* UN Human Rights Council 47th Session
* Oral Intervention[[1]](#footnote-0)
* Item 6: Lebanon UPR
* 8 July 2021

Delivered by: Nada Awad

**Palestinian refugees disproportionately impacted by Lebanon’s discriminatory legislation**

Madam President,

In the context of Israel’s apartheid regime imposed over the Palestinian people as a whole, 73 years after the Nakba, Israel continues to deny the right of return of Palestinian refugees.

As such, Palestinian refugees in Lebanon, including Palestinian refugees from Syria, continue to be disproportionately affected from the impacts of Lebanon’s discriminatory legislation as well the economic crisis and the COVID-19 pandemic. The absence of protection and legal accountability in Lebanon, enables human traffickers to exploit the vulnerability of Palestinian refugees. Hate speech and incitement against refugees is ongoing, including in the media by politicians and journalists.

Palestinian refugees have resided in Lebanon for 73 years; however, Lebanese law does not clearly define their legal personality, gravely undermining their fundamental rights. While the 2010 amendments to the Labor law and the Social Security Law contained minor improvements, the laws continue to categorize Palestinian refugees as foreigners. However, the amendments were not implemented in the absence of a decree by the Council of Ministers and remains under the prerogative of the labor minister and are subject to politicization resulting in the denial of the right to work and right to health of Palestinian refugees.

During the last Universal Periodic Review (UPR), Lebanon received more than 15 recommendations regarding the human rights of refugees, including Palestinian refugees. Lebanon did not accept recommendations to ratify the Convention and Protocol relating to the Status of Refugees or recommendations related to the promotion of access to means of subsistence, improvement the living conditions of refugees, and facilitation of access to employment for Palestinians by “removing discriminatory restrictions in all professional fields and amend legislation limiting Palestinian refugees from owning property.”

Palestinian refugees continue to suffer from horrific housing conditions, including overcrowding, lack of access to clean water and adequate sanitation and infrastructure, including connections to the sewage system and to electricity, as the camps have not expanded or serviced to meet population needs since 1950.

**We call on Lebanon to:**

* Ensure the fulfilment of Palestinians’ right to adequate housing and shelter, including by lifting restrictions on entrance of building materials to refugee camps to enable rehabilitation work;
* Amend the law to enable Palestinian refugees to own property while ensuring the completion of the Nahr Al-Bared Camp reconstruction and facilitate the return of refugees;
* Address systemic discrimination against Palestinian refugees by amending the law to guarantee the full and equal enjoyment of human rights, including by establishing a clear definition of legal personality for Palestinian refugees. Amendments should ensure the right to freedom of movement, travel and residence, the right to work, the right to health, the right to legal protection and fair trial as well as freedom of expression and association.

We also echo the call by survivors and Lebanese civil society for the establishment of an independent and international fact-finding mission into the Beirut port explosion of 4 August 2020.

Thank you.

1. CIHRS, on behalf of Palestinian Human Rights Organization (PHRO) [↑](#footnote-ref-0)