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Action Group For Palestinians of Syria



مركز العودة الفلسطيني
Palestinian Return Centre



PALESTINIANS OF SYRIA (PRS)

Destruction and Reconstruction

Annual Field Report 2019

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ANNUAL FIELD REPORT 2019

PALESTINIANS OF SYRIA (PRS)

DESTRUCTION AND RECONSTRUCTION

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TABLE OF CONTENTS

Introduction	6
Overview.....	8
Victims/Detainees.....	11
Palestinian Refugee Camps.....	21
Yarmouk.....	23
Khan Eshieh	36
AlSabina.....	39
AlHusainiya.....	43
Jaramana.....	45
Khan Dannun.....	49
AlSayeda Zeinab.....	51
AlRamadan	54
Handarat.....	55
AlNeirab.....	60
AlAyedeen – Hums	63
AlAyedden – Hama.....	71
AlRaml – Latakia.....	73
Palestinian Refugee Communities in Syria.....	75
Babila, Yalda, Beit Sahem (Southern Damascus).....	76
Qudsaya.....	79
Hittin.....	80

Northern Syria.....	81
Idlib.....	84
Deir Ballout Camp.....	84
Muhammadiya Camp.....	90
AlSadaka Camp.....	91
AlJazeera Camp.....	93
I'zaz.....	93
PRS in Southern Syria.....	96
AlMuzeireeb.....	97
Tseil.....	99
Tel Shehab.....	99
PRS Outside Syria.....	100
Lebanon.....	101
Jordan.....	117
Egypt.....	122
Algeria.....	126
Libya.....	127
Sudan.....	129
Gaza.....	131
Saudi Arabia.....	134
UAE.....	135
Kurdistan	138
PRS in Turkey and Eastern Asia.....	139
Turkey	140
Thailand	150
Malaysia	153

PRS in Europe	154
Sweden.....	155
Denmark.....	162
Norway.....	164
Germany.....	165
Netherlands.....	176
Austria.....	179
France.....	180
Greece	181
Cyprus	197



INTRODUCTION

Almost ten years into the Syrian conflict, the war machinery continues to tragically affect the lives of civilians. Perhaps, no community has been as severely affected by the warfare as Palestinian refugees in the war-ravaged country.

It may be true that in 2019 the pace of deadly shootouts and mass killings in Syria have relatively ebbed. However, to say that the situation of Palestinian refugees has seen better days is a historical and human fallacy.

Throughout 2019 and beyond, the Palestinian refugee community has been subjected to all sorts of human rights violations and psycho-physical suffering. Being misled by the lowered echoes of the war machinery, hundreds of displaced families packed for the return to their houses and shelters. Scores of them were shocked as they caught sight of their homes turning into mounds of rubble; Hundreds of other families were denied a safe access to their houses; Several others were arrested at makeshift checkpoints and forcibly disappeared in penal complexes and dozens more breathed their last on the migration road while trying to get to safety to Europe.

The present report gives a detailed account of the situation of Palestinian refugees in/from Syria (hereafter referred to as PRS) in 2019.

Entitled “Palestinians of Syria: Destruction and Reconstruction”, the report underscores the calamitous situation of Palestinian refugees in and outside Syria as a result of war-related incidents.

The report provides fact-based data and statistics about the number of victims and detainees among the Palestinians of Syria in 2019.

As figures in the study, though the number of victims and detainees shrunk back compared to previous years, dozens of Palestinian refugees were pronounced dead and/or arrested in 2019.

The report indicates that as many as 4,013 Palestinian refugees from Syria died of war-related incidents since the outbreak of the bloody conflict in March 2011 until the end of 2019.

The report also underscores the crises endured by the Palestinian community in displacement camps across and outside the Syrian territories. At the same time, it provides a detailed account of the violations perpetrated against PRS in their asylum seeking journey and on way to Europe and other destinations.

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

Seven such annual reports were released by AGPS from 2014 to draw the international community's attention to PRS' calamitous humanitarian situation.

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.



OVERVIEW

After ten years of conflict, Palestine refugees continue to be one of the most vulnerable groups in Syria with immense humanitarian needs.

Throughout 2019, PRS kept launching cries for help over their deteriorating humanitarian condition due to the sharp decrease in the exchange rate of the Syrian pound compared to the USD and their lack of access to the local labor market. The price leap overburdened the cash-stripped refugees. House rents have also seen a striking hike from previous years.

The majority of Palestine refugee households in Syria live in poverty and nearly half of them remain in protracted displacement as a result of conflict and the damage and destruction of their homes.

BLOCKADE AND DESTRUCTION:

Yarmouk camp remained blockaded for nearly five years by Syrian regime forces and their Russian allies. This led to mass displacement of its population and the total destruction of over 20% of the camp structures. 40% of buildings sustained partial damage.

Scores of other stranded families fled the camp following the 33-day military operation launched by the government forces on April 19, 2018. The Syrian government forces regained control over Yarmouk Camp and southern Damascus towns following the military operation. Dozens of civilians were killed and dozens more injured in the offensive. Over 60% of buildings in Yarmouk have gone either totally or partially destroyed in the warfare.



A few months earlier, the United Nations Institute for Training and Research (UNITAR) published the results of an assessment of the damage to Syrian cities caused by seven years of relentless bombardment by the incumbent regime and its allies since 2011.

The analysis found out that as many as 5,489 buildings were destroyed in Yarmouk Camp for Palestinian refugees. The damage atlas used satellite-detected damage analysis to identify buildings that are either destroyed, or severely or moderately damaged.

The Syrian government kept dragging its feet over civilians appeals to return to the camp and retrieve their property. Several laws were passed which obstructed civilians' return, including Law 10, Law 3 of 2018, and Decree 63 of the counter-terrorism law of 2012 which gave the government greenlight to freeze civilian property under the security pretext.

ENFORCED DISAPPEARANCE:

AGPS kept record of the secret incarceration of 1,780 Palestinian refugees in Syria's state run prisons from March 2011 to December 2019.

Throughout 2019, 29 Palestinian refugees died under torture in Syrian lock-ups, where hundreds of others endured dire conditions of captivity.

ATTACKS AGAINST CIVILIANS:

On May 14, 2019 AlNeirab camp for Palestinian refugees, in Aleppo, was hit with four guided missiles, claiming the lives of nine Palestinians. State-run media sources laid the blame on Syrian opposition forces.

DESTRUCTION OF GRAVEYARDS:

Russian and Syrian government forces ransacked the old cemetery of Yarmouk Camp, in Damascus, in search of the body remains of Israeli soldiers killed in the Battle of Sultan Yaakoob in Lebanon in 1982.

On April 19, 2018, a military operation launched by Syria's government battalions and their Russian abettors led to the destruction of 60% of civilian buildings and premises in Yarmouk Camp. Dozens of civilians were killed and hundreds injured in the offensive.

Heavy damage was wrought on Yarmouk's AlShuhadaa Cemetery as graves were hit with barrel bombs and headstones smashed by missiles and mortar shells.

ABSENCE OF HUMANITARIAN ASSISTANCE:

UNRWA's operations in Syria have most been carried out in government-controlled areas. Displaced Palestinians taking shelter in opposition-led zones or hard-to-reach areas have been denied access to relief services and humanitarian assistance.

The body of missing-in-action Israeli soldier Zachary Baumel was flown back to Israel in early April 2019. He was one of three soldiers still listed as missing in action since the Battle of Sultan Yaakoub in Lebanon in 1982.

INTERNALLY-DISPLACED REFUGEES

UN data indicates that out of 560,000 Palestinian refugees formerly sheltered in Syria, 450,000 have become internally displaced and 120,000 fled to other destinations, including 28,000 to Lebanon and 17,000 to Jordan.

STATISTICS: VICTIMS AND DETAINEES

AGPS has documented the death of 4,013 Palestinian refugees from Syria, including hundreds of women and children, since 2011, as a result of war-related incidents. 92 victims died on the migration route or outside Syria.

VICTIMS

In 2019, 70 PRS were pronounced dead, down from 276 in 2018. The list includes 29 victims who died under torture in Syrian prisons.

STATUS	NUMBER OF VICTIMS	PERCENTAGE
Military	20	28.57%
Civilian	50	71.43%
Death Toll	70	100%

VICTIMS BY STATUS

STATUS	2016	2017	2018	2019
CIVILIAN	171	64	168	50
MILITARY	140	141	68	20
DEATH TOLL	311	205	276	70

VICTIMS BY GENDER, AGE

Women and girls made up nearly 4.29% of the death toll among PRS. Three women and 67 men died in the conflict. The list includes eight children and 62 adults.

• VICTIMS BY GENDER

GENDER	NUMBER OF VICTIMS	PERCENTAGE
Male	67	95.71%
Female	3	4.29%
Death Toll	276	100%

• VICTIMS BY AGE

AGE	NUMBER OF VICTIMS	PERCENTAGE
Adult	62	88.57%
Minor	8	11.43%
Death Toll	70	100%

VICTIMS BY MONTH

The largest number of victims during 2019 was recorded in April, with 18 victims. 15 PRS were pronounced dead in May and seven in October.

YEAR: 2019	VICTIMS
January	4
February	6
March	0
April	18
May	15
June	2
July	2
August	5
September	1
October	7
November	4
December	6
Death Toll	70

VICTIMS BY GEOGRAPHICAL LOCATION

During 2019, 69 PRS died in the Syrian territories and one PRS in Turkey.

Aleppo, Idlib and Deir ALZor topped the list with 21 victims, followed by Damascus and its suburbs with four victims. Six PRS died in Hama, Hums, and Latakia while five were pronounced dead in Deraa. Another 33 PRS died in unknown locations.

• VICTIMS BY MAJOR PROVINCES IN SYRIA

PLACE OF DEATH	NUMBER OF VICTIMS	PERCENTAGE
Unidentified	33	41.14%
Aleppo	11	15.71%
Idlib	7	10%
Deraa	5	7.14%
Hama	3	4.29%
Rif Dimashq	3	4.29%
Deir ALZor	3	4.29%
Hums	2	2.86%
Aleppo	1	1.43%
Damascus	1	1.43%
Latakia	1	1.43%
100%	70	100%

• VICTIMS BY REFUGEE CAMP, COMMUNITY

PLACE OF DEATH	NUMBER OF VICTIMS	PERCENTAGE
Aleppo – AlNeirab Camp	10	83.33%
Deraa – Deraa Camp	1	8.33%
Deraa – AlMuzeireeb	1	8.33%
Death Toll	12	100%

VICTIMS BY CAUSE OF DEATH

During 2019, 29 PRS died under torture in Syrian prisons; 17 died under shelling and 16 were fatally gunned down. Three PRS died on the migration route.

CAUSE OF DEATH	NUMBER OF VICTIMS	PERCENTAGE
Torture	29	41.43%
Shelling	17	24.29%
Gunshooting	16	22.86%
Blast	3	4.29%
Assassination	2	2.86%
Migration Route	2	2.86%
Drowning	1	1.43%
Death Toll	70	100%

DETAINEES

AGPS documented the secret detention of 1,780 PRS in Syrian prisons until the end of 2019. 331 others have gone missing in the war-torn country.

14 PRS were arrested in 2019, down from 16 in 2018.

DETAINEES BY MAJOR PROVINCES, CAMPS

PLACE OF ARREST	NUMBER OF DETAINEES	PERCENTAGE
Damascus – Southern Damascus	8	57.14%
Damascus – Yarmouk Camp	3	21.43%
Deraa – Deraa Camp	1	7.14%
Unidentified	1	7.14%
Rif Dimashq – Khan Eshieh Camp	1	7.14%
Total	14	100%

• **NAMES OF 2019 DETAINEES**

#	NAME	DATE OF ARREST	PLACE OF ARREST	CITY	ADDRESS	DETAILS
1	Yehya AlSarhabn	30/01/2019	Deir Ballout Camp	Idlib	Daascus – Yarmouk Camp	He was arrested by opposition forces in northern Syria
2	Mo-hamed Yousef Hajres	31/01/2019	Soumariya	Rif Dimashq	Rif Dimashq – Khan Eshieh Camp	He was arrested by Syrian security forces at AlSoumariya checkpoint
3	Atiyeh Hasan Othman	01/03/2019	Ein AlKarsh	Damascus	Deraa – Deraa Camp	He was arrested by Syrian security forces as he attempted to obtain a travel permit to Lebanon. He was released sometime later
4	Rafat Nabhan	06/03/2019	Syrian borders	Rif Dimashq	Unknown	He was arrested by Syrian security forces after he crossed the Jdeida border-crossing, coming from Lebanon
5	Yaser Amayri	06/04/2019	Southern Damascus	Damascus	Damascus – Yarmouk Camp	Yaser, coordinator for the Jafra relief foundation, was arrested along with three other staffers by Syrian security forces after they were summoned to questioning by Syria's Palestine Branch forces
6	Ahmad Khamis	01/06/2019	Unknown	Unknown	Damascus – Yarmouk Camp	Palestinian ex-prisoner Ahmad Khamis, who was released from Israeli jails as part of an Israeli-Russian swap deal and re-arrested by Syrian security forces, has been enduring an unknown fate in Syrian prisons

#	NAME	DATE OF ARREST	PLACE OF ARREST	CITY	ADDRESS	DETAILS
7	Mo-hamed Yassin Fatyan	23/08/2019	Southern Damascus	Damas-cus	Southern Da-mascus	They were all arrested in early April 2019 in southern .Damascus towns
8	Bu Khaled Aamayri	23/08/2019	Southern Damascus	Damas-cus	Southern Da-mascus	
9	Yaser Karim	23/08/2019	Southern Damascus	Damas-cus	Southern Da-mascus	
	Maher Naser	23/08/2019	Southern Damascus	Damas-cus	Southern Da-mascus	
11	Ahmad Mahi	23/08/2019	Southern Damascus	Damas-cus	Southern Da-mascus	
12	Abu Amin Abdul Hafidh	23/08/2019	Southern Damascus	Damas-cus	Southern Da-mascus	
13	Fadi Akli	23/08/2019	Southern Damascus	Damas-cus	Southern Da-mascus	
14	Younes Abu Ria	23/08/2019	Southern Damascus	Damas-cus	Southern Da-mascus	

LIST OF TORTURE VICTIMS

#	VICTIM	DEATH DATE	ADDRESS	EXTRA INFO
1	Naser Yousef Husain	16/01/2019	Damascus – AlHajar ALAswad	He was arrested by Syrian security forces on his way back home from his workplace. His body was handed over to his wife after she was forced to sign a document claiming .he had ties with terror groups
2	Mohamed Fuad Atiyeh	07/02/2019	Damascus – Yarmouk Camp	He was tortured to death in Syrian .government prisons
3	Mohamed Husian Hasan	11/02/2019	Rif Di-mashq	He was born in 1990 and died under torture in Sednaya military prison, north of Damascus, where he .had been held for over three years

N°	VICTIM	DEATH DATE	ADDRESS	EXTRA INFO
4	Fares Balsheh	13/02/2019	Unknown	They died under torture in Syrian prisons, where they had been held for over five months. They were arrested on March 12, 2014
5	Mohamed Fares Balsheh	13/02/2019	Unknown	
6	Khaled Samara	26/02/2019	Unknown	
7	Mahmoud Walid Rahmeh	05/04/2019	Damascus – Yarmouk Camp	He was born in 1987. He took shelter in Yarmouk Camp. He is a native of Tiberias in Palestine
8	Mohamed Amayri	06/04/2019	Unknown	They were tortured to death in Syrian government prisons
9	Khaled Abu Shelah	06/04/2019	Unknown	
10	Yousef Abu Shelah	06/04/2019	Unknown	
11	Ibrahim Abu Shelah	06/04/2019	Unknown	
12	Jihad Abu Shelah	06/04/2019	Unknown	
13	Naim Abu Shelah	06/04/2019	Unknown	
14	Ghassan Abu Shelah	06/04/2019	Unknown	
15	Ali Saleh Abu Shelah	06/04/2019	Unknown	
16	Amar Abu Shelah	06/04/2019	Unknown	
17	Yassin Ahmad Hamour	25/04/2019	Hums Camp	He died following years in Syrian prisons. He took shelter in AlAyedeen Camp in Hums
18	Bilal Ibrahim Al-Sagheir	30/04/2019	Hums Camp	He died after seven years in Syrian government prisons. He was arrested on 11/10/2012
19	Mohamed Husain Akel	02/06/2019	Damascus – Yarmouk Camp	He died under torture in Syrian prisons, where he had been locked up for five years. He was arrested at a checkpoint near Yarmouk Camp. His family received a death certificate. His body has been secretly withheld by the Syrian authorities

N°	VICTIM	DEATH DATE	ADDRESS	EXTRA INFO
20	Hamam Diab	22/07/2019	Damascus – Yarmouk Camp	He died after three months in Syrian .an prisons. He was arrested in 2015
21	Fadi Fuad Al- Soutari	04/10/2019	Damascus – Yarmouk Camp	He was tortured to death in Syrian .government prisons
22	Sa'id Mustafa Amrein	20/10/2019	Unknown	They died under torture in Syrian government prisons, where they .had been forcibly disappeared
23	Ziad Lutfi Am- rein	20/10/2019	Unknown	
24	Amar Ahmad Faraj	06/11/2019	Damascus – Yarmouk Camp	He died following years of captivity .in Syrian government prisons
25	Osama Omar AlKhaled	25/11/2019	Deraa – Ein Ghazal	<p>Osama, a resident of Daraa, south of Syria, and a native of the Pales- tinian village of Ein Ghazal, got his health condition worsened at the Adra prison, before he was pro- nounced dead at a Damascus hos- pital</p> <p>Doctor Osama was arrested by Syrian security forces who raid- ed Maaria refugee camp, in Yar- mouk Basin, west of Daraa. He was dragged to a government prison in .Damascus</p> <p>The victim used to run his clinic in AlShajara village, in Daraa's western outskirts, and was called "the or- phan's doctor</p>
26	Ahmad Abed Maatouq	05/12/2019	Rif Di- mashq – Husainiya Camp	They died under torture in Syrian .government prisons
27	Mahmoud Abed Maatouq	05/12/2019	Rif Di- mashq – Husainiya Camp	

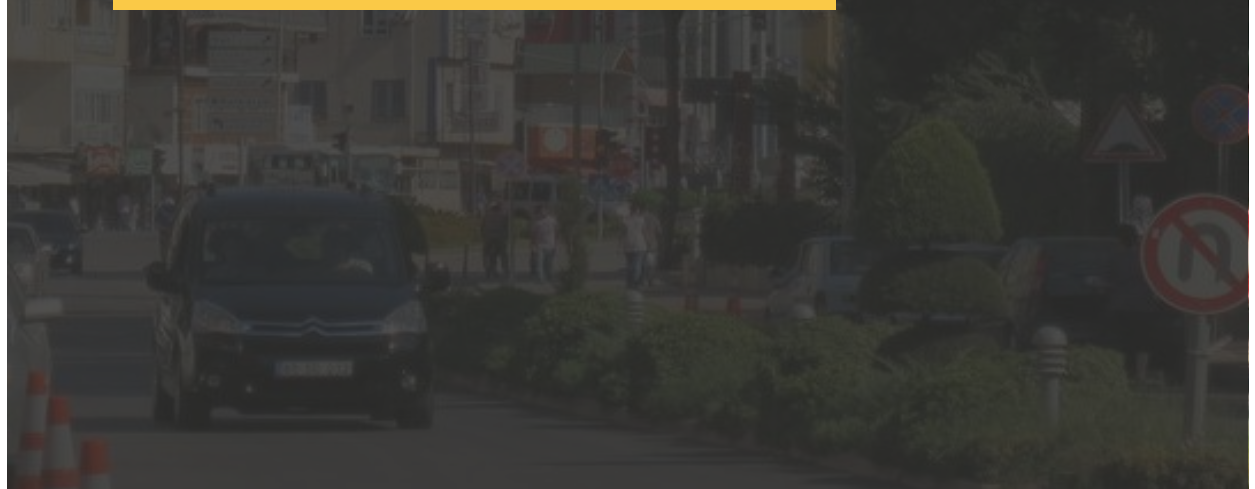
°N	VICTIM	DEATH DATE	ADDRESS	EXTRA INFO
28	Mohamed AlSir-sawi	17/12/2019	Damascus – Yarmouk Camp	He died under torture in Syrian prisons
29	Ahmad Raafat Mousa	22/12/2019	Rif Dimashq - AlSabina	His body was handed over to his family after he died under torture in Adra prison

LIST OF PRS RELEASED IN 2019

°N	NAME	DATE OF RELEASE	PLACE OF ARREST	PLACE OF RESIDENCE	DETAILS
1	Samer AlSa-fadi	26/01/2019	Syrian-Lebanese borders	Yarmouk Camp	He was arrested on the Syrian-Lebanese borders
2	Abdul Rahim Saleh	26/01/2019	Syria	Syria	He was arrested in 2013
3	Shadi Ibrahim Yousef	30/01/2019	Khan Eshieh Camp	Khan Eshieh Camp	
4	Fuad Fuad Kasem	19/05/2019	Damascus	Hama	He was released after five years in Syrian prisons. He was arrested in 2014
5	Atiya Hasan Othman	20/05/2019	Damascus	Deraa Camp	He was born in 1955 and sheltered in Deraa Camp south of Syria. He was released after four months in prison
6	Mohamed Fatah Hamouda	01/07/1988	AlRaml Camp	AlRaml Camp	He was arrested on 17/08/2011. He was jailed in Sednaya military prison before he was transferred to Suweida prison

N	NAME	DATE OF RELEASE	PLACE OF ARREST	PLACE OF RESIDENCE	DETAILS
7	Mahmoud 'Rafe	16/08/2019	AlNeirab Camp	AlNeirab Camp	He was released after seven months in prison. He was arrested on January 2, 2019 by a pro-government militia
8	Mahmoud Mohamed Mustafa	27/09/2019	Syria	Khan Dannun Camp	
9	Rashed Omar Husain	19/10/2019	Khan Eshieh Camp	Khan Eshieh Camp	He was released after five years in prison
10	Issa Amayri	08/11/2019	Southern Damascus	Southern Damascus	They were arrested along with other refugees in Yalda in April 2019
11	Yaser Karim	17/11/2019	Southern Damascus	Southern Damascus	

PRS in Palestinian Refugee in syria



A. PRS in Palestinian Refugee Camps



1

YARMOUK CAMP

UN data indicates that before the eruption of the conflict in 2011, Yarmouk was home to approximately 160,000 Palestine refugees, making it the largest Palestine refugee community in Syria. Located eight kilometers from Damascus, it is one of three unofficial camps in Syria.

In April 2015, armed opposition groups captured over 60 per cent of the camp, containing over 90 per cent of the remaining civilian population. This not only made relief institutions unable to carry out any distributions inside Yarmouk but also displaced most of the remaining 18,000 Palestine refugees and other civilians to the neighboring areas of Yalda, Babila and Beit Saham (YBB).

Almost all the remaining Palestine refugees left during the final government offensive for Yarmouk in April-May 2018, after which the government retook control of the camp.

Unofficial statistics indicate that some 200 families have remained in Yarmouk Camp. Scores of stranded families fled the camp following the 33-day military operation launched by the government forces on April 19, 2018.

The Syrian government forces regained control over the area and southern Damascus towns following the operation. Dozens of civilians were killed and dozens more injured in the offensive. Over 40% of buildings in Yarmouk have gone either totally or partially destroyed.

Local sources estimate that 40% of buildings in Yarmouk camp need reconstruction; 40% are habitable, and 20% are completely destroyed.

In 2019, the United Nations Institute for Training and Research (UNITAR) published the results of an assessment of the damage to Syrian cities caused by seven years of relentless bombardment by the incumbent regime and its allies since 2011.

The analysis found out that as many as 5,489 buildings were destroyed in Yarmouk Camp for Palestinian refugees. The damage atlas used satellite-detected damage analysis to identify buildings that are either destroyed, or severely or moderately damaged.

At the same time, Syrian security forces deployed at checkpoints pitched near the main entrance to the camp cracked down on civilians attempting to reach the local cemetery. Civilians also said Russian forces have been spotted around the main entrance to the old cemetery in the camp.

Over recent years, activists have slammed the Russian and Syrian government forces for ransacking the old cemetery of Yarmouk Camp, in Damascus, in search of the body remains of Israeli soldiers killed in the Battle of Sultan Yaakoob in Lebanon in 1982.

The body of missing-in-action Israeli soldier Zachary Baumel was flown back to Israel in early April 2019. He was one of three soldiers still listed as missing in action since the Battle of Sultan Yaakoub in Lebanon in 1982.

Heavy damage was wrought on Yarmouk's AlShuhadaa Cemetery as graves were hit with barrel bombs and headstones smashed by missiles and mortar shells.

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

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

PROPERTY-THEFT

Activists have warned that civilian property has been subjected to theft and homes to burglary in Yarmouk Camp for Palestinian refugees, in Damascus.

Activists have caught sight of flocks of vehicles laden with belongings stolen from abandoned buildings in the camp.

Over recent years, pro-government militias have been raking through evacuated homes in Yarmouk and holding sway over furniture, copper, iron, and kitchenware belonging to displaced families.

Reports of theft have emerged after Syrian government forces grabbed hold of the camp and burglarized civilian homes.

OFFICIAL VISITS, STATEMENTS

In early January 2019, Palestinian Authority (PA) President, Mahmoud Abbas, stressed the need to press ahead with the reconstruction of Yarmouk Camp so as to allow displaced Palestinians to return to their homes at the soonest time possible.

Abbas' calls were made during a meeting with the committee overseeing debris-clearance and reconstruction of the local cemetery in Yarmouk Camp.

The committee told Abbas that 70% of debris had been removed from Yarmouk's alleyways and that 280 families returned to the camp.

A decision issued by Syria's Council of Ministers a few months earlier tasked local authorities in Damascus with rehabilitating infrastructure and destroyed facilities in Yarmouk Camp so as to pave the way for the safe return of the displaced residents.



Minister of Local Administration and Environment Hussein Makhoul said at the time that the decision tasked Damascus governorate with missions previously undertaken by Yarmouk municipality in an attempt to boost reconstruction plans and facilitate civilians' return.

On January 12, Secretary of the Coalition of Palestinian Resistance Forces, Khaled Abdul Majeed, called on the concerned authorities to smooth the return of Yarmouk residents to their homes.

Abdul Majeed spoke out against the delay and reluctance maintained as regards the refugees' appeals for return, urging local authorities in Damascus to press ahead with reconstruction in order to allow the displaced families to return to their homes.

On January 14, a delegation of the Palestine Liberation Organization (PLO) headed by Azzam AlAhmad and Information Minister Ahmad Assaf paid a visit to AlShuhadaa Cemetery in Yarmouk Camp.

Sometime earlier, the delegation discussed possible ways to boost reconstruction of Yarmouk Camp. This came during a meeting with Syrian state delegates and Palestinian officials in an attempt to ease the refugees' return to their homes.

The PLO delegation also inaugurated the Palestine TV office in Damascus, a move they said will transfer the voice of the Palestinians to the world.

On January 16, member of the PLO's Executive Committee Wasel Abu Yousef told AlWatan daily that the PLO secured a sum of \$2 million to carry on debris-clearance in Yarmouk.

Abu Yousef said contacts were being held with the Syrian authorities in order to boost reconstruction and facilitate the refugees' return.

He quoted Syrian authorities as stating that displaced refugees will have their situation worked out and will be granted safe access to their homes.



PLO representative in Syria Tawfiq ALTirawi, also member of Fatah's Central Committee, dubbed the situation in Yarmouk tragic and calamitous, adding that debris-clearance and reconstruction are likely to take long months to be finalized.

ALTirawi also said that infrastructure in the camp sustained severe damage and that the Syrian authorities have been discussing possible ways to reconstruct destroyed facilities and premises.

On February 21, the coalition of Palestinian factions in Syria discussed during a meeting held in Damascus the situation in Yarmouk and latest development regarding the return file.

On February 22, a PLO delegation showed up in the camp to keep tabs on reconstruction works at AlShuhadaa Cemetery and debris-clearance operations.

On March 11, member of the Executive Office of Damascus Governorate Samir Jazaerli said, following a meeting held in Damascus that civilians will not be allowed to return to their homes in Yarmouk Camp before the technical committees finalize their reports about the condition of local buildings and premises, which sustained partial or total destruction during the warfare.

On March 18, a studies company entered Yarmouk Camp after it was tasked by Damascus Governorate, in cooperation with the General Authority for Palestinian Arab Refugees (GAPAR), to assess the condition of civilian buildings and premises located at the main entrance to the camp and near the local municipality in Palestine Street.

A member of the company said the delegation will release a database of all buildings in Yarmouk in the next few days, adding that owners of uninhabitable buildings will receive compensations.

At the same time, the General Union of Palestinian Engineers – Syria Branch announced the launch of technical committees to take part in the mapping of an organizational plan so as to smooth the rehabilitation of Yarmouk Camp.

On March 21, the United Nations Institute for Training and Research (UNITAR) published the results of an assessment of the damage to Syrian cities caused by seven years of relentless bombardment by the incumbent regime and its allies since 2011.

The UNITAR published a damage atlas that uses satellite-detected damage analysis to identify buildings that are either destroyed, or severely or moderately damaged. The analysis has been visualized and developed further to provide an overview of the extent of damage and its impact on the community.



The city of Homs came third in the list with 13,778 buildings destroyed. The destroyed buildings included 12,781 in Raqqa, 10,529 in Hama, 6,405 in Deir Ezzor, and 5,489 in the Yarmouk camp for Palestinian refugees.

According to the study, the city of Aleppo came first in terms of the number of buildings destroyed by the government forces' bombing campaigns. Nearly 36,000 buildings in Aleppo and 35,000 others in the Damascus suburb of eastern Ghouta were destroyed.

The majority of the Syrian cities, towns and villages which revolted against the Assad regime were subjected to heavy aerial and artillery bombardment which caused enormous damage to infrastructure, public facilities and civilian homes.

On April 28, Pro-government sources in Syria said the technical committee handed over a preliminary report about the condition of buildings, premises, and infrastructure in Yarmouk Camp for Palestinian refugees, in Damascus.

On May 19, pro-government sources in Syria announced the launch of a follow-up committee led by Minister of Public Works and Housing to wrap up rehabilitation plans in Yarmouk Camp and adjacent areas in two month's time.

The move was announced following a meeting convened in Damascus between the Syrian Prime Minister and government officials in an attempt to boost reconstruction works in such Damascus zones as Ein AlFijeh, Ein AlKhadra, Basima, Yarmouk Camp, and Jober, among other areas.

On May 25, Director-General of the Political Department of the Palestine Liberation Organization, Ambassador Anwar Abdul Hadi, said displaced families should not be misled into believing that they will gain access to their homes in Yarmouk Camp sometime soon.

Speaking from Yarmouk Camp, Abdul Hadi said the families' return remains indefinite and that several buildings remain uninhabitable and risk to collapse at any possible moment.

He quoted the Damascus Governor as stating that civilian buildings need to be carefully inspected before families are allowed to return to the camp.

He added that the Syrian government green-lighted debris-clearance in residential alleyways.

On June 14, Syria's Minister of Public Works and Housing Suhail Abdul Latif said serious efforts have been ongoing to finalize the roadmap for the rehabilitation of Yarmouk Camp and other areas in Damascus.

In press statements, Abdul Latif said efforts have been under full swing by the committee taking charge of the rehabilitation file, adding that it has discussed with officials at the ministry the latest developments in this regard.

On June 30, Yasar Abedeen, director of the General Company for Engineering Studies and Consulting, run by the Syrian Ministry of Public Works and Housing, said the company has been tasked with devising reconstruction plans for Yarmouk Camp, in Damascus, and surrounding areas.

Speaking with state-run media, Abedeen said Yarmouk Camp comes on top of the newly-signed contracts. Reconstruction is slated to be carried out along three phases and to last for 135 days.

The first phase encompasses an overall assessment of the organizational plan for 2013 and of the damage inflicted by the warfare. Airborne imagery has been implemented to that end.

As part of the second phase, proposals will be put forth in cooperation with the follow-up committee in order to reach a final decision regarding the opted-for vision.

The last phase includes a detailed outline of the final plan for the reconstruction of the camp.

On August 5, Head of the political department of the Palestine Liberation Organization (PLO), Anwar Abdul Hadi, said 70% of homes in Yarmouk Camp along with the infrastructure have sustained total damage in the warfare. 30% were partially damaged.

According to Abdul Hadi, the Syrian government is considering reconstructing the camp, adding that an ad hoc committee will finalize a plan to that end in a month's time.

Speaking with Palestine TV, the PLO official said that the Syrian authorities carried out field surveys and embarked on mine clearance operations as part of underway attempts to rehabilitate the Palestinian refugee camp.

Abdul Hadi said the Syrian government will take charge of the reconstruction of infrastructure and three floors of civilian buildings. Six floors will be greenlighted

by the government, up from three in previous years. Chinese partners are slated to provide the camp with cement and iron.

On August 20, Syria's Ministry of Public Works and Housing pointed, during a meeting held at its headquarters on Tuesday, underway efforts to reconstruct 220 hectares of Yarmouk Camp, in Damascus.

On September 24, the General Company for Electricity in Damascus announced a bid to carry out emergency excavations and replace damaged power ground wire in Yarmouk in accordance with technical and financial terms and conditions set by local authorities in this regard.

In a statement posted on its official website, the Power Company said those wishing to benefit from the tender should reach out to the company's supply department – office of foreign contracts to receive the required documents in exchange for 5,000 Syrian Pounds. Offers in this regard will be put forth in line with Law No. 51 of 2004 by Tuesday September 15. The final decision will be announced on September 16 at 11:30 a.m.



On October 21, Director-General of the General Company for Studies and Technical Consultations, Dr. Yasar Abdeen, said that the company finalized the first phase of the organizational plan for Kabon and Yarmouk Camp.

He added that the company is considering studying an organizational plan for AlHajar ALAswad area, adjacent to Yarmouk Camp.

On October 28, the General Company for Technical Studies and Consultations, which has been tasked with preparing an organizational plan for Yarmouk Camp, has put forth a three-phase reconstruction proposal which it said takes an estimated time-span of 15 years.

The first phase of the plan is devoted to reconstructing areas with the highest damage rate; the second phase seeks to rehabilitate moderately-damaged areas; the third covers zones which have been lightly damaged.

Palestinian lawyer Wael Maw'ed said no official decision has been issued by the Syrian authorities over the bid, saying the proposed reconstruction mechanisms and time-span are just unacceptable.

On November 10, Member of Damascus Executive Office Samir Jazerli said the old Yarmouk Camp has a legal specificity and is directly supervised by the General Authority for Palestinian Arab Refugees. Therefore, property ownership in the camp can only be proved by means of official documents, including a residence permit or a court order.

Given the above mentioned conditions, Law 10, which allows the Syrian government to designate zones for redevelopment, cannot be put into effect, he said.

Speaking with ALIqtisadi website, ALJazerli said Yarmouk Camp is part of Damascus governorate's administrative map.

He said that people's ownership rights are protected by the law and that recent reports about the reconstruction of the camp within an estimated time-span of 15-years will not affect families' return to their homes.

The Syrian official also stated that Yarmouk Camp is uninhabitable due to the damage wrought by violent shootouts on buildings and on the infrastructure, particularly power, water, and sanitation networks.

On December 5, Acting Commissioner-General of the United Nations Relief and Works Agency for Palestine Refugees in the Near East (UNRWA), Christian Saunders, paid a visit to Sabina camp in Rif Damshq, previously an embattled area to the south of Damascus to which Palestine refugees have returned.

Saunders toured UNRWA installations and met with representatives of the UNRWA school parliament.

"Dream big, keep your dreams, and work hard to realize your dreams," Saunders said while addressing the students.

Saunders visited Syria between 3 and 6 December, during which time he met with Palestine refugees and UNRWA staff and held meetings with a number of Syrian government officials.

Sometime earlier, he also travelled to Yarmouk, once a bustling area home to some 160,000 Palestine refugees and the enduring symbol of the Palestine refugee diaspora. The camp has been the scene of fierce clashes and now lies in ruins. Seventy-five per cent of the Agency's 23 premises, including 16 schools, need to be completely rebuilt and all three of the Agency's health centers in Yarmouk are completely destroyed.



INITIATIVES, ACTIVITIES

On February 4, a petition was handed over by the residents to Damascus governor Adel Anwar AlAlabi, urging local authorities to smooth the return of displaced families to their homes.

The 200-page petition, signed by 3,000 residents of Yarmouk Camp, called on the Syrian authorities to work on facilitating their immediate return to their homes and to rehabilitate destroyed infrastructure and facilities.

The residents expressed their readiness for voluntary work and to actively take part in reconstruction works.

The Association of Palestinian Engineers in Syria launched an initiative to help reconstruct Yarmouk Camp for Palestinian refugees, in Damascus.

In a statement, the Association said it has begun writing down names of engineers who have expressed their willingness to take part in volunteer drives seeking to rehabilitate buildings, vital facilities, and infrastructure in Yarmouk Camp.

On January 12, Palestinian activists strongly denounced a festival held by the Popular Front – General Command in the Arab-Palestinian Club in Yarmouk to pay tribute to families of Palestinians who have been killed or wounded while fighting alongside the Syrian government forces during the eight-year warfare.

The activists said the festival comes at a time when over 1,700 Palestinians are enduring mysterious fates in Syrian state jails, including children, women, and elderly refugees.

They added that dozens of displaced families have been banned from returning to their homes in such refugee camps as Yarmouk and Daraa, where scores of Palestinians were also killed.

The activists urged the Palestine Liberation Organization and Palestinian factions to make serious efforts and rally around the Palestinians refugees who have been torn away from the nourishment of home and family.

On May 5, leisure activities were held by volunteers from the Palestinian Red Crescent Society to entertain 30 children in ALJa'ouna Street, in Yarmouk Camp.

The warfare in Syria has had traumatic fallouts on Palestinian refugee children in and outside of Syria. Post-traumatic stress disorders, mental psychosis, sleeplessness



and nightmares, eating disorders, and intense fear have all been reported among Palestinian children from Syria.



On May 5, activists embarked on a so-called “I’ll Be Back Home” campaign in an attempt to urge concerned authorities to reconstruct Yarmouk Camp and allow displaced Palestinian families to safely return to their homes.

The campaigners called on the concerned families to gather at AlBashir and AlMajed mosque, near Yarmouk Camp, pending the creation of civil committees to follow up on the return file.

The activists spoke out against the apathy maintained by the concerned institutions regarding civilians’ appeals to return to their homes, saying instead of rehabilitating destroyed facilities the camp has been subjected to property-theft.

On May 22, a banquet held by the Palestine Liberation Organization (PLO) in Yarmouk Camp for Palestinian refugees sparked widespread anger among displaced families and activists.

An activist said: “How come that the PLO managed to get a permission from Syrian authorities to hold a banquet while it failed to receive green-light for the return of displaced families to the camp?”

The banquet was held in Haifa Street in Yarmouk. Families taking shelter in the area along with PLO officials were in attendance.

Addressing the residents, Palestine Ambassador Anwar Abdul Hadi said the event bodes well and is a promising sign that families will gain access to their homes soon.

On August 11, representatives of the Palestine Liberation Organization and other Palestinian factions paid a visit to the new AlShuhadaa Cemetery in Yarmouk Camp for Palestinian refugees, in Damascus.



2 KHAN ESHIEH CAMP

Khan Eshieh Camp, the third largest Palestinian refugee camps recognized by the Syrian government, was founded in 1948, near Khan Eshieh village. It is located some 27 kilometers away from southwestern Damascus and covers an overall area of 690 square meters. According to UNRWA estimates for 2011, some 19,000 refugees have registered with the UN refugee agency.

LIVING CONDITIONS

Palestinian families taking refuge in Khan Eshieh camp, in Rif Dimashq, have been struggling with squalid humanitarian conditions inflicted by the eight-year long warfare.

As in other refugee camps across Syria, the cost of living index in Khan Eshieh is several times higher than the pre-war period. Prices have seen a 1000% leap, overburdening even further the cash-stripped families.

Unemployment rates have also seen an unprecedented increase among Khan Eshieh residents, resulting in growing poverty rates.

Over recent years, most of the displaced Palestinian families have depended on aids sporadically given by UNRWA and other charities to pay rental fees and purchase much-needed items.



Civilians have also been living in a perpetual fear of arrest and prosecution as several residents have been summoned to questioned, others were sent to jail, and several others blackmailed or threatened.

According to UN data, Khan Eshieh camp lies beside the ancient ruins of Khan Eshieh, 27km south-west of Damascus. The Khan historically served as an overnight shelter for trade caravans on the road between Damascus and the southwest, and in 1948, it provided shelter for the first refugees from Palestine. The camp was established in 1949 on an area of 0.69 square kilometers with refugees originally from the northern part of Palestine.

Some of the camp's buildings and infrastructure were severely affected including some UNRWA installations; two UNRWA schools and the community centre were almost razed to the ground. In 2016, UNRWA was able to re-access Khan Esheih and the Agency was able to rehabilitate some of its installations. Residents have also slowly started to return, with the camp now accommodating 12,000 people.

At the same time, Residents of Khan Eshieh Camp have raised concerns over their children's safety as packs of stray dogs have been spotted in and around the camp.

The refugees appealed to the concerned authorities and NGOs to take urgent action over the spread of feral dogs in the camp, a phenomenon that has seen the day after dozens of civilians were forced out of their homes due to the deadly shelling and deported to northern Syria.

ACTIVITIES

On April 20, dozens of Palestinian refugees took to the streets of Khan Eshieh Camp, in Rif Dimashq, to protest the US President Donald Trump's biased positions and statements regarding occupied Jerusalem and the occupied Golan Heights.

The rally-goers spoke out against underway attempts to undermine Palestinians' inalienable rights, stressing their commitment to return to their homeland and establish an independent Palestinian state with Jerusalem as its eternal capital.

On January 23, the Biria primary school in Khan Eshieh Camp for Palestinian refugees honored laureate pupils who achieved good results in the academic year 2018/2019. Certificates and awards were handed over to schoolchildren. Teaching staff, NGOs, and parents were in attendance. A show and an art exhibition were held at the ceremony.

On August 24, the Institute of Language Studies celebrated the success stories of a number of Palestinian students who achieved the highest scores in literary and scientific branches as part of basic education in Khan Eshieh refugee camp, in Rif Dimashq.

Parents, activists, and representatives of political factions attended the celebration, held in AlFayhaa Hall, in Khan Eshieh refugee camp.



3

ALSABINA CAMP

Located some 14 kilometers away from southern Damascus, AlSabina Camp has been gripped with an abject situation owing to the absence of humanitarian assistance, relief aids, proper infrastructure, and vital facilities. Frequent water and power outages have made the situation far worse.

Residents of AlSabina Camp for Palestinian refugees, in Rif Dimashq, continue to speak up against the trash mounds piled up across residential alleyways and on the access roads, resulting in bad smells and the spread of life-threatening diseases and rodents.

The situation is worsened by the water crisis rocking the area amid the COVID-19 outbreak. Civilians said they are unable to wash their hands and bodies regularly, raising fears of a swift propagation of the deadly virus among the camp residents.

At the same time, civilians said they have been forced to walk for several kilometers to purchase vital items after the Syrian government suspended public transportation from and to the camp, among other areas.

The residents continue to lash out at the apathy maintained by UNRWA and the local municipality regarding their calls for urgent humanitarian assistance.

In late December, representatives of AlSabina town and its refugee camp visited on Monday the office of the Electricity Ministry in Damascus and updated Syrian officials on the frequent power outages rocking the area.

Engineer Nidhal Karmousha vowed to take the necessary steps in order to push for rehabilitating the power network in AlSabina, installing electricity meters for local homes as soon as they are available, and setting up 10 new electrical power-feeding transmission centers in and around AlSabina refugee camp at the soonest possible time.

Located some 14 kilometers away from southern Damascus, AlSabina Camp has been gripped with an abject situation owing to the absence of humanitarian assistance, relief aids, proper infrastructure, and vital facilities.

UN data indicates that the camp was established in 1948. Before the conflict in Syria, the camp was home to 22,600 Palestine refugees. It was taken over by armed opposition groups in 2013. The camp remained closed to civilians for almost four years and houses and infrastructure were damaged in the fighting. In September 2017, civilians were able to return to their homes. All UNRWA installations were in need of repairs.

The whole Palestine population in AlSabina camp suffered from displacement during the crisis and many families left the country and sought refuge in neighboring countries or fled to Europe.

During the conflict, labor opportunities have dwindled and the unemployment rate is still very high with very limited financial resources to help Palestine refugees restore their livelihoods. Like other areas in Syria, displacement, inflation, protection and security risks are among the main concerns shared by Palestine refugees and Syrians alike.

The camp is situated on an area of 0.03 square kilometers. Palestine refugees who came to Syria in 1948 first settled the camp. It also accommodates Palestine refugees who were displaced as a result of the 1967 conflict.

On April 5, hundreds of Palestinian refugees and NGO representatives took part in a march staged in AlSabina Camp, in Rif Dimashq, to mark the Palestinian Land Day and speak out against Trump's statements regarding Israel's sovereignty over the Golan Heights.

The demonstrators marched from Muadh Ibn Jabal Mosque down to UNRWA schools in the camp. Banners denouncing Trump's biased statements were lifted in the march.

A couple of weeks earlier, US President Donald Trump overturned longstanding US policy regarding the Israeli-occupied Golan Heights, announcing "it is time" for the US to "fully recognize Israel's Sovereignty" over the region.

"After 52 years it is time for the United States to fully recognize Israel's Sovereignty over the Golan Heights, which is of critical strategic and security importance to the State of Israel and Regional Stability," Trump tweeted.

The announcement handed Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu a significant foreign policy victory, less than three weeks before Israelis head to the polls to decide whether he should remain in power. The move comes just days before Netanyahu is set to join Trump at the White House and follows weeks during which Netanyahu has renewed his push for the US to recognize the Golan Heights as part of Israel.

Israel captured the Golan Heights from Syria during the Six-Day War of 1967 and formally annexed the territory in 1981. But that annexation has not been recognized by the international community, which has regarded the Golan Heights as occupied territory and Israeli settlements there as illegal under international law. The UN special envoy for Syria, Geir Pedersen, reiterated that position.

"The Security Council is very clear that the Golan is Syrian territory, and the first aspect of (Resolution) 2254 is of course the territorial integrity of Syria," he said in a news briefing in late February.

On December 6, Acting Commissioner-General of the United Nations Relief and Works Agency for Palestine Refugees in the Near East (UNRWA), Christian Saunders, paid a visit to Sabina camp in Rif Damshq, previously an embattled area to the south of Damascus to which Palestine refugees have returned.

Saunders toured UNRWA installations and met with representatives of the UNRWA school parliament.

"Dream big, keep your dreams, and work hard to realize your dreams," Saunders said while addressing the students.

Saunders visited Syria between 3 and 6 December, during which time he met with Palestine refugees and UNRWA staff and held meetings with a number of Syrian government officials.





On April 13, the General Authority for Palestinian Arab Refugees announced the launch of a civil registration office in ALSabina Camp for Palestinian refugees, in Rif Dimashq.

ALSabina Camp used to provide shelter to nearly 25, 000 Palestinian refugees, prior to the mass-deportation wave of 2013.

The office was inaugurated by Director-General of the General Authority for Palestinian Arab Refugees, Ali Mustafa.



4

ALHUSAINIYA

CAMP

Residents of AlHusainiya Camp, in Rif Dimashq, have denounced the poor infrastructure and absence of vital services in the area, saying mounds of trash have been piled up across residential alleyways.

The residents also said that they have been enduring frequent water and power blackouts along with an acute shortage in much-needed gas cylinders.

Civilians have frequently appealed to the concerned authorities to urgently intervene in order to work out the crises rocking the area and rehabilitate vital facilities. But their cries for help have often gone unheeded.

High unemployment rates and the absence of relief assistance by UNRWA and other humanitarian institutions have made survival quite difficult in the area.

Offensives launched on the camp using MIG warplanes led to the death of dozens of civilians in AlHusainiya Camp and a massive material destruction. Bloody shootouts between the opposition outfits and the Syrian government forces culminated in the latter's takeover of the camp on October 9, 2013.

The residents continue to rail against the uncontrolled use of motorcycles in the area, a phenomenon they said poses serious threats to the lives of their children.



Several horrific accidents took place due to inappropriate speed and infringement of road safety rules across residential alleyways.

On May 22, fires burst out near a UNRWA school in AlHusainiya Camp for Palestinian refugees in Rif Dimashq, resulting in heavy material damage. Firefighters and civilians rushed to the area to extinguish the fires. The reasons for the incident remain ambivalent.



5

JARAMANA CAMP

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

The residents continue to rail against poor sanitation networks and improper sewage disposal.

Palestinian refugees have also set off alarm bells over the acute water crisis, saying that, as a result of the dearth in drinking water, they have been forced to purchase expensive tanks.

The displaced families warned of the life-threatening diseases wrought by the unpleasant smells stemming from contaminated sewage poured near their refugee camp. Frequent power outage has added bad to worse.

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

UN data indicates that before the start of the conflict in 2011, there were over 18,000 Palestine refugees living in Jaramana camp. During the Syrian crisis, the number of Palestine

refugees in the camp and the surrounding area increased to 49,000 due to an influx of displaced Palestine refugees from other areas, including the camp of Yarmouk. As a result, Jaramana has become one of the most densely populated areas of Damascus. Many Palestine refugees took refuge in Jaramana because of the low rent rates.

In response, UNRWA opened three collective shelters in its schools and provided shelter to internally displaced persons (IDPs) until 2018. One of the largest UNRWA collective shelters was in al-Rama school, accommodating close to 300 Palestine refugees in both classrooms and tents in the school courtyard. In the summer of 2018, the three shelters were rehabilitated back into schools and are now in use again by UNRWA students.

UNRWA installations were not affected, but projectiles used to fall near the installations and inside Jaramana Camp. Due to the large number of IDPs in Jaramana Camp and the surrounding area, there was an increased demand on UNRWA services as the number of the refugees accessing the Agency's services in the camp almost tripled.

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

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

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

On January 1, fires broke out at the Plastic Factory near UNRWA schools in Jaramana Camp for Palestinian Refugees in Rif Dimashq as a result of fireworks played in the area. Material damage was inflicted on civilian property.

The locals appealed for an immediate response by the concerned authorities, warning of the material and human upshots of fireworks played in residential alleyways.

UNRWA was also able to repair and renovate the Nahaf School in Syria's Jaramana Camp for Palestine refugees thanks to support from the Saudi Fund for Development.

The school previously served as a collective shelter for displaced Palestinian refugees and will now welcome hundreds of students back to its halls as part of the 2019-2020 academic year, tweeted the UN refugee agency.

ABDUCTIONS

Civilians sounded alarm bells over the simmering abductions carried out in the area.

The residents said they have been blackmailed over their appeals for release and protection.

Several civilians, including children, have gone missing in Jaramana Camp. Palestinian child Zein Ahmad Taameh disappeared from AlAmeen Street in Jaramana Camp on Monday, April 1, on his way back home from Palestine School, run by UNRWA.

Three-year-old Palestinian child Teym Samer Jamil Surur, a resident of Sakhnin Street in Jaramana Camp, in Rif Dimashq, has also gone missing since April 18. His family kept appealing for information over his condition and whereabouts.

In a video circulated on social media network Facebook, a child taking shelter in Jaramana Camp showed how she was subjected to an abduction attempt by an anonymous gang. The video was removed sometime later. Instead, the girl published another video in which she gave instructions about ways to protect children from abductions.

According to AGPS data, over 300 Palestinian refugees have gone missing in war-torn Syria, mostly from Yarmouk Camp, south of Damascus.

HUMANITARIAN DRIVES

On May 5, the Community Development Center in Jaramana camp for Palestinian refugees announced the launch of sign language courses for deaf and dumb people who yearn for better communication and social integration. Concerned learners will be reportedly transferred by UNRWA to Damascus Society for the Deaf.



A member of the Community Development Center said UNRWA will cover all expenses of the projected course for those aged 14 and above.

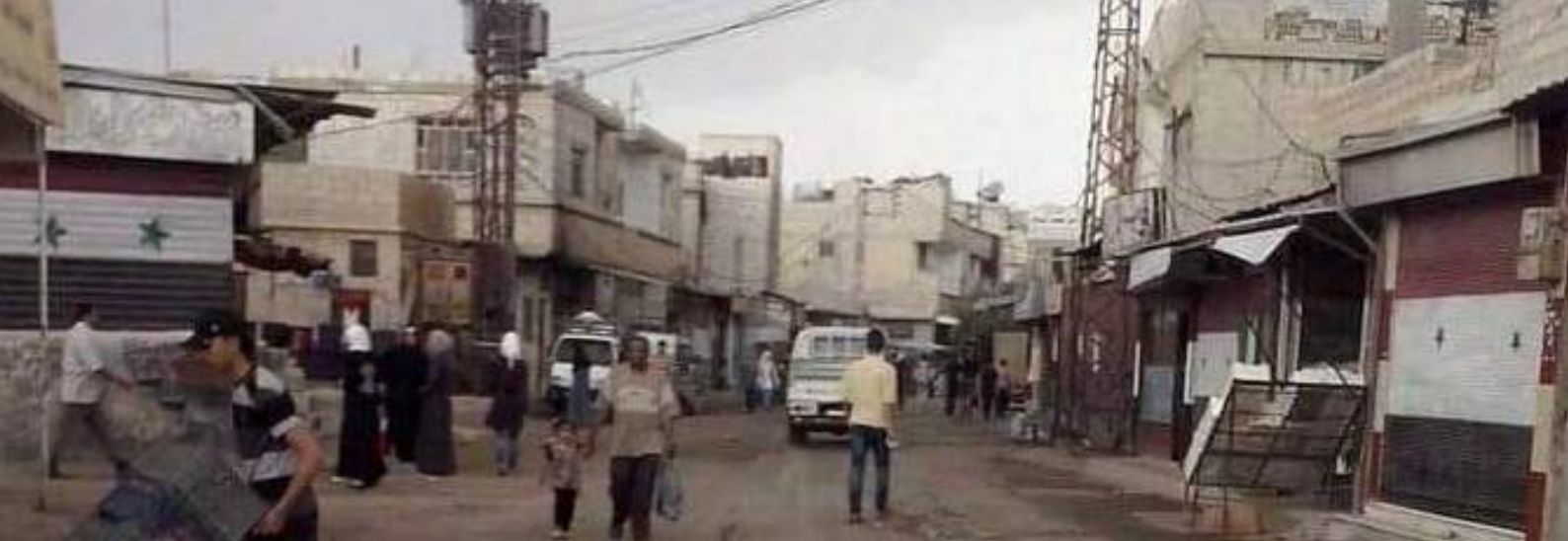
On July 11, psychological support activities were held by the Community Development Center in Jaramana refugee camp for elderly people and persons with special needs.

The four-day event makes part of ongoing attempts to help the Palestinian refugee community in and from Syria overcome the traumatic upshots of the bloody warfare and deadly violence.



Post-traumatic stress disorders, mental psychosis, sleeplessness and nightmares, eating disorders, and intense fear have all been among the symptoms with which Palestinian refugees, particularly children, have been diagnosed after they lost their homes, have had their parents/relatives killed in the war, underwent limb amputation, and witnessed daily scenes of death, dispossession, and destruction.

*Palestinian refugee Abdul Salam Halawa, from Jaramana Camp, took part in the 2019 AFC Asian Cup as a referee. He supervised a match between a Cambodian club and another from Myanmar. The competition was launched a few days earlier in the capital city of Cambodia Phnom Penh. Abdul Salam Halawa received the international badge for Palestine following cooperation between the Syrian and Palestinian sports federations.



6

KHAN DANNUN CAMP

Living conditions in Khan Dannun camp for Palestinian refugees, in Rif Dimashq, sharply deteriorated in 2019 due to the lack of financial resources and high unemployment rates wrought by the raging warfare. A transportation crisis has made life difficult in the camp.

Upon more than once occasion, civilians have railed against the mounds of trash and debris piled up in civilian neighborhoods and around the main access roads to the camp, resulting in bad smells and the spread of life-threatening diseases and rodents.

A state of panic also overwhelmed civilians in Khan Dannun camp after a girl was kidnapped by anonymous gunmen on August 17. The residents attempted to chase down a vehicle to which the kidnapped girl was dragged by anonymous gangsters. Members of Liwaa AlQuds brigade, affiliated with the Syrian government, rounded up the gangsters, who later confessed to the abduction.

Water supplies have also been repeatedly cut off across residential neighborhoods in Khan Dannun, forcing civilians to buy drinking water from privately-owned tanks at steep prices.

At the same time, On July 16, three brothers sheltered in Khan Dannun Camp survived a high-speed motorcycle accident and were rushed to a local hospital for urgent treatment. The motorcyclist fled the scene.

Over recent years, residents of Khan Dannun Camp for Palestinian refugees kept railing against the uncontrolled use of motorcycles in the area, a phenomenon they

said poses serious threats to the lives of their children.

Several horrific accidents took place due to inappropriate speed and infringement of road safety rules across residential alleyways.

The residents held pro-government forces accountable for the security mayhem rocking the area and called for impeaching those responsible.

CULTURAL EVENTS

A so-called Second Educational Forum was held in Khan Dannun Camp for Palestinian refugees on August 25, at the invitation of the Palestinian Cultural Forum in Khan Dannun.

The event was co-sponsored by the General Authority for Palestinian Arab Refugees, in cooperation with the United Nations Relief and Works Agency for Palestine Refugees in the Near East (UNRWA).

The event underscored the education services in Khan Dannun Camp and the lacunas of UNRWA's curricula.

A group of students and volunteers for summer tutorials at Jericho School along with the director of the General Authority for Palestinian Arab Refugees, Ali Mustafa, were honored at the event.

HEALTHCARE

Residents of Khan Dannun Camp, in Rif Dimashq, have spoken out against the mistreatment they have been subjected to by staff members at a UNRWA-run clinic in the camp.

Local activists urged the UN refugee agency, the General Authority for Palestinian Arab Refugees, and all other concerned authorities to take immediate action in response to the mistreatment they have been facing at the UNRWA clinic.

A number of residents leveled heavy criticism at the dentist working in the clinic, saying he has been mistreating patients showing up at the facility.

In a statement emailed to AGPS, the residents slammed the medical staff at the clinic for their apathy regarding the appeals of a number of patients for much-needed treatment and medicines, along with psychological support.



7

ALSAYEDA ZEINAB CAMP

ALSayeda Zeinab Camp, held by the Syrian government forces and their affiliated popular committees, has been gripped with dire socio-economic conditions as a result of the high rates of unemployment. Scores of civilians have fled the camp while others have been forced to join pro-government battalions.

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

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

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

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

At the same time, a transportation crisis has been rocking

AlSayeda Zeinab Camp since the outburst of the Syrian warfare. Civilians' access out of and into the area has almost been blocked. Workers and students have had difficulties getting to their workplaces and destinations.

The 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 quite unpredictably. Others have found no other way-out than to walk for dozens of kilometers in order to reach their destinations.

Located some 12 kilometers away from Damascus, the camp has been gripped with an abject socio-economic condition owing to the absence of humanitarian assistance, relief aids, proper infrastructure, and vital facilities.

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

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

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

HEALTHCARE

In 2019, over 25 Palestinian refugees have been diagnosed with cancer in AlSayeda Zeinab Camp, in Rif Dimashq.

On February 9, a 40-year-old Palestinian refugee succumbed to a lung cancer that infected his body. Other cancer-stricken patients have been left without treatment.

The propagation of deadly tumors has been attributed to the pollution overwhelming war-torn Syria and the spread of war remnants and toxic contaminants across residential neighborhoods. The poor hygiene has made Palestinian refugee camps a fertile ground for life-threatening germs and diseases.

Sick Palestinian refugees in Syria have faced enormous difficulties trying to secure treatment fees in an area that has been struck by poverty and unemployment.

On March 10, a free medical day was staged by the Popular Action Commission for the residents of ALSayed Zeinab Camp for Palestinian refugees, in Rif Dimashq.

A seminar held by medics as part of the event raised civilians' awareness about healthy food habits.

Four medical specialists took part in the event and provided bone pain check-ups and diabetes diagnoses. Patients received free medicines. Dr. Mohamed Sharkawi delivered a presentation about healthy nutrition and held a workshop to sensitize children to the dangers of ready-made food.



On May 13, UNRWA program announced the launch of a free training course for Palestinian refugees with disabilities in ALSayed Zeinab camp.



8

ALRAMADAN CAMP

Residents of AlRamadan Camp for Palestinian refugees, southeast of Syria, continue to launch cries for help over the socio-economic crises they have been enduring as a result of poverty, unemployment, the acute dearth in vital items, including fuel, and the swift price leap.

The residents continue to appeal to all concerned authorities, particularly UNRWA, to take urgent action in response to the dire humanitarian situation they have been struggling with.

Founded in the 1950s following efforts made by UNRWA to that end, AlRamdan Camp for Palestinian refugees is located some 50 kilometers away from southeastern Damascus. The nearest city to the camp—AlDameer city—is located at a distance of nine kilometers.

Civilians have called on the concerned authorities to increase water supplies allotted to the area, where a severe water dearth continues to mar civilians' life.

The residents continue to appeal to UNRWA and the General Authority for Palestinian Refugees to take urgent action in response to the crisis, saying they have been forced to purchase water from mobile tanks at steep prices due to the frequent water blackouts and poor water pressure.



9

HANDARAT

CAMP

Throughout 2019, activists and civilians sheltered in Handarat Camp, in Aleppo, kept appealing to all concerned parties to work on reconstructing civilian homes and facilities that have been reduced to rubble all the way through Syria's nine-year conflict.

Left without roofs over their heads, a number of families have been striving to reconstruct the destroyed walls of their homes in order to provide their homeless children with safer shelters.

In early November, volunteers from the Palestinian Red Crescent joined a campaign to repair power at the local school in Handarat Camp for Palestine refugees and cleanse the public park.

Palestinian refugees have also been grappling with dire conditions due to the lack of humanitarian assistance and life-saving services. The majority of families have been taking shelter in buildings rented at extremely steep costs in the poverty-stricken area. A severe water and power crisis also continues to rock the camp.

In a petition sent in February 2019, the families urged UNRWA to shell out shelter allowances, distribute food baskets, and provide vital services for the displaced families.

The residents also said most of the families have been taking shelter in buildings rented at extremely steep costs in the poverty-stricken area.

The families lashed out at UNRWA and the local authorities in the camp for turning their back on their demands, saying other areas in Aleppo have been rehabilitated, unlike Handrat Camp whose residents have been left on their own.

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

Handarat Camp (also called Ein AlTel Camp) is located to the northeast of Aleppo's Hill, overseeing the Turkey-bound traffic lanes. It stands on a rocky hill and is situated some 13 kilometers away from the city center.

According to data by the General Commission of Arab Palestinian Refugees in Syria, some 8,000 Palestinian refugees used to take shelter in Handarat Camp. Only 200 displaced families returned to the camp following the heavy onslaughts launched by the Syrian government battalions.

At the same time, hundreds of the internationally-prohibited cluster grenades have been detected in Handarat Camp due to the heavy onslaughts launched by the Syrian and Russian fighter jets on the area.

On August 13, 2019, a child called Shafiq Yaakoob died of wounds he sustained after a cluster grenade went off in the camp.

Available data from the International Committee of the Red Cross indicates that each year, large numbers of civilians are killed and injured by explosive remnants of war, such as artillery shells, mortars, grenades, bombs and rockets, left behind after an armed conflict.

For the civilians and communities in war-affected Syria, the presence of these weapons represents an ongoing threat. Many innocent civilians, including Palestinian refugees, have lost their lives and limbs by disturbing or inadvertently coming into contact with explosive remnants of war. These weapons have also hindered reconstruction and threatened economic livelihood. Houses, hospitals and schools cannot be rebuilt until such weapons are cleared.

Local communities often have no means of dealing with the problem themselves. Most do not have the technical capacity or the resources to clear explosive remnants of war safely and few have the resources needed to deal with the psychological, medical and rehabilitative needs of victims.

PROPERTY-THEFT

Property-theft and burglary targeting civilian homes have increasingly been reported in Handarat camp. Stolen materials include house furniture, ware, and power wires.

A resident said power wires have been stolen from a number of homes in Tarshiha and AlZeib neighborhoods. He held pro-government committees and AlQuds Brigade, affiliated with the Syrian government, responsible for the mayhem.

VISITS

Representatives of the Democratic Front for the Liberation of Palestine (DFLP) paid a visit, on Monday, February 18, to Handarat Camp for Palestinian refugees in Aleppo in an attempt to keep tabs on reconstruction works.

Member of the PFLP political bureau Ali Faysal, also secretary of DFLP-Lebanon region, called on UNRWA to work on rehabilitating Handarat Camp and other Palestinian refugee camps at the soonest time possible and to secure life-saving services for the displaced communities in war-torn Syria.



UNRWA delegation and director of the General Authority for Palestinian Arab Refugees paid a visit to Handarat Camp, north of Syria, on April 8, 2019, in an attempt to keep tabs on local premises and amenities.

Local activists called on the concerned bodies, most notably UNRWA, to make urgent steps so as to reconstruct their homes and rehabilitate the infrastructure, which sustained massive destruction as a result of the heavy shelling and bloody shootouts

between the Syrian government forces and opposition outfits.

Representatives of the General Authority for Palestinian Arab Refugees also showed up in Handarat Camp. The visit reportedly culminated in “important” decisions regarding the situation in the area.

Media sources quoted the delegation as stating that any attempt to force civilians to give up their homes and property in AlNeirab and Handarat refugee camps remains “illegitimate”, unless otherwise authorized by the General Authority for Palestinian Arab Refugees in accordance with the Cabinet of Ministers Resolution 1140 adopted in 1990.

In mid-2019, a delegation of the International Red Cross paid a visit to Handarat Camp for Palestinian refugees in Aleppo in an attempt to follow up on the situation endured by civilians in the area.

The delegation pledged to keep up efforts in order to secure drinking water and increase the number of water tanks.



Sometime earlier, the International Committee of the Red Cross delivered 10 water tanks in Handarat Camp, in response to the increase in the number of returnees.

On November 20, a delegation of the health directorate in Aleppo paid a visit to Handarat camp in order to inspect the progress of healthcare services in the area and follow up on Leishmania-stricken cases. Leishmania is a mosquito-borne disease mainly found in areas associated with poor waste disposal.



PROTESTS

Dozens of Palestinian refugees sheltered in Handarat Camp in Aleppo took to the street in response to the US President Donald Trump's recognition of Israel's sovereignty over the occupied Golan Heights.

Israel captured the Golan Heights from Syria during the Six-Day War of 1967 and formally annexed the territory in 1981. But that annexation has not been recognized

by the international community, which has regarded the Golan Heights as occupied territory and Israeli settlements there as illegal under international law.

The UN special envoy for Syria, Geir Pedersen, reiterated that position: "The Security Council is very clear that the Golan is Syrian territory, and the first aspect of (Resolution) 2254 is of course the territorial integrity of Syria," he said in a news briefing in late February.



10

ALNEIRAB

CAMP

AlNeirab camp is the largest official camp in Syria and is 13km east of the city of Aleppo near the Aleppo airport.

Before the start of the conflict in Syria, Neirab camp was home to more than 20,000 Palestine refugees. Like other Palestine refugee camps in Syria, a large number of families, young people, have travelled abroad. The camp has also seen a large influx of more than 900 families from the nearby Ein el Tal camp, which has been mostly destroyed.

With nearly 18,000 registered refugees, Neirab camp is among the most densely populated camps. The camp suffers from overcrowding and a lack of privacy. Like other areas in Syria, displacement, unemployment, inflation, protection and security risks are among the main concerns shared by Palestine refugees and Syrians alike.

The location of the camp near the military airport means the area was exposed to hazards including mortars and shelling between the start of 2013 and the end of 2018.

Poor shelters and poor construction of the barracks result in scorching temperatures in summer and freezing conditions in winter. Water leakage and rodent infestation also remain a problem for the refugees.



In 2019, AGPS documented an increase in the number of Palestinian migrants from AlNeirab refugee camp, in Aleppo.

The phenomenon has been attributed to forced military conscription with the Syrian government army, high unemployment rates, price leap, and lack of access to the labor market.

The crackdowns perpetrated by Liwaa AlQuds brigade, affiliated with the Syrian government, also lies behind the waves of mass exodus from the area.

During the second half of 2019, more than 150 youths fled the camp, in a journey that costs up to US\$1,000 per every single refugee.

Several migrants have been intensively questioned or/and detained at the Syrian-Turkish borders.

According to statistics conducted by UNRWA in 2012, some 10,358 Palestinian refugees (2,557 families) sought shelter in Aleppo and its northern suburbs. 20,978 refugees (4,893 families) took shelter in Aleppo's AlNeirab Camp and 6,359 (1,410 families) in Handarat Camp.

Recently, several refugee families have made their way from the camp to Turkey, in an attempt to reach Greek seashores, before getting to safety to a European country.

DEADLY ATTACKS

On May 14, as families gathered to break their fasts for the Ramadan Iftar meal, several rockets hit the densely populated Neirab camp for Palestine refugees in Aleppo, killing at least ten civilians and wounding more than thirty. Among those killed were four children, the youngest just six years old. A number of the injured remain in critical condition.

The ongoing hostilities around the Neirab camp and the ensuing deteriorating security situation have forced the United Nations Relief and Works Agency for Palestine Refugees in the Near East (UNRWA) to suspend the six schools that it runs within the camp – impacting more than 3,000 children. Funerals took place throughout the night of Tuesday, and shops and services were closed on Wednesday in mourning.

While UNRWA opened its schools in Neirab camp sometime later, it did so with the sad knowledge that three of its students will not be joining the final preparations for



the end-of-year exams. The victims were identified as: 10-year-old Amal Faez Sakhnini, six-year-old Yousef Mohamed Abu Harash, Mohamed Wald Dahoudi, his eight-year-old son Walid, Massa Mohamed Dahoudi (aged 3), Ahmad Farooq Khatib (born in 1982), Fatma ALKhatib, 65, Mahmoud ALSaadi, 70, and Ahmad Fathi Abu Hashem.

A number of injuries were reported. The list includes Baraa Khaled ALKhatib, 10, Jamal Fayez Sakhnin, 8, Ibrahim Mohamed Abu Harash, 8, Sara Mohamed ALKhatib, 11, Zahraa ALKhatib, 10, Mohamed Abdou Sharfou (born in 1971), and Ayman Mohamed Shababou, 37.

UNRWA condemned the killing and wounding of all civilians, including Palestine refugees and calls on all parties to the conflict to abide by their obligations under international humanitarian law, namely in taking all precautionary measures to ensure the protection of civilians during hostilities.

The dramatic escalation in hostilities in northwestern Syria leaves UNRWA concerned for an estimated 10–20,000 Palestine refugees who are displaced in that area. We join calls by other humanitarian actors in Syria for an end to the terrible suffering of civilians.

On May 14, Iranian forces stationed in Brigade 80 near Aleppo airport “accidentally” bombed Neirab camp for Palestinian refugees killing and injuring Palestinian civilians, media sources close to the Syrian regime and its affiliated group Liwa al-Quds reported.



Sources added that investigation revealed that members of the Iranian forces in the military brigade made a mistake in missile guidance system, causing the missile to miss its trajectory and land in the camp.

A delegation from the “Friends of Iran Forces” headed to Neirab camp on the same week to examine the damage caused by the bombing, the sources continued, noting that the regime-affiliated Liwa al-Quds group confirmed that perpetrators will be punished as to ensure this incident never happens again.

FIRES

Wildfires broke out **on Friday, May 23**, in a fuel store in AlNeirab Camp for Palestinian refugees in Aleppo, injuring at least 17 persons who rushed to the scene to put out the fires. They were evacuated to AlRazi Hospital for treatment.

Reporting from the field, an AGPS correspondent identified the wounded civilians as: Samir Haythem Hasan, Mohamed Mahmoud Bader, Abdul Raouf Jamal, Zuheir Mohamed Hamidi, Ayham Mohamed Abd Raboh, Zaki Husam Arar, Mohamed Ibrahim Ibrahim, Mohamed Mer'i Miaari, Assaad Anwar Abu Hashem, Omran Ibrahim AlDerbi, Mohamed Jamal AlSafadi, Fathullah Kamel AlKhatib, Fakhri Mer'i Miaari, Ahmed Amin Shalabi, Kamel Emad AlKhatib, Mohamed Tareq Shalabi, and Mahmoud Shahin.

On May 24, 2019, at least seven persons were left injured in AlNeirab Camp in fires rocking a fuel store.

On June 2, fires broke out at a bakery in AlNeirab Camp for Palestinian refugees, in Aleppo. The incident was attributed to a technical error in fuel-transfer to the furnace. Heavy material damage was reported.

On June 6, fires burst out in the western plains of AlNeirab Camp for Palestinian refugees, in Aleppo, in the third such incident in two weeks. The residents rushed to the scene to put out the fires, which resulted in heavy material damage.

UNCONTROLLED WEAPON POSSESSION

The unrestrained flow of arms among the pro-government militias in AlNeirab Camp, in Aleppo, also marred civilians' lives.

On January 6, five people, including a child from AlMesri family, were left wounded in shootouts rocking AlNeirab Camp.

In a letter emailed to AGPS, a resident attributed the simmering tension to the free access to weapons by Liwaa AlQuds militias, affiliated with the Syrian government.

The residents called on the concerned authorities to urgently work on disarming the camp and protecting vulnerable civilians.

They held Liwaa AlQuds militias accountable for terrorizing civilians and children in the area.



At least 10 children were also injured in their eyes in AlNeirab refugee camp, in Aleppo, due to factory-produced toy guns and firecrackers used by children during Eid. They sustained serious sight disorders and risk to undergo a complete sight loss.

The parents raised serious concerns over the condition of their children, urging Liwaa AlQuds militia, affiliated with the Syrian government, to ban the sale of toy weapons to children and to hold those responsible to account.

POOR SERVICES

The shelling on Neirab camp on May 14 that saw 9 Palestinian refugees killed and others injured revealed the deterioration of health situation in the camp and the severe shortages of health services, medical supplies and specialized staff

Residents were angry and upset by the inability of the medical center, which is run by Aleppo Health Directorate, to treat the injured.

One angry resident streamed a video in front of the medical center and talked about the poor quality health care the center provides and the inability of the center to treat the injured due to lack of specialist doctors and medicine, holding Aleppo's governor and the director of health responsible for this negligence and the disregard for the life of people.

He also called on camp residents to lodge a formal complaint with the concerned authorities in order to provide the center with specialist doctors and essential medicines.

The video showed a number of people carrying the injured and running to the center as there is not enough ambulances.

At the same time, students and parents at AlNeirab Camp for Palestinian refugees, in Aleppo, appealed to the concerned authorities to secure transportation means to give daily lifts to the local university due to overcrowding and unpunctuality in public means of transport.

In a letter handed over to Aleppo Governor and to the local transport manager, the residents called for the need to secure buses to transfer students to and back from their academic institutions, saying there currently exists no direct line between the camp and the university.

PROTEST MOVES

A vigil was staged on February 19 by the residents of AlNeirab Camp in Aleppo outside of UNRWA's office in AlNeirab, protesting the UN Agency's decision to hand over aids only to the poorest families in 2019. The decision implies that thousands of Palestinian families will not be included on the Agency's aid list.

The rally-goers urged the agency to reconsider its "unfair" decision and to work on securing sources of income for the displaced families. They added that UNRWA should keep up its services for Palestine refugees, dubbing the Agency a living witness of the Palestinian tragedy.

ACTIVITIES

On July 13, 2019, The General Union of Palestinian Teachers paid tribute to a plethora of Palestinian instructors in Aleppo.

On March 27, hundreds of Palestinian refugees took to the streets of AlNeirab Camp in Aleppo to speak up against Israeli aggressions on the blockaded Gaza Strip and in protest at the US President Donald Trump's recognition of Israel's sovereignty over the occupied Golan Heights.

The marchers chanted slogans expressing solidarity with the embattled coastal enclave of Gaza and condemning the Israeli onslaughts targeting civilians and populated homes in the blockaded Strip.

The protesters called on all concerned institutions to immediately step in and work on lifting the crippling Israeli siege on Gaza.

On April 17, a rally was staged by the residents of in AlNeirab Camp for Palestinian refugees, in Aleppo, in solidarity with Palestinian detainees in Israeli occupation jails.

The rally-goers spoke up for the prisoners' cause and called on the international community to take up its duties as regards thousands of Palestinians brutally tortured in Israeli jails, in violation of the Third Geneva Convention, which protects prisoners of war, defines their rights, and sets out detailed rules for their treatment and release.

On May 31, a march was held by the residents of AlNeirab Camp for Palestinian refugees in Aleppo on the occasion of the International Quds Day.

The marchers voiced their unyielding back-up of the Palestinian resistance until every single inch of the occupied Palestinian territories is liberated from Israeli grips and the



refugees return to their homeland.

The Quds Day has been observed by several pro-Palestine communities worldwide in an attempt to speak out against the Israeli crimes against the Palestinian people and denounce schemes to take over Jerusalem and Palestinian land.

On June 22, Palestinian factions and civil society representatives gathered at a workshop staged in AlNeirab Camp for Palestinian refugees to speak up against the US President Donald Trump's "Mideast peace deal", known as the "deal of the century", and the White House-led economic workshop in Bahrain.

The speakers stressed Palestinians' firm rebuff of the "deal of the century" and boycott of the Bahrain-hosted workshop, calling for serious steps to thwart the US-led anti-Palestine conspiracy and the notorious Oslo accord.

The US-led workshop, which was held in Bahrain's capital, Manama, on June 25-26, has drawn criticism from the Palestinians who said US President Donald Trump's peace plan was heavily weighted in favor of Israel and quashed their aspirations for statehood in the occupied West Bank and Gaza Strip.

INITIATIVES AND AWARDS

Members of Haytham Melhem Club, from AlNeirab Camp for Palestinian refugees, won 11 medals as part of Aleppo's Karate Championship held on April 12 and 13 in AlAssad Sports Arena, the 2nd largest indoor sports hall in Aleppo.



A group of Palestinian women in AlNeirab Camap in Aleppo launched a so-called "dafa" (warmath) campaign in an attempt to make woolen winter clothes for children and teenagers in Handarat area.

Winter garments were handed over to children and teens in Handarat as part of the campaign, which has been ongoing for the third consecutive week. Sticky notes comprising wishes for a warm winter have also been distributed.



The initiative saw the day following a training course in knitting staged by Umniyah Project in AlNeirab Camp, in partnership with the Palestine Red Crescent Society and the United Nations Children's Fund (UNICEF) in Aleppo.

On February 4, a smart bus stop was installed by civil society representatives from the so-called Umniyah Project, in partnership with the Palestinian Red Crescent Society, and UNICEF.



Volunteer students installed lighting kit and USB devices to charge mobile phones at the new stop and cleaned the environs of the nearby school.

In mid-December, representatives of the United Nations Population Fund (UNFPA) showed up in AlNeirab camp for Palestinian refugees, in Aleppo.

The UN delegation, led by UNFPA's Fabrizia Falcione, gained a closer look at the work mechanisms of Shams Project, which has been operating for nearly nine months in an attempt to empower women in the area.

The delegation met with registered women during awareness-raising sessions and professional training courses.

25 lighting devices were distributed in 25 residential alleyways to enhance night lighting and reduce sexual harassment, as part of a 16-day campaign against gender-based violence.

A campaigner said the move came as a result of the frequent power blackouts in the area and also as part of attempts to eliminate factors of harassment particularly against women and children in abandoned areas and near schools and access roads.



11

ALAYEDEEN

CAMP – HUMS

Palestinians taking shelter in ALAyedeen Camp in Hums have been facing a deteriorating humanitarian situation as a result of the price leap, sharp shortage in fuel supplies, the frequent power blackouts, and absence of humanitarian assistance. High rates of unemployment and the security turmoil rocking the region have made the situation far more alarming.

The residents have kept denouncing the ongoing electricity blackouts across residential alleyways and buildings. In appeals emailed to AGPS, civilians said the main power feeder has gone out of operation due to the lack of maintenance works.

The residents urged UNRWA and the concerned authorities to take the necessary measures in order to rehabilitate the power network and carry out the required maintenance works.

Fires broke out on Monday, July 15, at a fast food restaurant in AlQuds street in ALAyedeen refugee camp, in Hums. Firefighters rushed to the scene to put out the fires. Material damage was reported.

UN data indicates that the camp lies within the town of Hums, 160 km north of Damascus, on an area of 0.15 square kilometers, adjacent to al-Baath University. The camp was established in 1949 following the displacement of Palestinians during the first Arab-Israeli War of 1948-49. Many of the refugees living in the camp are originally from the villages surrounding Haifa, Tiberias and Acre in northern Palestine.

Before the crisis, the camp was home to 22,000 Palestine refugees. The majority of them used to work as laborers, local civil servants and vendors. However, since the start of the conflict in 2011, the original camp population has reduced to 9,000, with many seeking refuge abroad.

The camp has remained relatively calm and stable, despite Hums city being one of the most severely affected cities by the war with several neighborhoods reduced to rubble. This has caused the camp population to increase - thousands of displaced Syrians and Palestine refugees from Hums itself, as well as other areas, have moved to the camp. Demand for UNRWA services has grown due to this influx. There are currently 13,000 Palestine refugees living in the camp, and another 2,000 in surrounding areas.

Like other areas in Syria, displacement, unemployment, inflation, protection and security risks are among the main concerns shared by Palestine refugees and Syrians alike.

VISITS

On June 2, Director of UNRWA projects in Syria, Michael Amania and Director-General of the General Authority of Palestinian Arab Refugees, Ali Mustafa, toured ALAyedeen Camp in Hums to inspect living conditions in the area.



Amania and Mustafa said efforts have been ongoing to cover UNRWA's funding crunch after the US slashed allotted funds to the refugee agency.

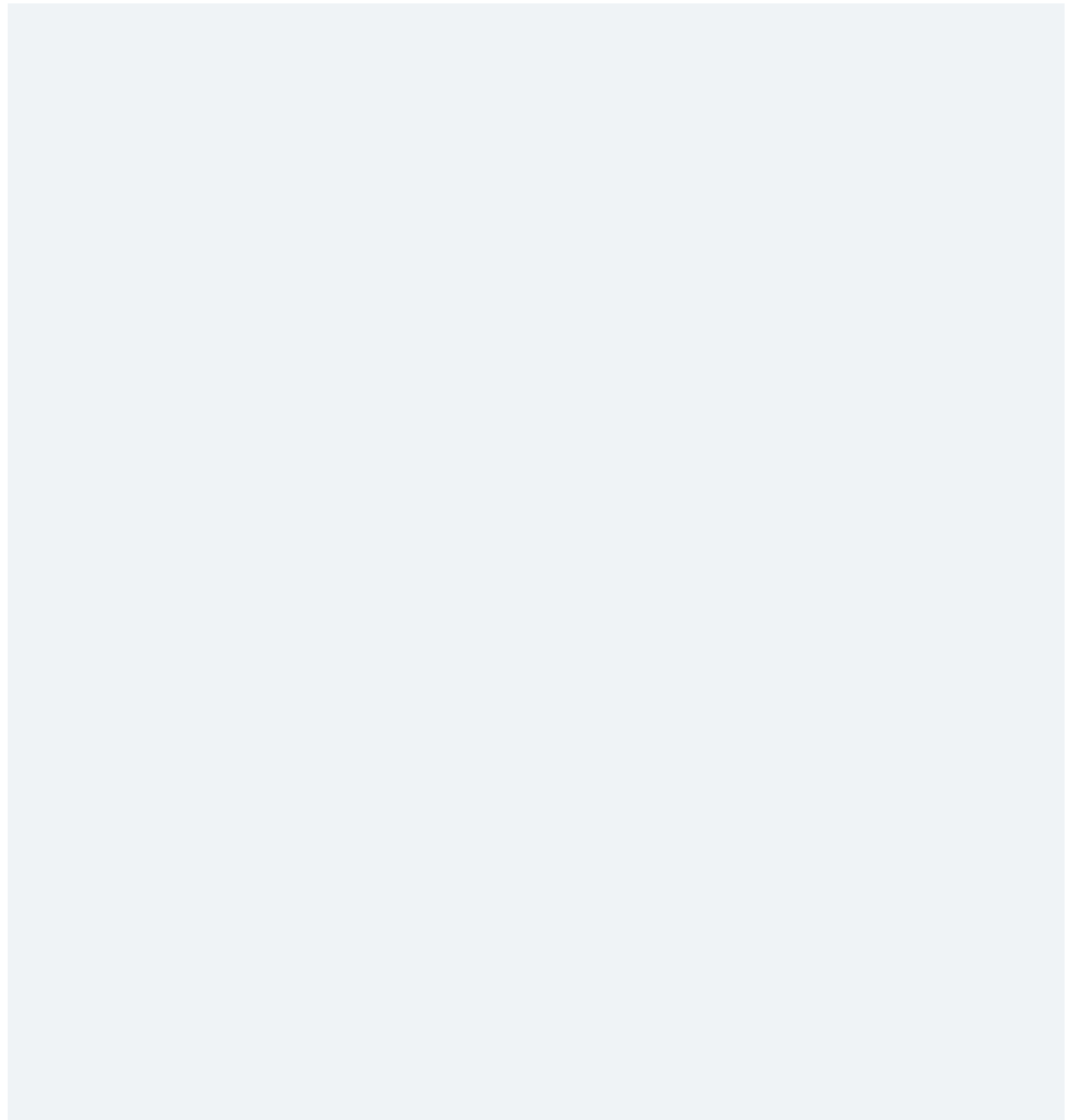
Amania stressed the need to boost hygiene in and around Palestinian refugee camps in Syria.

SUCCESS STORY

Palestinian refugee Shadi Farid Darwish, a resident of ALAyedeen Camp, in Hums, snatched the first seat in the classic bodybuilding contest held in the city.



Dozens of success stories have been achieved by Palestinian sportsmen/women, students, and artists from Syria nationwide and overseas.





12

ALAYEDEEN

CAMP – HAMA

UNRWA said that ALAyedeen camp in Hama city has attracted displaced Palestine refugees from Syria, boosting the population. The camp is currently home to between 300 and 400 displaced Palestine refugee families, and the camp population is estimated to be around 9,000 Palestine refugees.

Hama camp lies within the town of Hama, 210 km north of Damascus. The camp was established in 1950 on an area of 0.06 square kilometers overlooking the Orontes River. Most of the refugees had fled from the villages surrounding Haifa and Acre in northern Palestine.

Before the conflict in Syria, there were 8,000 Palestine refugees living in Hama camp. It is estimated that 1,000 of the original population have left the country.

Most employed refugees are wage laborers or shopkeepers, but many rely on UNRWA assistance to survive.

In 2018, UNRWA rehabilitated one of its two schools, both built in the 1950s, due to aging.

Environmental health in the camp is a serious problem and the mechanization of solid waste disposal is one of the most pressing needs. The sewerage system is antiquated and does not meet the requirements of a growing camp population.

Like other areas in Syria, displacement, unemployment, inflation, protection and security risks are among the main concerns shared by Palestine refugees and Syrians alike.

In the summer of 2019, mosquitoes and insects swamped civilian homes, forcing them to leave their doors and windows shut for fear of viral infections and viruses contaminating their children's vulnerable bodies.

The residents lashed at out at the local authorities for dragging their feet over civilians' appeals to spray insecticides, calling on the concerned parties to take an urgent action in response.



13

ALRAML

CAMP – LATAKIA

Residents of AlRaml Camp in Latakia continued to sound distress signals over the dire conditions they have been made to endure in the area owing to the poor infrastructure, absence of vital services, and price leap.

The residents said their life has been marred by the transportation crisis, frequent power/water outages, and the poor healthcare services.

Civilians urged UNRWA to assume its responsibility in this regard and slammed the Syrian government for its apathy regarding their cries for help.

Over recent years, Palestinian refugees taking shelter in AlRaml Camp have been facing abject conditions due to the lack of financial resources, food price leap, high unemployment rates, and steep rental fees.

Latakia camp is an “unofficial” camp located within the city boundaries of Latakia on the Mediterranean coast. The camp was established in 1955-1956 on an area of 0.22 square kilometers. Most of the refugees originally came from the city of Jaffa and villages in northern Palestine.

UN data indicates that before the start of conflict in 2011, the camp was home to 10,000 Palestine refugees. It is estimated

that 2,000 Palestine refugees have left the country. The camp has been largely unaffected by the hostilities, meaning that it has become a safe haven for Palestine refugees from Aleppo, Yarmouk and other places. Currently there are 14,000 Palestine refugees living in and around Latakia.

Residents of the camp are mostly civil servants or employed in shops. Fishing also provides a small income for many refugees.

Like other areas in Syria, displacement, unemployment, inflation, protection and security risks are among the main concerns shared by Palestine refugees and Syrians alike. Increasing poverty and hardship as a direct consequence of the ongoing crisis in Syria has led to an increase of negative coping mechanisms like early marriage, child labour and drug consumption. UNRWA has increased its efforts to carry out preventative and awareness-raising activities through its schools and community centres.

In 2019, tensions soared in the camp due to violent shootouts between Syrian government forces and opposition outfits. Injuries and material damage were reported.

ACTIVITIES

On April 6, a celebration was held by AlBerr charity to honor orphans and relatives of war victims in the camp.

On April 14, Leisure activities were held by the Jaffa Scouts Association for Palestinian children in Latakia Camp. Children joined hiking activities, choreographies, and games staged as part of the event. A cleansing campaign was carried out by the participants.

On October 6, a celebration was held by the Majed Abu Sharar Foundation in AlRaml Camp for Palestinian refugees, in Latakia, to honor Palestinian students who achieved the highest scores at schools located in AlRaml's southern corners.

Sometime earlier, Palestinian refugee Ahmed Malek Warda, sheltered in AlRaml camp, snatched the first rank after he got full marks in his secondary school exams.

The Syrian warfare has contributed to a sharp nosedive in the rates of access to education. Most of Syria's schools have been destroyed or put out of operation in the raging warfare, imperiling the education of the Syrians and Palestinians alike.

Concerns over abrupt abduction sweeps, torture, and enforced military conscription have led to a dramatic increase in school dropouts and tremendously affected children's access to education.

B. Palestinian Refugee Communities

- **SOUTHERN DAMASCUS:
BABILA, YALDA, BEIT
SAHEM**
- **QUDSAYA**
- **HITTIN**

1 SOUTHERN DAMASCUS

BABILA, YALDA, BEIT SAHEM

Thousands of Palestinian refugees taking shelter south of Damascus have been grappling with dire conditions due to the price leap, steep rental fees, and forced military conscription with pro-government forces.

Palestinian refugees sheltered south of Damascus have also been living in distress due to the arbitrary arrest sweeps and crackdowns perpetuated by the Syrian security forces.

Palestinian refugees have been subjected to movement crackdowns and denied free access out of and into southern Damascus towns.

The Syrian authorities ruled that in order for Palestinian refugees sheltered in the area to gain free access and of and into Damascus a formal consent should be issued to that very end.

Activists in southern Damascus said entry permissions can only be granted to the refugees if their situation is worked out. Every concerned person should carry a local residence permit, a residential lease, and a list comprising the names of all family members. A written application should be submitted to the concerned authorities.

Shortly after, a security check is conducted by the government forces to verify the provided data. The

applicant receives a written reply by the head of the Palestine Branch so as to be allowed to enter Damascus through a checkpoint in Babila.

Speaking with AGPS, an activist said his relatives who came to visit him from Jaramana Camp were denied entry to the area.

ARRESTS

In a 2019 report, Human Rights Watch said that Syrian intelligence branches were arbitrarily detaining, disappearing, and harassing people in areas retaken from anti-government groups. The abuse is taking place even when the government has entered into reconciliation agreements with the people involved.

Human Rights Watch has documented several cases of arbitrary detention and disappearance southern Damascus. The government retook these areas from anti-government groups between February and August 2018. In all cases, the people targeted – former armed and political opposition leaders, media activists, aid workers, defectors, and family members of activists and former anti-government fighters – had signed reconciliation agreements with the government.

A number of Palestinian refugees, including relief officers, have been locked up in Syrian government prisons. Several of them have got their security situation worked out after the opposition outfits withdrew from southern Damascus, though.

An abduction sweep launched on April 13, 2019 in Babila, Yalda, and Beit Sahem towns, south of Damascus, culminated in the detention of Palestinian refugees Mohamed Yasin Fatyan, Abu Khaled Amayri, Yaser Karim, Maher Nasr, Ahmad Mahahi, Abu Ameen Abdul Hafidh, Fadi Akli, and Younes Abu Ria over allegations of involvement in killing during the conflict.

A manhunt carried out on October 25 led to the arrest of four Palestinian refugees from southern Damascus.

In early October, a state of rising fear overwhelmed Palestinian young men taking refuge in southern Damascus after calls were circulated by the incumbent government for military recruitment.

According to Sawt AlAssima news site, a list of 6,000 wanted residents of southern Damascus was released by the government recruitment branch. Concerned men are required to turn themselves in by the end of October.

Over 5,000 Palestinian refugees have sought shelter in southern Damascus after they fled the embattled Yarmouk Camp due to the heavy shelling by the Syrian and Russian forces, and shortly after ISIS militias held sway over the area in 2015.



Palestinian refugees who joined the Palestine Liberation Army, among other battalions affiliated with the Syrian government, have been enduring serious crackdowns and abuses. A number of Palestinian deserters or draft dodgers have been summoned to questioning by government officers and subjected to psycho-physical torture to force confession.

A number of Palestinian recruits also said they have been forced to carry out exhausting personal chores for government officers against their will and under threat of punishment. Even those who have had their security files worked out have been involved in forced labor.

The fear of conscription, and potential punishment for ducking it or for desertion, is frequently cited by NGOs as one of the main reasons Palestine refugees give for wanting to leave Syria.

2 QUDSAYA

Palestinian families seeking refuge in Qudsaya town, in Rif Dimashq, have launched cries for help over their exacerbated situation due to the price hike, high unemployment rates, steep rental fees, and the decline in civilians' purchasing power.

The tough cordon imposed by the government forces on the main thoroughfares linking Qudsaya to Damascus city center has added bad to worse, preventing civilians from fetching much-needed bread loafs and fuel supplies.

Qudsaya is home to thousands of families who had mostly been displaced from besieged Yarmouk Camp.

A manhunt launched on Friday, September 13, resulted in the abduction of two Palestinian youths by Syrians security forces from their family homes in ALSakhriya neighborhood.

Members of the Fourth Division also arrested two Palestinian young men on their way back home from their workplaces in Qudsaya.

3 HITTIN

Hundreds of Palestinian refugees from Hittin community, in Barzah, in Damascus, have been grappling with dire conditions as a result of the Syrian warfare.

All the way through Syria's nine-year conflict, residents of Hittin have firmly rebuffed all attempts to drag them into the raging hostilities and have kept themselves at a distance from all warring parties.

In early March 2013, the community had come under heavy shelling due to its strategic proximity to flashpoints and government-held zones north of Damascus.

Hittin community is bordered from the west by the Syrian Scientific Research Centre compound, where machineguns and mortars were stationed. To the east, it is overseen by the lanes of Barzah AlBalad, which was under the control of the Free Army battalions (affiliated with the Syrian opposition).

In March 2013, tensions had reached a zenith due to the simmering sniper attacks and mortar raids carried out in the area. The community had come under a crippling siege and the warring parties had forced the inhabitants out.

In mid-April 2013, most residents fled the area. They regained access to their homes following an armistice struck between the Syrian government forces and the opposition outfits in Barzah AlBalad.

C. Palestinian Refugee in Northern Syria

Hundreds of Palestinian refugee families taking shelter in northern Syria have been enduring a tragic situation. Most of them have been crammed in poorly-equipped tents and denied their rights to vital services.

The families continue to call for the need to provide them with much-needed cash aid, medical items, and relief services, saying UNRWA has not handed them over aid on account that opposition-held zones fall outside of its map of field operations.

The displaced families called on the concerned human rights institutions to pressurize UNRWA to provide refugees with cash and in-kind aids along with the legal, physical, and humanitarian protection.

They further urged the UN agency to strike partnerships with other NGOs and deliver shelter and food allowances at the soonest possible time.

According to data by the Commission of Palestinians of Syria for Relief and Development, as many as 1,488 Palestinian families have been sheltered in the northern Syrian regions of Idlib, Efrin, and Aleppo's suburbs. The largest number of families are taking refuge in Idlib.

Some 819 Palestinian families have sought shelter in Idlib, including 226 families in the city center, 152 in Atama, 60 in Akrebat village, and 60 more in Sarmada town. 50 families are taking refuge in Maarat AlNu'man and Jericho, south of Idlib, and also in Ataa village.

EDUCATION

Displaced Palestinian families north of Syria continue to sound the alarm over their children's lack of access to education as a result of the enforced deportation they have been subjected to.

They said even the private school established in the area is made up of poorly equipped tents that are not fit to study in and risk to fall into pieces in the winter season. Neither professional training staff nor proper furniture are available at the school.

The families, who got displaced from Khan Eshieh and Yarmouk refugee camps, urged UNRWA to take its responsibility as regards the crisis and make urgent steps to smooth children's access to education in northern Syria.



In early 2019, displaced Palestinian refugees seeking shelter in northern Syria welcomed their new school year amidst many difficulties that continue to negatively affect the teaching/learning process.

The waves of forced deportation and mass displacement have led to overcrowding in schools where Palestinian refugees are taking shelter. As many as 70 students are often crammed in a single classroom, resulting in a poor academic output. The acute shortage in school furniture along with the families' inability to shell out education fees have made the situation far worse. A student is expected to pay as much as 15 thousand SYP with the start of the scholastic year.

Parents continue, meanwhile, to rummage around for better services in neighboring towns so as to make up for their children's low-level input in the poverty-stricken region. In such cases, the experience is often marred by the steep transportation

costs, which hit up to 7,000 Syrian pounds per student, a sum that far outlives the family's ability to shell it out. Other Palestinian families refuse to send their children, especially girls, to distant schools owing to the security mayhem rocking the region.

The situation is far worse in the refugee camps of Deir Ballout in Jenderes and AlBal near A'zaz. Schools established in the area are made up of poorly equipped tents that are not fit to study in and risk to fall into pieces in the winter season. Neither professional training staff nor proper furniture are available at the school. Students often find no other choice than to sit on the floor in order to attend lectures and jot down notes.

Educational premises in northern Syria fall under the direct supervision of Turkish or Syrian institutions and NGOs. In Idlib, those schools are run by the Syrian Salvation Government, which is a de facto alternative government of the Syrian Opposition, seated within Idlib Governorate.

The number of Palestinian students in northern Syria is estimated at 3,000, while the number of teachers does not exceed 30, most of whom are females.

PROTECTION CARD

On June 2, the Documentation Center of Palestinian Refugees in Northern Syria called on registered Palestinian families to show up at the center after Eid in order to receive their protection cards.

Applicants for the card should have original and complete identity documents, fill in application forms, and bring in their personal photos and IDs. Married couples should bring copies of recognized marriage contracts and of their children's birth certificates. Those whose documents went missing are required to obtain a police document testifying to the paper loss.

The Documentation Center of Palestinian Refugees North of Syria was established in order to keep record of and provide personal data on the Palestinian refugees sheltered in northern Syria. The group cooperates with the concerned authorities to that end.

The center has reportedly seen the day in response to the absence of authentic civil records and official bodies documenting the personal data (including marriage contracts, birth date, death date, number of children and newborns etc...) of the Palestinian refugees who have been taking shelter in northern Syria.

IDLIB

On August 29, dozens of Palestinian families fled Idlib's Maarat AlNu'maan and Jericho regions to Siklin, Harem, Atameh, and Ghushn AlZaytoun due to heavy shelling.

A number of Palestinian families also attempted to enter Turkey, seeking safe shelters for their children.

DEIR BALLOUT

Nearly 600 displaced families, among them 325 Palestinian families, have been struggling for survival in the poorly-equipped Deir Ballout Camp, after they were forced out of Yarmouk and southern Damascus towns.

On January 3, a civilian was pronounced dead and several others, including six children, were left wounded in violent clashes between Tahrir AlSham Commission and the National Front for Liberation in Deir Ballout Camp, north of Syria.

The list of wounded persons includes the displaced Palestinian refugees Thaer Barbar, Osama AlKusaini, and a child called Hajer.

On January 28, the Tahrir AlSham Commission (formerly known as AlNusra Front) abruptly sealed off the road leading to Atama, blocking civilians' access out of and into the area.

The Jindires thoroughfare, in Afrin, has also been closed off following a bridge collapse and a river flood rocking the region as a result of the torrential downpours.

Displaced families sheltered in the area launched distress signals and appealed to the concerned institutions to urgently step in order to help them secure food and medicines, among other life-saving items.

An acute water crisis has made the situation far worse. The refugees lashed out at the concerned authorities over their apathy regarding the acute dearth drinking water, saying local tanks are being filled in just once week, forcing civilians to line up in long queues for hours and under scorching heat to get a few liters.

The families have also been forced to purchase water from mobile tanks at 100 Syrian Pounds per 10 liters. Every family needs an average of 30 liters a day.

The families urged UNRWA, PLO, the Turkish authorities, and the concerned NGOs to live up to their responsibilities as regards dozens of hopeless families taking shelter in Deir Ballout Camp and to provide them with much-needed cash aids, medical items, and relief services.

Displaced families in Deir Ballout refugee camp in northern Syria also raised concerns about the upshots of the flooding of the Afrin river in the wake of heavy rains.

On February 3, civilians and rescue teams from AFAD charity removed the body of Palestinian refugee Ali Hasan Amer, nicknamed Abu Hasan ALDabou, from Afrin river, separating Deir Ballout and AlMuhammadiya refugee camps, in Afrin outskirts, north of Syria.

Ali, aged 19, went missing some 20 days ago. His body was found floating in the river. He was displaced from Yarmouk Camp to Deir Ballout Camp, north of Syria.

Sometime earlier, three other persons, including a child, drowned in Afrin river.

At the same time, tents were flooded with water as torrential downpours swamped Palestinian refugee camps in Afrin, north of Syria.

Pictures and videos circulated on social media showed dozens of tents being swamped by rain deluges while children appeared to be shivering of cold.

ARRESTS

Palestinian refugee Yehya Serhan was arrested by opposition forces on January 30 in Deir Ballout Camp over allegations of having ties with ISIS militias.

VIOLATIONS

In June, a number of Palestinian refugees were heavily beaten by the Turkish border guard as they attempted to cross the Syrian-Turkish borders. The refugees were pushed back to war-torn Syria.



The refugees, including women, were displaced from Yarmouk Camp, in Damascus, to Deir Ballout Camp, north of Syria. They attempted to reach the Turkish territories, fleeing the security turmoil in Syria, before they were caught by the Turkish border cops and violently beaten. They were detained for hours before being pushed back to Syria.

Following the incident, AGPS urged the Turkish authorities to cease crackdowns against Palestinian refugees from Syria and to bring to court gendarmerie officers involved in psycho-physical violations, including beating and shooting, against Palestinian and Syrian asylum-seekers.

POOR SERVICES

Displaced Palestinian families north of Syria rallied on October 31, protesting their tragic living conditions in the poorly-equipped Deir Ballout Camp.

The refugees urged UNRWA, the Palestine Liberation Organization, and the concerned NGOs to live up to their responsibilities as regards dozens of hopeless families taking shelter in Deir Ballout Camp and to provide them with much-needed cash aids, medical items, and relief services.

The camp has been a hotbed for snakes and rodents. Civilians have also been subjected to an acute dearth in much-needed food and drinking water.

Children taking refuge in the camp have been unable to pursue their studies as no educational facilities have been established in the area. The lack of healthcare facilities has made the situation far worse. Disease-stricken refugees are treated inside a poorly-equipped makeshift tent-clinic.

On July 6, paramedics at the mobile clinic in Deir Ballout Camp, north of Syria, kept record of over 50 cases of mosquito-borne diseases among civilians taking shelter in the area.

A paramedic attributed the phenomenon to the spread of mosquito bites which he said cause infections, high fever, swelling, and redness.

In a number of cases, civilians had respiratory disorders and severe pains.



The concerned persons received oral steroid adrenaline drugs and antihistamine injections. A number of cases were transferred to the hospital.

Medics in the camp called on the local council in Gindires region to spray insecticides across the area and clean out the Efrin River and wetlands.

Sometime earlier, the residents launched a cry for help over the propagation of Leishmania disease among the refugees. Coetaneous Leishmaniasis, is a type of skin disease 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.

Such types of diseases are 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 water/mosquito-borne infections.

In early September, the only school in Deir Ballout refugee camp, in Syria's northern region of Efrin, opened its doors with the start of the new academic year. The move was kick-started by volunteer activists sheltered in the camp, in cooperation with the Turkish charity AFAD.

Classrooms in Deir Ballout School are taught in makeshift tents equipped with a handful of seats and blackboards.

In 2018, some 250 students, out of 1,500 students taking refuge in Deir Ballout and the adjacent refugee camp of AlMuhammadiya, attended classes at the school. The teaching staff is made up of nine volunteer tutors, a general supervisor, and a director.

Students have been however unable to afford school furniture and winter garments needed with the advent of freezing temperatures in the area.



The displaced families have appealed to UNRWA and other concerned institutions to work on providing the school with the needed equipment and students with furniture.

PROTEST MOVES

Displaced Palestinian families north of Syria rallied on October 31, protesting their tragic living conditions in the poorly-equipped Deir Ballout Camp.

The refugees urged UNRWA, the Palestine Liberation Organization, and the concerned NGOs to live up to their responsibilities as regards dozens of hopeless families taking shelter in Deir Ballout Camp and to provide them with much-needed cash aids, medical items, and relief services.A

A few days later, displaced Palestinian refugees rallied outside of the office the Turkish Disaster and Emergency Management Presidency (AFAD) in Deir Ballout camp, north of Syria, protesting their deteriorating living conditions in the poorly-equipped facility.

The refugees called on AFAD staff members to take up their responsibilities regarding the squalid conditions they have been struggling with the poverty-stricken area.

They further urged the international human rights institutions, the Palestine Liberation Organization, and Turkish authorities to take immediate steps in response to their appeals.

On July 30, Palestinian refugee Khalil Ahmad Hawari appealed to the concerned parties and human rights institutions to broker his medical referral to Turkey due to the poor healthcare services north of Syria.

One month earlier, Hawari, displaced from Yarmouk Camp to Deir Ballout refugee camp, north of Syria, was subjected to a venomous insect sting and was transferred to an under-equipped clinic in northern Syria. Activists said medics could not provide him with the needed treatment and drugs as they failed to carry out precise medical diagnoses.

Hawari appealed to the international organizations and the Palestine Embassy in Turkey along with the UNHCR and the Conference of Palestinians in Turkey to take urgent action so as to save him before it is too late.

In September, a Palestinian mother displaced with her children from Yarmouk Camp said she has been enduring an abject humanitarian situation in Deir Ballout refugee camp, in the northern Syrian region of Efrin.

The mother said she has been taking cover with her sick husband and traumatized children in an unequipped tent.

Speaking with AGPS, Ruba Amayri said she has not find any sources of livelihood in the

area, adding that she failed to secure cash for treatment over painful chest disorders. Her husband also suffers from a Hepatitis C virus (HCV) and severe backaches after he was hit in an accident. The husband received treatment at a hospital in Antakya before he returned to Syria to live with his family.

Ruba's four kids, two among whom are enrolled at Deir Ballout's poorly-equipped school, have been going through difficult moments due to the traumatic fallouts of poverty and insecurity in the area.

The mother said she does not have cash needed to buy bread loafs for her children every day, adding that neither power nor sufficient drinking water are available in the camp.

On March 23, dozens of displaced Palestinian refugees took to the street in Deir Ballout Camp north of Syria, protesting the statements made by the U.S. President Donald Trump, in which he said that it is time for US to recognize Israel's Sovereignty over the Golan Heights.

Civilians displaced from the Golan Heights and taking shelter in the nearby AlMuhammadiya refugee camp also joined the protests.

President Donald Trump overturned longstanding US policy regarding the Israeli-occupied Golan Heights, announcing "it is time" for the US to "fully recognize Israel's Sovereignty" over the region.

Israel captured the Golan Heights from Syria during the Six-Day War of 1967 and formally annexed the territory in 1981. But that annexation has not been recognized by the international community, which has regarded the Golan Heights as occupied territory and Israeli settlements there as illegal under international law.

On June 26, Palestinian refugees displaced from Yarmouk Camp, Khan Eshieh, and southern Damascus to northern Syria took to the streets of AlSadaka, Deir Ballout, AlMuhammadiya, and ALJazira refugee camps on Wednesday, protesting the US President Donald Trump's "Mideast peace deal", known as the "deal of the century", and the White House-led economic workshop in Bahrain.

The refugees stressed Palestinians' commitment to their right of return to their motherland and lifted banners condemning the US-Israeli attempts to wipe out Palestinians' land and rights.

ALMUHAMMADIYA

Some 50 families displaced from Yarmouk Camp and southern Damascus have been struggling for survival in the impoverished AlMuhammadiya refugee camp, amid a striking apathy by the Palestinian Authority, Palestinian factions, and UNRWA, among other concerned bodies.

In early February, a committee to follow up on the conditions of displaced Palestinian refugees in AlMuhammadiya Camp, north of Syria, was formed by Palestinian activists.

The committee said in its founding statement that it saw the day as a result of the tragic situation endured by the displaced Palestinian families north of Syria, which it said is a reminder of the Palestinian Nakba (catastrophe).

On April 3, fires broke out in AlMuhammadiya refugee camp, southwest of Afrin city, north of Syria. A refugee tent was burned down in the incident. Other tents sustained damage.



On March 17, dozens of families taking shelter in Deir Ballout and AlMuhammadiya refugee camps, north of Syria, joined a vigil staged in solidarity with the victims of New Zealand's Friday mosque attack, which took away the lives of at least 50 Muslim worshipers and left dozens of others wounded.

The rally-goers condemned the terrorist attacks and expressed their heartfelt sympathy with the casualties' families, wishing a swift recovery to the injured.

"Such a barbaric act has no religion. This is terrorism in its most horrific faces. The crime stands in sharp contrast to all human rights ethics advocated by the West", said one of the demonstrators.

Australia-born Brenton Tarrant, 28, accused of carrying out attacks on two mosques in Christchurch that resulted in the deaths of at least 50 people, including children, was charged with murder as he appeared in a district court.

Tarrant, described by Australia's Prime Minister Scott Morrison as an "extremist, right-wing, violent terrorist", expressed admiration for other violent white nationalists and his intention to "create an atmosphere of fear" and to "incite violence" against Muslims.



ALSADAKA CAMP

Palestinian families who were displaced from AlShabiba Camp, in l'zaz region, to AlSadaka Camp, west of AlBal village, in Aleppo's northern town of Suran, have sounded distress signals over the dire humanitarian conditions in the area due to the absence of vital services and relief assistance.

A refugee said that upon their arrival, the families failed to secure food and power, adding that there are no groceries in the area. The refugees received only a blanket each.

The displaced families held the administration of AlShabiba Camp responsible for the forcible transfer and accused it of corruption and mistreatment.

On April 22, 2019, the local council in l'zaz city, in Aleppo's northern outskirts, transferred, in partnership with the Turkish charity AFAD, some 80 Syrian and Palestinian families, who were displaced from southern Damascus, from AlShabiba Camp to AlBal Camp, north of Suran city.



The families said they appealed to the administration and the concerned authorities to delay their transfer pending the end of the school year.

However, none of their appeals have been taken into consideration. The administration reportedly threatened to force out all those who refuse to yield in to the decision and to take away all of their personal belongings.

Located north of Suran city, in the northern countryside of Aleppo, AlBal Camp was established in April 2018 to give shelter to families displaced from Eastern ALGhouta. It is home to nearly 600 makeshift tents funded by AFAD charity and the Turkish Red Crescent.

INITIATIVES

On July 31, a group of volunteers announced their intent to deliver free education courses in ALSadaka refugee camp, housing displaced Palestinian and Syrian families.

A displaced woman called Umm ALAbd said the majority of children in the camp have been denied access to schools and academic institutions to pursue their studies ever since they were transferred from ALShabiba refugee camp to l'zaz city, some three months earlier.

Umm ALAbd said the initiative aims at providing courses to teach children how to read, write, recite Koran, paint, and play sports, among other skills.

ALJAZEERA CAMP

Some 30 Palestinian families displaced from Yarmouk Camp, ALTadhamun neighborhood, and AlGhouta, in Damascus, continue to sound distress signals over the dire humanitarian situation they have been enduring in AlJazeera Camp, in Atama, in Idlib, near the Turkish borders.

The situation has been characterized by an acute dearth in financial resources, relief aid, and vital services. The residents said no initiatives have been launched by the Palestinian Authority and UNRWA, among other concerned institutions, to assuage the crisis.

The displaced families lashed out at UNRWA over its apathy regarding their appeals for much-needed financial and in-kind aid, saying they have been unrecognized by the UN agency despite the fact they own a white registration card.

The families called on the international community to pressurize UNRWA to live up to its mandate and work on providing the refugees' with the legal, moral, and physical protection which they are quite urgently in need of.

I'ZAZ

Some 150 Palestinian families have been taking shelter in and around I'zaz town, after they were displaced from Yarmouk Camp and southern Damascus zones.

The residents continue to speak up against the dramatic spread of rodents, particularly rats, in the area. The refugees said that they got bitten by rats all over their vulnerable bodies and that deep scars figure on their limbs.

Activist Ammar al-Qudusi, also member of the Association of Displaced Palestinians, said a child was bitten by a rat in his lower lip, adding that at least 13 more persons, among them a two-month toddler, suffered rat bites.

He slammed local authorities for their apathy regarding the issue, saying the use of arsenic poisoning by the camp administration to kill rats has gone fruitless.

The residents raised concerns over the safety of their children owing to the propagation of lethal infections and fever, among other illnesses caused by rat bites.

The refugees urged all concerned authorities to immediately step in so as to rein in the propagation of rodents in their poorly-equipped tents and secure life-saving medicines and health care services.

PROTEST MOVES AND INITIATIVES

On January 14, Palestinian and Syrian families rallied outside of I'zaz Camp, protesting the mistreatment they have been subjected to by the local administration.

Speaking with AGPS by phone, the administration of I'zaz Camp denied, however, the allegations, saying staff have been doing their best to meet the refugees' needs.

Admins added that the rally held by the displaced refugees came following a decision prohibiting the transfer of meals from the restaurant to the tents in order to preserve public hygiene and reduce the propagation of rats in the area.

The camp administration also denied reports that 13 residents suffered rat bites, saying only two such cases have been spotted in the camp.

The displaced families confirmed, however, that 13 civilians, whose names and pictures have been documented, sustained injuries and scars all over their bodies as a result of rat bites. They held the camp administration responsible for the crisis due to its apathy regarding the residents' appeals for urgent action.

A rally was also staged in AlShabiba refugee camp in I'zaz, north of Syria, by the Palestinians of Syria Commission for Relief and Development, in cooperation with the Association of Displaced Palestinians in and around I'zaz area.

The vigil, which falls in line with the Palestinian Prisoner's Day and international anti-normalization campaign, came in response to Israel's simmering violations against Palestinian detainees and in protest at normalization with the Israeli occupation.

In late January, displaced families sheltered in I'zaz refugee camp, north of Syria, embarked on a cleaning campaign in an attempt to eliminate rats and enhance hygiene in the area.

The moves came a couple of days after Maram Foundation for Relief and Development, taking charge of the l'zaz refugee camp north of Syria, said it has reached an agreement with the displaced families to enhance their living conditions.

In a statement, Maram Foundation said practical measures will be implemented over the propagation of rats and poor hygiene in the camp. For their part, the residents pledged to clean their tents daily using kit handed over to them by the foundation. Maram vowed to distribute much-needed items, including cleaning kit, blankets, and kitchenware, to families who find a secure shelter, be it a home or a tent. Tents will also be handed over to families who find enough space to settle in recognized refugee camps.

The foundation further pledged to secure transportation among other basic services to families wishing to move to other refugee camps.

l'az refugee camp, also called AlShabiba, is home to 200 displaced families, including 120 Palestinian families, 234 children aged below 10, and 97 children aged between 11 and 16.

D. Palestinian Refugees in Southern Syria

- **ALMUZEIREEB**
- **TSEIL**
- **TEL SHEHAB**

ALMUZEIREEB

Palestinians taking shelter in AlMuzeireeb town continue to express deep concern over the security situation in the area as reports have increasingly emerged on new assassination attempts targeting Palestinian refugees.

AGPS documented the death of dozens of Palestinian refugees in AlMuzeireeb town, home to 1,700 Palestinian families and hundreds of other families displaced from Daraa refugee camp.

On April 26, 2019, former opposition leader Moafaq AlGhazawi was assassinated by anonymous gunmen.

A couple of days earlier, AlMuzeireeb mayor Ahmad AlNabulsi, aged 55, survived an assassination attempt after anonymous gunmen shot him with gunfire. The mayor was evacuated to the Daraa National Hospital, before he was transferred to the Muwasat Hospital.

On May 24, the body of the Palestinian refugee Tareq Mansour AlHusain, taking shelter in AlMuzeireeb, south of Syria, was spotted on a roadside in AlMuzeireeb town. Signs of heavy torture figure on his body.

On June 12, a new assassination attempt targeting former jury at the Palace of Justice Mohamed Abdul Rahim AlGhanem sparked panic in AlMuzeireeb community for Palestinian refugees, in Daraa's western suburbs.

On August 25, Mayor of AlMuzeireeb town Ahmed AlNabulsi, aged 55, was fatally gunned down by anonymous gunmen outside of his house.

On September 23, Palestinian-Jordanian refugee Mahran AlSaytari was pronounced dead after he was fatally gunned down in AlMuzeireeb town, in Daraa's western suburbs.



Reporting from southern Syria, an AGPS staff member said anonymous gunmen opened fire at Mahran, allegedly affiliated with the Syrian government forces. He breathed his last right on the spot.

On November 8, Palestinian refugee Dhiaa AlDeen Ahmed Saleh ALSbeihi, a former opposition gunman, was fatally shot by anonymous gunmen on Friday November 8 in AlMuzeireeb town, in Daraa's western suburbs.

An AGPS field reporter said gunmen boarding an armored car opened fire at the victim while he was outside of his home in AlMuzeireeb before they run away. He died immediately.

T'SEIL TOWN

Palestinian refugees taking shelter in T'seil town, in the southern Syrian province of Daraa, continue to launch cries for help over the exacerbated socio-economic conditions they have been enduring.

Palestinian families continue to call on all concerned parties, including UNRWA and the Palestine Liberation Organization, to rally around them and help them reconstruct their destroyed homes.

Palestinian families came to T'seil town following the 1948 catastrophe, after they were forced out of their homes in Palestine by Zionist militias.

Located some 30 kilometers away north of Daraa city center, T'seil has been home to some 120 Palestinian families, along with 40 families displaced from Damascus and its outskirts and 100 others displaced from Ein Thakar.

TEL SHEHAB

Displaced Palestinian families taking shelter in Tal Shehab, in Daraa's western outskirts, continue to denounce the price hike and dire socio-economic conditions in the area.

Located 17 kilometers away from Daraa's western corners and adjacent to the Jordanian borders, Tal Shehab is home to 40 displaced Palestinian families who have mostly been living on agriculture.

On May 5, municipality staffer Iyad Mohamed Jaara was fatally gunned down in the area.

PRS Outside Syria

- **LEBANON**
- **JORDAN**
- **EGYPT**
- **ALGERIA**
- **LIBYA**
- **SUDAN**
- **GAZA**
- **SAUDI ARABIA**
- **UAE**
- **KURDISTAN**



LEBANON

According to information collected by UNRWA, more than 80 per cent of PRS indicate that the Agency's cash assistance is their main source of income. 95 per cent of PRS are food insecure, while about 89 per cent of PRS live in poverty. 36 to 57 per cent of PRS youth face unemployment. In August and September 2019, UNRWA conducted a verification exercise of PRS in Lebanon and verified the physical presence of 27,803 PRS in the country.

The number of PRS in Lebanon has been gradually decreasing over the past two years, and UNRWA estimates that in 2020 the country will continue to host approximately 27,700 PRS (8,450 families). UNRWA said PRS's vulnerability is further

compounded by their precarious legal status. According to the Agency's monitoring data, around 55 percent of PRS do not possess valid legal residency documents.

The lack of a valid legal status, often coupled with outdated civil registration documents, results in severely restricted freedom of movement for some PRS in Lebanon due to fear of arrest, detention and being issued a departure order.

The vast majority of Palestinians from Syria are grappling with deportation concerns and live in a perpetual fear over their families' safety due to the security mayhem rocking the region.

At the same time, the Lebanese authorities continue to rebuff appeals for renewing the visas of those who entered Lebanon after September 16, 2016, blacklisting them as "illegal immigrants" and ruling for their immediate deportation within a time-span of 15 days.



On July 13, 2018, the Lebanese General Security Directorate gave instructions for working out the legal situation of Palestinians from Syria who entered Lebanon before September 16, 2016 and granting them a temporary and renewable 6-month stay, for free.

Data garnered by AGPS indicates that scores of Palestinians from Syria face an ambivalent legal status in Lebanon, 125 among whom entered the country through illegal routes while another 100 refugees have had their identity documents withheld by the General Security Directorate for months. 75 more refugees received deportation orders.

Speaking with AGPS, civil action committees said the Lebanese authorities continue to urge youths aged between 17 and 18 who entered Lebanon as minors to obtain identity and travel documents from Syria. Those belonging to such an age-category are not only placed under constant threat of refoulement to Syria but also risk to be forced into military conscription with pro-government militias in war-torn Syria and subjected to extra-judicial execution or forced disappearance.

On one occasion, the General Security office in Sidon lost a record of 30 identity documents, passports, and other official papers of registered Palestinians from Syria who submitted demands to renew their stays in Lebanon.

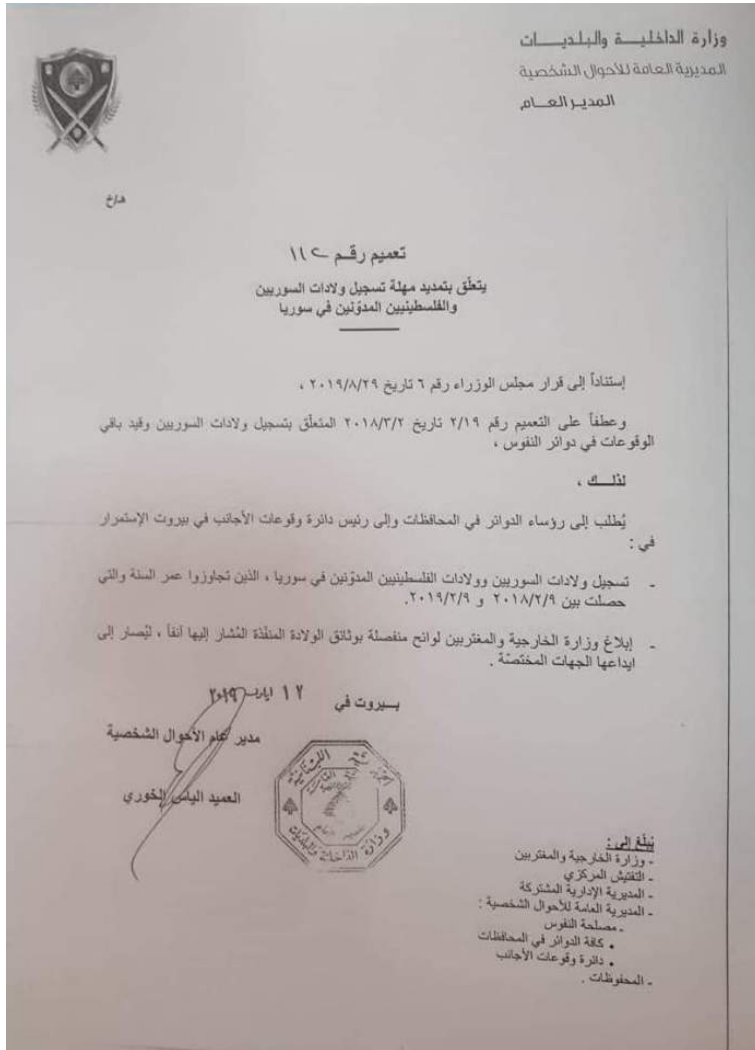
Recovering identity documents for Palestinians from Syria is never a risk-free process. Once they are back to Syria, the refugees are very likely to lose their lives or/and freedoms.

The absence of a specific legislation addressing the unique situation of the Palestinians of Syria has made them vulnerable to marginalization within the Lebanese polity.

The price leap, steep rental fees, expensive education charges, and lack of access to the local labor market, along with the absence of relief aids, have made life unbearable for the Palestinian refugees in Lebanon.

On September 28, 2019, the Lebanese Directorate-General of Personal Status announced its decision to stretch the time-limit set for the registration of Palestinian and Syrian newborns born in Syria.

The decision figured in Circular No. 112 sent to the Lebanese Foreign Ministry and the local municipalities.



The circular called on heads of governorate departments and foreigners' affairs departments in Beirut to register concerned newborns aged above one year and who were born between February 9, 2018 and February 09, 2019.

Obtaining birth/death certificates and identity documents by Palestinians from Syria in Lebanon is far from being a trouble-free process.

In recent reports, AGPS said the number of Palestinians who fled war-torn Syria to Lebanon has dramatically shrunk back.

The decrease has been attributed to the mistreatment and crackdowns perpetrated against the refugees in the Lebanese territories, where they have

also been denied the right to legal visas, refugee documents, safe accommodation, basic services, relief assistance, free education and healthcare, and access to the local labor market.

A decision issued by the Lebanese authorities in early May 2014 denied the Palestinians of Syria the right to freely enter the Lebanese territories, in an attempt to rein in refugee influx from Syria.

HUMAN RIGHTS VIOLATIONS

Palestinian refugee from Syria Abdullah Hasan Atiyeh, born in 1972, was arrested by the Lebanese security forces on April 17. The reasons for his detention remain ambivalent.

Abdullah fled the embattled Yarmouk Camp in war-torn Syria to AlMiya wa Miyah Camp, south of Lebanon.

His family has appealed to the Palestine Embassy and concerned institutions in

Lebanon to push for his release, saying Abdullah illegally entered Lebanon in the hunt for a safe shelter but got his legal status worked out by local authorities shortly after. The family added that he regularly renews his visa every six months.

Abdullah was reportedly arrested one day after he showed up at local police stations to renew his stay.

HUMANITARIAN ACTION

In mid-January, 2019, Sahabat ALAqsa Association and the Follow-Up Committee of Displaced Palestinians from Syria handed over fuel supplies to displaced Palestinian families from Syria in the Lebanese region of ALBekaa, after a violent snowstorm—called Norma—rocked refugee camps and uprooted their poorly-equipped tents.

Some 950 displaced Palestinian families from Syria have been struggling for survival in ALBekaa due to the freezing temperatures and the absence of relief assistance by UNRWA and the Palestinian Authority, among other concerned bodies.

On December 12, the Wafaa European Campaign handed over cash aid to a number of Palestinian families from Syria sheltered in Ein ALHilweh Camp in the southern Lebanese city of Sidon.

Representatives of the campaign paid a visit to ALBahaa and ALKifah communities to keep tabs on the dire conditions endured by the displaced families.

On May 5, ALSaraa Association, in partnership with Friends of ALAqsa Association and Hilwan Group, distributed orphan allowances to Palestinian children from Syria taking refuge in Lebanon. The transferred sum covered aid for September and October months.



STORM NORMA

Storm "Norma" caused damages to infrastructure, roads and homes across Lebanon, putting thousands of Palestinian refugees at risk, scores of whom were children.

The storm caused the collapse of many tents and flooding of several refugee camps. Hundreds of displaced families had been heavily affected.

Umm Yousef, a mother of four children from Syria-based Yarmouk Camp, told AGPS that her family spent sleepless nights after their tent was uprooted by the torrential winds.

Another refugee said storm Norma made life unbearable in the impoverished refugee camps where displaced Palestinian and Syrian refugees have sought shelter.

A so-called Abu Kasem said snow and freezing rains crept through his zinc-roofed tent. "We don't even have a carpet to lie on."

The winter of 2019 also proved to be one of the toughest for thousands of families displaced from Syria and seeking refuge in AlFarah Camp in AlBekaa, where hundreds of families were hit by the wave of snow, heavy rain and strong wind, forcing many of them to evacuate their already impoverished tents.

Many refugees had to spend the night standing up. Some families were stuck in the tents under the snow.

Emergency measures were put in place to rescue stranded families and help those suffering from the cold.

HEALTHCARE

Palestinian refugees in Lebanon have had scant access to quality healthcare. The Lebanese state does not provide them with any such services, and private treatment is highly expensive.

More than half of Palestinian refugees fleeing to Lebanon live in the 12 official camps across the country, where overcrowding, limited essential services and poor sanitary conditions mean health conditions are among the worst in the region.

The refugees are only assisted by UNRWA in a handful of health care services, including primary health care, urgent surgeries, and child birth assistance. UNRWA abstains from assisting the refugees in emergency cases, including traffic accidents. Patients in need of open heart surgeries receive partial funding.

Though URNWA clinics provide free or low-cost services, the refugees rarely have access to the prescribed medicines.

Those with life-threatening and chronic diseases continue to appeal for urgent medical treatment and financial assistance to purchase medicines and undergo therapy.

On September 13, UNRWA warned of the outburst of hepatitis (liver inflammation) in AlRashidiya Camp, south of Lebanon and called on the refugees to follow prevention tips.

UNRWA's Health Department spotted a number of hepatitis-stricken cases in AlRashidiya refugee camp. Samples were sent to hepatitis testing laboratories. The agency also embarked on an awareness-raising campaign.

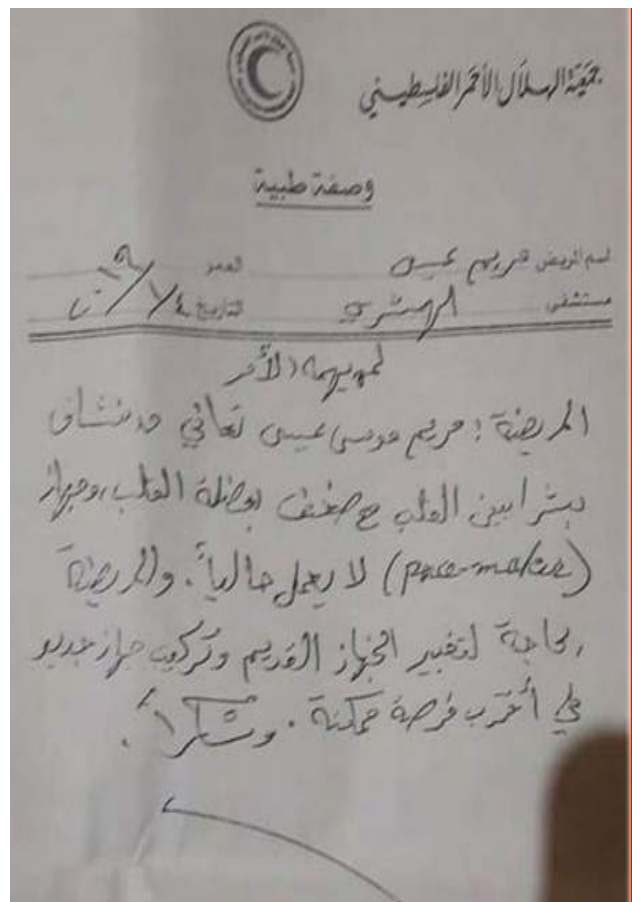
Media sources said at least 50 persons were diagnosed with hepatitis, including two persons sheltered in AlBas refugee camp but were on a visit to AlRashdiya Camp.

Located south of the Lebanese city of Sur (Tyre), AlRashidiya Camp is home to some 260 displaced Palestinian families who fled the bloody shootouts in Syria.

On February 13, Elderly Palestinian refugee Meriam Mousa Issa, born in 1932, said she was in need of an urgent pacemaker to help her recover her normal heartbeat.

Displaced from Yarmouk Camp, south of Damascus, to Ein AlHilweh Camp, south of Lebanon, Meriam suffered from cardiovascular disorders, heart failure, and disorders in her normal heart rate. She could not afford the fees needed for an urgent pacemaker implantation.

Her family appealed to all concerned parties to stand by her and help her secure treatment charges, estimated at \$5,000. UNRWA shelled out \$1,350 and the Palestine Embassy disbursed \$800 in aid.



The family said it failed to secure the remaining sum due to their dire conditions.

Several years ago, Palestinian refugee Meriam Mousa Issa underwent a pacemaker implantation in Syria.

*Three year-old girl Maria Tamer Abu Azara, born to Syrian-Palestinian refugees in Lebanon, died after failing to get access to treatment for leukaemia.

The family of Maria Tamer Abu Azara – originally from Palestine – had been displaced from their home in Syria to Lebanon, only discovering their daughter's condition after they arrived as refugees.

Doctors at Lebanon's Ghassan Hammoud Hospital informed Maria's parents that she needed to be placed in intensive care to save her life, but the family was unable to afford her treatment. Despite appealing to humanitarian organisations for urgent funds, little support emerged, leading to her death on February 16.

Syrian and Palestinian refugees in Lebanon face major obstacles to accessing adequate healthcare, with funding gaps leading to delays in treatment for numerous illnesses. Often forced to live in squalid camps with poor infrastructure, diseases spread fast with health centres often too far to access regular treatment.

Lebanon has also been accused of neglecting management of the refugee camps in an attempt to encourage refugees to return to their homes that are once again under the jurisdiction of the Syrian regime, despite the ongoing risk of reprisals from Damascus.

In November 2019, health officials with Lebanese charity Al-Irshad Wal Islah told reporters from Syrian news agency Zaman Al-Wasl that they had witnessed several cases where women had miscarried for no apparent reason, with suspicion falling on the camp's water supply. Despite appealing for local authorities to improve the water infrastructure, Lebanese police instead arrested the journalist who had conducted the investigation, holding him for several days before releasing him without charge.

On April 13, a hospital in the southern Lebanese city of Sour (Tyre) withheld the body of Palestinian refugee Mohamed Ahmed Eid after his family failed to shell out hospitalization fees.

The administration of Jabal Amel Hospital in Sour has rebuffed the appeals of Mohamed's family to hand them over the body of their son, who passed away on Wednesday, March 13.

Displaced from Yarmouk Camp in Syria to AlRashidiya Camp in Sour, the unemployed family failed to secure their son's treatment fees, estimated at \$4,400.

Mohamed's siblings appealed to the International Red Cross and Red Crescent organizations to take serious measures in order to pressurize the hospital administration to release their son's body so as to bid him last farewell and lay him to rest.

On June 13, the family of the Palestinian girl Israa Bahaa AlDeen Ali, who was displaced from Syria's Khan Eshieh Camp to Ein ALHilweh refugee camp, south of

Lebanon, urged the international human rights and humanitarian institutions to work on securing the fees needed to treat their girl, diagnosed with sight loss.

The family said Israa, born in 1990, was going to undergo a surgery in Russia after medics in Syria and Lebanon failed to provide her with the required treatment. The surgery is worth \$10,000.

On July 1, a displaced Palestinian family who fled Yarmouk Camp, in Damascus, to Wadi ALZina, in Lebanon's southern city of Sidon, appealed to the International Red Cross and Red Crescent organizations along with the Palestine Liberation Organization and humanitarian institutions to work on securing treatment fees for their premature newborn Lin Samer Abdul AL.

The family said medics at AlRa'i Hospital in Sidon urgently transferred their eight-month-old toddler to the neonatal intensive care unit where she had been lying in an infant incubator.

They added that UNRWA shelled out 60% of the treatment fees, estimated at over \$6,600. The father managed to secure another \$1,500.

On July 17, Palestinian refugee from Syria Abdul Majid Abu Kharaj, who was displaced from Yarmouk Camp to Lebanon's ALBekaa Valley, was transferred to a hospital following a heart attack that struck his vulnerable body.

Medics said he was in need of an open-heart surgery but backtracked shortly after, as a set of checks ups and tests proved his body's cardiac surgery intolerance. Medics decided to carry out cardiac catheterization (with balloon angioplasty and stent placement) to open up narrowed/clogged coronary arteries.

Abdul Majid appealed to the concerned parties to help him secure treatment fees, estimated at \$6,543. UNRWA pledged to reimburse \$2,000. The needed sum was estimated at \$1,800.

On September 22, a Palestinian child who lived in Syria's Yarmouk Camp before he fled to Beirut's Burj AlBarajneh refugee camp sustained second-degree burns all over 35% of his body and called for urgent treatment at local hospitals.

Activists quoted the child as appealing to the concerned humanitarian institutions to help him secure treatment expenses, estimated at some \$690, and another sum of money needed to purchase medicines and carry out medical follow-up.

On November 11, A Palestinian family who was displaced from Yarmouk Camp, in Damascus, to the southern Lebanese city of Sur appealed to the international

humanitarian institutions to take urgent action in order to save their eight-day-old newborn.

The family said their toddler suffered from a hemorrhage caused by a circumcision surgery (the removal of the foreskin from the human penis) he underwent in Sur.

The newborn needed a needle that costs \$800, a sum that far exceeded the family's ability to shell it out.

INITIATIVES, CAMPAIGNS

On February 6, the Union of Relief and Development Associations in Lebanon and the International Committee of the Red Cross embarked on a campaign to take down the names of persons suffering from war injuries and gunshot wounds in Lebanon.

Wounded persons who were in need of medical surgeries and taking shelter in Lebanon benefited from the initiative. Check-ups were carried out by specialized doctors to finalize the list of concerned patients.

On March 9, the Union of Relief and Development Associations in Lebanon (URDA) announced the launch of a campaign to repair children's testicular abnormalities, hernia, and hypospadias.

The union said the medical surgeries are to be carried out for free by pediatric surgeons in the Central Bekaa region. Preliminary medical checks will be kick-started on Wednesday, March 13 from 10 a.m. to 2 p.m. to determine the list of concerned

patients. Children aged below 18 will benefit from the measure, regardless of their nationalities.

On April 11, the Palestine Red Crescent Society in partnership with the Palestine Children Relief Fund (PCRF) announced the arrival of orthopedic surgeons to provide treatment for patients, including Palestinian refugees.

Patients aged below 16 years, regardless of their nationalities, underwent medical checks at Safad Hospital in AlBadawi Camp, north of Lebanon, after filling in

إعلان
تعلن جمعية الهلال الأحمر الفلسطيني / إقليم لبنان
وبالتعاون مع
جمعية إغاثة أطفال فلسطين
عن وصول بعثة طبية متخصصة في "جراحة اليد"
• في الفترة من 27 نيسان 2019 ولغاية 1 أيار 2019
• الفئة العمرية: من سنتين وحتى عمر 16 سنة
• تجري المعاينات والعمليات في مستشفى صدد في مخيم البداوي - شمال لبنان
للتسجيل يتم إرسال رسالة واتس اب على الرقم التالي: "81709083" محمد الحاج
يجب أن تتضمن الرسالة المعلومات التالية:
• الاسم الثلاثي
• تاريخ الميلاد
• رقم هاتف المريض
• عنوان السكن
• الجنسية
• نوع الحالة المرضية
• تقرير طبي للضرورة
رسم المعاينة: خمسة آلاف ليرة لبنانية (5000 ل.ل.)
ملاحظة: العمليات مجانية

a form. Detailed medical diagnoses were sent via emails to the concerned patients.

On May 23, the Relief Commission at Lebanon's Sunni authority Dar AlFatwa announced the launch of a medical project, in partnership with the World Rehabilitation Fund.

The initiative aimed at providing basic rehabilitation services to Palestinian refugees from Syria and other people with special needs. People who underwent limb amputations and suffered impairment received prostheses and/or orthotic devices, kinetic aids, and physical and occupational therapy. Those diagnosed with visual impairment received visual aids (eyeglasses, walking sticks, magnifying lenses) while people with hearing impairment received hearing aids and speech therapy.

On May 30, the Palestine Red Crescent Society in Lebanon announced the arrival of a delegation of German medics specialized in pediatric, oral, maxillofacial, and orthognathic (corrective jaw) surgeries, between 15 and 23 June.

The checks-ups and surgeries were provided for free at the Safad Hospital in AlBadawi refugee camp, north of Lebanon. Concerned patients were required to provide their personal data and a detailed medical report about their case.

EDUCATION

The security turmoil rocking the Lebanese territories has resulted in a remarkable increase in school dropouts among PRS. Widespread protests sweeping the country have also blocked the refugees' access to schools and education facilities.

Several PRS took part in summer camps occasionally held across the country.

On August 3, the International Association of Palestinian Teachers wrapped up the fourth edition of "We Learn Happily for Palestine" summer camp, held in cooperation with the Lebanese ex-education Minister, Abdul Raheem Murad, and the International Association of Palestinian Institutions.

Nearly 200 Palestinian students from Syria in Lebanon took part in the educational camp, which kicked off on July 26 at Dar AlHanan orphanage, in western Bekaa.

The event made part of ongoing attempts to bridge intellectual gaps created by the English-based curricula in Lebanon for Palestinians from Syria and to provide a catch-up program for refugees who have faced difficulties accessing educational services.

English language courses, robotics clubs, rapid calculation tools, painting workshops, and other activities were held as part of the camp so as to boost students' self-confidence and intellectual output.



*Five Palestinian students enrolled at UNRWA-run schools, among them four students who were displaced from Syria to Lebanon, were nominated among the top 10 contestants for the Lebanon team in the 2019 Arab Reading Challenge staged in Dubai in its fourth edition.

The participants expressed their deep disappointment over what they dubbed an "inhuman treatment" they faced during the celebration and the arbitrary travel ban slapped against them to prevent them from attending the wrap-up ceremony in Dubai on account that they are non-Lebanese nationals.

The students and their families also slammed the Lebanese committee for their "racist reaction" as they asked them to leave the hall after they handed them over certificates of appreciation and medals before the start of the main celebration. The committee further updated them on the travel ban which they said was issued as the students were Palestinian refugees rather than Lebanese citizens. The committee added that a sum of \$100 donated by UNICEF will be given to the Palestinian students while the Lebanese contestants will receive \$1,000.

*Palestinian girl Bisan Esam Khuza'i received an exemption certificate from AlAbrar Educational Center in Lebanon's western AlBekaa region, granting her the privilege to pass without sitting for the last-semester exams for the academic year 2018-2019.

Bisan, a 1st year high school enrollee, obtained the exams exemption certification thanks to the outstanding results she has achieved all the way through the school year.

Born and raised in AlSayeda Zeinab Camp, in Syria, Bisan and her family fled to Lebanon in 2012, one year after the deadly warfare took away the life of her father. Her dream job is to become a surgeon and tend to the wounded in the Israeli-blockaded Gaza Strip and other war-stricken zones.

In 2017, Bisan received a similar exemption honor after she garnered the highest score at her school.

Palestinian student from Syria Mohamed Ragheb Hamid, born in 2003 and raised in ALTadhamun neighborhood, in Damascus, before he got displaced to AlRashidiya Camp, in Sur (Tyre), south of Lebanon, earned a scholarship at King's Academy of Jordan after he got full marks in his exams for the 9th and 10th grades.



Palestinian student from Syria Jala Khaled AlKhatib achieved outstanding results as part of the 2019 basic education exams held at Beit Jala private school, in Siblin, in AlKharroub region, south of Lebanon. She got the first rank at the school and the 24th in Lebanon. 15-year-old Jala was born and raised in Yarmouk Camp, south of Damascus. She headed for Lebanon with her family in 2013, fleeing war-torn Syria.

On July 5, the Amal Club in Burj AlBarajneh refugee camp, in Beirut, paid tribute to two Palestinian brothers from Syria—Beshr Mazen Yousef and Aws Mazen Yousef—for their good conduct and the outstanding results they achieved during the school year.

The two children joined the karate club in Burj AlBarajneh refugee camp and are currently taking shelter in Shatila camp, south of Beirut. Their father gives them a daily lift to and back from the club on his bicycle. The family fled the embattled Yarmouk Camp in Syria to Lebanon.

Palestinian teen from Syria Mohamed ALJaafari won the first place at the chess competition staged by the Palestinian Chess Federation on Friday, July 5, on the occasion of the Palestine Olympics Day in AlBadawi refugee camp, in Lebanon.

Mohamed fled Yarmouk Camp in Damascus in 2012 on way to AlBadawi Camp, in Lebanon's northern city of Tripoli.

Palestinian refugee from Syria Ashraf Mohamed Ali, formerly sheltered in Khan Eshieh Camp, earned the first place at a bodybuilding contest staged in southern Lebanon. He was a former player with the Syrian Bodybuilding Federation and earned several awards in national and international contests.

PROTEST MOVES

In 2019, hundreds of displaced Palestinian families from Syria in Lebanon rallied outside of UNRWA offices in Lebanon, demanding legal protection and denouncing the US decision to cut off aid to the refugee agency.

The rally-goers railed against the US President Donald Trump's crackdowns and attempts to suspend all cash aid to UNRWA, a move they said would aggravate the calamitous situation of the Palestinians from Syria, who have already been gripped with abject living conditions.

The refugees said that aid-cut is a launch-off step toward the implementation of the US-Israel backed 'deal of the century' which aims at wiping out Palestinians' inalienable rights, liquidate the refugee cause, and whitewash the crimes committed against the Palestinian people since 1948.

The protesters voiced their firm rebuff of the underway schemes of ethnic cleansing, forced deportation, and displacement perpetrated against the Palestinian people nationwide and overseas.

*Palestinian refugees from Syria joined a rally held outside of the Australian embassy in Lebanon on Sep. 11 to demand humanitarian asylum and safe access to European countries pending a just and lasting solution to their plight.

At the same time, the Youth Authority of Palestinians from Syria handed over a memorandum to the Australian Embassy and the European Union, saying they have been enduring an abject situation in Lebanon, to which they fled after they were robbed of their property and belongings in war-torn Syria.



The refugees also sounded the alarm over the life-threatening journeys undertaken by hundreds of migrants onboard Europe-bound boats.

At the same time, hundreds of Palestinian refugees, waving Palestinian and Canadian flags, gathered outside of the Canadian Embassy in Beirut, requesting asylum in the North American country.

The periodic protests outside the embassy on the coastal highway north of Beirut began after a crackdown on undocumented foreign labor by Lebanese authorities.

In response, the Canadian Embassy in Beirut said that it cannot systematically accept refugee resettlement applications. In a statement issued on August 20, the embassy said Canada has been working with UNHCR and other concerned bodies to work out the resettlement file, adding that Palestine refugees fall within UNRWA's mandate rather than UNHCR's.



The embassy added that Palestinian refugees continue to suffer from high rates of poverty, unemployment, and food insecurity.

The statement warned against fraud attempts by migrant smugglers targeting refugees seeking resettlement in Canada, saying the Canadian government does not ask for sums of money whatsoever to carry out resettlement procedures.

On September 28, in response to the vigil held by the Youth Commission of Palestinians of Syria outside of the UNRWA office in Beirut, after the agency's director refused to meet with refugee families wishing to gain humanitarian asylum in other destinations pending a just and lasting solution to their plight, UNRWA denied being mandated to resettle Palestine refugees.



UNRWA said migration and resettlement issues fall outside of the Agency's mission and stressed its commitment to tackle all files having to do with its allotted services for Palestine refugees as mandated by the UN.

public services, owning or inheriting property, and working in 39 professions.

Around 100,000 Palestinians originally fled to Lebanon at the time of the Nakba mostly from northern and coastal areas of Mandate Palestine including Haifa, Safad, Yaffa, Acre and Nazareth. They were joined by later waves of refugees following the 1967 war, and the 1970 fighting in Jordan. Today, over 400,000 Palestinian refugees are registered with UNRWA in Lebanon.

The United Nation has identified Palestinian refugees in Lebanon as one of the most marginalized and poorest communities in the region. They continue to face high vulnerability and marginalization, making them heavily reliant on humanitarian support to cover their basic needs. The socio-economic hardships and unrest experienced by the country have compounded the refugees' already dire living conditions.



PRS IN JORDAN

Over 18,000 Palestinian refugees from Syria in Jordan can be categorized as vulnerable due to their precarious legal status and deteriorating humanitarian condition.

The majority of the Palestinians from Syria entered Jordan through irregular routes as a result of the Jordanian closed-door immigration policy barring the refugees' legal entry.

The refugees' vulnerable legal status has reduced their access to the job market and increased the risk of refoulement.

Several Palestinians who fled Syria for fear of being killed under shelling and the blockade have been shorn of their right to legal stays, health care, and access to education, among other services.

The swift price hike, steep rental fees, and daily crackdowns, along with the apathy maintained by international as regards the crisis and UNRWA cuts of its basic services, have added insult to the injury.

Since early 2012, Jordan has opted for a closed-door immigration policy and tightened grip on Palestinian refugees from Syria attempting to enter the country.

Sometime earlier, the Jordanian Prime Minister said his government shall not allow refugees from Syria to freely enter the country and turn Jordan into an "alternative home" for the displaced Palestinians.

In a report entitled “Not Welcome: Jordan’s Treatment of Palestinians Escaping Syria,” the New York-based group Human Rights Watch (HRW) said Jordan is turning away Palestinian refugees from Syria in violation of international law.

According to the report, Jordan forcibly repatriated more than 100 asylum seekers, including women and children, since mid-2012.

The 44-page HRW report, documented Jordan’s deportation of seven Palestinian men who were separated from their families, and evidence of the transfer of four others to Cyber City, a closed holding facility for Palestinian and Syrian refugees in northern Jordan.

It also described how Jordan withdrew citizenship from Palestinians who had lived in Syria for years and who had been detained or deported without identity documents.

More than 2 million Palestine refugees registered with UNRWA live in Jordan.

There are ten recognized Palestine refugee camps throughout the country, which accommodate nearly 370,000 Palestine refugees. Jordan hosts the largest number of Palestine refugees of all of the UNWRA fields.

The number of PRS in Jordan has remained relatively stable for a number of years, with 17,343 PRS recorded with UNRWA as of December 2019. Of these, 349 reside in King Abdullah Park (KAP), facing movement restrictions and a number of protection concerns.

Since the opening of Jabeer-Al Nassib border between Syria and Jordan, in October 2018, UNRWA has registered the return of 624 PRS inpiduals to Syria. As of November 2019, of those returnees, some 227 inpiduals were displaced again to Jordan for a range of reasons, including the unstable security situation in Syria, problems with civil documentation, lack of economic resources and livelihood opportunities, and high levels of destruction of homes and property.

A Comprehensive Food Security and Vulnerability Assessment conducted by WFP in 2018 indicated that the majority (67 per cent) of PRS were food-insecure or vulnerable to food insecurity. Twelve per cent of PRS female headed households were found to be food insecure compared to seven per cent of male-headed households. Food insecurity was even higher (78 per cent) in PRS households where the head of household was reported to be completely illiterate. Eighty-six per cent of surveyed PRS households were also reported to be in debt.

On January 13, the committee speaking on behalf of the displaced Palestinian refugees from Syria in Jordan lashed out at UNRWA for turning its back on the refugees' demands, which they voiced during their last sit-in outside of the agency's office in Amman.



A letter handed over to the refugees and signed by the Director of UNRWA Operations in Jordan, Roger Davies, said the cash aid allotted to the refugees, estimated at \$28 (20 Jordanian dinars) distributed every three months, meet their basic needs, including food, rental fees, and power/water charges.

The committee called for the need to increase the aid to 85 Jordanian dinars, hand the sum on a monthly basis, shell out rent and water/power fees, and treat the displaced Palestinian and Syrian families evenly.

The committee threatened to step up protest moves in case UNRWA does not live up to its responsibilities at the soonest time possible.

Sometime later, the Committee of the Displaced Palestinians from Syria in Jordan said it received a positive response by UNRWA officials in Amman over the refugees' demands.

The committee's representatives said a meeting was held with UNRWA's director of operations in Jordan Roger Davies to discuss the list of demands which were voiced by the refugees during recent vigils.

A delegation of the Follow-Up Committee of Displaced Palestinians in Jordan met on Monday, January 28, with the director of UNRWA operations in Jordan Roger Davies to discuss the situation of Palestinians from Syria seeking shelter in Jordan.

The committee urged UNRWA to meet the refugees' demands and shell out its monthly aids, including fuel, power/water, and shelter allowances, and to increase allotted aids.

Davies pledged that UNRWA will do its best to provide healthcare among other vital services to Palestinian refugees and urge donor countries to boost funds for the refugee agency.

Displaced Palestinian families from Syria joined a series of vigils staged outside of the UNRWA office in the Jordanian capital city of Amman, protesting the Agency's cut of vital services and urging it to shell out its monthly allowances so as to help the refugees pay their rental fees and other charges, including power and water bills. The refugees further called for enhancing vital services, particularly education and healthcare, and for increasing relief aid.

On March 2, the European Union member states (Madad Fund) contributed EUR 2 million to the United Nations Relief and Works Agency for Palestine Refugees in the Near East (UNRWA) as part of the EU's "Strengthening the Resilience of Palestine Refugees in Jordan and Lebanon" project.

The contribution came in-line with the Agency's 2019 Syria Regional Crisis Emergency Appeal and was allocated to fund vital life-saving services to the Palestine refugees from Syria residing in Jordan.

The announcement was made at the Delegation of the European Union in Jordan, and attended by the Ambassador of the European Union to Jordan, Andrea Matteo Fontana.

As the conflict in Syria entered its ninth year, Palestinian refugees have borne the brunt of its devastating consequences across the region, facing extreme danger in their camps of residence and multiple displacements.

The contribution was aimed to enable the Agency to provide essential services to some 17,500 Palestinian refugees from Syria in Jordan, including protection, education in emergencies and health care, in addition to operational costs that enhance the Agency's ability to provide services to the most vulnerable Palestinian refugees in the region.

Speaking at the announcement ceremony, the Director of UNRWA Operations in Jordan, Roger Davies expressed his gratitude to the EU for its continuous support to UNRWA and in particular its member states for their support to the Palestine Refugees from Syria in Jordan,



PRS IN EGYPT

Palestinian refugees who fled war-torn Syria have been subjected to a fragile legal status in Egypt, where they are treated as foreigners rather than asylum-seekers fleeing war-stricken zones.

Palestinians from Syria in Egypt have been denied the right to legal visas, refugee documents, safe accommodation, basic services, and relief assistance.

Those who illegally entered Egypt via the Sudanese borders have been denied the right to free movement, education, and labor, among other basic necessities. Unlike Syrian nationals, who are granted safe asylum in Egypt and systematically assisted by the UNHCR, Palestinian refugees are left on their own.

At the same time, the number of Palestinians who fled war-torn Syria to Egypt has dramatically shrunk back over the past three years.

AGPS data indicates that the number of Palestinian refugees from Syria in Egypt in 2018 was estimated at 3,500, down from over 6,000 in recent years. Some 500 refugees illegally entered Egypt through Sudan.

AGPS continues to stress the need to secure the rights of the Palestinians from Syria in Egypt, who fall outside of UNRWA's fields of operations, to legal and physical protection, as per the Refugee Convention of 1951, and to hand them over cash and in-kind aids, along with refugee cards, in order to enhance their legal status in the Egyptian territories.

Palestinian children from Syria have been denied easy access to education facilities in Egypt. The refugees receive basic and secondary school education at government-run schools after a formal consent is issued to that end by the Ministry of Social Affairs and Labor and the Ministry of Education.

Unlike Syrian nationals, who have been exempted from paying education charges, Palestinian refugees are compelled to pay in dollars given their "tourist" status.

A number of Palestinian refugees from Syria said they have failed to enroll their children at government-run schools. The only option left is to have them join private schools, an alternative which far outlives their budgets. The fact that UNRWA has not opened up schools for Palestinian refugees in Egypt has added bad to worse.

On March 7, 2019, UNRWA's liaison office in Cairo announced its decision to suspend healthcare services for PRS in Egypt due to funding shortage. UNRWA could not pay a sum of 900,000 Egyptian pounds to Mustafa Mahmoud clinic.

On June 20, a meeting was convened at UNRWA's liaison office in Garden City, in Cairo, by representatives of the Palestinian refugee community in Egypt and members of St. Andrew's Refugee Services. The delegations discussed developmental and community projects for Palestinian refugees from Syria in Egypt, along with possible ways to enhance health care and education services. The parties agreed to the need to establish local schools for Palestinian from Syria, hold vocational training courses, implement psychological support programs, and to provide the displaced refugees with shared shelters and the needed relief assistance.

On August 6, Palestine Ambassador in Cairo Diab ALLouh discussed with the director of UNRWA's office in Cairo Sahar ALJabouri the calamitous condition of Palestinian refugees who fled war-torn Syria to Egypt.

The UN representatives hailed the efforts made by the Palestine Embassy in Cairo in cooperation with UNRWA office in order to tone down the tragic situation of Palestinian refugees in Egypt.



On September 4, activists said that two Palestinian families from Syria had been held in Egyptian custody for the second month over allegations of illegal entry into the country from Sudan.

According to Palestinian activities, the list of arrestees includes 12 persons, among them children and an elderly woman, along with Palestinian Syrian migrants. They were all arrested on the Egyptian-Sudanese borders.

On October 27, PRS in Egypt railed against the apathy maintained by UNRWA, UNHCR, and the Palestine Embassy regarding their appeals for humanitarian, legal, and socio-economic protection.

A number of refugees said UNRWA and UNHCR continue to turn their backs on their calls for cash and in-kind assistance.

PRS have also denounced the mistreatment they have been subjected to by the staff members of the Palestine Embassy in Cairo.

On November 7, The Egyptian authorities deported a Palestinian refugee to Syria after he overstayed his visa in the country.

An AGPS field reported said the refugee entered Egypt illegally through Sudan to reunite with his family members, who have sought refuge in Egypt since 2014.

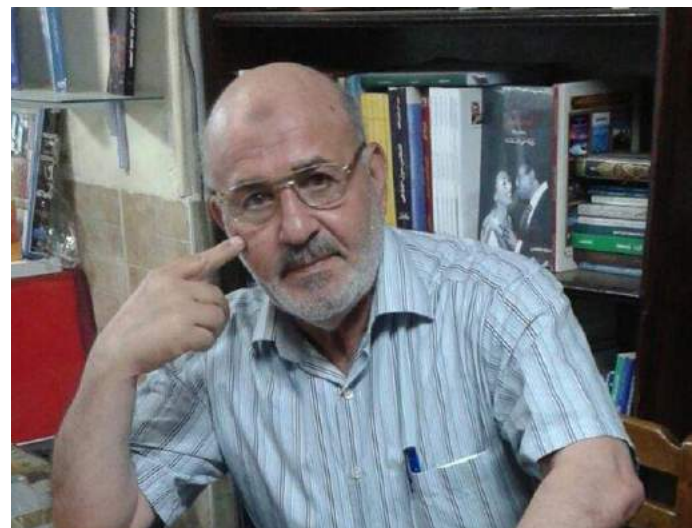
The Egyptian authorities arrested the refugee and kept him in custody for days, before they pushed him back to Syria.

The refugee's family said the husband was also deported from Egypt some eight days earlier, saying such arbitrary refoulement decisions stand in sharp contrast to international humanitarian laws.

SUCCESS STORY

On March 4, 2019, Palestinian author Mahmoud Husain Mufleh received an honorary PhD in poetry from the International Academy of Arts and Media in Egypt.

Mufleh hailed the move and expressed his deep pride of the honorary degree, which he said is a sign of the readership's admiration for his art and poetry.



The poet said he received the degree after the academy tasked Egyptian journalist Hanan AlShami with nominating an Arab poet living in Egypt for the honorary title. Mufleh will serve as a jury in poetry contests to be held in Egypt.

The poet voiced his deep-seated sadness of the displacement and dislocation Palestinian refugees have been enduring across the Syrian territories and overseas. "We're living a new Nakba (catastrophe) as our homes in Yarmouk Camp are destroyed daily", he said.

"We've been severely affected by the New Nakba. We're now like a bird sparrow dispersed by a bullet fired by the hunter. We're scattered here and there and everywhere", added Mufleh. "Some of us fled to the country of snow and fog, others drowned at sea and were swallowed up by fish. Scores of others were sent to jail but have never come out of it. A heavy blow has been dealt to us.... But we should remain steadfast until the sun rises again."



PRS IN ALGERIA

There is no official data regarding the number of PRS in Algeria.

In April, Palestinian sculptor and artist Zaki Salam won the Mohamed Khada Prize for Fine Arts in Algeria in its fourth edition. The ceremony was held in Mostaganem province, in the northwest of Algeria. Honor guests from Egypt, Morocco, Iraq, Palestine, and Syria were in attendance.

Palestinian sculptor Zaki Salam was born in Damascus in 1958. He graduated from the Faculty of Fine Arts in Damascus in 1984.

Sometime later, a set of paintings stolen from the home of the Palestinian artist Zaki Salam were put up for sale by an antiques shop in Bab Sharqi, in Damascus.

Palestinian sculptor Zaki Salam confirmed the piece of news on his Facebook page, saying some of his works which were taken from his home on AlUruba Street in Yarmouk Camp were being exhibited in an antiques shop in Damascus' eastern gate.

The artist added that he was robbed of his paintings, furniture, and personal library in the conflict.



PRS IN LIBYA

The situation of Palestinian refugees in Libya has been characterized by uncertainty and life-threatening risks.

The situation has been particularly alarming for Palestinian refugees and other migrants in Libya following the 2011 uprising, which put an end to over four decades of Qadhafi rule.

The outbreak in violence in May 2014, which split the country into two rivaling governments, has led to the withdrawal of international aid agencies and embassies. This in turn has contributed to further limiting access to updated information on migrants, including Palestinians fleeing war-torn Syria. Very little has been reported on Syrians and Palestinians in Libya, which makes their future increasingly uncertain.

The conflict in Syria that broke out in March 2011 brought about a new wave of Syrians and Palestinians seeking refuge in Libya. These refugees hoped to find a better life in the oil-rich country. However, the growing influx of refugees from Syria to Libya soon turned out nightmarish in a country that was already mired by civil unrest in the aftermath of the uprising.

The political stand-off between the rivaling governments, the upsurge of multiple armed conflicts, and the new wave of intense fighting between different coalitions of armed militias over control of territory, infrastructure and resources resulted in the death of thousands of civilians and the displacement of hundreds of thousands of individuals, including Palestinian refugees.

Palestinian refugees have been severely affected by the recent turmoil that broke out in Libya, where they are increasingly being regarded as unwanted foreigners. In

addition, Palestinians are also victims of the escalating level of crime, such as theft, violence, human smuggling and abductions, brought about by the exacerbated situation. This in turn has pushed thousands of them to take the perilous journey across the Mediterranean to Europe. Some Palestinians are reported to have been detained before their journey even began.

In addition, restrictive entry/exit measures undertaken by neighboring countries, such as Egypt and Tunisia, have further hampered their possibility to leave Libya.

In late July, Libyan authorities buried the bodies of dozens of migrants who had drowned at sea in one of deadliest incidents in the Mediterranean in 2019.

Rescue workers reported that they had recovered over 60 bodies from waters off the Libyan coast. Some 145 people were reportedly rescued, according to the International Organization for Migration (IOM), adding that more than 110 people were still unaccounted for after the event. A Libyan fisherman told the Agence France-Presse (AFP) news agency that the waters were full of floating bodies after the incident.

Libyan navy spokesman General Ayoub Kacem said that most of the rescued migrants were from Eritrea, while Palestinians and Sudanese were also among the group waiting to be taken on to reception centers.

UN refugee agency chief Filippo Grandi said on Twitter that the shipwreck was "the worst Mediterranean tragedy of this year."

"Restoring rescue at sea, ending refugee + migrant detention in Libya, increasing safe pathways out of Libya must happen NOW, before it is too late for many more desperate people," he added.

UN chief Antonio Guterres meanwhile said he was "horrified" by the latest tragedy at sea. "We need safe, legal routes for migrants and refugees. Every migrant searching for a better life deserves safety and dignity," he tweeted.

Human rights organization Amnesty International lambasted the European Union over the latest deaths, saying it represented "a new low for European leaders."

"They have done everything they can to pull up the drawbridge to Europe," Amnesty said, "yet people are still risking their lives to come to Europe".

Before this latest shipwreck, the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR) and the IOM had said that 426 migrants had perished in the Mediterranean thus far that year.



PRS IN SUDAN

Some 100 Palestinian families from Syria have been subjected to abject living conditions in Sudan, where they are treated as foreigners rather than refugees.

Relief institutions have also failed to live up to their duties as regards the Palestinian refugee community from Syria, who has been overburdened by the costly fees of visas and registration procedures.

Low wages, high rates of unemployment, and socio-economic marginalization have made life unbearable for Palestinian refugees in Sudan, forcing dozens of refugees to beg in the streets in order to feed their starved families.

The calamitous situation endured by the Palestinians from Syria in Sudan has forced scores of refugees to apply for UN-brokered asylum. However, their applications have been turned down. A handful of refugees embarked on small projects.

Palestinians from Syria in Sudan have also been forced to pay steep education fees, hitting up to \$150 at schools and \$3,000 at universities. Calls have been frequently launched to teach Palestinian children at UNICEF-run schools.

The refugees continue to slam the apathy maintained by the Palestine Embassy as regards the crisis and the difficulties they have been made to endure trying to obtain a Palestinian passport.

Sudan used to be the only country where Palestinians from Syria are let in without complicated legal procedures. A refugee used to obtain an entry permit from the Interior Ministry at a cost of no more than \$100. However, traffickers, who have been taking advantage of the situation, continue to blackmail refugees and force them to pay as much as \$600 to enter the Sudanese territories.

PRS in Sudan are scattered across Khartoum, Khartoum Bahri (North), and Omdurman.

On September 13, Palestinian and Syrian migrants seeking refuge in Sudan expressed deep concern about their ambiguous fate after the Sudanese police spokesman announced the government's decision to reconsider the status of foreigners who acquired citizenship in the country while ousted President Omar AlBashir had been in office. A bundle of preconditions has been set by the local authorities to determine the migrant's eligibility for citizenship, a move which was aimed at keeping work permits in check.

A migrant from Syria in Khartoum said the Sudanese authorities ruled that refugees from Syria should have their legal situation worked out within a 30-day time-limit.

*In March Khayrah Ummah charity handed over food baskets to displaced Palestinian families taking shelter in Sudan. The move, which was funded by the Indonesian NGOs KNRP and ANDARA, made part of endeavors to assuage the calamitous conditions endured by Palestinian refugees fleeing war-stricken Syria.

PRS IN GAZA



Some 150 Palestinian refugee families from Syria who returned to the blockaded Gaza Strip

have been facing an abject humanitarian situation in the Israeli-blockaded enclave.

The refugees say they have been deprived of humanitarian assistance by UNRWA and the Palestine Liberation Organization.

Palestinians living in the Gaza Strip have been enduring dire living conditions due to the 13-year-long Israeli siege and the devastating upshots of the Israeli onslaughts on the coastal enclave.

Civilians continue to launch cries for help over the high rates of unemployment, lack of financial resources, and movement crackdowns, which they said have made life quite unbearable in Gaza.

The offensives launched by the Israeli military on Gaza have turned the enclave into a hell on earth as most families have lost their sources of incomes, homes, and property.

According to data by the Norwegian Refugee Council (NRC), Gaza is one of the world's most densely populated areas, with more than 5,000 inhabitants per square kilometer. The Gaza Strip is smaller than the city of Oslo but is home to three times as many people.

A 2012 UN report predicted the Palestinian enclave would be "unlivable" by 2020 if nothing was done to ease the blockade, but in June 2017 a UN report on living conditions in Gaza stated that all the indicators were going in the wrong direction and that deadline was actually approaching even faster than earlier predicted.

Gaza is described by many Palestinians and humanitarian actors as the world's largest open-air prison, where nearly 2 million Palestinians live behind a blockade and are refused access to the other occupied Palestinian areas and the rest of the world.

NRC said 7 out of 10 Palestinians in Gaza are registered as refugees, and many of these come from families who were forced to leave their villages in 1948. Many have also been forced to leave their homes due to war, violence, and economic hardship.

On January 15, the Independent Commission for Human Rights -- Grievances Bureau in the besieged Gaza Strip embarked on a media campaign to push for rehabilitating the rights of the Palestinian refugees who returned to Gaza from war-torn Syria.

The commission called for a mass participation in an e-campaign launched on social media networks through the hashtag "refugees from Syria in Gaza".

The commission raised alarm bells over the dire socio-economic and humanitarian



conditions endured by the Palestinian refugees in the blockaded Gaza Strip after UNRWA suspended its shelter allowances.

At the same time, the refugees spoke up, in tweets and posts bearing the hashtag "refugees from Syrian in Gaza", for their right to labor opportunities in accordance with Article 17 of the 1951 Refugee Convention and their right to social insurance as guaranteed by the International Covenant on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights.

More than 50 years of Israeli occupation and 12 years of blockade have made the lives of nearly 2 million Palestinians living inside the besieged Gaza Strip unbearable.

On January 21, a workshop was staged by the Independent Human Rights Commission

- Grievances Bureau in the besieged Gaza Strip to discuss the situation of Palestinian refugees who returned from Syria to Gaza.

The commission briefed the participants about the calamitous conditions of the Palestinians of Syria and the infringement of their rights, including their economic, cultural, social, and political rights along with their right to healthcare, education, and official travel documents.

Head of the Committee to Follow-Up on the Situation of Palestinian Refugees from Syria in Gaza, Dr. Mohamed AlShawish, stressed the need to speak up for the cause of Palestinians of Syria and pressurize concerned authorities to live up to their responsibilities.

*On April 25, Palestinian refugees who fled war-torn Syria to Gaza joined a vigil held outside of the UNRWA office to protest delays in shelling out rental allowances, which they said have not been delivered for nearly one year.

On June 12, representatives of the Follow-Up Committee of Palestinians from Syria in Gaza met with director of UNRWA operations in Gaza, Mathias Schemale.

Member of the committee Omar Odeh told AGPS that the two parties discussed the squalid situation faced by PRS in Gaza due to the Israeli blockade.



PRS IN SAUDI ARABIA

In July 2019, the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia contributed an additional US\$ 2 million to the United Nations Relief and Works Agency for Palestine Refugees in the Near East (UNRWA) in support of Palestine refugees.

The contribution went towards the Agency's core services, including for education, health and relief and social services, in its five fields of operation in Lebanon, Syria, Jordan, Gaza and the West Bank, including East Jerusalem.

This contribution came at a critical time for UNRWA, which was still facing significant challenges to meet all financial requirements through the end of this year.

With this contribution, Saudi Arabia became the Agency's third-largest donor in 2018 with a total contribution of over US\$ 160 million.



PRS IN UAE

The UAE continues to ban the entry of Palestinian refugees holding travel documents issued in such countries as Lebanon, Syria, and Jordan.

The UAE has opted for closed-door immigration policy regarding PRS in an attempt to force the Palestinians to seek refuge outside of their territories.

Most of the Gulf countries s have outlawed granting visas to Palestinians with Syrian travel documents.

In 1955, the League of Arab States prohibited granting dual citizenship to Arab nationals and ruled that Palestinian refugees be not granted another Arab nationality to preserve his/her Palestinianhood. At the same time, the Syrian, Lebanese, and Iraqi authorities issued travel documents for Palestinian refugees in order to smooth their movement across the region.

In September, Palestinian blogger from Syria Tghrid Dawas has embarked on an online campaign entitled “I am a refugee . . . I am a human being” in an attempt to underscore the heavy burden brought about by “the travel document” which Palestinians from Syria should obtain to gain access to another country.

The activist said Palestinians from Syria have been unable to reunite with their family members in Arab Gulf states or any other destination following travel bans slapped by governments under the guise of unrecognized refugee documents.

Taghrid Dawas, who fled Yarmouk Camp to Germany in 2014, said she has not met with her daughter and husband in Abu Dhabi ever since she leaved Yarmouk Camp. Following several attempts to reach out to the UAE embassy in Berlin over her family reunification demand, Taghrid gave up the endeavor as staff members kept telling her that the embassy does not recognize refugee documents.

At the beginning of her campaign, Taghrid was seeking ways to mobilize support for her appeals to see her daughter Layan, whom she has not met for five years. Sometime later, Taghrid got in touch with activist Lama Salah, the mother of six-year-old Fayza who has been living in Dubai. Both activists agreed to speak up for thousands of Palestinian refugees who, just like them, have been torn apart from the warmth of family.

In July 2019, the United Arab Emirates (UAE) announced a US\$ 50 million contribution to the United Nations Relief and Works Agency for Palestine Refugees in the Near East (UNRWA), to support the vital and life-saving services provided by the Agency to over five million Palestine refugees in Syria, Lebanon, Jordan, Gaza and the West Bank.

UNRWA Commissioner-General Pierre Krähenbühl commended the outstanding show of support from the UAE and said: "At a time of intense pressure on our Agency, the immense generosity of the United Arab Emirates sends a clear message that Palestine refugees are not alone. In addition to a crucial financial contribution, it is also a show of solidarity by the UAE for which I am deeply grateful."

This financial support will go a long way in helping UNRWA maintain its programs for 2019 as planned, namely in the areas of primary healthcare, education and social services, all vital for the life and dignity of Palestine refugees, and an anchor for their feeling of stability.

In 2018, the UAE's contribution of US\$ 50 million to the Agency made the UAE the sixth largest donor for that year.

In November 2019, The United Arab Emirates (UAE) has donated a contribution of US\$ 12.5 million to the United Nations Relief and Works Agency for Palestine Refugees in the Near East (UNRWA).

"This extraordinary financial contribution will help the Agency continue to provide critical humanitarian services and operations for the remainder of 2019 in the areas of primary healthcare, education and social services across its five fields of operation", said UNRWA in a statement on Thursday.

UNRWA said this is the second contribution by the UAE to the Agency this year and is one of four disbursements totaling US \$ 50 million.

This generous donation could not have come at a more important time for the Agency and for Palestine refugees," said UNRWA Acting Commissioner-General Christian Saunders. "UNRWA is doing all it can to overcome the worst financial crisis in its 70 year history."

"I am hopeful that this strong demonstration of trust in UNRWA will encourage others to support the crucial work of the Agency," said UNRWA's Acting Commissioner-General.

SUCCESS STORIES

In December 2019, Palestinian refugee from Syria Shadi Ahmad AlFar won the fourth place in the “Mr” contest and the fifth in the 100 kgs competition as part of the Dubai bodybuilding championship staged at the Dubai Muscle Show which took place on 5-7 December 2019 at Dubai Trade Centre.

Shadi fled Syria's Yarmouk refugee camp in 2012 to AlZahira, in Damascus, before he headed for Jordan, where he had stayed for a couple of years. He then travelled to the UAE and took part in the international muscle show.



PRS IN KURDISTAN

AGPS database indicates that 700 Palestinian refugees from Syria are taking shelter in Kurdistan region, north of Iraq, where they have been subjected to squalid humanitarian conditions and prevented from renewing their visas.

On early July 2019, Authorities in the Kurdistan Region of Iraq lifted a ban on the family of Palestinian refugee Fadi Khaled Nasrullah to enter Erbil city, after they were caught by the Turkish authorities on June 27, 2019, and detained for one day. They were later pushed back to Erbil, where authorities threatened to forcibly deport them to Lebanon, pending their transfer to Syria.

Sometime earlier, the family landed at the Khartoum Airport, where they were ordered to shell out 2,000\$ so as to be allowed to stay in the country. They were deported to the Cairo International Airport soon after, as they failed to pay the required sum. Two days later, they obtained a visa to enter Erbil.

In appeals emailed to AGPS nearly a couple of weeks earlier, the family called on the concerned human rights bodies, the Palestine Liberation Organization, and Palestinian factions to take urgent steps in order to pressurize the Kurdistan authorities to backtrack on the refoulement decision. The wife said that the family has lost all of its belongings and property in the Syrian warfare and that any attempt to force them back to Syria will make their situation far worse.

PRS in Turkey and Eastern Asian Countries

- TURKEY
- THAILAND
- MALAYSIA



PRS IN TURKEY



Nearly 1,400 PRS families have sought shelter in Turkey, including 1,200 in Istanbul city.

Data by Khayra Ummah Organization indicates that 400 families, including 300 families in Istanbul, do not hold the kimlik protection cards.

PRS in Turkey have been facing dire socio-economic conditions and denied access to the local labor market.

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

On January 18, 2019, the AlWafaa European Campaign distributed relief aids to over 100 Palestinian families in Gaziantep city, south of Turkey. The list of items includes heating kit, foodstuff, and children's milk. Dozens of displaced families sheltered in other Turkish cities also received aid items as part of a relief mission kick-started by the AlWafaa Campaign.

On February 22, Khayra Ummah Organization distributed 50 BIM cards worth 100 Turkish Liras each to families of orphans and needy children with three members or less. Families comprising four members or more received 150 Turkish Lira.

In May, Khayra Ummah charity handed over food baskets to Palestinian refugees in Turkey's southern city of Osmaniye and in Reyhanli.

Fast-breaking meals for children were also distributed by the charity in Reyhanli as



part of the international campaign to preserve Palestinian identity "Intimaa".

On October 31, the Turkish Association to Support Palestine (FIDAR) said it signed an agreement with Medipol Findikzade Hospital in Istanbul, in cooperation with the Association of Palestinian Medics in Turkey. The new agreement provides Palestinians from Syria with partial discounts for medical care services.

Patients with a medical insurance will receive a 20% discount, apart from the allowance offered by the insurance company. Those without medical insurance will get 30% discount of the overall treatment fees.

Practical mechanisms have reportedly been set forth to put into effect the new deal, which pledged to uphold patients' privacy and afford female physicians to women and girls.

Head of FIDAR Association Mohamed Msheinish acclaimed the move, which he said would smooth Palestinians' access to health care services in Turkey. The agreement is the third of its kind in Turkey.

Khayra Ummah pledged to keep up such humanitarian projects and to reach out to over 275 Palestinian families taking shelter in Mersin.

LEGAL STATUS

Palestinian refugees from Syria in Istanbul have voiced deep concern over the intent of the Turkish authorities to forcibly send them back to Syria as many of them overstayed their visas. Turkish police notified irregular migrants to leave the country by August 20.

A number of refugees said they are looking forward to positive moves by the Turkish authorities in order to work out their legal status, following efforts made by the Palestinian Ambassador Fayed Mustfa and the Turkish Association to Support Palestine (FIDAR).

Recently, Turkish police stepped down crackdowns and abduction sweeps targeting irregular migrants and non-holders of the kimlik visa card in Istanbul.

Nearly 2,400 Palestinian families from Syria have sought shelter in Turkey, including 1,200 families in Istanbul, where they have been facing an abject situation.

Khayra Ummah organization estimated that 400 Palestinian families from Syria without kimlik visas have been taking refuge in Turkey, including 300 families in Istanbul.



The Turkish authorities released on Monday, June 24, the Palestinian refugee Alaa Mohamed Taha who was arrested some 35 days ago following a security sweep launched by the Turkish police in Esenyurt district, in Istanbul province.

Sometime earlier, his family members called on representatives of the Palestinian people in Turkey to reach out to Turkish officials and pressurize authorities to release Taha at the soonest possible time.

The family said he was detained by the Turkish police after they found out that he holds a Palestinian passport with neither a national ID number nor the entry stamp, adding that he obtained a kimlik card from Bursa. In November, Palestinian refugee from Syria Ahmad Hasan Abdul Wahab, displaced from Syria's Yarmouk Camp, was detained by Turkish police after he failed to obtain the kimlik temporary protection card.

His family has appealed to the Palestinian embassy and activists to push for his release from Turkish custody and prevent his forced deportation.

On July 29, Palestinian refugee Khaled Ahmed AlAbtah was detained in was arrested in a sweep launched by Turkish police targeting irregular migrants and non-holders of the kimlik visa card in Istanbul.

His family appealed to all concerned authorities and the Palestinian Authority to take urgent measures so as to release Khaled.

In August, hundreds of Palestinian families from Syria in Turkey called on the concerned authorities to take urgent steps in order to urge the Turkish authorities to release Palestinian refugees Khaled Ahmed AlAbtah, detained in Edirne prison since July 22, 2019, and Ahmad Jamil AlSayed, held in custody since July 30.

Both refugees were arrested in a sweep launched by Turkish police against irregular migrants and non-holders of the kimlik visa card in Istanbul.

Their families called on the Palestinian Authority and Palestine Embassy to take serious measures in order to protect Palestinian refugees from Syria and cancel the deportation threats.

In early August, the Turkish police released Palestinian refugee Mohamed Marwan AlSukari, from Yarmouk Camp, one day after they detained him

in Eskişehir province, in northwestern Turkey, on allegations that he did not carry a temporary protection kimlik visa.

A number of Palestinian refugees were held in Turkish custody over similar allegations, pending their deportation to Idlib, north of Syria. Most of them carry UNRWA cards testifying to their Palestinianhood.

Palestinian refugee Majed Fathi Hulweh, aged 19, was arrested by Turkish police on Wednesday, September 4, in Taqseem, in Istanbul, for not holding the kimlik visa card.

In mid-October, the Turkish Directorate General of Migration called upon illegal migrants from Syria in Istanbul who have the kimlik protection card to sign up for personal data updating so they can renew their travel documents, starting October 17.

Syria migrants with visas or work permits are not implied by the new measure.

The Migration Directorate said holders of kimlik cards should obtain permits in order to be able to freely move in the country.

OFFICIAL/POPULAR ACTIONS

On July 30, 2019, Palestinian Ambassador in Turkey Faed Mustafa said contacts have been held with the Turkish authorities in order to work out the situation of Palestinian refugees in Turkey, mostly those fleeing Iraq and Syria.



In a press release, the ambassador said that last week a meeting was held with representatives of the Turkish Foreign Ministry in Ankara in order to seek ways to work out the legal situation of irregular Palestinian migrants.

The Ambassador also said that he will meet with Istanbul's Mayor, Akram Imam Oglu, and that he called for another to be convened with the Director-General of the Migration Office in Ankara.

He added that the embassy continues to hand over Palestinian passports to Palestinian refugees from Syria in Turkey, expressing hope that the Palestinians would not undergo a third Nakba in Turkey.

On August 7, the Palestinian Ambassador in Ankara Fayed Mustafa discussed with Istanbul's Mayor Akram Imam Oglu the calamitous situation of Palestinian refugees from Syria in Turkey and the impact of the recent crackdowns opted for by the Turkish government to rein in the influx of irregular migrants.

During a press conference held on Wednesday, August 7, Istanbul's Mayor vowed to establish an office to keep tabs on the refugees' affairs by the end of this year and lend a hand to Palestinian families seeking shelter in Turkey.

On August 2, in a meeting held at the office of the Turkish Association to Support Palestine (FIDAR), AGPS warned of the repercussions of the latest measures pursued by the Turkish authorities in Istanbul against Palestinian refugees without kimlik visa cards.

The meeting underscored the socio-economic and legal hurdles encountered by Palestinians who fled war-torn Syria to Istanbul.



The two sides stressed the need for the Turkish authorities and NGOs to take urgent steps in order to protect Palestinians refugee from Syria and cancel the deportation threats.

They further called for establishing a legal committee to keep tabs on the situation of the refugees and work out their legal condition.

Ambassador to Turkey Faed Mustafa and Director-General of the Immigration Department of Turkey Abdullah Ayaz discussed the legal status of Palestinian refugees in Turkey.

On August 5, the Turkish Association to Support the Palestinian People (FIDAR) announced the launch of a hotline to report abrupt arrest and deportation of Palestinian refugees without kimlik visa cards in Istanbul.

The line number is as follows: 00905396801508.

Calls are received daily from 10 a.m. to 5 p.m. Whatsapp messages are also received from 5 p.m. onwards.

Experts in refugee affairs warned Palestinians from Syria not to sign in unclear documents or to show travel documents with non-identical data, adding that refugees without kimlik cards should translate their identity documents and hand them over to the concerned authorities when needed.

In late September, Palestine's Ambassador briefed the Turkish official about the squalid conditions endured by Palestinian refugees in turkey and called for practical measures to work out their ambivalent legal status in coordination with the concerned authorities.

The ambassador also tackled follow-ups of criminal cases and illegal activities along with the file of missing refugees.

The Turkish official voiced his department's commitment to make serious steps in this regard.

On September 29, Palestine Ambassador to Turkey Faed Mustafa and Director-General of the Immigration Department of Turkey Abdullah Ayaz discussed the legal status of Palestinian refugees in Turkey.

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HUMAN RIGHTS VIOLATIONS

Palestinian refugee Mohamed Ajlani Younes, who fled war-torn Syria to Turkey, said he was violently beaten by the Turkish police after he refused to be pushed back to Lebanon.

In a video from Istanbul's new airport, where he was detained, Mohamed said he was beaten up on his face by Turkish cops after he refused to yield in to a deportation order.

His family has appealed to the Turkish authorities, Palestine Embassy, and human rights organizations in Istanbul to make serious steps in order to release their son and cancel the deportation decision.



Speaking with AGPS by phone a few days earlier, Mohamed's family said he had left Lebanon through legal routes, via Rafic Hariri International Airport in Beirut on way to Iraq's Erbil International Airport. He later attempted to enter Turkey using a fake Iraqi passport.

Mohamed was detained on May 26. The Turkish authorities have threatened to push him back to Erbil or Lebanon.

On September 28, Palestinian refugee from Syria Kasem Rashid Rayan was detained by the Turkish authorities at Istanbul's new airport for the sixth consecutive day over allegations of illegal entry.

In appeals circulated on social media networks, Kasem's family called on the Palestinian and international humanitarian and human rights institutions to take urgent action in order to release Kasem and provide him with physical and legal protection.

Kasem fled Syria's Yarmouk Camp for Palestine refugees, south of Damascus, to Turkey, seeking a safe shelter and employment opportunities.

In mid-April, in appeals published on her Facebook page, Palestinian activist Fatima Jaber urged Palestine's Ambassador to Turkey, the human rights NGOs, and all concerned institutions to join forces in order to pressurize the Turkish authorities to release a Palestinian family from Syria whose members have been detained for over seven days running.

Jaber said Hoda Abdul Rahim Abdullah, her daughter Nahla Mohamed Alyan, and her sons Mohamed Ayman Daouah, aged three, and one-year-old toddler Omar Ayman Daouah, disappeared on April 11 on their way to Greece via the Turkish borders.

On Monday, the father was told that the family members have been detained by the Turkish gendarmerie inside a detention camp in Edirne's forests, west of Turkey. The family had also reportedly been subjected to a property-theft assault on the migration route. The Turkish gendarmerie allegedly smashed their mobile phones to prevent them from reaching out to other parties.

According to the activist, toddler Omar was transferred to a hospital on Monday, April 15, after heavy rains fell on his vulnerable body. He is in a critical condition.

Three Palestinian refugees—Mohamed ALZu'bi, Rashed Hejazi, and Udai ALJadaa, from Syria's Yarmouk Camp—were deported by the Turkish authorities to northern Syria after they were arrested on September 29, 2019, on their way to Greece from Aydın Province, in Turkey's Aegean Region.

Activists said that following an altercation, Turkish police officers tore the refugees' travel documents, including Palestinian Authority passports, UNRWA aid cards, and provisional identity documents, before they pushed them back to Idlib on Monday, October 7.

Two days later, two Palestinian refugees—Ahmad Yousef Abu Naser and Othman Mousa Khalil, residents of AlSabina Camp in Rif Dimashq—were deported by the Turkish authorities to northern Syria.

On October 11, Palestinian refugee from Syria Ali Husain Sharshara, was detained by the Turkish authorities.

Ali, from Syria's Yarmouk Camp, in Damascus, was arrested by Turkish police as he attempted to illegally enter Greece.

In October, activists urged the Turkish authorities to release Palestinian refugees from Syria Emad Ahmad AlSaadani, born in 1995, and Emad Abu Zeid, born in 1967, who had been held in Turkish custody for over 15 days.

An AGPS correspondent said both refugees, residents of Yarmouk Camp, in Damascus, were arrested by Turkish security forces in Izmir province after they illegally entered Turkey and failed to obtain the temporary protection card “kimlik”. The arrestees were taken to a migration detention center pending their deportation to northern Syria.

Activists and refugees' families have appealed to the Palestinian Authority, Palestine Embassy, and all other concerned bodies to urge the Turkish authorities to backtrack on their crackdowns on Palestinians from Syria and provide them with the physical and legal protection they quite urgently need.

Palestinian and Syrian migrants in Turkey face an exacerbated humanitarian situation due to the absence of vital services, including health care, housing, and relief assistance. The refugees continue denounce the mistreatment and crackdowns they have been subjected to by the Turkish police.

Turkey has served as a major launch-off point for migrants fleeing Syria, among other war-stricken zones, onboard "death boats" bound for Europe.

AGPS kept record of the death of dozens of Palestinian refugees at sea, trying to reach European destinations.

On March 23, 55 irregular migrants, including Palestinian and Syrian asylum seekers, were rescued by Turkish coast guards of the Aegean sea, trying to reach Greek seashores.

In May, 12 irregular migrants, including six Palestinian refugees, were rescued by Turkish coast guard.

In July, six Palestinian migrants were caught by the Turkish coast guard on Wednesday, July 17, off Bodrum coast, as they attempted to illegally enter Greece.

The six refugees, including four members of the same family, were arrested in Izmir. The Turkish police took away their mobile phones.

The activists appealed to the concerned authorities to release them, saying the refugees fled war-torn Syria in the hunt for safe shelters and secure livelihoods to feed their starved families.

*Over 100 irregular migrants, including Palestinians, Syrians, Lebanese asylum-seekers, were intercepted in Bodrum waters, off the Aegean coast, as they attempted to reach Greece.

In October 2019, some 150 irregular migrants, including Palestinian and Syrian refugees, were intercepted by Turkish coast guard.

ACTIVITIES

Over 10,000 people, including Palestinians from Syria, joined a mass-rally held on **March 9, 2019** to push for the release of prisoners held in Syrian lock-ups.

Protesters lifted banners and chanted slogans demanding that the Syrian regime release all prisoners and disclose the condition and whereabouts of victims of enforced disappearance and secret incarceration.

In June, Palestinian families seeking refuge in Reyhanli, south of Turkey, exchanged Eid greetings as part of a gathering held by Khayra Ummah Organization and the Turkish Association to Support Palestine (FIDAR).

Around 300 Palestinian refugees, including children, were in attendance. Children received gifts and took part in games and competitions held as part of the event.

On August 8, a celebration was held by Khayra Ummah organization to pay tribute to 120 orphan Palestinian students from Syria and 30 Syrian orphans seeking shelter in Istanbul.

The celebration was held in recognition of the exhaustive efforts made by refugees from Syria and the outstanding results they have achieved despite of the hurdles inflicted by the war in Syria.

Cash donations and in-kind gifts were distributed to the participants at the event.



On October 5, Palestinian refugees from Syria joined the Palestine Heritage Festival staged by the Popular Conference for Palestinians Abroad, FIDAR Association, and Takaleed Foundation, in Istanbul as part of the international campaign to preserve Palestinian heritage.

Speaking at the event, deputy-director of FIDAR Association, Ibrahim AlAli, stressed the importance of such pro-Palestine festivals, which he dubbed a step in the right direction and a means to promote the cultural, artistic, and humanitarian legacies of Palestine.

AlAli called on the Palestinians to mobilize regional and international back-up of the international campaign to preserve Palestinian heritage by twitting on hashtag **هاظا_النّا** particularly on October 7, which marks the Palestinian Heritage Day.

Palestinian garments, dishes, handicrafts, chants, videos, and choreographies figured at the festival.



PRS IN THAILAND



Nearly 179 Palestinian families, including 50 from war-torn Syria, have sought shelter in Thailand. The list includes 65 women and 110 children, along with elderly and sick persons.

A statement delivered by the Palestinian Return Centre (PRC) on Tuesday, March 12, as part of Agenda Item 4 of the 40th session of the UN Human Rights Council (UNHRC), warned of the situation endured by dozens of Palestinian refugees who fled war-torn Syria to the Kingdom of Thailand. The refugees risk to be forcibly sent back to Syria or tossed into Thai detention centers for indefinite periods of time.

PRC called on the UNHCR, as the body mandated with promoting and protecting Palestinians' human rights that are guaranteed under international law, to work out the refugees' legal status after dozens of them overstayed their visas and have, thus, been sent to jail.

PRC urged the UNHCR and Thai authorities to combine forces in order to save the lives of some 179 Palestinian families, among them 50 from Syria, who continue to live in a state of perpetual fear and deep-seated trauma in Thailand. PRC pushed for the immediate release of dozens of nonviolent refugees who took to the street to speak up for their rights.

PRC also submitted two written reports about the situation of the Palestinian refugees in Thailand and Egypt. The reports were officially taken onboard by the UNHRC as authentic UN-archived documents.

Throughout 2019, Palestinian refugees in Thailand renewed their appeals to the Palestinian Authority (PA) President Mahmoud Abbas, urging him to take serious action

regarding the calamitous situation endured by dozens of displaced Palestinians in Thailand, where they have been the permanent targets of arrest sweeps and arbitrary detention.

The refugees urged Abbas to pressurize the Thai authorities so as to release refugees trapped at IDC detention center and grant them legal and physical protection.

The refugees said the Thai authorities continue to rebuff their appeals for visa-renewal after they overstayed their residence permits. The Thai government also prohibited renting homes to the refugees, who have been considered as lawbreakers rather than asylum-seekers.

The refugees lashed out, in the letter to Abbas, at the UNHCR for dragging its feet over the refugees' cries for help and the mistreatment they have been subjected to in Thailand.

The stranded Palestinians expressed wishes that Abbas would lend them a hand and seriously work on assuaging their tragic situation.

A jailed Palestinian refugee who fled war-torn Syria to Thailand said that like hundreds of other refugees in the country he has been struggling with dire humanitarian conditions.

Speaking on condition of anonymity, the young man said: "We fled the Syrian warfare to Thailand seeking a safe shelter. However, we've been mistreated by local authorities and sent to jail. Others were forcibly pushed back to war-torn Syria."

The witness also said scores of refugees have gone through psychological breakdowns due to the squalid conditions they have been facing in Thailand. "Several detained refugees from different nationalities have attempted suicide after they lost hope".

According to the testimony, refugees are denied access to the Thai labor market. Those who overstayed their visas were sent to jail with their children. Women and children aged below three years along with elderly people were only released on a bail.

Our living conditions are just unbearable. The UNHCR continues to turn deaf ears to our ceaseless cries for help", he said, calling for transmitting his appeals to the concerned authorities and for smoothing the refugees' travel to Malaysia or Cambodia pending their safe return to their homelands.

Over recent years, the Thai authorities have been treating Palestinians from Syria as lawbreakers rather than asylum seekers fleeing war-stricken zones. Scores of refugees have been arrested after they overstayed their visas.

Palestinian refugees from Syria trapped in Thailand continue to slam the apathy maintained by the international community, the United Nations, the Palestine Liberation Organization, and the Palestinian Authority President Mahmoud Abbas over their suffering.



Activists have also raised alarm bells over the dire conditions of captivity in Thai detention centers, where dozens of migrants are crammed into cells that can barely accommodate a handful of persons.

The refugees continue to appeal for urgent humanitarian action and for serious measures in order to pressurize the Thai government to grant them safe asylum and work out their legal status.



PRS IN MALAYSIA

On June 9, 2019, the family of Palestinian refugee from Syria Hamam Khaled Diab appealed to the international human rights institutions and the Palestine Embassy in Malaysia to work on disclosing the fate of their son, who has gone missing for the fourth year running.

The father said the family lost contact with Hamam, aged 22, some four years ago, adding that his son worked as a computer scientist.

Hundreds of Palestinian refugees from Syria have gone missing since the outbreak of the Syrian warfare. Dozens more died on the migration route.

Scores of families have been blackmailed over the release of their missing relatives and have paid large sums of money to brokers, crooked lawyers, or government officials to get pieces of information about their conditions and whereabouts.

PRS in Europe

- SWEDEN
- DENMARK
- NORWAY
- GERMANY
- NETHERLANDS
- AUSTRIA
- FRANCE
- GREECE
- CYPRUS



SWEDEN

In October 2019, the Swedish Information Center said scores of staff members at migration courts risk to be laid off due to shortage in migration funds.

The centre said migrants who re-submitted asylum, citizenship, and family reunification applications have to wait for long periods of time to have their demands considered by migration courts.

The crisis was attributed to a sharp cut in the 2020 budget allotted to the Swedish Migration Agency and courts specialized in asylum and migration affairs.

In Sweden, eligibility for citizenship is granted after a four-year stay in the kingdom. No other prerequisites have been set by Sweden for citizenship applications. Children of Palestinians from Syria who were born in Sweden and one of whose parents has got a permanent residence permit are systematically granted citizenship.

However, the time-span allocated for examining applications for visas or family reunification submitted by refugees from Syria is often estimated as being very long.

According to estimates by the Swedish Migration Office, more than 22,100 Palestinian refugees from Syria obtained Swedish citizenship by the end of 2018.



As many as 14,450 Palestinians from Syria were granted Swedish citizenship from 2015 to 2017. From January to October 2018, another 5,674 Palestinians from Syria received citizenship documents from the Swedish authorities.

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However, the time-span allocated for examining applications for visas or family reunification submitted by refugees from Syria is often estimated as being very long.

Activists, said over 7,000 Palestinian refugees from Syria have been granted citizenship in the Netherlands.

According to AGPS data, over 85,000 Palestinians from Syria have reached Europe, fleeing the war-stricken Syrian territories.

The Swedish Migration Agency also said that 70% of Palestinian academics in 2018 have specialized in scientific fields, including engineering, physics, and mathematics.

Researcher Mohamed Yousef said that in 2015, 75% of Palestinian men from Syria opted for scientific branches. In 2018, 71% of Palestinian women from Syria in Sweden pursued arts and humanities.

REFOULEMENT

In August 2019, the Swedish Migration Office refused to grant asylum to 27-year-old Palestinian refugee Lein AlKhatib and decided to deport her to Lebanon, where her mother, a Lebanese national, and daughter live, according to Swedish news outlets.

Lein was born in Syria in 1992. In 2012, she fled with her family to Lebanon, where they faced dire conditions. The family returned to Syria, before they headed for Europe.

Some five years earlier, Lein and her younger brother and father left for Sweden, where her brother was granted asylum lest he be forced to join the Syrian army.

The Swedish authorities refused, however, to grant asylum to Lein and her father. In response to a renewed application, the Migration Office granted them a 16-month visa that expired last week.

Lein expressed concerns over her forced deportation by the Swedish police, adding that she was once pushed back from Lebanon to Stockholm.

Activists attributed the situation to the precarious legal status endured by Palestinian refugees born in Syria.



In November 2019, the Swedish Migration Agency issued a decision to deport Palestinian refugee from Syria Manal Zaydan and her four children to Saudi Arabia, after they had sought asylum for four years in the European country.

Speaking with AlKompis news site, Manal said the family appealed for asylum in Sweden in 2015 after his husband overstayed his stay in Saudi Arabia.

Two years later, the Swedish Migration Agency turned down the family's asylum applications. The family appealed the decision three times, but Swedish migration authorities insisted on the deportation.

Manal had tried to reach out to the Saudi Embassy to obtain a visa, but the latter rejected her appeal. Sometime later, Manal appealed to the migration court to reconsider her case, after she had submitted documents handed over to her by the Saudi embassy. However, the court rejected the documents due to "frail evidence."

Manal was later told that she can submit other asylum applications by May 2022, in case the deportation decision would not be put into effect.

Manal and her four children have been facing tough conditions in Sweden, where they have been taking refuge in her sister's apartment in Helsingborg. Her sister's six-member family have also been at the same house.

"My two daughters, aged 19 and 21, could not have access to university or to job opportunities as they have not obtained legal Swedish documents", said Manal. "I am a Palestinian and not a Saudi refugee. Thus, my deportation to Saudi Arabia makes no sense. If they want to deport me, it should be to my homeland Palestine. Should I remain homeless for the rest of my life?"

In early July, two Palestinian refugees from Syria with Swedish citizenship documents were released 26 hours after they were detained at Israel's Ben Gurion Airport.

The refugees' relatives told AGPS that they were both detained as they attempted to enter the occupied Palestinian territories on July 8, 2019 to visit their hometown Nazareth, from which their families were displaced.

The detainees were subjected to exhaustive interrogation at Ben Gurion airport and banned from entering the occupied Palestinian territories. They were pushed back to Europe on July 9.

Human rights activists said the entry ban and refoulement decision stand in sharp contrast to international humanitarian laws, calling for serious measures to pressurize Israel to comply with its obligations under international law.

A few months earlier, the Israeli occupation authorities banned a group of Palestinian refugees from entering Palestinian territories to attend a conference in the occupied West Bank.

On October 9, a 15-year-old boy was fatally shot in Malmö's Möllevångstorget square at 9pm on Saturday night -- one of the busiest times of the week for the area's many bars and restaurants, Swedish daily the Local reported.

The 15-year-old was one of two teenagers hit when attackers opened fire on a pizzeria on Ystadsgatan before fleeing the scene on bicycles.

"The shooting happened in an extremely public place, so we are out there collecting witness information and talking to those who have made some observations," Katarina Rusin, a press spokesperson at the police's operations centre, told the Sydsvenskan newspaper on Saturday night.

The wounded 15-year-old was still alive when police arrived and was rushed to hospital in an ambulance, but died during the night. The second teenager was taken to hospital in a private car.

Jacob Björkander, who lives in the neighborhood, told Sydsvenskan that he had been cycling past the spot where the attack took place with his two young children on Saturday evening.

"It's regrettable, absolutely awful, and lacking in any respect," he said. "This should be the end of it. It's gone too far. People should be out on the streets showing what they think, that we don't want this in our town."

SUCCESS STORIES

In February 2019, Palestinian refugee from Syria Assem Husam AlDeen Taleb was honored as the champion of the Swedish Open Karate Championship, staged on Saturday, February 19.

On December 23, 2016, Assem won the top prize at a Karate championship in Sweden and a gold medal, the fourth of its kind, at the contest.

In March, the Swedish Documentation Center (Ajyal) issued an encyclopedia of Palestinian refugee camps entitled "Palestinian Camps in Syria".

The encyclopedia, prepared by Palestinian journalist and researcher Ahmad Mustafa AlBash, seeks to document Palestinian camps in UNRWA's five fields of operations (West Bank, Gaza Strip, Syria, Jordan, and Lebanon) through narrative accounts shedding light on the historical background of the camps along with the socio-economic conditions experienced by the refugees. Live testimonies by displaced refugees also figure in the 248-page work.

Researcher Ahmad AlBash said the five-part encyclopedia is the by-product of exhaustive research that lasted for several years. It covers the socio-historical frames and specificities of 15 camps set up for Palestinian refugees in Syria. Other parts of the work are slated to be published in coming months.

In May, Palestinian refugee from Syria Khaled Ra'fat Assaad, born in Syria's 2008 in Khan Eshieh Camp, won the best fiction award for 2018 granted by the Swedish News Agency.

Khaled's novel tackled the story of his migration to Sweden with his family in 2013, fleeing war-torn Syria, and the risks they had gone through in their mountainous journey.

Dozens of displaced Palestinian refugees have achieved success stories in Europe, despite of the traumatic upshots wrought by the daily scenes of bloodshed and destruction across the embattled Syrian territories.

In June 2019, Palestinian student from Syria Shahd Anas Dasouki was honored by Sorliden School in the Swedish city of Örnsköldsvik for the excellent results she has achieved over the past three school years.

Shahd, formerly sheltered in Yarmouk Camp for Palestinian refugees, in Damascus, reportedly snatched the first seat as a third-year prep school student.



In August, Palestinian refugee from Syria Hosam Ayesh joined the National Football Team of Sweden.

Hosam, aged 24, was born and raised in Sweden. His father lived in Yarmouk Camp, in Damascus. His mother is a Jordanian national.



Also in August, The Swedish football team Östersunds FK has recruited a Palestinian refugee from Syria—Ahmed Yousef Awadh, from Khan Eshieh camp for Palestinian refugees, in Rif Dimashq province.

Ahmed was born on June 1, 1992 and joined the Swedish football club Idrottsklubben Brage, before he moved to Dalkurd FF in 2011 and IFK Varnamo in 2013. In 2015, he scored 15 goals and contributed in having 12 other goals scored, helping his club get to the second position in Sweden.

In October, Palestinian child from Syria Kays Yehya Ashmawi won the gold medal as part of a Judo competition staged in Skane County, south of Sweden.

Raised in Syria's Yarmouk Camp for Palestinian refugees, in Damascus, Kays offered the medal to his friend who received the bronze medal. The young champion said the gesture was sparked by the sadness figuring on his friend's eyes as the latter had never won the gold medal.

In November 2019, Palestinian professor Mahmoud Ahmad Hamid initiated an international research project in Sweden that is expected to revolutionize wood industry.



The project aimed to develop natural adhesives used in the manufacture of compressed wood, instead of the petroleum glues currently exposed in the market.

Speaking with Radio Sweden, the professor said that the petroleum materials used in the furniture industry might cause cancers and other diseases in case of uncontrolled exposure to heat.

Hamid worked at his office in Helsingborg, in southern Sweden, which brings together three institutions to recycle discarded materials and develop eco-friendly products.

One month earlier, Hamid received an international patent for an alternative bio glue.

He received his Ph.D. in wood technology and industry in 2000 from the University of George August in Göttingen, Germany, and served as a visiting professor at the university, before he arrived in Sweden in 2014.

Hamid was born on March 17, 1967 in Damascus. He was the head of the Department of Environment and Renewable Resources at Damascus University until 2014 and fled to Europe after the outbreak of the Syrian war. He supervised dozens of graduation projects at a number of universities.

In late 2019, Palestinian refugee from Syria Ayeda AlRifi opened up a women's sports club in the southern Swedish city of Malmö, making her 16-year-old dream come true.

Speaking with Alkompis news site, Ayeda said that what makes her new fitness club's so special is the fact that it provides a large space and all-inclusive services for women.



The studio is equipped with professional gym kit and provides courses in aerobics, zumba dance, tai po dance, stretching, and yoga both for children and adults. It is also equipped with a solarium, a sauna, a women's hair salon, and a private spa-massage area.

Ayeda, who grew up in Syria and had worked in the country as a sports coach, moved to Lebanon, before she headed for Sweden in 2015, where she has fulfilled her 16-year-old dream.



DENMARK

Some 2,200 Palestinian refugees from Syria (PRS) who have reached Denmark from 2012 have been facing a precarious condition in the Nordic country. 90% of PRS in the country are refugees who fled Yarmouk Camp. 10% are from other Palestinian camps and communities across the war-torn country.

Some 1,717 PRS have reportedly been granted temporary protection in Denmark, and thus, it is hard for them to obtain permanent residence permits or citizenship. Scores of refugees have failed to reunite with their families in Denmark.

One of the following three types of visas is often granted in Denmark: political asylum, humanitarian asylum, and temporary protection. The latter is valid for one renewable year and its holder becomes entitled to family reunification only after three years.

Over recent years, successive right-wing governments in Denmark backed up by the far right-wing Danish People's Party have opted for closed-door migration policies.

The Danish Immigration Service announced its decision to provide Palestinians from Syria with political asylum rather than humanitarian asylum, on conditions that they carry UNRWA registration cards or other documents proving that they are recognized as Palestinian refugees by UNRWA.

A Palestinian who fled Syria to Denmark told AGPS that refugees seeking to renew their visas are forced by the Danish authorities to sign a document in which he/she pledges to return to the homeland as soon as warfare is brought to a halt.

The refugee said the asylum applications submitted by the Palestinians from Syria have been reconsidered after the latter filed complaints in which they said they cannot return to their countries of origin and face strict conditions as they are categorized as "stateless".

Over recent years, successive right-wing governments in Denmark backed up by the far right-wing Danish People's Party have opted for anti-migration policies.

Danish sources told AGPS that the list of concerned refugees includes Palestinians from Syria with “humanitarian visas” granted as part of Article 7/2.

The Danish Immigration Service decided on August 29 to renew asylum applications submitted by migrants from UNRWA's following fields of operations: Syria, Lebanon, Jordan, the Gaza Strip, and the West Bank.

One of the following three types of visas is often granted in Denmark: political asylum, humanitarian asylum, and temporary protection. The latter is valid for one renewable year and its holder becomes entitled to family reunification only after three years.

Over recent years, successive right-wing governments in Denmark backed up by the far right-wing Danish People's Party have adopted anti-migration policies.



In November 2019, Norwegian cops arrested a Palestinian refugee from Syria and others as they protested against members of the SIAN anti-Muslim organization who set fire to Holy Quran.

Members of fanatic SIAN group took to the streets in the southern Norwegian city of Kristiansand and threw copies of the Holy Quran in garbage containers. A member of the organization set fire to a Quran book, to which Palestinian young man Kusay Rashid and his uncle Yaser Salama along with other bystanders by heavily beating the fanatic, before they got rounded up by police.

Stop Islamisation of Norway (Norwegian: Stopp islamiseringen av Norge, SIAN) is a Norwegian organization which was established in 2008, although its history goes back to a group started in 2000. Its stated aim is to work against Islam, which it defines as a totalitarian political ideology that violates the Norwegian Constitution as well as democratic and human values.



GERMANY

Hundreds of Palestinian families from Syria who have sought shelter in Germany have sounded distress signals over delays in the family reunification process, which they said often lasts for over three years.

Hundreds of Palestinian refugees from Syria in Germany have been separated from their families who have remained in Syria or fled to Lebanon, Turkey, or Egypt, where rental fees have reportedly hit \$450 per month. The situation is exacerbated by the price leap and the frailty of the refugees' legal status.

The German Migration Office has attributed the delay in family reunification procedures to difficulties in coping with the simmering pressure exerted on its staff members.

Palestinian refugees say, however, that the delay makes part of a closed-doors immigration policy pursued by the German government to rein in the influx of refugees to the country.

Palestinians from Syria in Germany are categorized as stateless refugees, according to the German law. The Geneva Convention stipulates that Germany grant nationality to those categorized as stateless refugees, in accordance with the German Nationality Law of 2000.

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In June 2019, the German Federal Office for Migration and Refugees rejected most of family reunification applications submitted by refugees from Greece.

German sources said that the Federal Office turned down 472 applications for family reunifications, among 626 applications submitted by migrants taking refuge in Greece and who wished to join their families in Germany between January and May.

Humanitarian institutions often level heavy criticism at Germany for never making the reasons for such restrictions as clear as required.

Palestinian refugees say such bans make part of a closed-doors immigration policy pursued by the German government to rein in the influx of refugees to the country.

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Palestinian and Syrian migrants working in Germany have denounced the low wages they have been receiving compared to their German counterparts and workers from other nationalities.

The refugees said they have been made to work for longer hours but end up receiving lower wages.

As the Syrian war entered its ninth year, refugees are being encouraged to return home by the countries to which they have fled. Those who do so, however, are finding the persecution that caused them to flee has not gone away, Foreign Policy magazine said in a report issued in 2019.

According to the report, a number of those who have returned have disappeared into the country's notorious prison system, a stark reminder of the dangers the country's former refugees face.

Foreign Policy has spoken to the relatives of two such Palestinian refugees, and activists confirm there are many more. Several others, meanwhile, have been rounded up and conscripted into the army.

Syria was and continues to be a police state with the same government and the same security apparatus in place, which is accused of thousands of politically motivated detentions. But governments hosting large numbers of refugees, including Lebanon and Germany, are under domestic political pressure to give incentives to refugees to go back home, it added.

One young man, Asser, chose to go back home from Germany after he was unable to surmount the bureaucratic hurdles preventing him from having his fiancée from Syria join him.

Two weeks after arriving back in Damascus, he was called in for questioning at the local intelligence branch. He phoned his family and told them he would be home soon. He has not been heard from since. His parents, who remain anonymous to protect them from regime retaliation, paid a mediator, who found out that Asser had been detained. Such go-betweens are widely used to gather information on the disappeared and imprisoned because officially no such information is made available by the government.

Asser's cousin, still based in Germany, told FP his story, also on the condition of anonymity. "He tried several times to claim the reunion [with his fiancée], but he couldn't," he said. "He missed her and started to feel tired and depressed. That's the most important reason he left."

Yasim, another refugee who left Germany under similar circumstances, has also disappeared. His cousin Mohammad, still based in Germany, said Yasim could not obtain the papers required to enable his wife to join him. All their documents had been destroyed in Yarmouk, the Palestinian refugee camp in southern Damascus where they had lived.

"He left Germany and was detained near the Lebanese-Syria border. We don't know anything about him after that," Mohammad said, adding that without his wife Yasim had found it difficult to adjust to life in Germany, a culture alien to him. "He could not cope with it."

FP said the lingering backlash to Chancellor Angela Merkel's open-door policy toward refugees in 2015 has forced the government to pursue policies that are ultimately placing refugees from Syria in the same danger from which they had fled. The dynamic raises questions of whether governments have a duty of care toward refugees who return, beyond the letter of the law.

Thousands of Palestinian refugees have simply disappeared into the regime's prison system, with no record of their fate or whereabouts, since the start of the war, and returning refugees are especially vulnerable to such harsh treatment.

The 1951 U.N. Refugee Convention says clearly that compulsory returns are disallowed if "life or freedom would be threatened on account of race, religion, nationality, membership of a particular social group or political opinion."

REFOULEMENT

In February 2019, Some 100 German activists rallied in Passau city, protesting a decision by the Bavarian government to deport the Palestinian refugee from Syria Arafat Shreih, his wife Samah Daqaq, and their child from Germany to Latvia.



The rally-goers voiced their anger over underway attempts to tear the family apart and urged the local authorities to backtrack on the refoulement decision.

The Bavarian government in Germany issued a decision to deport the family to the eastern European country of Latvia, where they were first granted asylum, before they headed for Germany.

The German authorities rebuffed the family's appeals for a legal stay in the country, where they have lived for three years.

The expectant wife and her husband, both formerly sheltered in AlNeirab Camp for Palestinian refugees, in Aleppo, were detained by the German police while their six-year old child was transferred to an orphanage.

Activists said the wife was released from a detention center, pending her deportation. As soon as she showed up at the airport the police decided to delay her refoulement after medical checks diagnosed her with health disorders.

The family fled AlNeirab Camp for Palestinian refugees in Aleppo, before they reached Greece. Shortly after, the UN secured their arrival to Latvia, where they were granted asylum.

The family had been enduring abject conditions in Latvia due to socio-cultural and linguistic discrepancies along with xenophobic reactions and denial of access to vital services in the country.

An e-campaign launched by German activists to urge the German authorities to backtrack on a decision to deport the Palestinian refugee from Syria Arafat Shreih, his wife Samah Daqaq, and their child from Germany to Latvia, garnered 30,300 signatures.

A report issued by Foreign Policy magazine in early February said that as the Syrian war draws to an end, refugees are being encouraged to return home by the countries to which they have fled. Those who do so, however, are finding the persecution that caused them to flee has not gone away, said in a report issued last week.

According to the report, a number of those who have returned have disappeared into the country's notorious prison system, a stark reminder of the dangers the country's former refugees face.

Foreign Policy spoke to the relatives of two such Palestinian refugees, and activists confirm there are many more. Several others, meanwhile, have been rounded up and conscripted into the army.

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The campaigners sought to reach 30,500 signatures as a means to pressurize the Bavarian government to cancel the deportation.

In February, Palestinian refugee Muhammad Adnan Talel Amouri, aged 24, had gone missing in Germany.

Born on October 3, 1994, Muhammad fled Yarmouk Camp in war-torn Syria to the Netherlands, before he headed for Germany one year and half ago.

His family said he suffered from several health disorders and urged the concerned human rights institutions to work on disclosing his condition and whereabouts.

In May, a Palestinian refugee from Syria aged 40 has been brought before a German court over charges of human trafficking and migrant smuggling onboard inflatable boats bound for Europe.

According to the German daily Bild Zeitung, the man was arrested in the Netherlands after a European arrest warrant was issued against him. He headed for the Netherlands in 2018, following years of involvement in human trafficking. The man is being trialed in Dresden.

In 2014-2015, he allegedly mediated smuggling thousands of migrants from Syria to European destinations via Turkey. Through such journeys, migrant boats are reportedly docked in Italy or Greece for sums of money of up to \$6,000 per every single person.

The German prosecution claimed the man is one of the most dangerous human traffickers in Mersin, in Turkey. At the end of 2014, he allegedly smuggled 800 migrants onboard a Moldavia-flagged ship which disembarked in Scissile. He was also responsible for securing stays at Mersin hotels for nearly 2,000 irregular migrants.

In June, three-year-old Palestinian child from Syria Ahmad Majed Awad, was pronounced dead after he drowned in a swimming pool in Gelsenkirchen, a city



located in Germany's most populous federal state of North Rhine-Westphalia.

Ahmad's family disembarked in Germany on June 11, 2014, fleeing war-ragged Syria. The family reached Munich before they moved to Bochum city in 2015 after they were granted a legal stay.

The German daily *Süddeutsche Zeitung* said the Celle's Higher Court sued a 33-year-old refugee from Syria over charges of spreading terrorist propaganda in favor of ISIS.

Police allegedly stumbled upon a gruesome picture on his mobile phone purporting to show beheadings.

The “stateless” refugee was born in a refugee camp near Damascus. He fled to Egypt and then to Italy, before he headed for Germany.

Media sources said a so-called Haidar. A. attempted in 2017 to kill a refugee in Horlach village, south of Augsburg, allegedly after the man insulted Islam and Muslims.

SUCCESS STORIES

On April 13, 2019, Palestinian refugee Jihad Husam Joudeh won the fifth place in the German Junior Bodybuilding Championship held on April 13 in Frankfurt. The contest was supervised by international coach Ibrahim ALJoudeh (called Abu Abdullah) and Palestinian refugee from Syria Shadi Ahmed, who won the third place in a bodybuilding championship (+90 kg) held on April 4, 2019 in Ras AlKhaimah, in the United Arab Emirates (U.A.E).

Jihad, a Palestinian from Yarmouk Camp, was born in 2006. He reached Germany in mid-June 2015 and currently lives with his family in Koln.

In June, Palestinian student Khayr AlDeen Abu AlHasan, aged 18, managed to get to the finals of the international 2019 Arab Reading Challenge staged in Dubai.

Khayr Aldeen, who fled war-torn Syria to Germany, said his success is a proof that Palestinian refugees scattered overseas have never and will never throw in the towel despite the traumatic upshots wrought by the daily scenes of bloodshed, destruction, and displacement.

*In August, the SAGA sports program in the German city of Hamburg labeled the Palestinian young man from Syria Hadi Ibrahim, formerly sheltered in AlAyedeen refugee camp in Hums, as the football league's top scorer. He was awarded the league cup.

Hadi's team Altona93 snatched the first place among youth football teams.

*An exhibition was staged on March 30 and 31 by Palestinian artist from Syria Maamoun AlShayeb in Berlin to mark the Palestinian Land Day. A number of Arab and non-Arab academics and artists, along with Arab community representatives in Germany, were in attendance.

Maamoun AlShayeb was born in 1960 in Damascus-based Yarmouk Camp. His parents are natives of Haifa, in Palestine. He graduated from the Faculty of Fine Arts in Damascus in 1984 and worked as a drawing teacher in Palestinian refugee camps in Syria for over 25 years.



*In June, Dozens of Palestinian refugees from Syria rallied in Berlin to speak up against a motion by the German parliament (Bundestag) defining the Boycott, Divestment and Sanctions (BDS) movement as anti-Semitic, and thus becoming the first major European parliament to do so.

The rally-goers lifted banners and yelled slogans condemning the simmering Israeli crimes against the Palestinian people and pushing the German government to take an unbiased stance regarding the Palestinian cause.

The motion, "Resist the BDS Movement – Fighting Antisemitism," was sponsored by the Bundestag's two largest parties – Chancellor Angela Merkel's Christian-Democratic Union and the Social Democrat party – as well as the Green Party and the Free Democratic Party.

Although the motion is non-binding, its significance both within Germany and across Europe is likely to be profound.

On a European level, the motion could serve as a precedent for other parliaments to label BDS anti-Semitic. Several European countries have sought to crack down on the movement in recent years.

In August 2019, a pro-Palestine cultural event held in the German city of Lunebourg sounded the alarm over the deteriorating living conditions in Yarmouk Camp for Palestine refugees, in Damascus.



Photos taken by activist Niraz Sa'id, who was tortured to death in Syrian government prisons, were put on display at the event. A movie was also screened.

In August, a group of Palestinian artists founded the so-called Association of Palestinians Painters in Europe. 50 artists from Germany, Sweden, the Netherlands, France, Denmark, and Norway joined the move.

Half of the members of the new association are Palestinian artists from Syria, along with Palestinians from Lebanon, occupied Palestine, and blockaded Gaza Strip.

An arts exhibition was staged by the newly-founded association in Berlin, where Palestinian artists translated their commitment to their identity and their right of return to their homeland into visual representations.



NETHERLANDS

Activists, said over 7,000 Palestinian refugees from Syria have been granted citizenship in the Netherlands.

The Dutch law stipulates that a Palestinian refugee from Syria be entitled to apply for citizenship rights after a three-year stay in the country and the acquisition of the Dutch language.

In 2019, Palestinian refugee Shatha Tamim and her children were granted citizenship documents in the Netherlands.

A passport has become a dream for us, the Palestinians", says Shatha. "This Dutch passport is the first we've ever received".

Shatha fled the Syrian war to the Netherlands some four years ago, seeking a safe shelter for her children.

She took refuge in the northern Dutch city of Zaandam, where she worked as an officer with NewBees.

On March 23, 2019 she applied for citizenship following a four-year stay in the country. Her demand was approved in October. Her sister Ayeda and son Akram Zaytouni also received Dutch citizenship.

In January, Palestinian refugee from Syria Mohammed Ali received the first prize at the Dutch language competition for 2018, beating 36 others contestants.

Sponsors of the event said the move comes to pay tribute to those who have been active in language-acquisition projects in the Netherlands.

In March, Palestinian refugee from Syria Tasnim AlHazina, aged 14, has won the “Read2me” tournament in the Dutch city of Helmond, representing her Dr.Knippenberg College. Tasnim qualified for the final.

In 2017, Tasnim won a similar tournament in Helmond city. At the time, she was enrolled at Salah ALDin ALAyoubi Islamic school.

Syrine said the competition revived her sense of belonging to the Arab world in a country where the study of Arab literature and history has dwindled, adding that she read over 100 books, exceeding the required 25 books.

The explosion reportedly occurred after part of the restaurant rooftop collapsed in the grills corner. The refugee was a resident of AlNeirab camp, in Syria's Aleppo province.

On November 29, 2019, Palestinian refugees from Syria joined a vigil held outside of the International Criminal Court (ICC), in the Dutch city of The Hague, condemning the ceaseless Israeli crimes against the Palestinian people.

The protesters called for an immediate probe into Israeli crimes, most notably in the blockaded Gaza Strip, and held the ICC responsible for the continued attacks and violations perpetrated by the Israeli occupation government against Palestinian land and people.

Spokesman of the Palestinian community in the Netherlands, Ayman Najmah, handed over a memorandum to the ICC calling for an immediate and independent investigation into Israeli crimes and for the necessary legal measures in response.



AUSTRIA

Naturalization for Palestinian refugees in Austria often takes ten years to come true. There are no official statistics about the number of PRS in Austria.

In February, Palestinian refugee from Syria Hamza AlKurdi, aged 24, earned the gold medal in Austria's 2019 Kickboxing Championship.

Hamza and other students exited Yarmouk Camp in May 2013 on way to Alliance and Sai'd AlAas colleges to sit for exams. He made it in the first examination session and got enrolled at Damascus College of Commerce and Economics, before he headed for Austria in 2015.

A few days later, Palestinian refugee from Syria Fidaa Suleiman earned the gold medal in Austria's 2019 Kickboxing Championship, in the second such medal won at the competition after Hamza.

The team, led by Palestinian coach from Syria Muhammad Suleiman, earned 11 medals in the contest.

Fidaa is one among thousands of other Palestinian refugees who fled war-ragged Syria to European countries as they rummaged around for safer shelters and promising careers.

In November, Palestinian child Mohamed Anwar Ali, from Syria's Khan Eshieh refugee camp, won the gold medal as part of chess competition staged between 130 contestants representing different Austrian schools. Mohamed received the best player award. Histeam snatched the third place at the contest.

FRANCE



In March, a short film made by a Palestinian family that was deported from Yarmouk Camp for Palestinian refugees, in Damascus, to France unveiled the torture tactics pursued behind Syria's prison bars. The film came onboard Ciné Palestine Festival, held in Toulouse in mid-March.

Entitled “Ana Madakhalni”, an Arabic expression that literally means I am innocent, the movie depicts the agony inflicted on detainees in Syrian state dungeons, where hundreds have died under torture. The scenario was written by Palestinian writer Abu Salma Khalil, who also played the role of a detainee. The director of the film is 16-year-old Adam Khalil. The daughter Salma and her friend Farah Adana Li figure in the movie as Abu Salma's daughters. Journalist Fidaa AlHattab played the role of the mother.

The movie tells the story of a Palestinian family from Yarmouk Camp who lived happily at their home until the father, who works as a painter, was arrested and sent to jail. While in custody, the family's breadwinner undergoes harsh psycho-physical torture. The family home is emptied and laughter is no longer heard in the abandoned building.

The move garnered a round of warm applause from French and Arab audiences and critics and it has been widely covered by local and international mass media.



GREECE

Tens of thousands of Palestinian and Syrian refugees have flooded across the Mediterranean and into Greece over the past few years, counting on being relocated elsewhere in Europe as part of an E.U. plan to redistribute the asylum seekers to lighten the burden on the countries at the front lines of Europe's migrant crisis.

Palestinian refugees from Syria continue to risk their lives onboard the "death boats" to Greece, rummaging around for a momentary respite from the daily scenes of bloodshed and destruction.

AGPS has kept record of the death of dozens of refugees onboard Greece-bound ships. Several others have been arrested by Turkish coast guards.

Activists estimate that around 4,000 Palestinian refugees from Syria are taking cover on such Greek islands as Lesbos, Mytilene, Chios, Leros, and Kos, among other areas.

In November 2019, the Greek authorities transferred hundreds of migrants, including 25 Palestinian refugees from Syria, to the mainland.

International news sources said 800 migrants were transferred from overcrowded refugee camps on Greek islands to the mainland.

The Greek government was expected to transfer 5,000 migrants to the mainland over the following couple of weeks.

In 2019, UNICEF warned that the number of unaccompanied migrant minors staying in overcrowded reception centers on the Greek islands exceeds 1,100, the highest level since the peak of the refugee crisis in early 2016, calling on European countries to do more to protect vulnerable children.

In recent years, Greek refugee camps have reportedly been running at three times their capacity. Overpopulated refugee camps cause a shortage of resources, not least healthcare.

Despite efforts to relocate people to the Greek mainland, there are thousands of migrants and refugees in camps on Aegean islands near Turkey, most of them vastly overcrowded, unhygienic and violence-prone. Scores of asylum-seekers continue to arrive daily.

In October, a number of migrants were injured and another killed in a clash between asylum-seekers in a refugee camp set on the Greek island of Samos, police sources said Tuesday.

The migrant was reportedly stabbed to death by Afghan migrants. The violence, apparently between groups of Syrians and Afghans, erupted in a camp pitched the town of Vathy late Monday.

A fire later broke out around the camp that authorities managed to place under control early on Tuesday morning.

Half of the 6,000 people who are stuck in Vathy camp on Samos are women and children," medical charity MSF said in a tweet. "This nightmare must end! Children and other vulnerable people must be evacuated from the Greek islands to safe accommodation."

300 Palestinian refugees from Syria who have sought refuge in the Greek island of Crete have been subjected to a dire humanitarian situation as the Greek government suspended granting social insurance cards (AMKA) to the refugees, preventing them from social welfare services and healthcare.

On July 11, 2019, Greece's Labor and Social Affair Minister, Nikos Vrotsis, has cancelled a ministerial decision regarding the issuing of social security number

(AMKA) to migrants, refugees, asylum seekers, unaccompanied refugee children and non-EU nationals.

Sometime earlier, the government of Greece sent notifications to 900 asylum-seekers who were granted "refugee status" to evacuate their European-funded shelters by the end of March and ruled for suspending their allowances.

Migrants stranded on the island continue to denounce the absence of vital services and the spread of poisonous reptiles outside of their poorly-equipped tents.

At the same time, a number of Palestinian and Syrian families who have sought refuge in the Greek island of Leros have been subjected to an exacerbated humanitarian situation due to the absence of vital services, including health care, housing, relief assistance, and power and water.

The refugees continue to call on the international human rights organizations to take urgent action in response to their appeals.

Some 150 Palestinians from Syria are taking shelter in a refugee camp set up in Leros island, where they have been grappling with dire socio-economic conditions.

The refugees compared the camp to an open-air prison, saying their tents have been engulfed with barbed wire that blocks access out of and into the camp.

They further denounced the mistreatment and crackdowns they have been subjected to by the Greek police. A number of migrants were injured after they were heavily beaten by cops.

Hundreds of Palestinian refugees and thousands of other asylum seekers taking shelter in Moria camp, set up on the Greek island of Lesbos, have expressed deep concern over their deteriorating humanitarian condition

The Moria camp was built to house 3,000 people but at least four times as many people have been living there.

The unsanitary conditions being endured by Moria's former inhabitants in the fields and streets of Lesbos has caused deep alarm.

Many of the asylum seekers in Moria described life there as being worse than much of what they had endured on their long, often painful journeys towards what they hoped was a better life in Europe.



Dozens of Palestine refugees who fled the relentless Syrian warfare to the remote northwestern Greek island of Kastoria also said their children have failed to set foot in local schools and to be admitted in local hospitals for treatment.

Taking refuge in faraway shelters funded by the International Organization of Migration (IOF) on Kastoria Island, some 70 Palestinian migrants have to walk for miles everyday to reach the city center. Kastoria is a small and quiet island in northern Greece, built on a peninsula on Lake Orestiada at about 700 meters above sea level and at a distance of 24 kilometers from Albanian borders.

In October, Dozens of Palestinian refugees trapped on the Greek island of Rhodes have gone on hunger strike due to their deteriorating humanitarian and health conditions.

In a letter emailed to AGPS, Palestinian activists said women, children, and elderly refugees have undergone harsh treatment in a detention center in Rhodes.

Palestinian and Syrian migrants have disembarked on the island in early October. They were sent to custody and denied their basic rights.

Activists quoted a refugee as stating that the prison authorities have banned the refugees from going out to the prison yard and reaching the eating place. Wardens also continue to prevent their access to winter blankets.

The refugees said a number of sick migrants diagnosed with kidney disorders and skin diseases, among other health problems, have had their health condition worsened due to poor hygiene and medical neglect.

Children below the age of 10 have reportedly been clinging to their mothers' arms in custody, where expectant women have also been held.

The refugees appealed for their immediate release and for urgent medical treatment.

At the same time, some 450 Palestinian refugees from Syria who have sought refuge in AlKaroura camp, set up on the Greek island of Chios, have been subjected to a dire humanitarian situation in the poorly-equipped tents.

The refugees denounced the absence of vital services, saying they have been forced to sleep outdoors due to overcrowding. They further spoke out against the spread of poisonous reptiles and rodents due to the poor hygiene in the camp.

The displaced families called on the international human rights organizations, including the UN High Commissioner for Refugees, to take urgent action in response to their appeals.

AGPS has also documented an increase in the number of Palestinian refugees seeking shelter in Vial camp, set up on the Greek island of Chios, where they have been struggling with dire conditions.

The number of Palestinian refugees from Syria in the camp has been estimated at 460, down from 160.

Palestinian refugees said they have failed to secure potable water and food items in the camp.

Some 350 Palestinian refugees taking shelter in Nea Kavala refugee camp, in northern Greece, also sounded distress signals over the absence of vital services and delays in asylum procedures.

Founded in 2015, Nea Kavala Camp is an old military airfield. It is home to 300 migrants, mostly from Syria, Iraq, and Afghanistan.

Dozens of Palestine refugees who fled the relentless Syrian warfare to remote Greek islands have been crammed in refugee camps that have reportedly been running at three times their capacity. Overpopulated refugee camps cause a shortage of resources, not least healthcare.

In 2019, Palestinian refugee Yasser Fa'our was sent to a Greek detention center over allegations of assaulting Greek police and attempting to burn state property, among other counterfeit charges.

Reaching out to AGPS, Fa'our said he had illegally entered Greece through Turkey on May 20, 2018. He had sought shelter in Moria refugee camp on Lesbos Island. Two months later, an altercation burst out between Arab and Afghani migrants while he was outside the camp.

As tensions soared, police troops showed up in the camp and showered refugee tents with teargas grenades. At the time, Yasser and a group of migrant youths rushed to the camp to evacuate women and children through the barbed wire. Four hours later, the police unlocked the entrance gates, allowing the refugees' access out of the camp. However soon after, policemen fired teargas once again and arrested Yasser

and two other Palestinian refugees, one of them was formerly sheltered in Yarmouk Camp and the other from the blockaded Gaza Strip.

"We were exhaustively interrogated by the police. However, our testimonies were later changed in the court and we were made to sign documents which we could not translate. Five charges were slapped against us, including incitement, attempted arsons against state property, assaulting police, and defamation of public institutions", said Yasser.

Yasser and the two other arrestees were taken to Athens. Release appeals filed by their attorneys were rebuffed, pending another court hearing.

"When we reached out to the Palestinian Embassy we'd been told that there is nothing they could do for us as they are only tasked with issuing required documents", he added.

Fa'our stayed for two years in Libya and four years in Lebanon, after he fled Yarmouk Camp, in war-torn Syria. He later entered Turkey through Kurdistan and spent 10 months in the country, before he embarked on a life-threatening Greece-bound journey.

Over recent years, Yasser volunteered at human rights associations and humanitarian charities. He had launched a theatre training project and a psychological support program for youths in Moria camp, before he was ultimately sent to jail.

Palestinian refugees from Syria who have been stranded in Greece continue to sound distress signals after most European states opted for a closed-door immigration policy, leaving hundreds of refugees trapped in underequipped makeshift refugee camps. An agreement between Turkey and Greece to tighten grip on refugees from Syria trying to creep into the Greek territories via the Turkish borders has made the situation far worse.

In January, dozens of Palestinian refugees rallied outside of the European Asylum Support Office on the Greek island of Samos, protesting the slow pace of asylum procedures and delays in the transfer of refugees from the island to Greek mainland.

The migrants also railed against the dire living conditions they have been facing on the Island and called on the Palestine Liberation Organization and international humanitarian institutions to urgently step in.

Reporting from Greece, an AGPS field correspondent said nearly 7,000 migrants, among them 30 Palestinians from Syria, have been sheltered on Samos Island.

In March 2019, Greece's Ministry of Migration Policy announced its decision to suspend aid allotted to refugees who were granted subsidiary protection or asylum before August 2017.

Greek news outlets said at the time that the Greek authorities will gradually notify refugees with subsidiary protection/asylum status for over six months to leave their camps and UNHCR shelters, pending the suspension of financial aids.

The Greek government said the policy dovetails the country's attempt to rein in the influx of migrants and overcrowdings on its islands.

Human rights activists said the new decision comes in line with the EU commitment to fund the UNHCR's relief and housing program for asylum-seekers who have not yet received replies over their applications for asylum.

The activists further warned of the fallouts of the decision, which they said will result in increasing numbers of homeless refugees who will be left with neither food nor shelter and be denied their basic human rights.

On June 1, the German Federal Office for Migration and Refugees rejected most of family reunification applications submitted by refugees from Greece.

German sources said that the Federal Office turned down 472 applications for family reunifications, among 626 applications submitted by migrants taking refuge in Greece and who wished to join their families in Germany between January and May.

Humanitarian institutions often level heavy criticism at Germany for never making the reasons for such restrictions as clear as required.

On June 11, the family of Palestinian refugee Ahmed Khalil Ibrahim, called Abu AlEz and born in Damascus on November 16, 1974, appealed to the international human rights institutions, namely Amnesty International, and the Greek authorities to work on disclosing the fate of their relative, who has gone missing in Greece.

The family said Ahmed, a resident of Shabaa town, in Ghouta, mysteriously disappeared from Athens more than 30 days ago. His condition and whereabouts remain unknown.

On June 15, Palestinian refugees from Syria taking shelter at Thermopolis camp in Greece sounded distress signals over the exacerbated humanitarian conditions they have been subjected to.

In statements emailed to AGPS, the refugees said they 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.

The refugees also railed against the socio-linguistic obstacles they have been facing owing to the absence of translators in the camp, adding that the camp's sole NGO was kicked out by the director, whom they said also cut off the power generator.

In response, the migrants took out to the street to speak up for their rights, before police showed up and ordered them to backtrack. Two children were reportedly injured in the clashes.

In September, dozens of migrants took to the streets in the Greek island of Kos after refugee tents were uprooted and others fell apart as torrential downpours swamped refugee camps set up on the island.

Pictures and videos circulated on social media show dozens of refugees lying in the streets, without roofs over their heads, while their tents were dismantled by the rain showers.

The refugee denounced the absence of vital services, including health care, housing, relief assistance, and power and water.

They further called on the international human rights organizations to take urgent action in response to their appeals.

More than 200 Palestinians from Syria are taking shelter in Kos island, where they have been grappling with squalid conditions and crammed in overcrowded and poorly-equipped tents.

In July, the Immigration Department of Greece announced its decision to force refugees who have obtained Greek visas since July 31, 2017 out of their homes and shelters. Rents will be shelled out via European funds and the refugees' allowances will be suspended in three months.

Sometime earlier, the government of Greece sent notifications to hundreds of asylum-

seekers who were granted "refugee status" to evacuate their European-funded shelters.

On July 14, activists launched calls for serious action to protect displaced migrants taking refuge in Exarcheia neighborhood, in downtown Athens, following a decision by the government of Greece to evacuate buildings sheltering migrant families.

In a letter to the concerned NGOs and activists, Palestinian activist Mootaz Mahmoud said that in the next few days the Greek authorities will evacuate buildings sheltering irregular migrants, including women and children, in Exarcheia neighborhood.

The activist warned that scores of migrants will be left in the streets, with no roof over their heads, and called for urgent steps to secure safe shelters for the displaced families.

Sometime earlier, the Immigration Department of Greece announced its decision to force refugees who have obtained Greek visas since July 31, 2017 out of their homes and sent notifications to hundreds of asylum-seekers who were granted "refugee status" to evacuate their European-funded shelters.

On July 22, Greek government suspended granting social insurance cards (AMKA) to the refugees. On August 20, Some 90 Palestinian refugees from Syria landed in Greece after they set sail from Turkey onboard rubber boats.

The Greek government expressed its deep concern over the reported 17 percent increase in migrant and refugee arrivals in recent weeks, saying close to 20,000 migrants are currently staying in overcrowded camps on Greek islands in the eastern Aegean Sea.

In late August, 13 boats carrying around 540 people landed at Skala Sikamias in Lesbos, the largest number in a single day since the signing of the EU-Turkey agreement. The 2016 deal enables Europe to send back all migrants who come irregularly via Turkey to the Greek islands. However, in three years, a relatively small number has been returned under the agreement.

The arrival of so many boats on Lesbos at the same time came as a surprise, said Boris Cheshirkov, a spokesperson for the United Nations refugee agency, UNHCR. "We can't say for certain what the reason is," Cheshirkov said. "Usually the factors that drive people to cross the sea from Turkey are warm weather and an increased volatility in their home countries, such as Syria and Afghanistan."



The arrivals from Turkey prompted the Greek foreign minister, Nikos Dendias, to summon the Turkish ambassador last Friday to “express Greece’s deep discontent.” The ambassador assured him that Turkey remained committed to the EU-Turkey deal, Reuters reported.

On September 10, Syrian and Palestinian refugees seeking shelter on the Greek island of Samos continue to rail against the poor services provided to them by the Greek authorities. A number of refugees threw meals to protest the poor-quality food. Worm-stuffed meals unfit for human consumption have figured in pictures circulated on social media networks.

The refugees also said they have been made to line up in long queues for over five hours to get their meals.

In late September, Palestinian and Syrian migrants who have sought shelter in Moria refugee camp, pitched on the Greek island of Mytilene, took to the streets on Sunday, speaking up against the squalid humanitarian condition they have been facing.

Greek police unleashed heavy sprays of teargas grenades to disband the protesters, several among whom choked on teargas. At the same time, wildfires broke out at a number of mobile caravans set up in the camp, resulting in heavy material damage.

Over recent months, Moria, one of the biggest refugee camps in Europe, has been running at three times its capacity, reportedly with over 9,000 refugees.

Thousands of women and girls are trapped on Greek islands, often in horrendous conditions, due to a “containment” policy for asylum seekers, to facilitate speedy processing and return to Turkey under the EU-Turkey deal.

UNICEF warned that the number of unaccompanied migrant minors staying in overcrowded reception centers on the Greek islands exceeds 1,100, the highest level since the peak of the refugee crisis in early 2016, calling on European countries to do more to protect vulnerable children.

“We continue to appeal to Greek authorities to transfer children to adequate accommodation on the mainland, but Greece cannot support refugee and migrant children alone,” UNICEF’s regional director for Europe and Central Asia Afshan Khan said from the agency’s headquarters in Geneva.

"It is vital that European governments increase pledges to relocate unaccompanied and separated refugee and migrant children, and fast-track family reunifications for those who already have relatives in Europe," she added.

Built to house 3,000 people, the Moria facility is hosting more than 8,700, including some 3,000 children, according to UNICEF. There are 520 unaccompanied children at a special section of the camp which was made to hold 160. Overall, Greece is hosting more than 32,000 child migrants of whom 4,100 are unaccompanied.

As a freezing winter season is around the corner, thousands of migrants, including Palestinian refugees from Syria, continue to struggle with terrible conditions, in overcrowded and ramshackle tents and containers on Greek islands.

On October 9, a navy ship carrying around 500 refugees and migrants, including 65 Palestinians from Syria, from the southeast Aegean island of Symi docked at the Greek capital's Piraeus port on Tuesday morning.

Symi does not have facilities to house migrants and asylum-seekers, which means that dozens of people were having to sleep in tents or in the open air outside the island's police station and port authority, as well as in public squares and streets.

assisted by private boats and the European Union border protection agency Frontex. The circumstances of the collision were not immediately clear.

The crash occurred before sunrise Wednesday in the heavily patrolled waters of the east Aegean Sea.

"The search effort is focused on locating a missing 26-year-old Syrian man," coast guard spokesman Nikos Lagadianos said. "The collision happened in total darkness ... they are trying to make the crossing undetected and the dinghies are usually overloaded with people. It is sometimes very difficult to detect those boats even for vessels equipped with radar."

According to AGPS data, Greek islands have seen a surge in recent months of refugees and migrants traveling in boats to the Greek islands to try and eventually reach EU countries.

On November 5, the Greek authorities transferred hundreds of migrants, including 25 Palestinian refugees from Syria, to the mainland.

International news sources said 800 migrants were transferred from overcrowded refugee camps on Greek islands to the mainland.

The Greek authorities released on Saturday, November 23, 120 migrants, including Palestinians from Syria, who have been detained on Rhodes Island for nearly 60 days.

The freed migrants include Palestinians, Iraqis, and Syrians.

The list of released migrants includes Palestinian refugee from Syria Thaer Tamim, along with his wife and two children, who reached Simi Island on September 22, 2019, coming from Turkey. The family was transferred to Rhodes Island after their health had taken a turn for the worse.

On September 26, Thaer was sent to a detention center on Rhodes Island while his wife Rima Abdul Kader and two children Abdul Rahman and Bilsan were taken to Lalisos Police Station on Rhodes Island.

The family had been subjected to mistreatment by the prison authorities. Wardens refused to give them winter blankets and drinking water. They were kept behind prison bars without charges. Authorities claimed that they were kept in jail because of over crowdedness in refugee camps and migrant reception centers.



Thaer and his family had also been left without treatment. Thaer, who was diagnosed with urinary tract disorders and severe inflammations, got his teeth falling out and sustained right hip fractures. His children suffered weight loss, anemia, and vitamin D deficiency.

In mid-October, An AGPS reporter said 85 Palestinian refugees from Syria have disembarked on such Greek Islands as Chios, Samos, and Mytilene.

Greece reportedly deported about 60,000 migrants to Turkey between 2017 and 2018, according to a report on the online news portal of weekly German magazine Spiegel, published last month.

According to Spiegel, Turkey accused Greece of not properly dealing with the asylum status of migrants. Instead, Turkish Interior Ministry filed claim that Greece illegally transported 58,283 people to Turkey in the 12 month period leading up to November 1, 2018.

"Push back" of asylum seekers is considered illegitimate under European and international law. Governments are required to seriously assess the asylum status of new migrants rather than forcing them back to another country.

In 2018, AGPS released a shocking report about a group of migrants who were discovered by villagers in Turkey's northwestern Edirne province in a run-down and naked state, after they were reportedly beaten up and stripped of their clothes and belongings by Greek police.

The migrants, including Yemeni and Palestinian refugees, were found while walking in open fields by locals of Kiremitçi Salih village in Uzunköprü district on the eastern bank of the Maritsa River forming the border between Turkey and Greece.

Live snapshots showed all migrants with visible signs of battery on their backs and all over their bodies.

The incident was the latest string of events involving police violence against migrants fleeing war-torn zones. Similar incidents have also taken place on the Aegean, where coast guards have been accused of deflating migrant boats and re-routing them back to Turkish territorial waters.

Based on the accounts of the illegally deported migrants, Greek police officers are also accused of confiscating migrants' valuable possessions and torturing them,

before pushing them back on the border, in violation of international law.

In December, Greek police set off tear gas to try and calm the protests at the Greek island camp of Vathy.

German press agency *dpa*, said Migrants are reported to have started fires and thrown stones at the police in protest at the overcrowded conditions in the camp. Schools in a 600-meter radius from the camp were reportedly evacuated because of the smoke from the fires.

Dpa says that the protests are thought to have come this time from the African community in the camp who have been demanding for days that they be transferred to the Greek mainland.

At the moment, it is estimated that are more than 7,500 migrants in Vathy, many of them unaccompanied children and young adults. According to the UNHCR, the camp has a capacity of just 648.

On December 15, Palestinian refugees taking shelter on the Greek island of Kos said their tents have been uprooted and others have fallen apart as torrential downpours have swamped refugee camps set up on the island.

Pictures and videos circulated on social media show dozens of refugees lying in the streets, without roofs over their heads, while their tents have been dismantled by the rain showers.

OFFICIAL STATEMENTS

In August 2019, Hamas' Department of Refugee Affairs called for securing psycho-physical and legal protection for Palestinian refugees who entered the Greek authorities, fleeing war-torn Syria.

In a statement, Hamas's Refugee Affairs Office expressed concern over the harsh living conditions endured by Palestinian refugees from Syria after they fled the unabated violence in Syria.

It said Some 160 Palestinian refugees from Syria who have sought refuge in the Greek island of Rhodes have been subjected to a dire humanitarian situation as their camp has been pitched in an area that served as a slaughterhouse for pigs and deprived of vital services, including healthcare, along with power and water.



The department's director Iyad AlMaghari called on the Greek authorities to allow a safe access to Palestinians from Syria into Greece and provide them with the needed services.

The Greek authorities continue to drag their feet over the refugees' calls to have their legal status worked out and to provide them with safe shelters.

SUCCESS STORIES

In November, a renowned publishing house in Athens released the Greek version of a poetry anthology by the Palestinian poet Mahmoud AlSersawi, which was translated by Professor A. Pianotti. It includes a forward by Professor Renos Papa Dublos and notes by Prof. George Rodosynthos, journalist Kifah Jahjah, Greek teacher Anastats, Cypriot Minister of Labor and Communications, and Mayor of Strovolos. The anthology was published in its English version earlier this year under the title *The Edge of Passion*.

Palestinian poet Mahmoud AlSersawi has been a member of the Union of Palestinian Writers and Journalists since 1985. He has produced several poetic anthologies, including "Sighs of Drought", "The Remains of the Soul", "The Edge of Passion", "Sound and Silence", and "A Critical Study of Mahmoud Darwish's Poetry".

A Palestinian poet from Syria, who now lives in Cyprus, AlSersawi is an awarded poet who also worked as a cultural editor for many Arabic and Palestinian journals before fleeing Syria. Ever since he fled to Cyprus with his family to escape the brutal war, he dreamed to have part of his poetry collection published and shared with Cypriots.

In 2010, he received the Palestinian Writers and Journalists Union decoration for his outstanding creativity and cultural activism. He is also the founder of the Ghassan Kanafani Forum in Damascus.

He began working in the press in 1988 and has written extensively in Palestinian and Arab newspapers.



Some 300 Palestinian refugees from Syria in Cyprus, along with other Palestinian refugees and migrants from Iraq and Lebanon, have been facing dire humanitarian conditions due to the absence of relief assistance and lack of access to the labor market in a country where 23.9% of the population are at risk of poverty and social marginalization.

In October 2019, Palestine Envoy to Cyprus, Ambassador Jabran Tawil, discussed with Kyriakos Kouros, Director of the Cyprus President's Diplomatic Office, the situation of Palestinian refugees in Cyprus.

Mr. Tawil underscored the need to set a relief mechanism to assist Palestinian refugees in Cyprus. The Cyprian official vowed to reach out to the concerned authorities to that end.

SUCCESS STORY

Palestinian child from Syria Mohamed Ayyash has been supervising chess competitions at a sports club in Cyprus' capital city of Nicosia.

Mohamed is supervising 25 players in the club. He is the youngest chess referee in Cyprus and has obtained high scores at his school in Nicosia.

The boy also provides free translation services for refugees and accompanies them to hospitals and other facilities in Cyprus.

Mohamed fled to Lebanon from Syria's AlSayeda Zeinab refugee camp, in Rif Dimashq, with his family. However, the family soon sought shelter in Cyprus due to the unrest gripping the Lebanese territories.



مجموعة العمل من أجل فلسطينيي سورية
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