



European
University
Institute

Robert Schuman Centre for Advanced Studies

Palestine: The Political and Social Dimension of Migration 2009-2010

Yasser Shalabi

CARIM Analytic and Synthetic Notes 2011/56

**Series - Mediterranean and Sub-Saharan Migration:
Recent Developments
*Socio-Political Module***



CARIM
Consortium for Applied Research on International Migration

**Analytic and Synthetic Notes – Mediterranean and Sub-Saharan Migration:
Recent Developments
Socio-Political Module
CARIM-AS 2010/56**

Palestine: The Political and Social Dimension of Migration 2009-2010

Yasser Shalabi

National Project Manager (Public Sector Development Program), Ministry of Planning and
Administrative Development

The entire set of papers on Mediterranean and Sub-Saharan Migration: Recent Developments are available at <http://www.carim.org/ql/MigrationDevelopments>.

© 2011, European University Institute
Robert Schuman Centre for Advanced Studies

This text may be downloaded only for personal research purposes. Any additional reproduction for other purposes, whether in hard copies or electronically, requires the consent of the Robert Schuman Centre for Advanced Studies.

Requests should be addressed to carim@eui.eu

If cited or quoted, reference should be made as follows:

[Full name of the author(s)], [title], CARIM AS [series number], Robert Schuman Centre for Advanced Studies, San Domenico di Fiesole (FI): European University Institute, [year of publication].

THE VIEWS EXPRESSED IN THIS PUBLICATION CANNOT IN ANY CIRCUMSTANCES BE REGARDED AS THE OFFICIAL POSITION OF THE EUROPEAN UNION

European University Institute
Badia Fiesolana
I – 50014 San Domenico di Fiesole (FI)
Italy

<http://www.eui.eu/RSCAS/Publications/>
<http://www.carim.org/Publications/>
<http://cadmus.eui.eu>

CARIM

The Consortium for Applied Research on International Migration (CARIM) was created at the European University Institute (EUI, Florence), in February 2004 and co-financed by the European Commission, DG AidCo, currently under the Thematic programme for the cooperation with third countries in the areas of migration and asylum.

Within this framework, CARIM aims, in an academic perspective, to observe, analyse, and forecast migration in Southern & Eastern Mediterranean and Sub-Saharan Countries (hereafter Region).

CARIM is composed of a coordinating unit established at the Robert Schuman Centre for Advanced Studies (RSCAS) of the European University Institute (EUI, Florence), and a network of scientific correspondents based in the 17 countries observed by CARIM: Algeria, Chad, Egypt, Israel, Jordan, Lebanon, Libya, Mali, Mauritania, Morocco, Niger, Palestine, Senegal, Sudan, Syria, Tunisia, and Turkey.

All are studied as origin, transit and immigration countries. External experts from the European Union and countries of the Region also contribute to CARIM activities.

CARIM carries out the following activities:

- Mediterranean and Sub-Saharan migration database;
- Research and publications;
- Meetings of academics and between experts and policy makers;
- Migration Summer School;
- Outreach.

The activities of CARIM cover three aspects of international migration in the Region: economic and demographic, legal, and socio-political.

Results of the above activities are made available for public consultation through the website of the project: www.carim.org

For more information:

Euro-Mediterranean Consortium for Applied Research on International Migration

Robert Schuman Centre for Advanced Studies (EUI)

Convento

Via delle Fontanelle 19

50014 San Domenico di Fiesole

Italy

Tel: +39 055 46 85 878

Fax: + 39 055 46 85 755

Email: carim@eui.eu

Robert Schuman Centre for Advanced Studies

<http://www.eui.eu/RSCAS/>

Abstract

This report covers socio-political developments in 2009 and 2010 related to migration from, or return to, the occupied Palestinian territory (oPt), and also to the status of the Palestinian refugees, especially those residing in Lebanon. This report takes its data from the *2010 Migration's Survey in the Palestinian Territory* of the Palestinian Central Bureau of Statistics (PCBS), as well as the *Socio-Economic Survey of Palestinian Refugees in Lebanon*, developed jointly by the United Nations Relief and Works Agency (UNRWA) and the American University of Beirut (AUB). The report concludes that emigration from the oPt will continue to be related with the political context and living conditions of the Palestinian people under the Israeli occupation. In addition, the Palestinian refugee problem will remain a central issue which, if not resolved on a just basis and in line with international law, will hamstring the peace process.

Résumé

Ce rapport couvre les développements sociopolitiques en 2009-2010 relatifs : d'une part, aux migrations de, ou de retour vers, les Territoires palestiniens occupés ; d'autre part, aux statuts des réfugiés palestiniens, en particulier ceux vivants au Liban. Ce rapport s'appuie principalement sur deux études : *Migration's Survey in the Palestinian Territory* réalisée par le Bureau central palestinien de la statistique (PCBS) et *Socio-Economic Survey of Palestinian Refugees in Lebanon* réalisée par l'UNRWA (United Nations Relief and Works Agency) et l'Université américaine de Beyrouth (AUB). Ce rapport conclut que l'émigration depuis les Territoires palestiniens occupés est liée au contexte politique et aux conditions de vie des Palestiniens vivants sous occupation israélienne. De plus, la question des réfugiés palestiniens représente un problème central qui, s'il n'est pas réglé de façon juste, selon le droit international, handicape le processus de paix.

1. Introduction

This report covers socio-political developments in migration issues in the occupied Palestinian territory (oPt) in 2009 and 2010. Previous reports have addressed periods immediately preceding that.¹ During the reporting period, a number of developments touched on the political and social situation in the oPt and in some neighbouring countries, particularly Lebanon. These developments have affected migration from, or return to, Palestinian territory, also significantly affecting the status of Palestinian refugees, especially those residing in Lebanon.

On the political level, the Palestinian-Israeli negotiations have come to an impasse, particularly in the aftermath of Israel's offensive on the Gaza Strip in December 2008. Notwithstanding some meetings held between leaderships of both parties during 2010, late 2010 witnessed a tapering out of the negotiations process. Israel has continued to refuse to freeze settlement construction on the West Bank. As recognised by the international community, however, settlement activity disrupts negotiation between both parties. The Israeli side has also refused to recognise its liability for Palestinian refugees and their right to return to their homeland. In effect, the Palestinian side has felt that the negotiations process has been a simple formality incapable of yielding tangible outcomes given Israel's refusal to give concessions.

In this context, the oPt has continued to suffer from harsh socio-economic conditions. Poverty and unemployment rates are still markedly high. Israel's policies and measures further dampen the already difficult living conditions experienced by Palestinians, create an environment conducive to emigration, and discourage many Palestinian expatriates from returning to their country. These policies and measures include the Gaza blockade; movement and access restrictions posed by military checkpoints separating the Palestinian residential area in the West Bank; restricted capacity of Palestinian businesses to export and import goods; control over Palestinian natural resources; unstoppped settlement activity; and the construction of the Annexation Wall.

This report sheds light on the above issues and takes its data from literature, reports and studies, including the *2010 Migration's Survey in the Palestinian Territory* of the Palestinian Central Bureau of Statistics (PCBS) as well as the *Socio-Economic Survey of Palestinian Refugees in Lebanon*, developed jointly by the United Nations Relief and Works Agency (UNRWA) and the American University of Beirut (AUB). The report addresses emigration and return migration in reference to the data found in the PCBS 2010 Migration Survey and covers conditions of Palestinian refugees in Lebanon on grounds of the UNRWA-AUB Survey. In this context, the report also makes reference to select reports and studies on the status of the Palestinian refugee population in Lebanon.

2. Palestinians around the World

By the end of 2010, the Palestinian population worldwide was estimated at 11 million, including 44.4% in Arab countries, 37.5% in the oPt, 12.4% in Israel, and 5.7% in other countries.² Refugees comprised around 67% of the total Palestinian population.³ Within the oPt, refugees represented

¹ For the previous report, see: Yasser Shalabi, "Palestine: the political and social dimension of migration". Available at: <http://www.carim.org/index.php?areaid=8&contentid=9>.

² Source: PCBS, 2010, *Palestinians at the End of 2010*, Ramallah, Palestine. Available At: http://www.pcbs.gov.ps/Portals/_pcbs/PressRelease/palpeople2010_E.pdf

³ Source: Resource Centre for Palestinian Residency and Refugee Rights (BADIL) (2009), *Survey of Palestinian Refugees and Internally Displaced Persons 2008-2009*. Bethlehem, Palestine. Available at: http://www.badil.org/ar/publications?page=shop.product_details&flypage=flypage.tpl&product_id=119&category_id=2

approximately 44% of the total Palestinian population in the West Bank and Gaza Strip.⁴ It should be noted that not all Palestinian refugees are registered with UNRWA. At the end of 2009, there were around 4.8 million⁵ UNRWA-registered Palestinian refugees, but other refugees remain uncounted.

3. Emigration and Return

During 2010, the PCBS conducted its Migration Survey in the Palestinian Territory⁶. Relevant field work was carried out in the West Bank between February and April 2010 and in the Gaza Strip between June and July 2010. The sample size of the survey was 15,050 households, including 9,900 households on the West Bank and 5,150 in the Gaza Strip. It is worth noting that this was the first specialised national survey on migration to be conducted in Palestinian territory. It should also be noted that the survey methodology was designed to collect data from household members living in Palestine, which means that the survey does not cover households who emigrated as a whole. Accordingly, estimates of emigrants do not reflect real figures, nor do they represent the real volume of Palestinian emigration. But the survey methodology *does* give numbers for returnees. Therefore, data on return migration is accurate and represents the volume and real status of emigrants coming back to Palestine. It should be noted that currently available data are only preliminary and derived from a PCBS press release. For a full analysis of the survey results, detailed data should be obtained. This data, which is still under preparation, is expected to be published in mid 2011. Below is a presentation of some of the main findings of the PCBS survey.

3.1 Emigration

The PCBS Migration Survey shows that 13% of persons in the 15-59 age category have the desire to emigrate and that 4% of this category are hesitant about emigration. Meantime, the rest of persons in this age category do not have the desire to emigrate from Palestine. The survey also reports that approximately 33,000 persons emigrated from Palestinian territory between 2005 and 2009. However, these statistics do not include households who emigrated as a whole. With respect to returnees, the survey results reveal that around 30,000 persons returned to Palestine over the same period (See Table 1 in the Annex below). In reality, reported figures indicate that emigrants outnumber returnees to Palestinian territory. If we take into account that the survey methodology allows a representation of all households who returned to Palestine (while at the same time it does not represent those who emigrated as a whole), this would indicate that the number of emigrants outweighs that stated in the survey, as well as far surpassing the number of returnees to Palestine.

The PCBS survey findings also show that 6.7% of Palestinian households have at least one emigrant member. Additionally, the percentage of male emigrants is substantially higher than female ones with a sex ratio of 152 males per 100 female. This significant difference may be attributed to the survey methodology, which excludes households who emigrated as a whole and restricts the scope of the survey to households whose members live in Palestine.

As far as emigrant age groups are concerned, the survey shows that young Palestinians in the 15-29 age category comprised the highest percentage of the emigrant population. In comparison to other age groups, this age category represented 33% of the total persons who emigrated between 2000 and the

⁴ Source: PCBS, 2010, *Palestinians at the End of 2010*, Ramallah, Palestine. Available At: http://www.pcbs.gov.ps/Portals/_pcbs/PressRelease/palpeople2010_E.pdf

⁵ Source: PCSB, 2010, *Demographic and Social Characteristics of the Palestinian Refugees: A Press Release on the World Refugee Day (20 June 2010)*. Available at: http://www.pcbs.gov.ps/Portals/_pcbs/PressRelease/refugee_2010A.pdf

⁶ Source: PCBS, December 2010, *Migration's Survey in the Palestinian Territory, 2010*, Press Release, Ramallah, Palestine. Available at: http://www.pcbs.gov.ps/Portals/_pcbs/PressRelease/Migration_e.pdf

period in which the PCBS survey was conducted in February-April 2010. The percentage was high in relation to both sexes, including 34% of males and 31% of females. The 30-44 age group represented the second highest percentage of emigrants for both sexes, including 25% of males and 27% of females. At 21%, children were the third highest group of emigrants, 18% of males and 24% of females (See Table 2 in the Annex below).

In relation to educational attainment, the survey results show that a high percentage of Palestinian emigrants were well-educated. Of the total emigrant population from both sexes, approximately 42% had completed education beyond secondary school (i.e. an associate diploma or above), including 44% of males and 36% of females. Emigrants who completed secondary education comprised 36% of the total number of emigrants from both sexes, including 39% of males and 27% of females (See Table 3 in the Annex below). These statistics indicate that Palestinian migration is mostly skilled. Persons with an educational attainment of less than secondary school only represent 22% of the total emigrant population from both sexes, 16% of males and 37% of females.

As far as emigration motives are concerned, PCBS data shows that the highest percentage (34%) of emigrants has travelled for education purposes. 22% have emigrated for family reunion; 15% to improve living conditions, and 14% due to unemployment and their inability to find employment opportunities in the oPt. On the other hand, it should be noted that 15% of the emigrant population did not state the reasons behind their emigration (See Table 4 in the Annex below).

PCBS figures show that the majority of Palestinian emigrants have continued to leave for Arab countries. 52% of emigrants travelled to Arab countries, including 24% to Jordan, 20% to Arabian Gulf states, 4% to Egypt, and 4% to other Arab countries. In contrast, 48% emigrated to other foreign countries, including 22% to the US and 26% to still other foreign states (See Table 5 in the Annex below). This data shows that Palestinian emigration to Arab states has generally declined and more Palestinians have been emigrating to non-Arab foreign countries. In relation to the Arab states themselves, the percentage of Palestinians emigrating to Jordan has also dropped in comparison to those leaving for Arabian Gulf states.

3.2 Return Migration

The PCBS Migration Survey results indicate that 5,000-7,000 Palestinians returned to Palestinian territory between 2005 and 2010 (See Table 1 in the Annex below). Findings also show that of the total population of the Palestinian territory, 5.9% had a previous place of residence outside the oPt.

As Table 6 in the Annex below illustrates, the majority of Palestinians returned to Palestinian territory during the period following the establishment of the Palestinian National Authority (PNA); i.e. between 1995 and 1999. Palestinians who returned during this period comprised 31% of the total returnees to Palestinian territory. Mainly associated with the political situation following the establishment of the PNA, many of the cadres and employees of the Palestine Liberation Organisation (PLO) came to Palestine in the context of the Oslo Accords. In light of the deteriorating security and political situation throughout the Palestinian territory, however, the percentage of Palestinian returnees sharply dropped to 10% between 2000 and 2004; that is, following the outbreak of the second *Intifada* in 2000. Israeli punishment measures, including, *inter alia*, movement restrictions and obstruction of business and investment opportunities, discouraged many Palestinians from coming back to their homeland. Nevertheless, the percentage of Palestinians who did return rose again from 2005 towards the period when the PCBS survey was conducted. In light of reduced Israeli restrictions on the freedom of movement and on economic and investment activities in the oPt, 14% of Palestinians have returned to Palestine over the reporting period.

According to findings of the PCBS survey, 39% of all Palestinian returnees were in the 0-14 age category when they returned to Palestine, indicating that the most significant group of returnees were children who accompanied their families. Whilst young returnees in the 15-29 age group represented

36%, returnees between 30 and 44 years made up 18% of the returnee population (See Table 6 in the Annex below).

With respect emigration motives, the survey results showed that almost one third (33%) of Palestinian returnees had emigrated for family reunion or for marriage or to accompany their relatives abroad. Returnees who emigrated for education purposes stood at 22% of total returnees. These emigrated for educational attainment and returned after they had completed their studies. 15% of the returnees emigrated with the intention of improving their living conditions. Emigration of another 10% of returnees was driven by unemployment and 3% by poor security or the search for political asylum abroad (See Table 8 in the Annex below).

In respect of countries where returnees used to live, the PCBS survey indicate that the majority (36%) returned from Jordan. Another 29% returned from Arabian Gulf countries, 10% from the US, 5% from Egypt, 9% from other Arab countries, and 11% from other miscellaneous foreign states (See Table 9 in the Annex below). Accordingly, these statistics show that the majority of Palestinian returnees used to live in Arab countries – a trend reflecting the high percentage of Palestinians who emigrate to these Arab states.

4. Palestinian Refugees

The calamity of the Palestinian refugees has persisted since 1948. On the political level, Israel has effectively refused to recognise its liability for creating this calamity. In violation of international law and the International Bill of Rights, Israeli has denied Palestinian refugees' right to return to their homes and land, homes and land from which they were expelled. Palestinian refugees, especially those in Lebanon, continue to experience harsh socio-economic conditions.

Israel's positions towards Palestinian refugees have influenced the peace process and negotiations between the Palestinians and Israelis. Israel's refusal to tackle seriously fundamental issues, including the two-state solution and the refugee problem, forces the peace process to an impasse. In countless forums, the PNA has stressed its position on the political settlement process, including the refugee problem. The Palestinian position can be summed up by Nabil Sha'th's "The Right to Return"⁷. Mr. Sha'th argues that international law provides the necessary foundation to establish a sovereign Palestinian state. In relation to the peace agreement, Palestinian positions are based on international law, whereby UN Security Council Resolution 242 constitutes the needed framework of the land-for-peace formula.

In order to reach a just solution for the Palestinian refugee problem, Sha'th believes that UN General Assembly Resolution 194 provides the framework, on which the Palestinian position stands. He asserts that the effort to achieve a just, comprehensive and real peace means that reference should be made to the international legal framework, especially for the Palestinian refugee problem. In his opinion, this framework means that:

- (i) Israel must recognise its liability for creating the Palestinian refugee problem and preventing them from returning to their land over the past six decades.
- (ii) Israel must recognise the right of every Palestinian refugee to return to their home in what has now been Israel. As it rejects such recognition, Israel's position impedes the achievement of a real and comprehensive peace in the region. Without justice delivered to Palestinian refugees, peace cannot be achieved in the region.

⁷ Sha'th, Nabil, "The Right to Return" in *Haq al 'Awdah* Journal, Issue 41, December 2010, Resource Center for Palestinian Residency and Refugee Rights (BADIL). Nabil Sha'th is member on the Fatah Central Committee and Commissioner of International Relations. He is also member of the Palestinian negotiating team and former PNA Minister of Foreign Affairs.

- (iii) In cooperation with the international community, Palestinian refugees must have real options that mean the end of longstanding displacement and expulsion, which they have experienced, as well as their unprotected status. In line with the international law, illegal properties should also be restored to their legitimate owners, including refugees and internally displaced persons, who have been expelled to other areas inside and outside Palestine.

4.1 The Status of Palestinian Refugees in Lebanon

Palestinian refugees live in tragic conditions in Lebanon. Findings of the UNRWA-AUB *Socio-Economic Survey of Palestinian Refugees in Lebanon*⁸ highlight the hard living conditions that Palestinian refugees experience in Lebanon. To this end, the survey was conducted in the summer of 2010, covering 2,600 Palestinian refugee households in Lebanon.

The survey results show that 260,000-280,000 Palestinian refugees live in Lebanon. Of these, 53% are women. The average household size is 4.5 members. The Palestinian refugee population is young, with an average age of 30 years, and half of the population is younger than 25 years old. Two thirds of Palestinian refugees live inside refugee camps and the rest in other settlements, especially on the outskirts of the camps.

These figures indicate that the number of Palestinian refugees in Lebanon does not match those registered with the UNRWA. 450,000 Palestinian refugees are registered with UNRWA in Lebanon, which means that approximately 45% of these refugees have emigrated from Lebanon for reasons associated with living conditions, poverty, unemployment, wars, etc.

Results of the UNRWA-AUB survey reveal that poverty and unemployment among the Palestinian refugee population are both high and worrying. An overall poverty incidence of 66% is indicative of households incapable of covering minimum basic food and non-food requirements. Extreme poverty amounts to approximately 7%, including households unable to secure daily basic food requirements. The poverty rate is higher in refugee camps than in other settlements. Unemployment reaches 56% among Palestinian refugees, a high percentage and one affecting living standards among the whole Palestinian refugee population. As explained below, the high poverty and joblessness rate among Palestinian refugees in Lebanon is driven by Lebanese regulations that discourage them from working in a large number of professions.

In connection with poverty and unemployment, a large number of Palestinian refugee households in Lebanon are vulnerable to food insecurity. Data revealed by the UNRWA-AUB survey indicates that 63% of households are mildly food insecure and 15% report severe food insecurity and are in need of urgent food assistance. Statistics also show that a quarter of Palestinian refugee households do not have access to sufficient fresh fruit, vegetables, meat and dairy products. One third of the households do not attain basic food requirements, resulting in a potentially significant contribution to chronic disease in this population.

Only 50% of youths of secondary school age (16-18 years old) are enrolled in education or in vocational training. The UNRWA-AUB survey results show that 8% of those between 7 and 15 years old were not at school in 2010. In light of reported high school dropout and low skills, and given the restrictions imposed on the labour market by the Lebanese government, Palestinian refugees' access to employment opportunities is extremely difficult, immediately impacting poverty, unemployment, and living standards of the Palestinian refugee households throughout Lebanon.

The survey finds that almost one third of Palestinian refugees in Lebanon suffer from chronic diseases. Although UNRWA provides free primary and secondary health care to Palestinian refugees, 95% of the refugee population do not have insurance. The survey results also show a correlation

⁸ Available at: <http://www.unrwa.org/userfiles/2011012074253.pdf>

between functional disabilities, chronic diseases and household living standards. Households with one disability or chronic depression cases live in poverty or in extreme poverty.

In relation to housing conditions, the survey results show that dampness and leaks were quite common, affecting 66% of Palestinian refugees' homes and resulting in higher rates of acute illness and functional disability incidence. Restrictions on living spaces have resulted in almost 8% of households reporting living in overcrowded conditions (more than three people in one room). Also, 8% of households live in shelters where the roof and/or walls are made from wood or eternite (asbestos), which generally renders homes unhealthy and adversely affects the public-health standards of Palestinian refugee households.

4.2 Rights of Palestinian Refugees in Lebanon

The status of Palestinian refugees in Lebanon has been of the subject of lengthy debates over decades, and ideas for improving their living conditions have varied. On the internal Lebanese level, some argue that enhancing the Palestinian refugee population's status in Lebanon implies a political risk as it would move towards their *tawteen* (naturalisation) in Lebanon. In contrast, others stress that "what is humanitarian" must be separated from "what is political". In other words, requirements of a decent living should be provided to Palestinian refugees in Lebanon without prejudice to the political dimension regarding their right to return to their motherland, from which they were, after all, displaced. In contrast, the official Palestinian position emphasises that Palestinian refugees in Lebanon are guests until they return to their homeland in accordance with international law and the relevant UN resolutions.

However, there have been changes in the rights of Palestinian workers in Lebanon. On 17 August 2010, four draft laws concerning rights of Palestinian refugees were presented to the Parliament of Lebanon. These were: Draft Law on the Prosecution of Palestinian Workers before Lebanese Regular Courts; Draft Law on the Title Right; Draft Law on the Right to Employment; and Draft Law Concerning Workers' Right to Receive Social Security. During discussions in the Lebanese Parliament, the Draft Law on the Prosecution of Palestinian Workers before Lebanese Regular Courts and Draft Title Right Law were not approved for legal and political considerations. The Draft Law on the Right to Employment and Draft Law on the Workers' Right to Receive Social Security were, however, endorsed after several amendments.⁹

Beside unqualified/ordinary professions, provisions regulating free occupations were effectively excluded from the Draft Law on the Right to Employment. There are seven free occupations in Lebanon, namely medicine, legal practice, engineering, journalism, teaching, accounting, and pharmacology. Also, the Law on the Right to Receive Social Security excluded Palestinian workers' entitlements to illness indemnity, maternity allowance and family increment. A Palestinian worker is entitled to indemnity in one instance only; if he or she suffers from a physical injury at work and provided that a special account is secured by the relevant Lebanese employer.¹⁰ Consequently, these draft laws were effectively rendered meaningless. Approval of "some facilitations for Palestinian refugees in Lebanon" is nothing but an endorsement of formal "facilitations" that are void of any legal or humanitarian substance.

The new laws have promoted the treatment of Palestinian workers in Lebanon as foreign nationals who must obtain a legal licence to work. In order to be able to work in Lebanon, Palestinian refugees should obtain the consent of a Lebanese employer and sign a work contract with them. They are also required to obtain a labour licence from the Lebanese Ministry of Labour. In pursuance of respective

⁹ Source: *Haq al 'Awadah* Journal, Issue 37, October 2010, "Palestinians of Lebanon: Lebanese Parliament's amendments to the rights of Palestinian workers: Formal facilitations that are void of any fair legal or humanitarian content". Available at: <http://www.alawda-mag.com/default.asp?issueId=38&contentId=1413&MenuID=86>.

¹⁰ *Ibid.*

Lebanese legislation, a labour licence will not be issued to a foreign worker unless they apply for a job, for which no Lebanese national has applied. Furthermore, a Lebanese employer should advertise for the employment opportunity in question in three newspapers.¹¹ In reality, the new laws have not introduced many improvements to the status of Palestinian refugees in Lebanon. Some commentators even argue that they have aggravated the refugees' status.

Though reflecting a welcome caution and opposition to these legal amendments, the majority of political and legal positions articulated by Palestinian authorities agreed that the Lebanese Parliament's step was inadequate. Most Palestinians believed that the said laws were just a small step that did not meet fundamental rights and were in conflict with relevant international conventions and treaties, especially those relating to refugees.

5. Conclusion

Socio-political changes in the Palestinian context have affected Palestinians' emigration trends as well as actual emigration rates. On the political level, Palestinian-Israeli negotiations have reached an impasse as a result of Israel's intransigence and refusal to halt settlement activity in the West Bank – an activity that is deemed illegal by international laws. Furthermore, Israel has continued to refuse to recognise its liability for the calamity of the Palestinian refugees while still denying their right to return to their homes and the land from which they were displaced.

On the ground, Israel has persisted in its measures and policies, including settlement activity, Wall construction, the complete blockade on the Gaza Strip, an internal and external siege of the West Bank, restrictions on the movement and access of persons and goods, control over Palestinian natural resources, etc.

These Israeli measures have rendered the living conditions of Palestinians throughout the oPt more difficult. Poverty and unemployment have continued to register high rates, driving still more Palestinians to emigrate and generating a desire among others to do so. Findings of the PCBS 2010 Migration Survey indicate that, over the past five years, an average of 6,500 Palestinians have emigrated on an annual basis. These statistics only cover individuals who emigrated, but whose families did not. The number may double if we add to it families who emigrated as a whole. In fact, many young households emigrate. Surveys presented in this paper show that innumerable factors drive emigration. While some factors are associated with politics, such as absence of security, others are linked with socio-economic conditions, including the search for employment opportunities, improvement of living standards, and education.

This paper highlights the hard living conditions experienced by Palestinians, particularly in Lebanon. It also argues that the new laws approved by the Parliament of Lebanon have not really enhanced the status of Palestinian refugees in that country. They were just formal improvements that were void of tangible content. It should be emphasised that difficult living conditions have driven many Palestinian refugees to emigrate from Lebanon as well. The difference between the number of UNRWA-registered refugees and UNRWA-AUB survey findings indicate that 45% of Palestinian refugees have left Lebanon.

To sum up, emigration will continue to be associated with the political context and living conditions of the Palestinian people under the Israeli occupation. The Palestinian refugee problem will remain the central issue which, if not resolved on a just basis and in line with international law, will hamstring the political process. Hence, emigration in the Palestinian context is not only intertwined with PNA policies, but also with the international community's responsibility for resolving the Palestinian question. It is further connected with Israel's recognition of its historical liability for the Palestinian refugees' calamity as well as its acceptance of their right to return to their motherland from which they were expelled and displaced.

¹¹ *Ibid.*

Annex

Table 1. Number of Emigrants and Returnees, 2005-2009

Emigrants	Returnees	Year
5,841	7,077	2005
5,205	6,054	2006
7,290	5,000	2007
7,390	5,854	2008
7,122	6,426	2009

Source: Palestine Central Bureau of Statistics (2010). *Migration's Survey in the Palestinian Territory, 2010 Press Release*. Ramallah – Palestine.

Table 2. Percentage Distribution of Palestinian Emigrants by Age and Sex, 2010

Sex			Age
Female	Male	Both Sexes	
23.8	18.4	20.6	0-14
31.3	34.2	33.0	15-29
26.5	25.1	25.6	30-44
11.7	14.7	13.5	45-59
5.2	6.2	5.8	60+
1.5	1.4	1.5	Not Stated
100	100	100	Total

Source: Palestine Central Bureau of Statistics (2010). *Migration's Survey in the Palestinian Territory, 2010 Press Release*. Ramallah – Palestine.

Table 3. Percentage Distribution of Emigrants Since 2000 by Educational Attainment and Sex, 2010

Educational Attainment	Sex		
	Both Sexes	Male	Female
Less Than Secondary	21.6	15.6	36.9
Secondary	35.7	39.3	26.5
Associate Diploma and above	41.9	44.1	36.1
Not Stated	0.8	1.0	0.5
Total	100	100	100

Source: Palestine Central Bureau of Statistics (2010). *Migration's Survey in the Palestinian Territory, 2010 Press Release*. Ramallah – Palestine.

Table 4. Percentage Distribution of Palestinian Emigrants Since 2000 by the Main Reason of Migration, 2010

Main Reason of Migration	Percentage
Unemployed / Lack of job opportunities in the country	13.7
To improve living standards	14.6
Education and study	34.4
Family reunion/Accompany/Marriage	21.9
Other	15.2
Not Stated	0.2
Total	100

Source: Palestine Central Bureau of Statistics (2010). *Migration's Survey in the Palestinian Territory, 2010 Press Release*. Ramallah – Palestine.

Table 5. Percentage Distribution of Palestinian Emigrants Since 2000 by Country of Residence, 2010

Country of Residence	Percentage
Jordan	23.5
Egypt	4.0
Arab Gulf Countries	20.4
Other Arab Countries	4.1
US	21.6
Other Foreign Countries	26.0
Not Stated	0.4
Total	100

Source: Palestine Central Bureau of Statistics (2010). *Migration's Survey in the Palestinian Territory, 2010 Press Release*. Ramallah – Palestine.

Table 6. Percentage Distribution of Returnees by year of Return, 2010

Year of Return	Percentage
1990 and before	25.5
1991-1994	18.9
1995-1999	31.0
2000-2004	10.4
2005 and after	14.0
Not Stated	0.2
Total	100

Source: Palestine Central Bureau of Statistics (2010). *Migration's Survey in the Palestinian Territory, 2010 Press Release*. Ramallah – Palestine.

Table 7. Percentage Distribution of Returnees by Age at Return, 2010

Age At Return	Percentage
0-14	38.5
15-29	36.4
30-44	18.1
45-59	5.6
60+	1.3
Not Stated	0.1
Total	100

Source: Palestine Central Bureau of Statistics (2010). *Migration's Survey in the Palestinian Territory, 2010 Press Release*. Ramallah – Palestine.

Table 8. Percentage Distribution of Returnees by Main Reason of Migration Abroad, 2010

Main Reason of Migration Abroad	Percentage
Unemployed / Lack of job opportunities in the country	9.7
Inadequate income in the country of origin / high wage in the new country	2.6
Place of work was changed	1.6
There are good business opportunities	1.0
To improve living standards	15.0
Personal problems with the employer or others at work	0.1
Education	21.7
To get a better education for children	0.1
Availability of social and health services there	0.6
Family reunion / Company/ Marriage	33.2
Away from family problems	0.6
For political asylum	0.3
Absence of security here	2.7
Other	10.8
Total	100

Source: Palestine Central Bureau of Statistics (2010). *Migration's Survey in the Palestinian Territory, 2010 Press Release*. Ramallah – Palestine.

Table 9. Percentage Distribution of Returnees by the Last Country of Residence Abroad and Region, 2010

Last Country of Residence Abroad	Percentage
Jordan	36.1
Egypt	5.1
Arab Gulf Countries	29.0
Other Arab Countries	8.9
US	9.5
Other Foreign Countries	11.1
Not Stated	0.3
Total	100

Source: Palestine Central Bureau of Statistics (2010). *Migration's Survey in the Palestinian Territory, 2010 Press Release*. Ramallah – Palestine.