

The Syrian regime's arresting policy in 2014

Introduction

The Syrian regime's security forces and militias continues kidnaping and arresting civilians in addition to the daily killing. With the huge number of people killed every day by the shelling with barrel bombs, missiles, and mortar shells in addition to the ongoing clashes in different part of the Syrian region, the systematic arresting perpetrated by the Syrian regime is maybe overwhelmed despite that it is being perpetrated consistently. The Syrian regime arrests and kidnaps civilians and then put them under brutal torture where, as an average, five people ever day die under torture according to SNHR.

SNHR estimates the total number of prisoners who have been arrested since the beginning of the Syrian revolution to be no less than 215,000 using the approximate documentation method. SNHR has lists of more than 76,000 names of those prisoners given the considerable difficulty to obtain the prisoners' names and information. Furthermore, we documented 5047 victims at least who died under torture inside the Syrian regime detention centers from the beginning of the Syrian revolution until the end of July 2014.

This report will highlight four patterns of arbitrary arrest which became more notable in this year; namely: arresting to conscript, arresting people who agreed on settlements with the Syrian regime, arresting relief activists, and, last but not least, prisoners of conscience.

Details

Arresting practices focused in 2014 on three main levels:

First: Conscription

The Syrian regime has recruited the military institution to kill the people. Many defection cases have been documented. Additionally, the Syrian youth has abstained from joining the army especially in the rebellious areas because the Syrian army has been involved in widespread violations which gave the impression that the army is nothing but another president-affiliated apparatus. Furthermore, many fighters have been killed during the clashes with the armed opposition which shrunk its size to less than one-fourth of its original size before the Syrian revolution. Also, the number of recruited and military officers from the Syrian coast or the Alawite sectarian group has increased at the expense of national diversity within the army due to the army perpetrating more than 47 ethnic-cleansing massacres according to a previous report published by SNHR.

The number of recruits in the official army is estimated to be around 70,000 while the actual number was 320,000 before the beginning of the Syrian revolution. This forced the Syrian regime to rely heavily on the Shiite militias (Iraqi, Lebanese, Iranian, and Afghani) as it was shown in an extensive report on fighting Shiite militias in Syria that was published by SNHR.

The Syrian regime, due to the aforementioned reasons, has issued strict orders for the Security forces of all specialties to arrest and conscript anyone in the service. These orders included the supporting, opposing, and controlled areas even if the arrested person had evidences from the Syrian government that enabled him to postpone his military service.

SNHR has documented 5430 cases at least where security forces arrested persons and forced them to fight with the Syrian regime army from the beginning of this year to the end of July 2014. As a weekly average, 168 are being arrested every week.

Second: Arresting people who agreed on settlements with the Syrian regime

SNHR has published a special report about the background of the settlement between the residents of Old Homs neighborhoods and the Syrian regime which can be practically generalized to include all the areas with whom the Syrian regime made settlements. These settlements were always violated by the Syrian regime where it arrested again at least 1860 persons from the beginning of 2014 to the end of July. This phenomena was most notable in Homs and Damascus countryside.

Third: Relief activists

The Syrian regime's arrests included all specialties and fields. However, we noticed in our detainees archive that the largest portion of the prisoners were relief activists where the number of prisoners who were previously working for humanitarian and relief organizations, whose work was mostly in the displacement and aid-distribution areas, is about 270 persons including 30 women.

Fourth: Prisoners of conscience

Although the Syrian regime arrested most of the prisoners of conscience, who most of them are still in prisons according to a previous report published by SNHR about the most prominent prisoners, the Syrian regime has kidnapped and arrested what left of them through luring them at the hands of informants or ambushing them. The Syrian regime relied on the policy heavily in 2014 as an attempt to avoid any media or legal controversies over those arrests. Apparently, the Syrian regime has succeeded to a large extent with that as we documented 47 arresting of prisoners of conscience from the beginning of 2014 until the end of July 2014.

Conclusion

It has become common knowledge for all the states that Syrian regime has been holding prisoners as hostages for three years so it can use them later in negotiations. These practices are encouraged by the utter silence of the International Community instead of demanding the release of all peaceful prisoners or at least reveal their fate. The International Community's pretext is always the Chinese and Russian vetoes. And amid a blatant international futility the Syrian regime is going on with systematic and barbarian arresting campaigns where its security forces is currently moving from one area to another so it can include all the areas under its control in its arresting campaigns.

