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We have a persistent feeling of inferiority as maktumeen

Statement of Hasan Mustafa Ne'eme



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As a stateless Syrian Kurd, Hasan is banned from travelling abroad. He even avoids travelling from one governorate to another, because he doesn't have any official proof of identity except a mere unrecognised identification certificate.

Hasan Mustafa Ne'mah was born in Ras al-Ayn, Sari Kani, in 1962. He is married with seven children, all of them stateless *maktum*.¹ Interviewed by STJ in March 2018, he explains:

"My father died when I was only six months old. During the special census, he did not register himself, so we became *maktum*, while my uncle was registered as a citizen of Syrian nationality. I tried resolving my legal status between 1988 and 1989, and went to the Civil Status Department in Damascus to submit my papers, but to no avail. My last attempt was in 2011, following the issuance of Decree No.49 on naturalisation of the *ajanib*.² I went to the Civil Status Department and appeared before age assessment committee in al-Hasakah city, but the employees said that the papers had been destroyed and burnt in Deir ez-Zur governorate as a result of the war."

Hasan was deprived of all his basic rights, including his rights to education, to vote, to be elected and to own a property, resorting to registering his possessions under the name of his uncle, who had the Syrian nationality.

He also explained the hardship he encounters when considering traveling:

"The identification certificate I hold entitles me to travel within the areas of Autonomous Administration, but it causes me a lot of trouble to travel to Damascus, especially after the spread of the regime's military checkpoints throughout the country. Most of the checkpoints officers don't know what *maktum* means. Now, my wife is sick and I'm reluctant to take her to Damascus to seek treatment, for fear of the trouble I might face because of my identification certificate. Plus, we're not allowed to stay in hotels except if we receive a permission from the hotel division."

Hasan deplores that his sons will not be socially empowered, as they were not permitted to pursue their education, and some of them did not even complete the preparatory and secondary level:

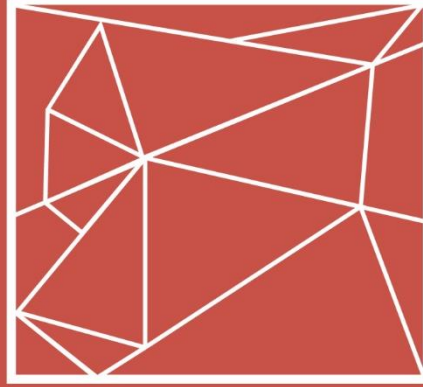
"We have a persistent feeling of inferiority as *maktumeen*. I traveled once to Damascus for an emergency, and on my way I was stopped by some security agents who asked for my ID. When I showed them the identity certificate, they wondered about the meaning of the word *maktum*. *Maktumeen* only exist in Syria. Other countries grant citizenship to foreigners after several years, but in Syria, there are *maktumeen* families with good financial conditions and who would be ready to offer millions to acquire a citizenship, but have never been able to do so."

¹ Sing. *maktum*/*maktumah*, i. e., unregistered stateless people.

² Sing. *ajnabi*/*ajnabiyah*, literally »foreigners« i.e. stateless. unregistered stateless people.

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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