



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

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الخاص بأوضاع اللاجئين الفلسطينيين في سورية

Daily report on the situation of Palestinian refugees in Syria



"Family Appeals for Information over Fate of Missing Refugee in Turkey"

- Palestine Refugee Agency Disappointed by European Parliament's Latest Resolution
- Coronavirus Cases Reported among Palestinians in Gilin
- Activists Warn of Blackmail as Prisoners Get Transferred to Damascus Lock-Up
- Popular Conference for Palestinians Abroad Distributes Relief Items in Yarmouk Camp

+442084530978

/Actgroup.palsyria

reports@actionpal.org.uk

www.actionpal.org.uk



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Latest Developments

The family of Palestinian refugee from Syria Mohamed Ahmed Es'id has called upon the Turkish and Greek authorities along with the International Red Cross and other humanitarian institutions to work on disclosing Ahmed's condition and whereabouts.

Ahmed disappeared over two years ago as he tried to illegally enter the Greek island of Rhodes through Turkey.

The family said Es'id was accompanied with 11 Palestinian and Syrian migrants, including a 10-year-old child before they went missing on March 27, 2019 in Fathiye, west of Turkey.

The list of missing migrants includes three Palestinians from Syria: Mohamed Marwan Tamim and Mohamed Dhafer AlNajar, from Yarmouk Camp, along with Mohamed Ahmed Es'id.

In another development, the United Nations Relief and Works Agency for Palestine Refugees in the Near East (UNRWA) said it was disappointed by the language adopted by the European Parliament in its 2019 discharge resolution on European Union (EU) budget implementation.

In a Friday statement, UNRWA said "the language implies that UNRWA teaches and disseminates hate speech and encourages violence within its schools. UNRWA is a United Nations Agency with zero tolerance for hatred, incitement to violence or discrimination."



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UNRWA said it unequivocally rejects such unfounded assertions and confirms that its educational materials uphold and advance the UN principles and values of neutrality, human rights, equality and non-discrimination regarding race, gender, language and religion.

The Agency said host country curricula are used by it in all its fields of operations and the content of the educational materials is thoroughly reviewed to ensure that it is in line with UN values and principles.

"In the rare cases where discrepancies are found, a robust system is in place to address them. To suggest that hate is widespread within the Agency and schools is not only false and misleading, but it validates sensationalist and politically motivated attacks which deliberately seek to discredit UNRWA and harm the most vulnerable section of the community: the Palestine refugee children," the statement added.

UNRWA stressed that it has a zero-tolerance policy for any deviation to UN principles. Nevertheless, UNRWA acknowledged that there cannot be zero risk when operating in a complex humanitarian setting and in a highly politicized environment.

"Members of the Parliament have been duly informed and kept up to date regarding this important development, and we profoundly regret that UNRWA investments have been ignored by many members of the European Parliament in its 2019 discharge resolution on EU budget implementation", the statement read.



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Meanwhile, coronavirus cases have been increasingly recorded among Palestinians sheltered in Gilin town, south of Syria.

Activists have denounced the absence of anti-coronavirus measures and the violation of precautionary protocols.

Palestinian refugees who have returned to Gilin town, in Daraa's western outskirts, after they fled the area due to the rampant shelling and deadly shootouts, continue to sound distress signals over the unbearable situation they have been enduring in the area.

Gilin's infrastructure and public amenities have sustained massive destruction in the warfare. Civilians wishing to have access to healthcare facilities often head for AlMuzeireeb town as no clinics are operative in Gilin.

Located some 25 kilometers away northwest of Daraa's city center, Gilin is home to 1,700 families displaced from the occupied Palestinian territories.

In the meantime, activists have warned that the families of hundreds of Palestinian refugees secretly held in Syrian state jails have been blackmailed over their appeals for information following reports on the transfer of prisoners to Damascus central prison of Adra.

Over recent years, hundreds of families have paid large sums of money of up to \$20,000 to brokers, crooked lawyers, or government officials to get pieces of information about the condition and whereabouts of their missing relatives.



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The families hardly ever receive the required pieces of information and the traffickers never show up again as soon as they are paid.

In a report entitled “Syria: Between Prison and the Grave” and published in 2015, Amnesty International warned that tens of thousands of people in Syria have vanished without a trace. They are the victims of enforced disappearance – when a person is arrested, detained or abducted by a state or agents acting for the state, who then deny the person is being held or conceal their whereabouts, placing them outside the protection of the law. The disappeared are cut off from the outside world, packed into overcrowded, secret cells where torture is routine, disease is rampant and death is commonplace. Their families are forced to live in desperation with few, if any, safe ways of finding their loved ones.

According to the report, the number of actors seeking to use the system for their own personal gain or advantage has increased. As a result of this opportunism by state security officers, an even greater number of individuals have been subjected to enforced disappearance in Syria. Amnesty International’s research suggested that those who exploit the system are driven by two primary motivations: first, the pursuit of financial profit, and second, the settling of personal grievances.

AGPS documented the secret detention of 1,797 Palestinian refugees in state-run penal complexes across war-torn Syria, among them 110 women and girls.



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AGPS also documented the death of over 550 Palestinian refugees under torture in Syrian government lock-ups, including women, children, and elderly civilians.

Affidavits by ex-detainees provided evidence on the involvement of Syrian government officers in harsh torture tactics, including electric shocks, heavy beating using whips and iron sticks, and sexual abuse against Palestinian detainees, in a flagrant violation of the Convention against Torture and Other Cruel, Inhuman or Degrading Treatment or Punishment, commonly known as the United Nations Convention against Torture (UNCAT).

Humanitarian Action

The Popular Conference for Palestinians Abroad distributed relief items to residents of Yarmouk Camp for Palestinian refugees, in Damascus.

200 families benefited from the move. Representatives of the Popular Conference visited Fayez Halawah Clinic and the local bakery to assess the damage inflicted upon them in the warfare.

The unabated warfare has had disastrous fallouts on Palestinian refugee camps across the Syrian territories. Palestinians who remained in Yarmouk or returned to the camp sometime later have been struggling for survival, in an area that has been severely affected by the deadly hostilities.



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Over recent years, most of Yarmouk's families have lived on sporadic aid handed over to them by UNRWA.

Civilians continue to appeal to the concerned authorities to speed up reconstruction works and rehabilitate infrastructure and vital facilities, including water and power networks.

Before the crisis started in 2011, Yarmouk was a bustling home to almost 30 percent of the Palestine refugee population in Syria. Today, the weight of displacement, hardship and the loss of loved ones add to the difficult living conditions in Yarmouk.