

November 2018



Syria's Local Polls Credibility Under Scrutiny

*The Syrian Government Accused of Taking Votes
by Force and Threats*

Syria's Local Polls Credibility Under Scrutiny

The Syrian Government Accused of Taking Votes by Force and Threats

Syrian government held local elections in its controlled parts of the country where Syrians voted for more than 40,000 candidates competed for 18,478 seats on local administrative councils in 88 constituencies included 6551 polling centers.¹

It is the first local polls since December 12, 2011, which conducted pursuant to Legislative Decree No.391 of 2011, which fixed the dates of local council elections.²

This was preceded by the issuance of several Legislative Decrees including Decree No. 101 which regulated the election of members of the People's Council and those of local councils on August 3, 2011³ and Decree No. 107, "The Local Government Act"⁴ on the decentralization of powers and responsibilities. On July 26, 2015, the government issued Decree No. 11 which provided for the amendment of section 1 from Article 55 of Act No. 107 to be " If the governor is exempted or legally absent the District Police Commander would be his designee in the executive branch and the vice-President of the Executive Office in all terms of reference relating to the work of the Office, and he decides the maintenance and orders the expenditures and payments."⁵

The local council elections came after the Syrian regime and Russian allies' control over most rebel enclaves including those in eastern Ghouta⁶, Daraa province⁷, Homs' northern countryside and others.

¹ "Syrians Voting for their Local Councils", Ministry of Local Administration and Environment, September 17, 2018; <http://www.mola.gov.sy/mola/index.php/2018-04-19-13-25-40/item/6897-2018-09-17-11-48-45> (Last edit: October 24, 2018).

² "Decree No.391 of 2011, Fixing the dates of Local councils' polls", People's Council of Syria, October 5, 2011; <http://www.parliament.gov.sy/arabic/index.php?node=5575&cat=4373> ;(Last edit: October 24, 2018).

³ "Legislative Decree No. 101 of 2011, the General Elections Law", People's Council of Syria, August 3, 2011; <http://www.parliament.gov.sy/arabic/index.php?node=5516&cat=4397> , (Last edit: October 24, 2018).

⁴ "Legislative Decree No. 107, The Local Government Act", People's Council of Syria, August 23, 2011; <http://www.parliament.gov.sy/arabic/index.php?node=5575&cat=4390> ,(Last edit: October 24, 2018).

⁵ "Legislative Decree No. 107 of 2015, amendment of The Local Government Act", Syrian Council of Ministers, July 26, 2015; <http://pministry.gov.sy/contents/12329/%D8%A7%D9%84%D9%82%D8%A7%D9%86%D9%88%D9%86-%D8%B1%D9%82%D9%85-/11/-%D9%84%D8%B9%D8%A7%D9%85-2015-%D8%A7%D9%84%D9%85%D8%AA%D8%B6%D9%85%D9%86-%D8%AA%D8%B9%D8%AF%D9%8A%D9%84-%D8%A7%D9%84%D9%85%D8%B1%D8%B3%D9%88%D9%85--%D8%A7%D9%84%D8%AA%D8%B4%D8%B1%D9%8A%D8%B9%D9%8A-107-%D9%84%D8%B9%D8%A7%D9%85-2011----%D9%82%D8%A7%D9%86%D9%88%D9%86-%D8%A7%D9%84%D8%A5%D8%AF%D8%A7%D8%B1%D8%A9-%D8%A7%D9%84%D9%85%D8%AD%D9%84%D9%8A%D8%A9---> (Last edit: October 24, 2018).

⁶ Retook by the Syrian regime during April 2018.

⁷ Retook by the Syrian regime in late July 2018.

According to many testimonies obtained by STJ, the Syrian government exercised pressure on civilians to vote for candidates from parties loyal to it, threatening those who refused by calling them "Syria's enemies".

Polls were also conducted in regime-held areas in Al-Hasakah, under the Kurdish Autonomous Administration, where the Syrian government forced employees in its institutions to vote for the National Unity list, which includes members of The National Progressive Front, loyal to the Syrian regime, by threatening them to cut their pay, and that naturally led the pro-government candidates to win the elections in a landslide.

According to STJ's field researchers, the majority of those elected in each of eastern Ghouta, Daraa and Al-Hasakah, are members of the ruling Ba'ath party, and were already chosen by acclamation by pro-government officials, which made the polls a farce.

I. "Those who refuse to vote are enemies of Syria"

Earlier in September 2018, Syrian government agencies began announcing local council elections in eastern Ghouta, which was confirmed by "Hasan Sleek ", a media activist from Douma city:

"With the beginnings of 2013, the Syrian regime's local councils were replaced by others of rebels, in the areas they had taken, which oversaw the functioning of the towns. However, after the opposition's evacuation from those areas, the Syrian regime returned to appoint local councils as it used to do before 2011, by forcing civilians to vote for a list of their agents, mostly from the Ba'ath ruling Party" .



An election rally in Douma with the aftermath of a rocket appeared on the ground, which was fired earlier by regime forces. Photo credit: [Duma News](#).



Preparations for the elections in Douma. Photo credit: [Duma News](#).

Omar Zarei, another media activist⁸ from Douma, told STJ that the recent elections held by Syrian government forces in Douma proceeded as planned, noting that the candidates were distributed on three electoral lists: Al-Wafa'a list (Sincerity list), Sawa Lilmahabba wa Elbina'a list (together to spread the love and construct) and the National Unity list, which includes (28) Ba'athist candidates and the people were forced to choose. Omar pointed out that the majority of candidates were earlier members of reconciliation committees which settled with the Syrian government, including; Yasser Adas, Mahrous al-Shghari, Badi'a Juma, Ayman Hadar, Mohammed al-Saour, Adnan Ma'abakah and Hamza Baghdadi."

إعلان نتائج أسماء الفائزين بمجلس مدينة دوما			
التسلسل	أسماء الفائزين عن القمطاع الأول	التسلسل	أسماء الفائزين عن القمطاع الثاني
١	محمد الذرة ابن مصطفى	١	ياسر نسيخ العصر ابن بشير
٢	عادل صاهر ابن سليمان	٢	لؤي بكوره ابن محمد نعمان
٣	عائده صلاح ابنة محمد	٣	محروس بغيري ابن محمد عدنان
٤	محمد خير الساعور ابن علي	٤	حسن القراوي ابن علي
٥	حسن النجار ابن درويش	٥	حمزة البقادي ابن محمد
٦	رانب حرب ابن مصطفى	٦	سمير الزكك ابن محمد
٧	ياسر عدس ابن رانب	٧	صحي هارون ابن محمد
٨	خالد سلام ابن محمد	٨	ياسر سزيول ابن محمد
٩	أيمن محضر محضر ابن محمد	٩	حياة الرحياني ابنة حسن
١٠	بديع حمزة ابن عبد الرؤوف	١٠	فاسم عبون ابن محمود
١١	هينام المما ابن عبدالقادر	١١	محمد نبيل طه ابن احمد
١٢	خالد جوهر ابن علي	١٢	ماجد حسانا ابن خليل
١٣	زهير النعال ابن بشير	١٣	نذير كلين ابن خالد
١٤	وليد حنية ابن عبد الحميد	١٤	كاسم النسيخ سليمان ابن محمد
١٥	ممدوح عبد الدايم ابن محمود	١٥	محمد علاء عريضة ابن محمد ياسين
١٦	محمد أنجيله ابن مصطفى	١٦	عدنان معيكة ابن محمود
١٧	ريده زريق ابنة أحمد	١٧	حسام طالب ابن يحيى الدين
١٨	ريما عطايا ابنة ممدوح	١٨	عمر النون ابن ابراهيم

A list for the candidates who win the elections in Douma. Photo credit: [Duma News](#).

Zarei added that candidates loyal to the Syrian regime sought to seize all the seats in Douma's local council:

"I learned from some of the activists in Douma that during the electoral process, a meeting of the elders, close to the Syrian regime, was organized, during which they elected Sawa Lilmahabba wa Elbina'a list, by acclamation, and forced Al-Wafa'a list to withdraw in favor of it. The regime's checkpoints in Douma did not confiscate the IDs of people on that day, as they do every day since the government retook the city, in order to claim the high turnout of voters, who were actually forced on it by threats of being called Syria's enemies."

⁸ Displaced recently to northern Syria.

The same happened in Hamoryah where the regime seized all the seats in the local council, according to Omar Issa, alias:

"Most of the candidates known for their absolute loyalty to the regime, some even are informers for intelligence services and helped hand over many young men to the security branches, some of whom were still disappeared so far. No civilian dared to stand for these elections, which results announced on September 17, 2018"

(إعلان نهائي بأسماء المرشحين لعضوية مجلس بلدة حمورة عن الدائرة الانتخابية في منطقة الغوطة الشرقية)

القطاع الثاني (٥)			القطاع الأول (٥)		
القطاع	الاسم الثلاثي	مجلس	القطاع	الاسم الثلاثي	مجلس
ب	احمد ابراهيم طعمة	١	أ	دعاء وليد الحمصي	١
ب	خالد عبد السلام عبد ربه	٢	أ	رفيق علي حجازي	٢
ب	سليمان إبراهيم حيدر الجبواوي	٣	أ	محمد سامي أحمد القصير	٣
ب	هنادي إبراهيم ياسين	٤	أ	محمد سعيد بوبو	٤
ب	وليد احمد طعمة	٥	أ	موسى احمد عيسى	٥

عضو
القاضي راشد الزعبي

عضو
القاضي وليد محمود كليسي

رئيس اللجنة
القاضي محمد سعيد بيطار



A list of the candidates won in Hamoryah. Photo credit: activists from Hamoryah.

Pro-regime candidates, members of the ruling Ba'ath Party, also seized the seats in Saqba town, as STJ's field researcher reported.

قائمة الوحدة الوطنية لمجلس مدينة سقبا

قطاع (ب)			قطاع (أ)		
بعثي	خالد مسلم القوتلي	١	بعثي	أحمد صلاح الدين الشجاع المكاوي	١
بعثي	أحمد حسن الحاج حسن	٢	بعثي	خالد رياض صادق	٢
بعثي	أنور سعيد المن	٣	بعثي	محمد عبد السلام ياسين الدالي	٣
بعثي	بشار سعيد أجانا	٤	بعثي	رامز ياسين ديبه	٤
بعثي	إياد فايز عبيد	٥	بعثي	كمال هشام دومانى	٥
بعثي	روى محمد سعيد الكرش	٦	بعثي	حسن محمد طاطون	٦
بعثي	حازم مروان صادق	٧	بعثي	محمد يوسف سعيد الخطيب المصري	٧
بعثي	صافي عدنان حامد	٨	بعثي	مريم إبراهيم ضبيان عبد الحق	٨
بعثي	رياض يوسف صادق	٩	بعثي	معتز يوسف بركات	٩
مستقل	أحمد شهاب الحلب	١٠	بعثي	فادي ياسين شاغري	١٠
مستقل	رائد محمد زهير أبو الراس	١١	مستقل	زياد محمد كامل البشير	١١
مستقل	سليم محمد عبيد	١٢	مستقل	روبه ميم هني	١٢
			مستقل	ياسين حاتم الرزق	١٣

A list of the candidates won the seats in Saqba’s local council

Photo credit: activists from Saqba.

II. Forcing government employees in Al-Hasakah to vote for regime agents

The Syrian regime held polls also in Al Hasakah, in the 15% territories under its control:

"About (2788) candidates, both independents and lists, vied for 1745 positions in the local administration in Al Hasakah. There were about 25 polling stations in Al-Hasakah City and 15 in Qamishli. Five days before the elections, we, the candidates, asked for stations in Al-Hasakah villages, but the Syrian government refused citing the Autonomous Administration’s control there, knowing that authorities and people there vowed to watch the process and protect the boxes, so (112) candidates withdrew from the elections before they began, (103) of whom were from Al-Hasakah and the 9 others from Qamishli city.", according to a lawyer ran for elections."

The lawyer added that on September 16, 2018, all the ballot boxes were put in the areas of the national Unity List candidates, which includes members of The National Progressive Front, and when the independent candidates asked for the boxes to be monitored until the voters' arrival, the Judicial Committee supervising these elections said "you can leave if you are not consent". He noted that all employees were forced to vote for the National Unity list, which led to the independent candidates' withdrawn, and the win of the National Unity list by acclamation.



Salma. h, a teacher from Al-Hasakah confirmed the forcing all the government institutions staffs to vote for the National Unity List:

"On September 13, 2018, me and all the school staff were informed to bring our electoral card on September 16, 2018, to vote in local ballots, or our pay will be docked otherwise and we would be questioned by the Legal Committee. On the election day, which was a holiday, all employees were forced to attend school where they took our vote cards and forced us to go out in a march cheering for the Syrian regime, then we were taken to one of the polling stations and forced to thumbprint the ballot paper, without knowing for whom we've voted."

III. Pro forma elections in Al Moadamyeh and forgery in Daraa

local sources in Al Moadamyeh town, Damascus suburbs, reported that it was a pro forma holding of local elections by the Syrian government, as only members of the Ba'ath ruling Party were allowed to run for local administration, citing that Mohamed Ibrahim al-Wawi, who won a seat in the local council is known for his cooperation with the Syrian air intelligence.

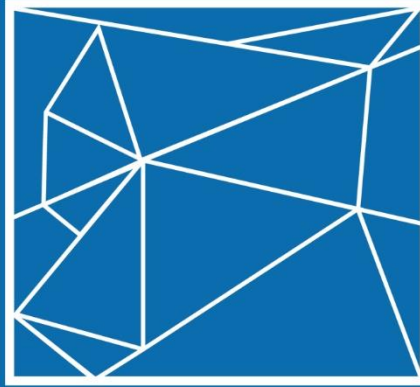
Mooneer Okla, a candidate from Mhajjah town, Daraa province, a member of the pro-government National Progressive Front, said in a post on his Facebook account in September 2018 that the elections hold in Daraa were rigged, noting that some candidates won by fake votes, which he provided evidences of, to the competent judiciary to investigate the case but to no avail.

... يشعر بالانزعاج. **Mooneer Okla**  ٢٠ ساعة • 

انا المرشح منير العقلة بدايتنا" بشكر كل شخص حط ثقتو فيي وانتخبني وبشكر اهالي محجه الشرفاء ولن انسى هذه الثقة وكل من تأمر ضدي من ابناء هذه البلدة معروفين ورغم هيك ماطلعهم شي معنا ولقد حصلت على عدد اصوات في محجه 2310 اصوات نزيهات وخاليات من التزوير بينما كان عدد اصوات المنافس بأزرع بمنطقو لايتجاوز 600 صوت فعلي وتم سحب سجلات نفوس لحراك كامله وبصر الحرير وتنزيل اصوات وهميه (تزوير) ولقد تم الاعتراض على الانتخابات اليوم في درعا وتقديم كامل الاثباتات للقضاء المختص وتم التحقق منها ووجد تزوير علني من قبل المنافس وحاليا رؤساء المراكز بقبضة الجهات المختصة والتحقيق مستمر ولم تصدر اي نتائج انتخابات لحد هذه اللحظة ولم تصدر لحتى بيت لقضاء المختص بالاعتراضات

The Facebook post of Mooneer Okla. Photo credit: Facebook.

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.

🌐 www.stj-sy.com

📘 [syriaSTJ](https://www.facebook.com/syriaSTJ)

🐦 [@STJ_SYRIA_ENG](https://twitter.com/STJ_SYRIA_ENG)

📧 [Syrians for Truth & Justice](https://www.instagram.com/Syrians_for_Truth_and_Justice)

✉ editor@stj-sy.org