



RESPONSES TO INFORMATION REQUESTS (RIRs)

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Lebanon/Jordan: Cards issued by the United Nations Relief and Works Agency for Palestine Refugees in the Near East (UNRWA); movement allowed between camps and countries with a card issued by the UNRWA; whether a UNRWA card is used only for food rations; whether this card is valid in all camps (2002-December 2004)
Research Directorate, Immigration and Refugee Board, Ottawa

A legal advisor at the Department of Legal Affairs of the United Nations Relief and Works Agency for Palestine Refugees in the Near East (UNRWA) provided the following information in correspondence dated 3 December 2004.

Types of cards issued by the UNRWA

The UNRWA issues two types of cards: registration cards and ration cards. Registration cards are issued based on family units and indicate that the persons listed are considered Palestinian refugees under the UNRWA definition. This card gives the bearer the right to UNRWA services. The services offered to UNRWA registration cardholders are therefore not limited to food rations.

Ration cards are only issued to persons enrolled in the UNRWA's Special Hardship Programme for food rations and other goods provided by the UNRWA. This program provides assistance to the most impoverished refugee families in the UNRWA's five fields of operation: the Gaza Strip, the West Bank, Jordan, Lebanon, and the Syrian Arab Republic.

Movement allowed with a UNRWA card

According to the UNRWA legal advisor, "the UNRWA registration card is not a travel document or permit, [a]nd it does not restrict Palestine refugees' movement between camps, out of camps, or to other countries." If a person fails to notify the UNRWA of his or her change of address, the most recent address for that person will appear on the registration card.

Validity of the UNRWA card in various camps

The registration card entitles the bearer access to UNRWA services in any of the five regions mentioned earlier, "both within and outside camps (about two-thirds of Palestine refugees live outside camps)." Outside the five regions where the UNRWA operates, "the registration card verifies the status of the persons listed on it as within UNRWA's operational definition of a Palestine refugee."

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.

Reference

United Nations Relief and Works Agency for Palestine Refugees in the Near East (UNRWA). 3 December 2004. Correspondence from a legal advisor at the Department of Legal Affairs.

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