

Brief Report: Videos Showing Torture and Extrajudicial Executions Evidently Carried Out by Syrian Democratic Forces

The United States Have to Call on The Party They Support to Cease Atrocities

SNHR

SYRIAN NETWORK FOR HUMAN RIGHTS

الشبكة السورية لحقوق الإنسان

Friday, August 25, 2017

The Syrian Network for Human Rights, founded in June 2011, is a non-governmental, non-profit independent organization that is a primary source for the United Nations on all death toll-related statistics in Syria



Before the Democratic Union Party (The Kurdistan Workers' Party's Syrian branch) founded the Kurdish Self-Management, the party's forces (People's Protection Units, Asayesh) committed a wide range of violations that we monitored in [several reports](#), in addition to reports by international organization (Amnesty International, Human Rights Watch) and a number of local organizations. The approach continued after the Kurdish Self-Management and Syrian Democratic Forces (SDF) were formed (some news reports contended that American officials imposed that name as an alternative to "Self-Management"). However, all of these names are fundamentally based on the Kurdish Democratic Union Party with the addition of nominal Arabic and Syriac parties.

Since the start of 2016, we have recorded a notable excessiveness in the severity of torture methods and a rise in the number of victims killed by SDF. Some of these violations exhibited ethnic characteristics, where we recorded a number of accounts from survivors who confirmed to SNHR that they were abducted and tortured. We have also acquired documents that prove that they were subjected to torture at SDF detention centers, and we published some of these documents in [our report](#) on the International Day in Support of Victims of Torture.

Recently, a number of videos surfaced online that show armed fighters whose uniforms and dialect, as well as the nature of the video itself and other aspects, suggest that they are affiliated with SDF. The video showed these fighters brutally torturing detainees, as the videos bore a similarity to the videos that showed fighters from Syrian regime forces. Also, the video show acts of killing through direct executions with no trial, and the everlasting charge is being affiliated to ISIS in a manner that is similar to the accusations of supporting and funding terror. These charges only serve as a pretext that justify torturing, disfiguring, and killing the offender without any evidences or judicial and moral restraints. We have copies of this videos on secret, secured services, as well as the source that originally published the videos.



On June 30, 2017, Anadolu Agency published a video showing two armed fighters wearing uniforms that show a yellow logo that seemingly is the logo of SDF, while wearing military jackets. One of the fighters was holding a knife and they were kicking, stepping, and beating two handcuffed detainees who were lying on the ground. It seems from the video that the fighters were trying to extract confessions from the detainees about the whereabouts of ISIS fighters. The Agency noted in its [report](#) that this incident was in al Mansoura town, western suburbs of Raqqa governorate.



On July 15, 2017, a video circulated on social media, in which a group of three or four armed fighters directly opened fire on a handcuffed individual with two dead bodies lying next to him. The video showed the fighters taking turns in shooting the victim, as they aimed their bullets mostly to the victim's head. One of the armed fighters in the video said that this is the fate that awaits anyone who stand in the way of the YPG (the armed wing of the Kurdish Democratic Union Party) and anyone who side himself with ISIS.





We managed to identify the victim: Ali Ahmad al Mohammad, born in 1980, from Khes Ajil village that administratively follows al Karama county in eastern suburbs of Raqqa governorate. Via a number of mediators, we cross-examined the video in question with a picture of the victim that was taken briefly before his death that we obtained from Mr. Samer who is a relative of the victim's. Mr. Samer told us that the victim has been working in Lebanon since mid-2015, and on March 19, 2017, he came back to his village by air from Damascus International Airport to al Qameshli Airport, as a picture of his [ticket](#) suggests. Samer told us that an altercation between Ali and a person who has close ties with SDF resulted in Ali being detained at the Airport for hours, which could be also the reason why Ali was eliminated later on April 3, 2017, as the video shows.



Samer, contacted via Facebook, says:

“Ali and his family, along with the village residents, fled the village in late-March after the heavy bombing by international coalition forces. They went on to live in tents in the vicinity of the village. On April 3, Ali came back to check on his house and to bring food to his family, and he was detained by SDF. Ali was then executed over a tip by a person who has close ties to SDF. The execution took place on the main road in Khes Ajil village. His dead body was disfigured as we found it. The dead body had also signs of knife stabs.”

SDF issued a [statement](#) on July 15, 2017, saying that they will launch an investigation to determine the facts of the case and will hold the people responsible accountable. Apparently, the statement was to alleviate the popular and media heat, because no investigation was launched as of this moment, and no details were made public to the Syrian people.

On July 21, 2017, a video filmed by an armed man speaking in Kurdish was published. The video shows an elder man with apparently blood on his clothes. We were able to identify the elder man in the video: Ahmad Zino, 80-year-old. We had recorded Ahmad as a victim in the death toll June 24, 2017, after his house in al Rmeila neighborhood, Raqqa city, was attacked using hand grenades by SDF which resulted in the killing of his son -Ass'ad Zino- while he was injured before he was murdered. The pictures that we obtained of him show a wound caused by a gunshot in his right shoulder.

Two days after the video was published, we recorded that SDF arrested Ahmad Ass'ad Zino, Ahmad Zino's grandson, from his house even though he was suffering from a previous injury sustained in a bombing by international coalition forces on Raqqa city. We believe that he was arrested over leaking the video.





SNHR
SYRIAN NETWORK FOR HUMAN RIGHTS
الشبكة السورية لحقوق الإنسان

A video showing a fighter we believe is affiliated o SDF talking to civilian Ahmad Zinou before killing him in al Rmeila neighborhood, northeast Raqqa city – we received the video on July 21, 2017



Filming and publishing killings and torture in a deliberate, purposeful manner reflect a social sickness that ran rampant within the Syrian people who was left alone fighting a regime that practices the most horrendous ways of killing, and wild militias that don't acknowledge the most basic local and international laws and norms. These acts aim to terrorize and submit the society in order to deter it from standing in the face of the ruling authority ever again.

Certainly, it is considerably difficult to verify these kinds of videos. However, a number of clues, eyewitnesses, and accounts from victims' relatives have verified SDF's involvement. In case we were to come across more evidences and these videos' authenticity were fully verified; these incidents surely qualify as war crimes and blatant violations to the most basic rules of the international human rights law. While these forces are a non-state party and, therefore, can't be a part of official treaties, they have to, in any case, respect the basic human rights for the individual, and uphold the customary international law in their actual areas of control.

SDF's history is filled with violations, extrajudicial killings, and indiscriminate attacks against civilians, in addition to arbitrary arrests. These forces haven't launched any investigations regarding any kind of violations. They also won't respond to the human rights organizations who tried to contact SDF in order to find out the SDF command's position with respect to these practices and what their future policies regarding them are.

SDF has to respect the standards of the international human rights law and end the torture against political and military foes, launch immediate investigations, and hold those who were involved in crimes accountable.

The SDF-supporting states need to apply pressure on SDF in order to put an end to their violations in all the areas and towns that are under the SDF's control. Also, SDF has to start forming and supporting local councils from the local community in order to establish a civil governance in these areas. Otherwise, SDF will be contributing and in agreement with these inhumane methods.





@snhr



Info@sn4hr.org

www.sn4hr.org

