



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



الهيئة 302
للدفاع عن حقوق اللاجئين

التمسك بـ "الأونروا" والحفاظ عليها وحمايتها على المستويين الإنساني والسياسي، بالضغط لإستمرار تقديم كامل وكافة الخدمات للاجئين الفلسطينيين، وبمواجهة أي محاولات لإنهاء خدماتها لارتباطها العضوي بقضية اللاجئين وحقوق العودة. ضغط لتوسيع سياسة عملها ليشمل إعتداد الجمعية العالمية بـ "الأونروا" وتوفير الحماية البدنية للاجئين.

"Refugee Commission Urges UNRWA to Transfer Aids for Palestine Refugees in USD"

- Residents of AlSabina Camp for Palestinian Refugees Denounce Uncleared Trash Mounds
- Disinfectants Distributed to Palestinian Refugees in Syria
- Food Items Delivered to Displaced Palestinian Families North of Syria

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Latest Developments

Commission 302 to Defend Refugee Rights has called upon the European Union (EU) mission in Lebanon, headed by Ralph Tarraf, to urge the UN Relief and Works Agency for Palestine Refugees in the Near East (UNRWA) to pay cash aid allotted for Palestinian refugees from Syria (PRS) in Lebanon in US dollars.

Commission 302 urged the EU delegation to pressurize the Agency to increase its cash allowances, in light of the economic hardship and price inflation wrought by the coronavirus pandemic.

The commission said it handed over memorandums to UNRWA's Commissioner-General Philippe Lazzarini of Sweden, UNRWA's Acting Commissioner-General Christian Saunders, Director of UNRWA Operations in Lebanon Claudio Cordone, the coordinator of the European Trust Fund Project "Madad" Irina Gorado, Director of the Financial Resources Department at UNRWA Shadi Al-Abd, and the Agency's spokesperson Sami Mushasha.



Last week, Director-General of Commission 302, Ali Huweidi, urged UNRWA to pay PRS's monthly aid in dollars, in light of the



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deteriorating economic situation in the country and the dramatic drop in the exchange rate of the local currency.

Huweidi called on UNRWA to carry out an emergency reassessment of its cash aid program and shell out PRS's 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 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.



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

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 another development, residents of AlSabina Camp for Palestinian refugees, in Rif Dimashq, continue to speak up against the trash mounds piled up across residential alleyways and on the access roads, resulting in bad smells and the spread of life-threatening diseases and rodents.

Civilians have sounded the alarm over the health hazards of uncleared garbage and the high risk of COVID-19 contamination caused by rubbish.



The situation is worsened by the water crisis rocking the area amid the COVID-19 outbreak. Civilians said they are unable to wash their hands and bodies regularly, raising fears of a swift propagation of the deadly virus among the camp residents.



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At the same time, civilians said they have been forced to walk for several kilometers to purchase vital items after the Syrian government suspended public transportation from and to the camp, among other areas.

The residents continue to lash out at the apathy maintained by UNRWA and the local municipality regarding their calls for urgent humanitarian assistance.

Located some 14 kilometers away from southern Damascus, AlSabina Camp has been gripped with an abject situation owing to the absence of humanitarian assistance, relief aids, proper infrastructure, and vital facilities.

UN data indicates that the camp was established in 1948. Before the conflict in Syria, the camp was home to 22,600 Palestine refugees. It was taken over by armed opposition groups in 2013. The camp remained closed to civilians for almost four years and houses and infrastructure were damaged in the fighting. In September 2017, civilians were able to return to their homes. All UNRWA installations were in need of repairs.

The whole Palestine population in AlSabina camp suffered from displacement during the crisis and many families left the country and sought refuge in neighboring countries or fled to Europe.

During the conflict, labor opportunities have dwindled and the unemployment rate is still very high with very limited financial resources to help Palestine refugees restore their livelihoods. Like other areas in Syria, displacement, inflation, protection and security



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risks are among the main concerns shared by Palestine refugees and Syrians alike.

The camp is situated on an area of 0.03 square kilometers. Palestine refugees who came to Syria in 1948 first settled the camp. It also accommodates Palestine refugees who were displaced as a result of the 1967 conflict.

Meanwhile, detergents and disinfectants were handed over by members of Fatah Movement to AlWafideen refugee community, in Rif Dimashq.

The move makes part of ongoing efforts to help Palestinian refugee community in war-torn Syria fight the coronavirus pandemic.

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 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.



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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.

Along similar lines, the Ihsan Charity handed over food baskets to a number of displaced Palestinian and Syrian families in and around the northern Syrian region of Atameh.



Over recent weeks, AGPS has warned of a projected outbreak of COVID-19 in Palestinian refugee camps in Syria. Though campaigns to help spread awareness among the camps' residents have recently



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seen the day, limited access to running water, pharmacies and medical facilities mean displacement camps are more susceptible to the spread of the highly infectious virus.