



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

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الخاص بأوضاع اللاجئين الفلسطينيين في سورية

Daily report on the situation of Palestinian refugees in Syria



"Int'l Relief Organization Blackmailed by Syrian Regime"

- Palestinian Refugee Mohamed Husain Forcibly Disappeared in Syrian Prisons
- Palestinian Refugees in Syria Displacement Camp Struggle for Potable Water
- UNRWA Aid Distributed in Yarmouk Camp
- Hygiene Packs Distributed in Handarat Camp

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Latest Developments

Syrian security forces demanded that an international humanitarian organization pay 1 million Syrian pounds for every aid distribution point in Yalda, Jaramana Camp, and Khan Eshieh Camp.

Sawt AlAsima news site quoted anonymous sources as stating that the blackmail came after the organization announced its intent to distribute relief items in the abovementioned zones.

The organization reportedly refused the extortion, saying this is an immoral act that only deepens the plight faced by vulnerable persons in war-torn Syria.

After ten years of conflict, Palestine refugees continue to be one of the most vulnerable groups in Syria with immense humanitarian needs.

Over 90 per cent of Palestine refugee households in Syria live in poverty and 40 per cent remain in protracted displacement as a result of conflict and the damage and destruction of their homes.

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.



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In another development, Palestinian refugee Mohamed Omar Husain, born in 1997, has been secretly held in Syrian government jails for the seventh consecutive year.

Mohamed, raised in Deraa camp, south of Syria, was arrested by Syrian security forces on June 10, 2013. His family received no information as to his condition and whereabouts.

Over 1,790 Palestinian refugees have been secretly held in Syrian government dungeons since the outburst of deadly hostilities.

AGPS also documented the death of over 600 Palestinian refugees under torture in Syrian government lock-ups, including women, children, and elderly civilians.

Affidavits by ex-detainees provided evidence on the involvement of Syrian government officers in harsh torture tactics, including electric shocks, heavy beating using whips and iron sticks, and sexual abuse against Palestinian detainees, in a flagrant violation of the Convention against Torture and Other Cruel, Inhuman or Degrading Treatment or Punishment, commonly known as the United Nations Convention against Torture (UNCAT).

AGPS estimates the real number to be far higher due to the gag orders slapped by the Syrian government on the detainees' names and fates, along with the families' reluctance to report such cases over retaliation concerns.

AGPS continues to urge the Syrian government to disclose the fate of scores of Palestinians held in its lock-ups, release the bodies of



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those tortured to death, to seriously work on halting harsh torture tactics, launch fact-finding probes into crimes of torture, and to bring those involved in such crimes before courts.

Meanwhile, Palestinian families taking refuge in Khan Eshieh camp, in Rif Dimashq, said water has been repeatedly cut off across residential neighborhoods.

The residents have warned of the repercussions of the water crisis on their children's health condition in light of the global propagation of the COVID-19 pandemic.

An AGPS reporter said most of the families sheltered in the camp are cash-stripped and cannot afford to buy drinking water from privately-owned tanks.

Palestinian families continue to appeal to UNRWA and the concerned authorities to take urgent action regarding the alarming humanitarian condition in the camp.

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.

Before the conflict in Syria, the camp was home to more than 20,000 Palestine refugees. In 2012, the farms and fields



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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.

In the meantime, UNRWA distributed food and in-kind items to 326 Palestinian refugee families taking shelter in Yarmouk Camp.

Most of Palestinian families sheltered south of Damascus fled Yarmouk as a result of the tough blockade imposed by the government troops and also after ISIS grabbed hold of the camp on April 1, 2015.

Scores of other 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.

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



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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.

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.

Along similar lines, the Syrian Association, in partnership with civil society groups in AlNeirab Camp, handed over hygiene packs to women, widows, and injured people affiliated with the Syrian regime in Handarat Camp.

85 families in and around Handarat Camp benefited from the move.

Palestinian refugees have been grappling with dire conditions in Handarat due to the lack of humanitarian assistance and life-saving services. The majority of families have been taking shelter in buildings rented at extremely steep costs in the poverty-stricken area. A severe water and power crisis also continues to rock the camp.

Heavy shelling on Handarat and bloody shootouts between the government forces and the opposition outfits led to the destruction of over 90% of buildings in the camp. The confrontations



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culminated in the government's takeover of the camp along with other zones in Aleppo and the displacement of its residents on April 27, 2013.

UN data indicates that Handarat camp (also known as Ein El-Tal camp) is on a hillside 13km north-east of the city of Aleppo in the Syrian Arab Republic. The camp was established in 1962 on an area of 0.16 square kilometers. Most of the inhabitants are refugees who fled from northern Palestine.

Ein El Tal camp was once home to around 7,000 residents. Around three hundred families moved to newly constructed houses in Ein El-Tal from Neirab camp under a 2003 project to reduce overcrowding in Neirab.

In April 2013, armed groups entered Ein El-Tal camp, forcibly displacing the entire population over a period of some 48 hours. The camp was a theatre of armed conflict until 2016, sustaining extreme damage in the process.

The camp is almost completely destroyed and lacks basic infrastructure including water, sewage and electricity.