

Part II

III) Humanitarian agencies and other international institutions

*They come here, take pictures of us, and take away all the relief assistance.
Where is the support that we are supposed to receive?
Our situation never improves.*

(Participant, Syndicate Meeting, Za'araniya shelter, Baghdad, Iraq).

Humanitarian agencies and other international institutions

I) Refugee Status

a. Non-Registered Refugees

The main reason for the humanitarian crisis is that the donor countries are reducing their assistance, diverting funds to projects that don't even exist. The international community is negligent, due to the terrifying and scary hegemony of the United States which leads the charge of the transnational companies. In this context, money started to flow into illusory projects, the so-called "peace projects." This is the cause of people's suffering, and it all continues because Israel doesn't respect the international community and doesn't abide by its resolutions. *(Participant, Preparatory Meeting, Amman, Jordan)*

Our suffering and problems will not be addressed by the Iraqi government or our national representative or the Embassy. We must lay our problems before international institutions, so that they can help us and offer us humanitarian aid. And this necessity is part of the Palestinian people's suffering. Don't expect from the Iraqi government to solve our problems. I can hardly fulfil my daily routine of loading and unloading shipments not to mention that they want me to pay 160 dinars in penalties. This is in addition to the curses, insults and offensive words we hear daily. We remember the day when a ranking officer in the residency department attacked us, saying: 'what do you Palestinians want?' He insulted us, asking, 'why don't you leave Iraq?' We were humiliated and we just left. That's why I am saying that we should raise our problems at the international level. *(Participant, Syndicate meeting, Hurriya shelter, Baghdad, Iraq)*

What I want to say is that we only want to convey our voice. We want the Right of Return and we insist upon it. And we want our voice to be heard by everyone including the PLO and the international institutions which are involved in the situation. *(Participant, Public Meeting, Aarhus, Denmark)*

I) Refugee Status

a. Non-Registered Refugees

There are thousands of refugees who are not registered by UNRWA, especially those who live in Aqaba and Wadi 'Araba and in some areas of the Jordan Valley, who don't have identity papers or a passport, and who are marginalized. *(Participant, Preparatory Meeting, Amman, Jordan)*

I don't think we give the issue of unregistered refugees enough attention. We speak about the right of return and usually that refers to the people registered by UNRWA but there are people living in refugee camps who UNRWA does not count. So we need to raise this point and address what will happen to people like myself. *(Participant, Public Meeting, Toronto, Canada)*

There is also the problem of the NR [Non Registered with UNRWA] who is neglected by UNRWA. I am from the NR [Non Registered with UNRWA], I don't get any help from the Students' fund and I don't have the right to receive medical care. This must be a fundamental concern. *(Participant, Worker's meeting, Beddawi camp, Lebanon)*

On services, we have a health clinic with one doctor who treats all types of patient. There are many Palestinians from 'Akrad Al-Baqara village who were not recognized by UNRWA. When they were finally recognized, they were able to get medical treatment from the agency's clinic which serves nearly fifteen thousand refugees. However, the medical supplies dedicated to the camp were not increased. *(Participant, Preparatory Workshop, Sbeineh camp, Syria)*

b. UNRWA, Ration Cards, and Legal Status

When a sick person with a chronic disease asks for their help, they ask him to demonstrate that he is not a beneficiary of the UNRWA health insurance scheme. However, the UNRWA program provides little more than aspirin. What more does UNRWA ever give than this? And if he is registered, would you deprive him from a surgical operation, which is very costly? This is one of the main sources of refugees' suffering. When those who live outside the camps want to be treated, they are told that they don't live in the camp and that they don't have health insurance and hence have no right to receive medical treatment. Sometimes I wonder what the definition of a Palestinian refugee really is. *(Participant, Preparatory Meeting, Amman, Jordan)*

Do you know that the ration card is the only evidence of the true number of Palestinian refugees? The United Nations does not grant you a ration card unless they have your name from one of its institutions. I only received Residency Status based on my ration card. When I contacted the Danish authorities they enquired about whether the United Nations had my name. When they found my name on the United Nations' lists, they gave me the Residency Status. Regarding the statistics relating to Palestinian refugees in Lebanon, it is illegal now to add any Palestinian who was born outside the country. When a Palestinian child is born outside Lebanon, it is registered in the country of birth, not in Lebanon. I don't care about the Lebanese identity; I am interested in the ration card. No one in the whole world can take it away from us, for our children's names are added to the "ration card". *(Participant, Public Meeting, Hillerod, Denmark)*

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1) Refugee Status

b. UNRWA, Ration Cards, and Legal Status

Of course I am a Palestinian, and I know that we have ration cards, but obviously we've lived in Europe for many years. My late father died long ago, and naturally our children have increased. But certainly none of our children were registered in UNRWA or any Palestinian records. It is very important that our children feel that they are registered as Palestinians, because the belonging should be a real one. This issue must be raised in order to find a solution to it. *(Participant, Public meeting, Barcelona, Spain)*

Take [participant] for an example. He has brothers living in Saudi Arabia, Qatar, and Kuwait, and they now have children who were never registered. This means that they do not have an UNRWA card. This is the point, as a proof of being Palestinian they should be registered. *(Participant, Public meeting, Barcelona, Spain)*

They took away everything that contains the words 'Republic of Lebanon.' All that we have left is the ration card which is not issued by the Republic of Lebanon. *(Participant, Public Meeting, Sondenborg, Denmark)*

This ration card helped a lot of Palestinians. A lot of Palestinians improved their financial condition and left the ration card. But at the same time, this is the only way to prove that I am a Palestinian. *(Participant, Public meeting, Barcelona, Spain)*

Of course I was registered with UNRWA, but only since I was 14 or 15 and I don't know what has happened to my registration now. *(Participant, Public meeting, Barcelona, Spain)*

I still have an UNRWA ration card at home, although I wasn't born here I still have it from Geneva. But I have faced a problem in acquiring

identity papers which I was told could not be issued. *(Participant, Public Meeting, Sondenborg, Denmark)*

When the Palestinian people came to Iraq for the first time as refugees, the United Nations and the international organizations were supposed to register their names in the United Nations' records, like the Palestinians in the neighbouring countries who were registered as refugees. *(Participant, Syndicate Meeting, the shelter of Al-Salam Neighbourhood (Al-Tobaji), Baghdad, Iraq).*

As for the Right of Return, it is a sacred right guaranteed by all the international laws. There is no organization, even if it represents the Palestinian person that has the right to renounce this right because it has two dimensions. It is a collective right for the people, and an individual right for every Palestinian. This is what I wanted to affirm before I began. As for UNRWA, it does not exist in the Gulf countries, because the agency has a specific definition of a refugee. Four definitions for the Palestinian refugees have been discussed in negotiations, one of them the agency's definition, and there is the American definition, the Israeli definition and the European definition. Perhaps the participants of the Palestinian meetings can give you a clearer idea about the needs of the Palestinian refugees in the Gulf. Whenever the issue of the Palestinian refugees in the world is discussed, the refugees in the Gulf are excluded under the pretext that they are financially well off, and since there is no UNRWA in the Gulf, then they are living well. The problem is that they always ignore this point. *(Participant, Public meeting, Sharjah, United Arab Emirates)*

As a Palestinian from Lebanon, I feel that what I need is what was expressed by our brother the engineer, which is to be able, when I renounce

the Lebanese nationality, to call the Lebanese Embassy after five minutes and get my identity card. But, as a Palestinian, when I renounced the refugee card or the passport of the Palestinian refugees in Lebanon, I didn't have contacts, as if I don't exist in the world's records, but I think I'm registered on what they call the ration card in Vienna. But they erased all records in Lebanon, which means that if I want to issue a refugee card from Lebanon, they would check the records and tell me that I have European nationality (with four red Xs which indicates that this is European nationality). The minimum right Palestinians in this country should enjoy is to be identified or to belong to his original nationality. *(Participant, Public Meeting, Copenhagen, Denmark).*

The Palestinian Authority and the PLO must assume the responsibility of registering the refugees in Iraq with UNRWA. They must exercise pressure in this direction, because, our community can't get to the United Nations or its international organizations, whereas the Palestinian Authority has a representative at the United Nations. He must also discuss the issue of registering the Palestinian refugees in the United Nations' records with the representatives of other Arab countries and with the United Nations itself. They must raise the problem that there is a forgotten Palestinian community of no more than thirty thousand people. We are not many. Are we really a thorn in their sides? We could be absorbed by any of Syria's camps. One hundred and twenty thousand Palestinians live in Al-Yarmouk camp in Damascus. Let them consider us Sbeineh camp, our number doesn't even compare to those in the large refugee camps. *(Participant, Syndicate Meeting, the shelter of Al-Salam Neighbourhood (Al-Tobaji), Baghdad, Iraq)*

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2) The United Nations and UNRWA a. Perceptions and Understandings of UNRWA

They come here, take pictures of us, and take away all the relief assistance. Where is the support that we are supposed to receive? Our situation never improves. (Participant, Syndicate Meeting, Za'faraniya shelter, Baghdad, Iraq).

You don't have the right to be employed or to work. You can only conduct your own business. Can I work like an Iraqi? No. They used to give us relief for a limited period and then they cut it off. That who trades can steal, and that who has a Jordanian passport can work and gain money, but the Palestinian that holds a travel document has "his mother cursed during his father's wake." It's a miserable wretched condition that we've been living for years. (Participant, Syndicate Meeting, Za'faraniya shelter, Baghdad, Iraq).

2) The United Nations and UNRWA

a. Perceptions and Understandings of UNRWA

To clarify this point, when talking about UNRWA, Palestinians consider it to be the only witness to their tragedy, and that the refugee cause would dissolve in case of its absence. The refugees consider its absence to be a threat to the Right of Return and to the Palestinian refugee. (Participant, Public meeting, Padua, Italy)

Why doesn't the European Union consider supporting UNRWA which already exists and which already has international structures and legitimacy? There is no doubt that it is merely a symbol and not a representative entity, but it is a political symbol of the tragedy of the Palestinian refugees, and at the same time, it was established to offer services needed by the Palestinian refugees. (Participant, Preparatory Meeting, Amman, Jordan)

I am not against improving the living standards of the people; on the contrary, I think that this is very necessary. But I just want to affirm that this should be done through UNRWA. It is an existing

international entity which has existing frameworks and structures and which is internationally recognized, and it is a symbol of the Palestinian exile, but it is not of course a representative symbol. (Participant, Preparatory Meeting, Amman, Jordan)

Since 1948, they have claimed that UNRWA was formed to care for our interests, and to preserve our rights. But this is a big lie, for it neglected our rights and lost them. International law and international legitimacy are all a big lie!. (Participant, Public Meeting, Koge, Denmark)

As for the needs of the refugees, there is a very poor class of refugees. Our insistence upon UNRWA is based on the fact that it is an international witness to the plight of the Palestinian refugees. Although it bears the name of Relief and Works Agency, the services it offers are negligible. The majority of the refugees don't benefit from it, but we insist upon it until it is time for us to return to our country, in the same way we try to preserve every grain of flour or every tablet of Aspirin. We demand an improvement in its services, especially with the rise of unemployment from which most of the people in the camp suffer. (Participant, Preparatory Workshop, Homs ('A'ideen) camp, Syria)

UNRWA is implementing projects to help the Palestinian refugees. With the donations it receives from other countries and international organizations, it offers them employment services, education, and sometimes medicines. Why don't the EU members increase their support to UNRWA to enable it to improve its services and offer more help? Why doesn't UNRWA sponsor the right of the Palestinian refugees to return, that is demanded everyday by the refugees in Lebanon, Syria and Jordan and in other parts of the world? There were many projects offered between 1949 and 1952 relating to the Right of

Return, why didn't the European Union revive these projects to help the refugees return to their country? What I'm saying is that it is not the international organizations that always demand and entrench the Right of Return; it is rather the refugee himself who is suffering in the camps. (Participant, Public meeting, Berlin, Germany)

Concerning UNRWA, I read some parts from a book on the Right of Return. The legal situation of UNRWA is different from that of the agencies that were established for the United Nations High Commission for Refugees. The Palestinian refugees in the camps think too highly of UNRWA's role, believing it to be a witness to 60 years of refuge. Practically it doesn't represent that, it is rather a political institution with no actions. It doesn't even offer information to serve international law on the issue. The Right of Return is marginalized. So what is needed from UNRWA? The problem isn't with UNRWA; rather it is with the United Nations and its law. If the UN can't implement the resolutions it passed relating to the Palestinian cause, then we should form fact-finding committees to take these issues into

consideration for the Palestinians. (Participant, Public meeting, Padua, Italy)

My view is that strengthening UNRWA as it is now would be a negative thing. For example, does strengthening UNRWA involve certain figures from this institution? We don't have organizations that work for Palestinian affairs especially in the United Nations and its various bodies including UNRWA. I don't really trust what UNRWA has done for Palestinian refugees since it was first created, but I support maintaining it. There are suggestions of abolishing it but this is of course a political not a

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2) The United Nations and UNRWA a. Perceptions and Understandings of UNRWA

practical goal. So is your goal political or practical? By political, I mean registering UNRWA as an entity which exists in order to just maintain the “refugees’ right”, and by practical, I mean that we will still get the funds from UNRWA which continue to keep the Palestinian refugees who live in the camps in a state of anaesthesia. *(Participant, Public meeting, Rome, Italy)*

On relations with international agencies, the most important agency that works for us is UNRWA. Although it is not fully performing its role it should keep on helping us until we return to our country because all the countries in the world took our country, not just Israel. This means they are all responsible for our people, so UNRWA is an extension of the donor countries which are those that support UNRWA. Therefore UNRWA should continue helping us. *(Participant, Women’s meeting, Wavel camp, Lebanon)*

I want to say that UNRWA is responsible for the Palestinian people’s affairs, their health and education services and for providing their daily basic requirements, but it doesn’t properly fulfil its obligations. We have to pay for everything from our own salaries. *(Participant, Public meeting, Burj el-Barajneh, Lebanon)*

As for UNRWA, [participant] was a student in one of UNRWA schools. There is a flaw within the UNRWA framework, and the role can be activated through many projects, including: recruitment of the Palestinian labour force, rehabilitation of UNRWA schools and hospitals and clinics. There is also an idea to form a committee from the donor countries to examine UNRWA situation and to see where their money goes. There are suggestions to develop the wells, the educational coverage, and repairing the camps in Lebanon in general. *(Participant, Students meeting, Shatila camp, Lebanon)*

In short, we don’t have a sponsor to protect our rights in the camps except for UNRWA which provides for our many needs, such as education, social and health services. But it is clearly noticeable that these services are declining, from the cultural and health services to scholarships which became restricted to fewer students. Yet students need to find jobs and educational opportunities outside Lebanon because they are rare in Lebanon and because they seek a decent life and hope to build a better future for themselves. *(Participant, Students’ meeting, Beddawi camp, Lebanon)*

The Palestinian refugees in exile, especially in the areas in which UNRWA offers services, greatly suffer from the politicized orientation of the agency’s work which aims to pressure the refugees into surrendering the Right of Return. The suffering of Lebanon’s refugees is a good example of that; they are deprived of job opportunities so that they are forced to migrate. *(Participant, Preparatory Workshop, Homs (A’ideen) camp, Syria)*

UNRWA represents the refugees’ status. It was established to offer them services until it is time for them to return. Relating to the development committees, in theory they have a clear remit but practically problems remain. The services offered to the refugees in the camp are not adequate; the economic situation is very bad and the many factories located around the camp are full of young workers who skip school. *(Participant, Preparatory Workshop, Sbeineh camp, Syria)*

It is true that UNRWA is providing services, but this is an obligation on behalf of the international community. Looking back to the foundations of these organizations they were created to serve the refugees. They are financed by all the countries

in the world. They didn’t offer a favour for the Palestinian people, our nation suffered a tragedy and was forced out of our country, therefore the capital they have is for helping these people. But as we noticed, America always politicizes humanitarian projects, like those which serve the refugees in providing education, health and food. Also, America uses these humanitarian services to achieve its own interests and bribe the Palestinian people into renouncing their legitimate rights.

I agree with those who demand improvements in the situation of Palestinian refugees and the services provided to them, which is something endorsed by the UN. *(Participant, Preparatory Meeting, Amman, Jordan)*

Why is the whole world dealing with UNHCR while we deal with UNRWA?. *(Participant, Public Meeting, Beirut, Lebanon)*

Thirdly, and I am sorry if I took a long time, is UNRWA. I agree with what [participant] said about the nature of UNRWA, but UNRWA should remain active, because if it is weakened, this would have harmful political repercussions for Palestinians. We should insist upon UNRWA and we should if possible get the Arab countries support and increase its activities, although I am not optimistic that this will happen. Thank you. *(Participant, Public meeting, Sharjah, United Arab Emirates)*

Our problem started with the Balfour Declaration. Consequently, Britain is to be blamed first for the catastrophe of the Palestinian people. We insist upon establishing a Palestinian state, but we also insist upon the Right of Return to our country and properties from which we were forced to leave in 1948. We don’t want to return via the Geneva accords. We are not looking for a new political address; our program is to mobilize the

To ensure the daily needs of the Palestinian people, especially the refugees are met, and to give them the strength to support their resistance until the Palestinian Cause is solved the way Palestinians want, we advise the donor countries to support UNRWA. We also urge the donor countries to commit to the resolutions upon which UNRWA was created, and to continue to offer the best services for the Palestinian people until their plight is resolved. (Participant, Preparatory Meeting, Amman, Jordan)

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2) The United Nations and UNRWA

b. Deterioration, Reduction, and Absence

UNRWA is still responsible for providing services that meet our needs. It should be pressured into providing better services until Resolution 194 is implemented, which guarantees the right of the refugees to return to their homes and properties. (Participant, Preparatory Workshop, Jaramana camp, Syria)

energies of our people and to refuse returning to 1967 territories. The agency is the international witness, we are not loyal to it because of its basic services, which are inadequate, but because it is the symbol of the refugee issue. (Participant, Preparatory Workshop, Homs (A'ideen) camp, Syria)

Does the UN work for the benefit of the Palestinians and the Arabs, or for the benefit of the Israel and America? The United Nations is supposed to represent the whole world, and the Arab countries are 24 countries. (Participant, Public Meeting, Hillerod, Denmark)

Before I forget, there is an issue that I would like to emphasise, which is European activity in the camps of Lebanon and some West Bank and Gaza camps as well. Some of the most dangerous aspects of Oslo were the conspiracies against UNRWA aimed at destroying it as the political embodiment of the refugees' Right of Return. Unfortunately, this is being done with the approval of the Palestinian Authority. (Participant, Public Meeting, Malmo, Sweden)

UNRWA is not useful to you or to your family. It is merely a political program that represents international legitimacy. (Participant, Public meeting, Jeddah, Saudi Arabia)

Decisions are not taken by the people, rather by a dominant group. It is true that we need the agency's services, but what is more important is that it acts as an international witness to the refugee cause. We also affirm Resolution 194, and we don't accept any manipulation of it. (Participant, Preparatory Workshop, Homs (A'ideen) camp, Syria)

We insist on the Right of Return and a representative from the PLO. As for UNRWA,

it is an institution which attends to the affairs of the Palestinian refugees, such as medical care and education. That's why some representatives from UNRWA attend these meetings. Therefore some UNRWA representative must be involved in this project. (Participant, Public Meeting, Beirut, Lebanon)

b. Deterioration, Reduction, and Absence

UNRWA was formed in 1948, sorry, in 1952, with a mandate to provide jobs for unemployed Palestinians, to teach their children, address their problems, and conduct censuses. This is exactly what UNRWA has been doing for the Palestinians who live in Jordan, Syria, and Lebanon. As for the Palestinians in Iraq, we demand that UNRWA make us feel like we really exist and that we are not forgotten which is how we feel now. And we ask that UNRWA take care of the Palestinian community in Iraq, and provide all the services for them, as it does in Jordan, Syria, and Lebanon, and in the same way it exists in the West Bank and Gaza. And we require it to find jobs for unemployed Palestinians and provide transportation, education and health services. I have the ambition, like other Palestinian, to finish my higher education. Who else will provide jobs for me as well as other Palestinians and their children in the future? That's why UNRWA must perform all these tasks. (Participant, Syndicate meeting, Hurriya shelter, Baghdad, Iraq)

UNRWA has no role whatsoever. I personally don't even know where its local offices are! I haven't seen any project or activity performed by it. Maybe it has activities in the research field, but it doesn't have an effective and tangible role. It is important for such an agency to reach out to people and identify their concerns and locations. Does it have statistics for the number of Palestinians and their gathering places? I don't

think I have seen any such research produced by them. All the research they do is sent abroad. How can it work with people when it doesn't even know their locations, opinions or numbers? For example, me and some friends of mine work in prominent fields and could be easily contacted. (Participant, Meeting, Cairo, Egypt)

The services UNRWA provides include medical treatment and education.

In terms of medical treatment, fewer referrals are being made. Patients' needs are not being fulfilled. Medicines are scarce and the same things are prescribed for illnesses that require different treatment. There are also no medical specialists.

As for the education, there are not enough schools. Classes are overcrowded with about 50 or 60 students in the same class and teachers have little experience, especially of the new curriculum.

Teachers are often not able, or not willing, to fully explain lessons to their students, which forces students to take private lessons. But these students are poor and can't afford them. Services are declining but the expenses we are incurring as a result are not being covered.

Schools also allow students to move automatically to the next grade even if they fail the exam. A first grade student, for example, can be automatically moved to the next level, until he reaches the fourth grade without knowing anything and then may be expelled from the school for failing. (Participant, Women's meeting, Ein el-Hilweh camp, Lebanon)

If you want to talk about the services provided in a host country, take the case of Jordan which spends about 400 million dollars on the camps. This sum exceeds the money offered by UNRWA. The donor countries do not offer enough money

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to support UNRWA; their grants and donations have greatly been reduced, affecting the services provided by UNRWA. We have had the UNRWA card for decades, yet this card is worthless now. UNRWA health services are very limited. The most important services involve daily interaction with citizens. These are mainly the educational, health, and environmental services linked to UNRWA. Their upkeep is important for the preservation of the camp's structure and the Cause. *(Participant, Preparatory Meeting, Amman, Jordan)*

We address UNRWA with these demands after it registers us in its official records. Basically, we should be first registered with UNRWA. We need so many things as a result of UNRWA's fifty year absence. UNRWA should offset this deficit by creating job opportunities and building official institutions. The intellectuals and the educated should be offered jobs. There should be effective institutions for UNRWA like those established in the Arab World. The Palestinian communities in Syria, Lebanon and other countries has not suffered as in the same way as the Palestinian community in Iraq, because, as a community, we haven't been registered but ignored. The regime did with us as it pleased and it oppressed us whenever it wished, while telling the world that it gave the Palestinians money and provided them with protection. When UNRWA tried to register us, the Iraqi regime refused. Two years before the fall of the regime, an organisation asked to conduct a survey of the Palestinians in Iraq. We started to fill in the forms with the names of community members, their addresses, ages, cities of origin, qualifications and employment. But three days later, we were surprised to receive a phone call at the Fateh centre threatening to arrest those who were working on this project if they didn't stop. We continued because they didn't have the right

to arrest us on the charge of conducting a survey of Palestinian people for UNRWA. Another phone call came to an embassy official threatening the same thing and the embassy was forced to withdraw the agents who were conducting the survey. The authorities even demanded that all the applications that were filled would be brought to the Liberation Movements Centre. Frankly we ignored this and gave the survey to the embassy.

The situation is now different; the previous oppressive regime was replaced by a new regime. We don't want to be ignored. We must contact UNRWA and start registering our people so we can provide a decent life for widows and get them out of houses that aren't fit for animals.

Our suffering is great when it comes to housing, jobs, identity and residency. Why can't I say that I am a Palestinian? This means that I am deprived of my basic civil rights. Therefore we demand UNRWA to act as an international institution to save us from this miserable situation. UNICEF and the United Nations exist in Baghdad, and they are international institutions which have offered the Iraqis more than UNRWA has offered us. They built hospitals and schools for them and fixed their sewer system, and it is the only institution that works with devotion. *(Participant, Syndicate meeting, Hurriya shelter, Baghdad, Iraq)*

We wish that UNRWA would act and take care of our case so as to find a solution to it. It is said that they have changed their representative here, but we haven't seen anything until now. What we can clearly see is that conditions are deteriorating every day. *(Participant, Syndicate Meeting, the shelter of Al-Salam Neighbourhood (Al-Tobaji), Baghdad, Iraq).*

Ok let me tell you something. When the Egyptian law regarding the Egyptian mother was passed,

giving the nationalities by force of law, it was supposed that an agency such as UNRWA would work to implement this. A lot of people applied and their applications were refused. Nevertheless, it didn't take any steps to help them. The institutions of the civil society, which are concerned with the legal aspects of this law, like the Egyptian child centre, worked on this issue. But UNRWA did not. Help with applications could have brought relief to some Palestinians: to become Egyptian citizens would have meant better treatment. It doesn't have any involvement in this area. Is their role limited to just bringing us blankets? Ok, we were fed and covered ourselves with these blankets but aren't there other problems?. *(Participant, Meeting, Cairo, Egypt)*

I have a refugee ration card but I don't receive anything from UNRWA, so I wonder who does? One wonders if UNRWA items are only distributed to certain people or are sold elsewhere instead of being handed out to the community. Do people request assistance? Go to one of the centres and you'll see that they do. Assistance is sent to the Palestinians as a whole, but it is received by certain individuals. *(Participant, Women's Preparatory Meeting, Amman, Jordan).*

UNRWA is barren and useless. In order to revive it, it needs help from donor countries. *(Participant, Workers' meeting, Shatila camp, Lebanon)*

We have local institutions such as UNRWA. Although the services UNRWA provides now are much fewer than before, they continue to be reduced. We lack social, medical, and health services the most. Our kids lack a lot of things. UNRWA is not doing what it is supposed to do.

We demand that UNRWA fulfil its role and be provided with all the necessary supplies it requires

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to do this so as to secure the health services. Many people here need medicine but when they go to UNRWA they don't receive anything because they claim that they are not allowed to provide such medicines. But most of the people can't afford to buy them.

As for the schools and education, the system has confused students. In the past there was one shift school attendance, but now they schools are operated on a double-shift system, one for the girls and the other for the boys. There is a lack of educational staff and many teachers are not adequately qualified to teach the subjects they have to teach. The Arabic language teacher also teaches math and the English language teacher teaches also teaches Arabic. There is no specialization; that's what we lack. We demand that they provide educational and specialized staff so that students can depend on some sort of support and a reference point so that they can complete their education and then go on to work. There are many schools here but because they don't have one in T'ilbay a lot of students from T'ilbay come here to attend high school. They travel far to learn for just two hours. As for social care, there isn't a social affairs office. And UNRWA services are being reduced. If you ask UNRWA for anything, the people there tell you that they don't have it and that you need to find some other organisations to help you, although it is internationally agreed that UNRWA should help the Palestinian people with these kinds of things. *(Participant, Women's meeting, Wavel camp, Lebanon)*

As for UNRWA, I think it would be much better if it would close its offices and leave, because it has no presence whatsoever and it doesn't do anything. The controversial problems are handled by the institutions of the Egyptian civil society in a more serious and effective way. UNRWA has no

presence at all, it just has an open office in Egypt. The security services control everything. We have widows here with children, and I don't know how they manage. *(Participant, Meeting, Cairo, Egypt)*

There has been a noticeable reduction in the services UNRWA provides. *(Participant, Women's meeting, Beddawi camp, Lebanon)*

UNRWA exists only in name. It doesn't run projects the employ the Palestinian refugees. It has also reduced its medical services and it doesn't offer financial support to refugees. *(Participant, Women's Preparatory Meeting, Amman, Jordan)*

We continue to give the donor countries information about the conditions which we live in and UNRWA has been the institution responsible for the Palestinian people since 1948. And yet services are being cut. When someone reaches the age of 18, they cut his rations even though he may have 6 or 7 brothers to raise. On what basis do they cut our rations? They are our right. *(Participant, Women's meeting, Nahr el-Bared camp, Lebanon)*

We don't have educational centres for young people that, for instance, offer computer courses. UNRWA services are very weak and the federations are absent. *(Participant, Preparatory Workshop, Jaramana camp, Syria)*

UNRWA services have been cut. Also the hospital which our health services have been contracted to is very far from the camp, a patient could die before reaching the hospital. These hospitals are not equipped with up to date technology either. *(Participant, Women's meeting, Nahr el-Bared camp, Lebanon)*

What we are offered is not substantial enough to address the social problems we face. Health

conditions are very bad and the "loans" assigned to improve the refugees' situation are negligible. *(Participant, Preparatory Workshop, Jaramana camp, Syria)*

Some UNRWA services are being reduced, such as rations and food supplies, and also education and health services. *(Participant, Students' meeting, Rashidieh camp, Lebanon)*

We lack general statistics. We don't even know how many there really are of us. We have suffered from UNRWA's absence. We have never received any assistance. And we were deprived of every civil right enjoyed by Iraqis. Why are we so neglected?. *(Participant, Syndicate meeting, Hurriya shelter, Baghdad, Iraq)*

UNRWA is supposed to be an entity or an organization responsible for Palestinian refugees all over the world in whatever country they might be. It is supposed to know their conditions and offer them services. But frankly it has no presence here in Egypt, and it offers no services to any Palestinian refugee in Egypt. I know that there is an office for the Agency here in Egypt in which only one employee works. It doesn't deal with the public. *(Participant, Meeting, Cairo, Egypt)*

UNRWA is meant to be responsible for us but it hasn't implemented any of the resolutions passed since 1949, unlike what it has done in Iraq, where resolutions were implemented. The same happened in relation to our late brother Hariri. In contrast, the resolutions concerning Palestinians were shelved, and now the United Nations has decided to reduce rations for everyone who has a ration card, although they are only distributed every three months and are nothing more than crumbs. As for healthcare, there are about 300 or 400 patients who come to see the doctor, and

Humanitarian agencies and other international institutions

2) The United Nations and UNRWA b. Deterioration, Reduction, and Absence

before arriving there, they write to him about their condition. There is no examination or anything, and he writes a prescription for them and tells them to go and buy the medicines from the pharmacy. How can they have the nerve to do that? One wonders, even if we take into account the large population of the camp living in an area of 2 km². (Participant, Worker's meeting, Nahr el-Bared camp, Lebanon)

that there are oppressed people who suffer, and tell them that they must offer them a helping hand. (Participant, Syndicate meeting, Hurriya shelter, Baghdad, Iraq)

We have popular committees, so why don't these committees take the first step in dealing with unemployment by creating projects in the camps

the Palestinian community, instead of going to UNRWA which chooses the hospital and the limitations on the treatment they can receive, covering them for only 4 or 5 days. (Participant, Students meeting, Shatila camp, Lebanon)

Jaramana Camp suffers from a lot of problems. No adequate services are supplied to the camp.

UNRWA's health services are very poor. There is a shortage of medicine, and even hygiene. Finding jobs for the refugees is just a slogan it uses. (Participant, Preparatory Workshop, Jaramana camp, Syria)

UNRWA's activities are politicised. The social development centre does not fulfil the needs of the local community, researchers don't find out what day to day life is like. There is no help in finding jobs and building careers. People are not given loans to improve their income. The social development centre has been turned into an investment centre which is a very grave matter. It is necessary to have vocational training. (Participant, Preparatory Workshop, Jaramana camp, Syria)

We now need to depend on a certain foundation which should be firm and strong. We must also conduct research to demonstrate all our needs and problems. And this study must be presented to UNRWA and the United Nations to show

UNRWA has done a lot of things for the Palestinian people, such as providing almost free education. We are talking here, in the Palestinian camps, about the positive impact of UNRWA, there are negatives, but we should also look at the positives. I have already mentioned education. We all know that it provides educational and health services. But it also provides employment; many young men and women are UNRWA employees. Another good thing is that UNRWA has created a lot of job opportunities for the Palestinian people. There are also the social services provided like the rations given to the Palestinian people. However, the medical services of UNRWA have been lately reduced. At the clinic they give you a prescription to go and buy the medicine, but we don't have money, so they don't give us the medicine. Rations are being cut too, we now receive half the things we used to in the past. As for education, there is a shortage of stationery and the number of students in one class is over forty students. If we want the children to succeed and pass their exams, there shouldn't be more than 30 or 35 students in one class. We also have teachers who are not adequately qualified. There are also houses in the camps that are entirely unsuitable for humans to live in. (Participant, Students' meeting, Rashidieh camp, Lebanon)

which can employ young Palestinians. We also face problems in the provision of health services. There are about 50 thousand Palestinians in Lebanon who don't have access to any hospitals that meet their needs. Why don't they build a hospital for Palestinians which is equipped with modern technology and a structure which enables Palestinians to receive medical care in

All the relevant institutions in the camp are negligent. There is a whole neighbourhood that doesn't have water. This problem is being addressed by the general body of the Arab Palestinian refugees which supervises this issue. Jaramana residents, 57 years after the Nakba, still suffer from instability. The houses of more than half of the camps' residents have been destroyed due to the "Southern Highway" plan without the provision of alternative housing. This forced local residents to rent houses, thereby to the economic and social strain they are under. The institutions we are in contact with offered no help; we didn't get a response from the general body, UNRWA or anyone else. Educational

achievement is declining. Students quit school very early for economic reasons and poverty. UNRWA no longer cares about its educational role and we lack activity centres in the camp. The situation for workers is also difficult; working hours are very long, and there is no social security. (Participant, Preparatory Workshop, Jaramana camp, Syria)

Humanitarian agencies and other international institutions

2) The United Nations and UNRWA c. Accessibility, Transparency, Inclusivity, and Accountability

It is important that relief aid that is offered by organizations and associations for all the refugees and not only for certain people. They should not be distributed according to political discrimination or nepotism. (Participant, Worker's meeting, Ein el-Helweh camp, Lebanon)

As the sister said, a clinic should be opened here. We also suffer from UNRWA, and the Red Crescent is treating us in the same way. For example, my husband was injured in the 1986 war of the camps while he was fighting to defend the camp and they wouldn't accept to make him enter hospital unless he was referred. And to be honest with you, some would not be able to make it without the Palestinian elites which give strength. We don't care about UNRWA, but we have negative points too. And the Red Crescent is the same. Go and search some houses in the camp and you won't find even a piece of bread to feed their children with, can such families pay 100,000 Lebanese Lira for a doctor visit? They were treating the martyrs' families in the same way and they reduced the services offered to them, you can find this reduction everywhere. (Participant, Women's meeting, Ein el-Hilweh camp, Lebanon)

Many Palestinian families suffered great hardship because of the absence of UNRWA. Some Palestinians were dragged into working with the American and Iraqi soldiers although they shouldn't have needed to. (Participant, Syndicate Meeting, Za'faraniya shelter, Baghdad, Iraq).

UNRWA is definitely negligent. It should fulfil its role because it was created to offer services and jobs for the refugees. Hence, UNRWA should be approached and pressed into fulfilling its role. (Participant, Worker's meeting, Ein el-Helweh camp, Lebanon)

c. Accessibility, Transparency, Inclusivity, and Accountability

If we are talking about favouritism and preferential treatment in Jordan, we should take a look at UNRWA! An employee's son has the right to be treated immediately, while others who don't have relatives working in UNRWA have to wait. (Participant, Women's Preparatory Meeting, Amman, Jordan)

There is no democracy. The foreign NGOs sometimes provide aid and it gets distributed to someone who is connected to the PLO or to someone who is connected to this or that faction. It becomes a matter of connections. This is favouritism, and it fosters tension. (Participant, Women's meeting, Burj el-Shemali camp, Lebanon)

As for general affairs in the camp, if you know someone important you will get what you want. For example, if I am rich and know important people I can register for assistance, but there are people who are really in need and don't get anything because they don't know anyone important. (Participant, Women's meeting, Ein el-Hilweh camp, Lebanon)

I feel that such meetings are only ink on paper. I wish that such results will be translated into actions because ink can be erased by the smallest drop of water. I also appeal to the project director that this meeting would be the beginning of a good relationship with us. The European Union had previously given us promises of a good start which materialised into the opposite of a good start! What good did they bring us when they came to perform their projects and gave them to institutions supported by the Jordanian government? These institutions received grants from the European Union out of which they derived astronomical profits, while other institutions were not given anything at all. (Participant, Pilot meeting, Amman, Jordan)

We want to speak about the aid which the donor countries give, and the projects which are being created. We wish that there would be more supervision because some officials are corrupt. This water pipe which the donor countries paid for will be registered as having been received by

Palestinians and we will have to pay a big price for it in the future. As the brother said, they must think that it's a long term loan. I think that all the donor countries are registering their payments as debts that they would want to claim back from the future Palestinian state. The United Nations is doing the same with Iraq, they deduct from Iraqi oil and they will appropriate it for hundreds of years. They are giving the projects to mafias, do you follow me?. (Participant, Worker's meeting, Nahr el-Bared camp, Lebanon)

There are provisions and aid that come from abroad which would feed us for a whole year and which are dedicated for the Palestinian refugees but where do they go? No one knows. Where are they sold? And why are they being sold when they are meant to help Palestinians?. (Participant, Women's Preparatory Meeting, Amman, Jordan)

UNRWA rations are given to the well connected. (Participant, Preparatory Workshop, Jaramana camp, Syria)

The problem is not the institution; it is the staff who run it. Staff members are exercising discrimination in these institutions. We have institutions which coordinate with UNRWA to help a certain person, yet the people in UNRWA would ask you why you accepted the help of so-and-so. The problem lies in the staff of UNRWA, and this is among the things that contribute to the reduction of UNRWA services which we are talking about. (Participant, Women's meeting, Wavel camp, Lebanon)

UNRWA is not fulfilling its duties although the services it provides are very important. We should preserve it because it is not just an office; it was formed according to an international resolution. (Participant, Worker's meeting, Ein el-Helweh camp, Lebanon)

Humanitarian agencies and other international institutions

2) The United Nations and UNRWA c. Accessibility, Transparency, Inclusivity, and Accountability

I met one woman who told me that her son works with UNRWA, and she said that when she goes to the health centre, she is immediately admitted for treatment without having to wait for even one minute. There are others who go to these centres at four o'clock in the morning to wait for dental treatment, and this woman arrives and is given medicine straight away! The problem is that we, Palestinians, are mean to each other! And don't help each other. *(Participant, Women's Preparatory Meeting, Amman, Jordan).*

I want to make another point. If a foreigner comes to the camp, they make him photograph the most miserable house and the most miserable family then suddenly the aid arrives. But those who were photographed don't get anything; rather, a certain organization comes and takes these donations. I have witnessed this many times. *(Participant, Women's meeting, Burj el-Shemali camp, Lebanon)*

Corruption is pervasive at the level of UNRWA's administrative services. Social support is not being distributed to those who deserve it. Education in the camp is getting worse. The unemployment rate is rising and there are no educational centres. The women's centre is very expensive. The PLO is absent and there are no communication channels to connect us to it. I demand the establishment of institutions that offer training courses for students. There are no cultural centres in the camp. *(Participant, Preparatory Workshop, Jaramana camp, Syria)*

We have many institutions that just work randomly, and look nothing like health, educational, and environmental organizations. Europe has been providing assistance for ten years to these institutions, so where do they spend this money? We haven't noticed any developments in Palestinian society. For example, in the camp, there are 20 organisations,

but there aren't any developed educational, health, and environmental institutions. The work that they do seems to be more of a means of subsistence for a certain group of people. There is no development whatsoever in society. Take Burj El-Barajneh camp, where there are 20 organisations but where there is no development. This money and assistance is being inappropriately spent, there is no research about these organisations for example. This aid should be channelled under one banner in the future which includes the PLO or a responsible organization; a common front should be formed in the camps. To begin a health or education project, for example, in Burj El-Barajneh camp, in order to examine the development it achieved after one or two years, and to make sure that the money was appropriately spent. The way these millions are spent should be organized by the European group in these local or national institutions. *(Participant, Public meeting, Burj el-Barajneh, Lebanon)*

Is there no aid? No, there is. A study was conducted in 2004-2005, which found that that during July such-and-such was distributed! I made 20 applications, and not one family received anything! Where did these funds go? Who is taking them? There are seats in the Amman Training College, who gets those seats?. *(Participant, Women's Preparatory Meeting, Amman, Jordan)*

No, it [UNRWA] is not our representative; it is supporting us on the basis that we are refugees. UNRWA exists because we are refugees, and when this fact goes unrecognised we cease to exist. Yet our presence is obvious in Al-Shatat countries, and we are a majority which has an opinion. As for education, UNRWA schools are not offering anything. The young men have had enough of it. Even employment in UNRWA can't be secured unless you know some important

people to back you and everyone including janitors need recommendations in order to work for UNRWA. *(Participant, Women's meeting, Beddawi camp, Lebanon)*

There is a point here concerning people who have special needs who should have greater rehabilitation services and better equipped centres. How would the child enter these centres? We are deprived from them. *(Participant, Women's meeting, Ein el-Hilweh camp, Lebanon)*

We, in the camps of exile suffer from poverty and deprivation, and also neglect of the disabled. The services offered to the disabled are seasonal. They occasionally provide some diapers, walking sticks, water mattresses, and wheelchairs if they are available, and they sometimes perform some surgical operations, if it is possible, but it depends on the person and whether he knows some important people. The disabled also have trouble getting their prescribed medicines, laboratory tests and x-rays, UNRWA only offers a few medicines. Disabled children who have nerve conditions have suffered especially from a reduction in UNRWA services, for the specialist doctors often asks for x-rays and laboratory tests disabled person has to pay for. The disabled also lack job opportunities. Therefore we want to speak up and appeal to your hearts to support the disabled so that each one of us can live a decent life in our society, and that one day our dream of returning to Palestine can at last come true. *(Participant, Public Meeting for Disabled Persons, Beirut, Lebanon)*

Some assistance is available for the establishment of developmental projects, but its scope is not comprehensive and does not cover all the camps. Some people benefit from this assistance, which means that UNRWA indulges in nepotism,

The concerns of Palestinians are enormous; the most important of these is to earn a living. How can we think of national issues if we are suffering from a social tragedy? The donor countries and organisations help the refugees according to their own agendas, not on the basis of what we want as Palestinians. This means the needs of the camp and its residents are not necessarily addressed.
(Participant, Public Meeting, Beirut, Lebanon)

Humanitarian agencies and other international institutions

2) The United Nations and UNRWA d. Channels of Communication

benefiting those who have connections in the agency and in the government's refugee committee. The different committees in the camp should share their experiences. The Agency's services are very bad, especially with regards to medical treatment; patient referrals to health clinics fail to satisfy patients' needs. (Participant, Preparatory Workshop, Homs (A'ideen) camp, Syria)

UNRWA should provide adequate housing inside the camps, in addition to a decent water system. It could also build new camps in line with all the social, legal and international specifications. An important issue is that UNRWA does not offer full provision of medicines or medical expenses. There are a lot of people who are not rich, such as my father or perhaps yours, who may die in their beds because they can't find anyone to pay for their surgery. If you went to UNRWA and told the officials there that your father or mother needed open heart surgery, they would tell you that it costs seven thousand dollars and that they would pay 200 or 2000 dollars. But how are you supposed to get the rest of the money? Shall I sell my son to receive medical care? UNRWA was founded in order to help the Palestinians and yet it is reducing its services. (Participant, Students' meeting, Wavel Camp, Lebanon).

I have a right to assistance as a patient and an old woman who can't get to the Nuzha neighbourhood from Al-Hashimi neighbourhood, who doesn't have money to pay for a taxi. Many women say that it is too far and can't get there, but when I finally get there, the centre is closed. Why do they close at 12:00pm? If I need a surgical operation of some sort, I won't find available hospitals. If I want

to dental treatment, there aren't any appropriate centres. (Participant, Women's Preparatory Meeting, Amman, Jordan)

d. Channels of Communication

Our communication with international institutions and any humanitarian organisations that provide services to Palestinian refugees is almost cut off in this country. There is no communication between us and the United Nations except when one

The organisation which deals with UNRWA should include representatives of the Palestinian people. The Palestinian people should not be planned for by some guy sitting in Geneva. At the highest level of UNRWA, the planning process must involve officials who represent the Palestinian people. Those of us who are disabled have set a good example. Although due to a shortage of funds, the services we receive are few, our participation in the provision of these services has been very good. We hope that the planning process would be conducted on a larger scale, and we demand to participate in it. The group of people who are affected should participate in the planning process and supervise its implementation. And this is very important for improving the relationship between UNRWA and the Palestinians.
(Participant, Public Meeting for Disabled Persons, Beirut, Lebanon)

has a personal problem which case one would act personally and contact them as an individual, not as a group or community. In Norway, we lack the presence of any official entity through which we can contact any international institution or organisation. (Participant, Public meeting, Stavanger, Norway)

Since the Lebanese have divergent views about Palestinians rights, the relationship with UNRWA needs to be established through the popular

committees in the camps. (Participant, Worker's meeting, El-Buss camp, Lebanon)

UNRWA should increase its support and aid, and our relationship with it should be through the popular committees and organizations. (Participant, Worker's meeting, Ein el-Helweh camp, Lebanon)

There should be a relationship between UNRWA and the popular committees in the camps, and these committees should communicate with UNRWA in addition to the PLO. (Participant, Worker's meeting, El-Buss camp, Lebanon)

Communication with UNRWA should be conducted through the popular committees and the PLO. (Participant, Worker's meeting, El-Buss camp, Lebanon)

Communication with international organizations should be conducted through the elected popular committee which need to be reconstructed of course. This committee's task would be to contact international organizations and those which provide services that relate to the camp and the affairs of refugees. (Participant, Worker's meeting, Beddawi camp, Lebanon)

The PLO is regarded as the political organization responsible for the refugees and our relationship with it is established through the unions and popular committees, while our relationship with UNRWA is established through popular committees. (Participant, Worker's meeting, El-Buss camp, Lebanon)

Humanitarian agencies and other international institutions

2) The United Nations and UNRWA d. Channels of Communication

We want our relationship with UNRWA to be established through popular committees. But these should be committees that truly represent the refugees and that are not based on the factions; they should be elected from all sectors of the local society. UNRWA is ultimately responsible for the refugees' rights and the daily lives of the refugees. We should demand that it increase its support and services in the health, education and infrastructure. *(Participant, Worker's meeting, Ein el-Helweh camp, Lebanon)*

I am responsible for 11 people, and when I ask UNRWA to help me, I don't receive anything. Our work conditions are very difficult and living is costly. When it comes to healthcare, medication is not provided. There is no communication link with the agency. They don't employ anyone due to poor financial conditions and job opportunities are only given by nepotism. The PLO is absent and marginalized and I think that it should regain its role. *(Participant, Preparatory Workshop, Jaramana camp, Syria)*

There are private organisations that may be limited to a certain category of people. But the institutions in which we work such as Al-Raiya (CARE) and other institutions are fully performing their role of communicating and acting in the best possible way they can. We don't deny that there is a great lack of assistance but we hope to enhance their role through enhancing communication with foreign organisations. We also hope to form a new popular committee elected by the local community which will fulfil its role. *(Participant, Women's meeting, Wavel camp, Lebanon)*

I wish to talk about the project goals. You mentioned the refugees' problem and their ability to express themselves. But where is the liberty that enables us to express ourselves? We

are working in UNRWA Women Centres. Two years ago we signed an agreement not to discuss politics or religion, lest UNRWA is accused of being a "terrorist" organization that supports terrorism in the camps. So they banned us from talking politics and religion, while you came to talk about enabling me to claim my rights!. *(Participant, Pilot meeting, Amman, Jordan)*

There should be parents' committees in schools to find solutions to the problems their children face. *(Participant, Women's meeting, Ein el-Hilweh camp, Lebanon)*

I know for example that some of the refugee claims made in Canada have sought help from organizations like Amnesty international for letters of support for their cases. One of the demands would be that Amnesty would actually fulfil its mandate and give more honest reports on what's happening in Palestine and what would happen to Palestinians if they were deported to places like the United States or Palestine. *(Participant, Public Meeting, Toronto, Canada)*

There should always be a Palestinian political body to monitor UNRWA and its response to demands, in particular the provision of healthcare because its services have been greatly reduced, especially those dedicated for the elderly. I don't want to repeat what was said about infrastructure because that issue was discussed thoroughly. The situation is disastrous, especially in the winter. *(Participant, Worker's meeting, Ein el-Helweh camp, Lebanon)*

Our UNRWA camp manager isn't worthy of his title. In addition, the popular committees are not conveying our demands, for we need a lot of things. The formal structure should be a camp manager not an UNRWA manager and the manager of

Nahr el-Bared camp should discuss the needs of Nahr el-Bared camp. *(Participant, Students' meeting, Nahr el-Bared camp, Lebanon)*

We should have another reference point in addition to the embassy, the popular committee which should put pressure on UNRWA to offer more services rather than the reductions that are taking place. There are certain things being reduced by UNRWA but at the same time people don't say anything in protest. The role of UNRWA should be further developed in the areas of education, medicine, and infrastructure. UNRWA is reducing many of these services. *(Participant, Worker's meeting, Beddawi camp, Lebanon)*

It is important that the contact with the media be made on the internal and external levels, whether at the PLO level, or through the communities who live outside Lebanon. This media contact is not present at the level of international organizations and Europe. *(Participant, Worker's meeting, Beddawi camp, Lebanon)*

We communicate by distributing leaflets to officials and to those who are known to care and sympathise, like the Red Cross. *(Participant, Women's meeting, Malmö, Sweden)*

We really should demand from these people that they speak up and tell the truth. Take the Red Cross for example. They have a mandate and obligation to serve political prisoners everywhere but they don't really lobby the governments that imprison them, or the countries they are in. I think one of the points that we need to make clearer and louder every time is that these organizations have an obligation to expose the truth to the Canadian government and the United Nations because most of these organizations work under the United

Humanitarian agencies and other international institutions

3) Specific Issues and Needs

I want to say in all honesty: if you visit a house which is very poor, the only thing its residents can tell you is: 'we want to eat, we want to live'. But in a house in which the basic necessities can be found, you find that its residents have more awareness, they say: 'we want a country and we are refugees who were driven away from our country, etc'. So, if you conduct any survey you will find that that the person who can't find food thinks of eating first. There may be a poor person who thinks about his country, but logic indicates that he will think of food since he can't find it, or of medical treatment if he can't have it.

(Participant, Preparatory Meeting, Amman, Jordan).

Nations, and that's our goal as a community; to pressure those groups to speak up and tell the truth. *(Participant, Public Meeting, Toronto, Canada).*

The most important role for the students and the camp's members is to convey their voice in various ways through such things as demonstrations and sit-ins. So has our voice been heard by the concerned institutions? Apparently not, for we can't see any results. *(Participant, Students' meeting, Beddawi camp, Lebanon)*

It is difficult to cover the expenses of treating those with chronic diseases, there is little money and there are so many people. We can see how many people suffer from such diseases. Therefore, we need institutions. There are some institutions, but they are for certain people. Also we need committees to follow the work of these institutions, and to record their achievements. Also, dialogues and meetings should always be held between all the labour and national organisations. *(Participant, Women's meeting, Beddawi camp, Lebanon)*

The local civil organizations have declined. A coordinating committee should be formed to avoid previous mistakes. In the past, the coordinating committee was exclusively for the institutions that are well informed. Yet the coordinating committee should not just include well informed organisations like Ghassan Kanafani Foundation and Sumud, no, it should include everyone so that it could be common for all. As for UNRWA, the comments about it are well-known, but what we want to add is that we don't feel that there is structure of coordination between UNRWA, the popular committee and the people in the camp. So you don't really know what is happening, there is something missing here. There should be an UNRWA representative in

the popular committee. *(Participant, Women's meeting, Beddawi camp, Lebanon)*

It's not really about us being connected to UNRWA but also having some sort of influence over what sort of funding the refugee camps are getting what's happening inside and what sort of support are they getting, we should probably discuss that as well. It's not really Amnesty, its UNRWA that we should focus on, in my opinion. Thanks. *(Participant, Public Meeting, Toronto, Canada)*

Most importantly, the relationship between organizations should be based on coordination, not on controlling the each other and depriving them of their role. Organizations should agree on the social and day to day issues even if they disagree on the political issues, because the social issues concern all the refugees not only certain people from this or that organization. *(Participant, Worker's meeting, Ein el-Helweh camp, Lebanon)*

Of course I want to return to my country and to my village. And you know that no one likes to live as a stranger away from his own country. In general, we want to find a solution to our problems. The Right of Return Committee should be able to contact higher international organizations, so that we can solve the problem of returning to our country and lands. It should fight to affirm our Right of Return at the United Nations. *(Participant, Public meeting, Stavanger, Norway)*

We also want to choose a representative from the popular committee to contact UNRWA to follow up what happens in the camp, which lacks a lot of things. *(Participant, Women's meeting, Wavel camp, Lebanon)*

First I wish to correct some of the mentioned information. There are three committees in

UNRWA but they are not powerful, they are just advisory committees with no internal system. They are elected committees, but UNRWA deals with them as advisory committees. *(Participant, Preparatory Meeting, Amman, Jordan)*

There must be communication between the educational body and parents through periodic meetings. *(Participant, Women's meeting, Ein el-Hilweh camp, Lebanon)*

3) Specific Issues and Needs

During the time of the monarchy in Iraq, they pledged to meet the needs of the Palestinians that came from Palestine, to provide them with housing, health services and jobs, etc. But they didn't fulfil their promises. We therefore demand that international organizations register and count the Palestinian people here in order to protect their rights and at least defend their "Right of Return" as refugees. We should at least be treated in the same way that the Palestinian refugees in neighbouring countries –like Jordan, Syria, and Lebanon- who have the right to enter schools and receive health services or ensuring some relief from medical expenses. We are deprived of all these services. Even the aid that comes from abroad, no one knows where it really goes. *(Participant, Syndicate Meeting, the shelter of Al-Salam Neighbourhood (Al-Tabaji), Baghdad, Iraq).*

The camp doesn't have a proper sewer system and there are no playgrounds or any other entertainment places. The elderly are marginalized and no one thinks of opening a centre to deal with their problems. Food and sweets sold in schools lack hygienic conditions and supervision. Teachers don't advise their students about buying clean sweets. We need to also establish medical

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3) Specific Issues and Needs

bodies to supervise the medicines which are sold in the pharmacies. There are no cultural or civil guidance programs for adolescents in Palestinian society that might allow for discussions between different local and student organisations. *(Participant, Students' meeting, Beddawi camp, Lebanon)*

Neighbourhoods are comprised of tightly packed residential units with no ventilation. There are too many people, small families who began in the camps have grown rapidly in size. Housing is just not fit for healthy living. The other thing is the poverty. Most of the refugees in the camps are very poor. There are too many people in the camps, 50% of them suffer from poverty and survive on the bare minimum. The third point is the work. Employment opportunities are limited and the money is not enough for one to live a decent life, and poverty leads to many bad things. The fourth point is health. There is some health care provided by UNRWA, but there are too many people. There are too few health centres to cover the neighbourhoods. *(Participant, Syndicate Meeting, Amman, Jordan)*

We suggest building a hospital in the camp, building a high school, expanding the schools and rebuilding the Samed Collaborative Institution. Our economic and social conditions need improvement and we must gain our civil rights so that we can resist and go on with our lives like other human beings. *(Participant, Women's meeting, Nahr el-Bared camp, Lebanon)*

To address our needs, we insist upon having the Agency [UNRWA] and we demand an expansion in its services. There are 14 thousand refugees in the camp, but the area of land on which the camp is built is not enough to accommodate them all. We have demanded new land to extend the

camp, but no one listens. Many of the camp's residents suffer from a very difficult economic situation and the rate of unemployment is high. The percentage of those who live below poverty line is more than 50% and there are no new lines of credits for the cases of extreme poverty, and many cases were cancelled. *(Participant, Preparatory Workshop, Horns ('A'ideen) camp, Syria)*

The urgent needs which I agreed upon with the girls are numerous and include a big hospital, a dialysis centre, a high school in Nahr el-Bared camp where more than 11 buses go to the Beddawi High School. We need parks for children because when they are kept in houses they get into trouble with their mothers. We must provide electricity, water and a sewer system. The number of the students in classes that contain 50 or 60 students should be reduced, we have a right to UNRWA services yet they are being withdrawn and you feel that there is favouritism at UNRWA, for example, some people are financially comfortable but receive rations, while others don't. This is also a problem we suffer from in the camps. The need to repair the streets in the camp is another pressing issue. *(Participant, Women's meeting, Nahr el-Bared camp, Lebanon)*

We are still living the same tragedy and we lack a lot of things. We must have more hospitals and supplies and there are too many people living in camps in a tiny area. Educational institutions must be built for students because they just stay home when they graduate with no work to do. And as for the issue of workers, there is no work. *(Participant, Worker's meeting, Nahr el-Bared camp, Lebanon)*

Rationing and extreme poverty are among the problems that should be treated, because we live below the poverty line in Syria. Also, the issue of

Palestinians from Gaza, Lebanon and Jordan living in Syria with no identity papers should be dealt with. The camp's utilities (water and drainage) suffer from a big problem although it has been partly solved. We used to buy water for 75 Syrian Lira for the tank, but now we get water every three days, depending on the employees' mood. *(Participant, Preparatory Workshop, Sbeineh camp, Syria)*

Living conditions in the camps are very difficult. These conditions are due to social, political, or economic reasons. Let's talk about these conditions and define these problems in detail. Some of you mentioned educational problems, others talked about employment problems, and the other issues like favouritism and corruption. Let's consider these matters further. *(Participant, Women's Preparatory Meeting, Amman, Jordan)*

I want to point out that we are talking about our problems as refugees, but what about the problems we face as human beings? There are Palestinians who suffer from particularly harsh conditions such as women, old people and the disabled. Those people have more problems and need support. *(Participant, Worker's meeting, Beddawi camp, Lebanon)*

We should work on improving all aspects of life in the camps, whether in the education, health, or social conditions. And everything should be achieved through cooperation with UNRWA and the PLO. UNRWA is responsible for the education and health services. *(Participant, Worker's meeting, El-Buss camp, Lebanon)*

In my view, the first need that Palestinian refugees have is for decent housing. Most live in zinc [aluminium] roofed houses and suffer from the insects. They also need to improve their economic

We demand that UNRWA come to Iraq, we want it to assume responsibility for us as it does in neighbouring countries, providing such services as building schools, rebuilding destroyed houses, erecting hospitals or at least a health clinic in every neighbourhood. These health clinics can, with the help that they get from international charities serve the refugees. This implies that Palestinian refugees should look first to UNRWA and build relations with it, and then the contact should be made between UNRWA and the Iraqi State. (Participant, Syndicate Meeting, the shelter of Al-Salam Neighbourhood (Al-Tobajji), Baghdad, Iraq)

Humanitarian agencies and other international institutions

3) Specific Issues and Needs a. Education and Health

situation. You can find a family of 15 members and more, with no one working except the father, or one or two from the family members. Also, there are only a few government jobs available. There needs to be more health centres and schools because currently they are from where people live. I think these are the problems. *(Participant, Syndicate Meeting, Amman, Jordan).*

a. Education and Health

The other issue is UNRWA and the provision of education. Classes are overcrowded and educational tools are scarce. There is also the UNRWA clinic, in which you can't find a single Revanin tablet from the fifth of every month. The services and social care offered to the elderly, handicapped, children and women are not at all sufficient either. *(Participant, Preparatory Meeting, Amman, Jordan)*

The PLO should offer free medical treatment and build schools. This would help compensate for UNRWA's reduction of services. It must build clinics because it is responsible for the Palestinian people at the level of services. *(Participant, Women's meeting, Ein el-Hilweh camp, Lebanon)*

Most important are the needs of the refugees and their health and education situation. There should be a hospital in the camp, and the health services offered by UNRWA should be improved. *(Participant, Worker's meeting, Ein el-Helweh camp, Lebanon)*

UNRWA is responsible for the Palestinian refugees' affairs, yet it doesn't have contracts with well-equipped hospitals which have adequate medical equipment and skilled doctors. Environmental standards are also poor; there are garbage containers available in the streets and the containers that are there are sometimes full of poisonous

rubbish. The education system in UNRWA lacks an adequate curricular plan before the school year begins, and this results in a lot of pressure in terms of teaching the curriculum over the course of the year. Also, there is no educational authority to refer to when problems arise. Many teachers lack the necessary qualifications, there is no equipment in the laboratories and the libraries, nor are there useful computer training programmes. Not having the computer skills and unawareness of its functions in the economic society and of the useful programs. The houses in the camps can't offer a healthy and decent life and there are no bodies concerned with housing issues. *(Participant, Students' meeting, Beddawi camp, Lebanon)*

We also need social care institutions. We have two organisations that might introduce or provide such institutions. First, basically, there must be an entity for the social cases in UNRWA institutions. They are saying now "hardship case" which means that they increase and decrease according to the budget and offerings of UNRWA. The popular committees should be the social sponsor in the camps, we are talking now and there are more details. *(Participant, Worker's meeting, Beddawi camp, Lebanon)*

We demand free hospitals with skilled doctors and nurses. Education should also be free and elementary school, obligatory. *(Participant, Students' meeting, Rashidieh camp, Lebanon)*

i. Education

There is only one kindergarten for children. This is not adequate and its annual fees are very high. *(Participant, Preparatory Workshop, Sbeineh camp, Syria)*

I want to say that since I began teaching for UNRWA, I have noticed that there is

discrimination between Palestinians themselves. If someone asks, for example, 'where do you come from?' and the answer is Al-Baq'a or Al-Wihdat the response would be that people from those areas are "disgusting." But where are the refugees concentrated? They are of course concentrated in the camps; the numbers of the refugees who live in Jabal Al-Hussein or in Sweifieh are small compared to the camps. Why do people have such a negative impression of our camps? And if we examine the conditions there, the UNRWA schools for example, we will find that each class has 50 or 60 students. We will also find that there are no counsellors in these schools. That's why the social problems prevail in the camps. All these problems originate from schools; the child grows and the problems grow and develop with him and that is the reason why people have a wrong idea about the camps. *(Participant, Women's Preparatory Meeting, Amman, Jordan)*

There has been a reduction in UNRWA services. Students now can only borrow half the books they used to be able to and they are usually torn and unusable. They have to buy the rest of them but with so little employment available, many parents can't afford them. We need to form committees to address the social problems Palestinian families face. Here, Palestinian families have endured a plethora of social and psychological problems as a result of the war and their economic situation. So I think that we should form a committee consisting of Palestinian psychologists to handle these problems. Educational activities inside the camp need to be increased because the quality of education at UNRWA schools is very low. We should establish centres where those who have pursued their university studies can teach the kids, because we are all brothers as Palestinians. *(Participant, Students meeting, Shatila camp, Lebanon)*

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3) Specific Issues and Needs a. Education and Health

As a school principal, I'd like to mention that we have difficulty in providing school books for students. The age of school books in private schools is one year; two years in public schools, but in the UNRWA schools they are three years old! This is a big problem for our schools, when we distribute them at the beginning of the year 20-30 pages are usually missing but we have to distribute them. (Participant, Preparatory Meeting, Amman, Jordan)

There are too many students at UNRWA schools and this matter is not addressed by the relevant authorities. New schools to absorb the rise in the number of students are not being built. The locations of schools are bad and so are their general safety conditions. They are located in busy streets and this endangers children, in particular younger ones. Palestinian artistic talent is often buried in such fields as painting, poetry, folklore, dancing and so on and not adopted by specialist cultural organisations. Favouritism and bribery are also present as well as irregularities in the hiring process in the camp. (Participant, Students' meeting, Beddawi camp, Lebanon)

The quality of education provided by UNRWA is lower than that of state schools. Computers were introduced in state schools for science and math teachers, including the schools that don't have electricity. But what about UNRWA schools? Isn't there a relief agency, aren't there donor countries, and support? Why do they ignore the fact that computers and projectors exist? Money is given but where does it all go? When a school building is 70 years old, how can I guarantee that the building will not collapse on the students? The school building has always been rented and the roof leaks on the students. How can students graduate

under these conditions? What will they learn? They will certainly become bitter; the camp's children will graduate as bitter people who resent their miserable conditions. This is despite the fact that they have energy and skills but don't live under good educational, social, and economic conditions. I wasn't raised in a camp but what about the child in the camp who quits school in the fourth grade to help his father at work? This child will never be successful unless he finds someone to support him. The problem is that although as refugees we talk to each other, who will convey our voice to the concerned organisations?. (Participant, Women's Preparatory Meeting, Amman, Jordan)

UNRWA services are being reduced. Students who study in its schools perform poorly and medical treatment is very limited. Additionally, UNRWA doesn't help talented students finish their education. I suggest that they build new schools, cancel the two shifts system, raise the level of teacher qualifications, improve the relationship between students and teachers, and cover such expenses as university tuition fees. (Participant, Women's meeting, Ein el-Hilweh camp, Lebanon)

Educational techniques should be developed in schools to meet the requirements of the modern curriculum. In the Jordan River school they built a computer lab, we went down to the lab and five of us used one computer. If all the computers in Lebanon and in the UNRWA camps were gathered and distributed according to the number of students, every student would have one for one semester. (Participant, Students' meeting, Beddawi camp, Lebanon)

I would like to comment on the current quality of UNRWA education. I live in an area with UNRWA schools and these have the worst reputation. One of the teachers told me that he works under

contract and that in order to keep his job he has to flatter and praise the manager. Classes are also overcrowded; you can find 60 students in the first grade. How can students learn with so many in the same class? How can the teacher reach every student in such an environment? The teacher gets tired and the teaching quality becomes bad. A generation of refugees will graduate from UNRWA schools and they will be known to the camps' residents as "a generation of losers!". (Participant, Women's Preparatory Meeting, Amman, Jordan)

I want to talk about the educational level issue that she [participant] referred to. Educational achievement in UNRWA schools is very low. There should be a follow-up committee to identify the problems and devise solutions to raise the educational level because we often see students skipping schools- both boys and girls- and they stay home and so the problem gets worse. That's why we need a committee to address this problem and to devise solutions and improve the educational performance. (Participant, Students' meeting, Rashidieh camp, Lebanon)

The other issue is education. It has been the same for 20, 25 years or more. This is the responsibility of UNRWA. Education services are low, so are the teacher skills, and this means low achievement in schools and with students skipping schools too often. (Participant, Worker's meeting, Beddawi camp, Lebanon)

UNRWA services are diminishing. Refugees can't find medicines in its clinics. The PLO is absent and we want to establish connections between refugees. Our conditions are very bad. Students can't even find a place to study. Living conditions force students to quit schools in order to work. (Participant, Preparatory Workshop, Jaramana camp, Syria)

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3) Specific Issues and Needs a. Education and Health

Some children are obliged to end their education after finishing preparatory school so as to feed their families. But we are now in an age of speed, development and information. What the fault of the child who has left school in order to feed their family? Concerned organisations should at least establish a training centre or something like that to teach them a skill that they could use in this modern age we live in. (Participant, Students' meeting, Beddawi camp, Lebanon)

Children who skip school should be trained and offered help in solving their problems. (Participant, Students' meeting, Beddawi camp, Lebanon)

UNRWA schools should be extended and improved to absorb the large number of students. (Participant, Worker's meeting, Ein el-Helweh camp, Lebanon)

My brothers studied at UNRWA schools, they were successful students, and they did very well in the Tawjihi high school leaving exams. But UNRWA schools that exist now are different from those that existed in the past in terms of the quality of the education they provide. (Participant, Women's Preparatory Meeting, Amman, Jordan)

There is a general demand for the ending of the two shifts system at schools because it is difficult to work in the evening and it is hot in summer, since there is less learning time, the students benefit less too. There are also too many students in each class, so the teacher can't give every student the attention or the time they need, the class only lasts for twenty minutes. (Participant, Women's meeting, Ein el-Hilweh camp, Lebanon)

We demand from UNRWA that it only have one school shift per day, and that it reduce the size of classes which are currently too overcrowded. Needs include assigning teachers to their specialised subjects and providing them with training and workshops; stationary should also be supplied to students and the problem of truancy should be tackled. UNRWA should also provide support for post-secondary and university-level education. (Participant, Women's meeting, Wavel camp, Lebanon)

Some students graduated from high school and obtained their baccalaureate, but with low grades and can't afford to study in private universities.

As UNRWA teachers, we are forced to sign a document which prohibits us from discussing politics, especially the Palestinian refugee issue, with students, directly or indirectly. Whoever refuses to sign is fired. It is illegal to hang anything in schools that has a reference to the Intifada, or the [Palestinian] revolution, or expressing your right as a refugee. There were some objections, but everyone wants to keep their job. Has UNRWA assumed the role of erasing Palestinian identity?. (Participant, Women's Preparatory Meeting, Amman, Jordan)

Some suggest giving them money to enable them to finish their studies with acceptable grades. (Participant, Preparatory Workshop, Horns ('A'ideen) camp, Syria)

Those who graduate from high school can't afford to continue their studies and no one cares about them. This is a very serious problem because these students have the ability to advance our societies. (Participant, Women's meeting, Ein el-Hilweh camp, Lebanon)

UNRWA should fully assume the task of educating young people. There should be Preparatory Workshops to enable individuals to develop their technical and scientific skills as well as their ability

to engage with the community. (Participant, Preparatory Workshop, Jaramana camp, Syria)

They are trying to make the people illiterate. Even if we consider UNRWA policy, we find that truancy is a problem, with very young men aged between 15 and 18 years and their childhoods still ahead of them, quitting schools and in need of vocational institutes to learn in. Where will they work? We demand the provision of vocational institutes for these young men and help them find work. (Participant, Women's meeting, Ein el-Hilweh camp, Lebanon)

We need a cultural centre and a reading hall in the camp so that students can study. (Participant, Preparatory Workshop, Sbeineh camp, Syria)

There is such a thing as a human right to education. Any Palestinian in Lebanon has the right to learn yet Palestinian refugees in Lebanon don't have enough schools for many to enter universities. An example of the neglect of education is that in Beirut there is only one high school. Who is responsible for that? UNRWA? Also, there is the Palestinian students' fund which is

for any Palestinian student and aims to help poor students. However, money is awarded to students on the basis of their academic performance and not how much they need the financial support. A third concern is the right to work. There are many students who graduate from universities and can't find a job. We are talking about the Palestinian student or worker who should have jobs in the Lebanese market even with some restrictions. The Palestinian need not work in governmental departments or serve in the army or the ministry of internal affairs, but they should be allowed to work in the private sector, whether in engineering or communications or electricity. There are a lot of fields

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3) Specific Issues and Needs a. Education and Health

where the Palestinian student or worker should be allowed to work in. (Participant, Students meeting, Shatila camp, Lebanon)

They prohibited political activity in schools. How are the students supposed to connect to their cause?. (Participant, Preparatory Workshop, Sbeineh camp, Syria)

ii. Health

UNRWA used to have special allocated beds in hospitals, but no longer has them. Public health services are very bad, especially in Al-Bashir Hospital which serves hundreds of thousands of citizens. There has been no financial relief for a long time for impoverished families who are in low paid jobs or don't work at all. . (Participant, Preparatory Meeting, Amman, Jordan)

We have a Red Crescent association but it doesn't actually do anything. In Elias municipality in Baalbek there is a well-equipped hospital with good services, while the Red Crescent lacks many things and is understaffed. Our health clinic is very primitive; it doesn't have the capacity and equipment which the local community needs. We demand aid from humanitarian organisations to develop the role of the Red Crescent hospital so that it can become an institution that people can turn to. (Participant, Women's meeting, Wavel camp, Lebanon)

Hospitals and UNRWA contracts with them need improvement. For example, to get to Rahhal Hospital [Mobile Hospital] which is appropriately named, takes an hour and a half. So if someone suffers from low blood pressure, he might arrive there on the point of dying. UNRWA cancelled its contract with the Islamic hospital because it cost tens of thousands of liras. We didn't want it

aren't any UNRWA hospitals or health centres for them. Drugs are not available, there no drugs for diabetes or high blood pressure and there is a shortage of doctors. But all Palestinian refugees suffer from blood pressure and diabetes. Also, vaccines are not available. You go at 10 in the morning and they tell you that the medicines have run out. The cheapest medicines now, especially

antibiotics, cost at least ten dinars. How can poor refugees pay for it? They say that 18% of the Palestinians live in camps, ok, I live in Nazzal neighbourhood, and the whole neighbourhood is inhabited by Palestinian refugees but there aren't any UNRWA centres or any place to go to. Don't I have the right to have a local centre?. (Participant, Women's Preparatory Meeting, Amman, Jordan)

Drugs are not available, we have to buy them from outside the centre and this involves travelling. (Participant, Women's Preparatory Meeting, Amman, Jordan)

First, the human rights issue. We, as Palestinians don't feel that we are treated as human beings in this country. We are deprived of rights enjoyed by humans all over the world. We also suffer from a lot of social problems. Take health care for example, health conditions in the camps are so bad as a result of the negligence of three organisations: first UNRWA, since it is the international institution which is a political expression of our status as Palestinian refugees and an institution charged by the Security Council and the United Nations to care for the Palestinians until we return to our country. Everyone can see that since the 1990s UNRWA clinics in the camps have started to reduce their services. There are no drugs, or specialist doctors. When you go to the doctor, he gives you either Aspirin or Panadol. They are making it very difficult for Palestinians to get to hospitals. First the number of night clinics in the area is very limited and can't absorb 60 thousand Palestinians in Akkar. Palestinians prefer not to pay transport costs to go to and return from Akkar to receive medical treatment at the hospital or to visit a patient there. Patients often think that it would cost them the same amount to go to a local private hospital instead. Consequently, people do not receive the health care which UNRWA is obliged to provide. We demand that UNRWA contract with a hospital closer to the two camps, to make it easy for people to go there and receive medical care. We also need a specialist hospital to treat the medical conditions that require specialist treatment and doctors. (Participant, Worker's meeting, Beddawi camp, Lebanon)

to contract with the Red Crescent but it did and many of our neighbours died on the road while trying to get there. (Participant, Students' meeting, Beddawi camp, Lebanon)

You have mentioned that 18% of the refugees live in camps. What about the rest? Where are the UNRWA health centres for them? There

are not any UNRWA hospitals or health centres for them. Drugs are not available, there no drugs for diabetes or high blood pressure and there is a shortage of doctors. But all Palestinian refugees suffer from blood pressure and diabetes. Also, vaccines are not available. You go at 10 in the morning and they tell you that the medicines have run out. The cheapest medicines now, especially antibiotics, cost at least ten dinars. How can poor refugees pay for it? They say that 18% of the Palestinians live in camps, ok, I live in Nazzal neighbourhood, and the whole neighbourhood is inhabited by Palestinian refugees but there aren't any UNRWA centres or any place to go to. Don't I have the right to have a local centre?. (Participant, Women's Preparatory Meeting, Amman, Jordan)

Drugs are not available, we have to buy them from outside the centre and this involves travelling. (Participant, Women's Preparatory Meeting, Amman, Jordan)

The other thing is the need to improve the medical care that UNRWA offers; providing more drugs and specialist doctors in the clinics so that people in the camps can receive health care. (Participant, Worker's meeting, Beddawi camp, Lebanon)

We have suffered on the UNRWA and the state levels. UNRWA services have been vanishing over the course of the past two decades. They are merely decorative services. They offer you a building, a hospital for example but the hospital is nothing more than a name. It is not adequately equipped for serious operations. The doctor needs to examine 400 patients and he has no time. I have diabetes and when I went to see him he just told me to go and buy some medicine. (Participant, Worker's meeting, Nahr el-Bared camp, Lebanon)

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3) Specific Issues and Needs a. Education and Health

The other point we need to discuss is the one raised by brother [Participant], about the reduction by UNRWA of their health services which happened long ago. They engage in contracts with poorly equipped hospitals and you need to know important people to be able to enter them and get a referral from here to go to the hospital. Sometimes they claim that the pharmacy is not ready or that the number of patients they can take in is 60 and that they are already at capacity. The patient may die before entering the hospital. *(Participant, Students' meeting, Nahr el-Bared camp, Lebanon)*

The most important problem we have is with UNRWA. For example, the hospitals which UNRWA have contracts with outside the camp. Why should a critically sick person be referred by UNRWA to that hospital? By the time the patient reaches the hospital his condition will have deteriorated. Therefore, we demand that a hospital be built inside the Nahr el-Bared camp since it is the biggest Palestinian camp [in Lebanon] with 31 thousand people living in it. Maybe this [overcrowding] is what is causing these diseases. Diseases are widespread in most camps including Nahr el-Bared camp where cancers have spread. What are the reasons for the spread of these cancerous diseases that we suffer from? We don't have any hospitals that have contracts with UNRWA and which have dialysis machines. The patient is obliged to travel to get medical treatment. We demand a well-equipped hospital which has dialysis machines and which is able to perform open heart surgery and treat cancerous diseases with chemotherapy. We also demand that a committee inspects health conditions in the camp and examine the reasons for these diseases. *(Participant, Students' meeting, Nahr el-Bared camp, Lebanon)*

UNRWA schools lack many things, such as a counselor whose job would be to guide the students and address their social or psychological problems. Also, there is not one psychologist in any of the UNRWA clinics in Lebanon, why? We demand that the UNRWA clinic receives more medical staff to enable it to treat patients who suffer from different diseases. *(Participant, Students' meeting, Nahr el-Bared camp, Lebanon)*

In the school I work at, the students' teeth are periodically examined; an UNRWA bus comes to school. Of course many students complain of toothache and some have decayed teeth which need to be extracted, but others just need treatment. But the doctor just starts to extract the girls' teeth without treating the ones that need treatment. He examines more than 15 girls and when we ask them whether he filled their cavities, they all say that he had extracted their teeth. Why are their teeth being extracted while some of them just need fillings?. *(Participant, Women's Preparatory Meeting, Amman, Jordan)*

UNRWA is reducing its services every month and whatever it gives us is motivated by pity, knowing that the United Nations must have a much bigger role. As for the relations between UNRWA and the camps we live in, if I suffer, for example from a heart condition and I'm in need of medication, I would go to the doctor who would not examine me at all. He would merely ask what medications I have taken, tell me that this medication is not available but that there is an alternative and he then gives me Aspirin or Panadol!. *(Participant, Worker's meeting, Nahr el-Bared camp, Lebanon)*

UNRWA does not do or offer anything for elderly people. If I'm 60 years old and I can't afford to have a surgical operation, must I die? Other people have to help you and pay whatever they can afford to pay. Secondly, there aren't enough beds in the hospitals. You go to the hospital and they say that they don't have a bed or ask who will pay for the medical treatment. We don't have a health ministry, so this is a very important thing. *(Participant, Worker's meeting, Nahr el-Bared camp, Lebanon)*

There is also the reduction in health services. You go to the clinic and they give you prescriptions to buy medicines from the pharmacy but there are a lot of people who don't have money to buy food, let alone medicine. *(Participant, Students' meeting, Rashidieh camp, Lebanon)*

The patient who needs a surgical operation is not treated at the expense of the agency. Medicine is not available, so the patient is obliged to pay from his own pocket. A lot of people in the camp suffer from diabetes, but medicines are not available. This increases the mortality rate. Many people suffer from a lot of diseases as a result of malnutrition, especially children. *(Participant, Preparatory Workshop, Sbeineh camp, Syria)*

I have stitches in my back, and the doctor prescribed me a medicine which he said is available from UNRWA, but they dispense it for me. *(Participant, Preparatory Workshop, Sbeineh camp, Syria)*

Specialized Nurses used to work at the agency's clinics caring for pregnant women. They stopped their pregnancy care services a long time ago and that increases the risk of still births. *(Participant, Preparatory Workshop, Sbeineh camp, Syria)*

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3) Specific Issues and Needs b. Environment, Infrastructure

As we have said, there must be free first aid courses for all organizations. It is important to learn how to move injured people and give them first aid before they can receive medical treatment. (Participant, Public Meeting, Wavel Camp, Lebanon).

We are not critical of the doctor but are concerned that there isn't specialist medical staff at the UNRWA clinic because the doctor does not have enough time to examine every patient. We know that the doctor is under a lot of pressure and that there are a lot of patients and so he will inevitably be unable to examine some. We demand a clinic with such specialist doctors. When you go to the UNRWA clinic they ask you what you suffer from and you when you say that you feel sick they suggest referring you to a specialist doctor at your own expense; whether you can afford it or not. That's why specialists for every disease should be available at every clinic. (Participant, Students' meeting, Nahr el-Bared camp, Lebanon)

There are problems with our health services; there are no adequate health services offered to all those who live in the camp. (Participant, Students' meeting, Wavel Camp, Lebanon).

Relating to social conditions, we demand job opportunities and that poverty and the emigration of the educated youth is addressed. Concerning health services, there are no hospitals in the camp, the Red Crescent is very expensive and there is a lack of equipment in the health centres. UNRWA should provide medicines and even pay for the treatment, if it involves an operation for example. (Participant, Women's meeting, Wavel camp, Lebanon)

The Palestinian Red Crescent hospital doesn't have chemotherapy for cancer, nor the ability to perform open heart surgery. They should improve the Red Crescent hospitals instead of contracting with hospitals from outside like Ghassan Hammoud Hospital. (Participant, Women's meeting, Ein el-Hilweh camp, Lebanon)

b. Environment, Infrastructure

There are also the environmental conditions from which residents of Al-Baqa'a Camp suffer, such as the pollution of water, the flooding of sewage and the mixing of sewage with clean water. There are low levels of primary health care and preventative medicine in different areas. These conditions have turned the camp into a garbage dump, not the least because the number of the cleaning workers assigned by UNRWA is limited and hasn't increased since 1968. In addition to this the workers who die are not replaced and the government doesn't want to employ more cleaning workers and when it employs it does so secretly so that it wouldn't be seen as taking over UNRWA's responsibilities. Also, consumption is increasing with population growth and this has led to health problems, tensions and social crisis. (Participant, Preparatory Meeting, Amman, Jordan).

UNRWA provides one garbage container for every one thousand people, and of course this is not enough. The structure of the camps is primitive and the streets are crowded. This impacts on the environment in an obvious manner, because the camps were built within a limited space (100 or 180m²). Those who live in Hittin [Marka] Camp have recently suffered from a garbage problem. The Jordanian television recorded this and presented the issue through one of its programs. About a month ago, this problem was solved. Now they say that they suffer from a water problem and I

think that they should demand that it be solved. (Participant, Preparatory Meeting, Amman, Jordan)

We need to spray pesticides and put proper garbage containers in the camps to preserve the health of their residents. (Participant, Students' meeting, Beddawi camp, Lebanon)

We also demand a hospital that is built although this won't solve all our problems. We demand that UNRWA solve our other problems by finding better housing for families and dealing with the problem of the epidemic diseases inside camps. For the sake of health in the camp, we demand the treatment of water and ensuring that the camps are clean, with repair of the sewer system. Solving these problems is a priority and more urgent than building a hospital and treating the incurable diseases which are common in the camp. The streets which lead to the school are unpaved and muddy and our children walk through them on their way to school, this needs to be addressed even more urgently. We demand that UNRWA deal with this for the sake of the camp's residents and its students. (Participant, Women's meeting, Nahr el-Bared camp, Lebanon)

The centre for women program in Irbid is the only centre to have been built in the camp since 1953. Seven years ago, UNRWA gave us a piece of land with an unstable house in Irbid Camp. After two years we were surprised to find out that the rehabilitation centre is our partner, why? We don't know. But since they have a humanitarian mission as we do, we agreed to share the land and we started to build the centre, but we didn't have money! UNRWA said that it doesn't have money to support the centre. UNRWA is just an umbrella and if we worked under it they would force us to sign a pledge to not discuss politics or religion, as

I am concerned for our health because the Homs Camp directly borders the oil refinery and it is therefore not suitable for human inhabitation. Many of its residents suffer from asthma, cancer and other chronic diseases. Medication is not available in adequate quantities. We lack an X-ray centre. There are more than 160 houses on the verge of collapse and yet UNRWA pledged to renew only 22 houses. (Participant, Preparatory Workshop, Homs ('A'ideen) camp, Syria)

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3) Specific Issues and Needs c. Employment and Assistance

I want to talk about the infrastructure of the camp. The streets are unpaved and full of puddles. The electricity services are poor, and water is brought from wells and then stored in contaminated tanks. Most of the camp residents have developed kidney problems as a result of drinking it. (Participant, Women's meeting, Ein el-Hilweh camp, Lebanon)

the sisters mentioned. So we are meant to follow their rules even though we will not receive any money to build the centre. We asked the help of the Palestinian affairs department, with all due respect they told me to stay in the camp to give me the "money". Many camps complained before we did, and although they exist in the camps, but they were not given money! When I want to build a centre in the camp to offer services to the camp's residents, where will I get the money? Are the Palestinian people supposed to beg for money? We went to the British Consulate, but they said that they cancelled the finance for building two years ago. The British state pays from its budget for UNRWA, where is all this money? When we mention UNRWA, we are not granted any support under the pretext that UNRWA offers assistance, but in fact it offers very little. They told us to raise the Jordanian flag, and we did, then we were asked to raise the UNRWA flag, and we did but we still didn't get anything. (Participant, Preparatory Meeting, Amman, Jordan)

As for infrastructure, there were infrastructure projects in the camp but of course they were all projects that didn't help to improve the camp's conditions; they were not very good projects. (Participant, Students' meeting, Rashidieh camp, Lebanon)

We should develop the sport clubs in Beddawi camp. (Participant, Students' meeting, Beddawi camp, Lebanon)

The United Nations is bound by Resolution 194, and we insist upon the Right of Return to the villages that we were forced to leave. But refugees should live a decent life in the camp.

There is no park here, the houses are unclean and UNRWA does not give out rations. The UNRWA women's centre is monopolized by a certain group of people. The training courses organized in the centre are very expensive, as if they were held by the private sector. There are only two kindergartens. The camp has no vaccinations for the children, and these are usually brought by a car from outside the camp. There is no X-ray centre in UNRWA's health centre and they only refer the most difficult cases to hospital. We suffer from basic infrastructural problems. (Participant, Preparatory Workshop, Jaramana camp, Syria)

UNRWA works under the slogan of helping and employing Palestinian refugees in Lebanon. But there is no hiring or any work. There is just coercion and injustice from the state and no one questions it or investigates anything. We simply demand to have job opportunities for poor workers who can't find a job. There should at least be factories that provide jobs for Palestinian people. You know and the whole world knows that in Lebanon the Palestinian people are being oppressed and humiliated. How much longer do we have to live in these conditions? (Participant, Worker's meeting, Beddawi camp, Lebanon)

We need to renew the electricity system in the camp. (Participant, Students' meeting, Beddawi camp, Lebanon)

As for infrastructure, we only need telecommunications. We now have the centrale but it doesn't fulfil its duties; if you receive a phone call after 12 AM, the centrale will be closed. Also they charge for the call three or four times more. We need telecommunications – we need to have phones. (Participant, Students' meeting, Nahr el-Bared camp, Lebanon)

UNRWA doesn't provide any useful services. I have a piece of land and I was registered with UNRWA so that they would build me a home. But the agency didn't do anything, which forced me to give the land to a contractor in exchange for a small apartment. (Participant, Preparatory Workshop, Homs ('A'ideen) camp, Syria)

Our basic infrastructure must be rebuilt. The infrastructure we have has to be fixed once every few years. We almost have no electricity, I mean we don't have it everyday and the subscription is very expensive. Some people can't afford to subscribe, so they live without electricity which affects learning one way or another. As for the water, the clean water is being mixed with used water and is contaminated as a result. (Participant, Women's meeting, Ein el-Hilweh camp, Lebanon)

Regarding services, there is no water in Al-Qiatia neighbourhood; streets are not paved and there are no lights. (Participant, Preparatory Workshop, Jaramana camp, Syria)

c. Employment and Assistance

We, as Palestinian refugees suffer from severe daily difficulties. We Palestinians in Lebanon, have a basic right to build an independent Palestinian state with Jerusalem as its capital and this we all agree upon. Our only legitimate representative is the PLO. But I have a question: if someone had problems, would he really think that his basic concerns were those of the Palestinian state and the PLO? He certainly wouldn't. There are many issues that concern each member of the Palestinian family and I'm one of those members. They all come down to financial concerns. Here, for example, the state offers services –and we

Humanitarian agencies and other international institutions

3) Specific Issues and Needs c. Employment and Assistance

thank them for that- infrastructure, like drinking water; and the sewer pipes, etc...But if I was very poor how could I build a house? And if I wanted to start a family could I open my own workshop once I had had my vocational training? Can I afford to pay child expenses? All these issues are related to poverty. I have a suggestion; in order to be able to think of building our country, we need to be living more or less comfortably. So I have an idea, although it might be difficult to articulate it, maybe it could help a little. A Lebanese citizen can take a loan in Lebanon but I am a Palestinian; can I enter any bank here and ask them to give me a loan, simply because I don't have a house? No, I can't. So what I am suggesting is that donor countries dedicate some money available to ordinary people, as they do for the infrastructure and water pipes and roads projects. If I want to open a shop or help my son get married or have a big family, I will be under stress. Can't this enormous stress lead people to take a wrong path? I mean when someone badly needs money won't he do anything to get it? I suggest that donor countries, in the same way they are providing projects, dedicate a budget to the Palestinian people in Lebanon, for example, 500 million dollars. Anyone who has an idea of a project in Nahr el-Bared camp can pursue it by borrowing without interest until he has made enough money to pay it back. I think that if this problem is solved, we can proceed to tackle other problems and I think that this is a very fair demand. In the same way they have the ability to build projects they can give us some money for loans, so that we are just like everyone else who can go to any bank and get a loan. Thanks a lot. *(Participant, Worker's meeting, Nahr el-Bared camp, Lebanon)*

On the other hand there has been a development in the camps we live in over the last four years. The European Union joined with development projects with the aim of improving the standard of living in the camps. However, personally, I am not impressed by the project of replacing zinko [aluminium] roofs with cement ones; this is not what I call really improving living standards. We need to address the pockets of poverty in the camps and create job opportunities. There is a trend to establish lending funds to finance small projects. This experiment was implemented in the camps, and there was a big demand for loans from these funds. But we have had enough of the limited projects in the camps and we need to present something new. We are now working on giving loans for other purposes; for setting up a grocery shop, a poultry farm or buying a car, for example. *(Participant, Preparatory Meeting, Amman, Jordan)*

UNRWA, which started with us in 1948 used to meet our basic needs, like supplying us with rice, flour and oil. We are now in 2004 and nothing connects us to UNRWA except a "card". I personally haven't used this card for years. *(Participant, Preparatory Meeting, Amman, Jordan)*

UNRWA has greatly reduced its services and yet there are people living in very difficult conditions. Why don't we demand that UNRWA reintroduce its policy of distributing rations? These used to especially ease the hardship of large families. They should offer rations to everyone, not only for the so-called shu'un (special hardship) cases, because there are large families who are living under very bad conditions. *(Participant, Worker's meeting, Ein el-Helweh camp, Lebanon)*

