



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



"12 Palestinian Refugees Tortured to Death in Syrian Regime Prisons in 2020"

- Residents of AlSayeda Zeinab Camp Facing Squalid Conditions
- Palestinians in Turkey Launch Distress Signals
- Palestine Embassy in Turkey Suspends Passport Procedures

+442084530978

/Actgroup.palsyria

reports@actionpal.org.uk

www.actionpal.org.uk



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Latest Developments

AGPS has documented the death of 12 Palestinian refugees under torture in Syria's state-run dungeons in 2020, bringing the death toll of torture victims in Syrian prisons among the Palestinians of Syria to 629.

In the majority of cases, the victims' families receive the death reports following years of enforced disappearance.

The 2020 victims are: Fadi Husain Amoura, Shadi Omar Amrein, Ahmad Husain AlSalibi, along with three breakaway rebels Abdul Karim Balhous, Ali AlSabagh, and Mustafa Badawi.

Khaled Mohamed AlHayek, Mohamed Ibrahim Kasem, Abdullah Mohamed Kheir AlSaad, and Basel Nabil Kherma were identified in leaked photos of torture victims.

Four Palestinian refugees—Mohamed Zreiq, Mamdouh Rebhi Khalifa, Fahd AlKhatib, and Iyad Kweidar—died before 2020 but their death was revealed much later.

A few days earlier, Palestinian novelist Ismail Schemale died in Syria's state-run AlSuweida prison, where he has been held for over 25 years.

According to the Syrian Press Center, the novelist was arrested in 1995 by Syrian security forces near the Syrian borders. He had been locked up for 21 years in Damascus prisons and for five years in Deraa prison, before he was transferred to Suweida prison, where he breathed his last.



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Schemale, born in 1953, was sentenced to life by the State Security Court over a book about Iraq's executed president Saddam Husain and Bashar AlAssad's father, Hafedh.

The prison administration claimed he died of a heart attack. His family said he contracted coronavirus in prison. He was buried in Tafas town, in Deraa, south of Syria.

AGPS kept record of the secret detention of 1,797 Palestinian refugees in Syrian government prisons.

Over recent years, families of Palestinian refugees tortured to death in Syrian government penitentiaries said they have been made to sign fraudulent documents and certificates claiming that their relatives died of heart attacks.

Horrific photos showing thousands of people who were tortured to death in Syrian government penitentiaries were leaked by a military police photographer, codenamed Caesar.

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).

AGPS estimates the real number to be far higher due to the gag orders slapped by the Syrian government on the detainees' names



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and fates, along with the families' reluctance to report such cases over retaliation concerns.

AGPS continues to urge the Syrian government to disclose the fate of scores of Palestinians held in its lock-ups, release the bodies of those tortured to death, to seriously work on halting harsh torture tactics, launch fact-finding probes into crimes of torture, and to bring those involved in such crimes before courts.

In another development, Residents of AlSayeda Zeinab camp, in Rif Dimashq, have been enduring squalid conditions due to high rates of unemployment.

Ten years into the conflict, more than half of the residents lost their sources of income. Scores of families continue to live below the poverty line due to exorbitant prices of food and non-food items.

The reluctance maintained by the Palestine Liberation Organization and other concerned bodies regarding their cries for help has made the situation far worse.

As a result, Scores of civilians have fled the camp while others have been forced to join pro-government battalions.

The Syrian government forces regained control over AlSayeda Zeinab Camp following a seven-month military operation. Heavy material damage has been inflicted on the camp.

The situation has been exacerbated by the lockdown measures imposed as part of the anti-coronavirus battle.



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UN data indicates that the camp was established on an area of 0.02 square kilometers in 1948, but the majority of the residents came in 1967. The inhabitants, who were displaced from the Quneitra Governorate in the Golan Heights during the 1967 Arab-Israeli conflict, sought refuge for the second time in their lives in the area. Most had originally fled to the Golan Heights in 1948 from nearby villages in northern Palestine.

Before the conflict in Syria, the camp was home to 23,700 Palestine refugees. The camp was affected by violent clashes that forced 40 per cent of the people to leave in late 2012.

Like other areas in Syria, displacement, unemployment, inflation, protection and security risks are among the major concerns shared not only by Palestine refugees but also Syrians alike during the ongoing conflict in Syria. The majority of Palestine refugees in AlSayeda Zeinab work as day laborers, government employees or vendors.

Along similar lines, some 70 Palestinian families taking shelter in Urfa continue to appeal for urgent action by the local and international humanitarian institutions.

Hundreds of PRS have been unable to provide for their children and families in Turkey. A large number of companies, factories, and shops shut their doors for fear of further COVID-19 contaminations. Several Palestinian families have lost their sole sources of income as a result.



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Unofficial statistics indicate that 10,000 Palestinians from Syria have sought shelter in Turkey, where they have been facing dire socio-economic conditions and denied access to the local labor market.

Turkish embassies continue to prevent Palestinian refugees from Syria from obtaining visas. As a result, hundreds of Palestinians have embarked on life-threatening journeys via illegal immigration roads to reach Turkey, fleeing war-tattered Syria, among other war-stricken zones.

Meanwhile, the Palestinian Embassy in Turkey announced that the Palestinian Ministry of Interior in Ramallah gave instructions for suspending applications for Palestinian passports for external use along with the replacement of lost or damaged passports in the country.

The move has been attributed to the increasing number of fake passports and travel documents in Turkey.

Palestinian refugees holding Syrian travel documents continue to be denied their right to free travel and free movement.

In Lebanon, Palestinian refugees from Syria are treated as foreigners and often denied access into embassies to obtain visas.

A number of Arab governments announced their decision to ban the entry of Palestinian refugees holding travel documents issued in such countries as Lebanon, Syria, and Jordan.



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A handful of such measures was opted for and put into effect by the Saudi authorities and the United Arab Emirates in an attempt to force the Palestinians to seek refuge outside of their territories.

Most of the world governments have outlawed granting visas to Palestinians with Syrian travel documents.