

**Report of the Forum on Governance
session and Local Administration
experiences**

Local Administration experiences
after the Syrian Revolution

2019/11/29-28

Second part

Introduction:

When the Syrian revolution began in 2011, the regime cut the basic services to all rebellious cities and towns and withdrew all workers in the services sector and local councils in these areas aiming to applying the policy of blockade and preventing food and services from these areas to collectively punish the population, and this led to a number of damages a large number of people in every city or town, and here some activists took the initiative to organize relief work and services in these areas and provide some basic services to those in need, but soon the gap of needs began to expand, to a degree that individuals or small groups can no longer continue providing services and assistance on their own without cooperation and coordination with others, this is where the idea of local councils began to arise.

These councils were run by people and groups that were able to provide their services to more needy people. And most of the material-support was provided by Syrian individuals inside or outside Syria, until the need became greater and the fundraising campaigns started outside Syria, which included individuals and organizations from all near or far countries.

Local councils are the main administrative nucleus in the liberated areas. Given the importance of effective and credible local councils, it is necessary to work on evaluating them in order to develop their efficiency in providing services and managing the local community.

The local councils evolved during the Syrian revolution from the administrative and organizational aspects and its relationship with the local community. After these years have passed since the beginning of its experiment, it has to be studied in a scientific way to extract the lessons learned and develop that experience.

Therefore, the Local Development Organization decided to hold sessions of the Governance and Local Councils Forum to present the experiences of local administration after the revolution in the presence of members of local councils in a number of governorates, and these experiences were discussed in their organizational development process and the most important services they provided and the pros and cons that accompanied their work.

I. Idleb Governorate Council:

Foundation:

Many regions were liberated from the governorate's countryside at the end of 2012 and Idleb was one of the first revolting cities and governorates. The entire province was liberated in 2015 and groups of revolutionaries were organizing services at the

areas outside the regime's control. In 2013, several local councils were formed in a number of regions in the governorate with an initiative to manage the services in the governorate, in addition to the military groups playing this role. Idleb city council established its liberation in 2015. A governorate council headed by Abdul Salam Al-Amin was agreed upon at the beginning of 2013 and after the formation of the Syrian interim government, it initiated with many activists and sub-councils holding multiple meetings between the different regions with the aim of forming Idlib Governorate Council to provide basic services and represent the liberated areas. They succeeded in electing the Provincial Council at a conference held in Rihanli-Turkey at the end of 2014 after forming a public authority from different regions that elected a council and an executive office headed by Mr. Ali Arnab. After two months, he submitted his resignation, and the council elected Mr. Ahmed Qassum in his place in March 2015 and based in Hazano. The military groups' interventions in many of the councils prevented holding the third session of the elections in 2017 and to date.

services:

The governorate council worked from the beginning of its formation to provide the necessary services, and to fill the gaps left by the absence of previous government institutions, which were blocked by the regime with the intention of depriving the revolutionary people of their services, and the focus was on health, education, and food security. Since its formation, the Council has supported agriculture within the governorate, especially wheat crop, by providing agricultural tools and seeds and buying the crop from farmers at a good price, then providing this crop to local council furnaces at a reduced price, which is in return supporting of bread prices. Note that over the years of work, the council met all the needs of cities, towns, and communities for the existence of bread bakeries. The council worked to form and structure the directorates in the governorate (seed multiplication, civil registry, real estate interests, agriculture, health, education, ...etc.) and support them. For example, the council was able to secure the wages of five thousand teachers and meet the needs of more than a thousand schools. In 2018, the Local Councils Directorate and the General Services Directorate in the governorate were formed.

The provincial council was affected by the repeated shelling of the council's offices and the liberated areas in general and the ongoing military conflict between the military groups in the governorate regions, especially after Hay'at Tahrir al-Sham took control of most areas in the governorate by the end of 2018, this led to the retreat of the scope of the council's work and this negatively affected the human resources, material resources and the services provided by the council in addition to the lack of a steady financial resource and the failure to develop a fee-collection system to help councils provide basic services in a sustainable manner and organizations compete with councils at times to provide services not coordinating with them and direct their

support to sub-councils without coordination with the governorate council in most cases all of this led to the ineffectiveness and sustainability of basic services.

Regulations and Relations:

The Governorate Council adapted the regulations issued by the Ministry of Local Administration of the Syrian interim government that supervised the elections for the councils, but there was no financial support from the interim government except for couple of months in 2014 and then was limited to technical coordination as well as the relationship between the governorate council and the sub-councils, but there was a weakness in the supervision of over the elections and the accreditation of sub-councils due to the control of some military groups, and the instability of the relationship between the governorate council and the interim government or sub-councils as a result of weak advocacy and administrative follow-up led to a lack of confidence as well as weak control and there were no clear systems control the relationship between councils and organizations.

II. Dar'a Governorate Council:

Foundation:

Dar'a was one of the first revolutionary cities and the spark of the Syrian revolution. Many cities and towns were out of the regime control in 2012, and activists worked to form Dar'a Governorate Council. The meeting took place in Cairo and announced the formation of its first governorate council in July 2013, then moved to Irbid in Jordan to exercise its duties in 2013 and its president was Muhammad Abu Seifan and they had their own rules of procedure. On 2nd Sep 2014 Free Dar'a Governorate Council was elected inside Syria and headed by Dr. Yaqoub Al-Ammar and reelected on 15th Dec 2015 and continued until 15th Jul 2016 Dr. Yaqoub Al-Ammar became Minister of Local Administration and began working in the Ministry on 22nd Aug 2016 and was elected Mr. Mohammed Al-Muzieb as head of the council, less than two months later, Dr. Yaqoub Al-Ammar was martyred on 20th Sep 2016 and Mr. Mohammed Al-Muzieb became Minister of Local Administration and Mr. Osama Al-Bardan was appointed head of the council until the end of that session. In 2017, a new council was elected, headed by Mr. Ali Al-Salkhadi, and it continued until 31st Jul 2018, when the regime took control of Dar'a and the residents were displaced with the council to northern Syria.

Services:

Dar'a Governorate Council worked to form the sub-local councils and activates Real Estate Interests and Transportation Directorates and the Civil Status Department and support the sub-local councils with wheat from the silos according to the population of each council during the period of of Dr. Yaqoub Al-Ammar.

The council also worked to buy wheat from farmers at competitive prices for the regime and sell it later to the Grain Foundation, which in turn grinds it and sells it to local councils at encouraging prices. The council was taking its percentage of

purchase and sale to be used as salaries for members of the executive office and employees, and the council contributed to activating the Directorate of Cleanliness and Water and also worked to rehabilitate schools and support the medical sector and cooperation with the civil defense.

Regulations and Relations:

The relationship of the Governorate Council with the sub-local councils was an organizational relationship, as the councils were formed according to the local administration law and the executive regulations issued by the Ministry of Local Administration in the Syrian interim government.

Dar'a Governorate Council was distinguished for organizing the work of charities and organizations (NGOs), and in late 2017 the council worked on forming a committee to manage the liberated areas in the south in cooperation with the Syrian interim government.

III. Hama Governorate Council:

Foundation:

Hama governorate has witnessed a strong revolutionary movement since the beginning of the Syrian revolution and many cities and towns have gone out of the regime control and activists have sought to form a governorate council in October 2013 and the first council was formally elected headed by Mr. Salah al-Din al-Hamwi and after the formation of the interim government the Ministry of Local Administration formed a preparatory committee in mid-2014 to form a new council. In February 2015, the second session of the council was elected headed by Mr. Alaa Al-Mousa. In April 2017, the third session was elected headed by Mr. Nafi Al-Barazi.

Services:

Hama Governorate Council worked to establish the civil defense in the governorate, support wheat cultivation, support education and health, establish a mill for wheat and flour for bakeries, pave roads, cleaning projects, and electrical maintenance, and also provide sub-councils with logistical equipment and digging shelters in Sahil Al-Ghab. One of the most important obstacles facing the council then, the demographic and the sectarian diversity of the governorate, which caused some differences between the regions and the continuous change of the control map and the centers of the regions still under the control of the regime deprived the council of various databases (civil registry - civil defense - educational offices) and military groups deficit on infrastructures has resulted in the Council being denied access to it and the lack of human resources.

Regulations and Relations:

Hama Governorate Council adopted the regulations approved by the Syrian interim government, especially the executive regulations for local administration, the internal system, and the financial system in part, and worked to establish the Local Councils Directorate to supervise the formation of the sub-councils, but the control of several military entities and groups in the liberated areas and the state of continuous control change and continuous bombing led to weakness the relationship with many councils and there work of organizations (NGOs) in the governorate was not organized, as was the headquarters of the governorate council most of the time outside the administrative borders of the governorate due to the military operations in the governorate's rural areas with offices in some cities like in Madiq Castle city.



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