



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



### "Coronavirus Exacerbates Situation of Palestinians of Syria"

- Palestinian Refugees among Patients Transferred to Damascus Hospitals
- Palestinian Refugees Urge UN Relief Agency to Transfer Cash Aid in US Dollars
- Aid Items Delivered to Palestinian Refugees in Turkey

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## Latest Developments

Unemployment rates among the Palestinian refugees who have remained in Syria have soared, amid a rise in coronavirus infections in the MENA region.

Hundreds of Palestinian refugees from Syria (PRS) have lost their jobs in the warfare and hundreds more have been wondering in the streets as they rummaged around for livelihoods to feed their starved families.

Most of Palestinian families in Syria depend on UNRWA's aids as they struggle for survival in the embattled Syrian territories.



However, the refugees' needs far outlive the cash/in-kind aids sporadically handed over to them by UNRWA, among a handful of other relief institutions operating in the Syrian territories.

The crisis in Syria has been one of the gravest and most demanding emergencies faced in the modern era. The vast majority of the 540,000 PRS are unable to meet their basic needs.

Many PRS lost their sources of income; refugee camps have seen unprecedented levels of destruction; rental prices have dramatically



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gone up; undernourishment and poverty have been a daily nightmare.

Due to the serious protection gaps, children have been forced to drop out of school and join armed groups to help feed their starving families.

Hundreds of families have had women as their sole breadwinners; and in several other cases boys and girls are spotted begging in the street for a few pounds.

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 Palestine refugees in Syria (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 and 86% of PRS households are reported to be in debt.

UNRWA said that the continuous depreciation of the Syrian pound and the deteriorating socio-economic conditions experienced by all civilians in Syria during the last year have increased the hardship faced by Palestine refugees, whose resilience is at breaking point.

Meanwhile, the Palestinian Civil Commission said that, in cooperation with the Syrian Red Crescent Organization, it has transferred a number of patients from Yalda town, south of Damascus, to Damascus hospitals.





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The commission said it has formed a team of volunteers following the partial lockdown to help civilians in the area.

Thousands of Palestinian refugees are taking shelter in the towns of Yalda, Babila, and Beit Sahem, south of Damascus, where they have been struggling with abject conditions.



In another development, Palestinian refugees from Syria (PRS) in Lebanon have called on the UN Relief and Works Agency for Palestine Refugees in the Near East (UNRWA) to pay their monthly aid in dollars, in light of the deteriorating economic situation in the country and the dramatic drop in the exchange rate of the local currency.

In appeals emailed to the Action Group for Palestinians of Syria (AGPS), PRS in Lebanon urged UNRWA to carry out an emergency reassessment of its cash aid program and shell out PRS' dues that have been indirectly cut as a result of the Agency's failure to take into account exchange rate variations over recent months.

Since mid-October 2019, the exchange rate of the Lebanese pound has remarkably shrunk back. \$1 is currently worth 3,200 LP. UNRWA's cash aid program has failed to take into account such a



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dramatic drop in the currency exchange rate. Vulnerable families continue to receive 1,500 LP from the Agency, regardless of the currency fluctuation.

A three-member family receives a sum of 270,000 LP (nearly 84 USD instead of 180 USD), a sum that lags far behind the refugees' basic requirements. Had the currency flux been taken into account, a family would instead receive 180 USD, amounting to 576,000 LP, a sum that matches the purchasing value it had some six months earlier. The situation is far exacerbated by the unforeseen price leap with rates hitting at times a 100% hike.

“Why has the agency suspended aid delivery to PRS in USD and overlooked the fluctuation in the currency exchange rate, especially that the EU Trust Fund Madad has made its contributions in dollars?” wondered a refugee.



According to UNRWA data, until February 2020, there are 28,000 PRS in Lebanon, making nearly 7,000 families.

PRS in Lebanon continue to face high vulnerability and marginalization, making them heavily reliant on UNRWA humanitarian support to cover their basic needs.



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Almost 90 per cent of PRS in Lebanon are under the poverty line and 95 per cent are food insecure, according to a 2015 survey by UNRWA.

In the meantime, the Association of Palestine Students in Turkey delivered cash and in-kind aid to 500 Palestinian students in Turkey.

The donated sum exceeds 56,000 Turkish liras. It was mainly spent in student rents.

The group also distributed some 80 food parcels to a number of Palestinian families in Konya and Bursa.

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.