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Syrian Expert House Meets Kurdish and Syrian Communities from Der Ezzor in Urfa, Turkey

On 24-25 August, 2014, a delegation from [Syrian Expert House](#), headed by Dr. Radwan Ziadeh, executive director of [Syrian Center for Political and Strategic Studies \(SCPSS\)](#), and Mr. Amr al-Sarraj, senior researcher in the [Transitional Justice](#) team, traveled to Urfa city to hold meetings and discussions about [Syria Transition Roadmap](#), a document published by SCPSS and the [Syrian Expert House](#) detailing the Syrian opposition's vision of the democratic transition in Syria. The meetings were conducted with Syrian and Kurdish communities, residents, human rights activists from Syrian-Kurdish civil society organizations, representatives from Syrian civil society organizations, relief organizations, political movements, refugees from Der Ezzor province and other eastern provinces. Moreover, the Syrian Expert House delegation met with Mr. Nawaf al-Basheir, head of al-Baqarah tribe, Mr. Ammar Khattab, member of the Syrian National Council, principle of al-Fajr School in Urfa for the Syrian refugees, and representative from Hayat Organization, which specializes in humanitarian relief, social services, and psychiatric support for the Syrian refugees internally and in Turkey.

The meetings highlighted many topics including: the status of Syrian and Kurdish residents in Urfa, the conditions of the refugees in the camps, the obstacles facing relief and aids sent to Eastern provinces, the deteriorating security situation in Der Ezzor Province due to the vicious control imposed by the Islamic State IS or ISIS. Additionally, the meetings defined possible solutions to the Syrian crisis and outlined how [Syria Transition Roadmap](#) can guide Syrians and Kurds on reforming and rebuilding the state after the conflict.

Also during the meetings, Dr. Radwan Zideh briefed the participants on [Syria Transition Roadmap](#) and the Syrian Expoert House's vision for Syria in the future. Afterwards, Dr. Radwan Ziadeh addressed the participants' questions and inquiries regarding the report.

When the Syrian Expert House members met with Relief Organizations' representatives, they complained about the lack of support and aid sent to Der Ezzor compared to other Syrian provinces. Furthermore, the organizations clarified that due to IS or ISIS control, delivering aid, relief and assistance had become almost impossible. Not to mention the violations and the crimes against humanities committed against the civilians, the residents, and the tribes of Der Ezzor province.

Moreover, Syrian activists highlighted the increasing numbers of Syrian and Kurdish refugees in Urfa estimating to 100,000, the majority of them fled from eastern provinces such: al-Hasakah, al-Raqqa, and Der Ezzor. They are uncertain and insecure about their legal status. As a result, the refugees have difficulties securing appropriate jobs. Subsequently, they can't earn sufficient income to live. In addition, the Syrian refugees in Urfa struggle to have their children enrolled in school to continue their education. Moreover activists reported the shortage in Syrian Schools, and the very low wage that teachers earn, which hinder the children refugees from having the basic education they deserve.



In general, most of the Syrian and Kurdish political, civil, and relief organizations criticized the opposition's lack of support towards the refugees who fled to Urfa from the eastern provinces of Syria. The Syrian Expert House promised to address their issues and concerns the relevant political entities, and to follow-up with them.

Originally, the Syrian Expert House was planning to visit the eastern provinces to meet with political, civil, and military organizations in order to discuss [Syria Transition Roadmap](#). However, due to the escalating violence, the ferocious control of ISIS, and the fierce battles of all sides of the conflict in that region, the Syrian Expert House sought to meet with refugees from these provinces in Urfa, Turkey. The meetings aimed to outline the democratic transition to establish a democratic civil government that respects human rights and plays a major role in ending the ongoing conflict in Syria.

[Syria Transition Roadmap](#) is the result of a year-long consensus-building research process conducted by the Syrian Expert House, a group of approximately 300 Syrian human rights activists, academics, judges, lawyers, leaders of the political opposition, defected government officials, defected military officers, members of local revolutionary councils, and commanders of the armed opposition.

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