

Violence Against Women



في اليوم الدولي للقضاء على العنف ضد المرأة المقرر السنوي، المصادف يوم 19 نوفمبر، يحق الإناث في سوريا ما يليها على يد النظام السوري

مقتل 28018 أنثى في سوريا منذ آذار 2011، بينهم 93 بسبب التعذيب، 10628 أنثى في زنجان قيد الاعتقال/الاحتجاز و1523 جازية عنف جنسي استهدفت الإناث



SNHR
SYRIAN NETWORK FOR HUMAN RIGHTS
الشبكة السورية لحقوق الإنسان

International Day for the Elimination of Violence Against Women: Tenth Annual Report on Violations against Females in Syria Mostly at the Hands of the Syrian Regime

At Least 29,661 Children Have Been Killed in Syria Since March 2011 Including 181 Due to
Torture, with 5,036 Forcibly Disappeared

Thursday 25 November 2021

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. Tenth Annual Report, the State of Females in Syria; Increased Violence and Continued Violations:

Syrian women played a pivotal role in the popular movement that began in March 2011, which turned after to an internal armed conflict after nearly a year. They were often subjected to violations due to their role and in the demonstrations as well as political, humanitarian, media and human rights activities, and they were also affected by the repercussions of violations that affected the Syrian society as a whole.

Some violations against Syrian women amounted to crimes against humanity, and the worst part is the continued violations, including horrific ones, for more than a decade, which made the state of women in Syria extremely fragile and vulnerable, as they lost various forms of legal and human rights protection.

Women have special, gender-based requirements in armed conflicts, with international humanitarian law granting them wide-ranging protections. There are more than 560 articles in the Geneva Conventions of 1949 and their Additional Protocols of 1977 which protect both women and men as civilians or as combatants by laying down limitations on permissible means and methods of warfare, and also as combatants who have fallen into enemy hands (captured, sick and wounded). Among these 560 articles (all of which protect women) there are more than 40 specifically concerning women¹.

Syria ratified CEDAW Convention in 2003², which is a ratification of the two international covenants³ and the Geneva Conventions⁴, but the problem is that the parties to the conflict do not respect and do not implement these articles, as if these articles do not exist, and the issue becomes more complicated when the ruling authority of the state (the Syrian regime) perpetrated the most violations and was the first to do so, some of which amounted to crimes against humanity⁵. The ruling authority of the state is supposed to protect its citizens and not be the one who kills, tortures and displaces them.

Since the establishment of the Syrian Network for Human Rights nearly a decade ago, hardly a day goes by without recording grave violations against women in Syria, and these violations have been practiced against them without any consideration, and some of these violations were discriminatory against women.

¹ ICRC, Women and war - update to the ICRC project, <https://www.icrc.org/en/doc/resources/documents/misc/5g5cs4.htm>

² United Nations, List of Countries that ratified the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women, https://treaties.un.org/Pages/ViewDetails.aspx?src=IND&mtdsg_no=IV-8&chapter=4&lang=en

³ United Nations, International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights, <https://www.ohchr.org/en/professionalinterest/pages/ccpr.aspx>
United Nations, International Covenant on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights, <https://www.ohchr.org/en/professionalinterest/pages/cescr.aspx>

⁴ ICRC, Geneva Conventions 1949 and their Additional Protocols, <https://www.icrc.org/en/doc/war-and-law/treaties-customary-law/geneva-conventions/overview-geneva-conventions.htm>

⁵ International Criminal Court, Rome Statute, Article 7, <https://www.icc-cpi.int/resource-library/documents/rs-eng.pdf>

The Syrian Network for Human Rights believes in the pivotal role of women in the struggle for their rights and focuses on the violations committed against them in particular. Also, the repercussions of the violations committed against them are horribly and doubly reflected in their family and society, and we refer to them in particular in all of our reports, statements and news, and we also issue reports and news about them specifically, and there is a special database of violations committed against them by all parties to the conflict since 2011 until now, and it includes what we have been able to document, which is undoubtedly the minimum.

Every year, the SNHR issue two main reports: on International Women's Day and on the International Day for the Elimination of Violence against Women, the extensive report includes the most prominent violations against females in Syria over the past year (since the previous year International Day for the Elimination of Violence against Women until this one), and focus on the broader and more harmful violations, such as: extrajudicial killings, arbitrary arrest/detention, torture, sexual violence. The report does not address the psychological effects of the violations on the females, and this issue need a special report. The report does not address other types of violations such as forced marriage of minors, restrictions on the movement of females, denial of work, and gender discrimination.

The report is based on the Syrian Network for Human Rights' archive, which has grown steadily since March 2011 through daily monitoring and documentation of violations, including extrajudicial killings, arbitrary arrest, enforced disappearance, torture, conscription, sexual violence, attacks with various types of weapons, and attacks on vital civilian facilities, with all the statistics included in the archive being documented in accordance with [our methodology](#) and with all the information and details that we have been able to access and verify.

This report outlines the record of violations against children by the parties to the conflict and the controlling forces in Syria between March 2011 and November 25, 2021 which SNHR's team has been able to document, highlighting the most notable of these violations, particularly those which took place between November 20, 2020, and November 25, 2021.

This report also draws on the accounts and interviews we conducted with female victims and survivors, and with victims' relatives, or witnesses of incidents in different areas of Syria, either by meeting with them directly or through talking with them via communication platforms. In this report, we provide 9 accounts, which we obtained directly rather than from open sources. In some cases, we have used aliases to protect witnesses' privacy and prevent them from being harassed or prosecuted. Witnesses received no financial compensation or promises in exchange for interviews. We explained the purpose of the report beforehand to all the interviewees we spoke with, and obtained their consent to use the information they provided to serve the purposes of the report and the documentation processes. All these procedures are carried out in accordance with our internal protocols, which we have worked on for years, and we strive constantly to develop these to keep pace with the best practices in maximizing psychological care and minimizing potential trauma for the victims.

According to the Syrian Network for Human Rights database, we can distribute the arrest/detention cases according to the governorate where the arrest incident took place, and according to the governorate to which the detainee belongs as well.

In this report and in most of our reports, we distribute the toll of arrest cases according to the place where the arrest took place, not according to the governorate to which the detainee belongs, and we note that sometimes we distribute the arrest cases according to the governorate to which the detainee belongs; to show the extent of the loss and violence suffered by the people of that governorate compared to other governorates, and we refer to this in the report.

All the attacks committed by the parties to the conflict in Syria which are cited in the report targeted civilian areas, where we did not document any military presence or weapons depots during or even before the attacks, and were carried out with no warning being given beforehand by the aggressor forces to civilians prior to the attacks, as is required by international humanitarian law.

This report represents the bare minimum that we have been able to document of the magnitude and seriousness of the violations perpetrated, and does not include any analysis of the grave social, economic and psychological ramifications.

Fadel Abdul Ghany, executive director for the Syrian Network for Human Rights, said:



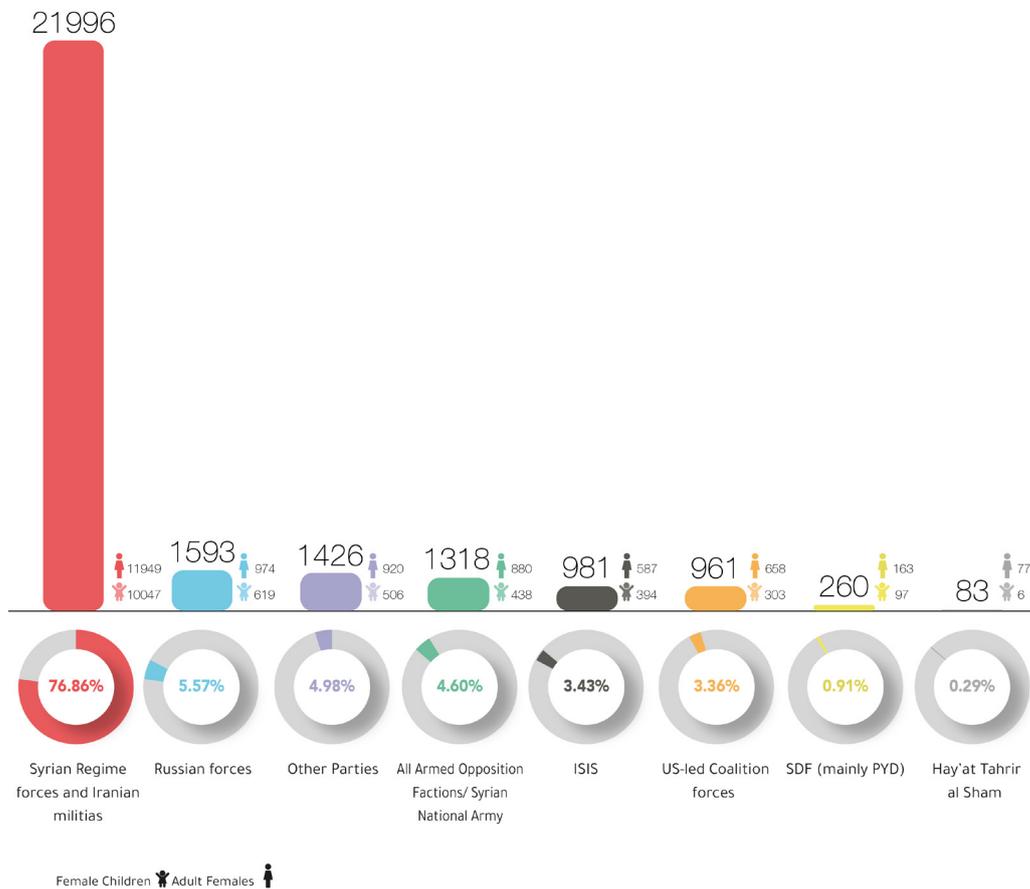
The grave violations against women are no longer gaining the necessary attention and condemnation, even though it continues, some of which amount to crimes against humanity. We have noticed a normalization of the crimes, as a result of its repetition for a long period of time, and that is quite dangerous. It is crucial to reject and condemn what Syrian women have been exposed to from all sides, at the forefront of which is the Syrian regime, and to no normalize the crime and its perpetrators.

II. A Record of the Most Notable Violations against Females according to SNHR's Database:

Females in Syria are subjected to many constant and repeated types of violations, varying in severity and prevalence, which have serious present and future repercussions for every Syrian child. At the Syrian Network for Human Rights, we focus on categories of grave and life-threatening violations identified by the United Nations Security Council, which we work tirelessly to document, always using our rigorous methodology. The killing of children is the greatest of these violations and the most severe in Syria due to the high percentage of child victims, with the second being arrest/abduction, which in the vast majority of cases turns into enforced disappearance, followed by torture and sexual violence. We also focus on the recruitment of underage females, assault on females and the constraints on females implemented by the parties to the conflict.

Extrajudicial killing:

SNHR documented the deaths of 28,618 females at the hands of the parties to the conflict and the controlling forces in Syria between March 2011 and November 25, 2021, distributed as follows:



- **Syrian Regime forces (army, security, local militias, and Shiite foreign militias⁶):** 21,996 females, distributed to 11,949 adult females and 10,047 female children.
- **Russian forces:** 1,593 females, distributed to 974 adult females and 619 female children.
- **ISIS (the self-proclaimed 'Islamic State'):** 981 females, distributed to 587 adult females and 394 female children.
- **Hay'at Tahrir al Sham ⁷(an alliance composed of Fateh al Sham Front and a number of factions of the Armed Opposition):** 83 females, distributed to 77 adult females and six female children.

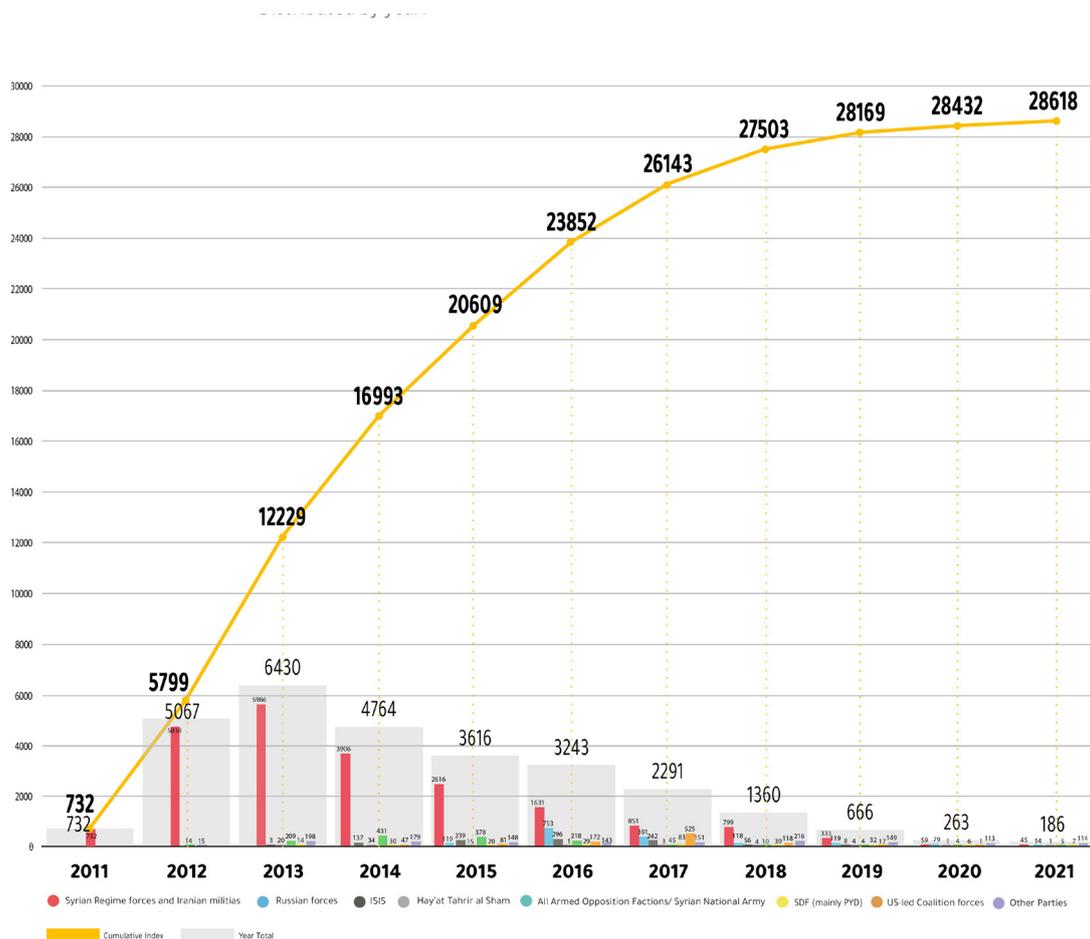
⁶ We generally use the term 'the Syrian regime' rather than 'the Syrian government', because the nature of the ruling power in Syria is a totalitarian dictatorship based on ruling the nation in an authoritarian fashion through a very limited group of individuals, primarily the President of the Republic and his selected leaders of the security services, while the ministers, including the Prime Minister and the Minister of Interior, play a restricted, largely ceremonial role, which is limited to implementing precisely what the ruling regime orders, without any decision-making power or active role; this means that the government's role is wholly subordinate and limited to serving the regime, with all the main powers being concentrated in the hands of the President of the Republic and the security services. Governance in Syria is wholly decided by the autocratic authority of the ruling family and there is no implementation structure. Rather, the government is an empty façade there for show: the Minister of Interior receives orders from the security branches over which he nominally presides which are in turn under the command of the President, while the Minister of Justice cannot summon a civilian-level security agent other than the head of a security branch; the security branches, along with the president, are the true power and the governing regime in Syria. Although we acknowledge that the United Nations and its agencies use the term 'the Syrian government' in general, we believe that this is a completely inaccurate and misleading term in the Syrian context.

⁷ The United Nations has designated it as a terrorist organization

- **All Armed Opposition factions/ the Syrian National Army⁸** : 1318 females, distributed to 880 adult females and 438 female children.
- **Kurdish-led Syrian Democratic Forces (the Democratic Union Party):** 260 females, distributed to 163 adult females and 99 female children
- **US-led coalition:** 961 females, distributed to 658 adult females and 303 female children.
- **Other parties:** 1,426 females, distributed to 920 adult females and 506 female children.

The chart shows that the Syrian regime is responsible for nearly 77% of extrajudicial killings, compared to the rest of the parties to the conflict. This indicates the deliberate and systemic targeting of females by the Syrian regime.

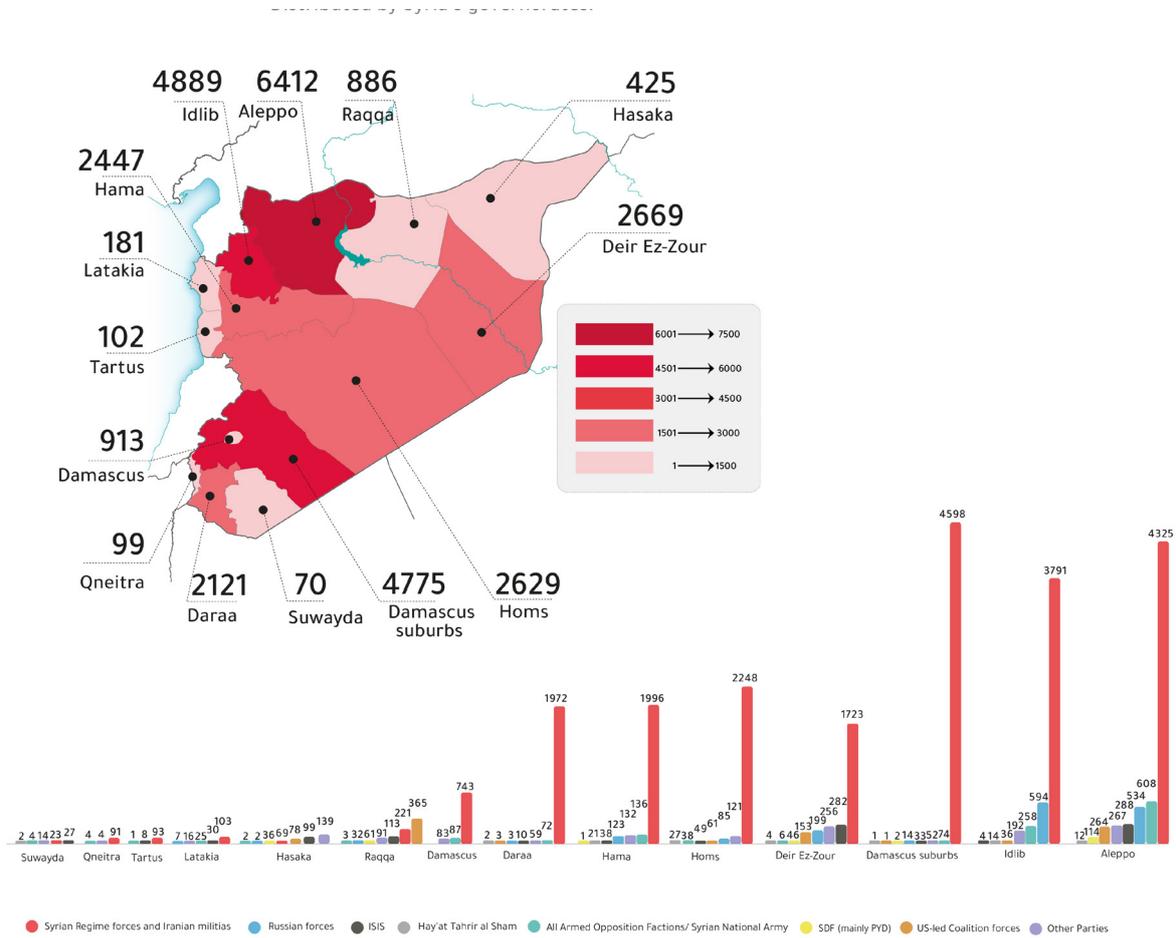
The death toll of females at the hands of the parties to the conflict and the controlling forces in Syria, distributed by years as follows:



Analyzing the above graphs shows that 2013 was the worst year in terms of targeting females with killings, and the Syrian regime forces were responsible for 93% of the killings, followed by 2012, 2014 and 2015, and the Syrian regime was also responsible for more than half of the killings that we recorded against females all these years.

⁸ All armed opposition factions: all the factions that have emerged since 2011 in various neighborhoods and regions in Syria, many of them no longer exist, and many of them did not follow a central command. At the end of 2017, the National Army was established and the remaining armed opposition factions gathered under it.

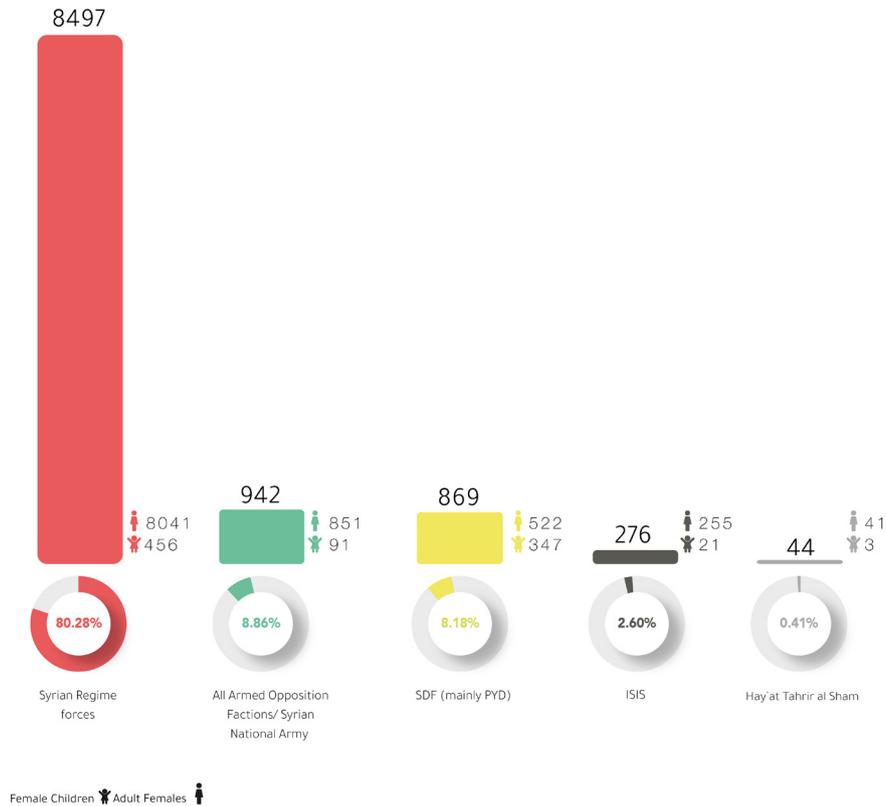
The death toll of females at the hands of the parties to the conflict and the controlling forces in Syria, distributed across Syria's governorates as follows:



The previous map shows that the highest number of victims was in the Aleppo Governorate, followed by Idlib, then Damascus Suburbs.

Arbitrary arrest and enforced disappearance

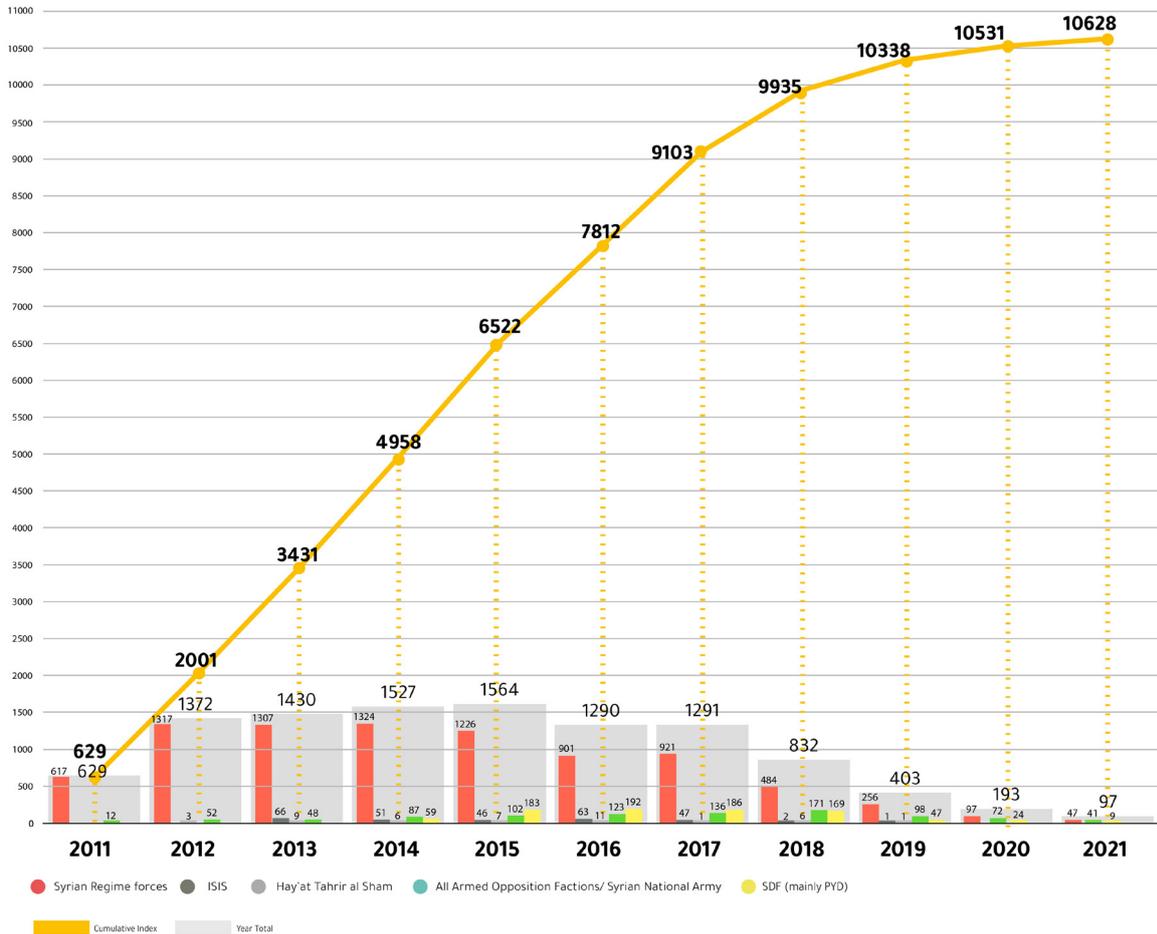
SNHR has documented that, as of November 25, 2021, at least 10,628 of the females arrested/ detained or forcibly disappeared at the hands of the parties to the conflict and the controlling forces in Syria since March 2011 are still arrested/ detained or forcibly disappeared, distributed as follows:



- **Syrian Regime forces:** 8,497 females, distributed to 8,041 adult females and 456 female children.
- **ISIS:** 276 females, distributed to 255 adult females and 21 female children.
- **Hay'at Tahrir al Sham:** 44 females, distributed to 3 adult females and three female children.
- **The Armed Opposition/ the Syrian National Army:** 942 females, distributed to 851 adult females and 91 female children.
- **Syrian Democratic Forces:** 869 females, distributed to 522 adult females and 347 female children.

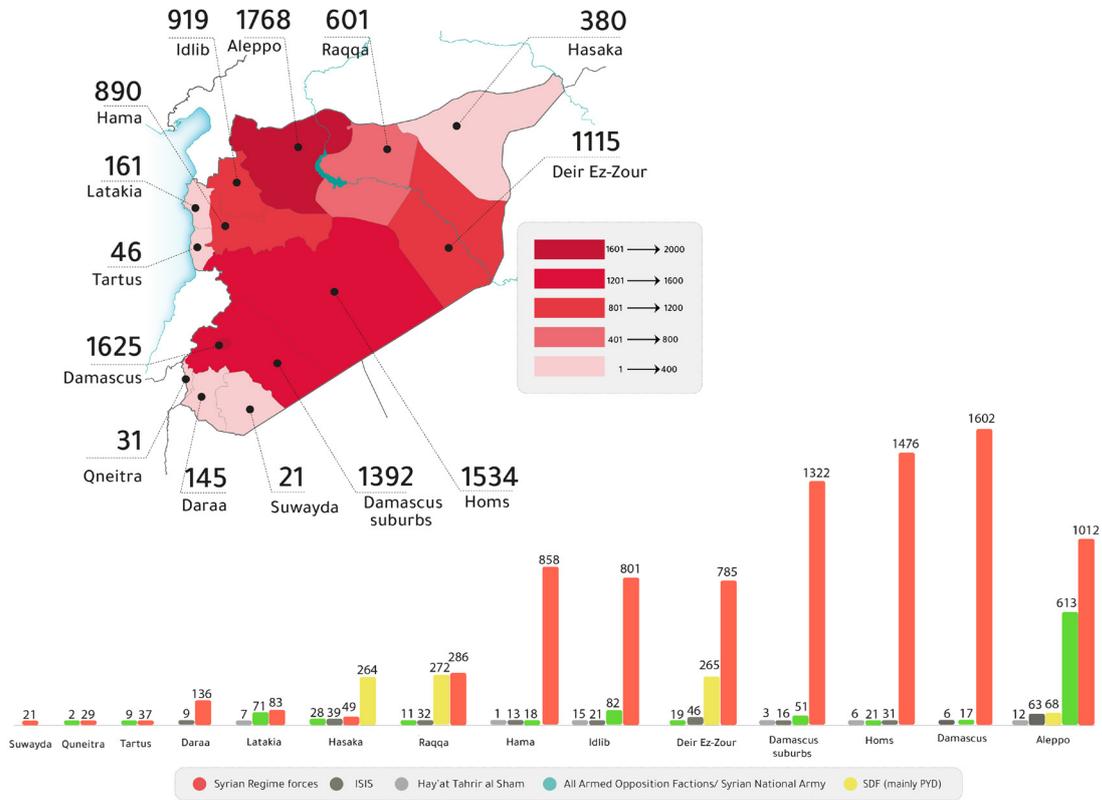
The chart for detained or forcibly disappeared females shows that the Syrian regime is responsible for about 80% of the cases of arrest and enforced disappearance compared to the rest of the conflict parties. This indicates the Syrian regime's deliberate pursuit, arrest and disappearance of females with multiple motives, in a planned and deliberate manner.

The toll of detained/ forcibly disappeared females at the hands of the parties to the conflict and the controlling forces in Syria, distributed by years as follows:



Analyses of the above graphs shows that 2015 was the worst year in terms of targeting females with arrests, and about 78% of the arrests recorded were at the hands of the Syrian regime forces, followed by 2014, 2013 and 2012, and the Syrian regime was also responsible for more than half of the arrests that we recorded against children during these years.

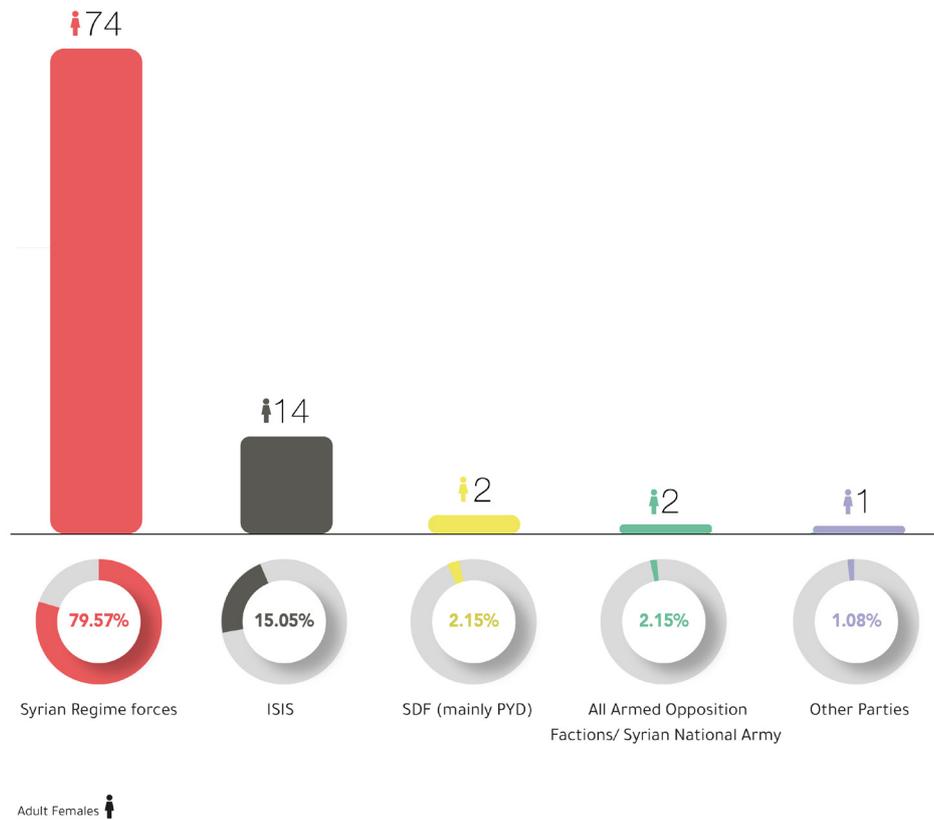
The toll of detained/ forcibly disappeared females at the hands of the parties to the conflict and the controlling forces in Syria, distributed across Syria's governorates as follows:



The map shows that the highest number of detained/ forcibly disappeared females was in Aleppo, then Damascus, followed by Damascus Suburbs.

Victims who died due to torture

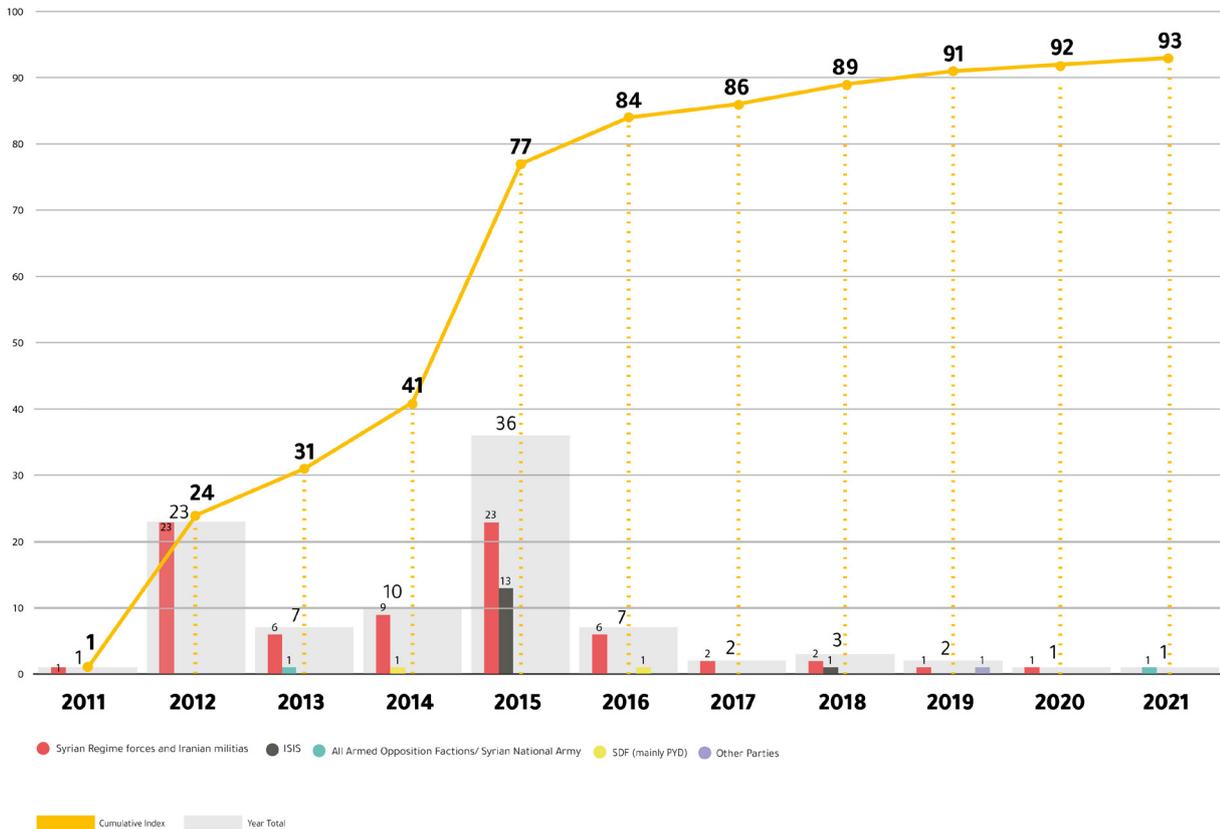
SNHR documented the deaths of at least 93 adult females due to torture at the hands of the parties to the conflict and the controlling forces in Syria between March 2011 and November 25, 2021, distributed as follows:



- **Syrian Regime forces:** 174.
- **ISIS:** 14.
- **Syrian Democratic Forces:** Two.
- **The Armed Opposition/ the Syrian National Army:** Two.
- **Other parties:** One.

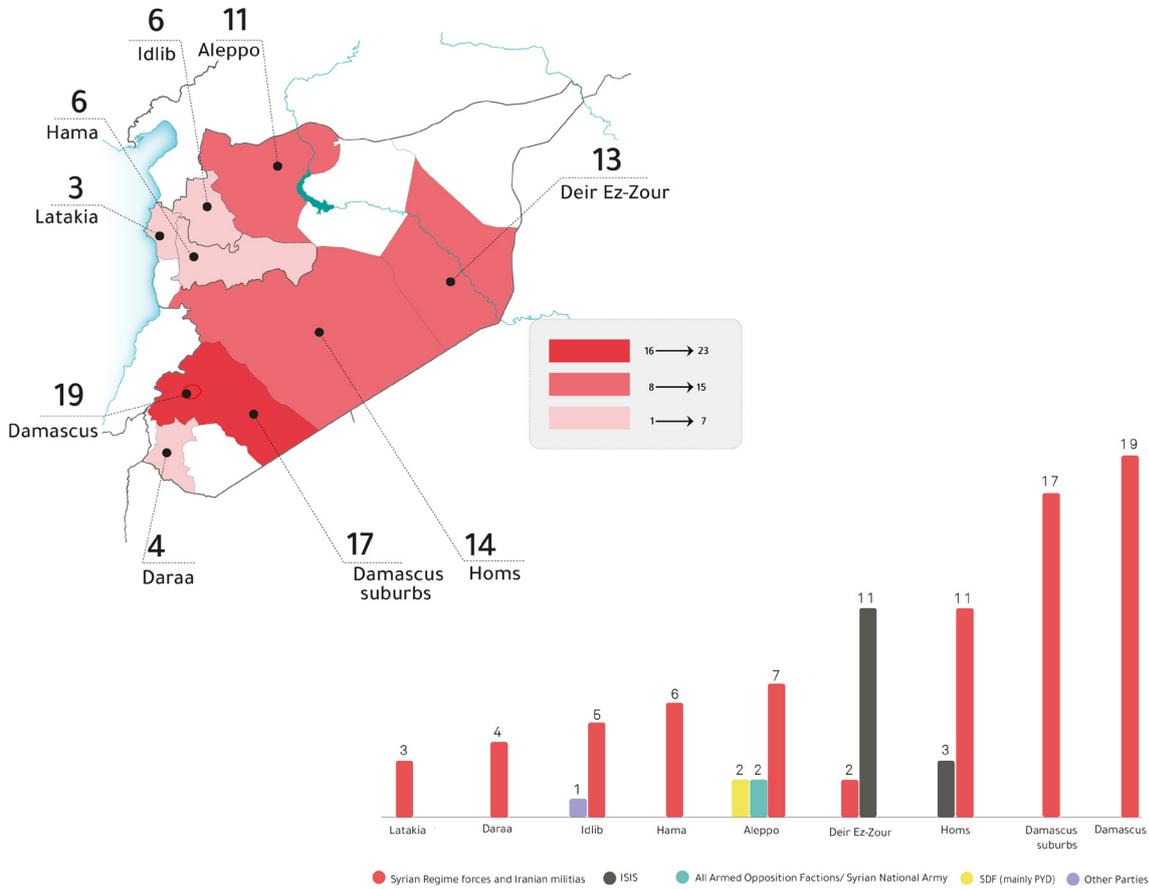
The chart for toll of females who died due to torture shows that the Syrian regime is responsible for about 80% of the cases.

The toll of females who died due to torture at the hands of the parties to the conflict and the controlling forces in Syria, distributed by year as follows:



The analyses of the above graph, shows that 2015 was the worst year in terms of the number of victims of females due to torture, and all the cases recorded were at the hands of the Syrian regime forces (23%) and ISIS, followed by 2012 and 2014, and the Syrian regime was also solely responsible for all females deaths due to torture during these years, except one.

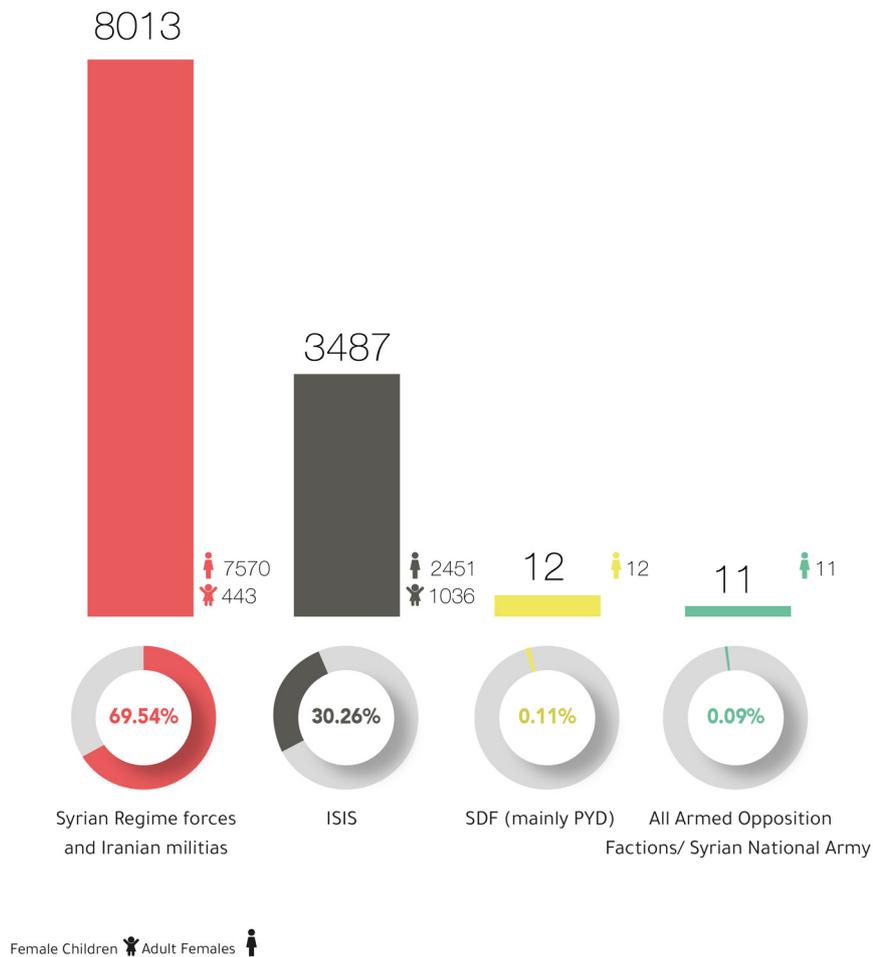
The toll of females who died due to torture at the hands of the parties to the conflict and the controlling forces in Syria, distributed across Syria's governorates as follows:



The previous map shows that the highest number of females victims of death due to torture was in Damascus, followed by Damascus Suburbs, then Homs, and Deir Ez-Zour.

Victims who died due to torture:

The SNHR has documented 11,523 sexual violence against females, including females under 18, distributed by parties to the conflict and controlling forces, from March 2011 to November 25, 2021, distributed by the perpetrator parties, as follows:



- **Syrian Regime forces:** 8,013 distributed to: 7,570 adult females, and 443 female children.
- **ISIS:** 3,487 distributed to: 2,451 adult females, and 1,036 female children.
- **The Armed Opposition/ the Syrian National Army:** 11.
- **Syrian Democratic Forces:** 12.

The chart shows that the Syrian regime is responsible for 70 % of the recorded sexual violence incidents, followed by ISIS. These parties have used the sexual violence as a strategic weapon, and a tool for torture and retaliation against the Syrian community.

III. Most Notable Violations against Females by the Main Parties to the Conflict:

1- Syrian regime forces (army, security, local militias, foreign Shiite militias):

A: Extrajudicial killing:

Many women have fallen victims to the killings practiced by the Syrian regime forces in various forms, during clashes in cities and populated areas, as well as a result of indiscriminate shooting at demonstrations in the streets, carrying out attacks to spread terror and force the society to retreat from its opposition.

Women were also killed during raids and pursuits of activists and dissidents. The targeting of women expanded along with the war operations as the brutality and violence curve risen during the attacks on the areas that were not under the control of the Syrian regime forces, and these areas were targeted with various indiscriminate and targeted bombardment methods from air and land and with various types of weapons, such as; missiles, shells, cluster bombs, toxic gases, and explosive barrels. The Syrian regime deliberately targeted overcrowded places of civilians, such as; markets, streets, gatherings, neighborhoods, residential buildings, IDPs camps. These operations led to massacres and female victims were killed in their homes, while they were working, receiving health care or humanitarian services. In many cases, the women that were killed were mothers with their children, or pregnant under the rubble of their homes after being bombed.

Females were also killed on a discriminatory and gender basis in brutal ways through burning, slaughtering and the use of cold weapons in many massacres that carried a sectarian and retaliatory nature. These massacres were concentrated in Homs governorate, Baniyas city, Jdaidet al-Fadl and al Qalamoun in Damascus Suburbs, the northern suburbs of Hama governorate, and the suburbs of Aleppo governorate. Often, after committing massacres, the regime forces burned bodies in basements and homes.

Females suffered from the repercussions of full and partial sieges, most of which lasted for several years, which the Syrian regime forces imposed on many cities, towns and neighborhoods to subjugate them. Females were burdened by the deprivation of medical care and access to health supplies.

Syrian regime forces intentionally bombed vital facilities, such as; hospitals, food ware houses, and sanitation facilities, and prevented civilians from leaving for treatment or allowing them to obtain it. All of this made females suffer doubly from diseases and malnutrition, and as a result we have recorded many deaths of females, and many women lost their unborn babies, or were subjected to early abortion as a consequence of the siege.

From March 2011 to November 25, 2021, the SNHR documented the deaths of at least 21,996 children at the hands of Syrian regime forces, with 11,949 of these being adult females and 10,047 female children; all of these cases are registered on the SNHR's database, the Syrian regime is responsible for 78% of the total of females' death toll. The number of female victims who were killed by its forces reached about 10 % of the total toll of civilian casualties, which is a high percentage and shows the deliberate targeting of females by the Syrian regime since the beginning of the popular movement towards democracy in March 2011.

During their military and combat attacks, the Syrian regime forces did not distinguish between civilian and military targets, but rather deliberately inflicted casualties on civilians to spread fear and push the population to forced displacement or surrender and submission, and to retaliate against the popular and political movement demanding change.

This strategy of widespread killing led to weakening Syrian families and tearing them apart, mainly when they lose the females due to the role and care that the female contributed. These operations also left tens of thousands of injuries, severe burns, disabilities, deformities, orphans, repeated displacement and instability, and their painful impact lives on to this day.

On the evening of Tuesday, September 7, [Joud Yaser Sharrit](#) was killed by Syrian regime artillery forces who fired several shells at al Dabeit neighborhood in the west of Idlib city. Joud, aged 21, who held an MA degree in Psychology, was the head of al Seraj al Munir Kindergarten for Memorizing the Holy Quran. The area was controlled by Armed Opposition factions at the time of the incident.

B: Arrests, Enforced Disappearance, and Torture:

Females were subjected to arrests/detentions by the Syrian regime forces, in particular the four main security services⁹, and they were targeted to retaliate against the Syrian society and subjugate it, and force it to stop its opposition activities, by intimidating it of the consequences of its continuation, given that the arrest/detention of females affects the dignity of families and breaks them. Females were arrested/detained through raids on their residences, or at work, or while passing through checkpoints and border crossings and moving between areas under the control of the Syrian regime forces and other parties, or by luring them to security ambushes and to arrest them.

The Syrian regime forces did not distinguish in the arrests/detentions between females and males. In many arrest cases, we have observed that females are targeted on a discriminatory basis only because of their gender. Females have been deliberately targeted for multiple reasons and motives; because of their various political, humanitarian activism and their effective contribution to the demand for democratic change; because of their relationship ties with activists and members of the armed opposition factions; their regional background and affiliation to the protest areas. And other reasons such as; contacting their relatives or acquaintances in areas outside the control of the Syrian regime forces, receiving money transfers, or expressing their opinions, and criticizing the living conditions and corruption in the social media. Females were also subjected to arrest/detention as they were taken as hostages to use in the negotiation, exchange of prisoners, as well as pressuring wanted individuals from their families to surrender themselves or extorting them financially in exchange for their release. We also noticed targeting women without reasons and randomly during raids in conjunction with the reconciliation agreements and settlements in the areas that the forces of the Syrian regime stormed to intimidate the community and force it to submit and accept the terms of the agreements imposed by its security committees.

⁹ The four security branches: the air-force intelligence, military intelligence, central command, political security branch.

In many cases, we have recorded the arrest of women with their children or with other women from their family, especially elderly or pregnant women, which increases the suffering of women during detention and exposes them to extra vulnerability when deprived of the medical and health care they need, as well as the needs of their children. Their children suffer from the same conditions throughout the period of their detention. From March 2011 to November 25, 2021, we have recorded no less than 152 incidents of arrest of children who were accompanied by their mothers, and no less than 89 incidents of childbirth inside detention centers, all of whom suffered from a shortage of the necessary health care after birth and the lack of food and medicine and psychological and health requirements, which resulted in the death of 7 newborns.

When detaining females in the detention centers of the security branches, the Syrian regime forces do not take into account their natural need and subject them to the same conditions of detention as the men. The women are placed in cells adjacent to the cells in which the males are held, they use the same bathrooms, and are searched and taken for interrogation by male security members as there are no female members to supervise them within the security branches, and they are also subjected to all forms and methods of torture similar to the men.

We had previously issued [an extensive study](#) on the most prominent methods of physical and psychological torture used in the detention centers of the Syrian regime.

According to the Syrian Human Rights, 74 women (adult females) died due to torture in the detention centers of the Syrian regime from March 2011 until November 25, 2021.

Women who were arrested for political reasons, or for their opinions are often held in the same cells designated for women with criminal charges such as: theft, murder, drugs or others in civilian prisons. This increases their suffering, and female detainees are subjected to trials in courts that lack the lowest levels of fair litigation, such as the [Counter Terrorism Court](#), Military Courts, and Military Field Courts, and that's only after they are transferred to a civilian prison.

We have recorded many cases in which women have been transferred from their detention centers in civilian prisons to unknown destinations, and we believe that secret death sentences have been issued against them by the Military Field Court. As for female detainees in security branches and unofficial detention centers, they are not subject to any trial and are not charged with specific charges.

The Syrian Network for Human Rights team has documented that at least 8,497 of females (8,041 adult females and 456 female children) arrested by Syrian regime forces since March 2011 are still arbitrarily detained or subjected to enforced disappearance as of November 2021. During their stay in the detention centers of the security branches, female detainees are denied seeing their families, contacting them or appointing a lawyer, and their presence in these centers often extends for long months or years, and the Syrian authorities deny their detention when asked about them, and often the detention amounts to enforced disappearance.

A woman, identified as Fatimah Ibrahim al Tawwal, and a female child, Yasmin Hadi Ahmad al Abdullah, both from Deir Ez-Zour city, born in 1975 and 1996 respectively, were arrested on Tuesday 6, 2012, by Syrian regime Security Military forces in the Military Police Street in Deir Ez-Zour city and taken to a detention center in Damascus city



Fatimah Ibrahim al Tawwal



Yasmin Hadi Ahmad al Abdullah

The SNHR spoke with Mrs. Youusra al Tawwal¹⁰, Fatima's sister and the mother of Yasmin al Abdullah, who told us: **"Members of the Security Military branch arrested my daughter Yasmin and my married sister Fatimah while they were together in the Military Police Street in Deir Ez-Zour city without any reason - they are housewives and have no activities outside the home. We are unable to obtain any information about them or the reason behind their arrests."**

We also learnt from Yusra that her brother Ahmad had also been arrested around one month before Yasmin's and Fatimah's arrest by Military Security branch personnel in a raid on his home in alJbeila neighborhood in Deir Ez-Zour city without any reason.

Mrs. Samar Awad Hussein, born in 1976, a Palestinian-Syrian woman who lived in Daraa city where she worked at the Institute of Technical Supervision, was arrested along with her husband, Samir Fawzi Ata, by Syrian regime forces on Monday, October 14, 2013, in the city's al Khatt neighborhood near the tuberculosis control dispensary located opposite the Martyr Muhammad Jabr al Falouji High School, and taken to an undisclosed location.

The SNHR spoke with Samar's brother, Basem Awad Hussein¹¹. He told us:

"On October 14, 2013, army personnel affiliated with Syrian regime forces carried out a military operation to demolish a tunnel between Shamal al Khatt neighborhood controlled by the Syrian regime forces and the camp neighborhood controlled by Armed Opposition factions. When they finished the operation the army members stole the content of the houses in the neighborhood and 'furnitured'¹² them. By coincidence, my sister Samar and her husband were passing through the neighborhood and saw the army personnel robbing their home, so they only got in the way of the personnel in an attempt to prevent them from robbing the home. So, the soldiers arrested them, along with other families in the neighborhood, taking them all to an undisclosed location"

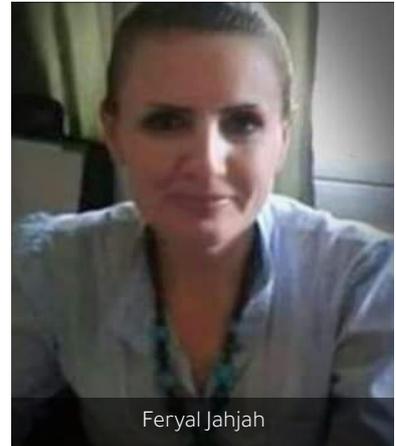
¹⁰ Contacted via phone on February 7, 2021

¹¹ Contacted via phone in June 2020

¹² Furnituring: Syrian Arabic slang for ransacking homes to steal furniture by Syrian regime forces.

Basem also told us that he only learnt of his sister's arrest from her neighbor who told him about what had happened when he was able to enter the neighborhood three days after the siege broke and the military operation ended. He added that, up to the time of our interview with him, the fate of his sister and her husband remains unknown.

Feryal Jahjah from Tartus city, an inspector with the rank of judge in the state-run General Authority for Control and Inspection, was arrested by personnel from the regime Criminal Security Branch's Cybercrime Department in the city on Thursday, January 14, 2021, after being summoned for investigation over accusations that she had criticized corruption and poor living conditions via her Facebook account. She was then taken to Adra Central prison in Damascus suburbs governorate, where she was charged with 'weakening the nation's psyche'. She was subsequently released on May 2021 by decree no. 13 of 2021



Feryal Jahjah

Halah al Jarf, a media worker for the Syrian regime's Public Authority for Radio and Television, who's originally from Salamiya city in eastern Hama governorate and now lives in Damascus city, was arrested by Syrian regime forces on Saturday, 23, 2021, while she was passing through one of the regime's checkpoints in Damascus city in connection with her criticism of the living conditions endured by the Syrian public in areas under the Syrian regime's control on her Facebook account. She was first taken to the Criminal Security Branch in Damascus city, then transferred to Adra Central Prison in Damascus suburbs governorate. Halah was charged with a generalized accusation of "weakening the nation's psyche" and a series of other charges related to the regime's cybercrime law. She was released on May 2021 under Decree No. 13 of 2021



Halah al Jarf

Farah Khazem, aged 20, a university student of pharmacy, from Jabla city in the suburbs of Latakia governorate, was arrested by Syrian regime forces as she was passing through one of the regime's checkpoints in Damascus city in connection with her criticism of widespread corruption and poor living conditions on her Facebook account and taken to a regime detention center. She was released on May 2021 under Decree No. 13 of 2021



Farah Khazem

In March 2021, Syrian regime forces arrested a woman in Tartus city in connection with a video clip found in her possession showing a survey on living conditions in the city, which was broadcast on March 4, 2021, by Syria TV. The woman was taken to the Criminal Security Branch in Tartus city. On March 16, 2021, the Syrian Interior Ministry published a statement on its Facebook account clarifying the reason behind the woman's arrest

[Link to visual report](#) broadcasted on Syria TV

Link to visual report broadcasted on Syria TV



Photo of the statement issued by the Syrian Interior Ministry



On Friday, March 19, 2021, Syrian regime Military Security personnel arrested a woman and her brother in Harasta city in Eastern Ghouta in the eastern Damascus suburbs governorate in a raid on their home in the city in connection with a phone call with one of the woman's relatives living in areas controlled by Armed Opposition factions. The woman was released the next day while her brother is still detained.

Batoul Abdullah Abu Touq, born in 1980, who is originally from Latakia city and has been living in Jamraya village in Damascus suburbs governorate, was arrested by Syrian regime forces on Tuesday 30, 2021, over accusations of leaking information to foreign parties. Batoul was arrested along with seven members of her family, with all being taken to the 'Palestine Branch' in Damascus city. On April 12, 2021, we documented the release of all the family members except Batoul, whose fate remains unknown as of the present date.

We talked with Batoul's father, Abdullah¹³, who told us:

'Personnel from the Palestine Branch raided our home and arrested all the family members and there are seven of us - me, my wife, my two daughters and my son, his wife and my grandson. They took us to the branch and carried out an investigation with us for two weeks during which we subjected to torture, beating and insults, and they accused us of transferring information about the research center in Jamraya to one of our relative outside the country. Then, they released us all except Batoul who we know nothing about till now'

Abdullah added that his interrogator told him to forget about his daughter and to thank him [the interrogator] for releasing the family members rather than incarcerating them alongside her.

¹³ Contacted via phone on July 18, 2021

Mrs. Rawan Isam Restum, who currently lives in al Mzayreeb town in the western suburbs of Daraa governorate, was arrested by personnel from the Syrian regime-affiliated Air Security Force personnel on Sunday, April 4, 2021, as she was passing through a regime checkpoint in Maket al Hatab in north of Daraa governorate and taken to a regime detention center in Damascus city. On April 5, 2021, we documented that Syrian regime forces released Mrs. Restum following protests by families in the town against her arrest.

On Sunday, April 25, 2021, Syrian regime forces carried out raids in al Amara village and Taqsis town in the southern suburbs of Hama governorate. SNHR documented those six women and five children were arrested. We documented their release on April 30, 2021.

On Wednesday, August 18, 2021, Syrian regime forces arrested a woman and her daughter, originally from Homs city, over accusations of their involvement in exchanging foreign currency (US dollars) and took them to an undisclosed location.

On Saturday, October 9, 2021, Syrian regime forces arrested four woman and one child, originally from Hama city, while they were passing through a regime checkpoint in Kweires town in the eastern suburbs of Aleppo governorate on their way from Hama city to the suburbs of Aleppo governorate which is under the control of Armed Opposition factions. We documented their release on October 17, 2021.

The SNHR spoke with Nada¹⁴, one of the women released, who told us:

“We contacted a person who worked in transferring passengers from areas controlled by the Syrian regime to areas controlled by Armed Opposition factions so we could travel to see our husbands living in these areas as they are pursued by the Syrian regime for reserve duty in the army. We set out from Hama city to the areas of Aleppo suburbs using a number of buses. When we came near Kweires town in Aleppo suburbs, personnel at a Syrian regime forces checkpoint blocked our way and arrested us after they checked our identification papers and confiscated our phones. Then, we were taken to the Security Military Branch in Aleppo city. After three days, we were released after being investigated about the reason for heading to Opposition-controlled areas”

Nada added that the women were forced to sign a pledge not to approach those areas in the future, being warned that if they approach them again, they will be arrested and referred to the judicial courts for trial.

C: Sexual Violence:

The Syrian regime has used sexual violence against women as an effective tool of torture in order to extract confessions for actions the detainee did not commit, or to obtain information from her, or as a form of punishment, and to spread fear and humiliation among the female detainees, and in many of the cases that we have recorded, sexual violence was practiced based on a sectarian background or as a retaliation according to the role the detainee played in the popular movement for democracy, whether this role was political, medical, relief, humanitarian or other civil society activities.

¹⁴ Contacted via phone in October 2021

In previous years, we had recorded the widespread and deliberate practice of sexual violence by the Syrian regime forces during raids on homes, as it allowed its members to practice it without restriction or punishment and with the implied approval of the commanding officers, to spread panic in the Syrian society and terrorize it. Females are often more vulnerable to sexual violence during interrogation and questioning to break their will and weaken them. Female detainees are exposed to sexual violence, including touching their chest area and thighs during transfers between security detention centers, especially when the distances are long. No special transport vehicles are assigned to females, but rather they are transferred among the male members. In many cases, we have recorded sexual extortion in exchange for basic services such as food, water and others.

Sexual violence has been practiced in many forms, the most prominent of which are:

- **Forced nudity:** forcing the detainee to take off her clothes and strip or watch her in the bathrooms, and when using the toilets.
- **Physical harassment:** touching the detainee's body, which often occurs during a search or interrogation.
- **Beating and directing torture at the genitals:** beating the female genitals or electrocuting them during torture. This method often causes grave bodily harm to the detainee.
- **Rape and threats of rape:** often practiced during interrogation and as a form of torture and revenge. Many female detainees were also threatened with rape, especially when trying to force them to confess to the charges against them.
- **Verbal psychological sexual violence:** The forms that we have recorded in this pattern varied, and it is often done by forcing the detainee to talk about her sexual life or her partner, and insults of sexual nature are directed to her and pressured to respond to talking about sex with the interrogator/the members and other forms of verbal sexual threats.
- **Extortion and sexual exploitation:** We have recorded in many cases that females are subjected to sexual blackmail for bartering, i.e.; extorting a female in exchange for basic services such as food and water.
- **Charges of prostitution/prostitution against female detainees:** Syrian regime forces forced at least 11 female detainees, including girls under the age of 18, to appear on official TV channels to confess that they had sex with armed opposition factions, all of whom turned were forcibly disappeared after their appearance, and many of the detainees told us about accusing them of prostitution among the charges they faced in the courts in order to stigmatize the detainee, destroy her in her community, and expose her to the risks of killing "Crimes of Honor".

The Syrian Network for Human Rights has documented that Syrian regime forces committed at least 8,013 incidents of sexual violence, including approximately 879 incidents that occurred inside detention centers, and at least 443 cases of sexual violence against girls under the age of 18.

By following this tactic of sexual violence in a planned, deliberate and widespread manner, the Syrian regime aims to drive the population to displacement from their areas, breaking their will to continue their demands for freedom and democracy, and thus force them to surrender, in a form of retaliation, that's aimed to destroy the fabric of the community.

Sexual violence has resulted in devastating and long-term physical and psychological repercussions for the victims. Victims often suffer from despair, isolation, depression and recall the memory of what they experienced. The effects are exacerbated and prolonged in light of the victim's feeling of anxiety and insecurity, in addition to the stigma and ostracism they experience from their social environment. Therefore, women in general prefer not to disclose what they have experienced with regards to sexual violence and to keep it secret.

2. Russian forces:

A. Extrajudicial killing:

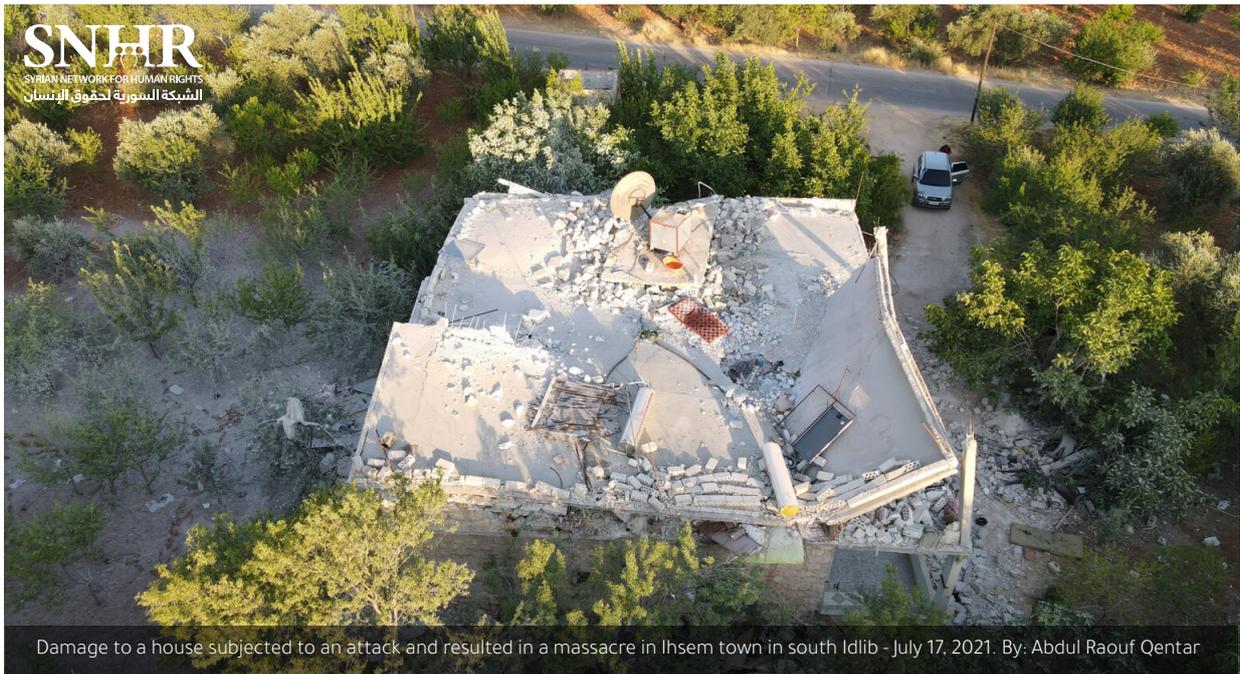
Since the first day of its military intervention in Syria on September 30, 2015, the Russian forces have carried out bombing operations using a variety of weapons that are more lethal and more advanced than those used by the Syrian regime forces. It targeted residential areas, markets, schools, camps, and vital facilities, and followed the same military strategy that the Syrian regime followed by using military force in a large and indiscriminate manner to displace civilians and re-subjugate the areas that are out of its control. Russia used the Syrian lands and people as an arena to test, develop and promote its weapons. The Russian regime has [announced](#) that Russian weapons were tested in Syria, including warplanes, helicopters, robots and various missiles. The Russian bombing of various types of weapons caused the killing of 1,593 females (974 adult females and 619 female children) since its military intervention until November 20, 2021 according to the SNHR database.

We have recorded many incidents of a double-strike¹⁵, and issued many reports that documented the massacres and violations caused by the Russian bombing, the last of which was on [the sixth anniversary of the Russian intervention in Syria](#).

On Saturday, July 17, 2021, at around 22:50 local time, a two-storey house located in the northern outskirts of Ihsem town in Jabal al Zaweya in the southern suburbs of Idlib governorate was targeted with a shell whose source SNHR hasn't yet identified, with the primary parties suspected of responsibility for the attack being Syrian regime forces and Russian forces, since the shelling emanated from an area controlled by them. The investigation process is still underway to specifically identify the party responsible for the bombing.

[The bombing](#) killed [nine civilians](#) from the [same family](#) (five female children and four women) with one of the victims being a nurse, Mariam Barakat, while seven other civilians were injured, most of whom were children and women. In addition to the deaths and injuries, the house was severely damaged. Ihsem city was under the joint control of Armed Opposition factions and Hay'at Tahrir al Sham at the time of the incident,

¹⁵ Targeting the same place in successive and accelerating air attacks, causing massacres and high death toll due to targeting paramedics and civilians gathered at the site of the attack, in addition to destroying and wiping entire buildings and neighborhoods.



Saturday, July 17, 2021, Russian artillery forces stationed in Syrian regime- controlled areas, accompanied by a Russian surveillance plane overhead, fired a shell, equipped with the Krasnopol laser guidance system targeting a house in southeast Sarja village in Jabal al Zaweya in the southern suburbs of Idlib governorate, killing three female children immediately and injuring other family members. As the Civil Defense team and other families gathered to aid the injured and recover the victims' bodies, the same forces attacked the same site again, killing three more civilians, including an elderly woman and Hammam al Asi, a media worker who worked for the Civil Defense's Bazabour Center, and injuring two SCD personnel, in addition to severely damaging what remained of the house and the area around it. [The toll of victims killed](#) in the [attack is seven](#) civilians, including four juvenile female siblings and an elderly woman. Sarja village was under the joint control of Armed Opposition factions and Hay'at Tahrir al Sham at the time of incident.

SNHR contacted Kamel Zreiq¹⁶, the leader of the Syrian Civil Defense in Bazabour village in Jabal al Zaweya. He provided us with details of the incident:

“As we reached the site, I was informed that four female children were inside the house while the rest of the family members were in the field. We recovered the bodies of three of them and they were taken away, while one female child remained under the rubble and while we were working [to rescue her], the grandmother of the girls and their father and some other civilians reached the site. A surveillance plane didn't leave the sky during our work, but we continued working till we were informed via our walkie-talkies of the necessity of leaving the location for fear of shelling. Immediately, I heard the sound of artillery firing, which I believed came from the Khan al Sebel area, so we immediately went to a nearby olive field to shelter, but the shell that fell near the first site killed the grandmother, whom we transferred by ambulance.”

¹⁶ Contacted via WhatsApp on July 28, 2021

4. Kurdish-led Syrian Democratic Forces (the Democratic Union Party):

A. Extrajudicial killing:

Since its establishment - since the establishment of the Autonomous Administration forces of the Kurdish Democratic Union Party - in January 2014, the Syrian Democratic Forces have carried out indiscriminate bombings on areas outside their control, and they have engaged in clashes in residential areas, and we have often observed the firing of bullets by their patrols randomly from checkpoints, in markets, or during raids, and we also documented victims who were killed by snipers, for which the Syrian Democratic Forces were responsible. All of this resulted in the killing of at least 260 females (163 adult females and 97 female children) who were documented in the SNHR database from January 2014 to November 20, 2021.

Sunday, March 14, 2021, Mrs. Amoun al Mohammed, age 48, died as a result of artillery shelling of the Syrian Democratic Forces as several mortar shells targeted al Hamran village in the eastern suburbs of Aleppo.

B. Arrest, enforced disappearance and torture

The Syrian Democratic Forces targeted females with detention/abduction and enforced disappearance, either with the aim of recruiting them into their forces to be used in combat operations or under the pretext of being relatives of members of the armed opposition factions or ISIS. The SDF carried out extensive detention operations, and detained the females to be taken as hostages to pressure their families to surrender themselves, or release them in exchange for sums of money. Women activists or those who object to and criticize the practices of the Syrian Democratic Forces have been targeted in detention/disappearance operations, either by raiding their homes or on the roads and at their workplaces, or while passing through checkpoints. We recorded many arrests in which females were targeted on the basis of ethnicity, or discrimination on the basis of gender. We recorded many incidents and cases in which the Syrian Democratic Forces detained females while they were traveling towards the areas controlled by the armed opposition factions as they passed through the SDF checkpoints.

According to the database of the Syrian Network for Human Rights, at least 869 females, divided into 522 adult females and 347 female children, are still under arrest or enforced disappearance in the detention centers of the Syrian Democratic Forces since its establishment until November 25, 2021.

Females are held in detention centers of the Syrian Democratic Forces under extremely poor conditions of overcrowding, lack of ventilation, hygiene, and ill-treatment.

They are subjected to various methods of torture such as; severe beatings, nail pulling, hair shaving, and bastinado, and in many cases, they are treated on the basis of ethnicity, and are deprived of health care and food. They are not charged with a specific offense or brought to trial until a long time after their detention, which can last for several months or even years. Torture, neglect of health care and conditions of detention caused the death of 2 women (adult female) in the detention centers of the Syrian Democratic Forces.

In addition to detaining/arresting females in detention centers or taking them to training camps of the Syrian Democratic Forces, al-Hol camp is closer to a detention camp that has so far accommodated tens of thousands of displaced people, including adult females and girls, in inhumane conditions. In its latest report, the UN Independent International Commission of Inquiry held the PYD-led Autonomous Administration responsible for the illegal detention of thousands of people. Through these detentions, the Syrian Democratic Forces violated a large number of principles of international human rights law, including arbitrary deprivation of liberty, freedom of movement, and the right to education and health care.

According to the report of the United Nations Secretary-General on Children and Armed Conflict in Syria issued in April 2021; by June 2020, there were about 65,400 people detained in al-Hol and al-Roj camps in northeastern Syria, 94 percent of whom were women and children.

On Wednesday, January 6, 2021, the intelligence agency affiliated with the Military Council in Manbej city in the eastern suburbs of Aleppo governorate which is affiliated with Syrian Democratic Forces, detained eight members of the Ebou family from their home in Manbej city, including Mahmoud, the father of Nedal Ebou who is wanted by Syrian Democratic Forces, and Nedal's three brothers. The arrested family members were identified as, 66-year-old Mahmoud Nedal Ebou, his sons Ahmad, Muhammad, and Rizan, Nedal's wife, 23-year-old Amirah Mutran, and Nedal's three sons, Mahmoud, Lazkin and Arin Nedal Ebou, aged between three to six years, with all being taken to an undisclosed location. The family members were used as hostages to put pressure on Nidal to surrender.

On Monday, March 1, 2021, Syrian Democratic Forces arrested 55-year-old Mrs Haifaa Houshou, Nedal Ebou's mother, on charges of appearing in a video demanding that the SDF release her son's family and her husband and other sons and reveal their fates. She was subsequently documented as a forcibly disappeared person like the other eight family members.

Nedal Mahmoud Ebou, aged 30, from Ein al Arab city in the eastern suburbs of Aleppo governorate, had been working in the Manbej city council's Finance and Control Department since 2016. After Nedal was assigned to chair an anti-corruption committee in the council's Management Board, he revealed the existence of a number of corruption cases, publishing reports on them in video reports on social media accounts; this led to death threats being made against him by the individuals whose names were mentioned in the videos. On December 20, 2020, Nedal Ebou submitted his resignation, but it was rejected. Meanwhile, the Manbej Military Council, also controlled by the Syrian Democratic Forces, refused to provide him with protection, forcing him to go into hiding and leave the area on January 2, 2021.

Following the arrests of the family members, the SDF released Nedal's mother in May 2021 while his other family members were released from al Maliyah Prison in Manbij city at the end of June 2021.



Mrs. Haifaa Houshou



Amirah Mutran



The video published on the social media sites by Mrs. Haifaa Houshou in which she demanded that SDF release her son's family and her husband and reveal their fates.

The SNHR spoke with Dr. Lazkin Mahmoud Ebou¹⁷, one of the family members who was arrested, and he told us: 'One of our family members, Nedal Ebou, has been working for four years as a civil employee in the Manbij Management Board - Finance and Control Department. According to Nedal Ebou, he was assigned to chair a corruption committee, with many corruption cases being opened as a result, and he mentioned figures involved in these cases by their names in videos that spread on social media sites. According to Nedal, these groups threatened that he would be killed if the committee did not stop its work. On December 20, 2020, Nedal submitted his resignation, which was refused. Meanwhile, the Manbij Military Council refused to provide him with protection, forcing him to disappear and to leave the area on January 2, 2021. When the intelligence agency of Manbij Military Council learnt about Nedal's disappearance, they illegally arrested nine individuals from my family including women and children, and detained them as hostages to put pressure on Nedal to hand himself over. Then, they released them after about six months. They were released in groups - at first his mother was released, then his brothers, then Nedal's wife and his three children.'

¹⁷ Contacted via phone in June 29, 2021

Dr. Mahmoud added, "During the duration of the family's detention, we were unable to contact them or identify where they were detained, and we learnt after their release that they were taken to al Maliya Prison in Manbej city in the suburbs of Aleppo governorate. Throughout the period of their detention, they were not investigated or questioned, and when they were released, they were not brought before a judge or court."

On Sunday February 21, 2021, Mrs. Shu'aa Muhammad al Khalaf, aged 22, from al Arida village which is administratively a part of Ein Eisa city in the northern suburbs of Raqqqa governorate, was arrested along with her father Muhammad by the Syrian Democratic Forces personnel in a raid on their home in the village in connection with a quarrel between an SDF member and her father over his refusal to take his daughter to a military conscription camp. They were taken to an SDF detention center in Ein Eisa.

On Wednesday, March 3, 2021, Syrian Democratic Forces carried out raids in al Jamea al Qadim neighborhood in the middle of Raqqqa city. SNHR documented those two women from the same family were arrested and taken to an undisclosed location.

Mrs. Nuha al Mar'i, from Raqqqa city, aged 25, was arrested by the Syrian Democratic Forces on Sunday April, 4, 2021, in front of the National Hospital in the city and taken to an SDF detention center. SDF subsequently released her on Wednesday April 7, 2021, following large protests in the city by her tribe and family.

C. Conscription:

The Syrian Democratic Forces have used adult females and underage girls as well in forced recruitment on a large scale, as they sought to recruit them, whether voluntarily or forcibly, in all areas of their control, depriving them of education as they were targeted by abductions while they were in schools, streets and neighborhoods, and established training camps, preventing them from communicating with their families and denying them visitation and directly involved them in combat operations. In most cases, families do not declare their daughters kidnapped out of fear for their fate or to make room for local mediators to return them.

The Revolutionary Youth (Joanne Schurchkar¹⁸), the Women's Protection Units and the People's Protection Units are considered among the most prominent parties responsible for the recruitment of children and their inclusion in the training camps and combat units of the Syrian Democratic Forces. We have noticed an increase in cases and incidents of kidnapping of female and male children by these parties at the beginning of 2020. Many parents of children who are recruited have informed us that they have searched and asked about their children at the headquarters of the Syrian Democratic Forces, but they did not get a response or an answer to their inquiries, and a number of them were threatened if they reported that their child had been recruited.

¹⁸ An armed organization that operates in the Syrian Democratic Forces territory, and receives instructions from the Kurdistan Workers' Party (PKK).

Despite the fact that the Kurdish Autonomous Administration signed [a joint action plan with the United Nations](#) in June 2019 to stop the recruitment of children into its forces and release those who were recruited, and the People's Protection Units and Women's Protection Units signing a deed of commitment with Geneva Call in June 2014 to ban the use of children in wars, the recruitment operations did not end, on the contrary, they increased in an unprecedented levels from previous years, and the Syrian Democratic Forces established [the Office of Child Protection from Armed Conflicts](#) on August 30, 2020 to receive complaints about the recruitment of children in their areas of control, but many families of child soldiers haven't received any response or information about the fate of their children. The report of the United Nations Secretary-General on "Children and Armed Conflict" for 2019, issued in June 2020, confirmed that [the Syrian Democratic Forces were the worst parties to the conflict](#) in the recruitment of children.

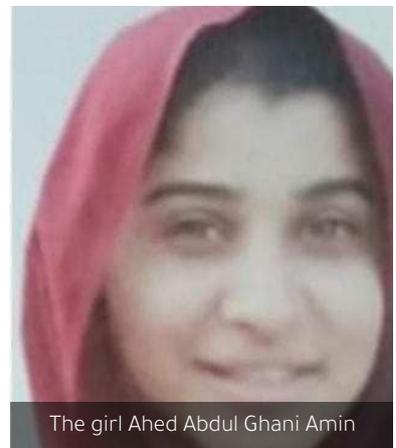
The Syrian Network for Human Rights team has documented at least 136 cases of child recruitment carried out by the Syrian Democratic Forces since its establishment, including 56 cases of recruitment of underage females.

A female child born in 2007, Rama Ali Othman, from Oqeiba town which is administratively a part of Afrin city in the northern suburbs of Aleppo governorate, was abducted for conscription by Syrian Democratic Forces personnel on Thursday, June 10, 2021, and taken to an SDF conscription camp.



The girl Rama Ali Othman

A female child born in 2005, Ahed Abdul Ghani Amin, from Tayy neighborhood in al Qameshli city in the northeastern suburbs of Hasaka governorate, was forcibly conscripted by Syrian Democratic Forces on August 2, 2021, and enrolled in one of their training camps in al Qameshli city.



The girl Ahed Abdul Ghani Amin

A female child born in 2006, Fatimah Idris Na'san, who originally came from Qoujman village which is administratively a part of Afrin city in the northern suburbs of Aleppo governorate and had been living in al Shahbaa area in the northern suburbs of Aleppo governorate, was abducted for conscription by the Syrian Democratic Forces personnel on Friday, August 13, 2021, in al Shahbaa area and taken to an SDF conscription camp.



The girl Fatimah Idris al Na'san

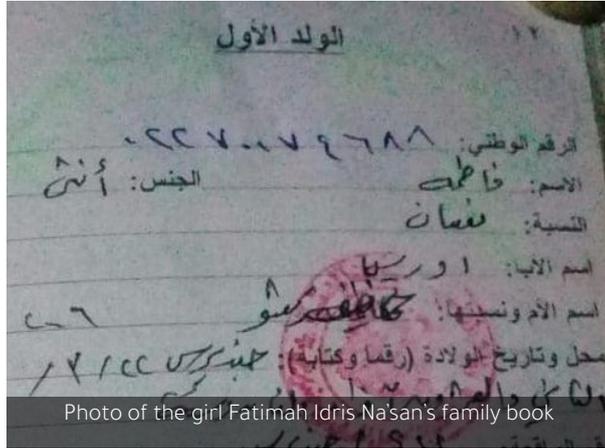
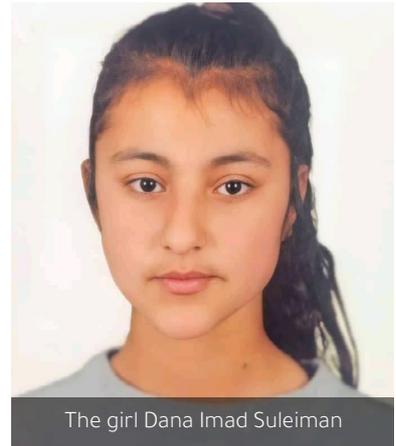


Photo of the girl Fatimah Idris Na'san's family book

A female child born in 2006, Dana Imad Suleiman, from al Qameshli city in the northeastern suburbs of Hasaka governorate, was abducted for conscription by Syrian Democratic Forces personnel on Thursday, August 26, 2021, in al Qameshli city and taken to an SDF conscription camp.



The girl Dana Imad Suleiman

D. Sexual Violence:

The Syrian Democratic Forces have used several types of sexual violence against females, either inside their detention centers or in the camps they guard and manage, most notably harassment during inspections, or verbal sexual harassment such as making statements with sexual connotations, threats of rape, or sexual blackmail. We recorded at least 12 incidents of sexual violence committed by the Syrian Democratic Forces as of November 25, 2021.

E. Restricting and assaulting women:

The Syrian Democratic Forces followed a security strategy with civil society organizations operating in the areas they control, and tried to infiltrate their ranks and learn about their various activities. This extended to many women activists for the purpose of restricting their work or threatening them and harassing them. In many of the incidents that we documented, the Syrian Democratic Forces attacked, beaten, and insulted them during the raids and persecutions.

On Wednesday, March 31, 2021, 50-year-old Mrs. Aishah al Ahmad from Hzaima village in the northern suburbs of Raqqa governorate was severely beaten by Syrian Democratic Forces personnel over an altercation with a member of the SDF while they were inspecting her home in the village, leaving her with fractures and bruises, after which she was transferred to the National Hospital in Raqqa city.

4. Hay'at Tahrir al Sham (a coalition group composed of Fateh al Sham -formerly al Nusra Front- and factions of the Armed Opposition):

A. Extrajudicial killing:

Hay'at Tahrir Al Sham followed a strategy of indiscriminate bombing in many of the military attacks it launched. This resulted in civilian casualties, including children, during the battles they waged with the rest of the parties to the conflict, or during the storming of areas under their control, which, according to the Syrian Network for Human Rights database, caused the killing of at least 83 females (77 adult females and 6 female children) since the establishment of Jabhat al-Nusra (currently Hay'at Tahrir al-Sham) in January 2012 until November 25, 2021.

B. Arrest and enforced disappearance

Hay'at Tahrir al-Sham (HTS) carried out arbitrary detention/abduction of females in its attacks on areas under the control of the Syrian regime, mainly areas of a religious minority; and made them hostages, to use them in the exchange for prisoners or release them in exchange for huge sums of money. It also targeted women activists in the areas under its control in humanitarian organizations and in the media, and charged them in relation to their activities, including employment, in order to pressure them to stop their work or to work within the limits and conditions imposed by the HTS. The HTS also persecuted the women who participated in protests against it or objected to its practices, and we recorded that the HTS targeted women simply because they were relatives of their opponents in the opposition factions, the Syrian Democratic Forces or ISIS.

The Syrian Network for Human Rights team documented at least 44 females (41 adult females and 3 female children) who are still detained or forcibly disappeared by HTS.

Mrs. Aliaa Wahhoud, from Tal'ada town in the northern suburbs of Idlib governorate, was arrested along with her son, Khaled Wahhoud, by members of Hay'at Tahrir al Sham on December 18, 2020, during a raid on her home in connection with protests in the town against Hay'at Tahrir al Sham earlier in 2020. She was released on January 20, 2021, while the fate of her son remains unknown.

Mrs. Wahhoud told us: **"Members [of Hay'at Tahrir al Sham] raided my home at seven in the morning and were looking for my son under the pretext that he was required for interrogation. I prevented them from entering the home and asked them to leave. They brutally took me away from the door and one of them hit me. At that point I shouted, so the neighbors came, and an altercation took place between the neighbors and the patrol personnel, so they arrested me and my son. At first, they took me to al Dana**

police station and then to Harem Prison. I stayed there until they released me. The situation was very bad, and during the investigation at one time they accused me of being affiliated with ISIS and another time they accused me of dealing with the regime. They threatened me with execution and with killing my son if I did not confess. They asked me who's behind the demonstrations that took place against them in the town, and I told them that I did not know anything. Then, one day they asked me to prepare for my release. They left me in Harem city instead of taking me to my village, and they did not give me any fare to return. I reached my home with difficulty by [getting lifts from] several cars heading towards my village". Aliaa added that after her release she was informed that there had been mediation by the town's dignitaries to release those who were arrested over their participation in protests against the HTS. As a result of this mediation, she was released but up till now she has no information on the fate of her son despite her repeated visits to HTS courts and police stations.

C. Restricting and assaulting women:

Syrian women in the areas under the control of Hay'at Tahrir al-Sham suffer from negative discrimination against them in general, and the restriction of freedom of movement and clothing is only one aspect of it, but the violations against them go far beyond that, and their suffering increases exponentially if they are working or wishing to work in public affairs, or in community organizations, whether it was in media, relief, or politics. We have documented that many women who were involved in public affairs were subjected to harassment and intimidation to push them to abandon their work, including:

Sending letters threatening to kill or kidnap them, assaulting them during their work, targeting their workplaces, harassing and threatening their families, dismissal from jobs or local entities in which they have obtained membership. Tarnishing the reputation of women working in civil society organizations, and using social media for this purpose, making trumped-up charges in order to summon them to the courts and detaining them, forcing them to sign a pledge to stop their activities and work and not to disclose what they were exposed to during the interrogation after being summoned.

These violations have resulted in some women being killed, and many women have been forced to either leave their work and stop their activities, or reduce and limit their activities, or escape threats and displacement and travel to other areas.

We also recorded in many incidents that members of HTS beat or humiliated women during their raids, searches and pursuits in many areas under their control.

We have recorded at least 108 incidents in which women were targeted because of their work or opposition to the practices of Hay'at Tahrir al-Sham, from the beginning of 2014 until November 25, 2021. The incidents were distributed according to their type as follows:

Assault, beating, or insulting human dignity: 31

Call for investigation: 24

Threats and intimidation: 22

Suspension from work: 18

Gender discrimination: 13

We have noticed that the incidents of targeting women on the basis of gender discrimination were directed mainly against female media activists during their work in covering the incidents of violations committed by the HTS, as they were distanced from the area of the event.

We believe that many of these violations have occurred against women activists in civil society organizations and others; given its prominent role in opposing the policies of Hay'at Tahrir al-Sham. This was clearly embodied in the women's demonstrations that women have organized since the beginning of 2014 until now, following the massive arrests carried out by the HTS against members of the armed opposition factions.

Tuesday, August 17, 2021, members of a group affiliated with Hay'at Tahrir al Sham beat a woman, damaging her teeth, as she attempted to prevent them from arresting her son. The incident took place during a series of raids carried out by the HTS in Khair al Sham IDPs Camp in the north of Kelli town in the northern suburbs of Idlib governorate. SNHR documented the arrest of three civilians in the raids, who were taken to an undisclosed location. The campaign was accompanied by intensive gunfire and beating of civilians by HTS members.

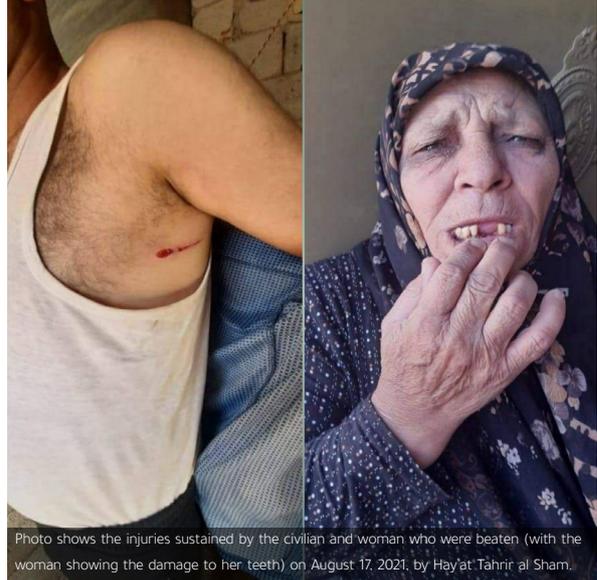


Photo shows the injuries sustained by the civilian and woman who were beaten (with the woman showing the damage to her teeth) on August 17, 2021, by Hay'at Tahrir al Sham.



Statement issued by Sarmada area administration which is affiliated with HTS regarding the incident in Khair al Sham Camp, which includes an apology to the woman



On Saturday, March 16, 2021, members of Hay'at Tahrir al Sham assaulted women as they were participating in a protest in al Sahhara town in the western suburbs of Aleppo governorate, demanding the release of their sons, who had been arrested at a checkpoint in Al Atareb city in the suburbs of Aleppo governorate on Friday March 5, 2021 by HTS for their membership of the Hezb al Tahrir Party.

Videos showing a protest by women in al Sakhara town in the western suburbs of Aleppo governorate and HTS members' assault against the protesters - March 5, 2021



On Tuesday, March 9, 2021, members affiliated with Hay'at Tahrir al Sham's Salvation Government in Idlib city closed the headquarters of the Syrian Humanitarian Institute for National Empowerment (SHINE) which was established in a villa in the city's outskirts, following an event organized by the institute to commemorate International Women's Day 2021 over a comment by the institute's US-based director, Rania Qaisar, on empowering women and women's rights. The Salvation Government summoned the local director of the institute for investigation at the Salvation Government's 'Syria Branch' office in the city, and ordered him to appear before its Attorney General. During the investigation, the employee of the organization was warned to remain silent on the closure decision and told that he would be followed to ensure that all the employees and students were evicted from the institute, after which the HTS confiscated all the keys to the building. Speaking about Rania Qaisar's statement on women's empowerment and rights, Salvation Government officials told the institute director, "This speech is inciting women to commit immorality and violating the law of God".

Statement issued by the executive director of the SHINE institute, Rania Qaisar on the closure of the institute



معهد SHINE للتعليم الإنساني
فرع ادلب سوريا

ديان لغلق قسري

هيئة تحرير الشام توقف عملاً التعليمي و تحت التهديد بعدم التصريح في ادلب

نحن أعضاء مجلس إدارة معهد SHINE للتعليم الإنساني في الولايات المتحدة الأمريكية نعلن قيام حكومة إفريقية تابعة لـ "هيئة تحرير الشام" بتهديد سبعة وأمن طواقم المنظمة في ادلب وإغلاق القسري لمرافقنا التعليمي تحت التهديد بعدم التصريح بتاريخ 9 آذار 2021 لأسباب غير موضوعية ومنهضة عن نكشعات مركزنا في يوم المرأة العالمي. بالإضافة إلى استمرار الاعتداءات والترويع الممنهج التي تقوم بها هيئة تحرير الشام ضد المدافع المدني، كما تواصل حكومة إفريقية لتقييد حريات الرأي والتعبير في المؤسسات التعليمية التي تهدف إلى تمكين المرأة وتقديم خدمات تعليمية جديرة بالاعتماد عليها.

نحن نحن أعضاء مجلس الإدارة إلقاء كلمة خجالتنا في ادلب لشهدا غرب سوريا ونحمل هيئة تحرير الشام وحكومة إفريقية المسؤولية الكاملة عن سلامة وأمن جميع الموظفين المتواجدين في فرع ادلب الذين أجبروا على الاستقالة خوفاً من إيذاء هيئة تحرير الشام أبناء من الترحيل القسري على المنظمة.

هذا وبإشهاد مجلس إدارة منظمة SHINE بالتصريح في تقديم التماسات القانونية في كافة المناطق السورية الأخرى، والتعاون مع كل الجهات السورية والأجنبية والدولية التي تعمل على كسح المدافع السوري معهما نحو المزيد من التمكين والاستقرار. كما نعهد مجلس الإدارة لفتنا في سوريا لعمودا العمل في الشمال العربي السوري في حال تخلفنا بشروطنا الحالية.

- 1- وقف كافة الممارسات والتهديدات لحقوق الإنسان والحقوق المدنية بما في ذلك حرية التعبير العام والتجمع
- 2- توفير بيئة حكم حقيقي وديمقراطي يضمن أمن وسلامة وحقوق جميع المواطنين
- 3- رفع العينة العالمية والبرية التي تلومها هيئة تحرير الشام من علة المؤسسات السورية والمنظمات المدنية المحلية والإقليمية والدولية
- 4- توفير بيئة عمل شفافة تحظر عودة الدعم المالي للمنظمة إياباً.

حفظت منظمة SHINE لهاذها على مدار ست سنوات صمت في بناه القرارات السورية وتمكين قادة المستقبل في عدة مناطق منها حلب، حماد ادلب، دمشق، وجرعا. أصبح الشعب السوري العظيم قادراً على اتخاذ القرارات الديمقراطية واستلم زمام بناه مجتمع حر وعادل ونحن نؤمن بقوة أن تحرير في سوريا أصبح حتماً وبنه التحقق. الشعب السوري في ادلب، 9 جوان 9 روم من يوم خمسة مرة ثانية.

رانيا قيسار – المديرية التنفيذية
والشؤون دي سي، الولايات المتحدة الأمريكية 2021



The Shine Institute is a human rights organization licensed in the United States of America, which has operated in Syria since 2015, providing educational and relief services and community empowerment projects in Idlib suburbs.

5. Factions of the Armed Opposition/ Syrian National Army¹⁹:

A. Extrajudicial killing

Armed opposition factions perpetrated killings through indiscriminate bombardment on areas under the control of other parties to the conflict, and killings of children occurred during clashes between the factions as well. The Syrian Network for Human Rights documented until November 20, 2021 the killing of at least 1318 females (880 adult females and 438 female children) at the hands of the armed opposition factions, since its formation early in 2012 and until November 25, 2021.

B. Arrest, enforced disappearance and torture

All the armed opposition factions / the National Army have established many official detention centers, as well as transformed their military bases into unofficial detention centers far from the judiciary established in their areas of control. Females were targeted with detention/kidnapping, either because of their activities or their objection to the practices in their areas of control. We also recorded many incidents in which women were targeted on an ethnic background, especially in the city of Afrin in the northern suburbs of Aleppo governorate, or under the pretext of working previously or currently with the Syrian Democratic Forces or its affiliated institutions. The armed opposition have also kidnapped women with their children during its attacks on areas under the control of the Syrian regime, and took them as hostages to use them in prisoner exchanges with the Syrian regime. Women and their children were targeted with mass arrests/detentions during their travel and transit from the areas under their control collectively under the pretext of verifying their security backgrounds and detained them in harsh conditions in detention centers. Most of these operations took place without judicial permission and without the participation of the police, which is the administrative body authorized to carry out arrests through the judiciary, and without clear charges being brought.

As of November 25, 2021, the Syrian Network for Human Rights team documented at least 942 females (851 females and 91 female children) who are still under arrest/detention by all armed opposition factions/ the National Army.

During their detention, in the armed opposition/the National Army detention centers, women are subjected to various methods of torture, such as severe beatings, electrocution, death threats, and solitary confinement. They are also deprived of health care, food, and needs, in addition to depriving her of her children if she is detained with them. Torture and neglect of health care resulted in the death of two women in detention centers affiliated with the armed opposition.

¹⁹ All armed opposition factions: all the factions that have emerged since 2011 in various neighborhoods and regions in Syria, many of them no longer exist, and many of them did not follow a central command. At the end of 2017, the National Army was established and the remaining armed opposition factions gathered under it.

An elderly woman Khaledah Ibrahim, from Jandariss town which is administratively a part of Afrin city in the northern suburbs of Aleppo governorate, was abducted, along with her daughter Hanaa Ibrahim and her baby granddaughter, by members of al Sham Brigade affiliated with the Syrian National Army in October 2020 in a raid on their home in al Qadim neighborhood in Al Tal Lane in the town and taken to an undisclosed location.

Khaledah Hannan Hussein, aged 26, a special needs person (deaf-mute) from Yalanaqouza village which is administratively a part of Afrin city in the northern suburbs of Aleppo governorate, was arrested by Syrian National Army personnel on Sunday, January 24, 2021, in a raid on her home in the village. We documented her release on Wednesday, January 27, 2021.



Khaledah Hannan Hussein

On Wednesday, February 3, 2021, the Syrian National Army carried out raids on Ras al Ein city in the northwestern suburbs of Hasaka governorate following the explosion of two IEDs of unknown source in the middle of the city earlier that day. SNHR documented the detention of ten civilians, including three children and five women, over their appearance in surveillance cameras' footage while they were passing the explosion location at the time of the blast. All were taken to an SNA detention center in Ras al Ein city. On the following day Thursday, February 4, the children and women were released.

We spoke with Mr. Abdul Aziz al Khalifah²⁰, a media activist and a friend of a number of the detainees. He told us: **"On February 3, 2021, an explosion took place near the post office roundabout in the middle of Ras al Ein city in the suburbs of Hasaka. The Civil Police referred to recordings from surveillance cameras in the area and arrested all the people who appeared in the recordings at time of the explosion, including children and women. Among the detainees there were three children and five women who were released the next day. All of these detainees were on their way to get identification papers for themselves and their children from the local council."** Abdul Aziz added, **"The area where the explosion took place is in the middle of Ras al Ein city extending from al Jouz roundabout to the post office roundabout. It is impossible for anyone who visits Ras al Ein not to pass through this area. They arrested a large number of people."**

On Sunday, March 14, 2021, the Syrian National Army detained/ arrested seven women as they were passing through a checkpoint in Bubul town which is administratively a part of Afrin city in the northern suburbs of Aleppo governorate while they were trying to cross the Turkish border. We documented their release on March 20, 2021.

²⁰ Contacted via phone on February 12, 2021

On Friday, April 2, 2021, Syrian National Army personnel detained/ arrested 19 civilians, including 15 women, in Rajo town, which is administratively a part of Afrin city in the northern suburbs of Aleppo governorate, as they were trying to illegally cross the Turkish border, and took them to a SNA's detention center in Rajo. We documented their release on April 6, 2021.

Mrs. Muwailidah Nu'man, aged 62, from Bouzikia village which is administratively a part of Afrin city in the northern suburbs of Aleppo governorate, was arrested by members of the SNA's al Hamzeh Brigade in April 2019 in a raid on her home in the village over accusations that she had engaged in dealings with the Syrian Democratic Forces.

Since then, she has been classified as forcibly disappeared, with the SNA forces preventing anyone, even a lawyer, from visiting her or knowing her whereabouts. On Wednesday, May 30, 2021, al Hamzah Brigade informed her family of her death in al Ra'ee Prison in al Ra'ee village in northeast Aleppo governorate, handing over her body to her family. SNHR data from numerous sources confirms that she was in extremely poor health at the time of her arrest as she suffered from chronic diseases, namely high blood pressure and diabetes, for which she needed regular medication, indicating that she probably died due to torture and lack of health care in al Ra'ee Prison.



Muwailidah Nu'man

On Monday, June 21, 2021, Syrian National Army personnel detained/ arrested Mrs. Bayan al Ahmad, who is originally from Homs city, along with her three children and two other civilians at an SNA crossing point near al Bab city in the northern suburbs of Aleppo governorate as they were travelling by bus from areas controlled by the Syrian regime forces towards al Bab city. We documented their release on Thursday, June 24, 2021.

Mrs. Bayan²¹ told us: **"I came with my children to visit my displaced family in al Bab city, and we had paid large sums of money to reach the area that separates the regime from the opposition, about 3 million Syrian pounds. When we arrived, I was surprised by personnel at the checkpoint demanding that we get off [the bus]. They confiscated all of our belongings, even my personal bag. They interrogated me and I told them that I was coming to visit my family and I gave them all information about them [her family], but they took me with all the other passengers to an area with shabby tents. We stayed there for about a whole day in the worst conditions without water or food. The next day, they took us to a prison near the tents and we were in a dormitory holding all those coming from the regime's areas. The officers did not give any consideration to the children who were always crying from the overcrowding, and they did not allow them to go out into the corridor to play, nor did they take into account the sick and the elderly persons, who did not get their medicines. The personnel refused to provide them with any help or to meet any request. As for food, it was given to us randomly, not according to our numbers, and it was hardly enough".** Bayan added that the Military Police released her after two days after conducting a security check, but she did not get back most of the items confiscated from her.

²¹ Contacted via phone on February 12, 2021

On Tuesday, September 28, 2021, Syrian National Army personnel detained two women, from al Mawali tribe, in Izaz city in the northern suburbs of Aleppo governorate and took them to an SNA detention center in the city. We documented their release on October 5, 2021, due to protests by al Mawali tribe in the city.

Two women, Jihan Muhammad Ali Qerrah Hessou and Hifin Ahmad, both Kurdish language teachers originally from Atamana village which is administratively a part of Afrin city in the northern suburbs of Aleppo governorate, were arrested by Syrian National Army personnel on Friday, October 1, 2021, in a raid on their homes in the village. Mrs. Jihan Ali Qerrah Hessou was released on Monday, November 1, 2021, while Hifin's fate remains unknown.

Lawyer Najah Omar Arous, aged 51, from Kwayra village which is administratively a part of Afrin city in the northern suburbs of Aleppo governorate, was arrested by personnel from the Syrian National Army's Military Police on Saturday, October 23, 2021, in Rajo county, which is administratively a part of Afrin city, over her participation in an earlier celebration related to Abdullah Ocalan while the area was controlled by Syrian Democratic Forces and taken to the central prison in Afrin city.



Najah Omar Arous

On Wednesday, October 27, 2021, Syrian National Army personnel detained three civilians, including two women from the same family, in al Ghazawiya village, which is administratively a part of Afrin city in the northern suburbs of Aleppo governorate, over accusations of their involvement in dealing with the Syrian Democratic Forces, and took them to an undisclosed location.

6. Other parties:

In the Syrian Network for Human Rights, we are documenting human rights violations in incidents for which we were unable to determine the responsible party, such as the victims of bombings, mine explosions, unknown sources of fire, unknown killings, kidnappings and enforced disappearances that are committed by unknown parties or parties acting as mobs that do not belong to any party, the victims of drowning in immigration boats, in addition to the victims of fire and indiscriminate shelling of the Turkish forces and their allied forces, and the victims of the Jordanian and Lebanese forces.

A. Extrajudicial killing:

Within this classification, the Syrian Network for Human Rights has documented the killing of 1,426 females (920 adult females and 506 female children), at the hands of other parties, from March 2011 to November 25, 2021.

B. Arrest, enforced disappearance and torture

The Syrian Network for Human Rights has documented at least 3,089 females who are still abducted or forcibly disappeared by other parties from March 2011 to November 25, 2021.

IV. Conclusions and Recommendations:

Legal conclusions

The parties to the conflict in Syria have not treated women in accordance with due regard for their gender as stipulated in international law, with Rule 134 of customary international humanitarian law²² stating that “The specific protection, health and assistance needs of women affected by armed conflict must be respected.” The parties to the conflict, in particular the Syrian regime which has perpetrated the largest number of violations in the conflict, have violated many of the articles pertaining to women, which are included in the Protocol II Additional to the Geneva Conventions of 1977, including:

Violence to life and person, in particular murder of all kinds, mutilation, cruel treatment and torture; outrages upon personal dignity, in particular humiliating and degrading treatment²³, rape, enforced prostitution and any form of indecent assault²⁴.

This report has proven that there are patterns of discrimination against women²⁵ in a number of practices being perpetrated in Syria that constitute violations of the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination Against Women, which stipulated the provisions that states must apply to protect women from the negative effects of discrimination, in addition to violating Security Council Resolution No. 1325²⁶.

The crimes included in the report that the Syrian regime has practiced in the form of widespread and systematic attacks which constitute crimes against humanity include: murder; torture; rape, and persecution.

Forced marriage may amount to a crime against humanity; the ISIS terrorist group practiced this violation in a widespread manner, through which it committed a crime against humanity; it has also been practiced by Hay'at Tahrir al Sham, but we were unable to document widespread use of this practice by the group due to the difficulty of determining this issue, and because of the tight security grip which the group wields over areas it controls and the fear felt by women and their families about the possible consequences of speaking out.

²² ICRC, International Humanitarian Customary Law, Rule 134, https://ihl-databases.icrc.org/customary-ihl/eng/docs/v1_cha_chapter39_rule134

²³ ICRC, First Geneva Convention, Article 3(1), <https://ihl-databases.icrc.org/applic/ihl/ihl.nsf/INTRO/365>
ICRC, Protocol Additional Protocol Additional to the Geneva Conventions of 12 August 1949, and relating to the Protection of Victims of Non-International Armed Conflicts (Protocol II) to the Geneva Conventions 1949, Article 4 <https://ihl-databases.icrc.org/applic/ihl/ihl.nsf/INTRO/475>

²⁴ ICRC, Protocol Additional Protocol Additional to the Geneva Conventions of 12 August 1949, and relating to the Protection of Victims of Non-International Armed Conflicts (Protocol II) to the Geneva Conventions 1949, <https://ihl-databases.icrc.org/applic/ihl/ihl.nsf/INTRO/475>

²⁵ United Nations, Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights, Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women, <https://www.ohchr.org/EN/ProfessionalInterest/Pages/CEDAW.aspx>

²⁶ UNSC Res 1325 (31 October 2000) UN Doc S/RES/1325

The Convention on the Rights of the Child²⁷ defines what the rights of the child are, aims to protect children's rights at all times, and stipulates that signatory states and parties (which include Syria), shall take "all appropriate legislative, administrative, social and educational measures to protect the child from all forms of physical or mental violence, injury or abuse, neglect or negligent treatment, maltreatment or exploitation, including sexual abuse. The convention also stipulates that signatory states and parties shall in particular prevent: (a) The inducement or coercion of a child to engage in any unlawful sexual activity; (b) The exploitative use of children in prostitution or other unlawful sexual practices; (c) The exploitative use of children in pornographic performances and materials"²⁸. This means that the state has an obligation to prevent and protect children from sexual abuse by the state and by non-state parties.

International humanitarian law provides general protection for children as persons taking no part in hostilities²⁹, and special protection as persons who are particularly vulnerable unarmed individuals³⁰. Rule 135³¹ of Customary International Humanitarian Law states that "Children affected by armed conflict are entitled to special respect and protection" in both international and non-international armed conflicts. The Geneva Conventions of 1949 and the two Additional Protocols of 1977 also recognize that "Children must be the object of special respect and must be protected against any form of indecent assault. The parties to the conflict must provide them with the care and aid they require, whether because of their age or for any other reason"³². Common Article 3³³ states that children, as persons taking no active part in the hostilities shall in all circumstances be treated humanely, without any adverse distinction. The provisions of the agreements focus on protecting children from hostilities, and ensuring that they are provided with the necessary care, relief and protection, especially for children in areas of armed conflict.

It is true that armed groups, as non-state parties, cannot formally join the parties to international human rights treaties, but they are nonetheless bound to respect basic human rights and by customary international law, since these parties effectively control parts of the state's territory.

The prohibition on the recruitment of children under the age of 15 has attained the status of customary international law, and this prohibition, which was initially stipulated in regard to international armed conflicts, has been expanded to include non-international armed conflicts. The statute of the International Criminal Court clarifies that both in cases of international armed conflict and of non-international armed conflict, forcibly conscripting or recruiting children under the age of 15 and enlisting them in armed forces or armed groups or using them in conflicts is a war crime³⁴.

²⁷ United Nations, Convention on the Rights of the Child, <https://www.ohchr.org/EN/ProfessionalInterest/Pages/CRC.aspx>

²⁸ Reference 26, Article 34.

²⁹ ICRC, Geneva Convention (IV) relative to the Protection of Civilian Persons in Time of War 1949, Article 3, <<https://ihl-databases.icrc.org/ihl/INTRO/380>>

³⁰ ICRC, Geneva Convention (IV) relative to the Protection of Civilian Persons in Time of War 1949, Article 14, <<https://ihl-databases.icrc.org/ihl/INTRO/380>>

³¹ ICRC, Customary International Humanitarian Law, Rule 135, <https://ihl-databases.icrc.org/customary-ihl/eng/docs/v1_rul_rule135>

³² ICRC, Protocol Additional to the Geneva Conventions (Protocol I) 1977, Article 77(1), <<https://ihl-databases.icrc.org/ihl/INTRO/470>>

³³ ICRC, Geneva Convention (I) for the Amelioration of the Condition of the Wounded and Sick in Armed Forces in the Field 1949, Article 3, <<https://ihl-databases.icrc.org/applic/ihl/ihl.nsf/INTRO/365>>

³⁴ International Criminal Court, Rome Statute, Article 8-2-b(XXVI) and Article 8-2-e(VII), <<https://www.icc-cpi.int/resource-library/documents/rs-eng.pdf>>

Despite the legal arsenal, including UN Security Council resolutions that stipulate respect for the rights of women and children, including female children, the Syrian regime controlling the Syrian state was the first party to violate laws, doing so on a large scale, and has been the only party to commit crimes against humanity. The other parties to the conflict followed its footsteps, and indeed committed violations that were not practiced by the Syrian regime itself, such as forced marriage, restrictions on clothing, freedom of movement and forced conscription, some of which amount to war crimes. International law has been violated in a comprehensive manner in the Syrian conflict that has spanned nearly a decade to date. The crimes perpetrated against Syrian women will not end without a political transition towards a democratic system that respects human rights, in particular the rights of women, and extends over the entire Syrian territory.

Recommendations:

All parties to the conflict:

- The regime must fulfill its obligations based on its ratification of CEDAW³⁵, implement the recommendations of the Committee on the Elimination of Discrimination against Women, including General Recommendation No. 30³⁶, respect the two International Covenants³⁷ and the Geneva Conventions, and accordingly stop committing crimes against humanity and war crimes.
- All parties to the conflict should immediately release forcibly detained women, particularly those detained in the context of armed conflict, abide by international laws on the detention of women and girls, including segregation from male prisoners, appoint female guards and security personnel to conduct searches, and implement protocols for searching prisoners upon entering custody to allow female detainees to report incidents of sexual violence.
- Abide by Security Council resolutions related to the Syrian conflict and Security Council resolutions related to the role of conflict parties in protecting women from sexual violence, in particular Resolutions 1325³⁸ and 2122³⁹.
- Permanently end the recruitment of children, including female children, and release all children under the age of 15 from all military formations and duties.
- Conduct investigations into perpetrators of violations, hold them accountable, and begin compensation and reparation of victims.
- Provide protection and security for the work and movement of women, provide them with support, and end all forms of restrictions and suppression of freedoms.
- Support the efforts made by women in combating violence against them and mitigate the economic and social repercussions that the conflict imposes on their lives.
- Spare women the scourge of war by taking all necessary steps to ensure that all forms of violations against women are ended, and ensure that women deprived of their freedom are placed in separate locations from men.
- Expand the effective participation of women in all political formations and within the peace process.

³⁶ United Nations, General recommendation No. 30 on women in conflict prevention, conflict and post-conflict situations, <https://undocs.org/en/CEDAW/C/GC/30>

³⁷ United Nations, International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights, <https://www.ohchr.org/en/professionalinterest/pages/ccpr.aspx>
United Nations, International Covenant on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights, <https://www.ohchr.org/en/professionalinterest/pages/cescr.aspx>

³⁸ UNSC Res 1325 (31 October 2000) UN Doc S/RES/1325

³⁹ UNSC Res 2122 (18 November 2013) UN Doc S/RES/2122

International community and UN Security Council:

- Provide protection and assistance to forcibly displaced women, including IDPs and refugees, especially girls, taking into account their specific needs, primarily for protection.
- All countries worldwide must ratify CEDAW, fulfill their obligations under it to hold the Syrian regime accountable, expose the regime's criminal practices against Syria's women, and make every possible effort to mitigate and stop these.
- Expose all States backing the Syrian regime in their efforts to rehabilitate or support perpetrators of crimes against humanity and war crimes against the women of Syria.
- Take all possible legal, political and financial measures against the Syrian regime and its allies, as well as against all perpetrators of violations in the Syrian conflict to pressure them to commit to respect the rights of women.
- Fulfill the commitment of pledged financial contributions:
 - Assist neighboring countries and provide all possible support to increase the level of education and healthcare in these countries which host the largest number of female refugees.
- At a minimum, pressure must be applied on the Syrian regime to ensure that international observers, including the Independent International Commission of Inquiry, are given unconditional and unrestricted access to women and girls in detention centers.
- Refer the situation in Syria to the International Criminal Court, or quickly establish a tribunal dedicated to trying crimes against humanity and war crimes to end the cycle of impunity that has spanned nearly a decade in Syria.

Committee on the Elimination of Discrimination against Women:

- Given the extent of the widespread violations by the Syrian regime against women, some of which amount to crimes against humanity, the Committee must highlight what it is doing in regard to Syria, as its efforts are not noticeable to us, and it must intensify its work on individual cases and groups in Syria, as we recommend that survivors communicate with the Committee and submit complaints individually, and the Committee should take the initiative to expand its work points.

The Special Rapporteur on violence against women:

- The Special Rapporteur on violence against women, its causes and consequences should intensify her efforts in Syria. This is especially crucial given the extent of the violence that Syrian women are subjected to, particularly by the Syrian government itself, compared to women under any other government worldwide, especially women imprisoned in the detention centers of the Syrian regime and its security apparatus.

European States and European Union

- Economic sanctions on the two main backers of the Syrian regime, namely Iran and Russia, must be intensified, which is something that can be effectively achieved by the European Union. While civilian protection and safe zones are still the primary demands, economic sanctions also remain an effective course of action.

- Provide every possible assistance to the active civil society groups working to rehabilitate and reintegrate female victims into their communities.
- Support the operations for the support and rehabilitation of female survivors in areas of displacement and asylum.
- Syria is one of the worst affected countries in the world in terms of the perpetration of several types of violations against women, and therefore it needs a greater amount of assistance compared to other countries and regions, especially considering that these violations are still ongoing to date.
- Support the judicial accountability process, including supporting the mandate of the International, Impartial and Independent Mechanism (IIIM) to assist in the investigation and prosecution of individuals responsible for the most serious crimes in accordance with the classification of international law committed in the Syrian Arab Republic since March 2011, in accordance with General Assembly Resolution 71/248⁴⁰, as well as supporting the path of litigation through universal jurisdiction.

High Commissioner for Human Rights:

- Release a special report on the violations that Syrian women, in particular, have been subjected to.

Independent International Commission of Inquiry (COI):

- Investigate the incidents included in this report and utilize them during the preparation of the next report.

The United Nations Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs (OCHA) and local and international humanitarian and relief organizations:

- Coordinate humanitarian aid operations according to the areas worst affected and reject attempts at pressure and blackmail by the Syrian regime which is working to harness aid to its advantage.
- Allocate adequate resources for the rehabilitation of female survivors, especially those who have been subjected to violence, sexual exploitation and forced marriage, giving priority to the areas worst affected.
- Expand support for services provided for female adult and child victims of violence, in particular victims of sexual violence, including providing funding for shelter, treatment and rehabilitation, counseling and ensure that these services are tailored to the specific needs of women and girls, with priority given to pregnant women, those who have recently given birth, and breastfeeding mothers.
- Establish special care and protection refuges for abused women who have been ostracized by their families and communities.

Feminist organizations around the world:

- Advocate for Syrian women and raise awareness of the extent of the violations they are exposed to which is almost without precedent globally, carry out activities and projects to rehabilitate the survivors of arrest, torture and forced displacement, and shed more light on the suffering of Syrian women in displacement camps, asylum and detention centers.

⁴⁰ United Nations, General Assembly Resolution 71/248 (11 January 2017), <https://undocs.org/en/A/RES/71/248>

Neighboring countries:

- Ensure that refugees, especially women, fleeing Syria are able to seek asylum, respect their rights, including the prohibition of refoulement, and expedite reunification. EU states and other countries should alleviate the burden on neighboring countries and receive more Syrian refugees, while donor countries should increase their assistance to the UNHCR and civil societies organizations in countries of asylum.

The High Commissioner for Refugees:

- Create a stable and safe environment for refugee women and intensify work to reintegrate them into society through long-term psychological treatments.
- Promote investment in education, health and psychological rehabilitation.

Thanks

The Syrian Network for Human Rights extends its sincere thanks to everyone who has shared news and information, especially survivor victims, eyewitnesses, and local activists, whose information has contributed to substantiating and strengthening the available data and evidence in documenting the various incidents included in this report.



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Federal Foreign Office



Institut für
Auslandsbeziehungen

Supported with German Federal Foreign Office funds by the ifa (Institut für Auslandsbeziehungen) Zivil Funding Programme