

# Part II

## II) Host Countries

*After the peace initiatives of 1977-88, some regulations were created against us by Sadat's Camp David treaty. The Egyptians began treating us like foreigners while previously they treated us as Egyptians. So laws that were applied to foreigners were also applied to us, for residency permits, school and university fees, and the like. We can't even study at the universities.*

*(Participant, Meeting, Cairo, Egypt)*

## Host Countries

### 1) Channels of Communication with the Host Country a. Existing Channels

#### 1) Channels of Communication with the Host Country

##### a. Existing Channels

As a Palestinian community, we don't have a committee to communicate with the Europeans. *(Participant, Syndicate Meeting, Hillerod, Denmark).*

I personally don't have any relationship on the state's institutional level, the relationship exists only on an official level. *(Participant, Syndicate Meeting, the shelter of Al-Salam Neighbourhood (Al-Tobajji), Baghdad, Iraq).*

There is communication with the host country which is achieved through the PLO's leadership and through the factions, and the problem lies in the Lebanese State. *(Participant, Worker's meeting, El-Buss camp, Lebanon)*

As for our Palestinian voice, we have a Parliamentary Committee. We communicate with the Swedish Parliament, the Ministry of External Affairs, or the Swedish parties through Parliament. There is a Parliamentary Committee consisting of six parties and we constantly communicate with them. Some Palestinians got their residency through this Parliamentary Committee. There were about 1500 Palestinians who were refused residencies, but through the Parliamentary Committee and through exerting pressure on the Swedish Immigration Minister and on the Swedish Cabinet Presidency, we managed to get them residencies, and the route to giving residency to Palestinians from the West Bank and Gaza was opened. *(Participant, Public meeting, Stockholm, Sweden)*

Sadly, means of communication with the state do not exist. The only way to communicate is

through the popular and security committees, but as we have just discussed the weakness of such committees as a result of their being very old, communication with the Lebanese state is difficult. The Lebanese state practices racial discrimination against the refugees to the benefit of its citizens, in matters relating to civil, social, political, and housing rights, so that it is very difficult for anyone of us to work in his particular or specialized field. They also deprive us of our right to own a property outside the refugee camp. Therefore, we hope that the officials and this state would treat both refugees and citizens fairly. *(Participant, Students' meeting, Beddawi camp, Lebanon)*

I am not sure that the Canadian government has an open channel for the Palestinian community to speak with. I don't know if they have any channel with any community to speak with, they usually speak to their MPs as their member of parliament. I am not sure if that is a channel for a Palestinian to speak to the government through a member of parliament, which does not represent the Palestinian community. *(Participant, Public Meeting, Toronto, Canada).*

There is the Department of Immigration and Emigration, and there is a Palestinian section in this Department which organized a course to register and categorize the Palestinian refugees, such as Palestinians who have a Jordanian passport, Palestinians who have Iraqi, Syrian, Egyptian, or Lebanese documents. It is a plan to mainstream them in the Iraqi society, and to solve the housing problem, by giving the refugees pieces of land as they used to give the Iraqis. This way they accelerate the process of ensuring houses for the Palestinian refugees. The houses which the Department of Immigration

and Emigration are arranging for the Palestinian refugees are temporary, according to them. They are just temporary leased apartments. *(Participant, Syndicate Meeting, the shelter of Al-Salam Neighbourhood (Al-Tobajji), Baghdad, Iraq).*

Until now, we couldn't establish relations with the government, because there isn't an established government to date. Everything is temporary. The other issue is that the powers and parties that we have contacted don't have any authority; they just promise to write articles in their newspapers as a way of giving us justice. The Embassy does not have immunity; it has limited authority and limited capacities. Therefore both the Embassy and the factions have been severely criticized by the community, which has a right to do so, for neither the Embassy, nor the political factions know the conditions in which we now live. They know I have a problem that must be solved. Even under the former regime, we used to solve our problems on the phone, with the help of the Liberation Movement Centre. They settled some of our issues, and got some things done for us. Now, there is nothing of that. Now we are targeted by populism. And this populism is killing us. We are increasingly worried when our children leave the house. I forbade my children to go to work because of what happened yesterday, I mean the protests against Palestinians. We hear insults and curses in streets, and we don't counterattack. Not because we are cowards, but because we don't wish to ignite a war, for it is like straw which will continue to burn if it catches fire. And as you said at the beginning, this community is limited in number. That's why I always say that it is wrong to push things to limits, instead we should absorb the problems, and we must be like the sponge which absorbs the buckets of water. Because if

war starts and trouble begins, we will be crushed under their teeth. First, we are few, and we don't have the capacities to face them if any trouble begins. *(Participant, Syndicate Meeting, the shelter of Al-Salam Neighbourhood (Al-Tobaji), Baghdad, Iraq).*

As for our representative in this country: we don't have one, of course. This is a natural consequence of lacking any foundations – an association or the community. I mean not having a representative to represent us to the host country we live in. Of course, we don't have civic structures or institutions. There is nothing more than social gatherings. *(Participant, Public meeting, Stavanger, Norway)*

When we first started to work in Saudi Arabia in the 1970s and opened our office in Riyadh, our task was to solve Palestinians' problems in Saudi Arabia in what relates to passports, and the legal, social, and civil issues that you talked about. There was a positive response from officials in Saudi Arabia, and the situation was addressed by solving all the problems we presented to officials in Saudi Arabia. This positive response led to addressing this situation while granting us exemptions for everything relating to passports with the Interior Ministry and other governmental bodies, like proving identity to study in schools or universities. There were exemptions for Palestinians to solve their problems. For example, when teachers' contracts were canceled in the early 1980s, first in the western area, some people in Saudi Arabia said that Palestinians suffered so much, and we said we should help them in solving their problems. Brother [representative] officially suggested this, and they didn't refuse and they exempted Palestinians. So everyone left Saudi Arabia except for Palestinians. We told them about

social problems also. For example, what would happen to the family of a pensioner here if he became ill and if he had a Lebanese document? They asked what was necessary to fix this, and we asked them to exempt such cases and allow them to live here, and they didn't refuse. Also there are Jordanian citizens who live in the West Bank and can't return there, and they agreed to exclude any Palestinian whatever his nationality is. Therefore, any problem that we present to them, whether social, legal, or civil or related to the passports, would get a positive response. Now the situation is improving after the stagnant period that followed the 1990 second Gulf war: We hope this improvement will resolve our legal and social problems. *(Participant, Youth meeting, Dammam, Saudi Arabia)*

### **b. Recommended Channels and Actions**

The question was about the means of communication with official entities. What are they? I would say that if we organize an event at a non-official level, we should talk about it ourselves. However, if we organize an event at the official level, if we invite some political parties for example, we can then ask the Embassy to invite so-and-so officially because it is the Embassy. *(Participant, Women's meeting, Athens, Greece)*

Are these official institutions that represent you or volunteer ones? Are they officially registered in Greece? How do you prefer to contact the host country? Through the government or the people of that country? I mean, regarding this matter that I brought up, you can't contact the host country except through Europe... Why would I put the community in a certain situation, while I know the answer beforehand? I think we should strengthen ourselves to be a powerful community, for the Greeks don't feel

the Arab's existence in Greece. We don't have a presence on the political or Arab community level. The Arabs don't exist on the map. But couldn't we have a role in influencing the Greek government? As Arab citizens we pay taxes, we work, and we pay. *(Participant, Women's meeting, Athens, Greece)*

We should agree upon one entity- be it the embassy or the community- to represent us in our contacts with the government of our host country, Greece. Once we agree upon a representative, we would have one common point of contact. *(Participant, Women's meeting, Athens, Greece)*

I disagree with the deputy who said that there is a committee called the Palestinian Parliamentary Committee. It is true that this Committee exists, but the refugees' cause in Jordan is ineffective. Why isn't there a special committee in the Lower House of Parliament with the name "Refugees' Committee"? Why isn't there a ministry or an official institution or a private one? And I don't mean the Department of Palestinian Affairs which doesn't represent the Palestinians or the refugees in anything, and which doesn't offer them anything. I am a Palestinian refugee who lives in this country, and this department hasn't achieved anything for me. Why isn't there a department or a ministry with a minister from the Jordanian government with the name of "the Refugees' Ministry" so that it can be a witness which affects all aspects of the cause, whether in the negotiations or the international conferences or in dealing with the problems which concern the refugees in the area... That's why I am demanding to establish an official specialized ministry or department in Jordan with the name of the Refugees' Department to be the coordinator and the real connection between

## **Host Countries**

### **1) Channels of Communication with the Host Country**

#### **b. Recommended Channels and Actions**

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## 1) Channels of Communication with the Host Country

### b. Recommended Channels and Actions

the international bodies and institutions and the PLO and the refugees themselves and also the Jordanian government, and to fulfil its role honestly. *(Participant, Preparatory Meeting, Amman, Jordan)*

Lobbying is a very good idea but you have to have the community behind you – you have to make the individuals in the community take the demands to the government that you are trying to represent. I think before we start thinking about lobbying we should look inward, into our community, and we need to activate our community that is isolated and marginalized in the political system in Canada. *(Participant, Public Meeting, Toronto, Canada).*

As for the law, it is not compulsory. And the municipality is free in deciding whatever it wants. You should exploit the situation and impose your terms on the municipality nominees. You must negotiate with any party that supports our cause on the basis of giving him your voice in exchange for him fulfilling your demands. I am positive that there is more than one party who is willing to meet with us to discuss this issue, not only at the municipalities' level, but also in the Parliament. We must act collectively regarding any issue that concerns the community. *(Participant, Public Meeting, Hillerod, Denmark).*

I want to emphasize the role of the community, because we are not the only community in Greece. The Syrian community has its representative, and so does the Egyptian community. Therefore, the community must focus, while performing its institutional rule, on working with the rest, because, as we mentioned before, the Embassy's role is a political one. This means that if I would like to solve my social problem, I must do that through the coming together of the whole

community. It is also important to stress the relations with other communities, to benefit from their experiences and strength. *(Participant, Women's meeting, Athens, Greece).*

As for contacting the host country: a committee or a special body can be formed, which consists of Palestinians who have Greek nationality. It can be called the Greek Palestinian Committee. This committee must have relations with highly important leading figures who have weight in Greek society. And these relations must be on the Greek level, not just on the Palestinian level, so that it contacts, say, various parties and mayors, to convey our demands and problems to these bodies. *(Participant, Women's meeting, Athens, Greece)*

Why don't we participate in existing Jordanian parties?. *(Participant, Women's Preparatory Meeting, Amman, Jordan)*

We demand the host country, Lebanon, to open an embassy for us here to be a central authority for Palestinian refugees. At this stage, we don't want more than that. *(Participant, Worker's meeting, Ein el-Helweh camp, Lebanon)*

Sadly, means of communication with the state does not exist. The only way to communicate with it is the popular and the security committees, but since we discussed the weakness of such committees as a result of being very old, communication with the Lebanese state is difficult. The Lebanese state exercises racial discrimination against its refugees to the benefit of its citizens on what relates to the civil, social, political, and living rights, so that it is very difficult for anyone of us to work in his specialist field. They also deprive us of our right to own a property outside the camp. Therefore, we hope

that the specialists and this state would treat the refugees and the citizens fairly. *(Participant, Students' meeting, Beddawi camp, Lebanon)*

We forgot something that we have agreed upon, which is the security committee that is needed in the camp and which would be a central security reference to the state. *(Participant, Worker's meeting, Beddawi camp, Lebanon)*

The relationship with the host country should be the relationship between the country and the political leadership which represents the Palestinian people. *(Participant, Worker's meeting, El-Buss camp, Lebanon)*

As for the PLO, at the level of the host country, there must be a special Embassy and a follow-up committee to pursue the Palestinian cause on cultural, social, health, and communication levels. *(Participant, Students' meeting, Rashidieh camp, Lebanon)*

We also demand a Palestinian Embassy to represent us practically before the host country which is the Lebanese State. *(Participant, Students' meeting, Rashidieh camp, Lebanon)*

In Sweden, a percentage of nearly 99% here have Swedish nationality - we have Swedish nationality. If we wish to act legally in order to pursue our case with the Swedish Authorities, what will they consider us as? We are refugees who gave up previous nationalities when we signed up to have new ones, and we consider ourselves as Swedish. *(Participant, Public meeting, Malmo, Sweden)*

As for the second and third points, they require, as you mentioned, the approval of the Swedish people; their views of communication through the unions of political parties, for instance. We

want, for example, to make our voice heard to concerned institutions. We must work through the students union and labor unions. If the communication was on a local level, they should be Swedish; I want to make my voice heard to the Swedish people. *(Participant, Public meeting, Uppsala, Sweden)*

We demand to organize a relationship with Lebanon through creating some sort of official and legitimate representation that would lead to organizing all other relations without negative effects. *(Participant, Public Meeting, Beirut, Lebanon)*

As for the relationship with the host country, I greet the Lebanese nation and the government and the President in my name and in the name of the Palestinian people and the PLO, because they embraced the Palestinian people and still are holding them until the Palestinian cause is solved. It is indeed a healthy relationship based on mutual understanding between the PLO and Lebanon. And I always call, through suggestions and recommendations, for opening an Embassy in Lebanon to manage the affairs of the Palestinian refugees. *(Participant, Public Meeting, Beirut, Lebanon)*

The relationship with Lebanon should be established through the PLO and this relationship should be good. And the state should – or rather we prefer that the state would – open a Palestinian embassy or an office for the PLO, so that it can be a political and national representative body for the refugees living in Lebanon. Also, the Palestinians in Lebanon should have some rights and they shouldn't prevent them from working or owning a house. Also he shouldn't be blockaded in the camps. *(Participant, Worker's meeting, El-Buss camp, Lebanon)*

Through learning the language of this society, this is one way. The other is to work within the political parties, and to build relations within the environment I'm living in. This way, I can be more effective. *(Participant, Public meeting, Malmö, Sweden)*

The problem is that they didn't recognize Jerusalem as part of Israel, and I think this is an advantage. So let us take things from this direction, speak with parties and Swedish authorities as well as the government, with a petition collectively signed by all Palestinians. *(Participant, Public meeting, Malmö, Sweden)*

Another issue is there is an old Resolution (No. 203) issued by the Revolutionary Council in 13 September 2001, which says that the Palestinian should have the same rights and assume the same duties as the Iraqi, except for the right of "citizenship". Why don't we endorse this law with the new regime, so that the Palestinian is no longer lost, and in order to build a strong relationship between Palestinians and Iraqis? *(Participant, Syndicate meeting, Hurriya shelter, Baghdad, Iraq)*

In the past, there were committees between us and the state. But now there is a security vacuum between the community and the state, who admit this policy of theirs is part of the Badr militias. This means that if any Palestinian met with Al-Ja'fari, the Prime Minister; or with Abd Al-Aziz Al-Hakim, the leader of the Islamic Revolution, who are both Bader leaders, they can instruct the Badr militias to ease, directly or indirectly, the community's suffering, whether on the state ministerial level or on the street level. These instructions are the right of Palestinians, in order to live, or their right to have real IDs. These goals must be achieved before talking about UNRWA or international institutions, because if we didn't first secure

the community in this country, we can't secure it through international institutions. *(Participant, Syndicate meeting, Hurriya shelter, Baghdad, Iraq)*

I think that holding an extensive dialogue with the Lebanese State is a very important thing, not least because they will get to know our opinions, demands, and aspirations, and so will the concerned countries, especially the European Union and UNRWA in Lebanon – which, ironically, was created to help us. Yet those who benefit from it are nationalized. By this I mean those who have obtained all their civil rights. *(Participant, Public Meeting, Beirut, Lebanon)*

There is a committee, but it is only just a friendship committee. This committee has never created real communication between the Norwegian authorities and the community, or offered services for people. Second, establishing relations between Palestinian families is the only thing that is happening here. As far as I know, there are no elections to elect this committee; its members are appointed by recommendation. I can recommend [member in the community] or other members of the Palestinian community. *(Participant, Public meeting, Stavanger, Norway)*

We who are living in Al-Shatat countries are different. For example we don't have to contact the host country, for we became part of this country. *(Participant, Public meeting, Uppsala, Sweden)*

The second point is political activity in Britain. This brother talked about political activity or political effort by the Palestinian community in Britain. I just want to ask one question, how many of us asked his son to register in any British party inside Britain? Unfortunately, none. Why?. *(Participant, Public meeting, London, United Kingdom)*

## Host Countries

### 1) Channels of Communication with the Host Country

#### b. Recommended Channels and Actions

*Among the essential and most important needs is the ability to exert pressure on the state in order to annul regulations restricting the right to work and to own property. This could be achieved through a direct relationship between the PLO and the host state.*

*(Participant, Worker's meeting, El-Buss camp, Lebanon)*

## Host Countries

### 1) Channels of Communication with the Host Country

#### b. Recommended Channels and Actions

There should be representatives to represent us before the host national authorities. *(Participant, Public meeting, Dammam, Saudi Arabia)*

In terms of communicating with the host country, we have listed certain organizations like the Canadian Arab Federation and Palestine House, which have played a role in communicating with the Canadian government and exercised some kind of lobbying role. But in both cases they haven't been clearly held accountable to the community as a whole for things they have done. An example given here earlier at this meeting was the Canadian Arab Foundation, which created very warm relationships with the Toronto Police. To ask if this is what Palestinians in the city would want, since the Toronto police have led the march for Israel and have sent all the chiefs of police from Southern Ontario on educational training missions to Israel. *(Participant, Public Meeting, Toronto, Canada)*.

Canada was involved and they wanted to play this role in Bosnia so they had many judges in Europe. And they actually boast about such capabilities - having so many international judges that investigate these things. I don't know if you read the news but Sharon now is being nominated for a Nobel Prize. Today Italy nominated Sharon for a Nobel Prize, so many of those people that committed these atrocities are still alive in Israel and they should be questioned at least. There are professors in Israel, and people in academia who actually record these things, and there might be international responsibility. But also it might be good to communicate with Israeli professors and people that research these things. In the case of my uncle I was able to find an Israeli army historian, because I actually have an uncle missing in Israeli prisons about whom finally last year we were

able to get some documents that the prisoners do exist; as before they were denying this. There are people who open this information, even it is not mentioned publicly, so maybe it would be good to form links with these people. *(Participant, Public Meeting, Toronto, Canada)*.

We notice that the policy of the Foreign Ministry increasingly favours Israeli interests. If we had a political lobby to exert pressure on the Canadian government, it wouldn't favour the oppressive Israeli policies against our people in the occupied Palestinian territories in such an obvious way. Or it would at least be neutral, without favouring one party over another. The reason for Canadian favouritism is ideological, not economic. The reason is that is not only in Canada, but also in most western countries and the United States foreign policy is based on interests not on ideology. What would make me sympathize with the Palestinian people if I don't engage in political or economic interests with them?. *(Participant, Public meeting, Montreal, Canada)*

Pressuring Canada to increase the funding for UNRWA is one important thing. *(Participant, Public Meeting, Toronto, Canada)*

I demand Canada increase its financial contribution to the UNRWA agency that takes care of Palestinian refugees. *(Participant, Public Meeting, Toronto, Canada)*

I am just going to list the demands that I have, and that many people might share. One is the cancellation of the Canada-Israel Free Trade Agreement; two is stripping the Jewish National Fund from its charitable status; three is taking a very clear position in favour of the Palestinian refugees right of return to their lands in 1948

occupied Palestine and the restitution of their land; and stopping the deportation of Palestinians from Canada. *(Participant, Public Meeting, Toronto, Canada)*.

I'll tell you my point of view as a person who has been living in Denmark for 17 years, and who works here, and knows this country very well. The least that should be done now is to issue regulations that can enable Palestinians to preserve their identity. Then they can be attached in a manner that is more psychological; which is to make them feel that things didn't come to an end just because they gained Danish nationality. But we don't have a structure which connects Palestinian people with each other correctly. *(Participant, Public Meeting, Copenhagen, Denmark)*.

I suggest that we make a recommendation about forming committees to the Danish government. That we, the Palestinian community in Denmark, insist upon the Right of Return and Resolution 194. *(Participant, Public Meeting, Helsingor, Denmark)*.

Our demands are simple: that they recognize us as Palestinians living in Europe, and that we are still Palestinians, and that we have the right to return to our country, and the right of compensation. *(Participant, Public Meeting, Sondenborg, Denmark)*

There are many different problems whether in Palestine or here in Norway. Yet even if we talked and talked, if we don't get Palestine back, we will not be able to return. Instead, we will simply stay in *Al-Shatat*. *(Participant, Public meeting, Stavanger, Norway)*

If anything is going to happen we have to make it happen. It must come almost from the top. It is almost like a chess board: the US is one of the major players from my point of view -- that's the way I see it. You know, right now, the USA isn't

really involved in the attempt of the peace process and the pullout -- not as much as they should be -- and the only way they are going to be involved is if we start voicing our concern from the US from within. I would say that the G8 countries, those are the ones who are going to push. You know if you stay silent - you know out of sight out of mind -- that's the way I see it. *(Participant, Public meeting, Chicago, Illinois, United States)*

We should hold meetings with the Canadian government. We don't have a problem, but let's talk about the problems of our brothers in the Arab countries' camps, and also the camps in the West Bank and Gaza Strip, who suffer from legal and living problems, in addition to their terrible financial situation. Although refugees in Palestine don't have a problem in contacting and communicating with their national representative, the PLO, or with the Palestinian Authority. What is needed from us as a Palestinian community in Canada is to offer them political support so they can confront Israeli oppression, to provide for their economic needs, and to offer financial assistance. Also to form a political lobby to exert pressure on the Canadian government to adopt a more balanced attitude to the Israeli-Palestinian struggle, and also to support the right of the Palestinian refugees to return to their country, which is a humanitarian and legitimate right that all people enjoy. *(Participant, Public meeting, Montreal, Canada)*

What is it that one doesn't have in Denmark? I need my political belonging, I need to belong to my homeland. When I watch the killings in Palestine on Al-Jazeera TV, I can't go out to the balcony, screaming that this must not happen. *(Participant, Public Meeting, Hillerod, Denmark).*

## 2) Status and Conditions of Palestinians

### a. Existing Conditions

By the way, I also confronted a problem in the school. I wouldn't call it discrimination lest the issue be exaggerated. But they [Egyptians] treat you on the basis that you are an Arab, and the Egyptians say that they are non-Arabs. They also accuse us of performing bombing missions. There is also characterization. They categorize the Palestinian as a violent person, thus they are afraid of us, not knowing what one is, exactly. The people are ignorant regarding this matter; even the young people don't comprehend the idea of the Palestinian cause correctly. They have a lot of misleading information. These ideas have their effects even on issues of marriage. *(Participant, Meeting, Cairo, Egypt)*

A social problem took place some time ago and it was broadcasted in the radio. An Egyptian girl named Basma or Nesma married a Palestinian man, and he took his two daughters and left the country. As I see it, it is not a big crisis. An Egyptian man might do the same, and he might kidnap his children while denying that. What I want to prove here is the way media handled the issue as if this was all because he is a Palestinian. There was a media fuss over the issue that all the Egyptians refrained from accepting Palestinians as husbands for their daughters. I will give you another simple example. During the Gulf War, my father liked to listen to the radio, someone reported him saying that he is a spy and a secret agent. This caused us problems for a while. These are simple examples. In every university, there are people to track the Palestinians to report their behaviour and relations with the Egyptians and whether they are integrated or not. This affects

Egyptians. But now, the notion that Palestinians are frightening is beginning to change. There are people who worked hard to change this point of view, including the Egyptian media. *(Participant, Meeting, Cairo, Egypt)*

They used to say that Palestinians support Saddam, and at that time we had a big presence in Iraq. The issue was very sensitive for us as Palestinians. I was in preparatory school and I could feel the issue. I used to see my father holding his radio close to him following the latest news that he even got diabetes from the terrible news saying all Arabs were against Iraq. He used to go out to the balcony to listen to the radio, while our neighbour was watching him. He hated him because he is a Palestinian, and he had this idea that all the Palestinians are disloyal, so he reported my father to the security service saying he is a spy, and that he was sending wireless messages "through the radio". *(Participant, Meeting, Cairo, Egypt)*

We live in a country which respects people and their civil and humanitarian rights. The Canadian State respects us as students or workers, or even as a community or Palestinian society living in this country, regardless of the policies of the Canadian government which favours Israeli interests. *(Participant, Public meeting, Montreal, Canada)*

We are forgotten, and Denmark where we live is increasingly trying to keep us isolated. *(Participant, Public Meeting, Hillerod, Denmark).*

On the government level in Lebanon, it should create job opportunities and respect our youth, and equality between educated Lebanese and educated Palestinians in schools and universities. The prices of medicine should be monitored. *(Participant, Women's meeting, Wavel camp, Lebanon)*

## Host Countries

### 2) Status and Conditions of Palestinians

#### a. Existing Conditions

## Host Countries

### 2) Status and Conditions of Palestinians a. Existing Conditions

What are the political and social problems we would like to raise with these entities? There are many issues and problems we need to raise. Everyone has problems. I can't personally raise them all. The Norwegian government, which is third highest on the international scale, the Norwegian people who have the highest living standards in the world – themselves suffer from many problems. I am a refugee in this society, and I sometimes face injustice and racial discrimination. I also don't know many areas or workplaces or some laws in this country. Solving these problems requires both joint and individual effort. (Participant, Public meeting, Stavanger, Norway)

I believe that there are many addiction and unemployment problems here in Uppsala, and imagine there are big problems. Yet these problems could have a programme or institutions trying to resolve them. I think the only way is to exert pressure on the Swedish government so that it would intervene on our behalf. (Participant, Public meeting, Uppsala, Sweden)

In general, we had good relations with the Iraqi people, and with the Authority. Sometimes we were given some rights, other times we were deprived of these rights. Occasionally, they would give us public jobs, and we were given some civil rights. A number of refugees were employed: they would give us normal jobs, minor ones. And things

are not like what they have been accusing us of, claiming that Saddam Hussein used to give us thousands of dollars. (Participant, Syndicate Meeting, the shelter of Al-Salam Neighbourhood (Al-Tobaji), Baghdad, Iraq).

As for the health issues, no one supports us, neither Egypt nor the PLO nor the Embassy. We pay to

*At present wherever a Palestinian goes in Iraq he can't ever say that he's a Palestinian, for fear of vilification or revenge, or hearing violent remarks. Like what happened with one of the community members. My father, when he went to collect his pension, was asked by the employee where he was from. And when he told him that he was a Palestinian, he called the police, telling them he was a Palestinian. The police held him for two hours, and he told them that he used to work there and he had a pension. When any member of the Palestinian community drives in his car, he wouldn't dare when a discussion begins say that he is a Palestinian. Once I was in my Kia car when an Iraqi said that all the Arabs must be burned, especially the Palestinians, to whom Saddam Hussein used to grant a million Iraqi dinars yearly for pocket money, in addition to a computer for each of them, and a house. At this point I told him that I was a Palestinian, and I asked him where he got this information, for it was all a lie. But I felt immediately sorry I had told him that I was a Palestinian, because everyone is filled with such hostile feelings against Palestinians. At present, I am an employee in the department, and those who know that I am a Palestinian are very few. Now, they require us to give them a new identity because the old one had been annulled. Until this moment I don't have the courage to fill the application where I ought to write down that I am "Palestinian". You would hear such remarks and insults and curses. (Participant, Syndicate meeting, Hurriya shelter, Baghdad, Iraq)*

receive medical treatment, and we don't have health insurance from the time we leave school. We now have social insurances for workers. However we are not treated like Egyptians. When Egyptians get health insurance, he gets a card and starts getting his medical treatment at the state's expense at public hospitals. But we only have insurance, and we are not allowed to get medical

treatment in their hospitals. Of course, we can ask the labour union or the Ministry of Labour in Egypt to coordinate so that we can get health insurance on the basis that we have social insurance. But we don't have the right to receive medical treatment like Egyptians, we pay for our treatment. And this is discrimination. The Palestinian Embassy plays no role at all in health issues, and it doesn't intervene even if we face health or work problems. It doesn't do anything for us as we are refugees. (Participant, Meeting, Cairo, Egypt)

As for solving this problem. I don't know, it is the responsibility of officials; they must find a solution to these problems. The personal problem lies in that a person must say he is a Palestinian, especially when looking for a job, and whether he would be received with approval from the other party. Of course, this is a simple solution, the radical one is in the hands of officials. (Participant, Syndicate meeting, Hurriya shelter, Baghdad, Iraq)

As for residency permits, if there is an explosion in the street, they arrest everyone who is in the street at the moment of the explosion. They ask for people's identities, and if they see you are Palestinian they take you along with the detainees. A number of Palestinians were arrested this way and no one knows what happened to them. They were arrested for merely being Palestinians. May God protect us. A few of us have Iraqi identities

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### 2) Status and Conditions of Palestinians

#### a. Existing Conditions

and those of us with them are not being harassed. You daren't say that you are a Palestinian in the street lest they arrest you and charge you with whatever crime. (Participant, Syndicate meeting, Hurriya shelter, Baghdad, Iraq)

There was once a Palestinian who had a screw loose, so they arrested him in the street and tortured him, charging him with carrying out many bombing operations, and he admitted, under torture, that he did. He is crazy, he didn't do anything, and he can't think clearly, how could they charge him with that? He used to say yes every time they asked him if he was responsible for this explosion, or that act, for he is crazy and doesn't know what he is saying. They made him appear on TV, and asked him, while everyone was watching. He said I did so-and-so. At present, any Arab they arrest would confess anything under torture, while, in truth, he hadn't done anything wrong. (Participant, Syndicate meeting, Hurriya shelter, Baghdad, Iraq)

They consider a Palestinian as a lost soul who doesn't have any support. Why don't we take his house since there isn't anyone to support him?. (Participant, Syndicate meeting, Hurriya shelter, Baghdad, Iraq)

Lifting the blockade on camps means giving us security and safety. When you feel emotionally comfortable as a citizen, this means you enjoy security and safety. (Participant, Women's meeting, Ein el-Hilweh camp, Lebanon)

Palestinians suffer from the problem of residency papers in the countries they live in, and from exile and lack of access to education. It is said that Palestinians have a lot of money, so higher fees are imposed on us! We hear this all the time, and there is the humiliation we go through in the airports and on the borders in order to get into another country. On the health level, we suffer from lack of treatment at hospitals. As for work

*They treat us like foreigners here. I live in Egypt but I am a Palestinian born in Palestine. I was raised here and am married to an Egyptian woman. I work here; I have a car and work as a driver. They treat us really badly here and they demand a lot of documentation, also residence permits are very costly. They fight us. The way the Saudis and Libyans treat us is much better. My son is six years old. I enrolled him in a private school and I paid 1200 pounds of fees while Egyptians pays 100 pounds. This year the residency permits became even more costly. Getting a permit to work is very difficult as well. You would apply today and get it after four months, or even a year. We are very tired and we badly need help. I want to return to my country, to Gaza, so that I can feel that I am worth something. What you're worth here is the money you have. For example I have a car and when I went to license it, I paid around one and a half thousand pounds for the fees. When I registered it under a name of an Egyptian, my brother-in-law, we only paid 100 pounds. There is a kind of discrimination between Egyptians and Palestinians. (Participant, Meeting, Hilwan, Egypt)*

and job opportunities, I think that our suffering in this field is obvious to all, and the situation is the worst in Lebanon. Nevertheless we suffer from this problem in all of the Arab countries. (Participant, Public meeting, Khartoum, Sudan)

The regime was exerting all kinds of pressure on us, and we are enduring here in extremely harsh conditions. That's why we live in camps in such

small, miserable houses, which can't be borne even by mice. And we are still suffering from this situation. (Participant, Syndicate meeting, Hurriya shelter, Baghdad, Iraq)

We have luxury in this country - we are talking about all of those exile countries!. (Participant, Public meeting, Detroit, Michigan, United States)

We have been living in Iraq since 1948. This disaster happened while we were still living this same life, nothing has changed for us. And even in Saddam Hussein's era, our conditions did not improve. On the contrary, our conditions were bad until this new regime came to accuse us of being given financial assistance and oil by Saddam. But this is not true! And we are suddenly accused of terrorism by the new regime. There are bad people, of course, who have always existed in the world. We have been mistreated, and it has become very difficult for us to live in Iraq. (Participant, Syndicate Meeting, the shelter of Al-Salam Neighbourhood (Al-Tobaji), Baghdad, Iraq).

They totally destroyed Palestinian refugees in Arab countries and in other countries. (Participant, Youth meeting, Dammam, Saudi Arabia)

The Arab countries destroyed us. (Participant, Public meeting, Jeddah, Saudi Arabia)

# Host Countries

## 2) Status and Conditions of Palestinians b. Rights and Needs

### b. Rights and Needs

#### i. Civil Rights

I cannot say that we are refugees, because we do not enjoy any of the rights that refugees enjoy. We are foreigners who live in Egypt. *(Participant, Meeting, Cairo, Egypt)*

After the peace initiatives of 1977-88, some regulations were created against us by Sadat's Camp David treaty. The Egyptians began treating us like foreigners while previously they treated us as Egyptians. So laws that were applied to foreigners were also applied to us, for residency permits, school and university fees, and the like. We can't even study at the universities. *(Participant, Meeting, Cairo, Egypt)*

There is no follow-up from the Lebanese government which doesn't care about the Palestinian people. Certainly we are a burden on the Lebanese government which treats us as if we are not human beings, and as if we don't have any value. For example, it doesn't take our actual conditions into consideration. We wish to develop a means of communication between us and the Lebanese government through the PLO. *(Participant, Students' meeting, Rashidieh camp, Lebanon)*

The Arab governments, intentionally or unintentionally, always seek to remove the

refugees' cause from Palestinians minds, including Jordan. Although Jordan in particular is a host country that asks the Palestinians to preserve their Palestinian identity while having Jordanian nationality – and this is an odd contradiction! When we raise the slogan saying "Jordan first!" this

*As for the treatment during Saddam Hussein's era, it was pretty good, although it wasn't as the Palestinian people wished it to be. But it was good in general. After the fall of Saddam Hussein's regime, many parties entered the political scene from nowhere. It is true that there are national parties, but the Shi'a parties are the ones holding the power, and deciding everything at the moment. We hope that things will get better in the future, but this will need a big effort, especially from the national Arab parties. Because we, the Palestinian people, are not going to stay in this country for ever. They are supposed to treat us in a good manner, like when the parties themselves were refugees when they were working abroad. Let them treat us in the same manner until Palestine is free, even if we were lying on each other, for Palestine will never be free as long as the present representatives of the Palestinian Authority are on the scene. We wish they would treat us like refugees who have rights to learn and get medical care, like human beings. We wish they would help find us jobs and equality in work, and with residency permits. We are 1948 refugees, it is not logical to be asked for residency fees or demand that we pay penalties. I was born in Baghdad in 1956. Now, anyone who lives in a certain country for five years is entitled to have its nationality. But I have lived in Iraq for fifty years. There are incorrect measures which are being practised against us as refugees. The new regulations, and its current procedures, mis-treat us. Whatever. I work as a taxi driver, but I hear a great deal about peoples' suffering, and I hear insults. And if I can answer back, I do, but what are you supposed to do?.* **(Participant, Syndicate Meeting, the shelter of Al-Salam Neighbourhood (Al-Tobaji), Baghdad, Iraq)**

means that a refugee who has Jordanian nationality doesn't enjoy the rights of this nationality except in one aspect, which is to be like a money machine to support the Jordanian economy, while he is deprived from all his civil rights (except for a few people in Jordanian society: capitalists and

influential people). For example, everyone knows that the electoral system for the Lower House of Parliament in Jordan aims to exclude Palestinian refugees and Jordanian citizens from Palestinian origin from political activity or engaging in any political life in Jordan. Consequently this Parliament

has no affect whatsoever upon the official Jordanian attitude of the refugees' case or of dealing with the refugees' problems at an international level. *(Participant, Preparatory Meeting, Amman, Jordan)*

We want Canada to end all secret trials because it affects all members of our community, every single person that we put on these trials. Secret evidence has been pretty much against Arabs. It's continuing, it's going to increase, and this is a major worry in the community. In this culture of security the so-called age of terrorism is really terrorizing our community here. I think we should really raise our voice about it. *(Participant, Public Meeting, Toronto, Canada)*

Basically, there is no refugee who knows Danish laws that relate to the refugee issue, like what your rights and your obligations are. You may know

simple information about your rights, but you don't know the rest of your rights, because you are not skilled in the law that is needed for such a situation. *(Participant, Public Meeting, Helsingor, Denmark)*.

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No one will help you anywhere. In the streets you can read the slogans against us. And if the National Guard or the police ask for your identity and know that you are a Palestinian, they would curse you, and arrest you, only releasing you after many long hours. You can't work in any far away location. *(Participant, Syndicate Meeting, Za'faraniya shelter, Baghdad, Iraq).*

I want to talk first about the host country in which we live. There are refugees in Syria, and in Jordan, and also in Lebanon. I think that the refugees in Syria are enjoying their rights, and the state treats them just like Syrian citizens. And it is the same situation in Jordan. Yet in Lebanon, the Palestinian people in the refugee camps did not receive any of their civil rights. Now if we want to talk about the camps, their residents live in miserable conditions. But the Palestinians in the camps, especially in Lebanon, only want to be safe and have their rights. I implore the Lebanese state, which is the host country, to classify some activities which represent the Palestinian people in order to devise a proper solution to this nation, so that it can live safely in dignity to enable it to return to its country. Because we don't want to live in Lebanon – it is just a host country until they implement the right of return for the Palestinians. *(Participant, Women's meeting, Burj el-Barajneh, Lebanon)*

The simplest Palestinian citizen has a lot of demands, like the right to own property. Why can't Palestinians own a property? This can be fixed based on certain foundations. For example, to give a Palestinian the right to own only one house, not many houses or even institutions, and that ownership rights should be based on the number of people in that Palestinian family. *(Participant, Students meeting, Shatila camp, Lebanon)*

As for the host country, there are some suggestions to claim our civil, humanitarian, and social rights, as well as lifting the blockade imposed on camps, and free the pressure upon parents. Then, most importantly, we claim the right to work for Palestinian citizens, and to communicate with the PLO's institutions and its leadership. And we demand and suggest opening an embassy for the Palestinians in Lebanon. *(Participant, Women's meeting, Ein el-Hilweh camp, Lebanon)*

As for the relationship with the host country, we demand to lift the blockade. The concerned entities should exert pressure on the state to ease its procedures for the camps in the south. *(Participant, Worker's meeting, Ein el-Helweh camp, Lebanon)*

We think that the host country, Lebanon, does not only neglect the refugees, but also imposes very tough security procedures that makes it very difficult to go to work, school, or even the hospital. There are people who don't go to work because of these procedures. In this regard, the role of the political leadership of the PLO is central. The leadership should discuss all these matters at an official level with the government. It should discuss the improvement of the camp conditions and seek permission for construction materials to enter the camps in the south. We know that here we don't have rights or work or anything. *(Participant, Worker's meeting, Ein el-Helweh camp, Lebanon)*

There should be an organized popular campaign to issue a pardon for the all political detainees just like was done for the Lebanese. This would ease the security condition that is not at all comfortable in the camp. *(Participant, Worker's meeting, Ein el-Helweh camp, Lebanon)*

We demand that the state ease its arbitrary procedures imposed on the camps and lift the blockade. Also we should open an embassy or an office for the PLO in Lebanon to look after refugee affairs, in coordination with the Lebanese state. *(Participant, Worker's meeting, Ein el-Helweh camp, Lebanon)*

The relationship with the state: we are here as guests of the state, and it should treat us according to the law, and according to our rights and obligations. We are willing to submit to all the laws and order; but we want them to treat us like human beings, according to the law. *(Participant, Worker's meeting, Ein el-Helweh camp, Lebanon)*

Let them just give us our rights, let them support our young people in the hospitals, and work with them. Let them give us the same rights as Palestinians in Syria or Jordan have. We don't have any rights in Lebanon. We insist upon the right of return even if they give us our civil rights. We just want our rights to be able to live like the rest of the world. No one really knows how we live since we are deprived from these rights and live in such miserable conditions. So we demand our rights and we insist upon our right of return, and we would leave everything in Lebanon and go back to our country at any time. *(Participant, Women's meeting, Nahr el-Bared camp, Lebanon)*

As for the host country, we thank it for hosting us for 57 years, but we demand the state to give Palestinians here their rights, albeit just a small part of their economic, social and civil rights. We also ask it to maintain channels through the popular committees and to build a strong relationship with it. The Lebanese state should take into consideration that we are a nation who holds on to its right of return, and our identity, and that we

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*The freedom of media here is suppressed. We are deprived of the most basic and simplest social rights, and you can see that the camps are under blockade. (Participant, Public Meeting, Beirut, Lebanon)*

refuse resettlement and immigration to anywhere else. There should be an embassy to facilitate things for us, and to which many functions can be transferred, in order that it communicates to the Palestinian people and the Palestinian Authority inside Palestine for us. These are our suggestions as a group. *(Participant, Women's meeting, Nahr el-Bared camp, Lebanon)*

I think we should stop this discrimination against Palestinians in our country. It should be stopped from here. We have to let the US government know that we are here. When we go to Israel we are humiliated and searched, and this needs to stop, and maybe Israel is doing this so Palestinians won't go back. So we should work hard from here with the organizations. This is the most important demand, to stop discrimination. *(Participant, Public meeting, Detroit, Michigan, United States)*

I don't wish to distinguish between different religions, but there are no mosques here in Greece, and there isn't a cemetery. This is a very important issue. I have friends who left Greece because they said that they want to know where they would be buried after they die. The Embassy has been there for twenty years. But we are a Muslim civil society in Greece, yet we don't have a mosque or an Islamic cemetery. The country would not approve that, and our governments are not pushing the country to do this. Our government says that these are European countries. I think that this issue can't be resolved except through Europe. *(Participant, Women's meeting, Athens, Greece)*

As to channels of communication in the host country: first they ought to respect the nationality of refugees and not discriminate between peoples, and respect our civil rights. This is what

is written in the Lebanese constitution and this is what one of its articles refers to. Amongst other things we should discuss are the rights of Palestinian workers, and also the lack of labour unions; Palestinians are not allowed to work in 72 occupations. In addition to that, working hours for the Palestinian worker are not defined although working hours for the Lebanese are eight hours a day. Moreover, the state does not give us any guarantees as Palestinian refugees who have been living here for 54 or more than 57 years. Everyone says that the Lebanese doesn't really know his country, yet neither does the Palestinian; anyhow we insist upon the right of return. Yet despite this fact, they are abusing our social relationship with Lebanon, and the most obvious evidence is that we, as Palestinian refugees, can't own property in Lebanon. If there is a rich married man his children can't inherit his wealth for it becomes the property of the state after his death. As for the issue of not participating in the election, we, as Palestinian refugees all over the world, don't want to participate in the elections, but on the educational level, we, as students in the Lebanese university, are not allowed to vote in the university. The Palestinian refugee in all other countries has rights. In Syria, for example, they treat the Palestinian refugees just like Syrian citizens. *(Participant, Students' meeting, Wavel Camp, Lebanon)*

Note that every time heated disagreement breaks out between the PLO's leadership and the government here, new arbitrary regulations are issued against the Palestinians. These regulations remain in force even when they come to an agreement. So we have a lot of arbitrary regulations. *(Participant, Meeting, Cairo, Egypt)*

All of us in this Palestinian community don't have any rights. All our rights are stolen. *(Participant, Syndicate meeting, Hurriya shelter, Baghdad, Iraq)*

We want full ownership rights – whether I want, as a Palestinian, to own one or ten houses. *(Participant, Students meeting, Shatila camp, Lebanon)*

The reason that I can tell you so much is that I live this situation. It is very humiliating that we should be stopped at checkpoints. A lot of discussion also takes place if someone brings electrical supplies into the camp in order to install or change something. They are trying to humiliate us. I consider lifting the blockade on the camps a basic demand that we discussed, and which needs to be raised in order to be emphasized. *(Participant, Women's meeting, Ein el-Hilweh camp, Lebanon)*

I think let's go back to the fact that we don't know what are the exact problems. A lot of people don't and I think this would be true for any of these organizations that do these studies. First of all we need a Palestinian representative, we don't really know who the representatives in exile actually are. Second of all we need to have representatives of *Al-Shatat* in Palestine. I believe that I am not being represented in Palestine, I have no representative in Palestine and we need to have a representative in Palestine. Let me finish. A lot of us in the community are not comfortable in speaking about American foreign policy towards Palestine, about oppression, we can change that with limitations and having rights in this country as American citizens. In reality what makes us wary is the American Patriot Act. The act states that you can be arrested for speaking out against the American government and, if that's true, then we need to have more

information submitted to people in branches and offices so they can relate it to their communities to help us understand what the facts are. I know that Palestinians in the Ramallah Community have actually been accused of raising funds against America, where in fact they were buying sweets for Palestinian children. How ridiculous is this? And people are hearing this stuff and it can be dangerous and it's frightening to people and we don't have enough information accessible to us. (Participant, Public meeting, Detroit, Michigan, United States).

From the legal side, we demand that arbitrary laws which deprive the Palestinian from many rights, like his right to work, are annulled. There are also laws which forbid Palestinians to own a flat. These laws should be revoked and an office of the PLO must be opened to pursue the concerns of Palestinians in this country. (Participant, Worker's meeting, Beddawi camp, Lebanon)

In the first place, to live as citizens in the Arab countries, which was declared in the Casablanca Protocol: that the Palestinian people should live as citizens in the host country and exercise their full rights in work, living, and housing. (Participant, Public Meeting, Beirut, Lebanon)

The civil issues which should be stressed and discussed with the host Lebanese state is the right to work and the right to own houses, in addition to implementing all the international resolutions which relate to legitimate human rights. (Participant, Workers' meeting, Shatila camp, Lebanon)

The right to own a property from which we were again deprived. The Palestinian is not allowed to

buy an apartment. We have the right to lift the blockade on the camps. We are living in a prison, and we suffer from very difficult emotional and financial circumstances. (Participant, Women's meeting, Ein el-Hilweh camp, Lebanon)

The right to own a property and to enjoy the social security for the Palestinians. When we first came to Lebanon, we were able to own a property or buy a house or a land. This law is cancelled now, and who bought a property

*Most young men who live here are educated yet they are not engaged in the jobs they were trained to practice. They are working as labourers. Perhaps the conditions we live in allow us to do so, and perhaps our parents couldn't get us to schools, but we are an educated and literate nation. Most of our young men have had high school and are working as labourers and can't find a job. This is a big problem. Until when will we continue to suffer? Maybe we endured these circumstances, but our children are now growing up – how are we to make sure that they will be safe if they can't even have a house to live in decently, and if they are not allowed to work, or eat, or drink. This is impossible. We wish to solve this situation now and we want this to be heard at the top levels. (Participant, Worker's meeting, Beddawi camp, Lebanon)*

still have it, yet no one is able now to own a property. Besides, anyone who owns a property can't leave his property to his kids after his death, instead the Ministry of Endowments takes it by a contract as a land or a real-estate. (Participant, Students' meeting, Beddawi camp, Lebanon)

We know that years ago they prevented Palestinians from owning a land or a house. (Participant, Students' meeting, Rashidieh camp, Lebanon)

There is discrimination against Palestinians in other Arab countries. (Participant, Youth meeting, Dammam, Saudi Arabia)

If you were a business man who needs to travel often, the last thing you would need is to have to go to the passport department to get an exit and return visa issued, and bring a paper from your sponsor. This is not a useful system for us. Unlike those from Egypt or Bangladesh or Pakistan who come here to get some money to start their lives

with, we, the Palestinians, have been living here for a long time like citizens, and we spend like them, if not more. So why can't we form committees and be treated like Saudi citizens, and why can't we travel wherever we want or own a house or buy land. The Palestinian leadership is supposed to discuss the situation of people who live in this country and work towards getting them some facilities to live in a better way. We don't demand to have nationality. (Participant, Public meeting, Jeddah, Saudi Arabia)

All we want is for you to give us part of the freedom that human beings enjoy everywhere. (Participant, Public meeting, Jeddah, Saudi Arabia)

## ii. Right to Organize

In fact, there are several civil institutions that deal with refugees' issues in the refugee camps, like the clubs, youth centres, and cultural centres. When such centres were established, they were effective and serious, and the Palestinian refugees in Jordan were feeling the same attachment to the Palestinian cause and the refugees' cause. But when these centres turned into clubs of the Youth Ministry after the disengagement (from the West

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*Most of the people here have suffered a lot during long periods that perhaps exceed forty years. It can mean a lot having any kind of support from the PLO, as we live in a foreign country. Because our situation here is very miserable we can't obtain nationality from this country and so we become a burden upon it. There are no resolutions from the Arab League that prevent us from taking nationality. We can't move in and out of the country. Consequently those of us who have Palestinian documents are very disillusioned with no aspirations or hopes. I bet that all of the attendees at this meeting can't plan what to do during one single week; they are not allowed to travel nor learn nor do anything. (Participant, Youth meeting, Dammam, Saudi Arabia)*

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*Associations also suffer from injustice.*

*There is a law allowing the Interior Minister to “close down any association without giving reasons or referring to the courts”. We own lands and halls, mosques and schools, but these can be revoked at any minute. In addition to this, we are not allowed to discuss politics. (Participant, Preparatory Meeting, Amman, Jordan)*

Bank), the official bodies and the security services interfered in selecting members of administrative bodies for these clubs one way or another; and a lot of things were done, and we all know that they were aimed at stopping educated, enlightened, and patriotic people and forbidding them from engaging with such clubs and centres. Their names were removed under weak pretexts. I am one of those who was prevented to go to such clubs because of “security” reasons. (Participant, Preparatory Meeting, Amman, Jordan)

There is something else. Sometimes there are programs at the United Nations and in Canada about supposed multi-culturalism that should allow Palestinians to organize around their cultural heritage and such things. And by the way in the United Nations there are a lot of conferences for stateless nations. Now I think somehow Palestinians always resisted being part of that organization... I am not really sure, but it is worth studying what are the international bodies that protect stateless nations in terms of preserving their cultural heritage and different programmes. (Participant, Public Meeting, Toronto, Canada).

This must begin from the universities, where the percentage of refugees among universities students is very high. We can start from there... we, as refugees, can find our representatives; whether this level of representative or a higher one. We only want our voice be heard, because even if we are too many in universities, the university rules would not allow you, as a refugee, to represent the refugees. This is difficult and has limits. If we ever want anything, we must loudly demand it, because we are not stealing – this is

one of our rights. We want a representative body in the university or in a certain city, but this is not something to declare. You can find this in the camps where there exist the biggest constituency for Palestinian refugees. It exists in the camps. That is why we want someone to represent us in these camps. I know these camps, and if I ever want anything, I know how to get there. And I think that the university student has a philosophy too, because he has an opinion and he is educated and bold. I once participated in a demonstration, and the other day I was summoned before the Dean of Student Affairs, and because I was carrying the

*It is illegal under law to form gatherings and meetings. You would be watched closely if you tried to form a channel of communication. You even risk of losing your residency. This really happens. If you want to do this, it should be limited to your family, because if you worked as a Palestinian in any project, you would face many problems on the security level. You would be watched on the basis that you are a suspect. To escape these security problems, you can work in a project that involves art. You can, for example, organize parties for Palestinian art. (Participant, Meeting, Cairo, Egypt)*

Palestinian hattah (scarf), the Dean took it from me. (Participant, Women's Preparatory Meeting, Amman, Jordan)

We have the right to have an embassy here in Lebanon. (Participant, Students meeting, Shatila camp, Lebanon)

We have the right to have a legitimate representative here, which is the PLO, while taking into consideration the right of protection and the right to express our opinions. (Participant, Women's meeting, Ein el-Hilweh camp, Lebanon)

Especially after Munich, we were put under the microscope of the German security services, and Palestinian civil organisations were banned. The student and worker unions were outlawed. Any Palestinian unionist activity on German soil was prohibited. This situation has gradually ameliorated. There are still some legal issues, but there is a notable level of Palestinian activity that is evident in the streets, the demonstrations, meetings, and in Palestinian areas in Germany. So long as one did not threaten the German order; their activities were tolerated. The peak was reached when the organisations were re-established; the student and

worker unions. The important issue here is to have a Palestinian will. (Participant, Public Meeting, Frankfurt, Germany)

*Are these monthly or weekly gatherings internationally allowed, and does the government of Saudi Arabia allow them even if they were?*

I want you to understand what I'm going to say very well: Saudi Arabia doesn't oppose anything. On the contrary, it offers support on both security and political levels, yet we should respect the country's policy. Saudi Arabia is isolated.

*Saudi Arabia prevented us from establishing training camps.*

*It can't prevent us from doing anything. Don't just offer interpretations about the country without any basis. (Participant, Public meeting, Jeddah, Saudi Arabia)*

Political work inside the university by students is forbidden which consequently limits the national role students can play. (Participant, Preparatory Workshop, Horns (A'ideen) camp, Syria)

In Egypt, they get very upset from the activities we perform. We have a committee called the Arab Committee for Liberation and Return. It is named the Arab Committee, unlike all the other right of return committees, and it includes non-Palestinian Arabs, it aims to achieve liberation and return, not just return, for, as we have seen, Palestine is an Arab cause, so all Arabs should participate in it. There is no return without liberation. *(Participant, Meeting, Cairo, Egypt)*

### iii. Status

I am a Palestinian refugee and I live in Hilwan. The Palestinians face so many problems here: for example when one wants to get some papers from the Embassy. The Egyptians treat Palestinians badly, and the least they say is that they are not living in their own country. The way of dealing with Palestinians in this country is really disgusting. You are ping-ponged from one person to another when you want to get your passport issued or some documents, and you also have to pay a lot of money. Any Egyptian would say to you that you are living in Egypt because of what their country offers to us, but they don't realize that we are living in this country with our own money. We are paying money to get our residency permits like any tourist would do. When I studied I had to pay in dollars, since I am a Palestinian, unlike Egyptians. I always used to get into trouble with my friends and neighbours because they kept telling me that we sold our land, and that we are not entitled to take anything from them. The people here are opportunists. When you need to sign some papers for exams or something as a Palestinian, they would ping-pong you from one place to another, but they sign the papers of

Egyptians without any trouble. They always say to you that you are nothing but a refugee. My sister studied science and she got A grades in all her classes, and she was entitled to get a scholarship. But they gave it instead to an Egyptian student, telling her that she can't take it up, because she is a Palestinian. We are very united as Palestinians, unlike them. Also, as a Palestinian you have to pay a certain sum, say 25 pounds, to take the exam and you will pass. *(Participant, Meeting, Hilwan, Egypt)*

*I get very frightened when the residency permit of my son ends lest they take him. His residency must be renewed ten days prior to its expiration or they would deport him. They made my son pay a huge amount of money to grant him residency. Where would he go? And he can't stay here without a residency permit. The same applies to his other brother, my son's brother, Rashad, who has six kids. He sent money to him to help him get his residency permit, do you believe that? His brother lives in Gaza, and he has six kids, and he is a taxi driver.... What can I say? He also sent 300 pounds for each of them so that they would be able to make three years residency permits in a way that enables them to return to Palestine if they can. We take these exit and return visas from the Mugam'ma here, otherwise our residency will be invalid. **(Participant, Meeting, Cairo, Egypt)***

The Ministry of Social Affairs used to offer us social services "in birth and in death", and used to help us with proving our residency in Iraq. This function does not exist anymore – it can give you a letter for the hospital. It is solely an administrative body. This body currently coordinates with residency authorities; one takes a letter from it for residency. *(Participant, Syndicate Meeting, Za'faraniya shelter, Baghdad, Iraq)*

I live as a human being, a citizen, and a refugee. I have a five-year passport, but when I wish to visit Palestine, they take away my passport at the bridge. Why? Is it because of security and sovereignty reasons? Ok... define for us the standards so that we can know this security and sovereignty, so that we can avoid crossing the red line. The standards in this country on what relates to this are not clear. I demand to clarify them. As Palestinian or Jordanian refugees, UNRWA and this country deprived us from a lot of services. The brothers from Gaza Camp and many others in other areas are deprived from the right of engaging in political life; there is no voting nor running for office. Thank goodness that there are UNRWA's women's committees through which men and women can articulate the needs of the camp and of our poor people. *(Participant, Preparatory Meeting, Amman, Jordan)*

There is a Jordanian woman who is married to a Jordanian who works with the Authority in the West Bank and Gaza. This woman has a Jordanian passport and a national number, and her children are Jordanians. Yet eventually they took her passport and that of her husband as well as her mother's away, and she is given a temporary passport. Why? Where would such people actually go?. *(Participant, Preparatory Meeting, Amman, Jordan)*

In the past, the late Wasfi El-Tal issued identity cards for us; these were civil identity cards that allowed us to move and work and stay in Jordan. They gave some of us two-year passports, but it is very difficult to renew them, not to say

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*I am from Gaza Camp. I feel that I am not alive, as if I were a corpse without a soul. I see my close friends that are Jordanian, and who are the same age as me. They are exercising their right to vote, whether in municipal or parliamentary elections. And I wonder why I am deprived from exercising this right. **(Participant, Preparatory Meeting, Amman, Jordan)***

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### 2) Status and Conditions of Palestinians

#### b. Rights and Needs

*They wish to kick us out. They don't want us, and the Authority hasn't done anything for us ever since the war began and it doesn't even recognize us. The beginning of the Palestinian revolution was from here, Iraq, and when we were young we were trained in Rashid Camp in Baghdad. (Participant, Syndicate Meeting, Za'faraniya shelter, Baghdad, Iraq)*

anything about approving them. You would also face problems when you travel from or to Jordan... In the end, all we can say is that we are better off than others, especially those who don't have any documents at all, those who are stateless. We tried to form a committee for the Gaza people, and [participant] knows that, and we contacted the Interior Minister and the Prime Minister and the Minister of Social Affairs, but then they tried to oppress each of us, and the solution was to forget the whole issue. (Participant, Preparatory Meeting, Amman, Jordan)

When we applied to have nationality here, the final clause dictates that you will give up your nationality whatever it was previously. When I went to Lebanon, I already had my Danish passport. The official asked me where I was from, and I said I was a Palestinian, and then he asked me to wait. And when I asked him what he wanted, he said that he was going to the archive to find my document in order to delete my name as a Lebanese Palestinian refugee because I am now Danish. This means that if all the people here went back to Lebanon, not one of them would have Lebanese origins. (Participant, Public Meeting, Sondenborg, Denmark)

Since the nineties, the Iraqi travel document for Palestinians has been useless for travel to Arab countries; it has no value and no one recognizes it. (Participant, Syndicate Meeting, Za'faraniya shelter, Baghdad, Iraq).

As for the community's conditions after the collapse of the monarchy, perhaps they were

a little better under Saddam Hussein's regime. He built buildings for them to live in instead of the stables as they used to, and they were given simple rights. And they treated us then like Iraqis in matters like nationality and services. I mean to say that there was a big jump towards giving us some rights, albeit simple ones. In spite of that, we were hoping to be better treated by them, and to be given broader rights. The

*I am among those who formed a committee for the people from Gaza. I demanded from the Jordanian government to find solutions to our daily problems. We don't want elections and we don't want to run for these elections for fear of the Jordanian sector of society. All we want is quite simply to have a civil identity card that enables us to move around, and work, and manage our affairs. If I want to cash a cheque from the bank, they ask about my ID card; my driving license is not recognized as sufficient. They would ask for my national number. There are 150,000 people in Jordan who suffer like me in this status, and also there are hundreds of engineers, doctors, lawyers, and pharmacists who are not allowed to work because they don't have a national number. We tried, and we lobbied, but I don't want to say what we got as a response lest we get sent to "another place". (Participant, Preparatory Meeting, Amman, Jordan)*

Palestinian in Jordan, for example, is treated like a Jordanian, but as a refugee, however he enjoys the rights that the Jordanian enjoys, yet he has the right to return as a refugee. This means that he takes a salary and international assistance and everything. We lack everything here in Iraq. It is true that Saddam Hussein had issued a law dictating that we should be treated like Iraqis, but this law was never put into effect. They used to give us some funds

for schools and universities and offer some scholarships. But there was one condition to get these funds, which is to be a Ba'athist. It is true that they allowed some Palestinians to enrol in colleges and universities, but only if the person belonged to the Ba'ath Party. There was a difference. (Participant, Syndicate Meeting, the shelter of Al-Salam Neighbourhood (Al-Tobaji), Baghdad, Iraq).

My father did not go to see his father because they prevented him to do so; he needed an authorization but he didn't get it until after three days. Yet by this time he was buried. My grandmother wanted to come, but they didn't give her authorization until after four days. (Participant, Students' meeting, Nahr el-Bared camp, Lebanon)

We demand that countries who have refugees stress that we are Palestinian refugees. (Participant, Public meeting, Malmo, Sweden)

I acquired Danish nationality, and I have my two daughters with me. One of them is registered UNRWA and the other is not, so I sent my daughter's papers, and the Lebanese government endorsed them, but it didn't register her; but UNRWA did. (Participant, Public Meeting, Sondenborg, Denmark)

We are all Palestinians. We spent many years in this country. There are people who spent forty years here. So why can't we get residencies like the Yemenis in the old days who used to have free residencies allowing them to go wherever they want without being bothered. (Participant, Public meeting, Jeddah, Saudi Arabia)

The services that were offered to the Palestinians in Jordan are not available in Syria or Lebanon or any other country, but at the same time, we do not enjoy full rights. Yet we are Jordanian citizens, but can't work in top jobs like the military institution. *(Participant, Syndicate Meeting, Amman, Jordan).*

They haven't restructured electricity in the camps for 50 years. If we want to talk about the problems which Palestinians in Lebanon are facing, there is the passports problem. Why can't Palestinians have a passport to represent them, and have a certain number of passports especially for the Palestinian refugees in Lebanon. *(Participant, Students meeting, Shatila camp, Lebanon)*

The community needs to cooperate with the PLO, because there are some legal issues by which it can support it. It is the organization that represents us when dealing with the German authorities and represents the interests of the Palestinian people in front of the German courts.

What I want to say is that we live in a country which totally rejects legal principles of immigration, and consequently refuses all international regulations. Imagine that a child who is born in Germany is not considered German, and therefore isn't entitled to have German nationality, and Germany can't be considered his country. A law was issued in Germany in 1/1/2005 which was (according to the press and advertising and talks and discussions), supposed to solve the problems of a range of immigrants, which includes many of the Palestinians who live in Germany. In fact

we belong to those who entitled "without nationality" and we don't have documents, and these people are not known, even to the PLO. The result is that all immigrants who arrived to Germany, even in 1989, have lived in this country for fifteen years. They no longer have political asylum, or residency, or a place to work. These people don't have documents and thus became a category called "without nationality".

*They refused to perform an eye operation for my father, so he had to enter a private hospital and pay four or five thousand pounds. This problem is not really serious, but imagine if it was: you would have no choice but to sell yourself. My father is a taxi driver, and I don't want to tell you how they treat him in the Department of Motor Vehicles just because he is Palestinian, I can't describe the degree of torment. By our house there is a photocopying centre that told us most of their earnings come from us, as every other day we have to copy papers for work permits or other permissions. We are constantly copying documents. If a security service employee arrests a Palestinian in the street, this would be another story. He would curse him saying horrible things and he would give him a hard time. Didn't I tell you that we are demanding our simplest rights?.*

*(Participant, Meeting, Cairo, Egypt)*

So this law was a big issue, and they announced that they will solve the "without nationality" problem, especially for those who have been living in Germany for eighteen years, or those who have clean legal record. They claimed that they will be given a residency based on this and people began to provide the evidence they had. Meanwhile, the German authorities were in the process of contacting the Lebanese government to try to get passports for those

who couldn't formally issue passports from the Lebanese Embassy.

The result was that the people who applied received letters written in German which demands that whoever wants a passport from the Lebanese Embassy should give them his residency permission. But to print the residency form for these authorities you need to have a passport. These poor people used to ask some private institutions for this, but they were told that they will be given a residency provided that they issue passports. And when they went to get their passports, they took them to the police station without warning, and they were immediately taken to the airport and forced out of the country. This happened three times during the last few weeks.

At present we have a problem. People who hear about this will not apply to have passports to get residency permits; they will stay without documents and without residencies. So it is hard to find a job, and also their children will not be able to go to schools. This is really a huge social problem. Had this law been implemented, the situation would have changed, and people would have been given residency, and the "right to work"!

The result has been that people who have been living here for 15 years can't register their children at schools, or have them to learn vocational skills. So the students who finish high school must depend on themselves and find a job. *(Participant, Syndicate Meeting, Berlin, Germany).*

I have temporary nationality which means that I don't have a Jordanian passport. This would mean that I'm renouncing my Palestinian identity,

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*Every new Iraqi government imposes new regulations upon us. We don't blame just this one regime; we blame all of them. Each new president imposes new laws on Palestinians. Each time they give us new identity papers. When the first refugees came to Iraq, they were given a 'refugee' identity papers. When the regime changed, they gave us a 'resident' identity paper. Under the new regime, the permanent resident ID paper was cancelled and they gave us temporary six-month resident identity papers. All over the world, whoever has been a resident for five years in a country is granted nationality. Yet we have been living in this country for 56 years, and they only give us six months residency cards?! Where is the justice in this? Is this justice?. *(Participant, Syndicate Meeting, Za'fariya shelter, Baghdad, Iraq).**

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and renouncing my rights. I am in a host country. *(Participant, Women's Preparatory Meeting, Amman, Jordan)*

There is also the freedom to move around and travel, I mean passports. There are many Palestinians who don't have passports; they only have those green or blue identity cards. *(Participant, Students' meeting, Rashidieh camp, Lebanon)*

I can't go to the centre for residency permits lest I hear humiliating language. How could an old man or woman go there? How could I go, if I were very timid? How would a woman go? How would Abu Tariq go, with my respect to him? A lot of people suffer from this. The other issue is housing. You came here and you took photos from the outside, despite it being known that this situation was raised more than once. We will help you, and we will raise 100 dollars for you. You want 50 dollars from the club, we will get you 100 dollars from the Embassy, and you saw that road. *(Participant, Syndicate meeting, Hurriya shelter, Baghdad, Iraq)*

Another issue is immigration. They appointed a cruel person for us to deal with who is a curse for the Palestinians. He speaks with one arrogantly, saying for example, "you are the father of so-and-so, and your father is so-and-so, don't you have a room?". If this person was appointed by the Embassy, what is this?. *(Participant, Syndicate meeting, Hurriya shelter, Baghdad, Iraq)*

Most of the Palestinians who live in Saudi Arabia have neither citizenship numbers nor identity cards. *(Participant, Public meeting, Dammam, Saudi Arabia)*

Basically we want to draw the refugees' attention to the fact that there is someone who cares about them. Take the refugees in Jordan or Lebanon or Syria; they are a group of people who

live, in one way or another, in several areas called refugee camps. The state gave them passports or certain documents that identify them as refugees, in contrast with native citizens. But here in the kingdom, most of the refugees don't have documents; they are refugees and I am one of them. There is another part who are considered citizens of Jordan or Syria. These do not stress the point of return of the refugees. *(Participant, Youth meeting, Dammam, Saudi Arabia)*

Why don't we form a committee to exert pressure on the Arab countries to cancel the guarantor system; our guarantor is the PLO. We need to be free without having to constantly renew residency with its high fees. There are people who really can't afford to have their children aught as well as pay their residency fees. *(Participant, Youth meeting, Dammam, Saudi Arabia)*

#### iv. Education and Labour

As for education, they have the expression "newcomers". When you want to enrol in a school or a university as a Palestinian you should receive permission from the newcomers department so that your son can enter a school. Of course, there are no government schools. All the schools available for Palestinians here are private ones, because they consider us foreigners. Palestinian students pay in sterling or dollars or their equivalent in Egyptian pounds. *(Participant, Meeting, Cairo, Egypt)*

As for the rights that Palestinians enjoy here of course they have the right to learn. But for Palestinians there are independent schools, which we call private schools, and which are not free. As for the regulations for university, they are a little different now, depending on whether the mother is Egyptian or not. These are recent

regulations. Previously Palestinian children from an Egyptian mother could continue to be educated in private schools and pay in sterling at university. The university fees are very high. I used to pay 1500 sterling, and it costs 3000 for science specializations. After the new system concerning Egyptian mothers was applied, these students would only pay 10% of the total sum, along with the fees in Egyptian pounds, which comes to 200-300 pounds. But we still pay for medical treatment, and you can't get medical treatment in public hospitals, only private ones. *(Participant, Meeting, Cairo, Egypt)*

In the days of [Jama] 'Abd Al-Nasser, my son and my daughter were in the finest schools and the best universities. They never took money from us. Now students here pay 2650 pounds and need another two thousand for other things, and when he goes to the doctor he has to pay 50 or 100 pounds. Where would he get such a sum?. *(Participant, Meeting, Hilwan, Egypt)*

The refugees' cause and the Palestinian cause have been removed from the curriculum of the Education Ministry, and instead a parallel program under the subject of human rights was introduced. This program is supported and the media promote it with signs everywhere. Has anyone ever seen a sign in the street or on the top of a building calling for "the preservation of the right of return"? And if someone put such a sign up, we all know what his fate would be. *(Participant, Preparatory Meeting, Amman, Jordan)*

As young refugees in the camps we suggest here that what we need are opportunities. Why can the children of military people and those who work in the field of education enjoy scholarships? There are scholarships for the residents of the camps,

regardless of the number; but 200 scholarships is not sufficient for the population of the camps! Is there anything that can qualify us to receive such scholarships?. (Participant, Preparatory Meeting, Amman, Jordan)

They do not recognize Palestinian students as international students so I am not sure what the latest update is on that. But if you are a Palestinian student you cannot apply for certain funds that are available to every international student, because there is nothing called Palestine according to Canada. (Participant, Public Meeting, Toronto, Canada).

Palestinian students do not enjoy any electoral right in the Lebanese universities, undermining his role at university. (Participant, Students' meeting, Beiddawi camp, Lebanon)

Unfortunately, there are a lot of Palestinian families that can't afford to have their children taught in private schools. I am poor and I can't afford to have my children educated. I heard of another man who withdrew his daughters from school and is not able to have them taught in private schools, so he only left the boys at school because there is not enough income to teach his daughters. This is in itself a problem for Palestinians or foreigners who live in Egypt. When my father was still alive, he told us that he could have not been able to educate us if they had applied the new system of universities fees when we were studying, for we are six kids and he hadn't enough money. But fortunately this system was introduced after we graduated. The last university in which the system was introduced is Al-Azhar University. (Participant, Meeting, Cairo, Egypt)

The first thing is that university students or students who have finished high school can't find

anyone to support Palestinian refugees. Maybe it is true that they used to give scholarships so that students can finish their studies- I am talking about Palestinian refugees in Jordan. Who is responsible for Tawjih students? They get high grades, 80 or 90%, but they can't get a place at the university. Who is responsible for letting them finish their studies? They don't get competitive chances to study in the universities. (Participant, Women's Preparatory Meeting, Amman, Jordan)

As for education, I have one question to all the sisters here. If we made statistics up until 1982, we can find the educational and cultural statistics for the Palestinian people in the refugee camps are very high. But from 1982 up until today, this percentage has decreased to less than half. We should research the reasons for this; is it the economic situation? We want to avoid this problem so that our people will not grow up ignorant. This point should be thoroughly studied. (Participant, Women's meeting, Burj el-Barajneh, Lebanon)

The Gaza Camp citizens are currently treated like foreigners, and they pay for university in dollars. (Participant, Women's Preparatory Meeting, Amman, Jordan)

Giving the Palestinians in the camps all the civil rights and providing the social assistance and educational scholarships to students who have high scores so they might study abroad. So that Palestinians in Lebanon can achieve the same educational level of Palestinians in any other Arab country. (Participant, Students' meeting, Beiddawi camp, Lebanon)

I have been living in Egypt for 36 years. We want jobs for our children who work one day and then have to stay home for days. I have here two kids, my son and his wife live with us. When my children

go to the Embassy, they are told that there are no jobs unless they know important people. The Egyptian government hardly manage to employ its own people. We are thankful to the Egyptians who accepted us in their country. But when we go to the Embassy, they would give us a hard time just to document some papers, and we also pay 50 or even 100 pounds for the application. We demand that the Embassy provide jobs for our children so that we can live in dignity. Where could we go and to whom could we complain? The Egyptian government does not employ Palestinians. (Participant, Meeting, Cairo, Egypt)

Job opportunities: employing a Palestinian horrifies the private sector. My brother, for example, has a Masters in Arabic language, and in order to work in a private school, he must obtain security clearance from the government. You would hear horrible things like "we don't employ Palestinians, they are terrorists". One is nothing to them. They treat Palestinians as they treat those from the Gulf area whom they regard as investors who will take their money and leave. This has affected most people, as well as the private sector which deal with you as if you were a thief who came here to steal, or a terrorist. These ideas were encouraged and it has produced a crisis in the sphere of employing Palestinians in Egypt. They are starting to consider those who have an Egyptian mother for certain occupations such as engineering and law. I think the lawyer's union is the foremost in this field. Maybe because it has realized the size of the problem so it began to treat Palestinians in a different way. It also calls for giving Palestinians or Sudanese certain exemptions. Things started to get easier when this system of including those who have an Egyptian mother was applied, and it has helped Palestinians find jobs. There is no problem working in law for Palestinians, because it is an open occupation and

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Unbelievably, he [my son] once worked in the cement sector for two days, and then they asked him about the identity card. He said that he does not have a card, so they knew that he was Palestinian, and they fired him. Also some time ago, some Egyptians gave him work and he worked for five days taking 10 pounds daily, finally they asked him about the card, but he said he is a Palestinian and he was fired. (Participant, Meeting, Hilwan, Egypt)

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concerns only the Lawyer's Union. And when it endorses you, you can work. *(Participant, Meeting, Cairo, Egypt)*

We demand that the Lebanese government creates job opportunities. We know that the current economic situation does not provide many opportunities, and there is no doubt that there are no jobs for some Lebanese citizens, which means that there are no jobs for Palestinians either. But it can at least grant Palestinians the right to work. We have engineers and doctors who don't have jobs in Lebanon. Their employment is limited to the camps. Why should a Palestinian lawyer who studied four or five years work in an office where he would stay late writing up all the information on the case, and at the end a Lebanese lawyer goes to plead it. This Palestinian lawyer has the right to go to court and plead the case himself. *(Participant, Students' meeting, Nahr el-Bared camp, Lebanon)*

Why can't Palestinians work in the army or security services? Why can't he work in state jobs? This is a part of the citizens' rights and they are endorsed by the constitution; why can't Palestinians enjoy them?. *(Participant, Preparatory Meeting, Amman, Jordan)*

What is happening is that you try hard to find a job that can't be found, in spite of their being resources. Yet they are reserved: you feel that your place is reserved for another person. You can't find an alternative except to leave the country, or work in lowly occupations, a taxi driver for example. For no one in this job asks you where you come from or what your nationality is. For the employer, you're just another worker; he doesn't care if you are Palestinian or Egyptian. You find university graduates working in these jobs. *(Participant, Meeting, Cairo, Egypt)*

I have a job but it is not with the government or with others, because that is very difficult. For me, I don't want anything from the Egyptian government because sooner or later I will leave. Egypt doesn't allow Palestinians and foreigners to work in the public sector. Lately public institutions have been privatized so that even the Egyptian worker can't find a job in them. *(Participant, Meeting, Cairo, Egypt)*

We are only allowed to work in jobs that require hard labour. We should demand that the state annul work laws that don't allow Palestinians to work in many classes of occupations. We have thousands of unemployed young men. Some of them are university and college graduates. *(Participant, Worker's meeting, Ein el-Helweh camp, Lebanon)*

There is no canteen or restaurant in any of the factories, and we don't get a break. And even ill workers can't take a break. And there are no services for our children. *(Participant, Preparatory Workshop, Sbeineh camp, Syria)*

There are no job opportunities for our students after they graduate. The host countries and the Gulf countries and the Palestinian companies should create job opportunities for them. *(Participant, Worker's meeting, Ein el-Helweh camp, Lebanon)*

As for the economic aspect, there is the work permit, and how to get it. All Palestinians don't have organized structures to be part of, except professionals like engineers, doctors, and lawyers. This means that they don't have unions like those which were inside the PLO; the journalist's union, lawyer's unions and engineer's union. In the 1980s, all the activities and dealings with these unions were blocked under regulations introduced in Egypt, except

for the worker's union. So we all had to get permission from the worker's union. I am a researcher and should therefore be categorized under a research category, but I am under the journalist's union because I can't contact or deal with the Egyptian journalist's union or the Palestinian press union to get me a paper proving that I work in the Egyptian media in order to get permission. So I am forced to write in the occupation space in my passport any occupation, like freelance salesman or car technician, so that I can get a work permit. You find many Palestinians who do that, although they may be honest but they don't have a choice, for they can't find a job. Under Egyptian law, 1% of the employees of any institution must be foreigners, whom the institution pays taxes and special social security for them and also a special health insurance in addition to their salaries. So any employer would prefer not to employ Palestinians, hiring instead Jordanians, to escape problems they would have. This created a crisis with Palestinian Jordanians who come to Egypt, because they can enter Egypt any time without a visa, and they can get their education exactly like Egyptians, and if they are studying in the private sector they only pay the fees, and in the university they would only pay 10%. Also the economic institutions would employ Jordanians whether they are of Palestinian origin or not. So the real unemployment rate amongst Palestinians has increased, although after that many PLO allowances were cancelled on the basis of it (except for the martyrs, whose families continue to receive their salaries). Another entity under the name of the Palestinian Association was created. It offers assistance for Palestinian families in the "poverty salary" program. But it asks for papers that are difficult to find, in order to give you as little as 50 [Egyptian] pounds or

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100 pounds at most. This amount is nothing in the economic conditions of a country like Egypt. But at least many families have started to receive money from it. The Palestinian women's union used to offer part of the donations it gets from charities on a voluntary and unorganized basis. According to the special procedures in the PLO, we should have proper allocations. (Participant, Meeting, Cairo, Egypt)

There are a lot of Palestinian graduates, and there are also vocational workers who are unemployed. And if he goes into any company or to any vocational institution to work, they get crazy when they know that he is Palestinian. They say to him that they must first employ Iraqis. And they start insulting him and asking him if he was a terrorist. Why doesn't the Palestinian leadership discuss all these problems and horror that the Palestinians have in Iraq? Why can't Palestinians in Iraq enjoy the minimum of his humanitarian rights? We want to live in dignity the same way every person would like to live.

(Participant, Syndicate meeting, Hurriya shelter, Baghdad, Iraq)

Suitable jobs which fit Palestinian talents are not available, although our educated sector is high in our society. And the social and structural bodies and organizations that are meant to study this problem and devise solutions for it are either absent or incompetent. (Participant, Students' meeting, Beddawi camp, Lebanon)

Palestinian students are not able to practice skills in any institution or company after finishing their studies. (Participant, Students' meeting, Beddawi camp, Lebanon)

We have discussed the political, legal, social and civil issues. We first mentioned the issue of job opportunities which are not available

*I agree with all that was said by the previous participant, because she spoke about the essence of the problem. But I want to add a few more things. Even if we Palestinians have Canadian or any other nationality, our legitimate foundation is always the right of return. We will not renounce our right to our land, country, and property for as long as we breathe. Also, as Palestinians in Lebanon, we face great dangers concerning education, health, civil rights and labour, where we are deprived from working in many occupations. I want to give you an idea about me. I am a trained nurse and an expert in this area. I have a diploma and a work permit from the Health Ministry to work in Lebanon as a trained nurse. This requires that I go to the Ministry of Labour to get a permit to work in Lebanon. At the Ministry they told me to leave, and that they will answer me in Lebanon, but three months went by and I went again to the Ministry and they told me to apply again to get the permit. I remained with no job or work permit. Then I worked as a nurse in Maqassed Khairiyya Hospital the Lebanese hospital in Beirut. But they told me that they must say in the job application that I am working as the cleaning boy, because the law of the Ministry of Labour which allows Palestinians to work in certain occupations and forbids them from working in others. And I worked on this basis for one year and they gave me a card that says that I am a cleaner, not a nurse. (Participant, Public meeting, Montreal, Canada)*

for our youth who can't work in any field once they graduate. (Participant, Women's meeting, Beddawi camp, Lebanon)

On the social level, we are deprived from the right to work. People are working and the country overlooks such laws although that it is not formally obliged to do so. We don't have the right to work, but we want jobs for graduate

students to become doctors, engineers, and lawyers. This country is supposed to help those people, in addition to the PLO and UNRWA, by creating jobs for them to enable them to help their families. (Participant, Worker's meeting, Beddawi camp, Lebanon)

Among the most serious problems for refugees in Lebanon are not having civil and social rights. Palestinians are not allowed to exercise their right to work, or allowed to work in 72 occupations. And if a worker, or teacher, or even a doctor can find work without permission, he does not enjoy any rights or compensation. He can also be fired if the employer wishes to do so. Our people with all its sectors are facing the worst kind of racial discrimination. Although we are protected by Lebanese law we don't enjoy the rights ratified by the UN General Assembly about the right of the Palestinian refugee to work in host countries. (Participant, Public Meeting, Wavel Camp, Lebanon).

As for the Palestinian camps, we demand certain work opportunities to be defined, like doctors and pharmacist. If any Palestinian wants to open a clinic or a pharmacy or any agency outside the refugee camp, he will need a license, and we demand that he could obtain such a license. (Participant, Women's meeting, Ein el-Hilweh camp, Lebanon)

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Palestinians are not allowed to engage in 74 occupations which any citizen in the free world can practice. For example, he is not allowed to become a doctor or a lawyer, and he is not allowed to open a clinic outside the camp. This leads to huge economic pressures that force him, like other skilled people, to leave the country, if he can find a way to, for it is very difficult for Palestinians to move freely or travel, especially to neighbouring Arab countries. *(Participant, Students' meeting, Beddawi camp, Lebanon)*

The principal demand for refugees who live in the camps is to lift the economic blockade imposed on them. Forbidding Palestinian to work in 72 occupations regardless of his major at university makes him unable to meet the Lebanese labour force. This either forces him to hang up his certificate - whatever it is - and just forget about it, while staying home waiting for any lost job opportunity, or leave his family and undertake the problems of being refugee again, alone. *(Participant, Students' meeting, Beddawi camp, Lebanon)*

The Lebanese government has so many negative elements. First there is the right to an education. For example, we study and take the baccalaureate, and we go on to university to study what we like for many years. Ok, we are allowed to learn but we can't work in the specialization that we studied. There is racial discrimination here. When I go for a job interview, for instance, the first thing they ask me is "what is your nationality?" and when they know that I am a Palestinian, I don't get the job. This is racial discrimination and sectarianism. The sectarianism is between Muslims and Christians, and the racial discrimination is against the Palestinians. *(Participant, Students' meeting, Rashidieh camp, Lebanon)*

The civic and social issues relate to improving job opportunities for Palestinians inside the camp. *(Participant, Students' meeting, Rashidieh camp, Lebanon)*

We want civil rights including the work and to no longer be deprived from working in 73 professions. *(Participant, Women's meeting, Ein el-Hilweh camp, Lebanon)*