

Aleppo: The continued siege of Sheikh Maqsood and Ashrafieh neighborhoods puts the lives of thousands of civilians at risk



June 17 2023



Aleppo: The continued siege of Sheikh Maqsood and Ashrafiyah neighborhoods puts the lives of thousands of civilians at risk

The siege of the Fourth Division on the Kurdish-majority neighborhoods led to difficulties in the availability of medicines, in addition to a shortage of fuel for the operation of the lonely hospital in the region.





The civilians of the Kurdish-majority in Sheikh Maqsood and Ashrafieh neighborhoods in Aleppo city, which are under the control of the Autonomous Administration, suffer from recurring economic and service crises, especially after the earthquake of 6th February 2023, as a result of the imposition of the checkpoints of the Fourth Division of the Syrian Arm since [the beginning of May 2023](#), a suffocating siege on the two neighborhoods with the aim of subjecting the area to its direct military control.

The infrastructure in the two neighborhoods was not good enough, and it was further damaged by the ongoing war in them since [2016](#) and the devastating earthquake that struck Syria and Turkey [on 6th and 20th February](#) 2023.

In an interview with the Lelun Association for Victims, a member of the Public Safety Committee, Engineer “Hussein Ahmed” in the technical office of the People's Municipality in Sheikh Maqsood neighborhood, warned of the deterioration of the service situation, saying:

“There is a danger to the buildings due to the leakage of sewage water into the basements and their foundations. The infrastructure has faults due to age, especially the sewage drains. The war that took place in the region in 2016, in addition to the two earthquakes, affected the infrastructure greatly, causing cracks in it and leakage of water into the buildings. There is concern about the recurrence of the scene of the collapse of the residential building on [22nd January](#) of this year, which was caused by water leakage into the foundations, because the salty sewage water interacts chemically with the cement, which leads to erosion of the foundations and the buildings collapsed. So, it is necessary to find solution to these problems immediately.”

Those forces, who increased the [number of checkpoints](#) around these two neighborhoods, from 4 to 8 ones do not allow goods and foodstuffs to enter and treat Kurdish citizens lightly.

Mr. “Muhammad Amin,” the co-chair of the People’s Municipality of the Autonomous Administration in the aforementioned neighborhoods, told the Lelun researcher that:

Once again, since Thursday 9th of June 2023, the Fourth Division has prevented the entry of cement into the two neighborhoods, which we need to repair faults in the buildings. We have evidence confirming that one of the members of the Fourth Division offered huge sums of money to bring it in. And most importantly, as a result of not allowing entry equipment, machinery and materials water leaks into the basements, which poses a threat to buildings and the possibility of their collapse, which may constitute a humanitarian catastrophe with unimaginable consequences.





With regard to obstructing the efforts of the popular committees in the two neighborhoods and preventing the service institutions of the Syrian state from providing assistance in removing rubble and demolishing damaged buildings, “Amin” stated:

"When coordination is made with a section of the municipality of Aleppo governorate, the Fourth Division prevents them from entering the two neighborhoods. As we have 12 buildings in a state of danger that should be removed as soon as possible, and three buildings consisting of five floors were removed, and nine other buildings are still in a state of danger of collapse. Because the equipment that is missing in the Sheikh Maqsood and Ashrafieh neighborhoods is not allowed to enter, these buildings pose a threat to the lives of citizens."

As a result of [the earthquake](#), many utilities such as the water and electricity networks in the two neighborhoods were damaged, which necessitates their repair. The committees affiliated with the People’s Municipality work with their modest capabilities, but there are works that require heavy machinery and equipment that these committees do not possess. According to “Mohammed Amin”:

"The security barriers do not allow the cranes of the Aleppo Electricity Company to enter the two neighborhoods to repair the broken networks, which leads to depriving a very large part of the population from public electricity".

In addition, the siege threatens public safety in Sheikh Maqsood and Ashrafieh, where [the health sector](#) in the two neighborhoods suffers a noticeable decline under the siege, as it caused a shortage of medical supplies in the "Martyr Khaled Fajr" hospital, which is the only hospital in the two neighborhoods, a shortage of medicines and a significant increase in their prices if can be found. In this regard, one of the hospital workers, who refused to reveal his identity, told Lelun:

"The hospital, with its modest capabilities, treats its patients at a reasonable price commensurate with the living conditions of the residents of the two neighborhoods. The hospital includes several departments, namely: the department of operations, intensive care, imaging, x-rays, nursery, and medical clinics. The work of all these departments depends on the hospital’s electricity generator, which is operating at the current stage in the inventory reserve of fuel. The siege creates many crises and hinders work and the easy availability of medicines, which are among the hospital's essentials, in addition to the shortage of fuel allocated for the hospital’s work.

According to the “Lelun” field researcher, the entry of medicines into pharmacies has been suspended for six months. An administrator in the Room of Pharmacists, who refused to reveal his name for fear of security prosecution, stated:





“The Directorate of Health and Drug Control of the Syrian government does not give approval to warehouses to export medicines to pharmacies in the two neighborhoods, on the pretext that they are higher decisions that cannot be overlooked, and that these pharmacies are outside the areas of government control. There is difficulty in entering medicines and a large increase in their prices. A car loaded with medicine will pay one million Syrian pounds to the checkpoints in exchange for its passage to the two neighborhoods, and here the pharmacist is forced to raise the price of the medicine many times its price, because of what he gave in exchange for bringing the medicine box.”

With regard to the danger of continuing siege on the lives of citizens, the researcher added:

“The imposed siege caused damage to vital sectors and increased the threat to the lives of citizens, especially after the warnings that were issued about many medical points going out of service as a result of the lack of medicines and fuel, as the siege puts the health sector on the brink of decline”.

At the end of his conversation with Lelun, the co-chair of the People’s Municipality recounted:

“The Syrian state deals with the citizens of Sheikh Maqsood and Ashrafiieh neighborhoods, who hold Syrian identity, with the logic of accusing them of being terrorists. Noting that more than 100 Christian and Armenian families live in the two neighborhoods, and the neighborhoods include all components of the Syrian people.”

Last year, Amnesty International called on the Syrian government to lift the siege on the Kurdish-majority neighborhoods in Aleppo, saying:

"Syrian government forces must lift the brutal siege imposed on civilians in the Kurdish-majority areas of the northern Aleppo region, which impede residents’ access to fuel and other essential supplies”.

The neighborhoods of [Sheikh Maqsood](#) and [Ashrafiieh](#) are among the popular neighborhoods that have been neglected by the Syrian government, and have been clamped down on them for five years through the repeated siege imposed by the Syrian army [from time to time](#).



About LELUN:

We are a group of daughters and sons of Afrin, who love its soil, are devoted to its olives, and we believe in the history of the fathers and grandfathers, and in fulfillment of their efforts and struggle in preserving the human being, the land and the trees, and in order for the trees to return to their splendor, and for the families and loved ones to return to their mountains, plains and homes, it was necessary to launch The ground is being prepared for the return of rights to their owners and the pursuit of justice.

The goal of justice for the victims was the main stimulus that generated us; Young men and women of Afrin who are jealous of its people, people and land, regardless of their nationality, sect, background or political affiliation, to establish an association for the victims of violations in this Afrin under the name "Lilon", to extend a helping hand to the affected women on an equal footing. by defending them.

"Lilon" will work to contribute to the prosecution efforts by providing evidence related to the violations committed against the residents and people of the Afrin region by all parties to the conflict, and to contribute to compensating the affected victims.

