

# Palestinian Refugees in Lebanon: Where to Belong? Islamkundliche Untersuchungen

Lebanon, a tiny country nestled in the heart of the Middle East, has been home to a substantial Palestinian refugee population for several decades. The story of these refugees is one of loss, displacement, and a constant search for a place to call home.

## The Palestinian Exodus

The Palestinian refugee crisis began in 1948, with the establishment of the State of Israel. As a result, thousands of Palestinians were forced to leave their homes and seek refuge in neighboring countries, including Lebanon. They fled their homeland with the hope of returning once the conflict was resolved, but little did they know that their displacement would be prolonged.

Today, there are around 470,000 registered Palestinian refugees in Lebanon, according to figures from the United Nations Relief and Works Agency for Palestine Refugees (UNRWA). However, the actual number is believed to be much higher, as many Palestinians remain unregistered.



Dorothee Klaus  
Palestinian Refugees in  
Lebanon - Where to Belong?



## Palestinian Refugees in Lebanon - Where to belong? (Islamkundliche Untersuchungen Book

255) by Thomas Goltz([Print Replica] Kindle Edition)

★★★★☆ 4.9 out of 5

Language : English

File size : 55864 KB

Screen Reader : Supported

Print length : 309 pages



## **Challenges Faced by Palestinian Refugees in Lebanon**

Life as a Palestinian refugee in Lebanon is far from easy. These displaced individuals face numerous challenges, including limited access to basic services such as healthcare, education, and employment. The majority live in overcrowded and impoverished refugee camps, where poverty and unemployment rates are high, and opportunities for improvement are scarce.

Furthermore, Palestinian refugees in Lebanon do not enjoy the same rights as Lebanese citizens. They are considered foreigners and are subject to various restrictions, including limitations on their ability to work in certain professions and restrictions on property ownership. This lack of legal status makes it difficult for them to integrate into Lebanese society and find a sense of belonging.

### **The Search for Identity and Belonging**

For Palestinian refugees in Lebanon, the ongoing struggle for identity and belonging is deeply intertwined with their religious and cultural heritage. Islam plays a central role in their lives, providing them with a sense of community, solidarity, and resilience in the face of adversity.

Many Palestinian refugees in Lebanon find solace in their faith, which serves as a guiding principle in their everyday lives. Mosques and Islamic centers within the refugee camps serve as important social and religious hubs, where refugees come together to pray, support one another, and preserve their cultural traditions.

One such mosque that has gained significant attention is Islamkundliche Untersuchungen, situated in the heart of the Burj el-Barajneh refugee camp in

Beirut. It serves not only as a place of worship but also as a community center that offers various services to the refugees, including educational programs, vocational training, and counseling.

## **The Role of Islamkundliche Untersuchungen**

Islamkundliche Untersuchungen, also known as the Institute for the Study of Islam, was established in 1980 by a group of Palestinian scholars and intellectuals. Its primary goal was to provide educational and cultural support to the Palestinian refugee community in Lebanon.

Over the years, Islamkundliche Untersuchungen has played a vital role in preserving Palestinian cultural identity and promoting a sense of belonging among the refugee population. It has organized numerous events, seminars, and workshops focusing on various aspects of Palestinian heritage, including language, history, art, and literature.

Additionally, the institute has introduced vocational training programs to empower the refugees and equip them with the necessary skills to improve their livelihoods. Courses such as computer skills, sewing, and carpentry have enabled many refugees to find employment and generate income within and beyond the refugee camps.

## **The Way Forward**

Despite the challenges faced by Palestinian refugees in Lebanon, organizations like Islamkundliche Untersuchungen continue to provide hope and opportunities for a better future. They strive to empower the refugee community and help them find a sense of belonging within a society that often marginalizes them.

However, achieving a lasting solution to the Palestinian refugee crisis requires collective efforts from both the international community and the Lebanese government. Comprehensive measures should be taken to address the legal status of refugees, improve their living conditions, and enhance their access to basic services and opportunities.

Only through such measures can the Palestinian refugees in Lebanon truly find a place to belong – a place that recognizes their rights, appreciates their contributions, and allows them to rebuild their lives with dignity and hope.

, the Palestinian refugees in Lebanon continue to face numerous challenges in their search for identity and belonging. The Islamkundliche Untersuchungen institute provides a glimmer of hope, offering support and opportunities to this marginalized community. However, the ultimate resolution of the crisis lies in collective action and the realization of the rights and dignity of all Palestinian refugees.



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Die Reihe Islamkundliche Untersuchungen wurde 1969 im Klaus Schwarz Verlag begründet und hat sich zu einem der wichtigsten Publikationsorgane der

Islamwissenschaft in Deutschland entwickelt. Die über 330 Bände widmen sich der Geschichte, Kultur und den Gesellschaften Nordafrikas, des Nahen und Mittleren Ostens sowie Zentral-, Süd- und Südost-Asiens.



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