



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

**"On 73<sup>rd</sup> Anniversary of Palestinian Nakba: Palestinians of Syria Confirm Commitment to Right of Return"**

- Residents of Yarmouk Camp Denounce Movement Restrictions due to Russian Checkpoints
- Reconstruction Projects Launched in AlSayeda Zeinab Camp
- Palestinian Refugee Mohamed Hussein Held in Syrian Prisons for 8<sup>th</sup> Year
- Palestinian Refugees Appeal for Humanitarian Asylum in Sweden

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## Latest Developments

73 years on, Palestinian refugees continue to remember the Nakba of 1948 with deep sorrow as thousands have been forced out of their homes by Zionist gangs and made into refugees scattered across the globe.

Palestinian refugee communities, including in war-torn Syria, continue to express their strong commitment to return to the land of their forebears.

Every year on May 15 Palestinians commemorate the day in which tens of thousands of civilians were forced out of their homes during the war that led to the creation of the self-proclaimed State of Israel in 1948.

This year, the Nakba Day comes amid deadly Israeli airstrikes, Jewish mob attacks and other forms of violent tactics imposed by the Zionist forces.

On May 15, 1948, some 750,000 Palestinians were expelled into refugee camps that still exist in the West Bank, Gaza, Jordan, Syria and Lebanon following the creation of the State of Israel in 1948.

Millions of Palestinians, including those displaced with the establishment of Israel, now found themselves having to live under military occupation, as well as further Israeli expansionism in their lands.



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For many Palestinians, the Nakba is the first chapter in a process of land grab that began in 1948.

According to Palestinian figures, roughly 640,000 Jewish settlers now live on 196 settlements (built with the Israeli government's approval) and more than 200 settler outposts (built without its approval) across the occupied West Bank and East Jerusalem.

International law regards both the West Bank and East Jerusalem as "occupied territories" and considers all Jewish settlement-building activity there as illegal.

Meanwhile, residents of Yarmouk Camp continue to denounce the movement crackdowns at checkpoints run by Russian forces.

Civilians have reportedly been denied access to the local cemetery to pray for their deceased relatives.

Eye-witnesses told AGPS that checkpoints run by the Syrian and Russian forces continue to cordon off Street 30 and AlMaghareba neighborhood in Yarmouk Camp.

Over recent years, activists have slammed the Russian and Syrian government forces for ransacking the old cemetery of Yarmouk Camp, in Damascus, in search of the body remains of Israeli soldiers killed in the Battle of Sultan Yaakoob in Lebanon in 1982.

On April 19, 2018, a military operation launched by Syria's government battalions and their Russian abettors led to the destruction of 60% of civilian buildings and premises in Yarmouk



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Camp. Dozens of civilians were killed and hundreds injured in the offensive.

Heavy damage was wrought on Yarmouk's AlShuhadaa Cemetery as graves were hit with barrel bombs and headstones smashed by missiles and mortar shells.

Meanwhile, the Charity Committee in AlSayeda Zeinab Camp embarked on three projects to install solar panels at the civil registration office run by the General Authority for Palestinian Arab Refugees along with a water tank at the local cemetery and chairs for visitors.

In the meantime, Palestinian refugee Mohamed Khaled Husain has been forcibly disappeared in Syrian government prisons since 2014.

Mohamed, born in 1981, was arrested in AlSayeda Zeinab camp, in Rif Dimashq.

UN data indicates that the camp was established on an area of 0.02 square kilometers in 1948, but the majority of the residents came in 1967. The inhabitants, who were displaced from the Quneitra Governorate in the Golan Heights during the 1967 Arab-Israeli conflict, sought refuge for the second time in their lives in the area. Most had originally fled to the Golan Heights in 1948 from nearby villages in northern Palestine.



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Before the conflict in Syria, the camp was home to 23,700 Palestine refugees. The camp was affected by violent clashes that forced 40 per cent of the people to leave in late 2012.

Like other areas in Syria, displacement, unemployment, inflation, protection and security risks are among the major concerns shared not only by Palestine refugees but also Syrians alike during the ongoing conflict in Syria. The majority of Palestine refugees in AlSayeda Zeinab work as day laborers, government employees or vendors.

In another development, a group of lawyers have called on Sweden to grant asylum to Palestinian refugees whose asylum application have been turned down.

The lawyers sent a memorandum to the UNHCR to pressurize it to assist vulnerable Palestinian refugees in Sweden, particularly those displaced from the Israeli-blockaded Gaza Strip.

The lawyers said UNRWA has failed to assist Palestinian refugees due to the frail humanitarian and security conditions in the region.

Over recent months, the Swedish Migration Agency has turned down applications for humanitarian asylum by Palestinian refugees fleeing Damascus, claiming the city is a secure zone and the refugees can safely return to it.





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A number of Palestinian refugees told AGPS that the Swedish migration authorities turned down their applications for visas which they had submitted in 2019.

A refugee said he had appealed the Agency's decision, saying his family had been chased down by the Syrian security forces and once they return to Damascus they will be arrested.

Human rights activists said Sweden no longer considers Syria an unsafe place for refugees. In order for visa applications to be accepted, the refugee should provide proofs of personal threats.

Last year, a new debate was opened by the migration committee at the Swedish parliament to determine post-coronavirus migration policy in the kingdom. The proposed draft law seeks to replace the temporary asylum law that will remain into effect until next summer.

Official Swedish statistics indicate that 3,296 Palestinian asylum-seekers categorized as "stateless" received citizenship documents in Sweden in 2019.