



Norwegian People's Aid
Lebanon

Future
without
Hope?

Palestinian Youth
in Lebanon Between
Marginalization, Exploitation and Radicalization

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Introduction

Hope, better future, stability: these are words that young Palestinian refugees in Lebanon never had the chance to say. The common feeling among them is that there is "no future". The Lebanese jobmarket remains closed to them; numerous Lebanese people look at them with fear and suspicion; an underlying racism, partly inherited from the civil war (1989-1975) is weighing on Palestinian youth. They feel stigmatized by negative stereotypes and are often associated with "Jihadism" or delinquency. They often say that the whole world abandoned them and forgot about them: the International community, the Lebanese State, but also the Palestinian National Authority (PNA) and the Palestinian Liberation Organization (PLO). This constant feeling of discrimination among Palestinian youth is fraught with danger: more precisely, it helps foster dynamics of radicalization and violent extremism in camps and gatherings, whether in radical religious groups or not, it leads young Palestinians and their families to choose illegal emigration to Western Europe, in most cases risking their lives, or it pushes them to seek refuge in drugs.

This study, based on an intensive fieldwork led by Marie Kortam and Nicolas Dot-Pouillard during 2017-2016 in Palestinian camps and gatherings in Lebanon, takes into consideration the socio-economic discriminations produced by the Lebanese legal framework, but it does not ignore the internal Palestinian dynamics that put young Palestinians at the margins of their own society. On the one hand, the discriminatory policies of the Lebanese state towards Palestinians raises the anger of youth, on the other hand, there is a deep crisis of the Palestinian social cohesion that affects young Palestinians. In the beginning, this report will try to describe the different modes of legal and informal discriminations and marginalization among Palestinian youth in Lebanon, from the space of camps and gatherings (family relations, at home, schools, streets of the camps) to the Lebanese public spaces. Then, it will show how marginalization and discrimination directly lead to some dangerous "exit logics": violent extremism, drugs and "artificial paradises", illegal immigration. Lastly, this study will show that there are nevertheless reasons for hope: some concrete steps could be easily accomplished to help improve social conditions of Palestinian youth in Lebanon, by better integrating young Palestinians in decision-making and promoting Lebanese - Palestinian dialogue. However, it necessitates a strong commitment of everyone: the International community, Palestinian factions and NGOs and Lebanese institutions.

Palestinian Refugees in Lebanon: Exclusion and Ostracism

In Lebanese media, three words are often associated to Palestinian camps and gatherings: "Jihadism", "extremism" (Tatarruf), and violence ('Unf). In the "common sense", a young Palestinian is a potential terrorist or a delinquent and in the period of a decade, Palestinian refugees in Lebanon (PRL) have been more and more in the spotlights. International institutions, Western embassies and Lebanese security apparatus see Palestinian camps as "spaces of exceptions": constant insecurity, implantation of jihadist groups – sometimes connected with al-Qaeda and the Islamic State's networks in Syria and Iraq – regular military clashes between Fatah Movement and radical Islamist factions – more specifically in Ein al-Helweh. Among Palestinians and Lebanese, memories of the 2007 Nahr al-Bared's fighting between the Lebanese army and Fatah al-Islam, are still very vivid. It is a collective trauma: the majority of the camp was either destroyed during the bombardments of the Lebanese army – which also suffered heavy human losses.

Radicalization dynamics and violent extremism in Palestinian refugee camps cannot be underestimated. Nevertheless, they should not be systematically caricatured under the sole security paradigm, because there is another daily reality: that of the Palestinians who feel rejected by the Lebanese society: unemployment, precariousness, work discrimination – Palestinian youth had become the first victim. About 280.000 - 260.000 Palestinian refugees are currently estimated to reside in Lebanon, in camps, gatherings and cities. Thirty-six professions remain prohibited to them, including: lawyers, public services, dentistry, general medicine, pharmaceutical services, opticians and optic sales, health workers, public accountants, or coastal navigation and fishing on Lebanese coasts. Certainly, the 2005 and 2010 changes in the Lebanese law have improved the access of Palestinian refugees to the labor market, giving them a partial access to the National Social Security Fund (NSSF); work permits are now free of charge. However, these laws are badly implemented, or not respected by Lebanese institutions and companies. Palestinian refugees are still prevented from legally acquiring property in Lebanon, according to Law 296/2001.

Palestinian Youth in Lebanon: A Bleak Picture for the Future

For Palestinian youth, the picture is even more discouraging. Young Palestinians aged between 13 and 25 constitute %26.37 of the total Palestinian refugee population in Lebanon. During the last few years, many studies produced by academics, local NGOs and international institutions such as UNRWA and UNICEF, have looked into youth marginalization and exploitation processes in Palestinian refugee camps. The consensus is clear: being young and being Palestinian in Lebanon is a “double penalty”. The unemployment rate among young Palestinians is very high; many of them have dropped out of schools and universities; daily interaction with Lebanese or state security personnel is marked by permanent discrimination or racist practices; more and more young Palestinian people turn to drugs; enrolment in Palestinian factions and radical jihadist groups encourages violence; young Palestinians only dream of emigration. A UNICEF report estimated that by %30, 2010 of Palestinians in Lebanon were under the age of %27; 18 of Palestinian women were of reproductive age; %50 under the age of 17 have left schools and that %22 of Palestinian women have married under the age of 18. In 2012, the International Labor Organization published a complete report about Palestinian employment in Lebanon, with a specific chapter on age and sex, noting that “the share of Palestinian workers between the ages of 15 and 19 is double than that of the Lebanese and that around half of the Palestinian workers are 25 to 44 years of age”. In August 2015, the Palestinian Association for Human Rights (PAHR) published a detailed report on Palestinian youth in Lebanon, with specific recommendations for international donors, Lebanese and Palestinian institutions. One interesting feature of the survey was the call to improve youth participation in local Palestinian structures and committees.

Three sensitive issues such as immigration, drugs and radicalization among Palestinian youth in Lebanon are being increasingly scrutinized. Firstly, when it comes to radicalization, a report published by the Danish Immigration Service (DIS) in 2014 questioned the radicalization processes in Palestinian camps, but it is only focused on Hezbollah and on the possible and suspected recruitment of young Palestinians by the Shia organization -it does not explore the jihadist dynamics within the camps. One year later, in October 2015, Lebanon Support published a complete report on radicalization in Palestinian refugee camps, with little data on young Palestinians leaving Lebanon for Syria. Secondly, emigration of young Palestinians from Lebanon to Europe, Australia and America is now a growing concern: but that information is available mainly in the Arab and the Lebanese press. By March 2014, a paper written by Paula Astih and published by Rai al-Yom and Anadolu Agency, tells the story of young Palestinians in Shatila camp seeking Swedish Visa. For Al-Akhbar daily newspaper, Qassem Qassem has covered those young Palestinians who demonstrated in 2014 for the right to immigrate, especially in Burj al-Shamali and Ein al-Helweh refugee camps. Jaber Suleiman, a Palestinian researcher, published an interesting study on 'Aidun's website about the emigration movements among Palestinian youth: al-Filastiniyun al-Ahrar (the Free Palestinians), the Coordination Union of Young Palestinians and the 2014 Facebook campaign for emigration. Furthermore, Usama Faysal, for Kull al-Watan, in September 2015 has also published a report about the right of emigration movement and about young Palestinians who tried to flee from Lebanon to Sweden and Germany. Finally, from the few studies that exist about drugs among Palestinian Youth, one can recall the in-depth research recently made by the Shahed Institution (Palestinian Association for Human Rights), published in November 2016.

Reconnecting Dispersed Elements

Marginalization, unemployment, dropping out of schools and universities, drugs, emigration, radicalization among Palestinian youth: these dynamics are well-known and are clearly identified by international institutions and donors, local NGOs and social workers in the camps. Nevertheless, the deep interactions and the system of interdependence between these various social problems have not been clearly analyzed.

The goal of this research, led for several months in all camps and gatherings consisting not only of young Palestinians, but of Palestinian social and political actors as well, is precisely that: identifying marginalization and exploitation processes, from families and homes to Palestinian and Lebanese public spaces and among the Palestinian community in Lebanon. This enables us to better understand the different “logical exit” that young Palestinians choose: recruitment by drug dealers, enrolment in factions, extremist groups and violent networks, willingness to flee from Lebanon, most often illegally, often at the risk of losing their lives. The reality is that, from dropping out and unemployment to emigration and radicalization, the general system of marginalization and exploitation of Palestinian youth is very coherent.

Fieldwork and Methodology

We have conducted research in Palestinian camps and gatherings in order to propose some key recommendations from reconnecting all these elements, understanding the general view and finding the Palestinian specifications. The research covered the majority of the camps and the most important gatherings in Beirut, both South and North. The targets were chosen based on their location and problems. A qualitative, rather than a quantitative approach was adopted for the analysis methodology, when working through group discussions (see Annex I) and in-depth interviews (see Annex II). Groups were selected based on community representation and vulnerability. Thirteen focus groups were conducted in Beirut, both north and south, and Beqaa, including camps and gatherings, as follows: 8 in the south, 3 in the north, 1 in Beqaa, and 1 in Beirut. Focus groups gathered 145 young Palestinians, aged between 16 and 28. In most cases, the organization of these Focus groups was facilitated by Palestinian NGOs and Popular Committees, which allowed us to host the participants in their offices. The majority of young Palestinians who joined the focus groups had never met before and were contacted by the organizers via Palestinian social workers in camps and gatherings. Strict rules have been enacted for the different sessions: no mobile phones, people had to raise their hands to take the floor, mutual respect between participants was required. To ensure transparency, sessions began with a short presentation of the goals and expectations of the research. There were no particular difficulties to organize the focus groups, except for two special cases: in Weifil, all young Palestinian men cancelled their participation at the last moment, with the explanation that they were not interested. The meeting became a non-mixed meeting, with only young Palestinian women. In another case (Sidon), a young man violently intervened at the beginning of the meeting, asking his two young sisters to leave the focus group, accusing the organizers of promoting drug consumption in camps and gatherings. This incident was quickly contained by the organizers.

With regard to gender, 76 young Palestinian women were part of the focus groups. The majority of the focus groups were mixed, between men and women. Nevertheless, two non-mixed meetings were organized with young Palestinian women (Weifil and Sidon old district). Not all of these young Palestinian women are married and some of them study or work.

With regard to social profile, some of the young Palestinians gathered in the focus groups are jobless and/or have abandoned secondary education.

Others are students (Lebanese International University, Siblin Training Center) and workers (vendors, hand workers, nursing). One young Palestinian has special needs (blind).

Some young Palestinians there are activists and members of NGOs (Najdeh, Palestinian Arab Cultural Club), sport clubs, charity and religious associations, political factions: but it is not the majority of them. The top priority of the focus groups was to gather young Palestinians representing different social realities of camps and gatherings, without taking into consideration their associative or political level of engagement.

The following topics were covered during the focus groups:

- Relations with family and relatives and daily activities at home.
- Daily activities outside the family and the home: schools, universities, work, engagement in NGOs, religious or charity associations, political factions.
- Daily relations with Lebanese people and institutions, outside camps and gatherings.
- Perception and feelings about daily violence, political violence, extremism and radicalization among Palestinian youth.
- Consuming and selling drugs in camps and gatherings, illegal emigration to Western Europe.
- General perception of NGOs, factions, International and Lebanese institutions and recommendations to address the decision-makers.

Concerning in-depth interviews, three types of actors and analysts have been interviewed:

- International and Lebanese Institutions (UNRWA Protection Unit, UNRWA Schools representatives, UNRWA Youth Unit, Siblin Training Center).
- Local Palestinian and International NGO's (TdH, Human Development Center, Nashet, Nabaa, al-Insan, Palestinian Association for Human Rights, etc...).
- Palestinian activists and stakeholders/actors (Popular Committees, Scout, "Independent" youth movements, movements against drugs and activists mainly affiliated to the following Palestinian political factions and their youth organizations: Fatah, Hamas, Democratic Front, Popular Front, Popular Front General Command, Palestinian Islamic Jihad, Combatant Islamic Movement, Shabab al-Muslim).

In-depth interviews involved 58 individuals, representing 29 associations, international institutions, unions, youth movements and factions. In a desire for objectivity and equity, activists coming from different ideological and political tendencies took part, whether leftists, nationalists or Islamists, PLO or non-PLO oriented.

This inclusive approach was important: indeed, the international community sometimes tends to favor Palestinian NGOs and movements more than others. Most of the time, Palestinian partners of western NGOs are leftist oriented, "secular" or belong to traditional PLO factions. It was necessary to have a more representative panel of Palestinian activists working on youth. Nevertheless, it was not possible to see all factions and NGOs in camps and gatherings: even if we covered a very large representative panel of associations and political organizations belonging to different ideological tendencies, we had sometimes to make difficult selections among the different movements encountered. We hope that people, representatives and activists we didn't have the possibility to interview will understand our own constraints. The following topics were discussed during the interviews:

- Social and political activities in camps and gatherings regarding youth issues.
- The difficulties encountered around education and dropping-out from schools and universities.
- The rising of drug traffic and consumption in camps and gatherings since the second half of the 2000s and the capacity to respond to it.
- The development of illegal emigration dynamics to Western Europe in camps and gatherings.
- The topic of radicalization, daily violence and violent extremism.
- The general system of governance of the camps and the consequence it has on Palestinian youth.
- The solutions and recommendations addressed by NGOs, factions and institutions concerning youth issues.

To resume: the focus groups were more oriented on marginalization and discrimination dynamics, whereas the interviews with NGOs, political activists and Palestinian institutions were more focused on topics such as violent extremism, drug traffic and consumption, illegal emigration among Palestinian youth. Focus groups and in-depth interviews have been systematically completed by field observations in camps and gatherings and by informal meetings with Lebanese and Palestinian analysts and intellectuals.

The main findings and conclusions report will be divided in three main chapters:

"'No future" for Palestinian youth in Lebanon?' is the first chapter of the report. It will deliberately be pessimistic. It not only describes well-known phenomena such as absence of employment opportunities, job insecurity, school and university dropout, but it also takes into consideration a permanent feeling of exclusion and marginalization among young Palestinians, from private spaces (family, home) to public spaces (streets of Palestinian refugee camps and also Lebanese public spaces).

The second part of the report is focused on the "exit" logic - which constitutes the direct aftermath of the marginalization process described in the first chapter: since the present is so bleak and uncertain, young Palestinians want "to escape". Political, social and associative actors implemented in the camps identify three dynamics of "exit": a) emigration, b) drugs and "artificial escapes", c) violence and radicalization. The "exit" logic also encourages new dynamics of exploitation by smugglers and by factions.

The third part of the report is more optimistic – and should help us to identify positive, concrete and realistic recommendations. Some young Palestinian activists work on a daily basis on social, charity or sporting issues. They maintain a "social tie" and some forms of collective solidarity among Palestinian youth. Political participation and a better integration of young Palestinians in factions and Popular Committees should be promoted. International institutions (UNWRA; UNICEF, or European governments), and also Lebanese institutions such as the Lebanese Palestinian Dialogue Committee (LPDC), are showing real determination to support Palestinian youth in Lebanon and work with them. But sometimes there is a rivalry between their initiatives. Palestinian youth in Lebanon should not be sort of a "market" for international and local donors, competing with each other. On the contrary, the problem is not the absence of initiatives, but rather that positive initiatives are dispersed.

I. “No Future” for Palestinian Youth in Lebanon?

Marginalization of young Palestinians is not only related to “legal discrimination”: interviews and focus groups revealed that young Palestinians have grievances not only against the Lebanese institutions, but also against their own Palestinian society: more and more, the generational gap between Palestinian youth and the generation of their parents becomes problematic. It is this double process of marginalization and discrimination – both Lebanese and Palestinian - that has to be questioned: contrary to the early years of the Palestinian National Movement (60s and 70s), Palestinian youth no longer believes in socio-promotion by education (UNRWA schools), and has no political perspectives. These youths socialize in a violent environment, saturated by tensions, from family and home to the streets of the camps. There is no financial autonomy and the weight of the family often prevails – especially for young Palestinian women. Both private and public spaces (Palestinians and Lebanese) are considered to be stifling and oppressive. Young Palestinians take refuge in a “blase attitude”, where boredom and individualism dominate. Resentment is real: *young Palestinians blame Lebanese political and security institutions, but also Palestinian factions and Popular Committees, for putting them at the margin.* Unfortunately, it is sometimes the paradigm of “all against all” which prevails.



A. Family and homes: a hard place to be?

Most of the participants in the focus groups recognise that a *real generation gap* exists between themselves and their parents, relatives and neighbours. Families and homes are a hard place to be: A young Palestinian woman living in the old city of Sidon affirms that families and homes are often associated with a violent atmosphere of “shouting” (Siyah) and “insults” (Shata'im) .

Parents' opinions are final in terms of professional perspectives, since young Palestinians have no financial autonomy. One young woman in the Miyeh&Miyeh camp indicated that the decision of her “discipline study has been undertaken by her father” , and she had been forced to accept it, despite her lack of conviction about the subject. Imposed marriage is the worst, which usually ends in divorce. This makes life of women hellish, because of the perception of the community towards divorced women. It leads to more severe restrictions from parents and relatives: “... Early marriage could be imposed only on young girls who are out of school. Girls who are well educated can refuse or at least resist it.”

Family and homes are also associated with a certain feeling of boredom: some of the male interviewees and the majority of women spend their time at home “sleeping” or “doing nothing” , cleaning houses, reviewing their lessons, meeting with friends, reading, watching TV, or passing their time on social networks. The lack of private space in camps and gatherings and the absence of autonomy are seldom considered by the different studies on Palestinian youth, although they are key factors for explaining the feeling of marginalization among young Palestinians. And this lack of private space is not offset by a fulfilling access to public space – that of the streets of camps and gatherings.

Real **generation gap** exists

B. Inside the streets: in search of lost time

Young Palestinians that were part of different focus groups have mixed feelings about the streets of refugee camps. Firstly, they are associated with violence – a violence that can be symbolic (insults, shouting, like within the family and home) and physical. Palestinian factions and Jihadist movements do not have the monopoly on weapons and daily violence. Tareq Othman is a young social worker for a Palestinian NGO independent of factions, in Shatila camp. He states: “Violence can be verbal or physical. Every Palestinian can have a weapon in their hands. They can buy a revolver for 200\$. *Young men under 18 can have it and walk in the camp with this gun without belonging to any party, and nobody will ask them a question.*” Yet, it is in the streets of the camps that young Palestinians – more often men than women – can spend their free time: they go to coffee shops inside the camps, play cards or they smoke nargileh. Young Palestinians from Baddawi refugee camps, belonging to the youth section of the leftist Popular Front for the Liberation of Palestine (PFLP), recognize that even though camps are associated with boredom and a lack of collective activities, they are usually the only place to be: they deliberately limit their stay outside the camps, in Lebanese public spaces.

But the streets of some camps – especially in Ein al - Helweh - are also segmented in military zones controlled by factions and militias and for some young Palestinians belonging to radical or fundamentalist factions, the streets of the camps are a de facto open-air prison. Shabab al - Muslim (the Muslim Youth) is a radical Islamist group gathering activists from Fatah al-Islam to Jund al-Sham in Ein al - Helweh refugee camp, regularly involved in violent fighting with Fatah Movement. Their members recall that they never leave the areas where they are implemented, especially the Al - Tire neighborhood, for fear of being arrested by Lebanese authorities, or by the Palestinian police.

Dance, Sports, Cultural and Political Activities

Nevertheless, some men and women have a collective social engagement and are volunteers, mainly in Palestinian NGOs - rarely Lebanese ones. Also, they do cultural activities like Dabkah (the traditional Palestinian dance), and finally sports such as football, basketball and boxing. All activities mainly take place inside the camp. But the lack of places for recreation, exercise, proper football fields, was a point of consensus among young Palestinians. They are also involved in Islamic cultural activities such as learning the Koran – in Mosques and in some Islamist factions: the crisis of PLO, Fatah and of the Palestinian national movement since the end of the civil war is one of the causes of the rising of religious and Islamic movements among youth. Muhammad Salem is the President of the Islamic League for Palestinian Students - closely associated with the Hamas movement - which gathers more than 1400 members among Palestinian students in universities and secondary schools. One of the programs developed by the Islamic League in the last few years is the “Majalis an-Nour” program, which combines “Islamic” and “patriotic” teaching for young Palestinian people. “Patriotic awareness” seems to be a constant preoccupation for Palestinian factions that are involved in youth activities, whether Islamist, leftist or nationalist, such as scouts (al-Kashafeh) . Political parties mobilize them in accordance with a calendar of mobilizations inside camps and gatherings, commemorating annually the “founding dates” of Palestinian history: “Nakbah”, or “Land day”.

These social activities maintain a certain social tissue for Palestinian youth in camps and gatherings. However, one must not get carried away: it is not the majority of young Palestinians that is active in NGOs, cultural or sport clubs. Palestinian youth seems disenchanted: it perceives Palestinian public space in camps and gatherings as an oppressive space – even if there is no other place to go, and as to schools and the Palestinian education system, young Palestinians also use negative terms while describing them.

C. A massive phenomenon of “dropping out”

Dropping out from secondary schools is a massive phenomenon among young Palestinians. All participants in focus groups agree on the absence of a child - friendly environment in UNRWA schools which could motivate children, an absence of psychosocial support programs and the presence of severe corporal punishment: “old teachers” are often seen as unable to deal with children. Some of them seem to be unqualified, or are considered as “extremists” in their religious outlook. Ahmed, a -21 year-old Palestinian from Ein al-Helweh recalls that he “left the school at grade 7 because one of the teachers ill-treated me and was violent”. Hussein, an -18 year-old from the same camp, said: “...My parents were worried because one of the teachers was always talking about the heroic actions of Islamic volunteers who left the camp to go to Syria and Iraq. Accordingly, they wanted me to finish the ninth grade and leave to study outside the camp...I chose to go for vocational education and to study nursing. ”

The second main reason for dropping out is social: in addition to the pressure from the family, sometimes because young Palestinians are expected to contribute to the household income, they become attracted by “easy money”. One of the interviewees from Insan Association, a drug rehabilitation centre based in Burj al-Brajneh refugee camp, explains how he dropped out: “I saw educated people working in construction; I liked education, but I worked in carpentry in summer, so I saw I have money; then I decided to continue. I had friends who are working and every Saturday they go out and hang out; one day they invited me and treated me [paid cost], but later I had to pay for myself. I started smoking, so I had to get money to pay” . The third reason for dropping out is connected to the lack of security around schools. Regular military clashes between factions affect the daily life of youth. Muhammad Younes, director of the UNRWA al-Bissan School in Ein al-Helweh refugee camp, says that, “young Palestinians students are the first victims of fighting that occurred between December 2016 and April 2017, opposing Fatah movement to some jihadist and fundamentalist movements”. He had to systematically “identify the number of students who lost their schoolbags and books, and sometimes their home, and who no longer come to school ”. He also recalls that some young boys, under the age of 18, are members of a “Night guard” (Harass al-Leil) led by Palestinian security forces. By receiving a financial compensation for their participation in the “Night guard” to help their families, they are potentially subject to dropout from schools.



The phenomenon of dropping out means a crisis of confidence in education, contrary to the sixties, seventies and eighties: at that time, UNRWA schools had a positive role among Palestinian youth. Primary and secondary education meaningfully participated in the construction of a modern national identity, carried by the young generation of that period. Today, it is exactly the contrary: the deep crisis of the education system is equivalent to a Palestinian social cohesion crisis. Young Palestinians no longer believe in a school system that does not provide them future perspectives or opportunities. It is also true, partly, for graduate education.

Discrimination in Universities

Obviously, dropping out from universities is less frequent: there is, de facto, an upstream selection that is also discriminative, based on the high rate of fees and the cost of studies. Muhammad Salem, from the Islamic League for Palestinian Students, estimates that “a young Palestinian student, if he is not at the Lebanese University (UL), will need a total of 7000 dollars annually for his studies: this includes enrollment, tuition and transportation fees, as well as books, laptops and materials such as photocopies; daily expenses and food. It is an enormous investment for Palestinian students”. The LPDC assures that “Palestinian students and Lebanese students are equally treated in terms of fees” at the Lebanese University, which is the least expensive university in Lebanon. Yet many Palestinian students choose to go to private universities, mainly the Lebanese International University (LIU), the Arts, Sciences and Technology University in Lebanon (AUL) and the Beirut Arab University (BAU). The reasons are numerous. Some Palestinian students assert that the Lebanese University (UL) still practices discrimination against young Palestinians at the moment of their enrollment; Lebanese International University (LIU), affiliated with Nasserist leader and former minister Abderahim Mrad, offers a less racist environment to Palestinian students than other institutions; The Beirut Arab University (BAU) has a long tradition, starting from the sixties and the strong presence of the Palestinian national movement in Lebanon, of solidarity with Palestinian youth. The geographical proximity between universities and camps and gatherings also plays a role in their choice of the enrollment.

In addition, if they choose private universities, young Palestinian students can benefit from three types of financial help: those of the Palestinian Student Fund (PSF), of the President Mahmoud Abbas Fund (PLO), and the Arab and International Donors. But these aids are often conditioned by a high success rate at the baccalaureate exam. The director of UNRWA Bissan School in Ein al-Helweh, Muhammad Younes says, that “students who can benefit from grants should have obtained at least an average of %75-%65 at the bachelor’s degree. And they have to get an inscription in universities in the same subject matter than at the baccalaureate. For instance, a student who studied economy until the bachelor’s degree cannot get an inscription in the faculty of biology”. Often, Palestinian factions, mainly Fatah and Hamas, also help Palestinian students with their daily expenses.

Young Palestinians admit that it is hard to pursue their studies for more than three years: the highest priority remains to find a job – which is not forbidden to Palestinians. Thus, employment opportunities are very limited. Major fields of study are business, nursing, mechanical engineering, or English literature – one of the best ways to find a job, later, in a UNRWA school.

For Palestinian youth, university studies could signify a means of emancipation, or even of social climbing. It is sometimes true – only for a tiny minority of young Palestinians. University courses enable them to obtain a diploma, but also to get out of the enclosed space of refugee camps. But the cost of education is not easily affordable, and Lebanese administrations on campus still practice discriminatory politics towards Palestinian youth. Unfortunately, these Lebanese discriminatory politics are not specific to universities.

**Palestinian
youth feel abandoned
and left alone.**

D. Difficult interactions with the “others” (Lebanese, Syrians and PRS)

Twenty-six years after the end of the civil war, and 34 years after PLO’s retreat from Beirut, Palestinians are still seen as potential and permanent danger by Lebanese society. Palestinian youth feel excluded from the country in which they were born. Many of their stories recount humiliation exercised by representatives of power, especially the police and army, when the authorities know that they are Palestinians. Sometimes, Lebanese political factions also exercise humiliating treatment against young Palestinians. On the labour market, the competition between young Palestinian refugees in Lebanon, Syrian refugees and Palestinian refugees from Syria (PRS) is increasingly fierce and adds up to the difficult relations between Palestinians and Lebanese. To sum it up, *Palestinian youth feel abandoned and left alone*. They are turning their anger and frustration against everyone: Lebanese, Syrian refugees, but also associative and political Palestinian representatives, who are accused of not listening and not taking into consideration their grievances.

With Lebanese People: A Constant Feeling of Humiliation

“Popular racism” is reflected in personal relationships or Lebanese - Palestinian social relations. For example, one interviewee recounted his story with a Lebanese girl: he contacted her father so as he could propose marriage to her, and the father replied: “If my little toe is Palestinian, I’ll cut it off”. Then he rejected him. Young Palestinians interviewed during the focus groups systematically spotlight the daily discrimination they are facing with Lebanese people, whether Christians, Sunni or Shia. Soldiers, policemen, but also members of Lebanese political factions are often held liable for racist acts. One interviewee from the Mieh&Mieh refugee camp says: “I was with a friend in Nabatiyeh; members of the Amal Movement stopped us and interrogated us. They were aggressive. Then they handed us over to the army intelligence in Nabatiyeh. The only reason was that we are Palestinians from the Mieh&Mieh camp. ” A young Palestinian from Burj al-Brajneh refugee camp also says: “Once a soldier at a checkpoint got in the bus and asked those who have the blue mantle [the blue Palestinian ID card] to show it. I objected and told him that it was their government that issued this mantle. He asked me to get off the bus and kept me for a while then released me.” The arbitrary detentions of young Palestinians and the non-application of the Law 422 concerning the rights of juveniles in Lebanese prisons, mainly the Roumieh detention Center, are also put forward by NGO workers.

Tensions between Lebanese and Palestinian people are not only individual nor limited to the daily relations with the Army and the Internal Security Forces. Lebanese and Palestinian youth gangs sometimes oppose each other. Hassan Yahia, director of the UNRWA al-Jalil School in Burj al-Brajneh refugee camp, says, that “by the end of April 2017, a group of young Shia from Burj al-Brajneh neighbourhood attacked the school to oppose some young Palestinians. Since then, the Lebanese army controls the entry of the school in the morning and the exit during the afternoon”. These youth gang logics are fraught with danger, especially in areas such as the Dahiyeh – the southern suburb of Beirut - where they could be turned in to sectarian and religious conflicts between Lebanese Shias and Palestinian Sunnis.

Exploitation at Work and Unemployment

The unemployment rate is very high among Palestinians, partly due to Legal discrimination, or by faulty application of the 2005 and 2010 Laws. According to representatives from Nabaa, an independent NGO based in all Palestinian camps: “*Unemployment has been a major challenge for a long time, but the Syrian crises decreased it inside and outside the camps.* Young men graduate from universities, but they do not find work, so they go to military groups or resort to drugs or immigration. The percentage of unemployment is around %82 because of the unfair law. ” Exploitation at work is equally a problem: daily relationships with Lebanese employers and workers are harsh. Tarek Othman, from Ahlam Laji NGO in Shatila camp, gives some examples about exploitation at work: “My brother is a controller on equipment in a building. He’s been working for 3 years, but he’s still paid daily, and consequently, he doesn’t benefit from any allowances.... I graduated with a BA in geography, but I couldn’t find work in this field. I worked in a store, selling spare parts; now I work in microfinance. I never worked in my major. So how do you think it will be for the uneducated youth? They will go into the labor market and become victims of exploitation by employers that might recruit them. There is a group of young men who had worked for 2 months at an aluminum company; now they left the company without getting a single penny, and they can’t go to the Ministry of Labor to complain because they are Palestinians” .

One of the paradoxical effects of work exploitation is the increasing competition between Palestinian workers in Lebanon on the one side, and Syrians and Palestinian workers from Syria (PRS) on the other side - more specifically on building yards. By 2012, solidarity between them existed: Palestinians from Syria and Syrian refugees were welcomed in Palestinian camps. Over time, the paradigm “of all against all” predominated. Indeed, Lebanese employers often play the game of the competition between them on labor market, with disastrous aftermaths.

According to the majority of interviews with institutional representatives, the Syrian crisis affects Palestinians’ chances to work inside and outside the camp: “For example, the daily payment of refugees is 30000 LL, but Syrians (and PRS) get 20000 LL,” said a youth from Wajeh and Al-Jalil NGOs in Tyre. According to them, NGOs also target Syrians and Palestinians from Syria due to the displacement: “The minister of labor issued a memo that limited the percentage of foreign workers in NGOs to %10. This caused many Palestinians to lose their jobs. On the other side, these NGOs started to hire Syrians.”

A representative of the Popular Committees in Sidon says, “we welcome the Palestinians from Syria, but they affect the work of Palestinians in a high percentage; for example, I was working in tiles, and since they came, we can’t work. We had prices that can’t go lower, but they met our price and offer lower prices, and customers want cheaper.”

E. Grievances against Palestinian institutions, representatives and NGOs.

Young Palestinians gathered in the focus groups all agree on a “generation gap”: with parents and relatives, but also with Palestinian representatives in Lebanon. They are excluded from participation in political leadership and Palestinian institutions. This is particularly true for Popular Committees. Their representatives are often more than 50-40 years old and they do not know how to deal with young Palestinians. Abed Abu Salah and Jamal Safadi are in charge of Popular Committees for Sidon's district. One of them admits: “the young men are not taking their rights; sometimes we blame NGOs and sometimes we blame the young men themselves; we tried to represent them in Popular Committees, but it didn't work; most of the youth want independence; they don't want to work with others”. Lack of dialogue, misunderstanding, mutual distrust: the gulf is growing wider between a younger generation that has not experienced the highly politicized years of the Palestinian national movement in Lebanon (the 70's and 80's) and activists involved in Popular committees and factions' leaderships.



Palestinian Representatives and their “Taboos”

Factions and Popular Committees are also criticized for not taking into consideration youth problems such as gender violence and child abuse. “Sex” is a taboo in Palestinian society, therefore talking about sexual exploitation or sexual deviance is still difficult. Questioned about sexual violence in Palestinian camps, representatives of Sidon's Popular Committees simply elude the subject, by answering: “We never encountered such issues”.

Yet, during interviews, youth or stakeholders mix sexual exploitation and harassment. Hasan Bahani and Mohamad Kaddoura from TDH NGO in South Lebanon highlight the limited intervention concerning sexual abuse: “These cases are still taboos; there is reluctant intervention from some NGOs. We still face problems in our interventions. We need to raise awareness of this problem, but the community usually doesn't acknowledge it; however, it's better than before.” Some interviewees clearly accuse political leaders or local figures inside the camps of benefiting from “sexual favors”. According to Zafer Khatib, from Nashet NGO, “there are cases where power is used to get sex; this is mainly used by political leaders.” Social workers of Nabaa NGO in Ein al-Helweh add: “There was a woman who needed to refurbish her house and she was subject to exploitation by some powerful person. There's an increased number of Palestinians from Syria and Syrian women who experience such exploitation. They are mainly approached by a responsible-looking person who offers them assistance and sometimes it happens openly, where a person or a leader continuously visits a woman to provide her assistance because she has a disabled child or so.”

For some Palestinians, gender discriminations are directly due to the rise, in the nineties, of radical Islamic factions in camps and gatherings. It is partly true. Certainly, *some Islamic organizations gradually imposed their fundamentalist rules in Palestinian neighborhoods*: during interviews conducted for this research, some social workers in UNRWA schools clearly asserted that schools in Ein al-Helwe refugee camp are now single-sex, because of the constant pressure of fundamentalist factions. But the reality is more complicated. Fatah movement and other PLO organizations are also conservative; Salafist and Islamist organizations do not have the monopoly of gender discriminations; and many young Palestinian women adhere to the Islamist discourse, belonging to Islamist and religious associations, often links with so-called radical factions, finding through them a feeling of self-esteem.

Mixed Feelings about Palestinian NGOs

Young Palestinians in focus groups also denounce Palestinian NGOs. Obviously, they maintain a social tie in Palestinian camps - at a time when international funding for UNRWA declines. Yet, young Palestinians often suspect that they seek “to take advantage” of international funding and donors, by prioritizing Palestinian refugees from Syria over Palestinian refugees from Lebanon. Young Palestinians seem to have mixed feelings about the role of NGOs in the camp. They are the only existing structure for social activities, education or sport. But, just as Popular Committees and factions, they are led by older activists – and are often indirectly linked to political parties.

Three basic critics against NGOs in camps and gatherings emerged from the interviews and focus groups: Firstly, they fully depend on foreign funds and donations to run their programs, but they do not implement projects based on the needs of the community. Ziad Kawaash, an expert in TVET (technical vocational education and training), says: "There is an Italian NGO that spent 5 million euros in 2005 on Enhancing Palestinian Employability in Lebanon; this included empowering Palestinian TVET NGOs, conducting studies on the labour market and finding work opportunities for Palestinians. The outcome was zero. There was no impact for this project on the Palestinian community."

Secondly, young Palestinians suspect that NGOs exercise a new form of exploitation by their competition to win proposals. All NGOs want to work with youth, because they could easily find funding for this category. For Shadi, a young Palestinian from Ein al-Helweh, "...some NGOs display their success to donors by calling for events to celebrate the finished projects ...they cheat ...the donors do not measure impact."

Thirdly, some Palestinian activists consider that international donors put pressure on Palestinian NGOs by forcing them to adopt specific agendas that do not take into consideration the popular culture of Palestinian camps. Walid Taha is working with the global think tank Pursue. In his opinion, "NGOs came to a community and started calling for equality and stopping early marriage without understanding the community and its values. Sometimes the community has religious and social values, but they are not aware of them. We should identify the religious and civil rights and promote them, because they are approved and accepted by all in a masculine community. *If a woman is beaten, she can give a saying, Hadith, of the prophet, or she can object by protecting herself with social norms that reject beating wives.*"

A feeling of double abandonment, both Lebanese and Palestinian

In terms of discriminations and exploitation, all of the facts are known: the Lebanese system, despite some recent reforms (mid2000-s) and significant progress, stays discriminative for Palestinians: access to the labour market, right to public space, education, freedom of movement. Young Palestinians perceive the Lebanese public space as hostile: as a space of apartheid, with its daily humiliation and harassment. But this survey shows another dynamic, which interacts with the first: the feeling of marginalization of Palestinian youth is also relative to the Palestinian society of camps and gatherings itself. This is probably what differentiates the contemporary period from the early years of the Palestinian national movement in Lebanon, when Palestinian youth had a leading role in refugee camps.

Nowadays, young Palestinians do not see the family or the home as a reassuring space; they consider the streets of camps and gatherings as violent and hostile; their communication with their family and relatives is harder and harder; they feel that they are not properly represented or listened to by the Palestinian leadership and the Popular Committees; they have harsh grievances against NGOs and civil society. *This double feeling of marginalization and discrimination – with Lebanese people, but also with the Palestinian older generations - has only one consequence: young Palestinians seek to flee from their current reality, by any means necessary.*

II. By Any Means Necessary? “Exit” The Different Logics of

Political activists, social workers and young Palestinians interviewed as part of the focus groups : all of them identify two interconnected dynamics. The first one is connected to the general process of marginalization, exploitation and discrimination of youth described above. The second one is relative to the consequences: young Palestinians want to “exit” by any means necessary: from the camps, from the present, from Lebanon. The ways to “exit” are threefold: Drugs and escapism; emigration and violent radicalization – which cannot be subsumed under the sole paradigm of “jihadism”.



A. Drugs and “Artificial Escapes”

Drug problems in Palestinian camps are nothing new, but it has become a less taboo topic than before. Drug problems can be divided in two categories: selling and addiction. *The most exploited category is Palestinian youth who are recruited as drug dealers.* In the majority of cases, these drug dealers develop an addiction as well. Tareq Othman (Ahlam Laji', Shatila camp) recalls that even juveniles are sometimes enrolled in drug selling: “last year, there was a -12year-old girl who was caught selling drugs (in Shatila camp). The dealers use children to promote their goods; they pay them pocket money”. He also stresses that “the dealers are well known in Shatila camp: Ahmad J. sells cocaine; Bilal A. sells buzz.” Drug traffic also affects educational institutions. During interviews, representatives of the Siblin Training Center (STC), that trains Palestinians after the Bachelor degree near Sidon, recall that last year, a young originating from the Bekaa camps tried to sell drugs among students . Even though he insists that this case is unique, it still shows that a risk can affect educational institutions.

Nevertheless, interviewees mostly underlined that drugs are not directly produced inside the camps, they come from the outside. But the last conflict at the end of April 2017 in Baddawi camp shows that a piston for making Captagon pills, from Beakaa area, was discovered in the apartment of one of the wanted men, so drugs are fabricated inside the camp. Interviews showed that the term “drug” itself is difficult to define: it is generally used to describe all ways of “escape”, from glue, alcohol and pills, to hashish and “harder” drugs.



Collective Responsibilities

Young Palestinians sometimes accuse factions – whether PLO or non - PLO affiliated - of “laissez - faire” policies. In some cases, as in Shatila and Burj al-Shamali refugee camps , they are directly held accountable for selling drugs. Interviews conducted in Shatila camp revealed that some well - known Palestinian leaders of a military faction close to Lebanese Hezbollah, are considered as principal drug dealers in the camps – an information that is difficult to confirm. Yet factions and Palestinian joint security forces (PJSF) seem to have averted this topic: they organized demonstrations against drug dealers in Shatila camp, but also in Ein al-Helweh, throughout October and November 2016, promising NGOs to hardly fight drug smugglers. While some Palestinian factions close to 8 March coalition are often suspected of overlapping drug dealers' networks in Shatila, young Palestinians of Waifil refugee camp, in East Lebanon, assure the contrary, that Hezbollah plays a positive role in and outside the camp to limit drug dealing. In any case, regardless of the responsibility of factions in selling drugs, interviewees, especially NGO social workers, constantly reaffirmed their commitment to work with Palestinian security forces and political leaderships to increase drug consumption in camps.

Lebanese authorities, especially the Internal Security Forces (ISF) and the Lebanese courts, are also called to face their responsibilities. Samer Maana (Human Development Center) gives the example of a young Palestinian in Ein al-Helweh, -17year-old, who tried to steal a generator near an old house in Sidon. He was denounced by the concierge and arrested by the Internal Security Forces (ISF). Then he remained six months in the Juvenile area of Roumieh Prison, before being released. He went back to prison later for abuse of narcotic substances. A severe jail sentence for minor crimes and a long period of detention in Lebanese prisons are often the best way for young Palestinians to become drug addicts: it is an eternal circle.

Adapted Structures

“I started to take drugs because I was angry. I studied in Siblin Training Center (STC). But every time the Lebanese recruited people, they refused to recruit me because I am Palestinian.”, says an ex-drug addict from Burj al-Brajneh refugee camp. According to another, *“the problem of drugs is a result. We were not born with it. It exists in the camp,* and when problems happen, young men find themselves involved with drugs. I was working normally but under pressure and under fear, I started with hashish, and then I started to take more until I abused drugs ”.

According to TDH and the assessment on child protection in 2009, drug addicts and dealers are mostly unemployed graduates who spend time in the streets. The findings of 2009 are still accurate, but the number has increased, and what is surprising is that some of the young men admit that they take drugs. The general profile of drug consumers is often the same: they are jobless or exploited at work, having experienced prisons or discrimination outside the camps. They are not automatically single. Some Palestinian drug addicts are authorized to join Lebanese rehabilitation Centers . But they feel rejected or despised by local staff: “I used drugs for 11 years. I visited a center in east Beirut for Christians; they discriminated me. I was about to quit for more than 10 times, but I stayed because of my son and wife. If you don't find a friend who understands your situation, you won't be healed. ”

Some Positive Initiatives for Drug Addicts

If the environment of Lebanese rehabilitation centers is ill-adapted for young Palestinian drug addicts, Palestinian camps obviously lack proper structures. The case of Al-Insan Center, located in Burj al-Brajneh refugee camp, is a positive exception: it started in 2013 by private and individual initiative, until 2015, when Medecin sans frontieres (MSF) started to support the center in providing psychosocial support (PSS) and medical services. All the treatments are free. Insan's staff isolates the patient to detox his body over three days. They have dorms, a sports club, a handcraft workshop where patients work and a medical health clinic that hosts a doctor two days a week and is on call when needed. They can host 12 patients at once, from 17 up to 54 years old. Around 100 people enrolled at the Center since it started. According to Nimer Nimer, founder of the Center, "Patients have a varied profile, both male and female. Females come on Saturdays, but they don't sleep there. There is a variety of patients, some are educated, some illiterate, other are rich, poor, married, single, and people with family problems".

One might think that in a very conservative society, drug addicts are seen as a danger threatening the whole community: it is partly true. Palestinian perceptions of drug consumers have changed: they are considered to be less of a danger, they are more and more perceived as what they simply are: "normal" people, that is to say jobless, subjected to discrimination, without future perspectives. Surprisingly, even fundamentalist and Islamist organizations abandoned their moralistic and "guild-laden" discourse towards drug addicts: seeing them more as "victims" than "criminals", some religious movements, sometimes depicted as "radicals", such as the Islamic Combatant Movement in Ein al-Helweh refugee camp, led by Cheikh Jamal Khattab, are now open to launch "rehabilitation programs" and "protection units" for young drug consumers.

Some years ago, drug consumption in Palestinian camps was still a general taboo: now, some Palestinian NGOs and activists began to take charge of this issue – but with small resources. Palestinian factions and security forces promise to contain drug trafficking – but their position sometimes remains ambiguous, since some of their members can sometimes be the main smugglers in camps. Lebanese institutions and rehabilitation centers are ill-adapted to young Palestinians – they are not their top priority. Positive steps have been undeniably accomplished by Palestinian stakeholders in camps and gatherings to help young drug addicts: but material means are still very limited. As for the Lebanese authorities and the International Community, they are focused on violent extremism in camps and gatherings: they probably underestimate the weight of drug consumption among youth, which is a form of mortal "escapism" that affects the whole Palestinian society.

B. From the "right of return" to the "right to emigration"

From Burjal-Shamali to Baddawi refugee camps, the crisis of the Palestinian National Movement in Lebanon can be resumed by the following historical shift: from the "right of return" (Haqq al-'Awda) to the "right to emigration" (Haqq al-Hijra). The generation gap between young Palestinians and their parents, identified above, is also a political one: in terms of dreams ("liberation of Palestine", "return"), perspectives and hopes. It is not that young Palestinians have fully abandoned the patriotic values and nationalist claims—some of them are engaged in the different factions of the Palestinian National Movement. But most of them, as revealed in the focus groups, are now dreaming of another right: to leave Lebanon and to go abroad.



"The Only Realistic Option"

The reasons behind this phenomenon are manifold: discrimination against Palestinians, meaningless life of youth in camps, lack of employment, troubles in their community and uncertainty about their future in addition to the security situation. It's all connected with marginalization of the youth and denying youth civil rights. *Youth immigrate not only for financial or economic reasons; they might travel for security reasons, for social reasons, or for a calm life.* They are in search of "settlement". For Muhammad Bahloul, member of the Popular Initiative (al-Mubadara al-sha'abiya), an independent youth movement mainly based in Ein al-Helweh refugee camp, it is the only "realistic option" for young Palestinians: "I wrote a paper some years ago: I explained that emigration has become a refuge (Maladhan), that is to say it is the only realistic option (al-Khayar al-waqi') for young Palestinians. All that happened since the Oslo agreements (1993) has targeted a just solution for Palestinian refugees". Emigration dynamics among young Palestinians have been encouraged by the direct aftermaths of the Syrian crisis on refugee issues, from 2011 until today: it probably reached its highest peak by summer and fall 2015. By October 2015, 23, the Lebanese army arrested migrant smuggling networks in Sidon. The figures speak for themselves: the five-member network sent a boat to Istanbul, carrying migrants to Turkey. Among the "passengers", only one was Lebanese, 14 were Palestinians from Syria, and 21 were Palestinians from various camps in Lebanon.

A Massive Phenomenon

People mainly go to Denmark, Norway, Holland, Sweden, Belgium, Germany, Russia and Italy. The country of choice depends on the cost, immigration history, and administrative complications of settlements and procedures. They entered Europe with a falsified visa or with smugglers by sea. According to Ziad Kawash, they can also obtain fake Syrian IDs delivered by smugglers. The immigrants are mostly between 18 and 25. There are families, too, who immigrate, but their number decreased as the cost increased and emigration has become more difficult nowadays. Many educated people left; they had graduated there, but as Lebanese law prevents them from working, they decided to leave. It is difficult to quantify the exact number of migrants, but Palestinian interlocutors estimate that hundreds of young Palestinians flee from Lebanon each year. Most of the young Palestinians who were a part of the focus groups know a relative who is now in Europe or in some Scandinavian country. According to Tareq Othman (Ahlem Laji', Shatila), "there are no official figures on immigration from the camp, but in the summer of 2015, around 250 young people left Shatila camp, and one can talk about 540 people in total from different camps during the same period". Hiba Hamzeh (Nabaa NGO) specified that some camps and gatherings could be more impacted by migration dynamics than others, saying: "each area has a basic prevailing challenge: Qasmieh gathering in South Lebanon is impacted by emigration; Shatila is now stuck with drugs; and Ein al-Helweh has extremist groups."

A Risky Choice and a High Cost

The cost is high. Financially, NGOs, political activists and young Palestinians who were interviewed estimate that travelling to Europe costs between 5000 and 10 000 American dollars. Young Palestinians are often jobless, or students: how can they pay such an amount? By selling everything, according to Hussam Miari, member of Ein al-Helweh's Youth Committees: cars, motorbikes, and furniture. Families can also help.

Emigration also has a human cost: Oussama Ali, member of the Palestinian Arab Cultural Club in Tripoli's refugee camps, quotes the story of "a -21-year-old woman called Riham Moghrabi, who immigrated by sea with her younger brother and she died. This set a precedent for women who were thinking of immigration". Until 2016, young Palestinians who wished to leave Lebanon passed through Turkey by getting a visa: but Ankara has cut the ways for emigration since.

Young Palestinians now pass through Egypt, Sudan, and Libya, to join Europe illegally, at the risk of their own lives. Some sources indicate that before joining Egypt and Northern African states, Palestinians from Lebanon sometimes passed through some Gulf States giving them visas (Emirates). These roads are becoming more and more dangerous. According to Hussam Miari, "some guys arrived in Sudan, but they were exploited there. Then they went to Libya. The Islamic State caught them and blackmailed their parents to send them ransom or they would kill them; there were people who went to Tripoli (Libya) by boat. But the smugglers taught them how to sail the boat and then left them in the sea."

Smugglers Networks and "Conspiracy Theories"

Smugglers networks are difficult to identify. Interviewees in focus groups unanimously say that there are no organized networks in the camps: youth communicate with each other and instruct each other on ways and routes. But other sources clearly identify formal or informal smugglers networks, gathering Palestinian, Lebanese and Turkish people – before the closure of the roads to Istanbul by Turkey. Palestinian factions and officers, but also Lebanese security services – Army and Internal Security Forces – are sometimes accused of being part of these informal smugglers networks. According to Nabaa NGO: "at the beginning, people used to go to Turkey through Syria and from Turkey to Greece; it was well organized. There are smugglers in Turkey and they have dealers in camps; every smuggler is responsible to pass a country to another and in the new country, a migrant will contact another smuggler who connects the immigrant with the other in another place. Each stage costs around 300-200\$."

Nevertheless, an important point has to be stressed: among the interviews, it is difficult to distinguish between rumors, "conspiracy theories" (Israel, Lebanese State and the International Community would all agree on letting Palestinian refugees flee to Europe, to undermine "the right of return") and verifiable information. A source in Shatila camp explicitly affirms, "some Lebanese have relations in embassies. They are very active in issuing visas for Palestinians from Shatila. There is another travel agency in Kola: they prepare all documents for a visa, for 4,000\$." The same source explicitly accuses the Palestinian - Lebanese Youth Meeting of encouraging Palestinians to leave – some of its representatives would regularly visit Turkey. People from Fatah Movement sometimes accuse Muhammad Dahlan's networks in Lebanon of undermining the right of return slogan, by encouraging Palestinians to leave and ask for visas. Although these assertions have more to do with factions competing with each other, and with uncertain rumors, they are nevertheless insightful: the willingness to emigrate is strong among young Palestinians, and NGOs, factions and youth movement cannot contain the dynamic. Conspiracy theories and rumors are also an easy and reassuring way to explain the phenomenon.

Success Stories or Deception

Young Palestinians think about European and Scandinavian countries in idealistic terms: "they respect human rights". The other border of the Mediterranean Sea is the opposite image of Lebanon: absence of racism and discrimination. The majority of youth take into consideration some success stories about immigrants to Europe: they would earn good money and would support their families in the camp. Europe and Scandinavian countries are the new promised lands: the nationalist slogan of the "right of return" is far away.

Yet, sometimes young migrants are disillusioned. Year after year, some of them come back. A -27-year-old young Palestinian from Ein al-Helweh explains that he finally "came back from Belgium"; "after a one-month journey, I reached there, but I came back because they wanted to put me in school ...I hate schools ...I came back with two other friends of mine; each of us lost 3,000\$ on smugglers." Residency is not suitable; the salary is not enough, or they remain jobless; they are away from their family; they live together with four or five people in one house. Another important issue is the conditions of their return. Some young Palestinians can be temporarily blocked in European Eastern countries (Hungary, Serbia), without identity cards or legal papers – they sometimes burn them. Palestinian NGOs and authorities, but also UNRWA, are engaged in a constant mediation process with Lebanese authorities – especially with the General Security – to facilitate their return. On this specific point, Lebanese authorities seem to easily facilitate the conditions of return of young migrants, according to a UNRWA representative.

C. The Best Option to “Exit”? : Radicalization, Violence and Extremism

Palestinian camps are often depicted as “no-law zones” by Lebanese and international media: they are the main “shelter” in Lebanon for jihadists, whether Palestinians, Lebanese, Syrians or Iraqis. “Fanaticism”, “violent extremism”, “radicalism”: all these concepts are often associated with Palestinian camps in Lebanon. Sometimes it is all a caricature and the single focus on “jihadist” movements does not help to understand “violence” and “extremism” among Palestinian youth in general. As drug consumption and emigration, radicalism and violent extremism are linked to poverty and youth marginalization. Jihadist and fundamentalist movements are undeniably violent stakeholders. But their violence is itself produced by the violent atmosphere that reigns in the camps. As one of the leader of Shabab al-Muslim, one known as the most radical Islamist faction in Ein al-Helweh refugee camp summed it up during one interviews, “those who have nothing become judges” (al-Fadi bia’amil qadi).



More than “Extremism”: “Factionalist Fanaticism”

It is true that the Islamic State and Al-Qaeda's networks are present in Palestinian camps: by September 2016, Lebanese security forces arrested Imad Yassin, a Palestinian activist and member of the Islamic State: he was suspected of having planned bomb attacks in Lebanon. Radical jihadist and Salafist groups are surely implemented in Ein al-Helweh refugee camps: Shabab al-Muslim, Fatah al-Islam, Fatah al-Sham , etc. *Religious radicalization among Palestinian youth cannot be denied.* But interviews and focus groups highlighted for this survey showed another reality: jihadist and radical groups are not the primarily concern of young Palestinians.

Most of the time, after having spontaneously spoken about unemployment, discrimination, dropping out, drugs and emigration, *young Palestinians effectively address the issue of “extremism” (al-Tatarruf): but it is always related to another term - “dominant violence” (‘Unf) , in a very general sense.* Their definition of “extremism” is very extended: “extremism” is systematically related to all political groups and factions: PLO, non-PLO, Islamist, then, finally, jihadist. More than “extremism”, a very vague concept, violence has to be understood in the meaning of “factionalist fanaticism” (al-Ta’asub al-fasa’ili) or “political fanaticism” (al-Ta’asub al-siyasi). All factions, political organizations, Palestinian police forces and, of course, jihadist movements, have been cited by young Palestinians during interviews for their violent and oppressive practices - with few exceptions: concerning “Factionalist fanaticism” in the camps, Hamas, Palestinian Islamic Jihad Movement, the Combatant Islamic Movement, Usbat al-Ansar and leftist factions (PFLP, DFLP and PPP) have been objectively less or not quoted at all by young Palestinians, contrary to Fatah, Ansar Allah , PFLP-GC, Resistance Brigades, Shabab al-Muslim and jihadist movements. Thus, focus groups and interviews also showed that young Palestinians never denounced violence in political terms: pro-Syrian regime factions versus anti-Syrian regime factions, Pro-Hezbollah factions versus anti-Hezbollah-factions. On the contrary: the factions that the youth accused of being violent, radical and oppressive intersect both political camps.

**Religious radicalization among
Palestinian youth
cannot be denied.**

Cartography of Military Enrolment in Factions

A real cartography of enrolment of young Palestinians in factions is difficult to establish. Nonetheless, broad tendencies can be identified. Two movements close to the 8 March coalition have been quoted many times during interviews and focus groups. The first is an Islamist faction based in Mieh&Mieh, Bourj al-Shamali and Rashidiyeh refugee camps, in South Lebanon. Young Palestinians denounced this organization for its violent practices, and for having juveniles among its rank-and-file members. Interviewees also put forward that these movement's practices prompted a number of Sunni youth to extremism in return, and this means having elements or sleeper cells in the camp. During the interviews, a young woman gave the example of the harassment exerted on her by one of its militiamen, catching up with her from one place to another on motorcycles, threatening her more than once.

Another movement close to the 8 March coalition and partly composed of Palestinian militiamen is also often in the spotlights, but, it just does not concern all camps and gatherings. This movement is present in Shatila camp, Wadi Zeini gathering, Ein al-Helweh, Mieh&Mieh, and in the camps of South Lebanon. Young Palestinians sometimes accuse their members of controlling drug traffic among youth (Shatila), or are suspected of enrolling young Palestinians, sometimes juveniles, in their ranks (Ein al-Helweh and Sidon's district gatherings), for a monthly payment largely superior to other factions (around 400 dollars) – an information that is difficult to verify. A young Palestinian from Sidon affirms that his friend “could not find a job for two years; he is now forced to go to training with this movement to obtain the amount of 400\$ per month in order to ensure financial aid to his family. There is a fear of dragging him to Syria”.

As the main Palestinian force in Lebanon, and as the principal faction leading the Palestinian Joint Security Forces, young Palestinians often see Fatah movement as a repressive force. This is true for all Palestinian camps and gatherings in Lebanon. For a member of the Youth Movement (al-Hirak al-shababi) in Baddawi camp: “A young man can sign in with Fatah; he's given a gun, and after his patrol or duty hours, he's allowed to take the gun home with him. Then he can use the gun to shoot at weddings or in a fight with a neighbour.” For some members of radical and fundamentalist factions, their own extremism is depicted as a reflection and a consequence of Fatah's violence. During an interview conducted with Shabab al-Muslim members in Ein al-Helweh refugee camp, one of them recalls the story of Bilal Badr – a young Palestinian, age 27, belonging to Fatah al-Islam and Shabab al-Muslim, wanted by the Lebanese authorities, accused of terrorist activities, who became the public enemy number one in Ein al-Helweh for years: “he was a young Palestinian, like the other young Palestinians, spending all his time in the streets. He was just a band chief (Qabadai), and he wasn't an Islamist. One day, a member of the Fatah movement killed his best friend. Then Bilal Badr decided to take his revenge and he shot at this Fatah rank-and-file member. He became wanted by the Fatah security forces in the camp and he had to hide. Then he entered in Fatah al-Islam”.

The problem which arises from the Fatah movement is threefold: *its members, often young, have not had a proper military training nor are politically constructed*, so that is why they behave aggressively towards other young people on checkpoints; they sometimes use their weapons for other reasons than security measures, and in other occasions, aside from security patrols (weddings or personal revenge); Fatah is accused of enrolling juveniles in its ranks. Many NGO representatives stress the fact that the enrolment of young juveniles in factions and police forces is a common practice: that is true for Fatah movement, but also for other PLO and non-PLO factions: “We identified around 60 cases of children who carry arms (in Ein al-Helweh). Various factions exploit needs of youth and pay them to join and participate later in clashes or work as bodyguards to some military figures in the camp.” - one positive point should nevertheless be stressed out when it comes to juveniles enrolled in factions – among which is the Fatah movement: some NGOs in the camps have an open dialogue with factions on this issue, encouraging them to stop the enrolment of young Palestinian people in their military apparatus.

Lebanese authorities are also being pointed out: by massively recruiting Palestinian “indicators” in camps, they may favorize an indirect process of radicalization among Palestinians. The system is the following: Palestinian “indicators” denounce other Palestinians for belonging to a radical jihadist faction. Then, Internal Security Forces and Lebanese Army’s Intelligence capture Palestinians, for instance on a checkpoint, after an ID’s control. The arrested Palestinians are then interrogated and put into jail. According to UNHCR, torture and ill-treatment of Palestinian prisoners in pre-trial detention is a common practice of Lebanese security services. Most of the Palestinians arrested are released. Why? Because unanimous denunciations, in reality, concern “private cases”: people are sometimes denounced unfairly for private reasons (a conflict with a neighbour, a family affair). In fact, they do not belong to the radical jihadist groups. But the whole process – denunciation, arrest, and jail is sometimes enough for creating conditions for a real radicalization: in addition to the feeling of injustice (torture, prison), those who have been arrested can meet salafist and jihadist activists in prison. The “denunciation” system is related to the uncontrolled practice of recruiting Palestinian indicators in camps and it sometimes has the opposite effect than expected.

Young Palestinians, at least, denounce jihadist and fundamentalist factions (IS, Fatah al-Sham, Shabab al-Muslim) for their radical comportment towards the population, for gender discrimination and for sending juveniles to Syria and Iraq. Even though jihadist dynamics probably exist in all camps and gatherings – as in Lebanon in general – the phenomenon is mainly limited to Ein al-Helweh refugee camp. Social workers and activists tend to minimize the enrolment of young Palestinians in jihadist factions – and do not hesitate to compare the number of Palestinian fighters in Syria to their French and European counterparts, which are considerably more numerous. According to Houssam al-Miari, “there is a part of the youth which effectively admires some extremist ideologies and thoughts, but it is only a small number. The smallest percentage is from Ein al-Helweh camp. In four years, only around 80 people (from Ein al-Helweh refugee camp) went to fight in Syria. But there were around 4,000 people who came from France to fight in Syria”. Yet, Samer Maana (HDC) and Soheil Natour (DFLP) note that *it is very difficult to estimate the exact reality of jihadist engagement among Palestinian youth*, especially since some areas of Ein al-Helweh refugee camp are entirely controlled by factions such as Shabab al-Muslim or Fatah al-Islam, saying, “Concerning young Palestinians fighting in Syria, the only available information for some areas of Ein al-Helweh are given by jihadist media, or by the Mosques they control, when they announce the death of their fighter in Syria”. Jihadist enrolment among youth is very limited in other Palestinian refugee camps. In the case of Baddawi and Nahr al-Bared refugee camps, the staff of the Arab Palestinian Cultural Club (al-Nidaa al-filistini) asserts that jihadist enrolment does not exist, since the end of the fightings between the Lebanese army and Fatah al-Islam (2007). But from the Youth Initiative Movement’s point of view, few young Palestinians from Baddawi effectively went to Syria: “We had a nice guy called Shadi Khatib (-25year-old); he went to fight in Syria, and all the media covered his story. The political parties refused to contain him; he had energy, but nobody understood him”.

Once again: a Way to “Exit”

Fatah, PLO or non-PLO factions, pro or anti-Hezbollah movements, fundamentalist and jihadist factions, but also other tendencies: why do young Palestinians, sometimes juveniles, take up arms and radicalize? There is no secret: the socio-economic reasons play the most important role. Entering in a faction means having a decent salary, monthly: “between 400 and 800 dollars”, depending on factions. Even members of extremist factions such as Shabab al-Muslim easily confess that it is “the economic extremism (al-Tataruf al-iqtisadi) which nourishes the thoughts of vengeance (Fikr al-Intiqam).”

But the socio-economic factors are not the only reason. For instance, engagement in jihadist factions cannot be only explained by the sole effects of unemployment and lack of future perspective. Walid Taha gives another explanation that does not automatically contradict to the socio-economic factors: “self-esteem”. “This is the only difference between Palestinian factions and ISIS; *they help young Palestinians develop their self-esteem*. The second factor is the feeling of injustice; when a person’s mother is in need to receive medical treatment and nobody accepts to treat her or help him, don’t be surprised if this young man goes to ISIS.” In this regard, the rise of jihadist factions cannot be separated from the deep crisis of Palestinian national movement, PLO and PA. According to Muhammad Salem, head of the Islamic League for Palestinian Students (close to Hamas movement), “*the rise of extremist factions is also linked to the lack of patriotic culture (thaqafa wataniya) among Palestinian youth*”. Jamal Hamad, one of the most important leaders of Shabab al-Muslim in Ein al-Helweh, highlights another key factor to understand radicalization dynamics: the youth spontaneity in camps, which is sometimes uncontrollable, even by Islamist or religious leaderships. According to him, the military clashes between Fatah movement and Shabab al-Muslim by early April 2017 could not be explained only by ideological or political factors: “many young Palestinians of al-Tireh neighbourhood who did not belong to Shabab al-Muslim stood behind Bilal Badr during the fighting and took arms because they felt insulted by threats on social media against the women and young girls of al-Tyre area, written by some Fatah members.” Finally, joining a faction is an easy way of protecting oneself, but also to protect one’s family and relatives. Carrying arms and weapons does not only provide a monthly salary for jobless people, it also gives them a social status. Drugs lead them to this social status, this sense of self - accomplishment, drug addicts do not have it: drugs conduct to social isolation, and young Palestinians drug consumers take the risk to be demonized by their own conservative society. *Emigration leads to death* – in the Mediterranean Sea or in the deserts of Libya: if not, young Palestinian people are away from their own family – and sometimes confront some harsh deceptions. Finally, enrolling in factions, whether secular, Islamist or jihadist, and carrying weapons is not always the worst option and the less realistic for young Palestinians in Lebanon. It could even be the best option to “exit”. This enrolment can be also demonized, by factions or by older generations: they would betray the “national cause”, by abandoning the “right of return” for the “right to emigration”.

Emigration
leads
to
death

III. Where do we go now?

Young Palestinians live on the fringe of the Lebanese society, due to blatant social and economic discriminations; the generation gap between young and older generations becomes flagrant; violent radicalization, drug consumption and emigration dynamics are rising among youth. The conclusion could be only pessimistic. But Palestinian youth is also resilient. *Some solutions exist.* And for international donators and institutions, as for all the stakeholders who intervene in camps and gatherings, it is still possible to identify four policy challenges.

The first challenge, evidently, is legal, social and economic. For years, the UNRWA faces budget reductions. Yet, there is no secret: to help Palestinian youth, there has to be investment in education, sports and culture, while improving the legal framework. This is not just an issue of creating new infrastructures for youth: those still existing could be easily developed and further enhanced.

The second challenge is political. It directly concerns young Palestinians involved in factions, independent movements, unions or associations. They try to maintain a social tissue among youth, but *divisions and political factionalism tear them*. They do not find their place in the internal Palestinian political system, still led by the older generations. The youth is not only asking for material means or rights: the youth needs to be represented. Political participation and representation is the best way to get a real-self esteem.

The third challenge concerns the relations with Lebanese people. Here too positive initiatives to build bridges between Lebanese and Palestinian youth exist, but they are scarce. It is time to encompass mutual fears.

The fourth challenge concerns the general system of aid and investment for youth in camps and gatherings. Despite reducing UNRWA's funding, many international donators today are interested in the Palestinian youth issue, but their initiatives are not coordinated. Even worse, they are sometimes competing. Palestinian youth should not be a competitive market for donators.



A. Solutions Exist

There is a basic consensus among interviewees: solutions for Palestinian youth exist, these solutions are well known. Social workers, young activists in factions, student unionists, they all agree on a "minimal program" that, with some effort, could be implemented in camps. A few numbers of cultural centers, cultural cafes, cinema clubs, sports clubs and libraries exist : by 2012, the Lebanese Palestinian Dialog Committee has counted 108 associations, 16 unions and syndicates and 42 sports associations in camps and gatherings for only 27 kindergartens and educational centers. It is not enough to host and "raise the awareness of youth", according to Radwan Abdallah, coordinator of Palestinian scouts in Ein al-Helweh. There are a lot of locals who feel neglected and in need of rehabilitation, as a staff member of the sportive Karmel Club in Shatila camp told us: "we have a modest shelter (Malja'), but if we want to improve it, we will need around 9000 dollars". Sportive activities also require a better coordination between Lebanese municipalities and Palestinian NGOs: camps are saturated places and Palestinians have to go to Lebanese playing fields (football, basketball, etc.).

Interviewees also have some recommendations when it comes to preventing people from dropping out of school – and most of the time they are always the same: developing psychosocial support and counselling programs inside schools, "*bridging the gap between community and schools* by supporting parents-teachers committees to ensure engagement of teachers and parents", finding "a mechanism of evaluation and follow up with schools performance and measure the role of the community in supporting schools", or developing evening classes for students with highest needs.

A Strong Financial Commitment of the International Community is Needed

Providing vocational training for youth to help them find jobs, advocating for the right of employment of Palestinian youth, opening a specialized centre for youth issues where they can address their problems and needs, creating a rehabilitation centre for drug addicts in camps, with a qualified staff, opening small workshops in camps to provide work opportunities and to give medicine to people, or promoting women empowerment initiatives and supporting women's programs in the camps. These are also basic recommendations which the social workers and youth activists constantly give. They are not unrealistic, but there is no secret: it necessitates more financial commitment of the part of the International Community. From this point of view, the signs are not encouraging. Interviewees unanimously denounce the cuts in UNRWA's spending and services for years. They often consider that Western and Arab countries forgot Palestinians in Lebanon.

Palestinian NGOs and activists maintain "social ties" among Palestinian youth. But without a strong financial commitment of the International Community towards Palestinian refugees in Lebanon, they will only be tilting at windmills. Emigration, dropping out from schools, daily violence, consumption of drugs or enrolment in actions will increase. Nevertheless, to suggest that the problem is only financial and material is partly true.

B. Rebuild Youth Self-esteem: The Need for Political and Social Participation

Many young Palestinians are socially and politically engaged in NGOs, sports and cultural clubs, scouts, student unions, and factions. It is a positive dynamic: obviously, *there is a real demand for political and social participation among youth*. But there is a sharp contrast between their daily engagement in camps and gatherings and the inability of Palestinian institutions to integrate them in their leadership. Popular committees remain led by an “old guard” – the same is true for factions, without exceptions. The “*generation gap*” is also *political*.



Promoting Youth Political Participation

One of the constant demands of youth activists was precisely that: promoting political participation of youth, playing the game of generation renewal inside Popular Committees, factions and NGO's. It is also a question of mutual trust between two generations that share a common suffering – the statue of refugee-but whose expectations and hopes have been dissociated from each other at a certain moment.

To fill this “generation gap”, interviewees proposed concrete recommendations: *improving the integration of young Palestinians in the leadership of Popular Committees*, factions and NGO's , “forming committees that could help youth by cooperating with schools, political factions, community centers and NGOs”, working with representatives of the community to invest in youth power in the local unions and institutions, or establishing a “Palestinian youth parliament” in Lebanon.

Going beyond “Factionalism”

These demands could easily help young Palestinians and activists, because they would give them a social role, or at least this way they will be able to find their place in the governance of the camps: the integration of youth in Popular Committees and factions should be promoted. But it requires encompassing “factionalism” and political sectarianism. These last years, formal or informal independent youth movements have appeared, sometimes gathering activists coming from different political tendencies: Facebook groups asking for “the right to emigration” and visas, Popular initiative and Youth Committees in Ein al-Helweh, Youth Movement in Baddawi camp, Shababuna (Our Youth) Movement. But the problem with these initiatives is twofold.

Primarily, factions often regard these independent youth movements with suspicions: they would threaten their own hegemony on Palestinian camps.

Secondly, these *Youth Movements compete with each other for political reasons* – and it would not be dishonest to say that their independence is sometimes relative. In Baddawi camp, the Youth Movement—which belongs to the Palestinian Youth Network in Lebanon—is clearly accused by some Palestinian activists of being affiliated to Muhammad Dahlan – a former leader of the Palestinian security services in the Gaza Strip and the West Bank, excluded from Fatah movement by Mahmoud Abbas, by June 2011. What is at stake here is simply the inter-Fatah competition between Muhammad Dahlan and Mahmoud Abbas' partisans for five years. In parallel, some young Palestinians accuse the Shababuna network of being manipulated by pro-Abbas' followers in Lebanon to counter Dahlan's rise among Fatah members. The official launching of Shababuna network, by March 2014, effectively gathered young representatives of all Palestinian factions – excluding Muhammad Dahlan's partisans in Lebanon.

In any case, there is a problematic conclusion: although these youth movements often work in the same way and develop the same programs – struggle against daily violence, drugs and violent extremism, promotion of youth participation, they are divided by political factionalism. They fight for the same cause and they probably have the same “patriotic” stances than youth movements affiliated to factions: but the internal divisions of the Palestinian national movement, more specifically Fatah's internal divisions, undermine them. Therefore, it is now urgently needed to encompass this political “factionalism”: positive initiatives coming from young Palestinians should not be considered as contradictory, they do not have to compete with each other, even if they respectively belong to different political and ideological traditions.

C. Priority to the Lebanese-Palestinian Dialogue

Palestinian factions in Lebanon participated in the Lebanese civil war (1989-1975). For most young Palestinians, that happened long ago. But the Lebanese society still looks at them with fear. However, times have changed. One of the most positive findings of this survey is the following: dialogue exists between young Palestinians and Lebanese.

Dialogue in Universities

The role of the different Palestinian youth movements and student unions of factions in this dialogue-process should be enhanced: these last years, they've all been engaged in a long-term collaboration with Lebanese movements, specifically, on university campus. Traditionally, Palestinian student unions evidently discuss with Lebanese organizations, which are ideologically close to them. The Islamic League for Palestinian students—affiliated to Hamas movement and the Beit al-Maqqdis association – close to Palestinian Islamic Jihad maintain good relations with Hezbollah or Muslim Brothers student unions. The Palestinian progressive democratic Union – which is affiliated to the Democratic Front for the Liberation of Palestine, and youth of the Palestinian Popular Front (PFLP), organize meetings with Lebanese leftist organizations – especially the Union of the Lebanese Democratic Youth (Lebanese communist party) and the youth movement of the Socialist Union (close to former MP Abderahim Mrad).

But the dialogue - process between young Lebanese and Palestinians has largely encompassed pure ideological affinities. Lebanese university (UL), Lebanese International University (LIU), Beirut Arab University (BAU), or Arts, sciences and technology University in Lebanon (AUC): all Palestinian student unions in these universities are now engaged in a long-term dialogue with all Lebanese movements: March 8 or March 14.

According to Imad Rifai, head of the Beit al-Maqqdis association (close to Palestinian Islamic Jihad Movement), "Palestinian youth organizations do not take part in internal Lebanese political conflicts. We have relations with all political tendencies in universities, apart from their confessional belonging: Hezbollah, Amal, the Socialist Union, The Future Current, but also Christian parties: Lebanese Forces, Chamoun's Liberal National Party, Lebanese Phalanges and Aounists". Muhammad Salem, Head of the Islamic League for Palestinian students (close to Hamas), says: "this is a positive step, because we now have an open and frank dialogue with all factions in Lebanon. Dialog with Christian is very important, to go beyond the aftermaths of the civil war. We know that the general perception of Palestinians remains negative among many Lebanese people. But, for example, inside Christian political parties and youth unions, as the Lebanese Forces, the Phalanges and the Liberal national Party, we found that they have young cadres and representatives who are very open for dialogue".

Dialogue between Lebanese and Palestinian youth movements in universities has probably had a limited effect on the general situation of young Palestinians in Lebanon; but it is a positive experience, which should be highlighted. To go beyond mutual fears inherited from the civil war, to move beyond Lebanese representations that often perceive Palestinians as a "threat", dialogue among youth is a top priority.

Working with Lebanese Institutions

Lebanese institutions – Internal security forces, Army, governments, are perceived by young Palestinians as discriminative, not respecting their basic rights. But it would be wrong to say that nothing has changed since the end of the civil war. Palestinian NGOs and activists are not totally isolated: among officers and Lebanese politicians, they have found people to talk with. Not all the doors are closed: when young Palestinians take the initiative, they can obtain positive results. Hussam al-Miari, head of the Ein al-Helweh Youth Committees (al-Lijan al-shababiya) gives one such example: "Today we appealed to minister Wael Abu Faour [Minister of Health in the Tammam Salam's government] to help us; a Lebanese medicine company that gives a free pack a month for patients, refused to give packs to Palestinian patients. But when we appealed to Wael Abu Faour, they said they will give every other month".

Discrimination against young Palestinians is not always legal. Often, the problem is not within the legal frameworks: it arises because some Lebanese institutions do not respect the rule of law. Samir Sayyid, head of the General Union for Palestinian students (GUPS, close to Fatah and PLO factions), gives the example of "a young refugee who spent all his life in Lebanon. He joined secondary school and when he went to the Lebanese University (UL), he was forbidden to enrol by the administration; under the pretext that he was a 1967 Palestinian refugee. The GUPS made an appointment with the presidency of the Lebanese University. We explained the situation to them and we managed to convince them; so they allowed him to enroll at the Lebanese University".

NGOs like Nabaa or the Palestinian association for Human rights (Shahed) also began to work with Lebanese security forces several years ago: they ask them to truly respect the Lebanese legal framework for juveniles (law 422) when they are arrested by the Lebanese army or Internal security forces; or they follow the cases of young Palestinians arrested for drug consumption with Lebanese lawyers or associations – such as UPEL. NGO workers interviewed systematically put forward their constant willingness to work and fully cooperate with Lebanese institutions: security apparatus, human rights associations, municipalities and government, trying to build a constructive dialogue with them. Drugs, unfair detentions of young Palestinians, discrimination at work and universities: they know that it is possible to work with Lebanese actors who fully understand their concrete demands. *This dialogue between Palestinians and Lebanese is a positive step* – and should be enhanced – even if it is too often undermined by a lack of general coordination between Palestinians, Lebanese and international institutions.

This dialogue between
Palestinians and Lebanese
is a **positive step**

D. Palestinian Youth in Lebanon should not be “a Competitive Market”

“The question of Palestinian youth in Lebanon is like a tree with three branches”, says Muhammad Salem, head of the Islamic League for Palestinian students: “UNRWA and international institutions such as UNICEF, local NGOs, and factions. They all have middle-term programs and activities for youth, but they are not coordinated, they only compete with each other”.

The interviews and focus groups which were realized for this survey showed that initiatives concerning Palestinian youth are numerous in all camps and gatherings. At the same time, the topic of Palestinian youth becomes a “competitive market”: first of all, between local NGOs themselves. This is an outgrowth of Palestinian history: even if NGOs participate in building “civil society”, most of them are nevertheless dependent on political factions.

The link between NGOs and factions is indirect, but it remains organic: NGO coordinators often belong to political parties, whether nationalists, leftist or Islamist. As a result, the internal divisions of the Palestinian national movement are reflected in the “civil society” itself. Palestinian NGOs now have to work together and go beyond their mutual distrust: they often have the same programs and innovative ideas around youth. Their energy should be less dispersed and better coordinated with other actors in camps – especially Popular Committees and factions’ student unions.



Going beyond the Dispersion of Initiatives

Once again, the problem is not only financial and material – even if it remains fundamental to sustain UNRWA’s capacities to provide services for Palestinians and to denounce the “austerity regime” it faces. The recent creation, in fall 2016, of an UNRWA Youth Unit, whose goals, among others, is to develop partnerships with Lebanese enterprises, “to find, in the general Lebanese ecosystem, innovative start-ups led by young Lebanese people and to recommend them young Palestinians with the appropriate skills”, is a “promising experience”, according to Sarah Chardonnes, special assistant to director of UNRWA. Working with the UNRWA Protection Unit, coordinating its efforts with UNICEF and the Sibling Training Center (STC), this newly created Youth Unit has nevertheless limited means and a reduced staff.

Yet, international donors are not absent from the scene. Palestinian youth remains one of their main areas of intervention in Lebanon. There is a sharp contrast between the reduction in UNRWA’s credits on the one side and the multiplication of projects around Palestinian youth in Lebanon, which have multiplied for years, on the other side.

Since fall 2016, the UK Department of international development (DFID) is engaged in a multi-year program on social and economic participation of Palestinian youth in Lebanon with Pursue, a global think tank associating Lebanese and Palestinian researchers and analysts in Beirut. Even though French involvement on Palestinian issues in Lebanon is less limited than their activities towards Syrian refugees, the French development agency (AFD) however has been considerably engaged in the Nahr al-Bared’s reconstruction programs since 2011 (rehabilitation of the Manara and Samakh Schools, funding of school supplies) .

By 2016, The European Union scholarship funds for Palestinian refugees in Lebanon, in partnership with UNRWA, have helped 112 young Palestinian refugee graduates to continue their studies in universities. Even the Palestine Liberation Organisation (PLO) and the Palestinian national authority (PNA) in Occupied Territories (OT) haven’t totally abandoned Palestinian refugees in Lebanon: Mahmoud Abbas’ funding (Sunduq Mahmoud Abbas) has a central role in helping young Palestinians to continue their studies. The LPDC, whose function is so crucial in improving relations between Lebanese and Palestinians in Lebanon and which owes its existence to the strong commitment of the International community: embassies (Japan, Norway, Switzerland), International organizations (ESCWA, UNDP, UNICEF), but also Lebanese governmental bodies (Ministries of Labour and Education). By 2016-2015, the LPDC, with the support of the German Corporation for International Cooperation (GIZ), launched dialogue sessions with young Palestinians throughout Lebanon, trying to improve the coordinate movements that exist among youth. The more modest initiatives shouldn’t be forgotten: those coming from foreign associations and NGOs, strongly committed to the solidarity with Palestinian people. Thus, the French-Palestinian solidarity Association (AFPS), has been therefore sponsoring disadvantaged children in Palestinian camps of Lebanon for more than twenty years, in partnership with NGOs such as Najdeh or Ajjal.

In conclusion: the money and the international funds never ceased to flow. But, too often, young Palestinians and social workers in camps and gatherings repeat, "Nothing changed". For them, the question is not only material: it is a political issue. All these initiatives are dispersed and not coordinated; Palestinian youth seems to be a market for international donors; they compete with each other, privileging some youth movements or Palestinian NGOs over others, encouraging indirectly a fragmentation process among Palestinian themselves; there is no long-term vision, only short or middle term programs.

E. Building Bridges, Not Walls

Palestinian camps and gatherings, their youth, are at the heart of a paradoxical logic: reasons for hope exist, although the situation seems to be desperate. Youth movements, sports clubs, scouts, and student unions maintain a social cohesion among youth, but they are undermined by political factionalism and don't find their place in leaderships (factions, Popular committees). Palestinians are engaged in a long-term dialogue process with Lebanese institutions on youth issues, yet, maybe they did not manage to encompass mutual fears and they know that the road ahead is a long one in trying to build bridges between both Lebanese and Palestinian youth. Despite the reduction of UNRWA's services and funding, which directly affects young Palestinians, especially in schools, international help and commitment for Palestinian refugees has never ceased, but youth no longer believes in their promises, calling into question the dispersion of initiatives and energies.



To improve the future of Palestinian youth in Lebanon, two basic principles should be kept in mind:

- Solutions reside in youth itself: young Palestinians should be considered as actors, not as passive subjects. Many young Palestinians proved they have energy, creativity and willingness. Whether "leftist", religious, nationalist, or independent, they have often the same recommendations and conclusions concerning their common destiny.
- It is time to build bridges, not walls. This report pointed out the respective responsibilities of many stakeholders: Palestinian factions, Popular Committees, Lebanese institutions and political parties, NGOs, international institutions. At the same time, all of these stakeholders, who have sometimes opposed each other, have also shown a real willingness of constructive dialogue around youth issues.

Thus, some concrete recommendations, based on the main finding of this research could be addressed to the main International, Lebanese and Palestinian stakeholders:

To UNRWA and International Donors :

- Drawing up a complete inventory of Youth movements, scouts, student unions, Youth centers and sport clubs in camps to better coordinate initiatives around Palestinian youth.
- Improving financial assistance for UNRWA in Lebanon.
- Strengthening the capacities (staff) of the newly created UNRWA Youth Unit, of the UNRWA Protection Unit and increasing grants for Palestinian students in Siblin Training Center (STC).
- Improving the training of UNRWA school teachers in terms of respecting child protection.
- Establishing a process of regular monitoring of parents-teachers committees in UNRWA schools, enhancing the dialogue between them.
- Promoting the creation of Drug rehabilitation Centers in Palestinian camps, in coordination with those still existing.

To the Lebanese Palestinian Dialog Committee (LPDC):

- Ensuring continuity of the youth initiatives launched by 2015 and 2016.

To the Transitory Direction Committee of the Palestinian Liberation Organization,

Popular Committees, Independent Youth Movements and all Palestinian Factions:

- Organizing a General Congress of Palestinian youth in Lebanon (including young PRS), associating Palestinian student unions, independent youth movements in camps and gatherings, young representatives of sport clubs, scouts and cultural centres, to improve the political participation of Palestinian youth in Lebanon and a better generational representativeness of youth in Palestinian leadership, and to go through political factionalism. This General Congress of Palestinian Youth in Lebanon could establish a permanent Youth Coordination Committee that could give regular recommendations concerning Palestinian Youth in Lebanon to UNRWA, Lebanese government and international donors.
- Holding elections of Popular Committees by integrating youth in their directions, with a quota of young women.
- Integrating young representatives, on a minimal quota, in the leadership of Palestinian factions.
- Integrating youth issue in the next session of the preparatory committee of the Palestinian national Council (PNC).
- Strictly complying with the existing legal framework on juveniles (Law 422/2022) and informing officers of the Palestinian Joint Security Forces (PJSF) on the rights of juveniles and the basic principles of child protection.

To Lebanese institutions and political organizations:

- Strictly complying with the existing legal framework on work and employment of Palestinians in Lebanon (Law 128 /2010 and 129/2010).
- Strictly complying with the existing legal framework on juveniles (Law 422 /2002).
- Launching a Conference of young Lebanese entrepreneurs, in coordination with the UNRWA Youth Unit, to promote Palestinian integration on the labor market.
- Respecting conditions for inscriptions of Palestinian students in universities, especially the Lebanese University (UL).
- Establishing a permanent Youth Dialogue Committee between Palestinian and Lebanese student unions in universities.
- Facilitating the conditions for young Palestinians who migrated illegally and want to return in Lebanon through a better coordination between the Lebanese General Security, UNRWA and Palestinian NGOs.
- Sustaining Palestinian children and student's security around UNRWA schools and Sibling Training Centers through a better coordination between the Lebanese Army, the Internal Security Forces, the Palestinian forces and educational staffs.

To Palestinian NGOs in camps and gatherings:

- Establishing a permanent coordination unit between NGOs, to better coordinate the initiatives on youth issue in camps and gatherings.
- Organizing training courses for officers of the Palestinian Joint Security Forces on the basic rights of juveniles and child protection.
- Organizing regular dialogue sessions between NGOs, youth movements and factions on the issue of juvenile soldiers in camps.
- Organizing regular dialogue sessions between young PRL and PRS.

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Annex I - Focus groups

- Focus group I:** Young Palestinians from Sidon district, meeting organised in a restaurant of the old city, October 7 : 2016 ,18 youths (5 males and 2 females), between 17 and 21 years old, most of them students (Lebanese International University and Siblin Center).
- Focus group II:** Mieh Mieh, meeting organised at the office of the General Union for Palestinian Women, October 10 : 2016 ,20 youth (8 females and 2 males), between 18 and 26 years old, one is married, most of them are jobless and dropped out from schools.
- Focus group III:** Young Palestinians leaving in Sidon old city, meeting organised in the old city, October 15: 2016 ,23 youth (all males), between 17 and 26 years old, three students and 12 working, mostly as vendors.
- Focus Group IV:** Ein al-Helweh, Nashit NGO Center, October 11 :2016 ,24 youth (6 females and 5 males), between 16 and 25 years old. Among them : 3 school dropout, 3 secondary level students, 1 working with NGO, and one youth with special needs (blind).
- Focus group V:** Young Palestinians women living in Sidon old city, meeting organised in the old city, October 7 : 2016 ,25 young females, between 18 and 24 years old, all of them dropped out from school, one is married.
- Focus group VI:** Rachidiye, Sanabil Center office, October 11 : 2016 ,25 youth (7 females and 4 males), between 18 and 27 years old, 10 dropped out from schools.
- Focus Group VII:** Wadi Zeini, meeting organised in the Palestinian Club office, October 13 : 2016 ,29 youth (7 females and 6 males), between 16 and 27 years old.
- Focus Group VIII:** Weifil, meeting organised at the office of the General Union for Palestinian Women, October 13 : 2016 ,31 youth, between 16 and 28 years old, all of them females, among them two are married, 4 students, 4 are jobless, and two dropped out from schools.
- Focus Group IX:** Nahr al-Bared, office of the National association for professional education, November 16 : 2016 ,3 youth (7 females and 9 males), between 19 and 29 years old, all of them students.
- Focus group X:** Baddawi, at the house of one of the participant, November 9 :2016 ,5 youth (5 males and 4 females), between 18 and 28 years old, among them one married woman and 3 dropout from schools.
- Focus Group XI:** Burj al-Shamali refugee camp, Beit Atfal al-Sumud office, November 16 : 2016 ,6 youth (8 males and 5 females), between 17 and 28 years old, among them 10 students in universities (graphic design, English literature).
- Focus group XII:** Baddawi, Popular Committee office, November 15 : 2016 ,8 youth (10 females and 5 males), between 16 and 32 years old, most of them students in the following areas : nursing, engineering, geography, English literature, business administration and accounting.
- Focus Group XIII:** Shatila, Daouq Popular Committees office, November 12 : 2016 ,9 youth (all males), between 20 and 28 years old, among them 2 students, 10 dropped out from schools (among them two are jobless, one nurse and 7 hand workers).

Annex II - Interviews

- Human Develoment Center (HDC)**, Mar Elias, September 2016 ,28 : Samer Maana and one staff member originated from Ein al-Helweh refugee camp.
- Democratic Front for the Liberation of Palestine (DFLP)**, Mar Elias, September 2016 ,28 : Soheil Natour.
- Refugees Dreams (Ahlam Laji')**, Shatila, September 2016 ,30 : Tareq Othman and two staff members.
- Nabaa**, Ein al-Helweh, October2016 ,4 : Heba Hamzeh, Hachem Hachem and Kafa Hourani.
- Nashet**, Ein al-Helweh, October 2016 ,4 : Dhafer Khatib.
- Palestine Scout Association**, Ein al-Helweh, October 2016 ,4 : Radwan Abdallah.
- Pursue**, Sidon, October 2016 ,9 : Walid Taha.
- Wajeh and al-Jalil NGO's**, Rachidiyeh, October 2016 ,11 : Iyad Sandeed, Mahmoud Sharari and Hussein Sharari.
- Terre des hommes (TdH)**, Tyre, October 2016 ,11 : Hassan Bahani and Muhammad Qaddoura.
- Popular Committees (Lijan al-sha'abiya)**, Ein al-Helweh, October 2016 ,15 : Abed Abu Salah and Jamal Safadi.
- Zyad Kaawish (ex-UNRWA Instructor and TVET expert at Siblin Center)**, Sidon, October 2016 ,16.
- Al-Insan Center**, Burj al-Brajneh, October 2016 ,21 : Nimr Nimr (Director) and four patients (ex-drug addicts).
- Youth Movement (al-Hirak al-shababi) and Palestinian Youth Network (PYN)**, Baddawi, October 2016 ,22 : Hatem Moqdad and Wissam Ramadan .
- Palestinian Arab Cultural Club (al-Nadi al-filistini)**, Baddawi, October 2016 ,22 : Oussama Ali, Youssef Najem and Maysoun Mustapha .
- Karmel Sportive Club (Nadi Karmel al-riyadi)**, Shatila, November 2016 ,5 : Ahmad Abdel Rahman.
- Popular Front for the Liberation of Palestine (PFLP) youth section**, Baddawi, November 2016 ,24 (four rank-and-file members).
- Youth Commitees (al-Lijan al-shababi)**, Ein al-Helweh, November 2016 ,15 : Houssam Miari and Ibrahim al-Hajj.
- Palestinian Students Union (Ittihad Tulaba-Filastin, GUPS)**, Sidon, December 2016 ,5 : Samir Sayyid.
- Palestinian Popular Initiative (al-Mubadara al-sha'abiya al-filastiniya)**, Ein al-Helweh, December 2016 ,10 : Muhammad Bahloul.
- UNRWA Youth Unit**, Beirut, December 2016 ,18 : Sarah Chardonnens.
- Shahed (Palestinian Association for Human Rights)**, Sidon, December 2016 ,21 : Mahmoud Hanafi.
- UNRWA Protection Unit**, Beirut, January 2017 ,7 : Matteo Benatti.
- Islamic League for Palestinian Students (al-Rabita al-islamiya li-Tulaba Filistin, close to Hamas Movement)**, Mar Elias, January 2017 ,9 : Muhammad Salem and one staff member.
- Palestinian Democratic Youth Union (Ittihad al-Shabab al-dimokrati al-filistini, close to the Democratic Front for the Liberation of Palestine)**, Mar Elias, January 2017 ,11 : Youssef Ahmad and Muhammad Hussein.
- Beit al-Maqdis (Holly House Association, Jami'iya Beit al-Maqdis, close to the Palestinian Islamic Jihad)**, Burj al-Brajneh, January 2017 ,13 :Imad Rifai and Muhammad Moussa.
- Combatant Islamic Movement (Haraka al-islamiya al-mujahida)**, Saida, April 2017 ,27: Abu Ishak.
- UNRWA al-Bissan School**, Ein al-Helweh, April 2017 ,29: Muhammad Younes (Director).
- Shabab al-Muslim (Young Muslims Gathering)**, Ein al-Helweh, April 2017 ,29: Jamal Hamad, Oussama Shahabi and two young members of Shabab al-Muslim.
- UNRWA al-Jalil School**, Bourj al-Brajneh, May 2017 ,3: Hassan Yahyia (Director).
- Siblin Center**, Sidon, May 2017 ,5: Linda Hajj Hussein (Director), Wissam Zeid (Registry and Alumni officer) and Said al-Khalil (Student counselor).

Annex III: Glossary

Ahlam Laji' (Dream of a refugee Association): it has been founded by 2011 in Lebanon. This association helping young Palestinian children and students is mainly based in Shatila refugee camp.
<https://www.facebook.com/Dreams-of-a-Refugee-Association286898564766811-/>

Al-Insan: it has been founded by 2013. It is a rehabilitation center for Palestinian drug addicts, based in Burj al-Brajneh refugee camp.
<https://www.facebook.com/1517891581756879-مركز-إنسان-لعلاج-الادمان-والطب-النفسي/>

Ansar Allah (The Partisans of God): it is a Palestinian Islamist group mainly based in Ein al-Helweh and Mieh Mieh refugee camps. It has close links with the Lebanese Hezbollah since the early nineties.
<https://www.facebook.com/868371383188726-المركز-الاعلامي-حركة-أنصار-الله-/>

Arab Palestinian Cultural Club (al-Nadi al-filistini): it has been founded by 1996. The Club is mainly present in Baddawi and Nahr al-Bared refugee camps.
<https://www.facebook.com/ArabPalestinianCulturalClub>

Beit al-Maqdis Association: this youth movement has been founded in Lebanon by the early nineties, and is closed to the Palestinian Islamic Jihad Movement led by Ramadan Shallah.
<https://www.facebook.com/baitalmaqdes.f.y.s/>

Beit Aftal al-Soumoud (National Institution of Social Care and Vocational Training): it has been founded by 1976. The goal of this association for Palestinian children is to "to preserve the Palestinian identity by keeping alive its cultural heritage and transmitting this to new generations".
https://www.facebook.com/pg/BeitAftalAssumoud/about/?ref=page_internal

Combatant Islamic Movement (al-Haraka al-islamiya al-mujahida): led by Sheikh Jamal Khattab, it is an Islamist organization mainly based in Ein al-Helweh refugee camp.
<https://www.facebook.com/AlshykhJmalkhttab>

Democratic Front for the Liberation of Palestine (DFLP): it is a leftist organization, born as a splinter group of the Popular Front for the Liberation of Palestine (PFLP). It is born in 1969, and is still led by Nayaf Hawatmeh.

Fatah (Palestinian National Liberation Movement): the Movement is officially born in 1959, in Kuwait, under the direction of Yasser Arafat, Abu Jihad and Abu Iyad. Fatah remains one of the most important Palestinian political organizations, in the Palestinian Territories as in the Palestinian Diaspora. Its main leaders in Lebanon since the early nineties are Munir Maqdah, Muhammad Abdel Hamid Issa (Lino), Subhi Abu Arab and Fathi Abu Aradat.
<https://www.facebook.com/1497975167133189-المكتب-الطلاي-المركزي-لحركة-فتح-في-إقليم-لبنان-/>

Fatah a-Islam: founded in 2006, by Chaker al-Absi. The Fatah al-Islam, a radical jihadist movement, led a war against the Lebanese Army in Nahr al-Bared, from May to September 2007. Today, its main leader is Bilal Badr, in Ein al-Helweh refugee camp. Activists of Fatah al-Islam also belong to Shabab al-Muslim (the Muslim Gathering).

General Union for Palestinian Students (GUPS): It has been founded by 1959 in Cairo, Egypt. The GUPS is close to PLO and Fatah Movement.
<https://www.facebook.com/591129354386875-الاتحاد-العام-لطلبة-فلسطين-فرع-لبنان-/>

General Union for Palestinian Women (GUPW): it belongs to PLO. The GUPW has offices and activities in all camps and gatherings of Lebanon.
<http://gupw-lb.org>

Hamas (Islamic Resistance Movement): Hamas is born in December 1987 in the Palestinian Occupied Territories. Inspired by the ideology of the Muslim Brothers, it is one of the most important Palestinian political organizations today. Hamas is not a member of the PLO.

Human Development Center (HDC): founded in 1999. It is a Palestinian NGO in Lebanon, implemented in all Palestinian camps, working on Human Rights and the rule of law.
<http://hdcrights.blogspot.com>

Islamic Jihad Movement in Palestine, or Palestinian Islamic Jihad (IIMP): born in the eighties, particularly implemented in the Gaza Strip. Led today by Ramadan Shallah, the Movement has strong ties with Teheran and with the Lebanese Hezbollah.
<http://alqudsnews.net>

Islamic League for Palestinian Students: it has been founded by 1987. The Islamic League is closed to Hamas Movement.
<http://www.islamicrabita.com>

Jund al-Sham (the Soldiers of the Levant): it is a radical Salafist organization, mainly based in Ein al-Helweh refugee camp, composed of both Arab, Lebanese and Palestinian activists. It appeared in the camp in 2004. Jund al-Sham is regularly involved in military clashes with Fatah movement, and with others PLO affiliated factions. Since 2015, some Palestinian members of Jund al-Sham belong to Shabab al-Muslim.

Lebanese Brigades for the Resistance against the Israeli Occupation (Saraya al-Muqawama): Born in 1997, the Lebanese Brigades gather Lebanese and Palestinian fighters close to Hezbollah, but non-members of the Party.
<https://www.facebook.com/445165048845610-السرايا-اللبنانية-لمقاومة-الأحتلال-الإسرائيلي-/>

LPDC: The Lebanese Palestinian Dialog Committee is a governmental body, dedicated to the Palestinian refugee affairs in Lebanon, established in 2005.
<http://www.lpdc.gov.lb>

Nabaa: it is a Lebanese NGO that works among Lebanese and Palestinian refugees, especially on youth and child issues.
<http://www.nabaa-lb.org/page57/en/Our20%Strategy>

Nashet: it is a Palestinian NGO in Lebanon specialized on youth issues. It has been founded in 2001.
<http://nashet.org/ar/من-نحن>

Palestinian Association for Human Rights (Shahed, Witness): it is a Palestinian NGO in Lebanon that seeks to promote «the culture of democracy and responsibility among the Palestinian refugees in Lebanon, as a major part of the Palestinian Diaspora».
<http://pahrw.org/portal/ar-LB/%D%8A%7D%84%9D%8B%1D%8A%6D8%9A%D%8B%3D8%9A%D%8A1/9/>

Palestinian Democratic Youth Union: it has been founded by 1976. The PDYU is closed to the Democratic Front for the Liberation of Palestine (DFLP).
<https://www.facebook.com/AthadAlshbabAldymqratyAlfstynyLbnan/>

Palestinian Scout Association (Jami'iyat al-Kashafat wa-l-Murshidat al-filistiniya): it is the oldest Palestinian scout association in Middle East, founded by 1912. The Palestinian Scout Association is present in all camps and gatherings of Lebanon.
<https://www.facebook.com/PalestineScout/>

Palestine Liberation Organization (PLO): founded in 1964. Since the death of late Palestinian President Yasser Arafat (November 2004), it is led by Mahmoud Abbas, also President of the Palestinian national Authority (PNA).

Palestinian Progressive Youth Union (PPYU): it has been founded by 1996. The PPYU is closed to the Popular Front for the Liberation of Palestine (PFLP).
https://www.facebook.com/pg/ppyu.org/about/?ref=page_internal

Palestinian Progressive Youth Organization (PPYO): it is the youth movement of the Popular Front for the Liberation of Palestine – General Command (PFLP-GC).
https://www.facebook.com/pg/yarmouk.feer/about/?ref=page_internal

Popular Committees (Lebanon): The Popular Committees exist in all camps and gatherings, and are PLO-affiliated. They were created in the late sixties in Lebanon. In charge of the general governance of camps and gatherings, they face, since the beginning of the nineties, the concurrency of two other structures: The Popular Committees led by pro-Syrian regime factions, and the Neighborhood Committees (Lijan al-Ahyia), led by Hamas movement.

Popular Front for the Liberation of Palestine (PFLP): it is one of the most important Palestinian leftist organizations, born in 1967, under the direction of Georges Habache. The PFLP is member of the PLO. Its main representative in Lebanon are Khaled Barakat and Marwan Abdul 'Al.
<http://www.pftp-lb.org/index.php>

Popular Front for the Liberation of Palestine – General Command : it is a splinter group of the leftist PFLP, born in 1968, under the direction of Ahmad Jibril. The FPLP-GC is still close to Damascus.

Popular Initiative (al-Mubadara al-sha'abiya): it has been founded by 2012. This youth movement is mainly present in Ein al-Helweh refugee camp.

Pursue: it is a think tank and research center, part of the ARK group in Lebanon, that led programs around Palestinian youth in Lebanon with the UK Department for International Development.
<http://arkgroupdmcc.com/supporting-palestinian-youth-in-lebanon/>

Shabab al-Muslim (The Muslim Gathering): founded in 2015. It is an Islamic movement mainly based in Ein al-Helweh. It gathers independent Islamic and Salafist activists, but also people from Fatah al-islam and Jund al-Sham. Its main representatives are Oussama Shababi, Hilal Hilal and Jamal Hamad. Shabab al-Muslim has been involved many times in military clashes with Fatah and with the Palestinian security forces.

Shababuna: it has been founded by 2014. It gathers young Palestinians belonging to different factions PLO or non-PLO oriented.

Siblin Training Center (STC): UNRWA Siblin Training Centre is specialized in TVET (Technical and Vocational Education and Training). It offers young Palestinians (around 1200 students by year) 28 semi-professional and trade courses in North and South Lebanon.
<https://www.unrwa.org/tags/siblin-training-centre>

Sportive Karmel Club (Nadi Karmel al-riyadi): this sportive club has been founded by 1969, in Shatila camp.
<https://www.facebook.com/1651843161731328-نادي-الكرمل-الرياضي-شاتيلا/>

Terre des homes (TdH): it is Swiss child relief agency, implemented in Lebanon and in Palestinian camps.
<https://www.tdh.ch/en/our-interventions/lebanon>

Usbat al-Ansar (the Partisans League): founded in 1985 by Sheikh Hisham Shraidi, the Partisans League is an Islamist organization particularly implemented in Ain al-Helweh refugee camp. Its main representative today is Sheikh Abu Sharif al-'Aql.

Wajeh and al-Jalil Center : it is a Palestinian NGO based in Lebanon. It targets "Palestinian youth living inside the Palestinian camps and gatherings in Lebanon, aged between 18 to 30 years old, and want to be active citizens in their society". The al-Jalil Center is based in the Rachidiye refugee camp.
<http://www.wajeh.net>

Youth Movement (al-Hirak al-shababi): it has been founded by 2011. The Youth movement is mainly based in Baddawi and Nahr al-Bared refugee camps, and is part of the Palestinian Youth Network (al-Shabaka).

Youth Movement (Lijan al-Shabab): it is a gathering of independent young Palestinians of Ein al-Helweh refugee camp, created by 2012.

