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The 11th Annual Report on Torture in Syria on the International Day in Support of Victims of Torture

People Documented Killed Due to Torture, Mostly by the 14,685 Syrian Regime, Including 181 Children and 94 Women, with Torture and Deaths by Torture Still Continuing

Sunday 26 June 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.

SNHR
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Content

I. Torture in Syria Has No Time Restrictions or Physical Limits	2
II. The SNHR's Cooperation with the UN Special Rapporteurs on Extrajudicial, Summary and Arbitrary Executions and on Torture.....	5
III. Updating the Death Toll of Victims Who Died Due to Torture in Syria Since March 2011, and Their Distribution Across Syrian Governorates.....	5
IV. Torture and Its Methods by the Parties to the Conflict in Syria	9
V. Conclusions and Recommendations	47

I. Torture in Syria Has No Time Restrictions or Physical Limits

On June 26 every year, commemorating the International Day in Support of Victims of Torture which falls annually on that date, the Syrian Network for Human Rights (SNHR) issues its annual report on torture in Syria, with our team [documenting all the incidents of torture committed in the year](#) since the previous annual report, monitoring the various torture methods practiced by the parties to the conflict and the controlling forces in Syria, and assessing whether torture practices have continued at the same pace or declined during this period, through conducting a comparison with [the previous annual report](#). Although we publish [periodic news items about torture survivors or deaths due to torture](#), this annual report gives a broader picture of torture in Syria because it includes an update on the death toll of victims who were killed under torture since the beginning of the popular uprising in Syria in March 2011 up until June 2022. This comprehensive update is based on the SNHR's documentation during the past year.

The importance of this report also stems from the fact that it provides further evidence that torture, prohibited in the harshest terms in international law, continues to be widely practiced in Syria against political dissidents or military opponents, among the parties to the conflict, or by the controlling forces against civilian citizens of the society that they govern, with the aim of extending their control, denying fundamental human rights, and suppressing any dissent or exercising of democracy. This report also presents cases of torture inflicted in conjunction with arbitrary detention.

The process of arresting people in Syria is in itself a form of torture because it takes place without presenting any judicial arrest warrant, which is a common practice by the parties to the conflict and the controlling forces and leads inevitably to other types of torture, as the report will explain; perhaps the most severe aspect of this process is that the torture inflicted on detainees in Syria is unlimited, meaning that we cannot identify a specific degree of torture perpetrated in retaliation for accusations or conviction of a particular crime. Rather, the practice of torture is limitless, left to the sadistic whims of the torturers, and constant throughout the period of the person's detention, which may extend for years, with any officer in detention centers able to inflict whatever torture he wishes on any detainee at any time he wants with absolute impunity. In addition, the extremely poor conditions of detention and, in particular, neglect of medical care, are in themselves another form of torture.

The report also confirms that the vast majority of detainees go on to be classified as forcibly disappeared, with enforced disappearance also being among the cruelest forms of torture, as it isolates those forcibly disappeared from the outside world, far from family members and friends, without even access to defense lawyers, and causes terrible psychological trauma and stress to detainees and their loved ones throughout the period of enforced disappearance.

Although all the parties to the conflict and the controlling forces have inflicted torture to some degree on their opponents, the Syrian regime has been by far the most systematic and widespread perpetrator of this crime, imprisoning the largest number of detainees and forcibly disappeared persons. In response to the torture practices inflicted by the parties to the conflict, the SNHR has intensified its monitoring and follow-up of this inhumane phenomenon; our team follows up on cases of torture and deaths due to torture, and we have built a database dedicated to victims killed due to torture, as well as people who survived being subjected to torture.

Through our continuous tracking of torture cases, we have been able to build a wide network of contacts with survivors of torture and with their families; this has enabled us to obtain a large amount of information, all of which is rigorously cross-checked to ensure it meets the highest possible levels of credibility and objectivity in documenting incidents while building the database of torture victims. We have also facilitated the process of communication between our team and the Syrian community by providing three numbers for communication via the WhatsApp application, and an electronic form via our official website, as well as via social media pages and e-mail.

As for the report's methodology, the definition of torture which we adopt in it is the one cited in Article 1 of the United Nations' 1984 Convention against Torture,¹ which states: **"The term "torture" means any act by which severe pain or suffering, whether physical or mental, is intentionally inflicted on a person for such purposes as obtaining from him or a third person information or a confession, punishing him for an act he or a third person has committed or is suspected of having committed, or intimidating or coercing him or a third person, or for any reason based on discrimination of any kind, when such pain or suffering is inflicted by or at the instigation of or with the consent or acquiescence of a public official or other person acting in an official capacity."**

The report is based on interviews we conducted with the families of victims and survivors of torture inflicted in detention centers run by various parties to the conflict. The interviews were conducted in a way that prioritized ensuring the security and safety of the victims, as well as of the SNHR team members, with these interviews carried out either by telephone or via various online communication programs, or by visiting the victims or family members in their homes inside and outside Syria. In this report, we provide 13 accounts, which we obtained directly rather than from any open sources. In some cases, we used aliases to protect witnesses' privacy and prevent them from being harassed or persecuted. Witnesses received no financial compensation or promises in exchange for interviews. We explained the purpose of the report beforehand to all the interviewees we spoke with, and obtained their consent to use the information they provided to serve the purposes of the report and the documentation processes. All this is in accordance with our internal protocols, which we have worked on for years, and we strive constantly to develop these to keep pace with the best levels of psychological care for victims.

¹ Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights (OHCHR), Convention against Torture and Other Cruel, Inhuman or Degrading Treatment or Punishment, Article 1, <https://www.ohchr.org/EN/ProfessionalInterest/Pages/CAT.aspx>

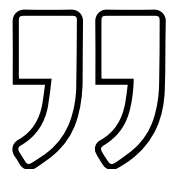
The statistics included in this report are also based on the cumulative work, resulting from the daily monitoring and documentation work that we have carried out continuously since 2011 up to the current moment concerning incidents of arbitrary arrest and torture, with SNHR carrying out a monthly update of the database. We can confirm that various amounts of information are available for each of the cases cited in compiling all the statistics included in the report, which is normal within the Syrian context and in the context of the great challenges facing our work; in general, these cases include basic information such as name, date, place and conditions of detention, the party responsible for the arrest, enforced disappearance and torture, the latest observations and documents provided, and other details. SNHR's Information Technology department has built a dedicated separate program for the database for each party to the conflict, providing information on detainees' original governorate, gender, marital and academic status, age group, and place of arrest, with all data being entered automatically.

Using the SNHR database, we can distribute the cases of arrests according to the governorate in which the incident took place, and the governorate which the detainee comes from. In this report, we distribute the deaths due to torture according to the governorate which the victim comes from, rather than the place where the torture took place because, in most cases, the place where the incident and the deaths by torture occurred are the detention centers in Damascus city, so we distribute the deaths due to torture according to the governorate which the victim comes from in order to show the extent of the loss and violence suffered by the people of that governorate compared to other governorates. The data added to the SNHR's database is retained securely, and we store several backup copies in different locations.

Given the exceptional difficulties and the magnitude of the violations, the cases mentioned in this report represent the barest minimum of the violations which we have been able to document, and we confirm that the real, so-far undocumented figures are far higher. Also, this report does not include documentation of the psychological repercussions experienced by survivors of torture.

Fadel Abdul Ghany, SNHR's Director, says:

"Torture in Syria has been practiced at the same frequent and systematic pace since 2011. We have no belief or hope that it will stop being perpetrated by the Syrian regime or the other parties to the conflict without a political change away from the existing leaders who have conducted no investigation or imposed any serious accountability for those involved in torture. We are still documenting brutal torture cases and deaths due to torture, and we fear for the fate of tens of thousands of forcibly disappeared people."



II. The SNHR's Cooperation with the UN Special Rapporteurs on Extrajudicial, Summary and Arbitrary Executions and on Torture

The SNHR cooperates with many UN bodies, including the special rapporteurs, and in many cases, we are unable to obtain complete data for the victims, which hinders the process of correspondence with the special rapporteurs due to the presence of specific requirements. On the other hand, we carry out periodic correspondence regarding the cases for which we are able to obtain adequate data, ensuring that we obtain victims' families' consent in each case, so we are currently requesting greater cooperation from more victims' families in order to submit as many cases as possible, given that the special rapporteurs correspond with the Syrian regime about some of the cases submitted that we have been able to verify, which are also listed in the special annex in the report prepared by the UN Group on Torture in Syria.

We have devoted [a form](#) on our official website that families can fill out, with the completed forms submitted automatically to the SNHR's arrest and torture department's team which is responsible for following up on each case, with team members then communicating with the families to complete the documentation and registration process.

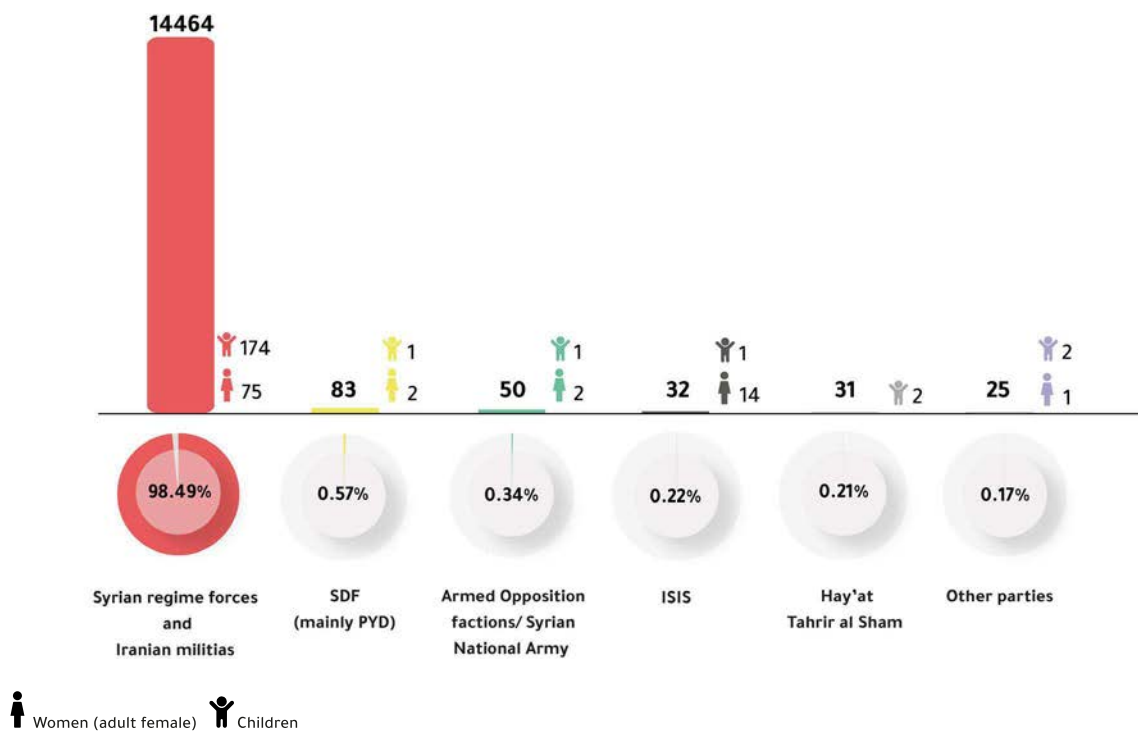
Since the previous annual report and as of the publication of this report, we have submitted at least 56 cases of torture or death due to torture to the Special Rapporteur.

III. Updating the Death Toll of Victims Who Died Due to Torture in Syria Since March 2011, and Their Distribution Across Syrian Governorates

Between March 2011 and June 2022, we documented the deaths due to torture of at least 14,685 individuals, including 181 children and 94 women (adult female), at the hands of the parties to the conflict and the controlling forces in Syria, according to the SNHR's database, distributed as follows:

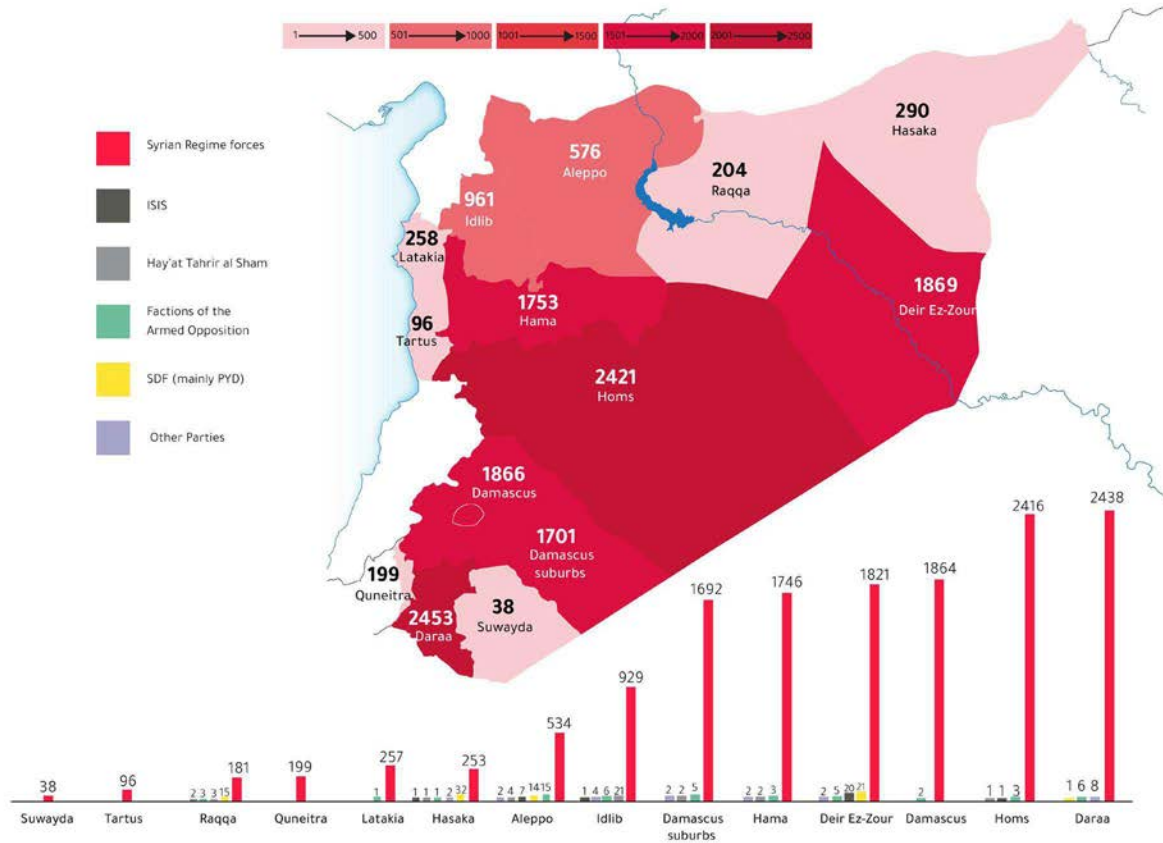
- **Syrian regime forces:** 14,464, including 174 children and 75 women.
- **ISIS:** 32, including one child and 14 women.
- **Hay'at Tahrir al Sham:** 31, including two children.
- **Kurdish-led Syrian Democratic Forces (the Democratic Union Party):** 83, including one child and two women.
- **All Armed Opposition factions/Syrian National Army:** 50, including one child and two women.
- **Other parties:** 25, including two children and one woman.

A chart showing the distribution of record of arrest or enforced disappearance since March 2011 until March 2022 at the hands of the parties to the conflict and the controlling forces in Syria:



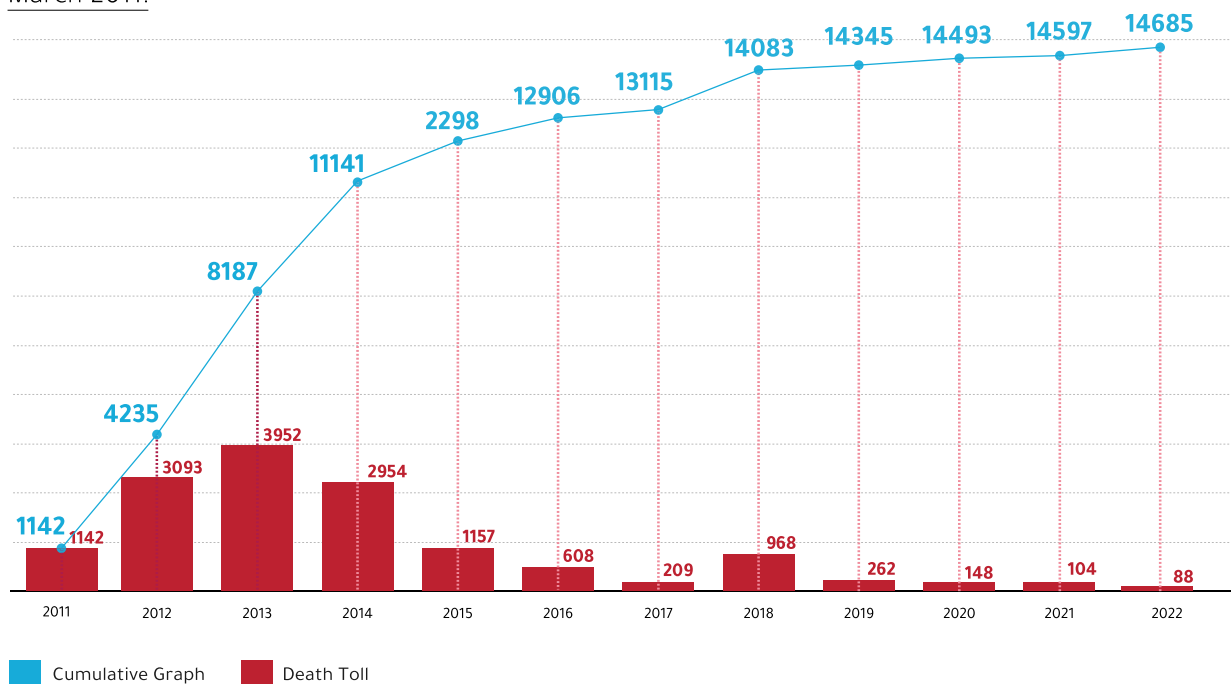
Statistics based on the SNHR's data show that the Syrian regime is responsible for the arrest of by far the largest number of Syrian citizens arrested by all the parties involved in Syria, with detainees subjected to one or more forms of torture, once again confirming that the Syrian regime is by far the most prolific perpetrator of torture in Syria, responsible for the vast majority of the death toll due to torture. SNHR's findings also underline that this huge number of torture-related deaths demonstrates that this is not an abnormal or unusual behavior for the regime but is in fact a systematic and regular practice committed on a vast nationwide scale against tens of thousands of detainees, thereby constituting crimes against humanity; the vast majority of deaths due to torture are exacerbated by the lack of medical care that leads tortured detainees to suffer unimaginably from their injuries without receiving treatment until they die.

A chart showing the distribution of the death toll of victims who died due to torture across all the Syrian governorates:



We note from the chart that the governorates of Daraa and Homs have seen the highest numbers of residents killed due to torture; we have documented the Syrian regime's use of torture in many cases in connection with the victim's affiliation with a certain area known for opposing the Syrian regime as a form of collective retribution in the regime's detention centers.

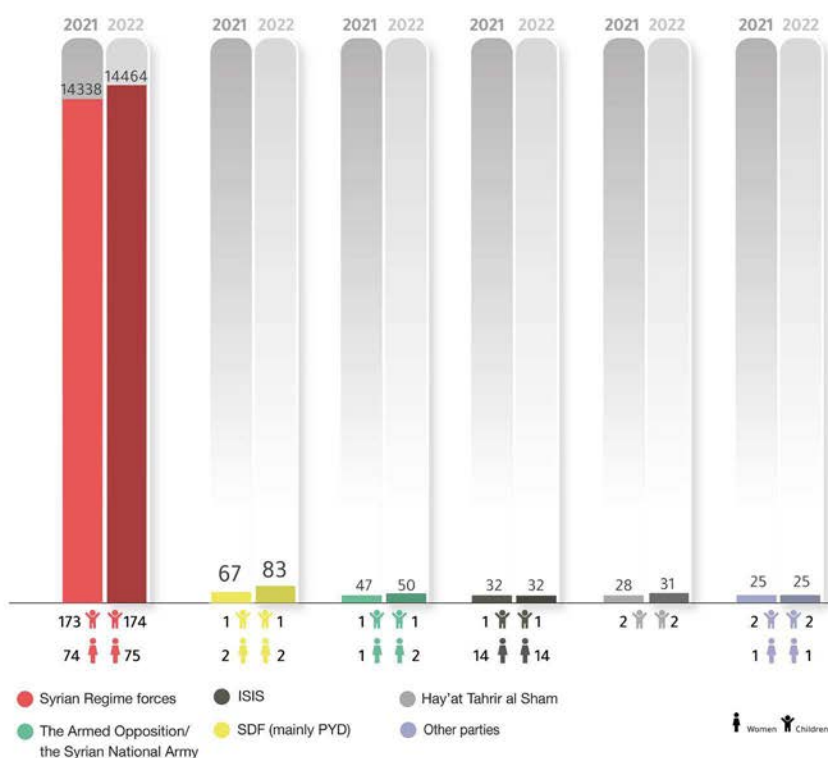
A chart showing the distribution of the documented death toll of torture victims in Syria by years since March 2011:



The chart shows that the years which saw the highest deaths due to torture were 2013, then 2012, followed by 2014.

Comparison between the toll of deaths due to torture at the hands of parties to the conflict and controlling forces since the previous annual report of June 2021 and the toll in this annual report of June 2022

2021 14537
2022 14685



The comparison shows the increase in the death toll due to torture, mainly in Syrian regime detention centers, which confirms that the practices of torture have not ceased and killings due to torture continue.

IV. Torture and Its Methods by the Parties to the Conflict in Syria

1. Torture by the Syrian Regime (Army, Security, Local and Foreign Militias)

A. Some 1.2 Million Syrian Citizens Have Been Subjected to Some Form of Torture:

According to the SNHR's database, the Syrian regime is still detaining/forcibly disappearing some 133,000 Syrian citizens; this number is not an estimate but is rather gathered from our data, as we mentioned. We can also estimate the number of those who were detained at some point and were subsequently released, or who are still detained, based on our existing data on detainees and on those who have been released from detention, at nearly 1.2 million Syrian citizens, all of whom were subjected to arbitrary arrest/enforced disappearance, and to some form of torture, since there is hardly a detainee who has not been subjected to at least one of the methods of torture we've documented, because, as we mentioned earlier, the arrest process itself, which is more like an abduction, is a form of torture.

Torture of detainees reaches its peak during the investigation process, which aims to extract confessions, use them against the detainee, and ensure sentences are issued by exceptional courts based on these confessions extracted under torture. This is the case for all sentences issued against political detainees by the Counter-Terrorism Court, the State Security Court, and other courts which are based on false accusations of crimes that the detainee did not commit.

We have noted that some torture is inflicted on a sectarian and region-based character, targeting detainees from areas known for their dissent or participation in the popular uprising against the Syrian regime, which has used a wide range of torture methods in the past 11 years and continues to do so. In a previous detailed report, SNHR documented the most notable methods of torture used by regime forces in their detention centers and military hospitals, [listing 72 methods](#) of physical, psychological, and sexual torture, all of which are widespread and deliberately practiced in all detention centers, with torture affecting all detainees, including women, children, the elderly, disabled, invalids and people with special needs, excluding no-one. This abuse also coincides with intentional negligence towards detainees' healthcare, as well as starvation, and grotesquely unsanitary conditions of detention, with regime detention facilities lacking the most basic hygiene and ventilation, as well as inflicting additional degrading treatment such as human 'stacking' of detainees in narrow, cramped, airless cells unsuited to accommodating the large and increasing numbers of detainees crammed into them, in addition to depriving detainees of clothes and blankets in extremely low or high temperatures, with many detainees suffering these barbaric conditions for many years, leading to a rising death toll due to torture and neglect of healthcare, with all these factors causing almost daily multiple deaths among detainees.

In addition to the concentration of torture operations mainly within detention centers, we have documented hundreds of incidents in which torture was inflicted at checkpoints or during incursions, through Syrian regime forces detaining and abusing the victims, with these incidents often ending with the execution of the victims. We have obtained dozens of videos filmed by Syrian regime forces showing them inflicting brutal abuse and torture with the aim of making fun of their victims and spreading intimidation and fear in Syrian society.

In addition to the aforementioned locations, torture also takes place in the regime's military hospitals, to which a number of detainees who have suffered severe injuries and chronic health conditions in detention centers are transferred, supposedly for treatment; instead, members of the medical staff present in these hospitals inflict various methods of torture that may lead to death, in violation of [the principles of Medical Ethics Relevant to the Role of Health Personnel, particularly Physicians, in the Protection of Prisoners and Detainees against Torture and Other Cruel, Inhuman or Degrading Treatment or Punishment](#), which was adopted by the United Nations General Assembly in its resolution of December 18, 1982.

Torture violations by the Syrian regime are crimes of a systematic and widespread nature, and therefore cannot be carried out by individuals in the Syrian regime without being a central policy of the Syrian regime, which is involved in and approves them at the highest levels. On January 13, 2022, [the Higher Regional Court in Koblenz, Germany, convicted](#) Anwar. R., who headed the Investigation Department in Security Branch 251 (Al Khatib Branch), affiliated with the Syrian regime's General Intelligence Service from January 2011 to September 2012. The SNHR contributed to the case by sharing a file containing data on 58 of the Syrian citizens who died as a result of torture in al Khatib Branch during the period of the convicted Anwar R.'s tenure in the Investigation Department, with this file handed over to the German Public Prosecutor through our partner, the European Center for Constitutional and Human Rights. We also submitted data to support [the Higher Regional Court in Frankfurt, Germany](#), in the trial of the Syrian doctor, Alaa M., who stands accused of charges amounting to crimes against humanity. The indictment contains 18 charges, including killing, torture, and causing physical and mental harm to detainees arrested by the Syrian regime on the grounds of their political opposition, with the crimes taking place in 2011 and 2012 in military hospitals in Homs and Damascus, in addition to the 261 Military Intelligence Prison in Homs.

The SNHR team has documented the deaths of at least 14,464 individuals, including 174 children and 75 women, in Syrian regime forces' detention centers between March 2011 and June 2022.

B. Eleven Deaths Due to Torture After the Issuance of Law No. 16 of March 16, 2022, Criminalizing Torture:

On March 30, 2022, the Syrian regime's President issued Law No. 16 for 2022 criminalizing torture,² which claimed that the regime classifies this crime as a felony requiring severe punishment for the perpetrator, or for those who participated in it, as well as those who provoked it. In Syrian law, torture is subject as a felony offense to a ten-year criminal statute of limitations if the perpetrator is not subjected to public prosecution immediately. SNHR issued a [report](#) previously in which we explained that there is a flaw in the Syrian regime's system of categorizing torture and creating the related legislation, in addition to a flaw in the text of the 'law' itself. The following are key points that demonstrate these flaws:

- The law does not include crimes of torture committed before the date of its issuance; rather, pre-existing provisions are applied.
- The law omits to mention the inhuman and cruel conditions of detention in which detainees are held, as well as omitting any mention of the prison authorities' deliberate negligence towards detainees and deprivation of healthcare for them, which are classified as being among the torture methods practiced by the Syrian regime and among the causes leading to the high rates of prisoners' deaths in detention centers.

There is no doubt that this law will remain meaningless ink on paper and will not contribute in any way to deterring the security services from practicing torture as long as the regime's other repressive laws that grant impunity to members of the security services from prosecution are in force, most notably:

1- Members of the General Intelligence Department (State Security Department):

Article 16 of Legislative Decree No. 14 of 1969, which contains the law establishing the General Intelligence Department,³ stipulates that intelligence department members may not be prosecuted for crimes they commit while carrying out the tasks assigned to them, except with the approval of their superiors.

2- Members of the Intelligence Division (Military Security Department) and the Air Force Intelligence Department:

These regime personnel enjoy similar, effectively total immunity as they are military personnel, with any prosecution being carried out before the military court, which does not prosecute military personnel except through a prosecution order issued by the Commander-in-Chief of the Army and the Armed Forces or the Chief of Staff according to the rank of the person to be prosecuted in accordance with the provisions of Article 53 of the Penal Code and Procedures of Procedure Military No. 61 of 1950.

² Syrian Arab News Agency (SANA), President al Assad issues a law criminalizing torture, March 30, 2022, <https://sana.sy/?p=1616786>

³ (This is a confidential law that is not published in the Official Gazette).

3- Members of the Political Security Division:

The Political Security Division is administratively affiliated with the Ministry of the Interior. In September 2008, [Legislative Decree No. 64 of 2008](#) was issued, which classified these personnel, along with members of the Internal Security Forces and members of the customs police, as falling under the jurisdiction of the military judiciary, and which further explicitly stated that their prosecution may not take place without the prior issuance of an order for prosecution by the General Command of the Army and Armed Forces.

Legislative Decree No. 64 of 2008, by which an amendment to the Military Penal Code and Military Trial Procedure⁴ granted immunity to police and political security personnel, who were previously amongst those who could be tried before the ordinary judiciary, limiting the ability to take action against them or against the army and the armed forces. 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 has been banned - if it had ever taken place - for regime officials at any level of leadership and particularly for the senior leadership.

At the beginning of 2012, [Legislative Decree No. 1 of 2012](#) was issued containing (the Law of Service for the Military of the Internal Security Forces), including members of the Political Security Division, which is considered an amendment to the aforementioned Legislative Decree 64/2008, which stipulated in Article 23 a requirement to establish a police disciplinary court that specializes in investigating disciplinary matters concerning military police. This court shall be competent to decide on their referral to the judiciary, except in the case of their being detained in flagrante delicto or during the commission of an economic crime, in which cases these two types of offenses can be prosecuted before the ordinary judiciary directly. It should be borne in mind that the police disciplinary court is made up of police officers named by the Chief of the Republic and therefore is not a judicial court and does not belong to the judicial authority but is completely subordinate to the executive authority.

Consequently, all members of the four security services enjoy immunity from prosecution unless their superiors allow it; prosecution which is conditional on obtaining the approval detailed above is considered unconstitutional and intrudes on the judicial authority, undermining its independence by imposing a limitation that does not allow it to exercise its constitutional mandate without the approval of an official of the executive authority as stated in the texts above.

⁴ Issued by Legislative Decree No. 61 dated February 27, 1950.

The SNHR has documented the deaths of at least 11 individuals due to torture in the Syrian regime's detention centers since the issuance of Law No. 16 criminalizing torture on March 30, 2022, until June 2022. In addition, we have recorded many summonses by the regime's security services in various Syrian governorates targeting the torture victims' family members, who were investigated and warned against announcing the deaths of their loved ones, being themselves threatened with arrest if they did so. This confirms that the law criminalizing torture is an empty formality created for the sake of appearance; it is essential under law to take measures to guarantee any complainant's right to file complaints or report torture, and to provide protection to the complainant or other person reporting this crime, to maintain confidentiality, and to protect witnesses, experts, and members of their families. The SNHR hasn't documented any cases in which the family members of regime victims who died as a result of torture reported these incidents, refraining from doing so due to well-founded fear of the security persecution that they'd face for doing so, which would expose them to arrest and torture by the security services. Families are even afraid to report these incidents to human rights organizations, as well as to the Syrian regime's authorities. These intimidating practices epitomize one of the main challenges we face in our documentation work, making it more difficult and complicated. We also note that these threats to victims' families are a standard policy used by the Syrian regime, which aims to intimidate and persecute the families of the victims in order to deter them or others from reporting the violations they and their loved ones are subjected to. This is why we have repeatedly emphasized the impossibility of implementing the law in light of the continued survival of the current regime's security services, while even the body authorized to take these measures, namely the 'public prosecution', is unable to protect them. Neither the regime's minister of justice or its attorney general have issued any instructions on how to implement these measures to date.

C. Incidents of Arbitrary Arrest and Torture Continue Even After the Issuance of the April 2022 Amnesty Decree:

On April 30, 2022, an amnesty law was issued by [legislative decree No. 7 of 2022](#); according to the text of this decree, those excused included Syrian citizens convicted of terrorist crimes committed before the date of April 30, 2022, except for those crimes which caused the death of a human being, as stipulated in the Counter-Terrorism Law No. 19 of 2012 and the General Penal Code. Given all these facts, the SNHR believes that this amnesty, despite its terms being theoretically slightly broader than those of its predecessors, does not differ in implementation from any of the preceding 18 amnesty decrees issued by the Syrian regime since 2011, all of which failed to secure the release of the vast majority of the detainees, with the Syrian regime still continuing to detain some 133,000 detainees/forcibly disappeared persons. We discussed in a preliminary [report](#) the key points that make Decree 7/2022 a formality.

Fifty seven arrests since the issuance of Decree No. 7 of 2022:

The SNHR's Detainees Department team has documented the detentions of at least 57 people, including one woman, by Syrian regime forces between the issuance of Amnesty Decree No. 7 on April 30, 2022, and June 2022. The arrests carried out by Syrian regime forces have targeted people who were previously granted a settlement certificate, who had received promises from the regime that they would not be harassed after settling their status. In addition, one woman, released under the amnesty decree, was re-arrested. The Syrian regime is still continuing its policy of arrests and enforced disappearances - as mentioned above, torture is organically linked to these arrests - and is not seeking in any way to reduce the number of detainees held in its detention centers, issuing these fraudulent 'amnesty decrees' purely for use in political disinformation.

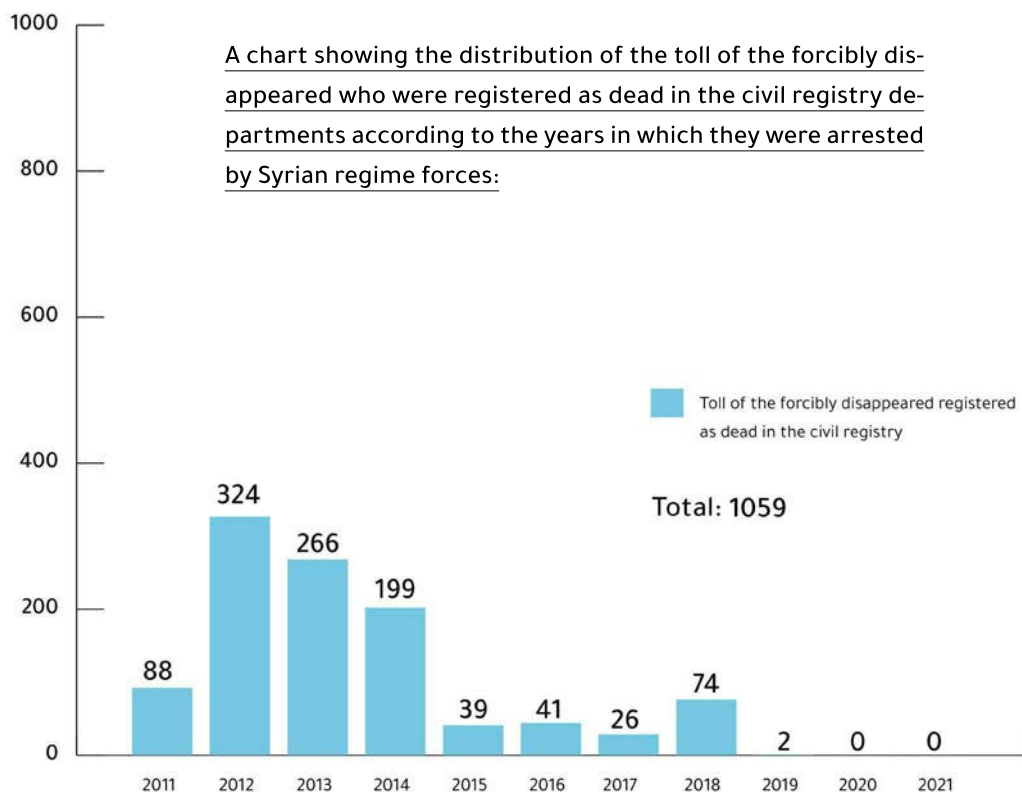
Eight deaths due to torture since the issuance of Decree No. 7 of 2022:

The SNHR's team has documented the deaths of at least eight individuals due to torture and medical negligence in the Syrian regime's detention centers, since April 30, 2022, including one woman, with none of the victims' bodies handed over to their families.

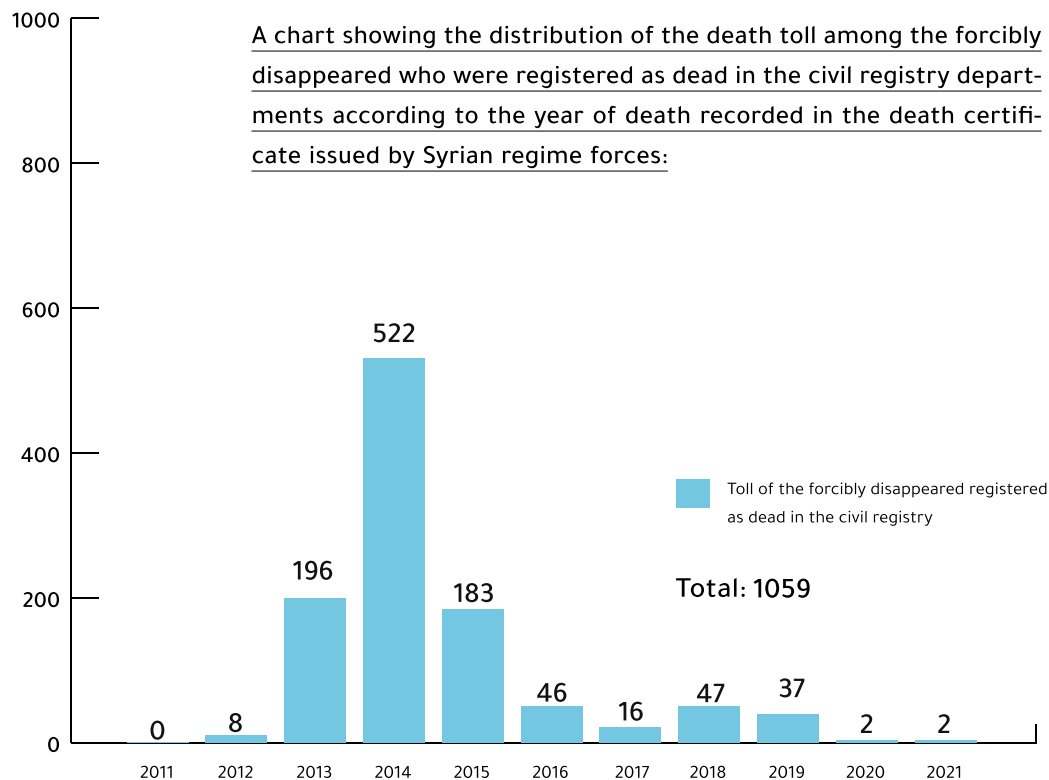
D. The Syrian Regime Acknowledged the Deaths of at Least 1,059 Forcibly Disappeared Persons Through the Civil Registry Departments, and We Believe That All Were Killed Under Torture:

During the period in which we were preparing this report, we were notified of new cases of families of detainees forcibly disappeared by the Syrian regime receiving notifications via the state civil registry departments informing them that their loved ones had died in custody. We've discussed this practice, adopted by the regime since the start of 2018, [extensively in previous reports](#), with the last such case documented by the SNHR taking place in Deir al Asafeer town in Damascus Suburbs governorate at the beginning of this year. We documented at least 54 people from Deir al Asafeer town, whose families learned of their deaths by obtaining death statements from the civil registry departments. We also addressed this subject in a [special report](#).

This humiliating practice has caused immense shock and additional trauma to the forcibly disappeared persons' families, some of whom continue to visit the civil registry departments in the hopes of discovering the fate of their loved ones. We have been able to document instances of at least 1,059 people, including nine children, two women, and nine medical personnel, among the forcibly disappeared persons being registered as dead in the civil registry departments' records, between the beginning of 2018 and June 2022, with the cause of death not mentioned, the victims' bodies not handed over to their families by the regime, and the deaths not announced at the time of their occurrence. Among the victims are four cases that were identified through leaked photos from the Syrian regime's military hospitals.

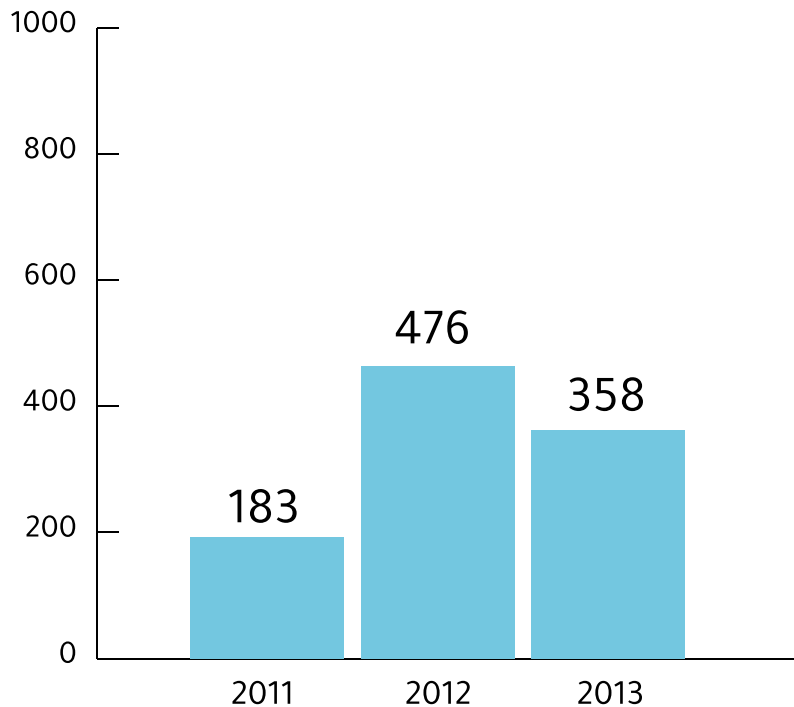


The chart shows that the great majority of the 1,059 cases that we have documented, were arrested by Syrian regime forces in 2012, then 2013, followed by 2014, which were the years that saw the largest wave of enforced disappearances into the Syrian regime's detention centers.



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A chart showing the distribution of the death toll among the forcibly disappeared who were registered as dead in the civil registry departments according to the year of death recorded in the death certificate issued by Syrian regime forces:



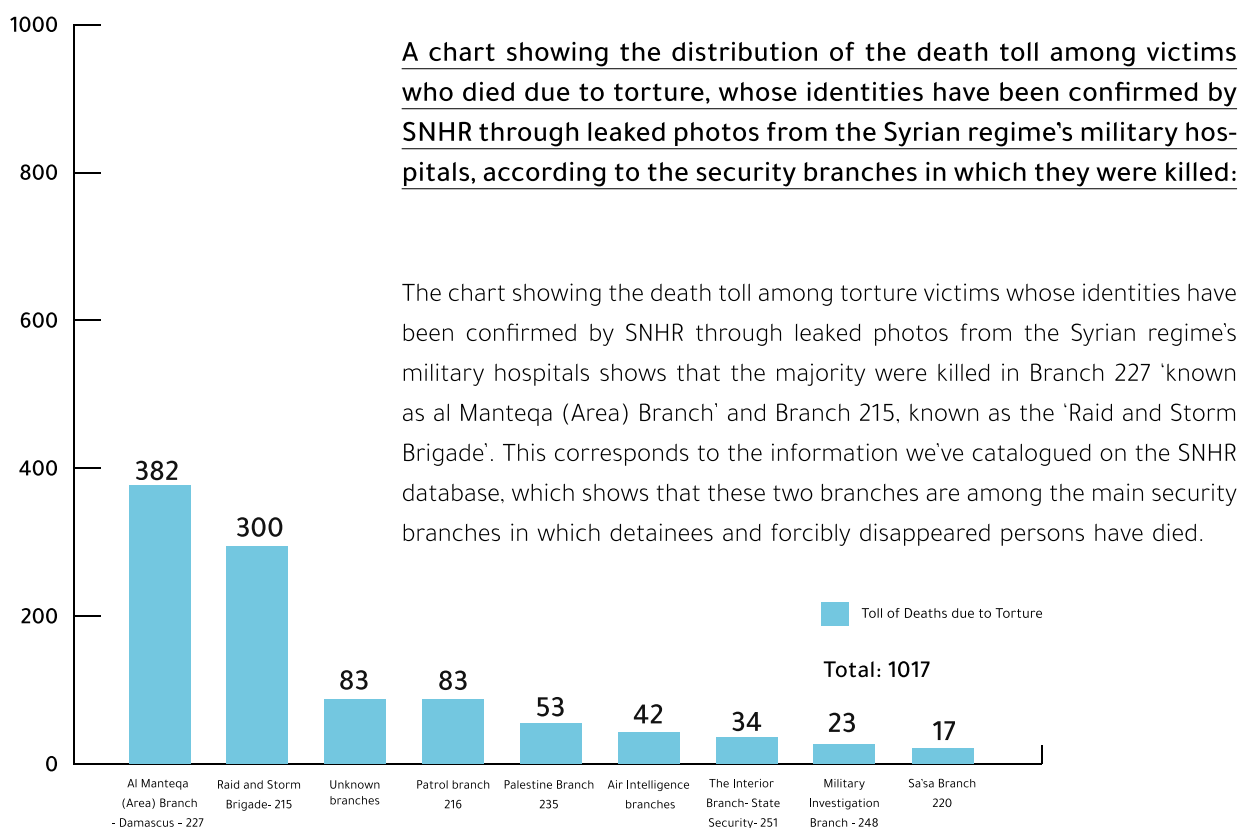
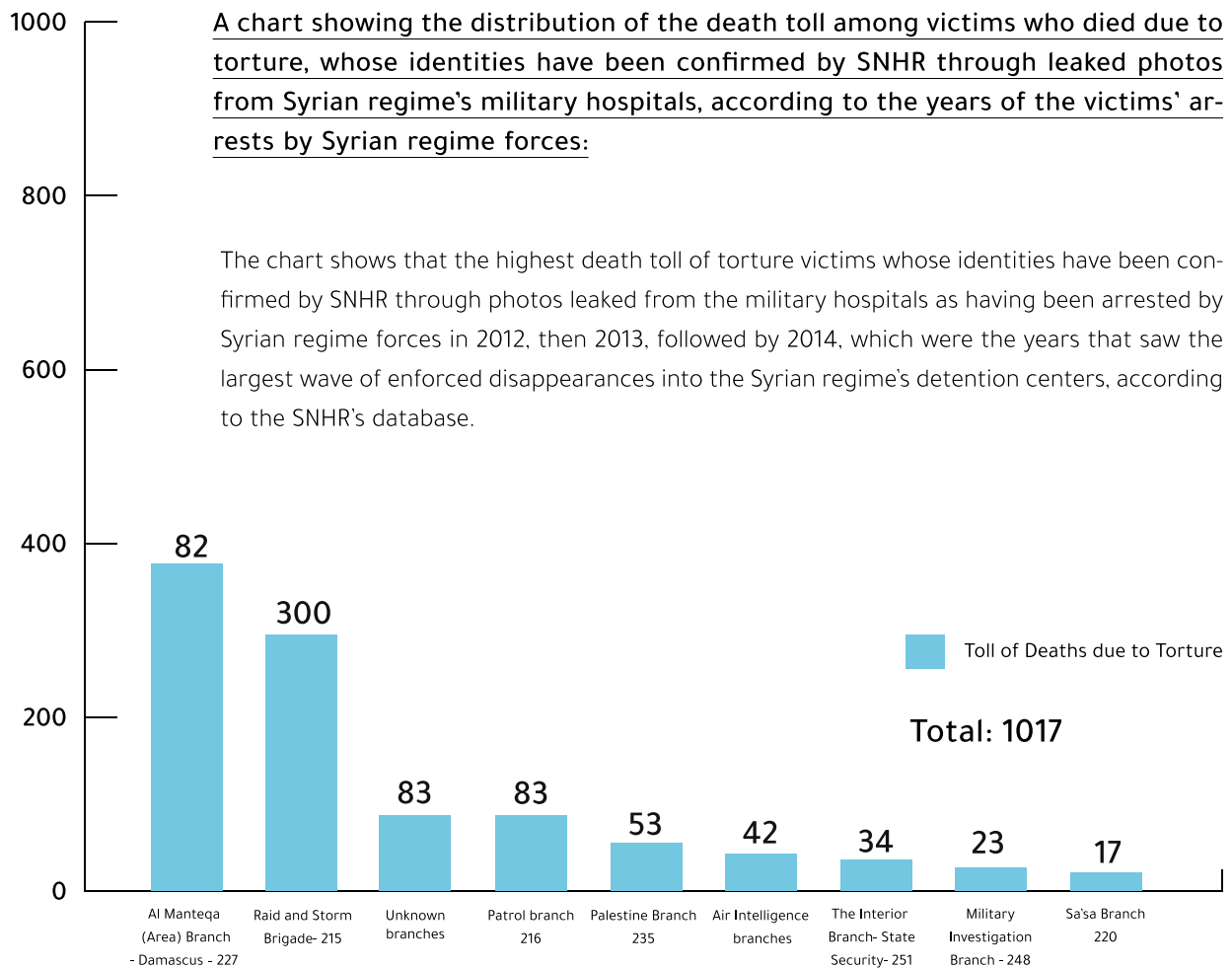
This chart shows that the highest number among the 1,059 cases whose deaths were recorded was seen in 2014, according to the death notifications issued by the civil registry departments, followed by 2013, then 2015.

E. Identifying at least 1,017 victims of torture through leaked photos from Syrian regime military's hospitals between the beginning of 2015 and June 2022:

Since the earliest days of obtaining the leaked Caesar photos, the SNHR has worked on identifying these victims, and we have issued many reports on this subject. Work on this issue is ongoing because these people were killed due to torture, as we keep looking for information on those photos in which we have not yet been able to identify the victims shown, as we face great difficulties in this issue, mainly because of the horrendous disfigurement inflicted on the victims' faces and bodies.

Accordingly, progress in identifying more victims has slowed; although we've been able to add a limited number of cases to those that we have successfully identified annually, we still have about 611 cases requiring verification, and we believe that we require greater logistical capabilities to identify these victims.

Since the beginning of 2015, we have been able to identify 1,017 of the 6,786 victims who appeared in the Caesar photographs; by cross-checking the 1,017 victims identified with cases previously recorded on the SNHR's database of those killed by torture; we found that 836 of these victims' cases had previously been registered by SNHR and 181 cases were not.



F. The Most Prominent Bodies and Individuals Involved in Torture in the Syrian Regime Forces' Detention Centers:

The laws established by the Syrian regime do not justify committing or concealing crimes since they are not laws in any meaningful sense of the term, but are rather pseudo-legal texts that blatantly violate the law. We at the SNHR rely on the relevant rules of customary humanitarian law in holding commanders and other senior officials responsible for war crimes committed by their subordinates pursuant to their orders⁵ accountable if they knew, or had reason to know, that these subordinates were about to commit or were committing such crimes and failed to take all necessary and reasonable measures in their power to prevent their commission, or if such crimes had been committed, to punish the persons responsible;⁶ the International Criminal Court Statute (ICC Statute) expands the elements of this responsibility to include crimes against humanity, which are committed in time of peace or war, and war crimes. This law also holds military commanders in addition to senior officials, including civilians, responsible for these crimes.⁷ In addition, combatants bear responsibility for their actions, even if they were carrying out orders from their higher-ranking superiors, and it is considered an inadequate excuse to claim that the combatant was acting according to orders issued by higher authorities, meaning that those who commit war crimes and crimes against humanity should be held individually criminally responsible for their actions.⁸ The International Criminal Court Statute also states: "The fact that a crime within the jurisdiction of the Court has been committed by a person pursuant to an order of a Government or of a superior, whether military or civilian, shall not relieve that person of criminal responsibility,"⁹ meaning that although such an order may be considered one of the mitigating circumstances in considering the penalty for this crime, it doesn't absolve the crime's perpetrator of his/her responsibility. The SNHR has repeatedly warned, through reports and statements, of the need to refrain from carrying out any acts that lead to committing war crimes or crimes against humanity, in addition to noting that international law provides that, even under duress, the perpetration of war crimes or crimes against humanity or extermination only become acceptable as a defense in extreme situations where there is no option but to kill or be killed.¹⁰

The various institutions of the Syrian regime have long been involved in committing widespread and systematic violations, many of which constitute crimes against humanity¹¹ and war crimes,¹² with everyone who ordered, incited, encouraged, justified, participated, provided assistance in or facilitated those crimes considered to be involved in them; at the forefront of these institutions are those of the army and the security bodies. There is a tendency among fact-finding committees and international commissions of inquiry towards revealing the names of individuals involved in perpetrating violations, with the SNHR having adopted this policy for years, and demanding that the Independent International Commission of Inquiry on Syria should reveal the names of individuals whose involvement in committing egregious violations constituting crimes against humanity and war crimes it has verified.

⁵ ICRC, International Humanitarian Law, Rule 152, https://ihl-databases.icrc.org/customary-ihl/eng/docs/v1_rul_rule152

⁶ ICRC, International Humanitarian Law, Rule 153, https://ihl-databases.icrc.org/customary-ihl/eng/docs/v1_rul_rule153

⁷ International Criminal Court, Rome Statute of the International Criminal Court, Article 28, <https://www.icc-cpi.int/nr/rdonlyres/add16852-ae9-4757-abe7-9cdc-7cf02886/283503/romestatuteng1.pdf>

⁸ ICRC, International Humanitarian Law, Rule 151, https://ihl-databases.icrc.org/customary-ihl/eng/docs/v1_rul_rule151

⁹ International Criminal Court, Rome Statute of the International Criminal Court, Article 28, <https://www.icc-cpi.int/nr/rdonlyres/add16852-ae9-4757-abe7-9cdc-7cf02886/283503/romestatuteng1.pdf>

¹⁰ The International Criminal Tribunal for the former Yugoslavia, Erdemovic case, IT-96-22, Para. 17, <https://www.icty.org/x/cases/erdemovic/tjug/en/erd-tsj980305e.pdf>

¹¹ International Criminal Court, Rome Statute of the International Criminal Court, Article 8, <https://www.icc-cpi.int/nr/rdonlyres/add16852-ae9-4757-abe7-9cdc-7cf02886/283503/romestatuteng1.pdf>

¹² International Criminal Court, Rome Statute of the International Criminal Court, Article 7, <https://www.icc-cpi.int/nr/rdonlyres/add16852-ae9-4757-abe7-9cdc-7cf02886/283503/romestatuteng1.pdf>

With regard to arbitrary arrest, enforced disappearance, torture, and related violations, the Syrian regime's four security services namely the General Military Intelligence Division, Air Force Intelligence Division, Public Administration Division, and Political Security Division, mainly practiced arrests, torture, and enforced disappearances in their detention centers, in addition to a number of military and civilian prisons. The SNHR maintains a database that includes thousands of detailed reports on individuals involved in committing violations of international humanitarian law and human rights law in Syria, their positions, and the most prominent violations they committed that we have documented, and we strive to update this database continuously whenever new details emerge. We have provided detailed information on many of these figures in [reports and other materials](#) we've issued over the past eleven years.

Enforced disappearance has been practiced according to a general systemic methodology, with a decision taken to employ this as a policy according to the chain of command that starts from the President of the Republic and is directly linked to him by the Ministries of Defense and Interior, the National Security Office, and associated security services. Here we note that the appointments, promotions, and transfers of officers among the heads of the security services are carried out under decisions and decrees issued by the President of the Republic exclusively. We also note that the process of identifying officials in the security services is very difficult and complex, as the Syrian regime is reluctant to name them. Therefore, we rely on a process of cross-checking between the database of archival documents, the database of those involved in human rights violations, and the accumulated information we've obtained from survivors of detention and defected officers, through our continuous communication with the survivors of detention.

Through use of these methods, SNHR has already identified many of the Syrian regime's most prominent leadership officials who we believe are involved in enforced disappearances and torture in previous reports. In this report, we present a new list of previously unidentified individuals involved in torture in the Syrian regime's main detention centers or military units affiliated with the army:

Adnan Jamil Ismail:

A Major-General, originally from Beit Kammouna village in the suburbs of Tartus governorate, Ismail, then a Brigadier General, held the position in 2011 of security officer with the Third Division, which is one of the divisions responsible for carrying out arrests, detentions, and torture against civilians in its headquarters in Damascus Suburbs governorate. According to survivors, Adnan Ismail directly supervised many of these operations. He was subsequently promoted to the position of Deputy Commander of the Division until 2015 when he was promoted to the rank of Major-General and appointed Commander of the Third Division, replacing Major General Loay M'alla.



Adnan Jamil Ismail

Nazih Hassoun:

A Major-General from al Qrayya town in the suburbs of Suwayda governorate, Hassoun was appointed in December 2012 as Deputy Head of the Political Security Division, then in 2015 he was appointed as the Head of Syria's Political Security Division until 2017, after which he was retired from service. We believe that Major-General Nazih is responsible for the torture of detainees that took place in the Political Security Division branches, especially the Central Investigation Branch located in the Fayhaa area of Damascus city.

Muhammad Deeb Zaitoun:

A Major-General from al Jebba village in Damascus Suburbs governorate, born in 1951, Zaitoun previously held the position of Head of the Political Security Division from 2011 until July 2012, then was appointed Director of the State Security Department, known as 'the General Intelligence Service.' Major-General Zaitoun is responsible for all torture operations committed in the branches of the State Security Administration since the beginning of his tenure in July 2012 until July 2019, when he was referred for retirement, and was succeeded by Major-General Husam Louqa.

Qahtan Khalil:

A Major-General and former head of the Security Committee in Daraa governorate, Khalil was formerly the assistant director of the Air Force Intelligence Department in Damascus governorate, in which capacity he is considered to be one of those responsible for the torture committed in al Mazza Military Prison and in the Investigation Branch at al Mazza Military airbase in Damascus city.

Ghassan Ali Bilal:

A Brigadier General, Bilal held the position of Director of the Special Security Office in the Fourth Division with the rank of Colonel in 2011, and directly supervised torture operations in the division's prison, in which military personnel and civilians who were arrested at the division's checkpoints in Damascus Suburbs governorate are detained. At the end of 2013, Brigadier General Ghassan Bilal took command of the 555th Parachute Regiment in the Fourth Division, in addition to continuing in his position as Director of the Division's Security Office.

Fadi Abbas:

A Colonel from Beit Yashout town, which is administratively a part of Jabla city in the suburbs of Latakia governorate, Abbas was appointed in 2018 as the Head of the Air Force Intelligence Department in Aleppo and Commander of the Security of Aleppo International Airport, in which capacity he is considered to be one of those responsible for the torture operations committed in the Air Security Branch in Aleppo city. He also worked for the Quartet Security Committee, which carried out investigations into detainees coming from other security branches in Aleppo city.



Fadi Abbas

Safwan Ibrahim:

A Lieutenant Colonel from Misyaf city in the suburbs of Hama governorate, Ibrahim holds the position of Head of the Investigation Department in Branch 227 'the Area Branch' in Damascus city, in which capacity he is considered one of those responsible for the torture committed in Branch 227.



Safwan Ibrahim

Suleiman Jumah:

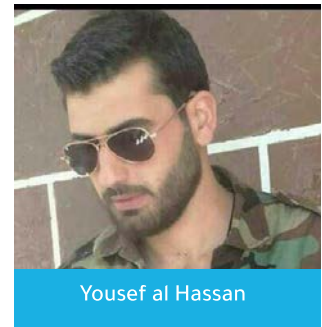
A Colonel, Jumah served as the Head of the Investigation Department in the State Security Branch in Hama city.

Marwan Khattab:

A Major, Khattab served as the Head of the Investigation Department in the State Security Branch in Tartus city.

Yousef al Hassan:

As a member of the Syrian regime forces' Air Security Force in Homs city, from Homs city, Hassan used to torture detainees during their detention and transfer them between the security branches in Homs city.



G. The most notable incidents of death due to torture by Syrian Regime forces in the last year (since the annual report published on this date last year):

Muhammad Abdul Aziz Ali al Thiab, born in 1993, originally from al Shamitiya town in the western suburbs of Deir Ez-Zour suburbs, was arrested by Syrian Democratic Forces in 2016 in Afrin city in the northern suburbs of Aleppo governorate, and handed over by them to Syrian regime forces in 2018 after the SDF withdrew from Afrin city and the Syrian National Army and Turkish forces took control of it. Almost since then, he has been classified as forcibly disappeared, until July 27, 2021, when his family was informed of his death in the regime's Seydnaya Military Prison in Damascus Suburbs governorate.



The SNHR spoke with Mr. Khaled,¹³ brother of Muhammad Abdul Aziz Ali al Thiab, who said: **"After the arrest of Muhammad by Syrian Democratic Forces in Afrin, he was handed over to the 'Hezbollah' militia in Aleppo in 2018. After that, we learned of them handing him over to Syrian regime forces in September 2019 after negotiations failed to release him as part of an exchange process, and we learned that he was being held in Seydnaya Military Prison where we appointed a lawyer to follow up on his case. One of those released from Seydnaya Prison in March 2021 told us that Muhammad's health was poor as a result of torture. On July 27, 2021, the lawyer informed us of his death in May 2021."**

Khaled added that his brother had suffered from a chest injury he sustained before his arrest.

¹³ Via phone on April 7, 2022.

Emad Haj Rahmoun, who was originally from al Zallaqiyat village in the northern suburbs of Hama, was living in Hama city at the time of his arrest when he was detained by members of the Syrian regime forces' Military Security Branch in September 2020, as he passed through one of the regime's checkpoints on the Hama-Mharda road while on his way to his village of al Zallaqiyat, and taken to the Military Security Branch in Hama city. He was 55 years old at the time of his arrest. Almost since that day, he has been classified as forcibly disappeared. On August 30, 2021, his family received information indicating that he had died on August 8, 2021. Our data from numerous sources confirms that he was in good health at the time of his arrest, indicating that he probably died due to torture in a Syrian regime detention center in Damascus. SNHR confirms that Syrian regime forces failed to hand over his body to his family.



Emad Haj Rahmoun

The SNHR spoke with Mr. Ayman Abdul Hamid Haj Rahmoun,¹⁴ the victim's brother, who told us: **"Emad was residing in Jordan and returned to Syria in March 2020 and settled upon his return in Hama. He was summoned for interrogation several times by Branch 248 in Damascus after his return, then was arrested by the Military Security Branch in Hama on September 10, 2020, while he was heading to al Zallaqiyat village, then transferred after a month to Branch 248 in Damascus, then to Branch 235 'Palestine Branch', from which [he was transferred] to Seydnaya Military Prison. In October 2021, we learned of his death inside Seydnaya Prison on August 8, 2021."** Ayman told us that Emad's family had been unable to obtain a death certificate, that his body was not handed over to them, and that throughout the period of his detention, his family was unable to visit him, despite all their attempts to do so.

Abdul Rahman Khaled Abboud, from Sarmin city in the northern suburbs of Idlib governorate, born in 1996, was arrested by Syrian Democratic Forces at the end of December 2017 in Manbej city, east of Aleppo, and handed over to Syrian regime forces in Aleppo city in 2018. Almost since then, he has been classified as forcibly disappeared, with the Syrian regime denying his detention and preventing anyone, even a lawyer, from visiting him. On September 29, 2021, his family received information indicating that he had died. Our data from numerous sources confirms that he was in good health at the time of his arrest, indicating that he probably died due to torture in a Syrian regime detention center in Damascus. SNHR confirms that Syrian regime forces failed to hand over his body to his family.



Abdul Rahman Khaled Abboud

The SNHR spoke with Mr. Mahmoud,¹⁵ a relative of the victim Abdul Rahman, who told us: **"Abdul Rahman was married and had a child who was born three months after his arrest. The Syrian Democratic Forces arrested him in Manbej city, where he was living and working, and then handed him over to the Military Security Branch in Aleppo in April 2018. On September 29, 2021, his family visited the Personal Status Department of Idlib governorate, where they learned that his death was registered in the civil registry on October 1, 2019."**

¹⁴ Via phone on April 2, 2022.

¹⁵ Via phone on April 16, 2022.

Mahmoud Faisal Qarqouz, from al Qseir city in west of Homs governorate, born in 1970, was arrested by Syrian regime forces in 2013, when he visited the Criminal Security Branch in al Wa'er neighborhood in Homs city to obtain an ID card to replace one he'd lost. Following his arrest, Mahmoud was transferred to a number of different prisons during the period of his detention, with the last prison being Seydnaya Military Prison in Damascus Suburbs governorate in 2014. Almost since then, he has been classified as forcibly disappeared, with the Syrian regime denying his detention and preventing anyone, even a lawyer, from visiting him. On December 1, 2021, his family received information indicating that he had died. Our data from numerous sources confirms that he was in good health at the time of his arrest, indicating that he probably died due to torture in a Syrian regime detention center in Damascus. SNHR confirms that Syrian regime forces failed to hand over his body to his family.



Mahmoud Faisal Qarqouz

The SNHR spoke with Mr. Fadi Qarqouz,¹⁶ a cousin of the victim Mahmoud, who said: **"Mahmoud was married and had 7 children. He was arrested for the first time on December 9, 2012, while he was passing through a checkpoint in al Qseir city, called the Sharkas Checkpoint, and he was released several days later without being handed his ID card, [with regime personnel] claiming that it was lost. So, he went to the Military and Political Security branches in al Qseir city to look for his ID card, so they told him to go to the Criminal Security Branch in al Wa'er neighborhood in Homs city to get a new one. When he visited the Criminal Security Branch, he was arrested. At first, they said it was on charges of having a similar name of a wanted person, then they claimed that he was wanted by several security branches. He was then transferred between several security branches in Homs city, and then transferred to the Area Branch in Damascus, and then to Seydnaya Military Prison in 2014, after which no news was heard of him and we were unable to obtain any information about him. In early December 2021, the lawyer assigned to Mahmoud's case informed us that he had visited the Military Police headquarters in Damascus to inquire about him, and they informed him that he was dead."**

Fadi added that they were not given any document proving Mahmoud's death, with the regime not even handing over his body. Throughout Mahmoud's detention, his family was unable to visit him, despite all their attempts to do so.

Ahmad Hasan al Dghaim, a day laborer from Jarjanaz town in the suburbs of Idlib governorate, born in 1973, was arrested by Syrian regime forces on Sunday, October 28, 2012, upon his return from Lebanon at al Dabbousiya border crossing with Lebanon in the western suburbs of Homs. Almost since then, he has been classified as forcibly disappeared, with the Syrian regime denying his detention and preventing anyone, even a lawyer, from visiting him. On Tuesday, February 1, 2022, SNHR received information that he had died in custody. Our data from numerous sources confirms that he was in good health at the time of his arrest, indicating that he probably died due to torture. SNHR confirms that Syrian regime forces failed to hand over his body to his family.



Ahmad Hasan al Dghaim

¹⁶ Via phone on December 3, 2021.

The SNHR spoke with Mr. Omar,¹⁷ the victim Ahmad's son, who told us: **"Since the moment of my father's arrest, we have obtained no information about him and his fate remained unknown despite the appointment of a number of lawyers to know his fate, until he was seen by former detainee from Ma'aret al Numan city who was released from al Mazza Military Airbase in Damascus in 2013. When one of our relatives visited the Personal Status Department, we learned that he died on November 10, 2014, according to the death statement we obtained."**

Muhammad Khair Ibrahim al Buqa'i, from Deir al Asafeer town in Damascus Suburbs governorate, born in 1982, was arrested by Syrian regime forces on Wednesday, April 18, 2012, near his home during a raid on the town. Almost since then, he has been classified as forcibly disappeared, with the Syrian regime denying his detention and preventing anyone, even a lawyer, from visiting him. In March 2022, his family received information indicating that he died in 2019. Our data from numerous sources confirms that he had suffered a severe back injury during his arrest, indicating that he probably died due to torture in a Syrian regime detention center in Damascus. SNHR confirms that Syrian regime forces failed to hand over his body to his family.

The SNHR spoke with Mr. Emad,¹⁸ a relative of the victim Muhammad, who told us: **"Muhammad Khair was married. In a raid by Syrian regime forces on Deir al Asafeer, he was arrested near his house; during the operation of his arrest, he was beaten by members of the regime forces, causing him a back injury, after which he was unable to stand or walk. He was then placed, along with about 150 other people, in the town square. Then, the regime forces released everyone while they arrested Muhammad Khair with another person from the same family. Since that time, no one has seen him, and his family was unable to take any action as a result of the siege imposed on the Eastern Ghouta since August 2013. In 2017, although one of his family members managed to visit the Military Police Branch in al Qaboun area and the General Personal Status Department in Damascus, he obtained no information indicating his fate. In March 2022, his family learned that he had died inside a detention center in Damascus, when they visited the Personal Status Department."**

Muhammad Ammar al Zu'be, from Tafas city in the western suburbs of Daraa governorate, born in 1998, was arrested by Syrian regime forces in January 2019, while he was passing through one of the regime's checkpoints in Dael city in the suburbs of Daraa governorate; Muhammad was among those who had previously settled their security status. Almost since then, he has been classified as forcibly disappeared, with the Syrian regime denying his detention and preventing anyone, even a lawyer, from visiting him. On March 2, 2022, Syrian regime forces informed his family of his death inside Seydnaya Military Prison in Damascus Suburbs governorate, with his body, which was handed over to his family on April 3, 2022, bearing signs of torture. Our data from numerous sources confirms that he was in good health at the time of his arrest, indicating that he probably died due to torture and neglect of healthcare.



Muhammad Ammar al Zu'be

¹⁷ Via phone on February 15, 2022.

¹⁸ Via phone on March 18, 2022.

The SNHR spoke with Mr. Jalal,¹⁹ a relative of the victim Muhammad, who told us: **“Muhammad was arrested by members of a checkpoint belonging to the Air Force Intelligence Branch in Da’el city, and he was transferred to the Air Force Intelligence Branch in Damascus, and then to Seydnaya Military Prison, where a lawyer was appointed. His family paid a large sum of money in an attempt to release him, but he died on March 2, 2022, due to torture. Then, negotiations resumed, but [these negotiations were] to release his body to his family, who received his body on April 3, 2022, bearing signs of torture.”**

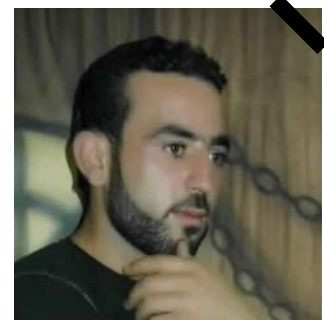
Esam Adham al Dandashi, born in 1993, from Tal Kalakh city in the western suburbs of Homs governorate, was a secondary school student when he was arrested by Syrian regime forces on June 26, 2013, from inside a field hospital in Tal Kalakh while he was receiving treatment after being shot in the abdomen when Syrian regime forces raided the city. Almost since then, he has been classified as forcibly disappeared, with the Syrian regime denying his detention and preventing anyone, even a lawyer, from visiting him. On March 7, 2022, his family learned that he died inside a Syrian regime forces’ detention center in 2015. We have information confirming that he was in poor health when he was arrested due to the injury he sustained, indicating that he probably died due to torture and neglect of healthcare. SNHR confirms that Syrian regime forces failed to hand over his body to his family.



Esam Adham al Dandashi

The SNHR spoke with Mr. Omar Farouk al Dandashi,²⁰ Esam’s cousin, who told us: **“My cousin Esam was arrested by Syrian regime forces personnel while receiving treatment in the field hospital in al Sharqiya neighborhood in Tal Kalakh city, following a raid by Syrian regime forces. In September 2013, he was seen in the military hospital in Tartus city, where his family learned from people present in the hospital that Esam underwent surgery and was released the next day. Since that time, no one has seen him, and his family tried to find out where he was being held through the mediation of people but did not know any information. During the recent period, his family appointed two lawyers, who in turn informed them on March 7, 2022, of his death in November 2015.”**

Muhammad Zarzouri, born in 1989, from al Najiya village in the suburbs of Idlib, was arrested in the village by Syrian regime forces on October 24, 2011. Almost since then, he has been classified as forcibly disappeared, with the Syrian regime denying his detention and preventing anyone, even a lawyer, from visiting him. On May 8, 2022, his family learned that he had been registered as dead in the civil registry, which gives the date of his death as October 15, 2012. SNHR believes it’s highly probable that Muhammad died due to torture in one of the Syrian regime’s detention centers.



Muhammad Zarzouri

¹⁹ Via phone on April 6, 2022.

²⁰ Via phone on April 7, 2022.

The SNHR spoke with Mr. Hussam,²¹ a relative of the victim Muhammad, who told us: **“A patrol of Criminal Security personnel in a civilian vehicle al Najiya village in the suburbs of Idlib arrested Muhammad, then handed him over to the Political Security Branch in Idlib city, where he remained in detention for two months. Five months after his arrest, his family learned from one of the former detainees that Muhammad was being held in the Political Security Administration (al Fayha’ Branch) in Damascus. Since that time, no one has seen him, and his family tried to find out where he was being held by appointing a lawyer, but they did not get any information, then they extracted a family statement to see if he was still alive, finding that he was registered in the civil registry department as having died on October 15, 2012.”**

H. Some of the video testimonies of victims who were subjected to various forms of torture during their arrest/detention in the Syrian regime forces’ detention centers:

Ammar Hassan al Hamwi, born in 1996, originally from Khan Sheikhoun city in Idlib governorate suburbs, was living in Damascus city and studying at Damascus University’s Faculty of Arts and Humanities’ History Department, when he was arrested by Syrian regime forces on Saturday, February 1, 2014, upon returning from work at a restaurant in the city’s Sheikh Sa’ed neighborhood. Throughout the period of his detention, Ammar was transferred between several detention centers, the last of which was Seydnaya Military Prison in Damascus Suburbs governorate, before finally being transferred to Hama Central Prison where he spent two months and from which he was released on Sunday, November 6, 2016.



In an interview with the SNHR, Ammar al Hamwi recalled the harsh conditions of his detention and the methods of torture he was subjected to, saying:

“I was working in a restaurant in al Mazza area of Damascus. One day, when I came back from work at around two a.m., specifically to my place of residence in al Sheikh Sa’ed neighborhood near al Mazza highway, there were a number of security personnel asking one of my friends about me the moment I came home, then they arrested me and my friends residing with me and took us to Branch 215 in Damascus. The next day, they called my friends for interrogation and released all of them at noon but kept me there. When they took me to the interrogation room, they accused me of dealing with terrorist gangs and using weapons against the Syrian army. When I denied these accusations, they severely beat me with sticks and tortured me using the ‘ghost’ and the ‘German chair.’ I was tortured for several months to confess these accusations, and I could no longer bear it, so I confessed what they wanted to hear in order to escape torture.

²¹ Via phone on May 9, 2022.

On January 30, 2015, I was transferred to Branch 248 with about 128 detainees, and then we were taken in a refrigerated truck to Seydnaya Prison. When we arrived at Seydnaya Prison, they beat and insulted us all the way from the prison door to the cell door. We were stripped naked, and they put me in a very small cell with a large number of detainees. In this prison, I suffered a lot of torment and my health deteriorated a lot, as I contracted diseases that led to a high temperature and severe diarrhea with a significant weight loss, in addition to torture, while many detainees died of these diseases due to a lack of medicines and healthcare. In May 2015, I was transferred to the Military Field Court in al Baramka area of Damascus, and when my name was announced, they took me to the judge's room, who only asked me for my name and told me to get out. Then, they brought me back to Seydnaya Prison, where I stayed until September 2016, when they announced my name from inside the prison and told me that I was being released under an amnesty from the 'President' for those who were arrested while they are under legal age. After Seydnaya Prison, I was transferred to Hama Central Prison, where the judge did not allow my release until after a letter was sent from the Military Field Court to Hama Central Prison, which took two months. Then, I was released from Hama Central Prison on November 6, 2016."

A video interview showing part of the testimony of Mr. Ammar Hassan al Hamwi, conducted by the SNHR



Muhammad Ibrahim Najjar, born in 1994, from Marea city in the suburbs of Aleppo governorate, who lives in Aleppo city, was arrested by Syrian regime forces on Thursday, July 5, 2012, while working in the city. Throughout the duration of his detention, Muhammad was transferred between several detention centers, including Seydnaya Military Prison in Damascus Suburbs governorate. On May 21, 2013, the Counter-Terrorism Court sentenced him to life imprisonment, with this sentence being commuted in 2020 to six-and-a-half years. On Friday, June 19, 2020, Syrian regime forces released him from Suwayda Central Prison.



Muhammad Ibrahim Najjar

In an interview with the SNHR, Mr. Muhammad Najjar told us about the conditions of his detention and the torture he was subjected to during his interrogation and throughout his detention. He says: “I was working in painting and decorating homes in Aleppo city. While I was working in the city center in Saadallah al Jabri Square, a sudden explosion occurred near where I was on the street, at three o'clock in the afternoon. So, I ran away from the site of the explosion, then I was shocked by a large number of regime forces' personnel chasing me, then they arrested me on the accusation that I was the one who carried out this explosion and said that I was a member of the Free Army, even though I was wearing work clothes and my young age did not suggest that I was a fighter. Then they put me in the trunk of a car and took me to the State Security Branch in Aleppo city. As soon as I entered the branch, I was subjected to the worst forms of torture - beatings with sticks and plastic tubes, and burning my body with cigarettes. This continued for six hours until I lost all sense of my body. Then they threw me into a small solitary cell with three other detainees, after which I was transferred to the Air Force Intelligence Branch in Aleppo city. After that, I was taken to al Neirab Airport in a bus with other detainees. When we arrived at the airport and got off the bus, members of the regime forces lined up at a distance of 50 meters reaching the plane, where they beat us one by one, then they tied us together in groups of 10 detainees each. After we arrived at al Mazza Airbase in Damascus city, we were beaten, insulted, and trampled under their feet. Then I was taken to the branch of the State Security Administration in Kafrsousa area in Damascus. In the yard of the building, I was beaten for more than half an hour by an officer after he demanded my name, then they put me in a double cell with 35 detainees. Five days later, they interrogated me, [continuing] for 10 days, during which I was subjected to beatings and various methods of torture that I could not bear, so I confessed what they wanted me to confess in order to stop them torturing me, such as carrying out an explosion, joining the Free Army, going out in demonstrations, and attacking the checkpoints of the regime forces. I was then detained for five months in a cell that contained a large number of detainees. The cell was inadequate in terms of its size and lacked the most basic necessities of life, with a number of detainees dying there as a result of illness and shortness of breath. After five months, I was taken to Adra Central Prison in Damascus Suburbs governorate, then I was sentenced to life imprisonment by the Counter-Terrorism Court in al Mazza area of Damascus city, and they detained me in Adra Central Prison until the end of 2015, after which I was transferred to Suwayda Central Prison until 2020, then they commuted the sentence to six-and-a-half years. On June 19, 2020, I was released from Suwayda Central Prison.”

Muhammad added that he was beaten and insulted while he was being transferred from one branch to another by the officers responsible for his transfer, and he could not communicate with his family until 2015 after he was transferred to Suwayda Central Prison.

A video interview showing part of the testimony of Mr. Muhammad Ibrahim Najjar, conducted by the SNHR

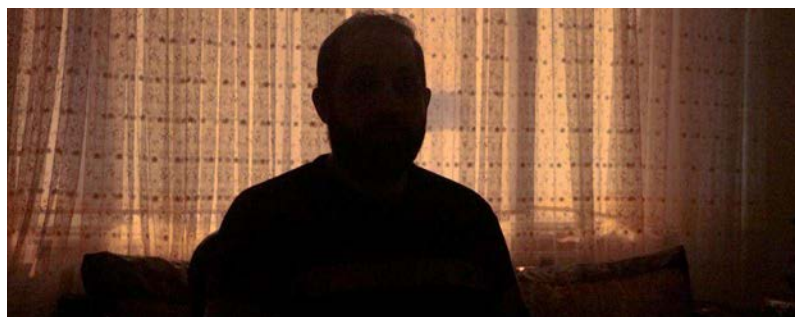


Muhannad al Hajj Yousef, from Damascus city, born in 1982, was living in Rekn al Din neighborhood in Damascus and working in the Syrian regime's Ministry of Defense's Defense Factories when he was arrested at his workplace by Syrian regime forces on Monday, February 27, 2012. Throughout the period of his detention, Muhannad was transferred between several detention centers, including Seydnaya Military Prison in Damascus Suburbs governorate. Syrian regime forces released him from Adra Central Prison in Damascus Suburbs on Monday, June 9, 2014.

The SNHR interviewed Mr. Muhannad al Hajj Yousef, who told us: "I was at my workplace in al Hama area of Damascus city when I was arrested by security forces, who handcuffed me and took me to the State Security Branch in the Kafrsousa area in Damascus. As soon as I entered an office inside the building with my eyes blindfolded, two personnel took turns beating me for two hours without knowing the reason for my arrest. Then, they transferred me to the Military Security Branch. When I entered there, I saw detainees hanging without clothes, and then I was beaten and forced to take off my clothes. Then, they put me in a solitary cell for three days without clothes on me, during which I could not sit on the ground because it was very cold. Then they took me out of the cell for interrogation and gave me my clothes. The interrogator beat me for half an hour with a green plastic stick. I later learned that I was accused of killing

Brigadier General Dr. Eisa al Khouli, a doctor in Hamish Hospital, in addition to being accused of carrying out terrorist acts. The interrogator threatened to torture and kill me if I did not confess to them. When I confessed, he beat me for an hour until I could not stand it, then I vomited and fell on the ground, then they carried me to the solitary cell. The next day, the interrogator told me that he knew that I was not the killer, yet he continued to beat and torture me with electrocution and burn my beard, in addition to pouring cold water on my body. After 45 days, the interrogator fingerprinted me on seven papers, then they put me in a car and took me to another branch. After two months, they transferred me to the Palestine Branch, where I was subjected to various methods of torture. Two months later, they transferred me to Branch 215, where I stayed for several hours, before I was transferred in a minibus with other detainees to the Military Police headquarters in al Qaboun area, where I was presented to a field court during which I denied my confessions. The next day, I was transferred to Seydnaya Military Prison, where I was detained for four months, during which I was subjected to various types of torture that could lead to death. I was detained in a cell that contained a large number of detainees. The cell was inadequate in terms of its size and lacked the most basic necessities of life, with a number of detainees there dying as a result of torture. After five months, I was taken to Adra Central Prison where my family was able to visit me for the first time, as they did not know where I was being held for about 10 months. While I was detained in Adra Prison, I learned that a field court verdict had been issued against me of 10 years' imprisonment without the right to overturn the verdict or to be brought before the court. After a period of three years, an amnesty decree was issued and I was released in June 2014, when I was stripped of all my civil and military rights, my movable and immovable property was seized, and I was summoned by the security branches several times. To date, I still suffer from the effects of torture that caused the fracture of two vertebrae in my spine, as I was severely beaten on the back in Seydnaya Military Prison, in addition to a leg injury."

A video interview showing part of the testimony of Mr. Muhammad Ibrahim Najjar, conducted by the SNHR



Emad Abu Ras, from Aleppo city, born in 1989, was a student at the Faculty of Commerce and Economics at Tishreen University in Latakia city, when he was arrested by Syrian regime forces on Wednesday, December 19, 2012, at the former Bassel al Assad International Airport in Hmeimim town in the suburbs of Latakia governorate. Throughout the period of his detention, Emad was transferred between several detention centers, including Seyd-naya Military Prison in Damascus Suburbs governorate. He was released on Saturday, December 12, 2015.



A video interview for part of the testimony of Mr. Emad Abu Ras, conducted by the SNHR



2. Torture by Hay'at Tahrir al Sham (HTS)

HTS has established numerous detention centers in many areas under its control. The SNHR team managed to identify at least 46 permanent detention centers affiliated with HTS located in Idlib governorate, the western suburbs of Aleppo governorate, and Latakia suburbs in northwest Syria. In addition to the group's 46 permanent detention centers, it also has at least 116 temporary detention centers, where detainees are subjected to investigation and interrogation prior to transferring detainees to permanent detention centers. Most of the survivors we met told us that they had been transferred between at least two detention centers during the period of their detention, with some telling us about being transferred between three to five detention centers on the orders of the senior officials at the group's security center. Detainees were often transferred by tying them together and placing them in vans or vehicles normally used to transport vegetables, with their eyes covered by blindfolds on which their names were written.

HTS generally prevents family members or lawyers from visiting detainees, and many survivors told us that they had not received any visits for the entire duration of their detention. Some other detainees, meanwhile, reported receiving visits, but noted that these were very few and far between, with an average of one visit every six months.

We noted that HTS has dedicated no separate detention facilities for juveniles/minors or women. Rather, minors are held in dormitories/cells with adults and are not tried in courts or by judges specializing in juvenile prosecution. As for women, separate dormitories have been allocated for them within male detention centers. In the event that women are arrested with their children, the child is placed with the mother if he or she is under the age of five to seven years; boys older than this age are taken from their mothers and imprisoned with the adult male detainees.

According to the investigations carried out by SNHR, one of the worst HTS detention centers, which continues to witness torture and disappearances and has a terrible reputation among survivors and families of the forcibly disappeared, is Harem Prison in the western suburbs of Idlib. As for the worst among the detention centers that were transferred or relocated, there are two particularly infamous centers: the 700th Prison in the western suburbs of Aleppo and al Uqab Prison in the southern suburbs of Idlib.

HTS uses multiple torture methods within the detention centers. Through our interviews with dozens of detention/torture survivors over the years, we were able to identify the most notable methods of torture used by the group, which are similar to a great extent to the torture methods practiced by the Syrian regime in its detention centers. We note that this similarity extends even to the strategy of extracting 'confessions' through torture, then trying detainees on the basis of these clearly coerced statements. Many detainees told us that they had been tortured by HTS members even before they were taken for interrogation, or that they were given the option of admitting the false charges against them or being tortured until they admitted them. All these similarities with the regime, however, did not prevent HTS from inventing its own distinctive torture methods. In this paragraph, we will not repeat the 72 torture methods used by the Syrian regime, which we talked about in detail in a previous report. HTS has been characterized by the use of 22 additional torture methods. A detainee may often be subjected to more than one method of torture during his or her detention. We have divided these methods into three main categories, and provided details on all of them in a [previous detailed](#) report on the most notable HTS violations, namely:

One: 13 physical torture methods

Two: Eight psychological torture methods

Three: Forced labor

The SNHR team has documented the deaths of at least 31 individuals, including two children, in HTS' detention centers since the group's establishment in early 2012 up until June 2022.

The most notable deaths due to torture by HTS:

Abdul Qader Abdullah Baydoun, a jailer at HTS' Jisr al Shoghour Court, from Bdama town in the western suburbs of Idlib governorate, was arrested by HTS personnel on Thursday, August 20, 2020, at the Jisr al Shoghour city court on charges of cooperating with US-led coalition forces. On Saturday, July 17, 2021, HTS informed his family of his death. Our data from numerous sources confirms that he was in good health at the time of his arrest, indicating that he probably died due to torture in an HTS detention center. SNHR confirms that HTS failed to hand over his body to his family.



Abdul Qader Abdullah Baydoun

Ahmad Hussein Sattouf, from Tal Hadya village, south of Aleppo governorate, was arrested by HTS personnel in the village in February 2021 on charges of affiliation with Syrian regime forces. On Wednesday, September 15, 2021, HTS personnel informed his family of his death without handing over his body. Our data from numerous sources confirms that he was in good health at the time of his arrest, indicating that he probably died due to torture in an HTS detention center.



Ahmad Hussein Sattouf

Faisal Ahmad al Juma, born in 1967, from M'ar Shimsha village in the eastern suburbs of Idlib governorate, who was the speaker and Imam at a mosque in Darkoush town in the western suburbs of Idlib governorate, was arrested by HTS personnel on Saturday, April 27, 2019, in Darkoush town, over accusations that he had been in contact with Syrian regime forces. He was taken to HTS's al Zanbaqi Prison in the town, with his family managing to visit him for the last time on December 6, 2021, at the town's police station.



Faisal Ahmad al Juma

On Tuesday, February 2, 2022, HTS notified his family that he had passed away inside an HTS detention center, although the group failed to release his body to his family. SNHR received information confirming that he was in bad health at the time of his arrest as he suffered from paralysis in his left foot, making it probable that he died due to lack of healthcare inside an HTS detention center.

3. Kurdish-led Syrian Democratic Forces (SDF)

The SDF has used torture in the group's detention centers mainly during investigations and interrogations as a way to extract confessions from detainees, with torture often carried out in a vengeful way and based on ethnic prejudice. The SDF placed detainees in extremely poor conditions of overcrowding, human stacking, and lack of ventilation and poor hygiene, and used torture as a punitive method against detainees who contravene SDF orders, using methods such as prolonged solitary confinement, deprivation of food and sleep, and shaving the detainees' heads. Among the most prominent methods of torture that SDF used extensively in its detention centers are flogging, the 'tire', 'shabeh', burning and electrocution, which are extremely similar to the torture practices inflicted in the Syrian regime forces' detention centers.

The SNHR's team has documented the deaths of at least 83 individuals, including one child and two women, in the SDF's detention centers, since the establishment of the Self-Management Forces of the Kurdish Democratic Union Party - in January 2014 until June 2022. We recorded SDF handing over a number of the victims' bodies to their families, with the bodies bearing signs of torture.

We also note that the SDF continue to detain tens of thousands of Syrian citizens and thousands of people of other nationalities in al Hawl desert camp without any legal basis and without issuing any judicial arrest warrants against these detainees, some of whom have been detained for years. The harsh conditions of detention, the living conditions, and the lack of food and medical care constitute multiple types of psychological and physical torture. We previously issued an extensive [report on al Hawl Camp](#) and the conditions of families' detention there.

The most notable incidents of torture by SDF:

Juma Muhammad al Barri, from al Tayyana town in the eastern suburbs of Deir Ez-Zour governorate, aged 42, was arrested by gunmen affiliated with the Syrian Democratic Forces on Friday, July 2, 2021, while he was passing through one of the SDF's checkpoints in the town, and was taken to an undisclosed location, before being released on July 3, 2021, with his body bearing signs of torture which he was subjected to in one of the SDF detention centers.



Kamal Muhammad al Allawi, from al Sh-heil city in the eastern suburbs of Deir Ez-Zour governorate, was arrested by gunmen affiliated with the Syrian Democratic Forces on Sunday, July 25, 2021, in a raid on his home in the city, and was taken to one of the SDF detention centers in al Bseira city in the suburbs of Deir Ez-Zour, before being released some hours later, with his body bearing signs of torture.



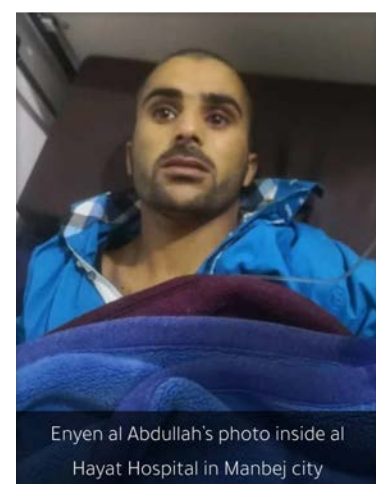
Photo shows the signs of torture on the civilian Kamal Muhammad al Allawi's body after his release

Madrouj al Sleibi, from al Marashda village, which is administratively a part of al Sousa district in the eastern suburbs of Deir Ez-Zour governorate, was arrested by Syrian Democratic Forces on Thursday, August 19, 2021, in the village, before being released on Wednesday, August 25, 2021, following the deterioration of his health and the torture he was subjected to in one of the SDF detention centers in Deir Ez-Zour governorate.



Photo showing Madrouj al Sleibi following his release in the hospital as a result of his deteriorating health condition

Enyen al Abdullah, from Jeb al Ashra village, which is administratively a part of Manbej city in the eastern suburbs of Aleppo governorate, was arrested by Syrian Democratic Forces in November 2021 when he was summoned to testify in a civil case in an SDF court, and was taken to an undisclosed location. On Thursday, January 30, 2021, Enyen was transferred to al Hayat Hospital in Manbej city after being tortured inside one of the SDF detention centers, where he arrived in a poor physical condition and suffering from memory loss.



Enyen al Abdullah's photo inside al Hayat Hospital in Manbej city

Jeindar Barakat, born in 1988, a member of the Kurdish Yekiti Party in Syria, from Hasaka city, who works in a currency exchange office, was arrested by Syrian Democratic Forces in a raid on his workplace in the city's al Mufti neighborhood on Tuesday, January 18, 2022, with the Syrian Democratic Forces releasing him after several hours, with signs of torture on his body.



Video showing Syrian Democratic Forces' arrest of Jeindar Barakat at his workplace



The SNHR spoke with Mr. Jeindar Barakat,²² who said: **“About six masked members of the SDF forces stormed my workshop in al Mufti neighborhood and arrested me after stealing my mobile phone and the money inside the shop. Then, they took me to al Mleibiya area, south of Hasaka city, where they cursed and beat me so badly that my finger was broken, and they threatened me not to say anything about what happened to me, then they threw me down on the ground in the area.”** Jeindar explained that the reason for his arrest was his continuous criticism of the SDF’s policies and his previous work as a field reporter for the Kurdistan Yekiti Party in Syria.

The most notable deaths due to torture by SDF:

Ghiath Abboud Saud al Faadel, born in 2000, from Tal al Shayer village, which is administratively a part of al Shaddadi city in the southern suburbs of Hasaka governorate, was arrested by Syrian Democratic Forces personnel in May 2019. Almost since that time, he has been classified as forcibly disappeared, with the SDF preventing anyone, even a lawyer, from visiting him or knowing his fate. On May 12, 2021, his family was informed by SDF personnel that Ghiath had died in the SDF’s Hasaka Central Prison in Hasaka city, with his body returned to the family. SNHR data from numerous sources confirms that he was in good health at the time of his arrest, indicating that he most probably died due to torture and lack of healthcare in Hasaka Central Prison.

The SNHR spoke with Mr. Isam,²³ a relative of the victim, Ghiath, who told us: **“Ghiath was unmarried. The Syrian Democratic Forces arrested him while he was with his friends in al Shaddadi city, west of the grain silos, and since that time we had known nothing about him, until the Syrian Democratic Forces informed his family of his death inside the SDF’s Hasaka Central Prison in Hasaka city, and we received his body.”**

Amin Aisa al Ali, born in 1986, from Birek village, which is administratively a part of al Derbasiya city in the northern suburbs of Hasaka, was living in Hasaka city, where he was an English language teacher, as well as being a member of the subcommittee of the Kurdistan Democratic Party’s Syria branch, and working in the real estate field. Amin was arrested by members of the Syrian Democratic Forces on Saturday, May 22, 2021, in a raid on his home in Hasaka city, and taken to an undisclosed location. On Monday, June 28, 2021, Amin’s family received news that he had died in one of the Syrian Democratic Forces’ detention centers, collecting his body from the People’s Hospital (formerly the National Hospital) in Hasaka. SNHR data from numerous sources confirms that he was suffering from a heart problem when he was arrested, indicating that he most probably died due to torture and lack of healthcare



²² Via phone on January 19, 2022.

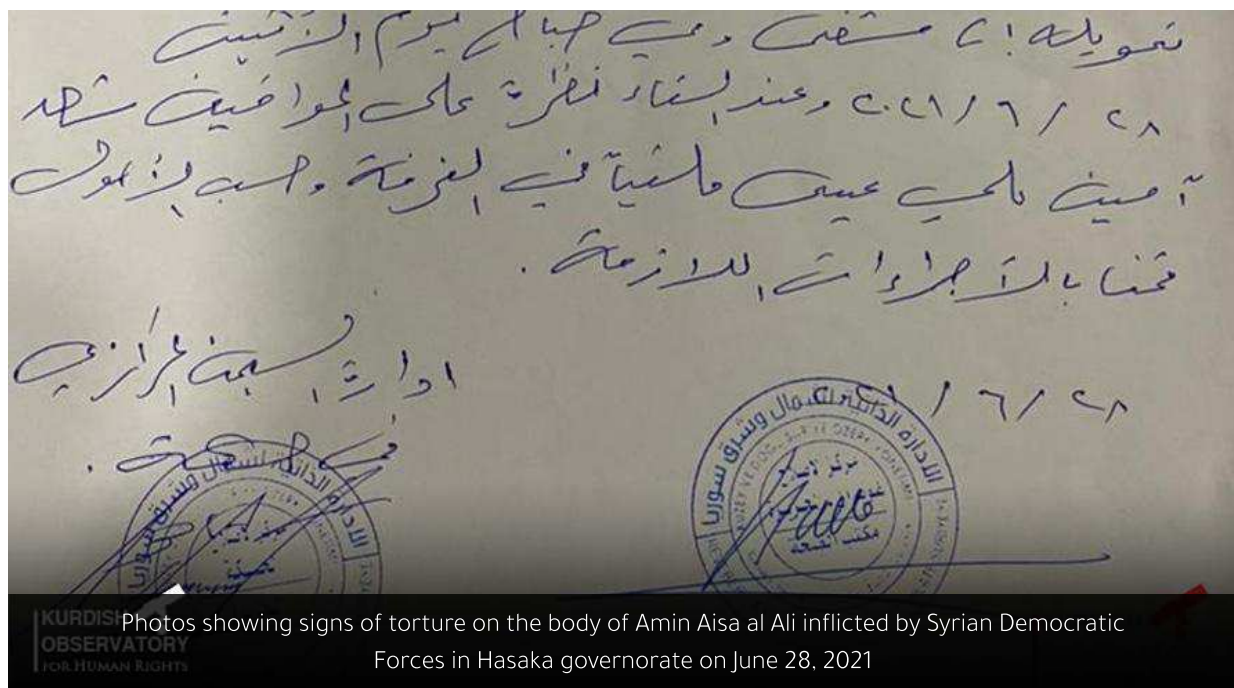
²³ Via phone on April 9, 2022.

The SNHR spoke with Mr. Hajjar Amin,²⁴ the victim's cousin, who in turn told us: **“Amin Aisa was a married father of two children. He worked in the real estate field and had a real estate office. A Kurdish Internal Security Forces ‘Asayish’ patrol arrested him in Hasaka city. We continued to visit the private authorities and the Public Prosecution for more than 10 days. We had been unable to deliver his medicines until 22 days after his arrest. On Monday, June 28, 2021, we received a call from the Martyr Sariya Military Hospital telling us to come to the hospital.”**

He added that upon their arrival at the hospital, they learned that Amin had died while in detention. They were able to retrieve his body that evening from the People's National Hospital in Hasaka, after obtaining approval from the Military Prosecution in Hasaka to do so. Amin's body clearly showed signs of severe torture in various parts of the body.

The SNHR notes that Amin al Ali had, on several occasions, [criticized](#) the management of the Syrian Democratic Forces and the decisions issued by the Self-Management Authority, which may be the real primary motivation behind the Syrian Democratic Forces' arresting him and torturing him to death. Meanwhile, in a [statement](#) issued about the case, the Syrian Democratic Forces denied having forcibly disappeared or tortured Amin, claiming that the cause of his death was a stroke.

The co-chairman of Syrian Democratic Council, claimed [in a post](#) on his Facebook page that the torture photos on the victim, Amin al Ali, were fabricated.



Photos showing signs of torture on the body of Amin Aisa al Ali inflicted by Syrian Democratic Forces in Hasaka governorate on June 28, 2021

²⁴ Via phone on April 4, 2022.



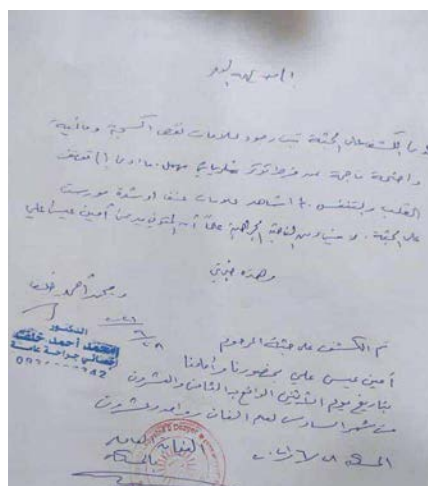
The second medical report on the victim, Amin al Ali, published by the Syrian Democratic Forces' Self-Management on June 29, 2021



The medical report on the victim, Amin al Ali, published by the Syrian Democratic Forces' Self-Management on June 29, 2021



Photos showing signs of torture on the body of Amin Aisa al Ali inflicted by Syrian Democratic Forces in Hasaka governorate on June 28, 2021



A photocopy of the medical report issued by the forensic doctor

Ahmad Dheawi Yasin al Athal, from al Tayyana town in the eastern suburbs of Deir Ez-Zour governorate, was arrested by Syrian Democratic Forces in June 2019, in a raid on his home in the town, and taken to an undisclosed location. Since that time, he has been classified as forcibly disappeared, with the SDF preventing anyone, even a lawyer, from visiting him or knowing his fate. On Wednesday, June 30, 2021, Syrian Democratic Forces informed Ahmad's family of his death inside one of the SDF's detention centers in Hasaka governorate, with his body being returned to them. SNHR data from numerous sources confirms that he was in good health at the time of his arrest, indicating that he most probably died due to torture and lack of healthcare in an SDF detention center in Hasaka governorate.



Khaser Ayed Helou al Hussein, an Arabic language teacher from al Qahtaniya town in the northeastern suburbs of Hasaka governorate, was arrested by Syrian Democratic Forces in May 2021, and taken to one of the SDF's detention centers in al Qameshli city in the northeastern suburbs of Hasaka governorate. On Monday, December 6, 2021, Syrian Democratic Forces informed his family that he had died after suffering a heart attack, handing his body over to them.



Muhammad Dab'ei al Aylan, from Boubadran village, which is administratively a part of al Sousa district in the eastern suburbs of Deir Ez-Zour governorate, was arrested by Syrian Democratic Forces in 2019. Since that time, he has been classified as forcibly disappeared, with the SDF preventing anyone, even a lawyer, from visiting him or knowing his fate. On Wednesday, September 22, 2021, Syrian Democratic Forces informed his family of his death inside one of the SDF's detention centers in Hasaka governorate, without returning his body to them.



SNHR data from numerous sources confirms that he was in good health at the time of his arrest, indicating that he most probably died due to torture and lack of healthcare in an SDF detention center.

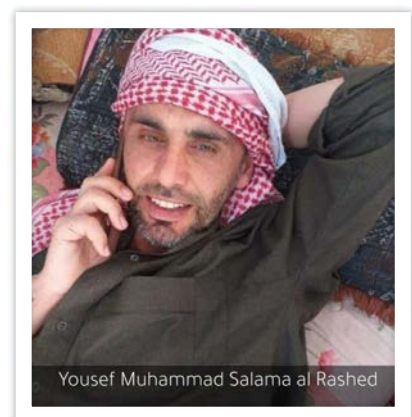
Adnan Ajaj al Abbo, from Khirbet al Ahaimer village, which is administratively a part of Tal Hmais district in the northeastern suburbs of Hasaka governorate, was arrested by Syrian Democratic Forces personnel in January 2021. Since that time, he has been classified as forcibly disappeared, with the SDF denying his detention and preventing anyone, even a lawyer, from visiting him. On Saturday, September 25, 2021, his family learned from a detainee released from one of the Syrian Democratic Forces' detention centers that Adnan had died due to torture and the deterioration of his health condition inside one of the SDF's detention centers in Hasaka governorate.



Ahmad Ali al Ali, from Tal Meshhen village, which is administratively a part of al Ya'rubiya village in the northern suburbs of Hasaka governorate, was arrested by Syrian Democratic Forces personnel in 2019. Since that time, he has been classified as forcibly disappeared, with the SDF denying his detention and preventing anyone, even a lawyer, from visiting him. On Monday, January 3, 2022, a Syrian Democratic Forces officer notified his family of his death in an SDF detention center in Hasaka governorate. SNHR data from numerous sources confirms that he was in good health at the time of his arrest, indicating that he most probably died due to torture and lack of healthcare in an SDF detention center.



Yousef Muhammad Salama al Rashed, a 42-year-old man from al Qouriya city in the eastern suburbs of Deir Ez-Zour governorate, who had been living in the Ghuwayran neighborhood of Hasaka city, was arrested by Syrian Democratic Forces personnel on Friday, January 28, 2022, in a raid on his home in the neighborhood, and taken to a detention center in the city. On Saturday, February 19, 2022, Syrian Democratic Forces informed his family that he had died, releasing his body to his family from a hospital in Hasaka city. SNHR data from numerous sources confirms that he was in good health at the time of his arrest, indicating that he most probably died due to torture and lack of healthcare in one of the SDF's detention centers in Hasaka city.



4. Torture by All Armed Opposition factions/Syrian National Army

The Armed Opposition/Syrian National Army practices torture in its detention centers to extract confessions from its detainees, with torture often carried out in a vengeful way and based on ethnic bigotry, as we detailed extensively in a previous report about the methods of torture used by Armed Opposition factions in their detention centers, entitled '[Awaiting Justice](#)'. The Armed Opposition/Syrian National Army also practices torture against those they kidnap, taking photographs of detainees to force their families to pay ransom money in exchange for their release, and using torture against civilians, including women and children, to force them to agree to demands by opposition factions' members, such as the use or seizure of these people's property, or in the event that they are suspected of cooperating with the Syrian Democratic Forces or with ISIS.

Among the torture methods used by members of the Armed Opposition factions/Syrian National Army are beating civilians, including children and women, and dragging them along the ground, in public places or inside their shops and homes, with the aim of spreading fear and terror or forcing their victims to carry out their orders. We have many photos and videos in our archives that show such assaults and the signs of torture on victims' bodies.

The SNHR's team has documented the deaths of at least 50 individuals, including one child and two women, in the detention centers of the Armed Opposition factions/Syrian National Army between March 2011 and June 2022. We have documented the Armed Opposition factions/Syrian National Army handing over a number of the victims' bodies to their families, with the bodies bearing signs of torture.

The most notable incidents of torture by the Armed Opposition factions/Syrian National Army:

Omar al Salmo is an ambulance medic from Ras al Ein city in the suburbs of Hasaka governorate. On Monday, July 19, 2021, members of the Syrian National Army arrested and beat him in the emergency department of Ras al Ein's National Hospital, due to his insistence on prioritizing helping a patient suffering from a heart attack before examining the patient brought in by the Syrian National Army personnel. He was released half an hour later, with signs of torture on his body.



A photo showing the signs of beating on the doctor's arm

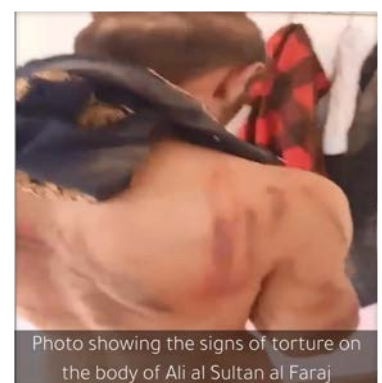


An explanatory statement issued by the Police and National Public Security Forces in Ras al Ein on July 23, 2021, regarding the assault on Doctor Omar al Salmo

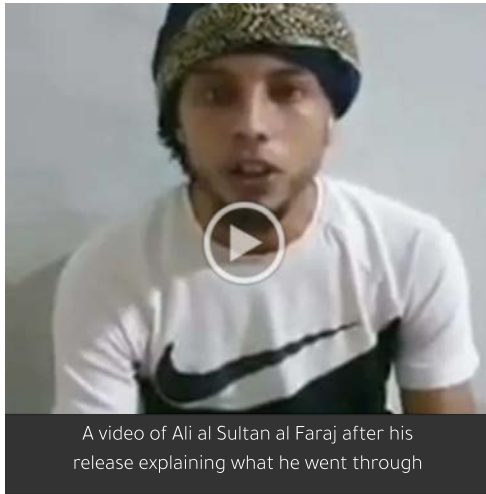
Khalil Aref Malla, the headman of his home village of Qort Qolaq al Kabir, which is administratively a part of Afrin city in the northwestern suburbs of Aleppo governorate, was arrested on Wednesday, August 11, 2021, by Syrian National Army forces in the village, and was subsequently released on Sunday, August 15, 2021, with his body bearing signs of torture.



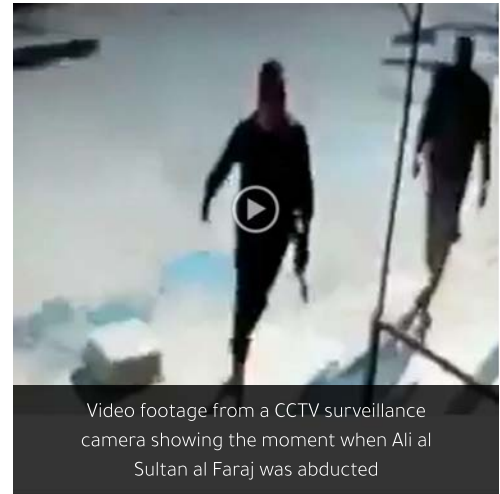
Ali al Sultan al Faraj, from Balwa village, which is administratively a part of Slouk district in the northern suburbs of Raqqa governorate, was abducted from Balwa village in early September 2021, by personnel from Soqoor al Sonna a faction affiliated with the Syrian National Army's 20th Division, and taken to a house near the village, where a number of the faction's personnel brutally tortured him after stripping him naked, lashing him with a whip and beating him with a club all over his body, with the attackers adding further insult to injury by forcing their victim to apologize to his torturers even while they filmed these debased acts. Following this brutal attack, which was accompanied throughout by relentless verbal abuse of the victim, and his grotesque forced 'apology', they subsequently released Mr. Al Faraj, dumping him near his village, publishing those disturbing videos documenting their assault on the Internet on September 9, 2021.



The videos posted online on September 9, 2021



A video of Ali al Sultan al Faraj after his release explaining what he went through



Video footage from a CCTV surveillance camera showing the moment when Ali al Sultan al Faraj was abducted

The most notable deaths due to torture by the Armed Opposition factions:



Hekmat Khalil al De'ar's photo

Hekmat Khalil al De'ar, from al Tayyana village in east of Deir Ez-Zour governorate, a 45-year-old married father of two, who worked as a shepherd, was arrested by the Suqour al Shamal Brigade affiliated with the Syrian National Army on Thursday, September 16, 2021, during a raid on his home in Ras al Ein city in the northwest of Hasaka governorate, on charges of having dealings with Syrian Democratic Forces, and taken to an SNA detention center in the city. On Monday, September 20, 2021, SNA members informed Hekmat's family of his death, with his body, which was handed over to his family at Ras al Ein Hospital, bearing signs of the torture he was subjected to during his detention. We note that Hekmat al De'ar had also been persecuted by Syrian Democratic Forces in 2020 which had forced him to leave al Tayyana village and move to Ras al Ein city.



The photo of the victim, Hekmat Khalil al De'ar, shows the signs of torture on his body

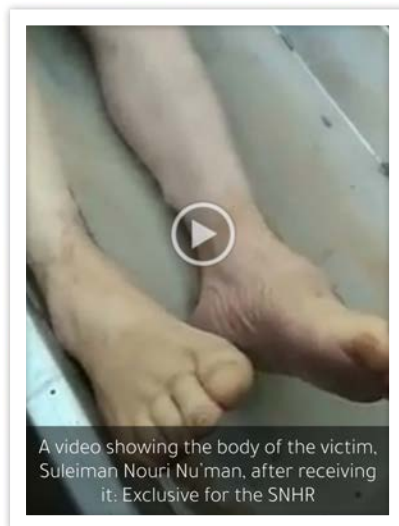


A medical report issued by the Health Directorate in Ras al Ein on September 21, 2021, explaining the causes of death

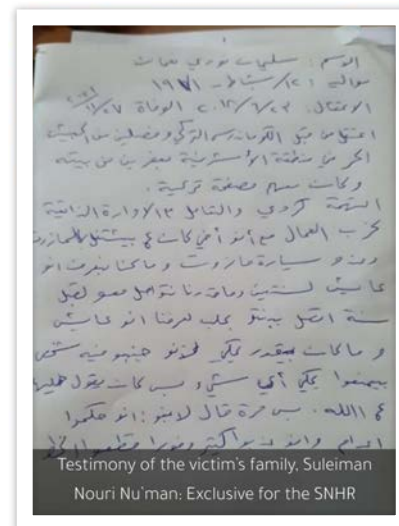


A video showing the signs of torture on the body of the victim, Hekmat Khalil al De'ar

Suleiman Nouri Nu'man, born in 1971, from Bouzikah village, which is administratively a part of Afrin city in the northern suburbs of Aleppo governorate, was arrested by members of the Syrian National Army on Saturday, June 23, 2018, during a raid on his home in al Ashrafiya area in Afrin city, on charges of having dealings with Syrian Democratic Forces. Almost since then, he was classified as forcibly disappeared, with the opposition forces preventing anyone, even a lawyer, from visiting him or finding out his fate. On Saturday, November 27, 2021, Syrian National Army personnel informed his family of his death in al Ra'ie Prison in al Ra'ie village in northeast Aleppo governorate, handing over his body to family members at the hospital. SNHR data from numerous sources confirms that he was in good health at the time of his arrest, indicating that he most probably died due to torture and lack of healthcare in al Ra'ie Prison.



A video showing the body of the victim, Suleiman Nouri Nu'man, after receiving it. Exclusive for the SNHR



Testimony of the victim's family, Suleiman Nouri Nu'man. Exclusive for the SNHR

The SNHR spoke with Ms. Sabah,²⁵ the sister of the victim, Suleiman, who told us:

"My brother was arrested by the Syrian National Army factions after they raided his house in al Ashrafiya neighborhood in Afrin city on accusations that he is Kurdish and deals with the Self-Management of the Workers' Party, even though he was working on a car selling diesel and had no political affiliation with any party. His fate remained unknown for more than a year. We didn't get any information about him or whether he was alive or dead. At the end of 2019, he called his daughter and told her that he was in al Ra'ie Prison, and he could not talk about other things on the phone because there was someone standing next to him that prevented him from talking about what was happening to him. In another call, he told us that he had been sentenced to death and that he was tortured, then the line was cut straight off. On November 27, 2021, we were informed by al Ra'ie Hospital of his death and told that we should come to collect his body." Ms. Sabah added that the family members waited for eight hours from seven a.m. until three p.m. to collect her brother's body, and said that the Syrian National Army did not tell them anything about the cause of his death, with the family observing the signs of torture on his body.

²⁵ Via Facebook Messenger application on November 29, 2021.

Abdul Razzaq Tarrad al Abeid, from M'arzaf village in the suburbs of Hama governorate, worked in car sales and lived in Jalma village of Afrin city in the northern suburbs of Aleppo governorate. He was arrested by personnel from Failaq al Sham, a faction of the Syrian National Army, on Thursday, February 24, 2022, at his home in Jalma village, and taken to a Syrian National Army detention center in Jandreis town near Afrin city, where he was tortured to death. On Friday, February 25, 2022, Abdul Razzaq's family was informed by a member of Failaq al Sham of Abdul Razzaq's death, with his body being released to the family from the place where he had been detained in Jandreis town.



The SNHR spoke with Mr. Firas,²⁶ a relative of the victim, Abdul Razzaq, who said:

"Abdul Razzaq left his house in Jalma village on Thursday morning, heading to his workplace in the car showroom he owned in Jandreis town. He was scheduled to go to his children, who reside in Jandreis town, where they study, but he did not go, and when his family called his mobile phone, it was turned off at the time. They waited for him until the evening before they informed the police, who circulated his name to the hospitals and the checkpoints, finding that he was being detained by the security apparatus of Failaq al Sham faction, who told his family that they had taken him for investigation and that he would be released the next morning, after which they called the family and requested the presence of his brother, telling him subsequently that Abdul Razzaq had died as a result of a heart attack, with his brother receiving the body at 3 a.m. on Friday morning. In Atma Hospital, his body was examined by the forensic doctor, who told his family that he had died as a result of severe torture and electrocution."

On Friday, February 25, 2022, the SNHR received photos and video footage clearly showing that the victim Abdul Razzaq Tarrad al Abeid had been subjected to brutal, lethal torture.



A video showing signs of torture on the body of Abdul Razzaq Tarrad al Abeid at the hands of Failaq al Sham members on February 25, 2022 (2)



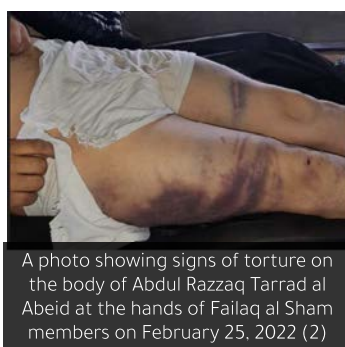
A video showing signs of torture on the body of Abdul Razzaq Tarrad al Abeid at the hands of Failaq al Sham members on February 25, 2022 (2)



A video showing signs of torture on the body of Abdul Razzaq Tarrad al Abeid at the hands of Failaq al Sham members on February 25, 2022 (1)



A statement issued by Failaq al Sham denouncing the killing of the victim, Abdul Razzaq Tarrad al Abeid, at the hands of its members:



A photo showing signs of torture on the body of Abdul Razzaq Tarrad al Abeid at the hands of Failaq al Sham members on February 25, 2022 (2)



A photo showing signs of torture on the body of Abdul Razzaq Tarrad al Abeid at the hands of Failaq al Sham members on February 25, 2022 (1)

²⁶ Via phone on February 26, 2022.

V. Conclusions and Recommendations

Legal Conclusions:

- Although international law wholly prohibits torture and other forms of cruel, inhuman or degrading treatment, with this having become a customary rule binding on all parties to the conflict, this report has proven that all the controlling forces in Syria have practiced torture against their opponents, and that these practices continue to be perpetrated to date, and we have no belief that these practices will stop as long as the same parties remain in leadership.
- Of all the parties to the conflict, the Syrian regime is by far the most prolific practitioner of torture. This report has proven once again that these practices are systematic and widespread, violating the right to life and constituting flagrant violations of international human rights law. It has been proved beyond doubt that the Syrian regime is fully aware of this and of the certainty that the inhuman conditions of detention routinely and inevitably lead to continuous suffering and pain and regularly to death. Despite knowing all of this, the regime has done nothing to stop these criminal actions. Killings as a result of torture constitute crimes against humanity under Article 7 of the Rome Statute, as well as being flagrant violations of international humanitarian law, which amount to war crimes under Article 8 of the Rome Statute.
- The number of cases of enforced disappearance in Syria carried out by Syrian regime forces that we have documented has now exceeded 86,000, with all these individuals being subjected to torture. We have no indication that the Syrian regime has stopped practicing torture, with the documented number of deaths due to torture exceeding 14,400 in total, while the testimonies SNHR has obtained from survivors, photos of Caesar, and death certificates in the civil registry provide further confirmation that the Syrian regime is engaged in systematic, regular and widespread attacks against Syrian civilians, in particular everyone who has called for a political transition towards freedom, to a degree where these violations constitute crimes against humanity; the participation of several state institutions in these crimes also underlines that this is a deliberate strategy by the ruling class in the Syrian regime and further demonstrates its central role in these crimes.
- The Syrian regime has clearly violated the provisions of the Syrian constitution and the provisions of the Convention against Torture which Syria ratified in 2004, as well as tampering with existing laws by enacting legislation that protects its forces from any prosecution.
- The other parties to the conflict, namely Syrian Democratic Forces, Hay'at Tahrir al Sham, and Armed Opposition factions, have not observed any of the principles of international human rights law or international humanitarian law concerning the issue of torture. While the practices of torture against these parties' opponents in the context of non-international armed conflict constitute war crimes, none of these parties have conducted impartial and independent investigations into the torture practices and deaths that occurred in their detention centers.

Recommendations:

UN Security Council and the United Nations, According to Chapter VII of the Charter

of the United Nations:

- Protect tens of thousands of detainees and forcibly disappeared persons by the Syrian regime from torture and lethal torture, and rescue those who remain alive.
- Devise a mechanism to compel all parties to the conflict, especially the Syrian regime, to stop torture, and to reveal the locations of the victims' bodies and hand them over to the victims' families.
- Russia must stop blocking the referral of the situation in Syria to the International Criminal Court.
- All UN relief agencies must track down the families that have lost their primary breadwinner or one of their members due to torture, ensure that aid is continuously delivered to their beneficiaries, and initiate rehabilitation.
- Impose UN sanctions on individuals and entities involved in torture acts and death due to torture.

The International Community:

- States which are parties to the Convention against Torture must take the necessary measures to establish their jurisdiction over perpetrators of torture and make all the necessary material and security efforts to attain this objective.
- All states worldwide must ensure that the Syrian regime respects the Geneva Conventions, in particular Common Article 3, and the rules of customary humanitarian law.
- Take serious punitive measures against the Syrian regime to deter it from continuing to kill Syrian citizens under torture, and put pressure on the other parties to the conflict in all possible ways to stop practicing torture once and for all.
- Provide more funds, support and sufficient grants to local organizations concerned with the care and rehabilitation of torture victims and their families.
- Provide support to individual activists and local organizations that document violations without imposing tutelage or political directives.
- Impose sanctions on individuals and entities involved in torture acts and deaths due to torture.

The Independent International Commission of Inquiry (COI):

- Study the cases included in this report, with the SNHR willing to cooperate and provide more evidence and details.

The Syrian regime:

- Immediately stop using all torture methods and extracting confessions under torture, adhere to the principles of international human rights law, and stop deploying the capabilities of the Syrian state in torture and in terrorizing Syrian society.
- Investigate all torture acts and deaths due to torture, and compensate families and victims.
- Abolish all sentences issued after extracting confessions under torture, and abolish exceptional courts since these are a tool of torture and repression against political opponents, especially detainees.
- Immediately allow access to the Independent International Commission of Inquiry, the International Committee of the Red Cross and all objective human rights organizations to all regime detention centers.
- Ensure the immediate and unconditional release of all those arbitrarily detained, particularly children and women, and reveal the fate of tens of thousands of forcibly disappeared persons.

The other parties to the conflict (Syrian Democratic Forces, Armed Opposition Factions, Hay'at Tahrir al Sham):

- Adhere to the standards of international human rights law, stop the use of torture against political or military opponents, launch investigations into those involved in these crimes, and hold them accountable.
- Stop extracting confessions under torture, and abolish all resulting sentences and decisions.
- Allow the International Committee of the Red Cross and human rights organizations to enter detention centers immediately and without any prior coordination.
- Disclose information about all detainees, publish lists of their names, publish sites and places of secret detention centers, and allow detainees' families and human rights organizations to visit them.

Thanks and condolences

We wish to express our sincere thanks and appreciation to all the families, victims, and activists for their gracious and valuable contributions to this report, and to offer our heartfelt condolences to the families and friends of the victims who died as a result of torture.



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