



# On The Banks Of Violence

Indicators of public life in the city of Deir ez-Zor

Floating the symbols of the Assad regime and its militias



**Mada | مدى**

المركز السوري لدراسات الرأي العام



جمعية حقوق للعدالة والتنمية  
RIGHTS FOR JUSTICE AND DEVELOPMENT

## **Working Group that prepared the report**

**Research team**

**Dr. Husam Al-Saad**

**Ahmed Murad**

**Ahmed Taha**

**Rights Association for Justice and Development in Deir ez-Zor**

## **Statistical Processes:**

**Faiq Al-Ali**

## **Design**

**Mohammed Al-Emam**

## **Translation**

**Husam Ismail**

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# Introduction

Deir ez-Zor Governorate, located in eastern Syria, has witnessed political, security and service transformations over more than a decade, starting with the outbreak of the Syrian revolution in 2011, passing through the years of ISIS control, then the control of the Syrian Democratic Forces (SDF), and ending with the return of its western section adjacent to the Euphrates River to the control of the new Syrian state following the fall of the former regime. With this accelerated political transformation over a decade, fundamental questions have arisen about the nature of the change that has taken place in the daily lives of citizens, especially in light of the continuing repercussions of the protracted war, and the accumulations of neglect and marginalization that the province has suffered from for decades, and the accompanying destruction, siege and displacement.

In this context, the Syrian Center for Public Opinion Studies (Mada) worked on monitoring and analyzing indicators of public life in Deir ez-Zor Governorate, Rifa and Medina, in the post-Assad regime's fall phase, in the section currently under the control of the Syrian government forces, through an analytical descriptive approach, based on collecting quantitative and qualitative data from the people of the city themselves.

The importance of this report comes to address the reality of the governorate through what its people experienced after liberation, and to accurately highlight the basic services, security, education, property rights and conditions for the return of the displaced, at a critical moment of political transformation. The new authority was supposed to break with the practices of the former regime, according to government directions, and work to build institutions based on transparency, justice, and respect for human rights, according to the constitutional declaration, and similar to other Syrian governorates. The field data collected, and the in-depth interviews with activists and specialists in multiple fields, indicate a different picture of what the transition is supposed to be. Despite the passage of 10 months since the return of the governorate to the state, the security situation in the governorate continues to follow the same repressive security pattern that prevailed during the era of the former regime, through the survival of security figures linked to the former authority in their positions, against which human rights violations were recorded, and the affiliation of elements who were affiliated with the National Defense Forces and dissident elements of the Syrian Democratic Forces and related to them. Tribal authority contributed to this, and these violators were close to people in positions of decision or notables and tribal sheikhs. On the other hand, dissidents and old revolutionaries were excluded, accompanied by the spread of violence and violations, the continuation of the drug trade, the kidnapping of children and the assassinations of activists. How insecure people feel, and lose confidence in any promises of change. The deteriorating security situation in Deir ez-Zor affected all sectors, albeit in varying proportions, but the most affected sectors were the education sector, which witnessed similar practices.

In education, the report highlights serious structural problems, most notably the spread of administrative corruption and nepotism, and the deliberate exclusion of educational cadres based on their revo-

lutionary background. These policies not only weaken the quality of education, but also threaten the future generations, especially in light of the high dropout rates, the difficulties of registering “unregistered” children, and the absence of appropriate infrastructure to accommodate the growing number of students. In addition to cases of bullying towards students who were displaced and returned to Deir ez-Zor by teaching staff.

The reality of public services remains largely subdued, except for a relative improvement in the electricity and internet sectors, an improvement that is in part attributable more to community and volunteer efforts than to structured government policies. As for other vital sectors, such as health, education, sanitation and waste management, they still suffer from the same structural imbalances that prevailed in the previous era and even witness in some aspects a further decline that complicates the suffering of the population.

The report also sheds light on widespread violations of property and housing rights, which complicates the return of displaced people and exacerbates the housing crisis, despite civil and civil efforts to renovate some homes, but these efforts remain limited and insufficient to face the magnitude of the massive destruction, and they are not without manifestations of nepotism and discrimination.

From this standpoint, the report not only documents reality, but seeks to understand the mechanisms and dynamics that reproduce patterns of injustice and corruption under a new authority, and raises fundamental questions about the nature of the “transition” that Deir ez-Zor is witnessing: Is it a formal change at the forefront, or a real break with the past? Is the city managed today according to a comprehensive development vision, or is it managed by the logic of factional, clan, and revenge interests? This report provides in-depth analyses that include answering these questions, through a systematic presentation of public life indicators in Deir ez-Zor, in the hope that it will contribute to improving the security, service and educational situation, and crystallizing more realistic visions for the future of the governorate and its people.

**It should be noted that some services improved during the period between data collection and in-depth interviews and the issuance of the report, as well as a slight improvement in the security, education, health and service situation, including the following:**

**Activating the military police and starting its work and opening the military court**

**Issuing a decision to start holding lawyers and jurists accountable for violations committed during the days of the former regime**

**Requesting the Directorate of Education for teachers dismissed for revolutionary reasons to put themselves at its disposal to appoint them on contracts of three months.**

**Inaugurate a dermatology and hematology department and provide Deir ez-Zor hospitals with three new echographs**

**Starting rubble removal operations, opening roads in a few destroyed neighborhoods, and lighting some streets.**

# Methodology

The report followed the tradition of the methodology of measuring public opinion, within a general methodological cover, which is the “descriptive analytical approach”. The survey aimed to monitor key indicators in the field of public services, health, security and education in the city of Deir ez-Zor and its countryside, which is under the control of the Syrian Transitional Government.

## Report Controls

1- A quantitative questionnaire was designed, which included independent variables that express general characteristics: gender, age, educational level, occupation, place of residence “countryside and city”.

The questionnaire questions revolved around:

- Indicator of the security situation: the general security situation, security practices, dealing with the people
- Education Index: Educational Reality, Teaching Competencies, Management, School Dropout
- Indicators and reality of public services: electricity, water, sewage, waste and garbage, internet, hospitals and clinics.
- Housing and Property Rights
- The return of IDPs to their homes and the challenges they face
- The role of civil society organizations and local councils in the restoration of houses

2- 10 in-depth interviews were conducted with activists in public affairs, including a group of specialists in the field of rights, education, security, health and media.

## Data collection and field research team

The survey sample amounted to (753) research items from Syrian female and male respondents.

The data collection team consisted of a group of university degree holders, university students and civil society activists. Experienced interviewers and data collectors with strong connections, knowledge and relationships within their communities. ***The data was collected in collaboration with a team from the Justice and Development Rights Association in the city of Deir ez-Zor, a civil society organization led by human rights experts and civil society activists.***

The data was collected between 8-14 September 2025, and the data collection coincided with the “***Deir EI-Ezz***” Fundraising Campaign to improve the service reality in the governorate.

***It is necessary to point out that there is a difference in opinions among the respondents, and this was evident in the value of the standard deviation in the indicators of security, education, health and telecommunications services, except for municipal services where the value of the standard deviation was close to one***

# General characteristics of the sample

## I. Gender

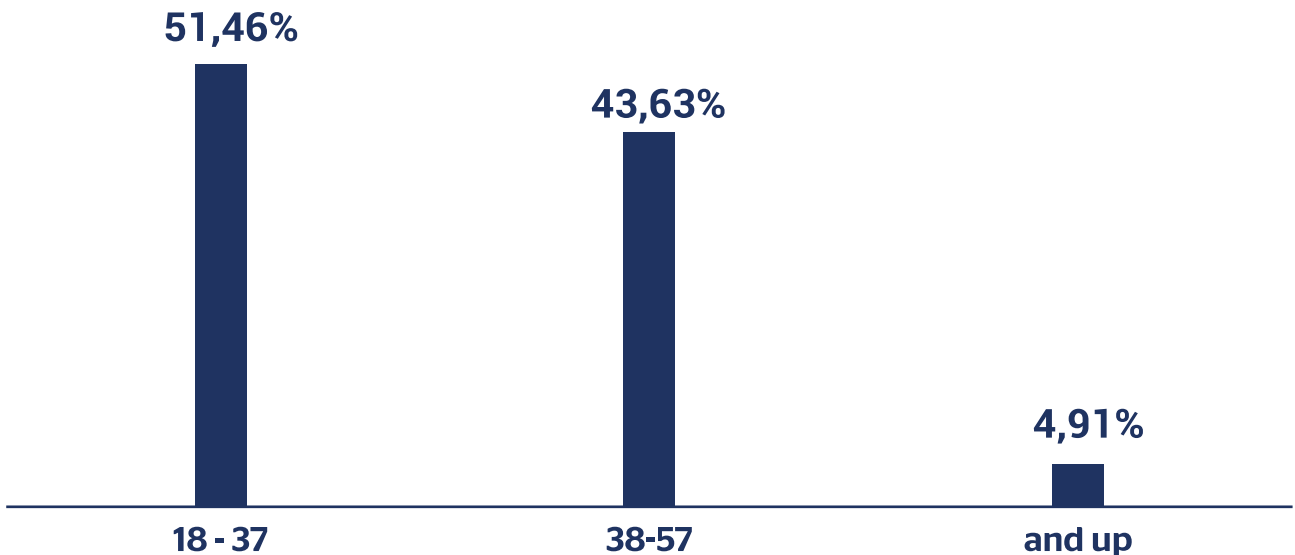
Figure No. (1) shows the distribution of the sample according to the gender variable



The study took into account the soldier's balance in the sample, as the percentage of females was 50.86% and males 49.1%.

## 2- Age

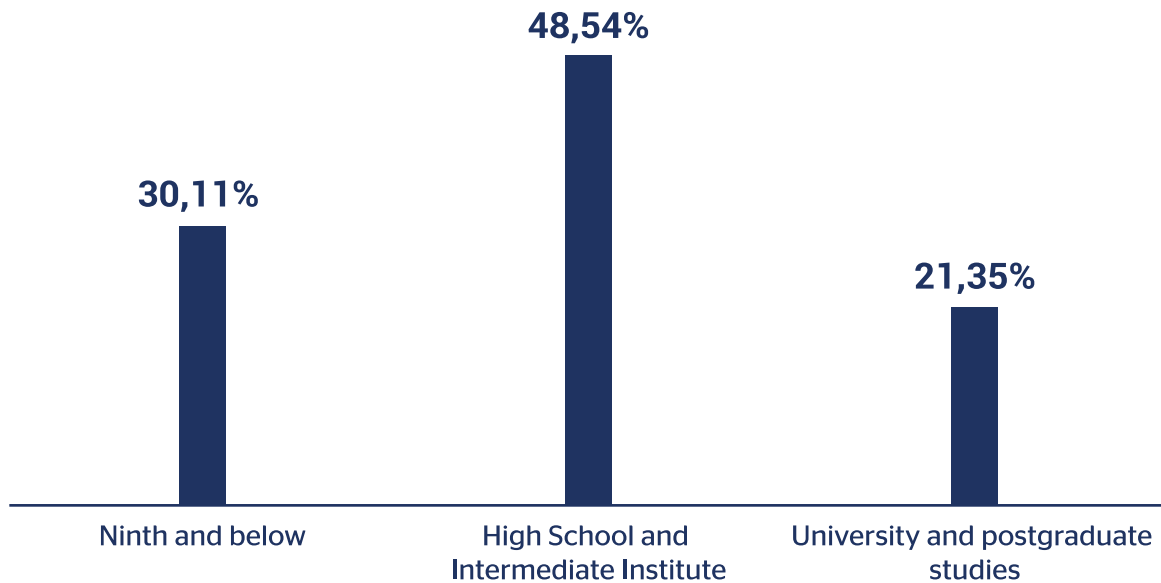
Figure No. (2) shows the distribution of the sample according to the age variable



The sample was distributed, according to age groups, among different generations, and the highest percentage was for the 18-37 generation at 51.46%, followed by the 38-57 generation at 43.63%, and the age of 58 and above was the lowest at 4.91%.

### 3- Academic Qualification

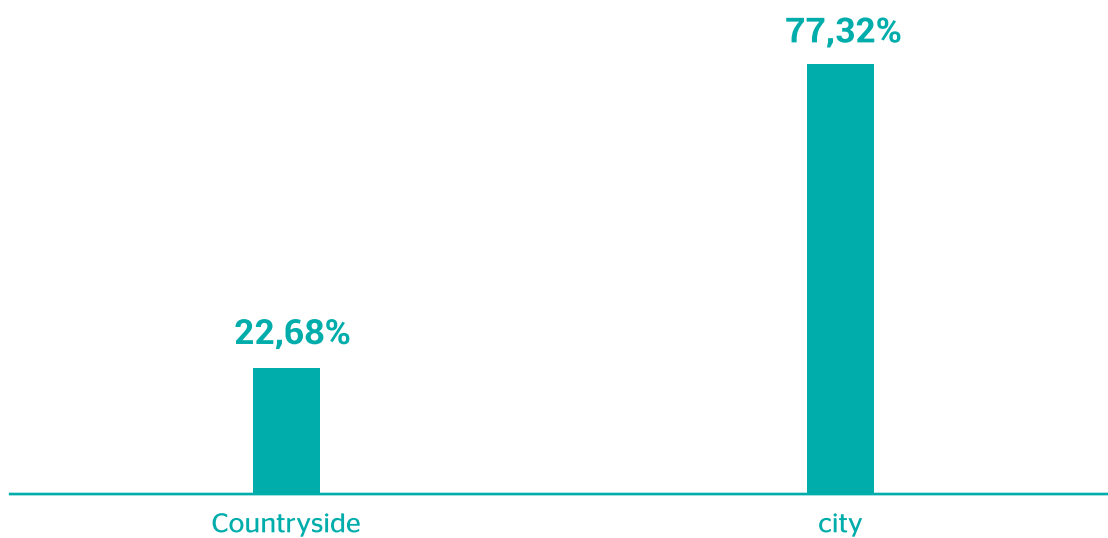
Figure No. (3) shows the distribution of the sample according to the educational level variable



At the educational level of the sample, the intermediate level “secondary and intermediate institute” was the highest by 48.54%, and the ninth and below 30.11%. The percentage of higher education was 21.35%.

### 4- Place of residence

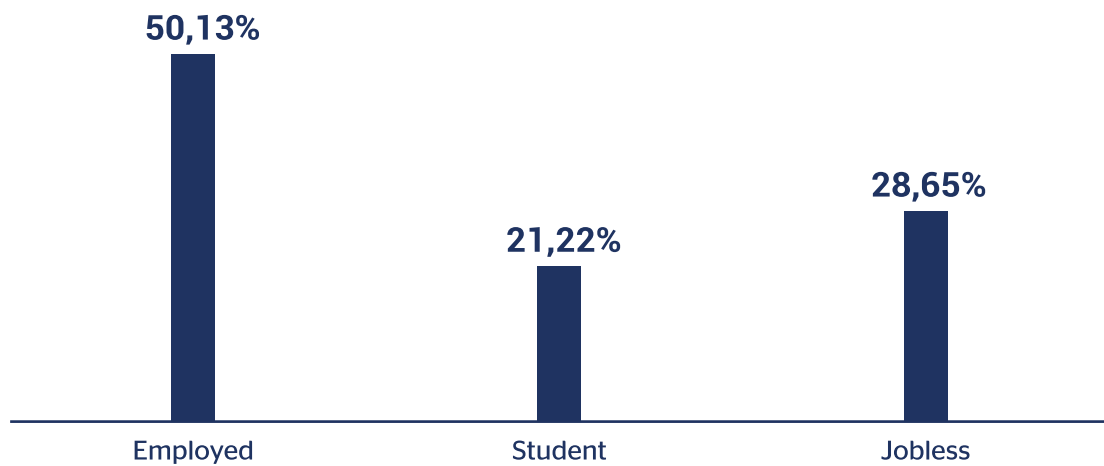
Figure No. (4) shows the distribution of the sample according to the variable of place of residence.



The sample percentage in the city of Deir ez-Zor was 77.32%, and in the countryside of the city was 22.68%.

## 5- Position within the profession

Figure No. (5) shows the distribution of the sample according to the variable of occupational status



The occupational status was distributed to 50.13 % who could work, and 28.69 who did not work, and the percentage of students was 21.22%.

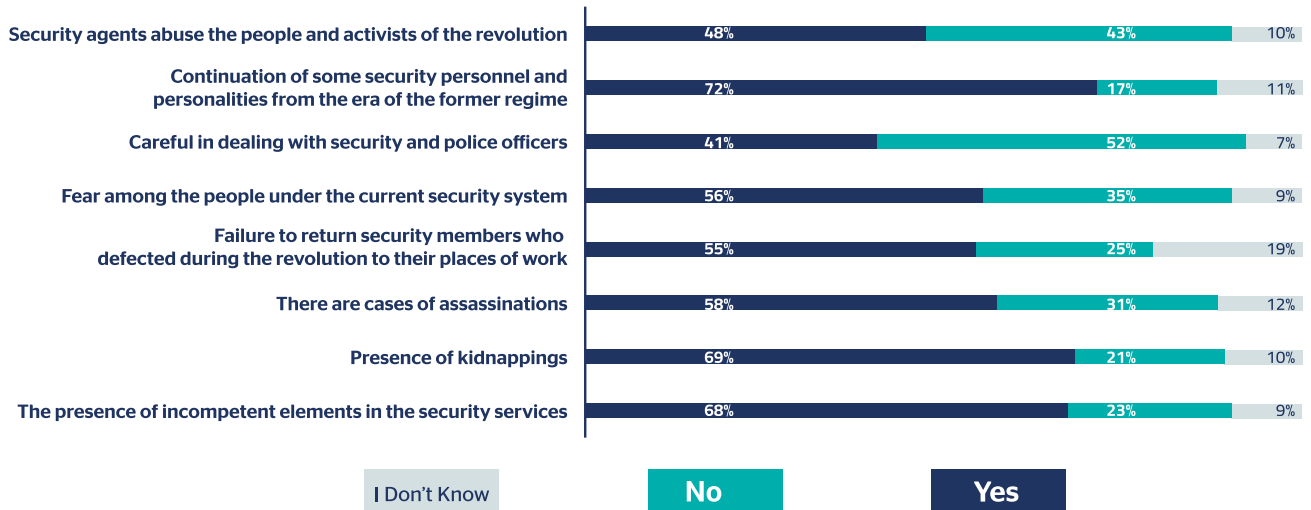
## II. Reproducing the pattern of security violence

Figure No. (6) shows the security situation index in Deir ez-Zor



The pattern of security dealings in institutions, in terms of appointment, behavior and practices, continued as it did in the days of the previous regime. It seems that the new Syrian government has reproduced the pattern of security behavior, its role and tasks as before, so that the people of Deir ez-Zor (the study sample) did not notice differences between the past and the present.

**Figure (7) Other forms of security violations in Deir ez-Zor**

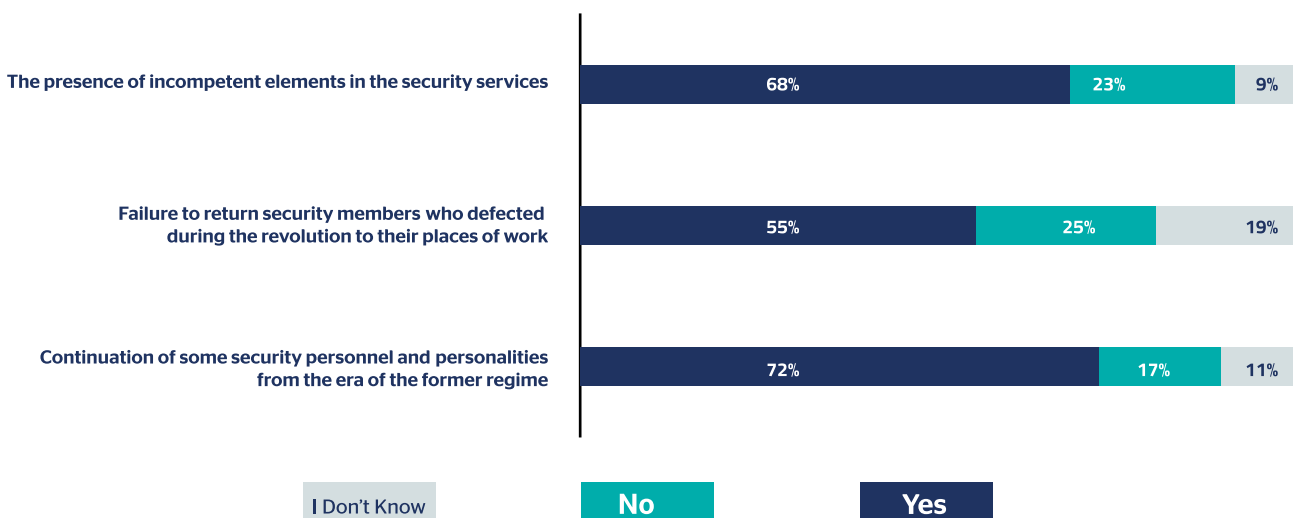


The state of fear, apprehension and violence “abuse” has remained the same as before by those in charge of the security institutions in the city.

The study sample gave a number of details and security practices that give us a picture of a reality that is at least described as violent, exclusionary and corrupt. As a note, the rates of practices and behavior related to the mechanism of work of the security services were clearly high.

Foremost among these practices is the “continuation of some security elements and personalities from the era of the former regime” at the head of their work (72%), and the “failure to return dissident security elements during the revolution to their places of work” (55%). This raises many questions about the transitional government’s perceptions of the form of security in the city, “which is neglected at the expense of restructuring public life in the general sense.” This leads us to the “ease” of the difficult reality of the people of the city and their suffering from the security grip in the stage before the fall of the regime. The above is accompanied by “the presence of incompetent elements in the security services” 68%.

**Figure (8) Some forms of security violations in Deir ez-Zor**

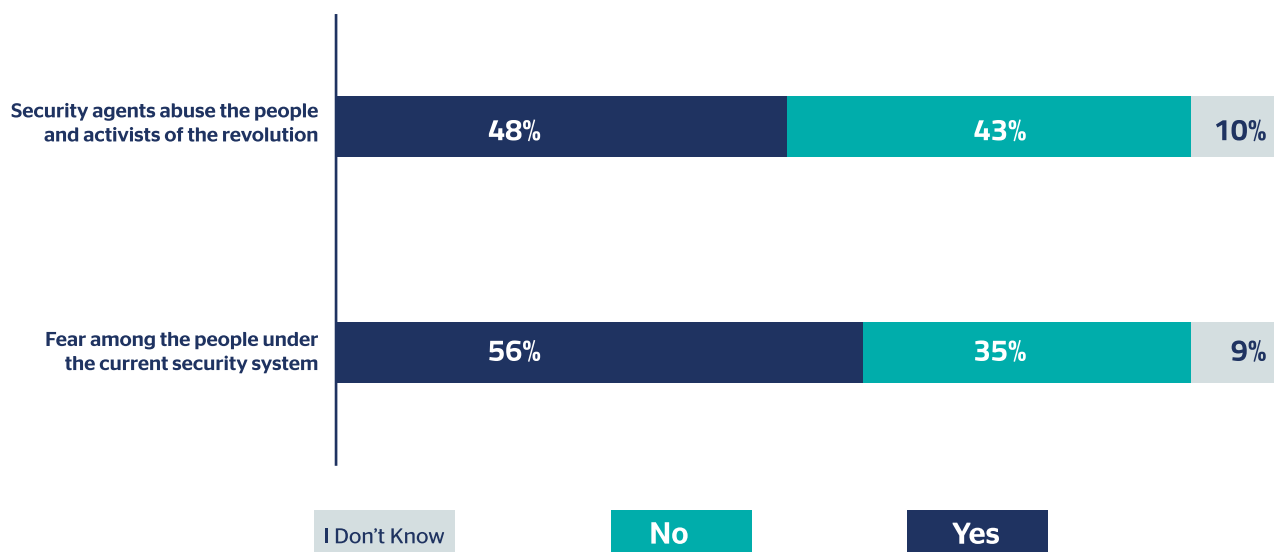


In the presence of this security structure, which remained dependent on favoritism and reliance on the elements of the former regime and the exclusion of dissident elements, it was natural that many violations would continue, and even increase as long as there was no intention on the part of the transitional government and its representatives in the city of Deir ez-Zor, to restructure the security establishment. One of the most important tasks required is to present new perceptions of the concept of security and those responsible for it, especially after years of repression and violations that the people suffered from.

General Security members carried out a security campaign on the neighborhood of Tab Al-Jo-ra and arrested several people (drug dealers - remnants of a regime). On the other hand, 150 remnants of the regime were released in only 3 days. Among those who have been proven to be involved in violations against civilians

To demonstrate this, 56% of the respondents reported that there is “fear among the people under the current security system” and 41% of them stated that there is a sense and behavior that is “cautious in dealing with security and police elements,” in addition to the behavior of security men and the security establishment with the people and activists of the revolution, which was characterized by violence and abuse. 48%.

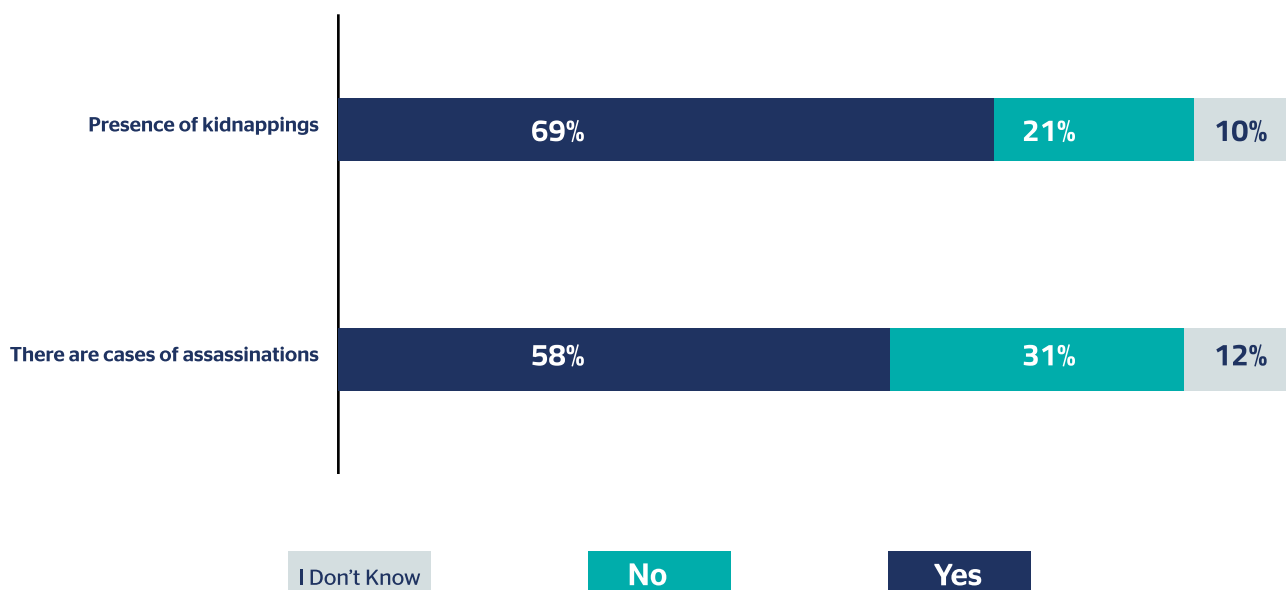
**Figure (9) Other forms of security violations in Deir ez-Zor**



It did not stop at these practices only, although they are sufficient to guide us to a general feeling that nothing has changed since the fall of the regime and the control of the new transitional government, which continued to follow the policies of the old regime in the security aspect and not to work on the structure of the regime and the security establishment.

58% of respondents reported having “cases of assassination” and 69% reported having “cases of kidnapping”. This is happening and the city of Deir ez-Zor is living on fears of a war that may break out soon between the government with Turkish support and the Syrian Democratic Forces, which the people suffered until a few days before the fall of the former regime.

**Figure (10) Other forms of security violations in Deir ez-Zor**



The qualitative interviews reinforced the above field results, and even added to them many details about the situation of the city of Deir ez-Zor.

The security situation in Deir ez-Zor is the main entry point to understanding the remaining challenges faced by the people in the city. The lack of security shades all aspects of life in the province, from “the marginalization of the old rebels from the Free Army and their lack of acceptance in the security and the army, and the placement and acceptance of elements of the National Defense and the remnants of the regime with defectors from the SDF in the internal security and the army in the new government.”

The tribal situation in Deir ez-Zor played a pivotal role in maintaining elements and officials in the security services and the army. These elements had a history of human rights violations against the residents of Deir ez-Zor until the fall of the Assad regime, and today they are still at work with the support of military factions and tribal sheikhs. Today, these elements constitute the spearhead in protecting the remnants of the regime on the one hand and covering up their practices, and insulting the city’s revolutionaries, arresting them, and wasting their rights on the other.

These practices will open the door to a process of “systematic revenge” by these elements for the revolutionaries and supporters of the revolution. Violations from these elements have been documented “in the time of the former regime and currently with the security” against the people of Deir ez-Zor, such as the Shabiha used to do, arbitrary arrests, trafficking and drug use, so that it seemed to the people that the current situation is more corrupt than what prevailed during the rule of the former regime.

With the continuation of violations by some security elements in the city, the Military Court and the Military Police Department were activated, and the security elements involved in the violations were arrested by the Military Police, and most of the military police cadres were revolutionaries.

Also, the “courts and judicial houses remained non-independent” and were monitored and controlled by the security establishment and its elements, which created a dangerous environment.

“This complex combination is not the result of chance, but rather reflects a deliberate strategy to reproduce the old security system in new forms.”

As for the phenomenon of “assassinations and violence” against the sons of the revolution, it represents a continuation of the regime’s policy of punishing the areas that revolted against it. Some defectors from the “SDF” and the remnants of the regime have also turned into a tool of repression against their community members, such as the assassination of the journalist “Kennedy Adai” and the arrest of a number of revolutionaries when they go to the Criminal Security to obtain a paper “not convicted” of old cases related to the revolution before releasing them and referring them to the court to issue a “stop search”.

Respondents in qualitative interviews saw all of those appearances as meaning “turning victim into executioner” as those rising up against a repressive regime reproduce the same mechanisms of repression when given the opportunity.

There is also a lack of “administrative competencies” in following up on security issues, which indicates that there is a structural problem in institution building. Coupled with the fact that defectors from the security corps are not allowed to return, despite the demand for their rights, it appears that the logic of exclusion and marginalization still prevails.

The continued presence of figures who committed violations in the days of the regime on top of their positions due to tribal or factional recommendations. It reveals the existence of an alliance of interests between old and new elites, offering and employing affiliations and loyalties to serve the interests of a particular group.

As for the phenomenon of “child abduction”, it represents the peak of the security and moral deterioration and the spread of this heinous crime, which is directly linked to the continued activity of Iranian cells and SDF cells, the adaptation of a large number of remnants of the National Defense with SDF, and the handing over of all points adjacent to the river that separates SDF areas and government areas.

The abduction of children has become a means of blackmailing and silencing revolutionaries who have documented the regime’s crimes against civilians, as they are threatened with kidnapping their children if they do not remain silent

As for prisons, Deir ez-Zor lacks them and detainees are placed in police stations, which allows mixing prisoners of civil crimes with security detainees and drug dealers.

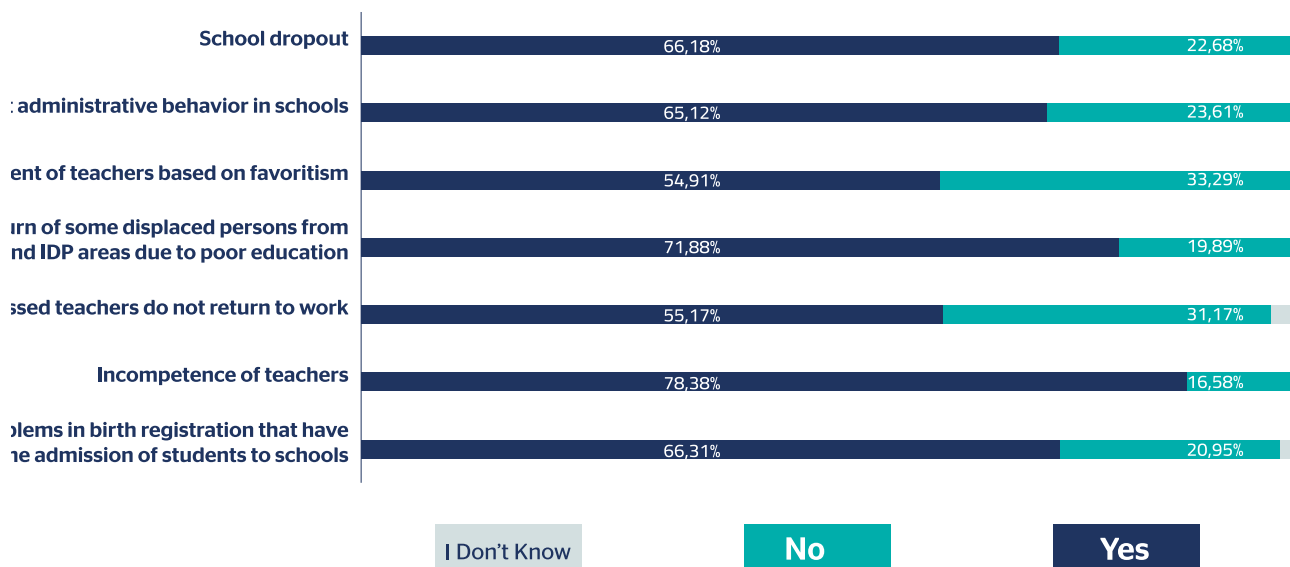
### III. The education sector... Favoritism and administrative and professional corruption

Figure No. (11) shows the indicator of educational services in Deir ez-Zor



In light of the security situation that is straining the lives of citizens in Deir ez-Zor, the education sector was expected to carry a lot of problems, suffering and corruption that has continued since the days of the previous regime. It should be an extension of the security reality, as the two sectors are based on human elements, some of which were part of a system of corruption and violations against civilians.

Figure No. (12) shows the problems of the education sector in Deir ez-Zor



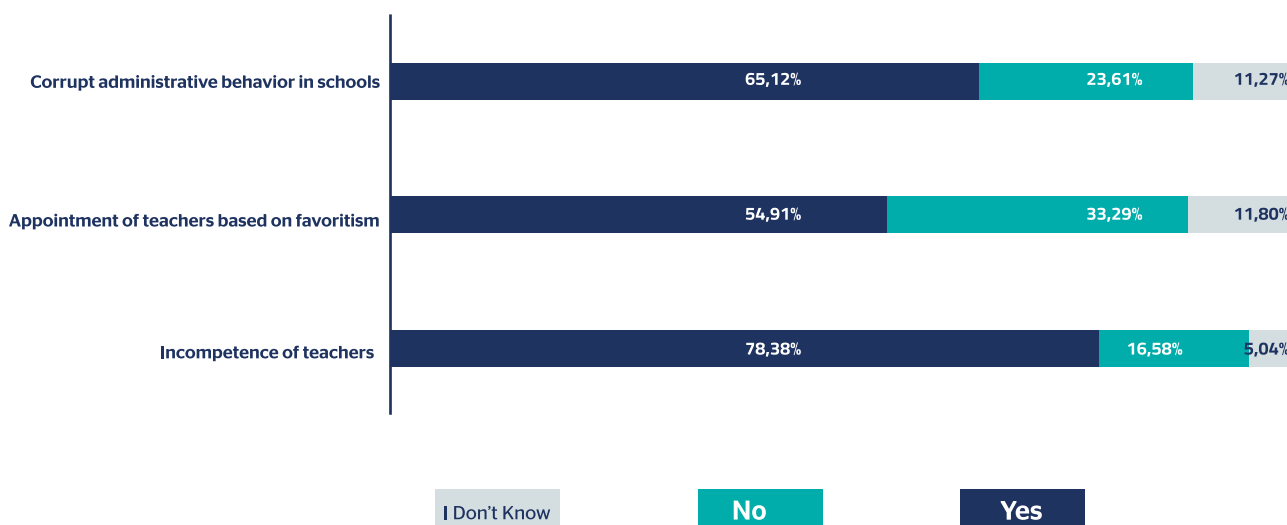
A series of problems and deteriorating realities plaguing the education sector, leaving the question open to those in charge of managing the city in the Syrian Transitional Government, which included aspects of daily life in general in the city that did not seem to have sensed its transition from the rule of the young Assad regime to a new transitional government.

Respondents reported a clear lack of scientific competence among teachers (78.38%), which has implications for the quality of students' educational achievement in later grades.

However, the lack of competence of teachers seems to be an inevitable result of the rampant corruption in the education sector at the level of administration, educational structure and quality of teachers. 54.91% said that the appointment of teachers is based on patronage, relationships, mediation, and perhaps ideological affiliations as well. This enhances the level of corrupt administrative behavior in schools by 65.12%.

The widespread policy of corruption in the education sector at all levels has also produced a major problem, which is the failure to return teachers dismissed during the previous regime to work. This is exactly the same when we talk about the security situation, and the failure to restore the security elements that broke away from the former regime to their jobs.

**Figure (13) Some of the problems of the education sector in Deir ez-Zor**

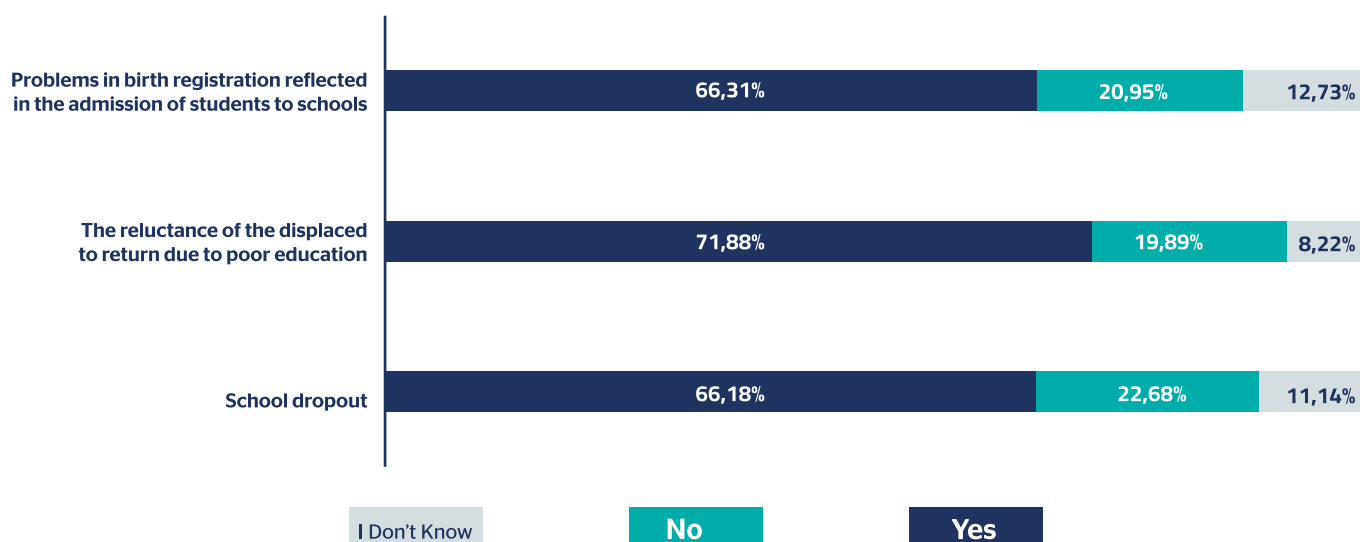


This behavior and dealing with the course of public life in its security, service and educational aspects refer us to the policy of the current transitional government and leave the interpretation and analysis open to the policy of reproducing the previous reality, which in all cases puts the people of the city in front of comparisons whose result is clear, which is that the reality has not changed with the change of the political system, and perhaps some practices have worsened under a transitional government that seems unable to manage the city and the complexities of the relationship with the previously dominant forces at all levels of public life.

Teachers appointed in recent years by the regime demonstrated because of the decision of the Directorate of Education to transfer them to other schools and that the appointments are made according to seniority. The demonstration included hateful statements against teachers returning from displacement

We are not talking here about urgent problems with the structure of the educational sector, so that some of them can be fixed with changing objective conditions, such as school dropout, for example, 66.18%, or the reluctance of displaced people to return due to poor education, 71.88%, not to mention the problems of registering newborns previously, which means that it is impossible to accept them in schools, 66.31%. We are talking here about an institutional structure that was corrupt from the top to the bottom of the pyramid, in administration, teachers and infrastructure.

**Figure No. (14) Other problems in the education sector in Deir ez-Zor**



It seems that attempts to pay attention to the education sector with its corrupt structure are still shy from the new transitional government, so the cycle of corruption continued as it was, and the problems and suffering of the people of education policies continued until this moment, despite attempts to improve them.

Qualitative interviews reinforced quantitative field findings. The views of the interviewees were unanimous that the educational system in Deir ez-Zor represents “an advanced state of orderly destruction of the future.” The inefficiency of teachers due to appointments based on nepotism in the days of the former regime shows how the legacy of administrative corruption continues to affect the quality of education, as well as the appointment of teachers without certificates that qualify them to teach, and the continued exclusion of teachers dismissed because of their participation in the revolution deprives the educational system of qualified cadres.

One respondent opined that exclusion “is not just an administrative decision, it is part of a systematic policy to limit the role of participants in the revolution and marginalize them.”

There is also the problem of the “Unregistered individuals (commonly referred to in Syria as ‘maktoumi al-qayd’, which has not registered in the official records “children of parents displaced from the city”, and the suffering they will face in achieving their rights to education in the future.

The qualitative interviews highlighted the existence of a major challenge facing the education sector, which is to increase the number of students significantly with the lack of qualified schools to accommodate them, with a lack of interest by the current administration and not seeking to solve these emergency challenges.

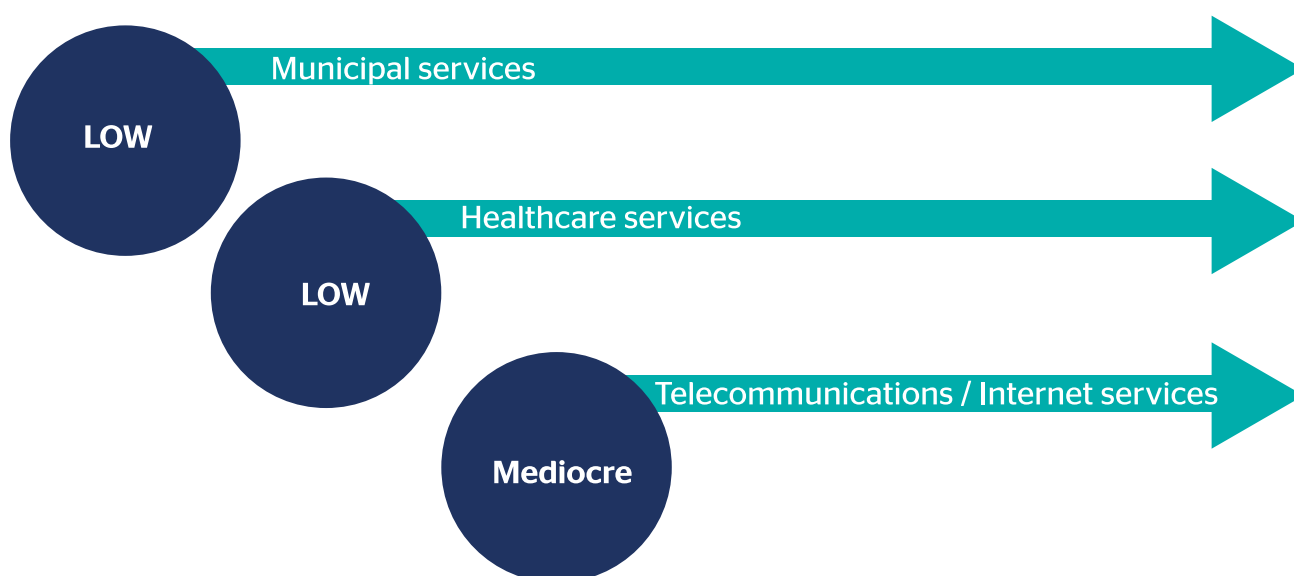
## IV- Growing problems deepening the deterioration of the reality of services in Deir ez-Zor

An indicator for public services in the city of Deir ez-Zor and its countryside was designed, which included:

1. Basic public services (electricity, water, sewage, waste and garbage)
2. Internet and telecommunication services
3. Health Services

The results showed that there are low indicators of the status of public services and health services, and a moderate indicator of the reality of the Internet and telecommunications services.

**Figure No. (15) shows the indicators of municipal services, health and communications**



The new transitional government took control of the city of Deir ez-Zor in the part that was under the control of the government forces of the Assad regime (the second part of the city is under the authority of the Syrian Democratic Forces “SDF”).

Nearly nine months after the new political regime took control of the city, the service related to the daily life cycle of the people of the city remained the same in the majority of its services, and the field results showed that there were observations of some services retreating from the above or improving them slightly or significantly. This explains the trend of the services index in the city (mentioned above).

With the exception of Internet and electricity services, which the sample acknowledged a gradual improvement in the services of the first 46.95%, and the second 80.37%, other services remained on the same performance, which is, of course, deteriorating.

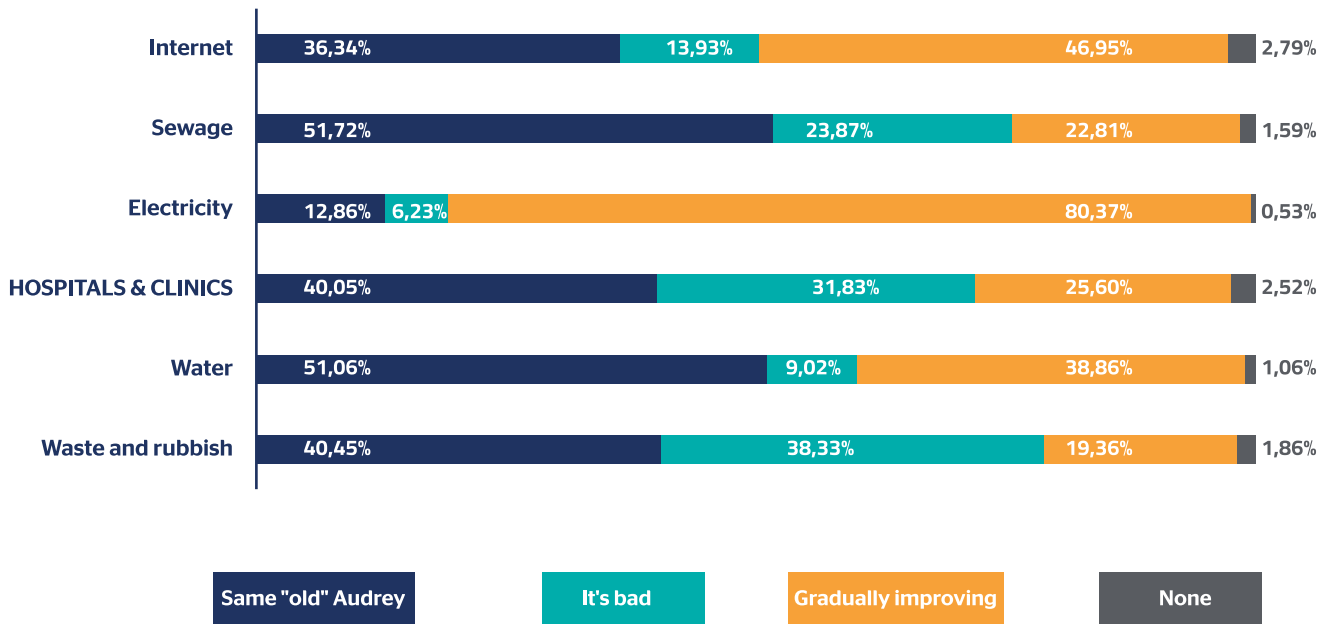
During the data collection, the city council began to remove rubble, open roads in destroyed neighborhoods in cooperation with the White Helmets and start lighting some streets by civil society organizations in cooperation with the electricity company.

At the forefront of those services in which only a slight improvement has been observed are the services of hospitals and clinics, which means that the people of Deir ez-Zor continue to suffer from poor service in those health facilities, in conjunction with the fact that other services remain poor, which are related to the health reality in one way or another. Sewage, waste, garbage and water services remained the same service performance in the previous era.

In fact, those who follow the situation of Syrian cities after the fall of the former regime will notice clear differences between one city and another, or preferences for the service side of one city at the expense of the other. How is the situation in the city of Deir ez-Zor, which has suffered for decades the years of the previous era and the periods of rule of the de facto authorities that followed, from marginalization and weakness in the implementation of service projects.

It seems that the new transitional regime did not deviate from that base in one way or another. Attention was paid to the main cities in Syria at the expense of their counterparts, especially since the city is within the lines of contact with the SDF forces, which have entered since the fall of the previous regime in a process of tug-of-war with the transitional government, noting that the political and military situation may be a candidate for the existence of military clashes between the two parties (the government and the SDF) in the coming days, according to cross analysis and statements.

Figure No. (16) shows the forms of security violations in Deir ez-Zor



According to qualitative interviews, respondents reported that the service reality in Deir ez-Zor shows a clear discrepancy between individual voluntary efforts and the inability of official institutions. The gradual improvement in electricity and water services, although limited, reflects a strong community will overcome challenges, but the almost complete reliance on volunteerism raises questions about the sustainability of these services and the ability of the community to bear their burdens permanently. This means that the improvement in some sectors of the service aspects came as a result of civil efforts more than government policies in the city.

**“When the former Syrian regime fell, groups of SDF forces entered the city of Deir ez-Zor, stole vehicles, transport buses, devices, government departments and institutions, and destroyed infrastructure. The files of the security branches and the Central Bank were also stolen by people affiliated with SDF before they withdrew from the city. It was a collective punishment that went unchallenged.**

**Because of these practices, there is today a great shortage of service vehicles, garbage trucks and electricity cranes, and this shortage has caused a humanitarian disaster for the work of municipalities and cleaning workers, as waste has accumulated significantly in neighborhoods and causes many diseases and unpleasant odors, and electricity maintenance has been delayed due to the lack of machinery.<sup>14</sup>**

As for the catastrophic health situation in hospitals, it reflects a comprehensive deterioration in this sector accompanied by the lack of medicines and basic medical equipment, the lack of qualified staff, and the deterioration of hospital infrastructure, as “Deir ez-Zor city has the National Hospital, which is about 7 km away from the city on the Damascus road, and it lacks a number of medical specialties and services (internal, orthopedic), and there is no obstetrics and gynecology department, and there is no equipment such as CT scan, which forces the satisfied to travel to Damascus for treatment. As for the military hospital, there is a lack of all medical and laboratory equipment, so we see the presence of laboratories in these hospitals, but they are out of service. Patients turn to private laboratories with high costs, and all this is an indication of the deterioration of health services in the city. “

1 - Interview with a human rights activist in the city of Deir ez-Zor

## V. Violations of property and housing rights... Lack of solutions

The housing, land and property rights file is almost one of the most complex files in Syria in general, due to the diversity<sup>2</sup> of real estate documentation methods on the one hand and the lack of linking them together electronically on the other hand. This is in the pre-revolutionary stage of the Syrian revolution. This complexity was compounded by the great destruction of real estate, land, residential and commercial areas and infrastructure. This was accompanied by a great weakness in legal documentation during the years of the war, and extensive damage to documents related to ownership, which created complex and overlapping problems.

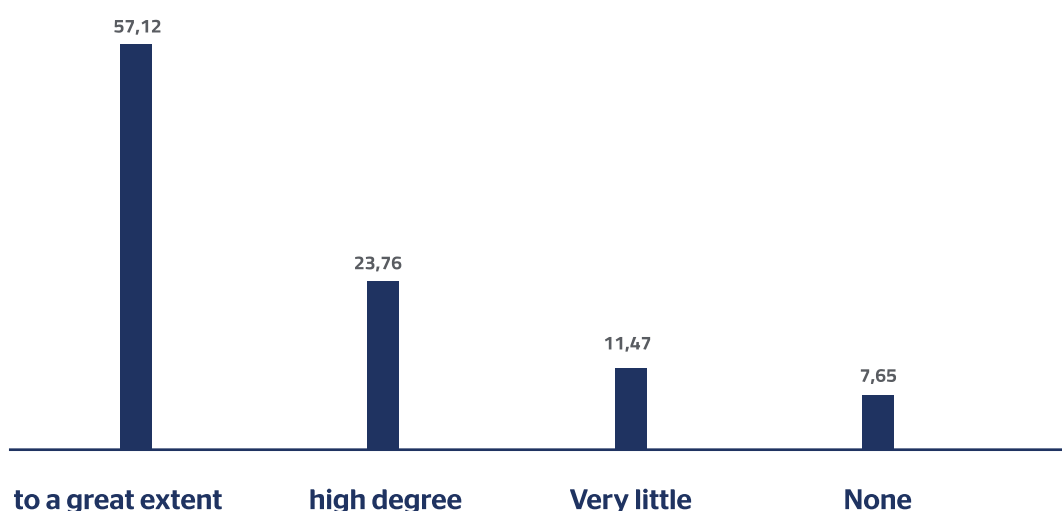
These complications have increased due to the legal problems created by the legislation issued by the former Syrian regime in recent years.

With the problem of forced displacement, arrest and enforced disappearance of rights holders, the landscape becomes surreal, the legal framework becomes fragile, and the environment is fertile for many violations and abuses.

Mada Center tried to explore the impact of this fragility in this file, and what types of violations are most prevalent in Deir ez-Zor, especially since it has been under the control of different forces since 2011.

The field results showed a clear increase in the percentage of violations in the city of Deir ez-Zor about property and housing rights, and included violations (destruction due to war and shelling, extortion by forgery, seizure of property, seizure and confiscation for security reasons, presence of mines, looting). Violations were significantly higher at 57.12%, then medium at 23.76%, and low at 11.47%, while 7.65% of the respondents reported that there were no violations related to property and housing rights or other violations against them.

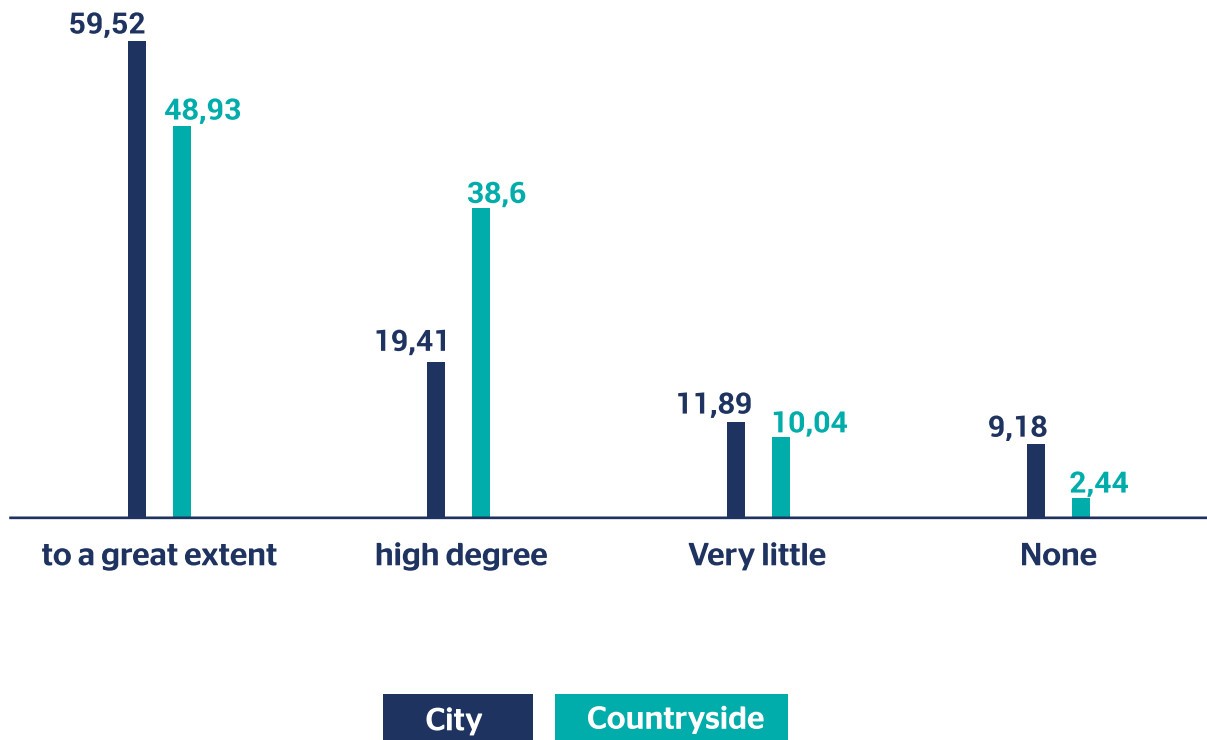
**Figure No. (17) showing the degrees of violations in Deir ez-Zor**



According to the variable of residence, countryside and city, the field results showed a rise in the rates of violations in the city compared to the countryside.

<sup>2</sup> - Interview with a human rights activist in the city of Deir ez-Zor - Real estate ownership can be documented in the real estate registry, which is the strongest legal argument, and it can be registered through a notary, or through a court ruling, and there are records of residential associations..Etc., and all of this is not connected electronically. Statistics of the Deir ez-Zor City Council for the rates of destruction and population occupancy

Figure No. (18) shows the degrees of violations in the city and countryside of Deir ez-Zor



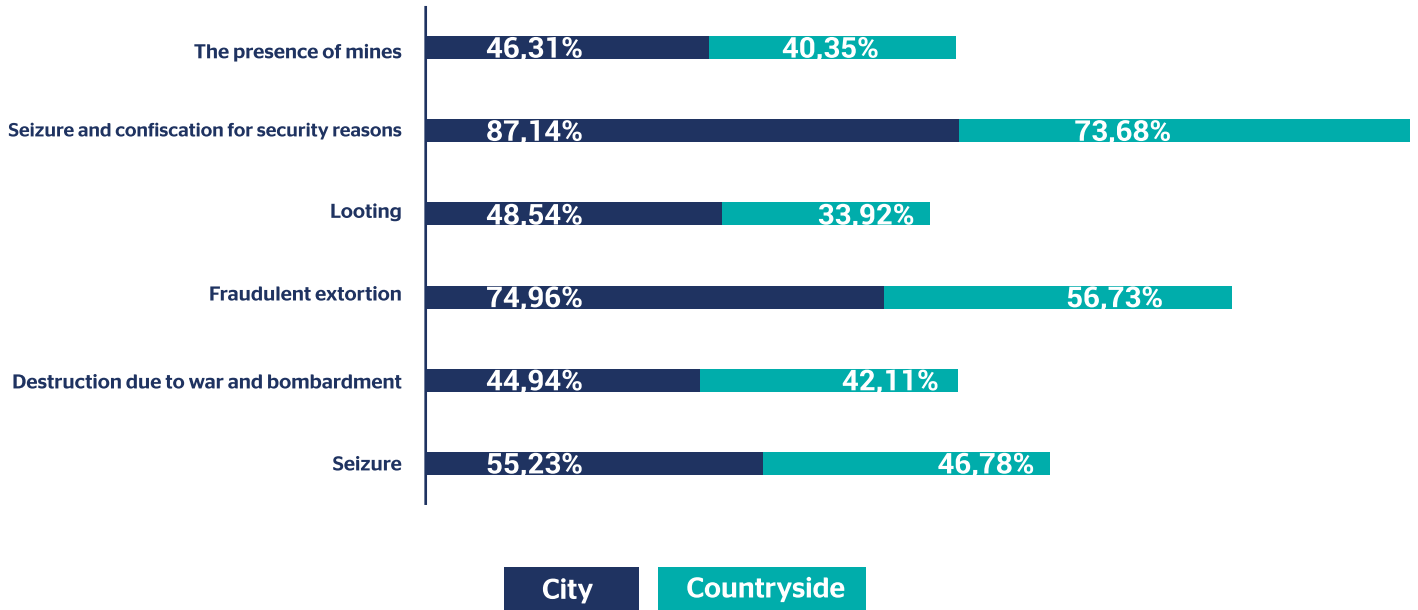
The city of Deir ez-Zor and its countryside have been subjected to several violations throughout the successive authorities that have controlled it, the effects of which continue to this day, although the degree of violation in its different types is slightly higher in the city than in the countryside.

The most frequent violations were mass destruction due to war, shelling and clashes over the past decades (87.14%, 73.68%), the city and the countryside, respectively. Then looting (74.96%, 56.73%) respectively.

The people of the city and the countryside in Deir ez-Zor suffered from various forms of violations, most notably also the seizure of property by “seizure”, the extortion of property by registering property to others through forgery, as well as seizure of property or confiscation for security reasons. The work of a court regarding real estate usurpation cases began after data collection and during the reporting period.

A major problem arises, which is the “presence of mines”, which threatens the lives of people if these mines are exploded, which means that officials in the transitional government must intervene, and intensify civil defense efforts in the city in order to remove these mines, which may leave many victims if the situation continues as it is.

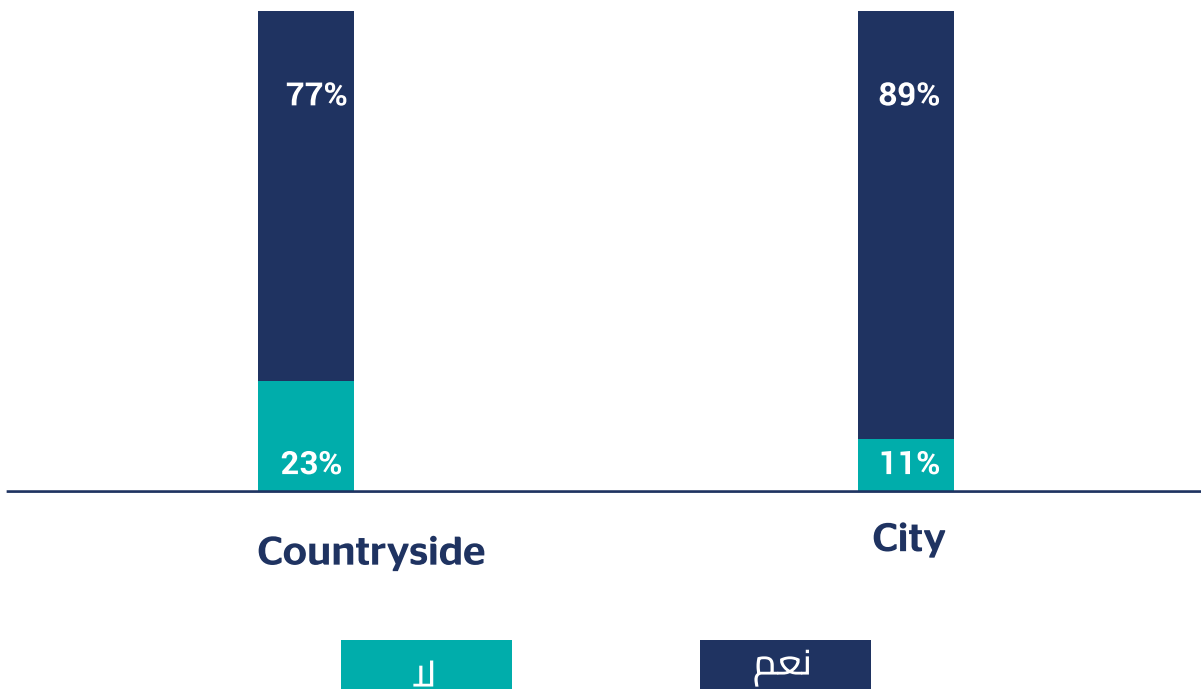
Figure No. (19) shows the types of violations in the countryside and the city of Deir ez-Zor



## VI. Problems hindering the stability of returning IDPs

Deir ez-Zor countryside witnessed a return of IDPs with a higher percentage than the city, as the percentage of IDPs returning to the countryside reached 32% compared to 11% who returned to the city.

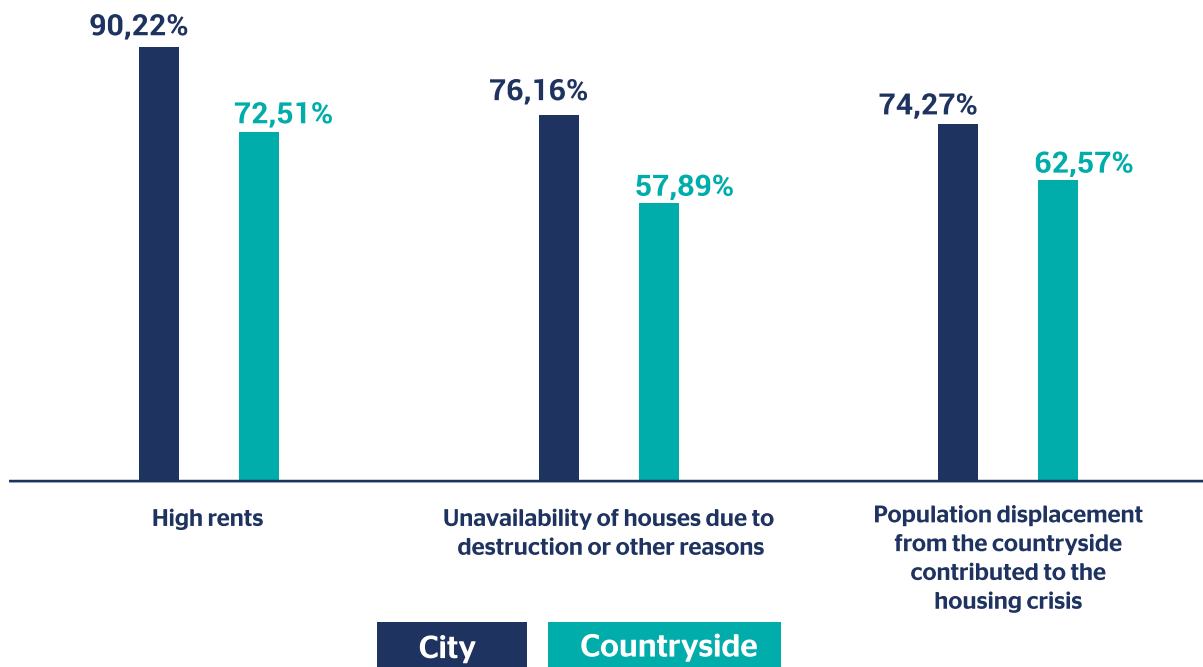
Figure No. (20) shows the rate of return of the displaced



Returnees to the city and the countryside in Deir ez-Zor have faced a number of problems, foremost of which are the high rents of houses and the lack of housing availability due to the great destruction, in addition to the arrival of many rural residents to the city. This exacerbated the housing crisis.

## These problems are clearly higher in the city than in the countryside.

Figure No. (21) shows the problems facing the returning IDPs



The qualitative interviews provided details of the housing crisis suffered by the people. The housing crisis and the rise in rents have become a noticeable phenomenon, accompanied by the delay of those involved in the transitional government in controlling the rental and housing market.

“There are properties for the revolutionaries and the people who were outside the country. These properties were sold by the regime and the dominant militias, without solving these real estate problems by the new government, which allows the continued usurpation of rights, looting of property and the reproduction of patterns of injustice and inequality.”

“The housing crisis was contributed to the movement of villagers to the city and the control of influential elements of the current government over some properties under the pretext of returning their ownership to people who were loyal to the former regime, although some of those properties are owned by opponents who were forced to migrate outside Syria years ago.”

Many neighborhoods in Deir ez-Zor city were destroyed. The percentage of destruction between large and medium was:

Al-Rushdia (100%) Industry (100%) Labor Center (100%) Hawaiqa (89%) Old Airport (91%)

As for the non-destroyed neighborhoods, they are: (Palaces, Villas, Ghazi Ayyash, Al-Jora Medicine, Al-Aghwat, Al-Dahiya, Industrial Area)<sup>3</sup>

<sup>3</sup> Statistics of the Deir ez-Zor City Council for the rates of destruction and population occupancy

ملاحظات	هل سبق أن تم إعداد دراسة تنظيمية ومن هي الجهة الدارسة	وضع المنطقة حالياً من حيث اشغالها بالسكان	موقع المنطقة العقارية (او تكاد) او صورة فضائية او مخطط مساحي	هل هي داخل او خارج المخطط التنظيمي	مساحة/ هكتار	المنطقة المتضررة بنسبة أكبر من ٩٠% (لا يوجد بنسبة ٩٠% وانما حسب الجدول التالي)
	١٨% ضرر متوسط ٨٢% لا يوجد ضرر	مشغولة ٨٠%	—	داخل	١٦٢	الضاحية
	١٠٠% لا يوجد ضرر	مشغولة ٨٠%	—	داخل	١٠٤	الأغوات
	٦٩% ضرر متوسط ٣١% لا يوجد ضرر ١١% غير متضرر	مشغولة ١٠%	—	داخل	١٧٢	الحويقة (وسط وشرقية وغربية)
	٥٢% ضرر متوسط ٥٧% ضرر شديد ٠% غير متضرر	مشغولة ٢%	—	داخل	٢٧	العرضي
	٤١% ضرر متوسط ٥٩% ضرر شديد	مشغولة ٥%	—	داخل	٢٢	كلمات
	٤٢% ضرر متوسط ٥٧% لا يوجد ضرر	مشغولة ٩%	—	داخل	٩٨	المنطقة الصناعية
	١١% غير متضرر ٣٤% ضرر متوسط ١٤% ضرر شديد	مشغولة ٧٠%	—	داخل	٤٧	الطحطوح
	٩٥% غير متضرر ٥% ضرر متوسط	مشغولة ٩٠%	—	داخل	٤٩	هرايش
	٨٥% ضرر متوسط ١٤% لا يوجد ضرر	مشغولة ٥٠%	—	داخل	٨٤	طب هرايش
	١٠% ضرر متوسط ٣٩% ضرر شديد	مشغولة ١٠%	—	داخل	٣٥	حي الصلابة السكني
	٤٤% ضرر متوسط ٤٥% ضرر شديد	مشغولة ٧%	—	داخل	٦٩	المطار القديم

٥٠% ضرر متوسط ٤٩% ضرر شديد	مدروسة سابقاً	مشغولة ١٠%	—	داخل	٢٤	الشيخ ياسين
٧٢% ضرر متوسط ٢٧% لا يوجد ضرر	مدروسة سابقاً	مشغولة ٧%	—	داخل	١٤	ابو عابد
غير متضرر	مدروسة سابقاً	مشغولة ٩٠%	—	داخل	٤٩	عقري عيش
٦٩% ضرر شديد ٣١% ضرر متوسط	مدروسة سابقاً	مشغولة ٢%	—	داخل	٧٣	الرشدية
٧٩% ضرر متوسط ٢٠% ضرر شديد	مدروسة سابقاً	مشغولة ٦٠%	—	داخل	٦٠	الجبيلة
غير متضرر	مدروسة سابقاً	مشغولة ٩٠%	—	داخل	٧٨	القصور
غير متضرر	مدروسة سابقاً	مشغولة ٩٠%	—	داخل	١١٩	الجورة
غير متضرر	مدروسة سابقاً	مشغولة ٧٥%	—	داخل وقسم منه خارج	٢٨٠	طب الجورة مع المهاجرين
غير متضرر	مدروسة سابقاً	مشغولة ٧٥%	—	داخل	٥٣	حي الفيئات
٧٤% ضرر متوسط ٢٥% ضرر شديد ١% غير متضرر	مدروسة سابقاً	مشغولة ٥٠%	—	داخل	٤٧	حي الموقنين
٩٨% ضرر متوسط ٣٠% ضرر شديد	مدروسة سابقاً	مشغولة ١٠%	—	داخل	٢٥	العمال
٧٨% ضرر متوسط ٢٢% ضرر شديد	مدروسة سابقاً	مشغولة ٥٥%	—	داخل	٦٥	العمال وسط
٩٨% ضرر متوسط ١٣% ضرر شديد	مدروسة سابقاً	مشغولة ٢٠%	—	داخل	٧٤	الحمدية

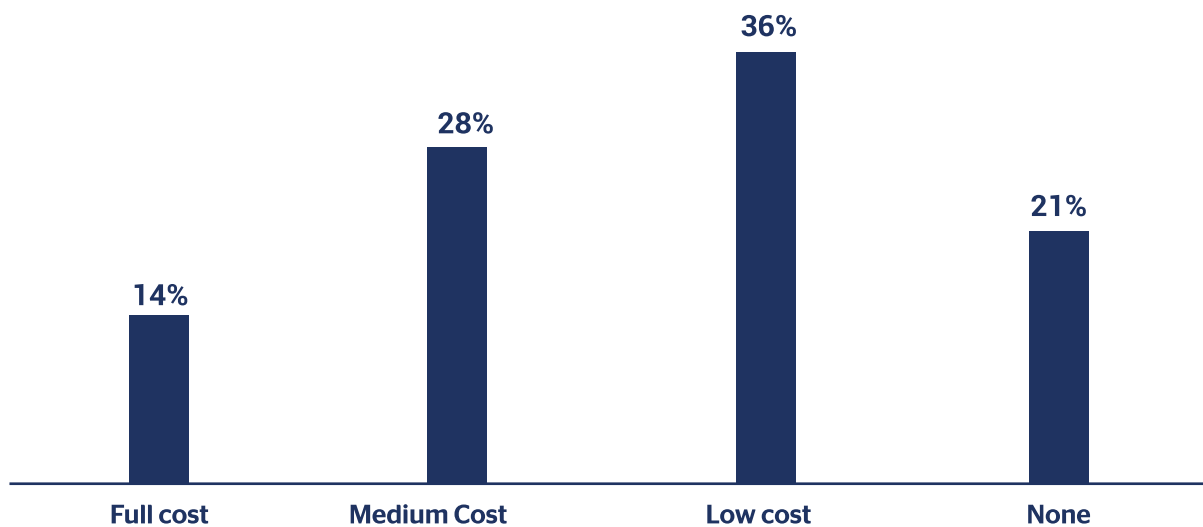
Photo (1) Deir ez-Zor City Council statistics for the affected neighborhoods and occupancy rates

## VII. Civil and civil efforts to overcome the housing crisis

In light of the return of the displaced to the city of Deir ez-Zor and its countryside, there were civil and civil contributions for the rehabilitation of housing as an initial step before the supposed reconstruction of the city in the later stage.

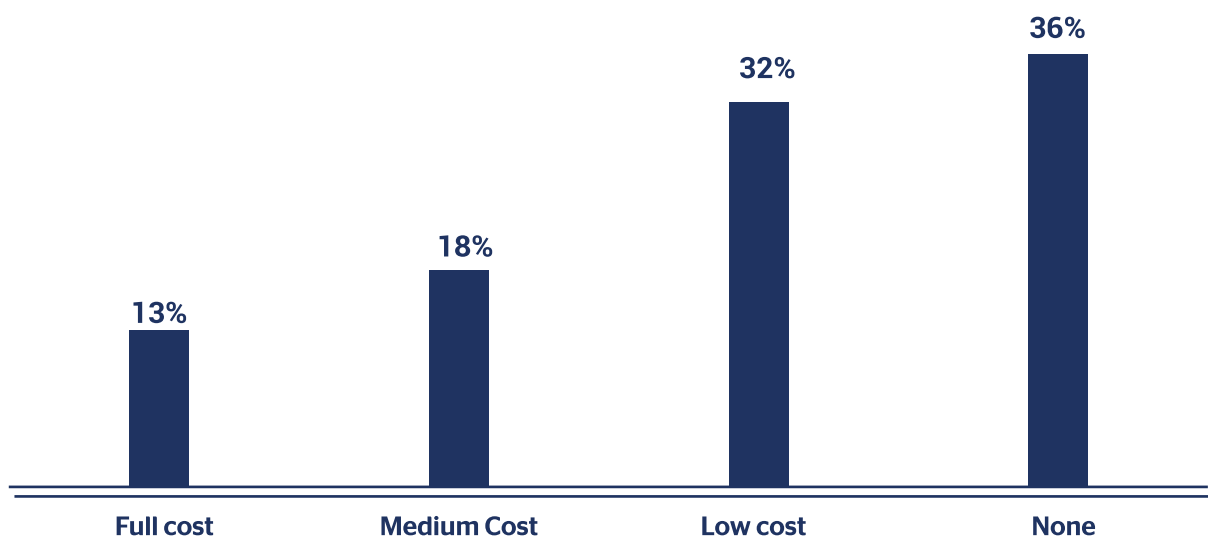
Some NGOs and civil society organizations covered the costs of restoration. Some costs covered full restoration by 14%, compared to 28% as an average cost limited to the basics (doors, windows, walls), and 36% as a small cost. 21% of respondents replied that their homes were not renovated.

**Figure No. (22) shows the contribution of civil and civil organizations in restoration**



As for the local councils, their contribution to the restoration processes was less than their counterparts' civil and civil organizations. 36% of the respondents stated that the local councils did not contribute to the renovations of their houses, while 32% of the local councils covered a low cost, 18% at an average cost limited to the basics (doors, windows, walls), and 13% at full cost.

**Figure No. (23) shows the contribution of local councils in restoration**



The testimonies in the qualitative interviews stated that with the inability of the people to repair their homes and the limited intervention by civil society organizations with partial restoration of a limited number of houses, favoritism by the organizations and the municipality appeared by targeting the restoration of specific houses, not according to the size of the destruction or necessity, which “reflects the failure of the reconstruction pattern based on external aid and the assistance of organizations to restore houses.” Despite the importance of this intervention in restoration, it remains insufficient to face the magnitude of the massive destruction in the city.

## Conclusions

The study reached a number of conclusions, the most important of which are:

1. Public Services Index score on a low rating
2. Health services index score on a low rating
3. Internet and telecommunications services index score on an average rating
4. Security status indicator score on a low rating
5. Education index score on a low rating
6. The security situation in the city remains unchanged. There were many security practices, as in the past, such as the abuse of the people and the activists of the revolution by the security elements, which left the people in a state of fear under the current security system and caution in dealing with the security and police elements.
7. The continuation of some security personnel and personalities from the era of the former regime at the head of their work, with the presence of elements who do not have competence in the security services, and the failure to return the dissident security personnel during the revolution to their places of work.
8. There are frequent cases of kidnapping assassinations.
9. The education sector suffers from structural problems that are exacerbated and affect the future of educational generations. Among the most prominent of these problems are the incompetence of teachers, the appointment of teachers on the basis of favoritism, corrupt administrative behavior in schools, the failure of dismissed teachers to return to their work, and school drop-outs.
10. Electricity, water, sewage, waste and garbage services remain the same with a slight improvement in those services
11. Internet and communication services have improved significantly, albeit moderately
12. The health sector in hospitals and clinics suffers from poor services and the absence of basic equipment, analysis laboratories and others
13. Problems of violations related to housing and property rights remain unresolved. Among the most prominent of these are: destruction due to war and bombing, extortion by forgery, seizure, seizure and confiscation for security reasons, and the presence of mines.
14. The city of Deir ez-Zor witnessed the return of a small percentage of displaced people
15. High rents, unavailability of houses due to destruction or other reasons, and population displacement from the countryside to the city were the most prominent suffering of the returning IDPs.
16. Some civil society organizations and local councils undertook the restoration of some houses, and these efforts ranged from full, medium and low costs

# Conclusions

Recommendations:

Based on the findings of the study, we propose sectoral recommendations that contribute to improving the current reality of the governorate:

## **The security sector**

- Radically restructure the security establishment, by removing elements associated with the Assad regime and holding them accountable in the event that they are proven to be involved in human rights violations, and adopting standards of efficiency, integrity and national affiliation instead of favoritism or factional loyalties when appointing
- The integration of dissident security and army elements during the revolution into the new security structure, after verifying their records and experiences, as part of the revolutionary and national fabric that contributed to the overthrow of the former regime.
- Establish an independent body to monitor the security services, including representatives of civil society, the judiciary and lawyers, to ensure transparency and prevent violations such as arbitrary arrests, torture, assassinations and kidnappings.
- Immediately investigate the assassination and kidnapping of activists, media professionals and revolutionaries, and hold the perpetrators accountable regardless of their affiliations, to stop the policy of impunity and restore confidence in justice.
- Separate the judiciary from the security services and ensure its full independence, allowing for fair and transparent trials, and prohibiting the use of courts as a tool of repression or revenge against opponents or participants in the revolution.

## **The education sector**

- Comprehensive reform of the education sector begins with the return of teachers who have been unfairly dismissed because of their revolutionary attitudes, and the adoption of criteria of competence and educational qualification in appointments, not patronage or political loyalty.
- Training current teachers who are not qualified or replacing them with new cadres and linking their continuation to the job with a periodic evaluation of their professional performance, to ensure the quality of education and student achievement.
- Solving the “Unregistered individuals” crisis by facilitating the procedures for registering late births and enabling them to enroll in schools without administrative obstacles, in cooperation with local councils and human rights organizations.
- Rehabilitate partially destroyed schools and build new schools to accommodate the significant increase in the number of returning students and ensure that no child is deprived of their right to education due to lack of space.

## **Property Rights**

- Forming an independent judicial-administrative committee to address violations of real estate property, including cases of extortion, forgery, seizure, and illegal confiscation, while ensuring the right of those affected to recover their property or fair compensation.
- Imposing strict legal controls on the real estate and rental market to prevent the exploitation of the housing crisis and setting fair price ceilings that take into account the economic situation of citizens, especially those returning from displacement.
- Launching a national campaign to remove mines and remnants of war from the neighborhoods of Deir ez-Zor, in cooperation with the Ministry of Emergency and Disasters and specialized international organizations, to protect civilians and enable returnees to safely restore their homes.
- Giving high priority to rehabilitating the infrastructure of basic services (water, electricity, sanitation, hygiene) through emergency plans funded by the Transitional Government in partnership with international organizations, not relying on unsustainable individual or voluntary efforts.
- Supporting and expanding the projects of civil and civil organizations in the restoration of houses, while ensuring the distribution of aid according to objective criteria based on the size of the destruction and the need of the population, and not on patronage or tribal or factional affiliations.

## **The Health Sector:**

- Rehabilitation of hospitals in Deir ez-Zor and providing them with basic medicines, medical devices (such as CT scan), and qualified cadres, considering the interest in health centers in the countryside, and linking medical facilities to a national health network that allows immediate referral of complex cases without charging patients high costs.
- Establishing a health emergency funded by the Transitional Government to cover the costs of treatment and analysis in private laboratories for incapacitated patients, as a temporary solution until the government laboratories are rehabilitated.

## **5- Services sector and local administration:**

- Activating the role of local councils in managing the affairs of the city, linking their funding to clear performance indicators in the sectors of services, security, education, and housing, while holding local councils accountable to the population.
- Promote the return of IDPs through integrated support packages that include temporary housing, financial assistance if possible, and education and health services, especially in less devastated neighborhoods.
- Launch a community awareness campaign against hate speech and retaliation, and promote a culture of citizenship and transitional justice, to prevent former victims from becoming new executioners.
- Pressure the transitional government to put Deir ez-Zor among the priorities of the national reconstruction plans, and not to marginalize it in favor of the major cities, especially in light of its strategic location and proximity to the lines of contact.



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