

December 2018

فiras
علي

We Feel Dehumanized

Statement of Firas Salim Ali



"We Feel Dehumanized"
Statement of Firas Salim Ali

Firas spent many years working as a porter. As stateless Syrian Kurd from the so-called *maktumeen*¹ class, he couldn't get a better job, and is deprived from basic, including civil and political, rights.

Firas Salim Ali was born in Jarnak Neighborhood in Qamishli/Qamishlo city in 1980. He is married with three children, all of whom are *maktumeen*. Firas tried to submit his papers to the Civil Status Department in Qamishli City in order to obtain Syrian citizenship, but failed, as he recounted to STJ field researcher who interviewed him in March 2018:

"I am stateless. I was born like this. My parents and uncles are *ajanib*². We have tried so hard to become citizen, but to no avail. In 2010 the Syrian government opened the way to some Kurds to resolve their legal status in order to become citizens of Syrian nationality, but there was no official decree regarding this. Some *ajanib* managed to obtain citizenship, and some *maktumeen* became *ajanib*. Since there was no legal basis for these procedures, we paid about SP350.000 as a bribe that year, without any result. In 2011 following the issuance of the Legislative Decree No. 49, which grants Syrian Arab nationality to those registered as *ajanib*, we resubmitted our papers again. However, nowadays, whenever we go to the Civil Status Department in Qamishli, the employees tell us that they don't know whether our documents are in Damascus or in al-Hasakah. I paid SP130, 000 to obtain an ID and a family book, to no avail. But I'll keep trying."

Like all other stateless people, Firas faced several difficulties, particularly in education. Unable to pursue his education, he insisted to educate his children, knowing that they would not get certificates, with the hope, still, that they wouldn't suffer the same fate as their father:

"We are not permitted to possess or acquire land, we feel dehumanized. I remember once, after the outbreak of war in Syria, a checkpoint officer asked to see my ID, and when I showed him the identification certificate I hold, he contemptuously uttered that this was "for animals."

Speaking about his dreams, Firas said:

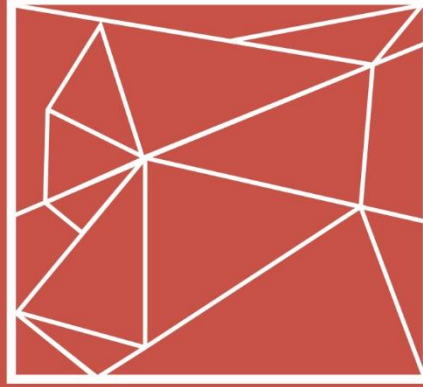
"All we want is to obtain an ID to be like everyone else. More importantly, I don't want my children to live the same tough life I've had. If I were a citizen, I wouldn't work as a porter, and we wouldn't be prevented from owning land while others have the right to benefit from theirs."

¹ Sing. maktum/maktumah, i. e., unregistered stateless people.

² Sing. ajnabi/ajnabiyah, literally »foreigners« i.e. stateless.

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_Justice)
 - ✉ editor@stj-sy.org