

December 2018

ولدت في  
السويد

If you have never been a  
stateless, you won't  
know what injustice feels  
like

Statement of Nareen Nawaf Mahmoud



**“If you have never been a stateless, you won’t know what  
injustice feels like”**

*Statement of Nareen Nawaf Mahmoud*

Just like thousands of other Syrian Kurds, Nareen was deprived of several rights: as a result of the census, carried out in 1962, she did not have a citizenship and access to education, and was not entitled to travel or vote. Still a *maktuma*, Nareen continues to suffer.

Nareen Mattini was born in Qamishli in 1984. Her family was divided by the census, some becoming *maktumin*, and others *ajanib*.<sup>1</sup> She spoke to STJ field researcher in March 2018:

**"It all started with the special census for al-Hasakah Governorate. The tragic irony about the census is that in some families one brother remained a citizen while the other was deprived of his citizenship and became *ajjabi*. In others, the father kept his Syrian citizenship but his wife and children lost theirs, or the other way round. I was classified as *maktuma*, while my husband is a citizen, and my father is *maktum* while my mother is *ajnabia*, so are my grandparents and uncles, who lost their Syrian citizenship by the census and became stateless. Thereby, we, Kurds, became strangers in our own country. We're born and die illegally, since births resulting from marriages have no official records in the personal status department, especially if one of the parents is *maktum*. This census caused a continuing humanitarian catastrophe, preventing Kurds from exercising several rights, mainly the right to be a citizen, as well as the right to education, work, property, travel, marriage, vote and even stay in hotels" .**

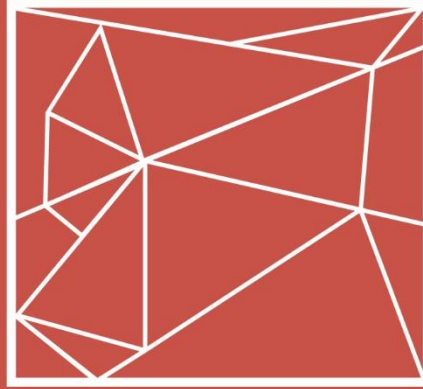
Nareen submitted her papers to the Civil Status Department in Al-Qamishli several times trying to obtain citizenship, but in vain. In 2012, following the issuance of Decree No. [49](#), she resubmitted her papers to the Civil Status Department. The employees there told her that her papers were sent to al-Hasakah, and would be sent to Damascus later, but she came up with nothing:

**"There have been so many difficulties, and we have always been excluded as *maktumeen* Kurds. Me and my brothers didn't access to higher education after the secondary school, because we won't be given a certificate. We were also not permitted to travel abroad, or even between the governorates inside Syria. Agents of the military checkpoints, stationed along the road, always demand our IDs, and ask so many questions. I die a thousand times whenever I am in such a situation. We are not permitted to officially register our house or business or any other goods under our name because we are *maktumeen*. You won't know what injustice feels like, if you've never lived as a *maktum*."**

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<sup>1</sup> Sing. *ajjabi/ajnabiyah*, literally »foreigners« i.e. 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.

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