

7.7.3. Security situation in the camps

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a) General security situation

Palestine refugee camps have long witnessed violent clashes between Palestinian armed factions.⁸³⁵ The UN described the security situation in the camps as ‘largely calm but highly fragile’ between April and September 2024,⁸³⁶ while noting ‘heightened insecurity’ over the first half of 2025. Fighting erupted between residents of Beddawi camp (near Tripoli) and the neighbouring Wadi al-Nahlah area in March 2025, followed by clashes involving rival criminal groups in Shatila camp (southern Beirut) in May 2025.⁸³⁷ The second quarter of 2025 in particular experienced a surge in violence, with UNRWA recording 21 incidents leading to at least nine deaths among Palestinian refugees.⁸³⁸

In Ein el-Hilweh camp, known for its volatile security situation due to the presence of a multitude of armed groups,⁸³⁹ several UNRWA schools remained inaccessible as of June 2025 as armed actors continued to be present on their premises.⁸⁴⁰ The level of proliferation of weapons varied among the camps. While heavy weaponry was found in Ein el-Hilweh and Rashidieh (in the Tyre area), the Nahr al-Bared camp was reported to be devoid of weapons.⁸⁴¹

In autumn 2024, Palestine refugee camps were affected by Israeli airstrikes targeting Ein el-Hilweh⁸⁴² and Beddawi (early October 2024),⁸⁴³ El Buss (early October⁸⁴⁴ and late November 2024), and Rashidieh (late November 2024),⁸⁴⁵ with reports of several casualties resulting from these attacks.⁸⁴⁶ Intense airstrikes also struck the area of Burj al-Barajneh camp in early October 2024, prompting large-scale displacement of residents from the camp.⁸⁴⁷ Israeli airstrikes on camps continued into 2025.⁸⁴⁸

b) Balance of power and role of militias in specific camps

Palestinian factions have long operated with relative autonomy in a number of the country’s 12 refugee camps, which exist largely outside state jurisdiction.⁸⁴⁹ The traditionally Fatah-dominated⁸⁵⁰ Popular Committees and the Palestinian factions were responsible for security and governance in camps.⁸⁵¹ Some of the factions involved in governance have not pledged loyalty to the Palestinian Authority.⁸⁵² Notably, Hamas has a strong presence in the camps alongside Fatah.⁸⁵³ Under a tacit agreement, both the Fatah movement and its rival Hamas maintain security in the camps.⁸⁵⁴ Ein el-Hilweh, the largest⁸⁵⁵ and most overcrowded of all Palestine camps and home to diverse political and military factions⁸⁵⁶ was run by Fatah but Hamas was gaining ground against the group.⁸⁵⁷

For more information on Palestinian factions, see sections [5.2 Palestinian factions](#) and [6.3 Areas controlled by different actors](#).

c) Conflict resolution mechanisms

After Lebanese President Joseph Aoun and Palestinian President Mahmoud Abbas had reached an agreement in May 2025 on disarming the Palestinian groups in Lebanon, the Lebanese authorities launched disarmaments in refugee camps on 21 August 2025.⁸⁵⁸ The handovers of weapons were overseen by the Palestinian Authority in coordination with Lebanese authorities.⁸⁵⁹ In an initial phase of the plan's implementation,⁸⁶⁰ some weaponry in Burj al-Barajneh camp (Beirut) was transferred to the Lebanese Army.⁸⁶¹ This was followed by the collection of weapons in Rashidieh, Al-Bass, and Burj al-Shamali camps in the Tyre area (28 August 2025).⁸⁶² A third phase again involved Burj al-Barajneh, as well as Mar Elias and Shatila camps (29 August 2025).⁸⁶³ On 13 September 2025, the Lebanese Army began implementing the fourth phase of the disarmament plan, focusing on Beddawi camp in the north⁸⁶⁴ and Ein el-Hilweh camp in the south.⁸⁶⁵

Meanwhile, journalist Rami George Khouri noted that the May 2025 agreement was hampered by both Aoun's and Abbas's insufficient control over actors on the ground. Thus, for instance, the weapons handed over from the Burj al-Barajneh camp in August did not stem from Fatah's official forces but from a renegade member who had been dismissed from Fatah. The journalist noted that as of early September 2025, it remained uncertain whether Fatah would fully turn over its arsenal of weaponry in the camps.⁸⁶⁶ Islamist groups like Hamas, Palestinian Islamic Jihad (PIJ), and other non-PLO groups rejected outright to surrender weapons,⁸⁶⁷ including militant groups operating in Ein el-Hilweh.⁸⁶⁸ As of mid-September, Hamas did not cooperate in the disarmament process, although talks with the group regarding arms handovers were reportedly ongoing.⁸⁶⁹

d) Security forces in the camps

Security forces generally refrained from entering Palestine refugee camps⁸⁷⁰ (an exception being Nahr al-Bared camp in the country's north, which has been under Lebanese Army control since 2007),⁸⁷¹ but Lebanese security forces monitored all movement of persons and items into and out of the camps.⁸⁷² The Palestinian National Security Forces, restructured under a new command in 2025, were operating in the camps⁸⁷³ where they were tasked with enforcing order and discipline, including a ban on firing weapons.⁸⁷⁴

In July 2024, the Lebanese Army carried out raids inside the Nahr al-Bared camp in an attempt to arrest wanted 'gang' members. This operation reportedly led to exchanges of gunfire and heightened tensions, with instances of resistance to the raids prompting the deployment of further military reinforcements.⁸⁷⁵ In a more recent development, in 2025, it was reported that the new Lebanese government was seeking to extend state authority into the Palestinian camps [876](#) by implementing the above-mentioned plan to disarm the camps.⁸⁷⁷

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