



Press release

SNHR Participates in A Forum Entitled ‘Why Are the Syrian Presidential Elections Illegitimate?’ at the Invitation of the Harmoon Center for Contemporary Studies

On Tuesday, May 25, 2021, the Harmoon Center for Contemporary Studies held a forum entitled ‘Why Are the Syrian Presidential Elections Illegitimate?’ via the Zoom platform, hosting Mr. Fadel Abdul Ghany, Director of the Syrian Network for Human Rights (SNHR), Ms. Alia Mansour, a writer on political affairs, and lawyer Mohammad Sabra, with the journalist Dima Wannous managing and moderating the dialogue.

Mr. Fadel Abdul Ghany described these elections as farcical, and talked about the importance of challenging and confronting them, pointing out that they violate the resolutions regarding Syria issued by the international community, represented by the UN Security Council, in particular Resolution No. 2118 and Resolution No 2254, which clearly stipulate that the solution to the internal armed conflict is the formation of a transitional governing body exercising full executive powers with representation from both the regime and the opposition, which could then create a new constitution, and only then hold parliamentary and presidential elections based on this new constitution. Mr. Abdul Ghany noted that Resolution 2254 was adopted in 2015, i.e. after the previous presidential elections held in June 2014,

adding that in the period since those sham elections up until April 2021 the Syrian Network for Human Rights had recorded the deaths of 47,967 civilians, including 8,762 children and 5,309 women, at the hands of Syrian regime forces, referring to the [report](#) issued by the Syrian Network for Human Rights on April 26, 2021, which addressed the illegitimacy of the planned elections, and outlined the most notable human rights violations committed by the Syrian regime since the previous elections.

Mr. Abdul Ghany also stressed that the Syrian regime had unilaterally engineered the 2012 constitution, making it a constitution of its own alone, which the regime imposed through its security services, and which gave Bashar al Assad powers that further bolstered his status as a brutal dictator with absolute impunity, making it even more impossible to remove him through democratic methods, as he combined the three powers - executive, legislative and judicial - placing them completely under his control, in addition to strengthening the violent dominance of the security services, whose members number in the tens of thousands.

Mr. Abdul Ghany pointed out that the Syrian regime's conduct of these elections has an undermining and destructive effect on the political process, adding that the UN Envoy should condemn the holding of presidential elections unilaterally, announce the UN's refusal to recognize their results, work to ensure that all parties are bound to pursue the path of the political solution in accordance with the relevant Security Council resolutions, and establish a specific timeline for accomplishing this.

Mr. Abdul Ghany concluded by stressing the importance of liberal and friendly countries not only condemning these elections and emphasizing their partiality and illegitimacy. In addition to this, he said, these nations must move forward with the process of achieving a political transition, given that this is an opportunity to remind the world of its responsibilities and the extent to which the Syrian regime has insulted Security Council resolutions and the political process.

The full dialogue can be viewed at the [following link](#).