



## The “Good Man’s” Family: Dreams Shattered by Massacre



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In a peaceful corner of Baniyas, there stood a home built on two pillars: honest work and strong family bonds. It was a house that Najib Rostom had built through years of effort and perseverance; it did not hum with the noise of life but thrived in the calm of those who simply pursued their dreams and a peaceful life. There, life’s small moments were both simple and sacred: a table gathering a father and his two sons after a long day, and quiet dreams forming behind walls, never imagining that identity could one day become a cause of death.

The Rostom family lived their lives deeply intertwined with love: Najib, the father, embodied wisdom and dignity, while his two sons, Ayman and Ibrahim, illustrated ambition and hard work. They were an inseparable part of the city’s fabric; people who served their community with open hearts, helping others without asking about their backgrounds or origins.

Najib Rostom, known as Abu Ayman, was born in 1956. He was far more than just a retiree who had finished his service at the Baniyas Refinery; to his fellow citizens, he was the embodiment of a “good man,” whose hands were ever-ready to mend, build, and serve. He lived by a simple yet profound credo, one he voiced with unwavering certainty: “What matters most is that you are a good person.” Even after undergoing open-heart surgery, and as the weight of the years began to press upon him, that tranquil heart never ceased to beat with kindness for all, remaining remarkably untainted by resentment or the bitterness of political division.

Najib believed that Baniyas was his everlasting refuge. He chose to stay among his people and neighbors, sure that the decades of goodwill he had sown would serve as a shield, protecting him and his family.

### **Ayman, who combined history and pastry**

Ayman Rostom, born in 1988, was the vibrant heartbeat of that home. A graduate of the Department of History, he did not limit himself to the confines of academic books; instead, he sought to make his own story through hard work and dedication. He never waited for life to pave his way; he wrestled with time, balancing an official job with a career as a pastry chef, a craft in which he excelled with talent and integrity, working tirelessly from dawn until long after dusk.

Ayman was known for his constant laughter and the stories that filled any place he entered with happiness and optimism. Wherever he went, companionship and warmth followed. He was a man who never hesitated to lend a helping hand, driven by ambitions that pushed against the days; he worked nonstop to improve his skills, achieve independence in his own business, and build a family he could find solace in.

## Ibrahim, who chose the path of engineering

Ibrahim Rostom, born in 1996, was the voice of calm and reason in his home. He not only earned a degree in Telecommunications Engineering but also deepened his expertise by earning a master's degree in the same field. Much of his time was spent behind a computer screen, designing websites and engaging with a global language of technology that connected people.

Ibrahim was a caring brother who offered quiet support to his loved ones. He was especially close to his sister, her companion and, in many ways, her kindred spirit. Those who knew him will always remember his gentleness and his unwavering commitment to rise above conflict.

A man who chose a life of quiet dedication, Ibrahim believed that knowledge and hard work were the only paths to a better future. He secured a position as an engineer at the Baniyas Water Unit, yet he never stopped refining his skills, always planning for the projects that would define the next chapter of his life.

## March 2025

On 7 March 2025, Najib, Ayman, and Ibrahim were killed in the massacres that spread across the Syrian coast. Like so many other homes in their neighborhood and throughout the city, their house was forever changed. That evening was no ordinary night; it marked the start of an endless absence.

Their daily presence in the home came to a sudden end: the father, who had spent his life working at the refinery; the son, who had balanced two demanding jobs; and the son, who had completed his postgraduate studies and just begun his professional journey. That day also shattered the simple dream Najib, the "good man", had of spending his remaining years in peace, watching the fruits of his labor flourish in his children's lives.

*[This account is based on the testimony of Zeina Rostom, who lost her father and her two brothers.]*

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## ABOUT STJ

Syrians for Truth and Justice (STJ) started as an idea in a co-founder's mind while attending the U.S. Middle-East Partnership Initiative's (MEPI) Leaders for Democracy Fellowship program (LDF) in 2015. The idea became a reality and flourished into an independent, non-profit, impartial, non-governmental human rights organization.

STJ's beginnings were more than humble; initially, it only reported stories of Syrians who experienced arbitrary arrest, enforced disappearance, or torture. Planted in fertile soil, the seed of this project grew into an established human rights organization licensed in the Middle East and the European Union. STJ today undertakes to detect and uncover violations of all types committed in all Syrian parts by the various parties to the conflict.

Convinced that Syria's diversity is a wealth, our researchers and volunteers serve with unfailing dedication to monitor, expose, and document human rights violations that continue unabated in Syria since 2011, regardless of the affiliation of the victims or perpetrators.