



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

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التقرير اليومي

الخاص بأوضاع اللاجئين الفلسطينيين في سورية

Daily report on the situation of Palestinian refugees in Syria



"UN: Explosive Contamination Jeopardizes Life of Palestinian Refugees in Syria"

- Khan Eshieh Refugee Camp Grappling with Sanitation Crisis
- Turkey Contributes US\$ 10 Million to Support Palestine Refugees
- Palestinian Refugee Amjad Yakoob Forcibly Disappeared by Syrian Regime for 6th Year
- 57 Palestinian Refugees from Syria Drown on Migration Route since Conflict Outbreak

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Latest Developments

Landmines, explosive remnants of war and improvised explosive devices (IEDs), which are particularly unpredictable and difficult to detect, continue to put millions of people, including Palestine refugees, at risk, warned the UN Agency for Palestine refugees.

The United Nations Relief and Works Agency for Palestine Refugees in the Near East (UNRWA) said in a tweet that some groups are at higher risk from explosive ordnance due to age, gender, social roles and activity patterns: children who will pick up dangerous items, farm workers who dig up the land, population groups on the move like IDPs, who may enter areas without knowledge of local threats.

In Syria, approximately 1 in 2 people are at risk from explosive contamination and 1/3 of the communities are potentially contaminated. Contamination severely impacts lives, livelihoods and amplifies the social and economic crisis aggravated by the COVID-19 pandemic.

People displaced or returning home are at high risk as they have limited information on safety issues in the areas they are going to.

This threat is particularly high for Palestine refugees in Syria, especially in newly-accessible or difficult-to-reach areas. These include areas that Palestine refugees have recently returned to areas such as Yarmouk, Ein el Tal and Dera'a camp, added UNRWA.



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Children on their way to and from school are highly exposed to the dangers of explosive ordnance. Tragically, just last month, a 10-year-old Palestine refugee boy in Syria was severely injured by a mine explosion and lost one of his legs.

In an effort to prevent this type of tragedy, UNRWA carries out risk education, holding awareness-raising sessions in schools and communities and distributing flyers.

UNRWA added that Palestine refugees living in Syria are not the only Palestine refugees at risk from unexploded ordnance. In the Gaza Strip, unexploded ordnance from the 2014 conflict continue to pose a direct threat, including to UNRWA students.

Along similar lines, Palestinian refugee families in Khan Eshieh camp, in Rif Dimashq, continue to rail against the poor sanitation networks and improper sewage disposal.

The displaced families warned of the life-threatening diseases wrought by the unpleasant smells stemming from contaminated sewage poured near their refugee camp. Frequent power/water outages have added bad to worse.

According to UN data, Khan Eshieh camp was built several centuries ago to give overnight accommodation to trading caravans on the ancient route between Jerusalem and Constantinople (modern day Istanbul). In 1948, the ruins of the city provided shelter for refugees from villages in northern Palestine.



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The camp, which lies 23 km south of Damascus, was officially established in 1950-1951 on an area of 0.03 square kilometers. The camp was home to 10,000 Palestine refugees by 2011, almost all of whom were living in irregular housing, constructed without any formal approval from the municipality.

Before the conflict in Syria, the camp was already one of the poorest camps in Syria. The conflict exerted additional pressures. The camp was surrounded by armed opposition groups and many refugee families displaced from other areas of Damascus took refuge in the camp, tripling the number of residents to some 30,000 during the crisis. Currently, the camp is home to 12,650 Palestine refugees. The increase of the camp population has had a negative impact on the camp's infrastructure.

In another development, the Government of Turkey has contributed US\$ 10 million to the United Nations Relief and Works Agency for Palestine Refugees in the Near East (UNRWA) in support of Palestine refugees.

In a press release issued last week, UNRWA said that this generous funding comes at a critical time for UNRWA as it faces a severe financial crisis and will go towards the Agency's core programmes of education, health care and improved living conditions for 5.7 million Palestine refugees across all five fields of UNRWA operation. This support from Turkey will have a direct positive impact on the well-being of some of the most vulnerable refugees in the Middle East.



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The Turkish Consul General in Jerusalem, Ambassador Ahmet Rıza Demirer, said, “Turkey greatly appreciates the work of UNRWA in the service of Palestine refugees and acknowledges the critical role the Agency plays in providing them a dignified life. Turkey will continue to support UNRWA and Palestine refugees until there is a just solution to their plight. We also call on the international community to stand with UNRWA as there is no alternative to it.”

Commissioner-General Phillipe Lazzarini expressed his deep gratitude and recognition of the sustained support that Turkey has extended to UNRWA over the years: “We are extremely grateful for the generous support provided by Turkey, especially at this critical time when the COVID-19 pandemic has greatly exacerbated the already devastating financial crisis faced by the Agency. This substantial contribution – early in the year – safeguards our service delivery and provides assurance to Palestine refugees that our service delivery will continue uninterrupted throughout the year. It also represents an investment in the stability of the Middle East region.”

The Government of Turkey has been a steadfast partner to UNRWA and since 1949 and has played a critical role in supporting the Agency. Over the last three years, Turkey has made annual contributions in the amount of US\$ 10 million in support of the Agency’s core budget and in 2020 made an in-kind donation worth US\$ 9.7 million for Palestine refugees in Gaza.



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UNRWA is confronted with an increased demand for services resulting from a growth in the number of registered Palestine refugees, the extent of their vulnerability and their deepening poverty. UNRWA is funded almost entirely by voluntary contributions and financial support has been outpaced by the growth in needs. As a result, the UNRWA programme budget, which supports the delivery of core essential services, operates with a large shortfall.

Meanwhile, Palestinian young man Ajmad Mohamed Yakoon, aged 18, has been secretly held in Syrian prisons since September 8, 2015.

Amjad, a resident of Yarmouk Camp, was arrested by Syrian security forces at Beit Sahem checkpoint.

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

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



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Degrading Treatment or Punishment, commonly known as the United Nations Convention against Torture (UNCAT).

In the meantime, AGPS data indicates that 57 Palestinians from Syria, mostly women, children, and elderly refugees, drowned onboard the death boats to Europe, fleeing the tattered Syrian territories.

A number of casualties breathed their last off the Libyan seashores on way to Italy while others sunk in Marmara waters as they tried to reach the Greek coast. Dozens of migrants have gone missing.