

**Documenting Dispossession and Exile:  
The Relevance of International Norms on Registration and Data  
Management with Regard to a Negotiated Solution to the Palestinian  
Refugee Problem**

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### **Abstract**

This study examines the use of international practice, by exploring the notion that international standards and precedents that have been applied to refugee situations in other cases can give guidance to Palestinian refugee registration data, in reaching future claims for compensation. Three broad questions are put forward in this study:

1. To what extent can international practice as adopted by the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR) in its registration and management practices offer a constructive perspective on Palestinian refugee registration procedures and data?
2. What is the relevance of the experience gained in the settlement of refugee claims in international settings, such as the practice of international Claim Commissions in search of guidelines for the planning of a future Palestinian Claim Commission?
3. Can existing Palestinian refugee registration data be constructed in a suitable way for the preparation of future claims?

On a broader level, the study will seek to explore two questions. Firstly, can Palestinian refugee registration data point towards findings that could contribute, by making available to negotiators, the quantitative data necessary for determining claims? Secondly, can international guidelines provide a framework for the use of Palestinian registration data in confronting refugee claims and losses?

The study also takes on a technical analysis. The case studies subject to the analysis are Bosnia and Herzegovina (BiH) and Kosovo. Via this approach, the research will study the general norms and procedures adopted by two Claims Commissions to resolve refugee claims. Insights are then made into the possible transfer of such procedures to the Palestinian refugee case. In doing so, a clearer picture of how a future Palestinian Claims Commission could be established, and how existing Palestinian refugee registration data could be assembled, is then examined.

This thesis argues that one of the major gaps in research on Palestinian refugees is that it has not benefited from the experience of international lesson-learning through the analysis of other refugee cases and especially the utilization of the experience of UNHCR and precedents set by international Claim Commissions. The study's main conclusion is that international guidelines and precedents have significant benefits for preparing Palestinian refugee registration data, in reaching future claims for compensation within the Arab-Israeli negotiations.

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## **Abbreviations**

AFSC	American Friends Service Committee
AHC	Arab Higher Committee
AVR	Assisted Voluntary Return
BADIL	Resource Centre for Palestinian Residency and Refugee Rights in Palestine
BiH	Bosnia and Herzegovina
CBS	Central Bureau of Statistics
CDR	Central Data Repository
CERI	Consolidated Eligibility and Registration Instructions
CERMOC	Centre d'Etudes et de Recherches sur le Moyen-Orient Contemporain
CIDA	Canadian International Development Agency
CIVITAS	Foundations for Participation: Civic Structures for the Palestinian Refugee Camps and Exile Communities
COHRE	Centre on Housing Rights and Evictions
CPRR	Council for Palestinian Restitution and Repatriation
CRPC	Commission for Real Property Claims
CRRPD	Commission for Resolution of Real Property Disputes
DHA	Department of Humanitarian Affairs
DoP	Declaration of Principles
DP	displaced persons
DPA	Dayton Peace Agreement
ECHA	Convener of the Executive Committee for Humanitarian Affairs
ECHO	European Commission's department for Humanitarian Aid
ECHR	European Court of Human Rights
ECOSOC	Economic and Social Council
EECC	Eritrea-Ethiopia Claims Commission
ERC	Humanitarian Affairs and the Emergency Relief Coordinator

ESM	Economic Survey Mission
EU	European Union
ExCom	Executive Committee of the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees
FAFO	Norwegian Institute for Applied Social Science
FERO	Field Eligibility and Registration Officer
FRY	Former Republic of Yugoslavia
GAPAR	Syrian General Authority for Palestine Arab Refugees
GFLP	German Forced Labour Compensation Programme
GIS	geographic information system
GPS	global satellite positioning
HCR	League of Nations High Commissioner for Refugees
HPCC	Housing Property Claims Commission
HPD	Housing and Property Directorate
HVAP	Holocaust Victim Assets Programme
IASC	Coordinator Chairs the Interagency Standing Committee
ICC	International Criminal Court
ICEM	Intergovernmental Committee for European Migration
ICHEIC	International Commission on Holocaust Era Insurance Claims
ICJ	International Court of Justice
ICM	Intergovernmental Committee for Migration
ICRC	International Committee of the Red Cross
ICTR	International Criminal Tribunal for Rwanda
ICTY	International Criminal Tribunal for the Former Yugoslavia
ID	identity documentation
IDD	Inter-Agency Internal Displacement Division
IDF	Israeli Defence Force
IDP's	internally displaced persons
IDRC	International Development Research Centre
IHL	International Humanitarian Law
ILA	Israel Lands Administration

IOM	International Organization for Migration
IPS	Institute of Palestine Studies
IPS	Integrated Property System
IRO	International Refugee Organization
IT	information technology
JCC	Jewish Claims Conference
JMCC	Jerusalem Media and Communication Centre
JNF	Jewish National Fund
KLA	Kosovo Liberation Army
KVM	Kosovo Verification Mission
LAS	League of Arab States
LAWE	Palestinian Society for the Protection of Human Rights and the Environment
LSCR	League of Red Crescent Societies
MDSD	Most Different Systems Design
MiMOSA	Migrant Management & Operational Systems Application
MMP	Microfinance and Micro-enterprise Programme
MOP	Palestinian Authority's Ministry of Planning
MSSD	Most Similar Systems Design
NATO	North Atlantic Treaty Organization
NGO	non-governmental organization
NSU	Negotiations Support Unit
OAU	Organization of African Unity
OCHA	Office for Humanitarian Affairs
OPTs	Occupied Palestinian Territories
OSCE	Organization for Security and Co-operation in Europe
OSO	Operational Support Officers
PA	Palestinian Authority (sometimes PNA: Palestinian National Authority)
PCA	Permanent Court of Arbitration

PCBS	Palestinian Central Bureau of Statistics
PHC	Population, Housing and Establishment Census
PICMME	Provisional Intergovernmental Committee for the Movements of Migrants from Europe
PLO	Palestine Liberation Organization
PLS	Palestine Land Society
PP	Project Profile
PPR	permanent place of residence
PRRN	Palestinian Refugee Research Net
PRRP	Palestine Refugee Records Project
RAO	Refugee Affairs Officer
RG	Registration Guide
RO	Refugee Office
RRs	Registered Refugees
RRIS	Refugee Registration Information System
RTD	Repossessions Tracking Database
RWG	Refugee Working Group
SHAML	Palestinian Refugees and Diaspora Centre
SHC	Special Hardship Case
SSE	Small-Scale Enterprise
TO	Technical Office
TRC	Truth and Reconciliation Commission
UN	United Nations
UNAMA	United Nations Assistance Mission in Afghanistan
UNCC	United Nations Claims Commission
UNCCP	United Nations Conciliation Commission for Palestine
UNDP	United Nations Development Programme
UNDRP	United Nations Disaster Relief Project
UNHCR	United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees
UNMIK	United Nations Mission in Kosovo
UNPPR	United Nations Relief for Palestine Refugees

UNPROFOR United Nations Protection Force  
UNRRA United Nations Relief and Reconstruction Agency  
UNRWA United Nations Relief and Works Agency for Palestine Refugees  
in the Near East  
UNSC United Nations Security Council  
URS Unified Registry System  
USCR United States Committee for Refugees  
WB World Bank  
WFP World Food Programme  
WJRO World Jewish Restitution Organization  
WOJAC World Organization of Jews from Arab Countries