

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

Local Administration experiences
after the Syrian Revolution

2019/11/19-18

First 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. Aleppo Governorate Council:

Foundation:

some areas of the governorate countryside were liberated early at the end of 2011 and large parts of the city joined them after mid-2012 and the areas outside the regime's control were organizing services in which volunteer groups of revolutionaries and with the beginning of 2013 several local councils were formed in a number of these regions in the province and the Revolutionary Council emerged with an initiative to manage services in the province, then many activists initiated several meetings between the different regions with the aim of forming an administrative entity to provide basic services and represent the liberated areas. In March 2013, after forming

a public body from various regions, it elected a governorate council and an executive office headed by Eng. Yahya Nanaa and took its headquarters in the industrial city near Aleppo city, and then succession the administration of the council as part of an electoral process in the second round headed by Mr. Abdel Rahman Dadam in In 2014 and the third headed by Mr. Bashir Alito in 2015 and the fourth headed by Mr. Mohamed Fadila in 2016 and the fifth headed by Mr. Ibrahim Al-Khalil in 2017 then Mr. Abdulmoneim Al-Mustafa was assigned in 2019 to head the council for a transitional period until the elections are held and this is smooth transition of the most important positives in the work of the council has strengthened its legitimacy in front of the local community and sub-councils as well as to promote the spirit of volunteerism in the community.

services:

Since its foundation, Aleppo Governorate Council has endeavored to provide basic services to citizens in the various regions of the governorate, starting with organizing the provision of flour to ovens, mills, relief and the Directorate of Transport, and then moved to organizing the work of local councils through the formation of the legal office first, which later evolved to the Directorate of Local Councils, as well. The establishment of the Education Office, which supervised education, schools and exams in cooperation with organizations and the interim government. The governorate council was affected by the repeated shelling on its offices, and the repeated loss of the liberated areas

led to move the council office to several areas, and this affected the human resources and material resources, and this negatively affected the services provided by the council in addition to the lack of a fixed financial support and the failure to develop a fee-collection system to help the councils provide basic services in a sustainable manner, in addition to NGOs' competition for councils at times to provide services without coordinating with them. NGOs Support is directed to sub-councils without coordination with the Governorate Council in most cases, all of which led to ineffectiveness or sustainability.

Regulations and Relations:

The Governorate Council adopted its own internal system that organizes the work of the various structures, and then relied on the regulations issued by the Ministry of Local Administration of the Syrian Interim Government that supervised council elections starting from its second round, but there was no financial support from the interim government except for several months in 2014, then the matter was limited to technical coordination, as well as the relationship between the governorate council and the sub-councils, but the supervision of the governorate council continued to oversee the elections and the adoption of sub-councils by region and geographical contact with them and the instability of the relationship between the council and the interim government or sub-councils as a result of lack of support and weak administrative follow-up led to a lack of confidence as well as weak control, also there are no clear relationship systems define the relationship with the NGOs.

II. Aleppo City Council:

Foundation:

After liberating Aleppo city neighborhoods in 2012, the urgent need to provide basic services to residential neighborhoods emerged, as more than a million people lived in the liberated areas of the city, and many relief committees in the neighborhoods and maintenance teams quickly established and these committees began with the activists to form Aleppo City Council early 2013, and its efforts were crowned with success in the third month of the same year, where a public body was formed that elected a city council and the executive office headed by Mr. Ahmed Azouz, and then the elected councils alternated, where Abdel Aziz Al-Maghribi later assumed the presidency of the council in 2014-2015 for two rounds, then Mr. Berta Hajj Hasan in 2016, which continued until the siege of Aleppo at the end of 2016, and the city's residents were displaced and the General Assembly elected a new council after the displacement headed by Ziyad Al-Muhammad in 2017, then Mrs. Iman Hashem took over the presidency of the Council in 2018, and this contributed to enhancing the legitimacy of the council and its resistance to some other bodies that tried to provide services and compete with the city council.

Services:

Aleppo City Council contributed to providing basic services to the local people in the neighborhoods of the city, which amounted to more than 60 residential

neighborhoods liberated, including relief services, bread, flour, hygiene and maintenance of water and electricity networks. The frequent shelling of the city's neighborhoods, including the city council building, led to depleting the council's material and human resources. The legal office supervised the formation and organization of neighborhood councils and resolved disputes in them. The city council contributed to establishing civil defense in the city and received support from the interim government for a short period. Supervising schools and exams in cooperation with the Governorate Council, and the City Council opened the Civil Register Directorate and registered births, deaths, and marriages. The siege of the city had a major impact on the council's services, and was limited to bread and relief, and Some forms of agriculture to secure food requirements. After displacement, the council's work was limited to relief services and water supply for the displaced from the city's residents to the remaining neighborhoods on the outskirts of the city.

Regulations and Relations:

After the end of the first round of the council, which was for six months, work began to develop an internal system for the council and a structure for the offices and departments in it, and to develop a strategic plan for the city council, and a financial system and a system for human resources were also established, then many provisions of the executive regulations issued by the Ministry of Local Administration in the Syrian interim government and the relationship with neighborhood councils was good and periodic meetings, which is a

positive point, while the relationship with the governorate council and the interim government is unstable and this constituted a negative point in the council's work.

III. Ar-Raqqa Governorate Council:

Foundation:

Ar-Raqqa city was liberated in March 2013, the military forces assumed the management of the city, then a successful city council was formed in late 2013, while some areas of the countryside were liberated before the city and had formed local councils such as Tel-Abiad. In 2014, ISIS took control of the city, and work began on forming a governorate council after the formation of the Syrian interim government. Mr. Omar Al-Khumri was appointed as interim president of the provincial council until an elected council was formed that was at the end of 2015 headed by Mr. Saad Shwish and re-elected in 2018 for a second round then in 2019 a new council was elected headed by Mr. Fayez Al-Kate', and the council was based in the Turkish state of Sanliurfa. In 2019, an office was opened for the council in Jarablus to take care of the displaced from Ar-Raqqa, and given the control of ISIS and then PYD over the city, effective councils were not formed on the ground.

Services:

The services provided by the city council and the governorate council at the beginning of its formation were limited to relief due to the factions' military control of the facilities of the city, then ISIS and PYD took control over the city to prevent any activity of any civil body.

Regulations and Relations:

No regulations were adopted at the beginning of Ar-Raqqa councils formation for a short period of time and after the formation of the interim government at the end of 2013 and the election of a council for the Ar-Raqqa Governorate in 2015 depending on the executive regulations of the local administration and the relationship was good with the interim government as the governorate council was participating in a lot of Meetings with the government, but did not receive any financial support from the government.

IV. Rural-Damascus Governorate Council:

Foundation:

After the liberation of many areas in Damascus countryside at the beginning of 2012, the local councils were formed in more than 180 towns and villages and due to the severing of the liberated areas in the Damascus countryside, there was no effective communication to form a governorate council until the end of 2013 where the sub-councils worked especially in Eastern Ghouta and some activists from the other regions are preparing a governorate council formation, and this has been accompanied by the formation of the Syrian interim government, where the Ministry of Local Administration has taken over the preparations to complete the formation of the Rural-Damascus governorate council, an electoral conference held in Gaziantep (Turkey) in April 2014, where the first council was elected headed by Eng. Osama Natouf, and Jordan was a temporary HQ for it. In

December 2015, a new council was elected in its second round headed by Mr. Akram Touma and the council's headquarters moved to Eastern Ghouta. Then after the formation of the second Syrian interim government and Akram Tohma named as a vice-president, Vice Council President Mr. Tariq Muatermawi was appointed to head the council in Augustus 2016, and then a new council headed by Mr. Mustafa Saqr was elected in December 2017. After the displacement of Eastern Ghouta at the beginning of 2018 the council moved to Aleppo countryside, and a new council was recently elected in northern Syria headed by Mr. Mahmoud Farhood in mid-2019.

Despite the permanent siege of Rural Damascus and the displacement of most of its residents to northern Syria, the election process for the provincial council was carried out in a way that helps to represent the various regions in the governorate, even after the displacement.

Services:

The council's services was limited to relief at the beginning of its formation, and soon after that, its services developed after moving the headquarter to Eastern Ghouta, where many projects were implemented, especially in Eastern Ghouta, food security projects, especially agriculture, wheat, and bakery, and the General Services Directorate did sanitation works, supervising the educational process and examinations in cooperation with the Education Directorate of the government, the council worked to supervise the formation of the sub-councils, but its role was limited, especially outside Eastern Ghouta,

and the siege negatively affected the sustainability and impact of these services.

Regulations and Relations:

Due to the fact that the formation of the first council for the Rural-Damascus was associated with the development of the executive regulations of the local administration, the governorate council approved it and circulated it to the sub-councils, but there was uneven adaptation from the sub-councils in Eastern Ghouta and the relationship of the provincial council was good with the Syrian interim government, especially with the presence of the Deputy Prime Minister in Eastern Ghouta and its effective role in coordination with the councils and directorates, as well as the relationship with the sub-councils, but it was uneven with other councils outside Eastern Ghouta due to the lack of geographical contact or financial support and the work of the council on organizing the work of the NGOs in Eastern Ghouta in an acceptable coordination.



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