

Department of Political Sciences
Master in International Relations

Chair of Islam: Culture and Politics

SAVING THE FUTURE OF REFUGEES THROUGH EDUCATION

*Educational programs in Lebanon for Palestinian and Syrian refugees
and a comparative analysis between the two in the Burj el Barajneh refugee camp.*

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INTRODUCTION

The present research work arises following a valuable experience in Lebanon during my curriculum internship (21st of October-6th of December 2019).

This experience has been a source of great enrichment and personal and work change.

In particular, it was my intention to analyze the great difficulties of the Palestinian and Syrian refugees and the governance system adopted in Lebanon, focusing in particular on the right to education.

The refugees located in Lebanon are in fact facing worse socio-economic conditions than those residing in Syria and Jordan, due to the socio-economic-political context of the country of the Cedars.

Lebanon is extremely indebted. "The public debt is around 130% of GDP, it is the third highest in the world". One of the causes that determine the public debt is linked to the reconstruction of Lebanon after the civil war and after the war with Israel ended in 2006, where Lebanon had had many loans from abroad.

However, as already mentioned, the large number of refugees scattered throughout the territory is aggravating the economic and social situation in Lebanon.

It is trusted that half of all displaced people are kids. The requirement for training is in this manner significant.

I started getting interested in Lebanese refugee camps since the summer of 2015 when I went to Beirut with my family for a month to visit my grandparents. I did my three-year thesis in 2016 entitled "Lebanon as a land of asylum. Palestinian and Syrian refugees."

In 2016 before my thesis I returned to Lebanon and I had the great opportunity to visit both the Palestinian camp of Sabra and Shatila, famous for the 1982 massacre and the Syrian shelter of Sarafand where I was accompanied by IOM operators (international organization for migration).

During these years of the Master's in Global Studies, also thanks to the exams that I had the opportunity to include in my study plan, I have become increasingly informed and documented about the refugees in Lebanon.

After my bachelor's degree I went back to Beirut 3 times, and every time I noticed that the situation did not improve for the refugees.

In these years I have always maintained relations with G.B. who works at the UN:

"what you see in the refugee camps in Lebanon is not terror, it's horror",

with R.P. working at the Italian Ministry of Foreign Affairs in Lebanon:

"Lebanon, the small and great country of cultural intertwining, of the thousand contradictions, where everything coexists and resists over time throwing an immense fascination on those who meet it "

and with N.Y. who works in UNICEF

" the situation of the refugee camps is plaque, the parents make the children go out on the streets to do almsgiving rather than sending them to school because the children for some families are the only source of income. "

They helped me to find the material for the bachelor's degree.

That thesis was not experimental, it focused on the general framework of the refugees; during the elaboration of the thesis a particular interest has already emerged for the theme of education and access to education: this thesis is the occasion to deepen it, it is the continuous.

In this thesis I gave a voice to the Palestinian and Syrian refugee children and adolescents in Lebanon, I tried to report their very own accounts, needs and their impressions.

Lebanon is the country, which has the biggest number of refugees with respect to its national population. In an area as big as Abruzzo (10400 km²) and with a population of 4,230 million inhabitants, Lebanon hosts refugees and asylum seekers mainly from Syria, and, in a smaller percentage, from Iraq and other countries: the highest per capita number of refugees in the world.

At the end of April 2019, UNHCR offices register 938,531 Syrian refugees and asylum seekers in Lebanon (amounting to 213,634 households) and 20,039 people from other countries (amounting to 7,714 households). The Government of Lebanon estimates that about 1.5 million people fled from Syria from the beginning of the civil war in March 2011.

To these numbers we must add 28,800 Palestinian refugees, also escaped from Syria (PRS), 35,000 Lebanese returnees, and a pre-existing population of 180,00 Palestinian refugees in Lebanon (PRL).

The prolonged crisis had a strong impact on Lebanon's social and economic growth, caused additional pressure on resources and infrastructures, exacerbated pre-existing development constraints, deepened social inequalities and tensions, mostly due to the competition for jobs and access to services.

The mass arrival of Syrian refugees has significantly increased competition on the Lebanese labor market, especially with regard to unskilled labor: in Lebanon, in fact, Syrians receive an average salary corresponding to less than half that of a Lebanese, and they also occupied a large slice of the informal economy. On the other hand, however, they tend to accept jobs that the Lebanese generally refuse. It is convenient for read this thesis to take into consideration that Lebanon did not accept the Geneva Convention on the Status of Refugees of 1951 and its supplementary 1967 Protocol, but is a signatory to the Universal Declaration of Human Rights of 1948 and appeals to the principle of non-refoulement. According

to art. 33 of the Geneva Convention “a refugee cannot be prevented from entering the territory nor can he be deported, expelled or transferred to territories where his life or his freedom would be threatened.”

“Half of the Lebanese, Syrian and Palestinian population involved in the crisis is children and adolescents: at least 1,4 million children under 18 are currently growing up at risk, deprived, and with acute needs for basic services and protection.”

I will analyze the observations and desires for Palestinian and Syrian children and adolescent in Lebanon in connection to their future, yet additionally to their current circumstance and their past encounters.

All the work collected for the realization of this thesis and that done for the previous thesis led me to know and to distinguish well the differences that exist between these two realities of refugees. It has always been heard about the Middle East but now with the issue of refugees in Italy is also experienced in its dramatic current situation. I therefore wanted to dedicate my own thesis to the refugees and concentrated on refugee children.

In fact, before describing the aim of my thesis I would like to introduce here the main differences between these two categories of refugees: Palestinians and Syrians.

The refugees living in Lebanon, especially the Palestinians are devoid of civil and social rights and their living conditions are on the verge of survival.

The emergency in Lebanon has become unsustainable especially following the great influx of Syrian refugees in recent years.

Two of UN Agencies join and are trying to manage such a large emergency and are responsible for the management function but their operations are very difficult and delicate. As they face serious financial difficulties that inevitably compromise the effectiveness of their intervention.

More than 2 billion dollars would be needed, but in reality much lower figures have been allocated.

One of these two agencies is UNRWA, founded in 1949, which is the only agency set up for a specific case of refugees, the Palestinian one, the other agency, UNHCR (1950) takes care of all the other refugees, in the case of Lebanon, of Syrian refugees.

In fact, the mandates of the UNHCR and UNRWA are mutually exclusive, for example they cannot be applied to the same operational areas, which implies an ambiguity of treatment of the refugees of no small importance. The disadvantage that Palestinian refugees have is that they are excluded from the protection of human rights granted to refugees who come under the umbrella of UNHCR and other international organizations because UNHCR provides protection and protection mechanisms for refugees and refugees their rights, while UNRWA does not provide any form of legal protection for Palestinian refugees.

The result is that the absence, in fact, of an unequivocal legal definition of who is a Palestinian refugee, complicated by the refugee definitions formulated in the statute of the UNHCR, in the Convention on the status of refugee of 1951, in the relative Protocol of 1967 and in the Convention on persons without state in 1954, it makes it impossible to apply, where necessary, most of the legal instruments provided for by

international law.

In conclusive terms, this ambiguity implied that the vast majority of Palestinian refugees were not in fact able to benefit from the protection of UNHCR and the 1951 Convention on refugee status, while UNRWA did not have an explicit protection mandate. Since the refugee problem could not have been solved shortly, and is still far from a solution today, this could be considered a historical error.

To date, Syrians in Lebanon have not found accommodation in formal camps because the Lebanese government, considering their presence “temporary”, decided not to invest economically in the construction of new camps. Furthermore, the Lebanese authorities do not provide collective gathering points for people and families arriving from Syria for this reason they live in shelters provided by UNHCR. Some Syrian refugees, especially the Palestinian refugees from Syria, live in the 12 Palestinian camps.

It is estimated that a large proportion of displaced Syrians is hosted in informal UNHCR tent camps in the Bekaa Valley, in Palestine refugee camps or in poor urban neighborhoods and substandard shelters such as garages, tents, animal sheds, unfinished buildings.

Their living conditions are increasingly alarming.

The substantial difference that separates the Palestinian refugees from the Syrians is that Palestinian refugees are running out of hopes and no longer have the ambitions of being able to climb a social ladder, and without ambition it becomes social parasites to return to Palestine and even to be able to live a dignified future, because they are increasingly aware that their homeland will almost certainly be erased from the global geopolitical maps. Syrian refugees, on the other hand, are still driven by the hope of recovering and believe that Syria will regain peace, even if the reconstruction project, both material and moral, is announced. Many of them are returning to Syria.

The data that I have collected and the testimonies that I recorded document a dramatic and apparently no way out: that of refugees is a perennial emergency that fuels the already serious internal fragility of Lebanon.

Going back to the topic of my thesis, now with these premises it will be easier to read the chapters that compose it.

This work depends on a subjective contextual analysis approach, where I accumulated data based on semi-structured interviews in Burj el Barajneh refugee camp from October 21- December 6 2018 and on documents analysis review. (UNICEF, RACEII, 3RP, UNHCR, World Bank... all updates at 2019).

I went with the permission letter of Professoressa Francesca Corrao at do the research for my bibliography at AUB (American University of Beirut).

The aim of my research was to examine how education is seen from the point of view of the Palestinian and Syrian children in Lebanon, a country that puts many barriers to education and to the future of the refugees.

The purpose of my paper was dictated by the fact that at the moment there are no comprehensive studies on the parallel comparison between these two types of refugees, Palestinians and Syrians.

With these preconceptions, I gave a main research question to my thesis: are the adolescent aware of being a likely lost generation?

I wanted to understand the perceptions on this theme of Syrian and Palestinian refugee children and adolescents in Lebanon if are the same or not.

The International Convention on the Rights of the Child guarantees the right to education of children, but it is not an obligation or a duty everywhere, because for many children in the world this is a denied right.

Education is one of the least funded sectors by humanitarian organizations.

What my children are experiencing is the life of a child to whom two important rights are granted: study and education.

Education is a privilege for the few. Lebanon is denying education to almost “two-thirds of school-age refugees”. One of the main reasons is because the parents cannot afford the expenses and they prefer to send their children to work or to beg in the streets so they can help their families.

The “street children” represent another “plague” of Syrian refugees. They spend their days in the streets of Beirut selling roses, packets of chewing gum, handkerchiefs. For them the dream of studying was put in a drawer by their parents a long time ago.

Children who want to go to school encounter various bureaucratic and cultural obstacles. For children the biggest challenge is having to tell their families their willingness to be educated, because for families they are sources of income.

Most of the Palestinians go to UNRWA schools, which are free.

These schools are seriously under-resourced and overcrowded, due to an extreme absence of funding. UNRWA runs 67 schools and two professional instruction focuses the nation over giving instructive administrations to more than 38,000 PRL understudies.

Since the last year Trump decided to publicly expressed that he had decided to reduce the Budget for aid to the Palestinians by \$ 200 million. UNRWA is almost completely financed by donations from states that are part of the UN and other voluntary contributions. The United States was the most important donor, so it is clear that the blow to the agency is very strong. Thus, many schools of UNRWA have to close due to lack of finances.

The most important problem for Palestinians is, even if they have an education, later, in the future they cannot work in the sector they most like, because Lebanon does not permit it. As Palestinians are considered foreigners from a legal point of view, they need a work permit issued by the Ministry of Labor, in accordance with the Entry, Residence and Exit Law from Lebanon. However, in principle, Palestinian refugees are not allowed work and the formal and regulated labor market provides success permits. It is estimated that 36% carry out elementary occupations such as sales, agricultural laborers, service or sales workers, cleaners.

The only option that remains for most refugees is to seek low employment in the informal economy, often undergoing specific, or in the case of jobs characterized by low turnover.

Syrian displaced people are unfit to manage the cost of even the ostensible educational cost and transportation expenses without help. A prominent test lies in language. While Lebanon and Syria both communicate in Arabic, in Lebanese government schools science and math are taught in English or French after evaluation 7.

Due to the inability to give an education this situation is causing the increase of a "lost generation".

In 2014 Lebanon embraced the Reaching All Children with Education (R.A.C.E.) approach, which has helped increment the quantity of Syrian kids joined up with government funded schools to 158,321 before the finish of the 2015-2016 school year.

In January 2016, the Ministry of Education and Higher Education revealed a quickened learning program for kids matured 7-17 who have been out of school for at least two years.

Additionally in 2016 Lebanon embraced the R.A.C.E. II plan with the objective of selecting 440,000 Syrian youngsters in formal training by the 2020-2021 school year. These policies fall within the framework of the regional "No Lost Generation Initiative".

In light of these critical prospects for the future, the point of this thesis as stated above is to listen to the voices and worries of the refugee children and to report their stories. I will analyze the fears and the hopes of the children for their future regarding their present situation.

Fieldwork took place during my internship at Fraternity Association for Social and Cultural Work in Lebanon. My research had one research site: the Camp of Burj el Barajneh of Beirut. The camp was founded in 1948 and in 1973 the Phalangists attacked the Burj El-Barajneh refugee camp.

The Association is a non-profit organization, established in November 2000 and it is located at the door of the Palestinian camp of Burj El Barajneh.

Fraternity Association chose to work with the underestimated youth, to enable them on every single imaginable dimension so they become dynamic social pioneers and harmony evangelists in the communities. In 2002, the Association set up inside the camp a nursery and kindergarten giving the access to education and health for children until 5 years old.

Then it started a program to contrast the school dropouts. (human rights, peace building, conflict resolution. Sports, arts\theater\folk dance).

My unit of analysis was Syrian and Palestinian adolescents, aged between 10-18 who access or not access a form of education in Lebanon. The majority of the Syrians refugees that I interviewed are out of school and some of them never went to school, due to the start of the war in Syria.

I interviewed them according to a qualitative research method with semi-structured interviews.

One of the biggest limitations was that the interviews were done in Arabic and I needed the translator and therefore it is something between the children and me.

Another limit that I found while doing interviews with children was that I had to win their trust by trying to understand their situation and seeing things with their own eyes.

The questions of my semi-structured interviews focused mainly on education and their perceptions of the reality around them and their future. I interviewed 50 Syrians from the Fraternity association and 50 Palestinians from the Unrwa school Al Beireh. All respondents live in the Burj el Barajneh camp.

The analysis of the data collected was carried out by comparing the most interesting issues identified in both categories of refugees, with the aim then to provide an accurate analysis of the data collected highlighting the most indicative answers for me.

According to UNRWA there are “61 million school-age children who cannot go to school and 250 million are unable to read and write properly although they have spent the last 4 years at school”.

During a humanitarian emergency situation, minors should be protected precisely from education. But in reality in these situations very often, due to lack of resources, the school is interrupted.

The children change the picture of their days, the present becomes uncertain and insecure and the future is unpredictable.

The normal aspirations and hopes of the future during an emergency are irretrievably set aside, but continuing to give education to children means not depriving them of the skills and knowledge so necessary for the younger generations to rebuild the social fabric after a conflict.

Postpone educational activities until "the emergency will be over" for many children, means never going back to school, often condemning them to a future of poverty.

Here below I shall explain the structure of my thesis.

The rielaboration of up-to-date objective data such as the 2019 LCP and historiographical materials has been included in the first two chapters, which are essentially historical reconstructions. Starting from the second chapter, we enter into the merit of the central topic of my research work.

I tried to understand and deepen the context of the current relationships between the troubled country of the Cedars and the people of refugees who are present on its territory.

But the real heart of my thesis is the third chapter, which is dedicated to testimonial sources, that is to my direct experience. In this third chapter you will find the transcription of some parts of the interviews with the refugees.

In the first chapter is provided an historical excursus of the history of the Palestinians and of the Syrians, which merged into the Lebanese civil war (1975-1990). In the 1970s, the epicenter of Arab-Israeli tensions became Lebanon, a country that until then was considered a "free zone" in the Middle East but which had long been crossed by frictions between the different components of its society: on one hand, the nationalist,

Muslim movement but also Christian, aimed at integration with the Arab world; on the other the Christian bourgeoisie and clergy, who consider themselves almost a colony of the West in an Arab environment.

The second chapter focuses on the stages of the exodus that led to settling on Lebanese soil from 48 half a million Palestinian refugees and from 2011 1.5 million Syrian refugees.

Lebanon has shown generosity, it has opened its doors to everyone, without, however, at first evaluating the inconveniences that this opening could have caused. Now the reception policies have changed: the borders have been blocked, new entries are forbidden to the Syrians.

As already mentioned above, with regard to the Palestinian refugees, their management was relatively "easy", because they were "ghettoized", locked up in dedicated areas and deprived of their rights.

The Lebanese government up to now does not recognize part of the rights to the Palestinians because, according to the Lebanese people, one day they will return to Palestine where they will have all the rights, practically from the point of view of Lebanon the right to return home would eliminate any sign of rooting (cultural, social, economic) for the Palestinians.

This position of Lebanon is a mechanism that wants to make the memory livelier among the Palestinians, making them live in the territory in a precarious way, so that between them the desire to return to Palestine is kept alive, that is, that the desire is not extinguished to leave Lebanon.

In the case of Syrian refugees, the reality has been very different: first of all, Lebanon has not created regular camps for them, both because of the experience of the Palestinian camps still present since 1948, and because of their desire to return home.

The situation of most of them (Palestinians and Syrians) remains dramatic, both from the economic and social point of view, and from the point of view of health and hygiene.

According to what I have seen and read, I have understood that the Palestinians feel alone, abandoned and unable to overthrow their situation. In twenty years, when there will no longer be the protagonists of the first wave of 1948, only people already born refugees will remain: "for life" refugees.

The Palestinians who still live in Lebanon, who are not examples of the totality of the Palestinian diaspora, represent the most threatened and vulnerable band today.

This chapter explains the background information of the status of the Palestinian and of the Syrian refugees in Lebanon and the historical relationship between Lebanon and Palestine and between Lebanon and Syria and the sectarian nature of the Lebanese state. I briefly examine the role of the Ministry of Education and Higher Education (MEHE) and the general education structure in Lebanon and Syria.

The third chapter focuses on the on-site linguistic investigation, describing the profile of the interviewees, the questions asked, the socio-cultural context and the differences between the two categories of refugees.

I will explain in details the methodological approach, the limitations and the ethical consideration of my work.

Through the answers given to me by children and adolescents, I tried to identify some issues and to highlight similar and conflicting points between the Palestinians and the Syrians.

At the end of the third chapter I comment on the results obtained from the analysis of the elaboration and transcription of the interviews, exposing the most relevant elements of the survey carried out. In the conclusion of the chapter I also give an answer to my research question. The factor that is important for both of the refugees is their right for education.

In the conclusions I make recommendations to Lebanon and to the international agents to have a more reassuring and hopeful future for refugees.

I dwell on the importance of education and on how Lebanon, in this case should implement policies for a qualitative and inclusive education for refugees.

It is easy to condemn the attitude of discrimination and restrictive policies of Lebanon, but this country has taken on an enormous importance of a humanitarian disaster in the indifference and disinterest of the international community.

The internship and my project.

The start of PROJECT SMILE.

During the internship at the Fraternity Association I assisted the teachers in their work with children.

On the first floor there were the kindergarten classes, made up of Palestinian and Syrian children, while on the second floor there were non-formal education classes for Syrian children and adolescents only.

I was supported throughout the internship by Sara, a Palestinian girl who has been working in the Association for two years as a psychologist, with whom I have established a wonderful relationship that I am trying to maintain because I am a hope for her, a friend who does not she would never have expected.

After work, I always stopped to talk with her and she slowly managed to trust me and confide in very important things. One day after work, she asked me if I had any problem crossing the field to go and see his new home that his father was building, I could not refuse, I would have lost her trust, I had to show her that I trusted her. I had already entered the camp several times, but I came only to the peripheral area, where there was a market, some small shops, hairdressers, the mosque, but I had never gone further. That day, instead, I walked the whole field, I heard myself being called by all the children that I had never seen in school (they do not go to school) but they all knew my name. I stopped several times to talk to them, even the mothers approached me. I tried to convince someone that it would have been better if they had sent their children to school, but the mothers told me that for them education is useless and would not have led them to anything, much better to send them to beg on the street or make them do small jobs to bring money home.

Once arrived at Sara's house, she proudly interpreted me every room, but she was proud and happy to have a terrace over the roof and told me "look at Petra, from here I can see the sky"; the houses of the fields are so attached to one that others a ray of sunshine is hard to enter.

The internship was very interesting to me; every child was in the heart.

The moments I spent with the kindergarten children were serene and carefree, they were available and open from the first day they saw me, they are still too young to be aware of their situation, they only know they are not in their country, but they live it as if it were a game.

Instead, with Syrian children and adolescents on the second floor, it was not easy at first. They, even though so young have lived through the war, seen their country destroyed and have already experienced so many deaths in their family. It was more difficult to establish a relationship, to become familiar with them because in their eyes I always saw a veil of sadness and awareness of the situation in which they find themselves. Sara knew from the first day that I wanted to interview some children for my thesis work, but two weeks had passed before I started the interviews; two weeks in which I had to calmly acquire the confidence of the teachers and consequently of the children and especially of the Syrian adolescents who were more skeptical, and also because I had to understand better their situation and thus be able to understand, at least in part, their perspective. The first few days I had to explain and explain the reason for my internship and why I decided to undertake my experience with them. Both the teachers and the adolescents repeated to me: "why are you here with us? The world is not interested in our condition! ", as if to say that I was just wasting my time because no one would listen to me and certainly nobody would have been interested in my stories.

In school, both in kindergarten and special needs classes, I have never seen bullying and no one ever excelled others, it is as if they all knew they were in the same uncomfortable situation.

I was impressed by the eyes of a little girl who, when I had to say goodbye to her and told her that the next day I would return to Italy, she hugged me strongly, saying "it's a fantastic thing, I will go back to my house one day, in Syria ", her eyes were full of tears because I was leaving but also full of hope to return to her home.

After two weeks the president of the Association assigned me the task of managing their Facebook page and then every day, when I returned home, I posted photos of the activities carried out during the day.

Every time I photographed the children during the activities, they turned to the camera lens smiling at me, it is with this type of work, when I posted the photos, that I got the idea of committing myself to a health-care project, because in their beautiful smiles I saw serious problems of oral hygiene.

Before starting with the project I called home, and asked if they could help me find some toothbrushes and toothpaste. A few days later I received a pack of 350 toothbrushes and an equal number of toothpastes, a silicone mouth and an hourglass. Thus began my project "PROJECT SMILE".

I talked about it with the people in charge who immediately accepted this initiative of mine with enthusiasm and gave me a blank paper on all the management of my project.

I started taking half-hour lessons in each class, explaining the importance of oral hygiene. Using my silicone

mouth, I showed how they had to wash their teeth.

I found that many children did not know what a toothbrush was.

After a few days of theory, I moved on to practice, I started bringing groups of 3 at a time to the sinks of the bathroom, giving each a toothbrush and a toothpaste.

I turned the hourglass that lasted 1 minute and a half and they knew, after the theoretical lessons that they had to wait for the end before the last rinse.

The children brought back to school their toothbrushes every morning, so that we could repeat it together, after breakfast (which is practically lunch, because the Association makes sure that they have a healthy and abundant meal because most children at home eat little and, above all, foods not suitable for their growth) for at least another week, so that it became a daily thing and necessary to brush teeth every day at least at school.

When I make video calls with the managers from Italy, when the children see me on the screen, they immediately show me their teeth.

1. Historical narrative of Lebanon, Syria and Palestine.

1.1. Lebanon



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1.1.1 The War in Lebanon: the facts and years from 1975 to 1982

In the 1970s, the epicenter of Arab-Israeli tensions became Lebanon, a country that until then was considered a "free zone" in the Middle East but which had long been crossed by frictions between the different components of its society: on one hand, the nationalist, Muslim movement but also Christian, aimed at integration with the Arab world; on the other the Christian bourgeoisie and clergy, who consider

themselves almost a colony of the West in an Arab environment. In 1958 a first conflict between Christians and Muslims had been resolved by the US intervention.¹

After the Six-Day War in June 1967 between Israel on one side and Egypt, Syria and Jordan on the other, won by Israel, which occupied the Syrian Golan Heights, the Sinai Peninsula, the West Bank and the Gaza Strip, so a new wave of 350,000 Palestinians from the West Bank and Gaza Strip was forced to evacuate and take refuge, mostly in Syria, Jordan and Egypt, the 1948 refugees were forced to evacuate a second time. Resolution 242, approved by the United Nations Security Council, on November 22, 1967, which appealed to the "land for peace" principle, which meant that Israel had to withdraw from the Palestinian territories to return the refugees in exchange for a recognition of the Arab states, since this resolution has been interpreted differently by the two parties has never been applied.

The crisis exploded in 1969, when with the Cairo agreements Nasser recognized the right of asylum in Lebanon to the Palestinians. The fragile status quo did not hold the entrance of thousands of Palestinians of Sunni Muslim religion (and among them a very low Christian percentage). By 1975, the number of Palestinian refugees on Lebanese territory amounted to about 300,000.

The refugees camps soon became a state in the state, as a base of support and recruitment of the feddayns; the guerrilla organizations end up constituting a sort of "double government" in the host countries and therefore subject to reprisals from Israel or from the Arab governments themselves. Lebanon also became the refuge of Palestine Liberation Organization PLO militiamen, expelled by the army of King Husayn of Jordan following the operations of the "Black September" (1970). The PLO continues its actions against neighboring Israel causing reprisals. Christians felt threatened by the growth of the Muslim component, supported first by Syria and then, since 1979, also by Iran.²

From the beginning of the decade the pro-Israeli alliances of the Christian factions in anti-Palestinian function and the pro-Syrian alliances of the progressive, secular and Muslim parties against Israel are outlined. Under the impetus of the Druze leader Kamal Jumblatt, who had made his [Progressive Socialist Party](#) (PSP) a militia, Muslims unite in the Lebanese National Movement, joined by the Palestinians of the PLO and the Popular Front for the Liberation of Palestine (PFLP). We are on the eve of a war that will cause 150,000 deaths, 20,000 missing.

The triggering cause dates back to two episodes that happened in Beirut on April 13th 1975.³

Palestinian militiamen shot from a racing car on a small crowd of Christians who witness the consecration of a church in a suburb of Beirut; a few hours later, the Phalangist massacre of Palestinian passengers took place on a bus to the Tall el-Zaatar refugee camp. Lebanon soon turned into a battlefield on which Israeli retaliation broke out several times, striking both militants and Palestinian refugees without distinction.

¹ Winslow C., *Lebanon: War and Politics in a Fragmented Society*. New York: Routledge, 1996.

² Weinberger N. J., *Syrian Intervention In Lebanon: The 1975–1976 Civil War*. New York: Oxford University Press, 1986.

³ O'Ballance E., *Civil war in Lebanon, 1975-92*, Hampshire, Macmillan, 1998.

The Green Line divided Beirut into two parts, in correspondence with the socio-economic rift: to the west the mass of the proletariat and the disinherited, to the east the citadel of Christians and of the rich financial bourgeoisie.

1976 is the cruelest year.⁴ The president Asad, who wanted a Syrian intervention in the conflict to pursue his expansionist designs, at the head of the Arab Dissuasion Force (ADF)⁵, but with the pretext of asserting the agreements of Cairo, 50 thousand Syrians enter Lebanon with the support of the Russians, in support of Christians.⁶

The three Palestinian camps of Tall el-Zaatar, Jisr al-Basha and, in part, Dbayeh were destroyed by Gemayel's militias. In 1978, Israel invaded southern Lebanon for the first time and besieged and bombed the refugee camps, with the prospect of a war to permanently eliminate the PLO from Lebanon and hit Syria. "Israel found its Vietnam", the war began without the broad consensus of its citizens⁷.

Southern Lebanon became a permanent battleground. Following the invasions by Israel, the Palestinians lost the support of the Lebanese people: at first the consensus is restricted to the Sunni Muslim parties, while after the second invasion the internal support will be lost almost completely.

⁴ Pappé I., *Storia... cit.*, 276.

⁵ The Arab Dissuasion Force (ADF) was a military intervention force created by the League of Arab States and led by Syria to intervene in Lebanon.

⁶ Wayne Scott L., *The political dissolution of Lebanon : international influences and domestic turmoil precipitate the civil war of 1975-1976*.

⁷ Pappé I., *Storia... cit.*, 277.

1.1.6. The War in Lebanon: the years from 1982 to 1989

In June 1982, Israel occupied Beirut with the support of the Maronite militias and with the aim of destroying once and for all the Palestinian bases.

The resistance of the PLO and international pressures led Israel to allow the peaceful withdrawal of Palestinian fighters under the guarantee of a multinational peace force made up of American, English, French and Italian units: until 1984 this had guaranteed the evacuation of Palestinian fighters but it does not restore a peaceful coexistence of the various Lebanese communities.

On September 14, 1982, an attack on the Phalangist headquarters killed, along with other leaders, the newly elected Lebanese president Bashir Gemayel, son of the founder of the Phalangist party. The departure of the feddayn led, in the area of Beirut subjected to Israeli control, to the bloody retaliation of the Christian Phalangists on the defenseless Palestinian population.⁸

The September 16 massacres in the Palestinian camps of Sabra and Shatila aroused horror and indignation all over the world; popular demonstrations in Israel also put the Menachem Wolfovitch Begin government in crisis and led to the resignation of defense minister Sharon. Following the Israeli invasion, a new force appears on the scene of the conflict, Hezbollah, the "party of God": Iran sent, with the support of Syria, many pasdaran ("guardians of the Khomeinist revolution") to train for the war the Shia population.

Soon Hezbollah carried out a long series of attacks and kidnappings, until the multinational force was forced to withdraw. Hezbollah settled mainly in southern Lebanon, and from there attacked the north of Israel, the Galilee, effectively taking the place of Palestinian terrorism, while on the home front it came into conflict with the other Lebanese Shiite party, Amal, which had the support of the Syrians.⁹

In that same period the leadership of the PLO, after its expulsion from Lebanon, settled in large part in Tunis; in 1983 some internal clashes broke out with Palestinian factions, aligned or not with Al-Fatah of Yasser Arafat, regarding the control of the camps. In 1985 the last Israeli soldier left Lebanon. In May 1987 the Cairo Agreements were repealed and in December the first Intifada broke out in the Occupied Territories. While the PLO is reorganized here, for Syria it was increasingly difficult to continue the siege of the camps. In early 1988, Syria announced the withdrawal from the siege of the Palestinian camps in Beirut and the South.

In 1989, with the Taif agreements, an inter-Lebanese treaty concluded the civil war in Lebanon. The assaults by Israel in the following years would have been sporadic but heavy between 1993 - the year of the historic Declaration of Principles (DOP) signed in Oslo by Arafat and Rabin, which marginalizes the Palestinians of

⁸ Abul-Husn L., *The Lebanese Conflict: Looking Inward*, Boulder, Lynne Rienner, 1998.

⁹ Levitt M., *Hezbollah : the global footprint of Lebanon's party of god*, Washington DC, Georgetown Press, 2013.

the diaspora - and 1996, the year of the massacre of Kana, in which 102 Palestinian civilians were burned alive by a napalm bomb; in the meantime the low-intensity guerrilla warfare continued between the Israelis and Hezbollah militias until May 2000, the date of the definitive withdrawal of the Israeli army.¹⁰

1.1.7. Lebanon from 1989 to today. A difficult balance.

The Taif agreements have as their main points the affirmation of Lebanese sovereignty in southern Lebanon, at the time occupied by Israel, the legitimization of the Syrian presence as a guarantor of peace, limited however to a period of two years (the withdrawal would have occurred only in 2005). The Taif agreements also address the refugee issue, with the aim of restoring control over the refugee community and rejecting forms of integration.

At the political level, the agreements marked the continuation of the previous culture, with a view to national reconciliation. To guarantee the peaceful coexistence of the 18 recognized religious communities and the governability of the country, in fact, since the independence from France of 1943 the Lebanese institutional set-up (national pact) is based on the principle of confessionalism: each community is assigned a fixed quota of seats in Parliament and the highest offices of the State are divided between the three most numerous confessions: the President of the Republic must be a Christian Maronite, the prime minister - the office with the greater executive power - Sunni Muslim, and president of the Shiite Muslim parliament.

Due to the economic crisis and the long years of civil war many Lebanese had emigrated abroad. Lebanon was in a situation of agony and the population was exhausted, which explains the rise on the political scene, starting in 1992, of the charismatic Sunni leader Rafiq Hariri, a billionaire linked to the Saudi ruling family. He is credited with the reconstruction, the disarmament of the militias and, above all, the liberation of southern Lebanon from the Israeli occupation, carried out by Hezbollah in May 2000 with Syrian and Iranian support.

Hariri, Prime Minister from 1992 to 1998, and from 2000 to 2004, must face a post-war situation marked by environmental damage, decline of agriculture and industry, lack of electricity in many areas, collapse of the public health system and of the university, high cost of living and precarious condition of Palestinian refugees. Hariri was convinced that the presence of Palestinians on Lebanese territory would have strengthened the Sunni component against the ever-expanding Shiite one, but he was forced to change perspective due to public opposition. The Palestinians were then equated with foreigners and, from a legislative point of view, were subjected to the same measures as foreigners and therefore to an exclusionary regime.

¹⁰ Kimmerling B. e Migdal J. S., *The palestinian... cit.*, 204.

In fact, Hariri implemented a series of ad hoc ministerial decrees to block foreigners from accessing professional registers, such as medical and commercial ones, thereby preventing them from practicing the profession and reserving the right to open any business to the Lebanese. It is paradoxical that the refugees could not practice qualified professions, even if they had obtained a degree in Lebanese universities.

To discourage any attempt by the refugees to settle outside the camps, it was decided in 2001 that they could not own any property, whereas before they could only own one property, and they were denied any kind of socio-economic integration. Furthermore, since 1995 the Palestinians suffer the humiliation linked to the freedom of expatriation, because they must obtain an entry visa to repatriate, without which they are not readmitted.

In September 2004, with Resolution 1559, the UN recommended the withdrawal of Syrian troops from Lebanon and the disarming of Hezbollah and Palestinian camps. From that moment the country is divided between anti-Syrians and pro-Syrians. On October 20, 2004, Hariri resigned, and he was assassinated a few months later, on February 14, 2005. Hariri's funeral turned into protests ("Cedar Revolution") against the Syrian military presence, who was seen as the responsible for the attack. Assad had no choice but to withdraw his men from Lebanon.¹¹ Following the June 2005 elections Fouad Siniora became Prime Minister, a collaborator of the late Hariri. His government of national unity, which unites the anti-Syrian and pro-American Druze-Sunni front, led by the son of Hariri, Saad, and the pro-Syrian one of Hezbollah and Amal.

On 12 July 2006 Israel, due to the capture of Israeli military hostages on the Lebanese southern border by Hezbollah militias, attacked Lebanon, knocking down Hezbollah villages and positions in the southern zone and in the Beqaa valley. The consequence of this war was that thousands of displaced people from the bombed areas found refuge even near Sidon in the Sunni Palestinian refugee camp of Hein El-Helwe, a very relevant fact, which shows the true spirit of the Palestinians, a people who, despite living in conditions of misery and degradation, it opens the doors of its own camp, and in this specific case they have also brought in Shiite.

This reception was reciprocated by Hezbollah after the war ended, and began to pay compensation to the Palestinians in the camp. The situation among the Lebanese and Palestinians changed with the siege of the Nahr El-Bared refugee camp by the former. The army had received the order from the government to eliminate Fatah al-Islam, but for the Palestinians it was just an excuse, according to them they wanted to remove the Palestinian community from the fields. In all camps there were demonstrations that called for the "cease-fire" and the return of the displaced persons to their homes in Nahr El-Bared.

The largest number of displaced people from Nahr El-Bared went to the Beddawi camp. In Beddawi, the reception facilities found themselves on the verge of collapse given the number of Palestinians, so UNRWA (the United Nations Relief and Works Agency for Palestine Refugees in the Near East) moved hundreds of

¹¹ Blanford N., *Killing Mr Lebanon : the assassination of Rafik Hariri and its impact on the Middle East*, London, Tauris, 2009.

displaced families into its schools in other camps. Even today, the Nahr El-Bared camp is almost completely razed to the ground, and only a few families have returned.

To compensate for the inadequacy of UNRWA's assistance, which had been accused of not finding a political solution, many Palestinian non-governmental organizations begun to support displaced people in the Beddawi camp. Currently, the Nahr El-Bared camp is divided into two parts: one recently built (New Camp), the other (Old Camp), the poorest part damaged by bombing, in which access to anyone is forbidden, even to journalists.

These two parts of the camp also differ in another respect: the New Camp is the territory of UNRWA, while the old part of the camp is nobody's territory and no one can claim the responsibility for reconstruction. To date, in the Palestinian refugee camps of Lebanon, there are so many actors of cooperation: UNRWA, ECHO (European Commission Humanitarian Office), foreign NGOs, Palestinian NGOs, solidarity groups, committees and voluntary associations.

The conflict lasted about a month, until the "ceasefire" imposed by the UN, and determines a political stalemate that is resolved in 2008 with the election of General Michel Suleiman as President of the Republic.

The political situation in the country of the cedars has been stalled for years: the previous parliamentary elections were held ten years ago, in 2009.

In 2013, after the fall of the Sunni government Najib Mikati caused by Hezbollah's withdrawal from the majority, eleven months have passed since the appointment of a new government, led by the Sunni Tammam Salam.

The climate of tension caused by the war in Syria has led the Parliament to self-question itself and to postpone the political elections, initially foreseen for May 2013, to November 2014.

Furthermore, the regular expiration of the mandate of the Maronite President Michel Suleiman in 2014 was followed by two years of institutional paralysis, during which the parliament, whose mandate was also expired, tried in vain to elect a new president. The situation was finally unblocked in 2016 with the election of Michel Aoun, pleasing both to Sunni forces close to Hariri and to Shiite forces allied with Hezbollah.

In 2017, the new law transformed the Lebanese electoral system from a majority to a proportional one, albeit with a high barrier threshold (10%), and the permanence of the division of seats based on the confessional membership of the candidates.

In the May 2018 elections, which took place 9 years after the previous elections and with the new proportional electoral system, the majority was obtained by blocking forces allied with Hezbollah, including the Christians of the Free Patriotic Movement (FPM) - the party founded by President Aoun - and the Shiite party Amal, whose leader Nabih Berri was confirmed for the sixth time president of the parliament.

Saad Hariri was renamed prime minister for the third time. In Hariri's intentions, this process should lead to the creation of a government of national agreement that, composed of representatives of the major political forces, can accompany the country on the path of the much-needed economic-structural reforms. However,

negotiations encountered numerous obstacles: each party wished to gain a certain weight in the new executive, both on the basis of the results of the elections and of the historical political weight of its own movement, regardless of the decline in consensus of the latest consultations and no one seems willing to make concessions.

As stated above, the elections were postponed three times since 2013.

Despite the constitutional expiry of the parliamentary mandate in 2013, the consultations were initially postponed to 2014, and in second stop in 2017, with the justification of the precarious security conditions due to the war in neighboring Syria. In June 2017, the approval of the much-discussed new electoral law then extended the legislation by a further year, until May 2018.

“Lebanon is heading for its first parliamentary elections in nine years”¹².

Although this blockade did not obtain an absolute two-thirds majority indispensable for advancing the most important reforms without obstacles, the seats won by Hezbollah and its closest allies influence parliamentary decisions, even without the support of the Christians of the Free Patriotic Movement (FPM). On the other hand, while the party of Prime Minister Hariri, al-Mustaqbal, lost about a third of the seats, the Christians of the Lebanese Forces (LF) almost doubled their consensus.

“Hariri's Sunni-majority FM party saw a drop from 33 seats to 21. FM's biggest symbolic loss was in the capital Beirut, a long-time stronghold of the party, where hezbollah candidates gained a few traditionally Sunni seats for the first time.”¹³

This result reflects a change in the Lebanese political framework: for a long time, in fact, national politics was analyzed through the lenses of the two camps formed during the Cedar Revolution, the protest movement that prompted Syrian forces to abandon Lebanon in the 2005, following the murder of then-prime minister Rafik Hariri.

On that occasion, the anti-Syrian alliance of March 14- formed, among others, by al-Mustaqbal and the LF- opposed the pro-Syrian forces - including Hezbollah and Amal.

To date, however, these two sides are no longer fully explanatory of Lebanese politics, which is much more fluid: among the reasons for the decline in consensus for al-Mustaqbal, in favor instead of the LF, we find a certain softening of Hariri towards of Hezbollah and FPM, as demonstrated by the tight pact in 2016 with Aoun, following which Saad Hariri earned the premiership.

¹² Ajroudi A. and Chughtai A., *Lebanon elections 2018: politics as usual*, Al Jazeera, 2 May 2018.

¹³ Ajroudi A., *Unpicking the results of Lebanon's elections*, Al Jazeera, 10 May 2018.

Thus, since Lebanon returned to the vote in May 2018, in fact it no longer had a government. The various political forces that entered the new parliament, have many difficulties in creating a shared programmatic base and, consequently, in designating names and faces for the new governmental structure.

The Lebanese government was actually formed on the 31 January, 2019, after 8 months of very delicate negotiations, Lebanese Prime Minister Saad Hariri announced the agreement for the formation of the new Lebanese government after the elections of May 6, 2018, adding at the moment of the announcement “*Let’s turn new page, start work*”.

“Lebanese factions have agreed to form a new government of national unity, ending nearly nine months of wrangling.”¹⁴

The Shiite bloc has obtained that the Ministry of Finance, attributed to Ali Hassan Khalil, of the Amal party of the president of the Parliament Nabih Berri. The Foreign Ministry was confirmed by Gebran Bassil, son-in-law of President Aoun and expression of his Patriotic Movement, the strongest Christian formation. The Ministry of Health goes to Jamil Jabak, close to Hezbollah, even if not inside the party. It is the first weighty ministry that gets the Shiite movement led by Hassan Nasrallah, a qualitative leap due to the good result in the last elections. The United States has opposed this choice to the last, because they fear a further strengthening of the Party of God.

1.1.4. The internal situation of Lebanon

Lebanon is extremely indebted, both public and private, as indicated by the fact that public debt corresponds to around 150% of the gross domestic product - the third highest in the world - while the budget deficit has recently exceeded 20% of the GDP². One of the structural reasons for the huge debt dates back to the reconstruction following the Lebanese civil war of 1975-1990, which was financed through large loans, contracts in particular with Lebanese banks, and thus led the government to gradually borrow.

Since 2011, the war in Syria has also had important consequences on the economy of neighboring Lebanon: first, the dynamics of war have partially isolated Beirut from the eastern trade routes. What has more weight on the socio-economic level, however, is undoubtedly the huge number of refugees hosted on Lebanese territory: more than one million Syrian refugees have been registered with UNHCR, but the Lebanese government claims the number to be 1.5 million.

Moreover, considering that about 175,000 Palestinian refugees were registered at the end of 2017 and that some thousands of Iraqis would also live in Lebanon, the Republic of the cedars is the country with the most refugees in proportion to the population.

¹⁴ *Lebanon forms new government after long delay*, BBC NEWS, 1 February 2019.

The mass arrival of Syrian refugees has significantly increased competition on the Lebanese labor market, especially with regard to unskilled labor: in Lebanon, in fact, Syrians receive an average salary corresponding to less than half that of a Lebanese, and they also occupied a large slice of the informal economy. On the other hand, however, they tend to accept jobs that the Lebanese generally refuse.

This is a very hot topic in the Lebanese political class: in particular, Shiite and Christian politicians cite the negative economic impact of refugees on the already devastated Lebanese economy and on the already shaky infrastructure system as one of the reasons to encourage the first repatriation of Syrians on a voluntary basis.

This approach has caused frictions both with UNHCR representatives, much more scrupulous than the Lebanese authorities in assessing the feasibility of returning refugees to Syria, and within the same government, where Hariri's forces, among others, have condemned the impetus and decision-making autonomy of Foreign Minister Gebran Bassil (FPM).

However, Bassil is firm in its intent, and Beirut is coordinating with Damascus to organize the return of displaced persons to Syria. In general, the refugee issue also has repercussions at the security level - for fear of jihadist infiltration in Syrian and Palestinian refugee camps - and on maintaining the delicate sectarian balance on which the country is based. Among the other challenges that the new government will face, there is corruption: according to the World Bank, it would cause a loss of around 10 billion dollars a year.

Confirming this exorbitant figure, the Lebanese Republic ranked 143rd out of 180 countries by corruption index. To restore public accounts and bring the Lebanese economy under control, so as to be able to solve the various infrastructural and management problems that the country suffers from, a first important step was the approval of a budget law in 2017, for the first time in twelve years. In April 2018, the international fundraising route was also embarked on, as already attempted - without success - in the 2000s.

The 'Cedre' donors conference, held in Paris, allowed Beirut to collect a first sum of 11 billions of dollars between donations and loans, which will be used to improve infrastructure and stimulate GDP growth, which today does not exceed 2% per annum.

However, loans and donations are tied to structural reforms that the donors expect to see realized in the country of the cedars.

The presence of a stable and effective government, therefore, turns out to be more than ever necessary. Also in virtue of its multi-confessional nature and its geographical position in the heart of the Middle East, Lebanon has always been the object of the aims of regional powers, which make its internal policy extremely permeable and dependent on external influences.

This implies that the composition and conduct of the new government will be extremely sensitive to the will and vetoes implicitly imposed by the various regional and international actors involved in Lebanese domestic politics, despite the insistence of Beirut on its independence and sovereignty.

1.1.5. Foreign relations

Saudi Arabia has historically supported the Hariri clan, while Iran has never made any secret of standing by the Party of God. In Syria, Hezbollah has proved to be fundamental in providing armed forces to support the camp government sponsored by Tehran; on the other hand, it is fundamental for the Shiite movement not to lose Damascus, as this would mean remaining isolated, losing the vital connection with Iran. In 2016, Riyadh stopped delivering military aid to Lebanon, and strongly advised its citizens not to travel to Beirut - a decision also replicated by the Allies, United Arab Emirates and Bahrain, which imposed a ban on traveling to Lebanon. In Saudi logic, these measures were justified by Hezbollah's commitment in Syria alongside Iran in favor of President Assad, by the support of the Party of God to the Houthis in Yemen. In November 2017, Prime Minister Saad Hariri announced his resignation live from the Saudi capital, claiming to fear for his life and denouncing excessive Iranian interference in the dynamics Lebanese. The situation turned into a stalemate, with Hariri's return to Lebanon and the resumption of his office, thanks also to the mediation of the French president Macron and to the firmness of President Aoun.

“The Lebanese prime minister, Saad Hariri, has said he is suspending the resignation that he announced two weeks ago from [Saudi Arabia](#), easing a crisis that had deepened tensions around the Middle East.

“Our nation today needs at this sensitive time exceptional efforts from everyone to protect it against danger,” Hariri said during Independence Day celebrations, having returned to Beirut late on Tuesday. “We must dissociate from wars, external struggles and regional conflicts.””¹⁵

However, the well-founded suspicion that Riyadh was behind this episode indicated how much Saudi Arabia is willing to expose itself to stem Hezbollah's influence in Lebanon - a direct vehicle, in the Saudi conception, of Tehran's hold on Beirut. Precisely for this reason, the role that Hezbollah and its allies will assume in the new government will be fundamental to understanding the configuration of Saudi-Lebanese relations in the coming years.

Meanwhile, despite the fact that Muhammad Bin Salman did not fund Hariri's electoral campaign as it did in the past, in the last few months Riyadh has attempted to draw closer to Beirut. This was highlighted by the various meetings held between the Saudi and Lebanese senior leaders, who expressed their willingness to improve relations also in the economic sphere.

Furthermore, at the Cedre conference, the Saudi kingdom would offer a billion dollar loan offer.

Also for Israel, Hezbollah is an enemy, both for its strenuous support to the Palestinian resistance and for its extreme proximity to Iran; from an Israeli perspective, Hezbollah is even more dangerous because it is near Israeli territory.

¹⁵ Shaheen K., *Lebanese PM Saad Hariri suspends resignation*, The Guardian, 22 November 2017.

The recent reintroduction of US economic sanctions on Iran promises to put a strain on the balance of the future government. The Hezbollah leader Hassan Nasrallah has spoken out against the sanctions, declaring that in any case they will not be able to cause either the fall of the Iranian regime, or the end of Iranian funding to its proxies in the Middle East, among which the same stands out Party of God. However, the economic ties between Lebanon and Iran do not exclude the possibility that sanctions could have negative repercussions on the Lebanese economy.

1.2. Palestine



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1.2.1. The 1948 war: ethnic cleansing of Palestine.

“La catastrofe che colpì la Palestina sarebbe stata ricordata nella memoria collettiva come Nakbah: la “catastrofe” che accese la fiamma dell’ unione dei palestinesi in un movimento nazionale. Nel loro immaginario, i palestinesi diventarono un popolo autoctono guidato da una guerriglia che cercava senza successo di spostare indietro le lancette dell’orologio.”¹⁶

“The catastrophe that struck Palestine would be remembered in collective memory as Nakbah: the “catastrophe” that lit the flame of the union of the Palestinians in a national movement. In their imaginary, the Palestinians became a native people led by a guerrilla who unsuccessfully tried to move the hands of the clock back”

May 15, 1948 coincides with the expiration of the British mandate in Palestine, the birth date of the State of Israel¹⁷, and it is from here that the odyssey of the Palestinian refugees begins. The first western Jewish pioneers arrived in Palestine between the end of the 1800s and the early 1900s,

¹⁶ Cfr. Ilan Pappé, *Storia della Palestina moderna*, Torino, 2005, 177.

¹⁷ Pappé I., *Storia... cit.*, 166.

“for many Zionist Palestine was not even an ‘occupied’ land when they first arrived there in 1882, but rather an ‘empty’ one: the native Palestinians who lived there were largely invisible to them or, if not, were part of nature’s hardship and as such were to be conquered and removed.”¹⁸

They increased the Jewish presence that had been constant but in low percentage in the previous centuries: during the first, second and third aliyah (‘rise to Israel’) took shape the Zionist project to install a Jewish national home in Palestine.

“Jewish tradition and religion clearly instructs Jews to await the coming of the promised Messiah at ‘the end of times’ before they can return to Israel as a sovereign people in a Jewish theocracy, that is, as the obedient servants of God.”¹⁹

In 1916 the secret agreement of Sykes-Picot was signed, with which France and Great Britain shared the Middle East, without taking into consideration the nationalist aspirations of the Arab peoples. It is from this moment that the Zionist movement became functional to European expansionist aims. Britain, not convinced by this agreement, decided to change perspective.

This strategic perspective known as the Balfour Declaration: on 2 November 1917, the then English Foreign Minister James Balfour wrote to Rothschild, representative of the political committee of the Zionist Organization, that Britain was in favor of the Jewish settlement in Palestine and made himself the guarantor of the Zionist project, raising the opposition of the Arab world.

*“His Majesty's government view with favor the establishment in Palestine of a national home for the Jewish people, and will use their best endeavors to facilitate the achievement of this object, it being clearly understood that nothing shall be done which may prejudice the civil and religious rights of existing non-Jewish communities in Palestine, or the rights and political status enjoyed by Jews in any other country.”*²⁰

In 1918, General Smuts published the first draft of the mandate system in the League of Nations project. The American president Wilson in 1919 established the League of Nations, an organization aimed at guaranteeing international peace through a collective security system.

The mandate system was a sort of compromise between the winners of the First World War.²¹ The territories that after the war were no longer under the sovereignty of some states were assigned to other advanced nations so that they helped them to look modern. The mandates were divided into three categories, type "a",

¹⁸ Pappé I., *The Ethnic Cleansing of Palestine*. London, Oneworld, 2006, 11.

¹⁹ Pappé I., *The Ethnic... cit.*, 10.

²⁰ It is a letter written by the then English foreign minister Arthur Balfour to Lord Rothschild, understood as the main representative of the English Jewish community, and referent of the Zionist movement, with which the British government claimed to look favorably on the creation of a "national home for the Jewish people" in Palestine, then part of the Ottoman Empire, respecting the civil and religious rights of other resident religious minorities. This position of the government emerged within the cabinet meeting of 31 October 1917.

²¹ Bagnato B., *l'Europa e il mondo. Origini, sviluppo e crisi dell'imperialismo coloniale*, Florence, 2006, 143.

type "b" and type "c" based on the level of development in which the states were after being submitted to the sovereignty of other states.²²

The League of Nations ratified, in 1922, the British mandate on Palestine.

The British refused to establish a representative Palestinian government and to limit Jewish immigration, so in the three-year period 1936-39 the Arabs gave shape to a real revolt against Jewish settlers and the English army. In 1937 the Peel commission²³ proposed the division of Palestine into two states. The Palestinians realized that the recognition of a Jewish state in Palestine was becoming a real threat to their existence.²⁴ The Zionist movement, while reaching the goal of founding a Jewish state, acted clandestinely through a military conquest; the Haganah, the Irgun and the Stern group were established (the three Jewish military formations) which were placed against the Arab-Palestinian guerrillas and also against the British administration.

Count Folke Bernadotte, United Nations representative, United Nations Mediator for Palestine, assassinated by a Zionist extremist in July 1948, tried to have a mediating role without results, Jewish settlements were supplied with men and weapons and the fighting continued.²⁵

With the armistice of 1949 and the defeat of the Arab armies the frontiers of the Jewish state were established on three quarters of the territory of the English mandate. The Zionist armed groups had begun to occupy even before England had withdrawn. Their goal was to expel the Palestinian population; the massacres carried out by the Haganah and the Irgun were organized with the aim of terrorizing the Palestinians and obtaining the abandonment of the lands.²⁶

When the war officially broke out on May 15th 1948, a good part of the Palestinian population had already abandoned their homes and their lands, going to take refuge mostly in Lebanon, Syria, Jordan (which at the time also included the West Bank, or West Bank) and Egypt (which then also included the Gaza Strip). The tragedy of the refugees officially began in the spring of 1948.

To repair the humanitarian disaster caused by the war, the UN Disaster Relief Project (UNDRP) was established, soon replaced with the UN Relief for Palestine Refugees (UNRPR), which dealt with the humanitarian emergency of the refugees up to August 1949. The Conciliation Commission for Palestine (UNCCP) was subsequently established, with the task of facilitating the promotion of peace and finding a solution for the refugees. When it was found impossible to repatriate Palestinian refugees within a short time, they began to assess the economic sustainability of their resettlement in the countries that had welcomed them, so the Economic Survey Mission (ESM) was established.

²² *Ivi.*, 145 e 146.

²³ The Peel commission (named after its president, Lord William Peel) was created by the British government during the British mandate of Palestine. The body proposed in 1937, during the Great Arab Revolt, a plan to divide the Palestinian territory for the establishment of two states, one Jewish and the other Arab.

²⁴ Kimmerling B. and Migdal J.S., *The palestinian people*, London, 2003, 115, 116.

²⁵ *Ivi.*, 171.

²⁶ Said E., *The Question of Palestine*, New York, Vintage Books, 1979.

With Resolution 302 IV of 8 December 1949, the General Assembly established the birth of that UN agency that would cover and still relate to the Palestinian refugee phenomenon, the UN Relief and Works Agency for Palestine Refugees in the Near East (UNRWA). Simultaneously with the birth of UNRWA, the General Assembly of the United Nations established a body capable of dealing with the refugee problem in the world in general, the so-called High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR).

UNRWA was, and still is, the only agency set up for a specific case of the refugee phenomenon, namely the Palestinians. The mandates of the UNHCR and UNRWA cannot apply to the same operational areas, there is a difference in the treatment of refugees that should not be underestimated. According to UNRWA, Palestinian refugees are excluded from the protection of human rights granted to refugees falling under the umbrella of the UNHCR and other international bodies.

Refugees under UNHCR are protected by rights, while UNRWA does not enjoy any form of legal protection, so that refugees cannot appeal to any international body if the governments of the host countries violate their rights.

The PLO (Organization for the Liberation of Palestine) was founded in 1964 as a unitary body of Palestinian resistance, equipped, as a sort of State, with a Constitution (the Palestinian National Charter), a government, a parliament and administrative structures, schools and health.

Under the leadership of the al-Fatah faction of Yasser Arafat, the PLO supports the armed struggle against Israel and supports the revolt movements of young Palestinians in the occupied territories (first Intifada in 1987 and second Intifada in 2000); at the same time, especially since 1974, it tries to walk the diplomatic path, provoking the reaction of the most radical groups, first of all Hamas.

1.2.2. From 1975 to today.

In 1974 the PLO was recognized as the only legitimate representative of the Palestinian people, first by the UN and then by most states, and since 1976 it has been part of the Arab League. However, Arafat's position is weakened by the separate peace sought at Camp David and ended by Egypt with Israel, to recover the Sinai in 1979. A key date is November 15, 1988: the Palestinian National Council proclaims the birth of the State of Palestine with capital of Jerusalem; a month later Arafat officially recognizes Israel in front of the UN General Assembly; within a few months already 70 states recognize the State of Palestine.

Peace initiatives do not find support from Tel Aviv. The turning point takes place with the Oslo agreements signed in Washington on September 13, 1993: the mutual recognition of Israel and the PLO takes place and a declaration of principles is signed, which envisages intermediate stages aimed at achieving coexistence

between two peoples in two different states, according to the principle of returning the occupied territories in exchange for peace. A new agreement (Oslo 2 Accord) signed in 1995 by Arafat and Rabin states that the West Bank is divided into three zones: an area A under Palestinian control, a zone B subjected to joint Israeli-Palestinian control; a C zone with full Israeli control.

The stalling of the negotiations, however, causes a growth of the Islamic opposition, represented above all by the fundamentalist political movement Hamas.

In the beginning of the second millennium the second Intifada, the New York attacks, the suicide attacks and, in response, the new occupations by Israel stop the peace process.

In 2005, Abu Mazen came to power after Arafat's death the previous year.

Hamas' victory in the 2006 elections exacerbates the conflict, causing incursions by the Israeli army into the Gaza Strip and a civil war between Hamas and al-Fatah on the streets of Gaza, until the birth of a national unity government and the division of Palestine in two: the West Bank in al-Fatah and the Gaza Strip in Hamas.

“The preliminary count put Hamas on 76 seats to Fatah's 43 in the 132 seat chamber. The result could complicate hopes of a peace deal between Israel and the Palestinians. George Bush said the United States would not deal with a Hamas-led government unless the party recognized Israel's right to exist.”²⁷

The operation "Cast Lead" (2009), the air and naval raid against the six ships of the Freedom Flotilla that tried to force the blockade of the Gaza Strip bringing humanitarian aid and other materials to Gaza (2010), the construction of 90 new Israeli civilian settlements near Ramallah (2013), the operation "Protection margin" (2014): these are the main stages of the conflict of this last decade. On the diplomatic side, on November 29, 2012, Palestine is admitted to the UN as a non-member observer state. It is an important step for the Palestinian cause.

“There were 138 votes in favor, nine against and 41 abstentions. Three countries did not take part in the vote, held on the 65th anniversary of the adoption of U.N. resolution 181 that partitioned Palestine into separate Jewish and Arab states.”²⁸

In 2016, with Resolution 2334, the UN Security Council called on Israel to end its settlement policy in the Palestinian territories, including East Jerusalem. Reconciliation between the two factions can be seen starting in 2017, when the executive of the Islamist movement in Gaza is dissolved and the conditions set by the Palestinian National Authority (PNA) are accepted, including the request to call new general elections.

²⁷ Jeffery S., *Hamas celebrates election victory*, The Guardian, 26 January 2006.

²⁸ Charbonneau L. and Nichols M., *Palestinians win de facto U.N. recognition of sovereign state*, REUTERS, 1 December 2012.

Currently the territorial entity of Palestine includes the state of Israel and the territories which, on the basis of the Israeli-Palestinian agreements signed between 1993 and 2000, are legally subject to the PNA: the Gaza Strip and some areas of the West Bank (including the cities of Jericho, Hebron, Nablus and Bethlehem). The Palestinian population is estimated at around 4 million; of these, more than a third live in the Strip, a territory of 378 km².

Although the evacuation of all Israeli settlements established since 1967 in the Gaza Strip and four other settlements in the northern West Bank was completed in 2005, more than 300,000 Israeli settlers remain in Palestinian territory. Between 2002 and 2006 a wall was erected to separate the Palestinian territories from Israel.

This has further compromised the freedom of movement of frontier workers and the transit of goods (the few exports, mostly agricultural products, are mostly destined for Israel).

The unemployment rate is at 41%. The industrial sector is almost absent and is based on small craft enterprises. The civil service absorbs most of the workforce, in ways often vitiated by cronyism and corruption. There are no efficient communication and transportation infrastructures; control of water resources is largely in Israeli hands and the lack of drinking water is a daily emergency.

1.3. Syria



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1.3.1. From the end of the French mandate to the Baathist coup.

With Sykes-Picot agreement, France recognized the influence on Syria and Lebanon, which led to the end of Greater Syria. France in 1939 ceded the Alexandretta sangjaco to Turkey and thus violated an article of the mandate, in which it was written that France had to protect the integrity of Syrian and Lebanese territory. During the Second World War, on 27 September 1941 the formal independence of Syria was proclaimed and a year later Šukri al-Quwatli was elected president of the Republic. In July 1945, the withdrawal of the French and British troops was agreed, and they withdrew definitively the following year.

In 1946, the Ba'th movement established itself as a representative of nationalism and aimed at the unity of the Arab peoples. In 1963, after the Ba'athist coup in Iraq, a group of Baathist officers, including the young zafiz al-Asad, took power in Syria and President Nažim al-Qudsi and Prime Minister Khālid were arrested Azm, this moment represents the birth of the bath party, which had a pan-Arab character.²⁹

²⁹ Galletti M., *Storia della Siria...cit.*, 88-89.

The founders of the neo-Ba'th were: Şalah Gadid, Nur al-Din al-Atasi and afiz al-Asad, who dragged him to take on more and more an alauite mold. After independence, Syria spent a period of political and institutional instability that lasted until November 16th 1970, when General zafiz al-Asad proclaimed himself president through a military coup.³⁰

In 1949 a parliamentary law was passed that regulated the number of denominational quotas reserved for minorities in parliament, or the seats reserved for: Christians, Alawites, Druze, Kurds. Four years later, in 1953 a law was passed according to which the president of the Republic had to be Muslim.³¹

General Asad assumed power in Syria on 13 November 1970 and in February of the following year he was elected President of the Republic for seven years with 99% of votes in favor with a referendum by universal suffrage.³²

Once he was elected president, Asad preferred that the army be personally controlled by him and tried to create an army directed towards the ideals of the Bath party.

The Syrian army particularly engaged in the Lebanese civil war and this caused an internal crisis in Syria, this situation worsened thanks to the growing number of Lebanese refugees and thanks to the growing economic inflation. In 1982, Lebanon witnessed the birth of a Shiite national liberation party, called "bizb Allāh" or "Party of God", this party moved against the Israeli occupation. In this context, Syria was the Shiite axis that touched the South of Lebanon, Damascus and Tehran. On 11 February 1999, zafiz al-Asad won for the fifth and final time the presidential elections, in which he obtained almost full marks.

1.3.2. The Asad regime

The Syrian army had intervened in the Lebanese civil war in support of Hezbollah, a Shiite national liberation party against the Israeli occupation. In this way Damascus was placed on the Shiite axis that started from the south of Lebanon and reached Tehran. On February 11, 1999, Hafiz al-Asad won the presidential elections for the fifth and final time, in which he obtained almost full marks. On 10 July 2000, after the death of Hafiz, his son Bashar was elected president of the Republic. From the beginning of his tenure, Bashar promises radical economic and political reforms and for this he is welcomed positively by society and hailed as the "Reformer".³³ In the first year it seeks to implement a less rigid policy in social control, opening a window to future democratization. In the economic field it liberalizes the banking system.

³⁰ *Ivi.*, 95.

³¹ Trombetta L., *Siria. Dagli ottomani agli Asad e oltre*, Mondadori, Milano 2013, 75-77.

³² Galletti M., *Storia della Siria...cit.*, 98-99.

³³ Van Dam N., *The Struggle for Power in Syria: Politics and Society Under Asad and the Ba'ath Party*. New York, I.B. Tauris, 2011.

However, these reforms do not lead to great results. Between 2003 and 2005, in the wake of the popular discontent caused by the corruption of the regime and the severe economic crisis, Bashar resumed the program of political reforms and initiated a generational change at the top: some people who had participated in the construction of the regime at the time of Hafiz are forced to leave the party. In foreign policy, Bashar wants to re-launch Syria in the international arena and renew relations with neighboring states. Relations with Lebanon came to a halt in February 2005 due to the assassination of Prime Minister Hariri, who accused Syria: Syrian troops are withdrawing from Lebanon, under pressure from the USA, France and Saudi Arabia.³⁴

On April 22, 2007, Bashar al-Asad was reappointed for a new term of seven years, being the only candidate of the winning party, the Baath.

1.3.3. The Syrian civil war.

“ the Syrian crisis cannot be understood in isolation from state formation across the Levant in which the states created after WWI have been in recurring crisis since their birth, not only Syria, but Iraq, Lebanon, and Jordan have all experienced regular combinations of domestic revolution, civil war, and external intervention”³⁵

The demonstrations against Asad and the restrictions on freedom of assembly and movement in February 2011, and the repression of the government army, lead to a massacre of opponents and the creation of a Free Syrian Army, as a form of armed opposition. It is the beginning of the civil war, still in progress and far from a solution. A war that is often explained, in an overly simplistic way, as a sectarian clash between Shiites and Sunnis but which some experts believe is the result of ancient socio-economic rivalries, which emerged with arrogance in recent years.³⁶ The United States and the European Union are trying to apply economic sanctions and an arms embargo against Syria to stop the escalation of violence, but this resolution is not approved due to opposition from Russia and China.

The Arab League also intervenes, with no result. Asad receives Hezbollah's support, which frees the city of Quasayr from rebels. The battle of al-Qusayr has undeniably highlighted the role of the Party of God in the conflict and allows us to glimpse the by now concrete possibility that the Syrian crisis extends definitively to

³⁴ Galletti M., *Storia della Siria...cit.*, 213.

³⁵ Kadri A., Matar L., *Syria: From National Independence to Proxy War*, Springer, 2018, 31.

³⁶ Jenkins B. M., *The Dynamics of Syria's Civil War*, Santa Monica, CA: RAND, 2014.

neighboring Lebanon. Even the Arab League has accused and still accuses Hezbollah of being a terrorist formation, but the party claims that its militias are fighting to defend Syria from the destruction projects carried out long ago by the United States and Israel.³⁷

Giving for verified the use of chemical weapons by the regime in 2013 Obama starts the military intervention in Syria. In January 2014, the peace conference known as Geneva 2 opens in Geneva, with which the UN intends to find a solution to the crisis; the Syrian government, the Syrian National Coalition and the Kurdish front take part, while the al-Nusra Front, the Islamic Front and the ISIS refused to sit at a common table. On June 3, 2014, presidential elections saw the victory of Asad, who was re-elected president for the third time.

A few days later the leader of ISIS, Abu Bakr al-Baghdadi, established the Caliphate in the controlled territories between northeastern Syria and western Iraq. Since September 2015, the Russian Federation has established ties with the Syrian government and is beginning to share information on the Islamic State with Syria. The following month Asad was welcomed by Vladimir Putin in Moscow, on his first trip outside the Syrian borders since the beginning of the war.

In November 2015 two Turkish F-16s shot down a Russian bomber, causing the death of one of the pilots: it is the beginning of a strong diplomatic instability between Turkey and Russia.

*“The Russian defence ministry insisted that the aircraft remained within Syria's borders throughout its mission, did not violate Turkish airspace and received no warnings”.*³⁸

On December 25, Russia bombs Syria and one of the rebel leaders, Zahran Alloush, commander of the Jaish al-Islam formation, is killed.³⁹

On 17 January 2016, ISIS is responsible for the bloodiest massacre in Syria in one day: the killing of tens, perhaps hundreds, of civilians, mostly women and children, and the kidnapping of 400 people in the city of Deir Ezzor. On 11 February in Munich a conference was organized by the USA and Russia with the aim of relaunching a plan for the pacification of Syria. Saudi Arabia and Iran also participate.⁴⁰

This meeting ends with a "cease-fire" agreement in a week's time.

On 25 February the truce was proclaimed and a few days later Putin announced the withdrawal of Russian forces from Syria. Despite the agreement, Russia and the United States continue to have opposing ideas about the future of the government of Bashar al-Asad: the United States is calling for the Syrians to decide their future - in fact they support a political transition that involves the removal of Asad - while Russia opposes a regime change.

³⁷ Galletti M., *Storia della Siria contemporanea*, Bompiani, Milano 2013, pp. 69-70.

³⁸ *Turkey's downing of Russian warplane - what we know*, BBC NEWS, 1 December 2015.

³⁹ *Syria conflict: Jaysh al-Islam rebel leaders die in air strike*, BBC NEWS, 26 December 2015.

⁴⁰ Van Dam N., *Destroying a nation : the civil war in Syria*, London, I.B. Tauris, 2017.

2016 sees a new truce and the withdrawal of the Islamic State. In 2018 the UN imposed a new humanitarian truce; despite this the number of deaths continues to grow and no peace can be seen. The end of the year is marked by the resumption of Russian attacks against Idlib, a rebel stronghold. A final event, on this line, took place on March 23 of this year when the Syrian Democratic Forces (SDF) took full control of Baghuz, a small village on the Euphrates where a last jihadist resistance had been attested. The US-backed Kurdish-Arab alliance fighters raised their yellow flag in Baghuz.

“A four-year military operation to flush the Islamic State from its territory in Iraq and Syria ended on Saturday as the last village held by the terrorist group was retaken, erasing a militant theocracy that once spanned two countries.”⁴¹

1.2.4. Syria and Lebanon.

Economic exchanges take place across the Bekkaa valley border between Syria and the Hezbollah party. Bashar Al-Asad, who is an Alawite or Shiite, not supporting radical Islamist movements has always favored a moderate alliance with Hezbollah. Although Syria has long occupied the Bekkaa valley and Lebanon itself accuses Syria of the murder of Hariri in 2005, this relationship between Syria and Hezbollah still continues. Sayyed Hassan Nasrallah provides militants for the Assad regime.

The battle of al-Qusayr represents the irrefutable proof of the involvement of the Party of God in the conflict and highlights the by now concrete possibility that the Syrian crisis extends definitively to neighboring Lebanon. From the clashes of al-Qusayr the role of the party of God was highlighted.

Sayyed Hassan Nasrallah speeches on television invites his followers to remain calm in order not to unleash the situation even in Lebanon.

⁴¹ Callimachi R., *ISIS Caliphate Crumbles as Last Village in Syria Falls*, The New York Times, 23 March 2019.

2. Educational policies for refugees in Lebanon.

2.1. General context

2.1.1. An overview

“In an area as big as Abruzzo (10400 km²) and with a population of 4,230 million inhabitants, Lebanon hosts refugees and asylum seekers mainly from Syria, and, in a smaller percentage, from Iraq and other countries: the highest per capita number of refugees in the world.

At the end of April 2019, UNHCR offices register 938,531 Syrian refugees and asylum seekers in Lebanon (amounting to 213,634 households) and 20,039 people from other countries (amounting to 7,714 households).”⁴²

The Government of Lebanon estimates that about 1.5 million people fled from Syria from the beginning of the civil war in March 2011.

To these numbers we must add 28,800 Palestinian refugees, also escaped from Syria (PRS), 35,000 Lebanese returnees, and a pre-existing population of 180,00 Palestinian refugees in Lebanon (PRL).⁴³

The prolonged crisis had a strong impact on Lebanon’s social and economic growth, caused additional pressure on resources and infrastructures, exacerbated pre-existing development constraints, deepened social inequalities and tensions, mostly due to the competition for jobs and access to services.

On April 2017 the World Bank stated that:

*“as a result of the Syrian crisis, some 200,000 additional Lebanese have been pushed into poverty, adding to the erstwhile 1 million poor. An additional 250,000 to 300,000 Lebanese citizens are estimated to have become unemployed, most of them unskilled youth.”*⁴⁴

The Lebanon Crisis Response Plan (LCRP), a joint plan between the Government of Lebanon and its international and national partners, targeted – “on 5,9 million people living on Lebanese territory - 3,2 million as “people in need”, including 1,5 million Lebanese who live under the poverty line (470,000 of whom are children), along with the most vulnerable groups in the region: the Palestinian Refugees in Lebanon (PRL), who face multi-generational poverty, and the Palestinian Refugees from Syria (PRS)”.⁴⁵































⁴² <https://www.unhcr.it>

⁴³ *Lebanon Crisis Response Plan 2017-2020 (2019 update)* (<https://reliefweb.int/sites/reliefweb.int/files/resources/67780.pdf>).

⁴⁴ The World Bank in Lebanon: <https://www.worldbank.org/en/country/lebanon/overview>. (Accessed May 30th 2019)

⁴⁵ Lebanon Crisis Response Plan (LCRP)

2019 TARGET & REQUIREMENT BY SECTOR

PEOPLE TARGETED		SECTORS	REQUIREMENTS (US\$)
2,156,137		 Social Stability	 125.4m
1,884,800		 Protection	 174.1m
1,563,500		 Health	 267.5m
1,351,624		 Water	 214m
1,023,911		 Basic Assistance	 476.8m
1,017,821		 Food Security & Agriculture	 508.6m
694,480		 Shelter	 156.9m
678,487		 Energy	 99.2m
497,171		 Education	 380.7m
49,662		 Livelihoods	 214.4m

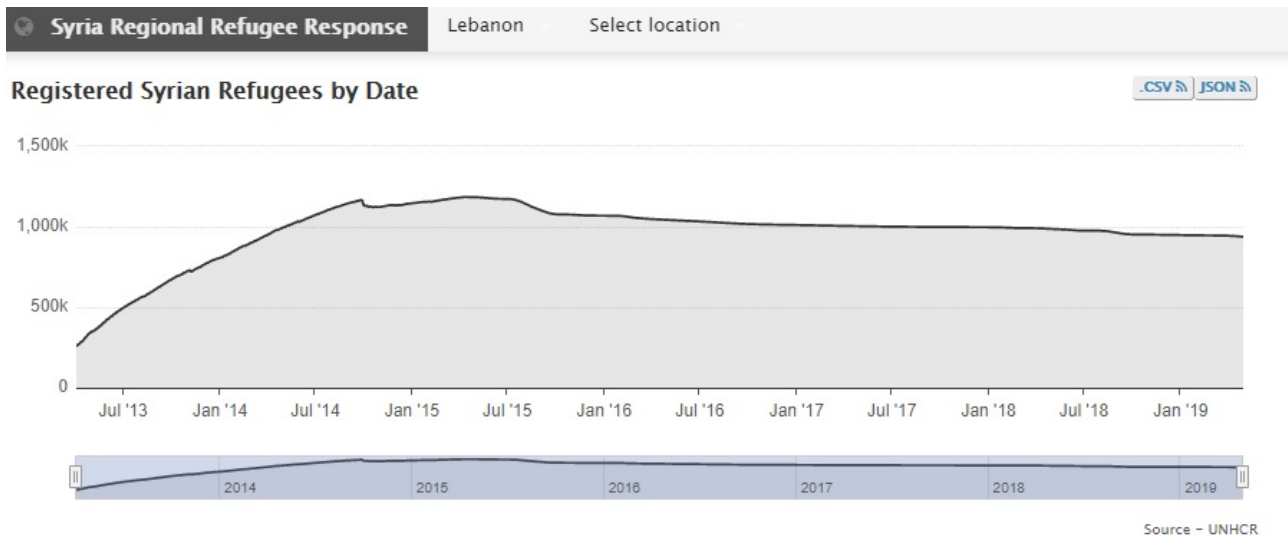
Source: LCRP 2019

Lebanon did not accept the Geneva Convention on the Status of Refugees of 1951 and its supplementary 1967 Protocol, but is a signatory to the Universal Declaration of Human Rights of 1948 and appeals to the principle of *non-refoulement* Gebran Bassil, which - according to article 33 of the Geneva Convention – “defines the prohibition of the expulsion or return of a refugee “to the frontiers of territories where his life or freedom would be threatened on account of his race, religion, nationality, membership of a particular social group or political opinion.”

“Article 33

prohibition of expulsion or return (“refoulement”)

1. *No Contracting State shall expel or return (“refouler”) a refugee in any manner whatsoever to the frontiers of territories where his life or freedom would be threatened on account of his race, religion, nationality, membership of a particular social group or political opinion.*
2. *The benefit of the present provision may not, however, be claimed by a refugee whom there are reasonable grounds for regarding as a danger to the security of the country in which he is, or who, having been convicted by a final judgment of a particularly serious crime, constitutes a danger to the community of that country.”*



Source: <https://data2.unhcr.org/en/situations>

International legally binding instruments like the United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child (UNCRC) sometimes conflict with local laws. For example, Article 28 of the UNCRC states that all children are entitled to free primary education.⁴⁶ However, in 1998, Law No. 686 amended article 49 of Decree No. 134/59 that ensured primary education for all children in Lebanon to specify such provisions for only Lebanese children.

⁴⁶ Art. 28, part 1. “States Parties recognize the right of the child to education, and with a view to achieving this right progressively and on the basis of equal opportunity, they shall, in particular: (a) Make primary education compulsory and available free to all; (b) Encourage the development of different forms of secondary education, including general and vocational education, make them available and accessible to every child, and take appropriate measures such as the introduction of free education and offering financial assistance in case of need; (c) Make higher education accessible to all on the basis of capacity by every appropriate means; (d) Make educational and vocational information and guidance available and accessible to all children; (e) Take measures to encourage regular attendance at schools and the reduction of drop-out rates.”

2.2. Palestinians

2.2.1. History

Under the United Nation Relief and Works Agency's (UNRWA) operational definition, a Palestinian displaced person is somebody whose ordinary spot of home was Palestine between June 1946 and May 1948, and who lost their homes in the aftermath of the 1948 Arab-Israeli conflict (known as the Nakba), and escaped in neighboring nations. In this definition are included the relatives of people who progressed toward becoming displaced people in 1948, however it excludes the individuals who left Palestine in later stages.⁴⁷

Those Palestinians who fit inside the above definition meet one standard for help, however UNRWA administrations don't accommodate all who fall in this class. Palestinian evacuees should likewise meet different necessities, for example, they should be living in the UNRWA regions of activities (Palestinian territories, Lebanon, Jordan and Syria), enrolled with the UNRWA, needing help.

Palestinian displaced people fall into three classifications:

- 1) Palestinians dislodged or removed from their place of inception because of the 1948 war and their relatives. They were 700,000 Palestinians. At the Lausanne Conference in 1949, Israel proposed the return of 100,000 refugees in exchange for the Arab recognition of the borders established by the war. Their right to return is enshrined in United Nations resolution 194, but it is prevented by Israel and is still a crucial point in peace negotiations.
- 2) those uprooted out of the blue from their places of starting point because of the 1967 war;
- 3) the individuals who are neither 1948 nor 1967 evacuees, yet who stay outside the zone of the previous Palestine and are unfit to return (because of renouncement of residency, disavowal of family reunification, and extradition) or are reluctant to do as such inferable from a well-established dread of indictment.

⁴⁷ Klaus D., *Palestinian refugees in Lebanon: where to belong?*, Berlin, Klaus Schwarz Verlag, 2003.

There are four categories of Palestinian refugees in Lebanon:⁴⁸

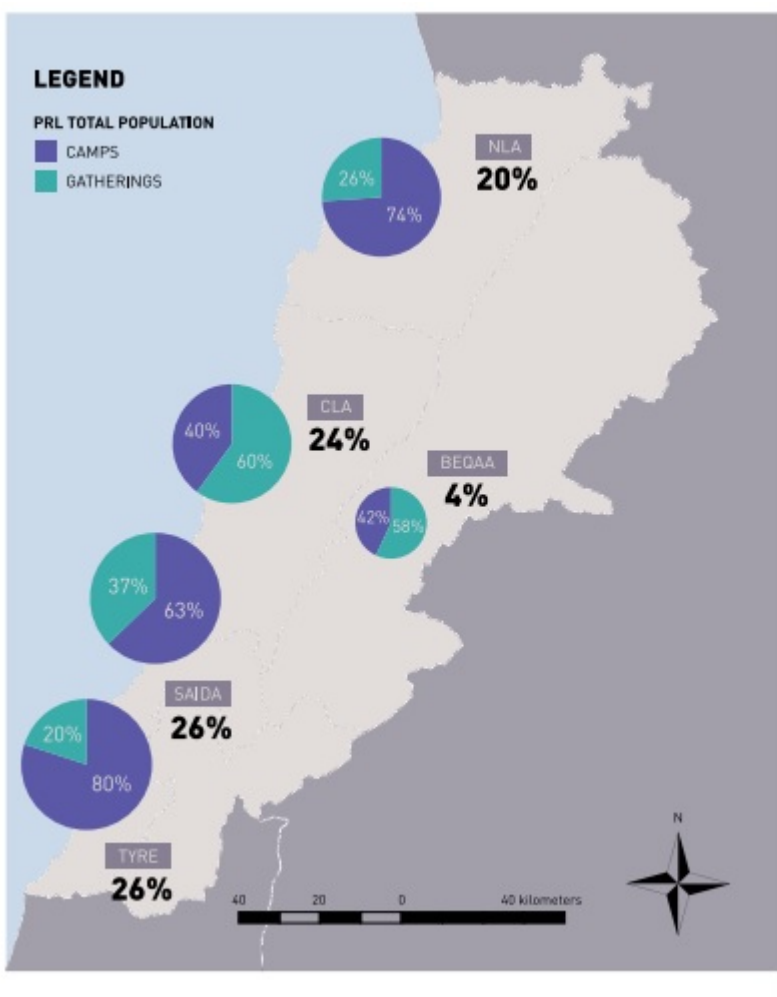
- 1) “Registered” Palestinian refugees, which are registered with UNRWA and the Lebanese authorities (PRL, approximately 450,000, although the actual number remaining in Lebanon is estimated to be between 174,000 to 300,000)⁴⁹; PRL are now in their third generation of displacement;
- 2) ““Non-registered” Palestinian refugees, which are not registered with UNRWA, but are registered with the Lebanese authorities”. An expected 35,000 of them are enlisted with the Department of Political Affairs and Refugees (DPAR) yet not with UNRWA. These people fall outside UNRWA's command since they left Palestine after 1948; on the grounds that they took shelter outside UNRWA regions of activities before coming to Lebanon; since they left after 1948; or in light of the fact that they didn't generally meet UNRWA's qualification criteria;
- 3) “Non-ID” Palestinian refugees (3,000 to 5,000), who are “neither registered with UNRWA nor with the Lebanese authorities”; generally they don't possess valid identity documentation or are registered with UNRWA in other countries as Jordan. They landed in Lebanon beginning during the 1960s and don't hold any substantial formal ID documents. As they are not enlisted with UNRWA in Lebanon, they supposedly don't have a legitimate lawful status in the country.
- 4) “Palestine refugees from Syria (PRS), who have arrived in Lebanon since 2011.”

In fact, Palestinians in Lebanon built a State inside the State, undermining the interests of Israel and Syria and causing the start of the Civil War in 1975.

⁴⁸ UNRWA, *Lebanon*.

⁴⁹ UNRWA, *Lebanon, protection at UNRWA 2018*

(https://www.unrwa.org/sites/default/files/unrwa_lfo_protection_activities_in_2018.pdf).



PRL – Total population

Source: *Survey on the Economic Status of Palestine refugees in Lebanon.*

2.2.2. Today

In Lebanon, there are two gatherings of Palestinians: those with citizenship and those without. During the 1950s, around 50,000 Palestinian evacuees of different religious gatherings were naturalized into the Lebanese nation.

These gatherings ended up naturalized for two reasons:

- (1) since Lebanon's pioneers tried to adjust Lebanon's partisan equalization
- (2) since Palestinians were at first seen as non-compromising in the political sense.

Palestinians of the Christian confidence alongside a couple of Muslim Palestinians were among the individuals who ended up naturalized and gained Lebanese citizenship.

In any case, enrollment with the UNHCR did not supplant and still does not supplant the living arrangement grant issued by the Lebanese experts, the main record important to regularize the nearness on Lebanese region.

Palestinians without citizenship cannot carry out most of the professions (medicine, farming, fishery, public transportation), cannot own, transfer or inherit property, cannot repair their homes (because the entry of buildings material into their camps is forbidden), cannot access to State-provided services as basic health-care and education; therefore, they are excluded from Lebanese schools and universities. Palestinians can only be assisted by UNRWA and live "ghettoized" in twelve UNRWA refugee camps:

Baddawi,
Burj al-Barajneh,
Burj al-Shamali,
Dbaya,
Ayn al-Hilwe,
al-Buss,
Mar Elyas,
Miyye Miyye,
Nahr el-Bared,
Rashidiyya,
Shatila,
Wavel

and 156 gatherings;⁵⁰ these camps are depicted as urban ghettos, encompassed by checkpoints and barbed wire, containing solid squares with folded rooftops, limited back streets with sewage and water pipes and secured with a labyrinth of alternative electric wires.

“In open violation of the 1965 Casablanca Protocol for the Treatment of Palestinian in Arab States, Lebanon denies Palestinians citizenship or legal residency because their absorption would compromise the delicate confessional balance; their right to work is severely restricted, massive poverty is the norm. In Jordan instead approximately 40% of UNWRA-registered Palestinian refugees have acquired full citizenship and are well integrated in social and economic system.”⁵¹

*“The situation of the Palestinians in Lebanon deteriorated steadily in the wake of the expulsion of PLO guerrillas following the 1982 Israeli invasion. By some accounts, of the 375,218 Palestinians registered as refugees with UNRWA in Lebanon, only some 200,000 remain; others have fled from the inhospitable conditions that successive Lebanese governments have sustained over the last two decades.”*⁵²

Analyzing more in detail some articles of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights, proclaimed by the United Nations General Assembly in 1948, we could objectively describe the attitude that Lebanon supported towards Palestinian refugees.

“ART. 7 All are equal before the law and are entitled without any discrimination to equal protection of the law. All are entitled to equal protection against any discrimination in violation of this Declaration and against any incitement to such discrimination.”

Palestinians cannot access the Legal Support Fund.

*“ART. 17 (1) Everyone has the right to own property alone as well as in association with others.
(2) No one shall be arbitrarily deprived of his property.”*

A 2001 law states that only foreigners coming from recognized States have the right to own real estate in the country, effectively and intentionally excluding Palestinians without a homeland. This law also prevents Palestinian property from being inherited by children or other relatives.

⁵⁰ UNRWA, *Lebanon, protection at UNRWA 2018*.

⁵¹ <https://www.refworld.org/docid/460a2b252.html>

⁵² Human Rights Watch, *Treatment and Rights in Arab Host States* (<https://www.hrw.org/news/2002/04/23/treatment-and-rights-arab-host-states>).

“ART. 20 (1) Everyone has the right to freedom of peaceful assembly and association.

(2) No one may be compelled to belong to an association.”

But according to Lebanon people from abroad cannot form or vote political representations. For this reason the Palestinian NGO’s or associations are deeply dependent from the Lebanese legislation.

“ART. 25 (1) Everyone has the right to a standard of living adequate for the health and well-being of himself and of his family, including food, clothing, housing and medical care and necessary social services, and the right to security in the event of unemployment, sickness, disability, widowhood, old age or other lack of livelihood in circumstances beyond his control.

(2) Motherhood and childhood are entitled to special care and assistance. All children, whether born in or out of wedlock, shall enjoy the same social protection.”

Palestinians are not recognized these rights.

“ART. 26 (1) Everyone has the right to education. Education shall be free, at least in the elementary and fundamental stages. Elementary education shall be compulsory. Technical and professional education shall be made generally available and higher education shall be equally accessible to all on the basis of merit.”

However, in Lebanon there are few places reserved for foreigner students for higher education, and the tuition fee is three times that of the Lebanese.

Many are unable to complete the elementary school studies provided by UNRWA.

“ART. 23 (1) Everyone has the right to work, to free choice of employment, to just and favorable conditions of work and to protection against unemployment.

(2) Everyone, without any discrimination, has the right to equal pay for equal work.

(3) Everyone who works has the right to just and favorable remuneration ensuring for himself and his family an existence worthy of human dignity, and supplemented, if necessary, by other means of social protection.

(4) Everyone has the right to form and to join trade unions for the protection of his interests.”

Lebanese labor laws treat non-EU citizens based on the principle of reciprocity, i.e. non-EU citizens collected the same legal treatment that a Lebanese receives in their respective countries.

From Palestinian refugees' point of view, who have legal and civil barriers to integration and are living in precarious conditions, the new arrivals in Lebanon of Syrian refugees, including about 32,000 Palestinians from Syria (PRS), are competing enemies according to scarce resources and jobs. Syrian refugees are often located inside the Palestinian refugee camps, heightening communities' tensions.⁵³

Since PRL are not allowed to introduce structure materials in the camps, the territory of the refugee camp has remained generally unaltered since 1948, notwithstanding the development of the population and the entry of thousands people from Syria.

PRS approach UNRWA schools and hospitalization. UNRWA in the first years covered for them costs of nourishment and housing. However, the absence of lawful status impacts access to services.

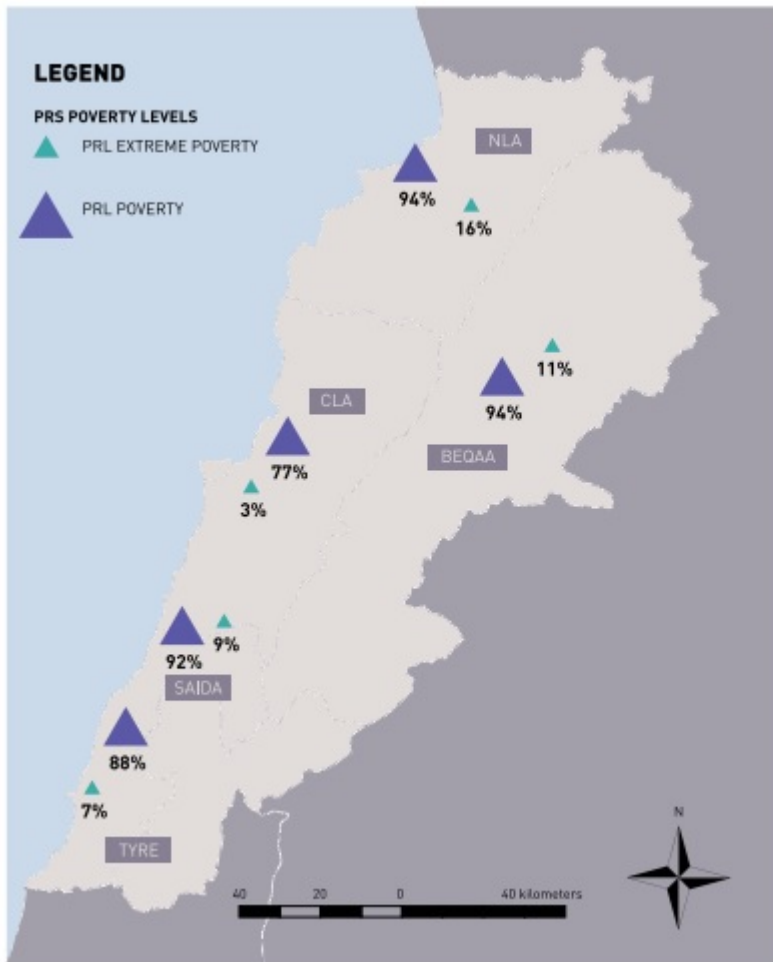
However, because of deficient financing for UNRWA's exercises in Lebanon, money help for lodging was suspended in July 2015, intensifying the vulnerability of Palestinian refugees from Syria.

Since 2015 they were in danger of persuasive ousting, dropping out of school, strain to look for high-chance business, diminished capacity to keep up legitimate status and improved probability of risky come back to Syria.

Since they do not have legal documents they face problems to reach UNRWA clinics situated outside the camps, they can be captured at checkpoints.

Moreover, the absence of standard legitimate status apparently implies that they are unfit to enlist for authority school tests and in this way to acquire official school declarations (Brevet and Bacculaureate certificates).

⁵³ UNHCR, *The Situation of Palestinian Refugees in Lebanon*, February 2016 (<https://www.refworld.org/pdfid/56cc95484.pdf>).



Poverty among PRS by geographic region

Source: *Survey on the Economic Status of Palestine refugees in Lebanon.*

Since 2014 their number is decreasing, from 41,400 to 32,800, due to migration to third countries and returns to Syria.

2.2.3. Focus on education: the role of UNRWA

“We provide assistance and protection for some 5 million registered Palestine refugees to help them achieve their full potential in human development.

The United Nations Relief and Works Agency for Palestine Refugees (UNRWA) is funded almost entirely by voluntary contributions from UN Member States. UNRWA also receives some funding from the Regular Budget of the United Nations, which is used mostly for international staffing costs.

The Agency’s services encompass education, health care, relief and social services, camp infrastructure and improvement, microfinance and emergency assistance, including in times of armed conflict.”⁵⁴

Most Palestinian goes to UNRWA schools, which are seriously under-resourced and overcrowded, due to an extreme absence of funding.

“Palestine refugees are reportedly denied access to Lebanese public schools, leaving them to pursue their education either in one of the UNRWA schools (both primary and secondary) or in private schools, which are, however, beyond the financial means of most.⁶⁴ UNRWA schools are reportedly often dilapidated and face severe overcrowding. Dropout rates are reportedly high for a variety of reasons, including the need to work in order to earn an income. Access to higher education is reportedly limited for Palestine refugees because many cannot afford the high costs; some refugees do not see any purpose in completing an education, which does not grant access to employment. For Palestinians without legal status (i.e. “non-ID” Palestinians and many Palestine refugees from Syria), secondary school education is reportedly inaccessible due to their inability to take the intermediate schooling exam.”⁵⁵

In the 2016/'17 school year, UNRWA gave basic, preparatory and optional instructive administrations to nearly 38,000 Palestine refugees, including more than 5,000 PRS.

UNRWA runs 67 schools and two professional instruction focuses the nation over giving instructive administrations to more than 38,000 PRL understudies.

The general point of the UNRWA Department of Education is to give, inside the system of the educational module endorsed by the host nations, general instruction, in-administration instructor training, professional and specialized training, constrained advanced education openings and college grants for Palestine kids and young, as per their essential instructive requirements, personality and social legacy.

⁵⁴ <https://www.unrwa.org/who-we-are>. (Accessed May 30th 2019)

⁵⁵ UNHCR, *The Situation of Palestinian Refugees in Lebanon*, February 2016 (<https://www.refworld.org/pdfid/56cc95484.pdf>).

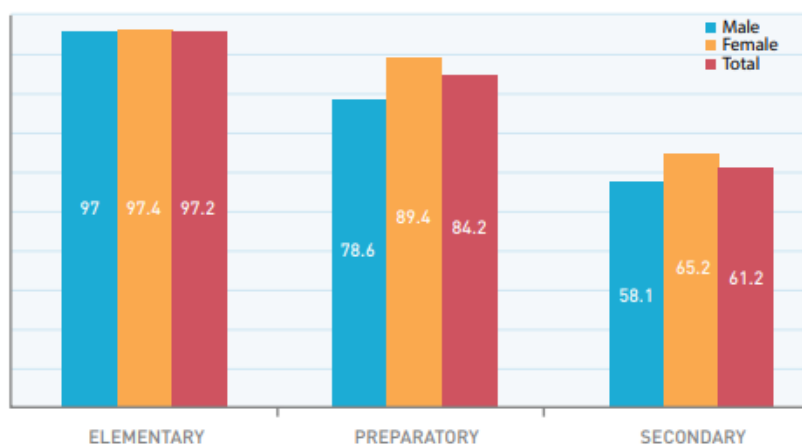
Since 2011, UNRWA has set out upon an Agency-wide Education Reform, moving in the direction of improving quality, comprehensive and fair instruction by improving:

- (1) Curriculum and Student Assessment;
- (2) Teacher Development and School Empowerment;
- (3) Inclusive Education;
- (4) Technical and Vocational Education and Training (TVET).

Another Teacher Policy was supported in 2013 and an Education Management Information System (EMIS) and an Inclusive Education Tool Kit.

UNRWA Sibling Training Center (STC) gives 28 professional and specialized instructional classes; 13 are accessible every year and the rest are offered on an elective premise crosswise over both South and North grounds.

FIGURE 11: PRL ENROLMENT RATE BY GENDER AND EDUCATION LEVEL (PER CENT)



Source: *Survey on the Economic Status of Palestine refugees in Lebanon.*

Reason for not attending	Average consumption aggregate (US\$/month)
Disability or illness	119.5
Cannot afford	128.6
Work	144.0
No available space in school	145.4
Insecurity/ bullying	122.7
Too far	124.7
Couldn't register	138.2
Overall average consumption aggregate	136.5

PRS – Reasons for non-attendance

Source: *Survey on the Economic Status of Palestine refugees in Lebanon*, 2015.

2.2.4 Defunding UNRWA

President Trump has implemented a foreign policy in favor of Israel since the start of his term. In December 2017 it officially recognized Jerusalem as the capital of the State of Israel.

As already expressed in chapter 1, the Partition Plan of Palestine, in fact, developed by the United Nations Special Committee on Palestine (UNSCOP) and approved in 1947 (Resolution 181), placed Jerusalem under international administration and, although never implemented, was never updated or replaced. 6 months later the American embassy was moved to Jerusalem on May 14, 2018.

This date coincides with the day of the State of Israel in 1948 and with the 70th anniversary of the establishment of the State of Israel: the day after the Palestinians commemorate the Nakba (the catastrophe in Arabic), that is the beginning of the exodus and the ouster of hundreds of thousands of Palestinians from their lands.

Another step in US foreign policy, which more closely related this thesis,⁵⁶ concerns the will of President Donald Trump, when on Friday 24 August 2018 he publicly expressed that he had decided to reduce the Budget for aid to the Palestinians by \$ 200 million.

⁵⁶ Sutton M. J., *The education provided for refugees in Lebanon by the United Nations Relief and Works Agency for Palestine refugees in the Near East*, 2007.

UNRWA is almost completely financed by donations from states that are part of the UN and other voluntary contributions.

The United States was the most important donor, so it is clear that the blow to the agency is very strong. According to the Palestinians this action has a logic behind it.

This measure, in fact, seems to be aimed at erasing the right of return of Palestinian refugees.

The first step would be to recognize the right to return only for one tenth of the refugees, that is for a little more than half a million compared to the total of 5 million and 350 thousand. To this end, the US Government is ready to ignore the Resolution of the UN General Assembly No. 302 of 1949, for which the right of return also falls to the descendants of refugees.⁵⁷

The beneficiaries would therefore be only those who really lost their homes and only those of '48. UNRWA would therefore be reduced in its function which, according to the American and Israeli administration, has so far done nothing but perpetuate the refugee issue, which so distresses Israel, freeing it from concern that the (Palestinian) minority could become a majority.⁵⁸

With this move, the question of refugees, considered by Israel to be one of the biggest obstacles to the solution of the conflict, would be eliminated by future concentration between the parties on the fate of Palestine. After the status of Jerusalem, the right to return of refugees would also be removed from the agenda. In Lebanon, where the government denies civil rights to Palestinian refugees.

⁵⁷ *Ivi.*

⁵⁸ <https://edition.cnn.com/2018/08/31/politics/trump-administration-ending-funding-palestinian-refugees/index.html>.

2.3. Syrians

2.3.1. Access to education for Syrian refugees

From the outbreak of the civil war Lebanon has hosted so many displaced Syrian people because it was bound by the bilateral agreement for Monetary and Social Collaboration and Coordination signed in 1993 with Syria, where it was sanctioned freedom of movement, permanence and work in the two countries.

At first, Lebanon has adopted the treaty policy, but after some years, by mid 2015, due to the increase of arrivals, embraced protectionist measures: confine the passage of Syrians into Lebanon, restrain the renewal of residency grants, forbid the work in specific sectors.

Although the host-community has shown great solidarity, the Government of Lebanon is reluctant to policies of assimilation, because a Muslim “invasion” could affect the ethnic and religious balance of the country. After eight years of war, the pressure to send refugees back to Syria is getting stronger.

On 19th January 2019 Lebanese Foreign Minister Gebran Bassil, at a summit with other Arab states held in Beirut, called on the international community to assume its responsibilities and foster “favorable conditions” to encourage Syrians to return home.⁵⁹

To date, Syrians in Lebanon have not found accommodation in formal camps because the Lebanese government, considering their presence “temporary”, decided not to invest economically in the construction of new camps. Furthermore, the Lebanese authorities do not provide collective gathering points for people and families arriving from Syria. “It is estimated that a large proportion of displaced Syrians is hosted in informal UNHCR tent camps in the Bekaa Valley, in Palestine refugee camps or in poor urban neighborhoods and substandard shelters such as garages, tents, animal sheds, unfinished buildings.”⁶⁰

Their living conditions are increasingly alarming.

Family units where all individuals have lawful residency licenses has diminished drastically throughout the years, from 58% in 2014, to 28% in 2015, to 21% in 2016, to just 19% in 2017. The lack of legal residency impacts their mobility and access to formal labor market and essential services, and increases risk of detention and exploitation.⁶¹

⁵⁹ “Summit ‘Encourages’ Refugees to Return to Home Countries”, *The National*, January 21, 2019

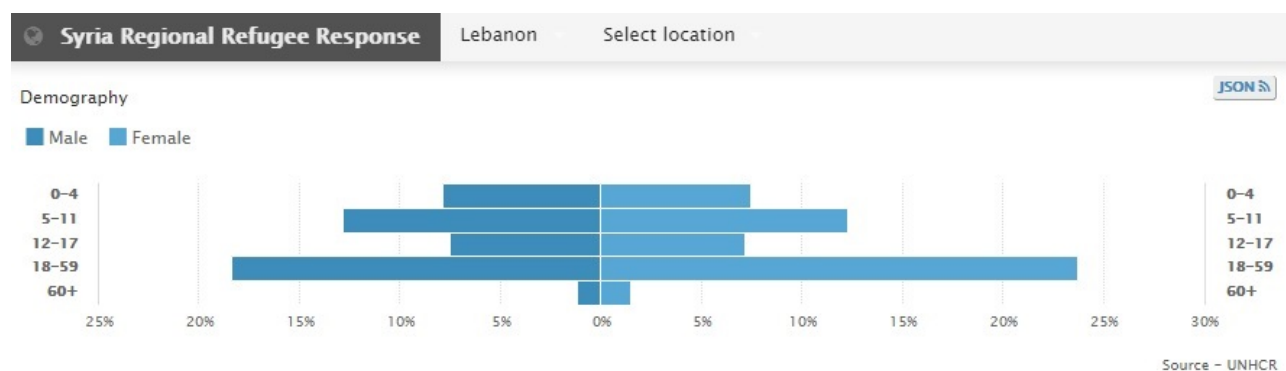
(<https://www.thenational.ae/world/mena/summit-encourages-refugees-to-return-to-home-countries-1.815809>).

⁶⁰ Rabil R.G., *The Syrian refugee crisis in Lebanon : the double tragedy of refugees and impacted host communities*, Lanham, Maryland, Lexington Books, 2016.

⁶¹ “‘I Just Wanted to be Treated like a Person’: How Lebanon’s Residency Rules Facilitate Abuse of Syrian Refugees”, Human Rights Watch, January 12, 2016 (<https://www.hrw.org/report/2016/01/12/i-just-wanted-be-treated-person/how-lebanons-residency-rules-facilitate-abuse>).

By law Syrians only in the construction industry and in the agriculture.

Undeclared work, usually underpaid, is increasingly widespread. Child labor is a rising concern: 2.2 percent of Syrian refugee children between the age of 5 and 17 are reported as working;⁶² children work often as farm hands in the Bekaa valley, the agricultural area that hosts the largest number of refugees, or are involved in street-based jobs in urban centers. Young girls are offered to wealthier local people, prompting an expansion in early marriages and polygamy (30 percent of Syrian girls aged 15 to 19 is currently married, with an increase of 7% from 2017)⁶³.



Source: <https://data2.unhcr.org/en/situations>

As stated above for the PRS, hundreds of Syrian refugees have started returning to Syria from Lebanon already in 2018, in fact in the last year the presence of Syrians in Lebanon and in refugee camps has decreased. Due to the improved situation in Syria, the Lebanese government has increased pressure on refugees to return home. Under this rebirth there is an agreement between Beirut and Damascus.⁶⁴

⁶² VASyR 2018: *Vulnerability Assessment of Syrian Refugees in Lebanon*, UN, December 2018 (<https://www.unhcr.org/lb/wp-content/uploads/sites/16/2018/12/VASyR-2018.pdf>), 36 and 187.

⁶³ *Ivi.*, 6.

⁶⁴ Khodynskaya-Golenishcheva M., *Aleppo war and diplomacy: Syrian crisis geopolitics in the context of international relations system transformation*, Beirut, Difaf Publishing, 2017.

2.3.2. Barriers and strategies

The average age of Syrian refugees in Lebanese territory is low due to the large presence of minors. “More than 1/2 of displaced from Syria are children: they were the first to escape from Syria along with the women. Already in 2014, before the current residency restrictions, 72 percent of children born to Syrian refugees in Lebanon did not have an official birth certificate: their parents could not register their births in the country because they did not have legal status and could not provide required documents.”⁶⁵

Lack of lawful residency, child labor and child marriage prevent children from school enrolment and attendance.

According to a study⁶⁶ published by FAO and ILO on child labor among Syrian living in informal settlements in Bekaa, 55 percent of children between 4 and 18 years of age are engaged in child labor, 75% of those in agriculture. For many families those job opportunities are a better investment than sending children to school.⁶⁷

Prior to the war, school enrolment rates were very high in Syria: around 97 for every cent of the Syrian youngsters went to grade school, 67 percent additionally went to auxiliary school. Nowadays in Lebanon around 630,000 Syrian children aged 3-18 years old are in need of education assistance; 40 percent of them remains out of formal or informal education.⁶⁸

“The out-of-school rates are highest among 15-to-18- year-old Syrians: only 6 percent enrolled in secondary schools and Technical Vocational (TVET) public schools.”⁶⁹ Children with disabilities cannot benefit from public education, because schools do not have resources and specialized teachers.

Many exile kids experience the effects of posttraumatic stress and depression, and need psychological support and trained teachers.⁷⁰

⁶⁵ <https://data2.unhcr.org/en/documents/download/67876>

⁶⁶ “Child labour in Agriculture in the Bekaa Valley of Lebanon: The Case of Syrian Refugees”, FAO and ILO, 2017 (<http://www.fao.org/3/a-i7721e.pdf>).

⁶⁷ El-Barq A.M., *Palestinian refugees in Lebanon: child labor, schooling and school dropouts*, Beirut, 2003.

⁶⁸ UNICEF, Syria Crisis, 2017 Humanitarian Results

(https://www.unicef.org/appeals/files/UNICEF_Syria_Crisis_Humanitarian_Situation_Report_Year_End_2017.pdf).

⁶⁹ *Lebanon Crisis Response Plan 2017-2020*. (Accessed May 30th 2019)

⁷⁰ Pace M. and Somdeep S., *Syrian refugee children in the Middle East and Europe : integrating the young and exiled*, Abingdon, Oxon, Routledge, 2018.

The few public schools with accessible spaces are not really situated in the zones of need. Moreover, Lebanon does not enable Syrian exiles to fill in as government funded teachers, one conceivable solution to soothe the overpowered state funded training frame.⁷¹

“Schools have introduced second shifts to accommodate for Syrian refugee children with some registering them morning (regular) classes. In some cases, SRC in morning shifts are placed in separate classes even though they are given the same curriculum as their Lebanese peers.”⁷²

In 2014 Lebanon embraced the Reaching All Children with Education (R.A.C.E.) approach, which has helped increment the quantity of Syrian kids joined up with government funded schools to 158,321 before the finish of the 2015-2016 school year:

“Ensuring that the vulnerable children from the refugee and host communities are able to access education is integral to an effective and equitable response and helps address underlying issues of conflict. Investing in equity is part of investing in social cohesion. Education can play a key role in reducing the present social tensions while providing education services to all refugees and strengthening the quality of service for host populations.”⁷³

“In January 2016, the Ministry of Education and Higher Education revealed a quickened learning program for kids matured 7-17 who have been out of school for at least two years. Additionally in 2016 Lebanon embraced the R.A.C.E. II plan with the objective of selecting 440,000 Syrian youngsters in formal training

⁷¹ Babikian J.A., *Civilization and education in Syria and Lebanon : historical, comparative and critical survey of the civilization and various educational systems in the several Syrian and Lebanese territories*, Beirut, 1936.

⁷² *An emerging framework for designing and providing education to Syrian refugee children in Lebanon*, Proceedings of the Symposium held at the Center for Applied Research in Education, Notre Dame University – Louaize, November 5, 2014 (<http://www.ndu.edu.lb/Library/Assets/Files/Documents/CARE/FormalSchoolingofSyrianRefugeeChildreninLebanon-Presentation/Emerging%20Framework%20for%20Designing%20and%20Providing%20Education%20to%20Syrian%20Refugees.pdf>). This symposium meant to make a space for on-screen characters in the field (for example instruction specialists, instructors, training program engineers) to share what they have observed to be basic in guaranteeing arrangements of value instruction explicit to the number of inhabitants in SRC.

⁷³ *Reaching All Children with Education in Lebanon*. (Accessed May 30th 2019)

by the 2020-2021 school year. These policies fall within the framework of the regional “No Lost Generation Initiative” (NLG),”⁷⁴

“a multi-year comprehensive approach to education and protection for all Syrian children, both inside Syria and in neighboring countries, as well as for the communities hosting them/host communities. The Strategy [...] covers both immediate humanitarian response interventions as well as longer term support that will build the resilience of children, communities, the education and protection systems, and infrastructure that are so critical to their future.”

Furthermore in mid 2016, the Ministry planned a structure for Non-Formal Education Programs (NFEP) and Accelerated Learning Programs (ALP).⁷⁵

*“Non- formal educational programs (NFEP) have developed curricular content and approaches to learning that aim to support the developmental and rehabilitative needs of SRC. In addition to basic literacy, NFEP have focused on vocational training, raising awareness about health and hygiene and providing psychosocial support. Learning activities spend little time on instruction and more time giving children room to explore and practice independently. ”*⁷⁶

Many children do not enjoy good mental health, have found and have experienced psychological problems. They suffer from posttraumatic stress problems (PTSD).

Many children suffered losses of parents during the war, they saw things that will never be forgotten.

Young people who live or have lived through war and savagery are at high risk of experiencing psychological well-being problems.

⁷⁴ <https://www.nolostgeneration.org/>. (Accessed May 30th 2019)

⁷⁵ Pace M. and Somdeep S., *Syrian refugee children..cit.*, 145.

⁷⁶ Akar B., *An emerging framework for designing and providing education to Syrian refugee children in Lebanon*, Center for Applied Research in Education, Notre Dame University, Louaize, Lebanon.

They have a greater need to go to school, because in the new situation in which they find themselves, or that of refugees, without education and with psychological problems they will get worse in the future.

Thanks to the NFEs they have the chance to improve day after day.⁷⁷

Until 2014 refugees with more than 2 years of no education were denied to register in schools, but since 2015, thanks to international support, a lot of Syrian refugees were able to register in school.

A clear example of this situation was the UNICEF “Back to School” campaign,⁷⁸ which due to the 94 million USD donation managed to register a lot of Syrian refugees in public schools for free.

The “Back to the Future” project⁷⁹ is the united commitment of the next 3 years (until 2019) of Terre des Hommes Italia, Terre des Hommes Netherlands, AVSI and War Child Holland, with the support of the MADAD Regional Fund of the European Union.

In these 3 years 19,000 children will be involved in Lebanon and 13,600 in Jordan, in activities that include: primary education, developmental programs in pre-school age, English and French courses to promote reintegration into the formal education system, psychosocial support for children, adolescents and their guardians, renovation of school buildings and transport services.

Regarding the international response to the Syrian crisis, from 12 to 14 March 2019 The European Union and the United Nations presided over the third conference: "Supporting the future of Syria and the region" in Brussels.

"This conference has two main objectives. First, it aims to support political process of UN. Restoring peace will require a political process under Syrian ownership led by the UN.

Second it aims to mobilize international financial support to favor of Syrians for humanitarian aid both within the country and in neighboring countries. "

(Federica Mogherini, High Representative for Foreign Affairs and Security Policy, 1 February 2019.)

⁷⁷ Wafai J., *Education as future-making : the dual experience of displaced Syrians*, 2018.

⁷⁸ <https://www.unicef.org/lebanon/unicef-lebanons-2017-back-school-campaign>. (Accessed May 30th)

⁷⁹ <https://terredeshommes.it/back-to-the-future/>. (Accessed May 30th 2019)

The greatest result that the conference has been able to bring is economic aid for Syria and for the countries that are hosting Syrian refugees, such as Lebanon.

They achieved a result of USD 7 billion for this year.

3. Case Study.

3.1. Education in emergencies

For the purposes of the present Convention, a child means every human being below the age of eighteen years unless under the law applicable to the child, majority is attained earlier

(Article 1 of the UNCRC)

The right of any person to access to education – as one of the most empowering instrument of social and economic growth and for peaceful development – is the crucial key of UNESCO’s mission and is enshrined in many normative international human rights instruments, first of all in the UN Universal Declaration of Human Rights (1948)⁸⁰ and in the UN Convention on the Rights of the Child (1989).⁸¹

However, its application is still very far from being ensured in many areas of the world. Globally, there are 61 million school-age children who cannot go to school. “More than 387 million children of primary school age (about 6 to 11 years old) and 230 million adolescents of lower secondary school age (about 12 to 14

⁸⁰ Art. 26: Everyone has the right to education. Education shall be free, at least in the elementary and fundamental stages. Elementary education shall be compulsory. Technical and professional education shall be made generally available and higher education shall be equally accessible to all on the basis of merit.

2. Education shall be directed to the full development of the human personality and to the strengthening of respect for human rights and fundamental freedoms. It shall promote understanding, tolerance and friendship among all nations, racial or religious groups, and shall further the activities of the United Nations for the maintenance of peace.

3. Parents have a prior right to choose the kind of education that shall be given to their children.

⁸¹ Art. 28: 1. States Parties recognize the right of the child to education, and with a view to achieving this right progressively and on the basis of equal opportunity, they shall, in particular:

(a) Make primary education compulsory and available free to all;

(b) Encourage the development of different forms of secondary education, including general and vocational education, make them available and accessible to every child, and take appropriate measures such as the introduction of free education and offering financial assistance in case of need;

(c) Make higher education accessible to all on the basis of capacity by every appropriate means;

(d) Make educational and vocational information and guidance available and accessible to all children;

(e) Take measures to encourage regular attendance at schools and the reduction of drop-out rates.

2. States Parties shall take all appropriate measures to ensure that school discipline is administered in a manner consistent with the child's human dignity and in conformity with the present Convention.

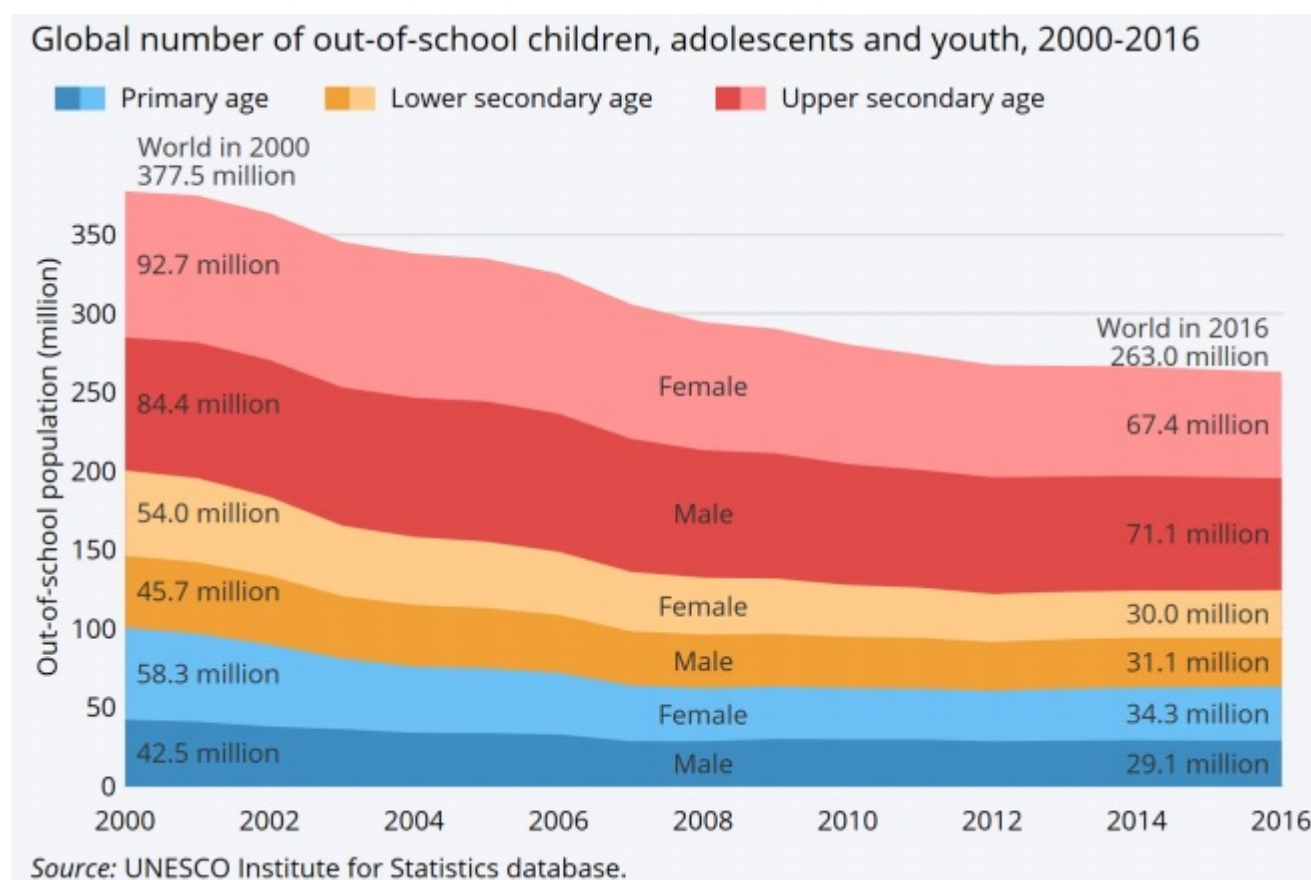
3. States Parties shall promote and encourage international cooperation in matters relating to education, in particular with a view to contributing to the elimination of ignorance and illiteracy throughout the world and facilitating access to scientific and technical knowledge and modern teaching methods. In this regard, particular account shall be taken of the needs of developing countries.

years old) are unable to read and write properly or handle basic mathematics, respectively more than one-half – 56% – of all children and 61% of all adolescents”. (UNICEF)

Especially in those areas hit by wars and humanitarian emergencies, young people deprived of the access to education are at risk of losing their future and opportunities to fulfill their potential. Nevertheless the funds allocated for education amount to 2% of total humanitarian aid.⁸²

According to the UNICEF statistics, 1 in 4 of world’s out-of-school children live in emergency situations; in those 35 crisis-affected countries, education is not guaranteed for 75 million people between the age of 3 and 18; classrooms are overcrowded and the quality of teaching is low, with an average of 70 pupils for teacher, often not qualified; girls are 2,5 times more likely to be out of school than boys. Entire generations are denied opportunities offered by a high-quality and uninterrupted education.

“Refugee children are five times more likely to be out of school than non-refugee children. Only 50 per cent have access to primary education, compared with a global level of more than 90 per cent”, says Filippo Grandi, UN High Commissioner for Refugees;⁸³ “[...] failing to provide education for 6 million refugees of school-going age can be hugely damaging, not only for individuals but also for their families and societies, perpetuating cycles of conflict and yet more forced displacement.”⁸⁴

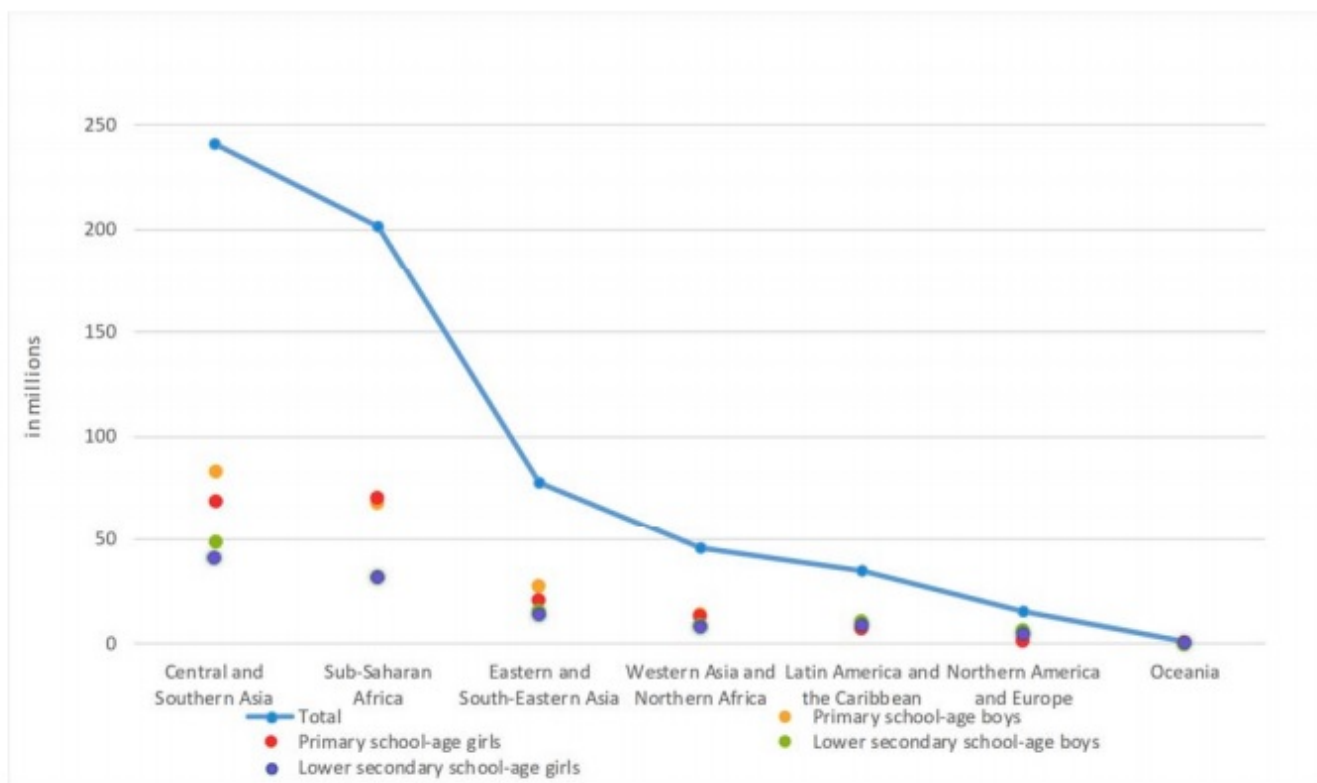


⁸² *Education Cannot Wait: A Fund for Education in Emergency* (<http://www.educationcannotwait.org/wp-content/uploads/2016/05/ECW-Investment-Case.pdf>).

⁸³ *Missing Out: Refugee Education in Crisis* (http://uis.unesco.org/sites/default/files/documents/missing-out-refugee-education-in-crisis_unhcr_2016-en.pdf).

⁸⁴ <https://www.unhcr.org/introduction.html>

Figure 1. Global number of children and adolescents who do not achieve MPLs in reading, by age group, SDG region and sex



Source: UNESCO Institute for Statistics

The goal No. 4 of the 2030 Agenda of the United Nations for the Sustainable Development (2015) is to “ensure inclusive and equitable quality education and promote lifelong learning opportunities for all”.⁸⁵ In May 2016 there was a World Humanitarian Summit in Turkey for the creation of the “Education Cannot Wait fund”.

⁸⁵ *Education 2030: Incheon Declaration and Framework for Action for the implementation of Sustainable Development Goal 4* (<https://unesdoc.unesco.org/ark:/48223/pf0000245656>).

“Education Cannot Wait” came about right on time, as the UN system gears up to achieve the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development. Quality education is indispensable to achieving all the Sustainable Development Goals (SDG) and should not have been a separate SDG in that sense, rather it is all encompassing. I can understand though that we need SDG 4 to measure progress. But again, quality education is the premise to realize each of the other SDGs” (Philippe Lazzarini, Deputy UN Special Coordinator).⁸⁶

Lebanon is among priority countries of “Education Cannot Wait” programming, as the occupied Palestinian territory. In Lebanon allocated funds from France will be used from 2018 to 2021 for the improvement of the quality of education in “second shift” school and for further interventions for out-of-school adolescents.⁸⁷

⁸⁶ *A new way of working in Lebanon* (<http://www.educationcannotwait.org/a-new-way-of-working-in-lebanon/>).

⁸⁷ *Education cannot wait: A Fund for Education in Emergency, Annual Results Report 2017-2018* (<http://www.educationcannotwait.org/downloads/reports-and-publications/>).

3.2. The “Lost generation”

“Many people and groups of people have a right claim to victimhood but younger people can claim for themselves an extraordinary victimhood [...]

The Lost Generation notion has been repeated ad-nauseam but justifiably”

Tarek Mitri, Former Lebanese minister, 2018

The Global Education Monitoring Report⁸⁸ estimates that “since 2016 refugees have missed 1.5 billion days of school”; therefore it is urgent to give a global response to the educational needs of migrants and refugees to ensure that their right to education is respected and to foster the growth of the host countries, with the message of: “investing in the education of those on the move is the difference between laying a path to frustration and unrest, and laying a path to cohesion and peace”.⁸⁹

The Report recommends to government these goals:

- protect the right to education (even of those without documents);
- promote inclusive education systems;
- respond to the needs of migrants and refugees, enhancing their potential;
- recognize their stories;
- train teachers;
- reform development aid by providing more resources for education in low-income countries.

UNICEF with the NO LOST GENERATION PROGRAM is trying to prevent it this phenomenon.

⁸⁸ <https://unesdoc.unesco.org/ark:/48223/pf0000265866/PDF/265866eng.pdf.multi>.

⁸⁹ Azoulay A., Director-General of UNESCO.

Launched in 2013, the Program involves UNICEF, host governments and local and international non-governmental organizations and donors, in order to promote a concerted action to prevent the loss of a whole generation of Syrian children and other vulnerable children in Iraq (1,2 million children in Syria, 100,000 Palestine refugee children, and 500,000 children in Iraq); moreover, the Program offers psychosocial support for over 1,2 million children and engagement opportunities for more than 1,3 million adolescents and youth.

Appeal	Sector	Country	Required funding
Syria HRP	Education	Syria	\$255,500,000
	Child Protection	Syria	\$72,100,000
	Adolescents & Youth	Syria	\$492,900,000 ²²
TOTAL			\$820,500,000
Refugee Hosting Countries (3RP)	Education		\$958,300,000
		Turkey	\$310,900,000
		Lebanon	\$388,400,000
		Jordan	\$220,500,000 ²³
		Iraq	\$18,100,000
		Egypt	\$20,400,000
	Child Protection		\$105,100,000
		Turkey	\$36,700,000
		Lebanon	\$33,700,000
		Jordan	\$22,500,000

Required funding for NO LOST GENERATION programming in 2019 (Source: <https://www.nolostgeneration.org/>)

3.3. My research

During a humanitarian emergency situation, minors should be protected precisely from education. In crisis situations, for example the war in Syria, children are vulnerable, become victims of violence, can lose family members, and can see people killed in front of their eyes and can also escape their countries and become refugees. “It is estimated that 3,7 million Syrian children never experienced peace and those who have less than 12 have already spent half of their lives in a condition of continuous imminent danger.”⁹⁰ These children no longer have a point of reference and must become adults ahead of time, going to work to help the family; sometimes parents are injured by war or sick and need a source of income, or even recruited by terrorist groups. As for girls, some are victims of early marriages to men of wealthy families because parents cannot maintain them. In these situations, due to lack of resources, the school is very often interrupted. The children change the picture of their days: the present becomes uncertain and insecure and the future is unpredictable. The normal aspirations and hopes in the future during an emergency are irretrievably put aside, but continuing to give education to children means not depriving them of those skills and knowledge so necessary to the younger generations called to rebuild the social fabric after a conflict.

Postpone educational activities until “the emergency will be over” for many children, means never going back to school, often condemning them to a future of poverty.

The aim of my research was to examine how education is seen from the refugees’ children in Lebanon. In a country – as stated in the previous chapter – that puts many barriers to education and to the future of the refugees, and in a context in which families themselves do not encourage schooling, I gave a main research question to my thesis: are the children and adolescent aware of being at risk to become a “lost generation”?

I wanted to understand whether the perceptions on this theme of young Syrian refugees and young Palestinian refugees in Lebanon are the same or not.

⁹⁰ <https://www.unicef.org/turkey/en/press-releases/1-3-syrian-children-has-grown-knowing-only-crisis-conflict-reaches-5-year-point>.

3.3.1. Research Design

QUESTIONS FOR THE SYRIAN REFUGEES

1) What is your name?

How old are you?

Since when you are in Lebanon?

How many people are you at home? Relatives: remained or returned in Syria?

Do your brothers study?

Do your parents work?

2) Do you go to school? in the afternoon or in a private school?

If yes, who helps you to do your homework? If not, what prevents you from going to school? How can you learn? Until what age did you study in Syria? How many years did you not go to school in Lebanon?

3) Do you like your new teachers?

What was your favorite subject in Syria and what is your favorite now in Lebanon?

4) The future: Syria? Lebanon? Or working abroad?

5) What was your hobby in Syria? And now in Lebanon?

6) What do you want to do for Syria? Tell me about your life in Syria.

7) What do you dream?

8) Tell me the good things about Lebanon.

What do you think of the Lebanese?

9) Do you have new friends here in Lebanon? Also Palestinian? Do you miss your old friends?

10) Why do the Palestinians go all to school and you don't?

11) I am Italian: do you know where is Italy?

QUESTIONS FOR THE PALESTINIAN REFUGEES

1) What is your name?

How old are you?

Since when you are in Lebanon?

How many people are you at home? Relatives: remained or returned in Palestine?

Do your brothers study?

Do your parents work?

2) Do you like to go to school? Why do you go to UNRWA's schools?

Which is your favorite subject?

Do you like your teachers?

3) The future: Palestine? Lebanon? Or working abroad?

4) What is your hobby?

5) What do you want to do for Palestine?

6) What do you dream?

7) Tell me the good things about Lebanon.

What do you think of the Lebanese?

8) Do you have Syrians friends?

9) Why do Syrians not go to school?

10) I am Italian: do you know where is Italy?

The purpose of the “qualitative case study approach” of the interview is to understand how the subjects studied see the world, to learn their terminology and their way of judging, to capture the complexity of their individual perceptions and experiences. The priority objective of the “qualitative interview” is to provide a framework within which respondents can express their own way of feeling with their own words.⁹¹

Unlike the structured interview – where all the interviewees are asked the same questions in the same formulation and in the same sequence – in the semi-structured interview the interviewer has a track with the topics to be discussed during the interview. However, there is freedom in the sequence and in the way of formulating the questions. The interviewer decides the style of conversation, the words to use, when and what to clarify. He can also develop unscheduled themes, which arise in the interview.⁹²

⁹¹ Patton M., *Qualitative Evaluation and Research Methods*. Beverly Hills, CA, Sage, 1990, 169-186.

⁹² Corbetta P., *Metodologia e tecniche della ricerca sociale*, Bologna, il Mulino, 1999, 405.

Research location

Fieldwork took place during my internship at Fraternity Association for Social and Cultural Work in Lebanon.

My research had one research site: the Camp of Bur el Barajneh of Beirut. Founded in 1948, it is overpopulated, as the majority of the refugees camps, it has narrow roads, when it rains it is flooded and the electricity wires are in contact with those of the water. Currently he camp hosts more than 17,900 registered refugees; the highest percentage concerns the age group between 13 and 25.⁹³



Source: UNRWA, Where we work (<https://www.unrwa.org/where-we-work/lebanon>)

⁹³ <https://www.unrwa.org/where-we-work/lebanon/burj-barajneh-camp>.

Research duration

From 21th October to 6th December.

Each interview lasted more than 20 minutes.

Unit of analysis

My unit of analysis was Syrian and Palestinian adolescents, aged between 10-18 who access or don't access to a form of education in Lebanon. The UN defines as "adolescents" those aged between 10-19. "WHO defines 'Adolescents' as individuals in the 10-19 years age group and 'Youth' as the 15-24 year age group, while 'Young People' covers the age range 10-24 years".⁹⁴

During my internship I individually interviewed 50 Syrian children from the Fraternity Association (25 boys, 25 girls) and 50 Palestinian children from the UNRWA Al Beireh school and in the camp (25boys, 25girls).

Syrian children are divided into classes not by age but by level, in special needs classes; in the kindergarten they share the classroom also with Palestinian and Lebanese children).

I also had the chance to interview some teachers of the Fraternity Association who told me some very relevant examples of what my research question was.

Language

The interviews were conducted in Arabic. Not knowing the Arabic, I had them translated by Sara (26 yo Palestine) at the time for the Syrians and Ibrahim (60 yo Palestine) for the Palestinians. Sara is a 25-year-old Palestinian girl born in Burj el Barajneh camp. She has worked in the Fraternity Association for 3 years as a psychological teacher. She has always studied in private schools.

⁹⁴ <https://www.who.int>

“As a psychologist I like this job but I would like to go to another association to have more experience, I send everyday curricula.”

Every day of the internship I was joined by her and we established a good relationship, I am in contact with her.

Ibrahim is the guardian of the association. He is Palestinian, lives furiously in the field and has worked in the association for 7 years, before working for UNHCR. I had little opportunity to talk to him, but on the way we did to reach the UNRWA school and crossing the refugee camp when we saw Syrians asking for alms, he used words of contempt for them, for example:

“They are dirty and beg us for alms Palestinians, they should ask for it outside the camp to the Lebanese who have brought them in.”

Data Analysis

I transcribed all the recorded interviews, and I utilized my field notes as an approach to contextualize my discoveries and help myself to remember non-verbal signs.

I decided to present the most significant parts of the interview, dividing them by main themes:

Relations between Palestinians and Syrians

Misconcept

Future and Dream

Hobbies

Education

Ethical considerations

As I inquired about a helpless target populace, there were countless moral contemplations for the undertaking. It was important for me to think about my situation as a specialist in this circumstance and to stay reflexive and basic all through, evaluating my very own inclination. This enabled me to take the epistemological position of compassionate lack of bias.

I was compelled to go up against my own positionality while in the field.

When I started interviewing the first children I realized that I had some prejudices,

To understand the situation well and how they could feel, I took the time to say that they are things very far from our way of thinking. For the type of information to be collected in my case I chose the type of qualitative research that was the most indicated.

I carried out an unstructured analysis with a series of open questions, leaving me with a broad faculty to deepen the answers given. I was looking to be able to identify connections of thought between Palestinian children on the one hand and Syrian children on the other.

Through the interviews I was able to identify the emotional-symbolic components of the refugees.

I did the interviews through a flexible and non-standardized set of questions so as to get as much information as possible about the individual child's perspective, learning his conceptual categories, his memories, his interpretations of reality and the reasons for his thoughts.

My role was to guide and control the interview while always respecting the freedom of the interviewee to express their opinions.

I was comfortable with the qualitative interview as it is flexible, or I could slightly change the questions during the conversation based on the needs and personalities of the refugees.

Challenges and limitations

One of the biggest limitations, of course, is that the interviews were done in Arabic and I needed the translator and therefore it is something between the children, and me even if I always tried to look them in the eyes when Sara or Ibrahim translated me. In fact some children wanted to answer me in English to the first questions, but failing to express themselves then Sara or Ibrahim said to continue in Arabic.

These are problematic children. Syrian children and Palestinian children are two different categories of refugees. The former experienced the war and, as we mentioned earlier in Chapter two, have serious psychological problems, and some have never been educated and have no mastery in writing or reading. The Syrian children were much slower at answering my questions, and at the beginning of the interview many did not look at me in the eye, then slowly they became confident. For me it was more challenging to interview Syrian children because I had to ask many more introductory questions to dampen the situation and become familiar and so I could make them talk more.

I remember a Syrian girl when Sara had to answer the association's phone: she touched my hand and said:

“I love you”

with a smile that expressed all the need for affection she had. Perhaps at that moment she felt less subjected to judgment. The first few days I tried to get close to Sara, pondering for a long time before doing or saying anything. I had to win his trust by trying to understand her situation and seeing things with her own eyes. During interviews with Palestinian children with Ibrahim I found it more difficult than when I was interviewing with Sara. Because they knew him less and above all because he was a man, but so the girls looked at me more than he did, and therefore the tact was more direct. The biggest limit I encountered when conducting my interviews: Ibrahim and the principal of the UNRWA school.

For example, when I asked a child (Ala, 11 yo, Palestinian) what life was like in the camp Ibrahim answered for her by saying: “you have to say it's sad, there are mice and it's cold”, then I had it translated by my uncle who is Lebanese.

Then the school principal who attended all the interviews also intervenes, when I ask Ala if she knows how life is off the field and the principal adds to the translation that out of the camp the children have the land and the nationality, something that the little girl does not say.

One thing that left me a bit puzzled is that the girl at the end of the interview said:

“the principal protects us and loves us so much”.

The other headmaster suggested almost all the answers (Maysam, 11 yo, Palestinians) I saw the little girl in trouble. When I ask the girl if the Lebanese are happier than the Palestinians, the principal is pretending to translate my question, she says to the child:

“You have to say that the Lebanese are happier because they have freedom.”

Ibrahim also suggests to Mysam:

“you must say that you want to return to Palestine!”

Moreover the preside principal of the school wanted to see the sheet of possible questions before interviewing the children and told me that those that dealt with relations with the Syrians could not do it (discrimination, keep them away); fortunately for my research I did them to Palestinian children in the field.

General introduction

These are two distinct categories of refugees. Palestinian refugees were born refugees and some children do not feel the sense of belonging and Palestinian nationality, they did not experience the war, they are used to living in refugee camps; they have no homeland since four generations. Instead the Syrians have been refugees for a few years, they came in different waves, they remember the war and their homeland, they still have friends or relatives in Syria and have contacts with them; they consider the camp a sort of “limbo”.

Above all, as we can deduce from the previous chapters, all the Palestinian children go to school; of those Syrians I interviewed only 9 go to school in the afternoon, the others go only to the Fraternity Association. Palestinian children know that Palestinians in other countries are better treated, while in Lebanon they are deprived of civil and social rights, because Lebanon does not invest for refugees to improve their conditions. UNRWA budgets are blocked by the Trump administration (US normally provided one-third of its total annual budget 1,2 billion dollars)⁹⁵ and this prevents the UN Agency from improving its services in proportion to the increase in the population of the camps.

TEACHERS

I also had the opportunity to interview the teachers of the Fraternity Association.

In the Fraternity Associations' schools teachers are both Syrian and Palestinian. They work in the Fraternity's school because they are not allowed to work outside the camp.

Fouas, 28 years, has been in Lebanon for 7 years and has been working in the center for 6 years (he works in the center theater). In Syria he worked in theater and studied at university. He can't go back to Syria because they would enlist him in the army.

Mariam, 29 years old, has been married for 1 year. She has worked in the center for 5 years. She says: “Children need a road, they need time.”

⁹⁵ *Gulf States Set to Plug UNRWA Funding Gap but under US Conditions: Reports*, “Middle East Eye”, 2 September 2018 (<https://www.middleeasteye.net/news/gulf-states-set-plug-unrwa-funding-gap-under-us-conditions-reports>).

Nahma is 32 years old and got married at 16. She has been working in the center for 6 years. She's got three children studying at UNRWA. She says: "I love to help the children"; "Some children are very intelligent but cannot use their skills."

Waad, 27 years old, has been in Lebanon since 2014; he has a 1 and a half-year-old daughter.

Imam, 29 years old, has been working in the center for 6 years: "The camp is my home, I have always lived there and I could not live outside the camp."

Lynda, 37 years old, has been working in the center for 7 years, and wants to go back to Syria to give her children a better future.

Mohammed, 30 years old, has been working in the center for 5 years. He graduated from Beirut University in business administration.

Madonna, 29 years old, has been working in the center for 7 years; she studied at the University of Beirut. She is in charge of interviewing the parents.

Rayan, 24 years old, provides social and psychological support and teaches English: "I try to get children to communicate with their parents".

Professor Fauas, 28 years old, from Syria, told me that a 13-year-old girl from the center tried to commit suicide because she was abused and beaten by her parents.

"Many parents are not educated, there are problems communicating with them; sometimes they call me because they did not understand the tasks I assigned to their children" (Waad, 27yo, Syrian)

"Syrian children found themselves living at home with many other relatives, and they followed less with regards to homework" (Maryam, 35 yo, Lebanese)

"The children are all the same, it depends on the families. Maybe I'll be back soon in Syria to give my children a better future" (Lynda, 37yo, Syrian)

"The children have to transfer the negative energy to the positive one. It is not their fault if they were born in Syria, we must make them adapt to this new life" [...] We inform children because they do not go to a normal school and we talk about Syria and war and in theater hours we give each child a role and we all do scenes that represent Syrian life and customs" (Mohammad, 30yo, Palestinian)

“The problems are transmitted from child to child. Children have many psychological problems, for the most serious seismicities supported by a psychological association” [...] “For example, a child died in Syria for a bomb, and another child was left in Lebanon with relatives because their parents returned to Syria; another child from the center was hidden under a van for three days in Syria for the war” (Madonna, 29yo, Palestinian)

3.3.2 Themes.

Relations between Palestinians and Syrians

Many of the Palestinian or Syrian children have no relationship between them: the Syrians stay with friends from their village in Syria.

The Palestinians did not like the arrival of many Syrians in their field. Now the situation has improved as many Syrians are returning to Syria.

Many children are influenced by parents; especially Palestinian children, at home they always hear words that are offensive to Syrians: “they steal our work”... “they came to live at our house”.

While, in the answers of the Syrian children I did not find words of hate.

“I don’t like Palestinians: they don’t treat us well, they always throw rubbish in front of our door, bullying” (Jihan, 13 yo, Syrian)

“I sometimes play with the Palestinians in the camp, but I don’t know their names” (Mohammed, 12yo, Syrian)

“In Syria I had no Palestinian friends; yes, they are very nice” (Amir, 10yo, Syrian)

“The Syrians are more than us, I like them but they would need their own field” (Salim 14 yo, Palestinian)

“The Syrians are taking our jobs” (Hala, 16yo, Palestinian)

“The Syrians are better than the Lebanese, but in our field they are all opening shops, they are taking away work” (Farah, 15yo, Palestinian)

“I have no Syrian friends, they are different from us” (Karim, 14yo, Palestinian)

MISCONCEPT

In my interviews I found that refugees children are not informed about the historical context or about the world’s geography. Syrians have no news of the war in Syria; they do not know if it is ongoing or it is over, only a few have told me that the situation is improving.

Many Syrians do not have TV, those few who are aware of the situation is because they have relatives in Syria. Some Syrians have returned to Syria a couple of times. Children’s eyes light up when they talk about Syria, sometimes they laugh or defuse.

The Palestinians do not know the history of their homeland; their parents, mostly poorly educated, do not talk about it at home.

In general they do not know where Lebanon is, some do not know the rest of the world, they do not know how other children live. Many not having the TV do not see the movies and do not imagine the way out of Lebanon. The answer is often “mabaaref” (= I don’t know”)

“I remember that because of a bomb my uncle in the rush to escape fell on my mother” [he laughs, then adds:] “I’m saying these things in a very ironic way but I was very afraid” [he laughs again and says:] “When I was running I saw a man with a swollen face for a bomb” [...] “I pray every day for the war in Syria to end. On the outside I laugh, but in my interior I am very sad” (Yassan, 16yo, Syrian)

“Fate has meant that as soon as we arrived in Lebanon our house in Syria was destroyed” (Mahas, 16yo, Syrian)

Many Syrian children work in place of mothers who stay home with younger children to bring money home together with their father, or they go and ask for caring on the streets. Like Mahas (16yo, Syria,) who goes to work to get his brother to go to university, because with the money he earns his father can’t afford it. He sells balloons to a place of rides, the leader is Lebanese. He works every day from 12 p.m. to 12 a.m., he can never sit, he can’t eat, he does it hiding from the Lebanese employer: “My boss treats me badly because I am Syrian, but without eating I keep myself fit, I am thin.”

Most refugees do not have a car per family, so they rarely go out of the camp; some of the Syrian children have never seen the sea in Lebanon. Others rent a car and make weekend trips, visit relatives in other refugee camps in Lebanon.

Why don't you go to a normal school? "I don't know" (Omar, 12yo, Syrian)

"In the camp I had 2 Palestinian friends but they returned to Palestine" (Mohammad, 12yo, Syrian)

"My mom did not register me at school because she doesn't know schools to register me" (Amal, 14yo, Syrian)

"Syrian children have no money for school" (Ali, 10 yo, Palestinian)

Children have no contact with Lebanese people. They are not racist but they have a conception distorted by reality and are influenced by parents. Some of the Syrians I interviewed "hate the Lebanese" because they can't study.

"I don't like them, because when I leave the field they beat us" (Amir, 10yo, Syrian)

"In Lebanon we are not so bad, in Palestine we would be lost, says my mom" (Rahia, 15yo, Palestinian)

"I don't like Lebanese, they don't let us work. The Syrians are better than the Lebanese but they steal our work in the field" (Farah, 15yo, Palestinian)

"The Lebanese are not all the same, obviously the majority discriminates against us, my boss where I work always observes me and I can never eat. It's good one day a year" (Mahas, 16yo, Syrian)

"I have Palestinian and Lebanese friends, they are nice." (Hassan, 17yo, Syrian)

"My dad works 14 hours every day, he can't take his phone to work and if something happens we can't go and see him at work, he eats on a scooter between one delivery and another. His Lebanese boss does not behave well with him. My mom says we accept the situation because there is no solution" (Saba, 12yo, Palestinian)

FUTURE AND DREAM

The adolescence of hundreds of thousands of refugees has been broken. Many children live reassured; they do not see a future for them. No hope can be seen in their eyes. Syrian children have witnessed and seen things that no child should see, have lost family members, have seen their parents killed, family members, friends, their homes have been bombed. Many at night cannot sleep due to nightmares. Others, instead others to self-harm fear, resort to drugs or try to commit suicide. My research states that the conflict has had serious consequences on Syrian children. Others are afraid of planes due to the bombs.

As for the Palestinian refugees obviously not affected by the war and being accustomed to the conditions of the camps because they were born there, what afflicts them most is the absence of a homeland. Not feeling accepted in Lebanon where they were denied many rights, their biggest dream is to go and grow up to work in Europe. In Lebanon they cannot become what they want.

The Palestinian refugees I interviewed have many relatives already in Europe, so they hope to be able to reach them and to be able to get a passport in Europe and so go and visit Palestine, their land.

From what emerges from the interviews I can see that all the Syrians I interviewed see their future in Syria and almost all dream of Syria either as it was before the war or as a nightmare and remember the scenes they saw. Instead the Palestinians dream of having a passport and traveling, the children are not connected to the Palestine like their parents or their grandparents who still have the key to their homes.

“I dream of going back to Syria and that there is no more war, in my dreams everything is ok” [...] “I want to go back to Syria is more beautiful than Lebanon, of course it’s my country” (Mohammad, 12yo, Syrian)

“I liked being in Syria more: now I live in a house with almost all my relatives, in Syria only with my parents” (Mohammad, 9yo, Syrian)

“I want to go back to Syria in my house here in the camp the house is small” (Yasmeen, 11yo, Syrian)

“Even if I don’t remember Syria, my parents talk a lot and they show me pictures, I want to go back to my country” (Bissan, 12yo, Syrian)

“The situation in Syria is improving, after the end of the war my family and I will return to Syria” (Aisha, 10yo, Syrian)

“I am here with my sister and her husband, our parents were still in Syria, during the war I was afraid; now in Lebanon I feel protected but when my parents tell me I can come back, I will be happy, I miss Syria very much” (Ahla, 11yo, Syrian)

“Syria was very beautiful, calm, fantastic people, after the war I will return to study in my country” [...] “I dream of Syria before the war. The Syria is all beautiful, the narrow roads and all the regions, my house was very beautiful” (Yasmeen, 11yo, Syrian)

“I want to be a hostess when I grow up, I want to fly and feel free” [...] “I don’t want to go to Palestine, I have an aunt there, and she tells me that the situation is less than zero” [...] “I’m afraid to kill an insect, but to kill a Israeli no” (Rahia, 16 yo, Palestinian)

“I’m always ready to go to Palestine, I don’t like Lebanon because it’s dirty” [...] “My mom doesn’t talk to me about Israel and Palestine but at school and on TV yes. Israel is bad, I want to kill all Israelis” (Ali, 10yo, Palestinian)

“I sometimes dream of a house with windows where you can see the sky and other times I dream of traveling” (Mohammed, 15yo, Palestinian)

“I don’t know where I want to live, my family is here and if I go away I want all my family with me” [...] “For Palestine I feel guilty every day” [...] “At night I dream of having a nationality and a passport to visit the Palestine. I want to go to Europe at least with the nationality; I can go to visit my country. I can’t do that in Lebanon” [...] “I don’t feel guilty about being Palestinian, but the other refugees who are not Lebanon live better than me” [...] When I told her I was Italian, she said: “I follow Italian football, I want to go on Italy” (Farah, 15yo, Palestinian) in her home.

“Dream my childhood in Syria ... when I was a child in Syria” (Hassan, 17yo, Syrian)

“I still have nightmares at night, my uncle died of a bomb thrown from a plane; one day I would like to get on an airplane that has no bombs” [...] “At 18 I want to go back to Syria even alone” [...] “I want to rebuild Syria, do all I can do” (Yassan, 16yo, Syrian)

“I dream of playing with my friends before the war, before I had nightmares, two friends of mine died, now I have less nightmares” [...] “What I feel is that now here in Lebanon it is only a dream and I will wake up” (Mahas, 16yo, Syrian)

“Dream of returning to Syria, my father is rebuilding our house that had been bombed” (Hammad, 10yo, Syrian)

“I want to go back to school in Syria, I dream of studying” [...] “My dad told me that when the mother gives birth to my little brother we go back to Syria” (Saleh, 13yo, Syrian)

“I have nightmares, they come back to my mind when they started shooting me or when we spent three days without eating because we were hiding from Daesh” (Abdahllah, 15yo, Syrian)

HOBBIES

For Syrians leaving the camp is dangerous: not being in possession of documents they risk being stopped at one of the many check points. Their world is the camp, they don't watch movies. The most common hobby is to play with friends. Sport is important. Many children have told me that they swim in the sea: it's free. Obviously their pastimes are different from non-refugee children.

The Palestinian refugees were born and always lived there so that is their life and they have their hobbies and they know how to spend their free time because they are used to it.

Instead the Syrian children who were used to being free and having all the rights and to run freely in the streets of their cities in Syria found themselves in a refugee camp without rights and therefore had to invent other pastimes or have them no more. Syrians had to leave everything in Syria. While some Palestinian children in their free time read and write, many of the Syrian children cannot read or write.

“I feel better when I was in Syria, I played a lot more, now I read the stories” (Mohammad, 12yo, Syrian)

At first he doesn't answer, he thinks about it, then he tells me: “I listen to the Koran and memorize it” [...] “I have no friends and I don't play with anyone, I only have relatives” (Ibrahim, 11yo, Syrian)

“Fortunately we rent a car every Sunday and go to the beach, I like swimming so much, it makes me feel free” (Amir, 10yo, Syrian)

“I like to play with dolls” [...] “We never go out of the way, if we do it is only once a month when the mother takes us to the playground” (Yasmeen, 11yo, Syrian)

“Visit my friends and relatives in the camps, we go to their homes and we do not play outside, there is no place” (Daha, 12yo, Syrian)

“In Syria I played with my grandfather and relatives, I would love to come back to my country, I'm always at home here and I never go out of the camp; my friends go to the beach; I never saw it. In

Syria I used to swim in the sea” [...] “My mother is sick and cannot move, my father is in Syria
“(Hammad, 10yo, Syrian)

Ahla, 11yo, Syrian, has no hobbies. She told me she doesn't know, she never does anything.

“PlayStation, football, swim” (Ibrahim, 11yo, Palestinian)

“I was dancing in a Lebanese school, but I stopped because my mother said it was too expensive”
(Tyla, 15yo, Palestinian)

“In my spare time I read and play, I go to the beach; I love swimming so much” (Tasneem, 11yo,
Palestinian)

“I write poetry at the weekend when I finish my homework” (Sama, 10yo, Palestinian)

“Soccer game off the field” (Bissan, 11yo, Palestinian)

“I play soccer and go swimming in a pool in the south of Lebanon; in the summer I'm always out. I
would like to work with sport” (Farah, 15yo, Palestinian)

“I have no free time and so, in addition to coming here to the center and going to work, I don't do
anything. In Syria I liked so much to draw and play soccer” (Hassan, 17yo, Syrian)

“I don't leave the field, I spend a lot of time here in the center. In Syria I liked to discover new things:
every day I built electronic things with friends. Now I can't do it anymore, I have no friends” [...] “In
Syria even if there is war the community is more open, life is very difficult in the field” (Abdahllah,
15yo, Syrian)

“In Syria I used to plant flowers with my grandfather in my garden. White and yellow reds. Now I no
longer have a piece of my land and the field does not pass the sun” [...] “Fortunately with the centers I
do the activity of photography out of the field” (Mohammad, 9yo, Syrian)

EDUCATION

The lack of education is one of the greatest fears of children and the impossibility of going to school creates great problems for them as well as in learning, even in socialization: without the possibility of studying, they are losing the “sense of future”.

Most of the interviews give rise to the conclusion of my chapter and confirm the importance of education and of the teachers’ role for both Palestinians and Syrians: they have the will to be educated. Especially for the Syrian refugees education is the most important thing in their life because they are projected into the future and want to forget about the past of their childhood.

Everyone told me that they really like school. Many of them see the Fraternity Association center as salvation.

Children never attended school; adolescents, instead, know what schooling means but they are aware about difficult to start school again, after so many years.

“I love to go to school in the afternoon and I love the teachers of the center” (Aya, 15yo, Syrian: attending a private Lebanese school downtown FA from 3 pm to 6.3 pm)

“As a Palestinian you have to get the chance to work, I hope to get the chance” (Samira, 17yo, Palestinian, attending the UNRWA school)

“Psychologically I feel better when I come here in the center; at home I think of Syria, I miss it” (Nour, 15yo, Syrian: he doesn’t go to school, only at the center)

“I would love to go back to school.” (Mohammad, 12yo, Syrian: he has been in Lebanon for 5 years, in Syria he was only a grade 1)

“I’m afraid for the future, the schools are expensive” (Kamir, 14 yo, Syrian: he started going to school in Lebanon again after 3 years of being here, now he is in grade 5)

“I go to a special needs class here in the center. Until a year ago I didn’t know how to hold a pen” (Rayan, 11yo, Syrian)

“I am not registered at school but I would like so much, I like studying. I have 3 other brothers; none of us goes to school. The other brothers who are older than me work” [...] “Mom didn’t register us at school because she doesn’t know any schools” [...] “Fortunately I come to the Fraternity Association, it brings me so many benefits” (Mohammed, 12yo, Syrian)

“I always ask my parents to be registered at school, I hope they will soon take the papers to register me. In the center I really like studying English” (Ibraim, 11yo, Syrian, since one month in the center; in Syria he started doing grade 2 but then the war broke out; in Lebanon he does not go to school)

“I go to school I have always gone both in Syria and in Lebanon. When I grow up I want to teach in Syria, if I can’t go back I’ll be a teacher in Lebanon. I like science, I love plants” (Jana, 14yo, Syrian)

“I’m lucky to go to school, I want to be a teacher when I grow up. I like studying to be smart. In the future I want to be a teacher to teach children, because many children cannot go to school” (Omar, 9yo, Syria: grade 2 at Lebanese public school, he should be at grade 3)

“When I grow up I want to be a teacher or a doctor, at least I care for people who have been injured in the war in Syria” (Amir, 10yo, Syrian: he doesn’t go to school. In Syria he did up to grade 3)

“I never went to school, in Syria there was war and schools were bombed and here my parents can’t afford school for me and my 6 brothers” [...] “Here in the center I learned to count and to write, but I still can’t read” [...] “When we go back to Syria we go to school like our cousins are going” (Hammad, 10yo, Syrian)

“I have never been to school, I have been in Lebanon for 2 years and schools say I am too old to start school” [...] “I can write and read but my brothers don’t” when I tell her if it will be difficult for her to start school responds firmly to “NO” (WANTS TO GO) “I feel older than my age. I’ve seen things in Syria that I’ll never forget. I saw dead people” (Yasmeen, 11 yo, Syrian: she never went to school)

“In Syria I did until grade 2, now I only come to the center. I like to be educated here in the center” [...] “I feel different from other children because I can’t write and read. In the future I want freedom

and become a teacher. I want to go on in my dreams and I don't want to be influenced by anyone” (Ahla, 11yo, Syrian: in Syria up to grade 2 now she doesn't go to school, only to the center)

“I hope the brothers will go to university, I hope to do it too. For now the UNRWA school is free and is very good” [...] “Since I want to be a teacher of Arabic in a UNRWA school” (Ala, 11yo, Palestinian)

“In the future, if I can't work, I want to write poetry” (Sama, 10yo, Palestine)

“For 3 years I have been going to a UNRWA school, before I went to a Lebanese private school, but my parents could no longer afford it. I would like to go back to that school, in the UNRWA school the teachers are not strict and it's messy” [...] “I want to go to work in Europe, because here in Lebanon even if you study then you can't work in whatever you want. I would like to become a cardiologist” (Samir, 10yo, Palestine)

“After I absolutely want to go to university, at least I have more job opportunities” (Farah 15yo Palestine)

“Now I do not go to school, in Syria I went to grade 3, in Lebanon until grade 7, but then they had no place” [...] “I still don't know what I want to be when I grow up, it's early, I have to study first. But I would like to become a rapper” (Hassan, 17yo, Syrian)

“I would have liked to continue school in Lebanon, but I have to work to help my family” (Yassan, 16yo, Syrian: in Syria up to half grade 6, now not attending school)

“I work, I get paid 13 pounds an hour but sometimes they don't pay me. But so I help my parents to pay for my brother's university, he is studying law. My father works on call” [...] “I want to go back to Syria to learn English” [...] “I feel lonely and depressed, two of my friends died in Syria. I have more responsibility than boys of my age” (Mahas, 16yo, Syrian: in Syria up to grade 6, now not attending school)

“I have 5 sisters and the mother is pregnant, none of us goes to school, in 4 we come here to the center. I liked school so much; I want to go back to Syria to study. My biggest dream is to study. I want to become a teacher. Some of my friends go to school but I'm not jealous, my dad teaches me to read and write, I also know how to count” (Asmah, 13yo, Syrian: in Syria up to grade 3, in Lebanon he doesn't go to school, only to the center)

“I arrived in Lebanon 1 and a half years ago, I have been attending the center for 1 year. I tried to register at school but they didn’t accept me because I need support. When the war started in Syria I continued to go to school for 2 years (until half grade 6) but then it was no longer possible.

I liked school, I was good and when I grew up I wanted to be a doctor or engineer, but now I have no chance without school. I forgot a lot about what I learned in Syria” [...]

“Here in the center I learned to rediscover myself, I learned theater, before I couldn’t say a word in front of others, now I really like it. I discovered that I have so many hobbies. I prefer to stay in the center with friends rather than at home. I am very sad when I remember what happened” (Adhallah, 15yo, Syrian: in Syria up to half grade 6, in Lebanon not attending school, only center).

CONCLUSION

“Youth represent a demographic who can rightly be viewed as agents of change yet youth in the context of displacement are the most exposed to bad solutions, they are most exposed to the temptation which are rife in the context of radicalization, and worse, even of terrorism” (Filippo Grandi)

Access to education and inclusion in education systems require investments that many host countries cannot sustain on their own. Current humanitarian aid is not able to meet the needs of children, as well as being often limited and unclear. The new Education Cannot Wait fund is an important mechanism “to reach some of the most vulnerable people.”

Ignoring the educational needs of migrants means squandering enormous human potential. Due to simple bureaucratic formalities, lack of data or uncoordinated systems between them, many people remain trapped in an administrative limbo. Yet investing in the education of talented and motivated migrants and refugees can contribute to economic growth and development, not only in host countries, but also in those of origin.

"Education is the most powerful weapon to change the world" and it is a fundamental tool to ensure that children themselves can, thanks to education, change an unfavorable starting condition.

This is why fighting for education to be accessible to all children is essential to guarantee a better future for all. Without this assumption children could not get a proper education or any education at all.

What happens to those who do not receive education is unpredictable and child labor or early marriage are just two of the many consequences of the lack of education.

As illustrated in chapter 3, conflicts deny culture, education to entire generations.

The school would instead give support, even psychologically, to these children who lived through the war and suffered family losses.

These children, as described by the pages of this thesis, do not have a future in front of them, they have nothing to care about, their present is a black hole, their eyes are full of sadness without hope.

Education is the starting point to guarantee a future for this generation. From my point of view the international community should support children psychologically so that they can hope for their future. Instructing culture means opening the mind and teaching should also be an instruction for personal decorum: hygiene, cleanliness of the environment and also to learn respect towards each others and how important it is to know how to live in a community and in a society.

Going to school also gives the children the possibility to mix equally and peacefully with other children from different culture and religious backgrounds, without any external interference. Learning, playing and acknowledging that there is more to this world than just war, hatred and anger which is what they experience daily in their homes.

Unfortunately, many are denied the right to study and therefore not having a personal discipline could easily lead to a life of crime and illegality.

“He who opens a school door, closes a prison”. (Victor Hugo)

The present generation of Syrian refugees will one day have to rebuild their country and without education they will not be able to do it.

It is important to invest in the education of the children. They have seen things and lived in conditions which makes them feel different from other children, they feel that they have had to grow quickly even without a proper education.

War is the enemy of childhood. Children are the ones who bear the greatest consequences of the war. The war for these two categories of refugees that I interviewed and analyzed in my work is the cause that does not give these children a normal childhood.

The endless war between Israelis and Palestinians and the war in Syria is what unites these two categories of refugees.

"The most important meaning of this Nobel award is that of the welfare of today's children is inseparably linked with the peace of tomorrow's world."

(Henry R. Labouisse)

As it has been fully demonstrated during the research, the number of Syrian refugees inside the Lebanese borders is leading the country towards serious problems of overcrowding; it is no coincidence that the highest concentration of refugees per capita in the world was recorded precisely in the Country of the Cedars. However, all these factors cannot constitute a justification for the management problems of this crisis.

The lack of a regular residence document implies having to come up against a reality of great uncertainties and fears.

The efforts of the Lebanese government, led by the Ministry of Education and High Education (MEHE), have helped to accommodate the children of refugees in the afternoon shifts, but much more needs to be done and the international community must guarantee the financial support necessary to foster access for Syrian children to public schools.

The organizations criticize the attitude that Lebanon adopts towards the refugees in its territory. But if we take into account that Lebanon finds itself hosting a huge amount of refugees compared to its population and its territory, we realize that it is one of the most generous countries in respect to the proportions compared to the others, even compared to our Italy. Italy itself should appreciate the humanity of Lebanon.

Lebanon is living in a difficult political and economic situation, Lebanon is facing instability, and managing the refugees is not easy.

Dealing with education:

“More than half of the world’s out-of-school refugee children are located in just seven countries: Chad, Democratic Republic of the Congo, Ethiopia, Kenya, Lebanon, Pakistan and Turkey. Refugees often live in regions where governments are already struggling to educate their own children. Those governments face the additional task of finding school places, trained teachers and learning materials for tens or even hundreds of thousands of newcomers, who often do not speak the language of instruction and have missed out on an average of three to four years of schooling.”⁹⁶

For these reasons, the parents of refugee children do not see the education of their children as the most essential thing, because living in tragic situations in Lebanon without rights, they consider that other needs for them are more important than education. Parents take advantage of their children, not considering the circumstances and consequences that may affect their lives. In some cases, due to great ignorance and a poor cultural background, they force them into child labor and their daughters into early marriages.

These children no longer live their childhood, some have never lived it and they are aware of being a lost generation.

The reality of the situation for Syrian refugees differs from that of the Palestinians. The Palestinians were born as refugees.

For Palestinian children, born as a refugee is their reality. They do not ask themselves why they must live in this situation, marginalized, huddled by everyone and without documents. They were born there and this is the only reality they know.

While, the Syrian children know that the real life is not that but unfortunately to them, not yet understanding

⁹⁶ UNHCR reports crisis in refugee education, 15 September 2016.

why, at some point it was denied from them and they were catapulted into an unreal situation, difficult and unsustainable.

For Palestinian children it is easier to live in their condition, compared to Syrian children, but it is certainly much more difficult to make them understand the importance of education, to have to reflect and understand and so to be able to rebel against this condition of their lives. For them, that piece of land the refugee camp, which is dirty, dusty, with little water and where electricity is an option, is their homeland.

The Syrian children, with the hope that in the near or distant future they will return to their country and for this reason they want to get well educated, to have a better future in Syria and so to make Syria grow again.

In the refugee camps life is monotonous, as I analyzed through interviews, the hobbies are always the same. Not one child that I interviewed told me that when he or she grew up wants to go to the moon, become a super hero character, a soccer player a princess, a model or a fireman.

They replied, almost in chorus: *"When I grow up, I want to be a teacher"*, this answer makes us reflect a lot. That of the teacher is the only authoritative work they know, the teacher for children is their authority, the only one who scolds them without aggression, just to make them understand.

For children who go to school, or even those who go to the Fraternity Association, the school is the only time where they feel protected, stimulated, where they eat adequately, the bathrooms are clean, they can draw and play with each other, where they do not have the responsibility of those very bulky and authoritarian families. The image of the teacher in their minds represents a protective and hopeful figure. Even at such a young age, they are aware of the importance a teacher's role has for their survival and helping them get through their dramatic situation.

Even for the children who do not go to school and find themselves in this situation, realize that when they grow up they want to teach what they could not study.

"in addition to helping refugees survive, we can help them prosper. We should think of refugees and refugee camps not as a temporary thing where people just rot and survive, but as centers of excellence where refugees overcome their dramas and are educated until the day they return home as agents of positive change and social transformation. "

(Melissa Fleming)⁹⁷

We need to invest in educating refugees, it would be a huge missed opportunity.

The children themselves are both victims and potential carriers of peace and reconstruction.

The life of the children I interviewed is a tragedy, but it doesn't have to end this way.

⁹⁷ Fleming M., *Let's help refugees thrive, not just survive*, TED Talks, 16 October 2014.

According to the Palestinian children, now in Lebanon, there are many restrictions which are denying them from professional jobs; therefore currently an education for the Palestinian refugees in Lebanon does not give them the possibility to have a career.

The Palestinian refugees in Lebanon do not even go to University. They think it would be useless and a waste of time as for they will not be able to to pursue a career in what they would have majored in.

These limits on the work that Lebanon imposes on them are linked to the choices regarding education, especially the university.

In Arezzo, Italy, there is an organization: Rondine Cittadella della Pace of which we should all be proud of, their work is precisely my objective of this thesis: in order to hope for a world without conflict, we must invest in the education of young people.

Rondine aims to reduce armed conflicts in the world by adopting a creative methodology to transform war contexts in a positive way.

"A place of human regeneration, where people can become leaders of themselves and of their community in search for the common good".

In Rondine there are children from all countries who live in a situation of armed or post-conflict scenarios.

Young people live side by side with their so called enemy. (for example Israelis with Palestinians)

The main objective of the organization is to train future leaders of the world.

"Promote the creative transformation of the conflict, through the experience of young people who discover the person in their enemy".

Recommendations.

To Lebanon an to the Ministry of Education and Higher Education:

- Lebanon should review the registration and work policies. Parents would send their children to school more willingly.
- Increase the number of the teachers in the second shift (for Syrian refugees).
- Improve the access to the higher education for refugees.
- Implement non formal education programs.
- Improve the quality of education of UNRWA.
- Lebanon should adhere to the Universal Declaration of Human Rights

- Public schools and universities of Lebanon should accommodate more Palestinian refugees.
- Labor restrictions should be eased.
- Giving the Syrian teachers a possibility to work.
- Ban child labor

To the International Community.

- Increase financial support for UNRWA and other organizations.
- Support the Ministry of Education and Higher Education to increase schools.
- Help Lebanon with its internal problems so Lebanon will be able to help the refugees.
- Professional psychological support for refugee families and trained teachers.
- Educational and social awareness program for the refugee parents.
- Provide stability in the refugees' homelands.
- Increase awareness of the refugee situation in other countries.

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SUMMERY

“In an area as big as Abruzzo (10400 km²) and with a population of 4,230 million inhabitants, Lebanon hosts refugees and asylum seekers mainly from Syria, and, in a smaller percentage, from Iraq and other countries: the highest per capita number of refugees in the world.

At the end of April 2019, UNHCR offices register 938,531 Syrian refugees and asylum seekers in Lebanon (amounting to 213,634 households) and 20,039 people from other countries (amounting to 7,714 households).” UNHCR

The Government of Lebanon existimates that about 1.5 million people fled from Syria from the beginning of the civil war in March 2011.

To these numbers we must add 28,800 Palestinian refugees, also escaped from Syria (PRS), 35,000 Lebanese returnees, and a pre-existing population of 180,00 Palestinian refugees in Lebanon (PRL).

The prolonged crisis had a strong impact on Lebanon’s social and economic growth, caused additional pressure on resources and infrastructures, exacerbated pre-existing development constraints, deepened social inequalities and tensions, mostly due to the competition for jobs and access to services, grafted into a context already characterized by high rates of poverty and unemployment, which have further increased: the World Bank estimates 200,000 poor Lebanese more and between 250 and 300,000 more Lebanese unemployed.

“The Lebanon Crisis Response Plan (LCRP), a joint plan between the Government of Lebanon and its international and national partners, targeted - on 5,9 million people living on Lebanese territory - 3,2 million as “people in need”, including 1,5 million Lebanese who live under the poverty line (470,000 of whom are children), along with the most vulnerable groups in the region: the Palestinian Refugees in Lebanon (PRL), who face multi-generational poverty, and the Palestinian Refugees from Syria (PRS).”⁹⁸

Half of the populations in Lebanon are children and adolescents.

Are they at risk of becoming a "lost generation"? And how aware are they of this reality?

⁹⁸ LRP 2019

Peoples and religions have always been intertwined in the territory of Lebanon, in search of a difficult balance, which in cyclical phases of its history has been put into crisis:

- 1975 -> massive entry of Palestinians in Lebanon.

Palestinian Armed Struggle Command took the control of the refugee camps instead of Lebanese armed force.

The Cairo Accord gave the PLO consent to set up social, monetary, lawful and political foundations for the Palestinian refugees and to try to improve the life conditions of Palestinian.

In fact, Palestinians in Lebanon built a State inside the State, undermining the interests of Israel and Syria and causing the start of the Civil War in 1975.

- 2011 -> repercussions of the war in Syria.

From the outbreak of the civil war Lebanon has hosted so many displaced Syrian people because it was bound by the bilateral agreement for Monetary and Social Collaboration and Coordination signed in 1993 with Syria, where it was sanctioned freedom of movement, permanence and work in the two countries.

This massive number of refugees in the country has had consequences on the political choices of the Lebanese government towards refugees, restrictive policies. These policies are reflected in the daily life of the refugees, preventing any integration and the continuation of their "ghettoization".

Lebanon did not accept the Geneva Convention on the Status of Refugees of 1951 and its supplementary 1967 Protocol, but it is a signatory to the Universal Declaration of Human Rights of 1948 and appeals to the principle of *non-refoulement* - according to article 33 of the Geneva Convention - "to the frontiers of territories where his life or freedom would be threatened on account of his race, religion, nationality, membership of a particular social group or political opinion."

Lebanon is extremely indebted, both public and private.

Since 2011, the war in Syria has also had important consequences on the economy of Lebanon: first, the dynamics of war have partially isolated Beirut from the eastern trade routes. What has more weight on the socio-economic level, however, is undoubtedly the huge number of refugees hosted on Lebanese territory.

The mass arrival of Syrian refugees has significantly increased competition on the Lebanese labor market, especially with regard to unskilled labor: in Lebanon, in fact, Syrians receive an average salary corresponding to less than half that of a Lebanese, and they also occupied a large slice of the informal economy. On the other hand, however, they tend to accept jobs that the Lebanese generally refuse.

In my work, I examined this segment of the population living on Lebanese territory in its various components: alongside Lebanese children and young people live children from two different communities: the Palestinian that resides for generations in the fields (since 1948) and the Syrian since the outbreak of the war in 2011: they have a very different history and regulatory framework (as I described in chapters I "*Historical narrative of Lebanon, Syria and Palestine.*" and in chapter II "*Educational policies for refugees*

in Lebanon.”) and therefore, beyond the age factor that unites them, they live very everyday situations and experiences different and face different perspectives.

“I want to go back to Syria is more beautiful than Lebanon, of course it’s my country” (Mohammad, 12yo, Syrian)

“I still have nightmares at night, my uncle died of a bomb thrown from a plane; one day I would like to get on an airplane that has no bombs” [...] “At 18 I want to go back to Syria even alone” [...] “I want to rebuild Syria, do all I can do” (Yassan, 16yo, Syrian)

“I want to be a hostess when I grow up, I want to fly and feel free” [...] “I don’t want to go to Palestine, I have an aunt there, and she tells me that the situation is less than zero” (Rahia, 16 yo, Palestinian)

“I sometimes dream of a house with windows where you can see the sky and other times I dream of traveling” (Mohammed, 15yo, Palestinian)

In the interviews I conducted in the Burj el Barajneh camp on an age range of 10 to 18 years, I found differences in the points of view of the children of the two communities, but at the same time I also discovered significant convergences, around a theme that continues to be central in their lives - as it should be in the lives of all children - regarding the role of school and education.

The lack of education is one of the greatest fears of children and the impossibility of going to school creates great problems for them as well as in learning, even in socialization: without the possibility of studying, they are losing the “sense of future”.

Most of the interviews confirm the importance of education and of the teachers’ role for both Palestinians and Syrians: they have the will to be educated. Especially for the Syrian refugees education is the most important thing in their life because they are projected into the future and want to forget about the past.

“I am not registered at school but I would like to so much, I like studying. I have 3 other brothers, none of us goes to school. The other brothers who are older than me works” [...] “Mom didn’t register us at school because she doesn’t know any schools” [...] “Fortunately I come to the Fraternity Association, it brings me so many benefits” (Mohammed, 12yo, Syrian)

“After I absolutely want to go to university, at least I have more job opportunities” (Farah 15yo Palestine)

“I would love to go back to school.” (Mohammad, 12yo, Syrian: he has been in Lebanon for 5 years, in Syria he was only at grade 1)

“I hope the brothers will go to university, I hope to do it too. For now the UNRWA school is free and is very good” [...] “Since I want to be a teacher of Arabic in a UNRWA school” (Ala, 11yo, Palestinian)

A common element regarding education is that families themselves do not encourage schooling, seen as an obstacle to the income and survival of the family unity.

For these reasons, the parents of refugee children do not see the education of their children as the most essential thing, because living in tragic situations in Lebanon without rights, they consider that other needs for them are more important than education. Parents take advantage of their children, using them as the only means to bring money home, not considering the circumstances and consequences that may affect their lives. In some cases, due to great ignorance and a poor cultural background, they force them into child labor and their daughters into early marriages.

Palestinian refugees.

In Lebanon, there are two gatherings of Palestinians: those with citizenship and those without. During the 1950s, around 50,000 Palestinians of different religious gatherings were naturalized into the Lebanese nation.

These gatherings ended up naturalized for two reasons:

- (1) since Lebanon's pioneers tried to adjust Lebanon's partisan equalization
- (2) since Palestinians were at first seen as non-compromising in the political sense.

Palestinians of the Christian confidence alongside a few Muslim Palestinians were among the individuals who ended up naturalized and gained Lebanese citizenship.

Palestinians without citizenship cannot carry out most of the professions (medicine, farming, fishery, public transportation), cannot own, transfer or inherit property, cannot repair their homes (because the entry of buildings material into their camps is forbidden), cannot access to State-provided services as basic health-care and education; therefore, they are excluded from Lebanese schools and universities.

Palestinians can only be assisted by UNRWA and live "ghettoised" in twelve UNRWA refugee camps and 156 gatherings.

Educational policies for Palestinian refugees.

Most Palestinian go to UNRWA schools, which are seriously under-resourced and overcrowded, due to an extreme absence of funding.

In the 2016/'17 school year, UNRWA gave basic, preparatory and optional instructive administrations to nearly 38,000 Palestine refugees, including more than 5,000 Palestinian Refugees from Syria.

UNRWA runs 67 schools and two professional instruction focuses the nation over giving instructive administrations to more than 38,000 PRL understudies. The general point of the UNRWA Department of Education is to give, inside the system of the educational module endorsed by the host nations, general instruction, in-administration instructor training, professional and specialized training, constrained advanced education openings and college grants for Palestinians, as per their essential instructive requirements, personality and social legacy.

Since 2011, UNRWA has set out upon an Agency-wide Education Reform, moving in the direction of improving quality, comprehensive and fair instruction by improving:

- (1) Curriculum and Student Assessment;
- (2) Teacher Development and School Empowerment;
- (3) Inclusive Education;
- (4) Technical and Vocational Education and Training (TVET).

Another Teacher Policy was supported in 2013 and an Education Management Information System (EMIS) and an Inclusive Education Tool Kit.

UNRWA Sibling Training Center (STC) gives 28 professional and specialized instructional classes; 13 are accessible every year and the rest are offered on an elective premise crosswise over both South and North grounds.

Syrian Refugees.

At first, Lebanon has adopted the wellcome policy, but after some years, by mid 2015, due to the increase of arrivals, it has embraced protectionist measures: confine the passage of Syrians into Lebanon, restrain the renewal of residency grants and forbid the work in specific sectors.

Although the host-community has shown great solidarity, the Government of Lebanon is reluctant to policies of assimilation, because a Muslim “invasion” could affect the ethnic and religious balance of the country. After eight years of war, the pressure to send refugees back to Syria is getting stronger.

To date, Syrians in Lebanon have not found accommodation in formal camps because the Lebanese government, considering their presence as temporary, decided not to invest economically in the construction of new camps. Furthermore, the Lebanese authorities do not provide collective gathering points for people and families arriving from Syria. It is estimated that a large proportion of displaced Syrians is hosted in informal UNHCR tent camps in the Bekaa Valley, in the Palestinian refugee camps or in poor urban neighbourhoods and substandards shelters such as garages, tents, animal sheds or unfinished buildings.

Their living conditions are increasingly alarming. In 2015 Lebanon stopped the registration of Syrians at UNHCR.

Since January 2015 the Government imposed new and more restrictive prerequisites for legal residency and residency renewal: Syrians who are not registered by UNHCR must find a Lebanese sponsor, pay a \$200 fee pro year.

Family units, where all individuals have lawful residency licenses, have diminished drastically throughout the years, from 58% in 2014, to 28% in 2015, to 21% in 2016, to just 19% in 2017. The lack of legal residency impacts their mobility and access to formal labor market and essential services, and increases risk of detention and exploitation.

By law, Syrians can work only in the construction industry and in the agriculture; Undeclared work, usually underpaid, is increasingly widespread. Child labour is a rising concern: 2.2 percent of Syrian refugee children between the age of 5 and 17 are reported as working; children work often in farms in the Bekaa valley, the agricultural area that hosts the largest number of refugees, or are involved in street-based jobs in urban centers. Young girls are offered to wealthier local people, prompting an expansion in early marriages and polygamy (30 percent of Syrian girls aged 15 to 19 is currently married, with an increase of 7% from 2017).

Education policies for Syrian refugees.

The average age of Syrian refugees in Lebanese territory is low due to the large presence of minors. More than 1/2 of displaced from Syria are children: they were the first to escape from Syria along with the women. Already in 2014, before the current residency restrictions, “72 percent of children born to Syrian refugees in Lebanon did not have an official birth certificate: their parents could not register their births in the country because they did not have legal status and could not provide required documents.”⁹⁹

Lack of lawful residency, child labour and child marriage prevent children from school enrolment and attendance. Economic barriers must be taken into account: most families send their children to work for bring money home.

“I work, I get paid 13 pounds an hour but sometimes they don’t pay me. But so I help my parents to pay for my brother’s university, he is studying law. My father works on call” [...] “I want to go back to Syria to learn English” [...] “I feel lonely and depressed, two of my friends died in Syria. I have more responsibility than boys of my age” (Mahas, 16yo, Syrian: in Syria up to grade 6, now not attending school)

Nowadays in Lebanon around 630,000 Syrian children aged 3-18 years old are in need of education assistance; 40 percent of them remains out of formal or informal education.

⁹⁹ <https://reliefweb.int/report/lebanon/lebanon-crisis-response-plan-2017-2020-2019-update>

The out-of-school rates are highest among 15-to-18- year-old Syrians: only 6 percent enrolled in secondary schools and Technical Vocational (TVET) public schools. Children with disabilities cannot benefit from public education, because schools do not have resources and specialised teachers.

Many exile kids experience the effects of posttraumatic stress and depression, and need psychological support and trained teachers.

Without additional resources, the Lebanese school framework, already fragile before the emergency, will be unable to absorb such a large amount of school-matured Syrian displaced people.

In 2014 Lebanon embraced the Reaching All Children with Education (R.A.C.E.) approach, which has helped increment the quantity of Syrian children joined up with government funded schools to 158,321 before the end of 2015-2016 school year. In January 2016, “the Ministry of Education and Higher Education revealed a quickened learning program for children aged between 7 and 17 who “have been out of school for at least two years”.

Additionally in 2016 Lebanon embraced the R.A.C.E. II plan (selection of 440,000 Syrian youngsters in formal training by the 2020-2021 school year). These policies lead to the “No Lost Generation Initiative” (NLG)”.

Furthermore in mid 2016, the Ministry planned a structure for Non-Formal Education Programs (NFEP) and Accelerated Learning Programs (ALP), which are useful to learn basic subject matters in a short period of time, then to register in public schools and enter the formal education system.

As it is evident from the previous pages, there are many themes that are intertwined and that concern the past and the future, points in common and points of separation between the two communities, which constitute the rich material collected during the two months of training at the Fraternity Association for Social and Cultural.

In the re-elaboration phase of the contents of the interviews I pointed out, with particular evidence the five themes around which I have articulated chapter III “*Case Study*”, which I consider the heart of my thesis: Relations between Palestinians and Syrians, misconception, future and dream, hobbies and education.

The substantial difference that separates the Palestinian refugees from the Syrians is that Palestinian refugees are running out of hopes and no longer have the ambitions of being able to climb a social ladder, and without ambition they become social parasites and even to be able to live a dignified future, because they are increasingly aware that their homeland will almost certainly be erased from the global geopolitical maps. Syrian refugees, on the other hand, are still driven by the hope of recovering and believe that Syria will regain peace, even if the reconstruction project, both material and moral, is announced. Many of them are returning to Syria.

The data that I have collected and the testimonies that I recorded, document a dramatic and apparently no way out: that of refugees is a perennial emergency that fuels the already serious internal fragility of Lebanon.

Education is a privilege for the few. Lebanon is denying education to almost “two-thirds of school-age refugees”. One of the main reasons is because the parents can not afford the expenses and they prefer to send their children to work or to beg in the streets so they can help their families.

The most important problem for Palestinians, even if they can have access to an education, is that they can not work in the sector they studied for, because Lebanon does not permit it. They do not even go to university because they think it would be useless and a waste of time.

“I want to go to work in Europe, because here in Lebanon even if you study then you can’t work in whatever you want. I would like to become a cardiologist” (Samir, 10yo, Palestine)

As Palestinians are considered foreigners from a legal point of view, they need a work permit issued by the Ministry of Labor, in accordance with the Entry, Residence and Exit Law from Lebanon. However, in principle, Palestinian refugees are not allowed to work and gain success. Permits are provided by the formal and regulated labor market. It is estimated that 36% carry out elementary occupations such as sales, agricultural laborers, service or sales workers and cleaners.

Due to the inability to give an education, this situation is causing the increase of a "lost generation". Although there is a very clear global legislative framework some host countries find it difficult to guarantee access to education.

The right of any person to have access to education – as one of the most empowering instrument of social and economic growth and for peaceful development – is the crucial key of UNESCO’s mission and is enshrined in many normative international human rights instruments, first of all in the UN Universal Declaration of Human Rights (1948) and in the UN Convention on the Rights of the Child (1989).

However, its application is still very far from being ensured in many areas of the world. Globally, there are 61 million school-age children who cannot go to school. “More than 387 million children of primary school age (about 6 to 11 years old) and 230 million adolescents of lower secondary school age (about 12 to 14 years old) are unable to read and write properly or handle basic mathematics, respectively more than one-half – 56% – of all children and 61% of all adolescents.” (UNICEF)

Especially in those areas hit by wars and humanitarian emergencies, young people deprived of the access to education are at risk of losing their future and opportunities to fulfill their potential. Nevertheless the funds allocated for education amount to 2% of total humanitarian aid.

According to the UNICEF statistics, 1 in 4 of world’s out-of-school children live in emergency situations; in those 35 crisis-affected countries, education is not guaranteed for 75 million people between the age of 3 and

18; classrooms are overcrowded and the quality of teaching is low, with an average of 70 pupils for teacher, often not qualified.

Entire generations are denied opportunities offered by a high-quality and uninterrupted education. The goal No. 4 of the 2030 Agenda of the United Nations for the Sustainable Development (2015) is to “ensure inclusive and equitable quality education and promote lifelong learning opportunities for all”.

In May 2016, there was the World Humanitarian Summit in Turkey to create the “Education Cannot Wait fund” addressed to children around the world.

Lebanon is among priority countries of “Education Cannot Wait”. In Lebanon allocated funds from France will be used from 2018 to 2021 for the improvement of the quality of education in “second shift” school and for further interventions for out-of-school adolescents.

Importance of education is something perceived not only in the official documents mentioned above but also in the desires of all children, aware that the construction of their future passes through education and training.

The present generation of Syrian refugees will one day have to rebuild their country and without education they will not be able to do it.

It is important to invest in the education of the children. They have seen things and lived in conditions which makes them feel different from other children, they feel that they have had to grow quickly even without a proper education. The school would instead give support, even psychologically, to these children who lived through the war and suffered family losses.

The endless war between Israelis and Palestinians and the war in Syria is what unites these two categories of refugees. Conflicts deny culture, education to entire generations.

These children, as described by the pages of this thesis, do not have a future in front of them, they have nothing to care about, their present is a black hole, their eyes are full of sadness without hope.

Education is the starting point to guarantee a future for this generation.

These children no longer live their childhood, some have never lived it and they are aware of being a lost generation.

The reality of the situation for Syrian refugees differs from that of the Palestinians. The Palestinians were born as refugees.

For Palestinian children, born a refugee is their reality. They do not ask themselves why they must live in this situation, marginalized, huddled by everyone and without documents. They were born there and this is the only reality they know. It is easier to live in their condition, compared to Syrian children, but it is certainly much more difficult to make them understand the importance of education, to have to reflect and understand and so to be able to rebel against these conditions. For them, that piece of land “refugee camp”, which is dirty, dusty, with little water and where electricity is an option, is their homeland.

While, the Syrian children know that the real life is not that but unfortunately to them, not yet understanding why, at some point it was denied from them and they were catapulted into an unreal situation, difficult and

unsustainable. The Syrian children, with the hope that in the near future they will return to their country and for this reason they want to get well educated, to have a better future in Syria and so to make Syria grow again.

In the refugee camps life is monotonous, as I analyzed through interviews, the hobbies are always the same. Not one child that I interviewed told me that when he or she grew up wants to go to the moon, become a super hero character, a soccer player a princess, a model or a fireman.

They replied, almost in chorus: *"When I grow up, I want to be a teacher"*, this answer makes us reflect a lot. That of the teacher is the only authoritative work they know, the teacher for children is their authority, the only one who scolds them without aggression, just to make them understand.

For children who go to school, or even those who go to the Fraternity Association, the school is the only time where they feel protected, stimulated, where they eat adequately, the bathrooms are clean, they can draw and play with each other, where they do not have the responsibility of those very bulky and authoritarian families. The image of the teacher in their minds represents a protective and hopeful figure. Even at such a young age, they are aware of the importance a teacher's role has for their survival and helping them get through their dramatic situation.

Even for the children who do not go to school and find themselves in this situation, realize that when they grow up they want to teach what they could not study.

These limits on the work that Lebanon imposes on them are linked to the choices regarding education, especially the university.

We need to invest in educating refugees, it would be a huge missed opportunity.

The children themselves are both victims and potential carriers of peace and reconstruction.

The life of the children I interviewed is a tragedy, but it doesn't have to end this way.

"I arrived in Lebanon 1 and a half years ago, I have been attending the center for 1 year. I tried to register at school but they didn't accept me because I need support. When the war started in Syria I continued to go to school for 2 years (until half grade 6) but then it was no longer possible.

I liked school, I was good and when I grew up I wanted to be a doctor or engineer, but now I have no chance without school. I forgot a lot about what I learned in Syria" [...]

"Here in the center I learned to rediscover myself, I learned theater, before I couldn't say a word in front of others, now I really like it. I discovered that I have so many hobbies. I prefer to stay in the center with friends rather than at home. I am very sad when I remember what happened" (Adhallah, 15yo, Syrian: in Syria up to half grade 6, in Lebanon not attending school, only center).

