



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



"Palestinian Journalists: Yarmouk's New Organizational Plan Targets Palestinian Presence"

- PFLP Official Accuses Yarmouk Residents of Forfeiting Their Property
- AGPS: 14 Palestinian Refugees Arrested in Syria in 2019
- Palestinian Refugees Urge UNRWA to Transfer Cash Grants in USD
- Lebanon's General Security to Work Out Legal Situation of Irregular Migrants

+442084530978

/Actgroup.palsyria

reports@actionpal.org.uk

www.actionpal.org.uk



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Latest developments

Palestinian researchers and journalists have sounded the alarm over the threats posed by the new organizational plan proposed by Damascus Governorate to reconstruct Yarmouk Camp.

Researchers and academics have warned that the new plan seeks to blur the Palestinian identity and further displace the refugee population, adding that it blatantly violates Palestinians' historical rights, including the right to ownership.

They called on the concerned authorities to preserve the identity of the camp and to rather implement the reconstruction plan approved in 2004.

Palestinian refugees and human rights groups continue to voice their firm rejection of the new organizational plan for Yarmouk Camp, which has been subjected to massive destruction in the bloody conflict.

Tension has been running high in the area as thousands of refugees continue to rail against the proposed plan, amid growing fears that their homes and property will be removed from the new plan.

Sometime earlier, the Damascus Governorate said parts of Yarmouk Camp are state property, which implies that the residents are not entitled to own the land but only the property built on it.

Recently, AGPS has called on the Syrian authorities in Damascus to re-examine the new organizational plan and to rather implement the old plan which was approved in 2004.



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In a statement, AGPS said plans that do not take into account Palestinians' inalienable rights make part of underway conspiracies to further displace the Palestinian people and destroy displacement camps as living witnesses to their refugee plight.

The statement said the new organizational plan will remarkably change the demographic and architectural identity of the camp. Several buildings and facilities will be removed, which will lead to a mass displacement of refugee families and a further deterioration of their humanitarian condition.

Activists warned that in case the plan is implemented, over half of the residents will not be able to return to their houses which they have abandoned in the bloody warfare.

Before the eruption of the conflict in 2011, Yarmouk was home to approximately 160,000 Palestine refugees, making it the largest Palestine refugee community in Syria. Located eight kilometers from Damascus, it is one of three unofficial camps in Syria.

In December 2012, fierce clashes erupted in Yarmouk, causing numerous civilian casualties, severe damage to property and the displacement of thousands of Palestine refugees and Syrians. The camp was under siege from July 2013, drastically restricting the entry of commercial and humanitarian goods.

In April 2015, armed opposition groups captured over 60 per cent of the camp, containing over 90 per cent of the remaining civilian population. This not only made UNRWA unable to carry out any distributions inside Yarmouk but also displaced most of the



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remaining 18,000 Palestine refugees and other civilians to the neighboring areas of Yalda, Babila and Beit Saham (YBB).

Almost all the remaining Palestine refugees left during the final government offensive for Yarmouk in April-May 2018, after which the government retook control of the camp.

UNRWA was able to return to the camp to conduct a needs assessment in October 2018. Of the 23 UNRWA premises in the camp and nearby Hajjar al Aswad, including 16 school buildings, all have been affected by the conflict.

Along similar lines, military and security chief of the Popular Front for the Liberation of Palestine-General Command (PFLP-GC), affiliated with the Syrian regime, has accused residents of Yarmouk Camp of forfeiting their property in the area and/or fleeing to Europe.

In a soundtrack circulated on social media, PFLP-GC official Khaled Jibreel claimed that those who left their houses and property and headed for other destinations are the ones responsible for the projected loss of the camp's historical identity.

Scores of Yarmouk residents have lashed out at Jibreel and accused PFLP-GC of stealing their property, ravaging their abandoned houses, and normalizing mass-displacement of the Palestinian refugee population.

In another development, AGPS documented the arrest of 14 Palestinian refugees in 2019, down from 16 in 2018.



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In its annual report documenting the situation of Palestinians of Syria in 2019, AGPS said all arrestees are men.

AGPS's newly-released report, entitled "Palestinians of Syria: Destruction and Reconstruction", underscores the calamitous situation of Palestinian refugees in and outside the war-ravaged country due to war-related incidents.

The 280-page report provides fact-based data and statistics about the number of victims and detainees among the Palestinians of Syria.

As figures in the report, though the number of victims and detainees shrunk back compared to previous years, dozens of Palestinian refugees were pronounced dead in 2019.

The report said that as many as 4,013 Palestinian refugees from Syria died of war-related incidents since the outbreak of the bloody conflict in March 2011 until the end of 2019.

The report also underscores the crises endured by the Palestinian community in displacement camps across and outside the Syrian territories.

At the same time, the study provides a detailed account of the violations perpetrated against the Palestinians of Syria in their quest to seek asylum and on their way to Europe.

The data has been compiled by a team of field reporters, news correspondents, journalists, photographers and researchers.



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Hundreds of reports have also been released by the group on a daily basis in an attempt to draw the international community's attention to the abject state of affairs endured by PRS.

To download the report, please click here:

<http://actionpal.org.uk/ar/reports/special/victimsofdestruction.pdf>

Meanwhile, Palestinian refugees from Syria (PRS) in Lebanon have called on the UN Relief and Works Agency for Palestine Refugees in the Near East (UNRWA) to pay their monthly aid in dollars, in light of the deteriorating economic situation in the country and the dramatic drop in the exchange rate of the local currency.

In appeals emailed to the Action Group for Palestinians of Syria (AGPS), PRS in Lebanon urged UNRWA to carry out an emergency reassessment of its cash aid program and shell out PRS' dues that have been indirectly cut as a result of the Agency's failure to take into account exchange rate variations over recent months.

Since mid-October 2019, the exchange rate of the Lebanese pound has remarkably shrunk back. \$1 is currently worth 3,200 LP. UNRWA's cash aid program has failed to take into account such a dramatic drop in the currency exchange rate.

According to UNRWA data, until February 2020, there are 28,000 PRS in Lebanon, making nearly 7,000 families.



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PRS in Lebanon continue to face high vulnerability and marginalization, making them heavily reliant on UNRWA humanitarian support to cover their basic needs.

Almost 90 per cent of PRS in Lebanon are under the poverty line and 95 per cent are food insecure, according to a 2015 survey by UNRWA.

In the meantime, General Directorate of the General Security of Lebanon said Arab and foreign nationals who illegally entered Lebanon or overstayed their visas can settle their legal situation at the Directorate as of July 31, 2020 until October 31, 2020.

UNRWA has identified PRS in Lebanon as one of the most marginalized and poorest communities in the region.

In its 2020 Syria crisis emergency appeal, UNRWA said that PRS in Lebanon continue to face high vulnerability and marginalization, making them heavily reliant on UNRWA humanitarian support to cover their basic needs. The socio-economic hardships and unrest experienced by the country have compounded PRS' already dire living conditions.

According to a survey conducted by the American University of Beirut in 2015, nearly 90 percent of the PRS population in Lebanon live in poverty, including 9 per cent who are in extreme poverty and unable to meet even their most essential food requirements.



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PRS's vulnerability is further compounded by their precarious legal status. The lack of a valid legal status, often coupled with outdated civil registration documents, results in severely restricted freedom of movement for some PRS in Lebanon due to fear of arrest, detention or forced deportation.