



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



### "Yarmouk's Displaced Families Lash Out at Damascus Authorities"

- Residents of AlNeirab Camp Denounce Heavy Tax Burden
- US Considering Resuming aid to Palestine Refugee Agency
- AGPS Provides Summary of International Humanitarian Action in Palestinian Refugee Camps in 2020
- AGPS Launches New Telegram Channel

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## Latest Developments

Residents of Yarmouk Camp have strongly condemned the reluctance maintained by Damascus Governor regarding their appeals for reconstruction permits.

Sometime earlier, Damascus Governorate had agreed to the return of the residents on condition that the building they live in is habitable, the submitted ownership documents are valid, and the necessary approvals are issued by local authorities.

Director of the political department of the Palestine Liberation Organization, Ambassador Anwar Abdul Hadi, said the return of displaced families to Yarmouk Camp has been taking place at a steady pace under the supervision of Damascus Governorate.

He said the return of families is contingent upon reconstruction of vital facilities and rehabilitation of water, power and sewerage networks.

In another development, Aleppo's financial directorate called on all parties involved in commercial and economic activities in AlNeirab Camp for Palestinian refugees to pay taxes.

Shopkeepers and merchants in AlNeirab Camp slammed the decision which they said comes at a time when the camp has been gripped with squalid humanitarian conditions as a result of the ten-year conflict.

AlNeirab camp is the largest official camp in Syria and is 13km east of the city of Aleppo near the Aleppo airport.



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Before the start of the conflict in Syria, Neirab camp was home to more than 20,000 Palestine refugees. Like other Palestine refugee camps in Syria, a large number of families, young people, have travelled abroad. The camp has also seen a large influx of more than 900 families from the nearby Ein el Tal camp, which has been mostly destroyed.

With nearly 18,000 registered refugees, Neirab camp is among the most densely populated camps. The camp suffers from overcrowding and a lack of privacy. Like other areas in Syria, displacement, unemployment, inflation, protection and security risks are among the main concerns shared by Palestine refugees and Syrians alike.

The location of the camp near the military airport means the area was exposed to hazards including mortars and shelling between the start of 2013 and the end of 2018.

Poor shelters and poor construction of the barracks result in scorching temperatures in summer and freezing conditions in winter. Water leakage and rodent infestation also remain a problem for the refugees.

Meanwhile, the US will consider the resumption of aid to Palestine through the UN Relief and Works Agency (UNRWA) as part of a push by President-elect Joe Biden for a two-state solution, said the new chairman of the House Foreign Affairs Committee in Washington.



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In an interview with Agence France Presse (AFP), Gregory Meeks said that Israel has long sought to have UNRWA closed down under the pretext that the agency perpetuates the conflict with the Palestinians. Outgoing US President Donald Trump's administration backed Israel in this by cutting donations to UNRWA in 2018.

Meeks also voiced support for the return of Palestinian diplomatic representation in the US. Trump closed the Palestinian diplomatic mission in Washington, also in 2018.

"I'm a firm believer in the two-state solution, providing both parties with self-determination, because that's the only way I believe that we can ensure a Jewish state of Israel that is viable and a peaceful Palestinian state, where they end up becoming interdependent in trade and other mechanisms," explained Meeks. "So we may need to restart the US assistance to Palestinian people, demonstrating that the United States is ready to lead again."

He added his belief that it is important to work with the Biden administration to review and look at humanitarian areas in which the US can find further dollars to show that it cares about humanity.

The New York congressman, who is the first African-American to lead the committee, won the position against Representative Joaquin Castro, who had vowed to champion the voice of the Palestinians. On the Israeli-Palestinian conflict, Meeks has been a supporter of Israel despite occasional, rather mild criticism.





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Last year, for example, he called Israel's proposed plans to annex parts of the occupied West Bank "anathema to a two-state solution" and urged pressure to be put on the Israeli government, using US military aid as leverage to prevent annexation. However, he apparently later reversed his position, telling the American Jewish Committee during an online event in August, "We know the extreme importance in the region to make sure that Israel has the right to defend itself, and the dollars that we give Israel to defend itself are absolute and unequivocal."

Meeks succeeded Eliot Engel, another New York Democrat and passionate defender of Israel, who lost his seat in a primary challenge from the left.

In the meantime, a handful of humanitarian moves were held in favor of the Palestinian refugee community in war-torn Syria throughout 2020.

In February, a Swiss delegation and a representative of the International Red Cross Committee in Syria paid a visit to Handarat camp for Palestinian refugees, north of Syria, on February 11, in an attempt to scrutinize living conditions in the camp.

The delegation assessed the condition of vital facilities, infrastructure, and water network.

In mid-2020, Director of UNRWA operations in Syria Amany Michael-Ebye paid visits to Khan Dannun, Yarmouk, Handarat, and AlNeirab refugee camps in order to inspect UNRWA facilities.



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Amanya met with UNRWA staff and Palestinian refugees at UNRWA-run clinics, distribution centers, community development centers, and schools, along with sanitation workers and students.

In November 2020, UNRWA's Commissioner-General, Philippe Lazzarini, visited UNRWA installations including a health centre and a school in AlSabina camp for Palestinian refugees, where he met members of the school parliament.

The refugees explained to the Commissioner-General the daily hardship of displacement and poverty, made worse by years of conflict that saw prices of basic goods soar to the point of making most of them unaffordable, as the value of the Syria pound collapsed.

The representatives of the school parliament briefed Lazzarini on the preventative measures taken in the school to prevent the spread of COVID-19 and the challenges of switching to online classes in the era of COVID-19. For most Palestine refugees in Syria, online education is a luxury that they cannot afford, with frequent power cuts, uneven internet coverage and absence of electronic devices in extremely vulnerable households.

Lazzarini made his first official visit to Syria on 26-29 October 2020. During his visit, he held meetings with a number of Syrian government officials and toured camps for Palestine refugees in Damascus to take a closer look at their situation and at the services that UNRWA provides within a context of the protracted crisis.



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After ten years of war, which has caused extensive casualties, large-scale and protracted displacement and the destruction of civilian infrastructure, Syria is now facing an economic meltdown, fuelled by conflict-related hyperinflation and the plummeting of the Syrian pound. Prices of basic commodities, including bread, have skyrocketed and people are forced to queue for bread as this subsidized commodity is rationed.

Ninety per cent of Palestine refugees in Syria live in poverty and 40 per cent remain in protracted displacement. Their hardship has been exponentially exacerbated through the imposition of sanctions and the rapid spread of COVID-19 in refugee communities. Their resilience is at breaking point.

Along similar lines, AGPS has launched an official telegram channel in an attempt to enable users to access data about the Palestinians of Syria.

Updated statistics and footages will be shared on the new channel on a daily basis. Reports about the violations of the refugees' basic rights since the outburst of deadly hostilities in war-torn Syrian will also be posted.

Followers can subscribe to the channel by clicking here:  
<https://t.me/joinchat/VHb7ejk12BfUZUo8/>