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A Comparative Analysis Between the Palestinians of Lebanon and Jordan:
The History, Integration, and Role of Refugees in the Arab-Israel Conflict and Peace Process

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Introduction

In many Arab countries, Palestinian affairs are domestic affairs. This is especially true of Jordan, where the US State Department estimates that over half of the population is of Palestinian origin.¹ Lebanon, Israel/Palestine's neighbor to the north, presents a different case. There, Palestinians account for around 10% of the population and are overall poorer and met with more resentment from the government compared to other countries.² In the wake of the Arab-Israeli conflict, Lebanon and Jordan are two countries out of many in the Middle East that absorbed these Palestinian refugees. Lebanon and Jordan's differing approaches exemplify the limitations of the Palestinian refugees' resettlement and the uncertainty of a future both in historic Palestine and their host countries.

Key issues of contentions concerning Israel/Palestine typically include the following: water security, settlements, Jerusalem, prisoners, Gaza, and refugees. The topic of refugees is possibly the easiest to understand but the most difficult to solve. Palestinians want to return to their homeland. In hope of this return and in proof of their authority to do so, many Palestinian families still have keys to the homes they lived in for centuries before 1948 and land permits given to them from the Ottoman Empire. For the Palestinians, returning is not a fantasy, but a belief. However, many of the places they hope to return to have been destroyed or occupied by Israeli families for two to three generations. Moving back would mean displacing the current residents or returning to a place that no longer exists. Across the Middle East, this tension between belief and reality is what shapes the Palestinian experience.

¹ "Country Reports on Human Rights Practices: Jordan," U.S. Department of State. March 2007. <https://2009-2017.state.gov/j/drl/rls/hrrpt/2006/78855.htm>.

² "In Lebanon, Palestinians Protest New Employment Restrictions," NPR, July 2019, <https://www.npr.org/2019/07/26/745041157/in-lebanon-palestinians-protest-new-employment-restrictions>.

Palestinian internally displaced persons (IDPs) are those who were expelled from their homes but remained in the regions that are now the West Bank and Gaza or local areas around Jerusalem that fall under the jurisdiction of modern-day Israel. Equally important are the Palestinians who were displaced to Arab nations. The larger refugee population includes both Palestinian IDPs and those living in nations other than Israel/Palestine. This research focuses on the latter category, and more specifically, Palestinians who were displaced to the countries of Jordan and Lebanon.

This paper is a comparative analysis that seeks to answer the following question: How do the refugee and citizenship statuses of Palestinians in Lebanon compare to the Palestinian population in Jordan, and what implications does that entail for the larger Arab-Israeli peace process (or the lack thereof)?³ While answering this question, this paper argues that the living conditions of Palestinians ultimately do not add or subtract from the likelihood of their return to Palestine. Therefore, their permanent settlement needs to be acknowledged multilaterally to end the range of inequalities and poor conditions they experience in their host countries.

The first part of this paper is dedicated to explaining the historical context of the Arab-Israeli conflict. It is referred to as the Arab-Israeli conflict, rather than the Palestinian-Israeli conflict, to emphasize this topic's wider impact on the Middle East. The scope of the conflict is not limited to internal affairs within Israel/Palestine. Additionally, the retelling of the Arab-Israeli conflict serves the purpose of reminding the reader that external key actors -- namely, Arab nations and the United States -- were consequential in the nation's early history and continue to contribute to unfolding circumstances and prospects of a peace process. The

³For this investigation, the term Palestinian Territories will be used when referring to the West Bank and Gaza. Israel or Israel proper will reference any land outside of that which is fully controlled by Israel's governance. When discussing the Palestinian Territories and Israel proper as a single unit, the region as a whole will be distinguished as Israel/Palestine. As Israel established its sovereignty in 1948, any reference to Palestine or historic Palestine refers to the land preceding this year and includes both the modern-day Palestinian Territories and Israel proper.

second part is an in-depth analysis of the Palestinian experience, focused first on those in Lebanon and then in Jordan. The paper concludes with a succinct summary of the peace process and an explanation of the refugees' expectations for future agreements.

A History of the Land and Its People:

Whose land is it?

A series of events in the mid-twentieth-century forced thousands of Palestinians to walk away from their homeland due to circumstances far outside of their control. Palestine was controlled by the Ottoman Empire for centuries until it was turned over to British administration in 1920 after the end of World War I. The British civil administration oversaw the land for less than 30 years and in 1947, the United Nations (UN) assumed responsibility for the future of the state. When the British departed Palestine in 1948, Israel declared its independence, consequently sparking a sequence of conflicts between the Arabs and Jews in the area.⁴

The first of several international decisions that dramatically changed the course of Palestine was the UN Partition Plan, signed on November 29, 1947. The plan was created by the UN's Special Committee on Palestine (UNSCOP), a group of international representatives tasked in May 1947 with developing proposals for the future of Palestine.⁵ Adopted as UN Resolution 181, the plan partitioned historic Palestine into two states: Jewish and Arab. Additionally, it set aside Jerusalem and Bethlehem as international territory. All three entities: the Jewish state, the Arab state, and the international zone around Jerusalem, were joined together under a shared economy.⁶ Though neither the Arabs nor the Jews ever had direct jurisdiction over pre-1948

⁴ Izzeldin Abuelaish, *I Shall Not Hate* (New York: Bloomsbury USA, 2010), 34.

⁵ Strawson, "The United Nations Partition Plan," 78.

⁶ United Nations Special Committee on Palestine, *Resolution 181 (II): Future Government of Palestine*, United Nations General Assembly. November 1947.

<https://unispal.un.org/DPA/DPR/unispal.nsf/0/7F0AF2BD897689B785256C330061D253>.

Palestine, decisions made in the 1940s favored the minority Jewish population. In 1947, Jews owned 7% of the land and represented around 30% of the population. The UN's plan contrastingly gave the Jews 55% of the territory, "including the most fertile land, and the slenderest of demographic majorities within that."⁷ Thus, the UN's transfer of land implied that even while the Palestinians constituted the majority, resources were provided to the Jewish population with the expectation that the Jewish presence there would expand.

The Arabs rejected the United Nations' plan and communicated that if Israel adopted it, they would invade. This rejection was the same answer the Arab world gave to the Peel Commission's two-state proposal in 1937.⁸ In this way, the Arabs were consistent in their refusal to establish a Jewish state in any part of Palestine.⁹ From the Palestinian perspective, "the conflict was not with Jewish refugees but with Jewish settlers."¹⁰ In other words, though Jewish populations needed refuge in the wake of World War II based on legitimate needs, claims such as the one that Palestine was a "land without a people for a people without a land"¹¹ were false and did not address how a Jewish influx into land previously owned by Palestinians would impact the original inhabitants.¹²

Despite the Arabs' warning, the Jewish population accepted the Resolution and Israel declared its independence on May 14, 1948, after the British mandate ended. Directly following this announcement, five Arab countries declared war on the state of Israel. Israel won the

⁷ Arthur Nelsen, "The Nakba Generation," in *In Your Eyes a Sandstorm: Ways of Being Palestinian* (London, England: University of California Press, 2011), 235

⁸ The Peel Commission was a commission appointed by the British government. It was the first recommendation of partitioning Palestine into a Jewish state and Arab state.

⁹ Benny Morris, "Some Conclusion" in *A History of the First Arab-Israel War*, (United States: Yale University Press, 2008, 396.

¹⁰ Gerhson Shafir, "Why Has the Occupation Lasted This Long?" in *A Half Century of Occupation: Israel, Palestine, and the World's Most Intractable Conflict* (Oakland, California: University of California Press, 2017), 95.

¹¹ As early as the mid 1800s, this phrase was used to describe the Holy Land of historic Palestine as a viable living situation for the Jews. Early users of the phrase perceived the Palestinians to be part of the larger Arab people. In 1964, the PLO accused this phrase of falsely describing Palestine as empty.

¹² Adam Garfinkle, "On the Origin, Meaning, Use and Abuse of a Phrase," *Middle Eastern Studies* 27, no. 4 (October 1991): 539.

proceeding conflict, setting a precedent for future conflicts as the issue of Palestinian colonialism remained unanswered.

Changing Demographics and The Nakba

An increase in the number of Jewish refugees into Israel/Palestine and the method through which their migration was enabled altered the demographics of the land's populations and their internal dynamics. This was consequential for the Palestinians, who had lived in relative peace with their Jewish neighbors for centuries. In these circumstances, it's important to provide clear definitions of the appropriate actors and other common expressions; namely, Jewish, Israeli, and Zionist are not synonymous terms. A Zionist is someone who upholds Zionism, a movement for the establishment and development of a Jewish nation. One does not have to be religious to be a Zionist, though the two largest streams of Zionism are Christian Zionism and Jewish Zionism, each motivated by their respective theologies. While Israel is currently about 80% Jewish, not every Israeli is Jewish.¹³ Relatedly, within the Israeli-Palestinian context, a settler is someone who wants to claim Palestinian land for the Jewish homeland in Israel. Still, not every Israeli is a settler, and some Jews are in favor of the establishment of a Palestinian state.¹⁴ Overall, Israeli or Jew cannot be used as a blanket term and directly blamed for the events against Palestinians in 1948; however, a push in Zionist ideologies -- both within and outside of Israel -- and the force used by those in power in Israel can be more accurately named as a leading cause of such circumstances.

Before 1948, a Jewish population was already present in Palestine. The Muslim and Christian Palestinian populations were a longtime ally of historic Palestine's Jews. The behavior

¹³ "Are all Jews Zionists?" Anne Frank House, accessed October 2020, <https://www.annefrank.org/en/topics/antisemitism/are-all-jews-zionists/>

¹⁴ Ibid.

of those who made Jewish migration into Israel/Palestine possible in the 1940s took on a different nature against the Palestinians. Zionism is a movement that began decades before Israel ever declared its independence, putting pressure on the UN and international actors to establish a Jewish nation, sometimes at whatever length possible. One researcher puts it this way: “Without the forced removal of Arabs -- and the seizure of their properties -- it is fair to question whether a viable state for Jews could have been created in Palestine at all.”¹⁵

In anticipation of Israel’s declaration of statehood and its consequential effects, around 650,000 Palestinians left their home for neighboring countries in three distinct phases. The entirety of the exodus spanned over a year. The very first Palestinian refugees left Jerusalem, Haifa, and Jaffa in November of 1947.¹⁶ February of 1948 signaled the first major wave of immigration from Palestine as Palestinians began fleeing from their homes in steady surges out of areas assigned to the new Israeli state by the UN. During the second wave, now impacting the west-central region, tens of thousands moved from the Sharon coastal plains. The key months of the exodus took place in April and May, correlated with the Arab invasion of Israel and the Arabs’ subsequent loss. At this time, characterizing the third and most climactic wave, an estimated 350,000 were forcefully expelled from Palestine by May.¹⁷

One-tenth of the overall Palestinian refugee population can be accounted for in the exodus from Lydda and Ramle.”¹⁸ Though Lydda and Ramle were partitioned within the Arab-Palestinian state, Israel developed a plan known as Operation Dani in July of 1948 to clear a path to Jerusalem. Starting on the night of July 9th, military operations were set against the two towns with the intention of inducing panic and flight against civilians. Radio messages between

¹⁵ Nelsen, “The Nakba Generation,” 235.

¹⁶ Asaf Romirowsky, “Arab-Palestinian Refugees,” *Israel Studies* 24, no. 2 (July 2019): 94.

¹⁷ *Ibid.*

¹⁸ Benny Morris, “Operation Dani and The Palestinian Exodus from Lydda and Ramle in 1948,” *Middle East Journal* 40, no. 1 (Winter 1986): 82.

Israel Defense Forces (IDF) commanders record one of them on July 10th saying: there is “a general and considerable flight from Ramle. There is great value in continuing the bombing.”¹⁹ Regardless of why it happened, this operation was the largest of any like it during the first Arab-Israeli war, and its aftermath accounts for a recognizable portion of today’s Palestinian refugees.²⁰ Due to the scale of this event, tens of thousands of Palestinians ended up in several different locations from this operation alone. Many went into the West Bank, though sizable populations arrived in areas as far as the Gaza Strip, Lebanon, and Jordan.

The entirety of the 1948 Palestinian exodus is referred to as the *Nakba*, meaning “disaster” or “catastrophe” in Arabic.²¹ As a result of the crises in this year alone, an estimated 650,000 to 750,000 Palestinians were relocated.²² The current distribution of Palestinian refugees, including those in Jordan and Lebanon, is largely a result of these events. Palestinians from the coastal plains in the central-western portion of Palestine mainly traveled east into the West Bank and modern-day Jordan. Syria and Lebanon’s Palestinian community primarily come from those who fled Palestine’s northern regions, most notably, Haifa, Galilee, and Tiberias.²³ While Israel commemorates 1948 as the year they gained their independence, the Palestinians primarily remember this year for the events of the *Nakba*, a time of great violence and loss.

Right of Return

None of the hundreds of thousands of Palestinian refugees were ever permitted by Israel to return to their homes.²⁴ Israeli forces destroyed many Palestinian villages altogether, leaving

¹⁹ Benny Morris, “Operation Dani and The Palestinian Exodus from Lydda and Ramle in 1948,” 86.

²⁰ Ibid, 82.

²¹ Romirowsky, “Arab-Palestinian Refugees,” 91.

²² Neil Gabiam, “From Humanitarianism to Development: UNRWA and Palestinian Refugees,” in *The Politics of Suffering: Syria’s Palestinian Refugee Camps* (Bloomington, Indianapolis: Indiana University Press, 2016), 43; Romirowsky, “Arab-Palestinian Refugees,” 94.

²³ Romirowsky, “Arab-Palestinian Refugees,” 94.

²⁴ Nelsen, “The Nakba Generation,” 236.

only rubble as evidence of their existence. Several others were repopulated as Jewish homesteads or planted over with trees. After living in the land for centuries, approximately 75% of the Palestinian population was dislodged from their homes during the *Nakba*.²⁵

The expulsion of Palestinians and their settlement elsewhere is growing increasingly permanent as decades pass. The United Nations issued Resolution 194 Article 11 on December 11, 1948. Put into place almost immediately after the *Nakba*, it was the earliest legal promise of a Palestinian right of return. The eleventh paragraph reads:

Resolves that the refugees wishing to return to their homes and live at peace with their neighbours should be permitted to do so at the earliest practicable date, and that compensation should be paid for the property of those choosing not to return and for loss of or damage to property which, under principles of international law or in equity, should be made good by the Governments or authorities responsible.²⁶

Though the UN's General Assembly continually raised the idea of a Palestinian right of return, many international actors do not recognize the resolution as having any legitimacy in international law.²⁷ After the 1967 War, which resulted in another military win for Israel, focus also largely shifted away from the IDPs and the external refugee population and onto Israel's occupation of the Palestinian Territories. Following the Oslo peace process in the 90s,²⁸ many refugees campaigned for their return after feeling they were being ignored. Over time, their campaign to return has changed and grown. This desire to return has not disappeared from the collective Palestinian memory, and it affects their relationship with their current environment.

The initial number of refugees that resulted from the *Nakba* has since grown into millions as their right of return remains unresolved. The United Nations Relief and Works Agency for

²⁵ Ibid, 235-236.

²⁶ United Nations General Assembly, *Resolution 194 (III): Palestine -- Progress Report of the United Nations Mediator*. December 1948.
<https://unispal.un.org/DPA/DPR/unispal.nsf/0/C758572B78D1CD0085256BCF0077E51A>.

²⁷ Howard Adelman and Elazar Barkan, "Palestinians and the Right of Return" in *No Return, No Refuge: Rites and Rights in Minority Repatriation* (New York: Columbia University Press, 2011), 190.

²⁸ See later section for more information.

Palestine Refugees in the Near East (UNRWA) defines Palestinian refugees as “persons whose normal place of residence was Palestine during period 1 June 1946 to 15 May 1948, and who lost both home and means of livelihood as a result of the 1948 conflict.”²⁹ The UNRWA allows descendants of Palestine refugees to register as refugees. Therefore, the status of refugee is passed on from one generation of Palestinians to another.

As of 2010, the number of Palestinian refugees was estimated to be about 7.5 million worldwide.³⁰ Some sources offer a constructive argument regarding the Palestinian cause, explaining that the volume of discussion lent to Israel/Palestine “has led to insufficient attention on other Middle Eastern refugee populations.”³¹ This point is valid, however, it is also worth noting that Palestinians are exceptional from other populations because they became refugees in the specific, limited context of Arab nations against the state of Israel. The Palestinians are also unique for having UN Resolution 194 passed in their name, the validity of which is debated or ignored.

Overall, a lack of follow-up to Article 11 of Resolution 194, an increasing Jewish presence in a land that was once predominantly Palestinian, and the public defiance to the Palestinian return are common features of the Palestinian experience. Points of contrast between contemporary Palestinians are mostly a result of the *Nakba* and other Arab-Israeli events. No matter where they are today, Palestinians are tied together by their experience of 20th century Middle Eastern history. In order to flesh out the myriad of current Palestinian realities, this paper will now focus on two different contexts in which Palestinians live, analyzing if and how these environments contribute to the Arab-Israeli conflict.

²⁹ “Palestine Refugees,” United Nations Relief and Works Agency for Palestine Refugees in the Near East, <https://www.unrwa.org/palestine-refugees>.

³⁰ Jalal Al Hussein and Riccardo Bocco, “The Status of the Palestinian Refugees in the Near East: The Right of Return and UNRWA in Perspective,” *Refugee Survey Quarterly* 28 (April 2009): 261.

³¹ Romirowsky, “Arab-Palestinian Refugees,” 95-96.

Lebanon

Lebanon's History and Role in the Arab-Israeli Conflict

Great Britain's withdrawal from the Middle East in 1948 created a vacuum and resulted in a time of uneasiness. This uncertainty was further perpetuated by the major defeat of the Arab countries in 1948 during the first war against Israel. The resulting refugee catastrophe, as previously discussed, created a burden on host countries. Lebanon experienced a civil war in 1958 and again in 1975-1990, with additional conflicts in-between that time.³² The Second Arab-Israeli War in 1956 (the Suez Crisis) and the Third Arab-Israeli War in 1967 (the Six-Day War) further agitated Arab-Israeli relations. On top of its already destabilizing civil conflict, the Six-Day War was especially harmful to the stability of Lebanon.³³ The South Lebanon Conflict from 1985-2000 and the July War of 2006 involving Hezbollah and Israel were also significant for Lebanese domestic affairs.

Lebanon's role within the Arab-Israeli conflict is unique for several reasons. After the Arab states were defeated in the Six-Day War, in 1967, the PLO (Palestinian Liberation Organization) assumed the mission of fighting Israel as a non-state actor.³⁴ Seeking to consolidate the Palestinian cause, the PLO evolved into a unified front, gathering support across several Arab nations. In Lebanon, they recruited militants among the families of Palestinian refugees. The Cairo Agreement of 1969 then allowed Palestinians to use land in southeast Lebanon to fight Israel militarily. This gave Palestinians in Lebanon an ideal location to engage in activities against Israel, their neighbor to the south.³⁵ At this time, 16 UNRWA camps in Lebanon -- home to 300,000 Palestinians at the time -- were also removed from Lebanese

³² Gabiam, "From Humanitarianism to Development," 94.

³³ Elias Hanna, *The Role of Leadership in Transitional States: The Cases of Lebanon, Israel-Palestine* (US Army War College, 2014), 102.

³⁴ *Ibid*, 102.

³⁵ *Ibid*, 103.

jurisdiction and placed under the authority of the Palestinians themselves. This allowed the Palestinians to create “a state within a state,”³⁶ championing the Palestinian cause as they saw fit. In the midst of already fragile domestic affairs, the PLO gathered a large armed presence in Lebanon. The PLO thus went on to be an actor in key conflicts including the Lebanese civil war from 1975-1990, advancing Palestinian nationalism and perpetuating the idea that the identities of Palestinian and Lebanese are mutually-exclusive.

Since conflicts in Lebanon were often fought along religious and ethnic lines, beyond the cause for their own rights, Palestinians were caught within hostile domestic Muslim-Christian relations. As Palestinians moved into Lebanon, most settled in the south in Muslim enclaves or on land owned by the Catholic church. Many Palestinians were aided and sheltered by locals but avoided mixing with the local Christians, creating a context for unhealthy relations in the coming years.³⁷ Lebanon, the most religiously diverse society of all Middle Eastern nations, recognizes 18 religious sects within their country. Among the Christians, the Catholics are the majority, representing four of the country’s Christian sects: Greek Catholic, Armenian Catholic, Syriac Catholics, and Roman Catholic. Since the Palestinians first began settling in Lebanon in 1948, for the most part, Muslims favored the Palestinian cause as part of Arab solidarity, but the Christians opposed it, fearing it would result in a loss of sovereignty for Lebanon.³⁸

The burden on Lebanon as a host country to Palestinian refugees is made uniquely complex by its sectarian divisions and regional conflict, in which Palestinians have played a key role since 1948. The ambiguous promise of a Palestinian right of return also impacts the quality of life for Palestinians and adds an additional layer to the complex dynamics within Lebanon.

³⁶ Ibid, 103.

³⁷ Rami Siklawi, “The Dynamics of Palestinian Political Endurance in Lebanon.” *Middle East Journal* 64, no. 4 (Autumn 2010): 598.

³⁸ Kail C. Ellis, “Greater Lebanon: The Problems of Integrating a Religiously and Ethnically Diverse Population,” *Journal of South Asian and Middle Eastern Studies* 42, no. 4 (Summer 2019): 8.

Amidst all of this, the right of return was not forgotten, but as it remained unanswered, the Palestinians' right to asylum and nationality received little to no attention in the midst of domestic and regional conflict.

Integration: Camps and Citizenship

Compared to other host countries, Lebanon presents a very different case in its treatment of Palestinians, who make up about 10% of the country's total population.³⁹ For the most part, Lebanon has given Palestinians little to no access to the social rights and services that its citizens receive. Such restrictions usually revolve around the sectors of employment, health, and property ownership.⁴⁰ Sometimes this socioeconomic discrimination is done in the name of the right of return; in other words, Lebanon pushes against the absorption of Palestinians, not permitting their living conditions to improve as a means to make sure that they are not assimilated into Lebanon, both physically and legally.⁴¹ As of December 2019, a total of 476,033 Palestinian refugees live in Lebanon,⁴² 45% of which live in UNRWA camps.⁴³ One author describes the Lebanese camps as being illustrative of the treatment they receive from the government: "For the most part isolated, disenfranchised, and ghettoized in refugee camps, separated from the country as a whole."⁴⁴ Aside from those who live in the camps, around one-third of Lebanon's Palestinian population lives in Lebanese towns and cities, where they live in conditions ranging from homeless squatters to their own private residences. Those who do not live in camps or the

³⁹ NPR, "In Lebanon, Palestinians Protest New Employment Restrictions."

⁴⁰ Gabiam, "From Humanitarianism to Development," 47.

⁴¹ Hussein and Bocco, "The Status of the Palestinian Refugees in the Near East," 263.

⁴² "Where We Work: Lebanon," United Nations Relief and Works Agency for Palestine Refugees in the Near East, last modified December 31, 2019, <https://www.unrwa.org/where-we-work/lebanon>.

⁴³ "Where We Work: Lebanon," Anera: Where Hope Finds a Way, <https://www.anera.org/where-we-work/lebanon/>.

⁴⁴ Nelsen, "The Nakba Generation," 237.

cities live in makeshift shelters.⁴⁵ Overall, any permanent settlement of the Palestinians, mainly Sunni Muslims, were and are perceived to be a threat to the country's religious sectarianism.⁴⁶

When Palestinian refugees first moved into Lebanon, camps were built only as temporary housing. However, some refugees still live in these temporary structures built for them in 1948. Their residence here, rather than in permanent settlements, is partially due to a perceived possibility of their return to Israel/Palestine, and also, because their lack of citizenship prevents them from owning property and earning a sustainable income. Of the sixteen camps that were built for Palestinians in Lebanon, not all of them survived the conflicts that occurred following their construction. Camps that were damaged or destroyed during the Lebanese civil war were never permitted to be reconstructed or replaced.⁴⁷

For example, the Ein El Hilweh refugee camp (EHC) was first settled by refugees from northern Palestine in 1948. Located in central Lebanon, it is a case of how regional affairs and the Palestinian cause have contributed to multigenerational conditions of poverty and vulnerability.⁴⁸ During Lebanon's civil war, EHC became the country's largest refugee camp and today, an estimated 80,000 people live in and around the camp, which has an area of 1.5 square kilometers.⁴⁹ OCHA (United Nations Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs) lists security as a major concern for EHC. Competing Islamist factions lead to frequent violence and sometimes causes death or injuries and more frequently prevents students and other community members from accessing necessary provisions such as education and health services. Of the Palestinians that live in Lebanon, 65% of them live under the poverty line and 23% of them are

⁴⁵ Wadie Said, "The Obligations of Host Countries to Refugees Under International Law: The Case of Lebanon," in *Palestinian Refugees: The Right of Return*, ed. Aruri Naseer (London; Sterling, Virginia: Pluto Press, 2001), 128.

⁴⁶ Gabiam, "From Humanitarianism to Development," 46.

⁴⁷ *Ibid*, 47-48.

⁴⁸ Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs, *Ein El Hilweh Camp Profile*. 2017, 1. <https://reliefweb.int/report/lebanon/south-lebanon-ein-el-hilweh-camp-profile-2017>.

⁴⁹ Equivalent to roughly 0.6 square miles.

unemployed. Due to pressure to financially support family members and a perception of having few to no opportunities beyond graduation, drop-out rates are also high among young adults.⁵⁰

In summary, without formal citizenship, the Palestinians' economic, social, and political liberties in Lebanon are virtually nonexistent. Their lives are generally characterized by poor living conditions, in which they have limited educational and occupational opportunities. The camps that survived the conflicts since 1948 are deteriorating while housing a growing number of refugees, including Palestinians, and more recently, Syrians as well. Refugee camp expansion or reconstruction is severely limited by the Lebanese government.⁵¹ The Palestinians who do not live in camps still experience a restriction on their rights, and by extension, experience a quality of life that is dramatically lower than the original Lebanese population.

The Oslo Accords were significant for Palestinians across the Middle East because the PLO and Israeli negotiators failed to come to an agreement on the right of return. Following the failure of the Oslo peace process, Lebanon granted the UNRWA some flexibility to improve some camps and expand policies than it has in the past. Still, most policy shifts have been considered largely symbolic since they have been accompanied by no significant change for the lives of Palestinians in Lebanon.⁵²

Palestinian naturalization into Lebanon has occurred, but it is a rare exception rather than the rule. While some Palestinians seek to improve the poor conditions in which they live, Palestinians themselves are commonly reluctant to change, fearing that any changes might give off the impression that they are fully integrating into Lebanon, and therefore, abandoning their return to Palestine. The PLO was ousted from Lebanon in 1982 and recent laws have been passed for Palestinian civil rights but until civility and equality emerge as proof of these changes,

⁵⁰ Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs, *Ein El Hilweh Camp Profile*, 2.

⁵¹ Gabiam, "From Humanitarianism to Development," 47.

⁵² *Ibid*, 48.

Lebanon's status quo toward the Palestinians is still largely characterized by a resistance to their integration. Ultimately, it can be summarized in the following way: Palestinians in Lebanon "represent the poorest sector in all of Lebanese society and the poorest group of Palestinian refugees in any Arab country,"⁵³ and nearly 60+ years after their arrival, no solution or formula exists for their repatriation or permanent settlement in Lebanon.

Jordan

Jordan's History and Role in the Arab-Israeli Conflict

To the east of Israel/Palestine lies Jordan. Compared to Lebanon and other host countries, Jordan's current disposition toward Palestinians is friendly and its policies have favored their integration into Jordanian society. Though Jordan was and is a major actor in Arab-Israeli affairs, conflicts have not been detrimental to the conditions and future of its Palestinian population. Relatedly, while Palestinians have been involved in Jordanian domestic affairs, relations between Palestinians and the indigenous population have not remained hostile.

Jordan's extensive connection to the land of historic Palestine impacts the Palestinian-Jordanian and Israel-Jordanian relationship. In 1948, Jordan received ownership of the West Bank after capturing it during the first Arab-Israeli war.⁵⁴ They became the first inheritors of any part of Israel/Palestine,⁵⁵ and this ownership became a key part of Jordan's role in the larger Arab-Israeli context. Jordan formally annexed the West Bank two years later and gave all residents automatic Jordanian citizenship.⁵⁶ During the time of Jordanian jurisdiction over the West Bank, some Palestinians fully embraced their adoption into Jordan as citizens,

⁵³Said, "The Obligations of Host Countries to Refugees Under International Law," 123.

⁵⁴ Raphael Israeli, "Is Jordan Palestine?" *Israel Affairs* 9, no. 3 (Spring 2003): 50.

⁵⁵ Asher Susser, "The Evolution of the Jordanian Role," in *Israel, Jordan, and Palestine: The Two-State Imperative*. (Massachusetts: Brandeis University Press, 2012), 173.

⁵⁶ Michael Fischbach, "The Implications of Jordanian Land Policy for the West Bank," *Middle East Journal* 48, no. 3 (Summer 1994): 493.

though others preferred to identify themselves as Palestinians and Palestinians only. Many Palestinians across both the West Bank and Jordan feared that their identity would be “Jordanized.” However, when Jordan lost the West Bank to Israel in 1967, this turned the tide, and at this point, “it was now the Jordanians who were concerned that the Palestinians might one day take over their kingdom.”⁵⁷ Jordan’s formal control over the West Bank lasted until 1967 until they lost the West Bank to Israel after the Third Arab-Israeli War. After the war, a wave of about 350,000 refugees also flowed into Jordan from Israel/Palestine, joining the group that settled there in 1948.

In 1967, PLO rallied support for the Palestinians in Jordan which mirrored its activities in Lebanon. The PLO claimed to represent the entire Palestinian people, which at the time included the one million Palestinians remaining in Israel/Palestine, the couple of million in Jordan, and the hundreds of thousands elsewhere. A notable event in Jordan’s history is Black September, a civil war between the PLO and Jordan that lasted from September 1970 to July 1971.⁵⁸ Relations between Israel, Palestine, and Jordan were made especially tense by the changing dynamics of who controlled the West Bank. Fearing the PLO’s growing influence, King Hussein launched an attack on Palestinian nationalists. During the civil conflict, around 20,000 Palestinians fled Jordan and an additional 3,000 were killed in the resulting violence.

In the decade following Black September, the relationship between Jordan and PLO was extremely hostile. This shifted after Israel’s invasion of Lebanon in 1982, which led King Hussein of Jordan to see that his country may benefit from working with the PLO in any peace process. In 1984, Hussein publicly sought to partner with the PLO “in a peace initiative or peace

⁵⁷ Sussner, “The Evolution of the Jordanian Role,” 174.

⁵⁸ Ziv Rubinovitz, “Blue and White ‘Black September’ - Israel’s Role in the Jordan Crisis of 1970,” *The International History Review* 32, no. 4 (December 2010): 689.

endeavor to solve the Palestinian question.”⁵⁹ Though the partnership saw the end to overstrung animosity within Jordan, it was short-lived and ended in 1986. In 1988, during the first Intifada, Jordan announced its formal end to having any hand in the West Bank’s engagements and revoked citizenship from all West Bank Palestinians, who had previously been given citizenship between 1948-1967. This prevented West Bankers from moving east, which they had been fully entitled to do as Jordanian citizens. The conclusion of Jordan’s decisions sent the message that “Jordan was *not* Palestine, Jordan was Jordan, and *only* Palestine was Palestine.”⁶⁰

The Gulf War in the early 1990s also saw an increase in the number of Palestinian refugees into Jordan, when 350,000 moved from where they had been living in Kuwait since 1948. By 1994, 70% of Jordan was Palestinian, representing the majority of its population.⁶¹ In 1994, Jordan signed a peace treaty with Israel, becoming only the second Arab nation to do so after Egypt. The peace treaty recognized that many issues of the Arab-Israeli conflict -- borders, settlements, Jerusalem, and refugees -- were of interest to Jordan and impacted their own security. Since then, Jordan emphasizes they have no intention of claiming the extent of involvement they once had in Palestine.⁶² Overall, while Lebanon continues to experience inter-religious conflict and the marginalization of Palestinians, Jordan’s social and governmental conditions are stable. This stability and a history of association between Jordan and the West Bank contribute to the Palestinians’ quicker and more widespread assimilation.

⁵⁹ Susser, “The Evolution of the Jordanian Role,” 183.

⁶⁰ Ibid, 186-187.

⁶¹ Israeli, “Is Jordan Palestine?” 62-63.

⁶² Susser, “The Evolution of the Jordanian Role,” 188.

Integration: Camps and Citizenship

While the Palestinians of Jordan have not given up on their right of return, Jordan is the only host nation to grant citizenship to its refugee population and is known for its exceptional lengths to which Palestinians have become a part of the country.⁶³ The sheer size or proportion of Palestinians in Jordan may have forced the Palestinian cause to be addressed more directly and quickly than in other countries. Jordan, with a population of nearly 10 million, is the largest recipient of Palestinian refugees. Approximately 2.2 million registered UNRWA Palestinian refugees live in Jordan, most of which (but not all) have full citizenship.⁶⁴ Refugees without citizenship mostly include any Palestinians who migrated from or fled Israel/Palestine after Jordan lost the West Bank in 1967, Palestinians who arrived from other countries after 1967, and Palestinians whose Jordanian citizenship has been revoked.⁶⁵ In total, about 70% of Jordan's population originates from Palestine; aside from a portion of its refugee population, most Palestinians in Jordan are well-integrated into society.⁶⁶

As an extension of Jordan's historic ownership of the West Bank, the majority of Palestinians within Jordan's current borders have been formal citizens of the country since 1950. For the most part, Palestinians became fully naturalized and obtained the same rights as the original Jordanian population, including voting, access to the job market, and healthcare. These rights are better than those they would have in other nations. Despite this integration, Palestinians are still said to face "informal discrimination as Jordanians of Palestinian origin" in

⁶³ Gabiam, "From Humanitarianism to Development," 47.

⁶⁴ "Protection in Jordan," United Nations Relief and Works Agency for Palestine Refugees in the Near East, modified March 2018, <https://www.unrwa.org/activity/protection-jordan>.

⁶⁵ Immigration and Refugee Board of Canada, *Jordan: Rights and Obligations of Palestinians Living in Jordan Without Jordanian Citizenship*, May 2014. <https://www.refworld.org/docid/53ecc8004.html>.

⁶⁶ Uri Savir, "A Palestinian-Jordanian Confederation," *The Jerusalem Post*, January 2013. <https://www.jpost.com/opinion/columnists/a-palestinian-jordanian-confederation#:~:text=About%2070%20percent%20of%20Jordan's,to%20be%20of%20Palestinian%20origin>.

employment, Parliament representation, and other institutions.⁶⁷ However, Jordanians of Palestinian origin easily achieve respect and representation. Queen Rania of Jordan, for example, is the current queen and comes from a Palestinian family.⁶⁸

Though Palestinians have integrated further into Jordanian society than in other countries, there remains a clear distinction between those who live in camps versus those who do not. Following the 1993 Oslo Accords, there was little to no evidence of improvement in Lebanese refugee camps even though the Lebanese government offered some leeway to the UNRWA. In Jordan, however, the post-Oslo conditions of the camp clearly improved. Further, after the 1994 treaty between Jordan and Israel, these new diplomatic ties correlated to some improvement of Palestinian camp conditions; the refugee camps were included in the Jordanian government's initiative to develop the country's impoverished areas.⁶⁹

The UNRWA currently provides services to ten refugee camps in Jordan which accommodate around 370,000 Palestinian refugees, 18% of the nearly 2 million total refugee population.⁷⁰ For example, the Amman New Camp was established in southeast Amman in 1995. What used to be over a thousand shelters has grown into "an urban-like quarter surrounded by areas of high population density."⁷¹ Though this camp does not record frequent violence or disruption, with an area of only 0.48 square kilometers,⁷² its citizens frequently contend with the consequences of overcrowdedness. Many of its shelters are in bad repair and 34% of those in Amman New Camp report having an income below the poverty line.⁷³ The Jordanian refugees

⁶⁷ Asaf Romirowsky, "The Status of the Palestinians in the Near East," 265.

⁶⁸ Savir, "A Palestinian-Jordanian Confederation."

⁶⁹ Gabiam, "From Humanitarianism to Development," 47.

⁷⁰ "Where We Work: Jordan," United Nations Relief and Works Agency for Palestine Refugees in the Near East, last modified December 31, 2019, <https://www.unrwa.org/where-we-work/jordan>.

⁷¹ "Amman New Camp," United Nations Relief and Works Agency for Palestine Refugees in the Near East, <https://www.unrwa.org/where-we-work/jordan/amman-new-camp>.

⁷² Equivalent to 0.185 square miles.

⁷³ United Nations Relief and Works Agency for Palestinians in the Near East, "Amman New Camp."

who do not live in the UNRWA camps live side-by-side with Jordanians in villages, towns, and cities.⁷⁴

Another contribution to the Palestinians' relative ease into Jordanian society is religion. Unlike Lebanon's consociationalism but not unlike the rest of the Arab world, Jordan's government and people are nearly religiously homogeneous. The majority of Jordanians are Muslim, comprising over 95% of the total population.⁷⁵ This closely matches the Palestinian refugee population, most of whom are Muslim, and others, Christian. If the Palestinians of Lebanon are separated from the country as a whole, be it because of religious sectarian division or their defeat in domestic and regional affairs, Jordanian Palestinians are the other side of the coin. Between Jordan's religiously-homogeneous society as well as the history between the West Bank and Jordan, the feeling is described as them "having fused with a bigger Arab nation."⁷⁶

In both Lebanon and Jordan, the Palestinians' settlement was meant to be temporary but out of the two, only Jordan has responded in a way that encourages a long-term establishment. Though many of its refugees are without citizenship, Jordan's exceptionalism in giving Palestinians citizenship was most likely made possible in the wake of diplomacy with Israel as Palestinians arrived and grew in numbers that rivaled the indigenous presence. Overall, Jordan presents a more hopeful case for the future of Palestinians. Though its Palestinians have not forgotten the right of return, they hold onto this Palestinian identity while living in much better conditions than most other Palestinians across the Middle East. However, Jordan's Palestinian refugee camps are proof that there is work to do for those without citizenship.

⁷⁴ "Insights Into the Socio-Economic Conditions of Palestinian Refugees in Jordan," United Nations Relief and Works Agency for Palestine Refugees in the Near East, December 20, 2013, <https://www.unrwa.org/resources/reports/insights-socio-economic-conditions-palestinian-refugees-jordan>.

⁷⁵ Mohammad Jalal Abbasi-Shavazi and Gavin W. Jones, "Population Dynamics and Human Capital in Muslim Countries," *Vienna Yearbook of Population Research* 16 (2018): 61.

⁷⁶ Nelsen, "The Nakba Generation," 237.

Challenge of Return

The impossibility of the Palestinians' return to their homeland is the biggest similarity between the experience of Palestinians in Lebanon and Palestinians in Jordan. Palestinians everywhere partially fear that improving their situation means that they are giving up their right to return but no matter the Palestinians' current living conditions, Israel and other key actors are unmoved in the expectation that no Palestinians will be allowed to return to Israel/Palestine.

Refugees in The Peace Process: 1948 and Post-Oslo

Since 1948, many key Israeli actors have publicly opposed the Palestinian right of return. Yosef Weitz, described as an architect of "Judaizing Palestine," worked alongside Israel's first Prime Minister David Ben-Gurion. Both Weitz and Ben-Gurion played a significant role in Israel's early acquisition and land development.⁷⁷ Weitz's journal entry on June 5th, 1948 admitted that his committee "had already begun 'here and there destroying villages' of Palestinians, "so that they do not attract their refugees to return." On the topic of their self-named "Arab Question in the State of Israel," Weitz's committee additionally proposed "measures to block the Arab refugees' return, to facilitate the refugees' resettlement in Arab countries, and to encourage emigration by Arabs still in the country."⁷⁸ This is one of several examples of how some Israeli actions worked directly against the Palestinians' return from the very beginning of Israel's statehood.

The Oslo Accords of 1993 were an attempt to establish a framework for Arab-Israeli relations; though it negotiated some guidelines still used today, the process ultimately failed mainly because it delayed the status of three major issues: Jerusalem, the borders of a future state

⁷⁷ Benny Morris, "Falsifying the Record: A Fresh Look at Zionist Documentation of 1948," *Journal of Palestine Studies* 24, no. 3 (Spring 1995): 51.

⁷⁸ *Ibid*, 49.

of Palestine, and the Palestinian right of return.⁷⁹ Shortly after signing onto a second agreement in 1995, the Oslo II Accord, Israeli Prime Minister Yitzhak Rabin was murdered. Since then, no final conclusion has been reached. Even though it was signed decades ago, Oslo is held responsible for a lot of Palestinian politics today, largely for its inability to establish a permanent settlement for the Palestinians.⁸⁰ Though such an arrangement between Arab and Israeli leaders was unprecedented, Israel's unwillingness to recognize any self-determination for the Palestinians became the status quo that has not changed since. This leaves open the possibility, though unlikely, of a future state to which Palestinian refugees could migrate.

Israeli rhetoric against Palestinian efforts to return to their original land continues today. Benjamin Netanyahu, Israel's current Prime Minister, encouraged the Palestinians to abandon their right of return in a state ceremony speech in 2009. Netanyahu insisted that the Palestinians "must abandon their demand to settle the descendants of Palestinian refugees in Israel and gradually 'eat away' at the State of Israel after a peace agreement is signed."⁸¹ Israel has not and will not accept or acknowledge responsibility for the Palestinian refugees. Because of the growth in the number of Palestinian refugees since 1948, Israel's primacy in the Middle East, and the struggle to bring other actors (PLO, Hamas, Fatah) into agreement, it seems extremely unlikely that a right of return will ever be granted.

Refugees in Future Peace Processes

Overall, Israelis call on the Palestinians to abandon their right of return as a prerequisite to a future peace agreement, while Palestinians are unlikely to move forward in the peace process

⁷⁹ Tom Hill, "1948 After Oslo: Truth and Reconciliation in Palestinian Discourse," *Mediterranean Politics* 13, no. 2 (July 2008): 151.

⁸⁰ Somdeep Sen, "'It's Nakba, Not a Party': Re-Stating the (Continued) Legacy of the Oslo Accords," *Arab Studies Quarterly* 37, no. 2 (April 2015): 162.

⁸¹ Khaled Abu Toameh, "Abbas Says He Won't Meet Netanyahu," *The Jerusalem Post*, July 12, 2009, <https://www.jpost.com/middle-east/abbas-says-he-wont-meet-netanyahu>.

if their right of return is not acknowledged. The most recent proposal for the future of Israel/Palestine was set forward by Donald Trump in 2020. The plan admits that the Arabs who were displaced have, “in very significant numbers, been isolated and kept from living as citizens in the many Arab countries in the region” but describes the Palestinians as being “cruelly and cynically held in limbo to keep the conflict alive.”⁸² The Palestinians in Lebanon are specifically noted, saying they have been “for the most part barred from owning property or entering desirable occupations, including law, medicine, and engineering.” Out of all the Arab countries, the plan applauds the Kingdom of Jordan for valiantly attempting “to take care of the Palestinian people in Jordan.”⁸³

In 2018, the Trump administration cut over \$350 million in aid to the UNRWA, nearly one-third of its total budget.⁸⁴ Meanwhile, the 2020 US-brokered deal proposes that all Palestinian refugee and immigration statuses be invalidated and asserts that there will be no right of return for any Palestinian into Israel. However, it sets forth the possibility of a small Palestinian state, into which up to 5,000 refugees could migrate for up to ten years. The plan was 181 pages in total, but Palestinians were not a part of its development. Because of this, Palestinians alternatively insist on a “collective process involving many countries to try to end the decades of Israeli-Palestinian conflict.”⁸⁵ Therefore, the failure to agree on refugees continues to leave the topic, among many others, open-ended in the continued post-Oslo era.

⁸² The White House, *Peace to Prosperity: A Vision to Improve the Lives of the Palestinian and Israeli People*. January 2020, 31. <https://www.whitehouse.gov/wp-content/uploads/2020/01/Peace-to-Prosperity-0120.pdf>.

⁸³ Ibid, 32.

⁸⁴ Lisa Schlein, “UN Warns Stability and Protection of Palestinian Refugees Threatened by Trump Peace Plan,” VOA News, January 31, 2020, <https://www.voanews.com/middle-east/un-warns-stability-and-protection-palestinian-refugees-threatened-trump-peace-plan>.

⁸⁵ Edith Lederer, “Palestinian Envoy Says US Peace Plan is ‘Dead Upon Arrival,’” AP News, July 24, 2018, <https://apnews.com/article/7fabab4a95bc4b5d90cad9276dfed62b>.

Conclusion

In conclusion, the experience of Palestinians is more similar than different, no matter where they are. Dispersed by the *Nakba*, Palestinians were treated as a temporary and inferior population despite what country they ended up in. The exceptional example of Palestinians being granted citizenship into their host country was at first attributed to Jordan's unique history of owning the West Bank 1948-1967. Across multiple generations, this original Palestinian population has since grown and their absorption as Jordanians has not been resisted. However, the Palestinian refugees in Jordan who still do not have citizenship must not be forgotten alongside the celebration of those in Jordan who have become citizens. Jordanian refugees without citizenship have the most in common with the Palestinians in Lebanon, most of whom live in disenfranchisement. Lebanon is known as the most resistant of all host countries, evidenced by a lack of political action on the Palestinians' behalf while the majority live as refugees in extremely poor conditions. Though faced with differing integration styles, Palestinians both in Lebanon and Jordan are unified by their collective identity and their desire to return to their homeland, the future of which remains in the hands of international policymakers.

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