

## Statement

### SNHR is the Principal Source in a Report Released by Denmark's Immigration Service on Military Service in Syria

The OPCW Must Not Waste Further Resources on Any Allegations by the Syrian Regime Which Lacks Any Credibility and is Involved in Crimes Against Humanity



Thursday 20 July 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 analyzes in Syria.

Denmark's Immigration Service, a directorate within the country's Ministry of Immigration and Integration, recently released a report on military service in Syria. The aim of the report is to provide the relevant information on military service in the Syrian regime's army, in order to determine the proper international protection policies, including policies on the refugees' situation and protection for them.

Released on July 7, 2023, the report draws primarily on evidence provided by the Syrian Network for Human Rights (SNHR), in summarizing conscription procedures in Syria, including those related to naturalized foreigners. To that end, the report notes that recruitment, both for conscripts and reserve combatants, continues in regime-held areas, with the same conscription procedures followed in all the areas under the regime's control.

The report also notes that conscripts might be required to be actively involved in hostilities that may constitute violations of international law.

Moreover, the report underscores that fleeing conscripts have been among the groups suffering the highest rates of arbitrary arrests at the hands of Syrian regime forces. In regard to this issue, the report cites SNHR, which further noted that escapees are usually detained by the Syrian regime's infamous intelligence services, putting them at grave risk of torture and forcible disappearance.

This report by Denmark's Ministry of Refugees, Immigration, and Integration, as well as [the ruling of the Court of Justice of the European Union \(CJEU\)](#), which called on EU Member States to fully recognize Syrians refusing to perform their mandatory service as refugees and noted that there is a legitimate strong supposition that refusal to perform military service might lead a person to be persecuted or be involved in war crimes, and the most recent situation report by [Germany's Federal Foreign Office](#) on Syria, all confirm, yet again, that regime-held areas cannot be deemed safe havens for their existing residents, let alone for returning refugees or internally displaced persons (IDPs). These documents also show that conscription in Syrian regime forces that are systemically involved in

perpetrating crimes against humanity and war crimes is a major obstacle impeding refugees' return. We have previously stressed that no Syrian citizen should join Syrian regime forces, considering the strong likelihood that they would incriminate themselves in gross violations and war crimes by doing so. We have also reiterated repeatedly that there will be no stability in Syria, as long as the current Commander-in-Chief Bashar Assad, who is involved in crimes against humanity, remains in power in the country.

To read the Danish Immigration Service's report in full, please click [here](#).<sup>1</sup>

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1. Report only available in English.



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