

20-08-2022

No: 3677

مجموعة العمل

من أجل فلسطينيي سورية
Action Group For Palestinians of Syria



التقرير اليومي



الخاص بأوضاع اللاجئين الفلسطينيين في سورية
The situation of Palestinian refugees in Syria

Rights Group: Syrian Regime Withholding Victims' Death Certificates

- **Over 90% of Palestinian Refugees in Syria Live in Poverty**
- **Canada Minister: Not Safe yet for Syrian Yefugees to Go Home**
- **Palestinians among Asylum Seekers Rescued off Turkish Coast following Pushback from Greece**



Latest Developments

The Syrian Network for Human Rights (SNHR) issued a report entitled “The Syrian Regime, Through Its Security Services and State Institutions, Controls the Incidents of Registering the Deaths of Victims Killed/’Disappeared’ in the Armed Conflict Since March 2011”, in which it notes that the Syrian regime has killed at least 200,391 civilians, including 14,464 due to torture, and forcibly disappeared 95,696 others since March 2011.

The 11-page report reveals that the Syrian regime has refrained from issuing death certificates to its victims’ families with the exception of a very few cases, regardless of the additional trauma and suffering this causes to the families of those killed.

It said the regime not only kills its victims, but even denies their families the small dignity of issuing a death certificate for them, amplifying the suffering of their family members, often for many years, given the repercussions of a person’s ‘disappearance’ on their spouse, children, parents, siblings, and other family members.

SNHR said part of this additional suffering results from the need to obtain a ‘devolution of inheritance’ document for any deceased person in order to dispose of this or her property, and to ensure that the deceased’s spouse and children are legally eligible to claim any retirement pension due to him or her. This document is also essential in enabling a deceased man’s widow, to request that she be appointed by a Sharia judge as a guardian of their minor children and to allow her to obtain passports for them and obtain any travel visas. Failure to register the death incident also deprives a widow of the opportunity for remarriage, and of other social and legal benefits and rights.

The report provides details of three methods used by the Syrian regime to register and confirm the deaths of some of the citizens who were subjected to extra-judicial killing at its hands due to the internal armed conflict; First, those victims whose families have not yet been able to obtain a death certificate to confirm their loved ones’ demise, even one which does not mention the cause of death or name the responsible party, or even gives another reason for the



death, for fear of the security repercussions on the family members, who desperately need these death certificates; second, victims of arbitrary arrest, with the Syrian regime and the other parties to the conflict having arrested at least 154,398 individuals, 111,907 of whom have been forcibly disappeared. Throughout the years of detention, the detainees are subjected to the most horrific methods of torture, which have caused the deaths of 14,464 due to torture. Thousands of people who were killed under torture have not been registered as deceased within the official state agencies, with the fate of 95,696 forcibly disappeared persons remaining unknown to the present day; the third method is related to registering the death of missing persons, through these deaths being registered after the passage of four years or more since the person was first documented as missing.

The report stresses that understanding the implementation of any decree/law/circular/decision issued by the Syrian regime cannot be treated as being independent of the unlimited powers and authority of the security services, who are the main controller of all other institutions and authorities.

The report concludes that the Syrian regime continues to issue legislation, laws, and decrees that violate the fundamental rights of citizens and ensure that death registration is done under the supervision and absolute control of the regime's security services. The regime often gives a false cause of death; It is impossible to obtain any official death certificate stating the true cause, i.e., that the Syrian regime arrested the victim, who subsequently died due to torture in a regime detention center, or that he or she was killed by the Syrian regime's strikes with barrel bombs or chemical weapons.

The report calls on the UN Security Council and United Nations to hold a meeting to discuss the fate of tens of thousands of Syrians killed or forcibly disappeared by the regime, whose fate the regime has not revealed, who are treated as though they had vanished from existence into nothingness, and to work seriously to achieve a political transition towards a state of democracy and respect for human rights, which will contribute to revealing the fate of hundreds of thousands of Syrians, and constitute a starting point for preserving the rights of the victims.



Along similar lines, the conflict in Syria has led to a food safety disaster in the country, with 93 percent of the population living in poverty, according to the Central Statistics Centre.

A number of factors have led to this reality, including the monopoly the armed groups have on sources of food.

The protracted displacement, deteriorating socio-economic conditions aggravated by the consequences of the COVID-19 pandemic, dire humanitarian needs and protection concerns continue to affect the lives of Palestine refugees in Syria.

UN data indicates that the protracted conflict has devastated human security and left 91 per cent of the 438,000 Palestine refugees estimated to remain in the country in absolute poverty and 40 per cent displaced.

Due to the serious protection gaps, children have been forced to drop out of school and join armed groups to help feed their starving families.

Hundreds of families have had women as their sole breadwinners; and in several other cases boys and girls are spotted begging in the street for a few pounds.

Meanwhile, Syria is not safe yet for millions of refugees to start going back home, a Canadian minister cautioned during a visit to Lebanon on Wednesday.

He spoke days after Lebanese officials announced a plan to start returning 15,000 Syrian refugees to their war-shattered country every month.

The remarks by Harjit Sajjan, Canada's minister of international development, followed his tour of the region that also took him to Jordan, where he visited Syria refugees living in tent settlements.

On Monday, Syria's Minister of Local Administration Hussein Makhoul said Syrian refugees in Lebanon can start returning home, pledging they will get all the help they need from authorities.

However, the U.N. refugee agency and rights groups oppose involuntary repatriation to Syria, saying the practice risks



endangering the returning refugees. Human rights groups have said that some Syria refugees who returned home were detained.

“It is very, very important to make sure that there is an absolute safe environment where they can return to,” Sajjan said in an interview with The Associated Press. “Clearly, right now, based on our assessments Syria is not a safe place for people to return.”

The calls for the return of Syrian refugees have increased in Lebanon since its economic downturn began in late 2019, leaving three-quarters of Lebanese living in poverty. For Palestinian refugees who fled war-torn Syria, living conditions have become much worse.

In the meantime, the Turkish Coast Guard detained 208 irregular migrants off the Aegean Sea and transferred them to the Immigration Department in Izmir.

According to Turkish authorities, 59 migrants were rescued off Ural district after the Greek forces forcibly pushed them back. Another 57 migrants were caught off the coastal town of Çeşme.

Two groups comprising 41 and 51 migrants were also detained off the Aegean. 10 migrants were rescued after Greek authorities pushed their vessel back to the Aegean regional waters.

The list of detained migrants includes at least five Palestinians from Syria. Their families expressed concerns over the consequences of their potential deportation to Syria.

In recent years, hundreds of thousands have made short but perilous journeys across the Aegean to reach Northern and Western Europe in search of a better life.

Hundreds of people have died at sea as many boats carrying refugees often sink or capsize. The Turkish Coast Guard Command has rescued thousands of others.

Turkey and Greece are key transit points for migrants looking to cross into Europe, fleeing war and persecution to start new lives. Turkey has accused Greece of large-scale pushbacks, summary deportations and denying migrants access to asylum procedures,



which is a violation of international law. Ankara also accuses the EU of turning a blind eye to this blatant abuse of human rights.

Pushbacks are considered contrary to international refugee protection agreements that say people should not be expelled or returned to a country where their life or safety might be in danger due to their race, religion, nationality or membership of a social or political group.