



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



"Syrian Security Forces Grab Palestinian Refugee Houses in Khan Eshieh Camp"

- Head of Palestine Refugee Agency Pays Visit to Syria
- Displaced Residents of Yarmouk Camp Call for Urgent Return
- New Water Installations Operative in Handarat Refugee Camp
- Palestinian Engineer Wahdan AlRawashdha Secretly Held in Syrian State Prison for 7th Year

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Latest Developments

Reports and testimonies collected by AGPS have revealed that armed groups affiliated with the Syrian regime have grabbed hold of Palestinian refugees' houses in Khan Eshieh camp.

Speaking with AGPS on condition of anonymity, sources inside Khan Eshieh camp said pro-government groups in Syria put marks on the houses of families who have been forcibly displaced from the area to displacement camps in northern Syria, pending the takeover of the targeted buildings.

Security forces from the Saa'saa Branch have held sway over more than 10 civilian houses after they threatened to send whoever objects to the move to prison over terror allegations.

Living conditions in Khan Eshieh have sharply deteriorated due to the lack of financial resources and high unemployment rates wrought by the raging warfare. A transportation crisis has added bad to worse.

After ten years of conflict, Palestine refugees continue to be one of the most vulnerable groups in Syria with immense humanitarian needs.

Survival for the majority of Palestinian families in war-stricken Syria has largely hinged on relief assistance. The vast majority of families have been living below the poverty line.

In another development, Commissioner-General of the United Nations Relief and Works Agency for Palestine Refugees



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

(UNRWA), Philippe Lazzarini, discussed with Syria's Deputy Minister of Foreign Affairs and Expatriates Faisal al-Miqdad the situation of Palestinian refugees in displacement camps across the war-torn country.

This came in a meeting held in Damascus on November 28 as part of a work visit that will last for a few days.

Lazzarini underscored the endeavours made by UNRWA to overcome its financial crisis and keep up its vital services to Palestinian refugees.

Al-Miqdad stressed Syria's commitment to assist UNRWA in maintaining its mandate and continue to provide core essential services to Palestinian refugees.

The crisis in Syria has been one of the gravest and most demanding emergencies faced in the modern era. The vast majority of the 540,000 Palestinian refugees in Syria (PRS) 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.



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

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.

UNRWA said in its 2020 Syria regional crisis emergency appeal that 126,000 PRS are identified as extremely vulnerable; 89% live in poverty; 91% live in extreme poverty; and 80% rely on UNRWA cash assistance as their main source of income.

UNRWA also said that 55% of PRS do not possess valid legal residency documents and 86% of PRS households are reported to be in debt.

Hundreds of PRS have also risked their lives onboard “death-boats” bound for Europe, fleeing prosecution and economic hardship.

Meanwhile, Palestinian families continue to call on the concerned authorities to allow them a safe return to their homes in Yarmouk Camp, in Damascus, and to press ahead with reconstruction projects.

On January 07, 2020, Palestinian lawyer Nour AlDeen AlSaman, a resident of Yarmouk Camp, called on Palestinian refugees to file lawsuits in order to return to their homes and retrieve their properties in Yarmouk.

Such calls come in response to the reluctance maintained by local authorities in Damascus regarding the residents’ ongoing appeals



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

to rehabilitate infrastructure and allow displaced civilians to safely return to the camp.

A number of activists have also warned of ongoing attempts to alter the demographic character of the camp and blur its identity as a living witness to the Palestinian refugee plight.

On February 4, 2019, a petition was handed over by the residents to Damascus governor Adel Anwar AlAlabi, urging local authorities to smooth the return of displaced families to their homes.

The 200-page petition, signed by 3,000 residents of Yarmouk Camp, called on the Syrian authorities to work on facilitating their immediate return to their homes and to rehabilitate destroyed infrastructure and facilities.

The residents expressed their readiness for voluntary work and to actively take part in reconstruction works.

Last year, the United Nations Institute for Training and Research (UNITAR) published the results of an assessment of the damage to Syrian cities caused by seven years of relentless bombardment by the incumbent regime and its allies since 2011.

The analysis found out that as many as 5,489 buildings were destroyed in Yarmouk Camp for Palestinian refugees. The damage atlas used satellite-detected damage analysis to identify buildings that are either destroyed, or severely or moderately damaged.

Most of Palestinian families taking shelter south of Damascus fled Yarmouk as a result of the tough blockade imposed by the



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

government troops and also after ISIS grabbed hold of the camp on April 1, 2015.

Scores of other stranded families fled the camp following the 33-day military operation launched by the government forces on April 19, 2018. The Syrian government regained control over the camp and southern Damascus towns following the military operation. Dozens of civilians were killed and dozens more injured. Over 80% of buildings have gone either totally or partially destroyed.

Along similar lines, works to repair water pumps in Handarat camp for Palestinian refugees, in the northern Syrian province of Aleppo, have been finalized.

Local residents told AGPS that equipment, including new water pipes and power generators, has been installed.

Palestinian refugees have been grappling with dire conditions in Handarat due to the lack of humanitarian assistance and life-saving services. The majority of families have been taking shelter in buildings rented at extremely steep costs in the poverty-stricken area. A severe water and power crisis also continues to rock the camp.

Heavy shelling on Handarat and bloody shootouts between the government forces and the opposition outfits led to the destruction of over 90% of buildings in the camp. The confrontations culminated in the government's takeover of the camp along with other zones in Aleppo and the displacement of its residents on April 27, 2013.



مجموعة العمل من أجل فلسطينيين سورية
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UN data indicates that Handarat camp (also known as Ein El-Tal camp) is on a hillside 13km north-east of the city of Aleppo in the Syrian Arab Republic. The camp was established in 1962 on an area of 0.16 square kilometers. Most of the inhabitants are refugees who fled from northern Palestine.

In April 2013, armed groups entered Ein El-Tal camp, forcibly displacing the entire population over a period of some 48 hours. The camp was a theatre of armed conflict until 2016, sustaining extreme damage in the process.

In the summer of 2017, families started to return to Ein El-Tal camp. As of the end of 2018, there were 90 Palestine refugee families that returned. The camp is almost completely destroyed and lacks basic infrastructure including water, sewage and electricity.

In the meantime, Palestinian engineer Wahdan Abdullah AlRawashdeh has been enduring a mysterious fate in Syrian government prisons, where he has been locked up for over seven years running.

Wahdan was kidnapped from his home in Jdeidat Artouz, in Rif Dimashq, on January 3, 2013. He is a retired colonel from the Palestine Liberation Army (PLA) in Syria.

AGPS kept record of the secret detention of 1,797 Palestinians, including 110 women and girls, in Syrian state-run prisons, where over 600 other refugees have also died under torture.



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