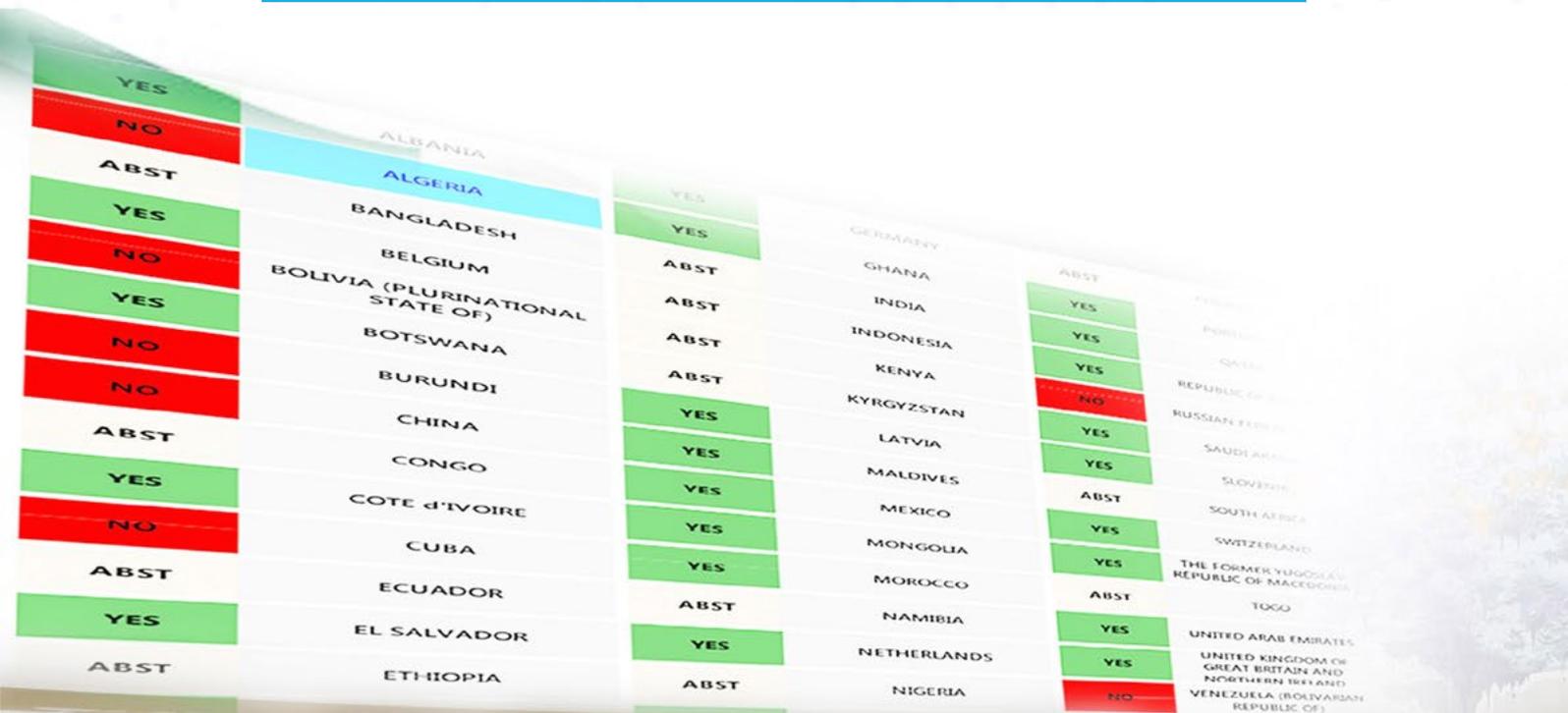


# Condemning Algeria's Attempts to Perpetuate the Syrian Regime's Impunity and Voting Nine Times in the Regime's Favor in the Human Rights Council

Algeria, the United Arab Emirates, and Any Country That Restores Relations with the Syrian Regime, Which Is Involved in Committing Crimes against Humanity against the Syrian People, Is Thereby Considered a Participant in These Crimes



Tuesday 29 March 2022

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.

**SNHR**  
 SYRIAN NETWORK FOR HUMAN RIGHTS  
 الشبكة السورية لحقوق الإنسان

## Contents

I. Algeria Implements a Public Relations Campaign in Favor of the Syrian Regime, Ignoring Its Atrocious Violations, Which Amount to Crimes against Humanity against the Syrian People .....	2
II. The Syrian Regime Insulted the Arab League and Violated All Its Initiatives Calling for a Solution to the Syrian Conflict.....	5
III. Algeria Votes Nine Times against the Human Rights Council Resolutions Defending the Rights of the Syrian People.....	8
IV. The United Arab Emirates Is the First Country after Russia and Iran to Invite Bashar al Assad, Who Is Involved in Crimes against Humanity, to Visit .....	10
V. Conclusions and Recommendations.....	11

## I. Algeria Implements a Public Relations Campaign in Favor of the Syrian Regime, Ignoring Its Atrocious Violations, Which Amount to Crimes against Humanity against the Syrian People

Algeria is preparing to host the next thirty-first Arab League Summit, which was scheduled to take place in March 2022 and was subsequently delayed until later this year, [as announced on January 19, 2022](#). In March of the same year, it was announced that it would be held on November 1 and 2, 2022. [High-ranking officials had expressed](#) their support for the return of Syria to the Arab League, seeking to find Arab consensus for this. For this purpose, Algeria launched a public relations campaign with Algerian officials visiting a number of Arab countries in an effort to persuade them to vote in favor of the Syrian regime's return to the League of Arab States.

In December 2016, [the official Algeria Press Service](#) quoted Ramtane Lamamra as saying, "What happened in Aleppo is that the Syrian state has now been able to recover its sovereignty and control over the city," [referring to the military campaign by the Syrian-Russian alliance on Aleppo city at the end of 2016](#). He added, "There are people who dreamed of the victory of terrorism in Aleppo and elsewhere."

On February 13, 2020, [former Algerian Foreign Minister Sabri Boukadoum said](#) during a press conference that Algeria ["calls for the acceptance of Syria's return to the arms of the Arab League."](#) He added that Algeria had previously considered freezing Syria's membership in the Arab League a loss for all Arab countries.

At the end of February 2020, in an interview on the Russian state-controlled RT TV channel, [Algerian President Abdelmadjid Tebboune](#), affirmed Algeria's call for Syria's return to the Arab League, saying, ["It is one of the founding countries of the Arab League."](#)

An article published by the Algerian Aljazair Alyoum [Algeria Today] newspaper on August 24, 2021, quoted Ramtane Lamamra, the Algerian Minister of Foreign Affairs, as saying in a press conference, ["Syria is an essential issue in preparing for the upcoming Arab summit, and sitting on its seat in the Arab League will be an advanced step in reunification and overcoming internal difficulties."](#) He added, ["There are those who believe that Syria's return to the Arab League is a positive matter, and Algeria shares this view, and there are those who believe that this return will increase division and sharpen differences."](#)

On October 27, 2021, [the Secretary-General of the Arab League, Ahmed Aboul Gheit, said in an interview](#) with the Egyptian Sada al Balad TV channel, that some Arab countries are quietly opening up to Syria, adding, ["However, I personally, as Secretary-General, did not observe any formal or informal request regarding the start of the procedures for returning to fill the seat."](#) He added, ["Algeria is at the forefront of the Syrian return, Iraq is talking about the](#)

Syrian return, and Jordan has a desire for Syria to return, to start contacts, and to return ambassadors, and all of this represents the beginning of momentum.” He stated that “the return mechanism is represented in the League’s Ministerial Council approval of a draft resolution that will be removed from the delegates and placed before the summit for approval.”

On November 10, 2021, Ramtane Lamamra, the Algerian Minister of Foreign Affairs, stated at the conclusion of a meeting organized by the Algerian Foreign Ministry with the heads of its diplomatic missions, that the country “considers that it is time for Syria to return to the fold of the Arab League and that the seat of Syria should return to the Syrian state without interfering in its internal affairs regarding who governs it and what developments it is going through.” He added, “We initially did not agree with the suspension of Syria’s membership.” The [Algeria Press Service broadcast video footage of this statement in a news bulletin](#).

[In an interview broadcast by Algerian El Bilad TV](#) on November 26, 2021, Algerian President Abdelmadjid Tebboune said in response to a question: Will Syria be present at the Arab League summit that Algeria will host next March 2022? “Syria is supposed to be present. The summit needs to be inclusive and a launchpad for the reunification of the fractured Arab world. We are a country that always knits the splintered together.”

On December 6, 2021, Arab League’s Assistant Secretary-General and President of the Tunis Center, Mohamed Saleh Benaissa, said in a [statement](#) to the Middle East News Agency (MENA), “The Arab League strongly supports the return of Syria’s seat in the [Arab League], a matter that will be raised at the upcoming Arab summit that will be held in Algiers in March 2022. Damascus should regain its [Arab League] seat, and it is now time to close ranks in order to protect the interests of the Syrian people.” Benaissa stressed that “the Arab League has made great efforts to facilitate the return of Syria to the Arab family,” and explained that a number of Arab countries, headed by Egypt, Algeria, Tunisia, and Iraq, are working on the return of Syria to the Arab League in spite of the opposition of some other Arab countries.

On January 30, 2022, Kuwait hosted the Arab consultative meeting at the ministerial level in its 156th session. In a press conference following the meeting, [the Secretary-General of the Arab League](#), Ahmed Aboul Gheit, said, “Syria’s return to the Arab League was not raised in today’s meeting between Arab foreign ministers.” He stressed that the issue of the return of a state to occupy its seat at the Arab League is always preceded by deliberations, consultations, and the presentation of a draft resolution, adding that Member states’ visions of Syria’s obligations must be taken into consideration - all of that have not yet been reached.

On February 14, 2022, Russia’s Sputnik News Agency [reported](#) on its official website that Mahmoud Khalifa, the military advisor to the Secretary-General of the Arab League, had told the agency that “Syria’s return to its seat in the League of Arab States will be close.”

Meanwhile, the Secretary-General of the League of Arab States, Ahmed Aboul Gheit, announced on February 2, 2022, that an Arab ministerial meeting is to be held in early March 2022 to discuss the possibility of Syria's return to the League. In an interview with al Mamlaka Jordanian state TV channel, he said, "Syria's attendance at the upcoming Arab summit in Algeria is linked to an Arab consensus and Damascus' response to the proposed Arab positions."

On March 9, 2022, [the meeting of the 157th session of the Arab League Council was held](#) at the ministerial level, during which an agreement was reached on the date of the next Arab summit in Algeria, namely on the first and second days of November of the same year.

In response to this, the Syrian Network for Human Rights (SNHR) is issuing this report and presenting it to all Arab countries, noting that the Syrian regime has not committed to compliance with the League's own initiatives, and continues to practice egregious violations against the Syrian people, having failed completely to change or moderate its brutal behavior in any way. This report also endeavors to expose and condemn the Algerian regime's own shameful role in supporting the Syrian regime, following in the footsteps of regimes affiliated with Iran's regime, such as Iraq and Lebanon, and noting regretfully that Algeria has always positioned itself against the Syrian people's obtaining their most fundamental rights, instead aligning itself with the Syrian regime and therefore being complicit in and supportive of the heinous violations which the Syrian regime has committed against the Syrian people.

**Fadel Abdul Ghany, Director of the Syrian Network for Human Rights, says:**

The Algerian regime's support for and promotion of the Syrian regime is a great insult to the Syrian victims, numbering millions, who were killed and displaced by the Syrian regime itself. It is also an affront to the struggles of the Algerian people for freedom and dignity, placing Algeria in the camp of repressive, mutually supportive authoritarian states. The Syrian regime's return to the Arab League must be linked to the release of tens of thousands of prisoners of conscience, holding the perpetrators of violations accountable, and respect for human rights.

## II. The Syrian Regime Insulted the Arab League and Violated All Its Initiatives Calling for a Solution to the Syrian Conflict

Since the very beginning, the Syrian regime confronted peaceful protesters participating in the popular uprising that broke out in March 2011 with live bullets and a campaign of arbitrary arrests, with the range and intensity of the violations practiced by the regime rapidly expanding, and with some of these amounting to crimes against humanity according to [the report issued by the UN High Commissioner for Human Rights in September 2011](#), which covers the period from March 15 until July 15, 2011, and [the first report issued by the Independent International Commission of Inquiry on November 23, 2011](#). The League of Arab States was late in even suggesting that the Syrian people should be protected from killing, torture, and enforced disappearance; four months after the outbreak of the popular uprising, [on July 15, 2011, the Secretary-General of the Arab League, Mr. Nabil Elaraby, visited Damascus](#), but the Syrian regime expressed its rejection of any intervention by the Arab League, insisting that it had the right to do whatever it wanted to suppress and end the popular uprising. The Secretary-General's visit did not result, therefore, in any change in the Syrian regime's violent approach towards the Syrian people, with the regime continuing to commit various types of violations ever since.

The first serious move by the Arab League was when the Syrian regime's killing of civilians escalated, with the regime involving all its military capabilities and arsenal against the people. According to SNHR's database, the Syrian regime killed 8,637 civilians from March 2011 until September 2011 and arrested/ disappeared 17,546 others.

In early September 2011, the Arab League announced [its first initiative](#), which stipulated many positive proposals, most notably:

- Inviting the Syrian government to immediately halt all acts of violence against civilians and withdraw all armed manifestations from cities.
- Calling for the provision of compensation to all victims of the present conflict.
- Calling for the release of all political detainees or people detained arbitrarily due to the recent incidents.
- Calling on the Syrian regime's President Bashar al Assad to issue a declaration of principles reaffirming his pledges of political reform, and affirming his commitment to a transition to a multi-party political system.
- Calling for the separation of the military from political and civilian life.
- Calling for the initiation of renewed political contacts, on the basis of equality, between the President and representatives of the Syrian opposition.
- Proposing that the League of Arab States would facilitate, at the President's invitation, a national dialogue according to an agreed mechanism.

The Arab League also worked to create mechanisms to implement the aforementioned initiative; on October 16, 2011, the Council of Arab Foreign Ministers issued [Resolution](#) No. 7435 to establish a Ministerial Committee (Algeria was among the members of this committee), that was mandated to liaise with the Syrian regime in an effort to halt all acts of violence and killing, withdraw all military presences, and launch a dialogue between the government and the Syrian opposition parties, but the Syrian regime did not abide by any of its provisions. Rather, it continued killings and arrests, demonstrating beyond any doubt that it intended to continue terrorizing and suppressing the popular uprising, and had no intention or need to make any concessions. We believe that Algeria was fully aware of the identity of the party that violated this initiative and chose not to respond to it, as a member of the Ministers' Commission.

On November 2, 2011, the Council of Arab Foreign Ministers held an extraordinary meeting during which it adopted an [Action Plan](#) that stipulated four main provisions, namely that the regime should: Put an end to all acts of violence, from whatever source; ensure the release of those detained during, and because of the events in the uprising; ensure the withdrawal of all armed elements from all cities and urban centers; and enable all the League's institutions, as well as Arab and international media, to move freely in Syria in order to ascertain facts on the ground and monitor the events taking place. The plan also stipulated that the Ministerial Committee would make the necessary contacts and hold the necessary consultations with the Syrian regime and all parties of the Syrian opposition in order to hold a national dialogue within two weeks of that date, although this consultation was to take place only if the Syrian regime made concrete progress implementing its commitments stipulated in the four main provisions of the plan.

On November 12, 2011, [the Arab League Council](#) decided to suspend the participation of Syrian delegations in the League's meetings. The resolution stipulates "Suspension of the participation of the delegations of the Government of the Syrian Arab Republic in meetings of the Council of the Arab League and all its subsidiary organizations and bodies as of November 16 until its full implementation of the commitments agreed upon under the Arab Action Plan to resolve the Syrian crisis, adopted by the Council at its extraordinary meeting on November 2." The resolution, which called on Arab countries to withdraw their ambassadors from Syria and impose political and economic sanctions on the Syrian government, was adopted with the approval of 18 countries, including Algeria, while three countries, Syria, Lebanon and Yemen, objected, and Iraq abstained from voting.

In mid-November 2011, [the Arab League decided to send an Observer Mission](#), and in December 2011 delegated Mr. [Mohammed al Dabi](#) as head of the League of Arab States' Observer Mission (consisting of 150-200 observers) to Syria, to find a solution to the Syrian crisis and provide protection for Syrian citizens.

On January 22, 2012, the Council of Arab Foreign Ministers approved [the second Arab initiative](#), which stipulated the need to end to all acts of violence and killing from all quarters. It also, once again, called on the Syrian regime to release all detainees, withdraw all armed elements from cities and residential areas, and grant access to the relevant League agencies and to Arab and international media. It highlighted the need to recall the Syrian Army and any armed forces of whatever formation to their barracks and original locations; to ensure the right to all forms of peaceful demonstration and not to confront protestors; and to facilitate the mission's work and the entry of equipment, in particular communications equipment. The mission called on the Syrian Government and all parties of the Syrian opposition to enter into a genuine political dialogue under the auspices of the League of Arab States within two weeks of the issuance of that resolution. The initiative included a request to the Security Council to support it. However, the Syrian regime did not implement any of the provisions, and gave false promises, while the security forces and the army continued to commit more and more violations, and the Arab Observer Mission was unable to prevent or stop any of them. On February 12, 2012, al Dabi submitted [his resignation](#) to the League of Arab States.

From March 2011 to February 12, 2012, we documented that the Syrian regime killed 13,923 civilians, and arrested/disappeared 23,526 others.

### III. Algeria Votes Nine Times against the Human Rights Council Resolutions Defending the Rights of the Syrian People

Following the Syrian regime's atrocious violations in response to the popular uprising for democracy in 2011 since its earliest days, the UN Human Rights Council (HRC) urgently intervened, issuing its [first resolution](#) almost six weeks after the start of the uprising. This resolution clearly condemned the Syrian regime's brutal violations and called for the creation of a Fact-Finding Mission. The HRC has subsequently held successive meetings on Syria, some of which have been held periodically and others especially, with the HRC issuing 37 resolutions on the human rights situation in Syria since the beginning of the popular uprising to date, **including 12 resolutions** regarding the establishment of the Fact-Finding Mission that later became the International Commission of Inquiry, as well as extending its mandate.

We, at the SNHR, have monitored all the resolutions issued by the HRC and documented the countries that voted in favor of the HRC's resolutions on Syria, and those which abstained or were absent when voting, as well as those countries that voted against the HRC's resolutions, showing their denial of the violations committed by the Syrian regime, which thereby effectively encouraged the regime to commit more violations by promising to secure support for it at the Human Rights Council.

All the countries that voted in favor of the Syrian regime at the HRC are repressive, tyrannical states hostile to human rights, such as Russia, China, Venezuela, and Cuba, and we regret that Algeria is among these countries, having voted in favor of the Syrian regime nine times, i.e. in all the periods during which it was represented at the HRC, including the years in which the Syrian regime repeatedly used chemical weapons of mass destruction. We also noted that Algeria was the first Arab country to vote in favor of the Syrian regime, following Algeria's election to the HRC, and continued to vote in the Syrian regime's favor throughout the period of its membership.

The following is a brief summary of the Human Rights Council resolutions related to the human rights situation in Syria since the beginning of the popular uprising to date, against which the Algerian regime voted:

### Resolution 26/23 - July 17, 2014:

01

Thirty-two countries voted in favor of the resolution, with nine abstentions, while five countries, (Russia, China, Venezuela, Cuba, Algeria) voted against the resolution.

### Resolution 28/20 - April 8, 2015:

03

In accordance with this resolution, the mandate of the Independent International Commission of Inquiry was extended for an additional year.

Twenty-nine countries voted in favor of the resolution, with twelve abstentions, while six countries, (Russia, China, Venezuela, Cuba, Bolivia, Algeria) voted against the resolution.

### Resolution 30/10 - October 13, 2015:

05

Twenty-nine countries voted in favor of the resolution, with twelve abstentions, while six countries, (Russia, China, Venezuela, Cuba, Bolivia, Algeria) voted against the resolution.

### Resolution 32/25 - July 15, 2016:

07

Twenty-seven countries voted in favor of the resolution, with fourteen abstentions, while six countries, (Russia, China, Venezuela, Cuba, Bolivia, Algeria) voted against the resolution.

### Resolution 33/23 - October 6, 2016:

08

Twenty-six countries voted in favor of the resolution, with fourteen abstentions, while seven countries, (Russia, China, Venezuela, Cuba, Bolivia, Burundi, Algeria) voted against the resolution.

### Resolution S-25/1 - October 25, 2016:

09

Twenty-four countries voted in favor of the resolution, with sixteen abstentions, while seven countries, (Russia, China, Venezuela, Cuba, Bolivia, Burundi, Algeria) voted against the resolution.

02

### Resolution 27/16 - October 3, 2014:

Thirty-two countries voted in favor of the resolution, with ten abstentions, while five countries, (Russia, China, Venezuela, Cuba, Algeria) voted against the resolution.

04

### Resolution 29/16 - July 22, 2015:

Twenty-nine countries voted in favor of the resolution, with twelve abstentions, while six countries, (Russia, China, Venezuela, Cuba, Bolivia, Algeria) voted against the resolution.

06

### Resolution 31/17 - April 8, 2016:

The Council decided to transmit all reports and oral updates issued by the Commission of Inquiry to all relevant bodies of the United Nations, and recommended that the General Assembly submit the reports to the Security Council for appropriate action. Also, in accordance with this resolution, the mandate of the Independent International Commission of Inquiry was extended for a year to further investigate all alleged violations and breaches of international human rights law in Syria since March 2011.

Twenty-seven countries voted in favor of the resolution, with fourteen abstentions, while six countries, (Russia, China, Venezuela, Cuba, Bolivia, Algeria) voted against the resolution.



On October 22, 2020, SNHR issued a [detailed report](#) in which we noted that the number of countries that voted in favor of the Syrian regime was only about 11, and we regret to say that Algeria is among these, in contrast with the vast majority who voted in favor of defending the rights of the Syrian people.

#### **IV. The United Arab Emirates Is the First Country after Russia and Iran to Invite Bashar al Assad, Who Is Involved in Crimes against Humanity, to Visit**

On March 18, 2022, Mohammed bin Zayed Al Nahyan, Crown Prince of the Emirate of Abu Dhabi in the UAE, [received](#) the Syrian regime's President, Bashar al Assad, with an accompanying delegation, on a visit that is the first of its kind since the suspension of Syria's membership in the Arab League in November 2011. During this trip, [the Syrian regime delegation also visited the Vice President of the UAE](#) and Ruler of Dubai, Mohammed bin Rashid Al Maktoum.

In this context, we must remind the government of the United Arab Emirates that the Syrian regime continues to practice atrocious violations, some of which amount to crimes against humanity, such as torture, enforced disappearance of more than 86,000 Syrian citizens, forced displacement and others. The Syrian regime system has also been convicted in the Koblenz court in Germany, for committing crimes against humanity. In addition, the Syrian regime has not been held accountable for 11 years of multiple violations against the Syrian people and state, and the regime itself has not held any of its individual members or officials to account. This means that we are facing a state of complete impunity, and that restoring relations with such a brutal regime harms the United Arab Emirates first, and is considered under international law to demonstrate support for the violations practiced by the Syrian regime against the Syrian people, because the fight against atrocious violations that constitute crimes against humanity and war crimes is considered one of the main tasks of all countries of the world as ratification of the Geneva Conventions.

The United Arab Emirates' position is different from that of the State of Algeria, as it sided with the rights of the Syrian people in freedom and dignity, voted 21 times in the Human Rights Council in favor of the rights of the Syrian people, and supported relief work through the Emirates Red Crescent, so receiving the Syrian regime in light of the eleventh anniversary of the Syrian popular uprising dealt a strong slap in the face of millions of Syrian regime's victims.

## V. Conclusions and Recommendations

- The vote of Algeria's regime at the Human Rights Council in favor of the Syrian regime, which is involved, according to dozens of UN, international, and local reports, in committing atrocious violations amounting to crimes against humanity, is considered to be as support and encouragement for the Syrian regime to commit more violations, as it is considered to be a form of participation in these violations under the rules of international law.
- The reasons that led to the expulsion of the Syrian regime from the Arab League, the imposition of international isolation on it, the boycott by the world's democratic states, and the imposition of international isolation on it have continued since 2011 to date, accumulating over nearly 11 years, which increased their extent and the number of victims.
- The attempt by Algeria, the United Arab Emirates, or any such attempt by any other country to promote or restore any form of relations with the Syrian regime is considered to be an offer of encouragement to the perpetrators of crimes against humanity enabling them to enjoy complete impunity, and it also represents a flagrant insult to millions of victims among the Syrian people.
- Algeria chose to prioritize its own interests with Russia at the expense of the principles of international human rights law and to comply with what Russia requested of it, in the same way as repressive authoritarian states such as Venezuela and Cuba.
- It is our duty as an organization that defends human rights in Syria to expose and lay bare the shameful actions of states that have stood by the Syrian regime, and to condemn their vote in the worst terms. Algeria's position at the Human Rights Council on the side of the Syrian regime is a disgrace in its modern history.

### Recommendations

#### To the Arab countries and the League of Arab States

- Continue to expel the Syrian regime from the Arab League and separate between the state and the Syrian people on the one hand and the ruling regime on the other; the rights of the victims must take precedence over political interests.
- Link any relations with the Syrian regime to the extent of its implementation of the Arab League's initiatives and demonstration of respect for human rights, in particular the release of tens of thousands of political detainees, the return of their looted property, the repeal of security laws, and the accountability of perpetrators of violations.
- Work to accelerate the political solution in Syria in order to return the Syrian state to its seat at the Arab League, instead of working to restore the current regime, which is involved in crimes against humanity and war crimes, including the use of weapons of mass destruction.

### **To the United States of America, European countries and countries friendly to the Syrian people**

- Put pressure on the Algerian regime to end its heinous and shameful attempts aimed at promoting and whitewashing the Syrian regime, despite its ongoing perpetration of crimes against humanity against the Syrian people.
- Send clear messages to countries worldwide emphasizing that there will be no normalization of relations with the current regime and that its allies must understand this message and work to achieve a democratic political transition that achieves the restoration of relations, and the return of refugees, and internally displaced persons, and the reconstruction of the nation.

### **To the Government of the United Arab Emirates:**

- Return to the position of the United Arab Emirates in support of the rights of the Syrian people to freedom and dignity.
- Stop any form of restoring relations with the Syrian regime, which is involved in committing crimes against humanity.

### **To the Algerian regime**

- Respect the rights of the victims who were killed and displaced by the Syrian regime, especially women and children, and the forcibly disappeared, and stop promoting the Syrian regime.
- Apologize to the victims for voting nine times against their rights at the Human Rights Council, and endeavor to atone for this shameful act by condemning the Syrian regime and linking its return to the Arab League with respect for human rights.



[www.snhr.org](http://www.snhr.org) - [info@snhr.org](mailto:info@snhr.org)