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Rural Aleppo: Up to 100 Cases of Leishmaniasis Recorded in Deir Ballut Camp in Afrin

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In the Deir Ballut camp, located in the Jindires district in the region of Afrin, Aleppo province, up to 100 people are affected by the dermal leishmaniasis disease. The incidences are accompanied by a shortage of treatment in the camp, while no precautionary steps are undertaken as to prevent the disease's proliferation, the field researcher of Syrians for Truth and Justice/STJ reported.

A doctor in the Deir Ballut camp, on the condition of anonymity, told STJ's field researcher in the region that no less than a hundred incidences of leishmaniasis were recorded, of whom 20 are children, in the two divisions of the camp; Deir Ballut and al-Mohammedia. He added that the treatment to the boil, resulting from the disease, is unavailable in the camp, being a generic medicine, namely Pentostam.

The doctor added the following:

“Without treatment, the boils, resulting from being affected by leishmaniasis, can heal within a year, but they leave deformities and scares in the place where they appeared. During this period, they would be vulnerable to ulceration and inflammation. The treatment is unavailable in the camp, and those who want the treatment must go to Idlib province. The price of a single treatment dose is 5000 Syrian pounds, about \$10 per session, a sum of money that the camp's displaced people cannot afford.”

STJ's field researcher met several of the affected people, of whom are Saleh, a 52-year-old man, and his son, who is 14-year-old. Both of them could not find medications in the camp's dispensary. According to this, Saleh along with other affected people demanded that the camp's administration provide the medication, but they received no reply. This situation also applies to Um Mohammad, who is seeking treatment for her child. She said:

“I do not have the transportation fee required to reach Idlib province as to treat my child, let alone the cost of the treatment itself!”

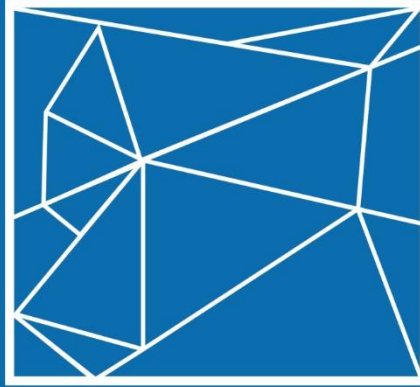
According to STJ's field researcher, little ponds of water and swamps proliferate in the camp's surrounding, while it is full of latrines and located close to the river, which contributes to the spread of the insect causing leishmaniasis. In addition to this, insecticides are not spread and no preventative actions are undertaken, such as filling in the swamps, which help insects amass.

It is worth mentioning that a death case due to deplorable humanitarian conditions¹ was recorded, and the people of the Deir Ballut camp have for several times demanded that AFAD organization, responsible for it, move the camp to another location, considered safer when it comes to natural factors. Today, the camp is erected in a very low plain, while surrounded by high hilltops, which creates the potential for deluges to form upon massive rainfalls, which, in turn, will sweep the tents away since the area lacks a sewage system. Despite this, the people's demands met no answer.

On May 21, 2018, the Syrian regular forces controlled the Yarmouk Camp, under a deal they signed with the opposition armed groups back then, which provided for the departure of those refusing the reconciliation with the Syrian government from the area towards Syria's north.

¹ "First Death Case due to Deplorable Humanitarian Conditions Recorded in Deir Ballut Camp", Syrians for Truth and Justice, November 22, 2018. (Last visit: January 16, 2019 (. <https://stj-sy.com/ar/view/993>).

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About Syrians for Truth and Justice:

STJ is an independent, nongovernmental organization whose members include Syrian human rights defenders, advocates and academics of different backgrounds and nationalities.

The initiative strives for SYRIA, where all Syrian citizens (females and males) have dignity, equality, justice and equal human rights.

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