

Field studies: the impact of the Syrian conflict

WARLORD'S ERA AND REVIVING OF PROTECTORATES AND TUTELAGES

(1)

SHIITE MILITIA

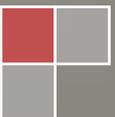
Work Team



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Field studies: the impact of the Syrian conflict on society

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PROTECTORATES AND TUTELAGES**

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SHIITE MILITIA

Work Team

Yousef FAKHER EL- DEN, Rateb SHABO, Garib MIRZA

Contributers:

Humam AL-KHATEEB, Tarek AHMET

Manager of the team

Yousef FAKHER EL-DEN

Consultation:

Mr. Anwar AL-BUNNI

Head of the the Syrian Center for Legal Studies and Research

Pro. Dr. Yousef SALAMA

The manager of the Academic Department of DRSC

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The methodological Framework of the Study:

First: Introducing the study:

This study aims to gather and to analyze the data related to the existence and the activities of the Shia militias in Syria, where we explore the status of these militias which, by now, has gained a presence with a big effect on the Syrian affairs.

This study is not restricted only to the military role of these militias, but it approaches –within the state of the war - the effect of these militias on the Syrian community.

We discuss the relationship between these militias and the Iranian strategies, how their existence and behavior reflected on the Syrian community, and whether their existence will contribute in creating an enduring violence mechanisms.

Second: Importance of the Study:

The importance of this study is that it documents one of the faces of the "conflict *operation* in Syria", reveals (how&why) it exists, and what are its dimensions. In a way that helps in foreseeing the future, and in supplying the subsequent studies with a research material.

In particular, the importance of this research comes from the fact that it tries to give a vision of the role of "Velayat el-Faqih" in the current conflict, and how it is practically embodied through this war, so this research puts, in the hands of - an interested reader, decision makers, different organizations- analytical information and conclusions.

Also this research is important because it highlights the details that are usually neglected in the public speech. Despite the fact that these are active elements, from which one can benefit in understanding the "status", and in constructing an approach of the relationships of the various Syrian components.

Third: the Study Framework:

Since the beginning of the violence operations in Syria, from confronting the demonstrations with power, to suppression actions like torture in prisons, to the armed turn in the revolution... Syria has entered gradually in the civil war and the Syrian situation started to be exposed in front of the outside interferes¹.

On the battlefield, the extreme forces were expanding, benefiting from various factors, so Shia militias expanded. Their components are from groups of Arabs, Syrians, and foreigners. Oppositely, an Islamic "Sunni" organization, which is ISIS, has expanded, endeavoring to revive the Islamic Caliphate and to establish an "Islamic State"⁽²⁾. Its components are a mix of Arabs, Syrians, and foreigners. So, while ISIS is destroying the Syrian state institutions to build its dream-country. The Shia militias' dominant behavior reached the degree of executing officers and soldiers at the Syrian military⁽³⁾, which leads to the completion of the destruction of the state legitimacy and prestige, even in the eyes of its loyalists.

And in between these two, there are many Islamic forces with diversity in loyalties and different directions. In addition to Al-Assad Forces.

At the regional level, we are witnessing a large disturbance that emerges from the timing of the public movement that demands democracy and political contribution, all along with the re-locating of the American existence in the area⁽⁴⁾. Which led to rushing the regional forces to fill the dual vacancies, the one that resulted from the mess created by the collision of the public movement with the authoritarian suppression mechanisms, and the other that resulted from the relative American retrogression.

BUT the Iranian intervention in the area has started previously in Iraq and Lebanon, through the Shia militias, and it has been prepared for, before a relatively long time, in Yemen (And that has appeared clearly once the

1 Yousef FAKHER EL -DEN, The complexity of the Syrian conflict, drsc, <http://goo.gl/RXa8EV>

2 In April 2013 the organization declared establishing "Islamic State In Iraq and Lavent" then it re-declared "IslamicState" in July 2014. It is named Da'esh or ISIS, the name we will adopt in this study.

3 Sharq newspaper, Iran executes Assad's officers, <http://www.alsharq.net.sa/2015/02/16/1297204> in Arabic.

4 Yousef FAKHER EL-DEN, Syria and Iran Through American Repositioning, policies analysis, <http://cutt.us/P9M00> in En

Houthis started their movement). Also this intervention started in Syria along with the starting of the revolution, as an effort from Iran to benefit from the incapability of the Syrian Regime to suppress the Syrian revolution, so she can extend its authority by taking Syria in, and by that she can convert its alliance (which turned into a close-alliance after the inheriting of Bashar Al-Assad the presidency: as a result of the deterioration of the relationship between the mentioned and the Saudi Arabia and Egypt, and his loss of the Soviet union support) into a Guardianship.

But, although that the general framework of the conflict is an international/regional one. And the boundaries between Syria and Iraq has practically fallen, And although that the developments in Syria are connected to the regional conflict with Iran in many countries, we restricted our research just to the Syrian geography, due to the fact that this research is a part of a wider research process, involves various topics, which is being done by the Center of the Democratic Republic Studies.

Forth: the Goals of this Study:

- 1- To offer an Organized and classified representation of the information which concerns with the Shia Militias, as a documentation effort.
- 2- To analyze the structure of these militias
- 3-To analyze the Iranian strategy regarding Syria, and the relationships that she is trying to construct with the Syrian components to serve this strategy.
- 4- A prediction attempt of what these relationships will turn out in the future?

Fifth: the Problematic point of the Study:

As a result to the intersection of the public movement which demands democracy and political participation, with the authoritarian repression which has done its best to deviate the path of the conflict from a peaceful revolution to a civil war, and under the re-locating of the American existence, disturbances have arisen up, from which the regional forces tried to benefit in one hand, and have intervened to face their results in the other hand.

All that overcomplicated the Syrian situation and exposed it to foreign interferences⁽⁵⁾.

So, Iran has intervened directly in Syria, once to protect the Syrian regime, and another to contain and control it and to stabilize its existence in Syria, and these Shia militias, brought from abroad, were an important tool of the Iranian intervention tools. These Militias have found a legitimacy, despite their frank and obvious doctrinal nature, and despite of that the ratio of Syrian Shia does not exceed 5% of the population, they have found a legitimacy among the loyalists who looked at them as a great ally to the regime against the Sunni Jihadist Islamic Militias, and these militias have made, with their numbers and experts, especially the Lebanese Hezbollah, a huge pressure on the Syrian Armed Opposition Forces and that has adjust the power balance till the near past.

The existence of these Militias created a combined problematic in the Syrian situation, with their obvious sectarian character, starting from their factions' names, to the unity of the Shia element in them, this led to the dedication of the sectarian polarization, firstly by using a sectarian sensitivity to recruit and motivate their agents, and secondly by creating an opposite sectarian reaction, with the same mechanism of the Sunni Jihadist Militia that confronts the Syrian Regime , and that will leave everlasting effects on the Syrian society, with the absence of efficient democratic national civil forces, the thing that brings complexities and changes in the Syrian community with its various plurality, and that is what we are trying to treat here.

Sixth: The Methodology of the Study:

The study team has adopted documenting, investigating and comparison in dealing with its resource, and it has analyzed them and presented them according to the descriptive analytical method.

5 Ibid

Seventh: Study References:

1- Media reports from various mass media which has been compared, by the research team, with trusted testimonies to gain as much accuracy as possible.

2-Studies and researches have been done by research centers and organizations that concern with human rights, and considered to have verifiability since their researches have been adopted as resources for various Media, Formal and International Organizations, i.e. Syrian Observatory for Human Rights, and Syrian Human Rights Network.

3- Testimonies, we have got, from civilian activists and coordinators activists, who live in the areas where these militias exist or have been there recently. Or through performing an open oral interviews with them.

Eighth: Questions of the study:

Main question in the research: What is the nature of the relationship (present one and its future prospect) among Shia Militias and the Iranian Islamic Republic, and among Shia militias and the Syrian components (The regime components, the Syrian public components and the components that emerged during the conflict). And from this question many other ones have arisen, about the nature of this Militia, which means its essence and identity, and questions about its (military, political, social and economic) activities and their connections with the Iranian Strategy. And does this Militia has a permanent effect on the Syrian community? 1And in case that the answer is yes, What are the relationship scenarios, between it and the factions, that consider themselves affected by the falling of the Assad? And by that we reach the question about, what could be done by the democrats in sake of building a varsity democratic patriotism that is able to reconstruct Syria, onto the citizenship and democracy bases.

And in the whole research, the most irritating question still this: how can we sort the real from the illusionary, in what the political actors, whom are affected by their ideologies and acts, are saying?

Ninth: Limitation of the Study:

In many parts of the study, it would have been better if the study has been conducted by quantity methods like doing questionnaires, to get more accurate results which we can adopt with more confidence, like the study of the majority of Alawi attitude from the Shia Militias. We couldn't do that in the presence of Al Assad (since any attempt from this kind could afford the witness his life, even if we conduct this interview orally), so we adopted testifies of peoples who have an information inside the society, due to their political or social work within their social environments.

Tenth: Tools if the study:

The study adopted the following: Opened Interview, Reports studying, news and researches, collective thinking sessions have been done by the teamwork. By that we can say that this study is the result of a collective thinking/analysis.

Section 1:

The Iranian Intervention and the Emergence of Shia Militia in Syria⁶



Fatwa of "Kazem al-Haerie", a Shia religious leader, invites to join to guardianship of the Islamic Jurists of Iran, and incentivizes the loyalists to fight with

Introduction:

The relationship between Iran and Syria goes back to a long time⁽⁷⁾, and we care about the current relationship between them, which cannot be studied without a speed look on the development in this relation which happened after “Bashar Al Assad” inherited the power from his father, and that entails also taking a look at the relationship during the father era.

Hafez Al- Assad has built his relationship with Iran as a part of an effort to support his rule, by building a net of relations. Benefiting from the enmity between Saddam Hussein and Iran, and the Iran's extreme need to an Arabian part can be with her side, during the war with Iraq. The tendency toward Iran came as compensation of Egyptian leaving the conflict with Israel alone, by Camp David agreement, which weakened Al-Assad negotiation choices. The father Al- Assad has played a vital role in the regional balance, between Iran and Arab Gulf States, which he aspired to have good relationships with, especially Saudi Arabia. He

6 The resource of the photo: al- Ufuq pedia

7 Abla Mazai, The Iranina - Syrian relationships, M.Sc. e-book

acted as an open path between the both regional powers, and always tried his best to benefit from the connection role between them both. The coalition between the father Al-Assad and Iran has experienced many inconsistencies, and sometimes he didn't hesitate to face it through representatives, as when he supported "Amal" faction in Lebanon against Iran-affiliated Hezbollah, whereby they were fighting for representation of the Shia existence in Lebanon. Also there are doubts that he has exposed the "Iran Contra" agreement to the social media⁽⁸⁾, through Alshiraa magazine, because he wanted to prevent the cooperation between Israel-USA and Iran, and to punish Iran for not supporting him against "Al-AAI Plane" case's consequences or during the International Siege. And it is important to observe that 10 years of "Khomeini" rule (the revolution-leader), could not make Al-Assad visit or meet him for any reason."⁽⁹⁾

Generally, Hafez Al-Assad was dealing with Iran from a self-interest perspective, and maintained the distance between him and her imperial ambition. He also took into consideration the balances on both the regional and the international level, and he found ways to do that even if he had to bow in front of the wind some times. But this situation has changed gradually during his son rule (Bashar Al-Assad) who accepted the Iranian influence in Syria. One of this acceptance aspects is that Iran stepped into the places that were forbidden in the late Assad's era, whereby the Shia Da'wa became free-handed in an unprecedented way⁽¹⁰⁾. This type of soft dealing Vs the tough one with other regional parts, were the prevalent regime's foreign policy when the revolution raised in 2011 March.

This soft dealing with Iran, and the converting in the relationship from the rival coalition into the coalition from a weak position, has many overlapped reasons, the qualitative shift in them was the collapse of the Soviet Union, and the termination of the cold war taking all the included international relations with it, that cold war from which the Syrian regime was the most beneficiary.

8 - we adopt sayings of Patrick Sel in his book: *Al-Assad, the Conflict upon the Middle East* about the responsibility of Hafez Al-Assad for the scandal, and this has been repeated a lot from decent researchers like Van Dam in his book: *The Conflict upon the Authority in Syria*, despite the existence of another saying that comes in many references like Kenneth Katzman's study: "Iranian Revolutionary Guard, Components and Rule", it speaks about the responsibility for Mahdi Al-Hashmi (to be continued)

9 The Shia Ba'th 1919 – 2007, The Syrian Institute for Syrian Studies

10 Ibid

In spite of the flexibility that the regime has showed to overcome the results of ceasing the cold war, it was faced with an international letting down as it considered; which started by the American disclaimer from her promises about the appeasement with Israel, and from the promises about its permanent leverage in Lebanon which was finished by kicking the Syrian army out.

Later, the international siege of Syria started, aiming to finish this regime – at least it has appeared as that – so the regime increased its corporation with Iran.

The father Al-Assad who established the political system, is different from his heir; the Father's internal method in governing was based on suppression and distributing benefits, while externally it ranged between doing favors to sabotage. All that has changed on the son's hands, who considered the strength aspects that he had, a permanent truth, at the beginning, then he rushed to Iran to protect him, when he was besieged by pressures, instead of bowing to the international winds, and finding solutions with other regional forces.

But, this period experienced a temporary political tension between both the Iranian and the Syrian regimes regarding the attitude towards Iraq. First, because of the actual position on the American invasion of Iraq, Whereby the Iranian regime accepted the invasion by making an agreement between U.S.A and Mohammed Baqer Al-Hakim, the president of the Islamic Supreme Council of Iraq. Where the Syrian regime ignored the animosity with its rival 'the Iraqi regime', and broke the international siege of Iraq, because of the fear of the results of the fall of his twin, the Iraq regime, which could lead to the fall of the Syrian regime as a next step. But after that, the tension was removed, when Iran started to reap the benefits from easing Iraq invasion, till she financed the Shia militias to fight the American occupation⁽¹¹⁾.

In June-2006, the Syrian and Iranian regimes signed the Joint Defense Agreement. Which is considered, to some observers, a result of

11 The current of al-Sader was in the center of the Iraqi Shia built on Arabian - base. It didn't participate in introducing to the American invasion to Iraq, on the contrary of the other Shia forces that are followed to Iran. It was the initiator to resist the American occupation, then Iran and its allies included themselves in this process after catching the benefits of the American invasion for taking Saddam Hussein down. Iran and its allies tries to deconstruct the Current of al - Sader. For more information on the pretended role of Shia Militia in Iraq, you can visit the T.V series of Dajla (the Iraqi Channel, titled The Guns of Shadow) about these militias in Iraq, whereby they concealed the role of other players in Iraq.

the international pressures and threats and the internal divisions (which appeared for the first time in the regime history when the vice-president "Abd El-Halim Khaddam" defected, in addition to the murder of the strong security officer "Gazy Kana'n" October - 2005). Hezbollah tried to fill the space after Syrian army withdrawal, which raised the importance of Hezbollah to the Syrian regime, Hence this regime found itself trapped between the hammer of the international pressures and the anvil of the Iranian rescuing after he became very dependent on Iran⁽¹²⁾

Amidst this situation the Syrian revolution started against the regime, so Iran interacted through many ways: Diplomacy, through the Russian ally and BRICS group states⁽¹³⁾. In addition to the countries that she can attract, to support her, and also through its connections with the political forces like the residue of leftist forces in the region, PKK, and Palestinian forces in Damascus. Iran also used the media campaigns through her channels, or through "AL_Mayadin" channel, which she has financed its establishing. And by exploring the possibility of arranging an opposition that follows her and helps her to make things fit her interests.

From the first moment of the Syrian revolution, Iran supported the Syrian regime strongly, to protect her leverage in Syria, in anticipation of losing one of its most important and closest alliance, and fearing of the effect of Syrian regime fall on its most important agent in the area, Hezbollah, and fearing from the consequences of that fall on the Iranian internal level, since it hasn't revived from the "green revolution" which it has just suppressed. So it did that to invest in the conflict, and to convert the results into its dominance side. "It is known that the Iranian government conditioned on Feb-2015 to get sovereign grantees (20 trillion USD) ($20 * 10^{12}$) from the Syrian government & in return it will provide a new line of credits (4,5 billion USD) ($4,5 * 10^9$) to provide petrol derivatives and nurturing materials⁽¹⁴⁾.

The Shia militias, Iran's militias, which entered Syria after the revolution to fight beside Al-Assad, was one of the most important factors that kept the regime together, and the existence of these militias

12 "The Strategy of Iran to Spread the Shia Contrain in Syria", al-Watan al-Arabi newspaper, 12- 6 – 2006 on the website of The Arabian Enlightenment <http://cutt.us/I9trv>

13 BRICS = Brazilia, India, Russia, China, South of Aferica.

14 Jad el- Karim el- Jibaii, Catastrophic Consequences of War Economy on Syria, DRSC, <http://cutt.us/Oxn6t>

has gone through many phases, the latest one was inspired by the revolutionary guards' experiment in Iran, but in different conditions, where it can't pretend that they represent the majority, and it can't defend the Syrian regime, which is originated in the same situation and claims, of which, the revolutionary guards' originated in Iran⁽¹⁵⁾. So the Shia military replaced its dream about "local revolutionary guards" by "minorities coalition", and called it a "resistance", the name, which it monopolized it in Lebanon, suggesting of minorities that it is their partner in "resisting" the majority, under the title of fighting the "extremism", the extremism which it was the major producer of it, and it results from its actions. This strategy is what we try to follow, among other goals, in our study.

The Iranian Strategy of the Shia Militias in Syria:

Hezbollah is one of the Iranian regime pillars and a main active in it, especially in the region. The speech of the Secretary-General of Hezbollah, Hasan Nasr Allah, on 24 - 5 - 2015, demonstrated the strategy of Iranian Revolutionary Guards in this issue, he said "We stick to the golden equation: army, people and resistance ... today we introduce this equation to all the region's people so they can achieve victory". This means the resistance has been built to be at least⁽¹⁶⁾, a partner to any state and affiliated to Iran, like Hezbollah, to weaken the state sovereign and to strengthen the Iranian leverage. Which can be considered as an exportation of the Iranian revolution, and exactly the experiment of revolutionary guards, which has converted from a militia to a parallel state.

As a locating of the states, in which the Iranian regime applies this equation, with falsifying the date of application, saying "Hasan Nasr Allah" in the same speech: "this equation which protects Lebanon today, let's take it out from the Lebanese circle and introduce it to Syria, and Syria has used it since many years. We introduce it to Iraq and Iraq has

15 Kenneth Katezman, Ibid.

16 We come across it in Iraq trying to seize on the state institutions or taking their places. We can find something like that in a report of al-Mashhad Newspaper " How Does Iran Manage its Conflicts through the Attempts of Making Iraq Stable? " <http://goo.gl/D5f09E>

used it since a year⁽¹⁷⁾. And introduce it to Yemen which has started using it since sixty days^{(18) (19)}”

But in this same speech, we can touch a general invitation to build militias that reach other denominations, which is achieved, before this speech, on the ground in Lebanon and Iraq, and it is going on in Syria now. For example, in Lebanon, Hezbollah has built a militia called "Popular Resistance Brigades" and supported small militias in different places⁽²⁰⁾, the last one was a honorary militia of the Communist Lebanese Party. In Iraq, Iran affiliated militias, "Imam Ali Battalions", started to train Christians to form a branch group of it, called "the Spirit of God, Jesus, Mary's Son, Battalion⁽²¹⁾". In Syria, our study contains a lot of models.

Both of Iranians and Hezbollah build Al Da'wa upon the minorities' permanent obsessions, and sometimes upon Sunni's fears in commercial cities' centers, as invitation to establish a political military coalition under Iranian custody, using the most important excuse: the risk of takfir (practice of excommunication).

The mechanism of establishing these militias is the affiliating to Iran and the political and military dependence on it. We concluded this from the role of Hezbollah in Lebanon and its ability to paralyze the government activity whenever it wants. In addition, it is the dominant of the war/peace decision, so it is as an armed agent of Iran. Keeping in mind that Hezbollah didn't accept the existence of any other forces in the Lebanese areas considered as sensitive terrains, even from its affiliated groups like the one that he established by itself "Lebanese Resistance Brigades" which follow it completely⁽²²⁾. In Iraq, Iran and the Shia Militias that are controlled by Velayat-el Faqih are pressuring on the

17 Iran established the first Iraqi Shia militia followed to it in Iran not in Iraq in 1982, by the name of : "the Brigade of Badr" . Then it changed its name to "Filaq Badr" . For more information, visit the website of the Islamic Movements <http://www.islamist-movements.com/12148>

18 Hasan Nasrallah insists to fabricate the facts, when he mentioned false dates depending on seizing of the near memory upon people because of breaking out the bloody conflict. But the date of converting Houthis into Twelver Shia doctrine and the province of the Islamic Jurists and its training by Hezbollah and Iran is earlier than the date of its coup over the political process in Yemen.

19 Speech of Hasan Naserallah on T.V <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=NlsvlKtdvAA>

20 Establishing Shia militas under protecting of Hezbollah, led by a drugs trader, <http://goo.gl/4aPdqp>

21 Imam Ali Battalions ... an abstract of extreme Iraqi Shia militias fighting ISIS, The New Gulf Website, <http://www.thenewkhalij.com/ar/node/8577>

22 Thaer Ghandour, The backer army of Hezbollah is deconstructed, <http://goo.gl/RbpwwE>

Head of Iraq Government "Hider Al- Abadi" to prevent him from arming the Sunni tribes against ISIS⁽²³⁾ .

So, it became clear that the strategy of Iran for the Shia Militias depends on permanent clashes, which means not to limit the conflict by the regime fall. It aims to impose itself as a fact that exists in Syria, by creating a coalition between denominations, Ethnics, and ideological groups, to face the progress of the Syrian Opposition in Syria, and Al-Hazm Storm in Yemen, and ISIS in Iraq. And to have a share from the political reality, independently from the regime that it defends.

The Shia Militia Emergence in Syria

The term "Shia Militia" became common in the media, and it ranges from "Sectarian Militia" to "Shia" as an absolute notion, depends on the attitude of the media, and its objectivity, and some of them use it, to serve the sectarian mobilizing, By obliterating the differences between the Shia Militia and the general Shia denomination, in order to build a stereotype of a bloody united denomination⁽²⁴⁾ . So this term users aim to provoke the other side with a united reaction against them. But in fact this method serves the Iranian strategy to control the Arab Shia.

The agents of Velayat-el Faqih freely express their indignation against who refuses to follow Iran⁽²⁵⁾, and those who refuse to provoke Arab Shia to fight against their same people to serve Iran; so here is "Hasan Nasr Allah" attacking who oppose him among the Shiite in Lebanon, and calling them " the Shia of American embassy" and describes them as " traitors, stupid and agents"⁽²⁶⁾

23 The contested leadership and loyalty divide Shia of Iraq, Arab Newspaper, <http://goo.gl/D5f09E>

24 There is a lot of evidence proving the fault of this concept (of the unity of Shia). We can see a lot of conflicts amidst Shia in Iraq and their militias. Al- Mashhad Magazine reported " the disputes of Shia - Shia are deeper than ones between Al - Maleki and Baddi, they include serious problems between the armed militias, which are divided into two parts: The militias that follow to Iran and religiously to Ali Khamenei as "Bde organization", "Asaib Ahl al -Haq", "Hezbollah Battalions" and "Khorasani Saraya", which don't respect the orders of the government very much. The second part is the battalions that follow the religious men like: "Ali Sistani", "Ammar al - Hakim" and Muqtada al - Sadr" which are closer to the government.

25 The attitude of the previous secretary – general of Hezbollah " Sobhi al – Tofaili", He said " Khamenie and Nasr Allah must fall out because of the bloodshed they are responsible for ". Syrianet website, <https://goo.gl/hYxm6N> .

26 Nasr Allah "We will not be silent... it is a battle of existence" Safier ?Newspaper <http://assafir.com/Article/421291>

The Iran- affiliated militias have appeared in Syria one by one. At the beginning of the Syrian revolution, it restricted only to accusations to "Hezbollah" in intervention in Syria, which were denied by the regime and Hezbollah, till declaring it in public in "Al-Qusayr" battle on May 2013, after 2 years from the revolution⁽²⁷⁾. The accusations weren't limited to Hezbollah, but they reached Al-Mahdi army, that affiliates to "Moqtada Al – Sader" in Iraq, especially after captivating some of his men in late 2011 (Syrian Network of Human Rights); in addition to videos on "YouTube", showing the arrestment of some people affiliated to Mahdi army⁽²⁸⁾.

In fact, the news about Al-Mahdi Army wasn't accurate, because this united group has started to degrade since 2004⁽²⁹⁾ by a clear effect of Iran, and "Moqtada Al-Sader" decided to disband it on Mars -2008⁽³⁰⁾, when he ordered his followers to leave weapons, during battles with Iraq and USA armies. Maybe Moqtada Al-Sader himself is the first source of confusion, because he insisted that he suspended not dissolved the army. Till 2012⁽³¹⁾, when he dissolved it officially. In this whole period there was a talk about a militia he has established under the name: "the Expected day" then "Peace brigades". And a lot of defectors from him under this name. And this what Iranians exploited through supporting "Asai'b Ahl al Haq Militia"⁽³²⁾, that follows it, led by "Kais Al Khazali", who has defected from "Moqtada Al Sader", in order to benefit from the popularity of "Al Mahdi" army and the Sadrism Movement, also Iran

27 Ahmad Yaqoup, "Involving of Hezbollah in Syria: the Facts and Prospectives, AJ net, 17 -3 – 2014
<http://cutt.us/0Ass>

28 "Uthman Bin Affan" Battakion declared capturing members of Mahdi Army, and broadcasted the images of their IDs of them over Youtube.

29 Adaeb Ahl Al haq, AJ net, <http://goo.gl/Cg8Ryl>

30 Muqtada al – Sadr orders his loyalists to leave weapons and keep silent,
http://www.aafaq.org/news.aspx?id_news=4780

31 Sadr current decides to dissolve Mahdi army and change it into "thinking projects",
<http://goo.gl/V2SiYl>

32 The first emergence of Asaib Ahl Al Haq was in 2004 when Muqtada al - Sadr signed (as the leader of Mahdi army - the armed party of Sadr current) an agreement with occupying American and Iraqi government to cease firing. Qais Khazali, Abd al - Hadi Daraji and Akram Kaabi decided to desert from Mahdi army with hundreds of combatants deciding to continue in fighting. In spite of the reconciliation between al - Sadr and Khazali in the middle of 2005, declaring establishing of "Asaib Ahl Al Haq" militia officially in July 2006. Then in 2008 it declared its independence from Mahdi army, when al - Sadr decided to dissolve Mahdi army and establish "the promised day battalions" instead of it, which Khazali refused to join it. Motaez bi Allah Mohammed, Asaib Ahl Al Haq ... the soldiers of Sulimani, al - Rased website, http://alrased.net/main/articles.aspx?selected_article_no=6783

supported Al-Khazali Moqtada Al-Sadr argument about the Sadrist heritage.

In Syria, all the indicators were pointing that, when the accusations were against Al-Sadr Army, there was a disorder in Sadrist Movement. Where “Moqtada Al Sadr” insisted on disagreeing the intervention in Syria, and among his followers supporters there were who supported the Syrian revolution in its peaceful stage; ('Jonobieh' Lebanese website reported about “Moqtada Al Sadr” – affiliated members: "his followers raised the “Free Syrian Army” flag sympathizing with the rebels in 2012”⁽³³⁾) but on the other side, “Kazim Al Ha'iri”, the religious reference of the Sadrist movement, gave a religious order (Fatwa) to fight in Syria with the Syrian regime, to cover “Kais Al Khazali” intervention in Syria, achieving the Iranian decision.⁽³⁴⁾

It appeared, in connection to the Syrian situation, that "The Shia Marja" (Shia reference) in “Najaf”, doesn't want to get involved, especially, in the Syrian war on the contrary with “Qom Marja”⁽³⁵⁾. Even though it seemed careful not to clash with the other side, because of the Iranian potency In Iraq, which takes many shapes including terrorism⁽³⁶⁾, and because of the popular sectarian mobilization that is produced by Iran and its allies, and strives to invest it against those who refuse its policies inside the Shia zone especially⁽³⁷⁾. That thing shows an aspect of the conflict among the political Shia Islamic forces⁽³⁸⁾, and it allows us to

33 Al – Gonubie website, <http://goo.gl/WEKyzw>

34 Haeri makes a Fatwa of the obligation of fighting in Syria, http://www.al-offok.com/main/articles.aspx?article_no=15526

35 Muqtada al – Sadr repeated his attitude of refusing fighting in Syria, what Sistani also impacted in his speech as some news leaked, NOW website, <https://goo.gl/S60pd4>

36 For example Muqtada al – Sadr accuses "Asaib Ahl Al Haq of killing the deputy of his current Saleh Akili, Al Arabie Website, <http://www.alarabiya.net/articles/2012/01/04/186302.html>

37 this interview explains the terrorism Iran applies against Shia reference which is opposition of it, or even differentiates from it. The principle of Province of Islamic Jurists between Shia concepts and Khomeini's experiment, an interview with the religious Shia one, political and writer Iyad Jamal el-Den, Qantara Web, <http://goo.gl/1X73mj>

38 The Shia writer from Saudi "Tawfiq al - Saif" the covert disputes between Shia currents. He bets that keeping political activity of these currents within the state entity will carry on keeping them away from Iran, he proves this point by what happened after American occupation of Iraq, when The supreme Islamic revolution council of Iraq (which - led Badr troops) kept distance from the Province of Islamic Jurists because of the political process in Iraq. We can reverse the equation, whereby Iran influences over Shia components in Arab countries to involve them in the conflicts by recruiting them in the Province of Islamic Jurists. For more information on the opinions of the writer: Tawfiq Saif, Parties are joined to Province of Islamic jurists, AJ net, <http://www.aljazeera.net/specialfiles/pages/6136be45-b917-4ec1-8c81-d38dbb62e8af>

track the Arab Shia provocation achieved by the Iranian agents' public speech, who are embarrassing their rivals either to push them to fight or to affect their legitimacy.

Since 2011 end till the big explosion of the Shia Militia "phenomena" in 2013, there have been a lot of observations, documentation and declaration the existence of these militias and their reproduction. So now we have 24 affiliated to Iran Shia militias in Syria. (Vice of the leader-general of "Al-Quds" Battalion, Hussein Hamadani, has declared, that there are more than 40 Battalions⁽³⁹⁾)

The Time Line of Establishing Shia Militia in the Syrian Lands⁽⁴⁰⁾

On 29-8-2011, Al-Nahar newspaper in Beirut reported news about a funeral of a Hezbollah member (Hasan Ali Smaha), who has been killed "during his Jihadist duty" as a resource of Hezbollah said, without stating the place he has killed in. but a resource of the Ministry of the Interior has denied that "Smaha" had been killed in Syria, saying that he has died in a traffic accident in Lebanon, to the same newspaper.

Then more important news was the death of "Mohammed Hussein Al Haj Nasief" nicknamed by 'Abo Abbas", one of the leaders in the party, where Hezbollah stated during his funeral that he has been killed during his Jihadist duty on October 2012. And this enhanced the doubts of Hezbollah intervention in the conflict in Syria.⁽⁴¹⁾

With the increase in the numbers of killed people of Hezbollah in Syria, Hezbollah admitted his involvement in the armed conflict in Syria, and it started to defend it using many excuses that served his priorities; beginning from defending the Shia's holy sites to provoke Shia sectarianism, to the state that it protects Shia in general, as Sheikh Nabil Qawowq, chief of the Executive Council of Hezbollah, has said: "What Hezbollah is doing in this issue, is a national and an ethical duty to protect the Lebanese people in the border villages⁽⁴²⁾". And when the

39 Arabya net, 10 -3 – 2015 <http://cutt.us/VmwXq>

40 Fighter Shia militias in Syria, Syrian network of human rights, 5 – 7 – 2014
http://sn4hr.org/public_html/wp-content/pdf/arabic/shia'a-arabic.pdf

41 Ibid

42 (Mansour practices political fabricates: Hezbollah protects Lebanese towns), Middle east online,
<http://www.middle-east-/>

Secretary General of Hezbollah announced the entering of the party forces to Al- Qusayr, his announcement came within the proclamation of “resistance”, and concentrated on the other minorities' obsession by proclaiming that he is fighting the 'Takfirists' (excommunications).

According to the testimonies we gained, and reports we collected and verified, the existence of Shia Militias was still according to the above mentioned phase until the first third of 2012; before this date, the existence of Shia members from Hezbollah or from the Iranian Revolutionary Guards or some Iraqi militias was only a matter of speech, without strong evidences or announcements from these groups. The same status continued till the summer of 2012, when “Abo al-Fadhel al- Abbas battalions” appeared clearly in Set Zeineb, Damascus. Keeping in mind that, in this summer, the assassination of the Crisis Cell in Syria took a place, in which Asef Shawket (the Deputy of Chief of Army Staff and Bashar Al Assad's brother in law), and the Minister of Defense Daoud Rajha, and the Chief of the Security National Office Hisham Bakhtiar, have been killed, and in this event the FSA(Free Syrian Army) made a big progress in the surrounding of Damascus and some of its external neighborhoods, which means two things, that the regime needed these militias, and that Iran was able to mobilize them rapidly.

The increase in the Shia militias' numbers continued in a bigger degree in the first third of 2013, when their appearance became in public and big in many Syrian areas. So the conflict entered a new stage, where this Shia militia's existence added more of sectarianism mobilization, and – as a reason – the Syrian opposition was finding itself, facing Shia troops from Iraq, Lebanon and even from Syria, in many sites. At the beginning of this stage, the Shia militias declared their existence in Syria; on May 2013 Hezbollah stated officially its joining to the Syrian regime's troops in the operation of seizing upon Al-Qusayr city in the western countryside of Homs, where the Secretary General of Hezbollah stated in his speech: " Syria is the back and the support of the “resistance’, and the” resistance’ can't stand idly by, or allow the excommunications to break its backbone" as a clear declaration for the first time of armed participating⁽⁴³⁾.

43 Involving of Hezbollah in Syria... Facts and Prospectives, Ibid.

In this period (Hezbollah declared its intervention in Al-Qusayr), Shia militia's numbers started to increase. In April 2013, "Said Al shohada", the Iraqi battalions, appeared. (They were defected from Hezbollah- Iraq, and led by Abo Mustafa al- Shibani in April 2013). It entered Syria in May in the same year. In the middle of this year, "Failaq al- Waed al –Sadiq" appeared in Syria (it was established in Iraq in 2006, led by "Ammar Hadad", a supporter to "Ali Khamenei", and has a strong relation with Lebanese Hezbollah). And then there was the announcement of "Liwa Zo Faqar" (led by "Abo Shahed al Jabbory", it was known by its partnership in Al-Nabek battles, where he was the front of the forces that re-gained the city from JN- Al Qaida and ISIS- held). In June and July of the same year, "Mohammed Baker al- Sader troops" (it is the armed part of Bader organization, Mohammed Baker al- Hakim established it in 1980, according to Imam Khomeini directions , and "Mohammed Baker al- Sader troops" work under the big armed branch of Bader organization: Failaq Bader). In this period also, Liwa (brigade) Kafiel Zeineb appeared (it works under the umbrella of Asai'b Ahl al-Haq, it stated its participating in the fighting in Syria at the middle of 2013). Hezbollah – al Nojaba' appeared in the same summer, and Liwa (brigade) Imam Hussein was stated. In undetermined date; middle or beginning of 2013, Hezbollah – Iraq entered Syria to participate in fighting. In the late of 2013 in December, "Assad – Allah Al Galib" Brigade appeared.

This period is considered as the apex of entering and forming Shia Militias, because we don't observe forming more of it, until the middle of 2014, when Liwa Mo'mal – Mahdi Army appeared in May exactly, and at the end of 2014 the Afghan fighters entered by Liwa Fatimid which its acts is in Dara' province mainly and extends to another northern areas.

The time line of the appearance and intervention of the Shia Militias, appoints that the big jump took place, between the first and the second third of 2013. After this date until now, there is no big increasing in the Shia Militia numbers, for many reasons, related for example, to ISIS seizing upon Mosel and Iraqi Shia Militia members' withdrawing to Iraq, which reflected on the Syrian case by dispatching Shia Afghani-Hazarah members to it⁽⁴⁴⁾.

44 Chritopher Kozak, An Army In All Corners... Assad's Campaign Strategy In Syria, Institution of study of war, April 2015, <http://cutt.us/clfe>

But the most important in this period (since the beginning of 2015) is the official Iranian speech: "we intervened in Yemen and Syria in order to extend the Shia crescent map" Mohammed Ali Jafari the leader of Iranian Revolutionary Guards said on September 2015.⁽⁴⁵⁾

Adding to this evidences, the production of a documentary film⁽⁴⁶⁾, Al-Ofok Iranian channel (unofficial channel follows the Iranian Revolutionary Guards) displayed it. The films shows a story of one of the Afghan fighters, who came – as he said - to Syria to protect the Shia Holy Sites from the extremists who want to destroy them. This means that the religious Shia sectarianism discourse was the prevalent discourse, and it is a contradictory one to the resistance narrative which Hezbollah and the regime are saying.

45 Arabya net, 8 – 5- 2015 <http://ara.tv/9qega>

46 A documentary film observes the life of Shia Afghan fighters in Syria, translated by New Syrian website, 9 – 5- 2015 (Persian & Arabic) <http://cutt.us/qZHh>

The Second Section

The Internal Relationships of the Shia Militia and the ways it is formed

The first part: militia exists before the Syrian crisis, and they are out of Syria.

The second part: militia which were formed as a direct reflection of the Syrian crisis, and entered Syria or were formed by Syrians.

The third part: the militia which defected from an original and active militia (already works in Syria), for many reasons.

The first part: Shia militia exists before the Syrian revolution:

There was no Shia militia inside Syria before the revolution in 2011, but there were ones in Iraq and Lebanon (of course the Iranian revolutionary guards exists in Iran but it can't be considered as a militia, because it is an army that is organized inside Iran, and because of that, it is not considered a militia which intervened in Syria, but a foreign army which entered Syria in a way or another)

The most prominent militia that entered Syria:

1. **Lebanese Hezbollah:** exists in Lebanon, and entered Syria in 2013 officially, in spite of a lot of information about the existence of its troops in Syria before this date.

It formed many battalions which follow it, from the Twelver Shia only, and who already have the Syrian nationality. It existence in north of Aleppo, in both "Nobbol" and "Zahraa"; the two are Shia towns where the residents in these towns enrolled in it⁽⁴⁷⁾ and in the Syrian Hezbollah recently.

2. **Hezbollah - Iraq:** is formed when the USA troops entered Iraq in 2003, and was officially announced in 2006. Led by Hashem Hamadani.

47 An interview with the journalist "Moustafa Mohammed", a journalist working in the field of Aleppo and its countrysides, seized by the opposite. He is from Marei' that lies on the north of Aleppo, works with Sada al - Shaam newspaper, Arabi 21 and New Arabic website.

3. Mohammad Baqer al- Sader – Bader Organization the Armed Wing⁽⁴⁸⁾: It is the first troops which shared in the fight in Syria, under the name: “The Martyr's "Mohammed Baqer al –Sader" troops. It is affiliated to Bader Organization which was established in Iraq 1980, under the umbrella of The Highest Council of the Islamist Revolution. Which is the oldest militia that Iran founded during the Iranian – Iraqi war, in order to destabilize the internal Iraqi situation and to conduct guerrillas in the Iraqi cities. The secretary general now is “Hadi al – A'miri” who leads “Al – Hashed Al Ashabi”, the Shia militia in Iraq in the war against ISIS.

4. Failaq al –Waed al Sadiq: is founded in Iraq in 2006, because of the problems within Al-Sadrism Movement and Al-Mahdi army. So it is a defect from Al-Mahdi army.

The second part: the most famous Shia militia which are founded because of the Syrian events directly:

1. Abo al –Fadhel al –Abbas⁽⁴⁹⁾: was formed from separated members of Asai'b Ahl Al Haq, Sadrism Movement, Liwa Bader, Hezbollah– Iraq, Lebanese and Iraqi Shia people in the middle of 2012 by the Iraqi man Ahmed Hassan Kiara. Since he had been killed, the Syrian “Ali Hasan Ajib Jaza” (Abo Ajib) has been leading it. A close expert to these militia stated to Dijlah Iraqi channel⁽⁵⁰⁾, that its census reached 4000 fighters. It participated in battles in “Der-Alzor”, “BouKamal”, Aleppo countryside and Damascus province. Disagreements took place inside this brigade between Syrians and Iraqi, so it split into a Syrian part led by Abu Ajib, and Iraqi part led by Haithem Darraji.

According to media, official telegrams have been sent from the leaders of the brigade in Iraq, to the leaders in Aleppo, ordering them to withdraw to Iraq immediately after the collapses and defeats of the brigade in Iraq, and after ISIS seizing upon "Ramadi" recently. Where there was an internal order to close the recruitment centers in Aleppo, which locate in 3000 avenue, Alhamadania, Salah al Den, Meridian,

48 Badr organization, Dajle Channel, programme: a gun of Shadow, episode 13,

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=z8TvSYvYvPCI>

49 The previous programme, episode 12 https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=GhJPJYQOO_4

50 Ibid

Neirab Camp, and the one that has opened recently in the industrial city⁽⁵¹⁾.

And from the Iraqis who went back to Iraq, the Troops of Abo al – Fadhel al Abbas were founded, which are affiliated to Al- Da'wa Iraqi party.

2. Liwa Assad Allah Al Galib: was founded in December 2013, led by “Abo Fatima Al Moussaoui”. With a uniform similar to the Iraq Army's one.

3. Al-TadaKhul Al-Sareea (the Speed Intervention Regiment): “Ahmad Haji Sa'idi” has founded it. He is Iraqi.

4. The Islamist Resistance – Saraya Khorasani or Saraya Talia Khorasani⁽⁵²⁾:

This brigade was founded by the Iraqi part: "Talia Islami". The secretary general is: "Ali Mahdi Ali Abbas Al Yasery".

In December 2013, "Saraya Talia Khorasan" was formed to participate in the battles in Damascus countryside', to defend "Set Zineb" and eastern Ghotaa⁽⁵³⁾. “Yasery” has stated that they have sent 600 fighters to Syria, or they were 800 according to an Iraqi expert. They stayed in Damascus and Ghotaa mainly. The brigade withdrew when ISIS seized upon Mosel, and took another name: Saraya Al Khorasani". Al Yasery declared there are, till now, some members among many formations in Damascus.

5. Liwa Al- Rida Al Shiite: it is said that this brigade consists of 3000 members, and that there are 400 officers and experts from Syria, Iraq, Lebanon and Hezbollah. The head of them "Abo Zien". He is a Shiite from "Al-Mokhtariyeh" (a town in Homs countryside), and a Lebanese Sgt. "Hasan Qasem⁽⁵⁴⁾". The strength and organization of the brigade are obvious, but we have no way to verify these numbers.

51 Abo al Fadhl al Abbas lets Assad down and goes back to Iraq from Aleppo, Durrar Shami website, <http://eldorar.com/node/76901>

52 The previous programme, episode 3, <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=xD53rdVgK8s>

53 Mohammad Ghazzi, Blog, Khurasani Saraya, http://sumerianpriest.blogspot.fr/2014/09/blog-post_6.html

54 Many Arabic media, Syrian media center, Khotwa for news, <http://stepagency-sy.net/archives/36695>

6. Battalion 47 "Al-Zarazir": It is an Iranian revolutionary guards – directly affiliated battalion. Its members are from Salameyeh City and its surrounding, and its officers are from Iranian Revolutionary Guards. We couldn't know their numbers, but its tasks are to defend the check points in Salameyeh and its surrounding. There are a lot of rumors about an organized "Shia Da'wa" in it, and about its connection with " Al-Hussayniyah" that Iran has constructed. But we couldn't make sure of how much that "Da'wa" has found its way among the members of this battalion in spite of its systematic cooperation with Iranian Revolutionary Guards.

7. Syrian Hezbollah: it has a limited role in the battles that the Lebanese Hezbollah conducts. Our witnesses believe that it is an expression of the ambition of Hezbollah to extend in Syria among the Shiite Syrian, more than it is an independent and integrated existence.

The third part: the most prominent Shia militias which are formed due to the Syrian crisis and because of the desertion from other Shia militias:

1. Liwa Zo al- Faqar: Because of disagreements between Iraqi and Syrian Shia in "Abo al Fadhel al Abbas" brigade, "Abo Shahed al Jabbory" has defected from it and founded "Zo al-Faqar" brigade, from Shia Iraqi members only, on June 2013. It is a desertion based on the difference in nationality in spite of the agreement in denomination.

2. Said al - Shohada Battalions⁽⁵⁵⁾: It is formed by internal Iraqi disagreement, defected from Hezbollah-Iraq. Its declaration was in "Set Zieneb" in Damascus, and it is the first Shia Iraqi group that entered "Set Zieneb" with a force consists of 50 fighters. It is the case of disagreement inside a homogenous nationality composition.

This militia participated in the battles in Western and eastern Ghotaa, as "Aqraba", "Ghorbeh", "Hujerra", "Big Sebineh", " Small Sebineh", " Der Selman", "Harran Al Awamid", "Hutitet Al Turkman", " Al Forosieh", " Al Bowida", " Al Husineih", " Jober" and " Dara".

3. Liwa Kafiel Zieneb - Asa'ibAhl al Haq: It was formed in 2004 in Iraq from members of Al-Mahdi army, because of a disagreement between its

55 The previous T.V programme, episode 10, <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=OfibLPkXj4>

founder "Qais al Khazali", and the leader of Mahdi Army, "Moqtada al Sader". And the relationship between these two reached a dead end, as this study and its references show.

4. Hezbollah al- Nojaba': It is born from "Asai'b Ahl al Haq", which is already defected from the disbanded "Al-Mahdi" Army. It was founded in 2013 by "Akram Al Ka'bi", who became the leader of **Hezbollah al- Nojaba'**, which defected from "Asa'ibAhl al Haq". It is composed from three fighting brigades: "Liwa (brigade) Ammar Bin Yasser", "Liwa Imam Hasan al Mojtaba", and Liwa al Hamad. (Sheikh Haider al Garrawi – the leader of Liwa al Hamad has defected from 'Hezbollah al- Nojaba' and formed 'Sidq and Ata'a movement' in Iraq). This militia had an effective role in regions like Aleppo and Damascus. The brigade went back to Iraq, to fight against ISIS and the previous included brigades were not mentioned anymore⁽⁵⁶⁾.

5. Liwa (Brigade) Imam Hussein: It was deserted from "Abu Fadhel al Abbas" brigade on July 2013.

6. Liwa (Brigade) Fatimid: It consists of Afghani Shiite mainly. Iran has recruited Afghani refugees who live in Iran and suffer from poverty. Iran sacrificed them by dispatching them as "human waves" to face the armed opposition in 'Dara', which led to a big loss in their side⁽⁵⁷⁾, including 'Mahdi Sabiry', the leader of this brigade successor of "Ali Rida Tawasoly" who is one of the most important leaders of Shia militias, and who is known by his closeness to "Qassem Sulimany" the leader of "Failaq Al- Quds" in the "Iranian Revolutionary guards"⁽⁵⁸⁾. This brigade has fought in many places⁽⁵⁹⁾ as Dara and Qinter battles, and got a painful loss.

6. Liwa Zienabion⁽⁶⁰⁾: is composed from Shiite from Pakistan who speak "Pashto⁽⁶¹⁾" the special language of "Kawrrem", the tribal region, where

56 Mohammad Ghazzi, Blog, http://sumerianpriest.blogspot.fr/2014/09/blog-post_9.html

57 Fuenral of the chief and vice – chief of "Fatimid" Brigade, Ahwas voice over Youtube
https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=BkKP_sEKlu0

58 Funeral of the chief of "Fatimid" Brigade killed in Syria, Al Arabya <http://goo.gl/2mV4Bz>

59 Reportage on outreaching to Shia and fighting in Parsia " | مستند زیبای گردان رزمندگان شیعه افغان در سوریه |
تصاویر منتشر نشده از فرمانده تیپ فاطمیون https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=4TtoH_kqSrQI

60 Zeinabies ... Pakistanian people fight defending Assad, AJ net, <http://goo.gl/PkYWdO>

there are many Shia tribes, as 'Tory' and 'Bengesh'. These tribes were supported and armed by Iran through Afghanistan for years, especially during the leverage period of "Talban Pakistan" in the tribal regions, in which 'Talban' made a lot of attacks against Shia in this region, which pushed them to construct training centers for fighters. The reference we rely on believes that these fighters were smuggled through Afghanistan, Iran, Iraq to Syria, by an organized network that receives and prepares them to fight. Because the road between 'Kawrrem' and Syria is long and is controlled by many forces, so the fighters can't pass it without a logistic support. This brigade fights in Aleppo mainly, in addition to battles in Qinter and Dara'.

The distinct in these formations is that they are built upon two overlapped but essentially contradictory bases:

Differentiation according to ethnic and nationality, and Iran disability, till the present, to unify them in a unique body. The militias are divided according to ethnic bases (in addition to the Arabic militia there is "the Fatimid" Brigade which consists of Afghans⁽⁶²⁾ and the Pakistani "Zienabion" Brigade. We can also discern from an interview made in London by an Iranian opposite newspaper "Kihan" – in London - with an Afghani fighter that the Afghani and Pakistani Shiite were in one battalion, then they were divided into two different battalions, based on the ethnic base, without a known reason⁽⁶³⁾. There are also a lot of reports about pushing the Afghani and Pakistani fighters⁽⁶⁴⁾ to the dangerous front lines. On the other side Arabs are divided by the nationality (Syrian\ Iraqi\ Lebanese) as we saw in the dissent in "Abo Al Fadhel al Abbas" Brigade. And Iraqi people are divided according to disagreements and competitions between their leaders.

The division based on the religious bases: We can find a discrimination based upon religious bases, between the forces, which are rigidly committed to "Velayat-el Faqih", and the others which deal with it beneficially. The most prominent example is "Al-Bader" troops which dealt with "Velayat-el Faqih" variously according to its need to the

61 Pakistanian Zeinabies Brigade fights in Aleppo, Zaman al – Wasel, Youtube, <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=D5SIHuZeoi4>

62 Fatimid Brigade is Syria... coliation with the color of blood, AJ net, <http://goo.gl/lbceV4>

63 Iranian Documentary film observes the life of Afghan fighters in Syria, ibid.

64 Afghan fighters... the fuel of regime in Aleppo, AJ net, <http://goo.gl/V5j4HG>

Iranian support, and according to the imparity between the periods of the conflict, the armed and the political. And we observed a discrimination between the original Shia whether they are Iraqis, Syrians, Lebanese or others, who get a special treatment, and are keenly separated from the others who have just converted into Shia Faith. The new converters may be previous- Sunnis, Alawis or Ismailis, despite the fact that they make a small portion⁽⁶⁵⁾.

An evidence of the fact of spreading the Shia doctrine into the new members from other doctrines, and discriminating them, is what we found in the ID of a member "Abu Fadhel al Abbas" Brigade⁽⁶⁶⁾, who was captured in "Al-Breeg" in Aleppo:

Syrian Arab Republic

The General Command of Army and Forced Troops

The Republican Guards

Popular Defense

Abo Al Fadhel Al Abbas Brigade (A)

The Jihadist: Mohammed Mustafa Shebly

The National no: 02010126237

The weapon no: 257118

Date of birth: 1997 (age= 18)

Date of issue: 30\ 9\ 2014

Date of expiry: 30\ 10\ 2014

Although the captive fighter said that he was forced "to kiss and to kneel in front of Imam Ali sword", to justify the photos on his mobile. But we do think that there is a forcing neither in recruitment nor in converting to Shia faith, but it results from allurements and sometimes from conviction. And it seems that the prisoner maybe said that because of fear. And we think that the reason of the short period of validity of the ID (one month

65 That what Abo Firad Halapi confirmed to us with an interview.

66 An interview with a captured published over youtube, Abo Firas Halapi has confirmed that to us, <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=goT11TS8k7g>

only) is untrusting the new recruited, so he will be forced to review the committee that has recruited him every month till he gains the trust. Especially that this ID gives its owner advantages which the Syrian army doesn't have, as the food, salary and in the checking points⁽⁶⁷⁾.

Also we can notice in the ID that "Abo Al Fadhel al Abbas" Brigade is laid in an official hierarchy inside the Syrian state as following (from base to top):

Abo "Al Fadhl al Abbas" Brigade, popular defense, the republic guards then the general Command of the Armed Troops "Bashar al- Assad" is the chief – in – commander. This full hierarchy includes the Shia organizations that are formed directly because of the Syrian events and which include Syrians, but we can't find Hezbollah or the Iraqi militia included in this Hierarchy.

We can observe a strange thing in the ID, it is the Symbol "ع" between quotation marks after the name of the brigade "Abo Al Fadhel al Abbas (who is –specially - a sacred Shia person). This symbol means He blesses us or we say salaam to him or other things of Shia religious expressions. Putting this symbol here is contrary to the own regime's discourse (the secularist one) which keeps naming Hezbollah the National or Lebanese "Resistant" not the Islamic Resistant as Hezbollah itself calls.

The same observations we find in the word 'Jihadist' that describes the recruited one, and we know Jihadist is an Islamic term. This case clears the militia insisting on determining and protecting the Islamic identity indisputably, even though they lay under the republic guards in the hierarchy.

We observed that the religious language isn't limited by the names of Shia militias and the declarations of their leaders, but it thrives among the people of the regime obviously, independently from its official discourse and on contrary of it.

In the Alawi towns, the expression "the martyr jihadist" for the regime troops' victims is prevalent now. This is because of the secret mobilization the regime uses, as it always does. It declares with a national

67 The journalist Abo Firas Halabi.

discourse officially, and speaks under it with all the possible shapes of recruitment and incitement.

The religious recruitment and the sectarian incitement have more ability to convince people and more ability to justify the terrible violence than the national mobilization. The regime exceeds in using this weapon more than the Islamic and Jihadist groups can do.

So the regime keeps officially the national language that it has been consuming for decades; and there is no benefit to convert from it. And it endeavors to feed the sectarian thought secretly, using extreme sectarian forces by their names and behaviors, which represent the other side of the Islamic jihadist's image.

The reasons of voluntary in the Shia Militia:

We think that there is more than one interpretation to explain the great ability of Iran to recruit Shia from different countries to fight in Syria. In spite of the fact that the sectarian incitement plays a vital role in sending Shia fighters to Syria, but we found out various overlapped reasons. We classify them operationally here. In this section we try to understand the motives of Shia fighters' voluntary in Syria, and the mechanism Iran uses for this aim.

At the beginning, we will get the attention that Iran is the lone side which forms, recruits and finances the Shia militia. This unique action has many important advantages, politically and militarily, compared to the various financiers, forces and resources which supply the opposition groups.

Religion: We observe that the religious discourse is so clear at the volunteer individual level, and it is maybe clearer than the political discourse of Iran and Hezbollah. A lot of evidences over mass media, social media and "YouTube" demonstrate the volunteers' desire of defending the "Holy Shia Sites against the excommunicators". Iranian regime supports this discourse either directly, or indirectly by its agencies, or even through its media as the Iranian documentary film "Mo'alem" that The "New Syrian" website has translated⁽⁶⁸⁾.

68 Complete translation of the Iranian documentary film, about the life of Afghan fighters in Syria, translated by Sinan Hawat, <http://cutt.us/fpCza>

Stimulating the local conflict: The enemy in Syria is introduced to the Shia fighters from Afghanistan and Pakistan as if it were "Talban"⁽⁶⁹⁾. And it is introduced as if it were "ISIS" to Iraqi Shia. (Although they have not fought ISIS in Syria at all)

Benefit: The reports indicate that money is one of the motives of voluntary to Shia who come out of Syria. Afghanis – who represent a big number in Syria – have reasons to volunteer as gaining the permanent residence in Iran, where a lot of Afghani "Hazarah" race reside illegally⁽⁷⁰⁾. In addition to getting rid of the sentences that Afghanis are accused of in Iran. Whereby the judgments range between 10 and 15 years, and can reach until execution. The contract between the Iranian Revolutionary Guards and the judged volunteers includes fighting for 2 years in Syria in order to get amnestied⁽⁷¹⁾.

The Shia sites in Iraq and Iran are the recruitment centers. This recruitment concentrates on the symbols of the "Twelver" dogma, through visiting Holy Shia Sites, interviewing with religious men and sometimes with leaders of "Hezbollah".

We could define some voluntary reasons of Syrian volunteers depending on many witnesses:

Firstly: the religious sectarian reason. If the volunteer is Shia by birth, it will be so easy to volunteer in a Shia militia as "Hezbollah" or others.

Secondly: Gaining money. The volunteer's salary exceeds that of the army and national defense with a big difference, the salary of an officer in the army is around 23,000 Syrian Pounds, but the volunteer's salary in these militia is around 30,000 SP or more, as it is said⁽⁷²⁾.

Thirdly: Distinct advantages the volunteer gains, as a monthly food assistance and special military treatment that can discriminate him from other soldiers in army and the national defense.

69 Ibid, <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=4TfoHkqSrQI>

70 Assad bring mercenaries to stay, new Arab, translated from Der Spiegel, 11 – 5- 2015
<http://cutt.us/uv1i> .

71 Abo Firas al –Halabi, an interview.

72 There is no confirmed data, the amount of salaries, an activist has reported it to us. Anyway, the income of the recruited one to the national defence depends on looting and robbing not on monthly salaries which are equal to the ones of the Syrian Army.

Fourthly: The volunteer becomes out of the state authority, even though he is wanted for criminal charges or the military service. Whereby the Syrian state can't arrest him.

Fifthly: Shia militia protect the volunteer and his family from the national defense groups (al – Shabiha). This is a reason for a lot of previous members in the national defense to leave it and go to the Shia militia. There are many places of "Musyaf"– Hama suffer from contravening, members of ND (national defense) offend other members from ND. The same matter happens in "Salameyeh" - city where the "Shabiha" (national defense agencies) contravene the security by criminal operations as kidnapping, killing...etc, and they do that against other members of ND also if they are weaker than them.

The voluntary ways in Shia militia:

Firstly for Iraqi Shia⁽⁷³⁾

Who wants to volunteer goes to "Al-Sader" City, selects the force he wants to volunteer in then goes back to his family for 2 days for farewell. After that he is transported to Iran, swears in front of "Rida Mazar" (grave) and stays in a training course for 2 weeks. After a short tourist trip in "Tehran" he travels to Lebanon by his Iraqi passport. In Lebanon he interviews with a leader of Hezbollah to rise his moral, then he goes to Syria. The fighting in Syria continues for 3 months then the fighter can go back to Iraq, where he had been promised by an employment. There are reports about a big amount of money the fighter takes in Iran, around as 5000 \$. In the case of death in Syria, his family will gain money as a compensation. We think this way is one of many technical ways of voluntary, and maybe there are some fighters who stay in Syria without going back to Iraq.

73 Ways of recruitment to Shia militias for defending Ba'th regime, All For Syria, 2 – 10 -2013
<http://cutt.us/iEOz>

Secondly for Afghani Shia⁽⁷⁴⁾:

Almost of Afghani Shia who fight in Syria are from Afghani "Hazarah" race, which lays in the middle of Afghanistan, adopts Shia Twelver section and speaks Persian. It has suffered from oppression for long periods during the excommunication rule of Talban, and from ethnic discrimination in the monarchy era.

Iran was denying its recruitment of Afghanis before two months, but in the same time there were unofficial Iranian resources report about Afghanis' recruitment⁽⁷⁵⁾. The Afghani government said that there are Afghanis fight with the both sides of conflict in Syria. And the Foreign ministry commissioned the Afghani embassy in Jordan of investigating the accusations of Iranian networks recruiting Shia Afghanis in Syria.

There are rumors about the salary of the Afghani fighters, which ranges between 400 to 500 \$, or 2215 \$ every 3 months with a holiday for 20 days; in addition to conceal the threatening of kicking the Afghani refugee out of Iran, who stay illegally in it⁽⁷⁶⁾.

Thirdly for Syrians:

If the Syrian is Shia – originally- he can affiliate to one of the non-racial battalions. They usually affiliate to Hezbollah – Lebanese as the residents in Nobbol and El Zahra' north Aleppo, or with some Shia sections that are established for Syrian Shia, as Syrian Hezbollah and the Syrian part of Abo Al Fadhel al Abbas, or a private brigade is formed for them as "Shia Rida" Brigade that lays on Homs country and the eastern Hama countries.

On other side the non-Shia Syrians, including Sunni, Alawis and Ismailia who convert to Shia Twelver section, are affiliated to new formed Shia battalions, to keep discriminated from the original Shia. For example, forming Al-Zarazir (battalion 47) in Salameyeh country⁽⁷⁷⁾.

There are formations under the umbrella of Hezbollah, which are formed especially for the non- original Shia Syrians. These formations look as

74 Sabeit Allah Saber, Afghans in Syria the soldiers of Ayat Allah for serving Assad, New Arabic, 4 –Nov – 2014 - <http://cutt.us/UjvGm>

75 Afghans Mercenaries in Syria.... AJ net, Ibid, <http://goo.gl/V5j4HG>

76 The documentary film, Ibid.

77 According to the experiment of the researcher Garib Mirza in Salamieh, some new established Shia battalion as "Rida" brigade can accept new- converted into Shia doctrine, but the strict Shia battalions as Hezbollah does not.

allies to Hezbollah in the battles. Leaders of Hezbollah lead them and affiliating to these formations doesn't mean belonging to Hezbollah virtually. This way is used to increase the rate of volunteers, we find out it in Salameyeh and Sweda.

In some cases, the Syrian volunteers affiliate to brigades established especially to assimilate numbers of volunteers who are not trusted in their dogma (Twelver- Shia) or their loyalty, in order not to make problems with the dogma – belief structure of the other fighters.

Most of the voluntary operations in this militia come true by the personal relatives. The prisoners who were captured informed that their friends or relatives have recruited them; over broadcasted videos.

"The relatives' way" of recruitment heightens the ability of checking the loyalty. But some witnesses have told us that they saw advertisements stuck in "Selah El Den" of Aleppo, invite people to affiliate to one of the Shia militias. If this witness is right, we think this way is limited comparing with relativity way of recruitment.

Conclusions

1. We define the Shia Militia in Syria as following: They are unofficial fighter groups and organizations. They are affiliated to “Velayat el-Faqih” as a dogma and attitude. They are following Iranian State financially and by controlling.

Iran has implicated this militia in the Syrian conflict; whereby it brought most of them from Iraq and Lebanon, and founded some of them in Syria from Shia Afghanis, Yemenis, Syrians and other nationalities fighters.

On a hand, its original existing is resulted by the political and social conflict in this region including the conflict for the authority and the victimhood that all the parties distribute between themselves⁽⁷⁸⁾. And on the other hand, this militia is resulted by Iranian regime's attempts to shift the social- political conflict into a pure sectarian conflict, in order to attract the Shia people in other countries to the belief of Velayat el-Faqih;

78 Yousef Fakhre el- Den, “Nationalism and Victimhood in This Region”, al – Hayat newspaper, <http://alhayat.com/Details/546711>

exploiting their need to protection because of this "shifted" conflict, and their need to supply to face challenges, the regime itself participates in their existing⁽⁷⁹⁾.

This means converting the Shia people into dependence on Iran regime politically. But this attempt – which started after Malali (jurists) holding upon the authority in Iran - is long, complex and facing a resistance in the popular and religious zones – even Shia zones – whereby Shia jurists don't accept it^{(80) (81)}.

2. Differentiating Shia Militia in Syria from other fighter formations that are existed in Syria and supplied from Iran also⁽⁸²⁾:

Firstly: All the affiliated people to this militia believe and practice the Shia dogma (belief), even though they weren't Shia people originally.

Secondly: These militias have a distinct position with the Syrian regime; the militia- affiliated Syrian will be free from army service for example. We will lighten on this point later.

Thirdly: The volunteer comes to defend the Shia Sites: Set Zieneb, Sakina in Daria', Rokaia in old Damascus and others, as he says. But, in fact, this defense isn't limited by existing in the surrounding of these Sites, it extends in which attacking any point of Syria against the enemies (Syrian regime's enemies) is considered as a part of this defense.

The Shia religious mobilization plays an essential role in the voluntary recruitment, in addition to allure the volunteers by money or by exempting them from arresting; for some Shia prisoners in Iran.

79 Mr. Mohammed Ali Husini, the regime of the province of the Islamic Jurists and war of sacred, AJ net, <http://goo.gl/zKLyn0>

80 AJ channel an interview with Dr. Abu Hassan Bani Sadr (1933) the first Iranian president after the revolution (1980 - 1981), a quote " He - Khomeini - wanted to make up a Shia belt to seize over the sides of the Islamic world, and this belt consists of Iran, IRAq, Lebanon and Syria, when he controls this belt he would invest petrol and the site of Persian Gulf to complete the seizing over the Islamic world. Khomeini was convinced that U.S. will allow him to do, I told him U.S. cheats you and Yasser Arafat also advised him and warned him from U.S. but he wasn't convinced. <http://www.khomainy.com/arkho/articles-40.html>

81 The Shia religious man Mr. Ali amin, the province of the Islamic jurists is an Iranian issue and Hezbollah and Amal movement have harmed Arab Shia, Arab London Magazine, <http://goo.gl/6nDhjf>

82 Including Palestinian and Kurdish portions, Kurdish troops are accused of relations with Iranian regime <https://goo.gl/HgVNF6>

Fourthly: Hezbollah justifies its intervention in Syria with different claims. After its speaking about defending the border Lebanese Shia towns and the Shia Sites, it implicated the issue of "resistance" that they want to assassinate in Syria. Hezbollah shows its intervention as a pre-emptive war. "If we hadn't fought in Syria, we would have been forced to fight in Baalbek, Hermel, Gaseous, Sidon, Tyre, Nabatean and other Lebanese towns and cities."⁽⁸³⁾

In brief: the Shia militias in Syria are fighting, voluntary and ideological groups that adopt the Twelver section, and most of them follow Velayat el-Faqih, and are distinguished by their relative independence from the Syrian regime.^(84)

83 A speech of Naser Allah 23 – May – 2015 <http://assafir.com/Article/421291/MostRead>

84 An Army in all Corners, Ibid.

The Third section

The military duty of the Shia militia in Syria

1. Damascus and its countries:

Damascus is considered an attractive place for the religious and sectarian recruitment to mobilize the volunteers, under the claim of Sunni and excommunicators' threatening the holy Shia Sites, such as: "Set Zieneb" in the southern of Damascus, "Ra's al Hussein" (the head of Hussein) in Amway Mosque in the middle of Damascus, Site of Roqia in old Damascus and finally the site of "Sakina" in Daria where "Ahmadi Najad" has intended to visit it. (This site was damaged on Mars 2015 amidst the battles)

Hezbollah has justified its intervention by another way. At the beginning of the Syrian events, it justified its intervention by protecting the border Lebanese towns, and sometimes by protecting the Shia Lebanese who live in these towns from the excommunicators. Then it justified its wide intervention by reasons of defending the back of "resistance" that is presented by the Syrian regime, considering its "jihad" in Syria as a complement to its resistant role with another shape.

Set Zieneb region and south of Damascus are the main base of Shia militia, where "Abo Al- Fadhel al Abbas" appeared in public in summer 2012, and participated in the battles surrounding Set Zieneb. The international Damascus airport lays on the eastern south of Set Zieneb, where "Abo Al Fadhel al Abbas" and others have participated in the battles there and along the road to the airport, where important places surround it in both sides (Bowida, "al- Zeyabia" in the west, Nashabia, "Der Salman", "Harran el- Awamid" and others in the east of the road.) late 2012 and the beginning of 2013. (The clashes included "Bet Sahem", "Babila" and others)

Our witnesses assured that Shia militia prevent the residents from coming back to the seized towns. Assad army with the militia have occupied the surroundings of Set Zieneb and changed it into a colonial Shia (settlement) completely. These terrains are: "Husineih", "Diabieh",

‘Bahgalieh’, ‘Sebineh’, ‘Bweda’ and ‘Hujerra’. Two terrains of them were described as Palestinian camps, in two reports issued by Palestinian parts; a report in Palestinian studies magazine⁽⁸⁵⁾ and the other in the work group for Syria Palestinians⁽⁸⁶⁾.

Our witnesses said that the militia allowed to settle some fighters' families in these towns, but in a limited way.

A battle of re-seizing “Moliha” city was an important battle that changed the power balance for the sake of the regime. It has continued for 135 days of violent clashes, and damaged 85% of the city's infrastructure.

Hezbollah and the Iraqi militia played a main role in it.

The battle of re- seizing “Utibeh” – the main entrance to eastern “Gotta” from the desert and a gate for bringing weapons to the opposition groups – was one of the most important battles, Hezbollah soldiers and commanders have managed.

In strategic Sebineh terrain – in the eastern side of Daria and the western side of Set Zeineb – “ Assad Allah al Galib” battalion has played a vital role to re-seize it.

The Shia militia exists in the terrains of eastern Ghotaa and Jober, and have played a role in sieging it and preventing the residents from escaping during the chemistry massacre on August 2013.

“Liwa Zo al Faqar” has appeared in the battles in “Nabek” - eastern north Damascus – with a strong role, and the Syrian Network For Human Right has registered many massacres had been done in that terrain⁽⁸⁷⁾.

In “Yabrud” and western “Qalamoun” until “Zabadani” – which lay along Lebanese border – violent battles are held and – it is reported – that Hezbollah seized some parts. If this terrain is fallen in the hand of JN and the other Islamic groups which fight there, the gate to the heart of

85 Yousef Zeidan, Ibrahim Ali, Palestinian refugees during the Syrian tribulation, Palestinian Studies Magazine, File: al- Yarmuk: a disaster bigger than a camp, Vol. 103 P 57.

86 Camps without Refugees, a report documenting the status of Palestinian camps that have been displaced in Syria (Subina, Husinie, Handarat) <http://goo.gl/20dL5M>

87 The Syrian network of the human rights, Ibid http://sn4hr.org/public_html/wp-content/pdf/arabic/shia'a-arabic.pdf

Hezbollah in Lebanon will be opened. Therefore, Hezbollah has controlled this terrain completely since Feb. 2014.

During preparing this research, the battles have renewed in west Qalamoun between “Alfateh” army (it is a collecting of opposition portions and JN) and Hezbollah. The both sides look at the battle as a vital one, because of the geographic site of it, which makes it very affective on Lebanese terrains over Ersal, which it is ready to transfer the war to the internal if its conditions are available. In addition, this site allows the possessor to control the vital highway between Damascus, Homs and the Coast. Evidences that expose the great hegemony these militias have on the regime's institutions have been remarkably increasing. These militias' own benefit would affect the internal political decision of the regime, for example, the information says that the Shia militia tried to damage the armistice in “Bet Sahem” and “Babila” violating the suspension of fire and shooting at the opposition's fighters. The reason is that these militias desire to push the Sunni existing away from “Set Zieneb” Site where their main castle is, as some witnesses said⁽⁸⁸⁾.

This corresponds with what we said that the existing of the Shia militia will affect notably any decision the capital – seized by the regime – will take.

In general, Shia militias have paid a lot of labor to protect the capital and all the roads and terrains which can guarantee the stability of the regime. Therefore, they have a big role in seizing upon places that can affect the powers balance, as what happened in “Moliha” and “Utibeh”.

But the strongest existing in the capital has important indicators of the future relations – and even the current relation – the Shia militia will impose. Now these militia became military force that is impossible to ignore in the core of the capital. This means they don't protect “Al-Assad” from the enemies surrounding him in Ghotaa only, they are a parallel force to the army, the “4th division” and the republic guards. And they are a new element will affect any decision, “Al-Assad” and his men will take.

88 Shia Militias Refuse Orders of Troops of Bashar Assad, all for Syria, 17 – 11 – 2014
<http://cutt.us/8dK1>

2. The north area (Aleppo and Edlib):

In the north, there are many terrains where the Syrians Shia stay as a majority, these terrains are: Nobbol and Zahra' (north Aleppo), 'Kofrayeh' and 'Fo'ae'h' (north Aleppo, western south 'Edlib') and some places in 'Jesser al Shagour'.

All these terrains are hold by the regime completely until preparing this research, and they are considered as important military bases, they are well supported and fortified bases. The indicators point that Iran attends centrally in them, for example, the negotiations that Iran made with the "Islamic Front" in 2014, which led to Homs kicked off the opposition's fighters from Homs. One of the items was: allowing the food aid to enter by land into Nobbol and Zahra', because the cities are sieged by the opposition completely and the food aid reaches by air, or by smuggling over Efren, the Kurdish city near to them.

This agreement is an evidence of the hegemony of Iranian regime on the Syrian regime, which doesn't attend in negotiation for its Syrian prisoners.

These Shia terrains represent a military field of the Syrian regime, depending on the Shia residents, the majority in them. The residents of Nobbol and Zahra' volunteer in Hezbollah mainly and in Wanderer "Qamer Beni Hashem" Battalion⁽⁸⁹⁾.

Numbers of them have affiliated to Hezbollah since July - 2006 war, and some of them had been killed and stated as a martyr⁽⁹⁰⁾.

In the middle of Aleppo, and the old part of the city, the Shia militia is considered as a main military force, especially Hezbollah, whose fighters are from "Nobbol" and Zahra'⁽⁹¹⁾.

89 A small battalion whose elements are less than 200 combatants from Nobel and el - Zahraa residents (Shia people). It became famous because of companying the pro - regime media. For information, read "Shia militias in Syria... a Story by Blood and Numbers" Arabiya net, 9 - june - 2014 <http://cutt.us/ZcHV>

90 An interview with the journalist Mostafa Mohammed.

91 An interview with the journalist Mostafa Mohammed.

And Hezbollah is the unique portion that raises its flag on the barriers it forms inside Aleppo⁽⁹²⁾. “Abo Al Fadhel al Abbas” brigade participated in battles inside Aleppo and in its countries. The Shia militias do operations, which have a security nature. For example, staying on the barriers and guarding, breaking into suspected houses by existing of “rebels” or the houses which were for one of the rebels in past. In addition to the arresting that can be without informing the regime⁽⁹³⁾.

It is notable that on the beginning of Feb.2013, non – Syrian Shia battalions appeared for the first time, through encroaching upon the southern Aleppo country, and seizing on Khnaser city, which lays on the main supplying road to Sferra and the terrains in north and east of Aleppo.

On June of the same year, the massacres of "wells" – as they are called – happened, in the terrains around the supplying road that passes Khnaser, by “Abo al Fadhel al Abbas” brigade and ‘Ammar ben Yasser’ Battalion⁽⁹⁴⁾.

Indicators have appeared pointing that there are participations of Iranian revolutionary guards in the field directly, in that period; and a number of them have been killed in Assan town, south of Aleppo⁽⁹⁵⁾. Three agencies from the troops, which attacked “Handarat” - north Aleppo – were imprisoned on October – 2014; they were Afghanis from Hazarah, the Shia Race⁽⁹⁶⁾.

Seven Syrian agencies – from Hezbollah - were imprisoned by “Al-Shami Front”, through the regime's attempt to seize “Hritan” and “Ritian” – north Aleppo – on Feb. 2015; when the regime was defeated by the opposition's troops.

According to information, a defected Syrian General has told: Iran and Hezbollah's Generals have put the plan of attack, and the number of the Shia attackers was: 70 Yazidi, 200 Iraqi, 300 Lebanese and Syrians from

92 The journalist "Abo Firas al –Halabi", who reported us that the combanants of "Syrian Hezbollah" are Shia Syrians from Nobbol and Zahraa.

93 An interview with the journalist "Yahya Mayo".

94 The Syrian network for Human rights, Ibid.

95 This town lies to the west of Sfeira, (about 12 KM)

96 Rami Suid, “The Map of Foreign pro – regime Militias”, new Arabic, 14 -4 – 2015
<http://cutt.us/7x4Mu>

Hezbollah, in addition to some Iranian agencies that managed sensitive tasks as military engineering and throwing missiles and others⁽⁹⁷⁾.

We have caught information that Afghans make suicidal operations through the fighting, and the regime depends on them because of that, and they played the first role in seizing upon Handarat north Aleppo. Other resources negated these operations, but they confirmed that Afghans, Iranians and Lebanese don't surrender in the event of sieging and they kill themselves. The resources assured their reports by an event took place in "Al-Mallah" front – north Aleppo – on Feb.2015: 300 Afghans and Iranians fighters lost in that terrains, after killing the guides of them. therefore the opposition forces could kill 120 and capture 10, but 13 ones of them fortified in a neglected building and refused to surrender, so the sieging continued for 12 hours until they were killed; their bodies were used to pressure on the regime to release civilians arrested, it keeps.

We couldn't discover the number of the Shia fighters comparing with the regime's fighters. Some of our resources estimate them more than 50% of the regime army, other resources counted them less than that depending on the number of the prisoners, whom the opposition troops have captured in the northern terrains of Aleppo: 40 soldiers of the regime's army and they are all Sunni, and 10 Shia soldiers from Nobbol and Zahra' only.

On the other hand, indicators appointed the chief role of the Shia militia. According to a defected soldier from the regime troops - he was from "Al-Zahra" avenue in Aleppo – there was a Lebanese commander called "Al –Sied" (means the big chief, and this word has a religious meaning in Arabic language, especially when Shia use it) was checking the Syrian troops and other troops. He was ordering the whole troops including the Shia militias, Syrian army and the Syrian commanders. According to the same resource, the leader of "Retian" operation was nicknamed by "al Sied Kumait" and he is a Lebanese Shia one. He was ordering the colonel "Sohil al Hassan" who is known by "Tiger". The commanders of Hezbollah lead the battles and all of Afghans, Iranians and the Syrian army are obeying them.

97 Ibid.

It is clear there are various nationalities of the Shia fighters and various Shia portions and divisions, they volunteer in. this verity has a signification we will approve it through the research.

3. The Middle Area

Syrian Shia exist in many terrains inside Homs, and in its countryside in a lot of small towns (more than 50 towns) as: “Umm al Amad”, “Umm Gbab” and “Gninat”, where they form a demography space which will play a role in Shia Militia foundation.

The most important battle, the militia have participated in was “Al-Qusayr” on April 2013, by Hezbollah.

Some reports and witnesses of Syrian activists said Hezbollah wasn't just a partner, in fact it prevented the regime's troops from participating in “Al-Qusayr's” battle, except logistic support, the coverage of artillery, missiles and jets. On the land, Hezbollah led the battles alone, till it could seize “Al-Qusair” and its countryside⁽⁹⁸⁾.

In the eastern rural side of Homs, where the most of Shia towns exist, they form a naturally pro-regime zone, which extents till the eastern country of Salameyeh – it lays on Hama province under the regime control --. In this zone, there are Shia members from many battalions, in the military barriers, whose task is keeping ISIS away from proceeding (these towns lay on the front with ISIS). But the most of the military troops are from the national defense (Shabiha) in addition to some foreign Shia members who have come from out.

For example, the attack that ISIS did against the barriers: “Ethrieh” and “Sheikh Hilal” in the eastern country of Salameyeh on 20\ 3\2015, we found out the name of a killed one: “Haj Akbar Irani”, in the pro-regime pages of Facebook in Salameyeh. And corresponds with the information we have caught from activists work inside Salameyeh. (This name is strange in Syrian and it is obviously an Iranian or Afghani name).

98 Al – Qusair is far 11 KM from Lebanese board, and it is one of the declared entering of Hezbollah in Syria.

Some reports informed that the big attack, ISIS did on 20\3\2015 (it caused killing of 73 persons, most of them are from the army and the national defense) has been pushed by helping of "Fatimid Bridge", the Shia one that Afghans form its staff, but we couldn't have confirmation about it⁽⁹⁹⁾.

But the confirmed information tells there is a new Shia brigade in both of Homs and Hama countries, called: "Rida troops". This brigade is formed by 20% of Afghani and Iranian fighters, and 80% of Shia Syrians (who belong to the Shia towns in Homs, in addition to who adopt the Twelver doctrine, from Salameyeh residents – who believe in Ismaili doctrine by the most- and from Alawi or Sunni tribes that lay on the eastern country of "Salameyeh" mainly.

The task of this brigade is protecting the 20 or more points, along the eastern country in the middle area. This line is a confrontation line with ISIS, as: "Mokharram al Foqani", "Mokharram al Tahtani", "Umm al Amad" (they are in the eastern country of Homs) and "Barri al Sharqi"⁽¹⁰⁰⁾ until "Nawa" town in eastern country of Hama (it lays on north to Salameyeh by 18 K.M and east to Hama by 20 K.M). Some reports have mentioned these troops' participations in battles in Aleppo, "Dara", "Qalamoun" and Ghotaa to support the regime's troops.

These troops represent a sort of support or alternative for the army, facing ISIS, although there are no violent clashes in this area, excepting the final attack of ISIS on "Al-Sha'er" field (a petrol field) and the countryside of Salameyeh on Mars 2015, (which led to a massacre caused 45 civilian victims in Mabou'jeh town on 31\ 3\ 2015. (Whereby the Syrian and international mass media reported it widely⁽¹⁰¹⁾). After ISIS's attack on Palmyra, we think this eastern front will explode. In this case we will experience the new relation between ISIS on a hand and Shia militias and the regime on the other hand. And we expect that event will expose new information about the mechanism of the Shia militias and their relations with the regime mainly. If that battle with ISIS happens, it will be the first long one between the two sides.

99 Syrian correspondent website, 22-3 – 2015 <http://cutt.us/IJK2>

100 A town in the western countryside of Salamieh, it is the front line with ISIS which is less than 8 KM far from it.

101 Anna Barnard, Hwaida Saad, "ISIS Seizes New Territory in Deadly Attacks in Syria", 1 – 4 - 2015 <http://cutt.us/GN4R>

Inside Salameyeh and its vicinity – which was under siege of extremism Islamic battalions – there an Iranian revolutionary guards – affiliated division (battalion), the residents called them Zarazir at the beginning to differentiate them from Lebanese Hezbollah fighters, who appeared in the city in the same period at the beginning of 2013.

Zarazir is a description of the soft small dappling on the fashion, by the accent of Salameyeh. According to the activist "George al Salmoni", this division is consists of Iranian revolutionary guards' Generals and chosen members from the near towns to Salameyeh from Alawi and Sunni people (the most Sunni people who affiliate to it, are from the tribe of the defense minister: "Fahed Jassem al Frig"). Some Ismaili and Sunni people from Salameyeh affiliate to it also. Our witness confirmed their converting into Twelver doctrine, but we couldn't have confirmation from other witnesses, about the rate of this converting. This division share protecting the barriers and the surround of Salameyeh.

Shia militias played a big role in “Morik” town - lays on the north country of Hama province-. That battle started on February 2014 and continued until seizing upon it by regime after 9 months. Activists and newspapers have reported that Hezbollah participated in it, in addition to direct participating of soldiers and commanders of “Iranian revolutionary guards”, whereby Iran has announced the death of the General "Abdullah al Eskandary" in “Morik”^{(102) (103)}.

Therefore, the Shia existence in the middle area – especially around Homs – represents an advantage that allows the Shia militias to fortify in.

No Shia portion controls this area by its self, or does the operations alone, as the situation in the north area. There is a diversity in the portions, some of them are domestic and other foreign.

The military tasks of them vary between the direct clashes, seizing operations as the bloody “Morik” battle, protecting the barriers and control the security inside the cities.

102 Morik is a strategic site between Hama and Idlib, because of it is lying on the highway joins Hama with Aleppo, which is the main support line to the regime's camp in Hamedie and Wadi al –Daif before JN seizing upon them.

103 Morik Battle is the most important one for the rebels since 2014, Aleppo news website, <http://halabnews.com/news/57081>

There are some important signs indicate to the domination, the militias have on the regime. The regime's fighters call the militias' terrains "friends' terrains", where regime's agencies are forbidden to approach or enter into these areas, under pain of killing or sniping, such as the accounting faculty in "Musyaf", which is under Hezbollah control, where any approach until 1 K.M means direct kill.

4. The Southern Area:

There is a small ratio of Shia Syrians in "Dara" province, they live in "Busra" city mainly. Whereby they are armed and supported, as the rest of the Shia Syrian places.

Hezbollah has participated clearly in the battles in "Dara" province, with other Shia militias. Then Fatimid Brigade has been founded from Shia Afghans. It consists of 5000 fighters. Its Afghani leader "Ali Rida Tawasoly" was killed in the battles at the beginning of Mars 2015. It is notable that Tawasoly was the right hand of "Qassem Sulimany" (the Iranian commander) in the region⁽¹⁰⁴⁾.

Some opposition activists drew the attention to the fact that "Qassem Sulimany" and Shia militias – especially Fatimid Brigade- have more influence on the decision than the regime.

There are a lot of reasons that drive Iran and Shia Militias to focus on this region, as: fearing of the armed opposition's arrival to southern Damascus, and in this event, the military situation of Damascus will deteriorate for the regime. There are political reasons also, which are related to determine the "Free Syrian Army"; whereby this region is considered the last castle of the "Free Syrian Army", where it has a military significance in, far from the extreme Islamic battalion – somehow- as "JN, which have participated in the military operation against the regime in the "death triangle" and in Dara' fronts with 20 to 30 fighters only in each front, as some reports said⁽¹⁰⁵⁾.

104 Many media as CNN Arabic, <http://cutt.us/pNML>

105 Thaer Ghandour, "Hezbollah Leads the Battle of Ceasing Free Syrian Army in Dara'a countryside", new Arabic, 14 – 2- 2015 <http://cutt.us/nHJud>

“Death triangle” region is the most important one strategically, it indicates to the triangle: Damascus countryside, Dara' countryside and Qunitra. It links Damascus Countryside province in the north, Dara' in east and south and Qunitra in west and south, laying on 7 K.M.

A big role of Iranian revolutionary guards, Hezbollah and other Shia militias has appeared in this area, and capturing the body of Iranian colonel "Abba AbdIlahi" from Iranian revolutionary guards on February 2015⁽¹⁰⁶⁾, was an evidence of an active participation of Iran in this area.

Shia militias share the regular army portions, and the national defense the military operations, or they do the military operations alone (as Hezbollah in Al Qusayr), and their military contribution extends to reach any Syrian land where the regime army exists. But their role, in the case of deterioration the regime faces, is a crucial factor for not defeating the regime. Therefore, they play a testamentary role on the regime with the passage of time. There are many examples about this case, as the rumors of executing 13 soldiers and commanders of the regime by Iranian commanders in the “death triangle”, because of accusation of “treason”⁽¹⁰⁷⁾.

These militias achieve all the military tasks, the regime troops do. From direct clashes to protecting the barriers, or staying in the back line behind the elite forces that break into, if the agencies aren't trained enough.

These militias perform some less dangerous tasks as protecting the roads or controlling the security inside the cities, (as their roles in the eastern countryside of Salameyeh and Homs, and their security role inside Aleppo). They also support the leverage of the national defense (Shabiha) inside the cities as the case of Salameyeh.

Most of weapons the militias use are: “M16 guns”, “Kalashnikov”, “developed sniping guns”, “(land-land)” missiles as “Burkan” and “Zilzal”, “machine guns”, “RPG”, “night vision binoculars”, “Doshka”, and “Vosdika” guns. There are no reports that talk about suicidal operation, these militias do, except one time when 20 Shia fighters were

106 Thaer Ghandour, Abbas abd Ilahy an Iranian leads Assad's troops, New Arabic, 26 – 2 – 2015
<http://cutt.us/d5JKp>

107 Adnan Ali, Syria.... Fatimid Liwa is the new of the southern battle, New Arabic 14 – 2 -2015
<http://cutt.us/ulzeP>

under siege in eastern Ghotaa, so one of them blew up himself to break the siege⁽¹⁰⁸⁾.

They practice parallel roles to the “national defense” (Shabiha). The army is different by using the heavy weapons from them, as missiles and jets. Whereas the militias command the military operations, as many resources have reported. These militias are considered “clean” morally, as the pro-regime people see. There is no kidnapping, stealing, threatening or bribing in the regime terrains. In the same time these criminal actions are distinct characteristics of the “national defense”, and they are considered anxious phenomenon in some region as “Musyaf”.

But this moral aspect of the militias– which is based on their obeying to a central leadership that imposes monitoring – disagrees with the brutal massacres these militias have achieved in order to frighten the oppositions, and the “Syrian Network for Human Rights” has registered a lot of them estimating the victims number with 806 ones⁽¹⁰⁹⁾.

We can observe that no battalion exists in one place by itself, but there is a mixture of them. Hezbollah exists from south to north, with dense points near the Lebanese border. Fatimid Bridge extends from its central point in the south till the north. This extension is supplied by the Shia Syrian popular existence along the line from the south to the north.

In spite of the little numbers of the Syrian Shia but they live in various regions, and it is an additional strong point we can add to the Assad's strength points, which empower him to use the strategy of: "an army in all corners" as the researcher "Christopher Kozak" says⁽¹¹⁰⁾, so he can delude the West that he controls over all Syria, to gains political gains rather than military ones. Most of the separated divisions here and there can cause massive losses to him, as the “division 17” in “Raqqqa”, which was completely destroyed by ISIS.

Now, it seems that the regime depends on another strategy, relies on reducing the confrontation space through decreasing the military

108 All for Syria, 19 - 12 – 2013 <http://cutt.us/NPiAf>

109 Arabya net, serious of "Making of the Death", 18 – 2- 2015 <http://cutt.us/p5vv1>

110 Ibid.

interventions with its military enemies. This means decreasing the area of domination for the sake of empowering the protecting on one hand, and reducing the losses on the other hand. It prefers the military gain than the political one now, depending on the political gains that are provided freely by the extremism, retardation and the irrationality of “ISIS” and “JN”.

Chapter Four

Shia Militias Relationships with the Regime and the Syrian Society



Despite the entanglement of these relationships in reality, we have sorted it in two levels (the Regime, and the society) to serve the research. So, we shed light in each section on the relationship of these militias with each of the social components, and the institutions (the army, and the National Defense Militias... etc.)

We found out that the pro-regime people belong to all the classes, regions, ethnics and sects, which contradicts the sectarian discourse that regime is supported by Alawites only. Anyway, increasing the sectarian conflict was because of the Syrian regime strategy, which depended on instigating the sectarian obsessions before it used it obviously in its war against the Syrian revolution. The heightened role of Shia militias and the radical Islamic forces on the contrary side has created results in each environment of them. As we are studying the relation and impact of the sectarian militia on a society that attempts to instigate its sectarian obsessions, and succeed in that due to reasons we will conclude in the conclusion; we have found ourselves studying the Syrian interaction with it, and its effect on them, according to religion and the doctrine, with all the related dangers. We recognize that our talking about the Alawites, for example, shed lights on the fact that each Alawi is obliged (even theoretically) to recognize himself as an Alawi; however, the expansion of the visualization of the sectarian conflict in Syria allows us, and maybe

force us, to take the limits of the sectarian and the doctrine division especially while studying the effect of a sectarian militias (as the Shia Militias under study) on the society in which they are active not just as a military one, but a political and as “Da'wa” (missionary) ones most of the time.

On the Syrian society level.

Sunnis⁽¹¹¹⁾

When we talk about the Sunnis, we talk about a wide social sector. It is mentioned and looked at as a cult without consisting it in the origin, which makes it an easy target for missionary “Da'wa” either by convincing or by seduction.

And we indicate that the process of “nominationalizing” the Sunnis, making the them a religious community, is not an easy thing for being the largest population mass, the thing that had previously prevented them from generalizing doctrinal tribalism - the thing whose best environment, in general, is the minority's feelings - with our notice that this doctrinal relaxing among the general Syrian Sunni is one of the reasons behind the extremism virtue of a "solid micro-core" in its medium, which serves as an aggressive response to the majority's neglect to its proposals.

Sunni-Shia Subject in Syria before the revolution:

Iran was seen mysterious by many of "Sunnis mediums" for a long time. Since Al-Malali has reigned, it has been considered “black” and ominous. Meanwhile, by the time, the Lebanese "Hezboallah" started to play the role of extraordinary ambassador of the Shia among the Sunnis mediums. What justifies our request to testify the rise in its popularity in the Arabic and the Islamic street, slowly and steadily, since its foundation, even before the Syrian revolution, is a set of factors: its efficient and armed hostility toward Israel and its western patron, which was always the secret of its popularity in this street; and in avoiding the sectarian bias in its general speech that has reached them; and in its success in building a picture about the Islamic movement that can

111 This section is on Arab Sunni including Turkmen with some generalization excluding Kurds who have a special context. It deals with the attitude of Sunni Syrians towards Twelver shia people not towards Alawite as Shia. Sectarianism and political discrimination were intensified in Syria within special trajectories and incubators (specially in the relation between Alawite - Sunni).

organize the rules of its members and audience accurately and in an integrated way.

Moreover, if a lot of the Arab and Sunni Muslims have been affected with this specifications (characterizations) of Hezbollah, it is clear that the effect among the Syrians was bigger since Lebanon was one of the subjects that the majority of the Syrian public opinion agrees with the opinion of the Syrian regime, and according to the views that we have reached, this was due to the underestimation of "14th Aathar" team, and the contempt to its liberalism values and their general and behavioral manifestations, in sake of the firmness and dogma of "Al-Jihadist' " in Qana or Bint Jbeil.

For instance, it looked like Syria is devoid of any negative feelings towards Shia back then, or it seemed like that Hezbollah is a general Islamic party, and its Shia nature means nothing. Anyway, apart from this sweeping current (that reached its top during the first decade of the new millennium, which contains "Tammuz War 2006" that happened along with the ruling of Bashar Al-Assad of the country and its incidence – personally – according to a common opinion we found it common among our interlocutors, as a captive to the attractiveness of the war) the doctrinal Sunni identity centered at a solid and a limited atmospheres, but it was intense and ready to storm when the right time comes and the Syrian "awake", according to their conviction, from the effect of Nasr-Allah charisma.

And we can observe these foci that will explode indeed in the "right" time after the Syrian revolution and the Iranian and the Shia militias against it, in the following:

- Salafi Jihad: very little has remained outside jails, from the ones whom they are affected by it or from its sleeper cells, where its existence has centered in Sednaya Military Prison, whose gates will be opened in 2011 and will occupy, at accelerating gradient, the Syrian revolutionist scene. The Salafi Jihadists have not merely stem of, in their attitude from the Shia, from the Salafi constants, or from the study at some of Saudi Islamic universities, but from their lonely practical experience in practicing the "Jihad" in Iraq, where the Shia forces and their incubators had a big role in the preparation for the American intervention, then in

cooperating with it, where the "Zarqawi edition" of "Al-Qaeda" has been embodied into a sectarian trail of blood.

- Traditional Salafi: its attitude from Shia is also traditional, with no truce. Even though the Salafi current inside Syria before the revolution was weak, (First for reasons related to what is called the "Shamian Islam", and second as a result of the security prosecution that saw that the difference between the scientific Salafi and the Jihadi one does not reassure), the most important one from the traditional Salafi, whose effect will appear later, are from those who were residents at one of the Arabic Gulf countries, and were prohibited – mostly – from entering their country, Syria. Some of them are some unorganized, unofficial remains from the Syrian "Islamic Brotherhood" which leaned to Salafi, and some of them are "original" Salafi. Anyway, the most important thing is that they were the first to, (after months from the revolution outbreak, and after its needs exceeded what was able to be insured mostly by the coordinated youths, with their Liberal tendencies), to actively intervene through the media by using their relations in some of the popular Sunni channels, and through relief work like preparing fields' hospitals, and by arming the nascent battalions. These Syrian Salafi who are residents in The Gulf countries and have connections there, have formed the first picture of the "supporters" who were represented by them as individuals, with what they were able to provide from generous contributions.

- - Sunna- Shia local tensions: like the tension between Shia Nubbul & al-Zahra at Aleppo countryside and their Sunni neighborhood, and between Kafraya and Al-fow'a in the countryside of Idlib and their Sunni neighborhood also. The truth is that this tension was not a doctrinal one, as it seems as much as it was a local one, on some of the little mutual resources, and kind of encroaching and bragging which all the Syrian countryside is not devoid from them, then this doctrinal conflict comes here to aggravate and to rise this tension to the level of "identity" level.

- "Umayyad" Damascus: Although most of Damascenes were carried on with Israel-Hezbollah war in July 2006 standing by the latter, and some of them engaged in activities such as providing accommodation and the needs for the Lebanese immigrants to the Syrian capital back then, but the Umayyad- Damascus sensitivity toward Shia is much deeper that it cannot be affected by a passing conformity (for the capital Damascus,

even the decade of years, we can consider it as a "passing", easily). Damascenes were admiring the speeches of Hasan Nasrallah, they were gathering around listening to them in cafes, but they were watching with worried eye and with a hidden condemnation to the Shia marches from Iran, Pakistan and others, while they were occupying Al-Hamidiyah market toward Umayyad Mosque and Sayedah Roghayeh, with their chanter sectarian referrals and slogans. Some of the most restrict Damascenes were warning even from Hasan Nasrallah, without finding an interactive audience.

- "Shawaya" Sunnah: that means the Sunni countryside of Deer Al-Zor, Al-Rakkah, Aleppo and Hama in which is mixed the "Saddami" tendencies, with the compassion with the variety mix from which the "Iraqi resistance" was consisted of the following elements: softened/lightened Baath, clans, Arabism, Islamic identity, Sunni identity, Jihad Salafi, along with the Salafi religion, which started to settle in these countryside and small cities.

- Individuals and scattered small groups that carry a negative attitude towards Shia for a reason or another, and does not find a response in the loud playground, which Hezbollah aims his media goals in it towards the Syrian and Arabic goal ranges.

The attitude of Sunni from Shia after the revolution:

The question about the attitude from "Alawites" is not late of the beginning of the revolution due to objective reality of the nature of the authority and its intense interfering with the doctrinal. But the question about the attitude from the Shia is late due to objective reasons: the Iranian attitude that supports the regime increasingly. The engagement of the countryside cities and the few Shia neighborhoods in some of the big cities (as in Damascus) in suppressing its revolutionist "Sunni" neighbor, and revealing its "natural" face that ally with the authority after a long phase of contiguity/non-discriminative, and, finally, the intervention of Hezbollah directly in the battles supporting the regime, and bringing different Shia militias.

Based on that, we can feel the Syrian Sunnis attitudes towards the Shia and Iran according to their different attitudes toward the regime originally since the revolution started. Which are, as know: opposition, supporting, and gray attitudes.

- Opponents: that means the revolution audience, its fighters, its activists and its liberated areas sons, involving what Daish (ISIS) has controlled later. Those, originally, are the audience of Hasan Nasrallah admiring the "Manliness" of his fighters against Israel, the enemy that the Syrian people hate. However, at the same time, they are closer to the rural Sunni ground which is against Iran from Arabism viewpoint, and against Shia from Sunni viewpoint. As this combination was the most common in the Syrian revolution controlled geography, there is no doubt that this combination has its enthusiastic supporters in all of the country directions and environments. If the wide board of the revolution audience is from the first type, (of whom felt the "treachery stab" by Hezbollah and appealed with whom they are "his Sunni brothers" according to his ideology, from Arabs and others, to resist the aggressiveness of this stab), there is a much higher level among the opposed, who are different in the formation, taking care of this issue from its Iranian and political sides.
- The supporters: they are, originally, an audience of Hezbollah and his Secretary-general, even though they do not feel home when they talk about them, as a logical result to the fact that this party is concerned only with the Shia⁽¹¹²⁾.

In fact, the Sunni supporters have been embroiled when supporting Bashar Al-Assad, as a direct result and an occupational involvements in the government's bodies or in the security devices or as partners, in some cases, or as a result of the preference of the "autonomy" in the face of a "crisis" which is the regime – omnipotent – will overcome it and will come back to review attitudes of the people and judging them, either punishing or rewarding, as it did before with the "Ikhwan

112 One of the most supporters of Hezbollah (Asaad Abu Khalil a secular one from Shia environment) reported that there is a distance between Hezbollah and its supporters, which keeps it away continuously because of its sectarian composition. Asaad Abu Khalil, "Hezbollah and its Sectarian Aspects", Damascus center for theoretical studies and civil rights, <http://www.mokarabat.com/s7650.htm>

Ahdath"/Brotherhood events/ in the eighties... as that every thing is recorded.

So, the dilemma that pro- regime Sunni and the others, of course, implicated themselves in has required ignoring some separated and non-confirmed events, as sniping some demonstrators and hot discussing with revolutionary friends and relatives. Then supporting the regime became – gradually – supporting using chemical weapons, explosive barrels and naval mines upon the cities and towns in addition to supporting the call for changing these cities into "potato fields" after exterminating all settlers : the armed people and their "public matrix" i.e. the residents.

This heightened implicating track, after the return became too much difficult on the spirit and the "personal history" during the revolution, changing the issue of the regime surviving into a real and symbolic issue, and moral degeneration of supporting heightening the regime weapon's store. After all that, the cooperation with the Shia militias becomes an easy matter to accept, especially with Hezbollah, the ally and friend.

In spite of all that, the pro-regime people have kept the Syrian careless attitude – which was prevalent before the revolution - towards the issues of polarity between Sunni and Shia.

- Gray people: It is difficult to put final, non-penetrable and rigid limits between the pro- regime people and the gray ones, since they prefer stability even if it is achieved by explosive barrels! But maybe it is right to describe a big part of Damasks (the original ones) so. It is clear that a big part of Damasks have supported the revolution and engaged with it, and a little part of them has invited to exterminate Gotta. Anyway, the biggest part of the original residents of the capital – the most of the immigrants have returned to their original religious section, city or family- hasn't doubted for a minute that the requisitions, demonstrators asked for, were right. But his\ her utilitarian perspective of the life, policy and the regime has posed the neutral practical attitude; waiting the result of the battle. The battle, he \ she has known since the beginning that it will be bloody, brutal and destroying. Therefore, he preferred to save his\herself and his\her loved city than what the “fool” Syrians (of Alawites, farmers in Gotta, Shawaya and Homsis) do!

These real gray people, Damasks and others, keep a lot of the common sense toward what is happening, especially after the blood and hating were prevalent. So, they look at the Iranian occupation aspects of the general life in Damascus with silent anger. In addition to the recruiting "Shabiha" from the Damascus Shia neighborhoods, in a way they interpret it by pure and intentional sectarian way. However, they will do nothing to resist but waiting.

The attitude of Shia toward Sunni people after the revolution:

Most of the Shia Syrians used the way of the sleeper regime-cells, unlike the suppressed and ineffective invitations in their communities. So it took the demonstrators, of Al-Meedan neighborhood in Damascus, a long time before realizing that Al-Joorah Street, which is a tiny street at the neighborhood, is shia street, that is why the families in it, gave the local help to the security devices to suppress the demonstrations. This situation had repeated a lot, at many villages and towns here and there, in which their people had suddenly, at least ostensibly, acted with a Shia behavior in supporting the regime and suppressing his opponents with weapons, with enthusiasm and an extremely steadiness, and in so many cases, with the regime's fanaticism as a system (Security) and as a sect (Alawites). The Shia fighters have revealed cold historical, sectarian, systematic malice most of the times whereas the malice of the Alawites that participated in the suppression tasks, for examples, was a mad and a hot one, it was bloody for sure, but it was at each moment able to turn to a naive rural turning to the scene of "The beautiful Syria" before the revolution. So the Shia fighters in Syria, whether they were Syrians or from other nationalities kept dealing carefully and professionally with the Sunni that supported them and their martial and political camp, with using him of course. So, they differ from the various devices of the regime, the official and non-official ones, which is fond of concentrating on the scenes of the veiled women at the supporters demonstrations, and of hosting the hypocrite tears of Ahmad Al-Hassoun the Mufti of the republic, which want sincerely to ignore everything that happened, and to go back to the "beautiful Syria", without punishing anyone.

Alawites

By a request of Hafez al Assad, Alawites had been recognized by the religious authorities in Iran and Lebanon as a part of the Shia. That was to achieve the need of Hafez al Assad to prove himself as Muslim to fulfill the requirements needed to be the president according to the Syrian constitution. After that, the Shia Doctrine found a place to stay in Syria.

In 1981 Almortada foundation was formed by Jamil al Assad (the brother of the president). Perhaps, it was not trying to follow the Twelver doctrine; in fact, it worked to come closer to the Shia religious rulers in Iran. So, it was a political foundation with a religious face. But it simulated a reforming movement aiming to come back to the Twelver original⁽¹¹³⁾. Maybe, it tried to import the Shia Twelver hierarchy into the Alawite structure, what would give its chief "Jamil al Assad" a religious weight that would be enough to invest politically.

Hafez al Assad dissolved Almortada foundation in the last month of 1983. It was explained by some analysts that the foundation's support to Rif'at al Assad, who was against his brother the president Hafez during the latter's sickness⁽¹¹⁴⁾. It is perhaps a factor, but it isn't enough to interpret that step, there was a role to the protests of the Sunni religious men who were against the provocative acts of the foundation. Also, it was the fear of entering the religious hierarchy into the Alawite sect, which would threaten the president by a religious weight equaling his political weight. Anyway, it is clear that the foundation was dissolved completely. This decision and the other one that came after, dissolving the Defense Units (to get rid of two sectarian institutions inside the authority) were what achieved stability to the Assad regime till Mars 2011.

On the other hand, the falling down of the permanent ally of al Assad regime, Soviet Union, led to rise the rate of the coalition with Iran as a kind of offsetting. This decision was what caused the base of the disorders in the accurate balancing of the foreign relationships of the regime that al Assad the father group had woven. This defect increased in the era of the heir Bashar al Assad. The relation between the heir al Assad and Iran experimented a stress period because of the contrary sakes in the Iraqi issue, when Iran eased invading Iraq and getting rid of

113 Shia Ba'th in Syria. Ibid P 44.

114 The conflict on the authority in Syria, Van Dam, Ibid.

Saddam Hussein regime⁽¹¹⁵⁾. After assassinating the Lebanese Prime Minister, Rafiq Alhariri, and the Syrian army's withdrawal from Lebanon, the defect reached to enmity with Arab Saudi in spite of the fact that the father - Assad was careful to keep the friendship with it. Then, the role of Hezbollah increased in supporting the Syrian regime whereas the father Assad fought pro-Iran Hezbollah in Lebanon, in the context of the conflict with it for domination on the Shia sect in this country⁽¹¹⁶⁾.

Hezbollah, as a resident party, has changed into an inspirer for wide groups in Syria, especially after liberating the South of Lebanon. So, these Syrian groups started to look at Iran through its perspective⁽¹¹⁷⁾.

This is what explains the attention of the regime about the statement of Hezbollah and its general secretary have stated that they are supporting the regime and its narrative about the events.

The dense existence of the Alawites is in Latakia, Tartous, Homs and Algaab plain. But because of the conflict for 4 years and the sovereign of the sectarian type on it gradually, the Alawite existence centered more and more in the coast as the Alawite families escaped from many terrains – especially from Aleppo and Damascus – to the mother coast. Considering it the most secure place for the Alawites, because any Alawite person is sentenced to death in the Islamic power-held areas for his/her doctrine regardless his/her political or thought stand.

There are many factors defining the relations between Alawites and Shia militias. In fact, this topic needs to be treated in various perspectives not only one:

- Militarily, the coast terrains have still been away from the war square until now. Apart from the limited clashes and jet and artillery striking almost daily from regime-held terrain upon the Islamic-held terrains in Latakia mountains, 3 battles happened in Latakia in a limited shape: The battle of Alhaffa, which lasted for a month in the summer of

115 Middle East Newspaper, Iranian sources reported that concealing the visiting of Putin is an expression of dissatisfaction of Russia because of the change in the Iranian attitude towards Iraq <http://archive.aawsat.com/details.asp?article=147289&issueno=8815#.VYm4PPIVikp>

116 Aba Mazozi, "Iranian - Syrian Relations through the Current International Changes", M.Sc., P16.

117 A study on converting into Shia doctrine in Syria after the war between Israel and Hezbollah, because of admiring Hezbollah, <http://elaph.com/ElaphWeb/ElaphLiterature/2007/1/202371.htm>

2012, the battle in the northern countryside of Latakia in the summer of 2013, when the JN fighters broke into 12 Alawite towns where their residents were displaced, killed and imprisoned, then the regime regained the towns after 2 weeks. The last battle was Kassap one in Mars 2014. Except that, the coast's residents fight in battles and places far from the coast mostly, and the echo of these battles comes as funerals of the coast residents' sons' bodies.

So the public contact is limited with the Shia militias, which exist in the hot fronts or near the Shia sacred sites, and all of these are far from the coast. Their existence in the coast is limited by the requirements of the recruitments. It is notable that there are semi- stated offices for them in the coast, rising the flag of Hezbollah and its general secretary's images. For example, there are offices in Latakia in 8 Mars street, in front of the Police Administrative Office; and in Tartous in Thoura street, in Aried neighborhood, and in Faqaseh neighborhood. They are independent recruiting offices from the official recruitment services in Syria, which were authorized – alone – to recruit in past. There are also independent agencies to recruit people but with coordination with the regime departments.

A lot of the youth prefer to affiliate in Hezbollah and under its direction because of its spiritual weight, in addition to the advantages they have as the food, war repair, and the care without an obvious Shia conversion condition. We could test these information by witnesses from Tartous who are recruited by Hezbollah or work under its commanding.

There is a clear difference between the care Hezbollah treats its members with and the one the regime does as in the servicing, the bad quality of the food and rare meals.

One Syrian soldier (he is known personally by us) " the commanders send the soldiers who bribe them to easy and non-dangerous tasks. The soldier can take days off by the bribe too. The food is bad and isn't enough because of stealing". Therefore, he with some friends have made an arbitrary checkpoint barrier on Damascus- Homs highway to have some food from the passing cars, using the general fear climate. "At the same time, good quality and enough food is available for Hezbollah

members, who participate in with the army's members in some tasks”, the witness said.

Also, the colonel Suhil al Hassan (who is nicknamed as the Tiger) is distinguished by his care of his agents and offering their requirements, and by respecting them and by equal treating. That is what makes them dedicated to serve him and adds an additional military value to him.

- Politically, it is logical that Alawites welcome any supporting for Assad, who looks – after the revolution raising - as the protector against either an Islamic authority that would marginalize them, or Islamic extremist groups that would threaten their existence as a sect or doctrine. So, there is a welcoming stand to the pro political Iranian stand. The attitude of Hezbollah that supports Assad left a good result among the most of Alawites. So its position has heightened in their minds, especially it was rising before the revolution, as well as it was among most of the Sunnis in Syria. This position has been executed by its resistant work against Israeli occupation. Off course before letting down in supporting the Syrian regime considering it as a part of the axis that Hezbollah makes its bayonet. Anyway, of all the other pro-regime Shia forces, most of the coast's residents knows Hezbollah only.
- By the sectarian (doctrine) perspective: most of the Alawites are repulsive concerning the religious firmness the Shia approve, starting from the veil issue to the committing of the religious obligations...etc. There is a small part of Alawites that tends to the Twelver Doctrine considering it as an external determined doctrine standing as a rival in front of the Sunni one, which has formed a resource of the oppression they suffered, as they think. This notion allures some Alawites to adopt the Shia Twelver Doctrine and find a psychological satisfaction by entering inside the rival direction that is announced against the Sunni, the matter that the esoteric Alawite doctrine does not treat.

It is beneficial to say that Iran has tried for a long time before the revolution to make the Twelver Shia doctrine closer to the public communities in the coast. It has formed a poor cultural center in Latakia introducing the Persian language courses, and it founded a Shia Sharia'

official school in the countryside of Jableh, and this school follows Alawaqaf Ministry. It has founded a collage – joint with "RasoulA'zam mosque in Latakia which plays a role in approaching Shia doctrine to both of Sunni and Alawite residents in the coast- to teach the Shia doctrine. Also, it was organizing trips to Iran periodically, religious trips internally and tourist externally. When we say they are "internally religious trips" that doesn't mean the aim is adopting Shia doctrine, but creating intimacy with the Shia doctrine. But all those steps haven't achieved big results of Shia converting, whereby the numbers of the convertors into Shia doctrine aren't big according to our resources.

In spite of naming the Alawites "the extremists of Shia", in the pure religious perspective, those who attends with their Alawite identity too much think Shia Doctrine is worse than Sunni, as one of the Alawites elite said. This is because Alawites think Shia people know the truth but deny it whereas Sunni people don't know it. Moreover, Shia people betrayed Al Hussein in the past, and who betrayed him cannot be trusted. We shed light on this point to say that the approaching with Iran is political one, not sectarian or religious one, as it is said in general.

4. There is a problem related to the state of Iran whereby the attitude toward it is problematic. On the one hand, it supplies the regime and that satisfies a big part of Alawites, and leads them to support it. On the other hand, Iran seizes the sovereign of Syrian state in the context of supporting the regime, which pushes many Alawites to feel worried (especially the martials). Any observer can touch dissatisfaction of the rumors about Iranian commanders control the Syrian army, especially when rumors spoke recently about executing 13 Syrian officers in Dara' by Iranian commanders. Therefore, the brigadier – the leader of the southern region - "Jaber Ibrahim" has been frozen, and now he is working in planting his field in Homs⁽¹¹⁸⁾. We can find out the dissatisfaction when the regime exchanges the Iranian prisoners and ignores the Syrian ones.

A lot of Alawites refuse the exaggeration of Shia role facing the Islamists, whereby Almanar and Alaalem channel refer to the Syrian army's victories to Hezbollah and "Alqudes Failaq" (a portion of the Iranian revolutionary guards led by Sulimany), as some Alawites protest.

118 A witness, who is a friend of the brigadier. He asked us not to mention his name.

One of them wrote on his account on Facebook, on the occasion of Sulimany's visit (the Iranian commander) to Algaab plain " it is shame on you... who glorify Sulimany and others, our army has fought, and it protected Syria, otherwise Sulimany couldn't visit Algaab plain... Neither Iran nor Russia ...nor any other ally can do anything without our army..." Another one commented on the post: " Don't leave the friends share the test of victory with you". This appoints to the feeling of dissatisfaction towards the Iranian domination, and that Iran supplies the regime really, but it wants to pick up the victory and refer it to itself.

On the other hand, changing the conflict from "political forces conflict" into "groups conflict", makes the factor of protecting the priority, which everything falls back in front of it including the sectarian feeling when those who seeks the protection does not think they can do that. That means the groups which feel threatened – as pro regime in the coast or Druze in Arab mountain - may accept the protection from any force that can do protect them regardless any religious or political consideration⁽¹¹⁹⁾. Therefore, we can understand the tending of a lot of pro regime towns' residents – which had been seized by Islamists – to fight under the flag of Hezbollah, not the Syrian army flag that let them down and couldn't protect them.

Now the motivation isn't the advantages Hezbollah has; we are in front of a new motivation, related to the control, high military and fighting ability Hezbollah has proved, which can generate and preserve the pro-audience trusting. So this audience has gradually preferred Hezbollah more than the regime army, which is called the national army by them.

Actually, the big defeats in Idlib, Jesser Alshogour and Ariha badly reflected the dissatisfaction with Iran among the Alawite community. Iran was looked at by the coast residents as it was using and “trading in” them, and it sold Syria in the nuclear deal with the USA. One of Alawites (a teacher) from Tartous said, "Losing Idlib assigns that Turkey supports the terrorists firmly and loyally more than the way Iran supports the Syrian army". This utterance carries a clear sign of not only accepting the foreign protection but asking for it too. And this utterance includes

119 We find attitudes like that in FaceBook pages of loyalists of regime as <https://www.facebook.com/eshtabrakallasad> in addition to our witnesses.

obvious confession of the Syrian army disability without Iran. Finally this utterance is on contrary side with the previous post we mentioned above.

A big part of disappointed Alawites of the regime ability to repulse the Islamic forces went back to the final wall: accepting the division as a way of protecting. "Armor of the coast" forming was a sign of that change. Its name and stating appoint to its task will be protecting the coast only, and that is an obvious step on the road of division.

It is obvious that many tensile forces affect the Alawites in their relations with Shia militias in this difficult situation they experiment in amidst an instable conflict.

Militarily, they feel the regime needs Iran's support to survive, and the most of them see that as long as it reigns this means protection to them. But in the same time they do not welcome the Iranian sovereign, a lot of them show sensitivity against the Iranian domination.

In the sectarian perspective, in spite of the direct and indirect attempts and in spite of money spent by Iran to spread the Shia Doctrine, the rate of converting to Shia doctrine is too weak among Alawites. Alawites do not seem that they will accept the Iranian attempt to transform the military supply into Shia extension. An opinion of one from the coast residents (He is secular and has PHD in philosophy): "Iran has retreated from its project of diffusing the Shia doctrine in the coast because it can't protect those who will enter the Shia section, and it doesn't want to carry moral and political load".

Using the Iranian supply without what it carries as Iranian domination and sectarian results is a destabilized equation. It is probably the Iranian domination that will prevail because of some Alawites oppression who accept the leverage and the converting to Shia doctrine. This case will open the door for a domestic conflict that has new attributes including the nationalism with the sectionalism.

In the field, there is no evidence that the Alawites refuse Shia militias in the basic level. So through this perspective most of the Alawites look at the military existence of Shia militias with comfort; at the beginning as an ally of the regime then as a protector.

To keep track of this relation, we tried to have more open interviews as we can with Alawite people, who are staying or were staying until a near period in the Alawi terrains, which was too difficult⁽¹²⁰⁾.

The witness (S): he is a university graduate from Alawi background and lives in one of the Alawi places in Tartous province. He has assured that there is no contact between Shia militias and Alawi residents, and these militias don't exist in all Tartous province where he lives. So we can't confirm the real direct contact between them. But that doesn't mean that the Alawites in Tartous city and its towns view the Shia existence comfortably. The witness (S) said that the distance between Alawite and Sunni is the same one that is between Alawite and Shia before the conflict. But after the conflict, and because of fearing from the radical Islam, the distance with the Shia became smaller and closer as they were necessary to protect them against ISIS and others.

In spite of that, Alawites still doubt the Shia coming to Syria. The same thing is said by another graduate,(A),who lives in Alawi terrains in Tartous province, "Alawites don't like Shia" he said, "unlike most of people think", and "there aren't cases of converting to Shia section in Tartous except individual cases."

We took another witness of another background that is neither Alawite nor Sunni (he doesn't know what his religious section is, because he is from a secular family). He was teaching in a town laying on the middle area. The town is settled by Alawites and Sunni Bedouins. The (teacher) has told us that the Alawite towns along the road near the border of the desert were rising Shia flags as the red and black one on which written " Ya Hussein we will answer your calling", "YaZeineb" and others. "The impact I received is that the Alawites feel comfortable toward the Shia militias, especially as they participate in the fighting against ISIS" he said. The witness has observed the Shia flags and the talks that express Alawite comfort toward these militias, but he and his friends haven't observed any Shia religious aspects as Praying and others.

In spite of the contrary views of the witnesses (S) and (A), this contradiction results from the difference between Alawites who live in

120 3 witnesses from 4 asked us not to mention any letter of their names nor their sites. The fear deters anyone to make a survey in the area of regime control.

Tartous and the ones who have emigrated from the coast to the middle area. We don't have enough information about the nature of this difference, so we will assign to it only as a hypothesis. But the witness of the (teacher) lets us conclude that the real reason of the approaching is offering the protection. It is necessary to take witnesses of Alawites who live in Homs and its countryside, where the Shia – Alawite connection is in its maximum. In addition to Alawites in Homs form a big mass that lays between the coast that is considered as the original, and the eastern towns that are the last Alawite residence in the Syrian map.

The witness of (Basel Al Abd Allah) was in the same line with the (teacher)'s witness. In Musyaf, Hama and Sabbora(a town in eastern countryside of Salamieh), there is no Alawi- Shia stress, but the opposite is right. Most of Alawite people in Musyaf think Shia militias are more moral than Shabiha (the national defense) and the army. They – Shia militias- don't steal or rob, could not be bribed and they fight because of faith and doctrine; that is contrary to the Shbiha who appear from Damascus to Homs. So they consider the militias as "the better" fighter. In addition to these, the militias offer money, supporting and protection to those who are affiliated with them, whereas the national defense troops don't protect who is affiliated to them. It is possible that one of the national defense can be assaulted by a stronger one. This cases has happened many times in past. For example, one of the national defense has hit an adjutant of a security service in Musyaf, then he pull him by his hair, in front of the people. And his friends from the security services couldn't interpose.

The previous criminals, pimps and immoral people – who were socially outcast- became leaders who rule the people by affiliating to the national defense. The shabiha formed prinedoms of whoredom and trading in drugs, as our witness said.

This dark image of the "supposed" protector against the risk of the opposition that is branded by terrorism, ISIS or JN or others; push people in Alawite terrains to approach to Shia militias, according to our witness, especially after the big losses of souls the Alawites have suffered from.

We observe that attitude in the witness of (Basel Al Abd Allah), the attitude of Alawites toward the Shia militias is mortgaged by the degree

of belonging to the Alawite identity. The religious one will view these militias through anxious perspective whereas the non- religious person doesn't care about converting to Shia or not.

As evidence of this complexity and non-homogeneity, is what happened in one of the towns of Musyaf region (our witness asked us not to mention his and its name), where the rate of converting to Shia doctrine has increased among Alawites, what caused a sensitivity – solved later - between the residents and the Shia militias. When we asked about the nature of this sensitivity, our witness answered that it didn't develop to a violence case, but it was a kind of clear anger or protest.

We can see that the basic relation, which goes from Alawites toward the Shia militias, isn't rigid. It is various and different. The difference is perhaps big; it ranges from changing the doctrine to Shia (all our witnesses said the cases are small) and sympathy as rising the Shia flag, to the reluctance or anxiety of the "province of the Jurists" policy, which a lot of people are afraid to drown in.

The Christians

The Christians split in their attitude toward the Syrian revolution. The official churches and the biggest part of the Christians supported the Syrian regime. In the contrary, the Assyrians and Syriacs have joined the revolution by their political parties, revolutionary coordinators and armed portions in the Euphrates Jazira (Upper Mesopotamia and sometimes referred to as the Island) in Hassaka. In addition to many Christian activists who are still working in the revolution land. Some of them have been killed or arrested by the regime's troops, as the cinematographic director "Basel Shehadeh"⁽¹²¹⁾.

Some democratic and secular people – who are Christian born – participated in the national opposition work as: the actor "Fares al Helo", Michel Kilo, Akram al Bunni, Anwer al Bunni, George Shashan Hido the representative of the Syrian national council in Belgium and Rimon Ma'jon, the member of the executive office of "Waed" party, and others.

121 Mohammed Gharibo, "Christians and the Syrian Revolution", Masar press, <https://goo.gl/2QuMA6>

The majority of the Christians look at the changing claims in worry – if they aren't secular claims clearly, as the other minorities in Syria – and the Christians accept that the regime is the protector of the minorities and its collapse is dangerous on them. But, in spite of that, they were careful to get involved in the fighting when the conflict transformed to the military stage, fearing of the consequences on them. In this context, the extension of the radical Islamic groups to Christian regions⁽¹²²⁾ was the event that changed the conviction of a big part of the Christians into "self-defense" idea. This case was what Assad authority and Hezbollah invested.

Before this event, the Christians were recruited by the Assad's army – as all the Syrians – and by secular parties – as Syrian Social Nationalist Party that is the most important one, and has coordination relations with Hezbollah. They are recruited by regime - also affiliated the national defense militias – which have relations with Iran and gaining more and more power with the decrease of the regime power .

After JN breaking into some Christians' terrains, a lot of them turned into the self-defense attitude, and their connection was heightened to the national defense-affiliated armed groups. They formed in Sednaya armed popular groups named "Virgin Mary", as witnesses from Qalmon have said.

There are other groups such as:

The national defense – Qassa' portion⁽¹²³⁾, the national defense- Bab Touma⁽¹²⁴⁾ \ Damascus portion\ ⁽¹²⁵⁾ and it contains some Shia agencies according to the witness of Farouq al Rifa'i, and the national defense in Wadi al Nusara and the national defense in Sqilbieh in Hama countryside⁽¹²⁶⁾.

122 Armed groups including JN breaks into Ma'lola town, middle east newspaper, <http://archive.aawsat.com/details.asp?section=4&article=752189&issueno=12787#.VWr3W89Viko>

123 The facebook account of it: <https://goo.gl/hrfvgl>

124 ==== <https://goo.gl/hrfvgl>

125 <https://goo.gl/ok4Z0z>

126 Mohammad Gharibou, Ibid.

As time passes with the weakness of the Assad-held center, those groups – mentioned above - maybe transform into Christian militias, the term has been mentioned over the mass media⁽¹²⁷⁾, and by some activists on the clashes' fronts, especially in Qalamoun⁽¹²⁸⁾. We found out by asking some witnesses in that area, that it isn't an accurate term: "Christian Militia" because it doesn't appear the real degree of development of the Christian groups, which follow the national defense. According to our witnesses, the Christians - in general - don't have the desire to be seen as the pro – regime armed groups inside their communities appearing as independent ones. So, they prefer to participate in a more general type.

We can conclude that we can't consider the national defense-affiliated Christian groups as armed militias until now. They have to split by themselves and have a private leadership and management, even though they still follow another side. We don't think this event is impossible – as we said – through the context of degrading the Assad authority and \ or reduction of its domination over regions. We consider naming the armed group in Sednaya "Virgin Mary" as an indicator of initial- accepting the differentiating idea. We can also observe that the Shia militias' behaviors and discourses, Hasan Naser Allah expressed in his discourse as we mentioned, whereby he motivated the religious portions and ethnics to transform into "the resistance" (militia); these behaviors and discourses encourage this attitude.

The Christian groups in the national defense militias cooperate with the Shia militias in the military field⁽¹²⁹⁾. And the Shia militias do not try to recruit people inside the Christian environment because of the religious difference, and they do not make any missionary activity since the Shia militias carefully take into consideration the exaggerated sensitivity of the Christians, and the Christian political forces, which ally with them in Lebanon and Syria⁽¹³⁰⁾.

127 "Heightening of Appearing the Christianarmed Group amidst Damascus, Quds Arabi, <http://www.alquds.co.uk/?p=347591>

128 "Syrian opposition: the Regime Exploits Christians against Themselves in Yaprud", Quds Arabi, <http://www.alquds.co.uk/?p=142640>

129 Ibid.

130 Several witnesses and evidence.

But in the Syrian Island, Christian militias have appeared because of the disability of the regime to keep the military control since 2012; and because of the interpenetrating of both the ethnic and religious factors. The Kurdish Democratic Union Party (PYD) has brought an affiliated Christian militia from Turkey⁽¹³¹⁾, called: Syrianc Military Council, which has an armed party⁽¹³²⁾ called "security forces – Sutoro"⁽¹³³⁾

According to different resources⁽¹³⁴⁾, "Sutoro" is divided into two parts, the first follows the civil peace council, which consists of "The Gathering of Youth for Mother Syria", and the Christian civil gathering. They are supplied with weapons and salaries by the national defense, but they do not participate with them in the battles against the opposition, and their tasks is limited to making the barriers and inspecting in Qamishlo city.

The second part follows the "Syrianc Union Party" that is close to the "Democratic Union Party" the Kurdish one. They participate together in the auto- administration in the Syrian Island. They lay on Malkieh, Kahtanieh and Qamishlo city, in addition to some sections in Hasakeh City. They receive their salaries from the Kurdish units for protecting the people (YPG), and their agents are distinguished by a high level training.

We observed a signature of one of the parts by the name of "Sutoro" with another part which put its signature by the name of "the Syrianc Military Councils- the general command" on the announcement they declared. They declared this announcement to state their cooperation with the PYD-affiliated YPG militia to fight ISIS⁽¹³⁵⁾. Some of the Kurdish opposition accuse this militia, cooperating with the YPG militia, of assassinating some opposite people from Assyrian Syrians⁽¹³⁶⁾.

Druze

Druze are based in Arab mountain (Swida province), Jaramana and Sehnaya (Damascus countryside province), Samaq Mountain (Idlib province) and in Sheikh Mountain. They form 3% of the Syrian texture. Arab Mountain is considered the social and spiritual center for them.

131 Syrianc network of human rights, <http://goo.gl/17SfFE>

132 An account on FB of it: <https://goo.gl/qCxbTv>

133 Facebook: <https://www.facebook.com/Sutoro.S.S.F>

134 Asaad Hanna and other witnesses

135 Joint statement between the militia of "Syrianc Military Council" and Sutoro.

<https://goo.gl/qwM9Mq>

136 Syrianc network. Ibid.

Therefore, the regime focuses on Sweida province without ignoring the other regions such as Shiekh Mountain's towns that the regime looks at as taken for granted. We can easily observe that there are different ways in which every Druze region treats with neighbors. For example, the relations between Druze religion in Sheikh Mountain and the neighboring areas is enmity. It is notable that the regime reflects its managing the enmity between the Syrian components, and on Druze section carefully. This is because of the doubts about Druze since Salim Hatom's coup d'état attempt in September 1966, and the Druze tribal support to him taking side with him.

Regime's strategy toward Sweida depended on its experiment and awareness of the special situation and the obsessions in this province in addition to realizing the religious social, regional and religious sensitivities, and the economic conditions so that it tried to take advantage of the conditions and the sensitivities.

We have to appoint that the wide Islamic shifting and the extremist shifting above that, which dominated the revolution in Syria in its armed stage, have eased attracting the minority sections in Syria by the regime. The political Islam can repulse all the minorities from the activate participation in the political change attempt in Syria, and this is what we have witnessed.

According to evidence we had in previous research⁽¹³⁷⁾, the regime strategy is based on keeping four pillars: the regional sensitivity between Sweida and Dara' a provinces; the sensitivity between Druze and Bedouins; the religious and sectarian sensitivity; taking advantage of the bad economic situation in this province as it is considered a poor province in Syria. After that the regime has tried to build militias by means of attracting using money and employment.

The opposition in the province and some social assemblies have organized some political, organizational, economic, military and social opposite activities based on an organized view to coordinate between these assemblies. On the political level, the national forces assembly started in Sweida. It includes a collection of the traditional opposite

137Humam al-Khateab, "The Relations between Swida and Dara'a during the Revolution", Democratic republic studies center, <http://goo.gl/Uln6lF>

parties as People Democratic Party, Revolutionary Labor Party and others. It includes also revolutionary forces as Sweida Province Coordinative, and revolutionary organizations as the Free Engineers and assembly of (Sweida Lawyers for Freedom), in addition to some figures representing the writers, researchers and technocrats.

On the economic level, Sweida Province Fund has been founded, and it is one of the most important revolutionary institutions in Sweida. It is financed by grants from the province's people that are inside or outside the province. This fund aims to support the Syrian revolution, either supply or relief, and its activity has extended over all the Syrian land, from Dara' to Der Elzor.

Militarily: The military council has been formed by leadership of the colonel Marwan al Hamad, he has a wide participation in Hawran, but it was forced both internationally and domestically to stop, so it ceased its activities.

Socially: The Social Assembly for the National Labor in Sweida has been formed by a group of the traditional leaders. This assembly aims to achieve the conciliations between the various society's components, and to keep the civilian peace. This assembly coordinates between the national forces in Sweida.

In this context, the regime has tried to attract Druze with the help of the Iranian and Lebanese allies, using the following:

Firstly: the investing in the sectarianism and the religion men, using religious heresies to bridge the gap between Druze and Shia. The regime used some Sheikhs to interpret some sacred books searching for common religious factors between Shia and Druze in order to cover the political coalition they want to achieve.

According to some Druze religious resources, those Sheikhs have falsified some religious documents and books, which are adopted by the Druze. They explained and analyzed them in a way that can serve the policy of the regime. The book "the Moullaf" that is written by Sheikh "Mohammed Ashrfani", was treated by that falsifying. It is a religious book adopted book by Druze.

The regime has arranged a visit including a group of Druze's Sheikhs, traders and businessmen from the province to Iran. They were 27 people who support the regime, economically and socially⁽¹³⁸⁾. The most important and active pro –regime person was: the Druze sheikh "Kamil Naser"

Secondly: the investment in the figure of "Samir al Qantar", as he is a national figure, and famous for his resistance against the Israeli occupation. He was invited by the regime to Sweida, and visited traditional leaders and VIPs in the province in order to invite to the unity with the regime and coordination with Hezbollah, which is the resistance flag carrier in the region, as he said.

Thirdly: the investment of Wiam Wahhab. He is from Lebanon's Druze,; however, he doesn't have a big popularity between Lebanon Druze. He has opened an office for his party "Arabic Unification Party", and played the role of the godfather of the Shia militias in Sweida, and all is done in coordination with the regime.

Fourthly: Hezbollah's entering Sweida and its attempt to allure the youth by monthly salaries and the distinct fashion from other portions. It sent a group of youth to Iran to have a training course continuing from 20 days till 2 months.

If we check the incidents in the field in Sweida, we can find out the attempts of the regime to join Druze with Iran have fallen down till now in spite of opening recruitment offices and youth's recruiting attempts under different names as (Ba'th Battalions, Popular Committees, popular organization and the home's armor). There was an Iranian falling down in both of the missionary level and the military level.

The reasons of the current failure according to previous research of the center⁽¹³⁹⁾:

1. The closed and conservative nature of Druze. In Spite of accepting the other on the political and social level, they refuse penetrating their doctrine. They have locked the door of accepting anybody new into their

138 "A Delegation from Swida to Iran", Tamadon website, <http://www.tamaddon.com/?p=6762>

139 Humam Khateab, "The provinces of Dara'a and al - Sweida Facing Strife", 27 – 4 – 2015
Democratic Republic Studies Center. In English <http://cutt.us/FQsom>

doctrine, fearing of infiltrating. Moreover, they consider anyone who leaves their doctrine a person leaving the circle of reincarnation and coming back to his\her original.

2. The nature of the social Druze's internal relations. There is a convention on a group of habits and inherited traditions; and there is a high sensitivity against anyone who inspires to breach them.

3. The pro- regime armed militias in Sweida have lost the trust in the regime and the Shia militias, especially after they let them down in Qadesieh Busra battle in Dara'a⁽¹⁴⁰⁾ as they did not coordinate the withdrawal with them, so the Druze's militia stayed inside a siege inside the archeological amphitheater until the Free Syrian Army released them as a good intention initiative toward Sweida residents.

4. Facing the religious – political falsifying phenomenon in Sweida, by Dignity Sheikhs – as they are called – and their persistence in refusing to involve Druze in a sectarian war. But the phenomenon of "dignity Sheikhs" is still limited inside its religious section limits because the Druze religious men have founded it regardless the fact that many unreligious youth have joined them later and the discourse of the dignity sheikhs that calls for getting out of the sectarian circle, to a national common circle, which we think it expresses the sake of Druze by opening national horizons and protecting them from imprisonment inside sectarian walls. That has appeared obviously in the speech of Sheikh Abo Fahd al – Bal'os, "Syria is our mother, who wants to walk in the line with Iran he can go, and who wants to walk in the line with Saudi he can go too, but we are still staying here" he said (adapted). On another occasion he stated, "we don't want a president who rules us from Iran, and no president rules us with Ebn Taimieh ideas, we want a president who rules us by the law”.

There are big challenges facing dignity sheikhs, we do not exaggerate when we say some of them are structural and stand as stumbling block in front of changing their sectarian nature. Their position on the horns of dilemma as they are between Shia extremism and the Sunni extremism, deepens the Druze fanaticism. If no critical force of a common nationality

140|bid.

appears, we can expect them to go far from the national line, which their discourse expresses their awareness that it is only means of survival.

Some aspects of the current failure of the plan to join Druze with Shia militias and Iran:

1. The increase dissatisfaction among the province's residents due to the Druze religious men and traders' visit to Iran, including Sheikh "Kamil Naser" who is one of the authority's Sheikhs the regime has used as a godfather for the relation between Druze and Shia, until the residents in Sweida were making jokes about him saying "Mulla Kamil or Kamil Khamenei".

2. The failure of establishing "Popular Hashied (mobbing)" army, which the regime and its agencies have tried to form in Sweida. The regime was persisting on that name for the sectarian signification of this name. This name "Popular Hashied" was given to the Shia militia in Iraq. The regime's aim was to face the popular sympathy phenomenon with the dignity sheikhs by putting it in front of them, the Sheikhs. However, Sweida residents have discovered this plan by virtue of the opposition and the conscious elite that disclosed the project, followed its details and warned of it. The evidence of the failure is that the regime is preparing for forming "the Nation's Armor Army" whereby it changed the name from "Popular Hasheid" into "The Nation's Armor" that copes with the nature of the residents' nature. Anyway, the latter has not gained the popular agreement (convention) until now, and both of the opposition and dignity sheikhs¹⁴¹ face it, which perhaps outweighs its failure.

On the other side, this project has failed when Sheikh Abo Wael Hannawi and a group visited Bashar al Assad, and called him to return the heavy vehicles to Sweida province after taking them, and they called him to arm the province to face ISIS, but the president answered them: "bring back the 27 000 people who escaped from the army service, and after that we can speak"⁽¹⁴²⁾.

In addition to that, a statement has been stated by the spirit chief of the Moahdin Muslims (the spirit council of Druze) which invites the Druze youth to join the army and it was verified by one Sheikh, "Hikmat al

141 Ibid.

142 Quote from Sheikh Hannawi.

Hujary". It is known that anything is stated by the Spiritual Council of Druze must be verified by the three sheikhs that constitute the council.

3. some rumors have disseminated recently over the media as Orient T.V and activists ' accounts on Facebook saying that Iran has started to buy lands in Sweida province, and build Husieniat (Shia centers) inviting to Shia doctrine, but till now this rumor is incorrect. Our witnesses have told us that there is a general thought in Sweida that the regime supports this rumor to check the opinions of the residents in the province, test and measure the reaction of them before making any practical step in this scope.

We observe that the reaction of this rumor coped with Sweida society composition, our witnesses said. A collection of statements, stands and remarks have been stated by civilian activists , traditional and religious leaders in the province condemned and denounced these actions, considering them as aggression on Druze and their community and doctrine, and some of these stands took a shape of threatening.

Some of the reactions we have observed:

- The statement of "Mouhedine (Druze) Awakening Group": it stated: "we – the assembly of Druze Awakening Sheikhs – consider that as an aggressive act, and an attempt to penetrate our culture, and we consider it as an attack against us, which needs a response⁽¹⁴³⁾..."

- An organization called "The Sword of al Maqdad Ibn al Aswad" has threatened to kill everyone rents or sells a land for the new naturalized ones.

4. The big deserting incidents that happened in the national defense's militia and Hezbollah militia by the residents of Sweida as some of them joined the "Dignity Sheikhs"

The field situation of the Shia militia in Sweida:

The Shia militias have tried to attract the youth in Sweida to their military ditch by financing and hegemony allurements; they gave a lot of advantages to the youth who joined to them. The salaries ranged between

143 "Druze Demand Iran to Stop Building its Religious Shia Buildings". Arabya net <http://goo.gl/Tf9rdn>

30,000 to 40,000 SP, in addition to 5,000 SP for every task. This salary is higher than other salaries of other portions fighting with the regime.

The Shia militias have distinguished them by the new fashion, and promised them with personal loans (in a meeting in Nazih Jarbou's house) then they did not act what they had promised. In spite of all that, the numbers of the militias are still ranging between 400 and 500 members, as the best approximation according to our witnesses. In fact, that was before refusing some agencies to join and delaying the salaries and cutting them off in some months (in 2015) after the defeating in Bosra' Alsham and Busra Alharir battles.

Hezbollah has used the office Wie'am Wahab opened in the Tower of the city, in the middle of Sweida province to accept the jointing requests and holding interviews and some narrow meetings.

Taysir Hattom and Wajih Aqel were the people responsible for organizing and presiding the requests. Affiliating to these militias doesn't pose the Shia Doctrine or the Twelver Doctrine's convention and loyalty as a condition. This agreement takes the form of a contract or a job agreement. After accepting the person, a meeting is done in Kriem field (it lays on the north of AlSora town and on the west of Morgana gas station) and in the leadership headquarter and the weapon store are in Khalkhala airbase. Some volunteers are sent to Iran in order to attend training courses, and some of them are trained to be professional snipers. The last information is assured by a witness from the heart of those militias. After he refused to join them and did not return his weapon: (they – Shia militias- were treating us totally secretly without confidence at all, even their names were nicknames as "Haj Abbas", "Haj Ibrahim" and "Abo Haidara"; we were sure those names weren't true and they were concealing them), he said. When I asked him about the way the militias treated them, he answered (the confidence is not existing, but we were in the best conditions of the food, drink and clothes. We decided to leave them when we discovered their treachery in Busra Alsham battle. When they asked us to go with them to fight in Busra Alharir, I refused with 50 ones, I know most of them by name). When we asked him about the direct chief, he said: (I knew one of them called "Rawad Abd Alkhalek"

from Sweida province, he was responsible for distributing the weapons and recruitment in Hezbollah, and the other responsible men were foreign using pseudonyms).

Hezbollah coordinates with the national defense militia, and they both coordinate with these portions:

1. The Syrian National Party's militia: This militia follows the Social National Syrian Party, which has an Executive General Chief in Sweida "Samir Mulhem".

2. Ba'th Battalion Militia: It follows the Socialist Arabic Ba'ath Party, whose chief of the security committee in Sweida is "Shebli Jannod" and the one in charge for military responsibilities is the colonel "Noaf Abo Ahmad".

3. Unifying Party's militia: It follows Arabic Unifying Party, which is led by Wiam Wahap. He is a Lebanese figure who does not have much popularity in Lebanese Druze society, he opened an office in Sweida coordinating with the Syrian regime. This office started to distribute weapons to the youth and Sheikhs in Sweida. After the last incidents in this province, it ceased its activities and the militia was dissolved, and the office was left for Hezbollah to manage its activities in the province.

4. Bustan Association militia: Bustan association is a charity one, Rami Makhlof – the Syrian businessman and the relative of Bashar al – Assad has founded it. In Sweida province, "Hind Zaher Aldin" the wife of the brigadier "Essam Zaher Aldin" and his son "Ya'rub" manage it. However, after the last incidents in Sweida that we mentioned above, this militia has been degraded and many deserting cases and a wide refusing to serve in it have been registered.

Ismaili:

The census of Ismaili is around 250,000 ones, what equals 1% of the census of Syrians. This section is divided between the "Nizari Ismaili", who stay in "Salameyeh" city (the weight center of Ismaili in Syria,

where 70% of them stay⁽¹⁴⁴⁾). And region of “Khawabi” river in the countryside of “Tartus” (where they represent the majority in the towns as: Briekeh, Bit Diebeh and Nabi' Naser⁽¹⁴⁵⁾). Nizari Moumoni (the other part of Ismaili) stays in both of “Musyaf” and “Qadmous” as a majority.

As other Syrian sections that don't have a political sectarian structure; it is difficult to speak about a political attitude of the Ismailism section, in which its members commit to either by forcing or volunteering. But there is what we can consider as a common thought (mentality) that is produced by the context of the own historical experiment for this section or that one. This experiment is still effective on the section in succession by converting to a part of the "social religious inheritance" as long as the state of citizenship and democratic isn't achieved.

In the old heritage of Ismaili, it was a doctrine opened toward the philosophy in unprecedented way in the Islamic history. It had a big role in the organized invitation and political activity, it expressed the thriving until building states, and the defeating until kicking them out far from the rich religions of resources.

In Syria. Alawi kicked out the Ismaili people from the mountains on the eastern beach of Mediterranean to the internal plains in the middle of 19th century after a series of long conflicts⁽¹⁴⁶⁾. Many clashes happened between Ismaili and Alawi in different periods, and they were bloody sometimes as in 1800, 1919 and 2005 in both of “Musyaf” and ‘Al-Qadmous⁽¹⁴⁷⁾’.

In the near Ismaili heritage there was a persistent sharing in the national cultural movement, and it has an affective role of a cultural secular elite.

Because of the common political economic condition in Syria, this "mentality" was an effective factor that pushed a big part of Ismaili – especially in Salameyeh⁽¹⁴⁸⁾ - to participate in the revolution, facing the media campaign, the regime adopted to frighten the minorities. Therefore,

144 Ibrahim Jubin, “Ismaili Has the Courage to Transform from Victimhood to co-existing”, Arab London newspaper, 25 – 1 – 2014 , vol. 9449, P 6 <http://www.alarab.co.uk/?id=13724>

145 Ibid.

146 Ibrahim Gharaubeh, book: *The Modern History of Ismaili*. <http://goo.gl/z60aaM>

147 Ibid.

148 Sabr Darwish, “Syrians and the Tribulation of Emigration” 9 – 10 – 2015, Democratic republic studies center, <http://cutt.us/9p5Ja>

Salameyeh became an incubator environment for the Alawi activists in the revolution and delights of the national agreement, what the revolution itself delighted in the first year in general⁽¹⁴⁹⁾.

To face the popular movement – which maintained the liberal political type at the beginning- the regime's mechanism started to work depending on all the disadvantages and negatives in the society. Whereby the security institutions have adopted the negative social forces (criminals and unemployed people ...etc.) and released them against the people, they stimulated the sectarian fanaticism among the most affected people from the general looting order. A group of Salameh family was the most important tool in Salameyeh city, they are Alawi stay in Daher Almager in the Southern neighborhood of the city. They became the dominators of the reality of a broken city.

The Shia militias started to appear by the time the army and pro-regime militias' ability has fallen back, whereby these militia stayed on the border of the city mainly with a simple existing inside the city, as our resources said. The battalion 47, which follows the Iranian revolutionary guards is one of these Shia militias, it lays on near “Zeghren” town in the Salameyeh countryside, led by Iranian commanders.

According to our resources, there is an office of Hezbollah in the city, it recruits people, who will be trained for 3 weeks in Lebanon, as the news says. Today, there are more than one office of Hezbollah, one of them lays in “Almuntar” neighborhood in the northern part of the city, and another in the middle of the city near to “Imam Ismail” mosque without being declared obviously, no flag or nameplate of Hezbollah on its entrance.

Iran and Hezbollah's activities are still careful and silent taking in consideration the domestic sensitivities⁽¹⁵⁰⁾. In spite of that, we could conclude that there is a concept of the methodology of their work. They establish a core of the converted people from Ismaili to Shia, with accepting others to work with them without doctrinal conditions primarily, using a gradual politicization and religious teaching. Their strategy supposes to support some domestic forces; they support a

149 Ibid.

150 An interview with the opponent writer Mazen Esmaeil.

military formation follows the Syrian Social National party – which is known for its overt sectarian discourse – in addition to the national defense.

According to our resources, "Dom" Family (it is a foreign family from Salameyeh, has come from the countryside surrounding the city and stayed in the city, and it is one of the little families that adopt “Twelver doctrine” inside Salameyeh. This family isn't different from "Salameh" family in terms of: poverty, ignorance, and working in the handcrafts before the revolution) was who founded Shia militia firstly in the city, and they built a center of them near to "Albadieh" gas station in the south of the city, and an armed conflict has happened between "Salameh" family and them.

In spite of the general dissatisfaction against the Syrian regime and its tools, and the general sensitivity towards the Shia militias, but the peoples' abstaining from protest is justified by the fear of:

1. The fear from what happened in other cities as bombing, damaging, killing and striking.
2. The iron grasp of the regime over the militias, but these militias use the policy of "easing and violence" whereby they slacken the pressure upon the citizens when the general resentment aspects appear. Then the situation comes bad again. There are a lot of examples as: stating a decision to remove the "dimness" windows of the "Shabiha's" cars (the national defense cars), which they use to kidnap people. But the situation has come to the previous position. Sometimes the regime arrests one of the "Shabiha" if the protests raised against him, but this arrestment is temporal then he is released, as what happened with "Ibrahim Al Saleh".
3. The risk which is coming from the Islamic armed forces, in which their practices in the last period carried to put a clear barrier with the Ismaili built upon the fear and refusing, for example:
 - a. Killing opposed activists. In the first of the current year, four civilian activists from Salameyeh have been killed in “Edlib”, by forces control this area. JN has been accused of doing this crime, which was explained by sectarian reasons, although these four persons are opposed against the regime, and some of them have been arrested, and others were wanted by

the regime and for the army service, which pushed them to escape from Salameyeh.

b. One of the armed battalion that "Al Saroot" (the previous famous goalkeeper, who followed ISIS, as rumors said) has struck the city with many missiles which led to hurt some children and kill many civilians. In a statement, activists disseminated over Facebook accounts, " Salameyeh city, the Nuseiri (a nickname of Alawis, enemies call them) and the pro-regime city has been struck revenging for Homs's martyrs". The striking happened again latter and led to kill a number of civilians.

c. The massacre ISIS made in al-Mabou'jeh town in the countryside of Salameyeh, and kidnapping some women, some of them are Sunni.

d. Arresting some men from Salameyeh who fight with the "free Syrian Army" by "JN" in the last of 2014, including their leader "Abo Mansour". JN threatened to kill them, but it released them after many intercessions, and confiscated their weapons.

These cases led to a deep fear of the city residents who are both of pro-regime and anti-regime. Ismailis found out that the radical Islamic forces in the surrounding of the city are a threatening resource for their existing, especially under the wide sectarian mobilization, the county expresses.

These dreads should push people to the contrary side, (The regime side), but the breaches, the national defense do, (assaults and kidnapping) don't made this side less dangerous than the other (ISIS) for the Ismailis. Ismailis today don't think that the regime can protect them, at least part of them. Especially after the massacre in "Al-Mabou'jeh" that ISIS did, whereby the national defense troops – which stay in "Al-Sabboura" the Alawi town far 5 K. M from "Al Mabou'jeh" - hindered to interpose for many hours, and they didn't come till "ISIS troops" retreated. And after that some members of the national defense tried to steal some houses⁽¹⁵¹⁾ making the people very angry.

For these reasons, Salameyeh city found itself between the jaws of the pliers. The first jaw is the extremist Sunni forces which pose a siege around the city, and the other one is the national defense, Alawis control it under the Shia support.

151 Sabr Darwish Ibid.

The Syrian Palestinians⁽¹⁵²⁾

The Palestinians refugees' number is about 600, 000 in Syria according to UNRWA and the civil societies; that forms 2.6% from the total Syria residents⁽¹⁵³⁾. 260. 000 ones live in "Damascus", 220, 000 in "Damascus Countryside", 37,000 in Aleppo, 33,000 in Dara, 24,000 in "Homs", 12,000 in "Lattakia", 10, 000 in "Hama" and the rest (as around 4000) distributes between "Quinter", "Edlib", "Raqqa", "Der Al zor" and Sweida⁽¹⁵⁴⁾.

The Palestinian refugees stay in Syria in 13 camps and 14 neighborhoods, and some of them live in the main cities. The camps are under the presiding of the General Form for the Palestinian Refugees administratively and civilly, while the neighborhoods are under the presiding of the municipalities.

The public opinion:

Since the beginning of the Syrian revolution, the Syrian Palestinian have tended to be careful, in anticipation of the repetition of the same experiment, their friends and relatives have lived in "Kuwait", "Iraq", "Jordan" and "Lebanon". But the Syrian security forces with Hezbollah and Palestinian battalions defied this public will by dispatching the young to "Golan", where they were killed by the Israeli fire without any help. It seemed as using their blood for serving the Syrian regime, so the people protested in "Yarmouk" camp during the funeral of the martyrs who their bodies came from "Golan". It was a clear decision to refuse using the Palestinian people, their daughters and sons' life and its issue to serve the Syrian regime against the revolution. The "Public Front – General Direction" faced the public "Insurrection" by firing at the peaceful demonstrators⁽¹⁵⁵⁾, whereas Palestinians moved in many camps in

152Yousef Fakher el –Den, Yousef Zeidan, book: *Syrian Palestinians through the Syrian Tribulation*, Democratic Republic Studies Center, <http://goo.gl/6AXDaQ>

153 The number of Syrians more than 21.5 millions in 2012 according to the statistical Syrian group.

154Dr. Samir Hasan, Sumia Saad el – Den, *Non – resident people and their characters*, 2007.

155Ahmet Jebriil (the secretary – general of Public Front – General Direction) has bragged that he continued firing for hours at demonstrators of the insurrection, he said that to his guests.

Damascus to support the demonstrators and their attitude, the most important movement was in “Khan Al Sheikh” camp.

In spite of this stand, the Palestinian portions – attached to the Syrian regime, which are called "Damascus portions" – continued to serve the Syrian regime, through the relation with Iran and by the supply from it. So they shared in the public relation campaign to serve the regime and disseminate its narrative⁽¹⁵⁶⁾. And they met with the political forces that keep solidarity with the Palestinian issue, in order to convince them stand against the Syrian revolution⁽¹⁵⁷⁾.

They shared also in the military labor of the regime⁽¹⁵⁸⁾, and participated in the siege of “Al Yarmouk” camp and contribute to strike “Khan Al Sheikh” camp with hundreds of the bomb barrels, missiles and mortars although it was empty of weapon and armed people⁽¹⁵⁹⁾.

But the conflict between these forces and the youth movement hasn't stop at all, in spite of the regime's destruction to the Palestinian society in the camps with the contribution of these forces⁽¹⁶⁰⁾.

The Military Pro-regime Formations⁽¹⁶¹⁾:

The military formations among Palestinians started – according the intersected witnesses we caught- by supporting of the Iranian revolutionary guards, which sent one of its commanders at the beginning of the revolution to meet with those portion's envoys together, and order them to be ready to defend the “Resistance” as he said. And he informed them that Iran is ready to supply their needs.

In the last of June 2012, practical steps were taken to establish "public committees" as the “Public Front –General Direction”⁽¹⁶²⁾ named it, whereby the “Public Front” opened an office in “Al khalisa” position in “Al Yarmouk” camp to register the volunteers to this new body. The

156An interview with Ahmet Jebri, Alam Channel, <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=bJLwsEDoyt8>

157 Lila Khaled (the member of the political office of the Public Front) in a meeting with the pro-Palestinians forces <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=aGjfEX-FNcE>

158 The book: *Syrian Palestinian through the Syrian tribulation*. Ibid.

159 Yousef Ziedan, Ibrahim Ali, “Palestinian Refugees through the Syrian Tribulation”, Ibid.

160 Yousef Fakher el – Den, “Yarmuk Camp: Generation Conflict and Damaging the Community of Rebels”, Palestinian Studies Magazine, File: “Yarmuk Camp: a Disaster Bigger than a Camp”, ibid, P36.

161 Sabr Darwish, “Weapons and Armed Combatant in Yarmuk Camp”, Palestinian Studies Magazine, Ibid.

162 A written witness from the Palestinian researcher Tarek Hammoud.

numbers of its members were around 2500 ones⁽¹⁶³⁾ in a case of weak financing and arming. There is an exaggeration in these numbers, the “General Direction” is known for its exaggeration to get more Iranian financing, and it contrived this number for this aim⁽¹⁶⁴⁾. Whereas the intersected information of our witnesses estimates the numbers as around 500 armed members⁽¹⁶⁵⁾.

The members of the public committees have been distributed – almost-over all the neighborhoods of the camp, made barriers and began to harass the residents without any practical meaning of that. Whereas the camp was empty of any armed existing of any Syrian side (regime or opposition) except the General Direction’s – affiliated groups, which are formed by arming and financing supply that exceeds the ability of an organization as the General Direction, which is known by its weak human and finance abilities. So the Iranian finance is present here without any doubt. This was the critical point for the attitude, the opposed groups adopted in the vicinity Syrian neighborhood of “Al Yarmouk”.

The troops of the General Direction represented a similar face to the regime due to the opposition. Whereby the weapon of the General Direction inside “Al Yarmouk” denoted the first breach for neutralizing the camp, which the opposition's groups committed to relatively during the last 8 months till August 2012, which is the estimated period to its existence in the neighborhood of the camp as “Alhajar Al Aswad” and “Altadamon”. The existing of the General Direction's committees continued inside ”Al Yarmouk” until the middle of December 2012, this period is as around 3 months and a half, the camp entered an unprecedented bloody violent circle.

The Palestinian military formations, which fight defending “Al-Assad”, follow Iran obviously. “Hezbollah” takes the position of the leader and controller of them, because of its long and acute knowledge of the Palestinian portion and also because it is the main agency of Iran in the

163Palestine online website, <http://goo.gl/VofJSi>

164 an interview with Abbas Zaki (a member of the executive committee of Palestinian liberalization organization) with Agrasia agency (from Jourdan), he said that he met with Bashar Assad and with all the palestinian organizations except the Public Front - General Direction which deceived the Syrian leadership by pretending that it has thousands of combatants that they can defense camps, to surprise Syrians because of the ppor numbers of its combatants

<http://www.gerasanews.com/index.php?page=article&id=123575>

165Many witnesses as the journalist Farouk Rifaii.

region. These Palestinian military portions cooperate with the Shia militias in both of Aleppo and the southern terrains of Damascus. (They both participate in controlling the siege around the southern terrain, and the entrusted role to the Palestinian portions is besieging “Al Yarmouk” camp from its main entrance). Some sides of the armed opposition accused these portions sharing in the battles in “Al-Qalamoun” over the mass media without any concrete evidences.

The most important armed Palestinian formations:

a. Al Quds Liwa (Brigade)

It is the most fierce pro- Assad Palestinian group that Palestinians changed into a minority inside it with the time. It was formed – in 2012 - at the beginning by the cooperating between the “Public Front – The General Direction” and a Palestinian engineer called "Mohammad Saied" who is connected to the security services. He is from “Neirab” camp – south of Aleppo. When “General Direction” merged its armed committees with groups follow the security services. Witnesses have told us that all the members of these groups shared the security services their operations to terrorize the civilians and the university's students in Aleppo, in order to prevent them from demonstrating and protesting.

Whereas the “General Direction” is a security agency – whose work intersects with the work of the security devices – “Al Quds Brigade”, with the passage of time and the increasing military depending on it, have become connected directly to the security devices, the Iranian sponsor and the Shia militias.

“Al Quds Brigade” includes: Palestinian refugees from both of "Neirab" and "Handarat" camps (but they became a minority with the time), fighters from Aleppo and its northern and southern countryside, the “black ghost” battalion and the “black shirts”.

The brigade settled in the "Neirab" camp firstly. A witness from the camp has told us that there are a lot of Shia members from Iraq, Iran and Lebanon in the brigade, without knowing if that is a kind of cooperation or they were affiliated officially to the brigade. Information was confirmed by witnesses and mass media that there is an office for recruitment, “Abo Al Fadhel al Abbas” has founded in the camp by

cooperation with “Al Quds” Brigade. According to one of our witnesses it is notable that there are huge numbers of Syrian Arman in the brigade.

The brigade consists of 3 battalions; it participated in many battles in Aleppo, as the one happened in “Salah Al Din” neighborhood of Aleppo. It exists in the surroundings of "Al Neirab" camp and the civil and military "Al Neirab" airbase, and in the towns:” Al Aziza”, “Sheikh Lotfy”, “Hilan”, west of Aleppo central prison, the surround of "Handarat" camp, surround of air intelligence building, “Al Rasoul Al A'zam” mosque and in Al-Rashedin front in the west of Aleppo.

The role of “Al Quds Liwa” has increased with the retreatment of "Abo Al Fadhel al Abbas” Brigade and closure its offices which lay on Alhamadania neighborhood – 3000 avenue, “Salah Al Din” neighborhood, “Meridian”, “Neirab” camp and the industrial city⁽¹⁶⁶⁾. So, Al Quds Liwa has started in media campaigns inviting the youngster in Aleppo to volunteer in it, according to intersected evidences with reports of mass media⁽¹⁶⁷⁾.

b. "The Armed Public Committees" which follow “the Public Front for Liberating Palestine – The General Direction”

The number of the members of the committees inside “Al Yarmouk” camp reached to 2500 ones, with weak financing and arming. After the regime bombing on “Abd Al Qader al-Husainy” mosque by “MIG” jet on 16 \ December\ 2012, and breaking into “Al Yarmouk” camp by “"Al Hajer al Aswad Bridge", Gebril's committees broke down and the remaining number retreated out of the camp.

Then the security devices re-built themselves out the camp, whereby it became a vital part of the “General Direction” organization, and became one of the most prominent Palestinian military formations that participate in besieging “Al Yarmouk” camp from the northern side, and seizes some buildings in the entrance of the camp.

c. “Fatah Intifada” Organization:

166 Abo Fadhl al – Abbas lets Assad down and withdraws from Aleppo to Iraq, Ibid.

167Al Quds Liwa recruits young from Aleppo to fight with the regime, Syria net,
<https://goo.gl/LpDKyH>

This organization exists in the entrance of “Al Yarmouk” camp, we estimate its members' number as about many hundreds. It seized the square that extends from the behind of “Helweh Zeidan” center to the surround of “Al Rojoleh” mosque on the north of “Al Yarmouk” camp, during “ISIS” entering to the camp. It could seize these terrains during busying the other groups with fighting “ISIS” inside the camp.

Certainly, the new financing of the organization – which enabled it to reconstruct itself relatively – is related to the development of the events in Syria, comparing with the previous financing. And it is related to Iranian financing to the groups that fight for the regime's sake. It is notable that the organization shares the “General Direction” controlling “Al-Husineih” camp, and it prevents the residents to return back although the regime has recaptured it from the opposition since 2 years.

Iran Builds a Pro Public Base:

Iran tries to build a public base upon utilitarian political land, without ignoring – as long as it can- the religious inviting in the context of the current situation and its priorities, which harmonizes with all the information we put in the previous paragraph. Iran realizes that it doesn't have a completely religious ally on the basic level, so "it founds its supremacy by the political head way especially that Alawis haven't shown any doctrinal reaction till now⁽¹⁶⁸⁾".

“Settlement” is a way for building a public base for Iran, which seems probably the most serious project; we have many evidences that indicates to a big demographic change.

In the southern western countryside, from the west of “Orontes” river to Lebanon's borders, where “Al Qusayr” city and other Sunni and Shia towns lay on; reports informed that the leader "Abo Turab" in Hezbollah, and the colonel "Joshua" from the regime army have destroyed Sunni mosques keeping 3 "Shia religious centers" and they have stolen, destroyed and pulled down the Sunni houses in more than 75 towns in this area, which forms a big demographic change, in addition to competing between them to settle in the houses that are abandoned by

168 Ali Amin, “Iran without an Incubator in Syria and the Game of ISIS Has Finished”, Jounobieh website, 8 – 5 – 2015 <http://cutt.us/BmGcC>

their owners. Therefore, this area has been called "the Shia State" in according to activists.

Hezbollah put big sand barriers on the riverside of the Orontes to prevent the residents from coming back to the western area of Orontes, where this "new state" is situated.

Some of the towns have been damaged completely: "Nahrieh", "Safsafeh", "Uthnieh", "Moh" and "Abo Hourî", in addition to seize upon the fields of "Ahmad A'mer" (he is a Syrian from the Turkmen nationality, and has thousands of hectares in this region) justifying that by the excuse: he has settled in this lands and taken them from the feudal owners⁽¹⁶⁹⁾.

The residents of "Al Qusayr" have been prevented to return to their terrains because they are "military terrains". Even the residents who have stayed in this area, were warned to leave, because of the excuse: "this land doesn't belong to them, and they – the residents- are settlers in the lands – of feudal Sweidan family⁽¹⁷⁰⁾ - where they were working in the past".

Iran and Hezbollah's benefit is to control the line that extends from Damascus passing Al Qalmoun and western countryside of Homs arriving to the coast, in order to provide a geographic connection between the regime's terrains, which is necessary to supply Hezbollah; especially that this area isn't far a lot from Lebanon, and it exposes the depth of Hezbollah geographic terrain⁽¹⁷¹⁾.

It was reported that the reconstruction plan was being prepared before the revolution, under the umbrella of organizing the irregular terrains; as organization "Mezze" region, to make it an Iranian domination area similar to the "Southern Suburb" in Beirut (the castle of Hezbollah). This organizing operation doesn't approach to the irregular houses where the pro-regime people stay in "Mezze 86" neighborhood, so the political type

169ibid

170 Thaer Ghandour, "Iran Invests in Syria Apart from Assad", New Arabic, 4 – 2- 2015
<http://cutt.us/8TgM>

171 Nama Shama, *Silent Sectarianism Cleansing, Iranian Role of Displacing and Damaging in Syria*, first Ed. May 2015

of this organizing operation is confirmed. And the revolution quickens this operation⁽¹⁷²⁾.

In addition to the western countryside of Homs, the demographic changing and settling are achieved in the middle of Homs city. The most famous and prominent event was burning the "properties registry" in Homs city on summer- 2013. The regime was accused by burning it intentionally, whereby the floors were burning one by one, according to the "Syrian Committee for Human Rights", which registered the evidence of the witness – researcher Saied Nazleh. No official documents survived to prove the ownership of the houses, especially with no available e-documents. This operation was accompanied with another one in terms of terrorizing the residents in order not to let them back to their houses. Shia Iraqis, Lebanese, and Syrians are settling in these houses⁽¹⁷³⁾.

The same thing happened in Damascus by the edict 2012 of organizing "Aldahadil", "Basatin Alrazi", a part of Daria's grove, "Allawan", "Naher Aishheh" and "Kafarsouseh" regions. This edict was interpreted by activists as a step to settle the Shia residents of "Nobbol" and "al Zahra" (north of Aleppo⁽¹⁷⁴⁾) in these areas. And Shia people have been given lands in "Sweiqah" neighborhood.

In the first half of 2014, the ownership of 3264 properties were removed in the regions: "Mezze", "Maleki", "Bagdad" street in the middle of Damascus, "Shagour", "Medan" and "Amara" in Old Damascus⁽¹⁷⁵⁾.

It is notable that the appearance of "Ashura" protests for the first time in Damascus, was an aspect of reinforcing the Shia base in Damascus.

172 Ibid.

173Ma Waraa al - Khabar, Al Jazeera Channel "there are 800 Internally Displaced Persons from Homs. opponents mention the project of Homs Dream as a project for putting areas of Homs in hands of wealthy Alawite people, and it began since Hafez Assad era in 1970s when he gave new resident Alawite houses in Homs"

17 - 4 - 2014 <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=fnOVrpoSgjc>

174Ibid.

175 Silent Sectarianism Cleansing, ibid.

Actually we don't have accurate details about buying lands in Damascus and its countryside by Iranians, but there are many witnesses have reported about that.

In Aleppo there is news about buying houses their owners have left or have been compelled to buy. This buying was by the Shia from “Nobbol” and “al Zahra” mainly⁽¹⁷⁶⁾, in addition to some Alawis who came from the coast, in order to enable the Shia to dominate the heart of old Aleppo, where the Shia militias preside largely. There is information about naturalizing Shia Iraqis who have proved loyalty to the regime (not loyalty to the portion that brought them) and settling them in “Assad Suburb” in “Hamadanieh” neighborhood, in under-construction houses, as "Mayo" informed us. In addition to build Shia centers in vicinity regions to “Jesser al Shagour” before “Al Fateh army” seized upon them.

The same thing is applied in Musyaf region, where Iranians buy lands as "Bassel Abd Allah" said.

One of the analytical articles supposes that Iran could build a pro-economic power, and a military obvious one. That will force any government comes after Al Assad's government to deal with it; Iran and its militias could create military force, and human force by the settlement, and an economic power by financing the regime and mortgaging the real estate of the Syrian state for the Iranian debts⁽¹⁷⁷⁾, which have not stopped, and the last one was on May 2015⁽¹⁷⁸⁾.

The smallness of the regime is in front of Iran is obviously clear, in which we notice that it negotiated for 13 bodies of Shia fighters in Aleppo (a commander of Hezbollah has led the negotiation) and agreed to release civilian prisoners. It is notable that the regime doesn't negotiate for alive prisoners from its army and security members! It negotiates just for Shia. It is a critical paradox assigns clearly to:

1. The relationship Iran organizes with its persons; their bodies are taken into consideration.

176 An interview with the journalist Moustafa Mohammed.

177 “The Real Estate of Syrian State in Return for Debts”, Qapas newspaper 1 – 5 – 2015
<http://cutt.us/j55Y>

178 Translation: Fuaz Saed, “Iran Gives Assad a New Debt to Keep the Machine of War”, new Syrian, 23- 5- 2015 <http://cutt.us/17Y1>

2. The regime's adopting of the Shia superiority even though it leads to misprize its soldiers.

This cases will reflect on the public base of the regime in both of contrary directions: quickening to affiliate to the Shia militia, or heightening the hatred towards them, among the pro regime people. In both of the cases the regime will be destabilized, and the conflict with its public base and among its public base itself will increase; worrying of the Shia militias and sympathetic with them.

The Fifth Section: Conclusion and challenges

Layouts:

The Iranian regime has intervened in Syria, under the pressure of its desire to exploit the disorders in order to seize and transform the relation with the Syrian regime into “trusteeship”. On another hand, to defend its leverage in Syria, and because of fearing from the consequences of the regime’s falling and losing one of its most important partisans. In addition to the fear from the internal "reverberation", whereby, Iran, hasn't cured yet from the “green revolution” it has just oppressed.

When the regime began to fall back militarily, Iran supported it with all the power factors. At the beginning by helping in establishing the national defense, which includes Shabiha who were working with the security devices in oppressing the demonstrations, and volunteers who were allured by money and advantages. Iran has motivated some Palestinian portions to establish their own militias to support the regime. And it also supported the “Kurdish Democratic Union Party”, (the Syrian part of PKK) to establish their own militia, too.

When these militias appeared disabled to defend the regime, Iran dispatched Shia militias from Iraq and Lebanon to fight in Syria as a compensation for the scarcity in fighters’ members.

Iran has inflamed the sectarian conflict as possible as it could to convince the militia- affiliated people to fight. This labor corresponds with both of the regime's initial attempt to modify the revolution to a sectarian conflict; and roles of sectarian opposition powers which look at the sectarian conflict as a main factor to increase their power, which leads to a deep sectarian split in the Syrian community, matches up with the regional conflict, to empower the sectarian classifying “Sunni- Shia”.

The existence of "Velayat el-Faqih" –Shia militias has three different stages in Syria, while indicators are appearing now, pointing to a fourth stage, whose probabilities are expectable. In the first stage the existence was limited to experience and counsel's supply, because the army and the security system were in the best conditions. In the second stage it seemed that the armed opposition gained the upper hand over the regime. Whereby it seized upon wide areas, so a big intervention of Shia militias

was accomplished to stand against it. That intervention was crowned by announcing the Iranian leaders and the general secretary of Hezbollah that they have saved the regime. The Third stage – which we are living now– the Shia militias are the direct military reason to save “Al-Assad” regime and prevent it from collapsing. This stage can be divided into two phases; the first is the “victories and extension” one, and the second is the “collapsing” one because of the Shia Iraqi militias' withdrawal to Iraq to encounter “ISIS” extension. In addition to the agreement between the pro- Syrian opposition states, and unifying the labor of the Islamic portions on the field.

We conclude that the existence of "Velayat el-Faqih"- affiliated Shia militias played a vital role in increasing the extreme of the second side of the conflict (the Sunni Islamic militias), and giving legitimacy to sectarian forces that are in a dire need to it. That can be considered as a continuance to Al-Assad's strategy, which determine the sectarian mobilization as an exit in facing the public revolution from the beginning. This case also explains the internal mechanism of the sectarian conflict, whereby each side legitimizes the other side by blood and fire.

Amidst the shifting to civil war, which has entered in its sectarian phase since a period, we tend to think that the opinion of "the need for an external protector" will find more and more accepting by more individuals from minorities, unless a central change from the opposition happens. If we take into consideration Iran’s increasing domination upon Al-Assad's authority, which becomes weaker continuously, and its falling back to be besieged in the area of Alawi existence; we can prospect the attributes of the fourth stage, the most prominent of them are:

- The Iranian hegemony which is changing from "protection" into trusteeship, and the continuance changing of Al-Assad's authority into a sectarian militia aspiring to establish a state, but it will be an Alawi state.
- The development of the sectarian case, which Iran encourages, supports, exhorts to, and tries to exploit through offering the equation of "collaboration of minorities" and introducing itself as the protector of the minorities.

- Inserting Syria in the era of the regional and international "protection" for its social compositions.

As a result we expect the Alawi public reaction to complicate. On a hand, we expect the resisting attitude of some parts towards the converting into Shia doctrine to decrease continuously, due to the lack of other solutions to go out from the dilemma that Assad's authority has involved them in. On the other hand, other parts will look at that matter as a peril that endangers their identity and life style, which will generate an unlimited social conflict, because it is a conflict with Assad's authority and inside it.

The "democratic national opposition" is the biggest absent today. This is because of the failure of the civil revolution's aspirations, under the degraded regime's striking, Shia militias, radical Islamic Sunni forces, and the chaos which is originated by the destroying and exterminating behavior of the regime. We also find the disability of the other -originally weak- democratic forces to interact with the disaster people live.

Challenges

The national Syrian democracy is absent due to the absence of the democratic national movement, even though in its conceptual dimension; so the sectarian mobilization has prevailed. Since the first moment of the research we observed how the differences between the Iranian regime and the Shia militias on a hand, and "Shia" in general on the other hand disappear. Treating all Shia and all Alawis as enemies, and not-differentiating between "Velayat el-Faqih" as a ruling ideology that devotes the Shia doctrine to the benefit of the Iranian ruling, and "Shia" in general, And not- differentiating between a dictatorial authority that created a functional role to a part of Alawis, and the general Alawis, hides the truth and benefits the sectarianism and who invest in it.

This absence forces the Syrians to face the challenges through the offered protection structures, which are sectarian mostly, either the structures that Iran and Assad authority support or the ones that the sectarian opposition support to face them; what applies the sectarian situation.

About the Iranian strategy, we find that there are barriers between the intentions and achieving them, as:

- The high sectarian mobilization, Iran and its agencies use, leads to weaken its attracting ability out Shia sector, and to empty the resistant account of its and Hezbollah.
- The big exhaustion, Iran is suffering from, because of the proxy war it fights using the Shia militias in three states (Iraq, Syria, and Yemen) and it may extend to a fourth state in the case of explosion in Lebanon, while the international siege is still surrounding it, and if the agreement about the nuclear issue is accomplished, Iran will be threatened by internal conflict between reformers and conservatives inside the political regime.
- The problem inside the Shia militias because of the differences in the ethnical and doctrinal backgrounds. The main bond between these militias is the loyalty towards the center, this loyalty may leave its doctrinal dimension under the pressure of the political needs. If we add what we found out: the resistance against the “Velayat el- Faqih” among the Shia existence, and some Shia parts’ giving priority to their national sakes at the expense of the religious relation that is manufactured to serve the Persian nationality; we can foresee elements of an increasing conflict that will be vital when the intensity of the sectarian conflict – which forces a wide section to be temporarily united -decreases. That is what explains the attention of Iran to keep the sectarian mobilization.
- Problems resulted by the changes happening to the Syrian regime and its loyalists. Whereas the regime loses militarily and changes into a politically mortgaged force with a clear sectarian dimension, feeling of loss is increasing between the loyalists, which forces many parts to split up from the base to go toward new leaderships, most of them are domestic and local, or separated from the old leadership. That will increase in a way that corresponds with the disability of the top of the base to reform itself due to the new changes and its requirements.

The minorities’ inclination to find protections mechanism that doesn't connect them to bloody Shia- Sunni conflict.

But Iranian regime shows a high vitality, and ability of adaptation to the changes and changing its discourse and alliances, in a new suitable way. If the Syrian opposition continues to show disability in presenting a Syrian national view, serious and practical, inside a national comprehensive framework where Alawis can find their interests simultaneously with the other compositions', and under the pressure of feeling threatened by the Islamic opposition; most of the Alawis will accept the external trusteeship or even dividing the country, due to the strict union they have showed with the regime since the beginning of the revolution

The disability of the opposition to form a national formation will lead to lose the opportunity of total benefiting from periods of weakness of wide parts of the Shia militias, which have other roles in Iraq and Yemen now, and maybe in Lebanon as a prospective probability.

If the general tendency goes toward more sectarian closing and more national disability, we experience a new phase of sectarian war, which will stop only by deconstruction or external trusteeship or both of them.

On the other hand, if a national solution is offered by rejecting the sectarian forces, and forming a national comprehensive framework that institutes an actual national forming operation, in which every Syrian is equal to his\her brother regardless the religion or section; if all that happens it will be a critical factor to destabilize the regime and breaking Iran's demonstration and the Shia militias which follow it.



Field studies: the impact of the Syrian conflict on society

WARLORD'S ERA AND REVIVING OF PROTECTORATES AND TUTELAGES

(1)

SHIITE MILITIA

Work Team

We think that there is more than one interpretation to explain the great ability of Iran to recruit Shia from different countries to fight in Syria. In spite of the fact that the sectarian incitement plays a vital role in sending Shia fighters to Syria, but we found out various overlapped reasons. We classify them operationally here .In this section we try to understand the motives of Shia fighters' voluntary in Syria, and the mechanism Iran uses for this aim.



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