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Aziz Pirro

We Lost all Hope for the Future, with the Loss of Census Documents

The statement of Aziz Pirro...

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All of Aziz's 12 mates were accepted at the "Mathematics and Physics Faculty" in Deir ez-Zor University, except him, as he did not have a secondary school certificate, he returned home disappointed. All because of being a stateless Syrian Kurd, specifically from the maktumin class. Aziz continue to suffer, especially since he has not managed to obtain Syrian nationality despite numerous attempts.

"Aziz Pirro", born in the city of Qamishli/Qamishlo (1973), married with two children, studied at the Faculty of Law in Euphrates University¹, al-Hasakah governorate, but even so he spent years working as a farmer. "Aziz" is one of the stateless Syrian Kurds, specifically from the "maktumin class. In this regard, he spoke to STJ on July 30, 2018, saying:

"Persons in charge of the 1962 special census, registered my grandfather and uncles' names, my father was also registered but in another village, as he was there at the time, whose registration documents were lost, as we were told later. My father made two objections to the census Committee, but with no result, knowing that my father was the mukhtar of the village, who seals the official papers needed by the people, including the identification certificates which he issues for himself and for the village people. We remain maktumin as many others, nothing has changed because the Political Security Directorate in Damascus didn't approve the documents we had submitted to resolve our legal status" .

Aziz said that the maktumin situation is the worst, citing that the ajanib al-Hasakah (al-Hasakah foreigners) class enjoys their rights, though not fully like the Syrian citizens, where the maktumin have no rights at all. He goes on to say:

"The most severe restrictions imposed on maktumin are on education. As for our family, my two brothers haven't been permitted to pursue education, but after 2000, two others, however, have been allowed to complete their education. In civilized states, even criminals, who are devoid of civil and political rights, are entitled to pursue education from within prisons. My brother "Bihzad Arab Dawoud", graduated first in al-Hasakah Governorate in the industrial high school, class 1996, but alas, he wasn't permitted to complete his studies although he received a letter of support signed by a number of Syrian Parliament members at the time. The university rejected my papers, which I had submitted to the "Mathematics and Physics" faculty in 1993, because I didn't attached the high school certificate since the Education Directorate hadn't issued me one. However, I attended Faculty of Law at the age of 40. I still remember when I went with 12 other students to register at Deir ez-Zur

¹ Commenting on his receive of the graduation document by chance, Aziz said that after he got the certificate, he found that his date of birth was written wrong, so he went to the university and told the employee in charge about it, who in turn went to the Dean of the Faculty at the time, Khaled Al-Khatib, who asked him to destroy it and to not give Aziz a new one and that his name was listed by mistake on the list of graduates. All because of being a maktum.

University, where all of them were admitted except me, I was so disappointed. Can you imagine how much such a situation hurts ?"

"Aziz", said to STJ, that he had participated several times in demonstrations which occurred between 2003 and 2008, against depriving the Syrian Kurds from nationality, which made him be repeatedly detained by Syrian security services, apart from frequent incursions into his house following his participation in a demonstration against the issuance of Decree No. 49, which declared whole the al-Hasakah Governorate as a full border area, where the decree stopped the construction operations, buying and selling where the unemployment rate rose to record levels on Al-Jazira as a result, he commented:

They always ask me, are you Syrian?, and I always reply yes, I'm a Syrian Kurd, but they shout on me saying that I have nothing proves that, and that I can't be Syrian Kurd, I should be either Kurdish or Syrian."

Like all other stateless persons, "Aziz" was not entitled to receive treatment in public hospitals, nor to obtain a document proving his graduation from the university. He stated that he had practiced teaching at one time, as he taught some village children voluntarily, since he is banned from employment because of being a stateless. He also recounted that he and his family used to own agricultural lands which they transferred from the name of his grandfather to the name of his uncles who have Syrian nationality, as they were unable to register them in their name, the same applies for the rest of their property such as houses and cars, which were also registered in the name of their neighbor. Aziz continued talking about the hardships he had encountered because of being a stateless, where he said:

"I still remember when I once went to Damascus, and waited until midnight to get a permission from the duty officer in the Damascus Governorate, to stay in a hotel. Not to mention the denial of a driver's license, and the registration of our agricultural crops in the name of others and vending them for a pittance to traders because the government has not accepted to buy the crops directly from us."

"Aziz" noted that there are substantial grounds to fear that the pending decree on naturalization of maktumin wouldn't include the exemption of all those over 18 from compulsory military service, unlike the ajanib al-Hasakah's (al-Hasakah foreigners), which was formally implemented at the beginning of 2012. Aziz goes on to say:

"It is important to note that many of those stripped of their citizenship continued to submit objections to the census commissions until the beginning of 1970s. Many of them had however received Syrian nationality, after paying considerable sums. In the 1990s, we obtained statistics from the Civil Affairs Directorate in al-Hasakah stating that there were at least 90 thousand Syrian Kurds had been classified as maktumin, knowing that their numbers had increased due to births. After the issuance of Decree No. 49 of 2011, many maktumin tried to change their status to ajanib, thus they would be permitted to submit for Syrian nationality. The estimated number of maktumin who are still residing in Syria

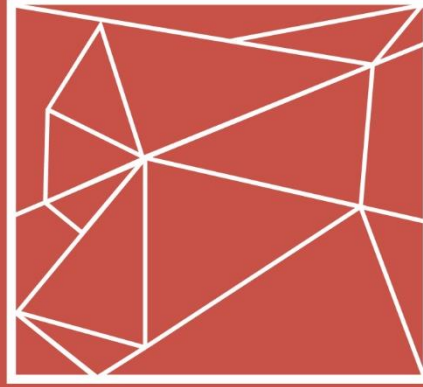
decreased, as it ranges between 20,000 to 25,000, for a number of reasons, where many of them have changed their legal status from maktumin to ajanib or to citizens, and also because of the migrations that have ravaged the region, especially after 2011, where tens of thousands of people migrated to other countries searching for a better life. Knowing that a year before, a presidential decree that granted Syrian nationality for some 150 maktumin families had been issue “.

Aziz thinks that solving the issue of the deprived and the stripped of citizenship, requires a comprehensive vision, which begins with granting citizenship to all of the stateless, the maktumin and the ajanib as well, along with compensating them especially for the land which they were be deprived from, pointing out that at the beginning of what was called the "Agrarian Reform", which denied the maktumin and ajanb access to land, as they have not been considered Syrians, where about 11 thousand families were prevented from benefiting from the Agrarian Reform act. However, the fertile land, in the vicinity of the Turkish border, which called the "Ten Line" was distributed to Syrian Arabs coming from Raqqa and Aleppo governorates and who were named al-Ghomour "The Flooded" after their lands which had been flooded by Euphrates Dam water, he concluded:

"Many people lived stateless from birth to death. My only wish now is that the Arabs, Kurds, Christians and Muslims of the region wouldn't be a target of racism because of their religious or ethnic affiliation. As Kurds, we know how it feels to be subjected to racism because of your national affiliation, which you didn't choose. I believe that better compensation for Syrian Kurds is to ensure that such policies do not recur in this country, which must not deprive any human being of his or her rights on the basis of his or her race, sex or religion."

سوريون
من أجل
الحقيقة
والعدالة

Syrians
For Truth
& Justice



About Syrians for Truth and Justice:

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

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

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