



Yaarub Saleh: Where Death Is Not the End



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Nineteen-year-old Yaarub Saleh was more than just an ordinary student. He was a quiet, gentle soul, known for his kindness and his ability to connect with everyone he met. He was known for never having a harsh word for anyone; he was simply cherished by those who knew him.

Since his school days, Yaarub had a clear, singular ambition: to become a doctor. He pursued this dream with unwavering dedication, earning an impressive 234 out of 240 on his baccalaureate exams, a feat that opened the doors to medical school. In 2024, he finally began his journey, enrolling in the preparatory year for the Faculty of Medicine, ready for the years of commitment required to fulfill his calling.

Yaarub was not just a hardworking student; he was a talented artist. He loved to draw, and his work had a skill that impressed everyone who saw it. He also played the oud, finding a refuge in music for peace and expression. His dreams were big, more than his nineteen years and deeper than the hardships he had faced.

In early March 2025, Yaarub was getting ready for his first-semester university exams. One morning, he shared with a friend his deep sadness over the death of his father, who had been killed just the day before in the violence that hit Baniyas. His friend tried to comfort him, seeing how deeply he was hurting.

But the tragedy did not stop there. On 8 March 2025, Yaarub was taken from a neighbor's house along with some others. After hours of fear and uncertainty, he was found dead on a rooftop, an heartbreaking ending that broke everyone who knew him.

One of his friends recalled,

“Our last meeting was short, just a brief encounter on the street. Although our conversation was brief, he took the time to encourage me to study, saying confidently, ‘I am sure you will reach a place worthy of you; keep striving.’ He was always the one to lift others up, even when he needed support himself the most.”

She added that the news of his death was almost impossible to comprehend,

“When the news of his death reached us, no one could comprehend what had happened. Even now, I still cannot believe it. In the morning, I was talking to him, offering my condolences for his father’s passing; only a few hours later, he himself had become the devastating news.”

Yaarub left at the very dawn of his journey, a medical student preparing for his first exams, a young man carrying dreams he was never given the chance to realize. The tragedy struck his family with double the cruelty; they lost both father and son within just two days.

In the aftermath of the coastal massacres, an educational initiative was launched to help close the learning gaps for local students. It was dedicated to the memory of several young victims from Baniyas, including Yaarub. Today, students benefit from this initiative and offer prayers for those who were lost, allowing Yaarub's legacy and that of his peers to carry on along the path they were never able to finish.

[This account is based on the testimony of a friend of the victim.]

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.