



COI QUERY

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COI QUERY RESPONSE – Occupied Palestinian Territory (OPT), Jordan, Lebanon, Syria

UNRWA's ability to fulfil its mandate across its areas of operation

1. Overview of current mandate, status and funding

1.1. Background and mandate

The United Nations Relief and Works Agency for Palestine Refugees in the Near East (UNRWA) was established by a resolution of the UN General Assembly (UNGA) on 8 December 1949¹ and began its operations on 1 May 1950. The Agency is mandated to provide assistance to Palestine refugees who are registered with UNRWA and reside within its areas of operation: the Gaza Strip, the West Bank (including East Jerusalem), Jordan, Lebanon, and Syria.² As per its mandate, UNRWA provides humanitarian assistance and contributes to the protection of Palestine refugees by delivering essential services, mainly in the areas of basic education, primary health care, relief and social services, microcredit, and emergency assistance, including in situations of armed conflict.³

The designation of 'Palestine refugees' assisted by UNRWA is based on a definition adopted in 1952, which refers to persons whose normal place of residence was Palestine between 1 June 1946 and 15 May 1948 and who lost both their home and means of livelihood as a result of the 1948 conflict, as well as their descendants through the male line.⁴

In addition to this group, the UN General Assembly has mandated UNRWA to provide services on an emergency and temporary basis to other persons within its fields of operation who require humanitarian assistance. This includes individuals currently displaced and in urgent need of continued support due to the 1967 conflict and subsequent hostilities. These persons are not registered as Palestine refugees.⁵

¹ UNGA, Resolution, 302 (IV), Assistance to Palestine refugees, (A/RES/302 (IV)), 8 December 1949, [url](#)

² UNRWA, FAQ: Who we are, n.d., [url](#); UNRWA, FAQ: What is the mandate of UNRWA?, n.d., [url](#); UNRWA, FAQ: Where we work, n.d., [url](#)

³ UNRWA, What is the mandate of UNRWA? n.d., [url](#)

⁴ UNRWA, Palestine refugees, n.d., [url](#)

⁵ UNRWA, FAQ: Who is UNRWA mandated to serve?, n.d., [url](#)

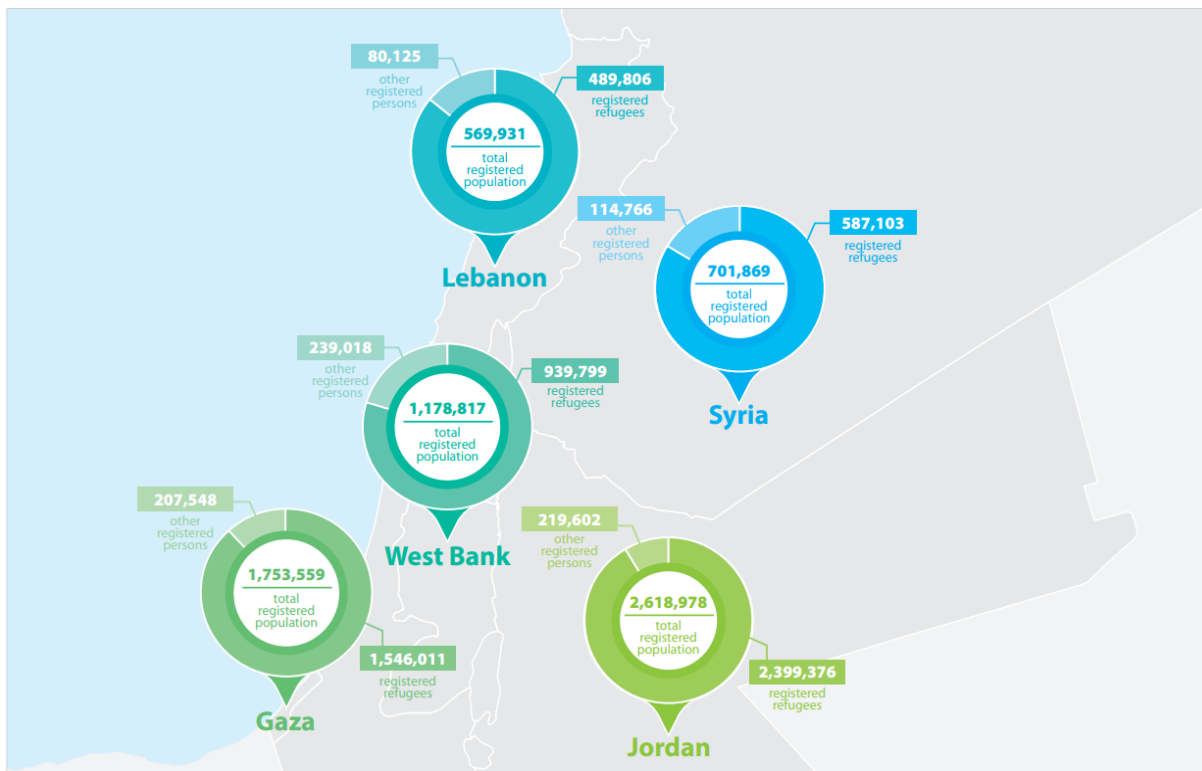


Figure 1: Profile of the population registered with UNRWA by field and status, December 2025. Source: UNRWA Refugee Registration Information System, 2025. The designations employed and the presentation of material on this map do not imply the expression of any opinion whatsoever on the part of UNRWA concerning the legal status of any country, territory, or area or of its authorities, or concerning the delimitation of its frontiers or boundaries.⁶

Any changes to UNRWA’s mandate, to the definition of Palestine refugees, or the categories of persons the Agency is mandated to serve can only be made by the UN General Assembly.⁷ On 5 December 2025, UNGA extended UNRWA’s mandate until 30 June 2029.⁸

1.2. Current status overview

Following the 7 October 2023 Hamas-led attacks against Israel and the ensuing war waged by the Israeli government in the Gaza Strip,⁹ UNRWA’s operating space has significantly

⁶ UNRWA, UNRWA Strategic Plan 2026-2029, 2026, [url](#), p. 24. It should be noted that UNRWA data on registered refugees across its five operational fields, as well as the latest available figures on the number of refugees who have received assistance by the Agency, may vary slightly across publications, even when based on the same underlying data.

⁷ UNRWA, FAQ, Palestine Refugees, [url](#)

⁸ UNGA, Resolution A/C.4/80/L.17, 11 November 2025, [url](#); For more information regarding the UNGA’s session: UNGA, “General Assembly Adopts 40 Fourth Committee (Special Political and Decolonization) Texts, Addressing 17 Non-Self-Governing Territories, Aid to Palestine Refugees”, press release GA/12739, 5 December 2025, [url](#)

⁹ ACLED, Two years since 7 October: Israel’s forever wars across the Middle East, 7 October 2025, [url](#); Guardian, The Middle East in crisis: 7 October, the day that changed the world, 29 September 2024, [url](#); New York Times, The War That Won’t End: How Oct. 7 Sparked a Year of Conflict, 7 October 2024, [url](#)



deteriorated in the Occupied Palestinian Territory (OPT, namely the Gaza Strip and the West Bank, including East Jerusalem). The conflict and the dire humanitarian situation in Gaza, marked by heavy loss of life, widespread destruction, and famine-level food insecurity, have forced UNRWA to focus on life-saving services, delivered through temporary and mobile modalities.¹⁰ In the West Bank, UNRWA services, including schooling, have been disrupted by intensified Israeli security incursions, movement restrictions, and settler violence, which have increased displacement among the Palestinian population.¹¹

The ability of UNRWA to carry out its mandate in the OPT has been further curtailed by Israeli legislation.¹² Two bills passed by the Knesset (the Israeli Parliament) in October 2024,¹³ and entered into force on 30 January 2025, have prohibited all UNRWA activities in Gaza and the West Bank, including East Jerusalem, and imposed a no-contact policy between Israeli authorities and the Agency.¹⁴ In addition, in December 2025, the Israeli government passed a law prohibiting the provision of electricity and water to facilities owned by or operated on behalf of UNRWA, as well as blocking the provision of communications and banking or financial services to the Agency.¹⁵ Since late January 2025, UNRWA's international personnel have been barred from entering the OPT. Israeli authorities have not issued visas or entry permits to the Agency's international staff for access to these areas, including Gaza.¹⁶ Since 2 March 2025, Israeli authorities have blocked UNRWA from 'directly bringing' any humanitarian assistance in the OPT, including food.¹⁷

In response to Israeli legislation, in October 2025, the International Court of Justice (ICJ) issued an advisory opinion stating, *inter alia*, that Israel - 'as an occupying Power' - has legal

¹⁰ UNRWA, UNRWA Strategic Plan 2026-2029, 2026, [url](#), p. 5

¹¹ UNRWA, UNRWA Strategic Plan 2026-2029, 2026, [url](#), p. 5

¹² UNGA, Report of the Working Group on the Financing of the United Nations Relief and Works Agency for Palestine Refugees in the Near East (A/80/340), 15 August 2025, [url](#), para 11; UNRWA, UNRWA Strategic Plan 2026-2029, 2026, [url](#), p. 5; Times of Israel, Israel reminds UNRWA it must end operations in Jerusalem and leave premises by Jan. 30, 25 January 2025, [url](#); HRW, World Report 2026 – Events of 2025, Israel and Palestine, 4 February 2026 [url](#)

¹³ Times of Israel, Knesset approves laws barring UNRWA from Israel, limiting it in Gaza and West Bank, 29 October 2024, [url](#)

¹⁴ UNGA, Report of the Working Group on the Financing of the United Nations Relief and Works Agency for Palestine Refugees in the Near East (A/80/340), 15 August 2025, [url](#), para 11; UNRWA, UNRWA Situation Report #210 on the Humanitarian Crisis in the Gaza Strip and the Occupied West Bank, including East Jerusalem, 25 February 2026, [url](#)

¹⁵ Times of Israel, Knesset passes law blocking provision of electricity and water to UNRWA facilities, 29 December 2025, [url](#); US: Library of Congress, Israel: Law to Cease UNRWA Activities Amended, Last updated 29 January 2026, [url](#)

¹⁶ UNRWA Situation Report #215 on the Humanitarian Crisis in the Gaza Strip and the Occupied West Bank, including East Jerusalem, 31 March 2026, [url](#)

¹⁷ UNRWA Situation Report #215 on the Humanitarian Crisis in the Gaza Strip and the Occupied West Bank, including East Jerusalem, 31 March 2026, [url](#)



obligations to collaborate with UNRWA ‘to ensure and facilitate the unhindered provision of urgently needed supplies essential to the survival of the Palestinian civilian population.’¹⁸

The UNRWA headquarters in East Jerusalem were eventually ‘seized, looted and set on fire’ by Israeli authorities in January 2026.¹⁹ The demolition of UNRWA’s headquarters was widely condemned by the international community,²⁰ including the UN Secretary-General²¹ and the European Union (EU).²² UNRWA representatives said that although the facility had been largely unused due to the enactment of the ban in January 2025²³ and due to security threats, the headquarters remained a UN facility protected by UN security personnel.²⁴

On 31 March 2026, Philippe Lazzarini’s mandate as UNRWA’s Commissioner-General ended. In his latest statements, Lazzarini noted that UNRWA has faced ‘appalling violations of international law and the privileges and immunities of the United Nations’, alongside ‘relentless disinformation campaigns, vicious political attacks and a grave financial crisis.’²⁵ Lazzarini stated that claims by the Israeli government alleging agency-wide neutrality breaches and that UNRWA is no longer operational in Palestine are ‘malicious assertions, which have been repeatedly debunked, are intended to erode international support for the agency, weakening Palestinians’ rights within final status issues in the Israel-Palestine conflict.’²⁶ Lazzarini further noted that UNRWA has reached ‘breaking point’,²⁷ as the Agency continues to operate under ‘exceptionally constrained’ conditions, while funding remains insufficient and uncertain.²⁸

Meanwhile, during 2024 and 2025, conflict and transition dynamics in Syria, together with renewed hostilities and mounting fragility in Lebanon, have placed additional strain on the

¹⁸ ICJ, Obligations of Israel in relation to the Presence and Activities of the United Nations, Other International Organizations and Third States in and in relation to the Occupied Palestinian Territory, 22 October 2025, [url](#), para 110-124; Times of Israel, ICJ says Israel obligated to work with UNRWA; Jerusalem ‘categorically rejects’ notion, 22 October 2025, [url](#); Just Security, The ICJ’s Advisory Opinion on Israel’s Obligations Towards UNRWA and Other International Organizations in the Occupied Territories: Key Issues, 23 October 2025, [url](#)

¹⁹ Lazzarini, P., Israel has crushed Unrwa in Gaza – and the rest of the world has done nothing, in The Guardian, 21 March 2026, [url](#)

²⁰ UN OHCHR, Demolition of UNRWA premises is symbolic of Israel’s attack on the United Nations system: UN expert, 23 January 2026, [url](#); Jerusalem Post, ‘Unacceptable’: Eleven foreign ministers condemn Israel over UNRWA HQ demolition, 29 January 2026, [url](#)

²¹ UN, Statement: UN Secretary-General on the demolition of the UNRWA Sheikh Jarrah compound, 20 January 2026, [url](#)

²² EEAS, Israel/Palestine: Statement by the Spokesperson on the demolition of the UNRWA compound in East Jerusalem, 21 January 2026, [url](#)

²³ Fowler J., Interview with DW, UN calls on Israel to stop demolishing UNRWA headquarters, on YouTube DW Channel, 20 January 2026, [url](#), min 1:54-2:10

²⁴ Guardian, Israel bulldozes Unrwa headquarters in East Jerusalem, 20 January 2026, [url](#)

²⁵ UN, Farewell Message from the Commissioner-General to UNRWA staff, 31 March 2026, [url](#)

²⁶ Lazzarini, P., Israel has crushed Unrwa in Gaza – and the rest of the world has done nothing, in The Guardian, 21 March 2026, [url](#)

²⁷ Lazzarini, P., Israel has crushed Unrwa in Gaza – and the rest of the world has done nothing, in The Guardian, 21 March 2026, [url](#)

²⁸ UN, Farewell Message from the Commissioner-General to UNRWA staff, 31 March 2026, [url](#)



Agency's capacity to respond to the growing needs of Palestine refugees.²⁹ The regional escalation of conflict starting from 28 February 2026³⁰ has had immediate impact across the Occupied Palestinian Territory,³¹ as well as in Lebanon,³² Syria³³ and Jordan,³⁴ further affecting the Palestinian populations.³⁵

UNRWA has, nonetheless, remained operational across its five mandated areas,³⁶ despite currently functioning under an 'existential crisis',³⁷ and despite ongoing security challenges.³⁸ The Agency employs over 28 000 individuals across all its fields,³⁹ most of them Palestinians.⁴⁰

In the Gaza Strip, the Agency reported to have continued its operation and delivered large-scale, life-saving support to affected communities despite severe access restrictions, widespread destruction, and ongoing security challenges. In the West Bank, UNRWA said to have remained a central provider of health care, basic assistance, and collective emergency shelter for affected Palestine refugees, while also coordinating and directly delivering the humanitarian response.⁴¹

Across Jordan, Lebanon, and Syria, UNRWA reported to have delivered continued essential humanitarian assistance to Palestine refugees, amid protracted displacement, increasing return movements, and growing socioeconomic pressures. Displaced refugees in these countries have remained heavily reliant on the Agency for essential support, including multi-purpose cash assistance and protection services, such as legal aid to overcome persistent obstacles in obtaining documentation and regularising their legal status. From January to June 2025, across the three operation fields, the Agency reported to have provided multi-purpose

²⁹ UNRWA, UNRWA Strategic Plan 2026-2029, 2026, [url](#), p. 2

³⁰ ACLED, Middle East Special Issue: March 2026, 4 March 2026, [url](#)

³¹ UN OCHA, Humanitarian Situation Report, 6 March 2026 [url](#)

³² El Pais, Nearly 800,000 people displaced by war against Iran and Lebanon, 11 March 2026, [url](#); New York Times, Israel Orders Military to Intensify Demolitions in Southern Lebanon, 22 March 2026, [url](#); ISPI, Lebanon on the Brink: Hezbollah, Israel and a Nation Under Strain, 19 March 2026, [url](#)

³³ UN, Middle East Escalation Spilling into Syria, Driving Displacement, Civilian Harm, Deputy Special Envoy Warns Security Council, [url](#); WHO, Update on escalating conflict in the Eastern Mediterranean Region, 17 March 2026, [url](#)

³⁴ Jerusalem Post, Iranian war ripples across Arab states as Jordan intercepts missiles, Egypt feels economic shock, 16 March 2026, [url](#); Aljazeera, US-Israel attacks on Iran: Death toll and injuries live tracker, 1 March 2024, [url](#); Roya News, Army says Iran fired 119 missiles, drones in one week directly targeting Jordan, 7 March 2026, [url](#)

³⁵ UN OCHA, Escalation in the Middle East and Beyond: The Humanitarian Response, 27 March 2026 [url](#)

³⁶ UN, Farewell Message from the Commissioner-General to UNRWA staff, 31 March 2026, [url](#); UNRWA, UNRWA Strategic Plan 2026-2029, 2026, [url](#), p. 5; UNRWA, Syria, Lebanon and Jordan emergency appeal 2025 progress report for the reporting period 1 January – 30 June 2025, November 2025, [url](#), p. 1

³⁷ UNRWA, UNRWA Strategic Plan 2026-2029, 2026, [url](#), p. 26

³⁸ UNRWA, Unrwa Occupied Palestinian Territory Flash Appeal 2026: Summary, [url](#), p. 1; UNRWA Situation Report #215 on the Humanitarian Crisis in the Gaza Strip and the Occupied West Bank, including East Jerusalem, 31 March 2026, [url](#)

³⁹ UNRWA, UNRWA Strategic Plan 2026-2029, 2026, [url](#), p. 5

⁴⁰ Akram S., Panel discussion: Gaza/West Bank: Expanding Genocide, UNRWA Ban & Defiance of International Institutions – What Protection Measures Are Needed for Palestinians?, Law for Palestine, 28 February 2025, [url](#)

⁴¹ UNRWA, Unrwa Occupied Palestinian Territory Flash Appeal 2026: Summary, [url](#), p. 1



cash assistance to families to cover rent, food, and basic needs. Health care remained central to the Agency's response, with primary health consultations and hospitalisations subsidised in Lebanon and Jordan. Education services have remained in place despite challenges, with children enrolled in UNRWA schools and many receiving counselling or recreational activities to address the effects of prolonged instability.⁴²

1.3. Current funding overview

UNRWA has experienced chronic underfunding for over a decade and is currently facing a financial shortfall of an unprecedented magnitude, which the Agency itself described as an 'existential crisis'.⁴³

UNRWA relies almost entirely on voluntary contributions from UN Member States and intergovernmental organisations to fund its mandate and operations.⁴⁴ The Agency receives funding through: a programme budget fund supporting core operations, including staff and non-staff costs and key services; emergency appeals, including flash appeals for humanitarian interventions; and time-bound, project-based funding to strengthen services without increasing recurrent costs. UNRWA operates a single, integrated budget framework: the programme budget is mainly funded by voluntary, unearmarked contributions from Member States and other donors, while emergency appeals and projects rely entirely on voluntary contributions, with projects specifically earmarked.⁴⁵ Internal financial data, as of 22 June 2025, indicate that more than 95 % of the Agency's budget comes from voluntary contributions.⁴⁶

Many key donors that had suspended funding to UNRWA (following Israel's accusations of UNRWA staff involvement in the 7 October attacks⁴⁷), have since signalled intentions to restore or continue support. These donors have stressed that their contributions are contingent on reforms and measures to ensure UNRWA's neutrality.⁴⁸ In January 2026, the EU stated that it remains committed to continuing its political and financial support to UNRWA,

⁴² UNRWA, Syria, Lebanon and Jordan emergency appeal 2025 progress report for the reporting period 1 January – 30 June 2025, November 2025, [url](#)

⁴³ UNRWA, UNRWA Strategic Plan 2026-2029, 2026, [url](#), pp. 6, 26

⁴⁴ UNRWA, How We Are Funded, n.d., [url](#)

⁴⁵ UNGA, Report of the Working Group on the Financing of the United Nations Relief and Works Agency for Palestine Refugees in the Near East A/80/340, 15 August 2025, [url](#), para 20, 21

⁴⁶ UNRWA, Finance and fundraising update – June 2025, 25 June 2025, [url](#), p. 7

⁴⁷ In early 2024, many key donors suspended funding to UNRWA after Israel alleged that a few numbers of Agency staff were involved in the 7 October 2023 Hamas-led attack on Israel. This led countries, including the United States and several European donors, to pause contributions pending investigations. Some donors later resumed funding following reviews and additional oversight measures by UNRWA. See Times of Israel, Israel reveals 12 UNRWA staffers it says took part in Oct. 7, says 30 more assisted, 16 February 2024, [url](#); Politico, UK, Italy, others join US in pulling funding for UN Palestinian agency, 27 January 2024, [url](#); Times of Israel, Canada, Sweden resume UNRWA funding after pause over terror allegations against staff, 9 March 2024, [url](#)

⁴⁸ UK, House of Commons Library, UNRWA and UK aid to the West Bank and Gaza Strip 2023 to 2026, 13 February 2026, [url](#), p. 40; France, Ministère de l'Europe et des Affaires étrangères, France Diplomacy, Situation of Unrwa, 28 January 2026, [url](#)



recognising the Agency as a key provider of humanitarian assistance, education, and health services in the occupied Palestinian territory.⁴⁹

As of 22 June 2025, UNRWA reported that its financial situation was highly uncertain due to delayed contributions and unpredictable cash flow, projecting cash shortfall of about USD 200 million. Donor delays have forced the Agency to take emergency measures, including postponed payments, internal fund reallocation, and unsustainable net salary payments. Month-to-month operations depended on timely disbursement of committed or new funds.⁵⁰ For 2025, UNRWA requested USD 880.2 million for its programme budget to sustain public-like services, alongside USD 2 164 billion for essential humanitarian operations, including USD 1.7 billion for the OPT and USD 464 million for Jordan, Lebanon, and Syria.⁵¹ However, according to a UNRWA representative cited by the media outlet *Daily Sabah*, the Agency had received only around USD 570 million in contributions, as of January 2026. The spokesperson further warned that, ‘as things stand, we expect a substantial shortfall in 2026.’⁵²

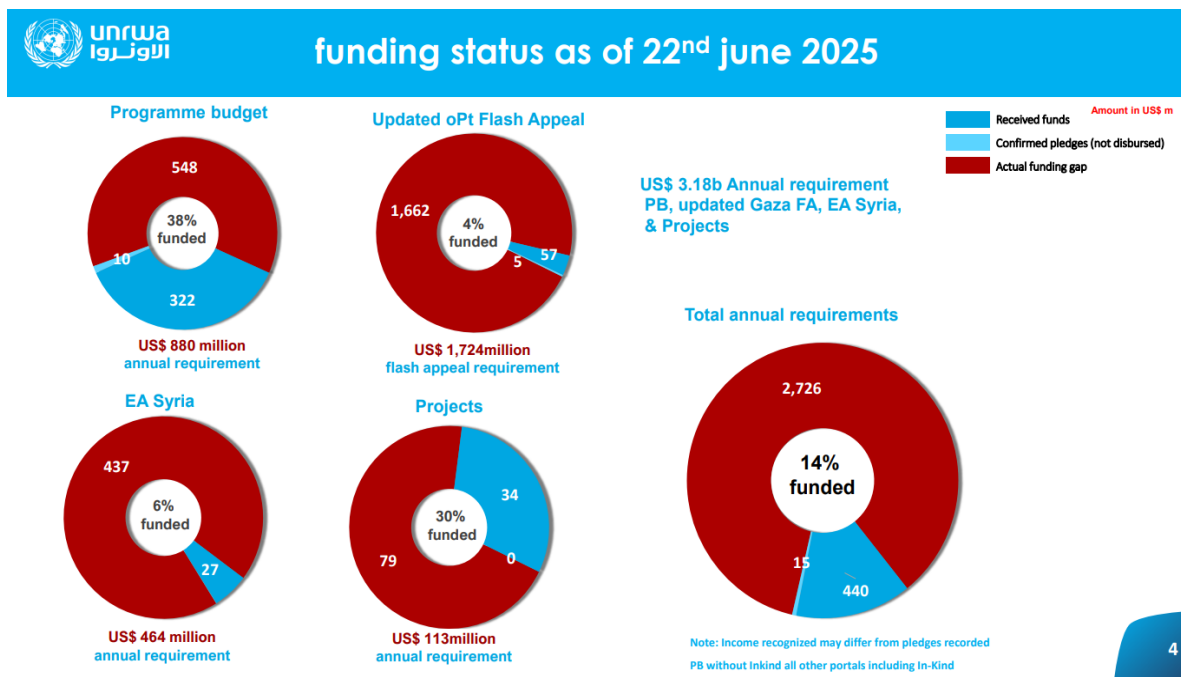


Figure 2: UNRWA funding status as of 22 June 2025. Source: UNRWA⁵³

⁴⁹ EEAS, Israel/Palestine: Statement by the Spokesperson on the demolition of the UNRWA compound in East Jerusalem, 21 January 2026, [url](#)

⁵⁰ UNRWA, Finance and fundraising update – June 2025, 25 June 2025, [url](#). For the full list of donors as of 31 December 2025, see UNRWA Donor Charts, 2025, [url](#); For the list of top 20 donors in 2025, see UNRWA, 2025 Top 20 donor ranking: Confirmed pledges (cash and in-kind) as of 31 December 2025 In USD, [url](#)

⁵¹ UNGA, Report of the Working Group on the Financing of the United Nations Relief and Works Agency for Palestine Refugees in the Near East A/80/340, 15 August 2025, [url](#), para 30

⁵² Daily Sabah, UNRWA cuts 571 Gaza staff as ‘dire’ funding crisis deepens, 7 January 2026, [url](#)

⁵³ UNRWA, Finance and fundraising update – June 2025, UNRWA funding status as of 22 June 2025, [url](#)



The Agency issued a recalibrated 2026–2029 plan focused on sustaining essential services and treating emergencies as an ongoing reality, while introducing cost-saving and efficiency measures, and emphasising the need for predictable funding, political support, and humanitarian access.⁵⁴ In December 2025, UNRWA announced that preparations were underway to open an office in Ankara, with Türkiye’s backing, to strengthen fundraising and coordinate aid for Gaza as well as reconstruction efforts in Syria.⁵⁵ In March 2026, against the backdrop of the escalation of the regional conflict affecting also Palestinian populations, UNRWA launched new emergency funding appeals.⁵⁶

Decreased funding has had an impact on all areas of operations,⁵⁷ affecting the over 6 million refugees across the five fields.⁵⁸ UNRWA’s microfinance programme is facing some of the toughest conditions in its history, with services in Gaza remaining suspended due to insecurity and access restrictions.⁵⁹ The Agency dismissed approximately 600 employees and implemented 20 % salary cuts across all operations in January 2026.⁶⁰ Job cuts prompted hundreds of UNRWA employees to stage multiple union-led protests, warning of severe consequences for millions of refugees.⁶¹

2. UNRWA’s operations in the Gaza Strip

2.1. Security and humanitarian context

Between 7 October 2023 and 25 March 2026, a total of 72 265 Palestinians were killed and 171 959 injured in the Gaza Strip, according to the Gaza’s Ministry of Health (MoH), as reported by UN OCHA.⁶² During the same period, UNRWA estimated that at least 853 people who were

⁵⁴ UNRWA, UNRWA Strategic Plan 2026-2029, 2026, [url](#), p. 3

⁵⁵ Al-Monitor, UNRWA plans Turkey office to boost Gaza, Syria aid as pledges dip, 2 December 2025, [url](#); Times of Israel, ‘Dire’ financial crisis forces UNRWA to drop hundreds of ex-Gazan staff from payroll, 11 January 2026, [url](#)

⁵⁶ UNRWA, Lebanon priority emergency response requirements, March 2026, [url](#); UNRWA, Occupied Palestinian Territory Flash Appeal 2026, [url](#); UNRWA, Syria, Lebanon And Jordan Humanitarian Appeal 2026, [url](#)

⁵⁷ Le Monde, UNRWA's cash flow problems force it to scale back its services in the Middle East, [url](#); National, Gaza's UNRWA staff in shock after pay cuts and layoffs , 24 January 2026, [url](#)

⁵⁸ Akram S., Panel discussion: Gaza/West Bank: Expanding Genocide, UNRWA Ban & Defiance of International Institutions – What Protection Measures Are Needed for Palestinians?, Law for Palestine, 28 February 2025, [url](#), min. 18:00-18:45

⁵⁹ UNRWA, UNRWA Strategic Plan 2026-2029, 2026, [url](#), p. 19

⁶⁰ Al Jazeera, UNRWA staff cuts deepen in Gaza as Israel restricts critical aid access, 30 January 2026, [url](#); Times of Israel, ‘Dire’ financial crisis forces UNRWA to drop hundreds of ex-Gazan staff from payroll, [url](#); The New Arab, Palestinians urge UNRWA to reverse dismissal of Gaza staff displaced by war , 22 January 2026, [url](#)

⁶¹ Middle East Monitor, UNRWA staff protest in Gaza against decision to dismiss 600 employees, [url](#); Reuters, Protest against the decision to lay off hundreds of Palestinians at UNRWA in Gaza, [url](#); Times of Israel, ‘Dire’ financial crisis forces UNRWA to drop hundreds of ex-Gazan staff from payroll, 11 January 2026, [url](#)

⁶² UN OCHA, Reported impact snapshot | Gaza Strip (25 March 2026), 27 March 2026, [url](#)



sheltered in its premises were killed and around 2 588 injured. 310 UNRWA personnel and 81 people supporting UNRWA's work were killed. Around 312 UNRWA installations were either damaged and/or impacted.⁶³ For instance, on 25 January 2026, In Jabalia Refugee Camp, North Gaza governorate, the Israeli artillery struck an UNRWA clinic, injuring an unspecified number of people, including a pregnant woman, and causing significant damage to the facility.⁶⁴ On 24 March 2026, an UNRWA health centre in Bureij (Middle Area) and a school in East Jabalia (North Gaza) were indirectly hit by gunfire from nearby Israeli forces. Both facilities sustained minor damage, with no casualties among UNRWA personnel.⁶⁵

The humanitarian situation in the Gaza Strip has remained 'catastrophic'.⁶⁶ Following the ceasefire announced on 9 October 2025,⁶⁷ military attacks have decreased but not stopped.⁶⁸ Security incidents and targeting operations have been reported almost daily, causing casualties among civilians, demolition of residential complexes, infrastructure, and renewed displacement.⁶⁹ Although the ceasefire has slightly improved humanitarian access, basic needs have remained extremely high (especially for shelter, food, water and sanitation, and healthcare) due to limited aid, irregular supplies, and continued restrictions on movement and items classified as dual-use.⁷⁰ Food security in Gaza remained extremely fragile, with 77 % of the population facing crisis-level food insecurity and over 100 000 people experiencing 'catastrophic levels of hunger'. Most families rely on food aid, while high prices continue to limit access to commercial and nutritious foods. Although more goods are entering Gaza, affordability remains a major barrier.⁷¹

⁶³ UNRWA, UNRWA Situation Report #214 on the Humanitarian Crisis in the Gaza Strip and the Occupied West Bank, including East Jerusalem, 25 March 2026, [url](#); UNRWA Situation Report #215 on the Humanitarian Crisis in the Gaza Strip and the Occupied West Bank, including East Jerusalem, 31 March 2026, [url](#)

⁶⁴ Insecurity Insights, Attacks on Health Care in the occupied Palestinian territory, 21 January - 03 February 2026, February 2026, [url](#)

⁶⁵ UNRWA Situation Report #215 on the Humanitarian Crisis in the Gaza Strip and the Occupied West Bank, including East Jerusalem, 31 March 2026, [url](#)

⁶⁶ UNRWA, UNRWA Strategic Plan 2026-2029, 2026, [url](#), p. 5; IFRC, IFRC Statement on Humanitarian Aid to Gaza: 'We must seize this crucial moment for Gaza's people', 17 October 2025, [url](#); British Red Cross, What is happening in Gaza? The ceasefire agreement offers a crucial moment of hope, last updated 2 December 2025, [url](#); UN OHCHR, As aid restrictions deepen crisis in the occupied Palestinian territories, women and girls pay heightened price, warn UN experts, 19 March 2026, [url](#)

⁶⁷ Guardian, First phase of ceasefire deal to end war in Gaza agreed by Israel and Hamas, 9 October 2025, [url](#); CNN, What we know and don't know about Trump's deal to end the war in Gaza, 10 October 2025, [url](#); Times of Israel, Full text of Oct. 9 Israel-Hamas deal on Trump's plan for 'comprehensive end' to Gaza war, 14 October 2025, [url](#)

⁶⁸ Palestine Red Crescent Society, Humanitarian Response Report in the Gaza Strip Since the Ceasefire Agreement (9 October 2025 – 28 February 2026), [url](#); ACLED, Middle East Overview: February 2026, 9 February 2026, [url](#)

⁶⁹ UN OCHA, Humanitarian Situation Update #357 IGaza Strip, 12 February 2026, [url](#); UN OCHA, Humanitarian Situation Report, 19 March 2026, [url](#)

⁷⁰ Palestine Red Crescent Society, Humanitarian Response Report in the Gaza Strip Since the Ceasefire Agreement (9 October 2025 – 28 February 2026), [url](#), p. 1

⁷¹ WFP, WFP scales up operations in Gaza as ceasefire passes 100 days, 19 January 2026, [url](#)



Before the 2023 war, the population in the Gaza Strip was of about 2.4 million, of whom 1.6 million were Palestine refugees.⁷² By the end of March 2026, UN OCHA indicated that most people in Gaza were still displaced, often living in dire conditions with limited protection and insufficient access to adequate and diverse supplies, while continuing to face daily shootings and strikes affecting residential areas. Casualties were still being reported, including among women and children.⁷³

2.2. Operational status and capacity

Although UNRWA's operating capacity in the Gaza Strip has significantly deteriorated since October 2023,⁷⁴ the Agency has never stopped working.⁷⁵ As noted by Tamara Al Rifai, UNRWA Director of External Relations and Communications, beyond the immediate humanitarian response, UNRWA provides services similar to those of a public sector in the Strip, making the Agency 'irreplaceable in the absence of a formal Palestinian public sector currently in Gaza.'⁷⁶

Since March 2025, Israeli authorities have prevented UNRWA from 'directly bringing humanitarian personnel and aid' into the Gaza Strip, while the Agency reports having sufficient food parcels, flour, and shelter supplies pre-positioned outside Gaza for hundreds of thousands of people.⁷⁷

The inability to engage directly with the Israeli authorities has significantly constrained the day-to-day logistics as well as the long-term sustainability of the Agency's operations.⁷⁸ Jonathan Fowler, UNRWA Senior Communications Manager, explained that many of the Agency's facilities lie behind the so-called 'Yellow Line', a barrier separating Gaza from Israeli forces under the three-step Gaza peace plan. He noted that this has made operations extremely difficult, with many UNRWA installations heavily damaged or destroyed.⁷⁹ As of 31 March 2026, 127 UNRWA facilities were located within the Israeli-militarised zone behind the Yellow Line and in areas where access is subject to Israeli approval or coordination.⁸⁰

⁷² UNRWA, Where we work – Gaza, August 2023, [url](#). It should be noted that UNRWA data on registered refugees across its five operational fields, as well as the latest available figures on the number of refugees who have received assistance by the Agency, may vary slightly across publications, even when based on the same underlying data.

⁷³ UN OCHA, Humanitarian Situation Report, 19 March 2026, [url](#)

⁷⁴ UNRWA, UNRWA Strategic Plan 2026-2029, 2026, [url](#), p. 5

⁷⁵ Al Rifai T., Interview with Al Jazeera, Gaza update: UNRWA operations amid Israeli ban, on YouTube Al Jazeera Channel, 9 November 2025, [url](#), min. 1:55-2:24

⁷⁶ Al Rifai T., Interview with Al Jazeera, Gaza update: UNRWA operations amid Israeli ban, on YouTube Al Jazeera Channel, 9 November 2025, [url](#), min. 2:35-3:38

⁷⁷ UNRWA Situation Report #215 on the Humanitarian Crisis in the Gaza Strip and the Occupied West Bank, including East Jerusalem, 31 March 2026, [url](#)

⁷⁸ Al Rifai T., Interview with Al Jazeera, Gaza update: UNRWA operations amid Israeli ban, on YouTube Al Jazeera Channel, 9 November 2025, [url](#), min. 1:55-2:24

⁷⁹ UN Multimedia room, Gaza and West Bank update UNRWA – UNOPS – UNIS, Geneva 23 January 2026, [url](#)

⁸⁰ UNRWA Situation Report #215 on the Humanitarian Crisis in the Gaza Strip and the Occupied West Bank, including East Jerusalem, 31 March 2026, [url](#)



As a result of regional escalation of conflict in March 2026, aid operations in Gaza were further restricted.⁸¹ On 28 February 2026, Israeli authorities closed all crossings into the Gaza Strip, suspending the entry of aid, fuel, and commercial supplies, the coordination of humanitarian movements near Israeli troop deployments, medical evacuations, the return of residents from abroad, and the rotation of humanitarian staff.⁸² The Rafah crossing was reopened on 19 March 2026 for limited movement of people, including medical evacuations and returns to Gaza, while Kerem Shalom remained the only operational cargo crossing, as of 25 March 2026. Only a limited number of trucks were entering the Strip, resulting in severe shortages of goods, rising prices, and a lack of essential items such as medicines and spare parts needed by UNRWA to sustain critical operations, including generator lubricants and batteries.⁸³

2.3. Provision of essential services and emergency response

UNRWA employs around 11 000 Palestinian staff in Gaza – many displaced themselves –, who have continued to provide critical assistance to nearly the entire population in need.⁸⁴ The Agency operates the largest emergency shelter network in the Strip, has remained the leading provider of primary health care, and has continued to deliver WASH (Water, Sanitation, Hygiene) and education services to most residents.⁸⁵

Because of recurrent displacement and extensive damage to UNRWA facilities, UNRWA has been compelled to resort to temporary and mobile modalities for the provision of life-saving services, amid active military operations.⁸⁶ UNRWA’s microfinance programme services in Gaza remained suspended due to insecurity and access restrictions.⁸⁷

Shelter, food, water and sanitation. As of 31 March 2026, an estimated 67 000 displaced people were living in 83 collective emergency shelters managed by UNRWA.⁸⁸ Living conditions in the shelters have remained precarious,⁸⁹ with overcrowding and limited access to safe water and sanitation services. Conditions were further compounded by sewage accumulation and inadequate access to basic necessities, including drinking water, soap, lighting, safe cooking fuel, and shelter materials. Rodent infestations have also become an

⁸¹ UN OCHA, Humanitarian Situation Report, 6 March 2026 [url](#)

⁸² UN OCHA, Humanitarian Situation Report, 6 March 2026 [url](#)

⁸³ UNRWA, UNRWA Situation Report #214 on the Humanitarian Crisis in the Gaza Strip and the Occupied West Bank, including East Jerusalem, 25 March 2026, [url](#)

⁸⁴ UNRWA, UNRWA Situation Report #213 on the Humanitarian Crisis in the Gaza Strip and the Occupied West Bank, including East Jerusalem, 18 March 2026, [url](#)

⁸⁵ UNRWA, Occupied Palestinian Territory Flash Appeal 2026: Summary, 9 February 2026, [url](#), p. 1

⁸⁶ UNRWA, UNRWA Strategic Plan 2026-2029, 2026, [url](#), p. 5

⁸⁷ UNRWA, UNRWA Strategic Plan 2026-2029, 2026, [url](#), p.19

⁸⁸ UNRWA Situation Report #215 on the Humanitarian Crisis in the Gaza Strip and the Occupied West Bank, including East Jerusalem, 31 March 2026, [url](#)

⁸⁹ IOM-CCCM Cluster, CCCM Flash Update on Heavy Rains and Flood in Gaza (as of 25-Mar-2026), 26 March 2026, [url](#); MSF, “The needs in Gaza remain enormous”, 13 March 2026, [url](#)



increasing concern.⁹⁰ Since October 2023, UNRWA reported to have implemented emergency WASH activities across Gaza in shelters and informal displacement sites, including operating water wells and desalination systems, supplying water by truck, distributing cleaning supplies, managing solid waste, disinfecting water tanks, and conducting pest control. In 2025, the Agency delivered 970 000 cubic metres of water and collected 70 000 tonnes of solid waste, benefiting an estimated 1.7 million people.⁹¹

Between 7 October 2023 and the start of the previous ceasefire on 19 January 2025, UNRWA provided two rounds of flour deliveries to over 388 000 families, reaching nearly 1.9 million people, with at least 374 000 families receiving three rounds. During that ceasefire, until March 2025, the Agency assisted more than 2 million people with essential food aid. UNRWA reported to have run out of its food supplies by the end of April 2025. Since 2 March 2025, Israeli authorities have prevented the Agency from ‘directly bringing’ in any humanitarian assistance, including food.⁹² During a January 2026 press briefing, the UN office highlighted that while UN agencies – including UNRWA – and their partners were still distributing mattresses, warm clothing, solar lights, and other aid, ‘capacity and funding constraints’ had restricted assistance to roughly 40 % of the 970 displacement sites across the Gaza Strip.⁹³

UNRWA reported that, as of 31 March 2026, its stocks of lubricant oil for vehicles and generators had been exhausted, with none available on the local market. The Agency introduced mitigation measures to protect its assets, including reducing generator operating hours across facilities and limiting vehicle use. The shortage of lubricant oil and spare parts was causing severe disruption to humanitarian operations.⁹⁴

Healthcare. The health system in Gaza is described as on the brink of collapse, with the majority of facilities damaged or non-functional and facing critical shortages of medicines and fuel.⁹⁵ Over 18 500 injured and chronically ill patients are estimated to be in need of medical care that is unavailable in the Gaza Strip due to the absence of specialised services, and are awaiting medical evacuation.⁹⁶

As noted by UNRWA Senior Communications Manager Jonathan Fowler, UNRWA has remained a key primary healthcare provider in the Gaza Strip, with around 15 000 patients

⁹⁰ UNRWA Situation Report #215 on the Humanitarian Crisis in the Gaza Strip and the Occupied West Bank, including East Jerusalem, 31 March 2026, [url](#)

⁹¹ UNRWA Situation Report #215 on the Humanitarian Crisis in the Gaza Strip and the Occupied West Bank, including East Jerusalem, 31 March 2026, [url](#)

⁹² UNRWA, UNRWA Situation Report #213 on the Humanitarian Crisis in the Gaza Strip and the Occupied West Bank, including East Jerusalem, 18 March 2026, [url](#); Al Jazeera, How US-Israel war on Iran deepens Gaza crisis, 9 March 2026, [url](#)

⁹³ UN, Gaza and West Bank update UNRWA – UNOPS – UNIS, Geneva 23 January 2026, [url](#)

⁹⁴ UNRWA Situation Report #215 on the Humanitarian Crisis in the Gaza Strip and the Occupied West Bank, including East Jerusalem, 31 March 2026, [url](#)

⁹⁵ UNFPA, Palestine Situation Report (October-December 2025), 21 January 2026, [url](#)

⁹⁶ WHO, oPt Emergency Situation Update Issue 67, 7 October 2023 – 31 January 2026, January 2026, [url](#), p. 3



seeking care daily, despite working in highly complex conditions, as the Agency strives to deliver services amid significant challenges⁹⁷ and ongoing shortages of essential medical equipment and supplies.⁹⁸

Of the 22 UNRWA health clinics operational before the war, only a limited number remain functional.⁹⁹ By 8 March 2026, 6 health centres and 4 additional UNRWA-rented facilities functioning as temporary health centres were operational across the Gaza Strip. By the same date, UNRWA was also delivering primary healthcare through 73 mobile medical teams operating in 28 medical points, both inside and outside collective emergency shelters, in the Middle Area, Khan Younis, Al Mawasi, and Gaza City. Between 2 and 8 March, an average of 1 043 UNRWA health personnel per day were working across the Agency's health facilities in Gaza, providing a total of 73 452 medical consultations.¹⁰⁰

UNRWA informed that, as of 31 March 2026, it was continuing to monitor infectious disease trends in overcrowded shelters, where risks are heightened by deteriorating wastewater systems, hygiene supply shortages, and restrictions on chemical imports. However, due to funding constraints, UNRWA had to discontinue some health service shifts (afternoon shifts at two medical points and Friday duty coverage at two locations) despite high needs on the ground.¹⁰¹

Education. UNICEF described Gaza's education system as on the brink of collapse, with over 97 % of schools damaged or destroyed, and around 658 000 school-age children with limited access to in-person learning since the beginning of the war.¹⁰² According to data by Gaza's Ministry of Education, as reported by UN OCHA, by October 2025, approximately 18 000 school-aged children and 780 education personnel had been killed, with many more injured.¹⁰³

Before October 2023, UNRWA had over 300 000 schoolchildren enrolled in the 183 schools it operated, most of them running on double shifts.¹⁰⁴ Since the 2023 conflict began, the Agency converted 95 % of its schools in temporary shelters for displaced families, including children. Almost 70 % of these schools have suffered damage, some repeatedly, with many partially or completely destroyed.¹⁰⁵

⁹⁷ UN Multimedia room, Gaza and West Bank update UNRWA – UNOPS – UNIS, Geneva 23 January 2026, [url](#)

⁹⁸ UNRWA, UNRWA Situation Report #205 on the Humanitarian Crisis in the occupied Palestinian territory (the Gaza Strip and the West Bank, including East Jerusalem), 21 January 2026, [url](#)

⁹⁹ UNRWA, UNRWA Situation Report #205 on the Humanitarian Crisis in the occupied Palestinian territory (the Gaza Strip and the West Bank, including East Jerusalem), 21 January 2026, [url](#)

¹⁰⁰ UNRWA Situation Report #215 on the Humanitarian Crisis in the Gaza Strip and the Occupied West Bank, including East Jerusalem, 31 March 2026, [url](#)

¹⁰¹ UNRWA Situation Report #215 on the Humanitarian Crisis in the Gaza Strip and the Occupied West Bank, including East Jerusalem, 31 March 2026, [url](#)

¹⁰² UNICEF, After Two Years of War: Gaza's Education System on the Brink of Collapse, 4 November 2025, [url](#)

¹⁰³ UN OCHA, Reported Impact Snapshot | Gaza Strip, 1 October 2025, [url](#)

¹⁰⁴ Al Rifai T., Interview with Al Jazeera: Gaza update: UNRWA operations amid Israeli ban, on YouTube Al Jazeera Channel, 9 November 2025, [url](#) min. 4:49-5:03

¹⁰⁵ UNRWA, Education Under Attack, 09 September 2024, [url](#)



Since August 2024, UNRWA has launched ‘Back to Learning’ activities,¹⁰⁶ creating space within its shelters for children to resume education.¹⁰⁷ As of 31 March 2026, the Agency continued to provide learning services in Gaza through ‘Temporary Learning Spaces’ and through its distance learning initiative.¹⁰⁸ UNRWA Director of External Relations and Communications, Al Rifai, noted that, however, ‘this does not replace the urgent need for a return to a normal school setting’.¹⁰⁹

3. UNRWA’s operations in the West Bank, including East Jerusalem

3.1. Security and humanitarian context

The security situation in the West Bank has remained highly unstable. Ongoing Israeli military operations, increased settler violence, and extensive movement restrictions have continued to disrupt daily life of Palestinians.¹¹⁰ Based on data collected and verified by UN OCHA, 1 079 Palestinians were killed in the occupied West Bank, including East Jerusalem, between 7 October 2023 and 30 March 2026. Of these, 240 have been killed in 2025 and 33 since the beginning of 2026¹¹¹ (including about 56 children).¹¹² During the same period, 11 900 Palestinians were injured in the West Bank. Of these, 3 994 were injured in 2025 and 772 since the beginning of 2026.¹¹³

As of March 2026, settler attacks in the West Bank have intensified,¹¹⁴ with injuries rising by 54 % and displacement linked to such incidents increasing more than fourfold compared with 2025 averages.¹¹⁵

¹⁰⁶ UNRWA, The Gaza Strip: UNRWA launches “Back to Learning” activities, 1 August 2024, [url](#)

¹⁰⁷ Al Rifai T., Interview with Al Jazeera: Gaza update: UNRWA operations amid Israeli ban, on YouTube Al Jazeera Channel, 9 November 2025, [url](#) min. 4:49-5:03

¹⁰⁸ UNRWA Situation Report #215 on the Humanitarian Crisis in the Gaza Strip and the Occupied West Bank, including East Jerusalem, 31 March 2026, [url](#)

¹⁰⁹ Al Rifai T., Interview with Al Jazeera: Gaza update: UNRWA operations amid Israeli ban, on YouTube Al Jazeera Channel, 9 November 2025, [url](#) min. 4:49-5:03

¹¹⁰ UNFPA, West Bank: How movement restrictions threaten motherhood—and why UNFPA’s support is vital, 1 February 2026, [url](#); UN, Cold kills another infant in Gaza as West Bank displacement intensifies, 21 January 2026, [url](#)

¹¹¹ UN OCHA, Data on casualties: Palestinians fatalities – West Bank, last updated 16 March 2026, [url](#)

¹¹² UN OCHA, West Bank - Monthly snapshot: casualties, property damage and displacement as of 31 January 2026, [url](#)

¹¹³ UN OCHA, Data on casualties: Palestinians injuries – West Bank, last updated 9 March 2026, [url](#)

¹¹⁴ HRW, In the Shadow of War, Settler Violence against Palestinians Intensifies, 13 March 2026, [url](#)

¹¹⁵ UN OCHA, Humanitarian Situation Report, 19 March 2026, [url](#)

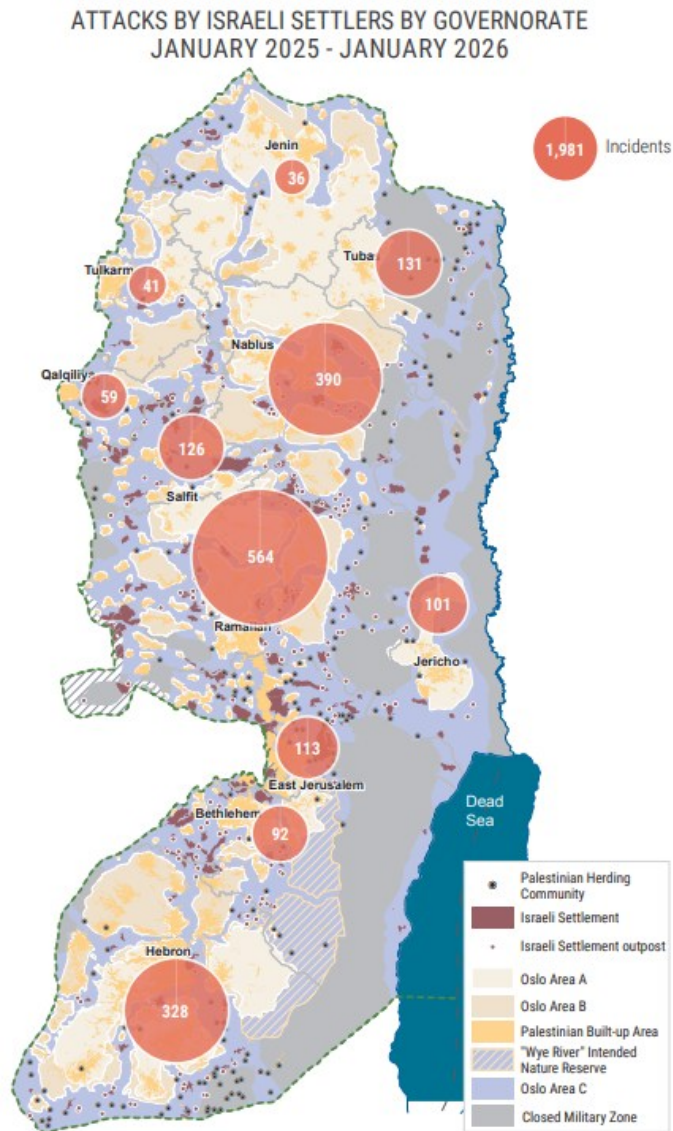


Figure 3: Attacks by Israeli settlers in the West Bank, by governorate - from January 2025 to January 2026.
Source: Based on UN OCHA West Bank Monthly Snapshot - Casualties, Property Damage and Displacement, January 2026.¹¹⁶

On 15 March 2026, the UN OHCHR OPT reported an alarming ‘pattern of unlawful killings’ of Palestinians amid growing impunity. In one of the latest incidents, on 15 March 2026, Israeli forces reportedly shot and killed a Palestinian family of four, including two young children, in the northern West Bank.¹¹⁷ In occupied East Jerusalem, extrajudicial killings, widespread demolitions, and forced displacement have increased. Checkpoints and closures are cutting

¹¹⁶ UN OCHA, West Bank Monthly Snapshot - Casualties, Property Damage and Displacement | January 2026, 19 March 2026, [url](#)

¹¹⁷ UN OHCHR OPT, Alarm over pattern of unlawful killings with two Palestinian families killed and settlers terrorising communities, 15 March 2026, [url](#)



the city off from its Palestinian surroundings, limiting access to social, cultural, economic, and religious life. According to UN experts, ‘punitive policing and systematic interference with freedom of worship are designed to coerce Palestinians to leave.’¹¹⁸ Since the new regional escalation, UN OCHA has recorded more than 150 settler attacks causing casualties or property damage across around 90 communities (an average of over six attacks a day, affecting roughly four communities daily).¹¹⁹

Between January and February 2025, Israeli forces carried out operations that resulted in the depopulation of three refugee camps in the northern West Bank (Jenin, Tulkarem, and Nur Shams),¹²⁰ causing the largest forced displacement in the West Bank since 1967.¹²¹ UN OCHA reported that from January 2025 until January 2026, a total of 38 008 Palestinians were displaced in the West Bank (of those, 33 362 were displaced during operations by Israeli or Palestinian forces in refugee camps; 2 360 were displaced due to settler violence and movement restrictions; 2 134 were displaced due to lack of permit, punitive measures and demolitions; 152 were displaced due to the destruction of homes in operations carried out by Israeli forces).¹²²

Living conditions in the West Bank have worsened due to intensified military operations, settler violence, and movement restrictions, which have hindered access to healthcare, education, and protection services. Women and girls, including tens of thousands of pregnant women, have been particularly affected.¹²³ A representative by UNRWA informed in January 2026 that Palestinian refugees who have been expelled from the camps by Israeli forces in January 2025 are living in poverty, with their incomes cut off and limited prospects of returning home as ‘the camps are being gradually demolished by the Israeli military.’¹²⁴

By the end of March 2026, the humanitarian situation in the West Bank, including East Jerusalem, had further deteriorated.¹²⁵ As a result of regional escalation, additional checkpoint and road closures across the West Bank have further impacted movement between communities,¹²⁶ limiting access to land, livelihoods, and essential services, amid continued

¹¹⁸ UN OHCHR, UN experts warn against the irreversible ‘de-Palestinisation’ of Jerusalem, 6 March 2026, [url](#)

¹¹⁹ UN OCHA, Humanitarian Situation Report, 27 March 2026, [url](#)

¹²⁰ BBC, Israel expels residents of three West Bank refugee camps, 23 February 2025, [url](#); HRW, West Bank: Israel Emptying Refugee Camps a Crime Against Humanity, 20 November 2025, [url](#)

¹²¹ HRW, World Report 2026 – Events of 2025, Israel and Palestine, 4 February 2026, [url](#); Oxfam, Largest forced displacement in the West Bank since 1967, 25 February 2025, [url](#); New York Times, Palestinian Displacement in the West Bank Is Highest Since 1967, Experts Say, 17 February 2025, [url](#)

¹²² UN OCHA, West Bank - Monthly snapshot: casualties, property damage and displacement as of 31 January 2026, [url](#)

¹²³ UNFPA, Palestine Situation Report (October-December 2025), 21 January 2026, [url](#)

¹²⁴ UN Multimedia room, Gaza and West Bank update UNRWA – UNOPS – UNIS, Geneva 23 January 2026, [url](#)

¹²⁵ UN OCHA, Humanitarian Situation Report, 19 March 2026, [url](#); UN OCHA, Humanitarian Situation Report, 27 March 2026, [url](#)

¹²⁶ UN OCHA, Humanitarian Situation Report, 6 March 2026, [url](#)



fatalities and injuries as well as property damage.¹²⁷

3.2. Operational status and capacity

UNRWA operations and services in the West Bank, including East Jerusalem, have been disrupted due to intensified Israeli security incursions, tighter movement and access restrictions, recurrent settler violence, and periodic closures at key crossings.¹²⁸ The aforementioned two bills passed by Israel in October 2024, which took effect on 30 January 2025, have then significantly hindered the ability of UNRWA to carry out its mandate in the West Bank, especially in East Jerusalem.¹²⁹ This is due to the prohibition of all Agency activities within East Jerusalem and the imposition of a no-contact policy between Israeli authorities and UNRWA.¹³⁰

Since the end of January 2025, Israeli authorities have not issued visas or permits to the Agency's international staff, who remained barred from entering the OPT.¹³¹ Following the enactment of the laws by Israeli government, the UNRWA headquarters in East Jerusalem were vacated, and by the end of March 2025 all international personnel in the occupied Palestinian territory had been relocated.¹³² The UNRWA headquarters were eventually demolished on 20 January 2026,¹³³ when armed Israeli forces arrived at the Agency's compound, accompanied by bulldozers.¹³⁴ They forcibly entered the site and demolished offices and warehouses.¹³⁵ The headquarters were then set on fire, in what the Agency called 'an unprecedented attack on the United Nations'.¹³⁶

In January 2026, Israeli authorities had also stormed a UNRWA health clinic in Jerusalem's Old City and forcibly shut it down for 30 days.¹³⁷ By the end of the same month, electricity and water supply was cut to several UNRWA facilities across East Jerusalem, including Shu'fat

¹²⁷ UN OCHA, Humanitarian Situation Report, 19 March 2026, [url](#); UN OCHA, Humanitarian Situation Report, 27 March 2026, [url](#)

¹²⁸ UNRWA, UNRWA Strategic Plan 2026-2029, 2026, [url](#), p. 5

¹²⁹ UNRWA, UNRWA's work in the occupied Palestinian territory since January 2025, 23 September 2025, [url](#), p. 2

¹³⁰ UNGA, Report of the Working Group on the Financing of the United Nations Relief and Works Agency for Palestine Refugees in the Near East (A/80/340), 15 August 2025, [url](#), para. 11

¹³¹ UNRWA, UNRWA Situation Report #214 on the Humanitarian Crisis in the Gaza Strip and the Occupied West Bank, including East Jerusalem, 25 March 2026, [url](#)

¹³² UNGA, Report of the Working Group on the Financing of the United Nations Relief and Works Agency for Palestine Refugees in the Near East (A/80/340), 15 August 2025, [url](#), para. 11

¹³³ Times of Israel, Israel demolishes UNRWA's East Jerusalem headquarters; UN agency: 'Unprecedented attack', 20 January 2026, [url](#)

¹³⁴ Guardian, Israel bulldozes Unrwa headquarters in East Jerusalem, 20 January 2026, [url](#); AP, Israeli crews target UN facilities for Palestinian refugees in east Jerusalem, 20 January 2026, [url](#)

¹³⁵ UNRWA, UNRWA Situation Report #205 on the Humanitarian Crisis in the Gaza Strip and the occupied West Bank, including East Jerusalem, 21 January 2026, [url](#)

¹³⁶ UN, UNRWA Commissioner-General: The burning of UNRWA's headquarters is an unprecedented attack on the United Nations, 25 January 2026, [url](#)

¹³⁷ Times of Israel, Israel shuts UNRWA health clinic in Jerusalem's Old City for 30 days, 15 January 2026, [url](#); UN, East Jerusalem: Forced shutdown of UN clinic signals escalating disregard for international law, 14 January 2026, [url](#)



refugee camp, as provisions of Israeli legislation amended in December 2025 came into effect.¹³⁸ Shu'fat Camp is the only refugee camp located within what the State of Israel considers the municipal boundaries of East Jerusalem. It is home to more than 16 000 registered Palestine refugees.¹³⁹ According to Israeli authorities, as reported by The Jerusalem Post, 10 UNRWA-registered properties, including schools, clinics and a training centre, received warning letters on 11 and 12 January 2026, and the properties were disconnected from electricity on 28 January.¹⁴⁰

Despite the ban,¹⁴¹ severe access restrictions, security challenges and amid large-scale displacement, UNRWA reported to have continued operations in the West Bank, remaining a central provider of health care, basic assistance, and collective emergency shelter for affected Palestine refugees.¹⁴² The Agency employs between 4 000¹⁴³ and 4 600 Palestinian personnel across the West Bank,¹⁴⁴ who have continued to coordinate and directly deliver humanitarian assistance.¹⁴⁵

3.3. Provision of essential services and emergency response

The West Bank has the highest number of official Palestine refugee camps among UNRWA's five fields; while other registered refugees live throughout rural and urban areas, including East Jerusalem.¹⁴⁶ UNRWA provides essential services to eligible beneficiaries, including education, healthcare, relief and social protection, infrastructure support, environmental health, and microfinance. Since the 7th of October 2023, the Agency has faced major challenges and constraints in delivering its humanitarian response in all refugee camps.¹⁴⁷ As of September 2025, UNRWA reported to have continued serving around 920 000 registered

¹³⁸ UN OCHA, Humanitarian Situation Update #356 | West Bank, 5 February 2026, [url](#)

¹³⁹ UNRWA, UNRWA Situation Report #206 on the Humanitarian Crisis in the Gaza Strip and the Occupied West Bank, including East Jerusalem, 28 February 2026, [url](#)

¹⁴⁰ Jerusalem Post, State asks High Court to reject challenge to anti-UNRWA laws ahead of Monday hearing, 26 March 2026, [url](#)

¹⁴¹ Times of Israel, Despite laws banning it, UNRWA continues to operate almost as usual in East Jerusalem, 9 April 2025, [url](#)

¹⁴² UNRWA, Occupied Palestinian Territory Flash Appeal 2026: Summary, 9 February 2026, [url](#), p. 1

¹⁴³ UNRWA, UNRWA Situation Report #214 on the Humanitarian Crisis in the Gaza Strip and the Occupied West Bank, including East Jerusalem, 25 March 2026, [url](#)

¹⁴⁴ UNRWA, UNRWA's work in the occupied Palestinian territory since January 2025, 23 September 2025, [url](#), p. 2. It should be noted that UNRWA data on employed personnel across its five operational fields may vary slightly across publications.

¹⁴⁵ UNRWA, UNRWA Situation Report #214 on the Humanitarian Crisis in the Gaza Strip and the Occupied West Bank, including East Jerusalem, 25 March 2026, [url](#)

¹⁴⁶ The 19 recognised refugee camps are Aida, Am'ari, Aqbat Jabr, Arroub, Askar, Balata, Beit Jibrin, Camp No. 1, Deir 'Ammar, Dheisheh, Ein el-Sultan, Far'a, Fawwar, Jalazone, Jenin, Kalandia, Nur Shams, Shu'fat, Tulkarm. UNRWA, Where we Work, West Bank, n.d, [url](#)

¹⁴⁷ UNRWA, Where we Work, West Bank, Tulkarm Camp, 2023, [url](#)

Palestine refugees in the occupied West Bank, about 290 000 in camps and 630 000 outside camps.¹⁴⁸

According to UNRWA Commissioner-General Philippe Lazzarini, as of November 2025, the Agency remained ‘very active’ in the West Bank, providing a broad range of services.¹⁴⁹ Since the end of January 2026, the cutting off of water and electricity supply by Israeli authorities to several UNRWA facilities across East Jerusalem, including Shu’fat refugee camp, have disrupted schools, health centres, and other essential services for Palestine refugees.¹⁵⁰ Nonetheless, the Agency reported to have continued operating in the West Bank, assisting the over 30 000 people displaced in the north by Israeli military operations, as well as providing education and healthcare to ‘thousands and thousands of others’.¹⁵¹ In March 2026, the Director of UNRWA in the West Bank, Roland Friedrich, reported that, ‘despite the challenging operational context UNRWA has continued to deliver its services in the West Bank’, with the support of its partners.¹⁵²

Emergency response in the northern West Bank. UNRWA has been acting as primary provider of humanitarian assistance to the approximately 33 000 Palestine refugees displaced following Israeli military operations in the northern West Bank in January 2025.¹⁵³ As of September 2025, a total of 400 UNRWA staff members were dedicated to the emergency response in the northern West Bank. Approximately 90 % of the 4 400 displaced students received UNRWA’s emergency education support. Primary healthcare services were being delivered through 11 temporary health facilities and four mobile health teams serving displaced populations. Additionally, around 13 tons of waste were being removed daily from communities hosting internally displaced persons.¹⁵⁴

Food and microcredit. In March 2026, director of UNRWA in the West Bank, Roland Friedrich, stated that, during the month of Ramadan, the Agency scaled up its assistance to ‘thousands of vulnerable families’ through food aid and cash-based interventions, in coordination with humanitarian partners. More than 5 400 families living below the poverty line received social safety payments to support food, utilities, and household expenses. Over 7 900 displaced families from Jenin, Tulkarm, and Nur Shams camps received emergency assistance. In addition, more than 5 400 labourers and medical patients from Gaza stranded in the West

¹⁴⁸ UNRWA, UNRWA’s work in the occupied Palestinian territory since January 2025, 23 September 2025, [url](#), p. 2. It should be noted that UNRWA data on registered refugees across its five operational fields, as well as the latest available figures on the number of refugees who have received assistance by the Agency, may vary slightly across publications, even when based on the same underlying data.

¹⁴⁹ UNRWA, Press Conference with UNRWA Commissioner-General Philippe Lazzarini, on YouTube UNRWA Channel, 13 November 2025, [url](#), min. 5:42 -6:36

¹⁵⁰ UN OCHA, Humanitarian Situation Update #356 | West Bank, 5 February 2026, [url](#)

¹⁵¹ Fowler J., Interview with DW, UN calls on Israel to stop demolishing UNRWA headquarters, on YouTube DW Channel, 20 January 2026, [url](#), min. 3:55-4:18

¹⁵² Friedrich R., Director of UNRWA Affairs in West Bank, Post on X, 21 March 2026, [url](#)

¹⁵³ UN Multimedia room, Gaza and West Bank update UNRWA – UNOPS – UNIS, 23 January 2026, [url](#)

¹⁵⁴ UNRWA, UNRWA’s work in the occupied Palestinian territory since January 2025, 23 September 2025, [url](#), p. 2



Bank received multi-purpose cash assistance to cover accommodation, food, transportation, and healthcare.¹⁵⁵

Healthcare. As of 2023, UNRWA ran 43 primary health facilities across the West Bank, including East Jerusalem, with over 895 000 patient visits.¹⁵⁶ As of September 2025, the Agency reported to have provided 687 800 health consultations in its 43 health centres.¹⁵⁷ A UNRWA senior representative stated, in January 2026, that the Agency still operated a clinic within East Jerusalem, serving ‘tens of thousands’ of Palestine refugees every year, who are among the poorest members of the community and who have no healthcare alternative.¹⁵⁸

Education. As of 2023, UNRWA ran 96 schools across the West Bank, including East Jerusalem, enrolling 45 195 students.¹⁵⁹ In May 2025, Israeli authorities forcibly closed six UNRWA schools in East Jerusalem,¹⁶⁰ and in September of the same year, UNRWA reported that, for the first time in its history, it was unable to open its schools in East Jerusalem for the new academic year.¹⁶¹ The closure of six UNRWA schools in East Jerusalem affected nearly 800 children, with only some able to enrol in other schools. In the northern West Bank, ten UNRWA schools in Jenin, Tulkarm, and Nur Shams camps remained closed following the Israeli forces’ operations. More than 4 000 children were enrolled in alternative education programmes, including remote learning, self-learning materials, and temporary learning spaces.¹⁶² Some of UNRWA schools remained open,¹⁶³ with nearly 46 000 Palestine refugee children enrolled for the 2025-2026 school year.¹⁶⁴

4. UNRWA’s operations in Jordan

4.1. Demographics and status of Palestinians

As of October 2025, Jordan hosted 2.4 million registered Palestine refugees, representing

¹⁵⁵ Friedrich R., Director of UNRWA Affairs in West Bank, Post on X, 21 March 2026, [url](#)

¹⁵⁶ UNRWA, Where we Work, West Bank, n.d, [url](#)

¹⁵⁷ UNRWA, UNRWA’s work in the occupied Palestinian territory since January 2025, 23 September 2025, [url](#), p. 2

¹⁵⁸ Fowler J., Interview with DW, UN calls on Israel to stop demolishing UNWRA headquarters, on YouTube DW Channel, 20 January 2026, [url](#), min. 4:18-4:38

¹⁵⁹ UNRWA, Where we Work, West Bank, n.d, [url](#)

¹⁶⁰ Times of Israel, Israel shuts UNRWA schools in East Jerusalem, in line with ban on aid agency, 8 May 2025, [url](#)

¹⁶¹ UNRWA, UNRWA statement on return to schools in the occupied West Bank, 1 September 2025, [url](#)

¹⁶² UNRWA, UNRWA statement on return to schools in the occupied West Bank, 1 September 2025, [url](#)

¹⁶³ UNRWA, Press Conference with UNRWA Commissioner-General Philippe Lazzarini, on YouTube UNRWA Channel, 13 November 2025, [url](#), min. 5:42 -6:36

¹⁶⁴ UNRWA, UNRWA statement on return to schools in the occupied West Bank, 1 September 2025, [url](#)



40 % of all registered refugees across UNRWA's five fields of operation.¹⁶⁵ Most of these Palestine refugees registered with UNRWA in Jordan hold full citizenship, although a minority do not.¹⁶⁶ As noted by Oroub El-Abed, an associate professor at Birzeit University, a person can simultaneously be a Jordanian citizen and a registered UNRWA refugee. In such cases, they are eligible for services from both the Jordanian authorities and UNRWA, with the decision on where to seek assistance often influenced by proximity.¹⁶⁷

Following the 2023 Gaza war, over 200 Palestine refugees from Gaza and the West Bank remain stranded in Jordan. Together with about 180 000 ex-Gazans displaced since 1967, these populations registered with UNRWA are among the most vulnerable in the country. Many do not have legal identification and are considered foreigners or stateless, restricting their access to formal jobs and essential services. Reliance on informal employment and humanitarian assistance contributes to persistent poverty and social exclusion of these individuals, increasing vulnerability to economic shocks and potential reductions in aid.¹⁶⁸

As of September 2025, 19 572 Palestine refugees from Syria were registered with UNRWA in Jordan, including 2 900 stateless individuals who experience significant restrictions on employment, education, and healthcare. Following the change of regime in Syria in December 2024, only 93 of these refugees - less than 1 % - were able to return, due to safety risks, gaps in services, and uncertain livelihoods.¹⁶⁹

4.2. Security context

Jordan has remained stable despite a volatile regional context, but it has been affected by neighbouring conflicts, including the war in Gaza since late 2023.¹⁷⁰ During the June 2025 conflict between Israel and Iran, drone debris fell into Jordan, causing civilian injuries and property damage.¹⁷¹ Following the new escalation of regional conflict, in March 2026, missile interceptions and falling debris have struck cities across Jordan,¹⁷² with authorities reporting a total of 356 incidents of falling debris across the country.¹⁷³

¹⁶⁵ UNRWA, UNRWA in Jordan: Factsheet, October 2025, [url](#), p. 1; UNRWA, Protection in Jordan, last updated March 2024, [url](#). It should be noted that UNRWA data on registered refugees across its five operational fields, as well as the latest available figures on the number of refugees who have received assistance by the Agency, may vary slightly across publications, even when based on the same underlying data.

¹⁶⁶ UNRWA, Where we Work, Jordan, n.d., [url](#)

¹⁶⁷ El-Abed O. Interview with DIS, in Denmark: DIS, Palestinian Refugees, June 2020, [url](#), p. 71

¹⁶⁸ UNRWA, UNRWA in Jordan: Factsheet, October 2025, [url](#), p. 1; UNRWA, Protection in Jordan, last updated March 2024, [url](#)

¹⁶⁹ UNRWA, UNRWA in Jordan: Factsheet, October 2025, [url](#), p. 1

¹⁷⁰ Mabon S., Jordan has long been a beacon of stability in the Middle East – but that looks to be changing, in The Conversation, 25 April 2024, [url](#); UNRWA, UNRWA in Jordan: Factsheet, October 2025, [url](#), p.1

¹⁷¹ Times of Israel, Caught in the crossfire, Jordan (quietly) shields Israel as Iranian shrapnel rains down, 24 June 2025, [url](#); UNRWA, UNRWA in Jordan: Factsheet, October 2025, [url](#), p.1

¹⁷² Jerusalem Post, Missile debris falls in Amman as Jordan faces direct threats amid Israel-Iran war, 22 March 2026, [url](#)

¹⁷³ AA, Jordan reports 356 incidents of falling debris since outbreak of US-Iran war, 16 March 2026, [url](#)



4.3. Provision of essential services

About 18 % of Palestine refugees in Jordan live in the ten official Palestine refugee camps throughout the country:¹⁷⁴ Amman New Camp, Baqa'a Camp, Husn Camp, Irbid Camp, Jabal el-Hussein Camp, Jerash Camp, Marka Camp, Souf Camp, Talbieh Camp, and Zarqa Camp.¹⁷⁵ Alongside the ten official camps, there are three unofficial camps, while other refugees live in adjacent areas. All of them experience similar socio-economic conditions.¹⁷⁶ Palestine refugees who lack citizenship - including many ex-Gazans and Palestine refugees from Syria – have continued to rely heavily on humanitarian assistance due to restricted access to employment, legal documentation and essential services. 69 % of Palestine refugees from Syria rely on UNRWA cash assistance as their main source of income.¹⁷⁷

As of October 2025, UNRWA ran 25 health centres and four mobile clinics, providing primary healthcare to around 500 000 Palestine refugees. The Agency operated 161 schools across Jordan with over 4 000 UNRWA teachers, enrolling more than 100 000 boys and girls in grades 1-10, alongside nearly 3 800 students in UNRWA's technical, vocational, and teacher training programmes (TVET) and teacher's college. In the first half of 2025, the Agency disbursed over 6 100 microfinance loans totalling USD 5.2 million, with over 60 % of recipients being Palestine refugees (all of whom were women). About 61 900 Palestine refugees also received multi-purpose cash assistance, including 59 000 under the Social Safety Net Programme and 2 900 Palestine refugees from Syria.¹⁷⁸

5. UNRWA's operations in Lebanon

5.1. Demographics and status of Palestinians

As of February 2025, under 500 000 Palestine refugees were registered with UNRWA in Lebanon. However, because registration is voluntary, the figure may be inflated due to unreported deaths and emigration, as well as the continued registration of newborns abroad through UNRWA's online system.¹⁷⁹ A June 2025 assessment by UNRWA put the number of

¹⁷⁴ UNRWA, Where we Work, Jordan, n.d., [url](#)

¹⁷⁵ UNRWA, UNRWA in Jordan: Factsheet, October 2025, [url](#)

¹⁷⁶ UNRWA, Where we Work, Jordan, n.d., [url](#)

¹⁷⁷ UNRWA, Syria, Lebanon and Jordan Humanitarian Appeal 2026, 23 December 2025, [url](#), p. 2

¹⁷⁸ UNRWA, UNRWA in Jordan: Factsheet, October 2025, [url](#), p. 2

¹⁷⁹ UNRWA, Where We Work, last updated February 2025, [url](#). It should be noted that UNRWA data on registered refugees across its five operational fields, as well as the latest available figures on the number of refugees who have received assistance by the Agency, may vary slightly across publications, even when based on the same underlying data.



Palestinian refugees effectively living in Lebanon at around 248 000. An estimated 23 000 of these individuals were Palestinian refugees from Syria.¹⁸⁰

Apart from UNRWA-registered Palestinian refugees, there is a smaller group of Palestinians who fall outside UNRWA's mandate but who, like those registered with UNRWA, hold an ID card issued by the Lebanese Directorate of Political Affairs and Refugees (DPAR)¹⁸¹ known as the Identification Card for Palestine Refugee, which officially confirms their legal residence in the country.¹⁸² A third group of Palestinians is known as non-ID Palestinian refugees as they are neither recognised by the authorities nor covered by UNRWA's mandate.¹⁸³ Notably, Palestinian refugees from Syria have faced difficulties maintaining their legal residency and obtaining civil documentation¹⁸⁴ and remained excluded from UNHCR's system of support for Syrian refugees.¹⁸⁵ Many camp-based Palestinians, particularly those from Syria and unregistered individuals, lacked legal documentation.¹⁸⁶

Palestinian refugees in Lebanon are not eligible for Lebanese citizenship, lack political rights¹⁸⁷ and have no access to state-provided services,¹⁸⁸ including healthcare and education.¹⁸⁹ Unlike in Jordan and Syria,¹⁹⁰ under Lebanese law,¹⁹¹ Palestinian refugees in Lebanon are barred from accessing 39 types of jobs¹⁹² involving higher wages,¹⁹³ and are banned from owning immovable property.¹⁹⁴ Discrimination in access to employment and property ownership,¹⁹⁵ along with the impact of the economic crisis striking Lebanon in recent years¹⁹⁶ have resulted

¹⁸⁰ UNRWA, UNRWA Strategic Assessment - UN80 Initiative, Report to the Secretary-General, 20 June 2025, [url](#), para. 37-38

¹⁸¹ FMR, Palestinian refugees in Lebanon, n.d., [url](#)

¹⁸² Asylos, Lebanon: Stateless Palestinians, last updated 2 April 2024, [url](#)

¹⁸³ FMR, Palestinian refugees in Lebanon, n.d., [url](#)

¹⁸⁴ Asylos, Lebanon: Stateless Palestinians, last updated 2 April 2024, [url](#)

¹⁸⁵ Al-Akhbar, Lebanon's Residency Rules Trap Palestinian Syrian Students, 1 July 2025, [url](#)

¹⁸⁶ PAHRW, The Reality of Palestinian Camps in Lebanon: An Ongoing Nakba and a Multi-Dimensional Struggle Issued by the Palestinian Association for Human Rights (Witness), June 2025, [url](#)

¹⁸⁷ Freedom House, Freedom in the World 2025 – Lebanon, 2025, [url](#), section B4

¹⁸⁸ Arab Weekly, Lebanon's push to disarm Palestinian camps faces major hurdles, doubts emerge, 11 June 2025, [url](#)

¹⁸⁹ UNRWA, UNRWA Strategic Assessment - UN80 Initiative, Report to the Secretary-General, 20 June 2025, [url](#), para. 38

¹⁹⁰ Arab Weekly, Lebanon's push to disarm Palestinian camps faces major hurdles, doubts emerge, 11 June 2025, [url](#)

¹⁹¹ Al-Akhbar, Palestinian Workers in Lebanon: Still Under Siege, 1 May 2025, 1 May 2025, [url](#)

¹⁹² Freedom House, Freedom in the World 2025 – Lebanon, 2025, [url](#), section F4

¹⁹³ Al Jazeera, Palestinians in Lebanon, refugees living in fear of Israeli air strikes, 6 October 2024, [url](#)

¹⁹⁴ UNRWA, Where We Work, last updated February 2025, [url](#)

¹⁹⁵ UNRWA, Where We Work, last updated February 2025, [url](#); HRW, World Report 2025 – Lebanon, 16 January 2025, [url](#), p. 281

¹⁹⁶ UNRWA, Where We Work, last updated February 2025, [url](#); NRC, Cross-border hostilities deepen suffering for refugees and local communities in crisis-hit Lebanon, 25 April 2024, [url](#)



in high poverty rates among Palestinian refugees¹⁹⁷ (exceeding 85 % in most camps as of mid-2025),¹⁹⁸ as well as widespread unemployment.¹⁹⁹

5.2. Security and humanitarian context

Israeli airstrikes targeted Palestine refugee camps (Ein el- Hilweh,²⁰⁰ El Buss,²⁰¹ Rashidieh,²⁰² Burj al-Barajneh - in Southern Lebanon,²⁰³ and Beddawi camp - in the northern city of Tripoli)²⁰⁴ in 2024 - causing several casualties²⁰⁵ - as well as in 2025.²⁰⁶ Almost all Palestine refugee families displaced by the 2024 conflict²⁰⁷ had returned to Lebanon by June 2025, with most of them finding their homes largely undamaged. However, about 201 100 Palestine refugees in Lebanon, including roughly 23 600 Palestinian refugees from Syria, continued to face severe socioeconomic hardship, with limited access to public services and regulated professions, and more than 80 % living below the poverty line.²⁰⁸

The refugee camps have long been affected by funding shortages²⁰⁹ with reports of overcrowding,²¹⁰ poor ventilation and constant power outages. In some camps such as Nahr al-Bared, drinking water had turned salty and unsuitable for domestic use. According to the Lebanon-based Palestinian Association for Human Rights (Witness) (PAHRW), infrastructure in most camps was 'near total collapse' as of mid-2025.²¹¹

Amid wider regional escalation linked to the Iran war, and following Hezbollah's launch of rockets and drones toward Israel on 2 March 2026, Israel intensified airstrikes across

¹⁹⁷ UNRWA, Where We Work, last updated February 2025, [url](#)

¹⁹⁸ PAHRW, The Reality of Palestinian Camps in Lebanon: An Ongoing Nakba and a Multi-Dimensional Struggle Issued by the Palestinian Association for Human Rights (Witness), June 2025, [url](#)

¹⁹⁹ Freedom House, Freedom in the World 2025 – Lebanon, 2025, [url](#), section F4

²⁰⁰ Al Jazeera, Why did Israel attack Lebanon's biggest Palestinian refugee camp?, 1 October 2024, [url](#)

²⁰¹ UNRWA, UNRWA Situation Report #5 on the Lebanon Emergency Response, 8 October 2024, [url](#); Al Jazeera, Why did Israel attack Lebanon's biggest Palestinian refugee camp?, 1 October 2024, [url](#)

²⁰² UNSG, Implementation of Security Council resolution 1701 (2006) during the period from 21 October 2024 to 20 February 2025, 12 March 2025, [url](#), para. 39

²⁰³ UNRWA, UNRWA Situation Report #5 on the Lebanon Emergency Response, 8 October 2024, [url](#)

²⁰⁴ UNRWA, UNRWA Situation Report #5 on the Lebanon Emergency Response, 8 October 2024, [url](#); Al Jazeera, Palestinians in Lebanon, refugees living in fear of Israeli air strikes, 6 October 2024, [url](#)

²⁰⁵ UNSG, Implementation of Security Council resolution 1701 (2006) during the period from 21 October 2024 to 20 February 2025, 12 March 2025, [url](#), para. 39; UNRWA, UNRWA Situation Report #5 on the Lebanon Emergency Response, 8 October 2024, [url](#); Al Jazeera, Why did Israel attack Lebanon's biggest Palestinian refugee camp?, 1 October 2024, [url](#)

²⁰⁶ UNRWA, Lebanon Quarterly Protection Update 1 April – 30 June 2025, 19 September 2025, [url](#), p. 1

²⁰⁷ Syria Direct, No return to Yarmouk for Syrian-Palestinians fleeing Lebanon, 25 November 2024, [url](#)

²⁰⁸ UNRWA, Syria, Lebanon and Jordan emergency appeal 2025 progress report for the reporting period 1 January – 30 June 2025, November 2025, [url](#)

²⁰⁹ MMC, Lebanon's escalating conflict: what are the displacement and migration consequences?, 10 October 2024, [url](#)

²¹⁰ UNRWA, UNRWA Strategic Assessment - UN80 Initiative, Report to the Secretary-General, 20 June 2025, [url](#), para. 37; MMC, Lebanon's escalating conflict: what are the displacement and migration consequences?, 10 October 2024, [url](#)

²¹¹ PAHRW, The Reality of Palestinian Camps in Lebanon: An Ongoing Nakba and a Multi-Dimensional Struggle Issued by the Palestinian Association for Human Rights (Witness), June 2025, [url](#)



Lebanon, particularly in Beirut's southern suburbs.²¹² On 16 March, Israel additionally started a ground military operation in the South of the country.²¹³ During the first week of March 2026, Israel issued evacuation orders of the entire population of areas of southern Lebanon²¹⁴ affecting more than 100 villages²¹⁵ south of the Litani River, the Bekaa region, and Beirut's southern suburbs.²¹⁶ Israeli airstrikes also targeted the Palestine refugee camps of Ein El Hilweh (Saida) and Beddawi (Tripoli).²¹⁷ On 8 March, an airstrike was reported within the security perimeter of Ein El Hilweh Palestine Refugee Camp in Saida Area.²¹⁸ No incidents affecting UNRWA facilities or staff were reported as of 31 March.²¹⁹ As of 26 March, more than one million people had been displaced in Lebanon, while evacuation orders remained in effect.²²⁰

5.3. Provision of essential services and emergency response

UNRWA reported to have continued providing humanitarian assistance to the most vulnerable Palestine refugees across Lebanon (as well as Jordan and Syria), amid protracted regional insecurity, displacement, increased return movements, and socio-economic pressures.²²¹ Across the country, there are 12 official refugee camps for Palestinians,²²² housing about half of the country's Palestinian refugee population. UNRWA acts as the sole provider of basic services in these camps.²²³

Following the intensification of conflict,²²⁴ on 4 March 2026,²²⁵ UNRWA has activated its emergency measures to respond to the influx of displaced Palestine refugees, as well as Lebanese and Syrian families seeking safety from conflict-affected areas in the South and

²¹² International Crisis Group, Crisis Watch, Lebanon, February 2026, [url](#)

²¹³ CFR, Conflict With Hezbollah in Lebanon, 17 March 2026, [url](#)

²¹⁴ Reuters, Israel orders Lebanese to leave swathe of the south 'immediately', 4 March 2026, [url](#); HRW, Israeli Military Calls for Evacuating Southern Lebanon, 5 March 2026, [url](#)

²¹⁵ UN OCHA, UN Relief Chief: Middle East violence's humanitarian fallout "increasingly daunting", 3 March 2026, [url](#)

²¹⁶ UNRWA, Lebanon priority emergency response requirements, March 2026, [url](#), p. 2

²¹⁷ Times of Israel, Lebanon says 2 killed in IDF strike on Palestinian camp in northern city of Tripoli, 5 March 2026, [url](#); Times of Israel, Israel strikes Palestinian camp in southern Lebanon, state media reports, 8 March 2026, [url](#);

UNRWA, Lebanon priority emergency response requirements, March 2026, [url](#), p. 2

²¹⁸ UNRWA, UNRWA Situation Report #3 on the Lebanon Emergency Response 2026, 19 March 2026, [url](#);

²¹⁹ UNRWA, UNRWA Situation Report #5 on the Lebanon Emergency Response 2026, 2 April 2026, [url](#)

²²⁰ UN OCHA, 26 March 2026, Today's top news: Lebanon, Occupied Palestinian Territory, Iran, Sudan, Cuba, 26 March 2026, [url](#)

²²¹ UNRWA, Syria, Lebanon and Jordan emergency appeal 2025 progress report for the reporting period 1 January – 30 June 2025, November 2025, [url](#), p. 1

²²² UNRWA, UNRWA Strategic Assessment - UN80 Initiative, Report to the Secretary-General, 20 June 2025, [url](#), para. 37; UNRWA, Where We Work, last updated February 2025, [url](#)

²²³ UNRWA, UNRWA Strategic Assessment - UN80 Initiative, Report to the Secretary-General, 20 June 2025, [url](#), para. 37

²²⁴ International Crisis Group, Crisis Watch, Lebanon, February 2026, [url](#); UNRWA, UNRWA Situation Report #1 on the Lebanon Emergency Response 2026, 6 March 2026, [url](#)

²²⁵ UNRWA, UNRWA Situation Report #3 on the Lebanon Emergency Response 2026, 19 March 2026, [url](#)



Beirut.²²⁶ The Agency reported facing a range of logistical challenges, including difficulties in procuring additional trucks to transport supplies to emergency shelters. Fuel supply interruptions to UNRWA facilities and camps (particularly in the Tyre and Saida areas) were also reported,²²⁷ impacting UNRWA's water and sanitation services in the refugee camps.²²⁸ In addition, limited warehouse staffing have reduced the Agency's capacity to carry out emergency logistics operations.²²⁹ Access to healthcare has also remained constrained due to the security situation (of more than 20 clinics operated by UNRWA in Lebanon, only around a dozen were currently operational).²³⁰ To complement its limited financial resources, UNRWA informed it was working in close coordination with community-based groups, local NGOs, and international NGOs on the ground, in providing its emergency response.²³¹

Already in June 2025, the UN noted that UNRWA was to face projected cash-flow gaps starting from July 2025 that put the continuous provision of essential services at risk for Palestine refugees in Lebanon.²³² In response to the worsening security and humanitarian situation, in March 2026, UNRWA launched a new emergency appeal aiming at supporting up to 10 000 people in UNRWA shelters and around 63 000 vulnerable Palestine refugees outside these facilities, with priority given to the most at-risk groups.²³³ In an interview with TRT World, on 12 March 2026, UNRWA Senior Communications Manager, Jonathan Foyler, stated that prolonged disruptions were expected to further limit the Agency's capacity to deliver assistance.²³⁴

Shelter and food. Due to evacuation orders issued by Israel in southern Lebanon, including in the three Palestine refugee camps of Burj Shemali, El Buss, and Rashidieh, UNRWA estimated that by 18 March around 50 % of residents had left these camps.²³⁵ The Agency operated two collective emergency shelters: Sibliin Training Centre in the Saida area and Battir School in Nahr el-Bared camp in northern Lebanon. By 31 March, a total of 1 867 displaced people had been registered in the two UNRWA emergency shelters,²³⁶ which were open to anyone, regardless of status or nationality.²³⁷ Because of the emergency, UNRWA has, in fact, extended its assistance to all those in need, not exclusively to Palestine refugees, while

²²⁶ UNRWA, Lebanon priority emergency response requirements, March 2026, [url](#), p. 2

²²⁷ UNRWA, UNRWA Situation Report #2 on the Lebanon Emergency Response 2026, 12 March 2026, [url](#)

²²⁸ Fowler J., Interview with TRT World, on YouTube UNRWA Channel, 12 March 2026, [url](#), min. 2.00-6.48

²²⁹ UNRWA, UNRWA Situation Report #2 on the Lebanon Emergency Response 2026, 12 March 2026, [url](#)

²³⁰ Fowler J., Interview with TRT World, on YouTube UNRWA Channel, 12 March 2026, [url](#), min. 2.00-6.48

²³¹ UNRWA, UNRWA Situation Report #3 on the Lebanon Emergency Response 2026, 19 March 2026, [url](#); UNRWA, UNRWA Situation Report #5 on the Lebanon Emergency Response 2026, 2 April 2026, [url](#)

²³² UNSG, Implementation of Security Council resolution 1701 (2006) during the period from 21 February to 20 June 2025, 29 July 2025, [url](#), para. 49

²³³ UNRWA, Lebanon priority emergency response requirements, March 2026, [url](#), p. 1

²³⁴ Fowler J., Interview with TRT World, on YouTube UNRWA Channel, 12 March 2026, [url](#), min. 2.00-6.48

²³⁵ UNRWA, UNRWA Situation Report #3 on the Lebanon Emergency Response 2026, 19 March 2026, [url](#)

²³⁶ UNRWA, UNRWA Situation Report #5 on the Lebanon Emergency Response 2026, 2 April 2026, [url](#)

²³⁷ UNRWA, Lebanon priority emergency response requirements, March 2026, [url](#), p. 2



striving to maintain its other core functions in line with its mandate as a development agency.²³⁸

Between 11 - 18 March 2026, the Agency had distributed 878 ready-to-eat food parcels and 8 550 hot meals to displaced people hosted in its two shelters, thanks to donation from World Food Programme (WFP) and other partners.²³⁹ By 25 March 2026, available stocks of non-food items included 1 550 mattresses, 4 792 pillows, 234 hygiene kits, 1 470 diapers for older persons, 219 fire extinguishers, 2 212 protective vests, 55 gas burners, 154 cooking pots, a range of kitchen utensils and equipment, and around 310 000 aluminium foil sheets.²⁴⁰

Healthcare. Prior to the new escalation of conflict in March 2026,²⁴¹ UNRWA ran 28 health centres, providing more than 200 000 medical consultations on an annual basis, whilst the Agency financially supported hospitalisations of over 30 000 individuals per year.²⁴² Despite UNRWA's support, Palestine refugees faced major difficulties in covering their share of hospitalisation costs and were increasingly unable to meet these expenses. As of February 2025, UNRWA reported lacking the resources to fully cover the health needs of Palestine refugees.²⁴³ Funding cuts led to a significant reduction in UNRWA's health services in Lebanon, with serious shortages of medical personnel, equipment, and medicines for the treatment of chronic diseases.²⁴⁴

By 31 March 2026, only 13 health clinics were operational, while 13 remained closed due to the security situation, with staff redeployed as needed. Primary healthcare services continued through rotating Family Health Teams in Tyre, as well as teams serving displaced people at Siblin shelter and in Musaytbeh. Mobile health services remained active, including the e-health platform (Mobile Clinic One) and Mobile Clinic Two in Musaytbeh. Medicines were distributed to clinics in Siblin and Musaytbeh, while some clinics in Tyre operated for medicine distribution only. Healthcare services were maintained across several areas: some clinics closed in Saida, all clinics remained operational in North Lebanon while in Bekaa Area clinics were operational on an emergency basis. By 23 March, UNRWA said to have delivered over 28 868 medical consultations, including for displaced persons. Hospitalisation for war injuries was covered by the Ministry of Public Health and International Committee of the Red Cross (ICRC).²⁴⁵

²³⁸ Fowler J., Interview with TRT World, on YouTube UNRWA Channel, 12 March 2026, [url](#), min. 0.50-1.40

²³⁹ UNRWA, UNRWA Situation Report #3 on the Lebanon Emergency Response 2026, 19 March 2026, [url](#)

²⁴⁰ UNRWA, UNRWA Situation Report #4 on the Lebanon Emergency Response 2026, 26 March 2026, [url](#)

²⁴¹ UNRWA, UNRWA Situation Report #1 on the Lebanon Emergency Response 2026, 6 March 2026, [url](#)

²⁴² UNRWA, UNRWA Strategic Assessment - UN80 Initiative, Report to the Secretary-General, 20 June 2025, [url](#), para. 38

²⁴³ UNRWA, Where We Work, last updated February 2025, [url](#)

²⁴⁴ PAHRW, The Reality of Palestinian Camps in Lebanon: An Ongoing Nakba and a Multi-Dimensional Struggle Issued by the Palestinian Association for Human Rights (Witness), June 2025, [url](#)

²⁴⁵ UNRWA, UNRWA Situation Report #4 on the Lebanon Emergency Response 2026, 26 March 2026, [url](#); UNRWA, UNRWA Situation Report #5 on the Lebanon Emergency Response 2026, 2 April 2026, [url](#)



Education. As of mid-2025, UNRWA operated 61 schools, educating over 38 000 children.²⁴⁶ The situation at educational facilities in camps was marked by overcrowding, shortages in equipment, and poor infrastructure, with some schools recording drop-out rates of 16 %.²⁴⁷ In Ein el-Hilweh Palestine refugee camp, located in Sidon,²⁴⁸ fighting between armed factions forced UNRWA schools to remain closed for much of the first half of 2025. By June 2025, some schools had reopened, while others continued to be occupied by armed groups.²⁴⁹ While around 3 000 undocumented Palestinian Syrian students were unofficially studying at UNRWA schools, Palestinian Syrian children faced persistent barriers to education.²⁵⁰

On 2 March 2026, the Government of Lebanon announced the closure of schools and suspension of education nationwide due to the security situation.²⁵¹ Such measure also impacted the 34 541 children enrolled in UNRWA schools.²⁵² In an interview with TRT World, a representative of UNRWA stated that the Agency was working to provide online education to children who were currently out of school.²⁵³ Education services eventually were resumed across public and private schools, UNRWA schools, and vocational centres, using remote, hybrid, and in-person methods, depending on area stability.²⁵⁴ By 31 March, all 60 UNRWA schools were operational: 18 in person and 42 remotely.²⁵⁵

6. UNRWA's operations in Syria

6.1. Demographics and status of Palestinians

The most recent available data by UNRWA, as of December 2025, indicate that 418 000 Palestine refugees registered with the Agency were residing in Syria, of whom approximately 30 % remained in a situation of protracted internal displacement.²⁵⁶ Following the escalation of

²⁴⁶ UNRWA, UNRWA Strategic Assessment - UN80 Initiative, Report to the Secretary-General, 20 June 2025, [url](#), para. 38

²⁴⁷ PAHRW, The Reality of Palestinian Camps in Lebanon: An Ongoing Nakba and a Multi-Dimensional Struggle Issued by the Palestinian Association for Human Rights (Witness), June 2025, [url](#)

²⁴⁸ UNSG, Implementation of Security Council resolution 1701 (2006) during the period from 21 February to 20 June 2024, 12 July 2024, [url](#), para. 38

²⁴⁹ UNRWA, UNRWA Strategic Assessment - UN80 Initiative, Report to the Secretary-General, 20 June 2025, [url](#), para. 39

²⁵⁰ Al-Akhbar, Lebanon's Residency Rules Trap Palestinian Syrian Students, 1 July 2025, [url](#)

²⁵¹ Lebanon, Ministry of Information, Ministry of Education: Closure of public and private schools, vocational and technical institutions Tuesday, daily assessment of developments, 2 March 2026, [url](#)

²⁵² UNRWA, Lebanon priority emergency response requirements, March 2026, 5 March 2026, [url](#), p. 2

²⁵³ Fowler J., Interview with TRT World, on YouTube UNRWA Channel, 12 March 2026, [url](#), min. 2.00-6.48

²⁵⁴ UNRWA, UNRWA Situation Report #4 on the Lebanon Emergency Response 2026, 26 March 2026, [url](#)

²⁵⁵ UNRWA, UNRWA Situation Report #5 on the Lebanon Emergency Response 2026, 2 April 2026, [url](#)

²⁵⁶ UNRWA, Syria, Lebanon and Jordan Humanitarian Appeal 2026, 23 December 2025, [url](#), p. 4. It should be noted that UNRWA data on registered refugees across its five operational fields, as well as the latest available figures on the number of refugees who have received assistance by the Agency, may vary slightly across publications, even when based on the same underlying data.



conflict in the region in March 2026, cross-border movements between Lebanon and Syria intensified.²⁵⁷ By 26 March, over 189 000 people had crossed from Lebanon into Syria,²⁵⁸ including over 1 200 Palestine refugees from Syria.²⁵⁹

Before the 2011 war, Palestinians had almost equal civil and economic rights to Syrians, while preserving their distinct national identity and the principle of the right to return.²⁶⁰ Palestinians who arrived between 1948 and 1956 were eligible for registration with the General Administration for Palestinian Arab Refugees (GAPAR), under the Ministry of Social Affairs and Labour. GAPAR maintained a registry linked to the Civil Affairs Directorate of the Ministry of Interior.²⁶¹ Registration enabled access to identity documents, family records, work permits, and travel documents.²⁶² However, not all Palestinians were registered, particularly those arriving after 1956.²⁶³

The 2011 conflict dismantled this balance. Camps - such as Yarmouk, Khan al-Shih, Sbeineh, Handarat, Husseiniyeh, and Daraa - became battlefields, subjected to sieges and bombardment, and in many cases left largely depopulated.²⁶⁴ Documentation gaps among Palestinians have remained widespread due to destroyed registries, lost IDs, and inaccessible property records, which have led many Palestinians to become 'legally invisible.' Moreover, GAPAR has largely lost its operational capacity, and overlapping responsibilities between Syrian ministries under the new transitional authorities and the Palestinian embassy in Damascus have created further confusion.²⁶⁵

Without documentation, Palestinians in Syria are unable to access services, claim housing, land and property rights, or obtain required security clearances for movement and return.²⁶⁶

6.2. Security and humanitarian context

Palestine refugee camps - particularly Ein el Tal, Yarmouk, and Dera'a - which previously accommodated about one-third of all Palestine refugees in the country²⁶⁷ - have remained

²⁵⁷ IOM, Syrian Arab Republic — Emergency Mobility Tracking and Cross Border Monitoring Situation Update — Round 2 (16 March 2026), 16 March 2026, [url](#)

²⁵⁸ UN OCHA, Lebanon: Flash Update #12 - Escalation of hostilities in Lebanon, (as of 26 March 2026), 28 March 2026, [url](#)

²⁵⁹ UNRWA, UNRWA Situation Report #5 on the Lebanon Emergency Response 2026, 2 April 2026, [url](#)

²⁶⁰ COAR, Palestinian Syrians at a Turning Point, 21 December 2025, [url](#), p. 10

²⁶¹ Netherlands (The), Ministry of Foreign Affairs: Thematisch ambtsbericht over documenten in Syrië, 9 March 2026, [url](#), p. 15

²⁶² Netherlands (The), Ministry of Foreign Affairs: Algemeen ambtsbericht Syrië, General official report Syria, January 2026, [url](#), p. 117

²⁶³ Netherlands (The), Ministry of Foreign Affairs: Thematisch ambtsbericht over documenten in Syrië, 9 March 2026, [url](#), p. 15

²⁶⁴ COAR, Palestinian Syrians at a Turning Point, 21 December 2025, [url](#), p. 10

²⁶⁵ COAR, Palestinian Syrians at a Turning Point, 21 December 2025, [url](#), p. 10

²⁶⁶ COAR, Palestinian Syrians at a Turning Point, 21 December 2025, [url](#), p. 10

²⁶⁷ UNRWA, Syria, Lebanon and Jordan Humanitarian Appeal 2026, 23 December 2025, [url](#), p. 4



largely destroyed,²⁶⁸ despite ongoing efforts to rehabilitate them.²⁶⁹ A UN assessment conducted between April 2024 to June 2024 found that 72 % of homes of Yarmouk camp were damaged in the war.²⁷⁰ In addition to the destruction and damage of the camp's buildings,²⁷¹ returnees also reported a lack of electricity, water, and basic services.²⁷² Also, over half of the country's sub-districts have continued to be contaminated by explosive remnants of war, including in densely populated areas where many Palestine refugees reside.²⁷³

Return movements to Yarmouk, the largest Palestinian refugee camp in Syria,²⁷⁴ began in late 2020, with the population of the camp estimated at 15 300 people (4 500 families), 80 % of whom were Palestine refugees, as of February 2025.²⁷⁵ After the collapse of Bashar al-Assad's regime, in 2025, refugee return movements were three times higher than the total recorded during the previous five years. By November 2025, around 42 000 Palestine refugees had returned to the heavily damaged camps of Yarmouk, Ein el Tal and Dera'a, compared with 12 638 returnees recorded in December 2024. These returns were largely driven by worsening conditions in displacement, particularly unaffordable housing and the lack of legal status abroad, rather than by improvements in refugees' former places of habitual residence in Syria.²⁷⁶

Food insecurity among Palestine refugees rose from 56 % in 2023 to 63 % in 2024, reaching 92 % during the first half of 2025.²⁷⁷ Malnutrition particularly affected children, pregnant women, and the elderly.²⁷⁸ 25 % of households of Palestine refugees were female-headed, while 30 % of Palestine refugees were categorised as 'extremely vulnerable.' With only 33 % of adults employed, child labour and early marriage were increasingly affecting children and women. Furthermore, prolonged displacement has also deepened trauma and mental health concerns, yet access to healthcare and education remains limited.²⁷⁹

²⁶⁸ UN/Syrian Arab Republic, Syria – Common Country Analysis, 2024 Update, 27 March 2025, [url](#), p. 34; UN OCHA, Humanitarian Response Priorities, Syrian Arab Republic, January – June 2025, March 2025, [url](#), p. 14; COAR, Palestinian Syrians at a Turning Point, 21 December 2025, [url](#), p. 10

²⁶⁹ UN OCHA, Humanitarian Response Priorities, Syrian Arab Republic, January – June 2025, March 2025, [url](#), p. 14

²⁷⁰ UNRWA, Rebuilding Lives and Infrastructure: Yarmouk Camp, Syria, 8 May 2025, [url](#)

²⁷¹ Enab Baladi, Yarmouk Camp: Residents return to a devastated area lacking services, 17 April 2025, [url](#); New Lines Magazine, Amid the Ghosts of a Refugee Camp, 20 June 2025, [url](#)

²⁷² Enab Baladi, Yarmouk Camp: Residents return to a devastated area lacking services, 17 April 2025, [url](#)

²⁷³ UNRWA, Syria, Lebanon and Jordan Humanitarian Appeal 2026, 23 December 2025, [url](#), p. 4

²⁷⁴ UNRWA, Yarmouk (Unofficial Camp), n.d., [url](#); UNRWA, Rebuilding Lives and Infrastructure: Yarmouk Camp, Syria, 8 May 2025, [url](#)

²⁷⁵ UNRWA, Yarmouk (Unofficial Camp), n.d., [url](#)

²⁷⁶ UNRWA, Syria, Lebanon and Jordan Humanitarian Appeal 2026, 23 December 2025, [url](#), pp. 4, 6

²⁷⁷ UNRWA, Syria, Lebanon and Jordan Humanitarian Appeal 2026, 23 December 2025, [url](#), p. 4

²⁷⁸ UN OCHA, Humanitarian Response Priorities, Syrian Arab Republic, January – June 2025, March 2025, [url](#), p. 14

²⁷⁹ UN OCHA, Humanitarian Response Priorities, Syrian Arab Republic, January – June 2025, March 2025, [url](#), p. 14



6.3. Provision of essential services

Almost 96 % of Palestine refugees in Syria rely on UNRWA's assistance, particularly cash support to cover basic needs and access to medical care,²⁸⁰ with efforts being constrained by ongoing funding shortages.²⁸¹

Palestine refugees in Syria have been spread across 12 refugee camps and various other sites throughout the country.²⁸² According to a humanitarian organisation interviewed by the Danish Immigration Service (DIS) in September 2025, over the years, some Palestinians have moved out of the camps to large informal settlements in rural areas. While UNRWA provides services in the camps, only a limited range of services are provided in such informal settlements. As a result, Palestinians living outside the camps or in informal settlements must either travel to the camps to access these services or rely on public services provided by the authorities.²⁸³

Palestine refugees returning to Syria, whether from abroad or internal displacement, are eligible for the same UNRWA services as residents (subject to funding) and must reactivate or transfer their registration to access the services. They can access healthcare, education, protection, social support, and livelihood assistance.²⁸⁴ Palestinian refugees returning to Syria faced significant challenges, including limited access to essential services and economic hardship.²⁸⁵ With basic services scarce and security still fragile, UNRWA's financial crisis is increasingly constraining its ability to sustain support, weakening a last-resort safety net for Palestinians in Syria. Although it remains the backbone of service provision, the Agency faces unprecedented financial pressure, while no alternative provider has emerged at a scale sufficient to fill the gap.²⁸⁶

A humanitarian organisation interviewed by DIS in 2025 stated that funding shortfall has had a significant impact on the provision of healthcare and education. According to the same source, UNRWA faces widespread criticism from Palestine refugees from Syria during community meetings and on social media for failing to meet its mandate, including in the provision of cash assistance and food support.²⁸⁷ In addition, UNRWA's free legal assistance programme - which covers issues such as civil documentation and gender-based violence cases - was suspended for several months over 2024-2025, as the Agency did not have sufficient funding to cover volunteer lawyers' transportation costs, court fees, and other related expenses. Beyond its effects on service delivery, the funding shortfall also has

²⁸⁰ UNRWA, Syria, Lebanon and Jordan Emergency Appeal 2024 Progress Report, 5 November 2024, [url](#)

²⁸¹ UN OCHA, Humanitarian Response Priorities, Syrian Arab Republic, January – June 2025, March 2025, [url](#), p. 14

²⁸² UN/Syrian Arab Republic, Syria – Common Country Analysis, 2024 Update, 27 March 2025, [url](#), p. 34

²⁸³ Denmark, DIS, Syria Situation of Certain Groups, December 2025, [url](#), p. 120

²⁸⁴ UNRWA, Information on UNRWA services available to Palestine Refugees from Syria returning from displacement due to the Syria crisis, July 2025, [url](#), pp. 1-3

²⁸⁵ UNRWA, UNRWA in Syria: Factsheet, March 2025, [url](#), p. 1; UN OCHA, Humanitarian Response Priorities, Syrian Arab Republic, January – June 2025, March 2025, [url](#), p. 14

²⁸⁶ COAR, Palestinian Syrians at a Turning Point, 21 December 2025, [url](#), pp. 1, 10

²⁸⁷ Denmark, DIS, Syria Situation of Certain Groups, December 2025, [url](#), p. 52



impacted around 2 500 locally recruited UNRWA staff, many of whom were facing uncertainty regarding their job security. Despite such uncertainty, they were expected to continue working on the frontline, engaging with communities and delivering services, even though they were unsure whether they would be paid or if their contracts would be extended.²⁸⁸

Shelter, food and microcredit. Due to funding shortages, emergency food assistance reached only a portion of the intended Palestine refugee population in 2024 (48 400 beneficiaries, about one third of the target, over half women), while cash assistance was provided for only part of the year (414 600 beneficiaries, over half women, covering six out of 12 months).²⁸⁹

According to both UN OCHA²⁹⁰ and UNRWA, for the year 2026, the Agency would continue to prioritise the delivery of essential humanitarian assistance, especially for the most vulnerable Palestine refugees. Such support includes cash assistance for basic needs, food security and livelihoods assistance, sanitation services, hygiene items, and dignity kits, as well as assistance for shelter repairs and other essential non-food items in heavily conflict-affected camps, particularly Dera'a, Ein el Tal, and Yarmouk.²⁹¹

Healthcare. According to a humanitarian organisation interviewed by DIS, the funding gap has significantly affected UNRWA's operations. Overall, the reduction in financial resources has led to cuts in several essential services, including hospitalisation. Although UNRWA has continued to deliver primary healthcare — such as maternal and child health services and basic obstetric care — these services have required careful prioritisation. As of 2025, the Agency could no longer provide support for secondary healthcare, including cancer treatment, which it had previously subsidised by as much as 75 %. Furthermore, the programme that referred vulnerable patients to hospitals and covered part of their expenses has been reduced by at least half.²⁹²

As part of its targets for 2026, UNRWA indicated that it will deliver emergency health services to Palestine refugees through 23 health facilities, providing approximately 900 000 medical consultations, including around 5 000 referrals through UNRWA-subsidised hospitalisations. In addition, about 20 000 Palestine refugees are expected to receive mental health and psychosocial support interventions. Five UNRWA health centres will be rehabilitated to strengthen service delivery.²⁹³

Education. The Agency runs 104 schools across Syria with around 1 700 teachers, serving more than 50 500 boys and girls enrolled in grades 1-9.²⁹⁴ A humanitarian organisation told

²⁸⁸ Denmark, DIS, Syria Situation of Certain Groups, December 2025, [url](#), p. 52

²⁸⁹ UNRWA, UNRWA in Syria Factsheet, March 2025, [url](#), p. 2

²⁹⁰ UN OCHA, Syrian Arab Republic Humanitarian Needs And Response Plan, 2 April 2026, [url](#), p. 20

²⁹¹ UNRWA, Syria, Lebanon and Jordan Humanitarian Appeal 2026, 23 December 2025, [url](#), p. 8

²⁹² Denmark, DIS, Syria Situation of Certain Groups, December 2025, [url](#), p. 52

²⁹³ UNRWA, Syria, Lebanon and Jordan Humanitarian Appeal 2026, 23 December 2025, [url](#), p. 8

²⁹⁴ UNRWA, UNRWA in Syria Factsheet, March 2025, [url](#)



DIS in 2025 that UNRWA has managed to procure only around 60 % of the textbooks and workbooks it needed. The remaining 40 % were being reused, despite the fact that workbooks are particularly difficult to reuse.²⁹⁵

As part of its targets for 2026, UNRWA indicated that it will rehabilitate or reconstruct six education facilities, including five schools and one vocational training centre. Approximately 52 000 students in UNRWA schools, including returnees, are expected to participate in recreational activities, while around 1 930 vulnerable students will benefit from short- and long-term training courses.²⁹⁶

²⁹⁵ Denmark, DIS, Syria Situation of Certain Groups, December 2025, [url](#), p. 52

²⁹⁶ UNRWA, Syria, Lebanon and Jordan Humanitarian Appeal 2026, 23 December 2025, [url](#), p. 8; UN OCHA, Syrian Arab Republic Humanitarian Needs And Response Plan, 2 April 2026, [url](#), p. 20

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