

No Alternative to Return Home: Violations Committed by Kurdish-Self-Management Forces in Al Hassaka Governorate

**Widespread Violations Displace
Tens of Thousands of Al Hassaka Residents**



The Syrian Network for Human Rights is a independent and non-governmental, non-profit human rights organization that investigates and documents all violations committed by all conflict parties involved in the Syrian conflict since 2011. The network, that does not adopt any ideology, was founded in June 2011 and aims to defend the human rights of the Syrian people. It also includes 27 researchers and human rights activists stationed in Syria and in other neighboring countries.

SNHR is committed to all standards and international conventions of Human Rights issued by the United Nations. It aims to ensure that victims' rights are not exploited and perpetrators are held accountable for their crimes.

SNHR issues periodic reports concerning the most notable daily violations, eight monthly statistical or specialized reports, annual reports, and reports concerning global human rights events. It also issues significant studies and documentaries on a regular basis in order to contribute to raising awareness in the Syrian community.

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I. Introduction and Methodology:

Al Hassaka governorate is one of the culturally rich and most diverse cities in northeast Syria. The governorate is inhabited by a mixed population of Arabs, Kurds, Turkmen, Assyrians, Armenians, Chechnens, Yazidis, and Chaldeans.

Kurdish forces joined other conflict parties in Syria when YPG forces, (the armed wing of the PYD party), established the Kurdish Self-Management Forces which was announced in January 2014 and seized control over some regions in north and east of Syria. The PYD party constitutes the main core of the movement that was called later on the “Kurdish Self-Management Forces”.

In this report we document the most significant violations that were committed by the Kurdish Self-Management Forces in Al Hassaka governorate since February 2015 and up till August 2015. During that period of time and up till now, this party has been committing widespread violations against human rights in Syria.

SNHR sent letters which discussed the violations that were committed by the Kurdish Self-Management Forces to each of:

- A leader in the Kurdish Self-Management Forces, Abdul Karim Omar and have not received any reply from his behalf up to the moment of making this report.

- Head of the PYD party, Saleh Mouslem, and have not received any reply from his behalf up to the moment of making this report.

Most of the time, Kurdish Self-Management Forces justify its violations by stating that it happened while it was fighting ISIL. Additionally, these forces accused in a [statement](#), Amnesty International in its report [“WE HAD NOWHERE TO GO’ - FORCED DISPLACEMENT AND DEMOLITIONS IN NORTHERN SYRIA”](#) and SNHR, of being aligned with ISIL; even though SNHR issued an extensive study about [ISIL’s violations](#) in January 2014, not forgetting several of other reports that document ISIL’s breaches and violations, especially in Ein Al Arab region (also known as Kobani), Al Hassaka, Raqqa and other regions.

Kurdish Self-Management Forces cannot follow the Syrian government steps by justifying its crimes and saying that it fights ISIL and terrorism to justify its violations and crimes; as it also cannot make use of ISIL’s presence to commit ethnic crimes. Kurdish Self Management forces should investigate and hold the perpetrators from its

party accountable for their crimes. Mr. Saleh Mouslem, being head of the PYD forces who founded the Kurdish Self Management Forces, must bear responsibility to these crimes that amount to war crimes and compensate to all those affected. Not holding the perpetrators from their party accountable to their crimes will urge victims’ families to retaliate on them.

We would like to mention that it took us nearly five months to complete this study since we faced a number of challenges and limitations. We had to reach affected displaced individuals and families and wait until we receive satellite images for several regions in Al Hassaka governorate which depict the destruction aftermath. We wanted to compare it before and after the KSM forces stormed the towns. Additionally, we are in the process of preparing an extensive report which documents the violations that were committed in Tal Abyad and in all regions under the control of the Kurdish Self Management Forces which will be issued in the upcoming weeks.

Report Methodology:

SNHR’s team conducted several interviews and investigations with the residents in Al Hassaka governorate who were affected directly by the Kurdish Self Management Forces’ violations. We met a number of refugees in Turkey who were displaced from the province and gave us their testimonies. We archived and analyzed several satellite images, in addition to a great number of pictures and footages that we received from the residents or displaced individuals.

Eyewitnesses’ testimonies that were collected in Turkey or inside Al Hassaka governorate were matching to a certain extent, which reinforces its credibility. Activist Abdulla Al Ahmad contributed to making this report and provided us with contact details and helped us verify the information, videos and images we received. All eyewitnesses spoke in Arabic as we also explained the aim behind conducting these interviews where some of them preferred their real names to be kept confidential, as we also kept a record for all the contact details to all eyewitnesses. Finally, all investigations and documentations conducted by SNHR are constantly being revised and edited.

We would like to mention that those documented incidents were the bare minimum of what we were able to record especially regarding the security risks we or eyewitnesses face in light of the Kurdish Self Management Forces oppression.

II. Executive Summary:

This report documents the violations that were committed by Kurdish Self Management Forces between February 2015 and up till August 2015. We noticed a surge in the violations committed by this party compared to previous times; especially since some these violations had ethnic dimensions towards Arabs mainly, Turkem and Assyrians, according to the Assyrian Human Rights Network.

The most significant violations emerged in Tal Hamees and Tal Barak, southern of Al Qameshli City, and in the southern and western suburbs of Al Hassaka and in Jabal Ezz towns.

Since February 2015 and up till August 2015, we recorded the death of not less than 47 civilians, including 9 children and 8 women in the abovementioned regions, due to random shelling or sniping. Not less than 612 civilians were arbitrary arrested, including 19 children and 8 women. Also, we recorded the death of one individual under torture. We also recorded robbery cases and the almost complete destruction and incineration of entire towns. Crops were also confiscated or burned; properties and lands were flattened. All these actions forcibly displaced tens of thousands of residents.

In an internationally unarmed conflict, and according to Article VIII of the Rome Statute, all these violations amount to war crimes and crimes against humanity and constitute breaches to the Customary International Humanitarian Law.

III. Violations Committed by Kurdish-Self-Management Forces:

A. Extrajudicial Killings:

SNHR documented the killing of 47 individuals, including 9 children and 8 women during the period covered by the report detailed as follows. We would like to mention that we kept records of all the victims' names and relevant details. It is worth noting that the abbreviation KSM stands for the Kurdish-Self-Management Forces.

1. On 23 February 2015, Kurdish Self Management forces (KSM Forces), positioned in a school in Tal Temer Shameya in the western of Al Hassaka governorate shot, under heavy fire at the towns' houses. As a result, a father and his two children were killed (Saleh Sawadi Al Wawi born in 1970, his son Abdul Basit born in 2003, and his daughter Ilham born in 2006). His youngest son, Youssef born in 2007, was also injured.
2. On 23 May 2015, child Haytham Issa Al Shamali, born in 2012 was killed by KSM sniper bullets in Abu Shakhat town.
3. On 24 May 2015, Salbi Abdullah (born in 1960) and Asma Mohamad Abdullah (born in 1982) from Makhzoum town were killed by KSM sniper bullets while they were passing in Jabal Al Azeez region.
4. On 27 May 2015, Khalaf Al Eino was killed by KSM sniper bullets in Al Jawadeya town.
5. On 3 June 2015, KSM artillery forces shelled Um Hajra town in the suburbs of Raes Al Ein which killed 3 civilians including a woman. The victims' names are: Ahmad Houssien Al Awwad, Foutaim Al Mouhaysen Al Salseel, and Ahmad Al Khalifa.
6. On 21 June 2015, child Alaa Ahmad Al Ahmad, born in 2001, was killed by KSM sniper bullets in Al Jawadeya town while he was escaping from an arrest attempt.
7. On 28 June 2015, Fatima Hanafesh was killed by KSM sniper bullets in Ghweyran neighborhood on Al Yarouti Bridge.
8. On 3 July 2015, KSM forces shot dead 3 individuals in Al Shara town in the suburbs of Raes Al Ein city after raiding their house. KSM forces accused the victims of supporting with ISIL and helping its fleeing members. The victims' names are: Hamdou Al Kraydi, Ayed Hamedi, and Samou Al Nazal. Their ages range between 50 to 55 years old.

B. Arrests and Enforced Disappearances:

SNHR documented a large number of widespread raids and arbitrary arrests by KSM forces after it stormed regions that were under ISIL's control in the suburbs of Al Hassaka governorate. The accusations were either for joining ISIL or supporting it.

We recorded the arrest of not less than 612 civilians, including 19 children and 8 women, most of them were from the Arabic ethnicity.

The arrests are detailed as follows:

1. On 17 May 2015, KSM forces arrested three individuals in Abu Jourun town in Tal Hamees suburbs. The detainees' names are: Hamed Al Faraj, Elias Al Mousaree' and Ismaeil Al Mosaree'.
2. On 20 June 2015, KSM forces stormed Al Ahaymar town and Khirbit Al Ahaymar and arrested 5 individuals: Child Yawar Youssef Al Salem (born in 2000), Shaalan Al Kalo, Saad Al Kalo, Basheer Al Hammoud, and Alwan Al Khaleef.
3. On 21 June 2015, KSM forces raided Al Aghabeesh town in the suburbs of Al Hassaka governorate after displaced residents returned to it earlier. They arrested 8 individuals: Khaled Suliman Al Ekla, Farhan Al Ekla, Ekla Ibrahim, Ismaeil Al Khaleel, Asaad Al Khaleel, Khodor Al Molhem and Abdul Dabbas Al Wawi.
4. On 21 June 2015, KSM forces arrested the Imam of Al Fateh mosque, Ahmad Al Shaykho, from his house in Al Kah-taneya town in Al Hassaka governorate. He was taken to unknown locations according to SNHR.
5. On 21 June 2015, KSM forces arrested, Ahmad Al Sheikh, an elderly, Imam of Al Rasafa Mosque in Al Jawadeya town.
6. On 28 June 2015, KSM forces arrested Awwad Houssien Al Kindar, his wife and his brother from their house in Al Azeeziye neighborhood in Al Hassaka city. They were taken to unknown locations.
7. On 2 July 2015, KSM forces arrested 8 civilians in Manazerat Al Ghameer town in Al Hassaka suburbs: Ali Al Sawwad, Taha Al Hajj Alwan, Mohamad Moussa Al Awaad, Mahmoud Al Mohamad Al Aboud, Mousa Al Jomaa, Mohamad Al Radi, Hani Moustafa Al Hajj Mohamad, and Saleh Ibraheem Al Ashwah.

C. Violations Against Properties:

1. Demolition and Incineration of Houses and Properties:

i. Towns that were almost completely destroyed; thus its residents were displaced:

Al Haswiya Al Kabeera, Al Haswiya Al Saghera, Um Kabeer, Um kaheef, Al Naem, Al Henwa Al Kabera, Al Henwa Al Saghera, Al Fastat, and Al Khawla towns.

ii. Towns that were partially destroyed; thus some of its residents were displaced:

Al Erja, Abu Jari, Eastern Palestine, Western Palestine, Um Kranyet, Lazaka, Al Khanasaa, Khazaa, Slayma, Oukaz, Al Jisi, Nakatha, Oumaya, Al Masoudeya, Tal Sawan, Abu Harmala, Abu Kabeer, Al Zahraa, Abu Feree', and Al Ghareeka towns.

An interactive map that depicts the locations of the most significant towns whose residents were displaced due to the violations of the Kurdish Self Management Forces.

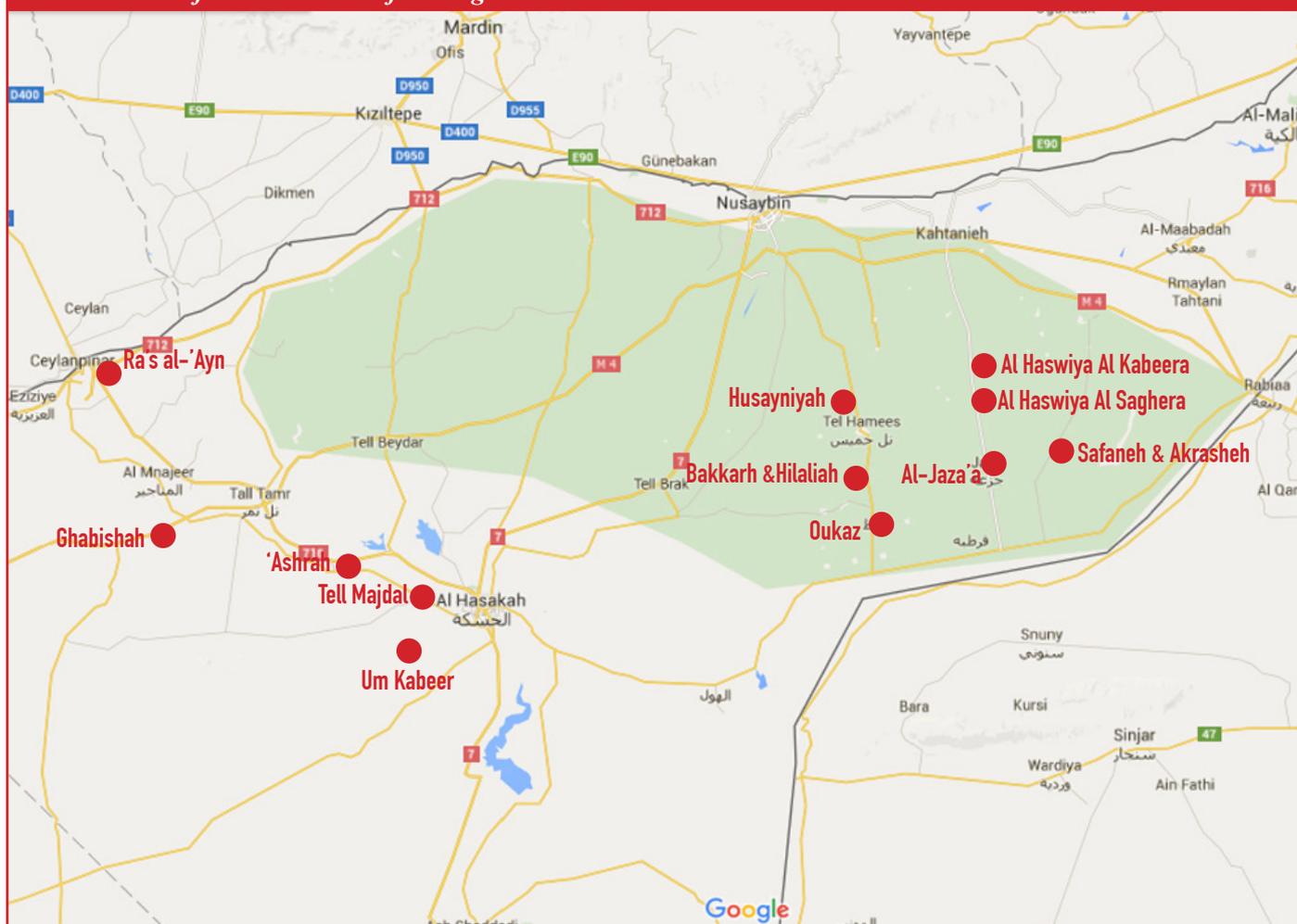




Image shows effects rubbles houses destroyed by kurd self-management forces in Alrezazeh village in Al Hesaka governorate country side

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- February 2015:

On 28 February 2015, KSM forces burned and destroyed dozens of houses in a number of towns in Tal Hamees town after ISIL withdrew from it and KSM forces gained control over the region. Al Housayneya town, Al Naem, and Al Hasweya towns were among the towns that were burned.

- March 2015:

1. In March 2015, KSM forces flattened houses to the ground in towns of western Hassaka suburbs and demolished several houses after forcing its residents to leave it. These towns are: Fareesat Al Sharayeen, Tal Bilal, Fareesat Al Wosta, and Al Razaz towns.

2. On 3 March 2015, KSM forces burned a number of houses in Al Wawya and Al Houswa towns. Also, during March, it gained control over 29 towns in Tal Hamees region after it stormed it and destroyed people's houses. According to that region, 9 towns were destroyed almost completely.

- April 2015:

On 20 April 2015, KSM forces destroyed most of the houses in the town of Tal Al Shouk in Tal Barrak suburbs after it gained control over it.

- May 2015:

1. On 10 May 2015, KSM forces burned five houses in Al Hela town in Raes Al Ein suburbs. Among the houses that were burned was Salman Subieh, and Saleem Mohamad Khalaf's houses.

2. On 12 May 2015, KSM forces were positioned next to the mosque in Al Haweesh town in Raes Al Ein for ten days. During that time, it vandalized the mosque before it left according to a several residents in that region.

3. On 18 May 2015, KSM forces flattened several houses to the ground using bulldozers in Lilan town southern of Raes Al Ein city after it stormed and gained control over it. What helped the KSM forces was the international coalition shelling.

4. On 19 May 2015, KSM forces looted, broke and entered to several houses in the following towns: Hayla, Al Laghaf, Al Houwiesh, Al Ramo, Al Soussa, Al Rihaneyi, Al and Al Salheya in Raes Al Ein..

5. On 27 May 2015, KSM forces burned five houses in the following towns: Al Zebyan, Kamel, Jadedat Idwan and Al Raseem houses. All these towns are located in the vicinity of the Raes Al Ein in Al Hassaka suburbs.

- June 2015:

1. On 6 June 2015, KSM forces demolished several houses in Al Sarli and Eshra towns in southern of Al Hassaka governorate.

2. On 9 June 2015, KSM forces used to bulldozers in Tal Hamam city and flattened several houses in it.

3. On 10 June 2015, KSM forces used bulldozers in Um Al Masameer town in southern of Al Hassaka governorate.

- July 2015:

1. On 9 July 2015, KSM forces burned several houses in Al Rehaneyi town in the southern suburbs of Ras Al Ein after its residents were displaced in May 2015.



2. Burning or Looting Crops:

- June 2015:

1. On 3 June 2015, KSM forces burned some crops in Ras Al Ein region.
2. On 5 June 2015, KSM forces burned the crops in Al Mountafein town in the suburbs of Nahyat Tal Temer in Al Hassaka suburbs.
3. On 6 June 2015, KSM forces looted the wheat and barley crops in vast agricultural lands that spread from Raes Al Ein till Naheyt Tal Temer region. It also looted the crops in the vicinity of Jabal Abdul Azeez that belonged to the displaced residents. They harvested the lands with 15 machines under the protection of their gunmen.

- May 2015:

1. On 7 May 2015, KSM forces confiscated a number of agricultural machines in the towns in the suburbs of Tal Nahya and Talhmes towns. We recorded the confiscation of three machines owned by Al Rumi family from Al Zahraa town.
2. On 17 May 2015, KSM forces looted the crops from several agricultural lands which were owned by Arabs in the following towns: Safana, Akrasha, Al Boutha, Mohamad Al Thayab, Al Housayneya, Al Khatouna, Al Enzi, Jazaa', Khazaa', and Slayma in Al Hassaka suburbs.
3. On 26 May 2015, KSM forces shot live bullets at a protest aiming to disperse it. The protest objected on the KSM actions that destroyed their houses, looted their crops and prevented the famers from farming their lands.
4. On 28 May 2015, KSM forces confiscated a number of barley and wheat crops that were stored in civilian houses in Al Shara town.
5. On 31 May 2015, KSM forces harvested vast agricultural lands that were owned by the residents of Al Aghbeesh town.



Image shows families from Al Jabour Clan in Al Hasakah countryside displaced by Kurd Self-management forces

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D. Forced Displacement:

Widespread violations that were committed by the KSM forces, which had ethnic dimensions sometimes; led to the displacement of tens of thousands of the governorate's residents, mostly Arabs, where dozens of other towns are still vacant of its inhabitants.

These towns are: Al Rawya, Al Khansaa, Al Ta'ef, Balkees, Al Khasa, Al Kharnoubi Al Saghera, Khirbit Moussa, Awayniyi, Al Housyneyi, Al Mabrouki, Al Salmasa Al Kabeera, Al Salmasa Al Shaghera, Al Jisi, Al May, Al Jouyasmeya, Al Zarka, Al Hinwa, Tal Majdel, Al Ishraa, Al Razaza, Um Al Kabar, Tal Khaleef, Al Madina, Al Shlashiyi, Al Madan, Al Soussa, Jurn Abyad, Maghouja, Al Gharaa, Al Hwiesh, Sayed Abad, Al Tahmeen, Nafyat Habash, Al Dabeeb, Al Saleel, Al Alkana, Um Hujra, Abu Fakheez, Al Karen and Al Badee', Tal Temer Shameya, Al Aghbeesh, Tal Hamam, Al Fouwaida, Al Khmasa Ar-be'en, Granada, and Al Kouzleyi towns.

Through our continuous documentation, we noticed that the displacement actions were perpetrated by the KSM forces since it was established. In what follows are the eyewitness's testimonies before and after the report's preparation which indicates a sustained and continuous approach that escalated dramatically in the period of time that is covered by the report.

- June 2014:

1. Um Layth, born in 1982, a widow and a mother of 6 children, from Al Raes Al Ein city in Al Hassaka gov-

ernorate told SNHR that she was expelled twice from her house by KSM forces. She was also threatened of murder, denigration, and robbery.

"In June 2014, after the school year was over, KSM forces stormed Raes Al Ein city. They were led by Houssien Kojar and they threatened and notified the Arab residents to evacuate their houses. These forces came to my house and my neighbor's as well and ordered us to evacuate the houses without justifying the reasons. They told me to go to Turkey or to regions under the control of armed opposition. We are civilians and we do not support the armed opposition or others.

I left my house and went to Turkey where I stayed for two months. Then I decided to go back to my house again when the school year was going to begin in Raes Al Ein and I was expelled from my house again for the second time. They threatened me that I and my family shall be burned alive in the house if I do not evacuate the house in two days. Housien Kojar, the leader, insulted me with his words so I had to leave my house for the second time. They took over my house, my land and two shops that I own. Since that time I have been living as a refugee in Turkey with my children. We have nobody to support us. More than 150 Arab families were displaced and their properties were seized by the KSM forces. We do not dare to go back to our cit. What did we do to them so that they did that to us?"

- November 2014:

Ahmad, 25 years old, a taxi driver, from Al Safana town in the southeast of Al Qameshli city who is currently living in Al Hassaka suburbs. He told SNHR his testimony:

“The number of the inhabitants of Al Safana town is almost 1500 individuals. Twenty five individuals enrolled with ISIL and tried to establish a headquarters but we were against this idea and expelled them from the town. We do not want our town to be a battlefield between the Kurdish forces and ISIL. We hate ISIL.

The KSM forces surrounded the town for about a week, since the end of October and up till the beginning of November in an attempt to storm it. They raided the town and they wore a camouflaged military uniform who were about 600 gunmen. They gathered a great number of the families in the town’s square, cursed, insulted and accused us of enrolling with ISIL. Also, they accused us of storing weapons in our houses. Some of their insults were racial even though the town was free of any ISIL presence.

They searched the houses in the town, burned almost 50 houses and shot at the water tanks. After that, they arbitrary arrested not less than 150 young men and ordered us to leave the city. They did not even allow us to take out belongings as they fired into the air. We heard explosion sounds from the town as we left it. I believe that the KMS bombed some houses. We arrived to a nearby town and I cannot even mention the town’s name because we fear the retaliation of the KSM forces. We heard the explosion sounds from the town every day.”

All these clashes in addition to shelling from different conflict parties, including the international coalition’s bombardment, led to waves of displacement. Most of the displaced individuals never returned to their houses out of fear from the KSM retaliation. Their houses, lands and shops were destroyed or burned and their possessions were looted; all these actions also conveyed a racial or ethnic grudge.

- February 2015:

1. Mohamad Al Abbas, 27, from Al Ewja town in Hasska suburbs, was displaced from his town and is currently residing in Aksaray City in Turkey. He told us his testimony:

“Our town is so small, almost 70 houses. Sometimes the KSM forces used to shoot at the town in order to terrorize the residents but did not target the residents directly even though our town was free from any ISIL presence. On 10 February 2015, we heard an unknown movement outside the house then we saw members of the KSM forces in their military uniforms entering the town. I hid in my house for almost 4 hours and during that time, I heard the sounds of gun firing, and the screams of women and children. When the firing sounds cooled down I met the residents. That is when I learned that the KSM forces arrested nearly 30 individuals then held them captive in the mosque. They broke into three houses who had members enrolled in ISIL and burned their houses even though their owners were not inside it. Those members are: Ahmad Turkey Al Falah, Abdul Rahman Al Aydan and Farhan Aydan Al Mohamad. KSM forces issued warnings to all the residents in the town stating that they must evacuate their houses in not more than 24 hours or else they will be burned alive in their houses. I was terrified, just as the rest of the residents and packed my belongings and fled with my family to a town called Al Gherra in Jabal Al Azeez region where we stayed there for four month, then I left to Turkey.”

2. Abu Saleh Al Swadi, born in 1992, married and a taxi driver from Tal Tamer Shameyi town in Al Hassaka western suburbs. We spoke to him in Turkey and he told us his testimony:

“I moved with my brother in mid 2013 to live in Tal Hamam town which is almost 8 Kilometers away from my hometown. On 23 February 2015, ISIL stormed Al Aghabeesh town and its surrounding villages, including our town which were all under KSM control. We heard shelling sounds for four hours then I fled the town with my older brother Abdul Kader, 27, and saw several women and children who were expelled from their houses under the pretext of ISIL’s invasion.”

- May 2015

On 26 May 2015, KSM forces warned the residents of a number of residents in Jabal Al Azeez to evacuate it and gave then a 24 hours notice. The KSM pretext is that it was a military region. These towns are:



Um Al Kabar, Jurn Abyad, Tal Za'yter, Al Shahedi, Al Fawqani, Al Moutawasita, Al Hamaneyi Al Fawqaneyi, Al Addad, Makhoulja, Al Ikla, Abu Sera, Eastern Dawodiya, Western Dawodiya, Al kefra, Southern Wasta, Tal Sousa, Al Qaseir, Al Sousa city, Al Sayad, Al Aghbeesh, Tal Hamam, Al Serhaneyi, Al Ghouraa, Al Khazna, Al Hazoumiya, Al Jafar, and other towns of southern of Al Hassaka governorate.

Nour Al Jabouri, one of the residents in Al Aghbeesh town in Al Hassaka suburbs was displaced twice. He is living in Turkey now and he told us his testimony:

“In the end of May 2015, after ISIL withdrew from the towns that surrounded Jabal Al Azeez region, southern of Al Hassaka governorate, KSM forces forced the Arab residents to leave their houses. I used to live in a town called Tal Hamam that is 8 kilometers away from Al Aghbeesh town in the southern suburbs of Al Hassaka governorate. I spoke to a number of displaced individuals from surrounding towns and they told me how KSM forces looted and burned their places and threatened them. The following month, KSM forces stormed the town of Tal Hamam and accused us of being ISIL members and that we should be in Palmyra not Kurdistan. They burned a great number of houses and that is when I was displaced for the second time. We ran out of the town on foot and passed by several

towns which were almost entirely vacant of any residents. We will never forget what they did to us.

The first time I was displaced was almost a year and a half when KSM forces committed a heinous massacre in Al Aghbeesh town against Arab residents. We ran away with almost 100 Arab families to Tal Hamam town and built small houses to shelter us. Then I was displaced again for the second time.”

In the following testimony, we focus on how KSM forces prohibited Abu Awwad from going back to his house. Abu Awwad, 26, a university student in the Faculty of Law, from Al Rihaneyi town in the suburbs of Raes Al Ein city. He was displaced from his town to the northern suburbs of Deir Al Zour. Abu Awwad gave his testimony about his displacement from Al Rehaneyi town and how he was prevented by KSM forces from returning back to it:

“On 7 May 2015, I fled my town with my family due to the clashes between KSM forces and ISIL, in addition to the international coalition shelling. We went to Al Zabeeb town in Jabal Al Azeez region.

After the KSM forces gained control over Al Rehaneya town and expelled ISIL from it on 15 May 2015, I left Al Zabeeb town and went back to my

village, however, the KSM forces prevented us from entering it and said: “You support ISIL, go to Raqqa where ISIL is.”

“They accused us of enrolling into ISIL even though our town was free from any ISIL presence. The number of inhabitants in our town is not more than 400 inhabitants and ISIL sometimes entered it and sometimes it used to leave it, and we could not have stopped them. We had to go back to Jabal Al Azeez region again but with the intensity of the clashes and the international coalition forces, I fled the region again to the towns in the northern suburbs of Deir Al Zour in the end of May. Later in August I learned from the residents of the surrounding towns to ours that the KSM forces looted and burned most of the houses in the town. How could we forget what they did to us?”

were surprised by the invasion of the KSM forces to our house when they arrested my elderly father in Tal Temer for 7 days. They accused him of dealing with ISIL and supporting it against the Kurds. He was beaten and humiliated. They did not even take into consideration that he was an elderly. They released my father by forced him to fingerprint on a paper which they told him that it was a release order. Later, it turned out that it was a paper that stated of waiver. My parents are old and illiterate. By that statement, KSM forces took over our five houses and all the agricultural lands that we owned. We had to leave the town. We are not their only victims. Every day they destroy, burn, loot houses and properties. The number of inhabitants in our town is not more than 300, and up till now, almost 30 families have left the region.”

- June 2015:

On 30 June 2015, KSM forces warned the residents of some towns from Al Ali tribe in the vicinity of Tal Barak to evacuate it and accused the residents of supporting or enrolling in ISIL. Most of the towns that were warned are:

Al Sultaneyi, Al Sakman, Al Saybat and Um Kahfe.

On 13 June 2015, KSM forces stopped some Arab families from returning to their houses in the following towns:

Wadha, Faresa, Al Sarli, Abu Shakhat, Abu Joulud, Al Shara, Al Dahmaa, Al Rawiya, and Nahey Mabrouka towns in the suburbs of Raes Al Ein city in Al Hassaka.

Abdul Mutaleb, 52, a farmer who lived in Um Masameer town is currently living in Ourfa city in Turkey. He told SNHR his testimony:

“In June 2015, the battles between ISIL and the KSM forces intensified in our town. Also, we were being shelled by the international coalition forces. All these factors forced us to leave the town and we ran to the towns in Abdul Azeez region. There, we stayed for about a month when we heard news that the KSM forces allowed the residents who did not support ISIL to return to their town after they gained complete control over it.

We went back to our town but after ten days we

Omar Al Hamadani, 36, from Khirbit Karaj town that belongs to Tal Temer region and he is currently living in Ourfa in Turkey. He told us his testimony:

“Our village was under ISIL’s control in the beginning of 2015, but they did not have a headquarters inside the town. In May 2015, and after the battles between ISIL and KSM forces intensified, we fled to the towns of Jabal Abdul Azeez and stayed there for nearly a month.

KSM forces gained control over the town in 5 June 2015. After 10 days, we decided to go back to the town. Upon our arrival, we saw not less than 12 houses that were demolished, which is half of the number of the houses in the town. The number of inhabitants in our town is not more than 100 inhabitants. We were prevented by the KSM forces from returning back to our town as they said that we need to leave to ISIL-controlled regions. This time we had to leave to Turkey because the battles intensified in the towns of Jabal Al Azeez region.”

- July 2015:

Mohannad, a telecommunications engineer, from Raes Al Ein city stated the following in an SNHR testimony:

“My family was harassed a lot by the KSM forces. Our suffering started in the mid of June 2014 when 5 KSM armed members, who affiliated to

Houssein Kojar the military leader of the KSM forces in Raes Al Ein city, stormed our house. They gave a three day notice to my family and interrogated my father. They asked him about my whereabouts and if I had enrolled with ISIL, which is a routine question. In that same period of time, we learned that KSM forces displaced nearly 90 Arab families from the city. We were supposed to be among the displaced families, but some of our Kurdish relatives from my father's side mediated with the KSM forces to let us stay in the city.

After almost two months, in mid August 2014, they demanded my father to enroll my brothers in the KSM forces and asked him to pay an amount of money, then accused him of enrolling and supporting ISIL.

They told my father: "You are not cooperating with us. You are not enrolling your family members in our forces and do not mourn our victims. You Arabs destroyed our city. You are ISIL supporters.

In the mid of July 2015, car was bombed next to Koujar office (the military leader of the KSM forces) that is 500 meters away from our house. Few hours later, a KSM patrol stormed our house and gave my family a one day notice to leave the house or they will burn them alive inside it. As a result, my family was forced to leave the town in addition to dozens of other families. Among the displaced families, was Al Hajj Houssein family, who is a Muazzin in Al Mahata mosque and owned several shops and houses. His charge was that his brother-in-law was an ISIL member."

but also, it was committed against other ethnic groups in Al Hassaka. For instance, in February 2015, nearly 100 Turkmen families were subjected to the cruelty, injustice and oppression. Some of these residents also told us that they were forced to displace and leave the city due to arbitrary arrests mainly, and due to the armed clashes that happened in the region.

SNHR interviewed Mo'ayed Al Sultan, 29, a lawyer, who lived in Raes Al Ein before he was displaced to Turkey. He is now living in Istanbul and he gave us his testimony:

"On 17 April 2013, armed opposition groups and An-Nusra front withdrew from Raes Al Ein almost entirely after clashes with the KSM forces. We feared our lives and therefore leaved the city. My family (Members) and almost 20 Turkmen families fled towards the Turkish borders (Jilan Binner Crossing point). We had to flee the city due to the continuous arrests and murders committed by the Kurdish forces. Residents in this city were arrested and expelled from their houses because the KSM forces accused them of supporting armed opposition groups. Right now, since not everyone can afford to move to a different region or country, only 20 Turkmen families out of 200 are left in Raes Al Ein."

Violations Committed by KSM forces against Turkmen: Turkmen are Turkish people who are located primarily in Central Asia. They have been residing in Syria in a number of cities and towns especially in Damascus, Aleppo, Homs, Hama, Al Raqqa, Daraa and Al Hassaka governorates. Most of them are Sunnis and they descendents from the Turkish families who lived in Syria hundreds of years ago during the Ottoman period. In Al Hassaka governorate, the number of the Turkmen inhabitants is nearly 8 thousands where half of them live in Raes Al Ein city and its suburbs. The rest inhabit Al Nashwa neighborhood in Al Hassaka and Al Qameshli cities. Most of the violations were committed against Arabs,

IV. Attachments and Annexes:

- Amnesty International reports:

- i. [“WE HAD NOWHERE TO GO’ - FORCED DISPLACEMENT AND DEMOLITIONS IN NORTHERN SYRIA”](#)
- ii. [Syria: Arbitrary detentions and blatantly unfair trials mar PYD fight against terrorism](#)

- A [statement](#) that was issued from Christian churches, civil and political institutions about the violations of the Kurdish Self Management forces:

- Refugee Camps in Turkey – March 2015:

A [video](#) that depicts a displaced woman in one of the refugee camps in Turkey. She says that the Kurdish Self Management forces particularly displaced Arabs. Also she states that her crops were looted as well.

- Turkey – February 2015:

A [video](#) that depicts an elderly woman who claims that KSM forces assaulted the residents in her region, Al Jezaa’ Al Zarka, and Al Nefaa’ towns which forced them to resort to Turkey for refuge:

- A [video](#) that depicts a man called Abu Abdulla who claims that he was displaced from Nahyat Tal Hamees town due to KSM arrests and killings.

- A [video](#) that depicts a man from Tal Hamees town who claims that International Coalition forces supported the KSM forces in killing civilians. He says that almost 150 families were displaced from Tal Hamees.



- Turkey – March 2015:

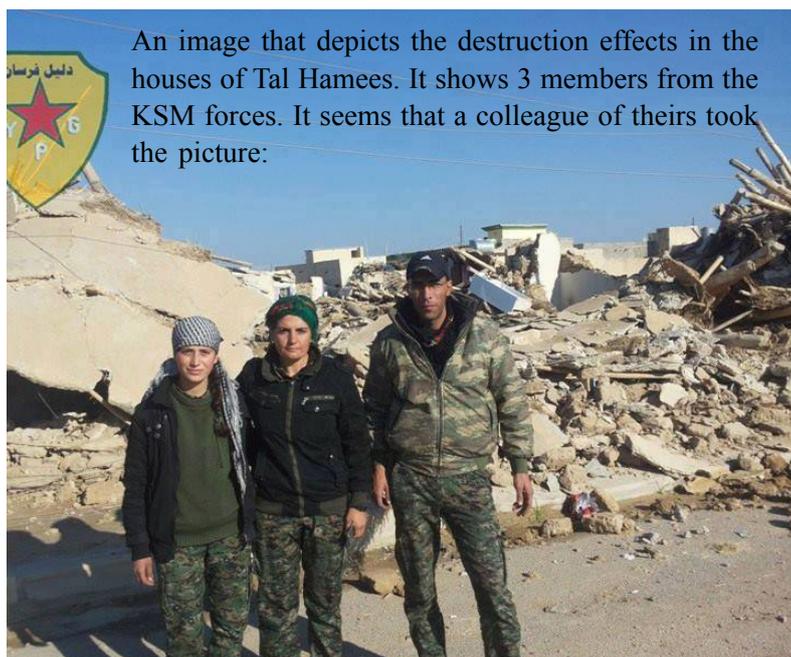
A [video](#) that depicts an elderly woman who says that she was displaced from her town by the KSM forces. KSM forces looted the several herds and burned several houses in the town.



- A video that depicts the destruction effects in some houses in Al Hawsawiya town next to Tal Hamees.



An image that depicts vandalism in a school in Tal Hamees. The sender claims that it was pretreated by KSM forces



An image that depicts the destruction effects in the houses of Tal Hamees. It shows 3 members from the KSM forces. It seems that a colleague of theirs took the picture:

- An [image](#) that depicts a number of houses that were flattened to the ground by KSM forces.

- [Images](#) that depict a [number of houses that were flattened](#) to the ground in Tal Majdal town in the western suburbs of Al Hassaka governorate.

- An [image](#) that shows depicts a house that was flattened to the ground by KSM forces in Al Razzaza town.

- A [video](#) that depicts the displacement of residents in Al Mabrouka town and its surrounding

- An [image](#) that depicts the displacement of families from Al Hassaka suburbs in May 2015.

- An image that depicts the displacement of families in the western suburbs of Raes Al Ein city

- An [image](#) that depicts displaced people from Al Mabrouka town and its surrounding villages in the suburbs of Raes Al Ein suburbs.



Several images that depict Arabs who were displaced from Al Hassaka suburbs

Several images which depicts displaced families from Al Jabour tribe in Al Hassaka suburbs due to the KSM actions.





Image shows families from Al Jabour Clan in Al Hasakah countryside displaced by Kurd Self-management forces

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Image shows families from Al Jabour Clan in Al Hasakah countryside displaced by Kurd Self-management forces

© SNHR



Image shows families from Al Jabour Clan in Al Hasakah countryside displaced by Kurd Self-management forces

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V. Conclusions:

Kurdish Self Management Forces violated the International Human Rights Law when it threatened, assaulted, attacked, arrested, killed and robbed civilians who live under its military authority.

Indiscriminate destruction, displacement, arbitrary arrests, extrajudicial killing and ethnic assaults are considered a clear violation of the International Humanitarian Law, and these indiscriminate killings amount to war crimes.

KSM forces prohibited civilians and residents from returning to their towns which is clear evidence that forced displacement was a systemized and deliberate strategy.

Recommendations:

i. To the Independent Investigation Commission:

Reveal the results of the investigations about the violations that were committed by Kurdish Self Management Forces.

ii. To the Security Council:

- Refer the Syrian file to the International Criminal Court.
- Impose sanctions against those responsible for the war crimes they committed.
- Impose and arms embargo against the Kurdish Self Management Forces since they violated the human rights law.

iii. To the Supporters of the KSM forces:

- Pressure the KSM forces to end all its violations against civilians and residents.
- Hold the perpetrators accountable for their crimes.
- To compensate for the damage and destruction they inflicted.
- Stop all forms of arms support since according to the international law, it is a contribution to those crimes.
- Condemn the crimes that were committed by the KSM forces.

iv. To the Kurdish Self Management forces:

- Abide to the international human rights law.
- Seize their arrests, assaults and destruction under the pretext of fighting ISIL.
- Investigate all the committed crimes.
- Compensate to all those affected.
- Allow residents to return to their towns.
- Hold all the perpetrators accountable for their crimes.

Acknowledgment and Condolences:

Our heartfelt thanks and appreciations go to the victims' families, eyewitnesses, and local activists whose testimonies contributed majorly to this report. Our most profound consolations go out to the victims' families and friends.