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Jordan: Access to health care in Jordan for a Palestinian refugee from the Gaza Strip who has a refugee passport; types of health care provided (2005 - June 2007)
Research Directorate, Immigration and Refugee Board of Canada, Ottawa

According to an article in *Forced Migration Review* (FMR), the United Nations Relief and Works Agency for Palestine Refugees in the Near East (UNRWA) provides health services to Palestinian refugees living in Jordan, the West Bank, the Gaza Strip, Lebanon and Syria (4 Sept. 2006). The services are offered first and foremost to mothers and children and focus on fighting and preventing illness (FMR 4 Sept. 2006).

As of 31 December 2006, approximately 1.86 million Palestinian refugees were registered with UNRWA and receiving some services from UNRWA and from the Jordanian government (US 6 Mar. 2007).

UNRWA manages 24 centres that provide a variety of health services to Palestinian refugees registered in Jordan (UN 21 Sept. 2006). According to a United Nations (UN) press release, UNRWA health centres are overcrowded and under equipped (28 Feb. 2005).

However, according to UNRWA Commissioner-General Karen AbuZayd, the UNRWA budget for programs in Jordan increased by three percent in 2006 (IPR Strategic Information Database 16 Mar. 2006).

In October 2006, an UNRWA report published the results of a survey of "special hardship case families" in the Palestinian refugee populations living in the West Bank, the Gaza Strip, Lebanon, Syria and Jordan; according to the survey results, these families have less access to private and public hospitals or to public health centres in Jordan than in the other regions of the Middle East where UNRWA operates (UN Oct. 2006, 83). The survey results indicate that people living in refugee camps in Jordan have easier access to health clinics, private and public hospitals and pharmacies (ibid., 83).

Moreover, a September 2006 UNRWA report indicates that the Agency concluded an agreement with the Jordanian government to change the hospital care reimbursement system for Palestinian refugees (UN 21 Sept. 2006). Previously, Palestinian refugees whom UNRWA referred to government hospitals were required to pay the full cost of hospital services, which was later reimbursed at 75 percent (95 percent of the cost for registered special hardship cases) (ibid.). According to the agreement, refugees will now pay only their share (5

percent or 25 percent of the expenses) and the Jordanian Ministry of Health will submit a monthly claim for reimbursement to UNRWA (ibid.).

Further information on types of health care offered to Palestinian refugees from the Gaza Strip who have a two-year (refugee) passport could not be found among the sources consulted by the Research Directorate.

Furthermore, the *Daily Star Egypt*, an English-language daily in the city of Gizeh, indicates that Palestinians from Gaza can apply only for two-year Jordanian residency permits, which are "very hard to renew" (5 Nov. 2006; see also US 6 Mar. 2007, Sec. 2d).

This Response was prepared after researching publicly accessible information currently available to the Research Directorate within time constraints. This Response is not, and does not purport to be, conclusive as to the merit of any particular claim for refugee protection. Please find below the list of additional sources consulted in researching this Information Request.

References

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United States (US). 6 March 2007. Department of State. "Jordan." *Country Reports on Human Rights Practices for 2006*. <<http://www.state.gov/g/drl/rls/hrrprt/2006/78855.htm>> [Accessed 3 May 2007]

Additional Sources Consulted

Oral sources: The BADIL Resource Center for Palestinian Residency and Refugee Rights, the Israel/Palestine Center for Research and Information (IPCRI), the Embassy of the Hashemite Kingdom of Jordan in Canada and the UN Relief and Works Agency for Palestine Refugees in the Near East (UNRWA) did not respond to requests for information within the time constraints for this Response.

Internet sites, including: BADIL Resource Center for Palestinian Residency and Refugee Rights, Canadian Embassy in Jordan, the Embassy of the Hashemite Kingdom of Jordan in Canada, Factiva, Human Rights Watch (HRW), Israel/Palestine Center for Research and Information (IPCRI), Jordan Ministry of Health, United States (US) Department of State, World Health Organization in Jordan.

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