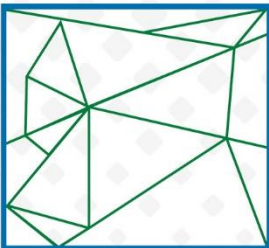


Aleppo: The Syrian Government Denies Basic Foodstuffs to Kurdish Neighborhoods



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*More than 200,000 people in Sheikh Maqsoud and Ashrafiyye
neighborhoods are suffering to secure their food necessities
under the blockade imposed by the regime forces*

On 13 March 2022, Syrian government checkpoints began restricting the entry of basic foodstuffs to the Kurdish-majority neighborhoods of [Sheikh Maqsoud](#) and [Ashrafiyye](#) in Aleppo. These two neighborhoods are run by a local council affiliated with the Autonomous Administration that controls large areas in northern and eastern Syria.

At the beginning of April, this restriction became a total ban on the entry of basic foodstuffs, especially flour. Syrians for Truth and Justice (STJ) met a local of Sheikh Maqsoud who said that military checkpoints controlled by the Syrian army have prevented the arrival of basic needs to the Kurdish neighborhoods in the city of Aleppo.

STJ met a local of Sheikh Maqsoud who confirmed that this is not the first time that the Syrian government has denied basic food items to the Kurdish-majority neighborhoods in Aleppo.

“During the last three years, the government checkpoints prevented the entry of foodstuffs, especially flour, rice and bulgur, to these two Kurdish neighborhoods in Aleppo several times,” they said.

The lack of foodstuffs has forced the besieged residents to go to nearby regime-held neighborhoods, mainly Bustan al-Pasha, Baghdad station, and Sulaymaniyah to buy necessary food items, especially bread. This has led to crowds in front of bakeries, where people wait for hours in long lines to get subsidized bags of bread for 200 SP. each, as the same bag has reached up to 2500 SP. in Sheikh Maqsoud and Ashrafiyye following the siege.

STJ learned that the government’s denial of basic foodstuffs to the two neighborhoods has led to food crises there, caused by soaring prices of food commodities, especially vegetables. Prices have doubled in comparison to regime-held neighborhoods.

Besieged Residents Protest Government Practices

On 09 April 2022, thousands of Sheikh Maqsoud and Ashrafiyye residents took to the street in response to their suffocation by the government. Demonstrators demanded the lift of the siege and the re-entry of basic foodstuffs to their neighborhoods.

Muhammed Sheikho, the co-chair of the local council running the Sheikh Maqsoud and Ashrafiyye neighborhoods confirmed that sieging the two neighborhoods is a common procedure by the government to leverage the Autonomous Administration following each dispute between the two. Sheikho said:

“The most significant blockade act by the government was on the 13th of last March, when a regime-run checkpoint on al-Jazira road prevented the entry of a truck loaded with sugar to the two neighborhoods. Since then, the neighborhoods witnessed a lack of basic food items, especially flour.”

Sheikho added that the economic situation in Sheikh Maqsoud and Ashrafiyye has been worsened by the government’s siege on the two neighborhoods. For example, the siege has forced owners of the almost 400 small garment factories in the two neighborhoods to pay large bribes to regime checkpoints to allow the passage of their cargos to other neighborhoods. Sheikho explained:

“The Sheikh Maqsoud and Ashrafiyye have a population of about 200,000; they are among the most densely populated neighborhoods in Aleppo. The

government' siege suffocated the two neighborhoods' residents; their protests and the local council's efforts have not been able to lift it."

Sheikho concluded by saying that the administration of the two neighborhoods does not yet know the direct reason for imposing the siege, which has led many bakeries to run out of their stores as of 05 April and stop distribution.

The Asayish Responds in Qamishli

On 08 April, members of the Internal Security Forces of the Autonomous Administration (commonly referred to as Asayish), imposed a security cordon and took over the Al-Ba'ath Automated Bakery of the regime in Qamishli and suspended its work. The bakery is the only-government run bakery inside the city, on which the residents of the city and the neighboring villages depend, especially those under the government's control in the southern countryside of Qamishli.

The Asayish did not comment on its actions taking control over the bakery and its deployment of forces around it, nor did the Autonomous Administration officially comment on the siege imposed by the regime on the Sheikh Maqsoud and Ashrafiyye neighborhoods.

Sheikh Maqsoud and Ashrafiyye neighborhoods

Sheikh Maqsoud and Ashrafiyye are Kurdish-majority neighborhoods located in northern Aleppo. These neighborhoods house tens of thousands of Kurdish people displaced from Afrin following Turkish-led military Operation Olive Branch. The People's Defense Units (YPJ), which is the main faction in the Syrian Democratic Forces (SDF), took control of the Sheikh Maqsoud and Ashrafiyye neighborhoods from government forces and other armed opposition groups. The Sheikh Maqsoud and Ashrafiyye are now under the Autonomous Administration, have civil administration, internal security forces (Asayish), and traffic police.



Image (1) - Sheikh Maqsoud and Ashrafiyye neighborhoods in Aleppo, Syria.



About Us:

Syrians for Truth and Justice (STJ) is a nonprofit, nongovernmental organization monitoring human rights violations in Syria. Founded in 2015, STJ has been based in France since 2019.

STJ is an impartial and independent Syrian human rights organization operating across Syria. Our network of field researchers monitor and report human rights violations occurring on the ground in Syria, while our international team of human rights experts, lawyers, and journalists gather evidence, examine emerging patterns of violations, and analyze how violations break domestic Syrian and international law.

We are committed to documenting violations of human rights committed by all parties in the Syrian conflict and elevating the voices of all Syrians victimized by human rights violations, regardless of their ethnicity, religion, political affiliation, class, and/or gender. Our commitment to human rights monitoring is founded on the idea that professional human rights documentation meeting international standards is the first step to uncovering the truth and achieving justice in Syria.



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