



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



### "3 Palestinian Refugees Arrested by Syrian Security Forces in Aleppo"

- AGPS Sounds Alarm over Poor Education Services in Syria's Daraa Camp for Palestinian Refugees
- Palestinians of Syria Denied Humanitarian Asylum
- Rights Group: Palestinian Asylum Seekers Face Abhorrent Discriminatory Measures in Sweden

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## Latest Developments

Three Palestinian refugees sheltered in AlNeirab camp, in Aleppo, were arrested by the Syrian security forces. The motives for the arrest were not made clear.

Reporting from Aleppo, an AGPS correspondent said Bilal Omar Beshkar, Mohamed Mahmoud AlKhatib, and another young man from the Saman family boarded a car from the camp on way to Aleppo city center, before they were arrested by Syrian forces.



According to AGPS data, 98 Palestinian residents of AlNeirab refugee camp have been detained in Syrian jails, among a total of 1,788 Palestinian refugees.

In another development, AGPS documented a sharp nosedive in access to education for Palestinians sheltered in Daraa refugee camp, south of Syria.

Most of Daraa's schools have been destroyed or put out of operation in the raging warfare as a result of heavy shelling using missiles and barrel bombs. A number of education facilities have also been turned into prisons or field hospitals, imperiling Palestinians' academic careers.



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At the same time, dozens of Palestinian teaching staff members have been arrested and sent to jail.

In attempt to bring life back to normal, a number of activists helped establishing 14 classrooms from the 1st to the 9th grade in order to enable Palestinian children to pursue their studies.

Last month, UNRWA opened the Tabaria and ALSafsaf schools in Daraa camp. 525 students are enrolled at UNRWA-run schools in the area.

Prior to the conflict, back in 2010, six UNRWA schools had been operative in Daraa Camp, before they shut their doors as a result of the bloody shootouts.

A number of homes have been used as alternative schools, where dozens of students are often crammed into one single room that lacks equipment, ventilation and hygiene.

The war in Syria has had disastrous fallouts on civilians' intellectual skills and academic performance, with hundreds of Palestine refugees dropping out of school over security concerns or following psychological breakdowns. A number of education facilities have also been turned into prisons or field hospitals, imperiling Palestinians' academic careers.

Founded in 1950-1951, Daraa Camp is home to over 650 displaced Palestinian families. As many as 4,500 families used to take shelter in the camp prior to the outbreak of the conflict, in 2011.

AGPS continues to appeal to the Palestine Liberation Organization and UNRWA, among all concerned institutions, to urgently step in and work on reconstructing destroyed schools, providing civilians





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with the needed psycho-physical protection, and boosting children's access to education in Daraa.

Upon more than one occasion, UNRWA has raised alarm bells over the striking upsurge in the rate of school dropouts among the Palestinians of Syria, several among whom have left schools to help feeding their impoverished families in unemployment-stricken refugee camps.



Meanwhile, Palestinian refugees from Syria have been denied easy access to neighboring countries, including Lebanon, Jordan, Egypt, Turkey, and North African countries.

The Turkish embassies have suspended visas for Palestinian refugees from Syria for over four years. Jordan also issued a decision officially banning the entry of the Palestinians of Syria regardless of their condition.

Palestinian refugees from Syria are reported to lack legal status in Lebanon. The absence of specific legislation addressing the unique situation of the Palestinians of Syria has made them vulnerable to marginalization within the Lebanese polity.



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Most of the Gulf countries have also outlawed granting visas to Palestinians with Syrian travel documents since 2013.

AGPS continues to urge neighboring countries to lift the entry bans slapped against the Palestinians of Syria and to abide by international conventions prohibiting the expulsion of civilians fleeing war-stricken zones.

Along similar lines, the Euro-Mediterranean Human Rights Monitor said Swedish migration authorities are exercising discriminatory measures against Palestinian asylum seekers in the country.

In a statement issued last week, EuroMed expressed grave concern over the fate of about 3,000 Palestinian asylum seekers whose residence status in Sweden has been recently threatened.

About three months ago, Sweden's migration agency, Migrationsverket, began an organized campaign against Palestinian asylum seekers in the country. Without giving any logical explanations, growing numbers of Palestinians who committed no offences have been denied their right to obtain new resident permits in Sweden or renew old ones that are close to expiring, said the rights monitor.

These unjustifiable practices violate international law by targeting Palestinian asylum seekers in particular, while the Immigration Department handles asylum applications from other nationalities without similar restrictions, it added.

EuroMed said that since 8 January, Palestinian asylum seekers started a sit-in in front of the Swedish Immigration Department to



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protest the new procedures and demand that the authorities grant them their rights under relevant domestic, European and international laws and treat them equally just like the rest of their peers from other nationalities.

Palestinian activist in Sweden, Kanaan Hamad, told Euro-Med Monitor that the procedures included the expulsion of some asylum seekers from immigration houses (refugee residence) and cutting humanitarian aid, which would have provided a small amount of money to refugees to buy food. Such measures undermine the stability and safety of asylum seekers.

According to Hamad, the procedures do not target new asylum seekers only. Palestinians who have been living in the country for more than ten years face great difficulties in obtaining long-term legal residency. Sweden authorities grant them a one-year resident permit which makes them unable to integrate into society, find work, or obtain health and educational services, in addition to banning their exit from Sweden, which has made life more difficult for those who have fled areas of conflict and fighting.

According to information collected by Euro-Med Monitor, most of those affected by the Immigration Department's decision are recent asylum applicants, temporary residence holders, and Palestinians from the Gaza Strip, the West Bank, and the diaspora communities of the Gulf countries as well as Yemen and Libya, where those coming from these areas are directly rejected.

Swedish migration authorities explicitly inform asylum-seekers that they do not want to recognize them as refugees, which leaves them without legal aid or integration, despite the authorities'



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acknowledging of the difficult conditions in the areas from which they came, especially the Gaza Strip. Swedish migration authorities state in their refusal letters that life is difficult in the coastal enclave economically and socially and the health sector is collapsing. Despite this, the authorities reject asylum applications of Gazans and ask them to return to the Gaza Strip and try to get a job and to start a family there.

Hamad stated that some Palestinian asylum-seekers have been on hunger strikes for 36 days to oppose the discriminatory measures against them, which poses a real threat to their lives, as happened with Ahmed Abu Al-Ata who suffers from serious complications as a result of his strike after Swedish authorities cut off his monthly pocket, expelled him from the immigration house and made him stay without any shelter or refuge.

He indicated that Swedish authorities deported some asylum seekers, but the airport refused to receive them due to their complicated legal circumstance, as they do not have legal residency or even passports. Hence, they remain in a legal limbo without permanent residence or a legal status.

Mohamed Emad, a legal researcher at the Euro-Med Monitor, said that the Swedish authorities' procedures to prevent the renewal and issuance of resident permits is a clear violation of the 1951 Convention relating to the Status of Refugees, especially Article 27 which states, "The Contracting States shall issue identity papers to any refugee in their territory who does not possess a valid travel document."



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In addition to the policy of forcible deportation that contradicts Article 33, Paragraph 1 of the Convention, which states that “No Contracting State shall expel or return ("refouler") a refugee in any manner whatsoever to the frontiers of territories where his life or freedom would be threatened on account of his race, religion, nationality, membership of a particular social group or political opinion."

Regarding the refugees' right to housing, food and financial aid, Emad explained that the Swedish authorities are obliged under international law to provide the humanitarian requirements for refugees, and this is confirmed by the asylum agreement, as it says: “The Contracting States shall accord to a refugee lawfully in their territory treatment as favorable as possible and, in any event, not less favorable than that accorded to aliens generally in the same circumstances, as regards the right to engage on his own account in agriculture, industry, handicrafts and commerce and to establish commercial and industrial companies."

Euro-Med Monitor warned that the Swedish authorities' continuation of such discriminatory actions against Palestinian asylum seekers will put their lives in danger, be it by depriving them of their basic rights, or returning them to unsafe areas from which they have fled.

The group called on the authorities to respect their contractual legal obligations, regularize the conditions of refugees and asylum seekers, enable them to integrate into society, and enjoy all basic rights guaranteed to them by international law, especially the Universal Declaration of Human Rights, the Refugee Convention





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and the International Covenants on Civil Rights, and other political, economic and social agreements.

Euro-Med Monitor called on the United Nations and the European Union to act quickly and seriously to put pressure on the Swedish authorities to ensure that asylum seekers and refugees in its territory have access to all their rights guaranteed according to international law, and to ensure the provision of basic services to them without discrimination on the basis of nationality, and to find specific mechanisms to force Swedish authorities to implement those decisions and not to repeat such practices against refugees and asylum seekers in the future.

