



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



"UNRWA Shocked by the Death of Two Palestine Refugees in Deraa, Appeals for Safety of Civilians"

- **UNRWA: 100% of Palestinian Families from Syria in Jordan in Need of Winter Assistance**
- **Palestinian Refugees from Syria Rally outside of UNRWA Office in Lebanon**
- **Philippe Lazzarini Appointed as UNRWA Commissioner-General**
- **Palestinian Refugee Ali Hamouda Secretly Held in Syrian Gov't Jail for over 7 Years**

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Latest Developments

Acting Commissioner General of the UN Agency for Palestine refugees (UNRWA), Christian Saunders, has strongly condemned the killing of a Palestinian woman and her niece near Deraa refugee camp, in southern Syria.

On the evening of 28 February, Raghad and Laila were killed by an improvised explosive device (IED) while walking back to their home in Deraa camp, Palestine refugee camp located in southern Syria, after having bought bread at the local bakery. Raghad was just 10-years-old and her aunt Laila was 53, said Saunders in a statement issued on Tuesday.

“This shocking incident occurred amidst rising tensions in the south of Syria in recent months, marked by incidents of kidnapping, targeted killings and the use of improvised explosive devices like the one that killed Raghad and Laila”, his statement read.



“Less than three weeks ago, the Palestine refugee community in Deraaa camp had come together to celebrate the inauguration of an UNRWA school after it had been rehabilitated”, stated Suanders. “Today, this same school community comes together in mourning to



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mark the loss of one of their students. As of February 2020, some 800 families had returned to the camp and 750 students to the UNRWA school.”

According to UN data, Deraa camp used to be home to some 10,500 Palestine refugees before the conflict in Syria led to large scale destruction and displacement. All UNRWA facilities in the camp have suffered high levels of damage and nearly 90 per cent of the camp residents were displaced.

“The opening of the school was supposed to be a symbol of hope, particularly for the camp’s children, many of whom have only known a world of war and devastation, said UNRWA’s Acting Commissioner-General.

Saunders added that indiscriminate use or the targeting of the IEDs against civilians or civilian objects is strictly prohibited under International Humanitarian Law.

A couple of days earlier, human rights sources said Palestinian woman Layla Salah Khalil, aged 40, and her niece Raghad Esam Awad, aged 11, died after an explosive device went off in Daraa province south of Syria.

The Action Group for Palestinians of Syria (AGPS) said the explosive device was implanted by unidentified assailants. It exploded near the office of AlBaath Party, on the route to the Daraa airport.

AGPS documented the death of 407 Palestinian residents of Daraa province, including 268 refugees taking shelter in Daraa camp, since the outburst of the bloody war in Syria.



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Along similar lines, UNRWA said nearly 100% of Palestine refugee families from Syria (PRS) in Jordan are in critical need of sustained humanitarian assistance.

In its Syria Regional Crisis Emergency Appeal 2020, UNRWA said the vast majority of PRS in Jordan need to receive one or more UNRWA emergency assistance interventions especially during winter.

UNRWA said PRS are highly vulnerable and 31% of recorded PRS are members of female-headed households, which increases their vulnerability.

Due to new arrivals and natural population growth, the number of PRS recorded with the UNRWA in Jordan has reached 17,343 at the end of November 2019, including 349 refugees sheltered in King Abdullah Garden.

PRS who have entered from Syria and remain in Jordan irregularly are living under continuous risk of arrest, detention and potential for forced return to Syria. Their lack of legal status and corresponding protection risks in Jordan are a source of major concern to UNRWA.

After nine years of conflict, Palestinian refugees in and from Syria continue to face significant humanitarian and protection needs. In the absence of a durable political settlement, intense hostilities and violence resulting in deaths and injuries, internal displacement, loss of livelihoods, decreases in the provision of public services, and extensive damage to civilian infrastructure have disrupted the lives of civilians and severely undermined coping mechanisms.



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According to the Agency's database, of the estimated 438,000 Palestine refugees remaining inside Syria, over 95 per cent (418,000) are in critical need of sustained humanitarian assistance. Some 254,000 Palestine refugees have been displaced at least once since the beginning of the conflict and an estimated 13,500 are trapped in hard-to reach or inaccessible locations.

Meanwhile, Palestinian refugees from Syria joined a vigil staged on Tuesday, March 3, outside of the offices of UNRWA directors in Palestinian refugee camps and communities in Sidon, Tripoli, and Western AlBekaa, along with the refugee camps of Ein AlHilweh, Burj AlBarajneh, AlBadawi, and Naher AlBared.

The protest move was called for by the popular committees for Palestinians refugees from Syria in Lebanon in an attempt to urge UNRWA to take up its responsibility regarding the Palestinians of Syria, increase cash assistance, and enhance humanitarian services, pending a just and lasting solution to the refugees' plight.



The rally-goers handed over letters to UNRWA directors, urging the UN Agency to take immediate action in response to their calamitous humanitarian condition.



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A few days earlier, Palestinian activists in Lebanon launched an e-campaign in an attempt to urge UNRWA to live up to their demands for physical, legal, and humanitarian protection.

Hundreds of Palestinian refugees from Syria also rallied on Monday, March 2, outside of UNRWA's regional office in Beirut, urging the UN Agency to set an emergency plan for comprehensive and sustainable relief assistance for refugees and displaced persons in light of the current economic crisis rocking the Lebanese territories.

Palestinians from Syria in Lebanon continue to express deep concern over their fate as anti-government protests have rolled into the fourth consecutive month and spiraled into violence.

Palestinian refugees from Syria are reported to lack legal status in Lebanon. The absence of a specific legislation addressing their unique situation along with their ambivalent legal status and the inhospitality shown by local authorities combine to make life unbearable for Palestinian refugees in Lebanon.

In the meantime, UN Secretary-General Antonio Guterres has named Swiss national Philippe Lazzarini to be the next commissioner-general of the United Nations Relief and Works Agency for Palestine Refugees in the Near East (UNRWA).

The organization provides services in the fields of education, health, shelter, and relief to more than five million registered refugees in the West Bank, Gaza Strip and East Jerusalem, in addition to refugees in neighboring countries such as Jordan, Lebanon, and Syria.



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A senior diplomat at the Security Council told Asharq Al-Awsat that the selection was decided on Monday, explaining that the appointment file was referred to the UNRWA Advisory Committee.

On April 24, 2015, former UN Secretary-General Ban Ki-moon appointed Lazzarini as the UN deputy special coordinator for Lebanon, in the office of then-UN Special Coordinator, Dutch Sigrid Kaag, who is currently Minister of Foreign Trade and Cooperation for Development of her country.

Lazzarini has extensive experience in humanitarian assistance and international coordination in conflict and post-conflict areas.

He has served as deputy to the Special Representative for the UN Assistance Mission in Somalia, also as a resident representative and humanitarian coordinator.

Before that, Lazzarini held several senior positions in the United Nations Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs, and various field missions in Iraq, Angola, Somalia, and the Occupied Palestinian Territories.

Before joining the United Nations in 2003, Lazzarini headed the marketing department of a private bank in Geneva. He also worked for 10 years with the ICRC as deputy head of communications, head of the ICRC delegation in Rwanda, Angola and Sarajevo, and an ICRC delegate in South Sudan, Jordan, Gaza, and Beirut.

UNRWA has been facing budget problems since last year after the United States, the agency's largest donor, announced it would halt its annual \$360 million-aid.



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In another development, Palestinian refugee Ali Mohamed Hammouda has been secretly locked up in Syrian government prisons for over seven years.

Ali, a native of the occupied Palestinian city of Haifa, was kidnapped on March 1, 2013, on his way out of AlShaghour area, trying to reach Jaramana in Damascus. His condition and whereabouts could not be identified.

According to AGPS data, 1,787 Palestinian refugees have been secretly incarcerated in Syria's state-run jails, including dozens of women and minors.

