

Statement

SNHR Signs a Memorandum of Understanding With the Forensic Anthropology Foundation of Guatemala



Tuesday, 8 August , 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.

The Syrian Network for Human Rights (SNHR) is most honored to announce that we recently signed a Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) with the Forensic Anthropology Foundation of Guatemala (FAFG) which provides for creating a mechanism for coordination and cooperation, paving the way to sharing information data and building our respective capacities.

The [FAFG](#) is an unprecedented initiative that aims to make Guatemala a hub for active civil society organizations working in Africa, the Middle East, and Asia, in order to empower and build the capacities of such groups in relation to searching for and documenting missing persons, with a particular focus on the use of a holistic, multidisciplinary approach, forensic sciences, memorialization, and mental health support.

Thanks to this MoU, SNHR's team working on documenting and tracking cases of missing and forcibly disappeared persons will be able to further bolster its capacities in relation to searching for and identifying victims through the use of forensic science and providing mental health and social support.

The MoU will also help in exchanging the wealth of experience SNHR has obtained through our work in Syria for over 12 years to date, while identifying and refining the scientific methods and approaches that best suit the Syrian situation. In addition, this partnership will help to identify the best practices and activities to assist in determining the true facts in various situations and in memorialization. All of this ultimately serve our primary objective of helping families to find their missing beloved ones, a crucially important step on the path of transitional justice that involves accountability processes, reparation, and reconciliation in the conflict and post-conflict phases.

Multiple MoUs

Our MoU with the FAFG is the latest in a long series of MoUs which SNHR has signed with various distinguished organizations, including UN bodies, such as [the International, Impartial, and Independent Mechanism to Assist in the Investigation and Prosecution of Persons Responsible for the Most Serious Crimes under International Law Committed in the Syrian Arab Republic since March 2011 \(IIIM\)](#). Through that MoU, the IIIM benefitted from large quantities of data extracted from SNHR's database.

In January 2020, SNHR also signed a Principles of Cooperation agreement with the Organization for the Prohibition of Chemical Weapons' (OPCW) [Investigation and Identification Team \(IIT\)](#), enabling SNHR to contribute to investigations into the incidents that the team is currently conducting and will conduct in the future, since the SNHR possesses an extensive database documenting the use of chemical weapons in Syria since the first use of this weapon documented by SNHR in December 2012.

In October 2019, SNHR signed an [MoU with the Government of the United States of America](#), providing for the establishment of a coordination and cooperation mechanism to share information and data documented by SNHR concerning human rights violations in Syria and the individuals involved in such violations in order to participate in the investigations carried out by the Government of the United States of America into some of these violations, and to place the greatest possible number of those involved in perpetrating these violations on the lists of economic and political sanctions; this will constitute a major impediment to any effort to rehabilitate the Syrian regime and all its organs and serve as an important form of accountability that was previously unavailable.

[In February 2020, SNHR signed an MoU](#) with Humanitarian Outcomes on contributing to its [Aid Worker Security Database \(AWSD\)](#) project, accredited by the United Nations, the Red Cross and Red Crescent, and numerous humanitarian NGOs worldwide. The AWSD is the most comprehensive global database of the major incidents of violence recorded against aid workers since 1997 to date. This MoU stipulated the establishment of a joint coordination and cooperation mechanism aimed at documenting and archiving violations and incidences of violence affecting aid workers. This effectively assists in the study, analysis, and description of aid work in Syria, providing comparisons with similar work carried out in other nations worldwide based on the AWSD's findings.

In addition, SNHR has signed a wide range of bilateral agreements with a number of research centers and other bodies for data-sharing, most notably: [The Armed Conflict Location & Event Data Project \(ACLED\)](#) and [the Global Public Policy Institute \(GPPi\)](#), [Amnesty International](#), [Harvard University](#), the New York Times, and others.

Our policy stipulates that we should not share any data without first co-signing a formal agreement or memorandum of understanding detailing the criteria for using this data; SNHR's general terms for data-sharing can be found on [our website](#).

SNHR will continue to build partnerships with organizations and bodies in order to establish the truth of what has, and is happening in Syria and support and document the narrative of victims and survivors on incidents, so as to prevent the distortion of history and refute the false narrative of the perpetrators of violations, most notably the Syrian regime and its allies Russia and Iran.



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