

# PALESTINIAN REFUGEES FROM SYRIA

**MAP**  
MEDICAL AID FOR PALESTINIANS

## BETWEEN DISPOSSESSION AND DISPLACEMENT

Sign our petition at  
[map-uk.org/syria](http://map-uk.org/syria)



**IN THE 5 YEARS  
SINCE THE SYRIAN CONFLICT BEGAN**

More than  
**3,180 Palestinians**  
have been killed

An estimated  
**110,000 Palestinians**  
have fled the country

Palestinians in Yarmouk camp queue for food parcels

UNRWA archive

**MAP are calling on the UK to ensure that the humanitarian response to the conflict in Syria provides equal protection for all refugees, including Palestinians**

**95%** of the 450,000  
**Palestinians**  
still in Syria are in continuous  
need of humanitarian aid

**60%**   
of those who remain are internally displaced

An estimated  
**3,000-5,000**  
people are trapped in  
Yarmouk camp with  
**little access to food,  
water or healthcare**



Before the conflict in Syria began in March 2011 around 560,000 registered Palestinian refugees lived in the country and approximately 70,000 more Palestinians were unregistered. Palestinians were well integrated into Syrian society and enjoyed many of the same rights as Syrian citizens, including access to state healthcare. Following five years of civil war in Syria more than half of the Palestinian population have lost their homes and nearly all are in dire need of aid. According to the United Nations Relief and Works Agency (UNRWA) they are among the most vulnerable of the refugees fleeing Syria.

The situation is particularly dire in Yarmouk refugee camp, which was home to 148,500 registered Palestinian refugees before the conflict began. Yarmouk has been almost continuously besieged since 2013 and in April 2015 ISIS linked militants invaded large areas of the camp, forcing out and killing many of its civilian inhabitants. Estimates from local activist groups are that approximately 3,000-5,000 people remain in the camp, without access to regular food supplies, clean water or healthcare.

An estimated 110,000 Palestinians have fled Syria since 2011 according to UNRWA. Approximately 17,000 of these people now live in Jordan and around 45,000 in Lebanon, many in urgent need of assistance.

## Currently there are approximately 45,000 Palestinian refugees from Syria in Lebanon, many living in shocking conditions and in need of urgent assistance

The population of Yarmouk camp has been **under siege** since **2013**



In these countries Palestinian refugees cannot register with UNHCR and instead rely on UNRWA for healthcare, education and often food and cash support. Almost all Palestinian refugees from Syria (PRS) in Lebanon are reliant on UNRWA aid as a significant source of income and conditions for Palestinians in Lebanon were already dire even before 2011. However in 2015, cuts to international donor support forced UNRWA to suspend its vital housing cash assistance to PRS.

The inability of Palestinian refugees to access UNHCR services also means that they are excluded from UNHCR's data, making it much more difficult to assess their needs and understand exactly where refugees are being forced into extreme conditions. Jordan effectively closed its borders to Palestinian refugees early in the conflict, and Lebanon followed suit in May 2014, leaving many with nowhere to turn.

MAP believes that the UK's humanitarian response to the conflict in Syria must provide equal protection for all refugees, including Palestinians. This should include equal access to opportunities for resettlement for vulnerable Syrian and Palestinian refugees from Syria.

**Even before the Syria crisis began, UNRWA services were stretched by a funding deficit. MAP is calling on the international community to support UNRWA and the humanitarian agencies who are trying to alleviate the plight of Palestinian refugees from Syria.**

### NOUR AND SAMIR'S STORY

Nour and her son Samir managed to escape the siege of Yarmouk, but were both injured by sniper fire as they fled. When they made it to Ein el Helweh camp in Lebanon, they needed surgery to treat their injuries, but as Palestinians they were ineligible for support from UNHCR. Instead they had to rely on UNRWA, which does not pay for war injury-related surgery. Nour's hip replacement surgery left them in serious debt, and Samir still has a bullet lodged in his back, as he cannot afford surgery. He is stuck in limbo, unable to heal and prohibited from working to support himself and his mother. To make matters worse, Lebanese restrictions over PRS have left Nour and Samir effectively trapped in the camp. The last time Samir ventured outside, he was stopped at a checkpoint and told to pay \$200 for a visa within ten days. Visa restrictions have since been relaxed; however, the situation is still unpredictable and many Palestinians in Samir's situation fear going through checkpoints due to a perceived risk of being deported back to Syria.



### THE AL MASRI FAMILY, FROM SBEINAH CAMP

The Al Masri family fled to Lebanon in 2012. For the last year, all six of them have been living in one cramped room in Ein el Helweh. Like Nour and Samir, their Palestinian identity has left them acutely vulnerable and effectively trapped. One of their sons was attacked by Lebanese children, leaving him with neuralgia in his left leg and UNRWA will not pay for the required MRI scan. As Palestinians from Syria the Al Masri family are not permitted to work in any capacity and last year UNRWA also reduced its assistance by 5,000 Lebanese pounds per person, meaning that the family are now surviving in extreme poverty. "Anywhere must be better than here," they say.

### BARONESS MORRIS OF BOLTON, MAP PRESIDENT:

"The particular vulnerabilities of Palestinian refugees and their sensitive status in the region compound the already stark and violent devastation they share with Syrians. It is absolutely right that we as a Government should provide vital support for vulnerable Syrian nationals but we should also ensure there is life-saving sanctuary and assistance for all vulnerable people fleeing conflict in Syria, including Syria's Palestinian population." **House of Lords, 16<sup>th</sup> September 2015**

**YOU CAN SIGN OUR PETITION AT: [MAP-UK.ORG/SYRIA](http://MAP-UK.ORG/SYRIA)**