

August 22, 2008

## **Call for researchers: Modes of Governance of Palestinian Refugee Camps Research Program**

**Issam Fares Institute for Public Policy and International Affairs (IFI)  
and Center for Behavioral Research (CBR)**

### **American University of Beirut**

Palestinian camps program faculty research director: Dr. Sari Hanafi

Program coordinator: Tara Mahfoud

For their program on Policy and Governance in Palestinian Refugee Camps in the Arab World, the Issam Fares Institute for Public Policy and International Affairs (IFI) and the Center for Behavioral Research at the American University of Beirut seek four short-term researchers to conduct research and interviews according to the proposal and methodology below, under the supervision of IFI: one researcher each in Syria, Jordan, the West Bank and Gaza. Duration of the contract is four months, starting October 1, 2008. (Research in camps in Lebanon is already underway).

Each researcher would undertake a preliminary literature review on the question of mode of governance of Palestinian refugee camps in the concerned field, then conduct 25-30 interviews with concerned actors and write a report (around 15,000 words) in English or Arabic. When IFI convenes a workshop on this issue, the researchers will be invited to attend. The honorarium for this research work is US \$3000 net.

Interviews should be conducted during the first two months. The researcher should provide IFI-AUB all the documentation gathered during the project, and all material produced, including the report, will be the property of AUB. The researchers will be acknowledged appropriately in any publications drawing on their work. If their reports are published separately, they will be recognized as the sole authors of the reports.

### **Abstract**

This research project aims to clarify the relationship between power, sovereignty and space concerning the case of the Palestinian refugee camps in the Middle East, by examining modes of governance inside the camps. By modes of governance, we mean: how a camp is managed in terms of relationships to the legal authorities of the host country and to the surrounding municipalities, relationships among groups within the camps, conflict resolution for everyday problems, and the role of moral entrepreneurs who control behavior and public morality in the camp. Many actors contribute to these different modes of governance: the host authorities, the Palestine Liberation Organization (PLO), various Palestinian political factions and parties, popular committees, the United Nations Relief and Works Agency for Palestine Refugees in the Near East (UNRWA), local and national Islamist groups, civil society and other informal groups, and various local and political commissars.

### **Methodology**

The primary research methodology will be ethnographic, employing loosely structured interviews in order to allow the analysis to stem from the statements of the interviewees themselves. Actors involved in governance and conflict-resolution could include the UNRWA director of the camp, popular committee members, political factions' leaders, host country political or security officials, religious leaders, NGOs, Palestinian union leaders, village clubs (dawawine), business leaders, and notables. The contacts with

camp dwellers will allow us to see how the population perceives these actors. We also wish to interview municipality actors in the neighborhood area of each camp.

We intend to conduct up to 30 in-depth interviews per camp.

The interviews will deal with the following questions:

- How is the space of the camp politically organized?
- What is the role of each actor in the governance of the camps?
- What kind of coordination and cooperation occur between the different actors?
- Who are the moral entrepreneurs?
- How have disputes over land/properties/businesses been settled?
- How are problems between camp dwellers on both the personal and neighborhood level resolved?
- What kind of justice (formal/informal) is used when dealing with social affairs?
- How have disputes between camp dwellers and those outside the camp been settled?
- What kind of institutional or ad hoc mechanisms are deployed among the camps' popular committees and the different host authorities in order to manage issues related to justice?
- How have municipal matters with the neighborhood municipalities been negotiated?

Interested researchers should send their CV and contact information by e-mail to [ifi@aub.edu.lb](mailto:ifi@aub.edu.lb) by September 10. For more information on IFI or the Palestinian camps program, see <http://staff.aub.edu.lb/~webifi/>