



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 Factions in Syria Push For Urgent Return of Displaced Families to Yarmouk Camp"

- Palestinian Refugee in Turkey on Verge of Losing Eyesight
- Palestinian Student Maher AlAyesh Forcibly Disappeared by Syrian Gov't since 2012
- Hygiene Packs Distributed in Palestinian Refugee Camp in Syria
- European Union Contributes Additional EUR 4.6 Million in Support Of Palestine Refugees
- UNRWA Tests New Aid Distribution Mechanism for Palestinian Refugees in Jordan
- UNRWA Transfers Winter Aid to Palestinian Refugees from Syria in Lebanon

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Latest Developments

Representatives of Palestinian political parties discussed the situation in Yarmouk Camp and called for the return of displaced Palestinian families at the earliest possible time.

This came in a meeting held in Damascus on December 21, during which the Palestinian factions assessed measures taken by the Syrian authorities to facilitate families' return to the camp and clear rubble from residential alleyways.

The meeting culminated in an agreement to task a committee with holding contacts with the Palestine Liberation Organization and the Palestinian Authority in Ramallah. The committee will also coordinate with UNRWA to enhance services and secure funds needed in the reconstruction process.

In another development, Palestinian refugee Firas Abdul Kader, currently taking shelter in the Turkish city of Izmir, is on the verge of losing his eyesight as he has been denied admission into Turkish hospitals after he failed to obtain the temporary protection card "kimlik".

Speaking with AGPS, Firas, who lost sight in his right eye, said he entered the Turkish territories in mid-2018 with his wife and three children. They were all arrested in Reyhanli city for illegally entering the country and held in custody for 27 days.



مجموعة العمل من أجل فلسطينيي سورية
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“We’ve been requested to sign security documents every couple of weeks”, he said. “Up to now, we’ve not received temporary protection cards.”

“During the detention period, my family and myself had gone through very hard moments. I experienced horrible nightmares, not knowing whether I could leave the prison and provide for my children”, he further told AGPS.

He added that once he was released from prison, a doctor told him that he needed an urgent eye surgery that costs 3,000 USD. But the hospital administration refused to let him in because he does not hold a kimlik visa.

Firas continues to sound distress signals over his deteriorating health condition, saying he might lose sight at any possible time.

Hundreds of PRS have been unable to provide for their children and families in Turkey. A large number of companies, factories, and shops shut their doors for fear of further COVID-19 contaminations. Several Palestinian families have lost their sole sources of income as a result.

Unofficial statistics indicate that 10,000 Palestinians from Syria have sought shelter in Turkey, where they have been facing dire socio-economic conditions and denied access to the local labor market.

Turkish embassies continue to prevent Palestinian refugees from Syria from obtaining visas. As a result, hundreds of Palestinians



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

have embarked on life-threatening journeys via illegal immigration roads to reach Turkey, fleeing war-tattered Syria, among other war-stricken zones.

Meanwhile, Palestinian university student Maher Abdul Hamid AlAyesh, aged 32, has been enduring a mysterious fate in Syrian government jails for the eight consecutive year.

Maher was kidnapped by Syrian security forces on June 10, 2012 from the exam room at Damascus Faculty of Science.

Maher, a third-year student of mathematics, was born in Tel Hamees, in AlKameshli, northeast of Syria, near the Turkish borders. An ex-prisoner said he had last met Maher in 2014 at AlMezzah Intelligence detention center.

According to AGPS data, over 60 Palestinian refugees were fatally tortured in Syrian government lock-ups, where at least 1,790 others have been secretly held.

Affidavits by ex-detainees have 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).



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

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.

In the meantime, the Palestinian Red Crescent in Syria, in cooperation with the Danish Red Cross, distributed on Tuesday, December 22, hygiene packs and detergents to residents of Khan Eshieh camp for Palestinian refugees, in Rif Dimashq.

The move aims to assist vulnerable families throughout the COVID-19 pandemic.

19 residents of Khan Eshieh camp have tested positive for COVID-19.

Recently, a state of panic has overwhelmed the Palestinian refugee community taking shelter in war-torn Syria following reports of increased coronavirus cases.

AGPS continues to urge UNRWA and the Syrian Health Ministry to provide the Palestinian refugee community in the war-ravaged country with hygiene kit and relief items in light of the coronavirus outbreak.

AGPS also stresses the need to supply Palestinian refugee camps with medicines, detergents, and disinfectants in order to help the displaced communities defend themselves against the deadly COVID-19 virus.



مجموعة العمل من أجل فلسطينيي سورية
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AGPS is deeply concerned that the lack of transparency maintained by the Syrian government regarding the pandemic will result in a catastrophic situation in displacement camps, at a time when the deadly virus continues to claim the lives of thousands of people across the globe.

AGPS fears the coronavirus could spread quickly in jails and in overcrowded displacement camps, where neither hygiene kit nor medical equipment are accessible.

Displacement camps set up in northern Syria are especially vulnerable as most hospitals and medical facilities have been bombed, rendering them out of order.

Along similar lines, the European Union (EU) has signed an additional contribution of EUR 4.6 million to the 2020 Programme Budget of the United Nations Relief and Works Agency for Palestine Refugees in the Near East (UNRWA) to help address the needs of Palestine refugees during the COVID-19 pandemic through its health and relief programmes.

The announcement was made during a virtual meeting on 11 November between UNRWA Commissioner-General, Philippe Lazzarini, and the EU Commissioner for Neighbourhood and Enlargement, Olivér Várhelyi. This contribution comes in addition to the disbursement earlier this year of EUR 82 million to the UNRWA Programme Budget.

The UNRWA Commissioner-General expressed his deep appreciation for the continued EU trust and support: “I am very



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

grateful for the European Union’s partnership with UNRWA and commitment towards Palestine refugees. This additional contribution is highly valued at a time when the Agency is facing an unprecedented financial crisis, exacerbated by the Covid-19 pandemic”.

The European Union Representative in Jerusalem, Sven Kühn von Burgsdorff, said “I’m very pleased that we could pay this additional allocation still this year. 2020 has been a very difficult year for Palestine refugees, who are not only badly affected by the COVID-19 pandemic and UNRWA’s serious financial crisis but also political tensions and the economic downturn in Palestine”.

“This support will help address the much needed services for Palestinians in refugee camps, and notably in the health sector. UNRWA’s work remains crucial for all Palestinian refugees and the viability of the two-state solution, as well as for the stability and security of the region”, he said.

The partnership between the European Union and UNRWA – which will next year mark its 50th anniversary - has evolved with the EU and its Member States becoming the largest multilateral provider of international assistance to Palestine refugees. This support has enabled UNRWA to provide frontline services to Palestine refugees across the Middle East, in the absence of a just and lasting solution to the plight of Palestine refugees.



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

Meanwhile, UNRWA has started testing aid distribution for Palestinians from Syria in Jordan through an e-wallet system.

Some 300 Palestinian refugee families will receive aid through the new distribution mechanism.

At the same time, UNRWA transferred cash aid to Palestinians from Syria in Lebanon via the ATM card.

Every family received a rental allowance of 625,000 Lebanese pounds, a food grant worth 100,000 pounds, and a winter grant of 218,750 as part of donations made by the EU Trust Fund “Madad”.

UNRWA also allocated a sum of 1,468,750 for families living in areas higher than 500 meters above the sea.

UNRWA has identified PRS in Lebanon as one of the most marginalized and poorest communities in the region.

In its 2020 Syria crisis emergency appeal, UNRWA said that PRS in Lebanon continue to face high vulnerability and marginalization, making them heavily reliant on UNRWA humanitarian support to cover their basic needs. The socio-economic hardships and unrest experienced by the country have compounded PRS' already dire living conditions.

According to a survey conducted by the American University of Beirut in 2015, nearly 90 percent of the PRS population in Lebanon live in poverty, including 9 per cent who are in extreme poverty and unable to meet even their most essential food requirements.



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PRS's vulnerability is further compounded by their precarious legal status. 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 or forced deportation.