

# UN Agency Warns of Record Rates of Hunger in Sanctions-Hit Syria



Workers carry a sack of hay to load it into a truck at a field in Qamishli countryside, in northeastern Syria June 30, 2022.

BEIRUT (Dispatches) – The World Food Programme has warned that hunger rates in Syria have soared to record highs after more than a decade of devastating foreign-backed conflict and biting Western sanctions.

A brutal war that triggered years of economic crisis and damaged vital infrastructure has put 2.9 million at risk of sliding into hunger, while another 12 million do not know where their next meal is coming from, the UN agency said. “Hunger soars to 12-year high in Syria,” as 70 percent of the population might soon be “unable to put food on the table for their families,” the statement said.

“Syria now has the sixth highest number of food insecure people in

the world,” the WFP added, with food prices increasing nearly 12-fold in three years.

Child and maternal malnutrition are also “increasing at a speed never seen before,” in more than a decade of war.

If the international community does not step up to help Syrians, it risks facing “another wave of mass migration,” said WFP Executive Director David Beasley during a visit to Syria this week.

“Is that what the international community wants?” he asked, urging donor countries to redouble efforts to “avert this looming catastrophe.”

UN human rights experts have already warned about the deleterious impacts of the Western sanctions

against Syria, saying the ongoing unilateral coercive measures have caused dire humanitarian consequences for Syrian citizens who are seeking to rebuild their lives.

Alena Douhan, the United Nations Special Rapporteur on the negative impact of the unilateral coercive measures on the enjoyment of human rights, in November last year called for the removal of sanctions against Syria, warning that they were perpetuating and exacerbating the destruction and trauma suffered by the Syrian nation since the onset of the foreign-sponsored conflict in March 2011.

“I am struck by the pervasiveness of the human rights and humanitarian impact of the unilateral coercive measures imposed on Syria

and the total economic and financial isolation of a country whose people are struggling to rebuild a life with dignity, following the decade-long war,” Douhan said in a statement following her 12-day visit to Syria.

Douhan said 90 percent of Syria’s population was currently living below the poverty line, with limited access to food, water, electricity, shelter, cooking and heating fuel, transportation and healthcare; and warned that the country was facing a massive brain-drain due to growing economic hardship.

Syria has been in the throes of foreign-backed militancy since March 2011. While the Daesh terrorist group was crushed by the Syrian government, the militant groups continue to hold sway in some parts of the country under the patronage of Western powers.

Numerous reports have pointed to the US’ role in transferring Daesh terrorists to the war-ravaged country and even airlifting supplies to the group.

Last year, the U.S. government imposed sweeping economic sanctions against Syria amid the Arab nation’s uphill battle for reconstruction and recovery.

The controversial Caesar Syria Civilian Protection Act, signed into law by former President Donald Trump, targeted individuals and businesses anywhere in the world that participated either directly or indirectly in Syria’s economy.

The restrictive measures have blocked imports of essential goods, affecting the Syrian people’s access to medical equipment, food, heating, gas, and electricity.

## Zionist Settler Violence Goes to Europe Through Virtual Reality

BRUSSELS (Dispatches) – A peaceful vista of the rugged South Al-Khalil Hills in the occupied West Bank is rudely interrupted by a man, a Zionist settler, wielding an automatic rifle in the distance. Next, the Zionist police come and throw tear gas at a group of Palestinians, all the while shouting at them and pushing them back. This immersive ‘virtual reality’ experience of settler violence was available for a limited time at the JW3 cultural

space in north London.

Israeli human rights organization B’Tselem had created the VR installation in order to bring the reality of settler violence to the UK, then on to Europe and the rest of the world.

B’Tselem’s spokesperson Dror Sadot said they want to bring it to communities like this one, to try to put them in the shoes of Palestinians that face these attacks.

“When we put videos online, it’s easy to scroll past them.

When you’re here with this headset on, you can’t scroll past. You can’t ignore it.”

For Sarit Michaeli, an Israeli human rights activist who helped create the VR video, seeing the locations and videos together is still a difficult experience.

“Wow...it’s not the first time I’ve seen that but it’s still pretty hard core.” Sarit was shot with a rubber-coated steel bullet from close range by Zionist troops in 2013, while supporting

a protest in the occupied West Bank, but the incident hasn’t held her back.

“This isn’t just about making people aware, it’s about getting people to understand what’s happening on the ground, but also to take responsibility and take action...to hold Israel accountable for this situation.”

B’Tselem hopes to expand the project so it can bring it to cities and communities around the world.

## Report: Syrian Killed by Zionist Fire in Golan Heights

GOLAN HEIGHTS (Dispatches) – Zionist troops shot dead a Syrian national and injured another for allegedly approaching a fence, according to the military on Sunday.

In a statement, the occupying regime’s army said troops monitoring surveillance cameras spotted the two men crossing the so-called Alpha Line -- a UN buffer zone separating the Israeli-occupied territories from Syria -- and approaching the fence in the occupied Golan Heights.

“Army soldiers were dispatched to the scene and opened fire in accordance with standard operating procedures,” it added.

No injuries were reported among Zionist troops.

There was no comment from Syrian regime authorities on the incident.

The Zionist regime has occupied most of the Syrian Golan Heights since the 1967 Middle East War.

On March 25, 2019, the former U.S. administration of Donald Trump recognized the occupying regime’s so-called sovereignty over the Golan Heights, which caused uproar in Syria.

## Turkey Deports 139 Illegal Afghan Migrants

ANKARA (Anadolu) – A total of 139 Afghan migrants, who entered Turkey illegally, have been deported, said the head of Turkey’s Migration Management Directorate.

As part of the work carried out according to the Irregular Migration Strategy Document and the National Action Plan, migrants, who do not have valid documents to reside legally in Turkey, are being sent to their home countries by charter flights. After going through all necessary pro-

cedures, including health checks and security-related steps, the migrants were deported to Afghanistan, Savas Unlu told reporters in the capital Ankara.

Stressing that Turkey arranged nine charter flights in 2023, Unlu said: “We have deported 8,571 irregular migrants from our country so far this year. This does not include these 139 migrants.”

Unlu added that as a result of Turkey’s efforts to combat irregular migration, the

number of irregular migrants arriving at the country’s borders for illegal entry in 2022 decreased by 38% compared to 2021.

“Since 2016, 2.7 million irregular migrants have been prevented from entering our country illegally,” he said.

Turkey has been a key transit point for asylum seekers aiming to cross into Europe to start new lives, especially those fleeing war and persecution.

## Europe...

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The government has criticized STOP for the way it has organized the strikes because, it says, it does not have a pre-set timetable and teachers and staff only refuse to work certain hours on a specific day but are still able to close schools.

Elsewhere in Europe, trade unions are calling for new demonstrations across France from Tuesday and threatening more industrial action into February.

After their tour de force on 19 January – more than two million took to the streets according to the organizers – France’s eight main trade unions have called for “a more massive mobilization on 31 January”.

However, Prime Minister Elisabeth Borne has stood firm, saying the raising of the retirement age to 64 in France is “no longer negotiable”.

Unions are hoping for a massive popular wave against the proposals of the “unfair reform” and its key measure: the postponement of the legal retirement age from 62 to 64 years.

But after their first successful action mid-January, “the bar has been set high,” according to political scientist Dominique Adolfo, and the unions “can’t afford a slip-up”.

The CGT union remains confident, believing turnout will be larger this coming Tuesday, as polls show public opinion a turning point against the reform.

France’s largest CFDT union maintains the French population is “very unfavourable to the project and this opinion is tending to grow” – and for the government to ignore the protests would be a mistake.

This Tuesday, more than 200 rallies have been planned across France.

In Paris, the strike march will end at Invalides – close to the National Assembly – where the examination of the controversial bill will already have begun.

Disruptions are expected on public transport this Tuesday – particularly at the SNCF rail and RATP metro operators – and school closures are also anticipated, with the number of primary school teachers on strike to be known by Monday.

## Murder...

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From the time officers opened his car door, only a minute has passed.

Someone fires a stun gun as Nichols runs away. At least two officers go after him, but they give up after about 15 seconds. One officer pants as he radios in for backup and makes his way back to the street where Nichols’ car is left.

About eight minutes later, word comes that the suspect was apprehended.

“I hope they stomp his ass,” one officer says to another. “I hope they stomp his ass.”

It’s 8:33 p.m. now and officers have clustered at the corner of Castlegate and Bear Creek, less than a half-mile from where this started. Nichols’ capture turns brutal with such speed that it’s hard to comprehend.

From a security camera perched above, Nichols is seen lying in the street. Two officers pin him down as a third appears to kick him in the head once, then again.

“Mom! Mom!” he cries.

He’s allowed to sit up, only to have an officer use his baton to beat him on his back. He wobbles up again, then absorbs a series of punches to the face and head. He’s doused in pepper spray.

Nichols seems nearly unable to stand now. He is held up by officers as more blows land. Then, after about five minutes of attacks, he is dragged a

short distance, his limp body propped against a car.

It’s 8:38 p.m., just 14 minutes after the initial traffic stop. You can’t see Nichols’ face, but hospital photos released later will show his nose bent at an unnatural angle and his face bloodied and bruised, almost unrecognizable.

Nichols’ moans have been silenced and the night’s action has largely stopped. Left in its wake is the ever-growing number of officers who wander, chit-chat and, most of all, just stand by with such nonchalance you’d think nothing had ever happened. Paramedics arrive a few minutes late and, still, Nichols appears unattended to.

He was only a minute or two from the home he shared with his mother, RowVaughn Wells. The officers’ voices capture them calling him “bitch,” “bastard” and worse.

His mom knows the truth. He was 29 and imbued with California mellow, a FedEx worker, amateur photographer, skateboarder and “damn near perfect” mama’s boy. He did no drugs, Wells said, and had no guns. He went out to take pictures of the sky and never made it home.

The footage runs more than 20 minutes more until an ambulance blocks the shot. Wells can’t bear to watch it anyway.

## Mass...

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developments in other countries as if they were beholden to it,” ministry spokesman Nasser Kanaani said.

The spokesman said the Canadian government’s slogans and claims are aimed at shifting the blame onto others and deflecting attention from its complicity in this human tragedy and bear testimony to the fact that this government and its allies are using human rights as a tool to impose their biased political viewpoints on others.

Kanaani expressed regret and deep concern over the large extent of these crimes and historic genocide while sympathizing with the Canadian indigenous community, saying, “These crimes against humanity will never remain undisclosed to true justice-seekers around the world, and the Canadian government should be held accountable for its dark past.”

## FM...

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United States’ demands will further strip the European Union of its dignity and credibility before the world public opinion. We advise Europeans to come to their senses and not to sacrifice their interests for the sake of U.S. desires.”

Nikzad stressed that the IRGC is an official military force and that Iran will definitely respond to any desperate and unwise attempt to blacklist the force.

“The National Security and Foreign Policy Commission of Majlis (the Iranian parliament) has drawn up a relevant plan. We are waiting for Europeans to alter their stance. The Islamic Republic’s hands, though, would not be tied and would react to any belligerence, if they insist on their behavior,” he said.

“European statesmen and women should remember the time they were haunted by the fear of Daesh terrorists, and then be thankful for the sacrifices made by the heroic IRGC forces.”

## Parliament...

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The Iranian Foreign Ministry vehemently denounced the act of sacrilege in Sweden, saying the move was a blatant example of spreading hatred and violence against Muslims.

Foreign Minister Hussein Amir-Abdollahian also said Western countries’ support for such acts in the name of freedom of expression is “not acceptable at all.”