



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



"Palestinian Family Appeals for Information over Fate of Forcibly Disappeared Son in Syria"

- Displaced Families to Return to Yarmouk Camp
- Norway Contributes \$3 Million in Aid for Palestine Refugees
- Residents of Greek Migrant Camp Grappling with Poor Hygiene
- Situation of Holders of Temporary Visas in Sweden Exacerbated by Coronavirus

+442084530978

/Actgroup.palsyria

reports@actionpal.org.uk

www.actionpal.org.uk



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Latest Developments

The family of Palestinian refugee Mohamed Hamdan, born in 1996, continues to appeal for information over the condition and whereabouts of their son who was detained by the Syrian security forces in August 2013 at a checkpoint pitched near the main entrance to Yarmouk Camp, in Damascus.

The family said they have no idea whether their son is still alive or has been tortured to death in Syrian government prisons.

In another development, Syrian security forces deployed on Street 30 have allegedly started registering names of families wishing to return to Yarmouk Camp.

Property ownership proofs and identity documents have been stipulated as a precondition for the registration process.

AGPS could not identify the piece of news.

Local activists said an officer at the checkpoint received civilians' applications and documents, pending the approval of their return. Owners of uninhabitable houses will not be allowed in.

Palestinian families continue to call on the concerned authorities to allow them a safe return to their homes in Yarmouk Camp, in Damascus, and to press ahead with reconstruction projects.

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.

Last year, the United Nations Institute for Training and Research (UNITAR) published the results of an assessment of the damage to



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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.

Meanwhile, the Norwegian Embassy in Lebanon said it will contribute \$3 million in response to the flash appeal launched by the United Nations Relief and Works Agency for Palestine Refugees (UNRWA) in favor of Palestinian refugees from Syria (PRS) in Lebanon.

On its Facebook page, the Embassy said Palestinian refugees are amongst the most vulnerable and marginalized communities in Lebanon.

It added that UNRWA continues to provide vital healthcare, protection, education, and relief services for Palestine refugees in Lebanon and that the Agency has been managing the anti-coronavirus fight in cooperation with the Lebanese government, UN bodies, and international/local NGOs.

According to information collected by UNRWA, more than 80 per cent of PRS indicate that the Agency's cash assistance is their main source of income. 95 per cent of PRS are food insecure, while about 89 per cent of PRS live in poverty. 36 to 57 per cent of PRS youth face unemployment. In August and September 2019, UNRWA conducted a verification exercise of PRS in Lebanon and verified the physical presence of 27,803 PRS in the country.



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The number of PRS in Lebanon has been gradually decreasing over the past two years, and UNRWA estimates that in 2020 the country will continue to host approximately 27,700 PRS (8,450 families). UNRWA said PRS's vulnerability is further compounded by their precarious legal status. According to the Agency's monitoring data, around 55 percent of PRS do not possess valid legal residency documents.

The lack of a valid legal status, often coupled with outdated civil registration documents, results in severely restricted freedom of movement for some PRS in Lebanon due to fear of arrest, detention and being issued a departure order.

In the meantime, Palestinian and Syrian refugees seeking shelter in Ritsona camp, located on the Greek mainland, roughly 75 kilometers northeast of Athens and housing about 3,000 migrants, denounced the poor hygiene and absence of healthcare services in the migrant facility.

Live photos obtained by AGPS show mounds of trash piled up on the access road, near migrant tents, which increases the risk of COVID-19 contaminations and the spread of life-threatening diseases.

The refugees also denounced the steep food prices.

Palestinian refugees and other migrants have been subjected to a dire humanitarian situation in substandard facilities set up in Greece, most of them vastly overcrowded, unhygienic and violence-prone.



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Palestinian refugees from Syria continue to risk their lives onboard the “death boats” to Greece. Activists estimate that around 4,000 Palestinian refugees from Syria are taking shelter on Greek islands.

Greece recorded its first coronavirus case in late February, reporting more than 1,400 cases so far and 50 deaths. The country's official population is 11 million. Compared to other EU countries at the forefront of the migration trend into Europe such as Italy and Spain, Greece has thus far kept its corona case numbers relatively low.

However, with more than 40,000 refugees and migrant presently stuck in refugee camps on the Greek islands alone, the Greek government has described the current situation as a "ticking health bomb."

Aid organisations stress that conditions in the overcrowded camps are inhumane, calling for migrants to be evacuated from the Greek islands. Greek Prime Minister Kyriakos Mitsotakis that Greece was ready to "protect" its islands, where no case has been recorded so far, while adding that he expects the EU to do more to help improve overall conditions in migrant camps and to assist relocate people to other EU countries.

Along similar lines, holders of temporary visas in Sweden expressed concerns over their fate amid the lockdown measures imposed across the country to fight coronavirus.

Palestinian refugees in Sweden told AGPS that they risk to go jobless as hundreds of migrant workers have been laid off and scores of companies turned down job applications.



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The Swedish Immigration Agency has imposed tough conditions on refugees holding temporary visas and wishing to obtain permanent visas. Since mid-July 2016, the Swedish authorities suspended permanent visa procedures for holders of temporary protection cards.

Over the past few years, thousands of Palestinian and Syrian refugees, among other migrants, who have applied for asylum in Sweden were granted two-year visas.

Eligibility criteria set by the Swedish authorities include a well-paid work contract valid for a minimum of two years and which enters into force before the expiration of the temporary visa. The employer should submit a recruitment declaration at the Swedish tax authority, taking into consideration the conditions defined by the national trade unions.