

Statement

SNHR Is a Prominent Information Source in the Danish Ministry of Immigration and Integration's May 2022 Report on the Treatment of Refugees Returning to Syria



SNHR Reiterates That Syria Is Unsafe and That Various Types of Violations Are Ongoing

In May 2022, the Immigration Service of the Danish government's Ministry of Immigration and Integration issued a report on the treatment of refugees returning to Syria.

The report relies on several human rights sources,¹ most notably, in order of the number of quotes included:



European Asylum
Support Office (EASO)

35



United Nations High
Commissioner for
Refugees (UNHCR)

33



Human Rights Watch
(HRW)

25



Syrian Network for
Human Rights (SNHR)

9

The report also relies on the United Nations Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs (OCHA), Amnesty International (AI), the European Institute of Peace, and others.

As the report states, it aims at providing updated information about the Syrian authorities' treatment of persons who return to Syria and contains information about monitoring of returns to Syria, number of returns, treatment of returnees by the Syrian authorities and factors, which may have an impact on their treatment.

¹ The report also relies on several media sources.

The report notes that thousands of Syrian refugees have returned to Syria in recent years, particularly from neighboring countries. However, it adds, the Syrian government's policy on the return of refugees from abroad seems to be unclear; on the one hand, the authorities have called refugees to return to the country and established formal procedures that enable refugees to return without being prosecuted or troubled by the authorities upon their return, while on the other, there are reports of returnees, predominantly returning from Syria's neighboring countries, who, upon their return, were subjected to different forms of violations by the Syrian authorities, including those who have cleared or settled their status prior to their return.

The report also notes that due to a lack of monitoring of returns by international organizations, it is unclear how systematic and prevalent such violations are. The report further adds that the exacerbating economic situation in Syria in recent years has also raised the risk of extortion from returnees by the authorities.

The report points out that the SNHR documented the arrest of at least 1,916 Syrian refugees, including 219 children and 157 women, after their return to Syria from abroad. The report indicates that some of those subsequently released revealed that they had been tortured while in custody. In addition, deaths in custody among returnees were also recorded.

The report adds that even persons not wanted by the Syrian regime's security services are at risk of arrest.

To read the full report by the Danish Immigration Service, please visit [this link](#). (The report is only available in English).

SNHR's assessment of the situation in Syria is based on the documentation we record on cases of arbitrary arrest, enforced disappearance, torture, forced conscription, and other violations committed by all parties to the conflict and the controlling forces, in particular the Syrian regime, because the regime's security services do not make records of citizens' arrests publicly available since there is, after all, no actual judicial authority in Syria. A refugee may be wanted by a security branch without him or her even knowing this; under the current regime, it is impossible for us or any party other than the staff at the security branch that ordered the individual's arrest to find out this information. Therefore, we reiterate that Syria is extremely unsafe for refugees to return to. This assessment is consistent with that of the Independent International Commission of Inquiry (COI), HRW, and AI. We hope that the political transition process succeeds, after which Syrian refugees can safely return to their homes and areas with freedom and dignity as soon as possible.



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