

moba media

PO 4653
Portland OR
97208
1217 SW 19th
Portland OR
97205
(503) 223-1677

Shirley
Hancock

Sanchez

camp

te.

engineer

Sanchez

REFUGEE CAMP

Channel 6 KOIN-TV

4/1/84

5:06

Voting is an alien concept in another part of the world where some Oregonians made some observations this week. It was a natural result of the Governor's trade mission of the Mideast.

Mark Sanchez went along and visited a Palestinian refugee camp in Damascus.

Since the creation of Israel in 1948, Syria has been home for some of the five million Arabs who are officially stateless. They are Palestinians. Many of them carry Jordanian passports but not these three thousand people who live in the Al Majerian Camp of South Damascus.

With tents supplied by the Palestine Liberation Organization and relief from Syria, these people lead an existence far different from what they knew just as little as two months ago when the American destroyer New Jersey shelled Beirut.

We have many troubles because most of the people here cannot work.

Mohammad Al Hassan holds an engineering degree. He realistically cannot expect to land a job here since Syria officially discourages work for evacuees regardless of their training.

You see someday these people are expected to leave. Not every evacuee lives in a tent. The richers ones, some of them, lives in homes and apartments but all of the people I've talked to here in the camps wants to go home.

(MORE)

Refugee Camp, Channel 6 KOIN-TV, 4/1/84

Sanchez

Frankly, they blame to a very real degree American foreign policy for their situation here.

Al Hassan

We, we don't stand up against the Americans but stand against the work of Americans in battle. We know that they have the same face Regan or Reagan.

Sanchez

Some of these Lebanese left with little more than their Mercedes and a change of clothing. They wait for peace to break out. These evacuees in Al Majarian and a dozen other camps receive some medical and educational benefits from the United Nations.

The Syrians help the blind and handicapped but would gladly trade all of that in for peace with Israel and a place to call home and no one underestimates the difficulties.

Someone asked me, though, why aren;t the Americans more concerned about our plight?

In Damascus, Syria, Mark Sanchez reporting for Newsroom Six.

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