

# From My Story...

## Change is a Matter of Thought

Hasnaa Issa



شبكة الصحفيات السوريات  
Syrian Female Journalists Network

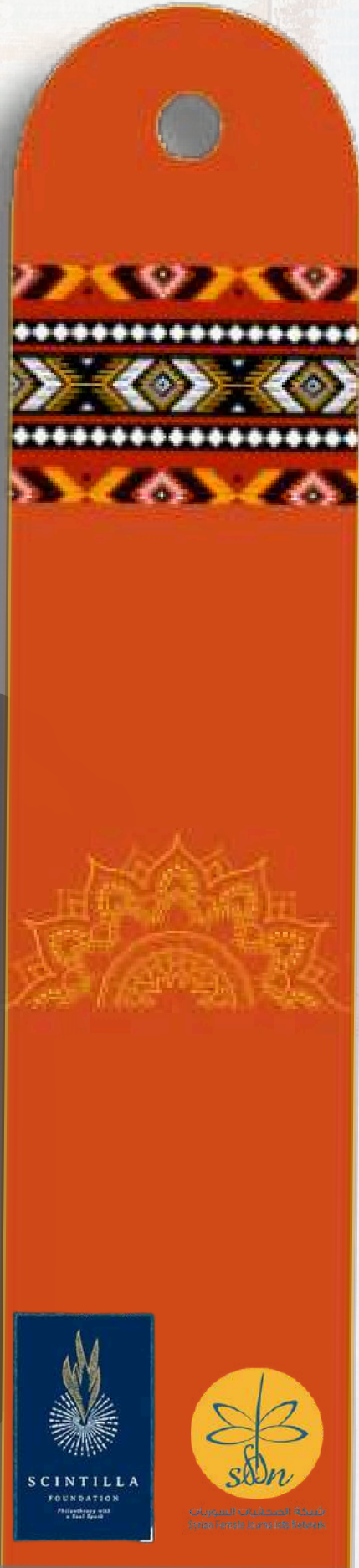


# From My Story...

## Change is a Matter of Thought

My name is Hasna Issa, a 39-year-old mother of twin girls, and forcibly displaced from eastern Ghouta. I am a media activist and advocate for human and women's rights. From the very beginning, my life was challenging. I suddenly found myself responsible for providing for my two girls amid harsh war conditions and an ongoing blockade that forced me to work multiple jobs to care for them. However, my greatest challenges were not just at the material level.

I was arrested by the Syrian regime, an experience that changed my life. Inside the detention centre, I became certain that the revolution we were fighting for was right, and I no longer had any doubt about the rightfulness of this cause. This harsh experience did not break me, instead, it fueled my determination to continue the struggle. Upon my release from prison, I emerged with a stronger spirit and decided to devote my life to advocating for women's rights and working to bring about real change in my society. In 2018, I found myself amidst a new challenge, the forcible displacement of the people of eastern Ghouta, and suddenly, I found myself in an entirely new place, knowing no one and without any family members by my side.



Original Ghouta  
Syrian Women's Rights Network



It was only me and my twin daughters, who needed much care and attention. This marked the beginning of a new phase filled with struggle and perseverance, once again.

### **Media: My Gateway to a New Life**

2019 was a new turning point in my life. I started my media career by establishing a small team of three women journalists. We launched a written newsletter called "Our News" in the north of Syria, focusing on community and women's issues in particular.

This step laid the foundation for a media project that later evolved to include podcasts and visual programs. Today, I run the "Our News" network, and we have grown our team to include more women journalists, providing professional and moral support they need to enter the media field.

Working in the media has not been an easy journey, especially in a new community where traditions and customs have limited women's appearances on camera. However, I was certain that the media was the means to raise issues that mattered to us, spoken in our own language and from our perspective. I took to the streets and began raising social issues with people, and I was met with unexpected acceptance from the community as if they were waiting to be asked so they could finally express their suffering and hopes.

My programme "Without a Filter", which ran for two seasons, was a platform for opening dialogues with the society during Ramadan.





It highlighted the daily issues affecting people's lives, from the rising prices of basic goods to the anniversary of the revolution.

This experience has helped me break the stereotype that women cannot appear in the media. Gradually, I have noticed some young women media professionals gaining confidence and stepping in front of the camera, which is encouraging. However, it's important to acknowledge that there are still challenges in some segments of society when it comes to embracing women's presence in the media.

### **Change is a Matter of Thought**

Before embarking on my media career, I had attended numerous trainings in editing, writing, preparation, and presenting. These courses were essential in developing my skills, but what left a profound impact on me was my journey in seeking the truth, which began in 2013 with an initial inquiry about the underlying causes of the challenges we face. A professor, whom I deeply respect, once gave me two books: Be Adam's

Son and How to Create the Future, and encouraged me to freely search for answers. He told me: "You have a great way of thinking, work on it and don't accept given ideas, look for the answers yourself and you shall find everything you need in God's book." I began my journey in the realm of thoughts and truth-seeking, and I am striving to instil this mindset in my daughters.





Today, my life is still filled with difficulties, but I am happy with what I have achieved. I continue to strive for myself, for my two children, and for the idea I believe in. I firmly believe that, as women, we can bring about real change in our society, and that challenges are only part of the journey towards truth and justice.

In addition to my career, I continue to support emerging women journalists through the "Our News" network. We are working to provide a safe space that enables them to pursue their journalistic work and publish their work on our platforms. This initiative remains voluntary, driven by our belief in the capabilities of women in media and our conviction that we will achieve the change we seek.

**Hasnaa**

