

## Palestinians in Yarmouk: Refugees Once Again

When your home is being destroyed, and your life and the lives of your children and loved ones are threatened, you have no time to think and few choices. You have to try to get everyone somewhere safe?away from the bombing, bullets, and other immediate threats as soon as possible.

But then you find yourself displaced in shelters and camps, with very little to no food, water, money, work, sanitation, or supplies. And then other threats to your children's lives become very real, very fast, like starvation, disease and dehydration. These are threats you can't run from ?

What do you do when all hope seems lost?

For the Palestinian refugees from Yarmouk camp near Damascus in Syria this is the reality. Yarmouk is home to the largest Palestinian refugee community in Syria. Although this community worked hard to improve their own living conditions since 1957, families from Yarmouk are now struggling to survive due to the war in Syria, and threats to their lives are everywhere. They are fighting a hard battle every day to stay alive?and children are suffering the most.

They were refugees once, already struggling to make ends meet, and now they are refugees fighting for their lives again.

Amneh, a teacher and mother of four, was trapped in Yarmouk for months. Nothing was allowed in or out of the camp.

?Living in a besieged camp is fatal?we were on the verge of starvation,? she said. Some reports even say that refugees are eating grass to satisfy their hunger and thirst.

With the help of UNWRA, the food baskets and blankets that Islamic Relief USA donors sent to Yarmouk to Amneh and her family were like a miracle for them.

?The food basket really saved us! Humanitarian aid is a must, it has to be continued.? Amneh said.

Hanan, also a mother of four, has been in trouble too. Before the crisis, her family had a good, stable life. Her children are well educated?her daughters are a pharmacist and a student of economics, and her sons are studying medicine and Arabic literature. But the conflict in Syria put their lives on hold. Once looking forward to promising careers, now they are displaced with no income. They were able to find a space at a refugee shelter, but can't afford the basics, not even the medication her son needs. The cash assistance they received helped pay for his medicine, and shelter managers are providing food, hygiene kits, blankets and other necessities to help them survive in these difficult times.

These women and their families were among 22,273 people helped by Islamic Relief USA donors in 26 refugee camps for Palestinians in Damascus. Donors helped provide essentials, including 18,900 tins of meat and the same number of packets of pasta, 18.9 metric tons each of rice, lentils and sugar, 18,900 liters of cooking oil, 10.9 metric tons of milk powder, and more food, as well as urgently needed sanitary items.

?The hardships are still deepening,? she said, ?Go on serving Palestinian refugees, we need your services especially in light of current events [in Syria]. We appreciate all your efforts.?

You can learn more about emergency efforts for those affected by the Syrian crisis by visiting the **Syrian Humanitarian Relief page**.