



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



"Over 110 Palestinian Refugee Women Secretly Held in Syrian Prisons, 34 Tortured to Death"

- Displaced Palestinian Family Launches Distress Calls from Northern Syria
- Situation of Palestinian Refugees in Syria Displacement Camp Exacerbated by Power Crisis
- Telecommunications Network Operative in Khan Eshieh Refugee Camp
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Latest Developments

At least 110 Palestinian women and girls have been enduring mysterious fates in Syrian government prisons, where scores of others have died as a result of torture.

Palestinian women have also been subjected to abrupt searches and exhaustive questioning at military checkpoints pitched across the war-torn country.

AGPS has frequently sounded the alarm over the violations perpetrated against Palestinian women in war-torn Syria, most notable among these are arrests, abductions, executions, body disfigurement, sniper attacks, sexual abuse, enforced deportation, and denial of the right to a fair trial, among other violations that flagrantly breach international laws and treaties.

AGPS documented the death of 34 Palestinian women and girls under torture in Syrian government dungeons.

The total death toll among the Palestinians of Syria who have fallen prey to fatal torture in Syrian state prisons has hit 600, among them children and elderly refugees.

AGPS believes the number to be far higher as scores of casualties have gone undocumented after the Syrian authorities kept their names under wraps. Several families have also refused to reveal their relatives' names over retaliation concerns.

According to affidavits by ex-detainees, Palestinian women and girls have been subjected to harsh psycho-physical torture tactics



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in Syrian penitentiaries, including electric shocks, heavy beating using iron sticks, and sexual abuse.

Such practices represent flagrant violations of the Declaration on the Protection of Women and Children in Emergency and Armed Conflict of 1974, Article 5, which criminalizes all forms of torture and mistreatment against women and children.

Inherently a taboo misdemeanor in the MENA region, violence against women, be it sexual, physical, or verbal, has remained under-reported among the Palestinian refugee community in Syria, with reasons wavering between fear of retaliation, embarrassment, social prestige, fear of punishment for those below the age of criminal responsibility, and distrust in law enforcement.

In another development, a Palestinian refugee sheltered in displacement camps set up in northern Syria said the humanitarian situation of hundreds of displaced Palestinian families is dire.

In a new testimony unraveled to AGPS, Palestinian refugee Issa Ahmed Awad, who was forcibly displaced from Yarmouk Camp, in Damascus, to northern Syria, said his family made up of 10 members and 15 grandchildren, have been struggling for survival due to years of protracted displacement, hardship, and loss of livelihoods.

Issa who was hit in a traffic accident in Efrin's outskirts a couple of weeks ago has been unable to purchase medicines and provide for



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his family as years of war and displacement strapped him of his source of income.

Issa, like thousands of displaced Palestinians and Syrians who live below the poverty line, has sunk into despair in the substandard refugee camps set up north of Syria, where conditions are dire and characterized by overcrowding, poor housing, unemployment, poverty and lack of access to justice.

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, according to UNRWA's "Syria Regional Crisis Emergency Appeal 2021".

UNRWA said in its fact-sheet that in Syria, 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.

In 2020, living conditions deteriorated further as a result of an economic crisis, leading to an increase in prices, including of the most basic commodities.

As the coronavirus pandemic has rebounded around the MENA region and the globe, Palestinian refugees in war-torn Syria continue to struggle with growing poverty and economic hardship.

Hundreds of Palestinian refugees from Syria (PRS) have lost their jobs in the warfare and hundreds more have been wondering in the



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streets as they rummage around for livelihoods to feed their starved families.

The crisis in Syria has been one of the gravest and most demanding emergencies faced in the modern era. The vast majority of PRS families are unable to meet their basic needs.

Many PRS lost their sources of income; refugee camps have seen unprecedented levels of destruction; rental prices have dramatically gone up; undernourishment and poverty have been a daily nightmare.

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.

Along similar lines, residents of Deraa Camp for Palestinian refugees, south of Syria, said their life has been marred by the chronic power blackouts in an area that has already been affected by the perils of cold weather.

Students and schoolchildren have been unable to do their homework and exam revisions due to electricity outages.

Cash-strapped refugee families are also unable to purchase power generators and car batteries which cost up to 120,000 Syrian pounds.



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All the way through Syria's nine-year conflict, residents of Deraa Camp for Palestinian refugees, south of Syria, have been grappling with dire humanitarian conditions owing to the high rates of unemployment and absence of vital facilities.

UN data indicates that Deraa refugee camp is located inside Deraa City, in southern Syria. Palestinian refugees came to the Deraa area in two waves in 1948 and in 1967.

However, as the recent conflict unraveled, the camp became engulfed by violence and 90 per cent of the camp population had to leave the camp and seek safety in other areas such as Deraa city, Damascus or Jordan. Most UNRWA services were moved to alternative premises in Deraa city.

Deraa camp and its surroundings returned to government control in the summer of 2018. The camp is now largely destroyed. UNRWA was able to return to Deraa camp in November 2018 to conduct a needs assessment. Inside Deraa camp, all premises including three school buildings and a clinic need substantial repairs or complete rebuilding.

Deraa camp was home to 10,500 Palestine refugees before 2011. As of November 2018, 400 Palestine refugee families have returned since the camp returned to government hands.

As of February 2020, some 800 families had returned to Deraa camp and 750 students to the UNRWA schools, according to UNRWA.



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The camp was initially set up on an area of 0.04 square kilometers, and it now covers an area of 1.3 square kilometers. In addition to the 10,500 Palestine refugees in the camp, there were more than 17,500 Palestine refugees living in neighboring Syrian villages before the conflict. Most of them worked as farmers on Syrian-owned lands, others were employed as wage laborers, government workers and a few as UNRWA staff.

The older part of the camp was established in 1950-51 for refugees from the northern and eastern parts of Palestine following the 1948 Arab-Israeli conflict. Next to the old camp is the newer part, which was set up in 1967 for some 4,200 Palestine refugees who were forced to leave the Quneitra Governorate in the Golan following the 1967 Arab-Israeli conflict.

In the meantime, the cell phones network has gone operative in Khan Eshieh camp for Palestinian refugees, in Rif Dimashq, following maintenance works carried out in the area.

Living conditions in Khan Eshieh have sharply deteriorated due to the lack of financial resources and high unemployment rates wrought by the unbridled warfare.

According to UN data, Khan Eshieh camp was built several centuries ago to give overnight accommodation to trading caravans on the ancient route between Jerusalem and Constantinople (modern day Istanbul). In 1948, the ruins of the city provided shelter for refugees from villages in northern Palestine.



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The camp, which lies 23 km south of Damascus, was officially established in 1950-1951 on an area of 0.03 square kilometers. The camp was home to 10,000 Palestine refugees by 2011, almost all of whom were living in irregular housing, constructed without any formal approval from the municipality.

Before the conflict in Syria, the camp was already one of the poorest camps in Syria. The conflict exerted additional pressures. The camp was surrounded by armed opposition groups and many refugee families displaced from other areas of Damascus took refuge in the camp, tripling the number of residents to some 30,000 during the crisis. Currently, the camp is home to 12,650 Palestine refugees. The increase of the camp population has had a negative impact on the camp's infrastructure.

In the meantime, UNRWA pledged to transfer cash grants to Palestinian refugees in Lebanon for the month of March as of February 22. The grants should be withdrawn by the concerned refugees by February 28. Beneficiaries of social insurances can withdraw their cash aid in the same period.

Palestinian refugees from Syria (PRS) in Lebanon are grappling with increased hardship and vulnerability, due to long-term displacement and difficult socio-economic conditions, coupled with the consequences of the COVID-19 pandemic, said UNRWA in a fact sheet entitled "Syria Regional Crisis Emergency Appeal 2021".

According to UNRWA, 87% of PRS live in poverty in the Lebanese territories.



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Nearly 65% of Palestinian refugees in Lebanon (PRL) live in poverty.

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