



11 April 2015 - “Surely, we can all refuse to tolerate the intolerable.” This was the plea of UN Secretary General Ban Ki-moon at a Press Stakeout in New York on Thursday 9 April 2015 addressing the rapidly deteriorating situations in Yemen and Syria. “The residents of Yarmouk are being turned into human shields.”

The Yarmouk camp in Damascus has housed Palestinian refugees of the Arab-Israeli war and their descendants since 1948. Before the Syrian war began in 2011 there were some 160,000 residents in the camp, but after years of merciless siege only 18,000 Palestine refugees and Syrians remain - about one eighth of the original number - 3,500 of which are children.

Since the self-proclaimed Islamic State group launched an offensive to [take control](#) of the camp at the beginning of the month, the residents are now being held hostage in conditions which Ban Ki-moon has described as resembling “the deepest circle of hell.”

“The Syrian war long ago exceeded words to describe the mayhem. Now the fighting has plumbed new depths. A refugee camp is beginning to resemble a death camp.”

Humanitarian corridor closed

According to a press release circulated by the UN Relief and Works Agency for Palestine Refugees ([UNRWA](#)) “Men, women and children – Syrians and Palestinians alike – are cowering in their battered homes in profound fear, desperate for security, food and water.”

The Secretary General explained that those trapped inside the camp “face a double-edged sword” of threats from both the “armed elements inside the camp, and government forces outside.”

"As I have repeatedly said, attempts by the Houthis and their allies to take territory by force and undermine the authority of the legitimate government are in clear violation of Security Council resolutions and their commitments in the UN-facilitated political process."

Falling short

Addressing reporters on Wednesday, UNRWA Spokesperson, Stéphane Dujarric stated that UNRWA had called for a pause in the hostilities in order to allow humanitarian access to civilians in need of assistance and the safe evacuation of those who wish to leave Yarmouk

UNRWA have previously stated that “the level of our aid has been [well below the minimum](#) required,” stressing the agency’s readiness to resume assistance to the civilian population as soon as hostilities cease. “Potable water is now unavailable inside Yarmouk and the meagre health facilities that existed have been overrun by conflict. The situation is extremely dire and threatens to deteriorate even further.”

Click [here](#) for an overview of the latest UN activities and diplomatic efforts in response to the

Palestinian refugees remain trapped inside Yarmouk camp.

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Syrian crisis.