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“Nothing Compensates Losing Three Darlings Together”

The Story of the Disappearance of Deeb Muhammad Burhan and Muhammad Salahdin Burhan by Syrian Army Elements

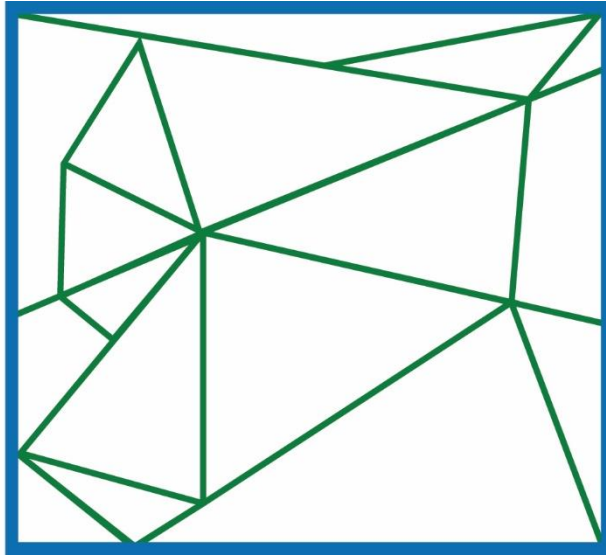
About Syrians for Truth and Justice/STJ

[Syrians for Truth and Justice /STJ](#) is a nonprofit, nongovernmental, independent Syrian organization. STJ includes many defenders and human rights defenders from Syria and from different backgrounds and affiliations, including academics of other nationalities.

The organization works for Syria, where all Syrians, without discrimination, should be accorded dignity, justice and equal human rights.

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Mayson Burhan tells the story of disappearance of her brother and uncle¹. She describes the catastrophe that her family faced after killing her father under torture by elements of Syrian Regular Army, and arresting her brother and her uncle and disappearing them without any trace.

Mayson Burhan's brother is Mohamed Salahdin Burhan, born in 1976, in Zabadani, Damascus countryside. He worked in business and distributing detergents. He is married but has no children. Mayson's uncle is Deeb Muhammad Burhan who was also born Al-Zabadani, in 1957. He was a trader and had cloths store, he is married with two children, a boy and a girl.

The calamity began on October 4, 2012, when the father identified as Salahdin Burhan was arrested on Al-Jabal checkpoint, operated by the Syrian Army, in Zabadani. Salahdin was taken to detention facility affiliated to the army in Wadi al-Qaq district in Zabadani near his farm. He was killed there under tortured, and his body was handed to his family without a death certificate or any personal belongings.

The family provided Syrians for Truth and Justice/STJ with a [videotape](#) that shows the body of the father Salahdin Burhan, and [two other videotapes](#) that explained [effects of torture](#) on the body of the father as well.

The family buried the father's body, and conducted a mourning ceremony. However, on the third day of the mourning, his son Muhammad, and his brother Deeb wanted to take back the car that the father had left in his land. Indeed, they went to Salah's land, but they were arrested by elements affiliated to the Syrian Regular Army who were combing the area following the murder of a high-ranking officer by armed elements. Many peasants who were in the farmlands adjacent to al-Jabal in Zabadani area were also arrested.

¹ This interview conducted on July 28, 2017 via the Internet.



The family heard news of the arrest of Muhammad Deeb and his uncle, and after they inquired about them, they learned that they were taken to Damascus directly, then the family later tried to inquire and get more information, but they had to pay large sums of money about \$6000, to intermediaries and lawyers. However, no credible or reliable news came as news of the mediators was conflicting, some of them said that they were held in Branch 215 affiliated to the Military Intelligence Apparatus, while others said that they were in the Fourth Armored Division, Regiment 555 deposit. Mayson says:

"Unfortunately, many were released from the branch 215, and 555 (which belong to the Fourth Division) and other branches, but we got no news about them. Later, we knew that the army arrested my brother Muhammad "because of our family name", the army believed he was "Sheikh Firas Burhan", who was wanted by the army".

Mayson talked about the family's distress following the death of the father and disappearance of the son and uncle:

"Our family is composed of five girls and one boy, Muhammad. We lost our father, our brother and our uncle in just four days. Whilst, but my mother suffered more, she is psychologically broken because of losing both her husband and her son. She always remembers them at every small detail in our daily life and activities, and sometimes she woke up at mid-night crying and screaming. She already had suffered from a nervous breakdown. We always feel that we badly need to know about their fate, we need to know any news about them, are they alive, or dead. In which place are they detained? ... Eyewitnesses talked about moment of the arrest of my brother and uncle and said that elements of the Syrian army hit my brother Muhammad's head with the back of the gun when, so we always wonder about the effects of this strike on his head? Did he survive after all? Did he lose his memory and so disappeared? Does it make sense that none of the former detainees who were released had seen them in the prison?"

Mayson's family were not affected so much, materially speaking, in comparison with the Uncle Deeb's family, as the girls travelled outside Syria, two of them studied Computer Engineering and the third studied photography. As for Mayson, she studied Philosophy and opened an educational institute; they work despite the absence of their father and brother. Anyway, Deeb's wife is a housewife, and his daughter could not work after she graduated from college and his son fled to Holland, so uncle Deeb's family became heartbroken and suffered from difficulty of providing daily needs as a result of the absence of a breadwinner. Deeb's wife shows traces of aging and fatigue after her husband's disappearance.

Fortunately, the Burhan family supported the two families morally and materially. The absence of the three resulted in no problems on land ownership. However, some lawyers advised the family that they should transfer and divide the lands that are still registered with Salahdin and



Deeb's names for fear the State may expropriate and confiscate the lands. The family did commended the procedures and expected some problems in the near future with regard to the legal complexities that may result in cases of disappearance or death of a person without issuing a death certificate.

Following the Burhan family travel, their house was subjected to a lot of material damage due to shelling Zabadani by the Syrian regime, one of the neighbors told them that they should come back to estimate the damage, with the possibility of compensating them in accordance with the "Reconstructing Syria" project. Mayson said:

"The neighbor asked us about the date of our arrival in order to estimate the damage, so I laughed and told him which house he is talking about; this is not the family's house in the absence of my father, my brother and my uncle. I doubt that the state would compensate affected people, but even if they reconstruct the four-wall house, it will remain a strange and an empty house in the absence of our."



Photo of the father Salahdin Burhan – Source: His family



Photo of the uncle Dib Muhammad Burhan – Source: His family



Photo of the brother Muhammad Salahdin Burhan – Source: His family