



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



**"Activists Warn Yarmouk Residents against Attempts to Turn Their Property into Bargaining Chips"**

- UNRWA Distributes Relief Items to Vulnerable Palestinian Families
- Activists Acclaim Efforts of Cleaning Staff in Khan Eshieh Camp
- Laureate Students Honored in Palestinian Refugee Camp in Syria
- Palestinian Family Appeals for Information over Fate of Forcibly Disappeared Relative in Syria

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## Latest Developments

Activists have called on the residents of Yarmouk Camp, in Damascus, to stand on guard to all attempts to force them to forfeit their houses and property at low prices.

The activists have warned against attempts by crooked real estate brokers to pressurize civilians to sell their homes and properties following the widely-condemned reconstruction plan proposed by Damascus Governorate.

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.

Human rights activists have accused pro-regime businessman of standing behind the purchase of property from Yarmouk residents.

Palestinian refugees and human rights groups continue to voice their firm rejection of the new reconstruction plan for Yarmouk Camp, which has been subjected to massive destruction in the bloody conflict.

UN data indicates that before the eruption of the conflict in 2011, Yarmouk was home to approximately 160,000 Palestine refugees, making it the largest Palestine refugee community in Syria.



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Located eight kilometers from Damascus, it is one of three unofficial camps in Syria.

In December 2012, fierce clashes erupted in Yarmouk, causing numerous civilian casualties, severe damage to property and the displacement of thousands of Palestine refugees and Syrians. The camp was under siege from July 2013, drastically restricting the entry of commercial and humanitarian goods.

In April 2015, armed opposition groups captured over 60 per cent of the camp, containing over 90 per cent of the remaining civilian population. This not only made relief institutions unable to carry out any distributions inside Yarmouk but also displaced most of the remaining 18,000 Palestine refugees and other civilians to the neighboring areas of Yalda, Babila and Beit Saham (YBB).

Almost all the remaining Palestine refugees left during the final government offensive for Yarmouk in April-May 2018, after which the government retook control of the camp.

In another development, UNRWA has started to send text messages to vulnerable Palestinian families in Syria in order to hand them over hygiene kit.

Families whose breadwinner is a person aged above 60 and diagnosed with a chronic disease will benefit from the move. Families headed by or one of whose members is a person with disabilities are also eligible for aid.



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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.

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 continuous depreciation of the Syrian pound and the deteriorating socio-economic conditions experienced by all civilians in Syria during the last year have increased the hardship faced by Palestine refugees, whose resilience is at breaking point.

Meanwhile, activists from Khan Eshieh Camp have paid tribute to cleaning workers whom they said have made their best to remove trash from streets and residential alleyways.

Palestinian families taking refuge in Khan Eshieh camp have been struggling with squalid humanitarian conditions inflicted by the nine-year long warfare.

According to UN data, Khan Eshieh camp lies beside the ancient ruins of Khan Eshieh, 27km south-west of Damascus. The Khan historically served as an overnight shelter for trade caravans on the road between Damascus and the southwest, and in 1948, it provided shelter for the first refugees from Palestine. The camp



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was established in 1949 on an area of 0.69 square kilometers with refugees originally from the northern part of Palestine.

Before the conflict in Syria, the camp was home to more than 20,000 Palestine refugees. In 2012, the farms and fields surrounding the camp became active battlegrounds in which heavy weapons were deployed, often indiscriminately. The population more than halved to 9,000.

Some of the camp's buildings and infrastructure were severely affected including some UNRWA installations; two UNRWA schools and the community centre were almost razed to the ground. In 2016, UNRWA was able to re-access Khan Esheih and the Agency was able to rehabilitate some of its installations. Residents have also slowly started to return, with the camp now accommodating 12,000 people.

Along similar lines, a number of Palestinian students were honored by the Islamic Jihad Movement during a ceremony held at the Arab Cultural Centre in AlHusainiya camp, in Rif Dimashq.

Hundreds of displaced Palestinian refugees in/from Syria have achieved success stories, despite the traumatic upshots wrought by the daily scenes of bloodshed and destruction across the embattled Syrian territories.

This includes scores of refugee students who have obtained the highest scores at their academic institutions; hundreds of refugee sportsmen/sportswomen who snatched the first places in regional and international competitions; dozens of artists who received



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renowned literary awards for their products and performances; and several housewives who turned trauma into a space of creativity.

After ten years of conflict, Palestine refugees continue to be one of the most vulnerable groups in Syria with immense humanitarian needs. The conflict has caused immense suffering and trauma over the past years.

In the meantime, the family of the Palestinian refugee Mohamed Issa AlHourani reiterated their appeals to the international human rights institutions to work on disclosing the whereabouts and condition of their son who has been locked up in Syrian state jails for the seventh consecutive year.

Born in 1982, AlHourani was kidnapped by Syrian government forces in November 2013 from Daraa AlBalad. His condition and whereabouts have been shrouded in mystery.

Over 1,790 Palestinian refugees have been secretly held in Syrian government dungeons since the outburst of deadly hostilities.

AGPS also documented the death of over 600 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



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of the Convention against Torture and Other Cruel, Inhuman or Degrading Treatment or Punishment, commonly known as the United Nations Convention against Torture (UNCAT).

AGPS estimates the real number to be far higher due to the gag orders slapped by the Syrian government on the detainees' names and fates, along with the families' reluctance to report such cases over retaliation concerns.

AGPS continues to urge the Syrian government to disclose the fate of scores of Palestinians held in its lock-ups, release the bodies of those tortured to death, to seriously work on halting harsh torture tactics, launch fact-finding probes into crimes of torture, and to bring those involved in such crimes before courts.