

## International day in support of victims of torture

Documented by [SNHR](#)

### Methodology and Introduction:

Syrian Network for Human Rights is one of the key sources to the United Nations in documenting the victims of Syrian Armed Conflicts, as pointed out by the United Nations' reports issued in its statistics of conflict victims and pointed out in the analysis provided by HRDA; appointed by UN to oversee the issuance of Statistics of conflicts victims around the world.

SNHR depend high criteria in documenting and with its members deployed in all of Governorates. By conducting interviews with hundreds of torturing victims by Syrian Government's Armed Troops, they all expressed methods of unified and systematic torturing methods in all of the Syrian Governorates which led to kill 2630 citizen under torture.

Committee against torture confirmed that Each State Party shall ensure that its competent authorities proceed to a prompt and impartial investigation, wherever there is reasonable ground to believe that an act of torture has been committed in any territory under its jurisdiction. Otherwise, the state will hold the responsibility and its officials will hold individually the responsibility of that for that have "have accepted unauthorized acts such as these.

Human Rights Committee, General Comment 20, Article 7  
(Forty-fourth session, 1992) paragraph 11:

11. In addition to describing steps to provide the general protection against acts prohibited under article 7 to which anyone is entitled, the State party should provide detailed information on safeguards for the special protection of particularly vulnerable persons. It should be noted that keeping under systematic review interrogation rules, instructions, methods and practices as well as arrangements for the custody and treatment of persons subjected to any form of arrest, detention or imprisonment is an effective means of preventing cases of torture and ill-treatment. To guarantee the effective protection of detained persons, provisions should be made for detainees to be held in places officially recognized as places of detention and for their names and places of detention, as well as for the names of persons responsible for their detention, to be kept in registers readily available and accessible to those concerned, including relatives and friends. To the same effect, the time and place of all interrogations should be recorded, together with the names of all those present and this information should also be available for purposes of judicial or administrative proceedings. Provisions should also be made against incommunicado detention. In that connection, States parties should ensure that any places of detention be free from any equipment liable to be used for inflicting torture or ill-treatment. The protection of the detainee also requires that prompt and regular access be given to doctors and lawyers and, under appropriate supervision when the investigation so requires, to family members.

## Report :

According to SNHR estimations, Syrian Government arrested at least 215.000 Syrian citizens , including 9,000 under the age of 18 and 4500 women ( 1200 student colleague )

Among the 215.000 arrested there are at least 70.000 are forced disappeared .

All this according to estimates conducted by Syrian network for human rights , it is very difficult to get all the detainees names because of the refusal of hundreds of families to provide us with statements of their sons fear of torture, but despite all the difficulties we could document nearly 80 thousand name of detainees registered by name, place and date.

## The four main Syrian Security Branches are :

Military Security , Air Security , General Security and Political Security , all have been practiced various kinds of torturing methods against all detainees, degrees of torture vary between detainees , but in general considered one of the worst and most horrible methods that violate human rights dignity and all international conventions.

Practicing Systematic daily torturing methods for long hours led to kill 2630 victims; including 85 children, 27 women , 114 Syrian Free Army ( less than 5 % and all the other victims are civilian activists , reporters , human rights activist and protestors ), according to statistic conducted by SNHR since the beginning of Syrian revolution to 10/6/2013 , and they are among the 92901 victims that announced by UN newest statistic, but those victims killed under torture which didn't stop to the date of this report.

[The following link](#) shows names and details for victims tortured to death by Syrian Government's Armed Troops

Distribution of victims tortured to death by governorate as follows:

Homs: 609	Damascus countryside : 465
Daraa : 410	Idlib : 273
Hama : 199	Damascus : 266
Aleppo : 143	Lattakia : 61
Dier Alzoor : 90	Lattakia : 63
Qunaitra : 34	Other Nationalities : 29
Hasaka : 20	Tartous : 14
Raqqa : 5	Swidaa : 1

## **Torturing methods that have been documented by hundreds of tortured survivors' testimonies are 46 cases divided into three sections :**

(note SNHR has the testimonies, photos of signs of torture for those victims)

First: torture methods 9 positions

Second : Various kinds of torturing ( 22 cases )

Third : Psychological torture (14 cases)

### **First: torture methods : SNHR could document 9 positions**

- 1- Ghost Technique ( Shabeh position ) : hanging victims to bathroom ceiling from the wrists while he stands on a chair , then took the chair so the victim will stand on the ground by his / her big toy  
Another case of Shabeh , known as fly ghost, where they tightened one of his/her feet with the victims hand using the same rope for many hours and even day or two , causing hands inflation or even cut
- 2- Tire position ( Dulab ) the victim is forced to bend at the waist and stick his head, neck, legs and sometimes arms into the inside of a car tire , then start beating him on different parts of his body
- 3- Flying Carpet position ( Basat Al-reeh ) involves tying the victim down to a two sections flat so that the detainee's hands and feet get tied to the front and back of the plank, and his face on the ground of it. Then, the front side of the plank is lifted as to fold it so that the body of the detainee gets folded until his head touches his feet. This leads to a dangerous stretch in the ligaments and nerves of the spine, which results the most dreadful kind of pain a person can suffer from. Meanwhile, another person is beating the detainee.
- 4- Crucify : the hands and legs of the detainee are tightened like a crucified person then they beat him/her specifically on genitals
- 5- Hanging: the hands are tied behind the back, then the detainee is hanged up and beaten with sticks and wires.
- 6- Smashing, where a detainee head is placed between the wall and the door of the prison, the door is closed on the head of the detainee.
- 7- Electrocution: a metal chair, the detainee is seated on it, then they put on the electric current.
- 8- Electric shocks to various parts of body
- 9- The German chair ( Al-kursi al-Almani ) : a metal chair with moving parts to which the victim is tied by hands and feet. The breaks of the chair bends backwards causing acute hyper-extension of the spine and severe pressure on the victims neck and limbs

### **Second : Various kinds of torturing ( 22 cases )**

- 1- Using all methods of beating on all body parts by different tools such as stake and electric cables, called colloquially ( Robai ) , to beat on the soles and tread on the head.
- 2- Completely uprooting fingernails.
- 3- Removing hair from different parts of the body
- 4- Cutting out flesh by forceps from sensitive organs
- 5- Rapping male and female detainees
- 6- Forcing the detainee to rape his/her cell mate
- 7- Cutting out some parts of the detainee body; such as finger, flesh, or stabbing in the back or stomach
- 8- burning detainee's skin using chemical acids or cigarettes.
- 9- exposing the detainee after being enforced to take off all clothes and covers to extreme cold.

- 10- depriving the detainee from medical care totally as there is a lack of medical care in large number of prisons.
- 11- Preventing the detainee to use the toilet but once or twice a day, forcing him/her sometimes to urinate on himself/herself. If the detainee is allowed to use toilet, the period may not exceed a minute. The detainee is also prevented from taking shower, going out and breathing fresh air.
- 12- Keeping a large number of detainees in a small cell (keeping 45 detainees in a 15 meter cell, Air Force Intelligence, Aleppo).
- 13- Pouring cold water over the body after being hit and wounded.
- 14- Cracking ribs.
- 15- insufficient amount of water and food which are not enough for a quarter of detainees.
- 16- Standing up on foot and hung up from hands for successive days.
- 17- Using underground cells without ventilation.
- 18- Pouring boiling oil or water over legs
- 19- Cutting the ear using the clipper used to trim the trees.
- 20- Stressing ears and nose using mallet.
- 21- Hanging up and then tying something heavy to the penis.
- 22- Electric shocking, especially in breasts, knees, and elbows.

### **Third : Psychological torture (14 cases) :**

SNHR documented the most systematic and practice 14 cases :

- 1- Forcing the detainee to watch his/her mate being raped.
- 2- Threatening the detainee that they will rape him/ her .
- 3- Force the detainee to watch his/her mates tortured and tortured to death.
- 4- Threatening the detainee with arresting his wife, mother or sister and rapping or torturing her in front of his eyes then make him see naked female detainees in the prison.
- 5- Threatening the detainee of torturing to death or slaughtering with knives.
- 6- Offending and assaulting the detainee's religious believes.
- 7- Putting male and female detainees in the same prison and in some cases strip them in front of the executioners
- 8- Putting detainee with dying person in the same cell
- 9- Putting detainee with dead person in the same cell
- 10- Assaulting the detainee and his family by obscene insult
- 11- Forcing the detainee to admit crimes he did not commit or they will double the torture.
- 12- Commanding the detainee to prostrate for Assad's portrait.
- 13- Deluding the detainee that he/she is going to be released and opening the cell's door, then bringing him/her back for torture.
- 14- Taking the detainee to the prison's doctor for treatment. The doctor hits him/her on the painful part, then the detainee is taken back to be re-tortured. So that none ask again for doctor.

Syrian Army , Shabiha and Security Forces practiced more horrible methods like genital cutting or cut the ears , we have more than 100 filmed and recorded , where security elements and Shabiha filmed those operations as they were having fun with.

Unfortunately all of those cases do not take the same reaction or echo against one video for brutal condemned crime committed by a soldier in Syrian Free Army and talked about different media agencies all around the world, not to mention President and Foreign Minister of Russia, Iran Foreign Minister, Lebanese Hezbollah secretary general although all of them knew and even participated in much more wider systematic crimes and not individual.

### **Legal Conclusions :**

United Nations Standard Minimum Rules for the Treatment of Prisoners

These principles are based, derived by international humanitarian law and international law of human rights, on the basis of humane treatment and non-discrimination. Protection principle No. 7 has particular importance especially important as calls to investigate all cases of ill-treatment of detainees and punish the perpetrators

### **Customary IHL states :**

Chapter 32 Fundamental guarantees

Rule 90 Torture, cruel or inhuman treatment and outrages upon personal dignity, in particular humiliating and degrading treatment, are prohibited.

Rule 91 Corporal punishment is prohibited.

Chapter 37 Persons Deprived of Their Liberty

Rule 118 Persons deprived of their liberty must be provided with adequate food, water, clothing, shelter and medical attention.

Rule 119 Women who are deprived of their liberty must be held in quarters separate from those of men, except where families are accommodated as family units, and must be under the immediate supervision of women.

Rule 120 Accommodation for Children Deprived of Their Liberty

Rule 120 Children who are deprived of their liberty must be held in quarters separate from those of adults, except where families are accommodated as family units.

Based on the forgoing :

1- SNHR emphasize that torturing committed by Syrian Government's Armed Forces is systematic widespread policy, the proof is killing at least 4 citizens under torture , this is constitute a flagrant violations of the state's obligations to International Human Rights Law and International Law of Human Rights.

2- The torture is systematically practiced and in a large scale attacks carried out by Syrian Government's Armed Troops and Shabiha against civilians , and they are aware of those attacks , which is considered as crime against humanity.

3- There are a large involvement of Shabiha militia affiliated to Syrian Government in torturing citizens in unofficial detention centers in various governorates where they raped and tortured abducted women

4- Syrian Government's Armed Forces committed wide range acts of to torture under non-international armed conflicts which is considered as a war crime according to Article 8 of the Rome Statute

5- Syrian Government didn't comply with customary IHL or any local or international law in torturing issues careless all international norms and laws

### **Second : Armed Oppositions :**

SNHR documented torturing cases in centers controlled by armed opposition , it led to death cases in particular in the cases of Shabiha committed rape against women when breaking in house, those the most documented torturing to death cases

Although armed opposition practice torturing against some civilians media activist cause their objections to some practices by some elements of the armed factions but did not live up to degree murder under torture.

Armed opposition also practiced methods of torture with some officers and soldiers whose arrested from government forces in order to obtain information.

There are also some of torture practices on a sectarian basis and considering that approximately 98% of the security chiefs are from the Alawite sect, a number of practices came as a reaction to those who torturing detainees and people in the security branches.

Legal conclusions against Armed Oppositions :

The applicable law in Syrian armed conflict is Customary IHL , where armed opposition violated the rules of customary IHL , although the other cases are individual , but we are in SNHR expressing our concern that this acts will spread in other areas

Accordingly, the armed opposition and other factions fighting have been committed in torturing acts war crime of torture and violation of their obligations under Article 3 common as the parties to the conflict in Syria

SNHR didn't document any case of torturing women and children

Condemnation and responsibilities

The Syrian network for human rights and as an organization concerned with the defense of human rights condemns in the strongest terms and the greatest phrases all methods of torture with all forms, which date back to many of them to primitive times the first and eras of the Middle Ages, and stresses that these acts of violent cannot be issued by the person with a humanitarian values, and hold the Syrian Government Troops with all its symbols and forms and all of those who alliance and cooperate with and supported financially or morally the Syrian Government Troops full responsibility for what happened and is happening from physical and material or moral damage , as well as all of the reactions and consequences of arrest and torture.

Not to mention that International community and UN attitude of standing and watching idly violations of international law in Syria is a stain against who legislates this rules cause the lack of implementation to put an end to dictatorships that violate and offend human dignity and encourages dictatorships to move forward in their policies criminal lack of undeterred.



## **Demands and Recommendations :**

### **1- Demands :**

According to Rule No. 124 of Customary IHL

Rule 124. ICRC Access to Persons Deprived of Their Liberty

A. In international armed conflicts, the ICRC must be granted regular access to all persons deprived of their liberty in order to verify the conditions of their detention and to restore contacts between those persons and their families.

SNHR as a human rights organization demands our colleagues in ICRC to do their duty entrusted to them as the only body authorized to visit detention centers and cellars expended and quickly visits, and has full liberty to select the places it wishes to visit and must be able to interview the detainees without accompaniments by the Syrian Government Troops .

We call upon the International Committee , Security Council and United Nations to live up to the human and humanity laws and constitutions and referral criminal and murderers to ICC

All city organizations around the world to exert pressure on the Security Council and all its members to refer criminals in Syria to ICC, and to be on the amount of responsibility of torture and kill exposed the Syrian people

### **2- Recommendations:**

#### **Human Rights Council :**

- 1- Pay more and Serious attentions of torturing death cases which considered as the worst type of crimes at all
- 2- Demand the Security Council and the concerned international institutions to hold their responsibilities in this serious matter
- 3- Pressure on the Syrian Government Troops to stop torturing and unlock the prisons and detention centers to see detainees and know their conditions
- 4- Hold alias and supporters of the Syrian Government Troops : Russia , Iran and China, the moral and physical responsibilities for the Syrian Government Troops excesses in this regard

#### **Security Council :**

- 1- Decision to refer all the criminals and the involved to ICC
- 2- Warn the Syrian Government Troops of the repercussions of using brutal methods on the stability of civil peace and coexistence between the people of the same society

#### **Arab League :**

- 1- Demand Human Right Council and United Nations to give this serious issue the right attention and follow up
- 2- Political and diplomatic pressure on the Syrian Government Troops 's main allies - Russia, Iran and China - to prevent them from continuous providing cover and international and political protection for all the crimes committed against the Syrian people and hold them moral and physical responsibility for all the excesses of the Syrian Government Troops
- 3- Serious attention of this case and give it high priority and , and try to take care of torture victims families

### **Transitional Syrian Government Troops :**

- 1- Media and Political deserved attention of this case, and continuously raised in Syrian Friends Conferences
- 2- Demand Human Right Council and United Nations to give this serious issue the right attention and follow up
- 3- Form specialized committee s to follow up the conditions of detainees families and care of them financially and morally
- 4- Form specialized committees to provide moral and psychological support to rehab victims detainees coming out of torture headquarter
- 5- Condemnation , accounting and follow up torture committed by opposition armed factions

### **International Commission of Inquiry:**

The International Commission of Inquiry to describe the facts as I got completely and give adapt the legal duty of the violations carried out by the Syrian government toward the Syrian people and to increase the members of the Committee specialists affairs Syrian commensurate with the size of the violations basis and take reports of Syrian human rights organizations that have members of specialists by on Syrian territory into account.

