

No less than 627 Cases of Arbitrary Arrest Recorded in February 2017



SYRIAN NETWORK FOR HUMAN RIGHTS

الشبكة السورية لحقوق الإنسان

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I. Introduction

The detainees issue hasn't seen any noticeable progress even though it was included in the "Cessation of Hostiles" statement. Regarding that issue in particular, we recommend the following:

- 1- Arbitrary arrests must be ceased immediately as it is still an ongoing concern according to SNHR's monthly report. All detainees' fates must be revealed and their families' right to visit them must be insured immediately as well.
- 2- All detainees who were detained for merely exercising their political and civil rights must be released unconditionally. The use of women and children as war hostages must be stopped and they all must be released.
- 3- Grant the Independent international monitors of the Independent International Commission of Inquiry on the Syrian Arab Republic, which was established by the UN, and the International Committee of the Red Cross access to all official and non-official detention centers without setting up any prior arrangements or any restrictions or conditions.
- 4- A UN committee should be formed to see to the release of the detainees periodically and per a timetable that must be presented by all the detaining parties and mainly Syrian regime forces that are detaining 99% of all the detainees.



Methodology

The ongoing and daily process of documenting detainees comes with additional challenges for SNHR that have been documenting detainees since 2011. One of these most notable challenges is the families' reluctance to cooperate and reveal any information on their family members' arrest even secretly and especially if the arrested individual was a female due to a prevalent notion among the Syrian society that doing so would result in more torture and risks. Instead, the families try to negotiate with security forces that usually blackmail these families and demand a cash payment that can amount to thousands of dollars in some cases. Despite the fact that SNHR possesses lists of more than 117,000 detainees, including children and women, it should be noted that we estimate that the actual number of detainees have exceeded 215,000; 99% of them are being detained mainly by Syrian regime forces.

The international community's and the United Nations', in all of its organs, failure to apply pressure on the Syrian authorities to release even one case (including those whose sentences are over), and even prisoners of conscience, affirmed that convention within the Syrian society which believes that it is useless to cooperate in the documentation process. Most of the releases were part of exchange deals with the armed opposition.

The Syrian government denies that it made any arrests or executed any abductions when asked by the detainees' families. SNHR obtains most of the information from former detainees.

All the documented detainees in February were arrested without a warrant, which has become a norm and a methodology in 99.9% of the arrests made by Syrian regime forces in all of its organs and entities (army, security forces, local militias, foreign militias). In all of the many interviews we conducted with thousands of prisoners since 2011, we have never heard of an arrest warrant or a cause. Most of the arrests are either through breaking doors and arresting people from their homes or at checkpoints in the streets. Apparently, Syrian regime forces follow this method in order to wipe off any evidence that might hold them responsible for these arrests and the torture, physical violence, extrajudicial killing, and the other crimes and violations that follow.

Also, Syrian regime forces don't allow 99.9% of the detainees to contact a lawyer, their families, or anyone. The people who perpetrate these crimes, or other crimes, have never been punished by Syrian regime forces and no case involving that have been recorded.



Instead, government authorities, itself, encourage and protect the people who perpetrate these crimes.

SNHR has recorded that no less than 117,000 individuals have been arrested since March 2011 (99% have been arrested by Syrian regime forces) these number don't include prisoners of a criminal background and include arrests cases that are based on the internal armed conflict and mainly due to the opposition activity against the ruling authorities.

The mounting number of arrests is due to a number of reasons:

- Many arrested individuals weren't arrested because of a crime they committed, but because of their relatives' involvement with armed opposition factions or because they provided humanitarian aids.
- Most of the arrests are being conducted randomly and involve people who weren't involved in the popular protests, relief, or even military activity.
- Thousands of detainees are still being detained by the Syrian regime even though a judicial order for their release was issued despite the bureaucracy, corruption, slowness, and limpness that the Syrian judiciary suffers from.
- Syrian regime forces control densely populated cities such as the main central cities and it continue to practice its systematic policies of arbitrary arrests against the civilians of these areas.
- There are many Syrian regime forces-affiliated entities that are authorized to make arrests, many of these entities make arrests without checking with Syrian regime forces or the judicial authorities to which these entities are affiliated. Also, these entities have its own list of detention centers that are not subject to any judicial supervision. The detainees inside these detention centers are not being treated in accordance with the stated Syrian laws.
- A great number of cases are driven by blackmails or sectarian grudges especially in unstable areas that are not held by a specific faction or it is undergoing a power struggle. As a result, many armed militias that have emerged can't be monitored as they don't answer to any particular group.

Details about detainees can be found through the search engine on SNHR website, you may also add the name and details of any detainee and the concerned team will check the data and upload it if proved accurate.



II. Report Details

Arbitrary arrests made in February were notable for Syrian regime forces' almost daily raiding and arrest campaigns that involved civilians in the main neighborhoods of city centers and residential areas that are under the regime's control. The arrests made focused on the age group 18-42 years old for the purpose of conscription, while Syrian regime forces targeted activists' and armed opposition fighters' families who live in its area of control. Also, Syrian regime forces carried out widespread raids and arrests in Homs city's neighborhood following the bombings that targeted the regime's security centers in the city. The regime also carried out almost daily raids and arrest campaigns in multiple areas under the regime's control in the southern suburbs of Hama. In addition, a number of areas in Damascus suburbs governorate saw raids and arrest operations for conscription purposes.

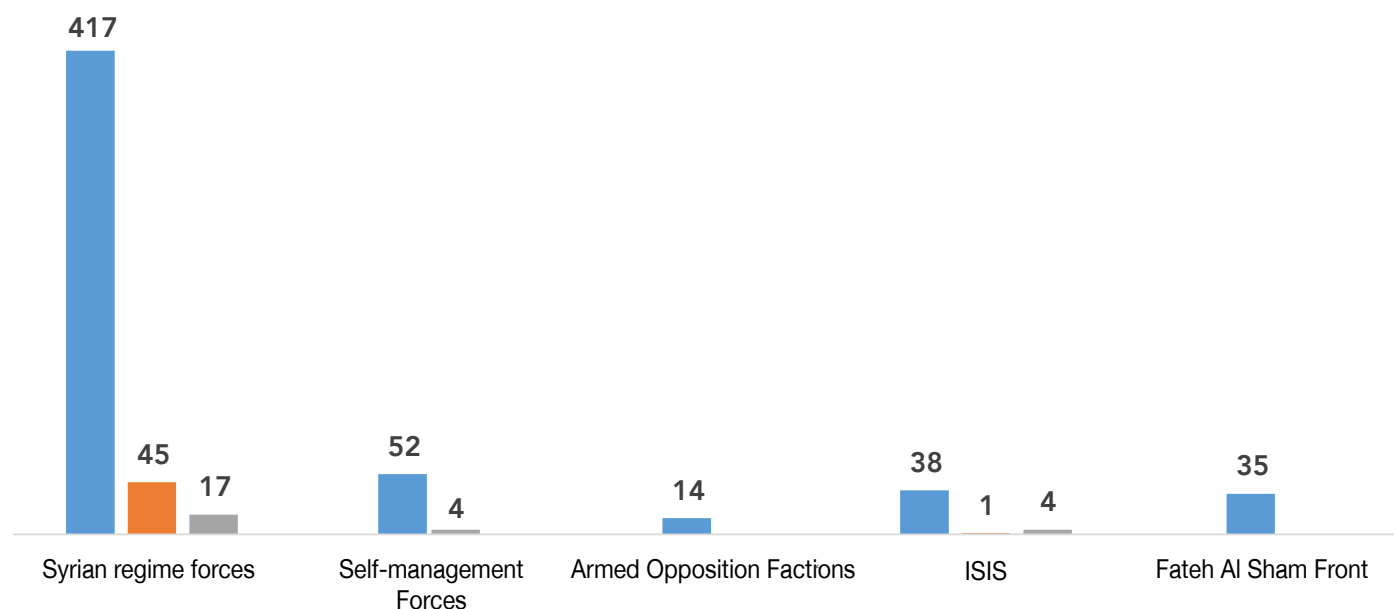
Furthermore, ISIS continues to enforce its policy of arbitrary arrests against civilians in its areas. The arrests included those who violated the organization's forcibly-imposed regulations, owners of phone shops, internet cafes, money exchange shops and civilians who are trying to flee ISIS-held areas to areas under the control of armed opposition. Also, Jaish Khaled ben al Walid, an affiliate of ISIS, carried out wide raid and arrest campaigns in Tseel and Jellen towns in the suburbs of Daraa governorate.

In contrast, Self-management forces also continue its policy of arbitrary arrests and enforced-disappearance against civilians and political and media activists who oppose its views in its areas. The arrests were concentrated in Al Hasaka city and Ifreen city in the suburbs of Aleppo governorate in addition to expanded arrest campaigns for the purpose of conscription that centered in Al Qamishli, in the suburbs of Al Hasaka governorate, and Ifreen and Ain al Arab in the suburbs of Aleppo governorate.

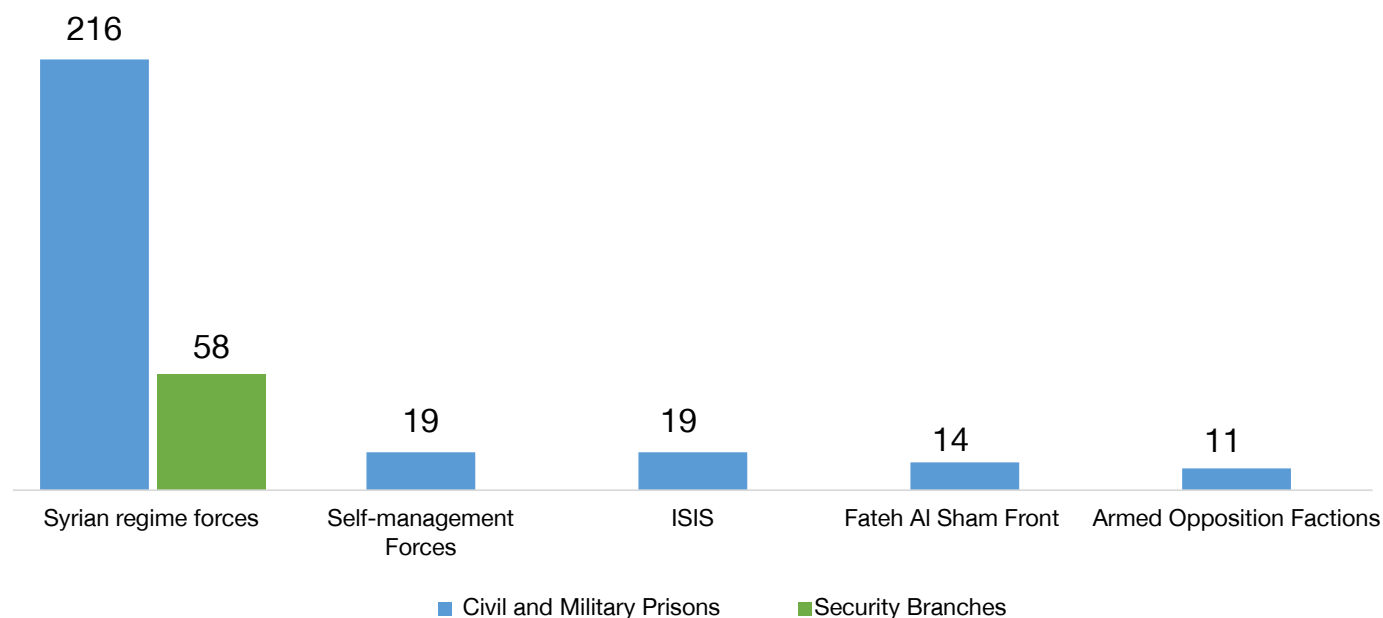
Fateh Al Sham Front (Formerly Al Nussra Front) carried out wide arrest campaigns targeting media activists and civil and service activists in Salqin and Harim cities in the suburbs of Idlib governorate.



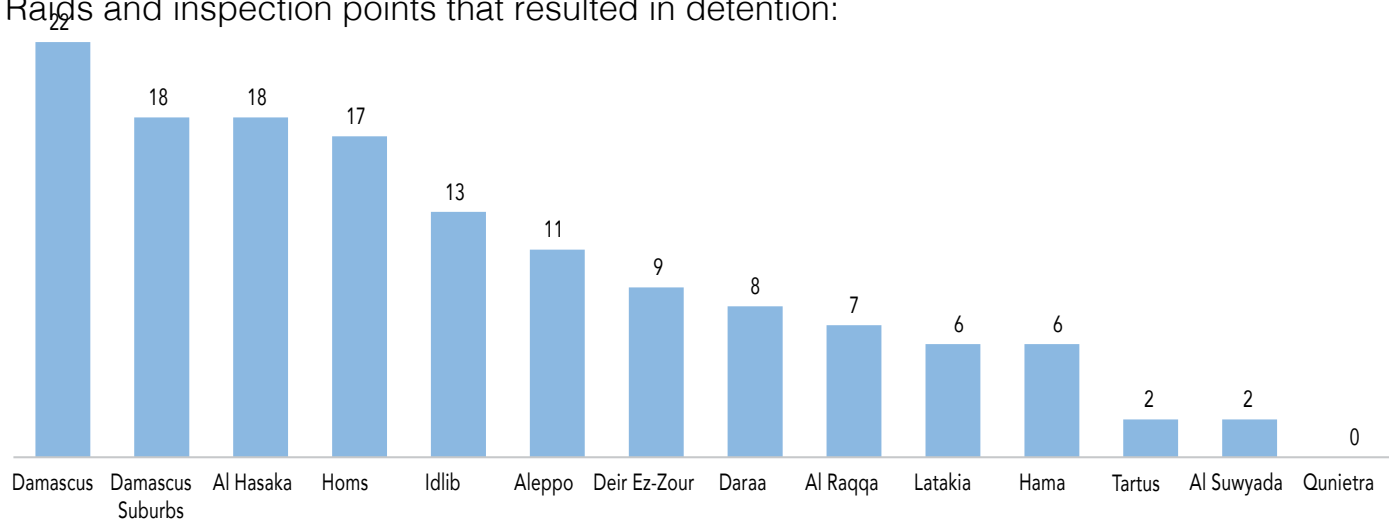
The following chart illustrates the distribution of arrest cases that we were able to record in February. This what we were able to record which is the minimum, due to security and logistic restriction.



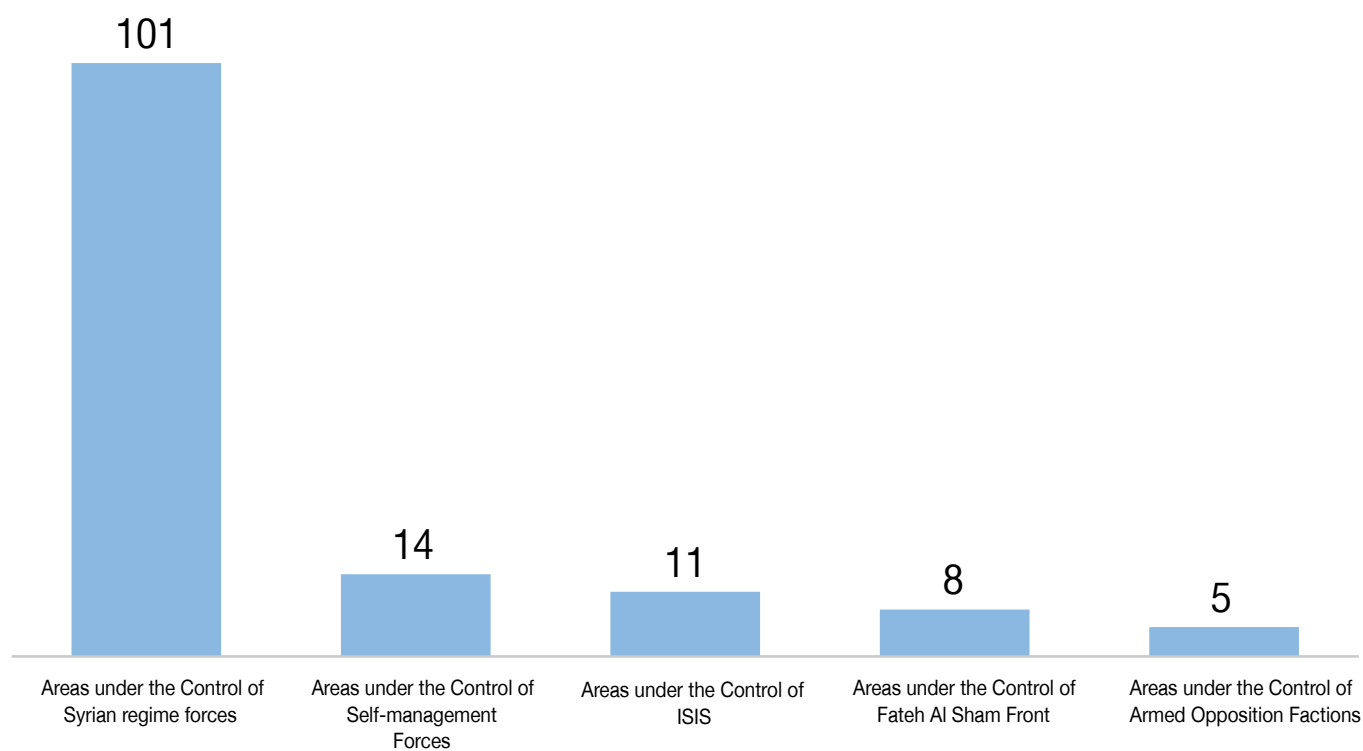
Releases from the various detention centers were as follows:



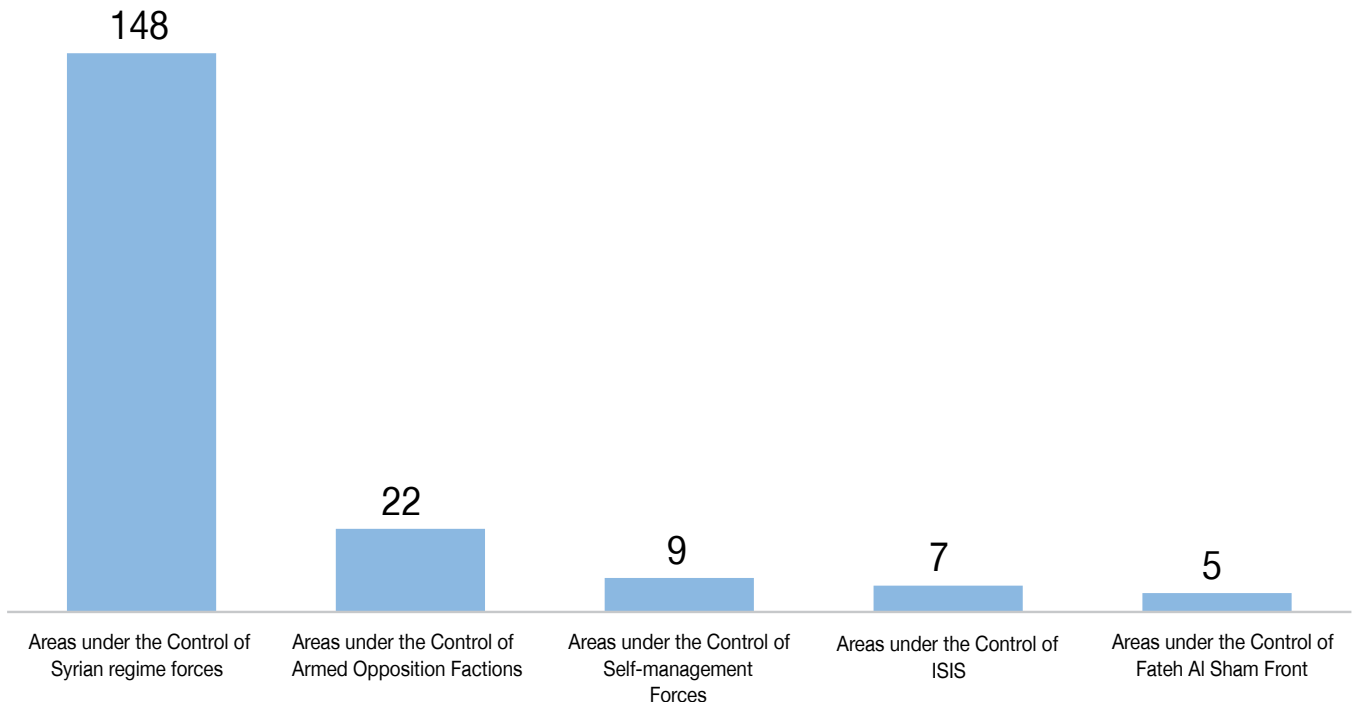
Raids and inspection points that resulted in detention:



Parties responsible for raids



Abduction cases by other parties:



III. Most Notable Cases of Arbitrary Arrest in February

Syrian regime forces

(Name is undisclosed for security reasons), a woman from Barza neighborhood in Damascus city, born in 1987, a housewife. She was arrested by Syrian regime forces at a checkpoint near Barza neighborhood in northern Damascus city on Monday, February 6, 2017. She was taken to an undisclosed location. Her fate is still unknown to SNHR as well as her family.

University student, Saad al Mohammad, from al Dahiriya neighborhood in Hama city, born in 1995, a second-year university student at the faculty of civil engineering in al Baath University in Homs city. On Monday, February 13, 2017, he was arrested by Military Security forces, affiliated to Syrian regime forces, from the university residency in Homs city. He was taken to an undisclosed location. His fate is still unknown to SNHR as well as his family.

Self-management forces (Primarily consisting of Democratic Union Party forces, a branch for the Kurdistan Workers' Party)

[Hussein Omar](#), visual artists, and member of the Kurdish party Yekiti, from M'abda town in the eastern suburbs of al Hasaka governorate. On Thursday, February 9, 2017, Self-man-



agement forces arrested him from his place of residence in M'abda town. He was taken to an undisclosed location. His fate is still unknown to SNHR as well as his family.

Media activist, [Jalnak Abdullah Kan'ou](#), from Jel Agha town in the suburbs of al Hasaka governorate, 24-year-old, a university student, reporter for Kurdstreet News Network. On Saturday, February 4, 2017, he was arrested by Self-management forces at one of their checkpoint on the outskirts of al Jawwadiya town and was taken to "Amouda city" prison in the suburbs of al Hasaka governorate. He was released on Sunday, February 5, 2017.

[Saleh Nour al Mash-had](#), from Manbej city in the northern suburbs of Aleppo governorate, born in 1984, an assistant surgeon at the National Hospital of Manbej city. He was arrested by armed fighters for Self-management forces who raided his place of residence in Manbej city on Friday, February 3, 2017. He was taken to an undisclosed location. His fate is still unknown to SNHR as well as his family.

Extremist Islamic groups

Fateh Al Sham Front (Formerly Al Nussra Front)

[Dr. Najib Klawi](#), from Jesr al Shoghour city in the suburbs of Idlib governorate, a doctor and head of the makeshift hospital in Jesr al Shoghour city. He was arrested by armed fighters from Fateh al Sham Front who raided Jesr al Shoghour makeshift hospital on Wednesday, February 8, 2017, and was taken to the police station of the city. He was released on Tuesday, February 21, 2017.

[Teacher Ahmad Kamal Bakrou](#), from Salqin city in the western suburbs of Idlib governorate, former head of the guidance office in the educational complex of Harem area, and a representative of Harem area in the political body of Idlib governorate. He was arrested by armed fighters from Fateh al Sham Front from his workplace in Salqin city on Thursday, February 9, 2017. He was taken to an undisclosed location. He was released on Tuesday, February 14, 2017.

Other parties

Child Umran Rashad al Basal, from Kafr Rouma in the southern suburbs of Idlib governorate, 14-year-old, he was abducted by unknown armed men near his place of residence in Kafr Rouma town on Saturday, February 25, 2017. On Sunday, February 26, 2017, the abductors tossed him in front of the town's mosque after he was severely tortured and beaten over several areas of his body.

[Picture of Umran Rashad al Basal, and signs of torture are visible on his body](#)



IV. Recommendations

- 1- Security Council must monitor the implementation of the following resolution: Resolution 2042, adopted on 14 April 2012, Resolution 2043, adopted on 21 April 2012, and Resolution 2139, adopted on 22 February 2014 which states that the crime of enforced-disappearance must be ceased.
- 2- The United Nations and the international community must uphold their responsibilities with respect to hundreds of thousands of detainees and forcibly-disappeared individuals in Syria.





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