



Statement

A Statement Condemning Syrian Democratic Forces' Arbitrary Detention of Nine Members of the Ibou Family, Including Five Children and Two Women, and Taking Them Hostage

The Syrian Network for Human Rights (SNHR) learned, through communicating with the Ibou family, that the Military Council' intelligence service in Manbej city in the eastern suburbs of Aleppo governorate, which is affiliated with Syrian Democratic Forces, on Wednesday, January 6, 2021, detained eight members of the family from their home in Manbej city, namely: The father of Nedal Ibou, who is wanted by Syrian Democratic Forces, three of Nedal's brothers, his wife and his three children, namely [Mahmoud Nedal Ibou](#) (aged 66 years), [Rizan](#), [Ahmad](#) and [Muhammad](#) Ibou (24, 16, and 14 years old), [Amirah Mutran](#) (23 years old), and the children [Mahmoud](#), [Lazkin](#) and [Aryn](#) Nedal Ibou, aged between 3 and 6 years, all of whom were taken to an undisclosed location. We believe that this detention aims to take Nedal's family members as hostages to pressure Nedal into surrendering himself to Syrian Democratic Forces.

Syrian Democratic Forces have not only kidnapped these family members as hostages, but also arrested Nedal's mother, [Ms. Haifaa Hushou](#), aged 55, on Monday, March 1, 2021, for appearing in a [video](#) in which she demanded that Syrian Democratic Forces release her husband and her son's family and disclose their fate. She was arrested solely for expressing her opinion, and also taken to an undisclosed location.

Nedal Mahmoud Ibou, from Ein al Arab city in the eastern suburbs of Aleppo governorate, aged 30, worked in the Finance and Control Department of the Manbej City Board of Directors since 2016; after he was assigned to head an anti-corruption committee in the Manbej Board of Directors, in performing his duties, he uncovered various instances of serious corruption, which he revealed in [videos](#) published on social media pages. As a result, Nedal received death threats from the people whose names were mentioned in the videos; on December 20, 2020, Nedal Ibou submitted his resignation from his position, but it was rejected. According to his family, the Manbej Military Council of Syrian Democratic Forces refused to provide him with protection from these threats, forcing him to go into hiding and then to leave the area on January 2, 2021.

None of the arrests of Nedal Ibou's family members were carried out according to a judicial warrant; this is a general rule in the vast majority of arrests carried out by the SDF, where the persons arrested are not informed of the charges against them, and are prevented from communicating with any of their family members. Nedal's family members are now effectively being held hostage as a strategy to force him to surrender himself. SNHR has documented many cases of Syrian Democratic Forces arresting family members of those who are wanted by SDF, particularly targeting the most vulnerable group that they can find among the family members, such as women, children, or the elderly. Often, these arrests are not carried out to extract information, but solely to take revenge on and pressure those wanted to surrender themselves, a strategy indistinguishable from the practices used by the Syrian regime against dissidents.

The Syrian Network for Human Rights condemns the arrest of the members of the Ibou family and holding them as hostages, in flagrant violation of international human rights law, and we demand their immediate release, along with restitution and material compensation for them over this crime, and we appeal to the US-led coalition forces to put pressure on Syrian Democratic Forces to end all forms of violations, primarily kidnappings, arbitrary detentions, hostage-taking, and torture.