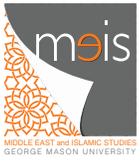




Refugees and Migrants



Refugee Workshop - Lebanon

Provisional Report

AUB College Hall, Auditorium B1 - July 21, 2015



Background

Refugees & Migrants Project

The Refugees & Migrants Project seeks to create a resource for scholarly production and advocacy on refugee, stateless, internally displaced, and migrant populations throughout the Middle East.

Fifty-five percent of the world's refugee population resides in the Middle East making it home to the largest concentration of refugee populations globally. The largest amongst these are Palestinian refugees produced as a result of war who are stateless in some contexts, internally displaced in others, and victims of secondary and tertiary displacement in still other contexts. They also include an influx of Iraqi refugees engendered by the 2003 US war against, and occupation of, Iraq. Since the advent of the Arab Uprisings, these refugee communities have steadily grown as a result of armed conflict and civil unrest, particularly in Syria, Libya, and Yemen as well as in the Sudan, and Somalia.

The Middle East is also the site of a significant migrant labor force especially in the domestic, service, and construction sectors. Despite their large numbers, they reside in the Middle East with relatively little to no government regulation. The lack of greater oversight together with their diminished political power subjects this vulnerable population to considerable exploitation.

Beyond those populations who have been forcibly displaced or who have voluntarily sought economic opportunities across borders are a number of other stateless populations suffering from *de facto* and *de jure* statelessness like the Kurds of Syria as well as the children of refugee men and/or of women born out of wedlock in Lebanon and Egypt, for example.

The region's density of migrant and refugee communities is not commensurate with the scholarly research, civil society advocacy, or social awareness regarding their conditions. This Project seeks to encourage scholarly production, advocacy efforts, and political awareness concerning transitory populations across the Middle East. It aims to address pertinent questions regarding applicable law, the socio-political status of these communities, as well as the political initiatives necessary to address their pressing needs. Some of those questions include:

- Have states adhered to temporary protection regimes? How have they been implicated by the influx of refugees across the region?
- What domestic, regional, and international legal instruments regulate the status of refugees, IDPs, and stateless people in each country?
- What domestic, regional, and international legal instruments regulate the status and rights of migrant labor in each country?
- How have protracted refugee situations impacted the socio-political standing of refugees?

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- How have overlapping refugee populations interacted with one another?
 - How have transitory populations played a role in shaping national identities?
 - How are LGBTQ communities been overlooked or, perhaps, over-served by international refugee agencies?
 - What role have UN agencies played and how do they interact with one another from country to country?
 - How have transitory populations shaped the region's political economy of resources, labor, and flow of international aid?
 - What is the potential of legislative efforts on alleviating humanitarian conditions?
 - How do civil society organizations serve vulnerable communities? Which communities are underserved? Which are served most?
 - How does racism in the Arab world impact the treatment of refugees and migrants from varying countries?
 - How does the flow of populations across borders impact the construction of racial identities and gendered politics?

Refugee Workshop-Lebanon

The Refugee Workshop-Lebanon is part of this larger project and is the first in a series of Country Assessment Roundtables. These workshops seek to assess the relationship between states and their residents as well as engendering new discussions about refugees and migrants in the Middle East.

The Lebanon Workshop focused on refugees, including stateless persons, and internally displaced persons (IDPs) but not on migrants. The workshop aimed to propose a set of critical research questions and/or components of advocacy initiatives for scholars, agencies, organizations, think tanks, and institutions concerned with refugee populations in Lebanon.



The project sought to evaluate how a set of decentralized factors, namely stakeholders, aid, and law, intersect and shape the conditions and prospects by refugee communities within Lebanon as well as to elucidate the relationship between the State and its non-citizen residents.

To this end, the Workshop organizers solicited suggestions for research questions and advocacy campaigns accompanied by a justification from each participant. These were collated and circulated among confirmed participants for review. The participants then convened for a one-day workshop to discuss, amend, and finalize those suggestions. More generally, the research

and advocacy suggestions constituted a springboard for a broader discussion on the question of refugees in Lebanon that touched on some of the following:

- Existent refugee communities within Lebanon and the humanitarian conditions they endure;
- Services available to them as well as the relative disparities among them as a result of government intervention, foreign aid, and available social services;
- The work of civil society organizations engaged in advocacy on their behalf;
- The legal regimes (refugee, civil, and criminal) regulating the lives of refugees including their migratory flow, their status within Lebanon, as well as their access to employment;
- The relationship between refugees and Lebanese host society as well as among the refugees;
- The relationship of the UN agencies to the State and the State's role with a broader international community; and
- The role of the State in relation to citizens and non-citizens alike



The workshop was intended to initiate a conversation without offering definitive conclusions. While, the organizers aimed to set a research and advocacy agenda for the benefit of scholars, NGOs, multilateral agencies, and other relevant stakeholders, the discussion organically took a slight turn. Using the questions and advocacy suggestions as a point of departure, the Workshop participants raised new questions and approaches to understanding the status and future of refugees in Lebanon.

Workshop Agenda

SESSION ONE | 10-11 | Introductions of Workshop and Participants

SESSION TWO | 11-12 | Brainstorming additional questions

SESSION THREE | 12-1 | Refugees and Lebanon

LUNCH | 1-2

SESSION FOUR | 2-3:30 | Palestinian Refugees & Refugees From Syria

SESSION FIVE | 3:30-5 | Concurrent discussions

Public and Medical Health

Gender-Based Violence

Labor and The Right To Work

Housing and Property

National Governance and Self-Governance

Durable Solutions, Protection Gaps, and International Institutions

SESSION SIX | 5-6 | Finalize Research Questions and Advocacy Campaigns

ANNOTATED PROVISIONAL AGENDA

SESSION ONE | 10-11 | Introductions of Workshop and Participants

- Overview of Refugees and Migrants Project + Lebanon Workshop-Refugees
- One-sentence introduction of everyone around the table
- Review of workshop materials – broken down into theme and refugee population
- Overview of the agenda and revisiting the workshop goals: Propose a research and advocacy agenda

SESSION TWO | 11-12 | Brainstorming additional questions

What are questions that should have been asked that did not appear and what questions would you pose to one another?

1. What is the relationship between these refugee communities?
2. What are the protection gaps between the refugee communities?

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3. What is the relationship between Palestinian refugees fleeing from Syria and those who have been there since 1948 and 1967?
 4. What is the state of Iraqi refugees in Lebanon? Do these conditions help explain the absence of attention and resources committed to this population?

SESSION THREE | 12-1 | Refugees and Lebanon

What is the relationship between out of status persons, generally, and state institutions?

1. Why are refugees in Lebanon treated as a security concern rather than as a humanitarian one? How is this reflected in the Lebanese legal system as well as in services offered to refugees as well as rights afforded to them (i.e., labor, health, housing, property)?
2. What are the implications of multilateral agencies (UNHCR and UNRWA) serving as the primary source of humanitarian protection for refugees? What is the relationship between these agencies and the State and how does that shape the welfare of refugees?

LUNCH | 1-2

SESSION FOUR | 2-3:30 | Palestinian Refugees & Refugees from Syria

There is consensus that Palestinian refugees should be afforded civil rights (right to work and right to own property) in Lebanon, but disagreement over whether to achieve this by demanding civil rights or instead by waging a political campaign from which civil rights flow. How does this discussion inform necessary research and advocacy?

Lebanon is host to one of the most significant Syrian refugee populations. Despite the fact that Syrian conflict appears to be of a protracted nature, Lebanon continues to deal with them by provided temporary protection. What issues does this raise and how should the state and international institutions respond?

SESSION FIVE | 4-5 | Concurrent discussions

Public and Medical Health

Gender-Based Violence

Labor and The Right To Work

Housing and Property

National Governance and Self-Governance

Durable Solutions, Protection Gaps, and International Institutions

SESSION SIX | 5-6 | Finalize Research Questions and Advocacy Campaigns

Observations and Recommendations

Observations

- 1) Addressing the question of refugees without distinction to national populations facilitated a discussion about the Lebanese state and its relationship to its residents and citizens, more broadly. This approach helped transcend the superimposed categories among refugees based on UN mandate, namely UNRWA and UNHCR, as well the treatment of refugees based on the political circumstances in their countries of origin. As a result, one can approach the question of refugees in Lebanon from a level of abstraction that illuminates challenges within the State and its institutions. By shifting the focal point of analysis from the needs of the refugee communities, the question is no longer what can the State do to better serve its refugee communities but rather what can the State do to function better in general. Thus, the question is not how to improve medical services for refugees but rather how to improve Lebanon's public health system for all of its residents. Similarly, rather than demand that refugees have the right to work, the impetus is to improve Lebanon's labor conditions and the strength of its labor force, write large.
- 2) There are two ways to approach refugee questions in the Middle East- either as humanitarian beneficiaries or as political agents. In light of the large concentration of refugee populations in the Middle East, host states and refugee communities have the potential to redefine the proper approach to refugee policy for the rest of the world. Examining refugees as humanitarian beneficiaries limits their political agency and places them at the whim of host states, donor states, and multilateral institutions. Conversely, viewing them as political agents places a greater onus on them as political partners and drivers of transformative justice. The latter approach makes refugee populations more of a risk to host societies and thus undermines their ability to obtain refuge. Simultaneously, however, because of the large concentration of refugees in the Middle East, it makes sense to ascribe these populations with greater political agency. This would also shift the relationship between the refugees and those agencies and organizations created to serve them. Rather than define the needs of the refugee populations, the refugee populations would drive the agendas of those agencies and organizations that aim to serve them. Also, this shift would enable refugees to unite across national divisions with one another and with other residents of their host societies.

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- 3) The protracted nature of Palestinian refugees in Lebanon raises serious questions of how to properly deal with the needs of long-standing refugee populations and newly arriving refugee populations. There is an impulse to deal with the most urgent needs of newly arriving refugees. This, however, stands to exacerbate the already meager provisions available to protracted refugee populations. Alternatively, prioritizing the needs of long-standing populations risks failing to serve the most acutely affected populations. This challenge is further complicated by the fact that refugees from Syria include Palestinian refugees. While Palestinian refugees from Syria fall under UNRWA's mandate, like the Palestinian refugees in Lebanon, and unlike their Syrian refugee counterparts, their basic needs as well as their national future is more proximately intertwined with Syrian refugees than it is with Palestinian refugees in Lebanon since 1948. This creates a challenge for all stakeholders including NGOs, UN agencies, Lebanon, Lebanese host society, as well as refugee populations themselves to properly address the most pressing short and long-term needs of refugees in Lebanon.

 - 4) The treatment of Palestinian refugees in Lebanon is a site of experimentation for the treatment of other refugees. The denial of the right to work for Palestinian refugees, for example, becomes the precedent and logic that denies similar rights to new refugee populations in Lebanon. The securitization of Palestinian refugee camps informs the security approach to Syrian and Iraqi refugees who are subject to curfews and indefinite detention for failure to prove legitimate status. As such, the approximation of Palestinian rights in Lebanon must be done without exceptionalizing the condition of Palestinian refugees. Instead, they must be treated as a site of experimentation for the treatment of other refugee populations and advocacy on behalf of any one of these populations, or all of them together, should respond to this framework.

 - 5) Lebanon has deliberately established a policy vacuum in regard to refugees. This creates a formidable challenge for policy reform on behalf of refugee populations and raises a significant question about who is the proper stakeholder in Lebanon to whom demands for reform should be addressed? If not the state, is it a cluster of state institutions? Alternatively, is it Lebanese society? Or is it the refugees themselves? Should advocates address UN agencies and state representatives? Or should reform target humanitarian and human rights NGOs that have become staples in the refugee industry in Lebanon? Even raising these questions helps elucidate the challenges facing refugees in Lebanon and helps inform the proper strategic approaches to addressing them.

It is critical to revisit the campaign for civil and political rights of Palestinian refugees in Lebanon. This campaign has failed to yield material gains for Palestinian refugees and requires evaluation. One possibility is to consider shifting the primary campaign among Palestinian refugees from a campaign demanding their civil rights, namely to work and own property, to a political campaign that centers them as agents of change. This campaign should be built around the demand for return to their original homes. From this political mobilization, refugees can leverage their power to make other demands including those for civil rights. Prioritizing the right to work and the right to own property for more decades on end, risks deflating the agency of Palestinian refugee populations. This is already indicated in a waning interest among Palestinian refugee populations to engage in advocacy campaigns for civil rights. These need not be mutually exclusive initiatives and can in fact be temporally staggered in light of strategic considerations. The point is that this should be highlighted as a much-needed debate in order to evaluate the state of affairs of Palestinian refugees and to empower them as agents of change.



Recommendations

Advocacy

- 1) Lebanon's own internal challenges (i.e., sectarian, corruption, policy vacuum re refugees) creates a conflict of how to best serve refugees. If we distinguish the communities as protracted refugee situations (PRS), as opposed to emergency refugees, and urge the government to afford PRS civil rights, we may be undermining the rights of emergency refugees. If, alternatively, we afford the most urgent needs to refugees fleeing Syria (Palestinian refugees included), we would be undermining and

exacerbating the conditions of Palestinian refugees who have been in Lebanon for decades. There are two possible ways to address this:

- a. Distinguish these as long-term policy and short-term policy agendas. In this way, the refugee communities are not distinguished to the disadvantage of any one group. Instead, the most acute needs of all refugees are addressed.

Address the problem as one dealing with the Lebanese State writ large - deal with the entire state and its provisions to all residents of the state without distinction to citizens, refugees, internally displaced, stateless persons.

- b. Refugees are sites of political agency and not clusters of misery- for this reason we should leverage their political power. Organize refugees to function as unions who can demand their rights alongside or in collaboration with other local parties and groups. They should organize themselves around a policymaking agenda.

2) In light of UNRWA's protection gap, two things can be done:

- c. Place pressure upon state actors to expand UNRWA's mandate to include durable solutions and thus enhance its protection of Palestinian refugees; and
- d. Place pressure on UNCHR to enhance its collaboration with UNRWA in terms of fundraising, border control, housing, provisions, employment rights, and all other practical functions short of durable solutions.

3) Place pressure upon multilateral institutions, like the human rights treaty bodies and the Human Rights Council, as well as the European Union, the World Bank, and the IMF which can then exert pressure upon the state.

4) Target host societies, including civil organizations and media, in order to resist the exploitation and demonization of refugees. This assumes that host societies can influence the government.

5) Resuscitate local body councils and risk management teams that are in a much better position to govern refugee communities and oversee the provision of basic goods, the creation of jobs, and the distribution of funds earmarked for refugee populations.

Research

- 1) Lebanon's relationship to refugees is not just a matter of security but also economic and political as well - how does this inform the treatment of refugees?

2) How does the relationship to UNHCR and UNRWA impact Lebanon's official policy towards refugees? How are these international institutions supporting and benefitting the state? How does Lebanon leverage its significant refugee population among other States to either approximate privileges and/or to deflect responsibilities?

3) What are proper definitions for the following categories: forced displacement (refugees, IDPs, statelessness), migrants, *de jure* statelessness, displacement?



4) How have recent shifts in the Middle East (i.e., occupation of Iraq, proxy regional civil war in Syria, intervention in Libya and Yemen, and the rise of non-state actors like IS) redefined the Arab-Israeli conflict? How, in turn, does that impact the status of Palestinian refugees in Lebanon as well as their relationship to Palestinian refugees from Syria who have recently fled to Lebanon?

5) What are the protection gaps between Lebanon's refugee populations from Syria, Iraq, and Palestine? What explains those gaps?

6) What is the relationship between Palestinian refugees fleeing from Syria and those who have been there since 1948 and 1967? Is there a singular Lebanese policy that impacts them? If not, why not and what does it tell us about protection gaps and necessary initiatives to close them?

7) What is the state of Iraqi refugees in Lebanon? Do these conditions help explain the absence of attention and resources committed to this population?

8) How are refugees in Lebanon treated as a security and economic concern rather than as a humanitarian one? How is this reflected in the Lebanese legal system as well as in services offered to refugees as well as rights afforded to them (i.e., labor, health, housing, property)?

9) What are the implications of multilateral agencies (UNHCR and UNRWA) serving as the primary source of humanitarian protection for refugees? What is the relationship between these agencies and the State and how does that shape the welfare of refugees?

10) What is the relationship between Lebanese (host) society and refugee populations? How have these relationships shifted and how have those shifts been driven by, and been beneficial to, the State?

Proposed Research Questions and Advocacy Campaigns

The list below features participant input broken down by refugee population and disciplinary theme. These were circulated among the participants before the workshop for review and discussed in detail at the workshop.

REFUGEE POPULATIONS

PALESTINIAN REFUGEES IN LEBANON

Research

1. Why has Lebanon not given Palestinian refugees any civil rights after 67 years of displacement?
2. Why has Lebanon state not given Palestinians the right to work, which will definitely improve their socio-economic conditions?
3. Why has Lebanon not given the Palestinian refugees the right to own property?
4. Why is UNRWA facing an acute financial problem? Is it a step towards dissolving UNRWA? Is there any political reason behind the present financial crisis? Is it a step towards dissolving UNRWA? Or is it a step towards the suspension of the international communities' responsibility for Palestinian refugees?
5. How can we provide protection to Palestinian refugees in the absence of the State's ratification of the Refugee Convention? In the case that Lebanon ratifies the Convention, how can you prevent the forced nationalization of Palestinian refugees?
6. How do you provide protection from gender-based violence among refugee by drawing on international responsibility established by UNSC 1325?

Advocacy

1. Shift to a political campaign for Palestinian national liberation and abandon campaigns for social and civil rights of Palestinians in Lebanon. In particular, demand return. Organizing people around return is a MUST. And it will lead to many important achievements internally. Consider how the 2011 march to the borders it unified refugees under one goal, one March, one destiny.
2. Achieve the right to work for Palestinians.

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3. Achieve the right to own property for Palestinians.
 4. Cultivate camp governance including electing camp popular committees.
 5. Cultivate public support in solidarity with the right of Palestinian refugees to work in order to leverage political parties forces to implement Labor Law 129 (2010) and facilitate the procurement work permits.
 6. Amend the law of the social insurance 128, to provide the complete social services. This should be accompanied by a network aimed at monitoring the violations against the right to work in both the public and private sector.

REFUGEES FROM SYRIA

SYRIAN REFUGEES

Research

1. What are the political determinants of health? How do politics affect the humanitarian response to Syria crisis?
2. Health finance: What are alternative models of health financing in crisis? How are Syrian refugees in Lebanon an appropriate case study of this?
3. What are the critical and effective durable solutions for situations of protracted displacement considering Syrian refugees in Jordan and Lebanon as a case study?
4. Is it time to challenge (or maybe demolish) the UN(HCR)'s monopoly of humanitarian work in regards to refugees in the Middle East?
5. What is the likely impact and outcome of the dramatic increase in the number of the Syrian refugees in Lebanon in light of the lack of a comprehensive Lebanese national plan to properly deal with this challenge?
6. Given that the majority of Syrian refugees access housing in Lebanon through the channels of the (informal) housing market, what are the channels of housing acquisition and the sources of tenure security available for these refugees? And how these channels transformed as the number of refugees soars and the subsidies/funding shrinks?
7. How can international organizations intervene to improve access to housing for these refugees, upgrade housing conditions, and reduce tenure insecurity?
8. How do you provide protection from gender-based violence among refugee by drawing on international responsibility established by UNSC 1325?

Advocacy

9. Address the labor rights and exploitation of refugees' labor power because refugee labor today has become abundant and thus the Lebanese employer has in turn fired his Lebanese employees and hired Syrians for half of their salaries.
10. The *kafala* system was the Lebanese government's way of dealing with the Syrian refugees since the exodus of Syrian refugees into Lebanon beginning in 2011. The Lebanese government did not have a plan and instituted an open border policy wherein it did not recognize Syrians as refugees but as displaced persons. How has this controlled the bodies of Syrian refugees and how can we adequately address this condition?

PALESTINIAN REFUGEES

Research

1. What is the status of Palestinian refugees fleeing to Lebanon from Syria and which UN mandate do they fall under?
2. What are the prospects of resettling Palestinian refugees from Syria in other countries?
3. How do you provide protection from gender-based violence among refugee by drawing on international responsibility established by UNSC 1325?

IRAQI REFUGEES

1. Time to challenge (or maybe demolish) the UN(HCR)'s monopoly of humanitarian work in regards to refugees in the Middle East.
2. How do you provide protection from gender-based violence among refugee by drawing on international responsibility established by UNSC 1325?

THEMES

PUBLIC AND MEDICAL HEALTH

1. What are the political determinants of health? How do politics affect the humanitarian response to Syria crisis?
2. Health finance: What are alternative models of health financing in crisis? How are Syrian refugees in Lebanon an appropriate case study of this?

GENDER-BASED VIOLENCE

1. How do you provide protection from gender-based violence among refugee by drawing on international responsibility established by UNSC 1325?

LABOR AND THE RIGHT TO WORK

1. Address the labor rights and exploitation of refugees' labor power because refugee labor today has become abundant and thus the Lebanese employer has in turn fired his Lebanese employees and hired Syrians for half of their salaries.
2. Shift to a political campaign for Palestinian national liberation and abandon campaigns for social and civil rights of Palestinians in Lebanon. In particular, demand return. Organizing people around return is a MUST. And it will lead to many important achievements internally. Consider how the 2011 march to the borders it unified refugees under one goal, one March, one destiny.
3. Cultivate camp governance including electing camp popular committees.
4. Cultivate public support in solidarity with the right of Palestinian refugees to work in order to leverage political parties forces to implement Labor Law 129 (2010) and facilitate the procurement work permits.
5. Amend the law of the social insurance 128, to provide the complete social services. This should be accompanied by a network aimed at monitoring the violations against the right to work in both the public and private sector.

HOUSING AND PROPERTY

1. Achieve the right to own property for Palestinians.
2. Given that the majority of Syrian refugees access housing in Lebanon through the channels of the (informal) housing market, what are the channels of housing acquisition and the sources of tenure security available for these refugees? And how these channels transformed as the number of refugees sores and the subsidies/funding shrinks?
3. How can international organizations intervene to improve access to housing for refugees in Lebanon, upgrade housing conditions, and reduce tenure insecurity?

NATIONAL GOVERNANCE AND SELF-GOVERNANCE

1. What is the likely impact and outcome of the dramatic increase in the number of the Syrian refugees in Lebanon in light of the lack of a comprehensive Lebanese national plan to properly deal with this challenge?
2. How can we provide protection to Palestinian refugees in the absence of the State's ratification of the Refugee Convention? In the case that Lebanon ratifies the Convention, how can you prevent the forced nationalization of Palestinian refugees?
3. (Self-governance) Camp governance among Palestinian refugees including electing the camp popular committees

DURABLE SOLUTIONS, PROTECTION GAPS, AND INTERNATIONAL INSTITUTIONS

1. What are the critical and effective durable solutions for situations of protracted displacement considering Syrian refugees in Jordan and Lebanon as a case study?
2. Shift to a political campaign for Palestinian national liberation and abandon campaigns for social and civil rights of Palestinians in Lebanon. In particular, demand return. Organizing people around return is a MUST. And it will lead to many important achievements internally. Consider how the 2011 march to the borders it unified refugees under one goal, one March, one destiny.
3. What are the prospects of resettling Palestinian refugees fleeing into Lebanon from Syria in other countries?
4. Time to challenge (or maybe demolish) the UN(HCR)'s monopoly of humanitarian work in regards to refugees in the Middle East.
5. Why is UNRWA facing an acute financial problem? Is it a step towards dissolving UNRWA? Is there a political reason behind the present financial crisis? Is it a step towards dissolving UNRWA? Or is it a step towards the cancellation of the international communities' responsibility of the Palestinian refugees?
6. What is the status of Palestinian refugees fleeing Lebanon into Syria and which UN mandate do they fall under?

Participant Bios

Sari Hanafi

Sari Hanafi is currently a Professor of Sociology and Chair of the Department of Sociology, Anthropology and Media Studies at the American University of Beirut. He is also the editor of *Idafat: the Arab Journal of Sociology* (Arabic). He is the Vice President of both the International Sociological Association and the Arab Council of Social Science. His last book is Arab Research and Knowledge Society: Fragments of a Mirror (with R. Arvanitis) (in Arabic, Beirut: CAUS and forthcoming in English with Routledge).



Ziad Abdel Samad

Ziad Abdel Samad is the Executive Director, Arab NGO Network for Development. He is also the Executive Director of the Arab NGO Network for Development (ANND). Based in Beirut, since 1999 ANND brings together 30 NGOs and 9 national networks from 10 Arab countries, active in the protection of social and economic rights. Abdel Samad is the President of the Euro-Mediterranean NGO Platform, a network gathering 83 national and regional networks and organizations. He is engaged in many global and regional networks focusing in the economic and social public policies and targeting regional and global institutions; such as Social Watch, an international network of citizen coalitions that monitors the implementation of the commitments made at the 1995 World Summit on Social Development in Copenhagen (www.socialwatch.org). He is also a member of the coordination group of the Civil Partnership for Development Effectiveness (CPDE). Abdel Samad is the Vice Chair of the Asia Pacific Research Network (APRN) (www.aprnet.org). He is a member of the Reality of Aid Network (RoA) (www.realityofaid.org) and active in electoral reforms and monitoring at the national and regional levels, through the Arab Network for democratic Elections (ANDE) and the Civil Campaign for Electoral Reforms (CCER) in Lebanon.

Samir al Khoury

Samir Al Khoury graduated Oxford University in Politics Philosophy and Economics. He was the Ambassador of Lebanon to Belgium and Luxembourg and Head of Mission of Lebanon to the European Community (1983-85); then to Japan, resident in Tokyo, concurrently accredited to the Republic of Korea and the Philippines (1985-94); Director of Political & Consular Affairs, and Deputy Secretary General of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, Beirut (1994-99); Ambassador of Lebanon to Italy and non-resident Ambassador of Lebanon to Malta. Concurrently, Khoury served as the Permanent Representative of Lebanon to the U.N. Organizations: FAO (Food and Agriculture Organization), WFP (World Food Programme) and IFAD (International Fund for Agricultural Development) (1999-2001). By November 2001, Khoury had completed a 42-year diplomatic career in the Foreign Service of Lebanon.



On November 2006, he was named Chairman of the Follow-up Committee on the Employment of Palestinian Refugees (FCEP) and as of July 2009 renamed as the Committee for Employment of Palestinian Refugees (CEP) and continues in that position to this date. As of September 2013, Khoury was elected Chairman of the newly formed NGO, Resource Center for Employment Promotion and Social Affairs.

Moe Ali Nayel

Moe Ali Nayel is a freelance journalist, fixer, producer, and translator based in Beirut, Lebanon. He writes for Lebanese-based as well as international and english publications. Nayel works closely with Syrian and Palestinian refugees in Lebanon.

Firas Talhouk

Firas Talhouk joined the Samir Kassir Foundation Center for Cultural and Media Freedom on October 2011 as a Researcher of Cultural and Media violations in Jordan and the '48 Territories. In 2013, he was promoted to Project Coordinator for Lebanon. In that capacity, he has followed violations against cultural and media freedoms in Lebanon, researched digital media rights in Lebanon generally as well as more particularly during electoral campaigns. Part of Talhouk's job is to help displaced Syrian journalists and activists in Lebanon by giving them legal guidance about their situation in Lebanon and help them, through a network of international foundations such as Reporters with no Frontiers and Human Rights Watch, to be resettled in Europe and United States.

Prior to his work with the Samir Kassir Foundation, Talhouk worked as a Resettlement Assistant at UNHCR Beirut dealing with cases of refugees from Iraq, Somalia, Sudan, Egypt, Bahrain, Eritria, and Iran following up cases deciding whether eligible for resettlement or not. He later moved to registration when the number of displaced Syrians fleeing into Lebanon increased dramatically. In that capacity, he worked in the field to address the urgent needs of the displaced and provide rapid assessment of their cases. Talkhouk has been a co-trainer for the employees of the Ministry of Social Affairs in a two-day training on humanitarian work and how to deal with a huge flow of refugees. He has consulted Beyond Reform and Development on how to establish a mechanism for monitoring human rights violations in areas where there are Syrian refugee camps.

Fouad M. Fouad

Fouad M. Fouad is a Syrian physician. He is currently an assistant professor at the American University of Beirut. His research focuses on the health effects of displacement inside Syria and to neighbouring countries Fouad is the lead author in a recent UN-ESCWA publication, which examines future policy options for health system rebuilding in post-conflict Syria.

Mahmoud Haidar

Mahmoud Haidar gathered experience in developing and directing strategy, marketing, technical, policy, and general management in government, enterprise, and corporate. He studied computer & communications engineering (BE, AUB), strategy & innovation (MBA, ED HEC), and international law & diplomacy (MA, TUFTS).

Haidar sat on numerous firms' and agencies' boards, and advised investors and governments on vision and policy development, technology trends, restructuring, and business undertakings in Europe, US, and the Middle East.

Presently, he is chairman of the Beachheads advisory board program of New Zealand in the Middle East; he directs and consults a number of public and private entities; and he lectures in business, regulation, public policy, innovation, and critical thinking course matters.

Joumana Merhi

Joumana Merhi is a human rights and women's rights activist since 1985. She is the Director of the Arab institute for Human Rights – Beirut office since 2004; the President of the Democrat Women's Institute from 2009-2013; the Coordinator of Arab Women's Forum in the Ayesha Network from 2008-2011; and the Coordinator of the Arab Women's Forum for transitional societies since 2014. Since 2000, she has worked on various training capacities throughout the Arab region, mainly with the Arab institute for human rights and a number of other international and regional institutes.

Noura Erakat

Noura Erakat is a human rights attorney, activist, and an Assistant Professor at George Mason University. Her scholarship investigates the laws of war, human rights, refugee law, and national security. She is a Co-Editor of *Jadaliyya*, an electronic magazine that leverages scholarly expertise and local knowledge on the Middle East. She has taught International Human Rights Law and the Middle East at Georgetown University since Spring 2009 and before beginning at George Mason University, she was a Freedman Teaching Fellow at Temple University, Beasley School of



Law. She has served as Legal Counsel for a Congressional Subcommittee in the House of Representatives, chaired by Congressman Dennis J. Kucinich. While an undergraduate student at UC Berkeley, Noura helped launch the first university divestment campaign at UC Berkeley in 2001 and upon graduating from Berkeley Law School, she helped seed BDS campaigns throughout the country as the National Organizer with the US Campaign to End the Israeli Occupation. There, she also helped initiate federal lawsuits in the U.S. against Israeli officials in for war crimes and crimes against humanity.

Rabih Salah

Rabih Salah is the Director of Ajial and athletics coach who grew up between Ain El Helweh, Beirut, and Yarmouk.

Rabih Shibli

Rabih Shibli is the Associate Director for Development and Community Projects American sdUniversity of Beirut.

Wafa Al Yasir

Wafa Al Yasir is the General Director, Palestinian Students' Fund in Beirut- Lebanon.

Perla Issa

Perla Issa works with the Institute for Palestine Studies.

Coline Grunblatt

Coline Grunblatt is a Protection Officer with UNRWA-Lebanon.

Mona Fawaz

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