



Photo by Dominiek Benoot

## profile: jenin camp

### jenin governorate

#### Overview

Jenin camp, with its population of 14,000 residents, borders the Jenin municipality and is the northernmost camp in the West Bank. It has been the scene of significant suffering, having been established in 1953 after the original camp in the area was destroyed in a snowstorm. Jenin camp was also severely affected by the second intifada, when the Israeli Defense Forces occupied the camp in 2002 after ten days of intensive fighting. More than 400 homes were destroyed in the operation, with hundreds more being severely damaged. More than a quarter of the population was rendered homeless. UNRWA coordinated and implemented the reconstruction of the camp, and an additional piece of land (the size of roughly 3 per cent of the original Jenin surface area) was developed adjacent to the camp, which reduced overcrowding.

Today, protection issues remain a primary concern for residents of Jenin camp. Both Israeli and Palestinian security forces conduct regular operations in the camp that often result in clashes and violence. In 2014, four refugees were killed during these operations. The violence has also had a significant impact on the emotional and psychosocial well-being of young children especially.

Jenin also experiences one of the highest rates of unemployment and poverty among the 19 West Bank refugee camps. Many residents previously relied upon work in Israel, which has been severely curtailed since the construction of the Barrier and the implementation of the permit regime. Unemployment and poverty has affected the youth especially, resulting in widespread dissatisfaction and frustration and contributing to higher school dropout rates among younger children.

#### UNRWA in Jenin camp

##### General information

- **Established:** 1953
- **Size:** .42 sq km
- **Population before 1967 (OCHA):** 8,450
- **Estimated population (PCBS):** 12,250
- **Registered persons (UNRWA):** 19,000
- **Estimated density:** 33,333 per sq km
- **Places of origin:** 54 villages in northern regions including Haifa and Nazareth

\* After the second intifada, many persons moved out of the camp but maintained their registered residence in the camp

##### UNRWA in Jenin camp

###### Main UNRWA installations:

- Four schools
- One health centre

###### UNRWA employees working in Jenin camp:

- Education: 112
- Health: 44
- Relief and Social Services: 3
- Sanitation services: 18
- Administration: 5

#### Education

There are four UNRWA schools in Jenin camp, two girls' schools and two boys' schools, which serve a combined 2,000 students. The schools in Jenin camp include libraries and computer and science laboratories. Psychosocial support is available and remedial classes in Arabic and mathematics are offered on Saturdays. However, there is a lack of organized after-school activities, which would otherwise benefit the children of Jenin camp. All of the UNRWA boys' and girls' schools require extensive rehabilitation.

Both the violence experienced by the children and the socioeconomic conditions in which they live have contributed to poor student performance and behavioural issues. Dropout rates are a continuous concern for school administrators in Jenin camp. The schools' principals, teachers and counsellors target at-risk children for additional support and guidance, including remedial education and individual counselling.

#### Health

The health clinic in Jenin was built in 2007 and provides primary health care including reproductive health, infant and child care, immunizations, screening and medical check-ups, and treatment of communicable and non-communicable diseases. Psychosocial counselling and family and child protection are also available at the health centre. A dentist is available twice per week. The clinic has an x-ray machine and offers physiotherapy services.

The clinic has recently implemented the Family Health Team approach. This new approach focuses on the entire family with the aim of providing comprehensive, continuous care with a strong preventative health focus. The Family Health Team has improved patient flow and reduced the number of daily consultations that each doctor performs, though this number remains above 100.





Photo by Dominiek Benoot

### Relief, Social Services and Emergency Response

Through the Social Safety Net Programme, UNRWA provides food parcels to some 415 impoverished refugees, which is the equivalent to 3 per cent of registered persons in the camp. Because the camp does not have an adequate food distribution centre, food is distributed in the street near the Youth Centre.

The Emergency Cash for Work Programme assists food insecure families by providing three-month work opportunities inside the camp. The family receives a cash subsidy in return for their work, helping them to meet their basic food needs. The projects on which they work are designed to benefit the camp community as a whole. Cash for Work labourers have undertaken sanitation work, strengthened women's income-generating projects, and completed construction of the camp's Disability Centre.

Social workers in the camp also conduct regular home visits to identify cases that require additional support. The civil society of Jenin camp is strong, and community-based organizations (CBOs) provide numerous social services to camp residents ranging from disability assistance to support for female-headed households. UNRWA works closely with several of these CBOs to provide additional assistance to vulnerable groups in the camp.

### Environmental Health

Seventeen sanitation workers collect solid waste from the camp on a daily basis, in addition to maintaining the sewerage and storm-water network in the camp. There is one tractor in the camp that assists the workers in the collection of waste. The waste is then transported by a municipality compactor to the nearby Zahrit al-Finjan Landfill. A sanitation foreman conducts daily water examinations and manages the team of sanitation workers.

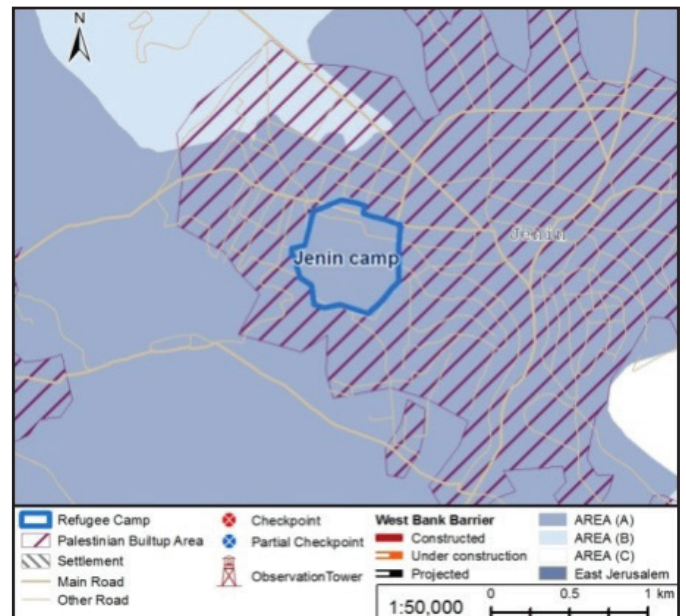
### Main Challenges

#### Access and the West Bank Barrier

Jenin camp residents are subject to regular incursions by both the Israeli and Palestinian security forces. These include search and arrest operations, often resulting in clashes, injuries and damage to shelters. In 2014, UNRWA recorded 19 injuries and four fatalities resulting from operations conducted by Israeli security forces. This violence has had a particular impact on young children, contributing to a strong sense of uncertainty and anxiety in their lives.

### Unemployment

Residents of Jenin camp experience among the highest rates of unemployment and poverty in the West Bank. Whereas many worked in Israel prior to the second intifada in 2000, this has significantly decreased as a result of the construction of the Barrier and associated access restrictions. This has had a particular impact upon the youth, many of whom remain unemployed despite having graduated from university. The resultant dissatisfaction and frustration is seen as a contributing factor to the increase in violence and substance abuse reported by camp inhabitants.



### Infrastructure

As in other camps, residents of Jenin camp are affected by poor infrastructure and living conditions. Water and electricity shortages are common and have intensified in recent years, especially among shelters located on the hillside and during the summer months. Many residents continue to live in substandard shelters, lacking adequate living space, ventilation and lighting. In past years, UNRWA has rehabilitated 31 shelters in Jenin camp.

## Spotlight: Community-Based Rehabilitation Centre

The Al Jaleel Charitable Society for Care and Community Rehabilitation was established in 1991 as the Community-Based Rehabilitation Centre (CBRC) under the umbrella of UNRWA in Jenin camp. The centre became an independent non-government organization in 2010. The Society seeks to enhance the health, physical, social, economic, and environmental conditions of persons with disabilities and their families. It does this by offering counselling and rehabilitation services, providing equipment suitable to facilitate the mobility of persons with disabilities, adapting homes to meet their needs, offering vocational training and job opportunities to promote self-sufficiency, supporting the inclusion of persons with disabilities in society, and establishing revolving funds to provide small loans to those in need. These activities are financed through small funds by UNRWA and project-funded activities.



Photo by Dominiek Benoot

In 2010, UNRWA financed the start-up of the prosthetic unit with US\$ 10,000. Three years later, the unit received a donation of US\$ 100,000 to expand and improve its prosthetic and physiotherapy services. The coverage of these services is costly and the target population is often unable to pay for the services. As a result, Al Jaleel is constantly seeking financial support.

UNRWA continues to build on its partnerships with CBOs. UNRWA began its work on disabilities in the early 1980s, focusing mainly on the health and physical aspects of rehabilitation. Today, the UNRWA disability policy revolves around the principle of empowerment, which promotes social inclusion and a participatory approach. Through its financial support of five CBRCs in the West Bank refugee camps, UNRWA makes services of this nature available to persons with disabilities. The yearly budget of UNRWA to support CBRCs is limited to US\$ 35,000 and focuses on capacity-building and small financial investments linked to service provision. As the story of Al Jaleel demonstrates, these investments create important opportunities for CBRCs to improve and expand their services.

**“The Freedom Theatre has given me the opportunity to learn what I never could in school and to experience what I missed in my childhood”**



Photo by Dominiek Benoot

Ahmed Nasser Matahim was born in Jenin camp in 1991. Along with his six brothers and sisters, Ahmad was among the children whose childhood memories were shaped by the strife of the second intifada. Only 11 years old at the time, Ahmed remembers his childhood as one where he lived in a state of constant fear. “At that time we thought soldiers and death were everywhere,” he says, and he recalls throwing stones at Israeli soldiers who then followed him home and beat him. There are peaceful recollections as well, such as Ahmed’s memory of his father selling vegetables on the street, but for the most part, violence defines his childhood life.

Israel’s violent takeover of Jenin camp in 2002 left a lasting impression on camp residents, and the ramifications of its violent legacy severely affected the mentality of the youth in Jenin camp. “We weren’t interested in school after that,” says Ahmed, “and in art class all the students would draw tanks, guns and bullets. We weren’t interested in our futures. We wanted to be martyrs like our brothers before us.” Perhaps that is why after completing ninth grade, Ahmad, like many of his fellow students, was unable to read and write.

It was in a coffee shop in 2006 when all of that changed. Ahmed and his friends were approached by Juliano Mer Khamis, a film producer who believed that theatre could be utilized as a means through which children affected by the 2002 Israeli invasion could express themselves artistically. Khamis, along with current managing director Jonatan Stanczak, cofounded the Freedom Theatre, a prestigious acting school that utilizes artistic production and cultural empowerment to work towards equality, justice and human rights.

Ahmed and his friends were among the Freedom Theatre’s first students that day, and as Ahmed recalls his first acting lesson with Juliano, he begins to laugh. “Juliano asked us to think about our life and express it any way we wished. I thought of my father selling vegetables on the street, so I stood up and began shouting ‘Potatoes! Potatoes!’” he says. The initial training period went on for a number of weeks before Juliano felt his students were prepared for their first read through of a scene. It wasn’t until he handed his students the script, however, that Juliano realized that the majority of his students were illiterate. “He immediately had an instructor brought to the theatre,” says Ahmed, “and we spent the next weeks learning to read and write.”

Ahmed spent the next three years of his life studying acting at the Freedom Theatre. Along the way, he discovered a love of stage design and production, and the theatre ultimately hired Ahmed as a set designer. In a generation stigmatized by the events of 2002 and where unemployment and frustration are rampant, Ahmed’s involvement with the Freedom Theatre has allowed him to thrive. When we ask Ahmed why he followed Juliano that day in 2006 and why he decided to dedicate his life to the Freedom Theatre, he says, “The Freedom Theatre has given me the opportunity to learn what I never could in school and to experience what I missed in my childhood.” Ahmed, like the Freedom Theatre itself, is a beacon of hope and inspiration for the residents of Jenin camp.

# General Overview West Bank Refugee Camps

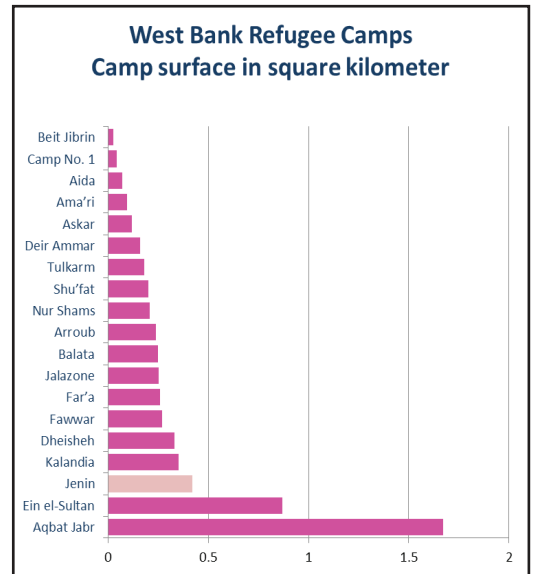
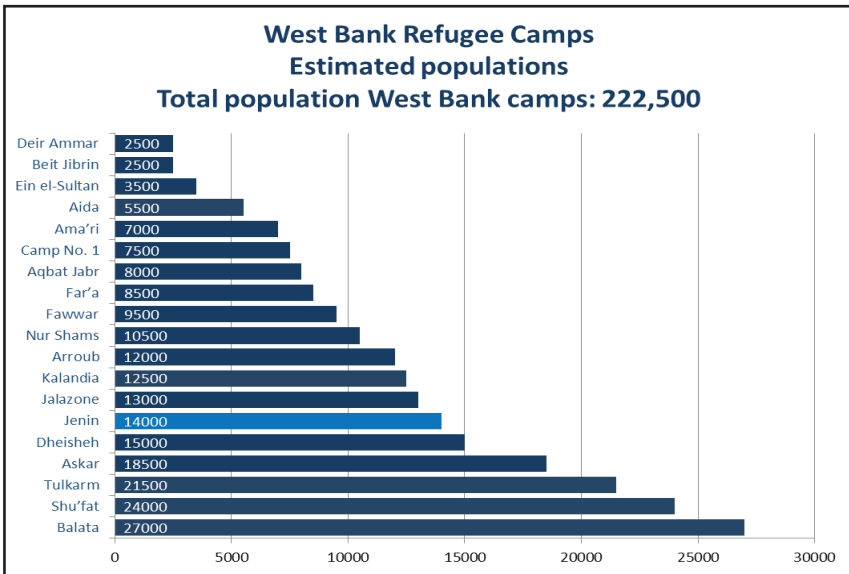
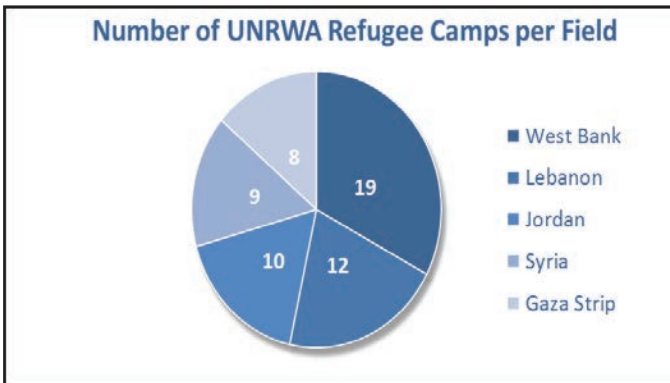
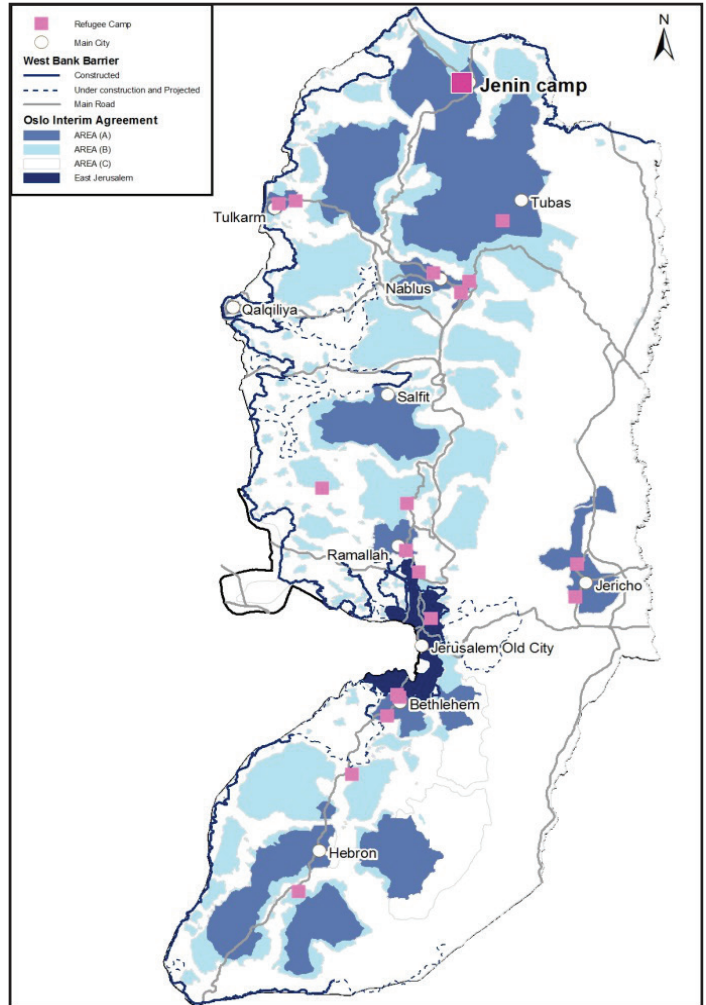
## Who is a Palestine Refugee?

A Palestine refugee is defined as any person whose normal place of residence was Palestine during the period from 1 June 1946 to 15 May 1948, and who lost both home and means of livelihood as a result of the 1948 conflict. The descendants of Palestine refugee males, as well as legally adopted children, are also eligible to register as refugees.

## Palestine Refugee Camps

There are 58 Palestine refugee camps located in Lebanon, Syria, Jordan, Gaza and the West Bank. The camps were first established as temporary tented cities for Palestine refugees who fled their homes during the 1948 conflict. For more than 60 years, this unresolved situation has challenged the camps and its residents.

The 19 Palestine refugee camps throughout the West Bank have since developed into urban areas home to more than 200,000 people (almost a quarter of the total registered persons with UNRWA), with the population in each camp varying from 2,500 to 27,000. The camps face challenges related to overcrowding, poor infrastructure, high levels of unemployment, food insecurity, and protection issues.



united nations relief and works agency  
for palestine refugees in the near east

[www.unrwa.org](http://www.unrwa.org)

UNRWA is a United Nations agency established by the General Assembly in 1949 and is mandated to provide assistance and protection to a population of registered Palestine refugees. Its mission is to help Palestine refugees in Jordan, Lebanon, Syria, West Bank and the Gaza Strip to achieve their full potential in human development, pending a just solution to their plight. UNRWA's services encompass education, health care, relief and social services, camp infrastructure and improvement, microfinance and emergency assistance. UNRWA is funded almost entirely by voluntary contributions.