



56 Individuals Killed due to Torture in November 2016 Including 48 at the Hands of Government Forces

Report Contents

- I. Report Methodology
- II. Executive Summary
- III. Most Notable Deaths due to Torture
- IV. Conclusions and Recommendations
- Acknowledgment

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, please see the following [URL](#)

II. Executive Summary

SNHR documented no less than 56 deaths due to torture inside official and non-official detention centers in November 2016. The death toll is distributed as follows:

A. Government forces (Army, security, local militias, Shiite foreign militias): 48

B. Extremist Islamic groups

ISIS (Self-proclaimed the Islamic State): 1

C. Armed opposition factions: 5

D. Self-management forces (Primarily consisting of the Democratic Union Party forces – a branch for the Kurdistan Workers' Party): 1

E. Unidentified groups: 1

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.

Hama governorate saw the highest number of victims who died due to torture with 21 individuals, while the remaining death toll was distributed across governorates as follows:

Aleppo: 9

Deir Ez-Zour: 7

Homs: 6

Damascus suburbs: 5

Damascus: 2

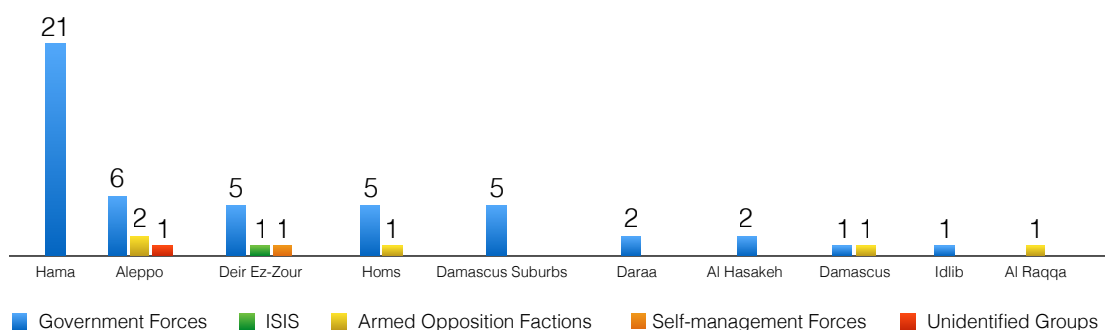
Daraa: 2

Al Hasakeh: 2

Idlib: 1

Al Raqqa: 1

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





Most notable cases of deaths due to torture in November are: One Engineer, Three Women

II. Most Notable Deaths due to Torture

Engineer

Abdullah Mustafa Al Batheish, electrical engineer, from Al Bab city in the suburbs of Aleppo governorate. On Sunday 11 December 2011, he was arrested by government forces at Kafrsousa circle in Damascus city. He was in good health at the time of the arrest. On Saturday 8 November 2016, we received information confirming that he died due to torture on Monday 25 May 2015 in Sydnaya prison in Damascus suburbs governorate.



Women

Zahra Khalil Al Ali, university student, from Ghbagheb town in the suburbs of Daraa governorate. She was arrested by government forces in mid-December 2014 at a checkpoint. Her family assured that she was in good health before the arrest. On Sunday 6 November 2016, we received information confirming her death due to torture inside a detention center.

Umama Abdurrahman Al Sayed, from Deir Ez-Zour city, 63-year-old. In October 2016, she was arrested by Self-management forces at Rajm Sliebi checkpoint, which is affiliated with Self-management forces, in Al Hasakeh governorate. She was detained in Rajm Sliebi camp and had a heart condition. On Saturday 12 November 2016, we received information confirming her death due to her body failing to endure the harsh weather conditions and due to denial of medical care at her place of detention in Rajm Sliebil checkpoint.

Lama Al Hamad, from Aleppo city, born in 1983, graduated from the commerce college at Aleppo University. In the beginning of 2014 she was arrested by the Political Security forces, affiliated to government forces, in Aleppo city. On Friday 18 November 2016, we received information confirming her death due to torture inside Sydnaya military prison in Damascus suburbs governorate.





III. Conclusions and Recommendations

SNHR affirms that this considerably huge number of victims who are dying due to 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. ISIS, Kurdish Self-management forces, and armed opposition factions all executed acts of torture which 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- 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. 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.

