



مجموعة العمل من أجل فلسطينيي سورية  
Action Group For Palestinians of Syria

19-11-2020

No. 2949

## التقرير اليومي

الخاص بأوضاع اللاجئين الفلسطينيين في سورية

Daily report on the situation of Palestinian refugees in Syria



**"Palestinians from Syria in Jordan Sound Distress Signals"**

- 12 Palestinian Engineers Allowed to Volunteer for Reconstruction Works in Yarmouk Camp
- Displaced Families Allowed to Return to Yarmouk Camp
- UNRWA Honors Graduates of Damascus Training Centre
- 4 Palestinian Brothers Forcibly Disappeared in Syrian Prisons for over 5 Years

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## Latest Developments

The Jordanian authorities have prevented Palestinian refugees from Syria (PRS) from benefiting from donations made by “Himmat Watan” campaign which provides aid to vulnerable families whose livelihoods have been affected by the coronavirus pandemic.

Activists said PRS are not eligible for social insurance in Jordan and have not benefited from aid items provided by the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR).

Palestinian refugees have urged the concerned parties to work on toning down their calamitous state of affairs in light of the socio-economic crisis and health setback wrought by the global coronavirus pandemic.

The number of PRS in Jordan has remained relatively stable for a number of years, with 17,343 PRS recorded with UNRWA as of December 2019. Of these, 349 reside in King Abdullah Park (KAP), facing movement restrictions and a number of protection concerns.

Since the opening of Jabeer-Al Nassib border between Syria and Jordan, in October 2018, UNRWA has registered the return of 624 PRS individuals to Syria. As of November 2019, of those returnees, some 227 individuals were displaced again to Jordan for a range of reasons, including the unstable security situation in Syria, problems with civil documentation, lack of economic resources and



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livelihood opportunities, and high levels of destruction of homes and property.

A Comprehensive Food Security and Vulnerability Assessment conducted by WFP in 2018 indicated that the majority (67 per cent) of PRS were food-insecure or vulnerable to food insecurity. Twelve per cent of PRS female headed households were found to be food insecure compared to seven per cent of male-headed households. Food insecurity was even higher (78 per cent) in PRS households where the head of household was reported to be completely illiterate. Eighty-six per cent of surveyed PRS households were also reported to be in debt.

In another development, Damascus Governorate has given greenlight to 12 Palestinian engineers to work as volunteers with the local reconstruction committee in an attempt to assess damaged buildings and infrastructure.

Other engineers lashed out at the Damascus Governorate for turning down their demands for voluntary work in the camp.

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. 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



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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 UNRWA 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.

UNRWA was able to return to the camp to conduct a needs assessment in October 2018. Of the 23 UNRWA premises in the camp and nearby Hajjar al Aswad, including 16 school buildings, all have been affected by the conflict.

Along similar lines, a number of displaced Palestinian families have been allowed to return to Yarmouk Camp after local authorities okayed their demands.

Eye-witnesses said trucks laden with furniture and kitchenware have been spotted at the main entrances to the camp.

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.



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Last year, 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.

Most of Palestinian families taking shelter south of Damascus fled Yarmouk as a result of the tough blockade imposed by the government troops and also after ISIS grabbed hold of the camp on April 1, 2015.

Scores of other stranded families fled the camp following the 33-day military operation launched by the government forces on April 19, 2018. The Syrian government regained control over the camp and southern Damascus towns following the military operation. Dozens of civilians were killed and dozens more injured. Over 80% of buildings have gone either totally or partially destroyed.

Meanwhile, 22 students who graduated from the Damascus Training Centre (DTC) were honored by the United Nations Relief and Works Agency for Palestine Refugees (UNRWA). Eight graduates have already been integrated into the labor market.

232 students will have been graduated from the centre by the end of 2020.



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UNRWA has been able to provide vocational training opportunities for hundreds of Palestine refugees in Syria. Vocational training has proven to be a vital lifeline in a region deeply affected by the conflict in Syria, which in 2020 has entered its ninth year.

UNRWA also said that its vocational centers play an active role in ensuring that their graduates find employment once they graduate. One of the most successful ways to ensure this is to offer on-the job training.

Vocational training courses include mechatronics, air-conditioning (AC) maintenance, sewing, computer maintenance, plumbing, and car electricity, along with medical, information, and engineering specialties.

In the meantime, four Palestinian brothers from the Tamim family have been secretly held in Syrian prisons for over five years.

The four brothers—Mohamed Bashar, Mohamed Amin, Mohamed Hadi, and Ali—took shelter in Yarmouk Camp.

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



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sexual abuse against Palestinian detainees, in a flagrant violation 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.