نداء جنيف
GENEVA CALL

NASHIT Activist

APPEL DE GENÈVE
GENEVA CALL

Geneva Call is a neutral, impartial non-governmental organization dedicated to promoting respect by armed non-State actors for international humanitarian norms. In particular it focuses on the protection of civilians in armed conflict and other situations of violence.

Geneva Call is one of the world's leading organizations in the field of sustainable humanitarian engagement with armed non-State actors. Its unique approach, centred on the issue-specific *Deeds of Commitment*, has been recognized as a successful model by the UN Secretary-General in his reports on the protection of civilians in armed conflict.

NASHIT Activist

Nashit association is an independent nongovernmental organization with the mission and vision to create a Palestinian Refugee community that embraces the values of democracy, social justice, dignity, human rights and equality between women and men.

Nashit association works towards enabling youth and women to participate in decision-making and play an important active, meaningful and equal role in everyday life.

March 2013, Ain el-Hilweh, Nashit association. © Nashit association

In July 2015, Geneva Call and cultural and social association Nashit launched a survey covering seven Palestinian camps *(Ain el-Hilweh, Mieh w Mieh, Burj el-Shamali, Rashidiya, Shatila, Burj el-Barajneh, Beddawi)* on the risks affecting children under the age of eighteen.

The analysis of a given situation is a requirement for dealing with any negative phenomena within a society. In this case, the study represents a diagnosis of the situation. Such diagnosis is the starting point for a therapeutic process. The importance of a study lies in the fact that it presents the situation objectively without exaggeration.

The Palestinian community in Lebanon lives in a precarious situation – psychologically, economically, and morally. The lack of stability and security is caused by a range of historical political, economic and social reasons. Some of these reasons exist since the Nakba (1948) and were subsequently inherited through the generations. Others are related to the civil and social rights of the Palestinians in Lebanon, and some are linked to the Palestinian internal dynamics, the political divisions and conflicts.

Violence incorporates a number of reactions that take multiple forms. In the case of Palestinians in Lebanon, the combination of circumstances in which the Palestinian individual lives generates an environment that encourages violence; however, these conditions are not all external. There are internal factors that contribute to the creation of an environment of violent behaviour; the study, therefore, of the causes of violence, and the subsequent addressing of both the external conditions and the internal causes, will allow for work towards the diminution of the phenomenon of violence.

Violence stands out as one of the phenomena addressed in one form or another by researchers or civil society institutions, but the overall number of studies on this issue does not exceed the number of fingers on one hand. This has led to the absence of profound knowledge and understanding of the phenomenon of violence, whether in terms of its manifestations, its causes, consequences, and effects.

There are a lot of explanations for the violence in the Palestinian society in Lebanon, some going as far as the denial of the existence of violence as a behavioural phenomenon that represents a serious threat to the lives of people, including to children who are one of the most vulnerable groups. When interpreting violent behaviour, many focus on it being a negative reaction to the different conditions that put pressure on the Palestinian refugees. This includes the political, economic and social conditions in Lebanon, the restrictions on civil and social rights for Palestinians, misuse of weapons and the absence of law enforcement, as well as internal differences that create an environment that fosters internal violence.

A conference entitled "Strengthening Palestinian awareness on the importance of protecting the most vulnerable" took place in 2012 in Ain el-Hilweh Camp. This event was sponsored by the Palestinian Embassy and organized by a group of associations in collaboration with Geneva Call, and with the support of the Swiss Development Agency. The conference, which was attended by 62 of the camp actors (civil society organizations, popular committees, political factions, grassroot initiatives etc.), concluded with the identification of children under the age of eighteen as one of the most vulnerable groups, and one of the groups most

affected by the situation. Another main finding of the conference was the growth of violence amongst children and youth.

Keeping in mind the specific conditions of Palestinian camps, combined with the easy access to weapons and the "chaos" characterizing it, there is always the possibility of a transition from individual to collective violence. There is also always the probability of an escalation reaching an armed clash that will inflict greater damage on the residents, and those most vulnerable in the society – especially children.

Geneva Call is operating at the international level on engaging armed non-State actors involved in armed conflict or other situations of armed violence. Geneva Call works on promoting the protection of children under the age of eighteen, and preventing their recruitment within armed groups. Whilst there is no armed conflict between armed Palestinian groups, there is however always the risk of a renewed shift to a situation of an armed clash involving armed groups or other armed organizations. Therefore, in order to achieve the protection of civilians, and especially the most vulnerable groups, Geneva Call has incorporated the Palestinian camps within its field of work, focusing on the importance of respect for international humanitarian norms. It has held a series of training workshops on international humanitarian norms with the participation of most Palestinian political factions. Geneva Call further secured the commitment by both the Palestinian Liberation Organization (PLO) and the Palestinian alliance forces (Tahaluf) to the highest standards regarding the safety of children in situations of conflict/armed violence. In a declaration on the Protection of Children from the Effects of Armed Conflict and Violence, signed in December 2013, the PLO and the Tahaluf notably condemn the recruitment of children under the age of eighteen and pledge to employ all means practically available to ensure that children under eighteen years of age do not directly participate in military action.

The social and cultural association Nashit, an independent NGO established in 2003 and registered with the Lebanese Ministry of Interior in 2006, focuses primarily on activities involving children and youth. It is engaged in the monitoring and tracking of negative phenomena, mostly through research and studies, affirming the importance of revealing the gaps leading to the weakening of the Palestinian community in Lebanon. It also tries, through such research and studies, to stimulate a conscious debate on humanitarian and protection issues. Nashit association is active inside the Palestinian Refugee camps of Ain el-Hilweh and Mieh w Mieh and has permanent projects such as the Palestinian Girls Club, the Nashit association flame team for youth, and the Hope program for Palestinian Refugees from Syria.

On this basis Geneva Call and Nashit association conducted a study on Children at Risk with a number of children under the age of eighteen in the camps mentioned above, using forms comprising specific questions. A total of 310 children aged 15-17 years old participated in the survey, and in the 39 focus groups that were held.

The study aims at highlighting the problem through specific data that demonstrates the phenomenon of violence and determines what it really is: its causes, its prevalence and its tools. Since weapons and their availability among children is the most dangerous issue within this phenomenon, the study addressed this topic directly, despite criticism it could raise by some under the rubric of the "sanctity"of the Palestinian arms in the refugee camps.

"That there is dinking water in the Shatila camp"*

*Recommendations and wishes expressed by the children at the end of the focus group sessions.

The selection of participants relied mainly on contacts and social relations within the camps. Nashit association in Ain el-Hilweh, Mieh w Mieh and Beirut, and relevant focal points in the other camps took on the process of approaching the children of the required age, randomly, to inform them about the focus groups and invite them to join. The children, who participated in the study, are "ordinary" children from the camps. Thus, some might be closer to violence and its manifestations than others. With one exception, the focus groups consisted only of boys, since girls tend to be less involved in violence generally speaking. This was confirmed by the answers of the female respondents. Furthermore, Nashit association has been working on the protection of girls and implementing projects that specifically targets girls, and girls-specific protection issues have been addressed there. Thus, this study mainly addressed boys at the critical age when potentially becoming involved in armed violence, and therefore the results of the study provide a picture of the situation of boys of this specific age group.

The research seeks to examine the relationship between the level of education, economic conditions, and the rates of violence among children aged 15-17. For this reason the survey does not cover the community as a whole, nor does it address the political, social, and psychological aspects which are additional considerations also affecting the existence of increasing violence.

The results of the forms and focus groups provide data demonstrating the living environment of the targeted group, and the links to violence, its causes, and its manifestations. The separation between the two lines of information collected, through the form and the focus groups, serves the purpose of highlighting the relationship between the environment and circumstances as a reason, and the violent behaviour as a result. Yet the study provides no direct link between the background answers and those given in the focus groups, so no participant can individually be identified. The study focused on the descriptive method to highlight the phenomenon in question and the extent of its manifestation and approached the subject in two ways:

1. A personal information form with clear questions regarding gender, age, resident of which camp, educational level, number of family members, work of the father[1], and the family's economic situation. The respondents included 310 children from the refugee camps of *Ain el-Hilweh, Mieh w Mieh, Burj el-Shamali, Rashidiya, Shatila, Burj el-Barajneh, and Beddawi*.

2. 39 focus groups with a maximum of 12 children each were organized involving children aged 15-17 and supervised by facilitators. There was a free debate about violence within the target group, including its causes and its forms in the mentioned camps. The questions were tackled gradually to ensure sincere responses.

As to the line of action, the participants in the focus groups first started by individually filling out a form with questions about their background, personal information and views. After that, an open discussion was held within the group. The discussions were recorded and afterwards analyzed, leading to the findings below. The study is based on the classification of the answers in specific tables, in order to clarify the content – precise data and percentages – to the reader. The answers are listed according to the most frequently answered to facilitate the reading.

2012, Ain el-Hilweh. © Nashit association

[1] *Aiming at establishing possible link to armed factions and not analyzing the economic situation.*

"Build a school for secondary students in the Burj el-Shamali camp"

IMPORTANCE OF THE STUDY

The importance of this study lies in it being the first to:

1. Examine this specific age group;
2. Comprehensively cover all of the main camps;
3. Present a picture of the risks affecting children under the age of eighteen;
4. Address the topic of weapons and their spread among children;
5. Entail tailored recommendations on programming to the main stakeholders to improve protection of the children at risk.

THANKS

Nashit association and Geneva Call would like to thank all those who contributed to the successful completion of this study; in particular the Palestinian Youth Organization and its coordinator in Lebanon Mr. Khaled El-Yamani, the Head of Burj el-Shamali website Mr. Ahmad Dahwesh, and the Head of Rashidiya website Mr. Nemer Horani.

This study would not have been possible without the generous support by the Swiss Federal Department of Foreign Affairs, and the combined efforts to organize the focus groups in the seven camps.

August 2012, Ain el-Hilweh, UNRWA school. © Nashit association

"No discrimination between a person and another"

SECTION 1:
The results of the Questionnaire

Nahr el-Bared
Beddawi
TRIPOLI

BA'ALBEK
Wavel

Dbayeh

Mar Elias   BEIRUT
Shatila
Burj el-Barajneh

LEBANON

SAIDA
Ain el-Hilweh
Mieh w Mieh

El Buss   TYRE
Burj el-Shamali
Rashidiya

Location of the main Palestinian refugee camps in Lebanon

No. 1: AGE

According to table No. 1, the percentage of participants for each age group was as follows: 26% for 15 years old, 35% for 16 years old, and 38% for 17 years old. The table also shows that the latter group was the largest because it is closer to the full age, and that the age of 17 reflects the reality of adolescence better than the other age groups.

Table No. 1:

AGE	NUMBER
15	82
16	110
17	118
Total	310

Diagram No. 1:

- Fifteen
- Sixteen
- Seventeen

26, 35, 38
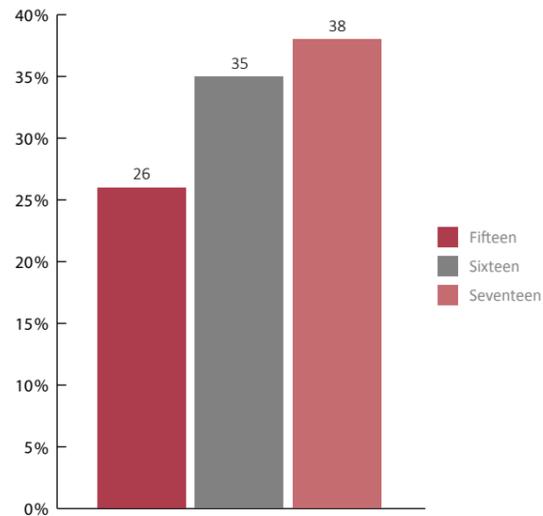
No. 2: GENDER

Table No. 2:

GENDER	NUMBER
Female	25
Male	285
Total	310

Diagram No. 2:

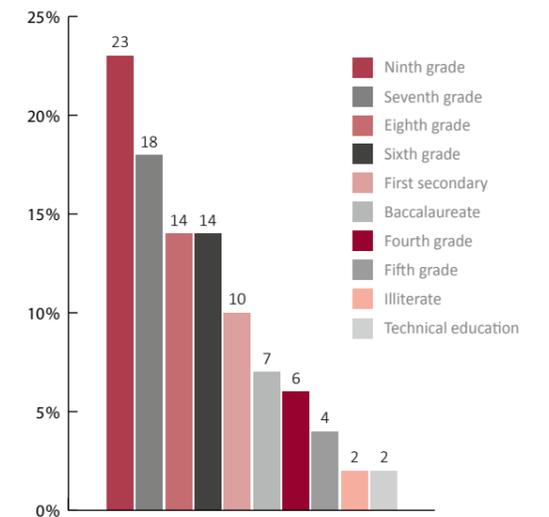- Female
- Male

8, 92
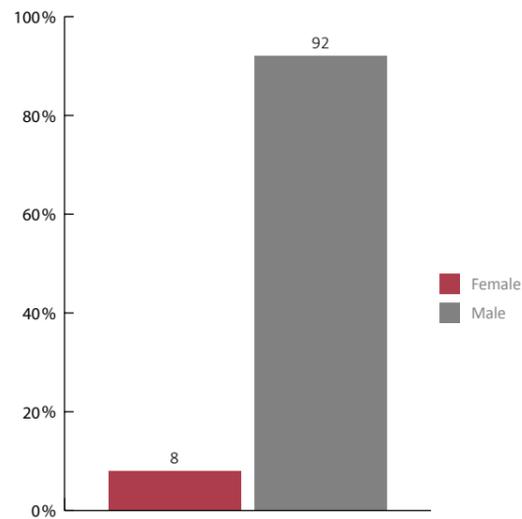
No. 3: EDUCATIONAL LEVEL

Table No. 3 shows the educational level of the children with illiteracy rates reaching 2%. 24% of the children reached the elementary level (grades 4-6, ages 9-11), whereas 55% made it until middle school (grades 7-10, ages 12-15) and 17% until secondary school (grades 11-13, ages 16-18), and 2% in technical education (after grade 9-10).

Table No. 3:

EDUCATIONAL LEVEL	NUMBER
Ninth grade	72
Seventh grade	56
Eighth grade	44
Sixth grade	42
First secondary	30
Baccalaureate	22
Fourth grade	18
Fifth grade	13
Illiterate	7
Technical education	6
Total	310

Diagram No. 3:

- Ninth grade
- Seventh grade
- Eighth grade
- Sixth grade
- First secondary
- Baccalaureate
- Fourth grade
- Fifth grade
- Illiterate
- Technical education

23, 18, 14, 14, 10, 7, 6, 4, 2, 2

"We wish that the UNRWA improves the level of education"

May 2013, Ain el-Hilweh, Nashit association. © Nashit association

No. 4: REASONS FOR QUITTING SCHOOL

This table shows that the percentage of children not receiving education (having quit) is 51%, whereas the percentage of those who are still in school is 47%. The remaining 2% are those who chose technical education after middle school.

This table also reveals that 30% of the cases of quitting school were because of economic reasons and the urge to work at an early age, 14% were due to the general situation in addition to the wars and the security situation, whereas 26% were due to the educational difficulties and repetitive failure, and 30% due to their family neglecting the problem.

Table No. 4:

| REASONS FOR QUITTING SCHOOL	NUMBER
Still studying	146
Economic status	30
Repetitive failure	26
Lack of motivation	22
Work	17
No direct reason	17
Educational difficulties	15
War and security reasons	11
General situation	11
Technical education graduate	6
Boredom	5
My parents didn't enroll me into school	4
Total	**310**

Diagram No. 4:
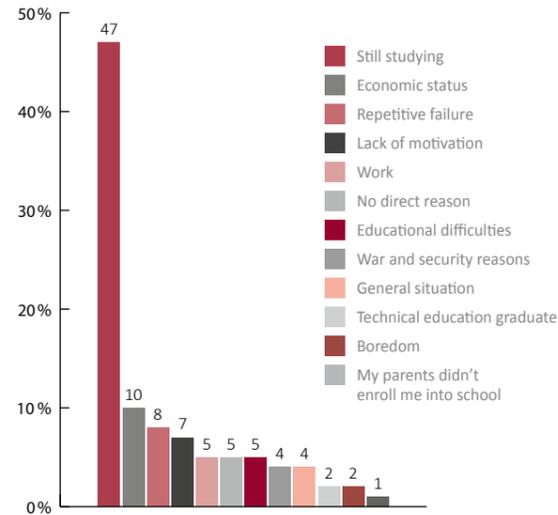
No. 5: ECONOMIC STATUS

The determination of the family's economic status as bad, very bad, moderate and good does not depend on scientific standards. It instead depends on the estimation by the children in the targeted groups themselves, meaning the way the targeted group views its own economic status as such. The respondents noted that the percentage of children having a status between bad and very bad reaches 40%, whereas moderate was 59%, and good only 1%.

Table No. 5:

| ECONOMIC STATUS	NUMBER
Moderate	182
Bad	107
Very Bad	17
Good	4
Excellent	0
Total	**310**

Diagram No. 5:
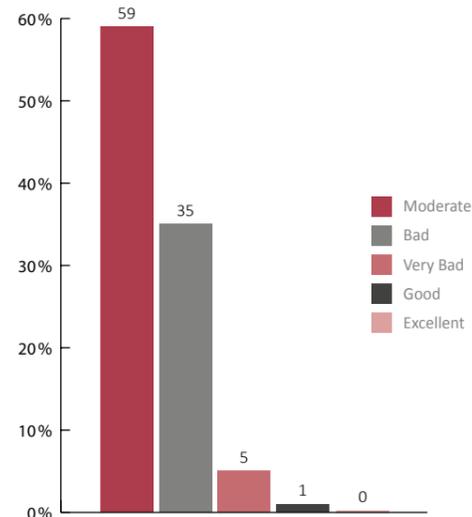
No. 6: FATHER'S PROFESSION

This diagram shows the percentage of unemployed fathers, about 13%, compared to 5% deceased, and 7% in seasonal work. Fathers in full time military work reaches 12%, with construction work reaching 28%, taxi driver 13%, free professions 14%, and careers with high qualifications (physician/doctor, engineer, teacher, employee) 8%.

Table No. 6:

FATHER'S PROFESSION	NUMBER
Construction	87
Free professions	45
Taxi driver	40
Unemployed	39
Full-time military	38
Careers with high qualifications	24
Seasonal work	21
Deceased	16
Total	**310**

Diagram No. 6:
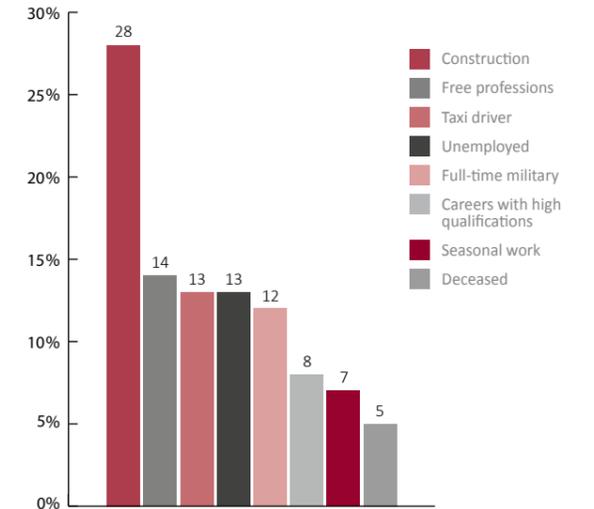
No. 7: NUMBER OF FAMILY MEMBERS (MOTHER, FATHER, CHILDREN)

Table No. 7:

NUMBER OF FAMILY MEMBERS	NUMBER
6	101
7	69
5	65
8	32
4	20
10	6
9	5
3	5
2	3
12	2
14	2
11	0
13	0
Total	**310**

Diagram No. 7:
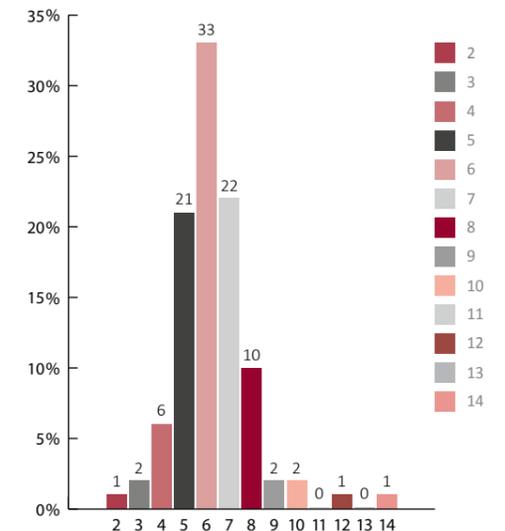
The survey shows that the number of family members between 5 and 10 is 90%. This is a strong indicator of the economic conditions.

No. 8: SKILL POSSESSION

Table No. 8, concerning the skills possessed by the children targeted by the survey, shows that 69% do not have any self stated skills or qualifications, compared to 31% that say they do. These are work related skills such as construction, electrical, mechanical, air-conditioning and cooling, hairdressing, and computer skills.

Table No. 8:

DO YOU HAVE ANY SKILLS?	NUMBER
No	213
Yes	97
TOTAL	310

Diagram No. 8:
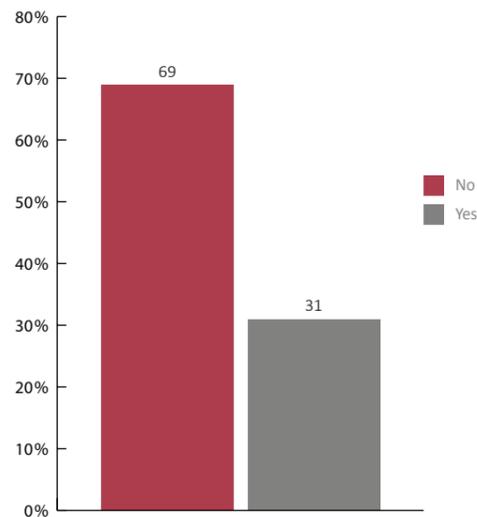
ANALYSIS OF THE QUESTIONNAIRE RESULTS

- The educational level reflects to a certain degree the reality of the targeted group. The survey forms revealed that the percentage of those who have dropped out of school has reached more than half of the participants, at 51%.
- Knowing that the number of participants between 15-16 years reached 192 or 61% of the overall number of participants, the percentage of secondary students (above the age of 16) still in school reached 36%, whereas the middle school students (below the age of 15) reached 68%. This shows that dropping out of school occurs in greater numbers after middle school.
- The results demonstrated a weak interest in technical education, for which the percentage of students reached slightly less than 2%.
- Economic conditions were the main reason for dropping out of school. This accounted for 19% of school dropouts.
- Quitting school for economic reasons is not the indicator of labour, since the percentage of child labour among drop outs only reached 11%; the difference here is therefore 8%.
- The percentage of children who quit school due to repetitive failure and educational difficulties reached 26%.

- The percentage of dropout cases due to external reasons (the general situation, wars, security reasons, and parents not enrolling the children) accounted for about 16%.
- In determining the self-stated economic status of the family according to the participants, 40% deemed their status to be very bad, whereas moderate reached 59% and good only 1%.
- Table No. 6 shows that the total of participants whose father is either deceased or unemployed reaches 18%; 63% are seasonal workers, taxi drivers, workers in the construction field or carry out free professions. Those committed to political organizations on a full time basis reached 12%.
- The percentage of fathers with high qualifications (doctor, engineer, teacher, UNRWA employee, or employee of a social organization) is about 8%.
- Participants with a family consisting of seven members and above reached 38%.
- Table No. 8 shows that with regard to skills, 69% of the participants find they do not have any skills or qualifications.

SECTION 2:
Results of the focus group discussions

Location of the main Palestinian refugee camps in Lebanon

The sessions covered 7 Palestinian camps in Tyre, Sidon, Beirut, and Tripoli, and 310 individuals aged 15-17 participated. The dialogues in the focus group sessions focused on violence, its methods, its reasons, and the extent of participation in the violence. The initial focus was violence, but as the security situation was very fragile at the time of the sessions, the topic of weapons and recruitment into military forces and armed groups imposed itself on the dialogue.

No. 1: DEFINITION OF VIOLENCE

Table No. 1:

DEFINITION OF VIOLENCE	NUMBER
Hitting	130
Murder and battle	100
Verbal	47
Oppression of women or assault	16
Disrespecting the opinion of others	9
Mental	5
Scaring kids	2
I don't know	1
Total	310

Diagram No. 1:
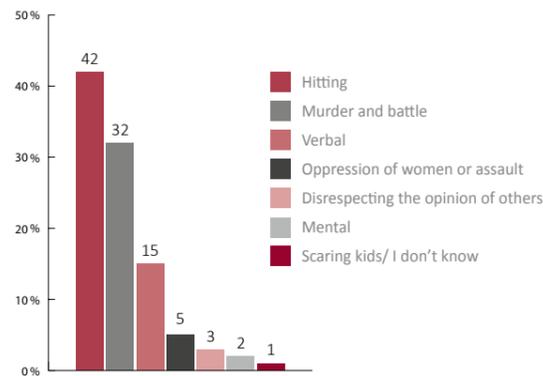
No. 2: USE OF VIOLENCE AS A SOLUTION TO A PROBLEM

Table No. 2:

HAVE YOU USED VIOLENCE TO SOLVE A PROBLEM?	NUMBER
Yes	156
No	154
Total	310

Diagram No. 2:
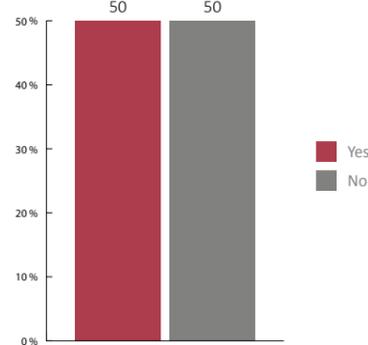
No. 3: VIOLENCE AS FIRST OPTION

Table No. 3:

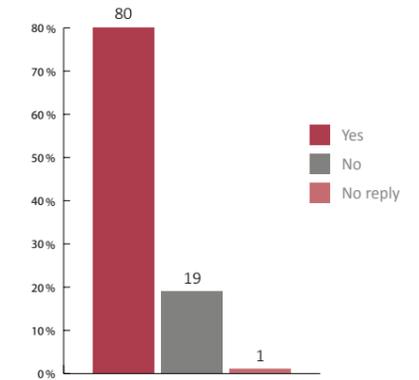| IS VIOLENCE THE FIRST OPTION FOR YOU?	NUMBER
No	188
Yes	118
Sometimes	4
Total	310

Diagram No. 3:
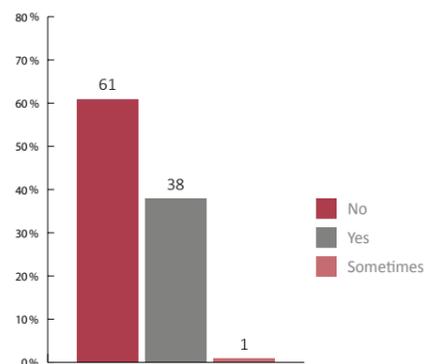
No. 4: INFORMATION ABOUT USE OF VIOLENCE

Table No. 4:

HAVE YOU HEARD ABOUT CONCRETE CASES AND/OR DID YOU PERSONALLY EXPERIENCE CASES WHERE VIOLENCE WAS USED?	NUMBER
Yes	247
No	60
No reply	3
Total	310

Diagram No. 4:

No. 5: CAUSES FOR VIOLENCE

Table No. 5:

DO YOU THINK VIOLENCE IS A RESULT OF PSYCHOLOGICAL, SOCIAL CONDITIONS, OR ARE THERE OTHER FACTORS?	NUMBER
Social	146
Psychological	136
Economic	21
I don't know	7
Total	310

Diagram No. 5:
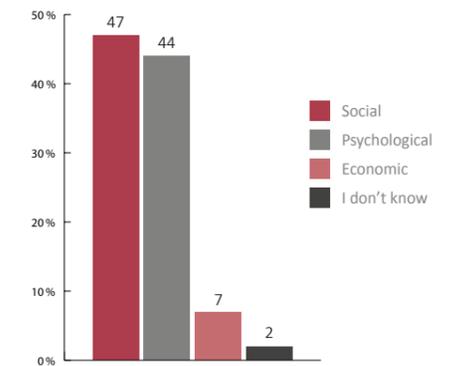
No. 6: USE OF SHARP TOOLS

Table No. 6:

DO YOU USE SHARP TOOLS IN VIOLENCE?	NUMBER
Yes	146
No	134
I don't use violence	30
Total	310

Diagram No. 6:
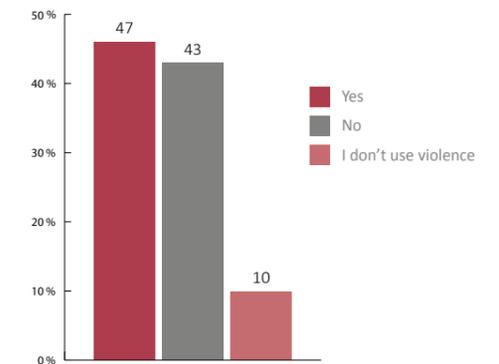
No. 7: TOOLS USED

Table No. 7:

WHAT ARE THE TOOLS USED?	NUMBER
Iron punch	45
Stick	45
Knives	35
Blade	21
Total	146

Diagram No. 7:
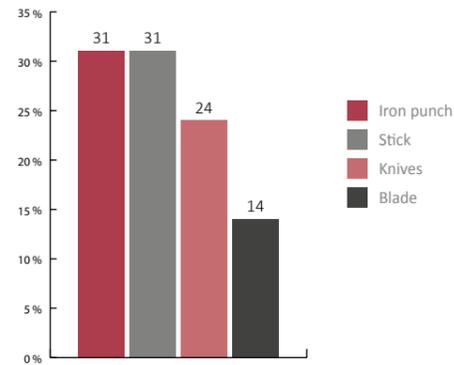
No. 8: VIEW OF GUNS

Table No. 8:

HOW DO YOU VIEW GUNS?	NUMBER
To face enemies	134
For self defence	56
Kills our people	46
Wrong	46
Should be organized	28
Total	310

Diagram No. 8:
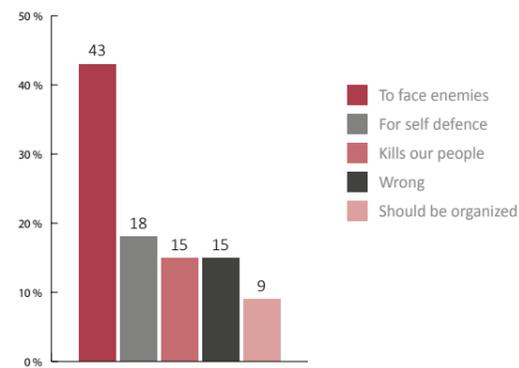
No. 9: KNOWLEDGE ON USE OF GUNS

Table No. 9:

DO YOU KNOW HOW TO USE A GUN?	NUMBER
No	160
Yes	150
Total	310

Diagram No. 9:
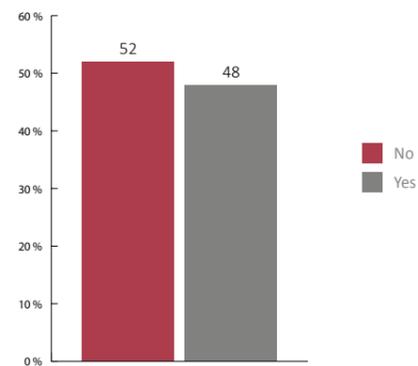
"We wish that
the factions unite"

No. 10: WAY OF LEARNING TO USE GUNS

Table No. 10:

HOW DID YOU LEARN TO USE GUNS?	NUMBER
Do not use guns	160
From family	68
With the armed organization	43
From friends	39
Total	310

Diagram No. 10:
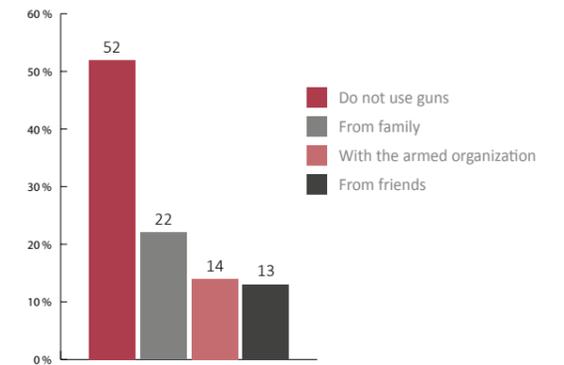
No. 11: AGE OF USING GUNS

Table No. 11:

AGE OF USING GUNS	NUMBER
16	32
15	27
14	20
10	17
17	14
13	13
Since childhood	11
12	9
11	7
Total	150

Diagram No. 11:
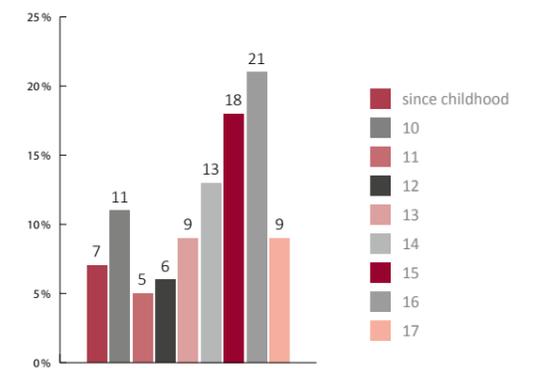
No. 12: PARENTS' ATTITUDE TOWARDS USE OF GUNS

Table No. 12:

PARENTS' ATTITUDE TOWARDS USE OF GUNS	NUMBER
They do not use guns	160
They have no problem with it	98
Objectors	32
Don't know	20
Total	310

Diagram No. 12:
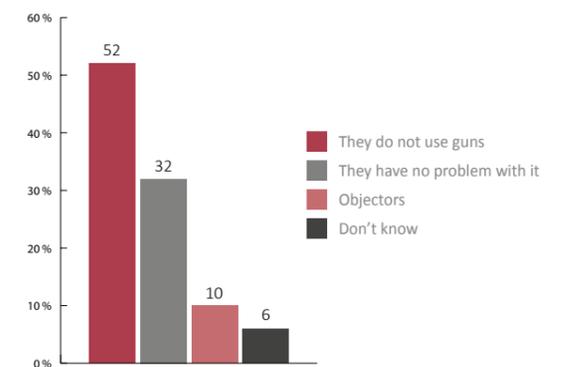
No. 13: **AFFILIATION WITH AN ARMED ORGANIZATION**

Table No. 13:

ARE YOU WITH AN ARMED ORGANIZATION?	NUMBER
No	245
Yes	65
Total	**310**

Diagram No. 13:

- No
- Yes
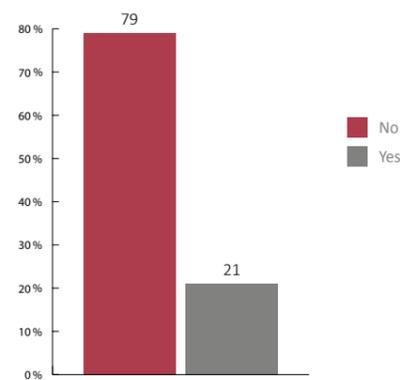
No. 14: **REASONS FOR AFFILIATION**

Table No. 14:

REASONS FOR AFFILIATION	NUMBER
National defence	39
Financial reason	17
No direct reason	9
Total	**65**

Diagram No. 14:

- National defence
- Financial reason
- No direct reason
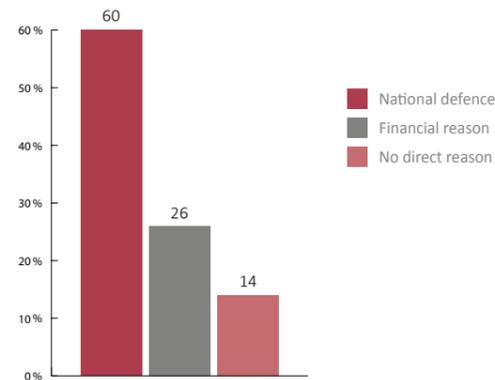
"We wish to return to Palestine"

No. 15: **PAID AFFILIATION**

Table No. 15:

| IS YOUR AFFILIATION REMUNERATED?	NUMBER
Yes	37
No	28
Total	**65**

Diagram No. 15:

- Yes
- No
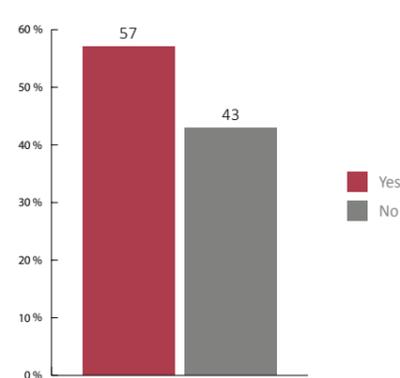
No. 16: **AWARENESS OF THE DEFINITION OF CHILDREN**

Table No. 16:

ARE YOU AWARE THAT PERSONS UNDER EIGHTEEN ARE CONSIDERED CHILDREN?	NUMBER
Yes	232
No	78
Total	**310**

Diagram No. 16:

- Yes
- No
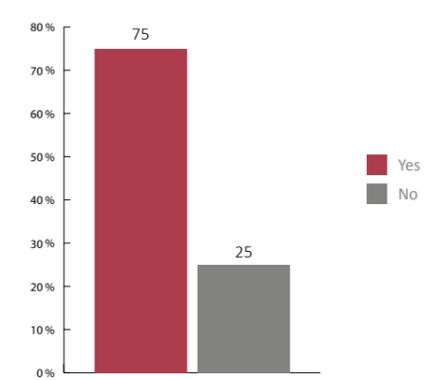
No. 17: **AWARENESS OF THE PLEDGE NOT TO RECRUIT CHILDREN**

Table No. 17:

ARE YOU AWARE OF THE PLEDGE BY THE PLO AND TAHALUF NOT TO RECRUIT CHILDREN UNDER 18?	NUMBER
No	161
Yes	149
Total	**310**

Diagram No. 17:

- No
- Yes
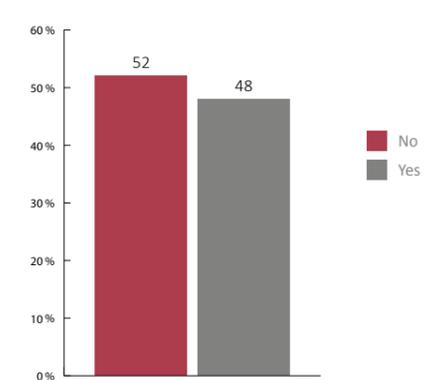
No. 18: **VIEW ON DANGERS OF SHOOTING IN THE AIR**

Table No. 18:

DO YOU THINK SHOOTING IN THE AIR ON OCCASIONS REPRESENTS A DANGER?	NUMBER
Yes	301
No	9
Total	**310**

Diagram No. 18:

- Yes
- No
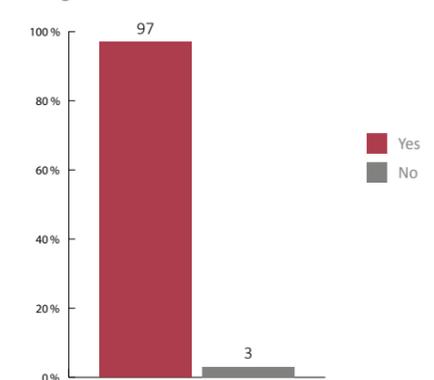
No. 19: ECONOMIC SITUATION AS REASON FOR CARRYING WEAPONS

Table No. 19:

IS THE ECONOMIC SITUATION THE REASON FOR CARRYING OF WEAPONS?	NUMBER
Yes	273
No	37
Total	310

Diagram No. 19:
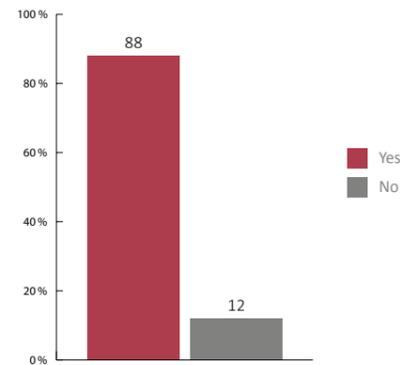
No. 20: GENERAL SITUATION AS REASON FOR CARRYING WEAPONS

Table No. 20:

IS THE GENERAL SITUATION THE REASON FOR CARRYING WEAPONS?	NUMBER
Yes	248
No	63
Total	310

Diagram No. 20:
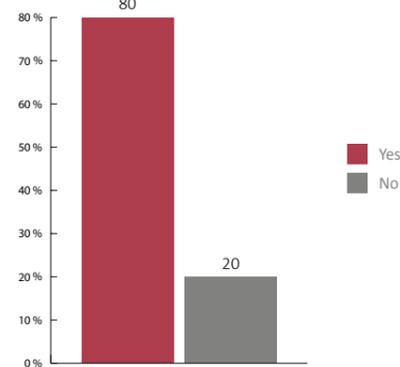
No. 21: WORKSHOPS FOR PROTECTION OF CIVILIANS

Table No. 21:

HAVE YOU EVER PARTICIPATED IN WORKSHOPS FOR PROTECTION OF CIVILIANS?	NUMBER
No	256
Yes	54
Total	310

Diagram No. 21:
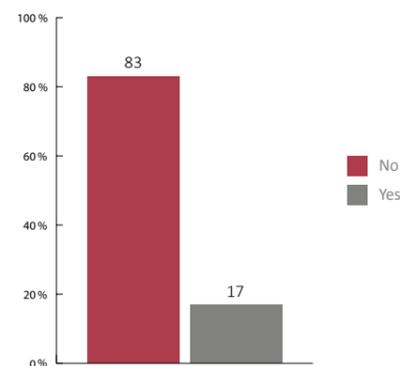
No. 22: FEAR FOR SECURITY IN THE CAMP

Table No. 22:

DO YOU FEEL FEAR FOR YOUR SECURITY IN THE CAMP?	NUMBER
Yes	186
No	93
I don't know	31
Total	310

Diagram No. 22:
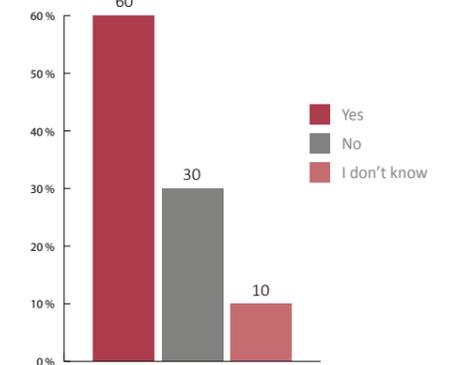
No. 23: REASONS FOR FEAR ABOUT SECURITY

Table No. 23:

| WHAT IS THE REASON FOR THE FEAR ABOUT YOUR SECURITY IN THE CAMP?	NUMBER
The restrictions/siege on the camps	93
Internal clashes	78
Deprivation of civil and social rights	77
Misuse of weapons	62
Total	310

Diagram No. 23:
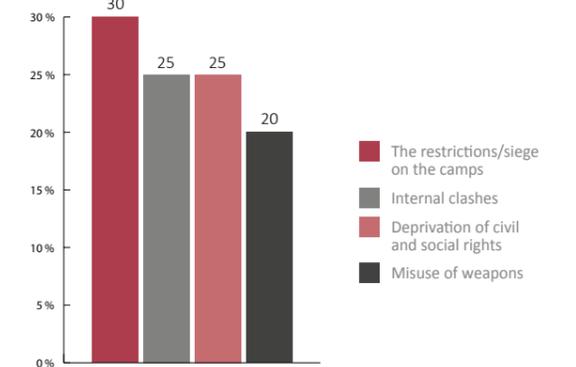
No. 24: IMPROVEMENT OF SECURITY

Table No. 24:

HOW COULD THE SECURITY IN THE CAMPS BE IMPROVED? (MULTIPLE ANSWERS POSSIBLE)	NUMBER
Organizing weapons	310
Right to return	310
Preventing the internal clashes	310
Improve the economic situation	270
A security force able to maintain security	252
Free spaces	202
Raise the level of awareness	124
Emigration	124
Improve the educational system	93
Total	310

Diagram No. 24:
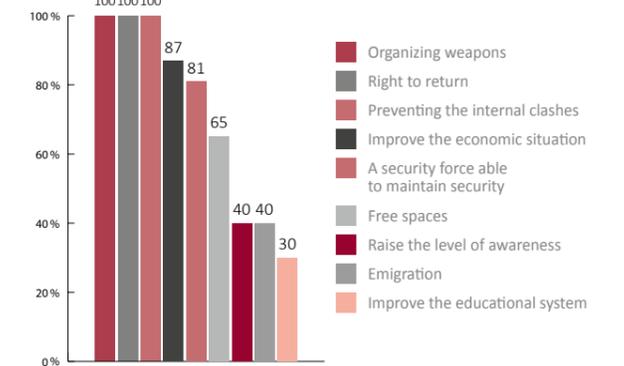
ANALYSIS OF THE FOCUS GROUP RESULTS:

- 42% of the participants considered violence to be the action of hitting (physical fights and abuse).
- 32% of the participants considered violence to be armed conflicts, assassinations, and murder.
- 21% of the participants defined violence as being non-physical.
- 5% of the participants described violence as being oppression or assault directed towards women.
- 156 out of 310 participants confirmed using violence to solve their problems, whereas 154 said they do not.
- 38% of the participants considered violence to be their first choice for solving problems.
- In determining the reasons for violence, 44% saw it to be psychological, 47% considered it to be social and 10% deemed it to be economic.
- When asked about the use of sharp tools in violence 47% replied positively, whereas 10% reconfirmed not using violence. In determining the methods and tools used, the answers varied between knives, blades, iron punch, and sticks.
- 61% of the participants viewed guns as something positive; with 43% considering them to be for facing the enemy and 18% as a means of self-defence. 30% replied that their presence is wrong and that they are being used to kill the people of the Palestinian community. The remaining 9% requested better organization for its use
- Through the dialogue it was revealed that 48% of the participants know how to use a gun, whereas 52% do not.
- On the source of gun usage training, about 29% acknowledged that they were trained through one of the armed organizations, 26% had been trained by friends, and 45% by their family.
- It was revealed in the dialogue that the age of the usage of guns or training started at 12 years or younger for 29% of respondents, and 22% started aged 13-14, whereas the remaining 49% were aged 15-17.
- Regarding the stance of the parents on their children's use of guns, 35% of participants replied that their parents do not agree or do not know; whilst 65% said that they did not oppose it.

- The total percentage of those affiliated in an armed group reached 21% of the participants.
- 28% of those in armed groups joined for financial reasons, 60% viewed it as national defence, and 14% mentioned no specific reason.
- 57% of those affiliated receive a salary in return, whilst the remaining 43% do not.
- Most of the participants replied positively to the question if is it generally known that those under 18 are children, while 25% replied that they did not know.
- When asked whether they know about the pledge not to use or recruit those who are under 18, 48% answered yes, whereas 52% were unaware of such pledges.
- Concerning the dangers of shooting in the air during certain events, 97% of the participants deemed it to be wrong, and only 3% did not.
- 88% of the participants considered the reasons behind the carrying of weapons to be economic, whereas 12% saw it otherwise.
- Table No. 20 shows that 80% of the participants consider the general situation in the camp and in Lebanon to be the reason for carrying weapons.
- Regarding the participation in workshops on the protection of civilians, 17% replied that they had participated, whereas 83% had not. It must be borne in mind that the percentage replying positively considered the civil defence and first aid workshops to be the ones in question.

May 2013, Ain el-Hilweh, Nashit association. © Nashit association

"An Islamic State"

SECTION 3:
Further findings

Nahr el-Bared

Beddawi

TRIPOLI

BA'ALBEK

Wavel

Dbayeh

Mar Elias   BEIRUT

Shatila

Burj el-Barajneh

LEBANON

SAIDA

Ain el-Hilweh

Mieh w Mieh

TYRE

El Buss   Burj el-Shamali

Rashidiya

Location of the main Palestinian refugee camps in Lebanon

"We want to live with dignity"

The study shows that 51% of the targeted group had left school at different times and due to multiple conditions, in addition to the 3% who did not enter the education system at all or are illiterate. On the other hand, the table concerning qualifications and skills shows that 68% of respondents say that they have no qualifications or skills. This means that those who have left school have less opportunity to find other alternatives. It highlights the intrinsic value of skills as part of the individual's identity, to identify with others, and to possess abilities that can be marketed in the future leading to alternative options.

The employment of children in the targeted groups reaches 5%. Relating this to the average of 51% of school dropouts, combined with the fact that 15% of quitting cases were for economic reasons, demonstrates that about 10% of those quitting for economic reasons did not go to work after quitting.

Furthermore, it can be concluded from the data provided by the target group that 69% of respondents say they have no qualifications. There remains, however, 31% of participants that have qualifications or skills, 7% of which possess qualifications of a type that can be used to work.

 21% of the participants of the focus groups state that they belong to armed groups (that can be considered the military wings affiliated to political organizations). 26% of those who joined said that they did for financial reasons.

The survey shows that 33% of quitting cases have taken up occupations such as in construction, as blacksmiths, as mechanics, or rank in armed groups receiving salaries. The latter represent 12%. However, it cannot be established if this is their only occupation.

Of the total participants in the survey on the definition of violence, 100 participants linked violence with murders, assassinations, and clashes. There is a geographical element to this result, as 53% percent of those giving this response came from *Ain el-Hilweh* camp and 13% from

Mieh w Mieh camp; it is known that these two camps have seen violence and killings during 2014-2015 which left a great impact on their definition of violence.

Regarding the question of the use of violence as an option to resolve a problem, 50% answered yes, with 38% viewing violence as the first option. It is remarkable that there is an equal number of participants who use violence as a mean of solving a problem, and the number of school quitting cases. Since the results of the forms and of the focus groups discussions do not allow for a direct comparison, it cannot be determined whether this is a direct correlation.

As for the violent instruments used, the results showed that 94% of those who admit using violence in dealing with their problems or their reactions use sharp tools.

In determining the causes or factors of violence, the largest proportion of the participants, 47%, indicated social causes, with 43% identifying psychological causes, and the last 7% highlighting economic factors.

Despite a pledge by the main Palestinian factions not to recruit children under 18 years old, the focus groups recorded 65 cases of child recruitment. There is however no baseline to this numbers, i.e. how many children were members, viewed use of violence and weapons in a positive manner, etc. before the pledge was made. It also remains unknown how many are affiliated with groups, other than the PLO and the Tahaluf factions, that are not bound by a pledge.

52% of all respondents are unfamiliar with this pledge, whereas 48% knew about it. Concerning participation in workshops on the protection of civilians, 83% of respondents had not participated.

The findings of the study highlighted important differences in the position of male and female respondents towards violence. Regarding the definition of violence, girls mainly mentioned the exposure to physical and moral violence as well as the acts of killing and harassing. As to its causes, the majority of female respondents focused on the psychological dimension, secondly was the social dimension, followed by economic and political reasons respectively.

To the question on the use of violence to resolve individual problems, 100% of females answered negatively. As to their opinion on weapons, the girls expressed their fear of

weapons; they see their aim in the protection of Palestinians, and at the same time acknowledge their use for assassinations and clashes.

There is thus a fertile ground for organized violence, and the factors that assist the growth of the phenomenon of violence. The most important of these factors is the lack of open spaces for dialogue, participation, and positive human interaction. In this respect there emerges the negative, dominant, interaction that is expressed through the growing violence.

The survey shows a significant proportion of cases of children quitting school, which leads to a reduction in skills or qualifications. It is clear that the framework for discovering and developing talents, the framework of professional education, is unavailable in proportion to the population, both in terms of the type of education and in quantitative terms. In this case the children having quit school are neglected and do not have the ability to contribute positively to the community. This is what often leads to a range of bad choices, and to a temperamental behaviour, which often ends with violence as being their only way of dealing with stress and conflict.

When 74% of the participants consider that violence consists of fighting operations, killings, assassinations, and clashes, then this definition, influenced by prevailing and dominant forms, perpetuates itself through the instability, insecurity, armed confrontations and individual differences that exist as a result.

The use of sharp instruments related to violence causes severe damage to the individuals involved, amounting to possible deaths. Several cases of killings were recorded due to the use of sharp weapons or firearms in the camps; no exact numbers are available, however, given that the few existing statistics such as by the United Nations only report on political violence. In the current political and social circumstances, this situation has the potential to escalate further.

Family plays a significant role in this field, for example the results of the focus groups showed that in 68 cases the children have been taught the use of weapons by their parents. The positions of the parents towards guns shows that 98 families out of 150 do not have a problem with the use of guns, which indicates the importance of the role of the family and their influence on the growing risks.

The social and economic situation is one of the most important catalysts for violent behaviour. The survey shows that the majority of participants have a family of 7 members or more. Of these participants there were 17 cases of deceased fathers, and 39 whose fathers are unemployed, as well as 21 in seasonal work, 38 in full-time military work and 40 taxi drivers, which collectively accounts for 47%. It is possible to imagine the social conditions of such families, as well as their capacity, or lack thereof, for raising the child and supporting the development of his/her personality, and to monitor behaviour and establish boundaries for the child.

The research undoubtedly confirmed that recruitment of children under 18 years is still taking place, which demonstrates the insufficient implementation of the pledge signed by the PLO and Tahaluf as the main political forces. The recruitment process and the availability and likelihood of carrying of weapons, constitutes an incentive for using weapons in individual differences or conflicts, that further may subsequently turn into a collective conflict through the solidarity of others with parties to the problem. This is something that has happened, and continues to happen, leading to massive harm for the population.

"Move freely and work"

June 2012, Ain el-Hilweh. © Wissam al-Saliby

SECTION 4:
Recommendations

For several decades, one argument often used in Lebanon is that in order to keep the Palestinians' urge for the "Right to Return" high and to prevent "permanent settlement", it is better not to have them well accommodated in the country of refuge. This argument is sometimes used to justify the "bad state" of the Palestinian camps at the infrastructure level and some of the restrictive laws on the Palestinians regarding residence and work.

However, human beings deprived of basic rights – in addition to being exposed to several other diverse enticements – can turn to violence as a way of life and transmit this phenomenon to their children.

The alarming results of the survey conducted by Geneva Call and Nashit association in July 2015 show clearly that not only are children used in armed violence within the camps, but also that some of these children use violence, and some of them do not see it as a "problem". The causes of this phenomenon are not limited to one set of factors, since they include political, social, economic, educational, and other factors within and outside the Palestinian camps. However, whatever the causes and explanations of violence are, what is certain is that it entails serious repercussions on the whole community – especially the children. In the focus groups conducted within the study mentioned above, some children expressed they would like "that a war starts and we migrate".

Nevertheless, these same children who "admitted" that they use violence and consider it as a primary means for solving problems demand a better life with basic services, education, and leisure activities on one hand while also longing for happiness, security, freedom, dignity, and non-discrimination on the other.

On the following pages are suggested recommendations based on the study conducted by Geneva Call and Nashit association in July 2015 with children in Palestinian camps in Lebanon on the risks affecting children. Though some suggestions might already be taking place, it is important here to make sure that these educational and socio-economic projects and programs decrease the causes and effects of violence to which children and youth are exposed.

Other recommendations might first sound inapplicable. However, if it is said that it takes a village to raise a child, it requires the efforts of a community and its surroundings to prevent children from being exposed to violence or – at least – to diminish the repercussions of existing violence in the camps; this can be achieved without having to make any concessions to the Palestinian rights.

"That a war starts and we migrate"

Nahr el-Bared
Beddawi
TRIPOLI

BA'ALBEK
Wavel

Dbayeh
Mar Elias
BEIRUT
Shatila
Burj el-Barajneh

LEBANON

SAIDA
Ain el-Hilweh
Mieh w Mieh

El Buss
TYRE
Burj el-Shamali
Rashidiya

Location of the main Palestinian refugee camps in Lebanon

August 2012, Ain el-Hilweh, UNRWA school. © Nashit association

Participants' quotes on wishes and recommendations:

- Live without fear (We want to be able to walk in the camp without fearing that something will happen)
- We want safety and security (x8)
- Live in freedom and security
- Live in security without terrorism
- Live with calm
- We want to work (x2)
- We want to find jobs after graduating from university (x4)
- Find work opportunities for youth
- Be able to work and a good salary
- Be able to work in everything (x2)
- Open the way for graduates to work in their fields after graduation
- We wish that a solution be found for unemployment and that the Palestinians become able to work
- We wish the state allows the Palestinians to work (x2)
- Organize the weapons/ their use (x3)
- No shooting in the air (x3)
- Organize the weapons though the security force inside the camp
- Give the security force more competency
- We wish that the security force assumes its role
- That the responsible protect our camp (x2)
- We wish that no one kills another
- We wish the weapons are pointed towards Palestine
- That they prevent the use of weapons for those who are under 18 because they are considered children
- Resolve the problems peacefully/ without weapons (x3)
- If there is a way for us to return (to Palestine) then let them return us. If not take us abroad
- Travel/ emigration (x10)
- That war starts and we migrate
- We want our civil rights (x3)
- We wish for the state to reduce procedures at checkpoints
- We wish for a decent life in the camps
- Right to property (x3)

- A letter of blame to the Lebanese state because it should be a support to us in ensuring the Palestinian rights
- We address the PLO to demand the rights
- That they remove the checkpoints
- Improve the situation of the youth in the camps
- The right to education
- The right to medication/ hospitalization
- Improve the school laws
- Decrease the number of students in one class to less than 55 student
- To add fans in class
- Not to use violence in the clinics and respect the people
- More care for the Palestinian people by the UNRWA and the Lebanese state
- Provide humanitarian aid for the people in the camp (x2)
- No discrimination between a person and another
- Demand the right to education and specialization in the field the person wants
- Go out of the camp without them asking for my ID
- Improve the services for the people
- We want to live with dignity
- We want to live freely
- Move freely and work
- We wish that the factions unite
- We wish to return to Palestine (x2)
- An Islamic State (x2)
- Get rid of the Syrians
- That they make our ID smaller
- That peace prevails in the entire world
- Safe playgrounds and schools (x3)
- A university for Palestinians
- We wish that the UNRWA improves the level of education (x2)
- That there is a private hospital for Palestinians in the camp and that it is well equipped (x2)
- That there is dinking water in the Shatila camp
- That they fix the water pipes in the ground
- Improve electricity
- Awareness raising activities for the people regarding social issues
- We want big playgrounds that are public not private (x2)
- Build a school for secondary students in the Burj el-Shamali camp

From the results of the study conducted by Geneva Call and Nashit association, and despite the difficulties encountered and shown, it is clear that real effective actions require the cooperation, commitment, and collective work of many entities and individuals – including local Palestinian and Lebanese authorities, NGOs and international organizations, parents, residents in and outside the camps, in addition to the children themselves.

As for the authors of this study, Geneva Call and Nashit association, raising general awareness on international humanitarian norms and national Lebanese legislation remains a priority. The implementation of the pledge signed by the PLO and Tahlauf should be supported by a variety of means. For all stakeholders on the Palestinian refugee camps in Lebanon, this study proposes the following set of recommendations.

General Long-Term Objectives

To enhance the lives of the people living in the camps.

To reduce the use of violence in general, with a special emphasis on the violence inflicted on children.

To prevent recruitment of children by armed factions.

Recommendations at the Legal and Security Levels (Local authorities, activists)

To form a judiciary committee of lawyers (Palestinian and Lebanese) to propose amendments to "discriminatory" Lebanese laws related to residence and work[3] and/or to activate the ones that are fair and just (in close coordination with the Lebanese Palestinian Dialogue Committee and other relevant entities) and follow up on them in relevant campaigns.

To form a commission of different political factions in order to re-affirm their pledge to the 2013 Declaration on the Protection of Children from the Effects of Armed Conflict and Violence, and to formulate regulations inflicting negative consequences upon the violation of the commitment.

To launch trained local community groups of observers within the camps (in coordination with political factions and the Lebanese Internal Security) with a mission to track and discuss, monitor and mitigate, and deal with violence and violations of Children Rights in the camps.

Recommendations at the Education and Awareness Levels (Non-Governmental Organizations, community activists, UNRWA, donors)

To organize regular seminars and workshops using active methods – for parents, youth, and children from inside and outside the camps (Palestinians, Lebanese, Syrians, and others) on the following themes:
– Non-violence as another possible means of working with conflicts – including small and personal conflicts – and struggling for rights
– Non-discrimination (based on gender, nationality, faith, etc.)
– Convention on the Rights of the Child
– International Humanitarian Norms
– Family planning
– Early childhood care and education

To follow-up the workshops with campaigns on these themes that the same participants of workshops can undertake (distributing pamphlets, hanging boards, using "traditional" and social media, etc.)

To organize specialized training sessions with experts on the following:
– Life skills (communication, working with conflict, advocacy, etc.) and economic skills (planning and building long fund-raising projects, Labor Law, etc.) for youth
– Parenting skills for parents

To activate existing Community Learning Centers (or establish new ones) within schools or organizations with multiple purposes, among which the following:
– Remedial lessons for students with repeated failure or at risk of repeated failure
– Literacy programs for drop-out children and others
– Computer lessons for children, youth, and elderly
– Indoor and outdoor educational and recreational games and exercises for children and youth with objectives related to awareness and practice of positive values and skills such as communication, cooperation, non-discrimination, participation, and other non-violent behaviors *(continued on following page)*.

[3] In 2001, the Parliament amended the 1969 legislative decree on Foreigners Acquisition of Property in Lebanon in order to simplify the procedures for non-Lebanese (296/2001). Palestinians were an exception to this law and were prohibited from owning property. As for work, in 2011, the Minister of Labor signed a decree implementing amendments to the Labor Law banning Palestinians from 70 jobs.

– Cultural cafés entertaining the following:
  • *Book-clubs including libraries with diverse but
    selected books and magazines and a weekly or
    monthly debate following a presentation of a book
    by children/youth*
  • *Cine-clubs where children and youth can watch
    diverse movies that they can debate with relevant
    animators*

– Artistic activities: theater, painting, playing music,
  singing, sculpting, artifacts, handcrafts, and others
– Sports Clubs for youth/ children from inside and outside
  the camps and conduct occasional tournaments
  involving all camps
– Regular meetings where positive testimonies about
  achievements by camp residents can be shared

**To organize debates among the residents of the camps and
the surroundings including political factions on violence,
its repercussions, and other issues/themes selected by the
participants. Moderators of these debates could be experts
and/or facilitators from within or outside the camps.**

**To conduct continuous training and training of trainers for
teachers, animators, and moderators who would conduct
the programs/activities mentioned above and below on
International Humanitarian Norms, Children Rights, non-
violent education, and active training techniques**

**To refer nurseries to UNRWA and to ensure the unification
of the "curriculum"**

**To modify few elements of the UNRWA educational system
with an emphasis on re-integrating drop-out students and
decreasing the number of children per class.**

Recommendations at the Economic/ Infrastructure/ Basic Services Levels (UNRWA, local Lebanese and Palestinian authorities, NGOs, and activists)

**To form liaison committees (or activate existing ones) with
relevant municipalities and ministries concerning the
camps' infrastructure (electricity, sewage, water, garbage
removal, and other sanitary issues), hospitalization
(governme nt hospitals), and education (public schools and
Lebanese University)**

**To form groups of volunteers among community activists,
youth and parents that might help in achieving some
needed absent basic services (painting walls, waste sorting
and recycling, planting trees, etc.)**

**To establish more dispensaries in the camps and to train
the personnel**

**To build (more) supervised playgrounds for children in the
camps**

**To involve community-based working groups into project
design**

**To create "exemplary streets". The population, and primarily
the children, is in charge of these streets. These streets are
"non-violence zones", they are clean, flowered, etc.**

**Create working opportunities for graduates in the camps
(workshops, shops), and opportunities to sell products
manufactured in the camps**

Miscellaneous Recommendations

**To disseminate this study and its results to the camps
residents and political factions, relevant Ministries in
Lebanon, the media, and the public and to conduct public
debates around children and violence**

**To integrate the camps into the national workplan
"Protection of Children associated with armed violence
in Lebanon" and take into account this study and its
recommendations.**

**To conduct meetings with local and regional media
representatives and the Ministry of Information
concerning the following:**
– Stereotyping of the Palestinian camps and Palestinians
  in the media
– Violence that the local and regional media spread to the
  public including children (when showing real-life
  slaughters, bombs, families and children being attacked
  by chemical weapons, assassinations, killed and injured
  victims, etc.)

**To establish a center for social and educational studies
about the refugee camps or at least to perform more
comprehensive studies on children (from birth to 18
years) and the educational and social situations in the
camps**

"That they remove
 the checkpoints"

"We want safety
 and security"

"Safe playgrounds and schools"

"That they fix the water pipes
in the ground"

June 2012, Ain el-Hilweh. © Wissam al-Saliby