

**Refugee Review Tribunal
AUSTRALIA**

RRT RESEARCH RESPONSE

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Questions

- 1. Please provide detailed information on the status of Palestinians from Gaza in Jordan, their socio-economic circumstances; the discrimination they encounter with respect to employment, access to services and property rights; and the degree of hardship faced by members this group in their day to day lives.**
- 2. Country information suggests that Palestinians from Gaza are allowed to work in the private sector in Jordan. Please provide a realistic assessment of this proposition in the context of Jordan's official and unofficial employment rates; the level of Palestinians' participation in the private (unskilled) work force; their rate of success in finding employment, and information suggesting that between 30% and 60% of Palestinians live below poverty levels in Jordan.**
- 3. What is the extent of assistance provided by UNRWA to Palestinians from Gaza living in Jordan?**
- 4. Are Palestinians from Gaza prevented from obtaining driver's licenses in Jordan?**
- 5. Are Palestinians from Gaza at risk of temporary detention or other forms of mistreatment by the Jordanian authorities due to circumstances arising out of their status, e.g. lack of access to a national ID number?**
- 6. Is there information to suggest that the Jordanian Embassy in Australia has refused to renew temporary Jordanian passports held by Palestinians from Gaza?**
- 7. Has the UAE passed new laws preventing Palestinians and Iraqis, particularly those holding temporary travel documents, from being able to enter the country on work visas?**

RESPONSE

- 1. Please provide detailed information on the status of Palestinians from Gaza in Jordan, their socio-economic circumstances; the discrimination they encounter with respect to employment, access to services and property rights; and the degree of hardship faced by members this group in their day to day lives.**

The US Department of State's 2008 *Country Report on Human Rights Practices* for Jordan sets out the distinction between the three groups of Palestinian refugees living in Jordan:

There were three groups of Palestinians residing in the country. Those that migrated to the country and the Jordan-controlled West Bank after the 1948 Arab-Israeli war were given full citizenship. Those still residing in the West Bank after 1967 were no longer eligible to claim citizenship but were allowed to obtain temporary passports without national numbers, provided they did not also carry a Palestinian Authority travel document. In 1995 King Hussein announced that West Bank residents without other travel documentation would be eligible to receive full-validity passports, although still without national numbers. Refugees who fled Gaza after 1967 were not entitled to citizenship and were issued temporary passports without national numbers (US Department of State 2008, *Country Report on Human Rights Practices for 2007 – Jordan*, 11 March – Attachment 19).

The following reports provide information on the status of Palestinians from Gaza in Jordan, although detailed and specific information on the day to day lives of people from this group was not easy to locate. Most sources agree that Gazan Palestinians face considerable discrimination in Jordan; an August 2006 article in *Forced Migration Review* claims that they are “treated by Jordan as Arab foreigners”. The 2008 *Report of the Commissioner-General of the United Nations Relief and Works Agency for Palestine Refugees in the Near East* (UNRWA) states that Gazans “are issued renewable Jordanian passports valid for two-year periods, albeit without national identity numbers”, but the *Forced Migration Review* article claims that the renewal of such temporary passports “is left to the discretion of the state”. A 2008 report from the United States Committee for Refugees and Immigrants (USCRI), which puts the number of Gazan Palestinians in Jordan at around 162,000, states that “Palestinians from Gaza holding temporary Jordanian passports had to pay school fees in foreign currency where applicable and a fee for medical services”, and that they “did not enjoy social security benefits, medical services, public education, or other social services that Palestinian citizens of Jordan enjoyed”. A November 2006 report from the *Daily News Egypt* quotes a source from UNRWA who claims that Gazans are “considered a stateless and foreign people in Jordanian society”, that they “face severe discrimination in regards to employment, housing, and education in Jordan”, and that they are “not allowed to purchase land in Jordan, which complicates their ability to settle”. A December 2007 report in the pro-Palestinian rights magazine *Until Return* claims that the two-year passports issued to Gazans “do not provide basic civil rights such as the right to employment or to vote” (El Abed, O. 2006, ‘Immobile Palestinians: ongoing plight of Gazans in Jordan’, *Forced Migration Review*, No. 26, August, pp. 17-18 – Attachment 4; United Nations 2008, *Report of the Commissioner-General of the United Nations Relief and Works Agency for Palestine Refugees in the Near East: 1 January-31 December 2007*, General Assembly Official Records, Sixty-third Session, Supplement No. 13, p. 11 <http://www.un.org/unrwa/publications/pdf/ComGen-AR2007.pdf> – Accessed 28 November 2008 – Attachment 1; United States Committee for Refugees and Immigrants 2008, *World Refugee Survey 2008 – Jordan*, *Refworld*, 19 June <http://www.unhcr.org/refworld/docid/485f50dcc.html> – Accessed 24 November 2008 – Attachment 2; Sandels, A. & Stack, L. 2006, ‘Palestinian-Jordanians still discriminated against, research shows’, *Daily News Egypt*, 5 November <http://www.dailystaregypt.com/article.aspx?ArticleID=3785> – Accessed 24 November 2008 – Attachment 5; ‘Baqaa and Gaza Camps in Jordan’ 2007, *Until Return*, Issue 3, December <http://al-awda.org/until-return/baqaa.html> – Accessed 28 November 2008 – Attachment 6).

The 2008 *Report of the Commissioner-General of the United Nations Relief and Works Agency for Palestine Refugees in the Near East* provides information on the status of Gazan Palestinians in Jordan:

According to UNRWA records, the largest number of Palestine refugees resides in Jordan. Most enjoy Jordanian citizenship, and are legally entitled to work and to have access to governmental institutions and other assistance. However, Palestine refugees who left the Gaza Strip in 1967, and their descendants, are issued renewable Jordanian passports valid for two-year periods, albeit without national identity numbers. The 1996 Labour Law requires non-Jordanians to have legal residency and valid passports and permits in order to work legally. Access to social security benefits depends on reciprocal privileges in the worker's country of origin, rendering Palestine refugees ineligible. The Government of Jordan provides to Palestine refugees and displaced persons education, rent and utilities, subsidies and rations, camp services, health care, public security and social services (United Nations 2008, *Report of the Commissioner-General of the United Nations Relief and Works Agency for Palestine Refugees in the Near East: 1 January-31 December 2007*, General Assembly Official Records, Sixty-third Session, Supplement No. 13, p. 11 <http://www.un.org/unrwa/publications/pdf/ComGen-AR2007.pdf> – Accessed 28 November 2008 – Attachment 1).

The United States Committee for Refugees and Immigrants (USCRI) 2008 report on Jordan states that “some 162,000 Palestinians who fled from the Gaza Strip in 1967 did not qualify for citizenship and received only two-year passports”. According to the USCRI report, Gazans: are ineligible for social security benefits; cannot join unions; must pay school fees in foreign currency “where applicable”; “paid higher fees than citizens did” for health care; and “did not enjoy social security benefits, medical services, public education, or other social services that Palestinian citizens of Jordan enjoyed”:

Jordan...hosted nearly 2 million Palestinians, all but 166,900 held Jordanian citizenship and USCRI did not count them as refugees.

...While most Palestinians in Jordan were citizens, some 162,000 Palestinians who fled from the Gaza Strip in 1967 did not qualify for citizenship and received only two-year passports.

...Palestinians displaced from Gaza in 1967 held temporary Jordanian passports without national identity numbers, which were valid for two years.

...About 332,000 Palestinians (including Jordanian citizens of Palestinian descent) also lived in camps throughout the country. More than 50 squatter settlements in mostly urban areas housed some 60,000 to 70,000 Palestinians ineligible for status with the UN Relief and Works Agency for Palestine Refugees in the Near East (UNRWA), including some of the former Gazan population.

Gazans held temporary Jordanian passports renewable every two years, as well as cards for crossing between Jordan and the West Bank, subject to Israeli closures and other restrictions.

...Jordanian law did not permit foreigners to join unions but its labor laws did generally apply to non-citizens. Access to social security benefits depended on reciprocal privileges in the worker's country of origin, rendering stateless Palestinians ineligible.

...All foreigners in Jordan, including refugees and asylum seekers regardless of their legal status, had access to Jordan's public health system at rates subsidised by the Government. The Government covered 80 percent of the cost for insured Jordanians, 70 percent for uninsured Jordanians, and 60 percent for foreigners.

...The 1952 Constitution reserved the right to free primary education to nationals...

...Palestinians from Gaza holding temporary Jordanian passports had to pay school fees in foreign currency where applicable and a fee for medical services. Public hospitals and health centers treated patients regardless of status, but non-Jordanians paid higher fees than citizens did. Palestinians displaced from Gaza since 1967 did not enjoy social security benefits, medical services, public education, or other social services that Palestinian citizens of Jordan enjoyed. UNRWA operated 24 medical clinics inside and outside the refugee camps.

Children of Palestinians from Gaza holding temporary Jordanian passports could enroll in Jordanian schools. Additionally, UNRWA operated 180 schools and two vocational training centers for Palestinian refugees. Universities, however, restricted foreign students with quotas and required them to pay twice as much as Jordanians (United States Committee for Refugees and Immigrants 2008, *World Refugee Survey 2008 – Jordan, Refworld*, 19 June <http://www.unhcr.org/refworld/docid/485f50dcc.html> – Accessed 24 November 2008 – Attachment 2).

An article from the August 2006 issue of *Forced Migration Review* states that “Gazans are treated by Jordan as Arab foreigners and pay taxes whenever they interact with the state”. According to this report: it is difficult for Gazans to access higher education as they count as part of a quota of 5% Arab foreigners in universities; Gazans require security clearance to gain private sector employment; politically active Gazans risk being stripped of their “expensive” temporary passport; and the renewal of temporary passports “is left to the discretion of the state”:

Gazans in Jordan are doubly displaced refugees. Forced to move to Gaza as a result of the 1948 war, they fled once more when Israel occupied the Gaza Strip in 1967. Guesstimates of the number of Gazans in Jordan range between 118,000 and 150,000. A small number have entered the Jordanian citizenship scheme via naturalisation or have had the financial resources to acquire citizenship. Many Gazan non-citizens live in Amman and other Jordanian cities. A significant proportion live in two camps run by UNRWA. Most of the 30,000 residents of Gaza (also known as Jerash) camp are Gazans while a few thousand of the residents of Hittin camp are 1948 refugees, subsequently displaced from Gaza.

Gazans are treated by Jordan as Arab foreigners and pay taxes whenever they interact with the state. The ‘passport’ they hold is in effect simply a residency permit, the renewal of which is left to the discretion of the state. Gazan men cannot renew their residence without clearance from the Jordanian security authorities. Their administrative vulnerability can lead to curtailment of rights to political participation and membership of trade unions enjoyed by Jordanian citizens. Some who have been active in Islamic political groups have found themselves stripped of ID.

The ‘passport’ – which is expensive – has value as an international travel document only if receiving states permit the entry of temporary passport holders. Few countries admit them, because they have no official proof of citizenship. Syria, Lebanon, Egypt and some Gulf States are among those who refuse to honour the document. Any delay in renewing the temporary passport or in applying for one puts an individual at risk of becoming undocumented.

As noted in earlier articles, Arab countries refuse to grant Palestinians citizenship in order to preserve their Palestinian identity and to remind Israel of its responsibility towards those it expelled. Jordan, however, stands out by view of the fact that the majority of Palestinians living within the borders of the Hashemite Kingdom of Jordan were granted fully-fledged

citizenship when Jordan formally annexed the West Bank in 1950. The Gazans, perceived and labelled by law and administrative practice as Palestinians, are therefore an anomaly.

UNRWA provides Gazan refugees with relief, health and education services but cannot meet all their needs. Since 1986 it has been harder for Gazans to compete for places in Jordanian universities as they must secure places within the 5% quota reserved for Arab foreigners. Entry to professions is blocked as Gazans are not allowed to register with professional societies/unions or to establish their own offices, firms or clinics. Only those with security clearance can gain private sector employment. Those who work in the informal sector are vulnerable to being exploited. Many Gazans are keen to leave Jordan to seek employment elsewhere but are constrained from doing so. Some have attempted to leave clandestinely (El Abed, O. 2006, 'Immobile Palestinians: ongoing plight of Gazans in Jordan', *Forced Migration Review*, No. 26, August, pp. 17-18 – Attachment 4).

A November 2006 report from the *Daily News Egypt* quotes a source from the United Nations Relief and Works Agency for Palestine Refugees (UNRWA), who “attributes the discrimination faced by Gaza-Palestinians to the fact that the group has been subject to displacement twice and thus are considered a stateless and foreign people in Jordanian society”. The source also claims that “Gaza Palestinians face severe discrimination in regards to employment, housing, and education in Jordan”, and that they are “not allowed to purchase land in Jordan, which complicates their ability to settle”. :

Palestinian refugees residing in Jordan may possess the same civil rights as Jordanian nationals, but it is still hard for Palestinians to become naturalised citizens of Jordan due to the fluid definition of ‘a Palestinian refugee’ as well as UNRWA’s strict rules and regulations.

In order for Palestinian refugees to receive help from UNRWA, for example, they not only have to live in UNRWA-regulated areas but also have to have lost both their homes and livelihood in order to qualify for UNRWA assistance as a Palestinian refugee, Kroner continues.

However, Rula Khalafawi, head of UNRWA’s Cairo office, argues that there is a wide range of special criteria available for Palestinian refugees who are not eligible to apply for official refugee status from UNRWA.

“To be able to officially register with UNRWA as a Palestine refugee, you have to have been a resident of Palestine between June 1, 1946 and May 15, 1948 and have lost both home and livelihood. Once you possess official refugee status, all your descendants including adopted children will inherit your status as a refugee,” Khalafawi told *The Daily Star Egypt*.

Non-registered refugees, including those who have lost their livelihoods but not homes or vice versa, are eligible for UNRWA assistance even though they may not reside in one of the areas that are regulated by the agency.

Also, UNRWA offers assistance in the form of cash, food, and shelter in cases of ‘special hardships,’ particularly for those residing in certain parts of the occupied Palestine territories, Khalafawi said.

Khalafawi attributes the discrimination faced by Gaza-Palestinians to the fact that the group has been subject to displacement twice and thus are considered a stateless and foreign people in Jordanian society.

First, they were displaced into Gaza in 1948 and then driven out of the same area following the 1967 war, Khalafawi points out.

Currently, Gaza Palestinians are only eligible to apply for two-year Jordanian residency permits, which are very hard to renew once they expire.

In addition, Gaza Palestinians face severe discrimination in regards to employment, housing, and education in Jordan, both Kroner and Khalafawi state.

For example, every Gaza Palestinian needs to be cleared by Jordanian security officials before being allowed to seek employment, Khalafawi says.

Moreover, the group is not allowed to purchase land in Jordan, which complicates their ability to settle (Sandels, A. & Stack, L. 2006, 'Palestinian-Jordanians still discriminated against, research shows', *Daily News Egypt*, 5 November <http://www.dailystaregypt.com/article.aspx?ArticleID=3785> – Accessed 24 November 2008 – Attachment 5).

A December 2007 report on the Gaza refugee camp in Jordan, sourced from the pro-Palestinian rights magazine *Until Return*, quotes women who live in the camp who “explained the harsh financial, health, and living conditions the people are facing”:

In Gaza Camp, UNRWA runs four schools and three doctors for a population of 28,000 people. Unlike other Palestinians living in Jordan, those in Gaza Camp are only eligible to temporary two-year Jordanian passports which do not provide basic civil rights such as the right to employment or to vote.

The women we met from Gaza Camp explained the harsh financial, health, and living conditions the people are facing. The percentage of disabilities noticed in the few houses this reporter visited was extremely high and shocking. Most families have been waiting for years to get financial support to renovate the room or two they call home. Several of the houses we visited were preparing dinner which included old bread pieces soaked in a bowl of water ('Baqaa and Gaza Camps in Jordan' 2007, *Until Return*, Issue 3, December <http://al-awda.org/until-return/baqaa.html> – Accessed 28 November 2008 – Attachment 6).

An article from the August 2006 issue of *Forced Migration Review* states that “[s]ome 60,000 stateless Palestinians, mainly from Gaza and original holders of Egyptian RTDs, were allowed to stay but have been denied any civil rights and most are confined to a camp near the northern city of Jarash”:

Palestinian refugees in Jordan, the largest community in any of the host countries, have Jordanian nationality but are denied equal political participation and subjected to subtle forms of discrimination. Jordanian authorities refuse to offer naturalisation to those Palestinians who at the time of their displacement in 1967 did not hold Jordanian passports. Some 60,000 stateless Palestinians, mainly from Gaza and original holders of Egyptian RTDs, were allowed to stay but have been denied any civil rights and most are confined to a camp near the northern city of Jarash (Shiblak, I. 2006, 'Stateless Palestinians', *Forced Migration Review*, No. 26, August, pp. 8-9 – Attachment 7).

An Immigration & Refugee Board of Canada (IRB) response from February 2007 quotes “an international relations professor at the University of Southern California” who states that “although Palestinians and Jordanians are equal under Jordanian law, there is informal discrimination against Palestinians”:

In a 13 December 2006 telephone interview, an international relations professor at the University of Southern California stated that although Palestinians and Jordanians are equal under Jordanian law, there is informal discrimination against Palestinians. The Professor explained that should an individual, Palestinian or Jordanian, require assistance or protection from the government, the individual is best served if he or she is well-connected or comes from a prominent family (Professor 13 Dec. 2006). The Professor added that Palestinians are not as likely as Jordanians to have good connections or to come from well-known families, and therefore not as likely to benefit from such assistance (ibid.) (Immigration & Refugee Board of Canada 2007, *JOR102174.E Jordan: Treatment of Palestinians by the government and its agents (2005 – 2006)*, 16 February – Attachment 3).

A March 2008 report from *IRIN News* states that Palestinians living in refugee camps in Amman, Zarqa and Irbid were able to apply for new low-cost housing, but “[o]nly those Palestinians with ordinary Jordanian passports – some 1.55 million of the 1.8 million registered Palestinian refugees – can apply for the cheap housing; other refugees (mainly Gazans who hold temporary two-year passports) are not eligible” (‘Jordan: Eligible Palestinian refugees sign up for new housing initiative’ 2008, *IRIN News*, 31 March <http://www.irinnews.org/Report.aspx?ReportId=77521> – Accessed 24 November 2008 – Attachment 8).

A 2008 article from *al-majdal* magazine, published by the Palestinian advocacy organisation BADIL, profiles a Gazan Palestinian family living in Al-Wihdat camp:

The Al-Liddawi family lives in the middle of Al-Wihdat refugee camp in Amman, one of the biggest camps in Jordan. They come from Jaffa, but came to Jordan from Gaza, which means that they have a different status than most other Palestinian refugees in Jordan. They cannot have a Jordanian passport and have restricted access to services.

...They live in very dire conditions as they have only a room, a lounge and a kitchen. They also have a small courtyard where things have piled up next to the few hens and rabbits they keep. This is their improved situation; a few years ago, they were obliged to live in one room with no proper toilets. A developer appalled by the bad conditions they were living in decided to help them by building two additional rooms, which is still not enough. They need an additional 7000JD to complete the work in the house.

...Talking about their status and conditions as refugees she feels that “we have no rights.” She points out that as far as education is concerned the available resources are limited. UNRWA schools only provide the service until children reach the age of 15, then they cannot go to university without paying fees that are very expensive. Because they are from Gaza, their status is also different. They cannot have permanent Jordanian passports. They are considered Palestinian residents who can go back to Gaza. They were recently told that they could stay in Jordan only until the children completed their primary education. This means that they will be able to stay only until July. The Jordanian authorities have, however, said that they can stay since the Rafah border crossing is closed. When it opens they will have to go. But for Sa’diya there is nowhere to go back to; “I do not have a place to stay and my relatives are very old.” Sa’diya does not carry a Jordanian, but a Palestinian passport. Her husband did get a Jordanian passport and her name, as well as her children’s names were marked under it, but it is no longer valid (Paq, A. 2008, ‘Struggling Alone for My Children’s Future’, *al-majdal*, No. 36-37, Winter2007-Spring 2008 <http://www.badil.org/al-majdal/2008/winter-spring/articles19.htm> – Accessed 28 November 2008 – Attachment 9).

In a December 2006 *IRIN News* interview, a Palestinian from Gaza reports claims that she “does not qualify for social aid”, that “UNRWA...does not provide me with financial assistance”, and that she is “not allowed to go to a government-run hospital for free treatment, while waiting lists at the UNRWA clinics are very long”:

UNRWA [United Nations Agency for Relief and Work for Palestine Refugees in the Near East] does not provide me with financial assistance and officials from the Jordanian government say I do not qualify for social aid like many widows in this country because I do not have Jordanian nationality.

I am paying the price of my parent’s decision to come to Jordan after the 1967 Arab-Israeli war. Refugees who came to the country after that date were given temporary passports but not Jordanian nationality, contrary to those who arrived in Jordan after [the Arab-Israeli conflict in] 1948. The latter can work everywhere and enter government-run universities, but we are treated like foreigners.

My 22-year-old son is not allowed to work in the government because he is not considered Jordanian, although he was born here.

...Nobody seems to care about refugees from Gaza. I asked the Palestinian embassy to help me go to Gaza, where most of my family lives, but they dismissed me saying an agreement with Israel means I cannot go until a permanent solution to the refugees problem is found.

In Jordan, I am treated as if I were a rich tourist. I am not allowed to go to a government-run hospital for free treatment, while waiting lists at the UNRWA clinics are very long. I am afraid if one of my kids falls ill I will have to sell my furniture to provide medication (‘Jordan: Noora, Nadi, Jordan, “Nobody cares about refugees from Gaza”’ 2006, *IRIN News*, 17 December <http://www.irinnews.org/Report.aspx?ReportId=62774> – Accessed 24 November 2008 – Attachment 10).

2. Country information suggests that Palestinians from Gaza are allowed to work in the private sector in Jordan. Please provide a realistic assessment of this proposition in the context of Jordan’s official and unofficial employment rates; the level of Palestinians’ participation in the private (unskilled) work force; their rate of success in finding employment, and information suggesting that between 30% and 60% of Palestinians live below poverty levels in Jordan.

Little information could be found regarding the participation of Palestinians from Gaza in the private work force or their rate of success at finding employment, as most information provided on this subject was either for Jordan as a whole, for the Palestinian community in Jordan, or for Palestinians in refugee camps, without specific reference to Palestinians of Gazan origin. The 2008 US Committee on Refugees and Immigrants report on Jordan states that “[a]ll bearers of temporary passports, including Palestinians displaced from Gaza since 1967, had to obtain permits to work legally”, and that “Palestinian refugees holding temporary Jordanian passports could work for the Government only on a contractual basis”:

It was difficult for refugees with residence permits to work legally and virtually impossible for those without them, including many asylum seekers.

...The 1952 Constitution reserved the right to work to citizens. The 1996 Labour Law required non-Jordanians with legal residency and valid passports to obtain work permits from the Ministry of Labour showing that the job required experience or skills unavailable among Jordanians, with preference to Arabs but with no exceptions for refugees and asylum seekers.

The law required employers to pay a fee, and the permits were valid for one year or less, but were renewable. Violators were subject to cumulative fines and expulsion of the foreign worker at the employer's expense.

...All bearers of temporary passports, including Palestinians displaced from Gaza since 1967, had to obtain permits to work legally. Palestinian refugees holding temporary Jordanian passports could work for the Government only on a contractual basis (United States Committee for Refugees and Immigrants 2008, *World Refugee Survey 2008 – Jordan*, *Refworld*, 19 June <http://www.unhcr.org/refworld/docid/485f50dcc.html> – Accessed 24 November 2008 – Attachment 2).

A 2006 Jordan Department of Statistics report on employment and unemployment in Jordan states that “[t]he overall unemployment rate (i.e. the number of unemployed persons divided by the number of economically active population) among the Jordanian labor force reached 13.1 percent for both sexes, 11.7 percent for males and 21.2 percent for females” (Jordan Department of Statistics 2006, ‘Employment and Unemployment Survey’ http://www.dos.gov.jo/sdb_pop/unempl/eus_fs_e1.htm – Accessed 28 November 2008 – Attachment 11).

A 2005 report from the European Union's European Training Foundation, which analyses employment figures from 2001 to 2003, puts poverty and unemployment in Jordan at 11.6% and 15%, respectively. The report also provides an assessment of the labour market in Jordan, with reference to demographic and regional factors, and provides information on the “informal sector”, or unregistered workers in Jordan, which it estimates as employing around 200,000 people:

The total population of Jordan in 2003 was an estimated 5.4 million, of whom 1.2 million represented the labour force. According to the Department of Statistics the unemployment rate was around 15% of the labour force, which means that around 180,000 Jordanians who wanted to work were left without a job.

The labour market in Jordan displays particular characteristics that have significant implications for understanding unemployment. First, the low economic participation rate is a result of the population's age structure, the large number of students, low female participation in the labour market and the early retirement age in the public sector. Second, there is an imbalance in the sectoral and gender distribution of economic activities.

...Third, the regional distribution of labour is unbalanced, since Amman has more than a third of the country's active population, both employed and unemployed. Fourth, small firms with 1–19 workers account for 65% of total private employment outside agriculture. Furthermore, the informal economy or hidden employment (outside legal and regular frameworks) represents a substantial and active part of the private sector workforce. Finally, the labour market is distorted by the number of Jordanian labour expatriates, many of them in highly skilled and professional occupations, and non-Jordanian workers in low-skilled and manual jobs in agriculture and personal services.

...The population structure in Jordan is very young, with 21% of individuals being in the age group 15–24 years. Young people are at greater risk of unemployment than any other segment of the population: almost 60% of jobseekers, both men and women, are below the age of 25. The 25–39 age group represents a third of the total number of unemployed persons.

...The causes of youth unemployment include: lack of career guidance counselling for students and unemployed people; lack of opportunities to find satisfying work following

graduation; the difficulty for individuals of obtaining jobs compatible with their qualifications; the poor wages and working conditions offered by firms; the gap between the skills of graduates and the needs of employers; social and cultural obstacles for the full integration of women into the labour market (families are more selective when choosing workplaces for females); and the wider international and economic situations. Also, 40% of employed people who want another job are less than 25 years old. The main reason given by Jordanians for seeking a different or an additional job is insufficient earnings, followed by unsatisfactory working conditions.

Compared to the overall unemployment rate of 15% in Jordan, the high unemployment rate among young people (32%) suggests that support is required for this group, particularly during the first few years after they have left school.

...In addition to the disparities between individuals, the differences that exist between the governorates throughout Jordan have been highlighted. The 1994 census indicates that 76% of families live in urban areas. Unemployed people are concentrated in three governorates, Amman, Irbid and Zarqa. During the three years from 2001 to 2003, these governorates accounted for more than two-thirds of the total number of unemployed people; Amman alone accounted for one-third.

...It is rather difficult to arrive at an accurate assessment of the scale of the informal economy, although it is estimated that around 200,000 people in Jordan are currently working in this sector.

...When analysing unemployment it is important to note that in countries without a comprehensive social security system such as Jordan many workers cannot afford to be openly unemployed while searching for scarce formal-sector jobs. Instead, they are often forced to accept low-productivity jobs in the informal economy (European Training Foundation 2005, *Unemployment in Jordan*, pp. 7-11 [http://www.etf.europa.eu/pubmgmt.nsf/\(getAttachment\)/4E4904B283AC4CAAC12570E0003D00E7/\\$File/NOTE6KCEZX.pdf](http://www.etf.europa.eu/pubmgmt.nsf/(getAttachment)/4E4904B283AC4CAAC12570E0003D00E7/$File/NOTE6KCEZX.pdf) – Accessed 28 November 2008 – Attachment 12).

An *IRIN News* report October 2006 quotes a study carried out by “the Amman-based Palestinian Centre for Citizenship Rights” which found that unemployment in Palestinian refugee camps is 33% for women, and less than half that for men; the study also found that “31 percent of Palestine refugees live below the poverty line in Jordan”:

More than 33 per cent of women in Palestinian refugee camps in Jordan are unemployed, according to a study released on Sunday by the Amman-based Palestinian Centre for Citizenship Rights. This represents a significant increase and is almost double the unemployment rate among their male counterparts.

The unemployment rate nationwide is 14.5 percent, the government says. A sluggish economy and an increased cost of living after a recent hike in fuel prices is making life harder for those without work and is having a profound impact on the living standards of refugees.

“Residents of refugee camps are fighting an uphill battle to make ends meet. They are living in a vicious circle; the poorer they get, the less educated they become, meaning they will always struggle to find jobs,” said Mohammad Akel, a member of the Jordanian parliament who represents Baqaa refugee camp, 20 km west of Amman and the largest camp in the kingdom.

...The recent study stated that 31 percent of Palestine refugees live below the poverty line in Jordan.

For women, it is much harder to find work because of social and religious restrictions. Their relatives may refuse to allow them to work in jobs which involve working closely with men. In addition, women are less educated than men because the little money families have for education is typically spent on boys ('Jordan: Unemployed refugee women face poverty' 2006, *IRIN News*, 16 October <http://www.irinnews.org/Report.aspx?ReportId=61889> – Accessed 28 November 2008 – Attachment 13).

Another *IRIN News* report, from May 2006, reports an attempt by the Jordanian government “to raise employment levels among native Jordanians” by significantly increasing the fees charged to foreign workers for work permits. The report also notes that “the labour ministry temporarily halted the issuance of work permits for non-Jordanians in order to study the issue further”, and quotes figures of 500,000 legal expatriate workers in Jordan, mostly employed “in the construction, industry, services and agriculture sectors”, and another “500,000 illegal labourers working in the kingdom without official permission”:

The government will impose “a significant increase” on the fees levied on foreign workers applying for annual work permits in an effort to raise employment levels among native Jordanians, a source at the labour ministry said on Monday.

...According to a ministry report issued last week, 15.5 percent of working-age Jordanians – some 200,000 people – are currently unemployed. This includes approximately 144,000 males and 55,000 females.

To this end, monies generated by increases in fees for expatriate work visas will go towards funding a national Training and Employment Fund. Annual visa costs for Arab workers will be raised from the equivalent of US \$200 to between US \$500 and US \$700. Those for other foreigners, meanwhile, will be increased from the equivalent of US \$450 to between US \$900 and US \$1,300.

According to government statistics, the number of legal expatriates in Jordan is currently about 500,000, representing approximately one fourth of the national workforce. Such foreign workers generally find employment in the construction, industry, services and agriculture sectors.

There are also an estimated 500,000 illegal labourers working in the kingdom without official permission.

...Illegal workers are generally paid about half of what their Jordanian counterparts receive for the same work. They also must often endure arduous working conditions, including long working hours, delayed payments and – occasionally – physical abuse. According to the law, any foreign labourer caught without an official work permit is immediately deported.

...Last week, the labour ministry temporarily halted the issuance of work permits for non-Jordanians in order to study the issue further. The government has also recently increased the minimum wage to the equivalent of US \$140 per month, in hopes of luring Jordanian workers to take jobs they would usually turn down ('Jordan: Government aims to 'Jordanise' labour force' 2006, *IRIN News*, 22 May <http://www.irinnews.org/Report.aspx?ReportId=26899> – Accessed 28 November 2008 – Attachment 14).

3. What is the extent of assistance provided by UNRWA to Palestinians from Gaza living in Jordan?

The United Nations Relief and Works Agency for Palestine Refugees in the Near East (UNRWA) website provides no information suggesting that it treats Gazan Palestinians in Jordan differently to other Palestinian refugees in the country. Nonetheless, UNRWA states that the camps built for the 1967 refugees “remain less developed than those established in the 1950s” and that “[s]ome of them lack basic infrastructure and public services”. The website also states that “[a]ll Palestine refugees registered with UNRWA in Jordan, whether they live in camps or outside camps, are eligible for UNRWA services. However, those living in or near camps, generally the poorest of the refugees, have easier access to Agency services”:

In 1967 following the Israeli occupation of the West Bank and Gaza Strip there was another influx of refugees into Jordan. Some 140,000 persons, already registered refugees with UNRWA, were part of the new exodus together with about 240,000 citizens of the West Bank who are referred to as “displaced persons” (the West Bank was administered by Jordan between 1948-1967). These new refugees took shelter in temporary camps in the Jordan Valley. When military operations escalated in the area they had to be moved to safer areas elsewhere in Jordan. In early 1968, six tented “emergency” camps were established for these refugees and displaced persons. UNRWA later replaced the tents with pre-fabricated shelters and the refugees themselves have now replaced the prefabs with concrete structures. Although there has been enormous improvements in the “1967 emergency” camps over the years, they remain less developed than those established in the 1950s. Some of them lack basic infrastructure and public services, especially the camps in remote areas.

UNRWA coordinates with the Jordanian government’s Department of Palestinian Affairs (DPA) as well as with the camps’ improvement committees. Members of these committees are selected by the DPA from amongst community leaders and refugee notables who in effect take on the role of municipal councils.

The infrastructure of the camps is primarily the responsibility of the host government. However, UNRWA’s sanitation and technical departments work hand-in-hand with the DPA and camp committees to help improve roads, pathways and drainage.

All Palestine refugees registered with UNRWA in Jordan, whether they live in camps or outside camps, are eligible for UNRWA services. However, those living in or near camps, generally the poorest of the refugees, have easier access to Agency services.

All Palestine refugees in Jordan have full Jordanian citizenship with the exception of about 120,000 refugees originally from the Gaza Strip, which up to 1967 was administered by Egypt. They are eligible for temporary Jordanian passports, which do not entitle them to full citizenship rights such as the right to vote and employment with the government.

...FACTS AND FIGURES

- Number of schools: 177
- Student enrolment: 129,327
- Number of primary health care facilities: 23
- Annual medical and dental patient visits (1 July 2005 – 30 June 2006): 2,258,811
- Refugees registered with UNRWA’s “special hardship” programme: 47,449
- Number of community rehabilitation centres: 10
- Number of women’s programme centres: 14
- Number of vocational and technical training centres (VTTC): 2

- Vocational and technical training places: 1,398
- Number of microfinance and microenterprise loans awarded: 5,278
- Cumulative value of loans awarded: \$ 6 million ('Jordan Refugee Camp Profiles' (undated), United Nations Relief and Works Agency for Palestine Refugees in the Near East website <http://www.un.org/unrwa/refugees/jordan.html> – Accessed 27 November 2008 – Attachment 15).

The UNRWA website provides the following information about al-Wihdat refugee camp, also known as Amman New Camp (figures accurate as of 31 March 2007), and the services it provides in the camp:

Amman New Camp, known locally as Wihdat, was one of the four camps established after 1948 to accommodate Palestine refugees who left Palestine as a result of the 1948 Arab-Israeli war.

The camp was set up in 1955 for some 5,000 refugees on an area of 488,000 square metres south east of Amman. The refugees were initially accommodated in 1,400 shelters constructed by UNRWA, and in 1957 the Agency built 1,260 additional shelters. Over the years the refugees have added more rooms to improve their shelters and the camp has grown into an urban-like quarter surrounded by areas of high population density.

UNRWA provides education, health and relief and social services through 21 installations operated by 670 UNRWA staff.

FACTS AND FIGURES

- There are 50,061 registered refugees;
- UNRWA runs 16 schools for 22,474 pupils in 2006/2007, with a teaching staff of 359. These schools operate on a double shift basis because of lack of adequate premises and lack of funds to build new schools;
- The Agency's two health centres are run by 9 doctors, 2 dentist, and 44 nurses and assistants for some 1200 patients daily;
- 550 families receive assistance through the Agency's special hardship case programme;
- There is one women's programme centre run by local women committee with financial and technical support from UNRWA. About 7,140 women benefit from the centre every year. The women's committees also run two kindergartens which provide day care for 333 children. A Legal Advice Bureau was opened in 1994 which provides legal consultancy services for women;
- A community rehabilitation centre was established in 1996 to provide day care facilities for about 259 refugees with disabilities. The centre is run by the local community with financial and technical support from UNRWA ('Amman New Camp(Wihdat)' (undated), United Nations Relief and Works Agency for Palestine Refugees in the Near East website <http://www.un.org/unrwa/refugees/jordan/newamman.html> – Accessed 27 November 2008 – Attachment 16).

It may be of interest to note a 19 November 2008 press release from UNRWA which states that the agency is facing a financial crisis, with "an overall shortfall across the Agency of about US 160 million".

The Commissioner General of the United Nations Relief and Works Agency, Karen AbuZayd has warned that UNRWA is facing what she called "a grave and imminent crisis" and that if it

is to be averted, the Agency must receive significant additional pledges in the first quarter of 2009.

Addressing UNRWA's annual meeting that brings together donors, host governments, NGO partners and other UNRWA stakeholders, AbuZayd explained that according to present budget projections, in the first quarter of next year, the General Fund which funds UNRWA's core services will suffer a shortfall of upwards of US 87 million. This combined with other unfunded projects put on hold from previous years means an overall shortfall across the Agency of about US 160 million. "This will bring UNRWA closer to financial crisis than it has ever been."

The meeting heard updates from Directors in UNRWA's five fields of operations, Syria, Jordan, Lebanon, the West Bank and Gaza. With regard to Jordan and Syria, AbuZayd said that UNRWA was "seeking to build on the assets of national stability, economic opportunity and relatively well developed infrastructure to create new avenues of achievement for Palestine refugees". On the destroyed Nahr el Bared refugee camp in northern Lebanon, she appealed to donors in the Gulf to assist with its reconstruction. In June, UNRWA and partners jointly launched an appeal for US 445 million of which US 282 million was for UNRWA's rebuilding. UNRWA has received just US 33 million ('UNRWA Commissioner-General Warns of "Grave and Imminent Financial Crisis"' 2008, United Nations Relief and Works Agency for Palestine Refugees in the Near East website, 19 November http://www.un.org/unrwa/news/releases/pr-2008/jor_19nov08.html – Accessed 27 November 2008 – Attachment 17).

A June 2007 response from the Immigration and Refugee Board of Canada quotes UN sources suggesting that "UNRWA education facilities were overcrowded and under-equipped":

In October 2006, the United Nations Relief and Works Agency for Palestine Refugees in the Near East (UNRWA) published the results of a survey of "special hardship case families" in Palestinian refugee populations living in the West Bank, the Gaza Strip, Lebanon, Syria and Jordan (UN Oct. 2006, 10, 20). According to the report, UNRWA schools were more accessible to those living in a refugee camp; however, refugees living outside the camps had better access to elementary, preparatory and secondary schools (ibid., 83).

...According to a UN document published at the start of 2005, UNRWA education facilities were overcrowded and under-equipped (28 Feb. 2005). As of 31 December 2006, there were approximately 1.86 million Palestinian refugees registered and receiving assistance from UNRWA (US 6 Mar. 2007).

According to a September 2006 article in Forced Migration Review (FMR), in Jordan, UNRWA was providing Palestinian refugees with elementary and preparatory, but not secondary education (4 Sept. 2006) (Immigration & Refugee Board of Canada 2007, *JOR102539.FE Jordan: Access to public schools or to any other form of public education in Jordan for children of Palestinian refugees from the Gaza Strip who have a refugee passport (2005 – May 2007)*, 13 June http://www.irb-cisr.gc.ca/en/research/rir/index_e.htm?action=record.viewrec&gotorec=452025 – Accessed 27 November 2008 – Attachment 18).

It may also be of interest to note two reports quoted in Question 1 above:

A December 2006 *IRIN News* interview in which a Palestinian from Gaza reports claims that she "does not qualify for social aid", that "UNRWA...does not provide me with financial assistance", and that she is "not allowed to go to a government-run hospital for free

treatment, while waiting lists at the UNRWA clinics are very long” (‘Jordan: Noora, Nadi, Jordan, “Nobody cares about refugees from Gaza”’ 2006, *IRIN News*, 17 December <http://www.irinnews.org/Report.aspx?ReportId=62774> – Accessed 24 November 2008 – Attachment 10).

A 2008 article from *al-majdal* magazine, in which a Gazan Palestinian in Jordan claims that “UNRWA schools only provide the service until children reach the age of 15, then they cannot go to university without paying fees that are very expensive” (Paq, A. 2008, ‘Struggling Alone for My Children’s Future’, *al-majdal*, No. 36-37, Winter2007-Spring 2008 <http://www.badil.org/al-majdal/2008/winter-spring/articles19.htm> – Accessed 28 November 2008 – Attachment 9).

4. Are Palestinians from Gaza prevented from obtaining driver’s licenses in Jordan?

No information was located to indicate that Palestinians from Gaza are unable to obtain driver’s licenses in Jordan.

5. Are Palestinians from Gaza at risk of temporary detention or other forms of mistreatment by the Jordanian authorities due to circumstances arising out of their status, e.g. lack of access to a national ID number?

No information was located suggesting that Palestinians from Gaza are at particular risk of mistreatment in this case.

No information was located regarding the probable response of Jordanian police or security forces to a situation in which a person was found to be not in possession of a national ID card or number.

6. Is there information to suggest that the Jordanian Embassy in Australia has refused to renew temporary Jordanian passports held by Palestinians from Gaza?

No specific information was located suggesting that the Jordanian Embassy in Australia has taken this action; nonetheless, sources suggest that renewing temporary travel documents can be problematic for Palestinians of Gazan origin.

The 2008 USCRI report on Jordan states that the Jordanian government has “refused to renew the passports of some 10,000 to 12,000 Palestinian former residents at its embassies outside the country for failure to prove former residence”:

Gazans held temporary Jordanian passports renewable every two years, as well as cards for crossing between Jordan and the West Bank, subject to Israeli closures and other restrictions. The Government refused to renew the passports of some 10,000 to 12,000 Palestinian former residents at its embassies outside the country for failure to prove former residence. Refugees registered with UNHCR did not have access to international travel documents (United States Committee for Refugees and Immigrants 2008, *World Refugee Survey 2008 – Jordan*, *Refworld*, 19 June <http://www.unhcr.org/refworld/docid/485f50dcc.html> – Accessed 24 November 2008 – Attachment 2).

The US Department of State’s *Country Report on Human Rights Practices for 2007 – Jordan* quotes human rights activists who claim that “the government did not consistently apply citizenship laws, especially in cases in which passports were taken from citizens of

Palestinian origin”, and that “the process was not transparent and the appeal process was virtually nonexistent”. The report also states that “[h]uman rights activists claimed that approximately 10,000 to 12,000 former residents of Palestinian origin remained outside the country, and that the government refused to renew their passports at embassies overseas”:

Citizens receive passports that are valid for five years. Some persons of Palestinian origin living in the country were citizens and received passports; however, the government reported that there were approximately 130,000 Palestinian refugees, mostly of Gazan origin, who did not qualify for citizenship. Approximately half received two-year passports valid for travel but which do not connote citizenship. West Bank residents without other travel documentation are eligible to receive five-year passports which do not connote citizenship.

Human rights activists continued to charge that the government did not consistently apply citizenship laws, especially in cases in which passports were taken from citizens of Palestinian origin. The government maintained this policy was in line with its efforts to implement the government’s disengagement from its former claims to the West Bank. However, activists complained that the process was not transparent and the appeal process was virtually nonexistent. Claimants or families filed appeals with the MOI, which were not resolved to their satisfaction. The government asserted that all cases it closed involved persons without valid claims to citizenship or travel documents.

Human rights activists claimed that approximately 10,000 to 12,000 former residents of Palestinian origin remained outside the country, and that the government refused to renew their passports at embassies overseas.

...Human rights activists maintained that despite the codified passport issuance procedures, interior ministry employees revoked national numbers of many citizens of Palestinian origin. Others claimed that their temporary passports were confiscated after spending time in the West Bank (US Department of State 2008, *Country Report on Human Rights Practices for 2007 – Jordan*, 11 March – Attachment 19).

A November 2006 report from the *Daily News Egypt* quotes a UNRWA source who claims that “Gaza Palestinians are only eligible to apply for two-year Jordanian residency permits, which are very hard to renew once they expire” (Sandels, A. & Stack, L. 2006, ‘Palestinian-Jordanians still discriminated against, research shows’, *Daily News Egypt*, 5 November <http://www.dailystaregypt.com/article.aspx?ArticleID=3785> – Accessed 24 November 2008 – Attachment 5)

7. Has the UAE passed new laws preventing Palestinians and Iraqis, particularly those holding temporary travel documents, from being able to enter the country on work visas?

The UAE government changed the laws relating to immigration visas in July 2008, and sources suggest that these changes have caused problems for expatriate workers in the country, although no sources were located which made specific reference to Palestinians and Iraqis holding temporary travel documents. Migrant workers were previously able to make visa renewal ‘runs’ to nearby foreign territories and return the next day, but the new laws state that they must leave the UAE for one month before a new visa will be issued. A September 2008 report from the *Gulf News* states that “[a] Palestinian has been stranded at Sharjah Airport for the past three days, having been denied entry following changes in visit visa rules”, and a September 2008 report from *The National* claims that the new visa rules have caused “widespread confusion” and “has caused thousands of expatriates to be stranded

abroad on so-called visa runs that are no longer permitted”. A July 2008 report also from *The National* examines the impact of the new visa laws on expatriate workers and their families, claiming that “it will be harder for the nationals of non-exempt countries to enter the UAE on a visit visa to search for work” (Al Jandaly, B. 2008, ‘Palestinian faces month’s stay in airport to get visa’, *Gulf News*, 26 September

http://www.gulfnews.com/nation/Immigration_and_Visas/10247969.html – Accessed 26 November 2008 – Attachment 20; Morris, L. & Khalaf, H. 2008, ‘Confusion surrounds visa rules’, *The National*, 30 September

<http://www.thenational.ae/article/20080929/NATIONAL/642285029/0/FRONTPAGE> – Accessed 26 November 2008 – Attachment 21; Habboush, M. 2008, ‘Visa rules burden job seekers, say expats’, *The National*, 31 July

<http://www.thenational.ae/article/20080730/NATIONAL/399145196/0/FRONTPAGE> – Accessed 26 November 2008 – Attachment 22).

A September 2008 report from the *Gulf News* states that “[a] Palestinian has been stranded at Sharjah Airport for the past three days, having been denied entry following changes in visit visa rules”. According to this report, the stranded Palestinian “cannot go to any neighbouring country for the period as no Arab country will issue him a visa”:

Ayman Zaqout from Gaza had gone to the Iranian island of Kish on a visa-change run but his visa was rejected by the Ajman Naturalisation and Residency Department under the new rules. He works for a food supply company in Ajman which had paid his insurance and sent him to Kish. “Now I am told that I can only enter the UAE after one month has passed,” he told *Gulf News*.

Zaqout cannot go back to Gaza because of the recent closure of the Rafah crossing. He also cannot go to any neighbouring country for the period as no Arab country will issue him a visa. The expatriate worker said he had been to Kish three times earlier to renew his visa. “I have no clue what to do,” he said.

Zaqout is afraid that he might have to spend the month at the airport before he is allowed in. His sponsor said he was not aware of the new rules which came into effect in late July.

“No one objected when we applied for the visa,” he said.

...The new rules state that those who wish to obtain a fresh visit visa to the UAE must leave for one month before being issued another visa, thereby ending short visa runs to neighbouring countries such as Oman or the Iranian islands (Al Jandaly, B. 2008, ‘Palestinian faces month’s stay in airport to get visa’, *Gulf News*, 26 September

http://www.gulfnews.com/nation/Immigration_and_Visas/10247969.html – Accessed 26 November 2008 – Attachment 20).

A September 2008 report from *The National* claims that the new visa rules have caused “widespread confusion” and “has caused thousands of expatriates to be stranded abroad on so-called visa runs that are no longer permitted”. According to this report, “[i]n most cases they must return to their home countries for at least a month before being issued another visa”:

Two months after the introduction of new visa rules many travel agents still do not know how they work and give misleading information to customers, according to an informal survey conducted by *The National*.

Widespread confusion over the new rules introduced at the end of July for obtaining visit visas has caused thousands of expatriates to be stranded abroad on so-called visa runs that are no longer permitted.

Almost half of 25 travel companies contacted by The National yesterday provided false, misleading or out-of-date information about visas. Only four were able to provide entirely accurate information.

Until July people whose visit visas expired were able to take short trips to neighbouring countries such as Iran, Oman and Qatar to renew their visas.

But under the new rules, the practice is no longer permissible for all but 33 exempt nationalities. Visitors from other countries cannot now expect to have their visas automatically renewed. In most cases they must return to their home countries for at least a month before being issued another visa.

...In reality, the two-month visit visas have been discontinued and replaced by one-month tourist visas, but these cannot be renewed after a short trip out of the country (Morris, L. & Khalaf, H. 2008, 'Confusion surrounds visa rules', *The National*, 30 September <http://www.thenational.ae/article/20080929/NATIONAL/642285029/0/FRONTPAGE> – Accessed 26 November 2008 – Attachment 21).

A July 2008 report also from *The National* examines the impact of the new visa laws on expatriate workers and their families, claiming that “it will be harder for the nationals of non-exempt countries to enter the UAE on a visit visa to search for work”, and that “[v]isit visas will only be granted to those sponsored by a direct relative”:

Expatriate workers are worried the new visa laws will prevent them from bringing relatives and friends to the UAE for work and reduce the pool of productive staff.

Their concerns mirror those raised by some senior human resources officials this week, who claim the hospitality and tourism industries, in particular, will be hard hit if the flow of new staff into the country abates.

Under the new rules, it will be harder for the nationals of non-exempt countries to enter the UAE on a visit visa to search for work. Visit visas will only be granted to those sponsored by a direct relative. Countries that are traditional labour sources for the UAE, such as the Philippines, India and Pakistan, are among those affected.

Expatriates spoken to this week say there are three factors that would make it harder for friends and family to travel to the UAE to look for work: higher fees for many visa types; the requirement that expatriates will have to fly to their home countries if they want or need to change the status of the visa; and restrictions that expatriates could sponsor only spouses and close relatives.

...Now, companies must obtain work visas for new employees before they arrive in the country.

Tabrez Ahmed, 34, a car technician, said the new system would not affect the people who were here to visit family members or for tourism purposes: “Those who look for work will be affected.”

The new rules would discourage people with low incomes, he said, because of the higher fees and the need to fly back to their countries if they arrived on a visit visa (Habboush, M. 2008,

'Visa rules burden job seekers, say expats', *The National*, 31 July
<http://www.thenational.ae/article/20080730/NATIONAL/399145196/0/FRONTPAGE> –
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A July 2008 report from *Emirates News Agency*, located on the UAE Interact website, quotes the UAE government official responsible for the new visa laws stating that they have “the aim of stamping out illegal residency”:

The new ministerial resolution that amends regulations of the foreigners' entry '&' residency law will go into effect Tuesday. “The resolution has created 16 types of visas with the aim of stamping out illegal residency,” Brigadier Nasser Al Awadhi Al Minahli, acting director of Abu Dhabi Naturalisation '&' Residency Department, told reporters today. Al Minhali predicted that by next December, the UAE will be free of illegal residents ('New regulations will help stamp out illegal residency' 2008, UAE Interact website (source: *Emirates News Agency*), 28 July
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