

# Motivated by poverty: Afrin's displaced people return to Afrin and are forced to pay sums to the factions



  
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## **Motivated by poverty: Afrin's displaced people return to Afrin and are forced to pay sums to the factions**

*Returnees clash with attitudes of local councils that cooperate with armed factions in collecting and imposing sums of money on citizens instead of alleviating their burdens on them and supporting them*





As a result of the worsening cases of extreme poverty in displacement places, indigenous families were recently forced to return to their villages and homes in Afrin region, most of whom are from Aleppo, Lebanon, and Shahba areas. According to what some of people returning to the region told Lelun, the reason is due to the poor economic conditions, the increasing unemployment rate, and the sharp rise in prices, in addition to the decline in the price of the currency compared to the dollar. This is what made most of the people there to decide to return to the area despite the danger of doing so amid widespread insecurity and frequent violations.

A local source reported to the “Lelun Association For Victims” that at the beginning of July 2023, the citizen “D. Sh” returned with his wife from Aleppo to Al-Maabatli/Mobato his hometown in Afrin, and lived with his family in their house in the town, as a result of his poor conditions financially and the state of extreme poverty that they were suffering from.

After a while, he was reported to the Sultan Suleiman Shah faction (Al-Amshat), which controls the town, summoned interrogated him and forced him to pay an amount of \$400 in exchange for “settling his situation” and allowing them to remain in the town.

According to the source, the aforementioned citizen suffers from a disability in one of his feet, and does not have the ability to pay this amount, so he was forced to borrow from his relatives and acquaintances who helped him, until he was able to secure the amount and pay it to Amshat.

In this regard, another source revealed to “Lelun” that the Al-Amshat faction in the town of “Al-Maabatli” arrested the young man, “Hassan Qazeqli Bakr,” who returned from Aleppo, and after his arrival to the town he was forced to pay 500 dollars, but the faction later arrested him under the pretext of his service for the Syrian army, and has not yet been released.

It is noteworthy that his arrival to the town cost him \$500 through the smuggling routes controlled by the armed factions between the Shahba and Afrin regions.

According to private information obtained by “Lelun” from sources close to the returning families, the families are forced to pay sums of money to the factions in exchange for their survival, the recovery of their homes, or the management of their property in a proportional manner. Every Kurdish resident returning to Afrin is summoned to the security headquarters to settle their situation, and some of them are released after paying varying sums of money.





In this context, “Lelun” documented in [a previous report](#) the imposition of financial fines on residents returning to the Shiya/Sheikh Al-Hadid district and other villages that are under the control of the Sultan Suleiman Shah faction known as “Al-Amshat,” as a local source reported to “Lelun” that the Al-Amshat faction had forced Kurdish people returning to the region to pay sums of money under the pretext of settling their situation.

(Zalikha Saadoun/pseudonym), who preferred not to mention her real name for security reasons, told “Lelun,” an indigenous person who recently returned to the region from Aleppo:

**“We were forced to return to the village, and we kept in mind the consequences that we would face during our return. I was summoned with my son for investigation at the district police station upon our arrival, and we received our house after paying an amount of \$1,200. Our conditions in Aleppo were deteriorating due to the lack of opportunities of work, and here (in Afrin) we are forced to pay huge amounts of money to stay in our home and manage our property, as the armed faction imposes varying fees on the people while they harvest their crops. We no longer know how we will manage our affairs in light of the difficult economic conditions”.**

People risk returning to their areas as a result of poor living conditions in the areas where they are located, while they clash with the attitudes of local councils that cooperate with armed factions in collecting and imposing sums of money from citizens instead of alleviating the burdens on citizens and helping returnees recover their homes and property.





## 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.

