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DECL: 01/14/2025

RELEASE IN PART B1,
1.4(B), 1.4(D)

Report to Congress on
Protracted Refugee Situations (U)

(U) This report is submitted pursuant to Senate Report 113-81 accompanying PL 113-76 (Consolidated Appropriations Act 2014), enacted January 17, 2014, which directs the Secretary to fulfill the reporting requirements relating to the United Nations Relief and Works Agency for Palestine Refugees in the Near East (UNRWA) under the "Protracted Refugee Situations" subheading in Senate Report 112-172. This report, prepared by the Department of State, is being submitted to the Committee on Appropriations and the Subcommittee on Foreign Operations of the House of Representatives, and the Committee on Appropriations and the Subcommittee on Foreign Operations of the Senate.

PART I: (U) Approximate number of people who, in the past year, have received UNRWA services --

- 1) **Whose place of residence was Palestine between June 1946 and May 1948 and who were displaced as a result of the 1948 Arab-Israeli conflict; and**
- 2) **Who are descendants of persons described in sub-paragraph 1**

~~(C)~~ As of September 30, 2014, UNRWA reported that there were 5,117,942 Palestinian refugees registered with the Agency.

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1.4(B)

(U) Not all UNRWA-registered refugees receive services from the Agency. Some refugees choose not to avail themselves of UNRWA services due to lack of proximity to UNRWA services, access to government- or employer-provided services, or personal preference. Using health services as a proxy for all regular UNRWA services, estimates suggest that approximately one-third of eligible registered persons do not access UNRWA core (non-emergency) services. Rates of usage of UNRWA services generally vary by host country, with utilization rates traditionally highest in Gaza, both as an absolute number and as a proportion of the registered population. In addition, given that UNRWA is a humanitarian relief organization, use of and access to its services fluctuate by need, especially in emergencies or times of conflict. For instance, use of UNRWA services by Palestinian refugees in Syria has increased significantly since 2011 due to

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Classified by: PRM Assistant Secretary Anne C. Richard
E.O. 13526, Reason: 1.4 (d)

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deteriorating circumstances there that have reduced Palestinian refugees' ability to cope with the ongoing war as personal resources have diminished. During the July-August 2014 conflict in Gaza, the entire Palestinian refugee population received some type of emergency assistance, particularly food aid. UNRWA emergency services are considered temporary emergency benefits and are not reflective of regular UNRWA service usage.

(SBU) UNRWA's core services for refugees in its five areas of operation (Gaza, Jordan, Lebanon, Syria, West Bank) include education, healthcare, and relief and social services. Education comprises the largest portion of UNRWA's services and budget. All Palestinian refugee recipients of UNRWA education services are descendants of persons whose place of residence was Mandatory Palestine between June 1946 and May 1948 and who were displaced as a result of the 1948 Arab-Israeli conflict. For the 2013-2014 school year, UNRWA provided general education to 436,323 registered Palestinian refugee children in 666 UNRWA elementary and preparatory schools (and secondary schools in Lebanon). In addition, UNRWA provided vocational training for 7,105 beneficiaries at nine vocational and technical training centers.

(e) UNRWA reports that approximately 3,253,503 eligible persons availed themselves of its health care services in 2013; however, this figure does not include the number of Palestinian refugees in Syria who used UNRWA health services because the conflict prevents UNRWA from obtaining accurate numbers of patients treated.

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With U.S. funding, however, UNRWA is in the process of introducing an electronic health information system (e-health)

[Redacted] As of December 2014, e-health data was available from 78 of 139 UNRWA health centers.

[Redacted]

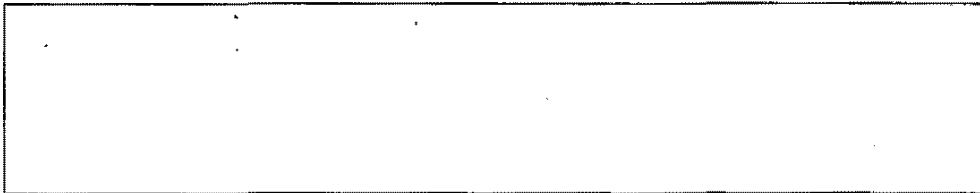
(e) [Redacted]

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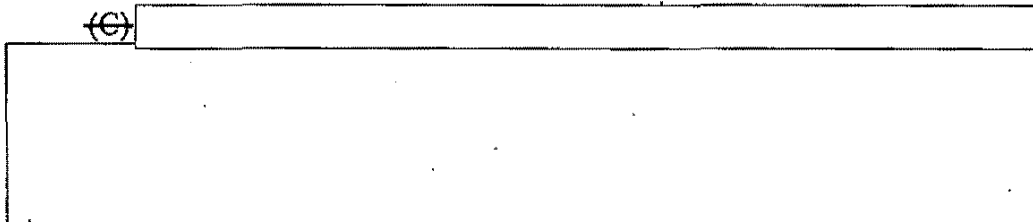


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(U) Considering descendants of refugees as refugees, and providing them with aid and services, is not unique to Palestinian refugees. In protracted refugee situations, refugee groups experience natural population growth over time. The UN High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR) and UNRWA both recognize descendants of refugees as refugees for purposes of their operations. For example, UNHCR recognizes descendants of refugees as refugees in populations including, but not limited to, the Tibetan refugee population of India and Nepal, the Burmese refugee population in Thailand, the Bhutanese refugee population in Nepal, the Afghan population in Pakistan, and the Somali population in Kenya.

PART II: (U) The extent to which the provision of services to such persons furthers the security interests of the United States and of other U.S. allies in the Middle East

(U) The status of Palestinian refugees is one of the most sensitive final status issues confronting Israel and the Palestinians, and it directly and significantly affects the politics and stability of U.S. allies in the region that host large Palestinian refugee populations, including Jordan and Lebanon. UNRWA has the sole UN mandate to assist Palestinian refugees until there is a resolution to the Israeli-Palestinian conflict in the context of a negotiated peace; as such, UNRWA serves an important humanitarian function and is a force for stability in the region.



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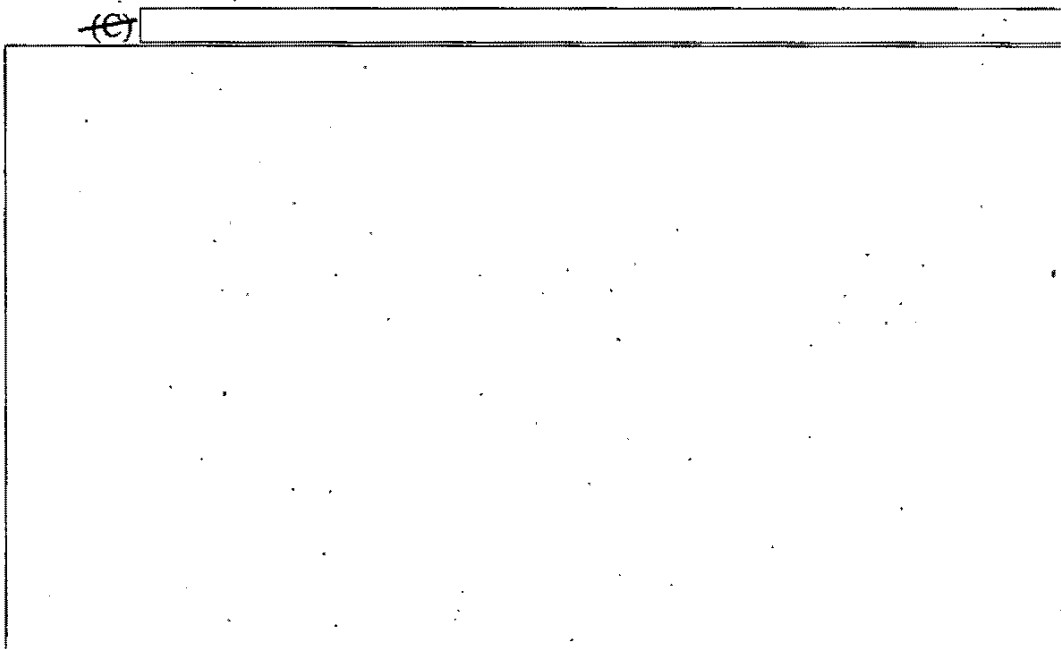
(U) [Redacted] The U.S. government has funded UNRWA's integration of human rights educational materials across UNRWA schools. These materials promote tolerance, human rights, and conflict resolution, and offer Palestinian refugee students the opportunity to receive an education modeled on universal values and human rights – the only program of its kind in the Middle East.

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(SBU) In times of conflict, UNRWA provides life-saving aid to Palestinian refugees, helping to mitigate the larger impacts of humanitarian crises within the region. In Syria, UNRWA's emergency assistance to Palestinian refugees enhances refugee coping mechanisms and reduces the push factors for Palestinian refugees to flee to neighboring Jordan or Lebanon (both of which have essentially closed or are trying to close their borders to refugees from Syria, including Palestinians) or to risk dangerous passage by boat to Europe. UNRWA assistance ensures that approximately 40,000 Palestinian refugee children in Syria can continue their education, and that the approximately 18,000 civilians trapped inside the besieged Damascus suburb of Yarmouk receive some emergency aid, including food and medical supplies, when allowed to do so by the Syrian regime and security conditions permit. During the summer 2014 conflict in Gaza, nearly a quarter of the Gaza population sought shelter in UNRWA schools, and, in cooperation with the World Food Program, UNRWA ensured that 1.8 million Palestinians – the entire civilian population of Gaza – received food assistance. Without UNRWA, the humanitarian impact of the conflict would have been far worse, rendering Gaza's recovery and return to relative stability much more difficult, to the detriment of both Palestinians and Israelis.



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PART III: (U) The methodology and challenges in preparing such report

(c) UNRWA makes statistical information regarding its registered refugee population publicly available, including through its quarterly bulletins and its "In Figures" annual updates.

[Redacted]

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(c) [Redacted]

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As noted above, UNRWA is in the process of transferring its health records to electronic information systems.

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(U) The information contained in UNRWA's quarterly statistical bulletin is based on data supplied voluntarily to UNRWA by registered Palestinian refugees for UNRWA's internal management purposes and to facilitate certification of refugees' eligibility to receive education, health, relief, and social services. New information on births, marriages, deaths, and change in place of residence is recorded only when a refugee requests the updating of the family registration card issued by UNRWA.

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