



## 58 Individuals Killed due to Torture in September 2016 Including 57 at the Hands of Government Forces

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### I. Report Methodology

Since 2011, the Syrian regime has been denying executing any arrests and, instead, accuses Al-Qaeda and terrorist groups such as ISIS. Additionally, the Syrian regime doesn't acknowledge any torture or death-due-to-torture cases. SNHR obtains information from former prisoners or prisoners' families where most of the families get the information they have about their detained relatives through bribing officials in charge.

We, in SNHR, refer to the families' accounts. It should be noted that the Syrian authorities usually don't give back the dead bodies of the prisoners to their families. Also, in most cases, families are scared to go and get the dead bodies of their relatives or even their personal items from military hospitals out of fear of being arrested themselves. Most of the families we contacted have assured that their relatives were in good health at the time of their arrest and illness couldn't have been the cause of death.

Fadel Abdul Ghani, chairman of SNHR, says:

*"The principle of 'Responsibility to Protect' must be implemented in light of the government's failure to protect its people, and the fruitlessness of the diplomatic and peaceful efforts so far. Crimes against humanity and war crimes are being perpetrated every day in Syria and mainly at the hands of the organs of the state itself."*





Therefore, SNHR encounters serious difficulties in the documentation process on account of the ban imposed against it and the fact that its members are being pursued by various parties. In light of such circumstances, it might be difficult to fully verify deaths as the process remains subject to ongoing documentation and verification while taking in consideration families' accounts.

To read more about SNHR documentation [methodology](#),

## II. Executive Summary

SNHR documented no less than 58 deaths due to torture inside official and non-official detention centers in September 2016 divided as follows:

A. Government forces (Army, security, local militias, Shiite foreign militias): 57

B. Extremist Islamic groups:

- Fateh Al Sham (Formerly Al Nusra Front): one

Deaths due to torture have been ongoing ceaselessly since 2011, this is an explicit indicator on the systematic violence and excessive forces used against detainees.

Homs governorate governorates saw the highest number of victims who died to torture with 28 individuals, while the remaining death toll were distributed across governorates as follows:

Daraa: 9

Hama: 8

Damascus: 5

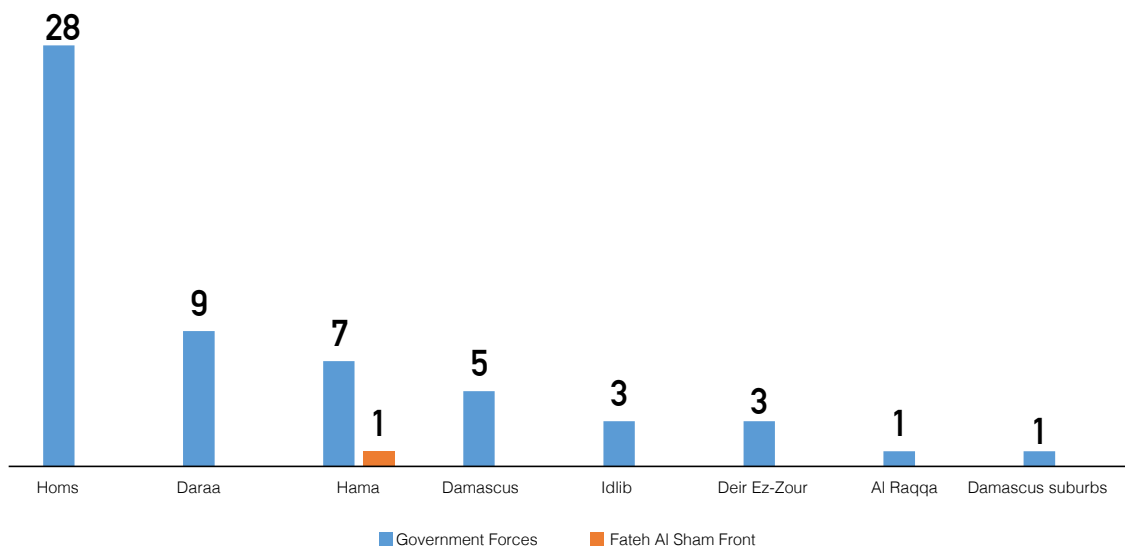
Deir Ez-Zour: 3

Idlib: 3

Al Raqqa: 1

Damascus suburbs: 1

The following table shows the death toll distribution across Syrian governorates by influential party





Most notable cases of deaths due to torture in September are:

One pharmacist

One athlete

Woman

Two individuals from the same family

### **III. Most Notable Deaths due to Torture**

#### **Pharmacist**

Mohammad Qasem Saeed, pharmacist, from Daraa camp in Daraa governorate, Palestinian-Syrian. He was arrested by government forces in 2012. On Sunday 11 September 2016, we received information confirming his death due to torture inside a government forces detention center.

#### **Athlete**

Jehad Qassab, from Baba Amro neighborhood in Homs city, captain of Al Karama Football Club and a player for the Syrian football national team, born in 1975. He was arrested by the Political Security forces, affiliated to government forces, as he was passing a checkpoint in Homs city, he was in a good health at the time. On Thursday 29 September 2016, we received information confirming his death due to torture inside Sydnaya military prison.

#### **Women**

Mrs. Wedad Layla, from Al Qaboun neighborhood in Damascus city, she was arrested by government forces at a checkpoint in Damascus city. On Wednesday 28 September 2016, we received information confirming her death due to torture inside branch 235, called Palestine branch, which is affiliated to the Military Security Intelligence division of Damascus.

#### **Individuals from the same family**

Sameh Ibrahim Al Hussein and his brother Samer, from Tareaq Al Sad neighborhood in Daraa governorate. They were arrested by government forces in 2014. On Wednesday 21 September 2016, we received information confirming their death inside a government forces detention center.





Sameh Ibrahim Al Hussein



Sameh Ibrahim Al Hussein

## IV. Conclusions and Recommendations

SNHR affirms that this considerably huge number of victims who are dying under torture every month, with taking into consideration that the actual number of deaths is most likely higher, unequivocally indicates a systematized policy that is being adopted by the head of the ruling authorities. All of the state's organs, branches, and figures are fully aware of these policies. Furthermore, these policies were enforced in a widespread manner which constitutes crimes against humanity and war crimes. Fateh Al Sham Front practiced acts of torture that constitute war crimes.

### Recommendations:

#### Security Council:

1. The Syrian case must be referred to the International Criminal Court.
- 2- Punishments must be enforced on all the leaders, of any party, who were involved in acts of torture which violates the international humanitarian law and the Resolutions of the Security Council on Syria; particularly resolutions 2042 and 2139.
- 3- To bind the Syrian government, and the other parties, to fully cooperate with the Independent International Commission of Inquiry on the Syrian Arab Republic, which was established by the Human Rights Council, in order to investigate torture practices inside detention centers.
4. To allow independent human rights organization to access any place in Syria.

#### Acknowledgment:

Our most sincere thanks to all families, eyewitness, and activists who contributed majorly to this report, and our most heartfelt condolences for the victims' families and relatives.

