

**Palestinian National Authority
Palestinian Central Bureau of Statistics**

**A Press Release
On World Refugee Day:
The Demographic Characteristics of the Palestinian
Refugees**

2008 , June

Palestinian Refugees:

The United Nations (UN) estimated the Palestinian Refugees at 957,000 in 1950.

Palestinian refugees (1948-1950): different official estimates about the Palestinian refugees between 1948 and 1950 have been issued by different sources; British, American, Palestinian, Israeli and United Nations (Table 1). This table shows that the British, American, and Palestinian estimates are close, while the United Nations has two estimates; the first was 726,000 and the second was 957,000. This variation is due to the fact that the first census was conducted in 1949, while the second estimate was conducted in 1950. Israeli official sources estimated refugees at 520,000, which is 437,000 less than the second UN estimate.

Table 1: Palestinian Refugees Estimates by Source of Estimation, 1948-1950

Region	Estimates of the Number of Refugees				
	British Estimates	Official American Estimates	UN Estimates	Official Israeli Estimates	Palestinian Estimates
Gaza Strip	210,000	208,000	280,000	-	201,173
West Bank	320,000	-	190,000	-	363,689
Arab Countries	280,000	667,000	256,000	-	284,324
Total	810,000	875,000	726,000	520,000	849,186
	-	-	957,000	590,000	714,100
	-	-	-	-	744,150
	-	-	-	-	780,000

Geographic Distribution of Palestinian Refugees at Refugee Camps in Arab Countries:

UNRWA's Estimate of Palestinian Refugees was about 4.56 million at the end of 2007.

The humanitarian tragedy that befell the Palestinian people in 1948 was seriously destructive. Approximately 957,000 people – according to UN estimates – were uprooted, expelled and displaced from their lands and homes that came under Israeli occupation. Families were scattered and homes and lands were abandoned. The Palestinian people who became refugees settled in what became densely populated refugee camps – though such camps are not legitimate places for refugees, from a legal point of view – scattered over neighboring Arab countries. Hosting governments allotted some lands owned by the state but mostly privately-owned and leased by the state for accommodating Palestinian refugees. UNRWA does not own lands and does not recognize officially two refugee camps in the Palestinian Territory. Official refugee camps according to UNRWA's definition are those built on lands especially allocated for this purpose by the hosting government, which may call an area inhabited by a large number of refugees as a refugee camp although the area was not allocated for the purpose of accommodating refugees.

Table 2 shows the distribution of registered Palestinian refugees by UNRWA in Arab countries and the Palestinian Territory within and outside refugee camps. The number of official Palestinian refugee camps, recognized by UNRWA, is 58 including 12 in Lebanon, 10 in Jordan, 9 in Syria, and 27 in the Palestinian Territory (19 in the West Bank and 8 in Gaza Strip).

UNRWA-registered Palestinian refugees of the West Bank constitute 16.3% of the total registered Palestinian refugees of which 25.4% are living in refugee camps. On the other hand, UNRWA-registered refugees of Gaza Strip constitute 23.0% of the total registered Palestinian refugees of which 45.9% are living in refugee camps in Gaza Strip.

Moreover, UNRWA-registered Palestinian refugees in Jordan constitute 41.7% of the total registered Palestinian refugees of which 17.4% are living in refugee camps. In Lebanon, the registered Palestinian refugees is 9.1% of the total registered Palestinian refugees of which 52.5% are living in refugee camps and in Syria refugees are 9.9% of the total registered Palestinian refugees of which 26.7% of them live in refugee camps.

Table 2: Distribution of UNRWA-Registered Palestinian Refugees by Country, Number of Refugee Camps, Number of Registered Refugees in Refugee Camps, and Number of Registered Refugees, December 31, 2007

Country	No. of Refugee Camps	Registered Refugees at Camps		Total Number of Registered Refugees	
		Number	Percentage	Number	Percentage
Jordan	10	330,468	17.4	1,903,490	41.7
Lebanon	12	217,441	52.5	413,962	9.1
Syria	9	120,383	26.7	451,467	9.9
West Bank	19	189,787	25.4	745,776	16.3
Gaza Strip	8	481,180	45.9	1,048,125	23.0
Total	58	1,339,259	29.4	4,562,820	100.0

According to UNRWA sources, registered Palestinian refugees constitute only 75% of the total number of the Palestinian refugees; so about one million and a half Palestinians are unregistered refugees. Consequently, the total number of Palestinian refugees is more than 6 million including the diaspora around the world.

Distribution of the Palestinian Refugees in the Palestinian Territory:

44.6% of the Population of the Palestinian Territory are Refugees

The findings of the Palestinian Family Health Survey of 2006 showed that refugees of the Palestinian Territory represented 44.6% of the total Palestinian Territory population; 19.4% of the total population are refugees in the West Bank and 25.2% of the total are refugees in Gaza Strip. Moreover, refugees constitute 30.9% of the West Bank total population and 67.7% of Gaza Strip total population.

Table 3: Percentage of the Palestinian Territory Population by Refugee Status and Region, 2006

Region	Refugee status		Total
	Refugee	Non-refugee	
Palestinian Territory	44.6	55.4	100
West Bank	30.9	69.1	100
Gaza Strip	67.7	32.3	100

Data also showed that the refugees constitute 92.3% of the refugee camp population, 41.3% of the urban areas, and 23.3% of the rural areas. Many refugees have moved out of the refugee camps to villages and towns due to socio-demographic and economic reasons such as over crowdedness, marriage and job opportunities.

Table 4: Percentage Distribution of Population in the Palestinian Territory by Refugee Status, Region, and Type of Locality, 2006

Refugee status/ region	Type of locality			Total
	Urban	Rural	Camp	
Palestinian Territory				
Refugee	41.3	23.3	92.3	44.6
Non-refugee	58.7	76.7	7.7	55.4
West Bank				
Refugee	32.1	18.8	90.3	30.9
Non-refugee	67.9	81.2	9.7	69.1
Gaza Strip				
Refugee	53.7	84.0	93.2	67.7
Non-refugee	46.3	16.0	6.8	32.3

Age and Sex Structure of the Refugees:

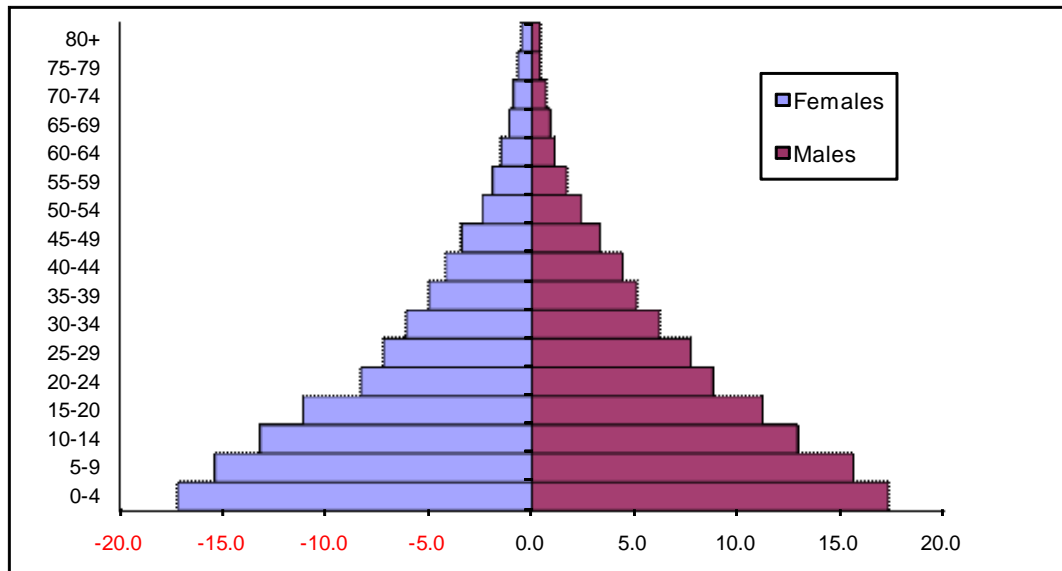
Palestinian refugees are mostly young.

The population pyramid of the Palestinian refugees does not vary from the demographic structure of the Palestinian society in general. The percentage of individuals below 15 years of age in the Palestinian Territory is 45.7% while for the refugee population the percentage is 45.8% and 45.3% among the non-refugee population. The reason for high percentages of young people in the Palestinian Territory, especially among the refugees, is due to high birthrates. Moreover, the percentages of elderly people among refugees are noticeably low and stand at only 2.8% of the total refugees compared to 3.1% for the non-refugee population.

The percentage of Palestinian refugees aged less than 15 years of the total Palestinian refugees population reached 41.7% in Jordan in 2000, 33.1% in Syria in 2003, and 33.0% in Lebanon in 2006. Sex structure of the refugee population shows that sex ratio among refugees is almost the same as of the non-refugees at 101.8 and 102.0 males per one-

hundred refugee and non-refugee females in the Palestinian Territory, respectively, compared to 102.3 for Palestinian refugees in Syria, and 98.5 for the Palestinian refugees in Lebanon.

Figure 1: Population Pyramid of the Palestinian Refugees in the Palestinian Territory, 2006



Fertility Rate Among Refugees:

Palestinian female refugees in the Palestinian Territory have higher fertility than female refugees in neighboring countries.

Based on the findings of the Palestinian Family Health Survey of 2006, the total fertility rate of the Palestinian Territory in 2006 was 4.6 children and the average number of ever-born children was 4.7. Upon comparing these rates by refugee status, differences are detected between refugees and non-refugees. For instance, the total fertility rate and average number of ever-born children for the refugee population are 4.9 and 4.8, respectively, whereas the same rates for the non-refugee population are 4.3 and 4.6, respectively.

Conversely, the total fertility rate for Palestinian refugee women in 2000 in Jordan is 4.6 children compared to 2.4 in Syria and 2.3 in Lebanon in 2006.

Table 5: Ever-married Women aged 15-54 by Age Group, Average Number of Ever-Born Alive Children, and Refugee Status in the Palestinian Territory, 2006

Age group	Refugee status		Palestinian Territory
	Refugee	Non-refugee	
15-19	0.6	0.8	0.7
20-24	1.8	1.9	1.9
25-29	3.2	3.4	3.3
30-34	4.7	4.6	4.6
35-39	5.6	5.5	5.6
40-44	6.7	6.3	6.5
45-49	7.2	7.1	7.2
50-54	7.8	7.7	7.7
Total	4.8	4.6	4.7

Household Size:

The average size of a household headed by a refugee is 6.3 individuals compared to 6.1 for households headed by non-refugees.

Palestinian households are large in size due to many reasons. Arabs have been well-known for their preference for having many children which meant higher social status for the parents and the family. Palestinian households consider children as future support and necessary family labor force to help at family farms, workshops, or stores. Many Palestinians consider children as a 'gift from Allah'.

The average size for Palestinian households in 2006 was 6.2 individuals; 6.3 for refugees and 6.1 for non-refugees. The average size of a Palestinian refugee household in Jordan, Syria, and Lebanon was 5.4, 4.1, and 3.8 respectively in 2006. The large average household size among refugees is due to high childbirth rates, especially in Gaza Strip, and the widespread phenomenon of extended families. The percentage of refugee households of more than 8 members reached 32.4% of the households compared to 28.6% for non-refugees.

Table 6: Percentage Distribution of Households in the Palestinian Territory by Household Size and Refugee Status, 2006

Household Size	Refugee status		Total
	Refugee	Non-refugee	
1	3.2	3.2	3.2
2	6.9	7.4	7.2
3	6.8	6.8	6.8
4	10.6	11.6	11.2
5	12.0	13.5	12.9
6	15.0	15.2	15.1
7	13.1	13.7	13.5
8	11.4	11.1	11.2
9	8.1	7.5	7.8
+10	12.9	10.0	11.1
Total	100	100	100
Average Household Size	6.3	6.1	6.2

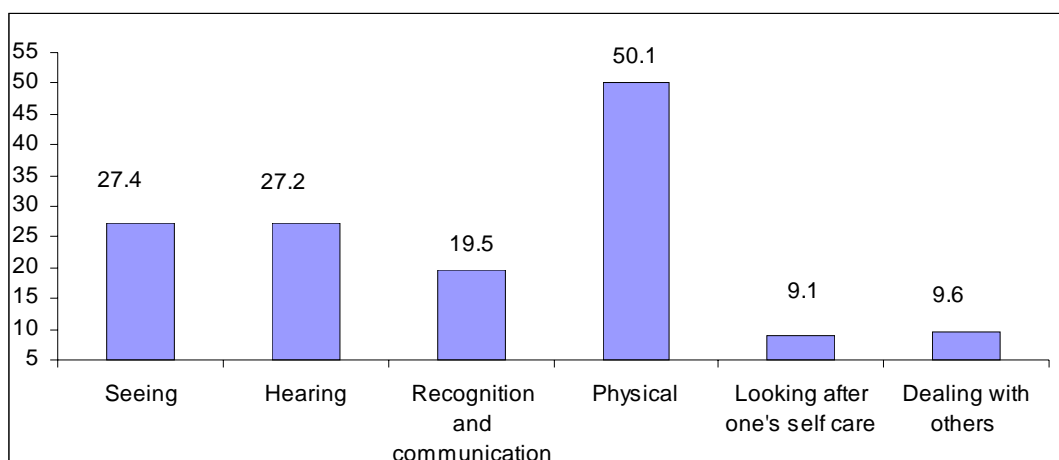
Health Status:

Disability:

There is a high percentage of disabilities among Palestinian refugees in the Palestinian Territory

According to the findings of the Palestinian Family Health Survey of 2006, 2.6% of Palestinian refugees are disabled compared to 2.4% for non-refugees. The percentage of the physically disabled who are Palestinian refugees is higher than non-refugees, at 50.1% and 45.6%, respectively. The percentage of Palestinian refugees with visual disability is 27.4% compared to 27.1% for non-refugees. Moreover, findings of the Disabled Social and Health Situation Survey, 2005 showed that 5,042 are disabled representing 2.9% of the Palestinian refugees in Palestinian refugee camps in Syria, of which 3.3% were males and 2.5% were females. Additionally, the percentage of disabled people living at refugee camps in the Palestinian Territory is higher than the percentages of disabled people living in urban and rural areas at 3.0%, 2.4%, and 2.5%, respectively.

Figure 2: Percentage of Disabled Refugees in the Palestinian Territory by Type of Disability, 2006



Chronic Diseases:

According to findings of the Palestinian Family Health Survey of 2006, 9.8% of Palestinian refugees suffer chronic diseases and receive medication; this is higher than the national percentage of 9.6% and the non-refugees percentage of 9.4%. Moreover, 3.6% of Palestinian refugees have hypertension which is higher than the national percentage of 3.3% and 3.1% for non-refugees.

Table 7: Chronic Diseases by Refugee Status and Type of Disease, 2006

Refugee status	Type of Disease								
	Diabetes	Hypertension	cardiovascular Disease	Cancer	Ulcer	Asthma	Anemia	Epilepsy	Healthy
Refugee	2.7	3.6	1.2	0.1	0.9	0.9	0.2	0.2	90.0
Non-Refugee	2.6	3.1	1.2	0.1	1.2	0.2	0.2	0.1	90.4
Total	2.6	3.3	1.2	0.1	1.1	0.2	0.2	0.2	90.2

Smoking:

The findings of the Palestinian Family Health Survey of 2006 showed that 17.6% of Palestinian refugees living in the Palestinian Territory aged 10 years and over are smokers, which is lower than the percentage for non-refugees and the national level of 18.8% and 18.3%, respectively. In regard to age, data showed that the percentage increases by age; it was 3.6% for refugees aged (10-19) years, 29.8% for refugees aged (40-49) years and 15.2% for refugees aged 60 years and over.

Poverty among Refugees in the Palestinian Territory

Households headed by refugees are poorer than households headed by non-refugees.

Data shows that refugee camps in the Palestinian Territory suffer the highest percentages of poverty. According to data on consumption patterns among households in the Palestinian Territory, 38.6% of refugee camp households suffer from poverty compared to 29.5% and 29.3% for rural and urban households, respectively. High percentages of poverty in refugee camps could be due to high percentages of unemployment, high dependency ratio, and large household size compared to urban and rural areas. Gaza Strip has the highest poverty rates regardless of type of locality. Moreover, the absolute poverty rates among Palestinian refugees in Lebanon, Jordan, and Syria by the end of 2007 were 12.0%, 3.0%, and 7.0%, respectively, according to UN estimates.

The percentage of refugee-headed households in the Palestinian Territory was 44.6% in 2006; however, they constituted 43.1% of the poor. The high rates of poverty among refugee-headed households could be due to the high poverty rates at refugee camps and in Gaza Strip in general. According to findings, the majority (42.1%) of the poor households that are headed by refugees live in refugee camps compared to 16.7% and 41.2% in rural and urban areas, respectively.

Table 8: Poverty Rates by Households' Actual Monthly Consumption Patterns and Refugee Status of the Head of Household, 2006

Refugee Status of the head of Household	Poverty		Poverty Gap		Poverty Severity		Deep Poverty	
	Value	Contribution	Value	Contribution	Value	Contribution	Value	Contribution
Refugee	33.3	43.1	9.5	45.8	5.2	48.5	20.9	44.9
Non-refugee	29.1	56.9	7.5	52.2	3.6	51.5	17.0	55.1
Total	30.8	100.0	8.3	100.0	4.2	100.0	18.5	100.0

Palestinian Refugees in the Labor Force

Palestinian refugees have lower percentage of participation in the labor market compared to non-refugees.

According to the findings of the Labor Force Survey of the first quarter of 2008, the percentage of 15 years old and above refugees in the Palestinian Territory taking part in the labor force is lower than the percentage of non-refugees of the same age category participating in the labor force: 38.5% of the refugees and 42.2% of the non-refugees. The same goes for the percentage of female refugees' participation in the labor force, which stood at 14.2% compared to 15.1% for non-refugee females.

Moreover, the same survey showed that there is a noticeable difference in unemployment rates between refugees and non-refugees. For instance, 26.1% of the refugee population are unemployed compared to 20.0% for the non-refugee population. Labor data in Jordan showed that unemployment among Palestinian refugees in Jordan in 2000 reached 13.0%, 11.0% for males and 23.2% for females.

Main Occupation

The data of the 1st quarter of 2008 showed that technicians, assistant technicians, and clerks constitute the largest occupation sector of the Palestinian population (aged 15 and above), representing 27.5% of refugees and 20.7% of non-refugees. Legislators and managers constitute the occupation with the lowest percentage among refugees and non-refugees at 3.6% and 4.2%, respectively.

Labor force distribution in the Palestinian refugee camps in Jordan vary according to sex. For instance, trade, restaurants, and hotel sectors attract 29.0% of the male members of the labor force whereas the industrial sector attracts one-third of the female members of the labor force. Moreover, 31.0% of the male labor force is skilled labor and more than one-third is unskilled in primary works. Conversely, almost one-half of the females taking part in the labor force are skilled laborers in primary works and 30.0% of them work as technicians or as clerks.

In Syria, 50.4% of the labor force of the Palestinian refugee population work in operating and assembling machines, 22.0% are professionals and technicians, and 17.5% work in the service sector. Moreover, 19.2%, 17.7%, and 15.3% of the Palestinian refugees labor force work in mining and quarrying, manufacturing industry, and construction respectively.

Palestinian refugee camps labor force in Lebanon is mainly involved in trade, restaurants, and hotels sectors (26.7%), construction (18.9%), and mining, quarrying, and manufacturing industry (13.6%). Moreover, approximately one-third of the females taking part in the labor force are involved in education and health.

Place of work

The percentage of Palestinians aged 15 and over working in the West Bank is 59.0%, 43.3% for refugees and 69.7% for non-refugees. This is largely due to a concentration of refugees working in Gaza Strip where the percentages are 47.1% for the refugees and 18.0% for the non-refugees. The percentage of Palestinians working in Israel and settlements is 11.2% of which 9.6% for refugees and 12.3% for non-refugees.

Employment:

Approximately 62.5% of the employed are wage employees (67.7% for refugees and 58.9% for non-refugees). The percentage of those who own their own business is 24.3% (21.0% for refugees and 26.5% for non-refugees).

Education among Refugees:

High rates of Palestinian refugees hold university degrees; there are low rates of illiteracy among Palestinian refugees compared to non-refugees.

Contrary to the rates of poverty and unemployment, illiteracy rates among Palestinian refugees in the Palestinian Territory are lower than for non-refugees. Illiteracy rates for Palestinian refugees in 2007 for individuals aged 15 years and over is 5.7% compared to 6.5% for non-refugees. Moreover, the rate of Palestinian refugees aged 15 and over holding the first university degree and higher is 9.2% of the total number of the refugee population of the same age group compared to only 8.4% for non-refugees.

The illiteracy rate among Palestinian refugees in Jordan 2000 was approximately 17.6%, in Syria the rate in 2006 was 16.5%, and in Lebanon the rate in 2006 was almost 25.5%.

Literacy

According to 2007 data, literacy among refugee individuals aged 15 years and over was 94.3% (97.6% for males and 90.9% for females) compared to 93.5% for non-refugees (97.0% for males and 89.9% for females)

Education Enrollment

According to the 2006 data, the enrollment rate in education for individuals aged 6 years and over among Palestinian refugees was 47.2%, 46.6% for males and 47.8% for females. These rates are higher than those of non-refugees, which stood at 45.2%, 44.8% for males and 45.5% for females. The enrollment percentage for Palestinian refugees aged 6-24 and living in Jordan in 2000 was approximately 66.0%. In Syria, the enrollment rate for Palestinian refugees aged 7-24 years in 2005-2006 was approximately 64.2%. Additionally, the same rates for Palestinian refugees aged 7-17 years and living in refugee camps in Lebanon in 2005-2006 were approximately 25.5%, 55.1% for males and 59.3% for females.

Dropout

The dropout rate for refugees aged 6 years and over at schools in the Palestinian Territory in 2006 reached 22.6%, 23.4% for males and 21.8% for females compared to 27.2% for non-refugees, 28.6% for males and 25.7% for females.

Housing Conditions of the Palestinian Refugees

Housing Units Ownership

The percentage of housing units owned by a household or a member of the household is 87.6% of the total inhabited housing units (84.6% for refugees and 89.7% for non-refugees). The percentages of housing units ownership for Palestinian refugees in Syria in 2008 is approximately 92.4% compared to 77.6% for Palestinian refugees living in Lebanon.

Type of Housing Unit

According to the 2007 data, the house is the most common type of inhabited housing unit in the Palestinian Territory at 53.3% of the total inhabited housing units, 48.9% for refugees and 56.5% for non-refugees. The percentage of housing unit ownership by Palestinian refugees in Jordan in 2000 was 77.0%, compared to 37.5% for Palestinian refugees in Syria and 58.1% for Palestinian refugees in Lebanon in 2006. This is followed by apartments at 45.0% of the total of inhabited housing units, 50.3% for refugees and 41.3% for non-refugees. The percentages for Jordan was 21.6% in 2000 and for Syria and Lebanon in 2006, the percentages were 61.8% and 40.8%, respectively.

Number of Rooms

The data of 2007 showed that the average number of rooms in a housing unit inhabited by a non-refugee household in the Palestinian Territory is 3.6 rooms compared to 3.5 rooms for a refugee household.

Availability of Durable Goods

According to data, the percentages of availability of durable goods at households vary between refugees and non refugees in favor of non refugees for the majority of such goods, especially those that are not considered significantly basic. For instance, the percentage of refugee households who have cars is 17.7% compared to 30.0% for the non-refugee households. Moreover, 27.6% of non-refugee households have a private library whereas 25.7% of refugee households have libraries. 44.2% of non-refugee households have telephone lines compared to 43.6% among refugee households. 36.7% of non-refugee households have computers compared to 34.4% among refugee households. The data above reflect the variations in the living standards and housing conditions between the refugees and the non-refugees. Noticeably, the durable goods that vary in possession between non-refugee households and refugee households are those that reflect a degree of luxury such as libraries, computers, and telephones.