

Statement

SNHR Condemns Syrian Regime for Killing Doctor Majd Kamalmaz Under Torture After Eight Years of Enforced Disappearance

SNHR Calls on the US Administration to Take All Measures Possible Against the Syrian Regime for Killing a US Citizen Under Torture



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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.

In May 2024, the family of doctor Majd Kamalmaz began receiving information of his death in a Syrian regime detention center. This came after many attempts by the family to find out anything about his whereabouts since he was first arrested by regime forces on February 15, 2017, at a checkpoint in al-Mazza neighborhood of Damascus city.

Dr. Majd Marwan Kamalmaz, an American psychotherapist, originally from Damascus city, was aged 59 at the time of his arrest. On February 14, 2017, Dr. Majd arrived in Damascus city from Lebanon, and was arrested the day after his arrival. Since then, he has been categorized as a forcibly disappeared person, with the Syrian regime denying having him or allowing anyone to visit him even a lawyer. According to intelligence received by the Syrian Network for Human Rights (SNHR) from his family, Dr. Majd was in good health at the time of his arrest indicating a strong probability that he died due to torture and medical negligence in a regime detention center. SNHR can also confirm that Syrian regime forces did not disclose Dr. Majid's death to his family at the time it took place, nor have they returned his body to his family.

Known for his extensive humanitarian activism, Dr. Majd helped many Syrian refugees in Lebanon by providing humanitarian and medical services. For this reason, he and others like him have been viewed as primary, strategic targets by the Syrian regime, which has spared no effort in pursuing, detaining and forcibly disappearing figures like Dr. Majd with no legal justification.

International law strictly prohibits torture and all other forms of cruel, degrading, or inhumane torture. The prohibition of torture is a customary rule that cannot be disputed or balanced against other rights or values, even in times of emergency. Violating this rule is a crime under international criminal law. Those who issued the orders for or assisted in carrying out torture are criminally liable for their actions.

Furthermore, by forcibly disappearing Dr. Majd and then killing him in one of its detention center, the Syrian regime has also violated the order of the Hague-based International Court of Justice (ICJ) issued on November 16, 2023, in regard to a request for provisional measures in the case brought by Canada and the Netherlands against the Syrian regime on the application of the Convention Against Torture and Other Cruel, Inhuman or Degrading Treatment or Punishment. According to the ICJ's court order, the Syrian Arab Republic, as part of its obligations under the Convention against Torture, was bound to "take all measures within its power to prevent acts of torture and other cruel, inhuman or degrading treatment or punishment and ensure that its officials, as well as any organizations or persons which may be subject to its control, direction or influence, do not commit any acts of torture or other acts of cruel, inhuman or degrading treatment or punishment." In addition, the document continued, the Syrian Arab Republic "shall take effective measures to prevent the destruction and ensure the preservation of any evidence related to allegations of acts within the scope of the Convention against Torture and Other Cruel, Inhuman or Degrading Treatment or Punishment."

SNHR condemns all abduction and torture practices by Syrian regime personnel, as by all other forces. We call for the immediate launch of an independent investigation into all incidents of arrest and torture that have taken place, particularly this latest barbaric incident that serves as further proof of the barbarism of the Syrian regime and highlights the rightful demand of the Syrian people to change this monstrous regime for a democratic government that respects human rights and defends the Syrian people.

The US administration must take every possible measure against the Syrian regime over its killing of a U.S. citizen under torture in this barbaric, unconscionable way. The US Department of Secretary must issue an urgent statement of condemnation that clearly expresses its intention to hold the Syrian regime accountable and demand that the regime compensates the victim's family.

SNHR stands in solidarity with Dr. Majd's family, extending our heartfelt thoughts and condolences to them and to all bereaved families who have lost loved ones to the Syrian regime's heinous machinery of torture.





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No justice without accountability

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