

## Syrian Revolution



Dawn broke, as I struggle to write a few words to introduce myself to you. This brings back memories of the delightful mornings that I had with my family 9 years ago at our house in our peaceful city. Slowly, a tear slides down my face and it drops softly on my computer keyboard.

As this gloomy realization sets in my mind, I suddenly feel more optimistic as I lift my head toward the window and see the rising sun. The sunlight floods my cozy living room here in Oakville and with a smile full of hope for a bright future and a new beginning, I decide to write these lines, because writing is a means to reach people, and because I am sure that what comes out of the heart reaches other people's hearts.

My name is Dana Al Sibai, I was born and raised in Syria in a city named HOMS. I have been in Canada for one year; however, I still remember the street that I walked by back in my now distant (only physically) home. The smell of the Jasmine flowers 'blossoms with their shiny green leaves and white flowers that some see as a symbol of peace. Actually, it is hard to forget how charming Homs is ([or perhaps was...](#)).

I came to Canada with the hope of starting a new life for my family and I. Arabic is my first language and that's why I applied to Sheridan College to improve my English skills in order to continue my studies. Being an English as a second language student at Sheridan gave me the opportunity to speak loudly about Syria in my Advanced Listening and Speaking class to highlight a revolution that cannot be hidden. Today I continue my journey at Sheridan as a student in the Software Development Program and as I often say, "A journey of a thousand miles begins with a step."

I've always dreamed of living in a country where I can talk fearless, where people don't hate each other and where there's freedom and dignity for all. However, I am not the kind of person who easily gives up no matter the circumstances, so whenever I have a chance to fight for my rights, I do what I can. Thus, when the "Arab Spring" started in 2011, I believed that this should be the freedom spark and the milestone that must change Syrian people's lives forever.

The “Arab Spring” was an uprising which began with a series of protests rapidly spreading within a week across Middle Eastern countries in 2011. In fact, many factors led to anti-government demonstrations in the Arab world, among them, the most prominent ones were political corruption, rising unemployment and rampant human rights violations. Since then, Syria the place I originally come from, was inspired by the “Arab Spring” and Syrian people started their pro-democracy activities against “Bashar al-Assad”, who has ruled Syria after his father, former president Hafez al-Assad, died in 2000. Although protests in Syria were peaceful and the demonstrators had no ‘weapons’ different to their voice, Bashar al-Asaad with his allies attacked them and killed more than 500,000 people since demonstrations started in 2011 up until now.

Over 1 million civilians have been injured and millions more have been forced to flee their homes and live as refugees elsewhere. As I am a Syrian student at Sheridan College, it is a great opportunity to write in brief words about my country’s revolution to explain how it started, and who the Assad supporters are.

The Syrian revolution began in a city called “Dra’a” with a graffiti that expressed freedom words against Bashar Alasad. This graffiti was written by young boys. Consequently, these boys were arrested and one of them was killed by the security forces. As a result of that, demonstrations sparked throughout Syria and citizens demanded the release of the detainees, along with greater freedom for all people in the country. Citizens also held security forces accountable for what they had done. However, Bashar Alasad responded by ordering the Syrian army to shoot and kill protestors; furthermore, the regime’s violence was very brutal and carried out with a spirit of revenge. Also, the Assad security forces started arrest campaigns, targeting women, students, and children. Those campaigns were known to have detainees tortured to death. All these incidents, in addition to people’s thirst for democracy led them to demand Assad to stepdown. Thus, a vast number of Syrians were determined to topple Assad’s regime.

Revolutions always happen to fight against oppression, and to promote the justice and freedom that continue to take place despite overwhelming odds throughout human history. However, dictators feels arrogance over any resistance and command violence and brutal attacks against any citizen opposing them. In other words, dictators always form alliances to support each other. Essentially, Russia, Iran and Hezbollah (a militia group based in Lebanon) are the Syrian government’s main allies, they all provide logistic support and military equipment in order to carry out dozens of massacres and to hit medical facilities and schools. Moreover, they use different kinds of bombs, missiles and special rockets that contain chemical and toxic substances. In fact, more than 1,700 civilians had been killed due to a Chemical attack ordered by Assad in the Eastern Ghouta region “We had heard whistling explosions, louder than usual, but thought they were ground-to-ground missiles. For two years we had been bombed with all sorts of weapons - how do you recognise the sound of a chemical attack? And “I saw people lined up in the street in front of it. They were spasming violently, foaming at the mouth, and their eyes were rolling back. There was a man hosing them down with water, but they looked like they were close to death” (Ameenah Sawwan, 2019).

Reporter Holly Yan wrote in an article posted on the *CNN* website the reasons for these countries to stand by Assad and she said that “Russia cares for two main reasons: one has to do with economics; the other with ideology. also, it's in Iran's interest to see al-Assad's regime remain intact due to two factors: religion and strategy” (Yan, 2013).

While life seems to be so beautiful and birds are cheeping, the truth is that many Syrians are still suffocating under Assad regime, and as all of the revolutions in history, activists believe that no dictator in the world will step down without resistance so they will never give up until the revolution accomplishes its goal. However, standing with the oppressors is not a point of view or matter of freedom of expression; actually, the whole world should do something to stop the genocide happening in Syria for the last eight years. According to the United Nations more than 6 million people are displaced and more than 500,000 are killed amid international silence. I must wrap up these lines now even though I couldn't have addressed many things, but from the bottom of my heart I hope that you will continue to look for the truth and support everyone's right to live safely and with dignity. Thanks for 'listening' to my voice.

## References

- Ameenah Sawwan. (2019, August 22). *I survived the 2013 chemical attack on Ghouta*. Retrieved from Aljazeera: <https://www.aljazeera.com/indepth/opinion/survived-2013-chemical-attack-ghouta-190822170425540.html>
- Yan, H. (2013, August). *Syria allies: Why Russia, Iran and China are standing by the regime*. Retrieved from CNN: <https://www.cnn.com/2013/08/29/world/meast/syria-iran-china-russia-supporters/index.html>