



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

27-11-2021

No. 3421

التقرير اليومي

الخاص بأوضاع اللاجئين الفلسطينيين في سورية

Daily report on the situation of Palestinian refugees in Syria



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الاونروا

"E-Campaign Calls for Humanitarian Aid for Palestinians of Syria"

- Number of Palestinians from Syria in Gaza Goes Down
- Food Boxes, Winter Garments Distributed in Northern Syria Displacement Camps
- Rights Group Lashes Out at Belarus, Poland over Human Rights Violations

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Latest Developments

Activists have embarked on an e-campaign to urge the UN Agency for Palestine Refugees (UNRWA) to deliver monthly aid to Palestinian refugees in Syria.

The campaigners said UNRWA should deliver its cash grants to refugees in the war-ravaged country every month instead every four months.

UNRWA distributes its cash aid for Palestinians in Syria every four months. Refugees figuring on the list of vulnerable cases receive 175,000 SP. Refugees registered as ordinary cases get 112,500 SP.

Poverty rates have reached a zenith in Palestinian refugee camps in Syria due to the sharp decrease in the exchange rate of the Syrian pound compared to the USD and the refugees' lack of access to the local labor market.

In its “Syria Regional Crisis Emergency Appeal 2021”, UNRWA said that protracted displacement, deteriorating socio-economic conditions aggravated by the consequences of the COVID-19 pandemic, dire humanitarian needs and protection concerns continue to affect the lives of Palestine refugees in Syria.

In another development, the Follow-Up Committee of Palestinians from Syria in Gaza said the number of Palestinian refugee families who returned to the besieged Gaza Strip from war-torn Syria is estimated at 130, down from 360 families in recent years.



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The decrease is attributed to the dire socio-economic conditions wrought by Israel's 12-year-long blockade on the coastal enclave.

Palestinian refugee families from Syria who returned to the blockaded Gaza Strip have been facing an abject humanitarian situation in the Israeli-blockaded enclave.

The refugees say they have been deprived of humanitarian assistance by UNRWA and the Palestine Liberation Organization.

Palestinians living in the Gaza Strip have been enduring dire living conditions due to the 14-year-long Israeli siege and the devastating upshots of the Israeli onslaughts on the coastal enclave.

Civilians continue to launch cries for help over the high rates of unemployment, lack of financial resources, and movement crackdowns, which they said have made life quite unbearable in Gaza.

According to data by the Norwegian Refugee Council (NRC), Gaza is one of the world's most densely populated areas, with more than 5,000 inhabitants per square kilometer. The Gaza Strip is smaller than the city of Oslo but is home to three times as many people.

Gaza is described by many Palestinians and humanitarian actors as the world's largest open-air prison, where nearly 2 million Palestinians live behind a blockade and are refused access to the other occupied Palestinian areas and the rest of the world.

NRC said 7 out of 10 Palestinians in Gaza are registered as refugees, and many of these come from families who were forced to



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leave their villages in 1948. Many have also been forced to leave their homes due to war, violence, and economic hardship.

In the meantime, Kayra Ummah Organization in cooperation with Shafaq Foundation has distributed food boxes and winter clothes to displaced Palestinian and Syrian families in northern Syria displacement camps.

Palestinian refugees sheltered in displacement camps in northern Syria have been enduring a tragic situation. Most of them have been crammed in poorly-equipped tents and denied their rights to vital services.

Hundreds of Palestinian families have been struggling for survival in the poorly-equipped Deir Ballout and Muhammadiya camps, among other camps, after they were forced out of Yarmouk and southern Damascus towns.

For many displaced Palestinian refugees, the perils of coronavirus add to the torment already experienced throughout the conflict.

High rates of unemployment and lack of relief assistance have made the situation far worse for the displaced families.

According to data by the Commission of Palestinians of Syria for Relief and Development, as many as 1,488 Palestinian families have been sheltered in the northern Syrian regions of Idlib, Efrin, and Aleppo's suburbs. The largest number of families are taking refuge in Idlib.



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Some 819 Palestinian families have sought shelter in Idlib, including 226 families in the city center, 152 in Atama, 60 in Akrebat village, and 60 more in Sarmada town. 50 families are taking refuge in Maarat AlNu'man and Jericho, south of Idlib, and also in Ataa village.

Along similar lines, Human Rights Watch (HRW) has sounded the alarm over the serious human rights violations committed by authorities against migrants and asylum-seekers stranded at the border between Poland and Belarus.

In a report entitled “Die Here or Go to Poland”, HRW said thousands of people are stuck in a desperate limbo at the border of Belarus and Poland in circumstances that violate their rights, in some cases egregiously, and put their lives at risk. Encouraged by local travel agents in the Middle East to travel to the Belarus capital, Minsk, they have come to the Belarusian/Polish border with hopes of crossing irregularly into Poland. Polish officials repel those who try to cross, or push back those who initially succeed in crossing.

According to the report, Belarusian officials beat and detain those who return, and coerce them to try to cross into Poland again, meanwhile preventing them in most cases from either traveling elsewhere in Belarus or returning to their home countries. Unable to move forward or back into either country, people are spending several days or weeks in the open on the border, without shelter or access to basic humanitarian services, including food and water, resulting in deaths, hypothermia, and other sickness and injuries.



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Belarus and Poland share responsibility for this human crisis, said HRW. By November, Polish media reported there had been more than 30,000 crossing attempts at the Belarusian-Polish border since the beginning of the year. This figure could include the same people making multiple attempts to cross, as many interviewed by Human Rights Watch had. Poland has not provided statistics on the number of people detained by Poland or pushed back to Belarus by Polish authorities. A spokesperson for the Belarus government was quoted on November 18, as saying there are 7,000 migrants in the country.

In September, in response to what they have labeled “an attack against Poland” and “hybrid warfare,” Polish authorities constructed razor-wire fences along large parts of the border with Belarus. The same month the authorities imposed a state of emergency on 183 towns and villages within two miles of the border, blocking all access to that area for journalists, civil society organizations, volunteers, and others. On the Belarus side, the 10 kilometers stretch parallel to the border is a secure zone, to which only Belarusian nationals who reside there have access, with the 3-kilometer area closest to the border completely restricted to all but military and security officials.

In October, Human Rights Watch researchers travelled to both sides of the Belarus-Poland border. Migrants and asylum seekers in Poland and Belarus told Human Rights Watch that Polish border guards routinely push them back across the border to Belarus, without due process. In some cases, if those crossing were injured or sick, authorities took them to hospital for medical



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treatment and gave them a temporary six-month stay on humanitarian grounds. However, the family members of those hospitalized were mainly taken back to the border and pushed across to Belarus, separating them from their loved ones.

Belarusian border guards apprehend those who are pushed back and bring them to open-air collection points on Belarusian territory. Subsequently, the guards guide or drive the migrants to different locations at the border and force them to cross back into Poland. According to people interviewed by Human Rights Watch, Belarusian border guards prevent migrants from leaving the border areas even if they no longer wish to try to cross the border again. Consequently, migrants in some cases spend several days up to several weeks stuck on the border in the open, without shelter or access to basic necessities, including food and water.

At time of writing, there have been 13 reported deaths. The arrival of cold weather in September further exacerbated the situation for trapped migrants. People interviewed by Human Rights Watch testified to violence, abuse, theft, and extortion by Belarusian border guards. Belarus opened a shelter for some migrants near the border in mid-November.

Belarus is not a safe country for migrants and asylum seekers. By pushing back people to inhuman and degrading conditions in Belarus, where they do not have access to asylum procedures and in some cases are met with violence, and by separating families, Poland is in breach of multiple obligations under EU, human rights, and refugee law including the prohibition on sending



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anyone to a country where they face a real risk of torture or other prohibited ill-treatment.

HRW added that Belarus and Poland share responsibility for the dire situation and the well-being of the thousands of people stranded or trapped on their common border. Likewise they both have an obligation to switch to a rights-respecting response and end the human suffering.

HRW called on Belarusian authorities to immediately stop all abuse of migrants, including pushing people towards the border with Poland. Authorities should also immediately allow access for humanitarian organizations to assist people in need, and ensure that basic assistance is provided, including adequate winterized shelter for all. But more importantly, they should permit those who wish to leave the restricted border area and return to their home countries via Minsk to freely do so. Authorities should launch investigations into abuses against migrants by Belarusian border guards and hold responsible individuals to account.

HRW urged Polish authorities to immediately halt all summary returns and collective expulsions to Belarus and stop all abuse by Polish officials of migrants. The government of Poland should also immediately allow humanitarian and other civil society organizations access to the area currently restricted under the state of emergency order for the purposes of saving lives. Journalists and other monitors should also be permitted access.

The human rights watchdog said the EU and other member states should press Poland to facilitate humanitarian access at its side of



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the border and consider a temporary relocation mechanism to enable people who arrive on Polish territory to be temporarily relocated elsewhere in the EU to have their protection needs fairly assessed.