



**The Story of Marwan, Rabee', and Roua:
"I Wish They Were Still Alive, Filling My
Life with Their Presence"**



السويداء
Sweida city

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On the night of 17 July 2025, the village of Rdemet al Liwa', located along the Damascus-As Suwayda highway, was attacked. Rabee', the son of Majda Raydan, and his father, Marwan, desperately tried to arrange transportation to evacuate their family to safety. However, every driver they contacted fled, and no one returned to help them. Forced to stay in their home, they clung to fragile hope, telling themselves,

"We are peaceful, unarmed civilians. Surely, no one will harm us."

The sounds of the clashes continued throughout the night. By morning, the attackers had entered the village. The family heard *takbir* chants drawing closer to their home, followed by voices ordering vehicles to be brought forward, before the attackers began smashing doors. Fearing the house would be stormed, the family members climbed onto the rooftop in hopes of finding safety.

On the rooftop were Majda, her husband Marwan, their son Rabee', his wife Roua, their two young daughters, Tala and Lamar, and Majda's daughters, Shahad and Sirin. As soon as the attackers spotted them, they opened fire with shells directly at the roof, leaving Shahad and Sirin injured by shrapnel.

Rabee' stepped forward to assist a family member and check on his two young daughters, who had been sleeping beside their grandmother. As soon as he came into view, the attackers shot him in the head, killing him instantly. Moments later, as his wife, Roua, rushed to his side, she too was struck by gunfire and lost her life. Meanwhile, Marwan was shot in the shoulder and began bleeding heavily, while his two young granddaughters wept and cried out in terror.

The attackers then scaled the walls with a metal ladder to reach the rooftop. One of the gunmen approached Marwan as he lay bleeding and opened fire, taking his life, as Majda was forced to watch the horror unfold, entirely powerless to intervene.

The girls were brought down from the roof, followed by Majda and her youngest daughter, who joined them below. With the attackers having set fire to the home's interior staircase, the metal ladder was their only path of escape. They proceeded on foot through the dust and rubble, surrounded by burning homes, as armed men recorded them on mobile phones, making unfulfilled promises that they were being taken to a hospital. Instead, they were transported to a gas station at the entrance of the al-Sham area, where the group was stationed. There, a designated individual provided basic first aid for their injuries.

As night fell, they were relocated to As Sawara Al Kubra and subsequently transferred to Hama Governorate. There, they were held in abandoned homes belonging to Arab families, joining other families who had already been detained for days.

Throughout their eight days in captivity, they lived in constant fear. They were given

only minimal sustenance, meager rations consisting of little more than a single tin of canned meat or cheese, accompanied by a packet of bread, barely enough to nourish the children. The captives endured verbal abuse and witnessed the physical beating and humiliation of two young men held alongside them. Armed men routinely moved in and out of the detention quarters, deepening the families' pervasive sense of vulnerability.

After eight days, they were finally released through the mediation of the Red Crescent and returned to As Suwayda via Daraa.

Marwan Khateeb al-Khateeb, born in Rdemet al Liwa' in 1960, was the eldest son in a large family. From a young age, he balanced his education with work to support himself and secure his livelihood. He married in 1988 and was blessed with a son, Rabee', and four daughters. In his later years, facing worsening economic hardship, he turned to shepherdry to sustain his family.

Rabee' Marwan Al-Khateeb, born on 17 December 1994, was the family's only son. A graduate of the Faculty of Science, he dedicated himself to education, teaching at schools in As Sawara as Sughra and Lahithah. In 2017, he married Roua al-Atrash, and together they had two daughters: Tala, six years old, and Lamar, two years old. Rabee' suffered from chronic back issues (disc herniation), and due to severe socioeconomic hardship, the entire extended family shared a single home.

Roua al-Atrash, born on 4 September 1994, pursued her higher education in the Faculty of Education after her marriage, continuing until her graduation, standing alongside her husband as they bore the severe burdens and harsh realities of daily life.

Majda recalls,

"We were one family; our joy was shared, and our grief was one. We worked together, against immense odds, just to meet our basic needs. I wish they were still alive, filling my life with their presence; I would have gladly remained in poverty if only they were still by my side. They broke my heart. I lost my husband and my only son, my pillar of support in this world."

This narrative is based solely on the personal testimony of Majda Turki Raydan.



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.



About Habaq :

Habaq Media is an independent platform from Sweida and part of the Habaq Collective. We tell everyday life as it is, covering the land, the markets, the songs, the faces, and the streets. We highlight local talent and connect those inside Syria with the diaspora.

Our editorial policies are clear: accuracy, do-no-harm, and source protection. We practice adaptive management, constantly planning, learning, and improving. Our professional, intellectual, and administrative independence is non-negotiable. Above all, people's safety comes first.