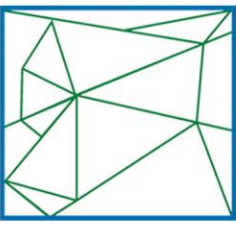


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Syrians
For Truth
& Justice



December 2017



Syrian Regular Forces Seized Houses of Civilian in Al Hasakah

“Special Report Listed the Accounts of some Homeowners Whose Houses Captured by Syrian Government Agents”



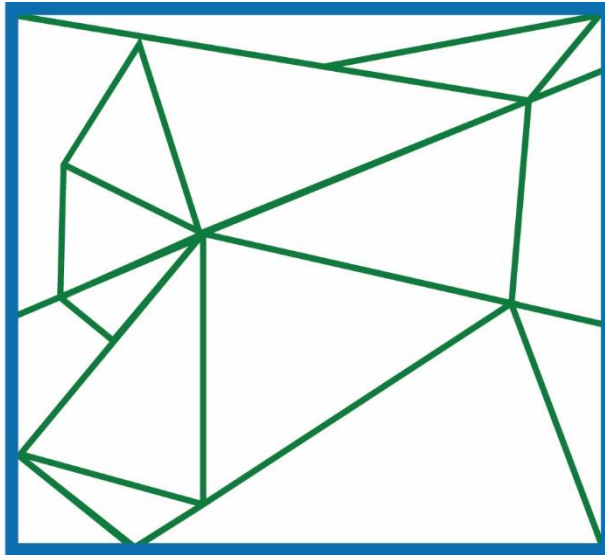
About Syrians for Truth and Justice/STJ

[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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Preface:

Several civilian houses in [al-Hasakah](#) city, northeastern Syria, have been seized and confiscated by the Syrian regular forces with their allies such as National Defense Force/NDF¹, specifically during October 2017. According to a [Syrians for Truth and Justice/STJ](#) reporter, the latter confiscated houses, particularly those located inside the security square² in al-Hasakeh near its military checkpoints, and then **distributed them to its agents to stay in** without any legal reason or judicial procedure, according to many testimonies obtained by STJ in November 2017.



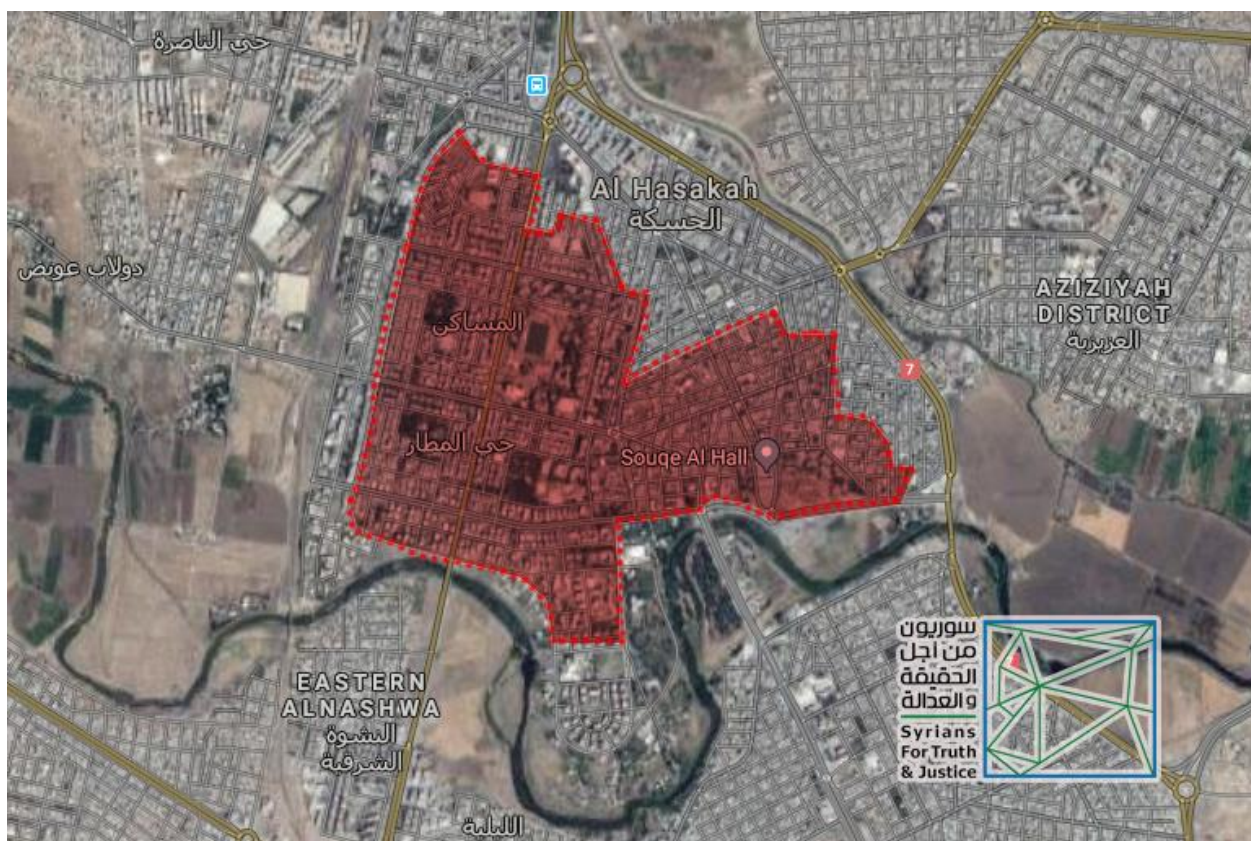
Image shows one of the houses seized by the Syrian regular forces in al-Hasakah city, specifically in “al-Barad al-Alee” street inside the security square in the city, taken on October 26, 2017. Photo credit: STJ

¹ The National Defense Force (NDF) was formed by some military commanders in the city of Hasakeh early in 2012, in an attempt to carry out raids, arrests and domination of the population within the city without any laws or orders of the court.

² The security square is the area in the middle of al-Hasakeh city, which is under the control of the Syrian regular forces, where all government departments, military posts and security branches of the Syrian regular forces are stationed.



According to STJ reporter, many people **left their houses inside the security square** in al-Hasakeh city, in the wake of the military clashes³ between the Syrian regular forces and the NDF against pro-Autonomous Administration Asayesh forces, on August 18, 2016. Therefore, many of them emigrate either outside the country or to other safer areas within al-Hasakeh, or to other areas such as Qamishli, Amuda and Derek/al-Malikiayah. However, **the residents did not sell or rent their houses**, they left them empty to return there as soon as the security situation in the city stabilized.



A map shows the location of the "security Square" in the province of Hasaka, the only area still under the control of Syrian government forces and its militias.

³ According to STJ reporter, these clashes erupted on August 18, 2016, following a disagreement between agents of the checkpoint of the Syrian regular forces, on the one hand, and elements of a military checkpoint belonging to the Al-Asayesh forces, on the other hand, inside the security square in the city of Hasakeh, the reason was that a Syrian regular agent assaulted another agent of the "People's Protection Units" forces.



First. Stationing of Military Checkpoints within the Security Square in Al-Hasakeh:

Following clashes between the Syrian regular forces and (NDF) against Asayesh forces of the Autonomous –Administration on August 18, 2016, the presence of Syrian regular forces was limited to the "security square" in al-Hasakeh, which made the latter control that area and stall up its military checkpoints in the entrances and exits of the security square area.

According to STJ reporter, these checkpoints surrounded the security square in all sides, as they were located on the bridge, known as Nashoua Bridge in the south, Al Qamishli Street from the north, the Air security Branch, or what is known as the cross road of the Sumara restaurant from the west, near a military barrack of the Syrian regular forces from the east.

Because of stationing those checkpoint within the city of Hasakeh, specifically at points of clashes between them and the "Asayesh" forces of Autonomous -Administration, many of the city's inhabitants fled either inside or to other neighborhoods in al-Hasakeh, while some decided to migrate out of the country, leaving their houses behind without owning the ability to sell them due to its proximity to the Syrian regular forces checkpoints

Second, The Displacement of the Owners of the Houses Near the Military Checkpoints inside the Security Square in Al-Hasakeh

Mohammed Khaled, an alias for a native of Al Hasakah city, who is one of the residents who left their houses, which located inside the security square in the city. Along with his family, Mohammed fled to Tal Hajar neighborhood in the city, specifically in November 2016. In this regard he spoke to STJ, saying:

"I decided to flee with my family from our house located at "Sumara Restaurant" cross road, particularly after being afraid because of the house's proximity to a military checkpoint of the Syrian regular forces. We were horrified of the idea of the outbreak of clashes again inside al Hasakeh, and be vulnerable for the indiscriminate missiles and bullets that do not distinguish as we are close to that checkpoint, so we decided to get out of the house hoping to sell it to the first customer."



The same happened with Muhammad from al-Hasakeh, who migrated outside the country in January 2017, as he preferred to leave his home due to his proximity from a military checkpoint of the Syrian regular forces, stationed on the entrance of the security square from the north-west side, But before he emigrated he made his brother a trustee of his house. In this connection Ahmed, Refaat's brother talked to STJ:

My brother emigrated to Germany after he was fed up and no longer wanted to live inside al Hasakeh, especially since that the area next his house's door had become more like a café where the ' SDF elements gathered. Therefore, before making a migration decision, my brother did a legal agency, which enables me to sell or rent the house. "

In another testimony, Suhaylah al-Ahmad, an alias, one of the women of al-Hasakeh, who also fled and left her house inside the security square in the city, specifically in the "Villa houses/Masaken al-Villat" area near al-Nashouah" bridge, where there is a (NDF) checkpoint, she recounted to STJ:

"In March 2013, my husband died of a heart attack and bequeathed us two houses, one in al-Hasakeh and the other in Qamishli city, but when the clashes broke out between regime forces and Al-Asayesh forces in al-Hasakah, I decided to escape with my three children to Qamishli in August

Third, Problems Faced Homeowners:

Because of the proximity of these houses to the military checkpoints of the Syrian regular forces inside the security square, no one wanted to rent or even buy them. This was confirmed by Muhammad Khaled, who repeatedly tried to sale his house or lease it through a real estate office located within al-Hasakeh city, but all his attempts failed, concerning that he continued:

"Every time a customer came to buy the house, the shock seemed clear on his face due to the proximity of the house of the military checkpoint of the regime. The customer was arguing for evading and not buying it. But a displaced family from Deir ez-Zur province wanted to rent the house, so I made a contract with this family, through a real estate office to be legal, with 15 thousand Syrian pounds as monthly fare, but when the new tenants start moving their belongings to the house, I was shocked by a phone call from the head of the family, as he told me that the checkpoint agents will not allow him to transfer his things until the owner of the house comes. So, I headed to the house immediately where I met the checkpoint agents, and showed them the lease papers. However, they told me that it was necessary to obtain the consent of the official of this checkpoint, and when I asked them to let me meet the official, they told me that he was busy and that I have to wait till tomorrow. "



Muhammad said that he had not been able to meet the official of the checkpoint despite he went there every day, as the checkpoint agents had been arguing that he was busy, and as a result the tenants had canceled the lease, which had been agreed upon only two weeks later, because they were not allowed to transfer their belongings to the new home, Mohammed assured that the house remained empty until then.

In a cross-checked testimony, Muhammad, Refaat's brother, confirmed what had been narrated earlier, that when he wanted to sell his brother's house, near a checkpoint, to a customer, the checkpoint agents of the Syrian regular forces rejected that and they refused to recognize his legal agency, and in this regard he continued

When I wanted to sell the house, one of the officials of the checkpoint asked me to obtain permission from the Military Security Branch in Hasakeh then I could act in the house, so I worked on this statement, and as a result, I was transferred from the Military Security Branch to the Political Security Branch of the city, and then to the Air Security Branch, but all in vain, as the papers and documents I worked on to recognize my legal agency remained within the Air security Branch, until they told me that are they rejected without any excuses, and they do not even return the documents and the legal agency papers which enable me to sell and act at the house. "

Suhaylah al-Ahmad wanted to visit her home in the security square, , after 10 months of departure, but she was prevented by the agents of the checkpoint, which is near her house, run the Syrian regular forces, arguing that she had no papers proving her ownership of the house, and in that connection she said:

"I tried to visit my house hoping to rent it through a real estate office, and that was in June 2017, but the checkpoint agents blocked me on the pretext that I don't have any paperwork to prove that I own the house, and they told me that they locked out the outside doors of the house after one of the robbers opened it during the clashes between the forces of the regime and the "Asayesh" forces, and despite of all attempts to beg to let me enter the house they rejected my request, and indicated me that I have to bring any witness or neighbors to make sure that I am right, knowing that all the neighbors had fled from their homes and never returned, just like us.



Fourth: Seizure of Civilian Houses in Al-Hasakah

After several months of attempts by the owners of these houses to sale or rent, most of them have lost hope, so some have decided to return to their homes, that they left as a result of military confrontations, including Muhammad Khaled as material life burdens and his inability to pay the fare of the house that he moved to, in Tal Hajar, pushed him to make a decision to return to his home in the security square inside al Hasakeh, he did not care about the seriousness of the security situation there, and in this regard he went on:

"When I decided to return to my house in October 2017, I was shocked that checkpoint agents had taken my house as a sleeping, and when I asked them to evacuate the house, one of them said in a cynical tone:" You didn't come home until we protected it, and he informed me that if I had asked for the house again, they might hurt me, so I understood that my house had been seized, so I returned to the house that I had rented in Tal Hajar neighborhood, losing any hope of going back to my house, just waiting for a miracle.

In turn, Refaat's brother, Mohammad, confirmed what had been said earlier that agents of the Syrian regular forces' military checkpoint had also captured his brother's house in the security square inside al- Hasakeh specifically in October 2017, that was after receiving a phone call from a neighbor who assured him that those agents broke the lock of the house and housed one of their families, Mohammad continued

One of the neighbors told me that the checkpoint agents housed a family in my brother's house, and when I asked that neighbor to inquire about it, he/she told them that the agents said that there was no trustee on the house, and if it remains empty without occupants, that will expose the checkpoint to great danger, as someone might sneak into the house and attack the checkpoint agents.

Suhaylah al-Ahmad also learned through one of her neighbors that the agents of regular forces' military checkpoint near her house had taken over the house including its belongings and furniture, and in that regard she added:

"In the middle of October 2017, I learned from a neighbor that an agent of the checkpoint lived in his house along with his wife and that I could no longer went back home unless I have an official document entitles me to get the house back from the checkpoint agents. Anyway, I learned later that another neighbor had the same story concerning seizing his home too. I thought that if I tried to retrieve the house through lawyers and the Justice Palace in Al Hasakeh, those agents may harass me in any way, so I left it and satisfied with Allah's plan.

STJ had earlier prepared [a report](#) on how several jihadist factions, including Hayat Tahrir al-Sham/HTS, formerly al-Nusra Front and the Turkistani Islamic party, seized



and confiscated many public and private property in the area of Jiser al-Shughour in Idlib countryside. STJ also prepared [another report](#) on how Lewaa Rabetet al-Marj took over homes specialized for internally displaced persons in the town of Kafr Batna in Eastern Ghouta in September 2017.