Ambassador of the Republic of Turkey

Consul of the Netherlands to Aleppo

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Hussein I. EL-MUDARRIS
The Honorary Consul of Netherlands in Aleppo

Hussein I. El-Mudarris, the successor of his father’s title being the consul of the Netherlands in Syria, graciously welcomed us and shared with us his life story; his academic studies, how he was first introduced into the world of diplomatic relationships, and how he came to be the Dutch consul in Aleppo

1. Tell us more about yourself, your personal life in general!

I was born in Aleppo. I have two sisters older than me. I spent my childhood between Syria and Lebanon up till the Lebanese war. Both my grand-parents from my mother’s side are Syrian; who lived in Lebanon since the 1940’s. My mother is considered half-Lebanese-half Syrian. A large number of my relatives are still living in Lebanon and one of my sisters is married there. My teenage years coincided with the Lebanese civil war, which led me to shift my holidays from Lebanon to Europe. After high school I studied French literature and I earned a diploma in translation between French-Arabic. Then I specialized in History, and I got also a diploma in tourism. I started my career in the 1980’s in Aleppo helping my father, the Honorary Consul of the Netherlands, in his work, especially in cultural and commercial matters and at the same time I helped him to run our agricultural farm. In short, I used to work with my father simultaneously while I was studying. I am fond of travels but I’ve never liked to live away from Syria. Whenever I had extended visits to foreign countries, I always made sure to come back to Syria even if it would be for a little while. Every place I go to; first thing I have to do is check out all cultural events in that place. I am huge a fan of art and music. I loved music my whole life and the only thing I didn’t do was not learning how to play a musical instrument.

2. Your father was the Honorary Consul of the Netherlands to Aleppo during the 1980’s and 1990’s. How did he get there?

My father is a Harvard graduate. He studied government-political science; majoring in International Law and International Relations. My mother graduated from BCW an AUB affiliated school for women majoring in English Literature. My father’s work was and still is in agriculture growing wheat, barley and cotton and from this background he developed a strong relationship with the Netherlands.

3. I noticed that in order to get to the Honorary Consul position, you have to have an economical relationship. Is that correct?

Correct. When there is a give and take relationship between two countries, they always position someone who has connections. Those connections play the prime role in deciding the eligibility in choosing an Honorary Consul.

I am the representative of the Dutch cooperation program (PUM) which allows sending Dutch experts to Syrian companies - an interesting way to develop the economical cooperation between Syria and The Netherlands.

4. When were you chosen to be the Honorary Consul of The Netherlands to Aleppo?

I was nominated in 1995 by Her Majesty Queen Beatrix, but the exequatur from the Syrian government was obtained in 1997. The first Dutch Consulate in Aleppo opened in 1607 according to the Dutch Ministry of Foreign Affairs; there will be a celebration in 2007 for the 400th anniversary.
5. Tell us more about the performance of the Consulate of The Netherlands to Aleppo, about the nature of your duties.

The Honorary Consul has a special role to play in promoting trade between the Netherlands and his consular area. In practice this means responding appropriately to requests relating to commercial and economic matters from the principal mission, local companies or perhaps the bilateral Chambers of Commerce and Industry in his consular area.

Before the Schengen agreement, the consulate of the Netherlands to Aleppo could issue visas to the Netherlands at the discretion of the Honorary Consul, however, at present all visa applicants from the mohafasat of Aleppo should present their visa applications to the Honorary Consul for evaluation and recommendation to the principal mission.

It is the duty of the Honorary Consul of the Netherlands to protect the interests of Dutch nationals within their consular districts.

In short the Honorary Consul should be present in any social activities that have to do with his country of origin and the Netherlands and should take an active role in promoting understanding between Syria and the Netherlands, especially through cultural activities: exhibitions, musical plays and other artistic performances.

6. So you are saying that not only is there business exchange between the countries, but also cultural exchange.

Yes, the cultural exchange is usually handled by the Honorary Consul himself, and there are a lot of activities organized in Aleppo.
7. What are the activities carried out by the cultural exchange program?

The cultural exchange program promotes Dutch artists who come from The Netherlands to exhibit their artworks; whether it be concerts, paintings or photography, and vice versa with Syrian artists. There are many activities that can be done but these are all left to the discretion of the Embassy in Damascus and the Consulate to determine which activities to be sponsored.

8. Is there a Dutch community here in Syria?

Yes there is. The Dutch community is mainly divided into three categories: the Dutch experts who work for ICARDA (Aleppo), the Schell experts (Damascus & Deir El-Zor) who visit Aleppo frequently, the Dutch expatriates married to Syrians and the Syrian nationals married to Dutch citizens— as you see the community members are rather diversified; you can see women of Syrian origin married to Dutch men, and Dutch women married to Syrian men.

9. I assume that there is a Dutch club, right?

Not in Aleppo, however, there is one in Damascus, that's mainly because Aleppo doesn't have a large number of Dutch people like Damascus.
10. Let's get more personal, are you married?
No, not yet. I'm single.

11. You haven't found the right girl yet?
Not yet. I have to find someone with whom I can share the same passions, someone interested in arts and involved in the social and intellectual life.

12. What kinds of activities do you like to do in Aleppo, with it being known to be full of life?
Well, some people might perceive me as a very serious person; I like staying out late at night. I like all kinds of activities, but in particular cultural activities. I try to assist to all cultural events such as conferences, concerts and exhibitions, and I participate myself by organizing exhibitions, especially about photography. I am a member of the International Federation of Photographic Art (FIAP) in Switzerland and of the Syrian Club of Photography. I am a keen supporter of Art.
I also use my free time in promoting two important causes from my point of view: the protection and valorization of our wonderful historical patrimony in Syria through several associations like "the Society for the Sake of Aleppo," and the promotion of the role of women in the society through a new NGO which I participated in its foundation in Aleppo, "the Syrian Women Society for Science and Technology (SWISS)."
Tehran, the capital of Iran, has recently been the center of a political crisis. This has caused a significant impact on the country's economy and the well-being of its citizens. The situation has been exacerbated by international sanctions imposed by the United States. As a result, Iran has been facing economic sanctions that have had a profound impact on its ability to trade and receive foreign investment.

In the midst of this crisis, the Iranian government has been working to diversify its economy and reduce its reliance on oil exports. This has involved a focus on developing non-oil industries such as tourism and agriculture. Despite these efforts, however, the country continues to face significant challenges.

Iran has a rich cultural heritage and a diverse population, and has a long history of resistance against foreign interference. The people of Iran have resisted for centuries, and continue to do so today. They have an unwavering commitment to their country and culture, and a deep sense of pride in their history.

Overall, Iran remains a complex and fascinating country, with a rich culture and history. Its people are resilient and determined, and continue to work towards a better future for themselves and their children.
لا تستطيعني قراءة النص العربي من الصورة المقدمة. لا يمكنني تقديم نسخة مكتوبة من النص العربي في الصورة. إذا كنت بحاجة إلى مساعدة أخرى، فأنا هنا لمساعدتك!
قضايا نقشية

عاد الباحث الفرنسي أوليفي سالمون إلى بلده، ليتابع إنجاز رسالة الدكتوراه التي يعدها في جامعة السوربون بباريس، والتي اختار لها موضوع (حبل في كتابات الرحالة الأجانب)، تعبيرا عن شعوره الطيب إزاية حلب، التي شارك، على مدى عدة سنوات مضت، في التعبير عن حبي لها، وإعجابه بها، بعد من الفاعليات الإبداعية.

كان آخرها الإخراج المتميز لفرقة إبداع الكاتب والشاعر جبران خليل جبران "النبي" باللغتين العربية والفرنسية، والإشراف مع الباحث حسين عصمت المدرس في إعداد المعرض التوثيقي الذي أقيم مؤخرا في صاله بلاد الشام، يعدون حلب المحروسة بين الجامع الأموي الكبير والمدرسة الحلوية / صور وثائقية تعود لبدايات التصوير الضوئي وانطباعات فنية لبعض المستشرقين من زاروا حلب يعود أقدمها للقرن 17 م.

والواقع أن نشاطه الحضاري خلال زيارته المتوالية لحلب، لم يقتصر على الإسهاب في العروض العامة، التي لم يكف الوقت المحدود لزياراته، فاضطر في أخرها إلى تاجيل محاضرة كان قد اعدها ليلقيها في إدلب، إلى زيارة تاليه، نرجو أنه يطول انتظارنا لها... بل تلقت منه، رغم ازدحام وقته بنشاطات أخرى، مساعدة قيمة استغرقت وقتا وجهدًا لا يستهان بهما، في ضبط لفظ وإملاء كتابة المئات من الأسماء الفرنسية والإيطالية والإسبانية للفنانين والفنانين التشيكيين، على نحو ما فعل الأساتذ المدرس بالنسبة للأسماء الهولندية، في قاموس الفنون التشيكية العالمية الموجه الذي قارب الجزء الأول منه على الإنجاز، بعد أن أمضت في إعداده أكثر من عقد من الزمن.

ولا أجد بالمناسبة، بدأ من القول، أن الساحة الإبداعية الحلبية، ربما افتقدت، مع أن هذا العايش لها ليس من أبنائها، في غيابه، الذي ارتج إياه بطول، عنصرًا فاعلا ومثيرًا، غرس في ذاكرتها بعمق جنون يستحق تقديرًا خاصًا.

م. صوفان الجندى
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ملاحظة:

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يرجى ملاحظة أن النصوص العربية هي المصدر الرئيسي، وأن الأجزاء المباركة أو المحددة بالله هي عبادة.

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