



مجموعة العمل من أجل فلسطينيي سورية
Action Group For Palestinians of Syria

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الخاص بأوضاع اللاجئين الفلسطينيين في سورية

Daily report on the situation of Palestinian refugees in Syria



"18 Palestinian Journalists Killed in War-Torn Syria"

- Palestinians Condemn Latest EU Resolution Targeting Refugee Agency
- Syria Regime Imposes Charges on Vehicles in AlSayeda Zeinab Camp
- Palestinian Prisoners in Syria Excluded from Presidential Amnesty
- Relief Items Distributed to Palestinians in Northern Syria Displacement Camps

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Latest Developments

AGPS has recorded the death of 18 Palestinian journalists in Syria and the secret detention of dozens more since the outburst of deadly hostilities in March 2011, among whom academics and volunteers.

The casualties died while covering scenes on the battleground or while providing civilians with relief assistance across the ravaged Syrian territories.

The list includes nine journalists who died under shelling, five who were tortured to death, and four others who were fatally shot.

The casualties are photojournalists and activists Fady Abu Ajaj, Jamal Khalifa, Ahmad AlSahli, Bassam Hamidi, Ahmad Taha, and Bilal Sa'id. They were killed in onslaughts targeting Yarmouk Camp for Palestinian refugees.

Photojournalist Jihad Shehabi died in an air strike on Hjeira town, south of Damascus, while activist Yamen Dhaher was killed in a raid on Khan Eshieh Camp. News correspondent Tareq Ziad Khader was pronounced dead in Daraa Camp, south of Syria.

Yarmouk residents Niraz Sa'id, Khaled Bakrawi, Hassan Hassan, and Alaa Naji, along with Bilal Ahmad, from Muadhamiyat AlSham, were tortured to death in Syrian government prisons.



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Iyas Farhat was the first journalist to be killed in Yarmouk as he covered a rally protesting the murder of 14 members of the Palestine Liberation Army in the bloody warfare north of Syria.

Ghassan Shehabi, director of AlShajara Center to document Palestinian heritage, along with activists Ahmad Kousa and Mounir AlKhatib were gunned down by a government sniper in Yarmouk Camp.

Scores of activists, journalists, and correspondents have, meanwhile, been locked up in Syrian government dungeons for years. The list includes Muhannad Omar, Ali Shehabi, Rami Hajou, Ali Musleh, and Ahmad Jalil.

Facts on the ground prove that the number of casualties is much higher. Difficulties in documentation stem from the absence of official statistics, lack of concern as regards the number of Palestinian casualties, journalists in particular, the intricacy of the name-identification process, and the families' reluctance to reveal the victims' names for fear of retaliation.

AGPS condemns the apathy maintained by the international community and Palestinian leadership as regards the extrajudicial killing, harsh torture, and arbitrary detention of Palestinian journalists and activists in war-ravaged Syria.

In another development, the Palestine Liberation Organization (PLO) and other national factions have strongly condemned the language adopted by the European Parliament in its 2019



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discharge resolution on European Union (EU) budget implementation.

The EU claimed UNRWA teaches and disseminates hate speech and encourages violence within its schools.

The PLO said the move makes part of an ad hominem campaign led by the Israeli occupation and its European allies to strip aid from the agency.

Palestinian Resistance Movement Hamas also denounced the measure, saying no such reactions have been made against Israel despite its school curricula being filled with racist terminology, hate speech, and dehumanizing discourse.

In response to the EU accusations, UNRWA said it is a United Nations Agency with zero tolerance for hatred, incitement to violence or discrimination.

UNRWA said it unequivocally rejects such unfounded assertions and confirms that its educational materials uphold and advance the UN principles and values of neutrality, human rights, equality and non-discrimination regarding race, gender, language and religion.

The Agency said host country curricula are used by it in all its fields of operations and the content of the educational materials is thoroughly reviewed to ensure that it is in line with UN values and principles.



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"In the rare cases where discrepancies are found, a robust system is in place to address them. To suggest that hate is widespread within the Agency and schools is not only false and misleading, but it validates sensationalist and politically motivated attacks which deliberately seek to discredit UNRWA and harm the most vulnerable section of the community: the Palestine refugee children," the statement added.

UNRWA stressed that it has a zero-tolerance policy for any deviation to UN principles. Nevertheless, UNRWA acknowledged that there cannot be zero risk when operating in a complex humanitarian setting and in a highly politicized environment.

"Members of the Parliament have been duly informed and kept up to date regarding this important development, and we profoundly regret that UNRWA investments have been ignored by many members of the European Parliament in its 2019 discharge resolution on EU budget implementation", the statement further read.

Meanwhile, the Syrian regime's Fourth Division imposed taxes on vehicles entering AlSayeda Zeinab town and its Palestinian refugee camp, in Rif Dimashq province.

This comes after Syrian security forces recaptured checkpoints previously run by Shiite militias and removed sand barriers pitched in and around the area.

The imposed charges range from 5,000 to 50,000 Syrian pounds. As a result, merchants have increased the prices of their



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commodities in an area that has already been gripped with dire socio-economic conditions as a result of the ten-year warfare.

Along similar lines, Syrian President Bashar Assad issued a decree Sunday granting amnesty and reducing sentences for several categories of crime committed before May 2, state news agency SANA said.

The Amnesty did not include thousands of Palestinian and Syrian prisoners held on security/political grounds and in such notorious lock-ups as Sednaya.

SANA did not give a reason for the amnesty but it came days before Muslims celebrate Eid el-Fitr, the feast that marks the end of the Muslim holy month of Ramadan. It also comes ahead of the May 26 presidential elections, which Assad will most likely win for a fourth, seven-year term in office.

Since Syria's conflict began in 2011, Assad has issued similar amnesties, the latest of which came in September 2019. The conflict has killed half a million people and displaced half the country's prewar population including more than 5 millions who are refugees abroad.

SANA described Sunday's presidential decree as "the most comprehensive amnesty decree for perpetrators of crimes, misdemeanors and felonies."



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The decree granted a complete pardon for the punishment for crimes and felonies including smuggling, drug abuse, and foreign currency trading.

It also covers kidnappings, provided that the kidnapped person was released before the date of the amnesty safe and sound.

The decree also allowed a general amnesty for military deserters who turn themselves in within 3 months for those inside the country, and 6 months for those outside the country.

The decree reduced the death penalty to life imprisonment with hard labor, and life imprisonment with hard labor to temporary hard labor for a period of 20 years.

Lists of hundreds of forcibly disappeared Palestinian refugees and victims in Syria are available on AGPS website, both in English and Arabic. AGPS supplies a database of their names and possible times and places of arrest.

AGPS has documented the secret detention of over 1,790 Palestinian refugees, including women and minors, in Syrian government lock-ups.

Humanitarian Action

The Palestine Commission for Relief and Development distributed food baskets to displaced Palestinian and Syrian families in Deir Ballout and AlMuhammadiya camps, north of Syria.



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Palestinian refugees sheltered in Idlib, AlMuhammadiya Camp, and Deir Ballout Camp, in northern Syria, have been enduring a tragic situation. Most of them have been crammed in poorly-equipped tents and denied their rights to vital services.

For many displaced Palestinian refugees, the perils of the coronavirus pandemic add to the torment already experienced throughout the conflict.

High rates of unemployment and lack of relief assistance have made the situation far worse for the displaced families.

According to data by the Commission of Palestinians of Syria for Relief and Development, as many as 1,488 Palestinian families have been sheltered in the northern Syrian regions of Idlib, Efrin, and Aleppo's suburbs. The largest number of families are taking refuge in Idlib.

Some 819 Palestinian families have sought shelter in Idlib, including 226 families in the city center, 152 in Atama, 60 in Akrebat village, and 60 more in Sarmada town. 50 families are taking refuge in Maarat AlNu'man and Jericho, south of Idlib, and also in Ataa village.