



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



"Coronavirus Infections Reported in Palestinian Refugee Camp in Syria"

- Palestinian Journalist in The Netherlands Launches Successful Career
- Italy Contributes to UNRWA Syria Regional Crisis Emergency Appeal in Lebanon
- Palestinian Refugee Ihab Abbas Forcibly Disappeared in Syrian Prisons for 7th Year

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Latest developments

A number of residents of AlNeirab camp for Palestinian refugees, in Aleppo, have contracted the novel coronavirus COVID-19.

The reported cases have been home-quarantined and kept under observation to curtail a propagation of the lethal disease in the displacement camp.

Recently, state of panic has overwhelmed the Palestinian refugee community taking shelter in war-torn Syria following reports of increased coronavirus cases in and around Damascus.

State-run media outlets in Syria said Health Minister Nizar Yazaji ordered the closure of wedding halls to help curtail COVID-19 contaminations after a number of Syrian nationals have tested positive for the lethal virus.

AGPS continues to urge UNRWA and the Syrian Health Ministry to provide the Palestinian refugee community in the war-ravaged country with hygiene kit and relief items in light of the coronavirus outbreak.

AGPS also stresses the need to supply Palestinian refugee camps with medicines, detergents, and disinfectants in order to help the displaced communities defend themselves against the deadly COVID-19 virus.

AGPS is deeply concerned that the lack of transparency maintained by the Syrian government regarding the pandemic will result in a catastrophic situation in displacement camps, at a time when the



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deadly virus continues to claim the lives of thousands of people across the globe.

AGPS fears the coronavirus could spread quickly in jails and in overcrowded displacement camps, where neither hygiene kit nor medical equipment are accessible.

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

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.

Meanwhile, Palestinian journalist Bisan Zarzar, who fled war-torn Syria to the Netherlands some six years ago, has achieved an outstanding career in the Western European country.

Bisan worked with "Holland Now" radio program and successfully broadcasted her series "Pursue your higher studies with Bisan".

She started her academic career as a student at the Modern Middle East Studies department at Leiden University. She currently works as a correspondent with Arab news outlets. She is active on social media and has a Youtube channel.

She has recently embarked on a podcast project entitled "Any idea?" to provide pieces of news about the Arab community in The Netherlands.



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In another development, Ambassador of Italy in Lebanon Nicoletta Bombardiere, and the Director of the United Nations Relief and Works Agency for Palestine Refugees in the Near East (UNRWA) Affairs in Lebanon, Claudio Cordone, signed last week an agreement for an additional contribution of EUR 1 million to the 2020 UNRWA Syria Regional Crisis Emergency Appeal in Lebanon from the Government of Italy.

This new critical funding will enable UNRWA to continue providing support to health care and cash assistance for Palestine refugees who are most in need of assistance in Lebanon. It will support hospitalization to over 380 Palestinian refugees from Syria (PRS) and multipurpose cash assistance to around 2,450 Palestinian refugee families from Syria displaced to Lebanon.

Cordone said: “I would like to express my deep gratitude to the Government of Italy for their support that will enable the Agency to continue to provide life-saving services to PRS in Lebanon while addressing their immediate needs in response to COVID-19. Contributions from Italy have made a significant difference to the lives of many thousands of Palestine refugees whose living conditions have worsened because of the COVID-19 pandemic and the economic crisis in Lebanon.”

Ambassador Bombardiere stressed the importance of UNRWA services in Lebanon and said: “Italy recognizes the enormous efforts of the Lebanese Government to host vulnerable refugees and will continue to support its endeavors. With the agreement we signed, Italy confirms its commitment to sustain the commendable



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actions undertaken by UNRWA in the country, also in the context of the COVID-19 emergency, a vision that places the vulnerable people at the center of the Italian aid policy.”

The Government of Italy has long been one of the Agency’s most reliable donors. Between 2017-2019, UNRWA received EUR 5.25 million from Italy in support of the Agency’s assistance to Palestine refugees in Lebanon, as well as the reconstruction of Nahr el-Bared refugee camp. This ongoing reconstruction project still requires some US\$ 51 million in funding for completion.

Donatella Procesi, Director of the Italian Agency for Development Cooperation (AICS) in Lebanon, said: “Support to UNRWA has been always one of the core activities of the Italian Cooperation. In the last few years, we have decided to support healthcare and lifesaving health assistance to the thousands of Palestinian Refugees fleeing from the civil war in Syria. A choice that is in line with our commitment to be always beside the most vulnerable people.”

In the meantime, Palestinian refugee Ihab Mahmoud Abbas, aged 23, has been secretly held in Syrian government prisons for the seventh consecutive year.

Ihab, a resident of Hums, was arrested by Syrian security forces on March 21, 2013 as he passed through the Dawar checkpoint. His condition and whereabouts remain unidentified

AGPS documented the secret incarceration of 1,797 Palestinian refugees in Syrian prisons, including 110 women and girls.



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Hundreds of Palestinian refugees have also been tortured to death behind Syria's prison bars. The government forces have been withholding their cadavers in unknown locations, preventing their families from bidding them last farewell.