



مجموعة العمل من أجل فلسطينيي سورية  
Action Group For Palestinians of Syria

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## التقرير اليومي

الخاص بأوضاع اللاجئين الفلسطينيين في سورية

Daily report on the situation of Palestinian refugees in Syria



### "Palestinian Refugees Suffer Economic Hardship in Syria"

- Syrian Authorities Seeking to Rehabilitate Palestinian Yarmouk Camp at Lowest Cost
- Local Bakery Provides Free Bread to Residents of Palestinian Refugee Camp
- UNRWA: 9,000 Palestinians Sheltered in AlAyedeen Camp in Hama
- EU Official Calls for New Migration Rationale

+442084530978

/Actgroup.palsyria

reports@actionpal.org.uk

www.actionpal.org.uk



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## Latest Developments

After nine years of conflict, Palestine refugees continue to be one of the most vulnerable groups in Syria with immense humanitarian needs.

Palestinian refugees in Syria (PRS) continue to launch cries for help over their deteriorating humanitarian condition due to the sharp decrease in the exchange rate of the Syrian pound compared to the USD and their lack of access to the local labor market. The price leap has also overburdened the cash-stripped refugees. House rents have also seen a striking hike from previous years.

The refugees continue to urge UNRWA and all other concerned parties to increase financial aid, help the displaced families return to their refugee camps, and provide much-needed relief services for Palestine refugees.

Over 90 per cent of Palestine refugee households in Syria live in poverty and 40 per cent remain in protracted displacement as a result of conflict and the damage and destruction of their homes, warned the UN Agency for Palestine Refugees.

The United Nations Relief and Works Agency for Palestine Refugees in the Near East (UNRWA) said in its 2020 Syria regional crisis emergency appeal that 126,000 Palestine refugees in Syria (PRS) are identified as extremely vulnerable; 89% live in poverty; 91% live in extreme poverty; and 80% rely on UNRWA cash assistance as their main source of income.



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UNRWA also said that 55% of PRS do not possess valid legal residency documents; 100% of PRS are in need of winterization assistance; and 86% of PRS households are reported to be in debt.

The majority of Palestinians sheltered in displacement camps set up across the Syrian territories have remained at bay from political calculations and frequently refused attempts by all warring parties to drag them into the raging warfare, saying their priority is to secure safe shelters for their children and families pending a just and lasting solution to their refugee plight and return to their motherland—Palestine.

In another development, Syria's Local Administration and Environment Minister Hussein Makhoulf revealed that the Damascus Countryside Governorate will remove the rubble in al-Hajar al-Aswad neighborhood, southern Damascus, to secure the return of displaced residents, adding that work is underway for the return of the residents of Yarmouk Camp, reported the state-run Syrian Arab News Agency (SANA).

Minister Makhoulf added that one of the scenarios which has the lowest cost and which is the fastest has been chosen for rehabilitating Yarmouk Camp in a modern way.

Last week, activists and residents of Yarmouk camp urged Damascus Governor to reply to a memorandum they submitted on February 4, 2019 and which was signed by nearly 3,000 residents, urging local authorities to smooth the return of displaced families to their homes.



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The residents expressed their readiness for voluntary work and to actively take part in reconstruction works.

Last year, the United Nations Institute for Training and Research (UNITAR) published the results of an assessment of the damage to Syrian cities caused by seven years of relentless bombardment by the incumbent regime and its allies since 2011.

The analysis found out that as many as 5,489 buildings were destroyed in Yarmouk Camp for Palestinian refugees. The damage atlas used satellite-detected damage analysis to identify buildings that are either destroyed, or severely or moderately damaged.

Most of Palestinian families taking shelter south of Damascus fled Yarmouk as a result of the tough blockade imposed by the government troops and also after ISIS grabbed hold of the camp on April 1, 2015.

Scores of other stranded families fled the camp following the 33-day military operation launched by the government forces on April 19, 2018. The Syrian government regained control over the camp and southern Damascus towns following the military operation. Dozens of civilians were killed and dozens more injured. Over 80% of buildings have gone either totally or partially destroyed.

A number of activists have warned of ongoing attempts to alter the demographic character of the camp and blur its identity as a living witness to the Palestinian refugee plight.

Meanwhile, a resident of AlNeirab camp for Palestinian refugees, in Aleppo, has donated bread quantities made at his bakery to the residents.





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The three-day initiative offers bread bundles worth 300 Syrian Pounds to the locals.

AlNeirab camp is the largest official camp in Syria and is 13km east of the city of Aleppo near the Aleppo airport.

Before the start of the conflict in Syria, Neirab camp was home to more than 20,000 Palestine refugees. Like other Palestine refugee camps in Syria, a large number of families, young people, have travelled abroad. The camp has also seen a large influx of more than 900 families from the nearby Ein el Tal camp, which has been mostly destroyed.

With nearly 18,000 registered refugees, Neirab camp is among the most densely populated camps. The camp suffers from overcrowding and a lack of privacy. Like other areas in Syria, displacement, unemployment, inflation, protection and security risks are among the main concerns shared by Palestine refugees and Syrians alike.

The location of the camp near the military airport means the area was exposed to hazards including mortars and shelling between the start of 2013 and the end of 2018.

Poor shelters and poor construction of the barracks result in scorching temperatures in summer and freezing conditions in winter. Water leakage and rodent infestation also remain a problem for the refugees.

Along similar lines, UNRWA said that AlAyedeen camp in Hama city has attracted displaced Palestine refugees from Syria, boosting the population.



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The camp is currently home to between 300 and 400 displaced Palestine refugee families, and the camp population is estimated to be around 9,000 Palestine refugees.

Hama camp lies within the town of Hama, 210 km north of Damascus. The camp was established in 1950 on an area of 0.06 square kilometers overlooking the Orontes River. Most of the refugees had fled from the villages surrounding Haifa and Acre in northern Palestine.

Before the conflict in Syria, there were 8,000 Palestine refugees living in Hama camp. It is estimated that 1,000 of the original population have left the country.

Most employed refugees are wage laborers or shopkeepers, but many rely on UNRWA assistance to survive.

In 2018, UNRWA rehabilitated one of its two schools, both built in the 1950s, due to aging.

Environmental health in the camp is a serious problem and the mechanization of solid waste disposal is one of the most pressing needs. The sewerage system is antiquated and does not meet the requirements of a growing camp population.

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In the meantime, Vice-President of the Commission to Promote a European Way of Life, Margaritis Schinas, said new immigration and asylum policies should be implemented across Europe, stressing the need for EU member-states to pool resources in this regard despite the challenges they are likely to face during negotiations.

Schinas said host countries cannot bear alone the heavy weight of migration and asylum challenges, saying a new agreement which will be put forth by the European Commission in the next few weeks calls for cooperation between countries of origin and transit in order to protect migrants and establish a joint administration capable of protecting borders.