

TOPICS IN INTERNATIONAL DEVELOPMENT
REFUGEES: CITIZENSHIP AND DISPLACEMENT IN THE MIDDLE
EAST
INTD 497

FINAL RESEARCH PAPER



Submitted by: Sara Awad – 260552571
Submitted to: Prof Diana Allan
Submitted on: December 7th 2015

Today, 6 million Palestinian refugees live in different countries around the world. At a micro-level, Egypt hosts over 120,000 Palestinian refugees (0.1% of the population) in different cities like Alexandria, Cairo, and Al-Arish (UNHCR, 2014). While the majority arrived after the *Nakba* (1948) and the 1967 war, more recent refugees arrived from Gaza following major Israeli raids. Although Egypt's responsibility as a host state is to ensure Palestinian refugees a decent life, assistance efforts have not been consistent over time. Since the 1940s, the Egyptian government has been refusing to have any permanent refugee camps fearing that Palestinians would stay permanently. As a result, unlike Lebanon and Jordan, Palestinians in Egypt live within the Egyptian community in the urban setting (Abed, 2009). Additionally, although UNRWA is the official assistance and protection provider to Palestinian refugees, Egypt does not fall under its scope of operations. Palestinian refugees report directly to UNHCR whose efforts have been either insufficient or curtailed by government's constraints. Due to a void of international and local protection, Palestinian refugees have been vulnerable vis-à-vis government's laws which have been fluctuating according to the preferences of the regime in power. While Nasser's regime equated Palestinian refugees to Egyptian nationals and allowed them to enjoy different rights, subsequent regimes retracted these rights and increased their alienation and financial burdens. The deprivation of rights due to the unstable legal and economic conditions of Palestinians in Egypt has placed them in a state of *in limbo*. This research paper examines how Egyptian domestic and foreign political developments over the past seven decades affect Palestinian refugees' rights and treatment in Egypt.

Legal context

First, it is important to establish the international legal context regarding Palestinian refugees. During the drafting of the UNHCR status in 1949, because of the scope of the

Palestinian refugee crisis, UNRWA, a separate agency, was established in order to provide assistance to Palestinian refugees in Jordan, Lebanon, Syria, the West Bank and Gaza but not in Egypt and Libya. In this sense, the 1951 Convention on the Status of Refugees does not define dispersed Palestinians as refugees because they are already receiving assistance from UNRWA (Abed, 2011). Therefore, by excluding Palestinian refugees from its definition, the Convention left refugees living in countries where UNRWA does not operate with no concrete international legal protection until 2002, when the UNHCR reinterpreted the 1D Article of the 1951 Convention (Takkenberg, 1998). It indicated that Palestinian refugees are *ipso facto* refugees and are to be protected by UNHCR if assistance or protection of another UN body ceases.

The Egyptian government ratified the 1951 Convention in 1981 with reservations on certain articles that contradicted Egyptian national law. However, although legally whenever Egypt signs a treaty it must automatically get integrated into the Egyptian legal system, it was not the case with the 1951 Convention. Kagan (2009) defines the legal framework for refugee protection in Egypt as “regrettably confusing”. Even after officially ratifying the Convention, Egypt does not have a national asylum law and the government has not yet introduced any legal amendments to comply with the provisions stated in the convention and does even abide by several articles of this Convention such as Articles 17 and 18 regarding wage-earning employment and self-employment (Abed, 2009). This is not only a violation of international law, but also it created a protection gap since refugees’ realities differ greatly from the theoretical protection mechanisms (Kagan, 2009). Besides, Egypt reached an agreement with UNCHR in 1954 whereby this agency would have an office in Cairo with the task of caring for the stateless refugee population living in Egypt, including but not limited to Palestinians. However, the UNHCR’s office in Egypt has not put substantial effort in putting the 1951 Convention into

action due to constraints imposed by the government (Badawy, 2008). The Egyptian government's unwillingness to assist and accommodate refugees not only affected Palestinian refugees but also other refugee groups such as the Sudanese and Iraqis. As a result, the implementation of refugee and migration policies in Egypt has been the result of arbitrary governmental choices rather than of the application of international laws. Due to the non-applicability of international protection mechanisms including the 1951 Convention, refugees in Egypt, especially Palestinians, suffer from a protection gap.

1930-1952: Monarchical Egypt

As part of the King Farouk and his administration's political tools to score popularity among the masses, Egypt began having an active role in the rise of the pan-Arab sentiments during the 1930s (Brand, 1988). These efforts included the Palestinian question; the 1940s witnessed an increasing Egyptian involvement in the Palestinian question coinciding with the establishment of the Arab League in Cairo. When the First Arab-Israeli War in 1948 broke out, 12,000 Palestinian refugees fled to Egypt (Brand, 1988). As a response, the government founded the High Committee for Palestinian Refugee Affairs' to organize and accommodate the arrival of the early waves of Palestinian refugees to Egypt. The Ministry of Social affairs arranged temporary camps to host the arriving refugees like the Al-Abaseya Camp, the Qantarash Sharq camp and the camp of Al-Mazrateyah in Port Said (Yassin, 1996). The government also established a committee to review the status of the refugees on a case-by-case basis.

Nevertheless, the Egyptian authorities refused to give arriving refugees any citizenship status, instead, the government temporary residence permits and work permits only for those who had enough funds and were familiar with an Egyptian national who would act as a guarantor (Abed, 2009). The validity of the residency permits varied according to each case and the

process itself took much time. For the Egyptian Prime Minister, Al-Nuqrashi, given Egypt's role in the war and its commitment to the Arab unity, Egypt will only host Palestinians temporarily. The government argued that Egypt couldn't accommodate the refugees for a long-time basis or give them the Egyptian citizenship due to the presence domestic problems such as inflation, overpopulation and high unemployment rates. However, Al-Abed (2009) argues that the real reason behind the government's stance is that Palestinian refugees were viewed as a threat to national security because many of them were associated with the communists or the Muslim Brotherhood. This implies that due to domestic political considerations, Palestinians in Egypt are *homo saver* (individuals with no rights of citizenship) and are deprived from enjoying protection from legal institutions (Ardent, 1966; Agamben, 1995).

In addition, after the war, Egypt enacted a military administration over Gaza but never claimed sovereignty over this Palestinian space (Feldman, 2008). In her study, Ilana Feldman asserts that the borders between Gaza and Egypt were strictly defined in order to ensure Egypt's national security away from any Israeli or Palestinian attacks. Even as people were given shelter, due to the military control, the refugees' life was marked by considerable deprivation and fear (Feldman, 2008). Palestinian writer Atwan (2008) recalls: "the Egyptian authorities were frightening enough: every town and village had a *hakim* (military ruler) who had the power to arrest, beat and torture anyone they wanted to, with or without good reason." In terms of aid provision, Feldman recounts that the assistance provided by the Egyptian government was nowhere near sufficient (Feldman, 2008). Besides, at the end of the war, the Egyptian government decided to relocate the refugees of the three camps inside Egypt to the Gaza Strip in order to remove these camps. Due to the massive increase in refugee arrivals, tensions between locals and refugees amplified as financial hardships accentuated (Feldman, 2008). In 1950,

UNWRA began operating in Gaza and took over the larger task of sustaining the refugees, including providing employment and engaging in education. The survivors of the early and bitter years in the Gaza camps depict detailed memory of humiliation and hunger, “life in the camps were tenuous” (Feldman, 2008). They relied on aid for almost everything they needed to survive - food (which was never enough), clothing, and healthcare, and such dependence increased tremendous insecurity and vulnerability (Feldman, 2008). Thus, during the early waves of Palestinian refugees, all efforts to accommodate Palestinians in Egypt were show-cases of Egypt’s international political position. The government’s treatment of early Palestinian refugees implied a clear sense of detachment and uneasiness shown by the unwillingness to engage actively in settling them in Egypt. Al-Nuqrashi adopted the “national security threat” pretext to justify its policies. The weight was shifted to Gaza where humanitarian agencies operated, but they were unable to provide sufficient assistance to everyone.

1952-1970: The Nasserist Golden Era

When Gamal Abdel-Nasser came into power in the early 1950s, he envisioned a pan-Arab framework where Arab states unify behind a common goal: eliminating western influence from the region (Tahlimi, 1992). Strategically, Nasser used the Palestinian question as a unique venue in order to rally the Arabs behind Egypt and secure a regional dominance for Egypt. In June 1961 Nasser told Radio Cairo “The refugees will not return while the flag of Israel flies over the soil of Palestine. They will return when the flag of Palestine is hoisted over Arab Palestine” (Tahlimi, 1992). Indeed, as Egypt played an important role advocating the Palestinian cause, attention was also paid to the 33,000 Palestinians residing in its cities. Tahlimi (1992) argues that Nasser’s rule was a ‘Golden Era’ to Palestinians in Egypt. In fact, even before the ratification of the Arab League’s Casablanca Protocol in 1965, which deals with the status of

Palestinians in Arab states, Palestinian refugees were welcomed in Egypt and were equated with Egyptian nationals in several venues. They enjoyed basic rights, employment in the public sector, right to state services, free public education, the right to import and export (unlike other Arabs) and property rights. Nasser also refused any external assistance from refugee organizations or UNRWA on the basis that Palestinians are treated as Egyptians (Takkenberg, 1998). Atwan (2008) recalls: “Nasser’s championing of the Palestinian cause ensure him an elevated social status in Egypt compared with the prejudice a Palestinian had known in Gaza and Jordan. Palestinians were viewed as revolutionaries and heroes of the resistance.” Palestinian refugees were encouraged to form Palestinian social unions in Egypt in order to promote the Palestinian identity and nationalism within the context of Nasser’s Arab nationalism. This gave Palestinian refugees the opportunity to integrate in the Egyptian society and considered themselves as Palestinian-Egyptians. However, the provisions of assistance and protection remained vulnerable to internal politics and the Egyptian relations with Palestinian factions (Dajani, 1986). For instance, due to the Egyptian-Palestinian clash over the Rogers Plan, all non-Fatah Palestinians were deported under pretext of protecting national security (Talhami, 1992).

Additionally, in Gaza, until 1967, the Egyptian government organized “mercy trains” that brought goods donated by Egyptians to Gaza and developed a broad array of services – including ration provision, schooling, housing programs, and employment opportunity - that helped improve conditions in Gaza for the entire population. Gazans were permitted to travel to Cairo freely either to work or to study: in 1962, Nasser called for Palestinians from Gaza with high school diplomas or college degrees to apply to work in public institutions in Egypt (Dajani, 1986). Work in trade, industry, and transport between Gaza and Egypt was permitted. This resulted in a growth of business activity and increased rapports with Cairo. Thus, although

Gazans sometimes critique Egyptian rule for an absence of political freedom, they almost universally praise its humanitarian efforts (Feldman, 2008). All in all, Nasser used the Palestinian cause, including the accommodation of refugees, as a means to boost his pan-Arab credentials. Given the situation of Palestinians in other Arab countries, the move was certain to have substantial propaganda value (Brand, 1988).

1970-1982: Anwar Sadat's regime, the cancellation of all privileges

Following the death of Nasser in 1970, Anwar Sadat took over the Egyptian presidency. Unlike Nasser, Sadat showed more accommodation towards Israel's biggest ally, the US. This was the source of tensions between the Egyptian government and the Palestinian leadership (Abed, 2009). Until 1975, even with the Sinai Accords which created political tensions between Sadat and the PLO, the legal status of Palestinian refugees residing in Egypt did not alter. However, during the second half of the 1970s, all privileges and rights that were offered during the Nasserite era started getting restricted. When Sadat went to Jerusalem in 1977 and lost his good relations with former Palestinian President Yasser Arafat, residency permits for Palestinians in Egypt were decreased from five to three years. Also, due to their criticism against Sadat's visit, many Palestinians were deported or arrested (Yassin, 1996). Mourid Barghouti, a famous Palestinian Poet, never engaged in politics and did not voice any opposition to Sadat's initiatives, but his deportation "was a preventative deportation" (Aljamal, 2013). More importantly, when the Egyptian Minister of Culture, Youssef Sibai was assassinated in Cyprus by an extremist Palestinian faction group, the Egyptian government declared the abolishment of all rights equating Palestinians to Egyptians. Palestinians were denied residency, employment and property ownership rights and were treated as foreigners, not even as refugees with special protection rights under international law. During Sebai's funeral, Egyptian Prime Minister

declared: “No more Palestine after today!” (Brand, 1988). Also, following these events, the Egyptian media fueled a brazen anti-Palestinian sentiment that was surging, along with a decrease in the sense of solidarity with Palestine among average Egyptians. Crowds gathered in Cairo shouted “No more Palestine” (Brand, 1988). Abed (2009) asserts “Palestinians were made to seem either like terrorists or as an unthankful group. The space for sympathy towards Palestinians, particularly for those living in Egypt, has really been toned down since then. Laws went from ‘Education is to be free for all citizens, including Palestinians to ‘except for Palestinians’”. At this point, due to political frictions with the PLO and the events that unfolded, Palestinians were no longer tolerated from the public or the government authorities.

The government’s hostile treatment of Palestinians in Egypt peaked after the signature of the Camp David agreement in 1978, which isolated Egypt from the rest of the Arab countries and signaled the start of US military aid to Egypt. For instance, all Palestinian associations, which were previously encouraged and supported by the Nasserist government, were abolished. Since then, Palestinians have not been allowed to form any associations (Farid, 2013). Palestinian children were no longer allowed to attend public schools or universities without a formal government approval and have to pay high tuition fees in foreign currency. Such restrictions led to a significant drop in the numbers of Palestinian students in Egypt and threatened to cause an increase in illiteracy rates amongst Palestinians who could not afford the elevated fees (Yassin, 1996). Also, in order to renew their residency, Palestinians needed to pay a fee and provide reasons of stay like education, work or marriage to an Egyptian. This complete transformation in laws and regulations increased the financial and social burdens of the refugees. Not only was the public opinion critical to their presence in Egypt, but also government laws distinguished them from the local Egyptian community which enhanced their status of “otherness”. Due to the

protection gap and their status as lawless, it is clear that Palestinian refugees in Egypt have been vulnerable to public opinion perception, political tides and the host state's national and political priorities, along with the course of its relations with Palestinian organizations.

1982-2011: Mubarak

Hosni Mubarak was appointed president after Sadat's assassination in 1982. He tried to consolidate and legitimate his power by restoring Arab relations and extending formal support to the Palestinian cause (Amin, 2011). Nonetheless, as a result of the Sadat era, which fostered a series of misperceptions and dismissed most Palestinians as an untrustworthy security threat, Mubarak's government was reluctant on improving the status of Palestinian refugees in Egypt. Not only did most of Sadat's harsh laws remain intact but also new discriminatory laws were established. For instance, in 1985, Palestinians who owned land were required to terminate their rights within five years or face seizure of the land by the government (Dajani, 1986). This left Palestinian refugees without any income since the law did not offer any compensation for the loss of property. Additionally, due to Egypt's high inflation rates during this period, Palestinians were required to pay higher fees for education, health care and the renewal of permits. This not only increased their financial burdens but also violates the 1951 Convention, which stipulated that signatory states shall not impose upon refugee charges, duties, or taxes of any description higher than those levied on their nationals (Amin, 2011). Additionally, throughout the Mubarak regime, many Palestinians were arbitrarily deported or arrested based on "national security concerns" (Abed, 2009). Especially during the 1990 Gulf war, the position of Palestinians in Egypt deteriorated. They faced difficult migration laws, which might have resulted from the PLO's critical stance on the war against the US with whom Egypt supported (Abed, 2009). Deporting Palestinian refugees was a way for the government to suppress any sources that might

trigger opposition to its policies domestically. The intolerance towards Palestinians proves that refugees' status remains highly dependent on political relations and national interests.

However, in the beginning of the 2000s, there were minor improvements in the situation and status of Palestinian refugees in Egypt. In 2003, work permits for foreigners exempted some foreigners including Palestinians from paying the high fees for work permits (Amin, 2011). Yet, most Palestinian refugees in Egypt suffered from the inability to access enough education and a lack of sufficient skills to engage in the Egyptian labor market. Additionally, in 2004, the law allowed Egyptian mothers to pass their nationality to their offspring born to non-Egyptian fathers. The government had previously argued that Egypt abides by its 1959 resolution stating that: "Palestinians must not be granted any other nationality in order to preserve the Palestinian identity" (Takkenberg, 1998). This move would allow concerned children to fall under Egyptian laws and have the right to free education and health care. However, the registration process was complex and applicants faced unexplained delays or rejection without any clear legal explanation (Amin, 2011). Additionally, in February 2005, the Minister of Health issued a new regulation allowing access to public primary and preventive healthcare services for all foreign nationals residing in Egypt (Grabska, 2006). This would benefit not just Palestinians but also all other refugees living in Egypt. Although it is positive, it is only limited to primary and preventive health-care, and remains dependent on ministerial whim and subject to change at any time.

Nevertheless, Hamas' victory in Gaza in 2005 troubled the Egyptian regime due to its Islamic doctrine and ties to the Muslim Brotherhood (Khalil, 2010). Following the raids between Hamas and Israel, the Egyptian government fearing from militancy flooding into Egyptian territories closed the crucial Rafah crossing between Egypt and Gaza, without credible evidence of any imminent threats. Gazans attempting to reach Egypt seeking food and supplies were

allowed into Egypt but could not go beyond El-Arish, a city in Eastern Egypt. This limited their opportunities to reach Cairo or any city where they can sustain a living. Likewise, Egypt's steel barrier constructed in 2009 was in efforts of preventing Gazans from entering into Egypt through smuggling. Echoing Sadat's "Egypt First" discourse, Mubarak explicitly declared that Egypt will never abandon the Palestine cause, but Egypt's national interests come first and foremost (Abed, 2009). This pretext was used in order to keep Palestinian refugees, especially Gazans affiliated with Hamas, out of the country and limit any supplies to Gaza. Thus, Sadat's hostile attitude towards Palestinians, which transformed them into foreigners and left them vulnerable to the regime's arbitrary alienation echoed during the Mubarak era. Although there were minor improvements, domestic political considerations against Palestinian refugees remained strong.

2011-2013: The Muslim Brotherhood in power

Mohammed Mursi, a member of the Muslim Brotherhood, was the first elected president after the 2011 revolution. He promised to end the Gaza blockade and help rebuild Gaza after successive Israeli raids. Despite Egypt's diplomatic initiatives, the social and legal conditions of Palestinians refugees in Egypt did not significantly differ from that of his predecessors (Rashidi, 2013). Palestinians continued to face systematic marginalization due to the harshness of the rules implemented during the Sadat and the Mubarak eras. Although some Palestinians hoped to see some changes under Mursi, given the good relations with Hamas and the Palestinian leadership, his rule was very short which did not allow for any improvements to take place (Farid, 2013).

In addition, following the breakout of the Syrian crisis, almost 10,000 Palestinians arrived in Egypt (HRW, 2012). Because Mursi supported Syrian oppositional forces against Al-Assad, he gave Syrian refugees a privileged position within the Egyptian asylum system (extended protection). However, Palestinians arriving from Syria were not entitled to such

privileges although they may consider themselves as Syrian. For instance, Egyptian authorities allowed UNHCR to only register Syrians but not Palestinians from Syria. Also, while Syrian refugees ordinarily receive three- or six-month entry visas on arrival and access the same access to subsidized primary and emergency health care as the Egyptian population, Palestinians from Syria don't enjoy such treatment as they get a one-week entry visa and are treated as foreigners in Egypt (Rashidi, 2013). Zakariya, a well-educated Palestinian refugee, explained that Palestinian refugees from Syria become like “fish out of water”, stripped from minimal protection or assistance (Rashidi, 2013). Mursi's rhetoric towards refugees was a political tool to bolster his support with Syrian opposition groups.

2013-today: The current situation

Mursi was removed from power via a coup organized by the military. Abdel-Fatah El-Sisi, the Head of the Armed forces came into power in 2014 through public elections. Muslim Brotherhood leaders were arrested and the group was outlawed. As a result, due to the circulated rumors by Egyptian media and social media demonizing Palestinian refugees and Hamas of their alleged support to the Morsi regime and the Muslim Brotherhood, the public and the government's xenophobic attitudes towards Palestinians exacerbated (Farid, 2013). According to Egyptian journalist Fahmy Howeidy, “There are elements within the Egyptian security services – whose arms reach into the media – who despise Palestinians and sneer at resistance, and who cannot bear to hear the name of Hamas because of their relations with the Muslim Brotherhood.” (Farid, 2013). In fact, this discriminatory attitude towards Palestinians is unfair to those who do not affiliate with Hamas, yet have to suffer from such political discourses.

Nowadays, the popular media sheds light on the situation of Palestinians refugees arriving to Egypt from Syria. Images of refugees detained in police stations across Egypt and in

Cairo International Airport have been circulating and raised a lot of criticism. Erakat (2014) explains that due to the growing anti-Syrian sentiment since Mursi and the presumed Hamas-Muslim Brotherhood connection, Egypt has been detaining refugees coming from Syria (especially the Palestinian Yarmouk camp) and arresting them when attempting to leave in an illegal manner. In the deportation center, Mahmoud, one of the detained recounts: “I felt powerless, oppressed and humiliated. I saw people of all nationalities getting into Cairo easily. There were many other Palestinians there. All felt abandoned, degraded” (Akram, 2015). Since they don’t have the necessary permits to stay in Egypt, Palestinians arriving from Syria are given limited options, either to go to back Lebanon, where they are only permitted to legally enter on a 48-hour transit visa, or to return to war-torn Syria, on their own expense (Akram, 2015). According to Joe Stork, UNHCR Middle East and North Africa director, since both Egyptian legislation and the 1951 Convention stipulate certain legal measurements before issuing a deportation verdict, Egypt’s arbitrary deportations are a contradiction of these laws and a violation of refugees’ rights (Akram, 2015). Meanwhile, another topic that is highly mediatized nowadays is the closure of the Gaza-Rafah border since the beginning of 2015 due to security tensions in Sinai (Scheider, 2015). According to Abu Madi, undersecretary of the Ministry of Interior and National Security in Gaza, 25000 humanitarian cases are waiting in Gaza for the crossing to open. Egypt is refusing the arrival of any new refugees into its territories as a means to preserve national security and to ensure that any Hamas affiliation stays away from the public. In this sense, Palestinians find themselves prey to changing domestic or international politics.

Egypt within a larger context

It is important to recognize the difference in terms of geographic settings between the Palestinians living in Egypt and those in Lebanon or in Jordan. On the one hand, one might think

that the absence of refugee camps and noticeable humanitarian aid in Egypt renders refugees invisible, voiceless and atomized exiles (Peteet, 2011). Authors like Randa Farah argue that camps are venues refracting an aggregate self-conscious Palestinian national identity and political struggle: “they are embodiments of the right to return to one’s home and homeland.” (2009). However, some scholars consider the near absence of refugee camps in Egypt in a positive light since camps are seen as places where they warehouse refugees. Indeed, Pateet (2011) argues that the living conditions of the urban refugee is often much better than that of a camp dweller and have a better chance of integrating into the host community. In fact, in order to circumvent social and financial difficulties, Palestinian refugees in Egypt adopted different strategies that would help them integrate into the Egyptian society and guarantee them a legitimate reason to stay in Egypt including marrying Egyptians, searching for jobs in private institutions or in the informal economy including domestic work, street peddling or construction labor (Abed, 2009). This is similar to the case of Iraqi refugees in Egypt who were able to self-sustain a living by sending their children to school and engaging in private sector business activities or the informal sector (Pascucci, 2011). Although both the Iraqi and the Palestinians live in the same urban setting, Iraqis who fled Baghdad were mostly middle class and educated, thus had more prospects and opportunities to integrate within the Egyptian community. Palestinians lacked the necessary work permits, skills and education required in order to work and find decent jobs that would give them a sustained and stable income.

Additionally, the independence and disconnection from refugee agencies allows refugees to avoid any vulnerability due to a change in aid provision and increases their opportunities for self-reliance. In fact, the camp setting isolates the refugees from the rest of the community and increases their dependency on humanitarian aid agencies (Hyndman, 2000). This is the case of

Palestinian refugees living in Lebanese camps whose identities are dependent upon the agency's recognition and care. Also, the high visibility of refugee camps increases the vulnerability of its residents to political attacks such as the Sabra and Shatila massacre in 1982 or the destruction of the PLO base camp in Karamah, Jordan in 1970. Thus, living in the Egyptian urban setting allows Palestinians to escape the attention of the media and avoid political targeting through integrating in the society.

Conclusion

In conclusion, the Egyptian legal framework towards refugees in general highlights a lack of implementation of international rights. In fact, although Egypt officially ratified the 1951 Convention on refugees, it does not comply with its provisions and is controverting many of its articles under pretext of national security concerns. Palestinian refugees are left unprotected and lawless. Also, due to the absence of UNRWA and the lack of consistency in the provision of assistance and protection from humanitarian aid agencies enhances their vulnerability due to changing laws and policies. As we go through Nasser's Golden Era to the long-lasting low ebb during Sadat's last years, it is clear that different Egyptian leaderships' treatment of Palestinian refugees underscore how policies toward refugees are often formulated by domestic and international geopolitical discourses and crises, including and Egyptian-Israeli and Egyptian-PLO relations. Currently, under the post-coup leadership, abusive policies towards Palestinians, disguised as state security measures, are being used to sustain an existing climate of fear toward refugees, in order to legitimize discriminatory and law-breaching actions. Yet, similar to other refugee groups in Egypt, Palestinian deployed various means in order to secure employment, residence, education and other basic rights, despite Egyptian separatists policies. Lastly, one hopes to see the Egyptian government address its responsibilities toward its refugee communities

and improve their situation within the framework of the “New Egypt” project envisioned by President El-Sisi.

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