



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



"Palestinian Refugee Behind Syria Prison Bars Appeals for Release"

- Syrian Regime Pledges Rehabilitation of Yarmouk Camp, Residents Appeal for Action
- Palestinian Refugees Denounce Mistreatment at Syria Displacement Camp
- Qatar Fund For Development Continues to Support Palestinian Refugees in Syria
- Follow-Up Committee of Palestinians of Syria in Gaza Calls for Vigil Outside of UNRWA Office

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Latest Developments

A newly-released prisoner in Syria quoted Palestinian refugee Basel Mohamed Ali AlShehabi as appealing to the international human rights institutions to pressurize the Syrian regime to release him from prison.

Basel reportedly asked the ex-prisoner to reach out to his family and update them on his transfer to Adra central prison, in Damascus.

The prisoner, in his 30s, was arrested in an abduction sweep targeting Yarmouk Camp a few years ago.

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



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Meanwhile, Deputy Minister of Foreign Affairs and Expatriates in Syria, Bashar Al-Jaafari, said that instructions were issued by the Syrian President to immediately implement practical steps to smooth the return of Palestinian refugees to Yarmouk Camp.

This came during a meeting between the Syrian President Bashar Al-Asad and representatives of Palestinian factions held a few days ago.

Nour Association, close to the Syrian regime, said the meeting discussed practical measures to boost the reconstruction of Yarmouk Camp and the return of families to their houses.

At the same time, the Water and Sanitation Company in Damascus embarked, a few days earlier, on maintenance works to repair water pipes in Yarmouk Camp as a part of a project carried out following an agreement with the General Construction Company at a sum of 200 million Syrian pounds.

Meanwhile, residents of AlSabina Camp, in Rif Dimashq, have spoken out against the mistreatment they have been subjected to by staff members at the UNRWA-run clinic.

Elderly patients and women who showed up at the facility have been made to line up for hours to receive medical treatment.

Local activists have urged the UN refugee agency, the General Authority for Palestinian Arab Refugees, and all other concerned authorities to take immediate action in response to the mistreatment they have been facing at the UNRWA premises.



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In a statement emailed to AGPS, the residents slammed the medical staff at the clinic for their apathy regarding the appeals of a number of patients for much-needed treatment and medicines, along with psychological support.

Located some 14 kilometers away from southern Damascus, AlSabina Camp has been gripped with an abject situation owing to the absence of humanitarian assistance, relief aid, proper infrastructure, and vital facilities.

UN data indicates that the camp was established in 1948. Before the conflict in Syria, the camp was home to 22,600 Palestine refugees. It was taken over by armed opposition groups in 2013. The camp remained closed to civilians for almost four years and houses and infrastructure were damaged in the fighting. In September 2017, civilians were able to return to their homes. All UNRWA installations were in need of repairs.

The whole Palestine population in AlSabina camp suffered from displacement during the crisis and many families left the country and sought refuge in neighboring countries or fled to Europe.

During the conflict, labor opportunities have dwindled and the unemployment rate is still very high with very limited financial resources to help Palestine refugees restore their livelihoods. Like other areas in Syria, displacement, inflation, protection and security risks are among the main concerns shared by Palestine refugees and Syrians alike.



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The camp is situated on an area of 0.03 square kilometers. Palestine refugees who came to Syria in 1948 first settled the camp. It also accommodates Palestine refugees who were displaced as a result of the 1967 conflict.

In the meantime, the Qatar Fund for Development (QFFD) has contributed US\$ 5 million to the United Nations Relief and Works Agency for Palestine Refugees in the Near East (UNRWA) in support of its health programme in Syria.

UNRWA said in a press release that this generous donation is part of a US\$ 20.7 million agreement that QFFD provided to the Agency in December 2019.

Conflict in Syria over the past decade has caused immense challenges for Palestine refugees, including deaths and injuries, continued internal displacement, large-scale migration to other countries, loss of livelihoods, and mounting humanitarian needs for basic survival. It has been a huge challenge for UNRWA which is having to respond to these needs of the Palestine refugees, with its reducing funding resources. The Agency has also had significant destruction of its installations, including health centres and schools.

The Agency delivers various primary health-care services, including out-patient consultations, vaccinations, growth monitoring, provision of medicines, gynecological consultations, laboratory services, care for non-communicable diseases, maternal and child health care and dental services. Health services are delivered through its 25 health facilities across Syria, including two



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mobile health clinics that cater mainly to the refugee population in Yalda and Yarmouk, Damascus and Ein el Tal camp in Aleppo. Furthermore, the Agency provides subsidized support to Palestine refugees seeking secondary and tertiary health care through a system of referral to public hospitals.

Expressing his thanks, Akihiro Seita, Director of Health at UNRWA HQ in Amman, said: “On behalf of UNRWA, I thank the QFFD for their continued and generous support to our health programme in Syria. This contribution helps ensure that UNRWA can continue to provide crucial and life-saving health-care services to Palestine refugees. We highly value the outstanding commitment shown by the QFFD to sustaining the delivery of basic health-care services to Palestine refugees in Syria.”

Qatar Fund for Development Director-General Khalifa Bin Jassim Al Kuwari said: “This contribution testifies to the Fund’s strong continued support of the long and healthy lives of Palestine refugees in Syria.”

UNRWA is confronted with an increased demand for services resulting from a growth in the number of registered Palestine refugees, the extent of their vulnerability and their deepening poverty. UNRWA is funded almost entirely by voluntary contributions and financial support has been outpaced by the growth in needs. As a result, the UNRWA programme budget, which supports the delivery of core essential services, operates with a large shortfall.



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In another development, a vigil is slated to be held on Wednesday by the Follow-Up Committee of Palestinians of Syria in Gaza to push for urgent humanitarian assistance by UNRWA.

Some 150 Palestinian refugee families from Syria who returned to the blockaded Gaza Strip have been facing an abject humanitarian situation in the Israeli-blockaded enclave.

The refugees say they have been deprived of humanitarian assistance by UNRWA and the Palestine Liberation Organization.

Palestinians living in the Gaza Strip have been enduring dire living conditions due to the 13-year-long Israeli siege and the devastating upshots of the Israeli onslaughts on the coastal enclave.

The offensives launched by the Israeli military on Gaza have turned the enclave into a hell on earth as most families have lost their sources of incomes, homes, and property.

According to data by the Norwegian Refugee Council (NRC), Gaza is one of the world's most densely populated areas, with more than 5,000 inhabitants per square kilometer. The Gaza Strip is smaller than the city of Oslo but is home to three times as many people.

Gaza is described by many Palestinians and humanitarian actors as the world's largest open-air prison, where nearly 2 million Palestinians live behind a blockade and are refused access to the other occupied Palestinian areas and the rest of the world.

NRC said 7 out of 10 Palestinians in Gaza are registered as refugees, and many of these come from families who were forced to



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leave their villages in 1948. Many have also been forced to leave their homes due to war, violence, and economic hardship.