

## INTERVIEWS WITH SYRIAN WOMEN IN REYHANLI - III

### REYHANLI'DA SURIYELİ KADINLAR İLE SÖYLEŞİLER - III

حوار مع مواطنات سوريات في ربحانلي – ٣

CENTER FOR MIDDLE EASTERN STRATEGIC STUDIES  
ORTADOĞU STRATEJİK ARAŞTIRMALAR MERKEZİ

مركز الشرق الأوسط للدراسات الاستراتيجية



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## CENTER FOR MIDDLE EASTERN STRATEGIC STUDIES

### **History**

*In Turkey, the shortage of research on the Middle East grew more conspicuous than ever during the early 90's. Center for Middle Eastern Strategic Studies (ORSAM) was established in January 1, 2009 in order to provide relevant information to the general public and to the foreign policy community. The institute underwent an intensive structuring process, beginning to concentrate exclusively on Middle affairs.*

### **Outlook on the Middle Eastern World**

*It is certain that the Middle East harbors a variety of interconnected problems. However, neither the Middle East nor its people ought to be stigmatized by images with negative connotations. Given the strength of their populations, Middle Eastern states possess the potential to activate their inner dynamics in order to begin peaceful mobilizations for development. Respect for people's willingness to live together, respect for the sovereign right of states and respect for basic human rights and individual freedoms are the prerequisites for assuring peace and tranquility, both domestically and internationally. In this context, Turkey must continue to make constructive contributions to the establishment of regional stability and prosperity in its vicinity.*

### **ORSAM's Think-Tank Research**

*ORSAM, provides the general public and decision-making organizations with enlightening information about international politics in order to promote a healthier understanding of international policy issues and to help them to adopt appropriate positions. In order to present effective solutions, ORSAM supports high quality research by intellectuals and researchers that are competent in a variety of disciplines. ORSAM's strong publishing capacity transmits meticulous analyses of regional developments and trends to the interested parties. With its web site, its books, reports, and periodicals, ORSAM supports the development of Middle Eastern literature on a national and international scale. ORSAM supports the development of Middle Eastern literature on a national and international scale. ORSAM facilitates the sharing of knowledge and ideas with the Turkish and international communities by inviting statesmen, bureaucrats, academics, strategists, businessmen, journalists, and NGO representatives to Turkey.*

**Feyyat Özyazar**

He was born in Reyhanlı district of Hatay in 1954. After working as a clerk in Iskenderun Civil Court of First Instance for a brief period, he quit his job and worked freelance by writing petitions in Reyhanlı. He still work as a columnist in a local paper. He has many published articles and interviews and also he has a published poetry book. Feyyat Özyazar is a member of ORSAM Advisory Board.

**Lina Zakaria Saguj**

Lina Zakaria studied for her undergraduate degree at the Faculty of Arts, Department of English, Aleppo University. After her graduation she worked for several institutions. She worked as a supervisor at Ma'amoun International Institution between 2001-2003. Then she worked at Sidra Knitwear as General Manager for four years. From 2006 to 2011 she worked for several private companies as general manager. She is currently working for Arche Nova Initiative as liaison officer.

## PRESENTATION

The terrorist attack that took place in Reyhanlı has been a tragic indicator of how easily the instability in neighboring countries could spread to Turkey. Another tragic scene that we are used to see after the 2011 uprising in Syria and in 2003 invasion of Iraq, was witnessed also in Reyhanlı district of Hatay. Official statements and the general view of the Turkish public opinion point out the Syrian regime as subject of the bombing. Accordingly, it is possible to read the attack as the Assad regime's striving to punish Turkey due to its Syria policy and to expand the battle field by drawing Turkey into the conflict.

The bombing had a major impact on Turkey. Since, the people in the region and local people in Reyhanlı were directly subjected to violence. This situation further deepened the polarization in the region, which is directly influenced by the conflicts as it is the border town with Syria and where a tense environment prevails. The Reyhanlı district has been hosting almost as many Syrian guests as its own population since the beginning of the uprising in Syria. Thus, it has radical impacts on the social, economic and security situation in the district. As ORSAM, we have conducted a great number of interviews with Syrian refugees, moving in Reyhanlı since the beginning of the conflicts in Syria. In those interviews, we listened to their life stories. As ORSAM, we considered that it is necessary to share those interviews. So we have been publishing them on our website with the Turkish public opinion once again after the last Reyhanlı bombing. We bring this study, in which we gathered the aforesaid interviews, to the public attention with the hope that it will contribute to understanding the situation in Reyhanlı and also to the outlook on Syrian guests; and we extend our thanks to those who contributed.

*Hasan Kanbolat*  
*ORSAM Director*

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**By:** Feyyat Özyazar  
 ORSAM Advisory Board  
 Lina Zekeriya Saguj

## REYHANLI'DA SURİYELİ KADINLAR İLE SÖYLEŞİLER - III

**An Interview with Majide Saleh Al Hazzani, a Syrian who fled to Turkey and settled in Reyhanlı district of Hatay by renting a house**

Majide Saleh Al Hazzani, who started to live under difficult circumstances when her husband was arrested by the regime, couldn't find a job. When harassment and molestation against her daughters added to economic problems, she decided to flee to Turkey.

**Majide Saleh Al Hazzani:** I am 40 years old. I was living in Tulal al Kasr village in Idlib. I fled to Turkey three months ago. I rented a house in Reyhanlı, and currently live there.

**ORSAM:** Who else came with you to Turkey?

**Majide Saleh Al Hazzani:** I came along with my daughters.

**ORSAM:** How did you decide to come to Turkey?

**Majide Saleh Al Hazzani:** My husband was a dolmush driver in Dana (a district in Idlib). When the unrest broke out in the region, he picked up passenger from Idlib to Aleppo. After he dropped off the passenger in Aleppo, he came back to Idlib. But during this time, those people, picking up by my husband, were being followed. So my husband was detained

with charges of knowing those people and collaborating with them. Even though he denied, he has not been released yet. And his only fault was picking up the passengers and transporting them from Idlib to Aleppo.

I have grown-up daughters. When my husband was put into prison, there was nobody else to operate dolmush. We started to engage in agricultural works. Nevertheless, both pro-Assad soldiers and pro-Assad villagers excluded us. Sometimes they cut off our water, stoned our house and did not give our daily wages. We were despised and became an object of derision. Except for a couple of families protecting us, the majority sided against us to prove that they are in favor of the regime. People were no more giving job or food. When my daughters were started to be molested and harassed, I decided to flee to Turkey.

**ORSAM:** Can you hear from your husband?

**Majide Saleh Al Hazzani:** My husband is still in prison. I cannot hear from him. When we came to Turkey, we rented a house and we have been living here for a couple months. But I am about to run out of money I saved and borrowed from the people around. I live in misery. I will apply for the tent city. I have no plan or courage to go back to Syria. Currently my priority is the honor of my daughters.



*\* This interview was made by Feyyat Özyazar in Reyhanlı district of Hatay, on 10 August 2012.*

**An Interview with Naciye Al-Hamdo, who rent an apartment and settled in Reyhanlı district of Hatay**

Naciye Al-Hamdo, a teacher in Syria, lost her husband when the conflicts first broke out. During the civil war, her house was destroyed. When she could not do her job anymore, her salary was cut, and she had to come to Turkey.

**Naciye Al-Hamdo:** I live in Hamdaniyah Neighborhood in Aleppo, Syria. I am a mother of one child. I am 27 years old and a teacher.

**ORSAM:** Could you tell us about your life before the civil war in Syria, what you went through during the civil war and the reasons why you came to Turkey??

**Naciye Al-Hamdo:** My husband Mervan Karim Al-Hamdo was killed during the first

bombardment on Aleppo. Our house was also destroyed during the aforesaid bombardment. Lots of people from our family were killed as a result of this attack. Our family members live away from one another, and also they have a small income. It was too difficult to be a widow woman in Syria even before those events. Since the civil war broke out, it has turned into a complete nightmare. I tried to live in a half-destroyed house with no electricity and water. But then I took shelter in our neighbors. The neighbors hosted me for a while. However, due to worsening living conditions and food shortage, people started to live from hand to mouth. The school where I worked was in another neighborhood. I could no more go to school in fear of being attacked, and thus my salary was cut. Along with my son, I took 150 thousand SYP we saved with my husband, packed our clothes and moved to Idlib with another family from Aleppo. We settled in Sermada Village which is close to border in Idlib, and we stayed there for 2 months. When the internal conflict and robbery started in Sermada as well, we had no



more security of life and my honor was under threat. We found a guide in order to pass the wire-mesh in the borderline. I gave 10 thousand SYP to the guide. He brought us to Hatay-Reyhanlı-Cilvegözü road. In Reyhanlı, there were mostly those who came from Idlib. There was a limited number of people from Aleppo. Therefore, there was no one I recognise. I hardly found a house for rent. I had a bed, a mattress, carpet and kitchen utensils, that's all. On the other hand, I had only 2000 TL left in my pocket. Neighbors helped me. They met some of my needs, and brought food. But this situation hurt my pride deeply and I started to work as a cleaner to earn money. I was a teacher in Syria, now I am a cleaner in Turkey. Eventually I applied to stay in tent cities. I pray the God to be accepted to the tent city before winter comes.

*\*This interview was made by Feyyat Özyazar in Reyhanlı district of Hatay, on 20 November 2012.*

### **An Interview with Mahide Hadji Hassan, who came from Aleppo and settled in Reyhanlı**

Mahide Hadji Hassan, whose husband was martyred as a result of the bombardment in civil war, came to Turkey after fighting to survive with her 2 sons and a daughter in Aleppo for months.

**ORSAM:** Could you introduce yourself in brief?

**Mahide Hadji Hassan:** I come from Bistenelpasha Neighborhood of Aleppo, Syria. I am a mother of 3 children.

**ORSAM:** Could you tell us about your life before the civil war in Syria, what you went

through during the civil war and the reasons why you came to Turkey?

**Mahide Hadji Hassan:** My husband's office was in the basement of our apartment. During the bombardment, the barrel fell on our building, and my husband was killed. Many of my neighbors were also killed during the bombardment. Furnitures both in our apartment and office were all destroyed, we hardly saved our lives. I came to Turkey along with my children after we stayed in neighbors and some relatives for a couple of days. If my adult sons had fallen into the hands of the Regular Army, they would have been forced to join the army or they would have been killed. Therefore, I took them away with me, and we came here.

We rented an apartment in Reyhanlı. Sometimes I go to the houses for cleaning, and sometimes I work as an agricultural worker. Both of my sons work in constructions. We have been striving to earn our own living. Most of our neighborhood was destroyed, and a large number of people were killed. We lived in an environment where there was no bread, no electricity and water was cut, and where nobody could go outside. We lived in fear as if our country had been invaded by foreign troops.

We had all kind of furniture and household goods at home in Syria. We were leading a comfortable and a regular life. Here, we have a simple rug, a couple of domestic utensils and a refrigerator. I could not buy a television yet. We sleep on sponge mattresses. We live in an apartment with a living room, a guest room and a kitchen.

People who were sent by some foreign businessmen came to Reyhanlı, and they delivered some materials to help Syrian families in need. I received two packages of food product

and three blankets. It is winter already, and we have neither heating stove nor charcoal. I save money to buy them.

I hear nothing from my neighbors and my relatives in Syria. I believe most of them migrated like us, but I do not know where they are. We cannot hear from each other through telephone either. I will stay in Turkey until things settle down in Syria.

*\* This interview was made by Feyyat Özyazar in Reyhanlı district of Hatay on 6 December 2012.*

**An Interview with Ramya Hadji Kaddur, who came from Syria to Turkey and settled in Reyhanlı district of Hatay**

Like many other families, Ramya Hadji Kaddur also crossed the border by passing over the wire fence and arrived in Reyhanlı as a result of the bombardments in Harim. Her husband was injured along with the opponents and he could not come to Turkey with her.

**Ramya Hadji Kaddur:** I come from Al-Rif in Idlib, Syria. I am a mother of two children.

**ORSAM:** Could you tell us about your life before the civil war in Syria, what you went through during the civil war and the reasons why you came to Turkey?

**Ramya Hadji Kaddur:** Air bombardment began against the opposition. Both inside and outside of Harim district, the villages, hamlets etc. were bombarded by air. Then the tanks entered our neighborhood, and they started to fight against the opposition forces. Many people were killed, injured in villages and county towns, some of them passed over wire fences and took shelter in Turkey, and some

others migrated to other districts of Syria. No one was left behind in our area, and we also left our home, our stuff, and animals.

I took my two children along with me and came to Reyhanlı. My husband, on the other hand, is in Harim, he cannot walk as he is injured. He stays with the opponents in a shelter. I rent an apartment, but I have no furniture. The neighbors helped me; so now I have a bed, kitchen utensils, and currently I live in an apartment for rent with a room and a kitchen. However, I do not know how long I can lead my life with the money I have. If I find a job, I might clean houses, work as an agricultural worker to make my living. However, winter is about to arrive, so I will have a major financial problem as it is not the season to work as an agricultural worker.

In our region in Syria, transformation came to a dead stop. Trade and agricultural activities also came to a dead stop. The whole population is faced with famine, everyone has been using what they have for now, but there is no hope for the future. The people in the region are about to run out of flour, cracked wheat etc. for winter. Those who have cars cannot buy oil, diesel. Everything has become very expensive, and the fuel is in black market.

Many families came to Reyhanlı like I did, and everyone is in the same situation, because they came here without selling their goods and bringing their car here. Some people had to immediately leave their home at midnight. Some of them could not even take their money, savings from home. Our clothing is not enough, we do not have winter clothes. In addition to all these financial problems, I also worry about my husband's life. He knows that I came to Reyhanlı, but he does not know where I stay. I cannot let him know, or I cannot hear from him either in current circumstances. I am in such a deadlock right now.

*\* This interview was made by Feyyat Özyazar in Reyhanlı district of Hatay on 6 December 2012.*

### **An Interview with Rima who came from Syria to Turkey and stay in Reyhanlı District of Hatay**

Rima, a dentist, was subjected to pressure due to the fact that his whole family is against the regime. As the pressure exerted increased, she first went to Jordan, then to the United Arab Emirates. Finally, through the Syrian-American Medical Society, she came to Reyhanlı.

**ORSAM: Could you tell us about yourself, and your life in Syria before the civil war?**

**Rima:** My name is Rima. I am from a Syrian village. My grandfather is known as one of the elders in the village. He is known for his hospitality, and thus his house was always full of guests. The problems of the village were always solved in the council of my grandfather.

One day, the security forces made a raid to the council, and they took some fifty people in the council into custody. All the members of our family were arrested. While investigating my grandfather, “where is your son Muhammad?” they constantly asked. My grandfather, on the other hand, told them that his son went to the province to visit his children. After blockading the house, some of the security forces came to our house in the province. I was seven years old back then. They arrested my father in front of my eyes. Nobody understood what happened. Furthermore, they expelled the children of my uncle in order to reach him. They wrapped a shackle around the neck of fifteen-year-old son of my uncle and made him walk on the streets of all around the village. Then the wife of my uncle was arrested as well. The children of my uncle were left all alone like orphans, without their parents. Their uncle took the children along with him. However, the security forces arrested their uncle as well.

My father stayed in prison without a trial for two years, then he was taken to court thanks





to a powerful person my mother had found. My father was on trial for hiding information about my uncle who was against the regime. But then, a law had been enacted. And in accordance with the aforesaid law, "information about the first degree relatives can be hidden"; thus the judge reached a verdict to release my father. However, my father stayed in prison for another year. Throughout his imprisonment, he had to struggle with lots of diseases. His only fault was the fact that his brother was against the regime.

Of course, after all that happened, people around started to stay away from us. Nobody even came to visit us. Those who visited us, on the other hand, were interrogated the following day. It was not even allowed to marry up with the girls in our family. A person who wanted to marry the daughter of my uncle was detained for three days. "Why did you choose this girl? Couldn't you find another one?" they asked him.

My father was lucky in order to be released before long. My other uncle, on the other

hand, stayed in prison for thirteen years. When he was released, he was all skin and bones, and he went through lots of diseases. He even lost his family. His daughter died, and his wife married another man. Because everybody thought he was dead.

Their third brother stayed in prison for seven years. After being released, he died of Alzheimer disease. And my fourth uncle was killed by the security forces.

Even the husbands of my aunts could not get away. We still do not know where the husband of my aunt is now. She, on the other hand, was fired from her job. Then she went blind from diabetes and hypertension. Although their son graduated ranking first from the department of philosophy, he could not be appointed to any public institution because of the decision of the government. All the lands of my grandfather were set on fire, and his all property was confiscated.

**ORSAM: Could you tell us about what you went through during the civil in Syria, and what brought you to Turkey?**



**Rima:** My father strived to raise the children of my uncle by keeping his shoulder to the wheel. Therefore, when the revolution started, my cousins took part in aid activities. By all means, all the young members of the family participated in the revolution, and as girls, we took part in the food aid activity. My brothers and cousins did not want to take part in the revolutionary council. They joined the Free Syrian Army.

As our house is located near the police station, we witnessed all armed conflicts. Everywhere turned into a blood bath. The bodies in terrible shapes were all around. Hence, we left our hometown. First we flew to Damascus and then to Amman. We stayed there for two and a half months. There were lots of pressure exerted on Jordan by Syria. Therefore, we were not welcomed there. They treated us very badly. When the King of Jordan warned that nobody would treat Syrians badly, the maltreatments towards us relatively decreased. In accordance with a decision taken, an obligation was imposed on all Syrians who migrated to Jordan to become registered in the commissioner for refugees. Those who registered their names in the commissioner were paid each 120 dinar. During that time, major storms broke out. All the tents were damaged as a result of the storm. I believe that the worst place for the refugees is Jordan. Although we are dentists, we could not find a job opportunity in Jordan. The specialists, on the other hand, started to work in emergency departments of hospitals.

In order to go to Dubai, we received an invitation by my sister. We immediately went to Dubai. The people in the United Arab Emirates treated Syrians very kindly. In fact, while wandering around, I carried the Syrian revolutionary flag on my shoulders. Nobody caused any trouble to us over there.

**ORSAM: How did you come to Turkey, and what are your observations here?**

**Rima:** As we always wanted to take part in the revolution, we got in touch with the Syrian-American Medical Society, and we were assigned to a duty for fifteen days in Reyhanlı district of Hatay. When we arrived in Reyhanlı, we started to feel like we came to Syria. There were Syrian families all around Reyhanlı. In fact, local families in Reyhanlı acted as if they were responsible for taking care of Syrian families. The Turkish people and government provided full support. I really appreciate the services provided in Reyhanlı district.

In hospitals, I saw patients in very severe conditions. The fact that most of them lost their hands or legs causes deep sorrow. Besides, most of these patients are children.

We hope that this war come to an end as soon as possible, and also we promise that we will not forget those who help us.

*\*This interview was conducted by Lina Zekeriya Saguj in Reyhanlı district of Hatay on 20 January 2013.*

**An Interview with Semah Seyyuk who fled from Syria to Turkey and moved in Reyhanlı district of Hatay**

“We know that Turkish people, Circassians in Reyhanlı and the Turkish government stand by us,” says teacher Semah Seyyuk.

**ORSAM:** Could you tell us about your life in Syria before and during the civil war, and what brought you to Turkey?

**Semah Seyyuk:** I am 40 years old. I graduated from university. I worked as primary

school teacher in Aleppo. I witnessed lots of things throughout my life in Syria. Especially in the primary school I worked at. Everybody in Syria knows that if someone is not a member of the Ba'ath Party, one cannot find a job or get a promotion in a public institution. Hence, members of the Ba'ath Party are in advantage in all sectors in the country.

When the revolution started in Aleppo, everybody became scared. On the other hand Syrians, including my family and I, also gathered strength to fight for and take our rights back from tyrants.

**ORSAM:** Why did you have to flee from Syria?

**Semah Seyyuk:** In Aleppo, at the end of each day we hoped that the next day would be better. We believed that we were close to victory and happiness. Whenever we saw the word 'Breaking News' on TV, we assumed that regime had finally collapsed. We wanted to experience victory in our country. We did not want to leave Syria. However, the day of victory has not arrived. The violence climbed. Food and medicine became less. Power black-outs, on the other hand, increased, as well as death toll and abduction. Stench of bodies and gun powder was everywhere. Despite all the negative conditions, we continued to fight and stay at home. But our children became sick. Therefore, we had to leave Syria. In Turkey, they call us "refugee". Nobody consents to it. My husband refused to leave home. He insisted on not going anywhere else but Syria.

We are a middle-class family. However, I come from a family engaged in politics. My father always strived for the Ba'ath regime to leave power throughout his life. When we were child, we did not understand what politics was. We listened to our father curiously. Our father always told us that the Ba'ath re-

gime is sectarian and tyrant, and that thieves smuggled all the assets of Syria abroad. He used to emphasize that one day we would be freed from tyranny. We were raised in this way. He was a good father. He raised us very well. However, unfortunately, my father passed away 6 months after the revolution started. My siblings and I are deeply in sorrow because he could not see the victory. Not only my father but also thousands of martyrs will not be able to witness the victory moment. We present our victory to my father and all martyrs.

**ORSAM:** What about your life in Turkey?

**Semah Seyyuk:** We are of Circassian origin. We knew that there were Circassians living in Reyhanlı. We hoped that they would guide us. When we arrived in Turkey, we were welcomed by Reyhanlı Circassian Association. They extended a hand to us. They provided us with accommodation and all supplies needed for free. Since we fled from Syria with a rush, we have a limited amount of cash. How can we maintain our life in Turkey with that money? Turkey is a very expensive country. How long will our money last? We do not have another financial resource. We are scared. We are afraid of winter, future, a needy lifestyle, starving, and becoming sick. We do not have enough money to buy medicine when we get sick. We do not want anything but to protect our children and make them feel like home. We do not want to be a burden on Turkey. Turkey has opened its borders to us. It has seen us through those hard times. We are thankful. But we've been listening to plenty of promises. We want the Turkish government to issue residence and work permit for us to work, also to provide employment and to provide education for our children. Turkey is very kind and merciful to us. God has mercy on us. We know that Turkish people, Circassians in Reyhanlı and the Turkish government

stand by us. I would like to extend my thanks for your help and support. I entreat God to bring us victory and our country back to us as soon as possible.

*\*This interview was conducted by Lina Zekeriya Saguj in Reyhanlı district of Hatay on December 14<sup>th</sup>, 2012.*

### **An Interview with Nur who fled from Syria to Turkey and moved in Reyhanlı district of Hatay**

Nur who works as a nurse came to Turkey after she was injured in an attack.

**ORSAM:** Could you tell us about yourself?

**Nur:** My name is Nur. I am 32 years old. I am married and have a daughter. I worked as a nurse in a Heart Health Center. I am an Alawite Arab.

**ORSAM:** Could you tell us about your life in Syria before and during the civil war, and what brought you to Turkey?

**Nur:** I was an anti-regime activist before the revolution. But when the regime used force against the students who staged demonstrations, we decided not to participate in the revolution. We did not show our reaction and did not have chance to take part in the protests since we were public servants. Because we always heard that arrest warrants were issued for doctors and nurses.

When the revolution started in Aleppo, the Heart Health Center stopped operating. Everybody was in a state of fear. Nobody came to Aleppo for fear of being arrested. In fact, the number of patients was decreasing with each passing day. We had to go to work in order not to be fired. We worked under difficult conditions before the Heart Health Center was closed. Water, power and fuel problem





prevailed. Generators worked for 24 hours a day.

We asked the manager to receive emergency cases and injured to the Heart Health Center. Our request was rejected. The manager decided not to do anything until an official notice.

We began to cooperate with some refugees, and provided them with medicine and health service. Then we went from district to district to give health service. Finally, I settled in a school and started to give health service. Those areas were frequently controlled by the regime forces. However, they were not suspicious of me. Meanwhile I continued to treat those participating in revolution. Two months later when some pro-regime supporters began to disturb me and my friends, we had to leave the school.

Afterwards, we headed towards rebel zones, and decided to continue to offer health service there. We provided people in need with food and medicine aid.

On January 31<sup>st</sup>, 2012 a festival was organized in Al-Bab to entertain children. People from each ethnic group and almost all groups from Syria attended the festival.

Some 200 children had fun, drew pictures, and sang songs. Some friends and I staged a demonstration outside the hall to protest the regime. Meanwhile a jet was flying over us. We decided to leave half an hour later. After we walked 200 meters away, 2 missiles targeted us. The first one did not blow up. When the other one exploded, we did not even understand what was going on. People around me were lying down with severe injuries. My leg started bleeding as well.

My friends and I were taken to a hospital nearby. The bone under my knee had been

broken during the attack. It was supposed to be operated as soon as possible. They decided to transfer me to Turkey as they were worried about possible adverse effects. An ambulance was provided. I was transferred to Reyhanlı State Hospital.

**ORSAM:** What have you experienced in Turkey?

**Nur:** When I was taken to Reyhanlı State Hospital, nobody asked me which sect I was affiliated to. I did not tell anyone either.

When I was about to be discharged from hospital, my friends told me that I should just say I was from Salmiye district. I did not feel necessity for hiding my identity in Syria. Because everybody knew very well who I was. But I saw that Syrian people in Reyhanlı did not feel well of Alawites. Moreover, some of them asserted that Alawites always had fun whenever the regime forces attacked on Sunnis. Or they alleged that Alawites always took sides with the regime before the revolution, and that they collected reports and information on Sunnis. My response to those allegations is that all Alawites are by no means the same, and there are also Sunnis among Shabihis. They agreed with me. Still, they always insulted Alawites.

I am Alawite, and married to a Sunni. Also my brother is married to a Sunni woman. We did not go through any sectarian problems from either side of families. In fact, a brother of my husband is a fundamentalist. But this situation has never posed a problem between families. As a matter of fact, although we were Alawite and against the regime, there were also pro-regime supporters among us. We always argued but we also knew where to stop it. After all, we were friends. In Syria, we lived together as a whole.

Sometimes I want to reveal my identity. But I am afraid of losing my friends and their treating me as if I were a spy. So, I hide my identity due to those concerns.

My treatment will be over soon. My friends rented an apartment in Antakya. I do not want to be a burden to anyone. I cannot work as a nurse anymore because of my current medical condition. So, I will start to look for a job to work in an office.

*\*This interview was conducted by Lina Zekeriya Saguj in Reyhanlı district of Hatay on December 5<sup>th</sup>, 2012.*

### **An Interview with Meryem who fled from Syria to Turkey and moved in Reyhanlı district of Hatay**

Meryem, who is a womenswear wholesaler, witnessed conflicts between the Free Syrian Army and pro-government forces in Aleppo; and fled to Turkey for their safety.

**ORSAM:** Could you introduce yourself?

**Meryem:** I lived with my mother in Aleppo until 2012. I graduated from the Department of English Language and Literature. I had a womenswear shop in Aleppo.

**ORSAM:** When and how did you come to Turkey?

**Meryem:** Towards the end of October 2012, my mother and I headed towards Bab al-Hawa Border Crossing. However, a checkpoint stopped us and said that there was 'no need to leave the country since things started to settle down'. Then we reached the border through the village roads.

**ORSAM:** Why did you leave Syria and Aleppo?

**Meryem:** As a matter of fact, our neighborhood in Aleppo was less damaged than any other districts. However, the idea of not even going outside for fear of being subjected to psychological pressures, coming under fire of snipers and bombardments led us to move in safer districts with higher living standards.

I was a womenswear wholesaler in commercial district of Aleppo. Until the first day of Bairam, our district was considered safe. But a conflict broke out between the Free Syrian Army and the pro-government forces, and our shops were damaged.

I wanted to carry the products to the stores in somewhere else. But pro-regime supporters opposed. Thus, I went back for three times and witnessed different incidents.

When I first went to the area, I came under fire of snipers; God helped me and I narrowly escaped from death. The second time I went back, I saw bodies of those from Free Syrian Army in front of the shop. There were signs of torture on the bodies, and it seemed like bodies had been dragged along the streets. Pro-regime supporters gave me a weird look and I hastily got into my shop.

A half an hour later I heard some voices outside the shop. When I looked outside, I saw the regime supporters caught an opponent boy and started to beat him, then they took him to a corner and executed the boy. They already started to drag the body along the street.

I was cut to the heart. I started look for something to cover the body. I could not find anything else but a prayer rug. I attempted to go

outside, but “Do you know what they will do to you?” said my employee. And I said, “Don’t tell me they will kill me! That would be an honor to die a martyr”. “What about your family? They will be tortured and at the end they will be killed as well,” he said. Then I came to my senses, and I stepped back.

A half an hour later, we heard some other voices. But this time it was a woman’s voice. I saw Assad Regime Forces along with the Syria TV channel and a woman getting ready for broadcast. The woman started to curse the regime and the broadcast lasted for another 5 minutes. At the end of the broadcast, they chanted pro-Assad slogans. Then they left.

I could not do anything that day; not for fear, but because I could not pull myself together after what I saw. On the third time, I sent a group of boys to the shop and carried all products to the store of my friend in a village in Aleppo. But a week before I came to Reyhanlı, I heard that everything in the store had been burnt away and I had lost everything.

**ORSAM:** How did you find it here when you arrived in Turkey?

**Meryem:** I do not know how to express my feelings. I am a Syrian Circassian. Circassians in Turkey who live in Reyhanlı welcomed me and my family. Uğur Pihava, leader of the Reyhanlı Circassian Association personally came to Bab-al Hawa Border Crossing to welcome us. Circassian families in Reyhanlı opened their doors to us. They met our needs. They shared their food with us. We do not know how to express our thanks to them. We are thankful for their generosity and hospitality.

Still I miss my siblings, friends and home. I am worried about the future of Syria. We live in fear. We are afraid of everything. I am afraid of things that could happen to my family in the future.

**ORSAM:** Have you encountered any problem in Turkey?

**Meryem:** I have not faced much problem since I have not been living here in Turkey for a long time. I have just begun to explore here. I witnessed something the other day that affected me quite deeply. A Circassian friend from Turkey staged a sit-in on his own to grab attention to the problems of Syrian Circas-



sian. In his protest, he called for an end to oppression on the Syrian people and Circassians' turning back to their country. I also wanted to participate in this sit-in. But I couldn't. I was afraid of being arrested and repatriated.

It still feels like a storm inside of me. First of all the sense of belonging of that sit-in, then how that protest made us feel strong gave me the strength to struggle. But I realized that participating in that sit-in would not make my voice heard.

Why couldn't I express my opinion? Why would I be arrested if I said I want my rights and I want to go back to my country? I thought I would be able to claim my rights out loud when I came to Turkey, but I could not say anything. I could only express the tyranny of the regime against the Syrian Circassians through my tears. Because I cannot be arrested for shedding tears, but I might be arrested due to other actions.

Turkey will reach the level of democracy and freedom that everybody, including us, hopes to have. God bless them that they welcomed us in their country.

*\*This interview was conducted by Lina Zekeriya Saguj in Reyhanlı district of Hatay on November 28<sup>th</sup>, 2012.*

### **An Interview with Semah, who fled from Syria to Turkey and moved in Reyhanlı district of Hatay**

"If you live in an area under the control of Assad forces, you are under a constant risk of being caught and executed," says a Syrian Circassian Semah.

**ORSAM:** First of all, could you tell us about yourself?

**Semah:** I am a mother. I have two sons and two daughters. My elder son lives in the U.S., and other three of them are in Aleppo right now.

**ORSAM:** What could you tell us about your life in Syria?

**Semah:** A couple of months ago, Aleppo became a city where constant conflicts, massacres and bombardments prevailed. Today, we are caught in a trap, and we have nowhere to go. We live in a district under the control of Assad regime in Aleppo.

**ORSAM:** What is your ethnicity or sect?

**Semah:** We are Circassians, and Circassians are a minority group of some quarter million population in Syria. The men of Bashar arrest every men passing by on suspicion of being opponent. Even if he is just someone out to buy bread for his family. They put people in prison to terrorize them only based on suspicions, and we cannot hear from them anymore. People who are abducted are mostly severely tortured and killed. There are hundreds of civilian people killed and hands tied on their back. If you live in an area under the control of Assad forces, you are under a constant risk of being caught and executed. If you live in an area under the control of opponents, on the other hand, you can be a target of missiles and bombardments of Bashar forces. There is no safe place.

**ORSAM:** Could you tell us about the difficulties that civilians and especially women go through in Syria?

**Semah:** My daughters and I are constantly subject to harassment by the Assad army and militia forces in this war. We do our best to stay away from convoys, checkpoints and military bases. I think that the civil war between



Bashar Assad and opponents will not come to an end in near future.

I miss my son in the U.S., and my children miss their brother. I am glad that my son is away from this sectarian conflict that the Syrian people are subject to. Every day, we wake up with the fear of dying, like most of the Syrians the other day.

If someone stayed in Syria, that would be a suicide. That person would be arrested by the regime forces. He/she has no chance of survival. They would be tortured until they confess. And they would be killed at the end. Because the regime forces would not believe that they have nothing to confess. It is not safe to stay in Syria for anybody. If someone had a chance to choose the place of arrestment, it is better to be put in jail somewhere that he is treated like human, not like an animal.

**ORSAM:** Considering the future of Syria, what are your plans for yourself and your family?

**Semah:** We want to go back to our homeland, North Caucasus. Because if we stayed in Syria, we would die.

*\*This interview was conducted by Lina Zekeriya Saguj in Reyhanlı district of Hatay on December 14<sup>th</sup>, 2012.*

### **An Interview with Sumeyya Hamdi Muvaffak who fled from Syria to Reyhanlı district of Hatay**

Sumeyya Hamdi Muvaffak lost her husband and home, and fled to Turkey due to the unhealthy environment of tent cities in Syria.



**ORSAM:** Could you tell us about yourself?

**Sumeyya Hamdi Muvaffak:** I come from Idlib province of Syria. I have three children. I lost my husband. Our house was destroyed. I have no income except my retirement pension. It is 18 thousand SYP (350 TL).

**ORSAM:** What about your life in Turkey?

**Sumeyya Hamdi Muvaffak:** Here, we rented an apartment with another family. As two families, we live in a common house. We do not have enough amount of furniture, mattresses in the apartment. We do not have kitchen utensils except for a small gas tank, a saucepan, teapot and three tea glasses. My home is gone, also I lost my husband. My whole world came crashing down around me. Even if I go back to Syria, I do not have an income other than my retirement pension. On the other hand, if I stay here I am in need of people around me. I applied for financial aid from Syrian aid organizations and also from benefit societies in Turkey. But I could not receive any aid. The Syrian army still seizes in Idlib province, Syria. Jaish al-Hur seizes the control of tent cities only in villages and towns. Therefore, transportation became completely difficult. We tried to stay in tent cities in Syria for a while, but we could not do it. There are all kinds of circumstances that make it harder to live. Neither a decent toilette nor shower, or food. People die of diseases. There is no organization that collect garbage and remove them away from tents. Lots of families are infested with lice. Therefore, I could not stay in tent cities or camps in Syria.

*\*This interview was conducted by Feyyat Özyazar in Reyhanlı district of Hatay on March 15<sup>th</sup>, 2013.*

## **An Interview with Suhad, who fled from Syria to Reyhanlı district of Hatay**

Losing her relatives due to the bombardment and air strike of the regime, Suhad wants to go back to Syria and live in peace.

**ORSAM:** Could you introduce yourself?

**Suhad:** My name is Suhad. I am 30 years old. I graduated from the Faculty of Education. When the revolution started, I was so glad to hear the news related to revolution on TV and around, because the regime had made the life miserable for the people for 40 years. I believed that this regime would be toppled down within couple of months, and a new period would start based on respect and rights. But after a while, I woke from a dream and realized that the regime would not collapse in a couple of years or with a couple of martyrs, that would cost lots of lives, martyrs.

**ORSAM:** Could you tell us what happened?

**Suhad:** I live in Aleppo. The demonstrations in Aleppo started to be staged in Salahedin, Sayf al-Dawla and Firdaws districts. At the end, the Free Syrian Army started to seize those districts, and the regime launched bombardments. Therefore, lots of people had to leave their places and most of them moved into schools or dormitories.

**ORSAM:** Was there somebody from your family or relatives among them?

**Suhad:** During those times, we went through many troubles. Regime's bombardment and air strike started at around 22.00 p.m and lasted until 03.00 a.m. Hence, we could not hear from our relatives. Daughter of my uncle was shot on her head in an air strike, my mother and one of the neighbors washed the body. My uncle had brought a bag, and we put

the body in it. My aunt was severely injured and she was brought in Turkey but she passed away a couple of days later. I visited my family 2 months later, and I especially wanted to see my uncle. Of course it was terrible, blood was everywhere, my uncle lived in this environment and he was in deep sorrow.

**ORSAM:** Why and when did you flee from Syria?

**Suhad:** I lived in my neighborhood before fleeing from Syria. We lived in a Kurdish district, and the Free Syrian Army seized the control of those areas. Once the Free Syrian Army made a raid on my house and attempted to steal our LCD TV, they accused my husband of working for Shabiha, and they did not even know his name. Furthermore, a bomb was dropped on our garage, and our car was damaged to a great extent. Everyone in our building gathered on the second floor, because it was the only area that was not targeted. Thus we stayed there for 3 days. Then someone from Cephethun Nusra helped us and we could flee from the area and took shelter in Reyhanlı district of Turkey. Of course, we do not know what happened there afterwards, and besides my husband had to quit his job. Because they started to abduct workers. I just hope to go back to my country and live in peace. We are fed up with the civil war, power blackouts, water cuts and hearing bad news. In addition to this, I trust neither Western nor other countries. As Sheikh Muaz Al-Khatib says, "Don't trust anyone, but only Allah," I only trust Allah.

*\*This interview was conducted by Lina Zakeriya Saguj in Reyhanlı district of Hatay on December 14<sup>th</sup>, 2012.*

**An Interview with Emire Fetura and Hatun al Jasim who fled from Homs, Syria**

Emire Fetura and Hatun al Jasim lost their husbands during the civil war and fled to Turkey under difficult conditions.

**ORSAM:** Could you tell us about yourselves in brief?

**Emire Fetura:** I lived in Homs district of Syria. When my husband was killed during the civil war, my 4 children and I went through hard times.

**Hatun al Jasim:** I lived in Homs district of Syria. My husband was killed during the civil war and I have 3 children.

**ORSAM:** Could you tell us about your life in Syria before and during the civil war, and what brought you to Turkey?

**Emire Fetura and Hatun al Jasim:** We were neighbors in Homs. Hatun's husband worked in bakery, and my husband Talat was vegetable and fruit seller in bazaar. Our houses were destroyed during the civil war and we fled from the city.

Those who had vehicles and were rather in good shape from Homs fled to Lebanon, which is closer to the area. On the other hand, those who did not have vehicle or enough money had to stay outdoors, up in the hills, woods and cave-like areas.

We were hungry for days, sometimes we drank rain water, and sometimes we had to wash ourselves between two rocks. We collected some branches and pieces of wood in the desert for fire to get warm, and we could only boil water in a can since we did not have any kitchen utensils. We had two blankets and several thick cardigans. We passed a couple of weeks like that. Some of us went to bring some food from other villages, settlements and from those who set up camp in desert. We could hardly arrive in rural Idlib after be-

ing kept waiting in barricades on the road. After arriving in border town of Sarmada, we crossed the Turkish border along with some other families.

Along with other Syrians, with whom we fled to Reyhanlı district of Hatay, we stayed in a mosque courtyard in the first place and then we could finally find decent food and bed with the help of people around us. Then we registered and started to get ready to head towards tent cities.

*\*This interview was conducted by Feyyat Özyazar in Reyhanlı district of Hatay on April 30<sup>th</sup>, 2013.*

#### **An Interview with Nahide Maddab al Hazzani who fled from Syria to Reyhanlı district of Hatay**

Nahide Maddab al Hazzani, who is a wife of a martyr Colonel, crossed barricades on the roads and fled to Turkey by bribing controllers.

**ORSAM:** Could you briefly tell us about yourself?

**Nahide Maddab al Hazzani:** I lived in Al Meydan neighborhood of Aleppo, Syria. I am 55 years old, and mother of 3 children. My husband was an officer with Amid (Colonel) rank. He was martyred as a result of an accident in Lebanon. I receive widow's pension. My elder daughter Nasra is married. My two sons have recently completed their military services. I received 25 thousand SYP widow's pension. We have our own house. My children sold clothes at a small shop in the neighborhood. They could not pursue a career.

Our neighborhood was seized by the army of regime for a while, and also by Jaish al-Hur for a while, at least the streets around us. The districts in Aleppo are quite big. Population of some districts has almost the same population of a town. We cannot hear from some streets, neighborhoods.

**ORSAM:** What did you go through during the civil war?





**Nahide Maddab al Hazzani:** Our neighborhood was bombarded by missiles, of which I do not even know the name. Some said Scud-1, some other Scud-2. Also barrel bombs, malodorous bombs etc., namely it is a living hell. Snipers are deployed in certain parts of the streets. Even people carrying a bag are shot. People bringing home the bread or food are suspected and shot.

Without turning on the lights at nights, we can go to markets to buy some food through the streets we know well. When we find food, we can buy it only at high prices. Some sell their products at arbitrary prices. There is no such thing as control in Aleppo. Furthermore, some people skin the animal carcasses and sell the meat to the people as if they were newly butchered. So, this part of Aleppo is as I mentioned above.

My married daughter, my son-in-law, two grandchildren, my two sons and I fled from Aleppo. We could only bring our clothes with us. Everything else is back at home. We crossed the barricades, bribed the control-

lers, and hardly arrived in Dene district of Idlib. Then to Sarmada district. And finally to Turkish border.

Currently, we stay in Reyhanlı. My children work if they can find daily jobs. I go to Aleppo on my own to draw my pension. The transportation fee was 300 SYP before. Now, on the other hand, it is at least 6 thousand SYP. Because vehicle owners also have to bribe on the road between Aleppo and Reyhanlı.

*\* This interview was conducted by Feyyat Özyazar in Reyhanlı district of Hatay on April 30<sup>th</sup>, 2013.*

#### **An Interview with Nayle Hammadi who fled from Idlib province of Syria to Reyhanlı district of Hatay**

Nayle Hammadi and her family took shelter in Turkey after their house was destroyed during the civil war. Her husband was arrested when he went back to Syria to draw his pension.



**ORSAM:** Could you introduce yourself?

**Nayle Hammadi:** I am from Muarra district of Idlib province, Syria. I have 6 children, and I am 52 years old. My husband is retired. He was arrested by the Army, and is still in prison.

**ORSAM:** Could you tell us what you went through during the civil war, how you fled to Turkey and the process that your husband was arrested?

**Nayle Hammadi:** Our house was partially destroyed during the attacks in the civil war. We left everything behind and fled to Turkey. My husband went from Turkey to Idlib, Syria to draw his pension for a couple of months. In January, when he went to draw his pension again, he was arrested. Now, we are all alone with my children in Turkey. One of my children is married, I have a grandchild. They are working. We do not have a financial problem. My husband's retirement pension is 20 thousand SYP (approximately 310 TL). Somebody gave his name to the regime's army. They slandered him. He was accused of helping Jaish al-Hur, providing them with weapons and various supplies. And it is all because our villagers denounced him, and thus he is in prison. We live in such an environment that who is in cooperation with whom is not known. We see people who even reveal people in their family just for money. The environment of trust is totally over.

**ORSAM:** Have you heard from your husband in prison?

**Nayle Hammadi:** I could not stand anymore and went to visit my husband. What my husband told me and what I saw was a real tragedy and cruelty. He told me that they stayed 45 people in a single cell, they were not even able to sleep, that there was a single toilette

and they could not take a shower due to the lack of water, and thus they stink. It is not allowed to take anything inside, neither blanket nor food, or cigarette. He says that sometimes they gave food and sometimes did not. He looked shaggy. He wore neither slippers, not socks, or pyjamas. He only wore his Galabiya (robe). He is kept there without any evidence, document, only based on somebody's statement. There is such a system in Syria.

*\* This interview was conducted by Feyyat Özyazar in Reyhanlı district of Hatay on April 30<sup>th</sup>, 2013.*

#### **An Interview with Radiye Nahsan Nammudi who fled from Idlib province of Syria to Reyhanlı district of Hatay**

When Radiye Nahsan Nammudi's neighborhood was bombed, they had to leave their home.

**ORSAM:** Could you introduce yourself in brief?

**Radiye Nahsan Nammudi:** I am from Idlib province of Syria. I am 50 years old. We came here together with my husband Mustafa (with a broken leg), my two sons, daughter-in-laws, and 9 grandchildren. My sons found a job and started to work. Yet, we are in financial difficulty as we have to pay rent, electricity and water bills.

**ORSAM:** Could you tell us about what you went through during the civil war, and what brought you here in Turkey?

**Radiye Nahsan Nammudi:** The Syrian town Sermin was bombed due to the fact that it is located near the military troops of the regime's army. We had to leave our home. I asked aid

societies and philanthropists in Reyhanlı for help. Frankly, I begged for help.

My husband is sick abed, he always needs bandages. He needs decent food for a healthy diet. Children have not tasted milk for 6 months. We cannot eat meat, chicken etc. except for certain food.

Most of the people from my village are in Reyhanlı, and some of them stay in tent cities. We did not apply for the tent city in the first place. And now we cannot go, because there is no place left. We had a field, and a grinding mill back in our village. We could neither harvest crop nor can we cultivate this year. Agricultural production is at a standstill. None of the farmers can go to their fields and cultivate. We told the villagers nearby that we want to rent out our field. But there is nobody interested. Our grinding machine is in

the village. We did not have the opportunity to take it to somewhere else. But if we could bring it to a border town, maybe we could rent the machine and have an income. That would work maximum another month after the harvest.

I heard that Arab countries have been sending aid for Syrians who are in need. Financial aid is also provided: 200 dollars per family. We could receive it only once. Then we could not receive any other financial aid.

*\* This interview was conducted by Feyyat Özyazar in Reyhanlı district of Hatay on April 30<sup>th</sup>, 2013.*

**An Interview with Safaya Maghribiy who fled from Hama district of Syria**



"I saw a bombardment in Hama. I witnessed a tyranny, a barrel bombardment in bread queue," says Safaya Maghribiy.

**ORSAM:** Could you tell us about yourself?

**Safaya Maghribiy:** I am from Sehilelghab district of Hama, Syria. I am a mother of 2 children, and widow. I live in a tent city.

**ORSAM:** What did you go through during the civil war?

**Safaya Maghribiy:** My husband was a police officer. He worked in various districts of Syria. He was lastly assigned to Damascus. When the civil war broke out, he was killed in the bombardment and conflicts launched by the students at university in Damascus. The widows-orphans pension I receive is 18 thousand SYP. I do not have my own house. I went back to the family home of my husband in Hama. I stayed there for a while, but bombardments were launched when Jaish al-Hur was deployed there because it is located in a rural area. The village was completely evacuated. My father-in-law, brother-in-law and I had to fled to Turkey. We have been here for six months. We live in the tent city in Islahiye.

I cannot go back and draw my pension. Nobody can provide me with financial aid. Thank God, we are provided with food and all kind of needs in the tent city.

I witnessed the bombardment in Hama. I saw people whose legs and arms were cut. Also people whose faces were devastated. I witnessed a tyranny, a barrel bombardment in bread queue. We were isolated for months. It was a miracle for us to fled from our district to Idlib. Those who had vehicles could escape, but it was hard for them as well. Because bombshells were dropped on all vehicles. After walking through villages, settlements and

woods, firstly we arrived in Idlib, then to the border region. We stayed in a tent city near Sermada. Then we passed to Atma. Then we could finally crossed the Turkish border.

My children came down with starvation, cold. We drank rain water. We heated water in cans. And we covered ourselves with rush mats since we could not find any blanket. We went through so many troubles while fleeing from Hama to Turkey.

*\* This interview was conducted by Feyyat Özyazar in Reyhanlı district of Hatay on April 30<sup>th</sup>, 2013.*

### **An Interview with Azize Fadıl al Naccar who fled from Syria to Reyhanlı district of Hatay**

Azize Fadıl al Naccar fled from Syria to Turkey under difficult conditions. Currently, she has been working as a cook and janitor in a health center.

**ORSAM:** Could you tell us about yourself?

**Azize Fadıl al Naccar:** I live in Aleppo, Syria. I am widowed, and I have 3 children.

**ORSAM:** Could you tell us about your life in Syria before and during the civil war, and what brought you to Turkey?

**Azize Fadıl al Naccar:** Poor and widow women in Syria do not have social security. They are just provided with some 5 thousand SYP (75 TL) financial aid. In addition, an aid foundation provided my children with 3 thousand SYP per month for their education. I was the poorest and neediest widow woman in our neighborhood. I had a two-room wooden house. I lost my husband years

ago. He was sick for years, and he died in his bed. When the civil war broke out, our house burned down after the bombardments on the neighborhood, and we had neither furniture nor house left at the end. Thank God, my children were at school and I was outside by chance. It all happened in broad daylight. There was a small mosque in the neighborhood which had been built by tradesmen in order not to have to go to the mosque far from the neighborhood in prayer times. They placed me there. We slept on rugs, and benefactors brought us blankets. I went outside during prayer times, and other times I used the small mosque as my home. When I also started to clean the place, nobody told me anything. Since everything got expensive after the events in Aleppo, the widow's pension I receive and financial aid provided by benefactors were no more enough. I could only afford to buy bread for a month with that money. I could not buy anything else. We did not have security of life, and when children could not go to school for fear as well, I decided to flee from Aleppo. With the help of a family who

were also migrating, I arrived in Dene district of Idlib. It seemed like there was not much bombardment or noise in Dene district. But people sure were afraid and worried. It was expensive to live also in Dene, and I had no money left. I stayed there for a couple of days without eating much, and then came to the border town. I aimed at keeping my children away from bombardment and hunger. We sometimes ate bread, and sometimes dried fruit I found around. Finally, we were able to cross the Turkish border. Some Syrian refugees I already knew from Syria helped me in Reyhanlı district of Hatay, while aid organizations provided us with food, clothing and accommodation as well as some financial aid. I found a job, I've been working as a cook and janitor in a health center. At least we are safe here, and my children can eat some decent food.

*\* This interview was conducted by Feyyat Özyazar in Reyhanlı district of Hatay on April 30<sup>th</sup>, 2013.*



## ORSAM REPORTS

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