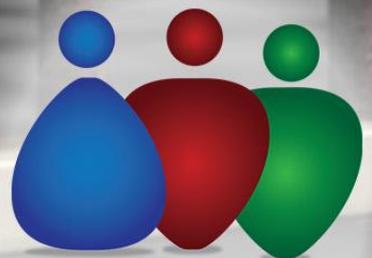


Prisoners in Syria

Pain without borders



Syrian Network
For Human Rights

الشبكة السورية لحقوق الإنسان

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Introduction & Statistics

Since the first days of the Syrian uprising, the Syrian authorities have been arresting thousands of citizens. Arrests went along with the acts of killings and targeted mainly four groups:

- Media activists and demonstrators
- Human rights activists, lawyers and civil society activists.
- Military defectors in addition to those discovered to be plotting to defect.
- Arbitrary arrests

After hundreds of interviews with people who were released from the government prisons in formal and informal concentration centers in different Syrian governorates, the Syrian Network for Human Rights estimates that there are about 215 thousand prisoners, among them 9 thousand children under the age of 18 and 4530 women.

And because the families of prisoners fear the authorities, it is very difficult to obtain all the prisoners' data through the traditional ways of documenting. And that is why we resort to estimative way, especially if the detainee is a woman.

Not only this. We have been informed by detainees' families that lots of them don't go to the authorities to ask on their sons fearing that they might be arrested, as it happened dozens of times with people who did that before.

Among the 215 thousand prisoners, there are about 85 thousand who are forcibly disappearing.

There are about 72 concentration centers in Syria. The main four ones are based in the quarters of the four intelligence apparatuses: air force intelligence, general intelligence, military intelligence and political intelligence, in all of which severe torture is practiced. As for the most prominent prisons, they are Sednaya prison, which

is considered the most obscure one, and then there is the big Mazza prison in the capital Damascus. In all prisons, there is deliberate, daily and systemized torture.

SNHR couldn't visit any of the prisons in Syria since we are banned in Syria. Not even one single human rights group could visit the basements of the Syrian prisons to look, without security sponsorship, on the conditions of prisoners and the treatment they are receiving.

Syrian authorities usually raid houses and shops, and when failing to arrest the wanted person, they arrest one of his relatives, and then threaten to execute him if the wanted person doesn't surrender to them.

Most prominent Prisons of opinion and political activists in Syrian Regime's prison until this moment:

Faik Almir

Political activist, from Alkadmos town, born in 1954, he is leader in Syrian democratic people's party, headed by Riyad al-Turk.

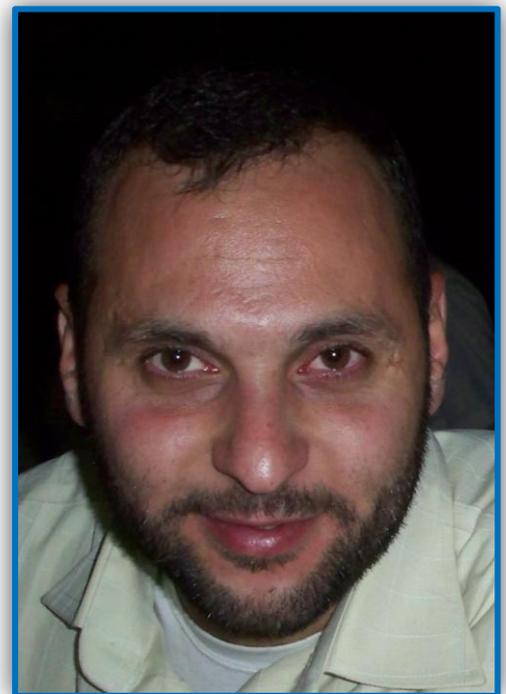
He was arrested from his house in Damascus Monday 7/10/2013.

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Dr. Omar Mohamed Mamoun Arnous (dentist)

Human rights activist of Syrian Network for Human Rights and relief activist, Professor at Damascus university and another private university, Master degree in dentistry, was preparing for PHD, was born in Damascus 16/5/1979, his father Manoun, his mother Maria.

Security forces raided his house at Dummar neighborhood in 7/10/2012, arrested him with his wife Maria and two years and half son, without any warrant.



Lawyer: Khalil Marai Matouk

Lawyer and one of the most prominent Human Right's defender, president of the Syrian Center for the Defense of prisoners of conscience in Syria, the executive director the Syrian Center for Legal Studies and Research and active in defending prisoner cases, he was arrested with his friend Mohammad Zaza while driving from his home in Sahnaya to his office in Damascus on 2/10/2012.

he undergoes to intensive and accurate treatment because he is suffering for lung disorder led to the disruption of 60% of them, he recently return from thereby outside Syria, just few days before arrested.

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Mazen Naji Maarouf

College student was born in 1987, freedom defender , filed member of SNHR, since the beginning of events in Syria he worked document and gathering information about the ongoing incidents, made dozens field visits for the incidents' locations, provided SNHR with huge number of news, photos, and videos.

Security forces raided his house in Baramka neighborhood after midnight of 18/1/2013, four security members broke the house door, arrested him and sized the computer and mobile, and arrested his sister Teacher Salam Naji Maarouf and his father Mamoun, after three days his sister's husband went to State Security branch to ask about them and get arrested too.

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Jakar Khoïn Mola Ahmad

Fourth years mechanical engineer student in Aleppo University, born in Hasaka-Qamishli 1985, Kurdish political activist, participated in the student movement peaceful, member of Yekîî Kurdish party.

Military Intelligence raided his home in Aleppo on 3/3/2012, takeover his personal computer and other items, it was the third time that he is arrested, the first was on 12/3/2008 in Aleppo University city by State Intelligence for seven days for his activity and defense of Kurdish issue, the second time was on the anniversary of March uprising on 25/3/2006, where he held in custody with few of his friend for 24 hours.

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Dr. Abdulaziz al-Khair

Abdalaziz al-Khair was born in Qerdaha of Lattakia in 1951. He studied medicine at the University of Damascus and graduated in 1976, during the years of his study he joined the Communist Action Party, arrested by Air Force Intelligence in Damascus international airport highway, after returning from China within the delegation of the National Coordination Body on 20/9/2012.

Should mentioned that Syrian authorities arrested him earlier cause his belonging to the Communist Labor Party, stayed out of sight for ten years inside Syria to avoid arrest, before get arrested on 1 February 1992.

In 1995, the State Security Court issued sentenced of 22 years imprisonment for belonging to a banned political party and transfer false news that may cause weakness in the nation feelings, spend his sentence in Sednaya military prison. Al-Khair was released in 2005 under a presidential pardon because of international pressure.

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Maisaa Alsaleh

Media activist for Orient Satellite TV station, civil society activist, interrogated by the investigation judge in the court of terrorism on 28/9/2013, and decided to arrest her.

She was arrested from cafe in Saroja in Damascus on 23/4/2011, with a number of civil activist including Moaz Alfara, Waad Aljaraf, Osama Azoz, Nada Aljindi, Dr. Bashar Farhat, Ahmad Zaghlo, Lina Alsamodi, Amani Alshiekh, Journalist Shayar Khalil Khalil.



Ms. Ola Hamidi

Civil activist, works as trainer of driving, born in Midan 1990, arrested at army barrier on Daraa highroad, seized her car in 2/10/2012, should mentioned that Ola suffering from diabetes and serious health setbacks.



Ms. Zainab Abu Dan

Lawyer arrested in Qabon in 29/11/2012.

Ms. Salma Abdulrazaq

Relief and Peaceful activist, 23 years old, Student at faculty of Architecture, was arrested from Yarmouk refugee camp barrier in Damascus on 30/12/2012, accused of Relief and dealing with displaced.

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Ms. Mona al-Wadi

Engineer and relief activist, born in Daraa 1976, was arrested because she was carrying food box for the affected families in the town of DeirAsafir of Damascus countryside on 26/11/2012, and she was taken to the Palestine Branch and then transferred to the Air Force Intelligence branch in Mezzeh, and reportedly that she is exposing to various types of torture, intimidation and psychological pressure, and after several months of her detention, she appeared on Syrian television to admit of being "terrorist" after they forced her on it.

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Ms. Faten Dabous

Humanitarian and relief activist, Military intelligence raided her house in Razi area in 18/8/2013 and arrested her, she was a displaced from Qadi Askar neighborhood.

Ms. Sahar Abdulaal

Doctor and activist, arrested by security forces from Mahmil in Idlib countryside in 1/9/2012.

Anas Alshaghri

A college student, in the third year of the Faculty of Economics at the University of Lattakia.

Peaceful and media activist, was first called and led a peaceful demonstration in Banyas, arrested when the army, security and Shabiha broke into Banyas, on 14/5/2011, and accused him with the establishment of an Islamic emirate where he is the Minister of the internal affairs.

We should mention that his two brothers are activists and detainees too, their mother was died few days ago during their detention.

According to the last news, he is in Sadnaya military prison.

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Dr. Mohamad Bashir Arab

Was born on 1980, Laboratory doctor, one of the first peaceful activist in Aleppo, Mohammad engaged in peaceful field activity as protest and other, he was perused for long time and lived under-covered for several months, due to break into his house, was arrested with two of his friend in Tuesday 2/11/2011, and lost any connection with him.

Former detainees (2004-2005), he was tried by Supreme State Security Court, cause of his students activities in university of Aleppo.

Leaked news confirmed that he is subjected to sever systematic torture that led to transfer him to Mojtaheed hospital in Damascus on 12 January 2012.

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Mazen Darwish

38 years old lawyer, Journalist and free speech advocate, founded the Syrian Center for Media and Freedom of Expression in 2004 that concerned in supporting journalists' rights, monitoring media and free speech freedom, and documenting violations committed against media activists and workers.

In 16/2/2012, Air Force Intelligence raided the headquarter and arrested 16 persons were there, including guests and Mazen the president of the center.

Darwish transferred between Air Force Intelligence and fourth brigade then Adra prison, before transferring him to trail before Military Field Court, where it held in secret and the accused don't have the right to defend himself or the right of appeal , and the judges are immediate and peremptory.

Organization of Reporters without Borders awarded Mazen PRIZE FOR PRESS FREEDOM in 2012, because of his courage and commitment to freedom of media in Syria.

Mazen also awarded „Roland Berger Human Dignity Award in November 2011.

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Omar Ali Khalaf

A pharmacist and a human rights activist, He believes in peaceful activism. Security forces raided his place of work in Abu Rmana district is Damascus on March, 12, 2012. He is in Sednaya military prison now.



Ms.Rama Yasser Al-Assas

Political and relief activist, student at literature faculty of Damascus, was born in Damascus 1986, arrested many times for her participation in peaceful demonstrations, as her house was raided many times, so she had to stay out of sights because of the continuous pressure on her and her family.

In August 27, 2012 , she was provoked to an ambush by an email for detainee, where many men in military forms attacked her, they blackmailed her family to pay 2 million Syrian Pounds to release her, but no one know anything about her up to this date.

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Methods of Torture

The network was able to count 45 torture methods; we will divide them into three types:

- Torture Techniques (8 positions)
- Various Methods of torture (22 cases)
- Psychological torture (12 cases)

First: torture Techniques:

we documented 8 positions, the most systematic and widely used one:

- 1) **Ghost Technique:** It occurs through putting handcuffs on the detainee's hands and hanging him/her to the ceiling of the investigation room by a rope while he/she stands on a chair. The chair is withdrawn to let him/her hardly touch the ground by the big toe.
There is a similar ghost technique in which one foot is tightened together with the hands by the same rope. The detainee many stay for many hours, a day or two days in such position, consequently his/her hands are cut.
- 2) **Tying Up, Kicking and Booting,** where the hands are tied with the two feet of the detainee to look like the car boot to be kicked and beaten on all parts of his body.
- 3) **Wind Carpet Technique:** it occurs by putting the detainee on a plank in the mid of which exist joints that allow the folding of the board so that the detainee's hands and feet get tied to the front and back of the plank, and his face on the ground of it. Then, the front side of the plank is lifted as to fold it so that the body of the detainee gets folded until the backside of his head touches the heel of his feet. This leads to a dangerous stretch in the ligaments and nerves of the spine, which results the most dreadful kind of pain a person can suffer from. Meanwhile, another person is beating the detainee.
- 4) **Crucify:** the hands and legs of the detainee are tightened like a crucified person then they beat him/her specifically on the sex organs.
- 5) **Hanging:** the hands are tied behind the back, then the detainee is hanged up and beaten with sticks and wires.
- 6) **Smashing,** where a detainee head is placed between the wall and the door of the prison, the door is closed on the head of the detainee.
- 7) **Electric chair,** a metal chair, the detainee is seated on it, then they put on the electrical current.

- 8) **German chair**, a chair made of metal, its back can be moved backward to pressure on the neck and spine of the detainee

Second: Different Methods of Torture:

we documented 23 methods used in most cases:

- 1) Using all methods of beating on all body parts by different tools such as stake and electric cables, called colloquially Robai, to beat on the soles and tread on the head.
- 2) Completely uprooting fingernails.
- 3) Removing hair from different organs of the body.
- 4) Cutting out flesh by forceps from sensitive organs.
- 5) Rapping detainees; males or females.
- 6) Forcing the detainee to rape his/her mate.
- 7) Cutting out some parts of the detainee body; such as a finger, flesh, or stabbing in the back or stomach.
- 8) Burning detainees skin using chemical acids or smoked cigarettes.
- 9) Exposing the detainee after being enforced to take off all clothes to extreme cold.
- 10) Depriving the detainee from medical care totally as there is a lack of medical care in large number of prisons.
- 11) Preventing the detainee to use the toilet but once or twice a day, forcing him/her sometimes to urinate on himself/herself. If the detainee is allowed to use toilet, the period may not exceed a minute. The detainee is also prevented from taking shower, going out and breathing fresh air.
- 12) Keeping a large number of detainees in a small cell (keeping 45 detainees in a 15 meter cell, Air Force Intelligence, Aleppo).
- 13) Pouring cold water over the body after being hit and wounded.
- 14) Breaking the ribs.
- 15) Providing insufficient amount of water and food which are not enough for a quarter of detainees.
- 16) Standing up on foot and hung up from hands for successive days.
- 17) Using underground cells without ventilation.
- 18) Detaining women and men in the same cells.
- 19) Pouring boiling oil or water over legs to burn the skin.
- 20) Cutting the ear using the clipper used to trim the trees.
- 21) Stressing ears and nose using mallet.
- 22) Hanging up and then tying something heavy to the penis.
- 23) Electric shocking, specially in breasts, knees, and elbows.

Third: Psychological torture

In SNHR, we managed to document 14 cases, the most used and systematic ones:

- 1) Forcing the detainee to watch his/her mate being raped.
- 2) Threatening the detainee with rapping.
- 3) Enforcing the detainee to watch his/her mates sufferings from torture or dying.
- 4) Threatening the detainee with arresting his wife, mother or sister and rapping or torturing her in front him after allowing him watch naked girls in the prison.
- 5) Threatening the detainee with torture to death or slaughter with knif.
- 6) Offending and assaulting the detainee`s religious beliefs.
- 7) Forcing the detainee to undress in front of his/her mates.
- 8) Putting the detainee in a cell, in which somebody is dying.
- 9) Keeping the detainee in a cell with a dead body.
- 10)Assaulting the detainee by obscene insult
- 11)Forcing the detainee to admit crimes he did not commit or they will double the torture.
- 12)Ordering the detainee to prostrate before Assad`s portrait.
- 13)Deluding the detainee that he/she is going to be released and opening the cell's door, then bringing him/her back for torture.
- 14)Taking the detainee to the prison's doctor for treatment. The doctor hits him/her on the painful part, then the detainee is taken back to be re-tortured. So that none ask again for doctor.

This led to kill 4058 Syrian under torture ,including 92 children , 31 ladies , 89 aged (more than 60 years old) , and 217 armed rebels (less than 5% of the toll victims under torture)

Legal Conclusions

- 1) Military forces and Shabiha (pro-government militia) arrested thousands of citizens without leveling any charge to them.
- 2) Government forces prevent prisoners from meeting lawyers and deprive them from family visits.
- 3) Torture is practiced methodically and is considered as a war crime.
- 4) Al Qaeda-affiliated groups committed similar practices.
- 5) In addition, there are some opposition armed groups who committed crimes of killing and arrest, though not methodically nor on a large scale. For that reason, they are not considered crimes against humanity, though they must be followed as war crimes.

Recommendations

- 1) There must be tangible diplomatic pressure on the Syrian government from the side of the Security Council and the international community in order to release all those who are unlawfully imprisoned. We would like here to remind you that the Syrian government has always denied the existence of women and children detainees; an allegation belied by the last deal of exchanging the nuns abducted by Jabhat Al Nusra with women and children who were in the government prisons. The whole world witnessed through this that the government was imprisoning women and children; a truth we have affirmed before.
- 2) It is also important that international monitors be allowed to reach to the formal and informal detention centers. Monitors must include members of the commission of inquiry on Syria and personnel from the office of Mr. Lakhdar Al Ibrahimi, in addition to members from the International Red Cross.
- 3) The international community must shoulder its responsibilities and move quickly and seriously to put an end to the ordeal of the Syrian prisoners.
- 4) The Security Council as well must transfer the situation in Syria to the International Criminal Court to prosecute those responsible for the violations in Syria.

