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## Mass Unfair Dismissals of Teachers in Daraa

The Syrian government fired 93 teachers in October 2018 without justifiable reasons

## **Mass Unfair Dismissals of Teachers in Daraa**

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## Introduction

Seizing control on Daraa<sup>1</sup> in July 2018, the Syrian government started imposing unfair practices, most notably the mass dismissals of teachers in the towns of Shajara, Busra al-Sham, Nawa, and al-Sanamayn, as a large number of teachers, reportedly 95, were fired from October 4 to November 5 of the same year, the date of writing this report, without clear reasons.

Teachers of Daraa considered the decisions to be a retaliatory measure taken against them for not visiting Syria's educational directorate during the years of the armed groups' rule on the province, a fact that the teachers justified by the difficult security situation then. However, the Syrian government treated those teachers as either retired or were being paid by 'foreign bodies', according to testimonies gained by STJ's field researcher.

Same procedures were carried out by the Syrian government in other provinces, as in September 2018 it imposed mass dismissal decisions, fines and imprisonment sentences against 400 civil servants across al-Qunaitra province, including 50 teachers who were fired on various charges, including the involvement in terrorist activities.

And in al-Sweida province 71 teachers were fired, for evading military reserve service.<sup>2</sup>

Further arbitrary practices were also taken by the Syrian government, as it arrested many civilians during August and September 2018, in the towns of al-Harrah, Atman, and al-Meliha al-Gharbiya, in violation to the six-month settlement agreement which contains safety guarantees for Daraa's civilians<sup>3</sup>.

### 1. 93 teachers fired without clear reasons

On October 4, 2018, Syrian Prime Minister's Office sent five directives with the numbers 15/1070, 30, 1800, 982, and 1030 to the educational directorates in each of Busra al-Sham, Nawa, Izraa, al-Sanamayn, Jasim, and al-Shajarah. The directives stipulated to the non-appointment or rehiring of 93 teachers, without providing reasons. Under this decision, some teachers were considered as retired.

The towns of Busra al-Sham, Nawa, Izraa, al-Sanamayn, Jasim, and al-Shajarah, cover an area of over 2500 square kilometer (km<sup>2</sup>), with an estimated population of 207,321,

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<sup>1</sup> In July 2018, the Syrian government took control over Daraa province, under a settlement agreement reached between it and the armed opposition groups. The agreement was concluded over two stages with Russian police guarantee. The first stage included the north area of Daraa and al-Lajat region. The second stage included the rest of the province except the Yarmouk Basin, which the Syrian forces controlled in August 2018. One of the agreement's provisions was that the Syrian forces would not enter the villages ahead of the Russian police and without conducting settlements. Another item stipulated non-exposure to any residents, STJ's field researcher said.

<sup>2</sup> The Syrian Government Fires 201 Teachers for Failing to Perform Military Reserve Service, STJ, October 1, 2018, <https://www.stj-sy.com/en/view/805>.

<sup>3</sup> Arrests Continue in Daraa Despite Reconciliations, STJ, October 18, 2018, <https://www.stj-sy.com/en/view/889>.

equivalent to 6.5 percent of Daraa's population, as reported by the Provincial Council of Free Daraa of the Syrian Interim Government/opposition, on March 2018.

Syria's Ministry of Culture<sup>4</sup> listed Daraa as illiteracy-free province in early 2010. Every small residential complex contained either a school, a kindergarten or an educational establishments (EE). Prior to the Syrian conflict, in 2010, there were approximately 1,124 EE, including private schools. The EE included 280,468 students and 16,453 teachers, i.e. one single teacher supervised 17 students.<sup>5</sup>

The ongoing Syrian war has had the most devastating effects on the educational sector and other aspects of life in the areas which had got out of the regime's hand. The complicated state created a significant administrative vacuum which led the teachers to get all messed up for several reasons, explained by a former employee in the Project Services Office of the Syrian Interim Government, who said:

**"Many schools were destroyed in the last few years. The Damage caused to the infrastructure was estimated to be more than 70 per cent. About 40 per cent of bridges, roads and public objects were destroyed as well. Consequently, many teachers were forced to stop going to schools. Moreover, poverty prompted many of them to seek jobs in other sectors, especially in humanitarian organizations. Therefore, those teachers were fired because of their continued unexcused absence from schools. The war incidents and the fear of arrest also prevented a large segment of teachers to go and receive salaries although they kept teaching at their schools. Syria's educational directorate decided to fire them due to their absence. It considered their status to be similar to those who dodged the reserve or the mandatory military service."**

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<sup>4</sup> "Syria's Ministry of Culture Celebrates an Illiteracy-Free Daraa Province", the General Organization of Radio and TV, Syria (ORTAS), January 9, 2010, <http://www.ortas.gov.sy/index.php?p=20&id=56003>.

<sup>5</sup> Dr. Qasim al-Zidawi, High Rate of Population and Urban Development in Daraa Province, Damascus university magazine, volume 30, <http://www.damascusuniversity.edu.sy/mag/human/images/stories/3-2014/en/709-752.pdf>.

٢٩	اسماء	سمير	الشحادات	حنان	١٩٩١ داخل حد ٣٥٢
٣٠	ايمان	احمد	البارودي	شهدية	١٩٩٢ حفص - باب هود
٣١	عكاش	يوسف	العامر	فاطمة	١٩٨١ تسلي
٣٢	احمد	يوسف	الحمود يوسف	داليا	١٩٥٦ عيشة حد ١٢
٣٣	خضر	عبد	العقلة	مسالحة	١٩٦٢ القنيطرة
٣٤	فاضل	ديب	الاحمد		
٣٥	انتصار	جاد الكريم	الطاسي	فريال	١٩٨٠ بصري الشام
٣٦	محمد	يوسف	المقداد	ليدة	١٩٧٢ بصري الشام
٣٧	يوسف احمد	سعيد	المصطفى	عائشة	١٩٥٠ البادية
٣٨	امجد	ممدوح	المحاميد	فوزية	١٩٧٤ برعا
٣٩	يونس	عبد الرحمن	الذويهي	عطية	١٩٧٤ سحم الجولان
٤٠	عمران	موسى	المحاميد	فريال	١٩٧٦ ام العيالن
٤١	ماهر	محمد	الخيطة	فريدة	١٩٨٩ جبين
٤٢	احمد	عبد المحسن	الصالح الحجي	رفقة	١٩٨٦ مارع
٤٣	احمد	محمد	الحيوس	ثنية	١٩٦٢ شهاب
٤٤	سونيا	اسامة	الحيوس	لخصال	١٩٨٢ شهاب
٤٥	حافظ	محمد	الكفري	حمدة	١٩٧٨ جبرين حد ٣١
٤٦	محمود	حسين	مرجان		
٤٧	ايهم	شريف	الاحمد		
٤٨	حسام	عبد الله	الزعيبي		
٤٩	عبد الله	محمد	السويدان	حدث	
٥٠	حمزة	عارف	عكاشة	حدث	
٥١	محمد نور	محمد	البيردان		
٥٢	ظاهر	عبد الإله	أبو حوية		
٥٣	يوسف	نور الدين	الغوثاني		
٥٤	عدي	طارق	الغنوم		
٥٥	احمد	عبد الإله	المحمود		
٥٦	علاء	شكري	السويداني		
٥٧	علي	عبد الحلیم	راشد		
٥٨	بركات	احمد	الشولي		
٥٩	عمار	ياسر	الزعيبي		
٦٠	ايمن	محمد	الزعيبي		
٦١	احمد	محمد	المرعي	نقيب فار	
٦٢	احمد	عبد الحكيم	الصلخدي		
٦٣	رافقت	اسماعيل	النظامي		
٦٤	محمد فلاح	محمود	الحريري		
٦٥	ياسم	محمد	الجمال		
٦٦	قيس	عبد الرحمن	الزهري	شرطي	
٦٧	عبد الرحمن		الزهري	نقيب اول متطوع	
٦٨	عبد السلام	سليمان	الزهري	جندي احتياط	
٦٩	كرم	احمد	الزهري		
٧٠	عبد الرحمن	احمد	الزهري		
٧١	علاء	احمد	زين العائدين		
٧٢	عبد الرزاق	عبد النبي	الخطيب		
٧٣	نوي	محمد	الشمولي		
٧٤	محمد	والى	الصفدي		

٧٥	يائل	رائد	الغزوي	ملازم اول فخر
٧٦	محمد	مصطفى	الطوي	حذ
٧٧	مروان	فواز	الخطيب	
٧٨	محمد	محمد	العواد	
٧٩	تامر	محمد	العق	
٨٠	احمد	موسى	الرافعي	
٨١	علاء	نزيان	الصارين	
٨٢	عمران	مصطفى	الخميس	
٨٣	شادي	علي	الجهمني	
٨٤	محمد	ناصر	الحري	
٨٥	عيزر	ناصر	عزاز	
٨٦	نصان	قتيل	الجندي	
٨٧	احمد	خالد	زين العطين	
٨٨	جاسم	محمد	مصطفى	
٨٩	ياسر	علي	البيهي	
٩٠	حموراني	علي	البيهي	
٩١	علاء	احمد	المقعد	
٩٢	ماهر	كريم	الشمس	
٩٣	هنا	زيان	المطر	

والعترس الذي تم تعيينه من خارج الملاك من هذه الاسماء اخراجه من الصف فوراً .

شعبة المترسرين  
سامية يوسف

ر. د. التلوي  
هواوي احمد

مدير التربية بدمشق  
محمد خير احمد العونة

مدير  
- مدير التربية  
- مديرة التعليم  
- مديرة التربية  
- مدير المدارس في المديرية العامة - دير - اريحا - السويداء - حماه - لاذقية  
- المدير العام للتربية في المديرية العامة  
- مدير التعليم  
- المدير

The decision issued by the Syrian Prime Minister's Office on October 4, 2018, which summarily dismiss 93 teachers in Daraa province. Photo credit: a teacher from Daraa province.

## 2. “My only crime was being an opponent”

Abu Firas, 40, a teacher from Tafas city in Daraa, was fired under the recent decision after 20 years of service. He said:

**"Like many others, I was against the government's way of dealing with the opposition, but I didn't take up arms against it. I kept doing my job regularly for years without being paid, though I have a family which counts on me. I didn't dare going to the educational directorate to receive my salary, fearful of a possible arrest at one of the regime's checkpoints. Therefore, I sought additional teaching hours in one of the 'revolutionary schools' which followed the opposition. I do not know why they were called like that, though the curriculum taught in them was the same that of the state without any modification. The students at this kind of schools were those who could not attend regime's schools. Other 12 teachers were also fired on allegations of cooperating with opposition bodies. That was my crime I was punished for!"**

## 3. ISIL is the one who should be held accountable, not us!

Mohammed. M., 37, is a teacher from the Yarmouk Basin<sup>6</sup> in Daraa. He is married with two kids. In 2014, his wife was killed by a barrel bomb fell near their house.

**"It is known that ISIL controlled the Yarmouk Basin for more than three years during which it imposed its own curricula instead of the state's. Therefore, me and many other teachers were forced to quit teaching fearful of being charged with apostasy by the group. Other teachers displaced the area and proceeded to other armed opposition-controlled areas. Many youths of my clan were killed by ISIL on allegations of cursing God or having links with armed opposition groups, and others died in random shelling. Only two of my cousins and I were left. Therefore, I quit teaching. I also feared the Syrian government which did not consider our conditions, as it arbitrarily arrested anyone came from the opposition areas and considered them to be ISIL supporters."**

Mohammed hoped that the Syrian government would have mercy more than ISIL, as he described. But instead of helping the teachers, it fired them under unfair decisions.

**"ISIL is the one to be blamed for our failure to attend schools. How could we, the helpless, fight ISIL while the Syrian government was not able to repel it! ISIL militants are criminals. We suffered much during the period when ISIL controlled the region and now the Syrian government fired us. All the teachers were unfairly fired, since they had settled their situations with the Syrian government and get a**

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<sup>6</sup> The Syrian army controlled the Yarmouk Basin on August 1, 2018. A settlement agreement was reached between it and Jaysh Khalid Bin al-Walid, an armed group. Under the agreement, 400 fighters of the group along with their families would evacuate to the east areas of al-Sweida and Homs, and the group would release abductees from al-Sweida.

**'settlement card', including me. The government is violating the settlement agreement already signed with Russia."**

#### **4. "No self-respecting State can get revenge on its own people"**

Abu Mostafa, 53, is a teacher in al-Harrah town, northwest of Daraa. He was fired due to a malicious report submitted against him, as he alleged.

**"I have never cooperated with the armed opposition groups or any other opponent parties, and I am not on the military reserves wanted list either. However, someone submitted a malicious report against me to the political security and to the state security. I think that's why I was fired. How can the Syrian government accept malicious reports without verifying its trueness? I don't want to stay in this job, all I want is the elimination of those false reports or I would be arrested otherwise."**

Samer Eid, 59, from Busra al-Sham is a retired teacher and a relative of one of those who dismissed recently. He said:

**"The Syrian government follows a reprisal policy. It takes revenge of Daraa's residents, particularly as its losses in Daraa were the most among those in other fighting areas in Syria. It punishes the educated people in Daraa by firing them and holding them accountable; my relative is one of those. This generation is doomed to lead in a 'failed state'; a state that does not forgive, instead it takes revenge of its own people."**

#### **5. "Those who go may not return"**

Teachers of Daraa didn't dare to go to the educational directorate of the Syrian government since it was highly likely that they would be detained and interrogated by the security branches, for being accused of complicity with the armed opposition groups including ISIL, as they reported. However, many teachers had already quit teaching altogether and sought other jobs or chose to immigrate abroad, that's why the Syrian Prime Ministry's Office issued decisions to dismiss more than 300 teachers across Syria, according to STJ's field researcher.



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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