



## **BUILDING LEGITIMACY UNDER BOMBS: SYRIAN LOCAL REVOLUTIONARY GOVERNANCE'S QUEST FOR TRUST AND PEACE**

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DOCTORAL THESIS

NOUR SALAMEH

BUILDING LEGITIMACY UNDER BOMBS:  
SYRIAN LOCAL REVOLUTIONARY GOVERNANCE'S QUEST FOR TRUST AND PEACE  
(2017)

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by

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UNIVERSITAT ROVIRA I VIRGILI

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## Summary in English

Although, Local Governance Entities in opposition-controlled areas in Syria introduce themselves as governmental bodies, their role and agency go beyond the traditional definition of local governance which limits them to resource mobilization, program implementation and service provision. They are part of a conflict society which includes a diversity of different organizations and groups, including, economic actors, private citizens, educators, activists, faith-based groups, foundations, legal organizations, advocacy groups, civil society organizations and the media, and also armed actors.

By scrutinizing the current dynamics and different types of local and provincial governance and administration entities and initiatives existing in Syria (since the beginning of the revolution in 2011 till the date of writing this thesis 2017), and their relations with internal and external actors, as well as with major influential armed groups, I tend to measure the impact of these entities on local communities, and examine the hypothesis that the revolutionary capital that they possess asserts their position in the transitional period in Syria, and in the efforts for building sustainable peace in the country.

In fact, I argue that a representative and legitimate system built with a bottom-up approach based on elections, with embedded freedom of expression, association and social inclusion would solidify peace or local truces, and may, if applied on a larger scale, lead to national peace.

Further, I wonder if the involvement of local governance entities in peace negotiations and the transitional period that follows would reflect the triumph of the Syrian revolution and what it stands for in terms of putting an end to years of authoritarian regime and establishing a democracy that is well adapted to the particularities and the characteristics of the Syrian people.

I also question if these LCs, in their current status, could serve as an example of a revolutionary democracy that could pave the way to a social democratic government.

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## Resumen en Español

Si bien las Entidades de Gobernabilidad Local de las zonas controladas por la oposición en Siria se presentan como órganos gubernamentales, su papel y su organismo van más allá de la definición tradicional de gobernanza local, lo que limita su papel a la movilización de recursos, ejecución de programas y prestación de servicios. De hecho, estas entidades forman parte de una sociedad de conflicto que incluye una diversidad de organizaciones y grupos diferentes, incluyendo actores económicos, ciudadanos privados, educadores, activistas, grupos religiosos, organizaciones legales, grupos de defensa, organizaciones de la sociedad civil y medios de comunicación. También actores armados.

Estudiando la dinámica actual y los diferentes tipos de entidades e iniciativas de gobierno y administración locales y provinciales existentes en Siria (desde el inicio de la revolución en 2011 hasta la fecha de redacción de esta tesis en 2017) y sus relaciones con actores internos y externos, así como con los principales grupos armados influyentes, intento de medir el impacto de estas entidades en sus comunidades locales y de examinar la hipótesis de que el capital revolucionario que poseen afirme su posición en el período de transición en Siria y en los esfuerzos por construir una paz sostenible en el país.

De hecho, argumento que un sistema representativo y legítimo construido de abajo a arriba basado en elecciones, con libertad de expresión, asociación e inclusión social, solidificaría la paz o las treguas locales y podría, si se aplicara en mayor escala, conducir a la paz nacional.

Además, me pregunto si la participación de las entidades locales de gobernanza en las negociaciones de paz y en el período de transición que sigue reflejaría el triunfo de la revolución siria y lo que representa en términos de poner fin a años de régimen autoritario y establecer una democracia que sea bien adaptada a las particularidades y características del pueblo sirio.

También cuestiono si estas entidades, en su estado actual, podrían servir como ejemplo de una democracia revolucionaria que podría allanar el camino a un gobierno socialdemócrata.

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## Preface

*“It was curious to think that the sky was the same for everyone, in Eurasia, or Eastasia, as well as here. And the people under the sky were very much the same. Everywhere, all over the world, hundreds or thousands of millions of people just like this. People ignorant of one another’s existence, held apart by walls of hatred and lies, and yet almost exactly the same, people who has never learned to think but were storing up in their hearts and bellies and muscles the power that would one day overturn the world.” – Georges Orwell, 1984*

Since Syrians found that Orwellian power within their hearts and dared to rise against the 40 year old authoritarian regime of Assad (Both father and son), they have endured all kinds of suffering and pain. The peaceful uprising, which erupted in March 2011, inspired by the Arab Spring, has soon descended into a bloody and brutal armed conflict with no end in sight.

Nearly 4 million Syrians are refugees, 7.6 million people are internally displaced and 16 million are in need of assistance inside and outside Syria<sup>1</sup>. More than 470,000 Syrians were killed between 2011 and 2017 according to the Syrian Centre for Policy Research<sup>2</sup>. In January 2014, the UN Office for Human Rights stopped updating the death toll in Syria as it lacked feet on the ground in the country and it was unable to verify “source material” from those with access to information<sup>3</sup>. Syrian human development indices have been rolled back 35 years. More than half of the population of 21.4 million persons now live in poverty, with an additional 6.7 million persons descending into poverty during the period of the conflict, with some 3.6 million of these becoming extremely poor. Since the start of the conflict 2.3 million jobs have been lost, while the unemployment rate has skyrocketed to 48.8 per cent. The educational system is in crisis with damage and destruction to almost 3,000 schools, while another 1,992 provide shelter for Internally Displaced Persons (IDPs). The school attendance rate has dropped to 46.2 per cent, with a shortage of teachers as thousands have joined the throng of refugees and IDPs. The healthcare system has been devastated by the loss of 32 government hospitals, and 31 per cent of Public Health facilities, added to the collapse of the domestic pharmaceutical industry and international sanctions blocking the import of lifesaving drugs, specialised modern medical equipment and spare-parts. The

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<sup>1</sup> <https://www.mercycorps.org/articles/iraq-jordan-lebanon-syria-turkey/quick-facts-what-you-need-know-about-syria-crisis>

<sup>2</sup> <https://www.hrw.org/world-report/2017/country-chapters/syria>

<sup>3</sup> <http://foreignpolicy.com/2016/04/22/u-n-envoy-revises-syria-death-toll-to-400000/>

system has also been stressed by shortages of health care workers, 80,000 deaths and approximately 240,000 persons that were injured or maimed during the conflict<sup>4</sup>.

To these tragic figures, the international community finally decided to react, and Kofi Annan who was the first UN and Arab League Special Envoy for Syria, called for a meeting in June 30th 2012 in Geneva, Switzerland. Officials from the US and Russia, along with other major powers, met and agreed on a political transition road map for Syria, known as the Geneva Communiqué. The road map envisioned the establishment of a transitional governing body, to be agreed upon and composed by both government and opposition, with full executive powers that would oversee elections and put the country on the path to democracy by engaging all groups and segments of the Syrian society in a meaningful national dialogue process; reviewing the constitutional order and the legal system; conducting free and fair multi-party elections for the new institutions and offices to be established and by ensuring full representation of women in all aspects of the transition<sup>5</sup>. Two months later, Mr. Annan, who kept expressing his optimism over the first Geneva peace talks, ended up resigning from his position, describing as "Mission impossible" the conclusion of a political solution to the crisis in Syria. For many observers, mostly Syrians, this resignation reflected one thing: None of the actors in Syria, especially armed ones, or the different foreign and regional powers engaging in the conflict, were ready to accept the very principle of a political solution. On July 2012, the International Committee of the Red Cross (ICRC), which oversees the Geneva Conventions, said fighting in Syria had spread across the country, and Syria had, since, become regarded as a "non-international armed conflict", which is the technical term for civil wars. Yet, the signs of an increased conflict fatigue, that both the Syrian regime and opposition showed, perhaps created sparkles of hope for international diplomacy to reengage in bringing conflicted parties together to discuss a political solution and a possible end to what's been described as the greatest humanitarian catastrophe in modern times. On the 22nd of January 2014, the successor of Mr. Annan, the UN peace envoy to Syria Lakhdar Brahimi, pursued, in cooperation with the United States and Russia, the Geneva II Conference for Syria with the aim of ending the war by bringing together the Syrian government and opposition to discuss clear steps towards a transitional government. However, the only thing that both sides managed to discuss was issues related to the provision of humanitarian aid to the people living in besieged or hard to access areas, and the exchange of prisoners. The discussions were conducted through an intermediary, Mr. Lakhdar Brahimi, and no concrete results were achieved. This time, the talks clearly demonstrated that nor the Syrian regime who has

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<sup>4</sup> <http://scpr-syria.org/publications/policy-reports/the-syrian-catastrophe-socioeconomic-monitoring-report-first-quarterly-report-january-march-2013-2/>

<sup>5</sup> <http://www.un.org/News/dh/infocus/Syria/FinalCommuniquéActionGroupforSyria.pdf>

been increasingly showing signs of fragility, or the Syrian traditional political opposition who remains fragmented, confused, disoriented and unable to agree on who is the true representative of the Syrian Revolution, or how to topple the Syrian regime, were capable of settling for a transitional peace process in Syria.

Meanwhile, major armed groups seemed to growing their influence on the ground. In various occasions these groups demonstrated that they were the real decision maker on the ground, at least in opposition-controlled areas<sup>6</sup>. Local truces and cease fires, backed by the UN, were negotiated with the allies of the Syrian regime.

These consecutive diplomatic failures, added to the intervention of different key players in Syria, has turned what started as a popular uprising, to a proxy war between major powers, especially after the emergence of the so called Islamic State - IS (Also known as ISIS, the Islamic State of Iraq and Sham or Daesh in Arabic) in April 2013. Since then, the United States has been leading an international coalition of over 62 countries and groups to weaken IS<sup>7</sup>. Russia, also, started conducting air strikes against IS militants, as well as against Syrian opposition-armed groups whom it considers terrorists groups. Meanwhile, Iran continues to support the Syrian regime, providing funding, weapons, fighters and other critical aid and expertise, while Saudi Arabia and other Arab states like Qatar, have and continue funding number of rebel groups fighting the Syrian government. Last but not least, Turkey who has the largest border line with Syria remain critical player in this conflict, whether by receiving nearly two million refugees; hosting the Syrian opposition and facilitating humanitarian aid delivery to Syria; or by providing technical assistance and funding to the Syrian civil and uncivil opposition who is based in Turkey. More recently, Turkey's part in the conflict took yet another turnaround. On 24th of August 2016, Turkish ground forces supported by tanks and warplanes crossed the Syrian border in a large scale effort to seize the city of Jarabulus from Islamic State (IS). Jarabulus is a vital supply line for IS and one of its last remaining strongholds on the border. Turkey's recent intervention also reflects its concerns over the growing influence of YPG<sup>8</sup> across the Syrian frontier, where they have captured large swathes of

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<sup>6</sup> In July 2015, Labib Al Nahhas, head of foreign political relations for Ahrar al-Sham Movement (A leading coalition of multiple Islamist and Salafist armed groups that coalesced into a single brigade in order to fight against the Ba'athist government led by Bashar al-Assad) expressed the Movement's readiness to engage in the international dialogue for Syria. In an op-ed published by Washington Post, Al Nahhas presented his Movement as a liable and capable partner who "believes in a moderate future for Syria that preserves the state and institutes reforms that benefit all Syrians". See full article [https://www.washingtonpost.com/opinions/the-deadly-consequences-of-mislabeled-syrias-revolutionaries/2015/07/10/6dec139e-266e-11e5-aae2-6c4f59b050aa\\_story.html?utm\\_term=.25618e8f9f33](https://www.washingtonpost.com/opinions/the-deadly-consequences-of-mislabeled-syrias-revolutionaries/2015/07/10/6dec139e-266e-11e5-aae2-6c4f59b050aa_story.html?utm_term=.25618e8f9f33)

<sup>7</sup> <http://news.nationalpost.com/news/mobilizing-the-world-up-to-62-nations-and-groups-have-joined-coalition-against-isis>

<sup>8</sup> Yekîneyên Parastina Gel (YPG) or the People's Protection Units. They were formed in 2004 as the armed wing of the Kurdish leftist Democratic Union Party.

territory since the start of the Syrian war in 2011<sup>9</sup>. While Turkey views the YPG as a terrorist group linked to the PKK <sup>10</sup> and has frequently bombed its forces, the United States does not view it as a terrorist group and has actively supported it as an ally fighting IS forces. This brings Turkey and the United States into conflict as Turkey continues to bomb the YPG forces over objections from the US. Meanwhile, the Syrian Kurdish fighters have an understanding with Russia, who supports the Syrian regime who allows them to take as much territory in the north of Syria as they can, as long as they stay out of the fight against it.

This is nothing but a drop in the sea of confusion prevailing the international community when it comes to Syria. It is also an indicator on how a true solution for the conflict may not be fully in the hands of Syrians.

In October 2015, the United States, the European Union, Russia, Saudi Arabia, Egypt, Qatar, Turkey, Iran and even Lebanon gathered in the Austrian capital for a new round of discussion on the political transition in Syria. Neither the Assad government nor the opposition were invited. On the 29th of January 2016, a UN Peace Conference for Syria started in Geneva. At the first day, Syrian government and opposition refused to sit in the same room together. On the 3rd of February 2016, UN envoy Staffan de Mistura suspended the peace talks.

At the time of writing this dissertation, very little has changed in terms of diplomacy, while the human cost of this bloody conflict continues to rise. Yet, in the midst of this chaotic and grim scene some Syrians remain faithful to the dream of establishing a democratic modern country free of all sorts of dictatorship, a country for all its constituents, the ethnic and the religious ones. To achieve the dream, hundreds of Civilian entities, organizations and initiatives have been forming and developing.

Their members are the unknown heroes whose action rarely reach the daily news. Behind each image of destruction, there's another one of rebuilding, behind each report on a "lost generation", there are thousands of initiatives to recover education in

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<sup>9</sup> A US-backed alliance between the Kurdish YPG and some Syrian Arabs called the Syrian Democratic Forces (SDF) have been advancing and taking over strategic areas from various armed Islamist groups. It scored a success by driving Islamic State (IS) militants out of the town of strategic town of Manbij in August 2016. The jihadist forces had to retreat to the town of Jarablus which Turkey recently seized.

<sup>10</sup> The Kurdistan Workers' Party or PKK (Partiya Karkerên Kurdistanê) is a left-wing organization based in Turkey and Iraq. Since 1984 the PKK has been involved in an armed conflict with the Turkish state, with the initial aim of achieving an independent Kurdish state, which has since shifted to a demand for Kurdish autonomy in Turkey

devastated areas. After every falling bomb, there is a team of Civil defence and “Free Police” rescuing and securing Civilians from falling structures. Behind each story of despair, there are hundred ones of hope and resilience that I intend to highlight and document.

### Aim of the Research

The first research proposal I submitted to my professor initially aimed at investigating Syrians' relation with Facebook and their use of this virtual space to launch civil initiatives, organize revolutionary activities, and communicate what was happening in the country to the outside world. This blue space was a fascinating world for me, me, the person who lived all her life under the Baath era and the rule of an authoritarian family who denied Syrians the right to free expression and to exercise their role as citizens in a republic that was supposed to derive its legitimacy from citizens themselves.

Right after being enrolled in the PhD program, I left Spain to Turkey to witness the revolution of my people closely. In Turkey, I first lived in a border town close to a humanitarian crossing through which I used to cross to northern Syria, and it was there where I rethought my priorities. I wasn't sure if I wanted to continue my studies. Witnessing the human suffering of my own people, all I wanted was be an actor instead of a spectator.

I volunteered, then worked with a nascent Syrian NGO. We provided humanitarian aid to refugees and displaced people, and we also started implementing vital projects such as schools, medical centres and centres for women's economic and professional empowering inside Syria.

One year later, I had the chance to work with a program aiming at enhancing local governance entities inside Syria. Back then I knew nothing about these entities, so I dedicated myself to learn more about them. Who are they? How they're formed? Who form them? What's the social status of their members within their communities? What's their relation with armed groups controlling the areas they operate in? And most importantly, are they capable of mobilizing their communities? And what does it take for them to so?

With all these questions in my head, I returned to Spain to discuss a new research proposal with my thesis director, but the research goal was only clear to me after three years of working on this subject. I finally realized that my goal is in fact to document as much as I can of the most important moments and achievements that local governance entities experience in a war setting and in the midst of chaos and excessive violence.

Most of the existing literature tackling conflicts and civil wars from an anthropological, social or political perspective often focus on pre or post-conflict societies. Actually, I couldn't find what would help me understand how communities organize or manage themselves while they are exposed to continuous bombing and are witnessing violent and military operations over extensive period of time. I couldn't find, neither, sufficient literature to assist me in understanding the mechanism of resilience that conflict communities develop to survive, and how would these communities would employ this mechanism in the transition period if Syrians arrived to that moment someday.

Writing this thesis, I realized that I had another objective. The truth is that it was never my dream to be an academic researcher. Throughout my professional and university trajectory, I have never been asked to elaborate or write a research paper. Yes, I did obtain a Bachelor degree in French Language and Literature without writing a single paper, just as most of the students who studies and graduated from Syrian universities which was nothing but the reflection of a deteriorated silenced and corrupted society.

It was in Tarragona, Spain, during my Master's studies where I discovered the "invention" of free expression and the necessity to compensate all the learning opportunities that I have missed. I desperately needed academic knowledge to understand what's happening around me. And because I am one of those dreamers who want to change the world, I realized that life, social and professional skills are not enough to make a change. These skills must be completed with scientific methods to obtain sustainable results.

To be able to add a very small contribution to the historical and anthropological history of conflict societies in also my objective in this research.

## Introduction

As dark and complex as it seems, perhaps the Syrian uprising which erupted in March 2011, is the most astonishing political and social development in Syria since the 1963 coup d'état which inaugurated a Baathist regime that later culminated in a one-family rule demolishing every Syrian hope in establishing an inclusive secular democratic state. It has created heated debates and generated extended researches not only in the worlds of diplomacy and politics, but also in the academic sphere where sociologists, academics and researchers rushed into analysing every bit of this movement as part of the "Arab Spring". Yet, after nearly six years of excessive violence, this movement turned into a regional conflict with horrific consequences starting from the emergence and the rise of radical organizations and terrorist groups on the Syrian soil and beyond, the largest displacement crisis in decades, and last but not least a regional and international proxy wars<sup>11</sup> that are threatening the international security, and fostering ethno-religious conflicts that could tear apart the Middle East as we know it. These developments shifted the focus of scholars addressing the Syrian conflict more towards studies related to international relations, terrorism, security, refugees, forced migrations, and others, with little attention to the Civilian dynamics in the areas of which the state withdrew or was forced out by armed groups. One of the most spectacular aspects of these dynamics is the emergence of hundreds of self-organized civil structures, known as Local Councils (LCs) who introduce themselves as local governance and administration entities, and alternatives to the authoritarian regime that considerable part of Syrians rose against.

By 2013, the Syrian territory became highly divided, with the Syrian government controlling less than 50% of the country; armed opposition groups holding the entire Province of Idlib (North), and parts of the provinces of Aleppo, Latakia, Homs, Hama, Daraa and Rural Damascus; Kurdish forces controlling parts of northern Syria in Aleppo and Hassaka Provinces, and finally the extremist group IS extending its control over a corridor along the Euphrates River spanning from Raqqa, to Deir Ezzor and Aleppo Province, with little presence in some communities in the southern parts of the Capital Damascus and very few villages in the mountains of Qalamon (Rural Damascus).

Among these four areas of influence and control, it is the areas that are controlled by opposition armed groups that present interesting findings and various models of governance that are experiencing democratic practices, and contributing to the reconfiguration of social structures where people have margins of freedoms allowing them to explore the limits of the revolutionary action.

Despite their foibles and limitations, these structures are potentially the most effective and capable opposition parties to engage in any peace process or measure aiming at

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<sup>11</sup> <http://www.washingtontimes.com/news/2014/feb/26/proxy-war-between-iran-saudi-arabia-playing-out-in/>

ending the Syrian bloodshed, and saving what has left of the Syrian society's diversity and coherence.

Their closeness and engagement with the communities they serve and with the values of the Syrian uprising, enable them to play impactful roles in fostering transparent and democratic practices within their societies. It also entitles them to popular legitimacy and acknowledgement that would allow them to take critical decisions when it comes to the fate of their local communities, as already happened in few areas across Syria.

Over the course of six years, LCs proved to be very resilient and effective in gaining citizens' confidence and acceptance. In various occasions people saw them as tools to shape the future of their state, a state of social justice and equal distribution of wealth and resources. Others saw in them an opportunity to create the nucleus of legitimate and representative government to substitute the current Assad rule, while others believe that these LCs could play a major role in establishing sustainable peace if they are supported to contribute in the state-building process during the transitional period.

Although, LCs introduce themselves as governmental bodies, their role and agency go beyond the traditional definition of local governance which limits them to resource mobilization, program implementation and service provision. LCs actions and dynamics are tangled up with the military and uncivil actors. Their actions often intertwine with those of Civil Society. Hence, LCs become part of a conflict society which includes a diversity of different organizations and groups, including, business, private citizens, educators, activists, religion-based groups, foundations, legal organizations, advocacy groups and the media (M, Raffaele. 2016).

It is the position of LCs in the heart of such society, and the necessity to include them in peace negotiation processes and peace-building efforts that this research is focusing on. Between 2014 and 2016, I worked with an official United States program <sup>12</sup> supporting local governance in Syria. My work with Local Councils and my daily contact with members of these entities, added to a close follow up to citizens' perceptions of LCs and their interaction of this type of elected entities, made me see how these self-organized structures managed, in a relatively short time, to build up a legitimacy that Syrian government lacked throughout the last four decades.

Over 40 years, governance has been heavily concentrated in the hands of the ruling elite and regime cronies, who manipulated the society through financial incentives,

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<sup>12</sup> Syria Regional Program (SRP) is a USAID/OTI funded program supporting Syrians who struggle for a future Syria based on democratic governance and respect for human rights. The program provides assistance to moderate civilian entities at the national, provincial and local levels, including LCs and the Civil Defence, among other Civil Society organizations.

repressive tactics, clannism, nepotism and systematic debilitation of local leaderships, forcing, thus, their legitimacy on people, and weakening Syrians' sense of a common identity and social contract.

Under Assad, government power remained highly centralized in the Syrian capital, Damascus, weakening the autonomy of provincial and local governance entities, and alienating huge segments of the Syrian population from the decision-making and from political participation even when it comes to issues strictly related to their own life styles, customs, traditions or the management of local resources, knowing that the Syrian demographics are a complex mosaic of more than 7 ethnicities and dozens of religions.

Weakening the autonomy of local administration and governance entities and reducing or manipulating the role of local leaderships whether tribal, religious, or ethnic, became Assad's tool to control citizens and confiscate their freedom, free will and interest to engage in public affairs. This marginalization combined with systematic introduction of corruption and nepotism to the economic, social and political systems in Syria, added to the inherited Ba'ath suppressing politics towards some Syrian ethnic groups, resulted in popular discontent and disengagement. These practices played huge role in creating fragile social cohesion. To tighten its grasp over the Syrian population, Assad dynasty fuelled ethnic and religious tensions by denying certain ethnic groups, such as Kurds of their basic rights and even citizenship<sup>13</sup>; granted leading positions in the armed forces, the intelligence services, and the ruling Ba'ath Party command to Alawites<sup>14</sup>; and created a new bourgeois class of regime cronies who benefited of the dramatic neo-liberal economic changes introduced to Syria by Assad the son, following the death of the father in June 2000. Not to mention repression of any movement or group showing

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<sup>13</sup> On 23 August 1962, the Ba'athist government conducted a special population census only for the region of Jazira (Later divided into three provinces: Deir Ezzor, Hasakah and Ar Raqqa) which was predominantly Kurdish. As a result, around 120,000 Kurds in Jazira (20% of Syrian Kurds) were classified as "ajanib," meaning "foreigners," based on Kurds from Turkey who had been in Syria since 1925. According to this classification, they were stripped of their Syrian citizenship. In fact, the inhabitants had Syrian identity cards and were told to hand them over to the administration for renewal. However, many of those Kurds who submitted their cards received nothing in return. Meanwhile, those who did not participate in the census were classified as maktumin ('unregistered or concealed'), an even lower status than the ajanib; for all intents and purposes, these unregistered Kurds did not exist in the eyes of the state. They could not get jobs, become educated, own property, participate in politics, or even get married. In some cases, classifications varied even within Kurdish families: parents had citizenship but not their children, a child could be a citizen but not his or her brothers and sisters. Those Kurds who lost their citizenship were often dispossessed of their lands, which were given by the state to Arab and Assyrian settlers. Three years later, in 1965, the Ba'athist government decided to create an Arab Belt (Al Hizam Al Arabi) in the Jazira region. The belt was 300 kilometers long and 10-15 kilometers wide, stretched from the Iraqi border in the east to Ras Al-Ain in the west. The implementation of the Arab belt plan began in 1973 and Bedouin Arabs were brought in and resettled in Kurdish areas. The toponymy of the area such as village names were Arabized. According to the original plan, some 140,000 Kurds had to be deported to the southern desert near Al-Raad. Although Kurdish farmers were dispossessed of their lands, they refused to move and give up their houses. Among these Kurdish villagers, those who were designated as foreigners were not allowed to own property, to repair a crumbling house or to build a new one.

<sup>14</sup> Members of the same religious minority of which the Assad family descends. Alawites who make up 12% of Syria's population are an Islamic sect who follow a very highly controversial branch of the Twelver school of Shia Islam.

slight sense of protest against the exploitation of the Syrian people's resources by an elite benefiting from this marriage of power and capitals.

By scrutinizing the current dynamics and different types of local and provincial governance and administration entities and initiatives, and their relations with internal and external actors, as well as with major influential armed groups, I tend to measure the impact of LCs on local communities, and examine the hypothesis that the revolutionary capital that LCs possess asserts their position in the transitional period in Syria, and in the efforts for building sustainable peace in the country. In fact, I argue that a representative and legitimate system built with a bottom-up approach based on elections, with embedded freedom of expression, association and social inclusion could solidify local peace or truces, and may, if applied on a larger scale, lead to national peace. Further, I wonder if the involvement of LCs in peace negotiations and the transitional period reflect the triumph of the Syrian revolution and what it stands for in terms of putting an end to years of authoritarian regime and establishing a democracy that is well adapted to the particularities and the characteristics of the Syrian people. I also question if these LCs, in their current status, could serve as an example of a revolutionary democracy that could pave the way to a social democratic government.

### Research Methodology

As (Filleule and Favre: 1992) noted, it is only by accumulating data of different origins and confronting them against each other while taking into consideration that each piece of information reveals part of the truth that we can obtain a sufficiently comprehensible view of the studied subject.

To fully understand how local governance entities function in the opposition-controlled areas I had to immerse myself into that world. Between 2014 and March 2016 I worked full time developing all sorts of projects with local councils, I participated in strategy reviews of the Syrian Regional Program which solely focus on enhancing the legitimacy of "moderate" local governance in Syria, and I carried over 100 meetings, interviews and informal discussions with member of local councils or with Syrian NGOs supporting local councils. Most of these interviews were carried out through WhatsApp or Skype (out of working hours), while I conducted other interviews in Gaziantep and Antakya in Turkey, as most of local councils representatives live there. My interviews were intentionally informal because I wanted to build trust and confidence with my interviewees. I wanted them to feel free to share any information with me, even when sometimes included some personal anecdotes, or information related to armed groups

that they felt that “donors” shouldn’t know about. To date, I still maintain a good relation with members of local councils inside Syria who often contact me just to talk about their frustrations, hopes and ask my opinion regarding some projects they intend to develop.

Given the nature of my previous work, I was able to have access to huge load of quantitative data and to obtain public opinion surveys, atmospheric reports and area-focused researches that I will not be using in my thesis for ethical and intellectual property purposes. These pieces of information enabled me to draw a baseline that guided me through the elaboration of this dissertation. To support my dissertation with qualitative evidence, I carried out a rigorous follow up of social media platforms of local and provincial councils, media offices<sup>15</sup> and other Facebook Pages that are dedicated to report or promote news of local councils.

My primary resources also included over 200 prints (newspapers and magazines) of which some have special editions dedicated to local councils. Thanks to these edits I was able to collect over 340 citation of citizens, reflecting their perception of local councils. (I am including sample of these citations in the appendices).

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<sup>15</sup> Even the tiniest village in the opposition controlled area has a Media office which is composed of local citizen – journalists or activists who report news of their communities.

## Chapter 1 - Emerging Governance

*“The blending of life in a revolution is an inherent requirement for its continuation and its victory. It requires a socially flexible structure that is based on the collaboration between the revolution and the daily lives of humans. This form of structure will be called: the local council.”- Omar Aziz*



Figure 1 - A Facebook post by the Rural Damascus Provincial Council commemorating the 3rd anniversary of the martyrdom of Omar Aziz. The post quotes Aziz and says "If the revolution fails then my life and the life of my entire generation worth nothing"

On the 16th of February 2013 Omar Aziz, a Syrian economist, activist and anarchist, died in military hospital in Harasta, Damascus Suburbs, after having been detained and tortured over the course of three months in one of the Syrian Air Force Intelligences branches. Born on the 18th of February 1949, Aziz studied economics at Grenoble University in France, then worked in information technology in Saudi Arabia, then went to the United states where he had stable life, but unlike many, once the revolution started, he left everything and went back to Syria to join the mass movement whether by protesting in the streets, providing relief, or later on by contributing to the formation of the first Opposition Local Council in the Damascene neighbourhood of Barzeh. Those who knew Omar Aziz said that he was a visionary. He believed in mass movements and in free human's capacity to rule themselves and develop their communities even in revolutionary settings. He also believed that democracy can't be deep rooted in the revolutionary society unless it's built from the bottom up. If he had lived to these times, he'd seen how his vision took roots in the Syrian territories where the state withdrew or was forced out. He'd seen how part of the Syrian working class, farmers, students, and youth; who for decades were victims of the oppression of the Baath power elite;

who owned and continue to own and operate, and manipulate the political and social structures in many part of the country; started to produce relatively advanced models of popular democracy by creating horizontal flexible structures, involving the different civil society actors, and closely coordinating with uncivil actors.

The struggle of these classes reflects their longing to emancipate from Baath policies which alienated Syrians from the decision making, and forced ostensible religious and ethnic harmony over them. In theory, the Socialist Arab Baath party, which for over than four decades has been the "leading party of the society and the state" (Syrian Arab Republic Conctitution 1973)<sup>16</sup>, strongly believed that the people is, he alone the source of all authority and leadership<sup>17</sup>, and that the value of the state comes from its emanation of the will of the masses. However, the practices of those who ruled Syria since the 1963 coup, were clearly mocking the very point of including Syrian citizens in the governance and the management of their own country.

The party which pretended to be an all-inclusive popular movement became a mechanism and a tool of oppression in the service of military, and later on of one family who confiscated all powers by a heavily centralized government. This centralized government was controlled directly by the head of the republic, who was also the General Secretary of the Baath party and the supreme commander of the Syrian army.

Since Assad's 1970 Corrective Movement<sup>18</sup>, the government has sought systematically to strengthen its control over local politics by straining all powers through the rule of one party. Ministers and senior staff members of the state were nominated by the president and assigned limited executive rights, while the regional command of the Ba'ath party and the secondary circles of the power system proposed candidates for government posts and key civil service positions but the final selection was always made by the president.

Syria was divided into fourteen provinces: Aleppo, Damascus, Dar'a, Deir Ezzor, Hama, Hasakah, Homs, Idlib, Lattakia, Qunaytirah, Ar Raqqa, As Suwayda, Tartus and the

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<sup>16</sup> 8<sup>th</sup> article of the 1973's Syrian Arab Republic constitution which remained the same till 2012.

<sup>17</sup> 5<sup>th</sup> article of the permanent constitution of the Socialist Arab Ba'ath party, approved in 1980.

<sup>18</sup> On November 19, 1970, the Regional Command of Ba'ath Party announced the designation of Ahmad al Khatib, as acting chief of state and of Lieutenant General Hafez Assad as prime minister and minister of defence. Assad then formed a 26-man cabinet, consisting of about one-half Assad Ba'athists and the balance scattered among Socialists, Nasserists, Independents, and Communists. This cabinet met for the first time on November 23, 1970. In a press interview Assad claimed that the change in government had been neither a coup nor the result of political conflict along lines of military-civilian division, but a natural development in the Ba'ath party's revolutionary movement, often referred to as the "Correction Movement." Soon after taking power, Assad moved quickly to create an organizational infrastructure for the government. In February 1971, the 173-member People's Council was organized, with the Ba'ath Party taking 87 seats; the remaining seats were divided among the "popular organizations" and other minor parties. In March 1971 the Ba'ath Party held its regional congress and elected the 21-member Regional Command headed by Assad. That same month, by a national referendum, Assad was elected president for a 7- year term.

Province of Rif Dimashq (Province of Rural Damascus). Each province was divided into districts, which in turn had sub-districts. Each province is headed by a governor nominated by the minister of the interior and appointed by the government after being approved through a presidential decree. The governor, who must be a Ba'ath party member, is responsible for administration, health, social, educational, touristic and other public services as power provision, transportation, agriculture, industry, civil defence, in addition to the maintenance of safety and security in the province through the police. The minister of local administration works closely with each governor to coordinate and supervise local development projects. Each governor is assisted by a Provincial Council of which three quarters of the members are popularly elected for a term of four years, while the remainder are appointed by the minister of the interior and the governor. In addition, each council has an executive arm consisting of six to ten directors appointed by the government from among the council's elected members. Each executive director is assigned to specific functions. Districts and sub-districts are administered by officials appointed by the governor, subject to the approval of the minister of the interior. These officials work with elected district councils to attend to assorted local needs and serve as intermediaries between government authority and traditional local leaders, such as neighbourhood or village Mukhtar, tribal leaders, and councils of elders or notables.

When the state withdrew or was pushed out of some areas across the country in late 2011, all local governance arrangements collapsed in these areas. By that time, the Syrian regime had started using siege as tool of repression<sup>19</sup>, combined with intensive shelling and bombing that caused huge and often irreparable damages to the infrastructure of rebel areas, leaving their populations deprived of basic life needs life food, water, electricity, education, access to health and medical facilities<sup>20</sup>, etc. These tactics went hand in hand with systemic killing, detention and liquidation of civil activists.

Under these catastrophic conditions, a need for social organization emerged. Syrian activists started forming Local Coordination Committees (LCCs)<sup>21</sup> who took in the responsibility of documenting the regime Human Rights violations, voicing out popular demands, creating venues of communication with the outside world, covering daily

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<sup>19</sup> Siege warfare in Syria: prosecuting the starvation of civilians, Amsterdam Law Forum, <http://amsterdamlawforum.org/article/viewFile/368/523>

<sup>20</sup> Health workers and the weaponisation of health care in Syria: a preliminary inquiry for The Lancet–American University of Beirut Commission on Syria, The Lancet, [http://www.thelancet.com/pdfs/journals/lancet/PIIS0140-6736\(17\)30741-9.pdf](http://www.thelancet.com/pdfs/journals/lancet/PIIS0140-6736(17)30741-9.pdf)

<sup>21</sup> When the Syrian uprising began in March, local committees emerged in towns and cities across Syria. These committees took responsibility for meeting, planning and organizing events on the ground within their own communities. Over time, the committees have sought greater coordination between themselves, in order to synchronize their activities, movements on the ground and political positions. Together the committees formed the Local Coordinating Committees of Syria, an umbrella organization with members from most cities and many smaller towns across Syria.

developments on the ground, promoting and organizing revolutionary acts. Yet, the excessive violence that rebel areas were subject to, forced LCCs to assume other roles blending real time life in the revolutionary action itself. LCCs found themselves carrying huge financial and moral burdens towards the wounded, the families of detained activists and those encircled in their areas, so they dedicated themselves to address these urgent needs. This distracted them from advancing the revolutionary action and shaping into a political goal and framework. This overlap of roles led to the emergence of new form of revolutionary structures that took in the charge of filling state vacuum.

To date, there are no clear statistics on the number of Local Councils in Syria, however a recent research, conducted by the Local Administration Councils' Unit (LACU), in cooperation with Norwegian People Aid (NPA) to produce an indicator of LCs needs across the country, suggests that there are approximately 405 councils across all Syrian provinces except Raqqa, Sweidaa and Hassaka since the first is mainly controlled by IS, the second by the Syrian regime and the latter by Kurdish forces. This number can be considered realistic, since the Syrian opposition has full of partial control over 11 out of 14 provinces, and the fact that LCs have also emerged in regime-held areas where they work in clandestinely.

LCs main responsibilities consist in managing civic life aspects by recovering medical, educational and economic activities and restoring public facilities such as schools, hospitals, roads, markets and services like water, electricity, telecommunications, etc. Very few LCs have developed politically to the extent that they are contributing to building and consolidating the social cohesion of their communities through civic activities away from ideologies, partisan views or political influences, while others started creating public venues to include citizens in the decision-making, and to publically discuss or criticize unilateral measures that armed groups are taking. Other LCs are involved in mitigating very local conflicts (like conflicts over resources between hosting and displaced communities, mediating between citizens and armed groups to resolve food crisis, creating "Mediation Centres" as alternatives to Sharia-Based courts that Islamist armed groups established, negotiating the release or the exchange of political prisoner in coordination with armed groups, or concluding local truce with the Syrian government or army).

## Experimenting Democracy

LCs' composition processes differ from place to another, and greatly depend on the demographic realities (Tribal, urban, rural, etc). While some LCs are appointed, others are elected or formed by consensus. In some cases, dominant armed groups impose themselves as indispensable partners in governing local communities. Some LCs are purely civil, while others are tangled up with uncivil parties. According to a survey conducted by Omran Center for Strategic Studies on people's perception of Local Councils role in 105 communities across the liberated areas in Damascus, Rural Damascus, Aleppo, Idlib, Daraa, Quneitra, Homa, Hama and Lattakia, 57% of polled people said that the majority of LCs have been appointed, while 38% said that their LCs were actually elected <sup>22</sup>.

Despite this inconsistency, there has been vigorous attempts to democratize LCs setup processes and organizational structures. Yet the very essence of democracy remains relatively vague for the majority of these LCs, as well as for people, the electorate, who for over four decades lost interest in participating or in being involved in any form of elections which they perceived as corrupt and manipulated by the central state<sup>23</sup>.

A very good example of these democratic experiments come from Houla in Homs Province (Centre of Syria), a broad plain with an area of about 65,000 hectares of agricultural lands and many small villages. Its population which currently counts



Figure 2 - A citizen casting his vote during the elections in Taldou Local Council – Homs countryside

approximately 120,000 is mainly concentrated in four main towns (Kafr Laha, Taldou, Tell Dahab and Tell Dara). Having been a regular protest hub since the beginning of the Syrian uprising, and one of the first areas where army defectors started organizing themselves under the broader Free Syrian

<sup>22</sup> See the survey's executive summary here

<https://www.omrandirasat.org/%D8%A7%D9%84%D8%A3%D8%A8%D8%AD%D8%A7%D8%AB/%D8%A3%D9%88%D8%B1%D8%A7%D9%82-%D8%A8%D8%AD%D8%AB%D9%8A%D8%A9/%D8%AF%D9%88%D8%B1-%D8%A7%D9%84%D9%85%D8%AC%D8%A7%D9%84%D8%B3-%D8%A7%D9%84%D9%85%D8%AD%D9%84%D9%8A%D8%A9-%D9%81%D9%8A-%D8%A7%D9%84%D9%85%D8%B1%D8%AD%D9%84%D8%A9-%D8%A7%D9%84%D8%AD%D8%A7%D9%84%D9%8A%D8%A9-%D9%88%D8%A7%D9%84%D8%A7%D9%86%D8%AA%D9%82%D8%A7%D9%84%D9%8A%D8%A9-%D9%82%D8%B1%D8%A7%D8%A1%D8%A9-%D8%AA%D8%AD%D9%84%D9%8A%D9%84%D9%8A%D8%A9-%D9%81%D9%8A-%D9%86%D8%AA%D8%A7%D8%A6%D8%AC-%D8%A7%D8%B3%D8%AA%D8%B7%D9%84%D8%A7%D8%B9-%D8%B1%D8%A3%D9%8A.html>

<sup>23</sup> <http://www.worldbank.org/en/country/syria/overview>

Army, Houla was subjected to siege by a combination of regime checkpoints and pro-regime villages since 2012. Like the rest of the besieged areas, the region has been suffering of the lack of basic life needs, as well as of shelling and bombardment by the regime, and later by its Russian ally. In 2013, Houla witnessed the formation of its first Local Council which was appointed following consultations between activists, and notables of the town of Taldou which is considered the center of the Houla region. According to activists interviewed for the purpose of this thesis, the LC showed poor management skills, and lacked popular support. None of its members was a holder of a university degree, or had a background or experience in public administration. One year later, number of Taldou's Aayan<sup>24</sup>, armed groups leaders and some religious figures called for popular elections. The elections, which were overseen by the "Homs's Media Activists League" who people regarded as neutral body, were open to all citizens, including military men, with a voting age set at 17. Part of the elections was documented by Homs's Media Activists League who interviewed number of citizens who expressed their satisfaction regarding the elections, and said that it has been the first time were true and transparent elections have been held in their area away from polarization or dictation<sup>25</sup>. "These elections are a reflection of the people's will. We went out calling for freedom and this is the freedom we wanted. These elections aren't exclusive, they are open to everyone wishing to have a saying in electing the town's council" said Abu Saad<sup>26</sup>, head of the military council of the town, when asked about his opinion regarding the elections<sup>27</sup>.

The new council was subject to controversy though, as the local community was divided between those who thought that the LC was doing its best to respond to their needs, taking into consideration the terrible conditions of the region and the lack of funds; and those who thought that it was nothing but a reproduction of the same Baathist mechanisms that governed them for over 40 years, and went to the town's main square protesting against the LC and calling for the formation of independent



*Figure 3 - Free Activists of Homs Group manifesting against the Local Council of Houla in 11 July 2014 - Homs Countryside*

<sup>24</sup> The word Aayan in Arabic means those who are considered as trustees or notables by their entourage. They could be head of big families, chef of tribe, or a personality to which citizens hold deep respect.

<sup>25</sup> <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=6Ecgq242pSQ>

<sup>26</sup> Abu Saad is the nick name of the defected colonel Mohammad Saad-Eddine Ibrahim who headed the Military Council in Taldou and which was part of the "Homs Liberation Movement". Colonel Ibrahim was killed in an air strike on January 2015.

<sup>27</sup> <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=DYNAWMnGMG8>

committee to oversee the LC's funds management <sup>28</sup>. However, the protest was said to be provoked by Salafist groups who failed to control the LC. Nonetheless, when the LC's mandate neared expiration, its president called for popular meeting to consult citizens on the best way to form their new governing council.



Figure 4- A Screenshot taken of the Short film "Democratic Village". A citizen discussing the LC's formation mechanism.

These discussions were documented in a short film, entitled "Democratic Village" <sup>29</sup> and they were indeed interesting for they showed how the relative freedom of expression and speech that citizens enjoy in opposition-held areas can generate controversy and constructive debate about the form and type

of state and democracy they aspire to. The consultations which lasted ten days reflected people's confusion over the rules of the electoral process; such as who is entitled to hold the presidency of the council (level of education, age, achievements, revolutionary activities, etc.); which people are entitled to the membership of the council (Should they be nominated by the town's Aayan and prominent figures? should they be elected directly by the local community? And what is the criteria for the candidacy to the LC?); for how many terms could the president be elected? Which people are entitled to cast votes and how? Who will oversee the elections? Over the course of ten days, people were divided into those who wanted the formation of the LC by agreement based on familial nominations, and those who wanted popular elections. Finally, they all agreed to hold elections that a committee including representatives of the revolutionary actors in the region (i.e. the military council, the security committee, the medical point and Aayan) will oversee. Few days later, an LC of 14 members was elected in midst of discontent of some of the big families of the region who kept questioning the LC's financial credibility and integrity.

<sup>28</sup> <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=qW7danDzkAg&feature=youtu.be>

<sup>29</sup> SMART NEWS AGENCY which is one of the Syrian Opposition leading Media Outlets made this documentary as to highlight the democratic experiments in opposition-held areas. <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=2BeQDe1I898>

Other parts in the opposition-held areas witnessed similar experiences in forming an LC, like Manbij, a city in the north-eastern countryside of Aleppo (North of Syria) of which the regime was forced out early 2012 after fierce battles with armed opposition groups. Again, the state vacuum crippled public services, leaving a community of an estimated 120,000 people in dire need for assistance, especially after the influx of thousands of civilians fleeing battles in neighbouring towns and cities. Following the liberation<sup>30</sup> of the city, its Ayan and activists held daily meetings to discuss how and who will run the city, and ended up appointing a Local Council of “revolutionary” personalities who played a role in liberating Manbij, including representatives of armed groups. Shortly, however, signs of popular disapproval regarding the LC’s composition and action emerged, which resulted in the organization of elections for forming a new Local Council. The new council was elected by a General Commission that included representatives of all the components of the local community including revolutionary entities, independent opposition and religious figures, former employees of the city’s different service institutions, and tribal chiefs. The Council which introduced itself to the community through a video-taped statement, posted in Youtube<sup>31</sup>, was composed of ten offices (The presidency office including the president, two vice-presidents, and a secretary; a Service Officer headed by an engineer; a Finance Office; a Medical Office headed by a pharmacist; a Revolution Coordination Office; a Sharia Judicial Office; a Security Office headed by a defected brigadier general; a Political Office headed by a lawyer; a Syndicates Office headed by a lawyer; and a Media Office). Although the LC performed well in terms of service provision and governance, some people accused of giving preferential treatment to those individuals who had active involvement in the revolutionary at the expense of those who didn’t. These critics were not found on any evidence though.



Figure 5 - The head of The Local Council of Manbij and its Countryside declaring the formation of the LC

<sup>30</sup> In the Syrian opposition literature it is common to use the work “Liberation” to describe the withdrawal or the expulsion of the Syrian regime forces and of pro-Assad para military.

<sup>31</sup> <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=OP6iwMDunCU>

In the liberated cities or the towns who've historically witnessed political activity, LCs formation process is more advanced and is based on modified bylaws inspired by the Syrian government's Local Administration Law (107). One of the best examples of these LCs is Douma Local Council which presents itself as civil, administrative service institution with an independent legal personality non-affiliated to any political or military, aiming to best regulate and provide civil services and needs of the people.



Figure 6- A screenshot of 1:59 minutes infographic produced by Douma Local Council explaining the LC's formation mechanism

Douma has always been considered as the capital of the Rural Damascus Province. Its center is about 10 km north-east of the center of Damascus which made it an attractive destination for Middle Class Damascene families who couldn't afford to live in the

capital. In 2011, its population was estimated at about 1, 5 million people. Since the beginning of the uprising, Douma has been a major flashpoint and had witnessed numerous demonstrations against the Syrian regime. As of October 2012, the Free Syrian Army was in control of the city and its surroundings. As a result, the city was subject to siege and daily air strikes and artillery shelling. The first attempt to form a local council for the city took place in November 2012. A number of activists and opposition figures including long-standing opponents of the Assad regime both father and son, like Mohamad Flaytani, the head of the executive committee of the Democratic Party of the Arab Socialist Union<sup>32</sup>, divided the city into 12 neighborhoods and appointed a committee of 5 people for each neighborhood, then asked each of the committees to elect a president. They, also created 12 specialized committees For Medical Affairs; for the Protection of Public and Private Properties; for Relief; for Technical and Public Services; for Finance; for Judicial and Sharia<sup>33</sup> Affairs; for Reconstruction and Restoration; for Non-Violence Movement and Protesting; for Public Affairs; for Media; for Education and Cultural Affairs; and finally for Documentation and Secretary Works. Each of these specialized committees also had to elect a president. The 24 presidents of the neighborhoods and specialized committees constituted a

<sup>32</sup> The Democratic Party of the Arab Socialist Union was founded on July 18th, 1964 by gathering a number of unionist forces whose main goal was to resist the separation and re-establish the Union with Egypt (United Arab Republic). The party was one of the first to release statements and form positions on the Syrian revolution of March 2011 and many of its members were the first activists in the ranks of the revolution. This was especially apparent in Damascus Suburbs, Daraa, Sweida, Al Raqqa, and Aleppo. Later the Party joined the National Coalition for Syrian Revolution and Opposition Forces.

<sup>33</sup> Sharia is an Islamic canonical law based on the teachings of the Koran and the traditions of the Prophet (Hadith and Sunna), prescribing both religious and secular duties and sometimes retributive penalties for lawbreaking. It has generally been supplemented by legislation adapted to the conditions of the day, though the manner in which it should be applied in modern states is a subject of dispute between Muslim traditionalists and reformists.

General Commission whose mission was to elect the 11 members of the executive office of the First Local Council of Douma, and its president. All of the members of the LC had to be revolutionarily active, moderate, non-alienated to any partisan religious or sectarian groups, honest, and well perceived by the community. During the next two years, the LC improved its elections mechanism and sought popular engagement by increasing the number of The General Commission to 25 instead of 24, and calling citizens of elect the members of the Commission who must include 7 engineers of different engineering specializations, 3 accountants or experts in Finance and Economy, 1 Medical expert, 2 Law, Judicial and Sharia experts, 1 education expert, 2 land titling experts, 2 agricultural and environmental experts, 6 popular representatives, and 1 technical expert. The nomination requirements were modified and candidates had to be: 1) over 26 years old 2) Renowned for good and moral behaviour 3) From Douma or has been one of its residents for 5 years 4) Committed to the goals and the principals of the revolution 5) committed to Douma LC's bylaws 6) No affiliated or a member of any military or armed group. To ensure citizens participation in the election, Douma LC used all available tools to announce promote the elections and inform the community of its developments. The LC produced animated infographics<sup>34</sup>, regular posts on its social media channel (Facebook & YouTube), printed posters and leaflets and distributed them in key areas around Douma and its surroundings, and contacted main opposition Media outlets inviting them to cover the different stages of the election process.

These three examples serve as patterns reflecting the lack of political culture and education, and the confusion that local communities often face when forming or electing their local councils. But they also draw a general picture of LCs creation, and reflect how local actors possessing influence over their communities, whether social, religious, tribal, ethnic, financial or military, are playing an important role in organizing and mobilizing these communities horizontally, and vertically by forming or contributing in the creation of Provincial Councils (PCs).

The role that Provincial Councils are ought to play; and which consist in building linkages between the popular base and the national Syrian opposition, as well with the countries that support the Syrian revolution; has been tangled up in a labyrinth of often conflicted local regional and international interests. Making the mission of forming a Provincial Council, a very difficult one as we will see in the following breakdown and narrative on the (11) Provincial Councils that have been created across the country.

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<sup>34</sup> <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=1XMQU-Z-E0o>

## Mapping Provincial Councils

### Damascus Provincial Council (DPC)

Although the Syrian capital Damascus remains a stronghold for the Syrian regime, some of its neighbourhoods are contested or controlled by the opposition, and others have reconciliation agreements with the regime.



7- Logo of Damascus Provincial Council

Damascus is composed of 16 sectors. Three of them (Barzeh, Qabon & Qadam) are under the opposition control and have active Local Councils who, along with the local opposition armed groups concluded truces with the Syrian government. The rest of the sectors are fully controlled by the Syrian regime but have LCs' committees and in some cases individuals that are working undercover and on a very small scale limited to relief provision. However, the only damascene sector that continues to be completely out of the hands of the Syrian regime, is Jobar and it is ran by a Local Council that is considered the main service provider to the few families who stayed in the neighbourhood. Meanwhile, Yarmuk which is located South of Damascus, is completely out of the regime control, but it's contested between ISIS, Jabhat Fateh al-Sham<sup>35</sup> and very few civil actors who are struggling to alleviate the suffering of the few thousand civilians of whom 160 people starved to death due to the siege imposed on them since 2012.

In 2012, a Coordination Bureau, including members of Damascene Local Coordination Committees, exiled activists and eminent opposition figures was created to support revolutionary activities on one hand, and respond to the worsening humanitarian conditions of citizens and residents of the rebelled neighbourhoods of Damascus, on the other hand. Simultaneously, each of the 16 neighbourhoods of Damascus formed their own Local Councils, which created overlap in terms of service provision. To avoid duplication of efforts, the Coordination Bureau embarked on a challenging journey to

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<sup>35</sup> Jabhat Fateh al-Sham, formerly known as the Al-Nusra Front (JAN) is a Salafist jihadist organization fighting against the forces of the Syrian government, with the aim of establishing an Islamic state in the country. It was the Syrian branch of al-Qaeda until 2016, and also operates in neighbouring Lebanon. In early 2015, the group became one of the major components of the powerful jihadist joint operations room named the Army of Conquest (Jaish Al Fateh), which took over large territories in Northwestern Syria.

form the first Provincial Council of Free Damascus, which finally saw the light on January 2016.

Following many attempts to overcome the inconvenient conditions for holding elections - most importantly the eminent security threats to activists and opposition figures in regime controlled areas, and the impossibility to physically unite them with the representatives of the other Damascene neighborhoods that are fully or partially liberated – the Coordination Bureau managed to form a General Commission of 31 representatives of the ten sectors that have active LCs (Jobar, Barza, Qabon, Tishreen Neighborhood, Tadamon, Qadam, Yarmuk , Kafrsuseh, Mezzeh and Dummar), and called for a meeting that took place over the internet – based platform Webex. 80% of the General Commission were inside Syria, while the remaining attended the meeting from Turkey. The elections were held under the supervision of number of eminent Syrian opposition figures like Mohamad Moaz Al-Khatib Al-Hasani <sup>36</sup>, Sheikh Osama Al-Rafai <sup>37</sup> , the vice president of the Syrian Interim Government (SIG), the minister of the Local Administration, Relief and Refugees (MOLARR), members of Elections Appeals Committee, and others.

The meeting resulted in the appointing of 35 people, 12 of which were elected as members of the newly formed council's Executive Office. During its first mandate, the DPC lost 4 of its members: Three of them resigned, while the fourth one, Amana Barakat who was the only female member of the DPC and head of the Relief Office, died on 20 April 2016. To this end, the DPC called active LCs to nominate candidates for the membership of the DPC.

Citizens' perception of the DPC is not quite clear as there are no available indicators that show us if the DPC is considered as a legitimate entity or how people see its role in the community. In light of the geo-dynamics versus the military control and the security situation in the Syrian capital, Damascus, the DPC has very limited fields and resources to invest in order to increase its visibility, thus legitimacy, among citizens. It relays on the LCs to promote its vision and efforts. It's, also, reaching out for members of minority groups, like Christians, as to include them in the council, but its attempts to be inclusive aren't yet fruitful as members of minorities seem to be influenced by the Syrian regime's propaganda picturing the Syrian revolution as Islamist and terrorist movement. The DPC sees itself as an elected authority meant to manage the local society through supervising and monitoring the affiliated directories, central and decentral committees which

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<sup>36</sup> Mohamad Moaz Al-Khatib Al-Hasani is a former president of the National Coalition for Syrian Revolutionary and Opposition Forces. He is also a former imam of the Umayyad Mosque in Damascus.

<sup>37</sup> Sheikh Osama Al – Rifai is the leader of a Sufi Movement and Chairman of Association of Sham Scholars.

provide services to the local communities, by institutionalizing its action. It also aims at bringing the cases of political prisoners and detainees back to light and free them or at least disclose their whereabouts through direct negotiations with regime officials, as happened before in Jobar in 2013 when the Jobar LC and members from the Damascus Coordination Bureau were directly involved, along with other uncivil actors, in exchanging a colonel from the Syrian army with four activists (Baraa Dahrouj, Ata Salam, Samir Ajineh and one more).

### Rural Damascus Provincial Council

The two Ghoutas (Eastern and western - or Rural Damascus) ) form an agricultural belt around Damascus , including about sixty cities who's population decreases from around 2 million before the to 500,000 at the time of writing this. These two areas have always been considered as the food basket for Damascenes as they supply its residents for vegetables, fruits and dairy products. They are also home to small to medium-businesses and industries, especially food industries, craft and furniture, plastic, etc.

Rural Damascus's involvement in the revolution began in 25 March 2011 when the first big protest took place in Douma, which was followed by demonstrations in the eastern part of the suburbs, such as Harasta, Zamalka, Jobar, Arbin, Misraba, Ain Terma, and other smaller towns, to which regime forces responded violently. By the end of 2011, people started holding arms and by mid – 2012 the Ghoutas were declared as Assad-free areas.

The concentration of the armed opposition in East Ghouta and the liberation of other towns in the north and south regions of the Ghoutas was also seen as an unprecedented threat to the capital, which to a large extent motivated the indiscriminate and brutal tactics that the regime has used against the population in East Ghouta which includes total siege, a chemical attack, intensive air strikes and artillery shelling, combined with repeated land operations with the support if Iranian militias.

The truces that the regime forced with it in the west and north part on towns of the Ghoutas, like Moaddamia in December 2013, Barzeh Barzeh in January 2014, Darayya in August 2016 and Al Qabon in May 2017, had a catastrophic impact on the population in Eastern Ghouta, leading to the deaths of more than 28 000 people.

Since late 2012, Eastern Ghouta experienced the complete withdrawal of state services and cessation of the activities of the state institutions. As a result, the provision of basic services such as food, water, electricity, and internet has been denied to the civilians in

those territories, in addition to the collapse of the logistical networks provided previously by those institutions. To address this situation, various governance initiatives have taken place in East Ghouta ever since the concentration of the opposition in this area. In order of increasing organisational complexity and functionality, examples of such initiatives are local coordination committees, and city councils, all of which have been shaped according to the particular needs of each city. This has been a complicated process due to the persistence of violence, but also due to the lack of formal cadres and professionals in the field of administration left to work in this area.

As a result, the different governance bodies in East Ghouta have tended to build upon and replace each other, undergoing transformations meant to address their weaknesses and meet more efficiently the evolving needs of the local populations. They have steadily taken on the role as providers of most basic administrative and other services in the area and have established networks of cooperation and communication between each other.



8- The development of Rural Damascus Provincial Council's logos according to structural progress

The multiplication of local councils around Eastern Ghouta has complicated the relations with external donors and the cooperation between the local councils themselves. Therefore, the creation of a larger body—a unified Council for all of East Ghouta—had been high on the priority list of the civilian opposition.

The first attempt in building this council was by forming what was called the Administration of Local Councils in Eastern Ghouta, then on January 27, 2013 a broad and inclusive civilian movement, called the National Assembly of the Forces of the Revolution in East Ghouta, was established to gather all actors in the region to form a unified council. It includes members of numerous local political parties, civilians and activists from 58 towns in the area. The Assembly, was the first step to the formation of the first Provincial Council of Rural Damascus as it contributed to the establishment of a Supervisory Electoral Commission to oversee the elections of the Provincial Council

which saw the light in May 2014 after fairly transparent elections that lasted over a period of three days.

Since its elections, the Provincial Council started working on consolidating its cooperation relations with the Unified Medical<sup>38</sup>, Unified Relief<sup>39</sup> and Unified Service Offices<sup>40</sup> that are highly respected among the citizens, given the huge efforts they deploy to relieve people's suffering. Those bodies have resulted in the consolidation of governance in East Ghouta and have addressed the problem of the multiplication of city councils by bringing them and their offices under a common umbrella and offering them additional support with their projects.

The work of the Provincial Council has been particularly developed in 2016 as it started to consolidate the institutional work in the Eastern Ghouta through the adoption of a clear administrative structure for the Provincial Council, defining its roles and responsibilities, and the establishment of a specific strategy with clear realistic objectives, including the implementation of vital projects, such as the food security project which consisted in planting wheat and storing flour for emergencies; a consensus of the residents of Eastern Ghouta, the strengthening of the logistic and administrative capacities of local councils through the provision of communications equipment, computers, printers and stationery, in addition to series of trainings on good governance; the implementation of projects that consolidate the interaction between the members of local councils and the civil society through the organization of informal banquets; most importantly the project of maintenance and manufacture of garbage containers for all the towns and cities of East Ghouta in cooperation with the Unified Services Office, which was the vehicle for including the Unified Service Office in the provincial council's structure as the "Directorate of Services".

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38 The Unified Medical Office in East Ghouta is made up of 17 medical offices controlling 35 medical points in all of East Ghouta, to which it regularly redistributes medical equipment with support from various Syrian and International NGOs such as Doctors without Borders, and the Syrian American Medical Society, the Office has contributed also in elaborating emergency plans and programs for the maximisation of medical resources and the standardisation of medical practice throughout all of East Ghouta, which have then been implemented by the local medical offices resulting in an enhanced use of the available resources

39 The Unified Relief Office in Eastern Ghouta was designed to unify the activities and objectives of the relief offices in the cities of East Ghouta.

40 Unified Services Office was established to organise the services offices within each city council, on a provincial level. It has been particularly active in the implementation of various projects throughout all of East Ghouta, the analysis of the need of infrastructural rehabilitation in different cities and the provision of expertise.

## Quneitra Provincial Council

At this stage in the war, Quneitra (Golan) is something of a forgotten province, with no major battles. There, crammed in between the Israeli-occupied Golan Heights and Daraa province, thousands of Syrians have sought refuge in recent years, fleeing relentless air raids and ground fighting in neighbouring provinces.

The Golan Heights are located south-west of Syria, 50 kilometres from Damascus, separated by the Yarmouk River from Daraa to the south, bordered by Jabal Al-Sheikh from the north and Lake Tiberias from the west. In the past, the Golan Heights, with all its cities and villages, were administratively subordinate to Quneitra. Their people relied on vegetables and fruits, especially apples and cherries. In the 1967 war with Israel, the latter occupied two-thirds of the area of the plateau, displacing most of its population towards the cities of Damascus and Daraa, while those who did not displace are currently living in five Arab villages (Majdal Shams, Baqata, Ain Qina, Ghajar and Massada)

After the October War, a cease-fire agreement with Israel was signed in 1974, and Israel's withdrawal from the city of Quneitra was contingent on Syria's commitment to withdraw from the area around the city and to form an international force called "UNDOF" to oversee the monitoring of the cease-fire

The regime prevented the reconstruction of the destroyed city of Quneitra after the Israelis withdrew from it. The residents were also prevented from returning to the non-occupied part of the Golan Heights without a temporary security permit. Currently, there are three major population groups in the unoccupied part of the Golan Heights: Khan Arnaba, Saasaa and Baath city near the destroyed city of Quneitra.

The form of interaction and involvement in the Syrian revolution in the Golan Heights differed between the inhabitants of the occupied part of the Heights, on the one hand, and the people in the territories controlled by the Syrian state on the other. The people of the occupied territory were divided between opponents of the revolution and supporters.



9- The Quneitra Province Local Council's Logo

19<sup>th</sup> 2011, citizens of Baqata refused to hold the Syrian (regime) flag, and the celebrations turned into a demonstration in support of the Syrian revolution.

On February 20<sup>th</sup> 2012, Syrian activists in the occupied part of the Golan declared a hunger strike in protest against the massacres of the Syrian people and their affirmation of the right of the Syrian people to live within a state for all its citizens.

As for the movement in the unoccupied part of the Golan Heights, it was limited because there were no residents. Most of them were displaced towards the Syrian interior since 1967 and can only enter the Golan with a security permit for a limited period of time as I mentioned before. These people did not hesitate to participate in the demonstrations of the revolution in their areas of displacement, such as the Hajar Aswad, Sabina and the neighbourhood of Tadamon in Damascus.

Given the nature of the Golan Heights, which is almost uninhabited, the unoccupied part of the Heights was the scene of continuous clashes between regime forces and armed opposition groups coming mainly from the liberated areas of Daraa.

On November 22<sup>nd</sup> 2012, the formation of the local council in the province of Quneitra and the Golan was announced revolutionary bodies and tribal leaders that extends between the Golan and Daraa <sup>41</sup>. The Council who declared its support for the SOC, included representatives of the residents of the Golan , both residents and displaced. The council also announced that it was cooperating with a consultative office of people

<sup>41</sup> [https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=zlv\\_Kivsohg](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=zlv_Kivsohg)

with expertise in the administration of local councils without naming them for security reasons.

One year following the formation of the first provincial council, a meeting was held in Jordan at the invitation of the representative of Quneitra province in the SOC, who met with most of the revolutionary forces of Quneitra present in Jordan. They agreed to elect a preparatory committee to supervise and prepare for the election of the provincial council. Seven people were elected to carry out this task.

The committee contacted the local councils who nominated 32 people as representatives of five districts reflecting the province's population. Then another meeting was held on July 25<sup>th</sup> 2013, in which a president of the council, a deputy and a secretary general were elected and ten people were assigned as heads of the council's specialized offices <sup>42</sup>.

In September 2014, a preparatory electoral commission was formed to restructure the provincial council after the emergence of disagreements over representation. A number of meetings were held with local councils in order to form an electoral body whose members must have university degrees and have a revolutionary career and a good reputation. These efforts resulted in the election of the first provincial council to be formed inside Syria, despite the boycott of some of the local councils who protested against the representative quotas within the electoral constituency <sup>43</sup>.

Many differences broke during the subsequent provincial council elections, but they were all resolved by tribal chiefs who served as mediators between civilian and military figures competing over governorship in the province. And sometimes, these differences were solved under pressure from the interim government, which had an active role in managing these Disputes through financial support.

In the second year 2016, the Kenitra Governorate Council decided to reconstitute its local councils in the governorate due to issues related to corruption. A law was also enacted to impose a license all relief and humanitarian organizations working on the ground to monitor the work of these organizations, and reinforce the principle of justice in the distribution of relief aid, as well as to fight corruption.

Currently, the provincial council supervises the work of 15 local councils in Quneitra and 3 in the province of Daraa, who manage the affairs of their displaced communities.

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<sup>42</sup><https://www.facebook.com/DoumaNews/photos/a.436541729732123.114231.345635412156089/606447782741516/?type=1&theater>

<sup>43</sup> <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=bALpdrQCuUM>

In November 2016, the Provincial Council decided to restructure the local councils it oversees due to issues related to corruption. The council also issued an executive order to license for all and humanitarian organizations operating on the ground to monitor the work of these organizations, The principle of justice in the distribution of relief aid, in addition to fight.

Today, the governorate council supervises the work of 15 local councils in Quneitra and 3 in the governorate of Daraa, which manages the affairs of the displaced people in addition to the municipalities of Damascus and its villages<sup>44</sup>.

### Dar'a Provincial Council

Dar'a province is where the Syrian uprising began as reaction of to the detention of 15 children for writing anti-regime slogans on school walls in March 2011. This province which is located in the south east of Syria, bordering Jordan, has strong tribal presence. 70% of Dar'a Province's cities, towns, and villages are directly under the control of the armed opposition, although Dar'a city, the provincial capital, is predominately under the control of government forces.

Dar'a story began precisely after the detention of the 15 students as group of tribal figures and elderly, accompanied by the parents of the children, met with intelligence chief who humiliated them without much considering tribal dignity. This encounter fueled the anger of people who demonstrated demanding the release of the children who were later returned to their families as mutilated bodies.

The situation soon escalated and by the end of April 2011 some of Dar'a's deputies began announcing their withdrawal from the Syrian People's Assembly in protest of the killing and abuse of civilians. By that time, huge popular demonstrations were organized weekly in the cities and towns of Dar'a, to which government forces responded violently, killing dozens of civilians.

Simultaneously, social and tribal figures from Dar'a and other provinces formed the Supreme Council of the Syrian Revolution. As a response, the regime send its tanks and military forces to storm and shell the city of Dar'a which was the first city to shelled by artillery in the beginning of the uprising. This military operation went hand in hand with the cut off of electricity, water and communication. The city was sieged.

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<sup>44</sup> <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=SHMZTM0ySrM>



10 - Dar'aa's Provincial Council's logo

Other cities in Syria revolted in solidarity with the devastated city of Dar'aa and demanded to end the siege imposed on the city. In addition, almost 700 Syrian personalities including directors, writers and journalists, signed a statement that was posted on social media networks under the title "For our Children in Dar'aa" demanding that the regime let food and milk into the city.

The regime did not respond to the demands; this pushed thousands of Dar'aa's eastern country side residents to demonstrate demanding to lift the siege off the city,

carrying food and medical supplies and baby milk to the besieged people as they headed towards the city. The regime ambushed the demonstrators and its forces started shooting at them indiscriminately which led to the fall of tens of martyrs and wounded in what was later known as "the Saida Massacre". Around 160 people were arrested.

Despite the brutal repression, Dar'aa province kept demonstrating and the first brigades of the Free Syrian Army were formed in September 2011, and it was followed by other armed formations.

Despite the fact that Dar'aa province was the cradle of the Syrian revolution, it delayed in forming a provincial council as other provinces did. This is mainly due to its tribal nature, as tribal and local leaders played a key role in filling the state vacuum. The discipline of armed groups and factions also contributed in creating a relative stability in the province. However, the attempts of the SOC to create homogeneous governance entities in the opposition areas eventually led to the formation of the first Provincial of Dar'aa in July 2013.

The Council was formed after a series of discussions and meetings between the revolutionary activists who were forced to flee to Jordan because of the security persecution and activists inside Syria. The initial idea was to form a council to manage Dar'aa's people who sought asylum in Jordan and whose number was increasing rapidly

<sup>45</sup>due to the shelling and the deteriorating humanitarian conditions resulting from the armed conflict.

A preparatory committee was formed of 13 members representing all sectors of the governorate of Daraa. Its mission was to prepare Daraa's Province First Conference which was later held in Cairo, Egypt, and to design a General Electoral Assembly. The committee's work was based on the 2012 Daraa demographic statistics which estimated the province's population at about 1,200,000 people.

A representative of every 10,000 people was elected as a member of the General Assembly (120 members). 33 seats for holders of university degrees were added and 27 seats were allocated for professional associations, organizations and bodies formed inside and outside Daraa. In addition to 3 seats for Christians and 4 seats for women. Thus, the number of members of the General Assembly was 187 members representing the entire province<sup>46</sup>.

The Cairo conference was attended by 97 members, while the remaining members of the General Assembly were not able to attend for various logistic reasons including Jordanian authorities decision to not allow the entering of some members to Jordan while other members who didn't have passports couldn't travel to Egypt. These members attended the conference though Skype.

The conference, thus, resulted in the election of the First provincial Council of Daraa under the presidency of Mohammed Abu Soayfan. The council was composed of 12 specialized offices (Legal, Administrative, Relief, Media, Finance, Medical, Civil defence, Projects, Human Resources, Services, Utilities, Media, Agricultural, Economic, and Education). The seat of the council was based in Irbid city, in Jordan who facilitated its work given tribal connections. At its first meeting in September 2013, the Provincial Council approved its bylaw, which is a modified version of the Local Administration Law 107 issued by the Syrian government<sup>47</sup>.

After the end of the Council's mandate in January 2014, differences sparkled among the members and the activists based in Jordan, and those inside Syria. Activists inside Daraa considered it unreasonable for the Council, who is supposed to be the representative of

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<sup>45</sup> According to statistics issued by the Department of Camp Affairs of the Ministry of the Interior of Jordan, the number of Syrians in Jordan is one million Syrians entered the Kingdom after 2011.

<http://governance.arij.net/blog/%D8%AA%D8%AD%D9%82%D9%8A%D9%82%D8%A7%D8%AA/161>

<sup>46</sup> Interview with the first president of Daraa Provincial Council <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=vAGb1KvsE9c>

<sup>47</sup> A copy of the bylaws was published on the council's Facebook Page [https://www.facebook.com/DaraaGovernorateCouncil/photos/a.589668711072431.1073741828.589385517767417/614317788607523/?type=1&relevant\\_count=1](https://www.facebook.com/DaraaGovernorateCouncil/photos/a.589668711072431.1073741828.589385517767417/614317788607523/?type=1&relevant_count=1)

the people, to operate outside Syria, especially after opposition armed groups gained more territories of the Province.

As a result, Daraa's activists divided the province into six sectors: the Jaidur, the Awsatt (the middle), the Yarmouk, the Medina, the Qalaa and Izzraa, and a new General Assembly was formed. For each 10,000 people a young activist of "good reputation" was elected. Then two representatives of civil society organizations were added. The total number was 149 members who in their turn elected 35 of them to be members of the council. Out of these 35, 16 were elected as members of the executive office (president, vice-president, secretary, and 13 were assigned to specialized offices <sup>48</sup>.

The following council (2015's term) was elected under the supervision of a special committee formed Lawyers Syndicate and Judge Ahmed Al-Birmawi<sup>49</sup>, and with the presence of representatives of six sectors equal to the members of the Provincial Council.<sup>50</sup>

Despite the lack of support from SOC, the council was able to establish number of directorates such as the Directorate of Civil Registry<sup>51</sup>, and the Directorate of Transport, the Land Titling and Civil records Directorate and the Irrigation Directorate through which the council was able to provide clean water to the entire Lajat area which was facing draught. Additionally, Daraa's Provincial Council is the only local council in Syria to manage an international cross border with a neighboring country with approval from regional powers.

### Hama Provincial Council

Hama Province which is located in western-center Syria has long and horrific history with the Assad regime as it was the hub of the Muslim Brothers movement which

<sup>48</sup> Article by Enab Baladi on the formation of Daraa's Provincial Council by the interior's activists <https://www.enabbaladi.net/archives/23061>

<sup>49</sup> A highly respected local figure.

<sup>50</sup> Ana Press on the elections of the provincial council of Daraa <http://www.anapress.net/ar/articles/%D8%AA%D9%82%20%D8%A7%D8%B1%D9%8A%D8%B1-%D9%85%D9%83%D8%AA%D9%88%D8%A8%D8%A9-%D8%A7%D9%86%D8%AA%D8%AE%D8%A7%D8%A8%D8%A7%D8%AA-%D9%85%D8%AC%D9%84%D8%B3-%D9%85%D8%AD%D8%A7%D9%81%D8%B8%D8%A9-%D8%AF%D8%B1%D8%B9%D8%A7-%D8%A7%D9%84%D8%AD%D8%B1%D8%A9-%D9%84%D9%84%D8%AF%D9%88%D8%B1%D8%A9-%D8%A7%D9%84%D8%AB%D8%A7%D9%86%D9%8A%D8%A9/>

<sup>51</sup> A report posted by the Provincial Council's Media Office on the Civil Records Directorate <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=xqFyAQp1LeQ>

rebelled against Assad, the father in the 80s. In 1982, the provincial capital, Hama, witnessed a massacre where 10,000 to 20,000 people were killed. On February 3rd 1982, military forces surrounded the city and for the next 27 days the city was bombed from the air and ground. Later government forces entered the city and abducted thousands of men including civilians, crushing thus the armed rebellion of the Muslim Brothers who many of its surviving members fled Syrian and lived in exile in Saudi Arabia, and some European countries.<sup>52</sup> When the uprising began, Hama was already prepared.

The residents of Hama began organizing themselves and demonstrating in large numbers, and on the 3rd of June 2011, hundreds of thousands of demonstrators from Hama and its countryside headed towards al-Assi square in the city of Hama in what was called "the Friday of the Children of Freedom". The demonstrators cheered for dignity and freedom, so the security forces fired directly at them killing number of people, including children.

After this horrific massacre, the residents of Hama demonstrated demanding the fall of al-Assad and his regime. What distinguished these demonstrations was the fact that they kept their peaceful nature despite their magnitude and the large number of people participating in them which according to some activists reached one million people.

The stances of the governor of the provincial capital back then who maintained peaceful attitude towards demonstrators and the crowded demonstrations formed an international pressure on the regime, especially after the American and French ambassadors witnessed one of these peaceful crowded demonstrations <sup>53</sup>. The regime then decided to dismiss the governor from his post on July 2<sup>nd</sup> 2011.

On July 5<sup>th</sup> 2011, the regime tried to invade the city's neighbourhoods by sending security forces and heavily armed para-military groups who carried out a large arrests campaign. The residents of Hama, however, went out to the city's streets and placed sandbag barriers and barricades of tires at the entrances of the city and its neighbourhoods. By doing that, the residents of Hama announced that the city was no longer under the regime's control and began civil disobedience.

The civil disobedience went on for a whole month, and so did the daily demonstrations in solidarity with other Syrian cities that were being subjected to bombing and destruction. However hundreds of the city's residents were forced to flee towards the

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<sup>52</sup> <https://www.theguardian.com/theguardian/from-the-archive-blog/2011/aug/01/hama-syria-massacre-1982-archive>

<sup>53</sup> <http://www.france24.com/en/20110709-hama-protests-bolstered-visits-usa-france-ambassadors-ford-chevallier-syria-assad>

countryside and the south, fearing that the army placed on the outskirts of the city might carry out reprisal operations.

By the end of July 2011, the regime forces, reinforced by tanks, invaded the city and regained control over the city. After this, most of Hama's wanted youth had to flee towards the countryside where they formed the Qashoush Brigade which was one of the first battalions to join the Free Syrian Army.

In early December 2012, the opposition's armed factions announced the start of operations aimed to regain control over the city on the one hand, and cut the regime's military supplies coming from the north on the other hand. The battles intensified between the armed opposition, composed of the Free Army and several Islamic armed factions, and the regime forces; they continued throughout the year of 2013 in the villages of Hama's countryside. Since 2014, the opposition's armed factions spread their control on large parts of Hama's countryside and took position there. They also cut the regime's supply lines and surrounded military units across the city, especially Hama's military airport.

While local councils were formed in most of the areas under the opposition control, it took the provincial council three years to emerge. On October 3<sup>rd</sup> 2013, representatives



Figure 11- Logo of Hama Provincial Council

of 40 local councils of the province, and representatives of number of revolutionary entities and few faith-based charities, and some figures of the Muslim Brothers group met in Syria and elected the first Provincial Council of Hama which was composed of 12 members: the president and the vice president, and 10 members of the executive office<sup>54</sup>. The president of the council, Salah Eddine Al Hamwi, who is currently a member of the SOC, was a political prisoner between 1980 and 2004. Al Hamwi was 17 years old when security forces abducted him from his home with the charge of being member of Muslim brothers, then he was sent to the notorious Palmyra prison<sup>55</sup>. After his release from prison, he conducted awareness and mobilization activities against the Assad regime's injustice. At the beginning of the revolution, he participated in the coordination of civil initiatives and later moved on to the military sphere through his

<sup>54</sup> The session of the elections of the first provincial council of Hama was video-taped and posted by the Union of Hama Revolutionaries on YouTube <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=rxLB9zDYRFI>

<sup>55</sup> The former president of the Provincial Council of Hama talking about his life in imprisonment <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=539pR6UBOso&feature=youtu.be>

work as chairman of the Foreign Relations Committee of the Military Council in Hama. The story of the president of Hama Provincial Council reflects in fact the stories of many of its members who had bitter history with the Syrian regime.

Despite the small parts that the opposition control in Hama province, the needs are huge because of the massive displacement from the city of Hama of those opposing the regime and who fear persecution, and the hundreds of families who had to leave their villages and towns in the northern, western countryside of Hama and in small besieged area in the southern parts of the province bordering Homs Province, because of the air strikes and the destruction of their homes. These displacement movements created and continue to create big pressures on Hama's Provincial Council who in February 2015 was restructured following elections supervised and sponsored by the SOC and the Interim Government. The council's 2<sup>nd</sup> term's election conference lasted two days and it took place in Reyhanli in Turkey.

This time, the Electoral Commission was composed of 135 people who were nominated by revolutionary actors of the province. The electoral process began by electing 17 members of the Electoral Commission to represent Hama City Council within the provincial council. These individuals were elected by consensus of all 135 present individuals. The same happened with the representatives of the countryside, as the participants at the conference elected 18 individuals to represent the villages and town of the western, northern, eastern, southern countryside of Hama and the Al Ghab region. Next day, attendees elected the President, the vice president and the members of the executive office of the Provincial Council. This was followed by assigning 35 of the attendees as members of the council.

The process went smoothly and the elected council of the 2<sup>nd</sup> term proved to be more efficient and active than its predecessor, as it implemented various development projects and it struggled to meet the IDPs' growing needs. But in August 2016, the president of the council, Alaa Al Moussa, resigned as a protest against international donors who stopped collaborating with Hama Provincial Council given the advances that the Syrian regime made in the countryside of Hama with support from its Russian allies.

Al Moussa published a statement on the council's accounts on Social Media saying that "International organizations, human rights and humanitarian organizations are plotting in one way or another, or are ignoring the renewed disaster in Syria, by limiting their contribution to food or drink or some Services that do not amount to support, but serve

as anesthetic measures that are harmful to the people (...) They reject categorically any demand for projects that could serve the country and the reconstruction efforts”<sup>56</sup>

In his statement, Al Moussa also cleared that his resignation is a sign of protest against the Interim Government who designed the General Electoral Commission based on regime statics that ignores the demographic changes<sup>57</sup> that have been happening in Hama Province.

In April 2017, a new provincial council was elected. The province of Hama was divided into seven electoral districts. Each district consisted of an electoral body, which is estimated according to the number of inhabitants in the residential units. The total number of the new General Electoral Commission was 159 members who elected 35 new provincial council members, and these 35 people elected 12 of them as president, vice president and head of 10 executive offices.

This time, the elections took place and the supervision of the Ministry of Local Administration at the Interim Government inside Syria. At the time of writing this research, the provincial council supervises and coordinate the work of 30 local councils in Hama and in Idlib Province were some local councils displaced with their communities.

### Homs Provincial Council

Homs Provincial Council was established in January 2012 by consensus, at al Waer neighbourhood, after the armed opposition groups managed to push out the regime forces from the neighbourhood and from parts of the northern countryside of Homs province, which is the largest governorate in Syria in terms of area.

Like all local and provincial councils, the main objective of its establishment was to find an alternative body for the state to manage liberated areas. The council consists of an executive office consisting of 12 out of 35 members of the General Assembly. The office includes the president and vice president of the council, as well as the heads of 10 offices. All members are involved in discussing and identifying the province's priorities, in coordination with the local councils. And then to the executive offices.

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<sup>56</sup> Full statement on Youtube <https://youtu.be/W14veoBnLOw>

<sup>57</sup> Syrian opposition warns of demographic change in Homs and Hama <https://www.middleeastmonitor.com/20170603-syrian-opposition-warns-of-demographic-change-in-homs-and-hama/>



According to the bylaws of the provincial council, members are elected for a one-year term. However, the conditions of siege and continuous shelling that have been exposed to areas outside the regime's control in the province have created fragile relations between the provincial council and local councils, and prevented it of holding transparent and fair elections.

12- The Homs Provincial Council's logo

In 2015, the heads of some local councils in Homs issued a statement criticizing the mechanism of the electoral representation at the provincial council. The statement said that it is no longer acceptable, after five years of revolution, that a governorship is monopolized by a bossy person who alienate others from the decision making.

The statement which was signed by the local councils of Rastan, Tair Maala, Ghantu and Dar Kabira, blamed the provincial council for failing in responding to the basic needs of the Syria people, and adopting a selective distribution policy in distributing aid.

Despite all this, and all logistic and security related difficulties, and the sever lack of resources and funds, the Provincial Council carried out a number of important projects, including provision of clean water by supporting fuel costs of water pumps in Gantu, Hula, Talbiseh, Zafarana and Ain Hussein in the northern countryside, which also suffers from siege and whose population depends entirely on agricultural activities. The council was also capable of supporting the cultivation of wheat in the northern countryside of Homs, which included 44,700 dunums, in addition to 85 dunums of winter crops, as well as a potato cultivation project in the northern countryside and al Houla. The Council is active in the area of food security. It also funds payments to provide food baskets to the most vulnerable people throughout the province, as well as to displaced communities in Lebanon and in Jordan, The council was also able to implement project related to the provision of milk for children, and the support of medical centers and centers for child and maternal care.

A support and liaison office was established to represent the council in the Turkish city of Gaziantep in early 2014 to facilitate communication with the political and executive offices of the Syrian opposition and to obtain support from international donors.

The Council works under short and medium-term plans because of the fluidity of the situation in the province, such as the evacuation of the entire neighborhood of Al wa'er of its fighters and residents in early 2017 after the neighbourhood suffered a

humanitarian disaster resulting in the death of civilians from hunger because of the siege imposed by the regime forces for over three years.

The Council currently oversees 17 local councils, 3 Directorates for Education, Agriculture and Health, as well as two Free Establishments of Water and Agriculture.

### Idlib Provincial Council

Idlib has a bitter history with the Assad regime. During a tour of Assad, the father, at Syrian provinces in 1970, some citizens of Idlib threw tomatoes at him, and this simple incident which may seem normal in a democratic state, costed Idlib people a lot, as Assad took revenge of the province by neglecting it and depriving it of development and infrastructure projects which had many repercussions on the province in general.

In March 1980, major demonstrations took place in Jisr al-Shughour city in the countryside of Idlib in support of the Muslim Brothers. They've strike over two days during which students attacked the "Consumption Establishment", a symbol of hunger and deprivation back then. In the same day, 25 helicopter gunships loaded with soldiers and equipment landed in the city. The army launched random raids, random arrests and arbitrary field executions of more than 150 Muslim and Christian residents of the city.

In the same year and two months later, the Third Armoured Division, a formation of the Syrian Army, landed in the villages of Jabal al-Zawiyeh also in the countryside of Idlib where the fighters of the al-Tali'ah Al Muqatilah, Muslim Brother's military arm, took refuge. As the Division left the mountains, they left behind them hundreds of dead and thousands of detainees and missing persons, as happened in Hama. At those times, Idlib, known as the Green Province given its massive production of vegetables and olive oil, lived a famine.

On March 25<sup>th</sup> 2011, demonstrations broke out in several towns and cities such as Binnish and Saraqeb demanding political reforms. The angry demonstrations soon spread to the whole province. The punishment was harsh through, as it witnessed a lot of destruction, bombing and killings, and it was then when Idlib witnessed the formation of the Free Syrian Army.

It was also the first liberated area and the main point of relief and medical supplies given its location on the border line with Turkey with whom it shares a 150-km border. However, these borders were also a curse on the province as it facilitated the infiltration of some jihadi groups that compete today with the civil entities over governance of the province. of the province and its administration.



13- Idlib Provincial Council's Logo

Idlib is divided into 6 sectors, comprising 166 local councils divided into the following districts: Khan Sheikun has 12 Local Councils, Ma'arat al-Nu'man has 31 Local Councils, Ariha has 32 local councils, Idlib has 40 local councils, and Al-Shughour has 22 councils.

The provincial council was established in 2013, but has been based for several years in Turkey and was barely functional. However, it took on a more active role in 2015, when it relocated its headquarters to Hazanu in the northern countryside of Idlib province, and set up another office in Gaziantep, Turkey, to

facilitate coordination with donors and supporters.

There are 11 specialized offices in the Provincial Council, each has a working group. The council has a technical and research project that supports local councils in identifying their communities' needs and convey these needs to donors.

The multiplicity of armed groups, and growing influence of extremist groups in the province largely impact the civilian spectrum in the province, as Idlib currently has several civilian administrations entities, including the General Directorate of Services (Al Hay'a Al'ma Lil Khadamat)<sup>58</sup>, the Service Administration Commission or SAC<sup>59</sup>, number of government bodies and directorates affiliated to the Interim Government, in addition to the Provincial Council.

<sup>58</sup> The General Directorate of Services is the service arm of the Sham Liberation Organization. It was formed by the Al Nusra Front earlier in 2013. The General Directorate of Services consists of a number of service institutions at the regional level of Idlib, Aleppo, Hama, etc. to be more like service ministries, which are linked to a number of service directorates at the sectoral level which in turn is related to municipalities formed by Directorate, to serve as the smaller local nucleus responsible for implementing the directives of public service institutions and bodies. Through these municipalities local people are contacted and serviced, as in the municipalities of Hare, Salqin, Darkush and Tal minis.

<sup>59</sup> The Service Administration Commission or SAC Authority was formed in September 2015 and is affiliated to the Ahrar Al Sham . It aims to establish a civil organization dealing with external parties and to build effective civil administration in areas controlled by the opposition. The main task of the Commission is to coordinate and integrate local councils in Idlib, and to provide them with a wide range of projects and services ranging from road rehabilitation to civil records registration and relief. The Committee formalized its work through memorandums of understanding with local councils and various relief bodies, as well as through and agreements that in some cases gave it the right of supervising local councils and controlling their financial affairs.

Despite this competition, the Provincial Council, is in a strong position, as it the only one that enjoys legitimacy in the eyes of the local councils who elected it and who are in the time elected by their local communities. The council, though, suffers from the lack of administrative competencies and resources as it depends almost entirely on external support. In August 2016, the Council held a meeting for the local councils in Idlib, where it announced the establishment of a central oversight body to supervise these councils.

The Provincial Council's approach to consolidate its relations with local councils, is by supporting them in implementing self-sufficient or profitable projects through which they'd be able to generate revenues and sustain their work, for example, the council was able to support 8 bakeries serving around 95,000 people throughout the province on a daily basis.

### Aleppo Provincial Council

Aleppo province is Syria's biggest province in terms of population size, and it is located in norther Syria where it borders the three Turkish province of Sanliurfa, Kilis and Gaziantep which became home to one and half million Syrian refugees. It includes 8 regions: Azaz, Al Bab, Jarabulus, Tal Rifaat, Sfeira, Afrin, and Ein Al Arab (Kobani), and Jabal Samaan (Simon Mountain) which includes the provincial capital, Aleppo city, Syria's once upon a time industrial capital.

Aleppo's first date with the revolution was on March 25th 2011. A 25/3/2011 when the people of the city of Aleppo came out in demonstrations and peaceful protests demanding freedom and dignity; and the since the beginning of 2012, the demonstrations became more intensive, and they were, therefore, subject to brutal repressive campaigns by government forces who killed, detained and abused hundreds of citizens. The countryside was also demonstration against the regime who started bombing the villages and towns. In July 2012, Aleppo's witnessed the emergence of FSA groups who decided to liberate the city of Aleppo and had violent armed clashes with regime force, resulting in the control of the FSA of most of the countryside of Aleppo and several neighborhoods of the eastern city of Aleppo. Between then and December 2016, Eastern Aleppo city became a living hell for its population which was subject to intensive shelling and bombing by the regime and its Russian allies.

The countryside was not in a better condition as it was and it is still the scene of military operations between four parties: the moderate armed opposition groups, and regime forces, the Syrian Democratic forces and IS. The following map which reflects Aleppo's

fragmentation into zones of influence and control, perhaps may reflect the complexity of the military situation in province, which greatly affects the ability of local councils to respond to people's needs<sup>60</sup>.



14- Aleppo's military control map: Green refers to armed opposition groups, yellow refers to Syria Democratic Forces, Darg green refers to Turkish forces, red refers to the Syrian regime forces and the grey refers to IS. – Source Syria liveuamap – Laster updated on June 2017

In Aleppo, as in many other rebel areas, the civil movement went hand in hand with the armed one. In mid-2012 activists formed the Transitional Revolutionary Council of Aleppo which initiated the creation of local councils in the countryside and the city to fill the state vacuum, provide services and organize the affairs of the citizens in the liberated areas. The council, has later served, as an electoral commission that in the following year, precisely in March 2<sup>nd</sup> 2013, elected the First Provincial Council of Aleppo. The 240 members of the electoral commission met in Gaziantep in Turkey and elected 29 of them as members of the General Secretary of the provincial council whose mandate was determined to six months to be followed by elections of new provincial council inside Syria<sup>61</sup>.

<sup>60</sup> <https://syria.liveuamap.com/>

<sup>61</sup> [http://orient-news.net/ar/news\\_show/5889/%D8%AA%D8%AD%D8%B6%D9%8A%D8%B1%D8%A7%D8%AA-%D9%84%D8%A5%D8%AE%D8%AA%D9%8A%D8%A7%D8%B1-%D9%85%D9%85%D8%AB%D9%84%D9%8A-%D9%85%D8%AC%D9%84%D8%B3-%D9%85%D8%AD%D8%A7%D9%81%D8%B8%D8%A9-](http://orient-news.net/ar/news_show/5889/%D8%AA%D8%AD%D8%B6%D9%8A%D8%B1%D8%A7%D8%AA-%D9%84%D8%A5%D8%AE%D8%AA%D9%8A%D8%A7%D8%B1-%D9%85%D9%85%D8%AB%D9%84%D9%8A-%D9%85%D8%AC%D9%84%D8%B3-%D9%85%D8%AD%D8%A7%D9%81%D8%B8%D8%A9-)



15- Aleppo's Provincial Council's Logo

representative of the population.

In December 2013, the electoral commission was expanded to include 344 members, including female activists, given the increase of the number of local councils recognized by the former provincial councils. This time, the elections took in Aleppo countryside<sup>62</sup>.

This was an important milestone in the consolidation of the concepts of local governance and democracy in the province, as it was repeated on an annual basis, and the council's members were keen to improve the electoral conditions and expand the electoral commission to be more

### Latakia Provincial Council

Latakia is one of Syria's two coastal provinces, and it has shared borders with Turkey. Out of the estimated 991,000 population of Latakia, Alawites have always been a majority, but the Province also has Christians, Armenians, Arab and Turkmen Muslim Sunnis who are mostly concentrated in the north-eastern mountains of the Province, also known as Jabal Al Turkuman (Turkemen Mountain <sup>63</sup>), and Jabal Al – Akrad (Kuds Mountain <sup>64</sup>). The regional capital, Latakia city, has, historically been dominated by Muslim Sunnis until the French mandate began in 1920 and encouraged the creation of

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=l8pvHs1p80>

<sup>62</sup> <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=l8pvHs1p80>

<sup>63</sup> Turkic migration to Syria began in the 11th century during the rule of the Seljuk Empire. However, most Turkmen settled in the region after the Ottoman sultan Selim I conquered Syria in 1516. The Ottoman administration encouraged Turcoman families from Anatolia to establish villages throughout the rural hinterlands of several cities in Ottoman Syria (and later the Syria Vilayet). Migration from Anatolia to Syria was continuous for over 400 years of Ottoman rule, until the dissolution of the Ottoman Empire in 1918; nonetheless, the Syrian Turkmen community continued to reside in the region during the French Mandate and the formation of various Syrian Republics. Today the Syrian Turkmen community share common genealogical and linguistic ties with the "Turkmen" of Iraq (see Iraqi Turkmen) but share a closer kinship to the Turks of Turkey. The New York Times, 'Who Are the Turkmens of Syria?', 2015.

<sup>64</sup> The inhabitants of this area are mainly Kurdish decedents who in recent years have shifted to speaking the Arabic language and have no ties with the remaining of Syria's Kurds who are claiming autonomy.

an “Alawite State” in modern day Latakia. The Alawite state lasted 16 years during which Alawites grew their influence in the Province, and its capital whose urban dwellers regarded Alawites poorly and considered them foreigners. With Assad, the father, rise to power, the province turned into a stronghold for the Assad family and its clan who descends from Qardaha, just east of Latakia city. Public life “Alawitization” has, since, became, an instrument in the hands of the Assad family who used it to manipulate Alawites and employ part of them in ending or repressing any sort of unrest in the province.

Since the beginning of the Syrian uprising in 2011, Latakia, province and city, witnessed peaceful revolutionary activity which was soon bloodily repressed. Like the rest of the country, protesters started taking arms. In 2012 the armed opposition has controlled parts of Jabal al-Akrad, Jabal Al-Turkuman, and areas along the Turkish border through which Jihadists infiltrated into Syria. During the two following years, FSA-affiliated groups and other opposition armed groups made significant advances in north-eastern parts of Latakia, captured some Alawite villages in which war crimes have been reportedly committed<sup>65</sup>, and in later stages they have reached the Mediterranean shores by capturing a coastal town called Samra which the Syrian regime re-captured in a counteroffensive.

Latakia's demographics and the fact that it has Syria's main port, the country's commercial and economic gate, makes it extremely important for the Assad regime as well as for its allies, especially Russians who, thanks to a treaty ratified in October 2016 with the Syria government, established their first permanent airbase in the Mediterranean (Global Research, 2016.).

Although the opposition's presence and control in the province is limited to number of scattered villages located in rough mountainous areas, with relatively small area of lands along the border with Turkey, local governance dynamics in Latakia present some challenges reflecting rural – urban and legitimacy related struggles.

In an attempt of assert its influence in the liberated areas and gain popular legitimacy by building strong ties with the self-organized and organically emerged local councils, the SOC created a Local Administration Support Unit (AKA as LACU) based in Turkey who

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<sup>65</sup> The 105-page report which Human Rights Watch published on October 2013 with the title of “‘You Can Still See Their Blood’: Executions, Indiscriminate Shootings, and Hostage Taking by Opposition Forces in Latakia Countryside,” presents evidence that two opposition groups (the Islamic State of Iraq and Sham and Jaish al-Muhajireen wal-Ansar) committed war crimes by holding women and children hostages, torturing and executing civilians based on their faith. (HRW 2013)

took many initiatives to improve the efficiency and the performance of local councils. One of LACU's initiative was the creation in February 12, 2013 of Latakia's first Provincial Council based on political agreements within the SOC itself and without organizing any elections. Administratively, Latakia is divided into 4 districts (Latakia, Jablah, Haffa and Qardaha), but when forming the council, LACU revised the administrative division of the province and appointed 11 members as follows: 4 for Latakia city, 1 for Jablah, 2 for Haffa, 2 for Jabal Al-Akrad and 2 for Jabal Al-Turkuman. The 11 members were in fact well known and they were coming from number of revolutionary bodies like the Local Coordination Committee of Latakia, the Supreme Council of the Revolution, the Coast's Revolutionary Youth Coalition and of the leading opposition-affiliated charity Floka Al Hurriyeh (Freedom boat), in addition to number of independent figures. Although most of its members where based in Turkey, the new council managed to provide critical services like the provision of clean water, food and relief to the estimated 800,000 people who live in extremely harsh situations across the liberated areas which has been subject to regular shelling and air strikes. The council's executive arms were the Civil Defense Center, and the Technical and Road Rehabilitation Services units whose quarters were built on the borders with Turkey. This created sensitivities among the local councils who accused the provincial council of monopolizing service provision to build its legitimacy at their expense. The entire liberated countryside has 7 non – elected local councils. 5 of them (Salma, Akko, Marj Elzawyeh, Dwerkeh and Kansaba) Al-Akrad mountain and 2 (Rab'a and Shahroura) in Turkumen mountain. All 7 councils struggle to provide service to over scattered 90 towns and villages.

The presidency of the provincial council was rotated among the members of the council up until 2014 when one of the members named Fadi Ibrahim who happened to be member of the SOC, declared that the provincial council can no longer provide services due to funds shortage, and accusing the SIG of deliberately ignoring the council's financial needs based on allegations and demands of some employees of the SOC-affiliated Assistance Coordination Unit (ACU) (Zaman Al Wasl, 2014). In fact this announcement reflected internal political struggles within the SOC's executive bodies who, staffed with inexperienced individuals with distinct political agendas, who directed



16- Lattakia Provincial Council's Logo

donor contributions to building their own legitimacy within the SOC hierarchy, instead of strengthening local governance structures and providing them with vital assistance. As a result, Mr. Ibrahim claimed the presidency of the Provincial Council depending on funds provided by other SOC members who share the same political views as him, while part of the local councils, supported by the ACU, and some local military groups formed their own Provincial Council and presented themselves to donors as the only rightful and legitimate council who “emancipated from the people to help people” Zaman Al Wasl.. In the following two years, Mr. Ibrahim councils remained functional but its action was limited to providing services to IDP camps along the border with Turkey, while the “self-declared” council was unable to assert itself as local governance entity or to get funds from international or regional donors. Meanwhile, the SIG attempted to end both councils’ disagreement by re-forming the provincial council through democratic elections as happened in other provinces. For this purpose, a special committee was formed by the Elections Directory at the ministry of Local Administration, and was requested to design a General Electoral Commission after conducting a field research in the Province’s new social and demographic situation. Yet, all the committee’s attempts were due to failure as some SOC affiliated figures pressured it to include the old council’s members in the commission, something that the new council’ members and supporters categorially rejected, describing as unacceptable that people who live in Turkey keep monopolizing the local council and control all its properties which should be used for the public’s sake, instead of being employed to gain political influence over people’s suffering and misery. Early 2016, the Syrian regime advanced in the northern countryside of Latakia and captured over 20 villages of the opposition. This led to an influx of thousands of families in the adjacent northern countryside of Idlib Province. Among the fleeing civilians were members of the former provincial council’s directorates and committees who took with them most of the vehicles and equipment which the council possessed in fear of air strikes. In fact, the Syrian regime bombed the council’s main quarter on the border with Turkey on March 23rd 2016. Few months later, the Interim Government formed a steering committee of representatives of the displaced population of the Latakia to oversee service and relief provision to Latakia’s civilians who’ve been living in camps across the neighbouring Idlib Province

### Ar-Raqqah Provincial Council

Although it has been one of the most marginalized and neglected Provinces by the central government throughout the rule of both Assads, the father and the son, and

despite the fact that it has been deprived development programs<sup>66</sup>, once liberated, Ar-Raqqah has been a hub of a very active civil society eager to rebuild public institutions based on a new agreed-upon social contract and the principal of citizenship.

With an estimated population of one million people, Ar-Raqqah Province is located on the north-eastern banks of the Euphrates River, and it is composed of three districts: Ar-Raqqah, Tel Abyad, and Tabqa (AKA Thawra) where Syria's biggest hydroelectric dam is located<sup>67</sup>. Prior to the conflict, the dam provided electricity to huge areas of Syria, including the entire north-eastern provinces of the country, as well as part of Homs, Hama and Aleppo Provinces, which changed hands several times before finally coming under the IS control. Ar-Raqqah's Population relies on the cultivation of grains and cotton in fields irrigated by the Euphrates River, as well as on local agricultural and small petroleum industries. The population is also very diverse demographically. Sunni Arabs with tribal affiliations are the majority, while Kurds, Armenians and Christians make up a significant percentage, especially Kurds whose presence is mainly concentrated along the border with Turkey.

Ar-Raqqah sons and daughters were among the first Syrians to show solidarity with the famous Children of Dar'a<sup>68</sup>. The first demonstration took place on 25 March 2011, and lasted for several months, during which they have their peaceful aspect. During this period, the Assad regime counted on tribal leaders to contain the demonstrations, providing them with arms, economic incentives, and light security support. With the rise of the violence and arrests levels, people's tension also started growing and so the peaceful demonstrations gradually transformed into armed clashes. Since then, the Province witnessed the consecutive creation of number of FSP battalions and armed groups whose influence has been gradually weakened by the Salafist groups of Ahrar Al-Sham and JN which dominated the military scene in Ar-Raqqah and have been the main force to drive the regime out of the entire Province between January 2012 and March 2013.

Being the first province to be liberated from the grip of the regime, Ar-Raqqah has had a lot of potential to develop a governance model that could be exported and applied in

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<sup>66</sup> <http://kassioun.org/economy-and-society/item/8035-2014-06-01-11-01-14/8035-2014-06-01-11-01-14?tmpl=affinityapp&print=1>

<sup>67</sup> <http://www.nytimes.com/2013/02/12/world/middleeast/syrian-insurgents-claim-to-control-large-hydropower-dam.html>

<sup>68</sup> The Syrian revolution first broke out in Daraa in response to the detention and torture of 15 children accused of painting graffiti slogans calling for the government's downfall. See <https://news.vice.com/article/the-young-men-who-started-syrias-revolution-speak-about-daraa-where-it-all-began>

other opposition controlled areas, as viable structures to substitute the state during the transitional period that follows the fall of the regime. Unlike other rebel areas in Syria, the first Provincial Council was formed late in 2011, and has worked secretly as “the Ar-Raqqah Revolutionary Council” which coordinated revolutionary activities and relief provision across the province. Many of its members were persecuted and detained by the Syrian regime, which pushed its members to relocate to the border Turkish city of Urfa. In December 2012<sup>69</sup>, the Council came out to light after participating in a conference organized by the National Coalition for Syrian Revolution and Opposition Forces (AKA as the Syrian National Coalition (SOC) **Appendix XXX**) to welcome Local Councils in the coalition

The first six months of the liberation of Ar-Raqqah witnessed the creation of over seventy Civil Society organizations, initiatives, groups and youth movements who were competing to support local councils in filling the state vacuum and recover public services in light of regime bombing; protecting minority groups and former government officials against the repression that some of the Salafist groups were carrying out; protecting public institutions against looters; and most importantly in facing the growing influence of JN who set up headquarters in provincial capital's municipality, and infiltrated the city by influencing local mosque Imams and some tribal leaders. Meanwhile, local figures formed a new council for the Province, with no input from the activists. This resulted in huge disagreements between the newly formed council and the one which was formed prior to the liberation and with support from the SOC. Activists and civil society actors' attempts to reconcile both conflicted councils almost failed, until members of the two councils, with the mediation of the “Ar-Raqqah Citizens Coalition”<sup>70</sup> agreed to reform the council and to appoint a general coordinator. The new council immersed itself in service provision. During this time, and despite all the disagreements, civilians' power grew stronger as the services and the activities they were organizing or providing quite effective, however, they couldn't stand up with the growing influence of extremists groups, especially IS which captured the Province, in a bloodless move, from JN who retreated to Aleppo countryside. In August 2013, it started imposing its extremist ideology in the province by murdering its activists, vandalizing its landmarks, destroying its churches, and closing its schools, and university. In terms of

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<sup>69</sup> <http://www.avestaarabic.com/2011-12-31-10-31-05/2044-2012-12-24-17-47-11.html>

<sup>70</sup> An independent Civil Organizatsion, formed in 27 March 2013, aiming at promoting solidarity among the different components of Ar-Raqqah's society, as well as the concept of citizenship and voluntarism. The organization's main goal was to preserve peaceful coexistence in the province. <https://www.facebook.com/%D8%A7%D8%A6%D8%AA%D9%84%D8%A7%D9%81-%D8%A3%D8%A8%D9%86%D8%A7%D8%A1-%D8%A7%D9%84%D8%B1%D9%82%D8%A9-568528693164906/#>

governance, IS kidnapped members of local councils and the Provincial Council, like Abdallah Khalil, a long-time opponent of the Assad regime, former political prisoner, a Human Rights lawyer and one of the founders of the first provincial Council of Ar-Raqqah <sup>71</sup>. The extremist group integrated tribal leaders into its system, either by manipulating the traditional tribal hierarchy, (For example, If an elder tribal leader is hesitant to cooperate, IS would promote a younger son or a secondary clan within his tribe), or by gaining allegiance of some tribes through provision of arms, financial support or simply by injecting their members in local governance structures across the Province.



17- Ar-Raqqah Provincial Council's logo

In October 2013, the Provincial council went through another reformation process, amidst accusations by some Kurdish figures and activists of JN and IS's involvement. In less than month, the Council's General Coordinator, Ibrahim Mousallam Moussallam, withdrew from the council and published a statement on number of opposition and Kurdish media outlets rejecting IS's monopoly over the council, and the exclusion of various components of the local community <sup>72</sup>. Despite IS's control over the Province, SOC formed a General Commission to elect a new council for Ar-Raqqah. On February 5<sup>th</sup> 2014, members of the former executive office and the four local sub-councils (The LCs of Ar-Raqqah Centre and Countryside, Tabqah, Tel Abyad and Karama city) met and elected 15 members for the executive office and three observers. The council whose members were all based in Ar-Raqqah continued to work despite IS presence, as the bombing of the city by the Assad regime, and later on by the US-Led coalition aggravated the humanitarian situation of over one million civilians who kept looking at their local leaderships to respond to their needs despite IS's total control of Ar-Arraqqah's resources, key facilities and public life. The council's main scope of work consisted in providing relief and managing IDPs camps which rose around the provincial capital, depending on funds and support from SOC and the Syrian Business Forum <sup>73</sup>.

The following two years of 2014 and 2015 brought significant changes to the Province which IS has been governing by coercion and terrorism, especially after the YPG's successful capture of the border town of Tel Abyad which has been considered a key supply route for IS, in June 2015; and the foundation, in October 2015, of the Syrian

<sup>71</sup> <http://www.shrc.org/?p=17900>

<sup>72</sup> <http://xeber24.org/6017.html>

<sup>73</sup> <http://en.etilaf.org/coalition-components/syrian-business-forum.html>

Democratic Forces (SDF)<sup>74</sup>. By capturing Tel Abyed, the YPG has furthered its goal of connecting the non-contiguous zones of territory it holds across northern Syria, which it organizes into three "cantons": Afrin (north-west of Aleppo), Kobani (north east of Aleppo), and al-Jazira (north-east Hasakeh province).

These developments encouraged activists and the remnants of the province's once blooming Civil Society who continued working in exile, precisely in Turkey, to prepare for the possible fall of IS in Ar-Raqqah. In November 2015, a number of former LCs members, tribal and Civil Society figures met in the recently liberated border town of Tal Abyad and



Figure 18 Picture of the meeting of Tal Abyad which resulted in the formation of Interim Provincial Council for Ar-Arraqah" in 2015

announced the formation of a "Interim Provincial Council for Ar-Arraqah" who many saw as a vital step to unify civilians' efforts under the constant political and military distractions and polarization, while others described as a vehicle to pass Kurds' federal project. Other opposition figures accused the council of ignoring the former General Commission of the Provincial Council, which to a certain extent, has been a representative platform for all the citizens of Ar-Raqqah. Despite all the accusations and criticism, the council worked extensively to gain Ar-Raqqah exiled civil society trust, as well as citizens who remain under IS control. The council concentrated its efforts to form a new General Commission by contacting the founders of the first Provincial Council ever of Ar-Raqqah, organizing several popular open meetings in the Turkish city of Urfa in presence of Kurdish figures, and seeking support from the SIG who, through its Ministry of Local Administration, Relief and Refugee Affairs (MOLARR), supported the re-formation of Ar-Raqqah's General Commission who in its turn elected the first SIG-recognized council in March 2016.

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<sup>74</sup> The Syrian Democratic Forces (SDF), are an alliance of Kurdish, Arab, Tribal, Assyrian, Armenian, Turkmen and Circassian armed groups aiming at fighting to create a secular, democratic and federal Syria. Since its creation, the SDF has been opposed by most of the armed-opposition groups who see it as a Trojan horse that international actors are using to impose federalism over Syria. Other opposition groups perceive the SDF as counter-revolutionary forces, since they've received both moral and material support from the Syrian regime.

## Deir Ezzor Provincial Council

Located in the east of Syria, bordering Iraq, Deir Ezzor province is home to Syria's largest oil deposit, the Al Omar, in addition to other smaller ones. It is also home to the largest gas plant which fell under IS control in 2014 and which continue to operate despite the US-led coalition which bombed the plant in September 2014 under the pretext of draining the funding sources of IS.

Despite the province's richness in agricultural resources and its well-developed cattle herding, it is one of the poorest Syrian provinces and it didn't benefit of any of its oil revenues. The province is composed of three main districts: Al Mayadeen, Al Bukamal and Deir Ezzor city which has seven bridges built on the Euphrates that divides it into two parts.

Since the 70s, the Assad regime exploited the tribal character of the province to penetrate into the social structure of the province, which facilitated its control over all people's life aspects. Tribal chiefs authorities were reduced, their usual functions were replaced by state agencies, and some tribal chiefs were given incentives and privileges to remain under the tutelage of the regime. This went hand in hand with a policy of impoverishment and poor development of the province's infrastructure which led to the migration of many of its youth to the cities in search of livelihood or learning opportunities, while others migrated to the Gulf to search for work.

Deir Ezzor bore grudges against the Assad regime who punished its entire population because of the Muslim Brothers who were active in the province in the 80s. That's why, when the Syrian uprising erupted in 2011, Deir Ezzor was among the first provinces to demonstrate against the regime.

On July 2nd 2011, the city witnessed its largest demonstration, and only four days later, security forces bombed one of its neighborhoods with tanks, then stormed it, and opened fire on the residents. This led to the formation of local committees to close the roads and prevent the army forces from entering the remaining neighborhoods of the city. As a result of the security campaign, 57 soldiers defected and this was the first form of Free Syrian Army presence in the province.

By the end of June 2012, the FSA had liberated some areas such as Al-Mouhasan, Al Mayadeen and Al-Qouriya who also bore grudges against

Since the beginning of 2014, Al Nusra Front and IS have exchanged control over the city of Deir al-Zour in fierce battles. In their turn, the government forces continue targeting the city with artillery and aircrafts.

The first revolutionary council in Deir Ezzor was formed in November 25<sup>th</sup> 2012, and it included two wings: military and civilian. It was considered as an umbrella for the revolutionary councils of all the cities, towns and villages of which the regime was forced out. This was the fruit of several meetings in the city of Istanbul in Turkey, which resulted in a committee to communicate with the revolutionary actors inside Syria and work on the formation of local councils, under the auspices of the former French Ambassador Eric Chevalier.

The committee had visited Deir al-Zour in April 2012 and met with activists, and military forces of the different areas. A representative from each village, town and city recommended by its activists and revolutionaries was elected to discuss the formation of Deir Ezzor first Provincial Council.



Figure 19- Logo of the Provincial Council of Deir Ezzor

The formation of this council faced several challenges including an attempt by a religious figure from Deir Ezzor and a Syrian expat to form a parallel provincial council under the auspices of the SOC. The latter didn't convince activists and the revolutionary forces though, and it soon disappeared.

One third of the council were representatives of Deir Ezzor city, while its remaining two thirds were composed of representatives of Deir Ezzor's countryside.

The council started its work by forming subsidiary councils. It was agreed that it would form a council in each city, town and village. The very small villages, which did not have a municipality, formed a service committee that was administratively linked to the nearest local council in the district. By the end of this process, 96 local councils and 30 services committees were formed<sup>75</sup>.

After the formation of the sub-councils, the Deir Ezzor Provincial Council was restructured to include a representative from each district, two representatives from the cities of Al-Bukamal and Mayadin and four representatives from city of Deir Ezzor. The head of each sub-council was also appointed as a member of the elective general

<sup>75</sup> Interview with the president of the Provincial Council – Ain Al Madina magazine <http://ayn-almadina.com/public/details/%D9%84%D9%82%D8%A7%D8%A1%20%D9%85%D8%B9%20%D8%B1%D8%A6%D9%8A%D8%B3%20%D8%A7%D9%84%D9%85%D8%AC%D9%84%D8%B3%20%D8%A7%D9%84%D9%85%D8%AD%D9%84%D9%8A%D9%91%20%D9%84%D9%85%D8%AD%D8%A7%D9%81%D8%B8%D8%A9%20%D8%AF%D9%8A%D8%B1%20%D8%A7%D9%84%D8%B2%D9%88%D8%B1%20%D8%A7%D9%84%D9%85%D8%AD%D8%A7%D9%85%D9%8A%20%D8%AD%D9%85%D8%B2%D8%A9%20%D8%A7%D9%84%D8%A8%D8%B1%D9%91%D9%8A/1712/ar>

assembly, which meets every month at the seat of the provincial council to discuss and follow the work of the council<sup>76</sup>.

Soon though, differences broke out within the provincial council for several reasons of which rural/urban sensitivities and polarization was the most important. Part of the tribesmen in the countryside controlled the oil fields which pushed the citizens of the cities accuse tribesmen of profiting from the revolution at the expense of the blood that cities' citizens shed for the revolution. Moreover, the magnitude of the destruction that the regime had caused in the city of Deir Ezzor for its strategic importance is a factor that cannot be overlooked when we try to understand the increased resentment that city sons bore against the countryside which has not been affected by the destruction.

The differences were also centered on the support that the Provincial Council receives. While cities, especially Deir Ezzor considered that they should be given the preference to more support since they're infrastructures were destroyed, countryside councils believed they're eligible to more support since they receive displaced civilians fleeing the cities. Additionally, the SOC had conditioned that in order to recognize the provincial council, the number of members of the executive office should not exceed 10 members, and this fueled additional differences related to city/countryside representation within the executive office of the council.

The differences were resolved later though by restructuring the executive office which included four representatives from the city and six representatives from the countryside who were elected by merging each district into one representation. Some districts gave up their representation in favor of the city. This resulted in relative stability for the local councils who were carrying about tremendous work which unfortunately interrupted by IS who controlled large parts of the province since mid-2014, with the exception of few neighborhoods of the city of Deir Ezzor city ("Al-Joura, Al-Qusour, Arbash" and Deir Ezzor military airport) that remain under regime control.

Initially, IS detained the important figures of the provincial council<sup>77</sup> and subjected the workers and members of local councils to "repentance courses"<sup>78</sup>, then began to

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<sup>76</sup> A video-taped session of the assembly in April 2014

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=869y723ps0&feature=share>

<sup>77</sup> Daesh releases the president of the provincial council of Deir Ezzor after two months of detention, Al Hal. Net

<https://7al.net/2015/01/18/%D8%AF%D8%A7%D8%B9%D8%B4-%D9%8A%D9%81%D8%B1%D8%AC-%D8%B9%D9%86-%D8%B1%D8%A6%D9%8A%D8%B3-%D8%A7%D9%84%D9%85%D8%AC%D9%84%D8%B3-%D8%A7%D9%84%D9%85%D8%AD%D9%84%D9%8A-%D9%81%D9%8A-%D8%AF%D9%8A%D8%B1-%D8%A7/>

<sup>78</sup> Repentance courses vary between 3 weeks to 3 months during which individuals are forced to learn about the Islamic Sharia and basics of Islam that Muslims shouldn't ignore. The most dangerous thing in these courses is that IS tries to instill its ideas in the minds of people and divide the people between believers and infidels and all those who are infidel are the enemies who a Muslim should fight - See Daesh: Islamic Classes and the doctrine of indulgence, Al Modon. <http://www.almodon.com/arabworld/2015/1/5/%D8%AF%D8%A7%D8%B9%D8%B4->

confiscate funds and properties of local councils. Later it started to persecute local council members on charges of being infidel. That's mainly because they are affiliated to the infidel national Syrian opposition. This systematic policy has led to the elimination of local councils, whose members are either exiled, killed or disappeared.

Since IS control of the Province and the implementation of the Islamic law, 150.000 were displaced, while 56% of the residential areas are destroyed due to air strikes carried out by government and coalition forces.

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[%D8%AF%D9%88%D8%B1%D8%A7%D8%AA-%D8%A7%D9%84%D8%B4%D8%B1%D8%B9%D9%8A%D8%A9-%D9%88%D8%B5%D9%83%D9%88%D9%83-%D8%A7%D9%84%D8%BA%D9%81%D8%B1%D8%A7%D9%86-%D8%B9%D9%84%D9%89-%D8%B7%D8%B1%D9%8A%D9%82%D8%A9-%D8%A7%D9%84%D8%A8%D8%B9%D8%AB](#)

## Chapter 2 - The making of legitimacy

According to Beetham (1991), a ruling or governance entity's legitimacy is reflected in three aspects: Legality which means that the entity complies with the established rules; Justification which supposes a common belief and understanding between the governors and the governed; and popular consent which reflects active and expressed support by citizens. Consent, public support, and trust are paradigms that have recently been evoked by scholars to measure institutional legitimacy (Easton 1965). These scholars developed their theories based on Weber's reflection on the charismatic legitimacy.

In a revolutionary and a rebel setting where a sudden rupture between the governor and the governed occurs, public consent and trust stand out as the only source of legitimacy to the entities that are trying to fill the "governance gap", given the fact that the elections that produce these entities, in the Syrian context, do not adhere to democratic standards. These paradigms also reflect governance's effectiveness, and its capacity to exercise a much bigger role beyond service delivery.

To measure citizens' consent and trust, thus the social capital or the legitimacy of emerging local governance in opposition – held areas, I tend to weigh the social capital that Provincial and Local Councils are gradually acquiring, and reflect on how this capital is contributing to shaping a civil culture, and enhancing people's leadership and sentiment in participating at a historic event (the revolution) and an aspired social change (Burstin 2013) by producing collaborative behaviors among citizens.

While Fukuyama equates social capital to trust, James Colman defines social capital as a variety of entities that all consist of some aspect of social structure (i.e. local councils, civil society organizations, syndicates, unions, activists, etc.) that facilitate certain actions of actors within the structure (i.e. local council members, activists, notables).

In this sense, efficiency of actions will result in a compound of trust, norms of reciprocity, participation and equality. In other words, efficiency is an essential source of "rightfulness" for the actors. Although one of the greatest weaknesses of the social capital concept is the absence of consensus on how to measure it, (Grootaert and Van Bastalaer:2001) posited that it is possible to measure social capital and its impact. (Onyx and Bullen: 2001) in their turn said that is possible to measure social capital through attitudes and expectations.

In the Syrian context, I argue that it isn't the democratic procedures or elections that reflect the trust that people have in their self-proclaimed representatives, but rather it is the ensemble of attitudes that people have towards them, as well as the effectiveness of the actions and the strategies these individuals/entities have.

An action is deemed efficient when it achieves or obtains its intended result or desired outcome. Effectiveness though is a variable that depends on different factors or situations, and in the Syrian context, the efficiency of Local Councils depend on internal and external factors such as the homogeneousness of the civil and uncivil dynamics; military situation and control (besieged, hard to reach or accessible area), donor dependency or independency, social sufficiency, and revolutionary background, added to the level of public political consciousness. So, by reviewing the public attitudes towards a sample of local governance initiatives across Syria, I will tend to measure the trust that these actors enjoy.

## Kafr Nobol – Stuttering Legitimacy



Figure 20- Kafr Nobol banners : "When legitimacy is derived from gun nozzle, an illegitimate council delegitimizes whoever it wishes and the law of jungle prevails.

*The Syrian Revolution in Kafr Nobol, 15 August 2015"*

Kafr Nobol, is a symbolic town in the collective revolutionary memory of Syrians. This small town which is located in the southern countryside of Idlib Governorate was one of the first towns in northern Syria to join the uprising, particularly on April 1<sup>st</sup> 2011 with series of pacifist protests. It was also one of the earliest towns to force out government forces in August 2012 by local rebel fighters and army defectors. Perhaps this enthusiasm is quite understandable given the fact that some of the town's families were active in the Muslim Brothers organization who led armed rebellion against Assad the father in the 80s. One of the town's sons, Ahmed Rajab Damour, even attempted to assassinate the Hafez al-Assad in front of the Damascus Guesthouse (Presidential Palace). While Damour fled to Jordan with his brother, the town has since become a target of the regime's discontent. Many of its sons were denied jobs at public institutions. Yet, the real reason for the city's reputation and symbolism for the rebellious Syrians stems from its famous banners which local activists designed and carried in weekly demonstrations addressing the local and international public opinion. Some of these banners were even exhibited in various events aiming at bringing support

to the Syrian revolution, in the USA, in France, Sweden, Holland and Turkey <sup>79</sup>. These banners were in fact one of the tools that local activists used to express their thoughts, opinions and positions towards the revolution and international events, and also to mock extremist groups such as IS<sup>80</sup> which appeared in Kafr Nobol in December 2013 but was soon driven out under the pressure of civilians, the FSA and other Salafist groups that differs from IS ideologically like Al Nusra Front or Ahrar Al Asham.

To communicate with the villagers while the regime was still controlling Kafr Nobol, that's between 2011 and the beginning of 2012, the activists who had left town to the nearby mountains and caves, which were out of reach of the army and security forces, organized the revolutionary movement and weekly demonstrations by all available means. At night, for example, they'd record messages to the people and the regime forces urging them to participate in the demonstrations and explaining their demands which consisted back then in lifting the security grip and the halt of massacres. Following the liberation of the town, the activists launched a local radio, Radio Fresh, covering Kafr Nobol, and neighboring villages and towns. The aim was to spread political and civic awareness among the people of the town. The launch of the radio coincided with the presence of IS which attempted to assassinate one of the town's distinguished activists, Raed Al Fares, and confiscated the radio's equipment. Surviving, Al Fares was out of sight for some time, during which he was able to obtain financial support from foreign organizations to restart the radio.

All this coincided with the emergence of the first form of local governance in Kafr Nobol through the drafting of a constitution or a <sup>81</sup> law project to govern or manage the affairs of the city by the principles on which the revolution was founded, namely, democracy and the separation of powers. The constitution was drafted by 11 persons who were elected by 40 activists and revolutionary figures. These same 40 figures elected 25 individuals of them to form four bureaus for Finance, Relief, Census and Media under

<sup>79</sup> See Al Jazeera report on the banners exhibition in various American states <http://www.aljazeera.net/Services/FullImageBody?&entityId=f6451603-4dff-4ca1-9c10-122741d17432&resourceId=ed3a815a-f1b9-48d5-b011-52c4eb56e540&imageId=dadfe489-5530-4944-b3ad-a94cefa106a7>, as well as an article on Al Modon Website on the banners' exhibition in Paris, France <https://souriahouria.com/%D9%83%D9%81%D8%B1%D9%86%D8%A8%D9%84-%D9%81%D9%8A-%D8%A8%D8%A7%D8%B1%D9%8A%D8%B3-%D8%B1%D8%A7%D8%B4%D8%AF-%D8%B9%D9%8A%D8%B3%D9%89/>. You can also see pictures of the exhibition that Souria Houria Collective organized in the streets of Paris in 2012 [https://www.facebook.com/pg/Sortie41/photos/?tab=album&album\\_id=440041569350853](https://www.facebook.com/pg/Sortie41/photos/?tab=album&album_id=440041569350853)

<sup>80</sup> <http://www.alarabiya.net/ar/arab-and-world/syria/2014/01/03/سوريون-يسخرون-من-داعش-عبر-ر-سوم-الكار-يكتير.html>

<sup>81</sup> A short documentary on the Constitution of Kafr Nobol [https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=z\\_UVQHIMx88&feature=youtu.be](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=z_UVQHIMx88&feature=youtu.be)

the name of “Union of Active Bureaus in Kafr Nobol (Ittihad Al Makateb Al’amila Fi Kafronbol)”. It worth mentioning that Radio Fresh was part of Union’s Media office.

Under the pressure of the growing needs of the town’s residents who were subjected to air strikes and suffered lack of services and basic needs, the Union gave up its role in Service delivery after failing in responding to people’s needs, especially after 1700 families from villages <sup>82</sup>of the neighbouring governorate of Hama sought refuge in the town creating an even bigger pressure on the estimated 30,000 people of Kafr Nobol.

At that point, the Union contributed to the formation of an Advisory Committee which was formed of 90 individuals each representing an extended family of 300 to 800 people. Out of the Committee’s members, 11 individual were elected to become the nucleus of the first Local Council of Kafr Nobol which was considered as a technocrat council as all of its members were technical professionals (lawyers, engineers, artisan, technicians and former municipal workers) regardless of their activism background. Despite this, the council remained a mirror of a clan society which sparked much controversy, especially among youth and revolutionary figures who believed that their Assad-free town should reflect Syrians democratic aspirations. Many of the town’s citizens found that the council was regressive and is not compatible to modern societies<sup>83</sup>.

Despite the critics, the council started providing limited services aiming at responding to citizens urgent needs, like distributing food baskets, providing drinking water through mobile water tanks or providing medicine. This was possible thanks to the donation of Syrian expats originating from Kafr Nobol or Idlib Province, as well as to very small assistance from the Syrian Opposition Coalition that was exclusively targeting displaced families which created resentment among the town’s sons who also needed help. As a result, many internal conflicts have arisen and most have been linked to the mechanisms of distributing relief items or to the powers of council members. Since the Council is based on family balances, these conflicts have had repercussions on the street, as unknowns burned the local council warehouse<sup>84</sup>, and others responded by organizing demonstrations in which participants raised plates saying that the local council represents them.

<sup>82</sup> [https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=yvP4P\\_P-6IE](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=yvP4P_P-6IE)

<sup>83</sup> Orient News Reports on citizens perception of Kafr Nobol New Local Council

<sup>84</sup> Unknown group burns KafrNobol Local Council’s Warehouse  
[https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=RC60rc\\_IPU4](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=RC60rc_IPU4)



Figure 21 - On March 22nd 2013, citizens of Kafr Nobol organized rallied in the town's streets carrying banners reflecting their support to their local council

To prevent further tensions in Kafr Nobol, activists put pressure on the town's influential families to resolve the council and

elect another one. These attempts were successful and a new council was elected. The new council was more determined to govern the town to the extent that it's president declared the council as a "Small government responsible of all the aspect of citizens' life"<sup>85</sup> which remind us of the former Syrian constitution where the Baath Party was "the leader of the State and the Society".

Yet, this period was marked by its relative stability and a remarkable progress made by council which started providing its services in more organized manner through five office for Service, Finance , Medical Affairs, Media and Security. The latter was formed of defected police officers and members.

The Council also established a central pharmacy which provided free medicine to Kafr Nobol and neighboring villages' residents. But, perhaps the most important thing that brought popular support to council is that it provides job opportunities to employees who were released from their jobs because of their pro-revolution positions. To date the council has provided more than 65 job opportunities through several projects<sup>86</sup>. The council was also able to provide financial and food assistance to the families of detainees or defected army officers of the town of Kafr Nobol.

Thanks to the fame that the town has gained through its banners and it civil movement, the council received considerable financial assistance of number of organizations and programs funded by western governments aiming at enhancing local governance in

<sup>85</sup> Akhbar Al Aan TV report on the Local Council of Kafr Nobol, interview with the head of the Local Council, the lawyer Nazhi Al Bayoush. <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=XElwQQ0gGI4>

<sup>86</sup>

<http://fresh-syria.net/2015/07/%D8%A7%D9%84%D9%85%D9%81%D8%B5%D9%88%D9%84%D9%88%D9%86-%D9%85%D9%86-%D9%85%D8%A4%D8%B3%D8%B3%D8%A7%D8%AA-%D8%A7%D9%84%D9%86%D8%B8%D8%A7%D9%85-%D8%A7%D9%84%D9%85%D8%AF%D9%86%D9%8A%D8%A9-%D9%81%D9%8A/>

Syria such as the USA and France. However, the fame has also drew the attention of some jihadist and Salafist groups which had started to extend its control over the liberated areas across Syria. Al Nusra front for example, established a “D’wa Office” in Kafr Nobol to spread Islamist Jihadist teachings among citizens, and started to oppress the town’s activists by different means. On December 29<sup>th</sup> 2014, Al Nusra kidnapped Raed Al fares and a another fellow activists, then released him one day later after torturing him. To extend its control over the town, Al Nusra attempted to infiltrate the local council and Advisory Committee, and to gain popular legitimacy by providing humanitarian assistance to the town’s residents through its Da’wa Office and charity services. Contrary to what happened in many towns in Idlib Governorate, Al Musra wasn’t able to control Kafr Nobol due to the presence of a strong local FSA group which allied with the second biggest armed group in norther Syria, Ahrar Al Sham.

The presence of individuals affiliated with Al Nusra within the council reduced the support that the latter had been obtaining, as all grants provided by western governments requires zero affiliation with any group or individual listed on sanctions lists.

With the shrinking support, the council wasn’t able to respond to all citizen’s needs who grew dramatically as the town became target to regular air strikes by the government forces which caused significant damages to the town’s infrastructure.

Ittihad Al Makateb Al’amila Fi Kafronbol which has changed its name to become the Union of Revolutionary Bureaus or URB (Ittihad Al Makateb Al Thawriyya)” soon realized the importance of establishing a shadow council or a parallel service structure to confront Salafist and Jihadist groups who also started building their legitimacy through service provision across the Governorate.

Given its reputation, the URB didn’t encounter much difficulties in obtaining both moral and financial support to its project that mainly consisted in community development and empowerment. The URB established and supported women centers and handed their management to local women, child-friendly spaces, a football field, and few service based projects<sup>87</sup>, that it handed over to the town’s local council just to keep this council

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<sup>87</sup> URB implements two water projects and hands them over to the local council. Article featured in Syrian Stories website <https://syriastories.net/ar/%D9%85%D8%B4%D8%B1%D9%88%D8%B9-%D9%85%D9%8A%D8%A7%D9%87-%D9%83%D9%81%D8%B1%D9%86%D8%A8%D9%84-%D8%A3%D8%B5%D8%A8%D8%AD-%D9%88%D8%A7%D9%82%D8%B9%D8%A7%D9%8B-%D8%B9%D9%84%D9%89-%D8%A7%D9%84%D8%A3%D8%B1/>

visible among citizens “because people must keep looking at the local council as their legitimate representative”<sup>88</sup>.

URB's intervention created a certain balance of power in the town and within the council. For example, on August 13, 2015 a self-appointed Shoura Council affiliated with Al Nusra Front issued an executive order exempting members of the local council of Kafr Nobol of their duties, and assigned five individuals to run the council till the creation of a new council. The so called Shoura Council didn't provide any justification for its decision and gave the exempted members 48 hours to evacuate the council and settle any due payments.

The town's citizens reacted immediately and occupied the building of the council and sought support from a force of Ahrar Al Sham. Meanwhile, the URB organized a manifestation and mocked the decision of the Shoura Council which no one had heard of it before the incident. People took the streets and manifested weekly. The popular movement resulted in a petition demanding open elections.

*“The people of Kafr Nobol categorically reject a local council composed of one color and has the loyalty to a few racist and exclusionist people. Each member of the Shoura Council is closely linked to a person or relative in the new local council, which represents only few of the people who formed it as if we returned to the rule of exclusion and loyalty and kinship to the Baathist Criminal Regime (...) Psychopaths, vainglorious and those who have appetite for power will only be confronted by the people through free direct democratic elections before the eyes of all people and citizens, which will bring down all those who pretend to be representing the people of Kafr Nobol”*<sup>89</sup>

Few days following the issuance of this petition, a new local council was elected based on the town's geographic districts without resorting to family representation. A preparatory committee of 6 people known for the town's people for their good reputation and wisdom was formed and was charged of managing the electoral process. The committee divided the town into sectors and formed sectoral committees who then selected a specific number of candidates for each sector (depending on the population density and the area of each sector) and in accordance with conditions set by the

<sup>88</sup> This was a note that the author took during an informal meeting with Raed Al Fares and the former president of the Local Council of Kafr Nobol, Nahid Bayoush, in Gaziantep in November 2015”.

<sup>89</sup> An excerpt of petition signed by the free people of Kafr Nobol which was published on many Opposition Outlets, including Al Watan FM which is available here <http://www.watan.fm/syria-news/15099-%D8%A8%D9%8A%D8%A7%D9%86-%D9%84%D8%A3%D9%87%D8%A7%D9%84%D9%8A-%D9%83%D9%81%D8%B1%D9%86%D8%A8%D9%84-%D9%8A%D8%B1%D9%81%D8%B6%D9%88%D9%86-%D8%A7%D9%84%D9%85%D8%AC%D9%84%D8%B3-%D8%A7%D9%84%D9%85%D8%AD%D9%84%D9%8A-%D8%A7%D9%84%D8%AC%D8%AF%D9%8A%D8%AF-%D9%88%D9%8A%D8%B7%D8%A7%D9%84%D8%A8%D9%88%D9%86-%D8%A8%D8%A5%D8%B9%D8%A7%D8%AF%D8%A9-%D8%A7%D9%84%D8%A7%D9%86%D8%AA%D8%AE%D8%A7%D8%A8%D8%A7%D8%AA>

preparatory committee. Of these conditions for example, that the candidate should not be less than 30 years old, and should have professional and academic degree, and a good revolutionary background. The call for candidacy was placed in public places and on the doors of mosques and on social media. 15 days later, 17 individuals were elected as members of the new council, then they elected a president and vice-president of them. The elections took place under the supervision of the Provincial Council of Idleb. At least 6 of the members of the council were said to be affiliated and supported by the URB.

These elections were in fact a turning point in the history of the local council of Kafr Nobol which was empowered by the town's people who, despite their dissatisfaction of the performance of the council (due to the lack resources versus needs) stood up behind it, especially after being directly hit by a missile in October 2015, only few days following the elections<sup>90</sup>.

People stood behind the council again in 2016 when, this time, both Ahrar Al Sham took turn in kidnapping and attacking members of the LC. In 2016 and under the pretext of investigating the theft of parts of a power generator that the Local Council operates to provide power to citizens, the "Sharia (Islamic) Court" which is affiliated to Ahrar Al Sham stormed the offices of the council, humiliated some of its members and arrested



Figure 22- Picture of one of Kafr Nobol's citizens against Al Nusra Front. Protesters also demanded the release of the kidnapped former of the council of their town

a member of the council. Following this incident, the council issued a statement saying that it will sever its ties with the Sharia Court because of the "coward act" as it described it, adding that this Court is not legitimate. As a reaction, the court raided the council's offices and arrested its president and two other members on May 18<sup>th</sup> then released few hours later. This provoked Al Nusra Front who is said to be close to arrested members, and who raiding

seven houses, arresting seven of the city's eminent and influential figures who were former members of the LC and who were close to Ahrar Al Sham.

This military interference in the town's civil affairs provoked popular movements that lasted almost a month till the liberation of the kidnapped figures. This time, men and women went down to the streets to express their anger with such practices. This

<sup>90</sup> Pictures of the damages of the LC of Kafr Nobol following a regime air strike. Retrieved from Facebook [https://www.facebook.com/pg/localkafranbel/photos/?tab=album&album\\_id=658205224316940](https://www.facebook.com/pg/localkafranbel/photos/?tab=album&album_id=658205224316940)

movement coincided with other manifestation in other towns in Idlib Province against Al Nusra Front.

This military interferences affected the council's capacity to outsource funds and seek support from INGOs and foreign governments, especially western ones which question of the council's "moderation". To this end, a meeting was called upon by the Provincial Council of Idlib who was also put in pressure by foreign government to act and limit the influence of jihadist groups over the town's council. The provincial council called for a meeting and encouraged the town's elderly to carry out new elections based on the Local Administration Law and under the supervision of the Syrian Interim Government. The meeting seemed to have been fruitful, as it resulted in new elections which resulted in a representative council where for the first time in its history women were elected, something which would never happened if Jihadist groups were still in control or influencing the council.



Figure 23- Print screen reflecting citizens' engagement with Kafr Nobol posts on Facebook

People also seemed more responsive and collaborative with the council as they started paying monthly fees in return of the water and waste management that the LC was providing on a regular base.

*"Well done. The people must collaborate so the Water Directorate would be a local sustainable authority that doesn't rely on funds"* Na'am Abdul Azib Abdio, commented on post by the LC on its Facebook reminding citizens to pay their due fees for the third month of the current year (2017). Abdio suggested the usage of water metering for fair tariff.

In a place like Kafr nobol (Which is not a unique case in the opposition-controlled areas) where military groups, and most importantly jihadist and extremist groups, compete with civil democratic entities over popular legitimacy and control of local communities, measuring the level of trust that local governance entities or individual who form them is very challenging, yet we can also detect some indicators on such trust. When people who used to address harsh criticism to some of Kafr Nobol LC, go to the streets and demand the freedom of the same people they used to criticize harshly or describe as old Baathists. When people criticize their councils, it means that they acknowledge councils' responsibility to serve them, in other words, people believe that LCs are entitled to act in their behalf on public matters. People's demand for open elections

and their participation in this basic democratic practice reflect their desire in belonging to a social chain that, according to Gramsci, is the intelligent work of the citizens, not a product of fate.

### Darayya – Governance for Survival



*Figure 24- This photo was taken during the final session of the Local Council of Darayya following its forced evacuation of Darayya - Source: The Local Council YouTube channel*

For Gramsci, revolutionary leaders aiming at diffusing their ideas among people must be prepared to take personal responsibility for their actions and, if necessary, pay the price that these actions may produce. And this was exactly what the leaders of the revolution in Darayya did. They assumed their responsibility right until 27<sup>th</sup> of August 2016 when approximately 8000 persons left their city following an agreement that is part of a demographic change forced by the Syrian regime.

Darayyans left their city after having endured a 1375 days siege, a systematic destruction of the city's infrastructure which some reports estimated at about 95% due to air strikes and artillery shelling, and after being target of 3500 documented barrel bombs<sup>91</sup> and hundreds of other kinds of missiles and bombs including napalm<sup>92</sup>.

After six years of revolution, some are used to words such as siege, bombardment, and forced evacuation. One may forget sometimes what these words truly means. For the sake of honesty, I didn't understand what these words mean neither until I witnessed once an air strike by government forces against an IDP camp on the Syrian – Turkish borders. That day, I was in a nearby camp and I will never forget the horror in the eyes of children and women specifically. Under bombing, there is a certain feeling of anticipation and uncertainty: One doesn't know whether he/she will survive or will disappear of the face of the earth. I wanted to mention this incident here because I want to draw readers' attention to the psychological state of a population who was trapped in almost 3 km of land and was subjected to a hunger policy and systematic bombing.

Darayya has a special place in the Syrian collective memory. I don't recall a day I mentioned the name of the city without people expressing their admiration of the Darayyan's unquestionable resilience, and heroism. But what kind of heroism? It is simply the heroism of survival and resilience against a war machine.

Resilience under inhuman conditions tremendous spirit of collaboration by all the components of the surviving society or the conflict society organizations (CoSOs) as Marchetti describes it (Marchetti and Tocci: 2011). A community of solidarity, because solidarity is its only choice; a traumatized community (I will mention later the reason why it is traumatized) and a community who holds on to the values of justice and freedom, as well as to its land.

When discussing Darayya's local governance experience which is a unique and different experience, we shouldn't frame it chronologically under the beginning of the Syrian uprising in 2011, as its roots go back a long way, precisely to 2003 which witnessed the emergence of Darayya Youth Group which a group of young men and women disciplines of the Syrian Islamic scholar Jawdat Said who is considered one of the most important thinkers of non-violence in the Muslim world. The group members were also disciplines

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<sup>91</sup> A barrel bomb is an improvised unguided bomb, sometimes described as a flying IED (improvised explosive device). They are typically made from a large barrel-shaped metal container that has been filled with high explosives, possibly shrapnel, oil or chemicals as well, and then dropped from a helicopter or airplane. Due to the large amount of explosives (up to 1,000 kilograms (2,200 lb)), their poor accuracy and indiscriminate use in populated civilian areas (including refugee camps), the resulting detonations have been devastating. Critics have characterised them as weapons of terror and illegal under international conventions.

<sup>92</sup> Human Rights Watch reported the use of incendiary weapons in several occasions. But the first time was in December 2012. Report Available here: <https://www.hrw.org/news/2012/12/12/syria-incendiary-weapons-used-populated-areas>

of Abdul Akram Al ASkka <sup>93</sup>, an Imam of Darayya and a ascholar who published several books on non-violence and feminism in Islam. Al Sakka was famous for his activism bottom-community development.

Taking advantage of the narrow margins of freedom that Assad had allowed in 2003, Daria's youth group undertook a number of activities for community change, believing that nonviolent movement and the horizontal engagement of local communities in such movement could would end up changing governance setting. Back in then, the group organized several activities to raise people's awareness regarding number of topics like corruption, smoking effects on health, and a clean 'up campaign <sup>94</sup> in the city under the slogan of "Untill they change what's in themselves" which the title of a book written by Cheikh Jawdat Said where he makes the Quranic verse (God does not change a people until they change what is in themselves) a starting point, to prove that in order to solve a problem or change a situation, the priority of change starts from ourselves. The campaign, though, by security forces arresting 24 of the participants of the campaign, 39 young man and woman of whom 11 were tried by a secret court and were condemned of 3 to 4 years of prison.

When the uprising sparked in Syria in 2011, members of Darayya Youth Group were among the first to make initiatives to mobilize the community. Some of these initiatives were very creative, like for example when few activists, including Ghayath Mattar <sup>95</sup> and Yehya Shurbaji, attempted to approach security forces' checkpoints and offered them water and flowers rapped in the Syrian flag. Sadly, security forces beat them violently. Later on both activists were arrested, Ghayath Mattar was returned to his family a dead body with marks of torture after only four days of detention, while Yehya Shurbaji is still diapered. The leaders of the uprising in Darayya struggled to maintain the peacefulness of the movement whether through leaflets that they distributed among people, or through public speech that they held in mosques following funerals of those killed by government and security forces, or later on by publishing a newspaper that they distributed in clandestine. But, Mattar's martyrdom was a decisive moment in the history of Darayya, as some of the city's sons held arms after seeing the regime response to peaceful initiatives.

The revolutionary movement has since been divided between Darayya Youth Group and the non – violent movement and Darayya's Cooridnation Committee who some of its members chose armed resistance. At that point, armed revolutionaries would only

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<sup>93</sup> As a preacher for years at the Anas Ben Malek Mosque in Darayya, Abdul-Akram Al-Sakka promoted freedom and peace without openly criticizing the Syrian government. Security forces arrested him on July 15, 2011 and his been disappred since. Human Rights Watch had reported his detention as well. <https://www.hrw.org/news/2013/09/11/abdul-akram-al-sakka-peaceful-activist>

<sup>94</sup> A video posted by unknown on Youtube in 2008 to docuement the clean up campaign <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=6ByJ9XKoLQ0>

<sup>95</sup> The story of iconic Syrian peace activist Ghiyath Matar whose brutal torture and death at the age of 26 outraged the international community and erupted into one of the most violent uprisings in modern history was featured in a documentary entitles "Little Ghandi". See the film's official trailer here <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=OQEiRsE4NCI>

protect protesters without carrying out offensive act against pro-government forces who were now encircling the city.

This period which extended over nearly a year witnessed monumental movements where the non-violence activists were able to engage armed revolutionaries in civil activities like a cleanup campaign that aimed at cleaning the streets of the city and removing the waste which accumulated when municipal services were stopped by the government. The city's female activists have also played important role in mobilizing the community and responding to the deteriorating psychological state of children. The activists organized themselves in "Tajamou' Hara'er darayya (The group of Darayya's Free Women" and set for themselves a number of goals aiming at promoting gender equality and empowering women on cultural, political, social and economic level. The group very particularly active in distributing flyers and leaflets calling the Christians of Darayya (who who constituted 25% of Darayya's population which was estimated at around 250000 people in 2011) to join the revolution. Although Christians didn't fully engage in the city's uprising, they manifested in several occasion their solidarity with protesters. For example, on April 23<sup>rd</sup> 2011, the bells Santa Tecla's Church (one two churches of Darayya) rang during a massive funeral of three activists killed under torture<sup>96</sup>.

*"The number of mourners was estimated at forty thousand. As they passed in front of the church, the bells rang and Christian women threw roses from the balconies on the funeral of martyrs who roamed the streets. Christians did not take part in the demonstrations (...) but their women helped us cook and hid with us when we were pursued. They did not harm anyone, nor did they inform security forces about us, and they did not give away those who sought refuge in their homes, nor did they remove a flyer or a picture of a martyr we hung in the streets. The church itself was a field hospital. I went to a funeral of a Christian soldier was killed after defecting from the regime's army in Homs. We visited his mother and her son and gave them roses on Easter."* <sup>97</sup>

Despite the tight security grip and repression, the revolutionary peaceful movement persisted, which worried the regime to whom Darayya was a true threat given its location between 4 of the regime's strongest holds: The republican palace, the republican guard headquarters, the military air base of Mazzeh and the 4<sup>th</sup> brigade (4<sup>th</sup> Armored Division) Head Quarter <sup>98</sup> as shown in the below figure.

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<sup>96</sup> In this Youtube video we can the church's bells ringing during he funeral <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=XEwdW5gmsS0>

<sup>97</sup> This an excerpt of the testimony of a female activist from Darayya that Syrian poet and author compiled together with testimonies of other Syrian female activists. This was published in the Lebanese newspaper Al Nahar <https://newspaper.annahar.com/article/266744-%D9%86%D8%B3%D8%A7%D8%A1-%D9%81%D9%8A-%D8%A7%D9%84%D8%AB%D9%88%D8%B1%D8%A9-%D8%A7%D9%84%D8%B3%D9%88%D8%B1%D9%8A%D8%A9>

<sup>98</sup> The 4<sup>th</sup> brigade or the 4<sup>th</sup> Armoured Division is an elite formation of the Syrian Army whose primary purpose is to defend the Syrian government from internal and external threats. It has as its roots in the Defence



Figure 25A map showing Darayya's location with regard to regime strongholds - Open source

On the 22<sup>nd</sup> of August 2012, the regime mobilized military and paramilitary forces and stormed the city, carrying out field executions, looting empty houses, and leading an arresting campaign. When regime forces withdrew from the city, opposition groups reported that over 400 bodies were found in the city's streets. In the next five days, regime forces shelled the city with artillery. Reports says that more than 700 civilian were massacred during that black week<sup>99</sup>, over than 1000 people were injured and 100 people were missing.

Following this "security operation" as described by regime sources, 90% of Darayya's sons left their city, including its Christian population.

People blamed revolutionaries for not defending them, yet they realized that there were no other ways to defeat the regime but through unity. Both the Darayya Youth Group and Darayya's Coordination Committee united and announced the formation of one umbrella for all forms of revolutionary activities in the city, under the name of the Local Council of Darayya. The first organizational structure of the Council which was formed on the 17th of October 2012, consisted of 10 offices for (Public Relations, Services, Neighbourhood Committees, Financial, Medical, Media, Relief, Legal, Peaceful, and

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Companies commanded by Rifaat al-Assad (Uncle of Bashar Al Assad and the Mastermind of the Hama Massacre). After Rifaat was banished from Syria in 1984, the Defence Companies were reorganised into the 569th Armoured Division, and then later into the 4th Armoured Division.

<sup>99</sup> The Guardian reporting the massacre <https://www.theguardian.com/world/2012/sep/07/syria-daraya-massacre-ghost-town>

Military Affairs). To put the military council office under the Local Council's mandate was, and is still, a first in the history of the Syrian Revolution.

The council established a website <sup>100</sup> where it published its bylaws, its objectives and thorough explanation of its structure which consisted of three layers:

- An Executive Office which is considered as the main decision making body of the city; and it includes the presidential team (president of the local council, deputy and secretary), heads of seven offices (public relations - relief - media - legal legal - services - medical - financial), and three members of the military office. The president of the council and his deputy are elected directly by the residents of the city.
- A Legislative Body Legislature which has a supervisory role to monitor the work of the Executive Office and has the power to withhold confidence from it, the President or the Vice-President. This body consists of members representing the military revolutionary who's name became the brigade of Shuhadaa Al Islam (The brigade of Islam Martyrs) , a block of other offices and three members of the city's civilians from outside the council.
- The General Assembly which consists of all the members and employees of the Council and its offices (both civilian-military).

Since its creation till the day it decided to end its work following the forced deportation of Darayya's population, the local council was known for its high commitment. It has representatives outside Syria in several Arab countries, as well as in France, the UK, Sweden, Belgium, Turkey, Germany and the Senegal. Its representative were in charge of soliciting financial support for the council's activities and projects. The Council was also implicitly collaborating with two charities operating in the regime controlled – areas to provide humanitarian assistance to displaced Darayyans who were living under the regime in nearby suburbs.

Since the "great massacre" as people recall August 2012 military operation, Darayya went under siege and systematic bombing. To face this, the council depended on the agricultural lands surrounding the city to plant strategic crops such as wheat and vegetables. Member of the military office also used to risk their lives to smuggle food and critical material to the city's population which has shrunk to 8000 people by 2016.

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<sup>100</sup> <http://darayacouncil.org/>



*Figure 26- Picture posted on Darayya's Local Council's Facebook page featuring one of its urban garden projects*

2016 was another decisive moment in the history of Darayya as the regime, backed by its Russian allies, escalated its military offensive against the city. Crops were burned out and regime forces made advances, which left no option of the local council but to support the residents of the city to plant vegetable and essential crops near their homes among the rubble.

The council provided fuel, water and seeds to citizens.

The council's relief office consisted in three committees: one for supporting detainees, pursued, and martyrs' families, another one to support displaced citizens, and one for supporting poor and vulnerable individuals. According the council, its relief office is main source of support to all affected individuals (whether during the revolution or before) regardless of their political orientation or religion.

Through its medical office, the council was providing emergency services to patients 24 hours a day. Its services also included radiology exams, general, neurological, cardiac, orthopedic services to accommodate all types of injuries, intensive care, surgeries, post-injury rehabilitation, dental services, and gynecological treatment and care.

The council's civil records office issued temporary identity cards to the remaining residents of Darayya. The IDs which were marked with the Syrian Arab republic Symbol (the opposition's version) were given to all the residents (civilians and non-civilians) and aimed at providing precise demographic statics to humanitarian organizations as well as to "preserve the rights and inheritance of people, and to document marriages, divorces and births, which in turn help to preserve families genealogical history, especially that some marriages occurred under siege and were not documented anywhere"

Between November 2015 and January 2016, The Today After Organization conducted a survey <sup>101</sup> with the objective of identifying and assessing local residents' views of their local councils. According to the survey which targeted a group of 803 individuals (424 males and 379 females), Local councils usually face difficulties that fall into two

<sup>101</sup> See executive summary here <http://tda-sy.org/publications/opinions-of-syrians-on-local-councils.html>

categories: 1) External challenges, including the fact that local councils cannot control Russian bombardment, hostile military factions, or insufficient donor funding; 2) Internal organisational challenges which each council does have a measure of control, such as personal relationships, leadership, and corruption. Half of the interviewees in Darayya thought that the biggest problem that their local council is facing is the lack of funding, while nepotism and corruption appeared to be the least of the city's problems. None of the city's interviewees expressed concerns about military factions' involvement in civil affairs. The result of the survey reflect, at a certain point, people's trust of their council which struggled together with the citizens its serves to survive.



Figure 27 - A picture of one of the sit-in that Darayya LC organized to break siege

In 2016 and after the intensification of the siege and the shelling, the council's media office organized several sit-in and protests addressed to the international public opinion. Women and children participated in these sit-ins, and international Media outlets covered them. The council also coordinated with its

representatives worldwide to organize a press conference in support of Darayya's resilience. The council was attended by number of eminent opposition figures and was aired on Al Jazeera Direct<sup>102</sup>.

Media pressure embarrassed the regime, which for the first time since the siege of Darayya allowed the entry of a delegation from the United Nations to the besieged city who was able to meet civilians and children and touch base with them. The UN delegation also met also met head so the council's offices who explained their works and expressed their demands. The military office, in its turn, was in charged to securing the UN delegation during the visit<sup>103</sup>.



Figure 28 - Darayya's last field hospital in flames following air strikes executed with napalm – Source: The LC's Facebook page

<sup>102</sup> Moas Al Khatib (Former president of the SOC) speech during the “Darayya’s Resilient Support” Conference <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=poilHfJEs-o&t=117s>

<sup>103</sup> The Council's Media Office document the visit in this Youtube <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Q7vGylCqZKo&t=168s>

Despite all the efforts to break Darayya's siege, the Syrian regime continued its military offensive and had since started using prohibited arms. In August 2016, the last field hospital of Darayya went out service after being burned following consecutive air strikes. And this was the final straw in Darayya's resistance.

With provision lines cut out and the last hospital of the city is destroyed, the council negotiated a forced evacuation with the Syrian regime. When the council posted the first picture of the forced evacuation on August 26<sup>th</sup> 2016, people engaged tremendously on social media. It was a moment highly charged of conflicted emotions.

*"Darayya Local Council, I have nothing for you but dep respect and admiration. You've worked tirelessly to preserve the civil face of the revolution and its values. The revolution is an idea, and ideas don't die"* Yassar Fattoum, a Syrian citizen commenting on the LC's Facebook page.

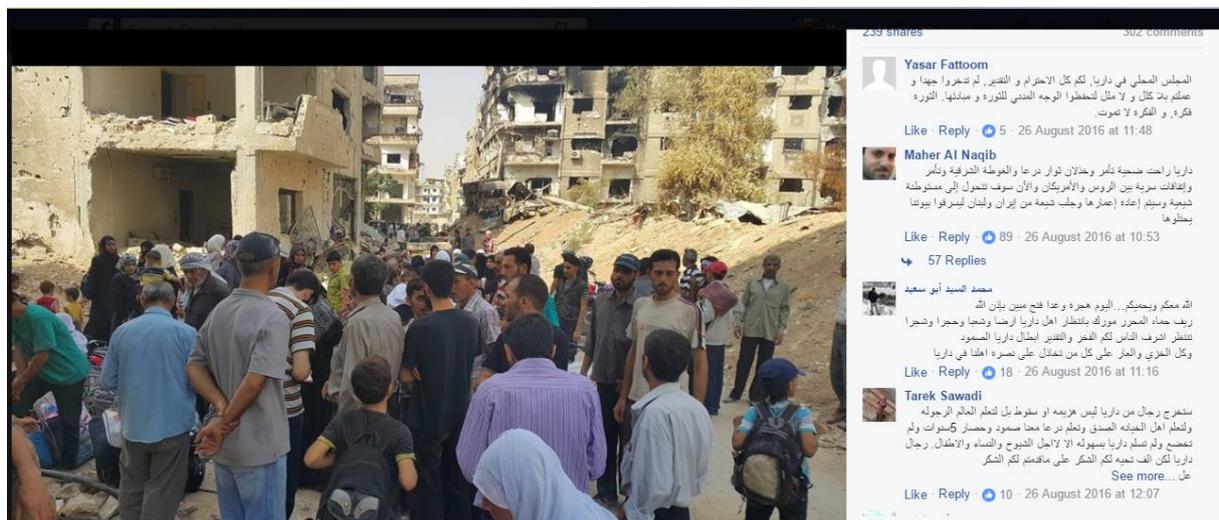


Figure 29 - A print screen reflecting people's engagement with Darayya's Local Council on Social Media.

2300 people reacted to this photos, and 302 people commented on it. The comments reflected people's appreciation and admiration of Darayya's Local Council and people's heroism.

Since the decision to leave the city was sudden, the council founded an "Emergency Room" under the supervision of the Legal Advisor of the Free Syrian Army, Osama Abu Zeid, who made huge efforts to communicate with relief organizations, and included them in the room. The aim was to respond to the evacuees' urgent needs in their final destination which was Idlib province.

In Idlib, the council formed a quadripartite committee to follow up the people and their needs and to communicate with the organizations and coordinate needed support. Three months following the forced displacement, the council issued a statement terminating its work. Then held a press conference, where the president of the local council and the heads of offices provided their final reports, including financial reports

which people's received positively, especially after some people attempted to discredit the council and harm its reputation.

Despite its forced displacement, and unlike what happened in other areas like Homs city (whose population was also forced out in 2014), the local council remained cohesive and committed to institutional and organizational work to serve the people of the city in their places of displacement, and did not abandon its revolutionary responsibility.

Only few months following the forced displacement, the council was able of coordinating with local NGOs to provide livelihood and job opportunities to breadwinners of 75 families of Darrayya currently living in Jarjanaz in Idlib Province <sup>104</sup>.

In fact, the local council became an example on community engagement, building a stable administrative and security environment, creating balance between the different ideological currents and rejecting extremist jihadist ideology coming from outside Syria.

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<sup>104</sup> Article on the project Amal (Hope) which provide job to Darayya displaced families

<https://www.freedomraise.net/%D9%85%D8%B4%D8%B1%D9%88%D8%B9-%D8%A7%D9%84%D8%A3%D9%85%D9%84-%D9%84%D8%AA%D8%B4%D8%BA%D9%8A%D9%84-%D8%A7%D9%84%D9%85%D9%87%D8%AC%D8%B1%D9%8A%D9%86-%D9%85%D9%86-%D8%A3%D9%87%D8%A7%D9%84%D9%8A-%D8%AF/>

## Social Engagement & Efficient Governance



Figure 30- Picture taken during the restoration of the Pedagogical Center of Marat Annuman and Abu Alaa Maari School in Idlib Province 2015 – Source: Nasaem Radio <sup>105</sup>

The different local governance entities which emerged across the opposition controlled areas” were formed as a reaction to the collapse of public institutions or municipalities, or to the lack of services that the regime intentionally cut off hoping it would contribute to the chaos in rebel areas. Therefore, most of the objectives that the council set for themselves were instantaneous or were based on emergency decisions.

In light of these circumstances, some councils were responsible and efficient, while other councils and entities failed in restoring to smart, innovative and sustainable solutions for their local communities. Performance disparity between this entities were critical when accumulating public trust and confidence.

Spontaneity also effects local council’s ability to be efficient, namely its ability to identify, understand and analyze its local community’s problem and needs, then provides timely and rewarding solutions, as well as its ability to put informed and realistic strategies given the fluidity and the complexity of the Syrian situation.

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<sup>105</sup> The campaign was launched by the Local Council of Marat Anuman in collaboration with the Syrian Civil Defense and a Syrian NGO called Shine to rehabilitate and maintain two important educational centers damaged by Government air strikes. Before the war, the Pedagogical Center belonged to the Education Directory and contained files of students of all the towns and village administratively belonging to Marat Annuman District. These files which were scattered among the rubble contained students’ certificates and important records that the council managed to save and preserve in its records department. See interview with the organizers here <http://www.nasaem-syria.fm/moduls/pageitems/newspage.aspx?ProdId=1163>

## Outreach, Interaction and Visibility

Most people expect better performance of councils whose members have previous experience in public administration, management or service provision, or of the councils of big cities and towns who may already possess tools, equipment and remnant of municipal structures that would assist them in their service delivery and public management. This is often the case, yet, the situation in some micro communities suggest otherwise, as local councils were able to implement projects with highly positive impact on their communities' lives by listening to them.

Citizens in Al Houeiz, a small village in countryside of Hama, suffered a lot of the deterioration of their village's main street which links it to their lands on which they depend for living, as well as to safer villages or towns that contrary to their village are protected from artillery shelling. Every time, regime forces bombard the village, people leave it using this street, but its terrible condition slow their movement which often keep them exposed to regime artillery. This situation caused many casualties that pushed most of the village's population to leave their homes and live somewhere else where they can be safe. Apart from the huge number of vehicle accidents that the street cause, it has also impacted people's ability to transport their agricultural products to sell them in bigger towns. To this end, the local council sought Hama's Provincial Council support to rehabilitate the road. The latter responded positively after obtaining a grant from a USA government funded project. Right before the beginning of the project, the council held a meeting where Houeiz and surrounding villages' influential figures and citizens were present to discuss the project. While some of the attendees applauded the project, a man said that fixing the road without including a sewer system wouldn't solve the problem and mentioned that the council should have taken into consideration several points in its financial and technical proposal to donors<sup>106</sup>. The discussions which were civilized and interactive ended by the representative of the provincial council promising to solve the problem in any possible way. At the end the road was rehabilitated, and a sewer was included as the citizen demanded. As reported by some local news platforms, the road contributed in decreasing the number of car accidents, and casualties.

This dialogue, and most importantly its result, promoted the council's credibility, while it has also promoted citizens' engagement in constructive criticism that leads to solutions, rather than blaming the council of turning a blind eye to their demands as is the case under the regime.

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<sup>106</sup> The meeting was videotaped and uploaded to YouTube on 19<sup>th</sup> March 2016. Available here <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=8BXkp1MdBmY&t=343s>

Listening to people's demands is, thus, a very important in building popular confidence and trust. In the Syrian case, we've got many examples on this type of engagement.

Like in Douma for example, when, in 2015, sanitation workers made a strike demanding



Figure 31 - A picture taken during the strike of Douma's Local council's Sanitation Workers, with one of the signs being hold saying: We, the worker of the council, highly appreciate the efforts of the council's member to sympathize with us, but this is not enough

the local council of Douma to increase their wages and accusing the elected members of the council of receiving high salaries compared to theirs<sup>107</sup>. The council responded by receiving five representatives of the striking workers to verify the council's financial records and compare salaries of all members and employees of the council. To their surprise, they discovered that a sanitation worker receive higher salary than the president of the council. The ended their strike

immediately, while the council decided to re-scale their salaries. Never in the modern history of Syria, under the Baath had regime, that a similar action had taken place. When asked by a local newspaper about his opinion regarding the strike, the president of the council, Akram Tou'ma, explained that salary scale depends on number of factors: the nature of the job (physical/administrative), the family status of the worker or the employee and his economic condition, and the risk level of the work.

In February 2016, regime forces targeted Douma's cemetery which is ran by Douma's Local Council. Three of the council's workers were immediately killed, and the council issued a mourning statement on its social media platforms and on its website. Following the attack, I contacted the representative of the council in Turkey and asked him what would happen to the families of these workers now that they've lost their only breadwinners. He told me that the council's policy stipulates that workers and members' widows continue to receive salaries from the council. It was the council's way to solidify its bonding capital.

<sup>107</sup> The strike was reported on many media outlets, including All4Syria under the title "The Local Council of Douma, Service experience struggling for success, and the prove are realities"  
<http://www.all4syria.info/Archive/197545>

In 2014, sanitation workers of Aleppo Free City Council, executed series of strike as a sign of protest against the Syrian Interim Government failure in providing them with salaries. The workers, though, demonstrated a high sense of responsibility towards their council who's lacking funds, and clearly showed that they



*Figure 32- Picture of Mahmoud AlNou'ymi, the worker who sold his wife's jewelry to give money to his fellow striking workers in Aleppo city - 2014*

stand behind their city council, as one of the workers sold his wife's jewelry which was estimated at about 600 USD and gave the money to the head of his sector so he'd distribute it evenly among his fellow workers who haven't had received their salaries for two months<sup>108</sup>. This is another example on bonding capital that some local councils possess.

When talking about the efficiency of local councils, I find myself returning to the local council of Douma which, for many, became a good example on good governance, the provision of life-saving services, and on the promotion of good practices that contribute to social behavior reconfiguration.

Douma's local council was among the first entities to recycle waste for various reasons including the production of biogas for citizenry uses. It all started with experiments carried out by members of the council on a very some scale, in their homes or private farms. Once, they obtained successful results of their experiments they shared these results with citizens and encouraged and helped farmers, for example, to use the biogas as alternative to the fuel which is scarce commodity under siege.

In one of my WhatsApp chats with Mr. Ziad Fleyttani who is one of the engineers of Douma's Local Council's Project Planning and Management Office which was charged of finding alternative energy solutions to face the siege, he told how he tried to make a tinny experiment to extract biogas of domestic organic waste on the rooftop of the multistory building where he lives. He installed a home-designed biogas unit on the rooftop using waste that he had collected of his neighbors. One day, an air strikes targeted the building next to his home, and as a result the biogas unit exploded and waste scattered on neighbors' balconies. While Mr. Fleyttani was laughing when he told

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<sup>108</sup> This incident was reported on several Syrian media outlets including zamanalwasl <https://www.zamanalwsl.net/news/56430.html>

me the story and how his neighbors reacted tolerantly as they knew that he was a member of the council and that these experiments will finally be used for their own benefit, I couldn't help thinking what if this had happened in another city and under different circumstances, not under siege or bombs? Would people be equally tolerant?

Mr. Fleyttani also told me how he taught his children how to separate organic waste from inorganic, and how his children, in their turn, taught their school fellows and friends the importance of recycling waste.

For me, these two examples demonstrate how social conscience and collective behaviors could be changed from down to top. They reflected the agency of individual social capital. This also reflects the bonding capital that (Brehm and Rahn: 1997) define as the web of cooperative relationships between citizens that facilitate resolution of collective action problems.

The extraction of biogas was part of a long production chain that increased Douma's local council visibility and contributed in its sustainability<sup>109</sup>. The Council's sanitation workers recycle around 30 tons of waste daily to extract organic fertilizers to farmers who are <sup>110</sup>deprived of this vital material for agricultural production because of the siege. The revenues enable Douma's local council to provide jobs to dozens of workers whom the siege left in a situation of extreme vulnerability. Part of the revenue is used to sustain this project. It is also worth mentioning that the council provide free fertilizers to farmers who cannot afford buying this material.

In the neighboring agricultural area of Al Marj <sup>111</sup>, the Local Administration Council of Al Marj which, supervises the work of 28 smaller sub-councils, provided life – saving services strictly related to people's health. In besieged areas, particularly Al Marj rare and unheard diseases that Syrian never witnessed started to emerge, like Malaria and Myiasis <sup>112</sup>which reflect the horrible condition of water in the area due to deterioration of sanitation infrastructures which require huge efforts to address them. The first case of Myiasis appeared in Al Ghouta in November 2014, and only one month later, Al Marj Council started the implementation of a project that consisted in rehabilitating and

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<sup>109</sup> Report by Alaan TV on Douma's Local Council's Waste Recycling Project <http://www.akhbaralaan.net/news/arab-world/2016/1/25/smart-move-from-doma-people-to-get-rid-of-waste>

<sup>110</sup> To the date of submission of this thesis (June 2017) Douma remained under 5 years old siege.

<sup>111</sup> Also located in Eastern Ghouta (Damascus Suburbs) and part of it remain under siege to the date of writing this thesis, while some of its villages and town fell in the hands of regime forces following a military offensive).

<sup>112</sup> Myiasis, an affliction caused when flies lay their eggs in wounds, is not lethal for humans, but its appearance says a lot about worsening living conditions in war-ravaged Syria, the World Health Organization said, as reported by Medical Express <https://medicalxpress.com/news/2014-11-syria-flesh-eating-maggot-disease.html#jCp>

maintaining the sewage system in 11 densely populated villages and towns. The project, which was a first-of-its kind in 20 years as said by many residents of the area faced many challenges of which systematic air strikes, the lack of blueprints of existing sewer systems, and the lack of proper material to replace pipes, and the condition of the used machinery which dates back to dozens of years, are the biggest. Despite this, the project was completed and complemented with other services such as garbage collection. Clean water and sanitation services weren't the only problem facing the residents of Al Marj area. Al Marj community is a rural one that depends on agricultural activities for living.

In late 2015 and for the first time in more than 30 years, the Barada River which passes through Al Marj area flooded hundreds of dunums of agricultural land, destroying crops and creating swamps which would have threatened people with new spread of diseases and epidemics, adding another hardship for people who already suffer of the siege and the continuous violence.



Figure 33 – The responsible of water committee at the Service Office of the Local Council of Al Marj Area explaining the immediate measures that the council took to protect some lands of the flooding – Source: The Local Council's Facebook page.

For many farmers this was a disaster. They had already cultivated their fields investing all their savings on seeds, fuel fertilizers and pesticides when available. Prior to the uprising, farmers committees were responsible for the clean up of the

the rivers and water streams that pass through their lands by expanding the riverbed and cleaning it from sediment and silt using heavy machinery such as bulldozers, but the siege, the lack of fuel, and the high cost of fuel (if existed in the first place) made it impossible for farmers to carry out this process without support. To this end, the local council of Al made all it can to obtain funds to clean the riverbed and the streams, and it managed to save the remaining cultivated lands of flooding. This was of a crucial importance for farmers. Unfortunately, by the end of 2016, the regime made advances and 80% of the lands were no longer under the control of the opposition.

To listen to people's needs and respond accordingly, local governance entities developed number of communication channels and mechanisms that vary depending on the security situation and the organizational and institutional level of the local council.

Hama Provincial Council for example launched a website where complaints, suggestions, inquiries that people present in person at local and sub-local councils, or express on the provincial and local council's social media channels are published. The council also respond to these inquiries to the extent possible<sup>113</sup>.

Another example comes from Aleppo city council which launched a survey on Google Forms to evaluate its performance. The survey which was addressed to any one following the work of Free Aleppo City Council mainly asked for people's rating of the performance of its executive members, its 9 departments, in addition to a narrative question where people were required to describe the strengths and the weaknesses of the council, and suggest measures to address these weaknesses<sup>114</sup>

Most of the councils have a Diwan<sup>115</sup> where people's demands or complaints are registered and communicated to executive offices depending on nature of the demand (i.e. a complaint related to water being cut would be communicate to the service office; a demand for humanitarian assistance would be communicated to the relief office and so on).

In small villages, local councils are usually formed by consensus of all influential figures, hence, the home of the head of the local council would usually be the place where complaints and demands are presented. In small villages, mosques are also considered as places where public issues are discussed. In Ram Hamdan, a small town in Idlib province, the council holds weekly meetings at the mosque to consult people and its services and exchange opinions of public interest.



*Figure 34- Picture of meeting including members of the local council and the town's eminent figures and representatives of families. Source: The Facebook Page of Ram Hamdam Local Council*

Most of the donors or foreign programs aiming at enhancing local governance in Syria noticed the need for increasing the visibility of councils and building their administrative and institutional capacities in order to prove to the communities they serve and intend to govern their abilities as alternative to former state institutions. In general, services that local councils provide are not publicized, nor promoted properly among citizens. Most of the public opinions that I reviewed during my previous work, demonstrated that

<sup>113</sup> See an example of these inquiries in Annexes.

<sup>114</sup> The survey is accessible here [https://docs.google.com/forms/d/e/1FAIpQLScHc-WkFhNCjsRHgZeSORD5v0M3Ee8CS1sVFiqugt\\_8HKIDNA/viewform?c=0&w=1](https://docs.google.com/forms/d/e/1FAIpQLScHc-WkFhNCjsRHgZeSORD5v0M3Ee8CS1sVFiqugt_8HKIDNA/viewform?c=0&w=1)

<sup>115</sup> Diwan is an Arabic word that means the place where state employees work. In Syria, all public institutions has a Diwan which serve as a reception office, or place where citizens would deposit complaints.

people often didn't know who is providing what and where. In 2016, the Provincial Council of Hama provided hygiene kits to families who had to flee villages of the northern countryside of Hama to a IDPs camp in the southern countryside of Idleb. The camp was run by an NGO, and an armed group provided security for the camp. Following the distribution, beneficiaries failed to identify who provided them with this specific assistance.

Between 2015 and 2017, many programs were especially developed to assist local councils in establishing "Citizen Service Offices" that are considered as official interfaces of councils which require that employees working at these offices be as collaborative, transparent and professional as possible. This type of assistance usually covers the costs for establishing and equipping an office (a physical space), stationery, printouts and workshops on public communication<sup>116</sup>.

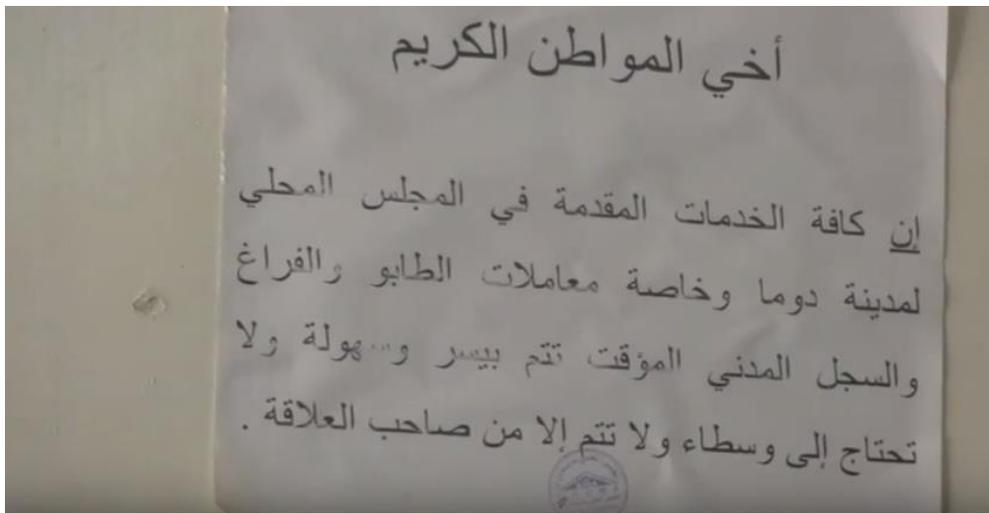


Figure 35- Picture of a sign placed at the entrance of the single-window office says: Dear Citizen, all the services provided by Douma Local Council a, especially the land titling and civil records procedures are being done smoothly and easily. They don't require a mediator and they can only requested and delivered in person.

single-window<sup>117</sup> system that eliminates the role of the traditional mediators who Syrians were used to hire if they wish to obtain a document or initiate a procedure at a public institution. These mediators had interest ties with public employees and they were the first part of the chain of corruption that ravaged Syria. The single-window office at the Local Council is very efficient measure to build trust with the public. Citizens would deposit their requests at the office, and return within two hours to get the paper they requested. At the entrance of the office, Douma's local council placed posters and signs to explain the procedures and how the system works. However, the council didn't need to publicize this effort because it is the only provider if this specific service within its community.

Not all local councils need such support though. In fact, some were capable of developing their own mechanisms to interact with citizens, like the Local Council of Douma which initiated the

<sup>116</sup> In Annexes, see invitation to the opening ceremony of a Citizen Service Center at a local council in the western countryside of Aleppo

<sup>117</sup> Report on the single – window system at the Local Council of Douma, available here <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=9YIPTgvdmMI>

But what about the communities where more than one party is providing the same service?

Conflict often produce competition behavior among humanitarian actors who according to (Cooley and Ron :2002) find themselves compelled in many cases to act as profit – maximizing corporates as they face competitive pressures that threaten their financial survival. This was the case in Bosnia and Herzegovinian in the 90s, and continue to be case in most conflict zones, including Syria.

The embodiment of this behavior in Syrian lays within the competition over service and aid provision among Syrian nascent NGOs, INGOs and local governance entities. Yet, in Syria, other actors are also competition over service provision. Armed groups, like Nusra Front and Ahrar Al Sham have also established their own service administrations and they excel in publicizing their work. In most cases, people get confused over who's assisting them.

Therefore, publicizing a service and promoting the visual identity of the service provider is crucial for obtaining people recognition, and slowly gaining their trust. Some councils resorted to promote their visual identity, namely, their logos and slogans through branding and marking the services or commodities they provide.

In Saraqeba, a town in Idlib Province, the council established bakery to cover the town's needs of this staple. Bread packs where branded by the council's logo, and a banner was placed at the entrance of the bakery which is located in the heart of the town. Through the banner, the council invited citizens to provide any bread-related complaint at the council.

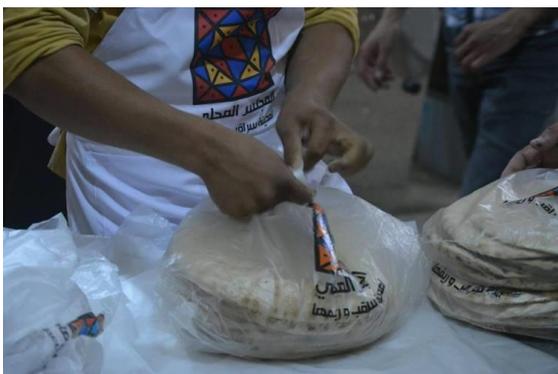


Figure 36- Sample of Saraqeb Local Council Outreach Material 1



Figure 37- Sample of Saraqeb Local Council Outreach Material 2

In Aleppo city, the council branded trash bins with its logo and distributed them among the city's neighborhoods.



Figure 38- Sample of Aleppo City Council outreach material - Trash bin branded with LC logo



Figure 39- A picture of one of the members of the participating at the Idlib Provincial Council's cleanup campaign – Source: Marat Annuman News on YouTube).

In Idlib, the provincial council launched a cleanup campaign in coordination with 61 local councils. During the campaign which lasted four days, the provincial council distributed branded T-Shirts and hats among local councils who, in their turn distributed among

volunteers who participated at the campaign. The aim was to reinforce the visual identity of the provincial council on a large scale.

Other councils promoted themselves by publishing their own newspapers. They edited printed and distributed free copies of their monthly newspapers among citizens, and published them on Social Media.



Figure 40- The cover of Narjis Magazine (The Magazine of the Local Council of Darat Izza (Aleppo) - Issue No 4 - December 2016

The local council of Darat Izza (a city in Aleppo countryside) launched Narjis (Iris) a 6 pages magazine which it publishes on a monthly basis. The magazine include news of the council,

projects and financial reports, news of NGOs working in the city, practical information such the schedules of pharmacies and medical centers of the city, interesting and motivational quotes of posts of residents of the city on Facebook, etc.

In some areas, especially besieged ones, where printing costs are very high or are not



Figure 41- The Imam of Harasta Qantara 9a town targeted by the sewer system rehabilitation project at AL Marj area) point out at a banner placed in the town's mosque and explains how its efforts to spread the word about the project among citizens.

available, local councils resorted to word of mouth and to the Imams of mosques. During the implementation of the aforementioned project of the rehabilitation of sewer systems in Al Marj area, the local council asked villages and towns imams to explain the project to citizens following Friday's prayers, and to promote good hygiene practices among them.

To be visible in the community and close to the people in terms of listening to them, interacting with them and discussing their concerns is essential for building a bridging capital. It is also important to engage with the local community and engage it in the

decision making, and involve it in the mobilization of all available resources to achieve the common goals.

In a conflict society where roles are intertwined, factionalism and arms chaos prevail and control and influence map changes rapidly, building relatively solid social structures based on civil alliances is extremely important for an efficient local governance. This means, though, that these structures should be inclusive. And, this in itself is quite challenging in the Syrian context.

### Minorities Inclusion

Answering this question is extremely difficult. In the opposition controlled-areas, local communities have become of almost one colour.

**Ethnically**, the majority of the residents in the opposition-controlled areas are Arabs, with the presence of very few ethnic groups like Turkmen, Circassians and Kurds. While Turkmen and Circassians are assimilated to a certain level in their respective local communities, Kurds have problematic relations with their Arab neighbours, especially that they are concentrated in areas under the PYD-led Auto Administration. For many Kurds, the Syrian revolution opened the door for their own independent project, a project that they have been struggling for, for many years. Once lands where the majority of the residents are Kurds, were liberated, YPG and Kurdish Security forces also known as Asayîş took over the control, and local councils supported by the Democratic Union Party or PYD (Partiya Yekîtiya Demokrat) emerged. These councils refused to be affiliated to the Syrian Opposition Coalition or to provincial councils affiliated to the Syrian national opposition., but the collaborated with the existing local councils of areas surrounding them. Despite their anti-regime claims, their behavior towards revolutionary entities raise suspicion among their Arab neighbors.

Cheikh Maksoud neighborhood in Aleppo city is a very good example on how military tensions affect civilian entities collaboration on the ground. The neighborhood is located at the eastern parts of Aleppo city which fell under the opposition control in 2012. Its residents who are a mix of mostly Kurds and some Muslim and Christian Arabs, participated in the revolutionary movement, and in 2012 they formed a Joint council which included 11 Kurds, 10 Arabs and 1 Christian. Although the council collaborated



Figure 42- The Logo of the Cheikh Maksoud Joint Council which inspires its colors from the Kurdish Auto-Administration (Rojava) flag

with the Council of Aleppo City which was formed around the same time, it kept its allegiance to the PYD.

Since its inception till April 2015, the council received aid from the city council. Each month 2800 relief baskets<sup>118</sup>. On the 5<sup>th</sup> of April 2015, Aleppo City Council was informed that aid with an estimated value of 100,000 USD was stolen from its warehouse by hundreds of people

before the eyes of the Asayîş who was in charge of protecting the warehouses, and the members of Cheikh Maksoud council who literally turned a blind eye, as their quarter is located right above the City Council's warehouses. The City Council viewed this as a planned theft, so it suspended the work of Cheikh Maksoud council and demanded the formation of a new council for the neighborhood based on Aleppo City Council's bylaws. Two days later a delegation of the suspended council visited the city council to negotiate the unsuspension of the council. After 30 hours of meetings and negotiations, both parties concluded an agreement which stipulated the formation of new council abiding by the City Council's bylaws. Only few days following this agreement, and to the surprise of the City Council, Cheik Maksoud council issued a statement withdrawing the legitimacy of Aleppo City Council and accusing it of being hijacked by some parties who want to impose their political and personal agendas. In front of this impasse, Aleppo City Council held a press conference to justify its position before the public opinion in the city. Since then, ties between the two parties were broken.

In September 2015, Fatah Halab's operations room <sup>119</sup> issued a statement warning the YPG from opening Cheikh Maksoud crossing with the regime without the room's approval, but the YPG didn't not comply with this warning which had terrible consequences on the collaboration between the Aleppo City Council and

<sup>118</sup> Through funds from western government, Aleppo City Council used to distributed monthly emergency aid to over 400,000 people living in Eastern parts of Aleppo.

<sup>119</sup> Fatah Halab (Aleppo Conquest) was a joint operations room of Syrian rebel factions operating in Aleppo. Succeeding the Aleppo Liberation operations room, its establishment was announced on 26 April 2015. This joint operation room was considered as one of the "powerbrokers" in Aleppo Province, being both "anti-regime" and "anti-ISIS."

Following the opening of the crossing, armed clashes erupted in the neighborhood and its surrounding resulting in casualties among civilians of both sides. In the same time, the regime unilaterally closed the crossing. A move that was seen by some Syrian – Kurdish activists as tactic to fuel conflict between Arab and Kurds. At that moment, Kurds were trapped between the regime and opposition armed groups, and the neighborhood witnessed acute lack of food staples and baby milk, right until the re-opening of the crossing with the regime few months later following military agreement between the regime and the YPG forces with Russian mediation.

Despite the tension between Arabs and Kurds in northern Syria, we've witnessed some moments where local governance entities were efficient in solving some complicated situations. Like in the summer of 2016 when regime forces made significant military advances in the northern countryside of Aleppo forcing almost 90,000 people to flee their villages and towns. Back then the Aleppo Provincial Council facilitated the movement of 200 families through Afrin, a PYD controlled city, after leading successful negotiations with Afrin Auto-Administration.

**Religiously**, most of the non-Muslim Syrians left the opposition controlled areas under pressure from extremist armed groups, or out of fear of violence, or simply because they didn't join the uprising.

In both province of Idlib and Aleppo, few Druz and Christian communities were determined not to leave their homes and lands. Some depended on the protection of their neighbors with whom they co-existed for hundreds of years and they shared sad and happy moments, like in the small village of Sardin where Sunni Muslim and Druz live side by side.

"Sardin is a small and simple village. Most of the village's inhabitants work in farming. In this village, we are connected by ties of friendship, brotherhood and affection. We live as our fathers and grandparents lived, keeping our customs and heritage alive (...) we share joys and sorrows" says the head of the local council of sardine when asked by a reporter on the secret of this co-existence.<sup>120</sup>

In Idlib as well, a treaty was signed between three Christian villages (Ya'qubiya, Qnayeh and Jededa) and armed groups controlling Jisser Ashughour where these villages are located. The treaty consisted in:

- 1 – The evacuation of the headquarters of all armed groups from the three villages

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<sup>120</sup> <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=oaOy9WEahRk>

- 2 – The handover of these quarters to a committee composed of activists and figures of the village including the village's priest Father Anton Luqa.
- 3 – The placement of checkpoints at the entrances of the villages to protect them.
4. Forbidding anyone from carrying arms inside the villages.
- 5 - Houses confiscated from individuals who were accused of dealing or supporting the regime forces were to be handed to the Shari'a Court to decide their fates or to lodge displaced families in them. The Sharia Court committed to evacuating these houses of their owners returned.
- 6 - Any group that refuses to leave the village or implement the terms of the agreement is referred to the Shari'a Court for prosecution
- 7- The villages were to be protected by Suqoor Al Hamama and Shuhadaa Al Hamama brigades.

The treaty created a minimum guarantee which encouraged some people to go back to their villages where 200 Christian families live <sup>121</sup>.



Figure 43- Picture reflecting the damages at the Ya'qubya Church following a government air strike – Source: Facebook Page

<https://www.facebook.com/ya.qn.jd/photos/a.1420274858225396.1073741828.1410949232491292/1638751206377759/?type=3&theater>

In 2013, it was reported that regime air strike targeted a rehabilitation center located in the Church of the Immaculate Conception in Ya'qubiya and the convent of the Franciscan nuns of Mar Youssef (Saint Joseph) Church

in the village of Qenaya. Several houses were also hit by the indiscriminate shelling. These news were evidenced by a report published in 2015 by the Syrian Network for Human Rights who documented the targeting of 40 churches by government forces, 7

<sup>121</sup> In this video posted by Syria Charity in April 2016, Franciscan Father Hanna Jallouf of Qneyyah says that 200 families still live in norther Idlib countryside

<https://www.facebook.com/ong.syriacharity/videos/1491624737524703/>

by extremist groups, 6 by IS, 1 by Al Nusra Front, 14 by armed opposition groups and 2 by unknown parties.<sup>122</sup>

In 2015, Idlib Provincial Council supervised the creation of a United Council for the villages where IDPs live side by side with Christians<sup>123</sup>. The Council which was formed by the consensus of Christians and IDPs who are a majority in these villages now, contributed to efforts for the rehabilitation of Ya'qubiya's church<sup>124</sup>.

Nonetheless, Christians living in these area carry out a discrete life style where they practice their religious traditions away from Islamists eyes<sup>125</sup>.

**Besides** religious groups and ethnicities, women seem to be a minority that local governance entities don't give much attention. Yet, there are indicators on local council's increased awareness regarding the inclusion of women in their structures. Unfortunately, this awareness is mainly driven by their belief that women are expected to engage in social capital building for the sake of others rather than themselves, as compassionate and selfless rather than self-interested agents. In most of the council's where women are present, women's role is limited to female-only concerns, rather than to public concerns regardless of gender considerations. These expectation though are challenge by women themselves, and by pressure exercised by civil society organizations and donors.

According to a survey conducted by Omran Center for Strategic Studies between January 1<sup>st</sup> and May 17<sup>th</sup> 2016, women's representation in local governance entities is limited to 2%. Out of 427 councils, only 105 include women as employees and members.

In most of the interviews that I conducted with local and provincial council members either for the sake of this research or as part of my job as project developer, I wanted to understand why women rarely appear in LCs structures? Since the beginning of the revolution, women were present in every aspect of the revolutionary action. They were equally targeted, detained or tortured by government forces, they've equally endured

<sup>122</sup> Full report available here [http://sn4hr.org/public\\_html/wp-content/pdf/arabic/Targeting\\_churches\\_in\\_Syria.pdf](http://sn4hr.org/public_html/wp-content/pdf/arabic/Targeting_churches_in_Syria.pdf)

<sup>123</sup> <https://www.smartnews-agency.com/ar/wires/161457/%D8%AA%D8%B4%D9%83%D9%8A%D9%84-%D9%85%D8%AC%D9%84%D8%B3-%D9%85%D8%AD%D9%84%D9%8A-%D9%84%D8%AA%D8%AC%D9%85%D8%B9-%D9%82%D8%B1%D9%89-%D8%A8%D8%B1%D9%8A%D9%81-%D8%AC%D8%B3%D8%B1-%D8%A7%D9%84%D8%B4%D8%BA%D9%88%D8%B1>

<sup>124</sup> See article in Souriatna on the return of Christian to their villages in Idlib Province <https://souriatna.files.wordpress.com/2015/01/souriatna-172.pdf>

<sup>125</sup> <http://www.almodon.com/arabworld/2016/12/23/%D9%85%D8%B3%D9%8A%D8%AD%D9%8A%D9%88-%D8%B1%D9%8A%D9%81-%D8%A5%D8%AF%D9%84%D8%A8-%D9%84%D8%A7-%D8%B9%D9%8A%D8%AF-%D9%87%D8%B0%D9%87-%D8%A7%D9%84%D8%B3%D9%86%D8%A9-%D8%A3%D9%8A%D8%B6%D8%A7>

the terrible consequences of war and in recent years we've been witnessing a shift in gender roles within the Syrian communities, as women stepped up to fill in the vacuum in many labor sectors, especially health and education.

The answer to my questions was mostly that in the opposition controlled areas, communities are conservative and that they're traditions and customs impede women's involvement or presence in leadership positions. Some also added that local council male members are often intimidated by Islamist factions which clearly prohibit women's presence in public spaces.

A study carried out by the Suisse Peace Foundation and LACU (Local Administration Unit) between August and October 2016 on public impressions and perceptions of local councils in five target areas, namely Daret Ezzeh (Aleppo), Maaret Annuman and Kafr Takharim (Idleb), Zamalka (Damascus Suburbs), and Nawa (Dar'a), seem to reinforce this narrative. The arguments presented during the focus discussion groups that the study included were mainly focused on whether women have "the necessary level of civilized behavior and awareness". In many occasions, interviewees targeted by this study mentioned that it is not the local governance entities that do not allow for the selection of women but rather the society that does not support the involvement of women "because of the common habits and tradition". Above all, most military factions are usually very restrictive with regards to the movement and clothing of women, which often results in even more barriers for their active participation.

Despite this view of women's participation and leadership, some councils took courageous initiatives defying their conservative communities, and it was in these communities where we've been witnessing a rise in the number of female-led organizations, and the involvement of women in public sphere.

Some Feminist theorists like Carle Gilligan and Joan Toronto believe in the possibility for women to convert their social capital into a distinctive form of local politics, one that builds on trust and social networks. They argue that care and community based networks can prove to be a resource and not just a burden for women. Both theorists have explored the distinctiveness of women's moral reasoning for involving in politics, introducing the concept of an "ethic of care" that women relate to, prioritize responsibilities and interpersonal relationships. They believe that while the ethic of care relegate women to the domestic sphere it can also be used to challenge and transform values and practices within the public and the political sphere.

This logic seems to be the case in Douma, where women engaged in building the local council's social capital ended up breaking into the patriarchal structure of their conservative community.

In Douma, the local council signed an agreement with a Civil Society organization to qualify and train 40 young women on public management, human rights and basic life skills such as communication. The end goal was to form a women's office within the local council of Douma which will employ the first three exceeded trainees. In 2014, the council employed its first female employee, Bayan Reyhan, who became the president of the women office at the local council and has been since leading figure in a feminist movement in Eastern Ghouta. Ms. Reyhan who was already fully involved in the revolutionary movement<sup>126</sup> faced many obstacles that she managed to overcome thanks to the support of her male colleagues as she explains in an interview with Enab Baladi <sup>127</sup>.

On January 31, 2015, Douma Local Council's Women office sponsored and supported the "First Women Conference in Ghouta" which included representatives of all organizations working on women and gender-related issues. The conference was very useful tool to introduce and unite local feminists around two goals: To explore ways to develop the work of women's activities "individually, on the one hand, and to develop mechanisms to activate the role of women in this crucial stage in the history of the country". The meeting was held only few days following a week of intensive air offensive. Yet, women participated actively. Each of the representatives introduced her organization or group and exposed the challenges they face, and by the end of the conference, women were able to come up with a set of recommendations of which "the increase of women's participation at the General Assembly of Eastern Ghouta" was the most important recommendation as it reflected women's will to be part of main civil decision making body in area.

Five months following the conference, Douma's Women Office launched another project "the Culture Oasis" which aimed at breaking the ice between women organizations and cultural actors within besieged Ghouta, and promote women's

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<sup>126</sup> In 2012 Ms. Reyhan formed the first female coordination committee in Eastern Ghouta to provide first service to free Syrian army wounded, she also contributed to the publication of *Tha'erat* (Rebellious women). In the same year she was detained by government security forces and was tortured physically and emotionally before being released following prisoners exchange deal.

<sup>127</sup> Full interview available here <https://www.enabbaladi.net/archives/105576>



Figure 44- Meeting at the Local Council of Douma on increasing women;s representation in the decision making – Source: Enab Baladi

presence in the cultural scene in the area a series of lectures and seminars given by Douma's female activists and feminists.

One year later, 25 female activists formally demanded an increased representation of

women at the Douma Local Council. This demand was communicated and discussed with the vice-president of the Syrian Interim Government (Akram Tou'ma, former president of Douma Local Council) and with the president of the local council. Women demanded the amendment of the council's bylaws to allocate seats for women, and highlighted the need for women to step out of the executive field to the decision-making circle. "In the last term's elections, two women posed their candidacy but no one elected them. Our bylaws doesn't prevent women from participating in the elections, that's why women need to organize themselves and lead electoral campaigns just as men do" said the president of the council in an interview with Enab Baladi<sup>128</sup>. Reyhan seemed to agree on this point as only 1% of women she talked with agreed on engaging in politics as they are not aware of their own power as she explains. "They are not self-sufficient, and they will not be capable of making change in the community without believing in their capacity of doing so"<sup>129</sup>. Iman Hashem, member of the executive office of Aleppo City Council in 2016, shares the same opinion as she thinks that only women will be able to do justice to women. "I always expect women to be the best as long as they want to be in the lead"<sup>130</sup> says Ms. Hashem who was the first woman to be elected as an executive member in the Local Council of Aleppo City.

<sup>128</sup> <https://www.enabbaladi.net/archives/114550>

<sup>129</sup> Interview with Syria Direct <http://syriadirect.org/ar/news/%D9%86%D8%A7%D8%B4%D8%B7%D8%A9-%D9%81%D9%8A-%D8%AF%D9%88%D9%85%D8%A7-%D8%A8%D8%B9%D8%B6-%D9%85%D8%B3%D8%A4%D9%88%D9%84%D9%8A-%D8%A7%D9%84%D9%85%D8%B9%D8%A7%D8%B1%D8%B6%D8%A9-%D9%8A%D8%B1%D9%81%D8%B6/>

<sup>130</sup> Interview with Akhbar Al Aan, available here <http://www.akhbaralaan.net/news/arab-world/2015/11/23/women-in-aleppo-syrian-revolution-multiple-roles-and-daily-challenges>

In Aleppo city, women's involvement in local governance faced slightly different trajectory than in Douma in Eastern Ghouta. Early 2014, IS appeared in Aleppo and started persecuting activists and civil actors, IS presence was huge obstacle to women's participation in city's local council elections as they feared abduction. But when FSA and other opposition armed groups pushed IS out few month later, few activists run for elections and only Ms. Hashem was elected. According to her, most qualified women had left the city given the terrible situation, while those who remained were mostly in the relief efforts trying to reduce the suffering of those surrounding them.



In Aleppo's countryside, and to be precise in Al Atareb city, women's

*Figure 45- Picture during a meeting between Al Atareb Women Commission and Al Atareb Local Council - Source: Mada Syria*

participation in local governance was imposed on the local council of the city. In February 2016, Al Atareb Women Commission was launched by a joint effort of three feminist groups: Anna Hiya (I am She) and Aman (Safety) Network and "Salam Al Atareb Group" who collected a large number of signatures of female activists and members of the civil society.

The Commission carried out a transparent electoral process in the presence of representatives of civil society organizations, and the process resulted in the election of a coordinator for the Commission and officials of the offices of Family Affairs, Social Welfare and Psychosocial Support; Education; Information; Communication; and the office of Widows and Orphans. The Commission visited schools, the local council, medical bodies, community and military leaders, active and influential social figures and civic organizations and groups, to discuss their concerns and needs, and they demanded to be represented within the Local Council of the city. By forming an alliance of all actors in women and gender issues in the city and its surrounding towns and villages, the Commission became a bridging capital that brought more trust to the city's council who acquired knowledge of the needs of a demographic segment that it didn't have much access to.

In areas where Salafist armed groups are densely present, local councils avoided the involvement of women in their structures, but they maintained strong relations with civil society organizations, that at a certain point, served as shadow councils. These organizations built up trust relations with resident without colliding with Salafists, while implicitly involving local councils in their actions.

For example, in Kafr Nobol, where the Al Qaeda affiliate Jabhat Al Nusra persist in intervening in civil affairs, the URB continue to confront this by consolidating its popular base. Besides its service-based activities, URB supports number of feminist organizations in Kafr Nobol and surrounding villages through a series of projects led and run by women. The local council's involvement in these projects is done either by contributing in the funding of the project <sup>131</sup> or by engaging former local council members as staff, which was the case when the URB and Mazaya Center established a driving school for women and assigned Mosaab Al Houssni, an engineer and former local council member, to supervise the project.

In addition to the voluntarily efforts that most local councils make to foster their engagement with their communities, programs designed by some of the Friends of Syria Group <sup>132</sup> to build local council s legitimacy contribute significantly in consolidating local council's social capital. One if the most efficient programs in this sense is Tamkeen (Empowering) Program which aims to strengthen local councils in Syria through a learning-by-doing process to good governance. Its approach consist in entering a community and forming a temporary committee called a "Tamkeen Committee" which works with all stakeholders to plan and implement projects. The Tamkeen Committee involves the Local Council because it is the most important stakeholders. The Tamkeen Committee also draws members from several different groups, but the Local Council almost always has more seats than any other stakeholder. Once the committee is established, it plans and implements projects, with Tamkeen funding, using good governance principles and processes.

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<sup>131</sup> In 2013, the URB affiliate Mazaya Center for women empowering established a sewing training center which was partially funded by the local council. <http://www.nasaem-syria.fm/moduls/pageitems/newspage.aspx?ProdId=814>

<sup>132</sup> The Group of Friends of the Syrian People (sometimes: Friends of Syria Group or Friends of the Syrian People Group or Friends of Democratic Syria or simply Friends of Syria) is an international diplomatic collective of countries and bodies convening periodically on the topic of Syria outside the U.N. Security Council. The collective was created in response to a Russian and Chinese veto on a Security Council resolution condemning Syria, and it include the countries of France, Germany, Italy, Jordan, Egypt, Canada, Qatar, Saudi Arabic, Turkey, the United Arab Emirates, the United Kingdom and the United States.

While Tamkeen and its likes contribute significantly in building the social capital of local councils in the communities they operate in, they risk to weaken the local councils of communities they exclude from their programs. Usually, these councils/communities are excluded because of the dense presence of jihadist groups, or following a “vetting” process where “key” individuals fail to pass the vetting which is one of the risk-mitigation measures that funding governments resort to in order to avoid the funding of groups or individuals on their “terrorists” lists. These measures may often end up increasing excluded communities’ vulnerability to jihadist groups who are also competing in building their own social capital through service and aid provision.

Small towns and villages with zero presence of any civil society organization or activists are equally excluded from these programs, and this means that their local councils are deprived from support and funding.

*“Councils worked proactively to provide the necessary and important services to resume life activities after the destruction of infrastructure because of the war (...) but what’s interesting is that people’s confidence in these councils decreased because some villages are developed at the expense of other villages. Service projects are implemented for the sake of some people, instead of targeting the areas that are most in need”* , Ahmad Halloum, Media activist from Idlib Province<sup>133</sup>.

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<sup>133</sup> Quote from an opinion poll conducted by Souriatna Magazine in Idlib province, available here <http://www.souriatnapress.net/%D8%A7%D8%B3%D8%AA%D8%B7%D9%84%D8%A7%D8%B9-%D8%B1%D8%A3%D9%8A-%D8%A7%D9%84%D9%86%D8%A7%D8%B4%D8%B7%D9%8A%D9%86-%D8%A7%D9%84%D8%A5%D8%B9%D9%84%D8%A7%D9%85%D9%8A%D9%8A%D9%86-%D8%AF%D8%A7%D8%AE%D9%84/>

## Chapter 3 – Guardians of the Revolution

In 2015, after five years of continuous carnage, after the fragmentation of the country and its division into areas of influence and military conflict, and after the transformation of the peaceful struggle to a proxy war in which foreign countries and parties are implicated, the The Syrian Islamic Council <sup>134</sup>(al-majlis al-islami al-suri, or SIC) launched the “Five Principles of the Syrian Revolution” which 27 Islamic and Judicial entities, 20 armed factions, 11 political parties and entities, 8 eminent and faith-based civil society organizations, 8 provincial councils and 52 eminent opposition figures <sup>135</sup> signed. The goal behind this paper was to express Syrians’ commitment to the principals of the revolution in light of the internationalization of the Syrian cause.

The paper stipulated the overthrowing and the dismantlement of the Assad regime, the dismantlement of the apparatuses of repression, the exit of all foreign forces from Syria, the conservation of Syria's unity and identity, and the rejection of quotas of all types.



Figure 46- Announcement of the launching of the five principles paper of the Syrian revolution

<sup>134</sup> SIC which is a body constitutes of 40 committees and Islamic associations of Muslim “Sunnis” inside Syria, is seen by many scholars and observers as an important step toward the goal of consolidating a moderate Islamic axis within the opposition in the face of the large Salafi military factions. See <http://carnegie-mec.org/diwan/55580>.

<sup>135</sup> For detailed signatory list, see <http://www.syriageneva2.org/2015/09/%D8%A7%D9%84%D8%A5%D8%B9%D9%84%D8%A7%D9%86-%D8%B9%D9%86-%D9%88%D8%AB%D9%8A%D9%82%D8%A9-%D8%A7%D9%84%D9%85%D8%A8%D8%A7%D8%AF%D8%A6-%D8%A7%D9%84%D8%AE%D9%85%D8%B3%D8%A9-%D9%84%D9%84%D8%AB/>

While these principles appear to be unattainable in the near term, they serve as a compass for the activism of those who continue to hold the banner of the revolution. Syrians struggle was never the product of a pre-determinate plan or the application of manual or a book. It was and it still part of a historic moment, a moment of social change, in the midst of which people learn activism, people learn how to advance their cause.

As I mention this historic moment I recall Rosa Luxemburg's remark, shortly before her murder in 1919 when she reduced the revolution to the trinity of "I was, I am, I shall be". She believed that revolutions are moments where people reclaim their identities and their new social orders, as long as they continue to struggle.

And it is indeed in this historic moment where Syrians are re-discovering their potentials and the learning how to re-build their institutions, manage their real life activities and creating networks of solidarity against unthinkable violence and global indifference.

As the country's map changes and drowns in a sea of political rivalries and interests generated by the conflict environment, and as hegemonic agendas of the jihadist groups begin to unfold, a large part of the Syrians continue the struggle to consolidate civil alliances and social cohesion, to preserve the Syrian identity and to survive by accumulating and mobilizing all available resources, including social capital.

Besides efficiency, visibility and social engagement revolutionary commitment and activism equally contribute to building the social capital of local councils. Understanding subjective dynamics, emotions, relationships between local council members and members of their communities, identities, relationships with the utopias of individuals who live a revolution, is very important to avoid reducing the analysis of a revolutionary movement as "a moment of effervescence" (Tarragoni: 2015). *"The revolution must be considered as a point of historical discontinuity, in which one can detect a "folding of time", in which are combined acceleration, rupture and re-foundation"*<sup>136</sup>. In this point of historic discontinuity, the subjective revolutionary commitment is yet another brick added to the building of social capital.

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<sup>136</sup> See Tarragoni, Federico, L'énigme révolutionnaire, P. 40

## Grief and solidarity for strengthening social capital

*“We depend on our expatriate citizens or on some charities, but this is not enough. As a united council it is no enough. We have many operational expenses. Nor our labor forces or our employees receive salaries (...) I don't really care what people say, we haven't received any salary for the last five years ... Perhaps two years ago we received some operational costs for some projects but that was all! (...) Oh, brother, we've issued so many calls for help, but to be honest we are really tired. We are tired of confronting people. We've got power and water networks to rehabilitate, we've got poor people that must help as a council, this is the smallest thing we should do, this our duty, and we are accused, people accuse us of receiving salaries... That's why I call Homs Provincial Council, the Syrian Interim Government and organizations working on supporting local governance to help us. Eyre are focused on local councils, and those outside, they want councils' signatures and recognition. Ok then, but councils still need labor force and operational costs, we want to work, my brother, we want work”<sup>137</sup> .*

People look at local councils to respond to their needs, and provide services in light of deteriorating humanitarian situation. They accuse them of irresponsibility, negligence and corruption, but they tend to forget that members and workers of local councils equally share their suffering while facing huge burdens.

In November 2015, Omran Center for Strategic Studies carried out a research on the crisis that local councils are currently facing. In the Study which targeted opposition controlled areas in 8 Syrian province, financial and humanitarian crisis were listed as top challenges. This includes the severe lack of resources (Human and financial), the lack of experienced, qualified and professional labor forces, and the deteriorating humanitarian situations, and the collapse of the health system.

The study also concluded that local councils suffer from a complete financial deficit which has several reasons, including reliance on unstable external sources of support; weak self-development of resources due to the lack of strategic vision, as well as the lack of an investment environment because of the security instability and unavailable resources; the large gap between the revenues of the councils and their operational expenses, and the cost of service provision which also depend on security and logistical restrictions.

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<sup>137</sup> Video – taped interview with the president of the United Council of Houla posted in Homs Media Center YouTube Channel <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=sIMmqLjNQjU&t=4s>

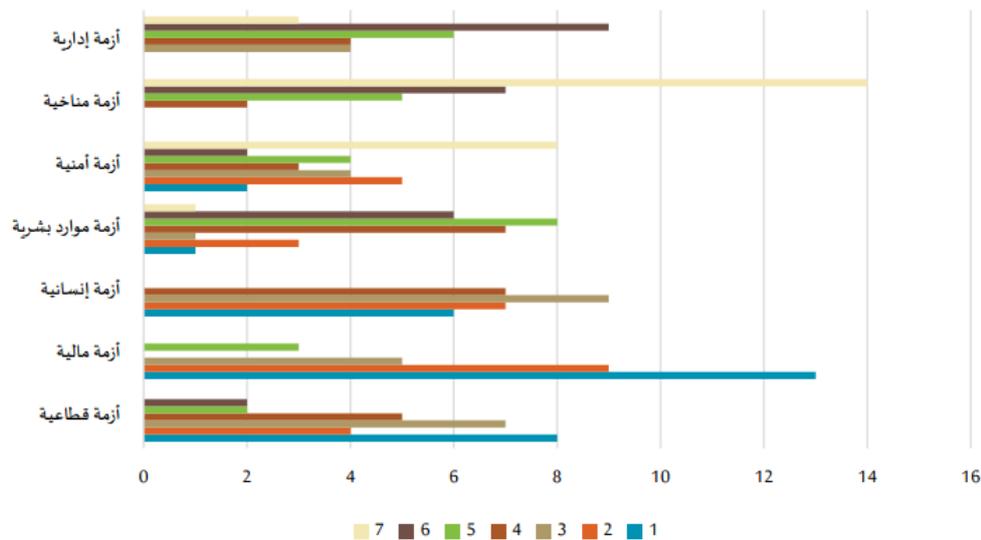


Figure 47- Order of Crisis facing Local Councils in Opposition Controlled area - Source: Omran Center for Strategic Studies<sup>138</sup>

The study didn't mention, however, that members of local councils work on voluntary<sup>139</sup> basis. The majority of local councils, particularly in small villages and towns rely on donations from Syrian expats, or charities. At least 18 members of local councils I met confirmed that they don't receive salaries.

In addition to indicating the inability of councils to fully, and sometimes partially, meet the basic needs of their communities, these crises reflect the magnitude of the psychological pressure that members and staff of local councils feel, and the depth of their suffering resulting from breaking down under the pressure of needs.

In 2014 when the eastern parts of Aleppo were subjected to intense shelling with barrel bombs, Smart News Agency aired a report on Free Aleppo City Council's determination to restore life under bomb. The report included an interview with the head of the Fleet Unit at the City Council who burst out in anger and despair in the middle of the report.

*"Here are one, two, three machines. It's been 20 or 25 days that they were broken. There are no spare parts, no money. What can we do? Streets are blocked, people climb rubble, and houses are destroyed. We can't help people, what should we do? Should we beat*

<sup>138</sup> The report order these crisis as follows (Blue indicator) : Financial, Sectorial (deficiency in meeting needs in some sectors), Humanitarian, Security and Human Resources. Full report is available here in Arabic <file:///C:/Users/HEWLETT%20PACKARD/Downloads/%D8%A7%D9%84%D8%A3%D8%B2%D9%85%D8%A7%D8%AA%D8%A7%D9%84%D8%AA%D9%8A%D8%AA%D9%88%D8%A7%D8%AC%D9%87%D8%A7%D9%84%D9%85%D8%AC%D8%A7%D9%84%D8%B3%D8%A7%D9%84%D9%85%D8%AD%D9%84%D9%8A%D8%A9%D9%88%D8%A2%D9%84%D9%8A%D8%A7%D8%AA%D8%A7%D9%84%D8%AA%D8%B9%D8%A7%D9%85%D9%84%D9%85%D8%B9%D9%87%D8%A7.pdf>

<sup>139</sup> See Suheib Al Salamat, Why Local Councils fail, Enab Baladi, Sept. 2016 <https://www.enabbaladi.net/archives/102936>

*ourselves? Should we beat ourselves? Ok, here we are, let's beat ourselves. We've got no one but God!"<sup>140</sup>*

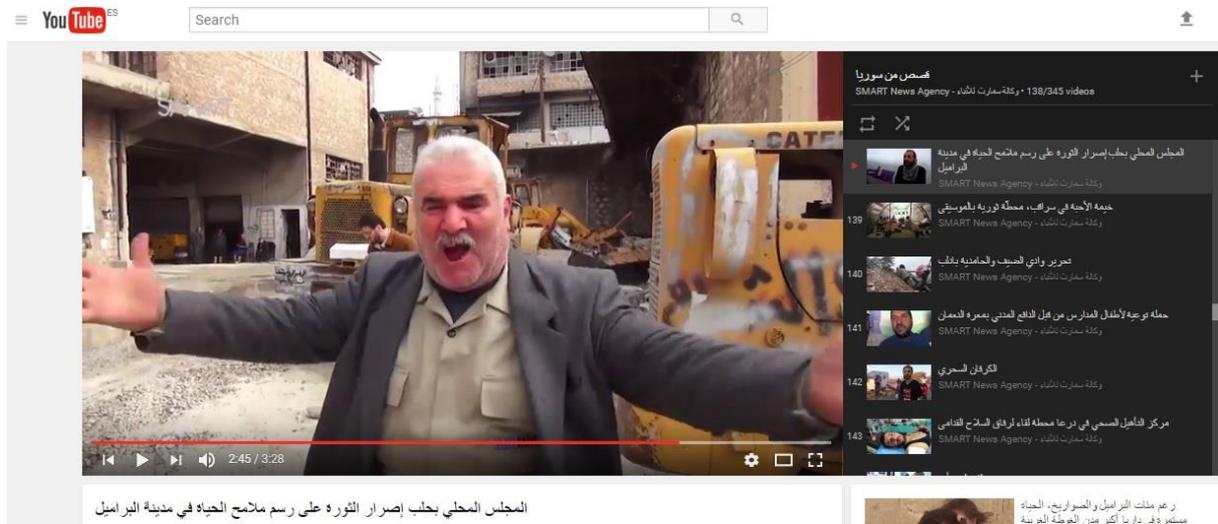


Figure 48 ' A screen shot reflecting a moment of anger and frustration on a member of Aleppo City Council ' Source: SMART News Agency You Tube Channel

This employee is not a unique case. In most of my interviews and during my work I was often confronted with angry, frustrated and burned council members who, as most of the affected population have needs, lost properties and loved ones, were subject to many forms injustice. They too, live under bombs...

Since I started working on this research (between 2014 and early 2017), I documented 47 cases where Local and Provincial Councils members were killed by government forces or other groups.

Among these 47 cases I documented, some individuals who were killed with their families. There were also members of local councils who lost their loved ones, yet continued their heroic civic struggle driven out of their commitment to the revolution.

Additionally I tried to document cases where offices and headquarters of local councils were targeted, because I wanted to highlight the vulnerability of the constituents of these entities. When I collected these information I went through council's Facebook pages and I had the chance to review people's comments and notice their grief. Facebook became a virtual memorial. People where posting on how much they respected and cherished the deceased. In such moments grief becomes a shared value and a source of social capital.

The two following tables include all the cases I had learned about from members of local councils, or are evidenced in open sources in the internet.

<sup>140</sup> Full report is available here and the employee's reaction appears in minute 2:28  
<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=sk0yeHzCULc>

Table 1- List of martyrs of local and provincial councils between 2014 and early 2017

#	Name	Position	Death cause	Name of LC	Date (DD/MM/YYYY)	Source
1.	Mohamd Abdul Rahim Al Khou	Member	Air strikes/Shelling	Zabadani LC – Rural Damascus	12/09/2015	<a href="http://www.asharqalarabi.org.uk/%D9%85%D9%86-%D8%A3%D8%AE%D8%A8%D8%A7%D8%B1-%D8%AD%D9%82%D9%88%D9%82-%D8%A7%D9%84%D8%A5%D9%86%D8%B3%D8%A7%D9%86-%D9%8A-%D8%B3%D9%88%D8%B1%D9%8A%D8%A9-17-9-2015_ad-id!339698.ks#.WUKEz2iGO00">http://www.asharqalarabi.org.uk/%D9%85%D9%86-%D8%A3%D8%AE%D8%A8%D8%A7%D8%B1-%D8%AD%D9%82%D9%88%D9%82-%D8%A7%D9%84%D8%A5%D9%86%D8%B3%D8%A7%D9%86-%D9%8A-%D8%B3%D9%88%D8%B1%D9%8A%D8%A9-17-9-2015_ad-id!339698.ks#.WUKEz2iGO00</a>
2.	Seif Eddine Al Wadi (Known as Abu Mohamad)	Secretary	Air strikes/Shelling	Inkhel LC – Dar'a	19/10/2016	
3.	Yamen Mahfoud	Employee	Air strikes/Shelling	Harasta LC – Rural Damascus	19/08/1982	<a href="http://www.vdc-sy.info/index.php/ar/reports/1440664134#.WUKJEGiGO00">http://www.vdc-sy.info/index.php/ar/reports/1440664134#.WUKJEGiGO00</a>
4.	Mohamad Mahfoud	Employee	Air strikes/Shelling	Harasta LC – Rural Damascus	19/08/1982	<a href="http://www.vdc-sy.info/index.php/ar/reports/1440664134#.WUKJEGiGO00">http://www.vdc-sy.info/index.php/ar/reports/1440664134#.WUKJEGiGO00</a>
5.	Ayman Mahfoud	Employee	Air strikes/Shelling	Harasta LC – Rural Damascus	19/08/1982	<a href="http://www.vdc-sy.info/index.php/ar/reports/1440664134#.WUKJEGiGO00">http://www.vdc-sy.info/index.php/ar/reports/1440664134#.WUKJEGiGO00</a>
6.	Houssam Mousleh	Employee	Air strikes/Shelling	Harasta LC – Rural Damascus	19/08/1982	<a href="http://www.vdc-sy.info/index.php/ar/reports/1440664134#.WUKJEGiGO00">http://www.vdc-sy.info/index.php/ar/reports/1440664134#.WUKJEGiGO00</a>
7.	Mohamad Shaker Ahmad Sheyban	Employee	Air strikes/Shelling	Harasta LC – Rural Damascus	19/08/1982	<a href="http://www.vdc-sy.info/index.php/ar/reports/1440664134#.WUKJEGiGO00">http://www.vdc-sy.info/index.php/ar/reports/1440664134#.WUKJEGiGO00</a>

8.	Alaa Homsí	Employee	Air strikes/Shelling	Harasta LC – Rural Damascus	19/08/1982	<a href="http://www.vdc-sy.info/index.php/ar/reports/1440664134#.WUKJEGiGO00">http://www.vdc-sy.info/index.php/ar/reports/1440664134#.WUKJEGiGO00</a>
9.	Abdulrahman Shilla	Employee	Air strikes/Shelling	Harasta LC – Rural Damascus	19/08/1982	<a href="http://www.vdc-sy.info/index.php/ar/reports/1440664134#.WUKJEGiGO00">http://www.vdc-sy.info/index.php/ar/reports/1440664134#.WUKJEGiGO00</a>
10.	Mohamad Nasouh Reyhani	Member	Air strikes/Shelling	Hamouria LC – Rural Damascus	20/08/1982	<a href="http://www.asharqalarabi.org.uk/%D9%85%D9%86-%D8%A3%D8%AE%D8%A8%D8%A7%D8%B1-%D8%AD%D9%82%D9%88%D9%82-%D8%A7%D9%84%D8%A5%D9%86%D8%B3%D8%A7%D9%86-%D9%8A-%D8%B3%D9%88%D8%B1%D9%8A%D8%A9-27-8-2015_ad-id!339237.ks#.WUKGGGiGO00">http://www.asharqalarabi.org.uk/%D9%85%D9%86-%D8%A3%D8%AE%D8%A8%D8%A7%D8%B1-%D8%AD%D9%82%D9%88%D9%82-%D8%A7%D9%84%D8%A5%D9%86%D8%B3%D8%A7%D9%86-%D9%8A-%D8%B3%D9%88%D8%B1%D9%8A%D8%A9-27-8-2015_ad-id!339237.ks#.WUKGGGiGO00</a>
11.	Kassem Billah (known as Abu Ibrahim)  ** few days earlier to his death, two of his children were killed in government air strike	Executive officer of the Cemetry office	Air strikes/Shelling	Douma LC – rural Damascus	14/02/2016	<a href="https://www.doumalc.com/?p=2987">https://www.doumalc.com/?p=2987</a>
12.	Mohamad Jamal Abdul Naf'e (known as Abu Khaled)	Worker	Air strikes/Shelling	Douma LC	14/02/2016	<a href="https://www.doumalc.com/?p=2987">https://www.doumalc.com/?p=2987</a>

13.	Omar Wahbe (known as Abu Saeed)	Worker	Air strikes/Shelling	Douma LC	14/02/2016	<a href="https://www.doumalc.com/?p=2987">https://www.doumalc.com/?p=2987</a>
14.	Mohamad Taha Allimdani	Member	Air strikes/Shelling	Douma LC	19/11/2015	LC Face Book Page
15.	Mohamad Al Masri (known as Abu Kassem)	Service Office	Air strikes/Shelling	Douma LC	27/10/2016	<a href="https://www.facebook.com/Douma.local.council/photos/a.503751369662090.1073741826.466190923418135/1120645171306037/?type=3&amp;theater">https://www.facebook.com/Douma.local.council/photos/a.503751369662090.1073741826.466190923418135/1120645171306037/?type=3&amp;theater</a>
16.	Yasser Numan	Education Office	Air strikes/Shelling	Douma LC	05/10/2016	<a href="https://www.facebook.com/Douma.local.council/photos/a.503751369662090.1073741826.466190923418135/1120645171306037/?type=3&amp;theater">https://www.facebook.com/Douma.local.council/photos/a.503751369662090.1073741826.466190923418135/1120645171306037/?type=3&amp;theater</a>
17.	Mohamad Burghla (Abu lyad)	Electricity Office	Air strikes/Shelling	Douma LC	02/09/2016	<a href="https://www.facebook.com/Douma.local.council/photos/a.503751369662090.1073741826.466190923418135/1077191775651377/?type=3&amp;theater">https://www.facebook.com/Douma.local.council/photos/a.503751369662090.1073741826.466190923418135/1077191775651377/?type=3&amp;theater</a>
18.	Wafiq Khalid Al Khatib	Service Office	Air strikes/Shelling	Douma LC	Died in 03/08/2016 after being injured 27/07/2016	<a href="https://www.facebook.com/Douma.local.council/photos/a.503751369662090.1073741826.466190923418135/1054428001261088/?type=3&amp;theater">https://www.facebook.com/Douma.local.council/photos/a.503751369662090.1073741826.466190923418135/1054428001261088/?type=3&amp;theater</a>
19.	Malek Khanshur	Member	Air strikes/Shelling	Douma LC	25/07/2016	<a href="https://www.facebook.com/Douma.local.council/photos/a.503751369662090.1073741826.466190923418135/1047964111907477/?type=3&amp;theater">https://www.facebook.com/Douma.local.council/photos/a.503751369662090.1073741826.466190923418135/1047964111907477/?type=3&amp;theater</a>
20.	Abdul Hakim Takleh (known as Abu Samer)	Sanitary workers'su pervisor	Killed by fire exchnage beteen two oppsoition fighting factions	Douma LC	30/04/2016	<a href="https://www.facebook.com/Douma.local.council/photos/a.503751369662090.1073741826.466190923418135/999789760058246/?type=3&amp;theater">https://www.facebook.com/Douma.local.council/photos/a.503751369662090.1073741826.466190923418135/999789760058246/?type=3&amp;theater</a>

21.	Abdul Karim Mahmoud Al Malih	Service Office	Air strikes/Shelling	Doum LC	24/02/2016	<a href="https://www.facebook.com/Douma.local.council/photos/a.503751369662090.1073741826.466190923418135/949901821713707/?type=3&amp;theater">https://www.facebook.com/Douma.local.council/photos/a.503751369662090.1073741826.466190923418135/949901821713707/?type=3&amp;theater</a>
22.	Kassem Ibrahim El Riz	Service Office	Air strikes/Shelling	Douma LC	12/01/2016	<a href="https://www.facebook.com/Douma.local.council/photos/a.503751369662090.1073741826.466190923418135/938582402845649/?type=3&amp;theater">https://www.facebook.com/Douma.local.council/photos/a.503751369662090.1073741826.466190923418135/938582402845649/?type=3&amp;theater</a>
23.	Bilal Aboud	Finance Office	Air strikes/Shelling	Douma LC	06/01/2015	<a href="https://www.facebook.com/Douma.local.council/photos/a.503751369662090.1073741826.466190923418135/935720106465212/?type=3&amp;theater">https://www.facebook.com/Douma.local.council/photos/a.503751369662090.1073741826.466190923418135/935720106465212/?type=3&amp;theater</a>
24.	Fares Khaled Al Da'as	Fleet maintenance department	Air strikes/Shelling	Douma LC	06/01/2015	<a href="https://www.facebook.com/Douma.local.council/photos/a.503751369662090.1073741826.466190923418135/935723686464854/?type=3&amp;theater">https://www.facebook.com/Douma.local.council/photos/a.503751369662090.1073741826.466190923418135/935723686464854/?type=3&amp;theater</a>
25.	Ziad Al Turk Abu Ali	Head of the electoral committee which supervised two terms of the local council	Air strikes/Shelling	Douma LC	14/12/2015	<a href="https://www.facebook.com/Douma.local.council/photos/a.503751369662090.1073741826.466190923418135/924215814282308/?type=3&amp;theater">https://www.facebook.com/Douma.local.council/photos/a.503751369662090.1073741826.466190923418135/924215814282308/?type=3&amp;theater</a>
26.	Abdul Raouf Mahmoud Al Farraj	Worker	Air strikes/Shelling		29/10/2015	<a href="https://www.facebook.com/Douma.local.council/photos/a.503751369662090.1073741826.466190923418135/915442028493020/?type=3&amp;theater">https://www.facebook.com/Douma.local.council/photos/a.503751369662090.1073741826.466190923418135/915442028493020/?type=3&amp;theater</a>

27.	Ayman Mohamad Al Farra	Worker	Air strikes/Shelling	Douma LC	22/11/2015	<a href="https://www.facebook.com/Douma.local.council/photos/a.503751369662090.1073741826.466190923418135/915442028493020/?type=3&amp;theater">https://www.facebook.com/Douma.local.council/photos/a.503751369662090.1073741826.466190923418135/915442028493020/?type=3&amp;theater</a>
28.	Soulaiman Walid Ayana	Service Office	Air strikes/Shelling	Douma LC	08/12/2015	<a href="https://www.facebook.com/Douma.local.council/photos/a.503751369662090.1073741826.466190923418135/921716974532192/?type=3&amp;theater">https://www.facebook.com/Douma.local.council/photos/a.503751369662090.1073741826.466190923418135/921716974532192/?type=3&amp;theater</a>
29.	Yasser Hassan Kabkab (known as Abu Wassim)	Service Office _ Supersior of cleaning worker	Air strikes/Shelling	Douma LC	30/10/2015	<a href="https://www.facebook.com/Douma.local.council/photos/a.503751369662090.1073741826.466190923418135/907512925952597/?type=3&amp;theater">https://www.facebook.com/Douma.local.council/photos/a.503751369662090.1073741826.466190923418135/907512925952597/?type=3&amp;theater</a>
30.	Diyaa Eddine Khalil Taha	Head of the Land titling Office	Air strikes/Shelling	Douma LC	22/08/2015	<a href="https://www.facebook.com/Douma.local.council/photos/a.503751369662090.1073741826.466190923418135/879051178798772/?type=3&amp;theater">https://www.facebook.com/Douma.local.council/photos/a.503751369662090.1073741826.466190923418135/879051178798772/?type=3&amp;theater</a>
31.	Nu'man Al Hajja	Member	Killed under torture in government detention center	Douma LC	2014	<a href="https://www.facebook.com/Douma.local.council/photos/a.503751369662090.1073741826.466190923418135/752701778100380/?type=3&amp;theater">https://www.facebook.com/Douma.local.council/photos/a.503751369662090.1073741826.466190923418135/752701778100380/?type=3&amp;theater</a>
32.	Mohamad Subhi Ashqar	Land Titling Office	Air strikes/Shelling	Douma LC		<a href="http://www.souriatnapress.net/%D8%A3%D9%83%D8%AB%D8%B1-%D9%85%D9%86-18-%D8%B4%D9%87%D9%8A%D8%AF%D8%A7%D9%8B-%D9%85%D9%86-%D9%83%D9%88%D8%A7%D8%AF%D8%B1-%D8%A7%D9%84%D9%85%D8%AC%D9%84%D8%B3-%D8%A8%D9%85%D8%AF%D9%8A%D9%86%D8%A9/">http://www.souriatnapress.net/%D8%A3%D9%83%D8%AB%D8%B1-%D9%85%D9%86-18-%D8%B4%D9%87%D9%8A%D8%AF%D8%A7%D9%8B-%D9%85%D9%86-%D9%83%D9%88%D8%A7%D8%AF%D8%B1-%D8%A7%D9%84%D9%85%D8%AC%D9%84%D8%B3-%D8%A8%D9%85%D8%AF%D9%8A%D9%86%D8%A9/</a>

33.	Sariya Qashou'e	Guarding Office	Air strikes/Shelling	Douma LC		<a href="http://www.souriatnapress.net/%D8%A3%D9%83%D8%AB%D8%B1-%D9%85%D9%86-18-%D8%B4%D9%87%D9%8A%D8%AF%D8%A7%D9%8B-%D9%85%D9%86-%D9%83%D9%88%D8%A7%D8%AF%D8%B1-%D8%A7%D9%84%D9%85%D8%AC%D9%84%D8%B3-%D8%A8%D9%85%D8%AF%D9%8A%D9%86%D8%A9/">http://www.souriatnapress.net/%D8%A3%D9%83%D8%AB%D8%B1-%D9%85%D9%86-18-%D8%B4%D9%87%D9%8A%D8%AF%D8%A7%D9%8B-%D9%85%D9%86-%D9%83%D9%88%D8%A7%D8%AF%D8%B1-%D8%A7%D9%84%D9%85%D8%AC%D9%84%D8%B3-%D8%A8%D9%85%D8%AF%D9%8A%D9%86%D8%A9/</a>
34.	Mohamad Haboush	Fleet office	Air strikes/Shelling	Douma LC		<a href="http://www.souriatnapress.net/%D8%A3%D9%83%D8%AB%D8%B1-%D9%85%D9%86-18-%D8%B4%D9%87%D9%8A%D8%AF%D8%A7%D9%8B-%D9%85%D9%86-%D9%83%D9%88%D8%A7%D8%AF%D8%B1-%D8%A7%D9%84%D9%85%D8%AC%D9%84%D8%B3-%D8%A8%D9%85%D8%AF%D9%8A%D9%86%D8%A9/">http://www.souriatnapress.net/%D8%A3%D9%83%D8%AB%D8%B1-%D9%85%D9%86-18-%D8%B4%D9%87%D9%8A%D8%AF%D8%A7%D9%8B-%D9%85%D9%86-%D9%83%D9%88%D8%A7%D8%AF%D8%B1-%D8%A7%D9%84%D9%85%D8%AC%D9%84%D8%B3-%D8%A8%D9%85%D8%AF%D9%8A%D9%86%D8%A9/</a>
35.	Bilal Aboud	Finance Office	Air strikes/Shelling	Douma LC		<a href="http://www.souriatnapress.net/%D8%A3%D9%83%D8%AB%D8%B1-%D9%85%D9%86-18-%D8%B4%D9%87%D9%8A%D8%AF%D8%A7%D9%8B-%D9%85%D9%86-%D9%83%D9%88%D8%A7%D8%AF%D8%B1-%D8%A7%D9%84%D9%85%D8%AC%D9%84%D8%B3-%D8%A8%D9%85%D8%AF%D9%8A%D9%86%D8%A9/">http://www.souriatnapress.net/%D8%A3%D9%83%D8%AB%D8%B1-%D9%85%D9%86-18-%D8%B4%D9%87%D9%8A%D8%AF%D8%A7%D9%8B-%D9%85%D9%86-%D9%83%D9%88%D8%A7%D8%AF%D8%B1-%D8%A7%D9%84%D9%85%D8%AC%D9%84%D8%B3-%D8%A8%D9%85%D8%AF%D9%8A%D9%86%D8%A9/</a>
36.	Mohamad Sa'our	Service Office	Air strikes/Shelling	Douma LC		<a href="http://www.souriatnapress.net/%D8%A3%D9%83%D8%AB%D8%B1-%D9%85%D9%86-18-%D8%B4%D9%87%D9%8A%D8%AF%D8%A7%D9%8B-%D9%85%D9%86-%D9%83%D9%88%D8%A7%D8%AF%D8%B1-%D8%A7%D9%84%D9%85%D8%AC%D9%84%D8%B3-%D8%A8%D9%85%D8%AF%D9%8A%D9%86%D8%A9/">http://www.souriatnapress.net/%D8%A3%D9%83%D8%AB%D8%B1-%D9%85%D9%86-18-%D8%B4%D9%87%D9%8A%D8%AF%D8%A7%D9%8B-%D9%85%D9%86-%D9%83%D9%88%D8%A7%D8%AF%D8%B1-%D8%A7%D9%84%D9%85%D8%AC%D9%84%D8%B3-%D8%A8%D9%85%D8%AF%D9%8A%D9%86%D8%A9/</a>
37.	Omar Ammar Amin	Member of Aleppo	His body was found in the Electricity Institute in Kafr Hamra town	Aleppo Provincial Council		<a href="http://aleppogov.com/?p=1296">http://aleppogov.com/?p=1296</a>

		Provincial Council	(Aleppo countryside) following the withdrawal of IS from the town			
38.	Iyhab Houriya	Member of the Civil Defence Office	Air strike	Aleppo Provincial Council		<a href="http://aleppogov.com/?p=1520">http://aleppogov.com/?p=1520</a>
39.	Ahmad Al Khaled	Member of the Civil Defence Office	Air strike	Aleppo Provincial Council		<a href="http://aleppogov.com/?p=1520">http://aleppogov.com/?p=1520</a>
40.	Ammar Bakkar	Member of the Civil Defence Office	Air strike	Aleppo Provincial Council		<a href="http://aleppogov.com/?p=1520">http://aleppogov.com/?p=1520</a>
41.	Bashar Al Shoukhi	President of Inkhel Local Council	Assassinated IS's sympathizing Ansar Al Aqsa group	Inkhel Local Council (Daraa Province)	17/03/2016	<a href="http://www.all4syria.info/Archive/347293">http://www.all4syria.info/Archive/347293</a>
42.	Ayoub Al Atrash	Member of the Civil Defence Office	Barrel bomb	Aleppo Provincial Council		<a href="http://aleppogov.com/?p=1959">http://aleppogov.com/?p=1959</a>
43.	Ali Swedan	Head of the	Air strike	Aleppo Provincial Council		<a href="http://aleppogov.com/?p=2103">http://aleppogov.com/?p=2103</a>

		Economic Office				
44.	Amer Al Nayef	Member	Chemical attack of Khan Sheikhoun *(Idleb)	Hama Provincial Council	04/04/2017	<a href="https://www.facebook.com/hama.province.council/photos/a.567006030031829.1073741828.565931476805951/1386910484708042/?type=3&amp;theater">https://www.facebook.com/hama.province.council/photos/a.567006030031829.1073741828.565931476805951/1386910484708042/?type=3&amp;theater</a>
45.	Khaled Mohamad Al Saleh	President	Air strike	Harbnafsah LC (Hama Countryside)	18/06/2016	<a href="https://www.facebook.com/hama.province.council/photos/a.567006030031829.1073741828.565931476805951/1089480521117708/?type=3&amp;theater">https://www.facebook.com/hama.province.council/photos/a.567006030031829.1073741828.565931476805951/1089480521117708/?type=3&amp;theater</a>
46.	Hassam Mohamad Al A'raj (The only cardiologist working n Hama Province)	Director	A targeted missile hit his car	Health Directorate at Hama Provincial Council – Kafr Zita (Hama Countryside)	13/04/2016	<a href="https://www.facebook.com/hama.province.council/photos/a.567006030031829.1073741828.565931476805951/1047748891957538/?type=3&amp;theater">https://www.facebook.com/hama.province.council/photos/a.567006030031829.1073741828.565931476805951/1047748891957538/?type=3&amp;theater</a>
47.	Bassel Wael Alloush	Employee	Air strike	Aleppo City Council	29/11/2016	<a href="https://www.facebook.com/TheLocalCouncilOFAleppoCity1/photos/a.657157564436780.1073741828.656857381133465/763958423756693/?type=3&amp;theater">https://www.facebook.com/TheLocalCouncilOFAleppoCity1/photos/a.657157564436780.1073741828.656857381133465/763958423756693/?type=3&amp;theater</a>
48.	Yaqoub Ammar	Minister of Local Administration at SIG and former President of Dar'a Provincial Council	<p>Suicide blast that targeted a meeting held by several civilian leading figures in Inkhel city</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- He was kidnapped by "Muthanna" Movement, affiliated with</li> </ul>	Syrian Interim Government / Dar'a Provincial Council	22/09/2016	<a href="https://www.alsouria.net/content/%D9%85%D9%82%D8%AA%D9%84-%D9%88%D8%B2%D9%8A%D8%B1-%D9%81%D9%8A-%D8%A7%D9%84%D8%AD%D9%83%D9%88%D9%85%D8%A9-%D8%A7%D9%84%D8%B3%D9%88%D8%B1%D9%8A%D8%A9-%D8%A7%D9%84%D9%85%D8%A4%D9%82%D8%AA%D8%A9-%D8%A8%D8%AF%D8%B1%D8%B9%D8%A7-%D8%AA%D9%81%D8%AC%D9%8A%D8%B1-%D9%8A%D8%B3%D8%AA%D9%87%D8%AF%D9%81-%D8%A7%D8%AC%D8%AA%D9%85%D8%A7%D8%B9%D8%A7%D9%8B-">https://www.alsouria.net/content/%D9%85%D9%82%D8%AA%D9%84-%D9%88%D8%B2%D9%8A%D8%B1-%D9%81%D9%8A-%D8%A7%D9%84%D8%AD%D9%83%D9%88%D9%85%D8%A9-%D8%A7%D9%84%D8%B3%D9%88%D8%B1%D9%8A%D8%A9-%D8%A7%D9%84%D9%85%D8%A4%D9%82%D8%AA%D8%A9-%D8%A8%D8%AF%D8%B1%D8%B9%D8%A7-%D8%AA%D9%81%D8%AC%D9%8A%D8%B1-%D9%8A%D8%B3%D8%AA%D9%87%D8%AF%D9%81-%D8%A7%D8%AC%D8%AA%D9%85%D8%A7%D8%B9%D8%A7%D9%8B-</a>

			Daesh, and was later rescued by the FSA			<a href="#">%D9%84%D9%82%D9%8A%D8%A7%D8%AF%D8%A7%D8%AA-%D8%A8%D8%A7%D9%84%D9%85%D8%B9%D8%A7%D8%B1%D8%B6%D8%A9-%D8%A7%D9%84%D8%B3%D9%88%D8%B1%D9%8A%D8%A9</a>
49.	Jamal Al Amarin	Former member of the executive office of Daraa Provincial Council, Assistant of the ministry of Service at the Interim Government	Suicide blast that targeted a meeting held by several civilian leading figures in Inkhel city  He was kidnapped by "Muthanna" Movement, affiliated with Daesh, and was later rescued by the FSA	Syrian Interim Government / Dar'a Provincial Council	22/09/2016	<a href="https://www.facebook.com/1007385769283511/photos/pcb.1226503960705023/1226503784038374/?type=3&amp;theater">https://www.facebook.com/1007385769283511/photos/pcb.1226503960705023/1226503784038374/?type=3&amp;theater</a>
50.	Mahmoud Mourshed Moudallal	Founding member of the Administration of Local Councils in Eastern Ghouta which later	Air strike	Rural Damascus Provincial Council	22/04/2015	<a href="https://www.facebook.com/LocalCouncil.Of.SaqbaCity.Ar/photos/a.316681488433016.59744.306640752770423/639892432778585/?type=3&amp;theater">https://www.facebook.com/LocalCouncil.Of.SaqbaCity.Ar/photos/a.316681488433016.59744.306640752770423/639892432778585/?type=3&amp;theater</a>

		became the Rural Damascus Provincial Council. he also contribute to the formation of the first local council of Harasta				
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Table 2- List of documented targeting of local or provincial councils buildings between 2014 and 2017

Type of facility`	LC	Date (DD/MM/YYYY)	Source
The council's building targeted by air strike	Kafr Tkharim - Idlib Countryside	24/10/2016	<a href="http://www.asharqalarabi.org.uk/%D9%85%D9%86-%D8%A3%D8%AE%D8%A8%D8%A7%D8%B1-%D8%AD%D9%82%D9%88%D9%82-%D8%A7%D9%84%D8%A5%D9%86%D8%B3%D8%A7%D9%86-%D9%8A-%D8%B3%D9%88%D8%B1%D9%8A%D8%A9-27-10-2016_ad-id!377942.ks#.WUKGH2iGO00">http://www.asharqalarabi.org.uk/%D9%85%D9%86-%D8%A3%D8%AE%D8%A8%D8%A7%D8%B1-%D8%AD%D9%82%D9%88%D9%82-%D8%A7%D9%84%D8%A5%D9%86%D8%B3%D8%A7%D9%86-%D9%8A-%D8%B3%D9%88%D8%B1%D9%8A%D8%A9-27-10-2016_ad-id!377942.ks#.WUKGH2iGO00</a>
Car bomb targeted the quarter of the Syrian Interim Government in northern Aleppo	Azaz LC – Aleppo Countryside	03/05/2017	<a href="http://www.reuters.com/article/us-mideast-crisis-syria-bomb-idUSKBN17Z0J8">http://www.reuters.com/article/us-mideast-crisis-syria-bomb-idUSKBN17Z0J8</a>

countryside which also included office of Azaz LC			
Government air forces targeted the quarter of Harata Local Council (The building was completely destroyed)	Harasta Local Council – Rural damascus	21/08/2015	<a href="http://www.alhayat.com/Articles/10695323/%D8%BA%D8%A7%D8%B1%D8%A7%D8%AA-%D8%B9%D9%84%D9%89-%D8%AF%D9%88%D9%85%D8%A7-%D9%88%D8%AA%D8%AF%D9%85%D9%8A%D8%B1-%D9%85%D8%AC%D9%84%D8%B3-%D8%AD%D8%B1%D8%B3%D8%AA%D8%A7----%D9%88%D9%85%D8%B9%D8%A7%D8%B1%D9%83-%D9%81%D9%8A-%D8%AD%D9%85%D8%A7%D8%A9">http://www.alhayat.com/Articles/10695323/%D8%BA%D8%A7%D8%B1%D8%A7%D8%AA-%D8%B9%D9%84%D9%89-%D8%AF%D9%88%D9%85%D8%A7-%D9%88%D8%AA%D8%AF%D9%85%D9%8A%D8%B1-%D9%85%D8%AC%D9%84%D8%B3-%D8%AD%D8%B1%D8%B3%D8%AA%D8%A7----%D9%88%D9%85%D8%B9%D8%A7%D8%B1%D9%83-%D9%81%D9%8A-%D8%AD%D9%85%D8%A7%D8%A9</a>
Two of the office of Douma LC were damaged following air strieks taregting nearby market. The Council suspense its work and called for pressure on Assad regime to stop attacks on civilians, and to allow Red Cross into besieged town	Douma LC – Rural Damascus	Government air forces continued the targeting of the city for 5 consecutive days between 19 and 22 August 2015	<a href="https://www.doumalc.com/?p=2322">https://www.doumalc.com/?p=2322</a>
Government air forces targeted the quarter of the Provincial Council (One PC member was killed and 8 others were injured)	Aleppo Provincial Council		<a href="http://aleppogov.com/?p=2103">http://aleppogov.com/?p=2103</a>
The quarter of the Local Council targeted by Russian air strike	Kafr Nobol LC (Idleb Countryside)	27/10/2015	<a href="https://www.facebook.com/pg/loalkafranbel/photos/?tab=album&amp;album_id=658205224316940">https://www.facebook.com/pg/loalkafranbel/photos/?tab=album&amp;album_id=658205224316940</a>
The Local Council's offices were partially destroyed by regime air strike	Kafr Sajnah LC (Idlib Countryside)	24 / 11/ 2016	<a href="https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Tw8U71m8Rfo">https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Tw8U71m8Rfo</a>



Table 3- A picture posted by Hama Provincial Council featuring the proceedings of the council's 3rd electoral term where we can see a banner with the photo of Amer Nayef, a former member killed in a chemical attack

While the “martyrdom” of these members was a shock to everyone around them, it was also a catalyst for their colleagues and their local communities to carry on the deceaseds’ mission and message.

The third electoral term of Hama Provincial Council for example was named after Amer Nayef, one of the council’s founding members

and former head of relief Office who was killed alongside his wife and children in the Khan Sheikhoun chemical attack<sup>141</sup>. The new members pledged to continue Nayef’s efforts in helping people in need.

In Eastern Ghouta, a charity was founded and named after Mahmoud Mourshed Moudallal (or Abou Mourshed as people liked to called him), who was one of the founders of the Administration of Local Councils in Eastern Ghouta, and who was killed in a government air strike. Abou Mourshed was also member of the Democratic Party of the Arab Socialist Union<sup>142</sup> and was known for his good deeds and his dedication to help the poorest and most vulnerable people during the hardest years of Eastern Ghouta’s siege<sup>143</sup>.

Abou Mourshed inspired and continue to inspire many activists within and outside Syria. Following his martyrdom, social media was buzzing with posts on what he did for the

<sup>141</sup> On May 1<sup>st</sup> 2017, Human Rights Watch has published a report on evidences supporting the conclusion that Syrian government forces had used nerve gas agents in Khan Sheikhoun <https://www.hrw.org/news/2017/05/01/syria-new-evidence-shows-pattern-nerve-agent-use>

<sup>142</sup> The Democratic Party of the Arab Socialist Union, is a long standing leftist party founded in 1964. The Party is also member of the National Coalition for Syrian Revolution and Opposition Forces.

<sup>143</sup> To know more about the siege, see the Siege Watch project which provides up-to-date information on Syria’s besieged communities. Data is collected on an ongoing basis from an extensive network of reporting contacts on the ground and disseminated through in-depth quarterly [reports](https://siegewatch.org/#8/-22.599/-23.733), in the interactive map <https://siegewatch.org/#8/-22.599/-23.733>

revolution and how he kept calling and encouraging activists to commit to non-violence despite the state violence and persecution.

*“The triumph of the revolution is not only about overthrowing the regime, but it is also sowing the seeds of change in the new Syrian generation. The commitment to work is the real secret to success and the revolution cannot win if its cadres do not abide by it and believe in it sincerely. Respect for people comes mainly from how much you respect them. The revolution is meant to replace the concepts of tyranny and dictatorship with concepts of freedom and dignity.”* These were the principals that Osama Nassar, one of the most eminent young figures of the non-violence movement in Syria, had learned from Abou Mourshed as he explained in an article he wrote in his memory.

The human capital that people like Abou Mourshed, Omar Aziz, Amer Nayef and other figures of the Syrian opposition was sort of a glue bringing together different parts of the local community. Both their work and their martyrdom contributed considerably in the building of the social capital of entities or networks of which they were part.

Apart from death, grief itself was used by some local councils to highlight shared experiences, shared suffering and shared goals.

In early 2016, Douma and Al Marj in Eastern Ghouta and Darraya in Western Ghouta were subjected to unprecedented government military attacks which left hundreds of families without a rooftop as their homes were destroyed and they had lost of their belongings. The local councils of three areas responded by launching a campaign they called “One heart, one siege”. The campaign consisted in mobilizing the civil society and exiled Syrians among one target: Sensitizing Syrians and the public opinion regarding the inhuman conditions in which entire populations live. They also wanted to send out a message of resilience and tell people that Syrians are united despite anything. During the campaign, all three councils provided aid to around 1500 families synchronically, and produced media reports and promos.

The slogan of the campaign clearly indicates that what unites them is pain.

“Let’s return to the beginning to “the people want to topple the regime” ... This work was done by Syrian volunteers. Their sect, their religion, their ethnicity and their heart is Syria, with a lot of love and loyalty to our country and our revolution, from exile, under bombs and within the siege.. From our pain: Syria

The volunteers of One Heart, one siege” says one of the promos they’ve produced. <sup>144</sup>

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<sup>144</sup> See full promotion here <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=ZcX4zqVMlag>



Figure 49- A 70 years old man standing in front of his destroyed home (One of the beneficiaries of One Heart One Siege Campaign) - Source: Orient News <sup>145</sup>

Councils of distressed, stricken and encircled cities exchange their grief and empathize one with another after every colossal event. Perhaps it is not only grief, perhaps it is also the fear that bring them to show solidarity among each other, a solidarity that enhances bonding social capital.

In early December when the eastern parts of Aleppo City was seeing a rapid escalation of indiscriminate bombardment by government forces, local councils across the country



Figure 50- A picture from Darayya Local Council protest in solidarity with Aleppo in December 2016 (From Darayya, here is Aleppo) - Source: Darayya LC

organized protests and sit-ins to denounce these barbaric attacks and show solidarity. Darayya, despite being under shelling itself, empathized with Aleppo. The Local Council organized a protest in which all its members, members of its Civil Defense Office and activists took part in this protests. The protest motto was "From Darayya, here is Aleppo" in reference to a historic moment, precisely the triple aggression against Syria and Egypt in October 1956 when French and British

<sup>145</sup> Orient news reporting on the One Heart One Siege campaign  
<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=rMHP0qFNMZg>

aircrafts launched air strikes on Egyptian targets including the main broadcasting antennas belonging to the Egyptian radio station, north of Cairo. The next day, Damascus Radio Station started its broadcasting by saying: "From Damascus, here is Cairo".



Additionally, many local councils tried to draw people's attention to the massacre on Social Media. Douma Local Council, for example, changed the background color of its logo to red, adding to its logo the hashtag #AleppoIsBurning. The council also suspended its work and issued a statement condemning the aggression against Aleppo.

Other councils, across the opposition controlled areas did the same.

"From Dar'a , the cradle of the revolution, from its Omari mosque, to Aleppo the Shahba<sup>146</sup> and its standing castle, patience, people of Aleppo, Dar'a stands with you till death" these were part of the statement of the president of Dar'a Provincial Council who along with the council members observed a sit-in in front of the seat of the council in Nawa city in solidarity with Aleppo in May 2016 <sup>147</sup>



Figure 51- Sit-in by members of Dar'a Provincial Council in solidarity with Aleppo city - Source: Step Agency

<sup>146</sup> Shahba is the nickname of Aleppo city, which means the white city.

<sup>147</sup> The full statement was recorded and posted in YouTube by Dar'a PC's Media office  
[https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Dcf7ZP3mV\\_I](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Dcf7ZP3mV_I)

Solidarity, though isn't only expressed by local councils in moment of grief. But also in stances where national causes are raised.



Figure 52 - Douma sit-in in solidarity with the KNC (From Douma to Amouda: Peace and Respect) - Source the Douam LC Facebook page

Like in Geneva 3, during the Peace talks in 2016, several local councils held sit-in in solidarity with the Kurdish issue in Syria and in support of Kurdish rights and demands and the efforts of the Kurdish National Council<sup>148</sup> in Geneva 3.

The council of Douma in rural Damascus, Saraqeb and Kafr Nobol in the countryside of Idlib and other councils in the mountain of the Kurds in Lattakia raised flags of the

revolution and banners in both Arabic and Kurdish.



Figure 53- Saraqeb (Idleb) in solidarity with KNC. One of the banners say: Kurds are part of the revolution

<sup>148</sup> The Kurdish National Council in Syria (KNC) was formed on October 26, 2011, in Erbil, Iraq, under the sponsorship of Massoud Barzani, the president of the Kurdistan Regional Government of Iraq. The KNC was initially backed by Kurdish parties formerly affiliated with the Kurdish Democratic Front and included eleven Syrian Kurdish political parties. The formation of the KNC as an umbrella opposition group to the Assad regime closely followed the establishment of the Syrian National Council (SNC), the main umbrella opposition group in exile, in the same month. Unlike the PYD, the KNC supports the unity of Syria.

## Revolutionary Commitment

It is not only solidarity in times of disaster and distress that reinforces the social capital enjoyed by local councils, but mutual solidarity between these councils and their communities is also a very important factor in building reliable social capital when the time comes to make fateful decisions. This solidarity has several forms, including revolutionary commitment and cooperation with various organizations and components of civil society. Not all local councils are only service providers, they are also revolutionary entities who represent people's aspirations to build a unified, democratic Syria with full sovereignty.

On February 27th 2016, when a cease-fire between Assad regime and the opposition went into effect protesters returned to Syria's streets. Protestors took advantage of the relative calm to come out in the largest numbers in years to declare that even after five harsh years they still wanted political change. Under the slogan "The revolution continues" demonstrators waved the revolution flag defying both the regime and jihadist groups who attempted to impose their own black flags that represent their radical ideologies. On March 4<sup>th</sup> 2016, protests were staged in 104 locations, a level of mobilization unheard of since the beginning of the uprising in 2011<sup>149</sup>.

Besides being involved in the mobilization and the logistics of these demonstrations, local councils' members were side by side with people and revolutionary entities chanting "The revolution continues".

With only less than 10% of the original population of Kafr Zita, one of the only four areas under the opposition control in the northern Hama countryside, the local council organized a demonstration to send out to the world the message that despite everything, they continue their struggle for freedom. Kafr Zita and the three other towns were subjected to systematic air strikes that destroyed 100% of their infrastructure. In an interview with Akhbar Alaan, Hasan A'raj, the head of the Media Office at the local council of Kafr Zita said that the efforts of the council resulted in the mobilization of 600 citizens who came to the destroyed town from neighboring towns where they thought refuge earlier, a relatively large number given the displacement of almost the entire population of these towns.

"I cannot describe my feelings when I left the demonstration. I shouted out with all my voice: Syria wants freedom. I had emptied my revolutionary sentiments, and then I was relieved as I realized that the demonstrations and the armed action must go in parallel." Said Abu Khaled, one of the protesting citizens<sup>150</sup>.

<sup>149</sup> [http://www.orient-news.net/ar/news\\_show/105016/0/%D9%81%D9%8A-%D8%A3%D9%88%D9%84-%D8%AC%D9%85%D8%B9%D8%A9%D9%8D-%D8%A8%D8%B9%D8%AF-%D8%A7%D9%84%D9%87%D8%AF%D9%86%D8%A9-%D9%86%D9%82%D8%B7%D8%A9-%D8%AA%D8%B8%D8%A7%D9%87%D8%B1-%D9%81%D9%8A-%D8%B3%D9%88%D8%B1%D9%8A%D8%A7](http://www.orient-news.net/ar/news_show/105016/0/%D9%81%D9%8A-%D8%A3%D9%88%D9%84-%D8%AC%D9%85%D8%B9%D8%A9%D9%8D-%D8%A8%D8%B9%D8%AF-%D8%A7%D9%84%D9%87%D8%AF%D9%86%D8%A9-%D9%86%D9%82%D8%B7%D8%A9-%D8%AA%D8%B8%D8%A7%D9%87%D8%B1-%D9%81%D9%8A-%D8%B3%D9%88%D8%B1%D9%8A%D8%A7)

<sup>150</sup> <http://www.akhbaralaan.net/news/arab-world/2016/3/11/kafr-zita-renewing-covenant-demonstrations-anniversary-massacres>

Simultaneously, in besieged Eastern Ghouta, the Rural Damascus Provincial Council organized together with the Media Activists League in Ghouta a festival to celebrate the revolution's anniversary. The festival was a chance to reiterate people's commitment to the revolution and to honor civil defense teams and journalists who've been working in extremely difficult conditions<sup>151</sup>.

Two month later, in April 2016, Rural Damascus Provincial Council organized another festivity to commemorate Syria's Independence Day <sup>152</sup>. More than 200 figures including members of local councils of different towns and villages attended this festivity which was an occasion to confirm people's longing for freedom and dignity as said Nizar Smadi, one of the eminent figures in Eastern Ghouta and former president of the provincial council.



Figure 54- Akram Touma, former president of Rural Damascus Provincial Council and Vice-President of the Interim Government celebrating the revolution's 5th anniversary - Source: Orient News

“As our ancestors achieved our first independence, Eastern Ghouta is offering sacrifices for freedom and dignity today” said Smadi. <sup>153</sup>

<sup>151</sup> [http://orient-news.net/ar/news\\_show/106342/0/%D8%B3%D9%86%D9%8A%D9%86-%D9%88%D9%85%D9%83%D9%85%D9%84%D9%8A%D9%86-%D9%85%D9%87%D8%B1%D8%AC%D8%A7%D9%86-%D9%81%D9%8A-%D8%A7%D9%84%D8%BA%D9%88%D8%B7%D8%A9-%D9%84%D8%A5%D8%AD%D9%8A%D8%A7%D8%A1-%D8%B0%D9%83%D8%B1%D9%89-%D8%A7%D9%84%D8%AB%D9%88%D8%B1%D8%A9](http://orient-news.net/ar/news_show/106342/0/%D8%B3%D9%86%D9%8A%D9%86-%D9%88%D9%85%D9%83%D9%85%D9%84%D9%8A%D9%86-%D9%85%D9%87%D8%B1%D8%AC%D8%A7%D9%86-%D9%81%D9%8A-%D8%A7%D9%84%D8%BA%D9%88%D8%B7%D8%A9-%D9%84%D8%A5%D8%AD%D9%8A%D8%A7%D8%A1-%D8%B0%D9%83%D8%B1%D9%89-%D8%A7%D9%84%D8%AB%D9%88%D8%B1%D8%A9)

<sup>152</sup> Syrian gained independence from France on April 17 1946

<sup>153</sup> <https://www.smartnews-agency.com/ar/wires/170126/%D9%81%D9%8A%D8%AF%D9%8A%D9%88-%D9%85%D8%AC%D9%84%D8%B3-%D9%85%D8%AD%D8%A7%D9%81%D8%B8%D8%A9-%D8%B1%D9%8A%D9%81-%D8%AF%D9%85%D8%B4%D9%82-%D9%8A%D8%AD%D8%AA%D9%81%D9%84-%D8%A8%D8%B0%D9%83%D8%B1%D9%89->

In Maarat Annuma, the Local Council contributes constantly to the organization of demonstrations and protests through its service office who raise and place the flags in the streets and prepare the demonstration's scenes alongside with civilian activists.



Figure 55- The Service Office of Ma'arat al-Nu'man LC prepares for a demonstration in the city - Source: Souriatna Press

In Nawa, the 2nd biggest city in Daraa Province, the Provincial Council whose headquarter is located there contributed to the mobilization of massive demonstration where a big banner including the names of the martyrs of the city was placed in the center of the demonstration scene.



Figure 56 \_ Nawa in Daraa (South of Syria) demonstrate in the "Revolution Continues" Friday - Source: Shahed Agency

[%D8%A7%D9%84%D8%A7%D8%B3%D8%AA%D9%82%D9%84%D8%A7%D9%84-%D9%81%D9%8A-%D8%AD%D9%85%D9%88%D8%B1%D9%8A%D8%A9](#)

While local councils admit their limitations, they also present themselves as representatives of their own communities, and they claim revolutionary responsibilities whose core is the protection of civilians in these communities.

The protection has many aspects, but in the Syrian context and within local councils' limited capacities and resources we can distinguish three types of actions where local councils contribute, to a certain extent, to local efforts for the protection of civilians.

### “Register”: Local efforts for guaranteeing the right to Identity and property

Identity is not the only element that makes up the essence of the human being as such, but it what represents the individuality of each person and the potentiality to develop as individuals and as part of a social group, to take advantage of all the capacities and natural and acquired abilities, as well as to enjoy and exercise the freedoms and rights that the legal order recognizes or grant.

To prove identity, a person must have a civil registry which is his/her legal status in the family and society, and which documents his/her important life events, kinship and family ties. Civil registration is therefore of fundamental importance in claiming rights and fulfilling duties, especially in a war context.

In early 2012, the Syrian regime shut down civil registry departments in opposition-controlled areas, transferred official records and documents to its areas of control, and forced the staff of these departments to move to its areas or they'd face dismissal from their jobs. Which happened to dozens of them<sup>154</sup>. This complicated the life of citizens who live in the opposition controlled areas and who fear being arrested or punished by the regime if they wanted to register and document their important life events like births, marriages, divorces, and deaths in regime controlled areas, especially if they are opponents or have family ties with individuals on the regime's wanted list.

“I am a father of three children and so far I do not have any official document proving my marriage or that these children are mine, I got married during the first months of the revolution, and after the Assad forces placed checkpoints on the roads and the

<sup>154</sup> The Syrian regime give employees the choice of staying under its surveillance, dismissal or persecution by Al Souria Net <https://www.alsouria.net/content/%D9%86%D8%B8%D8%A7%D9%85-%D8%A7%D9%84%D8%A3%D8%B3%D8%AF-%D9%8A%D8%AE%D9%8A%D8%B1-%D8%A7%D9%84%D9%85%D9%88%D8%B8%D9%81%D9%8A%D9%86-%D8%A7%D9%84%D9%86%D8%A7%D8%B2%D8%AD%D9%8A%D9%86-%D8%A8%D8%A7%D9%84%D8%A8%D9%82%D8%A7%D8%A1-%D8%AA%D8%AD%D8%AA-%D8%A3%D9%86%D8%B8%D8%A7%D8%B1%D9%87-%D8%A3%D9%88-%D8%A7%D9%84%D9%81%D8%B5%D9%84-%D9%88%D8%A7%D9%84%D9%85%D9%84%D8%A7%D8%AD%D9%82%D8%A9-%D8%A7%D9%84%D8%A3%D9%85%D9%86%D9%8A%D8%A9>

occurrence of several cases of detention of the people of area, I no longer dare to go to the civil registry departments in the areas under regime control, for fear of arrest, especially as I participated in all the demonstrations in the area and I called for the overthrow the regime (...)"For a while I decided to leave Syria with my family in search of safety. I tried to get the necessary documents to complete the travel procedures, such as the marriage contract, the family book, the passport and travel approval, through brokers who know people working at regime areas, but a marriage contract from regime courts costs 600 dollars, the cost of the Syrian passport is 2000 dollars, for the non-military, and it doubles for those wanted for military service, in addition to 500 dollars which is the cost of obtaining a civil registry history, and I am not able to pay all these costs, which forced me to refrain from the idea of traveling for now." <sup>155</sup>

In addition to the transfer of the majority of civil registries to regime areas, other registries were destroyed, burned or stolen during combats or in bombardment, liked what happened in Daraa, Homs or Manbij (in Aleppo).

Besides the crucial importance of these records, their absence also puts hundreds of thousands of Syrian children at high risk of statelessness. Especially, Syrian refugee children born in countries of asylum, or those who have been separated from their parents or families<sup>156</sup>.

Additionally the lack of a document proving the civil status of a person has sometimes exposed married couples' life to danger in area controlled by Salafist of Jihadist groups who prohibits mixing of women and men unless they prove that they have a legitimate relationship (marriage or close family tie)<sup>157</sup>.

Without a proof on a relative or a spouse's death, especially if this person was a state employee, many Syrian women and children lost their right to pension<sup>158</sup> and some

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<sup>155</sup> 30 year old Ayoub Al Zein from the countryside of Homs in an interview with Howwrya Net <http://horrya.net/2016/06/01/%D8%A7%D9%84%D8%A3%D9%88%D8%B1%D8%A7%D9%82-%D8%A7%D9%84%D8%AB%D8%A8%D9%88%D8%AA%D9%8A%D8%A9-%D9%81%D9%8A-%D8%A7%D9%84%D9%85%D9%86%D8%A7%D8%B7%D9%82-%D8%A7%D9%84%D9%85%D8%AD%D8%B1%D8%B1%D8%A9-%D9%85/>

<sup>156</sup> I am Here I Belong, UNHCR's report on stateless 2015 [http://www.unhcr.org/ibelong/wp-content/uploads/2015-10-StatelessReport\\_ENG16.pdf](http://www.unhcr.org/ibelong/wp-content/uploads/2015-10-StatelessReport_ENG16.pdf)

<sup>157</sup> Marriage, divorce, birth and death: Legally unrecognized life events in rebels aras – Syria Direct <http://syriadirect.org/ar/news/%D8%A7%D9%84%D8%B2%D9%88%D8%A7%D8%AC-%D9%88%D8%A7%D9%84%D8%B7%D9%84%D8%A7%D9%82-%D9%88%D8%A7%D9%84%D9%88%D9%84%D8%A7%D8%AF%D8%A9-%D9%88%D8%A7%D9%84%D9%88%D9%81%D8%A7%D8%A9-%D9%88%D9%82%D8%A7%D8%A6/>

<sup>158</sup> "Proof of death": the suffering continues to hunt dead in the Syrian war and the lives of those who remained behind <http://syriadirect.org/ar/news/%D8%A5%D8%AB%D8%A8%D8%A7%D8%AA-%D8%A7%D9%84%D9%88%D9%81%D8%A7%D8%A9-%D9%85%D8%B9%D8%A7%D9%86%D8%A7%D8%A9->

women find themselves unable to remarry for example or deprived from the right to inheritance.

While civil registration is important in normal contexts, it is extremely necessary in revolutionary moments, in the Syrian context in particular, as it lays the foundations for those mechanisms to be employed by communities, state, and the international community to promote social reconstruction during the transitional period by addressing the legacy of systematic human rights abuses and authoritarianism.

In addition to the problem of civil records in Syria, civilians' rights in terms of properties, ownership and belonging are also at risk. Particularly in light of the demographic changes taking place in the country which is being divided into zones of influence that regime allies use them to push for a political settlement or to strengthen their influence in Syria.

In Darayya, more than 300 Iraqi Shia families of Harakat Hezbollah al-Nujaba <sup>159</sup> moved into neighborhoods abandoned by rebels in August 2016 as part of a surrender deal. Up to 700 rebel fighters and their families were relocated to Idlib province and regime media announced within days that the Iraqis had arrived<sup>160</sup>. As Darayya, most of the rebel areas which had to surrender to the regime after being subjected to systematic massacres, destruction through air strikes and constant shelling, hunger and siege, are currently witnessing population swaps<sup>161</sup>.

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[%D9%85%D8%B3%D8%AA%D9%85%D8%B1%D8%A9-%D8%AA%D9%84%D8%A7%D8%AD%D9%82-%D9%82%D8%AA%D9%84%D9%89/](#)

<sup>159</sup> Harakat Hezbollah al-Nujaba is an Iraqi Shi'ite paramilitary group. The group openly receives training, arms, and military advice from Iran. They follow the Iranian government's ideology of Vilayat-e Faqih The group was one of the first Iraqi paramilitaries to send fighters to Syria, doing so since their formation in 2013. They have an increasing role in the country after a significant boost to recruitment efforts took place in 2015. They were a major participant in the 2015 South Aleppo offensive and the breaking of the siege of the Shia towns Nubl and Zahraa.

<sup>160</sup> "Al Nujabaa moves families from southern Iraq to Syria for Demographic change purposes – Ashar Al Awsat <https://aawsat.com/home/article/731611/%C2%AB%D8%A7%D9%84%D9%86%D8%AC%D8%A8%D8%A7%D8%A1%C2%BB-%D8%AA%D9%86%D9%82%D9%84-%D8%B9%D9%88%D8%A7%D8%A6%D9%84-%D9%85%D9%86-%D8%A7%D9%84%D8%AC%D9%86%D9%88%D8%A8-%D8%A7%D9%84%D8%B9%D8%B1%D8%A7%D9%82%D9%8A-%D8%A5%D9%84%D9%89-%D8%B3%D9%88%D8%B1%D9%8A%D8%A7-%D9%84%D8%A3%D8%BA%D8%B1%D8%A7%D8%B6-%D8%A7%D9%84%D8%AA%D8%BA%D9%8A%D9%8A%D8%B1-%D8%A7%D9%84%D8%AF%D9%8A%D9%85%D9%88%D8%BA%D8%B1%D8%A7%D9%81%D9%8A>

<sup>161</sup> Demographic Change and the Road to Useful Syria by Ghazi Dahman, The World Institute, 2016 <http://alaalam.org/ar/politics-ar/syria-ar/item/422-%D8%A7%D9%84%D8%AA%D8%BA%D9%8A%D9%8A%D8%B1-%D8%A7%D9%84%D8%AF%D9%8A%D9%85%D8%BA%D8%B1%D8%A7%D9%81%D9%8A-%D9%88%D8%A7%D9%84%D8%B7%D8%B1%D9%8A%D9%82-%D8%A5%D9%84%D9%89-%D8%B3%D9%88%D8%B1%D9%8A%D8%A7-%D8%A7%D9%84%D9%85%D9%81%D9%8A%D8%AF%D8%A9>

On July 1<sup>st</sup> 2013, government forces bombed the old city of Homs as part of its campaign to crush the opposition groups who controlled parts of the city for over a year and half. The bombing caused huge damages to the old building of the municipality of Homs which is considered as a historical and legal reference to the owners of real estate in the city and the countryside of Homs since it contains records since 1909 <sup>162</sup>.

The same scenario was repeated in Hajar Aswad area south of Damascus where the Notary Department was burned <sup>163</sup> or in Manbij where PYD affiliated forces and opposition activists exchanged accusation regarding the burning of the land titling directorate of Manbij (Aleppo) after its liberation from IS <sup>164</sup>.

In the midst of this chaos of records, local councils in collaboration, in support or in coordination with international organizations, foreign governments' aid programs and civil society organizations such as the Free Syrian lawyers (Tajamou'e Al Mouhmin Al Ahrar) <sup>165</sup>, stepped in to take in charge civil, real estate and land titling registration, documentation and archiving.

While some of these initiatives started with local efforts, there has been more and more dependency and international support, as the task they are taking is beyond local councils' capacities and limited resources.

In 2014, opposition groups took over the control of the Civil Record Registry building in Arbin in the suburbs of Damascus which contained records of civil registration and documents for the towns and regions of Ghouta, of Qalamoun (western countryside of Damascus bordering Lebanon) and some neighborhoods of East and West Damascus. The building was used by government forces as soldiers' barricades and some of the documents were burnt or damaged. However, given the location of the building on the front line, it was exposed to shelling and snipers, and rebels feared that the regime may destroy the whole building in attempt of regain its control. To this end, rebels in coordination of the Legal Office of Arbin Coordination Committee dug a 144 m tunnel to facilitate the office's volunteer to safely move the records to safer place<sup>166</sup>. The records were then handed to the Local Council of Arbin which photo-documented,

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<sup>162</sup> The Syrian Human Rights Committee reporting on the incident <http://www.shrc.org/?p=15314>

<sup>163</sup> <http://www.syriasteps.com/index.php?p=131&id=112047>

<sup>164</sup> [http://www.qasioun.net/ar/news/show/34463/%D9%87%D9%84\\_%D8%A3%D8%AD%D8%B1%D9%82%D8%AA\\_%D8%B3%D8%AC%D9%84%D8%A7%D8%AA\\_%D9%85%D9%86%D8%A8%D8%AC\\_%D8%A7%D9%84%D8%B9%D9%82%D8%A7%D8%B1%D9%8A%D8%A9%D9%88%D9%84%D9%85%D8%B5%D9%84%D8%AD%D8%A9\\_%D9%85%D9%86](http://www.qasioun.net/ar/news/show/34463/%D9%87%D9%84_%D8%A3%D8%AD%D8%B1%D9%82%D8%AA_%D8%B3%D8%AC%D9%84%D8%A7%D8%AA_%D9%85%D9%86%D8%A8%D8%AC_%D8%A7%D9%84%D8%B9%D9%82%D8%A7%D8%B1%D9%8A%D8%A9%D9%88%D9%84%D9%85%D8%B5%D9%84%D8%AD%D8%A9_%D9%85%D9%86)

<sup>165</sup> A non-governmental, non-profit human rights organization for free Syrian lawyers and jurists, registered on Tukey with offices inside Syria

<sup>166</sup> Arbin's Rebels: A 145 tuner to save the civil registry – Orient News [http://www.orient-news.net/ar/news\\_show/82259](http://www.orient-news.net/ar/news_show/82259)

archived the records, before establishing 5 related offices (Office of the single window open to citizens, Real Estate Documentation, Archiving, Photography and Automation, and the Copy Office)<sup>167</sup>. The council wasn't capable of doing all this work with the support of the Day After Association which is an independent, Syrian-led civil society organization working to support democratic transition in Syria who provided financial, and logistic support as well as training to the workers at the 5 offices<sup>168</sup>. The training was facilitated by Adnan Taha, a land titling and registration expert, who was one of the leaders of another registration project that Douma Local Council started in 2012 when opposition armed groups pushed government forces out. In November 2012. The council formed a records inventory committee that sorted out the real estate and civil records placed in Douma Municipality building which include 2067 records and real estate appendices covering 77 cities and villages, both liberated and under regime control, dating back to 1934.

In less than three months, the committee's work developed into a Real Estate Documentation Department within that has divided into eight sections. The first section is called "one window," and receives citizens' application for obtaining civil or real estate record and "to manage and overcome bureaucracy"; second is the Copying section where staff archive the applications, formalities and records of the first section; the third is the digitalization and photography section whose staff photo-document the aforementioned documents; the fourth is the Real Estate section which issues real estate records such as deeds of trust, release, gift or easement; the fifth is the lease section, the sixth is the auditing section; the seventh is the archiving office which archives real estate transactions and the final one the research section which verifies and researches applications for authorizations that citizens non-present in opposition controlled areas apply for through the local council's email<sup>169</sup>

In early 2017, the office started a new digitalization project which basically aims at digitalizing all existing paper-based records, in order to facilitate real estate processes and keeping records in easy-to-protect electronic versions, since the city is subjected to frequent air strikes and is also one of the areas that are facing the risk of demographic swap as happened in other rebelling areas.

*"The Local Council in Douma maintained the records of the Real Estate Registry in an excellent state which guarantees our rights as citizens, especially those who had to leave Syria. If these records are lost or burned given the bombardment, it would be very*

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<sup>167</sup> Report on Arbin's Local Council's Real Estate and Land Titling office <https://youtu.be/Ktsv0hMyLKU>

<sup>168</sup> <https://www.enabbaladi.net/archives/135018>

<sup>169</sup> Arranging the real estate chaos in Douma, Eqtissad net, <http://www.eqtisad.net/read/13105/>

*difficult for owners to prove their ownership. This protect our properties from unlawful acquisition in time of war” Izzeddine Ahma, one of the Douma’s residents<sup>170</sup>*

Douma’s Local Council civil records services were launched in the same time as the real estate and land titling office, as they’ve also acquired and preserved the civil registries and books which were located in Douma’s municipality and court. In addition to these service, the council issued 25,000 family book for residents of Eastern Ghouta in collaboration with the Rural Damascus Provincial Council and in coordination with Aleppo Provincial Council who also issued similar documents in 2015. Although these books lose their value outside the control areas of the opposition, they are an urgent necessity in the areas of issuance because they record and document the facts of marriage, birth and divorce and confirm children’s relationship to their parents, and preserves their rights<sup>171</sup>.

In 2016 in southern Syria, Daraa Provincial Council, in cooperation with the Free Lawyers Syndicate, opened four Documentation and Civil Registration



Centers in Nawa, Harak, Tafas and Bosra cities as

*57 - A coordination meeting between the head of Civil Registry Secretariat in Nawa (Draa), the head of Real Estate Directorate and a representative of the Free Syrian Lawyers Syndicate – Source: The Facebook page of Daraa Provincial Council*

substitutes to the regime directorates, in an experiment that aligns with the Civil Registration Efforts that Aleppo Provincial Council was leading in the north as well<sup>172</sup>.

<sup>170</sup> Interview with Micro Syria <https://microsyria.com/2016/12/08/%D8%AE%D9%88%D9%81%D8%A7%D9%8B-%D9%85%D9%86-%D8%B6%D9%8A%D8%A7%D8%B9-%D8%AD%D9%82%D9%88%D9%82-%D8%A7%D9%84%D9%86%D8%A7%D8%B3-%D9%81%D9%8A-%D8%B8%D9%84-%D8%A7%D9%84%D9%82%D8%B5%D9%81-%D8%A7%D9%84%D9%85/>

<sup>171</sup> <http://syrianvoice.org/25-%D8%A3%D9%84%D9%81-%D8%A8%D8%B7%D8%A7%D9%82%D8%A9-%D8%A3%D8%B3%D8%B1%D9%8A%D8%A9-%D9%84%D8%B9%D8%A7%D8%A6%D9%84%D8%A7%D8%AA-%D8%AF%D9%88%D9%85%D8%A7-%D9%88%D8%B6%D9%88%D8%A7%D8%AD%D9%8A%D9%87%D8%A7/>

<sup>172</sup> Daraa’s Opposition open a center for Civil Registration, Al Jazeera Net 2016 <http://www.aljazeera.net/news/reportsandinterviews/2015/10/22/%D9%85%D8%B9%D8%A7%D8%B1%D8%B6%D8%A9-%D8%AF%D8%B1%D8%B9%D8%A7-%D8%AA%D9%81%D8%AA%D8%AA%D8%AD-%D9%85%D8%B1%D9%83%D8%B2%D8%A7-%D9%84%D9%84%D8%A3%D8%AD%D9%88%D8%A7%D9%84-%D8%A7%D9%84%D9%85%D8%AF%D9%86%D9%8A%D8%A9>

The center which was also launched thanks to the efforts of former civil registration employees who were dismissed of their jobs by the regime, included real estate services.

In Aleppo in northern Syria, it was the Legal Office of Free Aleppo Provincial Council and Aleppo's Free Lawyers Syndicate who launched the civil registration directorate initiative which included field visits to all civil registries ran by local councils in the opposition controlled countryside of Aleppo to investigate the fate of civil records in this areas which frequently witness military operations and shelling. This was followed by series of coordination meetings with former employees, legal experts, Sharia courts and local councils. And in February 2015, the Provincial Council announced the opening of the Civil Registry Directorate in the areas controlled by the opposition in Aleppo and its countryside. The Directorate included three secretariats in Tal Refa'at, Darat Izza and Al Atareb. As in other areas, the civil registry system adopted the same system used in regime controlled areas, as to facilitate the audit, revision, comparison and integration of records in the transition period<sup>173</sup>.

Although Aleppo Provincial Council is the supervising authority, local councils are the ones who assume the responsibility of preserving, documenting and issuing citizens' vital documents despite the huge challenges they face including the lack of resources and funds, proper equipment like printers, ink, computers, etc. Many of the employees don't receive regular salaries and are working on voluntary basis which affects the quality of their as they cannot dedicate 100% of their time to work since they have to do other jobs to make a living<sup>174</sup>.

While civil registries' work is homogenous to a certain extent in most of the opposition controlled areas, Idlib and Homs seem to escape from this pattern.

For some reason, the small areas that are under the opposition control in Homs Province are ignored by most if not all the donors and aid programs that support the Syrian opposition, and this had affected the capacity of the local councils of these areas to respond to its people's urgent needs which also include civil registration services. Against all odds, Homs local councils provides basic services through its civil registry offices.

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<sup>173</sup> <https://www.zaitonmag.com/?p=1507>

<sup>174</sup> <https://www.alsouria.net/content/%D8%A7%D9%84%D8%B3%D8%AC%D9%84-%D8%A7%D9%84%D9%85%D8%AF%D9%86%D9%8A-%D9%88%D8%A7%D9%84%D8%B9%D9%82%D8%A7%D8%B1%D9%8A-%D9%81%D9%8A-%D8%A7%D9%84%D8%A3%D8%AA%D8%A7%D8%B1%D8%A8-%D8%AA%D8%AC%D8%B1%D8%A8%D8%A9-%D8%AA%D8%B3%D8%AA%D8%AD%D9%82-%D8%A7%D9%84%D8%AA%D8%B9%D9%85%D9%8A%D9%85>

In an interview with Horyya Net, a local media outlet, Mahmoud Abdel Aziz," one of the founders of the Civil Registry Office in the city of Houla , explained how they established the civil registry office by the end of 2013 in a small room in one of the town's schools. They brought tables and wardrobe and some chairs, stationery and some necessary paper forms and started issuing documentations of deaths, martyrdoms, marriages, births, family books and cases of detention of residents of the area, as well as orphans and widows.

“In light of the circumstances experienced during war, chaos, and displacement, it was necessary to do something that preserves the rights of people from being lost or forgotten” Abdel Aziz said<sup>175</sup>.

In other areas in Homs countryside, Sharia Courts took the charge of civil registration in coordination with local councils. For example, to register a child’s birth, the parents are asked to obtain a birth certificate stamped by the midwife or field hospital that supervised the birth. The certificate is then stamped by local council, and then registered at one of registry offices of this courts, as is the case in Termalla town in Homs northern countryside<sup>176</sup>.

In Idleb, a province that is fragmented into influence zones between Ahrar Al Sham, Jabhat and Nusra and FSA, civil registration is random and is also subject to differences arising between the three parties competing for gaining popular legitimacy: Idlib Provincial Council, Hay’at Idarat Al Khadamat and Al Hay’a Al’am li Idarat Al Khadamat.

In 2015, the Ahrar Al Sham affiliate Hay’at Idarat Al Khadamat established the Civil registration Department and number of offices in some villages and towns in countryside of Idleb. They issued 7000 family books and thousands of life events certificates, in coordination with the local councils who signed coordination memorandums and agreements with them <sup>177</sup>. In Idlib city, the provincial capital, which became under the military control of Jabahat Al Nusra sine its liberation in 2016, civil registration directorate do not recognize or authenticate records issued by local councils who work independently of any armed groups and who are affiliated to the SOC

<sup>175</sup> <http://horrya.net/2016/06/01/%D8%A7%D9%84%D8%A3%D9%88%D8%B1%D8%A7%D9%82-%D8%A7%D9%84%D8%AB%D8%A8%D9%88%D8%AA%D9%8A%D8%A9-%D9%81%D9%8A-%D8%A7%D9%84%D9%85%D9%86%D8%A7%D8%B7%D9%82-%D8%A7%D9%84%D9%85%D8%AD%D8%B1%D8%B1%D8%A9-%D9%85/>

<sup>176</sup> <http://www.refworld.org/docid/57fe3a9ba88.html>

<sup>177</sup> <http://www.umayyapress.com/%D8%A5%D8%AF%D8%A7%D8%B1%D8%A9-%D8%A7%D9%84%D8%B3%D8%AC%D9%84-%D8%A7%D9%84%D9%85%D8%AF%D9%86%D9%8A-%D9%81%D9%8A-%D8%A5%D8%AF%D9%84%D8%A8-%D8%AE%D8%B7%D9%88%D8%A9-%D8%B9%D9%84%D8%A7%D8%AC%D9%8A%D8%A9/>

recognized Provincial Council, like Saraqeb and Marat Annuman local councils who constantly challenge jihadist groups attempts of control.

On the other hand, in areas where local or provincial councils are incapable of launching such services for various reasons including lack of legal experts and human resources, or complications resulting from competition over control and influence, civil society is leading real estate registration efforts.

In November 2013, the Day After organization in cooperation with the Free Syrian Lawyers launched a project to protect documents in several Syrian locations. The aim of the project is to digitalize real property records to protect the legal rights and properties of Syrians from loss or damage, as well as to protect official documents that are subject to tampering or destruction (for example, in Homs or Hama) in order to prevent future disputes during the transition period.

The first phase of the project consisted in the documentation of 100,000 real estate records in 60 areas within the province of Idlib (Harim, Sarmada, Salqeen and other villages). The records were transferred to the Syrian Interim Government and the Local Councils to ensure citizens' access to them when needed<sup>178</sup>. During the second phase of the project which was targeting Aleppo city and countryside, the two organizations were only capable of documenting civil records because the real estate records were located in areas under the regime control. They have also faced several challenges as the biggest part of the files they revised and documented was stored in underground buildings (basements), where they were exposed to damage because of humidity. The third phase of the project is to document 150,000 judicial files which is equivalent to nearly six million digital photographs<sup>179</sup>.

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<sup>178</sup> <http://tda-sy.org/projects/doc.html>

<sup>179</sup> <http://www.umayyapress.com/%D9%85%D8%B4%D8%B1%D9%88%D8%B9-%D8%A7%D9%84%D8%AA%D9%88%D8%AB%D9%8A%D9%82-%D8%A7%D9%84%D9%88%D8%B7%D9%86%D9%8A-%D8%AC%D9%87%D9%88%D8%AF-%D9%84%D8%AD%D9%85%D8%A7%D9%8A%D8%A9-%D8%AD%D9%82%D9%88%D9%82/>

Protecting people's rights to identity and property, also includes the right to dignity, and to this end, many local councils established special office to run funerary services in their



Figure 58- People carry a body to be buried in the multi-layered graveyard of Douma city – Photo by Mohamad Badra for EPA

communities, and to provide dignified burial services to the family of the dead. In Douma, the local council is the only body that supervises the work of the cemetery and the burial, where the cemetery is considered for all

people regardless of their faith, affiliation or background. The dead are photographed, and registered in lists showing the number of the tomb, its location and coordinates in the cemetery so that the people will be able to identify the graves of their relatives. With the heavy aerial bombardment by regime forces since the beginning of the revolution, there were no longer enough places to bury the dead, and that's why the local council of Douma established a new multilayered cemetery far from the fighting front to absorb all the dead, in addition to the "Martyrs' Graveyard".

Besides civil registration and documentation, local councils and civil society organizations also struggle to sensitize citizens on the importance of registering their life events and preserving and maintaining their important documentations.

In Douma for example, the local council produced a short animated video <sup>180</sup> explaining civil registration processes. It also publishes monthly reports on the numbers of processed documentations in both its civil and land titling offices, and distributes posters and flyers in key areas in the city and neighboring town (See appendices).

In Daraa, civil registration offices have Facebook pages where they interact with people and respond to their questions or queries.

And in Aleppo, the Directorate of Civil Affairs in Aleppo and its secretariats launched the "Register" campaign in cooperation with the Free Syrian Lawyers' National Documentation Office, and Aleppo Free Police to encourage civilians to document their

<sup>180</sup> Available here <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=KrhRDHAZlBc>

life events and obtain the required data free of charge within the Directorate of Civil Affairs and its secretariats. The campaign was promoted through visits to schools, maternity hospitals and community development centers, as well as through publishing news of the campaign in audiovisual media and newspapers, and distributing distribution brochures and advertisements across the province.

On the other hand, the Free Syrian Lawyers and the Day After organization are preparing to launch “The property recuperation” project which consists of an electronic platform that any Syrian can access and records the information he/she owns about real estate he/she left in Syria, including any information on who put his hand on his/her property<sup>181</sup>.

### Local initiatives to protect Syria Cultural and Archaeological heritage

The destruction of cultural heritage plays a significant role in modern conflicts, affecting entire societies, as it is linked to the destruction of group identity, and can even prolong violence in the post-conflict period. This is undoubtedly the case in Syria where the unparalleled humanitarian crisis is also accompanied by an equally unprecedented loss of the nation's cultural heritage. From the major smuggling of artefacts and damage occasioned to its historic and archaeological sites, to the industrial-scale looting and deliberate destruction at the hands of IS <sup>182</sup>. The disappearance and destruction of Syrian culture and history may contribute to a sense of alienation and detachment since the impacts of such detachment have already been experienced following other conflicts as in Bosnia and Herzegovina, South Africa and Lebanon<sup>183</sup>.

Saving the remnants of this collective identity and the Syrian heritage is another field where local councils in close coordination and sometimes under the supervision of specialized civil society organizations were heavily involved.

In December 2013, local opposition sources reported the targeting and the looting of the 2,000-year-old Eliyahu Hanabi Synagogue in the Jobar neighbourhood of Damascus by government forces. Mohammad Al Shami, An activist from the neighbourhood which is controlled by opposition since the end of 2012, told Arabian business news <sup>184</sup>that the local council was protecting the synagogue from looting and that it has moved ancient Torah scrolls that had been stored in the synagogue to a safe place. A report by local opposition Orient News aired in June 2013 <sup>185</sup> showed the damages and the partial

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<sup>181</sup> <http://www.eqtsad.net/read/16193>

<sup>182</sup> See Lostal & al, 2016

<sup>183</sup> Ibid

<sup>184</sup> <http://arabic.arabianbusiness.com/politics-economics/2013/apr/2/327699/>

<sup>185</sup> <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=3zbYCZf-bwo&feature=youtu.be>



59 - Picture of the destruction of Eliyahu Hanabi Synagogue in the Jobar neighborhood of Damascus – Source: The Daily Beast

destruction of the synagogue by mortar shells, also featured local activists explaining that the opposition groups are willing to protect the synagogue from looting but not from shelling. Only few months later, regime forces flattened the Synagogue and destroyed thousands of Jewish artifacts contained inside the synagogue, according to the daily beast who obtained exclusive pictures of the destroyed synagogue.<sup>186</sup>

*“When the place was hit for the first time it was a really scary day for the Jewish community and for Jews around the world. It was a day of disaster. But when it was hit the second time, and I saw that the synagogue was destroyed, well this leaves one feeling great grief. It's like your world is on top of you.”* Said Rabbi Abraham Hamra, chief Rabbi of Syrian Jews in Israel in an interview with the Wall Street Journal<sup>187</sup>.

The Aleppo Grand Mosque or the Umayyad Mosque in Aleppo is the largest and oldest mosque in the city of Aleppo. It is located in the neighborhood of Jalum near the Medina Market in the Old City of Aleppo, which was listed on UNESCO World Heritage Site in 1986. The mosque the tomb of the Prophet Zakaria (the father of John the Baptist). The construction of the mosque began in the reign of the Umayyad Caliph al-Walid bin Abdul-Malik in 715 AD and was completed in 717 AD under the reign of the Caliph Sulayman ibn Abd al-Malik. Hellenistic period, the site of the Great Mosque was an Agora, and during the Roman era, it became a garden of the St. Helena Cathedral during the Christian era of Roman rule in Syria.

Opposition armed groups controlled the mosque for the first time on October 10<sup>th</sup> 2012 after clashes with regime forces that caused severe damage to prayer place and the

<sup>186</sup> <http://www.thedailybeast.com/exclusive-pictures-syrias-oldest-synagogue-destroyed-by-assad>

<sup>187</sup> <http://www.wsj.com/video/the-destruction-of-syrias-oldest-synagogue/B559F37C-B0E3-4106-93DB-FA6BC9487849.html>

northern and southern galleries, and a fire that came on the Waqf <sup>188</sup>library in the mosque which contained hundreds of manuscripts and rare archaeological books. The regime forces were later able to regain control of the Umayyad Mosque, but the opposition forces retook control over it in on 26 February 2013 until rebels evacuated Aleppo after a surrendering deal in December 2016.

On April 24, 2013, the minaret of the Great Mosque collapsed completely after months of clashes in its vicinity. As clashes continued in proximity of the mosque, the Archeology Department at Aleppo Provincial Council with the assistance of fighters of FSA decided to transfer the remaining Waqf manuscripts together with the historic Manbar<sup>189</sup> of the mosque to safety. The Manbar was covered with sponge boards before it was moved along with the manuscripts and the remaining books from the Shaabaniya school in the Farafra neighborhood to the warehouses of the council, and it was said that they were transferred to Turkey for fear of air strikes.



60- The transfer of valuable archeologist artifacts to safety by the Archeology Department of Aleppo Provincial Council – Source the Provincial Council Facebook Page.

Aleppo Provincial Council's Archology Department also documented damages caused by the systematic bombing by the Assad forces on archaeological sites in Aleppo, and

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<sup>188</sup> A waqf also known as habous or mortmain property, is an inalienable charitable endowment under Islamic law, which typically involves donating a building, plot of land or other assets for Muslim religious or charitable purposes with no intention of reclaiming the assets.

<sup>189</sup> is a pulpit in the mosque where the imam (prayer leader) stands to deliver sermons

implemented two other projects including the protection of the Meqam (mausoleum) of Zekerya, Meqam Bab al-Wali and the Sundial of the Great Umayyad Mosque by constructing in front of each Meqam a 40 cm thick wall to protect them of from bullets and bomb fragments.



61 – Works of protection of Meqams at the Great Umayyad mosque by Aleppo Provincial Council - Source: the Council's Facebook page

“They say that people make their cities. But if you are from Aleppo, one of the oldest cities in the world, the city has made you much more than you have made it. So when pieces of our history are destroyed one by one, pieces of us are lost, fragment by fragment.” Amal Hanano, Syrian blogger originated from Aleppo.

Following the liberation of Bosra City in Daraa province, south of Syria, in March 2015 armed opposition factions and civil activists and entities formed the Bosra Al Sham city council and number of local committees to oversee all the city’s civil institutions and to protect them from any threat, especially its archeological sites dating back to Roman, Byzantine, and Muslim times. The city council formed a committee for the protection of archeological sites which include the second century Roman Theatre, constructed probably under Trajan, Al-Omari Mosque , one of the oldest surviving mosques in Islamic history, and the Madrasah Mabrak al-Naqua which is one of the oldest and most celebrated of Islam, as well as the Cathedral of Bosra which a building of considerable importance in the annals of early Christian architecture. The committee which is very good example on the successful collaboration between civilians and revolutionary factions for the protection of local cultural and archeological heritage has

a Facebook page<sup>190</sup> where it posts regular reports on its work which includes photo documentation of the city's museum artifacts, documentation of damages of archeological sites by regime or Russian air strikes, as well as the regular maintenance of archeological sites.

Perhaps one of the most important activities that the committee has done so far, is reinforcing popular involvement in the protection and the preservation of its collective historical and cultural identity. In April 2015, the committee and the city council launched a volunteering campaign for the cleaning and restoration of the monuments in the city, in which activists, citizens and fighters from FSA participated<sup>191</sup>. It was then followed by another campaign<sup>192</sup> entitled "United with our heritage" aiming at introducing all the components of the local community to the importance of the monuments and their preservation. The campaign included many activities such as touristic tours for school students and employees of service organizations, awareness meetings with the city's residents, both young and elderly, in addition to publishing pictures and slogans showing the importance of preserving the monuments and ways of doing so.



62- "United with our heritage" an awareness campaign by Bosra Al Sham council and the Archeological Committee – Source Smart News Agency.

On the signs that the children raise we can read: Our heritage is our Responsibility; I live with my heritage and I build new one; our civilization is our history; There is no difference between our blood and our heritage.

<sup>190</sup> <https://www.facebook.com/%D8%AF%D8%A7%D8%A6%D8%B1%D8%A9-%D8%A2%D8%AB%D8%A7%D8%B1-%D9%85%D8%AF%D9%8A%D9%86%D8%A9-%D8%A8%D8%B5%D8%B1%D9%89-%D8%A7%D9%84%D8%B4%D8%A7%D9%85-1642112122698614/>

<sup>191</sup> <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=OSH7gVIX2o>

<sup>192</sup> <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=fWEia-FAMMM>



63- Closing Ceremony of Syria Mobile Film Festival at Bosra amphitheater

Bosra's experience is not limited to the preservation of the collective memory of the people, but it asserts their ownership of their public sphere. In April 2016, Bosra amphitheater hosted the closing ceremony of Syria Mobile Film Festival<sup>193</sup>. A red carpet was placed and was dedicated to

the audience, the people, the children and women of the city.

The festival was simultaneously organized in other places in opposition controlled areas, including Misraba in besieged Eastern Ghouta and Maarata Annuman in Idlib Province.



64 - Public attending Syria Mobile Film Festival in Ma'arat al-Nu'man in Idlib Province

<sup>193</sup> Syria Mobile Film Festival is a cinematic festival that has appeared in 2014 for the first time; despite the hard security conditions it displayed its films in Syrian, Turkish and Lebanese cities. It carried what the Syrian directors have seen through their cameras into more than thirty cities around the world. The festival tries to train and support filmmakers in the Middle East, as to encourage professional and amateur directors in making creative films via mobile camera with low budget and available technology tools. The revolutionary developing of the role of videos via mobile camera in the Arab world protest movements led to create the idea of the festival. Thousands of activists and journalists have filmed exceptional video clips that bravely spread outside the country and challenged dictatorships, so the mobile camera has become a main tool in peaceful struggle and free expressing. Syria mobile film festival aspires to be a part of global cinema scene, through cooperation with international and Arab festivals and with institutions that concerned in cinema arts. Moreover, it seeks to present free and different cinematic vision, which believes that the higher accuracy image is not necessarily the most clearness one.

This brings us to Idlib province which is home to 760 archaeological sites. These sites are subject to considerable risks and damage due to the heavy and continuous shelling by the Syrian regime and its allies, in addition to an increasing excavations and lootings because of the security and military chaos dominating the province. Archeological sites are also subject to sabotage by the local displaced communities in some areas who break down archaeological stones to use them in shelters construction, not to mention the transformation of archaeological areas into battlegrounds of frequent battles and clashes, or as training camps and quarters by some armed groups, like Al Nusra Front.



*65- Several truckloads of sand bags were delivered 2014-15 to protect the Ma'arra Museum mosaics from damage caused by further attacks – Source: the Penn Cultural Heritage Center*

The role of Idlib Local Councils in the protection of these sites is minor as they are overwhelmed by the response to people's basic needs. They do, however support the work of civil society organizations and initiatives, and local efforts to preserve their heritage. One of the most active organizations is the Idlib Antiquities Center which was established by local activists, academics, archeologists, engineers and jurists from different areas in Idlib. The Center aims to protect all cultural and civilizational heritage, disseminate cultural awareness, scientifically document monuments, document the damage of archaeological sites and historic buildings, prepare protection and restoration projects and implement them. It operates works in all liberated areas of

Idlib, parts of the northern Hama countryside and the northern and western Aleppo countryside.

So far, the Center's members documented and preserved 1,700 artefacts. They've also given particular importance to the archaeological museum of Maarrat Annuman, known as Khan Murad Pasha, which is viewed as one of the most important museums in the Middle East due to its extensive large-scale Roman and Byzantine mosaics—including an extraordinary series depicting the life of Hercules. They restore walls partially demolished by shelling and they preserve mosaics by painting them with glue, covering them with a cloth and placing sandbags over them to protect them from shrapnel. As for pieces of pottery, they wrap them with bubble wrap.



66- The Idlib Antiquities Center wrap pottery artefacts with bubble wrap to protect them of shrapnel - Source: The Center's Facebook page

The centre is also working to oversee the Apamea archaeological museum, located in Qalaat al-Madiq in the north-west Hama countryside, which contains Greek and Roman paintings and Islamic and Byzantine ceramics. The center was also capable of documenting more than 11 attacks by Russian aircraft on the Ebla archaeological site and Tel Mardikh, in addition to Maarrat al-Nu'man museum and Chanchrah village – classified by UNESCO as one of five Syrian World Heritage sites.

Most of the areas of archaeological interest are in the western countryside of Aleppo and north Hama, and the centre has managed to survey sites including ancient mosques and historical buildings in Jisr al-Shughur, Saraqib, Najiye, Turkmen and Ebla as well as the monuments of Mount Zawiya. It has also documented destruction at more than 140 out of the 470 archaeological sites in Idlib and its countryside.



67- The "Story" Project of Idlib Antiquities Center being implemented in schools in Idlib province - Source: The center's Facebookpage

As in Daraa, the Antiquities Center organizes several awareness campaigns targeting local communities, especially youth and children. In March 2017 for example, the center organized a Q&A competition targeting students of the Pedagogical Faculty in Marat Annuman. In 2016, the center started a "Story" Project which teaches school children the history of and the stories of their local communities. The center has also been working on establishing a Syndicate for Archeologists in Idlib Province.

The Center has also been talking to local councils and Sharia courts in liberated areas to develop a law that would criminalise looting or vandalising archaeological sites, especially after noticing number of violations at archaeological sites consisting of antiques dealers digging through these locations to find artefacts and smuggle them into Turkey, then sell them to international dealers. Besides this, the Centre signed an agreement with Lawyers for Justice <sup>194</sup>as to help elaborating a set of laws to protect Syria's cultural and archeological heritage.

<sup>194</sup> A civil society organization working to promote legal awareness among members of society, bodies and institutions, and document violations.

Besides the huge efforts that Idlib Antiquities Center is deploying, local efforts are crucial in protecting historical sites. In the village of Farkia, in Jabal El-Zawia, in Idlib Province which contains hundreds of archaeological sites from palaces, tombs and statues carved on walls with names,



68- Mohamad Al Omar, a local from Farkia village set up a committee to protect his village's archeological sites - Source: Moubader.com

all dating back to 510 AD, 40 years old local engineer Mohamad Al Omar set up a voluntary committee that includes some of the village intellectuals, engineers, teachers, university students, local council members and guards to protect their village's archeological sites from vandalism and looting.

### Local councils and the challenge of security

Civilians in areas under the control of the opposition not only deal with the violence of the regime and its allies, but also confront many foreign and regional agendas. Perhaps the most serious of these are those that are being imposed by jihadist and takfiri groups, exploiting the security and military chaos.

These projects are not limited to military presence, but extend to the imposition and the dissemination of the takfiri and jihsadist ideology among local communities through Da'wa (proselytization) offices or the appointment of imams of mosques loyal to them or, most importantly, the establishment service provision entities through which they try to build their legitimacy taking advantage of the deteriorating humanitarian situation and vulnerability of these communities. They also, pay special attention to youth and children as they try to impose Extremist Islamic curriculum in schools and institutes.

At the same time, the fragmentation of the national opposition and the absence of a unified military and civilian body to manage the opposition controlled area contributed significantly to persistence of security chaos, which other additional factors exacerbated it. As for example, the abundance and the diversity of opposition and national resistance groups and factions, and the absence of military and security coordination among them except in few cases, as well as and the tendency of some towards Islamic ideology that does not necessarily correspond to all the components of the Syrian society; the inter-factional fighting due to struggle over influence and



The Free Police in Aleppo was formed in October 2012 and consists of 60 police stations and about 1,700 members, as well as officers who defected from the government police and security forces, from lieutenant to brigadier. Their services vary between maintaining security and assisting the local councils in providing services; traffic patrols within cities and towns and on public roads; intervening in the event of any traffic accident on public roads and in cooperation with the Civil Defense and medical bodies to evacuate the injured and lead legal investigations, as well as referring offenders to local courts. It also intervenes in resolving disputes among citizens by solving problems by mutual consent if possible, and in case they aren't able to resolve these disputed resort to local courts.

*70- The police station in the town of Hazanu in Idlib countryside diverts the traffic. so that the town's local council can repair the highway following an air strike – Source: Idlib Free Police Facebook page*



In the province of Idlib, some officers and police members who defected from the regime in mid-2012 formed revolutionary policing centers, and provided their service for almost two years on as volunteers. However, these stations were organized in mid-September 2014 within the Idlib Free Police Commandment which is now comprised of 36 police stations

divided into two sectors: 18 North and 18 South of Idlib, five Traffic Centers, a Criminal Investigation Office and a Police Training and Development Center. Idlib Free Police is now composed of almost 1,200 officers, police members and a groups of civilians who were trained as police agents. They cooperate to a large extent with local councils in many service and security affairs.

It is also worth mentioning that the Aleppo and Idlib police Police Commandments have been supported since 2014 by the Security and Social Justice Program, a program funded by the United States, the UK, the Netherlands, and Denmark, and seeking to establish Syrian institutions capable of establishing and maintaining security and justice in areas controlled by the moderate opposition, through social integration projects, in order to change the negative stereotype of the police, which the Syrians see as a tool of repression. In Daraa, a few police stations were supported by the program, while other independent policing centers were supported either by local efforts or with support from military factions.

## 2) Islamic Police (Hisba)

A unified security institution established by the Fatah Army<sup>195</sup> to control the security and protection of civilians in the city of Idlib and some of its surrounding areas. The declared task of the Islamic police in Idlib is to resolve disputes between civilians and protect their properties. It also has female police agents. The Local community however doesn't abide this police rules or orders. In fact the people of Idlib have been protesting against the Islamic Police and the Fatah army since the liberation if Idlib city.



71 - Islamic Police Petrol in Idlib City - Source: Soutiatna

On February 2017, a Hisba patrol entered a girls' school in this of Idlib and they started reading off the names of some of the girls who would be kicked out. They said this was because these girls were not wearing Sharia-appropriate cloths. One of the girls objected to this decision, and she was arrested. Her father then came to see what was going on, and he was then arrested too. The rest of the schoolgirls, however, kept shouting and protesting until the father and the girl were finally let go<sup>196</sup>.

## 3) Turkish-backed Free Police:



72- Free Police backed by Turkey in Azaz City in Aleppo

Since January 2017, a new Syrian police force has begun to operate in the towns of Al Bab, Jarabuls and Azaz in the countryside of Aleppo after the expulsion of IS by armed opposition groups backed by Turkey. These police wear a distinctive uniform from the Aleppo command police, and they consist of regular police and Special Forces composed of Syrians who

<sup>195</sup> The Army of Conquest or Jaish al-Fatah was a joint command center of Sunni Islamist rebel factions .The alliance was formed in March 2015 under the supervision and coordination of Saudi cleric Abdullah al-Muhaysini. It consists of Islamist rebel factions mainly active in the Idlib Province, with some factions active in the Hama and Latakia Provinces. [2] In the course of the following months, it seized most of Idlib Governorate. It is actively supported by the government of Saudi Arabia.

<sup>196</sup> When Islamic police raid a school for girls to examine their clothing, an impromptu protest forces them to release the arrested – Syria direct <http://syriadirect.org/news/when-islamic-police-raid-a-school-for-girls-to-examine-their-clothing-an-impromptu-protest-forces-them-to-release-the-arrested/>

have received extensive training in Turkey. The Turkish authorities plan to train five thousand Syrian policemen to take over the protection of areas that have been liberated from IS in the framework of the "Euphrates Shield"<sup>197</sup>.

#### 4) The Police Command in Eastern Ghouta:



73 - Ghouta's Police facilitating the access of a Humanitarian convoy to Ghouta

Formed after the merging of the police of Eastern Ghouta - the southern and middle sectors and part of the sector of the Marj, with the Police Directorate in Douma and its surroundings in 2014, following the formation of the Unified Military Command of Eastern Ghouta, an operations room of Syrian rebel

factions that operates in Eastern Ghouta. The number of the Police Command members is 3700. It has four directorates in Douma, in the middle sector, in Arbin and in Al Marj districts, as well as the Jopar Center and the Southern Center. It has several offices for Criminal Security; Prisons and Penitentiary facilities, Protection of public facilities, government buildings and civil and service institutions; Training and administrative Affairs, Public Relations in order to maintain coordination between the police and other institutions operating in al-Ghouta, and to receive complaints from citizens in case of abuses by police officers and agents. The police also have two traffic offices and an office for the control of rationing and monopolies, whose task is to prosecute monopolists and hold them accountable.

<sup>197</sup> On March 2017 Turkey ended the "Euphrates Shield" military operation it launched in Syria to support Free Syrian Army (FSA) rebels, push ISIL fighters away from its border and stop the advance of Kurdish militia fighters. Turkey sent troops, tanks and warplanes, and it was able to take the border towns of Jarablus on the Euphrates river, Azaz and Al Bab.

## 5) Police Command of Qalamoun and Badia:



74 - The Police Command of Qalamoun and Badia - Source: The command's Facebook page

Under the name of battalion 582, the first form of policing in Qalamoun area in Western Rural Damsacus Countryside, was composed of volunteers from most of the revolutionary factions in order to deal with the internal security problems so that the rebels could devote themselves to external battles and not be preoccupied with what was going

on inside the cities. It was then developed to become the Police Command of Qalamoun and Badia, which consists mainly of civilian and defected police officers. It has also played a role in facing the expansion of IS near Damascus.

## 6) The internal security forces in Rastan:

The revolutionary police in Rastan in the northern Homs countryside was formed on 24-3-2012 by approximate 30 police officers and agents who defected from the regime.

As for the **judiciary**<sup>198</sup>, the most prominent judicial bodies located in opposition controlled areas are:

- 1) The Supreme Judicial Council in Aleppo: The Council was established on 30-7-2015 with the unification of seven courts in Aleppo and its villages
- 2) Courts of the Islamic Organization for the Administration of liberated areas: with an estimated number of 11 courts spread in the province of Idlib and part of the countryside Hama.
- 3) The Judicial Council of the Eastern Ghouta: It was established on 24-6-2014 with the mandate of most of the factions operating in the eastern Ghouta, which at that time were estimated to be "17"
- 4) The Court of Justice in Houran: formed in November 2014. Its authority includes areas under the control of the opposition in the provinces of Daraa and Quneitra
- 5) The Supreme Court of Northern Homs: formed on 1-10-2014 and includes courts: Rastan, Talbessa, Zafarana and Hula

<sup>198</sup> <https://www.enabbaladi.net/archives/56725>

## 6) Courts of the Front Nasra (Islamic Courts)



75 - A joint project by Free Police and Aleppo City Council to protect citizens from snipers – Source: Enab Baladi Newspaper

Local councils cooperate with police and judicial authorities. This cooperation often lead to the implementation of joint projects that are closely related to the security and safety of people, such as repairing and paving roads to reduce or prevent traffic accidents, building shelters and equipping

underground room to protect the population from shelling. In Aleppo, for example, the Free Police and the Aleppo City Council cooperated to put large cloth covers on a street to prevent the snipers of government forces from targeting civilians.

Local councils also cooperate with the courts and police in the field of market, pharmaceutical and industrial control, as well as in enforcing administrative or organizational orders issued by the councils, or judicial decisions related to abuse of public properties, etc.

The cooperation between local security forces (the free police and local FSA groups) also contribute significantly in solidifying people's resistance to extremist ideologies that some groups are attempting to impose on local communities either by coercion or through competing with local councils over services.

Local councils are also working to erase the symbols imposed by extremist groups, and to employ the local culture and the collective identity of their communities in confronting extremist ideology.

Apart from the non-essential ideological differences, groups like IS and Al Nusra Front often try to impose their visual identity on the societies that they attempt to subjugate or gain their support. For example, they paint the walls of public places in black and fill public places with their flags and symbols. They also hold pro-democracy rallies, in which the participants chant anti-democratic slogans and diabolize those who do not share with them the same ideology. These groups also provide basic services and relief to neglected and vulnerable communities in an attempt to attract them to their ranks.

Through these services, they try to promote their extremist ideology, such as separating females from males in schools established by these groups, forcing males and females to commit to the “Islamic attire”. Forbidding certain practices like smoking for example, forcing shop owners to close during prayer times, etc. But these practices are often challenges by the local community.

*“Protests erupted in the Salqeen and Kafr Sajna areas as locals objected to the Nusra Front’s confiscation of private property and harassment at the hands of the Hisba committee, the religious police. The Hisba harass women who don’t dress in accordance with the Nusra Front’s interpretation of Islamic law and attack shopkeepers who don’t close their stores during prayer time”<sup>199</sup>*

In Salqeen, a city in the northern countryside of Idlib, the local community still struggle against Al Nusra who imposes itself in the city and refuses to hand over the city’s civil administration to a Civilian body that doesn’t abide by its rules. Early 2017, civil groups drafted a list of recommended names to potentially help establish a local council in the city. They proposed the list to the AL Nusra Front affiliate Shura council but the latter refused their proposition. Despite this, 20 activists including Ahmad Bakrou, one of the most eminent revolutionary figures in the city, formed a council of 20 people.



76- Protesters calling Al Nusra Front to release an activist following the formation of the Local Council of Salqeen - Source: LC's Facebook page

One day later Al Nusra abducted Bakrou for supporting the new council, but it had to release him five days later following the demands of the local community during a protest in February 2017.

Meanwhile, the newly formed council demanded of Al Al Nusra to evacuate the public building it occupies in the city.

The demand was in a form of hand – written letter politely asking the Katibat Abu Talha (The Abu Talha Brigade) to evacuate the former building of the Women’s Union as the council needs a physical place to start operating (See Appendices).

They arrested Mr. Hussein Taleb, head of the legal office in the local council, and raided the house of Ahmad al-Halabiya, a member of the relief office in the Council and Mr.

<sup>199</sup> Ahmad Salamah, a 29 year old aid worker from Idlib province in an interview with Syria Deeply <https://www.newsdeeply.com/syria/articles/2015/07/16/idlib-protests-demand-end-to-rebels-military-rule>

Ahmed Istanbuli head of the financial office, without being able to arrest them as they managed to escape.

However, this contributed in the emergence of solidarity movements with the local council in a number of cities and towns in the countryside of Idlib, especially in Ma'arat al-Nu'man, which is a symbol of anti-al-Qaeda in Syria.



77- Residents of Maarat al-Numan in Idlib province protest the rule of Jabhat Al Nusra – Source: Tahrir Sourì

During the “The Revolution Continues” protests in February 2016 in Maarat Annuman, the Executive Force of the Fatah Army attacked demonstrators, burned the flags of the Syrian revolution and arrested a number of activists. When the Syrian revolution began, the three-star independence flag was a symbol used by that protesters calling for freedom and dignity against the regime two stars which referred to the monopolization of the country. The independence flag provokes both the regime, and extremist groups who see it as symbol of the supporters of "democracy" and the infidels who reject Islamist and extremist ideologies.

Few days following the crackdown on the protesters, Al Nusra Front imposed a ban on revolution flags and any other flags besides al-Nusra’s black flag in the city. On the same day, Al Nusra Front forces attacked a major demonstration organized by members of the 13th Division of the FSA, a rebel group based in Maarat al-Numan and supported by the SOC. The group has publicly rejected the ideologies of both ISIS and al-Qaida along with their presence in Syria. Al Nusra also arrested 50 protesters that day.

The arrests sparked outrage among local residents, who then transformed their demonstrations against the government into a campaign against extremist factions, particularly Jabhat al-Nusra, titled: "Enough is Enough" and began as a set of popular demonstrations has turned into daily acts of civil resistance in Maarat al-Numan.

In 2014, in less than two weeks after the Nusra Front took control of the towns of Harem, Darkush, Azmarin and Salqeen near the borders with Turkey in Idlib province, the Front began abusing the revolutionary civil bodies that operated these areas which led to the closure and resolution of these bodies and the control of the Front over its headquarters. Armed groups affiliated to Al Nusra Front took over the building of the Civil Court in the city of Harem, removed its sign and raised the banner of the Front. In the beginning, a religious judge appointed by Al Nusra began interfering with how the court operates and criticizing the work of civil judge, then the Front decided to close the court because its judges did not comply with their demands to apply Islamic law instead of civil law And the Syrian Civil Code. At the same time, there were considerable disputes between the civil police of the Civil Court in Harem and the religious figures appointed by Al Nusra Front to oversee the work of the Court. Civil police officers refused to execute orders from the Front who responded by resolving the civil police body of the town by force. Simultaneously, the Front had confiscated the local council's warehouses which led the council members to present a collective resignation and resolve the local council.



*78- The Al Atareb Local Council ran bakery which the extremist Group AL Nusra Front attempted to control - Source: The LC's Facebook page*

In February 2017, the Nusra Front stormed the main bakery of the city of Atareb (Aleppo Province) which is ran by the city's Local Council, and attempted to control it, but the residents of the city gathered in forced the Front's members out. The residents gathered after the local council held an emergency meeting calling out citizens to protect the bakery which serves more than 25 towns

and villages surrounding the city, as well as the city' residents through daily production of 6 tons of bread <sup>200</sup>.

Back to the three-stars flag - or the green flag as some Syrians call it - and its function as shared value among those who believe in the Syrian revolution, local councils adopted this flag as part of their own visual identity and focused on increasing its visibility. In Eastern Ghouta for example, the Provincial Council designed a new logo including the green flag and disseminated it through stamps and thousands copies of paper-forms that local councils use in their daily administrative work. This encouraged local councils to adopt, in their turn, the new logo and to unify their administrative procedures and processes. In this figure, 26 out of 27 councils signed and approved the statement using the unified logo.

In Al Atareb in Aleppo Province, the local council painted the flag of the revolution on the walls of its offices and the walls of police stations, civil defense and schools in response to the burning of the flag of the revolution unknown "masked" men in September 2016.

79- Statement by Rural Damascus Provincial Council rejecting the demographic changes that are taking place in Syria - Source: The council's Facebook page



### بيان

إن المجلس المحلي في القوطة الشرقية تؤكد عيسى تمسك أهل القوطة الشرقية بثوابت ثورة الحرية وإصرارهم عيسى المعنى فيها حتى تحقّق أهدافها عيسى أرض القوطة المباركة معقل الأحرار ومبني الأبطال، كما يؤكدون عيسى تشبّهم وتمسكهم بأرضهم ورفضهم الخروج منها أو مغادرتها وأنهم يلقون فيها مدافعهم عنها وعن وجودهم في ديرهم والذي يضمه الشّتون الدولي.

إن أهل القوطة الشرقية يضحون كل ساعات النظام الطائفي المجرم وحلفائه عن فتح معابر لتسهيل السكان والتي يروج لها أتباعه لرفع مستويات مرزّقتة وما تبقى من فوائده المنهارة ويؤكدون أنه لم يغادر القوطة أي شخص أو حتى يفكر في مغادرتها بمن فيهم أهالي البلدات والمناطق الذين هدمت منازلهم وسويت بالأرض و تم تهجيرهم منها و التروا البقاء في بلدات القوطة المحررة يتكاسمون الألم وعناء المشقة والصبر مع أهلها و إن أهل القوطة الشرقية لم ولن يرضوا أن يعودوا للعيش تحت نير الظلم والاستبداد بعد أن ذاقوا حلاوة العيش بحرية وكرامة.

إن المجلس المحلي ترفض سياسة التهجير القسري التي تهدف للسي تغيير البنية الديمغرافية قسري سوريا وتطالب المجتمع الدولي بالوقوف أمام مسؤولياته واتخاذ كل التدابير والإجراءات التي من شأنها منع النظام المجرم من الاستمرار باقتلاع السكان من مناطقهم الأمر الذي يتعارض مع كافة قواعد الشرعية الدولية ومبادئ حقوق الإنسان وبعد جريمة حرب وجريمة ضد الإنسانية.

إننا نشاهد أصدقاء الشعب السوري والمؤسسات الدولية المحة بالوقوف مع القوطة الشرقية وتعزيز صعود أهلها من خلال زيادة دعمها للمجالس المحلية والمؤسسات الإنسانية والذي من شأنه أن يوفر لأهل القوطة الشرقية الحد الأدنى من أسباب الحياة قسري ظروف زيادة وطأة الحصار الذي يفرضه النظام الطائفي على القوطة وأهلها.

الرحمة لأرواح الشهداء ونعاهم أننا ماضون بثورتنا حتى تتحقّق أهدافها في كل بقاع وطننا الحبيب سوريا.

حرر بتاريخ ٢٠١٧/٢/٢٠

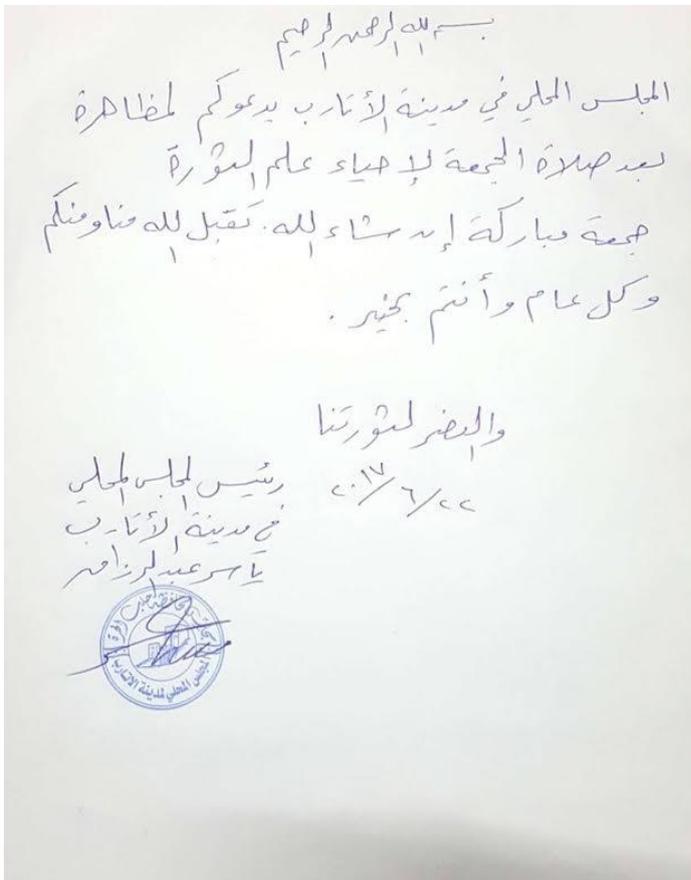


<sup>200</sup> <http://aleppo24.com/?p=5911>



80- Al Atareb Local Council paint the revolution flag on public building -  
Source : Qasioun Net

Several months later, Al Atareb local council invited the people to



81- Al Atareb Local Council call people to a protest following Friday prayers to "revive" the revolution flag -  
Source: The LC's Facebook page

demonstrate in support of the revolution flag and revival.

On the other, Aleppo Provincial Council, with support from different international donors, Stabilization Committee in the areas where IS was pushed out by the FSA, within the objective of recuperating the services that local communities were deprived of under IS rule, especially schools, as well as of restoring public facilities that were destroyed or damaged during combats such as water stations, sewage networks and public bakeries, and most

importantly to erase IS slogans from public places.

82- A stabilization Committee's promotional video reflecting its efforts in erasing IS slogans and traces from the areas it used to occupy – Source: The Committee Facebook page



## Conclusion

Every time I am invited to a lecture or seminar to talk about my research or about the civil resistance and the steadfastness of the people in the areas under the control of the opposition in Syria, the distressed and destroyed areas that are overwhelmed with all sorts of tragedies, I ask the audience to tell me the first word that jumps to their minds when they hear the word Syria. The answers often come as follows: civil war, destruction, refugees, pain, and Daesh or IS. So I say : Ladies & gentlemen I will tell you a story about hope and resilience, because this the story that I was and I am still witnessing.

When I started my research, I was afraid that I would fall into the trap of non-objectivity, after all, I am a Syrian citizen, I support the revolution of my people - Yes, I still call it a revolution – and I am in exile waiting for the nightmare to end.

I was afraid that my work and my close contact with local council members and activists over the last few years would make me delusional or would affect my judgement regarding the experiences of local governance in opposition areas.

But to my surprise, what happened was the contrary!

At first, I was affected by news in the international Media, the hustle and bustle of the international diplomacy, the consecutive press conferences after each peace talk, and by the does and don'ts that we Syrians were hearing. At some point, all I wanted to do, was to research local councils using an empirical quantitative methodology to prove that local councils are joy of popular legitimacy and are the ultimate alternative to the Syrian regime. I was obsessed with need to make surveys that I would design myself to gauge people's opinions regarding their local councils, but this wasn't a realistic plan as I had faced few risks entering the opposition controlled areas. So how can prove that local councils are key elements of any peace process? Where would I get trustworthy and objective statistics? How am I going to do this research? I kept asking myself, until one day I realized that I should rethink my methodology but I had no idea what tools would use, so I decided to immerse myself in world of local council, and I took a job with a program supporting these entities.

It was then when I started observing local council's behaviors, their relations with the communities they serve, and the way they form their revolutionary personality, and I found out that the social capital that these councils accumulate and the factors that play into the accumulation of this capital, are valuable resources for building sustainable peace during the transition period.

The process of accumulation of social capital contributed significantly to social reconfigurations that Syria truly need to stop the violence and explore peaceful and political solutions to their tragedy.

During the last few years, several think tanks and research entities elaborated research papers and conducted field surveys to identify local councils' needs, evaluate their performance or know people's perception of their local councils. Only rare papers, though, focused on the contributions of local councils in the collective behavioral and social transformations that are currently taking place in Syria.

After four decades of dictatorship and the rule of military, the Syrian society became fragile, corrupt, ignorant, and incapacitated. These years had stolen the will of the society. That's why when the revolution started, Syrians, found themselves in front of huge and multiple challenges that they 21<sup>st</sup> century impose. Yes, they found themselves in the century of democracies, modern states, technological revolution, and globalization; concepts that they are familiar with.

What further complicated things for Syrians, is that regional and international parties, friends and enemies, begun to import to Syrians their own visions and experiences in building modern states or re-stabilizing states ravaged by war, without taking into account two things: The first, is that the Syrian people is exposed to unprecedented level of violence, which has caused great shock and depleted its resources. The second, is that a people deprived of political, economic and social participation for over four decades cannot make democracy happen between night and day. It needs time, peacefulness and resources to be able to build accountable, transparent, and yes, democratic institutions. This people need to re-discover its national identity and to establish a social contract agreed upon by all components present on Syrian territory. It also needs sovereignty and the halt of external interventions that have only further complicated the situation on the ground.

Regardless of the foibles of the proceedings and mechanisms of electoral processes of local councils, or the impact of political or partisan interests or foreign agendas on them, these councils established the concept of election and democracy among citizens who realized that they have the right to choose their representatives, and contributed to the dissemination of a culture of accountability and transparency among people, especially in areas that had previously been marginalized. People have become aware of their right to hold accountable those responsible of running their public affairs.

Through their engagement and interaction with their communities, and thanks to their efforts in including people in the decision making, they've encouraged citizens to share their concerns and be involved in finding solutions to public problems, like what

happened for example in Saraqeb, when the "Saraqeb Youth Group", a local theater group, gave the revenues of one of its plays to the water unit of the local council of the city, which was suffering from people's abstention from paying the water taxes it has imposed on them to be able to continue pumping water into the city's main water network <sup>201</sup>.

*"We just want to point out that the proceeds of this play will go to the Water Unit. you can pay five liras or a thousand lira, at the end of the play there will be a box next to the door and you have the option of leaving the amount you want. The largest country in the world is based on the tax system ... We have to do this. The tax system is the best solution (...) Anyone can head the local council and manage it very well if the council has resources, but if we put the best person in a local council with no resources , then this would be really impossible "* <sup>202</sup>

In Douma, the head of the water unit at the local council, who is also a member of the Free Engineers Syndicate in Eastern Ghouta, designed a moveable solar-powered pump to provide clean water to civilians who can no longer afford, or to schools of the city which has been under siege for over four years.



The will to support their local councils in any possible way, means that these people trust in their council, and believe in it.

<sup>201</sup> <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=FrYBL6tKFUA>

<sup>202</sup> Ahmad Khattab, director of the play, addressing the audience before starting the play.

Through some of their projects and services, local councils ensured relative safety for their communities which encouraged them to restore some of their normal pre-war activities. Life continues after all!

In Douma, for instance, the local council supported a local charity organization in setting up a children's playroom in one of the city's basements for fear of bombing.

"Mom brought him here with my brothers, I am very happy with the games and we are not scared of the aircraft" <sup>203</sup>

Furthermore, by networking with civil society organizations, whether through joint projects, coordination, or even moral support, local councils have become an important reference even for international organizations. For example, international humanitarian organizations, including United Nations bodies, rely on statistics from local councils in their response to the humanitarian crisis in Syria. In 2013, when polio broke in Syria, local councils supported the SOC affiliated Assistance Coordination Unit in mobilizing local communities, and recruiting 7500 volunteers to conduct a nation-wide vaccination campaign that lasted six months.

*"In cities and rural areas, local councils of opposition leaders chose their own volunteer vaccinators, which enabled the task force to set up trusted distribution networks". A cold chain was set up to transport the vaccines from Turkey to a distribution hub inside the Syrian border. From there, they would be transferred to district centres across seven northern and eastern provinces."*<sup>204</sup>

On the other hand, the civil and real estate registry projects carried out by the local councils will have a valuable role in achieving transitional justice. These records are especially important in regard to the documentation of the martyrs and the circumstances that led to their death and the parties who caused their death. When the time comes, this information will enable those entrusted with the establishment of truth courts and national conciliations to identify war criminals and to bring them to justice.

The importance of local councils also relies in their role in resisting demographic changes and confronting extremists who attempt to destroy the Syrian social fabric.

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<sup>203</sup> Rahaf Issa a little girl interview by Enab Baladai <https://www.doumalc.com/?p=3655>

<sup>204</sup> Fighting Polio among the chaos of Syria's civil war, National Geography, <http://news.nationalgeographic.com/2015/03/150305-polio-syria-iraq-islamic-state-refugees-vaccination-virus-ijhad/>

Through all of the above, we can see how local councils influenced their communities and were influenced by them in the same time. And it is this power of influence that Syrians can rely on when talking about the chances of peace.

I would like to conclude by the proposing the following observations/recommendations:

Local political decision based on democracy and participation contributes to increasing citizens' trust in governance entities, it thus helps to build their legitimacy, which is crucial in the transitional period. That's why, local councils, must seek to expand their popular base by increasing public representation in their constituencies and general electoral commissions. This could be done through awareness campaign targeting especially the neglected segments as youth, women, and war wounded who are marginalized because of their physical disabilities. By including these three segments in the local decision making circles, local councils would give them hope and a sense of value that would immune them against extremist ideologies.

Although it may seem too early to discuss the inclusion of religious or ethnic minorities in local councils given the current ethnic and sectarian tensions and polarization due to the persistence of violence, but local councils should be encouraged to discuss these issues. For example, non-Sunni or non-Syrian Arab citizens who had to leave their once mixed towns or cities because of above mentioned tensions, must know that local councils operating in their towns struggle to protect their properties or their worship places against looters.

The establishment of transparent financial mechanisms will deepen the solidarity between the local councils and strengthen the position of these blocks to the public through the promotion of the concept of moral alternative to the system and the institutions of corrupt and unfair, which the revolution against them. Ultimately, this will be a victory for the revolution and a beginning for the desired peace.

In the absence of a central state (the authority of the regime) and the ineffectiveness of the national opposition, local councils must be aware that they entrusted in managing the funds and grants that Syrian's friends and international donors provide in support of the Syrian revolution. That's why, local council must put place accountable and transparent mechanisms to enable the public to have access to information. By promoting the concepts of transparency and accountability, local councils will be seen as the "ethical alternative" to the corrupt and unfair regime against who the revolution emerged in the first place.

In June 2016, Omran Center for Strategic Studies conducted a survey on the relations of local councils with national opposition bodies. They survey targeted 105 local councils

in 9 provinces and the results showed a generally acceptable assessment by the sample of the councils for their relationship with the official opposition institutions such as the National Coalition and the Syrian Interim Government. 37% of the sample described their relationship with the coalition as positive, compared to 25% who considered it negative. As for the Interim government, 45% of respondents expressed a positive assessment of their relationship with 21% who described it as negative and 34% as acceptable. Despite the distance of the national opposition from people on the ground, local councils must maintain close coordination ties with the national opposition bodies because they enjoy international recognition and they are the ones who lead the peace talks in the name of the masses.

On the other hand, Syrians who were forced to leave their country are often overwhelmed with the daily concerns that the life of exile create. Their revolutionary activities or their support to the civil movement that is this in action in Syria, are limited to organizing demonstrations in the event of mass massacres or to advocacy campaigns on social media. But this is not enough. They need to be more involved in shedding light over the spectacular efforts of local governance and civil entities.

The Syrians who believe in revolution and those living abroad should try to establish networks of solidarity and alliances with civil society, human rights organizations, and parliamentary blocs in the countries where they live to attract political support and to convey the real image of what's happening in Syria that international media often overlook.

It would also be very useful to establish twinning agreements between local councils and municipalities in the countries of the Group of Friends of Syria to grant international legitimacy to local councils and to highlight their experiences outside of Syria and support them morally and financially.

Finally, I believe that before anything else, international public opinion must be mobilized to stop immediately all acts of violence and to stop the export of arms to Syria.

Meanwhile, the revolution continues...



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Given the diversity of the sources that I have used for this sake of this research, it is important to categorize them according to their function and relevance:

### A) Primary Sources

A1 - informal interviews with over 20 Local and Provincial Council members including:

- Interviews with the Head of Project Management at the Rural Damascus Provincial Council, Ziad Fleyttani between June 2014 and February 2016
- Interview with the Vice-President of Damascus Provincial Council, Adnan Al Khatib, over Skype on March 4th 2016.
- Interviews with Head of Jisrein Local Council, Mohammad Abu Al Rajaa<sup>205</sup>, between August 2014 and September 2015
- Interview with former Head of Service Office of Khan Sheikhun Local Council, Osama Kayyal between April and August 2014
- Interviews with former Head of Hama Provincial Council, Alaa Moussa, between August 2016 and February 2017.
- Interviews with the former Head of Idlib Provincial Council, Ahmad Qassoum, between June 2014 and September 2016.
- Interviews with the Head of Dana Local Council, Shawqi Delaa, between May and August 2016
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- Interviews with elected female member of the Provincial Council of Rural Damascus, Nisrein Al Rish, December 2016 and January 2017
- Interview with former head of Media Office at Mleiha Local Council, Mohammad Al Hafi, Between June 2014 to January 2017

A2 - Local Syrian newspapers and websites dedicated to following up and monitoring local and Provincial Councils affairs and news, including:

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<sup>205</sup>For Security reason, I am using this pseudonym

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## Appendix 1 - A Discussion Paper on Local Councils in Syria by Omar Aziz - 2013

### Introduction: The Period of Power and the Period of Revolution

A revolution is an exceptional event that will alter the history of societies, while changing humanity itself. It is a rupture in time and space, where humans live between two periods: the period of power and the period of revolution. A revolution's victory, however, is ultimately achieving the independence of its time in order to move into a new era. The Syrian Revolution has entered its eighth month and still has days ahead in its struggle to overthrow the regime and unlock new areas of life. The authoritative control on the territories is relatively present, but its scope of power differs from region to region, from day to day, and from hour to hour throughout the same day. During the past, continuous demonstrations were able to break the dominance of absolute power in certain areas. It was the continuation of demonstrations that produced a National Council that included a broad spectrum of mass movements, organizations, and political parties, which were counted on to represent a legitimate alternative authority to the Arab and international communities. The National Council is imperative in order to accomplish the efforts required to protect the Syrian people from the regime and its brutality.

However, the revolutionary movement remains independent of daily human activities and is unable to interfere with everyday lives. Although the public still manages as they did in the past, there are "divisions of daily work" between day-to-day activities and revolutionary activities. This means that the social formations in Syria live in two overlapping times: the period of power, in which the regime still manages everyday activities, and the period of the revolution, in which activists work daily to overthrow the regime. The risk lies not in the overlap of the two periods, for that is the nature of revolutions, but rather in the absence of correlation between the spheres of daily life and the revolution itself. So, what is feared of the movement during the coming period is one of two things: humans becoming bored due to the continuity of the revolution and its disruption of their daily lives, or humans resorting to the use of heavy weaponry, causing the revolution to become the rifle's hostage.

Accordingly, the efforts one must undertake in order to independently detach his or her social formations under authority and separate "the period of power and the period of revolution" is the extent in which the revolution will successfully create an atmosphere of victory. It must be recalled that the past months were rich trials of several focuses in the areas of emergency medical and legal support, and now, we must urgently enrich these initiatives to include broader areas of life. The blending of life in a revolution is an inherent requirement for its continuation and its victory. It requires a socially flexible structure that is based on the collaboration between the revolution and the daily lives of humans. This form of structure will be called: the local council.

The purpose of this entrance, and what is followed in the discussion paper, is to research the feasibility of the formation local councils with members from diverse cultures who belong to different social divisions, yet are working together to achieve the following:

- To support the people in managing their own lives independent of institutions and state agencies
- To form a space for collective expression that supports the collaboration of individuals promotes daily and political activities
- To initiate activities of the social revolution at a district level and unify supporting frameworks

As time passes, the course of human life for individuals and families transforms into one of a constant search for safer places to live. This course in time also transforms daily work into tireless efforts to discover what has happened to missing loved ones. Thus, families persistently work to access information regarding detainment locations and rely on their general knowledge or relatives to assess the areas of detention.

The role of local councils is to transfer such misery from what would usually fall under “the period of power” into a process that includes a unique community initiative.

The council must, at a minimum, work on the following:

- i. Find safe housing for families coming new into the regime and provide them with needed supplies. The council located in that region must collaborate with its counterpart, the local council from the region that the families initially fled from.
- ii. Organize statements for the detainees and transfer the information to concerned authorities in the revolution. The council must arrange to contract legal authorities and must provide support to the families by issuing follow-ups on the conditions of loved ones in detention.
- iii. Manage the request reports of affected families and work to ensure the expenses through financial aid for the public and “regional revolution funds.”

Such acts demand organization, proper management of information, and knowledge of the arts of administration; however, this is not impossible despite the given type of rebellious environment. The revolution has nurtured a generation of experts in organizing demonstrations, strikes, and sit-ins that are capable of arrangements and work management specialties carried out innately by the people.

This revolutionary responsibility must not replace relatives or acquaintances (or at least during the first stage) and should not be binding in any way. Humans will begin to feel comfortable out of state services, and those who find temporary alternatives for kinship relations need time and practice in order to enter into contact and collective social behavior sophisticatedly and effectively.

## The Topic of Exchange Between Human Beings: The Formation of New Participants

- Provide a venue for discussion in which human beings are able to trade and search for solutions to daily issues
- Build horizontal links between the local councils of one geographic region and expand to include links between different geographic regions

The revolution transformed individuals themselves to broaden the horizons of their own lives once they ensured that the conflict was their means of liberation and, thus, marked their continuity and cooperation with the struggle enduringly. They were able to discover their newly defined capabilities of innovation and invention, of rich social engagements and assorted colors, that were different than what they had initially entrusted while being restricted under a single tyrannical killer for half a century.

Here, the local council's role is activating the people's cooperation and transferring it into their living spaces, which will vary in the nature of their activities and their movement in the face of authority, namely:

- i. Encourage people to discuss their conditions every day (in regards to their livelihoods and daily demands) and to solve specified issues collectively.
- ii. Consider the issues that require solutions outside the scope of the given locality, such as finances or support from other areas.

## The Topic of Land: Collective Rediscovery

- Defend the territories of the region that the state seeks to expropriate or has already acquired.

The State's acquisition of land in the cities and suburbs of Syria and its entailed population redeployment are foundations of its policy for domination and social exclusion. The State thus relies on these strategies to ensure its power. This policy has worked to form "safe" residential areas for officials and army officers, for shopping areas, and for the implementation of business plans in order to accommodate the wealthy. The revolutionary movement that we are witnessing in the rural and suburb areas of Syria is one aspect of the people's rejection of the State's expropriation and marginalization policies.

The role of the local council is the direct defense of property from State squatters, by any means necessary. It is imperative to take action through:

- Intervening quickly with properties that are subject to expropriation resolutions.
- Communicating with legal networks of the revolution to raise cases before the courts and challenge the decisions of acquisition in hopes of cancellation or, at the very least, postponement.

- Making the defense of the property and land an issue that concerns that masses of residents in the area collectively.

#### Configuration of Local Councils:

- The formation of local councils is related to the ability of movement in each region, which means it will be harder to accomplish in areas that are subject to heavy security presence and relatively easier in areas where revolutionary movement is more empowered.
- The achievements of the local council will be a gradual process according to the people's circumstances, demands, and interactions with it.
- The success achieved by each of the councils will be measured through experience and an increase in designated members.
- The configuration of local councils will not be an easy task, though it will be the basis for the continuity of the revolution. The difficulty of formation will not only be due to the suffocating security collar and siege, but also new and unfamiliar practices in life and social relationships. This situation demands an independent entity that is separate from the authority, in which the role of the body will be to support and develop economic and social activities in the area of its presence, while having an experienced administration in various fields.
- In the beginning, the program of the local councils must be applied in locations that have the most appropriate conditions. These localities will serve as pilot areas in order to correctly measure the proper formation of councils in other areas that are subjected to the toughest of conditions.
- Due to the absence of the electoral practice under the current circumstances, the local councils must be made up of social workers and laureates who are respected by the public, have expertise in social, organizational, and technical areas, and the potential and desire to commit themselves to voluntary work.
- The launch of local councils in stages will be in accordance with the priorities of the regime and those who will support its creation:

i. Local council members

ii. Regional activists

iii. Volunteer activists from outside the area that have experience in their respective fields of work

#### *The Role of the National Council*

The Council plays a pivotal role in the following matters:

- The legitimacy of the initiative: the National Council must adopt the idea of local councils, which will provide it with necessary legitimacy to launch, and facilitate acceptance by the activists in the sector.

- Funding: The National Board of Directors must accept financing the “Revolution Funds,” which in itself is a job the Council must fulfill. It allows greater flexibility in covering the establishment of local councils by covering all expenses of creation and costs that may not be covered by the region itself.
- The National council must facilitate the coordination between regions and raise the expectation of organization to the framework of entire provinces, for each area and each locality is still based on initiatives that are in accordance to their reckoned mobility. This independence undoubtedly proves the great flexibility in the movement, regardless that it was most affected by the absence of accommodating spaces. The role played by the National Council here is essential in finding a common ground and a closer interdependence between different regions.

## Appendix 2- Fact Sheet on the National Coalition of the Syrian Revolution and Opposition Forces (SOC)

### Mission of the Syrian Coalition

1. The mission of the Syrian Coalition is to support the Syrian people who are struggling to change their country into a democratic, inclusive and pluralistic civil state.
2. To fulfil that mission, SOC work to achieve five core goals, as outlined in our declaration of principles:
  - o to bring an end to all violence in Syria;
  - o to ensure a lawful, inclusive and democratic political transition;
  - o to maintain the continuity and preservation of functional state institutions and structures within a democratic and rule-of-law abiding state;
  - o to ensure the unity of the Syrian people and territorial integrity and sovereignty of our state;
  - o to bring all those responsible for war crimes to account in accordance with international law.
3. The Coalition fulfils this mission by voicing the concerns and aspirations of the Syrian people and by intensifying pressure on the international community to provide assistance on their behalf.

### About the Syrian Coalition

1. The Syrian Coalition was formed in November 2012. It brings together the main Syrian opposition groups committed to ending the Syrian conflict and assisting Syria's democratic transition.
2. The Coalition reflects the ethnic and religious diversity that is a fundamental part of Syrian heritage. Coalition members include Shia and Sunni Muslims, Alawites, Christians, Kurds, Druze, Armenians, Assyrians, and Circassians.
3. Coalition headquarters are based in Cairo, Egypt. We also have offices in France, Germany, Qatar, Turkey, the United Kingdom and the United States.
4. The Coalition is comprised of a 114-member Parliamentary Assembly led by President Ahmad al-Jarba, Vice Presidents Suheir Atassi, Salem Maslat and Mohamed Tayfur, as well as Secretary-General Bader Jamous.
5. Members of the Coalition's Parliamentary Assembly include all major groups and individuals committed to a democratic, inclusive, and pluralistic Syria, such as the Supreme Military Council representing the Free Syrian Army, Syrian National Council, the Democratic Bloc, the Revolutionary Movement, Syrian Revolution General Commission, Local Coordination Committees of Syria, and the Local Administrative Councils of Syria. We welcome everyone who is committed to the realization of a democratic Syria.
6. The Coalition is recognized as the legitimate representative of the Syrian people by 120 states and organizations. This includes the United States, the European Union, the Arab League, and the Gulf Cooperation Council.

### Principles

- o The Coalition is united by three core principles: inclusivity, accountability and consensus. These principles will guide the transition process as well as the formation of an interim government.

## Political Solution

1. The Coalition's vision is that of a democratic Syria free from Assad's tyranny. The Coalition fully supports all political initiatives to end the conflict in Syria that will enable a democratic transition process to begin, as outlined in our [framework for future political solutions](#).
2. The Coalition is committed to a political solution to the Syrian conflict built on the transition processes outlined in the [Geneva Communiqué](#) of June 2012, which stipulates that any future transitional governing body must be decided on the basis of mutual consent between parties to the conflict.
3. As Coalition President Ahmad al-Assi stated upon assuming office in July 2013, the Coalition will participate in the proposed Geneva II conference when the military balance has changed and the regime has demonstrated a willingness to transfer power to a transitional government with full executive powers.

## The Interim Government

1. To ensure the continuation of public services, legal duties, and basic services in liberated territories, the Coalition will form an interim government to serve as a temporary executive branch.
2. The Coalition plans to announce 11 ministers and 3 commissions as part of this administration. Each Ministry will have a 50 member team based in Syria's liberated territories.
3. The interim government will be dissolved with the appointment of a democratic transitional government.

## The Transitional Government

1. As was outlined in the [Geneva Communiqué](#), the Coalition expects any negotiation aimed at ending the Syrian conflict to discuss the establishment of a transitional government with "full executive powers".
2. Once a transitional government is formed, it will need to convene a national dialogue to formulate a new Syrian constitution, on the basis of which Syria should hold its first free and democratic elections.

## The Free Syrian Army

1. The Coalition works to prevent the destruction of Syria through the Free Syrian Army (FSA). The FSA is committed to ensuring the protection of civilians and their legitimate right to self-defense, in conformity with international law.
2. To systematize collaboration among its units, in December the FSA founded the Supreme Joint Military Command Council, a 30-member command structure that coordinates FSA operations and strategic planning. The Supreme Military Council is led by Chief of Staff, Salim Idriss, and will be under the command of a civil ministry, pending the formation of the Coalition's interim government.
3. The FSA acts in accordance with international law. It holds its members accountable for any violations of such law.
4. The FSA rejects all acts of extremism committed by terrorist groups. It condemns the use of chemical weapons, as stipulated in its [Proclamation of Principles](#). The FSA welcomes all UN investigations into the use of such weapons.

### Appendix 3 – Samples of different Local and Provincial Councils's publications (e.g. statements, outreach materials, orders, etc.)

Statement by Kafr Nobol Local Council severing ties with the Sharia Court and describing as illegitimate court - Issued on 17 May 2016



## Statement of termination of Daraya's Local Council – November 2017

## المجلس المحلي لمدينة داريا LOCAL COUNCIL OF DARAYA CITY



### بيان إنهاء أعمال المجلس المحلي لمدينة داريا

بعد التهجير القسري الجماعي الذي فُرض على أهالي مدينة داريا بعد أربع سنوات من الحرب والحصار ومع اختلاف الظروف والمعطيات في المرحلة الجديدة، بما فيها الشرط الأساسي لعمل المجالس المحلية وهو وجودها على أرضها، قرر المجلس المحلي لمدينة داريا إنهاء أعماله بعد أربع سنوات من تأسيسه.

عمل المجلس الذي تأسس في تشرين الأول 2012، في ظل ظروف بالغة الصعوبة حاول فيها تأمين الخدمات الأساسية و تخفيف معاناة الأهالي الإنسانية الناتجة عن حرب النظام على شعبه، ساعياً لتقديم نموذج للإدارة المحلية تثبت قدرة الشعب السوري على إدارة شؤونه بنفسه. واستمر المجلس بعد التهجير القسري من داريا نهاية آب 2016 في عمله بصفة مؤقتة في الشمال السوري المحرر لمتابعة شؤون الأهالي المهجرين هناك، إلى أن أنهى أعماله رسمياً وعقد جلسة ختامية في ريف إدلب في 22 تشرين الثاني 2016 عرض فيها أمام هيئته العامة وعدد من الأهالي والمهتمين تقارير عمل مكاتبه، كما أرسل إلى المنظمات التي دعمت المجلس والهيئات الصديقة قرار إنهاء الأعمال.

وإذ يعلن المجلس عن انتهاء عمله فإنه يتوجه بالشكر لكل من شارك في مساعدة مدينة داريا خلال السنوات السابقة، ويعبر عن إكباره لأهلنا الذين صبروا وصابروا وقدموا أغلى ما يملكون خلال مسيرة طويلة وشاقة من التضحيات والمآسي والمعاناة في مواجهة الظلم والإجرام. نسأل الله تعالى أن يخفف عن أهلنا وأن يجزيهم خيراً على صبرهم وأن يعيننا على مواصلة الطريق ويكتب لنا عودة قريبة إلى مدينتنا، ونسأله أن يتقبل شهداءنا ويعافي جرحانا وينصرنا في ثورتنا على من ظلمنا.

المجلس المحلي لمدينة داريا  
LOCAL COUNCIL OF DARAYA CITY



الشمال المحرر  
24 تشرين الثاني 2016

- 1- A sample of Hama's Provincial Council's response accusation of corruption - Source: Hama Provincial Council's website <http://hamacouncil.org/?p=960>



The screenshot shows the website of the Hama Provincial Council. At the top, there is a header with the council's name in Arabic: "مجلس محافظة حماة" (Hama Provincial Council). Below the header is a navigation menu with links: "تعريف بالمجلس" (About the Council), "المكتب التنفيذي" (Executive Office), "أخبار" (News), "معرض الصور" (Photo Gallery), "الشكاوى والطلبات" (Complaints and Requests), "إعلانات رسمية" (Official Announcements), "وظائف" (Jobs), and "اتصل بنا" (Contact Us).

The main content area features a large image of a landscape with mountains and a river. Below the image is the title of the article: "مشروع الطوافة واتهامات بالفساد ... حوار صريح مع المشرف" (The floating project and accusations of corruption ... an honest dialogue with the supervisor). The article is dated August 19, 2014, and is written by the editor-in-chief. The text of the article discusses the importance of the project, the accusations of corruption, and the council's response. It mentions that the project is a floating project in the Hama region, and that the council has received many complaints about corruption. The council has taken steps to investigate the allegations and has held a meeting with the project supervisor to discuss the issues. The article concludes by stating that the council is committed to transparency and accountability, and that it will continue to work to improve the project and address the concerns of the community.

On the left side of the page, there is a sidebar with a list of recent news items, each with a small image and a brief description. The items include: "اسمها طفل، مشروع رائد لدعم قطاع التعليم في المحافظة" (Her name is a child, a pioneering project to support the education sector in the province), "اسمها طفل، مشروع جديد يستهدف طلاب محافظة حماة" (Her name is a child, a new project targeting students in Hama province), "مساعدات من مجلس محافظة حماة لاراضي القرى المحررة حديثا" (Aid from the Hama Provincial Council for recently liberated villages), and "مجلس محافظة حماة يعلن مشروع إعادة تأهيل السيارات بنجاح" (Hama Provincial Council announces successful car rehabilitation project).

Below the sidebar, there is a section titled "أخبار في صور" (News in photos), which contains a grid of small images showing various scenes related to the council's work and the community.

بحث

السيّد محمود الحسن ترحّب بك ضيفاً كريماً على موقعنا، نرغب بتعريف سريع عن حضرتك.

أهلاً بكم ... أنا محمود الحسن من محافظة حماة مهندس مدني عندي خبرة بالمشروع لأكثر من 20 سنة مضت، ومكلف من وزارة الاتصالات والنقل والصناعة بالإشراف على مشروع الطوافة.

جاءتنا ملاحظات من بعض الإخوة على تنفيذ مشروع الطوافة، إضافة لإدعاءات بالسرقة على من قام بالتنفيذ، فطلبنا منهم إحضار وثائق تبرهن على هذه الإدعاءات، فما وصلنا إلى الآن سوى عرض سعر للبرميل الواحد بقيمة 3250 ل.س فقط، فما ردك على هذه الاتهامات؟

دائماً لا يتهم إلا من يعمل، في الحقيقة هذا نفس السعر تقريباً الذي اشترى به الإخوة البرميل الواحد وهو 20 دولار، علماً أنني لم أحصل على سعر أقل من 3300 ل.س للبرميل الواحد عند بحثي للتأكد من الأسعار.

من قام باستلام النقود وشراء التجهيزات والإشراف؟ ألم تقوموا بتشكيل لجنة مشتريات لهذا الغرض؟

قمنا بتسليم النقود للجهة المنفذة وهي المجلس المحلي للشريعة وقبر فضة وقد قام هذان المجلسان بتشكيل لجنة مشتريات مهمتها البحث عن أفضل الأسعار والتوقيع على الفواتير كلها، وأنا كمهندس من الوزارة مهمتي تتحصر بالإشراف وتقييم جودة العمل ومن تم التوقيع على استلامه.

كيف تقييم إنجاز هذا المشروع أ. محمود؟

أنا أشهد بأن العمل تم بشكل جيد.

بصراحة أكثر وحتى يطلع الجميع وتكون الأمور بشفافية، هل بالإمكان أن تعطينا تفاصيل أسعار المواد الأولية للطوافة؟

لا مشكلة بذلك، وهذه أسعار المواد الأولية:

- حديد صناعي وهي المادة الأساسية مع الدهان كل 1 كغ بـ 1 دولار (163 ل.س)
- البرميل بسعر 20 دولار لكل برميل (3260 ل.س)
- خشب كل 1 متر مكعب بسعر 445 دولار لكل متر مكعب (72535 ل.س)
- بيتون مسلح بسعر 100 دولار لكل متر مكعب (16300 ل.س)
- كيل فولاذي كل 1م بـ 10 دولار (1630 ل.س)

بحث

بصراحة أكثر هل هذه الأسعار نفس أسعار السوق ساعة الشراء؟

استعجلتم علي، فقد قمت بمقارنة كل هذه الأسعار بسعر السوق فوجدتها نفسها ما عدا البيتون فهو بسعر أقل من سعر السوق وكذلك الحديد الصناعي، فكل 3م بيتون مسلح مسعر في السوق بـ 20000 ل.س بينما في الفاتورة بـ 16300 ل.س.

اعتترض البعض على الناحية الفنية بأن النهر بعد هطول الأمطار وعلو منسوبه ستتهار هذه الطوافة وتضيع تكاليف وأتعاب المشروع هباء منثوراً، فهل هذا صحيح؟

بالنسبة للناحية الفنية فكرة الطوافة فكرة جيدة وهي مشبته بأبراج بيتونية عددها أربعة موزعة على الزوايا تتيح لها الطوف فوق المياه عند ارتفاع منسوبها مما يمنع انهيارها، فهذا الإدعاء خاطئ.

كلمة أخيرة توجهها للإخوة المشككين بالعمل والمتهمين بالفساد.

نشكر كل الإخوة على غيرتهم على العمل العام ونحييهم على الحس العالي بالمسؤولية، ولكننا نرجو منهم أن يكونوا عوناً للعاملين لا معطلين، وأن يكونوا مقومين لا مفسدين، وذلك من خلال الاستفسار والاستعلام فهو حق للجميع ولا يكون ذلك بتوزيع الاتهامات جزافاً.

وكذلك نحن نشكركم ونشكر كل من ساهم بإنجاح هذا العمل، ونرجو منكم الصبر على الاتهامات وتوضيح أي ملاحظات للناس فبذلك تؤسسوا لعمل صحيح وتبدؤوا ببناء الثقة الحقيقية بكم.

G+

Twee

Like 15

شاركها

(A) An invitation to the opening ceremony of Citizen Service Office at the Local Council of Darat Izza in the Western Countryside of Aleppo . (B) A leaflet produced by Rural Damascus Provincial Council on its Citizen Service Office and the

A

## وعوة

المجلس المحلي لمدينة دارية عزة  
يدعوكم لحضور اجتماع عام  
للإعلان

### من افتتاح مكتب مساعدة المواطن

سيناقش في الاجتماع مهام مكتب مساعدة المواطن ودوره وأهمية وجوده في تحقيق التواصل الفعال والمنظم بين المواطن والمجلس، وما يمكن أن يقدمه للمواطن.

يعد الاجتماع في صالة البرج - سوق السبت  
يوم الجمعة ٢٦ / ٥ / ٢٠١٧ م  
الساعة ٢ ظهراً

بالصحة والسلامة

حضوركم يشرفنا

3

ضمن أولويات البناء المجتمعي وحماية البيئة قام المجلس بعدة مشاريع على المستوى التعليمي والصحي والإعلامي والدفاع المدني ودوى الاحتياجات الخاصة والمرأة والرياضة والشباب وقد كان للمحافظة دور التخطيط والتنظيم والرقابة

4

ضمن أولويات البناء المؤسساتي والتنمية الإدارية قام المجلس بالعديد من المشاريع للمجالس المحلية والمديريات المركزية ومنظمات المجتمع المدني في مجال بناء القدرات والتواصل والدعم التقني واللوجستي لجميع أنواعه بالإضافة للدورات التدريبية المختلفة والتي كان هدفها تطوير البنية المؤسساتية بشكل سليم وتكثيفها إدارياً ومالياً وقانونياً بعيداً عن أي مظهر من مظاهر الفساد

5

ضمن أولوية خدمة المواطن والمشاركة المجتمعية في الشأن العام وعملية صنع القرار باعتبار المواطن هو الموصلة الحقيقية والرافع الأساسي لتطوير عمل جميع المجالس والمؤسسات نحو الأفضل ففقه اعتمادنا مبدأ الشفافية والإعلان في نشر الأعمال والقرارات كحقوقي رقي لجميع المواطنين وفي مختلف الوسائل المتاحة ومتمسكين لتلقي النقد البناء والشكاوى ومعالجتها عبر صمغتنا على وسائل التواصل الاجتماعي أو التوجه إلى مكاتب خدمة المواطنين في المجالس المحلية ومجلس المحافظة

مقدمة

تولي هيئات الإدارة المحلية أهمية لشكاوى السكان باعتبارها إحدى الأدوات التي يعبرون من خلالها عن مطالبهم وتوقعاتهم من تلك الهيئات لكن سابقاً لم يحقق الشكاوى مقصدها في رد المظالم وتصويب أداء المؤسسات، سواء بسبب القبطنة الأمنية التي كانت تظال كل من يحاول الإصلاح أو بسبب هيمنة الفساد على مؤسسات الدولة. الأمر الذي أدى إلى تقضي الثقافة السلبية لدى المواطنين وإحجامهم عن ممارسة حقوقهم الرقابية لتعلمهم المسبق بعدم جدوى ذلك ثم أنت المجالس المحلية ومجلس المحافظة كأحد أهم مفرزات الثورة السورية وأحد رهاناتها في إجاز التحول نحو نظام يحقق الية لتأطير وتنظيم مشاركة السكان في إدارة الشأن العام واستعادة حقوقهم التي سلبت منهم ومنها حق الترشح والانتخاب والمحاسبة

لحة عن أعمال مجلس محافظة ريف دمشق

يقوم مجلس محافظة ريف دمشق بجميع الأعمال التي تؤدي الى تطور المحافظة إدارياً واقتصادياً واجتماعياً اعتماداً على الخصائص والامكانيات والموارد المتاحة والمالية والبشرية المتاحة بما يتماشى مع تنمية شاملة وموازنة ومستدامة في جميع المجالات ضمن حيد واضح للأولويات وأقرار خطط مركزية ولا مركزية والتنسيق على أساس وضع رؤية مستقبلية في جميع مناحي الحياة لبناء سوريا حديثة ديمقراطية وفيما يلي لحة عن إنجازاته

1

ضمن أولوية دعم الصمود والاستجابة للاحتياجات الإنسانية قام المجلس بعدة مشاريع في تجهيز وخمسين الملاجئ والمخافي وشقق الأيواء للمهجرين قسراً والخدمات الأساسية بالإضافة للإغاثة والأمن الغذائي الاستراتيجي حيث كان هناك تنسيق عالي المستوى وتشجيع لزيادة فاعلية المشاركة من قبل جميع المؤسسات المدنية والرسومية في هذه الأعمال من خلال تشكيل لجان عاملة في شتى الميادين الهامة

2

ضمن أولوية تنشيط الدورة الاقتصادية وتحسين المستوى المعيشي وتعزيز التعافي المبكر من خلال فرض الخصخصة تشجيعاً لتسارع في خلق فرص عمل وإيجاد حافز من التكامل بين الدور الحكومي والتنموي قام المجلس بعدة مشاريع إحصاء وتوثيق وراسات إحصائية والمطابقة التيمونية بالإضافة الى صالات البيع الخفض وتأهيل الشقق وصيانة وتصنيع حاويات القمامة بالإضافة لأعمال الخدمات الأساسية كالنظافة والصرف الصحي وكذلك مشاريع الإنتاج الزراعي والحيواني

B

## مكتب

## خدمة المواطن (التواصل المجتمعي)

FB.COM/COUNCILS.EASTERN.GHOUTA



مؤسسات محلية | ١٠٠٥ | مجلة نرجس | العدد الرابع | ١٠٠٦ | مؤسسات محلية

المكتب الإغاثي الموحد

**العمل الإغاثي في مدينة درة عزة:**  
 ١- توزيع ٢٥٠ حصة غذائية مقدمة من منظمة الإغاثة الإسلامية.  
 ٢- توزيع ١٢٥٠ رطله خبز مجازة يومية مقدمة من منظمة عطاء الحيرة.  
 ٣- توزيع ١٠٥٠ حصة غذائية مقدمة من منظمة احسان.  
 ٤- توزيع عدد من حصص الطوارئ على النازحين في المدينة والمخبرين من القصف الناجم عن الطيران في المدينة.  
 ٥- توزيع ٦٠٠ كغ حنطة ل ٨٠٠ مزارع مقدمة من منظمة الإزدهار والقدم.  
 ٦- كما تم توزيع بلانز سلق ومغفوف لعدة مزارعين.  
 ٧- كما يستكمل المكتب الإغاثي مشروع الإحصاء وفق الصعوبات التي تعرض لها نتيجة زوح الأهالي من المدينة إلى أطرافها وعودتها.  
 ٨- توزيع ١٦٧٣ حصة شراه غذائية على الأهالي في مدينة درة عزة، وقيمة كل حصة ٧٢ \$ أمريكي بالتسليم ودعم من منظمة شباب الفراتان.  
 ٩- تم توزيع ١٦٠٠ سلة نظافة على الأهالي في مدينة درة عزة ضمن الفترة المحددة بالتسليم ودعم من منظمة شباب الفراتان.  
 ١٠- وكما تم بالتعاون مع منظمة **people in need** توزيع سلال غذائية في مدينة درة عزة والبالغ عددها ٤٠٠ سلة غذائية، ربة السلة ٥ كغ بالتسليم ودعم من منظمة شباب الفراتان.  
 ١١- وكما تم بالتعاون مع منظمة **people in need** توزيع ٤٠٠ رطله خبز بشكل يومي على الفقراء والمحتاجين في مدينة درة عزة بالتسليم ودعم من منظمة شباب الفراتان.  
 ١٢- وقد تم توزيع ٨٥ حصة طوارئ لدمون جدد على النازحين في مدينة درة عزة بالتسليم ودعم من منظمة شباب الفراتان.

١٣- وكما تم بالتعاون مع منظمة سوريا وريف بوزج الدعوة الثانية من قسام شرارة مادة ماوزوت في ( درة عزة - القاطورة - زرينا - كركرتين - ديرصمان) والبالغ عددها ١٠٣١ حصة، قيمة الحصة ٢٥ \$، علماً بأن سيتم توزيع الدعوة الثالثة والأخيرة خلال فصل الشتاء بالتسليم ودعم من منظمة شباب الفراتان.

**الأعمال الخيرية لخدمة شباب الفراتان في مدينة درة عزة:**  
 قامت منظمة شباب الفراتان بوضع عقد مع منظمة **people in need** (المال مقابل العمل) ، حيث يتضمن العقد تشغيل ٢٥ عمال نظافة في فري مدينة درة عزة .  
 تستمر منظمة شباب الفراتان بتسيير رحلات لنقل طالبات الجامعة في كلين الطب البشري في بلدة كركركاريم وكلية الهندسة المعلوماتية في بلدة الدانا وذلك لتخفيف حثاي السفر والكلفة على الطالبات وإعائتهن وهناك خطوط توسعها المشروع وحدات خطوط نقل جديدة لتلقي الطالبات في مختلف الكليات .



**العمل الإغاثي في ريف درة عزة:**  
 ١- توزيع ٣٠٠ حصة طوارئ على النازحين الجدد في القرى ريف درة عزة وريف عسجارة وذلك بالتسليم ودعم من منظمة عبت.  
 ٢- توزيع ١٢٩٦ حصة غذائية على ١٣ قرية في ريف درة عزة وريف عسجارة حيث يصل وزن الحصة ٨٠ كغ كروتونة عدد ٢ مع كس ز ٢٠ كغ وذلك بالتسليم ودعم من منظمة عبت.  
 ٣- توزيع ١٥٠٠ حصة نظافة على ١٦ قرية في ريف درة عزة وريف عسجارة وذلك بالتسليم ودعم من منظمة عبت.  
 ٤- توزيع ٨٠٠ حصة تجميل على حلمات سان ومشراف الكرامة وإزامل الشهداء وكركرتيا كم تم استهداف ٢٠ قرية في ريف درة عزة وريف عسجارة وذلك بالتسليم ودعم من منظمة عبت.  
 ٥- توزيع ١٩٥ رطله خبز لنازحين في ريف درة عزة بشكل يومي دعم مدرسة نجم بيان ومشراف ب ١٥٠ حصة تخموي على فرطاسية + ألعاب أطفال + حلوى أطفال وذلك بالتسليم ودعم من منظمة عبت .  
 ٦- استمرار مشروع تباع النازحين مع الحصة التسليفية ٧٥٠ قرية .

المجمع التربوي

تقرير أعمال المجمع التربوي في مدينة درة عزة لشهر تشرين الثاني ٢٠١٦ :  
 ١- تم توزيع مدارس درة عزة الإبداعية إلى الأطراف وفعلت كمرف صيفية وقد وعد المجلس الهنيء بدعمها بالمواد المطلوبة من مدافئ أو أجاز هذه الفرق  
 ٢- وكذلك تم توزيع طلاب ومدرسين بتأنيمة درة عزة للبنين والبنات على ثلاث مدارس طابق أول  
 ٣- تم صرف رواتب من مديرية التربية للمعلمين والبالغ عددهم ٤٣٣ معلم ومعلمة وبانتظار تحديد الأجر من المديرية  
 ٤- تم انتقال المجمع التربوي إلى المكتب الخدمية طريق الثانوية خلف المتصرف  
 ٥- كما قام المجلس الهنيء بالتعاون مع المجمع في تأمين مكان دائم ومناسب للدراسة فيها للطلاب الإعدادي والثانوي وبعل تأمين مكان دائم ومناسب لطالبات الشهادة لاستمرار الدورة الخاصة حتى الانسحابات.  
 ٦- تشجيع الأهالي لإرسال أولادهم للمدارس المنتشرة في أطراف المدينة والريف الصيفية والتواصل مع المجمع في حال عدم وجود غرف صيفية في المنطقة التي يسكنونها

قدم مكتب الأمان في منظمة شباب الفراتان بوضع ٦٠٠ كغلة بوم في مدينة درة عزة .

منظمة حواء

تستمر المنظمة في إقامة الدورات التدريبية التي تخص المرأة السورية وتستمر العمل في (دورة التمريض والإسعافات الأولية - دورة الخياطة و المهن اليدوية - دورة تعليم قيادة الحاسوب - دورة القوية والمحاولة باللغة الإنكليزية - دورة كويد ولحفظ القرآن الكريم) وقد بلغ عدد المتدربات حوالي ٢٠٦ متدربة بوزجة على جميع الحالات والاعداد في ازدياد.  
 تهدف هذه العزوات على رفع قدرات المرأة في كافة مجالات الحياة ولكون فاعلة في المجتمع وقادرة على الاعتماد على نفسها

مؤسسات محلية | ١٠٠٦ | مجلة نرجس | العدد الرابع | ١٠٠٧ | مؤسسات محلية

جامعة حلب في النيويس بالأمانة إلى قصف النظام

وكلية التربية وكلية الآداب بفسبها العربي والإنكليزي لتبريد معاناة هذه التجربة العظيمة ورغم ذلك تمت متابعة التعليم بالحلقة الذهبية... إن التعليم في جميع الكليات مستمر رغم كيرخطة النظام وذلك بصافر جهود الطلاب والناشطين التعليميين والعاملين فيها ودعم الأهالي والمنظمات العاملة في هذا المجال والجالس المهله الحرة التي لا تدخر جهداً بذلك والإعلاميين الذين يواكبون هذه العملية خطوة بخطوة لتفسي على الجهل المرمن من عقود البحث المتضن وفصل أفكاره المسترسلة من أجهالنا الصاعدة لتسطع من جديد مشاعر نور تفسي طمة هذه المرحلة لفضل إلى بر الأمان بقيادة جيل معلم واع

مؤسسات محلية

جامعة حلب في المناطق المحررة صرح من منحزات نورينا الماركمة تم انتحارها في العام الماضي وذلك لاستيعاب طلابها الناجحين في الثانوية العامة لتستوعب التعليم العالي رغم الصعوبات التي تم تليلها بصافر جهود القائمين على هذا المشروع من مدرسين واداريين ومجالس محلية وموظفات وبعثة طلابها الأخرى على مواصلة التعليم في الفصاح الكليات الثانية كلية الطب البشري كلية هندسة المعلومات والاقتصاد والعلوم والحقوق والشريعة الآداب بفسبها العربي والإنكليزي وكلية التربية قسم معلم صم، والتحق الطلاب بمقاعد الدراسة وقت السنة الأولى بتجاح. وفي بداية هذا العام أعلن عن المفاجئة العامة وتم التسجيل من قبل الطلاب عليها من الناجحين في الثانوية العامة لإلتلاف هذا العام والاعوام التي سبقتها. عدا الطلاب المتقدمين هذا العام في المناطق المحللة من قبل النظام... وتم استيعاب جميع الناجحين وذلك من خلال التقدم إلى مفاضلة الحواري... وتم الفصاح كلية طب الأسنان وكلية العلوم السياسية والزراعة لتوسيع مشروع التعليم العالي لهذا العام... إن عدد الطلاب في تزايد وإصرارهم الطلاب على متابعة العلم إلا أن الحسلة الشرسة التي يشهدها أعداء العلم والتعليم بالطيران الحربي السوري والروسي نال من بعض ماني الكليات وقام بدمر كلية الطب البشري

تم تدريب بعض العاملين الجدد في الأمانة من أجل تسير العمل بشكل جيد وتقوم بتسجيل كافة الوافرات الجديدة التي ترد إلى الأمانة بشكل يومي ولدى الأمانة الأخصائيات المؤلفة من ولادة وزواج وقيود فردية وطاقات عائلية حسب حاجة المواطن والعمل كامل في الأمانة ما عدا البطاقة الشخصية المطلوبة حتى تاريخه لم تسطيع تأنيها  
 - تم تفعيل دور وعمل مديرية الشؤون المدنية بحلب المناطق المحررة في ريف حلب وداعل المشبنة ولقد قمنا بالاشتراك معهم وتنسيق العمل لخدمة المواطن على نطاق أوسع (تقديم التسهيلات للمواطن قدر المستطاع ولكن دون التحولات)  
 - والتطوير بالتركز أن جميع الخدمات التي تقدمها الأمانة هي مجانية .  
 - تم عمل أمانة درة عزة الذي لم يوقف منذ بداية الثورة ورغم الظروف الصعبة والقصف الشديد على المدينة :  
 - بفضل الله في جهود جميع الأهالي بمخينة درة عزة من مدني وعسكري في تقديم الخدمات اللازمة حسب المستطاع للاستمرار في السجل المدني في المدينة  
 - لقد قدم المجلس الهنيء كل ما يلزم للأمانة بعد الانقطاع عن العمل مع مديرية النظام حين طغلت ظل السجلات إلى مركز مدينة حلب وتم رفض ذلك وتم بنو تسليمهم أي وثيقة من الأمانة  
 - لقد قامت إدارة الأمانة بتصوير هذا السجلات كاملة للحفاظ على المعلومات الورقية المدونة في السجلات كاملة ، حوفاً من قصف الأمانة من قبل النظام الحزم وقد تم قصف الأمانة بتاريخ ١٥ / ٧ / ٢٠١٥ ، من قبل الطيران الحزم ولقد أصيب إداري الأمانة إثر ذلك القصف

الشفاية
العدد الرابع ١٠١٠
مجلة نرجس ١٠٠٩
احصائيات

### المسألة المجتمع يسأل !!

#### هل سيتم ضخ المياه في الشبكة ؟

تعمل وحدة المياه في مدينة دارة عزة على مشروع ضخ المياه في الشبكة وبعد البدء بالمشروع تم تنفيذ ما يلي :

- ١- البدء ب حفر بئر على طريق لتعادة وقد وصل الحفر إلى ما يزيد عن ٢٨٠ م
- ٢- كما تم إنشاء محطة ضخ وتجهيزها بالمولدات على طريق لتعادة وتم استلام كميات من المازوت المعدة لتشغيل محطة الضخ أصولاً
- ٣- بعد تقديم دراسة لتجهيز خطوط الإساءة في شبكة مدينة دارة عزة ، تم البدء بتنفيذ خطوط الإساءة .
- ولازالت الوحدة تقوم بمد خطوط للمياه في بئر طريق لتعادة إلى تجمع الخزان الاول في نفس المكان .
- ولا يزال المشروع متوقفا للأسباب التالية :

  - ١- استكمال مد خطوط الإساءة للمناطق المرتفعة .
  - ٢- استكمال تنفيذ وتركيب المضخات الألفية في تجمع الأبار على طريق لتعادة
  - ٣- استلام الكلفة التشغيلية المعدة للضخ بشكل كامل

يقوم المكتب المالي بالجلسه املية لمدينة دارة عزة، بنشر تقرير شهري ودوري يبين حالة الصندوق المالي، بخطوة تعكس الشفاية ولتشارك المجتمع، ويتم نشر هذا التقرير عبر صفحة المجلس على التيسولك، وفيما يلي تعرض صورة عن الوثيقة الرسمية للتقرير المالي الشهري خلال شهر تشرين الثاني .

المجلس المحلي في مدينة دارة عزة  
المكتب المالي

الى رئاسة المجلس المحلي في مدينة دارة عزة  
لين لكم محدة الصندوق المالي للمجلس المحلي في مدينة دارة عزة لشهر تشرين الثاني ٢٠١٦  
(الإيرادات)

الرقم	الوصف	البيانات	البيانات
١	إيرادات عمل البات المحلي	٥٠٠٠٠	٥٠٠٠٠
٢	إيرادات صندوق وحدة المياه المترجلة الأولى للتعويض	٢٩٦٦٠٠	٢٩٦٦٠٠
٣	كلفة تشغيلية لعمل ضخ المياه من منتظمة بناء التسيوية	٥٧٥٠	٥٧٥٠
٤	إيرادات خارجية	١١٠٠٠٠	٣٣٢٨٠
٥	توقعات ومنح للمجلس المحلي	١١٠٠	١١٠٠

(المصروفات)

الرقم	الوصف	البيانات	البيانات
١	المصروفات ومصروفات المجلس	٣٩٣٠٠٠	٣٩٣٠٠٠
٢	مصرفات البات المحلي والشواتر التابعة له	٤٠٥٠٠٠	٤٠٥٠٠٠
٣	كافة مصروفات مرافق مياه صرف صحي، مرافق شوارع	٦٢٠٠٠	١٣٩٨٢,٨٣
٤	مصاريف إيجار	٥٧٠,٨٥	٥٧٠,٨٥
٥	نقطة شراء اراء لوزر ومكتبة للمجلس	٢٩٣٥٠	٢٩٣٥٠
٦	نقطة نقل وانتقال وأجور نقطة مواد الخالقة	١٥٠٠٠	٣٠٥٠٢
٧	تعميرات ومزايا ومنح	٢١٥٠٠٠	٢١٧٠٩٣
٨	نقطة مياه الصنابير، مستعملون، ترافيك، نقطة لتعمير	٣٦٦٠	٨٨٩٤٠,٣٣
٩	نقطة ضيقة ويوفيه	١٢٧٥٠	٢٨,١٤
١٠	نقطة مشروع دفع صيرج المازوت وقود وخيزار	٥٠١٠٠	١٥٦١٩,٩٢

دارة عزة في ٢٣/١١/٢٠١٦

رئيس المجلس المحلي في دارة عزة  
العدد إبراهيم

رئيس المجلس المحلي في دارة عزة  
د. احمد نصر مصطفر

### مشفى الفردوس

التوليد	عدد حالات الحسة : ٢
عدد الولادات الطبيعية : ٩٣	عدد المولودين بالخواصن : ١٠٦
عدد الولادات القيصرية : ٣٩	عدد الاطفال المولودين : ٢
الكوراج : ١٤	عدد الحمايل : ١٨٩٢
الصلبات الاخرى : ٢	الصيدلة : ١٦٨١

الكلية	عدد مرضى العصور الحاد : ٦
عدد جلسات العسيل : ٣٩٤	عدد المعالجات الداخلية : ٩٣
عدد جلسات الإسعافية : ١١	الطوفون داخل المشفى : ٠
عدد القنطر المزكية : ٩	عدد التذكور تحت ١٨ : ٠

### الأحوال العائلية

وفايات الولادة الحديثة : ١٠	وفايات نقل السكن : ٥	الطعقات العائلية : ٩٠
وفايات الولادة المكتومة : ٤٠	وفايات الطلاق : ١	قود فردية : ١٥٥
وفايات الزواج : ٢٧	وفايات الوفاة : ٣	قيد عائلي : ٩٠

### مواعيد هامة :

داخلية كلية " سبت أحد الثين لثلاثه "	حواصن اطفال ٢٤ ساعة ٧ ايام بالاسوع
فسيال كلية ٢٤ ساعة ٧ ايام بالاسوع	معاقة حونية ٢٤ ساعة ٧ ايام بالاسوع

### مركز الرعاية الأولية

داخلية : بوسا	طبية : " سبت أحد "
اطفال : " أحد الثين خمس "	عامة : " الثين لثلاثه اربعاء خمس "
أولية : " سبت لثلاثه "	نسائية : بوسا

### فيسبوكيات :

**عبدالله جاني**

علما بانني الصماء  
 يحدثنني و احبته  
 نعم هو الكتاب ... خير جلس

**Ahmad Rashed**

الثورة فكر وعمل ، ان نهرم بخسارة معركة أو أرض  
 لانهدد الأمل ، النصر قادم بان الله  
 #الثورة مستمرة

Statement of Cheikh Maksoud Joint Council in which it withdrew the legitimacy of the council of Aleppo City.

“The local council of the liberated city of Aleppo is a revolutionary institution that is subordinate to the will of the people in Aleppo and is currently devoid of its will by some influential people who want to impose their political and personal agendas on the will of the people in the neighborhood (the policy of starvation) In Sheikh Maksoud neighborhood until he regains his true will”



Promotional material produced by the Local councils to incite citizens to register and document their important life events

The screenshot shows a Facebook page for 'السجل المدني في مدينة درعا' (@alsjel.almdanee). The page header includes navigation links for various regions: Raqaa LCs, Hassaka LCs, Daraa PC, RDPC, Latakia PC, Quneitra PC, Aleppo PC, and Idlib PC. The main post is a photo of several civil registry cards with Arabic text, including 'استمارة وفاة' (Death Certificate) and 'استمارة من' (Certificate of Birth). The post has 50 likes and 3 shares. Comments from users like Usama Al Syasna and others are visible, discussing the importance of the civil registry in the liberated areas.

Descriptopn 1 –Print Screen of one of the posts by Daraa City Civil Registry Office with citizens commenting from top to down as follows:

- #Our Civil registry is the secret to our success/together to support our civil registry in Daraa so life continues
- Mashalla
- The losers and the followers of the criminal regime have been betting on the loss of the country and the ability of the revolutionaries in the liberated areas to advance civil life. The civil register is one of the pillars of civil life, which will serve, God willing, better than the regime offered before the revolution.
- May god protect and give you strength



سَجَل

سَجَل عقد زواجك  
لحفاظ على نسب أطفالك

للمزيد من المعلومات يرجى مراجعة أقرب أمانة سجل مدني  
أو الاتصال على الرقم WhatsApp 0969831305

صفحة سجل على فيس بوك  
facebook.com/SajjalSYR

Descriptopn 2- This is one of the printed material that the provincial council of Aleppo produced to encourage people to register their life events. It contains contact information to facilitate people's access to Civil Registration Directories



المجلس المحلي لمدينة دوما

دائرة السجلات العقارية

معلومات!!

- توثيق ممتلكاتك هو ضمان لك ولمستقبل أولادك
- ممتلكاتك أمانة في أعناقنا، وثق ضماننا لنا ولك
- احرص على أن تكون أوراقك نظامية فالسجلات أمانة

Description 3- Another printed material produced by the local council of Douma which says: Information!

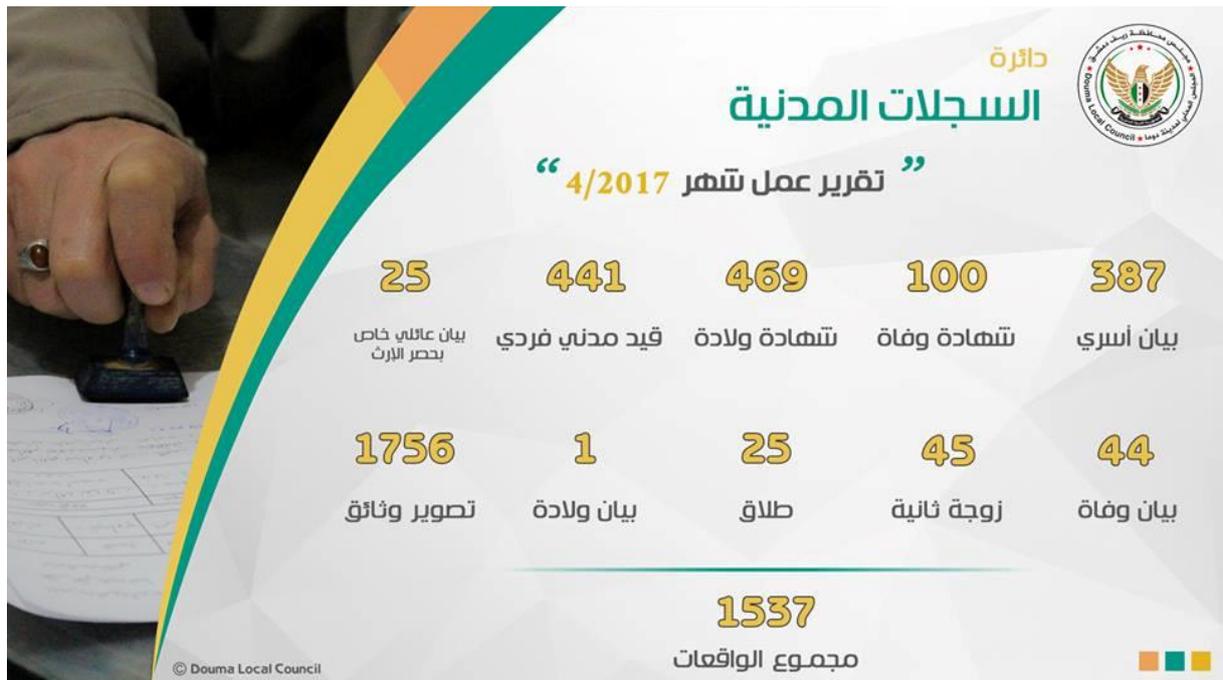
Documenting your properties is a guarantee for you and for the future of your children

Your properties are a precious responsibility, do register it as a guarantee for you and for us

Make sure that your documents are true and official documented because records are responsibility

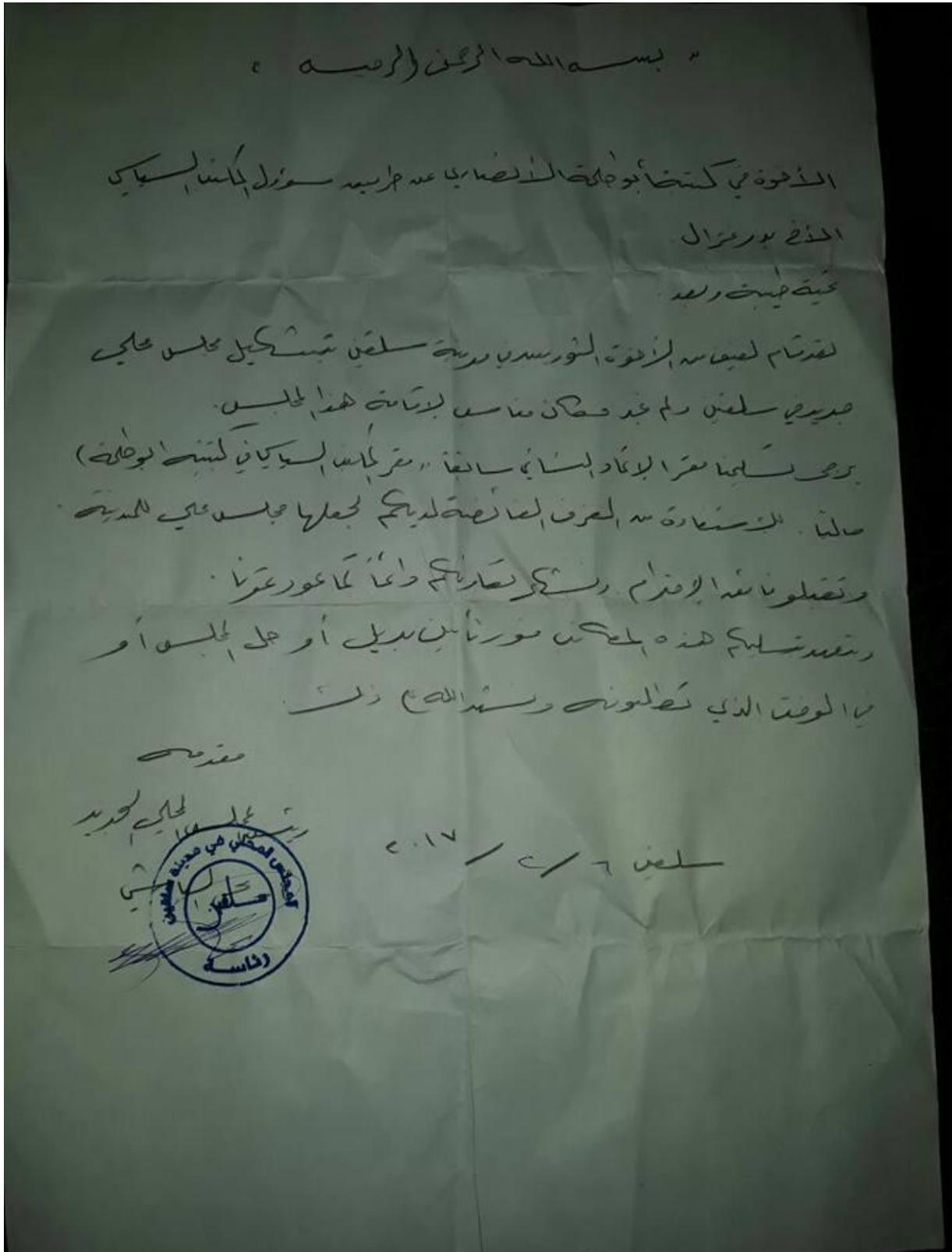


Description 4- Sample of a monthly report on real estate office work at the Douma Local Council. It's for April 2017 where 13232 real estate document were digitalized, 192 application were processed, 48 encumbrances on property, 135 verifications, 5 leases, 547 real estate record issued.



Description 5- Sample of a monthly report on civil records office work at the Douma Local Council. It's for April 2017 where 387 family registration copy, 100 death certificate, 469 birth certificate, 441 individual civil registration copy, 25 special family registration record for determination of heirs, 44 death statement, 45 second wife registration, 35 divorces, birth statement, 1756 documents photographed and documented.

Statement by Salqeen Local Council call Al Nusra Front to evacuate a public building that the council wants to use it as its headquarter







وزع مطبخ أم سميح الوجبات الغذائية على معظم بلدات الغوطة بما فيها جوهر

لكن الكميات لا تكفي، حتى أن الهجمات التي أطبقها تكفي لإطعام 250 عائلة تقريبا، بينما لا تزال عائلات العائلات بأحسن الحاجة للقمح خبز.  
في الفترة الماضية كان التوزيع يتركز على مدينة حرسنا، كونها من أكثر المدن حاجة، لكنني اليوم أوزعه في معظم مدن الغوطة، وخلال شهر رمضان أريد العمل في المناطق الخطرة والبعيدة كمنطقة جوب، التي لا تصلها الحملات الإغاثية ووجبات إقطار الصائمين. أنا لا أضع الطعام في صحن بلاستيك كما يفعل القائمون على مشاريع إقطار صائهم حاليا، نظرا لارتفاع أسعارها، لذلك أطلب من الأهالي إحضار صحن معهم. علاقتي جيدة مع الجميع ولم تعرض لمضايقات من أي أحد، على العكس الجميع يحاول المساعدة على الأقل في تنظيم عمليات التوزيع كي يحصل المحتاجون على حصصهم.

لم تكن التبرعات التي أجمعها كبيرة، فأحيانا كنت أستلم مبلغ 100 دولار أو أكثر، وتأتي التبرعات من برغون بالمساعدة، ثم انشأت صفحة باسم المطبخ على فيس بوك لأواصل مع من يريد تقديم المساعدة. المشكلة الأساسية هي ضعف التمويل، في التبرعات الفردية لا تكفي لإطعام جميع الناس أو حتى لشراء الحطب، بعدما بلغ سعر الكيلو الواحد منه 75 ليرة، ورغم ذلك تابعت العمل حتى استطعت الحصول على مبلغ 285 ألف ليرة، لشراء عدة طابع قديم «مركز تسام الآن» واستطعت دفع تكاليف المكان الذي أصبح مطبخا ومستودعا لتخزين المواد.  
اليوم أنا سعيدة لأنني أستطيع مواصلة الطبخ بشكل شه يومي، كما حصلت على بعض رؤوس الماعز والدجاج، تأمين الحليب والبيض للأطفال في مدينة حرسنا. أتمنى أن أستطيع تقديم الحليب لكل أطفال الغوطة

## أم سميح: من لا شيء تطعم المحبة

سيؤخذ على هذه القصة الصحفية أنها منازرة لبطلة قصتها، وهذه حقيقة، وتبريرها بأنه على الإعلام أن ينحاز للبشر الحقيقيين. ولمن ثابوا يبين الناس بأنهم صادقون، يعطون ولا يأخذون.

فاتن، أو أم سميح كما تحب أن تنادي، لتستعيد اسمها «الدكتور سميح» المعتقل لدى نظام الأسد منذ أكثر من عامين، ولا اعتقال حكليات عديدة معها، فقد اعتقلت مرتين، ونالها قسط إضافي من إساءة قوات النظام كونها فلسطينية الأصل، «أنت فلسطينية شو علاقتك بسورية» كما كان يقول الضابط الذي حقق معها.  
تبدأ القصة التي سترويها أم سميح لنا بعد خروجها من فرع الحطب عام 2014م، ودخولها إلى الغوطة الشرقية، واشتداد حصارها، ليتجاوز سعر كيلو الأرز 1000 ليرة.  
بدأت الأسعار ترتفع والبطائح تتلاشي، وصارت الناس تفقد أوزانها من الجوع، وكنت تعرفت في المعتقل على السيدة «نيرة مرشد»، هي من السهولاء من الطائفة الدرزية، حدثتها عن مدى سوء الوضع الإنساني، فاقترحت على إنشاء مطبخ لإطعام المحتاجين، وفعلا بدأت بمبلغ ساعدتني على تأمينه وهو 150 ألف ليرة. ورغم أن المبلغ لا يكفي لإطعام عدد كبير من الناس، إلا أنني بدأت العمل، واستخدمت أدوات الطبخ التي كان يمتلكها «لواء درع العاصمة» في مدينة حرسنا، كوني لم أملك مطبخ أو أدوات طبخ.  
ومع مرور الوقت وسوء الأوضاع، بدأت البحث عن مصادر لتمويل مطبخي بواجدة، وأطلقت عليه هذا الاسم، على أمل أن تصبح بنا واحدة في مواجهة موت محيط بأهالي الغوطة المحاصرين.

المجالس المحلية | ملحق خاص بصدر عن صحيفة سوريا نتا | 28 حزيران 2015

### استطلاع رأي

**أم وائل، 33 سنة، زوجة شهيد لديها 4 أطفال، حرسنا،** تنتمي أن يكثف المجلس جهوده بالموضوع الإغاثي لأنه بصراحة أكثر ما يهم الناس إن لم نجد ما نأكله ونطعمه لأطفالنا فإن نهم بأي أمر آخر. نسعى بأن الدعم المادي للمجلس قليل لكن نتمنى أن يتواصلوا مع المسؤولين في الخارج لزيادة الدعم لأن الأسعار مرتفعة جدا في الغوطة ولا قدرة لنا على إمالة عائلاتنا.

**مهي، 23 عاماً، حرسنا،** المجلس المحلي يحتاج إلى دعم، طبعاً شركراً لكل الخدمات التي يقدمها بسن هاد الشيء حسب الامكانيات الموجودة بالغوطة.

**أبو وديع، 30 عاماً، درعا،** المجلس المحلي لا يقدم شيء، سرقة بسرعة، وعدونا بمشروع إقطار صائم ما عم تشوف شيء، وون الدعم يلي عم يحي؟

**ياسين، 33 عاماً، حرسنا،** المجلس المحلي مالو أي وجود على الأرض منسجم فيه سمع فقط، ولا يقدم شيء.

**أبو حسن، 55 عاماً، دير الصافيير،** متعاملين خير من حصاد القمح، الله يوفقهم ويوش على إيديهم، والمهم الحكومة المؤقتة تضل عم تدعمن.

## لجنة تطوعية لإحصاء سكان الغوطة تبدأ من حمورية

الأعراض المزمنة والحالة المعيشية للأسر، وبحسب القائمين على المبادرة، فإن هدفها هو حفظ حقوق المقيمين والمغتربين، وععرفة البيوت المدعرة والمسكونة بالنزوحين إلى البلدة، التي تتوسط الغوطة وبنجا إليها الهاربين من القصف والدمار. كذلك تساهم هذه المبادرة في حصر وعرفة الحاجات المجتمعية وترتيب الأولويات والتنسيق بين كافة المكاتب في الغوطة الشرقية، بينما يقول القائمون على المشروع، إن أهم الصعوبات التي تواجههم، هي تكاليف التنقل والطباعة، إلا أنهم مستعدون بالعمل كمتطوعين.  
يذكر أن عدد سكان الغوطة حسب الإحصائية السكانية الحكومية عام 2010م بلغ مليونين وثمان مئة وستة وتسعين ألف نسمة، بينما انخفض عددهم بنسبة 46% خلال عام 2013م بسبب الحصار وقصف قوات النظام للمدنيين، وتقول الإحصاءات التقديرية الحالية إن عدد سكان الغوطة يبلغ اليوم أكثر من خمس مائة ألف نسمة.

وبعد الإحصاء واحداً من أكثر التخصصات أهمية على الإطلاق، لأنه أحد العناصر الرئيسية في أي عمل إداري أو مؤسسي، وهو في التطبيق العملي أحد أهم الركائز التي تساعد صناع القرار على اتخاذ قرارات فعالة في مجال السياسة العامة والبرامج والمشروعات، وذلك عن طريق وضع أفضل الأداة المتوفرة في جوه عملية تطوير السياسات وتنفيذها، عن طريق عمل منهجي وعلمي وعقائلي.  
في التجربة اللبنانية الأقرب إلينا، بعد أربعين عاماً تقريبا مضت على اندلاع الحرب، ليس هناك إحصاء شامل لعدد السكان أو المهاجرين زمن الحرب باستثناء بعض الدراسات المبنية على إحصاءات مبنية، أو على جداول حركة المغادرين والعاثين لدى الأمن العام اللبناني، إضافة إلى غياب أي إحصاء عن الملكيات العقارية وانتقالها زمن الحرب، وهو ما أثر بشكل فعلي على سياسات التنمية والتخطيط بعد اتفاق الطائف، كما سلمهم في ضياح حقوق شرائع بأكملها من المواطنين.

تطوع عدد من شباب مدينة حمورية لتشكيل لجنة مهمتها إجراء إحصاء سكاني دقيق عن العوائل المحاصرة في المدينة، في وقت تعذر فيه الحصول على أرقام دقيقة حول أعداد السكان في الغوطة الشرقية، بسبب القصف البومبي، ودراسة النزوح الداخلي المتكرر. وساعد هذا الإحصاء المجالس المحلية في تقدير حاجاتها الفعلية على المستويات الصحية، والغذائية، والتعليمية. فبدأت اللجنة عملها بتقسيم المدينة إلى قطاعات وأحياء ومبانٍ مرقمة، ثم قامت بإحصاء عدد الأقران، وأدرت مسحا شاملا عن الوضع الصحي والمعيشي للعوائل.  
وتوسّع العمل لاحقا ليشمل جميع مدن وبلدات الغوطة الشرقية، حيث توجهت اللجنة إلى زملكا وعين ترعا وحزة وغيرها لإجراء الإحصاءات بالتنسيق مع المجالس المحلية هناك.  
وشمل الإحصاء المتضررين من الحرب وأصحاب

### "نصف" الصيف في حرسنا

يرى أهالي الغوطة الشرقية أن فصل الصيف يقف لصالحهم ضد نظام الأسد، الذي يعنى في تجميدهم وحرمانهم من أبسط شروط الحياة، إلا أن قبول الصياد يحمل للسكان المحاصرين شروبا جديدة، فارتفع درجات الحرارة أدى إلى انتشار مرض «التقيح» الناتج عن تجمع القمامة وتركها عدة أيام أحيانا.

(أبو عمر 45 عاماً من سكان مدينة حرسنا، يحمل المجلس المحلي مسؤولية انتشار المرض ويتهمه باختيار مناطق محددة لتنظيفها على حساب مناطق أخرى.  
بالمقابل، يقدّر المجلس على لسان إدارته، بعدم قدرته على تخدم المدينة بشكل جيد نتيجة نقص الوقود وتعطل الآليات.



إصلاح شبكات الكهرباء إحدى مهام المجالس المحلي في القابون

## المجلس المحلي في القابون: جهود كبيرة رغم الحصار

بعد هجمة النظام الشرسة على حي القابون وفرضه حصاراً عليه قبل عامين، عملت جهود فردية على إدارة شؤونه المدنية. ليتم الاتفاق لاحقاً، على تأسيس مجلس محلي في أيلول 2014م.

ويقول رئيس المجلس المحلي في حي القابون أبو علي، لسوريانا: إن المجلس يضم كفاءات علمية، ويألف من عدة مكاتب، هي: مكتب الإغاثة، ويعنى بشؤون إغاثة الممنهين القاطنين من أهالي الحي والضيوف من الأحياء المجاورة وأهالي القوطة، ويقدم لهم قدر استطاعته المواد الغذائية وحبوب الأطلاق، إلى جانب تأمين المساعدة للعائلات الفقيرة والمعدة.

مكتب الإسعاف، الذي يعمل على مدار الساعة لإسعاف الجرحى المصابين، وتخدمهم وإرسالهم إلى المستشفى من أجل المراجعات ومكتب الأذن، الذي يقوم بتخديم المقبرة وتجهيزها وتسجيل الوفيات.

وتعمل الورشة الصحية، على إصلاح وتخدم شبكة المياه في الحي، بينما تعمل ورشة طوارئ الكهرباء على إصلاح وتمديد شبكات الكهرباء المنخفضة والمتوسطة التوتر.

أما مكتب النفاذ، فيحتاج مكتب إخلاء ومركز إطفاء، وكان يضم ورشة أعمال النظافة، وبسبب عدم توفر الدعم الكافي قامت مؤسسة حياة بتعني الورشة.

يضاف إلى ذلك مكتب الإحصاء، ومهمته إحصاء سكان الحي والشهداء والأيتام، كما توضع المجالس المحلية أيضاً، مكتباً طبياً وأخر تعليمياً، ومؤسسة حياة تتكفل بحمام هذين المكتبين على أكمل وجه، ويأتي الدعم

المادي من الحكومة المؤقتة والمجمعات الإغاثية ولكن هذا الدعم لا يكفي لتأمين متطلبات الحي.

ويذكر أبو علي « أن المجلس المحلي في القابون، ينفذ مشاريع عديدة، بينها مشروع شبكة المياه، ويقوم على مد شبكة مياه آبار لتغطية الحي، ومشروع حيواني، يضم أبقاراً ودجاجاً، وهو مشروع تنموي يؤمن الحليب للحي، وفي طور الإنشاء لتأمين البيض أيضاً.

ويخدم المجلس المحلي - وفق تصريح رئيسه - ما يقارب 20 ألف نسمة، يتعاونون معه بشكل جيد، لمعرفة ظروف العمل وضعوباته الكثيرة، وأهمها نقص الدعم المادي لمكاتب المجلس، وصعوبة تأمين مواد ومستلزمات العمل، نتيجة الحصار الذي يخضع له الحي، بينما يصل عدد العاملين في المجلس إلى 60 عاملاً.

### استطلاع رأي

#### أبو بلال، 30 عاماً، هاماً، القابون،

محطة توليد الكهرباء موهوبة بالحي، ومن هنا يتطوع للمنطقة الثانية، المجلس يوزع الساعات على كيفة، وبأدوب بتجي 3 ساعات بالنهاية.

#### فارس، 25 سنة، هروين،

المجلس عظيم جداً ولا يمكن لأحد أن يصدق كيف تم إنشاء كل هذه المكاتب من لا شيء وفي ظل الحصار والقتل على معارضة الخارج أن تخجل من نفسها وأن تنظر لهذه المجالس والتجارب الرائدة وتدعمها بكل ما لديها من إمكانيات لأنها فعلاً نواة للدولة السورية الحقيقية بعد سقوط النظام.

#### أبو موسى، 60 عاماً، والد ثلاث شهداء، دوما،

لما يشوف وجهه شراب مكتب الخدمات بدوما عم يشتغل بتنظيف الشوارع أو يدخلها لمنع الحشرات والأمراض، قلبي من جوا يقفح، يا عم القوطة رح ترجع تعم، الله يوفقن ويحمين.

#### أبو علي، 38 عاماً، مقاتل في الجيش الحر، الشيفونية،

إخواننا في المجلس المحلي لمحينة دوما لا تدرى عنهم سوى الخير والعتاب، ومنتظر توحيد الجهود في المؤسسات الفاعلة بالمدينة.

#### أبو خالد، دوما،

قبل أسبوعين كنت بدائرة النفوس بالمجلس المحلي بدوي سول مولود ابن أخي استشهد قبل شهرين، ما شاء الله عليهم يا أخي لما تشوف هدول الناس يوزع فينا الأمل ويثقلنا تشوف بكرأ أعلى.

#### أبو البراء، 35 عاماً، سقيا،

ليس عم تغطوا أخبار المجالس؟ شو إلكن مصلحة معن؟ ومن عم بدعمك؟

#### سعيد، 28 عاماً، كفر بشتا،

في كثير شغلات متعبة بالمجالس بشكل عام، وفي أفكار حلوة لبناء سورية وإعادة إعمار القوطة، بس بدما دعم لأن دواتب الموظفين ما عم بقدرنا بأمتها مثل الناس.

## مجموعة الحياة للتنمية في حي القابون

لتعليم الأطفال المتقطعين عن الدراسة بسبب الحصار والنزوح.

بدأت المجموعة تتوسع في أواخر العام 2013 مع ازدياد مشاريعها وعدد العاملين فيها، واليوم تعمل بشكل أساسي في حي القابون وتخدم عدد من الأحياء المجاورة مثل بركة وتشرين ودرستا الغربية.

تقوم المجموعة بدعم كل من مشفى الحياة الذي يتضمن مشفى للعمليات الجراحية ومشفى للتوليد ومشفى للجراحة العينية وعيادة أسنان ومخبر ومجموعة عيادات شاملة، ومدرسة الحياة التي تقوم على تعليم مئات الطلاب في كافة المراحل الدراسية، إضافة إلى بعض المشاريع التشغيلية والإغاثية التي تهدف لتأمين مواد غذائية أساسية لعدد من أهالي المنطقة.

هي مجموعة غير ربحية لا تتبع لأي جهة سياسية أو عسكرية أو منطوقية. وهي عدد من الشباب والنشطين والذين يعملون بدعم ومساندة من المجتمع المحلي وبعض المنظمات ذات الطابع الإنساني، ويهدفون أولاً وأخيراً للعمل من أجل الإنسان، ومن أجل مستقبل سوريا.

تأسست مجموعة الحياة للتنمية في حي القابون في منتصف العام 2012 خلال ظروف حرب عنيفة وحصار شبه مطبق على مناطق ريف دمشق، وذلك عن طريق عدد من الشباب والنشطين الذين عملوا واهتموا بشكل أساسي بالأمر الطبي والتعليمي.

وكانت البداية على شكل عمل فردي بون تأسيس مجموعة بشكل معلن، حيث تم العمل على تأسيس مشفى ميداني في الحي لعلاج جرحى الحرب، ومعهد



يضم مشفى الحياة مشفى للعمليات الجراحية ومشفى للتوليد ومشفى للجراحة العينية وعيادة أسنان ومخبر ومجموعة عيادات شاملة



## استطلاع رأي

**سبير، 25 سنة، القنيطرة، منسق من العيش**  
 لا يوجد شفافية في عملهم وعمل معظم المنظمات، يوزعون 100 وجبة ويلتقطون ألف صورة، على الداعمين أن يصفوا نظام رقابة أفضل لا أن يوقفوا المساعدات عند اكتشاف الفساد.

**همام، 40 سنة، القنيطرة**  
 متشغلون بالمناصب والخلافات والتكتلات، لا وقت لديهم لحل مشاكل الناس معظم مشاريعهم على الورق فقط.

**شعلان، 25 سنة، القنيطرة**  
 مجالس بظلال!

**أبو مصعب، 35 سنة، الثعينة**  
 نحن نسمع من حملات إغالة لا تنتهي، وعن منظمات ومشاريع لدرجة أنك تعتقد أن درعاً صارت حجة، لكن نحن نسمع فقط وما نستلمه من إغالة أقل بكثير من الكلام.

**مروان الحريري، 50 سنة، الثعينة**  
 المجلس المحلي مشكور يعمل على النظافة ولولاهم لأكلنا المرض.

**هشام الشيع، 25 سنة، الثعينة**  
 صحيح لسنا متينين من الجوع، ولكننا نبيع الدم من طلع القور حتى الليل، لكي نؤمن ثمن ربة خبز وبعض الخضار - اللحم نسيناه تماماً.

**أبو محمد الفارس، 35 سنة، نبع الصخر**  
 نحن نسمع باسم المجلس المحلي، أو مجالس محافظة، وتعريف أعضاء، حتى إنهم كانوا مجالس محافظة، ولكن لا نستفيد منهم بشيء. يتقن البيلد كل شيء طحين، وتعليقات، وقرب عمل.

**سعيد الداني، 45 سنة، نبع الصخر**  
 كل شيء موجود، ولكن لا نستطيع شراء، فقيدت عملي منذ ثلاث سنوات، وبعد إصابتي بشلل في الظهر، ولا أستطيع الوقوف لفترة طويلة، لدي ثمانية أولاد، اثنان منهم يعملان في الزراعة، والباقي صفار، وأخاف عليهم من الطرقات.

**محمد أبو التوب، 35 سنة، نبع الصخر**  
 الأمراض منتشرة بسبب ارتفاع الحرارة، وبقاء القمامة لفترة طويلة في الشوارع، وتطالب المجالس بالتدريك بسرعة لإيجاد أطفالنا من المرض، نحن نعرف أنهم لا يستطيعون منع النضف هنا، لكن على الأقل عليهم مساعدة الناس على تنظيف الشوارع.

**محمد شيعان، 45 سنة، نبع الصخر**  
 مجالس محلية تعني خدمات، ونحن لا نعرف الخدمات منذ زمن، لكن نشكر كل العاملين في مشرفي المدينة، والله لا نؤمن الليل، ويسهرون على راحة الضالين، وهم متعبون، ولا نسمع منهم شكوى رغم تعبهم وكثرة الإصابات.

**أبو وليد الشيع، 50 سنة، نبع الصخر**  
 الأسد لا يرحم، وهم لا يرحمون أولادنا مرضى، ولا يوفدوا، وبصراحة أنا لا أصدق أي أحد يعمل، أو يقبض نقوداً على أسمائنا، أين ذهب الدعم!!

**ممدوح البيضا، 25 سنة، نبع الصخر**  
 الله بنصر الجيش الحر والمجاهدين، فهم لم يقصروا أبداً، يساعدوننا في كل شيء بأعمال النقل، والتنظيفات والإغالة. ومعالجتهم جيدة على الدوام، أما المجالس فلا نسمع منها إلا الاعتماد المالي لهم بصل، أو المازوت مرتفع السعر، ولا تستطيع تسديد الآلات.

**أم فاتح، 38 سنة، نبع الصخر**  
 الصق أنهم لا يقصدون، وخلال رمضان وداعاً علينا الرزق، وربة، وسعداً، وفي العيد قدّموا لنا، ولكن الكمية انتهت، والأسعار عالية جداً.

## مخيمات تشكو سوء الخيم، وأخرى تختبرها مما يوفره العراء



قادت التطورات العسكرية الأخيرة التي شهدتها مناطق محافظة القنيطرة، إلى تقادم الوضع الإنساني للمدنيين، وازدادت أزمة النزوح والتشرد من معاناة الأهالي، حيث لجأ بعضهم إلى مخيمات مرتجلة، صنعت من الأقمشة والأغطية، في حين أن المخيمات النظامية، مثل «أمل» و«ديقة» و«الرحمة» و«الشحرار»، تعاني من نقص في أبسط الاحتياجات، من ماء الشرب وصولاً إلى مكونات الخيم نفسها، وذلك وفق ما يؤكد بعض سكان مخيم «الرحمة» في ريف القنيطرة في حديث مع صحيفة (سوريتنا).  
 ويقول أبو نعمان ذوال45 عاماً «أجسامنا باتت ضعيفة لدرجة أنها لم تعد قادرة على مقاومة الأمراض كالرشح، والكثيرون هنا يصابون بالحمى، وقرط الحساسية». فيما يشير أبو خالد، وهو أحد سكان المخيم، إلى أن النازحين لا يحصلون على السبل الغذائية إلا في مناسبات قليلة، ويتابع: «وما يرد إلينا لا يكفي لإطعام الجميع».  
 تنتشر المخيمات في المحافظة التي تشهد حتى اليوم معارك عنيفة بين قوات المعارضة وقوات النظام، على السواحل الجبلية منها، وعلى أطراف الطرقات الواقعة بين القرى، وبعضها مسجل من قبل المنظمات الداعمة وهيئة تنسيق الدعم، وبعضها لا يعرف وجوده إلا العابرون من الطرقات القريبة من تلك المخيمات، فيما وجدت مئات الأسر في المناطق المحاذية للشرطة الحدودية مكاناً مناسباً لنصيب الخيم بحقق أهم الأمن على اعتبار أن نيران النظام السوري لا تصل إلى هذه المنطقة لأنها قريبة من خط منع إطلاق النار.  
 يقدر ناشطون أن أكثر من 50 بالمائة من سكان القنيطرة هم في عداد النازحين اليوم، حيث تنتشر آلاف الأسر في عشرات المخيمات في ريف المحافظة، فيما لا يعرف من تلك المخيمات إلا القليل التي لا تحصل على الدعم الكافي.

## مركز زيتون الثقافي

### نحو تقوية سواعد اليافعين في مواجهة الحرب

بلغ عدد المستفيدين من دورات التمريض التي يقيها مركز «غصن زيتون الثقافي» حتى اليوم 150 يافعاً وياقة، ومثلهم من دورات الرسم والخط، و125 مستفيداً من ورشات الخياطة والتسبيغ، حيث يتنقل المركز الكائن في منطقة «الرفيد» بريف القنيطرة أبوابه يومياً لمجموعة من اليافعين (12 - 18 عاماً)، من أهالي المنطقة والبلدات المجاورة.



ويقدم المركز عدداً من الدورات التدريبية والتعليمية، وبرامج الدعم النفسي التي تعمل على تطوير مرتديه وإكسابهم مهارات مهنية وعملية، تساعدهم على مواجهة ظروفهم الصعبة التي يعيشون بها في ظل الحرب.  
 بدأ المركز العمل منذ بداية العام الجاري، وتم افتتاحه رسمياً في بداية شباط الماضي، حيث تتشارك «منظمة غصن زيتون» و«مدرسة» في رعاية المركز وإعداده بالدعم اللازم، بما من بصرى ينقل الطلاب يوماً من وإلى قرأهم، ووصولاً إلى كل تفاصيل العمل الأخرى.  
 يشير أبهم «الرفيد» مدير المكتب الإعلامي لتجمع غصن زيتون إلى أن الهدف الأساسي من إنشاء المركز، هو إخراج هؤلاء اليافعين من الواقع الصعب الذي يعيشونه، من خلال تعليمهم نشاطات ومهنًا مختلفة.

إن كثيراً من المنقطعين عن الدراسة يتكلمون المركز الثقافي، خاصة من النازحين، بينما يوجد الكثير من الطلاب الذين كانوا في المدارس صاروا يرتدون المركز أيضاً، حيث يشير الرفيد إلى وجود دورات تراعى ساعات الدوام المدرسي.  
 يشير إلى أن تجمع «غصن زيتون» هو منظمة عمل مدني تقوم بجهود عدد من الشبان والشابات المتطوعات اللائقي بـ«المرح» بالعمل لأجل الإنسان، وقد بدأ عمله منذ شهر تشرين الأول 2012م، ببعض النشاطات، ثم توسع من مبادراته لثلاثة أشخاص إلى مجموعة للعمل المدني، فمؤسسة تشرّف على عشر مدارس، وتستقبل أكثر من ثلاثة آلاف طفل، إلى جانب نشاطات وأعمال أخرى. أما منظمة «مدرسة» فقد تأسست في منتصف 2013م، وتعمل على تقديم الدعم النفسي، والتعليمي، والترفيهي للأطفال واليافعين والمرأة، ولها عشر مراكز في محافظتي درعا والقنيطرة، وفي لقاء المنظمين يكمل مركز «زيتون الثقافي» عمله، ويستمر «ما استمر الدعم له من قبل المنظمات الداعمة له»، ويهدف الكلمات بختم الرفيد حديثه عن المركز.

ويتمتع المركز اليافعين، والتي تسعى، وفق قوله، إلى إخراجهم من أجواء الحرب والأوضاع الصعبة، ومحاولة الوقوف على الإضرابات النفسية وعلاجها، وقد تمّ علاج عدة حالات خلال الأشهر الخمسة الماضية، حيث تتم جلسات الدعم النفسي في المركز بشكل يومي.

ملق خاص بمصدر عن صحيفة سوريتنا يعنى بتغطية أصال المجالس المحلية والبلديات المدنية داخل سوريا | درعا - القنيطرة 13 | 26 تموز 2015

## قُصِفَ وَنُقِلَ وَتَنَقَّصَهُ الْمَوَارِدُ: النُّورُ، مَرْكَزُ طَبِّهِ لِلتَّوْلِيدِ بَرِيفَ دَرَعَا



في ظلِّ عدم إمكانية التوجه إلى المشافي الموجودة في مناطق سيطرة النظام خوفاً من الاعتقال العشوائي على الحواجز التابعة له، واستمرار الإشتباكات المستمرة على الطرقات، وفي ظل غياب مراكز مؤهلة للتوليد، يدل الخوف والترقب مكان الفرح بقدم مولود جديد لعائلة في ريف درعا الخاضع لسيطرة المعارضة، وهذه المخاوف ما يبرِّرها في ظل ارتفاع عدد الوفيات بين الأطفال حديثي الولادة خلال العام الأول لسيطرة المعارضة على المنطقة.

تمّ مؤخرًا، وتلبية للحاجات الملحة، افتتاح مراكز مجانية تخصص برعاية الأمهات الحوامل والأطفال حديثي الولادة كمركز النور، ومركز الأمل، وغيرها من المراكز الأخرى التي تعمل في الشأن ذاته.

يضم مركز النور، وهو أحد أهم تلك المراكز، مجموعة من العيادات (أطفال، نسائية، قسم للتوليد الطبيعي، إضافة إلى العمليات القيصرية)، كما يضم قسما لتحاليل الطبية الإسفافية للأطفال المقبولين بالمركز.

براعي المركز العيادات الاجتماعية المساندة في المنطقة، حيث تقدّم الرعاية النسائية خدماتها عن طريق طبيبة نسائية، وعمر من القبائل القاتونيات، اللاتي يتابعن المرأة الحامل منذ بداية حملها، أما العيادات التي تتّم خارج المركز، ثمّ يستقبلون الأطفال حديثي الولادة بعد عرضهم على طبيب مختص لتقييم مدى حاجتهم للحضانة، وإعطائهم اللقاحات الضرورية.

خلال عمله تعرّفن المركز للقصص المنبغية والحربي عدة مرات، مما أوجب نقله من بلدة المسيقرة إلى بلدة كديبل، والتي تعدّ منطقتين أقلّ خطورة من غيرها، نظرا لما يتطلبه المركز من أمان وهدوء للمرأة الحامل والطفل، ويقدم المركز أيضا، وعلى الرغم من تخصصه بالنساء والأطفال، الإسعافات الأولية، والاستشارات للمرضى جميعا في حالات الضرورة.

أمّ سامر (24 عاماً) تقول: حقّرنا كثيرا قبل الإنجاب في هذه الظروف، لكن الحياة لبّدت من أن تستصعب، وقد تمتّ ولادة ابنتي في المركز محاطة بعناية طبية والممرضين،

بجهد القائمين على المركز، على الرغم من النقص الشديد في المواد والبنية التحتية في المركز، مثل مادة ماء الأوكسجين، للتحفاط على حياة الأم والوليد قدر الإمكان، ولم تتجاوز نسبة وفيات الأطفال حديثي الولادة

## آبار عشوائية تهدّد بجفاف الجنوب السوري

بعدم القاصي والداني، أن تنقص المياه ليس مشكلة جديدة على أهالي المناطق المحررة في سوريا، ولطالما اتجه الأهالي في إيجاد الحلول وحفر المزيد من الآبار، الأمر الذي كشف عن خطر حقيقي يهدّد المخزونات المائية الجوفية اليوم، وحتى مخزونات السدود، كسد درعا الشرقي وسد سحم الجولان في محافظة درعا، وهما من أضخم السدود في الجنوب السوري، وذلك مع استمرار انقطاع شبكة المياه الرئيسية عن معظم مدن وبلدات المنطقة الجنوبية. ويؤكد الناطق الإعلامي، منتصر أبو التوت لـ «سوريته» أن أهالي محافظتي درعا والقنيطرة «يعانون صعوبات في تأمين مياه الشرب، بسبب توقف مضخات المياه وارتفاع تكلفة الوقود، وكذلك تكلفة حفر الآبار، كما أنّ الجهود المبذولة من قبل المجالس المحلية لتزويد الأهالي بالمياه لا تكفي، فتكاليف الحفر والنقل المرتفعة تقف كعائق كبير أمام تأمين مياه الشرب».

من جهة أخرى، يؤكد المزارع أحمد الدريبي من مونة طقس، أنه ومن حوله يدركون الخطر الكامن وراء حفر الآبار، ويحدون تقسيمهم «مجردين على هذا الأمر، إذ ما من طريقة أخرى لتأمين مياه الري للزراعات، دحّ عنك صعوبات الحفر وارتفاع تكلفته، وإمتثال الخرفى في استخراج ماء في النهاية».

أما مونس محافظة درعا فهو «عاجز عن منع حفر الآبار المخالفة أو تأمين البديل للأهالي»، وذلك وفق تأكيدات الدكتور معاذ قطيفان، عضو مجلس محافظة درعا، والذي يقول: «إن غياب السطحة الفضائية والتفتيشية، هو ما أوصلنا إلى هذه الحال العشوائية في حفر الآبار، حيث لا يمكن السيطرة على هذه المسألة في ظل الفوضى، وغياب دولة القانون، وآليات المحاسبة. ونحن لا نملك القوة التنفيذية لمنع حفر الآبار العشوائية، نعلم نقوم بالتوعية، ولكنها لا تكفي».

## التكافل الاجتماعي

يقصد بالتكافل الاجتماعي أن يكون أفراد المجتمع مشاركين في المحافظة على المصالح العامة والخاصة، وتخفيف الأضرار المادية والمعنوية، حيث يشعر كل فرد فيه أن عليه إلى جانب الحقوق التي له، واجبات لأخريه، وخاصة أولئك الذين ليس باستطاعتهم أن يحققوا حاجاتهم الخاصة، وذلك بإضمار المنافع إليهم، ودفْع الأضرار عنهم.

التكافل الاجتماعي الذي يمارسه مجتمعنا فطريا يبدو نموذجا متقدما عن فكرة الضمان الاجتماعي التي أفرّتها الأمم المتحدة، ويعني: أن تقوم الدولة بإعانة المحتاجين، وضمان أمنهم الاقتصادي. وهو مصطلح خاص يشمل الأمور المادية فقط، ويصدر عن جهف واحدة، أما التكافل الاجتماعي فيشارك فيه جميع أفراد المجتمع، وسدّي التكافل تكافلا لأنه بين اثنين من بابي التفاعل، سواء كان بين مجموعة، أو فرد، تكافل القوم، أي: كفل بعضهم بعضا، أم بين طرفين، حيث يكفل كل طرف طرفه. ويشمل التكافل الاجتماعي التكافل المعنوي، والأدبي، والأخلاقي، والروحي الذي يعدّه بعض الناس أقل رتبة من التكافل المادي والاقتصادي، وقد يعدّونه نوعاً من الهروب من الإطار الحقيقي للتكافل الاجتماعي المادي، وهو رأي مجانبٍ للضوابط على اعتبار أن التكافل المادي لا يتحقق أهدافه إلا بالوقوف فوق الأرضية المعنوية والأدبية.

التكافل ليس غريبا عن مجتمعاتنا، فهو قديمٌ بقدمها، ومرتبطةٌ ببداية المجتمع الزراعي في حوران مثلا، وقد أتى الإسلام فعزّزه، وأدخله في صلب العقيدة، قال تعالى في سورة المائدة: «وتعاونوا على البرِّ والتقوى، وفي سورة البقرة: أو اتى المال على دمه نوى القرّينى واليتامى والمساكين وابن السبيل والسائلين وفي الرّقاب».

أما عن دور التكافل في تعزيز عمل المؤسسات في سوريا فأولية معكوسة، حيث قامت المؤسسات بتنظيم التكافل على منوال المؤسسات، فالإنعاق، والتعليم، والرعاية الطبية كلها بدأت بمبادرات مجتمعية أو فردية أنت المؤسسات لتنظيمها، وتكوينها، وتحقيق الفائدة الأكبر من نشاطاتها، حتى إنه يمكن عدّ الحراك المسلح تعبيرا عن التكافل الخفائي الذي يعرفه الفقه بأن يتطوع البعض لحماية الجماعة برأ الخطر خارجي.

## استطلاع رأي

### أم مهدي، 45 سنة، طريق السلد

استشهد زوجي وأبني الكبير، وابتني حامل، وزوجها استشهد منذ شهرين، عايشين من قلة الموت، وتبذل على الصاج، لأنّ رغيفاً خبز المعتمدين قال.

### ميس السائلة، 35 سنة، طريق السلد

بقينا أكثر من أسبوع تحت الشمس على الحدود مع الأرين، وما سمعنا لنا بالذخول، وحتى عندّ معبر تصب المجرّ متعونا من العصور لأننا لا نملك أوراقا ثبوتية بأثنا، هذه هي المشكلة وجلاها بسيط مع المجالس المحلي لكنهم لا يهتمون.

### أبو خلدون، 50 سنة، تل شهاب

أنا فتحت بيتي للمهجرين من أيّتي بحاجة إلى ثمن أيرته، لكنّ أوضاعنا سيئة جدا، ويقوم في بيتي ثلاث عائلات تهجرت من درعا، وتصلهم بعض المعونات أحيانا، فتشارك فيها، ولو أنها لا تكفي لعائلة واحدة.

### أبو الهراء، 40 سنة، درعا البلد

الله يدحم أيام حوران! لحدّ ما يخطر بالبال أن تفكر بالأكل والشرب، ربطة الخبز بسدود 100 و200، والبراهيل فوق رؤوسنا، ولمن تشككي! المجلس دائما ينقصه الدّم، والشباب كلهم على الجبهات، ولا تعلم متى يعودون إلنا شهداء.

### عمود، 29 سنة، القنيطرة

مسخرة وبيع وطنيات... بلعون على الشعب بلي التعن أبو أمه، وصار تحت الصفر بمئات السنين، بلي تشردّ وبلي قتل أولاده.

### أبو صلاح، 45 عاماً، خان الزبية

أتمنى أن تكون قرارات المجالس المحلية ملازمة، وينظموا المعاملات التجارية وشراء المواد الزراعية وتوزيعها بشكل أفضل، وألا يتساعلوا مع المخالفين والمحتكرين الذين زادوا كثيرا بسبب الفوضى، وكلّ من إيدو إلّ».

### مهد الرجمي، 38 سنة، نبع الصفر

جهودهم مشكورّة، يعنون الشعب على مصائبه الكثيرة.

### أبو فاضل، 50 سنة، الرفيد

لا أحد يعرف كيف تشكّلت هذه المجالس ومن قدر أعضاءها، لا فرق بينها وبين بلدات النظام.

### قاسم، 23 سنة، جيا

يعنون قدامى توزعوا المناصب بينهم ويسدقون كالمسابق، المنظمات وحدها من تقدّم بعض الخدمات.



## نحو إعادة تدوير عجلة الإنتاج الزراعي في القنيطرة: منح تنمية من منظمة «مدد»



أطلقت منظمة «مدد» مؤخراً مشروعاً لتمويل 300 مزارع يقيم في مناطق «مترقة» من محافظة القنيطرة، لزراعة أراضيهم بمحاصيل بعالية كالقمح، والشعير، والفول، والبالا، للموسم الزراعي الشتوي للعام القادم، بهدف إعادة تفعيل الإنتاج الزراعي الذي تضرر بفعل الحرب الدائرة منذ نحو عامين بين الثوار وقوات النظام.

وبأني المشروع في إطار جهود منظمات المجتمع المدني للانتقال بالمجتمع المحلي من الاعتماد على المنظمات الإغاثية في الحصول على المساعدات الإنسانية، إلى الإنتاج والاكتفاء الذاتي، من خلال مشاريع صغيرة تسلمه في تدوير العجلة الاقتصادية، وتشغيل أكبر قدر من العاطلين عن العمل. وأعلنت المنظمة أنها ستقدم دعماً مالياً لزراعة خمسة دونمات وسطيها لكل مزارع، شريطة وجود ملكية قانونية للأرض، متعا لسرقة أرض جورها أصحابها. وتمثل الدعم المقدم في حراثة الأرض لمرتين بأليات تؤمنها المؤسسة، إضافة إلى تأمين البذار والأسمدة والمبيدات الحشرية، وتأمين عملية الحصاد بشكل كامل، كما اشترطت المنظمة على المزارعين أن تحصل على 20% من المحصول، لتقديهما للفئات الأشد حاجة وتضراً في المحافظة.

ويتوقع الأستاذ أبو زيد مدير المنظمة أن يكون مردود المشروع قرابة 750 ألف كيلو غرام من القمح من 1500 دونم سوف يتم زراعتها، مع كتلة «ملفية» يستفاد منها في تغذية المواشي والحيوانات.

وستتقدم المنظمة أليات لتوفير معدنة بالتعاون مع الجهة الممولة، على أن تكون الأولوية للنساء والأسر التي لا تمتلك مهيلاً لها، والمهندسين الزراعيين ومساعديهم. وسيفتح باب التقدم إلى المنحة بدءاً من أول آب المقبل حتى الخامس والعشرين منه، وتسلم الاستمارات المعبأة لمكاتب المنظمة، أو المركز الزراعي في قرية الناصرية، أو مقرات اللجان المحلية في القرى عند تعذر وصول المزارعين إلى المكاتب المذكورة.

ونكر مدير المؤسسة في تصريح لـسورييتنا أن اختصاصين زراعيين سيقومون بالإشراف على العمل من خلال زيارات ميدانية دورية في مختلف مراحل الزراعة، من أجل ضمان حسن سير العملية الزراعية، والحصول على أكبر إنتاجية ممكنة. وتحاول «مدد» تطبيق معايير الجودة والمراقبة في العمل،

السورية المؤقتة ومؤسسات المعارضة كميات كافية من القمح. ويشتر إلى أن قلة المياه وعوامل البيئة التحتية، إضافة إلى ضعف إمكانيات النفاق المديني أثناء الحرائق، وهجران المدينيين للزراعة، وعوامل إضافية، أسهمت في تراجع قطاع الزراعة والإنتاج الحيواني الذي يعتبر المردود الاقتصادي الأول في المحافظة، إذ تشكل الأراضي الزراعية ما مساحته 21,1% من مساحة القنيطرة الإجمالية، كما تقدر الأراضي الصالحة للزراعة بحوالي 57,6%، بحسب الأرقام الصادرة عن وزارة الزراعة والإصلاح الزراعي في حكومة النظام. ويذكر أن منظمة «مدد» هي مؤسسة كندية غير حكومية وفيد ربحية تعمل في الأجزاء المحررة من القنيطرة بالتعاون مع المجالس المحلية، وشركاء محليين منذ العام 2012م، في قطاعات الإغاثة والتنمية والتعليم والدعم النفسي.

إذ طلبت من المزارعين الاتصال القوي مع مجالس إدارة المنظمة، أو مسؤولي المراقبة والتقييم وضبط الجودة، في حال وجود أية شكوى أو ملاحظة ذلك عن خلال عملية التقويم، أو فرز النتائج.

وبالتوازي مع ذلك تحاول المنظمة دعم مزارعي المحافظة عن طريق وضع مركز «مدد» الزراعي الاستشاري الواقع في قرية الناصرية، تحت تصرفهم على أن يكون مفتوحاً لجميع المزارعين الفائقين وغير الفائقين بالمشاريع طيلة أيام الأسبوع، وذلك من التاسعة صباحاً وحتى الخامسة مساءً بدءاً من أيلول القادم وحتى نهاية أيار 2016م.

وكان القصف المتعمد والمتواصل عن طيران وعنفوية النظام خلال الشهر الماضي، قد أدى إلى التضييق على المزارعين أثناء حصاد محصول القمح والشعير، إضافة إلى احتراق أجزاء واسعة منه، ما يجعل السكان أمام أزمة غذائية خلال الشتاء القادم، في حال لم تستورد الحكومة

ملحق خاص بصدر عن صحيفة سورييتنا يعنى بتغطية أخبار المجالس المحلية والمبادرات المدنية داخل سوريا | درعا - القنيطرة 3 | 26 تموز 2015

### استطلاع رأي

ناصر، 40 سنة، القنيطرة

إذا المحافظ خطوه غضب من كل واحد، فما بالك بالمجالس المحلي.

خلدون، 27 سنة، بير حميم

أعتهم الله على العمل في هذه الظروف الصعبة.

الحاج نوري، 61 سنة، القنيطرة

عليهم تأمين المازوت في المنطقة، ومعالجة المحتكرين، أسعار المواضات مرتفعة جداً، والأحوال المادية للسكان في الحضيض.

كامل، 43 سنة، حن أولية

ما في مجلس محلي ولا دعم مثل الناس والخلق، بحس شاطرين يحطو صور إلهن ح القيسويك بدون أي خدمات حقيقية.

هيام، 26 سنة، حن أولية

عليهم ألا يسمحو للفضائل العسكرية بالتدخل في أعمالهم، وأطالب الجيش الحر بالتفرغ للجبهات من أجل تحرير كامل المحافظة من قوات النظام.

رجا، 31 سنة، اللويضية

يتوجب على المجالس المحلي شراء مولدات ضخمة «مبيرات» وتوزيعها في الأحياء السكنية.

أم أحمد، 70 سنة، حدير البستان

ليس هناك من يهتم بتأمين المياه، بحس حفر آبار جديدة وفحص المياه الخاصة بالشرب.

### مبادرات ثقافية في القنيطرة

#### نحو استجابة أفضل، لتدريب عبر الإنترنت

دعا مكتب الموارد البشرية لمنظمة «مدد» في القنيطرة ناشطي المحافظة إلى التقدم لإجراء دورة عبر الإنترنت، بعنوان: «نحو استجابة أفضل»، وهي دورة موجهة للمهتمين بالعمل الإنساني، حيث تقدم الدورة خيارات ومعلومات حول أسس العمل الإنساني، والقانون الدولي الناظم له، وطرق تحميل المشاريع الإنسانية والتخطيط لها، وبأني هنا في إطار سعي منظمات المجتمع المدني في القنيطرة إلى تطوير عملها وخبراتها. وتكرت المنظمة على صفحتها على موقع «فيس بوك» أن من يكمل الأجزاء الخمسة للتدريب المقدم من جامعة أهارفارد باللغات العربية، أو الإنكليزية، أو الفرنسية، سوف يكون له الأولوية في التقدم إلى فرص العمل التي تعلن عنها المنظمة في القنيطرة.

#### محااضرة عن مخاطر الحرب

سلسلة من محاضرات التوعية حول مخاطر الحرب، وبحقوق المدينيين أقامتها منظمة «مدد» في القنيطرة، إضافة إلى دروس توعوية حول جراحة الحرب اعتماداً على مناهج من إعداد الهلال الأحمر القطري بالتعاون مع الدكتور «مكروتموس يانوس»، وهو أحد أصحاب الخبرة الواسعة في العمل الطبي أثناء الكوارث والحروب.

#### طيارة ورق

أصدرت شركة «حراس لحماية ورعاية أطفال سوريا» عدداً جديداً من مجلة «طيارة ورق» الخاصة بالأطفال بين أعمار 7 و14 عاماً، وقامت بتوزيعها في محافظة القنيطرة، حيث تضمن العدد الأخير من المجلة نصف الشهرية مجموعة من المواد التثقيفية، ومواد التوعية، والتسالي. يقدم العدد لتصفحهم من الأطفال قصصاً من التراث النمرائي، كما يعرض معلومات علمية ويقدمها للأطفال بطريقة شيقة، كمعلومات عن «دب» القطبي وطريقة صناعة الأشكال باستخدام مواد أولية وبسيطة من الطبيعة. وتورد المجلة عدداً من القواعد الكتابية البسيطة للغة العربية، وذوايا تثقيفية تتعلق بمعلومات عن المجموعة الشمسية، وتصاح طيبة وغذائية لتقوية عناية الأطفال، إضافة إلى مسابقات متنوعة.



## المجلس المحلي في المرح البنية العامة والخدمات والصعوبات



تأسس المجلس المحلي في منطقة المرح بالغوطة الشرقية، بعد لقاءات عدة، بين مختلف الفعاليات الثورية العاملة في المنطقة، وتلبية لاحتياجات الأهالي المتزايدة. وفي ظل غياب دور النظام، وضرورة تسيير وتنظيم الشؤون المدنية، كان لابد من إيجاد مؤسسة تقوم بالتنسيق وتوحيد الجهود المبذولة، لتقديم أفضل الخدمات للمواطنين.

عقد الاجتماع التأسيسي الأول للهيئة العامة للمجلس، في السادس عشر من شهر شباط 2013م، حيث تم اختيار ممثلين من البلدات المشاركة وعددها 28 بلدة، كما تم إقرار النظام الداخلي للمجلس، وانتخاب أعضاء مجلس الإدارة، وتسمية مدراء المكاتب التنفيذية.

كذلك، عقد الاجتماع الأول لمجلس الإدارة المحلية في منطقة المرح، في التاسع عشر من شباط 2013م، بينما جرت انتخابات الدورة الثانية للمجلس المحلي في آذار 2014م، لتأتي الدورة الثالثة في آذار من العام الجاري. عدل المجلس نظامه الداخلي مرات عدة، كان آخرها قبل انتخابات الدورة الثالثة بأيام، كما أقيمت هيكلية المجلس، بناء على قرار لجنة إشراف عليا منتخبة، في أيار من هذا العام.

### مشاير وتنسيق

يشرف المجلس، على تنفيذ عدد من المشاير الخدمية، إلى جانب مشروع خاص لترميم نظام الصرف الصحي في 2014م، ومشاير طبية وتعليمية لدعم المدارس والطلاب والمدرسين، وزراعية وغيرها.

ويشرف محمد الرفاعي، عضو المجلس المحلي في منطقة المرح، إن المجلس يعمل على تنسيق الجهود الإغاثية والطبية والخدمية، بين المؤسسات الخيرية ومنظمات المجتمع المدني، لتتم إحالة كل نشاط إلى مكتبه المختص، كما يسعى إلى محاربة الفساد الإداري، والنهوض بالعمل المؤسساتي، ورفع سوية كوادر العمل.

ويدير المجلس، كذلك، العديد من المشاير التي تعنى بالمعالجة الوبائية، ويعمل على نوعية الناس كم أول استخدام مصادر الطاقة المتجددة، كالمياه والمطافة الشمسية، في وقت يجري فيه دراسات كثيرة، ويشارك الأكار مع كلور من المختصين والفعاليات في الغوطة الشرقية، وخاصة ما يتعلق بموضوع حفر غاز الميثان والمطافة الشمسية.

ويقوم المجلس بدراسة وتنفيذ مشاير حيوية، بالاشتراك مع هيئة رسمية تتبع لجهات حكومية، وتعمل بإشراف الحكومة المؤقتة، مثل: وحدة تنسيق الدعم، ومحافظة ريف دمشق، كما يعمل بالتعاون والتنسيق مع مؤسسات مجتمع مدني مستقلة، فضلا عن منظمات إقليمية ودولية، على رأسها البرنامج الإقليمي السوري، الذي يعتبر شريكا حيويا وهاما في هذه الحركة.

### هيكلية ومكاتب

يتم تعيين أعضاء المجلس، حسب النظام الداخلي، إما عبر مجلس الإدارة، أو الانتخاب شرط وجود الكفاءة والخبرة، وتكون مدة رئاسة المجلس سنة ميلادية.

ويتألف الهيكل التنظيمي للمجلس المحلي، من هيئة إدارية، ومجلس الإدارة في المستوى الأول، تابهما في المستوى الثاني، تسعة مكاتب، هي مكتب الشؤون الإدارية القانونية، مكتب الإعلام والتواصل والدراسات، مكتب التربية والثقافة والتعلية، مكتب الزراعة والاقتصاد والري، مكتب الخدمات، مكتب الإغاثة والتنمية والإحصاء، المكتب الطبي، مكتب الدفاع المدني، والمكتب المالي.

ويملك المكتب الإحصائي، وفق الرفاعي، قاعدة بيانات كاملة عن كل أهالي المنطقة، وتوجد خطة لتوليه في المستقبل القريب مهام السجل المدني كافة، وذلك حال اكتمال الدراسة الخاصة بهذا المشروع وتهيئة البنية التحتية والموارد المالية والبشرية اللازمة له.

وأما هيئة الرقابة والتفتيش، فهي جزء من الهيكلية. وقد اتخذت مؤخرا دورا هاما جدا في التعديل الذي طرأ على تشكيلة المجلس المحلي، كما أن لها سلطة كبيرة، وقراراتها نافذة على جميع هيئات المجلس، إضافة إلى تسبقها مع الجهات القضائية المختصة في المنطقة.

وتبرز المساهمة الأكبر للمرأة في المجلس، عبر المكتب الطبي وكادر التمريض، كما أن لها دورا حيويا في السلك التعليمي أيضا، وقد شجع المجلس مشاركتها فيه، وحرص

على تعليمها في المدارس، فضلا عن مشاركة المجلس في تنفيذ مشروع تنموي مهم لتمكين المرأة. ويملك المجلس، إلى جانب ذلك، حق الإشراف الكامل على النشاط التعليمي في المنطقة، عبر المكتب التعليمي، الذي يدير عدة مشاير تعليمية لدعم الطلاب والمدرسين والمعلمين، ويقوم بإدارة وتنظيم كامل العملية التعليمية.

### تقييم وسعويات

يقول الرفاعي، «لا توجد أية مؤسسة ثورية تقوم بالعمل المطلوب منها على أكمل وجه، بسبب ضخامة الاحتياجات، وعدم استقرار وضع الموارد، وعدم وجود اعتمادات ثابتة يمكن أن تلي أي أسط لتحليلات أهالي المنطقة». ويحل الصعوبات التي تواجه المجلس، بنكر أن الحالة المعيشية المتدنية، والفقر، والبطالة، والفلاح، والحصار المطبق، والقصف المستمر، والعمليات العسكرية، تعيق عمل المجلس، بينما يعول السكان عليه، ويتطرون عنه الكثير، فهو مؤسسة حكم محلي بديلة لمؤسسات الدولة سابقا، لكن عدم كفاية الموارد يحول دون ارتقاها إلى مستوى طموحات وأمال المواطنين.

### الفعاليات العسكرية والمدنية

أصبح المجلس المحلي مؤهرا السلطة الوحيدة صاحبة الشأن في إدارة شؤون المدنيين، في ظل علاقة جيدة مع الفصائل العسكرية الموجودة في المنطقة، خاصة أن هذه الأخيرة، اتجهت إلى فضائها العسكرية، واتجه المجلس المحلي إلى القضايا المدنية وتسيير أمور المواطنين.

ويعمل المجلس، في المقابل، على رفع مستوى التنسيق مع الفعاليات والمجالس الأخرى، «فلا يمكن للمجلس المحلية، في بلدات ومن الغوطة الشرقية، العمل بمعزل عن جاراتها، مهما بعثت عنها». خاصة أن لكل منطقة عميزات تجارية وصناعية وزراعية، وفي هذا الإطار تتعاون المجالس المحلية، للقيام بمشاير زراعية على مستوى الغوطة الشرقية، ويتم تنفيذها في منطقة المرح، كونها الخزان الزراعي الاستراتيجي للغوطة، كما أن المؤسسات المدنية الفاعلة هي، بمعظمها، مؤسسات ذات طابع إنساني. والمجلس تنسيق عالي المستوى مع هذه المؤسسات، وجمع الخدمات التي تقدمها تتم بالتنسيق مع المجلس المحلي عبر مكاتبه التنفيذية المختصة.



المدارس إشراف كامل على الفعاليات التعليمية والمكتب التعليمي، الذي يدير عدة مشاير لدعم الطلاب والمدرسين والمعلمين

## استطلاع رأي

### زهير المحي، 53 سنة، مريح السلطان

الرجاء من المجلس المحلي الاهتمام بموضوع تراكم النفايات في مناطق التجمعات السكنية.

### أبو عمر سلامة، 27 سنة، مريح السلطان

لا يوجد مجلس محلي بالأساس، ولا مرة سمعت فيه.

### توفيق سلامة، 50 سنة، مريح السلطان

موجود، بس هو وقتنا، من 4 أيام اجت قنيفة على محصول قمح فلتحرق المحصول لين ما وصلوا ع أساس يطفوا الحريق.

### عبد الرزاق، 35 سنة، مريح السلطان

المجلس المحلي ما في لا دعم الو ولا شهر، وهاد سبب فشلوا بهي المناطق، يعني لا عمال تنظيف ولا تعبئة ماء، ولا يقدم شرب، بس بالاسم موجود، بس يعتقد ان كان في دعم يكون الوضع احسن، متلا مثل مجلس دوما وغيرها.

### محمد عبد الله، 45 سنة، مريح السلطان

نحننا بهي المناطق متسبين، وما حتى يتعرف علينا بشي، لا مجلس محلي ولا غيره، اصلا كل المرح ما فيها غير كمة عملة ليكون فيها مجلس محلي فقط!

### أبو همي، 33 سنة، بلدة الشامية

من بعد التدبير ما متسع غير مجلس محلي انحل، وتشكيل مجلس محلي... احنا ناعم انشوف منهم غير الحكي..

### محمد، 28 سنة، بلدة الشامية

والله طقت روحنا واحنا عم ادروح ونحكي. ونقلان: يحطو مكرو باص واحد بقدر ينزلنا على دوما عشان نقدر نشترى الاغراض... لانو هون مثل ملك شايف صدرا

### جاسم، 23 سنة، بلدة أوتايا

لسا الملاوت والكاك على حالوا سعر مثل النار ومافي غير منسج: رح ندعم روح انقور وكلون عم بكذنو..

### أبو معلقة، 30 سنة، بلدة أوتايا

في مشاير، مثل ملك شايف، ارض كبيرة ومحصول كبير، بس ياتري بيتوزع على هالعالم الغلابة.

### سامي، 27 سنة، مريح السلطان

والله على أسس في أهل من توزيع الخبز بعد ما كان في مشور بعشرات الدونمات كانوا مخصصين لهالشي، بس لانسف مثل ملك شايف حصاد ومدي وين راحو بالقمح كالعلة حريمة

### حنان وأختها مها، 25 سنة، مريح السلطان

عم نحاول اننهم هالمسؤولين انو لازم يكون عننا مركز لبيع المواد الغذائية، لانو والله عم انعمت الف مونة لتندزل على دوما ونحيب اغراضنا، وهات لتلاقي ركة! يا إما بتوقف ساعة، أو ساعتين ويمكن هاتلاقي حتى!

### أبو جاسم، 40 سنة، حرميتا القنطرة

بدنا يوفرو شوية محروقات لهالمولادات، لنقدر نزرع مثل هالعالم والخلق. والله بعنا حالنا، وبني قوقنا، ونحتنا، لنقدر ن فكر نسقى هالأرض.

ملحق خاص بصدر عن صحيفة سوريانا، وهي: تنظيم أعمال المجلس المحلي والهيئات المدنية داخل سوريا | الفوجوة الغربية وجنوب دمشق | 12 تموز 2015



## استطلاع رأي

**أبو موفق، 35 سنة، العجر الأسود**  
 الحمد لله الحال أحسن من قبل، كنا مهتمين جوع، بس اتشالله بخل الوضع بخير مو تخرب مثل العادة

**أبو ياسر، 30 سنة، العجر الأسود**  
 ما عنا مجلس محلي ولا بلدية، عم نعتمد على حالنا بكلشي- المي والكهربا والنظافة وحتى العلاج..

**أبو حمزة الدمشقي، 35 العجر الأسود**  
 مشاكلنا على حالها، ما في مي، ولا ندرنا في ما عمتمشرب، وصابتنا أمراض كنا نسمع عنها بالأخبار بالمجامع- إي صرنا نحنا المجامع

**محمد أبو الطور، طالب جامعي، العجر الأسود**  
 المجلس المحلي كان موجود وقف لأتو ما في دعم وشفلتو فقط طلب المساعدة على صحة قيس بوك، بس حتى لو موجود هلا شو رح بعمل اذا الحجة جاهزة وتتصدق التنظيفات ونقل المياه بعدها مازوت وأليات وما في مصاري- الناس مو ناظرة عن حدا شي ومالها غير الله

**أم مهران، العجر الأسود**  
 والله ما شفتنا سيارة للبلدية من عم لك الزبالة كيف حكومة بالشمس والبلاد عمتمرض

**أبو الناصر، العجر الأسود**  
 مجلس محلي وما بتعرف عنو شي هون! كيف بنو يكون في مجلس ونحن المي بلي عم نشربها وتكلفنا ملاوت مو نظيفة!

**سعد، 27 سنة، العضية**  
 بأعتولنا عناه بعدين لكل حدا حديث

**عبد الرحمن، 25 سنة، داريا**  
 المجلس المحلي عم يتوصل مصاري ما بتعرف وين عم بصرفه

**أبو خالد، 40 سنة، داريا**  
 نحنا من سائل عنا!! لا للمجلس المحلي ولا غيرو

**أم محمود، العضية**  
 خمسة أشهر فقط أطلق النظام فيها الطريق عتنا من الجوع! ماذا كان بفعل المجلس المحلي عندما كانت المعابر مفتوحة؟ أم أنه اعتقد ان الوضع سيبقى على حاله؟

## بعد اختناقه .. جنوب دمشق نحو ظروف أفضل

شهدت بلدات بلدا وبيلا وبيت سحم دخول مساعدات غذائية وإنسانية طوال العام الماضي، كان آخرها يوم الإثنين الماضي، حيث دخلت 2500 سلة غذائية، مقدمة من منظمة الهلال الأحمر العربي السوري، عن طريق حاجز بيلا - سيدي مقداد.

وجاء ذلك بعد يوم واحد، على دخول وفد سويسري، تابع لمنظمة الأمم المتحدة، إلى المنطقة عبر الحاجز نفسه، ليتفقد الأوضاع الإنسانية والمعيشية للأهالي، ويلتقي نازحين من مخيم اليرموك، ومقيمين في البلدات التي سعى النظام لتنفيذ ما يسميه مشروع مصالحة وطنية معها.



تتمثل مناطق بلدا وبيلا وبيت سحم بوضعها في ظل الحصار، كما أنها مغلقة على أيدي الجلوب المحاصرة الأخرى

**أسعار تنخفض .. وقدره شرايئة معدومة**  
 بدأ الوضع الإنساني في جنوب دمشق المحاصر، يتحسن تدريجياً، مع بداية الشهر الرابع، على خلفية فتح حاجز بيلا - سيدي مقداد، الحاجز الوحيد الفاصل بين العاصمة وجنوبها، والذي أغلقته قوات النظام منذ ثلاثة أشهر تقريباً.

ويقول تجمع ربيع شجرة - إن المواد الغذائية، تدفقت، عقب فتح الحاجز ودخول المساعدات الإغاثية المقدمة من منظمات دولية كأونديوا والهلال الأحمر ومؤسسات إغاثية محلية، لتعود حركة الأسواق في جنوب دمشق، بشكل تدريجي، إلى حالتها الطبيعية قبل إغلاق الحاجز، وتصبح أسعار سلة الكسك في بلدا وشمارح العروبة في مخيم اليرموك وسوق مفرق بيلا - بيت سحم، سواقاً تتوفر فيها شتى المواد الغذائية والمأكولات والمشروبات. وقد انخفضت أسعارها بشكل كبير، بسبب كثرة العرض، بينما يصل سعرها في العاصمة دمشق إلى ضعف أو ضعفي السعر الطبيعي، وقد كانت عشرات عشرات الأضعاف سابقاً. على سبيل المثال انخفض سعر كيلو الأرز مع بداية شهر رمضان إلى 300 ليرة لكل kilo الواحد، بعد أن بيع قبل فتح الحاجز بسعر 5000 ليرة.

ولم تخف وقدة المواد الغذائية في أسواق جنوب دمشق، من حال الأهالي المحاصرين، حسب التجمع عنهم، وذلك لعدم توفر الموارد المالية جراء البطالة وقلة العمل.

### زراعة الأسطح

عمد سكان أهالي بلدات بيلا وبيت سحم وبلدا، إلى الزراعة فوق أسطح منازلهم، في محاولة منهم لتحقيق اكتفاء ذاتي، وتأتي مساعي الأهالي هنا، نتيجة استهداف

قنطرة النظام، الأراضي الزراعية في بلدا وبيلا، وسيطرتة على بلدات مجاورة كحميرة وسبينة واليهودية، ما جعل الوصول إلى هذه الأراضي أمراً مستحيلًا، في ظل الفقر المنتشر، وارتفاع أسعار الخضراوات والمواد الغذائية القادمة من دمشق.

ويذكر المكتب الإغاثي لريف دمشق الجنوبي، المحاصر، أن توفر الأتربة والسجاد الزراعي وانخفاض تكاليف الزراعة البسيطة، ساعدت أهالي المنطقة على الاستمرار في زراعة الأسطح.

### المجلس المحلي في بيلا

ينفذ المجلس المحلي في بلدة بيلا، مشاريع كثيرة معظمها زراعي، تؤمن قديس عميل للأهالي، رغم انخفاض دعم المجالس المحلية كثيراً بعد الهدنة، حسب الناشط وليد الآغا.

## وقود على طريقة سكان جنوب العاصمة

تكدت ساعات كبرياء يوماً، تكون المكسب الفعلي الوحيد لأهالي بيلا وبلدا، وبيت سحم وباقي القرى الصغيرة المحاصرة جنوبي دمشق، من هنتها مع النظام، على اعتبار أن النظام لم يسمح حتى الآن بدخول المحروقات، ما دفع الأهالي لمباشرة مشاريع استخراج الوقود بحرق البلاستيك.

ويقول الناشط وليد الآغا: - إن العمل على تجارب لاستخراج الغاز من روث الحيوانات، كان قد بدأ قبل الهدنة مع النظام، ليتوقف لاحقاً، حين أصبحت مادة الغاز نادرة نسبياً، فضلاً عن أن طريقة استخراج الغاز من الروث مكلفة.

ولمّا كان هاجس تحقيق الاكتفاء الذاتي في الغذاء أمراً ملحاً طوال مدة الحصار، فقد انتشرت الكثير من المشاريع الزراعية، وفقاً للآغا، الذي أكد أنه دعا من بيت بخلو من مشروع زراعي، ولو في مساحات صغيرة للخضراوات، فوق الأسطح، أو حول المنازل، أو حتى على الطرقات العامة، ويتخوف نشاط المنطقة الجنوبية، من نقص المحروقات المتزايد، فمادة البلاستيك المستخدمة، ستنفذ في النهاية، كما أن توفر بعض السلع الغذائية بعد الهدنة، لم يمل مشكلة الغذاء، لأن غالب الأهالي، لم يعودوا بإمكانهم القدرة شرايئة، بسبب انعدام مصادر الدخل، والبطالة.

ملحق خاص بصدر عن صحيفة سوريا، بتغطيتها أصلاً المجلس المحلي والمحاكمات المدنية داخل سوريا | القويمة القومية وجنوب دمشق | 12 تموز 2015



جنوب دمشق - ربيع الوردة 29 حزيران 2015

## لتصفح وتحميل الحد الأخير



## استطلاع رأي عن المجالس المحلية في ريف حمص

2015-09-13

حمص، 31 سنة، الرستن  
لا علاقة لنا بالمشاكل بين المجلس المحلي في الرستن، ومجلس محافظة حمص، نحن بحاجة إلى الفخر لإطعام أولادنا.  
عد الرحمن، 45 سنة، الرستن  
المشكلة ليس نصوا أنفسهم أوصياء على مجلس محافظة حمص ويخشون في غازي عنتاب، بعيداً عن هومننا اليومية.  
أم مراد، نازحة من العولة، الرستن  
المجلس المحلي يمتكر الضمين والموث الإغاثية.  
جمال، 21 سنة، الرستن  
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عد الملك، 37 سنة، الرستن  
لو أن المجلس المحلي ليسوا بالمصوم لكن وضعنا أفضل مما نحن عليه الآن بكثير، والفتك على تلك العولة وثبينة، لأن وضعنا أحسن من وضعنا، وكل ما يأتي من مساعدات يتم توزيعه بين الجميع، وهذا ما نقف إليه في الرستن.  
أبو علي، 61 سنة، الرستن  
المشكلة ليست في المجلس المحلي، بل في مجلس المحافظة، والحكومة المؤقتة، ومعارضة الخارج.  
أبو أيوب، 30 سنة، ثبينة  
المجلس المحلي مقصر في تأمين مياه الشرب النظيفة والمنقحة.  
سفيان، 48 سنة، ثبينة  
ليس هناك عدالة في توزيع المال الخاوية.

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## تليجا



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posted on 2017-06-13
- وهجات غنائية دافئة لسكان الرستن خلال رمضان...  
posted on 2017-06-12
- غرابيب سود: نقاج عن داخل أم تسويق لها...  
posted on 2017-06-12
- زيد لعمار: أنا معارض للقتاة...  
posted on 2017-06-13
- فلك الموس  
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## كاريكاتير العدد



أم ضرار، 53 سنة، ثبينة  
أطلب من المجلس المحلي المشاركة في عمله، شكراً لهم جميعاً.  
هيام، 33 سنة، ثبينة  
على المجلس المحلي هو تأمين المحروقات أو المطبخ لتفئة الطلاب في المدارس.  
نور الدين، 40 سنة، ثبينة  
على المجلس المحلي مراقبة أسعار المحروقات والمطبخ والتمر، لمنع احتكار التجار لها.  
ياسر، 21 سنة، ثبينة  
على المجلس المحلي مراقبة اللجنة المسؤولة عن الفخر وتمسين جودته.  
محمد، 50 سنة، ثبينة  
المجلس المحلي في ثبينة من أفضل المجالس في سوريا، بورتك جيودهم.  
عد الكريم، 26 سنة، ثبو  
ما هذا المجلس المحلي؟ ليس هناك مدرسة فتحت حتى الآن، وإلى متى سيقى أولادنا من نون تعليم؟!  
أم سمير، 43 سنة، ثبو  
الروتين قائل، وكلما نطالبهم بشيء يقولون أن ليس هناك دعم من مجلس المحافظة.

نوري، 50 سنة، كفرلاها  
المشكلة ليست في المجلس المحلي، المشكلة في المصوم المعارضة في الخارج.  
صادق، 34 سنة، كفرلاها  
المجلس المحلي مقصر في تأمين مياه الشرب، وعليه أن يقوم بتحمل مياه الأبار بشكل دوري للتأكد من صلاحيتها.  
محمد، 41 سنة، ثذهب  
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غدي، 32 سنة، الرعر  
لا أعرف أهداً منهم لكنني لم أز من خدماتهم شيئاً أيضاً.  
عد الله، 24 سنة، الرعر  
لا تريد منهم أكثر من ترحيل القمامة، وتسيير مدارس الأطفال، ومن الصعب العمل في ظل المصار الخائق، وكل ما نريده هو أن يكسر المصار فقط.  
ميساء، 22 سنة، الرعر  
ليس هناك من يراقب الأسعار حتى أسعار الدولار في الرعر بتلا يتأخرون بها.

عن سوريا - ملحق وإصدارات - الرئيسية - قسم الفنون

# سورتينا

الرئيسية أخبار وتقارير ثقافة تحقيقات ناس حوار ميدان حقوق وحريات منوعات ترجمات

سورتينا يرمز أخبار وتقارير الانتفاخ يحمل المجتمع الدولي مسؤولية استخدام أسلحة محرمة دولياً يترعا

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مقالات ذات صلة



**برسم مجالس محليّة القنيطرة:**

- فضّل «من سكان القنيطرة» «الناطق المحرورة في القنيطرة تعاني مشكلة سيّدة شبكة التواصل بين المناطق، وأغلب الطرق فيها زراعية وغير معرّبة».
- «من سكان ريف القنيطرة» والمجالس المحليّة في القنيطرة مقصّر في تداع توفير مياه الشرب للتّاجرين في منج الأمل، فالأهالي أسحبوا بشتون من الشرب، يتزلقون لذلك مع استغلال البائعين لظروف التّاجرين وارتفاع سعر المياه، بحجة أن مكان المصنّف بعيد عن الأبار».



**برسم مجالس القوطة الشرقيّة:**

- عدنان أبو كاسم «من سكان منطقة العوج» ولم تقمّ لشبّا من نشايات المجالس المحليّة في منطقتنا، حيث تدلّع العزّك بقرينا، دون تدلّع منهم لتأمين حاجاتنا في تلك الفترات الصّعبة.
- هيامة العبد الله «من سكان القنيطرة» في منطقة العوج» وشبكة الأخطية والارماح، والمواد الطبيّة والأدوية، فمناظرتنا بأحسن الحاجة إلى مستوصف، ثم أسعج بأي نشاط المجالس المحليّة في منطقتنا.
- أيمن محسن «من سكان مدينة بيت سوري» وأقضي أكثر من سبعة علس الطريق العام لكي أجد سيارة لأقرا لي علسي، وأغلبها سيارات خاصة تقوم بخدمة تطوّعا، وأسعد الأساسيّ يعود إلى ارتفاع أسعار المحروقات، ولقد دعم شبكات التواصل في المنطقة، نكث من المجالس المحليّة بهذه الفضيحة.
- ناهد العلي «من سكان القنيطرة» وأرهب إلى العرصة التي أعصّل بها مدينا على الأندام، وأضلع مسطحة طويلة ركنا ومشيّا سربعا، وكناكة الطال، نطلب، بلأمن باسنان نغل إلى الماراس، أو تسمية الأوضاع لغادي تلك المشكّة الهامة.
- أم عبد الله المعين «من سكان مدينة بيت سوري» ولا يوجد في جينا لا ماء ولا كهرباء، غالبية المناطق، جونا مدينة بمولات كهربائية، وكإسباب مدينا، نطلب المجالس المحليّة للاهتمام بشؤون الأحياء المحروقة في البلدة وتجهيزها.
- كاسم محمّد «من سكان مدينة حرسنا» ومناظرتنا المومدة هي التواصل، بينما وبين الأرب مدينة في القوطة أكثر من 4 كيلو مترات، وعليك انتظار سيارة خاصة أو دراجة لتأوك، لذا نطلب الاهتمام بشبكة التواصل والقوطة وأن يلمد المجالس المحليّة في هذه الفضيحة.

صفحة تعتم بقضايا المواطنين في المناطق التي تدير شؤونها المعنية المجالس المحلية والهيئات الحكومية، فتعرض مشكلاتهم الإنسانية والخمنية كما يتلقونها، وتوجه هذه المشكلات إلى الهيئات والمؤسسات المعنية بهدف حلها والعمل على تجاوز جميع الصعوبات التي تواجه حياة المواطنين في مندم وقترام.

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**برسم مجالس محليّة درعا:**

- ضياء «من سكان بلدة نعيمة في ريف درعا الشرقي»، والمجالس المحليّة في البلدة يشغّر نكّل سبيل الإغالة، وما يلمد للصّابة وللأحسين من البلدة إلى القرى والبلدات الصّابرة لشغل جلا ولا يتحمل لوزم البورد».
- مروان «من سكان بلدة الشبيرة بريف درعا الغربي»، ويبدو تقصير المجالس المحليّة في بلدنا وأصدا بعدم تقديم مهورات المشارة.
- حميد «من سكان بلدة تمشول بريف درعا الغربي»، حتار العجوة الخشائية يستغلون الظروف، وهنالك ارتفاع خلوني بالأسعار دون رفيد، أو ماسب عليهم، لا يمكن للمجالس المحليّة أن تقوم بهذه المهمة».
- فرج «من سكان القنيطرة شمال منطقة درعا»، والبلدة منسبة من كل والمجالس، وحتى الأطفال الذين حرمهم النظام من التعليم ابتعدت عنهم المنطقتان التعليميّة، وأنشطة المجالس التعليميّة.
- زياد «من سكان زيزون بريف درعا الغربي»، يودّي تراجع الاهتمام بالمنطقة في منطقتنا إلى مشاكل صحية وأمراض كثيرة، علس المجالس المحليّة الاهتمام بهذه الفضيحة في مندم زيزون».
- صباح «من سكان مدينة درعا»، وأكثر من ألف طفل يذرا إلى مدهون بأمرنا نتيجة نقص طلب الأطفال والمواد الخشائية.
- مندر «من سكان بلدة أم ولد بريف درعا الشرقي»، وشبكة الكهرباء سيولة ككرا، حيث لا تلتبنا الكهرباء أكثر من ساعتين باليوم الواحد، وتتعمل الصوكات أحيانا خلال تلك الساعتين بسبب الضغط على المجالس المحليّة الاهتمام بتلك الفضيحة.
- مبد «من سكان المّ الله»، وعدد قري الجواة 52 قرية، ولا يوجد سوني نقطة طبية واحدة وغير مجهزة بشكل كامل».



**برسم مجالس ريف حمص الشمالي:**

- ياسر أبو واد «يسكن في مدينة تلبيسة بريف حمص الشمالي»، ولا يهتم المجالس المحليّة بأهون مادة الملب، لأطفال الصبينة.
- أبو علي «يسكن في مدينة الرستن بريف حمص الشمالي»، ويحذر المجالس عن تقديم المساعدات للضخّرين من فساد الفوات لتقوية منزلي، لا يصلح السكن، ولم يلمد للمجالس المحليّة في أية مساعدة تذكر».
- إيهاب الخوجة «يسكن في بلدة الرعوانة بريف حمص الشمالي»، «يجرق الأهالي القمامة بالرف من منزلي، بسبب عدم قيام المجالس المحليّة بتسيير عمال نظافة لجمع القمامة».
- رائد «يسكن في مدينة تلوة»، ولم يلمد للمجالس المحليّة في أية مساعدة للزوارعين في تصريف محصول الملوقة هذا العام».
- أبو خضر «يسكن في مدينة تلوة»، ولا يشوم المجالس المحليّة بتأمين طاقوطة لطقس الصبح في ظل ارتفاع الكهرباء وتكتم أصباب المواطنين بالأس».
- لم مهدي «مؤكدة من بلدة تير معلّة وتمسك في بلدة الرعوانة بريف حمص الشمالي في إحدى الماراس»، ولا يلمد للمجالس المحليّة في أية مساعدة، على الرغم من أن وضعي استثنائي، هازلت مقلية في مدرسة».
- بوسيف «يسكن في قرية القنطرة بريف حمص الشمالي»، مخر منزلي جبراه الفص، والمجالس المحليّة لم يلمد في أي نوع من المساعدة، حتى شادو بالمستشفى لتغطية التمدات التي خلفها الفص، لم يتم توفيره لي».
- مصطفى العر «يسكن في مدينة الرستن بريف حمص الشمالي»، ولا يدعم المجالس المحليّة مولدة الكهرباء بأقود لتشغيل بشر المياه في الحي، مع ارتفاع الكهرباء عن المدينة».

**أبو الجراء الإلدي، ريف إلبيا**

عمل المجالس المحليّة لمدينة سراقب، جهد إلى حد ما، ولكن هناك أسباب كثيرة تجعله يعاني من الفشل في بعض المشاريع، أبرزها أن المجالس غير مؤهل بالشكل الكافي، وبالتالي هو غير قادر علس أن يحل مشاكل الدولة المستغلبة كون أعضائه غير مستقرين وغير مهتمين وبالما ما يملون أن الدعم المادي غير متوفر، ويعملون كافة مشكلاتهم عليه، وهذا ما أدى إلى فقد مصداقيتهم بين الناس، وألم بإمكاننا من إثبات شرعيتهم من خلال العمل علس تأمين الخدمات للناس وتوفر متطلباتهم برسوم تلامي مع جميع الطلقات، كما أنهم لم يعملوا علس توفير فرص عمل ووظائف للشباب العاطلين عن العمل في المدينة، وهم مستغلون أكثر من غيرهم بكل هذه المشاكل.

**مروان الحسين، ريف حلب الغربي**

«شكّلت المجالس المحليّة حلب وريفها حلقة مميزة بعد غياب البلديات ومؤسسات الحكومة التي كانت تقدم الخدمات للناس، لكن المجالس رغم حداثة عهدها قدمت أكثر بكثير من مجالس البلديات السابقة للنظام، واهتمت بأهون كهدرة كالصحة والتعليم والإغالة، كما ساعدت بشكل كبير بوضع أسس التشاركية المجتمعية، على مستوى القرية الواحدة، والتي كانت غائبة على مدى 40 عاما». ويضيف «أرى المجالس البنجل الأفضل في المرحلة المقبلة بعد سقوط النظام، لكن حتاج لتظهير وتاهل بشكل أكبر، لذا هي بحاجة لدعم من الحكومة المستقبليّة، فهي الجهة الأفضل التي عملت بتظهير استثنائية وحققّت نجاحات كثيرة».

**استطلاع رأي بين الناشطين حول عمل المجالس المحليّة في مناطقهم**

**أبو إلياس الحوراني، درعا البلد**

يصف عمل المجالس المحليّة في مدينة درعا بـ «الجدار في ظل هذه الظروف»، حيث يقوم المجلس بإدارة التنسيق مع المنظمات الدولية، للقيام بمشروع «تضمين» كمشروع استيراد المياه من الأبار إلى المناطق المأهولة في المدينة، كما يعمل المجلس على توزيع مادة الخبز على الأهالي، وإدارة توزيع السائل الإغائية المقدمة من الهيئات والمنظمات الإزسانية.

ويحسب ما قاله أبو إلياس فإن المجلس المحليّ في مدينة درعا يشرف على غالبية أمور الرنى التحتية التي يستفيد منها الأهالي، كتوفير عمدة الماروت للمناطق المديانة وبعض العراكن التعليمية، إضافة إلى استحداث ورشة الكهرباء للقيام بأعمال الصيانة وغيرها.

**أبو عمر الجولاني، القنيطرة**

إن المجلس المحليّ اتدمع بمجلس المحافظة الذي يشرف على الأمور المدنية الخاصة بالأهالي، ومن أبرز اهتماماته تأمين عمدة الخبز، مينا أن سعر رطله الخبز «مرتفع نتيجة ارتفاع سعر الطحين، وعدم توفر القمح الصالح للإستعمال الذي يستجلبه المجلس، مشوا إلى أن مجلس المحافظة يعمل على تخفيض سعر الخبز والتنسيق مع مجلس محافظة درعا لحل مشكلة القمح منتهي الصلاحية، وأكد أبو عمر أن مجلس المحافظة يعمل في مشاريع خدمية مهمة أبرزها مشروع النظافة العامة في مناطق القنيطرة المحروقة، بعد أن عانت المحافظة من كميات القمامة المتراكمة.

**كريم الشامي، داريا**

استطلاع المجالس المحليّة خلال سنوات الحصار الأربعة إدارة موارد المدينة وتنظيم الحياة بها، وتبني عمل مشاريع إغائية وخدمية وطلبة خدمت المدينة وساعدت بشكل كبير في صمودها، عوضا بالقول: «مع استمرار الحصار على المدينة، وبعد انتقال وقف إطلاق النار، وعدم دخول المساعدات إلى المدينة، ظل المجلس يقوم بجمع المصابين في أماكن غير معرّبة، وتقديم برامج غذائية يومية لهم بالقدر المتاح، وعرض قدرات ترقيحية وأفلام وثائقية وتدوس تقنيّة مختلفة خلال أيام التجمّع، كما جهز المجلس ملعبا تدريبيا صغورا للأطفال، وملعبا آخر أكبر للشباب بعد أن انتشرت ظاهرة اللعب في شوارع داريا».

**دياب الحمرو، كرتلا، ريف حماه**

«رأى أن عمل المجالس المحليّة في ريف حماه بشكل عام، هو نشاط مؤثّر، لأنها البنيل الوحيد عن المؤسسات الحكومية في الظروف الحالية، والمهتمة بالدرجة الأولى بالمندمين، وفي حال تأمين الدعم المستمر» فسقوم هذه المؤسسات بالعديد من المشاريع التي تساعد الأهالي على تحمل أعباء النزوح وغيرها، كقنها تتصل بمشاكل مؤسساتي بحتر عن طريق مكاتب منظمة».

ملقن خالص يعصر عن صحيفة سورياتنا على بالمجالس المحليّة والمبادرات المدنية داخل سوريا | العدد 8 | نيسان 2016



بدرسة مجلس ريف اللاذقية

**برسم مجلس ريف اللاذقية وريف إلب جبلي والمنظمات العاملة هناك**

الجلسات والندوات، يتم التصوير بين منطقة وأخرى.

- بهاء ياسين «يسكن في مخيم بريف إلب»؛ دخلت إلى خيم في الصحراء الجديدة للنازحين، خاصة بعد موجة النزوح الجديدة من مناطق ريف اللاذقية باتجاه قرى ريف إلب.
- أميرة «تسكن في مخيم بريف اللاذقية»؛ هناك حاجة ماسة لطبيب الأطفال، خاصة غير متوفرة في مخيمها، ويجب المساعدة في تقديم بعض الخدمات العامة كصيانة الطرق.

• أبو مصعب «يسكن في مخيم بريف اللاذقية»؛ يتم توزيع المواد الغذائية لنازحين بشكل غير عادل، وغير منظم.

• فاطمة شيخ عمر «تسكن في مخيم بريف اللاذقية»؛ «السكان بحاجة ماسة إلى ضيعة غذائية المنظمة، ومساعدتهم في ذلك، كما أن تأمين مياه الشرب للأهالي يجب أن يكون في مقدمة اهتمامات العاملين في المجلس المحلي».

• أحمد جاسر «يسكن في مخيم بريف اللاذقية»؛ «لا نستطيع إلا من موضوع التصوير في تقديم الخدمات من قبل

صفحة تعتم بقضايا المواطنين في المناطق التي تدير شؤونها المعنية المجالس المحلية والهيئات الحكومية، فتعرض مشكلاتهم الإنسانية والخيمية كما يتناولونها، وتوجه هذه المشكلات إلى الهيئات والمؤسسات المعنية بهدف حلها والعمل على تجاوز جميع الصعوبات التي تواجه حياة المواطنين في منتمهم وقراهم.

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بدرسة مجلس ريف حماة

• محمد سعوي «يسكن في بلدة قلعة المتيق»؛ «الشراخ بالقرب من بيشي غير معيد، وهو غير صالح للزور في كل فصول السنة، لم يتدخل المجلس المحلي حتى الآن».

• محمد عبد السلام «يسكن في بلدة قلعة المتيق»؛ «شراخ حي الحمام في البلدة كلها بحاجة إلى تعبيد، ومجلس البلدة لم يحرك ساكناً».

• محمد عليش «يسكن في قرية الحويج في ريف حماة الغربي»؛ «الشراخ بالقرب من منزلي وسط البلدة مغفر، والمزور

منه صعب، نحن بحاجة إلى مساعدة المجلس في حل هذه المشكلة».

• سعيد الصنوف «يسكن في قرية الحويج»؛ «من مجرى السري بحر فرب بيشي في خبي الحويج، وهو مليء بالأوساخ والقمامة، علس المجلس المحلي حل هذه المشكلة».

• علي وعدون «يسكن في قلعة المتيق»؛ «الدعم والإغاثة قليلان جداً في البلدة، ونحن في أمس الحاجة لتدخل المجلس المحلي وتأمين الدعم الإنساني لتناه».



بدرسة مجلس إلب حلب وريفهم

• عبد المعين العمران «من سكان ريف إلب الشرفي»؛ «يقوم المجلس المحلي في محافظة إلب بنشر صور مسؤوليه وهم يقدمون المساعدات للناس أو يشترون أي مشروع خذي، ونشر هذه الصور فيه شره من المتأخرة بهجوم الناس، وبعض الإنزال لهم، وعند قيام المجلس بأي مشروع خذي أو إغاثي سيعلم سكان المدينة به، وهذا أمر طبيعي، ولذلك لا داعي لنشر صور ما فعلوه لكل الناس».

• معاذ الصمود «يسكن في ريف، مدينة أبو الظهور»؛ «المجلس المحلي في مدينة إلب يهمل منطقة أبو الظهور وريفها، حيث لم يقدم المجلس أي نوع من الخدمات في منطقتنا، فلا يوجد حاويات للبقايا».

• ليد باتت العاملة مكدسة في الشراخ، ولا يوجد سيارات لتزويرها».

• أبو عبد الله «يسكن في مدينة معرة مصرين»؛ «تقريباً نهاية المجلس المحلي عن معرة مصرين، وهناك عمليات هدر في مياه الشرب في المدينة، حيث أرى بعض أصحاب المحلات وورشات المدينة يفرغون الشراخ بالمياه التي يصبها المجلس والتي خصصت للشرب، وكان المجلس قد نوه سابقاً إلى ضرورة التفتيش وعدم الهدر؛ فالمياه قليلة، ورغم ذلك نستأجر إدارة المجلس بعض النظر عن بهدر المياه».

• أبو يوسف «يسكن في مدينة بنش»؛ «لم أتلق أية مساعدات من المجلس المحلي

في بنش»؛ رغم أن المجلس يستلم كميات لا بأس بها من المساعدات، وقد استلم المجلس مؤخراً مساعدات من منظمة «شوق»؛ وبعد أيام تفاجأت أن المساعدات وزعت للناس، وعندما سألت أحد العاملين في المجلس أجابني أنهم أهدوا مفاتيح للأهالي الصغار على المعونة وهدايا من بنسجتها، مع العلم أن غالبية الأهالي لم تكن لديهم دراية أن الحصول على المعونة يحتاج تسجيلاً ومقابلة».

• مخصص عبيدي «يسكن في ريف، مدينة الداناء»؛ «يهمل المجلس المحلي مدينة الداناء في موضوع توفير مياه الشرب للأهالي، ولا تأخذ من المجلس إلا الوعود»؛ «جميع المجلس المحلية في إلب تمكنت من تأمين المياه لساكنيها، إلا مدينة بنش حيث المياه مقطوعة فيها منذ أكثر من ثلاث سنوات».

• أيهم صواف «من سكان مدينة حلب»؛ «المجلس المحلي في حلب مفسر في مراقبة أصحاب مولدات الأسيارات، ورغم الفراق السيء، صور عن المجلس بشأن ضبط أسعار الأسيارات، وإلزام أصحاب المولدات بإسقاط تشغيل مولدات، إلا أن هذا القرار لم يطبق فعلياً، فيجب على المجلس أن يفرض رقابة شديدة عليهم، وأن يستعين بمتطوعي المحكمة الشرعية إن لزم الأمر، لأن المواطنين الملبس لم يعد يحصل أعياه مائة أخرى».



بدرسة مجلس ريف حمص الشمالي

• أبو محمد مواطن «يسكن في مدينة تلدو بسهل الحولة في ريف حمص الشمالي»؛ «المياه مقطوعة عن الحي الشرقي في تلدو منذ أكثر من ثلاث سنوات، دون أي جهود يقدمها المجلس المحلي المسؤول عن المدينة».

• عتي أبو ياسر «يسكن في مدينة تلدو»؛ «المطريق المؤدي إلى بيشي أنقطع في الحي الشمالي من المدينة غير معيد، والحركة صعبة صيفاً وشتاءً، والمسؤول عن ذلك هو المجلس المحلي في المدينة».

• خضر الياسين «يسكن في مدينة»؛ «منزلي الواقع على طريق المسد مغمر بفعل القصف من قبل قوات النظام، عجزت عن إصلاحه وتأهينه للسكن، لا يقدم المجلس المحلي أي مساعدة».

• علي إبراهيم «يسكن في مدينة تلدو»؛ «مكتب القمامة بالقرب من منزلي في شارع طريق البرج، والقمامة تتراكم لأسابيع قبل أن يتم نقلها، والمسؤول هو المجلس المحلي في المدينة».

• أبو فارس «يسكن في مدينة كفر لاما بسهل الحولة في ريف حمص الشمالي»؛ «توجه حفرة صرف صحي في الحي الذي أسكن فيه والذي يقع شمال المدينة، والمسؤول هو المجلس المحلي في المدينة».

• ياسر أبو فادي «يسكن في مدينة تلدو»؛ «يتم جمع القمامة بالقرب من أرضي الزراعية على أطراف المدينة، وهو ما يشكل خطورة على الأرض الزراعية، أهل المسؤولية للمجلس المحلي في المدينة».

• ميسر العلي «يسكن في مدينة تلدو»؛ «بسهل الحولة»؛ «لا يقوم المجلس المحلي في المدينة بدعم زراعة البطاطا هذا العام، في ظل ارتفاع أسعار البذار».

• عبيدة «يسكن في مدينة القبية بسهل الحولة»؛ «ريف حمص الشمالي»؛ «لا يقوم المجلس المحلي بدعم مائة التمر في عينتنا، في ظل الحصار وارتفاع سعر المائدة».

ملف خاص يصدر عن مدينة سوريا يعنى بالمجالس المحلية والهيئات المعنية داخل سوريا | العدد 7 | آذار 2016

Appendix 5– Treaty between the Three Christian Villages of Yaqubiya, Qneyya and Jedida (Jisser Ashughour District, Idlib Province) and armed factions – 2013 <sup>206</sup>

محضر اجتماع تياران حرمون انبار - ايامه في  
 قرية القبيصة بتاريخ 11/11/2013  
 بعد الاقناع من جانب المصالحين المحرمين واليهود واليهود  
 في - ما يلي  
 1- التوصل الى اتفاق بين المصالحين - قرية القبيصة واليهود  
 واليهود  
 2- تسليم الممتلكات التي كانت مملوكة من قبل - راجد القرية  
 شيا - القرية - راجد القرية - راجد القرية  
 3- تسليم الممتلكات التي كانت مملوكة من قبل - راجد القرية  
 4- تسليم الممتلكات التي كانت مملوكة من قبل - راجد القرية  
 5- تسليم الممتلكات التي كانت مملوكة من قبل - راجد القرية  
 6- تسليم الممتلكات التي كانت مملوكة من قبل - راجد القرية  
 7- تسليم الممتلكات التي كانت مملوكة من قبل - راجد القرية

8- تسليم الممتلكات التي كانت مملوكة من قبل - راجد القرية  
 9- تسليم الممتلكات التي كانت مملوكة من قبل - راجد القرية  
 10- تسليم الممتلكات التي كانت مملوكة من قبل - راجد القرية  
 لواء دمع القوي القائد / المرحوم /  
 لواء الكريخ / المرحوم /  
 لواء أهرام الشام / المرحوم /  
 لواء دمع القوي / المرحوم /  
 لواء أهرام الشام / المرحوم /  
 لواء دمع القوي / المرحوم /  
 لواء أهرام الشام / المرحوم /  
 لواء دمع القوي / المرحوم /  
 لواء أهرام الشام / المرحوم /

<sup>206</sup> Source: Orient news [http://www.orient-news.net/news\\_images/13\\_2/01360825305.jpg](http://www.orient-news.net/news_images/13_2/01360825305.jpg)