



PALESTINIAN REFUGEES AND THE MODERN DISPLACEMENT DILEMMA: A HISTORICAL AND HUMANITARIAN INQUIRY

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Abstract

This paper explored the Palestinian displacement and refugee crisis in the 21st century through both historical and humanitarian lenses. Since the 1948 Nakba, Palestinians have experienced mass displacement, with over 5 million refugees currently residing in camps across the Middle East. The historical roots of this crisis lie in the creation of Israel and the subsequent expulsion and flight of Palestinian populations, which set the stage for a protracted humanitarian issue that continues to affect generations. The study examined key factors, including the ongoing Israeli occupation, regional instability, and violations of international law, particularly regarding the right of return for Palestinian refugees. This analysis also highlights the enduring humanitarian challenges faced by Palestinian refugees, including limited access to basic services, education, and employment, while stressing the role of international organisations such as UNRWA, in providing essential support. By integrating historical and contemporary perspectives, this paper underscores the complex interplay between political, legal, and humanitarian dimensions of the crisis. The findings reveal that the resolution of the Palestinian refugee issue is inextricably linked to broader peace and justice efforts in the Israeli-Palestinian conflict.

Keywords: International Law, Refugee Crisis, Palestinian Displacement, Humanitarian Impact, Nakba

LES RÉFUGIÉS PALESTINIENS ET LE DILEMME MODERNE DU DÉPLACEMENT : UNE ENQUÊTE HISTORIQUE ET HUMANITAIRE

Résumé

Cet article examine la crise du déplacement et des réfugiés palestiniens au XXI^e siècle à travers une double approche historique et humanitaire. Depuis la Nakba de 1948, les Palestiniens ont connu un déplacement massif, avec plus de cinq millions de réfugiés vivant actuellement dans des camps à travers le Moyen-Orient. Les origines historiques de cette crise remontent à la création de l'État d'Israël et à l'expulsion ou à la fuite des populations palestiniennes, posant les bases d'un problème humanitaire prolongé qui affecte plusieurs générations. L'étude analyse les principaux facteurs à l'origine de la crise, notamment l'occupation israélienne continue, l'instabilité régionale et les violations du droit international, en particulier en ce qui concerne le droit au retour des réfugiés palestiniens.

L'analyse met également en lumière les défis humanitaires persistants auxquels sont confrontés les réfugiés palestiniens, tels que l'accès limité aux services fondamentaux comme l'éducation et l'emploi, tout en soulignant le rôle des organisations internationales comme l'UNRWA dans la fourniture d'un soutien essentiel. En intégrant des perspectives historiques et contemporaines, cette étude souligne l'interconnexion complexe entre les dimensions politiques, juridiques et humanitaires de cette crise. Les résultats révèlent que la résolution de la question des réfugiés palestiniens est indissociable des efforts plus larges pour la paix et la justice dans le cadre du conflit israélo-palestinien.

Mots-clés : Droit international, crise des réfugiés, déplacement palestinien, impact humanitaire, Nakba

INTRODUCTION

The Palestinian displacement and refugee crisis is one of the most endured and complex humanitarian challenges of the 21st century, with its roots deeply embedded in the historical and geopolitical dynamics of the 20th century. The 1948 Nakba, during which approximately 700,000 Palestinians were forcibly displaced from their homes in the wake of the creation of the State of Israel, marks the beginning of an ongoing refugee crisis that persists today. ¹The forced migration of Palestinians was not a singular event, but rather the start of a continuous cycle of displacement, which has been compounded by the subsequent wars, occupations, and political stalemates over the decades. By 2023, the United Nations Relief and Works Agency (UNRWA) reported that there were over 5 million Palestinian refugees, many of whom remain in refugee camps in Lebanon, Syria, Jordan, and the occupied Palestinian territories.²

The humanitarian dimensions of this crisis are profound. Refugees face significant challenges related to access to basic services such as healthcare, education, and employment, while the political context of their displacement remains unresolved. ³ The right of return, enshrined in United Nations General Assembly Resolution 194, remains a central issue in peace negotiations, with Israel's refusal to recognise this right perpetuating the crisis.

This paper aims to provide a comprehensive analysis of both the historical context of Palestinian displacement and the contemporary humanitarian implications, highlighting the legal, political, and social dimensions that sustain the refugee crisis.

¹ Farsakh, L. *Palestinian Labour Migration to Israel: Labour, Land, and Occupation*. Routledge. Pp38-62. (2012).

² UNRWA. *Palestinian Refugee Statistics and Reports*. United Nations Relief and Works Agency for Palestine Refugees in the Near East. pp. 189- 204. (2023)

³ Morris, B. *The Birth of the Palestinian Refugee Problem Revisited*. Cambridge University Press. pp. 88-105.

OBJECTIVES

The objectives of this research are to:

1. Analyse the historical causes of Palestinian displacement and their impact on contemporary refugee conditions.
2. Examine the legal status of Palestinian refugees under international law and the role of organisations such as UNRWA.
3. Assess the humanitarian challenges faced by Palestinian refugees in host countries and occupied territories.
4. Explore potential solutions for the Palestinian refugee crisis within the broader Middle East peace process.

MATERIALS AND METHODS

This study employed a qualitative research methodology that relies exclusively on secondary sources of information. This approach is chosen in recognition of the historical and evolving nature of Palestinian displacement, which has produced an extensive and diverse body of literature, official reports, archival records, and humanitarian assessments. These sources offer valuable insights into both the historical development and the contemporary realities of the Palestinian refugee crisis.

Data for this study were derived from a wide spectrum of secondary materials. These include academic publications - such as peerreviewed journal articles, books, and conference papers - that address Palestinian history, refugee studies, international relations, and humanitarian law. Additionally, the research incorporates reports and policy documents issued by key international organisations, including the United Nations Relief and Works Agency for Palestine Refugees in the Near East (UNRWA), the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR), Amnesty International, and Human Rights Watch. Archival materials and historical records provide foundational context, tracing

the displacement from the 1948 Nakba to ongoing developments. Contemporary perspectives are supplemented by analyses of media reports from reputable global outlets, while legal frameworks - such as international conventions, treaties, and United Nations resolutions - are examined to understand the rights and status of Palestinian refugees under international law.

The analysis is conducted using thematic content analysis, which facilitates the identification and interpretation of recurring patterns and key themes within the data. This analytical framework is organised around five central dimensions: the historical trajectory of Palestinian displacement from 1948 to the present; the legal rights and status of Palestinian refugees under international humanitarian and refugee law; the geopolitical and regional factors that shape refugee experiences; the humanitarian conditions within refugee camps and host countries; and comparative perspectives that place the Palestinian experience within the broader scope of 21st-century global displacement crises.

RESULTS

This study investigated the historical, legal, and humanitarian dimensions of the Palestinian refugee crisis, highlighting the enduring impact of key events such as the 1948 Nakba and the 1967 Six-Day War on displacement patterns. It examined the complex legal status of Palestinian refugees, particularly the role of UNRWA, and explores the ongoing humanitarian challenges faced by refugees in host countries and occupied territories. The study also evaluates potential solutions within the broader Middle East peace process, emphasising the need for a holistic and inclusive approach to resolving the refugee crisis. The findings underscore the protracted nature of the crisis, the inadequacies of current international frameworks, and the necessity of rethinking refugee rights as central to peace negotiations.

1. Historical Causes

The 1948 Nakba and 1967 Six-Day War are identified as key catalysts of Palestinian displacement. These events caused mass expulsions, land confiscations, and long-term statelessness, resulting in multigenerational refugeehood.

2. Legal Status and UNRWA's Role

Palestinian refugees lack formal legal protection under the 1951 Refugee Convention. UNRWA provides vital services but operates under a limited mandate, lacking the authority to resolve legal status or repatriation.

3. Humanitarian Challenges

Refugees face chronic poverty, overcrowding, limited access to education, healthcare, and employment. Host countries often restrict civil rights, exacerbating social exclusion, and long-term dependency on aid.

4. Potential Solutions

Durable solutions remain elusive due to political deadlock, Israel's resistance to the right of return, and weak enforcement of UN resolutions. A comprehensive peace settlement and regional cooperation are essential.

DISCUSSION

This study critically examines the historical roots, legal framework, humanitarian challenges, and political dimensions of the Palestinian refugee crisis. It highlights the roles of displacement events, international law, and aid agencies, with a focus on sustainable solutions.

1. Historical Causes of Palestinian Displacement

The displacement of Palestinians is deeply rooted in a series of pivotal historical events that have shaped the ongoing refugee crisis. Central to this history are the traumatic experiences of the 1948 Nakba and the 1967 Six-Day War, both of which remain critical to understanding the political and humanitarian dimensions of Palestinian displacement today.

The 1948 Nakba - Arabic for "catastrophe" - is widely recognised as a defining moment in Palestinian history. In the aftermath of the 1948 Arab-Israeli War, which ensued following the establishment of the State of Israel, more than 700,000 Palestinians were forcibly uprooted from their homes. This mass displacement, marked by violent military operations and the deliberate destruction of Palestinian villages, resulted not only in the loss of countless lives, but also in the fragmentation and erosion of entire Palestinian communities.⁴ The dispossession of land and the continued denial of the right of return have come to define the core elements of Palestinian refugee identity.

Notes, the Nakba set in motion a profound displacement that has persisted across generations, shaping the political identity and the socio-economic reality of Palestinians worldwide. In this context, Palestinian refugeehood is not merely a byproduct of war, but a continuing process of displacement that is unresolved and perpetuated by international and local political dynamics.⁵

The 1967 Six-Day War exacerbated the refugee crisis by displacing over 300,000 additional Palestinians, many of whom had already been forced to flee in 1948.⁶ This wave of displacement was especially traumatic, representing a second forced migration for many Palestinian families and deepening the hardships associated with statelessness and refugeehood. In the aftermath of the war, Israel's occupation of the West Bank, Gaza Strip, and East Jerusalem intensified the crisis through systematic policies of land expropriation, home demolitions, and the uprooting of entire communities.⁷ These policies - persisting into the present - continue to drive the displacement of Palestinians, both within the occupied territories and across neighbouring countries. For Palestinians, displacement is not a historical relic, but a lived and ongoing reality, exacerbated by Israel's continued settlement expansion in the West Bank, which systematically uproots communities from their

⁴ Pappé, I. *The Ethnic Cleansing of Palestine*. Oneworld Publications. Pp 341-375 (2006).

⁵ Masalha, N. *The Palestine Nakba: Decolonising History, Narrating the Subaltern, Reclaiming Memory*. London: Zed Books. 23-48 (2012).

⁶ Khalidi, R. *The Hundred Years' War on Palestine*. New York: Metropolitan Books. 239-307 (2020).

⁷ Falah, G. The 1948 Israeli-Palestinian War and Its Aftermath: The Transformation and DeSignification of Palestine's Cultural Landscape. *Annals of the Association of American Geographers*, 86(2), 256–285. (1996).

ancestral lands. Palestinian displacement extends beyond the seminal events of 1948 and 1967. In the decades that followed, recurrent waves of internal displacement have occurred, driven by sustained conflict,

military operations, and state-sanctioned practices such as land seizures and home demolitions.

The loss of territory and the systematic denial of the right to return have created a profound humanitarian crisis that spans decades, with Palestinian refugeehood becoming a defining feature of Palestinian identity⁸.

The historical trauma of displacement is compounded by Israel's policies, which continue to produce new forms of displacement in areas like the Gaza Strip and East Jerusalem, where Palestinians face restricted movement, settlement expansion, and violence. These policies perpetuate a cycle of displacement, ensuring that the Palestinian refugee crisis remains one of the most protracted in modern history. The 1948 Nakba and the 1967 Six-Day War represent the starting points of Palestinian displacement, but they are far from being the end. These events set in motion a continuing process of displacement that remains unresolved due to the political, legal, and humanitarian complexities of the Israeli-Palestinian conflict. These historical events are not isolated episodes, but foundational pillars of the Palestinian refugee crisis. Their enduring impact continues to shape the lives of millions of Palestinians across generations, underscoring the protracted and deeply rooted nature of their displacement.⁹

2. Legal Status and the Role of UNRWA

Palestinian refugees occupy a distinct legal status within the international refugee protection system - one that sets them apart from other displaced populations typically served by the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR). Unlike other refugees under UNHCR's global mandate, Palestinian refugees fall under the purview of the United Nations Relief and Works Agency for Palestine Refugees in the Near East (UNRWA). Although this arrangement stems from specific historical circumstances, it has led to a protracted legal

ambiguity. As a result, Palestinian refugees often face limited legal safeguards and lack access to durable solutions such as resettlement, integration, or repatriation.⁸

The exclusion of Palestinian refugees from the protections of the 1951 Refugee Convention is a critical aspect of their unique legal status. While the Convention guarantees essential rights - including the right to return and the right to nationality - to refugees worldwide, Palestinian refugees remain outside its scope. This exception, shaped by the political complexities of the Israeli-Palestinian conflict and the contentious issue of the right of return, has contributed to their ongoing vulnerability and legal marginalisation within the international system. The legal framework governing the status of Palestinian refugees remains particularly fragile, as it is not anchored in any binding international treaty that guarantees enforceable rights¹¹. In the absence of such protections, Palestinian refugees are left in a precarious legal limbo - dependent on humanitarian aid while lacking formal mechanisms to assert claims to land, property, or citizenship.

The United Nations Relief and Works Agency for Palestine Refugees in the Near East (UNRWA), established in 1949, has played a vital role in mitigating the humanitarian consequences of this legal void. Operating in Jordan, Lebanon, Syria, the West Bank, and Gaza, UNRWA provides essential services including healthcare, education, social support, and emergency assistance. However, the agency's mandate is inherently temporary, designed to offer relief until a durable political solution is achieved. Unfortunately, such a solution has remained elusive for decades.

As⁹ argues, UNRWA's capacity to provide sustainable solutions has been persistently hindered by chronic underfunding and intense political pressure. These limitations are further exacerbated by the absence of genuine political will to address the Palestinian refugee

⁸ Akram, S. M., & Rempel, T. Temporary Protection for Palestinian Refugees. *Boston University International Law Journal*, 22(1), 1 – 43. (2004).

⁹ Lindholm Schulz, H. (2003). The UNRWA and the Palestinian Refugees: A History within History. *Refugee Survey Quarterly*, 22(1), 23 – 28.

crisis and the international community's continued failure to achieve a lasting resolution to the broader conflict. Constrained by its limited

mandate, UNRWA is not empowered to facilitate long-term solutions such as resettlement or repatriation. Instead, its role remains confined to delivering short-term humanitarian assistance, leaving the underlying causes of displacement unaddressed.

As contends, the geopolitical complexities surrounding the Palestinian refugee crisis significantly hinder the international community's capacity to address the issue in a comprehensive manner¹³. The crisis extends beyond humanitarian concerns to encompass contentious political issues such as recognition and the right of return, which remain deeply disputed. As a result, Palestinian refugees continue to endure statelessness, face significant legal obstacles, and remain vulnerable to exploitation, particularly in host countries where many live in conditions of poverty and social marginalisation. In summary, the legal status of Palestinian refugees is intricately shaped by the broader and often volatile political dynamics of the Middle East. While UNRWA plays an essential role in meeting their immediate humanitarian needs, it is unable to provide the long-term solutions required to secure Palestinians' rights to return, resettlement, or citizenship.

The ongoing exclusion of Palestinian refugees from the international refugee protection system highlights the deep-rooted obstacles to resolving their plight, consigning millions to a state of legal and humanitarian uncertainty¹⁴.

3. Humanitarian Challenges

Palestinian refugees endure severe and systemic humanitarian challenges that profoundly impact their daily lives and prospects for the future. Among the most urgent issues is the overcrowding in refugee camps, which are frequently situated in resource-scarce areas with inadequate infrastructure. Originally established as temporary shelters, these camps have evolved into long-term settlements, where refugees often confront substandard housing and insufficient sanitation

and healthcare.¹⁰ The harsh physical conditions within these camps are further intensified by persistently high

unemployment rates, which entrench refugees in a cycle of poverty and social marginalisation. Palestinian refugees in Lebanon face especially acute socio-economic exclusion, as they are legally prohibited from owning property and barred from practising numerous professions, severely limiting their opportunities for advancement.¹¹ This legal and social marginalisation sustains Palestinian refugees' reliance on humanitarian aid and obstructs their integration into host societies. Consequently, many face limited access to education and employment opportunities, perpetuating a cycle of poverty and displacement that remains difficult to break. The humanitarian situation is further compounded in areas like the Gaza Strip and the West Bank, where refugees endure the dual challenges of military occupation and movement restrictions imposed by the Israeli state.¹² These restrictions severely curtail refugees' access to vital services like healthcare and education, while also restricting their opportunities to find work or participate in economic activities beyond the occupied territories. Moreover, the persistent threat of violence, especially during times of heightened conflict, further deteriorates the already precarious living conditions faced by refugees in these areas.

A distinctive aspect of the Palestinian refugee situation is the intergenerational transmission of refugee status, whereby the hardships endured by one generation are inherited by the next. Unlike many other refugee populations, Palestinian refugees are frequently born into the same legal uncertainty, with statelessness and restricted rights passed down through generations. This enduring cycle deepens the humanitarian crisis and poses significant obstacles to achieving lasting, sustainable solutions. The prolonged displacement of Palestinians has given rise to intergenerational trauma that impacts not only their

¹⁰ Peteet, J. (2005). *Landscape of Hope and Despair: Palestinian Refugee Camps*. University of Pennsylvania Press.

¹¹ Sayigh, R. Palestinians in Lebanon: Harsh Present, Uncertain Future. *Journal of Palestine Studies*, 27(1), 37–53. (1998).

¹² Hammami, R. *Palestinian NGOs Since Oslo: From NGO Politics to Social Movements?* Middle East Report, 214, 16–19. (2000).

material circumstances but also their mental health, identity, and sense of belonging¹⁸.

Moreover, the humanitarian challenges confronting Palestinian refugees are complex and enduring, shaped by a combination of legal

exclusion, economic hardship, military occupation, and the ongoing cycle of generational displacement. The dire conditions within refugee camps throughout the Middle East, coupled with the absence of lasting solutions, underscore that this crisis extends far beyond immediate relief efforts. The crisis demands not only immediate humanitarian relief but also durable political and legal solutions addressing the fundamental issues of statelessness, land rights, and the right to self-determination.

4. Potential Solutions and Peace Prospects

Efforts to resolve the Palestinian refugee crisis have been persistent yet elusive, despite numerous United Nations resolutions and diplomatic initiatives. Among these, UN Resolution 194 (III) stands out for affirming the right of Palestinian refugees to return to their homes and reclaim their properties. Nevertheless, despite this firm legal foundation, a practical and lasting political solution has yet to materialise after decades of stalled negotiations.¹³ The lack of progress stems from several interrelated factors: Israel's persistent refusal to recognise the right of return, divisions within Palestinian leadership, and uneven international pressure. A key obstacle to a lasting solution is the entrenched political deadlock that has long characterised the peace process. Israel perceives the right of return as a threat to its Jewish demographic majority, while many Palestinian groups uphold it as a vital component of their identity and sovereignty. This fundamental clash has repeatedly derailed negotiations, leaving the essential demands of both sides unresolved.

¹³ Rynhold, J. *The Arab-Israeli Conflict in American Political Culture*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press. 45-58 (2015).

Scholars such as ¹⁴argue it is crucial to reconceptualise refugee rights, emphasising their integration as a core element in any future final status negotiations. Rather than being sidelined, refugee rights must be recognised as fundamental to resolving the Israeli-Palestinian conflict, with return or compensation upheld as essential, nonnegotiable components of any lasting peace agreement.

Furthermore, the fragmented nature of Palestinian leadership poses significant challenges to forming a cohesive position on the refugee issue. The persistent divide between Fatah and Hamas, combined with the Palestinian Authority's limited authority over both the West Bank and Gaza, undermines the unity of the Palestinian cause and weakens its leverage in international negotiations.¹⁵

Beyond the internal political divisions among Palestinians, a notable deficit of sustained international pressure on Israel further hampers progress on the refugee issue. While Israeli policies have faced widespread international criticism, there has been no persistent or unified effort to compel Israel to engage in meaningful negotiations over the refugee question. Experts argue that regional collaboration and the creation of international accountability mechanisms are essential to overcoming the political stalemate and addressing the fundamental grievances related to displacement. The active participation of key Arab states, including Jordan and Egypt, alongside international actors such as the European Union and the United States, could help create a unified approach that places pressure on Israel to engage seriously in peace talks.

Ultimately, scholars emphasise the need to reframe the peace process through a comprehensive and inclusive framework that fully acknowledges the legal, humanitarian, and political rights of Palestinian refugees. A lasting and just resolution to the refugee crisis

¹⁴ Rouhana, N., & Ghanem, A. The Crisis of Minorities in Ethnic States: The Case of Palestinian Citizens in Israel. *International Journal of Middle East Studies*, 30(3), 321–346. (1998).

¹⁵ Rynhold, J. *The Arab-Israeli Conflict in American Political Culture*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press. 45-58 (2015).

can only be realised by adopting a holistic approach that embraces the right of return, compensation, and the integration of refugees.

Although the prospect of peace remains distant, the path forward is clear: it demands sustained diplomatic engagement, a fundamental reconceptualisation of refugee rights, and the meaningful inclusion of Palestinian refugees as active participants in the peace process. Only by tackling the root causes of displacement and delivering political, legal, and humanitarian solutions can a durable peace be achieved - one that finally secures justice and self-determination for Palestinian refugees.

CONCLUSION

The Palestinian refugee crisis is one of the longest and most complex displacement situations in modern history, rooted in key historical events such as the 1948 Nakba and the 1967 Six-Day War. These pivotal moments triggered mass displacements, leading to the loss of land, statelessness, and the destruction of communities. The legal status of Palestinian refugees remains in limbo, as they fall outside the protection framework of the 1951 Refugee Convention and are managed by UNRWA, an agency with limited capacity to provide durable solutions. Humanitarian challenges continue to plague Palestinian refugees, including overcrowded camps, limited access to services, and socio-economic exclusion, exacerbated by ongoing occupation and regional instability. Despite international resolutions affirming their right to return, political and diplomatic stagnation have prevented a resolution. The study underscores the need for a reimagined approach to Palestinian refugee rights within peace negotiations, emphasising the importance of international cooperation, regional collaboration, and a more inclusive framework for addressing the core grievances of displacement. Only through comprehensive and sustained efforts can the Palestinian refugee issue move towards a viable and just resolution.

RECOMMENDATION

The Palestinian refugee crisis remains one of the most protracted and complex humanitarian issues of the 20th and 21st centuries. Despite numerous international efforts, a lasting resolution continues to elude policymakers and humanitarian organisations. Based on the historical causes of displacement, the legal status of Palestinian refugees, their ongoing humanitarian challenges, and the broader Middle East peace process, the following recommendations aim to address both immediate and long-term needs. These recommendations focus on creating a comprehensive framework that acknowledges historical injustices, enhances legal protections, improves living conditions, and integrates the refugee issue into a broader peace strategy for the region.

1. Addressing Historical Causes and Contemporary Impact of Palestinian Displacement

- **Comprehensive Historical Documentation:** It is essential to continue documenting the historical experiences of Palestinian refugees through both archival research and the voices of displaced individuals. This will help ensure that the narrative of displacement is accurately represented in future peace negotiations and policymaking.
- **International Acknowledgement:** Efforts should be made at the international level to acknowledge the historical trauma of the Nakba and its ongoing impact on Palestinian displacement. This recognition could form the basis for international support for Palestinian refugees' right to return and reparations.

2. Examining Legal Status and the Role of UNRWA

- **Expansion of Legal Protection:** Given that Palestinian refugees fall outside the 1951 Refugee Convention, the international community must create a legal framework specifically addressing their rights. This could involve expanding the mandate of UNRWA to include legal protections for Palestinian refugees, including recognition of their right to return and citizenship in host countries.

- **UNRWA's Mandate Reform:** UNRWA's mandate should be reformed to offer not only humanitarian aid but also support for long-term solutions such as resettlement options and the facilitation of return. International donors should provide sufficient funding for UNRWA to enhance its capacity to address refugees' legal and socio-economic needs.

3. **Assessing Humanitarian Challenges Faced by Palestinian Refugees**

- **Improving Living Conditions:** Humanitarian agencies, alongside national governments and international organisations should work to improve the living conditions in refugee camps by providing better access to healthcare, education, housing, and employment opportunities. This requires consistent funding and effective monitoring of refugee welfare.
- **Access to Citizenship:** Host countries in the Arab world, particularly Lebanon, Jordan, and Syria, should consider providing Palestinian refugees with the possibility of citizenship or at least long-term residency rights to reduce their statelessness and socioeconomic marginalisation.
- **Psychosocial Support:** There is a need for more comprehensive mental health services for Palestinian refugees, who face intergenerational trauma. These services should be integrated into the existing humanitarian framework.

4. **Exploring Potential Solutions within the Broader Middle East Peace Process**

- **Inclusion of Palestinian Refugee Rights in Peace Negotiations:** Any peace process in the Middle East, including those related to the Israeli-Palestinian conflict, must prioritise Palestinian refugees' right to return, compensation, and integration into a future Palestinian state. Negotiations should adopt a

- rightsbased approach to refugee issues, ensuring that refugee rights are central to any final status agreements.
- **Regional Cooperation and Accountability:** Efforts should be made to foster regional cooperation between Middle Eastern countries, UN agencies, and international powers to create a framework for resolving the refugee issue. Accountability mechanisms should also be established to ensure that countries involved in the peace process uphold their commitments to refugee rights.
 - **Sustained International Engagement:** The international community should ensure that the Palestinian refugee issue remains a central focus in diplomatic efforts, through consistent pressure on Israel, Palestinian factions, and host countries to seek viable, long-term solutions. This includes greater coordination with organisations such as UNHCR, which can support initiatives aimed at solving the refugee crisis.

Through these recommendations, the humanitarian, legal, and historical challenges of the Palestinian refugee crisis can be addressed in a manner that ensures both justice and dignity for the displaced populations while contributing to broader peace efforts in the Middle East.

CONFLICT OF INTEREST

The author declares no conflict of interest. This research was conducted independently and is not influenced by any personal, financial, or institutional interests that could affect the objectivity or integrity of the study. All sources have been duly acknowledged, and the analysis is based solely on scholarly evidence and established academic principles.

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