



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



"Over 1,200 Palestinian and Syrian Refugees Killed in Ali AlWahsh Tragedy"

- Following Death of 8 Palestinian Refugees at Sea, AGPS Calls on European Court of Justice to Revise Family Reunion Law
- Palestinian Refugees in Lebanon Displacement Camp Rally in Solidarity with Victims of Greece Boat Tragedy
- Palestinian Refugees: Latest US Contribution to UNRWA Distrustful

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Latest Developments

Some eight years ago, over hundreds of Palestinian and Syrian refugees, including women and minors, were killed by pro-regime militias deployed at Ali AlWahsh checkpoint, south of Damascus.

The crime culminated in the murder of 1,200 Palestinians and Syrians, among them hundreds of women and minors trapped in the then-blockaded Yarmouk Camp.

In early January 2014, the Syrian regime claimed that a humanitarian corridor would be opened for those stranded in Yarmouk Camp and others areas south of Damascus. On Sunday, January 5, masses of stranded people from Yarmouk and the nearby towns of Yalda, Beit Saham, AlHajar AlAswad, ALTadhamun, AlBweidha flocked to AliAlWahsh Street, between Yalda and Hjeira towns.

As soon as hundreds of people showed up at Ali AlWahsh checkpoint, run by affiliates of a so-called “Abu Fadhl AlAbbas”, regime forces provided them with food which incited hundreds of others to join up.

At 10:00 young men were separated from women, children, and the elderly, before regime forces struck streets where people were gathering, resulting in deaths and injuries.

Eye-witnesses told AGPS that pro-regime militias forced civilians to throw their personal documents in barrels which were later



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burned down. Women were forced back to Yalda after heavy beating. Over 1,200 civilians were held captive inside warehouses. Several cases of rape and extra-judicial killing were reported.

The captives were transferred to Mision and Jajha security branches in Rif Dimashq, where they had been subjected to medical neglect heavy torture, many of them to death.

According to verified testimonies, at least 88 captives were fatally tortured in prison.

The youngest captive documented by AGPS is one-year-old Palestinian girl Maymouna AlSham Jaber. The oldest is Mohamed Koujil, born in 1939.

Meanwhile, AGPS has called on the European Court of Justice to revise migration policy and family reunification procedures for migrant children aged above 18.

The European Court of Justice (ECJ) should take serious action regarding the situation of refugees aged 18 and above and who wish to reunite with their families in Europe. This category of people has fallen prey to fraud and blackmailing by traffickers and smugglers.

AGPS has been receiving deeply alarming reports about what the Greek Coast Guard described in a statement as a “gigantic” operation that began on Friday, December 24, after a boat foundered off the island of Paros. Two earlier wrecks occurred farther south in the Aegean, off the islands of Folegandros and



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Antikythera. 17 migrants, including eight Palestinian refugees, breathed their last at sea. A number of others have been unaccounted for.

The list of victims of the latest tragedy includes Rawnd Alayde, a Palestinian-Syrian refugee born on November 21, 1998, and who risked her life onboard the Greek-bound “death boat” wishing to reunite with her family whom she has not seen for over six years after the German authorities turned their back on her appeals for family reunion, forcing her to seek alternative routes.

The tragedy is the result of the denial of the right to family reunification by EU States which continue to overlook the fact that protection of the family unit is a fundamental human right. Separation of families are of particular concern when they lead to migrant boys and girls being separated from their legal guardians or left unaccompanied. The longer-term separation of families due to migration, in particular when girls, like Rawnd, grow up in a host country without one or both parents, can also have a range of psychological, social and other adverse repercussions.

While EU States have the right to determine the conditions of entry, stay and the status of family members in their territories, EU governments should remember that the importance of family unity and its potential benefits for both migrants and their host communities should form a key part of migration policy considerations in Europe.

The EU and European Parliament should immediately embark on a fact-finding probe to determine the root causes of the Greece



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boat tragedy and hold those responsible for the migrant deaths to account in order to save more lives and help bring such crimes against humanity to a halt.

The EU should urgently reconsider its migration policy and family reunion red tape at embassies, migration departments, and consulates in host countries and to work on protecting the lives of migrants, among them hundreds of children, who are the victims of displacement, poverty, and economic marginalization.

Along similar lines, Palestinian refugees and CSOs in AlBadawi displacement camp, north of Lebanon, held a vigil in solidarity with the victims of the Greece boat accident and their families.

The refugees held banners lamenting the tragedy and mourning the victims, who risked their lives onboard “death-boats” fleeing war, economic hardship, and persecution.

A refugee said: “The families have pulled out all the stops to secure funds for the trip. However death had quicker wings than smuggler’s boats”.

Activists have urged the EU and European Parliament to immediately launch a fact-finding probe to determine the root causes of the Greece boat tragedy and hold smugglers to account in order to save more lives and help bring such crimes against humanity to a halt.

The accident is the latest in a series of similar tragic incidents at sea that claimed the lives of at least 72 Palestinian refugees fleeing



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war-torn Syria since the outbreak of the conflict in 2011. Scores of others died of cold on route to EU destinations.

In the meantime, Association 302 for Defense of Refugees Rights, warned of the malevolent implications of the latest contribution by the U.S. administration to the UN Agency for Palestine Refugees (UNRWA).

The United States pledged on Thursday to shell out \$99 to refresh the budget of the United Nations Relief and Works Agency for the Palestine Refugees (UNRWA), in light of the unprecedented financial crunch.

In a tweet, the State Department's Population, Refugee and Migration Bureau said: "The U.S. is proud to announce \$99M for UNRWA to provide education, health care, and emergency relief to hundreds of thousands of Palestinian children and families during a time of need."

Last year, the Palestinian Return Centre (PRC) issued a report unraveling the historical and legal discrepancies of the "2021-2022 Framework for Cooperation with the UN Relief and Works Agency for Palestine Refugees in the Near East (UNRWA)" signed by the U.S. Department of State's Bureau of Population, Refugees, and Migration on July 14.

Entitled "US-UNRWA Framework for Cooperation on Palestinian Refugees: Another Prelude to Dismantle the Agency", PRC's report provided a close reading of the Framework and showed how it



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unravels its biased and dangerous implications on the Palestinian refugee cause.

It said the framework signals a reawakening of the US pro-Israel policy which seeks to liquidate the Palestinian refugee cause, deny Palestinians' refugee status, and relocate them outside their homeland. The document includes signs of prejudice and partiality that strike at the foundations of the Palestinian refugee status.