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Sharp Deterioration of the Medical Situation in al-Rukban Camp- Jordan Denies Entry of Patients for Cure

Meditation and Privileges for Jaysh al-Ashaer Fighters While Displaced Await Days for Cure

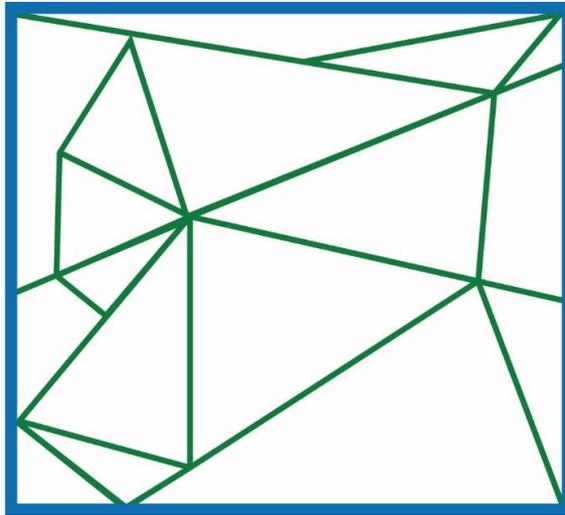
About Syrians for Truth and Justice

[Syrians for Truth and Justice \(STJ\)](#) is an independent, non-governmental and non-profit organization whose members include Syrian human rights defenders, advocates and academics of different backgrounds and nationalities. It also includes members of other nationalities.

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

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Health conditions have worsened in the al-Rukban refugee camp¹, located in the Syrian/Jordanian border junction. Multiple diseases, including malnutrition and food poisoning among children, were registered, and health situation has worsened accompanied with a significant soar costs of medicine while Jordan refuse the entry of the patients to its territory for treatment, According to several testimonies, came by STJ, illustrating the poor living conditions of the displaced within the al-Rukban refugee camp since the beginning July 2018.

In an interview with STJ on July 15, 2018, a nurse at one of the medical posts in the al-Rukban refugee camp who preferred anonymity for security purposes, said that diseases including the gastrointestinal infections, food poisoning and acute diarrhea are very prevalent in the camp, as the proportion of children infected with sharp diarrhea topped 25%, and other children also suffer from dehydration, in addition to the widespread of lung disorder, acute bronchitis and urinary tract infections (UTIs) among the displaced in the camp.

The three medical posts within the camp were unable to treat the severe diarrhea diseases because there was no potential to carry out the necessary analyses to determine the type of bacteria causing the disease, as well as inability to cure several cases, such as burns, fractures and myocardial infarction due to the lack of the necessary potentials, the nurse said.

The cost of the medicine rose remarkably after the Syrian regular forces and their allies launched their military operation in Daraa province, blocking the Dumeir Road, where medicines used to come from regime-held areas, the nurse said, explaining that "medicine smuggler" are imposing extra profit, up to 60%, on the medication, and that the "merchants" within the camp impose estimated 15% profit as well and control the price because of the difficulty of getting medication and its scarcity.

He added:

"A patient who is affected with food poisoning or severe diarrhea needs serum along with some medications. The cost of this simple treatment is SYP 10,000, which is a very large amount comparing to the current financial condition of the camp population."

Another medical source, whose identity is withheld for security purposes, in an interview with STJ on July 13, 2018, said that in the camp situations of suffocation were recorded among the children and the elderly, plus allergies in the chest as a result of dust storms that hit the area. Moreover, the high temperatures, the desert environment, the spread of insects and the lack of cooling devices and food preservation have contributed to the deteriorating of the health situation.

¹ Al-Rukban refugee camp lies on the Jordanian-Syrian border junction. It is established camp 5 km along the border strip with the Hashemite Kingdom of Jordan inside the Syrian territory at about 25 km length and 3 km deep within the de-escalation zone between Jordan and Syria. This camp was randomly established and has no obvious geometric shape since it was set up based on the displaced initiatives without the care of civic institutions. Estimated 80,000 Syrian refugees live there and this number is declining according to the security situations and ongoing battles east and central of Syria, in the midst of continuous movement from and to the camp, according to sources in-charge-of the statistic and documentation based in the camp.



On June 23 and 26, 2018, the al-Rukban refugee camp saw [two demonstrations](#) in which the displaced called Jordan and the United Nations to redistribute food aids, improve the sanitary conditions and open the border crossing point for the sick.

Several medical sources from within the camp told STJ that the Jordanian border guards prevent the sick people, even if their situation was so serious, from entering Jordan for cure emphatically. They only allow an element of Jaysh al-Ashaer Faction to enter easily under a medical report.

One of the women, living in the camp and who is an escort to a patient with kidney failure, said that she was waiting with the patient at the Jordanian medical post (Awon Point) and has a medical report confirming the deterioration of the patient's condition, and continued: "The soldier at the point tore the medical report and prevented my entry on the pretext of congestion and he expelled us (...) If you (have a mediator) i.e. know an element of the Jaysh al-Ashaer faction, then you can enter, otherwise you have to wait days and weeks until you are allowed."

In the same context, the son of a patient with heart disease, who asked anonymity, said that his father is suffering from ischemia, paroxysmal supraventricular tachycardia and needs a catheter and electrocardiogram. He said when he took his father to the medical post of (Awon Point), they conducted a simple check without electrocardiogram, gave him some medications and asked him to return to the camp. But, the patient's condition had yet to be recovered.

The witness added that the entering the medical post is so difficult and it is too overcrowded. He added, "the patient might wait days in order to enter the medical point, but eventually, enters in case he/she has got a medical report illustrating his/her condition."

Concerning (Awon medical point), the activist Mohammed Hasan al-Ayed, director of the Palmyra News Network in an interview with STJ on July 19, 2018, said that the point is about 3 km from the al-Rukban refugee camp, located at the Jordanian sand berm within al-Haram area between Syrian/Jordanian borders, and all its personnel are Jordanian. It is just a small field hospital, plus the treatment and services it offer are not better than those provided by the simple medical points inside the camp, except that the medication is free and available. He continued,

"Only the patient with the most severe emergencies (about to death) is allowed to enter Awon Point. But despite the seriousness of the patient's health condition and his desperate need to enter a hospital and intensive care, he is not allowed to enter Jordan for treatment. Treatment is limited to some medication at Awon Point and is sent back to the camp again. also, it is allowed to the point only through a mediator from Jaysh al-Ashaer, since it is backed by Jordan."



[The Goodwill Ambassador for United Nations refugee issues as-Safiya al-Ajloni Aal al-Majali has already stated](#) to Smart News Agency that the Office of the High Commissioner did not act "faithfully" to deliver food and medicine supply to both the al-Rukban refugee camp and al-Hadalt (al-Rweishad) camps, located at the Syrian/Jordan border, and that the aid and food relief that had entered the camps in previous occasions had been the result of personal efforts and donations from rich people in European states, most notably Italy and Germany, and the role of the Office of the United Nations High Commissioner was limited only to the coordination of access to the camps.

STJ had [published a report](#) in September 2017, highlighting the agony of the displaced persons in access to safe drinking water, let alone the deplorable living conditions of displaced persons.