

01-12-2022

No: 3776

مجموعة العمل

من أجل فلسطينيي سورية  
Action Group For Palestinians of Syria



## التقرير اليومي



الخاص بأوضاع اللاجئين الفلسطينيين في سورية  
The situation of Palestinian refugees in Syria

### **AGPS Calls for International Protection of Palestinians in/from Syria**

- **Cash-Stripped Palestinian Families Sound Alarm over Poor School Performance in AlHusainiya Camp**
- **Rights Groups Call for Establishing International Entity to Track Those Forcibly-Disappeared in Syria**



## **Latest Developments**

AGPS calls on the international community and UNRWA to assume their responsibilities regarding the Palestinian refugee community and to work on providing those trapped in conflict zones, particularly Syria, with psycho-physical and legal protection.

AGPS also stresses the need to secure the refugees' access to their basic rights to free movement, healthcare, humanitarian assistance, and education, as per international laws and conventions.

Due to their fragile legal status, Palestinian refugees from Syria (PRS) have been subject to arbitrary arrests and movement crackdowns and denied their basic rights. Those who fled the war-torn country to other destinations remain at a constant risk of refoulement.

After twelve years of conflict, PRS continue to be one of the most vulnerable groups in Syria with immense humanitarian needs.

PRS continue to launch cries for help over their deteriorating humanitarian condition due to the sharp decrease in the exchange rate of the Syrian pound compared to the USD and their lack of access to the local labor market. The price leap has also overburdened the cash-stripped refugees. House rents have also seen a striking hike from previous years.

Over 90 per cent of Palestine refugee households in Syria live in poverty and 40 per cent remain in protracted displacement as a result of conflict and the damage and destruction of their homes.

UN data indicates that 126,000 PRS are identified as extremely vulnerable; 89% live in poverty; 91% live in extreme poverty; and 80% rely on UNRWA cash assistance as their main source of income. 55% of PRS do not possess valid legal residency documents; 100% of PRS are in need of winterization assistance; and 86% of PRS households are reported to be in debt.



Meanwhile, Palestinian refugees sheltered in AlHusainiya camp, in Syria's Rif Dimashq province, said their children's school grades have gone down gradually over time due to economic hardship and the ensuing trauma inflicted by the conflict.

Over recent years, AGPS has kept record of a sharp nosedive in access to education for Palestinians sheltered in AlHusainiya refugee camp, among other displacement camps set up across the war-torn country.

A number of local schools face overcrowding, with over 60 students often crammed in a single classroom.

Schoolchildren have also been subjected to bullying and psycho-physical violence by a number of teaching staff.

At times, students are compelled to walk for kilometers to attend classes or sit for exams due to the transportation crisis. The situation has been exacerbated by the chronic power blackouts.

At the same time, teachers have been facing dire conditions due to salary decreases at government-run schools, where a tutor receives no more than 70,000 Syrian pounds.

Hundreds of teaching staff and university graduates have sought other jobs to earn a living and meet their families' basic needs. Scores of other teachers have been laid off by government or UN-run academic institutions. Dozens of instructors have also been forced to join pro-government battalions and serve in the Palestine Liberation Army (PLA), affiliated with the Syrian regime.

Upon more than one occasion, UNRWA has raised alarm bells over the striking upsurge in the rate of school dropouts among the Palestinians of Syria, several among whom left schools to help feeding their impoverished families in unemployment-stricken refugee camps.

Several UNRWA facilities were destroyed in the Syrian warfare and others have gone out of operation, including two clinics, a vocational training center, a youth development center, and 28 schools, out of 112 UNRWA schools in Syria. Other education facilities have been turned into prisons or field hospitals, imperiling Palestinians' academic careers.





Along similar lines, Reports of violence and school-drop outs have increasingly emerged in AlNeirab Camp for Palestinian refugees.

Several school boys left their academic institutions to join armed militias. At the same time, dozens of Palestinian teaching staff members have been arrested and sent to jail.

The waves of forced deportation and mass displacement have led to overcrowding in schools and educational premises in most of the areas where Palestinians have sought refuge. As many as 70 students are often crammed in a single classroom, resulting in a poor academic output. The acute shortage in school furniture along with the families' inability to shell out education fees have made the situation far worse. A student is expected to pay as much as 15 thousand SYP with the start of the scholastic year.

At least 35 quarrels broke out between schoolchildren last month, according to testimonies by teaching staff, parents, and eye-witnesses.

AGPS continues to appeal to the Palestine Liberation Organization and UNRWA, among all concerned institutions, to urgently step in and work on reconstructing destroyed schools, providing civilians with the needed psycho-physical protection, and boosting children's access to education in Syria's displacement camps.

Upon more than one occasion, UNRWA has raised alarm bells over the striking upsurge in the rate of school dropouts among the Palestinians of Syria, several among whom have left schools to help feeding their impoverished families in unemployment-stricken refugee camps.

In the meantime, Human Rights Watch (HRW) and Amnesty International (AI) called on United Nations member countries to establish an international, independent entity to track and identify those missing and disappeared since the start of the Syria crisis in 2011.

Human Rights Watch and Amnesty International said the Syrian conflict has been marked by prolonged arbitrary detention, torture and other ill-treatment, and forced disappearance at the hands of all parties to the conflict. UN Secretary-General António Guterres proposed the mechanism in a landmark report published in August



2022 on how to bolster efforts to address the thousands of detained and disappeared and provide support to their families.

“The practice of “disappearing” people in Syria has left a devastating legacy for hundreds of thousands of people and their loved ones,” said Adam Coogle, deputy Middle East director at Human Rights Watch. “A new international entity to address this devastating unfinished business that can never be overlooked from the Syrian conflict offers a glimmer of hope for families.”

The government of Syrian President Bashar al-Assad has been responsible for the vast majority of those disappearances, which frequently result in deaths in custody and extrajudicial executions. Even before the crisis began in 2011, Syrian authorities forcibly disappeared people for peaceful political opposition, critical reporting, and human rights activism. Non-state armed groups have also abducted people, with some like ISIS taking hostages and summarily killing them.

As of August, the Syrian Network for Human Rights estimated that around 111,000 people remain unaccounted for, most believed to have been in the hands of the Syrian government. The exact number cannot be determined because the overwhelming majority of detention facilities, especially those run by the intelligence forces, are off-limits to outsiders. Those detained by government security services or many of the non-state armed groups in Syria are routinely subjected to enforced disappearance or held incommunicado, with families unable to get information about the whereabouts of their loved ones or what happened to them.

“Eleven years into the conflict and the Syrian government and armed opposition groups continue to disappear or abduct anyone who opposes them, while their allies, Russia and Turkey, do nothing to stop these violations,” said Diana Semaan, Amnesty International’s acting deputy director for the Middle East and North Africa. “As tens of thousands languish in detention facilities or elsewhere, there are no reliable avenues for families to learn the fate and whereabouts of their loved ones. The lack of political will to address this issue has only prolonged the suffering of families. The UN SG’s proposal provides a way to fulfill the families’ right to truth and member states should rally behind it.”



The UN Commission of Inquiry on Syria has thrown its weight behind the secretary-general's proposal, with the commissioners announcing in an opinion piece for Al Jazeera English that the considerable wealth of information the Commission had collected over 11 years will be made available to the new mechanism. The commissioners also warned that the longer it takes to establish such a mechanism, the more difficult it will be to clarify the whereabouts and fate of the missing and those forcibly disappeared.

HRW and AI said member states should do everything in their power to ensure that a new international body in line with the secretary-general's recommendations is established quickly through General Assembly action. Countries with influence in Syria should also put pressure on parties to the conflict to act swiftly to resolve what has come to be seen as one of the major tragedies of the Syrian conflict, the human rights watchdogs added.