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SNHR
الشبكة السورية لحقوق الإنسان
SYRIAN NETWORK FOR HUMAN RIGHTS

The Semi-Annual Report

on the Tally of Arbitrary Arrest, Detention, Release, and Enforced Disappearance in Syria

The Documentation of No Fewer Than 246 Cases of Arbitrary Arrest and Detention in the First Half of 2026, Among Them 36 Cases in the Second Quarter

Thursday 02 July 2026



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

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I. EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

This report documents the tally of the cases of arbitrary arrest, detention, release, and enforced disappearance that the Syrian Network for Human Rights was able to document in Syria during the first half of 2026, with a separate analytical section devoted to the second quarter of that same year. The report presents the tally of the first half as the overall statistical framework, whereas it addresses the second quarter as an analytical segment falling within this tally, and not as a statistical set independent of it.

According to the Network's database, the Syrian Network for Human Rights documented in the first half of 2026 no fewer than **246 cases** of arbitrary arrest and detention, among them (14) children and (3) women, in addition to documenting **(1,069) cases** of release during the same period. It also documented the continued disappearance of a number of detainees whose whereabouts or fate had not been disclosed up to the date of the preparation of this report.

As for the second quarter of 2026, the Network documented no fewer than **36 cases** of arbitrary arrest and detention, among them (3) children, in addition to documenting (557) cases of release. The data show the continued recording of cases of deprivation of liberty outside the legal safeguards, with a disparity in their distribution among the various controlling parties, according to what the Network was able to verify.

Despite the notable decrease in the cases of arbitrary arrest and enforced disappearance after the political and security transformations that Syria witnessed following the fall of the regime of Bashar al-Assad on December 8, 2024, and also after the merger agreement concluded between the Syrian government and the Syrian Democratic Forces at the end of January 2026 and the preceding contraction in the areas of control and influence of the latter, the data documented in this report reflect the continuation of a state of arbitrary arrest, a limited number of which turned into enforced disappearance. That is on the part of the Syrian parties in control and effectively active in the present period.

The cases of arbitrary detention and enforced disappearance documented at the hands of the Israeli occupation forces, and resulting from the operations of ground incursions inside the southern Syrian territory, also point to the continued disrespect of these forces for the sovereignty of Syria and the unity of its territory, and likewise their disrespect for the provisions of international law and the Charter of the United Nations. According to the Network's database, the cases of detention at the hands of the Israeli occupation forces reached no fewer than 61 cases of detention in the first half of 2026, among them 15 during the second quarter of that same year.

In addition to that, the Network continues to document the detention operations that the Syrian government carries out against persons suspected of involvement in violations during the period of the rule of the former regime, presenting them in a separate section of the report given the difference of their legal nature from the cases of arbitrary arrest that target civilians. Within this framework, we recorded the arrest of no fewer than 96 persons in the first half of 2026, among them **37 persons** who were arrested during operations carried out over the months of the second quarter of the year. In return, the Syrian Ministry of the Interior announced in mid-June 2026 that the number of the detainees from among the military personnel alone who are suspected of involvement in violations and crimes during the rule of the former regime had reached more than **3,500 persons** of various military ranks[1].

The report concludes that the file of arbitrary arrest and enforced disappearance must be closed, as they are among the most prominent human rights violations in Syria, and this requires the release of all arbitrarily detained persons, the disclosure of the fate of the forcibly disappeared, guaranteeing that all arrest and detention procedures are subject to judicial oversight, enabling detainees to communicate with their families and their lawyers, holding accountable those responsible for the violations of arbitrary deprivation of liberty, and supporting the paths of transitional justice and the reparation of the harm to the victims and their families.

1. Al-Ikhbariah, "Interior Ministry: the Detention of Nearly 3,700 Military Personnel of the Former Regime,"

II. INTRODUCTION AND SCOPE OF THE REPORT

This report addresses the tally of the cases of arbitrary arrest, detention, release, and enforced disappearance in Syria during the first half of 2026, with a separate analytical section devoted to the second quarter of that same year, that is, the months of April, May, and June. It also addresses the cases of release that the Network was able to document during the period covered.

The report presents the tallies by the responsible party, or the party whose responsibility is more likely, by the Syrian governorates, and by the time period covered. It also distinguishes between the cases of arbitrary arrest that target civilians, and the detention operations that the Syrian government carries out in the context of pursuing the persons suspected of involvement in committing violations during the rule of the regime of Bashar al-Assad.

The report does not aim to provide a comprehensive account of all the arrest and detention operations that Syria has witnessed, but rather to present the minimum number of the cases that the Network was able to document and verify according to its adopted methodology. The tallies contained in it also do not include the persons detained in the context of direct military operations, or those for whom the process of verifying the circumstances of their detention has not been completed.

Providing a Reporting Mechanism:

The Syrian Network for Human Rights has provided an electronic form for reporting the violations of human rights during the transitional phase and beyond it, which allows families to submit their reports to the Network's team, which undertakes the follow-up of the cases, their registration, and communication with the families to complete the documentation[2].

III. METHODOLOGY AND LIMITATIONS OF DOCUMENTATION

This report relied on the methodology adopted by the Syrian Network for Human Rights in monitoring, documentation, and analysis, based on the documentation and research work completed during the first half of 2026, including what was completed during the second quarter of that same year. The report was built on a review of the Network's database, and the information it contains that was verified according to the adopted internal standards, in addition to the direct testimonies, the field monitoring, the reliable local sources, the open sources, and the reports received by the Network through its official channels.

The information that the Network relies upon is subject to a multi-level verification process before it is entered into the specialized databases. This process includes, according to the nature of each case, comparing the information received from more than one source, verifying the date and place of the incident, determining the legal status of the detainee, and assessing the responsible party or the party whose responsibility is more likely, when the available information allows for that.

The Network does not include a case in the tally except after the fulfillment of its adopted internal verification standard, which is built on the intersection of more than one available source whenever possible, or on a direct source supported by reliable indicators, while excluding the cases for which the available information does not allow for establishing the likelihood of their occurrence or for determining their legal nature to a sufficient degree.

2. Syrian Network for Human Rights, "Reporting Form for Human Rights Violations," https://snhr.org/arabic/10659-7/

The tallies contained in this report represent the minimum number of the cases that the Network was able to document and verify. These tallies do not necessarily reflect the full scale of all the cases of arbitrary arrest, detention, or release that occurred during the period covered, particularly in light of the security and logistical constraints, the disparity in the ability to access information from one area to another, and the halt of the support allocated to a number of the Network's programs and activities, which affected the expansion of the operations of field monitoring, verification, follow-up, and response to the reports received from the various areas.

Operational Definitions Adopted in the Report:

This report adopts the following definitions:

Arbitrary arrest: It refers to the deprivation of a person of their liberty without a valid legal basis, or in a manner that contradicts the safeguards stipulated in international law.

An arrest is classified as arbitrary in accordance with the five categories that the Working Group on Arbitrary Detention of the United Nations has defined:

(1) The absence of any legal basis for the detention. (2) Detention resulting from the exercise of the fundamental rights and freedoms guaranteed in the Universal Declaration of Human Rights and the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights. (3) The non-observance, wholly or partially, of the guarantees of a fair trial. (4) Prolonged administrative detention without judicial review. (5) Detention built on discrimination on the basis of origin, nationality, or ethnic, religious, or other affiliation.

Enforced disappearance: The report relies, in its definition of enforced disappearance, on Article 2 of the International Convention for the Protection of All Persons from Enforced Disappearance (2006), which defines it as the arrest, detention, abduction, or any form of deprivation of liberty committed at the hands of the employees of the state or persons acting with its authorization, its support, or its acquiescence, followed by a refusal to acknowledge the deprivation of liberty, or by the concealment of the fate of the disappeared person or their whereabouts. The report also takes the broader definition contained in Article 7(2)(i) of the Rome Statute, which includes the acts committed by political organizations or with their authorization or their support, which allows for the coverage of the practices of the non-state armed actors. Guidance is also drawn from the Declaration on the Protection of All Persons from Enforced Disappearance (General Assembly Resolution 47/133, issued on December 18, 1992).

Detention: This term is used in the report in its broadest sense to refer to any case of deprivation of liberty for which the process of verifying its circumstances and its legal characterization has not yet been completed, or the cases that a party carries out in the context of security or military operations without it becoming clear whether they meet the criteria of arbitrariness. Once the verification is completed, the case is classified either within arbitrary arrest, or within detention in the context of accountability, or within another category in accordance with its nature.

Documenting Detention Cases in the Context of Accountability:

Alongside the standards adopted in the cases of arbitrary arrest and enforced disappearance, the Syrian Network for Human Rights documents the cases of the detention of individuals suspected of involvement in violations during the period of the rule of the Assad regime, and that within the framework of the pursuit operations that the Syrian government conducts. These cases are documented, monitored, and followed up independently, however they are not included within the statistics of the cases of arbitrary arrest or enforced disappearance contained in this report, given their difference, in terms of nature and legal context, from the patterns of arbitrary detention that target civilians. The data of these cases are presented in a separate section of the report (Section IV).

Data Sources and Verification Mechanism:

The Network relies, in documenting the cases of arbitrary arrest, on multiple sources that include: the field researchers affiliated with the Network in the various Syrian areas, the direct interviews with the victims and their relatives, the testimonies of the witnesses and the local activists, information from official officials, and the reports received by the Network through its official channels.

The Network requires the confirmation of each case from two independent sources at least before its inclusion in the statistics. As for the cases in which only one reliable source is available, the case is registered with an indication of the level of verification in accordance with the following classification: (1) Confirmed: verified from two or more independent sources. (2) Likely: verified from one reliable source with the presence of supporting indications. (3) Under verification: received from one source and the verification process has not yet been completed. The cases classified as “under verification” are not included within the statistics contained in this report.

All the information is preserved in a secured database in accordance with professional archiving standards, which allows the tracking of each case and its developments. Each report undergoes three stages of review before its adoption: a field review to verify the accuracy of the data, a legal review of the characterization and the terminology, and a final editorial review.

Protection of Sources and Confidentiality of Information:

The Network is committed to strict protection measures that include: the anonymization of the identities of the witnesses and the sources in all the published reports, obtaining the informed consent of the witnesses and the victims before using their testimonies, the encryption of the stored and the transmitted data in accordance with the practices adopted in the Berkeley Protocol on digital open-source investigations, and the conducting of an assessment of the potential risks to the safety of the sources before publishing any information that may lead to identifying them.

IV. GENERAL CONTEXT AND CLASSIFICATION OF RESPONSIBLE PARTIES

The report took into consideration the fundamental transformations in the structure of authority and the areas of control in Syria since the fall of the regime of Bashar al-Assad on December 8, 2024, and what followed of operations to merge forces, factions, and entities that arose after the outbreak of the Syrian revolution into the institutions of the Syrian government. Among the most prominent of these developments is the agreement concluded at the end of January 2026, which stipulated the gradual merger of the Syrian Democratic Forces, with its civil formations and its security and military apparatuses, into the institutions of the state and the Syrian government, in return for the entry of the civil, security, and military institutions of the state into the central areas that had been under its control.

These transformations resulted in a change in the actors, the security conditions, the patterns of arrest and detention, and the forms of responsibility. Therefore, the report took these variables into account when classifying the responsible parties.

The report also adopts a classification that is based on the party that carried out the operation of deprivation of liberty whenever it was possible to verify it, while taking into account the developments that occurred in the structure of the security and military institutions during the transitional phase. This classification should not be understood as a final legal judgment of responsibility, but rather as a documentary classification that is based on the information available at the time of the preparation of the report, and it remains subject to review whenever new information appears.

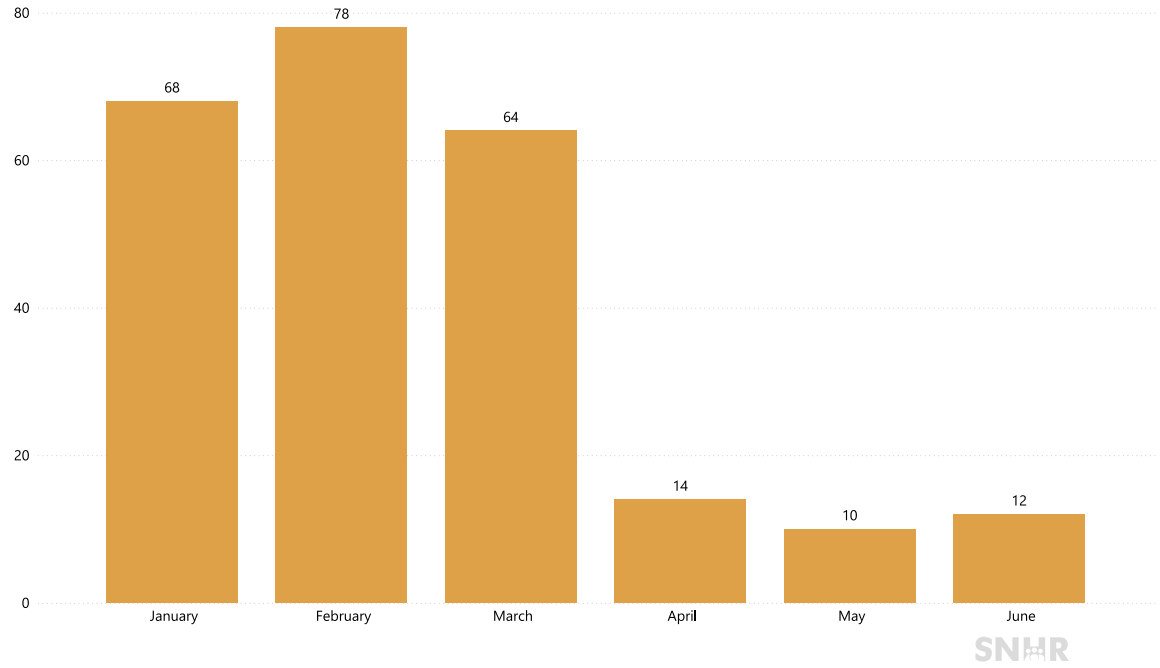
V. TALLY OF ARBITRARY ARREST, DETENTION, AND RELEASE IN SYRIA

1. In the First Half of 2026

A. Tally of the Cases of Arbitrary Arrest / Detention in the First Half of 2026:

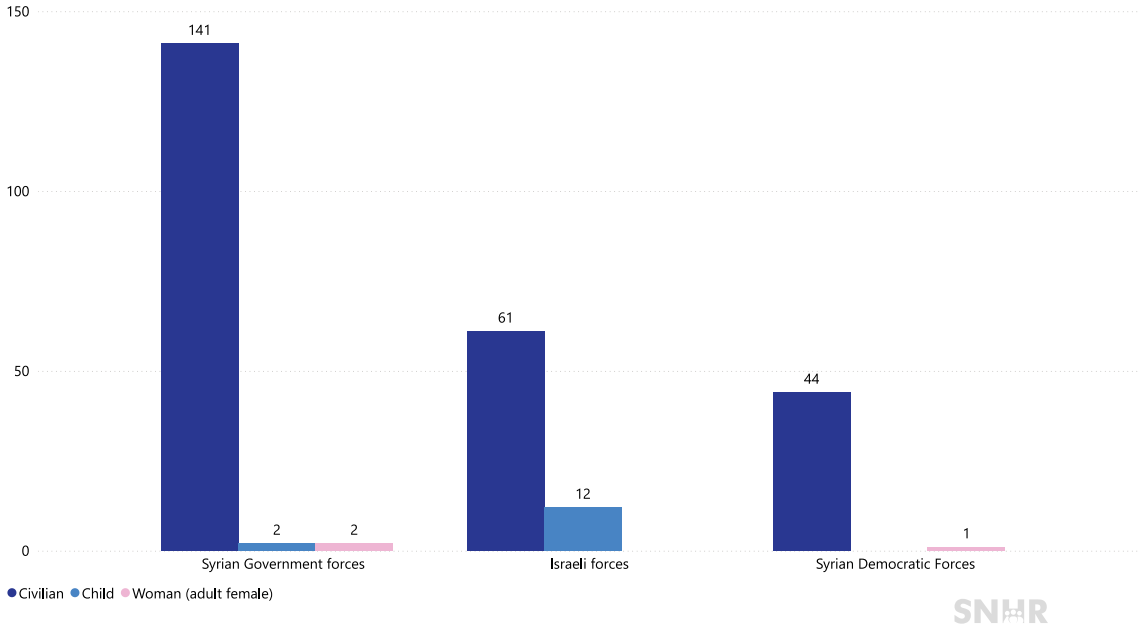
The Syrian Network for Human Rights documented in the first half of 2026 no fewer than **246 cases** of arbitrary arrest/detention in Syria, among them 14 children and 3 women (adult females).

The tally of the cases of arbitrary arrest and detention in the first half of 2026 is distributed by month as follows:



The graph above shows that the cases of arbitrary arrest and detention during the first half of 2026 witnessed a clear rise during the first quarter of the year, as 210 cases were recorded out of 246 documented cases, which constitutes nearly 86% of the total tally. Arrest cases reached their peak in February, at a rate that reached nearly 32% of the tally. By contrast, the last three months witnessed the continued monthly recording of arbitrary arrest cases, despite their notable decline.

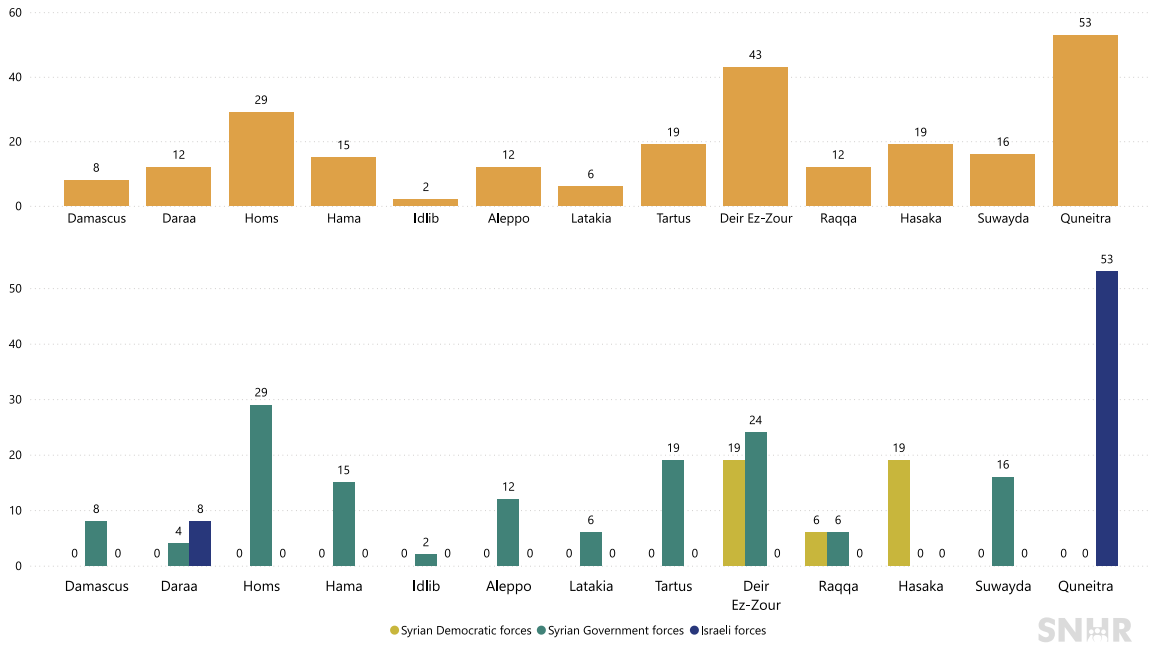
The tally of the documented cases of arbitrary arrest/detention in the first half of 2026 was distributed by party as follows:



A. Syrian government forces: 141, among them 2 children and 2 women, 12 of whom were released, among them 1 child.
B. Israeli occupation forces: 61, among them 12 children, 29 of whom were released, among them 3 children.
C. Syrian Democratic Forces: 44, among them one woman.

The tally shows that the Syrian government forces were responsible for the largest proportion of the documented cases of arbitrary arrest and detention in the first half of 2026, as the cases documented against them constituted nearly 57% of the total tally, followed by the Israeli occupation forces at a rate approaching 25%, then the Syrian Democratic Forces at a rate of nearly 18%. The documentation of cases that affected children and women also shows the continued exposure of the most vulnerable groups to violations of the right to liberty and personal security.

The tally of the documented cases of arbitrary arrest/detention in the first half of 2026 was distributed by the Syrian governorates as follows:



The data documented in the tally above show that the governorate of Quneitra recorded the highest tally out of the total tally of the documented cases of arbitrary arrest and detention during the first half of 2026, at a rate exceeding 21%, followed by the governorate of Deir Ez-Zour at a rate that reached nearly 18%. The rise of the tally in Quneitra is attributed mainly to the practices of arbitrary arrest and detention of the civilian population that the Israeli occupation forces carried out in the wake of their intensive and repeated ground incursions into the southern Syrian areas, whereas the cases in Deir Ez-Zour were distributed between the Syrian government forces and the Syrian Democratic Forces (which we recorded in the period that preceded the full control of the Syrian government forces over the governorate of Deir Ez-Zour in the last quarter of the month of January 2026).

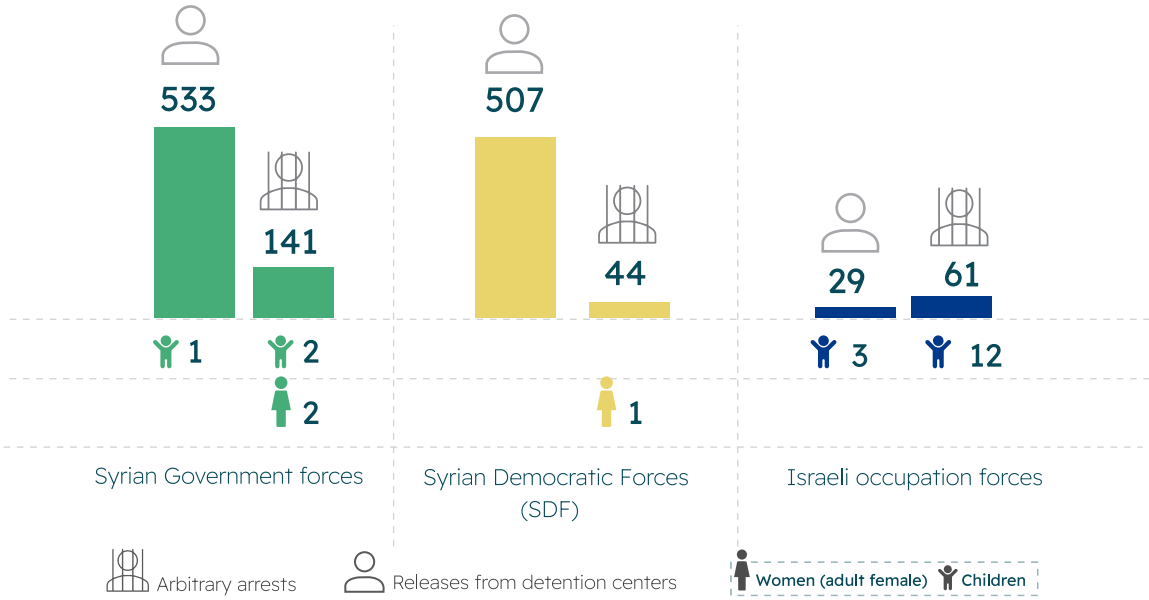
B. Tally of Release Operations from Detention Centers in the First Half of 2026:

The Syrian Network for Human Rights documented no fewer than **1,069 cases** of release from the various detention centers in the first half of 2026, among them 4 children.

The tally of the documented cases of release from detention centers in the first half of 2026 was distributed as follows:

A. **Syrian government forces:** 533, among them 1 child.
B. **Syrian Democratic Forces:** 507.
C. **Israeli occupation forces:** 29, among them 3 children.

A graph showing a comparison between the tally of the arbitrary detention cases and the release cases from detention centers in Syria in the first half of 2026:



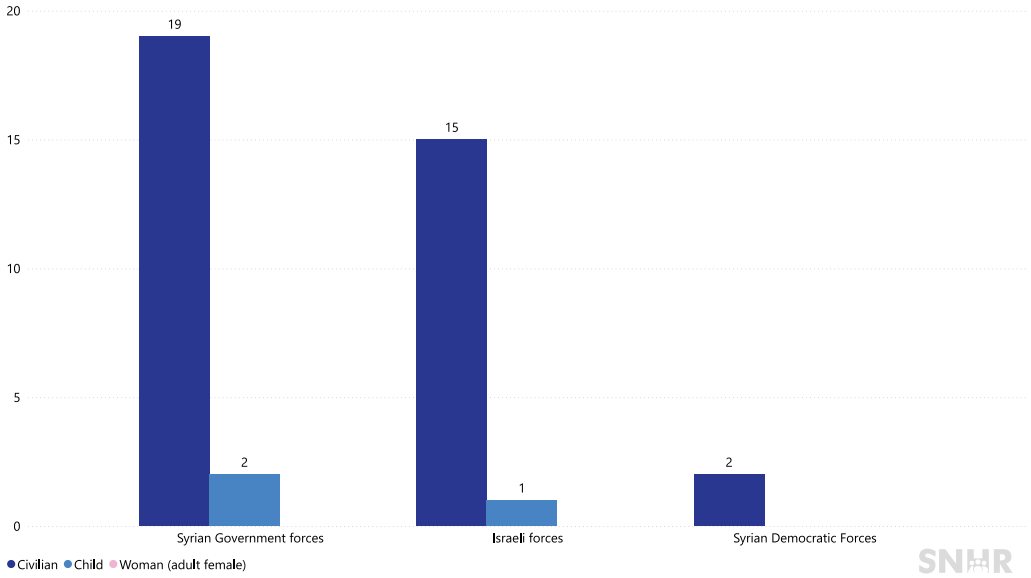
The preceding comparison shows that the number of the release cases from the detention centers belonging to the Syrian government forces has exceeded the number of the arbitrary detention cases. This is attributed to many reasons, the most prominent of which is the successive release of the detainees after the scrutiny of their records and the verification of their non-involvement in the killing operations before the fall of the Assad regime, in addition to the implementation of the agreements to release former detainees that took place between the Syrian Democratic Forces and the Syrian government, based on the provisions of the agreement of January 29, 2026.

2. In the Second Quarter of 2026

A. Tally of the Cases of Arbitrary Arrest / Detention in the Second Quarter of 2026:

The Syrian Network for Human Rights documented no fewer than **36 cases** of arbitrary arrest/detention, among them 3 children, in the second quarter of 2026.

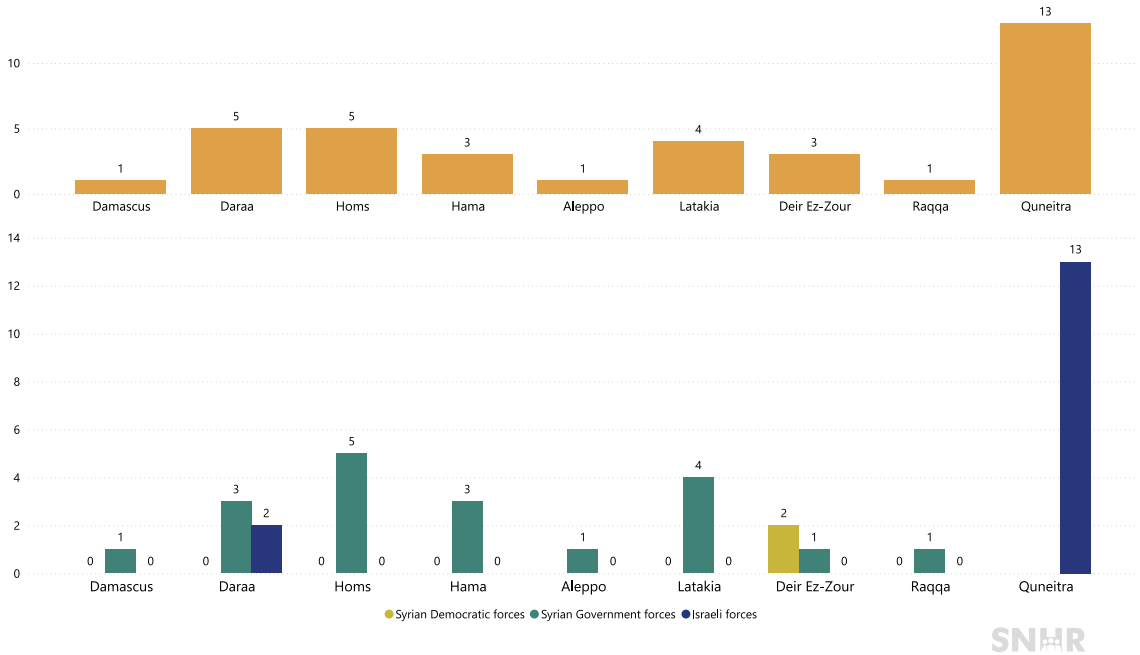
The tally of the documented cases of arbitrary arrest/detention in the second quarter of 2026 was distributed by party as follows:



- A. Syrian government forces: 19, among them 2 children, 1 child of whom was released.
- B. Syrian Democratic Forces: 2.
- C. Israeli occupation forces: 15, among them 1 child, 7 of whom were released.

The tally above shows that the Syrian government forces were responsible for more than half of the documented cases of arbitrary arrest and detention during the second quarter of 2026, as they constituted nearly 53% of the total tally, followed by the Israeli occupation forces at a rate approaching 42%. By contrast, the Syrian Democratic Forces recorded a markedly low tally compared to the previous periods, which is linked to the shrinking of the scope of its control and the decline of its field influence, alongside the merger agreement signed with the Syrian government at the end of January 2026.

The tally of the documented cases of arbitrary arrest/detention in the second quarter of 2026 was distributed by the Syrian governorates as follows:



The data distributed above show that the highest tally of the cases of arbitrary arrest/detention during the second quarter of 2026 was the share of the governorate of Quneitra, followed by the governorates of Homs and Daraa (5 cases each). The data also show a decline in the geographic spread of the cases of arbitrary arrest in the same period compared to what it was in the first quarter of the year, which reflects a general decrease in the pace of the arrest operations compared to the previous periods.

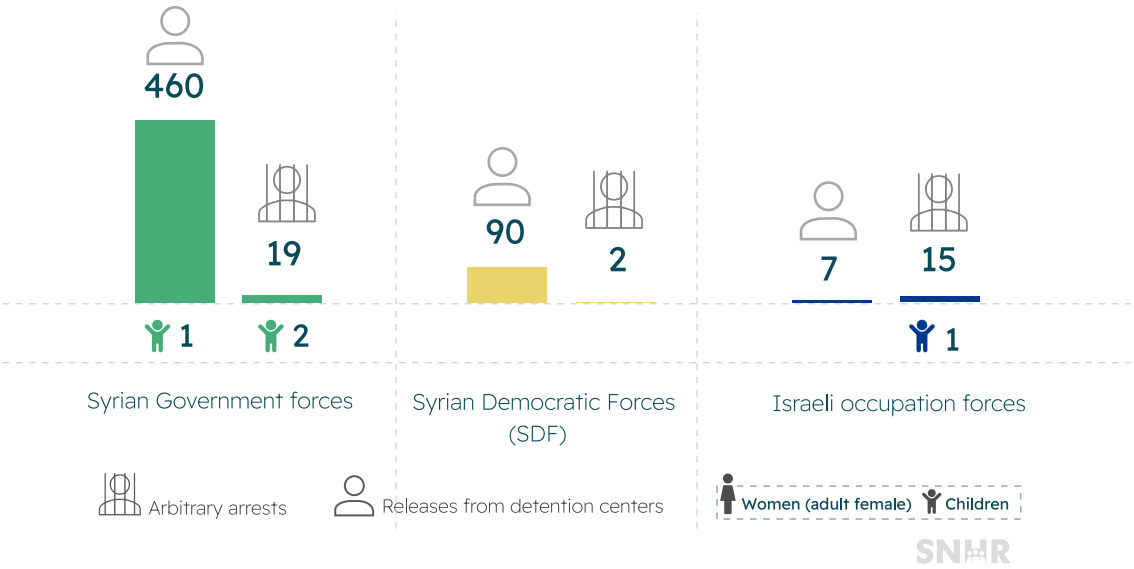
B. Tally of Release Operations from Detention Centers in the Second Quarter of 2026:

The Syrian Network for Human Rights documented no fewer than **557 cases** of release from the various detention centers in the second quarter of 2026, among them 1 child.

The tally of the documented cases of release from detention centers in the second quarter of 2026 was distributed as follows:

- A. Syrian government forces: 460, among them one child.
- B. Syrian Democratic Forces: 90.
- C. Israeli occupation forces: 7.

A graph showing a comparison between the tally of the arbitrary detention cases and the release cases from detention centers in Syria in the second quarter of 2026:



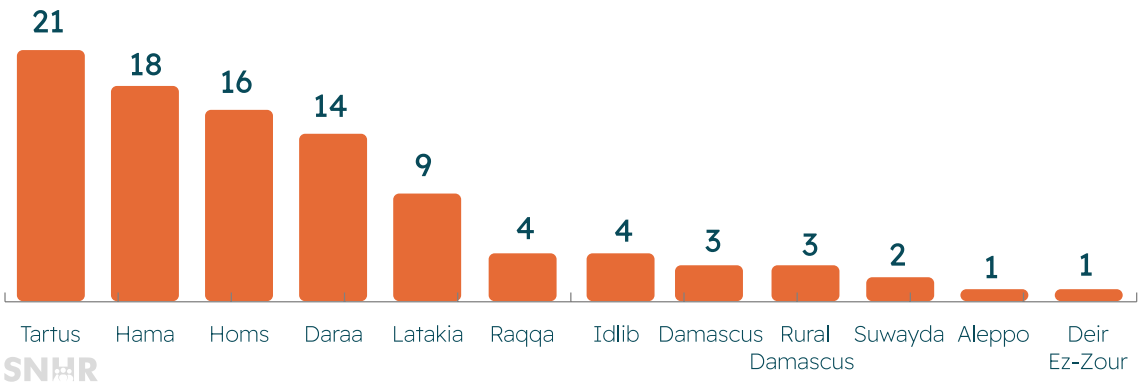
The tallies shown above indicate that the tally of the release cases from detention centers during the second quarter of 2026 greatly exceeded the tally of the documented cases of arbitrary arrest and detention during the same period. The Syrian government forces recorded the highest tally out of the total release cases, at nearly 83% of the total tally, followed by the Syrian Democratic Forces at nearly 16%, whereas the Israeli occupation forces recorded the lowest tally of release cases. This disparity between the numbers of detention and release indicates the continuation of the release operations at a high pace, particularly by the Syrian government forces and the Syrian Democratic Forces, in parallel with the decline in the pace of the arbitrary arrests documented during the second quarter of the year.

VI. DETENTION, PROSECUTION, AND RELEASE OPERATIONS IN THE CONTEXT OF HOLDING ACCOUNTABLE THOSE ACCUSED OF COMMITTING VIOLATIONS UNDER THE ASSAD REGIME

1. Detention Operations:

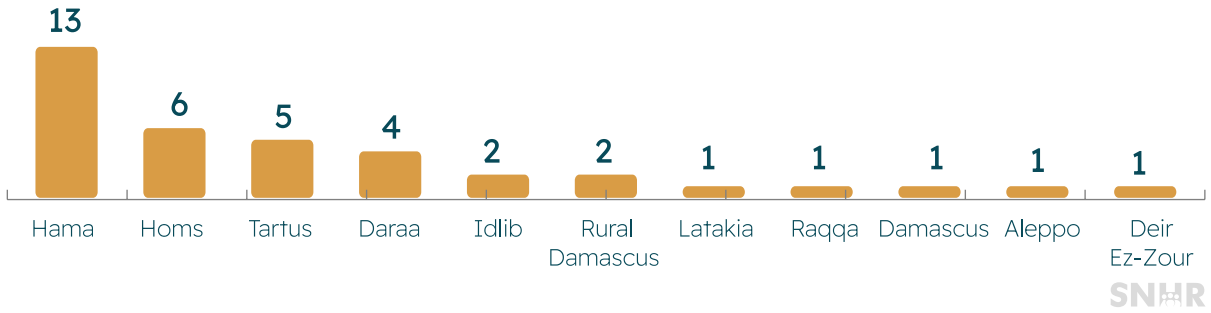
Elements of the Internal Security Command affiliated with the Ministry of the Interior in the Syrian government carried out, during the first half of 2026, raid and detention campaigns that affected no fewer than **96 persons**, in the framework of pursuing those accused of committing gross violations of human rights during the period of the rule of the Assad regime, among them 37 persons who were arrested in the second quarter of the year. These operations included most of the Syrian governorates, most prominently: Latakia, Tartus, Homs, Hama, Aleppo, Idlib, Daraa, Raqqa, Damascus, and Rif Dimashq. Arrested in these operations were former military personnel (including officers of command ranks), government employees, and elements who had been within the militias that fought in the ranks of the former regime, and quantities of weapons and ammunition were confiscated during them. The detainees were transferred to central prisons in Homs, Hama, and Adra (Rif Dimashq).

Distribution of the Detention Cases in the Context of Accountability by Governorate in the First Half of 2026:



The tally above clarifies that the largest number of the detention cases in the context of pursuing those accused of committing gross violations of human rights during the rule of the Assad regime in the first half of 2026 was concentrated in the governorate of Tartus (21 cases), followed by Hama and Homs (18 and 16 cases respectively), then Daraa (14 cases). This geographic distribution is consistent with two contexts: the first, the concentration of the military and security structure of the former regime in the coastal region (Tartus). The second, the occurrence of the armed attacks in March 2025 in these governorates, which led to subsequent detention campaigns that affected those suspected of their connection to those attacks. As for Hama, Homs, and Daraa, the rise of the number in them reflects the spread of former security and military elements in these governorates.

Distribution of the Detention Cases in the Context of Accountability by Governorate in the Second Quarter of 2026:



The data documented in the second quarter of 2026 tally for the detention cases amid the pursuit of those accused of committing gross violations of human rights during the rule of the Assad regime show the concentration of the largest number in the governorate of Hama (13 cases), followed by Homs (6 cases), then Tartus (5 cases). The rise of the number in these governorates reflects the spread of former security and military elements in these governorates.

Assessment of the Extent of Compliance with the Legal Safeguards:

The detention operations documented in this section raise concerns pertaining to the extent of adherence to the due legal procedures. The Network has observed the following remarks:

First, it was not possible to verify whether the detention operations had been carried out pursuant to arrest warrants issued by the Public Prosecution or the competent judicial authorities. The principle is that any arrest operation must be based on a judicial warrant in accordance with Article 9(1) of the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights, which prohibits the arbitrary deprivation of liberty and stipulates that the arrest be carried out in accordance with the grounds and procedures established in law.

Second, the executing parties did not officially announce the names of all the detainees, nor the charges directed against them, nor the places of their detention. International law, and in particular Article 9(2) of the International Covenant, obligates the informing of every person who is arrested of the reasons for their arrest at the time it occurs, and of any charge directed against them.

Third, the Network did not have anything indicating that all the detainees had been enabled to contact lawyers or to appear before a judge within a reasonable period. Article 9(3) of the International Covenant requires the bringing of the detainee before a judge or an officer authorized by law to exercise judicial functions “promptly.”

The pursuit of those accused of committing gross violations under the former regime is a legal and moral duty, and the Syrian Network for Human Rights supports this path. However, the legitimacy of accountability requires adherence to the safeguards of a fair trial and the rule of law, since any transgressions in this regard undermine the credibility of the process and violate the rights of the detainees regardless of the nature of the acts attributed to them. The Updated Set of Principles for the Protection and Promotion of Human Rights through Action to Combat Impunity (the Joinet/Orentlicher Principles, 2005) affirms that the right of victims to justice must be exercised within a framework that respects the rights of the accused to a fair trial, and that the breach of this balance weakens the guarantees of non-recurrence.

2. Operations of Release of the Detainees in the Context of Accountability:

The Syrian Network for Human Rights documented during the first half of 2026 no fewer than **133 cases** of release from the detention centers belonging to the Syrian government, where 60 cases of release were documented during the second quarter of 2026, and the documented release cases fall within three contexts:

First: Release after the conclusion of the investigations and the non-establishment of involvement: A number of the detainees who had been arrested in the framework of pursuing those accused of committing violations under the Assad regime were released, and that was after the conclusion of the investigations and the failure to establish their involvement in crimes. This included detainees from the governorates of Suwayda, Idlib, and Rif Dimashq mainly.

Second: Release within the framework of the prisoner exchange agreement with the Suwayda armed groups: On February 26, 2026, an agreement was reached between the Syrian government and the local armed groups in the governorate of Suwayda known as the “National Guard” led by Hikmat al-Hijri, and that was against the backdrop of the armed clashes that erupted in July 2025 between elements from the Ministries of Defense and the Interior in the Syrian government and those groups. The agreement resulted in the release of 61 detainees, natives of Suwayda governorate, who were held by the Syrian government, in return for the release of 25 captives from the elements of the Syrian government who were detained by those groups.

Third: Release of detainees against the backdrop of the events of Ashrafiyat Sahnaya: The release cases also included a number of the detainees who had been arrested against the backdrop of the events that erupted in the city of Ashrafiyat Sahnaya in Rif Dimashq in April 2025.

Remarks on the Release Operations:

The Network records two remarks on the release operations documented in this period. The first, that the release of the detainees whose involvement was not established is considered a positive measure that is consistent with the principle of the presumption of innocence stipulated in Article 14(2) of the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights, however the Network was not able to verify whether these persons had obtained their right to compensation for the unjustified detention in accordance with Article 9(5) of the same Covenant. The second, that the prisoner exchange agreement with the Suwayda groups raises questions about the legal framework in which the exchange took place, the extent of its subjection to judicial supervision, and whether the release was carried out according to an individual assessment of each case or collectively pursuant to the agreement.

VII. LEGAL CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

Legal Conclusions

1. **The Right to Liberty and Personal Security and the Prohibition of Arbitrary Arrest:**

   The cases of arbitrary arrest, detention, and enforced disappearance documented in this report touch upon the right to liberty and personal security, which is a fundamental right guaranteed by Article 9 of the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights, which prohibits the arbitrary deprivation of liberty, and obligates the informing of the person of the reasons for their arrest, enabling them to challenge the legality of their detention, and bringing them before a competent judicial authority within a reasonable period.

   The existing authorities and the forces that are effectively in control bear an obligation to respect these safeguards, and not to resort to the deprivation of liberty except in accordance with clear legal procedures, while ensuring effective judicial oversight, guaranteeing the rights of the detainees to contact their lawyers and their families, and not holding them incommunicado from the outside world.

2. **The Prohibition of Enforced Disappearance, Torture, and Ill-Treatment:**

   The cases of enforced disappearance, and the denial of the acknowledgment of the fate of the detainee or their whereabouts, constitute a continuous violation of a number of fundamental rights, including the right to liberty, the right to recognition as a person before the law, and the right not to be subjected to torture or cruel, inhuman, or degrading treatment. The International Convention for the Protection of All Persons from Enforced Disappearance also prohibits this practice absolutely, whether it is committed by the authorities of the state or by parties acting with its authorization or with its support, and international law criminalizes it when it is committed on a widespread or systematic basis.

   Moreover, the allegations pertaining to torture or ill-treatment during detention necessitate the conducting of independent and effective investigations, the holding accountable of those responsible for them, and the guaranteeing of the right of victims to a remedy and reparation, in harmony with the Convention against Torture and other relevant international standards.

3. **Fair Trial Safeguards and Detention in the Context of Accountability:**

   The report addresses separately the detention operations that the Syrian government carried out against persons suspected of involvement in committing violations during the rule of the regime of Bashar al-Assad. Despite the difference in the legal nature of these operations from the cases of arbitrary arrest that target civilians, they remain subject to the obligations of international human rights law, and in particular the necessity of respecting the presumption of innocence, informing the detainee of the reasons for their detention, enabling them to defend themselves, and bringing them before an independent judicial authority within a reasonable period.

   The accountability procedures may not turn into a means of arbitrary deprivation of liberty or of revenge outside the framework of the law, but rather should be based on independent legal investigations, the safeguards of a fair trial, and individual criminal responsibility.

4. **The Protection of Children and Women from Arbitrary Arrest:**

   The data contained in the report indicate the continued recording of arrest and detention cases that affected children and women. These groups enjoy special protection under international law, and in particular the Convention on the Rights of the Child and the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women, which both affirm the necessity of taking into account the best interests of the child, and not resorting to their detention except as a last resort and for the shortest possible period, and guaranteeing the treatment of the detained women in a manner that preserves their dignity and their rights.

   These obligations require the taking of additional measures to protect children and women during all stages of arrest and detention, and guaranteeing their access to legal assistance, health care, and communication with their families, and preventing their exposure to any form of torture or ill-treatment.

5. **The Right to Know the Truth, Justice, and Reparation:**

   The cases of enforced disappearance and the continued ignorance of the families of the detainees of the fate of their relatives affirm that the right to know the truth constitutes one of the fundamental pillars of transitional justice. This requires the disclosure of the fate of the disappeared, the protection of the official records and the former detention centers, enabling the families to access the relevant information, and guaranteeing the right of victims and survivors to reparation, rehabilitation, and non-recurrence.

   This also requires supporting the national and international mechanisms specialized in collecting evidence, disclosing the former detention places, and documenting the violations, in a manner that contributes to strengthening accountability and protecting the rights of victims.

Recommendations:

To the Syrian Government:

1. To ensure that all arrest and detention procedures take place in accordance with the law, and that no person is deprived of their liberty except on the basis of a clear legal ground, while informing them immediately of the reasons for their arrest, enabling them to communicate with a lawyer and their family, and bringing them before a competent judicial authority within the period specified by the law and in a manner that conforms to the international standards.
2. To disclose the fate of all the forcibly disappeared, to release all arbitrarily detained persons, to publish official information about the places of detention, and to enable the families to obtain the information pertaining to their relatives.
3. To ensure the subjection of all the places of detention to independent judicial supervision, to allow the competent national and international bodies to visit them, and to document the conditions of the detainees in them.
4. To investigate all the allegations of torture, ill-treatment, and enforced disappearance, to hold accountable those responsible for them in accordance with the safeguards of a fair trial, and to repair the harm to the victims and their families.
5. To protect the official records, the former detention centers, and the evidence pertaining to the file of the detainees and the forcibly disappeared, to prevent tampering with them, and to facilitate the access of the competent bodies to them.
6. To reform the legislation and the institutions regulating arrest and detention in a manner that ensures their conformity with the provisions of international human rights law, and in particular the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights and the International Convention for the Protection of All Persons from Enforced Disappearance.
7. To ratify the Rome Statute of the International Criminal Court, and to consider depositing a declaration under Article 12 to accept the jurisdiction of the Court over the crimes committed since a specified date.
8. To adopt national policies for transitional justice that include the disclosure of the truth, accountability, reparation, rehabilitation, and the guarantee of non-recurrence.

To the Judicial Authority and the Public Prosecution:

1. To open independent investigations into all the cases of arbitrary arrest, enforced disappearance, and torture documented in this report, and to ensure the accountability of those responsible for them in accordance with the law.
2. To ensure that all the investigation and trial procedures are based on individual criminal responsibility, while respecting the presumption of innocence, the safeguards of a fair trial, and the rights of the victims and the detainees.
3. To issue clear instructions regarding the protection of the evidence and the records pertaining to the former and current detention centers, and to prevent their destruction or tampering with them before their examination by the competent bodies.

To the Security Council and the International Community:

1. To support the efforts aimed at disclosing the fate of the forcibly disappeared and holding accountable those responsible for the crimes of arbitrary arrest, enforced disappearance, and torture in Syria.
2. To support the programs of judicial and institutional reform, and to strengthen the capacities of the national institutions specialized in protecting the rights of the detainees and preventing torture.
3. To support the Syrian organizations specialized in documenting the cases of arrest and enforced disappearance, and to enable them to continue the work of monitoring, documentation, and the preservation of evidence.
4. To freeze the assets connected to the persons responsible for the violations, to work on confiscating or recovering them in accordance with the legal procedures, and to direct their proceeds to the programs of reparation of the harm to the victims wherever the law allows.
5. To support the programs of psychological and social care and rehabilitation for the survivors of arrest and torture, and for the families of the forcibly disappeared.
6. To call upon the states hosting Syrian refugees to refrain from forcible deportation or from exercising pressures that lead to an involuntary return, and to work on preparing the conditions for a safe, voluntary, and dignified return in accordance with the international standards.

To the Office of the High Commissioner for Human Rights:

1. To integrate the findings and the data contained in this report within the periodic follow-up of the human rights conditions in Syria, in a manner that ensures the continuation of the follow-up of the file of arbitrary arrest and enforced disappearance before the Human Rights Council.
2. To provide technical support to the Syrian authorities in the fields of reforming the detention system, preventing torture, and ensuring compliance with the relevant international standards.
3. To support the programs of protecting the victims, the witnesses, and the sources, and to strengthen the capacities of the national institutions in the fields of documentation, investigation, and the preservation of evidence.

To the Independent International Commission of Inquiry:

1. To give special attention, in the upcoming investigations, to the violations of arbitrary arrest and enforced disappearance that the transitional phase witnessed, including the violations attributed to all the actors.
2. To include in its periodic reports an analysis of the developments pertaining to the fate of the forcibly disappeared, and the violations connected to the former and current detention centers.
3. To continue the collection and analysis of the evidence pertaining to the violations documented in this report, in a manner that strengthens the chances of accountability in the future.

To the International, Impartial and Independent Mechanism:

1. To collect, analyze, and preserve the evidence pertaining to the cases of arbitrary arrest, enforced disappearance, and torture contained in this report, in a manner that ensures the possibility of using it before the competent judicial bodies.
2. To strengthen the technical cooperation and the exchange of expertise with the Syrian organizations working in the field of documentation, in a manner that supports the preparation of legal files that meet the international standards.
3. To support the development of common standards for the preservation of the evidence pertaining to the file of the detainees and the forcibly disappeared, in a manner that preserves the integrity of the documentation chain and the possibility of using it in future judicial proceedings.

To All the Parties in Control of the Syrian Territory:

1. The immediate cessation of all forms of arbitrary arrest and enforced disappearance.
2. To disclose the whereabouts of all the detainees, and to enable them to communicate with their families and their lawyers.
3. To release all the persons detained because of their peaceful exercise of their fundamental rights.
4. To enable the International Committee of the Red Cross and the competent bodies to have regular access to all the places of detention.
5. Full commitment to the prohibition of torture and ill-treatment, and guaranteeing the treatment of all the detainees in a manner that preserves their dignity and their rights.

To the Israeli Occupation Forces:

1. The cessation of the military operations that expose civilians or civilian objects to danger inside the Syrian territory.
2. The cessation of the arbitrary detention operations and the release of all the detainees who have not been released and whose fate has not been known until now.
3. Respect for the sovereignty of Syria and the unity of its territory in accordance with the provisions of international law and the Charter of the United Nations.

Acknowledgments

The Syrian Network for Human Rights extends its thanks to the victims and survivors, the families of the detainees and the forcibly disappeared, the witnesses, the local activists, the community sources, and all those who contributed to documenting these cases or verifying them. The Network affirms that their contributions were essential in the preparation of this report, alongside its continuous commitment to protecting their safety, their privacy, and the dignity of the victims and survivors.

Annex: The Work of the Syrian Network for Human Rights on the File of the Detainees and the Forcibly Disappeared

Since the launch of its work in 2011, the Syrian Network for Human Rights has dedicated a fundamental part of its efforts to documenting the cases of arbitrary arrest and enforced disappearance in Syria, and to monitoring the patterns of the arbitrary deprivation of liberty and the violations connected to it, including torture, enforced disappearance, death inside the detention centers, and incommunicado detention.

The Network has worked on building an electronic documentation system that allows the archiving of the data of the detainees and the forcibly disappeared and classifying it by sex, age, geographic location, date of arrest, executing party, and place of detention whenever the information is available, in addition to the developments of the case, including release, the continuation of detention, or the verification of death. This system constitutes a basis for tracking the patterns of arrest and enforced disappearance, analyzing their temporal and geographic distribution, and providing data supporting the accountability efforts at the national and international levels.

The Network has given special attention to documenting the cases of the arrest of children and women, given what these violations reflect of serious effects on the most fragile groups. It has also expanded its database to include the categories of workers in the medical, media, and relief fields, the defenders of human rights, and other civilians who were subjected to arrest because of their activity or their work.

The Network issues periodic and special reports that document the patterns of arbitrary arrest and enforced disappearance, the release cases, and the changes in the conditions of the detainees, in addition to statistical analyses and graphs that help researchers, international institutions, and the media to follow the development of this file and analyze its trends.

The Network has also sent, since the first years of the conflict, documented files to the competent United Nations mechanisms, foremost among them the Working Group on Enforced or Involuntary Disappearances, the Independent International Commission of Inquiry, and the International, Impartial and Independent Mechanism, in addition to the relevant special rapporteurs, after the completion of the verification procedures and in accordance with its adopted methodology. United Nations, international, and judicial bodies rely on the Network's data in multiple files pertaining to accountability and the disclosure of the truth.

With the fall of the regime of Bashar al-Assad in December 2024, the Network entered a new phase in documenting the file of the detainees and the forcibly disappeared, as an important part of its efforts moved to following the developments connected to the transitional phase, and among the most prominent of these are:

1. Documenting the cases of arrest and detention that occurred after the transfer of power, and monitoring the extent of their conformity with the legal safeguards and the international standards.
2. Following the release operations, verifying the conditions of those released, and updating the databases continuously.
3. Monitoring the detention operations that the Syrian government carries out in the context of pursuing those accused of committing violations during the rule of the Assad regime, while documenting them separately from the cases of arbitrary arrest.
4. Following the disclosure of the fate of the forcibly disappeared, and collecting the information pertaining to the former detention centers and the relevant records and documents.
5. Expanding the field monitoring operations in the areas that became possible to access after the political and security changes, reviewing the deferred files, and collecting new testimonies and additional evidence wherever possible.
6. Developing the capacities of its local teams in the fields of documentation, the collection of statements, data protection, and the safe handling of sensitive information, in a manner that strengthens the quality of documentation and the possibility of benefiting from it in the paths of transitional justice and accountability in the future.

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