



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



"Palestine Refugee Youth in Syria Caught Between Hammer and Barrel"

- Syria Takes Top Position among World's Most Fragile Arab Countries
- UNRWA Provides Lifeline Services for Palestinians of Syria in Jordan
- Palestinians among Several Asylum-Seekers Arrested on Belorussia-Poland Borders

+442084530978

/Actgroup.palsyria

reports@actionpal.org.uk

www.actionpal.org.uk



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Latest Developments

Palestinian refugee youths continue to struggle with the devastating impact of the eleven-year warfare in Syria, amidst a deadly pandemic outbreak.

Palestinian refugee youths (aged 12 – 30) make up nearly 30% of the Palestinians of Syria, estimated at 540,000 in 2014.

The war has resulted in increasing rates of juvenile delinquency, unemployment, and psychological disorders.

Reports of drug consumption and trafficking have also increasingly emerged in displacement camps set up for Palestinian refugees in Syria

Daily scenes of destruction and bloodshed in Syria forced dozens of helpless civilians, among them children, to consume drugs and sniff glue, among other life-threatening substances, as a means to get over the trauma inflicted by the unabated warfare. Drug use, which starts as a way to escape, quickly makes their life worse.

Drug distribution is often carried out by children aged below 18 and members of cash-strapped and vulnerable families who are exploited by illicit drug trafficking networks which are subject to drug prohibition laws.

At the same time, the coronavirus pandemic has exposed the weak infrastructure of the education systems in Palestinian refugee



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camps in Syria. Many teachers, students, and parents agreed that the quality of teaching and learning deteriorated during the distance education period imposed by the lockdown, despite efforts made by teaching staff.

Available data by UNRWA indicates that 32 UNRWA facilities have been reduced to rubble in Yarmouk Camp alone, including 16 schools, in the Syrian conflict.

Several other UNRWA facilities were destroyed in the Syrian warfare and others have gone out of operation, including two clinics, a vocational training center, a youth development center, and 28 schools, out of 112 UNRWA schools in Syria.

Upon more than one occasion, the UN has raised alarm bells over the striking upsurge in the rate of school dropouts among the Palestinians of Syria, several among whom have left schools to help feeding their impoverished families in unemployment-stricken refugee camps.

Shortly after the outburst of the deadly warfare, the Syrian government forced Palestinian refugees aged 18 and above to join affiliated militias for periods of at least one year and a half.

Those who refuse conscription are subjected to crackdowns, abductions and even executions. As a result, thousands fled the tension-stricken country in the hunt for a safer shelter.



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A researcher told AGPS that a surge in violence and divorce rates has also been recorded among PRS due to the trauma wrought by years of displacement, destruction, bloodshed, and hardship.

Along similar lines, Fund for Peace international organization rated Syria, Yemen, Somalia as some of the most vulnerable world countries.

Yemen is the most worsened Arab country over the last decade, followed by Somalia, Syria, and Southern Sudan.

Sometime earlier, Freedom House's annual study of political rights and civil liberties worldwide said Syria is rated Not Free in Freedom in the World. Political rights and civil liberties in Syria are severely compromised by one of the world's most repressive regimes and by other belligerent forces in an ongoing civil war. The regime prohibits genuine political opposition and harshly suppresses freedoms of speech and assembly. Corruption, enforced disappearances, military trials, and torture are rampant in government-controlled areas. Residents of contested regions or territory held by nonstate actors are subject to additional abuses, including intense and indiscriminate combat, sieges and interruptions of humanitarian aid, and mass displacement.

Meanwhile, more than 2 million registered Palestine refugees live in Jordan, the largest number of Palestine refugees of all UNRWA fields. Most, but not all, have full citizenship. About 18 per cent live in the ten recognized Palestine refugee camps throughout the country. Tens of thousands of Palestine refugees displaced from Syria have sought assistance from UNRWA in Jordan. The



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majority of them are believed to suffer from abject poverty and live in a precarious legal status. UNRWA is working to accommodate Palestine refugee children displaced from Syria in its schools and to provide relief and health care to those in need.

UNRWA operates 25 health clinics and four mobile clinics across Jordan. All Palestinian refugees from Syria are eligible to access UNRWA primary health-care services. PRS also benefit from UNRWA-funded referrals to secondary and tertiary services.

As of April 2014, over 13,836 Palestine refugees from Syria (PRS) had sought support from UNRWA in Jordan. The vast majority of these refugees live in communities with host families or in rental premises. A small group of those who entered early in the conflict, approximately 200 individuals, are held in 'Cyber City', a government facility in Ramtha, along with approximately 200 Syrian refugees.

The number of Palestine refugees displaced from Syria registering with UNRWA in Jordan is projected to approach 20,000 by the end of 2014. Through the emergency response programme, UNRWA provides them with relief and social and protection services. They also access UNRWA education and health services, straining the existing capacities of the Agency as the numbers grow.

By the time PRS in Jordan register with UNRWA, they have exhausted their support mechanisms and are in dire need of assistance. Their most critical needs are for shelter, food and non-food items. UNRWA works to provide these vulnerable refugees



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with relief and social and protection services. They also access UNRWA education and health services, straining the existing capacities of the Agency as the numbers grow. As of April 2014, over 2,121 PRS and Syrian refugee children had enrolled in UNRWA schools in Jordan. UNRWA health centres provided over 17,000 free consultations to PRS patients in 2013.

The Government of Jordan announced a policy of non-entry to Palestinians fleeing the Syria conflict in early 2013. This stemmed the flow of Palestine refugees from Syria towards Jordan and compounded the extreme vulnerability of Palestinians seeking safety in Syria, as well as that of those who managed to enter Jordan.

The irregular status of PRS in Jordan means they endure a considerable degree of insecurity. They face difficulties in civil processes such as registration of births and in access to government services, and are at constant risk of refoulement. The development of negative coping mechanisms among refugees is also a risk, and we are working to better identify and refer cases of gender-based violence and other serious issues.

In the meantime, Poland is increasing the number of troops on its border with Belarus to around 10,000, its defence minister said on Monday, as the country tries to stem a surge in migration which it blames on Minsk.

Hundreds of people from places like Iraq, Afghanistan and Africa have been trying to cross the border illegally every day, and Poland



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has beefed up security in the region, brushing aside criticism that it is treating the migrants inhumanely.

Over the weekend, groups of about 60 or 70 migrants, including Palestinians from Syria, had twice attempted to force their way through the border before they were caught by border guards.

The European Commission and Warsaw say the flow of migrants has been orchestrated by Belarus in a bid to put pressure on the European Union over sanctions it imposed on Minsk. Belarus has denied this.

Poland has declared a state of emergency in the region and plans to build a wall on the border.

The Polish parliament has also passed legislation that human rights advocates say aims to legalise pushbacks of migrants across its borders in breach of the country's commitments under international law.

Polish divers on Wednesday afternoon found the dead body of a 19-year-old man from in the river Bug at the Belarus border, as the number of deaths at the Polish-Belarusian frontier climbs to eight.

“The identity was confirmed by the second young man with whom he tried to illegally cross the Bug the day before. Documents were also found next to the body. He is, beyond doubt, a 19-year-old citizen of Syria,” a spokesperson of the provincial police told the Polish state news agency PAP.



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The teenager was reported missing on Tuesday morning as he tried to cross the river. Polish forces will now investigate his death, PAP reported.

Polish border guards said they rescued another Syrian man, who told them he and another migrant were pushed into the river by Belarusian police forces on Tuesday.

The death of the 19-year-old Syrian national is the eighth at the border between Poland and Belarus since this summer. Last week, the body of a 24-year-old Syrian man was spotted from a helicopter lying dead in a field, the Guardian reported.