



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



"Education Services for Palestine Refugees at Risk in War-Torn Syria"

- Palestinian Refugees Struggling for Survival in Aleppo Refugee Camp
- Activists Raise Alarm over Coronavirus Propagation in Khan Eshieh Camp
- Residents of Jaramana Refugee Camp Denounce Property-Theft
- Palestinian Refugee Omar Adnan Za'za' Forcibly Disappeared by Syrian Regime



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Latest Developments

Palestinian refugee schoolchildren and students continue to struggle with the devastating impact of the ten-year warfare in Syria, amidst a deadly pandemic outbreak.

AGPS annual report about the situation of Palestinian refugees in Syria in 2020 indicates that this academic year, 51,000 Palestine refugee girls and boys have gone back to 103 schools run by the UNRWA in Syria, with measures being taken by teaching staff to prevent the spread of COVID-19.

The report warned of the hurdles faced by Palestinian schoolchildren and university students due to coronavirus propagation and the lockdown measures imposed across the country. The coronavirus pandemic has exposed the weak infrastructure of the education systems in Palestinian refugee camps in Syria. Many teachers, students, and parents agreed that the quality of teaching and learning deteriorated during the distance education period imposed by the lockdown, despite efforts made by teaching staff.

The report said that hundreds of displaced Palestinian refugees in/from Syria have achieved success stories, despite the traumatic upshots wrought by the daily scenes of bloodshed and destruction across the embattled Syrian territories.

This includes scores of refugee students who have obtained the highest scores at their academic institutions; hundreds of refugee



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sportsmen/sportswomen who snatched the first places in regional and international competitions; dozens of artists who received renowned literary awards for their products and performances; and several housewives who turned trauma into a space of creativity.

In late 2020, some 27 Palestinian refugee students graduated from the Faculty of Medicine in Syria.

Available data by UNRWA indicates that 32 UNRWA facilities have been reduced to rubble in Yarmouk Camp alone, including 16 schools, in the Syrian conflict.

Several other UNRWA facilities were destroyed in the Syrian warfare and others have gone out of operation, including two clinics, a vocational training center, a youth development center, and 28 schools, out of 112 UNRWA schools in Syria.

Upon more than one occasion, the UN has raised alarm bells over the striking upsurge in the rate of school dropouts among the Palestinians of Syria, several among whom have left schools to help feeding their impoverished families in unemployment-stricken refugee camps.

Dozens of Palestinian students, schoolchildren, and teaching staff have been killed or forcibly disappeared in war-ravaged Syria.

Along similar lines, Palestinian refugees have been grappling with dire conditions in Handarat due to the lack of humanitarian assistance and life-saving services. The majority of families have



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been taking shelter in buildings rented at extremely steep costs in the poverty-stricken area. A severe water and power crisis also continues to rock the camp.

The displaced Palestinian families called on UNRWA to take urgent steps in order to reconstruct the destroyed homes and facilities, saying most of the families have been taking shelter in buildings rented at extremely steep costs in the poverty-stricken area.

A severe water and power crisis also continues to rock the area. A massive destruction has been wrought on the infrastructure and civilian structures.

Heavy shelling on Handarat and bloody shootouts between the government forces and the opposition outfits led to the destruction of over 90% of buildings in the camp. The confrontations culminated in the government's takeover of the camp along with other areas in Aleppo and the displacement of its residents on April 27, 2013.

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Local sources told AGPS that 70% of the 150 families sheltered in Handarat Camp are Palestinian refugees; 30% are Syrians.

UN data indicates that Handarat camp (also known as Ein El-Tal camp) is on a hillside 13km north-east of the city of Aleppo in the Syrian Arab Republic. The camp was established in 1962 on an area of 0.16 square kilometers. Most of the inhabitants are refugees who fled from northern Palestine.

Ein El Tal camp was once home to around 7,000 residents. Around three hundred families moved to newly constructed houses in Ein El-Tal from Neirab camp under a 2003 project to reduce overcrowding in Neirab.

In April 2013, armed groups entered Ein El-Tal camp, forcibly displacing the entire population over a period of some 48 hours. The camp was a theatre of armed conflict until 2016, sustaining extreme damage in the process.

In the summer of 2017, families started to return to Ein El-Tal camp. Most of these families had been displaced to a government collective shelter in Aleppo city. As of the end of 2018, there are 90 Palestine refugee families that have returned. The camp is almost



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completely destroyed and lacks basic infrastructure including water, sewage and electricity.

In another development, activists from Khan Eshieh camp have called on the residents to keep to safety protocols and preventive measures in order to avoid more coronavirus infections in the camp.

The calls have been launched after a number of residents have tested positive for COVID-19.

Confirmed coronavirus cases have been increasingly reported in Palestinian refugee camps in Syria, at a time when residents have been launching cries for help over the absence of hygiene kit and medicines.

A few months earlier, AGPS also warned of an unabated outbreak of COVID-19 in Palestinian refugee camps in Syria. Limited access to running water, pharmacies and medical facilities mean displacement camps are more susceptible to the spread of the highly infectious virus.

Displacement camps set up in northern Syria are especially vulnerable as most hospitals and medical facilities have been bombed, rendering them out of order.

Meanwhile, Palestinian refugee families in Jaramana camp, in Rif Dimashq, have raised concerns over the increasing abductions, home-burglary attempts, and sexual harassment reported in the area, particularly overnight due to chronic power blackouts.



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A couple of weeks ago, the Syrian authorities reportedly arrested a two-member gang involved in property-theft in the camp. The two thieves were caught burglarizing a Palestinian refugee's home.

Over recent years, residents of Jaramana Camp have launched cries for help over the dire socio-economic conditions, high unemployment rates, poor infrastructure, steep rental fees, and chronic water crisis rocking the area.

Jaramana camp is 8km from Damascus on the road to Damascus International Airport. The camp was established in 1948.

UN data indicates that before the start of the conflict in 2011, there were over 18,000 Palestine refugees living in Jaramana camp. During the Syrian crisis, the number of Palestine refugees in the camp and the surrounding area increased to 49,000 due to an influx of displaced Palestine refugees from other areas, including the camp of Yarmouk. As a result, Jaramana has become one of the most densely populated areas of Damascus.

Many of the refugees worked as street vendors, government employees or in nearby industrial plants. Some inhabitants find work in the informal sector through collecting garbage for recycling. The majority of women are domestic workers in Damascus to supplement family income. Like other areas in Syria, displacement, unemployment, inflation, protection and security risks are among the main concerns shared by Palestine refugees and Syrians alike.



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This is not the first time that UNRWA operations in the camp were affected; the construction of a highway to Jaramana in 2006 meant that parts of the community centre, a health centre, a sanitation office, the newly installed sewerage network, urban development projects and schools had to be vacated. This was accompanied by a large number of refugee families being moved to a nearby new government housing project in the Palestine refugee gathering of al-Husseinieh or to shelters in the nearby villages and camps.

The camp occupies an area of 0.03 square kilometres. Historically, the camp has been inhabited by those displaced by the conflict in 1948, as well as Palestinians who had taken refuge in the Golan Heights and were displaced as a result of the 1967 hostilities.

In the meantime, Palestinian refugee Omar Adnan Zaaza' has been held in Syrian government prisons for over seven years running.

Omar was kidnapped by the Syrian government forces in 2014 from his workplace in Jaramana, in Rif Dimashq. He was dragged to an unidentified destination. His conditions and whereabouts remain unknown.

AGPS 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.



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