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Human rights situations that require the Council's attention

Written statement* submitted by The Palestinian Return Centre Ltd, a non-governmental organization in special consultative status

The Secretary-General has received the following written statement which is circulated in accordance with Economic and Social Council resolution 1996/31.

[21 August 2022]

* Issued as received, in the language of submission only.



Palestinian Refugees Facing Squalid Humanitarian Condition in the Northern part of the Syrian Arab Republic Displacement Camps

Overview

More than eleven years of relentless violence and deteriorating economic conditions continue to undermine the resilience of Palestine refugees living in the Syrian Arab Republic. Of the 560,000 Palestine refugees registered with the United Nations Relief and Works Agency for Palestine Refugees (UNRWA), 438,000 Palestine refugees are in the Syrian Arab Republic including 254,000 who remain displaced within Syrian borders; An estimated 56,600 (of the 438,000) are trapped in hard-to-reach and besieged areas where humanitarian access remains a key challenge.¹

Northern part of the Syrian Arab Republic

Over 1,500 Palestinian refugees families have reached northern part of the Syrian Arab Republic since the start of the conflict, where they have been crammed in substandard housing facilities and denied access to the most vital services, most notably healthcare.²

This has resulted in an increased number of deaths, abortions, and neonatal deaths, particularly with the outbreak of the coronavirus pandemic. Inappropriate medical diagnoses, shortage in staff and equipment along with medicines dearth have had tragic consequences.

Limited access to running water, pharmacies and medical facilities mean displacement camps for Palestinian refugees and Syrians are especially vulnerable. Most hospitals and medical facilities have been bombed, rendering them out of order.³

An acute dearth in potable water also continues to rock the area, where water tanks are being filled just once a week, forcing civilians to line up in long queues for hours and under scorching heat to get a few liters.

For over three months, the displaced families have not received aid from the Turkish Authority of Disaster and Emergency Management (AFAD) and the Turkish Red Crescent, the two bodies in charge of displacement camps north of Syria.

At the same time, Palestinian refugees families in the northern part of the Syrian Arab Republic have been deprived of vital assistance by UNRWA on claims that they are sheltered in inaccessible or opposition-held zones.⁴

Recommendations

Conflict in the Syrian Arab Republic over the past decade has caused immense challenges for Palestine refugees, including deaths and injuries, continued internal displacement, large-scale migration to other countries, loss of livelihoods, and mounting humanitarian needs for basic survival.

Palestinian Return Centre warns of the life-threatening repercussions of the dire humanitarian situation in the northern part of the Syrian Arab Republic displacement camps. Palestinian and Syrian families are food insecure and denied access to life-saving services.

UNRWA should live up to its responsibility regarding the Palestinian refugee community in north part of the Syrian Arab Republic and provide them with the humanitarian and legal assistance they are in quite urgent need of.

Donor countries should mobilize funds for UNRWA and help the Agency overcome its financial deficit in order to be able to maintain its vital services for Palestine refugees pending a just and lasting solution to their plight.

- 1 UNRWA, <https://www.unrwa.org/ar/syria-crisis>
- 2 AGPS, <https://www.actionpal.org.uk/ar/post/1763>
- 3 Syria Response Coordinators' website <https://www.enabbaladi.net/archives/577764>
- 4 Statement by the Palestinian Refugee Documentation Center in northern Syria <https://cutt.us/abziN>