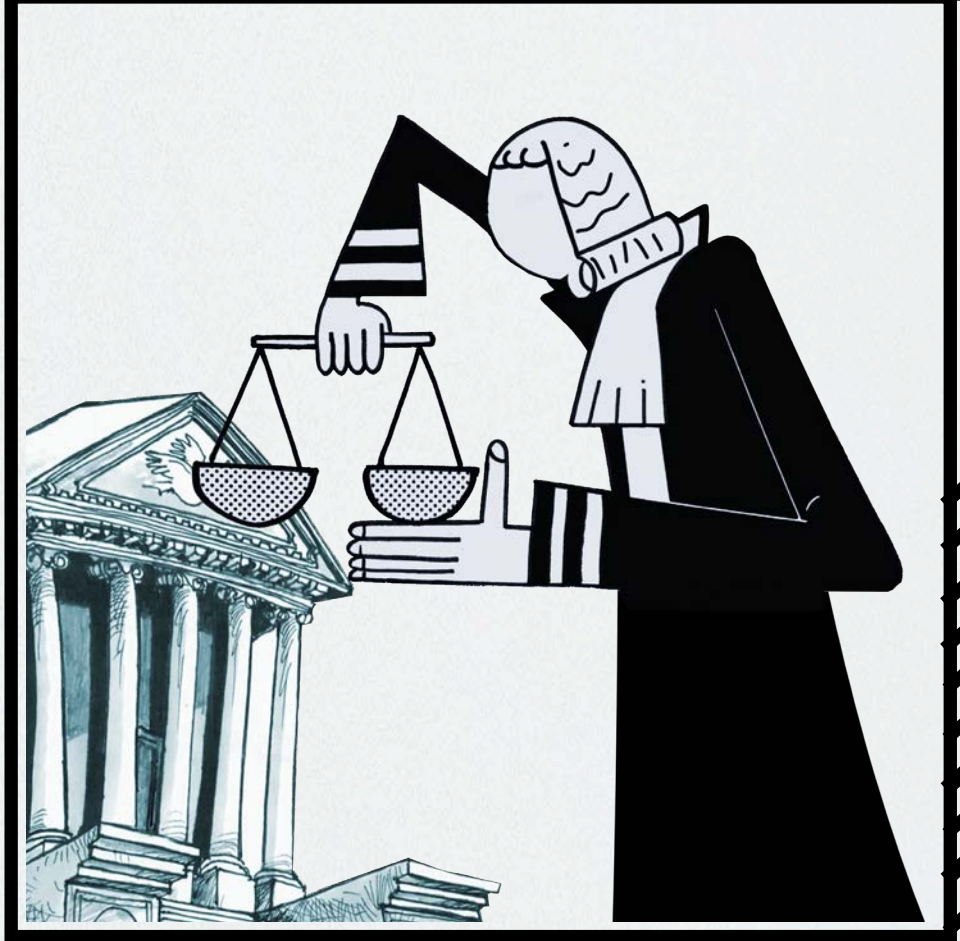


JULY 2022

Glimpse





Design: Sherien Alhayek


Drawings: Mohammed Katbeh

Published with support by the Friedrich-Ebert-Stiftung. The views expressed in this publication are not necessarily those of the Friedrich-Ebert-Stiftung. Commercial use of all media published by the Friedrich-Ebert-Stiftung (FES) is not permitted without the written consent of the FES.



 KeshMalek.Org

 KeshMalekOrg

 KeshMalekSyria

Kesh Malek

Glimpse aims to shed the light on the Syrian Civil Society which was revived after the Syrian revolution in 2011, showing the civil initiatives and sharing inspiring stories led by grass-roots and civil society movement inside and outside Syria. Glimpse is envisioned to be a reliable resource for readers interested in knowing more about Syria, the history, the society, and the thousands-year-old civilization.

As a youth workgroup coinciding with the beginning of the Syrian revolution in Aleppo Northern Syria “Kesh Malek” was formed. Its first activities were sharing and taking part in the peaceful movement, demonstrating and spreading demonstrators’ demands of “Freedom, Justice, and Dignity.” The paigns driven by the group’s long term vision to reach a better future for Syria. As “an Independent Democratic Pluralism state, respects human rights and devotes citizenship and justice values.”

CIVIL
SOCIETY'S
ROLE IN THE
TRANSITIONAL
JUSTICE
PROCESS

4

AFTER ITS
REVIVAL, WHAT
IS THE ROLE OF
CIVIL SOCIETY
ORGANIZATIONS
IN SUPPORTING
AL-SUWAIDA'S
MOVEMENT?

8

YOUNG
GIRLS
DROPOUT OF
EDUCATION:
CAUSES AND
EFFECTS

12

SYRIAN WOMEN
CAUGHT
BETWEEN
DISCRIMINATORY
LAW AND
SOCIETAL
RESTRICTIONS

14

INDEX

Civil Society's Role in the Transitional Justice Process – Prosecuting War Criminals as an example

By: Mohammad Satouf

Twelve years have passed since the beginning of the Syrian revolution and after all the human rights violations and war crimes that took place in Syria, the international community still have not taken a firm and united position against those crimes, especially the ones conducted by the Syrian regime and its allies. Starting with the large-scale crimes such as the forced displacement, the hundreds of massacres and targeting the civilians and the infrastructure as well as the arbitrary detention and forced disappearance of civilians.

In regards to the discussion around the transitional justice, it's important to define it. Although there is binary definition, we can say that it is collective action, some are judicial and legal and some are not, aiming to ensure accountability, reach justice, provide first aid for victims, empowering recovery, and reconciliation as well providing independent monitoring of the security regime, and finally strengthening the rule of law. Transitional justice shares with the justice system the principle of discovering and exposing the truth. Transitional justice should be attached to a political transitional period and the transitional justice process should be a result of this transitional period, such as political or armed conflict.

With all the war crimes taking place in Syria, the UN security council and other international organizations couldn't take any serious steps toward the violations taking place against the civilians in Syria and couldn't hold the war criminals to

account as there was no possibility to conduct an international tribunal in Syria like there was in Rwanda and Yugoslavia because of the Russian and Chinese veto. Beside keeping Bashar Al-Assad as a president of Syria, this is a major obstacle facing any political transition in Syria.

Despite all the challenges mentioned above, the victims' groups and civil movements apart from the survival initiatives have taken the lead in mainstreaming the concept of transitional justice through two main paths. The first is focused on building awareness and mobilization. Many civil society organizations in Syria worked on conducting workshops and sets of training sessions, targeting different sectors of the community, explaining and advocating for the concept of transitional justice. With minimal resources and capabilities, these workshops and dialogues were vital in explaining the concept and the formation of a vision focused on what we can achieve in Syria.

The second path is focused on prosecution and accountability efforts. Syrian human rights organizations, with the support of international organizations, have been actively seeking to document the various violations, prepare judicial files, and support the formation of associations for victims and their families. They have begun to prosecute war criminals and perpetrators of violations who are outside Syria, using the judicial mechanism currently available, namely "International jurisdiction," some countries have in-

ternational criminal jurisdiction as a reserve jurisdiction in their penal codes to prosecute war criminals.

Over the past years, Syrian organizations have been documenting human rights violations in Syria, and these documents and testimonies have helped to set in motion and pave the way for transitional justice, which facilitates prosecution, accountability, and reparation. In practice, Syrian organizations have filed cases in some courts, most notably in Germany and France, to combat impunity for "international crimes" committed in Syria.

The first extraordinary event of its kind in the world was the life sentence for the highest-ranking security defector from the Syrian regime, so far, for being found guilty of war crimes namely the murder and torture of Syrian civilians.

On January 13, 2012, after judicial hearings spanning more than a year, Colonel Anwar Ruslan, 58, was convicted by a German court in Koblenz for the torture of 4,000 detainees and causing 27 deaths out of 58, and two cases of rape, while leading the investigative department of branch 251, known as the "Khatib" branch in Damascus between April 2011 and September 2012.

The trial of Anwar Raslan resonated in the international media and generated fame among Syrians, with most welcoming the news, especially from Syrian human rights bodies working on the issue of accountability and justice. It was noted that, "The UN's comment came from Michelle

Bachelet, the UN High Commissioner for Human Rights, who described the ruling as a "paradigm shift towards justice".

Some believe that the trial faces many questions within the justice and transitional justice arena, in general, it is considered a victory and serves some justice for the victims of Anwar Raslan and their families. However, it remains within the framework of personal criminal justice with a political dimension. It does not necessarily mean hope for justice for all victims or the start of a transitional justice process that encompasses the complexities of the Syrian situation.

The term "justice" was mentioned in most of the statements related to the sentencing of Colonel Raslan, in the context of the beginning of the course of justice in Syria. However, when talking about justice as an absolute and clear value, it cannot be revoked or postponed under any circumstance or pretext. Human rights violations, from arbitrary detention to torture and killings by these agencies and their affiliates began not only with the start of the Syrian revolution in 2011, but it also became a usual situation affecting all of the participants in the demonstrations against the Syrian regime, after it only affected a small group of political opponents.

For some, the choice for the path of transitional justice may be contradictory to that of criminal justice, while the choice of the first does not necessarily mean that the second path should be excluded, particularly with regard to reparations for victims and





accountability for perpetrators, but it also does not mean that all perpetrators will be held accountable and they may not be held accountable as expected. The link of transitional justice to the political and the negotiation process between the parties and the conflict may impose a type of compromise and alternatives to criminal accountability which may be limited to compensation and reparation in order to reach a general agreement that ends the state of the conflict that drains the parties' resources.

Anwar Raslan's trial was not the first of its kind. The French authorities announced in February 2020 the arrest of Majdi Nama, known as "Islam Alloush", a former leader and spokesman for the Army of the Islam faction, a component of the Syrian opposition. The arrest occurred after seven members of the family of Syrian activist, Zaran Zaytouneh, and civil society organizations filed a complaint in June 2019 with the Crimes against Humanity Section of the National Counterterrorism Prosecution in France, regarding "acts of torture", "enforced disappearances" and "crimes against humanity and war crimes" committed between 2012 and April 2018.

Another example is in early 2022, the trial of Syrian doctor Alaa al-Moussa which began in Frankfurt, Germany. The court charged al-Moussa with 18 counts of crimes against humanity and killing opponent figures. In June 2020, Alaa Moussa was arrested in the western German city of Hesse. The General Prosecutor's Office also charged Al-Moussa with beatings on the head, stomach and genitals and injuries sustained by them.

Alaa al-Moussa, who arrived in Germany in 2015, had worked as a doctor in a prison run by the Syrian regime's military intelligence between April 2011 and 2012 in Homs, Syria,

until he was recognized by Syrian refugees in Germany with the help of civil society organizations, who filed a complaint against him with the German authorities.

Syrians have reacted extensively to the arrest and trial of Alaa al-Moussa, a war crime suspect, and have called for justice to be served on all those involved in war crimes and crimes against humanity in Syria.

In conclusion, there is a general belief among a large segment of Syrians that transitional justice will not be achieved until the conflict in Syria is over. Furthermore, in order to pave the way for real transitional justice and hold those accountable those who commit violations there has to be steps in place. These steps should include, establishing truth commissions that investigate violations, issuing recommendations to address them, and making proposals to prevent their recurrence in the future. Also, initiate prosecutions of offenders responsible for violations, provide reparation, including direct material and moral compensation for damages, rehabilitate victims and move to reform institutions, including dismantling repressive Syrian regime institutions such as the police and judiciary, and making constitutional amendments to avoid repetition of violations or impunity.

After Its Revival, What is The Role of Civil Society Organizations in Supporting Al-Suwaida's Movement?

By: Mohammad Satouf

The movements and demonstrations in Suwayda Governorate were not new in 2022, as the governorates in southern Syria witnessed intermittent demonstrations and protests for various reasons, the most prominent of which was the demand to overthrow the regime and the Assad family, under pressure from many factors that Syrians experience, such as having to live under the grip of the Assad regime and its militias, the lack of security, the economic pressure and the loss of the most basic and indispensable daily needs.

Most of these protests and demonstrations were organized by activists and residents of the province through the province's co-ordination committees. At the same time, civil society organizations were almost absent in supporting this movement. This raises a big question about the reasons behind the weak role of local civil society organizations. Therefore, they are responsible for carrying out their policies, advocating for them and interacting with them in various ways.

Reasons behind the demonstration

In April 2022, protests broke out in the province for nearly two weeks; This was in opposition to the government's decision to lift the subsidies on social groups (smart cards). These demonstrations have since expanded in their demands and slogans,

to include demands to overthrow the Syrian regime and the Assad family.

The Al-Suwaida province is suffering from a state of lawlessness that threatens people's lives. Assassinations have been on-going for many years, the severity of which has recently increased, with the regime's security services having limited capacity to intervene to suppress demonstrations and protests, according to local activist pages in the province.

The worsening living and economic conditions and the overall decline in the level of services provided by the regime's institutions have also cast a shadow over the governorate, increasing the frequency of protests and demonstrations. In January, the regime's government did not respond to the demands of protesters gathered in front of the city's Palace of Justice, demanding that the criminals be held accountable for rising crimes, kidnappings, and theft.

Nawras Aziz, a journalist and member of the Association of Syrian Journalists, explained that the protests in the province are not new, they started at the beginning of the revolution in 2011. He said, "the first union sit-in in the province started on 26 March 2011 with a sit-in organized by the Bar Association in Suwayda in support of and in solidarity with the demonstra-



tions in Daraa province at the time."

He went onto say, "since 2011, such movements and protests had started on a small scale and had been conducted by some anti-regime activist groups since 2005 and even before."

Aziz said that the Syrian regime tried to put economic pressure on the province, banning the export of apples, considered one of the most important products of the province, during 2019, and they also kidnapped many traders exporting apples at the entrance of the province.

According to Aziz, these pressures are part of the regime. The economic and living situation in the province has worsened and has been a source of pressure from the regime on the people of the province. At the beginning of January 2020, demonstrations in the province were renewed under the slogan; "We want to live", and they were an extension of the demonstrations in 2015 under the slogan; "We are strangled", then in 2016 under the banner; "We've got destroyed", and then; "We are burned" in 2019.

The most prominent of these demonstrations and protests was in June 2020, which lasted for nearly a month. Those days were full of events, and the demands of the demonstrators evolved into the slogans of the Syrian revolution.

The civil society organizations' role in supporting the governorate:

Since 2011, numerous civil society groups and initiatives have been formed in the province, mainly in the areas with relief and humanitarian aid such as food, health and other basic services, as in the other Syrian governorates.

Some community-based initiatives have also played an important role in supporting and protecting the community, such as the "You destroyed us" initiative and the "No" initiative. They have taken a decisive position on forced recruitment against the people of the province and have taken a stance in these initiatives against recruitment among other community initiatives.

In contrast, civil society organizations have had no effective role or influence in supporting civil movements in Suwayda province, except for some organizations that tried to support the movement through its various stages. The number of civil society organizations, especially relief organizations, increased in the province after 2011 to about 100, in addition to dozens of unlicensed volunteer groups, according to social media reports.

In this regard, journalist Nawras Aziz said that the role of civil society organizations in supporting civil movements in the governorate of Al-Suwayda were almost absent and had no real role or effectiveness, with the exception of some organizations that had a role in one way or another in supporting political movements in the governorate. However, there was only one civil society organization worked to

support political movements in the governorate.

Aziz explained that despite the small number of support and advocacy organizations for Al-Suwayda's movement and its small impact, there are still some organizations working in the scene and trying their best to support and advocate for civil movements. The reasons for their weak and small workload are many and varied, but the most prominent of these are the presence of security risks and militias, such as the national defence, family militias, and Iran's arms in the province, which are the main concerns of demonstrators, civilians, and organizations, as it is not easy for any organization to work or carry out its work well in light of these challenges.

Gandhi Saleem, a member of "My home is yours" in Shahba in northern Suwayda, tries to show a different picture of the work of civil society organizations. He says, in an interview with Al-Hal.net, "members of his organization participated in community initiatives, and they have no political ambition except to build peace and trust, and to maintain the organization's values. They worked without any interference from any foreign party, in a time of security tightness and the arrests of a number of them." He confirmed that the organization has launched many initiatives that have helped bridge the gap between the local community in Suwayda and the displaced, which has greatly contributed to the process of social integration and dispelled rumours about the new arrivals.

In September 2020, civil society organizations in Suwayda issued



a statement, following serious tensions in the governorate and following clashes between armed militias and local armed groups which resulted in killings, abductions and chaos.

"The escalation of events in the province is a continuation and result of a general context of lawlessness, the rise in violence, crime rates, the spread of drugs, the easy access to weapons, and the illegal economy," the organizations said in a joint statement.

They added, the latest incidents in Suwayda have led to "the killing, kidnapping, and terrorizing of residents and children, the dismemberment of the province, and the disruption to public life, in light of this it is the state's role to apply the law and protect citizens"

We can say the main obstacle faced by civil society groups in Suwayda is the deliberate sabotage of civil society efforts by the Syrian regime, in addition to preventing aid from reaching independent civil society organizations. One of the constraints faced by some civil society actors is their inability to play a direct role in humanitarian efforts to help IDPs and other people. They sometimes have to rely on the support of religious leaders and well-known family heads.

Young Girls Dropout of Education: Causes and effects

By: Zouhair Alshemali

After 10 years, the impact of the war in Syria continues to worsen and get more complicated year after year in all aspects of life, especially educational facilities. According to a statement issued in early 2012 by the UN Children's Fund (UNICEF), more than 2.04 million Syrian children are not in school, 40 percent of them girls. This is confirmed by the statistics of the World Bank, which show that there are 57 million children in the world who do not attend school, of whom 31 million are girls. Two thirds of uneducated adults are women, and the largest number of school dropouts are girls, especially in rural areas.

According to the Jusoor Center for Studies, the dropout rate in Syria, in general, has reached 58%. The study indicates that the highest dropout rate in Syria is in Idlib, and the Aleppo countryside, where the drop-out rate reached 70%, while in Al-Raqqa and Al-Hasakah, the drop-out rate ranged between 40% and 50% and the rest of the areas between 50% and 60%.

Psychological causes and misconceptions about girls' lack of education

Girls dropping out of school is not a new phenomenon in developing countries due to many factors such as, but not limited to, the high costs of private education, the low quality of public education, the lack of schools in remote regions and villages or the lack of parents' belief in the importance of education for girls,

which is attributed to the stereotyped gender roles of men and women in Arab societies which consider that women's maximum ambition is to marry and bear children, only.

Most girls who drop out of school grew up in communities that have preconceptions about the importance of education in the future of their children, especially girls. These societies don't believe in the need for women to work in the future, which leads to women marrying at an early age. Unlike in societies where we find high percentages of women who have completed their education, we find women in only certain jobs and professions, just like men.

Psychologist Hassana Al-Monajed believes that the psychology of

Syrian communities in many areas of Syria plays a major role in preventing girls from educational opportunities. Even if they have the opportunity it ends early, either because a husband comes by or because they see their sole role in the home to help with household chores.

According to Al-Minijed, "families consider investing in girls' education, unlike men's, to be futile. This is based on societal concepts that view a woman's life goal as only marriage, procreation, child rearing and the marital home for life."

In addition, parents fear that their daughters will be forced to go to school, al-Minijed said, adding that families are overburdened with time

and money that they do not have.

Education is not isolated from the rest of people's living conditions. With high unemployment and poverty rates, education will not be a priority for those who cannot afford to pay for or raise their children. Marriage has increased for Syrians of an early age over the past ten years. Some parents rush to marry off girls to those who seek to help them avoid the responsibility of raising and spending money on them, or perhaps even to marry them off to a young man residing outside Syria. Many parents view this as an opportunity for their daughters to have a better life outside war-torn Syria.

Poverty and extreme poverty have driven hundreds of families to marry off their underage daughters to ease the financial burden, said Zohour Qahwati, a social worker.

Some parents believe that early marriage protects them from any danger. Poor economic conditions and insecurity play an important role in the issue of girls dropping out of education in northern Syria.

Laila Hosu, advocacy director at Hurras, said that the separation of hundreds of schools in distance, is a major reason for girls to drop out of school. Security concerns have also played a major role in their exclusion from school.

Families who work in agriculture often take girls out of school to help with the agricultural land, especially

during harvest seasons, she said, because of the poor living conditions, which continue to worsen due to the small number of schools available in Syria and the lack of support for the second and third cycle of education.

"In addition, most donors focus on supporting non-formal education, which focuses only directly on the first cycle of education, which leaves children with little opportunity to return to formal schools and little support for the second and third cycles". Parents are pushing their girls to start a family, work in a sewing workshop or farm, and not seek educational opportunities", she added.

The consequences of girls dropping out of education on the family and society

The consequences of dropping out of education are also reflected in the communities. This is directly linked to the rise in child marriage rates. According to a study conducted by the United Nations Children's Fund (UNICEF), the rate of child marriage in Syria was 12% in 2011 which rose to up to 18% in 2012 and reached 32% in 2014.

As of February 2019, studies conducted by the United Nations Population Fund confirmed that the rate of child marriage in Syria reached 46%. These are the figures the UN organizations have been able to obtain, but according to many experts, the figures are expected to be much higher.

Girls who leave school early lose many of the opportunities and this negatively impacts their lives. They lose opportunities to develop their skills and to empower themselves physically, psychologically, and socially, in addition to the societal benefits that will be reflected in the future of the country. If a girl is confined to a house, a wife and a mother she will not have the kind of education or life skills that she is supposed to impart to her children in the future in order to raise a generation that is aware, or to provide a bigger income for the family or to establish a family with higher education which, if it happens, will benefit future generations to come. The higher the rate of the education and awareness level in a given generation, the better it will be for the later generations.

Social worker, Zohour Qahwati, said the responsibility for raising awareness among parents lies with the relevant institutions, civil society organizations, local councils, and youth groups. These organizations must raise awareness about the negative consequences of the steady decrease in school attendance and stress the importance of educating girls in order to develop Syrian society and raise its education level in the long term. This work must be permanent and uninterrupted, which is something that organizations who work in this field suffer from. This leaves it to local initiatives to be resourceful in this field and not to wait for financial support, which may not come anytime soon.



Syrian Women Caught Between Discriminatory Law and Social Restrictions

By: Alaa Muhamed

"Everything in our lives as women discriminate against us," a Syrian woman replied when I asked her about the forms of discrimination against women in Syrian societies. Qamar, a 45-year-old primary school teacher in Rif Dimashq, said the lives of women in patriarchal societies are painful and harsh, full of oppression and injustice. Syrian women are governed by customs, traditions and societal stereotypes, which are reinforced by legal texts based on discrimination, exclusion and biased opinions and decision.

The law obstructs women's human rights

The laws and regulations are general rules that are supposed to apply to all persons without discrimination and to all facts without exception, but in the Syrian law there are numerous discriminatory laws that have contributed to the obstruction of women's human rights.

These discriminatory laws include the Personal Status Law, which regulates marriage, divorce, descent, custody, guardianship, and inheritance. The Syrian personal status courts are divided according to religious denominations, each with its own sectarian courts and legislation which has made matters worse and strengthened the authority of clerics at the expense of the legislative authority.

Syrian personal status laws, particularly Shari'a, are rigid in the face

of the dynamic and evolving reality of women at all levels and violate the rights of citizenship and human rights, which include the right to life, respect, justice, freedom, the right for women to work, the right to privacy and the right to a decent life.

Minor amendments that did not change the reality

Marwa, a 55-year-old Syrian mother currently residing in northern Syria, says the personal status law is linked to pain, injustice, and long waiting times in court, this is caused by her struggle to obtain custody of her children after years of separation from her husband.

"I struggled a lot until I got a divorce, it tasted bitter and humbled everyone for the sake of my children's care and expenses," she said. "These laws are unjust, they stand on the side of men and do not consider women as human beings or citizens, and all of them must be blown up and replaced by just laws," she added.

The Personal Status Act has been amended several times. For example, in 1973, it states: Restricting polygamy by the existence of a legal ground, the wife's right to maintenance shall be forfeited if she works outside the home without her husband's permission. In regard to custody; "the period of custody ends when the boy turns nine years old and the girl turns eleven years old". Previously, the period of custody

ended when the boy seven years and the girl nine years.

In the second amendment, in 2003, the mother's custody period for her children was increased. It stipulated that "the mother's custody period shall end when the boy reaches the age of 13 and the girl reaches the age of 15. The mother may request the judge to hand over her child or her child without the need to file a lawsuit."

In regard to divorce, the amendment was unfair. Instead of preventing divorce by unilateral will, it merely relaxed the conditions for compensation in a divorce to make the only condition for compensation arbitrary. Instead of giving women and men equal rights to guardianship, the amendment merely prohibited children from traveling with one parent without the other's consent. The amendment raised the age of marriage to 17 for girls and 18 for boys and left it to the discretion of the judge in the marriage of a child or girl at the age of 15. The punishment of an elder who marries outside the court was made stricter. These laws apply in all Syrian governorates subject to various de facto authorities.

Disregarding women's rights

Syrian writer Khawla Dunia believes that discriminatory laws against women, including personal status, penal and labour laws, don't even meet the Syrian Constitution, which is also considered discriminatory.

Laws are considered contrary to the Constitution.

"Discrimination occurs in all aspects of the civil, political and practical life of Syrian women, in terms of wage discrimination, promotion in employment and presence in decision-making positions," she said.

"All of this has affected Syrian women and their development, as well as their basic rights, which are enshrined in international human rights conventions, as well as the conventions against violence against women (CEDAW), and affects their relationship with their families, children and their living conditions," she said.

There are no platforms for women to express themselves through their presence in decision-making positions, which allows for more discrimination in the family and society, she said. Women's rights are easily taken lightly, and women's rights are exploited on many occasions when their rights conflict with what male members of the family and society want them to do which tends to be forcing them to submit to their wishes.

As for the Syrian Personal Status Law, she said, "It tries to compliment all the religious particularities in Syria, and we know the diversity and differences in the Syrian religious fabric."

She pointed out that there are laws specific to all Christian and Muslim

sects, and they consider the specificities of the churches and sects' laws. We see the impact of this on women in particular, whether in marriage, divorce, child custody, inheritance, etc.

"There is great injustice against women and sometimes against men, especially in relation to marriage and divorce among Christian sects," she said. "Meanwhile, in Muslim sects, women are considered second-class human beings whose rights simply do not exist," she added.

Social Discrimination:

Women in Syrian societies live under marginalization, exclusion, neglect, and inferiority. This is due to the historical roots of male authorities who have successfully used coercive methods against women that have deprived them of their dignity, freedom, and ability to make decisions about their lives, and made their lives dependent on men's consent and comfort. Now, under the de facto authorities who have different doctrines, ideas, and ideologies, the situation is even more complicated.

Syrian feminist Mona Freij, from al-Raqa, spoke about discrimination against women at birth. She said, "Society dictates the colour clothing a child should wear and her toys, and they judge her life on her defects and characteristics, even the way she sits and what her voice sounds like."

"One of the most distinctive forms of discrimination in the eastern Euphrates areas, is their interest in male education at the expense of female students, because they think it is illogical to spend money on female education and then marry and have a family," Mona added.

She also points to a very important problem that most Syrian governorates share, which is the issue of inheritance. She says, "Our societies do not let women inherit agricultural land, and women cannot file claims for their inheritance rights because they will be the victims of gossip and shame in their society."

Areas that try to break free and others that increase restrictions

Efforts by the Autonomous Administration in eastern Syria to improve status of women in society cannot be ignored, as some policies have been adopted that seek gender equality, and this is not easy in a region governed by clans, societal traditions, religion, and other factors.

According to Mona, women's status has changed in the region, but they need more serious legal controls because the authority in the region is strong.

"Women in the region are now filing lawsuits to claim their rights, especially in relation to inheritance, but they may face judges who reject these claims on the grounds that



they cause discord and problems between families,” Mona said.

Mona pointed to the Women’s Protection Units of the Autonomous Administration, which are working to protect women but in an ill-conceived and unorganized way, causing new problems in the region.

In northern Syria, the situation is quite different, with HTS controlling the area along with the Salvation Government in Idlib, and the Syrian National Army (SNA) with the Syrian Interim Government (TSG) in the Aleppo countryside, all of which have different approaches to managing the area under their influence.

Women living in areas under the authority’s control are subjected to severe restrictions imposed by the authorities in the name of “sharia”, which prohibits them from mixing between the genders in schools, starting with primary schools, and in the areas of work and daily life. It also prohibits women from leaving the house without a male guardian present.

In areas under the control of the national army, women are struggling to obtain employment and women working in civil society organizations are being restricted socially and face criticism, and they are controlled in regards to their dress and life decisions.

Civil society organizations that work to “support and empower women” are trying to meet the challenges and exert efforts within the region. Some women’s organizations are working on projects to raise awareness and educate women about their civil rights, in addition to economic empowerment.

“The women’s struggle is new in Syria, and its features may have become clearer after the revolution,”

said Syrian writer Khawla Dunia. “women have become more aware of their rights and the extent of the injustice they are subjected to and there has also become a kind of solidarity in this struggle among Syrian women,” she added.

Syrian women have achieved what many political entities were unable to achieve, she said, as they were better able to communicate, monitor efforts, identify priorities and develop a vision for the future of Syria. It was not only inclusive to women’s rights but included a political, social and cultural constitutional and societal perspective.

A quick look at some of Syria’s discriminatory laws

Syrian law includes articles that place women under supervision and male guardianship. These restrictions are then passed on to their husbands.

There are laws in the system of crime and punishment, which have served as a cause rather than an end to crime. It can be said that such laws are violent to women and support those who are violent towards them. They have also strengthened the concept that women are inferior to men.

The first of these is the Code of Offenses against Public Morals and Private Morals, which gives a husband the right to rape his wife. This is in addition to the legality of so-called honour crimes, although this was removed from the law. However, many of the crimes committed under this pretext have gone unpunished.

Change and justice and equality cannot be achieved in a society without changing the rigid legal texts that have been enforced for decades without change, because the law is supposed to be the equal platform on which justice and equality is based.



nto the Syrian civil society

