



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



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PRESS RELEASE

"AGPS Appeals for Information about Condition of Forcibly-Disappeared Journalists in War-Torn Syria"

- Palestinians Rally Outside of UNRWA Offices in Lebanon
- Palestinian Refugees in Deraa Point Finger at Gangsters Involved in Assassinations
- Palestinian Refugee Girls Achieve Outstanding Results in Int'l Mental Math Competition

+442084530978

/Actgroup.palsyria

reports@actionpal.org.uk

www.actionpal.org.uk



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Latest Developments

AGPS condemns the apathy maintained by the international community and Palestinian leadership as regards the extrajudicial killing, harsh torture, and arbitrary detention of Palestinian journalists and activists in war-ravaged Syria.

AGPS stresses the important role that the media has in society. AGPS reiterates that journalists must be allowed to carry out their work freely, while realizing their right to free expression, as enshrined in Article 19 of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights, and Article 19 of the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights. Furthermore, at times of armed conflict, journalists are considered civilians and must therefore be granted due protection, as stated in Article 79 of Additional Protocol I (1977) to the 1949 Geneva Conventions, which represents customary international humanitarian law.

Monitoring and documentation indicate that the warring parties in Syria systematically target Palestinian journalists. This targeting has escalated with the active involvement of journalists in covering anti-regime protests. Violations against journalists take many forms, including denial of access to locations of incidents, destruction of equipment, arbitrary arrest, physical assault, and use of firearms that lead to injury or death.

AGPS has recorded the death of 18 Palestinian journalists in Syria and the secret detention of dozens more since the outburst of



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deadly hostilities in March 2011, among whom academics and volunteers.

The casualties died while covering scenes on the battleground or while providing civilians with relief assistance across the ravaged Syrian territories.

The list includes nine journalists who died under shelling, five who were tortured to death, and four others who were fatally shot.

The casualties are photojournalists and activists Fady Abu Ajaj, Jamal Khalifa, Ahmad AlSahli, Bassam Hamidi, Ahmad Taha, and Bilal Sa'id. They were killed in onslaughts targeting Yarmouk Camp for Palestinian refugees.

Photojournalist Jehad Shehabi died in an air strike on Hjeira town, south of Damascus, while activist Yamen Dhaher was killed in a raid on Khan Eshieh Camp. News correspondent Tareq Ziad Khader was pronounced dead in Daraa Camp, south of Syria.

Yarmouk residents Niraz Sa'id, Khaled Bakrawi, Hassan Hassan, and Alaa Naji, along with Bilal Ahmad, from Muadhamiyat AlSham, were tortured to death in Syrian government prisons.

Iyas Farhat was the first journalist to be killed in Yarmouk as he covered a rally protesting the murder of 14 members of the Palestine Liberation Army in the bloody warfare north of Syria.

Ghassan Shehabi, director of AlShajara Center to document Palestinian heritage, along with activists Ahmad Kousa and



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Mounir AlKhatib were gunned down by a government sniper in Yarmouk Camp.

Scores of activists, journalists, and correspondents have, meanwhile, been locked up in Syrian government dungeons for years. The list includes Muhannad Omar, Ali Shehabi, Rami Hajou, Ali Musleh, and Ahmad Jalil.

Facts on the ground prove that the number of casualties is much higher. Difficulties in documentation stem from the absence of official statistics, lack of concern as regards the number of Palestinian casualties, journalists in particular, the intricacy of the name-identification process, and the families' reluctance to reveal the victims' names for fear of retaliation.

In another development, Palestinian refugees and activists sheltered in Tripoli and its Badawi refugee camps, in Lebanon, rallied earlier this week outside of UNRWA offices to protest the Agency's decision to reduce cash aid for Palestinian refugee families from Syria (PRS) starting January 2022.

The protesters strongly condemned the decision which they said is a sign of apathy regarding the abject humanitarian condition already endured by the Palestinian refugee community in displacement camps across the Lebanese territories.

They added that the decision is also a serious breach of UNRWA's humanitarian mission as mandated by the UN and the Agency's promise to assist Palestinian refugees in its five fields of operation, including Lebanon.



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Palestinian refugees have urged UNRWA to work on their unconditional return to their homes from which they have been displaced by the Israeli occupation since 1948.

Earlier last month, UNRWA said in a statement that starting 2022, multi-purpose monthly cash grants of 100 USD to every registered Palestinian refugee family from Syria (PRS) will be reduced to 25 USD per person.

The Agency also said every PRS will receive an additional cash grant of 150 USD on two batches in 2022. UNRWA will suspend its food allowances for PRS in Lebanon.

At the same time, a number of NGOs leveled heavy criticism at UNRWA and urged the Agency to backtrack on the new measures which they said would result in further despair for PRS.

Meanwhile, residents of Deraa Camp for Palestinian refugees, south of Syria, held a person called “Iyad Harfoush” and his brother Mohamed responsible for the increasing abductions and assassinations targeting a number of residents over recent months.

In a statement emailed to AGPS, families and relatives of victims of assassinations and abductions said Harfoush has been involved in several crimes, including raping a daughter and abusing a child.

The residents said the gang led by Harfoush is also involved in drug-trafficking and property-theft.



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Civilians have called on the Syrian authorities to chase down Harfoush and the other gangsters and to take severe legal action against them over their crimes against innocent civilians.

Last week, a member of Harfoush's gang confessed in a live video to committing assassinations against a number of civilians in Deraa. Other people have also admitted that Harfoush forced them to murder a number of people in Deraa and its Palestinian refugee camp.

In the meantime, a number of Palestinian refugee students from the UNRWA-run Ramla School in Homs refugee camp achieved the first places in the International Mental Math Championship.

388 boys and girls from 44 countries, including Syria, participated in the competition.

10 Palestinian girls from the 7

and 8

grades at Ramla School took part in the tournament. Six girls won the contest. The other four students also achieved high scores.

Director of UNRWA operations in Syria, Michael Amany congratulated the school girls and their instructor for the outstanding achievement.

Dozens of displaced Palestinian refugees have achieved success stories, despite of the traumatic upshots wrought by daily scenes of bloodshed and destruction across the embattled Syrian territories.



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Thousands of children have gone orphaned after they lost one or both of their parents in the deadly warfare.

The conflict in Syria has had traumatic fallouts on Palestinian refugee children in and outside of Syria. Post-traumatic stress disorders, mental psychosis, sleeplessness and nightmares, eating disorders, and intense fear have all been reported among Palestinian children from Syria.