article 18 of the Convention. Also, the report addresses the period from 2015 to first half of 2016.

1.2 This report commences by submitting a critical commentary on the State report and identifies information gaps.

1.3 Reiterating a point raised in the introductory note, this report covers the situation of Palestinian refugee women currently residing in Lebanon during the time of drafting of the report who include registered refugees in Lebanon, Non-Registered, Non-IDs, and Palestinian refugees from Syria who have fled from areas of armed conflict in Syria.

1.4 Violence against women in the family setting is addressed in the section relating to marriage and the family. Special needs and old age vulnerability are addressed in the section on health. The report contains a set of recommendations.

1.5 The content pertaining to CEDAW convention in the second report is organized as in the case of the first report along the lines of selected articles of CEDAW from Article 7 to Article 16 inclusive.

## **2 Notes on the Lebanese State Report (CEDAW/C/LBN/4-5)**

This section examines critically the fourth and fifth joint report (CEDAW/C/LBN/4-5) submitted by the State of Lebanon to the CEDAW Committee in terms of progress made and gaps pertaining to the situation of the Palestinian refugee women currently residing in Lebanon.

### **2.1 Progress made in the Lebanese state report regarding the covering the situation of Palestinian refugee women**

2.1.1 The state report includes a formal commitment by the Lebanese government to insure implementation of human and social rights.. " until the enactment of full return, the government will work towards providing human, and social rights to Palestinians residing on Lebanese land.." in the declaration of the seventy second Council of Ministers dated 13/6/2011. (Paragraph 1.264 of the State report).

2.1.2 The combined fourth and fifth state report contains a substantive coverage of issues that face Palestinian refugee women (section 71 of the state report paragraphs 261 to 266 inclusive). Palestinian refugee women were the major subject of discussion under the subtopic 'refugee women' which is part of a general topic entitled 'women in special situations'. Several informational sources that were published after 2008 were sought regarding socio-demographic context as well as coverage of health and social services.

## **2.2 Gaps in the state report pertaining to the situation of Palestinian refugee women in Lebanon.**

2.2.1 Major sources of information in the State Report are from UNRWA, no governmental sources are cited regarding socioeconomic data pertaining to Palestinian refugees indicating the exclusion of the Palestinian population in camps from Lebanese database, as well as the lack of classification of Palestinians who are living outside the camps in Lebanese databases despite their inclusion in the samples.

2.2.2 In paragraph 266 of the fourth and fifth State Report under the heading of obstacles and challenges, while listing some challenges that Palestinian refugee women face including violence against women, the State Report is restricted to acknowledging challenges that Palestinian refugee women face without explaining the scope of the problems - despite the availability of data, and the report does not reflect on prospects for their resolution.

2.2.3 The lack of ratification by Lebanon of the Casa Blanca accord among Arab states is mentioned without restating a formal rationale of such lack of ratification and without any mention of prospects of ratification in the foreseeable future.

2.2.4 No details are provided on the scope of the problem of access to basic services (health and education) by unregistered Palestinian refugees.

2.2.5 Furthermore, no mention was made in the State report in the section pertaining to Palestinian refugee women of the interaction of the influx of refugees from Syria to Palestinian refugee communities.

2.2.6 In view of the above, the second report seeks to address information gaps within the constraints of available information and to identify specific issues in the following sections.

### 3 Context

This section on context previews the situation of Palestinian refugees in Lebanon during the period between 2008 and 2016. There were increasing security threats in the camps, and a major demographic shift with the advent of Palestinian refugees from Syria as well as Syrian refugees inside the Palestinian refugee camps. On the other hand, there is a lack of substantive change in the legal vulnerability of Palestinian refugees in Lebanon. Such legal stalemate regarding the status of Palestinian refugees in Lebanon may be regarded as a major contributor to exacerbating their marginalization and social exclusion.

#### 3.1 A change in the demographic composition of the Palestinian refugee population in Lebanon - a mix of 'local' Palestinian refugees and 'displaced' refugees from Syria

A recent report published by the United Nations Relief and Work Agency for Palestine Refugees in the Near East (UNRWA) and the American University of Beirut (AUB) of a population survey conducted in 2015 that covered the situation of Palestinian refugees registered in Lebanon including Palestinian refugees who fled from Syria as a result of the armed conflict who are registered in the Syria field of operation of UNRWA.

The total number of the Palestinian refugees currently living in Lebanon (PRLs) who are registered refugees in UNRWA records is 495,985 persons, while the total number estimated to be currently residing in Lebanon ranges from 260,000 to 280,000 persons. The estimate follows the 2010 estimate in the previous AUB UNRWA study (Chaaban et al, 2016)<sup>2</sup>. Most PRLs (63 percent) reside in 12 camps spread over the area of Lebanon; the rest (37 percent) reside in gatherings that are neighborhoods integrated within Lebanese communities. Ein el Hilweh refugee camp in Saida in south Lebanon is the largest concentration (where 15 percent of the population reside).

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<sup>2</sup> Chaaban, J., Salti, N., Ghattas, H., Irani, A., Ismail, T., Batlouni, L. (2016), "Survey on the Socioeconomic Status of Palestine Refugees in Lebanon 2015", Report published by the American University of Beirut (AUB) and the United Nations Relief and Works Agency for Palestine Refugees in the Near East (UNRWA).

Table 1 Population Age Pyramids Statistics - A Comparison of Palestinian refugees registered in Lebanon and Palestinian refugees displaced from Syria - 2015 data

Palestinian Refugees living in Lebanon (PRLs)			Palestinian Refugees displaced from Syria (PRS)		
Age group (Years)	Males	Females	Age group (Years)	Females	Males
0-14	26.8%	25.6%	0-14	34.1%	37.3%
15-24	24.2%	19.7%	15-24	19.1%	18.3%
25-34	14.6%	13.5%	25-34	17.5%	15.0%
35-44	10.5%	12.2%	35-44	11.3%	12.6%
45-54	11.3%	13.2%	45-54	08.4%	08.1%
55-64	6.2%	7.4%	55-64	05.3%	04.8%
65+	6.5%	8.4%	65+	04.5%	03.8%

Source: for Palestinian refugees living in Lebanon, source statistics in figure 3 p.45 in (Chaaban et al, 2016), Source: for Palestinian Refugees Displaced from Syria: statistics in the table are from figure 28 p.141 (Chaaban et al, 2016),

One-fifth of households (21.5 percent) are women headed households. The demographic composition of the Palestinians in Lebanon has been modified by the influx from Syria in general. According to UNRWA registration figures as of November 2015, the number of Palestinian refugees from Syria is 42,284. (Chaaban et al, 2016, p.8). The population is young, 50 percent is 24 years old and less for both PRLs and PRS as shown in table 1. PRS represent 20 percent of beneficiaries of UNRWA as of 2015 (Chaaban et al, 2016).

Lebanon is the largest place of refuge of Palestinian Refugees from Syria (PRS) outside Syria according to UNRWA (2014)<sup>3</sup>. The majority (63 percent) of Palestine refugees residing in Syria have been displaced either inside or outside Syria. Most (78 percent) are displaced inside Syria. The largest proportion of Palestinians from Syria who displaced outside Syria are displaced in Lebanon; PRS in Lebanon constitute 16 percent of the total PRS population. Most of the PRS arrived in Lebanon by 2014, after that date, there were restrictions from the Lebanese government (UNRWA, 2014)<sup>4</sup>.

UNRWA's assistance has been reduced in view of UNRWA's lack of funds, and a significant proportion live in fear of deportation. "UNRWA has been struggling to ensure adequate shelter, education, health care and other services to PRS, who now represent an approximate 20 per cent increase of beneficiaries in need of assistance in Lebanon. As the primary provider of assistance to PRS, UNRWA instituted in February 2014 programs of monthly cash assistance for food (US\$ 30 per person) and housing (US\$ 100 per family). In April 2015 food assistance was

<sup>3</sup> UNRWA, PRS in Lebanon <http://www.unrwa.org/prs-lebanon>

<sup>4</sup> UNRWA, PRS in Lebanon <http://www.unrwa.org/prs-lebanon>

reduced from US\$ 30 to US\$ 27, and 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." (Chaaban et al, 2016 p.8) Furthermore according to Chaaban et al 2016, "...the majority of PRS arrived in 2012 and 2013. A little over half of PRS are females. The majority of PRS live in Palestine refugee camps, with Ein El Hilweh hosting the largest share. PRS are on average five years younger than PRL and they count for bigger households than PRL. Most PRS live in fear of being deported as a result of Lebanon's tight restrictions on them." (Chaaban et al, 2016, p.147)

#### Box 1 Issues raised by Palestinian NGOs during the UPR session 2015

- Presence of 5000 persons who do not have a legal status, cannot register marriages, or births
- Lack of freedom of movement due to security restrictions around the camps
- Palestinians are deprived from working in professions such as medicine, law, engineering due to lack of government control over the professional orders
- Palestinians are deprived of the right to own property
- Poor housing conditions and vertical expansion of camps
- Restriction on the freedom of entering construction materials and sanitation supplies to the camps
- Reconstruction of Nahr el Bared camp is lagging

Source: Universal Periodic Review of Lebanon, 23rd Session of the UPR Working Group, November 2015, Joint NGO Submission: Human Rights Violations Perpetrated Against Palestinian Refugees in Lebanon, A Presentation by Ms. Malvina Abou Ardini, Association Najdeh.

### 3.2 Changes in the security situation in Lebanon between 2008 and 2016

Between 2008 and 2014, Palestinian refugee women and their families endured a set of events most prominent of which is the deterioration of the security situation in Lebanon and the escalation of the economic hardship, and overcrowding resulting from the influx of Palestinian refugees and Syrian refugees fleeing from armed conflict to Palestinian camps and gatherings. According to a Human Rights Watch report submitted to OCHCR UPR in 2015, "In addition to about 45 thousand Palestinian refugees from Syria in Lebanon according to a report from Human Rights Watch (2015), there are 300 thousand Palestinian refugees living - according to estimates - in severe hardship situations. Still Lebanese laws and regulations prevent Palestinians from work in at least 25 profession that require membership in a syndicate including law, medicine, engineering. Such laws also prohibit Palestinian refugees of Lebanon who own real estate from registering their property. "<sup>5</sup>

<sup>5</sup> Human Rights Watch, 2015 (translation by author) <https://www.hrw.org/ar/news/2015/10/15/284266>

### 3.3 Implication of the Syria crisis on living conditions of Palestinian refugees in Lebanon:

Palestinian refugee camps along with other areas of socioeconomic vulnerability in Lebanon attracted vulnerable refugees from Syria both Palestinians and Syrians. This resulted in a demand for areas to rent and increase in the rent fees based on the market response to increase in demand. The already crowded camps in all areas of Lebanon became flooded by the influx from Syria. Moreover, relief resources were channeled to Syria response interventions. Such shift in resource allocations was perceived by host communities as another cut in their already meager resources allocated to meeting their needs. (See Strickland, 2015<sup>6</sup>, Morrison, 2014<sup>7</sup>, Oxfam International<sup>8</sup>, and Dahi, 2014<sup>9</sup>, Jay, 2016<sup>10</sup>)

### *3.4 Conclusion regarding Context:*

Palestinian refugees in Lebanon live in a condition of exacerbated vulnerability - legally, and demographically. They live in a situation of low security, marginalization and social exclusion especially in the camps.

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<sup>6</sup> Strickland, Patrick (2015) Double displacement: Palestinians flee violence in Syria, then Lebanon, The Electronic Intifada, September 3, 2015 <https://electronicintifada.net/content/double-displacement-palestinians-flee-violence-syria-then-lebanon/14821>

<sup>7</sup> Morrison, Leah (2014) The vulnerability of Palestinian refugees from Syria, Forced Migration, September, pp 41-42. <http://www.fmreview.org/syria/morrison.html>

<sup>8</sup> Oxfam International (not-dated) Palestinian refugees from Syria: a story of perpetual displacement, <https://www.oxfam.org/en/lebanon-occupied-palestinian-territory-and-israel-crisis-syria/palestinian-refugees-syria-story>

<sup>9</sup> Dahi, Omar (2014) Syria in Fragments: The Politics of the Refugee Crisis, Dissent, Winter <https://www.dissentmagazine.org/article/syria-in-fragments-the-politics-of-the-refugee-crisis>

<sup>10</sup> Jay, Martin (2016) Psychological toll on Syrian refugees alarming, many suffer from mental illnesses, Daily Sabah March 24

<http://www.dailysabah.com/feature/2016/03/24/psychological-toll-on-syrian-refugees-alarming-many-suffer-from-mental-illnesses>

#### **4 Political and Public Life - Article 7**

4.1 *Women engagement in NGOs:* There is a substantial participation of women in NGOs. in 2010 NGOs (and government) constituted highest sector that women work in ( with a women's 'head count' of 29 percent) following education and health care sector (with a women's 'head count 'of 50 percent) - (Chaaban et al, 2010<sup>11</sup> report table 1-3 p.11). The same pattern.

NGOs as a mechanism of engagement of women in the public sphere and empowerment of women. There are indications of a sustained increasing trend of involvement of women in political and public life, engagement of women in the Palestinian refugee scene in Lebanon is mainly through NGOs that have space and resources to work in Lebanon. NGOs are playing a catalyzing role in promoting and accelerating women's involvement in political and public life in the Palestinian scene in Lebanon. This is echoed by the consensus of several women leaders of NGOs working with women as the Forum of Palestinian Women in Lebanon, that NGO work is regarded as a catalyst to activate women's effective political participation; they also describe the Palestinian body politic as a body with institutionalized patriarchy<sup>12</sup>. Recently women are starting to being engaged in dialogue committees with UNRWA<sup>13</sup>.

4.2 *Engagement of women through NGOs in addressing the UNRWA financial crisis.* A recent conference convened by 14 NGOs in Ramada Plaza Hotel in Beirut on March 21, 22, 2016 "Palestinian Refugees in Lebanon: an Unknown Future, How to Pave the Way to a Better and More Visible Future?" on the situation of Palestinian refugees following the recent policy changes in UNRWA. The conference presented papers on strengthening international strategies and international and regional policies relevant to the needs of Palestinian refugees in Lebanon, and touched upon the multiplicity of perspectives of donor organizations from human rights based to double standards. Other themes included the strengthening of security and protection, and the youth -current and future role. The conference called on UNRWA to implement 'real' and action oriented partnership with the Palestinian society with all its components and a call for ways and mechanisms of participating in decision-making in UNRWA, also recommended awareness raising to increase the knowledge of right holders and decision makers and the communities and update them on UNRWA's policies, and strategies. Another recommendation raised is to exert pressure on the State of Palestine "the observer member" in the advisory committee in UNRWA and on the advisory committee at large to respond to the needs of the Palestinian people. A third , is a call for stable budgets for UNRWA financed from the United

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<sup>11</sup> Chaaban, J., Ghattas, H., Habib, R., Hanafi, S., Sahyoun, N., Salti, N., Seyfert, K. & Naamani, N., (2010), *Socio-Economic Survey of Palestinian Refugees in Lebanon*, <http://www.unrwa.org/userfiles/2011012074253.pdf>

<sup>12</sup> input from the Forum of Palestinian women in Lebanon - meeting of June 2, 2016)

<sup>13</sup> Input from Ms. Buthaina Saad a current member of the dialogue committee with UNRWA in the social committee.

Nations without change in UNRWA's legal status, and to push towards forming a Palestinian - Lebanese - International committee from the parties concerned to oversee UNRWA's policy in terms of formulation and implementation.

Moreover, women's engagement in advocacy work within the framework of NGOs has been maintained nationally and internationally. At the national level, Association Najdeh is coordinating a coalition of partner NGOs in conducting the right to work campaign<sup>14</sup>. In addition a number of NGOs have been involved in the UPR shadow report preparation that is periodically submitted to the OHCHR<sup>15</sup>.

NGOs also play a role in capacity building and empowerment of women, Norwegian People's Aid funds several programs in NGOs working with Palestinian refugee communities including " Program of empowerment of women to participate in political and public life - Women Can Do it " which involves four NGOs working with Palestinian refugees at the grass roots level covering all camps and gatherings these are Association Najdeh, the General Union of Palestinian Women, the National Institute for Social Care and Vocational Training NISCVT, and the Popular Aid for Relief and Development PARD.

4.3 *Political participation* of Palestinian women suffers from a lack of information on the topic according to Fahd Sleiman (2012), but in general the political participation is relatively low, the highest proportion is 17 percent in the political Bureau of the DFLP - a left of center Palestinian Political Organization, implying variation in representation among political parties/ groups. However, Sleiman noted though that there is a slow but increasing trend of participation of women in Palestinian political institutions with a representational character<sup>16</sup>. There is a gap in political participation of women between the institutional structures inside Occupied Palestine namely in West Bank and Gaza and institutions in the Palestinian refugee community residing in Lebanon. According to Khaldat Hussein (2012) only 4 Palestinian refugee women are members of the Palestinian National Council<sup>17</sup>.

4.2 *Engagement of women in local governance*: Attributed to this program, there is more than nine-fold increase in the women members in local governance bodies in camps and gatherings referred to as popular committees from 5 members in 2011 to 47 members in 2014 which is the most up-to-date statistics available. (see annex for more details) In addition, table 2 presents

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<sup>14</sup> Association Najdeh, Right to Work Campaign, <http://www.association-najdeh.org/english/work.htm>

<sup>15</sup> Universal Periodic Review, Lebanon 2015 Civil Society Reports, <http://www.rdfwomen.org/eng/wp-content/uploads/2015/07/UPR-ENGLISH-final-output.pdf>

<sup>16</sup> Fahed Slueiman - Member of the Central Council of the Palestine Liberation Organization PLO - Positioning Women's Human Rights and the State Obligation to Promote and Protect them in the Current Social, Political and Economic Processes - a presentation at EFI- IFE Round Table held in Beirut 2012

<http://www.efi-ife.org/sites/default/files/report%20roundtable%20regional%20dialogue%20on%20enhancing%20democracy%2020-21%20june%202012%20beirut.pdf>

<sup>17</sup> Khalidat Hussein (2012) Political Participation and Partnership in Struggle, Nada Vol. zero, October 2012 p.2 (Arabic)

statistics of regional distribution of women members of popular committees in 2014. Saida camps and gatherings - the demographic hub have the largest proportion of women representation in local governance, followed by the camps and gathering in Beirut - the capital - 23 percent - both above the average of 18 percent. The lowest representation is in the Sour area in South Lebanon and Beqaa camp and gathering in the central area of the country.

**Table 2 Women engagement in Local Governance - Palestinian refugees in Lebanon - 2014 data**

<b>Area</b>	<b>Number of women</b>	<b>Proportion of women (Percent)</b>
<b>Sour - South Lebanon</b> Al Bass, Rashidieh, Burj Shamali camps and , Qassmieh and Shabriha gatherings	13	13%
<b>Saida - South Lebanon</b> Ein el Hilweh and Mieh w Mieh camps, and gatherings in Saida and Iqlim Kharroub	9	27%
<b>Beqaa</b> Al Jalil camp and gathering in Saadnayel	3	14%
<b>Beirut ( and suburbs)</b> Burj Barajneh, Shatila, Mar Elias and Debayeh camps, Shalehat and Said Ghawwash gatherings	13	23%
<b>North</b> Nahr el Bared and Baddawi camps, and gatherings in Tripoli and Meena cities	9	18%
<b>Total</b>	<b>47</b>	<b>18%</b>

Source: PLO - Follow-up Committee, provided by Buthaina Saad of Association Najdeh

A discussion group conducted for purposes of generating this report in Shatila camp<sup>18</sup> included the head of the popular committee - the highest form of Palestinian community governance in the camp. He expressed concern that the participation of women in public affairs in camps is limited to the domain of the traditional gender role - education, social services. Women members of popular committees do not assume responsibilities in key fields such as camp security.

4.4 *Engagement of women in syndicates:* In syndicates, according to Muna Waked - a political and grassroots activist and leader in DFLP<sup>19</sup>, there is a low level of representation in the Physician Syndicate - one out of 11 members, and there is one woman member out of 6 members in the syndicate of lawyers; 1 out of 11 of the executive council of the union of workers and staff

<sup>18</sup> Source: discussion group during preparation of the CEDAW report Shatila Camp - 2014,

<sup>19</sup> Mona Waked (2012) Voices that are rendered absent from the agenda, Nada Vol zero, October 2012 p. 4 (Arabic)

of UNRWA. Furthermore, no woman is represented in the general union of Palestine labor Syndicate despite the presence of thousands in its rank and file membership. A similar situation applies to the administrative committee of the union of engineers. This implies according to Mona Waked<sup>20</sup> the absence of gender perspective in the programs of such syndicates as limited as their scope of influence may be. In addition, concerns of working women are absent from the agenda of the Palestinian women's movement in Lebanon.

## **5 Representation - Article 8**

5.1 There has not been a substantive change in the situation regarding representation of women compared to situation during 2008. However, it is noteworthy that the State Report contains data from the General Union of Palestinian women. This highlights an emerging pattern of representation of Palestinian women in relation to the Lebanese government. In addition, alliances and networks that have been built between NGOs working with the Palestinian refugee communities and run by refugee women with NGOs working with Lebanese communities is another creative form of representation that fits the situation of the Palestinian refugee women in Lebanon. Such alliances have been present during the previous report. As for the situation of women's representation in the Embassy of the State of Palestine in Lebanon, no significant changes in the public sphere regarding representation of women have been noted since 2008.

According to information from leaders of women's organizations - Forum of Palestinian women in Lebanon<sup>21</sup> note that the embassy of the State of Palestine in Lebanon delegated the General Union of Palestinian Women with the service sector, consequently, in the dialogue committees with UNRWA that was instituted by political factions, women are assigned only the service committee, moreover in the crisis cluster which is the core group where political parties interface with UNRWA consists exclusively of men.

## **6 Nationality - Article 9 - The persistence of the problem of Non-IDs absence of basic human rights**

6.1 The fourth and fifth Lebanon State report noted that despite the measures taken as identified in the state report which consist of presenting them [non id Palestinian refugees] with identification cards to allow for movement without fear of incarceration however such identification cards do not allow them to work or register in schools or universities or benefit from health care or register marriage contracts in official department. (para 2.264) No justification was provided for such a limited action by the report.

6.2 In paragraph 266 point 2, the combined fourth and fifth Lebanon state report notes that Palestinians who are not classified as refugees (they are referred to as unregistered) do not benefit from service provisions by UNRWA or the Lebanese state. Such a statement needs

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<sup>20</sup> Mona Waked (2012) Voices that are rendered absent from the agenda, Nada Vol zero, October 2012 p. 4 (Arabic)

<sup>21</sup> Forum of Palestinian Women in Lebanon, June 2, 2016 meeting.

further clarification as follows: such category consists of two groups: first there is a category of Palestinians who are classified as refugees by the Lebanese state but are not registered in UNRWA Lebanon field office these are referred to as NRs. NRs whose mothers are registered refugees benefit from UNRWA service provision<sup>22</sup>. The second and more vulnerable category is that of the non-ids where neither UNRWA Lebanon nor the Lebanese government recognize them as refugees. This is the population group of 4000 individuals according to 2004 estimates that the Danish refugee Council spearheaded an advocacy for their plight in 2004 these are mainly located in Beqaa (Eastern Central part of Lebanon) and the Sour /Tyre area (south Lebanon)- both areas of socioeconomic vulnerability. An update of the DRC report in 2007<sup>23</sup> underscored several measures to be taken by UNRWA, Lebanese government, and Egyptian government, however no total was presented excepting that of DRC database where 1252 individuals were registered at the time.

6.3 Such challenge embodies the full implications of statelessness for Palestinian non IDs living in Lebanon. Despite advocacy of international NGOs such as DRC and local NGOs, since 2005 no substantive change with the exception of the security related identification procedure was done.

6.4 Aggravation - lack of Lebanese government for registration - There are reports that applications for naturalizing Palestinian women married to Lebanese men move along slowly. Furthermore, a Lebanese woman who is married to a Palestinian cannot bestow her Lebanese nationality to her child.

Discrimination against women in Lebanese law in the nationality law which pertains to paragraph 2 of item 9 in CEDAW relating to granting women equal rights as men regarding giving their nationality to their children,

Source: Najdeh Report of the Violence against Women Program 2015

## **7 Education - Article 10**

7.1 Education has emerged as a serious challenge facing Palestinian refugees with UNRWA's measures to shrink education along with health and in-kind social services (CRTDA, 2016)<sup>24</sup>.

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<sup>22</sup> Incomplete Entitlement: An overview of the Living Conditions of Palestinian refugees who are residing legally in Lebanon but are not entitled to UNRWA Lebanon Field, A Report submitted to DRC May 2011, Prepared by Aziza Khalidi

<sup>23</sup> Danish Refugee Council (2007) Survey Report on the Situation of Non-ID Palestinian Refugees Lebanon, Republished with an additional Chapter including updated statistics, September.

<sup>24</sup> CRTDA ACGEN: Active Citizenship and Gendered Social Entitlements (2016) UNRWA'S Endemic Financial Crisis And The Disregard Of Palestinians' National Rights, Editorial - January 2016 Social Rights Watch, Tuesday, 2/23/2016 <[Http://CrtDa.Org.Lb/Node/15082](http://CrtDa.Org.Lb/Node/15082)>

This problem is exacerbated by UNRWA's measures to adapt to the prolonged stay of Palestinian refugees from Syria which resulted in more crowded classrooms<sup>25</sup>.

7.2 In general, Palestinian refugees are enrolled in elementary education and intermediate education - given that these services are provided for free by UNRWA, and they even exceed the Lebanese according to findings from a 2008 survey (see figure....)<sup>26</sup>. However the pattern shifts in favor of the Lebanese in the secondary and university levels.

7.4 Enrollment in elementary, preparatory and secondary education: Data are available from two recent surveys conducted by UNRWA in partnership with the American University of Beirut in 2010 and 2015. Findings from these two surveys show a relatively small gender gap in elementary school favoring girls but it widens in preparatory and secondary school as shown in tables 3,4, and 5. This shows the tendency for boys to assume their gender role of going early on into the workforce in view of the poverty situation, also school is seen as a protective investment for girls for their future married lives.

**Table 3 Enrollment in Elementary school (percent) 2010 - 2015**

Girls		Boys		Girls and Boys	
2010	2015	2010	2015	2010	2015
96.62	<b>97.4</b>	92.81	<b>97.0</b>	94.72	<b>97.2</b>

Sources: for 2010 - (Chaaban, et al 2010 table3-10 p.37), for 2015 - (Chaaban, et al 2016 figure 11, p.72) - decimal points are displayed as displayed in the published documents.

**Table 4 Enrollment in Preparatory school (percent) 2-10 -2015**

Girls		Boys		Girls and Boys	
2010	2015	2010	2015	2010	2015
89.96	<b>89.4</b>	76.09	<b>78.6</b>	83.31	<b>84.2</b>

Sources: for 2010 - (Chaaban, et al 2010 table3-11 p.37), for 2015 - (Chaaban, et al 2016 figure 11, p.72)- decimal points are displayed as displayed in the published documents.

**Table 5 Enrollment in Secondary school (percent) 2-10 -2015**

Girls		Boys		Girls and Boys	
2010	2015	2010	2015	2010	2015
59.23	<b>65.2</b>	42.92	<b>58.1</b>	51.09	<b>61.2</b>

Sources: for 2010 - (Chaaban, et al 2010 table3-12 p.38), for 2015 - (Chaaban, et al 2016 figure 11, p.72) - decimal points are displayed as displayed in the published documents.

<sup>25</sup> Statements from activists from member NGOs from the Forum of Palestinian Women in Lebanon - informal conversations with author in 2016.

<sup>26</sup> consistent findings pertaining to Palestinian refugees were found in the study of Chaaban et al 2010, table 3-13 p.38 where 12.9 percent reported reaching last class in secondary and higher education.

## **8 Employment - Article 11**

8.1 The limitation on employment on Palestinian refugees at large and the gender gaps in employment for Lebanese women are elements of the framework that defines the context of employment for Palestinian refugee women in Lebanon<sup>27</sup>.

8.2 from the 2016 AUB study UNRWA study using 2015 data, NGOs are found to be the third largest employer of Palestinian refugees in Lebanon (3.8 percent), following the private sector which employs - 77 percent and UNRWA 4.6 percent.(Chaaban et al, 2016 p.82). Although the private sector is the largest employer for women 66.0 percent, men have a higher percentage 79.2 percent, whereas in UNRWA and NGOs the balance tilts in favor of women (9.8 to 3.4 percent in UNRWA for women and men respectively) and (9.6 to 2.4 percent in NGO for women and men respectively. (Chaaban et al 2016, table 24 p. 87).

8.3 Finally there is a lack information on the influence of patriarchy on Palestinian refugee women's choices of employment and to what extent are they are in control of the resources they generate.

## **9 Health - Article 12**

9.1 Recent findings on health conditions and health services utilization shows a dependence on UNRWA and a high prevalence on chronic illnesses in households, and from acute illness from a survey conducted in 2015 are summarized as follows:

" PRL [Palestinian refugees living in Lebanon] and PRS [Palestinian refugees displaced from Syria] health conditions and access to health services are highly dependent on UNRWA services. An almost unanimous count responded that they have access to UNRWA health services. 81.3 per cent of PRL report at least one family member suffering from a chronic illness. That rate is 83 per cent among PRS households. Sixty-three percent of PRL respondents and 75 per cent of PRS respondents report at least one household member who suffered from an acute illness in the past six months. Both PRL and PRS reported 10 per cent who suffer from a disability. Both PRL and PRS health conditions improve with increasing educational attainment and employment levels."

9.2 Other Research findings indicates that key health problems affecting Palestinian women include maternal health as well as ageing, non-communicable diseases and disability, psychological health and wellbeing. Living conditions and available services are factors of influence.

9.2. Ageing: Although the refugee population is a young population but there is a sizeable proportion of elderly. In a survey conducted in 2010, 11.68% of registered refugee women are aged over 65 (UNRWA, 2010)<sup>28</sup>.

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<sup>27</sup> for background information see annex 6

9.3 Disability: UNRWA estimated that 4% of refugees living in Lebanon have a ‘functional disability’ (PCSU, 2011)<sup>29</sup>; more than half are women (2.9% ) (Chaaban et. al, 2010). Conforming with international literature, strong links were found between disability and poverty, with female headed households also being more vulnerable to food insecurity (PCSU, 2011).

9.4 Maternal Health: As of 2010, 27.8% of Palestinian women living in Lebanon were of reproductive age (aged between 15 and 49), compared with 28.6% (the highest) in Jordan, and 25.5% (the lowest) in Gaza (UNRWA, 2010). Palestinian women in Lebanon are expected to bear an average of 3.2 children (UNRWA, 2010). Lebanon has the second lowest crude birth rate of 25.8/1000 births, after Syria which has a total of 19.6/1000 (UNRWA, 2010). It also has the lowest infant mortality rate, (19/1000), compared to 19.5/1000 in the West Bank, 20.2/1000 in Gaza, 22.6/1000 in Jordan and 28.2/1000. According to Armstrong (2012)<sup>30</sup> over 30% of pregnant women who receive assistance through Medical Aid for Palestinians (MAP) have anemia, leaving them six times more vulnerable to additional health problems throughout their pregnancy or during childbirth. Anemia is a significant problem in Lebanon particularly among pregnant women and children aged under three (UNRWA, 2011)<sup>31</sup>. However, following recent campaigns the number of children with anemia in the Tyr area in South Lebanon dropped from 31.34% in 2010 to 19.5 % in 2011. UNRWA reports, in 2011, that 75.9% of Palestinian women across the region registered their pregnancy in the first trimester, this is up from 49.7% in 2003 (UNRWA, 2011). The majority (90.9% ) attended a minimum of four antenatal classes (UNRWA, 2011). In addition, 28.8% and 31% of women in Lebanon gave birth via cesarean section in 2010 and 2011 respectively (UNRWA, 2011). This is the second highest rate in the region following Syria where 21.1% of their total deliveries via cesarean section in 2011 (UNRWA, 2011). According to Armstrong (2012) since 2008, compliance with breastfeeding and waiting 18 months between pregnancies has increased.

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<sup>28</sup> UNRWA, (2010), UNRWA Statistics – 2010, <http://www.unrwa.org/userfiles/2011120434013.pdf>

<sup>29</sup> PCSU, (2011), UNRWA response to OHCHR request for information: Addressing violence against women and girls with disabilities, <http://www.google.jo/url?sa=t&rct=j&q=&esrc=s&frm=1&source=web&cd=3&ved=0CDMQFjAC&url=http%3A%2F%2Fwww2.ohchr.org%2Fenglish%2Fissues%2Fwomen%2Fdocs%2FVAWHRC20%2FUNAgencies%2FUNRWA2.doc&ei=eVgzUrK9HZOv4QTctYD4DQ&usg=AFQjCNHFBjN0TtRg8uK3J6OwZUa1Pgu4g>

<sup>30</sup> Armstrong, M, (2012), Erasing the burden: maternal health care in Palestinian camps, <http://www.dailystar.com.lb/News/Local-News/2012/May-05/172427-easing-the-burden-maternal-health-care-in-palestinian-camps.ashx#axzz2ebyOoN2e>

<sup>31</sup> UNRWA, (2011), The Annual Report of the Department of Health, <http://www.unrwa.org/userfiles/file/publications/HealthReport2012.pdf>

9.5 Non communicable Diseases: According to UNRWA (2011) non communicable diseases are on the rise within all Palestinian communities across the region and are the primary cause of death or reason for seeking treatment. It is estimated that 31% of the Palestinian population in Lebanon have a non communicable illness - 32.4% of this population are women (Chaaban et.al, 2010). Diabetes I and II, as well as hypertension were the most common complaints (UNRWA, 2011). Other health complaints include cancer and respiratory diseases. The majority of the population (91%) seeking UNRWA health services are aged over 40 years, 61% of these were women (UNRWA, 2011). In 2011 the detection rates for breast cancer were up to 3%, from 1% in 2008 (UNRWA, 2011). Palestinian women in Lebanon have the highest incidence of smoking amongst Palestinian refugee populations in the region (Muhaidat, 2010)<sup>32</sup>.

9.6 Psychological Health and Wellbeing: Women report more symptoms of stress and psychological ill health compared with their male counterparts (Chaaban et.al, 2010; Sayigh, 2007)<sup>33</sup>. Mahmoud (2009)<sup>34</sup> found that women feel isolated within their own communities in a study of women in Burj Barajneh camp. In 2005, over 15% of Palestinian women in Lebanon living in the camps or gatherings rate their health as poor or very poor (Tiltnes, 2005)<sup>35</sup>. Findings from the AUB UNRWA study(Chaaban et.al, 2010) indicate that almost half of the women (47%) reported that they felt 'not good' or 'not good at all' compared with 26% of men who reported the same. Findings also showed that 22% of women, compared with 18.98% of men, reported experiencing some psychological problems in the past 12 months (Chaaban et.al, 2010).

9.7 Factors influencing the health of Palestinian refugee women: The conditions which many Palestinian women live in influence their health and wellbeing. In Lebanon 227,718 refugees, approximately half of which are women, live in one of the 12 camps throughout the country (UNRWA, 2010). These camps occupy small land spaces but are home to significant populations for example Burj El Barajneh an urban camp in Beirut is 1 square Km and home to at least 20,000 people (Mahmoud, 2009). The infrastructure in the camp is limited, water quality and quantity poor and electricity sporadic. These conditions mean that women and their children are more susceptible to health problems such as diarrhea, viral hepatitis, fevers, intestinal

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<sup>32</sup> Muhaidat, (2010), Palestinian Women Refugees: The situation in the Gaza Strip, the West Bank, Lebanon, Syria and Jordan, [http://cdn02.abakushost.com/pam/downloads/REP-2010-3-MIGR\\_EN.pdf](http://cdn02.abakushost.com/pam/downloads/REP-2010-3-MIGR_EN.pdf)

<sup>33</sup> Sayigh, R, (2007), The ongoing Nakba Sickness and Health among Palestinian Refugees, <http://electronicintifada.net/content/ongoing-nakba-sickness-and-health-among-palestinian-refugees-lebanon/7106>

<sup>34</sup> Mahmoud, O, (2009) Palestinian Refugee Women in Lebanon: Conditions and challenges in Borj El Barajneh Camp,

<sup>35</sup> Tiltnes, A, (2005), Falling Behind: A brief on the living conditions of Palestinian Refugees in Lebanon, <http://www.faf.no/pub/rapp/464/464.pdf>

infestations and other illnesses (Armstrong, 2012; Habib, 2010<sup>36</sup>). Furthermore, low quality dwellings and limited space have been associated with increased distress, especially for women (Sayigh, 2007).

**9.8 Health services:** UNRWA health services are understaffed and in high demand (Armstrong, 2012), UNRWA has 29 primary health care centres to meet the needs of Palestinians in Lebanon (Chaaban et.al, 2010) with recent UNRWA budget crisis the situation is getting more critical. UNRWA centres are partially supported by the Palestinian Red Crescent Society and Non-Government Organizations (Chaaban, 2010). For example MAP in partnership with Naba'a (Development Action without Borders) provides home visiting and midwifery support for pregnant women in Ein El Hilweh, Nahr al-Bared and Beddawi camps (Armstrong, 2012). The Palestinian Women's Humanitarian Organization (PWHO) provides home visiting and psychosocial support to elderly members of the Burj El Barajneh and Shatila camps<sup>37</sup>.

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<sup>36</sup> Habib,R, (2010) Addressing poor living conditions to improve health in Palestinian camps in Lebanon, [http://www.aub.edu.lb/ifi/public\\_policy/pal\\_camps/Documents/memos/ifi\\_pc\\_memo04\\_habib\\_english.pdf](http://www.aub.edu.lb/ifi/public_policy/pal_camps/Documents/memos/ifi_pc_memo04_habib_english.pdf)

<sup>37</sup> Palestinian Humanitarian Women's Organization Website <http://www.palwho93.org/>

## 10 Economic and Social Benefits - Article 13

10.1 Recent findings pertaining to benefits reaffirm earlier findings that most of the Palestinian refugees living in Lebanon work in the informal sector with a minimal percentage holding work permits let alone working with a contract. This implies lack of formal benefits that are enshrined in the law. Moreover, women are found to be less likely to be employed than men, consistent with the gender norms. The AUB - UNRWA report concludes as follows:

"In conclusion, a clear majority of PRL is informally part of the labour force. Around 86.5 per cent of the employed PRL do not have contracts, and only 6.0 per cent hold work permits. They have verbal agreements with their employers that leave them on bottom end of the employment ladder not benefitting from leave and subsidies, and this situation leaves them feeling rather insecure in their workplace; around half of PRL are wage laborers. The private sector is the largest employer of PRL. More than 70 per cent of the PRL workforce is employed in elementary occupations, craft and related trades, and services and sales. Lastly, women are five times less likely to be employed than men." AUB 2015 data p,91

10.2 Discrimination against Palestinian refugee women in the context of economic and social benefits is similar to that experienced by Lebanese women. This topic has not been raised as an separate issue specific to Palestinian refugee women in local discourses to this date. There are two possible reasons: the first is that there is a general discrimination against both Palestinian refugee women and men in relation to the Lebanese that has not been resolved to this date despite the small steps forward represented by gains made in amending the Lebanese Law to allow Palestinian refugees end of work indemnity benefits while they have yet to benefit from the insurance against sickness and work accidents on equal terms with Lebanese workers. Another reason, is the lack of information about the scope of the problem of gender discrimination for Palestinian refugees regarding economic and social benefits such as the gender pay gap among other indicators.

### **"Small Step towards the Right to Work**

On August 17, 2010, after a lot of hesitation and heated debate between different Lebanese political parties, the Lebanese parliament voted to approve a law, passed by parliament. This law constitutes the lowest common denominator by which all political parties were essentially given a veto, (Lamb 2010).

The amended text of article 59 states:

*"foreign workers/laborers have the same rights as Lebanese laborers upon being discharged from their work, based on the conditions of reciprocity policy; they have to obtain a work permit from the Ministry of Labor. Palestinian refugees, who are registered based on accords, at the Ministry of Interior Affairs and Municipalities (Directorate of Political and Refugees Affairs) are*

*exempted from the condition of reciprocity and the work permit fees issued by the Ministry of Labor.*

Article 59, paragraph 3 of Article 9 of the Lebanese Labor Law issued on 23 September, 1964.

The amended text further states:

*“Palestinian refugee workers are exempt from the condition of reciprocity as stated in the Labor Law and Social Security Law, so as to benefit from the contributions of end of service indemnity conditions which Lebanese workers benefits from. Hereby, the Administration of the Social Security Fund should ascertain*

*13 a separate independent account for the contributions belonging to Palestinian refugees’ workers, that does not bear the Treasury or the National Social Security Fund any financial obligation. Beneficiaries covered by the provisions of this law, do not benefit from the contributions of Sickness, Maternity and Family Allowances Funds”. PHRO 2010”*

*AUB study 2010 p. 13*

## **11 Rural Women - Article 14**

11.1 Data from Lebanon (See ILO report by Ajluni and Kawar, 2015<sup>38</sup>) point to the weakness of the agricultural sector in Lebanon and its slow growth, also a high level of informality of labor reaching 92 percent<sup>39</sup>. The Lebanese Central Administration of Statistics (CAS) data point to a wage gap of 21 percent in the agricultural sector favoring men<sup>40</sup>. A small proportion of Palestinian women work in agriculture 8 percent according to Chaaban et al 2010<sup>41</sup>. The most vulnerable Palestinian refugee communities are located in Sour (south Lebanon) when there is a large proportion of the refugee community who works in agriculture compared to other refugee communities in Lebanon (Chaaban et al, 2010). Post Syrian crisis, the situation has exacerbated given the competition by lower paid laborers from Syria, and for those who are Palestinians the situation is that of exploitation and taking advantage of the displaced status. There are no concrete data on the impact on the discrimination against women. Indirectly and given the intense patriarchy, one would infer that the situation is getting worse for Palestinian women displaced from Syria as well as Palestinian refugee women residing in Lebanon.

11.2 Available information from Lebanon, points to the emergence of cooperatives run by women (cite- CRTDA). However, among the Palestinian refugee communities, cooperatives or similar agricultural establishments run by women are few and have not yet become visible beyond their small communities (for example active aging NGO women are engaged in

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<sup>38</sup> Ajluni, Salem, Kawar, Mary (2015) Towards Decent Work in Lebanon: Issues and Challenges in Light of the Syrian Refugee Crisis A report International Labour Organization, Regional Office for Arab States (2015), <[http://www.ilo.org/wcmsp5/groups/public/---arabstates/---ro-beirut/documents/publication/wcms\\_374826.pdf](http://www.ilo.org/wcmsp5/groups/public/---arabstates/---ro-beirut/documents/publication/wcms_374826.pdf)>

<sup>39</sup> Ajluni and Kawar (2015) op.cit Table 13 p.26

<sup>40</sup> The labour market in Lebanon, Statistics In Focus (SIF), Central Administration of Statistics, Lebanon, Issue number 1, October 2011. Table 2 p. 6  
<[http://www.cas.gov.lb/images/pdfs/sif/cas\\_labour\\_market\\_in\\_lebanon\\_sif1.pdf](http://www.cas.gov.lb/images/pdfs/sif/cas_labour_market_in_lebanon_sif1.pdf)>

<sup>41</sup> Chaaban et al 2010 op.cit. Table 1-3 p.11

agriculture in the Nahr el Bare area in north Lebanon, there is no detailed information about the south and beqaa areas where the agricultural sector is active.

## **12 Law - Article 15**

12.1 As indicated in the first supplementary report in 2008, Palestinian refugee women are under the jurisdiction of the Lebanese law; consequently, issues pertaining to Personal Status laws are identical to those endured by Lebanese women in matters of marriage and the family.

12.2 However, the issue of access to justice for the Palestinian refugee women is not known but given the initial marginalization of Palestinian refugee women and further vulnerability following the advent of displaced persons from Syria - Syrian as well as Palestinians from Syria, raises the flag of a potential in risk of intensifying barriers to access to justice especially among Palestinian women from Syria given the mobility issue as indicated by a recent review of the situation by Oxfam GB that noted that the "Absence of legal education and lack of needed administrative structures within religious courts to assist women who initiate legal procedure are key impediments."<sup>42</sup>.

12.3 Furthermore, there is a consensus among member organizations of the Forum for Palestinian Women in Lebanon, that the current law of family protection does not protect women because there is no specification of the status of women, furthermore, marital rape is not recognized as an act of violence, in addition to a lack of clarity in the protection mechanisms involved within that law. Furthermore, in the Palestinian context there is absence and difficulty of access to justice and there is no mechanism that require families to report criminal acts and a case of sexual abuse of girls was presented and discussed as an illustration.<sup>43</sup>

## **13 Marriage and Family Life - Article 16**

13.1 There are indications of increase in early marriage among Palestinian refugee girls who are registered refugees in Lebanon. According to a recent AUB UNRWA survey conducted in 2015, regional data pertaining to secondary school enrollment show a reverse of gender gap favoring boys in the north and Beqaa areas attributed to early marriages for girls concurrent with the rise in poverty, and an increase in the enrollment of boys in secondary schools in Saida and Sour areas in the south.<sup>44</sup>

13.2 Palestinian refugee women from Syria face a set of challenges at the level of the family situation and livelihood, in addition to the fear of deportation as stated earlier (see paragraph 3.4)

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<sup>42</sup> See background section in Oxfam GB - Women's Access to Justice in the Middle East and North Africa Region, Phase II, 2015, job description of an advertisement for a consultant <http://daleel-madani.org/job/oxfamgb/women%E2%80%99s-access-justice-middle-east-and-north-africa-region-phase-ii>

<sup>43</sup> Forum of Palestinian Women in Lebanon, August 8, 2015 meeting.

<sup>44</sup> See Chaaban et al, 2016 p. 72.

a sharp decline was observed in the family integrity and living conditions as a result of displacement to Lebanon. That was exacerbated by the shock of their interface with the marginalized status of the Palestinians refugees in Lebanon are enduring regarding civil rights.<sup>45</sup>

13.3 Violence against women is a manifestation of deeply entrenched gender norms against women that regard them as wards of their fathers, brothers, then their husbands, cultural norms approve forms of violence under the pretext of discipline. There is increasing evidence regarding violence against women two surveys - a baseline and follow ups were conducted by Association Najdeh on a sample of 300 households in 2011 and 2013 in four Palestinian refugee camps in the North and the South (Saida area)<sup>46</sup> in 2011 and 2013 and from programmatic data by Association Najdeh in 2015.

Findings from the two surveys show that social, verbal, physical and sexual violence was reported by women (See table 5). Approximately a quarter of women reported physical violence, in addition, seven percent of women in 2013 reported sexual violence, such reporting of sexual violence by women in a community survey setting is an indicator of an increased awareness of women about this phenomenon.

Table 6 Population Survey data - Life time Prevalence of violence against women by type - Najdeh Cafod baseline and follow-up population surveys 2011 and 2013 in four Palestinian refugee camps in Lebanon - (Nahr el Bared , Baddawi, Ein el Hilweh and Mieh w Mieh)

Type of violence	Women reporting an incident of at least one indicator of a form of violence during life time 2013		Average number of respondents **	Women reporting an incident of at least one indicator of a form of violence during life time 2011		Average number of respondents **
	Number	Percent		Number	Percent	
Social – all indicators	65	<b>55.1</b>	118	107	68.6	156
Verbal – all indicators	35	<b>29.7</b>	118	57	36.8	155
Physical – all indicators	26	<b>21.0</b>	124	37	24.4	152
Sexual – all	9	<b>7.0</b>	128	9	5.8	154

<sup>45</sup> Synthesis from informal conversations by the author with Palestinian women from Syria conducted in 2015 and 2016 in Burj Barajneh camp, Wadi Zeineh, and Nahr el Bared, al Jaleel camp, and Ein el Hilwe camp, and Sour gatherings in the context of field visits as a consultant.

<sup>46</sup> Two population sample surveys were conducted by Association Najdeh in 2011 and 2013 in four camps in Lebanon, their findings affirmed previous evidence on the presence of violence against women in the family setting and generated specific evidence on the presence of sexual violence in addition to the physical, verbal, and social against women. The prevalence questions used were that of WHO - translated to Arabic. Information was generated from responses of the women who were exposed to violence. Given the close time periods between the two surveys, the data are useful as evidence of validity of the information generated.

indicators						
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\*\*The average was calculated to account for variation of number of respondents for each indicator of each form of violence.

Programmatic data from counseling centers in the violence against women published in program report for 2015 show a higher percentage of physical violence, this is understandable given that the 2011 and 2013 data were population data and the programmatic data involve women who perceived themselves vulnerable enough to consult the centers.

Table 7 Programmatic Data - Old and New Cases - displaced and non displaced coming to Najdeh Counseling Centers 2015 estimated prevalence of gender based violence - violence against women

Type of violence	old & new cases displaced & non-displaced women		old & new cases displaced & non-displaced men		Total
	Number	Percent	Number	Percent	
Physical	128	30.1	47	38.8	175
Sexual	18	4.2	10	8.3	28
Total	425	100	121	100	546

In addition, Association Najdeh programmatic data on the displaced from Syria (mostly Palestinian refugees) reveal as expected a higher prevalence of DV among the displaced.

Table 8 Programmatic Data - Old and New Cases - displaced coming to Najdeh Counseling Centers 2015 estimated prevalence of gender based violence

Type of violence	old & new cases displaced & non-displaced women		old & new cases displaced & non-displaced men		Total
	Number	Percent	Number	Percent	
Physical	60	31.3	34	48.6	94
Sexual	16	8.3	4	5.7	20
Total	192	100	70	100	262

#### 13.4 Structural Challenges pertaining family life

- Continuing discrimination against women the personal status law and the penal code.
- The continuing reservation of the Lebanese government on paragraphs c, d, and g of item 16 in CEDAW related to personal status law
- Continuing violence against women and girls especially domestic violence and the barriers that face passing of the bill to protect women from domestic violence
- Political instability and lack of security and consequent socio economic challenges
- Slowness of progress of the legislative process leading to annul discriminatory clauses against women
- Lack of signing by Lebanon of the Optional Protocol.

13.4 Challenges facing providers of services pertaining to violence against women can be summarized by the statement of Association Najdeh - a major provider for services in a report to its general assembly in 2016. In a report submitted by the Violence against women program to the General Assembly of Association Najdeh 2016 "The most prominent challenge facing NGOs working in the field of service provision including Association Najdeh and the Violence Against Women Program, is the increase in the number of displaced (both Palestinians and Syrians displaced from Syria) with limited capacities. Another challenge is the crowding of camps with the displaced. The camps already have a chronic problems in all levels, health, social, and economic. Lack of mechanisms of protection of women and children in general and for the displaced in particular, in addition to the lack of referral mechanisms among organizations themselves. Lack of a reference local agency (security - legal) to manage the difficult cases such as sexual harassment and rape. Programming challenges include creation of group of girls between 12 - 18 and implement activities targeted to that age group. Another programming challenge is to increase the proportion of engagement of men in awareness raising activities, and to develop the role of the men volunteers in the Najdeh VAW program"

## **14 Relevant initiatives and programs**

**14.1** Following the collaboration in drafting the First Supplementary Report on discrimination against Palestinian refugee women in Lebanon that was presented to the CEDAW committee in 2008, the relationships among several of the organizations that contributed to drafting the report developed/ evolved to an advance level of coordination that resulted in the establishment of the Forum of the Palestinian Women in Lebanon in 2009. The Forum aims at empowering women and abolishing the three dimensional discrimination that constitutes a challenge facing Palestinian refugee women in Lebanon and that is represented in the following forms: gender-based discrimination, discrimination based on their refugee status and discrimination based on statelessness (not having an official nationality).

**14.1.2 Members of the Forum of Palestinian Women in Lebanon** The Forum included since its inception in September 2009 a group of feminist and non-sectarian organizations that share the values of women's rights and complete equality among women and men. These member organizations are four feminist non-governmental organizations that work in the Palestinian scene/ communities and are committed to women's issues: these are Association Najdeh, Solidarity Association for Social and Cultural development, Palestinian Women Humanitarian Organization and the Palestinian Arab Women's League, in addition to an independent member (a woman activist) who is committed to women's rights and worked on preparing the draft shadow report to the CEDAW Committee.

**14.1.3 Objectives of the Forum** Demanding abolishing all forms of discrimination and violence against women that is sexual and gender based, as well as changing the stereotypical perception of women on the part of the Palestinian and the Lebanese decision-makers, communities, regionally and internationally.

- Disseminating knowledge on the rights of Palestinian refugee women in both societies Palestinian and Lebanese, and strengthening their roles at the level of (political) decision-making and at the level of civil society.
- Increasing political participation of women at the highest levels in order to achieve a system of government that protects women and acknowledges their rights.
- Amending the Lebanese Personal Status Law and removal of reservations on the CEDAW Convention, since such changes would lead to direct positive results/impacts on the situation of Palestinian women in Lebanon.
- Adopting the law of criminalization of domestic violence.
- Demanding increasing resources allocated to UNRWA in order to provide basic health, education, and social services of better quality to women.
- Strengthening relations between UNRWA and UNHCR in the field of information and experience sharing in the field of the discriminatory sexual and gender based violence, in addition to adopting by UNRWA of the UNHCR guidelines on addressing sexual and gender-based violence.

#### **14.1.4 Major Achievements of the Forum since its inception in 2009/2010**

The following projects are some of the major achievements of the Forum since its inception:

**14.2. Two projects with the Italian Bureau of Cooperation (2010)** affiliated to the Italian Embassy in Lebanon that aimed at raising awareness and building capacities on topics of violence and gender. It was implemented through varied activities the most important were:

- Activities with children (drawings, movie screening, performances of theatrical sketches linked to the topics of discrimination and violence), it was concluded with a competition among children from 4 to 14 years.
- Training of staff in Lebanese and Palestinian NGOs on gender equality in the work of organization in coordination with RDFL (Reunion Democratique de Femmes Libanaises).
- Training of staff of Forum member organizations on the technique of interactive theatre in addition to presenting theatrical performances.

**14.3. CAFOD and EU project (2008- 2011)** which aimed at increasing gender equality and empowering women in Palestinian refugee camps in Lebanon, some of its basic elements included the following:

- Increasing the level of awareness among the staff of NGOs and local communities on CEDAW and the Istanbul Framework of Action through convening local activities (round tables and seminars).
- Presenting interactive theatrical performances in all regions in Lebanon on topics pertaining to gender-based violence.

14.4. **The Danish Refugee Council Project** (2012) which is still ongoing during the date of drafting of this report, and which aims at empowering women at risk and/or victims of violence by developing their vocational and technical skills and enrollment in the job market and consequently their economic independence, this project is in partnership between the Forum and the NGO Platform of Saida. Some of its main components includes the following:

- implementing and disseminating findings from a study on needs assessment of Palestinian and Lebanese women survivors of violence, and needs of the job market.
- Launching of the Women's resource project.
- Supporting survivors of violence financially, professionally, and psychosocially through the Women's Resource Center.
- Implementing a media campaign on domestic violence in Saida entitled 'we want our families as strong as our fortress'.
- Building capacities of social intervention staff
- launching of vocational training courses and specialized services such as industrial stitching, and medical office management.

14.5. **Project of the European Feminist Initiative** (IFE - EFI) (2012) " strengthening a common agenda towards equality between women and men through the Istanbul Process", its objectives include:

- Raising awareness on the Istanbul Plan of Action and the capacities of women NGOs to lobby and advocate towards its implementation on the part of governments.
- Strengthening the role and the base of the non-governmental women organizations and their capacities to utilize the Istanbul Plan of Action and linking it with the other international instruments that aim at strengthening the rights of women.

## **14.2 Report on the scope of work of NPA relating to Palestinian Women's Rights - June 8, 2016** - Prepared by Ms. Haifa Jammal

NPA works with 11 partners from NGOs working with Palestinian refugees in Lebanon in several areas related to the rights of Palestinian women in Lebanon as follows:

*1. Program on Violence against women:* NPA supports Association Najdeh and the General Union of Palestinian Women to implement projects related to eliminating violence against women in Palestinian refugees camps and gatherings in Lebanon. These projects include awareness raising sessions for women and men, interactive theatre, and providing social,

psychological and legal assistance to women victims of violence through counseling centers, also they organize annual campaigns on the International Day for the Elimination of Violence against Women, and the 16 day International Campaign.

The total number of beneficiaries - women and men - from this program 4000 annually, 85 percent are women.

*2. Program of empowerment of women to participate in political and public life - Women Can Do it:*

NPA supports four NGOs in this program: Association Najdeh, the General Union of Palestinian Women, the National Institute for Social Care and Vocational Training NISCVT, and the Popular Aid for Relief and Development PARD. This program consists of training of trainers for women activists, workshops targeting women in Palestinian refugee camps and gatherings, and organizing public activities, production of media material such as posters, short films, documentaries. The program also involves working with popular committees - the governance institutions - in the camps and gatherings in order to increase the representation of women in these committees. The number of women members in popular committees rose from 5 members in 2011 to 47 members in 2014 reaching 18 percent of the membership of the popular committees.

The total number of beneficiaries from the Women Can Do It program annually approximately 250 person, 100 percent are women.

*3. Program for empowerment of youth to participate in political and public life:*

NPA supports two NGOs in this area, the first is the Cultural Palestinian Arab Club and the Al Jaleel Association for Development. This project consists of training of trainers, supports political

and social initiatives by youth, and cultural workshops in the Palestinian refugee camps. The total number of beneficiaries 200 individuals annually, 50 percent are women.

*4. Vocational Training Program:*

NPA supports three NGOs in this program: Youth for development, the National Association for Vocational Training and Social Services NAVTSS and the National Institute for Social Care and Vocational Training. Approximately 210 youths are trained annually and 60 percent are women. Training courses include life skills training such as advocacy and conflict resolution, gender, violence against women, human rights, leadership. In addition the courses include health, cultural and social topics.

Graduate both young women and men are supported to access work, or continue with their university education.

*5. Program for the rights of Palestinian Refugees in Lebanon:*

NPA supports the center for refugee rights (Aidoun), and the Center for Human Development. A one-week training course is organized by Aidoun every year about the International Instruments relating to human rights, and the rights of Palestinian refugees. About 30 young women and men - lawyers, jurists and activists - 60 percent are women. The Human Development Center annually organizes around

10 workshops for awareness raising on the right to elect, to submit candidacy, and to vote targeting Palestinian refugees in Lebanon, about 250 youth participate annually, 50 percent are young women. Also the two centers organize other activities pertaining to refugee rights in general where women and men participate.

*6. Program of rehabilitation for persons with disabilities:*

NPA supports Moussawat Association to provide rehabilitation services to persons with disabilities. Services include physiotherapy, occupational therapy, speech therapy, and provision of medical equipment, and guidance to families, and awareness raising on the rights of persons with disabilities. The

number of participants is about 600 persons annually, approximately 50 percent are women.

## 15 Conclusions and Recommendations

**15.1 Accountability:** CEDAW committee review procedures hold the State hosting the Palestinian refugees accountable. Such a situation is not sufficient for a thorough review of the implementation of CEDAW on the situation of Palestinian refugee women in Lebanon since there are two other principal duty bearers: the political duty bearer and the duty bearer with the mandate to provide assistance/ protection. *The political duty bearer* is represented by the Palestine Liberation Organization - PLO - and other and organizations yet to enroll in such a structure. PLO is the organizational embodiment of the Palestinian national identity and the other factions not yet enrolled in the PLO structure represent visible segments of the Palestinian refugee population. Such lack of accountability impedes assessment of implementation of articles 7 and 8 on Political and Public life and Representation in the CEDAW convention since the Lebanese government obviously does not represent the national body politic of the Palestinian refugees. *The duty bearer with the mandate to primarily assist* Palestinian refugees in Lebanon is UNRWA - the organizational embodiment of the international community's will to assist the population forcibly displaced from their homes in areas of Mandate Palestine. UNRWA is responsible for providing education, health services, social assistance, emergency assistance and job seeking services. Such a lack of accountability in relation to CEDAW impedes assessment of implementation of articles 10 and 12 respectively in the CEDAW Convention, since the Lebanese government who is not bound by the international refugee convention of 1951 and consequently is not bound to provide the comprehensive assistance and protection that Palestinian refugees in Lebanon have a right to under that convention. In addition UNRWA's registries provide evidence of the refugee status that would assist in the implementation of the right to return according to GA resolution 194.

*Recommend - that CEDAW Committee reviews its rules of procedures creatively within the boundaries of its mandate in order to establish formal processes of ensuring accountability - in addition to the State of Lebanon - of political representatives of the Palestinian population PLO and other and organizations yet to enroll in such a structure and UNRWA whose mandate is to provide assistance to Palestine refugees as additional duty bearers since they influence the lives of Palestinian refugee women.*

### 15.2 - Unified Legal status for Palestinian refugees in Lebanon

The legal status of the Palestinian refugees in Lebanon is not unified, there are refugees registered with UNRWA and the State of Lebanon, there are refugees who are registered with the State of Lebanon but not with UNRWA referred to as the (NRs) and there are refugees who do not have identification acknowledged either the State of Lebanon and UNRWA. The latter group is the most vulnerable and their situation is yet to be rectified. The implication on the lives

of women are significant given the prevailing patriarchy. In the UPR 2015, NGOs working with Palestinian refugees in Lebanon issued a recommendation Recommendation1<sup>47</sup> regarding legal personality of Palestinian refugees in Lebanon. as follows "Recommendation 1 - The LG [Lebanese government] must issue a law clearly defining the legal status of PR [Palestinian Refugees]; guaranteeing them their civil and socio-economic rights and the right to live in dignity."

Consequently,

*Recommend*

*to call upon the Lebanese government to issue a clear and special definition for Palestinian refugee women in Lebanon that would allow them to attain their rights as women through implementing international conventions and accessing basic services. Such a definition is considered to be a mechanism of protection.*

**15.3** The situation of Palestinian refugee women in Lebanon is increasing in vulnerability in view of an unstable political context.

Consequently,

*Recommend -*

*to Call upon the Palestine Liberation Organization given its professed responsibility in maintaining the national identity of the refugee population, to increase the participation of women in higher levels of political decision making.*

*Recommend -*

*to all relevant duty bearers - keeping aspects of vulnerability of Palestinian refugee women in Lebanon visible in the public discourse through relevant advocacy strategies*

**15.3.1** The Syria crisis is imposing an additional burden on Palestinian refugee women who are displaced from Syria as well as Palestinian refugee women from the host communities in refugee camps in Lebanon,

Consequently,

*Recommend - to concerned duty bearers - to examine the additional burden of displacement on Palestinian refugee women from Syria and the Palestinian refugee women from the host community and design and implement strategies accordingly.*

*Recommend - Adopt recommendation 32 issued by NGOs working with the Palestinian community to UPR 2015*

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<sup>47</sup> Universal Periodic Review, Lebanon 2015 Civil Society Reports, <http://www.rdfwomen.org/eng/wp-content/uploads/2015/07/UPR-ENGLISH-final-output.pdf>

*"The Lebanese Government must criminalize early marriages outside religious courts, prosecute those responsible for these marriages and implement measures to protect under-age PRW(Palestinian Refugee Women) from Syria, from early marriage."*<sup>48</sup>

**15.3.2** UNRWA's recent budget cut measures underscore a threat of erosion of educational, health and social services. Such measures constitute a threat to Palestinian refugee rights to assistance from the international community as acknowledged by the General Assembly Resolution 194 following the 1948 Nakba/catastrophe that scattered the population of Mandate Palestine across the region and the globe and left the population in the land disenfranchised . Such measures constitute a threat of eliminating the remaining fragile safety net for the Palestinian refugee population lays an excessive burden on women in the private spheres in terms of allocation of scarce resources and seeking assistance, and challenging further involvement on their part in the public sphere .in view of the recommendations of the NGO conference conducted in March 21-22 2016 on the situation of Palestinian refugees in Lebanon,

*Recommend to CEDAW Committee -*

*to Call upon the member states in the UN General Assembly to continue to assume responsibility in supporting UNRWA in accordance to GA Resolution 194 to fulfill their commitment to support assistance to the Palestine who became refugees as a result of the Nakba / Catastrophe of 1948, by supporting UNRWA through maintaining and developing the range of services it provides in the areas of health, education and social care to the Palestinian refugees.*

*Recommend - to CEDAW Committee*

*to call on UNRWA*

- *to halt the process of shrinking of its services and to work in partnership with other duty bearers to design and implement strategies for getting funding with a special focus on areas related to equality between women and men such as school curricula, and mental health, and to consider the recommendations of the NGO 2016 conference on the situation of the Palestinian refugees in Lebanon*
- *to increase involvement of Palestinian women employed by UNRWA in decision-making in various managerial levels.*
- *to strengthen gender mainstreaming in UNRWA.*

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<sup>48</sup> The Universal Periodic Review Lebanon 2015 Civil Society Reports, p.103

*Recommend - to CEDAW Committee*

*to call on Palestinian political organizations within and outside PLO structures,*

*to exert leverage on UNRWA to halt the process of shrinking of its services in view of the negative impact on the general Palestinian refugee population in Lebanon and the excessive burden placed on women in the private sphere.*

**15.3.3** Achievements made by the Palestinian refugee women's movement in the preceding decades in terms of involvement of women in political decision making, community governance, and the clustering of NGOs around a women's agenda of equality as exemplified by the Forum of Palestinian women in Lebanon, and the presence of gender segregated data and information on violence against women, are threatened to be eroded by the increase in marginalization and exclusion of the Palestinian refugee communities as a whole which may further cement general population issues as perceived priorities that precede in importance the issue of equality among women and men.

*Consequently,*

*Reiterate the recommendation presented in the first supplementary report (2008) - to call on Palestinian political organizations within and outside PLO structure - to enhance women's participation in positions of decision-making on the basis of merit and in the minimum to adopt measures similar to those adopted by the State of Palestine*

*Recommend to the NGO sector working with Palestinian refugees in Lebanon and especially Palestinian refugee women to develop strategies for increasing involvement of women in decision-making positions in political parties/organizations and in local governance structures as well as NGOs.*

**15.4** There is lack of specific information on several areas of discrimination against Palestinian refugee women in Lebanon at the community level, including information on access to justice, economic participation of women in the private sphere as well as the public sphere, violence against women in the public sphere, and impact of the gender gap in basic education favoring girls on the discrimination against women in the public as well as the private spheres.

*Consequently,*

*Recommend- Calling upon duty bearer agencies that are involved in generating knowledge about Palestinian population in Lebanon to include the field of discrimination against Palestinian refugee women in Lebanon as a priority in their agenda, through research or programmatic databases. Areas include economic participation, violence against women in the public spheres and monitor the impact of the gender imbalance*

*favoring girls in basic education on discrimination against women in the public as well as in the private spheres*

**15.5** Given that Palestinian refugee women in Lebanon are under jurisdiction of Lebanese personal status law,

*Consequently,*

*Recommend*

- *Reiterate recommendations presented in the Lebanese NGO shadow report pertaining to the status of Lebanese women. Implementing such recommendations would eliminate several impediments towards fully implementing CEDAW for refugee women in general and for Palestinian refugee women in particular.*
- *Reiterate the recommendation made in the first supplementary report calling upon the Lebanese government given its responsibility in protecting the refugee population,*
  - *To apply the civil and social human rights covenant to Palestinian refugee women and men residing in Lebanon with a special emphasis on the right to work since that would eliminate a significant impediment towards implementing CEDAW for refugee women.*
  - *To recognize the special vulnerable status of Palestinian refugee women vis-à-vis other refugee women given the lack of a sovereign state that would allow applying the principle of reciprocity in civil matters including work.*
  - *To call on the United Nations to increase resources allocated to UNRWA as well as intensifying linkages between UNRWA and UNHCR especially in the area of sharing information and experiences on Sexual and Gender Based Violence (SGBV) and adapting the UNHCR SGBV Guidelines to the needs of Palestine refugee women.*
  - *To advocate along with appropriate agencies efforts to ameliorate living conditions for Palestinian refugees with a special attention to elderly refugee women living alone.*

## **Annexes**

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## **Annex 1 CEDAW Convention: Articles Covered by Report**

Articles Covered by The Second Supplementary Report on Palestinian Refugee Women in Lebanon are the following <sup>49</sup>

### **Political and Public Life - Article 7**

State Parties shall take all appropriate measures to eliminate discrimination against women in the political and public life of the country and, in particular, shall ensure to women, on equal terms with men, the right:

- (a) To vote in all elections and public referenda and to be eligible for selection to all publicly elected bodies;
- (b) To participate in the formulation of government policy and the implementation thereof and to hold public office and perform all public functions at all levels of government;
- (c) To participate in non-governmental organizations and associations concerned with the public and political life of the country.

### **Representation - Article 8**

States Parties shall take all appropriate measures to ensure to women, on equal terms with men and without any discrimination, the opportunity to represent their Governments at the international level and to participate in the work of international organizations.

### **Nationality - Article 9 - The persistence of the problem of Non-IDs absence of basic human rights**

1. States Parties shall grant women equal rights with men to acquire, change or retain their nationality. They shall ensure in particular that neither marriage to an alien nor change of nationality by the husband during marriage shall automatically change the nationality of the wife, render her stateless or force upon her the nationality of her husband.
2. States Parties shall grant women equal rights with men with respect to the nationality of their children.

### **Education - Article 10**

States Parties shall take all appropriate measures to eliminate discrimination against women in order to ensure to them equal rights with men in the field of education and in particular to ensure, on a basis of equality of men and women:

- (a) The same conditions for career and vocational guidance, for access to studies and for the achievement of diplomas in educational establishments of all categories in rural as well as in urban areas; this equality shall be ensured in pre-school, general, technical, professional and higher technical education, as well as in all types of vocational training;
- (b) Access to the same curricula, the same examinations, teaching staff with qualifications of the same standard and school premises and equipment of same quality;
- (c) The elimination of any stereotyped concept of the roles of men and women at all levels and in

<sup>49</sup> Source: <http://www.hrcr.org/docs/CEDAW/cedaw5.html>

all forms of education by encouraging coeducation and other types of education which will help to achieve this aim and, in particular, by the revision of textbooks and school programmes and the adaptation of teaching methods;

(d)The same opportunities to benefit from scholarships and other study grants;

(e)The same opportunities for access to programmes of continuing education, including adult and functional literacy programmes, particularly those aimed at reducing, at the earliest possible time, any gap in education existing between men and women;

(f)The reduction of female student drop-out rates and the organization of programmes for girls and women who have left school prematurely;

(g)The same opportunities to participate actively in sports and physical education. (h)Access to specific educational information to help to ensure the health and well-being of families, including information and advice on family planning.

### **Employment - Article 11**

1. States Parties shall take all appropriate measures to eliminate discrimination against women in the field of employment in order to ensure, on a basis of equality of men and women, the same rights, in particular:

(a)The **right to work** as an inalienable right of all human beings;

(b)The **right to the same employment opportunities**, including the application of the same criteria for selection in matters of employment;

(c)The **right of free choice of profession and employment**, the right to promotion, job security and all benefits and conditions of service and the right to receive vocational training and retraining, including apprenticeships, advanced vocational training and recurrent training;

(d)The **right of equal remuneration**, including benefits, and to equal treatment in respect of work of equal value, as well as equality of treatment in the evaluation of the quality of work;

(e)The **right to social security**, particularly in cases of retirement, unemployment, sickness, invalidity and old age and other incapacity to work, as well as the right to paid leave;

(f)The **right to protection of health and to safety in working conditions**, including the safeguarding of the function of reproduction.

2. In order to prevent discrimination against women on the grounds of marriage or maternity and to ensure their effective right to work, State Parties shall take appropriate measures:

(a)To **prohibit, subject to the imposition of sanctions, dismissal on the ground of pregnancy or of maternity leave and discrimination in dismissals on the basis of marital status**;

(b)To **introduce maternity leave with pay or with comparable social benefits without loss of former employment, seniority or social allowances**;

(c)To **encourage the provision of the necessary supporting social services to enable parents to combine family obligations with work responsibilities and participation in public life, in particular through promoting the establishment and development of a network of child-care facilities**;

(d)To **provide special protection to women during pregnancy** in types of work proved to be harmful to them.

3. Protective legislation relating to matters covered in this article shall be reviewed periodically in the light of scientific and technological knowledge and shall be revised, repealed or extended as necessary.

### **Health - Article 12**

1. States Parties shall take all appropriate measures to eliminate discrimination against women in the field of health care in order to ensure, on a basis of equality of men and women, access to health care services, including those related to family planning.
2. Notwithstanding the provisions of paragraph 1 of this article, States Parties shall ensure to women appropriate services in connection with pregnancy, confinement and the post-natal period, granting free services where necessary, as well as adequate nutrition during pregnancy and lactation.

### **Economic and Social Benefits - Article 13**

States Parties shall take all appropriate measures to eliminate discrimination against women in other areas of economic and social life in order to ensure, on a basis of equality of men and women, the same rights, in particular:

- (a) The right to family benefits;
- (b) The right to bank loans, mortgages and other forms of financial credit;
- (c) The right to participate in recreational activities, sports and all aspects of cultural life.

### **Rural Women - Article 14**

1. States Parties shall take into account the particular problems faced by rural women and the significant roles which rural women play in the economic survival of their families, including their work in the non-monetized sectors of the economy, and shall take all appropriate measures to ensure the application of the provisions of this Convention to women in rural areas.
2. States Parties shall take all appropriate measures to eliminate discrimination against women in rural areas in order to ensure, on a basis of equality of men and women, that they participate in and benefit from rural development and, in particular, shall ensure to such women the right:
  - (a) To participate in the elaboration and implementation of development planning at all levels;
  - (b) To have access to adequate health care facilities, including information, counselling and services in family planning;
  - (c) To benefit directly from social security programmes;
  - (d) To obtain all types of training and education, formal and non-formal, including that relating to functional literacy, as well as, inter alia, the benefit of all community and extension services, in order to increase their technical proficiency;
  - (e) To organize self-help groups and co-operatives in order to obtain equal access to economic opportunities through employment or self-employment;
  - (f) To participate in all community activities;
  - (g) To have access to agricultural credit and loans, marketing facilities, appropriate technology and equal treatment in land and agrarian reform as well as in land resettlement schemes;
  - (h) To enjoy adequate living conditions, particularly in relation to housing, sanitation, electricity and water supply, transport and communications.

## **Law - Article 15**

1. States Parties shall accord to women equality with men before the law.
2. States Parties shall accord to women, in civil matters, a legal capacity identical to that of men and the same opportunities to exercise that capacity. In particular, they shall give women equal rights to conclude contracts and to administer property and shall treat them equally in all stages of procedure in courts and tribunals.
3. States Parties agree that all contracts and all other private instruments of any kind with a legal effect which is directed at restricting the legal capacity of women shall be deemed null and void.
4. States Parties shall accord to men and women the same rights with regard to the law relating to the movement of persons and the freedom to choose their residence and domicile.

## **Marriage and Family Life - Article 16**

1. States Parties shall take all appropriate measures to eliminate discrimination against women in all matters relating to marriage and family relations and in particular shall ensure, on a basis of equality of men and women:
  - (a) The same right to enter into marriage;
  - (b) The same right freely to choose a spouse and to enter into marriage only with their free and full consent;
  - (c) The same rights and responsibilities during marriage and at its dissolution;
  - (d) The same rights and responsibilities as parents, irrespective of their marital status, in matters relating to their children; in all cases the interests of the children shall be paramount;
  - (e) The same rights to decide freely and responsibly on the number and spacing of their children and to have access to the information, education and means to enable them to exercise these rights;
  - (f) The same rights and responsibilities with regard to guardianship, wardship, trusteeship and adoption of children, or similar institutions where these concepts exist in national legislation; in all cases the interests of the children shall be paramount;
  - (g) The same personal rights as husband and wife, including the right to choose a family name, a profession and an occupation;
  - (h) The same rights for both spouses in respect of the ownership, acquisition, management, administration, enjoyment and disposition of property, whether free of charge or for a valuable consideration.
2. The betrothal and the marriage of a child shall have no legal effect, and all necessary action, including legislation, shall be taken to specify a minimum age for marriage and to make the registration of marriages in an official registry compulsory.

End of annex 1

## Annex 2 UNRWA's Endemic Financial Crisis And The Disregard Of Palestinians' National Rights<sup>50</sup>

"UNRWA continues to steadily shrink its educational, health and in-kind services, in parallel with the international drive to write off the Palestinian cause which was already given up by most Arab and Palestinian political forces. In justifying the recent cuts in services, UNRWA once more invokes financial difficulties, resulting from the drop in international funding, while reflecting clear insensitiveness towards the social and humanitarian hardships of refugees caused by these cuts.

UNRWA was created in November 1948 with the purpose of providing aid to the Palestinian refugees as well as coordinating the relief efforts undertaken by various UN, other international and foreign organizations. This UN organisation began its operations in May 1950 as a specialised and temporary agency, with a mandate that was extended every three years (with the expected final life date on June 30th 2017) and until the resolution of the Palestinian problem. It is to be noted that this "temporary" lifespan has now extended over 65 years!

UNRWA is funded by a number of major donors namely the USA, the EU, the UK, Nordic countries, GCC countries, Japan and Canada, and has a geographical remit that covers five areas namely the West Bank, Gaza, Lebanon, Jordan and Syria. When it was first set up, the total number of UNRWA beneficiaries was 75,000 refugees. This figure has now risen to 5 million in 2015 according to the organization. UNRWA's budget is allocated as follows: 54% for educational services, 18% for health services, 18% for works and operations, and 10% for relief and social services.

UNRWA began shrinking its services as early as the eighties especially given the sharp drop in its income that could no longer keep up with exploding demographics, new emerging social needs and the sharp rise in the cost of services. The financial crisis that followed reflected the reluctance of the international community to increase its commitments because of what is known as "donor fatigue". This situation was concomitant with attempts to throw off the responsibility for the Palestinian refugees on their respective host countries, knowing very well that these countries lack the necessary financial resources. Palestinian refugees in UNRWA area of operation have different living and legal conditions, according to the host country. In Jordan, the overwhelming majority of Palestinian refugees has acquired Jordanian citizenship and became an integral component of the Jordanian society. In Syria, Palestinian refugees, and until recently (i.e. the outbreak of war in 2011) enjoyed rights and entitlements believed to be among the best than in any of the other host countries. In Lebanon, Palestinian refugees live in abysmal social and economic conditions especially since the successive Lebanese governments persist in blocking any initiative that may lead to the improvement of their social and economic situation. In justifying their positions, most of Lebanese governments have exploited the widespread fears of permanent resettlement of Palestinians refugees in Lebanon, as well as invoked their right to

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<sup>50</sup> Source: Collective for Research and Training for Development Action, CRTDA ACGEN: Active Citizenship and Gendered Social Entitlements (2016) UNRWA'S ENDEMIC FINANCIAL CRISIS AND THE DISREGARD OF PALESTINIANS' NATIONAL RIGHTS, "Tue, 02/23/2016 <<http://crtda.org.lb/node/15082>> quoted in entirety by permission of CRTDA.

return to their homeland. Within parts of Palestine, their home country, the responsibility for the welfare of Palestinians refugees lies with the Palestinian authority.

Strict policies and measures adopted by Lebanese governments since the early eighties have resulted in more social and economic hardship to Palestinians in Lebanon thus prompting many to leave the country. The recent new measures that have cut further on UNRWA services, have spurred only limited protests that seem incapable of addressing the real problem.

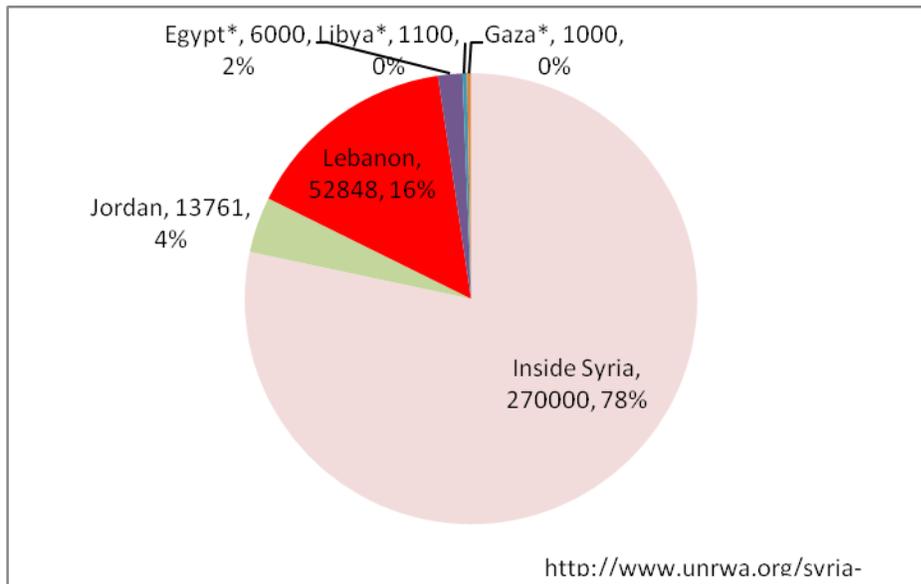
Within this context, most international parties as well as Arab and Palestinian officials, continue to procrastinate throwing the blame on each others, while indirectly furthering pressures on Palestinians refugees to abandon their inalienable national rights."

### Annex 3 - Some Statistical Tables and Figures

The following includes some statistical tables and figures on displacement, education, and women's political participation.

#### Statistics on displacement

**Figure 1 Distribution of Palestinian refugees from Syria according to the place their displacement UNRWA data 2014**



**Table 9 Distribution of Palestine refugees from Syria displaced outside Syria by place of displacement - UNRWA data 2014**

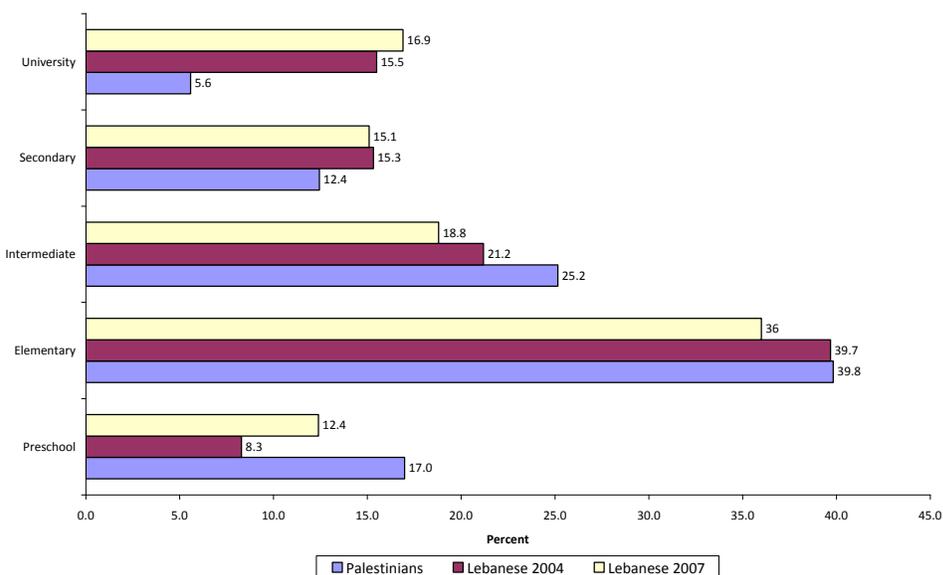
Place of Displacement	Number	Percent
Jordan	13761	18.4
Lebanon	52848	70.7
Egypt*	6000	8.0
Libya*	1100	1.5
Gaza*	1000	1.3
Total	74709	100.00

\* UNRWA referred to the figures as reports in contrast to the numbers in Lebanon and Jordan which are exact numbers of registered refugees kept by UNRWA.

Source <http://www.unrwa.org/syria-crisis>

## Statistics on Education

**Figure 2** Level of education of currently enrolled (2008) comparison with Lebanon 2004 and 2007



Source: The Right to Work Campaign for Palestinian Refugees in Lebanon (2009) Working Unprotected, Contributions of Palestinian Refugees Residing in Camps and Some Gatherings to the Lebanese Economy. p.76 - copied with permission

**Table 10** Net enrollment ratios (elementary education) for girls and boys with comparison to Lebanon 2004 & 2007 - PARELECO Survey 2008

Net enrollment ratio for elementary level students	Boys			Girls			Boys and Girls		
	Survey population (Palestinian Refugees)	Lebanon		Survey population (Palestinian Refugees)	Lebanon		Survey population (Palestinian Refugees)	Lebanon	
		2008	2004 *		2007 **	2008		2004 *	2007 **
percent	<b>95.6</b>	92.7	92.8	<b>98.9</b>	92.7	93.4	<b>97.2</b>	92.7	93.1

\* Ministry of Social Affairs (MOSA), Central Administration of Statistics (CAS), UNDP, 2006 table 2-3 p. 42

\*\* MOSA, CAS, UNDP, ILO 2008 table 3-7 p.66

Source - The Right to Work Campaign for Palestinian Refugees in Lebanon (2009) Working Unprotected, Contributions of Palestinian Refugees Residing in Camps and Some Gatherings to the Lebanese Economy, Table 11 p.75

## Statistics on Women's Political Participation

**Table 11 Women participation in Highest decision-making structures of PLO**

Agency	Number of women	Proportion women
Palestinian National Council PNC	65	10 percent
PLO - Central Council	10	Less than 8 percent
PLO - Executive Committee	1	6 percent (1/16)

Source: Fahd Sleiman presentation at IFI-EFI Round Table, 2012

**Table 12 Women participation in highest decision-making structures of The State of Palestine (West Bank and Gaza Strip)**

Agency	Number of women	Proportion women	Comments
Legislative Council (2006)		20 percent	Rise from 5.6 percent (1996) due to the implementation of 20 percent Quota for women
Council of Ministers (14th government)	6	25 percent (6 out of 24 ministers)	An increase compared to five seats in the previous ( 13th ) government
Upper level governmental positions		15 percent	
Governmental sector - general		37 percent	
Ambassadors	5		2008 statistics
Judiciary		9 to 12 percent	2008 statistics
Local Councils		14 percent (2012 elections)	Four percentage point decline from 18 percent in 2008 elections. However a net increase from 1.8 percent in 2008. This shift is due to implementation of quota of a minimum of 2 women members of rural and municipal councils.

Source: Fahd Sleiman presentation at IFI- EFI Round Table, 2012

#### **Annex 4 Palestinian refugees from Syria - Challenges of residence permits and negative impact of UNRWA's budgetary constraints**

The following paragraphs contain information on Palestinian refugees from Syria from a recent population study conducted in partnership between UNRWA and the American University of Beirut (Chaaban, et al, 2016). Topics included are: problems with residence permits and the impact of UNRWA's budgetary constraints,

On problems of PRS with residency permits Chaaban et al, 2016<sup>51</sup> summarize the situation as follows:

"In addition, 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 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."

As for the negative impact of UNRWA's budgetary constraints on PRS the study summarized the impact as follows:

"UNRWA has been struggling to ensure adequate shelter, education, health care and other services to PRS, who now represent an approximate 20 per cent increase of beneficiaries in need of assistance in

Lebanon. As the primary provider of assistance to PRS, UNRWA instituted in February 2014 programs of monthly cash assistance for food (US\$ 30 per person) and housing (US\$ 100 per family). In April 2015 food assistance was reduced from US\$ 30 to US\$ 27, and 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."<sup>52</sup>

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<sup>51</sup> Chaaban et al, 2016 p.8

<sup>52</sup> Chaaban et al, 2016 p.8



## Annex 5 Employment of Palestinian refugees in Lebanon - Background information

There are two other major sources of information covering the time period of the report in addition to the most recent data of 2015 discussed in section 8 of this document (Chaaban et al, 2016): these are the Najdeh study in 2008 on the economic contribution of Palestinian refugees in Lebanon, and the AUB UNRWA study in 2010 (Chaaban et al, 2010).

The Najdeh study using 2008 data produced gender segregated data on employment that are in the public domain, the data are from 2008 and the report was published in 2009. Findings from the 2008 study show that a markedly higher proportion of women worked in the service sector and that would capture NGOs, the construction sector as expected was exclusive to men. There are also statistics available on the institutional sector by work, the majority of men and women work in the private sector but there is a higher proportion of women who work in NGOs, Palestinian institutions - international and Lebanese. Also there is a slightly higher proportion of women working in UNRWA compared to men. Women and men have similar patterns of employment according to Najdeh 2008 findings with a slightly higher proportion of women 'receiving payment from an employer' compared to men (81.2 and 72.1 percent respectively), a higher proportion of men reported themselves to be self employed (18.1 and 11.3 percent respectively).

**Findings from the survey on living conditions conducted by UNRWA and the American University of Beirut in 2010** has gender segregated data - underscore the low level of involvement of women in the labor force in Lebanon compared to men with 13 percent of women being employed compared to 65 percent among men.

*"Many Palestinian workers are discouraged from working: 56% of refugees are jobless and only 37% of the working age population is employed. The Palestinian refugee labor force reaches 120,000, of which 53,000 are working. Joblessness among refugees has a strong gender dimension: Only 13% of women are employed compared to 65% of men. Those with a job are often in low status, casual and precarious employment. Our survey shows that 21% of employed refugees work in seasonal employment, and only 7% of those employed have a contract. Very few have a second job (3%) indicating the scarcity of even low quality employment. Most refugees have low qualifications: 6% of the Palestinian labor force has university training, compared to 20% for the Lebanese labor force." p 10*

In addition, the survey produced evidence that linked higher levels of education with higher employment rates for women as follows:

*"Those with better education are more likely to be employed. Indeed around two thirds of those 23 and 65 years old with a vocational or university degree are employed. Compared to less than*

*40% for those with educational levels of Brevet or lower or 44% for those in that age group that only hold the Bacculaureate (see Table 1-4 first column). This indicates that continued education increases chances for employment. Passing the Brevet and Bacculaureate respectively opens access to further education which increases employment opportunities. As will be discussed below Bacculaureate pass rates are already good, 12 improving Brevet pass rates and facilitating access to university and vocational schools are likely to enhance the employment prospects of Palestine refugees in Lebanon. Employment rates for women who attended further education is also higher, half of women with a university degree work and 43% of those with a vocational degree do."<sup>53</sup>*

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<sup>53</sup> AUB UNRWA Study ,2010, pp.11,12