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من أجل فلسطينيي سورية

Action Group For Palestinians of Syria



التقرير اليومي



الخاص بأوضاع اللاجئين الفلسطينيين في سورية
The situation of Palestinian refugees in Syria

Displaced Families Accuse Yarmouk Camp Chiefs of Corruption

- Integration Training Becomes Compulsory in Turkey
- Khan Dannun Camp Gripped with Water Crisis
- Palestinian Writer Ali AlShehabi Forcibly Disappeared by Syrian Regime for 10th Year



Latest Developments

Displaced families have slammed the Syrian authorities for turning their back on their appeals to return to Yarmouk Camp for Palestinian refugees, south of Damascus, and reconstruct destroyed facilities.

Officials in charge of Yarmouk Camp file continue to drag their feet over civilians' calls to return to their homes in Yarmouk Camp and retrieve their property.

At the same time, activists have called on the residents of Yarmouk Camp to stand on guard to all attempts to force them to forfeit their houses and property at low prices as prices have skyrocketed in Damascus.

Real estate dealers have reportedly established limited-liability contracting companies to buy real estate from the residents at extremely cheap prices. Civilians who have lost their property ownership documents have particularly come under simmering pressure.

Unofficial statistics indicate that some 200 families have remained in Yarmouk Camp. Scores of stranded families fled the camp following the 33-day military operation launched by the government forces on April 19, 2018.

The Syrian government forces regained control over the area and southern Damascus towns following the operation. Dozens of civilians were killed and dozens more injured in the offensive. Over 60% of buildings in Yarmouk have gone either totally or partially destroyed.

In 2019, 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.



In another development, Director of Communication and Integration at the Turkish Immigration Department, Gökçe Ok, called on foreigners in Turkey to attend the integration course launched in partnership with the Turkish Ministry of Education.

Ok said participation in the course is obligatory as it aims to familiarize migrants and foreigners on Turkish traditions and way of life along with ways to get access to vital services and facilities.

The official warned beneficiaries not to get in touch with brokers to avoid fraud and corruption.

Unofficial statistics indicate that 10,000 Palestinians from Syria have sought shelter in Turkey, where they have been facing dire socio-economic conditions and denied access to the local labor market.

Turkish embassies continue to prevent Palestinian refugees from Syria from obtaining visas. As a result, hundreds of Palestinians have embarked on life-threatening journeys via illegal immigration roads to reach Turkey, fleeing war-tattered Syria, among other war-stricken zones.

Meanwhile, residents of Khan Dannun Camp for Palestinian refugees in Rif Dimashq have set off alarm bells over the acute water crisis which has been ongoing for years across a number of residential neighborhoods.

Civilians have been forced to purchase potable water at over 7,000 Syrian pounds a tank (five barrels).

Living conditions in Khan Dannun have sharply deteriorated due to the lack of financial resources and high unemployment rates wrought by the unbridled warfare.

According to UN data, Khan Dannun camp, which lies 23 km south of Damascus, was officially established in 1950-1951 on an area of 0.03 square kilometers. The camp was home to 10,000 Palestine refugees by 2011.

Before the conflict in Syria, the camp was already one of the poorest camps in Syria. Most refugees worked as farm workers on Syrian-owned lands, others are wage laborers, while a few commuted to industrial plants.



The conflict exerted additional pressures. The camp was surrounded by armed opposition groups and many refugee families displaced from other areas of Damascus took refuge in the camp, tripling the number of residents to some 30,000 during the crisis. Two UNRWA schools premises were converted into collective shelters to give accommodation to more than 130 families between 2012 and 2018. Currently, the camp is home to 12,650 Palestine refugees.

The increase of the camp population has had a negative impact on the camp's infrastructure, affecting the electric network and the sewerage system. The camp suffers from sporadic sewage blockages due to the increased pressure on the existent sewerage system, which was designed for only 10,000 inhabitants, while there are now significantly more. Water supply resources have also been affected and the camp suffers from water shortages, especially during the summer months.

Many school children have dropped out or work after school hours to support their families. The camp also suffers from a high incidence of inherited diseases such as thalassaemia and sickle-cell anemia.

In the meantime, Palestinian writer Ali Sa'id Shehabi has been secretly held in Syria government jails for the tenth year running.

Shehabi, an English instructor at a UNRWA school, was kidnapped on December 17, 2012. Prior to his abduction, Shehabi had been taking shelter in Yarmouk Camp for Palestinian refugees.

Frequent calls by international NGOs and activists to unearth Shehabi's fate have gone unheeded by the Syrian regime.

AGPS has documented the secret incarceration of over 1,900 Palestinian refugees in Syrian regime lock-ups, among them children, women, academics, university students, and sick civilians.