

Education in Al-Shaitat area.. an intermittent recovery

The Deir Ezzor governorate has experienced periods of darkness and destruction due to the destructive military power and the different ideologies of the parties to the conflict in Syria, most of whom had a common objective to take revenge upon the rebellious people of the governorate.

The people of the Shaitat area took their share of the darkness and misery when the Daesh organization perpetrated against them the biggest massacre in Syria after the Chemical Massacre by the murder of 1000 local civilians, most of whom were decapitated or executed by firing squads. Furthermore, the organization displaced the rest of to the desert and sentenced anyone below 14 to death.

The three towns of the tribe (Granj, Al-Kashkiyah and Abu Hamam) experienced all kinds of persecution under the rule of the organization and life returned to them only after the defeat of the extremist group.

After the defeat of the organization, the people of Al-Shaitat launched a series of programs and campaigns aimed at resorting life to their area. A group of them was aware of the importance of education in the society of which they had been deprived for five years. As a result, they reconstructed several damaged schools, despite the difficulty of the situation as many schools had been destroyed and were in need for necessary equipment.

A local from the Shaitat tribe named 'Shihab Al-Taamah', a media activist and a member of Our Euphrates Organization which operates in the Shaitat area, said in an interview with DeirEzzor24 that ' Based on our individual efforts and the support from some people of the Shaitat tribe, we have managed to reconstruct 24 schools in the towns of Abu Hamam and Al-Kashkiyah. The schools have received 17500 students this year, which is a significant number compared to the last year in which the number of students reached 125000.'

On the other hand, the people of Granij town have reopened twenty schools and the number of students they received has reached 12000 and 260 teachers this year.

The teachers rely on their own experience and some old textbooks of the Education Directorate, linked with Assad regime, in the teaching process. This is due to the absence of new curriculum at the current time, which is of main concern for the teachers as the used textbooks promote the Baath ideology. In addition, the Deir Ezzor Civil Council is paying an insufficient amount of 100 USD to every teacher as a monthly salary, forcing the teachers to work extra jobs to help their economic situation.

On the other obstacles facing education in Al Shaitat is manifested in the fact that many families are poor and hence they are sending their children to work in order to secure their living. In the same context, Shihab says, ' Many children have not yet joined schools, whose age range from 6 to 15, because of the severe economic conditions of their parents that force them to work. '

SDF, in turn, have not provided the necessary support to improve the education situation in the Shaitat area and their efforts have been limited to the provision of some seats and whiteboards. Shihab Al-Taamah says concerning this 'SDF have not done much for education in Al-Shaitat area. They only provided less than 300 seats and around 45 whiteboards, as well as 6 water tankers, in addition to insufficient monthly salaries to the teachers. Their efforts are extremely limited despite the urgent need for more seats, textbooks, and reconstruction of schools. Winter is coming and most the doors and windows of those schools are in poor condition. In addition, toilets need to be reconstructed.

He added, 'There are no civil organizations that support education in the Shaitat area, apart from our organization 'Our Euphrates For Development', which has reconstructed two schools. We are waiting for other organizations to contribute to the improvement of education in our area'.

Education is the building block of every society due to its major role in the determination and shaping of the identity of the people and being the compass of the society. Hence, the people of Deir Ezzor have been active in the reopening of schools and improvement of education after they had been deprived of it for five years at the hands of the killing machines in Syria.

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