



ENCYCLOPEDIA OF WOMEN AND ISLAMIC CULTURES

Muslim Women and Displacement: Iraq, Syria & Palestine

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- ❖ Approximately one million people have been internally displaced by mounting crisis in northern and western Iraq in 2014, adding to an already-displaced population of another one million. This has made Iraq home to one of the largest IDP populations in the world. The situation has left 250,000 women and girls in need of urgent care, including nearly 60,000 pregnant women. Over 220,000 Syrians are also seeking refuge in the country. One hospital reported that maternal medical needs have doubled since the beginning of the crisis, and necessities such as menstrual products are in short supply in refugee camps¹.
- ❖ The United Nations Relief and Works Agency for Palestine Refugees (UNRWA), established in 1949, identifies 5 million registered Palestinian refugees living in the West Bank (754,411), Gaza (1,240,082), Syria (517,255), Lebanon (447,328), and Jordan (2,070,973) as of 2014.²
- ❖ Jordan is home to Zaatari, the second largest refugee camp in the world in 2012. The camp houses at least 120,000 Syrians (conservative estimates at 81,000)³. Though Jordanian law prohibits marriage for anyone under 18 years of age, Syrian refugees in Jordanian camps have been marrying off girls younger than that in an attempt to provide safety and financial security for them.⁴
- ❖ Over 3 million refugees have left Syria since 2011. The Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR) has registered Syrian refugees in Jordan (608,373), Lebanon (1,138,043), Turkey (808,576), Iraq (217,192), and Egypt (138,347).⁵ Because these do not include unregistered refugees, actual numbers are higher. In June 2014 there were more than 12 million internally and externally displaced Syrians.
- ❖ A 2014 UNHCR report stated that over 145,000 Syrian refugee households (25%) are headed by women alone, as a result of husbands fighting, being killed, or disappearing due to civil war and conflict.⁶
- ❖ UNRWA statistics from 2010 cite the following figures for registered Palestinian refugee women: a mean marital age of 20.2; a maternal mortality rate of 23/100,000 births; and an adolescent fertility rate (women aged 15-19) of 4%.⁷
- ❖ In 2010, 15% of registered Palestinian refugee households in Lebanon were headed by women; 6% of households in the West Bank; and 5.2% of households in Gaza. Out of the 27,496 registered women refugees who were widows, 9% receive food and cash assistances as a form of economic relief.⁷

¹ 30 June 2014 <http://www.unfpa.org/public/cache/offonce/home/news/pid/17678;jsessionid=0EE61495A37C0ABE9A095E74BCDC5BC1.jahia01>.

² Copyright 2014 <http://unrwausa.org/page.aspx?pid=396>

³ 03 August 2014 <http://data.unhcr.org/syrianrefugees/settlement.php?id=176&country=107®ion=77>

⁴ 12 November 2013 <http://www.aljazeera.com/indepth/features/2013/11/teenage-syrian-refugees-wed-protection-201311101497543146.html>

⁵ 04 August 2014 <http://data.unhcr.org/syrianrefugees/regional.php>

⁶ 08 July 2014 [http://reliefweb.int/sites/reliefweb.int/files/resources/Woman Alone ENG 2 July 2014.pdf](http://reliefweb.int/sites/reliefweb.int/files/resources/Woman%20Alone%20ENG%20July%202014.pdf)

⁷ March 2012 http://unstats.un.org/unsd/gender/Jordan_Mar2012/Presentations/Panel%202.a/Panel%202.a_4_UNRWA%20Presentation-%20Empowerment%20of%20palestine%20refugee%20women.pdf