

UN Calls For Help In Yarmouk

10th April 2015

The United Nations has made a plea for humanitarian access to the besieged Yarmouk Palestinian refugee camp in the suburbs of Damascus. The UN is concerned about the plight of around 18,000 Palestinian refugees holed up in the camp. Many of Yarmouk's residents fled after the group ISIS invaded last Wednesday and overran the camp. Jordan's Ambassador to the UN Dina Kawar called "for the protection of civilians in the camp" and for "humanitarian access to the area including...life-saving assistance". Another UN spokesperson Pierre Krahenbuhl described the situation as "more desperate than ever". He said: "What civilians in Yarmouk are most concerned about right now is bare survival".



Yarmouk was established in 1957 to accommodate the huge influx of Palestinian refugees from Israel. It became home to the largest Palestinian refugee community in Syria. Before the recent ISIS incursion, around 160,000 people lived there. Life in the camp had already become intolerable for most residents following 18 months of bombing and a siege because of Syria's civil war. Many parts of the camp now resemble a ghost town, with shells of bomb-blasted buildings and a civilian population that has fled. News agencies report that ISIS now controls about 90 per cent of the camp. Syrian authorities are worried ISIS could use it as a springboard to launch attacks on the capital Damascus.

Vocabulary

- *plea*
- *suburbs*
- *fled*
- *assistance*
- *concerned*
- *establish*
- *community*
- *incursion*
- *resemble*
- *launch*

COMPREHENSION QUESTIONS



1. Where in Damascus is Yarmouk?
2. How many Palestinians are in the camp?
3. Who is Pierre Krahenbuhl?
4. When was Yarmouk first set up?
5. For how long have the people of Yarmouk endured bombing?

DISCUSSION QUESTIONS

1. What good do you think the U.N. plea will do?
2. How can the world help the refugees in Yarmouk?
3. To what extent has the world forgotten about what's happening in Syria?
4. What will it take for there to be no more refugees in the world?
5. Should the USA and other countries go into Syria?

