



## Invitation to the International Event

# Thirteen Years of Death, Torture, and Disappearance: Examining Human Rights Abuses and Accountability Opportunities in Syria

on Friday, March 15, 2024, at 10.00 – 11.00 EST  
(15.00 – 16.00 CET, 17.00 – 18.00 Syria time)

The Syrian Network for Human Rights (SNHR) cordially invites you to attend the international event, 'Thirteen Years of Death, Torture, and Disappearance: Examining Human Rights Abuses and Accountability Opportunities in Syria'. The event, which is sponsored by the United States, France, the Netherlands, Germany, and the United Kingdom.

**This event will address the ongoing human rights violations and abuses that Syrians continue to face 13 years into the conflict, including the unjust detention or disappearance of 155,000 people, and explore how the international community can advance justice and accountability efforts to hold perpetrators of violations and abuses accountable.**

This March marks 13 years since the Syrian people courageously and peacefully took to the streets to demand freedom and respect for human rights. Thirteen years later, the Assad regime continues its brutality, as the regime has been responsible for innumerable atrocities, some of which rise to the level of war crimes and crimes against humanity. Estimates of those killed since the beginning of the conflict range up to 550,000 victims. Reports by human rights groups, UN entities, and eyewitnesses describe how the regime continues to arbitrarily detain, torture, and kill political opponents, activists, human rights defenders, journalists, and medical professionals. The regime, along with Russia, also continues to target civilians in aerial and artillery attacks, including through the use of incendiary and cluster weapons. Today, there are over 6.9 Syrian million internally displaced persons (IDPS) and 6.8 refugees according to the UNHCR, as the human rights and humanitarian situation in Syria is rapidly worsening. Forcibly displaced Syrians face significant risks of mistreatment upon return, and many have nowhere to return as a result of widespread destruction or the regime's confiscation of their property. Protection thresholds have not been met for the safe, voluntary, informed, and dignified return of refugees to Syria.

SNHR estimates that at least 155,000 persons in Syria remain arbitrarily detained or forcibly disappeared, with the regime responsible for the vast majority of these missing persons. The regime holds individuals without charges and in many cases detains them merely for peacefully protesting. Family members seeking to obtain information about their missing loved ones face risks of detention, abuse, and exploitation when inquiring directly with the regime. Detainees are often held in detention centers for years without any information provided on their status in overcrowded, unsanitary, and abhorrent conditions, while detainees are also systematically subjected to many forms of torture, including the systemic use of sexual and gender-based violence. Despite these grave risks, the regime continues to deny complete access for impartial and independent entities to most detention facilities. To address holistically the tragedy of missing persons in Syria, the UN General Assembly established the humanitarian mandated "Independent Institution on Missing Persons in the Syrian Arab Republic" (IIMP) in June 2023. The IIMP's goal is to help advance the right to know the truth about these individuals' fate and whereabouts, for progress on the missing persons issue is absolutely vital to promote lasting stability in Syria.

Impunity for the Assad regime's horrific atrocities over the past 13 years is unacceptable. It is clear Syrians continue to face horrific human rights abuses at the hands of the Assad regime; such disregard for life is evidence that the regime has done nothing to merit normalization by the international community. The pursuit of a political resolution to the conflict in line with UNSCR 2254 can help secure the stable, just, and enduring peace that Syrians deserve.

### Speakers:

#### **Christopher Le Mon**

Acting Principal Deputy Assistant Secretary of State, USA.

#### **Ethan Goldrich**

Deputy Assistant Secretary of State, USA

#### **Stefan Schneck**

Special Envoy for Syria, Germany

#### **Ann Snow**

Special Envoy for Syria, UK

#### **Gijs Gerlag**

Special Envoy for Syria, the Netherlands

#### **Antoine Alheritiere**

Deputy Head of the Near East Department, France

#### **Linnea Arvidsson**

UN Commission of Inquiry

#### **Maymouna Al-Ammar**

Guardians of Childhood

#### **Sawsan Al-Habbali**

Activist and Sister of prominent activist Osama Al-Habbali, who was forcibly disappeared by the Syrian regime.

#### **Fadel Abdulghany**

Director of the Syrian Network for Human Rights

### Moderator:

**Razan Brghol**, Head of Program, Baytna

**To participate,**  
please fill out the [form](#).

The event will be conducted in English, with Arabic interpretation available.

You can also watch the event live on SNHR's social media channels:



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[www.snhr.org](http://www.snhr.org)

**The event will focus on the following questions:**

- **Overall Trends:** What types of abuses are Syrians facing as we enter the 14th year of the conflict? How has the regime's perpetration of atrocities shifted over the years including who is now targeted, where, and how?
- **Gender:** How does the human rights situation in Syria uniquely impact women and girls? What efforts are underway to advance human rights for women and girls?
- **Missing Persons:** In light of the establishment of the IIMP, how can progress be made on the right to know the truth for the 155,000 missing and unjustly detained persons in Syria?
- **Displaced Persons:** What types of abuses do IDPs and refugees face upon return to Syria and what makes returnees more vulnerable to regime abuses?
- **Accountability:** In light of recent universal jurisdiction cases in third countries and the ICJ case brought by Canada and the Netherlands under the Convention Against Torture, what are the prospects for expanding justice and accountability for human rights violations and abuses and violations of the law of armed conflict?



For any inquires, you can contact Mr. Rafat Suleiman (SNHR)

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