

Selective Justice Reproduces Injustice!

(Translation)

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Since the fall of the Bashar al-Assad regime, there has been much talk in Syria about the necessity of achieving transitional justice, that is, justice that guarantees the transition from an unjust and tyrannical regime to a new system that provides justice and to a people who have suffered the most brutal forms of oppression and repression for fourteen years.

However, here the fundamental question arises: who are the criminals who deserve to be brought to justice? And have they truly received the accountability and punishment they deserve, which would heal the hearts of grieving mothers and soothe the wounds of the suffering Syrian people in general?

Undoubtedly, the first to be held accountable are the political, military, and security leaders of Bashar al-Assad's regime. However, reality shows the exact opposite. Many of them have been granted amnesty or overlooked. For example, Muhammad Ghazi al-Jalali, the former Prime Minister, was met in Damascus on the day of liberation, and friendly conversations were exchanged with him during the handover of power in Damascus instead of being arrested and prosecuted. Later, we see him participating in the annual liberation anniversary celebrations!

As for Fadi Sakr, one of the heads of the military and security criminal gangs, he has become a founding member of the National Reconciliation Committee, and is mediating the release of regime thugs and soldiers from prisons under the vague and broad pretext that "their hands are not stained with blood," even though Fadi Sakr's own involvement and complicity in bloodshed are well-documented. He is one of the direct perpetrators of the massacres in the Tadamon neighborhood and the crimes committed by the National Defense Forces which he headed in Damascus.

As for the judges of the former regime, who issued death sentences and long prison terms against thousands of innocent people, some of them continued to work normally in the courts of the new Syrian administration, ruling according to the same laws established by the previous regime; the very laws that were a major cause of the misery and injustice suffered by the people of ash-Sham.

The same applies to the pillars of the regime's economic system, such as Muhammad Hamsho, whose exoneration was signed off on, and his past crimes were erased with a stroke of a pen. He continues to conduct his business without any accountability even though he deserves to be prosecuted for his crimes and his unlimited financial support for Bashar al-Assad's regime, support that was directly used to kill those who participated in the revolution.

Even prominent figures from the Bashar al-Assad regime who were arrested, such as Interior Minister Muhammad al-Shaar, who also served as head of the Political Security Directorate, and Atef Najib, head of the Military Security Directorate in Daraa and Bashar al-Assad's cousin, who played a pivotal role in instigating the protests in Daraa at the beginning of the revolution, in addition to Ibrahim Huwajja, head of the Air Force Intelligence Directorate, and the regime's Grand Mufti, Ahmad Hassoun, were shown in videos supposedly undergoing trials. But is it conceivable that after a full year, their trials have not concluded, and nothing has been proven against them that would warrant the application of the death penalty or even prosecution under the positive law adopted by the new administration.

The reality is that none of them have been genuinely prosecuted, and none of the regime's criminal henchmen have been held accountable. Instead, we see them being released in batches to the point that the prisons are almost empty of them!

In contrast, these widespread releases of the Bashar al-Assad regime's thugs and their cronies coincided with the trial of nearly thirty young men from Hizb ut-Tahrir, who received unjust sentences ranging from three to ten years. All of them had been detained before the liberation, and their only crime, according to those who arrested them, was holding dissenting opinions. They had opposed Hayat Tahrir al-Sham's (HTS) approach at the time, which involved freezing the front lines, submitting to Turkish influence, and complying with the dictates of countries seeking reconciliation with the criminal regime, ultimately leading to the American-backed political solution and the implementation of Resolution 2254, which called for integrating the opposition with the regime, forming a joint government and forgetting the criminal past of the al-Assad family.

The injustice was not limited to the members of Hizb ut Tahrir, but also affected other prisoners of conscience; some of whom were arrested before the liberation, such as Sheikh Abu Shu'aib al-Masri and Abu Yahya al-Jaza'iri, while others were recently arrested for expressing opinions contrary to al-Jolani's government, or for a video or comment they posted on social media. Examples include the arrest of the American journalist, Bilal Abdul Karim, in the city of al-Bab, as if he were a war criminal, after roads were blocked and he was surrounded by a large number of military vehicles, as well as the arrest of the journalist Murad Mahalli in the city of Jarablus, after his house was raided, its occupants insulted, and his media equipment destroyed.

Even migrants who supported the revolution were not spared from repression and arrest, such as Abu Dujana al-Turkistani and Abu Islam al-Uzbeki, not to mention the military attack launched by the security forces of the new administration on the camp of French migrants, before they retreated under media pressure. Even those who call for opening new fronts to end the separatist rebellion face the same fate, as happened with the activist Abu Shabouh al-Furati, who appeared in a video statement with a number of fighters and called for the liberation of the Syrian Jazeera region from the separatist SDF forces, only to end up in prison.

What we are witnessing today, quite clearly, is a declaration of tolerance, forgiveness, and pardon for criminals and murderers in blatant violation of the standards of justice, while those who express their opinions are persecuted and criminalized in a clear violation of the law and the constitutional declaration adopted by the administration itself.

This is in addition to the criminalization of those who once came to support the rebellious people in order to appease foreign directives, especially after the administration joined the American alliance to fight "terrorism" according to the Western definition, i.e., Islam.

In other words, the Syrian administration is not practicing genuine transitional justice, nor even the minimum standards of justice. Instead, it is practicing selective political hostility against broad segments of the Syrian people and against the revolutionary base, which now finds itself marginalized at all levels and even persecuted, if it demands the achievement of the revolution's goals. Meanwhile, the base of the former regime is being courted and attempts are being made to win it over as an alternative to the revolutionary base.

Transitional justice is not a slogan to be chanted, nor a media commodity to be consumed. It is a real process that can only be achieved by holding criminals accountable, without exception, providing justice to victims without discrimination and protecting freedom of opinion and expression without selectivity. Any political project that ignores these values or replaces justice with deals, and accountability with amnesties, will not establish a stable state. It will only reproduce injustice in a new guise, and sow the seeds of an inevitable future conflict.

Either there will be true justice that honors the blood and sacrifices, and this will only be achieved by implementing the system of Islam, or we will be walking into a dark tunnel that threatens the hopes of the Syrians and empties liberation of its meaning.