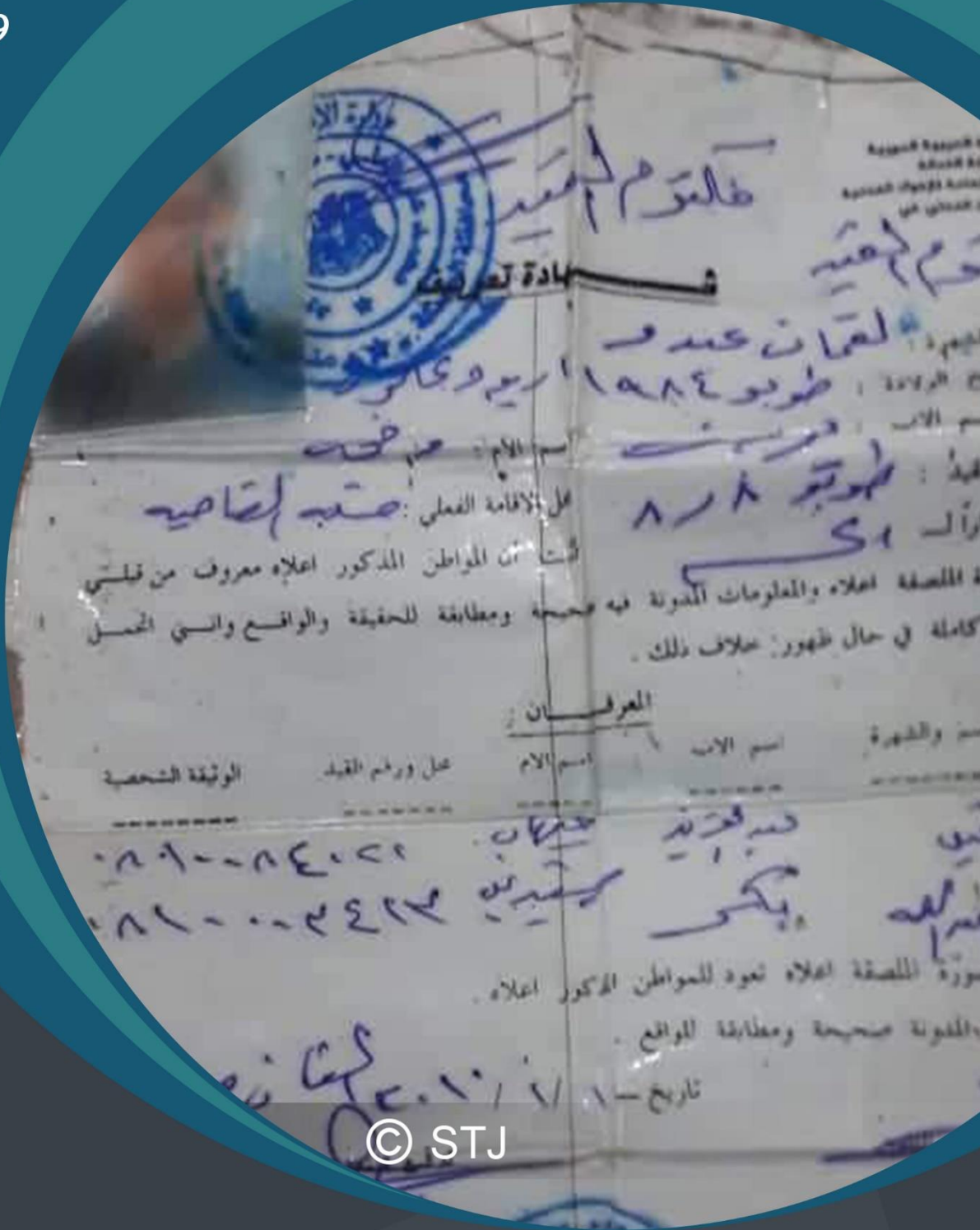




October 5, 2019



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I Feel like I'm Useless, as if I don't  
Even Exist

## **“I Feel like I’m Useless, as if I don’t Even Exist”**

*The statement of Luqmān Yousif Abdu, a Syrian Kurd deprived of nationality due to the 1962 special census*

Luqman Yousif Abdu is still unable to register his children because of the fact that he is a Syrian stateless Kurd, categorized under the *maktumeen* by the 1962 special census. As a result, he suffers deprivation of his most basic rights; the economic, social and political.

Luqman Yousif Abdu born in al-Hasakah 1984, and he is married with three children. He recounted to STJ the consequences of statelessness he suffered, saying:<sup>1</sup>

**"My nine brothers and I are *maktumeen*, just like my father. In 1995 my father managed to change the status of some of my brothers to *ajanib*, and they automatically became citizens in 2011 under the Decree No. 49, which passed then,<sup>2</sup> while me and two of my brothers remained *maktumeen*. We made many attempts to obtain nationality, but in vain. My two older siblings, who were *maktumeen*, traveled to Germany, but me, as a stateless, not entitled to do so, nor my children. In my family, only my wife is a Syrian citizen."**

Speaking about the difficulties and obstacles that continue to impede his right to life, due to being a *maktum*, Luqman went on to say:

**"We face difficulties in every aspect of our life. Wherever we go, we are asked to present our Identity documents; and when we show the identification certificates we hold, they make fun of us. My wife is a Syrian citizen, and we still don't have an official marriage certificate, even my children aren't registered in my name. However, two of my children go to school, which always ask us to bring official identity documents. But identification certificates are the only proof we have, and they are not recognized neither by the schools of the government nor by those of the Autonomous Administration. As the government schools ask for identification certificates issued by the *mukhtar*, while schools of the Autonomous Administration require us to extract ones from the 'Komen'. Anyway, as a *maktum*,**

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<sup>1</sup> The witness was interviewed face to face by STJ field researcher on September 10, 2019.

<sup>2</sup> Following the onset of peaceful protests in Syria, which demanded sweeping reforms in the country, Decree No. 49 was issued on 7 April 2011, and has been announced on the official website of The Syrian People's Council under the title "Granting Syrian Arab Nationality to those Registered as *ajanib* in al-Hasakah". The decree states:

Article 1: individuals who are registered as *ajanib* in the al-Hasakah province shall be granted Syrian nationality.

Article 2: The Minister of the Interior shall issue the decisions containing the executive instructions to this decree.

Article 3: This decree shall enter into force on the day of its publication in the Official Journal.

Several months after the issuance of Decree No. 49 of 2011, a ministerial decree of nationalizing *maktumeen* was reported. The Personal Status Department employees, however, told submitters that it was not yet in effect, and they actually didn't know which department would take it over.

For more info read: "Syrian Citizenship Disappeared", STJ, September 15, 2018 (last visit: October 1, 2019)

<https://stj-sy.org/en/745/>.

**I'm not even considered to be existed in this country; I can own nothing and can't even register my wife nor my children in my name."**

Luqman's numerous attempts to obtain any official identity document have failed so far. In this regard he said:

**"A while ago, I submitted for a commercial register, for I wanted to work in trade between here and Iraqi Kurdistan, but they said I don't have the right for that since I'm a *maktum*. Further, I didn't been able to obtain a passport nor a driving license. We, the *maktumeen*, don't have the right to do anything regardless how simple it is. For instance, I once was asked by a real estate office worker to sign as a witness on a sale contract for a land, but I said sorry I don't have the right to do so because I'm a *maktum*, and not exist officially. In 2008, I took a job at Dublin company (a foreign oil company that worked in the region then) in Tishreen oil field. I worked there for about a year, before disputes erupted between the company and the Syrian government, which ordered the company to provide the IDs of all its workers, and conditioned them to be all Syrians. So, I was dismissed but yet given a certificate of appreciation from the company for my dedication."**

In 2012 Luqman went to Iraqi Kurdistan to submit for a residence document but he failed to obtain one. He recalled to STJ an awkward position he was put in, saying:

**"I was traveling with my family to the city of Duhok for treatment, when a checkpoint stopped us and prevented me from completing my way because I did not have a residence document. Thus, I waited for three hours with my family in the street, near the checkpoint, until they allowed me to enter. I remember also that I once applied for a job at the Erbil International Airport, but I couldn't get it because I wasn't granted a residence permit there."**



## History

Syrians for Truth and Justice was conceived during the participation of its co-founder in the Middle-East Partnership Initiative (MEPI) Leaders for Democracy Fellowship program, who was driven by a will to contribute to Syria's future. Starting as a humble project to tell the stories of Syrians experiencing enforced disappearances and torture, it grew into an established organisation committed to unveiling human rights violations of all sorts.

Convinced that the diversity that has historically defined Syria is a wealth, our team of researchers and volunteers works with dedication at uncovering human rights violations committed in Syria, in order to promote inclusiveness and ensure that all Syrians are represented, and their rights fulfilled.

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