



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

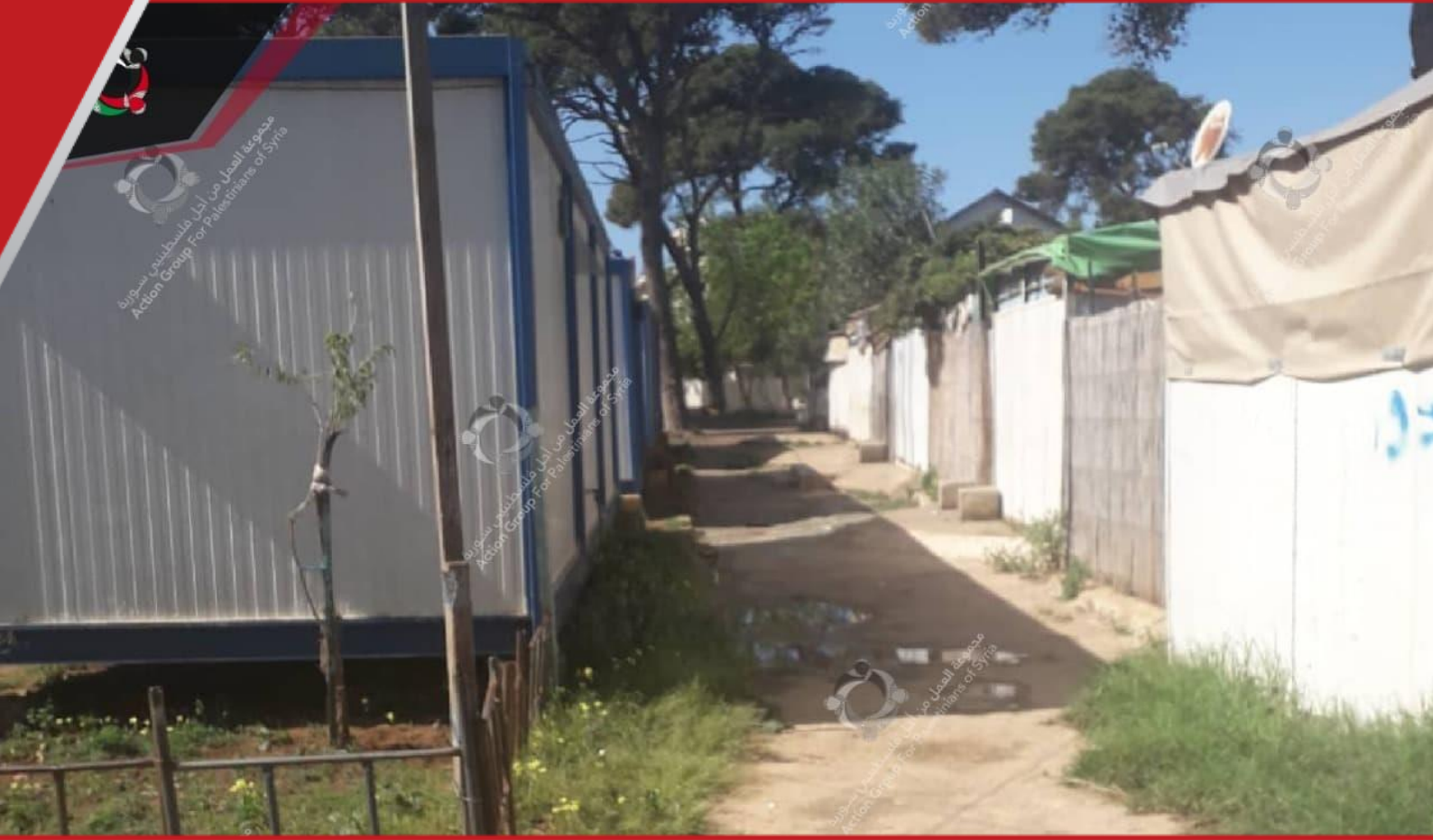
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التقرير اليومي

الخاص بأوضاع اللاجئين الفلسطينيين في سورية

Daily report on the situation of Palestinian refugees in Syria



"Palestinian Refugees Launch Cry for Help from Algeria"

- UN: 10 Years of Multiple Hardships for Palestine Refugees in Syria
- Rights Group: 25,000 Palestinian Refugees from Syria Struggling for Survival in Lebanon
- Swedish Migration Agency: Syria Migrants in Need of Protection
- Palestinian Refugee Adham Mohamed Forcibly Disappeared by Syrian Regime for 8th Year

+442084530978

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Latest Developments

The brutal conflict in Syria has forced thousands of Palestinian refugees to flee the war-torn country in search of safer shelters.

Hundreds of Palestinian refugees from Syria (PRS) who have reached Algeria have been living in distress due to their squalid humanitarian conditions.

15 PRS families have been sheltered in Algeria's Sidi Faraj camp, near the capital city Algiers, where they have been denied access to the local labor market and to humanitarian aid.

Speaking with AGPS, the refugees said they have been sheltered in ramshackle caravans. Poor hygiene and lack of ventilation have caused many infections and skin diseases.

The refugees continue to raise alarm bells over medical neglect and the absence of humanitarian aid, saying the new Palestine ambassador has only distributed school bags to children.

The Algerian authorities have failed to provide PRS with their UN-recognized rights as refugees fleeing war-stricken zones. The UNHCR also continues to turn its back on their appeals for emergency assistance.

The majority of PRS living in Sid Faraj camp have overstayed their three-month visas. Algerian authorities have also suspended naturalization procedures for Algerian-born PRS and prevented scores of them from residence permits and property ownership.



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Dozens of PRS families fled Sidi Faraj camp to European destinations after paying exorbitant sums to smugglers.

Along similar lines, ten years after demonstrations started in Syria, over half of the Palestine refugees in the country have been displaced at least once because of the brutal conflict that ensued, including 120,000 who have sought safety in neighbouring countries, mainly Lebanon and Jordan, and beyond, said the UN Agency for Palestine Refugees.

Once a vibrant community of over 550,000 people, Palestinians had come to Syria in two main waves in 1948 and 1967 to settle in 12 camps across the country. Yarmouk, the most famous of the Palestine refugee camps, became known as “the capital of Palestine refugees.”

The United Nations Relief and Works Agency for Palestine refugees in the Near East (UNRWA) said it has operated in Syria since 1950. Since the start of the conflict in 2011, UNRWA has stepped up its operations to ensure the needs of Palestine refugees in the country are met. The Agency is the main provider of humanitarian assistance and basic services to 438,000 Palestine refugees who remain in the country – 91 per cent of whom live in absolute poverty - and who have been among those worst affected by the conflict.

“As a Palestine refugee, you are already born with a tag that says “displaced”, said UNRWA Commissioner-General Philippe Lazzarini. “If you are a Palestine refugee in Syria, then you are at least doubly displaced and most likely living in extreme hardship.”



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In response to the Syria regional crisis, with its multiple layers of conflict, displacement, hardship and most recently, the COVID-19 pandemic, UNRWA is a lifeline to nearly 420,000 of the most vulnerable Palestine refugees in Syria. Cash assistance and food aid by the Agency are often the only fixed support they get.

In neighboring Jordan and Lebanon, a total of 45,500 Palestinian refugees from Syria receive health, education, social services and cash assistance from UNRWA to help cover their basic needs. But the funding crisis that has hit UNRWA in the last few years has also heavily impacted the Agency's ability to adequately respond to the immense needs of Palestine refugees from Syria.

Since the start of the conflict, many UNRWA installations inside Syria, such as schools and health centers, have become inaccessible or sustained severe damage. Forty per cent of UNRWA classrooms have been lost and almost 25 per cent of the Agency's health centres are currently unusable due to the conflict. UNRWA in Syria has also lost 19 staff members during the 10-year conflict.

“The daunting images of destruction in Yarmouk camp remain with me, even a few months after I visited Syria,” said Lazzarini. “Children in pink and blue school uniforms stepping out of the rubble to get on a school bus was a surreal sight.”

UNRWA is seeking to rehabilitate some of its installations in Syria to be able to provide services in the areas where Palestine refugees are returning. It is primarily seeking to rehabilitate a building in Yarmouk camp to use it as a multipurpose center after some 500 Palestine refugee families have returned to the camp.



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“Where Palestine refugees are able to safely return, UNRWA will do everything it can to give them access to basic services,” added the UNRWA Commissioner-General.

Meanwhile, Palestinian Human Rights Organization (HAHED) said that 25,000 Palestinian refugees from Syria (PRS) have been facing dire conditions across Lebanese villages and refugee camps.

SHAHED said in its annual report that though PRS are denied access to the local labor market and are heavily reliant on humanitarian aid, they have been forced to pay accommodation fees and denied their right to vital services.

SHAHED said PRS families are unable to pay hospitalization charges and to secure much-needed medicines due to their dire socio-economic condition and the multiple hardships inflicted by years of displacement along with the consequences of the COVID-19 pandemic.

In its fact sheet entitled “Syria Regional Crisis Emergency Appeal 2021”, UNRWA said that 87% of PRS live in poverty in the Lebanese territories.

UNRWA’s factsheet indicates that 257,000 Palestinian refugees in Lebanon are in need of UNRWA emergency cash assistance.

Over 470,000 refugees are registered with UNRWA in Lebanon. About 45 per cent of them live in the country’s 12 refugee camps. Conditions in the camps are dire and characterized by



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overcrowding, poor housing conditions, unemployment, poverty and lack of access to justice.

Palestinians in Lebanon do not enjoy several important rights; for example, they cannot work in many professions and cannot own property (real estate). Because they are not formally citizens of another state, Palestine refugees are unable to claim the same rights as other foreigners living and working in Lebanon.

In the meantime, the Swedish Migration Agency said asylum seekers from Syria are still in need of protection as the status quo has not changed in Syria.

Over recent years, the Swedish Migration Agency has turned down several applications for humanitarian asylum by Palestinian refugees fleeing Damascus, claiming the city is a secure zone and the refugees can safely return to it.

A refugee told AGPS he had appealed the Agency's decision, saying his family had been chased down by the Syrian security forces and once they return to Damascus they will be arrested.

Human rights activists said Sweden no longer considers Syria an unsafe place for refugees. In order for visa applications to be accepted, the refugee should provide proofs of personal threats.

In another development, Palestinian refugee Adham Kheir Mohamed, born in 1990, has been secretly held in Syria's state-run prisons for the 8th consecutive year.



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Adham was arrested by Syrian security forces on May, 30, 2013 at a checkpoint in Yarmouk Camp, south of Damascus.

AGPS has documented the secret detention of 1,797 Palestinian refugees in state-run penal complexes across war-torn Syria, among them 110 women and girls.

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