

Corona and Palestinian refugees in Lebanon

The living conditions of Palestinian refugees were no better before the spread of Corona. For the past seventy years they have suffered from marginalization and discrimination, which prevented them from obtaining the most basic human rights. The crisis of a pandemic outbreak of corona doubled their suffering, as it (the pandemic) came after the continuation, escalation and deterioration of the economic crisis and the decline in the value of the Lebanese currency against the US dollar. The past is a result of the plan of the decisions of the former Lebanese Labor Minister to combat foreign employment, as well as the deterioration of the economic situation and the unfair decisions of the Minister against the Palestinians. In the month of October, the popular uprising was launched, with the accompanying of cutting roads and closing institutions and factories.

Yes, the suffering of the Palestinian refugees in Lebanon is cumulative. Its results were depriving the Palestinian of his social and economic rights, such as the right to work, ownership, hospitalization, social security, etc.

The deterioration of the Lebanese pound exchange led to insanely high prices, which negatively affected the ability to meet daily life needs, and exacerbated the socio-economic situation that the majority of Palestinian refugees suffer from food insecurity and severe and expected poverty, so that the poverty rate between them is now more than 80%.

In order to confront Corona, a coordination committee was formed at the initiative of the Palestinian Red Crescent Society with the participation of UNICEF, UNRWA and a number of Palestinian and foreign NGOs working in the health field, and the committee's leadership was assigned to UNRWA as the international body entrusted with providing services and relief to the Palestinians. Where it was later coordination with the Lebanese Ministry of Health and the Lebanese Red Cross.

The Corona pandemic has demonstrated the inability of the United Nations organizations, the European Union and foreign organizations to respond to the needs of facing this epidemic, and in turn, Palestinian NGOs have initiated and within their capabilities to carry out awareness campaigns, sterilize service centers, roads, etc., and provide in-kind assistance to the poorest families.

It is the divine ability that has thus far protected the camps from the spread of this epidemic, because if it spreads, there will be a catastrophe among the camp population, as to this date there is only a Palestinian refugee family from Syria that has suffered the epidemic, so the mother is treated in the government hospital specialized to treat this epidemic. The rest of the family members were isolated and placed in a school inside the camp, as their house does not allow the required conditions of isolation to be applied.

Finally, it must be noted that UNRWA's delay in responding quickly in carrying out its tasks as an international body responsible for providing relief, health and operational services has left the Palestinian refugees in Lebanon vulnerable to poverty and destitution, and this in itself is a violation of their human dignity and a violation of its commitment and mandate. Which necessitates the assistance of Palestinian refugees in the host countries, and as the pandemic revealed UNRWA's shortcomings in responding immediately to meet the required needs, it also revealed the inability of the PLO and its many factions, and with it the Palestinian Authority, which instructed its embassy in Lebanon to pay 10% of the cost of treating the patient with the epidemic and that UNRWA bear the costs. The rest of the treatment.

What the Palestinian or foreign NGOs provide does not meet the needs of the Palestinian refugees, just as the Palestinian Authority will provide the provision of catering rations and the establishment of some organizations as well. They all remain below the minimum requirements needed.

Unfortunately, Corona will throw thousands of Palestinian refugees in Lebanon into the clutches of poverty and destitution Hunger if urgent relief programs are not implemented, as well as from the UNRWA and international and foreign organizations, including what necessitates the duty of the authority to provide support to the people of the camps, and the results of the Corona reflection will be so effective that the poverty, unemployment and outbreak will increase Mental illness, suicide, theft and violence forms multiple.

Let us work to fight poverty, ignorance, preserve human dignity, and safeguard their economic, social and human rights.

Kassem Aina

General Director

National Institution of Social Care & Vocational Training/ Bait atfal assumoud

Office Tel: 00961-1-859076 / 00961-1-859092 / 00961-3-233073

fax: 00961-1-859071

Mobile: 00961-3-233053