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سوريون
من أجل
الحقيقة
والعدالة
Syrians
For Truth
& Justice



Syrian Security Services Arrest Former Leaders of Jaysh al-Islam in Southern Damascus

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On November 15, 2018, Syrian security services arrested three former leaders of Jaysh al-Islam and another person, who have already conducted a reconciliation/settlement with the Syrian government, after a raid they undertook near the town of Aqraba, south of Damascus, according to testimonies obtained by Syrians for Truth and Justice/STJ.

In an interview with STJ on November 25, 2018, a source, who refused to reveal his name for security reasons,¹ said:

“On November 15, 2018, elements of the Air Force Intelligence Branch stormed the Al-Araby Factory, located on the outskirts of the town of Aqraba. There, they arrested Ibrahim Ghazal, Ahmad al-Shibanee and Abu Safi Kaserwani, as well as a person from the town of Beit Sahem, who accompanied them and whose name was not identified. The people whose names are mentioned have all conducted a regularization of status deal with the Syrian government, and the Russian police pledged to protect them and the mentioned location, as it spreads in the area.”

Ibrahim Ghazal, dubbed Abu Mohammad, according to the source, was the General Commander of the Liwa Aqraba/Aqraba Brigade, dissolved in the Jaysh al-Islam, while Ahmad al-Shibanee, who is dubbed Abu Ammer, was a security officer in the same brigade. Concerning Abu Safi Kaserwani, he was a military leader of the same brigade as well. The three of them are from the town of Aqraba.

The source stressed that the arrest of the three leaders was based on the reports filed by a person² against them. In former years, this person was detained at the prisons of the Aqraba Brigade faction, and when the Syrian regular forces controlled the towns of southern Damascus, he was released. He volunteered in one of the security services and started to file reports against the leaders and the persons who underwent a settlement with the Syrian government. The source added that the arrest of these three leaders will facilitate the way for the detention of dozen others for similar reasons and on allegations of criminal cases.

In May 2018, the Syrian regular forces and their allies managed to control the cities and towns of southern Damascus after they conducted several deals, under which the armed opposition groups' militants and some civilians were deported to Idlib. They also signed another deal with the organization, which refers to itself as the Islamic State/IS, known as “Deash”³, according to which the latter left the area to the As-Suwayda province. Since they took over the region, the forces conducted operations of arrest, detention and forced recruitment, a part of which was contrary to the reconciliation/settlement deal. Covering the issue, STJ published reports on several incidents.⁴

¹ The name, title and location of the source are not revealed at his request.

² The name of the person who filed the reports is not revealed at the source's request.

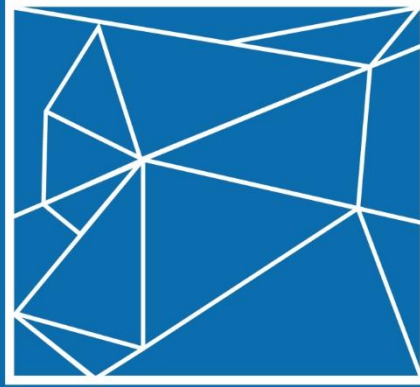
³ The Arabic acronym for ISIS.

⁴ “Arrests and Forced Recruitments by the Syrian Regime, Southern Damascus”, Syrians for Truth and Justice. September 13, 2018. Last visit: January 28, 2019. <https://stj-sy.com/en/view/742>.

“Arrests in Yarmouk Camp after Being Taken Over by Regime Forces”, Syrians for Truth and Justice, June 9, 2018, Last visit: January 28, 2019. <https://www.stj-sy.com/en/view/566>.

“Extensive Looting and Thefts following the Evacuation Deal in Yarmouk Camp”, Syrians for Truth and Justice, June 7, 2018, Last visit: January 28, 2019. <https://www.stj-sy.com/en/view/564>.

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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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