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At Least 2,218 Arbitrary Arrests/ Detentions Documented in Syria in 2021, 242 of Them in December: Detainees in 2021 Include 85 Children and 77 Women

Any Openness to the Syrian Regime Means an Escalation of Restrictions, Arrests, Torture and Enforced Disappearances



Sunday 2 January 2022

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. Background 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 and army forces, as well as its 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 (SNHR), as is clarified in our methodology¹.

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 nearly 88 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 other parties to the conflict and the controlling non-regime forces in Syria, such as the Kurdish-led Syrian Democratic Forces, extremist Islamist groups, and various Armed Opposition factions, use similar strategies and practices to those of the Syrian regime, albeit at a lower rate and in a less systematic manner than those practiced by Syrian Regime forces; these constitute violations of International Human Rights Law, and, if they took place on the basis of the armed conflict, they constitute violations of International Humanitarian Law.

None of the parties to the conflict and the controlling forces provide any public record for the community showing the whereabouts of the arrested/ detainees and the reasons for their arrest, nor do they provide any documentation of the judicial sentences issued against them, including the death penalty, with the vast majority of the families not knowing the fate of their loved ones, since the vast majority, as we've indicated in all the reports we've issued about the detainees, have been forcibly disappeared. We have talked in detail about the phenomenon of enforced disappearance and the suffering of the families, especially the children, in [many reports](#).

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>

Methodology

This report outlines the record of arbitrary arrests by the parties to the conflict and the controlling forces in Syria documented in December and in the whole of 2021. In addition, it sheds light on the most notable individual cases and incidents of arbitrary arrest and detention that the SNHR's team documented during the last month, as well as categorizing cases and incidents of arrest according to the place where the incident took place.

On 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 record of the cases and incidents of arrests documented by the SNHR, which are included in this report, do not include those kidnappings and abductions in which we were unable to identify the responsible party.

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 under the principles of international laws and the set of principles on arbitrary arrest and enforced disappearance. The SNHR's Detainee and Forcibly-Disappeared Department daily:

- Records cases of arrest/ detention/ torture which departmental personnel collect from various sources, such as victims' families, SNHR members in Syrian governorates, cooperating local activists, and former detainees (survivors of detention), conducting daily updates of data on cases of arrest/ detention, enforced disappearance and release, according to verified information on the person's condition, before diligently working to contact the families of the detainees and forcibly disappeared persons, and those close to them, for the purpose of collecting as much information and data as possible, in light of the extraordinary and extremely complex challenges.
- This information, once received, is then registered on the database after being cross-checked with several sources. The Detainee Department also constantly works to pursue any new leads or information about each detainee, the place of detention, and his or her current conditions via continuous interaction with the detainees' families and those close to them, as well as meeting with survivors of arrest/ detention and documenting their testimonies about the circumstances and experience of their detention and the violations they were subject to, along with those whom they saw within the detention centers.

The Detainee Department team constantly updates the database of detainees who were released as and when information becomes available; this data is added to the SNHR's databases which are retained securely, with several backup copies being stored in different locations. We have created on our website a special form [to document a detainee](#) to facilitate access and contact with victims' families.

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 intended to suppress freedom of opinion and expression.

The ongoing daily process of documenting detainees also comes with other additional challenges for SNHR, which has been documenting detainees' cases since 2011. The most notable challenges amongst these are:

- 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 for help with securing their loved ones' release, effectively ransoms, that can amount to thousands of dollars in some cases.
- The failure of the international community and of all the organs of the United Nations to apply pressure on the Syrian regime authorities to release even one individual (including those whose sentences are completed), has affirmed the conviction of many within Syrian society that it is useless to cooperate in the documentation process.

II. Summary of the Most Notable Events Related to the Detainees Issue in December and in the Whole of 2021:

Among the points which we wish to emphasize in this report is that Syrian regime forces have continued to persecute and target Syrian citizens in areas under regime control in connection with their political dissent and expression of opinions, despite the right to both being guaranteed by the Syrian constitution and international law. This proves once again the truth of the crucial point which we have reiterated several times previously, namely that no Syrian citizen can feel safe from arrests since these are carried out without any basis in law or any oversight by any independent judiciary, and are perpetrated by the security services with no involvement by the judiciary. Following these arrests, detainees are routinely classified as forcibly disappeared persons, and therefore the areas under the control of the Syrian regime cannot be considered to constitute any sort of safe haven for residents there, with a large percentage of those we talked with during our documentation of violations expressing a strong desire to emigrate, flee and seek refuge in other countries; all this underlines that regime-controlled areas of Syria are very definitely not a safe haven for the return of refugees or IDPs. There will be no stability or safety in light of the survival of the regime's brutal security services, which have committed crimes against humanity since 2011 and are still continuing to do so up to the current date. Among the arrests and detentions that we recorded are the following:

A. In 2021:

First: At the beginning of January, the Syrian regime made a series of appointments and transfers of administrative positions and senior officers in several security branches in the Syrian governorates, and SNHR believes that these measures were the reason for the decrease in the number of arrests by the regime by the end of January; despite this, regime forces have continued to persecute and arrest individuals who had concluded settlements of their security status with the regime in areas that had previously concluded settlement agreements with it; these arrests have been concentrated in Aleppo, Damascus Suburbs and Daraa governorates, with these operations continuing throughout 2021, mostly taking place during campaigns of mass raids and arrests and at checkpoints.

Second: We documented widespread arrests, most of which were carried out by the regime's criminal security branches spread across Syrian governorates, targeting pro-regime media workers and civilians, including university students, lawyers and state employees, over their criticism of the difficult living conditions and the regime's governmental corruption in the areas controlled by the Syrian regime, with a series of other charges brought against them related to the cybercrime law, and with most of those arrested being imprisoned in Adra Central Prison in Damascus governorate.

Third: In March, we documented arrests in connection with involvement in activities commemorating the popular uprising for democracy in Syria, which were concentrated in the governorates of Homs and Hama. We also recorded arrests, including against women and children, in connection with making phone calls to people in areas outside regime control, and in relation to traveling and moving between areas under regime control and others controlled by other parties to the conflict.

Fourth: 2021 also saw arrests by Syrian regime forces in connection with civilians trying to migrate illegally by sea and via multiple land border crossings. Those arrested included children, women and people who had previously settled their security status. We also documented arrests targeting civilians while they were visiting the Immigration and Passports offices in Syrian cities to obtain documents related to traveling abroad.

Fifth: We recorded nearly 218 arrests of returnees (refugees and IDPs) to areas under the control of Syrian regime forces, including seven children and six women.

Sixth: We documented arrests targeting civilians on the grounds that they did not participate in the ['presidential elections'](#) held on May 26, while they were passing through the Syrian regime checkpoints, mainly those adjacent to areas that had previously seen settlements. These arrests were concentrated in the governorates of Aleppo, Hama and Damascus Suburbs, where civilians were detained at checkpoints and in some cases were taken to security branches. We documented the release of most of these detainees hours after their arrest, when they had been subjected to beatings and humiliation.

Seventh: We documented arrests targeting journalists, as well as family members of activists in the popular uprising and of dissidents of the Syrian regime.

Eighth: We documented random arrests targeting civilians, including elderly people, women and children, concentrated in many areas of Daraa governorate in connection with the deteriorating security conditions and the residents' rejection of the regime forces' security presence in their areas, with regime forces storming a number of houses in the neighborhoods of Daraa al Balad and stealing or smashing up the residents' belongings.

Ninth: We recorded arrests targeting former relief workers in al Yarmouk Camp, south of Damascus city, during raids on their places of residence in Yalda town, south of Damascus Suburbs governorate.

Tenth: We recorded arrests targeting civilians, including women, on charges of exchanging or receiving foreign currency (US dollars). A number of detainees' relatives told us that Syrian regime forces arrested them because they obtained money transfers from their relatives abroad. Detainees were taken to regime security branches and their money was confiscated, with regime officials demanding that they pay money in US dollars in exchange for their release.

Eleventh: We documented arrests targeting a number of civilian traders and merchants, in connection with their stopping their commercial activities and attempting to leave the country, with these detainees charged with carrying out acts that would harm the 'prestige' of the Syrian state.

Twelfth: We documented arrests targeting civilians in the towns of Babbila and Yalda, south of Damascus Suburbs governorate, after they submitted a complaint to the Municipal Council criticizing the poor provision of services in Damascus Suburbs governorate. We also documented arrests carried out by Syrian regime forces targeting civilians, including women, in Douma city, in Damascus Suburbs governorate, after a quarrel that took place in Hamdan Hospital in the city, in connection with their criticism of the ill-treatment they were subjected to by the medical staff in the hospital.

In terms of releases from prisons and detention centers in 2021, we recorded that Syrian regime forces released at least 691 individuals, including 55 children and 36 women, distributed according to their background as follows:

- 343 individuals - most of them from the governorates of Daraa and Damascus Suburbs - were released in the context of the reconciliation and settlement agreements carried out by the Syrian regime in both governorates. According to family members and friends of the released individuals, and to the information recorded on our database, the former detainees spent an average period of one to three years in the Syrian regime's detention centers.
- 218 individuals were released from civil prisons in various governorates, after the end of their arbitrarily imposed sentences, with their release not being linked to the Amnesty Decree No. 13 of 2021. According to family members and friends of the released individuals, and to the information recorded on our database, the former detainees spent an average period of one to nine years in the Syrian regime's detention centers.
- 24 individuals were released from the security branches without having undergone any trials, following detention for periods ranging from a couple of weeks to two months.
- 106 individuals were released from detention centers in connection with the issuance of the Amnesty Decree No. 13 of 2021. We issued [a special report](#) on the decree and on documenting the arrest of more people than those who were released by the Syrian regime under the amnesty decree alone.

The released detainees spent their periods of arrest/ detention in extremely poor conditions which included being subjected to torture, and endured an almost complete lack of healthcare and medical care, along with severe overcrowding; all had been arrested without receiving any explanation of the reasons for their detention and without any arrest warrants being provided.

Meanwhile, Syrian Democratic Forces continued enforcing the group's policies of arbitrary detention and enforced disappearance throughout 2021, targeting activists and members of civil society groups who oppose their policies. We also recorded SDF carrying out mass raids and arrests of civilians, media activists and members of the Kurdistan Democratic Party who took part in anti-SDF demonstrations in areas under its control, as well as targeting civilians for their kinship relationships with individuals in the Armed Opposition/ the Syrian National Army. SDF also targeted several families for arrest, as well as targeting several members of the same families, including elderly people, without providing clear charges, taking these detained individuals to undisclosed locations.

SDF also carried out campaigns of mass raids and detentions, targeting civilians, including children, on the supposed pretext of fighting ISIS cells, with some of these campaigns backed by US-led coalition helicopters, and other campaigns targeting medical personnel, which were accompanied by attacks on medical facilities.

We also recorded Syrian Democratic Forces again arresting children with the aim of taking them to its training and [recruitment](#) camps and forcibly conscripting them, preventing their families from communicating with them, and failing to disclose their fate.

We documented detentions of teachers and students over their participation in protests held to condemn the earlier arrest of other teachers by the SDF. These detentions were accompanied by beating and verbal insults against students. We also note that all the students detained are children aged between 15 to 17 years old, with their juvenile status not taken into consideration by those detaining them.

We also documented arrests targeting students, teachers and members of the Christian Syriac Orthodox Creed Council, over their criticism of and refusal to adopt the educational curriculum imposed by the SDF in its areas of control; we issued [a detailed report](#) on this issue on February 19, 2021.

In the context of cases in which individuals have been released, we documented in 2021 that Syrian Democratic Forces released 269 civilians, including two women, from SDF detention centers. The duration of detention for those released ranged from eight months to two years, with most being released as a result of tribal mediation.

2021 also saw Hay'at Tahrir al Sham carrying out detentions of civilians, with arrests concentrated in Idlib city, including activists and workers with civil society groups; most of these arrests occurred due to the detainees expressing opinions critical of the HTS's management of areas under its control, or on other charges such as colluding with Syrian Democratic Forces. These detentions 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 traveling or passing through temporary checkpoints, or through issuing summons for interrogation by the Ministry of Justice of the HTS' Salvation Government; we recorded cases of detentions at HTS checkpoints on charges of breaking the fast during the month of Ramadan.

We also recorded summonses being issued by the Media Directorate of the Salvation Government against media activists, after they published posts on their personal Facebook pages on the occasion of World Press Freedom Day. We also documented arrests carried out by Hay'at Tahrir al Sham personnel in IDP camps in the north of Idlib governorate; the arrests were accompanied by heavy shooting and an assault on civilians, including women.

We also documented arrests carried out by Hay'at Tahrir al Sham personnel in Kafrayya town in the northern suburbs of Idlib governorate, in connection with a protest against the Turkistan Islamic Party in front of the Turkistan Islamic Party's court building, in al Fou'a town, after the party ordered a number of displaced persons to leave their homes in order to seize control of them. We also documented Turkistan Party personnel arresting elderly civilians for refusing to leave the houses that the party wants to seize.

All Armed Opposition factions/ Syrian National Army also carried out arbitrary detentions and kidnappings in 2021, including women, most of which were carried out on a mass scale, targeting those coming from areas under the control of the Syrian regime. In addition, we recorded detentions carried out under an ethnic pretext, with these incidents being concentrated in areas under all Armed Opposition factions/ Syrian National Army's control in Aleppo governorate. 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, as well as being carried out without presenting any clear charges against those being detained. We also documented raids and detentions carried out by Syrian National Army personnel, targeting civilians on charges of collaborating with Syrian Democratic Forces. These arrests were concentrated in some villages of Afrin city in the suburbs of Aleppo governorate.

We also recorded detentions targeting women under the pretext that they were trying to cross the Turkish border illegally, before releasing them later.

B. In December:

First: Syrian regime forces² continued in December to persecute and arrest individuals who had concluded settlements of their security status with the Syrian regime in areas that had previously concluded settlement agreements with the regime; these arrests have been concentrated in Deir Ez-Zour, Damascus Suburbs and Daraa governorates, with most occurring during campaigns of mass raids and arrests and at checkpoints.

Second: We documented arrests targeting university students while they were on their way from their homes in Damascus suburbs to Damascus University in Damascus city.

Third: We documented arrests targeting many civilian members of one family from Suwayda governorate, in raids on their tents located between Dael city and Kherbt Ghazala town in the western suburbs of Daraa governorate.

Fourth: We recorded random incidents of arrests of citizens in Damascus Suburbs governorate, with most occurring during campaigns of mass raids and arrests, which we believe were based on malicious security reports issued due to the targeted individuals' opposition to the Syrian regime, including individuals who had concluded settlements of their security status.

Fifth: We documented arrests carried out by Syrian regime forces targeting civilians, including university students, in connection with their criticism of the deteriorating living conditions in the regime-held areas.

In terms of releases from prisons and detention centers in December, we documented the release of at least 41 detainees held by the Syrian regime, all from Daraa governorate, including three children and six military personnel, who were released from regime detention centers in Damascus governorate. The release was the result of a reconciliation process carried out by the Syrian regime in Daraa governorate.

According to the released individuals' families, relatives and friends, and to the information recorded on our database the former detainees spent an average period of one to three years in the Syrian regime's detention centers, where they were held in extremely poor conditions which included being subjected to torture, and endured an almost complete lack of healthcare and medical care, along with severe overcrowding; all had been arrested in raids or while passing through regime checkpoints, without receiving any explanation of the reasons for their detention and without any arrest warrants being provided.

Also in December, we documented the release of 11 detainees held by the Syrian regime, most of them from Damascus Suburbs governorate, who were released from regime detention centers in Damascus, after the end of their arbitrarily imposed sentences, with their release not being linked to the Amnesty Decree No. 13 of 2021. According to the released individuals' families, relatives and friends, and to the information recorded on our database the former detainees spent an average period of one to three years in the Syrian regime's detention centers, where they were

² We generally use the term 'the Syrian regime' rather than 'the Syrian government', because the nature of the ruling power in Syria is a totalitarian dictatorship based on ruling the nation in an authoritarian fashion through a very limited group of individuals, primarily the President of the Republic and his selected leaders of the security services, while the ministers, including the Prime Minister and the Minister of Interior, play a restricted, largely ceremonial role, which is limited to implementing precisely what the ruling regime orders, without any decision-making power or active role; this means that the government's role is wholly subordinate and limited to serving the regime, with all the main powers being concentrated in the hands of the President of the Republic and the security services. Governance in Syria is wholly decided by the autocratic authority of the ruling family and there is no independent decision-making structure. Rather, the government is an empty façade there for show: the Minister of Interior receives orders from the security branches over which he nominally presides which are in turn under the command of the President, while the Minister of Justice cannot summon a civilian-level security agent other than the head of a security branch; the security branches, along with the president, are the true power and the governing regime in Syria. Although we acknowledge that the United Nations and its agencies use the term 'the Syrian government' in general, we believe that this is a completely inaccurate and misleading term in the Syrian context.

held in extremely poor conditions which included being subjected to torture, and endured an almost complete lack of healthcare and medical care, and severe overcrowding; all had been arrested without receiving any explanation of the reasons for their detention and without any arrest warrants being provided.

Also in December, we documented releases based on exchanges between the Syrian National Army and Syrian regime forces. We also documented the release of dozens of people a few days, weeks or months after their arrest, without their being subject to any trials, with most of these individuals coming from Hama and Damascus governorates. All the released detainees spent the periods of their detention within the security branches.

Meanwhile, Syrian Democratic Forces continued enforcing the group's policies of arbitrary detention and enforced disappearance in December, with the number detained increasing this month as SDF personnel continued carrying out campaigns of mass raids and detentions, targeting civilians on the pretext of fighting ISIS cells, with some of these campaigns backed by US-led coalition helicopters. We also documented arrests targeting civilians from the same family, including a child, with these arrests concentrating in Hasaka and Deir Ez-Zour governorates. We also recorded Syrian Democratic Forces again kidnapping children with the aim of taking them to its training and recruitment camps and forcibly conscripting them, preventing their families from communicating with them, and failing to disclose their fate.

December also saw Hay'at Tahrir al Sham³ detaining civilians, including media activists and politicians, with these arrests concentrated in Idlib governorate; most of these arrests occurred due to the detainees expressing opinions critical of the HTS's management of areas under its control. These detentions were carried out arbitrarily in the form of raids in which HTS members stormed their victims' homes, often breaking down the doors, or by abducting their victims while they were traveling or passing through temporary checkpoints. We also documented Hay'at Tahrir al Sham personnel's arrest of a civilian in Salqin city in the western suburbs of Idlib governorate over his criticism of the leadership of the city's police force affiliated with the HTS, before releasing him at a later time.

Meanwhile, all Armed Opposition factions / Syrian National Army also continued carrying out arbitrary detentions and kidnappings in December, including women, most of which were carried out on a mass scale, targeting individuals coming from areas controlled by the Syrian regime. In addition, we documented detentions carried out under an ethnic pretext, with these incidents being concentrated in areas under all Armed Opposition factions/ Syrian National Army's control in Aleppo governorate. 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, with these arrests also carried out without presenting any clear charges against those being detained. In addition to these cases, we also documented raids and arrests carried out by Syrian National Army personnel, targeting civilians on charges of collaborating with Syrian Democratic Forces. These arrests were concentrated in some villages of Afrin city in the suburbs of Aleppo governorate.

Finally, with the 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 favorable for the spread of infectious diseases such as the COVID-19 coronavirus; this now threatens the lives of approximately 131,000 people who are still documented as being detained or forcibly disappeared by Syrian regime forces, according to the SNHR database, including [nearly 3,329 health care personnel](#) who are still arrested or forcibly disappeared, despite its being more than a year since the COVID-19 pandemic emerged in Syria, with new strains emerging since then, and the many subsequent calls for the urgent immediate release of all medical personnel due to Syrian society's desperate need of their expertise.

³ The United Nations has designated it as a terrorist organization

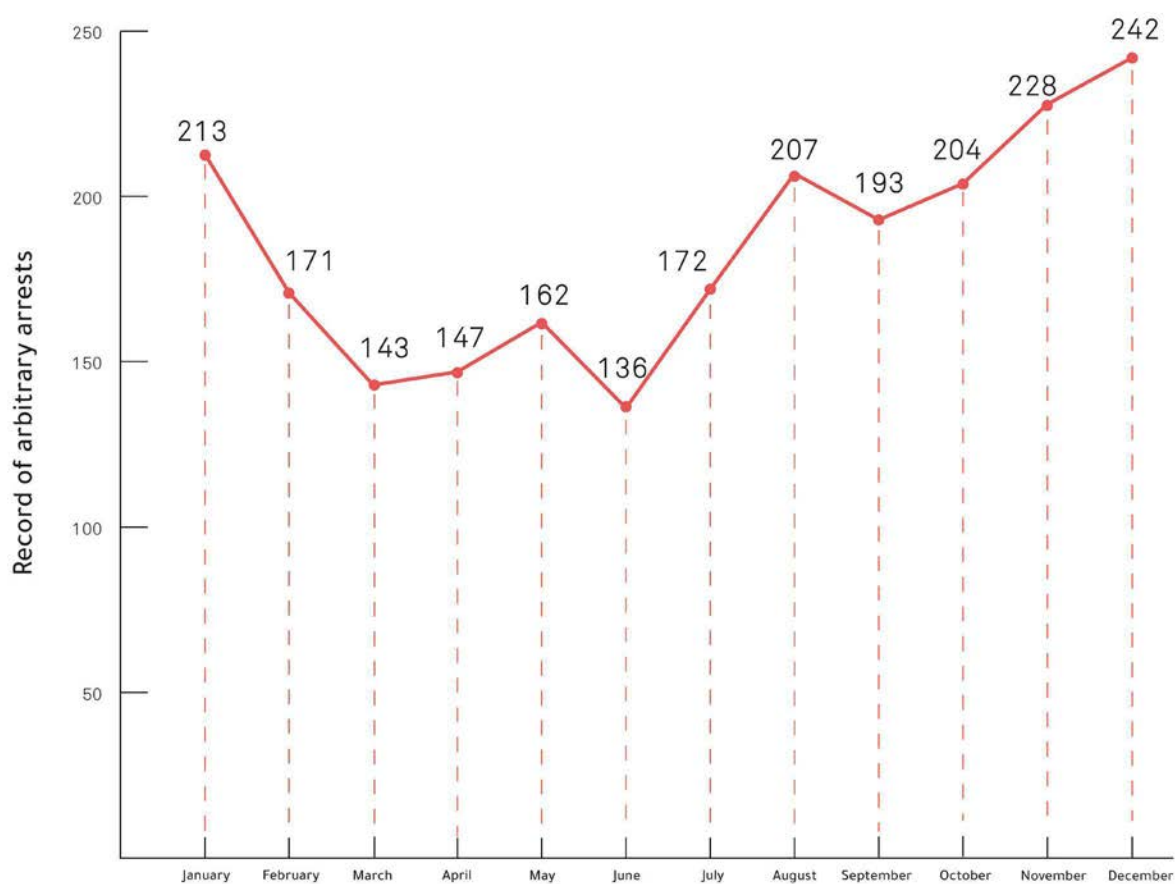
Rather than releasing prisoners of conscience and other detainees, including detainees whose sentences have ended, in order to contribute to alleviating the terrible overcrowding suffered by detainees which poses an additional threat to their lives due to the spread of the coronavirus, the Syrian regime has been arresting even more citizens, as SNHR has documented, meaning additional overcrowding in detention centers. This behavior completely contradicts the demands of some countries allied with the Syrian regime, as well as prominent figures and organizations affiliated with them, to ease or freeze the sanctions imposed by other nations on the regime, under the pretext of helping it to overcome the coronavirus. The Syrian regime's policy towards the issue of detainees clearly reveals the inconsistency of this request, clarifying precisely how the Syrian regime deals with citizens in light of the spread of the COVID-19 coronavirus and how indifferent it is to their wellbeing.

III. Record of Cases of Arbitrary Arrests by the Parties to the Conflict:

A. Record of cases of arbitrary arrests in 2021:

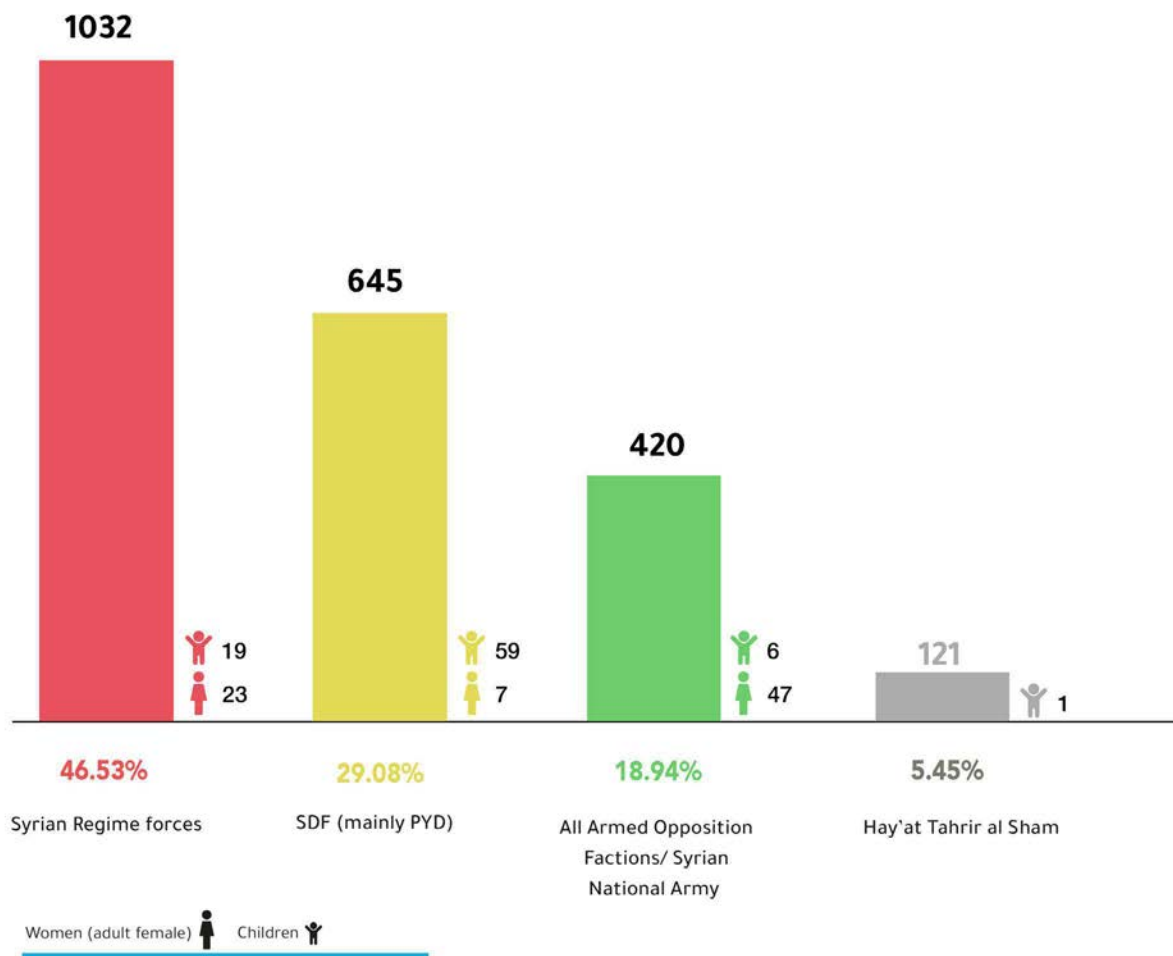
SNHR documented at least 2,218 cases of arbitrary arrest/ detention in 2021, including 85 Children and 77 women (adult female), 1,752 of whom have subsequently been categorized as cases of enforced disappearance.

The record of cases of arbitrary arrest/ detention at the hands of the parties to the conflict and the controlling forces in Syria in 2021 was distributed as follows:



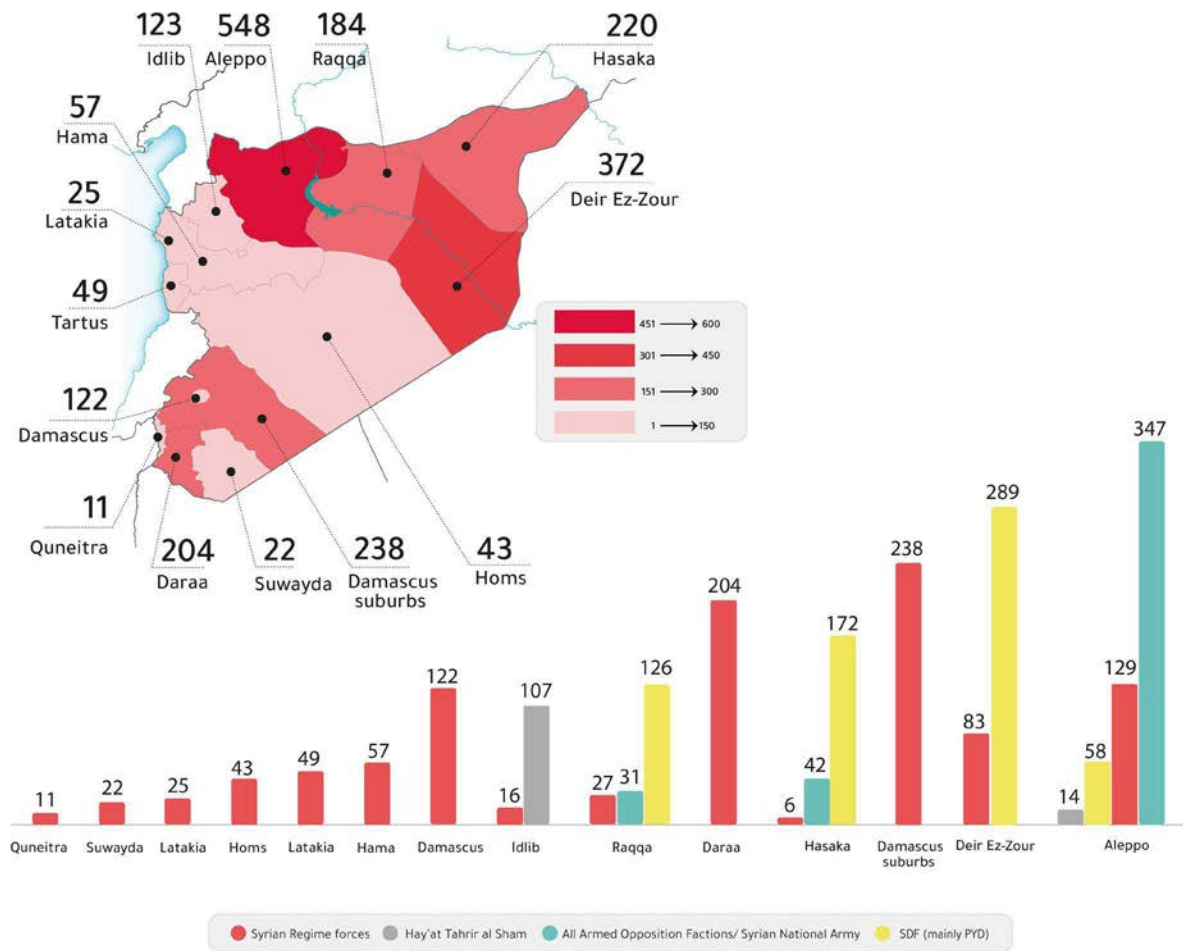
The chart above shows the increasing rates of cases of arbitrary arrest/ detention in December due to Syrian regime forces' widespread arrests targeting civilians on various pretexts, as well as returnees to regime-held areas, critics of the deteriorating living conditions, and activists' and dissidents' family members, with these figures increasing in January, August, October and November 2021. This was due to widespread arrests carried out by Syrian regime forces, Syrian Democratic Forces and Syrian National Army forces, some of which occurred on a mass scale in areas under their control.

The record of cases of arbitrary arrest/ detention was distributed according to the parties to the conflict and the controlling forces in Syria in 2021 as follows:



- A. **Syrian regime forces:** 1,032 individuals, including 19 children and 23 women.
- B. **Hay'at Tahrir al Sham:** 121 individuals, including one child.
- C. **All Armed Opposition factions/ Syrian National Army:** 420 individuals, including six children and 47 women.
- D. **Syrian Democratic Forces:** 645 individuals, including 59 children and seven women.

The record of cases of arbitrary arrest/ detention at the hands of the parties to the conflict and the controlling forces in Syria in 2021 was distributed across all the Syrian governorates as follows:

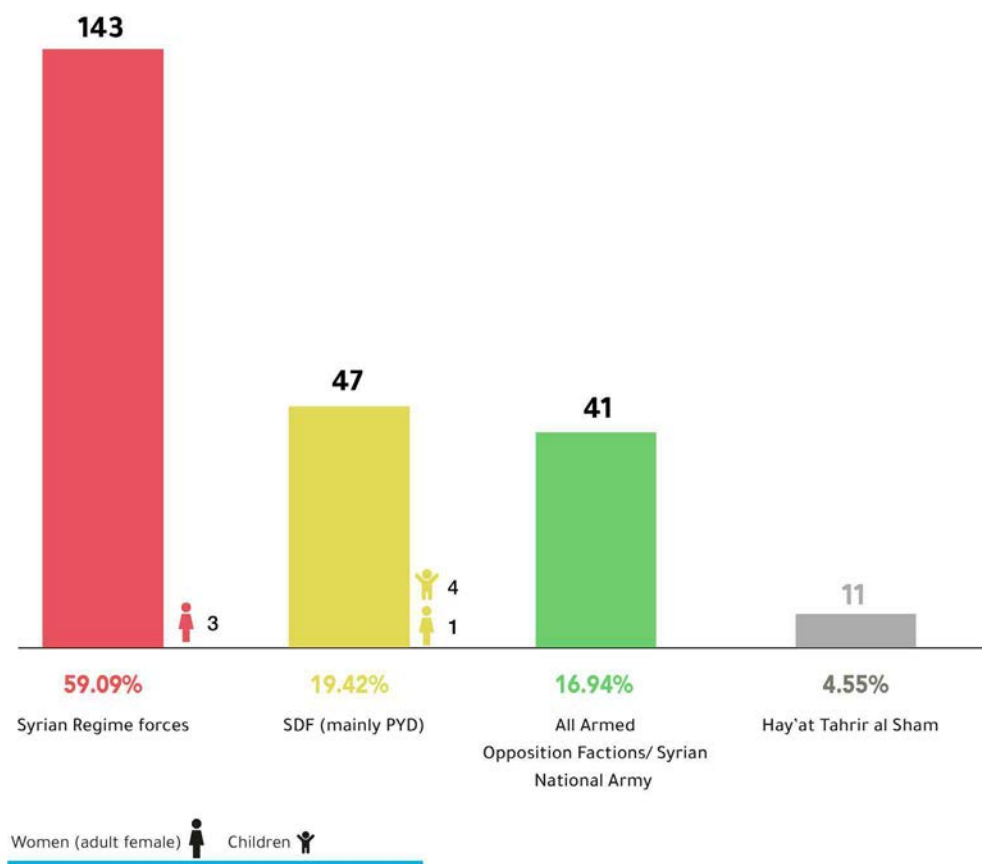


The map above shows that the highest rates of cases of arbitrary arrests/ detention during this period were seen in Aleppo governorate, followed by the governorates of Deir Ez-Zour, Damascus Suburbs, Hasaka, then Daraa.

B. Record of cases of arbitrary arrests in December:

In December 2021, SNHR documented at least 242 cases of arbitrary arrest/ detention, including four women and four children, at the hands of the parties to the conflict and the controlling forces in Syria, 198 of which have subsequently been categorized as cases of enforced disappearance.

The record of cases of arrest/ detention were distributed according to the parties to the conflict and the controlling forces, as follows:



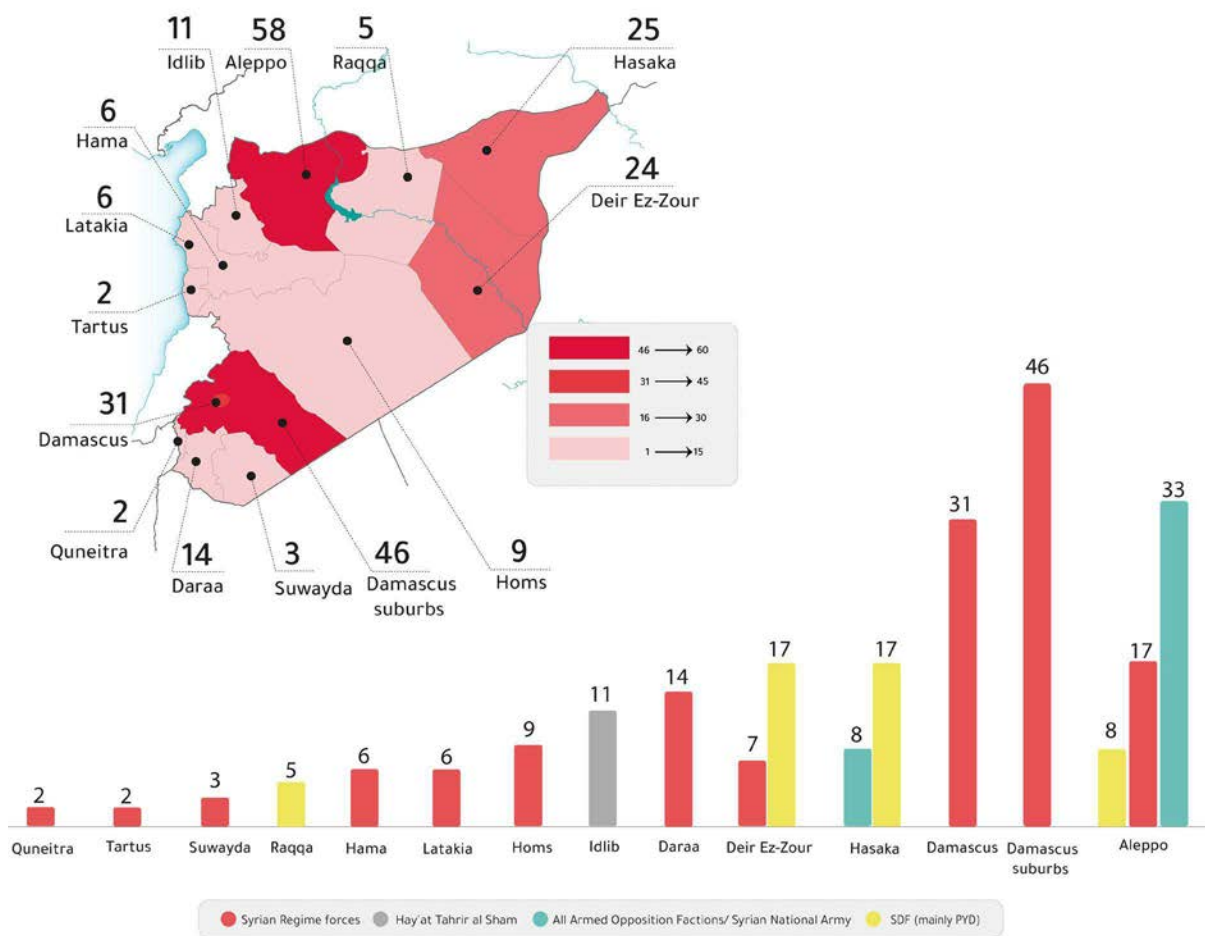
A. Syrian regime forces: 143 individuals, including three women. Eight of these have been released, while 135 individuals have subsequently been categorized as cases of enforced disappearance.

B. Hay'at Tahrir al Sham: 11 individuals. Eight of these have been released, while three individuals have subsequently been categorized as cases of enforced disappearance.

C. All Armed Opposition factions/ Syrian National Army: 41 individuals, including two children and two women. 18 of these have been released, while 23 individuals have subsequently been categorized as cases of enforced disappearance.

D. Syrian Democratic Forces: 47 individuals, including four children and one woman. 11 of these have been released, while 36 individuals have subsequently been categorized as cases of enforced disappearance.

The cases of arbitrary arrests/ detention documented in December at the hands of the parties to the conflict and the controlling forces were distributed across all the Syrian governorates as follows:



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

IV. Most Notable Cases and Incidents of Arbitrary Arrest/ Detention in December and in 2021:

1. In 2021:

A. Syrian Regime forces:

- Most notable incidents:

On Wednesday, January 6, 2021, personnel from the Syrian regime's Fourth Division arrested four children from Douma city in the Eastern Ghouta, east of Damascus Suburbs governorate, while they were passing through one of the regime's checkpoints in Mazarea al Mal'ab area on the outskirts of Douma city, as they were transporting a quantity of copper and electrical wires into Douma city, and took them to one of the regime's checkpoints in the city near al Kilani Station. We documented that they were released on Saturday, January 9, 2021.

On January 31, and February 1 and 2, 2021, Syrian regime forces carried out a campaign of raids and arrests in Janoub al Mal'ab neighborhood in Hama city. SNHR documented the arrest of nine civilians, over anti-Syrian regime graffiti on some walls in the Janoub al Mal'ab neighborhood, with those detained taken to an undisclosed location.

In March 2021, Syrian regime forces arrested a woman in Tartous city for making a video that included a vox pop opinion poll about the living situation in Tartus city; this video was published on March 4, 2021 on Syria TV. The detained woman was taken to the Criminal Security Branch in Tartous city.

On March 16, 2021, the Syrian Ministry of Interior issued a statement on its Facebook page explaining the reason for the woman's arrest.

A copy of the statement issued by the Syrian Ministry of Interior

[Statement link](#) on Facebook

[The video](#) link that was shown on Syria TV

A copy of the statement issued by the Syrian Ministry of Interior



On Friday, March 19, 2021, personnel from the Syrian regime's Military Security Force arrested a woman and her brother, from Harasta city in the Eastern Ghouta, east of Damascus Suburbs governorate, in a raid on their home in Harasta city, on charges that she had made a phone call to one of her relatives in an area controlled by Armed Opposition factions, with both taken to an undisclosed location. We documented that the woman was released the next day.

On Saturday, May 22, 2021, personnel affiliated with Syrian regime forces carried out a campaign of raids and arrests in al Dweil'a neighborhood and Kashkoul area in Damascus city. SNHR documented the arrest of six civilians, on charges of tearing up pictures of the President of the Syrian regime, Bashar al Assad, in al Dweil'a neighborhood and Kashkoul area, with all taken to an undisclosed location.

On Wednesday, May 26, 2021, personnel affiliated with Syrian regime forces detained seven civilians at the check-point at al Shiha village in the northern suburbs of Hama governorate, on charges of not participating in the presidential elections and not having the ink on their fingers as evidence of participation. We documented their subsequent release after several hours of detention, beating and humiliation.

On Thursday, May 27, 2021, the Syrian regime's Air Security Force and State Security Force personnel carried out a campaign of raids and arrests in the neighborhoods of Bustan al Qasr and al Kallasa in Aleppo city. SNHR documented the arrest of 14 civilians over their opposition and refusal to participate in the 'presidential elections' that took place on May 26, with all being taken to an undisclosed location. The raid was accompanied by regime forces destroying shops in the neighborhoods.

On Monday, August 9, 2021, Syrian regime Military Security Force personnel carried out a campaign of raids and arrests in Yalda town, south of Damascus Suburbs governorate. SNHR documented the arrest of three civilians, former members of the relief office in al Yarmouk Camp, south of Damascus city, all of whom were taken to an undisclosed location.

On Wednesday, August 18, 2021, personnel affiliated with Syrian regime forces arrested a woman and her daughter from Homs city, in Damascus city on charges of having exchanged foreign currency (US dollars), and taking them to an undisclosed location.

On Saturday, September 4, 2021, Syrian regime Military Security Force personnel in Daraa al Mahatta area arrested a woman, her brother and her five children, all from Daraa governorate. We documented that they were released on September 8, 2021.

On Wednesday, September 8, 2021, Syrian regime Air Security Force and State Security Force personnel carried out a campaign of raids and arrests in the neighborhoods of al A'zamiya, al Shahbaa, Halab al Jadida, al Mokambo, al Furqan and al Dahiya in Aleppo city. SNHR documented the arrest of 13 civilians, including traders and merchants, in connection with their closing their shops and making efforts to leave the country due to the spread of corruption and the deterioration of living and economic conditions, with these individuals arrested under the pretext of thwarting operations that would harm the 'prestige' of the Syrian state; all those detained were taken to an undisclosed location.

On Saturday, October 9, 2021, Syrian regime forces personnel arrested four women and one child, originally from Hama city, as they were passing through one of the regime's checkpoints in Kwaire town in the eastern suburbs of Aleppo governorate, while they were heading from Hama city to the suburbs of Aleppo governorate, which is under the control of factions of the Armed Opposition. We documented that they were released on October 17, 2021.

On Tuesday, October 19, 2021, Syrian regime forces personnel arrested two civilian Palestinian refugees, residing in the Nayrab Palestinian Refugee Camp in the southeast of Aleppo governorate, as they were at the Immigration and Passports building in Aleppo city, taking them to an undisclosed location.

On Monday, November 15, 2021, Syrian regime forces personnel carried out a campaign of raids and arrests in the towns of Babbila and Yalda, in the south of Damascus Suburbs governorate. SNHR documented the arrest of 12 civilians after they submitted a complaint to the Municipal Council criticizing the service situation in Damascus Suburbs governorate, with all of the detainees being taken to an undisclosed location.

On Wednesday, November 17, 2021, Syrian regime Military Security Force personnel arrested three civilians, including a woman, from Douma city in the Eastern Ghouta, east of Damascus Suburbs governorate, after a quarrel that took place in Hamdan Hospital in Douma city, in connection with their criticism of ill-treatment they were subjected to by medical staff in the hospital, with all being taken to an undisclosed location.

On Friday, November 19, 2021, Syrian regime forces personnel carried out a campaign of raids and arrests in the neighborhoods of al Sakhour, Masaken Hanano and al Haydariya in Aleppo city, in connection with reports that civilians were preparing to protest at the dire living conditions in these areas. SNHR documented the arrest of 17 civilians, who were taken to an undisclosed location.

- Most notable cases:

Waddah Muhi al Din, the office manager of the 'Buq'aat Daw' (Spotlight) magazine in Aleppo city, born in 1955, from Aleppo city, was arrested by Syrian regime forces in the city on January 9, 2021, after he criticized robberies taking place in the city's markets on his Facebook account, and taken to the Criminal Security branch in Damascus city. He was released in accordance with Amnesty Decree No. 13 of 2021 issued on May 2, 2021, for those who committed offenses, misdemeanors and felonies.

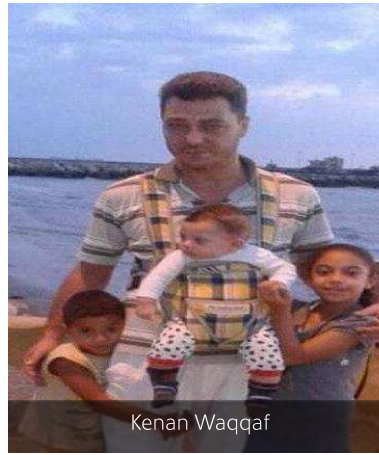


Waddah Muhi al Din

Photo of the post in which Waddah Muhi al Din criticized robberies taking place in Aleppo city's markets



Kenan Waqqaf, a reporter for al Wehda newspaper in Latakia city, who is originally from Tartus city, was arrested on Sunday, March 7, 2021, by Syrian regime forces after being summoned to the Criminal Security Branch in Damascus city over criticism on his Facebook account of the poor living conditions and corruption in areas under the Syrian regime's control, and taken to Adra Central Prison in Damascus Suburbs governorate. He was released in accordance with Amnesty Decree No. 13 of 2021 issued on May 2, 2021, for those who committed offenses, misdemeanors and felonies.



Kenan Waqqaf

Ms. Rawan Isam Rustum, living in al Mzayreeb town in the western suburbs of Daraa governorate, and Khaled Jamal al Rumman, a 16-year-old child from Inkhel city in the northern suburbs of the governorate, were both arrested by the Syrian regime's Air Security Force personnel on Sunday, April 4, 2021, while they were passing through a regime checkpoint in Menkat al Hatab village in north Daraa governorate. The detainees were taken to a regime detention center in Damascus city. On April 5, 2021, we recorded the release of Ms. Rawan by the regime following a popular protest against her arrest in al Mzayreeb town while the fate of the child remains unknown.

Two children, brothers Omran and Omier Mar'i Hasan Abazid, aged 15 and 14 respectively, from Ataman city in the north of Daraa governorate, were arrested along with their father by Syrian regime Military Security Force personnel on Monday, June 7, 2021, during a raid on their home in the village, and taken to an undisclosed location.

Amer Abdul Baqi, from Suwayda city, was arrested by personnel affiliated with Syrian regime forces on Monday, June 7, 2021, while he was passing through one of the regime's checkpoints in Damascus city, before being released a few hours later as a result of popular pressure and mobilization against Syrian regime forces in Suwayda city, as he is a Sheikh from the Druze sect who wears religious attire.



Amer Abdul Baqi

Bassam Safar, a reporter and writer, born in 1962, who works as an editor in the cultural section of the North Press Agency and is a member of the National Coordination Committee's executive office, from al Salamiya city in east of Hama governorate, currently a resident of Damascus city, was arrested by Syrian regime forces personnel on Thursday, June 24, 2021, as he was passing through one of the regime's checkpoints at the entrance of al Dwail'a neighborhood in Damascus city heading to his home. He was released on July 31, 2021.



Bassam Safar

Khalaf al Harbi, aged 70, from Khsham town in the eastern suburbs of Deir Ez-Zour governorate, was arrested by personnel affiliated with Syrian regime forces on Wednesday, July 14, 2021, as he was passing through one of the regime's checkpoints on the road to Atherya village in the northern suburbs of Hama governorate, and taken to an undisclosed location.



Khalaf al Harbi

Alaa Sheikh Suleiman, a secondary school student from Kanaker town, northwest of Damascus Suburbs governorate, was arrested by Syrian regime Military Security Force personnel on Friday, September 10, 2021, while he was passing through one of the regime checkpoints on Jdaidet Artouz turn-off, Damascus Suburbs governorate, as he was heading from Damascus city to Kanaker town, and was taken to the '215' Raid and Storm Brigade Branch in Damascus city.

Wael Hamshou, a student at Damascus University's Petroleum Engineering faculty, born in 1999, from Lahtha village in north Suwayda governorate, was arrested by Syrian regime forces personnel on Wednesday, October 27, 2021, while he was passing through one of the regime checkpoints near Hasyaa town in the southern suburbs of Homs governorate, in connection with his participation in a protest criticizing the poor living conditions in Suwayda city in 2020. We documented that he was released on October 30, 2021.



Wael Hamshou

Ayman Hussein, a teacher from Kanaker village, southwest of Damascus Suburbs governorate, born in 1983, was arrested by Syrian regime forces on Tuesday, November 2, 2021, while he was passing through one of the regime checkpoints on his way from Kanaker village to Damascus city, and taken to an undisclosed location.

Photos of detainees released by Syrian regime forces show the effects of the gross neglect of medical and health care during their detention:

On Saturday, June 19, 2021, the Syrian regime released 32 detainees, all of them from Damascus Suburbs governorate, from its detention centers in Damascus governorate. The release was the result of a reconciliation process carried out by the Syrian regime in Damascus Suburbs governorate.

The Syrian regime gathered all the detainees being released in a bus before releasing them in Kafr Batna town square in Damascus Suburbs governorate. The photos show the clear deterioration in the health conditions of the gaunt released prisoners.



Photo of Muhammad Serdar after his release in 2021



Photo of the released Muhammad Serdar before his arrest and enforced disappearance in 2018



Photo of Abdullah Antar after his release in 2021



Photo of the released Abdullah Antar before his arrest and enforced disappearance in 2018

B. Hay'at Tahrir al Sham

- Most notable incidents:

On Saturday, April 24, 2021, Hay'at Tahrir al Sham arrested/ detained three civilians, from the Eastern Ghouta in Damascus Suburbs governorate, while they were passing through one of HTS' checkpoints in Ma'aret Misreen town in the northern suburbs of Idlib governorate, on charges of breaking the fast in the month of Ramadan, and took them to an undisclosed location.

On Friday, July 16, 2021, Hay'at Tahrir al Sham personnel carried out a campaign of raids and arrests/detentions in al Sahhara village in the western suburbs of Aleppo governorate, after local residents refused to agree to the HTS' Salvation government's appointment of an Imam of a mosque in the village. SNHR documented the arrest /detention of three civilians, including elderly people. We documented their release on July 18, 2021.

On Tuesday, August 17, 2021, Hay'at Tahrir al Sham carried out a campaign of raids and arrests/ detentions on the Khair al Sham IDP Camp in north of Kelli town in the northern suburbs of Idlib governorate. SNHR documented the arrest of three civilians who were taken to an undisclosed location, with the arrests accompanied by heavy shooting and an assault on a civilian man and woman, with the woman attacked for attempting to prevent the HTS personnel from arresting her son.

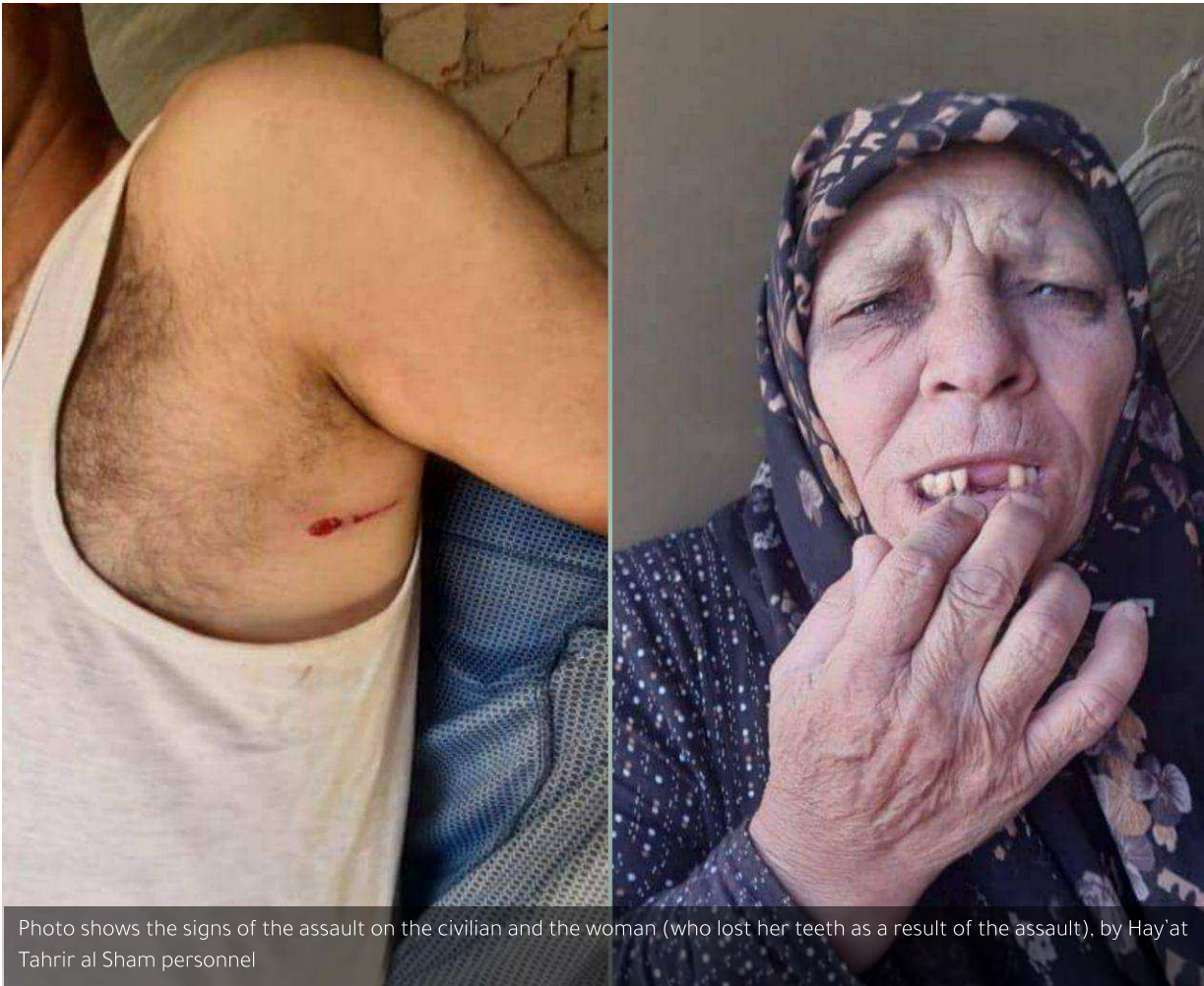


Photo shows the signs of the assault on the civilian and the woman (who lost her teeth as a result of the assault), by Hay'at Tahrir al Sham personnel

On Sunday, September 5, 2021, Hay'at Tahrir al Sham personnel carried out a campaign of raids and arrests/ detentions in Kafrayya town in the northern suburbs of Idlib governorate, in connection with a protest against the Turkistan Islamic Party held in front of the Turkistan Islamic Party's court building, in al Fou'a town, after the party ordered a number of displaced persons to leave their homes in order to seize control of them. SNHR documented the arrest of three civilians, who are originally from al Latamena town in the north of Hama governorate, who were taken to the Military Court in Idlib city. We documented that they were released after several hours of detention.

- Most notable cases:

Yaser Istanbuli, a nurse in the surgical section of al Muhafaza Hospital in Idlib city, who is originally from Aleppo city and now lives in Binnesh city in the northern suburbs of Idlib governorate, was arrested/ detained by Hay'at Tahrir al Sham personnel from Binnesh city on Friday, January 15, 2021, and taken to an undisclosed location.

Firas Ghanoum, from Idlib city, was detained by Hay'at Tahrir al Sham personnel on Thursday, March 4, 2021, in a raid on his commercial store in Idlib city, over his rejection of the decisions of Hay'at Tahrir al Sham's Salvation Government, regarding the removal of kiosks and a barracks in Idlib city, and was taken to an undisclosed location.

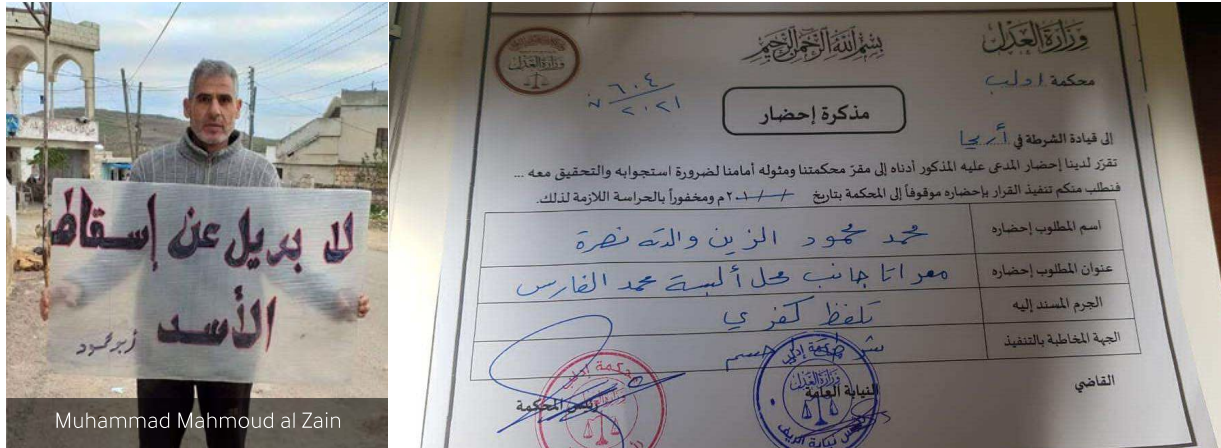


Muhammad al Aqel, an employee of the Syria Immunization Group, from Kafr Takhareem town in the western suburbs of Idlib governorate, was arrested by Hay'at Tahrir al Sham personnel on Monday, March 22, 2021, while he was at a training meeting for the team in Armanaz town in the western suburbs of Idlib governorate, and was taken to an undisclosed location.



Muhammad Mahmoud al Zain, an activist in the popular uprising from Ma'rata village in the southern suburbs of Idlib governorate, was arrested/ detained by Hay'at Tahrir al Sham personnel on Wednesday, April 7, 2021, during a raid on his home in the village over a lawsuit filed against him claiming that he "cursed the name of God". We documented that he was released on Sunday, April 25, 2021.

A subpoena issued by the Ministry of Justice of the Salvation Government to arrest Muhammad Mahmoud al Zain



Muhammad Alam al Din al Sabbagh, a university student at the Faculty of Commerce and Economics and a media activist with the Euphrates Humanitarian Association, from Darat Ezza city in the western suburbs of Aleppo governorate, was arrested/ detained by Hay'at Tahrir al Sham personnel on Wednesday, April 7, 2021, near Termanin village in the northern suburbs of Idlib governorate over allegations of his dealing with Syrian Democratic Forces, and was taken to an undisclosed location.



Omar Haj Kadour, a French Press Agency correspondent, from Binnesh city in the suburbs of Idlib governorate, was summoned by the Information Directorate of the Hay'at Tahrir al Sham's Salvation Government in Idlib city, on Tuesday, May 4, 2021, in connection with a post on his personal Facebook page, on the occasion of World Press Freedom Day, with the post including a photo of him taken whilst he was being subjected to a violation months ago by Hay'at Tahrir al Sham personnel; the Directorate officials punctured his press card issued by them as a preliminary penalty, and he was warned that publishing the same photo in the future would expose him to greater penalties up to preventing him from engaging in any media coverage and work permanently, and he was asked to pledge not to re-publish it.

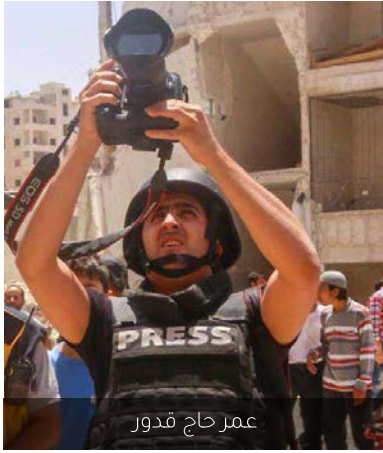


Photo of the post that Omar Haj Kadour published on his page



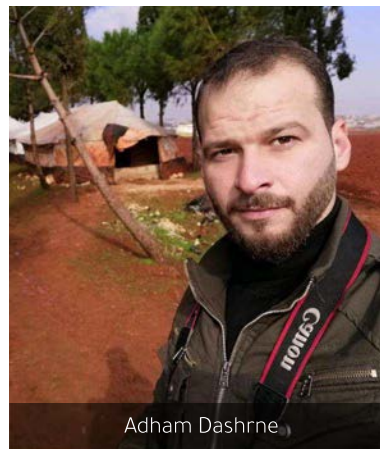
Ahmad Rahhal, from Mer'yan village in the southern suburbs of Idlib governorate who lives in Salqin city in the western suburbs of the governorate, was arrested by Hay'at Tahrir al Sham personnel on Tuesday, June 8, 2021, in connection with criticizing a money collection receipt issued by HTS' Salvation Government in a post on his Facebook account, and taken to an undisclosed location.



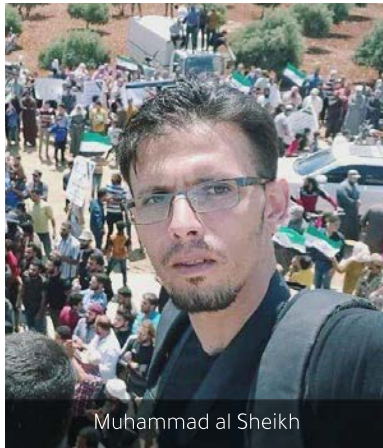
Photo of the post on Ahmad Rahhal's Facebook page



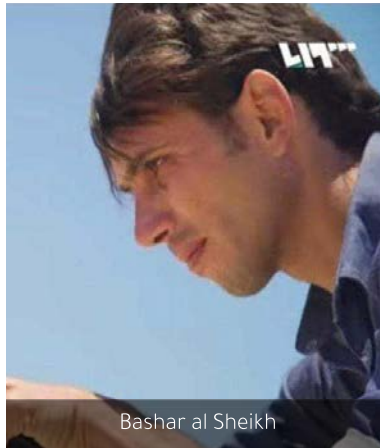
Adham Dashrne, a media activist, who also works as a photographer with the Jaysh al Ahrar faction affiliated with one of the Armed Opposition factions, from Taftanaz city in the northern suburbs of Idlib governorate, was arrested/ detained by Hay'at Tahrir al Sham personnel on Wednesday, August 4, 2021, upon visiting the Military Court in Idlib city, in connection with a lawsuit filed against him on charges of insulting the Salvation Government which is affiliated with Hay'at Tahrir al Sham, on Facebook. We documented his release on Wednesday, August 11, 2021.



Bashar and Muhammad al Sheikh, two brothers, both media workers from Kafr Nbouda town in the northwest of Hama governorate, currently living in al Anadolu IDP Camp near Kafr Lousin village in north of Idlib governorate, were arrested/ detained on Saturday, September 4, 2021, by Hay'at Tahrir al Sham personnel in a raid on their residence in the camp on charges of dealing with the US-led coalition forces. We documented that Muhammad al Sheikh was released on September 6, 2021, while the fate of his brother, Bashar, remains unknown.



Muhammad al Sheikh



Bashar al Sheikh

Muhammad al Amin, a member of the Ariha Civil Defense center's staff, from Shnan village in the southern suburbs of Idlib governorate, was arrested/ detained by Hay'at Tahrir al Sham personnel on September 4, 2021, during a raid on his home in the village and taken to an undisclosed location. A few days after his arrest, his family was informed that he was being transferred to al Shami Hospital in Arhia city in south of Idlib governorate as his health deteriorated sharply due to being tortured in detention.



Muhammad al Amin

Mamdouh Hilal, the director of the Big Heart Foundation office in Sarmada city in Idlib suburbs, from Sarmada city, was arrested by Hay'at Tahrir al Sham personnel on Friday, November 12, 2021, for interrogation in connection with the killing of the accountant of the Big Heart Foundation, Firas al Awad, after al Awad was shot and a sum of money allocated to the organization was stolen on Thursday, April 1, 2021, in front of the organization's office in Kafr Yahmoul town in the northern suburbs of Idlib governorate, with Mamdouh being taken to an undisclosed location.

C. All Armed Opposition factions/ Syrian National Army

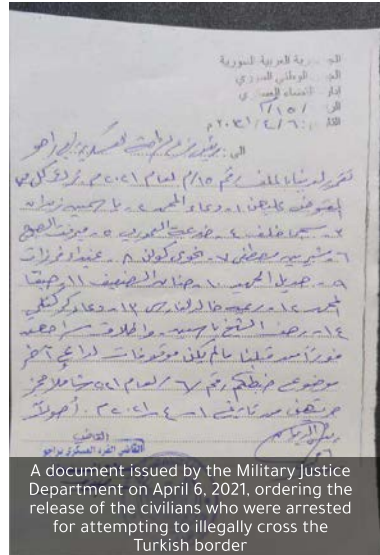
- Most notable incidents:

On Thursday, January 7, 2021, the Syrian National Army forces carried out a campaign of raids and arrests/ detentions on Hammam al Turkman village, which is administratively a part of Tal Abyad area in the northern suburbs of Raqqa governorate. SNHR has documented the arrest of seven civilians, including three women, who were taken to an undisclosed location.

On Wednesday, February 3, 2021, the Syrian National Army forces carried out a campaign of raids and arrests/ detentions in Ras al Ein city in the northwestern suburbs of Hasaka governorate, in connection with the explosion of two IEDs of unknown origin in Ras al Ein city center on the same day. SNHR documented the detention of 10 civilians, including three children and five women, over their appearance in video footage recorded by surveillance cameras while they were passing through the area at the time of the explosion, with all those arrested being taken to one of the Syrian National Army's detention centers in Ras al Ein city. The three children, the five women and two other persons were released the next day, Thursday, February 4, 2021, and their relatives informed us that they had been tortured.

On Sunday, March 14, 2021, Syrian National Army forces arrested/ detained seven women from Homs city, while they were passing through one of the Syrian National Army's checkpoints in Bulbul town, which is administratively a part of Afrin city in the northern suburbs of Aleppo governorate, as they were trying to cross the Turkish borders. We recorded their release on March 20, 2021.

On Friday, April 2, 2021, Syrian National Army personnel arrested/ detained 19 civilians, including 15 women, in Rajo town, which is administratively a part of Afrin city in the northern suburbs of Aleppo governorate, over their attempt to illegally cross the Turkish border, and took them to one of the Syrian National Army's detention centers in the town. We recorded their release on Tuesday, April 6, 2021.



On Sunday, October 17, 2021, Syrian National Army forces carried out a campaign of raids and arrests in Ma'mal Oshaghi village, which is administratively a part of Afrin city in the northern suburbs of Aleppo governorate. SNHR documented the arrest of three civilians, on charges of collaborating with Syrian Democratic Forces, and were taken to an undisclosed location.

- Most notable cases:

Adnan Rahim Jammou, his wife Fatima Mahmoud Hounik, his son Rezkar, and female child Alia, from Kafr Shileh village, which is administratively a part of Afrin city in the northern suburbs of Aleppo governorate, were detained by personnel affiliated with the Syrian National Army forces on Friday, January 1, 2021, in a raid on their home in al Mahmoudiya neighborhood of Afrin city, and taken to an undisclosed location.



Ms. Fatima Mahmoud, aged 50, from Kafrdelli Tahtani village, which is administratively a part of Afrin city in the northern suburbs of Aleppo governorate, was arrested/ detained by personnel affiliated with the Syrian National Army forces on Sunday, January 3, 2021, in the village, and taken to one of National Army's detention centers in Afrin city.

Hayyan Habbabeh, a media activist from al Nqeir village in the southern suburbs of Idlib governorate who works in the healthcare center of Violet organization in Izaz city in the northern suburbs of Aleppo governorate and lives in Izaz city, was arrested by personnel affiliated with the Syrian National Army forces in Izaz city on Thursday, January 21, 2021, and taken to an undisclosed location. We documented that he was released on January 30, 2021.



Saleh Izzo al Mustafa, from al Rehaniya village in the suburbs of Hasaka governorate, was detained by personnel affiliated with Syrian National Army on Wednesday, February 3, 2021 in connection with the explosion of two IEDs of unknown origin in Ras al Ein city center in the northwestern suburbs of Hasaka governorate, over his appearance in video footage recorded by surveillance cameras at the time of the explosion, and was taken to one of the Syrian National Army's detention centers in Ras al Ein city. We documented that he was released on February 11, 2021, with his body bearing signs of torture.

Photos of the civilian Saleh Izzo al Mustafa show the signs of torture on his body



Two women, named as Hifin Awsou and Mazkin Awsou, from Qastelih Kaishek, which is administratively a part of Afrin city in the northern suburbs of Aleppo governorate, aged 39 and 45 respectively, were arrested by Syrian National Army forces on Sunday, August 15, 2021, during a raid on their homes in al Ashrafiya neighborhood in Afrin city, and taken to an undisclosed location.

Ali al Sultan al Faraj, from Balwa village, which is administratively a part of Slouk district in the northern suburbs of Raqqa governorate, was abducted from a café in Balwa village on Tuesday, September 7, 2021, by gunmen affiliated with the Syrian National Army's 20th Division, known as Soqoor al Sonna, and taken to a house in Ali Bajeliya village in the suburbs of Raqqa governorate, where the SNA personnel brutally tortured him by lashing him with a whip and beating him with a club all over his body, while he was completely stripped naked, with the attackers adding further insult to injury by forcing their victim to apologize to those torturing him while filming these debased acts. Following this brutal attack and the grotesque forced 'apology', along with the attackers' relentless verbal insults to the victim throughout the attack, they subsequently released Mr. Al Faraj several hours later, dumping him near Hamam al Turkman village in the suburbs of Raqqa governorate, publishing those disturbing videos on the Internet on September 9, 2021.



Photo showing the signs of torture on the body of Ali al Sultan al Faraj



Photo of Ali al Sultan al Faraj during his detention

Abdul Rahman Hasan and his son Roudi, from Yalanqouz village, which is administratively a part of Afrin city in the northern suburbs of Aleppo governorate, were arrested/ detained by Syrian National Army personnel on Friday, November 12, 2021, while they were passing through one of Syrian National Army's checkpoints in Izaz city in the northern suburbs of Aleppo, on charges of collaborating with Syrian Democratic Forces, and taken to an undisclosed location.



Roudi Hasan



Abdul Rahman Hasan

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

- Most notable incidents:

On Wednesday, January 20, 2021, Syrian Democratic Forces' personnel in al Derbasiya city in the northern suburbs of Hasaka governorate physically and verbally assaulted students from a number of local schools who held a protest against the arrest of seven teachers by the SDF on January 19, 2021, beating and insulting the young protesters, as well as detaining a number of them.

SNHR has documented the detention of 17 students, including six females, by the SDF forces, who beat and insulted the students. We documented that all of them were released on Saturday, January 23, 2021. We also note that all the students who were detained are children aged between 15 to 17 years old, with their juvenile status not being taken into consideration.

Photo showing Syrian Democratic Forces arresting one of the students while they were participating in a protest against the detention of teachers in al Derbasiya city



Video showing Syrian Democratic Forces beating and arresting the students while they were participating in a protest against the detention of teachers in al Derbasiya city



On Saturday, February 6, 2021, Syrian Democratic Forces carried out a campaign of raids and arrests/ detentions in Amouda city in the northern suburbs of Hasaka governorate. SNHR documented the detention of five teachers, for teaching a curriculum different to the one imposed by the SDF in the areas under the group's control, and taken to an undisclosed location.

On Monday, February 8, 2021, clashes erupted between Syrian Democratic Forces personnel and Syrian National Army factions on the frontline of al Toukhar al Saghir village, which is administratively a part of al Jarablos city in the eastern suburbs of Aleppo governorate, on the line between the two parties, after an attempt by the SDF to infiltrate the area. The Syrian Democratic Forces personnel, while withdrawing from the outskirts of the village, kidnapped a farmer and his children to use them as human shields, with no additional information emerging up to the current moment about their fate. The area is under the control of the Syrian National Army.

On Friday, March 5, 2021, Syrian Democratic Forces personnel carried out a raid on the Public Surgical Hospital in a Sh-heil city in the eastern suburbs of Deir Ez-Zour governorate, sabotaged medical equipment and furniture there and arrested/detained eight civilians present in the hospital, including a doctor and three nurses. The arrests/detentions were accompanied by verbal and physical assaults against the hospital staff by the SDF personnel, in addition to the burning of cars and motorcycles belonging to hospital personnel.





Photo shows Garboul al Shehadah, an administrator at the hospital, who was beaten by Syrian Democratic Forces personnel



Photo shows Dr. Raed, a specialist in internal diseases, who was beaten by Syrian Democratic Forces personnel

On Sunday, April 18, 2021, Syrian Democratic Forces carried out a campaign of arrests/ detentions in Jdaidet Kahit village, which is administratively a part of al Karama district in the eastern suburbs of Raqqa governorate, in retaliation for an anti-SDF demonstration in the village which took place after SDF personnel shot two civilians dead. SNHR documented the arrest of 15 civilians in the raids, with the arrests being accompanied by the burning of three houses owned by civilian village residents, and recorded their release five days later on April 23, 2021.

On Friday, October 15, 2021, Syrian Democratic Forces carried out a campaign of raids and arrest/ detention on Tal Abyad Street in the middle of Raqqa city, following an anti-SDF protest that broke out criticizing the poor living and service conditions and arrest campaigns in SDF-controlled areas. SNHR documented the arrest of four civilians, who were taken to an undisclosed location.

- Most notable cases:

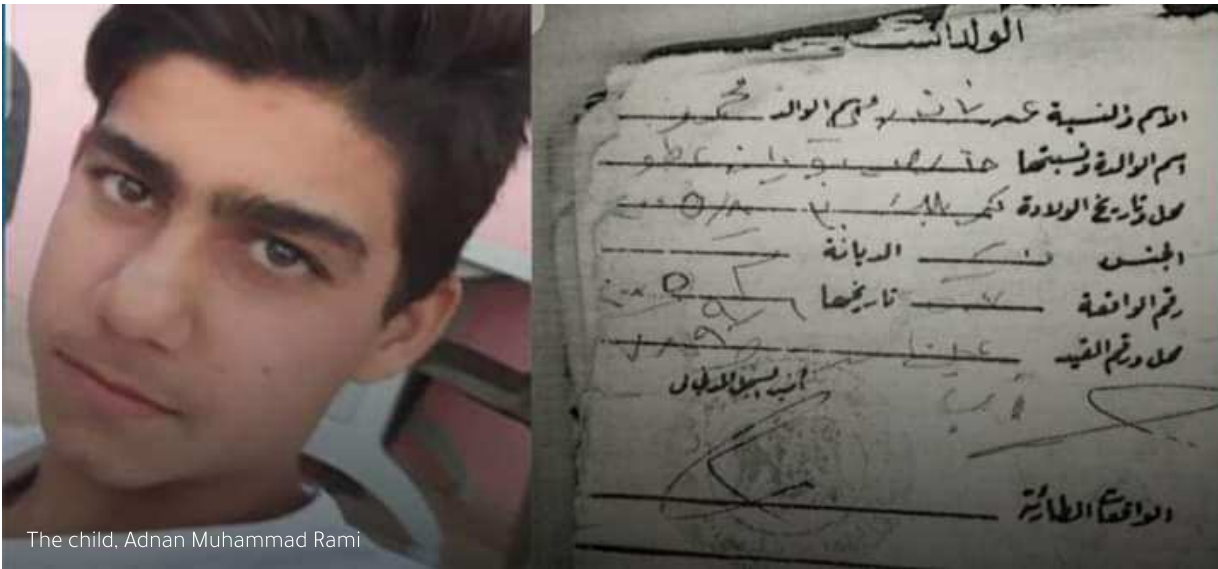
Yaser Khalil al Khader, from Raqqa city, was detained by Syrian Democratic Forces personnel on Monday, January 25, 2021, in a raid on his home in the city, over his criticism via his Facebook account of the SDF's practice of demolishing homes which supposedly violate building regulations. We documented that he was released the next day.

Yaser Khalil al Khader



Yaser Khalil al Khader

Adnan Muhammad Rami, a 15-year-old child from Karda village, which is administratively a part of Kobani city in Aleppo suburbs, was kidnapped by Syrian Democratic Forces personnel on Wednesday, February 3, 2021, and enrolled at one of SDF's training camp.



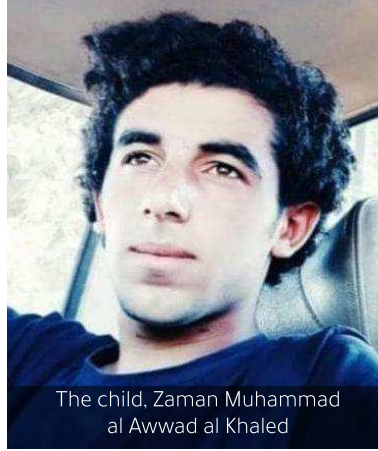
The child, Adnan Muhammad Rami

Ali Saleh al Wakaa, a media activist from Abu Hamam city, which is administratively a part of al Sh'aitat area in the eastern suburbs of Deir Ez-Zour governorate, was detained by Syrian Democratic Forces personnel on Thursday, February 4, 2021, in Hajin Hospital in the eastern suburbs of the governorate, during a visit by a delegation of the US-led Coalition to inspect the rehabilitation operations in the hospital, and taken to an undisclosed location.



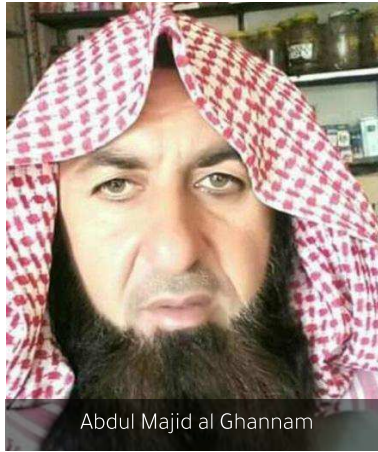
Ali Saleh al Wakaa

Zaman Muhammad al Awwad al Khaled, a 15-year-old child, from al Sh-heil city in the eastern suburbs of Deir Ez-Zour governorate, was detained by Syrian Democratic Forces on Sunday, February 21, 2021, in a raid on his family's house in al Shabaka neighborhood in the city, and taken to an undisclosed location.



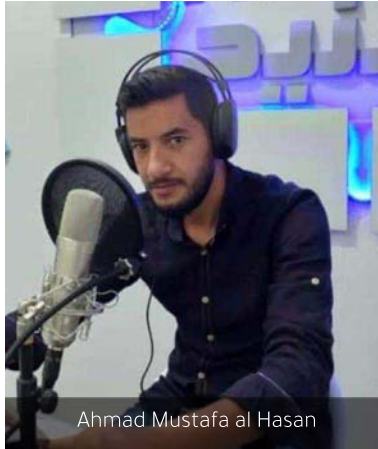
The child, Zaman Muhammad al Awwad al Khaled

Abdul Majid al Ghannam, the Imam of al Safa Mosque in al Bseira city in the eastern suburbs of Deir Ez-Zour governorate, was arrested/ detained on Wednesday, April 21, 2021, by Syrian Democratic Forces, backed by a US-led Coalition helicopter, in a raid on his home in the city, and taken to an undisclosed location.



Abdul Majid al Ghannam

Ahmad Mustafa al Hasan, a media activist and reporter for SY+, from Kabsh Gharbi village in the northwestern suburbs of Raqqa governorate, was arrested by gunmen affiliated with Syrian Democratic Forces on Wednesday, June 16, 2021, as he was passing through one of SDF's checkpoints in Raqqa city, over his criticism of the poor service conditions in the city with is controlled by SDF, published on his Facebook account. Following his arrest, Ahmad was taken to an undisclosed location.



Ahmad Mustafa al Hasan

Isam al Ejeil, the head of the Environment Protection and Sustainable Development Group, from Maheimda village in the western suburbs of Deir Ez-Zour governorate, was arrested/detained by gunmen affiliated with Syrian Democratic Forces on Saturday, July 17, 2021, during a raid on his home in the village and taken to an undisclosed location. We documented his release on July 29, 2021.



Barzan Hussein Layani, an ARKTV reporter, born in 1973, from Ma'bada town in the northeast of Hasaka governorate, was arrested/detained by gunmen affiliated with the Syrian Democratic Forces on Sunday, July 18, 2021, during a raid on his home near Ali Bin Abi Taleb Mosque in the town. We documented his release on November 6, 2021.



Ahed Abdul Ghani Amin, a female child born in 2005, from Tai neighborhood of Qameshli city in the northeastern suburbs of Hasaka governorate, was conscripted by Syrian Democratic Forces and enlisted in one of on SDF's training camps in Qameshli on Monday, August 2, 2021.



Ayman al Hussein, a teacher from Hasan Agha village, which is administratively a part of Manbej city in the eastern suburbs of Aleppo governorate, was arrested/ detained for forced conscription by gunmen affiliated with Syrian Democratic Forces on Sunday, August 22, 2021, while he was passing through one of SDF checkpoints near al Rasm al Akhdar village in the eastern suburbs of Aleppo governorate, and taken to an undisclosed location.



Female child, Ahed Abdul Ghani Amin

George Yousef Safar and Samer Danhou Kouriyeh, two members of the Christian Syriac Orthodox Creed Council, both from al Qameshli city in the northeastern suburbs of Hasaka governorate, were arrested/ detained on Tuesday, September 21, 2021, by the Syrian Democratic Forces' Internal Security Force personnel, known as 'sutor' in al Qameshli city over the council's refusal to adopt the educational curriculum imposed by the SDF in its areas of control in schools affiliated with the council. We documented that both men were released the next day.



George Yousef Safar

Ziad Muhammad Sharif, a member of Kurdistan Democratic Party, from al Qameshli city in the northeastern suburbs of Hasaka governorate, was arrested by gunmen affiliated with Syrian Democratic Forces on September 24, 2021, during a raid on his workplace in the central market in the city over his participation in an anti-SDF protest criticizing the poor living and service conditions and arrests in the areas controlled by SDF. We documented that he was released the next day.



Ziad Muhammad Sharif

Sidra Khalil Ibrahim, a 14-year-old female child from Abboudan village, which is administratively a part of Afrin city in the northern suburbs of Aleppo governorate, was kidnapped for forced conscription by Syrian Democratic Forces personnel on Saturday, November 6, 2021, from al Sheikh Maqsoud neighborhood in Aleppo city, and taken to one of the SDF's conscription camps.



Female child Sidra Khalil Ibrahim

Mudar al Abdullah, a primary school teacher from Tal al Samen village in the suburbs of Raqqqa governorate, was arrested/ detained by Syrian Democratic Forces on Wednesday, November 17, 2021, during a raid on his workplace at the Tal al Samen village school for basic education, where SDF personnel beat him for an unknown reason, and was taken to one of the SDF's detention centers in Ein Eisa city in the northern suburbs of Raqqqa governorate.

Isam Muhammad Eisa, a child born in 2008, from Qatama village, which is administratively a part of Afrin city in the northern suburbs of Aleppo governorate, was kidnapped for forced conscription by Syrian Democratic Forces personnel on Tuesday, November 23, 2021, near the Martyr Qahra-man School in al Sheikh Maqsoud neighborhood in Aleppo city, and taken to an SDF conscription camp.



Child Isam Muhammad Eisa

Photos of detainees released by Syrian Democratic Forces show the effects of the gross neglect of medical and health care during their detention:

Hussein Thabbah al Dakhil, from al Baghouz town in the eastern suburbs of Deir Ez-Zour governorate, was arrested by Syrian Democratic Forces in November 2019, with his detention lasting for around two years, before being released on Sunday, May 23, 2021, from one of the SDF's detention centers in Hasaka governorate. The comparison between the photos of Hussein before and after his release clearly shows the signs of the healthcare neglect he suffered during his detention.



Hussein Thabbah al Dakhil after his release from the Syrian Democratic Forces' detention centers in Hasaka governorate in 2021



Hussein Thabbah al Dakhil before his arrest and enforced disappearance in the detention centers of Syrian Democratic Forces in 2019

Abdul Karim al Ali, known as Abu Atwan, from al Shnan village in the eastern suburbs of Deir Ez-Zour governorate, who was arrested by Syrian Democratic Forces in 2018 and taken to an undisclosed location with his detention lasting for around three years. On September 21, 2021, the SDF released him from one of the group's detention centers in Hasaka governorate. The photos show his health and physical condition before his arrest and after his release.



Abdul Karim al Ali after his release from the Syrian Democratic Forces' detention centers in Hasaka governorate in 2021



Abdul Karim al Ali before his arrest and enforced disappearance in the detention centers of Syrian Democratic Forces in 2018

2. In December 2021:

A. Syrian regime forces:

- Most notable incidents:

On Sunday, December 5, 2021, Syrian regime forces personnel arrested six university students studying at Damascus University's Faculty of Informatics Engineering, while they were passing through one of the regime's checkpoints in Marj al Sultan town in the Eastern Ghouta, east of Damascus Suburbs governorate, and took them to one of the regime's detention centers in Damascus city.

On Monday, December 13, 2021, Syrian regime forces personnel carried out a campaign of raids and arrests in al Hajar al Aswad neighborhoods, south of Damascus city. SNHR documented the arrest of eight civilians, with the detentions accompanied by shooting; those arrested were taken to an undisclosed location.

On Wednesday, December 15, 2021, Syrian regime forces personnel carried out a campaign of arrests at a temporary checkpoint at the entrance to al Balad street in Zamalka town in the Eastern Ghouta, east of Damascus Suburbs governorate. SNHR documented the arrest of 11 civilians, who were taken to an undisclosed location.

- Most notable cases:

Nayef Mheilani al Hammada and his two sons, Hatem and Mahdi, from Suwayda governorate, who have been living in tents in the area between Dael city and Kherbt Ghazala town in the western suburbs of Daraa governorate, were arrested by Syrian regime forces on Friday, December 3, 2021, in a raid on their tents, and were taken to an undisclosed location.

Salim al Hammadi, from al Mayadeen city in the eastern suburbs of Deir Ez-Zour governorate, was arrested by Syrian regime forces on Wednesday, December 15, 2021, near the Tishreen Center for Internal Trade in al Qosour neighborhood in Deir Ez-Zour city, and was taken to an undisclosed location. Salim was among those who previously settled their security status.

Izzat al Mahameed, from al N'eima village, east of Daraa governorate, was arrested by Syrian regime forces on Wednesday, December 15, 2021, in a raid on his house in the town, and was taken to an undisclosed location.

Nawras Taysir Abu Zain al Din, from Shahba city in the suburbs of Suwayda governorate, born in 1997, was arrested by Syrian regime forces on Sunday, December 19, 2021, near al Abbasyin bus station in Damascus city as he was heading to Homs city, being detained in connection with his criticism of poor living conditions in Suwayda city in 2020. Then, he was taken to an undisclosed location.



Nawras Taysir Abu Zain al Din

B. Hay'at Tahrir al Sham

- Most notable cases:

Muhammad Saed Qurunful, from Salqin city, a guard working in the city's Central Hospital, west of Idlib governorate, was detained by Hay'at Tahrir al Sham personnel on Monday, December 13, 2021, in Salqin city, over his criticism of the leadership of the city's police station affiliated with Hay'at Tahrir al Sham, and subsequently released on December 15, 2021.



Muhammad Saed Qurunful

C. All Armed Opposition factions/ Syrian National Army

- Most notable incidents:

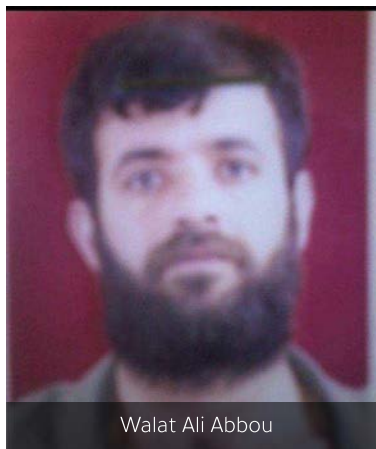
On Wednesday, December 1, 2021, Syrian National Army forces carried out a campaign of raids and arrests/ detention in Kafr Safra village, which is administratively a part of Afrin city in the northern suburbs of Aleppo governorate. SNHR documented the arrest of three civilians, who were taken to an undisclosed location.

On Wednesday, December 8, 2021, Syrian National Army forces carried out a campaign of raids and arrests/ detention in Ghazawiya village, which is administratively a part of Afrin city in the northern suburbs of Aleppo governorate. SNHR documented the arrest of four civilians, who were taken to an undisclosed location.

- Most notable cases:

Ms. Rouhat Nouri Ebou, aged 22, from Qarzahil village, which is administratively a part of Afrin city in the northern suburbs of Aleppo governorate, was detained by Syrian National Army forces on Thursday, December 2, 2021, as she was passing through one of their checkpoints in Afrin city, and taken to an undisclosed location.

Walat Ali Abbou, from Kakhra village, which is administratively a part of Afrin city in the northern suburbs of Aleppo governorate, was detained by Syrian National Army forces on Thursday, December 2, 2021, in a raid on his house in the village, and taken to an undisclosed location.



Tareq Saeediyah, from al Bab city, a guard working in the automatic bakery in al Bab city in the eastern suburbs of Aleppo, was detained by members of the Syrian National Army's Military Police on Monday, December 6, 2021, in al Bab city: the police personnel physically assaulted him over a verbal altercation between him and a member of the Military Police, as he tried to enter the bakery, and took him to an undisclosed location.

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

- Most notable incidents:

On Tuesday, December 7, 2021, Syrian Democratic Forces, backed by a US-led Coalition helicopter, carried out a campaign of raids and arrests in al Sh-heil city in the eastern suburbs of Deir Ez-Zour governorate. SNHR documented the detention of two civilians from the same family from al Mayadeen city in the eastern suburbs of Deir Ez-Zour, who were taken to an undisclosed location.

On Tuesday, December 7, 2021, Syrian Democratic Forces carried out a campaign of raids and arrests/ detentions in Abu al Neitel village in the northern suburbs of Deir Ez-Zour. SNHR documented the detention of five civilians, including one child, who were taken to an undisclosed location.

On Monday, December 13, 2021, Syrian Democratic Forces, backed by a US-led Coalition helicopter, carried out a campaign of raids and arrests in al Bseira city in the eastern suburbs of Deir Ez-Zour governorate. SNHR documented the detention of six civilians, who were taken to an undisclosed location.

- Most notable cases:

Hamad Ahmad al Za'lan, a child born in 2004, from al Keshkiya town, which is administratively a part of al Sh'aitat area in the eastern suburbs of Deir Ez-Zour governorate, was detained for forced conscription by Syrian Democratic Forces on Saturday, December 4, 2021, as he was passing through an SDF checkpoint in Raqqa city, and taken to an SDF conscription center.



Child Hamad Ahmad al Za'lan

Karim al Ismail, a child from Abu al Neitel village in the northern suburbs of Deir Ez-Zour, was detained by Syrian Democratic Forces on Tuesday, December 7, 2021, in the village, and taken to an undisclosed location.



Child Karim al Ismail

Ryad Mahmoud al Arran, from al Sbe'i village, which is administratively a part of Soor district in the northern suburbs of Deir Ez-Zour governorate, was detained by personnel affiliated with Syrian Democratic Forces on Friday, December 17, 2021, in a raid on his house in the village, and taken to an undisclosed location.

Fariza Jundi Ebou, a 15-year-old female child from Kouran village, which is administratively a part of Ein Arb city in the eastern suburbs of Aleppo governorate, was abducted for forced conscription by Syrian Democratic Forces personnel in the village on Friday, December 17, 2021, and taken to an SDF conscription center.



Female child Fariza Jundi Ebou

V. The Most Notable Work Carried Out by SNHR on the Detainees Issue:

Since 2011, the SNHR 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 make comparisons between these parties, as well as identifying the governorates from which the largest proportion of residents have been arrested and disappeared.

Over the years, we have published periodic [news](#) reports on arrest incidents, as well as publishing a [monthly report](#) that monitors the record of cases of arrest, enforced disappearance, or release that occurred in the past month, as well as semi-annual and annual reports, in addition to dozens of additional reports that provide information on the various detention centers of the parties to the conflict, and other [special reports](#) related to detainees. We also periodically submit special forms to the United Nations Working Group on Enforced or Involuntary Disappearances, the Special Rapporteur on Arbitrary Detention and the Special Rapporteur on Torture.

VI. Many Face Multiple Charges Following False Confessions Extorted Via Torture and Intimidation, Before Being Referred to 'Courts' More Like Security Branches, With the Regime Issuing Decrees and Laws That Violate the Principles of Law:

We at 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 falsely accused by the regime's security branches of several charges based on testimonies taken from detainees by regime forces 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; these detainees may be transferred to another security branch if they are wanted by more than one branch. The detainees are forced to place their fingerprint on these coerced report under threats, torture and general intimidation; it should be noted here that the security branches rarely allow detainees to read and sign these false confessions, instead of ordering them to use a fingerprint in place of a signature, with the detainees in most cases doing so while blindfolded with a piece of cloth; these security reports are then 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 (The stages mentioned here may take months and possibly years, during which the detainees are subjected to the worst forms of torture, which often prove lethal.).

Regarding the [Counter-Terrorism Court](#) in short, this 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 legislation on 'counter-revolutionary goals' issued in 1964, which violates the most basic principles and rules of law and human rights, under which

a person can be arrested simply because he or she is suspected of not supporting the Syrian regime, with the court ruling on most cases of arrest carried out by Syrian Regime forces. 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 types of crimes and can therefore 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 dominates the judicial authority, and therefore the most fundamental conditions of fair trial are not met in this court, which is also closer to a military-security branch than to a court of law.

According to the SNHR's database, the vast majority of detainees were arrested in connection with their participation in activities opposed to the Syrian regime, no matter how innocuous, such as attending demonstrations, being involved in media or humanitarian relief activism, or even as a result of their kinship ties with an activist; this means that the vast majority of detainees are arrested in connection with their political activism, meaning that they are political detainees.

The Syrian regime also legalized the crime of torture, despite the fact that the current Syrian constitution, issued in 2012 by Decree No. 94, prohibits arbitrary arrest and torture according to Article 53, and the General Penal Code in accordance with Article 391 which imposes a penalty of from three months to three years in prison for anyone who beats a person with a degree of severity during the investigation of crimes, and prohibits torture during investigation in accordance with Article 391; however, there are legal texts that explicitly oppose previous constitutional articles and Article 391, giving almost complete immunity to the security services and legalizing impunity, with the most prominent of these being the following:

1. Legislative Decree No. 14 of January 25, 1969, stating that: "It is impermissible to pursue any workers in the State Security Administrations for crimes they have committed during the execution of the specified duties they were authorized to carry out, except by virtue of an order to pursue issued by the director."
2. Article 74 of the Internal Security Law of the State Security Department and the rules of service for its employees issued by Legislative Decree No. 549 of May 25, 1969, states that: "No legal action may be taken against any General Intelligence Department employees, those assigned or detailed to the department, or those contracted with it for crimes incurred on the job or in the course of performing the job before referral to a department disciplinary board and before an order is obtained from the director."
3. Legislative Decree No. 69 of 2008, by which an amendment to the Military Penal Code gave immunity to police and political security personnel, who were previously amongst those who could be tried before the ordinary judiciary, and limited the ability to take action against them or against the army and the armed forces. Para-

graph (a) of Article 1 of this decree stipulated: "Crimes committed by each of the officers, warrant officers and members of the Internal Security forces, members of the Political Security Division, and members of Customs Brigade, due to performing the tasks entrusted to them." Paragraph (b) of the same article states, "Prosecution orders for officers, warrant officers, members of the Internal Security forces, members of the Political Security Division, and members of Customs Brigade are issued in a decision by the General Command of the Army and the armed forces, in accordance with the provisions of Article / 53 / of Penal Code and the Military Trial Procedure and its amendments." This prosecution is issued in wartime, according to the Penal Code and the Military Trial Procedure by the Commander-in-Chief of the Army and the Armed Forces, who is at the same time the President of the Republic. Consequently, such prosecution was banned - if it had ever taken place - for officials at any level of leadership and limited to the senior leadership.

4. Decree No. 55 issued on April 21, 2011, related to counter-terrorism, of which Article 1 states: "Added to Article 17 of the Code of Criminal Procedure, the following paragraph: responsible for law enforcement or authorized tasks investigate the crimes stipulated in Articles 260 up to 339 articles 221 and 388 and 392 and 393 of the Penal Code and collection of evidence and surveillance of the suspects, which should not exceed the reservation for them for seven days subject to renewal from the Attorney-General and in accordance with the data of each file on the unit should not exceed this period of sixty days."

These three decrees and Article 74, which are supposed to be legal texts but in reality constitute a violation of the law, are decrees and texts that legitimize crimes, violate even the 2012 constitution, and violate fundamental tenets of human rights. For this reason, Syria under the current Syrian regime suffers from two problems: the first in terms of the legal texts themselves, and the second in terms of applying the law which is far graver; without a doubt, these legal texts, which express a commitment to ensuring impunity, along with the Syrian regime's failure to carry out any investigation or accountability for any member of the regime's security forces, no matter how low-ranking, against the background of acts of torture, have all contributed to increasing the rate of torture. Indeed, the regime's security services, in coordination with some doctors in military hospitals, are so sure of their impunity that they have invented new and horrific methods of torture that are even more brutal and savage than their usual methods. We have noted the use of new methods of torture in the past two years that were not used in previous years, which have caused deaths due to torture to continue up to this day. The laws established by the Syrian regime do not justify committing or concealing crimes, because they are not laws but rather pseudo-legal provisions that violate the law.

Other parties to the conflict have also established courts to try their detainees in accordance with procedures that are, to a great extent, similar to the courts affiliated with the Syrian regime. Extremist Islamist groups have established Sharia courts made up of sharia judges or security personnel and issued sentences according to their extremist ideology. As for the areas under opposition control, these have established courts which operate according to amended forms of existing Syrian laws. Syrian Democratic Forces, meanwhile, have established the 'people's courts' and established their own laws and legislation derived from the Syrian laws, with all these courts following the policy of exceptional courts by holding brief proceedings, essentially amounting to kangaroo trials, to try the cases before them without any considerations of the fundamental standards of fair trials, and relying mainly on the jurisprudence of judges, most of whom are unqualified or illegal.

Over the past nine years, the Syrian regime has issued nearly 18 amnesty decrees, many of which are similar to one another and focus on securing the release of perpetrators of crimes, felonies and offences, while including only a very small number of detainees referred to exceptional courts such as the Counter-Terrorism Court and the military field courts, and excluding the largest proportion of detainees who were not subjected to any trial during the years of their detention, who have been classified as forcibly disappeared. We previously [issued a report](#) in which we monitored the detention and torture incidents that we recorded since the issuance of the two amnesty decrees, Decree No. 20 of 2019, and Decree No. 6 of 2020. We also issued [a special report](#) in which we outlined our follow-up work regarding the implementation of the latest decree No. 6, nearly two months after its issuance, and the record of arrests, torture and releases recorded by the SNHR between the issuance of Decree No. 6 on March 22, 2020, and May 15, 2020. In July 2021, we also issued [a special report](#) summarizing the cases and incidents of arrest and releases documented by SNHR in the period since Amnesty Decree No. 13 was issued on May 2, 2021, up to July 15, 2021. The report distinguished between the record of releases that took place related to the amnesty and those not related to it, which took place within the context of sentences' expiry. Despite all the amnesty decrees issued, at least 131,000 citizens in the categories of detainees and forcibly disappeared persons are still detained by the Syrian regime.

VII. Conclusions and Recommendations:

- The issue of detainees and forcibly 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 arbitrarily 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. The International Committee of the Red Cross has been unable to conduct any periodic visits to any of these detention centers, constituting a violation of International Humanitarian Law.
- 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. The regime has 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. 68.25 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 inquiries 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.
- All Armed Opposition factions/ Syrian National Army 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:**UN 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.
- In light of the spread of the coronavirus, it is vital to put pressure on the Syrian regime to release tens of thousands of arbitrarily detained persons, primarily medical personnel whose professional skills and services the Syrian people are in dire need of.

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 previous reports. SNHR is willing to cooperate and provide more evidence and data.

United Nations, the international community, 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 102,000 documented missing persons in Syria, 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.
- We call on the official 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.
- Support organizations working to document cases of arbitrary arrest, enforced disappearance, and torture, support the course of accountability and its mechanisms, and support organizations working in victim rehabilitation programs.

The Russian regime:

- Must demand that its ally, the Syrian regime, disclose the fate of nearly 87,000 forcibly disappeared persons and immediately release tens of thousands of arbitrarily detained persons and detainees whose sentences ended, before demanding that those states which imposed sanctions on the Syrian regime lift them.
- Must provide the Syrian regime with the necessary medical supplies and equipment to examine tens of thousands of detainees and ensure that they are not infected with the COVID-19.

All parties to the conflict and the controlling forces:

- The arbitrary arrests and enforced disappearances, which are still ongoing, as detailed in this SNHR monthly report, must be ended immediately, the fate of all detainees and the forcibly disappeared persons must be revealed, their families should be allowed to visit them immediately, and the bodies of detainees who were killed as a result of torture should be handed over to their families.
- Unconditionally release all detainees who have been imprisoned merely for exercising their political and civil rights, release women and children, people with special needs, the sick, and the elderly, and stop using any detainees as prisoners of war.
- Allow the independent international monitors of the Independent International Commission of Inquiry and the International Committee of the Red Cross to access all official and unofficial detention centers without establishing any prior arrangements or any restrictions or conditions, and improve the conditions of places of detention to meet the legal standards of detention centers.
- 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.
- Publish a register containing the detainees' data together with the reasons, locations, and sentences issued.
- All sentences issued by the regime's field military courts and Counter-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.
- End the policy of carrying out arrests without legal warrants, release all detainees imprisoned by them without judicial charges, and emphasizes that individuals should also be detained only briefly before being presented in a court of law, and that such trials do not take weeks or months.

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, and to extend our sincere solidarity to the detainees and the forcibly disappeared persons and their families.



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