

## The Syrian Dilemma: Between Cognitive Dissonance and True Hope

### News:

After 14 years of war and oppression, Syria seems poised for change as Bashar al-Assad's regime falls and opposition forces, led by Abu Mohammad al-Julani, take Damascus. However, hopes for a brighter future are tempered by the strong influence of external powers like the U.S. and Turkey, who steer Syria's path under secular, Western-backed frameworks like UN Resolution 2254. This raises critical questions about whether true hope can exist without rejecting foreign domination and prioritizing Islamic principles.

### Comment:

These developments compel us to reflect on the nature of true hope and the role of cognitive dissonance in Syria's current predicament.

Cognitive dissonance refers to the inner tension that arises when confronted with conflicting beliefs or actions. In the case of Syria, this is evident in those who hope for a better future with Islam while simultaneously acknowledging the continuation of a secular and democratic state, and that Western powers such as the U.S. and UN Resolution 2254 remain in control. This resolution emphasizes that Syria must remain a secular state, which essentially ensures that the colonial actors who have controlled the country for years retain their influence. The words of U.S. Secretary of State Antony Blinken during a recent meeting in Jordan affirms this. Blinken emphasized the importance of a so-called inclusive and democratic future for Syria, underscoring the hegemony of the U.S. and its allies. On top of that, the criminal system of Bashar al-Assad seems to have left through the front door, only to return through the back in another form.

Additionally, this cognitive dissonance leads many to blindly embrace Julani's project without offering honest criticism. They associate this support, among other, with hope, despite the clear compromise of opting for a secular model over Islamic governance and dependence on external powers. This perpetuates the illusion that a better future can be achieved without first placing Islamic principles at the centre.

In Islam, hope is essential, deeply connected to the Islamic creed (aqeedah), but it is also bound by conditions. True hope requires action and trust in Allah (swt) while fulfilling all efforts to uphold Islamic principles. Nurturing hope without meeting these conditions—such as accepting a secular and democratic state under Western dominance—is a delusion. It does not lead to victory but to continued submission to the same colonial structures.

The current situation in Syria demonstrates that true hope is not merely a desire for change but also a willingness to align this change with Islamic values. This means that Muslims in Syria must not bow to Western powers but instead strive for a society governed by Islam.

The Syrian people have already made tremendous sacrifices. It is now time to take the next step. This requires a collective effort to reject the hegemony of external powers and demand nothing less than the solution of Islam.

In a world where the U.S. and other global powers continue to dictate the future of countries like Syria, it is essential to recognize that true hope does not lie in accepting their conditions. True hope lies in trusting Allah (swt) and acting according to His guidance. Only then can Syria achieve genuine victory and a future that honours the sacrifices of its people.

The events in Syria serve as a painful yet instructive example of how cognitive dissonance and illusions of hope can mislead a nation. It is crucial to internalize these lessons and understand that true hope is not just an abstract desire but a concrete effort aligned with Islamic principles. The current tendency to uncritically embrace the Julani project highlights the risks of hope that is not rooted in Islamic conditions. The Syrian people now have the opportunity to turn this hope into reality by choosing a path that does not bow to external powers but is fully committed to Islam.

**Written for the Central Media Office of Hizb ut Tahrir by**

**Okay Pala**

**Media Representative of Hizb ut Tahrir in The Netherlands**