

The logo features the word "Beehive" in a large, stylized font. The "B" is red, and the "ee" is red with a blue orbital path around them. The "hive" is in a teal color. Below "Beehive" is the text "Middle East Social Media" in a teal, sans-serif font. In the top right corner, there is a logo for Tel Aviv University and the Moshe Dayan Center for Middle Eastern and African Studies (MDC).

Beehive

Middle East Social Media

Vol. 9, No. 7, July 2021

Editor: Giovanni M. Quer

**“We Dared to Dream, And We Will Never Regret Dignity” –
The Slogan of the 10th Anniversary of the Syrian Uprising**

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On 10 February 2020, Syrian journalist and filmmaker Waad Al-Kateab participated in the 92nd Academy Awards, where her film *For Sama* was nominated for best documentary. Even though her film did not win the Oscar, the event inspired many within the ranks of the Syrian opposition, due to the phrase that appeared on Al-Kateab’s dress during the ceremony – “We Dared to Dream, And We Will Never Regret Dignity (in Arabic: *tajarra’na ‘ala al-hulm wa-lan nandam ‘ala al-karama*).”¹ Al-Kateab was acclaimed on social media for speaking on behalf of the ‘voiceless Syrians,’ raising their plight and demands.²

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¹ Caterina Minthe, “[The Heart-Warming Friendship Story Behind the For Sama Oscar Dress](#)”, *Vogue*, 10 February 2020, accessed 8 April 2021.

² Yasmina Allouche, “[For Sama’s Director Speaks for ‘Voiceless Syrians’ in Embroidered Oscars Dress](#)”, *Middle East Eye*, 10 February 2020, accessed 8 April 2021.



[@AhmadBaeydoun](#), Facebook, 11 February 2020. Waad Al-Kateab in the 92nd Academy Awards.

The impact of this event did not remain within the boundaries of Hollywood. A year after the ceremony, on the 10th anniversary of the Syrian uprising, the phrase that appeared on Al-Kateab’s dress became a motto for many Syrians on social media, both outside and inside Syria. Since early March 2021, hundreds of thousands of tweets have published the hashtag “10th Anniversary” alongside the hashtag “We Dared to Dream, And We Will Never Regret Dignity.”³ By mid-March, about 24,000 people changed their Facebook profile frame to a design that consisted of this slogan using the “change.org” platform.⁴

³ See, [@sy_shamil](#), Twitter, 20 March 2021, accessed 8 April 2021; [@apohanalhalba](#), Twitter, 13 March 2021, accessed 8 April 2021; [@jasminem_al](#), Twitter, 19 March 2021, accessed 8 April 2021.

⁴ Hamza Al Khatib, “[We dared to dream - 10 year anniversary of the Syrian revolution](#)”, Change.org, 17 March 2021, accessed 8 July 2021.

In many cases, this slogan was the opening sentence of numerous posts commemorating the Syrian uprising. For instance, the Syrian actor Jay (Jihad) Abdo, who was forced to flee Syria in October 2011 after voicing opposition against the Assad regime, wrote on his personal Facebook page on March 2021: “*We dared to dream and we will not regret dignity. These are not just words, this is the story of an oppressed people and an exceptional revolution.*”⁵ The council of Arshaf Municipality (located in the northern region of the Aleppo Governorate) posted on its Facebook page: “*We dared to dream and we will not regret dignity. Let the pledge be renewed that we will remain revolutionary and steadfast until we liberate our country and achieve our freedom.*”⁶ In Idlib, the last stronghold of the Syrian opposition, activists used this hashtag for encouraging people to participate in the commemorative events.⁷



[@JayAbdo](#), Facebook – profile picture.

This slogan has gained popularity and momentum, prompting even non-Syrian personalities to use it for expressing solidarity with the Syrian people. For example, British actress Emilia Clarke posted on her Instagram page this slogan in Arabic calligraphy.⁸ Her Game of Thrones co-stars, Kit Harington and Rose Leslie,

⁵ [Jay Abdo](#), Facebook, 1 March 2021 [in Arabic], accessed 8 April 2021.

⁶ [@arshafcouncil.m](#), Facebook, 19 March, 2021 [in Arabic], accessed 8 April 2021.

⁷ “[Idlib during the Tenth Anniversary of the Syrian Revolution: ‘We Dared to Dream, and We Will Never Regret Dignity’](#)”, *Freedom Raise*, 17 March 2021 [in Arabic], accessed 8 April 2021.

⁸ “[Emilia Clarke Posts a Portrait of Arabic Calligraphy along with a Message To Syrians](#)”, *Al-Bawaba*, 17 March 2021, accessed 8 April 2021.

followed suit and posted a picture of themselves with a plaque reporting this slogan.⁹

However, this slogan also triggered a debate among media experts and social media activists regarding the high price that Syrians have paid for this so-called “dignity”. Berlin-based Syrian-born journalist Maissun Melhem wrote: “*We dared to dream, and we will not regret dignity.*’ *The sentence would become a mantra for Syrians who are celebrating the 10th anniversary of their revolution against one of the most brutal dictatorships of our time. Watching this and recalling the haunting pictures of the past 10 years, I ask myself: Do we really not regret it?*”¹⁰ American-Syrian writer and activist Lina Sergie Attar also observed: “*These two opposing words, regret and dignity, occupy alternate universes of meaning now. Is it possible not to regret what has happened to Syrians and Syria since 2011?...Where is the dignity for those who are left behind? Is it possible not to hold on to at least the spark of humanity that spread across the country in the early years of the revolution, before it was brutally extinguished by the regime, its allies, the extremists, and the world?*”¹¹

Amidst this criticism, this slogan also came to express the lack of contrition by many Syrians for the outbreak of the uprising and the fight for their honor and dignity, despite the disastrous results. Marwan Safar Jalani, a student at Yale University who left Syria in 2012 because of the war, wrote: “*A decade ago, we did not know that we would redefine what it means to dream, so we will never regret asking for our dignity. We will keep dreaming, and we will keep doing.*”¹² Maha Jumaa, a 38-years old pharmacist who smuggled medical supplies to Darayya city in Ghouta (on the outskirts of Damascus) after it was besieged by Assad’s forces, and was later displaced to the Idlib province, said that these were the “*days of my life, despite the danger.*” Moreover, even though Jumaa lost her brothers during the uprising, she remarked that, “*if they came back to life and learned what their sister gave in terms of humanitarian aid, they wouldn’t hesitate to pay for that with their*

⁹ [@omartvsd](#), Twitter, 24 March 2021, accessed 8 April 2021.

¹⁰ Maissun Melhem, “[Opinion: Justice Is Elusive as Syria Marks 10 Years of War](#)”, *Deutsche Welle*, 15 March 2021, accessed 8 April 2021.

¹¹ Lina Sergie Attar, “[When Assad’s End Comes](#)”, *Newlines Magazine*, 18 March 2021, accessed 8 April 2021.

¹² Marwan Safar Jalani, “[A Decade Ago, We Dared to Dream](#)”, *Inkstick*, 16 March 2021, accessed 8 April 2021.

lives.”¹³ Moeen al-Asfar from Daraa city in southern Syria, the cradle of the Syrian revolution, concurred, and added that under this slogan the Syrian revolution’s 10th anniversary is an occasion for joy since “*It brought the Syrian people together in a single word, which is death rather than humiliation.*”¹⁴

With the 10th anniversary of the outbreak of the Syrian uprising, the future looks bleak for those who aspired to overthrow the Assad regime and create a better future for Syria. Despite the tragic human loss and the immense humanitarian crisis, change is not on the horizon, while Assad is systematically advancing for ensuring his control over most of the Syrian territory, backed by his Russian and Iranian allies. Therefore, the 10th anniversary of the outbreak of the Syrian uprising also required a kind of soul-searching. Was it worth the sacrifice? Life in Syria before the uprising, was it not better? For this reason, and despite some criticism, the phrase that appeared on Waad Al-Kateab’s dress in February 2020 became a motto and a symbol a year later. It provided to the Syrian opposition and its supporters the means to look back at the previous decade without regret, despite the grave consequences of the uprising. This slogan also serves as a reminder for the future – Syrians should never stop dreaming, and should never give up striving for living honorable and dignified lives.

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¹³Alaa Nassar, “[The Syrian Revolution on Its 10th Anniversary: No Regrets, but Longing for Its Early Days](#)”, *Syria Direct*, 18 March 2021; accessed 8 April 2021.

¹⁴ *Ibid.*