

5.2 Palestinian factions

5.2 Palestinian factions

According to Daher, ‘Palestinian factions maintain armed groups within Lebanon’s 12 official refugee camps, located across Beirut, north Lebanon, Saida, Tyre, and the Bekaa Valley. These include not only Fatah, Hamas, Palestinian Islamic Jihad, but also other smaller factions. Camps have also hosted groups linked to international jihadism, such as Fatah al-Islam, notably involved in the 2007 Nahr al-Bared conflict’.331 These factions maintain an active presence across refugee camps in Lebanon.332 According to the United Nations Relief and Works Agency (UNRWA), over many years Palestinian armed factions have engaged in fighting within the camps, sometimes breaching the inviolability of UNRWA premises, as in Ein El Hilweh where schools remained closed for much of 2025.333 UNRWA has also highlighted the absence of effective governance, judiciary, and law enforcement structures in these camps.334 For more information on the camps, see section 6.3 Areas controlled by different actors and for information on the situation of Palestinian refugees in these camps, see section 7.7 Palestinians in Lebanon.

As of May 2025, Lebanese President Joseph Aoun and Palestinian President Mahmoud Abbas agreed to prevent attacks on Israel from Lebanon and remove unauthorised weapons.335 In correspondence with the EUAA for this report, Maalouf Moneau stated that ‘Palestinian groups remain armed, but the government has begun disarming them through an agreement with the Palestinian Authority’336 while UNRWA reported that Lebanon, with Palestinian Liberation Organisation (PLO) support, is working to demilitarise the camps under a ceasefire agreement with Israel.337 For more information, see sections 7.7.3 Security situation in the camps and 7.7.3(b) Balance of power and role of militias in specific camps and 6.3 Areas controlled by different actors.

On 21 August 2025, as part of the first phase of the broader disarmament effort, Fatah-affiliated groups in Burj al-Barajneh and several other camps handed over part of their weapons.338 ACLED recorded nine weapon seizures from groups linked to Fatah, while Hamas and Palestinian Islamic Jihad refused to participate, highlighting the limited scope of the initiative. 339 As of 13 September 2025, Palestinian factions in Ein al-Hilweh and Beddawi refugee camps in Lebanon handed over truckloads of weapons to Lebanese authorities.340

- 331

  Daher A, online interview, 13 August 2025, and email communication, 22 August 2025

- 332

  Al Jazeera, Lebanon begins disarming Palestinian groups in refugee camps, 21 August 2025, url; AA, Palestinian refugee camps in Lebanon start handing over weapons, 21 August 2025, url

- 333

  UNRWA, UNRWA Strategic Assessment - UN80 Initiative, Report to the Secretary-General, 20 June 2025, url, para. 39

- 334

  UNRWA, Where we work, Lebanon, updated in February 2025, information observed on 17 September 2025, url

- 335

  AP, Lebanese and Palestinian leaders agree that Lebanon won’t be used as a launchpad to strike Israel, 21 May 2025, url; Asharq Al-Awsat, Hamas Seeks Faction Talks Before Palestinian Disarmament in Lebanon, 22 May 2025, url; L’Orient Today, Lebanon's arms monopoly: Abbas signs, but what about Hamas?, 21 May 2025, url

- 336

  Dr. Maalouf Monneau, M,,., , email communication, 11 September 2025

- 337

  UNRWA, UNRWA Strategic Assessment - UN80 Initiative, Report to the Secretary-General, 20 June 2025, url, para. 39

- 338

  Al Jazeera, Lebanon begins disarming Palestinian groups in refugee camps, 21 August 2025, url; ACLED, Middle East Overview: September 2025, 5 September 2025, url;

- 339

  ACLED, Middle East Overview: September 2025, 5 September 2025, url

- 340

  AP, Palestinian factions hand over truckloads of weapons in Lebanon’s largest refugee camp, 13 September 2025, url; MEE, Palestinian factions hand over weapons from largest Lebanon refugee camp, 13 September 2025, url; Alarabia English, Palestinian factions hand over truckloads of weapons in Lebanon’s largest refugee camp, 13 September 2025, url

© European Union Agency for Asylum 2026 | Email: info@euaa.europa.eu