

Flygtningenævnets baggrundsmateriale

Bilagsnr.:	1270
Land:	Syrien
Kilde:	Syrian Network for Human Rights
Titel:	At Least 156 Cases of Arbitrary Arrests Documented in Syria in March 2020. Including 97 Cases of Enforced Disappearance
Udgivet:	2. april 2020
Optaget på baggrundsmaterialet:	25. august 2020

At least 156 Cases of Arbitrary Arrests Documented in Syria in March 2020

Including 97 Cases of Enforced Disappearance



SYRIAN NETWORK FOR HUMAN RIGHTS

الشبكة السورية لحقوق الإنسان

Thursday, April 2, 2020

The Syrian Network for Human Rights (SNHR), founded in June 2011, is a non-governmental, independent group that is considered a primary source for the OHCHR on all death toll-related analyses in Syria.



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I. Introduction and Methodology

Arbitrary arrests and enforced disappearances have been amongst the most widespread violations since the earliest days of the popular uprising for democracy in Syria in March 2011.

These criminal acts, which are considered to be the most common and pervasive regime violations against Syrian citizens, affecting hundreds of thousands of Syrians, are carried out by the Syrian regime's security services, as well as their affiliated militias, as part of a deliberate and planned strategy, often in a sweeping indiscriminate manner, in order to instill terror and fear into the largest possible number of Syrian people. Approximately eight months after the start of the popular uprising, other parties began to emerge in Syria, also carrying out arrests and kidnappings. The process of documenting the cases of detention and cataloguing whether detainees are released or join the ranks of the forcibly disappeared has been one of the greatest challenges and difficulties faced by the Syrian Network for Human Rights, as is clarified in our methodology¹.

¹ "Syrian Network for Human Rights Methodology", Syrian Network for Human Rights, <http://sn4hr.org/public_html/wp-content/pdf/english/SNHR_Methodology_en.pdf>



Since 2011, the Syrian Network for Human Rights has created complex electronic programs to archive and categorize the detainees' data, which the team collects and verifies; this enables us to catalogue the detainees according to gender, the location where each was arrested, the governorate from which each detainee originally came, and the party responsible for their arrest. These programs also enable us to cross-index cases and make comparisons between these parties, as well as identifying the governorates from which the largest proportion of residents have been arrested and disappeared.

Given the importance and sensitivity surrounding the violation of arrest of Syrian citizens, the Syrian Network for Human Rights has, since its establishment, never stopped issuing daily news of arrest incidents, and publishing monthly reports documenting the arrests, enforced disappearances and releases that took place in the preceding month, in addition to issuing an annual report, as well as publishing dozens of other reports on different detention centers run by various parties to the conflict, and additional special reports concerning detainees. Also, the SNHR periodically submits special forms to the United Nations Working Group on Enforced or Involuntary Disappearances, the Working Group on Arbitrary Detention, and the Special Rapporteur on the question of torture.

Most of the arrests in Syria are carried out without any judicial warrant while the victims are passing through regime checkpoints or during raids, with the security forces of the regime's four main intelligence services often responsible for extra-judicial detentions. Every detainee is tortured from the very first moment of his or her arrest and denied any opportunity to contact his or her family or to have access to a lawyer. The authorities also flatly deny the arbitrary arrests they have carried out and most of the detainees are subsequently forcibly disappeared.

The Syrian regime is responsible for no fewer than 89 percent of all the arbitrary arrests that we have documented, and is the first and most prominent of all the parties to the conflict in systematically perpetrating this violation. In most cases, victims' families are unable to accurately identify the body responsible for making the arrest, given the vast array of forces affiliated with the Syrian regime (including Iranian militias, the Lebanese group Hezbollah, and others), in addition to the four main regime security agencies and their many branches, all of which are authorized to arrest and torture detainees, and to commit the crime of enforced disappearance.



The issue of detainees and disappeared persons is one of the most crucial human rights issues in Syria which there has been no progress in resolving despite its inclusion in several resolutions of the UN Security Council, as well as in UN General Assembly resolutions, in Kofi Annan's plan, and finally in the statement of cessation of hostilities issued in February 2016, which states that "all parties undertake to work for an early release of any arbitrary detained persons, particularly women and children", and in Security Council resolution 2254 of December 2015, article 12, which states that all detainees, especially women and children, must be released immediately. Despite all these resolutions and other official statements, no progress has been made on the issue of securing the release of detainees in any of the rounds of negotiations sponsored by international parties regarding the conflict in Syria.

In light of these considerations in regard to this particular issue, we therefore recommend:

- 1- Arbitrary arrests and enforced disappearances, which are still ongoing, as detailed in this SNHR monthly report, must be ended immediately. The fates of all detainees must be revealed, and their families' right to visit them must also be ensured immediately.
- 2- All detainees imprisoned for merely exercising their political and civil rights must be released unconditionally. The use of women and children as prisoners of war must be stopped and they must all be released.
- 3- The independent international monitors of the Independent International Commission of Inquiry on the Syrian Arab Republic, which was established by the UN, and the International Committee of the Red Cross must be granted access to all official and unofficial detention centers without establishing any prior arrangements or any restrictions or conditions.
- 4- A UN committee should be formed to monitor and periodically assess the release of the detainees according to a timetable that must be presented by all the detaining parties, primarily the Syrian regime forces that are responsible for 89 percent of all detentions.
- 5- All rulings issued by the regime's field military courts and terrorism courts should be suspended or repealed, since they are non-compliant with domestic and international legislation, as well as failing to provide guarantees of a fair trial.

Methodology

This report outlines the record of arbitrary arrests by the main perpetrator parties to the conflict documented in March. In addition, it sheds light on the most notable individual cases and incidents of arbitrary arrest that the SNHR's team documented in March, as well as categorizing cases and incidents of arrest according to the location of the incident.

According to the SNHR's database, we can categorize cases of arrest according to the governorate in which the incident occurred, and according to the governorate from which



the detainee originally came. In this report and in most of our reports, we categorize the record of arrests according to the place where the arrest took place, not according to the governorate from which the detainee originally came. It should also be noted that sometimes we categorize the cases of arrest according to the governorate from which the detainee originally came in order to show the magnitude of loss and violence suffered by the people of that governorate compared to other governorates, in which case we refer to this in the report.

The report also documents arbitrary arrests that subsequently turned into enforced disappearances. A number of criteria must be met before SNHR will classify a case as an enforced disappearance: the individual must have been detained for at least 20 days without his or her family being able to obtain any information from the relevant authorities about their status or location, with those responsible for the disappearance denying any knowledge of the individual's arrest or whereabouts.

The SNHR team implements strict standards in evaluating and assessing any incident of arbitrary arrest in accordance with the principles of international laws and the aforementioned set of principles on arbitrary arrest.

The SNHR's Detainee and Forcibly-Disappeared Department records cases of arrest which departmental personnel collect from various sources, such as: victims' families, SNHR members in Syrian governorates, cooperating local activists, and former detainees, before diligently working to contact the families of the detainees and forcibly disappeared persons, as well as people close to them and people who survived detention, for the purpose of collecting as much information and data as possible, in light of the extraordinary and extremely complex challenges. We also record eyewitnesses' accounts and track cases of arrest to update these records regularly in order to determine the fate of each detainee, their place of detention, and the circumstances of their arrest. We have created on our website a special form [to document a detainee](#) to facilitate access and contact with victims' families.

The ongoing daily process of documenting detainees also comes with other additional challenges for SNHR, which has been documenting detainees' cases since 2011. One of the most notable challenges amongst these is the reluctance of victims' families to cooperate and reveal or provide details of any information on their family members' arrest, even confidentially, more especially if the arrested individual is female, due to a well-founded fear still prevalent in Syrian society that being discovered doing so would result in more torture and further danger for their loved ones and themselves. Instead, families try to negotiate with security forces which usually blackmail these families and demand cash payments, ef-



fectively ransoms, that can amount to thousands of dollars in some cases. Despite the fact that SNHR possesses lists detailing the cases of more than 144,000 detainees, including children and women, we can safely say that our estimate of the actual number of detainees exceeds 215,000.

The failure of the international community and of all the organs of the United Nations to apply pressure on the Syrian authorities to release even one individual (including those whose sentences are completed), even prisoners of conscience, has affirmed the conviction of many within Syrian society that it is useless to cooperate in the documentation process. Most of the releases achieved were part of exchange deals with the armed opposition. The detainee figures included in this report don't include prisoners with a criminal background, but do include cases of arrest that are based on the internal armed conflict, mainly due to opposition activity against the ruling authorities, as well as cases of detention to suppress freedom of opinion and expression.

II. Many Face Multiple Charges Following False Confessions Extorted Via Torture and Intimidation, Then Referred to 'Courts' More Like Security Branches

We in the SNHR wish to emphasize that the vast majority of detainees involved in the popular uprising for democracy in Syria, including political and human rights activists, media workers, and relief activists, and similar prisoners of conscience, have been accused by the security branches of several charges based on testimonies taken from detainees by the regime under coercion, intimidation and torture. The most prominent of these charges are: provoking sectarian strife, threatening the system of governance, weakening national sentiment, collusion with external agents and the enemy, supporting and financing terrorism, and weakening the nation's morale, all of which are broad and wide-ranging charges, which are documented within regime security authorities' reports, with these security reports being referred to the Public Prosecution service, after which the majority of these cases are referred to either the Counter-Terrorism Court or the Military Field Court.

Regarding the Counter-Terrorism Court in short, it was established in accordance with Presidential Decree No. 22 of 2012 to serve as a substitute for the exceptional Supreme State Security Court, and examines detainees' cases according to the Counter-Terrorism Law No. 19 of 2012, an article of legislation similar to the counter-revolutionary goals law issued in 1964. The Counter-Terrorism Court consists of three judges appointed by the President of the Republic, according to the proposal submitted by the Supreme Judicial Council, which is also chaired by the President of the Republic, who try civilians, military personnel and juveniles, and issue sentences in absentia. In addition, these sentences may not be appealed except in the case of those who surrender themselves voluntarily. Although the body's official name is the Counter-Terrorism Court, it tries all the crimes, therefore it can be called an exceptional court; it is, in fact, part of the regime's security apparatus.



As for the Military Field Court, again briefly, this was established by Decree No. 109 of August 17, 1968, with its jurisdiction originally specified as being only for crimes committed in wartime; its remit was expanded in 1980, however, to allow it to operate in both war and peace times and to try civilians, military personnel and juveniles. This court is also formed by the executive authority through the Minister of Defense, and consists of a president and two members who are not required to be law graduates. The rulings issued by this court are not open to appeal, being endorsed by the Minister of Defense. Regarding the death sentences issued by this court, they are ratified by the President of the Republic, with both the Minister of Defense and the President of the Republic able to manipulate the rulings issued according to their personal whims. The Military Field Court is wholly managed by the executive authority that dominated the judicial authority, and therefore the lowest conditions of fair courts do not meet in this court, which is also closer to a military-security branch.

III. The Syrian Regime Is Responsible for Threatening the Lives of Thousands of Detainees Because of the COVID-19 Pandemic

Detainees and individuals forcibly disappeared by Syrian Regime forces are subjected to exceptionally brutal and sadistic methods of torture, which have assumed a vengeful character since the popular uprising for democracy began in March 2011. In a detailed report, we have recorded [at least 72 methods of torture](#) practiced in the Syrian regime's detention centers and military hospitals.

As well as inflicting these horrendous methods of torture on detainees, the Syrian regime also deliberately subjects the imprisoned detainees to unimaginably squalid, unsanitary and massively overcrowded conditions in its detention centers without even the bare minimum of hygiene or sanitation to protect against illness and disease. These conditions are especially horrific in the headquarters of the four main security branches and military prisons, where large numbers of detainees are packed into cells of various sizes, with an average cell area measuring 4 x 6 square meters containing approximately 50 detainees; this means that each detainee barely has an area of 70 cm² for sitting and sleeping, with detainees usually taking turns to attempt to sit or lie down to sleep when their numbers exceed the holding capacity of the cell, as they routinely do; these cells also lack ventilation and the most basic standards of sanitation and cleanliness; the conditions are even more squalid in the solitary confinement cells located on the detention centers' lower floors which lack even light. Throughout the duration of their detention in the security branches, detainees are also prevented from going outside to get any exercise, or exposure to fresh air or sunlight.



Despite these congested unsanitary conditions, detainees are able to shower or wash only very rarely throughout the period of their detention, which often lasts for many years, with all these factors contributing to the spread of diseases, epidemics and infectious conditions, especially respiratory and skin diseases, due to the lack of fresh air and the lack of exposure to sunlight and light. The narrowness of the cells and the cramped, overcrowded conditions also cause detainees to be subjected to suffocation and shortness of breath due to inhaling the smells of bodily waste, sweat, pus, and blood from wounds. The conditions of detention in security branches and military prisons are somewhat similar to the civilian central prisons in terms of overcrowding, human stacking, and lack of cleanness and ventilation.

Syrian Regime forces deliberately withhold sufficient quantities of pillows and blankets from detainees in detention centers, with those which are issued usually being filthy, threadbare, soiled and encrusted with blood, pus or other bodily waste and fluids, and lousy with parasites. In addition, detainees are denied adequate clothing and often left only in their underwear since their clothing is worn, soiled or torn during torture or forcibly removed during inspections; all these practices expose detainees to severe cold in winter, when temperatures fall below freezing.

All these practices make each of the days, months, and years that detainees spend in detention similar to a never-ending hell, with these brutal conditions being a very deliberate and widespread strategy on the part of the Syrian regime with the aim of debasing and torturing detainees. Subjecting detainees to conditions that foster disease and infection and leaving them to suffer without medical help or treatment is another deliberate and conscious part of this strategy, forcing already physically and emotionally traumatized detainees to endure an additional layer of torment and debasement often leading to death. With the recent global spread of the COVID-19 pandemic and the Syrian regime's admission that it has already documented cases of infection, the already grave situation facing prisoners in regime jails is now critical, particularly in light of the detention conditions that are, as explained above, favorable for the spread of infectious diseases such as the COVID-19 coronavirus; this now threatens the lives of approximately 130,000 people who are still documented as being detained or forcibly disappeared by Syrian Regime forces, according to the SNHR database.



IV. March Outline

In March, Syrian Regime forces continued to pursue and arrest individuals who had settled their security situation in areas that have signed settlement agreements with the Syrian regime; these arrests have been concentrated in the governorate of Damascus Suburbs, with most occurring in mass campaigns of raids and arrests, some of which targeted former workers in humanitarian organizations. We also recorded arrests in Deir Ez-Zour governorate, including of elderly people, women and children, for making phone calls to areas outside the Syrian regime's control or with the aim of forced conscription, either in raids on the victims' homes or while they were passing through regime checkpoints and crossings. In March, we recorded that Syrian Regime forces released nine detainees from their detention centers in Damascus city following the issuance of Amnesty Decree No. 6 of 2020. We issued [a special report](#) on the case.

Meanwhile, Kurdish-led Syrian Democratic Forces continued enforcing the group's policies of arbitrary arrest and enforced disappearance throughout the month of March, targeting activists and members of civil society groups who oppose their policies. These arrests were concentrated in the governorates of Deir Ez-Zour and Hasaka. Also in March, SNHR documented Syrian Democratic Forces carrying out arrests targeting civilians, including children, with the aim of forced conscription. Syrian Democratic Forces also targeted several families for arrest, as well as targeting several members of the same families, including elderly people, without providing clear charges, taking those detained to an undisclosed location. We also recorded that Syrian Democratic Forces released nearly 103 detainees from their detention centers, all of whom were released as a result of tribal agreements and on the occasion of the Nowruz.

In addition to these incidents, March also saw Hay'at Tahrir al Sham arresting activists working with civil society groups, as well as media activists and other civilians, with most of these arrests occurring due to the publication of reports on social media accounts criticizing the HTS's management of areas under its control. These arrests were carried out arbitrarily in the form of raids in which HTS members stormed their victims' homes, often breaking down the doors, or by kidnapping their victims while they were travelling or passing through temporary checkpoints.



Factions of the Armed Opposition also continued carrying out arrests and kidnappings in March, most of which occurred on a mass scale, in many cases targeting several members of the same families in the territories under these forces' control; these incidents were concentrated in areas under their control in Aleppo, Raqqa and Hasaka governorates. Most of these arrests occurred without judicial authorization and without the participation of the police force, which is the legitimate administrative authority responsible for arrests and detentions through the judiciary, and were carried out without presenting any clear charges against those detained.

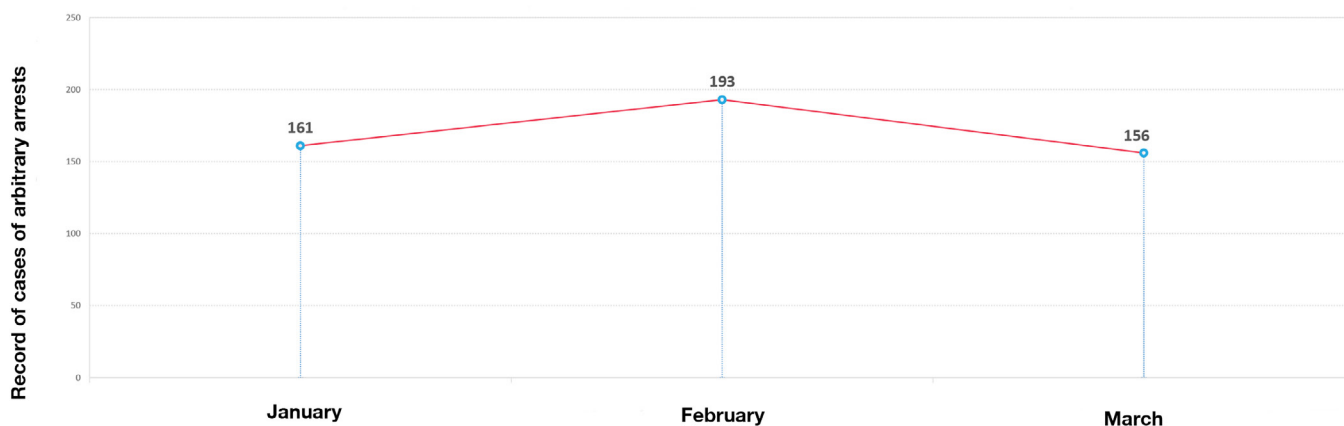
V. Record of Cases of Arbitrary Arrests by the Parties to the Conflict

A. Record of cases of arbitrary arrests since the start of 2020:

SNHR documented 510 cases of arbitrary arrests at the hands of the main perpetrator parties in Syria since the start of 2020 up to April 2020, distributed as follows:



At least 510 cases of arbitrary arrests in Syria in 2020
From January to April



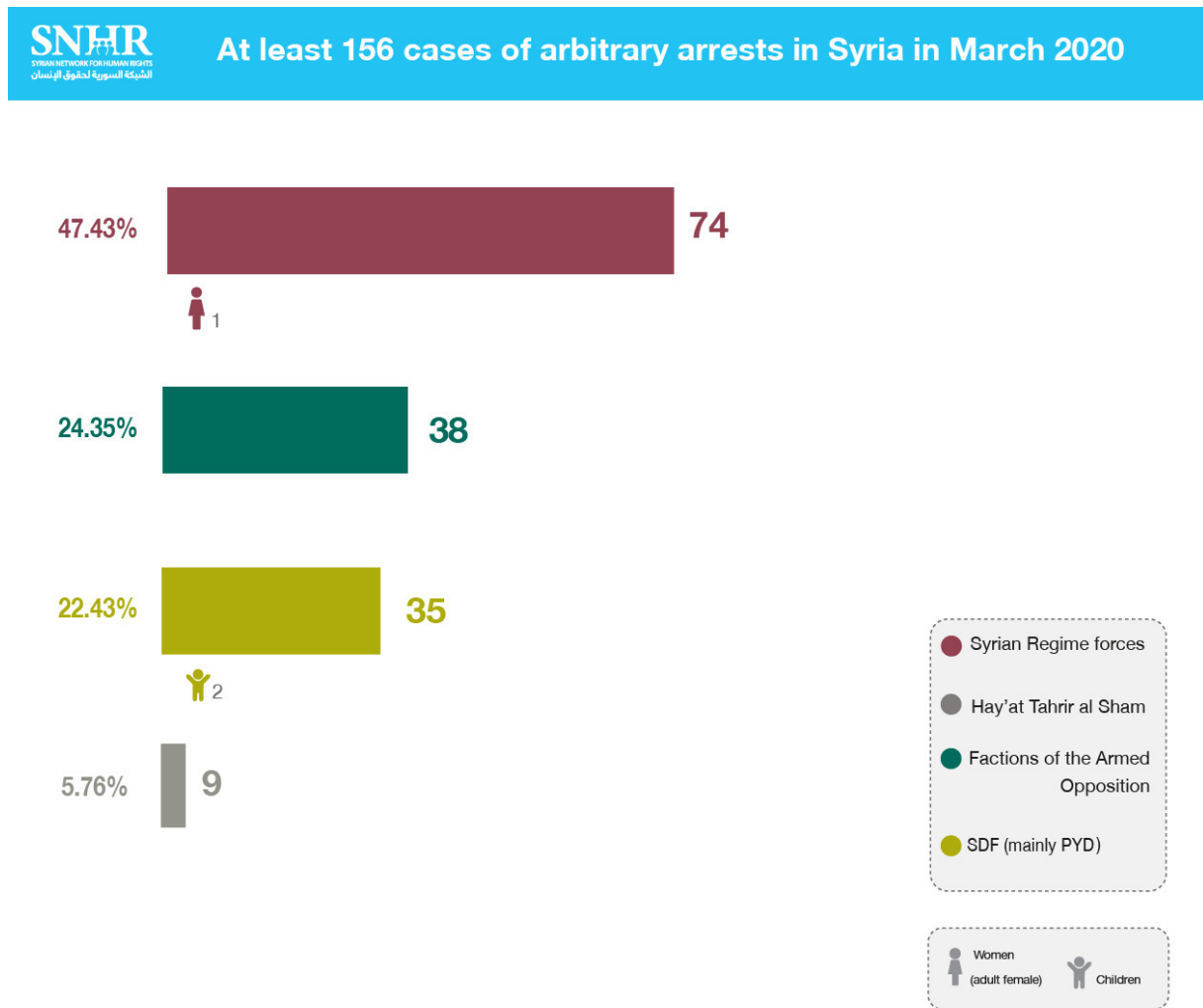
The chart above shows the increasing rates of cases of arbitrary arrests in the months of February 2020. This was due to the wide arrests carried out by Syrian Regime forces, some of which occurred on a mass scale in areas they regained control of.

B. Record of cases of arbitrary arrests in March:

SNHR documented in March 2020 at least 156 cases of arbitrary arrests, including two children (one of whom a female) and one woman (adult female), at the hands of the main perpetrator parties to the conflict in Syria, including 97 which have subsequently been categorized as cases of enforced disappearance.



These arrests were distributed according to the main perpetrator parties responsible, as follows:



A. Syrian Regime forces (army, security, local militias, and Shiite foreign militias):

74 individuals, including two women. 48 of these have subsequently been categorized as cases of enforced disappearance.

B. Extremist Islamist groups:

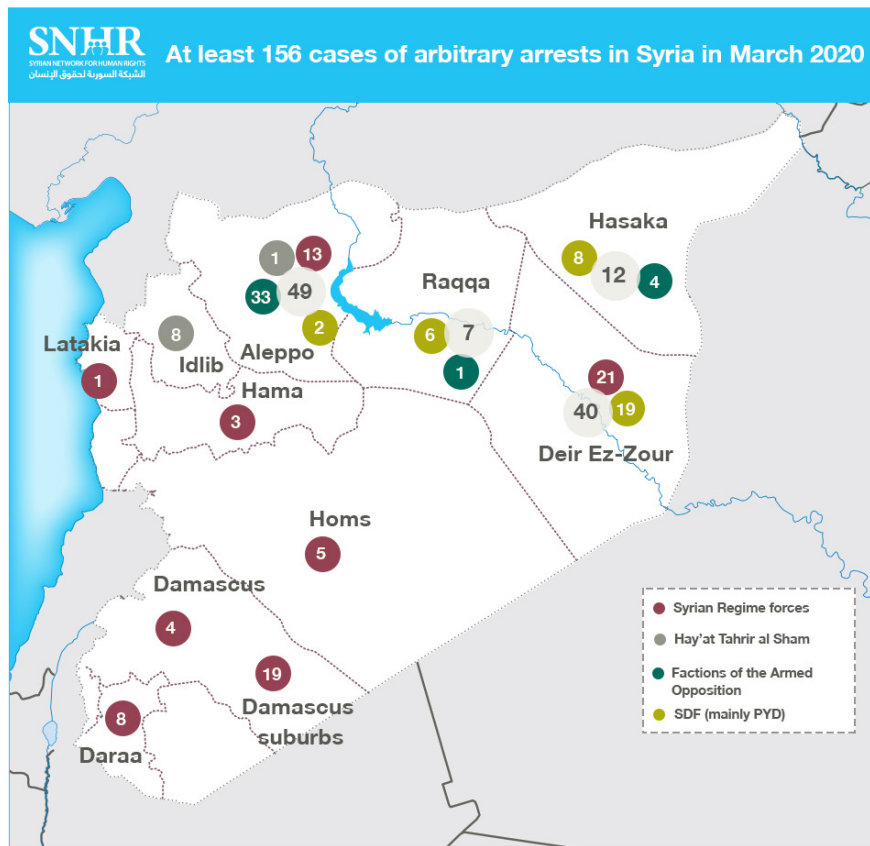
- Hay'at Tahrir al Sham (an alliance composed of Fateh al Sham Front and a number of factions of the Armed Opposition): Nine individuals. Seven of these have subsequently been categorized as cases of enforced disappearance.

C. Factions of the Armed Opposition: 38 individuals. 20 of these have subsequently been categorized as cases of enforced disappearance.

D. Kurdish-led Syrian Democratic Forces (the Democratic Union Party): 35 individuals, including two children (one of whom a female). 22 of these have subsequently been categorized as cases of enforced disappearance.



The following map shows the distribution of cases of arbitrary arrests documented in March across all the Syrian governorates by the main perpetrator parties:



The map above shows that the highest rates of cases of arbitrary arrests during this period were seen in Aleppo governorate, followed by the governorates of Deir Ez-Zour and Damascus Suburbs.

VI. Most Notable Cases and Incidents of Arbitrary Arrest in March:

A. Syrian Regime forces:

- Most notable incidents:

On Sunday, March 8, 2020, Syrian Regime forces carried out a campaign of raids and arrests in Irbeen city in the Eastern Ghouta in Damascus Suburbs governorate. SNHR documented the arrest of 12 civilians, who were taken to an undisclosed location.

On Tuesday, March 10, 2020, Syrian Regime forces carried out a campaign of raids and arrests in Talbisa city in the north of Homs governorate. SNHR documented the arrest of three civilians, who were taken to an undisclosed location.



On Saturday, March 21, 2020, Syrian Regime forces carried out a campaign of raids and arrests in the villages of Wadi Barada in Damascus Suburbs governorate. SNHR documented the arrest of four civilians, who were taken to an undisclosed location.

- Most notable cases:

T'oub al Derzi, from Marat town in the eastern suburbs of Deir Ez-Zour governorate, was arrested by Syrian Regime forces on Saturday, March 21, 2020, in a raid on his home in Marat town. His fate remains unknown to SNHR.

Mohammad Majid, from Douma city in the Eastern Ghouta in Damascus Suburbs governorate, was arrested by Syrian Regime forces on Sunday, March 22, 2020, in a raid on his workplace in Douma city. His fate remains unknown to SNHR.

B. Extremist Islamist groups

- Hay'at Tahrir al Sham:

- Most notable incidents:

On Tuesday, March 3, 2020, gunmen affiliated with Hay'at Tahrir al Sham arrested three civilians, including a media activist, from Sarmin city in the northern suburbs of Idlib governorate, while they were passing through one of HTS checkpoints on the outskirts of Harem city in the western suburbs of Idlib governorate, before releasing them an hour later.

- Most notable cases:

Zakarya Haj Zakkar, from al Atareb city in the western suburbs of Aleppo governorate, was arrested by gunmen affiliated with Hay'at Tahrir al Sham on Tuesday, March 10, 2020, in a raid on his home in al Atareb city. His fate remains unknown to SNHR.

Omar Mohammad Shouman, from Idlib city, was arrested by gunmen affiliated with Hay'at Tahrir al Sham on Sunday, March 1, 2020, in a raid on his home in Idlib city. His fate remains unknown to SNHR.

Abdul Karim Ali Mohammad Ali, from Idlib city, was arrested by gunmen affiliated with Hay'at Tahrir al Sham on Monday, March 9, 2020, in a raid on his home in Idlib city. His fate remains unknown to SNHR.



C. Factions of the Armed Opposition

- Most notable incidents:

On Wednesday, March 4, 2020, gunmen affiliated with a faction of the Armed Opposition carried out a campaign of raids and arrests in Kakhra village of Ma'batli area, which is administratively a part of Afrin city in the north of Aleppo governorate. SNHR documented the arrest of three civilians, who were taken to an undisclosed location.

On Friday, March 6, 2020, gunmen affiliated with a faction of the Armed Opposition carried out a campaign of raids and arrests in al Rehaniya village in the north of Hasaka governorate. SNHR documented the arrest of two civilians, who were taken to an undisclosed location.

- Most notable cases:

Salah Ibou, aged 40, from Qerzaihel village of Shirawa district, which is administratively a part of Afrin city in the northern suburbs of Aleppo governorate, who is an employee with the Bahar Relief Organization, was arrested on Monday, March 9, 2020, by gunmen affiliated with a faction of the Armed Opposition while he was passing through one of their checkpoints in Tranda village, which is administratively a part of Afrin city in the northern suburbs of Aleppo governorate. His fate remains unknown to SNHR.

Juwan Jamil Ibesh, from Kafr Janna village of Sheran district in Afrin city in the northern suburbs of Aleppo governorate, was arrested on Tuesday, March 10, 2020, by gunmen affiliated with a faction of the Armed Opposition while he was passing through one of their checkpoints in Afrin city. His fate remains unknown to SNHR.

Abdin Anta, from Habbou village of Ma'batli district, which is administratively a part of Afrin city in the northern suburbs of Aleppo governorate, was arrested on Wednesday, March 11, 2020, by gunmen affiliated with a faction of the Armed Opposition in a raid on his home in al Ashrafiya neighborhood in Afrin city. His fate remains unknown to SNHR.

D. Kurdish-led Syrian Democratic forces (mainly PYD)

- Most notable incidents:

On Monday, March 2, 2020, members affiliated with Syrian Democratic Forces carried out a campaign of raids and arrests in Theyban town in the eastern suburbs of Deir Ez-Zour governorate. SNHR documented the arrest of three civilians, including one woman, who were taken to an undisclosed location.



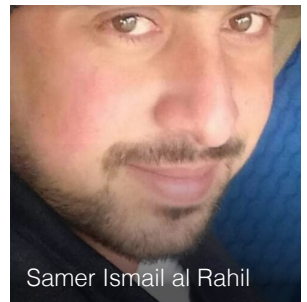
On Tuesday, March 3, 2020, members affiliated with Syrian Democratic Forces carried out a campaign of raids and arrests in Ja'bar village, which is administratively a part of al Tabaqa area in the western suburbs of Raqqa governorate. SNHR documented the arrest of four civilians from one family, who were taken to an undisclosed location.

On Monday, March 9, 2020, members affiliated with Syrian Democratic Forces carried out a campaign of raids and arrests in Theyban town in the eastern suburbs of Deir Ez-Zour governorate. SNHR documented the arrest of three civilians, who were taken to an undisclosed location.

- Most notable cases:

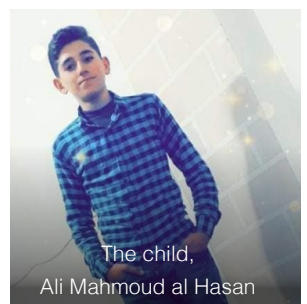
Lawyer Omar al Khamri, from Ja'bar village, which is administratively a part of al Tabaqa area in the western suburbs of Raqqa governorate, the Chairman of the board of directors of "Together for Algarnya", was arrested on Tuesday, March 3, 2020, by gunmen affiliated with Syrian Democratic forces in Ja'bar village. His fate remains unknown to SNHR.

Samer Ismail al Rahil, a college student at Faculty of Arts in Euphrates University in Hasaka city, from al Aziziya neighborhood in Hasaka city, was arrested on Wednesday, March 4, 2020, by Syrian Democratic forces while he was passing through one of the SDF's checkpoints in al Tabaqa city in the western suburbs of Raqqa governorate. His fate remains unknown to SNHR.



Abboud al Akhras al Haf, from al Sh-heil city in the eastern suburbs of Deir Ez-Zour governorate, was arrested on Thursday, March 12, 2020, by gunmen affiliated with Syrian Democratic forces in al Sh-heil city. His fate remains unknown to SNHR.

The 14-year-old child, Ali Mahmoud al Hasan, from al Derbasiya city in the northern suburbs of Hasaka governorate was arrested on Tuesday, March 17, 2020, by Syrian Democratic forces with the aim of forced conscription in al Derbasiya city and taken to an SDF conscription camp in Hasaka governorate.



VII. Conclusions and Recommendations

- The SNHR believes that the Syrian regime has not fulfilled any of its obligations under any of the international treaties and conventions which it has ratified. We refer specifically to the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights. It also violated several articles of the Syrian Constitution itself, with thousands of detainees detained without any arrest warrant, held for many years, without charges, and prevented from appointing a lawyer and from receiving family visits. 65.08 percent of all detentions documented have subsequently been categorized as cases of enforced disappearance, with detainees' families being denied any information on their loved ones' whereabouts, while anyone making enquiries about the detainees faces the risk of being arrested themselves for doing so. The Syrian regime has also violated the right to liberty enshrined in article 9 of the ICCPR through the widespread practice of arbitrary and unlawful detentions.
- Hay'at Tahrir al Sham imposes absolute authority over the large areas it controls and the residents there. The group which has a political entity, and has developed a highly hierarchical structure, is therefore obliged to implement the provisions of international human rights law. Hay'at Tahrir al Sham has committed widespread violations through arrests and enforced disappearances.
- Factions of the Armed Opposition have carried out arrests and torture against a number of residents in areas under their control.
- Kurdish-led Syrian Democratic Forces have violated many basic rights and practiced numerous violations such as torture and enforced disappearance. They also have a political entity with a largely hierarchical structure and are, therefore, also obliged to apply the provisions of international human rights law.

Recommendations

Security Council

- The Security Council should monitor the implementation of Resolution 2042, adopted on April 14, 2012, Resolution 2043, adopted on April 21, 2012, and Resolution 2139, adopted on February 22, 2014, all of which demand the immediate cessation of the crime of enforced disappearance.

Human Rights Council

- Follow up on the issue of detainees and forcibly disappeared persons in Syria and highlight this issue in all annual meetings.
- Cooperate and coordinate with all active local human rights groups in Syria.



Independent International Commission of Inquiry (COI)

Launch investigations into the cases included in this report and previous reports. SNHR is willing to cooperate and provide more evidence and data.

International, Impartial, and Independent Mechanism (IIIM)

Address the cases mentioned in this report and past reports. SNHR is willing to cooperate and provide more evidence and data.

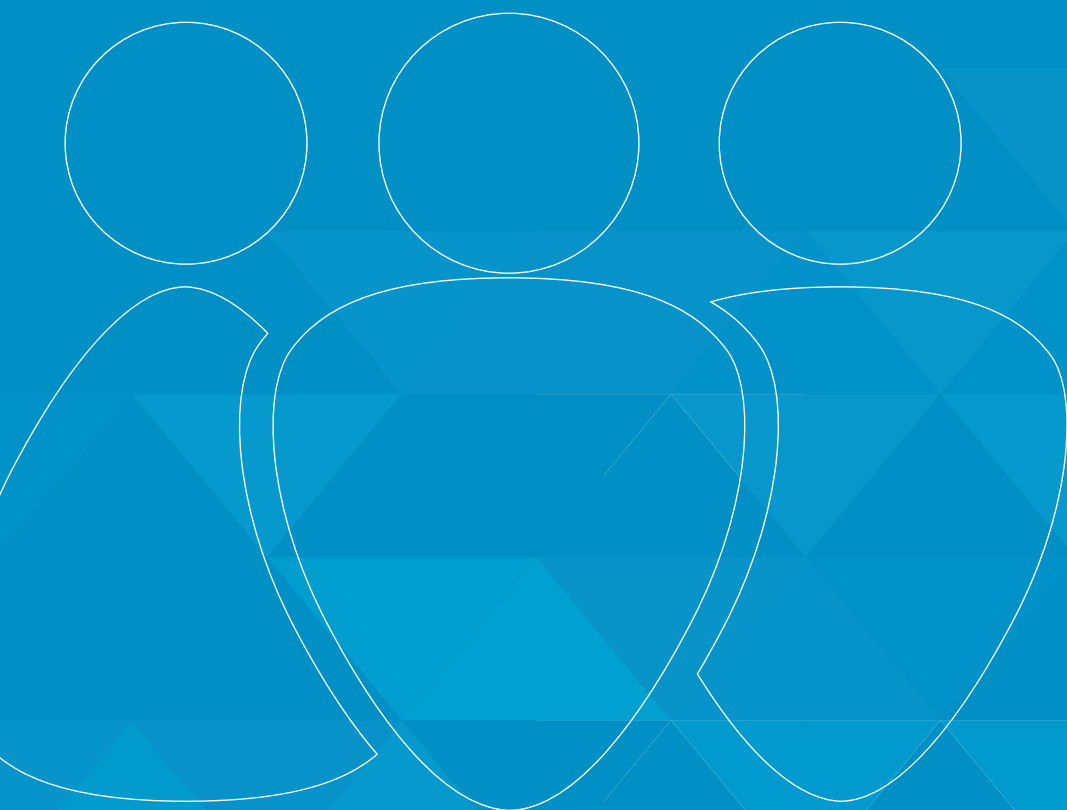
United Nations and the guarantors of the Astana talks

- An impartial special committee should be formed to monitor cases of enforced disappearance, and to make progress in revealing the fate of the nearly 98,000 documented missing persons in Syria, approximately 85 percent of whom are detained by the Syrian regime.
- Immediately begin applying pressure on all parties to ensure that they immediately reveal their detention records according to a timetable. In the meantime, detention places should be revealed immediately, and humanitarian organizations and the International Committee of the Red Cross should be allowed to visit them directly.
- Ensure the release of children and women, and the end to the practice of holding families and friends as war hostages.
- We call on the official recently appointed to take charge of the detainee file at the UN special envoy's office to include the issue of the detainees during the upcoming round of Geneva talks, as this issue is of far greater importance to the Syrian people than other longer-term issues which can be jointly addressed later by the parties after a political settlement is reached, such as the constitution.

Acknowledgments

We wish to extend our sincere thanks to victims' family members and friends, as well as to eyewitnesses and local activists, all of whom have contributed effectively to the collection and verification of data.





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