

The identification certificate of the witness Ismail Muhammad, a stateless Syrian Kurd.

I No Longer wish to be a Syrian Citizen

The statement of Ismail Muhammad



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Ismail did not foresee that he might be over 70 years of age, and not able to realize his dream of acquiring Syrian nationality.

Ismail Muhammad was born in al-Qahtaniyah/Tarbassiyah town, in al-Hasakah Governorate. He is 70 and married with children. Ismail is one of the stateless Syrian Kurds, specifically from *maktumeen*¹ class. He spoke to STJ field researcher who interviewed him in March 2018:

“My legal status changed to *maktum*, while my brother became a citizen as a result of the special census. I’ve submitted my papers several times in order to resolve my status but I always got rejected due to my affiliation to the Kurdistan Democratic Party of Syria at the time. I went once to the Civil Status Department with an acquaintance, they told him that I was on the regime’s black list, and that I would never obtain the nationality. However, leaving the party didn’t change mine or others’ legal status either. At some point, I just started feeling that it’s difficult or almost impossible to acquire citizenship, so I stopped trying.”

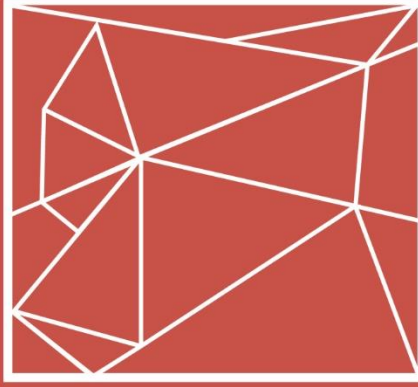
When the Decree No. 49 on the naturalization of *ajanib* al-Hasakah was issued, in 2011, Ismail had lost his hope of achieving the dream of acquiring Syrian nationality and didn’t re-submit his papers to the Civil Status Department to resolve his legal status:

“We have faced many problems because of our legal status. My sons have not been able to complete their studies, and we were not permitted to possess or officially register any property in our name. We had to register our own goods under the names of our relatives who have Syrian nationality. Regarding work, I spent years working in a small shop, since we, *maktumeen*, aren’t permitted to practice all profession or to choose the field we can work in. Not to mention the difficulties we used to experienced during our travels within the country: my eldest son was arrested three times by security services during his travels from one Syrian governorate to another, all because of being *maktum*. This led him later to travel to Turkey and obtain the Turkish identity, because my wife was a Turkish national. Although she has been living in Syria for nearly 50 years, she was, herself, given the Syrian residency papers only a few years ago.”

¹ Sing. *maktum*/*maktumah*, i. e., 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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