

Escalation of violence in Syria claiming Palestine refugee lives and destroying civilian homes

 [unrwa.org/newsroom/official-statements/escalation-violence-syria-claiming-palestine-refugee-lives-and](https://www.unrwa.org/newsroom/official-statements/escalation-violence-syria-claiming-palestine-refugee-lives-and)

[Donate](#)

[Back to Newsroom](#)

08 June 2016

The United Nations Relief and Works Agency for Palestine Refugees in the Near East (UNRWA) deplores the escalation of the armed conflict in Syria which in recent days has claimed the lives of two Palestine refugees in the northern city of Aleppo and continues gravely to endanger the safety of Palestine refugees in Khan Eshieh camp in southern rural Damascus.

On 4 June, at around 15:30 hrs, 14 year-old Baraa Mahmoud Hosin Jomaa, was killed in the Al Hamadaniyeh area of Aleppo city when an exploding rocket struck his home. He died at a time when the area was hit by a barrage of munitions causing tens of deaths and casualties. On 5 June, at approximately 10:30 hrs, Khairieh Zohir Siam, aged 41 years, was struck by a bullet from a sniper rifle while she was travelling in a commercial mini-bus in the Al Ramoseh area in Aleppo city. She was killed instantly, while another Palestine refugee, a fellow passenger, was injured in the hand and neck. UNRWA strongly condemns the parties responsible for these deaths. The thoughts and condolences of UNRWA staff are with the bereaved families.

In Khan Eshieh camp, southern rural Damascus, intense fighting involving the use of heavy weapons and airborne munitions continues to endanger the lives of Palestine refugees and to damage and destroy civilian homes. On 4 June, shortly before 13:00 hours, the home of a Palestine refugee was hit and severely damaged by an explosive munition. This follows the death of a six year-old Palestine refugee child from an artillery explosion on 27 May, and the death of five Palestine refugees in two separate artillery strikes inside Khan Eshieh camp on 17 May.

UNRWA remains gravely concerned about the risk of death and serious injury to Palestine refugees and other civilians throughout Syria. The Agency reiterates its demands to all parties to desist from exposing civilians to these risks. To save civilian lives, it is imperative that all sides respect and comply with their international humanitarian law obligations.

Background information on the situation in Syria

UNRWA in Syria provides vital humanitarian support and health and education services to 450,000 Palestine refugees. Over 95 percent of the Palestine refugees are wholly reliant on UNRWA humanitarian aid.

In the Governorate of Aleppo, UNRWA serves some 25,000 Palestine refugees who reside in Aleppo city and Neirab camp. Many of these refugees have experienced displacement. Ein El Tal camp (Handarat) located north of Aleppo city was once home to around 7,000 residents. In April 2013, armed groups entered the camp, forcibly displacing the entire population over a period of some 48 hours. As the camp has been a theatre of armed conflict since then, it is likely to have sustained extensive damage. Neirab camp is

southeast of Aleppo city and is situated adjacent to an airport. The camp's 15,000 residents include Palestine refugees displaced from Ein El Tal and further afield. Neirab residents have experienced the effects of armed conflict at varying intensity since 2012.

Khan Eshieh camp, home to about 9,000 Palestine refugees, is located in a volatile area in the rural area south of Damascus, where spikes in violence have caused the death of seven Palestine refugees in the past two weeks. Since 2012, the farms and fields surrounding the camp have been active battlegrounds in which heavy weapons have been deployed with often indiscriminate impact. Some 75 UNRWA staff residing in the camp strive to maintain support to Palestine refugees through limited services offered in three schools, a health clinic, and a community centre. UNRWA's work is impeded by the fact that since 2013, humanitarian access to Khan Eshieh has been constrained. To receive assistance, Palestine refugees must travel at great personal risk to UNRWA distribution centers in Sahnaya or Khan Dannoun.

Background Information:

UNRWA is confronted with an increased demand for services resulting from a growth in the number of registered Palestine refugees, the extent of their vulnerability and their deepening poverty. UNRWA is funded almost entirely by voluntary contributions and financial support has been outpaced by the growth in needs. As a result, the UNRWA programme budget, which supports the delivery of core essential services, operates with a large shortfall. UNRWA encourages all Member States to work collectively to exert all possible efforts to fully fund the Agency's programme budget. UNRWA emergency programmes and key projects, also operating with large shortfalls, are funded through separate funding portals. UNRWA is a United Nations agency established by the General Assembly in 1949 and mandated to provide assistance and protection to some 5.4 million Palestine refugees registered with UNRWA across its five fields of operation. Its mission is to help Palestine refugees in Jordan, Lebanon, Syria, West Bank, including East Jerusalem and the Gaza Strip achieve their full human development potential, pending a just and lasting solution to their plight. UNRWA services encompass education, health care, relief and social services, camp infrastructure and improvement, protection and microfinance.

For more information, please contact:

Sami Mshasha

Director of Communications, Arabic Language Spokesperson

Mobile:

+972 (0)54 216 8295

Office:

+972 (0)258 90724

Email:

Show Email

Show your support to Palestine refugees in Gaza
Donate

SUBSCRIBE TO THE UNRWA MAILING LIST

Sign up below to receive the latest news and updates about our work with Palestine refugees across the Middle East.

Copyright© United Nations Relief and Works Agency for Palestine Refugees in the Near East