**The Lebanese crisis and its serious repercussions on**

**The economic and social reality**

**of Palestinian refugees in Lebanon**

There is no doubt that the Lebanese economic crisis and the high rate of poverty and unemployment in Lebanon affected all segments of society, and the absence of solutions to this reality, the cause of an atypical popular revolution in Lebanon, which united the Lebanese street with its various sects and political affiliations, which led to the fall of the Lebanese government, and the effects of the crisis in Lebanon continue to this day. This.Considering that the number of Palestinian refugees in Lebanon ranges according to UNRWA records to 475,000 Palestinian refugees, while the actual estimates of them reach 250 thousand refugees, in addition to 28 thousand Palestinian refugees from Syria. The repercussions of the current Lebanese crisis affected all of them extensively.

**The reality of Palestinian refugees before the current crisis in Lebanon:**

**1**- The Palestinian refugees in Lebanon, under the normal conditions of Lebanon, are deprived of practicing more than 45 professions or careers.

**2**- Palestinian workers in Lebanon have no legal protection and most of them are exploited by employers in terms of wages and end-of-service compensation and are subject to arbitrary dismissal at any moment

**3**- The results of the socio-economic survey conducted by UNRWA in cooperation with the Issam Fares Foundation at the American University of Beirut in 2016 indicated that the poverty rate among Palestinian refugees in Lebanon reaches 65%, and extreme poverty reaches 7%, and the unemployment rate reaches 56%.

**4**- The significant decline in UNRWA relief services, which do not exceed at normal times 14% of the total refugees, in addition to the low amounts of money provided, which do not exceed 33 US dollars per person once every three months.

**5**- The decline in health services provided by UNRWA to Palestinian refugees in Lebanon due to its financial crisis. And the decrease in its coverage to 50% for patients with acute diseases, especially cancer patients, and only about 60% of hospitalization costs for patients of the third level, according to the standards of the Lebanese Ministry of Health and the World Health Organization.

**6-** The inability of the Palestine Red Crescent hospitals affiliated with the Palestine Liberation Organization to fill the huge gap in the health and medical needs of Palestinian refugees in Lebanon.

**7**- The increase in cases of cancer patients in the Palestinian camps as a result of the increase in cancer patients in Lebanon in the first place, and UNRWA covers only 50% of hospitalization and medication costs.

**8**- The procedures of the Lebanese authorities towards the Palestinian camps in Lebanon and the restriction of the entry of building materials to them led to an almost complete paralysis of the handicraft professions in the camps and a significant negative impact on the economic and social reality of the refugees.

**9**- The high cost of university education in Lebanon, bearing in mind that the number of Palestinian students who succeed in official secondary certificates annually ranges between 1000 to 1200 students annually and their need to enroll in private university education, given that the Lebanese University does not absorb more than 5% of them, and in theoretical disciplines only.

**10**- Restrictions imposed on the travel of Palestinian refugees to work in Arab countries or other foreign countries has led to the presence of large numbers of graduates of universities and vocational institutes without work.

**11**- An increase in the desire to migrate illegally from the Palestinian camps to escape the aforementioned economic reality.

**The reality of Palestinian refugees in Lebanon as a result of the current economic crisis in Lebanon:**

Three months before the outbreak of the current crisis in Lebanon, i.e. in August 2019, the Palestinian refugees were surprised by the decision of the pre- Lebanese Minister of Labor Camille Abu Suleiman to classify Palestinian workers and owners of Palestinian institutions and shops in Lebanon as foreigners, and they must obtain work permits and pay their financial obligations according to the laws of the Ministry The Lebanese Labor is under threat of legal prosecution, closing the violating institutions with red wax, and issuing records of seizure and violations of institutions, companies and shops that receive Palestinian workers without work permits.

The Minister of Labor did not respond to the mediators' efforts, which led to a wave of large protests in the Palestinian camps in Lebanon for more than four consecutive months.

Many Palestinian institutions were closed with red wax, and many Lebanese employers expelled or dismissed Palestinian workers, which exacerbated the economic and social reality of most Palestinian refugees in Lebanon. Unemployment rose to 70%, and poverty and needy families increased dramatically**.**

As a result of the Lebanese economic and political crisis, on October 17, 2019, a wave of protests and road blockages erupted throughout Lebanon, which led to the closure of public and private institutions, companies and workshops. This reality has exacerbated the situation of Palestinian refugees in Lebanon through**: -**

**1-** Most of the institutions and companies dispose of their workers or reduce their salaries and wages to less than 50% due to their inability to pay their salaries and wages, and the biggest victim of this step is the remaining Palestinian workers.

**2**- The emergence of the Corona virus to Lebanon in February 2020, and the gradual increase in infected cases, leading to the fact that Lebanon was forced to close Beirut airport to arrivals, moving to closing schools, universities, educational institutions, companies and industrial factories, and even closing villages and cities in addition of restricting movement due to the gradual rise in the number of infections, which exceeded 500 persons per day, as well as an increase in the number of deaths, which reached 80 cases per day.

This situation led to the loss of most of Lebanese and residents people in

Lebanon their job opportunities and increased the rate of poverty and unemployment in Lebanon, especially among the Palestinian refugees as well, especially since they depend heavily for their livelihood on the daily work. They do not have farms, properties or companies that provide them with sources of livelihood.

**3**- The economic and financial inflation in Lebanon, the deterioration of the purchasing power of the Lebanese national currency and the depreciation of its exchange rate against the price of the dollar led to a significant increase in the prices of goods and the loss of many of them, which exacerbated the conditions and conditions of the Palestinian refugees in Lebanon.

**4**- The lack of job opportunities led to the inability of the majority of Palestinian families in the camps to secure the minimum requirements of food and daily food, starting with securing a daily loaf of bread and medicine.

**5**- UNRWA's failure to assume its responsibilities towards this emergency crisis by not increasing the beneficiaries of its social safety net program or its emergency relief aid program.

**6**- Hundreds of cancer patients from Palestinian refugees in Lebanon have stopped completing their treatment due to the loss of many medicines, as well as their inability to pay the difference in drug bills, of which UNRWA covers only 50%.

**7**- The inability of hundreds of refugees to cover the difference in the expenses of the emergency medical operations due to their inability to provide the necessary funds. Especially after the significant increase in the bill for medicines for corona patients, as well as for medical supplies, and the significant increase in the price of fuel, especially the fuel oil which used by private hospitals to operate electricity generators, where the daily cost of the patient in the hospitals from using diesel is estimated at 650 thousand Lebanese pounds, which is equivalent to $30, to which added on the bill of Hospitalization. (Note: Lebanon is ranked as the most expensive hospital in the world).

**8**- The loss of many medicines and medical supplies in Lebanon due to the failure to open Lebanese financial credits to import them, and consequently the high prices of the available ones and the inability of the refugees to purchase them.

**9**- Fear of hundreds, if not thousands, of Palestinian students in universities stopping completing their studies due to the inability of their families to provide the financial payments or fees and depriving them of implementing their final exams due of non-payment of fees. As well as the inability of many of them to save on transportation costs that increase many times.

**10-** Thousands of Palestinian families have been forced to rent houses because of the prevention of entering construction materials to the camps and allowing them to build or rehabilitate their houses, and most of them have stopped paying their rents, especially hundreds of families from Nahr al-Bared camp who are still waiting for the reconstruction of their homes since 2007 and for fear of being expelled from their homes later.

**11**- The financial and banking measures taken by the Central Bank of Lebanon and the Syndicate of Banks regarding the movement of withdrawing and depositing funds, and the complications of the arrival of some funds from some Palestinian expatriates to their families, exacerbated the living crisis of those families.

**12**- A decline in the purchasing power of money transferred by the Palestinian Authority to its members in Lebanon due to the large difference in the exchange rates of the dollar against the local currency, and their inability to provide the minimum requirements for their lives.

**13**- The inability of many families to provide money and transfer it to their children who are students abroad and deprive non-Lebanese from benefiting from student dollar transfers.

**14** The inability of Palestinian families to provide stationery, school uniforms and transportation fees for their children due to the significant increase in the cost of transportation due to the high prices of fuel, in addition to the high prices of stationery and school uniforms, which greatly exceed the capabilities of these families

**The dangers of the prolonged crisis in Lebanon and its impact on the Palestinian refugees in Lebanon :**

**A-** Starting to raise voices in the camps to make major protests against UNRWA and against the Palestinian factions and the accusations of not shouldering their responsibilities towards the refugees, and that impact on the stability of the camps.

**B**- b- Fear of the spread of social problems that may led to crimes , Theft and contraband , drug addictions , due to hunger and the inability to provide the necessities of life.

**C** - Fear of the emergence of cases of extremism and outlaw groups under the pretext of need and hunger.

**d**- Fear of patients starting to die at the doors of hospitals or the confiscation of their bodies until the treatment costs are paid.

**Immediate and necessary steps to confront the crisis:**

**1**- The need for UNRWA to launch urgent emergency appeals to international donors to provide relief for all Palestinian refugees in Lebanon, even if it was necessary to declare the Palestinian camps as disaster areas.

2- The need for the international community and the United Nations to assume their responsibilities towards supporting the Palestinian refugees through UNRWA and other supporting associations ( NGOs) to alleviate their suffering and help them cover the expenses of food, medical treatment, education and others until the crisis ends and the situation in Lebanon is stabilized.

3- The need to work hard to provide the patient people with cancer medicine and treatment supplies to Palestinian refugees in Lebanon.

4- The need to provide a transportation fees or means of transportation for Palestinian students in UNRWA schools after the high fees for transporting students to and from schools as a result of the high fuel prices in Lebanon and different kinds of stationaries and the inability of Palestinian refugees to provide these expenses and the fear that many parents will not be able to send their children to schools this year.

**On 14/10/2021**

**The Palestinian Association for Human Rights (witness)**