



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

27-06-2020

No. 2804

## التقرير اليومي

الخاص بأوضاع اللاجئين الفلسطينيين في سورية

Daily report on the situation of Palestinian refugees in Syria



### US Sanctions on Syria Make Situation of Palestinian Refugees Worse

- Coalition of Palestinian Forces Reject Yarmouk Camp New Rehabilitation Plan
- Palestinians of Syria to Benefit from UNDP
- New UNRWA Office Opened Up in Khan Eshieh Camp

+442084530978

/Actgroup.palsyria

reports@actionpal.org.uk

www.actionpal.org.uk



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

## Latest developments

At a time when the US has been intensifying sanctions as part of the so-called “Caesar Act” targeting anyone doing business with the Assad regime, thousands of Palestinian refugees continue to struggle for survival in the war-torn country, both in government-held or opposition-captured zones.

Recently, the Trump administration ramped up pressure on Syrian President Bashar al-Assad and his inner circle with a load of new economic and travel sanctions for human rights abuses and blocking a settlement of the country's conflict.

Many of those on the list were already subject to US sanctions, but the penalties also target non-Syrians who do business with them.

The sanctions are the result of legislation known as the Caesar Syria Civilian Protection Act, named after the pseudonym of a Syrian who worked with the military police and turned over photographs of thousands of victims of torture by al-Assad's government.

The implementation of the sanctions has led to a further deterioration of the exchange rate of the Syrian pound, resulting in a worse economic situation for vulnerable families whose sole sources of income have been already affected by the bloody warfare.



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

Nine years into the deadly conflict, the majority of Palestinians of Syria (PRS) continue to live below the poverty line and are food insecure.

A UN report in 2019 said that an estimated 83 percent of Syrians live below the poverty line, and people are increasingly vulnerable due to the loss or lack of sustained livelihoods.

The United Nations Relief and Works Agency for Palestine Refugees in the Near East (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; 100% of PRS are in need of winterization assistance; and 86% of PRS households are reported to be in debt.

The majority of Palestinians sheltered in displacement camps set up across the Syrian territories have remained at bay from political calculations and frequently refused attempts by all warring parties to drag them into the raging warfare, saying their priority is to secure safe shelters for their children and families pending a just and lasting solution to their refugee plight and return to their motherland—Palestine.



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

In another development, the Follow-Up Committee of the Damascus-based Alliance of Palestinian Forces expressed its firm rejection of a recent plan put forth by the Damascus Governorate to rehabilitate Yarmouk Camp for Palestinian refugees.

During a Friday meeting, the committee warned that the plan entails negative consequences on Palestinian refugees and their right of return to their homeland, Palestine.

The groups called for serious efforts by all parties to facilitate the return of displaced Palestinian families to Yarmouk Camp.

Assistant Secretary-General of the Popular Front for the Liberation of Palestine – General Command (PFLP-GC), Talal Naji, said efforts have been under full swing to allow Palestinian families to return to the camp and retrieve their property at the soonest possible time.

One day earlier, the Damascus City Council said the reconstruction plan for Yarmouk Camp will be released in a month's time after complaints were filed by local residents.

The council said a three-phase reconstruction plan is under examination. The plan will take into account the degree of damage inflicted on houses and infrastructure.

40% of Yarmouk residents are slated to return to their homes and retrieve their property after the plan enters into effect.

Last year, the United Nations Institute for Training and Research (UNITAR) published the results of an assessment of the damage to





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

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.

Scores of 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.

A number of activists have 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.

Meanwhile, the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP) Resident Representative in Syria, Ramla Khalidi, said Palestinian refugees in Syria are entitled to benefit from the programme, including funds allotted for small enterprises.

Khalidi said Palestinian refugees in Syria are entitled to the same UN privileges as Syrian nationals.

Her statement was released as part of a Monday meeting with the Director-General of the Political Department of the Palestine Liberation Organization (PLO) Anwar Abdul Hadi.



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

The meeting sounded the alarm over the squalid humanitarian condition endured by Palestinian refugees as a result of the nine-year conflict and the anti-coronavirus lockdown.

Along similar lines, an AGPS reporter said the UN Relief and Works Agency for Palestine Refugees in the Near East (UNRWA) opened an office in the camp so as to facilitate registration for Palestinian refugees in the area.

The new office has been established at UNRWA's Social Development Center in Khan Eshieh. A worker has been tasked with taking down the refugees' demands and thus sparing them an exhausting trip to AlMezeeh or Halabouni areas in Damascus.

Refugees will be able to register their newborns and receive aid cards along with death/birth certificates at the new office, which will be operating weekly on Tuesdays.

Palestinian families taking refuge in Khan Eshieh camp have been struggling with squalid humanitarian conditions inflicted by the nine-year long warfare.

According to UN data, Khan Eshieh camp lies beside the ancient ruins of Khan Eshieh, 27km south-west of Damascus. The Khan historically served as an overnight shelter for trade caravans on the road between Damascus and the southwest, and in 1948, it provided shelter for the first refugees from Palestine. The camp was established in 1949 on an area of 0.69 square kilometers with refugees originally from the northern part of Palestine.



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

Before the conflict in Syria, the camp was home to more than 20,000 Palestine refugees. In 2012, the farms and fields surrounding the camp became active battlegrounds in which heavy weapons were deployed, often indiscriminately. The population more than halved to 9,000.

Some of the camp's buildings and infrastructure were severely affected including some UNRWA installations; two UNRWA schools and the community centre were almost razed to the ground. In 2016, UNRWA was able to re-access Khan Esheih and the Agency was able to rehabilitate some of its installations. Residents have also slowly started to return, with the camp now accommodating 12,000 people.