



[Violence Continues in Palestinian Refugee Camp in Lebanon](#)

Fighting has persisted at the Ein el-Hilweh Camp following the assassination of Palestinian faction Fatah commander Abu Ashraf al-Armouchi and four of his bodyguards this past Saturday. Ein el-Hilweh is the largest Palestinian refugee camp in Lebanon, located near the southern port city of Sidon and the home to over 55,000 refugees. Conflict first began after an unknown gunman attempted to kill Mahmoud Khalil, but shot Ashraf al-Armouchi, who is responsible for security inside Ein el-Hilweh, instead. Following the assassination, fighting continued between factions, killing at least nine people and injuring dozens more. The violence forced over 2,000 refugees to flee, and nearby hospitals and buildings to evacuate.

Due to a longstanding agreement between parties, the Lebanese army is prohibited from entering the camp, surrounded by a large wall with limited access. The conflict resolution inside the camp, per the agreement, is left to groups in Ein el-Hilweh.

The camp was established in 1948 under the jurisdiction of the United Nations, primarily in response to Palestinians fleeing after the Nakba and the creation of the state of Israel. Since then, it has remained the largest of the 12 official UN refugee camps in Lebanon. Over 479,000 Palestinian refugees are currently living in Lebanon's refugee camps. Violence in the camp is not an anomaly. Multiple clashes have erupted over the past few decades between several armed factions, and the Lebanese military inability to use force to end violence due to the standing agreement.

An attempted ceasefire started Monday after a meeting between Fatah, Lebanese Amal, Hezbollah, and other groups, fighting has persisted. Following the spillover of conflict outside of the camp that injured several Lebanese army officials, the army warned of the "consequences of exposing military posts and their personnel to danger, whatever the reasons, and stressed that the army will respond to fire in kind." The director of the UNRWA in Lebanon, Dorothee Kraus, stated that all UNRWA operations within the camp have been suspended due to the conflict. She said that safety in Ein el-Hilweh must be restored for the betterment of all civilians and children. Lebanese Prime Minister Najib Mikati condemned the recent attacks, asking Palestinian forces to cooperate with the Lebanese army to mediate the situation.

The violence in Ein el-Hilweh is a consequence of the Palestinian-Israeli conflict, and mirrors similar the current conflict at the Lebanese-Israeli border. This past month, incidents at the borders left three Hezbollah members injured from Israeli fire, as Lebanese fighters and citizens alike attempt to retake what they consider Lebanese land fenced off by Israeli forces.

The migration of Palestinian refugees into Lebanon has remained steady for over 70 years has provided Fatah and other Palestinian factions with members and thus increasing their presence in the refugee camps. As violence continues, there is no telling if a ceasefire will hold, or if greater jurisdiction from the

Lebanese army is needed to end the fighting. Nevertheless, Ein el-Hilweh is a reminder of the Palestinian plight for existence, as the generational conflict for autonomy feeds the conflict with Israel.