



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



"Prisoners' Families Blackmailed in Syria"

- Palestinian Refugee Released from Syrian Prison
- Security Turmoil Overwhelms AlSayeda Zeinab Camp
- Palestinians in AlHusainiya Camp Facing Dire Conditions

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Latest Developments

The families of hundreds of Palestinian refugees secretly held in Syrian state jails have been blackmailed over their appeals for information.

Hundreds of families have paid large sums of money of at least \$2,000 up to \$20,000 to brokers, crooked lawyers, or government officials to get pieces of information about the condition and whereabouts of their missing relatives.

The families hardly ever receive the required pieces of information and the traffickers never show up again as soon as they are paid.

In a report entitled “Syria: Between Prison and the Grave” and published in 2015, Amnesty International warned that tens of thousands of people in Syria have vanished without a trace. They are the victims of enforced disappearance – when a person is arrested, detained or abducted by a state or agents acting for the state, who then deny the person is being held or conceal their whereabouts, placing them outside the protection of the law. The disappeared are cut off from the outside world, packed into overcrowded, secret cells where torture is routine, disease is rampant and death is commonplace. Their families are forced to live in desperation with few, if any, safe ways of finding their loved ones.

According to the report, the number of actors seeking to use the system for their own personal gain or advantage has increased. As a result of this opportunism by state security officers, an even



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greater number of individuals have been subjected to enforced disappearance in Syria. Amnesty International's research suggested that those who exploit the system are driven by two primary motivations: first, the pursuit of financial profit, and second, the settling of personal grievances.

Along similar lines, a Palestinian refugee from Khan Eshieh camp was released from Syrian prisons following a two-year detention term.

AGPS has not revealed his name over security concerns.

AGPS has kept record of the secret incarceration of 1,797 Palestinian detainees in Syrian state jails, where over 600 others have also been tortured to death.

In another development, tension has been running high in AlSayeda Zeinab Camp, in Rif Dimashq, after clashes burst out a few days earlier between Shiite groups and gunmen in the area. Deaths and injuries were reported.

Residents of AlSayeda Zeinab camp, in Rif Dimashq, have been enduring squalid conditions due to high rates of unemployment. Ten years into the conflict, more than half of the residents lost their sources of income. Scores of families continue to live below the poverty line due to exorbitant prices of food and non-food items.

As a result, Scores of civilians have fled the camp while others have been forced to join pro-government battalions.



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The Syrian government forces regained control over AlSayeda Zeinab Camp following a seven-month military operation. Heavy material damage has been inflicted on the camp.

UN data indicates that the camp was established on an area of 0.02 square kilometers in 1948, but the majority of the residents came in 1967. The inhabitants, who were displaced from the Quneitra Governorate in the Golan Heights during the 1967 Arab-Israeli conflict, sought refuge for the second time in their lives in the area. Most had originally fled to the Golan Heights in 1948 from nearby villages in northern Palestine.

Before the conflict in Syria, the camp was home to 23,700 Palestine refugees. The camp was affected by violent clashes that forced 40 per cent of the people to leave in late 2012.

Like other areas in Syria, displacement, unemployment, inflation, protection and security risks are among the major concerns shared not only by Palestine refugees but also Syrians alike during the ongoing conflict in Syria. The majority of Palestine refugees in AlSayeda Zeinab work as day laborers, government employees or vendors.

Meanwhile, Palestinian families taking refuge in AlHusainiya camp denounced the acute shortage in fuel supplies and firewood.

A liter of fuel is being sold at up to 1,000 Syrian pounds, a sum which the cash-strapped families can hardly afford.



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High unemployment rates and the absence of relief assistance by UNRWA and other humanitarian institutions have made survival quite difficult in the area.

Offensives launched on the camp using MIG warplanes led to the death of dozens of civilians in AlHusainiya Camp and a massive material destruction. Bloody shootouts between the opposition outfits and the Syrian government forces culminated in the latter's takeover of the camp on October 9, 2013.