

05-05-2022

No. 3570

مجموعة العمل

من أجل فلسطينيي سورية

Action Group For Palestinians of Syria



التقرير اليومي



الخاص بأوضاع اللاجئين الفلسطينيين في سورية

The situation of Palestinian refugees in Syria



Following Presidential Amnesty, Palestinian Prisoners' Families Blackmailed in Syria

- Palestinian Refugee Released from Syria Prison with Memory Loss
- Eid Celebration Held by Palestinians from Syria in Lebanon



Latest Development

The families of hundreds of Palestinian refugees secretly held in Syria's state-run prisons have been blackmailed over their appeals for information.

Hundreds of families have paid large sums of money to brokers, crooked lawyers, or government officials to get information about the condition and whereabouts of their missing relatives.

The families hardly ever receive the required pieces of information and the traffickers never show up again as soon as they are paid.

Speaking on Prisoners' Voice website, ex-prisoners and activists have warned prisoners' families not to publish their relatives' personal information on social media networks.

Over recent days, prisoners families, including Palestinian refugees, assembled in the "President's Bridge" area, awaiting the arrival of buses carrying people who have been held for years in Syria's infamous prisons, many for participating in the 2011 protests against President Bashar al-Assad.

Other families gathered since Monday in Sednaya, north of Damascus, which is home to Sednaya, Syria's largest and most notorious military prison.

Palestinian refugee families expressed fear that their relatives would not be included in the amnesty, saying they have suspicions as to how sincere the Syrian regime could be.



On Saturday, Assad issued a decree giving a general amnesty to people convicted on terrorism charges before 30 April 2022. The amnesty excludes acts that have led to killings or kidnappings, and those against whom there are civil personal claims.

Thousands of Palestinians and Syrians have been jailed on terror charges for peaceful opposition to Assad's government since the 2011 Arab Spring protests and subsequent war.

The Prisoners' Council said the regime claimed 2,500 people would be included in the amnesty. However, no more than 40 people have been released so far.

Nizar Sedkni, deputy justice minister, said the amnesty included those convicted of various crimes, including being involved in or financing a "terror group", a term often used for opposition groups.

Justice Minister Ahmed el-Sayed described the amnesty as a comprehensive national reconciliation, telling the state-operated al-Watan newspaper that it was contributing to the return of thousands of refugees.

The releases come after the Guardian revealed last week that in 2013 military security agents executed about 42 people by pushing them into a hole, shooting them and then burning them.

Thousands of Syrians were discovered killed under torture when a defector leaked nearly 50,000 photographs in 2014, showing the bodies of some 7,000 detainees mutilated by torture.



Over 1,700 Palestinian refugees are believed to be languishing in Syria's prisons, many of them have spent nearly a decade in prison while scores of others died under torture behind prison bars.

Along similar lines, Palestinian refugees Mohamed Khalil Kasem, born in 1972 and raised in Yarmouk Camp, along with Noufen Mohamed AlMukanen, a resident of Latakia city, were released from a regime prison in Syria.

Noufen reportedly lost memory as a result of brutal torture in prison.

On Saturday, Syrian President Bashar AlAssad issued a decree giving a general amnesty to people convicted on terrorism charges before 30 April 2022. The amnesty excludes acts that have led to killings or kidnappings, and those against whom there are civil personal claims.

Thousands of Syrians have been waiting outside prisons in the country for the release of their relatives detained by the regime.

The regime insists that those who have been freed – many of whom have spent around a decade in detention – are political prisoners and those found guilty on charges of "terrorism", which consists of anyone who expresses criticism of the regime, campaigns for human rights or is part of any opposition entity.

Photos of some who were released were published on social media sites such as Twitter, with many users commenting on the frailness of the former detainees and their traumatised gaze, likely caused by years of torture and trauma under detention. Many of



In a report entitled “Syria: Between Prison and the Grave” and published in 2015, Amnesty International warned that tens of thousands of people in Syria have vanished without a trace. They are the victims of enforced disappearance – when a person is arrested, detained or abducted by a state or agents acting for the state, who then deny the person is being held or conceal their whereabouts, placing them outside the protection of the law. The disappeared are cut off from the outside world, packed into overcrowded, secret cells where torture is routine, disease is rampant and death is commonplace. Their families are forced to live in desperation with few, if any, safe ways of finding their loved ones.

According to the report, the number of actors seeking to use the system for their own personal gain or advantage has increased. As a result of this opportunism by state security officers, an even greater number of individuals have been subjected to enforced disappearance in Syria. Amnesty International’s research suggested that those who exploit the system are driven by two primary motivations: first, the pursuit of financial profit, and second, the settling of personal grievances.

In the meantime, a celebration was held by AlIslah Relief Association on Wednesday, May 4, in the southern Lebanese city of Sidon to mark holy Eid AlFitr (fast-breaking festival).

The celebration was held in cooperation with the International Campaign to Preserve Palestinian Identity (Intimaa) and the Popular Conference for Palestinians Abroad.



Lebanon is struggling for the third year in a row with a crippling financial crisis, which has pushed many Palestinian refugees below the poverty line, resulting in an increasing number of beggars on the streets. The crisis has also greatly affected the middle class, whose incomes have declined with the depreciation of the local currency against the dollar, while others have been laid off as hundreds of institutions, factories and shops shut down.

With the rise in unemployment on one hand, and the dollarization of the most basic needs — including the monthly subscription to the electricity generator and fuel — on the other, most Lebanese nationals and Palestinian refugees are barely surviving.

Over 470,000 refugees are registered with UNRWA in Lebanon. About 45 per cent of them live in the country's 12 refugee camps. Conditions in the camps are dire and characterized by overcrowding, poor housing conditions, unemployment, poverty and lack of access to justice.

Palestinians in Lebanon do not enjoy several important rights; for example, they cannot work in many professions and cannot own property (real estate). Because they are not formally citizens of another state, Palestine refugees are unable to claim the same rights as other foreigners living and working in Lebanon.