

# PALESTINIANS OF SYRIA

BLOODY DIARY AND UNHEARD SCREAMING



مجموعة العمل من أجل فلسطينيي سورية  
ACTION GROUP FOR PALESTINIANS OF SYRIA



مركز العودة الفلسطيني  
PALESTINIAN RETURN CENTRE



# **PALESTINIANS OF SYRIA**

## **BLOODY DIARY AND UNHEARD SCREAMING**

“A Documentary Report Monitoring Important Events  
Related to Palestinians of Syria During the First Half of 2015”

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## Contents

<b>Introduction</b> .....	<b>5</b>
<b>Palestinian Refugees in Syria - Facts and Indicators</b> .....	<b>6</b>
<b>Living Conditions of Palestinian Refugees in Syria</b> .....	<b>6</b>
<b>1. Palestinian Camps in Syria</b> .....	<b>7</b>
The Yarmouk camp.....	7
Khan Al Shieh Camp “Al Awda Camp” .....	19
Dara Camp .....	25
Al-Neirab Camp .....	27
Khan Danoon Camp .....	29
Jaramana Camp .....	30
Hosseinieh Camp.....	31
Sbeineh Camp.....	33
Hndarat Camp .....	33
Al-Aadeen Camp in Homs .....	34
Al Aadeen Camp (Hama).....	38
Al- Ramil Camp in Lathikia .....	38
Sayeda Zeinab Camp .....	39
Alramdan Camp.....	39
<b>2. Palestinian Compounds in Syria</b> .....	<b>40</b>
Muzareeb Compound .....	40
Qudseia.....	41
<b>3. Palestinian Syrian Refugee Victims</b> .....	<b>41</b>
Temporal Distribution of Victims .....	42
Victim distribution according to the reason of death .....	42
Victim distribution in the main camps and governorates .....	43
Photographs of Torture .....	44
<b>Palestinian refugees from Syria to Lebanon</b> .....	<b>47</b>
<b>Palestinian Refugees from Syria in Turkey</b> .....	<b>60</b>

<b>4. The Palestinian Refugees in Europe and other countries .....</b>	<b>67</b>
Palestinians of Syria Committee in Austria .....	70
Palestinians of Syria Committee in Sweden «Tawasul» .....	70
The Palestinian Refugees in Egypt .....	71
The Palestinian Refugees in Libya .....	72
Displaced Palestinian Refugees in Morocco.....	73
Palestinian Refugees at Cyprus .....	74
Palestinian Refugees in Greece .....	75
Palestinian Refugees at Macedonia .....	77
The Palestinian refugees in Hungary .....	78
The Palestinian Refugees in Indonesia .....	79
The Palestinian Refugees in Thailand .....	80
The Palestinian Refugees in Romania .....	81
<b>Numbers and Indicators.....</b>	<b>81</b>

## Introduction

While the Syrian crisis still rages on, the Palestinian refugees that have been in Syria for 67 years are paying the price as the war has impacted on fundamental capacities of both the Syrian and Palestinian people.

The war's remit has expanded to the refugee camps and the compounds that are distributed throughout the Syrian cities. 2,910 Palestinian refugees have died as a result of clashes, shelling or due to torture within Syrian prisons.

The Action Group for Palestinians of Syria (AGPS), is a media and human rights organisation that monitors issues relating to Palestinian Refugees in Syria (PRS), regardless of where they are situated and have been documenting events affecting and violations against PRS. The AGPS acts through a network of field correspondents and researchers specialising in the Palestinian cause, maintaining an overview of their evolving situation of displacement. This documentation provides important context for defence of their rights of refugees in local, regional and international forums.

The report uses anecdotal evidence from Palestinian refugee camps and compounds inside of Syria that provides information of the daily life, health and humanitarian conditions of Palestinian refugees in Syria. It also documents the daily abuses and events that arise out of the conflict that is ongoing in Syria and that has affected the Palestinian refugees in particular. Finally, it details the situation of displaced PRS, that are displaced for the second time outside of Syria. Having fled/migrated to neighbouring countries as either a destination or transit point until they reach Europe.

This report reflects the most important events in the first half of 2015, which is preceded by two reports documenting the events of the first and second half of 2014, a "status report" and several special reports on issues related to the Palestinian Syrian affairs.

## Palestinian Refugees in Syria - Facts and Indicators

When talking about the living and economic conditions of Palestinian refugees in Syria, it is often synonymised with the living and economic conditions of Syrians as Palestinian refugees are generally completely integrated there.

The report, issued in March 2015 by the Syrian Center for Policy Research, UNRWA, and the Qatari office of United Nations Development Program (UNDP) in Syria entitled *Alienation and Violence*, refers to the following social and economic indicators:

- Unemployment increased from 14.9 per cent in 2011 to 57.7 per cent at the end of 2014.
- 3.72 million People are unemployed; including 2.96 million who lost their jobs during the crisis leading to the loss of the main source of income for 12.22 million people.
- Continuous devastating rates of poverty during 2014 affecting four people out of every five persons.
- Almost two-thirds of the population (64.7 per cent) are living in extreme poverty. since they cannot afford the minimum basic needs, food and non-food.
- With the growing prevalence of poverty, 30 per cent of the population live in extreme poverty, which means that they cannot provide their basic needs of food.
- Education has collapsed with 50.8 per cent of all of children of this category not enrolled in basic education during the 2014-15 school year throughout Syria.
- Almost 50 per cent of children of this category have lost a total of three years of study.
- Inequality in educational opportunities is growing between regions and the general quality of education has deteriorated.

## Living Conditions of Palestinian Refugees in Syria

The prevailing social and economic conditions has forced PRS, of limited income to share houses between families due to the high rents that have arisen from the displacement crisis within the country. This has divided PRS into two main categories:

1. Staff employed by the state within the Syrian public sector before the start of the conflict who were able to continue employment within the resources available. Wages were the equivalent of no more than US\$ 200 for graduates and US\$ 75 for non-graduates, in Syrian pounds.
2. Business owners or employees in the private sector. The latter resulted in having to let staff go due to the deteriorating economic situation; and many businesses closed its headquarters, particularly where they were located in the countryside as these became battlegrounds for the regime and opposition.

This meant that employees who lost their job underwent four stages:

- i) Doing nothing while waiting for opportunities to earn an income to help their family get by as well as being in receipt of in-kind aid provided by relief and charitable institutions and UNRWA cash transfers, distributed to PRS once every two months up to an equivalent of US\$ 100 per person.
- ii) Being forced to work within the ranks of the Syrian army and security in the so called National Defense Army or Palestinian factions loyal to the regime such as General Command, Fatah al-



Intifada, or others. This section attracted young people receiving a monthly salary of up to US\$ 200.

iii) Joining the Syrian revolution and residing in opposition areas also known as “the liberated areas”.

iv) Being forced to flee to neighbouring Arab countries or Turkey, some continuing their journey to Europe.

## 1. Palestinian Camps in Syria

### • The Yarmouk camp

An imposed siege on the Yarmouk camp has been ongoing since mid-July, 2013. During the first half of 2015, the camp experienced rising violence and starvation but the most pertinent event witnessed by the camp was its seizure control by the Islamic State in Syria, ISIS now control almost 70 per cent of the area. Shelling coincided with escalation of shelling with explosive barrels and rockets and the fall of mortar shells at neighborhoods of the camp under the pretext of striking the headquarters of “ISIS” which caused a huge destruction in homes and property and caused the death of many residents.

Suffering of Yarmouk residents increased as circa 6000 families migrated to neighboring areas such as Bait Sahem and Yalda due to ISIS control, curtailing the entry of food and maintaining the siege, which restricted water and cut off the supply of electricity, medicines and medical supplies.

The AGPS team documented 1,100 fatalities from the Yarmouk camp since the beginning of the conflict.

### ❖ Living Situation

The humanitarian situation had deteriorated in the Yarmouk camp due to the imposed blockade by the regular army and the Popular Front (General Command), and due to food aid being restricted, which had been provided by UNRWA to the people of the Yarmouk since 12 October 2014. The suspension of aid into Yarmouk made residents vulnerable to death from starvation as residents resorted to searching for food in garbage containers or drinking pepper soup, causing disease “ISIS” storming of the camp led to campaigns of intimidation and abduction of dozens of young people from their homes. In addition, residents were prevented from accessing water distribution points and remained in their homes because of the spread of snipers and curfews.

Most relief agencies working in the Yarmouk camp had stopped fearing potential abduction by “ISIS”. The camp had witnessed the migration of 975 families to Bait Sahem town, which is in the vicinity of the camp.

Meanwhile, Al Wafaa European campaign announced it will sponsor the displaced Palestinian families from the Yarmouk camp to nearby neighborhoods by providing them with meals, essential needs, and care until reaching a solution that guarantees them a safe haven.

The suffering of Yarmouk residents increased due to the loss of fuel, water and ongoing power cuts, and severe drought, which hit Syria and the surrounding countries in January, prompting many trapped people to destroy their homes’ wooden furniture and fire it in an attempt to mitigate the effects of the bitter cold that they have suffered. Activists on social networks shared images of people in the camp breaking wooden furniture to be used to provide heating.

### ❖ Continuing Water Cuts since September, 2014

Continuing cuts to drinking water, which has affected around 20,000 residents of the Yarmouk camp since September 2014, forced the refugees to move to adjacent neighborhoods in order to access water for daily usage; but the elimination of water from these neighborhoods as well forced them to use artesian wells.

Residents depended on wells almost entirely despite the fact that most of them are contaminated with dust and sediment, which has caused illnesses, particularly kidney related illnesses. In spite of all these risks, and the fact that they were warned by relief workers of the potential spread of kidney related diseases, an alternative solution was never found.

They extract water from artesian wells by electric pumps operating by diesel due to the power cuts, which they have been doing for more than two years. However, ISIS have stole more than 3,000 liters of fuel, which was allocated to operate water pumps that has exacerbated the crises of water and hygiene.

### ❖ Local and International Appeals and Distress Calls

On 5 January, a number of activists and residents of the Yarmouk camp appealed to concerned organizations, including UNRWA and the authorities, to work to lift the suspension of food being brought into the camp after being suspended for more than 20 days. This has caused hunger and malnutrition as well as price hikes in consumables. Prices reach as much as 1,500 Syrian pounds for a kilogram of rice, 2,300 Syrian pounds for a kilogram of sugar, in excess of 2,000 Syrian pounds for a kilogram of flour, and 1,400 Syrian pounds for a kilogram of lentils.

On 11 January, a group of young Palestinians in Yarmouk protested against the continuing siege imposed on the camp by the Syrian army and various Palestinian groups, which has prevented food, medical aid, water and electricity from reaching residents. In addition, the protesters appealed to the concerned authorities, the Palestinian Liberation Organization and militants in the Yarmouk camp to allow the entry of aid and work towards ways of securing it.

Palestinian refugees conducted a sit-in in order to raise awareness that a humanitarian disaster would be imminent if disruption of food and medical aids into the camp was to continue. Protest slogans included: "We were not killed, but starved to death".

In this context, five Arab TV stations, which are: Jerusalem satellite channel, the Yarmouk channel, Al-Khartoum channel, Al-Watan Algerian channel, and Sanaa channel, collectively broadcasted a programme on 12 January 2015 called "Freedom Appeal", which looked at the suffering of camp residents and the reemergence of food deprivation for them.

In a statement issued on 13 January 2015, Al-Wafa'a European campaign had warned of a humanitarian catastrophe and the possible re-emergence of famine to the Yarmouk camp after aid had stopped and the dire conditions that were compounded by a snowstorm, exacerbating the already difficult situation.

The campaign expressed concern, particularly regarding vulnerable groups such as women, children and the elderly in tragic conditions affecting over 18,000 residents in the Yarmouk camp. The campaign also stressed to relief organisations, the necessity to respond rapidly to the needs of Yarmouk residents and to work hard to protect civilians from the ongoing conflict in Syria.

On 18 January 2015, the Yarmouk camp witnessed a mass demonstration circling the camp demanding a lift of the siege, in order to return the camp to normal conditions and return its residents. The protestors, carried banners with the words "The Yarmouk Camp, Capital of Diaspora .... Cold..... Starving," "Children of the Yarmouk camp cold and starve to death," and "No for starving children and elderly," written on them. They wished to stress the need for the entry of food aid to the camp, blaming all parties of the conflict for its cessation.

On 29 January 2015, dozens of the Yarmouk Camp's children carried out a sit-in under the title of "a child cry" in front of the Youth Support Center on Al Madares Street, where children raised banners demanding officials and leaders of the Palestinian factions to act on their responsibilities towards residents of the camp.

The children raised a banner on which was written a Hadeeth for Prophet Mohammed (peace be upon him) "All of you are responsible and each one of you is responsible for his people," while others carried banners included a message to the Palestine Embassy in Damascus, which said "Palestine Embassy, I wish I could eat cake".

The message to the Palestine embassy was a reference to the celebration held by the embassy on the anniversary of the start of the "Fatah movement" in a restaurant in Damascus a few kilometers from the camp, considered distasteful because of the trapped residents of which 176 have died due to starvation and lack of medical services. Friends of Humanity International Organization, reported in their publication, "We are still alive - the suffering of Yarmouk residents between blockade and risk of death by killing or starvation", that since the beginning of the siege on 22 June 2013, 166 residents have died from starvation and lack of medical care. The siege has lasted a total of 577 days. The report also stated that the camp's population has decreased from 500,000 to just 20,000.

"Friends of Humanity" demanded the Syrian regular forces and allied military squad lift the military siege on civilians, to stop shelling civilian neighborhoods, allow the entry of food supplies to residents, to re-provide the Yarmouk camp with drinking water and electric power, to allow free movement of people including exiting and entering the camp and to release civilian detainees.

## ❖ Health

Most relief and medical authorities in Yarmouk stopped providing their services for fear of abduction by ISIS.

In the first half of 2015, health standards have deteriorated rapidly in the Yarmouk refugee camp because of ISIS' control on the camp. On 1 April 2015, they targeted and shelled the Palestine Hospital. Amongst the injured were Nasser Bakir, Mohammed Al- Bahree, Wesam Al- Ghoul and Mahmoud Al- Khateeb. Due to the lack of resources, relief workers were resorted to treating the injured in fairly rudimentary ways.

Health conditions were also impacted by the infringement of exiting through the regime's checkpoints should any injuries be sustained. "Al-Izz Ibn Abd Al- Salam" Brigades of the opposition also worsened the situation by preventing the arrival of the camp's wounded to Al-Tadamon neighborhood for treatment in the field hospitals. A few Palestinian Red Crescent Society (PRCS) were able to leave in order for their injuries to be treated, however, on 4 March 2015.

Rates of jaundice and typhoid increased significantly as a result of the lack of nutrition and water in addition to the spread of garbage between residents' homes, as well as the stopping of all relief agencies working in the camp.

The deteriorating health situation inside the camp forced the residents to launch an appeal to the International Committee of the Red Cross (ICRC) demanding their mandate to coordinate with the Syrian regime and medical authorities in and outside the camp in order to treat the injuries.

On 31 March 2015, PRCS staff and volunteers carried out a solidarity vigil in protest of the targeting of medical staff and personnel in the camp condemning the assassination of the relief and medical activist, Yahya Abdullah Al-Hourani, who was assassinated by a gunshot on his way to Palestine hospital.

In its turn, the (ICRC) in Geneva and the International Federation of Red Crescent and Red Cross (IFRC) condemned the assassination of relief and medical activist, Yahya Abdullah al-Hourani, and called on the conflicting parties to respect international humanitarian law and to stop attacking humanitarian workers, hospitals and ambulances.

### ❖ Educational situation

In spite of shelling, starvation and dehydration in Yarmouk, its residents insisted on continuing schooling through the establishment of alternative educational schools and centers. Mosques, wedding halls and kindergartens turned into six educational centers divided between primary, elementary and secondary level classes.

One of these centers is “Bar’am Al-Zelal” kindergarten, which was established by a number of activists in the Yarmouk camp, where they worked to secure and provide it with needed educational equipment, as well as to secure teaching staff and preparing it to welcome 120 children in aiming to raise their educational, social, and psychological normalcy in order to continue the educational process. These educational centers had witnessed a large turnout of residents who supported and praised them for its role towards their children and their feeling that their children are following up the education movement as if that the camp in its best.

On 25 January 25 2015, 66 students who are interested in applying high school exams in correspondence with the Ministry of Education decision by requiring an educational sequence for students or exceeding this exam after the agreement of the Syrian security apparatuses to exit from the Yarmouk camp while their return was documented on January 27, 2015.

On 15 February 2015, volunteers of the Yarmouk secondary school protested to demand all international organizations, authorities, and institutions that work outside the camp to support them to continue the educational process inside the camp.

### ❖ Education Obstacles in Yarmouk

Yarmouk Camp faced many obstacles with regards to education, affecting and weakening the educational provision including its complete cessation.

1. The continuing blockade forced residents to seek work/income and rations of food including children. This extended to teachers who migrated in order to search for work. Although, the teachers of “Al-Jarmaq” school in Yarmouk returned to school on 8 February 2015 looking for jobs advertised through the school’s billboards.
2. UNRWA, although a primary provider of education for Palestinian refugees, was prevented from carrying out its services and even accused of perpetrating the siege themselves. They did deliver textbooks, which was said to be done under residents’ pressure, but overall the delivery set against their commitments is still shy.
3. Continual bombing from Syrian warplanes, mortar shells and sniping has meant the wounding of many and the demolition of many buildings including Al-Fallujah School in mid-December 2012 as a result of regime bombing. This not only causes physical damage but us having a lasting psychological effect on residents and children.
4. The spread of disease, some of which have turned into epidemics such as jaundice and lice. Without the necessary treatment, which has been unavailable due to the camp siege, 176 people lost their lives.
5. The fear of many secondary school and university students from leaving the camp to perform their exams (if they were allowed) from being arrested and assassination. Cases

of arrest and torture of Palestinian students in the Syrian prisons have been recorded for being accused by the Syrian authorities of working in the medical and relief field in the camp.

6. On 22 January 2015, Syrian security forces arrested four students including three female students at the entrance of the Yarmouk camp when leaving for high school exams. They were part of a 66 student contingent of the camp who were granted permission to do so with agreement by the Syrian security apparatuses who had all of their names and with a guarantee from the PLO. On 30 April 2015, again members of the regular army arrested four students when leaving for official exams at the checkpoint of Bait Sahem. According to activists, members of the security forces took the students from an UNRWA bus and arrested them without reason, releasing them after a short while.

### ❖ The Continuation of Assassinations

In the first half of 2015, a series of assassinations, abductions and slaughter of relief and media staff continued inside the Yarmouk camp. Many attempts of assassinations of activists and key Palestinian figures were made; and many of them had been documented to be perpetrated by unknown groups.

On 12 January 2015, the Palestinian Jordanian refugee Abdallah Rezeq, who was born in (1955), was found killed in his home, while clear signs of white weapon were found on his body. It is worth mentioning that Rezeq belongs to the Fatah movement.

On 11 February 2015, Assad Hussein, a member of the Civic Council of Yarmouk, died after being shot by a sniper when he left his house in the Yarmouk camp at Rijah Square.

On 15 February 2015, a failed assassination attempt by an unknown masked man was implemented against an official of the relief department in the national commission, Mohamed Taha (Abu Taha), in front of his house in the Yarmouk camp.

On 22 February 2015, Firas Hussein Al- Najee, official at "Basma" institution in the Yarmouk camp, was assassinated by unknown group, while he was found dead in his home after being shot by a bullet in his head. On 23 March 2015, unknown group tried to kidnap Abdallah Al-Khateeb, a relief and media activist.

On 30 March 2015, Yahya Abdullah Al-Hourani (Abu Suhaib), a Hamas leader in the Yarmouk camp, was assassinated near Al- Taj chicken shop while on his way to work in the Palestine hospital, which led to him sustaining head injuries.

On 24 April 2015, the Palestinian refugee Mohamed Tawfiq was found dead inside his home in Al- Orouba Street in the Yarmouk camp.

### ❖ Initiatives to Lift the Siege

In terms of negotiations and initiatives to lift the siege on the Yarmouk camp, the first half of 2015 did not witness any change or progress on the ground because of the deteriorating conditions in the camp.

On 5 January 2015, the Secretary of the Yarmouk branch of the Palestinian organization of Baath Party, Rateb Shihab, asked the Palestinian leadership to "make a united decisive decision to end the Yarmouk camp and other Palestinian camps' crisis", and to halt the "useless negotiation".

On 3 February 2015, President of the Palestinian Reconciliation Committee and secretary of the Palestinian People's Forum, Sheikh Mohammed Omari, confirmed that the reconciliation committee was seeking cooperation with several parties to put forward a new international initiative to end the crisis of the besieged Yarmouk camp ruling out military intervention in the camp.

He accused the gunmen inside Yarmouk of disabling and spoiling all initiatives, which would have kept the camp neutral and therefore, lifted the siege. In addition, he pointed out that the “Palestine Liberation Organization, in cooperation with the 14 factions, finally provided the initiative in which the secretary of Fatah movement and some of the Palestinian organizations but it remained unsuccessful till this moment.”

On 5 February 2015 a number of Palestinian websites close to the Syrian regime, shared a picture of a statement attributed to the 14 Palestinian factions in Syria, which focused on the implementation of the Palestinian initiative signed on 21 June 2014, backed by the Syrian leadership in order to return the residents of Yarmouk to their homes.

On 10 February 2015, the Syrian Deputy Foreign Minister, Faisal Mekdad, said that: “The Syrian government is ready to overcome any obstacle in front of aid delivery to the Yarmouk camp in order to alleviate the suffering of its residents.”

This came during a meeting with the Political Department of the Palestine Liberation Organization Director, Anwar Abdul Hadi, at the headquarters of the Syrian Foreign Ministry in the capital Damascus. Close sources to the Syrian regime sites that the two sides discussed the situation of the Palestinian refugee camps in Syria and stressed the need to work for food aid delivery to the Yarmouk camp as soon as possible regardless of any other the circumstances.

Meanwhile, a PLO delegation made several visits to Syria in order to discuss the Yarmouk camp and the storming of “ISIS”. However, none of these visits attained practical results.

On 24 April 2015, a member of the PLO Executive Committee, Ahmed Majdalani, announced that a PLO delegation should visit the Syrian capital, Damascus, but the Syrian government apologized for not receiving them. PLO media sources reported that the Syrian apology was a consequence of the PLO’s confusion and contradiction in dealing with the Yarmouk camp crisis.

Ahmed Majdalani, the Palestinian Authority’s (PA) envoy to Damascus said that: “Syria requested a postponement of the PLO delegation’s visit which was scheduled to Syria” and that” Syria asked for a postponement, not a rejection of the Palestinian delegation visit for a week due to internal concerns there”.

It was clear that there do exist Palestinian disagreements about defeating “ISIS” and Al- Nasah from the camp. The PLO and the PA refused a military solution. In contrast, Palestinian factions in Damascus demanded significant military intervention in order to defeat ISIS and Al-Nusra Front from the camp and that it is against any negotiated solution with the groups.

### ❖ **Yarmouk under the Control of ISIS**

In the first half of April 2015, fierce battles broke out inside the Yarmouk camp between ISIS, Al-Nusra Front and Palestinian groups including Alkrain, Azaatoot, Sarhan, and a group belonging to Ahrar al-Sham that held both allegiance to ISIS and Aknaf Bait Al-Maqdis. Battles ended with the control of ISIS for more than 70 per cent of the Yarmouk area where serious abuses against civilians and targeted some private and public property inside the camp.

### ❖ **Reasons and Motives**

The second half of 2014 witnessed a series of targeted assassinations of activists inside the Yarmouk camp.

An unknown group assassinated Bahaa Saqr, a member of the Yarmouk residents’ league. He was after shot at dawn on 2 August while wandering through Yarmouk main street near Al-Waseem mosque.

Two militants were also assassinated, Ahmed Al-Sahli (Abu Adel) and Abdullah al-Bader (Abu Uday) were killed after leaving evening prayers in the neighborhood of Al-Oroubah, on 19-20 August respectively.

On 29 November, the activist, Ali al Hija, was assassinated in Al-Orouba Street after being directly shot in a barber shop.

On 20 December 2014, the activist Mohammad Yousuf Ariesha (Abu Abed Areisha), Director of the relief office in the camp, was assassinated after being shot in daylight in the middle of Loibeia Street by a group affiliated to the Syrian opposition while on his way to the headquarters of the office.

On 23 December 2014, Mohammad Qasim Tiraoah, a Fatah official in the Yarmouk camp, was assassinated after being shot by an unknown person while he was near Al-thalathein Street.

On 30 March 2015, Yahya Al-Hourani (Abu Suhaib) a Hamas former official in the camp and one of the most prominent relief and medical workers in the camp, was assassinated too.

According to details given by the researcher Tariq Hamoud in the context of estimating position on the Yarmouk published by Al- Zaytuna Center for Studies and Consultations: Aknaf Bait Al- Maqdis have been accused of organising assassinations for ISIS in the Alhajar Al Aswad area. Evidence has led to the arrest of a number of ISIS members to be investigated with. This provoked ISIS to storm the camp and surround the Al-Aknaf Shatat office within 24 hours of the arrests. ISIS managed to impose its control quickly on all southern areas of the camp, the areas that were under the control of Al-Nusra Front, which seemed to be a prior agreement between the two parties.

Clashes broke out between ISIS and Al-Aknaf in several areas inside the camp. Over the first two days of April, fierce battles occurred between them at the junction with Noah-Ebraheem Street, which divides the eastern camp almost equally with Al-Zeer, while ISIS progressed in the third day as a result of their large numbers and armament (estimated at about 1000 members), preventing Al-Nusra Front from reaching any support outside of the camp such as from their strongholds to the south.

With the decline of Al-Aknaf to the north of the camp, troops from Fatah al-Intifada, which is backed by regime forces and the General Command, captured the square in the north of the camp. This strengthened the presence of the regime along Palestine Street from the municipal area up to the area around Al- Rojolah mosque.

As a result, this narrowed down the hold on Al-Aknaf groups, who receded to an area no more than 400 meters with clashes ceasing by the fourth and fifth day.

This coincided with horrific events the beheading of two young men by ISIS, who then threw them into the street. Rumors spread, worsening the humanitarian situation with ISIS controlling the only water distribution point inside the camp near Palestine mosque. In addition, ISIS stopped all attempts for food to be allowed into the camp, no matter the institution.

On the sixth day, Aknaf succeeded in assembling a number of its members in the south of the camp. It also launched an attack in which it regained the cultural center and the hospital behind it.

On the seventh day, a limited group of Palestinian Liberation Army dissidents, led by Colonel Khaled al-Hassan, tried to support Aknaf in the north with an opposite attack on ISIS. This led to the killing of Colonel Hassan. This scene ended up with Aknaf being besieged by both ISIS and Al-Nusrah Front from one side and the regime on the other<sup>(1)</sup>.

ISIS, however held a different narrative to the accusations of the assassinations mentioned. They claim that the storming of the camp was a revenge attack for an ISIS leader's family member who was killed in the camp.

Another explanation was that ISIS were trying to relieve the camp from the siege as they claim that Aknaf had a monopoly over aid entering Yarmouk, trading on the livelihood of the trapped, and participating with the regime in narrowing down the hold on them. In addition, they published a video showing food warehouses they claimed were stores for Aknaf in an attempt to influence public opinion<sup>(2)</sup>.

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(1) Situation assess: Yarmouk Camp to Where? Tariq Hamoud

(2) Response and signifying of the ISIS Fraudulent Lying, Dr. Ibrahim Hamimi [https:// drhamami.net/](https://drhamami.net/)

Further justifications included the claim that Aknaf was about to reach an agreement on the delivery of the camp to the regime. In the ninth issue of the English magazine “Dabiq”, according to “Arabi 21” newspaper, Aknaf Bait Al-Maqdis was described as “client awakening of the Syrian regime” adding that Aknaf made an agreement with the Juggernaut, Bashar al-Assad, to restore the Nasire regime to the Yarmouk camp.

### ❖ Direct Result of ISIS Entry to Yarmouk

The intensification of fighting in the Yarmouk camp between fighting battalions inside it worsened the humanitarian, living and security crises of its residents on several points. Mostly the ongoing siege that had last over 600 days, preceding these battles. In addition, the reaction of the Syrian regime forces and the Palestinian committees loyal to it and the preceding bombings with various kinds of weapons what inflicted more victims among the Palestinian refugees from the camp’s residents.

The AGPS documented 38 victims of the camp during April. As a result of extreme circumstances experienced by residents, the elderly Fatehiya Khalil Abu Jawed (1935) died on 8 April 2015 attributed to the lack of food and medical care in the Yarmouk camp. In addition, Nasser Abbas died after being shot by a sniper near Al- Orouba Street while on his way to bring water and food for his family. Zainab Daghestani, 12 years old, died on 7 April 2015 after being shot by a sniper in front of her home in Al-Orouba Street.

As a result of rocket shelling and explosive barrels, refugee, Hussein Taha, died on Monday, 6 April 2015 at his home in the Yarmouk camp. On 13 April 2015, the bodies of Mohammed Sabbagh and his wife were recovered from under the rubble of their home behind Palestine hospital due to a previous shelling that targeted Yarmouk.

In addition, many victims’ bodies were buried in public parks the cemetery remained inaccessible due to the intensification of fighting in the early days of the ISIS storming.

Both media activist, Jamal Khalifa and Abdul Latif al-Rimawi were buried in the garden of Abdel Kader al-Husseini Mosque.

### ❖ International, Local, and Palestinian Reactions

UN Secretary General, Ban Ki-moon, described the camp as a “ring of hell” and its residents in need of protection and cannot be abandoned. He added that ISIS committed crimes against humanity. The Envoy General of UNRWA, Pierre Krähenbühl, said that the humanitarian situation in the camp is “absolutely disastrous.”

Hassiba Haj Sahraoui, Deputy Director of the Middle East and North Africa program at Amnesty International said that: “Life for civilians who are besieged in the Yarmouk camp became a painful suffering to stay alive.”

She also demanded that humanitarian organisations be allowed to enter the camp because “there is an urgent need to immediately allow independent humanitarian agencies to enter the Yarmouk camp without restrictions and to alleviate the burden of endless suffering.”

Members of the UN Security Council also called for “halting the attacks on the Yarmouk camp,” and demanded “to allow humanitarian organisations to enter aid to the Yarmouk camp for Palestinian refugees south of Damascus,” and” to ensure the access and evacuation of civilians.”

The British ambassador of the UN said that: “We are outraged by the situation in the Yarmouk camp and the use of explosive barrels by the Syrian regime.” In contrast, Russia disrupted, according to some sources, the issue of a statement from the Security Council proposed by the United States that condemns the shelling of Yarmouk camp south of Damascus and “calls on the parties to withdraw from the camp and to lift the siege.”



Regionally, the Arab League called on the international community to intervene immediately to ensure that the Yarmouk camp and other Palestinian camps will not be involved in the Syrian conflict. It also warned in a statement that “the Yarmouk residents with all their sectors, including children, are the most who are affected and likely to die as a result of the continuing conflict in the light of the severe siege imposed on the camp.

It was clear that there is a significant disparity in the Palestinian position regarding the Yarmouk crisis. While the Palestinian Authority and Hamas demanded to “protect civilians” and “neutralize the camp” from fighting, some called for a military intervention to remove ISIS and reinstate security in the camp.

In a statement by the Head of the PLO Political Department, Anwar Abdel Hadi, after a meeting with Deputy Foreign Minister Faisal Al-Miqdad, Al-Miqdad expressed that “Syria is ready to support Palestinian fighters in all areas, including the military, to take ISIS out of the camp and rescue civilians.”

Anwar Raja, a spokesman for the PFLP\_GC, said that “The field developments in the camp impose a change in the attitude and the use of force to take out terrorists from the camp.”

He added “If there is consensus during the meeting, it will be in coordination with the Syrian state,” adding “this is normal because it is a Syrian land and any Palestinian decision will be under the umbrella of the Syrian state.”

On the other hand, this call found a significant opposition to a large segment of Palestinian residents who saw it as a decision to end the existence of the camp and called for the need to find a political way to put an end for the crisis in order to secure the camp from the deteriorating destruction, and to stop the bloodshed of civilians.

### ❖ Camp Diaries

- On 3 January 2015, the Yarmouk camp witnessed shelling and sporadic clashes, which targeted scattered areas. Clashes broke out between regular army forces and Palestinian groups loyal to it from one side and groups affiliated with the opposition on the other side.
- On 3 January 2015, the camp witnessed a failed assassination attempt on one of Aknaf Bait Al-Maqdis leaders, Nidal Abu Al- Ela (Abu Humam), after planting an explosive device next to his house in which material damage was sustained.
- On 5 January 2015, the Yarmouk camp was exposed to rocket attacks targeting the opposition group in Al-Ramma Street and Althalathein Street to the north of the camp, coinciding with the outbreak of clashes.
- On 6 January 2015, ISIS members kidnapped Bahaa Al-Ameen, one of the cadres of Fatah movement and responsible for Bisan Sports Club, while he was at Al-Zain neighborhood area south of the Yarmouk camp, which is controlled by ISIS.
- On the same day, a fire broke out in a house in Safed Street, which turned out to be owned by Sheikh Mohammed Omari (Abu Omar), a member of the People’s Committee of reconciliation in the Yarmouk camp while the reason for the fire is still unknown.
- On 8 January 2015, violent clashes broke out in a number of junctions in Rama Street and the Municipality of Yarmouk camp in Palestine Street.
- On 7 January 2015, ISIS released Baha Al-Ameen, one of the cadres of Fatah movement in the Yarmouk camp, responsible for Bisan Sport Club, a day after being arrested at Al-Zain neighborhood in the south of the camp, which was dominated by the organization for over two weeks.

- On 18 January 2015, seven armed battalions of the Syrian opposition “legitimate authority in the south of Damascus, Al-Islam army, Ajnad Al-Sham, Ahrar al-Sham Islamic movement, Aknaf Bait Al- Maqdis Brigades, Al- Islah forces, Al-Hajar Al-Aswad fighters” threatened in a statement issued to ignite the southern region if the Yarmouk camp is stormed by Yarmouk Brigade, which is intended to be created by the Syrian regime and the Palestinian factions loyal to it.
- On 5 February 2015, the Yarmouk camp was targeted by a number of mortar shells that fell on sporadic areas resulting in two injuries. The refugee Ghalia Mostafa was one of the victims who sustained injuries as the regular army checkpoint guards allowed her to go out to receive urgent treatment in the capital’s, Damascus, hospitals. It also allowed the exit of Mr. Deeb Sadia for treatment as well as two children, Qassem and Hashim Faraj.
- On 24 February 2015, violent clashes broke out in the Yarmouk camp in Damascus at the center of Palestine Street and Althalathein Street between the Syrian army and the Palestinian groups loyal to it on one side and the armed opposition groups on the other. This coincided with the fall of several artillery shells at Althalathein and Rama Streets without causing any civilian casualties.
- On 4 March 2015, a bomb exploded near Palestine mosque at the center of the Yarmouk camp, causing material damage with no injuries.
- On 7 March 2015, five members of armed groups surrender to the camp’s checkpoint in order to regularize their status.
- On 10 March 2015, bombing from rockets and mortars targeted the camp killing six fighters from armed opposition groups, including Al-Nusra Front. This came after targeting the Front headquarters in Orouba area adjacent to the stadium area at the camp.
- On 23 March 2015, bombing and a number of missiles targeted different places in the Yarmouk camp without causing any injuries. This coincided with clashes between armed groups affiliated to the Syrian opposition and the regular army alongside the Palestinian factions.
- On 30 March 2015, relief and medical activist, Yahya Al-Hourani “Abu Suhaib” was assassinated while on his way to work in Palestine hospital.
- On 1 April 2015, ISIS stormed the Yarmouk camp with the facilitation of “Al-Nusra Front, while ISIS progressed with heavy shelling targeting different areas of the camp around Khamastaash Street, controlling one of the main headquarters of Aknaf and then taking control of large areas of Khamastaash Street, the area around Palestine mosque and other areas which led to the mobilization of Aknaf Bait Al-Maqdis Brigades and the confrontation they had with ISIS.
- Al-Nusra placed various checkpoints in the vicinity of Palestine square in order to prevent the arrival of supplies to the camp by opposition factions in the neighboring town of Yalda.
- On 2 April 2015, violent clashes reignited between Aknaf and ISIS in the vicinity of Palestine mosque, Almadares street, Safad Street, and Ja’una Street. Activists confirmed the assistance of Al-Nusra Front to “ISIS” in which it prevented the arrival of the opposition factions reinforcements headed by “Al-Islam Army” and “Ababil Horan” while some groups succeeded in reaching the camp where it formed with Aknaf Bait Al-Maqdis, a joint operations room to manage the battle against ISIS.
- Heavy shelling with rockets and missiles targeted the camp and its vicinity, which caused vast damage in Al-Orooba neighborhood. In addition, there was a number of wounded, coinciding with the entry of groups belongs to the regime and the Popular Front-General Command, which entered the camp through Palestine Street and soon clashed with Aknaf- Bait Al-Maqdis.

- On 4 April 2015, violent shelling with rockets and explosive barrels targeted the camp and caused material damage and a number of injuries among residents.
- On the same day, dozens of families were displaced to neighboring areas of Yarmouk (Yalda and Babbila).
- On 5 April 2015, a violent attack targeted different parts of the camp causing considerable material damage, with sporadic clashes continuing between ISIS and Aknaf Bait al-Maqdis.
- On 7 April 2015, violent clashes broke out between Al-Aknaf battalion alongside the youth of the Yarmouk camp and ISIS members. These clashes concentrated on the center of the Yarmouk Secondary School for Girls in the region of Jalal Kawash Street near Palestine Street and Al-Oraaba area near Yalda area while the camp faced heavy shelling with rockets and mortars. This affected the ancient cemetery of the martyrs and the area around Al- Basil hospital.
- On 7 April 2015, violent bombing with at least six explosive barrels targeted different parts of the camp and caused enormous destruction in buildings and property.
- On 9 April 2015, Palestine Hospital and adjacent buildings were shelled by explosive barrels, which led to vast destruction of the hospital. The bombing renewed in the camp and targeted the vicinity of Rija square by a missile causing material damage in the region.
- On 9 April 2015, sporadic clashes broke out between Aknaf Bait Al-Maqdis Brigades alongside a group of youth and ISIS members in which Al-Aknaf was able to gain new sites in the vicinity of Loubeiah Street.
- On 11 April 2015, Aknaf Bait Al- Maqdis announced its attack on ISIS across Salah Al-Deen mosque.
- On 13 April 2015, sporadic clashes broke out between ISIS and Aknaf Brigades in the vicinity of Yarmouk Secondary School for Girls in the street of martyr Jalal Kawash near Palestine Street, the Yarmouk Street, and Loubiah Street lanes.
- On 15 April 2015, Aknaf Bait al- Maqdis Brigades achieved significant progress on the north side of the Yarmouk camp after violent clashes broke out between Al-Aknaf and the Palestinian groups on one hand and ISIS and Al-Nusra Front on the other hand on the axis of Jalal Kawash Street and the area around Salah AL-Deen mosque.
- On 16 April 2015, dozens of Yarmouk residents transferred nine bodies, all of Palestinians, to be buried in the garden of Abdel Kader al-Husseini Mosque during the early days of clashes that broke out after the storming of ISIS to the camp.
- On 19 April 2015, sporadic clashes broke out at Ain Ghazal Street axis.
- On 21 April 2015, a number of mortar shells were dropped at different districts inside the camp, which led to casualties among residents.
- On 21 April 2015, the PFLP-General Command announced the arrival of a military unit from Lebanon called “Special Magaweer” of its members to Damascus.
- On 21 April 2015, ISIS released eleven persons who were arrested by the regime after storming the Yarmouk camp on 1 April 2015. Among the released was Sheikh Abu Saleh Taha, the imam of Al-Safadi mosque in Al- Orouba neighborhood. He was arrested as he resembled an ISIS member.
- On 25 April 2015, three civilians were shot in Al-Orouba Street by snipers in Yalda town; the snipers were stationed at buildings overlooking Al-Orouba Street after violent clashes took place.
- On 26 April 2015, armed groups affiliated to the Syrian opposition in the town of Yalda in Damascus demanded residents of the Yarmouk camp to evacuate the camp within 48 hours.
- On 27 April 2015, the armed groups affiliated to the Syrian opposition and Aknaf Bait Al-Maqdis attacked the headquarters of Al- Nusra Front and ISIS in Palestine square area, south of the camp resulting in the death of two members of ISIS and Al-Nusra Front, including Abu Suhaib, security official in ISIS.

- On 29 April 2015, violent missile strikes targeted the surroundings of Loubia Street without any injuries. Palestinian groups announced that they had achieved progress in the vicinity of the Al-Habeeb Al-Mustafa mosque after violent clashes between them and ISIS alongside Al-Nusra Front.
- On 30 April 2015, random bombing targeted the camp.
- On 1 May 2015, the camp was targeted by a number of missiles and rockets that caused the death of the refugee, Ibrahim Mohammed, in addition to damage to vast numbers of homes and property.
- On 2 May 2015, warplanes hovered above the camp in conjunction with the ongoing violent clashes between Palestinian armed groups on one hand and ISIS and Al-Nusra Front on the other hand. Confrontations focused in Al- Habeeb Al-Mostafa mosque area, Al-Mahkama area and Ain Ghazal.
- On 6 May 2015, Ahrar al-Sham groups controlled over some of buildings that were under the control of ISIS groups near Al-Zein neighborhood.
- On 9 May 2015, shelling and a number of mortar shells targeted different areas, which led to the outbreak of fires in some buildings overlooking the Yarmouk Main Street resulting in material damages.
- On 10 May 2015, civilians were wounded by bombing the Yarmouk camp with a number of mortar shells that were dropped at different parts of it. This coincided with calls that were heard over loudspeakers made by Palestine Mosque calling people to go to Palestine Hospital to donate blood for treatment of the injuries.
- On 17 May 2015 different parts of the Yarmouk camp were bombed by a number of shells, and sporadic skirmishes in several combat lines between armed Palestinian groups on one side and ISIS and Al-Nusra Front on the other side.
- On 22 May 2015, random shelling with mortars and rockets targeted several lanes and streets in the Yarmouk camp which caused serious damages in residential buildings. One of the shells targeted Al-Shohada'a graveyard in which it caused distraction of some graves and fire outbreak.
- On 24 May 2015, bombing targeted different parts of the camp, which coincided with sporadic clashes in several areas of the camp, including Althalathein Street.
- On 26 May 2015, heavy shelling with explosive barrels targeted the vicinity of the Electricity Company at Yarmouk main Street and Palestine mosque near the subsistence center in the Yarmouk camp which led to at least one victim and a number of injuries among civilians too.
- On 2 June 2015, a number of rockets and missiles targeted the camp and caused material damages. Clashes also broke out between Palestinian armed groups and ISIS alongside Al-Nusra Front.
- On 3 June 2015, Syrian warplanes targeted the Yarmouk camp with more than four explosive barrels in several areas of the camp including Ain Ghazal lanes adjacent to Mashroa Al Waseem area, and resulted in only material damages.
- On 7 June 2015, violent clashes broke out between Palestinian armed groups and ISIS alongside Al-Nusra Front, where the clashes were concentrated in the area of Al-Habeeb Al-Mostafa Mosque, Almahkama, and Rijah Square. This coincided with a number of mortar shells that were dropped in the camp without any injuries.
- On 10 June 2015, ISIS detained the voluntary relief worker, Iyad Ayoub Al- Qdoom, a member of the Democratic Front after his return from the town of Yalda to the Yarmouk camp.
- On 11 June 2015, violent clashes broke out in the Yarmouk camp on the axis of Yarmouk Secondary School for girls and the municipality in which medium missiles and weapons were used, while the Syrian regime and the Palestinian groups shot Al-Yarmouk Main Street and launched several explosive shots.

- On 15 June 2015, artillery shelling targeted different areas and resulted in only material damages.
- On 15 June 2015, the local council of Bait Sahm town in Damascus issued a statement in which it denied the spread of rumors about giving the residents of the camp who migrated to the town two days to leave Bait Sahem after the control of ISIS within the camp. The statement emphasized that the reason for the misunderstanding is the abuse of some residents of one of the buildings of the Yarmouk camp. As a result, this prompted the owners of these buildings to demand the departure of the offended only by giving them two days to do so. However, the Senate and the local council agreed to address the abuses and find quick solutions to the problems.
- On 21 June 2015, dozens of the Yarmouk residents went out in a solidarity protest with the residents of Dara'a and Khan Al-Shieh who were subjected to frequent shelling with missiles and explosive barrels. In addition, the Yarmouk residents expressed their solidarity with the child's parents Moneer Hazeenah who died as a result of being shot by a bullet in Beirut during the funeral of one of the Lebanese Hezbollah members.
- On 22 June 2015, a video was posted on Facebook by one of the armed group brigade's leaders in the Yarmouk camp in which it was announced the withdrawal of ISIS from the area that it had controlled in the Yarmouk camp after the end of its military campaign on Aknaf Bait Al-Maqdis Brigades. The spokesman stressed that ISIS delivered all military sites inside the camp for the Palestinian armed battalions there. Moreover, ISIS no longer has any military/administrative headquarters or presence inside the camp. Yet, it stressed that battalions will defend the Yarmouk camp against any attack by the Syrian regime forces and the Palestinian factions loyal to it. The spokesman of armed brigades pointed out that they weren't an obstacle to the return of the Yarmouk camp residents to their property and homes, noting that a number of medical and relief institutions are still doing its job inside the camp.
- On 22 June 2015, the Syrian security released Jamal Hammad of the Palestinian Red Crescent and director of Palestine Hospital formerly after being arrested for more than 80 days.
- On 22 June 2015, rocket attacks targeted residential neighborhoods and resulted in only material damages. This coincided with clashes centered on the junction between the Yarmouk Secondary School for Girls and Palestine Street, which took place between the regular army and the Palestinian groups loyal to it on one hand and Al-Nusra Front and "ISIS" on the other hand.
- On 22 June 2015, Yarmouk activists organised a solidarity vigil with the Palestinian detainees and abductees in the Syrian prisons demanding the Syrian authorities to release all Syrian and Palestinian Syrian prisoners, and to determine their fate and the fate of the missing.
- On 28 June 2015, activists denied the veracity of the information contained in the report, which was published by the armed groups close to ISIS in the Yarmouk camp a few days prior. The report spoke about the withdrawal of ISIS from Yarmouk, and that the members of ISIS are located inside the camp side-by-side with members of Al-Nusra Front and some Palestinian groups without any change.

- **Khan Al Shieh Camp "Al Awda Camp"**

During the first half of 2015, Khan Al-Shieh camp for Palestinian refugees in Damascus suburb was targeted by violent bombing of explosive barrels, rockets and heavy artillery. The most violent shelling occurred at the beginning of June. Khan Al Shieh town is considered one of the towns, which witnessed the carnage with explosive barrels in the Damascus suburb.

The number of barrels dropped by helicopters of the Syrian regime reached 860 explosive barrels from which about 35 barrels hit Khan Al-Shieh camp. Warplanes performed more than eighty raids including 30 raids by (SU-24) modern warplanes with a large destruction power, which hit the camp too.

### ❖ Living Situation

Khan Al Shieh camp, the second largest Palestinian camps in Syria, suffers from a real humanitarian crises as a result of the escalation of military confrontations between the Free Syrian Army and the regular army in the surrounding areas, which left the camp to live under fire and a severe bloody conflict in Syria.

This affected negatively on the residents as a result of the continued closure of all roads between the camp and its neighboring regions except Zakya-Khan Al Shieh Road. Residents are forced to walk through this road in spite of risks resulting from the outbreak of clashes between the regular army and Al-Jaish Alhor groups from time to another.

Closing the only road to the camp by the regular army and stressing the security procedures affected negatively on the availability of necessary food supplies. Many types of food supplies ran out and the prices of other species increased.

On 1 January 2015, members of the regular army at Al-Masham checkpoint, thoroughly inspected all passengers, cars and buses going to the camp and confiscated their food supplies. According to the testimony of one of the passengers, members of that checkpoint inspected the bread ties and then allowed them to take eight loaves only, while confiscating the rest resulting in scarcity of bread in the camp.

### ❖ Arrests and Release

The Syrian army and security forces intended to arrest a number of residents of Khan Al Shieh camp either when exiting or returning to the camp, trapping the camp residents.

- On 1 January 2014, the Syrian security implemented a campaign of arrests by creating a sudden checkpoint on the road to Khan Al Shieh camp in Damascus suburb. Six residents of the camp were arrested; among them were: Ayman Mahmoud Mousa, 23 years old, an employee in the factories of Al-Koswa area, Ahmed Sami, 32 years old, who worked as a driver, Moaiad Mohammed Saeed, 37 years old, a state official, Fadi Yassin Taha, 28 years old, and Mohammed Suleiman Musa, 27 years old, working as a driver. In addition, the Syrian security released two residents the same day and were detained for hours.
- Samer Hassan Marzouk, 34 years old, a Khan Al Shieh resident, went missing two weeks ago, no further information has been reported on him since..
- On 3 January 2015, Syrian security forces arrested Mahmoud Ibrahim al-Hamid (arrested by members of Kawkab town checkpoint) and Khalil Saleh Shakoosh, (arrested from his house in Jadeedit Artooz).
- On 5 January 2015, Ahmad Majmeel, a resident of Khan Al-Shieh camp was arrested by members of the regular army at Kawkab town checkpoint.
- On 6 January 2015, Syrian security forces arrested the Palestinian refugee Mohamed Khair Asaad, a resident of Khan Al Shieh camp in Gdaidat Artooz area in Damascus.
- On 12 January 2015, Malik Samir al-Khalidi, a resident of Khan Al Shieh camp, was arrested by a member of the regular army at Kawkab town.

- On 8 January 2015, the regular army at Kawkab town checkpoint arrested Khalid Shamse and Mohammed Yahya Al-Hamid, two residents of the camp, while releasing Zaher Ajaj after being arrested for about six months.
- On 15 January 2015, the young man Muhammad Tariq Raja and Ibrahim Idris, two residents of the camp, were arrested at the first roadblock checkpoint in Al-Kaswa area.
- On 29 January 2015, members of Al-Jadeeda town checkpoint of the Syrian security arrested Mohammed Ibrahim, a resident of Khan Al Shieh town. In addition, members of Sehnaya checkpoint of the regular army also arrested Ali Suleiman on the same day, a resident of the camp also.
- On 30 January 2015, the Syrian security services arrested Mohammed Mahmoud Al-Qadia from Sehnaya checkpoint, a resident of Khan Al Shieh camp.
- On 1 February 2015, Hussein Abu Assab, a resident of Khan Al Shieh camp was arrested by members of the Syrian security forces at Kawkab town checkpoint.
- On 8 February 2015, members of the regular army at Kawkab checkpoint arrested 22 Palestinian refugee residents of Khan Al-Shieh camp. The Syrian army forces stationed at Kawkaba checkpoint forced the bus to stop and ordered its passengers to disembark, taking the bus to an unknown destination.
- On 10 February 2015, members of the regular army at Kawkab checkpoint arrested Abdullah Sanad (Abu Yazan) while members of "Al-Kobrey" checkpoint at Al-Kaswa area arrested bus drivers, Yousef Abu Hamam and Abdullah Issa. Two residents of the camp were also detained for several hours and then released after questioning.
- On 11 February 2015 a number of bus drivers from residents of Khan Al Shieh camp stopped working for fear of being arrested.
- On 3 March 2015, three residents of Khan Al-Shieh camp were arrested: Amr Mahmoud Al-Ramlee (a college student at the Faculty of Civil engineering fifth year), Mohammed Omar Hussein and Ahmed Hajji, released hours after being arrested.
- On 12 March 2015, Syrian security forces arrested a number of Palestinian youth from Khan Al-Shieh camp, including Ammar Abu Lafi and Ali Hussein who were arrested by members of Al-Jadeeda town checkpoint, while members of Kawkab town checkpoint arrested each of Hani al-Lafi, Bassam Asaad and Abdo Shaker.
- On 14 March 2015, the Popular Committees of the Syrian security services in the city of Idlib, northern Syria, arrested a group of residents of Khan Al-Shieh camp during their travel trip including the students: Yaman Haitham Taha, Mahmoud Riad Tahmeir, Bahaa Mowafaq Jabr, Ghassan Jabr, and Hadi Ibrahim Hamad, in addition to two women in the camp.
- On 16 March 2015, members of Kawkab checkpoint of the Syrian military forces and security arrested three residents of Khan Al-Sheen camp: Khaled Khamis Al-Ahmad, Khaled Saleh Nofal, and Reda Mahmoud Suleiman during their return to the camp from their work.
- On 18 March 2015, the Syrian security released the Palestinian refugee Suleiman Falah, a resident of Khan Al-Shieh camp, a day after being arrested on one of its checkpoints.
- On 19 March 2015, the Syrian security forces arrested both Fadel Adel and Muhammad Kasim Shteivi on the road of Khan Al-Shieh Camp in Damascus.
- On 20 March 2015, the Syrian security released the Palestinian refugee, Fadi Nazmi Aissat, a resident of Khan Al-Shieh camp, days after being arrested.
- On 29 March 2015, factions of the Syrian armed opposition after its control over Edlib city released a number of Palestinian refugees from the residents of Khan Al-Shieh camp from one of the regime's prisons in the city after being detained by the regime checkpoints in the city of Idlib while trying to access to Turkey.

- The Syrian security forces also released a number of Palestinian prisoners on the same day, including Yasser Abu Saada, Samer Marzouq and Mohamed Mahmoud Qadia, residents of Khan Al-Shieh camp. It is noteworthy that they were released after transferring them from one of the security branches to Adra prison in Damascus suburb.
- On 5 May some prisoners from Khan Al-Shieh were released including Palestinian refugee, Ali El- Taweel. Ali was arrested several days prior at the factory checkpoint while returning from Lebanon to Syria. Jameela Wahaibi was also arrested by the Sasa branch.
- On 6 May 2015, members of Kobrah checkpoint in Damascus arrested Munir Mohammed Yusuf, a resident of Khan Al-Shieh camp in Damascus.
- On 12 May 2015, the Syrian security services arrested Ahmed Mahmoud Al- Nader, a resident of Khan Al-Shieh camp, through one of the security forces and the Syrian army checkpoints at Artoz in Damascus, while on his way to work in the Ministry of Agriculture.
- On 12 May 2015, the Syrian security forces released Raja Uday, a resident of Khan Al-Shieh camp, after being arrested in the city of Qatna.
- On 22 May 2015, the Syrian army and security forces arrested Mansour Saleh, a resident of Khan Al-Shieh camp in Jadeedat Al-Fadel town while returning from work.
- On 3 June 2015, the Syrian security forces arrested the Palestinian refugee Mohamed Khair Musa, a resident of Khan Al-Shieh camp. It is noteworthy that many residents of Khan Al-Shieh camp had been arrested by the Syrian regime in Artoz checkpoint and the only entrance to Khan Al Shieh camp.
- On 19 June 2014, the Syrian security forces arrested the university student Mohammed Bashar Mohamad Asaad, a resident of Sebaih clan, in Jadeedat Artooz.
- On 19 June the Syrian security released Hamada Ziad Al-Mosleh, a resident of Khan Al-Shieh camp, five months after his initial arrest.
- On 29 June Samir Hasan Hasan, General Coordinator of Hemma Youth Group in Khan Al-Shieh camp, suffered from stroke several hours after he was released from custody by Syrian security forces. The stroke was brought on by trauma after being tortured in custody. He was taken to hospital and died a few hours later.
- On 27 June 2015, Al-Hasan was detained by the regular army at Kawkab checkpoint. He was then handed to the Political Security branch in Qatna.
- On 30 June members of the Syrian security forces at Al-Qateefa checkpoint in Damascus arrested brothers, Ahmed and Mustafa Asaad.

### ❖ **Camp Diary of Events**

- On 18 January 2015, Syrian warplanes launched six raids in different areas of Khan Al-Shieh farms distributed among Al-Zohoor Street, the area around the villas and palaces area.<sup>7</sup>
- On 7 February 2014, Khan Al- Shieh camp was targeted by mortar shelling with some materialistic damages. The surroundings were subjected to heavy shelling by explosive barrels.
- On 4 February 2015, warplanes targeted the vicinity of Al-Salam highway near Khan Al-Shieh camp for Palestinian refugees in Damascus by two explosive barrels.
- On 21 February 2015, Khan Al-Shieh camp was bombed where the West Side of it was targeted with at least two mortar shells, which led to the outbreak of a fire in residents' homes.



- On the morning of 18 May 2015, a number of Syrian regular army members committed a massacre against the people of Khan Al-Shieh camp by targeting a civilian car that was carrying a number of refugees during their passage through the remaining port that connects the camp and the center of the capital, Damascus. Shelling resulted in at least five casualties, including Falisteen and her brother, Mohammed Saeed Fayez Saleh, their mother Khalidiya Fayez Thaher and the driver accompanying them, Khalid Al Ramlee, However, a number of casualties is believed to have been caused.
- On 18 May 2015, Khan Al-Shieh camp was bombed with a number of mortar shells that landed on the homes of its inhabitants without any injuries, while shells in the eastern neighborhood inside the camp resulted in only material damages.
- On 1 June 2015, a number of mortar shells targeted residents' homes without causing any injuries. Two missiles targeted the main water reservoir of the camp and one of the shells landed on a house in the camp's residents in the western lane causing material damages only.
- On 4 June 2015, Khan Al-Shieh camp was shelled by one mortar shell, which targeted the eastern neighborhood in the camp causing material damage.
- On 4 June 2015, a number of shells targeted the outskirts of Khan Al-Shieh camp in Damascus without any casualties.
- On 11 June 2015, Khan Al-Shieh camp was bombed by a ,number of mortar shells which led to material damage of buildings and property in the eastern neighborhood of the camp, while the neighboring farms were bombed by three explosive barrels and caused panic among residents .
- On 13 June 2015, Khan Al-Shieh camp was targeted by explosive barrels; one of them targeted the eastern neighborhood of the camp and resulted in at least one victim, in addition to a large number of injuries and damage to buildings and property.
- On 15 June 2015, heavy shelling with rockets and explosive barrels targeted the camp, where helicopters threw three explosive barrels on the camp targeting Al-Salam Hospital, the area around Al Andalus shops and the old market. This led to casualties among civilians and left a state of tension and panic amongst residents, in particular those suffering from the continuing deteriorating security situation in the regions and farms adjacent to the camp. The targeting of the eastern region of Khan Al-Shieh camp and surrounding areas with mortar shells was recorded. This coincided with violent clashes between the Syrian army and groups of the Syrian armed opposition in Drousha area. In addition to the targeting of the regular army forces to the road linking Khan Al-Shieh, Zakia and Al-Abassah area.
- On 16 June 2015, Khan Al-Shieh camp was exposed to heavy shelling with explosive barrels, which targeted Dair Amro and Bair Al-Sabea schools, both UNRWA schools. This led to the death of the Syrian citizen Khairia Ahmad with many injuries among civilians. The AGPS correspondent said that there is a state of extreme panic and fear among residents particularly children and women.
- On 17 June 2015, Syrian warplanes dropped four explosive barrels, which targeted Al-Said Street and the area around Villas Street, which led to the one mother miscarriaging after being injured by shrapnel and causing a number of other civilian injuries. The Syrian army and security checkpoints in Artooz area prevented the transfer of passenger cars of Khan Al- Shieh from leaving the area and diverted them towards Al-Kiswa, while all other roads leading to Khan Al- Shieh camp were closed except Zakia road.
- On 19 June 2015, Khan Al-Shieh camp was exposed to heavy shelling with explosive barrels, while helicopters dropped a number of explosive barrels that targeted one of the main streets of the camp causing material damages only. One barrel was dropped

near Al-Huda mosque during Friday prayer. This forced the mosque's imam to cancel his kutba out of fear for civilians inside the mosque.

- On 19 June 2015, residents appealed for the PLO, the Palestinian embassy in Damascus, the Palestinian factions, UNRWA and human rights organisations to intervene immediately in order to stop the constant bombardment targeting their camp days ago. The activists complained of the negative role of media and human rights organisations interacting with the suffering of the camp.
- On 22 June 2015, the Syrian warplanes targeted Khan Al-Shieh farms and the area around the camp with four explosive barrels, which left considerable damage in the place. This coincided with warplanes hovering over the region causing panic and tension among the people of the camp fearing that bombing could reach them again. In addition, violent clashes broke out between the regular army and the Syrian opposition groups on Drousha and Al- Kabosa hill, which led to the closure of all roads connecting Khan Al-Shieh camp.
- On 23 June 2015, warplanes hovered above the camp and targeted farms and the surrounding areas with five explosive barrels, which caused vast damage at the crash site.

### ❖ Media Campaigns and Solidarity Statements with Khan Al Shieh Camp

Activists from the Palestinian camps launched a campaign on Facebook under the title of "Save Khan Al-Shieh camp" due to the continuing siege imposed on the camp and the consecutive targeting with explosive barrels, rockets, and mortar shells, which killed nearly 125 victims.

According to an activist, the campaign came after heavy shelling targeted Khan Al- Shieh camp with explosive barrels, as well as to shed light on the suffering of the camp's residents who are suffering from stressful economic and living conditions since the war began in Syria. Another activist stressed that the primary goal of the campaign is to protect civilians, save the camp and neutralize it from the conflict in Syria.

The elders and activists of Khan Al-Shieh camp demanded that their camp not be brought into the Syrian conflict in Syria, stressing that it comprises of unarmed civilians. They therefore appeal to all parties to spare the camp from the horrorsOf the war.

Moreover, they appealed to all international stakeholders including the UN, UNRWA, Palestinian factions and the PLO as the apparent legitimate representative of the Palestinian people, to interfere to lift the injustice and oppression from all residents of the Palestinian camps in Syria including Khan Al- Shieh camp.

Hamas condemned the bombing of Khan Al-Shieh camp with explosive barrels and called, through its political bureau member, Izzat al-Rishq, to stop immediately shelling the camp and to lift the siege. He condemned the targeting of the camp's population as unacceptable; it would also result in siege never ending, deepening the humanitarian crisis and was necessary in order to keep the camp neutral.

UNRWA also denounced the use of explosive barrels that targeted a school in Khan Al-Shieh refugee camp in Damascus. This came from a statement posted on its official website where it said: "UNRWA strongly condemns those agencies responsible for the bloody blast on June 16 in Khan Al- Shieh camp southwest Damascus."

The blast caused the death of a Palestinian refugee and the injury of an unspecified number of people. Meanwhile, a large explosion at an UNRWA school resulted in the destruction of a building adjacent to one of the UNRWA installations, which was hosting summer activities. This caused the injury of at least one child. The school was empty and had not been used for several months.

The statement pointed out that many strikes targeted the Khan Al-Shieh camp on 16 June 2015, commencing around 01:00 AM with an explosion believed to be caused by a mortar shell. Then at around 11:30 AM the camp became exposed to many strikes including at least one explosive barrel according to some reports.

The statement stated “the Censure of UNRWA regarding the deaths, injuries, and trauma amongst Palestinian civilians including children. It feels shocked due to the blast, which hit a UN facility. The statement also called on “all parties of the conflict to recognize the facilities of the United Nations and to respect its sanctity, neutrality, inviolability. UNRWA also calls on the Syrian government to ensure respect for their obligations under international law, and to ensure adherence to them.” UNRWA appealed to the armed groups in Syria to respect its international legal obligations and abide by them.

“The armed conflict in civilian areas must stop to ensure that the quality of life and security of Palestinian and Syrian civilians throughout Syria is not threatened.”

- **Dara Camp**

Daraa camp is still being bombarded almost daily with explosive barrels as a result of the intensification of fighting in the city of Daraa and the neighborhood. Almost 70 per cent of the camp’s buildings were destroyed.

- ❖ **Living Situation**

The remaining people of Deraa camp are suffering from living among hovering warplanes and mortar shellings. In addition to complete water cuts since 1 April 2014 in all parts of the camp.

This forced people to use artesian wells in order to provide water for their children despite pollution; but it is the only option left to them or they would have to walk substantial distances to fetch drinking water, exposing them to life threatening danger for snipers spread along the buildings overlooking the streets of the camp.

In addition, people are suffering from great difficulties in the extraction of water due to continuous power cuts. The scarcity of fuel needed to operate electric generators to provide power for the pulling engines.

Therefore, some residents used hand pumps to overcome the problem in light of power cuts over long periods. The electricity may be cut for 20 hours a day and sometimes for consecutive days. In addition, landline phone and wireless services had been completely stopped for more than a year.

The fuel prices have risen significantly due to the extortion of traders and checkpoints of the Syrian regular army, as they control the prices of materials imported to the region. The price of gas cylinders exceeded US\$50 if available, as well as the price of a ton of firewood for heating, which reached approximately to US\$190 with a scarcity of diesel fuel and gasoline.

This comes in light of absence of the work of public utilities, service, and relief work teams, which led to the proliferation of rodents (rats - mice) in most of the abandoned and destroyed houses. The work of UNRWA also stopped in the camp, in particular, medical centers.

- ❖ **Health Aspect**

There is no hospital or medical center In Daraa camp, in addition to the severe shortage of drugs and medical equipment and materials needed for first aid.

There is no availability of ambulances to transport the wounded to receive treatment outside the camp. Regular army snipers hamper the arrival of ambulances to the camp and if people succeeded in transferring a patient outside the camp, Jordan refuses the entry of any Palestinian refugees from Syria even the injured.

As a result of the deteriorating health situation, a number of activists inside the camp warned of the spread of disease among people especially after being forced to use contaminated drinking water due to drinking water cuts in the camp.

### ❖ Camp Diary of Events

- On 1 February 2015, two Palestinian young men, Marwan Atiya Khamis and Ahmed Abdul Hadi Alnawaamah, from the Ghawarna tribe and residents of Glenn compound for Palestinian refugees in the west of Daraa, sustained multiple injuries during shelling conducted by the regular Syrian army for workers' car.
- On 10 February 2015, warplanes, rocket launchers and heavy artillery targeted Daraa camp, which left homes and properties damaged.
- On 17 February 2015, shelling also targeted different parts of Daraa camp although no injuries were sustained.
- On 17 April 2015, Syrian warplanes targeted Daraa camp after the bombardment of several areas in Daraa by explosive barrels without causing injuries among civilians.
- On 8 April 2015 Syrian warplanes targeted Daraa camp with explosive barrels leading to the death of a resident and injury to three others after the destruction of an entire building by shelling.
- On the same day, the Syrian army troops banned the displaced residents of Daraa camp based in the areas under the control of the regime, to access areas controlled by the Syrian opposition; and in the case of the entry of any individuals in the area of Al Mahata (under the regime's control) to prevent them from returning. For the people living in the opposition areas, they are allowed to go and return back.
- On 15 May 2015, the Syrian military warplanes targeted Daraa camp with explosive barrels, which caused a number of casualties among civilians.
- On 4 June 4, 2015, warplanes bombed Daraa camp with two explosive barrels causing massive destruction in buildings and property.
- On 15 June 2015, Syrian warplanes dropped explosive barrels on Daraa camp causing considerable damage.
- On 19 June 2015 warplanes bombed Daraa camp with explosive barrels that led to a number civilians sustaining injuries and causing massive destruction to buildings and property.
- On 23 June 2015, warplanes launched two air strikes on Daraa camp.
- On 19 June 2015, both Daraa camp and Al-Muzeireeb compound in southern Syria, witnessed the outbreak of clashes described as the fiercest in months. The Syrian armed opposition Brigades, located in the southern region, launched a violent attack on the regular army forces. Those clashes coincided with warplanes targeting of Daraa camp, Muzeireeb compound, and the surrounding areas with tens of missiles and explosive barrels causing the death of some victims including: Ali Qwaider, Mahmoud Bitari, Ibrahim Bakr Khaled, child Elaf Yasin Abu Jas, Khaled Nassar, Aqaab Nassar, Mohammed Abdel Kader, Basil Habib, and Kamal Mohamed Abdel Kader, as well as a number of wounded from whom is Yamen Awad Yassin, as well as causing massive destruction to property.

- **Al-Neirab Camp**

The location of Al- Neirab camp, which is adjacent to Al-Neirab military site, made it a strategic location for parties to the conflict. In the first half of 2015, the camp was bombed and shot, which led to casualties among civilians and many deaths because of their involvement in the conflict in Syria.

Some of them were fighting with Al-Quds Brigade, loyal to the Syrian regime, while others were fighting alongside armed opposition forces. The AGPS documented the names of 114 victims of Neirab residents who had died since the beginning of war.

A state of instability and insecurity prevailed through Neirab camp due to the deteriorating security situation in the surrounding areas. The only road between Aleppo and Al-Neirab had been closed as a result of clashes, which broke out in Ramouseh and Amiriya district followed by shooting.

### ❖ Living Situation

The migration of Neirab residents continued towards Turkey and the rest of Europe as a result of the security and living conditions. It was noted that during the first half of 2015, a large number of residents migrated to Turkey in an attempt to access European asylum countries. In Turkey, many young people and families, waiting for ways that could take them to the Europe via legitimate and illegitimate ways.

The growing trend of migration out of the country can be attributed to the growing number of arrests by the Syrian security services and groups loyal to it including Lewaa Al-Quds Brigade for Palestinian youth in Aleppo, in order to force them to join the PLA army. This has been in addition to the pressure on youth inside and outside of the camp and the arrests they face.

Migration and exit from Syria was not an easy process. The past six months saw an increasingly tense situation emerge as Palestinians started to migrate toward Turkey. The Syrian security forces and groups loyal to it detained a number vehicles carrying passengers from Neirab while they were on their way to Turkey, and after detaining them they were taken to the airport and handed to Syrian security. They were then handed to the Syrian military security before being released.

The Syrian security forces are attempting to prevent any Palestinians from leaving the camp, while several youth who had left had been returned from checkpoints separating areas controlled by the regime from areas controlled by opposition.

People in the camp are living in a state of fear and anxiety due to the deteriorating security, living, and economic situation. During the first half of 2015, markets of Neirab witnessed a remarkable increase in the prices of food, vegetables, and fruits after clashes broke out on Azeeza, Sheikh Lutfi and Sheikh Saeed Fronts, which led to the closure of Khanasser, a vital road to the city of Aleppo.

Residents of the camp complained of a scarcity of fuel, in particular diesel, necessary to operate special electric generators the residents to produce power in order to mitigate the effects of frequent power cuts.

In addition, residents of Neirab camp suffer from the high price of gas cylinder, which reached about US\$50.

In terms of aid provided by UNRWA to the refugees in the city of Aleppo, Neirab residents complained of the mechanism used by UNRWA in the distribution of cash assistance provided to them.

According to one resident, UNRWA has been irresponsible in their mandate and camp residents have been forced to wait in front of the bank for long hours under the sun in order to receive financial assistance.

He said the reason was due to new decisions that had been made by UNRWA, which required the presence of all family members in order to process the individual data of Palestinian refugees residing in Syria. Another refugee complained of the ill treatment by banks towards them. According to him, the bank has been giving priority and preference to the auditors of its customers while the Palestinian refugees are required to wait or return another day.

In response to these complaints, UNRWA stopped distributing cash assistance and intended to establish offices within Al-Neirab camp. The mission of these offices is to make sure family members' data is recorded, the head of the household is then given the paperwork for authority to receive cash assistance.

### ❖ Camp Diary of Events

- On 7 January 2015, in Aleppo, Palestinian groups belonging to ISIS, captured Walid Taya, 30 years old while on his way from Al-Neirab to Turkey.
- On 12 January 2015, Thaer Dahudy, a resident of Al- Neirab camp, was lightly wounded due to anti-air missiles that were dropped on the camp.
- On 13 January 2015, anti-warplane machine gun fire targeted homes in the camp causing material damage.
- On 15 January 2015, Syrian security services arrested a member of the administrative board of the Palestine Student Union, Salim Mohammed Sadiq, due to a brawl in the Union headquarters of the Baath University over the Presidency of the Union. In addition, Syrian security services released Rami Mohammed Rifai, a day after being arrested, and Moaiad Riad Awad, two days after being arrested.
- On 2 February 2015, the Palestinian refugee Moataz Ismail Azzam, a resident of Al-Nairab camp, was arrested by one of the regular army checkpoints in Aleppo during his return, but he was released after a short period.
- On 12 February 2015, Syrian security forces arrested the refugee Mohammed Salem, in his fifties, from Al- Nairab camp in Aleppo mentioning that he was arrested many times before.
- On 17 February 2015, the Palestinian refugee, Mohammed Walid Mhaour was wounded after being hit by a shell in the Saraiyan area in Aleppo. He is a member of the Al-Quds Brigades.
- On 25 February 2015, Syrian security forces arrested two Palestinian refugees Mohammed Derbas, 27 years old and Shehadeh Miari, 47 years old, residents of the camp.
- On 3 March 2015, the Syrian security arrested four Palestinian refugees from Neirab, including: Ahmed Saeed Azzam, in his fifties, and his son Mohammed Ahmed Saeed Azzam, in his twenties, from their home in Al- Neirab camp and the elderly Abu Karem Al- Reefi, who is in his sixties. Meanwhile, Ahmed Nasseef was arrested at one of the regular army checkpoints in Aleppo city.
- On 3 March 2015, the Syrian security released the Palestinian refugee Mohammed Taya, a resident of Al-Neirab camp, after being detained for more than seven days.
- On 6 March 2015, a group of Al-Quds Brigade related to the regular army arrested the refugee Ahmed Zakaria Abu Rahma, 16 years old, and Anas Ahmad Azzam, 16 years old, both camp residents. They were taken to an unknown destination while Syrian security released the refugee, Abu Karem Reefi.
- On 16 March 2015, the Palestinian refugee, Ghassan Ismail Al-Bash in Al-Neirab camp was shot in his foot by a member of Al-Quds Brigade who set fire randomly.

- On 18 March 2015, a group of Al-Quds Brigade related to the regular army arrested the Palestinian refugee Ayman al-Dahoudi, a resident of Al-Neirab because of his refusal to vacate his shop, which is located in his own property. He died at the axis of Hndarat Front in the ranks of Al-Nusra Front.
- On 8 April 2015, the Syrian opposition published photographs of the bodies of Mahmoud Abu Ellail and Anas Kareem, members of the Palestine Liberation Army. The photos clearly showed signs of torture. The pictures were found among a group of pictures relating to torture victims found in the Security Criminal branch (a Syrian security branch) in the city of Idlib after it had been controlled.
- On 10 April 2015, groups loyal to the Syrian regime captured three houses belonging to the expatriate families from Al-Neirab camp and expelled its tenants.
- On 23 April 2015, Al-Quds Brigade in Al-Neirab camp announced the opening of a military training course for 30 days starting from the age of 15 years and above. They recommended that each one attend a “lightning teacher” course to review the group’s headquarters in A-Neirab camp.
- On 7 May 2015, Naif Fayyad, a camp resident was wounded with shell shrapnel while he was in the city and then he was taken to a hospital.
- On 12 May 2015, the Palestinian refugee, Khaled Mohammed Tafesh, a resident of Al-Neirab camp in Aleppo and a second year university student at the College of Dentistry was reported missing. He was last seen in Al- Said Ali Street after which contact was lost
- On 8 June 2015, a number of mortar shells were dropped at the outskirts of Al-Neirab and targeted the vicinity of the airport fence and Al-Rabieh Hall that caused only material damages.
- On 17 June 2015, the Syrian security forces and groups loyal to it detained a vehicle carrying passengers from the camp, while it was on its way to Turkey. After being arrested, they were handed over to the airport, controlled by Syrian security. The pro-Syrian regime groups detained a vehicle carrying passengers to Turkey and handed them over to the security of the Syrian military before being released the next day.
- On 27 June 2015, the Syrian security forces arrested Tariq Hassan Bassiouni, a member of the regime security committees, after he refused to go to fight with the Syrian army on one of the burning fronts in Aleppo. Bassiouni is in his late thirties, originally from Haifa city in Palestine.

### • **Khan Danoon Camp**

Due to the geographical location of Khan Danoon, the regular army retained control of its entrances and exits by establishing a checkpoint at the main gate. The people of the camp complained of the practices of the checkpoint members towards residents, though a large number of youth volunteered in different pro-Syrian regime groups.

A resident, who wished to remain anonymous, said to the AGPS that “members of the checkpoint harass women and girls, as well as harming them with verbal abuses while they passed through the checkpoint. In addition, he pointed out that “the regular army members take away many of nutrients that are entered by shop owners and residents to the camp.” All those practices happen in front of members of the Popular Committees of the Palestinian groups, which fight alongside the regime without defending the girls of the camp or its residents as they have claimed to do.

### ❖ Relief and Living Situation

Residents of Khan Danoon suffer from clear unresponsive relief in light of the difficult economic conditions in which they live, due to the absence of charitable associations or civilian work committees inside the camp as a result of security restrictions imposed by the regime forces and campaign of arrests, which have affected many of the relief activists.

This forced committees to close their doors For the safety of their staff. Furthermore, residents of the camp, which is the poorest among the Palestinian refugee camps in Syria, still rely on financial and relief assistance provided by UNRWA.

The residents complained of the lack of basic services where there was a state of resentment and discontent among people of Khan Danoon because of the severe neglect that affects the camp and its services.

There has been sewage floating around the streets of the camp despite the repeated calls by residents to UNRWA and to those responsible to repair the damage. No one has acted on these calls however. Observers and doctors warned of the spread of epidemics and diseases in the camp as a result of the continued flow of contaminated water and the slow response to treating it.

Khan Danoon camp is the poorest among the Palestinian refugee camps in Syria, where residents rely on financial and relief assistance provided by UNRWA. They also suffer from poor living conditions including food shortage and widespread unemployment and poverty as well as the continuing cuts to electricity, water, and communications for long periods of time.

### ❖ Security Situation

Khan Danoon residents suffer from instability due to rising hostilities in the regions and adjacent towns between the Syrian opposition forces and the regular army, as well as the participation of some residents in fighting with the regular army. This has made the camp vulnerable to shelling and has resulted in casualties and injured.

### ❖ Camp Diary of Events

- On 6 January 2015, the Syrian security forces released the Palestinian refugee Moatasem Riad Rmad, a resident of Khan Danoon camp, after he was arrested by a group of Syrian armed opposition for several months in Al- Kaswa region in Damascus.
- On 1 February 2015, the refugee Ahmed Abo Asia, a resident of Khan Danoon camp and a member of the popular Committees of the regular Syrian army, was arrested after being detained in the town of Al- Kaswa.

### • Jaramana Camp

In the first half of 2015, a state of relative stability experienced by residents of Jaramana camp, which lies eight kilometers from the Syrian capital, Damascus is located on the road to Damascus International Airport.

Residents of the camp are suffering a lack of basic services and infrastructure services. In particular the sewage network has caused problems to the residents especially demonstrated during the winter months. Accordingly, residents appealed to those responsible for camp services to solve the sanitation problems, which worsened and restricted the residents' mobility. The camp has been significantly overcrowded because of the displacement in the Palestinian camps in Damascus.



The camp also suffers from other crises, including the rise in house rents, and the increasing demand for housing, deteriorating their living conditions.

Unemployment rates have also risen and aid had reduced including from UNRWA, which residents say covers only partially their needs.

On health, the camp has endured hepatitis patients among its residents, which is a direct result of the contaminated water, which has threatened the spread of disease among its residents, especially children.

On 12 March 2015, a medical source from Jaramana camp confirmed that there were indeed some hepatitis patients among residents amid fear of the spread of the disease among the residents.

He said that “The high number of hepatitis patients caused by contamination of drinking water became a worrying issue” and perhaps what increases our fears is the quick spread of diseases especially among school students.”

He stressed the need for immediate help to the residents of Jaramana camp to treat those suffering but also to address the hygiene issues causing it. Patients also needed to such as the need for sterile water.

Jaramana camp also received circa 5,000 displaced families from other stricken camps including Yarmouk, Al-Husseinia, Sayeda Zeinab, Sabina, and Altheabih camps.

Jaramana camp did not engage directly the ongoing events in Syria as a result of its location, but its vicinity has seen targeted with shells as a result of its proximity to the road of Damascus International Airport and the Ghota, while the number of victims has reached 25 residents.

- **Hosseinieh Camp**

On 10 February 2015, Hosseinieh camp witnessed the most important event during the first half of 2015, the visit of the UNRWA delegation. The delegation viewed the UNRWA facilities and calculating the damages. They noted that access of UNRWA to the region had been facilitated by Syrian authorities including the General Authority for Palestinian Arab refugees

On 10 March 2015, dozens of Palestinian refugees from Hosseinieh camp gathered on the outskirts of Hosseinieh area hoping to return to their camp and their homes. This was after the delegation of UNRWA and the General Authority for Palestinian Arab Refugees came to inspect UNRWA facilities in the camp to see the progress of restoration and the maintenance process in those facilities.

After the completion of the exploratory round, the Commissioner-General of UNRWA delivered a speech on the status of women in the camp stressing the importance for the return of residents to their camp to alleviate their suffering.

He also stressed the imparking of UNRWA on reformation and rehabilitation of damaged facilities; while also expressing the readiness of the agency to carry out humanitarian responsibilities towards Palestinians in Syria.

Some residents who managed to enter the camp with the UNRWA delegation asked many questions about the date of return to their homes and how they would return. They also demanded to return as soon as possible while the Syrian regime forces evacuated the camp and closed it again in the face of the camp’s residents.

In the same context, Rateb Abbass, Deputy Governor of Damascus, announced in his speech at Hosseinieh camp the close return of residents to their homes within a few days and added that there will be guidelines and mechanisms to commence the return.

## ❖ Civilian and Media Mobilisation

A number of activists, dignitaries and residents of Hosseinieh camp demanded to be able to return to their camp especially after the regime had seized control and the General Command on the camp on 10 November 2013.

In the same context, the camp activists launched a number of media campaigns on through social media in order to force the concerned authorities and the Syrian authorities to move and re-populate the camp.

On 23 April 2015, a group of activists launched a media campaign titled “For Hussein... For Return, Together our Voice will be Stronger.”

Activists said that this campaign was launched because the Syrian army and officials delayed the return despite concerns on reconciliation return of residents to their homes in Hosseinieh and despite no extraneous reasons preventing being present.

On 30 April 2015, a number of activists from Hosseinieh sent a unified message under the title “message from the people of Hosseinieh camp or town... there have been many promises but we did not return yet”.

The message was sent to a number of pages and sites belonging to the Syrian government and a number of officials headed by the Syrian President in addition to the channels of the Syrian radio in which they denounced the frequent promises of Syrian officials about the imminent return of residents to Hussein.

The most recent, according to Al-Risala in the beginning of the current year, when the Minister of National Reconciliation talked about Hussein in an interview for the Syria TV news in which he said that people of Al-Hosseinieh will be in their homes during the first three months of 2015.

A number of Hosseinieh activists blamed the Syrian officials and those responsible for reconciliation for the not being able to return to their homes and property.

Activists stressed that despite tens of appeals and calls by Hosseinieh camp notables and residents, urging dialogue with the Syrian government to grant them return to their property and homes.

The residents were forced to leave their homes due to the deteriorating security situation in the camp and its neighboring areas. Appeals were broken and delays ensued.

A meeting was held on 14 May 2015 between the Minister of State for National Reconciliation with the National Reconciliation Commission in Al-Hosseinieh in Damascus in the presence of Ali Mustafa, Director-General of Public Authority for Palestinian Arab refugees, Aziz Hussain, Administrative Director of UNRWA and Lena Mari, Regional Director of UNRWA in Damascus.

In this meeting, they suggested a mechanism for the return to Hosseinieh camp. Activists stressed that the in a TV interview, the Minister of National Reconciliation in the Syrian government had promised the residents of Hosseinieh camp return within the first three months of 2015. Activists responded by saying that “We are now in the fifth month but no one returned to the camp.”

In October 2013, the Syrian regular army entered Hosseinieh camp with members of the Palestinian Fatah-Al-Intifada and Al-Nedal Front and extracted the remainder of residents from the camp. Until now, about 42,000 Palestinian refugees and 30,000 Syrian residents of Hosseinieh camp are still displaced outside the camp.

- **Sbeineh Camp**

There had been no new developments during the first half of 2015 in condition at Al-Sbeineh camp. The regular army and some Palestinian groups loyal to it continued to prevent residents from returning to their homes and property.

This was after having been forced to leave the camp for violent clashes breaking out between the regular army and groups of the armed opposition, which ended with the regular army controlling the whole camp.

According to the estimations of an eye witness, more than 80 per cent of the camp had been destroyed almost completely from the extended area of Maaz Bin Jabal mosque region and up to the camp's bakery known as Al-Akurds bakery, which is at the western entrance of the camp.

In contrast, residents had been displaced to neighboring towns and camps to find themselves in new strife as a result of this displacement. Their suffering did not stop at leaving their homes but included all sides of their lives which turned into a tragedy due to the economic conditions, the spread of unemployment, and poor financial resources.

Under the influence of war and poor economic conditions, many residents of the camp migrated outside Syria. UNRWA estimates indicated that the proportion of refugees from Sbeineh refugee camp in Lebanon had reached 8.21 per cent of the total refugees there, which is nearing fifty thousand refugees.

- **Hndarat Camp**

During the first half of 2015, bombing with explosive barrels targeted Handarat camp for Palestinian refugee in Aleppo coinciding with the continuation of violent clashes between groups of the Syrian armed opposition and the regular army alongside the Palestinian groups close to it. The regular army imposed its control over the camp, which represents a strategic area according to it.

- ❖ **Living Situation**

Residents of Hndarat camp, who migrated since 27 April 2013 to neighboring areas and Aleppo, are suffering from severe economic crisis due to the continued displacement from their homes, unemployment and high prices as well as the unavailability of financial resources and poverty, which prompted some residents to work in the Al-Quds Brigade, which supports the Syrian army, and to engage in the ongoing war. Other residents opted to immigrate to neighboring and European countries.

- ❖ **Camp Diary of Events**

- On 14 February 2015, the Syrian security arrested the Palestinian refugee Moatasem Amjad, a resident of Hndarat camp, during his return from Lebanon to Syria where he was taken from Al-Dabosia bordering point to one of the branches of the Security Forces.
- On 22 February 2015, groups of the Syrian armed opposition arrested the Palestinian refugee Bashar Masri, resident of Hndarat camp in the village of Ritan in Aleppo suburb, after his participation with "al-Quds Brigade," the armed group loyal to the Syrian regime, in the Syrian army battles against the Syrian armed opposition groups in Aleppo and its suburb. The detainee appeared in a video broadcasted by Syrian opposition groups with dozens of regime soldiers who were arrested after clashes between the two parties in the village of Ritan.
- On 26 February 2015, the refugee Abdullah Marwan Abu Hashem, resident of Hndarat camp and a member affiliated to the Syrian opposition was wounded after clashes that broke out in the northern suburb of Aleppo. He was then transferred to a hospital in the Turkish city of Gaziantep.

- On 4 March 2015, Syrian security services arrested Mukhtar of Hndarat camp, Abu Zahra Fadel, from university housing where he lives with a large number of displaced families of the camp.

- **Al-Aadeen Camp in Homs**

In the first half of 2015, a growing trend of young people leaving the camp grew in Homs. They moved on to Turkish territories for fear of arrest and raids carried out by Syrian security.

In the first three months of 2015, a large number of youth were arrested, which forced them to flee and move to other areas including Turkey or a view to move on to Europe.

The camp, which is controlled by the regular army, lives under unprecedented intensive security. As a result, residents of the camp started to feel that they were living in a big prison.

On 21 June 2015, the Syrian authorities constructed and installed an iron fence separating Al-Aadeen camp neighborhoods in Homs, university mass, and university housing from the west, and Al-Waleed suburb neighborhoods, Akrama neighborhood and Wadi Dahab neighborhood in the eastern region along Al-Sham street starting from Tadmor crossing up to Altimthal crossing on Hadara Street without any corridors of service between the two sides.

The iron fence affected the communication between the camp residents and their relatives in neighboring regions. As a result, residents were forced to go to the south across Tadmor crossing to return to Al-Sham Street, which doubled the costs of transportation especially for students and employers trying to reach appointments with the UNRWA clinics and Bisan hospital.

It also impacted shopkeepers in eastern neighborhoods who lost all their customers from the west.

The fence was built for security reasons to ensure protection of the eastern districts loyal to the regime.

Syrian security at the front of the camp, created detachment and census surveys in order to collect detailed information about residents of Al-Aadeen camp, where there was complete absence of any member of the Palestinian factions, the Department Foundation of refugees or UNRWA.

The census process included the entire population either residents of the camp, displaced, or renters in the camp of the Syrians and the Palestinians. Security members demanded homeowners to write leases for their displaced relatives or those hosting them in their homes.

### ❖ Living Situation

Suffering prevails in Al-Aadeen camp in Homs while the Syrian war continues. In the first half of 2015, the AGPS correspondent transferred images from the bitter reality of the camp and the stifling living conditions suffered by the residents.

Sales of goods declined in the camp as they rely on traders of the adjacent neighborhoods, in light of security harassment on entering the camp.

As a result, there was a significant rise in the prices of food, clothing and medicine. Prices doubled by comparison to prices outside the camp due to the tightening of security and bribery occurring at the checkpoints and with other members of the Syrian army.

Residents of the camp complained of the high prices of heating materials: the price of a liter of diesel ranged between 220 and 250 Syrian Pounds, and the price of gas cylinder has reached 3500 and 5000 Syrian Pounds. Only empty gas cylinders are allowed to exit the camp, allowed entry back into the camp once it is filled. Gas is the responsibility of the owner of the cylinder, despite availability; therefore, due to the scarcity of fuel and power cuts, many camp residents are relying on firewood, the price of which is also high.

UNRWA distributed the fourth installment of its aid to people of the camp while the names of arrested, detainees and travelers were separated from their parents and had been prevented from receiving aid, which did not include financial grants.

On 7 May 2015, the committee that follows up affairs of the Homs camp introduced a memorandum to the Director of UNRWA, Michael Kengsley, that included the needs of Palestinian refugees in Al-Aadeen camp in Homs. The memorandum focused on the basic daily joints of live of Palestinian refugees and included relief, educational, health, hygiene, and functional sectors.

### ❖ **Camp Diary of Events**

- On 2 January 2015, Syrian security forces arrested Rami Mohammed Rifai and Moaiad Riad Awad, taking them to an unknown destination.
- On 18 January 2015, Syrian security arrested the refugee, Firas Khaled Al-Shaaby while he was reviewing the political security branch. It is worth mentioning that he is in his thirties and originally from Ain Al- Zaytoon village in Palestine.
- On 23 January 2015, Security forces arrested the retired professor, Saleh Abbas, Mukhtar, in the Al- Aadeen camp neighborhood in Homs. He is in his seventies and originally from Saffuriyya village in Palestine.
- On 26 January 2015, the Syrian security services arrested Saleem Sadiq from Al-Adaden camp in Homs and a member of the so-called “Baath Brigades” in the Baath University in Homs.
- On 2 February 2015, the Syrian security released the Palestinian refugee Ahmed Osman, a resident of Al-Aadeen camp in Homs, after being detained for more than a year and three months.
- On 6 February 2015, Syrian security released the Palestinian refugee, Saleh Abbas, after being detained for more than ten days.
- On 8 February 2015, contact was lost with the Palestinian elderly, Khair Al-Deen Muhammad Shaaby. It is noteworthy that Al-Shaaby used to exist near Alshabakat crossing point next to Bilal Mosque from the southern-eastern side of the camp.
- On 20 February 2015, Mahmoud Khaled Mahmoud Shatarah, a resident of Al-Aadeen camp was arrested. It is noteworthy that Shatarah was arrested twice before.
- On 20 February 2015, Syrian security released the college student Mohammed Ahmed Qssad, a resident of Al-Aadeen camp. He was arrested on 18 February and detained for more than four months
- On 23 February 2015, Syrian security raided the home of the Palestinian refugee, Rami Khalil Subhia, in order to arrest him but he escaped.
- On 24 February 2015, a large-scale security campaign was carried out by dozens of Syrian security forces. It started with crossfire between Syrian security forces and a number of armed groups to the west of the Nissan Hospital. This was accompanied mortar explosions targeting the camp and its surroundings.
- Clashes commenced after Syrian security raided the home of wanted Wesam El-Sayed, also known as Abu Mohammed. He is one of those whose status was regularized by Syrian security services in coordination with Palestinian factions with reference to “the presence of Syrian security crowds in the western vicinity of the camp. This coincided with a number of snipers and security members climbing the roofs of rooms in the University City adjacent to the camp. This campaign provoked a state of panic among residents who rushed to bring their children from schools, to stay in their homes, and to close their shops for fear of being shot or arrested.
- On 25 February 2015, Rami Khalil Sabha (Abu Khalil), in his forties and originally from Tarsheeha village in Palestine, and Wesam Al-Said, in his fifties and originally from Safed

city in Palestine, Ahmed Al-Shaaby (Abu Al-Gour), and a young man from Al Alamayri family, displaced from Damascus to the camp, they surrendered themselves to the Syrian security. This was after the Syrian security arrested their families, including women, in order to put pressure on them to surrender.

- On 26 February 2015, the Syrian News Agency of the regime published pictures of the Palestinian refugees, Wesam Al-Said, Rami Subhia, Ahmed Shaaby and Abdul Razzaq Amaara, who were executed in spite of handing themselves over to Syrian security authorities.
- On 10 March 2015, Palestinian refugees, Moaidr Riad Awad, in his thirties and originally from Alshajara village in Palestine, and Mohammed Tariq Imam, in his thirties and originally from the city of Acre in Palestine, were arrested.
- On 13 March 2015, Syrian security forces arrested three residents of Al-Aadeen camp; they are: Ghassan Ahmed Al-Ghadban, in his early thirties, originally from the city of Safed in Palestine, Mustafa Al-Roubah, in his early twenties, originally from Safed in Palestine and Khaled Mohammed Khalil Al- Taubah, in his thirties and originally from Saffuriyya village in Palestine.
- On 14 March 2015, the Syrian security forces arrested Mahmoud Moussa Arabi in the pretext of shooting civilians last year near Bisan Hospital. He is in his thirties and originally from the city of Acre in Palestine.
- On 17 March 2015, Syrian security arrested Firas Al-Haj Yahia, in his early fifties, originally from the city of Safed in Palestine.
- On 20 March 2015, the Palestinian refugee, Ahmed Al-Tawba was arrested, a resident of Al-Aadeen camp in Homs, in his late thirties, originally from the village of Saffuriyya in Palestine.
- On 23 March 2015, the AGPS correspondent in Al-Aadeen camp in Homs reported the arrest of five residents by members of Zaidal checkpoint on the road of Homs- Al-Silmia Hama during their travel to Turkey.
- On 23 March 2015, Syrian security released Fouad Hussein, a resident of Al- Aadeen camp in Homs, after being detained for more than 14 days.
- On 2 April 2015, the law student, Mohammed Musab Al-Jamal, was arrested.
- On 7 April 2015, Syrian security released three residents of Aadeen camp in Homs; they are Mohammad Omar Al-Shalabi, the student Moaz Marwan Zahrawi in the same day of being arrest, while Mohamed Ahmed Khalafah was released on the second day of being arrested.
- On 11 April 2015, Syrian security forces arrested three Palestinian refugees from Al-Aadeen camp in Homs; they are: Mohammed Mousa Mohammed Shatarrah, at the beginning of his thirties and originally from village of Tarshiha in Palestine, Khaldoun Moussa Mohammed Ahatarrah, in his forties and originally from the city of Safed in Palestine.
- On 10 April 2015, a member of the regular army checkpoints arrested Iyad Awad Naim, at the beginning of his forties and originally from Alshajara village in Palestine.
- On 28 March 2015, the Syrian security forces arrested refugee Ghassan Abdul Aliyu, in his late thirties.
- Syrian security forces released four Palestinian refugees; they are: Mohammed Mousa Mohammed Shatarrah, Khaldoun Mohammed Musa Shatarrah, residents of Al-Aadeen camp in Homs, in their late thirties and originally from the village of Tarshiha in Palestine.
- On 5 May 2015, Syrian security forces also raided a home in Al Quds street of Al-Aadeen camp in Homs in which Amjad Mohammed Hadba, in his thirties, was arrested for the second time in the past two years.
- On 13 April 13, 2015, the young man Aladdin Ahmed Faris, in his thirties and a resident of Al-Aadeen camp in Homs, was arrested during a raid of Syrian security offices in Sahammas neighborhood adjacent to the camp.

- On 13 May 2015, Syrian security forces arrested Palestinian refugee, Ziad Mohammed Ayoub, in his late fifties, originally from Al Jush village in Palestine.
- Syrian security forces also arrested Palestinian refugee Mahmoud Issa Abbas, in his early fifties, originally from the village of Tirat Haifa in Palestine.
- On 18 May 2015, Suleiman Al-Shantee, in his late thirties and originally from the city of Safed in Palestine, having been arrested for the second time. He spent two years in Syrian prisons because he went to the Baba Amr neighborhood in Homs to check on his home.
- On 20 May 2015, the refugee Abdo Ghannam was arrested, a resident of Al-Aadeen camp in Homs, in his fifties and originally from the village of Tirat Haifa in Palestine.
- On 21 May 2015, the Syrian security forces arrested Mahmoud Louay Hussein, at the end of his thirties and originally from Zeeb village in Palestine, during his return from the city of Tartous.
- On 21 May 2015, Syrian security forces arrested the refugee Amer Taleb Darwish, a resident of Al-Aadeen camp in Homs, from his workplace near Bisan Hospital. The refugee Mohammed Ismail Omar, also known as Abu Omar, a resident of Al-Aadeen camp in Homs, in his late forties, originally from Alshajara village in Palestine, was also arrested.
- On 27 May 2015, Syrian security services released Abdou Ghannam, one of Al-Aadeen camp in Homs, in the middle of his fifties and originally from the village of Tirat Haifa in Palestine, two days after being arrested.
- On 28 May 2015, Syrian security forces arrested the refugee Ala Salaymeh, also known as Abu Ajaj, a resident of Al-Aadeen camp in Homs and a member of the security committees of the regime.
- On 3 June 2015, Syrian security released four Palestinian refugees including three residents of Al-Aadeen camp in Homs including Abdul Ghassan Aliyu, in his thirties and originally from the city of Acre in Palestine, in detention for nearly a month and a half; Tariq Akram Hashem Salaymeh, in his forties and a resident of Al-Shajarah village in Palestine, serving in detention for more than two years and Yusuf Mohamed Bassiouni, in his forties and a resident of the city of Haifa in Palestine having been in detention for about thirty days.
- On 6 June 2015, Syrian security forces arrested Salem Abu Imad Hassan, leader of the Democratic Front and a member of leadership of the central region, at Al-Qateefah checkpoint while on his way from Homs to Damascus in order to resume reunion procedures with his family in Germany.
- On 7 June 2015, two missiles targeted Jaffa Street and Bisan Hospital Street, resulting in material damages.
- On 13 June 2015, Syrian security released three residents of Al-Aadeen camp in the city of Homs including Marwan Ali Gareeb, after being detained for more than a year in the central prison in Homs, and Amer Taleb Darwish, in his forties and originally from Al-Shajarah village in Palestine, Mustafa Al- Rabwa, in his thirties and originally from the city of Safed in Palestine, who was detained for more than three months.
- On 14 June 2015, one of the air security checkpoints after the city of Hamm in the north and before Mork area arrested Palestinian refugee, Maia Ahmed Salaymeh, a resident of Al-Aadeen camp in Homs.
- On 16 June 2015, Syrian security forces arrested Palestinian refugee, Khaled Zeid Abu Jamal on the Syrian-Lebanese border without knowing the reason beyond his arrest. It is referred that he is an official from the Homs branch of the PRCS and one of the most important volunteers in Al-Aadeen camp in Homs.
- On 18 June 2015, Hamid Attallah Khatab was arrested in the Immigration and Passports Department in Homs during his attempt to obtain a passport, knowing that work in Homs Petroleum Company for more than twenty-five years.

- On 27 June 2015, Syrian security forces raided the house of the refugee Mohammed Ismail Omar, in his twenties and originally from Al-Shajarah village in Palestine. They arrested him after he surrendered when security forces held his brother hostage in demand for his return from exile. He is in his twenties and originally from Alshajara village in Palestine.
- On 30 June 2015, Syrian security forces arrested Maher Darwish, a member of pro-Syrian security groups, in his thirties and originally from the city of Safed in Palestine. He had refused to join the Syrian army and security forces to fight the armed opposition groups

- **Al Aadeen Camp (Hama)**

In the first half of 2015, Al-Aadeen camp residents in Hama, having received a large number of displaced families from various camps and the cities of Damascus, Aleppo, Idlib, Hama suburb, Deir ez-Zor, Raqqa, Deraa, and Lathikia. While they remain in relative calm they are surrounded by a ring of security imposed by the regular army at the entrances and exits of the camp, and are enduring raids and arrest campaigns being carried out by the regular army.

On 17 June 2015, at an air security checkpoint located after the city of Hama in the north and before Mork district, arrested three Palestinian refugees from Al-Aadeen camp in Hama. They include Nabil Abdul Salam Salaymeh, Shadi Haitham Kassem, and Talal Mohammed Abdullah originally from Al-Shajara village. However, they were released on 21 June 2015.

Economically, residents are complaining of widespread unemployment among, which they have felt from the tense security situation, which has cast its shadow on the residents of the camp. They lost their jobs mostly and became almost completely dependent almost on relief aid whenever it was distributed.

- **Al- Ramil Camp in Lathikia**

Despite the relative calm felt by Al-Ramil camp, in the city of Lathikia, which is controlled completely by the regime, the camp was exposed on 5 February 2015, to bombing and the fall of three shells on its sides without leaving any physical damages.

The residents of the camp complain of the continued raids and arrests campaigns carried out by the Syrian security services from time and another to the homes of the camp.

On 16 February 2015, pro-Syrian regime Palestinian groups raided their homes and took control of some of their headquarters.

On 14 June 2015, members of Al-Qateefa checkpoint of the regular army arrested Laila Abu Amr (Um Mahmoud), a resident of Lathikia camp, while traveling to Damascus to visit her son who was detained in Sednaya prison. Meanwhile, Walid Assaf, a resident of the camp, was released after being detained for more than three weeks, while on June 15, the elderly Asaad Mohammed Haj Mahmoud, 55 years old, was arrested, a resident of the city of Lathikia.

In addition, residents are suffering from the prosecution of Syrian security services for the PLA military service. As a result, many of them had to flee the country. In the meantime, the AGPS documented the arrest of 72 refugees in the city of Lathikia including Al-Raml camp and 18 victims that died during the war.

Living conditions are also suffering. On 9 January 2015, residents of Al-Ramil camp had lived a stifling blockade by the snowstorm that hit Syria, which led to the isolation of the city of Lathikia, including Al-Ramil camp, from the rest of the Syrian governorates due to the snow height and road closures that affected their lives.

This issue led to a bread crisis after bakeries stopped working due to the attempt to prevent the entry of flour to the camp. The storm also led to complete darkness after electricity poles fell and network outages were incurred for many surrounding areas.



On 22 June 2015, the Syrian regime forces sent a number of detainees of Al-Ramil camp in Lathikia to the battlefronts to face the Syrian armed opposition groups in several areas. The Syrian security arrested a group of Al-Ramil camp residents before nearly three months to join them as a reserve soldiers for his army including: Ahmed Abdullah Garageesh, who died in the city of Hama in battles during clashes in which he was forced to participate in the fighting alongside the Syrian regime forces.

On 23 June 2015 a member of the Syrian regular army checkpoint near Al-Ramil camp in Lathikia tore up a picture of the late President Yasser Arafat that was put up by a resident on his car, as he insulted him and all Palestinians.

Leaders of the Fatah movement in Al-Ramil camp in Lathikia heard about this accident, which prompted them to contact the security branches and leadership of Albaath Party in Lathikia to express rejection of these actions.

- **Sayeda Zeinab Camp**

Al-Sayeda Zeinab camp in Damascus, which is controlled by the Syrian army and the loyal Popular Committees, is considered one of the Palestinian camps that are relatively peaceful. In contrast, its residents are suffering from a crisis of living conditions as security tightened at the checkpoints.

One of the residents described the audit and favoritism at the checkpoints by saying that: “Bread is possible to be available to only to some families according to favoritism and knowledge.”

As well as, residents complain about the scarcity of fuel, as they are resorting to firewood, not to mention the high prices of material in general and fuel in specific.

The crises increased the onerous costs of Palestinian family with the weakness of potential and financial resources and the spread of unemployment which prompted people to travel abroad or to work within the Popular Committees of the Syrian army.

It is worth mentioning that, at the beginning of 2013, armed opposition groups entered the camp after violent clashes and shelling that lasted for seven months. The Syrian army entered the camp and then the Palestinian Popular committees took over the task of protecting the camp.

Those battles affected negatively on the camp and its residents and the devastation is still ongoing. Casualties reached approximately 100 victims, according to some reports and 200 wounded, which included cases of amputation and other permanent impairments. The AGPS has the names of 42 of those victims.

- **Aldamdan Camp**

Tension prevailed in areas adjacent to Aldamdan camp, located approximately 50 km south-east to the city of Damascus and nine kilometers away from the city of Al Dameir, which negatively reflected its residents who complained from the lack of stability, security and safety due to continued clashes and mutual shelling between the regular army and groups of the Syrian opposition.

In addition, people in the camp are suffering from severe living conditions including widespread unemployment, lack of food, medicine, fuel and high prices.

## 2. Palestinian Compounds in Syria

### • Muzareeb Compound

During the first half of 2015, Muzareeb town in Daraa province, inhabited by circa 8,500 Palestinian refugees, experienced a state of insecurity and instability due to bombing and explosive barrels targeting the area.

On 19 January 2015, artillery shelling targeted the town and resulted in a number of injured.

On 28 January 2015, a car bomb exploded, which led to 11 victims and dozens wounded.

On 9 March 2015, Syrian warplanes dropped two explosive barrels containing toxic gases at Muzeireeb town, causing suffocation.

On 20 April 2015, Syrian warplanes bombed the town of Muzeireeb with explosive barrels, which led to a number of casualties among civilians, while warplanes bombed the town again on 26 April.

On 5 June 2015, Syrian warplanes targeted Muzeireeb compound with four explosive barrels, which led to an undetermined number of casualties and wounded as well as large-scale destruction to buildings and property.

Relief efforts included that on 23 January 2015, where the Palestine Charity Committee in Mazirab compound distributed 100 food baskets to residents, and carried out visits to the elderly to garner an indication of their needs and to provide them with assistance.

On 18 May 2015, the Committee distributed food aid to 75 Palestinian families displaced from Damascus and its suburb to the town of Mazirab, as part of its attempt to alleviate the economic and humanitarian suffering.

Severe living conditions have impinged on many in the camp due to various factors including water cuts and water tank price increases to \$12.

The need for fuel increased during the winter months after temperatures reached -9 degrees Celsius and the market saw a big increase in fuel price: the price of a liter of gasoline reached around \$ 4.5 and liters of diesel \$2.5.

The increased price of fuel impacted on the economic burdens of residents, forcing them to live in homes without heating, under the scarcity of gas and high prices if available, forcing residents to resort to primitive methods such as burning wood for heating and cooking.

Furthermore, Palestinian refugees in Muzeireeb compound and more than 139 refugee families complained of the lack of bread. According to the testimony of a resident, finding a loaf of bread became an obsession haunting everyone: "family provider became obsessed with providing a loaf of bread for his family."

On 23 June 2015, Syrian warplanes dropped explosive barrels on the town of Muzeireeb, which led to a number of victims and injured, as well as mass destruction to buildings and property.

The AGPS documented five victims of Palestinian refugees that died in the town of Muzeireeb after fierce battles raged in the south of Syria between the Syrian armed opposition and the regular army battalions, in a battle named by the opposition "South Storm."

Victims included Ali Qwaider known as Abu Hussein and Mahmoud Bitara, who died after heavy shelling targeted Muzeireeb on 25 June 2015. Khaled Nassar, Iqab Nassar, Muhammad Falaha, and Basil Habib also died as a result of clashes with the Syrian regular army in Manshiya front.

Ibrahim Khaled Bakr and baby girl, Elaf Yassin Abu Jaas, were killed by the regular army shelling on Alsaahri neighborhood. Meanwhile, Kamal Mohamed Abdel Kader also died following the bombing of Naemeh town with explosive barrels.

On 27 June 2015, Syrian warplanes targeted Muzeireeb town with a missile that hit a home, which led to the injury of about 15 children and a woman from the Palestinian family of Alkerkti, displaced from Deraa to Muzeireeb.

The raid instilled fear and panic amongst residents who thought that the shelling may continue. On the other hand, Palestine Charity Committee and its cadres in the town of Muzeireeb continued the rescue operations and transported the wounded to Muzeireeb Martyrs hospital. On 29 June 2015, the 36-year-old refugee, Awad Ahmed Khalil, from Muzeireeb town was arrested while on his way to work. It is noteworthy that he is originally from Al Naema town in Safed.

- **Qudseia**

Continuous suffering endured by nearly 6,000 Palestinian families, who fled from the Yarmouk refugee camp and other camps to Qudseia district, Damascus suburb due to the increased tension in the region between the Syrian opposition forces and the regular army.

The regular army arrest campaigns against residents and the closure of all roads between the town of Qudsaya and the city center, forced many families to flee from Qudseia district to areas within the city of Damascus and its suburb.

Regarding living conditions, on 14 February 2015, hundreds of Palestinian families displaced from the Yarmouk camp to the Qudseia district, demanded Palestinian and Syrian authorities to find a solution to their plight, by lifting the Yarmouk siege, thereby allowing the entry of food and medicine, as well as the ability of residents to be able to return to their homes and properties; thereby addressing their harsh living conditions, the high prices and rents, of the camp widespread unemployment and the loss of their homes and properties in the Palestinian camps.

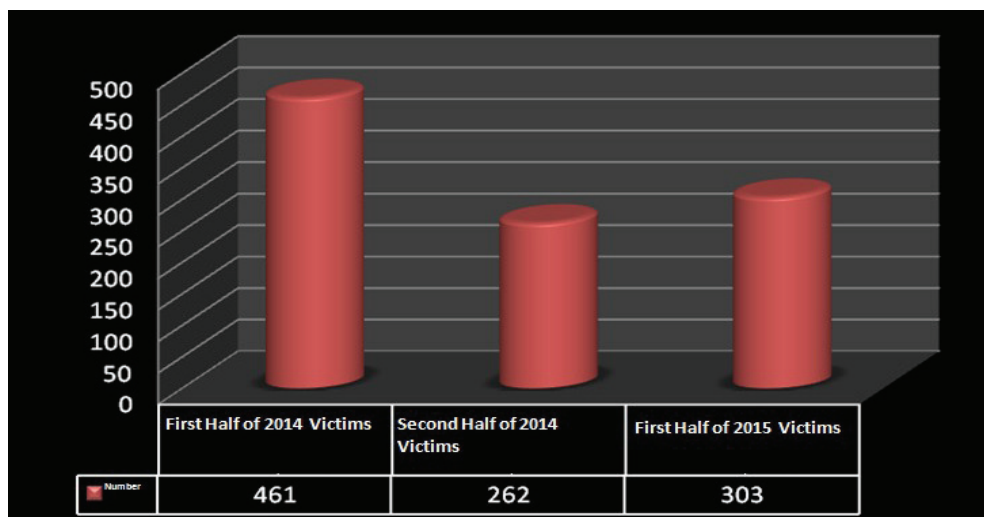
- **3. Palestinian Syrian Refugee Victims**

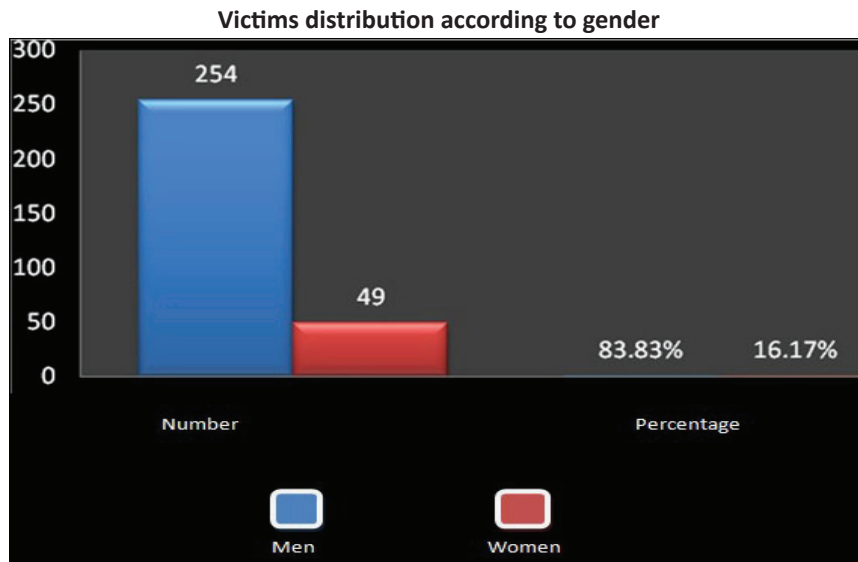
Palestinian bloodshed continued in Syria inside the Palestinian camps and compounds and abroad, while the total toll of Palestinian victims reached 2,910 since the outbreak of violence in March 2011 up until the end of June 2015.

Comparing the number of documented victims at the AGPS during the first half of 2014 with the first half of 2015, observers noticed a decrease in victims, where 461 Palestinian refugees died in the first half of 2014, while during the same period in 2015, 303 Palestinian refugees died; at a rate of 254 men and 49 women.

The number increased for the second half of 2014 by 41 victims, where the number of victims reached 262 victims.

**Victims who died during the first half of 2015, and during the first and second half of 2014**

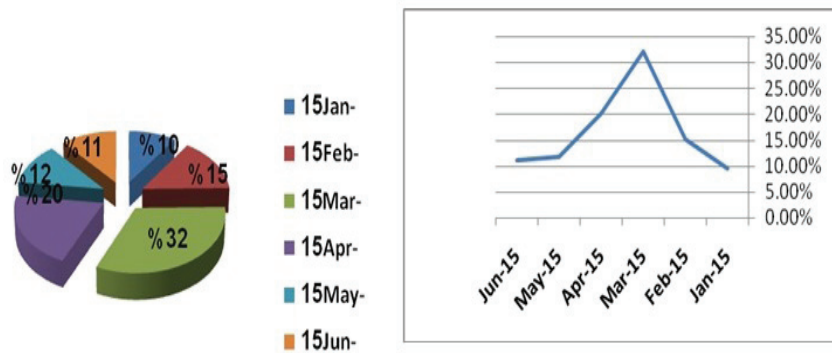




- Temporal Distribution of Victims**

The number of victims among Palestinian refugees in Syria varied month by month; March was the bloodiest month, where 97 victims died in Syrian territories, followed by April where 61 victims died, including 42 victims in the Yarmouk refugee camp after ISIS entered the camp and took control of Yarmouk during the first half of April 2015, and the subsequent bombing with explosive barrels, rockets, mortars and clashes commenced.

**Victims distribution during the first half of 2015**



- Victim distribution according to the reason of death**

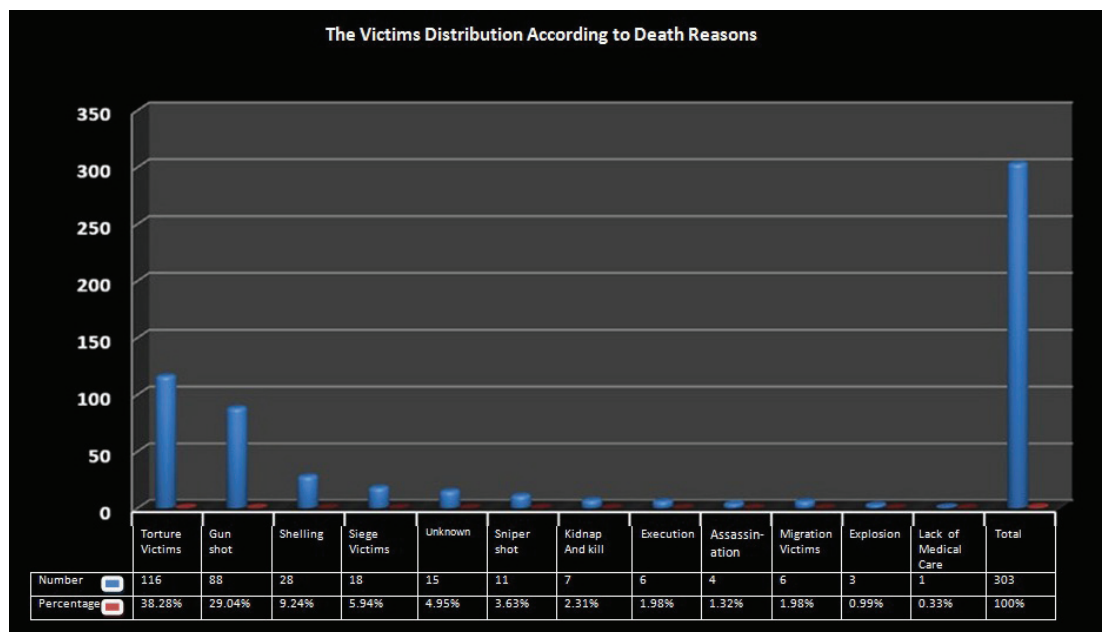
The causes of Palestinian refugee deaths in Syria varied during the first half of 2015. Torture to death was the largest percentage, as the number of torture victims reached 116; an increase by 38.28 per cent.

Deaths due to sniper fire and gunshots formed 32.67 per cent; causing an average of 99 casualties, followed by shelling and bombing, which claimed the lives of 31 refugees; making up 10.23 per cent of the total number of casualties.

The ongoing siege and lack of medical care in the Yarmouk refugee camp resulted in the death of 19 refugees; making up 6.27 per cent of the casualties. Kidnapping and killing claimed the lives of 13 refugees, 4.29 per cent of the total.

Along the migration route to Europe, 6 (1.98 per cent) Palestinian refugees died in different parts of the world. Four Palestinians were assassinated in the Yarmouk camp; a percentage of 1.32 per cent were mostly documented against unknown groups. 15 refugees died in unknown circumstances.

Victim distribution according to the reason of death



- Victim distribution in the main camps and governorates**

The AGPS documented 113 Palestinian victims that died inside the main Palestinian camps in Syria during the first six months of 2015. The same number was recorded but without knowing the accurate address. 38 victims died in Swidaa and Deraa provinces; a percentage of 12 per cent.

Victim distribution in the main camps and governorates during the first half of 2015

Place of Death	No.	Percentage
Unknown	113	37.29 %
Damascus-Its Suburbs	91	32.01 %
Damascus Suburb-its Camps	36	11.88 %
Deraa	26	8.58 %
Swidaa	12	3.96 %
Aleppo	9	2.97 %
Homs	4	1.32 %
Idlib	2	0.66 %
Hama	2	0.66 %
Lathakeia	1	0.33 %
Outside Syria	7	0.33 %
<b>Total</b>	<b>303</b>	<b>100.00 %</b>

In camps, the Yarmouk camp has the highest percentage of victims at 76.11 per cent, involving 87 casualties. This is followed by Khan Al Shieh and Deraa camps, including the town of Muzeireeb, which witnessed unprecedented tension and intensive shelling with explosive barrels, where nine victims died from Khan Al Shieh camp, and six victims from Muzeireeb compound.

#### Victim distribution on the main camps during the first half of 2015

Place of Death	No.
Damascus-Yarmouk Camp	87
Damascus Suburb-Khan Al Shieh Camp	9
Deraa- the Camp	6
Homs- the Camp	4
Deraa- Muzareeb	3
Aleppo- Handarat Camp	1
Damascus-Sayeda Zainab	1
Damascus Suburb-Jaramana Camp	1
Lathakeia- Alraml Camp	1
<b>Total</b>	<b>113</b>

#### • Photographs of Torture

Nearly 6,500 pictures of torture victims in the Syrian regime's prisons were leaked between March and June 2015, which included photographs of detainees who were detained before August 2013. 78 images out of 404 of Palestinian refugee bodies that died due to torture were identified, and there is any information about them.

The leaked pictures reflected the extent of torture and abuse against detainees, while the AGPS monitoring and documentation team managed to identify their owners by communicating with a large number of sources, including the detainees' families and friends, and a number of Syrian human rights authorities, which took the publication of such images on their websites.

Notes by the AGPS monitoring and documentation team about the identified images:

1. Signs of fatigue and tortures were clear in most photos.
2. Detainees were severely tortured; some eyes had been poked out, as happened with the victim, Ala Naji; others sustained skull fractures, a smashed nose, bruises, the cracking of the jaw, as happened with the victim Muhammad Rakkad.
3. Some victims did not seem to be affected by torture or abuse when compared to the other photos, indicating they were assassinated while in detention.
4. Some detainees had very long hair, indicating they had been in detention for long periods of time prior to assassination.
5. There was a lack of information about the subjects, including their names. Their private numbers were held at security branches where they were detained.
6. Detainees were detained at the following branches: Air Force Intelligence, Al Dawreyat, Al Mantiqa, military investigation, Sasa, Palestine, State Security, military police, and other branches<sup>(3)</sup>.

(3) Check out «Massacre of Photos,» a documentary report issued by the AGPS on the internet.[http://www.actionpal.org.uk/ar/reports/special/photo\\_massacre\\_report.pdf](http://www.actionpal.org.uk/ar/reports/special/photo_massacre_report.pdf)

### Names of Torture Victims who were identified through the Leaked Photos

No.	Name	Place	Date	Address
1	Mohammed Fayez Al Zaher	Artouz	3/26/2013	Damascus Suburb-Artouz
2	Ibrahem Abdul Hafeiz	Dmar	5/23/2013	Damascus -Damr
3	Khalid Mohammed Bakrawi	Yarmouk Camp	9/11/2013	Damascus -Yarmouk Camp
4	Ahmed Hussein Zaher	Khan Alshieh Camp	10/1/2013	Damascus Suburb -Khan Alshieh Camp
5	Hassan Hassan	Yarmouk Camp	12/17/2013	Damascus -Yarmouk Camp
6	Basil Nabeil Khorma	Yarmouk Camp	4/27/2014	Damascus -Yarmouk Camp
7	Salah Rashdan	Unknown	7/22/2014	Unknown
8	Alaa Naji	Dmar	8/7/2014	Damascus -Damr
9	Ghasan Bishtawi	Yarmouk Camp	2/1/2015	Damascus -Yarmouk Camp
10	Mohammed Al Khateib	Yarmouk Camp	3/11/2015	Damascus -Yarmouk Camp
11	Tariq Mawed	Yarmouk Camp	3/12/2015	Damascus -Yarmouk Camp
12	Mohammed Khalid Fouad Abu eid	Yarmouk Camp	3/12/2015	Damascus -Yarmouk Camp
13	Mahmoud Mohammed Mawed	Yarmouk Camp	3/12/2015	Damascus -Yarmouk Camp
14	Ibrahem Mohammed Amer	Yarmouk Camp	3/13/2015	Damascus -Yarmouk Camp
15	Abdullateif Saed	Yarmouk Camp	3/13/2015	Damascus -Yarmouk Camp
16	Sulaiman Al Abdullah	Altadamon	3/14/2015	Damascus-Altadamon
17	Nour Saed	Unknown	3/14/2015	Unknown
18	Islam Ammar Abu Rashid	Unknown	3/14/2015	Unknown
19	Yaser Isam Al Naji	Yarmouk Camp	3/15/2015	Damascus -Yarmouk Camp
20	Usama Hussein Saleim	Yarmouk Camp	3/15/2015	Damascus -Yarmouk Camp
21	Umar Mahahi	Yarmouk Camp	3/15/2015	Damascus -Yarmouk Camp
22	Umar Khalid Nayef	Khan Alshieh Camp	3/15/2015	Damascus Suburb -Khan Alshieh Camp
23	Mohammed Rakkad	Dmar	3/15/2015	Damascus -Damr
24	Samer Yousef Hasan	Dmar	3/15/2015	Damascus -Damr
25	Tayseer Sakhnini	Dmar	3/15/2015	Damascus -Damr
26	Huda Jaber Hamdan	Qudseia	3/15/2015	Damascus Suburb-Qudseia
27	Bisan Abdulghani	Altadamon	3/15/2015	Damascus-Altadamon
28	Nouraldein Dawoud	Unknown	3/16/2015	Damascus -Yarmouk Camp
29	Ibtisam Arafa	Unknown	3/16/2015	Homs
30	Rana Al Masri	Unknown	3/16/2015	Deraa-Deraa Camp
31	Mazen Qadoura	Unknown	3/16/2015	Unknown
32	Mahmoud Abdulrahem Mahmoud	Unknown	3/16/2015	Damascus-Alhajar Alaswad
33	Nouraldein Dawoud	Unknown	3/16/2015	Damascus -Yarmouk Camp
34	Mohammed Faraj	Unknown	3/16/2015	Damascus Suburb-Khan Dannon Camp
35	Samer Haseib Najeib Zahran	Unknown	3/16/2015	Unknown
36	Nisreen Mahmoud Jaber	Yarmouk Camp	3/16/2015	Damascus -Yarmouk Camp
37	Mohammed Fayyad	Unknown	3/18/2015	Damascus -Yarmouk Camp
38	Mohammed Abdullah Hamdan	Unknown	3/19/2015	Deraa-Deraa Camp

39	Mohammed Ypusef	Unknown	3/19/2015	Damascus -Yarmouk Camp
40	Baraa Al Abdullah	Unknown	3/20/2015	Damascus Suburb
41	Aya Al Abdullah	Unknown	3/20/2015	Damascus Suburb
42	Ubaida Khaleil Qasim	Unknown	3/20/2015	Damascus Suburb-Duma
43	Ahmed Abdulrahman Abwaini	Unknown	3/20/2015	Damascus -Damr
44	Yaser Abu Naser	Unknown	3/20/2015	Damascus Suburb -Khan Alshieh Camp
45	Imad Mustafa Alabtah	Unknown	3/21/2015	Damascus -Yarmouk Camp
46	Ahmed Mohammed Amora	Unknown	1/5/2013	Damascus -Damr
47	Nidal Al Haj Ali	Unknown	3/22/2015	Damascus -Yarmouk Camp
48	Mahmoud Hasan Zaghmout	Unknown	7/10/2014	Damascus -Yarmouk Camp
49	Amer Mahmoud	Unknown	3/24/2015	Damascus -Damr
50	Merwan Amayri	Unknown	3/25/2015	Damascus -Yarmouk Camp
51	Umar Hamdan	Unknown	3/25/2015	Unknown
52	Fadi Al Khateib	Unknown	3/26/2015	Damascus -Yarmouk Camp
53	Mohammed Abu Tayoun	Dmar	6/16/2013	Damascus -Damr
54	Mahmoud Abdulhafeiz	Dmar	1/22/2014	Damascus -Damr
55	Suhaib Mahmoud Alabdullah	Unknown	3/23/2015	Damascus -Yarmouk Camp
56	Ahmed Husam Amayri	Unknown	3/26/2015	Damascus -Yarmouk Camp
57	Kifah Khalid Shuqair	Unknown	3/26/2015	Damascus -Yarmouk Camp
58	Mohammed Farah	Unknown	3/26/2015	Damascus Suburb-Khan Dannon Camp
59	Sameera Ahmed Al Sahli	Yarmouk Camp	11/8/2014	Damascus -Yarmouk Camp
60	Dalia Azzam	Unknown	3/26/2015	Damascus-Altadamon
61	Yara Al Salman	Unknown	3/26/2015	Damascus -Yarmouk Camp
62	Doaa Mansour	Unknown	3/26/2015	Damascus -Yarmouk Camp
63	Tasneim Sihabi	Unknown	3/26/2015	Damascus-Alhajar Alaswad
64	Mervat Abu Madi	Unknown	3/26/2015	Damascus -Yarmouk Camp
65	Lama Shihada	Unknown	3/26/2015	Damascus -Rokn Al Dein
66	Zainab Abdullah Taha	Unknown	3/26/2015	Damascus -Damr
67	Hiba Deeb	Unknown	3/26/2015	Hama
68	Latifa Nouraldein	Unknown	3/26/2015	Hama
69	Nidal Saadeya	Yarmouk Camp	5/14/2013	Damascus -Yarmouk Camp
70	Yamen Saadeya	Yarmouk Camp	5/14/2013	Damascus -Yarmouk Camp
71	Yaser Ibrahim Aljouda	Yarmouk Camp	9/8/2013	Damascus -Yarmouk Camp
72	Hasan Abu Tayyon	Dmar	6/16/2013	Damascus -Damr
73	Nour Ghubari	Unknown	3/31/2015	Damascus -Yarmouk Camp
74	Laith Abu Rajab	Unknown	4/10/2015	Hama
75	Mahmoud Deyab	Unknown	4/16/2015	Hama-Camp
76	Shadi Fawaz Hasan	Unknown	5/12/2015	Damascus
77	Bilal Sharqawi	Unknown	5/16/2015	Damascus Suburb-Eastern Ghouta
78	Ghasan Jaber	Unknown	6/7/2015	Damascus -Damr



#### Fourthly - Displaced People outside Syria

There has been no change to the legal and humanitarian situation of the Palestinian refugees displaced from Syria. In Jordan the entry of Palestinian refugees from Syria continued to be prevented under any circumstances<sup>(4)</sup>, similarly as to Egypt and Turkey, which continued to be accessed illegally.

In Lebanon, ban continued to be imposed on the Palestinian refugees from Syria, but very limited cases entered by Palestinian factions and embassy.

- **Palestinian refugees from Syria to Lebanon**

According to UNRWA statistics at the end of November 2014, the number of Palestinian refugees from Syria in Lebanon amounted to 44.5 thousand refugees, equivalent to 12, 720 families spread over five regions in Lebanese cities inside and outside the camps.

- ❖ **Palestinian family from Syria measurement of the total families:**

Family Members	Percentage	No/Family
1-3 Members	50.33 per cent	6400 Families
4-6 Members	43.58 per cent	5543 Families
+ 7 Members	6.09 per cent	775 Families

- ❖ **Ages of Palestinian Refugees from Syria**

0-5 years = 13.88 per cent, equivalent to 6,175 children

This age group from early childhood needs support and special care, especially children who rely on artificial feeding. They need baby milk, diapers, and nutrition.

6-17 years = 25.88 per cent, equivalent to 11,516 children

This age group is in basic education - first and second stage. They need funding related to education, transportation, and support in all its forms.

+18 years = 60.23 per cent, equivalent to 26. 771 people

This age group is ready to enter the labour market, but is unable to do so because of high unemployment and legal restrictions imposed on refugees from most nations.

- ❖ **Palestinian families according to provider:**

26.40 per cent of the families are supported by woman, equivalent to 3,360 families.

Within these families, the wife is responsible for the household and management, by virtue of death or loss of a spouse or family separation, while 73.6 per cent of the families are supported by man.

(4) Palestinians of Syria: Wound is Still Bleeding, issued by PRC and AGPS-Palestinian Refugees in Jordan, Page 74 and beyond. 2014situationreport2woundstillbleeding.pdf, <http://www.actionpal.org.uk/ar/reports/special/>

### ❖ Distribution of Palestinian Syrian families to Lebanese areas

Area	Percentage	No/Family
Beirut	18.96 %	2,415 Families
Beqaa	16.20 %	2,060 Families
Sidon	32.07 %	4,079 Families
Tripoli	15.53 %	1,975 Families
Tire	17.23 %	2,191 Families

### ❖ Distribution of Palestinian Syrian families inside and outside the camps

Distribution	Percentage	No./Family
Inside the Camps	50.17 %	6,381 Families
Outside the Camps	49.83 %	6,338 Families

In a tour inside and outside of the camps, it shows that the average fare to homes inside the camps is US\$200, while outside the camps is US\$400.

### ❖ Palestinian refugees from Syria to Lebanon according to arrival/ destination

UNRWA said that 91.46 per cent of the PRS in Lebanon fled from Damascus and its refugee camps. Refugees from the Yarmouk camp constitute 49.48 per cent of them, about 5,800 families are unable to go back, at least for the foreseeable future, while the Yarmouk Camp remain under the control of ISIS.

Refugees from other Syrian regions (center - North - South) formed 8.54 per cent of the total.

### ❖ Palestinian Refugees; Harsh Winter and Virtually Non-existent Response

In the winter of 2015, Lebanon suffered many snowstorms that affected the region in general, some of them were known by different names according to the regions they hit; Zeina in Lebanon, and Huda in Palestine and Jordan, and various others.

Palestinian refugees from Syria to Lebanon have endured the bitterness of this additional disaster, adding to their hardship as no provisions for refugees are providing or preparing them for this type of weather. Moving and accessing areas covered by snow was difficult and they lost basic material, such as fuel, food, baby milk and frozen water in reservoirs.

The Beqaa region is one of the cooler Lebanese regions, by virtue of its geographical location that extends between two series of eastern and western mountain ranges. 16.20 per cent of PRS families live there; equating to 2,060 families and 7,420 refugees. Almost (1.6 per cent) of them are residing in Jalil refugee camp in Baalbek, 800 m above sea level, while the rest are distributed in cities and towns of Beqaa, that is 235 towns and villages.

In Beqaa region, aid has been scarce mainly due to the sparse dispersement of refugees in this area.

PRS in Beqaa are also uncounted for by (UNHCR), as they are considered part of the Palestinian refugee population that should be under UNRWA's mandate. However, no other services are provided by UNRWA, medical or educational, inside the camps or main cities.

The storm affected most of the refugee communities in Lebanon directly by blowing down tents and metal roofs off of the houses; water leaked through to the refugees' homes; deaths occurred amongst children and elderly people, caused by a significant drop in temperature; wind speed intensified; and fuel was also scarce as relief organizations had stopped providing aid to refugees.

Indirectly, the storm affected children who suffered from the extreme cold, and endured health issues such as asthma, influenza and pneumonia.

On 19 January 2015, the Lebanese Red Cross saved two PRS children (a boy and a girl) under two and a half years old, displaced from the Yarmouk camp in Lebanon. They were found alone in the cold next to a small room in the town of "Koukaba" in the district of Rashaya southern Lebanon. Their mother was taken to the hospital and a boy found them shivering from the cold, as they were taken to a house before being transferred to the hospital. Internal security forces attended and followed up their status, taking them to the government hospital of Rashaya.

### **Respond to the Storm Crisis**

Response to the storm's crisis was varied. UNRWA ended up excluding a large number of families from winter aid, and limited to their provision to the cooler areas such as the Beqaa region.

A Hamas spokesperson from the Refugee Affairs Office, Yasser Ali, said on 9 January 2015 "the movement began providing urgent aid to refugees in some public localities and shelters to help them cope with these conditions."

PRS civil society in Lebanon such as the Women's Committee of Palestinians of Syria Committee in Lebanon, conducted a field visit including some camps and compounds inhabited by Palestinians of Syria in Beqaa region. The purpose of the visit was to inspect the humanitarian and living conditions and provide relief. They distributed fuel, heaters, blankets, winter shoes and towels to a number of children from families affected by the snow storm, while a volunteer doctor checked a number of patients in these compounds and camps.

### **Angry Reactions**

On 15 January 2015, dozens of PRS in Lebanon sit-in in front of the UNRWA center in Beddawi camp, to condemn the delay of UNRWA in the distribution of winter aid to refugees whose suffering has been exacerbated due to the low air affecting the region. They demanded "UNRWA" bear responsibilities towards them for being the only international organization responsible in Lebanon and Syria.

Protesters also expressed anger over the failure of Palestinian factions and the embassy towards PRS in Lebanon, accusing it of not attending to the suffering of refugees and failing to provide necessary legal support.

### **❖ The legal status of Palestinians of Syria in Lebanon**

The Lebanese government still refuses to allow Palestinians to enter the country, except in limited circumstances. PRS in Lebanon are processed as tourists or displaced persons, which exempt the Government from burgeoning the responsibility towards them. Their rights in international law have therefore, been failed without any obvious legal mechanism or guidelines to deal with them.

On 28 January 2015, the head of the Lebanese Palestinian Dialogue Committee, Dr. Hassan Mneimneh, conditions PRS, outlined in a memorandum submitted by Hamas, stressed the need of UNRWA to carry its responsibilities towards the PRS, especially in a cyclical aid of shelter, food, clothing, education, and health similarly as to the interaction of the UN High Commissioner with Syrian Refugees, and not to stop these services till the end of the crisis in Syria.

The memorandum also demanded the legal department of UNRWA to carry its responsibilities towards following up civil cases of Palestinian refugees from Syria in terms of their residency, college entry, or providing official examinations in Lebanon, especially that some refugees lost part of their documents because of hostilities in Syria.

### **Refugees' Rights Violations**

Within these appeals and demands, many violations against Palestinian refugees from Syria in Lebanon were monitored, either on borders while trying to escape the ongoing hostilities in Syria, or those who are about to resume private procedures, such as immigrants' reunion in Europe via the existing embassies in Lebanon.

One of the examples that affected the Palestinian community in Lebanon is the story of the 5-year-old PRS Rehab Khatib on March 11, 2015. Rehab managed to enter Lebanese territory to catch her family fleeing there after separation lasted about 10 months, after a personal intervention by Director-General of General Security Maj. Gen. Abbas Ibrahim.

The child was prevented from entering Lebanon because of the Lebanese authorities decision to close the borders to PRS, after the girl Rehab was forced to leave Lebanon earlier to go to Syria for treatment because of the high cost of treatment in Lebanon, and lack of UNRWA's programs regarding the treatment of PRS in Lebanon. Meanwhile, Shahid Institution for Human Rights in Lebanon issued a statement reported that: "the status of the child Rehab Al Khatib is a stark model of how the Palestinian refugees from Syria are suffering, where they stranded and their family bonds were shattered between Lebanon, Syria, and other countries."

The Syrian Private "Cham Wings Airlines" also issued a recommendation, which was circulated to travel and tourism offices in Syria, demanding the fulfillment of conditions required for the travel of Syrians, Palestinians, and Iraqis to Lebanese territory.

As for the Palestinian refugees, the circular stressed "preventing the entry of -Palestinian Syrian policyholders to Lebanese territory, and in case of a complementary ticket for another station outside Lebanon, the refugee is to remain exclusively in the waiting room at the airport."

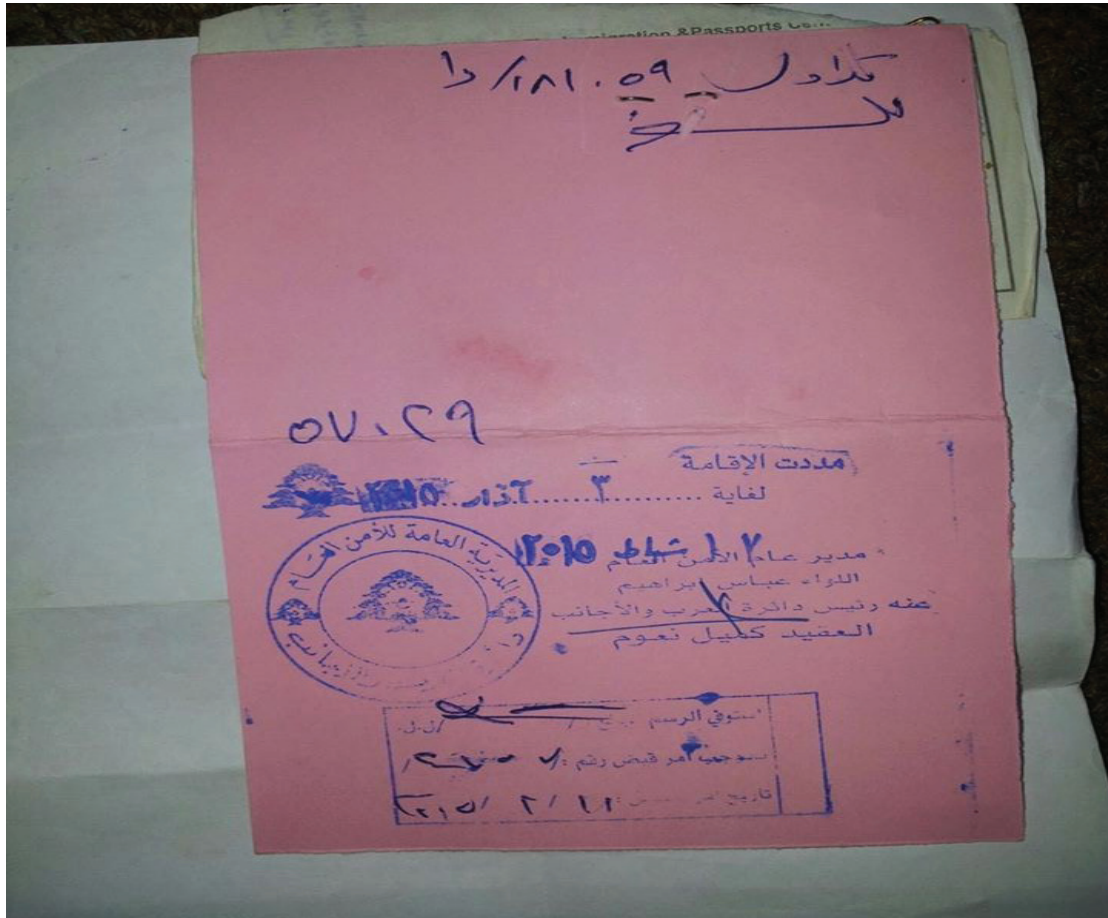
According to a refugee (who preferred anonymity), the Lebanese authorities prevented him from entering their territory, despite the presence of his wife and children inside Lebanon. He reported that when he was in Saudi Arabia, the airline refused to give him a ticket, under the pretext that "the Palestinian Syrian is prohibited from entering Lebanon."

Lebanese General Security also arrested many refugees, at different periods, due to the end of their residency, while rejecting the renewal of residencies or sealing "travel" on the papers of those who applied to renew their residency, despite the payment of fees (\$ 200).

All these procedures have made so many refugees reluctant to renew for fear of deportation and ill treatment used by some members of the public security towards them. A refugee has described his suffering as he tried to renew his residency, saying: "I went to renew at 5:30 Am; I stood in the queue because of the overcrowdings and waited until 8:00 am, the start time security agents there. Time passed and no one was allowed to enter. At 9:00 am, a security member told us: "no one will enter and there is no time we are closing in one hour," noting that they close at 11:00 am on Friday. The refugee added that: "during our waiting, we were cursed and insulted, including women, children, and elderly people."

Within arrest campaigns carried out by the Lebanese army against refugees during June 2015, they arrested a number of PRS in the city of Tripoli and Sidon, under the pretext of the end of their residency. Some detainees were recognized; they are: (H A, M A, L R, A R, A Sh), which prompted the Palestinian Syrian refugees to sit-in in front of the security force headquarters in Ain al-Hilweh refugee camp in Sidon on 22 and 23 June 2015.

## Copy of a Travel Document Written on it "For Travel" when trying to Renew Residency



### ❖ Educational Reality

The suffering of Palestinian refugees from Syria continued in all areas of their life due to the continuing refugee and the instability, overwhelming the general situation of refugees.

Education is one of the most important facets a refugee is keen to keep constant as it provides hope in improving the conditions of their life.

Most students are receiving first and second stages of the basic education of the Palestinian refugees of Syria in UNRWA schools within the Palestinian camps and outside, but there are ongoing impediments that completely prevent students from attending schools, high schools, and universities. Some of these impediments are the deteriorating economic situation for refugees, different curriculum, and administrative complications<sup>(5)</sup>.

Some students were able to study the Syrian scheduled in Lebanon and perform examinations in Syria through the Institute of Churches Compound for FREE Education with multiple branches in Lebanon.

However, the recent prohibitive decisions for the entry of Palestinian refugees from Syria to Lebanon, made many students reluctant to go to Syria, for fear of not being able to go back, in addition to the decisions issued by the Ministry of Education in Syria, which limited the number of students applying for high school exams, which required them access to study or undergo a sequence of ten material standard exam from various stages of high school.

(5) Palestinians of Syria: Wound is Still Bleeding, issued by PRC and AGPS-Palestinian Refugees in Jordan, Page 74 and beyond. 2014situationreport2woundstillbleeding.pdf, <http://www.actionpal.org.uk/ar/reports/special/>

Nevertheless, from 22 to 30 January 2015, 51 out of 63 students who enrolled in the Churches Institute, managed to go to Syria and return back to perform the entrance exam in order to apply for high school exams in Syria. 45 students of them managed to perform the final exams in June 2015.

For the ninth grade, 133 students, who are also enrolled to Churches Institute, are interested in applying for exams according to the Syrian curriculum, only 69 of them were able to get off to Syria and return to Lebanon after coordination between the Palestinian Embassy, the Department of Churches Institute, and the Lebanese Public Security.

It is noteworthy that the Lebanese General Security required students who have completed fifteenth, to regularize their legal status and pay \$200 as residency allowance, which made some students reluctant to apply for exams for not having the money, noting that Hamas movement in Lebanon provided the student, in which their number is (48), with an amount of \$100.

As for the ninth-grade and high school students in Lebanon, the Palestinian student faced a requirement issued by the Lebanese Ministry of Education on 22 March 2015, which states that “the Palestinian students applying to examine the ninth grade, and who are registered with UNRWA refugee schools in Lebanon systematically, have to ratify and equate the certificates of previous years, which originally issued from Syria.”

The resolution demanded a valid regular residency for students, so they can apply for the exam.

This decision was unacceptable among refugees, on 25 March 2015, parents of students launched appeals for the Lebanese Ministry of Education and Higher Education to allow their children to apply for official exams in Lebanon.

On 27 March Hamas called in a statement to the Lebanese government “to Correct the situation of Palestinian Syrian students in Lebanon, after preventing them applying the official exams, and not to deal with Palestinian refugee from Syria as security file, but they are humanitarian situation internationally recognized.

The statement issued by the Office of Refugee Affairs in the Hamas movement in Lebanon was surprised of not allowing students to apply exams, while the Bureau stressed “the need to address the root of the problem, which began with not considering them as refugees in Lebanese circles.

Therefore, they are treated ambiguously,” as he added: “If this is not possible, it is not less than providing legitimate residency for refugees, especially because they were forced by dire circumstances to resort to Lebanon.”

In addition, Office of Refugee Affairs of the Hamas movement in Lebanon called the Lebanese Minister of Education to correct the problem through an exception for students covered by this procedure.

For the same purpose, a delegation from “Shahid” human rights Foundation met with the head of the Lebanese Palestinian Dialogue Committee, Hassan Mneimneh, on 7 May 2015, where the delegation discussed with Mr. Mneimneh the suffering of Palestinian refugees from Syria about renewing their residency by the Lebanese General Security, and the difficulty of obtaining permits to enter the Palestinian refugee camps by the army intelligence, as well as depriving the students of applying for official exams for this year.

Indeed, this pressure implemented by Palestinian factions and institutions and civil committees resulted in a positive decision relieving refugees from this condition.

Regarding the decisions of UNRWA about reducing its services for PRS in particular and the Palestinian refugees in general, which affect the educational status of refugees, a group of Palestinian activists in Lebanon launched “Together against UNRWA resolutions” campaign on 28 May 2015.

The campaign was launched to protest the UNRWA decision to stop aid, cancel a number of schools, increase the number of students in the classrooms, cancel appointments in education, health, relief, and the rest of the schools and the threat to expel 350 teachers in Lebanese schools.

On the other hand, on 5 June 2015, “the Lebanese Association for Supporting Scientific Research” provided 500 university scholarships to study at universities in Lebanon for the academic year 2015-2016, and placed several conditions to accept students applying for the grant. The conditions are: to be a Syrian or displaced Palestinian Syrian in Lebanon, and holds a high school certificate equation of the Ministry of Higher Education in Lebanon.

### ❖ **Palestinians of Syria Migration from Lebanon**

Palestinian refugees did not find in Syria a safe environment for their lives, money, and honor after nearly four years of hostilities, especially after the departure of most of them from their homes more than once inside Syria, while tens of thousands were displaced to neighboring countries.

Lebanon constituted a wide gate for the entry of the largest number of Palestinians of Syria, where firstly, the Palestinian refugees were allowed to enter before taking preventing procedures of their entry almost completely.

### **Justifications of Refugees’ Migration**

The phenomenon of demanding mass immigration spread among Palestinian Syrian refugees in Lebanon. Palestinians of Syria activists in Lebanon, at the end of 2014, managed to collect signatures of about 7,000 Palestinian refugee families in Lebanon demanding (UNHCR) to transfer the file for it instead of UNRWA in order to implement the resettlement program of Palestinian refugees in Europe similarly as to Syrian refugees.

In search for reasons of these demands through questionnaire of Palestinian Syrian public opinion in Lebanon, justifications focused as follows:

- Prevent granting residencies in Lebanon, even temporarily, is what makes us under legal prosecution and deportation from Lebanon.
- Consider the Palestinian Syrian refugee as a tourist in Lebanon and not to accept registering him as a refugee.
- Non-registration of the Palestinian refugee student in public schools in Lebanon because of the violation of residency.
- Non-registration of new births, and connect it to obtaining a residency in Lebanon.
- Preventing Palestinians of Syria from working legally.
- Dispersion of Palestinian families between Syria and Lebanon because the Lebanese government closure of the official crossings and preventing Palestinian Syrian from entering Lebanon.
- UNRWA deficiency of providing all humanitarian services and legal protection for refugees.
- The ongoing Syrian crisis and the inability to return to the camps in Syria.
- The feeling of loss and lack of incubation that exceeded hunger, homelessness, and deprivation of thousands of refugees.
- The successful Palestinian cases (the Palestinians of Europe) who migrated and managed to secure the future of their children and get a European citizenship and a passport

which enables access to all countries in the world without a visa, unlike the Palestinian document that denied its holders from moving or even sometimes to return to the state where it was issued as the Egyptian document.

- Taking a lesson from the past which proved the useless of staying in the Arab countries because there is dignity for refugees in there no matter how long they stayed there.
- Official sponsor PLO ignorance to the issue of Palestinian refugees in the Diaspora in terms of legal and relief follow-up.
- The absence of popular incubator for refugees on the Lebanese level, and racist laws applicable in Lebanon towards them.
- Taking a lesson of the Lebanese Palestinian suffering, and their quest for migration as a result of conditions that they originally live.

Some people may ask how refugees provide necessary funds for migration, in light of the extreme need. The funds of migration ranged between (5000 \$ -14,000) per person, depending on the methods used to gain access to Europe, either by sea, land, air.

Considering the Palestinian slide that migrated, the general character of immigrants are from owners of money, high class people, and owners of scientific talent heads, such as doctors, engineers, technicians, and teachers. The majority of this class was able to secure travel costs of their savings, and their migration was a relatively early. The rest of slides, adopting the following ways to secure the necessary costs:

- Selling Gold primarily for women.
- Selling houses as done by more than 60 Palestinian families in Al Aedein camp in Homs.
- Selling movable and immovable property; such as cars and real estate at low prices. Some real estate offices in the city of Damascus purchased homes in the Yarmouk refugee camp from its displaced owners, despite the fact that those houses are under siege.
- Borrowing from relatives or acquaintances, particularly those outside Syria.
- ATM cards selling with the help of UNRWA for half the price, in exchange for an express cash payment.
- Securing travel costs for one member of the family who are able to reunite the rest.
- Securing the amount of money through the previous sources combined.

### **The Way to Europe from Lebanon**

Palestinian refugees took many twisted and dangerous roads from Lebanon to Europe, carless about results, even if the results are sometimes their lives, after they lost hope.

In the beginning, Beirut Airport from Egypt and Libya formed a gateway to Italy across the sea by what has become known as death boats. Yet, after the closure of Cairo airport in front of Palestinian Syrians, and the closure of Tripoli International Airport in Libya because of the burning events there, and the stoppage of flights from and to it, the refugees have discovered a new way longer distance and more serious.

This way is Sudan road by a fake invitation by a company or a relative that enables the refugee to enter. As he enters Sudan, he takes the Sudanese Libyan desert to Zuwara city or Benghazi, and then to Italy by boats.

As well as, refugees went through smuggling from Syria to Turkey because of their inability to obtain a regular visa. Recently, whole families returned back from Lebanon to Syria through Al Dabouseia crossing point near the city of Homs and from there to Turkey in a high risk flight.



After arriving to Turkey refugees distributed on many ways. Some refugees ride the sea from Mersin to Italy directly and some others ride the sea to Greece, and from there trying to arrive by land or by air by a false passport (similar to - or image instead of the image). Some of them pass the Turkish border towards Bulgaria, Serbia, Macedonia, and then to Hungary, and from there to Austria, Germany or other European countries.

The statistics carried out by the Union of Islamic institutions in Ein el-Hilweh camp in the Lebanese city of Sidon - to name a few - until the date of June 15, 2015, indicated the presence of 253 Palestinian families are counting on women because of the husband migration to Europe.

On the other hand, the observer of the results of migration of refugees finds that it was not clear of incidents that led mostly to deaths among refugees. Some of them were swallowed by sea, and some of them buried in the desert, as well as the missing, and detainees in Arab and Western prisons.

### ❖ UNRWA and Stopping Aid to Palestinian Refugees from Syria in Lebanon

UNRWA inconsistently provided urgent assistance to Palestinian refugees from Syria in Lebanon since the beginning of resort until a special program known as (PRS), short for PALESTINIAN REFUGEE FROM SYRIA. The program included various service sectors; such as health, education, and relief, in addition to providing legal advice<sup>(6)</sup>.

#### The UNRWA Gradations to Stop its Aid

The UNRWA successive series in its decisions towards the Palestinians of Syria refugees specially the emergency aid. In October 2014, UNRWA deliberately cut off aid on about 1100 Palestinian families because they don't meet the UNRWA standards to get aid.

In April 2015, UNRWA reduced its food allowance for all the Palestinian refugees in Lebanon from 45000 to 40000 LBP (30 to 27 USD)

On 14 May 2015, the UNRWA High Commissioner Mr. Pierre Krähenbühl issued some decisions that aim to reduce the UNRWA services in all sectors under the pretext of 100 Million USD budget deficit, the reduction will lead to stop the aid of the UNRWA on the Palestinians of Syria refugees, especially the 100 USD of the shelter allowance and the reduction of food and clothes allowance from 45000 to 40000 LL and will be topped later. He added that the schools will be reformed to be 50 students in the class and to dismiss the clinics employees and the cleaners from the PRS program, which serve the Palestinians of Syria in Lebanon .. etc.

On 20<sup>th</sup> of May 2015, the UNRWA Director in Lebanon Matthias Schmale declared the stop of the emergency assistance of the shelter allowances on the Palestinians of Syria in Lebanon due to the budget deficit and the lack of donations.

#### Civil and Popular Mobilizations against the UNRWA Decisions

The UNRWA decisions to reduce its services mobilized the community of the Palestinian refugees in Lebanon. The refugees noticed the danger of those decisions and their negative reflections on the Palestinian refugees cause. Where the popular interaction in the camp was monitored all over the Lebanese cities:-

- On 1 June 2015, the Palestinians of Syria committee in Lebanon, the Committee of the displaced Palestinian Syrians affairs in Lebanon, some civil society organization in Sidon and camps met the head of UNRWA office in Sidon Dr. Ibrahim Al Khatib and the head of UNRWA office in Ein Al Helwa Mr. Fadi Al Saleh at the UNRWA office

(6) For more information, you can see the status report about the conditions of Palestinians of Syria-February 2014- by the AGPS, PRC London, and Fidar, Page 100 via the following link: <http://www.actionpal.org.uk/ar/reports/special/>

in Sidon. The meeting was concerning the following up of those committees for the UNRWA decision for reducing the aid and the humanitarian reflections on the refugees in general and the Palestinians of Syria in Lebanon in particular. The civil societies requested a meeting as soon as possible with the UNRWA Director in Lebanon Mr. Matthias Schmale to discuss the latest UNRWA decisions and the negative impacts on the Palestinian Refugees.

- On 2 June 2015, tens of the displaced Palestinian Syrian camps residents carried out several protests. The camps of Al Burj AL Shamaly, Al Rashedeya, and Al Meya Meya in Sour city and Sidon south of Lebanon witnessed protests in front of the UNRWA office. They condemned the latest UNRWA decisions, which were to cut the shelter aid. The protestors demanded the Palestinian factions, the PLO, Human Rights Organisations to immediately interfere to put pressure on UNRWA to stop its decisions.
- On 3<sup>rd</sup> June 2015, Mr. Matthias Schmale, the UNRWA Director in Lebanon, held a meeting with a number of Palestinian Syrian refugees committees, Palestinian factions representatives and the popular committees at Ein El Helwa camp. The Meeting came to show the Palestinian factions of the UNRWA reasons and suffering of Budget deficits and the weak services and the solution to overcome the current situation, the factions stressed on the necessity that UNRWA should commit to its full responsibilities on the Palestinian refugees in General and the Palestinians of Syria in particular.
- On 10 June 2015, during the visit of the UNRWA Director in Lebanon Mr. Matthias Schmale to Nahr Al Bared camp and Al Beddawi camp, tens of displaced Palestinians of Syria refugees organized a protest in front of AL Ramla school at Al Beddawi camp in Tripoli. The protest came to condemn the UNRWA procedures of stopping the assistance on the Palestinian Syrian families; they demanded the director of UNRWA reconsider these arbitrary decisions, which were negatively reflected on their living situation.
- On 12 June 2015, a number of Palestinian Syrian committees and some of the civil societies in Sidon and the camps met the Director of UNRWA in Lebanon Mr. Matthias Schmale to follow-up the UNRWA reduction of services and the humanitarian reflection on the Palestinian refugees in general and the Palestinians of Syria in Lebanon and the Palestinians in Lebanon in particular.
- On 14 June 2015, under the slogan of “UNRWA was established to let the Palestinian refugees work not to strive and displace them”, dozens of the displaced Palestinian Syrian families in Lebanon organized a protest in front of the UNRWA office at Wadi Al Zaina in Sidon city south of Lebanon as to reject the latest UNRWA decisions, which aim to reduce the UNRWA services on the Palestinian refugees in general and the Palestinians of Syria in particular.
- On 15<sup>th</sup> of June 2015, dozens of displaced Palestinians of Syria in Lebanon carried out several protests. The camps of the Al Nurj AL Shamaly, Al Rashedeya, Al Bas, Al Beddawi in Sour city south of Lebanon and Tripoli north of Lebanon carried out protests in front of the UNRWA office. They condemned the latest UNRWA decisions, which are to cut the shelter allowance on the refugees and they also demanded the Palestinian factions, the PLO, and the Human Rights organizations to immediately put pressure on the UNRWA to stop those decisions.

## **Condemnation and Denunciation Statements**

The Palestinian factions and Palestinian civil societies inside and outside Lebanon issued a number of condemnation and denunciation statements for the UNRWA decision after the UNRWA statement to reduce the assistance introduced to the Palestinian refugees. They demanded UNRWA to continue providing services to the Palestinian refugees till they achieve the right to return to their houses that they migrated in 1948, according to UNRWA division of Establishment No. 302 and the International decision No. 194.

### **UNRWA Statement: - Lack of Funds Forces UNRWA to Suspend Cash Assistance for Housing for Palestinian Refugees from Syria in Lebanon on 22<sup>nd</sup> of May 2015, Beirut.**

UNRWA has been forced to suspend monthly cash assistance for housing to PRS living in Lebanon. Starting July 2015, more than 43,000 Palestine refugees from Syria in Lebanon who receive monthly cash assistance of US\$100 per family towards housing and US\$27 per person towards food will stop receiving the cash assistance for housing.

While some funds remain for UNRWA to continue cash assistance for food over the next few months, the Agency has exhausted all funding to support housing assistance for PRS families.

“This assistance is the main source of income for over 95 per cent of those refugees who have little access to livelihood opportunities or any public services,” said UNRWA Director in Lebanon Matthias Schmale. “Among all the refugees fleeing Syria to Lebanon, Palestinian refugees are particularly vulnerable, as they have very few alternatives for service provision and suffer from restrictions on their access to the job market. Moreover, because of their uncertain legal status, they are at risk of detention, abuse, and deportation. The suspension of the housing assistance will be disastrous for this already vulnerable community.”

Mr. Schmale appealed to the donor community to mobilize resources to protect Palestinians from Syria in Lebanon from unacceptable risks. “Faced with the reduction in humanitarian assistance, the living conditions of the Palestine refugees from Syria are likely to become even more volatile. We might see more and more Palestine refugees fleeing this harsh reality and trying to make their way across the Mediterranean to reach Europe. I appeal to the international community to enable UNRWA to provide the bare minimum assistance so the Palestine refugees can live in dignity while they await a just solution for their plight.”

UNRWA continued to work closely with partners and UN Agencies to mobilize resources for a scaled-up humanitarian response in support of PPRS in Lebanon as well as the Palestinian communities who were already in Lebanon before the Syria crisis. The agency has appealed to donors to increase support through its Call for Funds, seeking an immediate injection of US\$ 30 million. The UNRWA Syria Crisis Appeal has received only 21 per cent of the funds needed for 2015 and chronic underfunding for humanitarian interventions in Syria continues to undermine the Agency's capacity to sustain life-saving emergency interventions.

### **Hamas Press Statement- Refugees Affairs Bureau in Lebanon**

“Hamas rejects the decision of UNRWA against the Palestinians of Syria in Lebanon

The Director General of “UNRWA” in Lebanon, Mr. Matthias Schmale declared that starting from July 2015, UNRWA started suspension of shelter allowances for more than 43,000 Palestinian refugees from Syria in Lebanon, who get monthly financial shelter allowance 150 LBP (100USD) for the family, food allowance 40 LBP (27USD) for the individual, they are not going to take any of the monthly allowance.

We at the Hamas Office declare our rejection for this arbitrary decision, which expose about 12000 Palestinian Syrian families losing their house danger or impacting their living level and their bad nutrition.

In front of the sudden crises, which UNRWA hidden and didn't tell any concerned of the Palestinian Syrian refugees' affairs in Lebanon, We confirm the following:-

First, securing the fund for the UNRWA projects and emergency response is the responsibility of UNRWA itself, if it failed securing the fund so the UN central fund is responsible to cover it.

Second, we find in this decision a dangerous step to tighten the situation of our people from the Palestinians of Syria.

Third, the decision means that UNRWA is escaping its responsibilities towards the Palestinians of Syria refugees.

Forth, we declare our rejection for this decision and we will have other peaceful choices till UNRWA reconsider its decision.

Fifth, we call all the active and effective sides such as Lebanese Government and the International community to pressure UNRWA to reconsider its decision, Moreover; we call the donors to support the emergency budget of the Palestinian Syrian refugees.

Sixth, we call the organizations and institutions concerned about the Palestinians of Syria situation to come along to agree on the coming escalating steps.

Finally, our people of the Palestinian Syrian refugees in Lebanon are the responsibility of every one and depriving them with these arbitrary decisions means to increase their suffering and to contribute to the unjust they were exposed to.

### **The AGPS London Press Release-Friday May 22, 2015**

“The AGPS Press Release about the UNRWA’s Decision of Suspending Shelter Allowance Aid for the Palestinians of Syria in Lebanon:”

The AGPS condemns the sudden announcement of UNRWA, through its General Director in Lebanon, Mr. Matthias Schmale, about the suspension of the urgent aid related to cash allowance of shelter against all Palestinians of Syria in Lebanon. The decision will be implemented starting from July 2015, following a similar decision where aid was suspended for about 1200 Palestinian Syrian refugee families in Lebanon since October 2014.

The AGPS denounces the continuous reduction of urgent aid for Palestinians of Syria in Lebanon, regarding the consequent aggravation of their misery and suffering, and a threat to their social security and their right to live in dignity, so, the AGPS is:

Calling UNRWA to immediately undo this injustice decision against 43,000 Palestinians of Syria in Lebanon, to continue providing them with its urgent aid till their plight ends, and not to evade its direct responsibility towards the Palestinian refugees

Calling the International society to bear its responsibilities towards the cause of Palestinian refugees, to fulfill its obligations towards them, and to take serious actions in order to resolve the problem of permanent incapacity of UNRWA’s fund in order to avoid its repercussions on refugees

Calling the Arab League and the Palestinian Authority to urgently intervene in order to prevent the implementation of this decision, and to put pressure on UNRWA so as to cancel it

Calling the civil society institutions to take actions against the austerity and reduction policy followed by UNRWA against the Palestinian refugees

In this regard, Mr. Ahmed Hussein, the AGPS coordinator, stated that UNRWA’s decision on the pretext of lack of funding, does not absolve them of responsibility, and the stricken refugee should not pay the price of international donors evasion of their responsibilities, especially as we are talking about an international organization of the United Nations that has enough of solutions by its direct custody over the Palestinian refugees through UNRWA. Mr. Hussein

stressed that UNRWA is demanded to resume aid and even increase it under the harsh conditions experienced by the Palestinians inside and outside Syria, calling at the same time all official Palestinian bodies to take action and to bear its natural functions towards what is happening.

### **A Press Statement for the Palestinian Coalition Forces in Lebanon about the Decisions and Procedures of UNRWA, 23<sup>rd</sup> of May 2015, Beirut.**

Palestinian Coalition Forces in Lebanon considered that UNRWA evades its responsibilities towards the Palestinian refugees after the recent decisions related to reducing financial aid to the displaced people of Syria, and the suspension of emergency program for the residents of Nahr al-Bared camp.

The statement stressed the complete rejection of the press conference of the Director-General of UNRWA in Lebanon, Mr. Matthias Schmale, warning of humanitarian disaster that would occur to the displaced people of Syria.

The statement put direct and full responsibility to UNRWA and its management in Lebanon, about the repercussions of this decision, and the its result, thus, we call on UNRWA's management to reconsider this unfair decision. “

The statement also called on “the Lebanese authorities to facilitate the movement of displaced Palestinian people from Syria in Lebanon, and to approve the renewal of residencies periodically, and exempting them from fees and fines imposed on them, on a temporary basis until they return to their camps in Syria.”

### **A Press Statement By the Division of Refugees Affairs-Hamas-Gaza, 24<sup>th</sup> of May 2015.**

#### **“Hamis, UNRWA Reduction against Palestinians of Syria in Lebanon Catastrophic”**

Division of Refugees Affairs in Hamas denounced UNRWA reductions in allocations for residence of the Palestinian refugees in Lebanon and Syria, stating it's a new tragedy.

UNRWA announced it will halt allocations of residence for some 43 thousand Palestinians from early July, which will aggravate their suffering.

DRAH stated that the total sum of money UNRWA will save as a result of such reductions is not more than a million and a half, which is considered to be nothing if compared to the UNRWA budget.

DRAH said that UNRWA should have increase efforts to secure the funds and decrease suffering of the refugees in Syria and Lebanon, not to increase their original suffering.

UNRWA financial aid provided for 12 thousand Palestinian refugees families is 100\$ for each family, and allocation for food that is 27\$ for every people.

Hamas calls UNRWA to reconsider its arbitrary decisions.

### **A Statement by the Popular and Civil Follow-up Committees in Lebanon-Tyre Area**

#### **23 May 2015.**

In time, refugees continue to demand UNRWA to improve and develop its services in all sectors, especially after the Visit of the UNRWA Director in Lebanon Mathias Schmal for the camps in Lebanon and listened to their suffering, everybody was astonished by the arbitrary decisions of UNRWA.

The UNRWA High Commissioner, Mr. Pierre Krähenbühl issued some decisions that aim to reduce the UNRWA services in all sectors under the pretext of \$US 100 Million USD budget deficit, the reduction will lead to stop the aid of the UNRWA on the Palestinians of Syria refugees,

especially the US\$100 of the shelter allowance and the reduction of food and clothes allowance from 45000 to 40000 LL and will be topped later. He added that the schools will be reformed to be 50 students in the class and to dismiss the clinics employees and the cleaners from the PRS program, which serve the Palestinians of Syria in Lebanon...etc.

We at the Popular and Civil Committees at Sour city reject the inhumane decision to our people, we demand the High Commissioner and the new UNRWA director in Lebanon, Mathias Schmal to:-

- Reconsider those decisions and search for a serious mechanism to fund URWA
- We Demand UNRWA to prioritize and improving the quality of spending such as the unnecessary activities for refugees.
- We demand all the Palestinian people with its political and social forces to put a clear mechanism to face those decisions on the basis to maintain the sustainability of UNRWA services. We demand them to work in parallel with community mobilizations to request the stop of those decisions and searching for alternative and new resources.

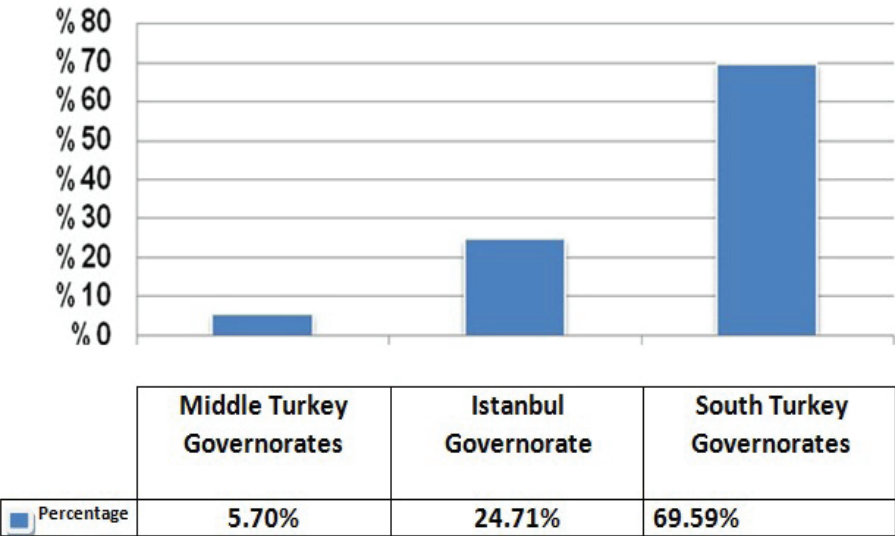
• **Palestinian Refugees from Syria in Turkey**

Palestinian refugees, escaping from certain death in Syria, were forced to take refuge in Turkey via dangerous smuggling routes as there was a full ban on visas for the Arab States and many others.

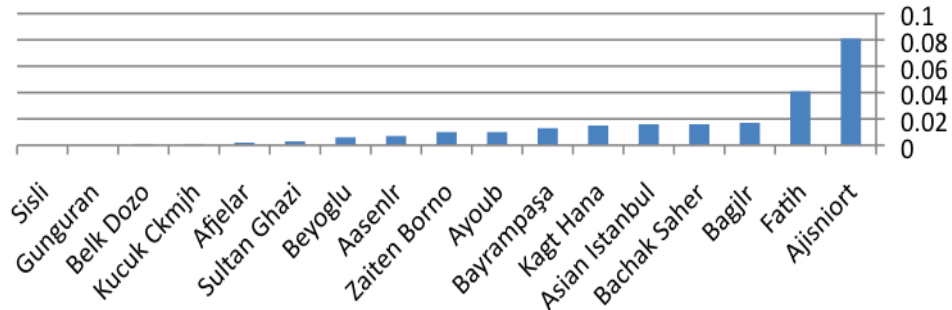
There are no precise statistics on the numbers of Palestinian Syrian refugees who are in Turkey, for the fact that most of them entered Turkish territory illegally, but the statistical section of the “Palestinians of Syria Committee in Turkey” presented by statistical committees estimated that there about 6,000-8,000 refugees received up to the end of June 2015, spread over the provinces of South and Central Turkey and the capital, Istanbul.

**Distribution of Palestinians of Syria Refugees in Turkey**

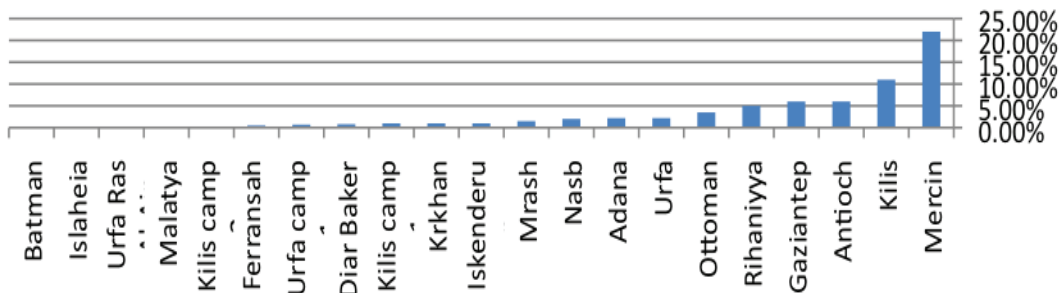
*The Places of the Palestinians of Syria in Turkey*



### Distribution of Palestinians of Syrian in Istanbul According to Region

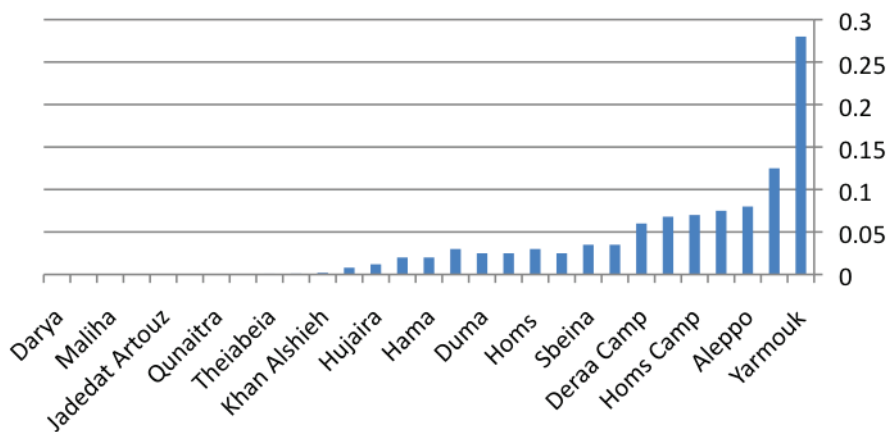


### Distribution of Palestinians of Syrian in South of Turkey According to Region



### Distribution of Palestinians of Syria According to the Arrival Destination

#### Distribution of Palestinians of Syrian in Turkey According to the Original Address in Syria



### ❖ Legal Reality of Palestinian Syrian Refugees in Turkey

The legal situation of Palestinian refugee coming from Syria is considered as one of the worst. Turkish laws do not treat PRS like Syrian refugees who are provided with many advantages and facilities. It also does not treat PRS like a Palestinian refugee holding a Palestinian document. The PRS therefore feel like the biggest loser, not provided for by the Turkish Government, exacerbating their suffering.<sup>(7)</sup>

### ❖ Humanitarian Reality for Palestinian Refugees from Syria in Turkey

Palestinian refugees in Turkey receive no aid by official bodies such as UNRWA and UNHCR. Their only relief is through personal communication with Turkish charities or Syrian associations. The Syrian associations generally operate for Syrians only, while there are very limited associations that help Palestinians in private, such as the Turkish Association for Solidarity with Palestine (Vidar), and limited Turkish municipalities.

Turkey, is characterized by a high cost of living compared to the standard of living for those coming from Syria. Therefore, there is a large gap between them, as well as the huge flow of Syrians to Turkey has led to a surge in prices and rents of houses which greatly exacerbated the suffering and made many families live on the crumbs and looking for jobs at ridiculous prices to secure bread only.

Some families were forced to deny children's education so they could work, or because they could not afford to pay for it. Many families were also unable to rent houses individually, therefore, sharing with other families or living in shops or cellars, unsuitable for living.

During the first half of 2015, high prices were observed and were prevalent in Turkey. Prices rose by approximately 10 per cent across the board, which was linked to the currency exchange rate decline that accompanied the political changes in the country, especially seen in Istanbul.

### ❖ Economic Reality and Job Opportunities

Job opportunities for Palestinian Syrians and Syrians generally exist but are low in wages and challenging in that there are language barriers and a lot of competition for them for the sheer number of refugees.

While the average wage in Turkey for the regular worker is 1,500 Turkish Lira, the Syrian and Palestinian Syrian receives circa 800 Turkish Lira, 1,400 for a university graduate in teaching. This is very low compared to the type of work they have to do and their level of educational attainment, as well as the lack of opportunities and scarcity of such opportunities.

Most PRS are subjected to blackmail and scams by some employers as a result of their weak illegal status, where they are employed at rock-bottom wages or in very poor conditions.

### ❖ Health Reality

A refugee with an AFAD card would get the same treatment as any other Syrian refugee. They get free medical appointments, access to hospitals and free surgeries for emergencies.

Two problems have been noticed regarding access to healthcare however. Firstly, the language barrier, necessitating the presence of an interpreter, the cost of which is high; secondly, the cost of medicine is also high.

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(7) For more information see the documentary report of 'Palestinians of Syria, the Wound is still bleeding,' issued by PRC and AGPS- the Palestinian Refugees in Turkey page 78-91. <http://www.actionpal.org.uk/ar/reports/special/2014situationreport2woundstillbleeding.pdf>



## ❖ Education Reality

Refugees have to pay very high tuitions so as to receive educational services at the Syrian schools due to the existence of registration fees, book fees, and school bus fare which are generakky higher than individual salaries, if a family has more than oe child at school.

A lot of students seemed to drop out of school at different levels of school and for more than one academic year, which holds serious impact on the next generation.

Moreover, up till now, Turkish schools refuse to deal with AFAD card holders, and most often ask for a legal residency to enroll the children. Therefore, Palestinians of Syria resort to the Syrian schools ran by the opposition, which offer low standard education in general, not to mention that their tuitions are not cheap either,

As for university students, most universities demand holding a passport as well as residency for students to enroll. However, in the past few months, some private universities became available, and opened registration for “AFAD” card holders. In addition, some associations took initiative to provide tuitions, enabling students to receive scholarships, despite the limited number of scholarships.

In general, Palestinian refugee students need to pass the YOS exam, which is a national test that is considered a key condition for any foreign student to enroll at Turkish universities in addition to passing the Turkish language test that requires almost a full year of studying. Both certificates require joining specialized educational centers which tuitions are considered expensive.<sup>(8)</sup>

## ❖ Palestinian Refugees in Turkey and Border Camps

There are a small score of Palestinian refugees in the camps of the Turkish government, such as Kilis 1 camp, Kilis 2 camp, Viranşehir, and Gilan Pienaar .Most of these refugees do not reveal their real nationality for fear of being expelled from the camp for there is no law that includes the PRS with the Syrians.

As an initiative on behalf of the General Assembly for the Palestinian Refugees of the temporary Syrian Government in the opposition, a shelter for the Palestinian refugees was opened in Gaziantep Governorate, Kilis on 13 May 2014.

This came with the purpose of taking in the Palestinians who had no shelter, and giving them attention, given their sensitive and complicated legal and political status.

However, living conditions inside this shelter were extremely dire. The shelter administration suffered due to the lack of resources, which increased the suffering of the families that already had neither food nor income, in addition to the presence of a score of injured people as well as people with disabilities.

## The Closure of Kilis Camp for Palestinian Refugees in Turkey

On 23 March 2015, the General Assembly for the Palestinian Refugees of the Syrian Opposition evacuated its shelter for the Palestinian Refugees in Kilis City, Turkey after less than a year of its opening.

This was attributed to the decree issued by the Turkish government. Yet, concerned parties have indicated that the true reason behind the closure is that the funding for the project had stopped.

The Turkish government has agreed to receive all the families living at the shelter in Mardeen Camp, one of government’s border camps located around 400 km to the east. The evacuation

(8) Palestinians of Syria in Turkey – information report - a special report about the conditions of Palestinian Syrian refugees displaced in Turkey after the Syrian crisis, and highlights their reality in all respects; legal, economic, and living conditions, and offers views of the statistical side and the geographical distribution generally, in addition to other addresses. The report constitutes a documentary reference and an introductory guide for briefing with all details of this case – Prepared by: Palestinians of Syria Committee in Turkey- Department of Information - date of preparation: March 2015 - updated on June 28, 2015.

process took place in stages; however, a number of families refused to evacuate for varied reasons. It is worth mentioning that the shelter witnessed some problems, in addition to the continuous reduction in the quality of aids provided to its occupants. Furthermore, it has witnessed the return of some of its occupants to Syria.

Some monitors attribute the failure of such projects in Turkey, which receive more than 2 million Syrian refugees on its soil, including more than 200 thousand in camps, to the feeble coordination among the donating parties, and the scattered efforts in this area.

In addition, they attribute it also to the absolute absence of the roles of the Palestinian leadership (factions and authority) and the UNRWA, along with the denial of UNHCR services; on top that was the legal loop in Turkey that led to this condition in the first place.

### **Problem of Palestinian Families that Refused to Leave to Mardeen Camp**

A number of Palestinian families coming from Syria made an appeal, calling for help and assistance so as to have a good life in Kilis, South of Turkey, particularly after the closure of the shelter they were living at and the disruption of most aids.

In the appeal the action group received, the families pointed out that most parties had abandoned them at the time their choices had diminished; choices that are limited to being exiled to Mardeen camp that was described as a “Military Barracks” or to being deported back to Syria despite of all the risks to their lives.

During a phone call with (Z.A), spokesman for the forty-nine families, he explained to the AGPS representative that Mardeen camp is more like an exile, since it is isolated in a very far geographic area from population centers in which jobs can easily found.

He stressed that they were willing to get assistance and they able to search for decent work at the same time.

Mr. (Z.A) demanded the Turkish government to house them in center closer to the Turkish cities and town centers. He also carried the General Authority for Refugees responsibility to take action for the success of this endeavor, as well as he expressed hope that Arabic and Turkish charities to move in order to provide them with alternatives that would keep their dignity and provide them with means of stability.

Within the phone call with a refugee inside Mardin camp, the refugee (T.A) confirmed that the camp was located in a very harsh nature of a desert area, and that the level of services inside it is extremely poor, starting with the hazy drinking water, the prevention of communication, and not ending with muds and dust due to the primitive nature of the camp, indicating the availability of a health clinic and a school at the same time.

It is noteworthy that these families were living in the Palestinian Center of the Public Authority for refugees in the Syrian opposition, which witnessed many of financial and administrative difficulties recently, which ended with closing it by agreement with the Turkish government and the transfer of those who were in it in batches to Mardeen camp, which is about 400 km away from the East opposite to the borders of Qamishli Syrian city.

### **Mardeen Camp**

The Palestinians of Syria Committee in Turkey carried out a subjective study for the situation of Palestinians of Syria at “Derek Organization for Hospitalization” or Mardeen camp to emphasize the reality of complains of the Palestinian families at Kilis city about the situation of the camp and the refusal of refugees to go to it.

The study is an attempt to convey the real picture of services in the camp, it insures that the

study doesn't have a specific attitude towards the rejection calls or the support calls to transfer to the camp but it tries to clear the picture as possible as it can.

The Turkish government initiates to secure alternatives for the families through transferring them to Mardeen camp in the southern of Turkey 450 Km far from Kilis city after the closure of the Palestine shelter center at Kilis city in the beginning of March 2015.

According to the calls, 60 families agreed to transfer and 4 families refused due to different reasons. According to the contacts of the Palestinians of Syria committee at Turkey with some families in Mardin camp, the refugee (M.A) said that the camp was recently established on a wide space and contains 5 lanes, which form 80 per cent of the space.

The camp contains also big tents each one contains 5 to 8 families and fabric separates among the tents, moreover, the camp is equipped with the basic equipment such as a refrigerator, cold and hot heater, cocker electricity, 3 clothes closets, a mattress and a blanket for each one, monthly food parcels, monthly cleaning materials and kitchen equipment.

The camp also contains a school, a supermarket, a pharmacy, a mosque as caravans. The streets of the camp are still under construction of the asphalt and services. Many families insure the good treatment and food, where there are collective kitchens, laundry rooms, and public toilets.

As to investigate the reality of the families, who refused to enter the camp, the committee contacted some families, where they referred to the lack of privacy inside the camp due to that the separation fabric is thin and not soundproofing in addition to the collective kitchens and toilets.

They expressed their worry from the tight state represented with closing the whole camp with fences and preventing anyone to enter and exit the camp but with permission. They also ban the refugees to take photos and use mobiles, which was justified by the administration of the camp that it is still under construction and its real state is not its final state.

Among the proponents and opponents opinions, Palestinians of Syria Committee insured that it doesn't adopt any of the two viewpoints as it aims to reach the information with neutrality and transparency, and leaving the choice to the refugees themselves.

### ❖ Immigration from Turkey to Europe

Illegal immigration from Turkey to Italy and Greece during 2015 was greatly decreased recently, owing to the new procedures of the Turkish government in order to limit this immigration, such as:

1. Tightening the procedures of water control and intensifying the Turkish coast guard that intercepts boats of illegal immigrants.
2. The spread of Turkish police patrols in neighborhoods of the cities experiencing acts of migration and launching many campaigns to arrest smuggling networks.
3. Tightening airports control procedures, which led to an almost complete stop of illegal immigration by air.
4. Low numbers of illegal entrants to Turkey during the first half of this year, due to the closure of official and unofficial border ports applied by the Turkish government during the parliamentary election period and earlier, as well as in conjunction with the expansion of ISIS controlled scope on Syrian territory near Turkish border.

The AGPS monitoring and documentation team monitored some incidents against refugees while trying to migrate from Turkey:

- On 17 January 2015, the Turkish Coast Guard saved 22 Syrian and Palestinian migrants in the Aegean waters while trying to leave Turkey, where they left the Turkish coast across

a rubber boat off “Teka Ogac” area in “Didem”, while 12 Syrian nationality migrants and 10 Palestinians were saved, who were about 2.5 nautical miles off the “Teka Ogac”, in the Aegean Sea waters.

- On 17 January 2015, the Turkish Coast guards in southern Turkey captured a fishing boat in the Mediterranean coast opposite the city of Mersin, carrying 140 illegal Syrian and Palestinian immigrants, including 30 children while trying to go to Italy. After making medical examinations, immigrants were transferred to Mersin Security Directorate.
- On 17 March 2015, the Turkish Coast Guard rescued a boat carrying a number of Palestinian Syrian and Syrian refugees, who were heading to the Greek island of Kos, while five people died off the coast of the town of Bodrum, south of Turkey, while eight others were saved.
- On 26 May 2015, the Turkish authorities arrested three PRS from Neirab; they are: Mohammed Hdera, Mahmoud Shalabi, and Mohamed Khalayli while trying to travel by sea from Turkey to Greece in order to migrate to European countries. The Turkish authorities released the two young men, Mohammed Hdera and Mohammed Khalayli, after the intervention of the Palestinian embassy, and kept detaining the 21-year-refugee Mahmoud Shalabi because of uncertainty of his nationality.
- On 29 May 2015, in unprecedented accident, the Turkish authorities deported a number of refugees from Syria, including nine Palestinian Syrian refugees who were deported to the north of Syria after being arrested while trying to reach Greece. According to one of the deportees, who asked not to mention his name, “they were arrested in the Turkish city of Izmir where they were harassed by the security men there before being deported by bus to a border camp as they were told. At the border, the soldiers transferred them outside of the Turkish border and tell them they are forbidden entering Turkish territory for a year.” In addition, the refugee stressed that the Turkish authorities did not give them any official document confirming the reason for deportation. Activists believe that this step constitutes a great threat to the lives of refugees because of bombing and clashes in the Syrian north, as well as law and international norms prohibits the return of refugees to areas of conflict where they fled.
- On 7 June 2015, two boats of the Turkish Coast guards stopped a boat carrying nearly 100 Palestinian and Syrian refugees while trying to reach Europe, while sound of gunfire in the air were heard, and members of the group were arrested and transferred to a prison in the Turkish city of Antalya.
- On 8 June 2015, the Turkish authorities released the Palestinian Syrian and the Syrian refugees who were detained the day before while trying to leave the Turkish territory by sea to Greece.
- On 11 June 2015, activists confirmed to the AGPS that the Turkish authorities continue to detain about 50 Palestinian and Syrian refugees in a stadium in Izmir for the second consecutive day. Activists added that the Turkish authorities arrested them while trying to reach Greece from the Turkish coast. They also transferred the suffering of detainees that included a number of women and children. The stadium where they detained lacks to the basic needs of medical care and blankets, demanding at the same time to be released as soon as possible.
- On 23 June 2015, the Palestinian refugee Hana Abdul Qader (Em Fouad), a resident of the Yarmouk refugee camp, drowned after a boat coup, which was carrying at least 62 passengers off the city of Bodrum on the south west coast of Turkey, while trying to reach Greece.

## 4. The Palestinian Refugees in Europe and other countries

The Palestinians of Syria search for asylum in Europe has not stopped in 2015, it continues via various means that brought happiness to those who could make it to Europe, and sorrow and grief to those who lost their way.

### ❖ Number of Palestinians of Syria in Europe

The statistics of the UNHCR refers that the number of the Palestinians of Syria, who reached Europe, is 30000 refugees till the end of 2014, where the number of the refugees, who reached Europe during the first half of 2015, is 6,950 refugees, which raises the number to 36450 Palestinian Syrian refugees.

It is mentioned that the Palestinians of Syria refugees are categorized as stateless that contains other number of people such as Kurds, Kuwaiti Bedoon and Somali refugees, who are 16per cent.<sup>(9)</sup>

Detailed Statistics of Number of the Palestinian Syrian Refugees in Europe<sup>(10)</sup>

Years	2011	2012	2013	2014	2015
Numbers	2,465	3,513	9,620	13,902	6,950
				<b>Total Number</b>	<b>36,450</b>

### ❖ The Legal Situation for Palestinians of Syria in Europe

PRS in Europe are granted various types of asylum and residencies according to the number of years and the political approach in the host country, it also differs in the type of asylum, the personal situation of the applicant and the policy of the country, where Germany, Netherland, France, Belgium, Denmark and Norway grant temporary residencies between one and three years, in addition to the different types such as humanitarian asylum and political asylum in some cases. Britain and Switzerland have strict procedures for asylum.

Sweden grants permanent residencies to PRS but are deferent between the political and humanitarian asylum, dependent on the situation of the applicant. In general, most of the European countries grant the right to humanitarian asylum to the Palestinians of Syria due to the refugees' request.

### ❖ The Living Situation for Palestinians of Syria in Europe

The living situation is similar in all European countries, a decent house and salary that can ensure a decent life for him and his family with a small difference among countries. The economic and political situation can also contribute to the stability and welfare of the refugee.

The refugees suffer during the wait for agreement on the asylum application in European countries. This can arise from various obstacles including:

1. Forcing the refugee to leave his/her fingerprint in Italy. Unfortunately, many Palestinians of Syria refugees are forced to leave their fingerprints in Italy, which prevents them from seeking asylum in other European countries, with the exception of some German states, which may neglect those footprints. The Agreement of Dublin Convention will be applied on the refugees who leave their fingerprint in Italy, the agreement insures that the refugee should be returned to the first country that he/she had his/her fingerprint in.

(9) Methodology of statistical figure weighting for Palestinian Syrian refugee in Europe by the economic researcher Mohammed Yousef

(10) UNHCR statistics

2. Long waiting periods that are spent by many refugees for waiting their residencies, where sometimes the waiting reaches more than one year
3. The delayed of family reunion, where in some countries it takes a period of up to more than a year and a half, making the refugees and their families on edge of a bad situation, especially in the case the availability of most of the families in dangerous areas, In addition to the economic burdens as a result of the delay of reunion.
4. The difficulty of the refugees' families' access in Syria to the European embassies in Lebanon or in Turkey, due to the prevention of their entry to Turkey and the strict procedures of Lebanon.
5. The absence of a representative and clear side to represent them, follow up their problems and introducing the community that they live in after leaving their camps.
6. The difficulty of languages and getting homes due to the huge number of immigrants to the European countries
7. The high cost of transportations and poor communications between the Palestinians of Syria refugees due to the long distances.

### ❖ **The Popular European Mobilization Towards the Palestinians of Europe**

Institutional and civil mobilizations took place in the European continent in the first half of 2015, which were solidarity festivals with the ongoing events related to the Palestinians inside and outside Palestine.

#### ● **The Solidarity European Week with the Palestinians of Syria and Yarmouk Camp**

A number of European institutions and bodies working for Palestine in the European continent finished the activities of the European week for solidarity with the Palestinians of Syria, which was launched by an invitation of Palestinians in Europe thirteenth Conference, to be held in Berlin.

The Solidarity week included a number of activities and events of solidarity with the Palestinians of Syria in all of Germany, Britain, Sweden, Netherlands, and Austria.

The Solidarity week activities launched from the German city of Dortmund, where each of the Palestinian assembly and the Association of Palestinian women in Germany implemented a seminar entitled "Palestinians of Syria the New Nakba" which was attended by many institutions, activists, and bodies concerned about the Palestinian refugee issues.

For its part, Friends of Humanity International issued a report in Austria entitled "We are still alive - the suffering of the Yarmouk camp residents between siege, the risk of death out of killing or starvation," which has been circulated to dozens of human rights organizations.

This was followed by connecting with a number of international bodies, including the British government, the EU, and the (UNHCR) in the United Nations by both of PRC and AGPS in London, where they briefed on the latest developments and statistics related to the suffering of the Palestinians of Syria.

Moreover, each of Palestine Youth League and Coordinating Council to support Palestine in Austria, in the capital Vienna, organized a sit-in in solidarity with Palestinian refugees in Syria, where activists demanded to end the Yarmouk siege in Damascus, as well as to neutralize the Palestinian refugees from the ongoing war in Syria.

Palestinian Center for Justice in Sweden implemented a workshop to discuss the conditions of the Palestinian refugees in Syria and Sweden, where a number of heads and officials of the civil societies in Sweden and Denmark participated in the workshop.

Meanwhile, the Palestinian assembly in Germany, Berlin held a special seminar entitled “Palestinians Soria, Renewed catastrophe” to highlight the file of the humanitarian crisis experienced by the Palestinians of Syria, in the presence of representatives of the Palestinian and the Arab institutions in the capital Berlin, and a large number of people from the Palestinian and Arab community.

The Palestinian institutions finished the activities of the solidarity week through a workshop<sup>(11)</sup> hosted by the Jerusalem Cultural Center in the Dutch city of Rotterdam sponsored and supported by the Palestinians of Europe Conference, the Palestinian Return Centre, and the Palestinian house in Netherlands. The workshop discussed the situation of Palestinian refugees under the title “the Palestinians of Syria conditions in Europe (Challenges and Opportunities).

On the 3 March 2015, the Palestine House Organization in cooperation with the Palestine League in Netherland organized a protest sit-in in front of the Dutch parliament in Hague city in Netherlands as solidarity with the Palestinians of Syria issue and with camps tragedies and their hunger and displacement.

The sit-in contained delivering a memorandum to the Foreign affairs committee of the Dutch parliament, included a number of demands that aim to lobby towards taking the Yarmouk siege away and securing safe shelters to the Palestinians of Syria. In their turn, a number of Parliament members promised that the demands will be discussed in the coming Dutch parliament meeting. The sit –in contained a photo gallery that expresses the tragedy that the camps’ residents suffer from specially the Yarmouk camp which is the capital of Diaspora and the biggest camp. It is noted that the Yarmouk siege led to 172 victims due to hunger.

#### • The Palestinians of Europe and Palestinians of Syria conference

The Palestinians of Syria question has occupied a wide space in the activities of the Palestinians of Europe conference, which was held in 25<sup>th</sup> of April 2015 titled “The Palestinians of Europe and the National Project.”

The opening speech was to talk about the Palestinians of Syria suffering and it was said by Mr. Tareq Al Hamoud, the General Coordinator for the AGPS. Mr. Tareq Hamoud shed the light on the pain, suffering, and death of the Palestinians of Syria due to the ongoing conflict in Syria. He also stressed on the rights of the Yarmouk camp and the other camps to raise their voice because the carelessness of their cause continues.<sup>(11)</sup>

The Palestinians of Europe conference witnessed an exhibition titled as» A Cup of Coffee» for the Palestinian artist Anas Salama. He highlighted in his paintings the suffering of the Yarmouk

(11) Participating European institutions: Palestinians of Europe Conference, the Palestinian Return Centre - London, the Action Group for Palestinians of Syria - London, Palestinian assembly in Germany, the Palestinian Women’s Association - Germany, the Coordinating Council to support Palestine in Austria, Friends of Humanity - Austria, Palestine Youth League - Austria, the Palestinian justice center - Malmo, the Palestinian house - Netherlands.

(12) A speech of Mr. Tariq Hamoud, the AGPS former General Coordinator – PRC-London Executive Director: «The death counter is still counting martyrs, how our young people do not raise their voice, and how we do not object while abandonment is a Dagger of death Daggers for killing Palestinians of Syria?» He pointed out that Palestinians of Europe Conference was the first to defend the cause of Palestinians of Syria three years ago, and there are projects, convoys, campaigns, and appeals came out of the conference.

He pointed out that «the Yarmouk camp is besieged at least (665) days ago, and is suffering from siege, starvation, killing, and deprivation, and yet it is dealing with this massacre like a transient event occurring in any country around the world.» He demanded lifting the siege on the Yarmouk camp and it leaves the choice of 18,000 Palestinians to choose their own destiny. He stressed that more than three-quarters of Palestinians of Syria have become homeless either at home and abroad, and that there are hundreds of Palestinian detainees are uncounted for. Detainees’ families, us, and every Palestinian have to know their fate, demanding to release them both in prisons inside Syria or outside in Serbia, Macedonia and Cambodia. He believed that the detainees are our responsibility and we have to raise their names off the only solution. « He asked «the official and unofficial Palestinian leadership to put the issue of the Palestinians of Syria on the ladder of priorities, and to stop ignoring and excluding them and tampering with their fate. He also called elites and intellectuals to launch individual and collective initiatives, and not to wait for a formal role, but they have to be leaders and to identify the issue and this tragedy as much as possible. MR. Tariq Hamoud, AGPS general coordinator, concluded by emphasizing that «the Palestinians of Syria are an integral part of this people, an integral part of its options, and an authentic part of the right of return, which we will stick to by land, sea, and air. This right will not be forgotten by our tragedy.» Adding that: « We, in all languages of the world, say: we are returning to Palestine through the Yarmouk camp, Deraa camp, and Muzareeb, we are returning back through Ein Alhilwa, Aljalzoun, and Shijaea. Even if Palestine is our home, Camps are also a homeland on the path of this homeland, dear to our hearts as to Jaffa, Acre, and the Galilee. «

camp residents. Moreover, a workshop for the Palestinians of Syria was held in the conference and was attended by dozens of Palestinian Syrian activists, who live in Europe, where the attendees discussed the work mechanisms and the suggested ideas to support the Palestinians of Syria refugees.

The Conference stressed in its final statement that the conference is aware of the renewable Nakba of the Palestinians in Syria in addition to the suffering and pain of the Yarmouk camp and other camps. The statement refers to that the Palestine people Nakba continues unless they activate the right of return to their lands and homes in Palestine.

The statement also demanded of not imposing any on the Yarmouk residents and to open the camp for exit and entry according to the decision of its residents and the rest of the Palestinian camps in Syria. The statement called on the necessity to open the roads for the humanitarian aid to reach the residents of the camps. It stressed on the continuation of the efforts and campaigns to support the Palestinian people in their renewable Nakba with all efforts and also called all countries to commit to their obligations towards the refugees and to treat them well.

The conference chairs adopted the following-up of all suggestions of the workshop of the Palestinians of Syria that was held within the conference and they will do their best to apply those recommendations on ground according to the capacity of the Palestinians in Europe.

### ❖ **The Civil Palestinian Syrian Mobility in Europe**

The first half of 2015 witnessed the launch of a number of civil committees that were formed by the Palestinians of Syria in the countries in order to activate their role in the countries they resorted to.

#### • **Palestinians of Syria Committee in Austria**

The Palestinians of Syria committee in Austria was formed after calls of the coordination council to support Palestine in Vienna. It was formed to discuss the situation and problems of the displaced Palestinians of Syria in Austria and to become a strong seed for the future center of service that is specialized in the Palestinians of Syria affairs and to help them solve the problems that they suffer from.

#### • **Palestinians of Syria Committee in Sweden «Tawasul»**

The committee introduced itself as a temporary constituent assembly formed from a number of Palestinians of Syria activists. The committee seeks to activate the Palestinians of Syria in the different places in Sweden in addition to strengthen the relations amongst them. It is mission to solve the problems that face the refugees through the Swedish organizations, which support Palestine and to change the plight of the Palestinians of Syria to a gift.<sup>(13)</sup>

(13) Vision: Transforming the second plight of the Palestinians of Syria from a plight to a gift.

Objectives:

Interim Committee works during its first year on two main axes, namely: Palestinian refugees coming from Syria to Sweden, and the development of an institution or a private entity for Palestinian Syrian refugees in Sweden.

The first axis, objectives are summarized as follows:

- 1 Communicating with Palestinian Syrian refugees in Sweden
- 2 Survey available capabilities and expertise
- 3 Communicating with Swedish institutions in support of Palestine
- 4 working to provide legal assistance, guidance, and counseling
5. Preparing a series of activities and supporting events
- 6 Establishing sub-committees in various cities and regions

The second axis, which deals with Developing an institution or a private entity for Palestinian Syrian refugees, objectives are summarized as follows:

- 1 After a year, the Interim Committee turns from a temporary committee to an institution or a permanent committee
- 2 To put a clear vision for the work of proposed organization



- **The Palestinians of Syria are Tortured on the Roads of Migration**

The International Organization for Migration declared that about 1,800 migrants died in the Mediterranean during the first third of 2015 as increasing 30 times on the same period of 2014. According to a statement for the Italian coast guards, which was published on 28 June 2015, the number of the migrants, who reached Italy during the first half of 2015, is about 69,000 on. The statement clarified that the number of the refugees who reached Europe in 2015 exceeded the number of the refugees who reached during the first six months of 2014. In a related context, the number of the refugees who reached Greece since the beginning of 2015 is about 80,000 migrants; most of them reached Greece through sea.

International Humanitarian and Human Rights Organizations clarified that half of the migrants who reached Italy are from the Palestinians of Syria of Syrians and they escaped the ongoing conflict in Syria. <sup>(14)</sup>

Many observers attribute the increase in the number of illegal migration victims to the continuation of the migration and not just in one season but all seasons. The life and death were equal to the refugees and they are moving individual of in groups to the traffickers and smugglers to ride the death boats without looking to the sea or going through difficult and unsafe land roads.

- **The Palestinian Refugees in Egypt**

The Egyptian authorities detained about 60 Palestinian refugees at Karmouz police station in charges of illegal entry to Egypt on 25<sup>th</sup> of October 2014. they became arrested in bad and unhealthy situations amid treatment amid mistreatment, according to one of the detainees to the AGPS. <sup>(15)</sup>

It is worthy to mention that the Egyptian authorities returned the detained Syrian refugees to Turkey while they kept the Palestinian refugees at Karmouz police station though their innocence and transferring their papers to the Egypt Foreign ministry while they have the agreement of any country to accept them on its lands, which is rejected by the detainees.

In 9 February, the Palestinian and Syrian detainees declared their open hunger strike due to the carelessness of their issue at Karmouz prison. They entered in a hunger strike till they achieve their demands to coordinate with the concerned parties to receive them in the European Union countries specially the countries that their families are available in.

In 16<sup>th</sup> of June 2015, the Egyptian authorities began to transfer the detained Palestinian refugees at Karmouz prison since 8 months after the German authorities agreed to receive them. The

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3 To put proposed Bylaw for the institution in line with Swedish law

4 Enterprise license in the Swedish official institutions

5 To work on developing the institution to be one of the leading voices that represent the Palestinians of Syria in Sweden

Tools:

1 Social Work: through meetings, conferences, and communication with all segments of Palestinians of Syria in Sweden

2 Media work: by taking advantage of social networking sites, and to produce guidance and educational materials that serve newcomers

3 Legal and guiding work: by trying to secure all guiding information issued by the Swedish government agencies, in addition to benefiting from past experience for the Palestinian community in this regard

Structural:

During its first year, the temporary Committee follows to the Palestinian Justice Center- Malmö.

After the first year, the Interim Committee will be transformed into a founding committee oversees the convening of a general conference to launch an institution or a private entity for Palestinians of Syria.

A number of sub-committees branch for the Interim Committee to be distributed according to the whereabouts of the Palestinians of Syria in Sweden, and follows the founding committee. After the first year, all members of the sub-committees will be called to the General Conference.

task

Converting the second resort plight of the Palestinians of Syria from a plight to a grant

[https://www.facebook.com/tawasul.pal.syr/info?tab=page\\_info](https://www.facebook.com/tawasul.pal.syr/info?tab=page_info)

(14) Italy rescues 44,000 migrants during the past two days- the AGPS website- 30-6-2015

<http://www.actionpal.org.uk/ar/post.php?id=2242>.

(15) Palestinians of Syria, the wound is still bleeding- a documentary report issued by PRC and AGPS- Palestinian Refugees in Egypt, page 69 and beyond. [actionpal.org.uk/ar/reports/special/2014situationreport2woundstillbleeding.pdf](http://actionpal.org.uk/ar/reports/special/2014situationreport2woundstillbleeding.pdf)

number of the transferred refugees to Germany is 42 including women and children and the second group will be transferred to Sweden and France.

In 19 June 2015, 75 Palestinian and Syrian refugees launched through the AGPS, the humanitarian organizations and other concerned parties, a hunger strike in protest for their release from Balteim prison at Balteim city, which is located in the very north of Egypt and in Kafr Al Shekh governorate. The Refugees said, "We are Syrians and Palestinians, please help us to convey our message to all concerned parties, we hope that the United Nations help us, we are a group of detained women, elder people, children a week ago".

The refugees described their situation as very inhumane. They also complained of degradation of women by the Egyptian police and medical carelessness towards the infirm. They declared their hunger strike as a reaction of their suffering in the detention. Finally, they demanded the UN and Human Rights Organizations to intervene to release them of the continuous hell they were enduring.

### • **The Palestinian Refugees in Libya**

Libya is a key transit point for PRS to Europe. The insecurity in the country means PRS can not stay there but its proximity to Italy, make it a gateway. The worsening security situation, however, forced many to seek other avenues. Europe is a prime destination for refugees as many of the other countries are declining the intake of Palestinian refugees. Refugees are often smuggled from Libya to Europe by fishing boats, lacking basic safety that has led to the death of many refugees at sea. The smugglers use riots in Libya as well as the increasing number of refugees.

On 5 January 2015, the Interior Minister in the recognized Libyan government, Mr. Omar Al Sanky, issued a decision that bans the entry of the Sudanese, Palestinians, and Syrians to Libyan territories under the pretext that some may have had some involvement in the terrorist attacks in Libya.

Palestinian refugees were forced to find alternative routes after the airports refused them. Sudan has been another transit country and origin country to Libya, and thousands have used this route. A refugee being smuggled will start in an Arab country that has direct flight to Khartoum. From Sudan, the smuggler will send an online invitation from a Sudanese company, stating that they want to give him a contract to work, this enables them to enter with a visa, otherwise not granted to the PRS. The PRS are usually under the impression that the invitation is real – they are advised at the airport that the papers are fake and they should not show them to the authorities at Khartoum airport. They are told not to worry and that people will facilitate their illegal entry into the country. The result is the PRS finds himself stranded in a country with no legal standing to be there. From Libya cars smuggle them to Libya through the Sudanese Desert to their first station, which is Ijdabya Libyan city. People receive them and place them with other refugees. They are living in squalid conditions, living on a main meal of macaroni.

The smugglers keep the refugees until they have their money. Then they are transferred to the first smuggler. The smugglers get their money in Ijdabya and transfer the refugees to Sebrata, located in Tripoli city in Libya, which is the last station before riding the sea. The smuggler will detain the refugees until they get all their money before riding the boats.

During their moving from Ijdabya to Tripoli, the refugees are exposed to a number of risks such as the ongoing conflict between the Military Brigades in Libya. A driver of the smugglers car said, «once we traveled with a convoy of ten cars but we reached with eight cars.

One immigrant said,»They were transferred in the fruit refrigerators from Tarhouna to Sebrata». Others said that they slept in horse stables near Sert city for several days in very difficult situations due to clashes while they were near the city.

## Documenting and Monitoring Calls from Libya

On 11 January 2015, the AGPS received news about the detention of 35 PRS including three children at Zwara area, which is near Al Zawraa, north west of Libya. The refugees were exposed to pillaging at gunpoint and they are treated savagely after they were prevented from getting food and calling their relatives.

On 23 January 2015, the AGPS documented the death of the Palestinian Syrian refugee, Husam Ahmed Mohsen, in a car overturn while he was on the migration route through the desert road between Sudan and Libya.

On 31 January 2015, the AGPS received news about the detention of 25 PRS and Syrian refugees at Qernada prison at Al Bayda city at Al Jabal Al Akhdar northwest Libya; they had been detained for three months and ten days. The news referred that their release is waiting papers from the Palestine Consul in Libya.

3 February 2015, the AGPS monitored the missing of the Palestinian refugee, Fares Jalbout, 26 years old, from Yarmouk camp. He went missed while leaving Ijdabya to Tripoli in Libya and has not been heard from since.

On 12 February 2015, the AGPS received news about the intention of the Libyan Authorities to release a number of PRS and Syrian refugees that they arrested on 15 December 2014 while they were heading from Ijdabya to Tripoli under the pretext of illegal immigration. The news also referred that the Libyan Authorities will transfer 17 Palestinian youth coming from Lebanon and Syria from Mesrata prison to Tripoli central Prison as to release them.

On 24 February 2015, the AGPS documented the death of Dr. Mnawer Raheel from Khan Al Shieh residents as he sank in the Mediterranean while trying to reach the Italian Shores launching from Libya.

On 6 March 2015, the AGPS received news about missing the Palestinian Syrian youth Ahmed Khalid Hasan after launching on a boat from Libya to Italy.

On 13 April, about 150 people, including tens of PRS and Syrian refugees, launched through the AGPS an appeal to the International Confederation of Red Cross (ICRC) to contact the Italian Coast Guards and rescue them after their boat had crashed, which was launched before a day of the sinking date from Mesrata in Libya towards the Italian shores.

## • Displaced Palestinian Refugees in Morocco

Dozens of refugees are trying each day to pass from Morocco to Melilla Spanish city, which is located on the Mediterranean, in order to apply for asylum there.

On 6 May 2015, 50 PRS launched an appeal through AGPS while they were stuck in one of the border areas near Melilla State northern of Morocco. The refugees were trying to immigrate illegally while escaping the ongoing war in Syria. They demanded all international organizations and human rights organizations intervene to end their suffering and to contact the Moroccan government to allow the refugee to leave its territories to the European countries.

A recording was shared on social media of a displaced PRS woman from yarmouk, shouting and shut out, outside the Spanish Gate in Morocco. She described her suffering and the Palestinian refugees suffering during their journey, naming it the "Death Road" She clarified that the trip was leaving from an area called «Mughaneia» in Morocco, and the topography of the place was very rugged: the immigrants walked for several hours, all the way to the state of Melilla maritime border.

A PRS described of their treatment by the smugglers: «The smugglers transferred them by cars at specific points, and from one place to another; from one city to another. We walked on foot over roads, mountains, and valleys over thorns, plants, and stones.» She pointed out

that smugglers prevented them from talking, using phones or smoking cigarettes, for fear that border guards were to discover them and arrest them. This was confirmed but they escaped the border guards several times.

The PRS stressed during the interview that they were at the mercy of the border guards and smugglers and when they pass to the other side they were exposed to being beaten, insulted and humiliated. She described the crossing as worse than the Rafah crossing and the treatment is worse than the Israeli Occupation treatment on the checkpoints and crossings.

### • **Palestinian Refugees at Cyprus**

At midnight on 26 September 2014, the Cyprus navy withdrew a boat that was carrying 345 Palestinian and Syrian refugees while they were heading to Italy. The refugees were obliged to fingerprint in Cyprus and they put them in a refugee camp. The Cyprus authorities provided them with food and drink in the camp and they gave them some time to continue the asylum procedures and to close the camp. Moreover, they will end the refugees' case burdens on the Cypriot authorities.

Under the pressure of the European Union and a number of organizations, the refugees didn't leave the camp.

On 26 December 2014, the Cypriot Police found a dead body of the Palestinian Syrian refugee ,Ahmed Abdulla from Al Baramka neighborhood, from those refugees still in the Greek Cyprus. His dead body was found on the side of the road after several days of being missing. Cypriot authorities officially notified the Palestinian and Syrian refugees, living in Purnara camp, to leave. This came in a letter signed by the Chairman of Purnara camp, Dr. John Avlonettis, under the title "last alarm" directed to the residents in the camp, the warning included 5 points:

1. The last day of the camp is Friday 16 January 2015 at 3:00 pm.
2. Everyone must complete his\her asylum or temporary residency procedures.
3. Those who applied for asylum are be transferred to Kufino camp on Friday 16 January 2015.
4. The deadline for those who have applied for temporary residency can stay in the camp until 16 January 2015.
5. Those who did not apply, should leave the camp on Friday morning 16 January 2015.

On 16 January 2015, the AGPS received a message of distress from the PRS in Cyprus, demanding all civil, religious, official, human rights, United Nations, and the UNHCR organizations to assist the Purnara camp residents and find a suitable solution for them.

The message came as Cypriot authorities started to carry out its last warning to evacuate the camp. The Cypriot civil defense started to eliminate some refugees' tents and to end all services in the camp. The committees were formed in cooperation with the Palestine Community at Cyprus to organize the camp after closing it by the government.

On 27 January 2015, the Cypriot authorities allowed the entry of Mr. Ameen Abu Rashid and Hasan Al Rfai, Al Quds Satellite channel correspondent, to its territories to continue their humanitarian mission to the Palestinian detainees at Cyprus. Meanwhile, resources confirmed that this decision came after the intervention of the Dutch authorities, as the President of the Al Wafa campaign "Amin Abu Rashid" holds the Dutch citizenship. Abu Rashid and Hasan Al Rfai were initially arrested at Larnaca airport, but were eventually allowed to enter the territories. .

On 30 January 2015, the Cypriot government started to unbind some of the PRS tents in Cyprus. The authorities also stopped all services provided to the Palestinian refugees such as place, food, and water, moreover, they closed the medical center. A refugee said "they will transfer everybody to streets, parks, and mosques because there is no place to go."

After Al Wafa Campaign and the Palestine community in Cyprus, the Cypriot Government decided to postpone unbinding the tents at Kokkina Tarmesiya camp at Nicosia, which receives tens of PRS, until the end of the week. It is expected to transfer them to a safe place with the possibility to extend their stay at Kokkina camp.

Al Wafa Campaign confirmed that the Cypriot authorities agreed to change their state from humanitarian stay to a tourist or work visa.

On Thursday 3 February 2015, the Cypriot authorities agreed to new procedures that ease the transfer of the Palestinian refugees, who staying out of duress at the temporary shelter camp in the Cypriot capital.

The agreement was between the representatives of the Palestine community and the shelter camp's residents. The Cypriot government agreed to pay 500 Euro for adult and 200 Euro for each child to cover the expenses of their stay at the hotels until Saturday 7 February 2015 and they granted the refugees a tourist visa for seven months. The period allows refugees to apply for other countries visas and to extend their visas if the countries ask for it.

The Cypriot authorities transferred the residents of the camp and their furniture and things in buses to distribute them to hotels in some of the main cities such as Nicosia, Larneca and Lemasol according to the refugees' choices.

## • **Palestinian Refugees in Greece**

Greece is a main destination country for refugees in Europe because as the journey is fairly straight forward by sea from Turkey and it is also relatively cheap.

Hundreds of PRS were exploited by human traffickers in Greece. Dozens of them had been erected and theft by human traffickers who promised to deliver them to northern European countries, forcing them to stay in Greek cities for long periods, in some cases for more than six months.

After many days of waiting, most refugees lost their money and could not reach their destination. A refugee described Greece as, "it is the cemetery of refugees," as many were left in Greece as its strict security procedures on smuggling prevented many from moving on.

The AGPS monitored violations by the Greek navy and police towards the refugees such as beating, cursing and throwing their papers and belongings in the sea.

They were provided with substandard housing, poor food and only temporary residency for 6 months despite being stuck in limbo, unable to return to the conflict and unable to continue their journey to Europe. They were then forced by Greek authorities to leave the camps. Some were detained for various periods in prisons, similar to Nazi prisons, according to a description made by a refugee who had been released.

Those violations prompted the PRS and Syrian refugees to carry out consecutive protests at Athens City during December 2014, against strict procedures imposed on them, not allowing them to leave Greece to other European Countries.

One of the protestors said that an officer from the Greek Interior ministry asked the protestors to end the protest and empty the squares but they refused. The protestors called the Minister to listen to their demands so the deputy of the minister of the Migration and Passports Department agreed to meet a delegation from the PRS.

The deputy asked them to put together a list of the protestors' names but the demands were not achieved and the sit-ins were spread in the first month of 2015, the open sit-in included several areas in Greece such as: Athena, Syantijma square, in front of the Greek Parliament, and the Golden Square area.

More than 1000 protestors from the PRS gathered and raised slogans "don't repeat the tragedy of Saeed Mohammed Saleh"<sup>(16)</sup>, they sent messages to the International and Palestinian organisations to take actions to rescue them.

The refugees said that they will continue to protest until the authorities fulfil their demands including, tmore humane treatment, safe passage from Greece to other European countries, better conditions to endure the severe cold and to avoid the perilous journey by sea ar the hands of smugglers, as they have no money for food and medicine.

The Palestinian refugee protesters also demanded the Palestinian embassy and its ambassador "Merwan Toubasi" in Greece, visit, support and show compassion for them, as well as representing them to the Greek authorities.

After a series of protests, the Greek authorities declared that they would carry out a pledge on 14 January 2015. The Syrians and the Palestinians in Greece started to attain valid travel documents for Greece, allowing them to travel to any European country in order to seek asylum safely, avoiding the risks of smuggling and scams that the Syrians were exposed to.

The agreement was between the government and the protestors, which states that it will prepare a list for possible asylum to the migration and passports department at KatyKhaki area in order to issue the required travel documents and to end the protest at Syntegma Square completely. They also were given the right to education and medicine.

Despite the allowance, some European countries such as Sweden said, through an official declaration to Alkomis Network and the Migration Office, that it will reject asylum applications from refugees coming from Greece, if they have a residency in Greece.

William Spindler, a spokesperson for the UNHCR in Geneva, addressed likely destination European countries and spoke about the problems in the Asylum system in Greece, which meant difficulty granting refugees residency, while also being vulnerable to arrest and being shot at at other border areas. He spoke about the worrying situation of how to support the refugees and the discrimination they faced.

The spokespersonsaid that most refugees headed to destination countries after reaching Greece and ensured that the UNCHR seeks to document the unofficial return cases of refugees coming from Turkey to Greece by land or sea.

On 2 January 2015, the AGPS documented the death of Palestinian youth, Saeed Mohammed Saleh, while trying to reach northern Europe. His dead body was found frozen in one of the forests while trying to reach Greece. His five year-old daughter was with him on the journey, her father died while embracing her, trying to protect her from severe cold in the forest.

On 17 January 2015, the AGPS declared Palestinian Syrian refugee, Majed Mohammed Al Daqqa from Barzeh compound for Palestinian refugees in Damascus, went missing while heading to Turkey then to Greece. He died from poisoning, suffering for seven days in Greece. He crossed the sea a number of times and having been out of contact for some time, his relatives have said that there is no word from him.

On 29 January 2015, the AGPS received news about the missing Palestinian refugee, Mahmoud Mohamed Abbas in Greece; he is from the residents of the Yarmouk camp.

On 20 April 2015, the AGPS documented that a boat carrying at least three hundred people, sank yesterday off the Greek island of Rhodes in the Mediterranean. The International Organization for Migration (IOM) received a distress call by a person on board, who declared the death of twenty persons on board the boat.

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(16) Saeed Saleh, a Palestinian Syrian young man, and a Greek farmer found his corpse frozen holding his a live daughter

The Greek Coast Guard, however, did rescue 83 people from sea and returned to retrieve the bodies of a man, a woman and a child, after their boat collided with rocks near Ziveros area off the Dodecanese island of Rhodes. The AGPS documented the death of the Palestinian youth, Ahmed Mahmoud Abbas, 30 years old from Al Aedin camp in Homs, who was amongst the passengers.

On 9 May 2015, a group of Palestinian and Syrian immigrants appealed to the International and the Italian Red Cross to intervene in order to secure their passage to Italy, after a strike on a commercial ship that had been rescued and headed to Greece, rejecting the Greek police's attempt to forcibly disembark them to Greece.

Migrants also called Arab, international, and Greek news agencies to go to the port of Kalamata in order to report on their plight on board the merchant ship, in order to put pressure on the Greek and Italian Red Cross to coordinate in order to transfer them to Italy.

The boat was that was carrying Palestinian and Syrian immigrants which launched from Turkey to Italy, was out of fuel while a merchant ship that was headed to Greece rescued them. The Greek police tried to climb the vessel to force the immigrants to disembark, but the ship's crew refused to do so without the presence of the Red Cross.

## • **Palestinian Refugees at Macedonia**

On 22 December 2014, the AGPS documented that about 450 Palestinian and Syrian young detainees in Macedonian prisons announced a hunger strike protesting the continued detention in Macedonian prisons in less than basic conditions of hygiene and provision of food. The Macedonian authorities responded by cutting the power and water as punishment to end their hunger strike.<sup>(17)</sup>

The AGPS documented that the Macedonian authorities detained 40 Palestinian refugees at Ghazi Baba camp and the detention department in Fergizia.

On 3 May 2015, the AGPS received a letter from a number of Palestinian and Syrian detainees inside Ghazi Baba camp in Macedonia, which described their suffering inside the camp as similar to a prison.

The detainees confirmed, in their letter, that there are number of Syrians, Palestinians, Iraqis and Afghans, inside the prison, and they are enduring dire situations. There is no room for everyone to sleep at the same time: 27 currently habitate a room that accomodtes 10 people, while a number of them are sleeping in the corridors, near the garbage containers or near bathrooms.

The letter indicated that the police do not provide them with any services, they are drunk most of the time on wine, coming round only to turn off the lights. In their offices they call some of the female detainees to the investigation room and sexually harass them.

Families with young children including new borns are not exempt from abuse by the police involving beatings, and calls of being criminals, killers and terrorists.

Residents in the camp stressed that there were no hygiene services, no doors to the bathrooms, no hot water for showering, no boilers, while the prison administration prevents them from having food and clothes, as some of them were detained for surplus of five months. Food consists of one loaf of bread and a can of tuna or sardines per person. Water provided was contaminated and additional purchase of water and food comes at high prices.

Health issues plague the residents, including asthma, hypertension and diabetes; one of the detainees lost functional use of one of his testicles; another detainee had been shot in his hand, resulting to gangrene and eventually amputation.

(17) Palestinians of Syria, the wound is still bleeding- a documentary report issued by PRC and AGPS- Obstacles on the road, page 103 and beyond. [actionpal.org.uk/ar/reports/special/2014situationreport2woundstillbleeding.pdf](http://actionpal.org.uk/ar/reports/special/2014situationreport2woundstillbleeding.pdf)

Detainees are also not allowed to go outside bar women, children or anyone told to take the rubbish outside, being ordered to return immediately. None of the detainees know the reason for their detention or of their court date.

Communication with relatives has on the most part been banned, assumingly so as not to be able to inform them of their presence in the prison as they say, they are only irregular migrants fleeing a war, not criminals or terrorists.

They also renewed their appeals to human rights organisations, international organisations, the ICRC and Palestinian embassies, which is the only legitimate representative of the Palestinian people, to do their part and put an end to their suffering.

On 5 May 2015, the AGPS received news that the Macedonian authorities released Palestinian refugees and had been transferred to Greece; where about 290 refugees are still in the detention, including Palestinians Syrians and Syrians.

The AGPS documented in the first month of 2015 the death of the Palestinian refugee, Mohammed Mshenish, also known as Abu Zain, from the Yarmouk camp in Macedonia. He died after being exposed to an acceding while he was in his way from Greece to Serbia in order to reach European Asylum countries after losing contact with him on 24 November 2014.

On 10 May 2015, the Palestinian Syrian refugee, Sami Khalid Deyab, went missing in Macedonia while trying to travel to Europe.

### • **The Palestinian refugees in Hungary**

Hungary is considered a transit country: thousands pass through it by land or by foot to reach destination asylum countries. Hungarian authorities arrested a number of PRS while trying to travel to a European country through its territory on charges of illegal immigration.

According to the testimony of a detainee's father to the AGPS, the prison administration in Hungary has terrorized the detained PRS in order to forcibly extract their asylum fingerprint.

Meanwhile, dozens of Palestinian refugees detained in Hungary have been humiliated and treated inhumanly due to the insistence of the Hungarian authorities to forcibly extract their asylum fingerprint, which would prevented then from following their families to other countries such as Sweden, Norway, Denmark and other European countries.

The AGPS documented dozens of detained Palestinian refugees in Hungary that were experiencing assault, humiliation and inhuman treatment after the Hungarian authorities insisted on forcibly taking their fingerprints for asylum. This procedure will prevent them from joining their families in other European countries; such as Sweden, Netherlands, Denmark and other countries.

Meanwhile, the prison management deliberately terrorizes the PRS detainees in Ttbanya prison by punishing those who resist the fingerprinting by putting them in prison and depriving them of food and drink.

One of the refugees said that they were arrested by Hungarian authorities about two weeks ago on charges of illegal immigration, and among them there were women and children, as well as some patients that required medical care.

Regarding the treatment of the prison administration toward them, he said: «It confiscated all their personal belongings and ID papers, and practiced psychological pressure and torture «starvation.» He added that the prison administration told them earlier of the release date, but it breached their promises and extended the period of imprisonment as they resisted providing fingerprints for the aylum process, a process known a «Dublin” Requirement.



He added that «based on these non-humanitarian and ethical practices we decided to declare an open hunger strike in order to achieve our demands of release, not to extract our fingerprints, and to allow us heading to one of the European countries.» He also said that the officer in charge of booking threatened them to cut off the internet and other threats if they did not end their strike and eat their food.

On 18 May 2015, the detainees launched an appeal through the AGPS to human rights and civil society organisations to intervene for their release after being arrested by Hungarian authorities on charges of illegal immigration.

On 30 January 2015, the Supreme Administrative Court in Berlin decided to stop the deportation of the Syrian and the Palestinian refugees in Germany, who left their fingerprints at Hungary because it lacks readiness. The court refers that according to the Dublin agreement, the first country the refugee reaches is responsible for him to receive and protect. In 2011, the European Court of Justice found that Greece is unable to receive refugees and the court decided that Hungary was unable to receive refugees too.

On 23 June 2015, Hungary suspended one of the Dublin treaty items, which provide to return the refugee back to the country he first arrived to.

On 24 June 2015, Austria called the Hungary ambassador after Budapest stopped receiving asylum seekers from other European countries challenging the European authorities, moreover it will increase the refugee burden on Vienna.

### • **The Palestinian Refugees in Indonesia**

Southeast Asian countries specially Thailand, Indonesia, Philippines, South Korea are the nearest transit countries to Australia, which they can get to through smuggling mafias

The AGPS documented two cases of Palestinian refugees in the Indonesian prisons; they are Deya Abu Al Hayja and Tareq Ouda. Tareq is one of hundreds stories suffered by the Palestinian refugee due to the war in Syria. Tariq went to seek safety, similarly to other Palestinian refugees.

Thailand was his destination station where he found stability and security; he lived there for three years and seven months without any problems, only those related to housing and accommodation, but he embraced this temporary life until he faced the dilemma of his passport that was washed in the washing machine by mistake.

However, he went to the Syrian consulate in Thailand in order to attain a new travel document, but the Syrian consul refused as he remained without a document proving his personal identity, which would expose him to prosecution and deportation, especially as he had had no visa for the last two and a half years.

Tariq decided to leave Thailand and travel illegally with a false passport; his trip started from Thailand, through Cambodia and Indonesia, arriving in Colombo, Sri Lanka as he was detained by airport security in transit.

In a letter received by the AGPS, Tariq confirmed the news of his detention for five days in Sri Lanka airport without food or water or a bathroom. He pointed out that he does not know when he will be released. He said: «Whenever I ask them about the date of my release, they tell me a new story, the last thing I knew that they will deport me to Jakarta, «he added, if I already was deported to that country, I certainly would go to prison because I entered Jakarta with a false passport.

On 19 May 2015, The Palestinian refugee “Tariq Adnan Ouda” detained at the Indonesian prisons on charges of illegal immigration launched a distress call through the AGPS to appeal to human

rights institutions and the civil society to intervene for his release. Mr. Ouda said, in a letter, of which the AGPS received a copy, that he is detained in the Immigration and Passports prison near the airport after the Sri Lankan authorities returned him to Indonesia. He also added that he does not know what the charges are or the fate that awaits him. Mr. Ouda who lives in harsh conditions and suffering from a bad physical and psychological situation has spoken with the Palestinian ambassador in Indonesia to express sympathy with his suffering.

The ambassador promised to issue him a new passport by the Palestinian Authority, and pointed out that the new passport will not be issued prior to three months passing, after that he will not be able to travel to any other country.

At the end of his letter, Tariq Ouda, request his message be delivered to all international organisations, human rights organisations, the PA and the Palestinian factions soto intervene to end his suffering.

The AGPS documented that the Indonesian authorities arrested the Palestinian refugee Deya Al Deen Adnan Ghazi Abu Al Hayja, from Yarmouk camp. On 3 April 2014, Abu Al Hayja emmigrated illegally and was arrested in Indonesia. Then, he was sent to the Pontianak detention center at Kalimantan. He stayed in the center for two months and was treated badly, being beaten by members of the Migration and Passport Department.

Abu Al Hayja had a disease called Idiopathic thrombocytopenic purpura and stayed five days in hospital then he was transferred to kalideres detention center in Jakarta, the Indonesian capital, without any rights and in inhumane conditions.

### • **The Palestinian Refugees in Thailand**

On 28 January 2015, a number of Palestinian Syrian detainees for about a year in Thailand have launched a distress call via the AGPS to put an end to their tragedy. In detail, one of the detainees - who preferred not to be mentioned by name - said to the group that he and five young men from Syria, who fled the horrors of the war in Syria, In addition to an old man and his son from Gaza, and a young Palestinian from Iraq.

Those detainees were arrested about a year ago on charges of the expiry of their visas, adding that after the end of their visas they tried to travel to the Cambodian border, so as to renew it but they did not, and during our presence in Bangkok we were arrested on charges of being at the end of our residency papers". The young man also said, "we were distributed on two prisons in Bangkok, named "IDE", and the second prison followed to the Department of Immigration and about four hours away from Bangkok."

The AGPS correspondent asked about the circumstances and the conditions of detention, and the young man replied, "the place is very dirty, the food is little and poor quality, and the guards prevent us from going out for ventilation where we did not see the sun for long periods which caused skin diseases for us."

Meanwhile, the detainees complained of the lack of communication with them by any legal or official Palestinian or international entity,. They also expressed surprise at the UNHCR's position when he said, "Although we are registered with the UNHCR but they did not protect us from detention, and the Commission did not communicate with us, neither it nor any legal or official Palestinian or international organization."

In conclusion, the young man, who provided the group with a list of Syrians, Iraqis, Palestinians and Gazan detainees, appealed to all those institutions, international, Arab, and Palestinian human rights organizations, and on top of the PLO, the Palestinian Embassy, the human rights organizations, and UNHCR to intervene to put an end to the tragedy and to release them. It is noted that the detainees renewed their appeal on 4 February 2015.

- **The Palestinian Refugees in Romania**

Romania is considered one of the European transit countries to destination Asylum countries. Through Romania the refugees try to go to Europe leaving from Turkey, then Bulgaria and Austria. The other way is from Turkey to Romania by sea then directly to Hungary by land.

In the second month of 2015, the Romanian coast Guards rescued about 70 migrants; most of them were Syrians, Palestinians, and Iraqis. They were in a little fishing boat, it was about to sink while trying to cross the sever waves to reach Europe.

- **Numbers and Indicators**

The AGPS monitored the events over the migration flows through the seas during the first half of 2015 as follows:-

On 16 January 2015, the Italian Navy rescued 326 Syrian and Palestinian refugees on a fishing boat. The boat was launched from Zowara, a Libyan city, before it was withdrawn from the sea.

On 16 February 2015, the Italian Navy teams rescued 130 people who were in a boat that was launched from Libya heading to the Italian port opposing Lampedosa, south of Italy. The passengers were made up of about 1,000 migrants of different nationalities, including hundreds of Palestinian and Syrian refugees, they were launched from the Libyan cities such as Zeltin, Zowaa and Seprata to the Italian territories. Before days of the rescue operations, two boats sank in sea which were coming from the Libyan coasts, the waves swallowed about 300 migrants who were onboard.

On 4 March 2015, Italian coast Guards found 10 dead bodies in a new drowning incident of illegal immigrants south of the Mediterranean, while their nationalities were not declared.

On 5 April 2015, survivors reported that 400 migrants died when their boat sank after it launched from Libya on its way to Italy. 550 migrants were onboard when it sank after 24 hours of its launching from the Libyan coasts. The Italian coast guards clarified that the boat lost its way 150 Km far in front of the Libyan coasts. The Italian coast guards rescued about 144 people who were onboard.

On 7 June 2015, the Italian coast guards declared that they rescued more than 2,000 migrants from five wooden boats in the Mediterranean.

On 25 June 2015, the Palestinian refugee, Maysar Abed Bushtawi, 65 years, died while she was on a boat that was launched from Egypt to Italy from diabetes.

On 28 June 2015, the Italian coast guards declared that they rescued during the last two days about 4,400 migrants in front of the Libyan coast.

**The AGPS-July 3, 2015**









While the Syrian crisis still rages on, the Palestinian refugees that have been in Syria for 67 years are paying the price as the war has impacted on fundamental capacities of both the Syrian and Palestinian people.

The war's remit has expanded to the refugee camps and the compounds that are distributed throughout the Syrian cities. 2,910 Palestinian refugees have died as a result of clashes, shelling or due to torture within Syrian prisons.

The report uses anecdotal evidence from Palestinian refugee camps and compounds inside of Syria that provides information of the daily life, health and humanitarian conditions of Palestinian refugees in Syria. It also documents the daily abuses and events that arise out of the conflict that is ongoing in Syria and that has affected the Palestinian refugees in particular. Finally, it details the situation of displaced PRS, that are displaced for the second time outside of Syria. Having fled/migrated to neighbouring countries as either a destination or transit point until they reach Europe.

This report reflects the most important events in the first half of 2015, which is preceded by two reports documenting the events of the first and second half of 2014, a "status report" and several special reports on issues related to the Palestinian Syrian affairs.

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