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مجموعة العمل

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Action Group For Palestinians of Syria



# التقرير اليومي



الخاص بأوضاع اللاجئين الفلسطينيين في سورية

The situation of Palestinian refugees in Syria



**AGPS Calls for Immediate Release of Palestinian Prisoners in Syria**

- Prisoners' Families Urge Palestinian Authority to Pressurize Syrian Regime to Free Palestinian Prisoners
- Vigil Held in Berlin in Solidarity with Prisoners in Syria
- Palestinian Refugee Identifies Father in Leaked Photos of Torture Victims in Syria



## **Latest Development**

AGPS has called upon the Syrian regime to release all Palestinian refugees forcibly-disappeared in the country and secretly held behind its prison bars.

The Syrian regime should live up to its promises recently made in the amnesty issued by the country's president Bashar AlAsad 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.

Only 14 Palestinian refugees, including four women, have been released from the time the pardon has entered into force.

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 a few hundreds have been released so far.

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 prisoners' families have called on the Palestinian Authority, political factions, and international community to escalate pressure on the Syrian regime in order to free all Palestinians secretly held in prison and reveal the condition and whereabouts of scores of forcibly-disappeared refugees.

Over recent days, prisoners' families, including Palestinian refugees, continue to assemble 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 AlAssad.

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

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

A Palestinian women lying on the ground in the "President's Bridge" area, in the Syrian capital, Damascus, told the Action Group for Palestinians of Syria (AGPS): "I have not returned home for days. I've been there from the moment the amnesty entered



into effect wishing that my eyes would stumble upon my son whom I have not met for the fourth year”.

The son of another forcibly-disappeared Palestinian refugee said: “We haven’t seen a moment’s rest for days. My family and I continue to go far and wide across Damascus to find our father who has gone missing since 2015.”

Last week, 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.

At the same time, a vigil was held in Berlin’s neoclassical monument Brandenburg Gate, on May 7, in solidarity with prisoners in Syria and with the families of victims of the Tadamun massacre committed by the Syrian regime in 2013.

Last week, Chair of the Independent International Commission of Inquiry on the Syrian Arab Republic Paulo Pinheiro has asserted that detention in Syria is equivalent to disappearance.

He explained that predictions indicate that most detainees have been executed and buried in mass graves, and others subjected to torture and ill-treatment.

Pinheiro added that being arrested in Syria today is tantamount to disappearing and urged the need to establish an independent mechanism with international authorities to investigate the issue of disappeared civilians.



One week earlier, the Guardian revealed that in 2013 military security agents executed about 42 people, including Seyam and two other Palestinian refugees—Said Ahmad Khatab and Luay AlKubra—by pushing them into a hole, shooting them and then burning them.

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.

Meanwhile, a Palestinian refugee sheltered in AlSabina Camp, in Syria's Rif Dimashq city, said he was shocked after he came across the photo of his father Ali Ahmad Ali, born on October 1st, 1969, in an album of torture victims leaked by the so-called Caesar breakaway.

Ali's son said his father was first arrested in 2013 and then in 2014. He had spent three months in Adra prison and re-arrested on the day of his release after a security patrol from Military Branch 227 stormed his family house and beat his wife and sons. He was secretly transferred to Bayader Nader branch.

“I was arrested in July 2014, one month and a half after my father was arrested, and dragged to the same prison where my father had been held”, said his son. “I did my best to meet my father or at least identify his condition, but to no avail. Other inmates who thought he had been released told me that he had disappeared for nearly one month”.

“My father was transferred to the underground floor and tortured to death”, added the son.



A few years ago, horrific photos showing thousands of people who were tortured to death in Syrian government penitentiaries were leaked by a military police photographer, codenamed Caesar.

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

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

AGPS has documented the death of over 620 Palestinian refugees under torture in Syrian government penitentiaries, among whom minors and elderly detainees.

AGPS believes the number is far higher due to the gag orders enforced by the Syrian regime on the detainees' fates and names, along with the reluctance of the casualty's families to reveal the names of their deceased or missing relatives for fear of retaliation.

Torture is a crime under international law. According to all relevant instruments, it is absolutely prohibited and cannot be justified under any circumstances. This prohibition forms part of customary international law, which means that it is binding on every member of the international community, regardless of whether a State has ratified international treaties in which torture is expressly prohibited. The systematic or widespread practice of torture constitutes a crime against humanity.