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Middle East Brief

The Syrian Muslim Brotherhood and the Asad Regime

Dr. Liad Porat

In April 2009, the then leader of the Syrian Muslim Brotherhood (Ikhwan), 'Ali Sadr al-Din al-Bayanuni, announced an end to the Brotherhood's participation in the National Salvation Front (NSF)—a coalition of various opposition groups founded by former Syrian president Abdul Halim Khaddam and committed to overthrowing Bashar al-Asad's regime. Some viewed the announcement as reflecting a decision on the part of the Ikhwan to cease actively opposing the regime—and, thereby, as reflecting an unprecedented show of goodwill on its part toward the Syrian government. Various commentators speculated that al-Bayanuni, who resides in and operates from the Syrian Ikhwan Center in London, was steering the movement toward a historic reconciliation with the regime.¹

Those who read the Brotherhood's withdrawal from the NSF as signaling a significant ideological shift toward the Syrian regime pointed out that this process had actually begun a few months earlier, with al-Bayanuni's announcement during the January 2009 Israel-Gaza war of a "suspension of resistance activities in the struggle against the Syrian regime."² They also pointed to meetings held during the Gaza war in 2009 between Bashar al-Asad and Sunni religious leaders, including Sheik Yusuf al-Qaradawi, as indicating a developing rapprochement between Syria's secular regime and the Brotherhood. Al-Qaradawi is seen as reflecting the views of the Egyptian Brotherhood and is known as the most influential living Sunni clergyman.³ This meeting could be seen, these observers maintained, as an expression of mutual respect and recognition, providing Asad with a measure of religious legitimacy.

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This Brief argues that the withdrawal from the NSF did not represent a fundamental shift in the Ikhwan's longstanding stance with respect to the Asad regime, which it remains committed to toppling and replacing. Furthermore, it contends that the Ikhwan will not reach any meaningful understanding with the regime unless and until the latter accepts its basic conditions for a true reconciliation: namely, that its leaders be permitted to return to Syria and to operate there not as individuals but as a movement. In making this argument, the Brief contextualizes the Syrian Ikhwan's most recent actions by placing them within a larger trajectory of its changing reactions to various political circumstances. In other words, it argues that what occurred in April 2009 constituted a continuation of the Ikhwan's history in Syria rather than a rupture in that history.

A History of the Syrian Ikhwan's Armed Struggle

In the mid-1940s, various Syrian Islamic groups and organizations formed an alliance under the name the Muslim Brothers (al-Ikhwan al-Muslimun).⁴ Under this rubric, the Syrian Ikhwan became the representative for all the Islamic circles in Syria, making Syria the first nation after Egypt in which the Ikhwan movement took root. Mustafa al-Siba'i (b. 1915 in Homs, d. 1964), the Ikhwan's first leader (al-murakib al-'am), led the Brotherhood on an armed struggle against the French Mandate.⁵ Under his leadership, the movement flourished and its activities extended throughout Syria.

During the period between the departure of the French in 1946 and the Ba'th coup in March 1963, the Ikhwan was a legitimate part of the political system, increasing its representation in Parliament from three seats (amounting to 2.6 percent) in 1949 to ten (5.7 percent) in 1961.⁶ The Ikhwan's second leader, 'Isam al-'Attar (b. 1927 in Damascus), rejected the use of violence against the Ba'th throughout the 1960s and the beginning of the 1970s. By contrast, other senior leaders as well as young activists saw armed struggle as a necessary strategy in the battle against the Ba'th. One example was an important faction in Aleppo headed by 'Abd al-Fatah abu-Ghuda (b. 1917 in Aleppo, d. 1997).⁷ Abu-Ghuda supported a policy coupling civil disobedience with armed struggle. The Ikhwan and the Aleppo faction also disagreed about the role of religion in politics. Abu-Ghuda envisioned an entirely Islamic state and government, while al-'Attar supported a civil government with Islamic representation. Meanwhile, an even more radical third faction took root under the leadership of Marwan Hadid (b. 1934 in Hamah, d. 1976 in jail in Syria), who also supported the use of violence.⁸

Al-'Attar's opposition to the use of violence, along with his absence from Syria after 1964, hindered his ability to lead the activists within Syria at a critical period.⁹ In 1972, the Aleppo faction deposed him and nominated Abu-Ghuda to become its new leader. Since then, the factions of Aleppo and Hamah have been the most prominent among the Ikhwan leadership and the most explicit in calling for the downfall of the Asad regime.

Beginning in the 1960s, a new generation of activists took hold of the movement. Many of these activists had studied in Egypt and were influenced by the radical teachings of Sayyid Qutb, who defined governments that failed to implement Sharia in all aspects of life as heretical and illegitimate. These young activists adopted Qutb's prescription that Arab society must be reformed along the lines of a pure Islam. They accused the Syrian regime of tyranny, corruption, and heresy, regarding it as "an enemy of Islam." The young activists called for a violent clash with the Ba'th regime in an attempt to topple it.

Major political developments within Syria also helped to stir up resentment toward the regime and incite violence against it. Among these was the dramatic increase in socialist policies and in secularism generally, as well as the isolationism of the Ba'th under the leadership of Salah Jadid (who ruled Syria after the February 1966 neo-Ba'th coup, until he was deposed by Hafiz al-Asad in November 1970). Syria's military defeat in the June 1967 war against Israel further shook the legitimacy of the regime.

The Islamic circles headed by the Ikhwan were an inseparable part of the dominant social forces that made up the traditional Sunni-urban political power structure. This traditional political structure was based on the notable families of Damascus, Aleppo, and the other large urban centers in Syria. When this traditional order disintegrated following the rise of the Ba'th, the Islamic circles found themselves, sometimes contrary to their own will, constituting the last bastion of the old order, and at the forefront of the popular Sunni-urban struggle against the regime.

In turn, the neo-Ba'ths' (1966–70) atheistic outlook and socialist economic policies accentuated the social and economic nature of this struggle and turned it into a struggle for survival. With regard to uprooting religion from politics, the Syrian regime demonstrated a tenacity almost unparalleled in the Arabic world.¹⁰

Violent clashes between the Ikhwan and the regime ensued a short time after the Ba'th came to power. In April 1964, violence erupted in Hamah, led by Marwan Hadid, which ended in the demolition of its central mosque and the death of dozens of activists. By January 1965, the events in Hamah had ignited violence in Damascus as well. Subsequently, in April 1967 riots erupted among the Sunni population all over Syria, but the regime managed to suppress the violence.¹¹

After taking power in November 1970, Hafiz al-Asad attempted to scale down the anti-Islamic policies characteristic of his predecessors. The attempt was motivated by Asad's desire to secure religious legitimacy for the 'Alawi ('Alawiyyah) community and for his regime. The Ikhwan reciprocated by scaling back its resistance to the regime. Yet the confrontation continued, reaching one of its climaxes with the eruption of riots in 1973 in reaction to Asad's plans to eliminate the clause in the Syrian constitution stating that Islam is the religion of the president and the source of all jurisprudence.¹² As far as the Ikhwan was concerned, this was proof that Asad was not a proper Muslim.

The sum total of all of these causes and developments led the Ikhwan into an open struggle against the regime, with the goal of toppling it and establishing an Islamic state in

its place. The literature cites 1976 as the beginning of the first stage of the violent struggle.¹³ That year, several groups that operated under the Ikhwan's umbrella initiated violent attacks against the regime's institutions. The Ikhwan's narrative, however, is that the armed struggle began in 1979, at the *regime's* initiative.

In 1979 the Ikhwan escalated its violent activity, and also published for the first time its formal organ, *al-Nadhir* (The one who warns). On June 16 the Ikhwan launched an attack on the Military Academy for Artillery Officers in Aleppo, causing the death of thirty-two 'Alawi cadets and injury to dozens more. The event prompted the regime to try to completely uproot the movement.¹⁴

The year 1980 was a tumultuous year for Syria. At the beginning of that year, it seemed that the regime was on the defensive and that its days were numbered.¹⁵ The Ikhwan succeeded in winning popular support among the Sunni population, and even managed to take partial control over all the major cities. Its leaders called for the assassination of government officials and senior military officers—and on June 26 it launched a failed attempt to assassinate Asad. The regime responded by launching a major punitive campaign against the Ikhwan. Government commando troops were dispatched to Palmyra prison and massacred nearly a thousand inmates who were members and supporters of the Brotherhood.¹⁶

The Asad regime acted against the Ikhwan in the political arena as well, enacting Law No. 49 at the beginning of July 1980, which stipulates the death penalty for membership in the Ikhwan—but also provides that members who surrender will be spared. According to reports issued by the regime, 1,052 Ikhwan activists turned themselves in.¹⁷

By 1981, however, other Ikhwan activists had taken up arms against the regime. By the end of that year, the city of Hamah had become the center of the armed struggle, with violent clashes occurring almost every day. This reached a climax in February 1982, when the regime's ensuing crackdown on the movement's strongholds in the city resulted in thousands of casualties among Ikhwan activists and the movement's virtual defeat—along with the exile of the movement's leadership from Syria.¹⁸ Some settled in various Arab countries, including Jordan, Iraq, and Saudi Arabia, while others moved to Europe. Since the 1990s the movement has been based in London.

Coalition-Building in Support of the Struggle

Since the beginning of the 1980s, the Ikhwan has joined forces with other opposition groups, including extreme

leftist circles and Kurdish elements as well as other Islamic groups, forming alliances in the struggle against the regime. The willingness of the Brotherhood to enter into coalitions with opposition forces so different in nature from itself testifies to the Ikhwan's determination to continue the struggle by any available means. At the same time, it has insisted on retaining the senior leadership positions within such coalitions by making sure that it constitutes a majority within any given leadership apparatus.

Moreover, by creating coalitions with other opposition forces, the Ikhwan has indicated to the regime that it is not alone in the struggle, and that despite its leadership being in exile, it still carries weight inside Syria. In addition, due to the many assassinations carried out by the regime against Ikhwan activists, the coalitions that the Brotherhood created or joined have enabled it to shift some of the regime's focus from itself to other opposition groups.

In the August 1980 issue of *al-Nadhir*, the Syrian Ikhwan leader Abu al-Nasr al-Bayanuni (b. 1945 in Aleppo, no relation to 'Ali Sadr al-Din al-Bayanuni, the Ikhwan leader until 2010) spoke of "entering into a necessary campaign to separate heresy from faith." He also spoke of a jihad conducted by "holy warriors" against the heretical regime, and the need to use arms in order to topple it.¹⁹ Against the background of escalating crackdowns by the regime and the Ikhwan's sense that the revolt had reached a dead end, the Ikhwan established in October 1980 the "Islamic Front" under the leadership of Abu al-Nasr al-Bayanuni. In January of 1981, this organization released a manifesto that stressed the clear division between the believers (that is, the Islamist factions) and the heretics (that is, the regime); highlighted the sectarian nature of the regime; and called for its toppling. Only a few months earlier, in November 1980, a manifesto entitled "The Islamic Revolution in Syria and Its Charter" was published, carrying the signatures of some of the Ikhwan's top leaders, such as Sa'id Hawa (b. 1935 in Hamah, d. 1989), 'Ali Sadr al-Din al-Bayanuni, and 'Adnan Sa'd al-Din (b. 1929 in Hamah, d. August 2010). This sixty-five-page document adopted the Ikhwan narrative with regard to the regime, and called for an armed revolt in order to topple it.²⁰

On March 11, 1982, in the wake of the events at Hamah, a new opposition coalition was declared: the "National Alliance for the Liberation of Syria," also known afterwards as the "National Front for the Liberation of Syria." The alliance included the Ikhwan alongside other factions opposed to the regime, some from the left side of the political map.²¹ It was based on the principles that Islam should be the state religion and that the Sharia must be the basis for state law. In a pamphlet released in 1984, the Front also explicitly called for "killing Asad."²²

In February 1990 the establishment of yet another alliance, the "National Front for Saving Syria" (preceded by the "National Alliance for the Liberation of Syria"), was announced.²³ When referring to the establishment of this alliance, 'Ali Sadr al-Din al-Bayanuni declared that the main purpose of this body was to "topple the Syrian regime."²⁴ Despite the different names given to these various alliances, emphasizing Islamism at times and nationalism at others, the basic purpose and intention of the Ikhwan—to topple the Asad regime—has remained constant.

The ongoing endeavor of the Ikhwan to establish alliances hostile to the regime has continued into the twenty-first century. In the middle of the 2000s, a number of opposition groups, including the Ikhwan, issued the "Damascus Declaration," calling for a change of Syria's ruling regime. Moreover, in a very surprising move, in 2006 the Ikhwan joined forces with fifteen other opposition groups along with the former vice-president of Syria, Abdul Halim Khaddam—all united by their common opposition to Bashar al-Asad—in the establishment of the National Salvation Front (NSF).²⁵

In light of the ingrained hostility of the Ikhwan toward Khaddam, who was not only Hafez al-Asad's former vice-president but also the former governor of Hamah, this last development can only be interpreted as the Ikhwan 'striking a deal with the devil.' The alliance made clear the lengths to which the Ikhwan was ready to go in order to advance its ultimate goal—overthrowing the regime.

The motivation for the Ikhwan's entering into this coalition is apparent in statements by 'Ali al-Bayanuni issued during and after June 2007. In these he argued that there were "clean" elements within the regime that were capable of eventually bringing about a change in the nature of the regime. Al-Bayanuni maintained that when the Ikhwan entered into a coalition with Khaddam, it was clear to the group that there were more like him who wanted to see Bashar al-Asad deposed. The Ikhwan thus hoped that other senior political figures in Syria would join the struggle.²⁶

The NSF enabled the Ikhwan to open a second front against the regime. While as part of its participation in the NSF the Ikhwan refrained from mentioning the events in Hamah (although those events continued to be featured in the Brotherhood's internal publications), various manifestos issued by the Ikhwan on behalf of the NSF in 2006–9 reveal a vehement hostility toward the Asad regime. In writings by al-Bayanuni and the movement's spokesman, Zuhayr Salim (b. 1947 in Aleppo), published on the NSF website, the Ikhwan expresses a clear aspiration to topple the regime.²⁷ Indeed, the

Ikhwan's call in June 2007 for a "national rapprochement," which excluded the regime as being "an outsider" and as inciting "civil war" (*fitna*), was a natural extension of its involvement with the NSF. Its consistent goal was to create unity among the various power centers in Syria in opposition to the regime.

At the beginning of 2009, al-Bayanuni stated that the regime was a foreign and hostile element in Syria and that true "national rapprochement" would be possible only once it was replaced.²⁸ This approach was expressed earlier in a position paper published by the Ikhwan in November 2005 following the murder of Lebanon's prime minister, Rafik al-Hariri. In that statement, the group reproached the Syrian regime, claiming that "this ruling caste does not represent the Syrian people, does not represent its interests, and has separated itself from society and its institutions."²⁹

The Propaganda War

With the Ikhwan organization in tatters following the events in Hamah in 1982, the organization changed its strategy, while maintaining its ultimate goal. Without armed cadres in Syria, the Ikhwan was not in a position to launch an armed struggle, and it has accordingly refrained from committing any violent acts since the 1982 events.³⁰ Although the struggle against the regime was now primarily a struggle for the hearts and minds of the Syrian people—conducted through publications, propaganda, and preaching—the March 1984 issue of *al-Nadhir* included a fatwa that declared that Asad had forfeited his life on account of his part in the killing of Muslims.³¹ Writing in the formal organs of the Ikhwan—*al-Bayan* ("The Declaration") as well as *al-Nadhir*—Sa'id Hawa and Abu al-Nasr al-Bayanuni made clear that the Ikhwan saw itself as facing a critical trial period (*mihnah*) in which it needed to struggle for survival against its main enemy, the regime.³²

According to the Ikhwan's narrative, the regime rests on a narrow sectarian basis and acts on behalf of an external conspiracy to destroy Syria from within by instigating a civil war (*fitnah*) and by oppressing "true" Muslims.³³ In Ikhwan publications, Asad's sect, the 'Alawi community (*al-taifa al-nusayriyyah*), is the target of attacks meant to undermine the regime's legitimacy. The 'Alawi sect, according to the Brotherhood, is unanimously believed by Muslims to be guilty of heresy,³⁴ and Asad's regime "rips apart the unity of the people, and threatens the unity of the homeland."³⁵ The regime rests, it charged, on the power of "sectarian armed gangs" made up of elements that are "segregated from the army and the people," and

it was imperative, therefore, to act to "[overthrow] the regime and [save] the nation."³⁶

The Ikhwan accused the regime of compromising the Islamic nature of the Syrian people from within, through a "policy of erosion and disintegration."³⁷ It later accused the regime of targeting the economic infrastructure of Syria, as well as its social and political make-up, by creating rifts and power struggles between the different sectors within Syria.³⁸ The Ikhwan believed that this strategy of isolating and delegitimizing the "sectarian" Asad regime would weaken its basis for support and hasten its demise.

In order to legitimize its religious claims against the 'Alawi regime, the Ikhwan relies on established religious scholars, including Abu Hamed al-Ghazali (1058–1111) and Ibn Taymiyya (1273–1328). The latter decreed that the 'Alawis are a sect of heretics that must be killed unless they repent and re-embrace Islam.³⁹ Such attacks on the 'Alawis continue to this day, nearly three decades since the Ikhwan first accused Asad of offending the Ka'ba. In February 2010, for instance, Zuhayr Salim compared the massacre in Hamah to the stoning and burning of the Ka'ba by Al-Hajjaj ibn Yusuf in the seventh century.⁴⁰ While the Ikhwan recycles the same arguments year after year, the level of vehemence employed by its leaders when attacking the regime has not remained constant. Thus, in the middle of the 1990s the Ikhwan scaled down its attacks on the regime because of the prospect of conducting talks with its representatives. These talks might have been interpreted as a potentially pivotal turning point with respect to the Ikhwan's attitude toward the regime, on the assumption that holding direct talks with an adversary indicates a willingness to recognize its existence and legitimacy. If this had been the case, it could have been (and was) argued that the Ikhwan had abandoned its ideological resistance to the regime.

A thorough examination of the Ikhwan's publications, however, shows that this engagement in talks with the regime was merely a tactical response to changing circumstances. In the mid-1990s, the Asad regime relaxed its policy toward Islamic circles in Syria, exhibiting a certain degree of openness with respect to Islamic educational institutions, the building of mosques, and the appointment of clergymen. It also began to release prisoners from among the Ikhwan's activists.⁴¹ The reason for these positive steps was that at the time direct talks between Syria and Israel were taking place, and the Asad regime was seeking some measure of religious legitimacy for this development.

Nonetheless, in May 1997 the Ikhwan's exiled leadership rejected the regime's demand that the movement refrain

from resuming its legal operation in Syria. Al-Bayanuni stressed that Ikhwan leaders would not agree to return to Syria one by one and demanded the annulment of Law No. 49, enacted in 1980.⁴² A short while afterward, the attacks on the regime escalated again, until the death of Hafiz al-Asad in June 2000.⁴³

In this instance, as in other cases, the Ikhwan curbed its attacks on the regime only in order to advance its own goals. Once it became clear that the regime had no intention of meeting the Brotherhood's demands—namely, to allow the leadership to return to Syria and the organization to resume its activities as a recognized movement—the attacks were renewed. This allowed the Ikhwan to reap short-term benefits, such as the release of prisoners, while maintaining its relevance in Syria as a movement that opposed the regime head-on.

This point can be clearly illustrated by analyzing the Ikhwan's actions following the rise of Bashar al-Asad to power—an event that generated some momentum for reconsidering the relationship between the two adversaries. As long as Bashar released Ikhwan prisoners and permitted the return of political exiles to Syria, the Ikhwan restrained its attacks and allowed the new ruler “a hundred days of mercy.”⁴⁴ Although ‘Ali al-Bayanuni protested the nepotistic manner in which Bashar took power, he was willing to reach out to the new leader in order to help him advance Syrian society. Yet this indulgence was contingent on Bashar's willingness to open a new chapter in the regime's attitude toward the movement and to permit it to resume its operations in Syria.⁴⁵ Once Asad rejected this demand, ‘Ali al-Bayanuni contended in a December 2008 interview that Bashar's regime was merely a continuation of his father's, and that the corrupt nature of the regime had even intensified. He added that any hopes of the regime bringing about reforms were based on fantasy, since in reality the regime under Bashar does the opposite of what it promises.⁴⁶

Conclusions

In August 2010, the leadership of the Syrian Ikhwan changed from ‘Ali al-Bayanuni to Muhammad Riad al-Shakfa (b. 1944 in Hamah). Yet there is no indication so far of any significant shifts, either in the Ikhwan's attitude toward the Syrian regime or in its broader leadership. Rather, the Brotherhood has tried to use this change to send a clear message to Bashar al-Asad's regime that it is also time for the regime to make a change in *its* ranks.⁴⁷

Nonetheless, in a reality in which the discourse employed by the Ikhwan is characterized by a clear dichotomy between “believers” and “heretics,” and as long as the

current regime in Syria is perceived by the Ikhwan to be a direct continuation of its predecessor, it is only reasonable to expect the group to pursue its previous agenda. When in an interview from January 2009, ‘Ali al-Bayanuni was asked to comment about the unilateral suspension of hostilities (*hudna*) that he had declared a short time before, he explained that given the “war” in Gaza, when Israel is targeting the “Palestinian brothers,” it is imperative to allow the Syrian regime to perform its national and moral duty and come to their aid.⁴⁸ By “aid,” al-Bayanuni was alluding to opening a front against Israel to deter it from continuing its attacks on Hamas. But as al-Bayanuni knew full well that this would not happen, his insinuation was calculated to expose the Syrian regime as weak and impotent. It also corroborates the assessment that the declared *hudna* was merely a tactical move on the part of the Ikhwan.

The current Ikhwan leadership constantly calls attention to the need for general reform in Syria, as well as the need to change the regime. Thus, it is not surprising that the leadership was quick to demean the regime as too impotent to help the Palestinians in any meaningful way. For its part, the Brotherhood gained public relations points by demonstrating a chivalrous willingness to abandon its struggle with its mortal enemy for the sake of the greater good that was involved in assisting the group's Palestinian brethren in their fight against Israel.

Despite recent assessments in the media regarding a possible rapprochement between the Ikhwan and the Bashar Asad regime, the movement's leaders continue to voice their hope for a civil revolt in Syria, wherein “the Syrian people will perform its duty and liberate Syria from the tyrannical and corrupt regime.”⁴⁹ The Ikhwan stresses that it does desire a Syrian “national rapprochement,” but that the current regime can take no part in it, since it is not part of the Syrian nation. The logical corollary would be that the Ikhwan could not have any meaningful communication with the regime—and indeed, over the past year its leaders have stated repeatedly that such talks are not taking place.⁵⁰

Endnotes

- 1 Yvette Talhamy, "Syrian Muslim Brothers and the Syrian-Iranian Relationship," *IkhwanWeb*, December 15, 2009.*
- 2 See *Syrian Observatory Human Rights*, November 8, 2009 [in Arabic] and *Akhbar al-Sharq*, April 5, 2009 [in Arabic].*
- 3 *al-asr.ws*, February 18, 2009 [in Arabic].*
- 4 Elie Friedman, "Terrorism in Syria: 'The Muslim Brotherhood' and Their Struggle against Hafiz al-Asad's Regime, 1976–1982" (master's thesis, Tel Aviv University, 1989), p. 2 [in Hebrew]; Itzhak Weismann, "The Politics of Popular Religion: Sufis, Salafis, and Muslim Brothers in Twentieth-Century Hamah," *International Journal of Middle East Studies* 37 (2005), pp. 39–58.
- 5 Umar F. Abd-Allah, *The Islamic Struggle in Syria* (Berkeley: Mizan Press, 1983), pp. 96–101.
- 6 See Eyal Zisser, *Syria's Facade: Society, Government, and State* (Tel Aviv: Hakibutz Hameuchad, 2003), p. 253 [in Hebrew].
- 7 Friedman, "Terrorism in Syria," p. 17.
- 8 Brynjar Lia, *Architect of Global Jihad: The Life of al-Qaida Strategist Abu Mus'ab al-Suri* (New York: Columbia University Press, 2008), pp. 38–39.
- 9 Abd-Allah, *The Islamic Struggle in Syria*, p. 103.
- 10 Zisser, *Syria's Facade*, pp. 248–49.
- 11 *Ibid.*, p. 249.
- 12 *Ibid.*, p. 250.
- 13 Abd-Allah, *The Islamic Struggle in Syria*, pp. 81, 106–9; Zisser, *Syria's Facade*, p. 254.
- 14 On the circumstances and unfolding of the struggle, see Thomas Mayer, "The Islamic Opposition in Syria, 1961–1982," *Orient* 4 (1983), pp. 589–609; Abd-Allah, *The Islamic Struggle in Syria*, pp. 80–87.
- 15 Zisser, *Syria's Facade*, p. 256.
- 16 Patrick Seale, *Asad of Syria: The Struggle for the Middle East* (London: I.B. Tauris, 1988), p. 329.
- 17 For the text of Law No. 49 as it appears on the Ikhwan website, see *Ikhwansyria.com*, June 10, 2007 [in Arabic].* According to one study, 26.7% of the detainees were students, 13.3% were professionals (engineers, doctors, lawyers, etc.), and 7.9% were teachers. See Zisser, *Syria's Facade*, p. 257.
- 18 Abd-Allah, *The Islamic Struggle in Syria*, p. 192.
- 19 *al-Nadhir*, no. 22 (August 1980), pp. 14–16.
- 20 Bayan al-Thawra al-Islamiyya fi Suriyya wa Minhajuha (Damascus, November 1980).
- 21 Zisser, *Syria's Facade*, p. 258.
- 22 *al-Nadhir*, no. 66 (March 1984), pp. 6–10.
- 23 *Ibid.*, no. 122 (April 1990), p. 9.
- 24 *Ibid.*
- 25 Liad Porat, "The Egyptian and Syrian Muslim Brothers and Their Struggle against the Secular Arab Regimes from the Beginning of the 1970s to the Early 1990s: Opposition Discourse and a Radicalization Shift" (PhD diss., University of Haifa, 2008), p. 370 [in Hebrew].
- 26 www.savesyria.org/arabic/news/2007/06/002.htm [Content removed online but available from Author upon request].*
- 27 www.savesyria.org/content/view/200/30/; www.savesyria.org/content/view/233/37/. [Content removed online but available from Author upon request].*
- 28 *Syrian Observatory Human Rights*, January 16, 2009. [in Arabic]; *Syrian Observatory Human Rights*, November 2, 2009. [in Arabic].*
- 29 *Ikhwan Online*, November 14, 2005 [in Arabic].*
- 30 An explanation is provided by the vice leader of the Ikhwan, Faruq Tifur, in an interview from 2007, *Ikhwansyria.com*, November 13, 2007 [in Arabic].*
- 31 *al-Nadhir*, no. 66 (March 1984), pp. 6–10.
- 32 For excerpts of an interview with al-Bayanuni, see *ibid.*, no. 122 (April 1990), p. 10.
- 33 *Hamah: Masat al-Asr allati Faqat Magazir Sabra wa Shatila* (Cairo, 1984), p. 11.
- 34 *al-Nadhir*, no. 2 (September 1979), p. 23.
- 35 *Ibid.*, no. 19 (June 1980), p. 20.
- 36 *Ibid.*, no. 44 (February 1982), p. 3.
- 37 *al-Bayan*, no. 15 (October 1989), pp. 6–7.
- 38 See an interview with al-Bayanuni from July 2007, *Ikhwansyria.com*, July 21, 2007 [in Arabic].*
- 39 Zisser, *Syria's Facade*, p. 250. Regarding the status of the 'Alawis and how Islamic circles view them, see Matti Moosa, *Extremist Shiites: The Ghulat Sects* (Syracuse, NY: Syracuse University Press, 1988), pp. 269–70.
- 40 Zuhayr Salim writes about the events at Hamah on the Twenty-Eighth Memorial Day (in February 2010): *Ikhwansyria.com*, February 4, 2010 [in Arabic].*
- 41 Eyal Zisser, "Syria, the Ba'th Regime and the Islamic Movement: Stepping on a New Path?" *The Muslim World* 35 (2005), pp. 48–50.
- 42 Zisser, *Syria's Facade*, p. 264.
- 43 Escalating struggle against the regime is reflected in the first pages of *Akhbar waaraa* (a rare bulletin on behalf of the Syrian Ikhwan) for the years 1996–97.
- 44 Zisser, *Syria's Facade*, pp. 266, 267.
- 45 *Ibid.*, p. 265.
- 46 See *Ikhwansyria.com*, December 13, 2008 [in Arabic].*
- 47 See *alittlehad.net*, April 9, 2006 [in Arabic].* In an interview from April 2006, 'Adnan Sa'ad al-Din stresses that members of the leadership who come from Hamah carry a lot of weight. His remark supports the main thesis of the article: that there is no major shift in the movement's stances.
- 48 See *Ikhwansyria.com*, January 11, 2009 [in Arabic].*
- 49 isammemo.cc, March 16, 2007 [in Arabic]; www.savesyria.org/arabic/news/2007/06/002.htm [Content removed online but available from Author upon request].*
- 50 *Syrian Observatory Human Rights*, April 8, 2009 [in Arabic].*

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