



مجموعة العمل من أجل فلسطينيين 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



"Palestinians of Syria Call on UN Agency to Increase Humanitarian Aid"

- Palestinian Refugees Struggling for Survival in War-Torn Syria
- Coronavirus Cases Reported in Jaramana Refugee Camp
- Displaced Palestinian Families Urge Syrian Authorities to Facilitate Return to Yarmouk Camp
- Palestinian Family Appeals for Information over Forcibly-Disappeared Husam AlRefai

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Latest Developments

Director-General of the General Authority for Palestinian Arab Refugees (GAPAR), Ali Mustafa, has called upon UNRWA's Commissioner-General to work on securing Palestinian refugees' access to much-needed humanitarian and cash aid.

Musatafa called for increasing aid allotted to the refugees, after years of protracted displacement and dispossession. The COVID-19 pandemic has made the situation far worse.

In a letter to UNRWA, GAPAR urged the Agency to deliver aid every month rather than on a trimestral basis, saying an emergency aid plan should be adopted in order to ensure that Palestinian refugees continue receiving much-needed cash assistance so they can buy food and stay safe.

Along similar lines, Palestinian refugees in Syria continue to launch cries for help over their deteriorating humanitarian condition due to the sharp decrease in the exchange rate of the Syrian pound compared to the USD and their lack of access to the local labor market.

The price leap has also overburdened the cash-stripped refugees. House rents have seen a striking leap from previous years.

The refugees continue to urge UNRWA and all other concerned parties to increase financial aid, help the displaced families return to their refugee camps, and provide much-needed relief services for Palestine refugees.



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In its “Syria Regional Crisis Emergency Appeal 2021”, UNRWA said that protracted displacement, deteriorating socio-economic conditions aggravated by the consequences of the COVID-19 pandemic, dire humanitarian needs and protection concerns continue to affect the lives of Palestine refugees in Syria.

UNRWA said in its fact-sheet that in Syria, the protracted conflict has devastated human security and left 91 per cent of the 438,000 Palestine refugees estimated to remain in the country in absolute poverty and 40 per cent displaced.

As the coronavirus pandemic has rebounded around the MENA region and the globe, Palestinian refugees in war-torn Syria continue to struggle with growing poverty and economic hardship.

Many PRS lost their sources of income; refugee camps have seen unprecedented levels of destruction; rental prices have dramatically gone up; undernourishment and poverty have been a daily nightmare.

Due to the serious protection gaps, children have been forced to drop out of school and join armed groups to help feed their starving families.

Hundreds of families have had women as their sole breadwinners; and in several other cases boys and girls are spotted begging in the street for a few pounds.

Meanwhile, the UNRWA-run AlRama School, in Jaramana Camp for Palestinian refugees, in Syria’s Rif Dimashq province



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suspended courses at a number of classes on account of maintenance works.

Parents slammed the school administration for such “an arbitrary decision”, saying the measure rather comes following reports of a coronavirus infection sustained by an instructor at the school.

With the beginning of this school year, parents and teaching staff spoke out against the absence of anti-coronavirus drives in Jaramana Camp, saying no measures were implemented at schools and public facilities to protect civilians and prevent further contaminations. Schoolchildren are seen in crowds outside of their schools, most of them without masks.

Confirmed coronavirus cases have been increasingly reported in Palestinian refugee camps in Syria, at a time when residents have been launching cries for help over the absence of hygiene kit and medicines.

A few months earlier, AGPS also warned of an unabated outbreak of COVID-19 in Palestinian refugee camps in Syria. Limited access to running water, pharmacies and medical facilities mean displacement camps are more susceptible to the spread of the highly infectious virus.

Displacement camps set up in northern Syria are especially vulnerable as most hospitals and medical facilities have been bombed, rendering them out of order.



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In the meantime, Palestinian families continue to call on the concerned authorities to broker their safe return to their homes in Yarmouk Camp, in Damascus, and to press ahead with reconstruction projects.

Such calls come in response to the reluctance maintained by local authorities in Damascus regarding the residents' ongoing appeals to rehabilitate infrastructure and remove debris.

A number of activists have also warned of ongoing attempts to alter the demographic character of the camp and blur its identity as a living witness to the Palestinian refugee plight.

Last year, a petition was handed over by the residents to Damascus Governorate, urging local authorities to smooth the return of displaced families to their homes.

In 2019, the United Nations Institute for Training and Research (UNITAR) published the results of an assessment of the damage to Syrian cities caused by seven years of relentless bombardment by the incumbent regime and its allies since 2011.

The analysis found out that as many as 5,489 buildings were destroyed in Yarmouk Camp for Palestinian refugees. The damage atlas used satellite-detected damage analysis to identify buildings that are either destroyed, or severely or moderately damaged.

Most of Palestinian families taking shelter south of Damascus fled Yarmouk as a result of the tough blockade imposed by the



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government troops and also after ISIS grabbed hold of the camp on April 1, 2015.

Scores of other stranded families fled the camp following the 33-day military operation launched by the government forces on April 19, 2018. The Syrian government regained control over the camp and southern Damascus towns following the military operation. Dozens of civilians were killed and dozens more injured. Over 80% of buildings have gone either totally or partially destroyed.

In another development, 33-year-old Palestinian refugee Hussam Ali Al-Rafai, a resident of Yarmouk, has been locked up in Syrian government penitentiaries for eight years.

Al-Rafai was kidnapped by Syrian government troops deployed at a Damascus checkpoint on May 15, 2013.

AGPS has documented the secret detention of 1,797 Palestinian refugees in state-run penal complexes across war-torn Syria, among them 110 women and girls.

AGPS also documented the death of over 550 Palestinian refugees under torture in Syrian government lock-ups, including women, children, and elderly civilians.

Affidavits by ex-detainees provided evidence on the involvement of Syrian government officers in harsh torture tactics, including electric shocks, heavy beating using whips and iron sticks, and sexual abuse against Palestinian detainees, in a flagrant violation of the Convention against Torture and Other Cruel, Inhuman or



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Degrading Treatment or Punishment, commonly known as the United Nations Convention against Torture (UNCAT).

AGPS estimates the real number to be far higher due to the gag orders slapped by the Syrian government on the detainees' names and fates, along with the families' reluctance to report such cases over retaliation concerns.

AGPS continues to urge the Syrian government to disclose the fate of scores of Palestinians held in its lock-ups, release the bodies of those tortured to death, to seriously work on halting harsh torture tactics, launch fact-finding probes into crimes of torture, and to bring those involved in such crimes before courts.