



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



### "17 Palestinian Journalists Killed in War-Torn Syria"

- Qatar Deports Palestinian Refugee to UAE
- Yarmouk Camp Residents Call for Exemptions on Electricity Bills
- Coronavirus Cases Soaring in Latakia's Palestinian Refugee Camp
- Luxembourg Signs Strategic Partnership Agreement with Palestine Refugee Agency

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## Latest Developments

Statistics released by AGPS on the International Day of Solidarity with Palestinian Journalists have recorded the death of 17 Palestinian journalists since the outburst of deadly hostilities in March 2011, among whom academics and volunteers.

The casualties died while covering scenes on the battleground or while providing civilians with relief assistance across the ravaged Syrian territories.

The list includes nine journalists who died under shelling, five who were tortured to death, and four others who were fatally shot.

The casualties are photojournalists and activists Fady Abu Ajaj, Jamal Khalifa, Ahmad AlSahli, Bassam Hamidi, Ahmad Taha, and Bilal Sa'id. They were killed in onslaughts targeting Yarmouk Camp for Palestinian refugees.

Photojournalist Jehad Shehabi died in an air strike on Hjeira town, south of Damascus, while activist Yamen Dhaher was killed in a raid on Khan Eshieh Camp. News correspondent Tareq Ziad Khader was pronounced dead in Daraa Camp, south of Syria.

Yarmouk residents Niraz Sa'id, Khaled Bakrawi, Hassan Hassan, and Alaa Naji, along with Bilal Ahmad, from Muadhamiyat AlSham, were tortured to death in Syrian government prisons.



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Iyas Farhat was the first journalist to be killed in Yarmouk as he covered a rally protesting the murder of 14 members of the Palestine Liberation Army in the bloody warfare north of Syria.

Ghassan Shehabi, director of AlShajara Center to document Palestinian heritage, along with activists Ahmad Kousa and Mounir AlKhatib were gunned down by a government sniper in Yarmouk Camp.

Scores of activists, journalists, and news correspondents have, meanwhile, been locked up in Syrian government dungeons for years. The list includes Muhannad Omar, Ali Shehabi, Rami Hajou, Ali Musleh, and Ahmad Jalil.

Facts on the ground prove that the number of casualties is much higher. Difficulties in documentation stem from the absence of official statistics, lack of concern as regards the number of Palestinian casualties, journalists in particular, the intricacy of the name-identification process, and the families' reluctance to reveal the victims' names for fear of retaliation.

AGPS condemns the apathy maintained by the international community and Palestinian leadership as regards the extrajudicial killing, harsh torture, and arbitrary detention of Palestinian journalists and activists in war-ravaged Syria.

September 26 marks the International Day of Solidarity with Palestinian Journalists, initially declared by the International Federation of Journalists (IFJ) in 1996. On that day, tens of Palestinian journalists were injured by Israeli forces while covering





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incidents and clashes in the occupied Palestinian territory (oPt). IFJ called on international journalists at the time to increase solidarity with Palestinian journalists who were increasingly subjected to violations of human rights by the Israeli forces.

In another development, the Qatari authorities deported Palestinian refugee Muhannad Tawfiq Shaarawi to the U.A.E. after they held him in custody for days as he overstayed his visa.

Muhannad told AGPS that he had come under pressure by Qatari authorities while in custody. He later received a visa to the U.A.E., before Qatari authorities took his iris scans and fingerprints. He was deported and mistreated by airport officers.

Muhannad's father has been left on his own in Qatar, where he has been receiving medical treatment at AlRumeila clinic.

Muhannad had entered Qatar last year after he received a grant from the Qatari Foreign Ministry through its embassy in Khartoum. Authorities turned down his appeals for visa renewal.

The Qatari authorities ordered him to leave the country and go back after obtaining a new visa. "How on earth can I do this? My situation is very complicated", said Muhannad sometime earlier. "My Palestinian-Authority-stamped passport and Syrian travel document do not enable me to freely enter and exit the country".

Last week, the refugee appealed to the Qatari government, Palestinian embassy, and international human rights organizations to pressurize the Qatari authorities to release him from custody,



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work out his legal situation and backtrack on his deportation to war-ravaged Syria.

Syria remains unsafe for refugee returns. Arbitrary detention and enforced disappearance continue to be among the most urgent challenges to human rights in Syria with tens of thousands detained in prisons, primarily by the Syrian government. The release of detainees and the disclosure of the fate and location of those forcibly disappeared in Syria are urgent priorities for Syrians and Syrian civil society.

Meanwhile, residents of Yarmouk Camp have called on Syrian authorities to exempt them from exorbitant power bills that have been overburdening them from the time the opposition forces captured the area.

The unabated warfare has had disastrous fallouts on Palestinian refugee camps across the Syrian territories. Palestinians who remained in Yarmouk or returned to the camp sometime later have been struggling for survival, in an area that has been severely affected by the deadly hostilities.

Over recent years, most of Yarmouk's families have lived on sporadic aid handed over to them by UNRWA.

Civilians continue to appeal to the concerned authorities to speed up reconstruction works and rehabilitate infrastructure and vital facilities, including water and power networks.



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Thousands of Palestinian refugees were forced out of Yarmouk Camp after the Syrian fighter jets struck the area in late 2012. Dozens were killed and hundreds wounded in the onslaught. The situation went downhill after ISIS militias grabbed hold of the camp in April 2015 and closed off vital thoroughfares to the area. Scores of other stranded families fled the camp following the 33-day military operation launched by the government forces on April 19.

Before the crisis started in 2011, Yarmouk was a bustling home to almost 30 percent of the Palestine refugee population in Syria. Today, the weight of displacement, hardship and the loss of loved ones add to the difficult living conditions in Yarmouk.

Along similar lines, residents of AlRaml Camp for Palestinian refugees in Latakia have sounded the alarm over the increasing coronavirus cases reported in the area.

Activists called on civilians to wear face masks and abide by safety protocols, most notably social distancing and regular hand-washing, in order to help curtail the pandemic.

In the meantime, the Government of Luxembourg signed on Thursday a multi-year Strategic Partnership Agreement with the United Nations Relief and Works Agency for Palestine Refugees in the Near East (UNRWA).

Under the 2022-24 Strategic Partnership Framework, Luxembourg will contribute EUR 12.3 million assistance in support of the Agency's operations over a three-year period. Luxembourg's



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donation will help UNRWA continue to provide critical support, including education and healthcare services, to Palestine refugees across the Agency's five fields of operations.

In response to the signing, Luxembourg Minister for Development Cooperation and Humanitarian Affairs, Franz Fayot, remarked: "I am very happy to announce that the Government of Luxembourg has decided to renew its strategic partnership in support of the Agency's work during the period 2022-2024. This strategic partnership represents our determined commitment and solidarity to Palestine refugees at a time when the Middle East continues to experience serious humanitarian crisis, including the effects of the COVID-19 pandemic."

UNRWA Commissioner-General Philippe Lazzarini noted: "This multi-year agreement offers UNRWA vital financial predictability to counter continuing funding gaps. On behalf of the Agency, I would like to thank the Government of Luxembourg for its generous contribution in support of the Palestine refugee community. We deeply appreciate the steadfast and strategic cooperation that UNRWA and the Government of Luxembourg have developed over the years."

The Government of Luxembourg is a long-standing donor to UNRWA. In 2020, the Government of Luxembourg was the overall 25th largest contributor to the Agency, offering vital support at a time when UNRWA faced an existential crisis affecting its critical services to Palestine refugees across the Middle East, in light of current funding challenges.



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