Twelve states have consistently voted against Human Rights Council resolutions that condemn the violations against the Syrian people between March 2011 and April 2023.

Only 12 States Voted Against the HRC Resolutions Condemning Violations Against the Syrian People Since March 2011, With the Overwhelming Majority of World States Voting in Support of the Rights of the Syrian People.

SNHR Welcomes the COI Report and the Most Recent HRC Resolution Confirming that Violations Continue in Syria.

The numbers shown on the map reflect how many times each state has voted.

Tuesday, April 11, 2023

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. SNHR Welcomes the COI’s Report and Underscores the Well-Established Collaboration Between SNHR and the COI Since 2011


The Syrian Network for Human Rights (SNHR) reviewed the report, providing a summary of the main points which it addressed:

The report notes that various types of violations of human rights and international law are still being committed in a widespread manner in Syria at the hands of the parties to the conflict and controlling forces. The report further confirms that over 13 million people are either internally displaced persons (IDPs) or refugees, while 90 percent of all Syrian civilians now live in poverty. The report also states that an estimated 15.3 million people in Syria are now in need of humanitarian assistance to stay alive, reaching a record-high level since the conflict started. Moreover, the report emphasizes that the number of Syrian refugees willing to consider returning to Syria continued to fall in 2022, especially given their legitimate concerns related to safety and security. On the contrary, the report adds, more and more Syrians are trying to escape the country, seeking asylum in Europe.

In addition, the COI report sheds light on the severe state of insecurity in areas under the Syrian regime’s control, noting that arbitrary arrests, enforced disappearances, and deaths due to torture, are all still being carried out against citizens, including those refugees and IDPs who do return to the Syrian regime’s areas of control.

Regarding the military operations in the areas under the control of the other parties to the conflict, the report notes that the Syrian regime continues to target civilians in northwestern Syria, highlighting regime forces’ use of cluster munitions to target IDP camps. The report also documents land attacks that may amount to war crimes. Additionally, the report refers to the airstrikes by Russian forces that may also be classified as war crimes, given their status as indiscriminate attacks leading to the killing or injuring of civilians. In this context, SNHR welcomes the explicit confirmation of the Russian forces’ responsibility for these attacks, which we have repeatedly recommended to the COI, after reviewing each and every of its reports following their release.

Meanwhile, the report notes that Hay’at Tahrir al-Sham (HTS) has also restricted basic freedoms, including freedom of expression, and continues to detain journalists and activists simply for voicing opinions critical of HTS. As the report further notes, the group also denies all those it detains the opportunity to contact their families, as well as access to healthcare. Moreover, the report further notes that Syrian National Army (SNA) factions also continue to carry out arbitrary detentions and enforced disappearance, adding that some SNA members have practiced torture, including sexual violence.
On this subject, the report stresses that rape and other forms of sexual violence that take place in the Syrian regime’s detention facilities constitute crimes against humanity. SNA and HTS, meanwhile, have committed a war crime through the practice of rape and other forms of sexual violence.

The report also talks about the prison camps in northeastern Syria. As the report reveals, Syrian Democratic Forces (SDF) continue to detain approximately 56,000 individuals, most of whom are women and children, in these facilities. As the report notes, the conditions in the two camps of al-Hawl and al-Rwj may qualify as a form of cruel or inhumane treatment.

The report calls on the parties to the conflict to immediately end all indiscriminate and direct attacks against civilians and civilian objects, and to launch independent and credible investigations into any incident involving their forces that resulted in injuries among civilians. The report also calls on the parties to the conflict to ensure accountability for the perpetrators of violations and the non-repetition of said violations, and to make the findings of those investigations known to the public.

The report stresses that torture and other forms of cruel, degrading, or inhumane treatment must come to an end in all detention centers, including sexual and gender-based violence. The report also calls for the release of all arbitrarily held detainees and for accountability to be ensured for the perpetrators of all these violations through fair trials. In the same context, the report calls for ending all forced disappearances and taking all possible steps, in accordance with UN Security Council resolution 2474 (2019), to pinpoint the whereabouts of detainees and/or missing persons, reveal their fate, and ensure they can contact their families.

Moreover, the report recommends that immediate action must be taken towards establishing an international mechanism to collect and coordinate all claims related to missing persons, including victims of enforced disappearance. This demand has been reiterated by the COI since its first report issued on November 23, 2011, and in many of its subsequent reports.

The report also calls for continuing efforts to achieve accountability, and emphasizes that the return of Syrian refugees must be voluntary, safe, and conducted in a practicable manner that preserves their dignity, with no potential consequences of physical harm or violations of their fundamental human rights.

SNHR welcomes the findings of the COI’s report, and we support its mandate and the investigations it has carried out since its establishment in the summer of 2011. The COI has been a great help to the Syrian people, professionally and impartially documenting the violations perpetrated against them, always welcoming criticism directed at it regarding some points and reviewing these points. Since the earliest days of the COI’s establishment, SNHR has cooperated with its investigators providing them with data and any information required, as well as facilitating communication and relations with victims and their families. We assert our continuing support for the COI’s work, given its exceptional importance in light of the continuing perpetration of atrocious violations in Syria, especially by the Syrian regime.
Snhr welcomes the coi report and the most recent hrc resolution confirming that violations continue in Syria.

II. The UN HRC Asserts that Violations Continue in Syria, With Five Oppressive States Voting Against the Syrian People and Against the HRC Resolution

On April 4, 2023, the UN Human Rights Council (HRC) adopted Resolution 52/30, by which it extended the COI’s mandate for a period of one year, requesting that the COI present an oral update to the HRC during its 53rd session and present an updated written report at the 54th and 55th sessions. The resolution agreed that all reports and oral updates of the COI would be transmitted to all relevant UN bodies and recommended that the UN General Assembly submit the reports to the UN Security Council for appropriate action.

The resolution condemns the state of human rights across Syria, noting that the conflict has been characterized by constant patterns of grave violations and abuses of international law. To that end, the resolution called on all parties to the conflict to immediately adhere to their obligations in accordance with international humanitarian law and international human rights law. The report also stresses that all those responsible for those violations and abuses must be held accountable. In this context, the resolution calls on the Syrian regime to fully collaborate with the HRC and the COI by allowing them immediate, full, and unrestricted access to all parts of the Syrian Arab Republic.

The report welcomes the progress made on the issue of international accountability, stressing the importance of holding more trials in the spirit of the Koblenz trial, whose importance we, at SNHR noted for including a ruling convicting former Syrian regime security official Anwar R. of crimes against humanity, which necessarily entails, according to the Rome Statue of the International Criminal Court (ICC), that such crimes are of a systematic or widespread nature. As such, crimes of this nature cannot possibly be committed by individuals in the Syrian regime without the existence of a central policy within the regime involving those at the highest echelons of power. Accordingly, these convictions constitute a clear condemnation of the machinery of torture, killing under torture, and sexual violence by the Syrian regime, which further underlines that anyone considering the revival of any form of relations with the Syrian regime or supporting the Syrian regime, is in reality supporting a criminal institution responsible for war crimes which has also committed crimes against humanity. On a related note, the resolution mentions the authority enjoyed by the Security Council to refer the situation in Syria to the ICC. The resolution also welcomes the joint initiative by the Netherlands and Canada to hold the Syrian regime responsible for violating its obligations in accordance with the Convention against Torture and Other Cruel, Inhuman or Degrading Treatment or Punishment.

The resolution further calls on the Syrian regime and other parties to the conflict to immediately release all missing persons detained through abductions, enforced disappearance, and arbitrary detentions, and to provide detailed information to their families about their fate and whereabouts. The resolution underlines the catastrophic impact of enforced disappearance that cruelly affects the victims’ families of the victims, especially women and children. Meanwhile, the resolution welcomes the UN Secretary-General’s findings detailed in his report on missing persons, noting that it is looking forward to additional efforts being made by the UN General Assembly on the subject of how to support work being done to clarify the fate and determine the whereabouts of missing persons in Syria, identify the human remains, provide support for the families, and encourage further coordination between the existing mechanisms and other...
stakeholders. The resolution stresses the UN’s support for the establishment of a consistent and comprehensive mechanism for this purpose. On a related note, the report calls on all states, relevant UN bodies, international organizations, and civil society to make greater effort to place more emphasis on the issue of missing persons in Syria, including victims of enforced disappearance, and to support the rights of the missing persons’ families to learn the truth about their loved ones’ fate and whereabouts. The resolution also stresses the importance of ensuring full and meaningful involvement for the victims and survivors in all efforts to search for and locate missing persons in Syria.

Furthermore, the resolution notes that the Syrian regime needs to reveal information on the fate of roughly 344,684 detainees and convicted individuals who the regime claims benefitted from its ‘amnesty laws’, as well as information on the documented execution cases in the al-Tadamun neighborhood massacre. The resolution also calls on Syrian regime forces to stop carrying out retaliatory acts against families seeking to obtain additional information about their missing and arbitrarily detained loved ones.

The resolution further notes that, since the beginning of the conflict, over seven million refugees have so far been forced to flee from Syria, with over seven million more people displaced within the country, calling upon all parties to the conflict to immediately cease activities that could cause further displacement, and calling upon the Syrian regime to protect the human rights of returning refugees and internally displaced persons, especially in light of the findings of the COI’s latest report, which confirm that the Syrian regime does not yet offer a safe and stable environment for any practicable and dignified return of refugees and displaced persons inside Syria.

Moreover, the resolution condemns all acts of sexual and gender-based violence and abuse, recognizing the need for a survivor-centered approach to responding to and preventing such violence and abuse, and calls for all victims and survivors of such crimes to be provided with immediate and non-discriminatory access to services, such as medical and psychosocial support.

The resolution, again, reiterates the UN’s calls on the HRC to hold accountable all those responsible for the use of chemical weapons in Syria.

We note that all the findings of this resolution are in the interest of the Syrian people and state, against the perpetrators of violations. Despite this, however, five oppressive states voted in favor of the Syrian regime, namely China, Cuba, Bolivia, Eritrea, and Algeria, although the majority of those voting, 26 states in all, voted in favor of the resolution and the Syrian people.

We, at SNHR, welcome the HRC resolution and its recommendation, contained in the document A/HRC/52/L.16 which draws primarily upon the work of the COI. We extend our thanks to all states that voted in support of the rights of the Syrian people, while condemning the stance of China, Cuba, Bolivia, Eritrea, and Algeria in support of the violations of the Syrian regime and voting against a resolution that extends the mandate of the COI, all of whose findings are in the interest of the Syrian people and the Syrian state against perpetrators of violations. Despite all of these points, those oppressive states have chosen to vote in favor of the Syrian regime which is involved in perpetrating crimes against humanity.
III. A Brief Analysis of the States' Voting Behavior on HRC Resolutions Show that Only 12 States, All of an Oppressive, Authoritarian Nature, Have Consistently Voted in favor of the Syrian Regime Since March 2011

We, at the SNHR, have constantly monitored all the UN resolutions issued by the HRC, numbering 41 resolutions on the human rights situation in Syria, since the beginning of the popular uprising up to the current date; these include 14 resolutions regarding the establishment of the Fact-Finding Mission which later developed into the International Commission of Inquiry, as well as extending its mandate. We have documented the states that voted in favor of the HRC resolutions on Syria, and those which abstained or were absent during these votes, as well as those states that voted against the HRC resolutions, expressing their denial of the violations committed by the Syrian regime, denials which effectively encouraged the regime to commit more violations by promising to secure support for it at the HRC. We have released multiple reports and statements in this regard.

Based on our continued scrutiny of the HRC resolutions and our monitoring of the voting record, we can say with absolute confidence that the states that have consistently voted against the HRC resolutions -12 states in all, including the five states that voted against the latest resolution on April 4, 2023 - are mutually supportive totalitarian states that are actively opposed to democracy and respect for international human rights law.

In our summary of the states that voted against every HRC resolution, we want to highlight the fact that those are mutually supportive totalitarian, isolated rogue states. On average, it is safe to say these are no more than four to five states in contrast to the 30 states that have voted in support of the HRC resolution, out of the 47 states eligible to vote. In other words, all these resolutions over the years have gained an overwhelming majority of support. A focused review of the list of states for each resolution can ascertain the following:

First: Only 12 states have consistently voted against the Syrian regime over the past 12 years, all of which are oppressive dictatorships:

These states are Russia, China, Venezuela, Cuba, Bolivia, Burundi, Armenia, Eritrea, Algeria, Iraq, and Egypt. Below is the number of times each of those states has voted in support of the Syrian regime:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>States</th>
<th>states have consistently voted against the Syrian regime over</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>China</td>
<td>Voted against 34 times</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Cuba</td>
<td>Voted against 34 times</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Venezuela</td>
<td>Voted against 30 times</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Russia</td>
<td>Voted against 21 times</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Bolivia</td>
<td>Voted against 17 times</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Algeria</td>
<td>Voted against 10 times</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Eritrea</td>
<td>Voted against 10 times</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Burundi</td>
<td>Voted against 9 times</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Iraq</td>
<td>Voted against 7 times</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Armenia</td>
<td>Voted against 6 times</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Philippines</td>
<td>Voted against 4 times</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Egypt</td>
<td>Voted against 3 times</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
SNHR Welcomes the COI Report and the Most Recent HRC Resolution Confirming that Violations Continue in Syria

A map showing the 12 states that have consistently voted against HRC resolutions that condemn violations against the Syrian people between March 2011 and April 2023, and how many times each state has voted:

Second: Eight states have voted in favor of the HRC resolutions, but voted once in favor of the Syrian people:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>States</th>
<th>Voted in favor</th>
<th>Voted against</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Mauritania</td>
<td>9 times</td>
<td>once against</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Malaysia</td>
<td>9 times</td>
<td>once against</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Gabon</td>
<td>16 times</td>
<td>once against</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Kyrgyzstan</td>
<td>7 times</td>
<td>twice against</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Bangladesh</td>
<td>4 times</td>
<td>once against</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Somalia</td>
<td>6 times</td>
<td>once against</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Pakistan</td>
<td>3 times</td>
<td>once against</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ecuador</td>
<td></td>
<td>It has voted <strong>four</strong> times in favor of HRC resolutions, while voting <strong>three</strong> times in favor of the Syrian regime.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

1. Only the Philippines voted once in favor of one of the resolutions, while consistently voting against the rest of the resolutions throughout its different terms as a Human Rights Council Member State.
Third: The overwhelming majority of the world’s states have endorsed the Human Rights Council resolutions that support the rights of the Syrian people and condemn the vicious crimes against them:

The number of states that have voted in favor of the HRC resolutions on Syria since March 2011 is massively greater than the number of dictatorial states that voted in support of the Syrian regime. This has also been the case on all resolutions by the UN General Assembly, and regarding the resolutions issued by the Organization for the Prohibition of Chemical Weapons (OPCW). We continue to hope, however, that the situation will change in terms of the Security Council’s abject and shameful failure on Syria. Below is a map of the states that voted in favor of human rights in Syria. We, at SNHR, counted the number of times each state has voted in favor of HRC resolutions. Those states constitute the overwhelming majority (in contrast to the 12 dictatorial states aligning themselves in support of the Syrian regime). We greatly value those states for showing support for the rights of the Syrian people.

A map showing the world states that have consistently voted in favor of Human Rights Council draft resolutions condemning violations against the Syrian people between March 2011 and April 2023 and how many times each state has voted:
IV. Conclusions and Recommendations

Legal Conclusions

- Twelve of the world’s countries (Russia, China, Venezuela, Cuba, Bolivia, Burundi, Eritrea, Philippines, Algeria, Iraq, Egypt, Armenia), all of which share the common characteristics of being subject to oppressive authoritarian tyrannical rule, have consistently voted against HRC resolutions on Syria from March 2011 to April 2023, a shameful act that we condemn in the strongest terms.

- Russia is involved in committing violations that constitute crimes against humanity and war crimes in Syria, which explains both why it voted, before its membership was suspended, against all HRC resolutions on Syria and why it fears the work of the COI.

- This report again confirms that most of the world’s countries refuse to support crimes against humanity and war crimes in Syria, and if the decision to move to protect civilians was left to the HRC or the UN General Assembly, these violations would have ended since the summer of 2011; however, the executive power is in the hands of the UN Security Council, which has failed abjectly and completely to protect civilians in Syria for 11 years to date.

Recommendations:

World states

- The HRC is a human rights body and the resolutions issued by it are closely related to fundamental human rights, and all countries of the world must respect these resolutions and comply with them.

- The countries of the world must stand in solidarity with just causes, and should always vote in favor of HRC resolutions condemning those nations that excessively violate fundamental human rights like the Syrian regime.

- Countries supporting the Syrian regime must be exposed, and their votes in favor of the regime at the HRC must be condemned.

- Authoritarian dictatorial states, such as China, Venezuela, Iran, Iraq, Egypt, and Algeria, must not be elected to the HRC, because their very nature means they will always vote against human rights worldwide, with their votes on Syria serving as a stark example of this.