



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



"Winter Storm Loulou Brings Severe Flooding on Palestinian Refugee Camps in Lebanon"

- Daraa Camp for Palestinian Refugees Grappling with Drinking-Water Scarcity
- UN: Only 1% of Stranded Migrant Children in Greek Camps Go to School
- Switzerland Resumes Funding for Palestine Refugee Agency

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Latest Developments

Winter storm Loulou rocking the Lebanese territories has brought heavy rain and strong wind to Lebanon, causing severe flash flooding and high winds in areas where thousands of Palestinian refugees have sought shelter.

Palestinian refugees camps, including AlRashidiya, home to hundreds of Palestinian refugees from Syria, have been overwhelmed with heavy rain and high winds. Meteorological experts warned the storm could lead to wind speeds of up to 70 kilometers per hour and a raging sea. The storm is expected to increase in strength until Thursday and could cause flooding in lower areas of the country due to rain.



The storm will make life more difficult for the thousands of Palestinians living in the country's refugee camps and substandard accommodation such as unfinished buildings or shacks. Few of these shelters are well insulated or suitable for the cold months, despite efforts by UN agencies to help refugees to prepare for winter.

Last January, storm Norma brought snow and heavy rain to dozens of Palestinian refugee camps, forcing the UN to relocate hundreds



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of people living there. Aid groups warned refugees were at risk of freezing to death in the conditions because they had only tents and blankets to defend against the cold.

Along similar lines, residents of Daraa Camp for Palestinian refugees, south of Syria, said they have been enduring an acute dearth in drinking water since early April 2014.

Civilians said maintenance works have been carried out by the local water company to repair the main line feeding the northern corners of the camp. However, water has not been pumped to central neighborhoods due to a sand barrier blocking the flow of water from the main lines feeding the area.



Over recent months, families taking refuge in the area said drinking water has been contaminated by sewage, causing it to become foul and salty.

The families continue to urge the local authorities and relief institutions, namely UNRWA, to make urgent steps in order to rinse out wastewater, enhance hygiene in the area, and provide the residents with much-needed water supplies.



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All the way through Syria's eight-year conflict, residents of Daraa 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.

In another development, only one percent of some 12,000 migrant children stuck in limbo in desperate conditions at refugee camps on Greek islands have had access to school, the UN said Monday.

"Out of 12,000 children on the islands, only one percent go to formal public school, said UN refugee agency (UNHCR) spokesman for Greece Boris Cheshirkov.

"Children are in despair, they need to be in a classroom and have a normality," Cheshirkov said, highlighting a plethora of problems including a lack of teachers and transport.

"Access to education is a big problem, especially on the islands," he added.

Cheshirkov noted that the registration and identification centers hosting the youngsters "were designed for a short time -- but the reality is different, they stay for many months." The children are dispersed across camps holding around 40,000 people in total on five islands in the Aegean Sea -- Lesbos, Chios, Samos, Leros and Kos.

Referring to a family that fled war-ravaged Syria, Cheshirkov said: "They left Syria four months ago when their house was destroyed, and their three kids have never gone to school because they were too young in Syria to go. Now that they are in Greece and at school age,



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their father Ibrahim, 49 years old, wants them to go to school (but here they can't go".

Greece was overwhelmed by the migrant crisis which erupted in 2015 with tens of thousands of people arriving after making perilous crossings in barely seaworthy vessels via neighboring Turkey. Their stays in the camps have extended over long months, in squalid and unbearable conditions.



Last month, Doctors Without Borders (MSF) drew attention to the particular plight of minors and appealed to EU states to take urgent action to "put an end to this cycle of suffering", warning of the effect on the children's mental and physical health caused by conditions it termed inhumane.

The NGO has said it fears some children are left at increase suicide risks in dangerously overcrowded camps such as Moria on Lesbos.

Meanwhile, Switzerland said on Friday it had resumed aids to the United Nations Relief and Works Agency for Palestine Refugees in the Near East (UNRWA), the New Arab news site has reported.



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Switzerland was among a number of countries that suspended their contributions to UNRWA earlier this year amid allegations that the Agency had misused donor funds.

The Swiss foreign ministry told AFP in an email on Friday that Guterres had confirmed in a letter sent to Bern on December 3 that "the probe uncovered no evidence of misappropriation of funds".

The ministry also highlighted reforms put in place by UNRWA to better manage donor funds.

Taking into account the measures taken and the confirmation from the UN Secretary-General that no donor funds had been misappropriated, Switzerland has decided to resume its payments to UNRWA, it said.

In early November, UN Secretary General Antonio Guterres released a statement saying the preliminary

findings of an internal UN probe found no "fraud or misappropriation of operational funds" by Krahenbuhl.

"There are, however, managerial issues that need to be addressed," his statement said.

Before halting its payments to the agency, Switzerland had already dished out 25 million Swiss francs (\$25.4 million, 23 million euros) in 2019. In 2018, the wealthy Alpine nation provided the organization with funds of 26 million francs.