

Flygtningenævnets baggrundsmateriale

Bilagsnr.:	2189
Land:	Syrien
Kilde:	SNHR
Titel:	Monthly Report on Arrests/Detentions in Syria – At least 197 Cases of Arbitrary Arrest and Detention Recorded in October 2025
Udgivet:	1. november 2025
Optaget på baggrundsmaterialet:	21. januar 2026



Monthly Report on Arrests/Detentions in Syria

At least 197 Cases of Arbitrary
Arrest and Detention Recorded
in October 2025

Sunday 02 November 2025

197





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.

Contents:

I. SNHR's Monthly Report on Arbitrary Detentions and Arrests in Syria.....	1
II. Report Methodology.....	2
III. Arbitrary Arrests, Detentions, and Releases in Syria in October	4
IV. Most Notable Patterns of Arbitrary Arrests, and Releases by the Parties to the Conflict and Controlling Forces in Syria in October 2025	8
V. SNHR's Vision of and Approach to the Issue of Arbitrarily Arrested Detainees and Forcibly Disappeared Persons at the Domestic and International Levels	10
VI. Conclusions and Recommendations	12



I. SNHR'S MONTHLY REPORT ON ARBITRARY DETENTIONS AND ARRESTS IN SYRIA

On December 8, 2024, Syria witnessed arguably the most seismic political and military event in over 50 years with the fall of the dictatorial Assad regime, which was succeeded by a transitional government. This came after 14 years of a popular uprising that began in March 2011. In those 14 years, the numbers of arbitrary detentions and enforced disappearances reached unprecedented levels, with these being among the most widely practiced systematic violations committed by the former regime against civilians.

Since 2011, the Syrian Network for Human Rights (SNHR) has constantly documented arbitrary detentions and released monthly reports summarizing the detentions in the previous month. As shown on SNHR's database, the fates of at least **160,123 of the people** forcibly disappeared by the former Assad regime remain unknown to this day. Indeed, the ramifications of these violations still persist not only in the legal and social sense, but in their families' and all Syrians' collective memory of the victims, illustrating the staggering volume of the human rights atrocities for which the former regime was responsible.

With the transition of power, it's become apparent that there's an urgent need to establish legal regulations that will put a conclusive end to the harrowing era of arbitrary arrests and enforced disappearances along with the end of the regime and ensure respect for the basic human rights of individuals. In order to achieve this, it's essential to establish a legal framework that promotes human rights and consolidates protective laws, while also creating effective control mechanisms to avoid any recurrence of these violations in accordance with international standards.

In this context, we at SNHR continue to release our monthly reports on arbitrary arrests and enforced disappearances in order to document these practices and monitor any violations that may take place during the transitional phase. Documenting these practices is a crucial part of ensuring the non-recurrence of past violations and of supporting all efforts aimed at building a state founded on the rule of law and respect for human rights, enacting reformist policies, and ensuring that Syria's security and legal institutions adhere to the norms of accountability and transparency. In addition, documenting such violations provides a record that enables the Syrian government and the relevant domestic and international bodies to identify and address any potential infringements, thus further strengthening the transitional justice process and promoting victims' rights to reparation and accountability. Finally, it should be noted that SNHR will continue to regularly issue these reports in order to keep pace with the latest political and legal developments and events on the ground in Syria so as to continue providing an accurate and up-to-date picture of the situation regarding detentions and enforced disappearances in the country.

II. REPORT METHODOLOGY

While Syria continues going through the current transitional phase in the wake of the historic ousting of the Assad regime and its downfall on December 8, 2024, SNHR will continue to release our statistical/analytical monthly reports monitoring and documenting arbitrary detentions, enforced disappearances, and releases from detention centers. Accordingly, this report summarizes the arbitrary arrests, enforced disappearances, and releases documented by SNHR in the month of October. We added a new classification to distinguish between arbitrary arrests and detentions carried out in the context of the efforts by the Syrian government to capture those involved in violations under the former Assad regime.

SNHR's standards for documenting detentions

The methodology adopted by SNHR in our reports follows the internationally recognized standards for documenting human rights violations, including the guidelines established by the UN and the Working Group on Arbitrary Detention. More particularly, we use the five criteria adopted by the UN Working Group on Arbitrary Detention to document such cases. Meanwhile, in cases of enforced disappearance, we use the definition established by the Declaration on the Protection of all Persons from Enforced Disappearance, which was adopted in accordance the UN General Assembly resolution 47/133 on December 18, 1992, as "a body of principles for all states". Besides those standards for documenting arbitrary arrests and enforced disappearance, we are recording detentions by the Syrian government that target those who committed violations under the Assad regime's rule. We are working on monitoring these cases in accordance with certain procedures.

Data sources and verification mechanism

In documenting arbitrary arrests, SNHR draws upon several sources, with every item of information provided to us being subjected to rigorous and precise verification mechanisms. These sources include:

- SNHR's own field researchers who are scattered across Syria.
- Direct interviews with victims and their families.
- Eyewitnesses' and local activists' accounts.
- Official information provided by state officials.

SNHR follows strict documentation procedures, as well as ensuring that data is updated whenever new information emerges in order to maintain accuracy. All data is stored on a specially designated database which incorporates professional archiving practices that conveniently allow for monitoring and updating of individual cases. Every report also goes through multiple revision phases before it is issued.

Classifying cases according to the party responsible

In this report, detentions are classified according to the parties responsible for carrying out the arrests. These parties are:

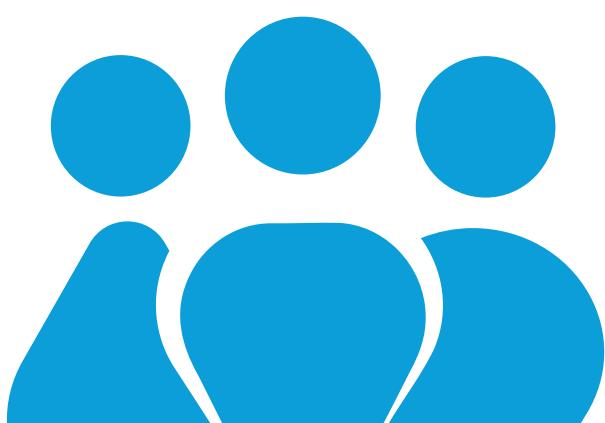
- **The Syrian government** which has governed Syria since December 8, 2024.
- **Syrian Democratic Forces (SDF)** which currently controls the northeastern region of the country.

Cases are additionally classified according to the location where each detention took place, rather than by the detainee's governorate of origin. The report also contains a demographic analysis of detainees by sex and age (males, females, children), in addition to classifying releases based on their contexts.

Challenges

Monitoring and documentation efforts faced additional challenges in the period following the fall of the regime, due to widespread changes on the ground. This necessitated intensified efforts to ensure data accuracy and the continuity of monitoring operations. Field and legal developments will also be reviewed periodically to reflect changes that may affect the documentation of violations.

Given the scale of the violations and the exceptional difficulties in documentation, this report represents the minimum number of documented cases, with the caveat that the actual figures may be much higher.

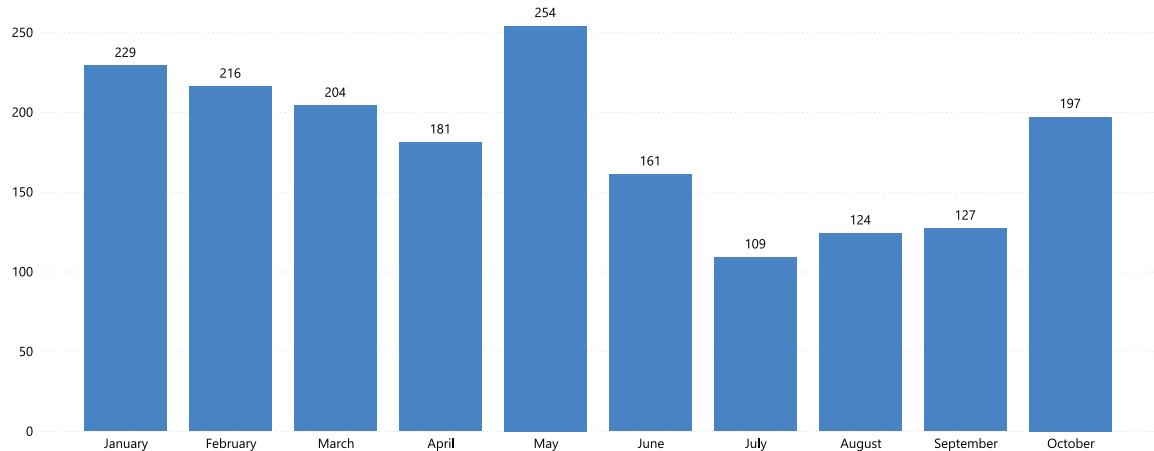


III. ARBITRARY ARRESTS, DETENTIONS, AND RELEASES IN SYRIA IN OCTOBER

Arbitrary arrests and enforced disappearances since the start of 2025

SNHR has documented no fewer than **1,802 cases** of arbitrary arrest since the beginning of 2025 up until the end of October, with those arrested including 66 children and 25 women (adult female).

Arbitrary arrests/detentions carried out by the parties to the conflict and controlling forces in Syria in 2025 are distributed as follows:



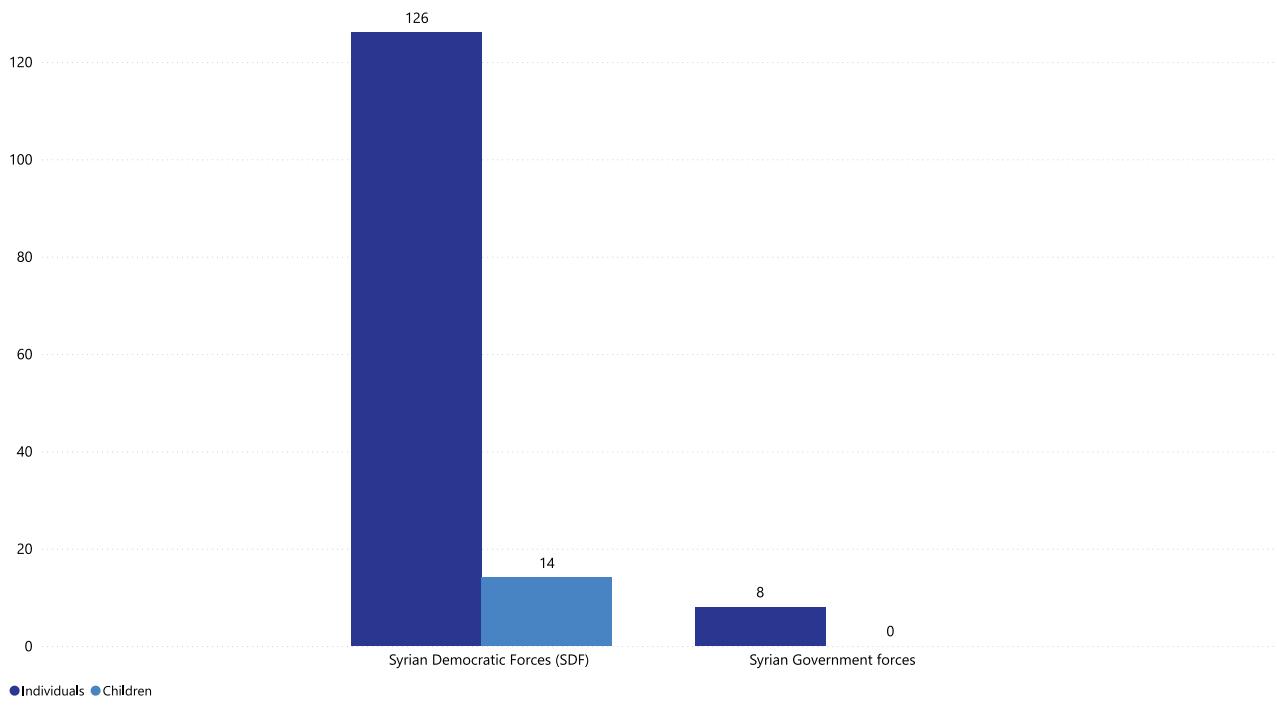
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The previous graph shows an increase in the number of detentions in May, which is attributed to the implementation of raids and detention campaigns by the Internal Security Forces of the Ministry of Interior of the Syrian government in several areas under its control, especially in the governorates of Latakia, Homs, Hama and Damascus, as part of the pursuit of people suspected of involvement in violations committed during the rule of the Assad regime, in addition to the arrests carried out by the Syrian Democratic Forces against civilians on the grounds of their criticism of the practices carried out by the Syrian Democratic Forces in the areas they control.

B. Arbitrary detention and enforced disappearance in October

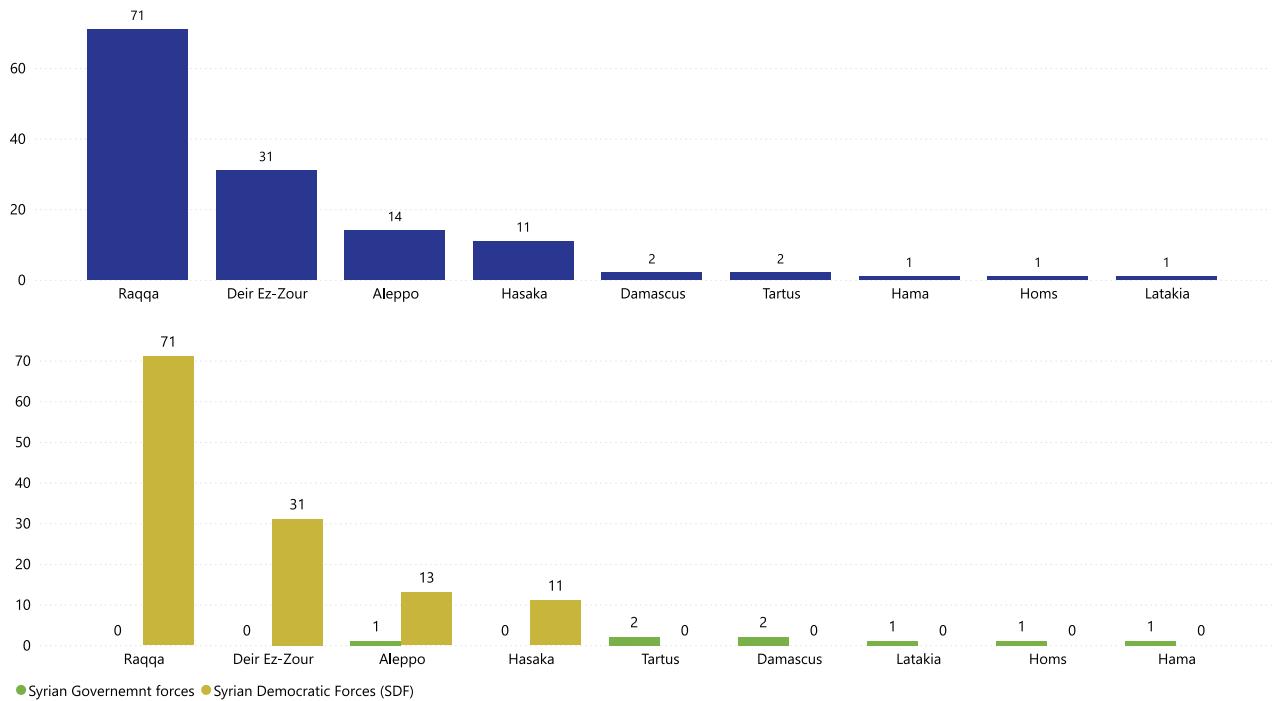
SNHR documented no fewer than **134 cases** of arbitrary arrest/detention, with those detained including 14 children.

Arbitrary arrests/detentions documented in October 2025 are distributed according to the parties to the conflict and controlling forces as follows:



- **A. Syrian government forces:** 8, of whom four were released.
- **B. Syrian Democratic Forces:** 126, including 14 children, 87 of whom were released.

Arbitrary arrests/detentions documented as having been carried out in October 2025 by the parties to the conflict and the controlling forces in Syria are distributed across Syrian governorates as follows:



As the chart above shows that the highest number of arbitrary arrests/detentions was in Raqqa Governorate, followed by Deir Ez-Zour and then Aleppo.

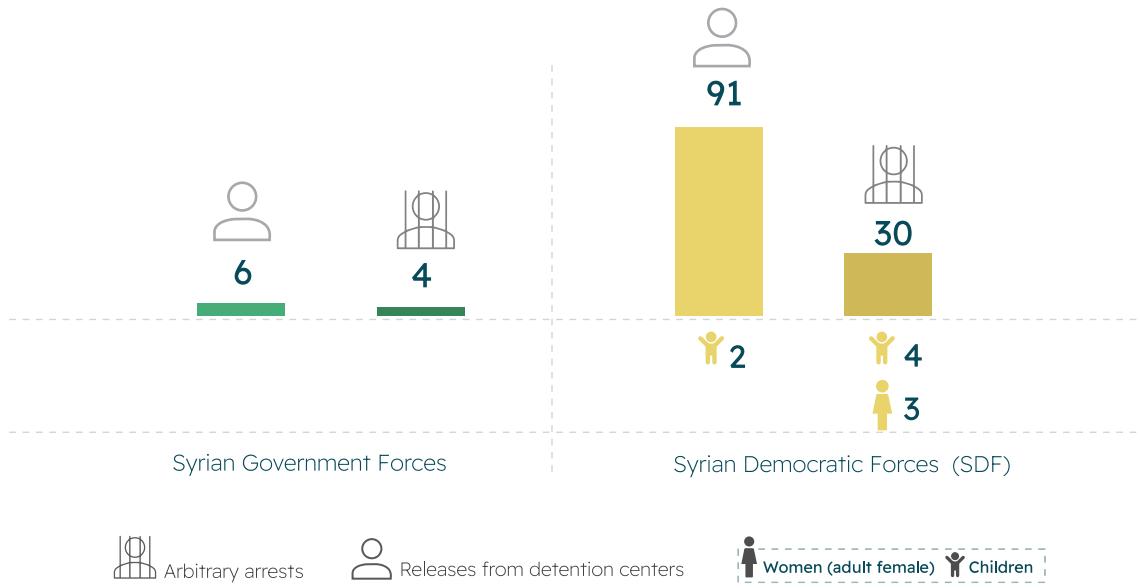
C. Releases from detention centers in October 2025

SNHR documented the release of no fewer than 97 people from the various parties' detention centers in Syria, including 12 children.

The releases by the parties to the conflict and controlling forces in Syria documented in October 2025 are distributed as follows:

- **A. Syrian government forces:** six releases.
- **B. Syrian Democratic Forces (SDF):** 91 releases, including 12 children.

Comparison between arbitrary arrests and releases from detention centers documented in October 2025 for each of the parties to the conflict and controlling forces in Syria:



The preceding comparison reveals that the number of releases from SDF detention centers exceeded the number of arbitrary detentions. This is attributed to arrest campaigns targeting civilians for forced conscription, which escalated tensions and resentment between local residents and security forces. These pressures prompted the SDF to release dozens of detainees in an attempt to quell public anger and de-escalate the situation.

IV. MOST NOTABLE PATTERNS OF ARBITRARY ARRESTS, AND RELEASES BY THE PARTIES TO THE CONFLICT AND CONTROLLING FORCES IN SYRIA IN OCTOBER 2025

A. Arbitrary detentions

As part of the prosecution of those accused of committing gross human rights violations during the Assad regime's rule, members of the Internal Security Command, affiliated with the Syrian government's Ministry of Interior, carried out raids and detentions in October 2025, targeting **at least 63 individuals** in the governorates of Latakia, Tartus, Homs, Hama, Aleppo and Damascus.

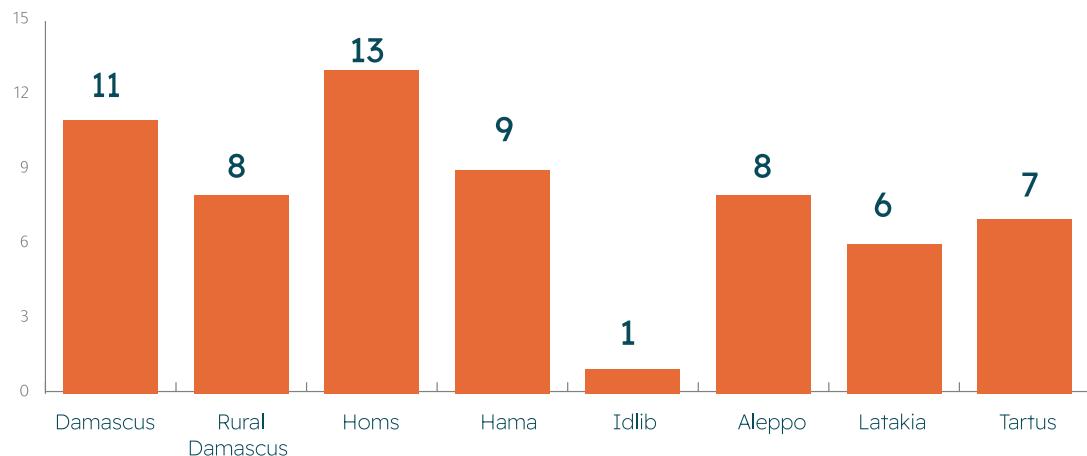
These operations targeted former military personnel and government employees, and resulted in the confiscation of quantities of weapons and ammunition. Those detained were transferred to central prisons in Homs, Hama, and Adra in the Damascus countryside.

The Network also documented detentions of individuals suspected of being linked to armed groups that launched attacks in March 2025 on security sites affiliated with the Syrian government's Ministries of Defense and Interior. These groups are linked to or affiliated with remnants of the former regime. These operations were concentrated in the provinces of Latakia, Tartus, and Hama, and the attacks resulted in hundreds of extrajudicial killings.

Although these operations were carried out within the framework of security campaigns, it has not been possible to verify whether they were carried out pursuant to legal arrest warrants issued by the Public Prosecutor or the relevant judicial authorities. The Syrian Network for Human Rights emphasizes the importance of adhering to legal procedures and the need to publicly disclose the names of detainees and guarantee their legal rights.

In this context, the Syrian Network for Human Rights has provided a form for reporting human rights violations that may occur during and after the transitional period in Syria. Families can fill out the form and automatically send it to the network's team, which monitors and records the cases and communicates with families to complete the documentation process.

The Syrian government's detention of those accused of committing violations during the former Assad regime was distributed by governorate:



SNHR

The map above shows that the highest number of detentions in the context of the accountability measures taken by the Syrian government was in Homs Governorate, followed by Damascus Governorate and then Hama Governorate.

B. Releases of those accused of committing violations from Syrian government detention centers:

In October 2025, the Syrian Network for Human Rights documented at least 48 cases of release from various detention centers. Most of the detainees were from Hama, Homs, and Rural Damascus governorates and were detained as part of the accountability process after investigations were concluded and their involvement in crimes was not proven.

V. SNHR'S VISION OF AND APPROACH TO THE ISSUE OF ARBITRARILY ARRESTED DETAINEES AND FORCIBLY DISAPPEARED PERSONS AT THE DOMESTIC AND INTERNATIONAL LEVELS

Since the beginning of the **Syrian popular uprising for democracy in March 2011**, SNHR has placed great emphasis on resolving the issue of detainees and forcibly disappeared persons in Syria, bearing in mind the **humanitarian and human rights-related factors** surrounding this matter. To ensure that this immensely sensitive issue is given the appropriate high priority, SNHR has assembled a working team consisting of highly trained and qualified members with **legal and technical expertise**. This team has been working tirelessly **to document and record violations**, beginning by **establishing a database** to catalogue the details of detainees and forcibly disappeared persons. These documentation efforts are then used as the foundation for periodically released **detailed reports**, which aim to help in **protecting the rights of victims** and their families and to expose **the perpetrators of violations**.

Since the issue of **missing and forcibly disappeared persons** is one of the **most persistent, complex and dangerous issues** that continues to plague Syrian society, SNHR has strived to work in coordination with the **various international and UN entities** to document and combat this harrowing phenomenon. These partners include the **Independent International Commission of Inquiry on the Syrian Arab Republic (COI)**, the **International, Impartial, and Independent Mechanism (IIIM)**, the **UN Human Rights Office (OHCHR)**, and the **UN Independent Institution on Missing Persons in Syria**. SNHR's work in this field involves collecting and analyzing evidence and information on enforced disappearance cases and related violations, and providing the international community with **accurate reports and information** based on these investigations. As such, SNHR's reports have become **a vital instrumental and reputable source** of information on these issues internationally.

SUCCESSES AND ACCOMPLISHMENTS

As mentioned above, thanks to our invaluable expertise and **strict compliance** with international standards, SNHR's data has come to be regarded as a reputable **principal** source of information for many UN bodies, being used and cited in numerous UN statements and resolutions, including a draft resolution on the situation of human rights in Syria ([A/C.3/78/L.43](#)), passed by a majority vote on Wednesday, November 15, 2023, which condemned the **Assad regime's** continued serious violations of international law. This resolution also acknowledged that the documented number of detainees in Syria exceeds **160,123**. Relatedly, the resolution holds the Assad regime responsible for the systematic use of enforced disappearance, which, it notes, constitutes a crime against humanity.

Meanwhile, [the case brought against the Assad regime at the Hague-based International Court of Justice \(ICJ\)](#) on the Application of the Convention against Torture and Other Cruel, Inhuman or Degrading Treatment or Punishment (Canada and the Netherlands v. Syrian Arab Republic) draws upon the data and evidence supplied by SNHR. Elsewhere, SNHR, through its many partnerships, has contributed to numerous legal cases brought against individuals responsible for human rights violations in Assad regime detention centers under the principle of universal jurisdiction in Europe and of the Foreign Sovereign Immunities Act in the US, as well as contributing to various other cases, all of them steps on the path to justice and accountability.

Documenting victims

In the years since its foundation, SNHR has established multiple rigorous **procedures** to document and provide details on victims in detention centers, building on our **ever-expanding wealth of experience** gained through close monitoring of enforced disappearance cases. SNHR has also maintained a longstanding and close working relationship with the UN Working Group on Enforced or Involuntary Disappearances, which has required maintaining **constant communication** with the families of 'missing' and 'disappeared' persons to build **comprehensive files** for every case. Up until the Assad regime's downfall on December 8, 2025, this data was then sent to the UN special rapporteur who could then contact the relevant regime officials to enquire about some of the cases submitted. Furthermore, SNHR continues to correspond with the two **UN special rapporteurs on torture, counterterrorism, and mental health** to follow up on such cases.

Facilitating communication with victims

In addition to the above, we created [a special online form](#) on our website which detainees' families can use to report their loved ones' cases; once the family members complete this form, it's then sent automatically to our team working on the issue of detainees and forcibly disappeared persons. SNHR has also always endeavored to ensure that we're easily accessible for victims' **families**, through **facilitating various means of communication**, including phone numbers, our **official channels online**, or through our team members who are scattered across Syria, who work to **collect information** and provide support for the families.

VI. Conclusions and Recommendations

Conclusions

- **Failure to comply with fair trial procedures:** The data documented shows that many detentions have been carried out without judicial warrants or legal guarantees, which is an explicit violation of Article 9 of the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights (ICCPR) that prohibits arbitrary arrests and affirms detainees' right to know the cause of their detention and to appear before a court as soon as possible.
- **Violating the dignity of detainees and the prohibition of torture:** The report documents physical and psychological abuses against detainees, including torture and degrading treatment, that explicitly contravene the 1984 Convention Against Torture, which compels all parties to take effective measures to prevent torture and to hold those who carry out torture accountable.
- **More must be done to ensure the legal and organized release of detainees:** While we have documented the release of some detainees, these processes currently lack any clear judicial procedures or transparent investigative processes, which raises concerns about arrests continuing outside the relevant legal frameworks, in violation of the principle of the arbitrary deprivation of liberty, as established in Article 3 of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights.
- **More must be done to protect victims' rights and their families:** The fact that enforced disappearance persists without the fate of forcibly disappeared persons being revealed or any official information about them being provided to their families is a violation of the 2006 International Convention for the Protection of All Persons from Enforced Disappearance, which compels states and organizations to reveal detainees' place of detention and to enable families to know their loved ones' fate.
- **Absence of accountability mechanisms and transitional justice:** Despite the political change, insufficient measures have been taken to date to ensure accountability for past violations or to achieve justice for the victims, reflecting an inadequate level of commitment to the requirements of transitional justice which necessitates establishing investigation and accountability mechanisms, in addition to ensuring that these violations do not recur in the future.
- **The SDF has committed violations of basic human rights,** including torture and enforced disappearance even though it possesses a political structure, which means that it is also obligated to abide by international human rights law.

Recommendations

UN Security Council and international community

1. Refer crimes to the International Criminal Court (ICC)

- and apply diplomatic pressure on government and international stakeholders, including the Russian government, to ensure the extradition of those responsible for crimes, such as Bashar Assad and his close aides, to the competent international courts for trial.

2. Freeze and seize the funds of the former regime

- Take legal action to freeze and confiscate the funds and assets of the former regime's officials who were involved in violations, and use those resources to support transitional justice programs and compensate victims.

3. Support international efforts to reveal the fate of missing persons and achieve national reconciliation

- Secure the necessary resources to support the efforts of the Independent Institution on Missing Persons in the Syrian Arab Republic (IIMP) and the International Commission on Missing Persons (ICMP), including training local teams on advanced search techniques to identify the missing.
- Fund programs to support national reconciliation, and provide psychological and social support for the families of forcibly disappeared persons.

UN Human Rights Council

- Continue to focus on the issue of detainees and forcibly disappeared persons in Syria and regularly highlight this issue in all annual meetings.
- Promote cooperation and coordination with active local human rights groups in Syria to support the efforts of documentation and accountability.

Independent International Commission of Inquiry on the Syrian Arab Republic (COI))

- Launch in-depth investigations into all the arbitrary detention and enforced disappearance cases included in this report and previous reports.
- Focus on the issue of forcibly disappeared persons and ensure the monitoring of the status of forcibly disappeared persons following the Assad regime's downfall.
- Cooperate with human rights groups, including SNHR, to secure the necessary evidence.

International, Impartial and Independent Mechanism (IIIM)

- Collect and analyze evidence on the crimes of arbitrary detention, enforced disappearance, and torture included in this report.
- Support the exchange of information and expertise with Syrian organizations working in the field of documenting violations.

UN and international community

- Apply pressure on all parties to compel them to publish lists of detainees' names and reveal the location of these prisoners' detention according to a fixed timetable.
- Allow UN and international organizations, particularly the International Committee of the Red Cross (ICRC), to access detention centers to assess the humanitarian conditions there.
- Support organizations working on documenting violations and torture, and provide sustainable support for victim rehabilitation programs.

UN Working Group on Enforced or Involuntary Disappearances

- Increase the capacity of the team working on the issue of forcibly disappeared persons in Syria, especially in light of the high numbers and extensive scope of enforced disappearance cases in the country.
- Prepare periodic and more detailed reports on developments to maintain pressure on involved parties.

UN Independent Institution on Missing Persons in Syria (IIMP)

- Look into all the cases included in this report and cooperate with SNHR to obtain the necessary data.
- Ask the transitional government to start operating in Syria and to cooperate with the IIMP to document the cases of the missing and take effective steps to ensure transparency and accountability.

Russian government

- Cooperate with the international community to extradite Bashar Assad and fugitives implicated in war crimes to the custody of the transitional government or the competent international courts.
- Support the efforts aimed at promoting transitional justice in Syria to ensure fair reparation for the victims.

All parties to the conflict and the controlling forces

- Arbitrary arrests and enforced disappearances must be ended immediately; the fate of all detainees and forcibly disappeared persons must be revealed.
- Families must be allowed to visit detainees immediately, and the bodies of detainees who have died as a result of torture must be returned to their families.
- Ensure the unconditional release of all arbitrarily arrested detainees, especially those who have been imprisoned merely for exercising their political and civil rights.
- Allow international monitors, such as those with the COI and the ICRC, to access all detention centers with no restrictions.
- A UN committee must be formed to monitor and periodically assess the release of detainees
- End the policy of carrying out arrests without presenting legal warrants, and ensure that detainees appear before courts within a reasonably short period of time following their arrest.

the Syrian government

1. Cooperate with international organizations

- Issue official invitations to independent UN and international agencies, including:
 - International, Impartial and Independent Mechanism (IIIM)
 - Independent International Commission of Inquiry on the Syrian Arab Republic
 - International Commission on Missing Persons (ICMP).
 - International Committee of the Red Cross (ICRC).
- Enable these organizations to have unrestricted access to detention centers and crime scenes.

2. Protect evidence and crime locations

- Document burial sites and prisons, and prevent any interference or evidence tampering.
- Adopt clear measures to preserve all articles of evidence and ensure their use in fair trials.

3. Promote transitional justice and accountability

- Ratify the Rome Statute of the International Criminal Court (ICC) and grant the ICC retroactive jurisdiction.
- Devise a comprehensive plan to hold those responsible for crimes accountable, compensate victims, and enhance transparency in investigations.

4. Reform the judicial and security system to prevent future violations

- Enact new legislation that ensures the autonomy of the judiciary and prohibits all forms of arbitrary arrest.
- Restructure the security apparatus in line with international human rights standards.

5. Ensure the highest standards for detentions carried out within the context of accountability

- Activate judicial oversight over detentions carried out in the context of accountability to ensure compliance with the law and international standards.
- Publish periodic lists of detainees held in the context of accountability along with the reasons for their detention to ensure transparency.
- Develop an independent judicial review mechanism for detentions carried out within the context of accountability to prevent any violations.
- Ensure the right of detainees who were arrested in the context of accountability to access independent legal representation and fair trials.
- Emphasize that all accountability processes follow clear legal procedures while preventing any violations that may constitute human rights violations.
- Establish a human rights monitoring mechanism to ensure that accountability does not become a tool for arbitrary detention.

6. Provide psychological and social support for those affected

- Establish specialist programs to rehabilitate torture and detention survivors, and provide support for victims' families.

7. Enhance monitoring and accountability for the state security services

- Establish independent monitoring committees to ensure the non-recurrence of violations during security services' operations.
- Hold those responsible for human rights violations accountable to ensure non-recurrence.

8. Improve communication with families and enhance transparency

- Hold regular meetings with local community representatives to clarify security policies and ensure that no groups are specifically targeted.
- Publish periodic reports on arrests and releases to ensure transparency.

9. Address misinformation campaigns

- Establish official platforms on social media to publish accurate news.
- Cooperate with independent media to ensure professional coverage of events.

10. Respect human rights during security operations

- Train security forces in how to treat detainees in a humane way.
- Commit to releasing any suspect who was part of the Assad regime if it's been established that they were uninvolved in perpetrating any violations.

11. Expedite settlement procedures for wanted individuals

- Implement a fair process to resolve the situation of wanted individuals, and encourage them to reintegrate in society.

12. Involve civil society in decision-making

- Enhance the role of the local community in decision-making mechanisms to ensure fair representation for all groups.

Acknowledgment and Solidarity

We wish to extend our most sincere thanks to survivors and to victims' family members and friends, as well as to eyewitnesses and local activists, for their significant and invaluable contribution to this report. We stand in full solidarity with all detainees and forcibly disappeared persons and their families.



SYRIAN NETWORK
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No justice without accountability

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November, 2025

