



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



"Palestinian Families Stranded on Greek Island Launch Cry for Help"

- UN Renews UNRWA Mandate
- Syria Rights Group Reveals Shocking Facts about Conditions in Sedanaya Military Prison
- Palestinian Family Forcibly Disappeared in Syrian Jails for 6th Year

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Latest Developments

Dozens of Palestinian and Syrian refugees detained on the Greek island of Rhodes have appealed to the national and international human rights institutions to work on their urgent release from custody, where they have been facing squalid captivity conditions.

In a letter emailed to AGPS, Palestinian activists said among the detained refugees are men, women, and elderly people, who have all been subjected to mistreatment by Greek prison authorities.

The refugees landed on the island in early October. Women have been separated from men in jail.



Activists quoted a refugee as stating that the prison authorities have banned the refugees from going out to the prison yard and reaching the eating place. Wardens also continue to prevent their access to winter blankets.

The refugees said a number of sick migrants diagnosed with kidney disorders and skin diseases, among other health problems, have had their health condition worsened due to poor hygiene and medical neglect.



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Children below the age of 10 have reportedly been clinging to their mothers' arms in custody, where expectant women have also been held.

The refugees appealed for their immediate release and for urgent medical treatment.

In another development, the United Nations General Assembly (UNGA) renewed the mandate of the Palestinian refugee agency on Friday, in an overwhelming show of support despite unabated pressure by the US and Israel to end the agency's work.

170 Member States voted for the resolution. Unsurprisingly, only representatives for Israel and the U.S. voted against. Canada, Cameroon, Guatemala, Vanuatu, Micronesia, Marshall Islands and Nauru abstained.



The measure comes amid an ad hominem campaign waged by Israel and the United States against the UN agency on the grounds that it defends Palestinians' right of return to Israeli-occupied territories, thus preventing a practical solution to the conflict.



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In the past few years, UNRWA, which was founded in 1949, has faced an unprecedentedly ferocious attack targeting its legitimacy.

In 2018, the Trump administration cut contribution to UNRWA's budget, sending the agency into financial turmoil. The agency survived only after European and Arab countries rushed to plug the gap.

Over the past few months, allegations of misconduct in the top echelons of the organization have thrown UNRWA into further disrepair, leading to the resignation of the agency's Commissioner General, Pierre Krahenbuhl.

Prior to Krahenbuhl's resignation, a UN spokesman said preliminary findings excluded "fraud or misappropriation of operational funds," pointing at the fact the allegations were likely around personal misbehavior.

Meanwhile, the Association of Detainees and The Missing in Sednaya Prison (ADMSP) stated in its first report, entitled "Sednaya Prison: Factory of death and enforced disappearance in Syria", that inmates have been tortured to death in the highly-secretive penal complex.

The report, released in Gaziantep in Turkey on Tuesday (November 12), monitors the procedures and consequences of detention in Sednaya Prison in Syria, which the Assad regime continues to use as a main centre for the detention and enforced disappearance of political detainees, denying them any contact with the outside world and subjecting them to poor conditions that often lead to death.



The report is based on 400 face-to-face interviews with former detainees in Sednaya prison. It sheds light on the torture tactics used by prison authorities against inmates. These strategies are also used as a means to terrorize anti-government voices.

The 60-page report provides an estimate of the number of detainees who have been locked up in Sednaya prison since its opening in 1987 until the beginning of 2019. It shows how the pace of detention has considerably accelerated after 2011, and confirms that it is very difficult to reach accurate statistics about the number of detainees there.

The report states that the Syrian regime itself is unable to issue accurate lists of the numbers of detainees due to the numerous victims of extrajudicial executions, torture, starvation, deprivation, and medical neglect.

“This is the first time that so many former detainees in Sednaya prison have been reached. The Assad regime’s methods of detention and enforced disappearance may have been known to some Syrians, but this report shows, by providing figures and testimonies, how the regime used the mechanism of arrest and enforced disappearance as one of the tools of war against the Syrian society”, says Diab Serriyah, general coordinator of the Association of Detainees and The Missing in Sednaya Prison.

The report devotes a whole chapter to the trials of detainees in Sednaya prison. It illustrates the Assad regime’s resort to the Military Field Court after 2011 and shows how the number of Sednaya detainees increased dramatically from 24.3% before 2011 to 87.6% after 2011. The military field court lacks the minimum



requirements of a fair trial as the detainee is not allowed to have access to a lawyer or any contact with the outside world.

The report also states that only about 6.5% of the detainees in Sednaya have been brought before the Terrorism Court. Furthermore, the report points out that the percentage of detainees who said that their property was confiscated by the court after 2011 was significantly higher than the percentage of such cases before that year.

In addition, the report states that there is a large network of officials, and influential persons within the regime, along with some judges and lawyers who are extorting the families of the detainees and forcibly disappeared persons in order to secure visits to their loved ones in places of detention, or to make promises to release them. This reinforces the Association's hypothesis of the existence of state decisions aimed at looting detainees for their money, especially after 2011.

The ADMSP identified 24 types of psychological torture which included mock executions, being forced to watch other inmates being tortured, and threats against prisoners' families.

Every former prisoner interviewed reported to have been beaten with sticks or batons in Sednaya, with 20 forms of torture identified, often resulting in the death of the inmates.

Almost all reported being whipped or beaten while trapped inside a tire, with other forms of torture including being suspended from the arms, electrocution, and the "German chair", which sees inmates tied around a chair with pressure applied.



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Sexual abuse has also significantly increased under the Assad regime, with around a third of detainees admitted to have suffered from this form of torture at Sednaya.

Few inmates expect to emerge from Syria's Sednaya prison alive, a place where routine torture and inhumane living conditions are, obviously, all designed to break the hope and dignity of prisoners, according to human rights groups.

Along the same line, alarm bells have been sounded over the unknown fate of several Palestinian refugee families who have been kidnapped by the Syrian regime troops.

The list of missing families includes the Mouloud Khaled Al-Abdullah's family, kidnapped on July 27, 2013 at a regime checkpoint in Nisreen Street, in the nearby Al-Tadhamun neighborhood.



The family's 73-year-old father, Mouloud Khalid Al-Abdullah, has been diagnosed with cardiovascular diseases while the mother,



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Dheiba, 65, is a diabetic. Al-Abdullah family members Ilham, 48, Anaam, 33, Yasmeen, 39, along with the latter's six-year-old kid Ubada, have all gone missing so far.

Unverified reports said the family is being held captive by pro-regime abettors in Al-Tadhamun quarter. Others said the Al-Abdullah family members are locked up in a regime penitentiary in Damascus. The family's actual fate remains, however, mysterious.

According to AGPS data, 1,768 Palestinians, including 108 women, are incarcerated in regime jails. 452 Palestinian refugees were, meanwhile, tortured to death in those penal complexes.