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سوريون
من أجل
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Syrians
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& Justice



Rural Homs: University Students Denied Deferral Documents by Military Recruitment Department

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Hundreds of Homs University students, from northern rural Homs, are facing the risk of being sent to perform compulsory military service due to the military recruitment department's refusal to grant them deferral documents though they have officially returned to the colleges they left in the past years of conflict. This took place after the students conducted a reconciliation/settlement deal, one of the terms of which provide for giving them a six-month-respite – starting from May 2018- to regularize their legal status and obtain the documents needed to prevent their recruitment, knowing that the duration is to end in mid-December 2018, according to testimonies obtained by Syrians for Truth and Justice/STJ.

According to STJ's field researcher, the al-Rastan Military Recruitment Department was moved to the city of Homs, similar to the Houla region's military recruitment department. The students from the rural parts thus have to go to the city of Homs to refer to the military recruitment departments.

On November 18, 2018, a university student from the city of Talbiseh, the first eyewitness, informed STJ's field researcher of the following:

“After I signed the reconciliation deal, I went to the university and filed an application, in which I justified my absence from the university. In the application, I wrote that the reason was the roads being blocked by the armed groups. The application was approved and I was officially allowed to continue my education from the point where I stopped. I also obtained a document proving my being a university student from the Student Affair Department, after which I headed to the military recruitment department to get a deferral, but the department refused to grant me the document and said that the regularization deal does not include a deferral of the compulsory military service.”

A second eyewitness, a university student at the al-Baath University, on November 16, 2018, told STJ's field researcher the following:

“About 2000 students from northern rural Homs are waiting for a solution to their problem with the military recruitment department. I and many other young men have legalized our status and officially returned to the university without any further complications on the part of the university. The military recruitment department refuses to grant us deferrals. Based on this, we communicated with the current minister of education pleading a solution to our problem, but we are not optimistic at all because the whole affair depends on the Ministry of Defense.”

A third witness, who is also a university student, said:

“I study at the College of Arts and Humanities/ Arabic Language Department, and I am left with a few materials to graduate. For this reason only, I decided to stay and sign the settlement/reconciliation deal. Nonetheless, what happened was that I was sent to

perform military service for twenty days even though the settlement deal's given respite has not ended. I was then taken back to the town. They told me that I will be recruited at the onset of the New Year; for its part, the military recruitment department did not grant me a deferral though I was admitted into the university again."

The three university students stressed that the period of the settlement document which they signed will be due in mid-December 2018. Accordingly, they will be vulnerable to seizure by the Military Police, spreading at the checkpoints. The three of them also confirmed that many of their mates did not commit to the university's attendance schedule and the compulsory sessions for fear of being arrested at the checkpoints, which happened after they were denied a deferral by the military recruitment department.

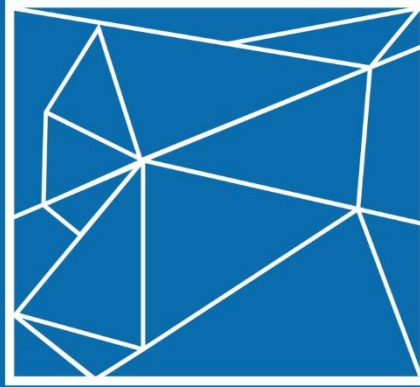
Since the Syrian regular forces and their allies controlled northern rural Homs, many violations of the reconciliation/settlement deal were documented, where governmental institutions refused to rehire the employees they dismissed earlier and dozens of the region's young men were arrested, detained and summoned for various reasons, some of which are unknown. Some of the young men were released, while the destiny of others is yet unknown. Covering these incidents, STJ published several detailed news reports. ¹

¹ "Syria: National Security Bureau Summons Officer Defectors in Northern Rural Homs prior to their Discharge", Syrians for Truth and Justice, November 6, 2018, (Last visit: February 2, 2019). <https://stj-sy.com/ar/view/937>.

"Ongoing Arrests against Former White Helmets in Homs and Daraa", Syrians for Truth and Justice, September 15, 2018, Last visit: February 2, 2019. <https://stj-sy.com/en/view/744>.

"The Syrian Government Refuses to Rehire Dismissed Employees in Northern Rural Homs, Contrary to Settlement Deal's Terms", Syrians for Truth and Justice, November 8, 2018, (Last visit: February 2, 2019). <https://stj-sy.com/ar/view/943>.

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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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