



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

24-11-2019

No. 2587

التقرير اليومي

الخاص بأوضاع اللاجئين الفلسطينيين في سورية

Daily report on the situation of Palestinian refugees in Syria



"Displaced Palestinian Women Turn to Handicrafts to Provide for Their Families"

- Palestine Heritage Exhibition Held North of Syria
- UAE Contributes US\$ 12.5 Million to Palestine Refugees
- Palestinian Nurse Bassel Omar Secretly Held in Syrian Jails for over 6 Years

+442084530978

/Actgroup.palsyria

reports@actionpal.org.uk

www.actionpal.org.uk



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

Latest Developments

A number of Palestinian refugees who were displaced from Syria to Lebanon have got into embroidery to earn a living to feed their children.

A so-called Amna who closed her beauty salon in Syria when the war started decided to enroll in an embroidery training, after she was eventually relocated to the Shatila refugee camp in southern Beirut in 2013.

“We are like a family here,” Amna told Al-Monitor, as she introduced a small group of her colleagues at the Shatila Studio workshop.



The studio was established with funding by Basmeh & Zeitooneh, which has trained over a thousand women between 2013 and 2018. The scarves, bags and cushion covers the women made were sold and the trainees received a small sum per piece sold. At the end of 2018, however, the project ran out of funding and the studio was about to close.

According to Al-Monitor, four former trainees decided to take over the studio. Niveen, Boushra, Fatimah and Samar, who were



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

already working as artisans and supervisors at the studio, decided to turn it into a business.

“It was a huge step,” Niveen Sokari, co-director and the chief financial officer of the studio, told Al-Monitor. “Everything changed. We had to be more organized and always keep an eye on the figures.”

Sokari, a Palestinian born in Yarmouk refugee camp in Syria, spoke to Al-Monitor in her small office, whose walls are covered by hand-written spreadsheets illustrating the revenues, monthly profits and accumulated earnings.

She told Al-Monitor that the studio faces many ups and downs, which should not come as a surprise for a startup, but the accumulated earnings are slowly increasing.

“Since we turned into a business, one of the things I am most proud of is how the quality of our products improved,” she said, explaining that they are able to “offer something unique” to the international markets.

Most of the products from the collection of Shatila Studio are sold online, but they are planning to open a small showroom at the studio, which is located in the camp.

The studio offers a stable income to 74 women, but more women — up to a hundred — get involved when there is a lot of work. The artisans are paid by the piece, regardless if it is sold or not.

Shatila Studio’s identity is deeply connected with war, forced migration and refugee camps. Sokari grew up in Yarmouk, in Syria. But when she arrived in Shatila she was just shocked.



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

“I had no idea a refugee camp could look this bad,” she said. “Before coming to Lebanon — even though I am a Syrian Palestinian — I did not consider myself a refugee. Here I was forced to fit into this identity.”

“It is war that brought us together,” the Shatila Studio website states. Its logo features birds resting on power lines, one of the most common sights in the camp.

“Our embroideries tell our own stories,” Sokari added. “Shatila is our identity, it is where we are from. But with our skills, we can get our voice out into the world.”

In the meantime, the Palestinians of Syria Commission for Relief and Development, in cooperation with the Popular Conference for Palestinians Abroad, organized an exhibition for traditional Palestinian heritage in the northern Syrian province of Idlib.



The moves aims at preserving Palestinian heritage in light of Israel’s ongoing attempts to wipe out Palestinian identity and culture.



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

In another development, the United Arab Emirates (UAE) has donated a contribution of US\$ 12.5 million to the United Nations Relief and Works Agency for Palestine Refugees in the Near East (UNRWA).

“This extraordinary financial contribution will help the Agency continue to provide critical humanitarian services and operations for the remainder of 2019 in the areas of primary healthcare, education and social services across its five fields of operation”, said UNRWA in a statement on Thursday.

UNRWA said this is the second contribution by the UAE to the Agency this year and is one of four disbursements totaling US \$ 50 million.

“This generous donation could not have come at a more important time for the Agency and for Palestine refugees,” said UNRWA Acting Commissioner-General Christian Saunders. “UNRWA is doing all it can to overcome the worst financial crisis in its 70 year history.”

“I am hopeful that this strong demonstration of trust in UNRWA will encourage others to support the crucial work of the Agency,” said UNRWA’s Acting Commissioner-General.

UNRWA is confronted with an increased demand for services resulting from a growth in the number of registered Palestine refugees, the extent of their vulnerability and their deepening poverty. As a result, the UNRWA program budget, which supports the delivery of core essential services, operates with a large shortfall.



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

UNRWA is a United Nations agency established by the General Assembly in 1949 and mandated to provide assistance and protection to some 5.4 million Palestine refugees registered with UNRWA across its five fields of operation. Its mission is to help Palestine refugees in Jordan, Lebanon, Syria, West Bank, including East Jerusalem and the Gaza Strip achieve their full human development potential, pending a just and lasting solution to their plight.

Meanwhile, Palestinian nurse Bassel Hassan Omar, aged 38, has been held in Syrian government lock-ups since March 7, 2013.

Bassel was kidnapped by the government forces from AlMujtahid Hospital in Damascus, where he had served as a nurse. His fate remains shrouded in mystery.

Scores Palestinian medics, paramedics, and relief activists have been locked up in Syrian jails. Others died under torture in Syrian penitentiaries.

AGPS documented the incarceration of 1,768 Palestinian refugees in Syrian lock-ups.

