



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



"Palestinians from Syria Trapped on French Guiana Appeal for Humanitarian Action"

- Palestinian Refugee Arrested on His Way Back from Germany
- As Palestinian Refugees Appeal for Return to Ravaged Yarmouk Camp, Fatah Movement Commemorates 74th Anniversary

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Latest Developments

Palestinian refugees stranded on the French island of Guiana have been subjected to a precarious legal status and dire humanitarian condition.

As the conflict broke out in Syria, thousands of Palestinian refugees fled the war-torn country to Brazil after they obtained humanitarian asylum visas from Lebanon. Scores of them illegally crossed to Guiana island. The majority of them arrived in the Brazilian city of Macapa before they crossed Oyapock River by boat and finally disembarked on French Guiana. A number of others came from Venezuela.

The number of Palestinians from Syria on Guiana Island is estimated, according to unofficial statistics, between 700 to 1,000.

PRS families who first arrived on the island, had been subjected to homelessness and sheltered for several weeks in the canvas tents set up on the streets. They later managed to apply for asylum and submitted their demands at the municipality. They obtained a six-month asylum visa and a sum of €250 per person as a food grant. Two months later, they obtained visas, following interviews with the French Office for the Protection of Refugees and Stateless Persons (OFPRA). However, the Immigration Department rejects asylum applications for new arrivals among PRS. A number of new comers managed to obtain visas following appeals to the Court of Appeal.



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A Palestinian from Syria gets a ten-year residence permit. OFPRA classifies PRS as stateless and refers to them through the acronym XXX.

PRS also face enormous difficulties trying to get French birth certificates in order to be able to issue a residence card and a passport. Many of them wait up to one year and a half.

Discrimination, exorbitant house rents, and lack of access to the local labor market have also been among the dilemmas suffered by PRS on the island.

French Guiana is an overseas department/region and single territorial collectivity of France on the northern Atlantic coast of South America in the Guianas. It borders Brazil to the east and south and Suriname to the west. With a land area of 83,534 km² (32,253 sq mi), French Guiana is the second-largest region of France (more than one-seventh the size of Metropolitan France) and the largest outermost region within the European Union. It has very low population density, with only 3.5 inhabitants per square kilometre (9.1/sq mi).

In another development, a Palestinian refugee was arrested by Syrian authorities at the Damascus International Airport after he came back from Germany to visit his family. His condition and whereabouts remain under wraps.

Unverified reports confirmed his secret incarceration in Palestine Branch 235 or Branch 227.



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Over 15 Palestinian refugees were arrested by Syrian forces on their way back from neighboring countries and European destinations. The list includes 13 returnees from Lebanon. One refugee returned from Sweden and another from The Netherlands.

Meanwhile, activists who attended a ceremony held on Sunday January 9 at the Arabic Club in Yarmouk Camp, south of Damascus, to mark the 75th anniversary of Fatah Movement founding in Syria, leveled heavy criticism at Fatah, saying the ceremony comes at a time when hundreds of Palestinian refugee families have been left without roofs over their heads in and outside the ravaged camp.

A few days earlier, Palestinian refugees in Syria slammed a Fatah delegation that showed up in Damascus on January 6, led by the secretary of the group's Central Committee, Jibril AlRujoub.

The refugees said Fatah leaders have turned blind eyes and deaf ears to the dire humanitarian situation in displacement camps for Palestinian refugees across the Syrian territories.

They added that the situation of PRS has been excluded from Fatah's agenda and the discussions it has been conducting with the Syrian regime.

Palestinian refugees said that instead of holding a festival in the ravaged Yarmouk Camp, Fatah and the Palestinian Authority President Mahmoud Abbas should rather work on reconstructing the camp and rehabilitating vital facilities in order to enable



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displaced families to return to their homes and retrieve their property.

They further called on the delegation to pressurize the Syrian regime to facilitate families' return to Yarmouk Camp at the earliest possible time and reveal the condition and whereabouts of forcibly-disappeared Palestinian refugees in Syria.