



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

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التقرير اليومي

الخاص بأوضاع اللاجئين الفلسطينيين في سورية

Daily report on the situation of Palestinian refugees in Syria



"37 Palestinian Women Tortured to Death in Syrian Jails"

- **Palestinian Families Displaced from Yarmouk Camp Appeal for Urgent Relief Assistance in Response to Coronavirus Outbreak**
- **Activists In AlSabina Camp Call for Home Quarantines**
- **Athens Migrant Camp Quarantined over Coronavirus Contaminations**
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Latest Developments

AGPS has documented the death of hundreds of Palestinian refugees under torture in Syrian government prisons since the outburst of the bloody warfare in 2011, among whom 37 women and girls.

AGPS data indicates that the toll of torture among Palestinian refugees in Syria's state-run penal complexes has hit 620.

Field reporters believe the real numbers to be far higher due to the government's reticence to reveal the names and fates of Palestinian detainees and the families' fears to disclose their relatives' names over retaliation concerns.

The list of victims includes activists, volunteers, medics, engineers, academics, journalists, university students, and artists.



According to data by AGPS, more than 1,790 Palestinian refugees, among them children, women and elderly refugees, have been enduring unknown fates in Syrian government lock-ups. Toddlers clinging to their mothers' arms have also been spotted in Syrian jails.



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According to affidavits by ex-detainees, Palestinian refugees have been subjected to harsh psycho-physical torture tactics in Syrian penitentiaries, including electric shocks, heavy beating using iron sticks, and sexual abuse.

AGPS believes that such practices represent flagrant violations of international law which criminalizes all forms of torture and mistreatment against civilians.

AGPS continues to urge the Syrian authorities to disclose the condition and whereabouts of Palestinian refugees held in its penitentiaries.

In another development, Palestinian families displaced from Yarmouk refugee camp to Jdeidat Artouz, in Rif Dimashq, said they are unable to cope with the coronavirus outbreak as they have not received medical assistance by the UN Relief and Works Agency for Palestine Refugees (UNRWA).

The residents said no precautionary measures have been taken in the area, where dozens of displaced families live below the poverty line.

Civilians added that neither disinfectants nor detergents have been distributed in the area.

Over recent weeks, Palestinian refugees sheltered across the Syrian territories have kept urging UNRWA to assist them in their fight against the novel coronavirus COVID-19.

Activists have lashed out at UNRWA and the General Authority for Palestinian Arab Refugees (GAPAR) over their unresponsiveness



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regarding the cries for help launched by the Palestinian refugee community in Syria due to coronavirus outbreak.

The refugees said the sterilization campaigns and precautionary measures carried out by UNRWA and GAPAR do not protect civilians against COVID-19 contaminations.



Recently, AGPS has warned of a projected outbreak of COVID-19 in Palestinian refugee camps in Syria. Though campaigns to help spread awareness among the camps' residents have recently seen the day, limited access to running water, pharmacies and medical facilities mean displacement camps are more susceptible to the spread of the highly infectious virus.

Along similar lines, activists in AlSabina refugee camp called on the residents to stay indoors following complaints that children have been spotted in the streets.

Located some 14 kilometers away from southern Damascus, AlSabina Camp has been gripped with an abject situation owing to the absence of humanitarian assistance, relief aids, proper infrastructure, and vital facilities. Frequent water and power outages have made the situation far worse.



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The calls fall in line with a range of preventative measures imposed by President Bashar al-Assad's government, which controls the country's biggest cities.

It has imposed a night-time curfew, restricted travel between provinces, shut schools and universities, and banned gatherings at mosques and other public events.

Last week, Syria's health ministry said a woman succumbed to coronavirus disease - the war-torn country's first officially reported fatality.

The woman died on Sunday after being taken to hospital, state media reported, without giving a location.

A dozen other people tested positive for the Covid-19 respiratory illness but medics suspect there are many more.

There are fears the virus will spread rapidly through vulnerable populations, overwhelming the healthcare system.

Only 64% of public hospitals are fully functioning and there is a considerable shortage of trained staff, according to the World Health Organization.

There are also six million internally displaced people in Syria, many of whom are living in overcrowded conditions in camps with insufficient water and sanitation infrastructure.

Meanwhile, Greece has quarantined a refugee camp in the mainland, home to 2,300 people, for at least two weeks after 20 residents tested positive for COVID-19.



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Greece's Ministry of Migration announced on Thursday that movement from the Ritsona camp will be heavily restricted and monitored by police. All of those who tested positive showed no symptoms, the ministry said.

An AGPS reporter said a 14-day quarantine has been imposed on the camp, where some 2,500 persons have been taking shelter, including 250 Palestinian refugees from Syria.

The measures came as authorities tested dozens of people in the camp after a woman, who had been living there, was found to have the infection as she gave birth in a nearby hospital last week - the first recorded case of a refugee contracting COVID-19.

Health officials are currently investigating the source of the infection, and are testing more camp residents to establish how many have the virus.

The International Organization for Migration (IOM), one of the official actors in Ritsona which will continue to have a presence during the quarantine, was attempting to protect the site located some 70 kilometers (43 miles) north of the capital, Athens, from a more serious outbreak.

There would be a heightened police presence around the camp to ensure the lockdown measures were adhered to.

The cases come amid growing calls from NGOs, doctors and academics for the European Union to evacuate refugee camps during the coronavirus pandemic.

Thousands of migrants, including Palestinians, live in packed and squalid camps in Greece, and are therefore at high risk of acquiring



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infectious diseases due to crowded conditions and poor hygiene and sanitation.

There are growing fears that an uncontrolled spread in camp contexts, such as those on the Greek islands, may lead to a public health disaster as measures of social distancing and quarantine are almost impossible in these settings.

As of Wednesday evening, Greece had 1,415 confirmed cases of the virus and a total of 50 deaths.

In the meantime, 18 irregular migrants were rescued by the Turkish coast guard off Mugla seashore.

The migrants, including Palestinians from Syria, were stuck off the Aegean coast onboard a Greece-bound vessel.

In 2019, Turkish authorities held nearly 455,000 irregular migrants across the country, including about 60,000 trying to cross the Mediterranean.



As many as 268,000 irregular migrants were held in Turkey in 2018, 175,000 each in 2017 and 2016 and 146,000 in 2015.

Palestinian refugees from Syria continue to risk their lives onboard the “death boats” to Greece, rummaging around for a momentary



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respite from the daily scenes of bloodshed and destruction. AGPS has kept record of the death of dozens of refugees onboard Greece-bound ships.

Activists estimate that around 4,000 Palestinian refugees from Syria are taking cover on such Greek islands as Lesbos, Mytilene, Chios, Leros, and Kos, among other areas.