



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 Refugee Ahmad Khamis Forcibly Disappeared by Syrian Regime"

- Coronavirus-Stricken Palestinian Refugees in Lebanon Appeal for Urgent Healthcare Services
- UNRWA Calls on Palestinian Refugees to Return Cash Aid following Technical Error
- Khan Dannun Camp for Palestinian Refugees Gripped with Power Crisis
- Palestinian Asylum Seekers on Greek Island Denounce Corruption

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Latest Developments

Palestinian ex-prisoner Ahmad Khamis, who was released from Israeli jails as part of an Israel-Russian swap deal and re-arrested by Syrian security forces, has been enduring an unknown fate in Syrian prisons.

Informed sources told AGPS that Khamis was arrested in June 2019 and has been subjected to exhaustive interrogation by Syrian intelligence officers at Palestine Branch 235.

Khamis, a resident of Yarmouk Camp, in Damascus, was released from Israeli custody in early 2019 and was taken back to Syria, in what media sources described as Russian-mediated reciprocation for the repatriation of the body of the long-missing Israeli soldier Zachary Baumel.

Khamis was kidnapped in April 2005, allegedly after he attempted to creep into an Israeli military base and carry out an anti-occupation operation in the occupied Golan Heights. He was sentenced to 18 years in prison.

An Israeli official speaking on condition of anonymity said at the time that Israel agreed to release the prisoner as a "goodwill gesture" after the return of the remains of Zachary Baumel.

Israel's military announced on 3 April that Baumel's remains, missing since the 1982 Lebanon war, had been returned, bringing to a close a highly sensitive case for Israelis.



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The announcement came less than a week before hotly contested Israeli elections, which saw Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu win a fifth term in office.

Russian President Vladimir Putin said during a visit by Netanyahu that the remains had been found by the Russian and Syrian armies, in a context where Moscow had a military presence in Syria to support President Bashar AlAssad.

But Syrian Information Minister Imad Sara said on 4 April that Damascus had no knowledge of plans to repatriate the remains, nor was it aware of the details behind the discovery of the body and its subsequent transfer.

In another development, Palestinian activists said displaced Palestinian refugees in Lebanon's AlBekaa region who tested positive for coronavirus have been left without medicines.

The infected refugees slammed UNRWA for turning blind eyes to their distress calls, saying the phone calls carried out by the Agency should rather be replaced by medical aid.

Some 800 Palestinian families from Syria have been facing squalid humanitarian conditions in AlBekaa region.

According to information collected by UNRWA, more than 80 per cent of PRS indicate that the Agency's cash assistance is their main source of income. 95 per cent of PRS are food insecure, while about 89 per cent of PRS live in poverty. 36 to 57 per cent of PRS youth face unemployment. In August and September 2019, UNRWA



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conducted a verification exercise of PRS in Lebanon and verified the physical presence of 27,803 PRS in the country.

The number of PRS in Lebanon has been gradually decreasing over the past three years, and UNRWA estimated that in 2020 the country hosted approximately 27,700 PRS (8,450 families).

UNRWA said PRS's vulnerability is further compounded by their precarious legal status. According to the Agency's monitoring data, around 55 percent of PRS do not possess valid legal residency documents.

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 and being issued a departure order.

Meanwhile, UNRWA urged registered Palestinian refugees from Syria in Lebanon to return the undue cash grants which were sent to them by mistake to BankMed.

A few days earlier, transfer of UNRWA cash aid to Palestinian refugees from Syria in Lebanon had been suspended due to over-deposits of allotted sums.

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



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a fact sheet entitled “Syria Regional Crisis Emergency Appeal 2021”.

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

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.

In the meantime, residents of Khan Dannun Camp, in Rif Dimashq, have denounced the ongoing electricity blackout across residential alleyways and buildings.

The residents said electricity has been operative for no more than a couple of hours daily, urging UNRWA and the concerned authorities to take the necessary measures in order to rehabilitate the power network and carry out the required maintenance works.

The situation has been made worse by the frequent thefts of power cables from residential alleyways and access roads.

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

According to UN data, Khan Dannun camp was built several centuries ago to give overnight accommodation to trading caravans on the ancient route between Jerusalem and Constantinople



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(modern day Istanbul). In 1948, the ruins of the city provided shelter for refugees from villages in northern Palestine.

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.

Along similar lines, migrants and asylum seekers, including Palestinians, taking shelter in substandard migrant facilities set up in Greece said they have been blackmailed over their calls for speeding up asylum procedures.

The migrants sounded the alarm over corruption and bribery which they have been confronted with at migration offices.

Corrupt brokers have reportedly blackmailed the migrants and asked them to pay money in return for asylum-seeking documents.



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Palestinian refugees and other migrants have been subjected to a dire humanitarian situation in migrant camps and other substandard facilities set up in Greece, most of them vastly overcrowded, unhygienic and violence-prone.

Over recent months, Greece's refugee camps have been running at four or five times their capacities, with tens of thousands of migrants crammed into poorly-equipped tents.

Palestinian refugees from Syria continue to risk their lives onboard the "death boats" to Greece. Activists estimate that around 4,000 Palestinian refugees from Syria are taking shelter on Greek islands.