

Statement

**On the International Day to End
Impunity for Crimes against
Journalists, We Demand Justice
for the Souls of at least
634 Citizen Journalists**

SNHR

SYRIAN NETWORK FOR HUMAN RIGHTS

الشبكة السورية لحقوق الإنسان

Thursday, November 2, 2017

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.



SNHR noted today, which marks the International Day to End Impunity for Crimes against Journalists, that no less than 634 journalists and citizen journalists have been killed in Syria in the last seven years, to an average of two journalists per week, which reflects an unprecedented level of violence and violations against journalists and citizen journalists in Syria since the start of the popular uprising for freedom in March 2011.

While the main parties to the conflict in Syria have practiced acts of violence against journalists and citizen journalists, committing crimes against them that qualify as war crimes, the Syrian regime has been, first and foremost, the primary perpetrator, being responsible for 83% of crimes, as the Syrian regime's crimes constitute crimes against humanity.

The Syrian regime has fought media activism systematically, committing hundreds of violations against journalists and citizen journalists, including killing, arrest, and torture in order to conceal the violations of human rights that the Syrian people has and is experiencing, and to hide the crimes against Syrian citizens. This goes hand-in-hand with a complete lack of accountability and observation, as we never recorded any investigations or accountability processes by the Syrian authorities for the crimes against the Syrian people, in general, and against journalists and citizen journalists in particular, nor any criminals were brought to justice which undoubtedly encourages more crimes in light of a complete impunity and what it entails of destruction of societies and absence of justice.

Certainly, the other parties, mostly ISIS, has been responsible for similar violations, but to different extents, and we rarely saw any accountability processes for those responsible for violations against journalists and citizen journalists.



According to SNHR records, no less than 634 media activists and journalists (local and foreign) have been killed, as of this writing, since March 2011 - distributed as follows:

- Syrian regime forces: 526 - around 82.97%
- Russian forces: 16 - around 2.52%
- Extremist Islamic groups: 52 - around 8.21%, divided into:
 - ISIS: 46 - around 7.26%
 - Fateh al Sham Front: 6 – around 0.95%
- Armed opposition factions: 21 – around 3.31%
- Kurdish Self-Management forces (particularly PYD): 3 – around 0.47%
- Other parties: 16 – around 2.52%

Additionally, we have recorded 1,124 cases of arrest and abduction by all parties to the conflict. No less than 408 citizen journalists are still considered missing or forcibly-disappeared.

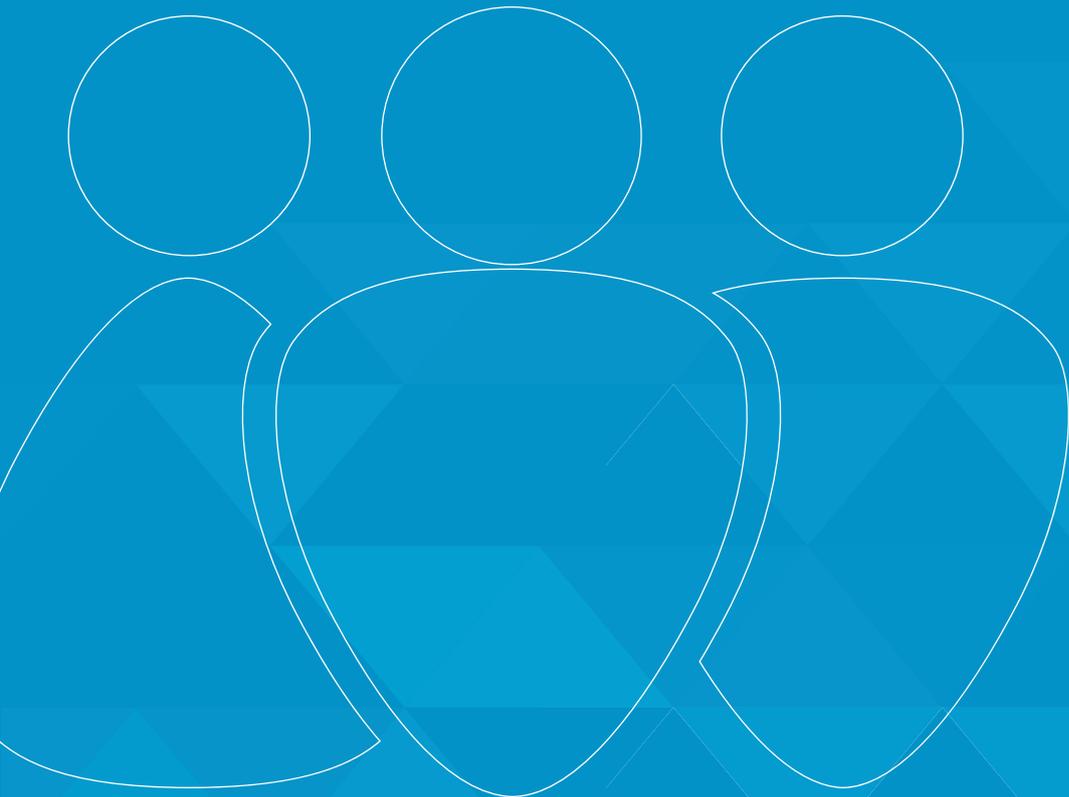
The hope for justice for Syrian and non-Syrian journalists has crashed against the Russian/Chinese veto that has been used three times against referring the Syrian case to the International Criminal Court (ICC).

SNHR calls on the Security Council to contribute effectively to the fight against impunity policies by referring the Syrian case to the ICC. The international community has to apply serious pressure on Russia and China in order to prevent a fourth veto and allow the Syrian case to be referred to the ICC, and take every step possible to prevent violence against journalists and workers in the field of media, and hold the perpetrators of such violations accountable.

In addition, the OHCHR has to condemn all attacks and acts of violence against journalists.

Finally, the Commission of Inquiry has to launch investigations regarding incidents of targeting of media activists, given the vital role they play in exposing violations against the Syrian people.





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