

Oral statement submitted by *BADIL Resource Center for Palestinian Residency and Refugee Rights*, a non-governmental organization with special consultative status¹

HUMAN RIGHTS COUNCIL, Session 24, Item no. 4 (09 Sep - 27 Sep 2013)

Mister President, Distinguished Members of the Council,

As of September 2013, approximately 50% of all registered Palestinian refugees in Syria have been displaced in Syria or to a neighbouring country.

Violence has affected all camps and in particular Yarmouk refugee camp in Damascus, which was home to the largest Palestinian population in Syria. Today, more than 70% of Yarmouk's 150,000 residents are displaced with limited access to and from the camp and many facilities—including health centers—have shutdown.

To date, of the Palestinians displaced by the armed conflict in Syria, at least 235,000 are displaced in Syria; 92,000 in Lebanon; and 8,430 in Jordan. Palestinians have also fled to Egypt and Turkey.

Jordan publicly announced its policy of rejecting Palestinian refugees from Syria in the fall of 2012. On the other hand, Jordan welcomes Syrians, of whom at least 350,000 have entered. Families in which one spouse is Syrian and the other Palestinian are unable to enter together because the Palestinian spouse will be rejected. If the father is Palestinian, the children may be refused entry as well.

Consequently, many Palestinian refugees fled to Lebanon where they are charged with \$17USD for a weeklong visa while Syrian refugees are still granted a six-month extendable visa at no charge.

Another 10,000 Palestinian refugees have left Syria for Egypt or Turkey again, unlike their Syrian counterparts, they are not recognized as refugees and do not receive the same access to healthcare and other services. Palestinian refugees from Syria arriving in Egypt receive extendable weeklong visas, but concerns about being denied extensions have prevented many from seeking renewals. Meanwhile, Syrians typically receive three or six-month visas and can register with UNHCR, which Palestinians are precluded from accessing due to the existence of and lack of coordination with UNRWA. As a result Palestinian refugees find themselves without any form of protection.

Therefore we call upon **all States** and especially Lebanon, Jordan, Egypt and Turkey—to open their doors to refugees fleeing Syria without discrimination and to ensure equal treatment.

In addition we call upon the **Human Rights Council** to:

- Coordinate efforts among different agencies, namely UNRWA and UNHCR that is UNRWA to extend its fields of operations to fulfill the urgent needs of Palestinians in Turkey and Egypt and UNHCR to recognize UNRWA Palestine refugees as refugees entitled to protection provided by it.

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