



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



"Pro-Gov't Battalion in Syria Involved in Illicit Drug Trafficking in Palestinian Refugee Camp"

- Palestinian Actor Contracts Coronavirus in Syria
- Palestinian Refugees Facing Ambivalent Fate in Greece
- Turkey Rescues 929 Asylum Seekers in Aegean
- Palestinian Refugee Wins Aleppo Bodybuilding Championship

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Latest developments

Members of Liwaa AlQuds armed group, affiliated with the Syrian regime, has been accused of running a network for drug trafficking in AlNeirab displacement camp and adjacent areas, informed sources told AGPS.

Speaking to AGPS on condition of anonymity, the source said military commander Iyad Abdul Rahim and his brother Ammar have been involved in the distribution and sale of substances smuggled from Lebanon and which are subject to drug prohibition laws.

Liwaa AlQuds's former military commander Samer Rafe' has also been involved in drug trafficking. He had been arrested over corruption and theft charges.

The list of drug dealers identified by the same source includes Liwaa AlQuds affiliates Shadi Jamamsah, Amjad AlMesri, and Mohamed Zahouri, The latter, nicknamed Arnoub is the drug baron in the camp.

Drug distribution is carried out by children aged below 18 and members of cash-strapped and vulnerable families.

The list of children exploited by the illicit network for drug trafficking includes Majd Mohamed Abu Hasan and a boy working for Ammar Abdul Rahim, officer in charge of Liwaa AlQuds southern checkpoint in AlNeirab camp. Ahmed Yousef Jawhar, the son of the Baath Party's Secretary has also been allegedly involved



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in drug promotion to university students. He has just been released from jail.

Daily scenes of destruction and bloodshed in Syria forced dozens of helpless civilians, among them children, to consume drugs and sniff glue, among other life-threatening substances, as a means to get over the trauma inflicted by the unabated warfare. Drug use, which starts as a way to escape, quickly makes their life worse.

In another development, Palestinian actor Ahmed Rafe' has contracted coronavirus in Syria, a source inside Assad University Hospital in Damascus revealed.

Ahmed's son, Nour, said his father tested positive for coronavirus which he contracted ten days ago. He is currently held at the Assad University Hospital in Damascus.

Ahmed was born on November 4, 1960. He played in several theatrical performances and participated in television and cinematic productions. He is the father of actor Mohamed Rafe' who was killed by armed militias in Damascus. He played "Ibrahim" in Bab AlHara series.

Meanwhile, Palestinian refugees and other migrants have been subjected to a dire humanitarian situation in migrant camps and other substandard facilities set up in Greece, most of them vastly overcrowded, unhygienic and violence-prone.



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Over recent months, Greece's refugee camps have been running at four or five times their capacities, with tens of thousands of migrants crammed into poorly-equipped tents.

Recently, the Greek Council for Refugees (GCR) and Oxfam have warned that the new Greek asylum system is designed to deport people rather than offer them safety and protection.

According to GCR and Oxfam, this means that people who have fled violence and persecution have little chance of a fair asylum procedure, and even families with children are regularly detained in inhumane conditions.

In the report 'Diminished, Derogated, Denied', published on July 1, the organisations showed how the reformed Greek asylum law, which entered into force on 1 January 2020 and was later amended in May, exposed people to abuse and exploitation.

The situation is further aggravated by the inhumane living conditions in Greece's refugee camps where people are now at risk of a devastating health crisis should COVID-19 reach the camps.

The organisations' analysis found that many particularly vulnerable people – such as children, pregnant women and people with disabilities – have been detained upon arrival on the 'hotspot' islands, without sufficient access to necessary care or protection. The asylum system also makes it extremely difficult for people seeking asylum to properly present their reasons for fleeing their home countries, like conflict or persecution, to the Greek asylum service.



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Testimonies gathered by the Greek Council for Refugees expose these harrowing living conditions in those camps

The organisations said that reformed law effectively bars many people who do not have legal support from appealing an asylum rejection. Deadlines have been shortened drastically and, in many cases, expire before people are informed of the decision. People seeking asylum are only able to submit an actual appeal through a lawyer – but in Lesbos, there is only one state-sponsored lawyer.

Over the past months, during the COVID-19 lockdown, there has been a worrying increase in cases of sexual harassments and reports of rape, and of domestic violence in Greek camps.

Palestinian refugees from Syria continue to risk their lives onboard the “death boats” to Greece. Activists estimate that around 4,000 Palestinian refugees from Syria are taking shelter on Greek islands.

Along similar lines, the Turkish Coast Guard rescued more than 900 asylum seekers in the recent month who were pushed back by the Greek Coast Guard into Turkish territorial waters in the Aegean.

Asylum seekers were seeking to cross to Europe with rubber boats to start new lives, especially those fleeing war and persecution.

According to data compiled by Anadolu Agency, from June 22 to July 22, a total of 929 asylum seekers pushed back by the Greek forces were rescued. Nearly 380 of them were rescued in Izmir,



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238 in Balikesir, 162 in Canakkale, 108 in Mugla, 24 in Aydin, and 18 in Antalya.

In 2019, a total of 29 asylum seekers lost their lives between Jan. 1 to July 22 due to harsh conditions at the sea. This year, the tally reached 35 in the same period.

According to the Coast Guard Command, 12,609 irregular migrants trying to cross to Greece were held between Jan. 1 and July 22. Over 880 migrants were held from July 1 to July 22.

Turkish Coast Guard lent asylum seekers a helping hand by providing them with clothes and food. Health care personnel also treated rescued asylum seekers in bad health conditions.

Turkey has been a key transit point for asylum seekers aiming to cross to Europe to start new lives, especially those fleeing war and persecution.

The country earlier this year opened its gates to irregular migrants seeking to cross to Europe, accusing the EU of failing to keep its promises under a 2016 migrant deal.

Turkey hosts nearly 4 million refugees from Syria, more than any other country in the world.

In the meantime, Palestinian refugee Mohamed Abu Khaled has won the first place in the bodybuilding championship (2nd division) held at AlHamdaniya sports hall in Aleppo. 18 contestants (70 kgm) showed up at the competition.



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Mohamed, from AlNeirab camp, in Aleppo, had won similar competitions.

Hundreds of displaced Palestinian refugees in/from Syria have achieved success stories, despite the traumatic upshots wrought by the daily scenes of bloodshed and destruction across the embattled Syrian territories.

This includes scores of refugee students who have obtained the highest scores at their academic institutions; hundreds of refugee sportsmen/sportswomen who snatched the first places in regional and international competitions; dozens of artists who received renowned literary awards for their products and performances; and several housewives who turned trauma into a space of creativity.

Almost ten years into the conflict, Palestine refugees continue to be one of the most vulnerable groups in Syria with immense humanitarian needs. The conflict has caused immense suffering and trauma over the past years.