THE HELL OUT OF PRISON

The Released Political Prisoners in Syria

FREEDOM JASMINE
ياسمين الحرية

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"Qualitative Study"

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The Researchers: Garib MIRZA, Samer TLASS, Yasmina BINSHE.

The Translation from Arabic to English: Garib MIRZA. Edited by: Sarah Atkinson.

The Translation from English to Turkish: Onur Ozgur, Cansu Tekin.

Drawings: G. Oyku Dogan.

Freedom Jasmine

Human Rights and Advocacy

Gaziantep, Turkey.

http://jasmine-sy.org

info@jasmine-sy.org

This research has been conducted as a part of the **International Campaign to Save Detainees in Syria,** which has been launched by Freedom Jasmine.

In 2014, a group of Syrian human rights activists, lawyers and prison survivors founded Freedom Jasmine in Gaziantep, in the south of Turkey. It is an organization concerned with documenting the violations committed against those who were arrested and imprisoned, and those who have been subjected to enforced disappearance, by any of the parties involved in the Syrian conflict.

Freedom Jasmine launched its first campaign, "The Global Campaign for Rescuing Syrian Prisoners" in late 2014. In addition to this, Freedom Yasmeen also trains human rights activists on how to document human rights violations and how to plan and manage advocacy campaigns, both inside Syria and in Turkey.

Freedom Yasmeen focuses on interviewing recently released prison survivors, in order to document cases of violation during their confinement, and to prepare papers to be raised in the relevant

courts. The organization ultimately seeks to bring to justice the perpetrators of such violations.

This study endeavors to empower advocacy efforts, neutralizing the "affair of prisoners" from the political route, and analyzing the cases of survivors to support the various efforts exercised to help these survivors and reintegrate them into society.

Executive Summary

This research studies the social, economic and identity-related consequences the ex-that prisoners experience after leaving prison. It also aims at uncovering and analyzing the impact of incarceration on their lives.

This study concerns Syrian ex-political prisoners who were arrested, on grounds related to the current conflict in the country, between 2011 and 2017.

For the purposes of our research, we adopted the Grounded Theory method, interviewing a purposive sample of ex-prisoners, and questioning the various overlapped dimensions that form the picture of this issue.

In the beginning, we set forth the international and national (Syrian) legal definitions of political prisoners, which are still contested. We then addressed the ways in which the ex-prisoner experiences the initial moments of being out of prison; namely, the experience of the outside

world in the first instances of being "free." IThi\ is an important "instance-phenomenon" because of the semi- or complete isolation from the outside world that is imposed on prisoners. We then analyzed the ex-prisoner's experience of the outside world based on a larger period, starting from the first contact with the outside world up until the interview, and we addressed what we called "Dis-Earthing" from the ex-prisoner's own community, city, and world, which is a permanent and continuous uprooting.

We then addressed and analyzed initial determinants of the social identity adopted and exercised by the ex-prisoners, and tried to define how prison affected them. We discussed the alienation that ex-prisoners feel and articulate, and how such alienation influences the legitimacy of the state as seen by those ex-prisoners, and how such perceptions of the state's legitimacy may affect their understanding and practice of citizenship now and in the future. We also analyzed the individual

identity issues of the sample members, and the patterns in which it appears.

Finally, we discussed the concept of "reintegration" in the Syrian context, based on the previous analysis. We considered the problems that ex-political prisoners face, especially those who are now refugees in Turkey.

Introduction:

In mid-March 2011, popular protests and demonstrations broke out in Syria against Bashar Assad and his Baath Party regime, which has been in power since 1963. This protest took place in the context of the so-called "Arab Spring", which toppled two Arab dictators, the Tunisian and Egyptian presidents, after peaceful mass demonstrations resulted in pushing the army to overthrow them. In Libya, peaceful protest escalated into an armed revolution backed by the West, resulting in the toppling of dictator Qadhafi and killing him. In Yemen, there was a sort of military intervention that overturned the dictator Ali Abdullah Saleh.

The peaceful demonstrations in Syria gradually developed into a non-international armed conflict, or civil war. The brutal oppression of Assad's regime was one of the major factors that paved the way to civil war; defections from the regime army gradually spread, and defectors founded the first core of the Free

Syrian Army (FSA) in late 2011. Later, various and conflicting armed battalions emerged, fighting the regime, and fighting each other. Different ideologies, affiliations and loyalties--such as Islamic, extreme Islamic, and nationalist (e.g. PYD) parties--participated in shaping the current very complicated situation in Syria.

On the other hand, the intervention of international forces and regional militias has played a role in complicating the conflict, and pushing it deeply into a sectarian nature that is being labeled as a Sunni-Shiite/Alawi conflict. The sectarian dimension has been constantly rooted in the Syrian, regional and global narrative. It is worthy to note the role of the Shiite militias in fueling such a sectarian dimension. Since 2013, these militias, being loyal to, and backed by, the Iranian government, have played an essential role in the conflict. As a result, various Lebanese, Iraqi, Afghani and Pakistani

militias are involved in the Syrian conflict[1].

In September 2014, strikes by the US-led international coalition against IS started in Syria; one year later, in September 2015, Russia declared its direct intervention in Syria, backing Assad. The following year, Operation Euphrates Shield, led by Turkey, started in the north of Syria against IS (Aug. 2016); seven months later the US Navy struck Shayrat Airbase – a regime airbase – in reaction to the alleged chemical attack committed by the regime against Khan Shykhun, Idlip in April 2017.

In summary, various conflicting forces share control over the Syrian lands: the regime and pro-regime forces, FSA's battalions, a wide range of Islamic-oriented forces, Kurdish forces, and ISIS. Each one of these forces conforms, in one way or another, a footstep for regional and international powers in Syria.

Within this political-military framework, severe violations have been – and are being – committed against human rights and international humanitarian law. During this research we focus on the victims of arbitrary arrest and torture in the regime's prisons. This arbitrary arrest, torture, ill treatment, torture leading to death, and forced disappearance form a basic means with which the regime endeavors to oppress the popular protest.

According to documentation from Syrian Network for Human Rights, the number of people arrested since the protests of 2011 comes to more than 93,000 *documented by name*, including 2800 children (under 18 years old) and 5800 women, most of whom are classified as subject to forced disappearance[2]. However, Syrian activists speak of more than 200,000 arrested. International human rights organizations like Amnesty International and Human Rights Watch, among others, have issued several studies and reports addressing the systematic torture, deprivation of basic

rights, and extrajudicial killings which have been committed against prisoners in Syrian prisons. Amnesty International has estimated that as of mid-2016, 17,723 prisoners had been killed in the regime's prisons.[3]

It is noteworthy that the withholding of information on the fate of prisoners is, per se, a sort of collective punishment. It is common for families to spend days searching for a "distorted" image of their loved ones who have been arrested by the regime. This became common especially after "Caesar" leaked 55,000 photographs of prisoners killed inside the regime's prisons. Up till now, thousands of families have no information whatsoever on the status of their loved ones inside prisons.

Regarding the arrests made during the current Syrian conflict, the majority of previous studies have focused on the period of actual imprisonment, which is without a doubt a period of hell. But there are few studies on the lives of prisoners after their release. We found only one

study concerning this topic, a statistical study concerning only women former prisoners, and the determinants of their reintegration into society. But we were unable to use it because of fundamental methodological errors in the conclusion of its findings; that is, its inferential statistical findings do not meet the necessary standards of research[4].

Studies that have examined the cases of former political prisoners, and in general former prisoners, in different regions of the world, point to the notion (or the signifier) of their transition from "Inside" to "Outside", which is per se a complicated one. In spite of this, we observed that this transition is usually narrated as a transporting from a case consisting of simple signifiers (inhumanity, unfairness, oppression, death under torture, and so on) to another case also consisting of simple signifiers (freedom, resurrection, and so on). Such simplified narrative may justifiably result from the extreme darkness and brutality of

the "Inside"--just staying alive is a worthy goal.

We presume that moving from the "Inside" to the "Outside" is not a completely achievable deed. It is not only a spatial moving though the person passes clearly locative boundaries. Indeed, both the "Inside" – as a living social and political, semiotic and narrative symbol – and the "Outside" – in which, and only in which, the "Inside-symbol" can articulate itself, being uttered by the mouth of the released ex-prisoners – are overlapped. That is to say, the ex-prisoner is a common ambassador between the two: "Inside" and "Outside." Thus, the ex-prisoner is not simply a mover from a dark "Inside" to a more comfortable or less dark "Outside."

Reintegration studies focus on the complexity that takes place, and is adhered to, in the overlapped region between the two fields--the Inside and the Outside; they are multidimensional studies, can cover a wide range of

political, identity-related, economic and social dimensions.

Within the Syrian situation, such a concern falls under a specific complexity, resulting from two factors which formed an enduring presence during the research: firstly, the Outside has changed radically since 2011; secondly, a notable portion of the prisoners had no—or very little—idea as to what was going on the Outside.

The Methodology:

a- This research analyzes different dimensions of the Syrian ex-political prisoners' circumstances, which are defined thus:

The ex-political prisoner is: the Syrian or Palestinian prisoner (since 1948, thousands of Palestinians have fled to Syria, where now there are nearly 500,000 Palestinian persons in Syria), who has been arrested by regime or pro-regime forces on grounds related to the current Syrian conflict. This can be refer to active participation, or being engaged in peaceful non-violent or military actions against the Assad regime, or being accused of such actions unfairly, or being held as a hostage of the regime.

Those who were--before confinement-- affiliated with classified terrorist groups or extreme Islamic or nationalist groups have been deliberately excluded from the definition. This is to alleviate potential ideological effects of the sample on the findings, (an above average coherence,

adoptive social and partisan environment is expected, regarding the Islamic and the nationalist partisan prisoners, compared to those who were not affiliated). On the other hand, we tried to avoid the argument about "terrorism" of which prisoners are usually accused.

This research does not attempt to reflect the experience of prisoners in all the non-state actors' prisons, for the following two reasons:

1- The total estimated number of those prisoners is less than 13,000; they account for less than 10% of the total number of prisoners, (90% are imprisoned by the regime)[5].

2- The proportion of prisoners killed inside non-state actors' prisons is 1%, while 99% of those killed are accounted for the by regime's prisons[6].

But it must be noted and clearly set forth that avoiding study of the non-state actors' prisoners does not mean, in any way or by any intention, that these actors have not

committed violations against international humanitarian law and the human rights international law.

To make the definition of the political prisoner as definitive as we possibly can, we will later discuss it in legal terms. This is a difficult task, because such a definition is controversial, as we will see.

b- This research is important as it is one of the first studies on the lives of former political prisoners in the current Syrian conflict. This research aims at destabilizing the prevalent narrative, both the research and non-research narratives— a narrative which is confined to the "hell" inside the prison, to the experience of the prisoner subjected to torture. Such an aim may participate in diversifying possible narratives regarding the experience of prisoners.

c- This research aims at discovering the realm of ex-political prisoners outside of the prisons in accordance to many theoretical dimensions, in addition to

defining a collective of practical determinants which are crucial for supporting them and planning to support them.

d- We used the Grounded Theory method to conduct this research. Thus, we have employed a qualitative inductive method. We adopted this method because it offers a more flexible range for treating the collected data and pushing them to unfold. Such data are especially vague to us, so we were not confident about using pre-defined categories.

The frameworks usually used in such kinds of research are related to reintegration in the community, which is, per se, a wide framework including various approaches, such as studying the personal and social identity, citizenship, social and political participation, and so on.

We used the reintegration framework, and the concept of reintegration is functionally employed as a "hypothesis" to keep the

direction of the analysis coherent and manageable.

We used the following approaches:

1- Identity Theory.

2- Social Identity and Self-categorization Approaches.

3- Representation Theory.

4- Practical (operational) approach regarding operations of the reintegration of ex-prisoners.

On the other hand, it should be stated that for the purposes of this study we avoided psychological approaches, though these are still important ones, and have not yet been adequately studied.

We reviewed different studies on ex-political prisoners around the world, and found many open source materials about ex-political prisoners in Northern Ireland, and several studies in Burma, among others. In spite of the differences between conditions in these countries and those in

Syria, these studies were important for approaching the question of our research from different perspectives.

e- We used in-depth, semi-structured interviews in collecting data, we urged the interviewee to narrate, seeking to record a semi-story or vignette at the end. Discourse analysis was adopted to analyze the data, and MAXQDA software was used to code those data.

f- The scope of the research:

It is limited to Syrian ex-political prisoners, as defined above, who were released between 2012 and April 2017.

It is also limited to those who were arrested inside Syria, and who after release now live in either Syria or Turkey.

g- The population of the research:

It should achieve all the following conditions:

1- The population of the ex-political prisoners as defined above, and

2- Those who live in Turkey or in Syria, either in the regime-held area or opposition-held area, and

3- Those who are not considered to be prominent activists, nor politically or civilly oriented. Of those ex-political prisoners who have since their release become prominent political and civil activists, many were already political or civil activists before the uprising in 2011. Such people have a different and specific understanding compared to the "normal" non-prominent activists, who gave no serious or active attention to the political situation before the uprising.

4- Those whose activities before arrest were limited to civil, media, political, relief or logistic activities. Those who systematically and continuously engaged in military actions against the regime are excluded from the research sample, in order to avoid any argument about their nature as prisoners of war or political prisoners.

h- The sample is a purposive sample, designed to be as representative as possible. 80% of the sample's members live in Turkey, and this negatively affects the representativeness of the sample.

i- The limitations of the research:

1- The difficulty of finding survivors (ex-prisoners) from the prisons who are ready and enthusiastic to be interviewed.

2- We were limited to only open source materials regarding this topic.

3- The failure of our sample's representativeness.

j- The definitions:

The Syrian Security Services: Security agencies have played an essential role in the oppression of the people since 1963 after the coup by the Baath Party, which has ruled the country up to now. Security services include Policy Security, Military Security, Air Forces Intelligence, and State Security. These services hold power over that of the police and judiciary. They

have their own "secret" prisons, in which severe violations against human rights are committed.

Military Sydnaya Prison: It is managed by the Ministry of Defense. It has a very brutal reputation for having a high level of inhumane treatment, a high number of persons killed under torture and otherwise killed extra-judicially[7].

Civil Prisons: Some of those arrested are deported after investigation to civil prisons in Adra, Homs, Aleppo, and so on. These prisons are under supervision of the Interior Ministry, and typically the prisoners do not experience as high a level of ill treatment as they would in prisons run by the security services. But this is not a generalized case, since unknown prisoners have been killed in Aleppo Centric Prison under torture, for example. It is also noteworthy that many of the prisoners in those civil prisons are confined without any trial or sentence, and there is no idea as to how long they will be held.

The Basements of Intelligence: This refers to the places of torture, confinement and investigation run by intelligence agencies.

The Legal Determination of the Political Prisoner:

a- In International Law:

There is no decisive international legal definition of a political prisoner. Such a definition is still specific to each individual case, without a comprehensive legal text that can be generalized to all cases.

Regarding the Syrian context, there is no legal definition of a political prisoner set forth by any relevant organization. International organizations such as Human Rights Watch commonly use words like *arrested, prisoners, confined*, and sometimes such phrases as "the arrested persons who had engaged in peaceful political activities", as the most prominent designation of them as "political prisoners"[8].

Amnesty International uses relevant words such as: *confined, arrested, prisoner*; but it used the term *prisoner of conscience* in

some cases at the beginning of the Syrian uprising. Amnesty International sometimes uses the term *political prisoner* pointing to Kurdish prisoners in Syria[9]. We should take into account that Amnesty International makes distinction between *prisoners of conscience* and *political prisoners*, since most of their counterparts do not.

According to Amnesty International, *prisoner of conscience* and *political prisoner* are defined thusly[10]:

Prisoner of conscience: These are generally opponents of the government; Amnesty International demands their freedom immediately and unconditionally. They typically are arrested because of their opinions, identities or their peaceful activities. We can see the following examples of reason for arrest:

1- Involvement in non-violent political activities.

2- Belonging to a minority group that is struggling for autonomy.

3- Insistence on observing religious practices which are not approved by the state.

4- Participation in union activities such as strikes.

5- Being accused of committing actual crimes while in fact only criticizing the authorities.

6- Writing articles on abuses against human rights committed in their countries.

7- Refusing mandatory military service on grounds of conscience.

8- Refusing to use the official language of the country.

9- Having a family member who is an opponent of the government.

Political prisoner: A prisoner who believes in a political thought which forms a motivation pushing him/her to do a deed leading to his/her arrest. As opposed to the prisoner of conscience, Amnesty International does not demand his/her

release, and does not demand special treatment for these political prisoners (given a human treatment to all kinds of prisoners). Amnesty International sets some examples of cases which can be considered political prisoners:

1- A person who has been convicted of, or accused of committing, a crime carried out for political reasons, such as: murder or robbery carried out to support the goals of an opponent group.

2- A person who has been convicted or accused of committing a crime carried out within a political context, such as demonstrations or trade union protests.

3- A person who has been arrested for belonging to an armed opponent group.

In the European context, regarding the definition of political prisoner, we found:

In 2011, a group of independent experts were asked by the European Council to work on determining a list of clear norms that can define the political prisoner in

both Azerbaijan and Armenia, during those countries' endeavors to join the Council. Officially, the norms defined are still confined to these two countries only. These are[11]:

"A person deprived of his or her personal liberty is to be regarded as a political prisoner if:

1- the detention has been imposed in violation of one of the fundamental guarantees set out in the European Convention on Human Rights and its Protocols (ECHR), in particular freedom of thought, conscience and religion, freedom of expression and information, freedom of assembly and association;

2- the detention has been imposed for purely political reasons without connection to any offence;

3- for political motives, the length of the detention or its conditions are clearly out of proportion to the offence the person has been found guilty of or suspected of;

4- for political motives, he or she is detained in a discriminatory manner as compared to other prisoners; or,

5- the detention is the result of proceedings which were clearly unfair and appears to be connected with political motives of the authorities."

The committee has noted that those arrested on grounds of violence, crimes such as terrorist attacks, cannot be considered political prisoners, **with assurance that such a distinction is applied in democratic countries where no legal armed resistance can be claimed** (meaning that this distinction can't be applied in Syria).

These norms have helped in determining the status of political prisoners in other countries, as International Federations for Human Rights have used these norms to study the situation of the political prisoners in Georgia after the revolution[12].

Finally, we can find the definition of political prisoner set out by the Assistance

Association for Political Prisoners: "The one who was arrested because of his or her engagement in activities of a political movement either peacefully or using resistance means"[13].

b- In Syrian Law

Syrian criminal law defines political crimes, in article 195, as:

1- Political crimes are politically motivated crimes, committed deliberately.

2- Political crime targets private and public political rights, if the *preparator does not commit it for a selfish motive.*

Article 196 sets out that:

1- Those crimes which are combined or associated with political crimes are also considered political crimes per se, if and only if they are not so severe regarding the ethics and the public right. These include: killing, severely injuring, committing arson, damaging or sinking properties, and so on.

2- **Within the context of a civil war or insurgency, such associated/combined crimes – mentioned above in 1 – are considered political crime if and only if the war customs bans them.**

(It is notable that there is a differentiation between 'political criminal' and 'political detainee').

Article 197:

1- If a judge determines a political nature of a crime, he/she should sentence the convicted one by:

- Life imprisonment **instead** of either execution or life imprisonment with hard labor.
- Detention, exile, or house arrest **instead** of limited hard labor.
- Simple detention **instead** of detention with labor.

c- Discussion:

In spite of the limitations imposed by the Assad regime on international and local human rights organizations to visit detainees in Syria, information leaked by former prisoners and dissidents from the Assad regime has lead us to be sure about the nature of the prisoners (and ex-prisoners); in this research we are concerned with political prisoners as defined in accordance with the definitions mentioned above. Furthermore, according to the definition of Amnesty International some of them are clearly prisoners of conscience.

The legal nature of the prison doesn't matter regarding his basic and essential status as a human being, which means he/she should be respected and humanly treated, even if in case of emergency.

Internationally, the Standard Minimum Rules for the Treatment of Prisoners have been adopted. These aim to assure protection of all people who are detained or arrested, assure their humane treatment,

protect their dignity, assure their right to be informed of the reason for arrest, and assure their right to be informed of their rights, **and their rights of contacting the outer world**, and the right to family visits, and so on.

The Syrian authorities (and the non-state actors) have violated and abused all of these rules, and have passed over these standards rules to violate the basic human rights.

Ex-Political Prisoners (EPPs): Life Outside

a- A statistical description of the sample

As mentioned in the methodology above, a purposive sample has been adopted. Over the course of 15 days, 38 members of the sample were interviewed, and their statistical profile is as follows:

1- **Duration of detention:** One of the basic factors affecting the social, economic, political, and psychological dimensions of the EPP's life is how long they spent in prison. We dealt with the duration factor as an indicator that initially points to the degree of "suffering." We did not include analysis of other factors regarding the prisoner's suffering, such as: how continuous, systematic and severe the torture was, the age of the prisoner, doctrines and values of the prisoners, etc[14]. We dropped these because they are complicated factors needing more time, and they fall outside of the purpose of this research. To minimise the shortcomings of such an omission, we took into account the following points:

1-The degree of torturing and its systematic use are similar in the Security Services' prisons, and the states of the EPPs (we interviewed) are similar in a narrow range. So we decided that dropping a measurement of the degree and the systematization of the torture in prisons did not have a notable effect on the research findings.

2- The situation in civil prisons is different from those in security services prisons (intelligence basements) in terms of the degree and systematization of torture and conditions of the confinement in general. The conditions in the civil prisons are much better than those in the intelligence basements, but they still fail to reach the standard minimum rules for the treatment of prisoners.

3- We have already defined the research population in a way that can alleviate other potential factors, such as extreme ideology.

Duration	Exactly less than 1 year (symbol 1)	1-2 years (symbol 2)	2-3 years (symbol 3)	3-4 years (symbol 4)	4-5 years (symbol 5)	Total
Frequencies/ Male	0	1 (3%)	13 (43%)	11 (36%)	5 (16%)	30 (100%)
Frequencies/Female	6 (75%)	2 (25%)	0	0	0	8 (100%)
Total	6 (15%)	3 (7%)	13 (34%)	11 (28%)	5 (13%)	38 (100%)

Distribution of EPPs according to duration of detention
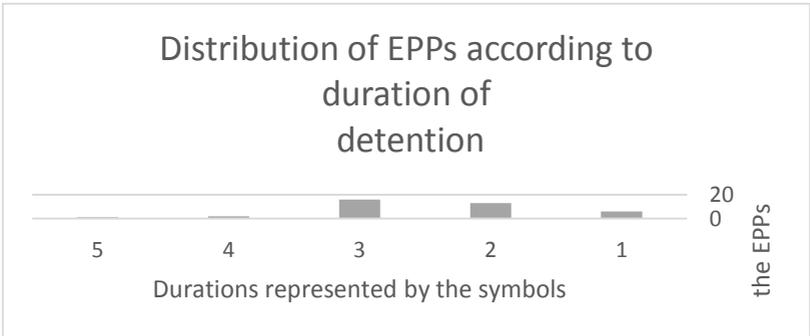
We see that the majority of females in our sample were imprisoned for less than a year, while the majority of males stayed in prisons between 2 and 4 years.

2- **Year of arrest:** The political and military conditions have varied from one year to another during the continuing conflict; that is to say, the consequences of the "process" of the arrest and its

holistic impacts and conditions may differ respectively. We will define only the year of the arrest, supposing that there is a sort of understanding of the conflict from 2011 till mid-2017, described by an increase in the violence and activity of Islamic groups. Such a factor is a control variable, so we think it is unavoidable. For example, those who were arrested in early 2012 did not experience the case of intensive Jihadist interventions in Syria, when the FSA was the main opposition party against the regime. After 2013 the situation changed radically, with Jabhet AL-Nusra (AL-Qaeda branch) and ISIS occupying an increasingly prominent position in the conflict. We suppose that the contradictory situations would cause different potential effects on the prisoners, in respect to his/her hopes, motives, and attitudes towards the Syrian situation.

It is essential to bring into focus the fact that the prisoner likely is isolated from the Outside, from the outer world. So we can consider each time layer (each year) as

independent from the former and from each coming year, in terms of the effect related to the prisoner, and his/her connections (and relations) to the Outside. Thus we will deal with these years as isolated separated time islands more than as a series of time blocks.

An EPP who were arrested in 2012 and released in 2014 described the situation as: "Before my release, in late 2014, I was transported to a prison in Aleppo, and there I was able to talk to a prisoner recently brought there. There was a distance between the door and the floor in our solitary cells. We used this distance to talk. I asked him the reason for his arrest. He answered that he had voluntarily surrendered to the regime, that he was a dissident officer. I was shocked, and asked him 'Why?' He told me that he favours the regime over ISIS, from which he had barely had escaped. I was much more surprised, and asked 'What is ISIS?' At that time I didn't know what ISIS meant." At that time, ISIS occupied wide spaces in

Syria, and already had become an international issue, and the International Coalition against it had started its strikes.
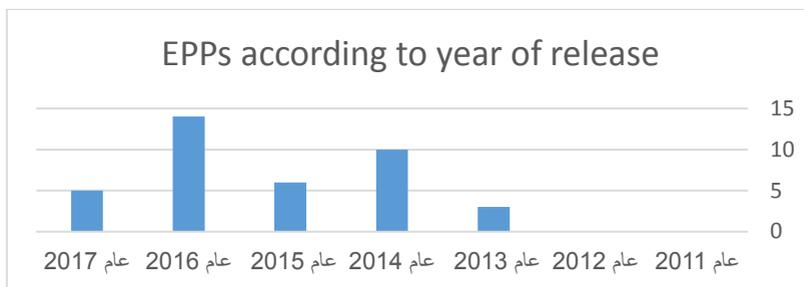
Year of arrest	2011	2012	2013	2014	2015	2016	Total
	1(2%)	16(42%)	13(34%)	8(21%)	0	0	38(100%)

Number of prisoners in each year
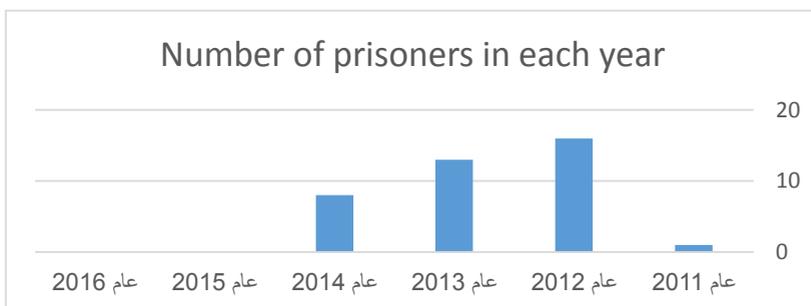
We can see that 2012 and 2013 account for the majority of prisoners.

3- **Year of release:** This character is complementary to the previous one, and its importance emerges through representing the period in which the prisoner had to re-organize his/her life since release until the time of the interview.

Year of arrest	2011	2012	2013	2014	2015	2016	2017	Total
	0	0	3(7%)	10(26%)	6(15%)	14(36%)	5(13%)	38(100%)

EPPs according to year of release

عام 2017 عام 2016 عام 2015 عام 2014 عام 2013 عام 2012 عام 2011

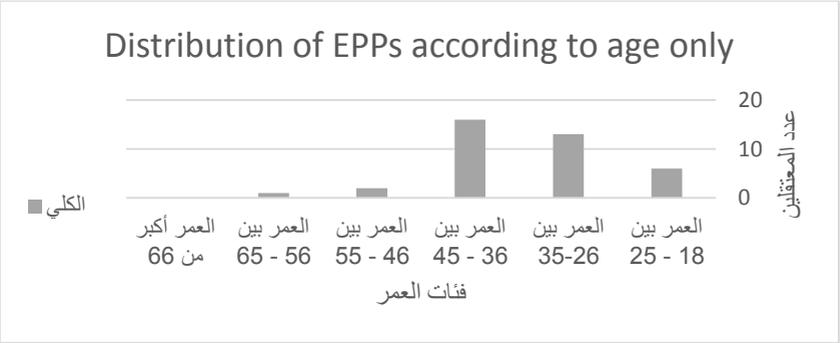We can see that the majority of EPPs were released in 2016.

4- **Age of prisoner at time of arrest:**

The age	18-25	26-35	36-45	46-55	56-65	Over 66	Total
Male	6(20%)	11(36%)	12(40%)	1(3%)	0	0	30(100%)
Female	0	2(25%)	4(50%)	1(12.5%)	1(12.5%)	0	8(100%)
total	6(15%)	13(34%)	16(42%)	2(5%)	1(2%)	0	38(100%)

45

Distribution of EPPs according to age and gender
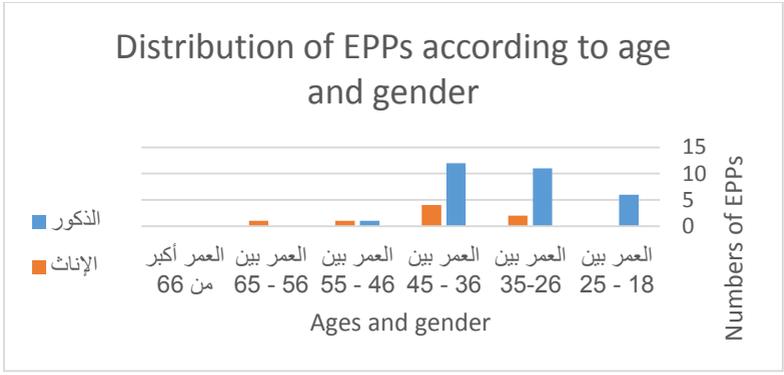
(Blue represents male, orange female.)

Distribution of EPPs according to age only

We can see that the majority of EPPs were arrested between the ages of 26 and 45.

5- **Education:**

Education	Before baccalaureate	Baccalaureate	Two years after baccalaureate	Didn't complete undergraduate	Completed undergraduate	Total
Male	9(30%)	9(30%)	1(3%)	4(13%)	7(23%)	30(100%)
Female	0	3(37%)	1(12.5%)	1(12.5%)	3(37%)	8(100%)
Total	9 (23%)	12(31%)	2(5%)	5(13%)	10(26%)	38(100%)

Distribution of EPPs according to education

We can see that most categories are similar, except for "Two years after baccalaureate".

b- Isolation in prison

The prominent situation we observed from our sample is either a complete loss in communication with the outer world during imprisonment, or an intensive lack of communication with the Outside. Additionally, we can trust this as a generalized case according to past interviews with EPPs conducted for other studies. No families visits, no lawyers; sometimes the families have no idea of whether or not their loved one is even alive; they need to stay hopeful until their family member is freed, or find evidence, such as trustworthy information or a photo of prisoners killed, both of which are very difficult to obtain.

Recently imprisoned prisoners form a semi-unique channel between the prisoners' Inside and Outside; this is the case in the intelligence basements and official prisons, and in the semi-official prisons which are run by militias. Another channel is found when a prisoner is moved from one cell to another, or from

one prison to another. In these cases they are able to replace their stagnant information environment with a new environment with possible new information in terms of policy, field battles, and so on.

On the other hand, some prisoners in civil prisons may have relatively better connections with the Outside, through news and visits from friends or family, even if these are rare.

It is noteworthy that some civil prisons seem to be a sort of Outside compared to the intelligence basements and similar facilities. For this reason we conducted the majority of our interviews with prisoners from intelligence basements and other prisons with harsh conditions, more so than those who were freed from civil prisons.

When the prisoner is freed, at that "instant" he likely faces a very different and new Outside. This "first instant" of moving from Inside to Outside will affect

the life of the EPP deeply and for a long time. It is an essential element of our study, and the one from which we will start.

c- Description of the instance of release:
- EPP: "I stood alone near the gate of the prison, having no idea where I could go. I looked at the scene of devastation and the pale faces. I felt that I had moved from one prison to a bigger one, in terms of suffering and pain."
- Interviewer: "Do you use the word 'bigger' because it is bigger as a place?"
- EPP: "I mean…the suffering is greater, the size of the suffering is bigger, it seems to have a bigger age, and a longer period."

Many studies of ex-political prisoners point to the fact that the instant of release doesn't mean an instance of complete freedom, as they themselves describe. What prisoners experience in prison, what they had learned about released prisoners,

who came back to prison, cause them to expect to face difficulties on the Outside.

As one Burmese political prisoner said, "Once you are a political prisoner, you will stay a political prisoner forever."[15]

A Holocaust survivor expressed what he felt when he was freed from the concentration camp: "I knew that my problems would start now".[16]

Both quotes, with a distance of about 60 years between them, are identical with what the Syrian EPP has said.

Sadik, a Syrian EPP said: "I have got out of the military court in Damascus – near the center of the capital – with worn clothes, no money, with no connection to my family … I came out as a lost one."

Ahmad, another Syrian EPP: "I was barefoot, I was wearing a torn shirt, I stayed for long hours near the air forces intelligence branch in Amrieh, at the center of Damascus, roaming around it, having no idea what I should do…. a

person passed by me and he intuited my status."

The life of the EPP starts with a feeling of "alienation," of feeling lost in the Outside to where he was "spat out," at the instant of being released. Some are released from a prison in a city different from their original city, as appears in our examples above. Three EPPs were caught in prisons in Damascus and released from them, though they are not from Damascus.

Such an "alienation" establishes a paradox that manifests in terms of staying near the place, the hell, from which the EPP has just been released, and which he always wanted to leave, and which he will keep afraid of being returned to in the coming hours and days after release.

The prison, the way the prisoners are treated, and the way they are released, cause the EPP look at the world/society/city as a maze or a forest in which he/she tarries and stalls while going through it. He or she expects more pain

and more suffering directly from this Outside. Being stuck close to the prison,(or to the court, which is also another type of arrest with no minimum fair roles of judging) is what makes the prison a stage of going forward, from it. He/she can take time trying, looking for a solution to the "alienation", near the out walls of the prison.

The prison system succeeds in imposing itself as a starting point for the prisoner, or as a signpost on a map, for as long as possible. This success, which unfolds by spitting out the prisoner, is performed by two associated factors that will follow the EPP for a long time, directly affecting the process of reintegration:

The two factors are:

1- To what extent the EPP experiences alienation at the instant of release (referring to the shabby appearance)

2- To what extent the EPP is able or unable to contact his/her social network.

Releasing prisoners barefoot and in very worn clothing is not an exceptional case. On the contrary, it is very common. We were told that those who are going to be released are given a shirt (and pants sometimes) from a newcomer; such behavior has become a custom, but getting shoes is likely impossible.

In the photo below we can see prisoners who have just been released from Damascus Police Center, at the center of Damascus, in 2012 or 2013, where they are barefoot.

Releasing the prisoners in poor physical condition, with untreated lice, and usually scabies, creates a shabby appearance, especially since most of them have no money at that moment. This suddenly emerging appearance in the capital or other cities is essential to creating that feeling of alienation in the prisoner. This will push him or her to feel isolated, hesitated and lost. An EPP told us: "I

thought they (people in the street) will say I am full of lice, dirty… and they will avoid me."

The second factor involves losing the social network which had been present before arrest:

When the interviewers asked the EPPs about their needs exactly before release, most of them answered: mobile phones. Contacting families or friends from whom they were absent and without information for long time, likely, is the first thing the prisoner seeks upon release. This network is actually the womb of the "Outside" of prison, and it is only thing which has the ability to negate the feeling of being lost. When the EPP reaches his or her network, he or she starts to break out of this state of alienation.

Both factors are available to take various values; they form the phenomenon of alienation at the instant of release according to their intensity. Not all cases of EPPs are as harsh as we set out above.

Ahmed, an EPP, told us: "I was released from the police center in Damascus, confused, with no idea where I should go, in spite of having had some connection with my family who were in Aleppo. I had some money, I paid 1000 Syrian pounds (2US$) to a policeman to give me his phone. I called my brother's friend who was in Damascus, and he came to take me to his home."

Sai'd, another EPP, said: "I was released from the Military Security Branch in Kafrsuseh – at the center of Damascus – no money, semi-naked. I had a very worn torn shirt, and worse pants, and was barefoot. I called my brother by borrowing the phone of a person in the street. I sat in the gateway of a building in that area and waited for him."

Sai'd expressed less of a feeling of being lost[i], but in spite of this he hesitated to ask

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[i] - we use the adjective "lost" and the word "alienation" as the same signifier, regardless of the deep concept of "alienation". This is to say we reduce the concept of "alienation" in favor of "being lost" concept.

people if he could their phone. What is important is to address the fact that he found his brother on the other side of the phone, that his brother existed on the other side. But the absence of a person on the other end of the line is what causes fear in the EPP. The one being called may have been killed, may have migrated, may have lost their phone or changed the number, or may have been displaced from their home.

Finally, some cases were low intensity in terms of alienation at the instant of release, scaled on both factors. The family of Rabii was able to pay a large bribe to an intelligence officer of high rank to have him released from prison and moved to his village in Homs by a car of the intelligence services. Other EPPs have had their families waiting at the gate of the prison.

According to the intensity of each factor, the duration of the alienation may continue for hours or days. EPPs who can't reach anyone in their social network face more difficult situations; usually they

initiate asking for help from passersby in order to break the first circle of alienation. Sometimes they wait, without any initiation, for someone who will initiate an offer of help.

- EPP: "A person saw me sitting at the gate of the court, I was lost and barefoot. He came close to me and gave me some money, and asked me where I was going."
- EPP: "A person passed by me, I had no idea what I should do. He asked me where I wanted to go. He told me that my town is under siege, and I couldn't get to it. (The town is in the Damascus countryside; before the war 30-40 minutes was usually enough to get to it from the heart of Damascus.) He took me to his mini-factory to wait for a connection with my family. I stayed there for many days and finally made contact with my family. They were not in their town, they were not even

Syria; they had been in Turkey for more than a year and a half."

After connecting with the family the EPP moves to another phase, in which we can question the degree of duration and depth of each factor of alienation: to what extent the alienation is continuous, and to which degree it is rooted. In this second phase we can question, and search for, other potential factors of alienation, and maybe re-establish both previous factors. By reaching the social network, especially the family, the EPP completes his/her physical release from prison, when he/she returns to his society, from which he/she had been arrested.

The security agents threw me out of prison. I was at the center of Damascus, barefoot, wearing a worn shirt and pants. No money, no mobile. None of the passersby agreed to give me his mobile phone to call my family in Aleppo. I had been imprisoned for three years, I had no idea about my family, I had no idea about

Aleppo, where I had been arrested and transported to Damascus.

After much begging to the minibus drivers, one of them agreed to take me to the Abbasids bus station (where the buses travel to Aleppo and other provinces. The fee of one person in those minibuses is less than 50 Syrian pounds).

I had never imagined myself in such a situation, exhausted, begging for the fare for a mini-bus. I imagined people transformed to monsters, I was confused, didn't know where I could go. I had had no connection with my family for 3 years. Did they die? Were they still alive? In the air forces intelligence in Damascus, where I was imprisoned, we heard the sound of warplanes every day, shelling every day… Did that shelling and devastation reach Aleppo? (When this EPP were arrested in 2012, the military clashes had not yet reached Aleppo, though the bloody clashes which would later stigmatize Aleppo).

I arrived at the bus station, and a new journey to Aleppo has started. I had no money to buy a ticket. I had stayed in the station, out in the open, for 4 days, suffering from starvation and cold. Every 2 days a bus travelled to Aleppo. (At the time of his arrest there was a bus every few hours).

I picked up news about Aleppo from people, I heard that the road was being blocked every few days, because of the clashes. The names of the conflicting parties were completely new to me.

Finally, after much begging to the bus drivers, one of them agreed to take me to Aleppo in return for cleaning the bus. I reached Al-Hamidiey neighborhood in Aleppo, where my home used to be, the neighborhood was under the regime's control. I asked about my family, and learnt that they had gone to Turkey.

Then the third journey started, being smuggled into Turkey.

d- Dis-Earthing[ii]

The EPP discovers a different world upon release; each EPP will face what has changed during the years of imprisonment, though there are different degrees of alienation among the EPPs. There are roads and highways that are now blocked, or that have been abandoned; new cities and towns that are now under siege, and no way to reach them. There is a new geography, or a new political geography, a new planning of the country, and new actors in the conflict that did not exist before the arrest. There is no opposition one can easily point to, and there is no longer that easily identifiable object of the opposition. Confronted with this radically changed scene, the world of friends and family has changed also.

After release, and after initial connection with family or friends, the EPP tries to re-

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[ii] - We derive this term "Dis-Earthing" to be more radical and more ontological than other potential terms like "uprooting". That "Dis-Earthing" indicates a ripping of something not from another thing (as terms like 'uprooting' or 'extracting' may indicate), but from itself.

join them, and at this point the fear of re-arrest plays its essential and enormous role in determining which roads the EPP will follow.

- EPP: "I was afraid of re-arrest if I came back to Homs; that is what I heard had happened to many others. I stayed in the home of a friend in Damascus for a while, then I was smuggled to Idlip province in the north. I have not come back to Homs. I learnt that the regime has completely devastated the Old Homs, where we lived. I learnt also that my family had fled to Turkey since that time. So I decided to go to Idlip to join them in Turkey."

- "After the release I was able to make contact with my relatives in Douma, a Damascus suburb. It was difficult to reach that area, because it was under siege by the regime, and I was afraid I would be re-arrested at one of the regime checkpoints along the way. I stayed

in a friend's home in Damascus until my brother could smuggle me into Douma."

The internal smuggling between the provinces is a common case addressed by many interviewed EPPs, for the reasons seen above.

- EPP: "I had to arrive in Idlip. I contacted some friends after numerous hardships, and learnt that my family was in Reyhanli, in the south of Turkey. They had lost hope that I was still alive. There is no way from Damascus to Idlip, so I went to Dara', then to Swedaa, in southern Syria, and then I was smuggled to Idlip."
- EEP: "We walked for many days. The people who were with me on the road to Idlip were assembled in a place under Shabiha control (a militia that supports Assad). It was very strange, to assemble us, this kind of people, in an area under regime control. Money first!

Shabiha doesn't care about you--either you are a supporter or an opponent of the Assad regime. What matters is the money they can earn. After assembling we continued along our smuggling road, with lorries of Bedouin in their areas. The same matter I experienced in both the regime-held area and the Bedouin-held area, which is out of control of the regime. Money first! Both parties exploit people in the same way by smuggling them. They are smuggling mafia. In Idlip I was delivered to another smuggling mafia, who guaranteed my entry to Turkey. Finally, I have joined my family in Reyhanli."

The internal smuggling is a clear sign of the geographical changes that have happened. The rest of the family and friends of the EPP play the basic role of guiding and helping the EPP along such a road. The smuggling requires money,

which the EPP doesn't have. It also requires relationships with smugglers, which is very difficult for an EPP to have after long time in prison.

There is another aspect of the changed geography, which typically shocks the EPP. It is the huge devastation in the towns and the cities. One of the EPPs was able to pay a bribe to an officer to be released from the civil prison in Homs. He said that he suffered a severe shock when he saw the enormous damage to the city of Homs and the other villages on the road between Homs and his town of Al-Rastan, (north-west of Homs, under opposition control, and under siege by the regime).

There is another aspect of change--the demographic dimension:

- EPP: "After my release, I decided to go back to my neighborhood in Homs, Al-Edihar. I was surprised by what I saw. The neighbors are not my neighbors, the inhabitants in

the neighbor are not the original[iii] ones, who were here before my arrest (3 years earlier). I couldn't adapt to it. I work in a grocery, and I'm waiting to join my family who have gone to Europe. I will leave this job, I can't see these faces everyday."

The neighborhood has changed; it has not been damaged, but its previous inhabitants are not there anymore. Al-Edihar neighborhood is a new one, founded in 2000. Its inhabitants had bought their flats by taking out loans from the state-owned real estate bank. Despite its inhabitants being from different sectarian and regional backgrounds, the EPP used the term 'endogenous' to describe the

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[iii] The original word in Arabic has the same signifier as the English word 'endogenous'; in other words, both words in English, 'original' and 'endogenous', have exactly the same meaning in Arabic. It would be more accurate to use 'endogenous' and not 'original;' however, we have used 'original' in order to avoid any potential confusion in the foreign reader.

inhabitants he had lived with, and to discriminate them from the newcomers.

Rooting a recent neighborhood, aged less than17 years, in the memory, and using the term 'endogenous' results from, and indicates the feeling/experience of, dis-earthing.

The internal smuggling per se enforces the dis-earthing. One can pass from one's country only by smuggling, as he/she wants to be smuggled from one country to another. Using this reality to make money and create benefits is what deepens this experience/feeling, especially since it forms a mutually beneficial process between the main parties in the conflict. The damaged towns across the country come out to deepen such a case. We may find an EPP who can't go back to his neighborhood because there is no such a neighborhood anymore. One of those EPPs said: "I reached my neighborhood, I found it devastated, no one there. It has become a shelter to snakes, dogs and cats." Another said: "I reached Maarrat al-

Nu'man, Idlip. My wife and children joined me there. We decided to flee to Turkey because we couldn't stand the bombardment there. I had to pay enormous money to a smuggler."

We observed that many EPPs put forth another harsh dimension to describe the dis-earthing. It is the 'deterioration' taking place regarding the EPP's intimate social network—the party which is expected or hoped to be on the other side of the phone when the EPP is released from prison. Most EPPs, regardless of the arrest period and degree of alienation, expressed such a deterioration among their intimate social network. They also expressed a high degree of pain and suffering because of this deterioration.

The friend/family network may no longer exist, or not in the same form, and the EPP realizes that the limit of receiving help to reach "home" after release is dependent on the extent to which the network still exists. In other words, when the EPP gets out of the circle of alienation

formally, he/she realizes that the extent to which the social network no longer exists.

- EPP: "When I arrived in Douma, a Damascus suburb, very tired, I was shocked. A huge number of my friends and family had been killed by the regime bombardment. My sister, her children, my father, many friends. All were killed. Whoever survived has immigrated".

- EPP: "When I was released, I learnt that my family has been in Sweden for 3 years. They thought I had been killed under torture as had been reported by a former prisoner. After 4 years in prison, the world has changed. Now there are no friends, no family. No job. I just wait for the reunion."

The EPP finds out that the community he/she used to living among no longer exists in the same form. The intimate relations fall apart, having been being crushed by violence and immigration. "The world has changed—the physical

entity of friends/family is coercively absent for a long or a short period, or forever.

- EPP: "All my friends, all my family are scattered. I know nothing about them. Whoever I meet is busy with his own problems, which overwhelm him since his immigration (to Turkey). Friendships are not as they were. Sadness, gloom, pain…are what cover the faces of all, and appear in their relations and their speech. On the other hand, I am empowered by my relations with revolutionary activists in Turkey, especially those who live in Gaziantep."

Additionally to those extreme cases of absence, the "nature of friendship" has changed. Harsh life circumstances have negatively affected such relations.

- EPP: "The old friends have disappeared… the ones who support the regime consider me a

terrorist and act with enmity towards me. Others have followed extreme Islamist groups and considered me an apostate. We are lost between betrayal and infidelity."

We can see that the ideology has affected friendships. The EPP said "they--the friends—have *disappeared*"--this is a disappearance under cover of extreme ideologies.

- EPP: "The friends! They are distributed between the dead and the immigrants. Friendship always changes as the person's experience changes, because he is always homeless… but what is the benefit of friendship if we can lose it?"

This EPP articulated the substantive core of such deterioration within friendships; it pushes the human to be substantively homeless. We can see the circular causality expressed by this EPP; losing friends makes him feel substantively

homeless, and the friendships are useless, because they continuously disappear. Such a circular causality indicates a deep experience of a loss of friendship.

Three factors deteriorate the texture of friendships: Physical disappearance by death or immigration—in both of these cases disappearance is associated with absence. The second factor is the hard living and working conditions, especially in the Turkish diaspora. Such hardships make people less intimate, or less able to be, as they "always" were in past. This factor appears to be an indicator of the disappointment that the friends group couldn't bear. The third factor is ideological change, which spurs old friends to leave, or to "disappear". The old friends may name a friend, who has a different political orientation, as part of an out-group, and reject him. With respect to this factor, and by digging in the testimony of a former EPP, we should light on the following fact as it is experienced and perceived: All parties in

the conflict are extreme, they refuse the "friend" who indeed doesn't belong to any party of the conflict. This indicates that there is no ability to form a friendship now, because of the mobilization during the current conflict.

We can conclude that the EPPs articulate the friendships as having deteriorated in their very essence, absolutely rather than provisionally. Besides this, being substantively "homeless" stands for losing/threatening the social identity, regarding the loss of friends[17].

Dis-Earthing is also empowered by constructively twinning both: the deterioration within the friendship texture and the geographical changes. Such a twinning is what roots the coercive dis-earthing even more. (This world is new. It has changed).

A kind of defense against this deterioration has come out, even if on a small scale among our sample. A kind of compensation has been applied by some

EPPs, some of whom have found new friends in Gaziantep who work in "revolutionary" activities, and two EPPs have joined a battalion of the Free Syrian Army. Many female EPPs have volunteered in human rights NGOs. So, we can find an effort to build a new compensatory social network, but we didn't investigate to what extent such a network indeed compensates for the original deterioration mentioned above.

Now we can go further in the analysis. The feeling/experiencing of alienation at the release instant is more rooted now, after addressing the case of deterioration within the intimate social network. That the alienation is comprised by two factors: the feeling of being lost at the moment of release, which refers to the very worn clothes and other elements, and the second the inability to contact, or difficulty in contacting, the social network. We can conclude that both factors can be merged into one, in the case of a continuously deteriorating social network.

In light of this understanding we can bring into focus the EPP's utterance regarding moving from a smaller prison to a bigger one, spoken at the moment of release. Now we deal with it not as an arbitrary emotional expression, spoken by a disappointed and shocked prisoner, but as an *image* of "social presentation" presented by an EPP. Carefully, we are going to deal with the dis-earthing, partially and from one perspective, as a social presentation of the EPPs. This is the way they explain their social life, their realities and their relationships. They even expressed and explained more absolute concepts—friendship--in the shadow of the dis-earthing. Such a *hypothesis* needs a deeper analysis to shape it more concretely[18].

Typically, many other studies have pointed to this issue of the social exclusion from which the EPPs suffer. Such an exclusion may come from the fear people have of the authorities—more specifically, that the authorities consider

political prisoners as criminals, and having contact with them may put one in danger. This case is common in autocratic states such as Burma[19]. By contrast, in Northern Ireland, political prisoners (the republican) expressed more reintegration into their community, which they had fought for, and they said that they didn't need programs for reintegration in their own community[20]. Problems such as finding homes, finding jobs, and dealing with having had their property confiscated by the authorities are their most serious problems.

Similar difficulties to those experienced in Burma or Northern Ireland faced Syrian ex-political prisoners in the 1990s, when many political prisoners were released[21]. Such problems are initially similar to what we have described above, but they are *fundamentally* different. In the current situation of Syrian EPPs, there is no problem that can be – phenomenologically – described as "difficulties in housing, renting, finding homes", which can be

solved by charity organizations, or loans, etc. Even regarding the other serious difficulties, like social exclusion because of the fear that revenge may be taken by the authorities, cannot be described to phenomenologically seize our questioned case. Such a problem can be solved by having secret connections with former prisoners, or it will be solved when the dictator regime is toppled, etc. In our case, that of dis-earthing, there is a disappearance or semi-disappearance of the geography and its architecture, and there is a disappearance or semi-disappearance of the friendship more than of the friends themselves.

The long internal road, the story of Housin:

I was released from the military Mazzeh Airbase, semi-naked, barefoot, wearing only an undershirt, and worn shorts. I had no idea about my family, where they were, are they alive? Dead? I have no direction to go. I stood close to the prison (which is a security service branch), and I

asked for a paper that could allow me to pass the regime checkpoints on the road to my city, Homs. I have a home in my city. The employee answered "Okay, I will give you this paper, because that area (Homs) is for us not for the terrorists. There was a soldier from Homs who gave me some money to travel to the city. From Damascus to Homs, two days…. The highway was blocked many times by the military, and I was forced to move from one car to another.

The internal smuggling, the smuggling to Turkey, the story of Ali:

My travel started from Al-Kuswa, south of Damascus. We went with a guy to a region between Damascus suburb and Dara' provinces, then to Al-Lajat, passing many villages. Then we arrived at Sida, Dara' province. We hired a smuggler, who took us to Swidaa province, and he delivered us to another smuggler from Bedouin. The next day he drove with us to Qastel, the town between Swidda and the Syrian desert, and delivered us to a person

who was responsible for receiving the escapees from the regime-hold areas, and taking them to an assembling center in Shanwan area, which is under ISIS control. The following day we moved to Al-Mayadeen city, Deir ez-Zor province, across the Syrian desert. We stayed there for a night. The next day, they took us to Maskana town, through the Tabka-Raqqa road. We stayed for a night too. In the morning they brought many mini-buses which took us to the bus station in El-Bab town, which was under ISIS control. We were hidden in that station with other escapees, since ISIS had banned anyone from leaving its areas. After many days we travelled to the town of Um-Housh, which lies at the borders between ISIS and the FSA. When we arrived at the FSA-held side, they checked us out and investigated us. Then we took a bus to Izaz, then to Ekda town on the borders with Turkey. We couldn't pass the borders, except by smuggling of course. Then they took us to Hurbet Al-Jouz

town, Idlip province, and later we were
smuggled to Turkey.

The road of smuggling, described by Ali

e- Questioning social identity[22]

How are the boundaries between groups
perceived by the EPPs, after the
imprisoning experience[23]? To whom does
the EPP belong?

We observed that the interviewed EPPs
created two boundaries determining "Us"

and "Them", which are completely at odds with one another. So, we have four groups in two pairs, one pair of which is based upon a sectarian perception, and the other upon an ethical/political perception.

1- The first pair: Alawi/non-Alawi; it is noteworthy that the EPPs didn't name the Sunni people as the contradictory group of the Alawi, only rarely.

2- The second pair: Cooperative, good, free, revolutionary /sinister, monster, unfair, oppressor.

Both pairs are refer to a complex system of ideas, perceptions and experiences before, during and after prison:

- EPP: "When I was released, my friends had either been killed or they had immigrated. Only a very few of them are still here entrenched with the FSA to deter advances of the troops of Alawi Shabiha".

The "very few" conveys a feeling of gloom, defeat, or maybe conveys an endeavor to resist the defeat. This "very few" "resists" the "advances" of "Alawi" troops, who are "Shabiha"[iv]. This "very few" is unable to initiate, it just works and tries to reduce the size of the defeat. On the opposing side, there is the Free Syrian Army, which is the in-group of the EPP, so it seems. FSA is the group conflicting the out-group which is the Alawi Shabiha's troop. We can see that this out-group is defined, not only as Shabiha troops (which is a general stigmatization not attached to a sect), but as Alawi; namely, a sectarian affiliation is intentionally attached to this out-group. It is a clear stereotyping process against this out-group, with the intention of denigrating it.

Another EPP, a Palestinian Syrian, expresses such a sectarian based division:

[iv] - This word Shabiha has a negative meaning, referring to black mafias. No one uses it in Syria with a positive intention, it has a stigma, and all try to dissociate themselves from it, at least in public, narratively.

- "I hadn't discriminated between the Alawi, the Sunni or the Shiite, we had been Syrians, with no discrimination. I had no idea about the hatred embedded within the Alawi and the Shiite sections. They used to say to us in prison: You want to overthrow the regime! To overthrow the Mr. president Bashar Assad! Don't you know that Bashar Assad is your God? You are a faggot… drug addicted… dogs of Erdogan …dogs of Qatar. I asked my colleagues in prison 'Why this hatred?' They explained to me that the regime is based on such sectarian hatred."

In this testimony we can note: "We", the Syrians are split into two groups: the sectarian malevolent one (the Alawi-Shiite), and the other group is unclear, not obviously announced, which is the Sunni group, but embedded to be equal to the rest of the Syrians, the non-sectarian, non-

malevolent Syrians. This second group is the in-group of the EPP.

Another EPP:

- "In prison I discovered how much the Alawi-regime has ruined Syrian society, turned it into a jungle where only the fittest survive."

In this testimony also we see how the Alawi sect is represented to be the out-group standing against Syrian society, to which the EPP belongs.

Both former testimonies use words such as "discovered," "I hadn't known" with respect to learning about the sectarian hatred. Such words strongly point to the focal role that prison has played in creating such sectarian representation and perception of Us and Them.

- **"In Syria there are no Prisons, they are places for torture, sadism and malevolent sectarianism."**

This EPP says clearly that the prisons in Syria are tools to create, not only urge or incite, malevolent sectarianism. From this testimony we can conclude that the EPP may want to justify why such a sectarian division, between Us and Them, has emerged.

On the contrary, there are a few different experiences, which refer to different prisons and different treatment within them. One of the EPPs in the Hama civil prison expressed a contrasting experience:

- "I discovered that the Syrian community is wonderful in spite of everything. People from different ideologies and doctrines were together in Hama prison. Islamist and secularist people, Sunni, Alawi and Ismaili."

This testimony assures, from the other side, how much prison plays a focal role in creating the sectarian belonging and (in)discrimination.

The other political/ethical pair is also prevalent in our sample, contesting the first pair (the sectarian one):

- EPP: "I discovered the fine facet of Syrian society, it is good, cooperative, tolerant. Of course there is the another facet, the greedy one, even if in the miserable conditions."
- EPP: "There was no way to avoid prison without traveling abroad. It is not logical to travel out leaving the country to the unfair regime. It is not logical to leave our homes and abandon our revolution."
- EPP: "Had I been able, I would have taken all my good revolutionary colleagues out of prison, and left those spies, betrayers and greedy ones in prison to spend their lifetime there."
- EPP: "In Sydnaya prison I met friends from all regions of Syria, and from different ideologies. I found the hardline ones with their

Islamist or secular ideologies, and those tolerant, who are concerned about building Syria, liberating it from unfairness… to live as brothers."

These four testimonies exposure two groups defined and discriminated by *common sense's* ethical boundaries or *common sense's* ethical political ones. The question that arises now is to which extent we can consider someone belonging to a group of: "good, cooperative, tolerant" people? Of course such characters and "norms" don't establish an identifiable group. But characters/norms of "revolution, revolutionary" can determine identifiable boundaries of groups, even if, nowadays, they refer to fluid political/ethical common sense values. (There is a clear decisive distinction between them: who identifies the opponent party against the regime as a revolutionary one, and who identifies such a party as an opposition, which is a neutral naming).

We also saw that some EPPs' participation in what they have called "revolutionary activities" in Gaziantep, south of Turkey, indicates belonging to this "revolutionary" in-group. We observed that the women are more engaged in such activities, especially in the field of human rights and empowering women.

Generally, the interviewees didn't express a belonging to an in-group of ex-political prisoners, in spite of capturing them in such a narrated group during the interviews. We have not found any sign of being a member in the in-group of EPPs. We can suggest that the absence of any serious organization concerning such members may cause, with other factors, this non-belonging.

In sum, three conclusions can be set forth:

1- The EPPs who used the sectarian boundaries to identify their groups, expressed a kind of an embodied feeling of defeat. "The Alawi regime *has turned* the Syrian society *into* a jungle", the

turning is done. "There are a very few" who stayed in Syria to resist, to deter advantages of Shabiha, they just defend, while the other, the out-group, attacks. Such a defeatist perception and feeling has many justifications attached directly to the reality, particularly the demographic evacuation, like what has taken place in Old Homs, which is a Sunni area. The sectarian in-group of EPPs, to which they expressed somehow belonging, is defeated in the field, the thing urges a feeling of defeat they showed.

Contrarily, the other EPPs who adopt the ethical/political base of identification, did not express a decisive feeling of defeat or not. This means they may have a feeling of a continuous conflict between the groups. This identification uses more absolute characters and norms, such aS: goodness, revolutionary, evil, oppressor, etc. and such norms refer to endless conflict.

2- Some EPPs used focal norms related to popular ethics, such as: cooperation,

tolerance, greed, etc. which are "cosmopolitan" norms. No one used more specified expressions of norms, such as those related to human rights. They have not used basic human rights' expressions, such as 'absence of fair judgment' and so on. This distinction is important to differentiate a struggle to get rid of "unfairness" from a struggling to achieve "human rights".

3- Discussing the social identity of the EPPs needs more detailed research, but initially and according to the goals of this pilot study, we can conclude:

First: There is a kind of support of self-esteem by addressing a "Free-Syria" group one belongs to, and by denigrating the out-group. No coherence or congruence appear clearly within the in-group of "Free-Syria". This in-group displays in EPP's speech as a vague, without clear determinant boundaries.

Second: There is a kind of evasion of others, the extreme evils, without a clear determination of an in-group.

In both former cases, we see evidence of identity loss.

Identity Loss[24]:

Some individuals in the sample expressed a high level of identity loss, by generalizing negative stigmas about all Syrian society:

- EPP: "Most of the prisoners inside the prison fought their closest friends over a loaf of bread."
- EPP: "The arrest was a bitter trial that completely changed my life. It also changed my beliefs about friends. I found out that Syria is a jungle, only the fittest survive".
- EPP: "All parties are equally bad, the regime and the opposition, no fairness in any of them".
- EPP: "I imagined that people had turned into monsters…no family, I don't know where I should go."

- EPP:"I care only about my self since I've been released. I don't care about my family or my friends."

This identity loss comes out as a "jungle where only the fittest survive", there is no in-group the EPP wants to belong to, then he/she keeps him/herself away from all those stigmatized as evils. It is extreme social self-exclusion.

Such loss (which can be described as alienation) creates severe hardships in practicing and perceiving citizenship in the phase of the political transition later. It also puts up roadblocks against attempts to re-establish state legitimacy.

One former political prisoners in Northern Ireland said: "I have not entered the prison to be released". What he means is that he seeks to get the Republic of Ireland admitted, to get his struggling admitted too. He was arrested as a political prisoner not as a criminal. Such an admission can only be gained from the British government. In the case of Syrian EPPs,

no one can say "I have not entered the prison to be released", not only because the circumstances are radically different, (many prisoners in Northern Ireland were able to finish their studies inside prison, while to get out alive is the greatest success of Syrian prisoners), but also because there is no a group/state to gain admission of the identity from. That some EPPs either don't care about society or the state (alienation), or decline the state to a sectarian level (the Alawi regime)[25]. In both cases, the legitimacy of the state and other non-state actors is fragile or dead.

Identity loss results from a loss of meaning, and from searching in vain for an institution that can legitimize itself and bestow values, meaning and belonging to individuals. The vague boundaries of what seems to be an in-group, the feeling of defeat, the denial by the whole society, and sometimes obviously to both parties, are all signs and maybe "causes" of identity loss.

When EPPs identify an out-group as Alawi, and the in-group as the rest of Syrians, they indeed try to use sectarian belonging as a stigma. They are Alawi, we are *not Sunni, we are the rest of the Syrians.* In addition to the sectarian denigration intentioned by this identification, a question arises, who is Syrian then? Are ISIS members Syrian? Jabhat Al-Nusra? And so on…We suppose that this kind of identification embodies an inability to clearly identify selfhood, based as it is on identifying the other-enemies to point to the vague in-group.

Finally, it is very important to set forth that these identifications are based on the rhetoric of, and limited to the framework of, the imprisonment experience.

f- The EPP's representing of the self[26]

Firstly:

We observed that individual identities are more salient and clearer than the social identities described by the EPPs. In other words, individual identity is more salient than the social identities as some EPPs expressed.

- EPP: "I feel that I am a hero, I stood with my comrades and faced the tyrant. I don't regret it… I *fulfilled* my obligation… yes, I feel that I am a hero, I didn't give any information about the rebels … in spite of the horrible torture I was exposed to."
- EPP: "We knew that we would be arrested … I am proud that I *was* one of the rebels against the oppression…"
- EPP: "I *have done* my obligation… just that…"

These EPPs show obvious self-satisfaction; they did their tasks and made

sacrifices. They showed no regret, and they didn't show any feeling of being victims[27].

But what is noteworthy that expressed *done, achieved, or finished* task or obligation. Which may glance to a task that will/should not be completed or continued. Such an "end" is congruent to what we found out of a fragile social identity the EPPs showed. That the political (or revolutionary in terms of the EPPs' words) tasks or obligations need to be involved within a group.

Secondly:

On the contrary, there is EPPs showing a completed inability, and unable paralyzed selves.

- EPP: "**I was unable … I felt like I was a piece of meat, whoever sees it is disgusted by it… I can't help anyone, even my self I can't help.**"
- EPP: "All my thoughts were about how to get out of that place alive. I

saw people die in front of my eyes, everyday. I thought only of myself. I had no idea when I would get out. I couldn't help anyone. My self… I couldn't help."

- EPP: "I was miserable. Participation in one demonstration at Aleppo University against the regime led to three years in prison. During two of those years I knew nothing about my family."

One of the writers of the book "Acts of Memory" addresses the "denial of subjectivity" that Holocaust survivors show. This denial results from losing the ability to keep, control the self-fate or self-destiny, which occupies an essential place in western culture. Such a loss is enough to lead someone to deny him/herself. The writer recounts the story of a former prisoner: A Nazi officer ordered her to boil water in a container; then he brought a recently born baby and threw the baby into the water. The survivor said that whoever was there in

the kitchen boiling the water *is* not herself, *is* not her, watching that horrific accident taking place, and doing nothing[28]. The description displayed by the Syrian EPPs, "to be a discussing pieces of meat/ unable to help even myself", is similar to what the Holocaust survivor said. The self is "dispossessed or alienated" to an outside oppressor power.

Thirdly:

There is another case placing a space between both former extreme points. It is the acceptance of the fate experienced in prison, it doesn't believe in the "revolution" nor want to practice it. The self is not dispossessed to the same extent as shown above. In this regard, we noted that the majority of EPPs, who represent the second and the third cases, were arrested for a silly reason, and generally they are not engaged actively in the events taking place in this conflict.

- EPP: "I was concerned about myself only, keeping a distance

from both the extreme Islamist prisoners and the secular ones. I am a man who doesn't care about policy. I met some miserable people like me in prison, they had been imprisoned without any fault. They didn't care about overturning the regime, whoever rules is welcomed. We are only concerned about our livelihood".

- EPP: "I don't feel regret, I don't feel I'm a hero. I'm not from the revolutionary people, I left the revolution to those who love it. I know I can't bear the hardships of the revolution, such as the imprisonment and the humiliation. I left Duma in early 2011, to stay away from its events, I lived in my parents-in-law's home in Mazzeh. In 2011 I participated in a parade supporting Assad, and carried a photo of Assad, after pressure from my wife. I carried it and roamed the Damascus streets".

g- The problems faced by EPPs[29]

In attempting to make a robust study on the problems faced by EPPs, a quantitative survey and a statistic analysis were the best fit. The relevant NGOs need generalized findings to build a response to meet their needs. Since we don't have quantitative research now, we will make a qualitative analysis, which can help in building categories for statistical analysis in later studies.

The problems that the EPP may suffer from can be classified into eight categories:

1- Health problems, mental and/or physical.

Skin diseases were the most common health problems among EPPs. Other problems include HIV, stiffness of joints because of torture, gastroenteritis, and back pain.

The health problems complicate and foil other kinds of problems, in that they break

down the body, which is the basic asset for life.

2- Unstable relations with family, and particularly with the spouse.

3- Absence of social and psychological support, and being blamed for bringing his/her circumstances upon him/herself.

4- Unemployment, or working in low level jobs. One EPPs we interviewed worked in a grocery shop, despite having graduated from university in Syria. He said: "What I do now is not a job."

5- Poverty: inability to meet basic needs, such as health care, housing, or having the necessary capital to start a new job.

6- Sometimes the EPP is the sole breadwinner in his/her family. It is also common that in the case of the death of a breadwinner in the EPP's extended family, he/she may also be financially responsible for them as well.

7- Loss of property in Syria due to damage or confiscation.

The 4th to 7th categories can be gathered under economic problems, which deserve further discussion:

The economic deterioration of the EPP's family life basically results from various factors, including the following: families often have to use all their savings and the profits from properties they had before the family member's arrest, often the sources of work are blocked or broken down during the war, large amounts of money must be paid in the families' endeavors to find out any information about the prisoner. We can find many cases where families have fallen under huge burdens of debt during the imprisonment of a family member and after his/her release. It is noteworthy that Syrian NGOs don't provide any specialized support for EPPs.

8- Inability to get a passport.

These problems are similar to both those who live in Turkey or inside Syria.

On the other hand, there is no help offered to the EPPs, except some volunteer

activities. The social network became unable to offer a help to the EPP, because of th enormous burden of it, after 6 years of war, losing properties after bombardment or looting, fleeing to other countries or within the country, and so on. Such an absence of support is very significant in terms of increasing the fragility and poverty in the post-prison life's circumstances.

h- The social reintegration

First: At the level of policy

The most common approach to studying EPPs is the reintegration. So far we have used this term in its general meaning as: rehabilitation, support, helping the EPP to be engaged in his/her society. In the following paragraph, we will deeply dig in this concept.

Reintegration can be defined in three comprehensive attitudes regarding the general ex-prisoner, not the political ones in particular[30]:

1- Risk-based: This attitude supposes that the former prisoner presents a risk to the state and society, so he/she should be restricted. The restrictions can take different forms, such as enforcing him/her to sign in at regular intervals, restricting his/her travel abroad, preventing him/her from working, or putting restrictions on kinds of work he/she may do.

2- Needs-based: This attitude supposes that the former prisoners present a burden to society, so that NGOs and governments should take over training and rehabilitation.

3- Strengths-based: This new attitude supposes that the former prisoners are an asset to society, and are not simply passive receivers of help. They should be viewed as positive actors who can initiate change in their societies.

All these attitudes of reintegration are based upon these presuppositions: 1- Society is normal, and the prisoner has deviated from this normality to make mistakes or commit "sins," 2-The prisoner is the party who must fit into society, 3- The prisoner is/was located outside of society, and now, during reintegration, he/she must come back to it[31].

The case relatively diverges from that of the ex-political prisoners. The political prisoners are those who have fought the state, and usually the identity of the state.

They threaten the "peace" in society, especially in a dictatorship. Previous studies, taking in their accounts this nature of the political prisoners, devote the citizenship as a basic, necessary and unavoidable tool to achieve the reintegration. Such a tool may necessarily require making reconciliation and settlement with the political prisoners. Which means there are gates will be opened from the state in front of them, such gates were not available before, and/or the political oriented prisoners didn't want to pass them. This settlement will pave the way to creating active citizens into which the ex-political prisoners will be turned[32], and such a settlement implies that there is a change within the society should happen. In this regard, we can't persistently speak on a deviated prisoner from the normal society[33], and such a persistence can be an obstacle to reintegrate the ex-political prisoners.

How can we critique and discuss those principles regarding the Syrian context?

1- The current Syrian state completely or partially loses its legitimacy, as the EPPs see.

2- A part of the EPPs is already self-excluded from the society. They don't care about it. (The social exclusion is inability to participating actively in the social, economic, political and cultural life of the society, it is also the alienation and avoiding the mainstream of the society[34]).

3- The Syrian state approaches the political prisoners as a risk, and restrict them tightly. (most of them were afraid from re-arresting directly after the release).

4- The Syrian state is economically and sociologically devastated. It can't offer any kind of reconciliation of settlement with the EPPs, at least in the short-term. In other words it can't offer the necessary active citizenship to them.

5- No settlement can be done without a transitional justice is done. Especially, because the numerous violations committed against the prisoners.

These five points mean the Syrian state can't at all achieve the reintegration of the EPPs.

6- WE can easily conclude from the paragraph of dis-earthing that the social, geographical and architectural environment is fragmented, and is being fragmented. It is fragilely present. So, into what the integration can be done?

7- The social, economic and symbolic place, into which the reintegration must be done, needs to be re-built.

We can conclude that the both basic columns of reintegration, i.e. the society and the state are more fragile to make any reintegration in the Syrian context. So, the reintegration is not able to be applied in the Syrian context, in terms of its common classical definition.

Second: Does the Syrian refugees' problems in Turkey contain (imply) those problems of EPPs?

What much are the problems of EPPs and refugees in Turley different/similar?

We reviewed many studies[35] and media reports on the Syrian refugees live in Turkey, we also depended on our daily touch with the Syrian in Gaziantep and Istanbul. We can set out the following comparisons between the refugees and EPPs' problems in Turkey:

The refugees' problems basically differ from the EPPs' (refugees) problems by the both following dimensions:

1- The physical and mental health problems are not urgent for the refugees as they are for the EPPs. In the case of EPPs, such problems are prioritized, but they are not for the refugees.

2- The EPPs are exposed to be blamed by their close social environment, over their arresting. Such a blaming is absent in the

case of the refugees. That refuging in Turkey has taken place as influx, according to a numerous damage hit a small or big community in Syria, gradually or suddenly. But the prison, on the contrary, is individual in his/her imprisoning. So, it is easy to blame a person, while there is no room to blame thousands of thousands of people to their taking refuge. In other words, EPPs are more vulnerable than the refugees to be socially excluded.

The economical and working problems are very similar in the both cases of EPPs and refugees.

We couldn't compare the relationships between the EPPs and their wives/husbands with those of refugees.

In this comparison we should keep in our mind a fundamental difference between the both cases; that the EPP has been/had been/is participant in the political life, intently or not. While the refugees do not

necessarily participate in such political life.

As conclusion: Supporting the EPPs needs a different approach of that of refugees in Turkey. The approach of reintegration is not the available one, active one to support and cube with the EPPs, in its classical common version.

The conclusion:

This research found that getting out of prison doesn't simply mean being transported from the Inside, which is death, hell, torture… to the Outside, which is freedom and resurrection. Such a narrative is wrong.

The prison throws the prisoners, or most of them, out of its gates barefoot, with very worn clothes. This happens after a long period in which connections with the outside world have been lost, where there has been little or no information about family, friends, and no information on what is going on Outside. The instance of release creates alienation and hesitation: the EPP sees the city and the outside world as a forest/jungle or a maze, through which it is very difficult to navigate.

Despite the fact that the release period itself ends after moments or, at most, days, it is just a symptom of a continuous case, which we call dis-earthing. Namely, the EPP finds out that the geography, architecture, and social texture have disappeared or have radically changed, maybe forever. In other words, the Outside where the prisoner is free and survivor only in it, has lost a lot of its aspects and its *essences,* (that we found a case of denying the nature and the possibility of friendship essentially). Such a loss threats and restricts achieving the freedom and the dignity of the former political prisoner.

The Outside is an extent of the Inside, but with different dimensions. We can assure that the imprisonment process exercised by the regime over the political prisoners is not confined and limited to the deeds inside the prison. It is a process has been exercised over the all Outside; and it has pushed the all to be participant in it. The ex-political prisoner is distinctive in this

process by being isolated from the time, and events happening Outside. If time is a continuous and fluid series of changing events, then the ex-political prisoners were outside of it, while they were in the prison. Because of these events had changed the reality in a very radical way, which affected essential elements of the humanity. In this case we concluded the situation of dis-earthing of the EPPs.

We see that the narrative framework, which depends on the Inside-Outside division, and which shapes the former prisoner as witness on the Inside, is not enough. It can't help the ex-political prisoner to express him/herself exercised during this horrible experiment. This "exercise" is not achieved Inside only, but also basically Outside, where the hell is continuously taking place, in a constant way.

This dis-earthing is an image of the social representation of the EPPs on their life, society and the nation.

Many EPPs experience social alienation. Many of them decline the representation of the state to a sectarian entity, they identify in-groups and out-groups, under the condition of imprisonment experience-related narrative, by one of two ways: a sectarian identification (in-group = non-Alawi, out-group= Alawi, Shiite), and an ethical/political identification (in-group =revolutionary, free & out-group= oppressor, unfair…).

In the both cases, the social identity regarding the imprisonment experience, is fragile, unclear, and the EPPs don't form a clear belonging in this respect.

There are three types of the representing the self individually. The first reflects a high self-esteem, *but* the deeds and conditions that led to such self-esteem *have been completed, ended, and done* in the past. Those deeds seemed to be tasks and obligations, things the EPPs had achieved, and they will not continue in practicing them. The second type is pivoted around the alienated self, and the

third type occupies a place between the both other types, there is a kind of surrendering to fate, without alienation but also without self-esteem.

All these types are congruent with the weakness and fragility of social identity, such that even among those who normally exhibit high self-esteem, their sources of such esteem is located in the past, not based on belonging to a group, which means it is not possible to be politically active.

Finally, we discussed the classical common concept of reintegration, and found that this concept cannot be applied in the Syrian context, particularly because there is no environment, no society into which the integration can be done. That is what is referred to in dis-earthing. For example, the classical reintegration of former political prisoners implies their admission into active citizenship, and creation of a kind of settlement with them. Such settlement and admission are impossible in the Syrian context, as the

state has lost its legitimacy, and can't make any settlement under the current circumstances of social, political and economic devastation. Society in its economic, social, architectural, and geographical dimensions has disintegrated.

Suggestions:

1- Establishing institutions and centers to concern about the EPPs, and handle health care for them, and to offer emergency financial help.

2- Rehabilitation of EPPs by training and guidance to suitable work.

3- The Syrian NGOs should specifically offer support to EPPs.

4- Encouraging EPPs to create leagues and self-run organizations.

5- Focusing on advocacy campaigns to attract volunteers who are enthusiastic to share their knowledge and time in supporting EPPs in Turkey.

Notes:

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[5] - http://sn4hr.org/

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[7] - https://www.washingtonpost.com/world/national-security/us-accuses-syria-of-mass-executions-and-burning-bodies/2017/05/15/b7b66c86-3986-11e7-8854-21f359183e8c_story.html?tid=ss_fb-bottom&utm_term=.a19bc197f6d9

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[13] - "The Role of Political Prisoners in the National Reconciliation Process," Assistance Association for Political Prisoners in Burma (AAPP), 2010.

[14] - Bichescu, Dana, et al. Long – term Consequences of Traumatic Experience: an Assessment of Former Political Detainees in Romania. Clinical Practice and Epidemiology in Mental Health, 1:17. 26 Sep. 2005

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[16] - Bal, Miek, et al (editor), Acts of Memory… culture recall in present, Dartmouth College, Hanover and London, 1999

[17] - social identity is empowered essentially by the friends one chooses. Individuals are more attractive to others who assert and enforce their mutual/common social identity. When the individual is exposed to an anxiety and doubt about his/her social identity, then he/she needs friends more. Friends in such a case help in supporting the self-image, or the self- perception. On the other hand, friends form the rich environment, an individual can find his/her instruments to be able to achieve.
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http://dx.doi.org/10.1080/1057610X.2016.1253990

We were inspired by this study where the identity transformation of ex-political prisoners was discussed in depth.

[23] - We are using Social Identity Theory in the first place and Self-categorization theory,

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In this study the researcher discussed the role of the family institution in the process of identity loss, which was useful to us. We found more evidence of how important the loss or deterioration of the family structure is in terms of loss of social identity of EPPs.
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Also see:
Gormally, Brain. Conversion from War to Peace …Ibid.

[26] - In this discussion we used the Identity theory…
Michael A. Hogg, Deborah J. Terry, Katherine M. White. A Tale of Two Theories: A Critical Comparison of Identity Theory with Social Identity Theory. Social Psychology Quarterly, Vol. 58, No. 4 (Dec., 1995), pp. 255-269. American Sociological Association. 2011.

[27] - EPPs may show victimhood to achieve salience to the self,
Carmel Joyce & Orla Lynch (2016) Ibid.

[28] - Acts of Memory. Ibid.
[29] - The problems addressed in this paragraph are similar to the problems faced by EPPs from other countries, even those who live in democratic countries.
No author, "After Release I Had to Restart My Life From the Beginning…Ibid.

Gormally, Brain. Conversion from War to Peace…Ibid.

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[32] - McKeever, Grainne. Ibid.

[33] - Ibid.

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