

Statement

SNHR Participates in a Webinar on Documenting Human Rights Violations Worldwide, on the Sidelines of the Global Sites of Conscience Meeting 2020

On Tuesday, December 8, 2020, the Syrian Network for Human Rights (SNHR) participated in a webinar on Documenting Human Rights Violations Worldwide. The event took place on the sidelines of the Global Sites of Conscience Meeting 2020, hosted by the Asia and the Pacific Sites of Conscience Network. The webinar was broadcast on the Zoom platform, with the participation of Mr. Fadel Abdul Ghany, Executive Director of the Syrian Network for Human Rights, Ms. Sophia Brostean-Kaiser of the Memorium Nuremberg Trials (Germany), Mr. José Antequera representing the Centro de Memoria, Paz y Reconciliación (Colombia), and the moderator of the session Ms. Nana-Jo N'Dow, the Executive Director of the African Network Against Extrajudicial Killings and Enforced Disappearances (ANEKED) (Gambia).

The International Coalition of Sites of Conscience, which is the only global network of historic sites, museums and memory initiatives that connects past struggles to today's movements for human rights and social justice, currently consists of over 300 members in nearly 65 countries.

The webinar aimed to highlight documentation initiatives that are actively contributing to social reconstruction, democracy-building and the promotion of human rights, supporting and strengthening their vision, with participants in the event speaking about the role of documentation in protecting human rights through their experiences.

Ms. Nana-Jo N'Dow opened the seminar, noting the importance of documenting human rights violations as **“a powerful tool in knowledge production, societal contestation, education on human rights abuses, and the importance of fighting impunity, including furthering transitional justice mechanisms.”**

This was followed by an address by researcher Sophia Brostean-Kaiser of Germany's Memorium Nuremberg Trials, who spoke about the Nuremberg trials and the development of contemporary international criminal law, noting that crimes, however large, numerous and well-known, are only held to account when criminals appear before a court, adding: **“The International Criminal Court (ICC), as with any other court, can act only if there is documentation of crimes and of human rights violations,”** and observing that legal prosecution of crimes is just one aspect of the importance of documenting human rights violations.

Thirdly, the Chairman of the Syrian Network for Human Rights, Mr. Fadel Abdul Ghany, focused on five main aspects of the SNHR's work:

1. The initial stages of the documentation process and building a network of relationships with families, activists, and eyewitnesses.
2. Building electronic programs that help in the documentation and archiving process and its development.
3. The entry of multiple parties to the conflict, and the development of SNHR's methodology.
4. The most notable challenges facing the documentation process.
5. The evidence presented by the Syrian Network for Human Rights with regard to the issue of extrajudicial killing.

Mr. Abdul Ghany presented some of the [charts](#) and [a map](#) showing the distribution of the proportions of civilian casualties killed by years, governorates and gender, and according to the perpetrators of killings.

In conclusion, Mr. Abdul Ghany said that the only solution to the Syrian catastrophe remains for the international community to acknowledge the terrible extent of the human loss that has afflicted Syrian society and traumatized people across the region, and to take decisive steps towards practically implementing the existing Security Council resolutions and finally achieving a political transition that leads to a democratic system which respects and defends the rights of the Syrian citizen and abides by the principles of international human rights law.

To see the full webinar, [you can visit our YouTube channel:](#)