



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



Countries Raise \$130 Million for Palestine Refugees

- Palestinian Refugee Ahmad Shaaban Latest Victim of International Community's Apathy
- Resident of Palestinian Refugee Camp in Syria Pronounced Dead
- UN Agency Calls on Palestinian Refugees to Sign Up for MA Scholarship
- MSF Lashes Out at Greece over Unwarranted Lockdown on Migrant Camps

+442084530978

/Actgroup.palsyria

reports@actionpal.org.uk

www.actionpal.org.uk



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Victims

Palestinian refugee Ibrahim Suleiman Turk died in a land mine blast while he was boarding a vehicle of Liwaa AlQuds armed group, affiliated with the Syrian government forces, in the northern Syrian city of Idlib.

Ibrahim, a resident of Aleppo's AlNeirab displacement camp, joined Liwaa AlQuds after the end of his military conscription with the Palestine Liberation Army.

Latest developments

During an extra-ordinary global meeting on UNRWA at ministerial level hosted on Tuesday by the governments of Sweden and Jordan, 75 governments and non-governmental organizations made \$130 million in financial commitments to sustain the operations and services of the United Nations Relief and Works Agency for Palestine refugees in the Near East (UNRWA).

The theme of this special pledging conference under Sweden and Jordan's leadership was "A Strong UNRWA in a Challenging World– Mobilizing Collective Action." The gathering was co-chaired by Jordan's Minister of Foreign Affairs and Expatriates Ayman Safadi and Swedish Minister for International Development Cooperation Peter Eriksson, with the special participation of António Guterres, Secretary-General of the United Nations.



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Echoing many participants in the event, Ayman Safadi, Minister of Foreign Affairs of Expatriates of Jordan, told the conference that “This is a time for action. Supporting UNRWA is a necessary action. The agency has done all it could to ensure efficiency and effectiveness in its operations. We must stand by it.”

Minister for International Development Cooperation Peter Eriksson urged traditional and non-traditional donors to “translate political support for UNRWA into financial support and contribute to a more sustainable UNRWA with multi-annual support to its program budget.”

The Minister added that “supporting UNRWA is critical for stability by ensuring that half a million children can continue go to school and respond effectively to the COVID-19 pandemic.”

UN Secretary-General António Guterres said, “In December 2019, UN Member States voted overwhelmingly in support of renewing the mandate of the United Nations Relief and Works Agency for Palestine Refugees. UNRWA stands as a vital source of stability in a region rife with ongoing conflict and now also battling the health, economic and social impacts of the COVID-19 pandemic.”

“All nations must come together to create the long-term financial mechanisms necessary for the Agency to continue uninterrupted its UN-mandated mission to protect and assist a vulnerable population of 5.6 million Palestine refugees”, added Guterres.



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“The results of today’s conference demonstrate the international commitment to the rights and well-being of Palestine refugees and the role of UNRWA as their essential provider of human development and humanitarian aid until the political entities involved reach a just and lasting solution to their plight,” said UNRWA Commissioner-General Philippe Lazzarini.

“Palestine refugees have long lived with the threat that UNRWA operations might be suspended. UNRWA has long lived from hand to mouth”, stated Lazzarini. “Today, we took a significant step forward in addressing the Agency’s chronic short and long-term financial challenges, including promoting multiyear agreements, expanding the donor base, and exploring innovative funding avenues and mechanisms”.

UNRWA chief commended Tuesday’s participants for sharing the Agency’s goal to promote the dignity and the rights of Palestine refugees.

Participants included ministers and senior officials from 75 governments and international organizations, representing all regional groups of the United Nations.

UNRWA is the UN agency responsible for providing protection, health care, education, relief and social services, emergency response and other lifesaving services to more than 5.6 million Palestine refugees across the Middle East.



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The needs of the refugees are rising as a consequence of the outbreak and long-term implications of the COVID-19 pandemic, the economic downturn in host countries, and the political instability on top of the continued occupation of Palestinian Territory, the blockade on Gaza, and the conflict in Syria.

In another development, human rights activists have slammed the reluctance maintained by national and international humanitarian and human rights organizations regarding the calamitous situation of Palestinian refugees fleeing war-torn Syria to Turkey.

The latest victim of the international community's apathy was Ahmad Shaaban who drowned at his house in Istanbul following the rainstorm that hit the city on Tuesday, June 23.

Activists said the refugee suffered serious health disorders, including hepatitis and foot tumor. He failed to pay treatment charges due to his frail legal status. His frequent appeals for urgent humanitarian assistance have gone unheeded.

Recently, Palestinian refugees from Syria in Turkey have expressed concerns over their deteriorating condition particularly in light of the new movement clampdown imposed across Turkish provinces as part of anti-coronavirus measures.

A large number of companies, factories, and shops shut their doors for fear of further COVID-19 contaminations. Several Palestinian families have lost their sole sources of income as a result.



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Meanwhile, UNRWA has called on students wishing to apply for a Master's degree at Arizona University to sign up on http://bit.ly/OLS_UNRWA in order to be considered for scholarships granted by Abdulla Al Ghurair Foundation for Education.

The foundation is now offering MA scholarships for 33 different specializations, spanning the fields of engineering, technology, health, education, tourism, and more as part of the Al Ghurair Open Learning Scholars Program.

In the meantime, Doctors Without Borders (MSF) has accused Greek authorities of using the coronavirus as a pretext to continue a lockdown on migrant camps, after the government in Athens has extended the lockdown until July 5, while lifting restrictions across the country, reported InfoMigrants news site.

A coordinator from Doctors Without Borders (MSF) on the Aegean island of Lesbos, Marco Sandrone, said a Greek government decision to extend a three-month virus lockdown on migrant camps was not based on public health concerns.

Athens announced at the weekend that there would be no lifting of restrictions for the migrant camps on the islands until at least July 5, in the fourth extension to the lockdown to be declared since March. No reason was given for the decision.



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Greece has remained relatively free of COVID-19, with 190 recorded deaths from the virus. The government has progressively loosened restrictions, declaring at the end of May that the country was “ready to welcome the world.”

"We cannot stay silent any more," Sandrone told the news agency AFP. "People in the camp do not represent a threat. They are a population at risk," he said.

Sandrone said Greek authorities had also failed to keep their promise to move older people and those with chronic illnesses quickly out of the camps. Instead, they were being kept indoors, with public health concerns being used as a pretext.

Portraying migrants as a risk to the general population is "extremely dangerous rhetoric," especially when "the threat comes from outside," Sandrone said.

No coronavirus cases have been recorded in the Moria camp and no migrants are reported to have died from COVID-19 in any of the Greek island camps.

However, Greek authorities have been accused of doing little to protect residents in the facilities, where overcrowding makes social distancing impossible and many do not have access to enough water, sanitation and hygiene products.

There are currently more than 32,000 asylum seekers, including Palestinian refugees, in the island camps with a capacity of 5,400.



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The Greek government has been transferring thousands of the migrants to the mainland in an effort to reduce the overcrowding.