

INTERVIEWS WITH SYRIAN WOMEN IN REYHANLI - V

REYHANLI'DA SURİYELİ KADINLAR İLE SÖYLEŞİLER - V

حوار مع مواطنات سوريات في ریحانلي (٥)

ORTADOĞU STRATEJİK ARAŞTIRMALAR MERKEZİ
CENTER FOR MIDDLE EASTERN STRATEGIC STUDIES

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 has been working 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.

PRESENTATION

The terrorist attack which took place in Reyhanlı was a tragic indicator that the instability prevailing in neighboring countries could easily spread into Turkey. A similar tragic scene, which we are used to see in Iraq following the 2003 invasion and in Syria following the 2011 uprising, took place in Reyhanlı, Hatay. Official statements and a general outlook in the Turkish public opinion holds the Syrian regime responsible for the attack. Accordingly, it is possible to read the action as the Assad regime's attempt to punish Turkey for its Syria policy and to expand the battle field by drawing Turkey into the conflict.

The event affected Turkey deeply. However, the locals, the residents of Reyhanlı, were directly exposed to violence. This situation further deepened polarizations in the region, which is already directly affected due to its bordering Syria, and where a tense atmosphere prevails. Reyhanlı has been hosting as many Syrian refugees as its total population since the beginning of the events in Syria. Which also radically affects the social, economic and security in the region. As ORSAM, we have carried out a great number of interviews with Syrian refugees who have settled in Reyhanlı since the beginning of the events in Syria, and listened to their life stories. We thought we should bring these interviews that we've been publishing on ORSAM's website to the attention of the Turkish public opinion once again after the recent event in Reyhanlı. We present this study, in which we gathered the aforesaid interviews, to the attention of the public opinion by hoping that it helps understanding the situation in Reyhanlı and contributing to the outlook on Syrian refugees; and we extend our thanks to everyone who contributed to the study.

Hasan Kanbolat
ORSAM Director

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By: Feyyat Özyazar
ORSAM Advisory

INTERVIEWS WITH SYRIAN WOMEN IN REYHANLI - V

An Interview with Bedriye al Faisal who went to the refugee camp near Atme and returned to Reyhanlı Bedriye al Faisal, came to Turkey because of the unsanitary tent cities in Syria.

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

Bedriye al Faisal: I am from the district of Maarrat al-Nu'man under Idlib Governorate, Syria. We are a family with three children. We came to Turkey in April 2012. We lived in Reyhanlı for a long time. However, we had to cross the border back to Syria, the tent city near Atme, since we could not afford to pay the rent and could not find a job. We just wanted to get rid of paying rent and electricity, water bills.

The tent city near Atme is provided for all Syrians who are poor, unemployed and in misery. A place, where people have to wait in line for toilet and shower. Most families cook their food on an oven that they made with wood and wastes. Using a bottled gas or electric oven is considered luxury there. Sometimes bread is distributed to us, and biscuits to children. However, people become miserable due to living in a tent on a hill in hot weather. While even us, the adults, couldn't stand it, children were considerably suffering from the heat.

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

Bedriye al Faisal: In the tent city there are people from all across Syria. People from Homs, Hama, Aleppo and Idlib; and those who lost their limbs and have injuries in various parts of their bodies. Medical crews visited tents. Desert hospital was established, provide health service to people. However, it is so crowded that there are problems in every department. This being the case, we crossed the border back to Turkey and returned to Reyhanlı. The apartment we stayed for a long time had been leased to someone else. We stayed with some Syrian friends for a while. And finally we found a two-room apartment. We can find temporary jobs, if occasionally, as it is an agricultural season. However, I am worried for afterwards.

**This interview was conducted by Feyyat Özyazar in Reyhanlı district of Hatay on June 26, 2013.*

An Interview with Hindiyye Ali Sabri who crossed the border from Syria into Turkey and settled in Reyhanlı district of Hatay

Hindiyye Ali Sabri's husband was injured as a result of the bombing in their neighborhood, and now she works in a packing-house with her daughter-in-law in Turkey.

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

Hindiyye Ali Sabri: We come from Al Nerab in Idlib Province, Syria. I am a 45 year-old mother with 4 children. We live together with my husband Vahed, and our eldest son Abdulsettar who is married.

ORSAM: What are the reasons that bring you to Turkey from Syria?

Hindiyye Ali Sabri: My husband was injured eight months ago as a result of a bombing attack on our neighborhood. He was injured in his arm and waist. After our house was partially destroyed, we had to migrate due to lack of shelter.

ORSAM: What are you doing for living?

Hindiyye Ali Sabri: We have been staying in a rent apartment for some seven months. My

daughter-in-law and I have been working in a packing-house owned by a merchant who is partner with a Syrian. We work from 8 am to 6 pm everyday. They promised they would give 20 TL to laborers. As 25 laborers, we live in this warehouse. The food products arrive in sacks and big packages. We pack them in two-kg packages and put them in small paper boxes in line with the instructions. The food products that arrive are generally rice, sugar, bulgur, pasta, lentil and flour. These packages are sent to Syria and distributed to people who are in poverty, misery and stuck in there.

ORSAM: Have you faced any negative situation?

Hindiyye Ali Sabri: In the beginning, our salaries were paid regularly each month. We worked without skipping since we were so happy to find a job. However, we cannot receive our daily wages or monthly salaries for



two months. They asserted that their bosses did not send cash, and finally the warehouse was closed. Those who hired us disappeared. The two-month wages of all laborers went down the drain. We are unemployed and needy right now.

ORSAM: What are your opinions regarding the current situation over there?

Hindiyye Ali Sabri: This is what a Syrian businessman has done to his citizens. Syria remained on the verge of a civil war because of such people. Those who like to exploit each other.

ORSAM: Are you planning to return?

Hindiyye Ali Sabri: It is not possible. Our neighborhood is still under bombing attack. Especially after the recent rumors that Idlib will be hit by chemical attack, those who are from Idlib and who live nearby cannot dare to return Syria.

**This interview was conducted by Feyyat Özyazar in Reyhanlı district of Hatay on June 26, 2013.*

An Interview with Neval Maghrubi Al Affan who crossed the border from Syria into Turkey and settled in Reyhanlı district of Hatay

“My children are having nightmares. They are scared to even go outside, they are not going to school, cannot eat well and their health has failed,” says Neval Maghrubi Al Affan.

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

Neval Maghrubi Al Affan: I come from An-edan in Aleppo, Syria. My husband Rashed is

engaged in trade, and we have two sons and a daughter. We migrated illegally to Reyhanlı six months ago.

ORSAM: What were the developments that made you leave your hometown?

Neval Maghrubi Al Affan: After our neighborhood was hit by jets and barrel bombs, tank and artillery shootings were launched. A great number of houses were destroyed, and just as many workplaces were hit and we were surrounded by destroyed buildings. People were screaming in despair. We could not even take extra clothes from the house. Even our money was trapped under ruins. My husband insisted on not leaving Aleppo, and moving into somewhere else in the city. However, we eventually left Aleppo in despair with children crying and by knowing that the violence would continue.

ORSAM: What did you witness during the civil war when you were there?

Neval Maghrubi Al Affan: The southern, western and partially northern Aleppo was seized by the regime's army. People had find a way out only through the eastern and partially northern parts of the city, and everyone was fleeing. Cars were full of injured people. Some of them did not even leave their acquaintances during the bombing attack, and drove them to somewhere else calmer where they could bury them. Even water and bread was a blessing for us and everyone else who fled from the region. Nevertheless, everyone was hungry and in despair.

ORSAM: How do you make your living here? Could you tell us about your life in Reyhanlı?

Neval Maghrubi Al Affan: We work here in Reyhanlı. Also we receive aid from aid organi-

zations. But what we experienced was unforgettable. My children are having nightmares. They are scared to even go outside, not going to school, cannot eat well and their health has failed. We never returned to Aleppo. We only ask those who go to Aleppo about what the life is like over there. We hear that life is quite expensive, and there is neither production nor trade in Aleppo right now. People are stuck in a certain place and get back to a single shelter before it gets dark. No water, no electricity, no TV, and social life is over in the city.

**This interview was conducted by Feyyat Özyazar in Reyhanlı district of Hatay on June 26, 2013.*

An Interview with Nucud Haidar who crossed the border from Syria into Turkey and settled in Reyhanlı district of Hatay

Nucud Haidar lives with her husband, son, daughter-in-law and three grandchildren.

ORSAM: Could you tell us about your life before the civil war in Syria, your experiences during the civil war and your current life?

Nucud Haidar: I am from Rif Aleppo, Syria. I am 57 years old. My husband cannot even go out due to his health problems. We live together with my son, daughter-in-law, and my grandchildren. We owned a 5-decare orchard. We cultivated vegetable, and sold the crops to Aleppo during the harvest season. My husband earned our living by working as a peddler in neighboring villages. We have two daughters and a son. Our daughters got married and left home. We started to live with my son and my daughter-in-law. My son is a laborer just like my husband. After peddling from village to village for years, my husband's health has failed. Now, he cannot even go outside the house.

Our neighborhood in Syria was bombed. The roads were blocked. We had no security of life and property anymore. My son suggested to move to Turkey. And we packed our things and came here. My son goes to work as an agricultural laborer early in the morning. His daily wage is 20 TL. This is our only income. We cannot always find a job. We did not bring anything as we left Syria. We have just a couple of mattresses, blankets and some kitchen utensils. We could not afford to buy TV nor refrigerator. We sought help from aid organizations. They came to check our home. And they told us they would come back within two weeks and help us. Now we are waiting for them.

It has been 15 days since they moved to our neighborhood. I met her when I went to grocery store to buy bread in the morning. She came to buy 5 loaves of bread, 5 eggs, 200 gr. of black olives. It cost 6.50 TL in total. Nucud, on the other hand, had 5 TL. She was begging to bring the rest of the money later. But the grocery owner refused her request by asserting that everybody said the same. I intervened and started to speak in Arabic. The woman got relieved when I spoke in Arabic. I paid the money. And she invited me home. She lived two streets away from my apartment. I accepted her invitation and promised to come by after work to visit her husband and to check them. They stay at a house with two rooms, a kitchen, bathroom and a small garden. They offered me tea. They served the tea in water glass as they did not have tea glasses. I left the house after drinking the tea. I stopped by the grocery store and bought tea, coffee, biscuit, chocolate and sunflower seed oil for them. When I came back with shopping bags in my hands, they were both embarrassed and also happy. They thanked me as they cried.

**This interview was conducted by Feyyat Özyazar in Reyhanlı district of Hatay on June 26, 2013.*

An Interview with Rasha Mahmoud who crossed the border from Syria into Turkey and settled in Reyhanlı district of Hatay

Rasha Mahmoud believes that as the Syrian people, they are now paying the price for their mistakes.

ORSAM: Could you tell us about yourself in brief?

Rasha Mahmoud: I am from Hama, Al Gab in Syria. I am 27 years old and single, and I live with my elderly parents. I graduated from the Department of Arabic Language and Literature, but couldn't work in Syria. Although I applied for every school in Reyhanlı, I was not assigned.

ORSAM: Are there many women in a similar situation in Reyhanlı? Are there job opportunities?

Rasha Mahmoud: There are many girls in Reyhanlıs who are college graduates like me. However, only some 100 of them work as a teacher at schools and as a secretary at hospitals, while others are unemployed.

ORSAM: How do you make your living?

Rasha Mahmoud: My father receives his pension, and also I have a brother who works in the United Arab Emirates (UAE) and he sends us a thousand dirhams each month. And we are getting by in line with the living conditions in Turkey. However, I would feel better if I were engaged in something. I have not earned my own bread yet despite the fact that I am at this age. It is hard to depend on my father and brother or a living.

ORSAM: How do you think the civil war affected your region?

Rasha Mahmoud: The war ripped the families apart, and too many people have been martyred and suffered in our region. However, we gained a strong will as a result of the war and the war also taught us to be patient and take a firm stand. The well-educated people in Syria underline that what we've been going through is something to draw lesson from. As the Syrian people, we must have done somethings wrong that today we are paying the price heavily. When I see Syrians who beg for help in despair around, I can't help crying as a Syrian citizen. We couldn't appreciate the peace at home. Therefore, we are suffering.

ORSAM: How do you see the future of Syria in the post-civil war period?

Rasha Mahmoud: There is no such thing as Syria anymore, and the economic war would break out if the current civil war came to an end. Everywhere is destroyed in the country. We will picture the villages, neighborhoods, where our acquaintances were killed or injured, and we will restore our country that we destroyed with our hands if we can find an opportunity.

**This interview was conducted by Feyyat Özyazar in Reyhanlı district of Hatay on June 26, 2013.*

An Interview with Rule al Ahmed who crossed the border from Syria into Turkey and settled in Reyhanlı district of Hatay

Rule al Ahmed's children were born physically handicapped due to the cross-cousin marriage.

ORSAM: Could you tell us about yourself?

Rule al Ahmed: I live in Idlib al-Nerab, Syria. My husband's name is Mahar al Ahmed.

I work as a cleaner in a healthcare organization, and my husband is a driver. Due to the cross-cousin marriage, our children were born physically handicapped.

ORSAM: How was your financial situation?

Rule al Ahmed: My salary from the healthcare organization was 15 thousand SYP, and my husband earned some 20-25 thousand SYP. Our financial situation was quite good back then. When the civil war broke out, our region was bombed, and the health center was destroyed during the attack. My husband was unemployed as well due to the fact that the roads had been blocked.

ORSAM: Could you tell us what you experienced during that period?

Rule al Ahmed: First of all, our neighborhood was hit by tanks and missiles, then the jets. Maybe the most damaged and destroyed region in Syria is al-Nerab. Because since the regime's army was not comfortable with the proximity of the military troop and the presence of people in this neighborhood, they forced people to migrate and people migrated in order not to die. The town went to rack and ruin.

ORSAM: Could you and your husband find a job in Reyhanlı?

Rule al Ahmed: Here, my husband works as a driver; he transports Syrian passengers between Reyhanlı and Şanlıurfa. Syrian people visit one another and also are engaged in trade. They keep in touch with one another, and thus there is always passenger transportation. Sometimes, I work as a cleaner when I find a job. We were registered in aid organizations, and we receive help from those organization from time to time.

ORSAM: Who does look after your children?

Rule al Ahmed: It is too hard to look after and raise handicapped children, but they are not hard children. They stay where they are as I leave them at home, and they do not disturb others, nor break anything when we are gone. I am a woman under difficult circumstances. But people die in Syria, while we live in peace here. Therefore, we will not return until the end of the civil war.

**This interview was conducted by Feyyat Özyazar in Reyhanlı district of Hatay on June 26, 2013.*

An Interview with Rukniyye Al Ibrahim who crossed the border from Syria into Turkey and settled in Reyhanlı district of Hatay

The Assad regime arrested Rukniyye Al Ibrahim's husband and son, and she cannot hear from them for six months.

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

Rukniyye Al Ibrahim: My name is Rukniyye Al Ibrahim. I come from Al-Gab district of Hama, Syria. I am 57 years old and have 5 children. We migrated from Hama to Reyhanlı with my husband Mahmoud, my son Ibrahim and my daughter Zehra. We owned vineyards and orchards in Hama before the civil war, and we lived in peace as a family. But our life has changed after the outbreak of the civil war and our life started to turn black just like Hama's skylines. Our vineyard, orchards and house were destroyed one by one during the bombing attacks and we had no more security of life.

ORSAM: What are the reasons that made you leave Aleppo?

Rukniyye Al Ibrahim: Due to the sudden bombardment, we had to cross the border into Turkey without taking any of our assets and money from the bank. We have our passports. Two months after arriving in Reyhanlı, my husband and son returned to Hama to collect debts.

My husband is 62 years old, and my son is 33 years old. They have no criminal records, nor connection with any organization. As a family, we live a simple life. However, when the regime's army noticed that my husband and son crossed the border into and out of Turkey during the search on the road, they arrested them. And they were accused of crossing the border into and out of Turkey with their passports. The regime's army, namely the current Assad regime in Syria began to consider Turkey as rebel, traitor if he/she crossed the

Turkish border following the outbreak of the civil war. I cannot hear from my husband and son for 6 months. I do not believe that they will be released and that we will ever be together again. Because those who are prisoned with such accusations are killed from torture in prisons.

ORSAM: How do you make your living here?

Rukniyye Al Ibrahim: I don't have any income. Sometimes, my daughter and I find temporary jobs. People hire us for a cleaning job, and sometimes we work as agricultural laborers. We live in poverty and fear. We do not feel safe here on our own.

**This interview was conducted by Feyyat Özyazar in Reyhanlı district of Hatay on June 26, 2013.*



An Interview with Subhiyye Avvad who crossed the border from Syria into Turkey and settled in Reyhanlı district of Hatay

Asserting that coming to Turkey is a miracle, Subhiyye Avvad works as a cleaner in a cafeteria.

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

Subhiyye Avvad: I came from Aleppo, Syria. My husband's name is Şaban Diyap Abu Maher. We have three children. It was a miracle for us to come to Turkey through the jets, tanks and missiles.

ORSAM: How did you come to Turkey?

Subhiyye Avvad: Most people who do not have vehicle did not leave Aleppo or other regions not because they did not want to leave their hometown, but because they did not have means. In other words, people are stuck in where they live. Those who have vehicles, on the other hand, face barricades and obstacles. For a poor person, it is like escaping a prison. We experienced this life style, torture, fear and hunger for months.

We cannot leave the build-up of years, house, assets. We feel sad, but those who attack on us do not feel for us. In Syria, people and animals are treated equally. Moreover, some animals are treated more kindly since they are a food source. Thus, we migrated from this environment.

ORSAM: How do you make your living here?

Subhiyye Avvad: I work as a cleaner in a cafeteria near the Lake Yenışehir, Reyhanlı. After working as a cleaner, I sell cigarettes and packs of tea on a cardboard in front of the

cafe. I earn 15 TL from my job at cafe, and 10 TL from my extra job. My husband, on the other hand, works as a janitor at an hospital. His monthly salary is 450 TL.

** This interview was conducted by Feyyat Özyazar in Reyhanlı district of Hatay on June 26, 2013.*

An Interview with Sumeyya Haidar who crossed the border from Syria into Turkey and settled in the Reyhanlı district of Hatay

"There are many benefactors in Reyhanlı, and people still continue to receive humanitarian aid. Hundreds of families survive like this," says Sumeyya Haidar.

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

Sumeyya Haidar: I came from Idlib, Syria. I am 32 years old and have 2 children. I lost my husband last year. And currently I stay with my older brother in Reyhanlı. When the civil war broke out, my husband said somebody should fight and brought me and our children to here and then left. Our village and neighboring villages were bombed. Everybody's life was disturbed. Everything we owned was bombarded and plundered. Three months later, we received his corpse.

ORSAM: Why did you migrate from Syria? What do you do here? How do you make your living?

Sumeyya Haidar: When my older brother became homeless and unemployed as well, we had no choice but to migrate. It is our 7th month here in Reyhanlı. I go out early in the morning and look for a job. I do anything I

find. I clean houses, stairs in buildings, gardens, also work as an agricultural laborer etc. If I cannot find anything, I just ramble about. I receive help from aid organizations. Sometimes I beg for help. Because my older brother is not in good shape either. He has children, as well as I do. I need to contribute since we live together considering the essential needs such as the electricity, water and gas.

When we first arrived in Reyhanlı, we hadn't brought anything with us from Syria. Now we have a TV, refrigerator and a washing machine. We bought each of them from second-hand stores. And a benefactor gave us an air circulating fan, and a bottled gas oven. Some others gave us blankets, mattresses etc. Right now, it seems like a real home. It all started with a plastic mat and an old rug, but today we have a carpet, mattress, utensils. There are many benefactors in Reyhanlı, and people continue to receive humanitarian aid. Hundreds of families in Reyhanlı can survive like this.

**This interview was conducted by Feyyat Özyazar in Reyhanlı district of Hatay on June 26, 2013.*

An Interview with Visal al Murad who crossed the border from Syria into Turkey and settled in Reyhanlı district of Hatay

Visal al Murad decided to marry a Turkish truck driver.

ORSAM: Could you tell us about yourself?

Visal al Murad: I live in Hay al Murab under the administration of central Syria. I am 36 years old, my husband was martyred. And I have 2 children. Both my children are married and I live in Yenisehir, Reyhanlı by myself.

ORSAM: Could you tell us about your hometown in Syria and your children?

Visal al Murad: The Hay al Murab in Idlib is a rural area, and it is full of vineyards and orchards. The violence, massacre and destruction of the civil war in our region has been going on for some two years. My children turned out to be unfilial, each took their husbands/wives, children along with them and left Syria, and they abandoned me. Thus, I illegally crossed the border into Turkey with a family from our neighborhood. During a period when the civil war was at its peak point and houses were hit by air and ground attacks, I left my home. I have neither an identity nor a registration certificate.

ORSAM: How do you make your living in Reyhanlı?

Visal al Murad: I worked as a dishwasher at a restaurant in Yenisehir, Reyhanlı. Then I met a Turkish citizen and he proposed to me, and I told him that it was not possible to have a civil marriage since I did not have even an identity card. He proposed to have a religious marriage.

I pondered over this proposal, and I decided to have a cosy home environment instead of being stuck in a restaurant. Thus I accepted his marriage proposal.

ORSAM: Could tell us about the man you are going to marry?

Visal al Murad: He is from a district in Kırıkkale. I do not know Turkish and he does not know Arabic. He is a truck driver. His vehicle was stuck in Cilvegozu for a while, and he made friends with the locals of Reyhanlı, so they introduced us to one another. He lost his wife, he is a widower as well. We agreed to get married as two widows. We have a Turk-

ish-Arabic dictionary and we are trying to learn new words from each other's languages. I am leaving for Kirikkale next week. If the civil war ends one day, I return to my country to get my identity card and passport to have a civil marriage. Syria is over for me.

**This interview was conducted by Feyyat Özyazar in Reyhanlı district of Hatay on June 26, 2013.*

An Interview with Yumna Shahut who crossed the border from Syria to Turkey and settled in Reyhanlı district of Hatay

Only Yumna Shahut, who is a teacher as well as her husband, could find a job as just one of the members in a family is allowed to be employed.

ORSAM: Could you introduce yourself?

Yumna Shahut: I live in Tel Minne in Idlib, Syria. My husband Mahmoud Selim and I are both teachers and we have a child.

ORSAM: What did you do in Syria before the civil war?

Yumna Shahut: We both worked as a teacher before the civil war, and we had a happy, peaceful life. We worked at the same school and both of us worked as a class teacher. My husband's family circle is known for being against the regime for many years. And many of his relatives were out in prison, the salaries of those who worked in public institutions were cut when the uprisings and events broke out, and we faced a witch-hunt.

ORSAM: Could you tell us about what you went through?

Yumna Shahut: The houses and and schools were bombarded, and nothing was left of ed-



ucation. We demanded to practice our profession in other regions, but nobody who carried the surname of Shahut was hired since we were not trusted. We had no choice but to migrate. After waiting in the border zone for a while, we illegally crossed the border into Turkey because we would by no means be given passports. As a matter of fact, there was no system to carry out a legal procedure to issue a passport anyway.

Some of the teachers who migrated from Syria to Reyhanlı and came together found a job. I found a job at Syrian schools in Reyhanlı but my husband couldn't. There were so many demands, so only a single member of a family was hired.

ORSAM: How do you make your living in Reyhanlı?

Yumna Shahut: My husband is a peddler, and earns the money to pay the rent. And I am trying to manage the household needs with my salary. It is good to be able to find a job and to work under these difficult circumstances. There are many unemployed and poor Syrian people around that it is a blessing for us to have a job.

**This interview was conducted by Feyyat Özyazar in Reyhanlı district of Hatay on June 26, 2013.*

An Interview with Covhara al Hattat who crossed the border from Syria into Turkey and settled in Reyhanlı district of Hatay

"People are starving and living in misery in Syria. The neighborhoods are split by military troops, invaders and the opposition," says Covhara al Hattat who lives with her children.

ORSAM: Could you tell us about yourself?

Covhara al Hattat: I am 45 years old. Recently, I have lost my husband. I live with my three children; my son Isa, my daughters Emel and Feiruz.

ORSAM: What did you go through in Syria before migrating to Reyhanlı?

Covhara al Hattat: We came from Aleppo last week. It was no more possible to live there because of the bombing attacks. People are starving and living in misery in Syria. The neighborhoods are split by military troops, invaders and the opposition. Each corner is seized by different groups and surrounded by barricades. Robbery, pounding, deaths, women abuse are everywhere across the country. But more importantly, hunger and malnutrition negatively affect everyone because of unemployment and lack of food. Even water and bread might be luxury for people, because water is dirty and baking bread is almost impossible. Most people go out to buy bread by risking death, they will die either of starvation or with a few loaves of bread. People long for a hot plate of food over there, sometime they have the opportunity to dip their bread into tea or they just eat their bread by wetting.

ORSAM: What are the current living conditions in Syria? What kind of life are people, who could not leave Syria, living right now?

Covhara al Hattat: We hear that there are still district bazaars in certain areas, but it is impossible to go there anyway. Say you went to those bazaars, would you give up the half of your total budget to buy a kg tomato or any other vegetable? We couldn't afford to buy milk, yoghurt, green vegetables. Meat, chicken was already far beyond our budget. You are in a darkness over there, neighborhoods

are hit by bombing attacks, and you have to constantly hide. Would you live in such an environment? Imagine your children in such an environment.

**This interview was conducted by Feyyat Özyazar in Reyhanlı district of Hatay on June 27, 2013.*

An Interview with Deal Hamza who crossed the border from Syria into Turkey and settled in Reyhanlı district of Hatay

“The biggest dream of the people in Syria is to flee or the change of the current regime,” says Deal Hamza.

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

Deal Hamza: I came from Idlib, Syria. I have two children. My husband’s name is Talep Abu Abdo, he works as a construction worker. We left Idlib under difficult circumstances. The suburbs, villages, hamlets are hit by attacks. The city center is still seized by the regime’s army and not everybody is allowed to enter the city center. The regime’s forces arrest those who are involved in the uprisings the moment they catch them. They immediately hit those who resist. The regime’s army is comprised of all segments (Shiite-Alawite-Sunni) of the society. They are all paid. The more head they cut off, the bigger prize they win. There are people who make profit over dead bodies. Some cut the heads of people they kill and display them across the city center. They think of it as an achievement. They see it as a symbol of courage according to their moral structures and characters. They aim at suppressing and scaring the people by displaying the heads of people they kill. The poor people are already suppressed and

scared. The biggest dream of the people in Syria is to flee or the change of the current regime.

ORSAM: How do you make your living here?

Deal Hamza: I am an educated person, and so is my husband but nobody hired us there. We do not have a circle, nor a supporter. Who hires us when we become financially weak. I started to have dreams in Turkey. What really matters is to provide our children with a peaceful environment and then food. The living conditions are very harsh and expensive compared to our income. We’ve been craving for our life in Syria.

**This interview was conducted by Feyyat Özyazar in Reyhanlı district of Hatay on June 27, 2013.*

An Interview with Emne al Hussein who crossed the border from Syria into Turkey and settled in Reyhanlı district of Hatay

Emne al Hussein stays with 20 families in a building under construction, where men and women are separated.

ORSAM: Could you introduce yourself?

Emne al Hussein: I am from Ser al Zor Hamidia, Syria. I am 45 years old and a mother of six children.

ORSAM: Where and under what conditions do you live in Reyhanlı?

Emne al Hussein: This is a building under construction in Reyhanlı, where women stay in the cellar and men stay in the basement; and also this building is situated on the busi-

est point of the city. 20 families stay here. Each family has at least 5-6 children. The playground of children is the stairs between the cellar and basement, and a free space in the construction field. There is a toilet, bathroom and sink in the cellar, where women stay; but there is no sink, water, and even no toilet and bathroom in the basement, where men stay.

Couples cannot stay together, it is forbidden for a man to go downstairs even to call his wife. A woman send her children to upstairs when she has something to say to her husband. Men use the toilets of mosques in the neighborhood, and they can take a shower if they have acquaintances nearby.

As 20 families, approximately 100 – 200 people, we sleep on blankets and mats in cellar. When this many people stay together, there is no space left to even breath. And after a while, the noise of children, stinks and cries get on our nerves. Nevertheless, all this noise is much preferable and safer than the bomb noises back in Syria.

ORSAM: What did you go through before you migrated to Reyhanlı?

Emne al Hussein: Our village was bombarded, and our neighborhood was hit by barrel bombs, destructive bombs. Our houses were destroyed. We left everything behind and fled.

ORSAM: How do you make your living?

Emne al Hussein: Sometimes we find something to eat, but some other times we sleep hungry. It is not always possible to find a benefactor who could bring aid and food to this many people. Men are unemployed, some of them go and find a job, while some others just rumble about without finding one. We live such a life.

**This interview was conducted by Feyyat Özyazar in Reyhanlı district of Hatay on June 27, 2013.*



An Interview with Hana Suhem al Baskali who lives in Germany

Hana Suhem al Baskali came from Germany to visit her relatives in Reyhanlı.

ORSAM: Could you tell us about yourself in brief?

Hana Suhem al Baskali: My husband Akram Daar and I have been living in Germany for years. We have two children. My husband and I came to visit our relatives here in Reyhanlı. We found out where our relatives migrated to. The largest migration flow was into Turkey. Most family members settled in Hatay and Gaziantep. That's why we've come to Reyhanlı. When the civil war broke out in Syria, as Muslim foundations, charity organizations in Germany and in many European countries, we set a budget among ourselves.

ORSAM: What did you with the budget in detail?

Hana Suhem al Baskali: We transferred the budget we collected to Syria in cash through someone. The process of collecting and transferring money continued regularly for 18 months. At least some 50 thousand Euro was sent to opposition groups each month. We provided the Syrian families with food, clothes, shelter and financial support.

ORSAM: You yourself went to Syria. What were the impressions you got?

Hana Suhem al Baskali: I took some time off from work in Germany, then my husband and I went came to Turkey by land and then to Syria. I saw the real Syria for myself. There is a huge difference between the Syria I watch on TV and the real one. We had to drive on rough roads in order to go to Aleppo. We saw villages, vehicles and lands on fire on the way. Aleppo went to rack and ruin. Everything and everywhere was destroyed. Moreover, the military vehicles were burned and abandoned. Aleppo was beyond recognition. Peo-



ple are hungry and in misery, the economy is over, and everything is very expensive. For instance nowadays even 100 thousand SYP is not enough for a family who used to get by on 15-20 thousand SYP in the past. Most people have become dependent. Many people became disabled and injured, as many people were martyred. Even the faces of people have changed. I see my relatives and the Syrian people in general live in pain and tears and without hope.

**This interview was conducted by Feyyat Özyazar in Reyhanlı district of Hatay on June 27, 2013.*

An Interview with Ilmiyye Edhem who crossed the border from Syria into Turkey and settled in Reyhanlı district of Hatay

Ilmiyye Edhem works as a tailor at a tailor shop, sewing women's clothing.

ORSAM: Could you tell us about yourself?

Ilmiyye Edhem: We had to migrate from Aleppo, Syria to Reyhanlı 5 months ago. I am 35 years old and have 2 children. My husband Selemi al Bashir works as a construction laborer and I work as a tailor.

ORSAM: How do you get along with the locals of Hatay – Reyhanlı? How did they welcome you?

Ilmiyye Edhem: In the first place, the locals of Reyhanlı welcomed us with love and respect. But following the major explosion that took place on May 11th, they were on the brink of turning us away from Reyhanlı. We were insulted, suspected but after a while, namely when we overcame the shock, things continued where we left off. On Sundays,

we have breakfast together with some of my neighbors. One week at their house, and the other week at ours... We formed such a close friendship.

ORSAM: How have you been making your living since you moved from Syria to here?

Ilmiyye Edhem: I work as a tailor here in Reyhanlı. Generally, I sew dresses and nightgowns for women or pajamas for children. I earn for each piece I sew. My daily income is some 20-25 TL. When my husband goes to work, his daily wage is 20 TL. Sometimes there is no job, and sometimes he cannot work as he gets tired. Our children go to school. Although their education was interrupted for a while, they receive accelerated lessons during the summer months. Thus, they make up the days they missed at school.

ORSAM: How was your life in Syria?

Ilmiyye Edhem: We were living in a rent in Aleppo. We did not have a car nor house of our own. However, our income back then was enough for us to get by considering the living standards in Syria. However, today everything is very expensive. SYP was devalued and our income back then is no more sufficient to live there.

ORSAM: How did the civil war affect the economy and what were the reflections on the people?

Ilmiyye Edhem: Beforehand, a Syrian family with a monthly salary of 15 thousand SYP could easily maintain their life without borrowing money. But today, things have changed. Today, 50 thousand SYP is required for a month. The rent which is 3 thousand SYP in the suburbs of Aleppo is now 7 thousand SYP. The vegetable and fruit prices have incredibly increased, approximately by 300

per cent. Electricity and water is provided occasionally. People live in darkness and without water. The bottled gas, on the other hand, has gone on the black market...

ORSAM: Why did the bottled gas go on the black market?

Ilmiyye Edhem: The bottled gas refinery and Gas Storage Station in Aleppo remain in the area where the Jaish al-Hur seizes control, and it goes to villages and the Idlib province from that area. The eastern and northern parts of Aleppo do not quite have an access to bottled gas. Therefore, bottled gas has gone on the black market.

ORSAM: What is the current situation in Aleppo? Do you hear from your relatives, friends?

Ilmiyye Edhem: I hear that transportation in the city has come to an end, children cannot go to school. No health service. Everyday the neighborhoods are hit by a great number of bombs. As you can imagine, there is no security of live either. In such an environment, there is no way to live in Aleppo.

ORSAM: How do you make your living in Reyhanlı? Do you experience difficulty in getting by?

Ilmiyye Edhem: I go to district bazaar at weekends, and I spend 30 TL for vegetable and fruit, which equals to 2.300 SYP. Beforehand, it was our monthly budget for vegetable and fruit in Aleppo... In Reyhanlı, there are places that sell Syrian bread. A pack of bread costs 2,5 TL, in other words 200 SYP. We used to eat bread at this cost for more than a month. A pack of bread, namely eight loaves of bread, cost 25 kuruş. It makes 64 loaves of bread for two SYP. In Reyhanlı, on the other hand, 64 loaves of bread cost 32 TL, which

equals to 500 SYP. Therefore, we think bread is too expensive here. We cannot eat meat for a month. In Syria which is currently in a civil war, 1 kg meat is 800 SYP, namely 10 TL; while it is 24 TL in Turkey. Only one weekend we went to Reyhanlı- Lake Yenışehir, and it cost us 25 TL, which equals to 2 thousand SYP. We spent the money just to see some green and the lake. We used to go and return between Aleppo – Latakia for 2 thousand SYP.

**This interview was conducted by Feyyat Özyazar in Reyhanlı district of Hatay on June 27, 2013.*

An Interview with Ilmiyye al Seraceddin who crossed the border from Syria into Turkey and settled in Reyhanlı district of Hatay

“We were a rich family back in Syria. We lived a happy and a peaceful life. But we had to leave everything we had behind. God damn those who made this to us,” says Ilmiyye al Seraceddin.

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

Ilmiyye al Seraceddin: I am from Al Habit district of Hama, Syria. I am 62 years old and widow. I live with my son. Our neighborhood was bombed and then invaded by armed groups. My both daughters are married and live in Egypt. My husband passed away. We had vineyards and orchards in Hama. We were a rich family. We lived a happy and a peaceful life. But we had to leave everything we had behind. God damn those who made this to us!

ORSAM: How do you make your living? What is your source of income?

Ilmiyye al Seraceddin: My son works here. He works from 09.00 to 22.00, but his daily wage is only 20 TL. Our apartment we live in is too small, and we do not have enough furniture. I have 3 grandchildren. Sometimes we cannot buy milk for them, sometimes they sleep hungry. We live in misery. In Syria, we had a refrigerator and a deep freeze. We always had seasonal vegetable and fruit, meat, chicken. We have not eaten meat for more than a month. Children can see chocolate only in the hands of neighbor kids. They do not have toys. They play with the ball I made for them. Still, we are grateful. Because if we had not left Syria, we would have been killed. If not by bombardments, people would break into our house and rape or kill us. We would be hungry all the time in addition to fear, worry and insecurity. At least we are safe in here. We are grateful that some of our neighbors bring food to us. In the afternoons, my daughter-in-law and I go to district bazaars

and collect the remaining unsold vegetable and fruit. Sometimes they give it for free, and some other times at quite low prices.

**This interview was conducted by Feyyat Özyazar in Reyhanlı district of Hatay on June 27, 2013.*

An Interview with Rakiye Abdo al Ahmar who crossed the border from Syria to Turkey and settled in Reyhanlı district of Hatay

Rakiye Abdo al Ahmar peddles cosmetics, shampoo and soap on the street to make their living.

ORSAM: Could you tell us about yourself?

Rakiye Abdo al Ahmar: We came to Reyhanlı from Aleppo, Syria. I am 32 years old. I live



here with my husband Nadji al Attar, my mother and my two children. We have been in Reyhanlı for approximately 7 months. When we first moved to here, we did not know the streets of our neighborhood, but now both my husband and I know each and every street of Reyhanlı.

ORSAM: How was your life before you migrated to Turkey?

Rakiye Abdo al Ahmar: I graduated from trade school in Aleppo, and my husband was engaged in glassware. We left everything we had back in our country and migrated to here due to the civil war.

ORSAM: How do you make your living here?

Rakiye Abdo al Ahmar: Currently, I peddle cosmetics, shampoo, and soap on the streets

in order to make our living. My husband, on the other hand, peddles vegetable, fruit, tea and cigarette. Our children stay with their grandmother as we work. My husband buys the vegetable and fruit to sell near the wholesale market hall. We buy tea, cigarette and cosmetics from Syria. As SYP was devalued, the products we sell are cheap for the Turkish in Reyhanlı and thus we receive a great deal of orders. For instance, normally a make up kit is 25-30 TL, but I sell it for 7 or 10 TL. The rent is 400 TL, and electricity, water bill and other costs are around 150 TL. We bought white goods by installment recently. We pay 300 TL for them. Still, we have extra spending money left.

ORSAM: Are you planning to return to Syria?

Rakiye Abdo al Ahmar: Our house in Aleppo was destroyed. Also our neighborhood



was hit by bombardment. By the way, when a neighborhood is hit by a barrel bomb by air, at least a part of the neighborhood is completely destroyed. People are trapped in the wreckage. We are not planning to return to Syria before the civil war ends. Our children go to school safely and in peace. We live in peace as well. Aleppo, on the other hand, is going through hard times nowadays.

**This interview was conducted by Feyyat Özyazar in Reyhanlı district of Hatay on June 27, 2013.*

An Interview with Rece al Huseyyen who crossed the border from Syria into Turkey and settled in Reyhanlı district of Hatay

Like many other families, Rece el Huseyyen's family started to live in caves and rocky places when their village was bombarded.

ORSAM: Where and how did you continue to maintain your life after the civil war break out in Syria?

Rece al Huseyyen: I am from Bara al Ravya district of Idlib, Syria. As family, we are engaged in farming. My husband Abdulhakim, my five children and I have been living in a cave in al Ravya district for a year now.

ORSAM: How did you come to Turkey?

Rece al Huseyyen: When the villages started to be bombarded, with many other families, we started to live in caves and rocky places in the neighborhood. However, it started to smell gas smothering us. We thought we were going to die. When the people around began to complain about the same thing, we left the place and came to the Turkish border crossing.

We had a few furniture back in Syria, and we could not find a chance to bring them along with us. Children's eyes were burning, and their feet were itching. As 5 families, we arrived in the border crossing in five days sometimes by walking and sometimes by hitchhiking. We did not have anything to eat, or to drink. We stayed at an open field for a night. Then someone helped us cross the border into Turkey.

ORSAM: Under what circumstances do you live in Turkey?

Rece al Huseyyen: We were five families, and each families had 5-6 children. When we first arrived, we stayed in the backyard of a house. They gave us food, and water. Then we found an old building. The landlord let us stay there for free. The building had water system. But there was no electricity. Nevertheless, we consent to it. Because at least we were not afraid of gas poisoning, bombardment, or being killed here. We work if we find a job. And when we cannot find one, we get by help from others.

**This interview was conducted by Feyyat Özyazar in Reyhanlı district of Hatay on June 27, 2013.*

An Interview with Reshide Talal from Syria who settled in Reyhanlı district of Hatay

Reshide Talal earns her living by peeling onions and putting them in sacks in the warehouse of a shop.

ORSAM: Could you tell us about yourself?

Reshide Talal: I am from Aleppo, Syria. My husband is an architect. We cannot hear from him for 4 months. One day he went out and

never came back. I asked everyone I knew in Syria. But nobody knew where he was. I am afraid he might have been killed. My three children and I illegally crossed the border into Turkey. I only had a sack of belongings, a purse and 1500 SYP (22 TL) with me. I witnessed a great number of villages and fields were on fire on my way from Aleppo to Atma in Idlib. When I arrived in Turkey, I told the authorities that I wanted to go to the tent city. I applied to stay in tent cities. But none of them was available. First of all, I took shelter in a mosque in Reyhanlı. Then a benefactor helped me. He cleaned a shop which was empty and let me stay there. There was electricity and water. It even had a WC, but no shower. Neighbors brought mattress, blankets. They brought us food.

ORSAM: How do you make your living? What is your source of income?

Reshide Talal: Currently, I earn my living by peeling onions and putting them in sacks in a shop in the neighborhood. My daily wage is per kilo. I earn some 25-30 TL in a day. It is not possible to live in the tent city located near Atma. People are living like sardines, there is no space to breath. Water, food, shower, toilet facilities are not sufficient. People get sick from unsanitary conditions over there. Therefore, I could not stay there. I fled Syria to save my children's lives. Staying in Atma would mean to leave my children dead.

**This interview was conducted by Feyyat Özyazar in Reyhanlı district of Hatay on June 27, 2013.*

An Interview with Rihayle al Berho who crossed the border from Syria into Turkey and settled in Reyhanlı district of Hatay

"The youth in Syria who suffered for years launched the civil war," says Rihayle al Berho.

ORSAM: Could you tell us about yourself?

Rihayle al Berho: I come from Idlib el Muallimin district of Syria. I have six children, two of them are married. One of my children was martyred. I live with Abdohalim, Hamza and Zuher. We were a middle-class family back in Syria. My husband owned an auto gallery.

ORSAM: How was your living conditions and your daily life back in Syria?

Rihayle al Berho: Although our freedom was restricted in Syria, we were fond of our health and social life. Many Syrian families lived like that. Every week, we used to go on a picnic and have fun with out neighbors. As three-five families, we slaughtered a sheep. It was like that for years. The only problem we encountered was in government offices. Nobody interfered in trade, private and family life.

ORSAM: What do you think was the reason people in Syria rebelled against the regime?

Rihayle al Berho: The young people in Syria were not employed in the jobs they desired despite their diplomas and their degrees. Even those who were graduated from the same school and had same living conditions were not hired in same positions. We were like a second-class citizen in this regard. It was when the youth rebelled against the regime. There was no right to object, those who claimed their right were either arrested or tortured. There are lots of people in Syria who have been under detention for months, and of whom right of defense has been violated. They were released either on bail, or thanks to influential people. The youth in Syria who

suffered for years launched the civil war in the country. Today, educated people live in freedom in Turkey, but they work as a laborer, while some of them are unemployed and live in misery.

**This interview was conducted by Feyyat Özyazar in Reyhanlı district of Hatay on June 27, 2013.*

An Interview with Selma Al Hazeni who crossed the border from Syria into Turkey and settled in Reyhanlı district of Hatay

Selma al Hazeni is unemployed and lives in Reyhanlı with her mother confined to bed.

ORSAM: Could you introduce yourself?

Selma Al Hazeni: I live in Binnec district of Idlib, in Syria. I am 39 years old. I studied

until 11th grade. I had an unhappy marriage and was divorced. Currently, I live in Reyhanlı with my mother confined to bed. My father was a fruit seller. He sold vegetable in his pickup truck and we had a small garden. He used to cultivate seasonal fruit. He passed away years ago. My mother is 75 years old and confined to bed.

ORSAM: Could you tell us about your marriage?

Selma Al Hazeni: I had an unhappy marriage. I was the second wife of my ex husband. The only reason I married was poverty. Because I had an elder brother and a sister-in-law at home, and I served for them. They considered me slave-servant, not a sister. I put up with it to stay with my mother, but I also wanted to marry and have a family. I married but I could not start a family. I was more sad then I ever has been, because my husband and his first wife started to torture me. I did not have



a child, and I divorced after a seven-year marriage.

ORSAM: What did you go through during the civil war? How did you come to Turkey?

Selma Al Hazeni: We live in western neighborhood of the Binnec district. Our neighborhood was bombarded, and our house was destroyed. The residents of the entire neighborhood migrated, and many people were killed. There were more than hundred injured people when we were there. I illegally crossed the border into Turkey and all women in my country suffered and insulted after the outbreak of civil war, they did not have pity even on children. We could not find even bread. Those who had golden earrings were robbed, and when they resisted, they were tortured and even killed. They forced us to migrate, and in fact there was no other option.

ORSAM: What are your current living conditions in Reyhanlı?

Selma Al Hazeni: We live together with a family from our neighborhood. I do not have

any income. My mother is confined to bed. I applied for every aid organization in Reyhanlı, and despite the fact that we've been receiving some help, it is not enough to pay the rent, electricity, water bills and to buy food. We sleep on sponge mattresses and cushions. We have a simple, thin blanket and a TV. We have nothing else.

ORSAM: Is there anything else you would like to add?

Selma Al Hazeni: I worked as a laborer at a chocolate factory in Binnec district for many years. However, I do not have a profession. Nobody hires me in Turkey because of my mother's poor health, as well as because I do not speak Turkish and wear burqa. Even if they did, I cannot stay away from my mother all day long. I have such a problem.

**This interview was conducted by Feyyat Özyazar in Reyhanlı district of Hatay on June 27, 2013.*



An Interview with Sham'a Kaddur Heslavi who crossed the border from Syria into Turkey and settled in Reyhanlı district of Hatay

Sham'a Kaddur Heslavi who lost her husband in a bombardment lives with her three children.

ORSAM: Could you please introduce yourself?

Sham'a Kaddur Heslavi: I live in Haman Karm al Jabal, Syria. I am 45 years old, have three children. I am a widow. My husband was martyred in a bombardment, he was 51 years old and worked at an auto tyre service. During the bombardment, he was killed by a shrapnel piece at work. My son Ibrahim is a teacher. My daughters Yusra and Merve were students.

ORSAM: Can you tell us about what you went through?

Sham'a Kaddur Heslavi: When our neighborhood was bombarded, it was no more possible to live in Karm al Jabal. Fires that broke out after the bombardment, as well as stinks, lack of electricity, water and hunger forced people to migrate. When people migrate from settlements, you cannot live on your own. After all, there was nowhere left to live in anyway. Carbon monoxide poisoning was the most common cause of deaths in the region. Even during day, the sky was dark.

We left both Hama and Syria. We illegally crossed the border into Turkey, and my son cannot receive salary since he does not work anymore. My daughters do not have a profession. As mother, only I work. My son work as a driver from time to time. He transports Syrians crossing the border between Kilis – Antep – Urfa, or those coming from tent cities to cities.

ORSAM: How was your life in Reyhanlı?

We pay the rent regularly, but when we did not pay this month's rent on time, the landlord came to throw our furniture and us out of the house in the middle of the night, locked the door and left. We stayed up all night on the street. After staying in a mosque courtyard and then with some benefactors for a couple of days, we finally found a wooden house. It was very dirty and full of rats since nobody lived in it for years. The rent is 150 TL. We cannot find much to eat, and do not have much furniture and utensils, but at least we are safe and healthy. We are grateful.

**This interview was conducted by Feyyat Özyazar in Reyhanlı district of Hatay on June 27, 2013.*

An Interview with Vahube Naus al Ahdar who crossed the border from Syria into Turkey and settled in Reyhanlı district of Hatay

Vahube Naus al Ahdar lost her husband, uncle and nephew during the civil war.

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

Vahube Naus al Ahdar: I come from Jisr al-Shughur in the Idlib Governorate, Syria. I am 45 years old. I have 3 children.

I lost my husband, uncle and nephew during the civil war. In the early stages of the civil war, I lost my husband, and my nephew was injured and he passed away 6 months ago. Right now, I am all by myself with my three children. I moved from Jisr al-Shugur to Salkin. I had some acquaintances in Salkin, thus I started to live over there.

ORSAM: What are the reasons you fled Syria?

Vahube Naus al Ahdar: The people in Syria have not drawn any lesson from the civil war and disaster. Even in hunger and misery, some people try to take advantage of widows because they live in poverty and on their own. Therefore, many women in our region committed suicide. They will either give up their dignity and feed their children, or they will be hungry.

I resisted, and crossed the border into Turkey with another family, illegally crossing the border. In Reyhanlı we rent a house with the other family. I pay 200 TL for a month. The other family's share is also 200 TL.

ORSAM: How do you make your living here?

Vahube Naus al Ahdar: Aid organizations help martyrs' relatives. Both treatment and also medicine is for free at hospitals. We have no problem on this matter. I do not have a house back in Syria. No properties or assets either. My relatives and friends are preoccupied with their own problems. Some of them live in Reyhanlı, and some others live in tent cities. The family I live with and I bought a refrigerator and a washing machine. We do not have a TV yet. We are planning to buy a second-hand TV with the money we earn by working. We cannot always find a job. Aid organization do not always give us food. My children go to Syrian schools. One of them is in the 6th grade, while the others are in the 8th and 11th grades. The school provides them with stationery equipments. Since the school is not far away, I do not have to pay for their transportation.

ORSAM: Can you meet the needs of your children?

Vahube Naus al Ahdar: My children and I live with a shoestring budget. I can afford to buy some vegetable and fruit only once a month. Food such as dessert and meat is a luxury for people like us. To buy new clothes, on the other hand, is impossible. We sit on floor cushions. We do not have table and chairs. My children do not have a study room. They have a pair of clothes and they go to school with the same outfit everyday. It is the same for most Syrians. Only a few families are in good shape. Children are malnourished and live in unsanitary conditions. We try to obtain hot water by heating water on a small bottled gas. A life in misery and poverty, as you can see.

**This interview was conducted by Feyyat Özyazar in Reyhanlı district of Hatay on June 27, 2013.*

An Interview with Lamia al Jabiri who crossed the border from Syria into Turkey and settled in Reyhanlı district of Hatay

Lamia al Jabiri and her daughter-in-law worked as an agricultural laborer by harvesting tomato and potato, but she had to quit since she is not used to work at such jobs.

ORSAM: How did you migrate to Turkey?

Lamia al Jabiri: We come from Jisr al-Shughur in Idlib Governorate, Syria. My husband Azez, my son Taha and my daughter-in-law Bushra crossed the border into Turkey on June 1st. We had some cardigans on us until we arrived in the border crossing. Then we crossed the border into Turkey and came to Reyhanlı.

ORSAM: Could you tell us about the latest situation in Syria?

Lamia al Jabiri: Our neighborhood has been bombarded by air and land. The houses which was not destroyed in early stages of the civil war have been damaged and destroyed, while the shops, orchards, vineyards have also been damaged right now. The regime's army has grown stronger. The access to villages, towns, settlements between Idlib and Latakia has been blocked and their connection to outside has been cut. My brothers, relatives and friends are fighting against the regime's army. Most young people are in the field to fight against the regime. Blocking these roads means leaving the locals in the area hungry, miserable and dead. Those who can flee save themselves. However, those who cannot flee will die of starvation, disease, misery and fear.

ORSAM: What about your living conditions in Reyhanlı?

Lamia al Jabiri: Currently, we live in a clay house in Reyhanlı, and we pay 400 TL a month for rent. My husband and I cannot work, and our son works as a laborer. My daughter-in-law and I worked as an agricultural laborer by harvesting tomatoes and potatoes for a couple of days. However, we are not used to work

at such jobs, it was hard for us. Our daily wage was 15 TL and we worked from 07:00 to 16:00. We could work only for two days. On the third day we couldn't go, because working under 35 celsius degrees for all day long made us sick. We were already exhausted from misery and hunger for months.

We have neither air-conditioner nor refrigerator at home. Sometimes, we cannot even find money to buy bread. Vegetable is relatively cheap during this season. However, we are not sure if we can fast in these circumstances during the Ramadan month. I have three grandchildren. We cannot afford to buy milk or biscuits for them. We dip bread into sugared water, and feed the babies. The staple food we eat at home is: Bulghur, tomato, potato and zucchini. We take a bucket of cold water from our neighbors everyday. We do not have a radio or TV to follow the news.

**This interview was conducted by Feyyat Özyazar in Reyhanlı district of Hatay on June 28, 2013.*



An Interview with Mehesin al Gabbush who crossed the border from Syria and settled in Reyhanlı district of Hatay

Mehesin al Gabbush says that SYP is devalued and people are exchanging items they need since purchasing power has declined.

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

Mehesin al Gabbush: I come from Sahel Al Gab district of Idlib, Syria. I am engaged in agriculture and breeding. My husband's name is Ahmed, my children's names are Jamil, Hamza, Merve, and Nura. My children could study until the 9th grade. Because we could not afford more. We were a poor and needy family family back in Syria. It is the same in Turkey. Here we are as poor as we were in Syria. We had a couple of animals for breeding, we used to cultivate vegetable we needed and also we had a few fruit trees in a corner of the field in Syria. It was all we had. But now we do not have anything left of it.

ORSAM: How is the people in Syria? What are the challenges encountered by Syrians as they migrate?

Mehesin al Gabbush: Most people in Syria have run out of cash. Even if they had, SYP has been devalued and purchasing power has declined. We exchanged a goat with a sack of flour or a sack of bulghur, or exchanged vegetable with other needs of home. Besides, there is also no sanitary water left in the region. We met our needs from puddles. There were water wells in certain hamlets. However, these wells were both far from our house and also it was located in a dangerous area in war environment.

We saw barricades on the way as we migrated. Some barricades were set up with well inten-

tion, but some of them were set up by people who intended to rob others. Those ill-minded people explicitly held people to ransom on the pretext of guiding them, and took their money, valuables or whatever they needed to help them cross the barricade. There was no way to object. Because they could kill you there and then. In Syria, the army of opportunists have increased and they act cruelly. The army consists of both locals and foreigners. It is aimed to kill the Syrian people.

**This interview was conducted by Feyyat Özyazar in Reyhanlı district of Hatay on June 28, 2013.*

An Interview with Sara Youssef Hamden who crossed the border from Syria into Turkey and settled in Reyhanlı district of Hatay

Sara Youssef Hamden's ancestors were Turkish nomad families who were gathered and settled in Hamidiya village of Banias district in Tartous during the Ottoman period.

ORSAM: Could you please tell us about yourself?

Sara Youssef Hamden: I am from Hamidiya village of Banias district in Tartous, Syria. I am 45 years old, widow and have 3 children. Since Hamidiya is a village established back in the Ottoman period, during the reign of Sultan Ahmad, it was called Hamidiya. In fact we are of Turkish origins, and our nomad ancestors were gathered and settled in here centuries ago. We are the last generation.

ORSAM: Do you speak Turkish?

Sara Youssef Hamden: I know some Turkish words. However, I cannot speak Turkish since I did not study.

ORSAM: Which members of your family are still alive after the bombardment?

Sara Youssef Hamden: Only my mother and my two siblings. When Baniyas was hit by bombardment, our village was damaged as well and the vast majority of the village was destroyed and set on fire, including vineyards and orchards.

ORSAM: What is your source of income?

Sara Youssef Hamden: We lost it all. Furthermore, our connection with the neighboring villages and roads was cut.

ORSAM: Could you tell us about your husband?

Sara Youssef Hamden: My husband Mohsen Taha's health failed and he could not undergo treatment since we were not able to afford it. There is no such thing as social security in Syria. If you have money, you undergo treatment. The state hospitals are insufficient. They have neither specialists nor equipment, medicine. Those hospitals only dress wounds, and vaccinate. He was supposed to be treated in Damascus or Aleppo, but we could by no means go there. At least 15-20 thousand dollar was required for the treatment, and it is impossible to find this amount of money in a country like Syria. Even if we sold our orchard and house, it would not cost more than 2 thousand dollars. Now they are gone too.

ORSAM: How long have you been in Reyhanlı? What do you do?

Sara Youssef Hamden: I have been in Reyhanlı – Hatay for three months. Beforehand, we settled in Salkin, Syria. We stayed with the relatives on my mother's side for a while, but they were also poor and had no income. But here in Reyhanlı, in addition to re-

ceiving help, I also find temporary jobs from time to time.

**This interview was conducted by Feyyat Özyazar in Reyhanlı district of Hatay on June 28, 2013.*

An Interview with Sehem Nader Al Hasan who crossed the border from Syria into Turkey and settled in Reyhanlı district of Hatay

Sehem Nader Al Hasan's husband was injured in the conflicts, and now she is trying to look after her children by seeking help from aid organizations and from the neighbors.

ORSAM: Could you introduce yourself? How did you come to Turkey?

Sehem Nader Al Hasan: We come from al-Nerab in Idlib Governorate, Syria. I have three children. My husband Abdulkader periodically went to Syria each month. The last time he went to Syria, he was injured and treated there. However, he cannot work since his leg and shoulder is bandaged. We have been in Reyhanlı for some eight months. We fled Syria with great difficulty. We achieved to survive.

ORSAM: What have you experienced and come across in Turkey?

Sehem Nader Al Hasan: Some Syrians deceived my husband. They told him that he should fight along with mujahids at least 3 – 5 days a month, so that he could do a good deed and also he would be known as a man who fight with mujahids and they also said that he would be provided with all kind of financial support in Reyhanlı. Thus, he started to go to Syria each month. They compensated the

days he did not work. He brought tea, sugar, rice, bean etc. from Syria.

ORSAM: Where is your husband right now? What does he do?

Sehem Nader Al Hasan: The last time he left for Syria was twenty days ago, now he is resting at home since he is injured. We rely on help from other people, we cannot pay our rent, electricity and water bills. Those who made promises to my husband do not come anymore. Thus, I am trying to look after my children by seeking help from aid organizations and neighbors.

**This interview was conducted by Feyyat Özyazar in Reyhanlı district of Hatay on June 28, 2013.*

An Interview with Vusul al Sa'adi who crossed the border from Syria into Turkey and settled in Reyhanlı district of Hatay

"Everybody is struggling for their own life. Nobody's sharing someone else's sorrow. As

Syrians, we've become desensitized," says Vusul al Sa'adi.

ORSAM: Could you tell us about yourself?

Vusul al Sa'adi: I come from Hama Al Gab, Syria. I am 40 years old and I've been undergoing a treatment at an Eye Hospital in Reyhanlı, where Syrian doctors work.

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

Vusul al Sa'adi: I lost my husband. I have 2 sons and they moved to Egypt with their wives. I live with my daughter Bushra. Our financial situation was good in Syria. I used to receive widow's pension. Also we had some savings. I did not have any health problem, nor a problem in my eyes. When the civil war broke out and people around me were being killed by attacks, I started to cry. My children left me for their security of life. As a matter of fact, they were also unfilial. They took their wives and children, but they never thought of their mom and sister. We were under bombardment and we had no man in the family.



ORSAM: How did you come to Turkey?

Vusul al Sa'adi: We crossed the border into Turkey along with those who were migrating from our neighborhood. Since we did not have a passport, we could not go to Egypt. In Turkey, we rent a house with another Syrian family. My eyesight failed since I cried all the time. The doctor gave me glasses. I need to regularly visit hospital for treatment.

ORSAM: How do you make your living in Turkey?

Vusul al Sa'adi: My daughter goes to work as an agricultural laborer with a Syrian group. I cannot work. We can earn at least the rent money, we have no financial trouble for the time being. On the other hand, I cannot hear from my sons.

ORSAM: How do you think the civil war affected Syrians?

Vusul al Sa'adi: Everybody is struggling for their own life. Nobody's sharing someone else's sorrow. As Syrians, we've become desensitized. In other words, we have been dehumanized. As a matter of fact, the civil war has been a burden Syrian women. Women have gotten sick because of poverty, and also longing for husband, children and siblings. If the civil war continued longer, all Syrian women would either get sick and become disabled or would die without fighting.

**This interview was conducted by Feyyat Özyazar in Reyhanlı district of Hatay on June 28, 2013.*

An Interview with Nasra Abbas who crossed the border from Syria into Turkey and settled in Reyhanlı district of Hatay

"Syrians, living a poor life, are really upset about the fact that some Syrian citizens stab us in the back and make money on us," says Nasra Abbas.

ORSAM: How did the process starting with internal tension and turning into a civil war in Syria affect your life?

Nasra Abbas: I am from Aleppo, Syria. We lived together with my husband Mahmed al-Bashir, my son Matar and my daughter-in-law Vechi; but my husband left to Syria with a friend and never came back. We still can't hear from him. It's like we have been dead since he left. In Aleppo, our house was destroyed, our shop was damaged and life has become terrible. We moved to Reyhanlı 8 months ago. It is difficult for us to find a job. But when we find one we work. Also, we have a language problem, as well as financial difficulties.

ORSAM: Do aid organizations help during the Ramadan month?

Nasra Abbas: In Reyhanlı, aid organizations will distribute food every evening during the Ramadan month. We registered our names, and they said they will give Syrians two main courses and a dessert at dinner. Although we could partially overcome the food problem, we have great difficulty in paying the rent, electricity and water bills.

ORSAM: Do people from Muslim or neighboring Arab countries help you get by?

Nasra Abbas: Syrians, living a poor life, are really upset about the fact that some Syrian citizens stab us in the back and make money on us. European and Middle Eastern countries provide millions of dollars of help for Syrian people, and the money is given to certain people for them to distribute. However, those people distribute only 10 percent of the

money, buy food products and give them to the people. But they make out an invoice of in return for millions. Some groceries work in cooperation with them. Thus we cannot receive help.

Many Syrians who lived in poverty and took shelter in Turkey are now driving top model cars and take their families to touristic places. It is possible to witness such cruelty, inequity and deception.

**This interview was conducted by Feyyat Özyazar in Reyhanlı district of Hatay on July 1, 2013.*

An Interview with Besime Lutfi who crossed the border from Syria into Turkey and settled in Reyhanlı district of Hatay

“Our house is far from the place, where iftar meal is given, and I have to walk for 40 minutes for food. Although it hurts my pride, hunger and poverty make a person forget about pride,” says Besime Lutfi.

ORSAM: Could you tell us about yourself?

Besime Lutfi: I am from Maarrat Al Masrin in Idlib, Syria. My husband Ibrahim passed away ten years ago. My son Mahmoud, my daughter-in-law Sara, my three grandchildren and I live together.

ORSAM: How do you live in Turkey?

Besime Lutfi: I was given an iftar card. Everyday I come to take 4-person meal with the card. At least we got rid of the food and gas expenses for a month. We do not have think about the expenses other than the rent. When we were in Syria, we used to eat desserts, snacks, fruit after the iftar dinner. We used to

go to woodlands afterwards. Now all we have is the iftar meal, and then only a few glasses of tea. Neither dessert nor fruit. Sometimes I buy biscuits for my grandchildren. We started to cut down expenses on their food as well. Because we do not have a sufficient income. We do not have money to buy milk, chocolate.

Our house is far from the place, where iftar meal is given, and I have to walk for 40 minutes for food. Although it hurts my pride, hunger and poverty make a person forget about pride. It is better than stealing. We have no income in Syria, neither a house left. People in our neighborhood migrated, and would have been killed if we hadn't fled. At least we are alive here.

**This interview was conducted by Feyyat Özyazar in Reyhanlı district of Hatay on July 25, 2013.*

An Interview with Dua Saleh Haled who crossed the border from Syria into Turkey, and settled in Reyhanlı district of Hatay

Dua Saleh Haled was married in return for bride price at a young age. She has 4 children.

ORSAM: Could you tell us about yourself in brief?

Dua Saleh Haled: I am orphaned, and my uncle forced me to marry a 30-year-old man when I was 13 years old in return for bride price. Right now I am 19 years old and I am a mother of 4 children. My husband is in prison in Idlib, Syria. I cannot hear from him.

ORSAM: How did you decide to come to Turkey?

Dua Saleh Haled: Everyone in our neighborhood left their home. I have been in Reyhanlı for three months. Beforehand, the locals from our village stayed in the border zone for a while. I follow them wherever they go. They help me.

ORSAM: According to your observations, what are the impacts of the civil war on the people in the border zone?

Dua Saleh Haled: The living conditions in the Syrian border zone are too harsh. People long for everything they had beforehand, and they are afraid of being bombarded. People from our village migrate in groups, and we have to stay together. Some groups attack on women in Syria. A great number of women were raped in Syria.

ORSAM: What about your living conditions in Reyhanlı?

Dua Saleh Haled: I live in a house with a broken door, windows, and naked walls in Reyhanlı. We have tap water, but we don't have electricity. We only have two sponge mattresses, a bottled gas, a plastic mat and

two blankets; that's all. I have two dresses, and one extra clothing for each of my children in a bag. Thanks god my children are alive.

ORSAM: How do you make your living? Do you work?

Dua Saleh Haled: There are many benefactors in the neighborhood. Everyday we receive food. Some people give us money, and some others bring fruit. Some people brought milk, fruit juice for my children for a couple of times. I cannot work since I have four children to look after. Every afternoon, benefactors who distribute iftar meal during Ramadan month come to bring us food.

**This interview was conducted by Feyyat Özyazar in Reyhanlı district of Hatay on July 25, 2013.*

An Interview with Huriye al Ahmed Sinceri who crossed the border from Syria into Turkey and settled in Reyhanlı district of Hatay



Huriye al Ahmed Sinceri and her husband worked as teachers in Syria before the civil war.

ORSAM: Could you tell us about yourself?

Huriye al Ahmed Sinceri: We migrated from Ar Rif, Aleppo 4 months ago. My husband and I worked as teachers in Farac. The SYP had a value two years ago, and everything was cheap in our country. Our salary was 25 thousand SYP each. I could save some money under the circumstances of Syria. When the civil war broke out, our neighborhood was bombarded and we had no security of life anymore. Thus we had to flee Aleppo. There was no chance to work either. Those who still went to work were attacked by opposition forces, and those who did not go could not receive their salaries.

ORSAM: How do you maintain your life in Reyhanlı?

Huriye al Ahmed Sinceri: Here, we live in a shanty house. My husband peddles in district bazaars, and I work as a cleaning lady. Sometimes we find a packing job in warehouses, and

we find a chance to work together. I registered our names in aid organizations for Ramadan. I told them about our situation, and they visited us to see the place where we lived. Now, everyday we receive food aid. The free iftar meals will continue until the end of Ramadan. Everyday pilaf, bean or potato; nothing else. We are longing for meat, chicken, sugar and dessert. Nevertheless, we thank God that we are alive and we live in peace. Time heals all wounds.

**This interview was conducted by Feyyat Özyazar in Reyhanlı district of Hatay on July 25, 2013.*

An Interview with Karmiyye al Vahab who crossed the border from Syria into Turkey and settled in Reyhanlı district of Hatay

"All Syrians are ill. We are psychologically ill. We walk, talk but we feel void inside," says Karmiyye al Vahab.

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



Karmiyye al Vahab: I am from Al Habit, Idlib, Syria. I am 54 years old. My husband's name is Adil al Hashim and my son's name is Muntehe. I live with my daughter-in-law Jasmin. Men fight in war and women suffer.

Our region is very beautiful and is located near Aleppo – Damascus road. It is a land of green, orchards and vineyards. It was the heart of agricultural economy, as well as a peaceful place. This war brought us to a deadlock. It is not certain who fights against whom and to what end.

ORSAM: How do you make your living? What is your source of income?

Karmiyye al Vahab: My husband and I are high-school graduates. My son graduated from college. However, we all work as laborers here in Reyhanlı. We struggle with poverty and misery. After the civil war broke out in Syria, we couldn't find food and lived in poverty but at least we are safe here. My husband is retired, but it means to risk death if he goes to draw his pension in Hama. Many people like us cannot draw their pensions. Also, SYP has been devalued. Even if we went and drew our pension, it would not change anything. The misery will continue.

ORSAM: Is there anything you would like to add?

Karmiyye al Vahab: All Syrians are ill. We are psychologically ill. We walk, talk but we feel void inside. We live like aliens. We cannot think properly. We've shed so much tears that we do not have anymore tears to shed. We do not trust anyone anymore. We are scared. If someone gives us food we will eat, if not we will sleep hungry. Is it called living?

**This interview was conducted by Feyyat Özyazar in Reyhanlı district of Hatay on July 25, 2013.*

An Interview with Nuraya Abdulhakem who crossed the border from Syria into Turkey and settled in Reyhanlı district of Hatay

"Life is over in our region. Therefore we had no choice but to migrate. We got used to see dead bodies around," says Nuraya Abdulhakem.

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

Nuraya Abdulhakem: I am 50 years old. I came from Aleppo to Reyhanlı 3 months ago. I have 3 sons and 5 grandchildren. I lost my husband. The civil war in Syria is getting worse with each passing day. Shops, houses, streets and roads are hit by bomb attacks. We got used to them all, but lack of water, hunger, unsanitary conditions, stink, insects and mosquitos around us started to worry us more than the bombardments.

ORSAM: What are the reasons that made you flee Syria?

Nuraya Abdulhakem: The civil war took my husband away from me. The majority of our house was destroyed. Most of my neighbors were killed. Life is over in our region. Therefore we had no choice but to migrate. We got used to see dead bodies around. Dead bodies began to seem like cat, dog carcasses to us. There is no one to bury them. Fear prevails in the region, where we fled.

ORSAM: How do you make your living here?

Nuraya Abdulhakem: I returned empty-handed. They give food to those who come first abundantly, and towards the end, they say there is no food left. It is a very stupid dis-

tribution system over here. I return empty-handed and we do not have anything to eat at iftar.

**This interview was conducted by Feyyat Özyazar in Reyhanlı district of Hatay on July 25, 2013.*

An Interview with Rabia Hadj Hassan who fled Syria and settled in Reyhanlı district of Hatay

Rabia Hadj Hassan sees the civil war as a pointless, cruel war which has no end.

ORSAM: Could you tell us about yourself?

Rabia Hadj Hassan: We are a poor family. My husband, children, married son, two children and I live together. Our income is not sufficient, therefore I come to wait for the iftar meal during the Ramadan month.

ORSAM: How did you come to Turkey?

Rabia Hadj Hassan: We are from Al Gab, Hama, Syria. Our house was destroyed. We don't have a source of income anymore. The youth is not safe there. They will either fight against the regime's army or they will attack on Muslims by fighting along with the regime's army. They do not have another option. I convinced my husband to move into Reyhanlı. I see this civil war as a pointless and a cruel war which has no end.

ORSAM: How do you make your living here?

Rabia Hadj Hassan: Here, we are begging for help. They give us food but there are cameras around shooting us. We take our food and leave in shame.

**This interview was conducted by Feyyat Özyazar in Reyhanlı district of Hatay on July 25, 2013.*

An Interview with Behiye Attar who crossed the border from Syria into Turkey and settled in Reyhanlı district of Hatay

"At least a member of every Syrian family is martyred, injured or lost," says Behiye Attar.

ORSAM: Could you tell us about yourself in brief?

Behiye Attar: I live in Al Haldiya, Hama, Syria. I am 41-year-old housewife, and I have three children. As women in Syria, we did not know how to bake bread. Because we bought it from bakery and it was much cheaper that way. There are many women in Syria who do not even how to knead dough. Now, on the other hand, we are in need of flour and dough, and we've learned how to bake bread on iron plate.

ORSAM: What jobs did women do in Syria?

Behiye Attar: Syrian women were not allowed to work except for those who lived in rural areas. But here we work in the fields as agricultural laborer, also as a dishwasher and cleaner. We clean other people's backyards. We used to eat meat all the time, and did not like every of food. But now we are in need of vegetable, hot plate of food. We wait in lines in front of iftar tents or foundations which distributed free meal, hoping to have a plate of food.

ORSAM: How do you make your living? What is your source of income?

Behiye Attar: My husband leaves for work in the morning and comes home at night for a

daily wage of 20 TL. Sometimes I work as a cleaner and contribute to household expenses. We are not hungry, but still we have problems and we are worried.

Our house was destroyed. We don't have a source of income anymore. Our family was destroyed, as well as our dreams. I do not know where my siblings are right now. My husband, on the other hand, cannot hear from his uncles and cousins. People are being killed and injured; while some people are trapped in the wreckage.

ORSAM: Is there anything you would like to add?

Behiye Attar: At least a member of every Syrian family is martyred, injured or lost. People are in poor health live in depression. The people and children cannot eat well, children cannot play and wander around half-naked. There it is; the image of the Syrian people.

**This interview was conducted by Feyyat Özyazar in Reyhanlı district of Hatay on July 25, 2013.*

An Interview with Muntaha Khaled who crossed the border from Syria into Turkey and settled in Reyhanlı district of Hatay

Muntaha Khaled says that it is not proper for young boys and girls to wait in food queues together according to customary rules, therefore elderly women and children wait in queues.

ORSAM: Could you introduce yourself? How did you come to Turkey?

Muntaha Khaled: I am from Idlib, Syria. I am a mother of 5 children; two sons and three daughters. We've lost everything we had in Idlib. Our village was destroyed. I do not know how it will be rebuilt, and who will help.

ORSAM: How do you make your living here?

Muntaha Khaled: Actually I am a tailor, but I could not find a job in Reyhanlı. My children work as laborers. Every afternoon I come to the area near the municipality where iftar meal is distributed. I am given 4-person meal,



but we are 7 people in the family. When I ask the reason, the officials say that they consider a family consists of 4 members and they cook accordingly. Some aid organizations give bread besides the meal, while some other give only meal or only bread. We cannot reach all of them at the same time.

According to customary rules, is not proper for young boys and girls to wait in food queues together. Mostly men do not like to be seen in such places either. Therefore elderly women and children wait in queues.

**This interview was conducted by Feyyat Özyazar in Reyhanlı district of Hatay on July 26, 2013.*

An Interview with Nevara al Harbi who fled Syria and settled in Reyhanlı district of Hatay

Nevara al Harbi asks, "During the Ramadan month, people's religious feelings come into prominence. The number of people who want

to help those in need increase. But what will happen after the Ramadan?"

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

Nevara al Harbi: We come from Hama, Syria. My husband Halel passed away. I am 60 years old, and I have 5 children. We were a rich family. My husband served as mukhtar for a long time. We had a large social circle, and lived in abundance.

ORSAM: What made you leave Syria?

Nevara al Harbi: When the civil war broke out, my children drew the attention on themselves. They pointed themselves as a target. Our village was bombarded, lands were set on fire, our properties, assets were plundered. On the one hand we were hit by the regime's army, and on the other hand some families taking sides with Assad acted in cooperation with the regime's army and attacked on the opposition, as well as informing against them and seizing their properties. We were stuck



between the plunderers and the cruel army. We could not save our tractor or anything we had at all. They either set everything on fire or plundered them. Not only our properties, but also the majority of our village was destroyed like this.

ORSAM: How do you make your living here?

Nevara al Harbi: Currently, I seek help to get food from the aid organizations in Reyhanlı, and also I seek clothes for my grandchildren. My grandchildren, daughters-in-law, and I have nothing else than the clothes on us. When we need to change our clothes, we just take them off and wash before we sleep and wear them again after they dry. Recently, benefactors started to give us clothes and furniture they do not wear or use. Now we have a couple of clothes.

During the Ramadan month, people's religious feelings come into prominence. The number of people who want to help those in need increase. But what will happen after the Ramadan? Who will give us food every evening? When will my children and grandchildren see hot plate of food again? In Reyhanlı, we ate only bread, potato and pasta for an entire month. We make tea only once a day, because tea and sugar is so expensive. There are many Syrian families here who have come down in the world, and we are one of them. Bombardments did not kill us, but we might die of starvation, sorrow, pain or stress.

**This interview was conducted by Feyyat Özyazar in Reyhanlı district of Hatay on July 26, 2013.*

An Interview with Vasaf Hamden who fled Syria and settled in Reyhanlı district of Hatay

Vasaf Hamden relies on help from aid organizations which look after martyr's families and provide financial support each month.

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

Vasaf Hamden: I come from Idlib, Syria. My husband was martyred three months ago. I have two children. My husband was fighting against the regime's army along with Jaish al-Hur in a region located between Idlib and Aleppo. He had been fighting for months, and during this period, our village was bombarded for several times. We lived in misery, but my husband insisted on not fleeing Syria.

ORSAM: How are the people in Syria doing? What problems do they encounter during the migration process?

Vasaf Hamden: In Syria, people cannot find anything to eat, even bread. There are many areas, where power and water is cut. People are given bread, which is baked in basements of some building thanks to generators. But there are so many denouncers among people that they immediately report the names, actions and places; and the regime's army destroy the place by air. Before the regime's army, people among us kill one another. Some people do it just for money. A neighbor reports against his neighbor. Or sometimes they slander. The majority of deaths, slaughters and bombardments are caused by those informers and spies.

ORSAM: How do you make your living here? What is your source of income?

Vasaf Hamden: We have relatives and friends from our village here who settled in Reyhanlı months earlier than us. They became acquainted with Reyhanlı, they know here well now. They easily found us a house. I live here

with my children. There are aid organizations here in Reyhanlı which look after martyr's families and provide financial support each month. I rely on their help.

During the Ramadan month, I come here everyday to take food. Although it is a little hard to come here, still it is easier to eat cooked food. My children can eat hot plate of food and do not sleep hungry. Hence, I do not mind waiting in line and getting tired.

**This interview was conducted by Feyyat Özyazar in Reyhanlı district of Hatay on July 26, 2013.*

An Interview with Vasfiyye Hadj Ali who fled Syria and settled in Reyhanlı district of Hatay

"My husband was a clergyman in Hama, and his salary was cut following the outbreak of the civil war. Thus, we had to migrate," says Vasfiyye Hadj Ali.

ORSAM: Could you tell us about your life in here and how you came to Reyhanlı?

Vasfiyye Hadj Ali: My name is Vasfiyye Hadj Ali. We fled Hama, Syria and moved into Reyhanlı three months ago. I live with my husband and son. We are a 7-member family. Every evening, we wait in line with plastic plates to get food in front of the municipal building around 19:000 since the beginning of Ramadan month. We live in Bayır neighborhood of Reyhanlı. I have to walk 20 minutes to get food. I try to be home 35 minutes before the iftar hour.

ORSAM: How was your life in Hama before you migrated to Turkey?

Vasfiyye Hadj Ali: My husband was a clergyman in Hama, and his salary was cut after the outbreak of the civil war. My son, on the other hand, could work as a laborer, if not as a public servant. We were able to make our living. We did not live in peace already, but after the beginning of the civil war, we had no peace at all. Our neighborhood was under constant bombardment of the Assad's army. Everybody was scared and started to migrate, then we had to flee as well. Hama was always under bombardment and even the buildings partially destroyed were being bombed, because the



regime's forces had heard about people who were hiding under wreckage. Therefore, the regime's army attacked on the wreckages as well.

ORSAM: How did you live in such a tough environment?

Vasfiyye Hady Ali: We could not meet our basic needs. Transportation was paralyzed due to the bombardment and we did not have access to water and food. We had no life at all. It was like we were fleeing a prison camp. The only thing we had was some money and the clothes on us. We did not know who were the people we met on the way, there was no state control. Everyone was demanding some things. We had travel expenses, and we met both those who robbed and those who helped us on the way. During this process, we met various type of people.

ORSAM: What are your observations during the process?

Vasfiyye Hady Ali: You know, you cannot express everything with words. You must see and experience yourself to understand it. Smokes, cries of women and children etc. prevailed all around. Nothing was left of the city. Everything was destroyed, including facilities and factories. Roads were full of broken and abandoned vehicles as we left Hama. When we arrived in the Turkish border zone, we believed we survived and we were safe. Life is over in Syria.

**This interview was conducted by Feyyat Özyazar in Reyhanlı district of Hatay on July 26, 2013.*

An Interview with Rehel Hady Hamdo al Kusay who crossed the border from Syria into Turkey and settled in Reyhanlı district of Hatay

Rehel Hady Hamdo al Kusay is only hoping for the release of her husband from the prison in exchange.

ORSAM: Could you introduce yourself in brief?

Rehel Hady Hamdo al Kusay: I am from Hay Al-Kussur, Hama, Syria. My husband Nevvaf was arrested by the regime's forces, and I live with my sister-in-law Hajer, my mother-in-law Meriam, and my children.

ORSAM: With whom did you migrate to Reyhanlı? Why did you leave Syria?

Rehel Hady Hamdo al Kusay: My husband is in prison; my sister-in-law's husband, namely my husband's younger brother, was martyred; and my mother-in-law lives with us. We came to Reyhanlı six months ago, because Hama had been under bombardment. However, since my husband and his brother both fight along with the opposition against the regime's forces, they returned to Syria after settling us in Reyhanlı. We heard that my husband's brother Haisem, father of three children, was martyred. Then my husband was arrested and Assad's army took him away. Now he is in prison in Damascus.

ORSAM: How do you make your living in Turkey?

Rehel Hady Hamdo al Kusay: Now as three women, we live on our own in Reyhanlı. We work as agricultural laborers, and rely on the help of aid organizations during Ramadan month. We go to the foundations and bakeries which distribute free food and bread for iftar.

ORSAM: What is it like in prison? On what conditions do your husband and others in prison might be released?

Rehel Hadj Hamdo al Kusay: When the opposition forces capture someone from the Assad's army in Syria, they exchange their friends in prison with those whom they capture. I am only hoping for the release of my husband from the prison in exchange, after Jaish al-Hur captures a member/several members of the Assad's army.

ORSAM: Are you planning to go back to Syria?

Rehel Hadj Hamdo al Kusay: As family, we cannot go back to Syria unless the current regime changes.

**This interview was conducted by Feyyat Özyazar in Reyhanlı district of Hatay on July 27, 2013.*

An Interview with Sonya Allush who fled Syria and settled in Reyhanlı district of Hatay

"The hardest times of a woman, a mother is her experiences during the civil war," says Sonya Allush.

ORSAM: Could you tell us about yourself?

Sonya Allush: We live in al Huwaz district of Hama, Syria. We have 5 children. My husband is a construction worker.

ORSAM: Can you please tell us what you went through?

Sonya Allush: The hardest times of a woman, a mother is her experiences during the civil war. We are a poor family. We had at least a house back in Syria, but it was destroyed during the bombardment, like many others in our neighborhood. We slept outside, under the

shadows of trees or took shelter in the houses that had been abandoned after the bombardment for months.

Lots of families in our neighborhood invaded others' houses, especially when rich families leave their home, the poor break into those houses because they have no other choice. We longed for bread and water, and it was a major problem for us to feed our children and keep them warm. We were in solidarity with the people from our neighborhood, but there was no means.

ORSAM: What are your observations regarding the people in Syria?

Sonya Allush: There was no means to clear the wreckages, and no time to treat the injured people and bury dead bodies. Because when it got crowded in a certain area, we were attacked by air and thus we couldn't stay together in large groups for fear of being killed. During the day hours, everybody hid under wreckages, and nobody worked. It is the same for the neighboring villages and towns. Nobody could hear from each other due to the lack transportation.

ORSAM: How did you come to Turkey?

Sonya Allush: We arrived in the Turkish border zone under difficult circumstances, and we crossed the border into Turkey only after waiting for two weeks. During this process, we couldn't find a glass of water, or a piece of bread.

ORSAM: Could you tell us about your life in Reyhanlı?

Sonya Allush: We found a shanty house in Reyhanlı, and live together as two families. We received help from aid organizations, and ate from the free iftar meals provided by the

municipality. When my husband and I find a job, we both work. The bombardment in Hama has not ended yet. We hear that it still continues.

**This interview was conducted by Feyyat Özyazar in Reyhanlı district of Hatay on July 27, 2013.*

An Interview with Husne Seyyid Isa who crossed the border from Syria into Turkey and settled in Reyhanlı district of Hatay

Husne Seyyid Isa lost her husband. Also their house was destroyed. So that she came to Turkey due to the unsanitary conditions in Syria.

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

Husne Seyyid Isa: I come from Binnec, Idlib province of Syria. I am 34 years old and have a child. Here I live with my mother.

ORSAM: Why did you leave Syria?

Husne Seyyid Isa: My husband was martyred as a result of the bombardment in our neighborhood. My elder brother, sister-in-law, mother and I illegally crossed the border into Turkey and came to Reyhanlı. I worked as a nurse at hospital, and helped many injured people after the outbreak of the civil war. I tried to help the women, children and elderly people who were injured as a result of bombardment in our neighborhood as much as I could. However, our house was destroyed, and we had no place to live in. When I also lost my husband, I had no choice but to leave Syria.

My elder brother came with us as well, and we rent a house. I worked as a cleaner. My brother,

on the other hand, began to work as a peddler. But as the number of Syrians increased in Reyhanlı, as well as the number of peddlers, the level of income declined. Hence, it became harder for him to live by peddling because of the expensive living conditions with three kids. Hunger and misery prevailed. So he left us on our own, and returned to Syria with his wife and children. Disloyalty of my brother to his mother and sister upset and destroyed us more than his returning to Syria.

ORSAM: How do you make your living in here?

Husne Seyyid Isa: Currently I live with my mother and child in a single-room apartment with a kitchen. We cannot find bread most of the time. I applied for several aid organizations and foundations. I've received food aid only once so far. I work as a cleaning lady, and my monthly income is not beyond 250 TL. I have not bought a new clothing for myself or my child for 6 months. We've eaten meat only once since we came here six months ago, and it was during the Ramadan month. And neighbors have given us food for a couple of times.

ORSAM: How do you get along with other Syrian refugees in Reyhanlı?

Husne Seyyid Isa: There are many Syrian families around in the neighborhood. However, as Syrians, everyone is preoccupied with his/her own troubles. Even those who do not have financial difficulty do not care about their neighbors, do not ask if they are hungry or have any problem. People act completely insensitively. We do not have the understanding of sharing. Those who are not killed in the civil war die of poverty.

ORSAM: What kind of difficulties have you encountered as a woman?

Husne Seyyid Isa: Some Syrians here have attempted to take advantage of my neediness and proposed to me. They propose to women to have a 2nd or 3rd wife. But I reject their proposal. Because I do not trust. They could leave or throw us out of the house, which is the character of Syrian men. I prefer to die of hunger than being dishonored.

**This interview was conducted by Feyyat Özyazar in Reyhanlı district of Hatay on August 15, 2013.*

An Interview with Ranya Daur who crossed the border from Syria into Turkey and settled in Reyhanlı district of Hatay

Ranya Daur says that they rely on help from others, and they get by when her husband finds a job.

ORSAM: Could you tell us about yourself?

Ranya Daur: Husne Seyyid Isa: I live in Kerferhu district of Idlib, Syria. I am a mother of five children and my husband is an agricultural laborer.

ORSAM: What did you go through during the civil war? What were the developments that made you leave Syria?

Ranya Daur: Our region was bombed by air and ground forces of the regime in Syria, like other regions in the country. It was six months ago, when the bombing started and it lasted for hours. When I looked around in the morning, houses had been destroyed and everywhere was full of black smoke. Since we lived in village-style houses, they were located side by side lined in circle. The room next to the door, bathroom, kitchen were about to be destroyed, but we left home by taking a

couple belongings we could carry along with us. We did not have any asset. Children cried all night long. My husband and I were terrified as well. Our army was attacking on us. I cried for a long time and thought about where we could go, and what we would do. We fled Syria towards the Turkish border zone, and after waiting for couple of days in the border zone, we illegally crossed the border into Turkey. We rent a two-room house with a kitchen and bathroom in Reyhanlı, and we pay 250 TL a month.

ORSAM: What have you experienced in Turkey so far?

Ranya Daur: We receive aid from benefactors and aid organizations. Also my husband works at any job he finds, he leaves for work in the morning and works until night. A benefactor in our neighborhood distributed milk to Syrian children. The following day was Ramadan and children were very happy, but milks he bought from the grocery had expired. But we saw it after children drank the milk. Many other Syrian families were in the same situation, and we took children to hospital. They were food poisoned. My children have been under treatment for two days and thanks God they feel better now.

ORSAM: Is there anything you would like to add?

Ranya Daur: This is poverty. Ignorance, rush etc. The excitement from finding milk would almost cause me to lose all my children.

**This interview was conducted by Feyyat Özyazar in Reyhanlı district of Hatay on August 15, 2013.*

An Interview with Rihene al Bekkur who crossed the border from Syria into Turkey and settled in Reyhanlı district of Hatay

“Those who migrated in the first place are luckier than us. They know everywhere, while we do not know any foundation, aid organization, charity etc. We have no choice other than to beg for help,” says Rihene al Bekkur.

ORSAM: Could you introduce yourself?

Rihene al Bekkur: I am from Al Raqqa, Syria. I have three children. My husband was killed in a bombardment. I am a widow.

ORSAM: How long have you been in Reyhanlı? What was the reason that brought you to here?

Rihene al Bekkur: It has been 16 days since I came to Reyhanlı. The bombardment that took place between July 15 – August 10 was so strong that our village was completely destroyed by the jet attacks from the air, and by tanks from ground. As the residents of the entire village, we stayed out in the open. The plunderers and regime’s forces broke into our houses and stole everything. They left us without water and food. We had to live in hot weather under the sun, and in darkness. They force people to migrate and try to kill them without bombs. My husband was martyred in a bombardment, and at least 25 people were killed from our village. I took my children away with me, and took shelter in a woodland far from the village. Then we arrived in the border zone with another family.

ORSAM: How did you cross the border into Turkey? What conditions were you faced with?

Rihene al Bekkur: We illegally crossed the border into Turkey, and we thought we would immediately find a place in a tent city, but there was not an available place. We are homeless. We’ve been in Reyhanlı for two weeks, and neither my children nor I have eaten a

hot plate of food, soup so far. I give them a piece of bread and sometimes a tomato or cucumber; this is our food, breakfast, and our life. My three children sleep on the same floor cushion, and I sleep on a mat. We do not even have a blanket. I have a change of clothes other than what I have on me. We couldn’t find a place to take a bath for two weeks. My biggest dream right now is to have a bath.

ORSAM: Are there many other people who live under similar conditions?

Rihene al Bekkur: There are many Syrian women around who have not taken a bath for a long time, and most of us have been infested with lice. Furthermore, most of them have health problems. We applied for many aid organizations, but there are so many demands that they have difficulty in responding to all of them. Those who migrated in the first place are luckier than us. They know everywhere, while we do not know any foundation, aid organization, charity etc. We have no choice other than to beg for help.

**This interview was conducted by Feyyat Özyazar in Reyhanlı district of Hatay on August 15, 2013.*

An Interview with Rabia Daher Hadji Gedro who fled Syria and settled in Istanbul

Rabia Daher Hadji Gedro illegally crossed the border from Syria into Kilis, and then came to Istanbul with the help of an acquaintance.

ORSAM: Could you introduce yourself? How did you cross the border into Turkey?

Rabia Daher Hadji Gedro: My husband Najeb, our children Mahmoud, Suphi, Kamil,

Husra and I came from Ar-Raqqah, Syria. We illegally crossed the border into Kilis three months ago. We arrived in Istanbul with the help of an acquaintance in Kilis. We stay in Kağıthane neighborhood.

ORSAM: How do you make your living in Istanbul?

Rabia Daher Hadji Gedro: I sell hand-knitted clothes in Beyazid square everyday. My husband, on the other hand, works in a bakery. Sometimes our sons work in car wash or sometimes as a construction worker. Our daughter stays at home. She does the housework.

ORSAM: What were the living conditions like in Syria?

Rabia Daher Hadji Gedro: Bombs were dropped on Ar-Raqqah for several times. Tribes were split. Some of the tribes fight along with Jaish al-Hur, and some of them fight along with the regime's army. There are martyrs in each family. Houses of each family have been destroyed. My brother's son was martyred as well. Our house was destroyed.

ORSAM: What are your current living conditions in Istanbul?

Rabia Daher Hadji Gedro: Hasan from Kilis who greeted us in Istanbul helped us rent an apartment. He helps many other Syrians who arrive in Istanbul rent an apartment, find a job. Also, every morning he takes some 15 Syrians and us to the Beyazid square and then takes us home at the end of the day. Each month, we pay him 500 TL commission on rental. We do not know where to go, what to do here. We couldn't do anything if it wasn't for him. We pay 400 TL for rent, and 150 TL for electricity, water, gas bills; we try to make our living. We cannot object to Hasan no matter what he

says. Maybe we can find a cheaper apartment, but in the end, we have to do whatever he tells us to do. We fled Syria because of oppression, bombs and for fear of death. But at least we are free here despite the fact that some people exploit and threaten us. Most of my relatives from Syria migrated to different places like Hatay, Gaziantep, Kilis, Şanlıurfa.

**This interview was conducted by Feyyat Özyazar in Istanbul on September 20, 2013.*

An Interview with Sara Abid al Faris who fled Syria and settled in Istanbul

Sara Abid al Faris and her husband, who are both teachers, fled Syria and moved into Turkey after the bomb attack on Aleppo.

ORSAM: Could you introduce yourself and tell us about what you went through in Syria during the civil war?

Sara Abid al Faris: I am from Al Kelles in Aleppo, Syria. I have 2 children and I work as a civil servant. My husband's name is Shabatin Allam, and he also works as a teacher. The civil war made our life miserable. We went from a district in Aleppo to another one in order to work. But the conflicts, barricades and control points prevented us from going to work. As we could not go to work, we could not receive salary anymore. Our neighborhood was bombed, and after it was seized by the opposition groups, it was declared as the enemy zone.

ORSAM: What are the developments that left you with no choice but to leave Syria? What are your living conditions in Istanbul?

Sara Abid al Faris: We had no choice but to migrate. First of all we crossed the border

from Syria into Kilis, and then arrived in Istanbul. There are many other Syrians like us. We are educated people, but here in Turkey, we worked as an agricultural laborer. We run errands. My husband and I work in a hotel. We are obliged to work in almost every department of the hotel. Cleaning, laundry, dish washing etc. The only time-off we get is an afternoon once a week. My husband is 40 years old, but he looks like a 60-year-old. I am 32 years old, but I look like 50. We live in an apartment with 2 rooms and a living room. We pay 400 TL for rent. We lack many pieces of furniture. Both my family and my husband's family fled Aleppo. They live in Antep and Kilis. Some of them work, some others are unemployed; we talk to them on phone from time to time. Our children cannot leave home. We lock them in the house since we both work. One of my children is 10, and the other is 14 years old.

**This interview was conducted by Feyyat Özyazar in Istanbul on September 20, 2013.*

An Interview with Umeyma Rashid Hadj Youssef who fled Syria and settled in Istanbul

Umeyma Rashid Hadj Youssef works as a cleaner in Istanbul, while her husband work in a coffeehouse.

ORSAM: Could you tell us about yourself? How did you come to Turkey?

Umeyma Rashid Hadj Youssef: I am from al Habit district of Hama, Syria. I am 38 years old and I have 4 children. My husband Mahmoud al Bashir, our child and I migrated to Hatay six months ago. When we gave up hope to return to Syria, we came to Istanbul.

ORSAM: What were your living conditions in Syria?

Umeyma Rashid Hadj Youssef: Al Habit is an agricultural zone in Syria. When it was seized by the opposition groups, the regime's army started to drop bombs and attack on the region. A great number of innocent people were killed as a result of the attacks. None of the Syrians had time or opportunity to bring their personal belongings with them as they migrated. Because one struggles for his/her life under bombardment. Some families left even their elderly parents behind as they fled Syria since they thought their elderly parents would be a burden to them. Some others left their injured or disabled relatives/friends behind and left the country. Health of most of those staying in Syria for a long time has failed. Each Syrian who does not fight has to migrate.

ORSAM: How do you make your living in Istanbul?

Umeyma Rashid Hadj Youssef: My husband works at a coffeehouse, and I work as a cleaner. A family from Hatay brought us to Istanbul. This family also found us an apartment, and job. We are together all the time. The woman of the family from Hatay works as a cleaner as well. I earn 20 TL, and my husband earns 30 TL. At least we are not hungry. After spending the money to pay rent, water, electricity and gas bills, food, all we have left is 100-150 TL.

**This interview was conducted by Feyyat Özyazar in Istanbul on September 20, 2013.*

An Interview with Nadire Ali Kelles who fled Syria and settled in Istanbul

"No one around me knows Arabic, so I communicate with body language," says Nadire Ali Kelles.

ORSAM: Could you tell us about yourself? How do you make your living in Istanbul?

Nadire Ali Kelles: I am from Kefer Zeita in Hama, Syria. I have been in Istanbul for six months. My husband goes to work in the morning and returns home in the evening. We stay in Esenyurt. I go to work as a cleaning lady and babysitter. Everyday the family I work for also gives me bread everyday. No one around me knows Arabic, so I communicate with body language.

ORSAM: What did you witness during the civil war in Syria? What were the developments that forced you to leave Syria?

Nadire Ali Kelles: We had not left our village yet when Hama was bombed. I mean the last bombing attack. After almost a year, military troops attacked. People were tortured. Their vehicles, homes were set on fire. Women, girls were attacked. My husband

Adil Al Kelles is among those who took part in the demonstrations against the regime's army and the demonstrations staged after the Friday prayer along with his relatives. The regime's forces know my husband. My husband had left us and fled. Two months later, I left the village with my children with the help of my relatives. We illegally crossed the border into Hatay.

ORSAM: What have you experienced and witnessed in Turkey?

Nadire Ali Kelles: I found my husband with no money or food. Then we rented an apartment stayed in Kırıkhan for a while. Then the family took us to Istanbul. We stay in an apartment building under construction under difficult conditions. But thank God we are alive.

**This interview was conducted by Feyyat Özyazar in Istanbul on September 20, 2013.*

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