

December 2018

فلسطين  
والحرية  
والعدالة

## Bribery is the only mean to obtain citizenship

Statement of Ramadan al-Muhammad



## **Bribery is the only mean to obtain citizenship**

*Statement of Ramadan al-Muhammad*

When the Syrian government took away agricultural land from the big landowners in Hasoud village and distributed it to peasants worked on it, according to the Agrarian Reform Law issued during the period of the United Arab Republic, Ramadan only got a 2 hectares land to utilize, while other farmers were entitled to larger agricultural land. That was only because Ramadan is a stateless Syrian Kurd.

---

Ramadan al-Muhammad was born in Helwa village, al-Hasakah Governorate in 1945. He is married with children, all of whom are stateless Syrian Kurds, specifically from the *ajanib*<sup>1</sup> category. In this regard, Ramadan spoke to STJ in an interview conducted in March 2018:

**"It all started when I moved from my hometown to Hasoud village to settle in, since I was a co-founder of it. When the census was conducted there, the mayor told the villagers to stay home because the people in charge were coming to register names of each family members. When they came to my house, I had a newborn baby then, so they registered my name and the names of my two kids. As a result of the census my name, as well as my brother's and some other villagers', came under the list of *ajanib*. Two years later, some police officers came to my brother Hussein's house and asked him about his and his mother's names. They were hiding the name lists they had, so Hussein couldn't see them, and indirectly they told him that he could acquire citizenship illegally, which means, through bribery, but my brother did not follow-up the matter. I made an objection to the Civil status Department to get citizenship as many others did, but that did not work. Those who paid bribes managed to obtain citizenship. We have suffered a lot: we were not permitted to practice the professions we liked, nor to register our property under our own name, or to get an education. In 1958, during the unity period between Syria and Egypt, the Syrian government took away agricultural land from the mayors and the big landowners, and distributed it to peasants worked on it. The mayor gave us only 2 hectares because we were *ajanib*, while other peasants of Syrian nationality obtained large agricultural land."**

Following the issuance of Decree No. 49, on naturalization of *ajanib* in 2011, Ramadan submitted his papers to the Civil Status Department, and he finally was able to achieve his dreamland became a Syrian citizen.

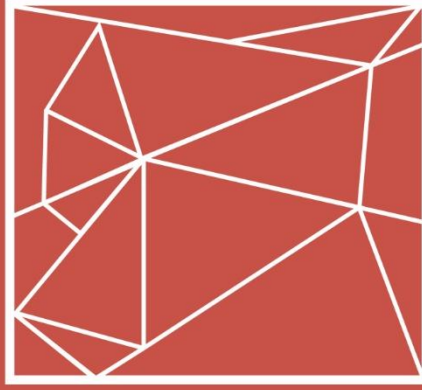
---

<sup>1</sup> Sing. ajnabi/ajnabiyah, literally »foreigners« i.e. stateless. 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.

---

🌐 [www.stj-sy.com](http://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](mailto:editor@stj-sy.org)