



مركز العودة الفلسطيني
Palestinian Return Center



مجموعة العمل من أجل فلسطينيين سورية
Action Group For Palestinians of Syria

PALESTINIANS OF SYRIA

LIFE UNDER RESTRICTIONS



**Annual Field Report on the Situation
of the Palestinians of Syria in 2017**

Edited by Ibrahim Al-Ali

PALESTINIANS OF SYRIA

LIFE UNDER RESTRICTIONS

Annual Field Report on the Situation of the Palestinians of Syria in 2017

Edited by
Ibrahim Al-Ali

Prepared by:

Tarek Hamoud
Ahmad Hosain

Fayez Abu Eid
Ala Barghouth

Muhammad Al-Bash
Ibrahim Al-Ali

Translated & Edited by:
Safa Othmani



Action Group for Palestinians of Syria



Palestinian Return Centre



مجموعة العمل من أجل فلسطينيي سورية
ACTION GROUP FOR PALESTINIANS OF SYRIA

LONDON UNITED KINGDOM
INFO@ACTIONPAL.ORG.UK

TEL: +44 (0) 20 8453 0978
WWW.ACTIONPAL.ORG.UK



مركز العودة الفلسطيني
PALESTINIAN RETURN CENTRE

LONDON UNITED KINGDOM
INFO@PRC.ORG.UK

TEL: +44 (0) 20 8453 0919
WWW.PRC.ORG.UK

FIRST EDITION, 2018
ACTION GROUP FOR PALESTINIANS OF SYRIA
THE PALESTINIAN RETURN CENTRE
ISBN: 978-1-901924-42-8

ISBN 978-1-901924-42-8



Contents

Introduction	7
Overview	9
CHAPTER I	
Palestinian Refugees in Syria	
A) Palestinian Refugee Camps	
Refugee Camps:	
Yarmouk Camp.....	11
Withdrawal Initiatives, Agreement.....	15
Khan Eshieh Camp.....	31
Daraa Camp	33
AlSabina Refugee Camp.....	38
AlHusainiya Camp, Handarat Camp	40
AlNeirab Camp.....	41
Jaramana Camp.....	43
Khan Dannun Camp, AlSayeda Zeinab Camp	44
AlAyedeen Camp in Homs, AlAyedeen Camp in Hama.....	45
AlRaml Camp in Latakia	46
CHAPTER II	
B) Palestinian Refugee Communities:	
Damascus and Its Suburbs:	
Qudsaya, Hittin Community, Naher Aisha, AlDhiabiya:	48
Eastern Ghouta:	49
Southern Syria	
AlMuzeireeb	49
Jilin Community.....	52
Zizon Community:.....	53
Tseil, Heit Town, Tafas Town:.....	54
Northern Syria	
Idlib	55
CHAPTER III	
C) Palestinian Refugees Outside of Syria	
Palestinians from Syria in Lebanon	56
Palestinians of Syria in North Africa (Egypt – Libya)	57
Palestinian Refugees from Syria in Saudi Arabia	64
Yemen, Kurdistan,	65
Palestinians from Syria in Turkey.....	66
Palestinians from Syria in East Asia (Malaysia, Thailand)	66
Palestinians from Syria in Europe.....	70
Success Stories	72
	77

Political and Human Rights Activism	78
Appeals	79

CHAPTER IV

D) Victims and Detainees

Victims	80
Detainees	83
List of Palestinians of Syria Detained in 2017	84
List of Palestinian women, Girls Detained in 2017	86
Victims of Torture	86
Released Refugees	88
List of refugees released in 2017	88
 Conclusion	 92

Introduction

For the seventh year in a row, alarm bells continue to be raised over the calamitous upshots of deadly hostilities in war-ragged Syria. According to AGPS data, as many as 3,629 Palestinian refugees have had their lives taken away by the raging warfare since March 2011 until December 2017.

In a territory where arms continue to be used without control and where bloodshed rages on around the clock, Palestinian refugees in Syria have ceaselessly sounded distress signals over the tragic situation they have been made to endure in the midst of an unabated tide of forced deportations, extra-judicial killings, psycho-physical torture, and arbitrary detentions.

Forced out of their homes and land by the Israeli occupation some 70 years ago, the Palestinian refugees who have fled to Syria, as they rummaged around for a safer shelter, have found themselves trapped in a situation which is no less tragic than that wrought upon their forebears.

The tough blockade on Yarmouk, the deadly shelling on Daraa, the arbitrary arrests at checkpoints pitched across the Syrian territories, and the tragic conditions endured by poverty-stricken communities have made the situation as alarming as it sounds.

While hundreds have been clinging to the hope of return to their camps without conditions or restrictions, dreaming to reunite with their families and children, others have given it all up, prefiguring a future that is as dark as nighttime.

This report keeps record of the death of 205 Palestinians during 2017 due to war-related incidents, 12 among them killed under torture in Syrian government dungeons, where 1,644 Palestinians have been locked up. Since the outbreak of bloody hostilities, 475 Palestinians were pronounced dead as a result of torture in Syrian prisons.

The report documents the detention of 28 Palestinians in 2017 and the release of 25 others.

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

The present report provides thorough data on the daily onslaughts, death toll, and number of detainees in war-torn Syria. It also underscores the crises endured by the Palestinian community in refugee camps across and outside of the embattled Syrian territories.

At the same time, the study provides a detailed account of the violations perpetrated against the Palestinians of Syria on the asylum-seeking road and on way to Europe.

AGPS is a London-based human rights watchdog that monitors the situation of Palestinian refugees in war-torn Syria. In seeking to fulfill this goal, AGPS team

does its best to uphold the finest standards of historiographic ethics and maintain honesty in sourcing. To that very end, live snapshots, footages, and sworn affidavits are taken directly from the fighting scene across a myriad of flashpoints so as to authenticate AGPS role as a human rights overseer.

We are reshaping global media on human rights documentation and relentlessly working to boost our status as one of the world's most revered and most consulted human rights observatories.

A series of annual and semi-annual reports released by AGPS on the situation of the Palestinians of Syria are available on the group's website: <http://www.actionpal.org.uk/en/>

Overview

As hostilities have gone rampant in Syria, the number of victims has hit the zenith. Affected by the atrocities of the unabated warfare, the Palestinian refugee community has been subjected to a situation where shelling, bloodshed, and deprivation have turned into daily occurrences.

Though the situation has seen a state of relative calm in such refugee camps as AlNeirab and Handarat, north of Syria, as a result of the ceasefire deal struck in Aleppo and the takeover of the city by the Syrian government forces, Palestinian refugees in central and coastal provinces have been enduring abject security and socio-economic conditions.

A number of residents who had been displaced since November 2017 also returned to AlSbeina camp following a set of conditions and mechanisms set forth by the Syrian government.

The Syrian regime troops also grabbed hold of the Jaramana camp and AlSayeda Zeinab, along with AlHusainiya, Khan Eshieh, and Khan Dannun, where the humanitarian and living conditions have gone from bad to worse.

At the same time, residents of Yarmouk Camp have fallen prey to internal mayhem, shelling, and the blockade imposed by ISIS and Tahrir AlSham battalions, among other warring parties. The cordon slapped by the pro-regime troops on the camp has made the situation far more alarming.

Meanwhile, shelling rocking the Palestine refugee camps in Daraa has brought about simmering tensions and destruction.

The absence of relief aids and humanitarian assistance in such embattled areas as Idlib's and Daraa's outskirts has resulted in a calamitous situation for the Palestine refugee communities.

Palestinians from Syria have been denied access to free movement inside and out. Jordan has officially suspended the entry of Palestinians from Syria; Lebanon has set tough conditions to rein in the influx of refugees from conflict zones; Turkey has suspended entry visas for Palestinians from Syria for the second year, except for holders of Gulf visas.

The number of refugees and asylum seekers has shrunk by half in 2017 compared to 2016. In 2017, an estimated number of 181, 543 refugees reached European countries, 85,662 among whom from war-tattered Syria. In late 2015 and early 2016 the number has hit over 1,200,000, including more than 300,000 who fled from Syria.

1.76% of those who fled to Europe in 2017 via the Mediterranean sunk at sea, up from 1.38% in 2016.¹

¹ The Euro-Mediterranean Human Rights Monitor

CHAPTER I

Palestinian Refugees in Syria

A) Palestinian Refugee Camps



Yarmouk Camp

In 2017, the Yarmouk refugee camp had come under heavy shelling. Bloody confrontations between ISIS, the Nusra Front, and the government battalions made the situation fraught with uncontrolled tensions. Tensions had reached a zenith due to the attempts of ISIS squads to hold sway over every corner of the camp and force the Nusra Front out of the area following a deal struck with the Syrian government. Key to the deal was the retreat of ISIS from AlHajar AlAswad and Yarmouk.

Since mid-July 2013, Yarmouk Camp has been blockaded by the Syrian government forces and their allies, blocking the entry of aid items and civilians' free movement inside and out.

ISIS Tightens Grip on Yarmouk Residents

Nearly 60% of Yarmouk's overall area had come under ISIS control since early April 2015. Those stranded inside the shelter have never ceased to sound the alarm over the crackdowns and violations committed by ISIS militias.

Speaking with AGPS upon more than one occasion, Yarmouk residents said that life has become unbearable as they have been mistreated by ISIS and have had their personal freedoms violated on a daily basis.

A blockade was also slapped by ISIS on Yarmouk's western corners on account that the area had been controlled by their Nusra Front rivals, obstructing the delivery of bread, water, and relief items to Nusra-led zones.

ISIS carved out the camp into sub-sectors controlled by a battalion each. Every section is closed off with checkpoints, roadblocks, and sand barriers as had been the case in the Loubiya Street, Abu Hasheesh Square, the Haifa Street, Street 30, and the Sports City. Another such roadblock was pitched outside Abi Eskander shop leading to the Uruba Street.

Violations, Arrests, and Executions

Ever since they captured the camp on April 2015, ISIS militias have terrorized the residents through the arbitrary abduction sweeps, extra-judicial executions, and amputations perpetrated in the area under the religious guise. ISIS ruled that the residents be banned from visiting graveyards and prevented students and teaching staff from pursuing their academic careers outside of the camp. Doors of local schools were shut down, leaving the residents with no option other than to join ISIS-run schools.

ISIS further imposed tight restrictions on the delivery of firewood from the shelter to adjacent towns, stipulating that a written permission be issued by the ISIS-run

“public court” to that very end and that the intended quantity do not exceed 25 kilograms.

Palestinian and Syrian families in southern Damascus have often launched cries for help over the lack of firewood needed for cooking and heating during winter season. Civilians have been forced to purchase the debris of demolished homes and structures in Yarmouk and AlHajar AlAswad and selling them to others sheltered in nearby towns and camps.

ISIS also banned raising the Palestinian flag, ruling that whoever breaches the ban be subjected to harsh penalties. Sources from the camp said ISIS mobs stepped on a Palestinian flag.

Groups of women were also tasked by ISIS mobs to keep tabs on “religious felonies” committed by women inside the camp.

Those caught with shaved-off beards in Yarmouk came under the threat of detention and prosecution by ISIS.

Flagrant Violations

On February 13, 2017, a newly-married couple was kidnapped by ISIS on allegations that they tied the knot outside of ISIS’ religious court. Eye-witnesses said the marriage contract was conducted in the presence of lawyer and two witnesses. The groom received a penalty of 18 flogs and a prison sentence while the wife had her hair shoved entirely after she was flogged several times.

Sources from the camp said ISIS invalidated scores of marriage contracts struck at religious courts in southern Damascus areas, including Yalda, Babila, and Beit Sahem. Couples who concluded their marriage contracts at pro-government bodies received harsh penalties.

On February 13, 2017, ISIS executed the Palestinian refugee Mohamed Atiyeh, nicknamed Hamouda Jazeera, on charges of collaboration with Aknaf Beit AlMaqdis. ISIS claimed that telephone conversations with Aknaf Beit AlMaqdis allies were found on his mobile phone.

On Sunday, February 19, 2017, ISIS mobs in Yarmouk burglarized a UNRWA office and misappropriated all of its kit, including laptops, lab microscopes, cameras, and printers, declaring the stolen property “war spoils.”

On March 2, 2017, ISIS executed five Palestinian refugees among them a member of the Alyan family, another from the Tayeh family, and two more refugees affiliated with Tahrir AlSham. The other casualty was identified as Mohamed Nasar.

On March 7, 2017, ISIS released gruesome snapshots purporting to show the brutal execution of Palestinian youth Mohamed AlTayeh in AlUruba neighborhood in Yarmouk Camp on allegations of collaborating with Tahrir AlSham battalion. A shot showed the head of the handcuffed hostage as being severed from his body.

On April 2, 2017 ISIS closed off, without prior notices, the checkpoint set up on

the Yarmouk-Yalda thoroughfare and barred civilians and students' access out of and into the area.

On April 4, 2017, ISIS forced civilians out of their homes near Abdul Qadir AlHusaini Mosque and Haifa Street, declaring the area a closed military site. Sometime earlier, families sheltered in Haifa and Jadat neighborhoods, adjacent to the Shuhadaa neighborhood and Street 15, were ordered to leave their homes under the same pretext.

On July 2, 2017, ISIS smashed headstones in Yarmouk's New Cemetery under the religious guise.

On July 5, 2017, ISIS released three residents of Yarmouk who were arrested for carrying tobacco.

On July 21, 2017, ISIS released pictures documenting the execution of the Palestinian teen Mohamed Alyan. The latter was kidnapped over charges of entering foodstuff to Tahrir Al Sham-led zones.

On November 6, 2017, a number of civilians were arrested by ISIS mobs over allegations of tobacco-possession on their way back home from Yalda town to Yarmouk.

ISIS: Divisions, Disagreements, Withdrawals & Deals

Internal rifts among ISIS leaders flared up in 2017 following disagreements over leadership in southern Damascus. Tensions further escalated as a result of the agreement struck with the Syrian government and which stipulated that ISIS members retreat from Yarmouk to AlHajar AlAswad.

With the possibility of a government takeover of the camp coming into view following the deal, ISIS "emirs" (leaders) broke away from the militia while others run away. A number of ISIS leaders escaped to Deir AlZor following coordination with the government forces. Those who remained in the area faced an unknown fate.

Abduction sweeps had been launched by ISIS fighters following reports on the dismissal of the so-called leader "Abu Hesham AlKhaboury". The latter, a former ISIS leader in southern Damascus, arrested ISIS member Abu Othman AlRiqawi after reports emerged on Al Riqawi's projected takeover of power.

Tensions escalated following ISIS decisions to assign "princes" from AlHajar AlAswad and to monopolize power, ruling out its Palestinian allies in Yarmouk.

Special sources told AGPS that ISIS underwent a state of alert as a result of the new decisions and nominations made by the group's leaders in Al Hajar AlAswad.

In 2017, scores of "princes" left ISIS-run zones south of Damascus (Yarmouk camp and AlHajar AlAswad). The list included Rateb Tayara (Abu Ahmed), ISIS' former media chief south of Damascus. He left the Shuhadaa sector in Yarmouk camp on way to an unidentified destination following an agreement with the Syrian

government forces. Abu Ahmed passed through a checkpoint separating ISIS troops, on the one hand, and the government forces and their Palestinian allies, on the other.

- On October 11, 2017, seven ISIS members left Al Hajar Al Aswad following contacts with the government forces. Four relatives of Abu Hesham AlKhaboury also walked out on Sunday, December 6, 2017, through the same checkpoint. Three more ISIS members passed through the checkpoint on Friday, December 13, 2017 on way to an unknown location.
- On December 14, 2017, eight relatives of Hesham AlKhaboury, among them Saddam, AlAraby, Abu AlBaraa, Abu Kasem Hamad, and Azou (Al Khaboury's nephew) left AlHajar AlAswad with the help of the Syrian government forces.
- On December 16, 2017, ISIS arrested eight members on their way out of southern Damascus through the Barada Factory checkpoint separating AlHajar AlAswad and AlSbeina town.

ISIS Branches South of Damascus: Names and Missions

AGPS kept record of the names and missions of ISIS-run security branches in AlHajar Aswad stronghold south of Damascus. AGPS found out a striking resemblance between the names of ISIS divisions and those designating pro-government branches.

Located in AlHajar AlAswad, Site 4 was used by ISIS as a police station to work out emerging disagreements and castigate those who violate religious decrees. Site 3, adjacent to AlHajar AlAswad, handled cases of those arrested on security grounds. The largest and most dangerous ISIS site was nicknamed "AlAhmar" or "Site 0", where red-suited convicts sentenced to death were held captive in anticipation of their execution.

Tahrir AlSham Commission (Formerly Self-Identified as Nusra Front):

All attempts to force Tahrir AlSham fighters out of Yarmouk Camp, following an agreement between the opposition forces and the government allies to evacuate the pro-government areas of AlFoua and Kafriya north of Syria in return for the retreat of gunmen in AlZabadani, Madaya, and Yarmouk to northern Idlib, had been fruitless due to the security mayhem rocking the area.

In 2017, the Syrian government forces allowed several Tahrir AlSham fighters to safely exit the Yarmouk camp with their families following the four-town agreement.

- On June 3, 2017, another Tahrir AlSham fighter left AlKadam area with his family through a government-run checkpoint on way to Idlib. The exit was carried out under the supervision of the Syrian Red Crescent. In return, four

wounded persons along with 12 accomplices were safely allowed to leave Kafria and AlFoua on way to Aleppo.

- On June 22, 2017, two sick members of Tahrir AlSham were allowed out of blockaded Yarmouk Camp in exchange for the safe exit of two persons from AlFoua and Kafria.

Pro-government sources said an estimated 120 Tahrir AlSham fighters present in government-held areas in Yarmouk were about to be evacuated from the camp toward northern Syria as part of the four-town agreement.

In the meantime, fierce clashes burst out between Tahrir AlSham and ISIS battalions as a result of the latter's ceaseless attempts to hold sway over Yarmouk's western corners, already held by Tahrir AlSham. ISIS tightened the noose around civilians' neck in Tahrir AlSham-led zones and barred the entry/exit of residents and foodstuff, declaring the area a closed military zone in an attempt to force Tahrir AlSham members to throw in the towel.

Withdrawal Initiatives, Agreement

Several agreements and initiatives had been announced in 2017 in anticipation of the withdrawal of ISIS and Tahrir AlSham from the Yarmouk refugee camp following the transfer of injured members of Tahrir AlSham to Idlib as part of the four-town agreement between the Syrian government and opposition forces. ISIS leaders also launched calls for the upcoming withdrawal of their allies from southern Damascus.

Meanwhile, Syria's Minister of State for National Reconciliation Affairs, Ali Haidar, said in a statement issued by the ministry's press office that efforts had been under full swing by the Syrian government to work out the situation in southern Damascus, particularly in AlHajar AlAswad and Yarmouk Camp, and secure civilians' return to their homes.

Haidar's statement was released following a meeting held at the ministry's headquarters on July 31 with representatives of the Popular Initiative for Reconciliation in Yarmouk Camp. The Palestine Liberation Organization (PLO) envoy, Anwar Abdel Hadi, was in attendance.

The ministry's adviser Ahmed Muneer Ahmed also said that a reconciliation committee had been tasked with entering Yarmouk Camp and carrying out reconciliation talks so as to make militants withdraw from the area of their own accord and restore calm in Yarmouk. "We have a plan for withdrawal of gunmen. We will contact them directly to that very end," the official said at the time.

Talal Najy, Assistant Secretary-General of the Popular Front for the Liberation of Palestine-General Command, said efforts had been underway to force ISIS members in Yarmouk to retreat to northern Syria by the end of 2017.

Speaking on the sidelines of a meeting held by the Central Command of the Palestinian Resistance Forces in Damascus on November 28, 2017, Najy said that Syrian authorities and Palestinian factions, among other concerned bodies, have combined forces to work out the situation in southern Damascus by the end of 2017, adding that ISIS and Tahrir AlSham gunmen were ready for reconciliation.

On September 28, 2017, PLO envoy, Anwar Abdel Hadi said the countdown to end the Yarmouk Crisis was just kick-started on the ground and that practical mechanisms were opted for to force terrorists and armed militias out of Yarmouk Camp, among other southern Damascus areas.

At the same time, Rif Dimashq governor Alaa Ibrahim said that tensions in Rif Dimashq will be soothed by the end of 2017 while the implementation of AlQadam neighborhood agreement, stipulating the transfer of gunmen who refused to yield in to northern Syria, had been put off.

Ibrahim also said that developments will be announced soon regarding the agreement of Yalda, Babila and Beit Sahem, located in Damascus's southern outskirts.

Ibrahim added that efforts had been in progress as to the agreement related to AlQadam and AlHajar AlAswad, controlled by ISIS. He said gunmen deployed in those areas had been facing up to ISIS terrorists in AlHajar AlAswad and that the situation will come to an end once ISIS fighters give ground.

Secretary of the Coalition of Palestinian Resistance Forces in Syria Khaled Abdul Majeed said the Yarmouk file was tightly linked to the situation in eastern AlGhouta and that agreements were concluded earlier with armed groups in AlHajar AlAswad, Yarmouk and adjacent zones as regards southern Damascus areas. He added that sometime earlier a number of ISIS and AlNusra fighters had been gearing up to leave the area and have their situation worked out, saying lists containing the fighters' names were put forth.

In 2017, the Syrian government forces allowed scores of Tahrir AlSham fighters to safely exit the camp with their families in order to resettle in Idlib following the four-town agreement.

25 Tahrir AlSham fighters managed to leave AlKadam area with their families on way to Idlib under the supervision of the Syrian Red Crescent. In return, four wounded persons along with 12 companions were safely allowed to leave Kafria and AlFoua on way to Aleppo.

Meanwhile, a state of panic had overwhelmed Palestinian refugees who had been left with an unknown fate in southern Damascus, particularly in the embattled Yarmouk refugee camp. Human rights activists had raised concerns over the unrestrained expansion of the government forces and their war abettors in the area, which they will result in the forced conscription of Palestinians or in the mass exodus of refugees and their families for fear of being chased down, arrested, or killed.

Cairo Agreement: An Attempt to Rein In Escalations South of Damascus

The head of the political body of Jaysh AlIslam Mohammed Alloush stated on Thursday, October 12, 2017 that an agreement on de-escalation south of Damascus was reached and came into force.

He said a meeting was held at the invitation of Cairo following talks with the Russian side to de-escalate tension in eastern AlGhouta and AlKadam neighborhood south of Damascus.

Alloush added that the Cairo-brokered agreement, signed by Jaysh AlIslam, AlAbabeel Brigades, and Aknaf Beit AlMakdis, following talks with Russian delegates, was expected to culminate in a ceasefire in southern Damascus, the opening of crossings, and the protection of the residents against all attempts of forced deportation. The move made it possible for any faction wishing to join the agreement to do so.

In a statement issued on Wednesday, September 13, 2017, Syrian opposition forces in Yalda, Beit Sahem, Babila, and AlKadam voiced their firm rebuff of all agreements that would result in the forced deportation of the residents of southern Damascus. The residents also took to the streets, protesting any such schemes and condemning all attempts to change the demographic composition of the area for sectarian or political benefits.

A de-escalation statement issued by Jaysh AlIslam, Aknaf Beit AlMakdis, and AlAbabeel Brigades also called on Russia, in its position as the underwriter of the truce, to commit to a cessation of hostilities. They further announced their intent to embark on reconciliation talks in favor of a comprehensive solution to the crisis. The signatories also urged Russia to boost efforts so as to keep crossings and humanitarian passageways open in Babila and AlKadam and allow a smooth entry of life-saving food items and medical stuff. The statement reiterated the parties' firm rejection of the forced deportation of the residents of southern Syria.

All initiatives and talks carried out between the Syrian government forces and the armed groups to cease hostilities in Yarmouk and disarm the camp have been futile. Fingers have been pointed at both parties for the failure of such endeavors.

Health Care:

The health situation in the Yarmouk refugee camp had gone sharply downhill in 2017 as hundreds of civilian residents sustained life-threatening diseases.

All hospitals and clinics in the camp, except for the under-equipped Palestine Hospital, had gone out of operation due to the acute shortage in medical stuff and specialized practitioners as a result of the tough blockade slapped by the regime army and the Popular Front for the Liberation of Palestine – General Command (PFLP-GC) since mid-2013. 3,000 to 5,000 civilians had been trapped inside the shelter while over 200 refugees died as a result of undernourishment and medical

neglect. The situation worsened after ISIS captured large areas of Yarmouk Camp in early April 2015.

AGPS has frequently sounded the alarm over the propagation of the life-threatening typhoid fever and jaundice diseases in areas controlled by Tahrir AlSham west of Yarmouk Camp.

The crisis had been attributed to the twofold blockade enforced by the Syrian government forces and their war partners, on the one hand, and ISIS militias, on the other. Contaminated water wells have added bad to worse. Several typhoid-stricken civilians have been spotted in southern Damascus, mostly in Yarmouk Camp.

Field sources said over 189 Palestinians needed urgent medical referrals, among them 31 cancer-stricken patients, 78 others with cardio-vascular diseases, and 20 more refugees with fractures and bone diseases. 18 Palestinians were, meanwhile, diagnosed with liver and kidney diseases, 14 with epilepsy, eight with asthma, and 11 with paralysis.

At the same time, the National Coalition for Syrian Revolution and Opposition Forces, commonly named the Syrian National Coalition, cut off aids to local clinics in Yalda town and Babila. Both facilities are run by the General Health Commission south of Damascus.

Activists warned of the repercussions of the move on hundreds of displaced families and sick civilians who have been left on their own in the poverty-stricken area. Yalda and Babila resource-deprived clinics had served as the only health facilities for hundreds of patients south of Damascus.

Sick civilians trapped in Yarmouk Camp have been denied the right to medical treatment. Hundreds of patients have had their appeals for urgent medical referrals turned down at government-run checkpoint.

On March 19, 2017, the Syrian government forces and the PFLP-GC troops prevented the injured Palestinian child Hamza Hasan from leaving southern Damascus for medical treatment. The child was hit in a car-ramming incident, along with other persons, in Beit Sahem. The child's family had to appeal to a reconciliation committee south of Damascus to secure his transfer to Damascus hospitals via the Baibla-Sidi Miqdad checkpoint.

Sometime earlier, instructor Taysir Rahal, tutoring at Palestine Alternative School, run by the Jafra Foundation in southern Damascus, was shot and injured in his head by a sniper near AlShuhadaa Cemetery, in Yarmouk Camp, on his way to AlKadam neighborhood to meet with delegates of the local reconciliation committee over the child's need of urgent medical therapy.

On June 17, 2017, a patient had parts of his leg amputated as a result of an artery blockage. He was barred from passing through govern-run checkpoints to receive treatment on the grounds that he did not hold a permission from the Palestine Branch. Sometime earlier, he was allowed out of the area to undergo a leg surgery

following the mediation of the Damascus-based Palestine Embassy.

The Syrian regime forces allowed the sick Palestinian refugee Iyad Abu Hamdan to safely exit southern Damascus so as to undergo urgent medical checks and therapy. The move came after Hamdan's health status sharply deteriorated. Medics said 40-year-old Hamdan, diagnosed with clogged foot arterioles, should show up in the hospital every five days for urgent medical checks.

Palestinian child Ammar Bahloul was also allowed access to Damascus hospitals via government-led checkpoints due to intoxication inflicted by insecticides.

Local activists lashed out at the Syrian government which they said has been implementing "racist measures" against Palestinian refugees.

AGPS has frequently launched calls for securing health treatment and medical referrals, appealing to all warring parties to allow patients trapped inside Yarmouk and adjacent zones a safe access out of the area.

AGPS also appealed to UNRWA, among other concerned bodies, to live up to their duties vis-à-vis the crisis and work on securing proper treatment for the Palestinian refugees, particularly those diagnosed with life-threatening diseases.

Education

ISIS militias south of Damascus have declared education outside of ISIS-run schools "illegitimate", forcing students stranded in Yarmouk Camp to enroll at ISIS schools in the area.

- On August 3, 2016, ISIS ruled for shutting all schools in the camp and firing all instructors who worked outside ISIS' shield.
- Teachers who wished to work as independent "civil servants" were asked to register their names within a period of one week and to accept monthly salaries of no more than 25,000 Syrian pounds (\$50).
- At the same time, ISIS sealed off the main thoroughfares to local schools and threatened to prosecute all those who enroll or work at institutions outside of ISIS control.
- As a result, school drop-outs among Yarmouk students rose due to the tough restrictions enforced by ISIS on civilians' access to education and on school curricula.
- On December 19, 2016, marking the first day of the new academic year, ISIS slapped an arbitrary closure on all schools and ruled that a boys' school near Ibrahim AlKhalil Mosque in the Uruba neighborhood, south of Yarmouk, and another for girls in AlHajar AlAswad stronghold be kept open. An ISIS-made curriculum was also imposed on the two schools.
- More than once ISIS had also closed off the Yalda-Yarmouk checkpoint, blocking students' access to their schools under shallow pretexts. Several books and manuscripts had also been seized by ISIS terrorists.

- On February 19, 2017, ISIS mobs in Yarmouk broke into a UNRWA office and seized all of its kit, including laptops, lab microscopes, cameras, and printers, declaring the stolen property “war spoils.”
- Prior to ISIS capture of large parts of Yarmouk, the UNRWA bureau was run by the local relief office at Yarmouk.
- On May 18, 2017, ISIS established a school for children aged between 12 and 14 and urged parents to register their children at the so-called “Cubs Military School.” The locals said the move made part of ISIS attempts to brain-wash children and force them to join the raging hostilities.

Protest Moves and Appeals

On September 18, 2017, Palestinian activists appealed to the Palestine Liberation Organization and all concerned authorities to boost efforts so as to allow preparatory and secondary school students along with those enrolled in universities to sit for exams in Damascus.

On October 29, 2017, a sit-in was staged by the students of the Jarmak Alternative School in Yalda, calling for their right to education and speaking up for students stranded in Yarmouk. They further called for keeping students at bay from political and military calculations.

“We want neither food nor aid boxes; do not take away our right to education,” some of the banners lifted during the rally read.

Despite the countless crackdowns and movement restrictions, the education process had been ongoing, though at an intermittent pace.

Water Crisis

Residents of Yarmouk camp have frequently launched cries for help over the acute water crisis, saying they have been forced to drink water spouting from contaminated artesian wells after the Syrian government cut off water supplies since September 9, 2014.

Experts warned of the life-threatening diseases and kidney disorders inflicted by the unhygienic artesian wells due to the germ-infested deposits and the absence of water-disinfection endeavors.

Clashes between ISIS and Tahrir AlSham sharpened the crisis as civilians stranded in flashpoints, particularly the Loubiya, AlJa’ouna, Haifa, Safouriya, 15, and Safad streets, failed to fetch drinking water.

The Commission of Palestinians of Syria for Relief and Development had warned of the fallouts of the crisis, particularly in Yarmouk, Yalda, Babila, and Beit Sahem, affected by a severe water dearth. Thousands of residents depend on a single water unit, forcing the committee to opt for regulating consumption.

On April 23, 2017, activists warned of the calamitous conditions wrought by the

water crisis as thousands of Palestinian refugees and Syrians have been battling with a searing summer weather and struggling for survival as an abrupt temperature hike rocked the area. The hotter-than-normal air mass that has remained nearly stationary over the MENA region over the past few years has made the situation far worse, stretching the capacity of water networks beyond limits. Underfunded relief endeavors have failed to cope with the heat as demand for water far exceeds the capacity to supply it.

According to the Palestinians of Syria Relief Charity, several children have been diagnosed with sharp diarrhea, inflammatory bowel diseases, and leishmaniasis, among other lethal diseases.

The commission attributed the phenomenon to the unhygienic water supplies drunk by civilians in the area as the Syrian government cut off water to Yarmouk shelter and its environs. Springs serving hundreds of civilians in the territory have also ceased to flow due to the government offensives.

Activists in blockaded southern Damascus areas raised alarm bells over the countless cases of intoxication spotted among stranded children, mostly in Yarmouk and Babila due to the infected AlFijeh water line.

No significant water purification endeavors had taken place in the area during the period under examination. One such rare attempt occurred in Babila, where a resident manufactured a handmade water filter to remove undesirable chemicals and suspended contaminants from the impure AlFijeh supplies.

Living Conditions

Palestinian refugees stranded in Yarmouk and nearby towns have been enduring abject living conditions due to the tough blockade imposed by the regime army and the PFLP-GC since mid-2013. At least 200 refugees were pronounced dead as a result of undernourishment and medical neglect.

The government forces further closed off the Kadam-Asali checkpoint, a vital passageway for the delivery of food items and medical stuff south of Damascus. Following the measure, an acute shortage in food and medicines rocked the area. At a certain point in time, civilians could only eat herbs to silence their starved stomachs. The Syrian government forces also forced the opposition battalions south of Damascus to close the Beirut checkpoint connecting Yalda and Yarmouk as part of a pressure-tactic aiming to toughen the blockade on Yarmouk.

On June 29, 2017, ISIS stepped up crackdowns on civilians in Yarmouk and notified some 50 families to immediately evacuate their homes on claims that they were located near flashpoints adjacent to Yalda town.

ISIS gunmen searched civilian homes in Uruba Street and near Abu Hashish Square, in Yarmouk, and seized mobile phones in the hunt for conversations with Tahrir AlSham rival group.

ISIS also ordered a number of civilians to leave the camp under the security pretext and banned family visits and cash-transfer in ISIS-held zones.

Western Yarmouk: A Twofold Blockade

The blockade enforced by ISIS on the western corners of Yarmouk Camp led to an acute shortage in foodstuff and medicines. The residents were forced to kneel down before ISIS militants to secure a loaf of bread for their starved children and families. Armed militias had not, however, been affected by the blockade as they managed to secure food items via government-run checkpoints at nightfall.

Residents of Yarmouk's western neighborhoods of AlRija, Jadat, Ein Ghazal, Street 15, and Street 30 had been grappling with a twofold siege imposed by the government squads and their Palestinian allies on the one hand, and ISIS militias on the other.

On January 8, 2017, ISIS outfits in southern Syria ordered civilians, via mosque loudspeakers, to retreat from Fatah AlSham-run areas in Yarmouk Camp to ISIS-led zones in the shelter in less than 72 hours.

Following the measure, ISIS squads unlocked the roadblock between ISIS-led areas for one hour to allow civilians access out of Fatah AlSham-controlled zones, threatening to seal off the roadblock completely.

ISIS battalions further closed off Hassan Salama, Umm AlFahm, AlRamla, Loubiya, and AlSafsaf neighborhoods. 19 families got reportedly blockaded in the area as a result.

Restrictions on civilian movement inside and out had also been slapped by ISIS as part of its intent to turn the area into a military zone. ISIS militants also seized foodstuff fetched by civilians as they returned to their shelters in areas controlled by Fatah AlSham after they allowed them to enter one kilogram and a half of foodstuff.

Eye-witnesses said the residents had been subjected to verbal assaults by ISIS gangsters on their way out of the Madaris checkpoint. ISIS notified civilians of their intent to seal off the checkpoint once and for all.

On January 17, 2017, residents of the Fatah AlSham-run western corners of Yarmouk Camp have announced, in letters sent to ISIS militias, their firm rebuff of any attempts to force them out of their homes, no matter the pretext.

The residents of western Yarmouk further expressed concerns over the aggravated burglary and housebreaks targeting their own and only homes, reiterating their commitment to a nonaligned status and to neutrality as regards all warring actors.

One such incident occurred moments after a lady left her home in the hunt for foodstuff to feed her starved children. As soon as she came back home, she found out that all of her furniture and belongings were stolen.

Residents of Tahrir AlSham-led zones west of Yarmouk Camp planted cucumber,

among other vegetables, in an attempt to assuage the aftermaths of the siege.

On August 28, 2017, the Syrian government forces green-lighted the entry of six vehicles laden with aid items and dispatched by the Syrian Red Crescent to Tahrir AlSham-held zones west of Yarmouk as part of the four-town agreement.

Sources close to the Syrian regime said the Red Crescent delivered 600 food portions along with medical items to western Yarmouk.

On October 31, 2017, 26 families stranded west of Yarmouk were allowed to safely reach Yalda town. The families were received by the Commission of Palestinians of Syria for Relief and Development in its Yalda-based office. Sick persons received medical treatment. The families also joined a luncheon before they went back to Yarmouk Camp.

Closure of Uruba Checkpoint

During the last quarter of 2017, the Syrian opposition squads south of Damascus closed off the Uruba-AlNakheel checkpoint separating Yarmouk Camp and Yalda town. The measure came against the backdrop of the clashes that broke out between the Syrian government forces deployed in Yalda and ISIS militants in Yarmouk.

The opposition forces also attributed the closure of the Beirut checkpoint to their attempts to force ISIS members to turn themselves in and penalize them over their ceaseless attacks on checkpoints pitched across flashpoints between the two squads in Yarmouk and AlHajar AlAswad.

On October 19, 2017, Jaysh AlIslam said in a statement the closure came to force ISIS to join the negotiations table and commit to a ceasefire in civilian-populated areas, cease attacks against students and teachers, neutralize the checkpoint, and allow humanitarian cases a safe access out of and into the area.

Jaysh AlIslam said that the ISIS leader turned his back on the aforementioned demands and that the latter believed civilian institutions and pro-Palestine groups will pressurize the opposition to unblock the passageway.

An agreement was struck between opposition forces south of Damascus and ISIS to secure a humanitarian passageway between Yarmouk Camp and Yalda town from 07:00 a.m. to 07:00 p.m. The deal also stipulated that civil defense ambulances safely enter/exit the area from 07:00 p.m. to 07:00 a.m. to evacuate emergency cases.

The opposition forces allowed Yarmouk residents to pass through the Yalda-Yarmouk checkpoint in a two-hour opening that was opted for following efforts made by pro-Palestine institutions operating in Yalda. The opposition forces in Yalda also announced their decision to allow students from Yarmouk Camp, AlHajar AlAswad, and AlTadhamun areas to reach their schools. Paramedics and relief staff were also allowed to safely move inside and out.

On Monday, November 6, 2017, ISIS abruptly re-shut the Uruba-AlNakheel checkpoint and prevented the residents and students from moving to or back from nearby towns.

Following a closure that lasted for over one month and a half, the Syrian opposition forces unblocked an access road between Yalda and Yarmouk, allowing students from Yarmouk to reach their schools in Yalda and the residents to fetch foodstuff and vegetables. The checkpoint was, however, kept closed.

Activists said the Uruba checkpoint had been kept closed as a result of the pressure exerted by the Syrian government forces on the opposition squads to seal the Yalda-Yarmouk checkpoint. The closure also reportedly came following an agreement with the Syrian government. The latter ruled that the Babila-Sidi Miqdad checkpoint be closed in case the opposition outfits refuse to close the Yalda-Yarmouk checkpoint. The government forces prevented civilians who left for Damascus from Babila and Beit Sahem from entering southern Damascus towns.

The Syrian opposition forces turned their back on the threat launched by the government forces and kept the Yalda-Yarmouk checkpoint open. The government forces responded by closing off the Babila-Sidi Miqdad checkpoint and banning the entry/exit of civilian cars. The residents were also prevented from entering vegetables, sugar, flour, and fuel. The residents could only enter one bread bundle each. As a result, the opposition forces were pressurized to close the checkpoint and lift the barricades and barrels set up between Yarmouk and Yalda.

A swift price hike hit southern Damascus markets due to the crackdowns imposed by the government troops. Local markets had run out of vital items, most notably flour, sugar, rice, fuel, and cooking gas. Residents could only enter one kilogram of food each. Women were allowed to enter one bread bundle each following exhaustive search at the checkpoint. Merchants monopolized the delivery and purchase of vital items. The price of a single loaf of bread went up as high as 100 Syrian Pounds (nearly \$0.25).

Ten days later, the Syrian government outfits opened the Babila-Sidi Miqdad checkpoint after they made sure that the Uruba roadblock was completely closed by the opposition forces. Trucks laden with food items were allowed to enter southern Damascus towns.

A statement released by civil society representatives in Yarmouk appealed to all warring actors south of Damascus to lift the siege imposed on the camp and unblock the Uruba-AlNakheel checkpoint, closed following clashes between the opposition forces in Yalda and ISIS in Yarmouk.

The statement warned of the tragic repercussions of the closure, calling on all concerned parties to take urgent steps so as to save innocent civilians who wished to retrieve their right to a safe and dignified life.

It added that some 3,000 families have been stranded in the camp, including 35 families blockaded by ISIS for over a month's time in western Yarmouk, where they have been enduring an unknown fate.

The residents added that the Yalda thoroughfare represents their only passageway to fetch vital food items for their children and families who were at the risk of starving to death.

The statement was wrapped up with an appeal to all warring parties to keep the residents at a safe distance from the deadly warfare and military interests and to reopen the checkpoint without further delay.

Key Events

- On January 2, 2017, fierce clashes broke out in Yarmouk Camp, between Fatah AlSham and ISIS following futile attempts by the latter battalion to creep into the area.
- On January 5, 2017, clashes broke out between the pro-government Free Palestine Movement and ISIS at the crossroads of AlShuhadaa zone in Yarmouk. Medium and light weapons were used in the clashes.
- On January 6, 2017, violent clashes rocked Yarmouk Camp between ISIS militants and Fatah AlSham. Deaths were reported in the shootout.
- Sources at the camp confirmed that an infiltration attempt was carried out by a member of Fatah AlSham battalion who covered himself up in a women's dress. As soon as he reached an ISIS-run checkpoint in Street 15 he opened fire at ISIS members, killing a number of gunmen. Tensions soared following the infiltration.
- On January 9, 2017, the Syrian government forces attacked Fatah AlSham-held zones in the camp.
- On January 12, 2017, ISIS struck the Tahrir AlSham-led Rijah Square in the Yarmouk refugee camp with a number of mortar shells, resulting in material damage.
- On January 13, 2017, the Syrian government army targeted Fatah AlSham-held areas north of Yarmouk Camp. Field sources south of Damascus said that heavy smokes emerged as a result of the aggressive shelling carried out using tank artilleries and mortar shells. The offensive targeted Yarmouk's northern corners and the Sports Street in AlTadhamun neighborhood, adjacent to Yarmouk.
- On January 16, 2017, the Syrian government forces struck ISIS sites in Yarmouk, resulting in material damage. Clashes broke out at flashpoints between the armed groups and the pro-government forces. Palestinian refugee Adnan Mohammed Khalil, called Abu Adham, was pronounced dead.
- On January 25, 2017, Yarmouk refugee camp was hit with three mortar shells, resulting in material damage.
- On February 2, 2017, the anti-government Sham AlRasul brigade seized the Pool Area between Yalda town and the blockaded Yarmouk Camp. Sometime earlier, Fatah AlSham battalions deployed in the Pool area crept into Yalda,

Babila, and Beit Sahem towns and tightened grip on the environs of Yarmouk's northwestern area of AlRija Square.

- On February 4, 2017, fierce clashes flared up between the Fatah AlSham outfits and ISIS at the crossroads of Haifa and Safouriya streets in the camp after ISIS gunmen attempted to lift metal barriers. Two ISIS members were killed and others injured in the clashes.
- On February 5, 2017, clashes broke out between Fatah AlSham and ISIS following the latter's attempts to move into areas controlled by the former in Street 30 and Street 15 west of Yarmouk Camp.
- On March 10, 2017, violent clashes burst out between the pro-government Free Palestine Movement and ISIS battalions at the Shuhadaa crossroads in the camp. Palestinian young man Mahmoud Mundher AlKuku, nicknamed Abu Samer and affiliated with the Palestine Movement was rushed to a hospital so as to be treated for wounds he sustained in the clashes.
- On March 16, 2017, a number of mortar shells were fired at AlRijah in Yarmouk, resulting in material damage.
- On March 17, 2017, the Syrian government forces struck residential neighborhoods in Palestine Street with missiles, inflicting heavy material damage on civilian buildings. Bloody confrontations also burst out between pro-government Palestinian groups, escorted by the National Defense Forces, and the opposition forces at the Tarboush crossroads.
- On March 19, 2017, clashes broke out in the camp between ISIS and Tahrir AlSham, resulting in deaths and injuries on both sides. The Syrian government also bombarded several areas in the camp, inflicting material damage.
- On March 20, 2017, an unidentified militia opened fire at a hearse transferring the body of Umm AlAbed Tamim to Yarmouk so as to lay her to rest in the new Shuhadaa Cemetery.
- On March 23, 2017, AlRijah Square and other zones in the Yarmouk refugee camp were hit with a number of mortar shells and missiles.
- *Sporadic clashes between ISIS and Tahrir AlSham flared up in the camp. Clashes between ISIS and opposition forces also burst out at an intermittent scale at the crossroads of the Uruba Street.
- On March 30, 2017, clashes broke out between the Free Palestine Movement, escorted by pro-government Palestinian groups, and armed militias inside the Yarmouk camp, claiming the life of the Palestinian refugee, Fadi Abdul Majeed, affiliated with the Palestine Free Movement, and leaving others injured on both sides.
- On April 1, 2017, ISIS attempted to infiltrate opposition-led zones in Yalda, resulting in clashes with Jaysh AlIslam on the Beirut Street front between Yalda and Yarmouk. Clashes also burst out between AlKara'een battalion and the pro-government Palestinian groups at the crossroads of the Palestine Street and Yarmouk municipality.

- On 2 April 2017 violent clashes broke out between ISIS and armed opposition groups. Sounds of heavy blasts were detected near the Uruba-Beirut checkpoint, set up between Yalda and Yarmouk. Injuries were reported on both sides.
- On 11 April 2017, overnight clashes flared up between ISIS and Tahrir AlSham at the crossroads of the Haifa Street, where light and medium weapons were used. No injuries were reported among civilians.
- On April 23, 2017, ISIS targeted Tahrir AlSham-held zones west of Yarmouk Camp with mortar shells, resulting in material damage.
- On April 24, 2017, ISIS militants grabbed hold of all areas formerly controlled by AlKara'een battalion in Yarmouk following the death of a so-called Abu Rabi' Kar'ouna (Ahmed Abdul Rahman Kareem) who succumbed to wounds inflicted by a tunnel blast on April 3, 2017.
- On April 26, 2017, sporadic clashes broke out between ISIS and the Syrian opposition forces in Yalda town. Light and medium weapons were used during the confrontations, waged at the crossroads of the Palestine and Uruba streets.
- On April 27, 2017, dozens of ISIS and Fatah AlSham members were killed and wounded in violent clashes.
- On April 28, 2017, dozens of ISIS and Tahrir AlSham fighters were killed and several others injured in bloody shootouts.
- On April 29, 2017, ISIS attacked Beit Aknaf AlMaqdis strongholds. Clashes burst out at the Palestine Street crossroads and in the environs of the local clinic and the cultural center.
- On April 30, 2017, a so-called Abu Ibrahim, the former chief of Tahrir AlSham Commission succumbed to wounds he sustained during clashes with ISIS in Yarmouk.
- On May 2, 2017, Jaysh AlIslam targeted an ISIS site in Uruba Street, killing an ISIS gunman. Clashes also broke out between ISIS and the Syrian opposition squads in Yalda town.
- On May 10, 2017, a number of homes in Yarmouk were burned down as a result of violent clashes between ISIS and Tahrir AlSham militias.
- On May 13, 2017, clashes broke out between ISIS and Tahrir AlSham at the crossroads of Haifa and Yarmouk streets.
- On May 17, 2017, Yarmouk refugee camp came under heavy shelling that targeted civilian areas overnight.
- On May 18, 2017, violent clashes broke out between Tahrir AlSham and ISIS after the latter attempted to infiltrate Haifa Street. Medium weapons and incendiary bombs were used.
- On May 28, 2017, alternating clashes burst out between Tahrir AlSham and ISIS at the crossroads of Street 30 in Yarmouk Camp. Light and medium weapons along with shells were used in the clashes.

- On June 1, 2017, the camp had come under heavy shelling by the Syrian government forces, damaging civilian homes. Fierce clashes burst out between Tahrir AlSham and ISIS at the crossroads of Haifa Street. Light and medium weapons were used. Confrontations also broke out between the Kara'een battalion and Fatah AlIntifada at the crossroads of Palestine Street.
- On June 5, 2017, the Yarmouk refugee camp was hit with mortar shells and B10 projectiles unleashed by the government forces on the crossroads of Palestine Street and the Sports Street. Material damage was reported.
- On June 11, 2017, violent clashes between AlKara'een and pro-government battalions rocked the crossroads of the Palestine Street and the Sports Street. Warplanes kept hovering over the territory.
- On June 13, 2017, overnight clashes broke out between ISIS and Jaysh AlIslam squads after ISIS members detonated a high-explosive incendiary bomb at the crossroads of the Basateen area, between Yalda and AlHajar AlAswad (AlZein neighborhood).
- On June 18, 2017, clashes broke out in Yarmouk Camp between pro-government militias, escorted by Dara' AlAqsa Forces, the military wing of the Free Palestine Movement, on the one hand, and ISIS and AlKara'een, on the other. Injuries were reported on both sides.
- On June 21, 2017, clashes broke out at the crossroads of Palestine Street between AlKara'een battalion and the pro-government forces. Light and medium weapons were used.
- On June 23, 2017, ISIS struck Tahrir AlSham-held zones west of Yarmouk Camp with barrages of mortar shells.
- On June 27, 2017, violent flared between ISIS and Jaysh AlIslam. A member of the latter battalion as killed while injuries were reported on both sides.
- On July 6, 2017, violent clashes broke out between ISIS and Jaysh AlIslam at the crossroads of Beirut Street, east of Yarmouk Camp. Light and medium weapons, along with hand-made grenades, were used.
- On July 7, 2017, Palestine and AlJa'ouna neighborhoods in Yarmouk Camp were struck with mortar shells. No injuries were reported.
- On July 17, 2017, tension soared in Yarmouk camp and squabbles burst out between ISIS leaders after a network of fake currency trade and antiquities trade comprising ISIS affiliates was unraveled. The so-called Abu Hamza AlSheikh, an ISIS Emir (prince), was directly involved in the fraud. Another Emir, nicknamed AlKhabouri, was reportedly kicked out on the same grounds.
- On July 24, 2017, violent confrontations broke out between Jaysh AlIslam and ISIS after the latter tried to creep into AlZein neighborhood, controlled by the former battalion.
- On July 29, 2017, ISIS attacked Tahrir AlSham-led zones west of the Yarmouk refugee camp with mortar shells, resulting in material damage. Violent clashes also flared up between ISIS and Tahrir AlSham.

- On August 6, 2017, ISIS struck Tahrir AlSham-led areas in Haifa Street in Yarmouk with mortar shells, resulting in material damage. Violent clashes also flared up between ISIS and Tahrir AlSham.
- On August 7, 2017, a number of mortar shells were dropped on Yarmouk Camp. A child was moderately injured and property damaged in the offensive.
- On August 16, 2017, clashes broke out between ISIS and Tahrir AlSham battalions in the besieged Yarmouk refugee camp following an ISIS attack on areas controlled by Tahrir AlSham. No injuries were reported on either side.
- On August 18, 2017, violent confrontations burst out between pro-government forces and the armed militias in Yarmouk Camp at the crossroads of Palestine Street. No casualties were reported on either side. At the same time clashes between ISIS and Tahrir AlSham broke out near Abu Fuad Oven, Haifa Street, Safouriya Street, and Yarmouk neighborhoods. Light and medium weapons were used.
- On August 21, 2017 violent clashes burst out between ISIS and Sham AlRasoul brigade, escorted by Aknaf Beit AlMaqdis, in the vicinity of the Bassel swimming pool. The clashes spread out to flashpoints between Yarmouk and Yalda, south of Damascus.
- On August 24, 2017, clashes and shootouts between ISIS and the opposition outfits rocked the crossroads of the Uruba Street. Light and medium weapons were used.
- On August 31, 2017 violent confrontations broke out between ISIS and Jaysh AlIslam at the crossroads of the Zein neighborhood south of Yarmouk Camp. Medium weapons were used.
- On September 1, 2017 violent clashes broke out between ISIS and the opposition squads in AlZein and AlUruba areas. Medium weapons and bombs were used. Fires broke out at a number of civilian homes in the clashes.
- On September 4, 2017 four ISIS militants were pronounced dead following an attack by Jaysh AlIslam on ISIS sites. Jaysh AlIslam claimed responsibility for an attack on ISIS sites on the outskirts of AlHajar AlAswad using mortar shells. Violent clashes broke out between the two sides.
- On September 5, 2017, Yarmouk Camp was hit with missiles. The Kara'een-held sector was targeted with high-explosive rockets. Clashes broke out between the Kara'een battalion and the pro-government forces. Light and medium weapons were used.
- On September 9, 2017, the Syrian government forces targeted Street 30, west of Yarmouk, with machinegun fire.
- On September 15, 2017, ISIS attacked members of Tahrir AlSham Commission in Yarmouk with incendiary bombs, calling them "apostates".
- On September 17, 2017, violent clashes occurred in the vicinity of the Shuhada Park and Yarmouk Girls' High School between ISIS and the pro-government squads.

- On 24 September 2017, sporadic clashes burst out in Yarmouk Camp overnight between ISIS and Jaysh AlIslam at the crossroads of Palestine and AlZein neighborhoods. No damage was reported on either side.
- On September 26, 2017, the environs of Yarmouk Secondary School in Palestine Street were targeted with artillery shells. Material damage was reported. Clashes occurred at the crossroads of the Shuhadaa sector between ISIS and the pro-government forces. Light and medium weapons were used.
- On October 7, 2017, the Syrian government forces targeted Yarmouk camp with artillery shells. Shells slammed into the Kara'een sector in Palestine Street and AlTadhamun neighborhood, adjacent to the camp. Civilian homes sustained material damage.
- On October 8, 2017 the Syrian government dropped mortars on the Kara'een sector and AlTadhamun neighborhood, resulting in heavy material damage. At the same time, pro-government forces in the Nisreen Street attacked the area with medium machine guns.
- On October 13, 2017, mortar shells hit the outskirts of the camp and AlTadhamun neighborhood, resulting in material damage.
- On October 18, 2017, the Yarmouk Camp was targeted with mortar shells. Material damage was reported. Intermittent clashes broke out at the Uruba crossroads between ISIS and the opposition forces deployed in Yalda town.
- On October 18, 2017, the Syrian government forces and its allied militias targeted the Shuhadaa sector, Kara'een sector, and Palestine Street in Yarmouk with mortar shells.
- On October 22, 2017, clashes broke out between ISIS militants on the opposition factions in Yalda after ISIS members attempted to seize a local clinic set up between Yalda and Yarmouk Camp. Light, medium and heavy weapons were used, resulting in deaths among ISIS.
- On October 23, 2017, ISIS targeted opposition sites near the local clinic and the Japanese Hospital located on the outskirts of Yarmouk Camp with toxic gas bombs. 10 fighters from the Aknaf Beit AlMaqdis brigade were injured and transferred to a local clinic in Yalda.
- On October 24, 2017, the Syrian government forces and their Palestinian abettors struck various areas in Yarmouk with high-explosive missiles, inflicting material damage.
- On October 27, 2017 clashes broke out on the outskirts of the camp between ISIS and the armed opposition groups.
- On November 1, 2017, violent clashes broke out near the Uruba checkpoint between ISIS the opposition groups after members of Jaysh AlAbabeel battalion infiltrated into a building in which ISIS members were hiding in Daaboul Street. Deaths were reported on both sides.
- On 21 November 2017, violent clashes burst out in Yarmouk between ISIS and

the pro-government forces in areas held by the Palestine Free Movement.

- On December 5, 2017, Yarmouk Camp was struck with mortar shells, inflicting heavy material damage on civilian homes. Clashes also burst out between ISIS and Jaysh Ababeel near the Tuesday market in AlTadhamun neighborhood adjacent to Yarmouk Camp.
- On December 11, 2017, violent clashes broke out between the government forces and Tahrir AlSham in Yarmouk.
- On December 11, 2017, Palestine Street and AlTadhamun neighborhood were attacked with surface-to-surface missiles. Violent clashes flared up between pro-government Palestinian groups and ISIS fighters after the latter attacked a government checkpoint in the Nisreen neighborhood and seized building blocks in the area.

Khan Eshieh Camp

AGPS has frequently warned of the exacerbating living conditions endured by Palestinian refugees in Khan Esheih Camp, in western Rural Damascus, in 2017 due to the tough blockade imposed by the government forces on the main access roads out of and into the area.

Refugees had not only run out of urgently-needed items and bereaved of most humanitarian services; they had also been grappling with tough crackdowns on their way out of the camp.

Abduction sweeps and home break-ins had almost been a daily occurrence in the camp. The terms of a truce deal between the government forces and the opposition groups to lift the siege and protect the residents never truly saw the day on the ground.

The residents appealed to the Palestine Liberation Organization (PLO) and UNRWA to take urgent action regarding the situation in Khan Eshieh, saying the visits carried out by Palestinian officials in 2017 had been fruitless. They added that 25 million Syrian Pounds donated by member of the Fatah Central Committee Dr. Samir AlRefai who visited the camp on January 3, 2017, to rehabilitate infrastructure and vital facilities had not yet been shelled out.

The Syrian government forces also prevented aid delivery to families whose members left for Idlib following an agreement between the opposition groups and the Syrian government forces in early December 2016.

The General Commission of Arab Palestinian Refugees in Syria, in partnership with UNICEF, handed over winter clothes and shoes to all families in the camp except for those whose members left for Idlib.

Activists told AGPS that the local committee, chaired by Ismail Noufel, made a list of 220 Khan Eshieh residents who went to Idlib.

Khan Eshieh residents and farmers also spoke out against crooked merchants who

chop down fruitful trees from the area and sell firewood at steep prices to the residents. They urged the Syrian government and its popular committees to take a firm stance against fraudulent merchants and work on supplying the camp with firewood.

Official Visits

On January 3, 2017 a delegation of the Palestine Liberation Organization, headed by the member of the Central Committee of Fatah Movement and the secretary of the PLO factions Samir Al-Refai, popped in Khan Esheih Camp for Palestinian refugees.

The visit came as part of intents to keep tabs on the situation endured by residents of Khan Esheih and to seek urgent ways-out of the crises rocking the shelter.

A number of Khan residents and activists slammed the PLO for what they dubbed a “belated” move, wondering: “Where has the PLO been when we launched a cry for help after another to neutralize our disarmed camp and lift the blockade?”

They added that the PLO visit was a camouflaged form of the crackdowns and cordon slapped by the Syrian government troops around civilians’ neck, in a renewed infringement of the reconciliation accord struck with the opposition outfits in early December 2016.

On April 1, 2017, a delegation of Russian officers from Hmeimim military base, escorted by fighters from the Palestine Liberation Army (PLA) and from the Sa’sa’ pro-government branch, toured Khan Esheih Camp, without prior notifications.

The visit was accompanied by a humanitarian convoy, handed over to Khan Esheih residents, in cooperation with UNRWA. The Syrian government forces continued, meanwhile, to block the access of Khan Esheih residents to their homes and the entry of much-needed items to the camp.

On June 12, 2017, Syrian government delegates popped in the camp. The delegation included Rif Dimashq governor Alaa Ibrahim and security and military officials. Rif Dimashq governor pledged to work on unblocking the main access road to Khan ESheih and rehabilitating much-needed facilities in the area, including power, water, and telecommunication networks.

On November 22, 2017, UNRWA Commissioner-General Pierre Krähenbühl visited the camp. Krähenbühl met with the Social Development Committee in the camp and discussed key crises undergone by the residents, most notably as regards power and telecommunication networks, along with removal of landfill. Krähenbühl, vowed to work on improving living conditions in the camp.

Civil Action

Activists and civil society groups combined efforts to alleviate the socio-economic crises in Khan Esheih and make up for the absence of national and international

relief institutions.

On January 10, 2017, the Palestine Charity Commission distributed 1,000 bread bundles to the residents of Khan Esheih through government-run checkpoints.

On March 7, 2017, the commission distributed food boxes, children's milk, and diapers. Civilians and persons with special needs benefited from the move.

On May 5, 2017, the Jafra Foundation for Relief and Development handed over food parcels, blankets, pillows, and children's milk to the residents of Khan Esheih.

On November 22, 2017, the Palestine Charity, in cooperation with the Palestinian Red Crescent, launched its "Seventh Medical Week" activities in Khan Esheih refugee camp for Palestinians in Rif Dimashq. Dozens of patients received free medical checks and medicines.

Daraa Camp

In 2017, Daraa Camp for Palestinian refugees had come under heavy shelling as a result of the unabated offensives launched by the Syrian government army on opposition-held zones in Daraa city.

The government forces attacked the camp with internationally-prohibited weapons, including barrel bombs and projectiles carrying the lethal napalm substance.

As a result, 80% of buildings and civilian structures were reduced to rubble in the rampant warfare, forcing several families to seek shelter elsewhere. As many as 375 Palestinian refugees were also pronounced dead in Daraa. UNRWA facilities sustained heavy material damage.

A statement released by the Daraa Free Council on June 13, 2017 declared Daraa a disaster zone.

AlYadouda, AlNueima, Umm AlMayadhen, Daraa AlBalad, AlSadd Road, and Daraa Camp were all announced "disaster areas" due to the heavy damage inflicted by the escalated offensives launched by the Syrian government forces and their war abettors. The infrastructure was remarkably devastated while all field hospitals went out of operation.

UNRWA denounced the escalation of violence in the area, saying hostilities waged by the warring actors led to the displacement of Palestinians and the suspension of aid delivery in war-affected zones. As a result, several Palestinians were pronounced dead in 2017.

Those stranded in the camp kept frequently appealing to the relief institutions, UNRWA, PLO, and the warring parties to work on securing safe shelters to the residents, opening humanitarian passageways before children, women, and elderly people, and to urgently evacuating the wounded and sick residents to hospitals.

On October 27, 2017 dozens of Daraa Camp residents rallied following Friday's noon prayers, slamming UNRWA, PLO, and the concerned authorities for dragging

their feet over the calamitous situation in the area.

The rally-goers urged UNRWA to assume its duties and work on handing over financial and in-kind aid items to the residents. They further called on the PLO and Palestinian factions to make urgent steps so as to work out the water, power, and health crises endured by the residents.

Water supplies to Daraa Camp had been cut off since early April 2014. Daraa residents had been forced to rely on contaminated artesian wells to secure water supplies. Refugees often walk for long distances to fetch water, risking a journey fraught with danger to irrigate their children's thirst.

Health Care

Residents of Daraa Camp had run out of life-saving medical supplies and emergency items. Most of local clinics and hospitals went out of operation due to the deadly onslaughts rocking the area. There were almost no ambulances to evacuate wounded residents. Those evacuated outside the camp were returned by the Jordanian authorities, who refused to let in Palestinians from Syria even those injured in the warfare.

On February 15, 2017, local activists and civilians appealed to the United Nations and the International Red Cross, among other concerned bodies, to work on securing health care services for the wounded residents and on allowing the entry of life-saving medicines, which the camp has run out of due to the unabated shelling on local hospitals.

Daraa residents further called for urgent humanitarian action by the Palestinian political factions, the PLO, and UNRWA so as to mitigate the tragic fallouts of the acute dearth in foodstuff, medical kit, and fuel reserves, among other crises wrought by the tough blockade enforced by the government troops.

Education

AGPS kept record of a sharp nosedive in access to education for Palestinians sheltered in the Daraa refugee camp in 2017.

Most of UNRWA's schools were destroyed or put out of operation in the raging warfare. Other education facilities were turned into dungeons or field hospitals, imperiling Palestinians' academic careers.

A number of armed militias in the area also imposed curricula based on extremist doctrines and overseen by fanatic tutors.

AGPS launched appeals to the PLO and UNRWA to urgently step in and work on reconstructing destroyed schools, providing civilians with the needed psycho-physical protection, and boosting children's access to education in Daraa.

Upon more than one occasion, UNRWA has raised alarm bells over the striking upsurge in the rate of school dropouts among the Palestinians of Syria, several among

whom left schools to help feeding their impoverished families in unemployment-stricken refugee camps.

According to data by the Syrian Network for Human Rights, all schools in Daraa Camp were completely destroyed while dozens of Palestinian teaching staff members were arrested.

Key Events

On January 2, 2017, the Syrian government forces targeted the AlSadd Road neighborhood with an explosive cylinder and Daraa AlBalad with mortar shells, sparking panic among children and inflicting heavy material damage.

On January 8, 2017, the Syrian government forces stationed in a building in Daraa targeted the camp with four tank shells.

On January 22, 2017, the AlSadd Road and Daraa AlBalada south of Syria were subjected to heavy shelling by the government forces. Material damage was reported.

On January 24, 2017, the government forces hit AlSadd Road with gas cylinders and mortar shells. No civilian casualties were reported.

On February 10, 2017, the Syrian government troops targeted the camp with machinegun fire, sparking terror among stranded civilians.

On February 13, 2017, the Syrian government forces attacked the Daraa refugee camp with artillery shells and heavy machineguns, resulting in material damage. The government forces also hit AlSadd Road with a surface-to-surface missile. Government warplanes struck Daraa AlBalad neighborhoods, causing heavy material damage.

On February 15, 2017, the Daraa refugee camp came under heavy shelling.

On March 7, 2017, the AlSadd Road and Daraa neighborhoods were attacked by the government forces using barrel bombs.

On March 10, 2017, a number of Palestinian refugees, including Nadeem Hamdan, from Daraa Camp, were injured in violent clashes in Daraa and AlManshiya between the government forces and the opposition squads.

On March 20, 2017, the Daraa refugee camp was attacked by the Syrian government forces using mortar shells.

On March 30, 2017, the AlSadd Road and Daraa neighborhoods were hit with heavy artillery and mortar shells.

On April 11, 2017, the government forces and warplanes hit AlManshiya neighborhoods in Daraa AlBalad and opposition-led zones. Clashes flared up between the government troops and Tahrir AlSham battalions, aided by opposition factions.

On April 12, 2017, the Daraa Camp and AlSadd Road, home to dozens of Palestinian families, were hit with mortar shells. Material damage was reported.

On 14 April 2017, the Syrian government forces targeted Daraa Camp with gas cylinders, explosive hoses, and mortar shells. No civilian casualties were reported.

On May 4, 2017, the government forces struck AlSadd Road neighborhood with a ground-to-ground missile and mortar shells, destroying civilian homes and facilities. Clashes occurred between the government forces and the opposition outfits.

On May 19, 2017 AlKashef and AlSadd Road neighborhoods were attacked with mortar shells. Casualties were reported in AlKashef.

On June 3, 2017, the Syrian government forces targeted the Daraa refugee camp south of Syria with three ground-to-ground missiles.

On June 4, 2017, the Daraa refugee camp and the AlSadd road neighborhood were heavily bombed by the Syrian regime. A number of explosive barrels hit the camp and the neighborhood, which is home to dozens of Palestinian families.

On June 5, 2017, Daraa Camp and its environs were struck with 43 surface-to-surface missiles and 12 barrel bombs, causing heavy damage to civilian structures.

On June 9, 2017, the government forces targeted the camp and the AlSadd Road neighborhood with rockets and barrel bombs. Palestinian refugee Hassan Khamis was pronounced dead and dozens of civilian homes were destroyed.

On June 10, 2017, the government forces hit the camp and AlSadd Road with barrel bombs and missiles.

On June 12, 2017, the government forces stepped up offensives on and around the camp, unleashing 16 explosive barrels containing internationally-prohibited napalm, 24 ground-to-ground missiles, and 30 naval mines.

On June 15, 2017 dozens of surface-to-surface missiles were dropped on Daraa Camp and AlSadd Road.

On June 21, 2017, the camp was struck with surface-to-surface missiles. The government forces attacked residential neighborhoods adjacent to the camp and inhabited by Palestinian families

On June 22, 2017, Daraa Camp and the AlSadd Road neighborhood were heavily bombed by the Syrian government forces.

On June 25, 2017, the government forces attacked the Daraa Camp and AlSadd Road with barrel bombs and surface-to-surface missiles, resulting in heavy material damage.

On June 28, 2017, the Syrian government forces struck the Daraa refugee camp with surface-to-surface missiles, causing heavy damage to civilian homes and property.

On June 30, 2017, fierce clashes broke out overnight in the eastern vicinities of Daraa Camp between the Syrian government army and opposition groups.

On July 8, 2017, five air raids were launched on the Daraa refugee camp using 23

explosive barrels, five napalm bombs, 12 surface-to-surface missiles. The shelling proceeded at a rate of one shell every 10 minutes.

On August 15, 2017, the Daraa Camp was struck overnight with mortar shells. Material damage was reported.

On October 1, 2017, the Daraa Camp was targeted with machinegun fire discharged by government forces deployed at a checkpoint set up near the new court.

On October 10, 2017, Palestinian refugee Mahmoud Qweider was wounded by shrapnel caused by explosive devices unleashed by Syrian government forces toward the camp.

On October 17, 2017, the Syrian government forces targeted the camp with heavy barrages of machinegun fire, causing material damage.

On October 16, 2017, the government forces attacked the camp with three mortar shells, ruining civilian homes. The minaret of the Quds Mosque was also hit with machinegun fire.

On October 21, 2017, the Syrian government forces targeted the outskirts of Daraa Camp with a tank shells.

On October 22, 2017, the government forces attacked Daraa Camp with heavy machineguns and mortar shells. No casualties were reported.

On October 27, 2017, the government forces targeted the camp with three mortar shells, causing material damage.

On October 30, 2017, Daraa Camp neighborhoods were targeted by machinegun fire and sniper bullets, sparking terror among civilians stranded in the camp.

On November 1, 2017, a mortar shell hit the Daraa refugee camp, causing material damage.

On November 17, 2017, mortar shells hit the Daraa refugee camp, destroying civilian homes.

On November 20, 2017, the government forces targeted the camp with a number of mortar shells, wreaking havoc on civilian homes.

On November 21, 2017, the Syrian government forces targeted Daraa Camp with an explosive gas cylinder, causing material damage.

AlSabina Refugee Camp

The displaced residents of AlSabina Camp, in Rif Dimashq, began to return to the shelter on Monday, August 28, 2017, following a decision by the Syrian Reconciliation Minister, Ali Haidar.

The residents who wished to return to their homes in the camp were received at the offices of local reconciliation committees, where property-proving documents were inspected. The residents were also asked to pay electricity and water bills. The first batch of returnees was made up of military-status holders and civilian servants. Civilians returned to the camp as part of the second batch after local authorities asked them to bring a certified document from the Immigration Department proving that their family members legally left their homes through official crossings.

Families of missing and detained persons were subjected to tough measures by the security forces who received the returnees' lists from the local reconciliation committees. Most of the families who have a relative affiliated with opposition forces were banned from returning to their homes. Families of pro-government dead persons were not allowed access to the camp without a document proving the person's place and cause of death.

Several families affiliated with the opposition refused to apply for return permits for fear of being chased down and arrested.

Most of the returnees were families who had previously sought shelter in government-run zones.

In a report issued in early November 2017, UNRWA said some 2,500 families returned to AlSabina refugee camp while 1,000 more were expected to return to the shelter in the following months.

Residents of the Northern Valley in AlSabina were not allowed to enter the area due to its proximity to tension-stricken zones including AlHajar AlAswad and Hujeira.

On Monday June 12, 2017, National Reconciliation Minister, Ali Haidar, said during a meeting with the head of UNRWA's office in Syria, Mohammed Abidi, that the government took a decision to return the locals who were displaced from AlSabina area, in Rif Dimashq, to their homes.

Haidar added that the reason for the delay lies in the presence of armed militias on the outskirts of the area, saying efforts have been ongoing to address the situation and rehabilitate the infrastructure at the soonest time possible.

On January 25, 2017, a delegation of Syrian government officials, headed by Ali Haidar and the governors of Rif Dimashq and AlQuneitra, toured AlDhiabiya and AlSbeina south of Rif Dimashq in an attempt to follow up on the mechanisms adopted in favor of the residents' return to their homes.

Palestinian activists accused the Syrian government troops and their allied groups of setting up rooms at the entrance to AlSabina Camp where wanted returnees

will be locked up. They added that a checkpoint was pitched by the government forces to monitor the return of the residents to their homes. The reconciliation committee in AlSabina said the rooms will be used in inspecting and regulating entry permits.

Education

On October 15, 2017, UNRWA opened two schools, out of six schools set up in AlSabina Camp, in the first such move since December 2012. Some 500 students from first to ninth grade joined classes following a four-year hiatus.

Reconstruction and maintenance works were carried out at AlSalhiya boys' school and Safouriya girls' school prior to the launch of the 2017-2018 academic year.

On October 31, 2017, UNRWA's Deputy Director-General visited AlSabina and inspected educational facilities, the local health center, a UNRWA-run development center, and water wells. The delegate vowed to speak up for the residents and work on improving their situation by all means available.

Living Conditions

Palestinian refugees who returned to AlSabina Camp had their hopes dashed as a result of the power and water blackouts, among other crises rocking the area.

Upon their return, the refugees were shocked as they caught sight of the mounds of debris heaped up in the area and the destruction wrought on infrastructure.

The residents lashed out at the Syrian government and the governors of Rif Dimashq and AlQuneitra who reneged on their promises to rehabilitate the infrastructure and vital services.

Sources close to the government said since 2016, no single step has been made to restore electricity in AlSabina city except for a couple of endeavors to install medium-voltage lines, a process they said does not take more than two or three months.

The residents also strongly denounced the water crisis in the area, saying they could only secure water via tanks containing 90 water barrels each. Water wells run by the local municipality have not been activated as local authorities raised concerns over equipment theft in the area.

UNRWA also pledged to carry out maintenance and reconstruction works, take measures to clear debris in the camp, and to rehabilitate power, water, and sewage networks.

UNRWA relief staff carried water-filled tanks to Palestinian refugees. A makeshift clinic was also dispatched by the agency to the camp pending the reopening of its local clinic.

AlHusainiya Camp

Palestinian refugees in AlHusainiya Camp, in Rif Dimashq, repeatedly denounced the arbitrary roadblocks pitched by the government forces and abduction sweeps launched against the residents in 2017.

On July 5, 2017, a number of Palestinian young men were kidnapped by the Syrian government forces as they paid visits to their relatives in AlHusainiya Camp. One of the arrestees was identified as Mohamed Salem, a resident of AlSabina Camp. The charges included drug consumption, which was denied by local residents and activists.

Palestinian refugees sheltered in AlHusainiya Camp also said Shiite families affiliated with the Syrian regime held sway over their homes. The displaced Palestinian families slammed the Syrian government for relocating their Shiite allies and fighters' families at refugees' homes.

Sometime earlier, refugees in AlDhiabiya, in Rif Dimashq, had been forced to share their homes with pro-government families after they regained access into the area.

40% of the residents of AlHusainiya Camp for Palestinian refugees were prevented from returning to their homes via government checkpoints, activists told AGPS.

On August 16, 2015 residents of AlHusainiya Camp were allowed limited access into their homes following a two-year ban slapped by the government army.

The residents further denounced the poor educational services in the camp and the lack of access to academic courses, urging UNRWA and school headmasters to reach out to students' parents so as to enhance their children's academic output.

Handarat Camp

On June 25, 2017, residents of Handarat Camp were allowed to return to their homes several months after the Syrian government forces grabbed hold of the area.

Handarat returnees performed Eid prayers at the local mosque, which was severely damaged by the rampant shelling.

AGPS field correspondent quoted a number of Palestinians from Handarat Camp in Aleppo as stating that remnants of internationally prohibited cluster grenades, discharged by Russian and Syrian fighter jets, swamped the camp.

Activists notified civilians to keep at bay from suspicious objects for fear of unexpected blasts, holding the Syrian government accountable for the fallouts of such war remnants.

Tension flared up in the camp following an order issued by the government forces on September 14, 2017 to evacuate the residents of section 9 of a students' dormitory in Aleppo in two weeks.

The residents expressed concern over the repercussions of the move and called on UNRWA and all concerned bodies to reconstruct their camp and secure a safe return to their homes.

Pro-government news outlets quoted the Aleppo governor as pledging to reconstruct the infrastructure in the camp and to work, within a period of one month, on securing power and water supplies.

The same sources added that efforts will be made to equip the Bakara and AlShaher schools along with the local clinics and to remove war remnants and debris. The promises were released following a meeting in a Palestinian shelter in Aleppo. Over 90 families applied to benefit from the move.

On October 12, 2017, a delegation of the International Red Cross toured Handarat Camp in an attempt to assess the needs of those who were forced out of the Aleppo dormitory.

On February 23 2017, Swedish relief institutions distributed food aids to Palestinian and Syrian families displaced from Handarat Camp.

Nearly 90% of civilian buildings and structures in Aleppo-based Handarat Camp have been partially or totally destroyed in the deadly offensives launched by the government forces using missiles and barrel bombs.

AlNeirab Camp

Despite the relative state of calm characterizing AlNeirab Camp in Aleppo in 2017, the residents had been subjected to tough restrictions and crackdowns by the government forces and its allied Liwaa AlQuds troops.

On February 6, 2017 Palestinian resident of the Aleppo-based AlNeirab Camp, Mohamed Ahmad Zahrawi, born in 1980, was kidnapped by the government troops, on his way back to the camp from Latakia city, where he worked as an Arabic instructor, to bid goodbye to his family members, who were heading to Germany. His fate and location have been shrouded in mystery.

On February 21, 2017, the Syrian government forces arrested the Palestinian tutor Muhammad Walid Rafa', the head of the Acre High School in AlNeirab Camp in Aleppo, following a raid on the school.

On February 21, 2017, Palestinian refugee Abdullah AlKhatib, housed in AlNeirab Camp, went missing on his way to the northern Syrian province of Aleppo. Activists said they believe AlKhatib was most probably kidnapped at a government roadblock pitched in Aleppo.

On March 16, 2017, Palestinian refugee Abd AlNatour, from AlNeirab Camp, was released from Syrian government prisons following a two-month detention.

On September 8, 2017, the Syrian government forces released the Palestinian youth Mohammed Madi AlKhatib following a five-year imprisonment.

On October 23, 2017, the Syrian government forces released the Palestinian youth Samer Abdel Hamid after he had been detained in Aleppo for more than twenty days.

Key Events

On March 27, 2017, member of the pro-government committees in Aleppo-based AlNeirab Camp, Ahmad Qudsiya, was killed following a fight with AlMashour family. Palestinian Refugee Wahid AlAmin, in his 50s, sustained serious wounds in the fight. Tension soared in the camp after all schools and access roads were closed off as a result of the deadly confrontation.

On 12 April 2017, Palestinian refugees from Liwaa AlQuds brigade were killed as they fought alongside the pro-government forces in AlZahraa, in Aleppo. The list included Ahmed Bader, Hesham Abu Hasan, and Waseem Azzam.

On April 27, 2017, events were staged by Palestinian refugees in solidarity with hunger striking Palestinian detainees in Israeli jails.

On May 30, 2017, Palestinian refugee Hamada Dakour, from Liwaa AlQuds, was wounded as he fought alongside the Syrian government forces in Tadmur city.

On August 18, 2017, heavy blasts rocked AlNeirab Camp, sparking panic among children and women. It turned out sometime later that the blast emanated from an ammunition dump owned by the pro-government Liwaa AlQuds battalion near AlShuhadaa Cemetery. Throughout the Syrian warfare, AlNeirab Camp has been a hotbed for munitions stores and arms depots.

On September 26, 2017, a missile landed near the Shuhadaa Cemetery, adjacent to AlRashideen area and AlZahraa neighborhood, controlled by the opposition forces west of Aleppo. No civilian casualties were reported.

Living Conditions

Residents of AlNeirab Camp have experienced dire living conditions as a result of the rampant hostilities. The residents kept ceaselessly crying for help over the acute dearth in bread, which they attributed to the attempts of anonymous parties to shorn civilians of much-needed items.

Hundreds of civilians had to line up on a quasi-daily basis in long queues outside local ovens in the hunt for a bundle of bread loafs to feed their starved children and families.

AlNeirab residents spoke out on several occasions against the poor selling mechanisms and the abrupt closure of distribution centers, along with the influx of residents from nearby towns, including AlNeirab, Tel Shu'ayeb, and Jibreen, to the camp in the hunt for bread. The residents also warned that bakers were selling large quantities of flour to unidentified parties.

Civilians urged the Syrian government and all other concerned parties to urgently work on securing bread, increasing flour supplies to local bakeries, holding crooked bakers to account, controlling bread sales in Jibreen and AlNeirab, and restoring local distribution centers.

Hundreds of Palestinian refugees in AlNeirab Camp also denounced the transportation crisis in the area as buses, among other means of transport, suspended their services due to the severe shortage in and steep costs of fuel and diesel supplies.

The residents further launched cries for help over the spread of lethal insects, rodents, and stink inflicted by the contaminated water used by farmers to irrigate their land lots in the area.

The residents appealed to all concerned bodies, including UNRWA, to urgently step in and take action regarding the poor hygiene and diseases wrought on the camp.

They warned of the spread of cutaneous leishmaniasis, caused by *Leishmania tropica*, also known as the “Aleppo Evil”, “Aleppo ulcer”, “Aleppo boil”, “Aleppo button” or “habbat halab”. It can produce permanent disfiguring scars on the face, especially of young people. Cutaneous leishmaniasis is mainly found in areas associated with poor waste disposal. Water shortage, poor sanitation and lack of other public services combine to create ripe conditions for the transmission of the disease. It is a vector-borne disease transmitted by infected sandflies

At the same time, traffic accidents saw an upsurge in the camp as a result of the uncontrolled use of motorcycles and violations of driving codes.

Subjected to poverty and unemployment, dozens of Palestinian refugees who joined the pro-government committees and Liwaa AlQuds squads joined risky motorcycle rallies staged at the camp, mainly in the so-called “death street” located near the railway station. Several motorcyclists sustained severe injuries.

The residents held Liwaa AlQuds responsible for the chaotic state of affairs in the camp as most drivers were members of the latter group.

Media sources said at least 12 persons were injured in July 2017, mostly children, as a result of unregulated motorcycle driving.

On January 4, 2017, the AlNeirab Municipality removed sand barriers set up at the main entrances to the area pending the return of traffic to normal.

Jaramana Camp

The situation in Jaramana Camp had been relatively calm in 2017 compared to the situation in other beleaguered areas.

On October 21, 2017, two people from Jaramana Camp were injured after five mortar shells were dropped on Abu Nori and AlTahrir neighborhoods. The bombardment caused heavy material destruction and led to a state of terror among the residents, who held the Syrian opposition forces in Rif Dimashq accountable for the onslaught.

Jaramana Camp residents faced severe living conditions due to the poor services and worn-out infrastructure, along with the high unemployment rates and increase

in rental fees in the overcrowded area. The residents have also been deprived of relief services and humanitarian assistance. UNRWA services failed to cope with the residents' increasing demand for help.

Jaramana Camp has been kept at bay from the raging warfare in Syria. However, mortar shells slammed into the environs of the camp due to its proximity from the Damascus International Airport and Eastern AlGhouta.

Khan Dannun Camp

Located some 23 kilometers away from southern Damascus, Khan Dannun Camp saw a state of calm in 2017. However, the residents had been grappling with tough conditions as a result of the escalated violence in Syria.

A transportation crisis has hit the Khan Dannun Camp since the outburst of the Syrian warfare. Workers and students have also had difficulties getting to their workplaces and universities.

Khan Dannun residents spoke out against the steep and unfixed transportation fees, often devouring up to a quarter of their salaries. Civilians are often forced to catch another means of transportation as bus drivers change the lines, stops, and fees according to their whims. Others have found no other way-out than to walk for thousands of meters in order to reach their workplaces. More often than not, AlKiswa town was the only terminus of government buses.

AGPS reporter quoted Khan Dannun residents as stating that their appeals for help have frequently gone unheeded by the Syrian authorities and Palestinian factions, many of whose representatives have showed up in local festivals and acclaimed civilians' iron will.

"Political leaders would better show up in the shelter so as to keep tabs on our daily suffering and work out the crisis before it is too late," a resident said.

Residents of Khan Dannun Camp for Palestinian refugees in Rif Dimashq have set off alarm bells over the acute water crisis, forcing civilians to purchase expensive tank water. Water supplies have been cut off across a number of Khan Dannun neighborhoods, including AlAkkad, Allud, Jericho, and other quarters near the new water tank. The residents called on the government institutions and UNRWA to take urgent action over crisis.

The Palestine Charity Commission embarked on a project to dig up two artesian water wells in Khan Dannun Camp in an attempt to assuage the upshots of the water crisis wrought on the area.

AlSayeda Zeinab Camp

Residents of AlSayeda Zeinab camp faced severe socio-economic crises as a result of the price leap and shortage in bread and fuel. Frequent power outages aggravated the situation.

AlAyedeen Camp in Homs

Abduction sweeps launched by the Syrian government forces at an intermittent pace marred the relative calm enjoyed by the residents of AlAyedeen Camp in Homs in 2017. The camp was turned into a large-air dungeon controlled by the government forces from all sides, a resident said.

According to AGPS data, 178 residents of AlAyedeen Camp have had unknown fates after they were arrested by government troops. No precise data is available regarding the number AlAyedeen residents held in opposition lock-ups.

On September 28, 2017, men and women from the camp were summoned to questioning by the Syrian government forces. Four women were arrested shortly afterwards, among them Sahar Akad, a nurse at Bisan Hospital, run by the Palestinian Red Crescent in the camp. Three women were transferred to detention centers in Damascus.

On November 4, 2017, the Syrian government forces kidnapped two female Palestinian refugees from their family homes in AlAyedeen Camp and dragged them to an unknown location. AGPS has not revealed the detainees' names over security concerns.

On January 23, 2017, the Syrian government forces released the Palestinian refugee Gharib Mohamed Gharib sheltered in Homs-based Alyedeen Camp, after he had been detained for two years and three months. He was arrested on November 4, 2014 at a government checkpoint near the municipal stadium.

On April 16, 2017, Palestinian young man Amjad Hadaba was released from Syrian government jails, where he had been held for two years.

On June 1, 2017, Palestinian refugee Mohamed Hasan Mustafa Salima, from the Palestine Liberation Army (PLA), was released following a prisoner swap deal struck between the government forces and Jaysh AlIslam in Rif Dimashq.

On October 3, 2017, Palestinian refugee Muayad Idris was released from government prisons.

***AlAyedeen Camp in Hama**

Though the situation remained fairly calm in Hama-based AlAyedeen Camp in 2017, a state of terror overwhelmed the residents due to the abrupt break-ins and abduction sweeps launched by the government troops.

Residents of AlAyedeen Camp also faced high rates of unemployment as hundreds were laid off due to the security mayhem rocking the area.

Dozens of families could not fetch bread, among other vital aid items, due to the swift price leap. The camp also faced a power crises and a shortage in fuel supplies.

AlRaml Camp in Latakia

Residents of Latakia-based AlRaml Camp occasionally expressed concerns over the abrupt arrest campaigns carried out by the Syrian government forces and the tight measures enforced at the main entrances to the camp. Dozens fled the shelter for fear of being kidnapped in such sweeps.

Residents of AlRaml Camp also spoke out against the upsurge in food prices and rental fees, along with the high unemployment rates.

Dozens of Palestinian families had sought shelter in AlRaml Camp, after they fled their camps in war-stricken zones.

CHAPTER II

B) Palestinian Refugee Communities:

Damascus and Its Suburbs:

Qudsaya:

Around 6,000 displaced Palestinian families seeking refuge in Qudsaya town, in Rif Dimashq, have faced abject living conditions due to the price hike, high unemployment rates, and the decline in civilians' purchasing power.

Palestinian refugees denounced the increase in rental fees following the retreat of the opposition battalions from the area. The residents said they used to pay 25,000 Syrian Liras (some \$50). However, as soon as the blockade got lifted the house owners notified the residents that they expected up to 70,000 S.L per month.

Several families who were forced out of their homes by greedy house owners said they preferred to live under the blockade, imposed on the town for over two years, than to live rough in the streets.

Hittin Community:

Hundreds of Hittin community residents in Barzeh, north of Damascus, faced tough socio-economic conditions as a result of the warfare. The community opted for a neutral position regarding all warring parties despite its proximity from hot flashpoints. The residents refused all attempts to arm the camp or engage in the fighting.

Naher Aisha

In 2017, Palestinian families displaced from Yarmouk Camp and AlHajar AlAswad and seeking shelter in Naher Aisha in Damascus were ordered to leave their homes in the area which they rented after the opposition forces captured the neighborhood. The Syrian government forces launched calls for the evacuation of AlMajareesh family homes, rented by Palestinian families, following a reconciliation agreement. Left without roofs over their heads, the families called on all concerned parties, including UNRWA and the Palestinian Authority (PA), to work on granting them a safe return to their homes in Yarmouk or securing safe shelters to the displaced families.

Naher Aisha, also called AlSayeda Aisha neighborhood, is an overcrowded area divided by Autostrad International into two parts: the western part, adjacent to Kafr Sousa and Daria orchards; the eastern part, adjacent to AlBawaba neighborhood, in AlAshmar Square, leading to AlKadam neighborhood.

AlDhiabiya:

In 2017, the Syrian government squads allowed hundreds of residents to return to their homes in AlDhiabiya town, in Rif Dimashq. However, soon after, the residents protested the oppressive measures implemented by the government forces in an attempt to alter the area's demographic character.

On February 17, 2017, the residents said Shiite families affiliated with the Syrian regime held sway over their homes. The displaced Palestinian families slammed the Syrian government for relocating their Shiite allies and fighters' families at refugees' homes.

The refugees said the families who seized their homes refused to go away saying the government forces are the only ones who are entitled to determine who should leave and who should stay. Others found no other way out than to live under the same roof with pro-government militias.

On February 6, 2017, dozens of Palestinian families regained access to AlDhiabiya, which was seized by the government troops in late 2013 following a wave of heavy shelling on the area. Ever since, the thoroughfare has been kept closed by the government forces on account of underway reconstruction projects.

AGPS documented the death of nine Palestinians from AlDhiabiya area due to deadly shelling, bloody confrontations, and extra-judicial executions.

Eastern Ghouta:

At least 250 Palestinian families sheltered in Eastern Ghouta in 2017 risked losing their lives in the rampant hostilities and also due to the tough cordon slapped by the Syrian government forces. The result was an acute shortage in medicines and foodstuff. Scores of children suffered from undernourishment. Such towns as Duma, Zamalka, Hiza, and Hamouriya came under heavy shelling.

The residents appealed to UNRWA and the concerned Palestinian and international institutions, along with the Palestine Embassy in Damascus and PLO to take immediate action over the calamitous situation in Eastern Ghouta.

Southern Syria

AlMuzeireeb

Palestinians living in Daraa, particularly in Daraa Camp, AlMuzeireeb Community, and Gileen, experienced severe hardships in 2017 due to the power and water blackouts and the tough cordon imposed by the government forces, blocking the entry of medicines and medical quit.

The government onslaughts on local hospitals along with the ban imposed by the Jordanian authorities on the entry of Palestinians from Syria made the situation unbearable.

Palestinian refugees taking shelter in Daraa suburbs, in southern Syria, slammed the government troops for preventing them from entering food boxes received from UNRWA.

AGPS on-the-spot correspondent said Palestinian refugees often risk their lives to get a food box from UNRWA centers in Daraa to feed their starved children.

However, the refugees were often forced to sell those boxes at cheap prices due to the bans slapped by the regime troops deployed at local checkpoints.

Other refugees continue to refuse to head to UNRWA centers to receive aid parcels for fear of being kidnapped by the Syrian government forces in the process or forcibly enlisted at the PLA.

Several refugees sheltered in Daraa, AlMuzeireeb, and Gileen had been subjected to daily crackdowns, intensive inspection, and arbitrary abductions on their way to fetch food from charities.

AlMuzeireeb community, south of Syria, has been grappling with an acute dearth in drinking water after the local lake—the sole water supplier for hundreds of families in the area—dried out as a result of the uncontrolled excavation of artesian water wells. Over 100 artesian water wells were dug up in the area. The manipulation of water prices by the well owners has made the situation far worse for AlMuzeireeb residents.

The Palestine Charity Commission continued to provide humanitarian assistance and in-kind relief items to Palestinian refugees in southern Syria.

In February, the commission handed over 50 free medical prescriptions in AlMuzeireeb town, to the northwest of Daraa province.

The charity further delivered 5,000 SYP as monthly allowances to 55 orphans in the area, along with \$2,500 donated by the Shourouq Al Shams Foundation to boost orphans' funds.

On January 6, 2017, the commission, in cooperation with Syria Companions Foundation, distributed food aid to 100 displaced families sheltered in poorly-equipped tents in AlMuzeireeb, AlFawar, and AlAjami.

On March 17, 2017, the charity, in partnership with the Association of Palestine Scholars Abroad and AlAqsa Companions, handed over food boxes to 150 families in the camp and another 100 boxes to families displaced from Yarmouk Basin. Other in-kind items, including meat, were distributed in the area.

Arrests and Abductions:

A state of tension burst out in 2017 in AlMuzeireeb due to the arbitrary abductions carried out by anonymous gunmen.

On October 31, 2017, unidentified assailants kidnapped the Palestinian refugee Manhal Hamayda, aged 40, from the Muzeireeb-Tel Shehab access road and asked

his family to shell out \$200,000 as a condition for his release. He was released on November 29, 2017.

On November 19, 2017, anonymous gangsters kidnapped the Palestinian refugee Ahmed Mohamed AlSaitari. His fate has been shrouded in mystery.

On the same day, Palestinian child Mohamed Hani Rabi' al-Saitari, 16, was kidnapped by the government forces at Khirbet Ghazal checkpoint and dragged to an unidentified location. His fate remains unknown.

AGPS documented the incarceration of 13 Palestinians from AlMuzeireeb town in Syrian government jails, where they have been enduring a mysterious fate.

Education:

Heavy shelling and assassination attempts in AlMuzeireeb made access to education extremely hard.

On January 26, 2017, in letters emailed to AGPS under such titles as “Accepted here, Rejected there” and “UNRWA. . . Unheeded Cries for Help,” instructors at UNRWA schools in AlMuzeireeb, in southern Syria, slammed the agency’s “iniquitous” appointment mechanisms.

The teachers wondered about the reasons why their names were not included in the lists of the newly-tenured instructors.

The instructors further spoke out against the lack of transparency in the tenure process, saying such a privilege had been granted to those who were appointed in 2017 at the expense of those appointed in 2011.

According to the emailed letters, 205 instructors in Damascus branch received such tenure offers, compared to 12 only in Daraa. None of such privileges were however granted to those teaching in AlMuzeireeb, home to the largest UNRWA schools in Daraa province.

Four UNRWA schools are located in Daraa: Ein AlZaytoun, Quds, Teraan, and AlAbbasiya.

In response to the complaints, UNRWA said there were no vacancies available for Daraa teaching staff, in comments that triggered further tension in the area.

A number of UNRWA teachers were killed in onslaughts launched by the government battalions on AlMuzeireeb.

The list of casualties includes 50-year-old Houriya Ahmad AlSeid, who died of shrapnel inflicted by a blast near Ein AlZaytoun School.

The casualty worked as the head of the nursing staff in a UNRWA medical center in AlMuzeireeb, in Daraa.

57-year-old Suzan Ghazazwa, an instructor at the UNRWA-run AlAbbasiya School in AlMuzeireeb, also died after an artillery shell hit her home in Daraa.

A massacre perpetrated by the regime army on AlZaytoun School and a local clinic run by the agency on February 18, 2014, also took away the lives of over 15 Palestinian schoolchildren.

At the same time, a barrel bomb dropped by the government forces near Teraan School on February 9, 2014 left 40 schoolchildren and four teaching staff members wounded.

Key Events:

On January 20, 2017, two air strikes were launched by the government warplanes on AlMuzeireeb town.

On February 12, 2017, AlMuzeireeb town was hit with mortar shells by the government army, causing ruin to civilian homes and panic among the residents.

On February 19, 2017 an air strike hit the town, resulting in material damage. The government forces also targeted the area with barrel bombs. Palestinian refugee Ziyad Salman AlRamah, aged 36, was killed in a government onslaught on the outskirts of AlMuzeireeb using mortar shells.

On April 11, 2017, a number of civilians were left injured in a deadly assassination attempt that took away the life of the commander of the Maghawir AlJawalan battalion, Muthana Ajaj AlSa'di. The shooting attack, carried out from a Kia Rio car driven by anonymous gunmen, left 35-year-old Ibrahim Ahmed Saleh, from AlSaitariya family, among other civilians in AlMuzeireeb, wounded.

On May 18, 2017, the Syrian government forces targeted AlMuzeireeb town with eight mortar shells, killing a Syrian national from the Golan Heights.

On June 28, 2017, missiles and mortar shells were dropped on AlMuzeireeb overnight.

On July 1, 2017, the Syrian government launched four air strikes on AlMuzeireeb, resulting in deaths.

On August 3, 2017, an explosive device installed by anonymous gunmen exploded in a civilian car, causing material damage.

On October 3, 2017, a heavy blast rocked the area after ISIS militias attacked the opposition forces in AlKansoura Factory in AlMuzeireeb. Injuries were reported.

On October 27, 2017, ISIS troops deployed on the outskirts of the town kidnapped three young men, sparking tension and terror among the residents.

Jilin Community

Hundreds of Palestinians families were forced out of their shelters in Jilin as hostilities between ISIS and the opposition outfits kicked into high gear.

Jilin town, controlled by ISIS-affiliated Khaled Ibn AlWalid battalion, in Daraa's western outskirts became a permanent target of shelling. Only a handful of families, out of 450 Palestinian families formerly sheltered in the camp, remained in the

area. Located 25 kilometers away from northwestern Daraa city center and home to 700 families, Jilin houses families mostly displaced from Palestinian territories occupied in 1948. A number of other families are from the occupied West Bank and the blockaded Gaza Strip.

Families displaced from Jilin, in southern Syria, have also faced dire conditions due to the simmering hostilities between the different warring parties. Jilin residents have run out of vital food items and medicines.

Education

ISIS control over the area and the fierce clashes made access to education hard to attain.

On September 19, 2017, 400 students flocked to the local school in Amouriya village, in Yarmouk Basin, after they were displaced from Jilin due to ISIS capture of the area.

Key Events:

On February 21, 2017, 15 persons were reportedly killed in a massacre perpetrated by ISIS militants shortly after they broke into Jilin town, in Daraa's western outskirts. The list of casualties included Palestinian refugees Faraj Mohamed Faraj and Faris Ali AlGhazawi. Shortly before they backtracked from the town, ISIS kidnapped dozens of civilians and subjected others to field executions.

By the end of march, four refugees sustained moderate to serious wounds after ISIS attacked refugees attempting to flee Jilin.

On September 19, 2017, violent clashes broke out between the pro-ISIS Khaled Battalion and the opposition outfits in Jilin, south of Syria.

On October 14, 2017, fierce clashes broke out between the pro-ISIS Khaled Ibn AlWalid Battalion and the opposition outfits west of Yarmouk Basin.

On October 19, 2017, clashes flared up between Khalid Ibn AlWalid battalion and the armed opposition forces.

On November 5, 2017, clashes flared up between Khalid Ibn AlWalid battalion and the armed opposition forces.

On November 9, 2017, clashes broke out between Khalid Ibn AlWalid battalion and the armed opposition forces.

Zizon Community:

115 Palestinian families in Zizon, in Daraa, south of Syria, experienced calamitous conditions in 2017 as most families took shelter in poorly equipped shacks after they were forced out of their homes due to the government shelling and ISIS capture of the camp.

Most of the Palestinian families who sought shelter in Zizon were displaced from Daraa and Jilin.

As water supplies dried out, the residents were forced to buy drinking water at \$3 per a cubic meter. Firewood was sold at \$180 a ton. Several residents could not receive aids disbursed by UNRWA as distribution centers fell within ISIS-held zones.

On several occasions, the residents appealed to UNRWA and the concerned international institutions to take action regarding the situation of Palestinian refugees in Zizon.

Tseil

In 2017, displaced Palestinian families seeking refuge in Daraa's northwestern town of 'Tseil, to the south of Syria, kept protesting the dire situation they underwent after they were forced out of their homes in the raging hostilities.

The displaced civilians said they received no relief aids or foodstuff, except for a few food baskets and heating kit from the Palestine Charity Commission.

Displaced Palestinian families sounded the alarm over the repercussions of the bloody confrontations between the opposition outfits and the ISIS-allied Khaled Ibn AlWalid battalion.

Several families fled to Jordan while others kept moving back and forth from 'Tseil to other Daraa towns.

On February 26, 2017, members of Khaled Ibn AlWaleed battalion kidnapped several residents on allegations of their affiliations with opposition outfits. Two girls were also kidnapped by ISIS because their father fought alongside the opposition groups.

Heit Town:

Palestinian families in Heit town, in Daraa's western suburbs, went through hard times as a result of the violent clashes between the opposition outfits and ISIS battalions. The latter frequently attempted to infiltrate the town via its western corners and targeted neighborhoods with machine gunfire. Several landmines were implanted by ISIS in the area, taking away the lives of several residents.

Residents of Heit town, home to 15 displaced Palestinian families, had been subjected to a tough blockade by ISIS battalions in an attempt to capture the area. The security mayhem resulted in a price leap and high unemployment rates.

Tafas Town:

Over 150 Palestinian families displaced from Yarmouk Basin, in Daraa's western outskirts, were left with the danger of displacement after the city's local council ordered the evacuation of schools used as provisional shelters. Unable to pay rental fees, scores of families had gone homeless.

Tafas's local council claimed that hundreds of students from different age groups

will not be able to pursue their academic careers as the city's 24 schools were turned into civilian shelters.

Several displaced families could not find alternative homes to take cover in due to the steep rental fees and lack of financial resources.

The families appealed to the humanitarian and relief organizations to rally round them, work on finding alternative homes for their children, and enable students to pursue their studies at local schools.

On February 22, 2017, two Palestinian refugees, including Mohamed Kamal AlBeitari, from Tafas town, were executed by ISIS mobs who broke into the area and kidnapped dozens of civilians.

Northern Syria

Idlib

Palestinian refugees who were displaced from Khan Eshieh Camp to the northern Syrian province of Idlib experienced tough conditions as they failed to secure food and housing, among other basic needs in the tension-sticken area.

Tension hit a zenith in 2017 after dozens of families were forced out of Tel Merdeikh town, in Idlib, and headed for Atama and Salwah bordering Turkey, for fear of being killed in the raging hostilities.

Activists said 300 families have been on the verge of death in the beleaguered town of Idlib, urging the Syrian authorities and concerned institutions, particularly UNRWA, to immediately step in and keep civilians safe from underway hostilities.

The displaced families who sought shelter in the area appealed to UNRWA to take urgent action as regards their tragic state of affairs, provide civilians with relief and medical assistance, and to work on securing children's access to school.

The damage inflicted on infrastructure, including schools, hospitals, and civilian facilities, along with the power and water cuts, have made life unbearable in the area.

The residents launched calls for reining in the price hike, particularly as regards rental fees, in an area where most families live in extreme poverty, urging UNRWA to deliver in-kind and cash aids in opposition-led zones and to allow civilians to safely access distribution centers. Several young men refused to show up in distribution centers for fear of being chased down and forced into military conscription by the government troops.

UNRWA ruled that in order for Palestinian refugees from Syria to receive cash aids all family members aged 17 or above should show up in distribution centers.

Some 2,500 families were forcibly deported from Khan Esheih Camp to the northern Syrian province of Idlib on November 28, 2016, following a reconciliation deal struck between the Syrian government and the opposition forces.

CHAPTER III

C) Palestinian Refugees Outside of Syria

Palestinians from Syria in Lebanon

Some 31,000 Palestinian refugees from war-torn Syria sought shelter in Lebanon, according to UNRWA data released during the Syria Emergency Appeal launched on January 9, 2017 in Beirut in the presence of UNRWA's Director-General in Lebanon Hakam Shahwan and the agency's former Director-General in Syria Matthias Schmale.

According to the "Comprehensive Census of Population and Housing in Palestinian Camps and Gatherings in Lebanon", issued on December 21, 2017, and prepared by the Lebanese-Palestinian Dialogue Committee, in partnership with the Lebanese Central Administration of Statistics and the Palestinian Central Bureau of Statistics, 18,601 Palestinians from Syria, amounting to 4,456 families, remained in Lebanon. 2,202 families live in Palestinian refugee camps while 1,055 others live in surrounding communities. 1199 families live in different locations across Lebanon.

The report found out that 9.1% of Palestinian families from Syria lived in Beirut; 11.3% in Bekaa, 31.3% in Sidon, 21.8% in Tripoli, 15.3% in Sur, and 11.2 % in AlShouf.

Geographical Distribution of Palestinian Families from Syria in Lebanon, according to the 2017 census

Region	Percentage
North Governorate	21.7%
Beirut	9.1%
AlShouf	11.2 %
Sidon	31.3 %
Sur	15.3%
Bekaa	11.3%
Total	100%

Several Palestinian families from Syria left Lebanon as part of family reunification procedures in European countries. Other families returned to Syria due to the tough socio-economic conditions in Lebanon and the lack of relief assistance.

AGPS researchers warned of the discrepancies as regards statistical data on the Palestinians from Syria in Lebanon. In early 2017, UNRWA said 31,800 refugees sought shelter in Lebanon. Data released in the first quarter of 2017 by Lebanon's Census Committee indicated that 19,000 refugees lived in Lebanon, with a gap of 13,000 compared to UNRWA statistics.

Legal Status:

Palestinian refugees from Syria in Lebanon faced a precarious legal status in the Lebanese territories. Efforts were made in 2017 to work out the situation.

On July 13, 2017, the Lebanese General Directorate of General Security, called on Palestinians from Syria sheltered in the Lebanese territories, including those who overstayed their visas, to show up at police stations so as to work out their legal status and receive a subsidiary and renewable six-month visa for free.

The directorate refused, however, to renew visas for those who left Lebanon and returned in 2017 but do not have a multiple-entry visa.

On October 9, 2017, the Director-General of the General Directorate of Personal Status, Elias Khoury, issued a special circular for Palestinian refugees from Syria, to simplify procedures as regards marriage and birth documents for Palestinians from Syria in Lebanon.

The memorandum, which is the product of coordination between the Lebanese-Palestinian Dialogue Committee and the other concerned parties, seeks to alleviate the suffering of the Palestinians from Syria in Lebanon, where they have been subjected to entry bans and have had their appeals for visa renewal rejected. Tough restrictions have been opted for by the Lebanese authorities to rein in the influx of Palestinians from Syria.

Violations:

AGPS monitored scores of violations against Palestinians from Syria in Lebanon in 2017. On May 22, 2017, the Lebanese authorities detained the elderly Palestinian woman from Syria Maysar Sakhnini shortly after she landed in Rafiq AlHariri Airport onboard a flight from Saudi Arabia.

In appeals launched on social media, the detained woman urged the PLO and Palestine Embassy in Lebanon to pressurize the Lebanese authorities to allow her a safe access into Lebanon.

On August 25, 2017, the Lebanese General Security Forces deported the Palestinian refugee Luay Rahma to the Syrian borders, paying no heed to his appeals for temporary shelter.

The refugee fled the war-ravaged Syrian territories to Lebanon before he headed to Turkey on way to Libya. Shortly after, he was detained by the Turkish authorities for nearly one month after they found out that he did not have a visa to enter Libya. He was later detained at Rafic Hariri Airport after the Turkish authorities deported him to Lebanon.

Humanitarian Appeals

On July 13, 2017, the Lebanon-headquartered Monitor Association for Human Rights appealed to the international community and the Syrian government to take urgent action regarding the Palestinian refugee community in war-ravaged Syria and to work on improving the situation in Palestinian refugee camps until the refugees return to their motherland, from which they were forcibly deported.

Monitor urged the international community, the Syrian government, UNRWA, the Palestinian factions, and all civil society institutions to immediately work on reconstructing Palestinian refugee camps in Syria so as to grant the displaced Palestinians a temporary respite from the plight of dislodgement and destruction wrought by the rampant warfare.

The association's Chairman of the Board of Directors Dr. Ramzi Awad, called on the Syrian government, UNRWA, the international community, and Palestinian factions, and civil society institutions to follow up on the file of Palestinian refugees and grant them protection until they return to their camps and communities.

On October 13, 2017, the Euro-Mediterranean Human Rights Monitor urged the Lebanese authorities to facilitate the adult refugees' access to the labor market and ensure acceptable wages so that there is no need for child labor, forced labor and dropping out of school.

A report issued by Euro-Med monitor on October 4, 2017, under the heading "Small hands, enormous commitments: Child labor among Syrian refugee children in Lebanon", said refugees from Syria in Lebanon often live in difficult circumstances due to severe restrictions on employment, low wages, and the fact that they often work mainly in random unorganized jobs.

Euro-Med added that due to limited financial aid, refugee families from Syria are forced to send their children to work instead of sending them to schools. The Lebanese education sector also played a role in driving them away. With children working side by side with adults, a critical situation is created, Euro-Med warned. 60 to 70 percent of refugee children are forced to work. Even more critically, over 85 percent of working children are in "risky" jobs.

The Euro-Mediterranean Human Rights Monitor called on international organizations in Lebanon to exert more effort to secure a life of dignity for refugees. It also called on the international community not to shirk its responsibilities towards refugees, now making a quarter of the population.

Euro-Med urged the Lebanese authorities to work on making better the lives of all refugees (Syrian and Palestinian) through full waiver of residence fees and to build on the positive steps they have taken towards the work of refugees and stop practices that restrict their right to labor, including revoking the non-employment agreement.

Euro-Med said the Lebanese authorities should make greater contributions to removing the different obstacles to the enrollment of refugee children in schools, and establish specialized schools to educate refugees and to use the already present

evening schools. In addition, special attention should be focused on understanding student capabilities, given the difficult circumstances they had to endure during the conflict, and the difference in the curriculum studied in their country of origin.

AGPS called on UNRWA to provide the Palestinians of Syria with the legal and physical protection quite urgently needed at such a turmoil-stricken stage.

AGPS appealed to UNRWA, in line with its mission as a UN-recognized relief body, to rally round the Palestinian refugees from Syria, particularly those who fled to Lebanon.

Speaking during the Syria Emergency Appeal for 2017 press conference held On Monday, January 9, in the Lebanese capital—Beirut— AGPS representative Fayez Abu Eid launched calls for funds for Palestinians caught up in war-torn Syria and in the occupied Palestinian territories, including east Occupied Jerusalem, along with those who fled to Lebanon and Jordan. Abu Eid spoke up for the refugees' need of a legal cover in UNRWA's five fields of operations.

He raised alarm bells over the state of insecurity and unrest endured by the Palestinians from Syria in Lebanon, where they are treated by the Lebanese authorities as “tourists” and “second-class citizens” rather than refugees.

AGPS delegate further warned of the precarious upshots of unemployment and the lack of financial resources on the socio-economic situation endured by the Palestinians of Syria in Lebanon.

On Monday, September 19, 2016, the Lebanese authorities stipulated that every single refugee who overstays his visa in Lebanon has to shell out \$200 to get a renewed six-month permit, added Abu Eid.

Education:

The majority of the Palestinians from Syria in Lebanon have been enrolled at UNRWA schools, where English-language curricula were mainly used to teach students in the post-fifth grade stage. Extra-courses were offered so as to bridge gaps in the learners' academic input.

Classes had been frequently suspended as a result of the road closures and strikes held in tension-stricken areas

Several students found difficulties in coping with the discrepancies in teaching curricula, which led to an increase in school drop outs. Others abandoned classes due to their families' inability to pay education fees.

A number of Palestinian instructors from Syria denounced a decision by UNRWA demanding that teaching staff return to Syria, resign, or work as volunteers. Several teachers urged UNRWA to reconsider its decision, expressing concerns over the arbitrary abductions and harassment they are likely to face upon their return to Syria. Shortly after, UNRWA backtracked on the decision until further notice, taking into consideration the unrest in Syria.

Health Care:

Health care services for the Palestinians from Syria in Lebanon have been no better, compared to other vital services quite urgently needed by the refugee community. UNRWA continued to provide health care services for registered Palestinian refugees from Syria and Palestinians living in Lebanon. Such services included primary health care, urgent surgeries, and child birth assistance.

Humanitarian Appeals

Several Palestinians from Syria in Lebanon appealed for urgent medical treatment and financial assistance to purchase medicines and undergo therapy for life-threatening diseases.

On July 23, 2017, the family of seven-year-old Hasnaa Wasef Karmou', displaced from Yarmouk Camp to Lebanon's AlBekaa Valley, appealed to the concerned humanitarian institutions to urgently work on securing fees for the treatment of their sick daughter, diagnosed with a right kidney stone.

They said Hasnaa was in need of an urgent surgery worth \$8,200 to remove the stone at AlRoum Hospital in Beirut. No contribution was made by UNRWA to help the family.

The family of the Palestinian refugee from Syria Osama Moussa, aged six years-old, also made an appeal for urgent intervention in order to cover fees for the treatment of their cancer-stricken son, estimated at \$5,000.

Osama, diagnosed with brain cancer, was deported from Yarmouk to Wadi AlZeina, in Lebanon, with his family.

The family of the Palestinian refugee from Syria Adnan Othman appealed to the concerned bodies to help the family secure urgent treatment fees.

Adnan, deported from Yarmouk Camp to the southern Lebanese city of Sidon, was diagnosed with clogged heart arterilleries and cardio-vascular disorders. He was in need of a heart pacemaker to recover his normal heartbeat. The hospital administration said the surgery was worth \$15,000, a sum that far outlived the family's budget.

Sick Palestinian refugee from Syria Maher Ramadan Omar, aged 30, had gone homeless due to the security mayhem rocking Ein AlHilweh refugee camp, south of Lebanon.

Maher, who fled Yarmouk Camp in Syria in the hunt for a safer shelter, has gone quadriplegic following a road accident in Sidon. He is in need of a deep brain stimulation (a neurosurgical procedure involving the implantation of a medical device called a neurostimulator, sometimes referred to as a 'brain pacemaker'). The surgery costs up to \$5,000.

As the security situation took a turn for the worse in Ein AlHilweh Camp, Maher fled to the seaside, seeking a respite from bloody strife.

Humanitarian Initiatives

A handful of endeavors have been launched by Medical institutions in Lebanon to assist refugees from war-ravaged Syria who were unable to access much-needed health facilities in the Lebanese territories.

The Qatari Red Crescent and the Palestinian Red Crescent organizations in Lebanon, in cooperation with the Palestine Children's Relief Fund and the Syrian American Medical Society Foundation, provided Palestinian and Syrian children sheltered in Lebanon with free bone surgeries and medical follow-ups in Beirut, Bekaa, Sidon, and Tripoli.

AlBunyan Clinic in the southern Lebanese city of Sidon, in partnership with the Humanitarian Cooperation Association, declared February 22, 2017, a free medical day in favor of the displaced Palestinian and Syrian children who fled war-tattered Syria and have sought shelter in Lebanon, along with urinary tract patients.

The move made part of ongoing endeavors to tone down the crises endured by the Palestinian refugees from Syria in Lebanon.

On May 18, 2017, a delegation of Spanish surgeons carried out free bone surgeries for Palestinian and Syrian children in Lebanon.

Fundraising campaigns were also launched by activists on social media networks to help displaced families secure treatment fees.

Children aged below 17-years-old and whose treatment was uncovered by the UN commission received free surgeries, with the exception of those diagnosed with kyphosis and scoliosis.

Relief Services

Palestinian refugees from Syria in Lebanon have slammed the apathy maintained by relief institutions and charities vis-à-vis the tragic situation they have been made to endure in the Lebanese territories, saying the efforts made by UNRWA and Palestinian factions do not live up to the needs of the refugee community.

As winter storms swept across Lebanon, among other Middle Eastern regions, bringing heavy rainfall, strong winds and cold temperatures, life for tens of thousands of refugees living in camps and makeshift shelters turned unbearable.

On December 13, 2017, UNRWA announced that it will transfer cash aids for the Palestinians from Syria in Lebanon via ATM cards. Every Palestinian family from Syria reportedly received a rental allowance of up to \$100 and a food allowance worth 27\$ per every refugee.

As part of the move, every family living in Bekaa received a three-month cash batch of \$75 per every month. Families taking shelter in other regions received a one-month aid of \$75.

On January 15, 2017, AlWafaa European Campaign, in partnership with the Austrian Rahma Foundation, wrapped up the second phase of the so-called "Together for a

Warm Winter Campaign V” launched in Lebanon-based refugee camps.

60 families in AlBarar Camp in Bar Elias received food baskets. 90 families in Burj AlBarajneh and AlBadawi camps received food items and winter blankets. Fuel supplies were also handed over to more than 60 displaced families near Baalbek city.

On January 18, 2017, the Committee of the Palestinians of Syria in Lebanon, in partnership with the Quds Charity Committee, delivered winter clothes to displaced Palestinian families taking refuge in AlBadawi Camp, in the northern Lebanese city of Tripoli.

Toddler diapers were also handed out to 50 displaced families as part of underway endeavors to assuage the calamitous state of affairs endured by the Palestinians from Syria.

On February 5, 2017, the Beit Atfal AlSoumoud charity in Lebanon distributed cleaning supplies to a number of Palestinian families from Syria sheltered in AlBadawi Camp, in the northern Lebanese city of Tripoli.

On February 14, 2017, the Palestinian Cultural Center delivered food parcels donated by the Islamic Relief Organization to displaced Palestinian families from Syria in Saad Nayel area, in Lebanon’s Central Bekaa.

On February 19, 2017, Beit AlJalil Children Center distributed fuel vouchers to Palestinians from Syria in AlJalil Camp in Baalbek.

On February 21, 2017, food parcels and coupons were handed over to Palestinians from Syria with special needs in Ein AlHilweh Camp.

On May 17, 2017, the Charity Commission for Relief of Palestinian People, in cooperation with AlIrshad and AlIslah Association, distributed 200 food baskets to Palestinian families from Syria in Wadi AlZeina, south of Lebanon.

On June 11, 2017, the Palestinian Red Crescent Society distributed food baskets to a number of Palestinian families from Syria in AlBadawi Camp, in Tripoli. The move was sponsored by the Kuwaiti Red Crescent.

On June 15, 2017, the Palestinian Charity Commission, in partnership with Islamic Relief Worldwide, distributed 150 food baskets to a number of Palestinian families from Syria in Wadi AlZeina, in the southern Lebanese area of AlKharoub.

On June 19, 2017, the Palestinian Red Crescent in AlHamshari Hospital distributed fast-breaking meals to Palestinian families from Syria in Sidon.

On August 1, 2017, the Committee to Follow Up on Palestinian Refugee Affairs, in partnership with Beit Atafl AlSumoud, distributed in-kind aids to a number of displaced Palestinian families from Syria. The aid items were donated by the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP).

On September 4, 2017, members of the Assembly of Palestinian Workers from Syria organized a free-haircut event to celebrate Eid AlAdha, for the Palestinians of Syria in Lebanon. 250 children benefited from the event, including the kids of the assembly members and the children of the Palestinian-Syrian communities.

On October 26, 2017, the Charity Commission for Relief of Palestinian People distributed hygiene kit to 280 kindergartners in Naher AlBared.

On November 29, 2017, the Charity Commission for Relief of Palestinian People, in partnership with AlIrshad and Islah Association, delivered winter clothes to 160 displaced Palestinian families from Syria and a number of poor families in Wadi AlZeina, south of Lebanon.

Palestinians of Syria in North Africa (Egypt – Libya)

Egypt

Palestinian refugees who fled the deadly conflict in Syria to Egypt have been treated as second class citizens. The Palestinian Embassy in Cairo, the PLO, and the international institutions have made little to enhance the legal status and living conditions for the Palestinians from Syria.

In 2017, AGPS reporters monitored dozens of cases of harassment, sexual assaults, and property-theft against Palestinians from Syria in Egypt.

A Palestinian refugee said he was once stopped by an Egyptian national driving a Kia Cerato car and had his money misappropriated.

“A man walked out of the car and asked about my nationality before he inspected my passport and overstayed visa. He was Named Mohamed. A. F and was holding identity documents issued by Cairo’s Police Department”, said the refugee. “The man dragged me to the car and switched off my mobile phone”.

“As soon as we reached the crossroads of AlMustakbel city he asked me to hand him over my money at gunpoint”, he added. “Another man who was wielding a knife kept insulting me. They took away the sum of money I had and disappeared in the blink of an eye after they threw my passport on the roadside. Penniless, a taxi gave me a ride back home, after I had all my hopes dashed in the assault.”

Libya

Libya has been a stopover for thousands of Palestinian refugees fleeing war-tattered Syria to Europe. Hundreds of families risked losing their lives on way to the Libyan shores.

In 2017, Palestinian activists said a number of Palestinian refugees from Syria were detained in Libya’s northeastern city of Benghazi. Other refugees were kidnapped from Bani Walid area, northwest of Libya.

The activists said they failed to reach out to six Palestinian refugees held in Benghazi’s central prison, including four from Syria and two from Lebanon.

The Palestinian Embassy reportedly held contacts with Libyan parties to release the refugees in the upcoming days.

Kidnapers also demanded a ransom to release an eight-member group kidnapped

from Bani Walid, among them an elderly woman in her 70s.

The smugglers released the elderly woman after her health status went downhill.

Reaching out to AGPS by phone, a captive's mother said her son and the other detainees had their hopes dashed due to the mistreatment they faced by the smugglers. She added that she paid the required ransom but her son has not been unshackled yet.

Libyan authorities estimate that 6,000 migrants and refugees are held captive by smugglers. The total number of refugees and migrants detained in Sabratha is very likely to hit 20,500, among them those held in official detention centers.²

Palestinian Refugees from Syria in Saudi Arabia, Yemen

Saudi Arabia

Palestinian refugees from Syria in Saudi Arabia continued to sound the alarm over the mistreatment they have been subjected to after the Saudi authorities prevented them of their basic rights, including the right to a visa, education, and free medical care.

A Palestinian family who fled war-torn Syria said they entered Saudi Arabia as pilgrims to perform Umrah (minor pilgrimage). The visa expired one month later and the family was ordered to leave Saudi Arabia after local authorities refused to renew their visas.

"The Saudi authorities also prevented our children from enrolling at local schools and denied us access to the labor market on account that we overstayed our visas," the family stated.

The father added that they have been shorn of the right to free medical treatment.

"We've seen it all in Saudi clinics. When my wife delivered our newborn we'd been forced to pay all treatment fees," he said.

Another family said they have spent sleepless nights after their relative was buried two months after his death because they do not have visas.

² The UN refugee agency (UNHCR) warned that thousands of refugees lived in dire conditions in Libya, saying they could have been exposed to abuse on a shocking scale. The UNHCR said its field staff members had described a "picture of human suffering and abuse on a shocking scale" among refugees previously held by smugglers. UNHCR said amongst the refugees and migrants who suffered abuse at the hands of smugglers, there were pregnant women and new-born babies. Hundreds had not eaten for days when found by authorities, while hundreds of others had no shoes and clothes. Many refugees recounted how they had suffered from abuse, including sexual violence and forced labor while showing their wounds. The UNHCR said official detention centers and assembly points were packed with refugees and many children, among them a worrying number of unaccompanied and separated children, many under the age of six, were forced to sleep in the open. The UN agency also said that the facilities lacked water tanks and other sanitation equipment. Full article available on this link: <http://www.unhcr.org/news/briefing/2017/10/59e5c7a24/libya-refugees-migrants-held-captive-smugglers-deplorable-conditions.html>

Yemen

Houthi militias in Yemen kidnapped the Palestinian university student from Syria Moel Mohamed Ibrahim Waleed and kept him in custody for over three years. Moel was arrested right as he reached Sanaa International Airport and was dragged to an unknown location. He had been denied the right to reach out to his family members or to contact a lawyer.

Palestinians from Syria in Kurdistan

On September 29, 2017, sources told AGPS that 23-year-old Ahmed AlBarhoumi, from Khan Eshieh Camp in Rif Dimashq, had gone missing as he tried to pass through Iraq's Kurdistan region on his way to Turkey. His family could not reach out to him.

An ex-detainee said AlBarhoumi had been held in a prison in Kurdistan.

On October 25, 2017, the young man was released by the Kurdish forces and deported to Lebanon the following day.

Palestinians from Syria in Turkey

Tight restrictions have been enforced by the Turkish embassies to curb the influx of illegal migrants. Security troops have also been heavily deployed on the Turkish-Syrian borders. The Turkish army set up smart watchtowers to oversee infiltrations into the borderland. Warnings in English, Turkish, and Arabic were also issued to notify persons within 300 meters from the border.

The situation of Palestinians from Syria in Turkey has been unstable. Yet, Palestinians entering the Turkish territories through illegal routes are considered as Syrian migrants and are granted a special protection card guaranteeing their access to schools and health care services.

Those entering Turkey via legal routes should acquire a touristic visa or a work permit as a prerequisite to stay in the country.

General Census and Geographical Distribution

According to statistics conducted by Khayra Ummah, 7,000 to 8,000 to Palestinian refugees from Syria fled to Turkey, among them 2,000 children aged between one to 14.

As for the geographical distribution, Palestinians from Syria in Turkey are scattered across three sectors:

*44% of Palestinians from Syria in Turkey (775 families) are taking shelter in Istanbul, Izmit, Izmir, Antaliya, Ankara, Bursa, Nida, Nif Shahir, Aksaray, Bolu, and Yalova.

*640 families, making up 37% of Palestinians from Syria in Turkey, live in Osmaniye, Antakya, Reyhanli, Mersin, Adana, Iskenderun, Kalkan, Konya, Kerman and Kayseri.

*19% (335 families) of Palestinians from Syria in Turkey reside in Kilis, Urfa, Nizip, Gaziantep, Kahramanmaraş- Diyarbakir, Mardin, and Batman.

Living Conditions

Statistics found out that 186 Palestinian orphans, 58 widows, and 30 families of missing refugees are taking shelter in Turkey. 423 refugees are jobless. Most of refugee workers earn very low wages that are not commensurate with the exerted efforts and do not meet rental costs, among other needs.

Statistics also show that 249 university graduates work in fields that do not match their areas of specialty. The average incomes range from 1000 to 755 Turkish liras while rental fees are estimated at 450 to 900 TL.

Education

Palestinian students in Turkey joined free-cost schools opened by the Turkish government for migrants from Syria. Syrian students are allowed to enroll at official schools. In some provinces Palestinians were allowed to do so only if they were holding visas. In other provinces visa was not a prerequisite. Students with a Turkish identify card known as “kimlik” were allowed to join schools without charge.³

In August 2016, a roadmap was put forth by the Turkish Ministry of Education to instruct Palestinian students from Syria during the 2016-2017 school shift regardless of the students’ legal status in the host country.

The Turkish government opted for a series of measures to help students from Syria access educational facilities and boost integration into the Turkish community. Intensive Turkish language courses were staged to that very end. The process was based on Turkish curriculum. 290 Syrian instructors were trained under the supervision of the UNICEF and sent to teach in schools.

Palestinian students were also allowed to join Turkish universities at a low cost, compared to the steep fees required by other universities in the region.

In case the student passes his/her secondary school exams, the chance to enter the university gets lower as the student faces a trade-off with Turkish students.

According to data by Khayra Ummah, 1,496 refugee students are enrolled at Turkish institutions. 164 students gave up their academic careers due to the economic hardships they have been facing in the country.

³ The kimlik is an identity card given to Syrians and Palestinians from Syria in Turkey

Students in Turkey in 2017

Primary School	Preparatory School	High School	Universities	Total	School Drop-Outs
857	375	201	63	1496	164

Identity Documents and the Syrian Embassy

The access of Palestinians from Syrian in Turkey to identity and travel documents has not been an easy mission due to the complicated protocols pursued by the Syrian consulate.

A refugee should apply for a rendezvous. In Many cases the refugee seeks help from special offices to book a meeting at a cost that reaches up to \$300. In several cases, applicants are mistreated by the consulate's staff members. Responses to the refugees' applications are not delivered within a short span of time. As a result, several refugees overstayed their visas while waiting for a reply from the consulate or for a meeting date by the Immigration Department in order to finalize all needed documents. Passports and official documents from Syria should be authorized by the Syrian consulate in Istanbul.

Conference of Palestinians Abroad

Hundreds of Palestinian refugees from Syria flocked to the two-day Palestinians Abroad Conference held in Turkey as of February 26, 2017. Several workshops and activities were organized on the sidelines of the event.

Activism

Palestinian refugees from Syria in Turkey took part in pro-Palestine events, most notably the "Intimaa" campaign aiming to boost the sense of Palestinianhood in the refugee generations.

Several rallies and marches were also held to protest the Israeli aggressions and break-ins at the Aqsa Mosque—the third holiest site in Islam.

The Balfour Declaration Centenary Campaign and protests over the US President Donald Trump's identification of Occupied Jerusalem as the capital of the self-proclaimed Israeli state caught the attention of hundreds of Palestinians from Syria.

Violations

On April 11, 2017 Palestinian refugee Mohamed Ghazawi, a resident of Yarmouk Camp, was shot and killed by a gendarme as he attempted to enter the Turkish territories, fleeing war-torn Syria.

On May 9, 2017, Turkish gendarme detained two Palestinians from Syria—Mohamed Mahmoud Abu Taleb, aged 22, and Khalil Khaled Shaaban, 25—as they attempted to illegally enter the Turkish territories. Both were sent to a detention center for non-Turkish nationals on the Syrian-Turkish borders.

On June 8, 2017, the Turkish gendarmerie arrested 124 migrants in Adranah, northwest of Turkey, as they attempted to cross the Turkish borders on way to Greece. Turkish news outlets said the detained asylum seekers and illegal immigrants were holders of Syrian, Pakistani, Algerian, Georgian, Moroccan and Palestinian identity documents.

On August 24, 2017, Palestinian refugee Luay Rahma who fled the war-ravaged Syrian territories was detained by the Turkish authorities for nearly one month after they found out that he does not have a visa to enter Libya. He was deported to Lebanon and detained at Rafic Hariri Airport. Following contacts with the Turkish authorities, the latter accepted to receive him. However, soon after, the Turkish authorities told him that they have been seeking ways to send him back to Lebanon. As soon as he stepped in the Lebanese territories he was banished and left on his own on a borderland with Syria.

On December 27, 2017, the family of the Palestinian refugee Majd Esam Ta'mari from the Latakia refugee camp appealed to the human rights institutions to work on disclosing the fate of their son who had gone missing for six months.

In a letter sent to AGPS, the family said their relative has been held captive by opposition forces in Idlib, north of Syria, on his way to Turkey.

In September Majd was transferred to a hospital in Turkey following a strike by the Syrian government army on opposition sites in Idlib. Shortly after, the family was told that the opposition outfits released him and that he was shot by Turkish gendarmerie as he tried to cross the Turkish borders. He was reportedly transferred to an unidentified hospital.

Palestinians from Syria in East Asia (Malaysia, Thailand)

Malaysia

Palestinian brothers Hamza and Othman Khashan, stranded at Malaysia International Airport, called on the international institutions and civil society organizations to lend them a hand and work on freeing them.

According to activist Fatma Jaber, the brothers Hamza Khashan, aged 23, and Othman Khashan, 13, have been trapped in the Malaysian airport since October 15, 2017.

“The mother and her children are registered at the UNHCR in Malaysia. She has been in Malaysia for five years”, added the activist. “The father has been in Germany for three years and is entitled to reunite with his family. However, the German authorities turned down his appeal on the grounds that the family would get asylum through the UNHCR in Malaysia.”

The UNHCR decided to close the case as soon as it received reports on the father’s situation in Germany.

The father was banned from travelling to Malaysia to reunite with his wife and children after authorities rejected his appeals for a visa. Shortly after, he was rushed to a hospital as a result of a severe heart attack.

The activist added that Hamza had to travel from Malaysia to Germany with a valid Palestinian passport as his Palestinian-Syrian travel document had expired since 2013. Accompanied by his brother Othman, who holds a Palestinian-Syrian travel document, both were detained at the Cambodia Airport and deported to the Malaysian airport, where they were detained by local authorities. Following a one-month detention period, Othman and Hamza were left with no other choices than to be sent back to Syria or kept in custody in Malaysia until their case is worked out by the UNHCR.

Thailand

Palestinian refugee Muhannad AlKhaja, formerly sheltered in Yarmouk Camp, launched a cry for help from the Bangkok airport, in the southeastern Asian country of Thailand, where he has been stranded.

In a letter emailed to AGPS, AlKhaja said he fled Yarmouk Camp, in southern Damascus, a couple of years ago, due to the deadly offensives targeting the shelter. AlKhaja had first sought shelter in Lebanon before he headed to Thailand, where he had been granted a six-month stay. However, he was later detained by the Thai authorities for overstaying his visa and transferred to the “deportation prison”, where he had been locked up for nearly one year and a half, before he was deported to Lebanon.

The Lebanese authorities threatened to turn him in to the Syrian authorities. AlKhaja expressed fear that he might be arrested and tortured by the Syrian government forces who blacklisted him as “a draft dodger” after he rebuffed military conscription.

AlKhaja was once again deported to Lebanon from Kuala Lumpur, in Malaysia, where he got off in the hunt for a safe shelter.

After the Lebanese authorities notified him of their intents to turn him in to the Syrian government, AlKhaja booked a flight to Thailand, where he was detained right as he stepped in the airport.

AGPS news correspondent quoted AlKhaja as appealing to the Palestinian Authority, the Palestinian embassy in Thailand, and the UNHCR to take urgent action so as to release him and revamp his legal status.

On March 26, 2017, Ma'an News Agency quoted refugee Mohamed Abu Harb, detained in Thailand, as stating that three families along with women and elderly persons had been stranded in Thailand's IDC lock-up for overstaying their visas.

The list of stranded refugees included 75-year-old Majed Maarouf Melhem and his three daughters Muntaha, Maha, and Nahad. Kan'an Aziz Melhem (formerly sheltered in Yarmouk Camp, in Damascus), Mohamed Younis Abu Harb (from Khan Esheih Camp, in Rif Dimashq), Sultan Afif Ahmad, Ayham Ibrahim Younis, Mohamed Kheir Ahmad Azimeh, Muhannad Yassin, Omar Thaer Saleh, Ahmad Abdul Rahman AlNawajha, and Shadi Amjad AlNawajha also figured on the list.

Mohamed's brother, Faysal Abu Harb, said Mohamed, aged 45, holds a degree in clinical laboratory sciences from the University of Damascus and worked in several labs before he fled Syria in 2013 in quest of a livelihood and lest he be kidnapped by Syria's warring parties.

Faysal added that his brother, a holder of a Palestinian passport, entered Bangkok via illegal routes. The Thai authorities detained him and sent him to IDC as soon as his visa expired.

In a soundtrack leaked from IDC, Mohamed said he suffered a stroke in his feet due to the interruption of oxygen delivery in the Thai detention center. Several refugees have been detained for over one year and five months, said Mohamed, adding that the detained refugees have been subjected to over-crowdedness and poor-quality food, along with the lack of hygiene and ventilation.

In a letter sent to AGPS sometime earlier, a stranded refugee said: "We've fallen prey to skin diseases as we've not seen the sun for a long period of time."

On November 14, 2017, Palestinian refugee from Syria Iyad Suleiman, detained in Thailand, appealed, in letters received by AGPS, to the concerned institutions to rally round him.

Suleiman said he entered the Thai territories in 2013 to submit an application at the UNHCR for migration to Europe after he overstayed his visitor visa. He was detained on November 9, 2017, and sent to a Thai jail.

Suleiman added that the UNHCR told him that it cannot help him out for they are considered by the Thai government as lawbreakers rather than migrants fleeing conflict zones.

Palestinians from Syria in Europe

In 2017, the situation of Palestinians from Syria started to take a turn for the better. Scores of refugees were able to find new jobs while others joined European schools and universities. Those who got their MAs and degrees from European institutions were easily embraced by the labor market.

Scores of refugees were granted European citizenship documents, particularly in the Netherlands and Sweden, where migration policies have gone increasingly open.

2017 saw a decline in the influx of migrants from Turkey, Egypt, and Libya after the latter countries opted for closed-door immigration policies and tightened military grip on their coasts. Several agreements were signed to prop up control over borderlands with European countries.

At the same time, Palestinian refugees from Syria who have been stranded in Greece have undergone an arduous situation after many European states opted for a closed-door immigration policy, leaving hundreds of refugees trapped in underequipped makeshift refugee camps. Such countries as Hungary, Bulgaria, and Macedonia propped up security control on their borders. Austria, Denmark, and Sweden partially suspended free inter-mobility by setting up police checkpoints at border crossing points with neighboring countries.

Number of Palestinians from Syria in Europe

Up until the end of 2017, no exact statistics were released by an official Palestinian body as regards the number of Palestinians from Syria across Europe. Most of EU-based migration departments held contacts with official Palestinian bodies rather than civil society representatives for access to statistical data. The EU provides no separate data on the Palestinians from Syria. UNHCR categorizes them as “stateless”, a tag that also includes Kurds, Somalis, and migrants from Gulf States, estimated at 16%. ⁴

AGPS found out that 80,000 Palestinians from Syria reached Europe until the end of 2016. Due to the decline in the refugee influx and increase in family reunification opportunities statistics have gone imprecise.

AGPS estimates that around 100,000 refugees reached Europe until the end of 2017.

Humanitarian and Legal Situation

Most of Palestinians from Syria were granted asylum in European countries. No abrupt bills were issued as regards the legal status of refugees. However, most European countries upheld a closed-door policy that was already started in the second half of 2015. A number of EU countries ruled that refugees from Syria be only entitled to a five-year stay. In such countries as Sweden, refugees were only

⁴ Statistics conducted based on the Weighting methodology by the Palestinian-Syrian researcher Mohamed Youssef.

entitled to a three-year renewable visa or a 13-month protection permit. Holders of the protection status do not have the right to family reunification while those holding three-year visa were entitled to family reunification under strict conditions. Denmark has adopted a tighter financial policy as regards the refugees, cutting its aids. The government enacted a law allowing police to seize refugees' assets in a procedure allegedly intended to cover each asylum seeker's costs.

Sweden

Palestinian refugee from Syria Mustafa Hajawi, a resident of Yarmouk Camp was arrested by the Swedish authorities on January 25, 2017 at a Swedish immigration agency after he had gained residency rights from the Greek authorities.

AlHajawi headed to Sweden from Greece in September 2014. The Swedish authorities revoked his residency rights on account that he was granted such rights in Greece and will thus be treated as someone who received protection from a European state.

Hajawi went back to Sweden from Greece and kept out of police sight for one year and a half before he applied for a new visa. Soon after, the Swedish authorities arrested him and deported him to Greece.

On March 4, 2017, the Swedish Migration Agency (SMA) rebuffed the appeals of Palestinian refugee from Syria Mohamed Alyan to reunite with his family, following a mistake in the investigation procedure.

Alyan, who has been granted a Swedish visa some three years ago, said he was shocked as soon as he caught sight of a letter from SMA notifying him that his appeal for family reunification, which he had submitted just one month ago, was hastily turned down. The letter was dropped in a mailbox at his home located near the Swedish city of Jonkoping.

Alyan said the Migration Agency mistook him for another person and when he headed to the office for further clarification his inquiries were turned down.

SMA demanded that Alyan get an authorization from his wife for she is the concerned party in the case.

"A SMA staff member was surprised when she caught sight of someone else's name on my file," said Alyan. "The lady said she believed a lapse of some sort occurred in the decision-making process and recommended that I appeal the decision immediately."

On July 1, 2017, SMA rejected the appeals of a Palestinian family from Syria in Egypt to reunite with their 15-year-old child in Sweden.

The minor reportedly obtained the Swedish citizenship following a two-year stay in Sweden.

On October 15, 2017, the Abu Idris family had gone homeless south of Sweden after SMA forced them out of their home.

Activists said the mother Inaam Beiroumi and her two sons Ibrahim and Khaled, along with her three daughters Safa, Eisha, and Suzan, appealed for asylum in Sweden in 2014. After one year and a half, the family members were granted a one-year stay and were asked to renew their visa three months before the expiry date, which they did in Malmo. However, a staff member told them that they do not have the right to visa-renewal and that they will be deported to Libya.

On September 5, 2017, the family received an evacuation order. On September 8 they got their identity documents rescinded.

“SMA told us that it will no longer be of assistance to the family”, the family said. “As soon as we got in the social welfare department, the personnel told us that we should leave the home and return the keys by Friday, threatening to cut power and water in case we do not abide by the order. We were also told that police will force us out of the home if we do not leave by that date.”

On September 27, 2017, SMA staff members forced the family out of the home and shut down the entrance doors.

“We spent the night in a hotel room before we were driven out the following day”, the family added.

“We stayed up at the social welfare department until 08:00 p.m. Nobody offered help until police showed up at the office and forced us out”, they further stated. “We have been left in the streets, having no place to hide into.”

Greece

Palestinian refugees from Syria sheltered on Greek islands continued to launch calls for help over the exacerbated humanitarian conditions they have been subjected to. Palestinian refugees in Greece have been enduring medical neglect and poor hygiene, along with the lack of relief assistance and the propagation of poisonous reptiles in the makeshift tents they have been locked up in.

Some 400 Palestinian refugees, mostly from Syria-based refugee camps have been stranded in makeshift tents and under-equipped halls on such Greek islands as Lesbos, Chios, Leros, and Kos. Dozens of families kept wandering in wild forests and abandoned ranches.

Ferocious rainstorms hit Greek Islands in winter, blasting the tent-compounds for Palestinian refugees with raging winds and debris.

Scores of refugees had been subjected to heavy beating, verbal abuse, humiliation, and racist slurs by migrant gangsters in the presence of Greek police. Several refugees sustained injuries and bruises, according to testimonies from Greece.

On November 8, 2017, dozens of migrants from Syria, among them Palestinian and Syrian refugees, rallied outside the German embassy in Athens, urging the German authorities to reunite them with their families in Germany.

Human rights organizations slammed Germany for breaching the terms of the

Dublin Regulation which rules for transferring refugees under family reunification procedures from Greece in no more than six months.

Germany

Germany reactivated the Dublin Regulation which it had suspended in 2011. Every asylum-seeker on his/her way to a new destination and whose fingerprints are kept in the country's record should be returned to the country which they first entered. On October 1, 2017, the German authorities deported the Palestinian refugee from Syria Mohamed Kabi'a, called Abu Taha, to Greece, in the first such move following the reactivation of the Dublin Regulation.

Mohamed sustained hand injuries in the Syrian warfare. He was granted a Greek citizenship and visa. He left for Germany via legal ways in quest of medical treatment and applied for asylum sometime later.

Mohamed said that four months later, his application was turned down. He appealed the decision but authorities once again turned it down. German police stormed his room in a refugee camp in Hamm and deported him to Greece on October 25, 2016.

The Netherlands

On October 11, 2017, a Dutch lady embarked on a solidarity campaign to stop the deportation of a five-year-old Palestinian child from Syria called Zein.

According to Dutch news outlets, the child was diagnosed with "down syndrome" (DS or DNS), also known as trisomy 21, which is a genetic disorder caused by the presence of all or part of a third copy of chromosome 21. It is typically associated with physical growth delays, characteristic facial features, and mild to moderate intellectual disability.

According to De Stad Amersfoort daily, the Dutch authorities announced their intent to deport Zein to Iraq, his mother's birthplace. Nearly 4,500 people joined the campaign, which aimed to pressurize the Dutch Justice Minister to rescind the deportation order.

The lady warned that the child would be prosecuted in Iraq due to his Sunni background and that his health status would deteriorate in the Iraqi territories.

Britain

The family of the Palestinian refugee from Syria Youssef Jihad Hassan, aged 23, appealed to the British authorities to backtrack on a decision to deport their son to Italy. According to the Independent newspaper, Youssef's father, Jihad, said if the Interior Ministry withholds his son he will throw himself "in front of the same car that will carry his son."

Youssef left Damascus when he was 15-years-old, fleeing forced military conscription. He was separated from his brothers in the raging warfare. He reached Britain onboard a truck from Calais in 2014. He then reunited with his family in Middlesbrough, where all the family members, except for Youssef, have been granted refugee status. The Interior Ministry ruled that he be banned to Italy, following two years of ceaseless appeals.

Success Stories

AGPS documented cases of success stories achieved by the Palestinians from Syria in Germany, Sweden, and the Netherlands, among other European destinations.

2017 saw a fruitful participation by Palestinian refugees from Syria in a set of exhibitions, rallies, sports activities, cultural workshops, international competitions, and economic projects.

Several refugees were hired as medics and paramedics, particularly in Northern Europe, though access to the medical sector may take up to five years due to complicated procedures.

Sweden

- Palestinian poet from Syria Amer Sarsour, born and raised in Yarmouk Camp, represented Sweden at a youth poetry festival held in Nicosia, in Cyprus.
- Palestinian refugee from Syria Ahmed Noufel, a resident of Yarmouk Camp, earned the first prize at Halmstad's short film festival.
- Palestinian refugees from Syria Alaa AlBarghouti and Hazem Abu Younes, among other migrants, launched the First Arab Book Fair in Scandinavia, in the southern Swedish city of Malmö.
- Palestinian refugee from Syria Ghassan AlSaadi, a former resident of Yarmouk Camp, embarked on a so-called Virserum Forum for Fine Art, joined by 15 male and female artists from Syria and Palestine in the Swedish village of Virserum. Master pieces reflecting the bright side of life in the Middle East were put on display for the European audience. The art workshop sought to subvert the stereotypes and biased representations of the Middle East inculcated in the European mindset.
- Palestinian refugee from Syria Abdullah Mousa, aged 19 and from Yarmouk camp, won the gold medal in the Judo championship held in Halmstad, southwest of Sweden.
- Palestinian refugee from Syria Muhammed Hussein Ashmawy, from Yarmouk Camp, ranked "third" in the Judo championship that was held in Sweden. Muhammad won two bronze medals in the men and youth categories.

Germany

- Palestinian artist from Syria Ghassan AlShehab held an art exhibition in the Frankfurt Huff Hall in the German city of Mainz, the capital and largest city of the state of Rhineland-Palatinate, on February 4, 2017. The event was sponsored by the provincial government and attended by the local minister-president.
- Palestinian refugee from Syria Omar Hazima earned a coach certificate in Karate, Muay Thai, and wrestling from the German sports commission for

refugees. Hazima fled Jaramana Camp for Palestinian refugees, before he ultimately disembarked in Germany.

Denmark

- Paintings drawn by the Palestinian artist from Syria Wasim Kewan, a resident of Yarmouk, exerted a pull on scores of visitors during the cultural week held in Argos city in Denmark to promote Palestinian and Islamic culture.

The Netherlands

- Palestinian refugee from Syria Bahaa AlTawba, from AlAydeen Camp in Hums, finished third at the Isala Cup body building championship 98 kilograms staged in the Netherlands.
- The results were announced during the open bodybuilding championship held on March 27, 2017 in Capelle Aan Den Ijssel in Rotterdam.

Political and Human Rights Activism

In 2017, Palestinian refugees from Syria had been actively engaged in pro-Palestine campaigns and events held across Europe.

- The cause of the Palestinians of Syria emerged onboard of the UNHRC emergency session. On September 19, 2017, the Palestinian Return Centre (PRC) delivered an oral statement before the UNHRC member-states in which alarm bells were sounded over the situation of Palestinian refugees in war-torn Syria.
- Palestinian refugee Ahmed Nurullah was elected as the representative of the Palestinian community in the Netherlands.
- Dr. Maamar Maw'ed was appointed as the head of the PalMed association in Sweden.
- Several Palestinians from Syria joined Europe-based unions, including medical unions, journalists' unions, and teachers' unions.
- Newly-formed Palestinian associations in Greece, including the Jafra Foundation for Relief and Development, took part in humanitarian campaigns in favor of Palestinian refugees.
- *Palestinians from Syria joined pro-Palestine activities staged across Europe, most notably in Sweden, Germany, and the Netherlands.

Appeals

On October 21, 2017, the family of the Palestinian young man from Syria Kusay Musleh appealed to the international humanitarian institutions and the Palestinian Authority President Mahmoud Abbas to take urgent action in order to save their son who was hospitalized in Italy.

The father said Kusay caught an amnesia after a refugee boat from Libya sunk in the Mediterranean Sea on August 2, 2014. A few days later, the father reached out to a nurse at a hospital in Lampedusa who told him that his son was alive and was transferred to a hospital in Sicily, south of Italy, where medics diagnosed him with a memory loss.

“We tried to contact the Red Cross in Syria, Lebanon, Norway, Sweden, and Canada, but to no avail”, said the father. “A friend of ours in Norway went to the Italian hospital to keep tabs on Kusay’s condition. However staff members prevented him from entering the hospital and refused to provide him with whatever piece of information available about Kusay.”

The father said activist Fatma Jaber held contacts with the Palestinian ambassador in Italy Dr. May Keila who said there is nothing she can do for under Italian regulations no pieces of information should be revealed nor contacts be allowed with missing persons except by a family member.

Kusay’s father appealed for a travel permit so as to enable the family to visit their hospitalized son.

In a letter sent from Germany on December 18, 2017, the family of the Palestinian from Syria Hamza Husam Abdul Kader Hamid called on the Red Cross and other international institutions to work on disclosing the fate of their missing son.

Hamza went missing after a migrant boat sunk at the Aegean Sea, off the Greek seashores. The boat set sail from Turkey to Greece on September 20, 2015.

The father said his son, aged eight, had a speech disability and lived with his family in Turkey, adding that his son figured in a report released by a German news outlet.

At around 04:00 a.m. the dinghy carrying the family and other migrants was hit by a freighter. The predawn darkness prevented the father from reaching his son after he fell from his arms. Unable to bear the shock, some 52 migrants jumped into the sea. The father lost consciousness. When he woke up he was surrounded by Greek coast guards and found out that his son went missing.

The family fled the beleaguered Yarmouk Camp to Turkey before they left for Mytilini Island, in Greece, onboard the “death boats”.

CHAPTER IV

D) Victims and Detainees



AGPS document the death of 3,629 Palestinian refugees since the outbreak of the war in Syria in March 2011 until December 31, 2017. 3,541 Palestinians died of war-related incidents in Syria while 88 refugees died outside of the Syrian territories.

Victims

205 Palestinian refugees from Syria were pronounced dead in 2017, down from 311 in 2016. 20.48% of the casualties for 2017 died in refugee camps.

Victims by Status (Militant – Civilian)

In 2017 the number of militant casualties hit 141, at an estimated percentage of 68.78%. 64 civilians died in the same year. The data reveals an increase in Palestinians' involvement in the raging warfare.

Victims by Status

Status	Number	Percentage
Militant	141	68.78%.
Civilian	64	31.22%
Total	205	100%

The relative decrease in the number of victims compared with 2016 is attributed to the relative state of calm in various areas across Syria.

Status	2016	2017
Civilian	171	64
Militant	140	141
Total	311	205

Victims by Gender, Age

Women made up 5, 37% of the overall number of victims. 11 women and 194 men were pronounced dead. The list of casualties also included 12 minors.

Gender	Number	Percentage
Men	194	94,63%
Women	11	5, 37%
Total	205	100%

Age Category	Number	Percentage
Adults	194	94.15%
Minors	121	5.85%
Total	205	100%

Temporal Distribution of Victims

The largest number of victims was recorded in February with 27 victims, mostly pro-government militants. 48 Palestinians, including 34 militants, died in August and September.

Death Date	Number
January	10
February	27
March	19
April	14
May	18
June	14
July	19
August	25
September	23
October	12
November	10
December	14
Total	205

Victims by Geographical Location

201 Palestinian refugees died inside of Syria in 2017 while four refugees were pronounced dead in Lebanon, Egypt, and Germany.

29 Palestinians died in Yarmouk Camp, nine among whom as a result of the twofold blockade imposed by the Syrian government forces and the opposition outfits. Eight Palestinians from Daraa city were also pronounced dead in 2017.

Victims by Major Refugee Camp

Place of Death	Number	Percentage
Yarmouk Camp	29	69.5%
Daraa Camp	8	19.5%
AlMuzeireeb	39.5% ebe also pronounced araa Cpposition outfitsimposed by the	7.14%
AlSeyda Zeinab	1	2.38%
Dannun Camp	1	2.38%
Total	42	100%

Rif Dimashq province topped the list with 37 casualties, 30 among whom identified as members of pro-government Palestinian factions and the PLA.

Victims by Major Province

Province	Number	Percentage
Rif Dimashq	37	18.05%
Daraa	36	17.56%
Damascus	35	17.07%
Unknown	26	12.68%
Hama	23	11.22%
Deir AlZor	14	6.83%
AlRiqa	10	4.88%
Hums	9	4.39%
Aleppo	9	4.39%
Idlib	2	1%
Total	201	100%

Victims by Cause of Death

134 Palestinians from Syria, including 129 militants, were fatally gunned down in 2017. 20 refugees died under shelling. Others were tortured to death in Syrian government jails.

Cause of Death	Number
Gunfire	134
Shelling	20
Torture	12
Blockade	11
Sniper bullets	9
Blast	6
Execution	4
Medical negligence	3
Fires	2
Assassination	1
Extra-judicial execution	1
Migration	1
Cold-weapon assault	1
Total	205

Detainees

According to AGPS data, 1,644 Palestinian refugees have been detained in Syria since the outbreak of the bloody warfare. Another 304 Palestinians have gone missing.

28 Palestinian refugees, including seven women and girls, were detained in 2017, down from 76 in 2016, among them three women.

Khan Eshieh Camp topped the list of detainees in 2017 with 15 refugees as a result of the manhunts and abduction sweeps launched by the government forces, who held sway over the camp in 2017. Activists who refused to retreat to Idlib, north of Syria, following the reconciliation deal have also been chased down by the government troops.

Over 242 Palestinians from Khan Eshieh camp are incarcerated in Syrian government dungeons.

Detainees by Location

Location	Number	Percentage
Rif Dimashq – Khan Eshieh Camp	19	67.86%
Aleppo – Handarat Camp	3	10.71%
Hums – AlAyedeen Camp	2	7.14%
Rif Dimashq – AlSabina Camp	1	3.57%
Unidentified	1	3.57%
Daraa – AlMuzeireeb	1	3.57%
Damascus – Yarmouk Camp	1	3.57%
Total	28	100%

List of Palestinians of Syria Detained in 2017

No.	Name	Date of Arrest	Details
1	Mohamed Mustafa Hamad	13/1/2017	He was kidnapped by the Syrian government forces from his home in Khan Eshieh Camp for Palestinian refugees in Rif Dimashq following the reconciliation deal between the government forces and the opposition outfits.
2	Shadi Ibrahim Yousef	27/1/2017	He is called Shadi AlMukhtar. He was kidnapped by the Syrian government forces on his way back to Khan Eshieh shelter via the Darousha checkpoint and dragged to an unidentified destination shortly afterwards.

3	Mohamed Ahmed Zahrawi	6/2/2017	He was born in 1980 and was kidnapped by the government troops on his way back to AlNeirab Camp from Latakia city, where he worked as an Arabic instructor. Up to the moment of writing, Zahrawi's fate remains cloaked in undecipherable secrecy.
4	Raslan Tawfiq Raja	8/2/2017	Raslan Tawfiq Raja, a resident of Khan Esheih Camp, was kidnapped at the regime-run AlEin checkpoint.
5	Mohamed Walid Rafe'	21/02/2017	Palestinian instructor Mohamed Walid Rafe', director of Acre Prep School in AlNeirab Camp, was kidnapped following a raid on the school.
6	Abdullah AlKhatib	22/2/2017	A resident of AlNeirab Camp, Abdullah had gone missing on his way to Aleppo.
7	Nizar Sa'id AlNader	4/6/2017	A resident of Khan Esheih Camp for Palestinian refugees, in Rif Dimashq, the young man was kidnapped by the Syrian government troops on his way to take exams in Artouz on allegations of writing anti-regime posts.
8	Mahmoud Jamil Noufel	4/6/2017	A resident of Khan Esheih Camp for Palestinian refugees, in Rif Dimashq, the young man was kidnapped by the Syrian government troops on his way to take exams in Artouz on allegations of writing anti-regime posts.
9	Ahmed Mahmoud Ibrahim.	4/6/2017	A resident of Khan Esheih Camp for Palestinian refugees, in Rif Dimashq, the young man was kidnapped by the Syrian government troops on his way to take exams in Artouz on allegations of writing anti-regime posts.
10	Jihad Ata Dwei'r	10/06/2017	The 15-year-old boy was kidnapped by the Syrian government forces from his family home in Khan Esheih Camp.
11	Ahmed Abu Sittah	18/06/2017	He was kidnapped by the Syrian government forces from his workplace in Khan Esheih Camp, in Rif Dimashq.
12	Mohamed Salem	1/07/2017	He is a resident of AlSebeina Camp. He was kidnapped by the Syrian government forces at AlHusseiniya checkpoint as he paid a visit to his relatives in AlHusseiniya Camp. The charges included drug consumption, which was denied by local residents and activists.
13	Adel AlArjawi	29/8/2017	He was kidnapped by the government forces from his home in Khan Eshieh.
14	Abdul Kader Ali Ibrahim	12/08/2017	He was kidnapped by the Syrian regime forces from his home in Khan Esheih's eastern neighborhood.

15	Tahseen Ziyada AlSukri	18/8/2017	An ex-detainee said he had met him in the pro-government Saydana military prison, north of Damascus.
16	Wael Jasem Khalil	21/08/2017	He was kidnapped by the pro-government forces near Khan Eshieh Camp.
17	7/9/2017	Abdul Satar Sa'id	He was kidnapped by the government forces at the main entrance to Khan Eshieh Camp, where he was taking shelter.
18	7/9/2017	Hani Lafi	Working as a public transport driver and taking shelter in Khan Eshieh Camp, he was kidnapped by the government forces at the entrance to the Camp.
19	Mazen Abu AlHaj	7/9/2017	He worked as a teacher. He was kidnapped by the government forces at the main entrance to Khan Eshieh Camp.
20	Ahmed Husain Husain	12/11/2017	He was kidnapped by the government forces at Jdeidat Artouz checkpoint, in Rif Dimashq. His fate has gone mysterious.
21	Mohamed Hani Rabi' AlSeitari	19/11/2017	16-year-old AlSeitari, from AlMuzeireeb town, was kidnapped as passed through Khibet Ghazala checkpoint.

List of Palestinian women, Girls Detained in 2017

No.	Name	Date of Arrest	Details
1	Rand AlKhalidi	5/1/2017	A resident of Khan Al-Sheih Camp, she was kidnapped at a government checkpoint in Jdeidat Artouz town, in Rif Dimashq.
2	Mona Husain	10/04/2017	She was kidnapped at a government checkpoint on her way to receive food aids. She is married and has got children.
3	Suad Saoud Saoud	12/07/2017	A resident of Khan Eshieh Camp, she was kidnapped at a government checkpoint in Jdeidat Artouz town, in Damascus Suburbs.
4	Utaf Arabi	3/8/2017	Called Umm Raed, from Ein Ghazel Street in Yarmouk Camp, the woman was kidnapped by the government forces as she passed through AlKadam checkpoint on way to Damascus. Charges against her included funding terror groups.
5	Houda Darwish	16/9/2017	A resident of AlAyedeen Camp in Hums, she was kidnapped by the government forces.

6	Sahar Akad	16/9/2017	She is a resident of AlAyedeen Camp in Hums and works at Bisan Hospital. She was kidnapped by the government troops in Syria.
7	Sheikha Ghaleb AlRamli	24/04/2017	She was kidnapped at a government checkpoint in Damascus. Her husband, Shahada, from Derbel in Qatna, was arrested by the government forces shortly after he was summoned to questioning. Their fate has gone mysterious.

Victims of Torture

In 2017, 12 Palestinian refugees were killed under torture in Syrian government dungeons, bringing the number of victims of torture and forced disappearance in war-torn Syria to 475.

Victims of Torture in 2017

No.	Victim	Death Date	Residence	Details
1	Ahmad Emara	1/2/2017	Aleppo – AlNeirab Camp	35-year-old Palestinian resident of the Aleppo-based AlNeirab Camp, Ahmad Emara, a father of two kids, was tortured to death in Syrian government penitentiaries, where he had been held for three years.
2	Bassam Ali Youssef	8/2/2017	Damascus – Yarmouk Camp	Palestinian resident of Yarmouk Camp Bassam Ali Youssef, born in 1978, died under torture in Syrian government lock-ups. The casualty was kidnapped in 2013 from a UNRWA-run vocational education center in AlMezzeh, in Damascus.
3	Basem Baya'a	23/3/2017	Hums – AlAyedeen Camp	Aged 38 and sheltered in AlAyedeen Camp in Hums, he was tortured to death in Syrian government prisons, where he spent over four years.
4	Basel Khartabil AlSafadi	2/08/2017	Unidentified	The Syrian government executed the Palestinian web developer and cyber activist Bassel Khartabil AlSafadi, his family said. The execution of Bassel Khartabil was carried out days after he was moved to the Adra prison on October 3, 2015.
5	Udai Ahmad AlHaj Daoud	5/8/2017	Daraa – AlKashef neighborhood	The family of the missing Palestinian refugee Udai Ahmed AlHaj Daoud, 25, said the latter died under torture in Syrian government jails. The family said security forces in AlKabon, in Damascus, handed them over his identity documents a couple of years earlier and asked them to get a death certificate from Tishreen Military Hospital in Damascus.
6	Amjad Ragheb Nassar	6/8/2017	Damascus – Yarmouk Camp	He died under torture in Syrian government penitentiaries, his family said. The casualty was kidnapped five years earlier from the main entrance to Yarmouk Camp.

7	Marwan AlLababidi	8/8/2017	Hums – AlAyedeen Camp	Nicknamed Abu Khaled, from AlAyedeen Camp in Hums, Marwan was kidnapped by the government forces on 4/4/2015. He is a native of Akka in Palestine and in his 30s of age.
8	Abdullah Mohamed Ghazi	13/8/2017	Damascus – Yarmouk Camp	Abdullah was tortured to death in Syrian government prisons. The casualty, aged 20, was kidnapped by the government troops on December, 14, 2013 on his way out of Yarmouk Camp to fetch bread loafs. AGPS identified him through a set of photographs showing torture victims in war-torn Syria.
9	Haytham Muhannad AlKadi	17/8/2017	Hums – AlAyedeen Camp	His family said he died in Syrian government dungeons following a four-year detention period.
10	Ezzedine AlKhatib	14/10/2017	Rif Dimashq – AlSayeda Zeinab Camp	He was tortured to death in Syrian jails. He was kidnapped by the government forces three years earlier. His identity documents and death certificate were handed over to his family.
11	Saleh Fathi Ahmed Saleh	04/11/2017	Rif Dimashq – Khan Dannun Camp	The victim was a member of the PLA. He was tortured to death by the government forces and their affiliates in Khan Dannun Camp.
12	Fayez Diab Diab	31/12/2017	Unidentified	He worked as a lawyer and died as a result of torture in Syrian prisons.

Released Refugees

25 Palestinians were released from Syrian prisons in 2017, some among whom were arrested during the same period at checkpoints pitched around Khan Eshieh Camp, while others were captured sometime earlier.

On January 1, 2017, the Syrian security forces released six Palestinian residents of Khan ESheih Camp following pressure on the reconciliation delegation.

The refugees were identified as Shadi Hindi, Mohamed Abdullah Arsan, Hamza AlMuslih, Tariq Khalifa, Mohamed Kheir Nawfel, and Mohamed Akl Dhaher.

The Syrian government forces released the Palestinian refugee Raslan Tawfiq Raja, from Khan Eshieh Camp, on February 16, 2017, and Sahdi Ibrahim Youssef (called Shadi AlMukhtar), also from Khan Eshieh Camp, on March 2, 2017.

On January 23, 2017, Palestinian refugee Gharib Mohamed Gharib, a resident of the Hums-based AlAyedeen Camp, was released from a Syrian government lock-up, where he had been held for two years and three months. Gharib was arrested on November 4, 2014 near the government-run Syriatel checkpoint.

List of refugees released in 2017

No.	Name	Release Date	Place of Arrest	Details
1	Tareq Khalifa	01/01/2017	Khan Eshieh Camp	He was released from Syrian government jails after he was kidnapped following the reconciliation deal between the government forces and the opposition outfits.
2	Mohamed Kheir Nawfel	01/01/2017	Khan Eshieh Camp	He was released from Syrian government jails after he was kidnapped following the reconciliation deal between the government forces and the opposition outfits.
3	Mohamed Akl Dhaher	01/01/2017	Khan Eshieh Camp	He was released from Syrian government jails after he was kidnapped following the reconciliation deal between the government forces and the opposition outfits.
4	Gharib Mohamed Gharib	24/01/2017	Hums Camp	Palestinian refugee Gharib Mohamed Gharib, a resident of the Hums-based AlAyedeen Camp, had been held for two years and three months in Syrian government jails. He was arrested on November 4, 2014 near the government-run Syriatel checkpoint.
5	Aesha Salah Sweid	07/02/2017	Syria	Palestinian refugee Aisha Salah Sweid, born in 1962, was released as part of a prisoner swap deal struck between the Syrian government and the opposition forces north of Syria.
6	Raslan Tawfiq Raja	16/02/2017	Khan Eshieh Camp	The Syrian government forces arrested him on February 8, 2017 at the Ein checkpoint.
7	Mohamed Walid Rafe'	28/02/2017	AlNeirab Camp	Palestinian instructor Mohamed Walid Rafe', director of Acre Prep School in AlNeirab Camp, in Aleppo, was released from a government detention center, seven days after he was kidnapped from the school.
8	Shadi Ibrahim Youssef	03/03/2017	Khan Esheih Camp	Palestinian refugee Shadi Ibrahim Youssef, nicknamed Shadi AlMukhtar, a resident of Khan Esheih Camp, was kidnapped at the Darousha checkpoint one month earlier, on his way back to Khan AlSheih Camp.
9	Abed AlNatour	06/03/2017	AlNeirab Camp	He had been incarcerated for over a couple of months in government jails.
10	Hesham Kasem	19/04/2017	AlKabon	Palestinian refugee Hesham Kasem, a resident of Khan Dannun Camp, was released from an opposition-run penitentiary in AlKabon, east of Damascus, where he had been held for months. Kasem was reportedly released following a military operation launched by the government forces on opposition-led sites and strongholds. 34 soldiers held captive by the opposition were also freed in the operation.

11	Mohamed Hassan Mustafa Salayma	01/06/2017	Hums	Palestinian refugee Mohamed Hassan Mustafa Salayma, from the PLA, was released following a prisoner swap deal between the government forces and Jaysh AlIslam in Rif Dimashq. He was reportedly kidnapped by the government forces in Hums on September 23, 2012.
12	Wadah Mahmoud Husain	1/6/2017	Damascus	Palestinian refugee Wadah Mahmoud Husain, from Khan AlSheih Camp, worked as a greengrocer. He was arrested at the government-run Baghdad checkpoint in Damascus.
13	Abdul Kader Ali Barghis	21/6/2017	Hjeira	He was released following a three-year detention period. He was arrested by the government forces at the Hjeira checkpoint.
14	Jihad Ata Dwei'er	26/07/2017	Artouz	Jihad Ata Dwei'er, a resident of Khan Esheih Camp, had been held in a Syrian government jail, since June 10. Newly-released Jihad was arrested by the Syrian government forces in Artouz, in Rif Dimashq on his way to take secondary school exams.
15	Nizar Sa'id AlNader	27/07/2017	Artouz	Nizar Sa'id AlNader was kidnapped by the Syrian regime troops on June 4, 2017, on his way to Artouz to sit for secondary school exams. He was accused of writing anti-regime posts.
16	Mahmoud Jamil Noufel	27/07/2017	Artouz	He was kidnapped by the Syrian regime troops on June 4, 2017, on his way to Artouz to sit for secondary school exams. He was accused of writing anti-regime posts.
17	Ahmed Mahmoud Ibrahim	27/07/2017	Artouz	He was kidnapped by the Syrian regime troops on June 4, 2017, on his way to Artouz to sit for secondary school exams. He was accused of writing anti-regime posts.
18	Utaf Arabi	14/08/2017	Yarmouk Camp	Utaf, called Umm Raed, was arrested by the government forces at the Kadam checkpoint over charges of raising funds for terror groups.
19	Mohamed Madi AlKhatib	08/09/2017	Syria	Mohamed, a resident of AlNeirab Camp, was released following a five-year detention period in Syrian government lock-ups.
20	Muteea Ahmed Mubarak	12/09/2017	Khan Eshieh Camp	She was released 15 days after she was captured by the government forces.
21	Emina Huran	12/09/2017	Khan Eshieh Camp	She was released 15 days after she was captured by the government forces.
22	Muayed Idris	AlAyedeen Camp in Hums	03/10/2017	He took shelter in AlAyedeen Camp, in Hums.
23	Samer Abdul Hamid	22/10/2017	Aleppo	He was arrested in Aleppo and held in a government detention center for over 20 days.

24	Manhel Haydeh	29/11/2017	AlMuzeireeb	On October 31, 2017, unidentified assailants kidnapped the Palestinian refugee Manhal Hamayda, aged 40, on the Muzeireeb-Tel Shehab access road and asked his family to shell out \$200,000 as a condition for his release. He was released on November 29, 2017.
25	Shadi AlHindi	17/12/2017	Khan Eshieh Camp	He had been detained nearly for one year in government dungeons. Sometime earlier, Shadi was arrested and released from a government jail, before he was rearrested and sent to prison.

Conclusion

The report highlighted the calamitous situation of the Palestinians of Syria as a result of war-related incidents. As shown above, the Palestinian refugee community from Syria has been grappling with a vulnerable legal status and shorn of the right to physical and moral protection.

The situation has been no less tragic in the new asylum destinations, where the Palestinians of Syria are treated as foreigners and stateless individuals, and are thus, denied the right to permanent stays, family reunifications, access to labor market, and free movement inside and out.

AGPS appeals to all stakeholders and UN bodies, among all concerned institutions, to take a serious and urgent action vis-à-vis the crises wrought on the Palestinians of Syria and to push all warring actors to neutralize Palestinian refugee camps and keep refugees at bay from armed conflicts.

The report dovetails ongoing attempts by AGPS and PRC to bring the news of the Palestinians of Syria to the forefront. Despite the difficulties and risks emerging on the scene, as war has kicked into full gear since March 2011, intensive research has been conducted to draw a true-to-life picture of the situation of the Palestinian refugee community.

www.actionpal.org.uk

Phone: 00 44 20 8453 0978

Email: info@actionpal.org.uk

Address: 100 Crown House, North Circular Road
London NW10 7PN United Kingdom



مركز العودة الفلسطيني
Palestinian Return Center



مجموعة العمل من أجل فلسطينيين سورية
Action Group For Palestinians of Syria

