



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



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### "Number of Coronavirus Fatalities Goes Up in Palestinian Refugee Camp in Syria"

- 285 Displaced Palestinian Families from Syria Taking Refugee in Lebanon's Wadi AlZinah
- 70% of Deraa Camp Neighborhoods Deprived of Potable Water
- Situation of Displaced Palestinian Families in Deir Ballout Camp Exacerbated by Water Dearth
- Palestinian Family Forcibly Disappeared in Syrian Prisons for 7<sup>th</sup> Year

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## Latest developments

A number of residents of Khan Dannun camp for Palestinian refugees, in Rif Dimashq, have died of coronavirus this week.

Local sources told AGPS that the lethal virus has spread quickly in and around the camp, saying at least four people have succumbed to the disease over recent days.

The same sources slammed the Syrian authorities and international humanitarian institutions for their indifference regarding the residents' appeals for treatment and hygiene kit.

A number of patients with breathing disorders have reportedly been denied admission into Damascus hospitals and asked to quarantine themselves at home.

Over recent months, 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 seen the day, limited access to running water, pharmacies and medical facilities means displacement camps are more susceptible to the spread of the highly infectious virus.

In another development, the number of Palestinian families from Syria sheltered in Wadi AlZinah, in Lebanon's southern region of AlKharroub, is estimated at 285.

The number has shrunk back compared to previous years. The Charity Association for Relief of Palestinian People said that in



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2018, 550 Palestinian families sought shelter in the area, up from 400 in 2019.

In its 2020 Syria crisis emergency appeal, in August and September 2019, UNRWA conducted a verification exercise of PRS in Lebanon and verified the physical presence of 27,803 PRS in the country.

The number of PRS in Lebanon has been gradually decreasing over the past two years, and UNRWA estimates that in 2020 the country will continue to host approximately 27,700 PRS (8,450 families).

According to a survey conducted by the American University of Beirut in 2015, nearly 90 percent of the PRS population in Lebanon live in poverty, including 9 per cent who are in extreme poverty and unable to meet even their most essential food requirements.

The UN Agency also said PRS continue to face high vulnerability in the Lebanese territories. PRS's vulnerability is exacerbated by their precarious legal status.

According to the Agency's monitoring data, around 55 percent of PRS do not possess valid legal residency documents. The lack of a valid legal status, often coupled with outdated civil registration documents, results in severely restricted freedom of movement for some PRS in Lebanon due to fear of arrest, detention and being issued a departure order.



In 2019, the decision of the General Security Office of the Government of Lebanon to deport Syrians who entered the country illegally after 24 April 2019, coupled with departure orders issued to PRS without valid residency who entered before that date, have also increased the fear of PRS of being deported to Syria, said UNRWA.

The socio-economic hardships and unrest experienced by all in the country have compounded PRS' already dire living conditions. According to information collected by UNRWA, more than 80 per cent of PRS indicate that the Agency's cash assistance is their main source of income.

Meanwhile, residents of Daraa camp said they have been left without water for several days.

Civilians attributed the water scarcity to the closure of water pipelines by local authorities at the claim that water supplies are being frittered away under the ground due to unrepaired water networks.

The residents urged the local water company to carry out the necessary repair works and rehabilitate water networks at the soonest possible time.

An AGPS reporter said the Syrian army and authorities refuse to remove a sand barrier underneath which the main water key is buried.



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Over recent years, families taking refuge in the area said drinking water has been contaminated by sewage, causing it to become foul and salty.

All the way through Syria's ten-year conflict, residents of Daraa Camp for Palestinian refugees, south of Syria, have been grappling with dire humanitarian conditions owing to the high rates of unemployment and absence of vital facilities.

Founded in 1950-1951, Daraa Camp is home to over 650 displaced Palestinian families. As many as 4,500 families used to take shelter in the camp prior to the outbreak of the conflict in 2011.

UN data indicates that Deraa refugee camp is located inside Deraa City, in southern Syria. Palestinian refugees came to the Deraa area in two waves in 1948 and in 1967.

However, as the recent conflict unraveled, the camp became engulfed by violence and 90 per cent of the camp population had to leave the camp and seek safety in other areas such as Deraa city, Damascus or Jordan. Most UNRWA services were moved to alternative premises in Deraa city.

Deraa camp and its surroundings returned to government control in the summer of 2018. The camp is now largely destroyed. UNRWA was able to return to Deraa camp in November 2018 to conduct a needs assessment. Inside Deraa camp, all premises including three school buildings and a clinic need substantial repairs or complete rebuilding.



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Deraa camp was home to 10,500 Palestine refugees before 2011. As of November 2018, 400 Palestine refugee families have returned since the camp returned to government hands.

As of February 2020, some 800 families had returned to Daraa camp and 750 students to the UNRWA schools, according to UNRWA.

The camp was initially set up on an area of 0.04 square kilometers, and it now covers an area of 1.3 square kilometers. In addition to the 10,500 Palestine refugees in the camp, there were more than 17,500 Palestine refugees living in neighboring Syrian villages before the conflict. Most of them worked as farmers on Syrian-owned lands, others were employed as wage laborers, government workers and a few as UNRWA staff.

The older part of the camp was established in 1950-51 for refugees from the northern and eastern parts of Palestine following the 1948 Arab-Israeli conflict. Next to the old camp is the newer part, which was set up in 1967 for some 4,200 Palestine refugees who were forced to leave the Quneitra Governorate in the Golan following the 1967 Arab-Israeli conflict.

Along similar lines, hundreds of displaced Palestinian families north of Syria continue to launch cries for help over their tragic living conditions in the poorly-equipped Deir Ballout Camp, saying an acute water crisis has made the situation far worse.

The refugees lashed out at the concerned authorities over their apathy regarding the acute dearth in potable water, saying local



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tanks are being filled in just once week, forcing civilians to line up in long queues for hours to get a few liters.

The families have also been forced to purchase water from mobile tanks at exorbitant costs.

Hundreds of displaced Palestinian families taking refuge in the camp continue to urge the concerned authorities and international humanitarian institutions to live up to their responsibilities as regards their calamitous situation and to provide them with much-needed cash aid, medical items, and relief services.

In the meantime, ten members of a Palestinian refugee family have been secretly incarcerated in Syrian government jails since June 16, 2013.

AGPS identified the family members as: Mahira Mahmoud Amayri (born in 1964), Hadeel Mahmoud Amayri (born in 1987), Aseel Mahmoud Amayri (born in 1988), Widad Mahmoud Amayri (born in 1990), Razan Mahmoud Amayri (born in 2000), Suheer Mahmoud Amayri (born in 1981), and Maysaa Jamal Idris (born in 1979).

The list also includes Firas Waleed Dasouki (born in 1978) along with his children Hamza Firas Dasouki (born in 2011) and Hala Firas Dasouki (born in 2012).

The family members were all kidnapped by Syria's pro-government squads at a checkpoint in Nisreen Street, in AlTadhamun neighborhood.



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AGPS kept record of the secret detention of 1,797 Palestinian refugees in Syrian state dungeons, among them 110 women and girls.

AGPS continues to call on the Syrian government to disclose the fate of hundreds of Palestinians forcibly disappeared in state-run penitentiaries.

AGPS believes that the arbitrary internment of Palestinian refugees in war-torn Syria amounts to a war crime.

AGPS kept record of several cases where Palestinians have been kidnapped at government checkpoints or during assaults carried out by government troops on Palestinian refugee camps and shelters. In most such cases, the detainees' families receive their relatives' bodies from a military or government hospital while wrapped up in a plastic bag or in a blood-tainted piece of cloth.