

# Report on the Most Notable Cases of Arbitrary Arrest and Enforced Disappearance in Syria



SYRIAN NETWORK FOR HUMAN RIGHTS

الشبكة السورية لحقوق الإنسان

Thursday, November 1, 2018

The Syrian Network for Human Rights (SNHR), founded in June 2011, is a non-governmental, independent group that is considered a primary source for the OHCHR on all death toll-related analyses in Syria.



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## I. Introduction

Tens of thousands of Syrians have fallen prey to the Syrian regime's apparatus of systematic arrests, which targets not only activists or others who were involved in the popular uprising against the Assad family's dynastic rule, but also targets many individuals merely on the basis of suspicions or kinship. Syrian authorities usually deny having made these arrests, forcing worried family members to go to great lengths just to know the whereabouts of their loved ones. As a result of the regime's culture of secrecy, most of these arrests – over 85 percent – are classified as forced disappearances. These practices are part of a calculating and deliberate central policy of the Syrian regime, as we've explained in many previous reports. A dedicated team at SNHR has been documenting arrests and the resultant cases of forced disappearance, as well as releases, since 2011.

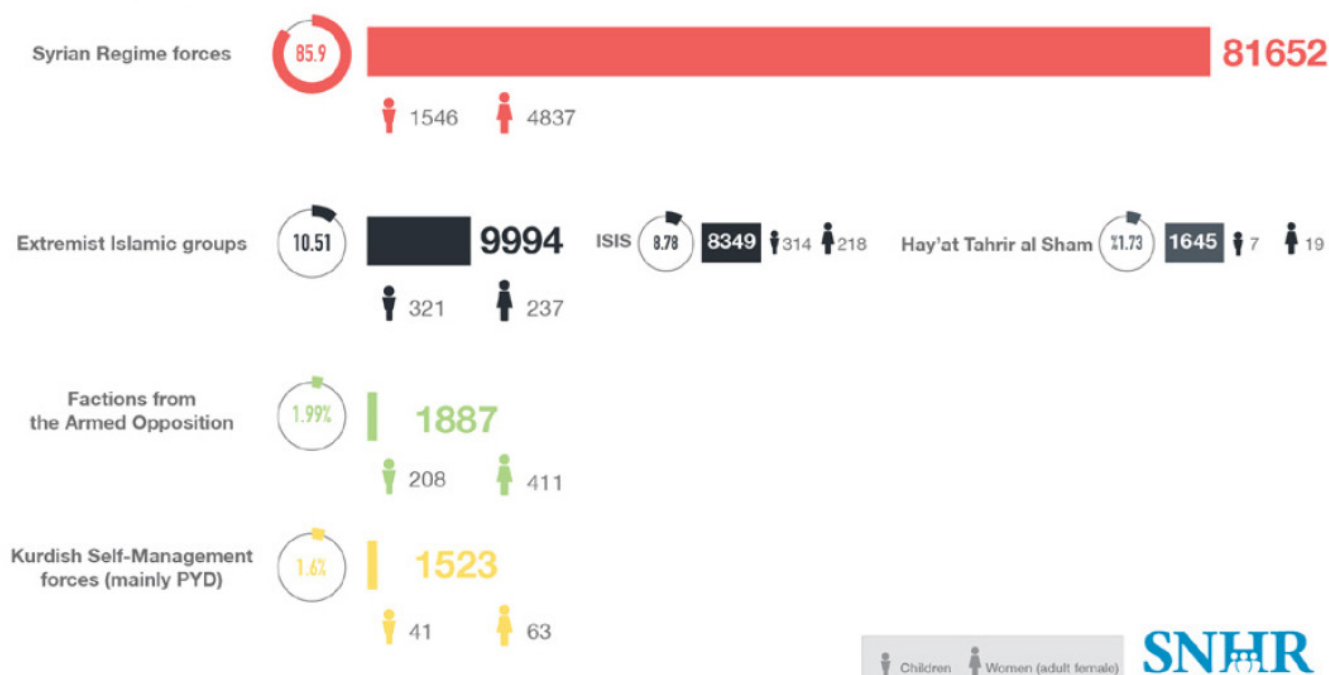
SNHR records new incidences of arbitrary arrest almost every day, with the Syrian regime being the first of the parties to the conflict to carry out these practices in a systematic fashion against the various segments of Syrian society. The Syrian regime has adopted mafia-like methods, as most arrests are made without any warrant or judicial memorandum while the victims are passing through a checkpoint or during raids. From the very first moment of arrest, the detainee is subjected to torture and denied any chance to contact his or her family or attorney. In addition, authorities routinely deny even having made any arrest; as a result, most detainees are categorized as forcibly disappeared persons.



According to the database of cases catalogued to date, at least 95,056 individuals are still forcibly disappeared at the hands of the parties to the conflict in Syria between March 2011 and August 2018.

## No less than 95,056 individuals are still forcibly disappeared at the hands of the parties to the conflict in Syria from March 2011 until August 2018

As follows:



As documented by SNHR

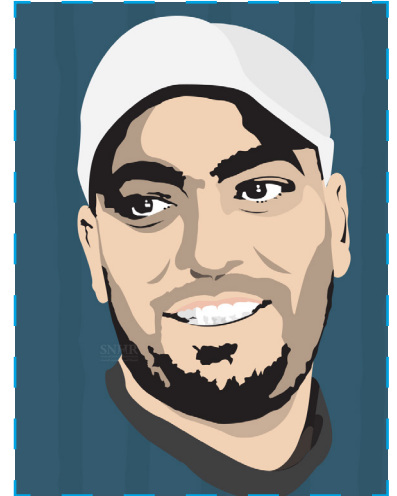
**SNHR**  
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## II. Outline of the Most Notable Cases of Arbitrary Arrest and Enforced Disappearance in Syria according to the SNHR Database

### Adnan Zera'i

Playwright and theater actor, from the Baba Amr neighborhood of Homs city

Adnan was arrested by Syrian regime forces on Sunday, February 26, 2012, from the Rukn al Din neighborhood of Damascus city. His fate remains unknown.



### Tal al Mallouhi

Blogger and university student, from Homs city, born in 1991...

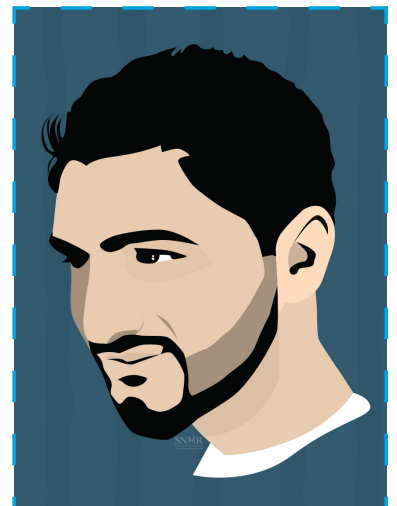
Tal was arrested by Syrian regime forces on Sunday, December 27, 2009, in Homs city. A court order for her release was issued on Thursday, October 24, 2013, but wasn't implemented. Her fate remains unknown at the time of this writing.



### Anas Ali al Shaghri

University student at the Tishreen University's Faculty of Economics, and a popular uprising activist. He was born in 1988...

Anas is from al Bayda village near Banyas city in Tartus governorate. He was arrested by Syrian regime forces on Saturday, May 14, 2011, in al Bayda village. His fate remains unknown.





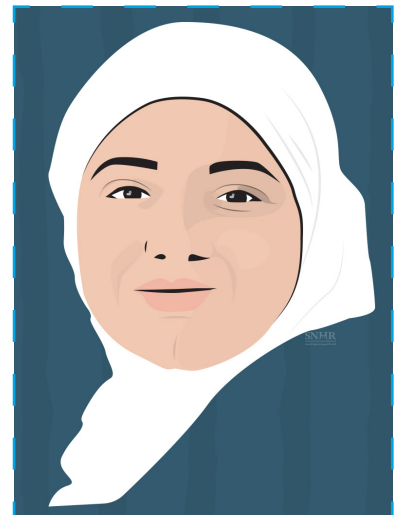
### **Mohammad Bashir Arab**

Medical laboratory specialist, from Aleppo city, born in 1980... He was arrested by Syrian regime forces in his hometown of Aleppo on Wednesday, November 2, 2011. Two months later, on Thursday, January 12, 2012, he was transferred to al Mujtahed Hospital in Damascus city as a result of medical problems after suffering severe torture in custody. Since then, no new information has been revealed about his fate.



### **Rama Yasser al Asas**

Student at Damascus University's Faculty of Literature, and an activist in the popular uprising, as well as in the field of humanitarian relief. Born in 1986, she is from Damascus city... She was arrested by Syrian regime forces in al Baramka neighborhood of Damascus city on Monday, August 27, 2012. Her fate remains unknown at the time of this writing.



### **Hussein Mustafa Harmoush**

Defected Lieutenant Colonel, from Ebleen village in the northern suburbs of Idlib governorate, born in 1972... He was arrested by Syrian regime forces on Monday, August 29, 2011, in an operation whose details have yet to be revealed. His fate remains unknown.



### **Jihad Asaad Mohammad**

Journalist, from the Dummar neighborhood of Damascus city, born in 1988...

He was arrested by Syrian regime forces on Saturday, August 10, 2013, in the Thawra Street of Damascus city. His fate remains unknown.



### **Loay Khattab**

Otologist, from Taybet al Imam city in the northern suburbs of Hama governorate...

He was arrested by Syrian regime forces on Sunday, March 4, 2012, at Tishreen Military Hospital in Damascus city. His fate remains unknown at the time of this writing.



### **Ismail al Hamed**

General surgeon and political activist, from Fateira village in the southern suburbs of Idlib governorate. He was born in 1964...

He was arrested by gunmen from ISIS on Saturday, November 2, 2013 in al Raqqa city. His fate remains unknown.



### **Salah Mahmoud Amasha**

General Surgeon and political activist from Baq'atha village in the northern suburbs of Quneitra governorate.

Salah was arrested in an ambush by Syrian regime forces on Wednesday, February 20, 2013 in al Thiabiya town in Damascus suburbs governorate. His fate remains unknown at the time of this writing.



### **Adel al Braz**

Student at Damascus University's Faculty of Tourism, from the Dummar al Balad neighborhood of Damascus governorate. He was born in 1980...

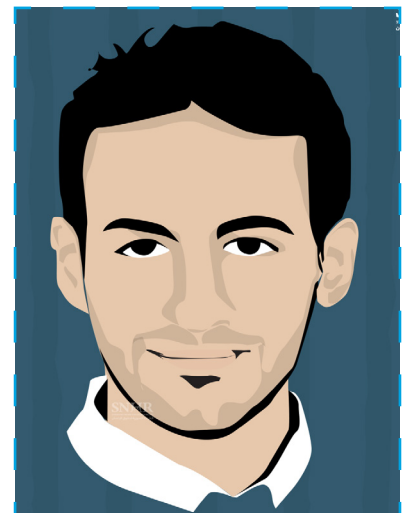
He was arrested by Syrian regime forces on Saturday, August 11, 2012 in the Dummar al Balad neighborhood of Damascus city. His fate remains unknown.



### **Mohammad Samih Bahra**

University student, studying medicine, from Damascus city. He was born in 1989...

He was arrested by Syrian regime forces on Tuesday, May 28, 2013, from al Sheikh Saed neighborhood in Damascus city. His fate remains unknown at the time of this writing.



### **Rania al Abbasi**

Dentist, won a number of Syrian and Arab chess championships, from Damascus city. she was born in 1970...

She was arrested by Syrian regime forces on Monday, March 11, 2013 in the Dummar neighborhood of Damascus along with her husband Abdul Rahman Yasin and their six children (Dima 14, Intisar 11, Najah 9, Walaa 8, Ahmad 4, and Layan 1.5). Their fate remains unknown.



### **Samer Idris**

Lawyer, from Damascus city. He was born in 1970...

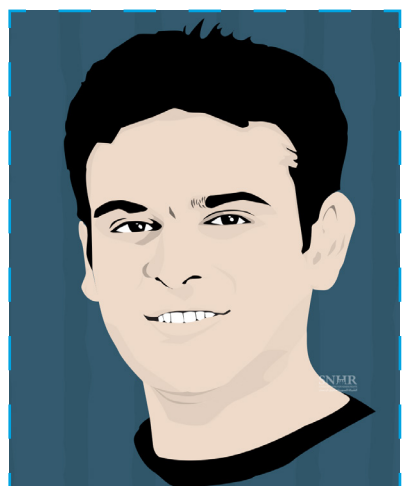
Samer was arrested by Syrian regime forces on Monday, June 11, 2012, as he was leaving the Justice Palace in Damascus city. His fate remains unknown at the time of this writing.



### **Hayyan Mohammad Mahmoud**

Cardiac surgeon, from Salamiya city in Hama governorate suburbs. He was born in 1986...

He was arrested by Syrian regime forces on Monday, July 16, 2012 in al Mujtahed Hospital in Damascus city. His fate remains unknown at the time of this writing.



### **Ahmad Arabi Baqdounes**

Human rights activist from Damascus city He was born in 1983...

He was arrested by Syrian regime forces on Friday, May 19, 2012, in Damascus city. His fate remains unknown at the time of this writing.



### **Basel Ahmad Tabbakh**

Student at Damascus University's Faculty of Fine Arts, from Aleppo city, born in 1985....

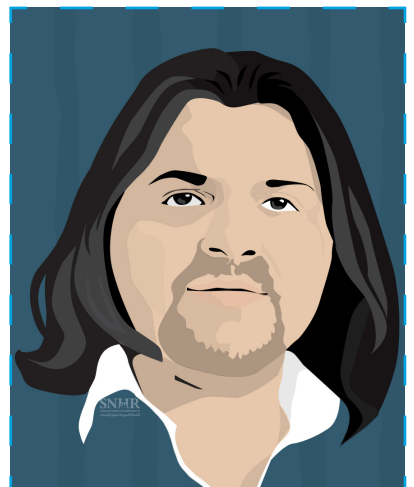
He was arrested by Syrian regime forces on Tuesday, March 12, 2013 in Jaramana city in southeastern Damascus suburbs governorate. His fate remains unknown.



### **Zaher Ahmad Tabbakh**

He worked as a mixing technician at a production company, from Aleppo city. He was born in 1988...

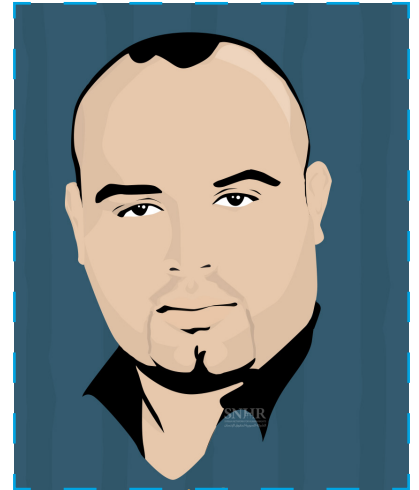
He was arrested by Syrian regime forces on Tuesday, March 12, 2013 in Jaramana city in southeastern Damascus suburbs governorate. His fate remains unknown.



### **Maher Theib**

Journalist, former employee at the General Organization of Radio and TV, graduated from the Damascus University's Faculty of Literature...

Maher, originally from Tarnaja village in the northeastern suburbs of Quneitra governorate, was arrested by Syrian regime forces on Wednesday, March 13, 2013 at a checkpoint in Sa'sa' town in southwestern Damascus suburbs governorate. His fate remains unknown.



### **Anas Badea al Azma**

Journalist, from Damascus city, a graduate in Economics from Damascus University. He was born in 1979...

Anas was arrested by Syrian regime forces on Wednesday, November 7, 2012 in Damascus city. His fate remains unknown.



### **Jihad Jamal**

Jihad Jamal, an activist in the popular uprising, born in 1972, graduated from Aleppo University with a degree in law, from Aleppo city, born in 1972...

Jihad was arrested by Syrian regime forces on Wednesday, March 7, 2012 at the Ninar Café in the Bab Sharqi neighborhood of Damascus city. He was taken to the Palestine security branch. His fate remains unknown.



### **Eyas Ayyash**

Member of the Executive Office of the National Coordination Committee for Democratic Change Forces, from Damascus city. He was arrested by Syrian regime forces on Thursday, September 20, 2012, at a checkpoint on the Damascus International Airport highway. His fate remains unknown.



### **Maher Tahhan**

Member of the Executive Office of the National Coordination Committee for Democratic Change Forces, from Damascus city. He was arrested by Syrian regime forces on Thursday, September 20, 2012, at a checkpoint on the Damascus International Airport highway. His fate remains unknown.



### **Rami Hannawi**

Political activist and member of the National Coordination Committee for Democratic Change Forces, from Suwayda city...

Rami was arrested by Syrian regime forces on Sunday, August 5, 2012 at a checkpoint in Sehnaya town in southwestern Damascus suburbs governorate. SNHR received information confirming his death due to torture in a Syrian regime detention center on Monday, December 27, 2017.



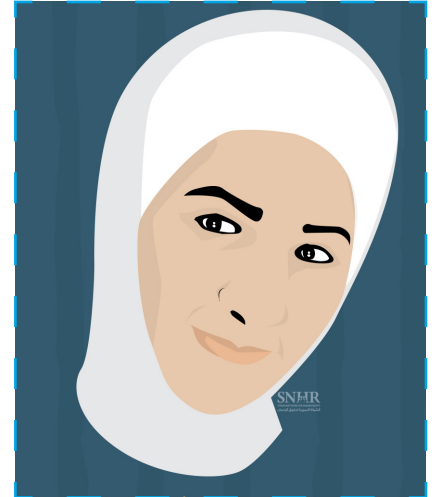


### **Lama Nawaf al Basha**

University student, studying Project Management. Volunteer with the civilian group Methaq Swrya. She is from al Tal city, northern Damascus suburbs governorate. She was born in 1992...

Lama was arrested by Syrian regime forces on Sunday, November 16, 2014 in an ambush in al Tal city. She was taken to Adra Central Prison. She was tried by al Midan Military Court. In 2015, she was transferred by a police unit from Adra Central Prison to an unknown destination. She was last visited by her family on Sunday, March 29, 2015.

On Tuesday, July 31, 2018, SNHR received information that Lama had been registered as dead in the civil registry, and probably died due to torture in a Syrian regime detention center.



### **Yahya Sharbaji**

A peaceful political activist, from Darayya city, western Damascus suburbs governorate, born in 1979, studied Business Administration at Damascus University...

Yahya founded the 'Darayya Youth Group' in 2003. He was arrested by Syrian regime forces on Tuesday, September 6, 2011, in Sehnaya town in Damascus suburbs governorate. On Monday, July 23, 2018, his family learned while obtaining documents from civil registry offices that Yahya was registered as dead on January 15, 2013. SNHR suspects that he died due to torture in a Syrian regime detention center.





### **Niraz Saeed**

Photographer, Syrian-Palestinian, winner of the UNRWA photo competition in 2014, from al Yarmouk Camp for Palestinian refugees in the south of Damascus city.

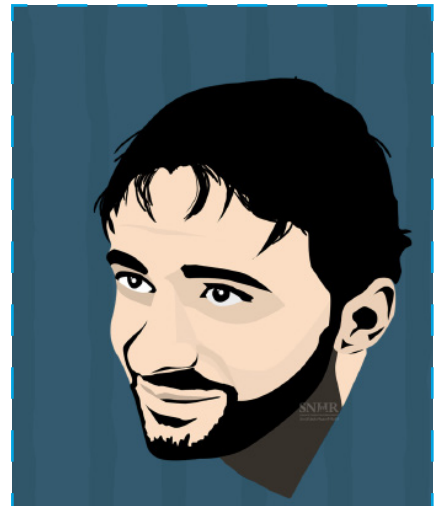
Niraz was arrested by Syrian regime forces on Friday, October 2, 2015 in Damascus city. On Monday, July 16, 2018, SNHR received information concluding that Niraz had been registered as dead in civil registry. We suspect that he died due to torture in a Syrian regime forces detention center.



### **Islam Kheiro al Dabbas**

An activist in the popular uprising, student of architecture, from Darayya city, western Damascus suburbs governorate, born in 1989.

He was arrested by Syrian regime forces on Friday, July 22, 2011. On Monday, July 16, 2018, SNHR received information concluding that Islam was registered as dead in the civil registry on December 15, 2013. We suspect that he died due to torture in the Saydnaya Military Prison in Damascus suburbs.



### **Majd al Din Abdul Fattah Khoulan**

Student of law, from Darayya city in southwestern Damascus suburbs governorate...

He was arrested by Syrian regime forces on Monday, August 8, 2011, in Darayya city. On Monday, July 24, 2018, SNHR received information concluding that Majd al Din was registered as dead in civil registry on January 15, 2013. We suspect that he died due to torture in the Saydnaya Military Prison in Damascus suburbs.



## **Faten Rajab**

Has a PhD in nuclear physics, from Douma city, Damascus suburbs...

She was arrested by Syrian regime forces on Saturday, November 17, 2011, and detained at the Air Force Intelligence's interrogation branch for 10 months, before being transferred to the Special Forces Branch 215 of the Military Intelligence agency. She was last seen in mid-September 2013, at Military Security's Branch 215. She was arrested on the orders of the Military Security Branch 291, and reportedly suffered from continuous bleeding due to being injected by Syrian regime forces with an unknown substance.

Subsequently, SNHR received information that Faten was detained in the State Security Branch where her health deteriorated before being transferred to the Deposition Section in Adra Central Prison on Friday, February 21, 2014. At the time of writing, her fate remains unknown.



## **Abdul Aziz al Kheir**

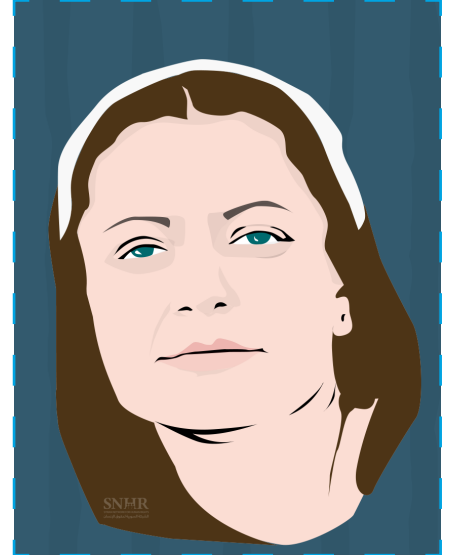
Doctor, member of the National Coordination Committee for Democratic Change Forces, from Latakia city, born in 1951... He was arrested by Syrian regime forces on Thursday, September 20, 2012, at a checkpoint on the Damascus International Airport highway. His fate remains unknown.



## Razan Zaitouna

Lawyer and human rights activist, director of the Violations Documentation Center in Syria. Born in 1977, she is from Douma city, eastern Damascus suburbs governorate.

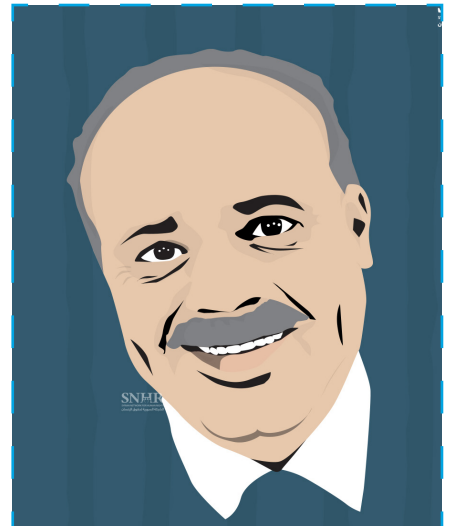
SNHR documented that she was abducted on Monday, December 9, 2013, by unknown gunmen, Razan was abducted along with her husband Wael Hamada, and two of her colleagues who work in the same field. the two colleagues are activists Samira Khalil and lawyer Nazem Hamdi. The four of them were abducted from the office of the Violations Documentation Center in Syria, in Douma city, which was under the control of armed opposition factions at the time, most notably the Islam Army. the fate of the four human rights activists remains unknown.



## Zaki Kordillo

Teacher at the Higher Institute for Dramatic Arts, from Izaz city in Aleppo governorate northern suburbs...

He was arrested by Syrian regime forces on Saturday, August 11, 2012 in Dummar neighborhood in the west of Damascus city. His fate remains unknown



### **Father Paolo Dall'Oglio**

A Jesuit Italian priest, born in 1954, he was arrested by ISIS gunmen on Monday, July 29, 2013, in Raqqa city. His fate remains unknown.



### **Mohannad Mohammad Omar**

Journalist, Syrian-Palestinian, from al Yarmouk Camp for Palestinian refugees in the south of Damascus city. He was born in 1985...

He was arrested by Syrian regime forces on Wednesday, February 29, 2012 from al Alam Channel's office in Damascus city, his fate remains unknown.



### **Basel Khartabil**

A computer engineer and information expert. His specialty is developing open source software, Syrian-Palestinian, from Damascus city, born in 1981...

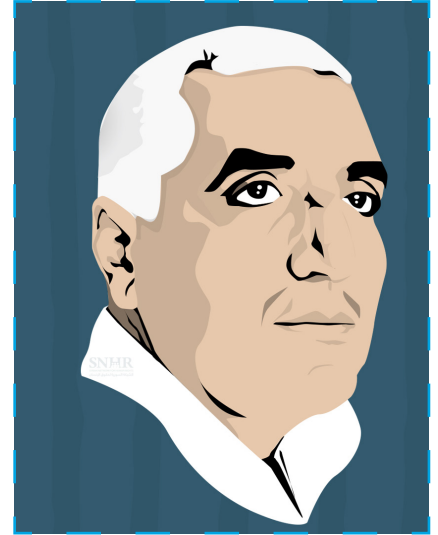
He was arrested by Syrian regime forces on Thursday, March 15, 2012, in al Mazza neighborhood, west of Damascus city. He spent the period of his detention in Saydnaya Military Prison and Adra Central Prison in Damascus suburbs governorate. On Tuesday, August 1, 2017, SNHR received information concluding that Syrian regime forces executed Basel after he was sentenced to death by al Midan Military Court in Damascus on Monday, October 5, 2015.



### **Khalil Mar'ei Ma'touq**

Lawyer, and executive director of the Syrian Center for Studies and Legal Researches, from al Mshairfa village in Homs governorate, born in 1959.

He was arrested by Syrian regime forces on Tuesday, October 2, 2012, at a checkpoint in Sehnaya town in southwestern Damascus suburbs governorate. His fate remains unknown



### **Amr Khalaf**

Pharmacist, peaceful political activist, from Damascus city, aged 32 at the time of his arrest...

He was arrested by Syrian regime forces on Monday, March 12, 2012, from his workplace in the Abo Rimmana neighborhood of Damascus city, SNHR has received information confirming that he is being held at the central prison in Suwayda governorate.



## **III. Torture and Most Notable Methods of Torture Used at Syrian Regime Detention Centers**

The Syrian regime has resorted to the use of torture at detention centers since the first days of the popular uprising, with torture deployed as a standard, calculated and premeditated policy throughout its detention centers in Syria. By speaking to hundreds of survivors, we've come to recognize a pattern of similarities in terms of torture processes and methods.

In most cases, the torture processes end with disfigurement and often in death. However, it should also be noted that most torture processes are exacerbated by severe medical neglect, which causes unimaginable pain to the detainee that routinely results in their deaths. As such, it is clear that the crimes perpetrated against detainees are part of a sustained series of crimes, of which brutal torture is the most severe; this is particularly the case when these crimes are committed in order to inflict serious physical damage or cause severe pain for numerous purposes, whether to extract information, for retaliation, or to spread panic among detainees.



The fact that this apparatus of systematic torture operates in secrecy allows the Syrian regime to deny that any incidences of torture or deaths by torture take place in its detention centers, even though it has issued hundreds of death certificates for forcibly disappeared former detainees in these prisons. These death certificates invariably state that the cause of death was either a myocardial infraction (heart attack) or an abrupt cessation of breathing without providing the deceased prisoners' families with any additional information on the circumstances of the death of their forcibly disappeared family members. The families receive no medical report and are usually denied even the chance to see their loved ones' bodies or to obtain any information about their resting place.

Many families are fearful of asking more than once about their missing loved ones for fear of being threatened or persecuted by security services themselves. The families are also denied even the opportunity to arrange a funeral service or to hold any mourning rituals for their deceased loved ones for the very same reasons.

In many cases, courts trying the detainees automatically approve the confessions made by detainees under torture; these include military courts, al Midan courts (field military courts), and other courts qualified to rule on terrorism cases, which also issue the most severe penalties such as life imprisonment or the death penalty. These courts are considered to be regime apparatuses affiliated with state security branches.

The Syrian regime has violated its own Syrian Constitution of 2012, which explicitly states in Article 53, Paragraph 2, **“No one may be tortured or treated in a humiliating manner, and the law shall define the punishment for those who do so; A statute of limitation does not apply to this criminal act.”** Meanwhile Article 391 of the Syrian Criminal Code prohibits torture and order the punishment of perpetrators according to the following paragraphs: (1) Anyone who beats a person with a degree of severity is not permitted by law, in order to extract a confession to, or information about, an offence, shall be subject to a penalty of from three months to three years in prison. (2) If the assault results in illness or injury, the minimum penalty shall be a minimum of one year's imprisonment.

Even though those laws, which prohibit torture and order the punishment of perpetrators, have been unequivocally enacted, the continuing implementation of Article 16 of Law 14 of 1969 grants security authorities and affiliated bodies impunity for crimes they perpetrate, stating that those responsible can't be prosecuted without the permission of their commanding officer. Thanks to this impunity, no guilty verdict has ever been returned against





any individuals affiliated with regime security authorities for perpetrating torture in the history of the Syrian judiciary. This Article constitutes a blatant violation of all the international and national instruments, as well as the Convention against Torture to which the Syrian government has acceded.

As a result of all these factors, SNHR stresses that any constitutional committee, elections, or reconstruction efforts will be rendered meaningless as long as such brutal security apparatuses exist.

### **Most notable methods of torture used at Syrian regime detention centers**





### Al Shabeh (Suspending Detainees in the Air)

The detainee's hands are cuffed to his back, as he is hung from the ceiling and beaten using sticks and cords. Other forms involve the detainee's hands being tied to his back and hung from the ceiling of the detention room while standing on a chair which is pulled as the detainee is left standing on the tips of his toes. This method can be executed in bathrooms, corridors, or detention rooms

### الشَّبح

تُقَيَّدُ يدا المعتقل خلف ظهره، بينما هو معلق، ويُضْرَبُ بالعصي والأَسلاك. وفي وضعيات أخرى، تُقَيَّدُ يدا المعتقل خلف ظهره، وتُربطان إلى أعلى سقف غرفة الاحتجاز، بينما هو واقف على كرسي، ثم يُسحب الكرسي ليبقى المعتقل واقفاً على رأس إبهام قدمه. وقد يكون الشَّبح في الحمامات أو الممرات أو غرف الاحتجاز.

### Al Shabeh (Suspending Detainees in the Air)

The detainee's hands are cuffed to his back, and tied to the detention's room ceiling as he is standing on a chair which they pull from under his feet, and the detainee is left standing on the toes of his feet. A different form involves having the detainee's hands cuffed to his back as he is hung from the ceiling and being beaten using sticks and metal cords. This method can be executed in bathrooms, corridors, or detention rooms

### الشَّبح

تُقَيَّدُ يدا المعتقل خلف ظهره، وتُربطان إلى أعلى سقف غرفة الاحتجاز، بينما هو واقف على كرسي، ثم يُسحب الكرسي ليبقى المعتقل واقفاً على رأس إبهام قدمه. وفي وضعيات أخرى، تُقَيَّدُ يدا المعتقل خلف ظهره، بينما هو معلق، ويُضْرَبُ بالعصي والأَسلاك. وقد يكون الشَّبح في الحمامات أو الممرات أو غرف الاحتجاز.





### Falqa (Bastinado/Foot Whipping)

The detainee is tied as their feet are up where he is being whipped on them using a whip, an electrical cable, a plastic hose, or any other tool.

### الفلقة

تقييدُ المعتقل ورفع قدميه وضربهما بالسَّوط أو بـكبل كهربائي أو خرطوم بلاستيكي أو أيّة أداة أخرى.

### Bisat al Rih (Flying Carpet)

The detainee is attached onto a two-part wooden board. The two parts can close in on each other, bending the detainee's body causing terrible pain to the spine. During this time, the detainee is actively beaten by the security personnel

### بساط الريح

يُثَبَّتِ المعتقل على لوح خشبيّ مكوّن من قسمين، ثمَّ يُحرَّك القسمان باتجاه بعضهما، ما يؤدي إلى انثناء جسد المعتقل، ويسبّب له ألماً فظيلاً في العمود الفقري، وفي أثناء ذلك أيضاً يتلقى المعتقل ضربات من عناصر الأمن بالتزامن مع ثني جسده.





## السَّحْل

شَدُّ المعتقل/ة من شعره بقوة وسحب جسده على الأرض في مكان الاحتجاز

### Dragging

Pulling the detainee violently from his hair and dragging their body across the detention place

## الدولاب

### Al Dulab (The Tire)

the detainee's hands and feet are tied together where his body simulate the shape of a tire while he is being beaten by the guards all over his body. Other variations of this method see the detainee jammed inside a tire (Dulab) as he is being beaten on his feet and head

تُقَيَّدُ يدا المعتقل مع رجليه، بشكل يُحاكي عجلة السيارة (الدولاب)، ثم يتلقى ضربات سَّجَّانيه على مختلف أنحاء جسده. وفي حالات أخرى، يُحَسَّرُ المعتقل داخل عجلة سيارة (دولاب)، ويتلقى الضربات على رجليه ورأسه.





### الدولاب

يُحسّرُ المعتقل داخل عجلة سيارة (دولاب)، ويتلقى الضربات على رجليه ورأسه. وفي حالات أخرى، تُفبّد يدا المعتقل مع رجليه، بشكل يُحاكي عجلة السيارة (الدولاب)، ثمّ يتلقى ضربات سجانيه على مختلف أنحاء جسده.

### Al Dulab (The Tire)

The detainee is jammed inside a tire (Dulab) as he is being beaten on his feet and head. Other variations of this method have the detainee's hands and feet tied together where his body simulate the shape of a tire while he is being beaten by the guards all over his body.

### The German Chair

A metal chair with a bendable back used to apply pressure on the detainee's neck and spine

### الكرسي الألماني

كرسي مصنوع من المعدن، مع إمكانية إرجاع ظهره للخلف، بحيث يتم الصّغط على رقبة المعتقل وعموده الفقري.





### The Electric Chair

A metal chair where the detainee is sealed to the chair as an electric current is running through it.

### الكرسي الكهربائي

كرسي معدني، يُثبَّت عليه المعتقل، ثم يُوصل بالتيار الكهربائي.

### Al Salb (The Crucifixion)

The detainee's hands and feet are tied as to imitate a cross, before the beating starts which particularly targets the reproductive organs

### الصَّلب

تُربط يدا ورجلا المعتقل على وجه مماثل تماماً لفكرة الصليب، ثم تبدأ عمليات الضرب، التي تستهدف بشكل خاص الأعضاء التناسلية.





### الوقوف الطويل والحرقان من النوم

ربط يدي المعتقل/ة نحو الأعلى وتركه لتيام واقفاً ومحرماً من النوم

### Prolonged Standing and Deprivation of Sleep

The detainee's hands are tied up as he is left standing and deprived of sleep for days

### Beating

Beating the detainee's all over his body using various tools, such as sticks or electric cables.

### الضرب

يُضرب المعتقل على أنحاء جسده كافة، ويكون الضرب بأدوات مختلفة مثل العصي أو كبلات الكهرباء.





## IV. Conclusions and Recommendations

### Legal conclusions

SNHR believes that the Syrian regime has demonstrated a lack of commitment to the international agreements and treaties it has ratified, in particular the International Covenant on Political and Civil Rights. In addition, the Syrian regime has violated the Syrian constitution itself as hundreds of thousands of detainees have been detained for many years with no arrest warrants or any charges. The Syrian regime also denied those detainees the right to an attorney and barred their families from visiting them. Eighty-five percent of all detainees have been documented as cases of enforced disappearance since the Syrian regime has never informed their families of their whereabouts. In the event of families attempting to inquire about the whereabouts of their loved ones - inquiries that may put the families themselves at risk in many cases - regime security branches and authorities automatically deny having detained them in the first place.

Enforced disappearance is a strategy used by the Syrian regime to target anyone connected to the popular uprising that rose against the Assad family's dynastic rule. Analysis of the available data shows that this phenomenon is prevalent in areas that were well-known for joining the uprising, which suggests that this strategy is based on a consistent and deliberate policy, including the regime's recent revelations concerning the fate of some of the forcibly disappeared individuals, which was also done in a deliberate manner. The implications of the coordination between state institutions in a way that serves these criminal actions are clear in light of the arrests specifically targeting figures who supported the popular uprising, with their subsequent forced disappearances being followed by the issuing of death certificates containing no information about the place or cause of their deaths. This also suggests that broad segments of the regime's employees, including leadership officials and lower-ranking personnel, were aware of this particular regime policy, as well as of the true cause of death and the brutal acts of torture. Some of these individuals clearly even had knowledge of the location of the dead bodies and mass graves, particularly given the appallingly large number of forcibly disappeared persons and the number of cases of death due to torture that we have documented, which is estimated at nearly 14,000 in total.

Enforced disappearance is prohibited by the customary international humanitarian law documented by the International Committee of the Red Cross, as stipulated in Rule 98, which prohibits enforced disappearance in international and non-international armed conflicts. Rule 117 of the same law states, "Each party to the conflict must take all feasible measures to account for persons reported missing as a result of armed conflict and must provide their family members with any information it has on their fate."



Furthermore, international criminal law also prohibits enforced disappearance. According to the International Criminal Court's Rome Statute, practicing enforced disappearance in a systematic manner constitutes a crime against humanity (Article 7-1-i), which applies to the acts of the Syrian regime.

## **Recommendations**

### **Security Council and United Nations**

- Hold an emergency meeting to discuss this critical matter that threatens the fates of nearly 82,000 individuals and terrorizes the whole of Syrian society.
- Find methods and mechanisms to prevent the Syrian regime from tampering with the living and the dead, as this poses a major threat to the security and stability of the Syrian state.
- The Security Council should act to stop torture and deaths due to torture inside Syrian regime detention centers, and to save the surviving detainees as quickly as possible.
- Take action under Chapter VII of the Charter of the United Nations to protect the detainees from certain death inside detention centers.

### **OHCHR**

- Issue a statement to condemn and address this blatant violation of the most basic standards of human dignity.
- Release an extensive report on this barbaric phenomenon and clearly condemn it, and call on the Security Council to take urgent action to find a solution that preserves the rights of the families, reveals the fate of the dead bodies, and holds the criminals accountable.

### **Commission of Inquiry (COI)**

- Start investigating this critical issue. We are willing to provide all additional information and data

### **International, Impartial and Intendent Mechanism (IIIM)**

- Add this critical issue to the main investigation agenda.

### **Syrian regime**

- Stop treating the Syrian state as a private family property
- Stop terrorizing the Syrian people through enforced disappearance, torture, and death due to torture.
- Stop tampering with and exploiting civil records in service of the goals of the ruling family.
- Take responsibility for all legal and material consequences of its actions and compensate the victims and their families from the resources of the Syrian state.





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