

In the One Year Since the ICJ Issued its Order, the Syrian Regime Has Killed at Least 84 Individuals through Torture, and Arrested At least 1,161 Civilians, Including 18 Children and 43 Women

SNHR's Fourth Periodic Monitoring Report Proves the Syrian Regime's Violation of the ICJ's Order, Calling on the Court to Conduct an Official Evaluation of the Regime's Compliance



Friday 15 November 2024

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.

Contents

I. One Year Since the ICJ Order, the Syrian Regime Has Failed to Take Any Actual Measures to End Torture.....	1
II. Summary of the Violations Related to Regime Detention Centers in the Period from November 16, 2023, Until November 16, 2024.....	3
A. More arbitrary arrests and enforced disappearances recorded.....	3
B. Deaths due to torture.....	5
C. More forcibly disappeared persons have been registered as dead in the civil registry records.....	7
III. The Amnesty Decrees Promulgated by the Regime Since the ICJ Order Was Issued on November 16, 2023, Exclude Detainees and Forcibly Disappeared Persons.....	10
Arbitrary arrests and torture persist despite the amnesty decrees.....	10
Historical overview of amnesty decrees since 2011.....	11
IV. New Elections for the People’s Assembly of Syria Were Held Amid Continued Human Rights Violations.....	12
The People’s Assembly of Syria elections violate international community resolutions.....	12
V. Civilian and Military Figures Who Were Implicated in War Crimes and Crimes Against Humanity Are Appointed to Senior Positions.....	13
New government formed with leadership figures who incurred international sanctions.....	13
VI. Conclusions and Recommendations.....	17
Conclusions.....	17
Recommendations.....	18
Acknowledgment & Solidarity.....	20

I. One Year Since the ICJ Order, the Syrian Regime Has Failed to Take Any Actual Measures to End Torture

Today, Saturday, November 16, 2024, is the first anniversary of [the publication of the Order by the Hague-based International Court of Justice \(ICJ\)](#) on Thursday, November 16, 2023, which came in response to a case by Canada and the Netherlands against the Syrian Arab Republic submitted officially before the court on June 8, 2023. The case concerned Syria's systematic failure to fulfill its international obligations to prohibit torture under the UN Convention against Torture and Other Cruel, Inhuman or Degrading Treatment or Punishment, which Syria ratified in 2004. The Order, according to the official order document, called on the Syrian regime to:

First: "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."

Second: "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, including medical and forensic reports or other records of injuries and deaths."

Furthermore, the court requested that Syria submits a report to the court every six months after the date of the ICJ order's issuance, outlining the steps taken to put it into effect.

Since the Order was issued, the Syrian Network for Human Rights (SNHR) has closely monitored the Syrian regime's compliance with it through continuous monitoring and documentation. To that end, [the group released periodic reports on this topic](#), with this being the fourth such periodic report monitoring the regime's compliance with the ICJ order. The first report was released on February 22, 2024, three months after the ICJ order was issued, the second on May 23, 2024, six months after the ICJ order was issued, and the third on August 15, 2024, nine months after the ICJ order was issued. All three previous reports, as well as this one, have concluded that Syrian regime had failed to take any actual action to end torture, nor has it taken any action whatsoever to comply with the ICJ Order's requirements. On the contrary, the humanitarian situation has only grown more dire since the ICJ order was issued on November 16, 2023, with SNHR documenting the deaths of dozens of individuals due to torture, while arbitrary arrests and enforced disappearances continue at alarming rates. Torture is also still being used as a strategic weapon of war, and continues to be a primary and defining aspect of the regime's security system to consolidate control and crush dissent.

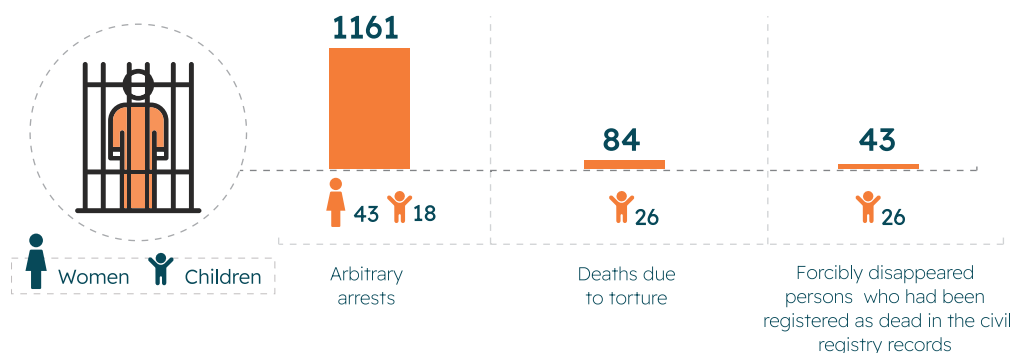
On August 12, 2024, the Independent International Commission of Inquiry on the Syrian Arab Republic (COI) [released its latest report](#) covering the period between January 1 and June 30, 2024. In that report, the COI documented more deaths in detention at the hands of the Syrian regime, stressing that “The Commission has reasonable grounds to believe that the [Syrian regime’s] Government continued to commit acts of torture and ill-treatment against persons in State custody, including practices causing death in detention, as well as arbitrary imprisonment, rape or other forms of sexual violence of similar gravity, and enforced disappearances, again confirming continuing patterns of crimes against humanity and war crimes.” The report also documents cases of forcibly repatriated Syrian citizens being subjected to torture, with these individuals having been subjected to such violations from the first moments of their arrival after being deported to Syria. Elsewhere, the report notes that the Syrian authorities continue to hamper families’ efforts to find out the fate of their detained loved ones, compelling these families to pay bribes to obtain information, visit their loved ones, or secure their release. Moreover, the report stresses that, in addition to the risk of arbitrary arrest and other related violations, “Life in government-held areas continued to be marked by deteriorating living conditions,” confirming continuing recurrent patterns of war crimes, grave human rights violations, and crimes against humanity.

In addition to these points, the Syrian regime continues to utterly dismiss international resolutions calling for a comprehensive political process by appointing figures implicated in war crimes and crimes against humanity to senior positions, further tightening its grip on power and perpetuating despotism. The Syrian regime even held elections for a new People’s Assembly of Syria in July 2024 and named a new government cabinet in September amid sharply worsening living conditions and increasing human suffering, all while the regime has control only over about 63 percent of Syrian territory, and is responsible for displacing half the population who are living today as either internally displaced persons (IDPs) or as refugees.

This report provides a summary of the violations that have been committed by the Syrian regime against the Syrian people since the issuance of the ICJ Order, including arrests, torture, and enforced disappearance, as well as the amnesty decrees issued by the regime that exclude political prisoners and prisoners of conscience. In addition, the report goes over the recent government selections, which included figures implicated in crimes against humanity, reflecting the regime’s prioritization of consolidating its own power above any other consideration through these appointments. The report stresses that rigorous action must be taken against the regime, including sanctions and diplomatic boycott in order to promote respect for human rights, and ensure that perpetrators of violence are no longer shielded by their impunity.

II. Summary of the Violations Related to Regime Detention Centers in the Period from November 16, 2023, Until November 16, 2024

Throughout this period, SNHR has documented the commission of grave human rights violations in a systematic manner in regime detention centers. These include torture, in its various forms, arbitrary arrests, and enforced disappearance. Furthermore, some forcibly disappeared persons were registered as dead in the state civil registry records. The graph below outlines the violations committed by the regime since the ICJ order was issued on November 16, 2023, up until November 16, 2024.



The figures above show that the regime is still carrying out arbitrary arrests, enforced disappearances, and torture practices in a systematic manner, meaning that it has failed to take any effective action to end these violations. The data further confirms that there has been no discernible improvement in terms of the human rights situation.

A. More arbitrary arrests and enforced disappearances recorded

Since the ICJ Order was issued on November 16, 2023, up until November 16, 2024, SNHR has documented at least **1,161 cases** of arbitrary arrest at the hands of Syrian regime forces, including of 18 children and 43 women, with all those detained being held in various regime detention centers. Of the 1,161 arrested, 138 have been released, while the remaining **1,023** have subsequently been categorized as enforced disappearance cases. In other words, 88 percent of all people arrested in that period have subsequently been categorized as forcibly disappeared persons, while only 12 percent have been released.

Most prominent patterns identified in the arbitrary arrests

1. Arrests related to freedom of opinion and expression: These arrests have been targeting civilians and activists who voiced their demands or criticized the living conditions in regime-held areas. Other civilians and activists were also arrested for expressing their support on social media for the popular movement in Suwayda governorate, with those detained facing charges related to the Counter Cybercrime Act. SNHR documented the arrest of 34 individuals, including three women, in relation to freedom of opinion and expression, with most of these arrests taking place in the two governorates of Latakia and Tartus.

2. Arrests involving returning refugees and IDPs: We have recorded arrests/detentions targeting refugees and IDPs who returned to regime-held areas. This pattern of arrests spiked in May 2024 in the wake of a crackdown by the Lebanese General Security and Lebanese Army that targeted Syrian refugees in Lebanon and forcibly repatriated them to the Syrian border, making them an easy and automatic target for regime security agencies. Meanwhile, there were also arrests of a number of [Syrian refugees returning from Syria to Lebanon to flee the ongoing Israeli offensive on Lebanon that was launched on September 23, 2024](#). These arrests took place at the regular and irregular border crossings between Syria and Lebanon, with most of those arrested being taken to regime security and military detention centers in the governorates of Homs and Damascus. We also documented arrests/detentions targeting civilians, including women and children, while they were attempting to return from areas under the control of armed opposition factions and Hay'at Tahrir al-Sham (HTS) to their original regime-held areas. **Since the start of 2024, we have recorded at least 182 cases of arbitrary arrest/detention of refugees and IDPs who voluntarily returned or were forcibly repatriated to regime-held areas, with those arrested/detained including two children and five women (adult female). Most of them were arrested by the Syrian regime's Military Security Intelligence detachment in al-Masna border area and at checkpoints erected at the entry points to Damascus city.**

3. Arrests related to military service: Syrian regime forces have carried out widespread arrests targeting civilians in Rural Damascus and Hama for failing to join the regime's military or reserve forces as part of their mandatory military service requirements. Most of these arrests took place in raids or at checkpoints, with those arrested even including people who had agreed to settle their security status in areas that agreed to settlements with the regime. Many of these arrests were carried out by security branches' personnel to extort ransom money from the victims' families.

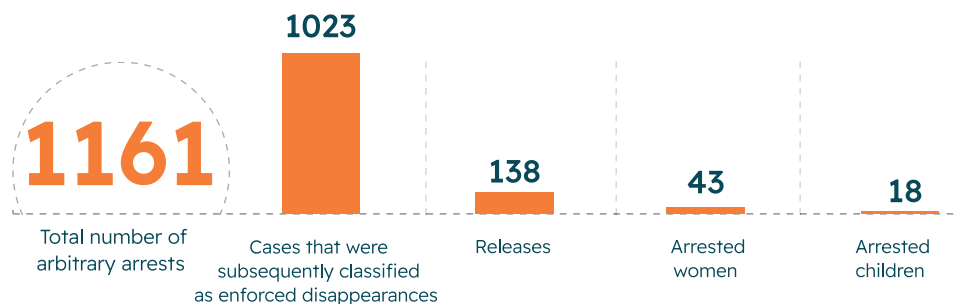
4. Arrests at Immigration and Passport Departments: We have also documented arrests/detentions by regime security forces targeting civilians who were visiting Immigration and Passport Department offices in regime-held areas, in order to obtain travel documents, visas, or other documents needed for leaving the country.

These patterns suggest a systematic targeting of civilians, returning activists, and refugees, and further restrictions on freedom of opinion and expression, in addition to expanded arbitrary arrests on the ground of the Counter Cybercrime Act and military service laws. Overall, these violations are in line with the systematic and calculated oppression that have been a central part of the Syrian regime's policy.

Regime forces often carry out these arbitrary arrests without observing any of the proper legal procedures, such as issuing judicial warrants, with victims usually being arrested at checkpoints or in raids. The main security agencies, who operate without any form of judicial oversight, carry out these arrests, which are usually followed by torture from the very first moments of detention, with the detainees being denied any opportunity to contact their families and lawyers, and subsequently going on to become forcibly disappeared persons.

Summary of the arbitrary arrests documented since the ICJ Order was issued on November 16, 2023, up until November 16, 2024

At least **1,161 arbitrary arrests** documented, with the victims being held in regime detention centers, between the date of the ICJ order being issued on November 16, 2023, and November 16, 2024



Regime detention centers are infamous for the brutal torture carried out there. In fact, SNHR has counted [as many as 72 separate types of physical, psychological, and sexual torture](#), to which all detainees are subject without any exceptions, even for women, children, the elderly, sick, or mentally or physically disabled.

At least **136,614 individuals** who have been held in regime detention centers for many years continued to endure unimaginable torture. According to accounts by former prisoners, all detainees are subjected to at least one of these barbaric methods of torture except for very rare cases, even if they are detained for only brief periods.

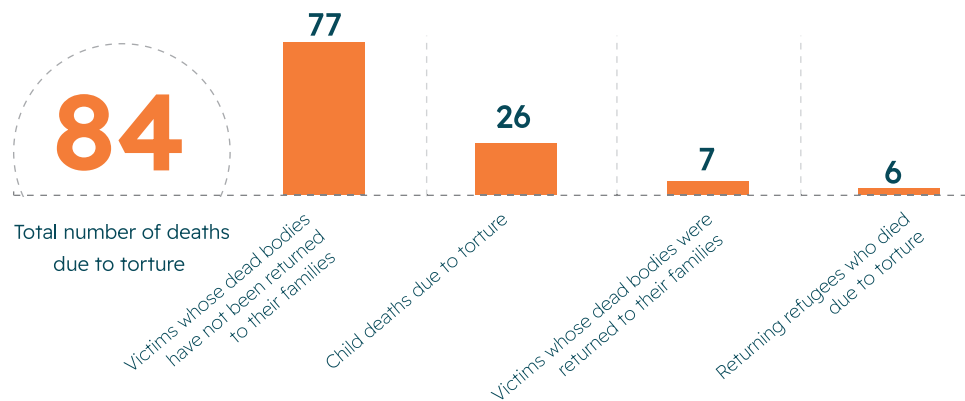
B. Deaths due to torture

From the date of the ICJ Order being issued on November 16, 2023, up until November 16, 2024, SNHR documented at least 84 deaths due to torture in regime detention centers, including those of 26 children. In other words, 31 percent of all victims documented as dying due to torture were children.

Only seven of the bodies of victims who died due to torture in this period have been returned to their families, while the overwhelming majority (about 91.67 percent) have not been returned, which again underlines the regime's continuing enforced disappearance policy. Also among these victims were six former refugees who had voluntarily returned or been forcibly repatriated to regime-held areas, after which they were detained and subsequently died due to torture or medical negligence, accounting for about seven percent of the total.

Summary of the deaths due to torture in regime detention centers documented between November 16, 2023, and November 16, 2024

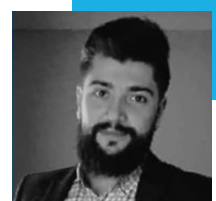
At least 84 deaths due to torture in regime detention centers were documented in the year between the date of the ICJ order being issued on November 16, 2023, and November 16, 2024



This data provides further confirmation that torture is still being carried out in a systematic way in regime detention centers, with increasing numbers of children also being targeted. Meanwhile, the limited number of victims' bodies that have been returned to the families highlights the regime's continued use of enforced disappearance of victims as a policy. Overall, this reflects the regime's utter disregard for even the most basic of human rights and its continuing use of torture as an instrument to terrorize and oppress returning civilians and members of vulnerable groups.

Some notable examples among the deaths due to torture:

Abdul Ghany Mustafa Munir, an architect from Aleppo city, born in 1991, was arrested on Saturday, August 17, 2024, by Syrian regime forces in Tadeef city in eastern rural Aleppo governorate while he was trying to travel to an area under regime forces' control in Aleppo city. He was taken to a detention center in Aleppo city.

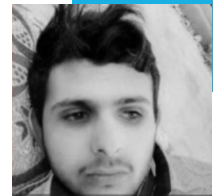


↑ 👁 Abdul Ghany Mustafa Munir

According to intelligence received by SNHR from people close to the victim, Abdul Ghany, who had been a refugee in Türkiye where he worked in construction, was forcibly repatriated to northwestern Syria in April 2024. During his stay in Izaz city in Aleppo governorate, which is under the SNA's control, Abdul Ghany's family made arrangements with the regime to settle his security status and paid the required fees to relieve him from mandatory military service. Nonetheless, Abdul Ghany was arrested by regime forces on his way back to Aleppo city. He has been classified as a forcibly disappeared person ever since.

On Tuesday, September 10, 2024, Abdul Ghany's family received notification from regime forces that Abdul Ghany had died in a branch of the Syrian regime's Military Security Intelligence Directorate in Aleppo city. His body was returned to his family the next day bearing clear signs of torture. SNHR can confirm that Abdul Ghany was in good health at the time of his arrest, indicating a strong probability that he died due to torture and medical negligence inside the Military Security Intelligence Directorate branch in Aleppo city.

Mahmoud Khaled al-Iliwi from Tal Karsyan village in eastern rural Idlib governorate, born in 2005, was arrested along with his father, Khaled, on Friday, October 11, 2024, in Khan Sheikhoun city in southern rural Idlib governorate. The two men were then taken to the Hama city branch of the Syrian regime's Military Security Intelligence Directorate.



↑ ⓘ Mahmoud Khaled al-Iliwi

According to intelligence received by SNHR from local activists in Idlib governorate, Mahmoud and his father Khaled had been living as refugees in Lebanon since 2013, working in agriculture there. Due to the intensifying Israeli airstrikes on Lebanon which began on September 23, 2024, the two men decided to flee back to Syria via the irregular crossings in Homs city and return to their home village, which is located in an area free of regime control. The father and son were arrested by regime forces on the grounds of entering the country irregularly, and of Mahmoud's having evaded mandatory military service.

On Tuesday, October 22, 2024, the Military Security Directorate branch released Khaled, then returned his son's body to him, informing him that Mahmoud had died in the same facility. SNHR can confirm that Mahmoud was in good health at the time of his arrest, indicating a strong probability that he died due to torture and medical negligence in the Military Security Intelligence Directorate branch in Hama city.

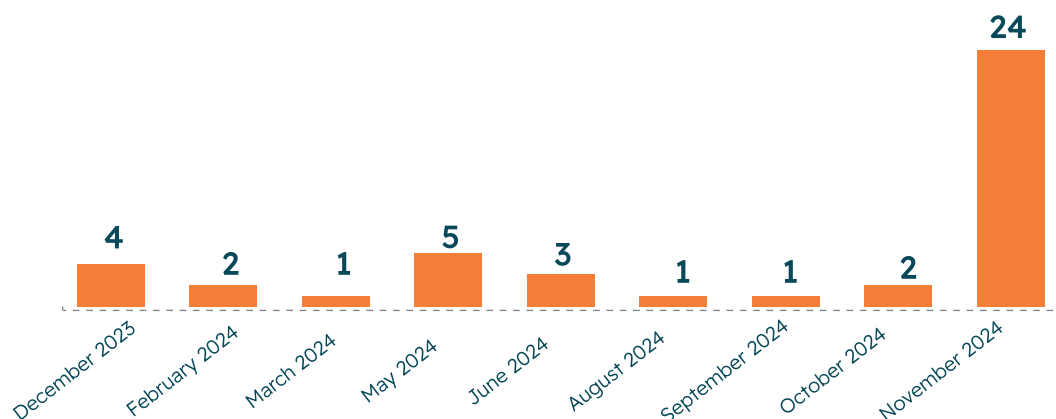
C. More forcibly disappeared persons have been registered as dead in the civil registry records

Since the start of 2024, SNHR has been able to obtain death certificates for newly discovered enforced disappearance cases that had not previously been publicly disclosed, leading us to believe that the Syrian regime is sending newly released information about forcibly disappeared persons to the civil registry offices to register their deaths. Since November 16, 2023, up until November 16, 2024, we have documented the registration of the deaths of no fewer than 43 people previously documented as forcibly disappeared in the civil registry records, including 26 children. In these cases, the cause of death was not given, and the Syrian regime has not returned the victims' bodies to their families or notified the families of their loved ones' deaths at the time they took place. We detailed the mechanisms adopted by the regime to register these deaths in [a report released on December 12, 2022](#).

Among these cases are victims from the same families, political activists, and university students. We began documenting such cases in 2018. As of this writing, we have documented 1,661 cases of forcibly disappeared persons being later registered as dead in the civil registry records, with these victims including 50 children and 21 women, as well as 16 medical personnel. The cause of death was not provided in any of these cases, and the Syrian regime has not returned any of the victims' bodies to their families, nor did it notify the families of their loved ones' deaths at the times they took place.

Summary of the cases of forcibly disappeared persons being registered as dead in the civil registry records that have been documented since the ICJ order was issued on November 16, 2023, up until November 16, 2024

At least 43 forcibly disappeared persons have been registered as dead in the civil registry records in the year between November 16, 2023, and November 16, 2024. These cases are distributed according to the month in which they were registered as follows:



As shown above, November 2024 saw the highest number of cases documented in one month with new 24 cases recorded, accounting for about 56 percent of the total in the period covered by the report. This uptick reflects a recent increase in the number of forcibly disappeared persons who have been registered as dead, which raises serious concerns about the regime's continuing enforced disappearance policy with respect to registering deaths without notifying the families or returning their loved ones' bodies.

Cases of forcibly disappeared persons who have been registered as dead since the ICJ order was issued on November 16, 2023

[Abdul Akram al-Saqqa](#), a revivalist Islamic thinker born in 1944, from Darayya city in western Rural Damascus governorate, who founded the ‘Charity Association’ and the ‘Sharia High School’ in Darayya city, was arrested on July 14, 2011, by Syrian regime forces in a raid on his home in the city. He has been classified as forcibly disappeared ever since, with the Syrian regime denying having detained him and refusing to allow anyone, even a lawyer, to visit him.

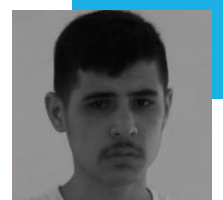


↑ ⓘ Abdul Akram al-Saqqa

Abdul Akram al-Saqqa was known for his reformist work in his local community, where he was the imam and khatib (deliverer of the Friday sermon) at the Anas bin Malik Mosque. In 1988, he founded ‘al-Assad Institute for the Memorization of the Holy Quran’, which was one of the first such establishments in Syria, serving as its director until the end of 2000. He also founded ‘al-Saqqa House’ for printing, publishing and distribution, through which he published several scholarly, cultural, social, and intellectual books. With the advent of the popular uprising for democracy in Syria in 2011, he participated in the peaceful anti-regime demonstrations in Darayya city. Given his status as a well-known and widely respected dignitary in the area, he and other popular figures were strategic targets for the Syrian regime which spared no efforts or resources in arresting, prosecuting, imprisoning and forcibly disappearing such individuals, without any legal cause.

On Tuesday, August 20, 2024, Abdul Akram al-Saqqa’s family obtained a death certificate from the civil registry office in Darayya city indicating that he had died on November 3, 2014, with no other details, such as cause of death, provided. This suggests that Abdul Akram died about three-and-a-half years after his arrest. SNHR can confirm that he suffered from several conditions prior to his arrest that required medical care and various types of medication, indicating a strong probability that he died due to torture and medical negligence. SNHR can also confirm that Syrian regime forces failed to announce Abdul Akram’s death when it happened, as well as failing to return his body to his family.

Abdul Aziz Mohammad al-Dahik, a boy from Talbisa city in northern rural Homs governorate, was 16 years old at the time of his arrest by Syrian regime forces on Friday, July 12, 2013, while he was returning from a trip to Lebanon. He has been forcibly disappeared ever since with the regime denying having detained him and refusing to allow anyone, even a lawyer, to visit him. On Monday, September 30, 2024, his family learned that he had been registered as having died on November 9, 2023, in the civil registry office in Talbisa city. We can confirm that he was in good health at the time of his arrest, indicating a strong probability that he had died due to torture and medical negligence in regime detention centers. SNHR can also confirm that regime forces have not returned his body to his family.



↑ ⓘ Abdul Aziz Mohammad al-Dahik

III. The Amnesty Decrees Promulgated by the Regime Since the ICJ Order Was Issued on November 16, 2023, Exclude Detainees and Forcibly Disappeared Persons

In the year since the ICJ Order was issued on November 16, 2023, the Syrian regime has promulgated two legislative decrees providing for general amnesty.

- **First Decree:** [Legislative Decree No. 36 of 2023](#), which grants amnesty for crimes committed before the date of the promulgation of the decree. The decree was issued on the same day as the ICJ Order.
- **Second Decree:** [Legislative Decree No. 27 of 2024](#), which grants amnesty for military evasion crimes, as stipulated in the Public Penal Code (Legislative Decree No. 61 of 1950) and the misdemeanors and infractions committed before September 22, 2024.

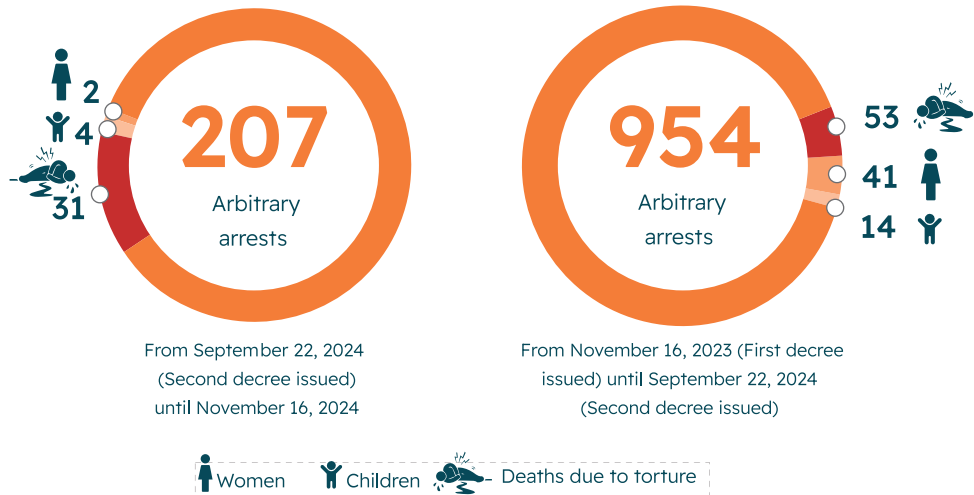
These decrees are consistent with the regime's customary policy of promulgating amnesty decrees as a way to ease pressure on its overcrowded courts and prisons. These decrees achieve this primarily through focusing on military crimes, misdemeanors, and infractions. However, these two decrees, as with their predecessors, explicitly exclude arbitrarily arrested detainees and forcibly disappeared persons by excluding the laws used by the regime as grounds to prosecute political prisoners and those detained over expressing their views.

Arbitrary arrests and torture persist despite the amnesty decrees

Even though the regime promulgated two amnesty decrees during the last year, on November 16, 2023, and September 22, 2024, respectively, arbitrary arrests, in which those detained, including women and children, are imprisoned in regime detention centers, persist alongside torture.

- **Since the promulgation of the first decree** (Legislative Decree 36/2023 on November 16, 2023): Between November 16, 2023, and the date of the second decree's promulgation on September 22, 2024, SNHR documented at least 954 arbitrary arrests, including of 14 children and 41 women, and 41 deaths due to torture in regime detention centers.
- **Since the promulgation of the second decree** (Legislative Decree 27/2024 on September 22, 2024): Between September 22, 2024, and November 16, 2024, SNHR documented 207 arbitrary arrests, including of four children and two women, and 31 deaths due to torture, including 26 child deaths, in regime detention centers.

Arbitrary arrests and deaths due to torture documented after the Syrian regime's promulgation of Legislative Decrees 36/2023 and 27/2024 since the ICJ order was issued on November 16, 2023



As the data shows, these amnesty decrees had no tangible effects with respect to limiting arbitrary arrests. That is to say, arbitrary arrests continued at their usual high rates following the promulgation of each of the two decrees, with the same applying to torture, with 53 deaths due to torture documented in the first period, and 31 in the second period.

Historical overview of amnesty decrees since 2011

Since March 2011, the Syrian regime has issued about 24 amnesty decrees which were largely similar in terms of their content, in that they focused on offenders charged with misdemeanors and minor infractions, while excluding most political prisoners and those detained without trial, as well as those subjected to secret trials who were subsequently categorized as forcibly disappeared persons. On November 16, 2022, [SNHR released a detailed report breaking down the amnesty decrees promulgated by the regime between March 2011 and November 2022](#). The report finds that amnesty decrees often result in the release of an extremely limited number of detainees, while arbitrary arrest and enforced disappearance remain systematic regime policies with no changes regardless of any amnesty decrees that may be promulgated.

IV. New Elections for the People’s Assembly of Syria Were Held Amid Continued Human Rights Violations

Even though the Syrian regime continues committing grave human rights violations, including extrajudicial killing, torture, and enforced disappearance, it still found it appropriate to hold elections for the People’s Assembly of Syria on July 15, 2024, pursuant to Presidential Decree No. 99 in accordance with the Syrian Constitution. On July 18, 2024, the Higher Judicial Elections Committee officially announced the results of the elections, with the Baath-led Alwiḥdah Alwaṭaniyah [National Unity] electoral list winning 74 percent of the People’s Assembly’s seats, further confirmation of the regime’s complete hegemony over the political and electoral process.

These elections were held at a time when 37 percent of Syrian territory still remains outside regime control, with the regime having no control over the governorates of Hasaka, Raqqa, Deir Ez-Zour, Idlib, and parts of Aleppo. Meanwhile, the regime has effectively lost control over the two governorates of Daraa and Suwayda, although both regions are nominally under its rule. In terms of population, meanwhile, over half the Syrian people have been forcibly displaced either as IDPs or refugees.

Besides the blatant lack of any transparency or fairness marring these elections, many of the individuals declared winners are, in fact, implicated in grave human rights violations. Some of them are even heads of pro-regime militias who were directly involved in military and security operations against civilians. These violations include extrajudicial killings, arbitrary arrests, enforced disappearance, and crushing peaceful demonstrations. The fact that such figures now have legislative power is just another manifestation and further evidence of the regime’s continuing impunity and the consolidation of its brutal, oppressive forces, which move Syria further away from any path towards true justice or reform and simply perpetuate oppression, injustice and despotism, with a complete absence of any guarantees of the Syrian people’s fundamental rights being observed or even acknowledged.

The People’s Assembly of Syria elections violate international community resolutions

These elections blatantly contravene resolutions on Syria passed by the international community, including the Geneva I Communiqué, which was included in UN Security Council resolutions 2118 and 2254, both of which clearly state that the only way to resolve the internal armed conflict is to establish “a transitional governing body with full executive powers” which represents both the regime and the opposition. This body, the resolution continues, shall devise a new constitution that would constitute the foundations for parliamentary and presidential elections.

Paragraph 4 of UN Security Council resolution 2254 explicitly specifies this sequence: “[The Security Council] expresses its support... for a Syrian led political process that is facilitated by the United Nations and, within a target of six months, establishes credible, inclusive and non-sectarian governance, and sets a schedule and process for drafting a new constitution, and further expresses its support for free and fair elections, pursuant to the new constitution, to be held within 18 months and administered under the supervision of the United Nations, to the satisfaction of the governance and to the highest international standards of transparency and accountability, with all Syrians, including members of the diaspora, eligible to participate...”

V. Civilian and Military Figures Who Were Implicated in War Crimes and Crimes Against Humanity Are Appointed to Senior Positions

In recent years, the Syrian regime has pursued a strategy of promoting, reappointing and reshuffling figures implicated in grave human rights violations to senior civilian, security, and military positions, in order to consolidate its control and reward those individuals who played instrumental roles in crushing the popular uprising and ensuring the regime's survival. As such, these figures enjoy far-reaching powers as part of a broader regime strategy to strengthen loyalties and allegiances within its security, military, and civilian institutions and to put the state institution at the service of the regime's oppressive policies.

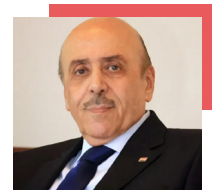
New government formed with leadership figures who incurred international sanctions

On September 23, 2024, the Syrian regime head Bashar Assad charged Mohammad Ghazi al-Jalali with the task of forming a new government. This new government consists of 28 ministries, including at least 15 which have been designated for sanctions by the United States and the European Union, with Prime Minister Mohammad Ghazi al-Jalali himself being one of those designated, over their implication in grave human rights violations that include brutal suppression of civilians, and various war crimes. In the newly formed government Minister of Interior Mohammad Khaled al-Rahmoun and Minister of Defense Ali Mahmoud Abbas were among the ministers who retained their positions, which those two have held since 2018. Both these ministers have played an instrumental role in managing and directing violations against civilians.

Most prominent civilian and military figures implicated in war crimes and crimes against humanity who were appointed to senior positions in 2024

Ali Mamlouk

A Major General, born in 1946, from Damascus city, Ali Mamlouk served as the head of the National Security Bureau, Syria's highest security apparatus, from 2012, during which time he was involved in widespread violations, including overseeing arbitrary arrests, torture, and crushing protests. On January 18, 2024, he was named as a Special Security Advisor to the President of the Syrian Arab Republic. On May 24, 2024, the Paris Criminal Court officially convicted Ali Mamlouk, along with two other Syrian regime security leadership officials, on charges of complicity in war crimes and crimes against humanity in the case of the deaths of the Franco-Syrians Mazen Dabbagh and his son Patrick (Abdul Qader)..



↑ 👁 Ali Mamlouk

Ali Mahmoud Abbas

A Corps General, born in 1964, from Afra village in Rural Damascus. He has been the Minister of Defense since April 28, 2022, retaining the same position in the new government that was formed in September 2024. In July 2024, he was designated for sanctions by the EU over his involvement in “systematic and widespread torture, rape, as well as sexual and gender-based violence against civilians.” The sanctions imposed on Ali Mahmoud Abbas include an asset freeze, prohibition of any form of provision of funds to him, and a ban on any travel to the EU.



↑ ⓘ Ali Mahmoud Abbas

Mohammad Khaled al-Rahmoun

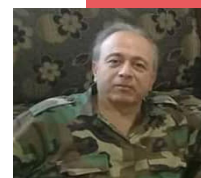
A Major General, born in 1957 from Khan Sheikhoun city in rural Idlib governorate. In 2017, he was named the Deputy Director of the Head of the Political Security Intelligence Directorate, having previously headed the Air Force Intelligence Directorate in the Southern Region in Harasta city in Rural Damascus. He is accused of crimes of torture and extrajudicial killing against detainees, and of giving orders to bomb civilians in Eastern Ghouta in 2013. He has been the Ministry of Interior in the Syrian regime’s government since 2018. In January 2017, he was designated for sanctions by the US over his involvement in using chemical weapons to attack Eastern Ghouta. In March 2019, he was designated for sanctions by the EU over his involvement in documented violations against civilians.



↑ ⓘ Mohammad Khaled al-Rahmoun

Kefah Melhem

A Major General, Kefah Melhem, from Jneinat Raslan in rural Tartus governorate, is one of the highest-level leadership figures in the regime’s intelligence service, having held a number of influential positions. He was appointed as the head of the Military Security Intelligence Directorate’s information department in 2014. In July of the same year, he was promoted to Major General and appointed as the deputy director of the Military Security Intelligence Directorate, subsequently being promoted to head of the directorate in 2019. The Military Security Intelligence Directorate is one of the main regime agencies involved in widespread violations in detention centers, including arbitrary arrest, torture, and enforced disappearance. On January 18, 2024, Melhem succeeded Major-General Ali Mamlouk as the head of the National Security Bureau.



↑ ⓘ Kefah Melhem

Suhail al-Hassan

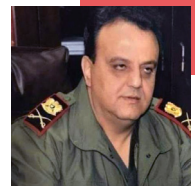
A Major-General from Beit Ana village in a rural area near Jabla city in Latakia governorate, Hassan is the infamous Commander of the regime's Division 25 Special Operations Unit, wielding significant influence in the military operations led by the regime with the direct support of Russian forces. He was previously an intelligence officer with the Air Force Intelligence Directorate in Damascus city, being associated with a number of documented violations, including violent attacks on civilian areas, the use of excessive force, and adopting 'scorched earth' policies, which resulted in widespread destruction and massive human losses in the areas against which he led attacks. On April 9, 2024, he was appointed as Commander of the Syrian regime's Special Forces unit.



↑ ⓘ Suhail al-Hassan

Akram Ali Mohammad

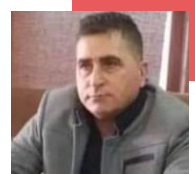
A General from Hadida village in rural Homs governorate, Akram Ali Mohammad is one of the most influential security officials in the regime, having held several sensitive security positions of power. He headed the regional State Security branch in Aleppo governorate from 2009 to 2012. In 2013, he was appointed as head of the General Intelligence Directorate's Branch 255, also known as the State Security Division, in Damascus city. In 2016, he was appointed as head of the State Security branch in Tartus governorate. In 2019, he was promoted from Brigadier General to Major General, and in May of the same year he was named as the First Deputy to the head of the Syrian General Intelligence Directorate. On May 12, 2024, he was appointed as the governor of Suwayda governorate, which has been witnessing anti-regime protests since August 2023, in what seems to be an attempt by the regime to contain the protests through use of security measures.



↑ ⓘ Akram Ali Mohammad

Redwan Ali Saqqar

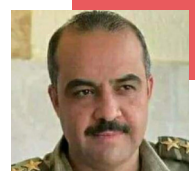
A Brigadier General, from Juvin village in rural Tartus governorate, Saqqar was previously the head of the Air Force Intelligence Directorate branch in Hama city and has been associated with many violations and torture carried out in the directorate's detention centers. On May 9, 2024, he was appointed as the head of the Air Force Intelligence Directorate branch in Homs city, to continue playing an instrumental role in the intelligence apparatus which has been accused of playing a central role in grave human rights violations.



↑ ⓘ Redwan Ali Saqqar

Duraïd Ismail Awad

A Colonel, from al-Rbe'a city in rural Hama governorate, Awad, who was previously the head of the 'al-Ashghal al-Nari' [Gun Manufacturing] Department within the regime's Division 25 Special Operations Unit, took part in a number of military operations against areas outside regime control, which resulted in the destruction of infrastructure and numerous casualties. On May 9, 2024, he was appointed as the head of the Air Force Intelligence Directorate branch in Hama city.



↑ ⓘ Duraïd Awad

Rami Munir Ismail

A Brigadier-General, from Latakia governorate. On May 9, 2024, he was appointed as the head of the Air Force Intelligence branch in the Coastal Region, where he oversees regional security operations. It should be noted that the Air Force Intelligence Directorate, with which he is affiliated, is widely accused of playing a central role in the commission of grave human rights violations, including arbitrary arrests, torture, and enforced disappearance.



↑ ⓘ Rami Munir Ismail

Mohammad Ghazi al-Jalali

Born in 1969, Al-Jalali, from Damascus city, was the Minister of Communication and Technology from August 2014 until July 2016. On September 23, 2024, he was appointed as Prime Minister in the newly formed government. In October 2014, he was designated for sanctions by the EU over his involvement in the “Syrian regime’s violent repression of the civilian population.” The sanctions include an asset-freeze and a ban on travel to the EU.



↑ ⓘ Mohammad Ghazi al-Jalali

Mohammad Abdul Sattar al-Sayed

Born in 1958, from Tartus government, Al-Sayed has been the Minister of Endowments or ‘Awqaf’ since 2007, playing an instrumental role in promoting religious rhetoric that complies with regime policies. On August 17, 2012, he was designated for sanctions by the US. On October 16, 2012, he was designated for sanctions by the EU. On July 18, 2012, he was designated for sanctions by the United Kingdom for his involvement in the “Syrian regime’s violent repression of the civilian population.”



↑ ⓘ Mohammad Abdul Sattar al-Sayed

Mohammad Rami Radwan Martini

Born in 1950, from Aleppo city, Martini holds a bachelor’s degree in civil engineering. He has been the Minister of Tourism in the Syrian regime’s government since 2018, as well as being the founder, owner, and general director of a number of companies, most notably the Coral Martini Hotel and the Julia Dumna & Martini Tourism Investments Company and is the Chairman of the Board of the Martini & Co. Company. In 2018, he was designated for sanctions by the EU for his involvement in supporting financial corruption to the benefit of the Syrian regime.



↑ ⓘ Mohammad Rami Radwan Martini

IV. Conclusions and Recommendations

Conclusions

- **Grave human rights violations persist**

SNHR's investigations have conclusively determined that the Syrian regime continues to commit grave human rights violations, including systematic torture, extrajudicial killings, and enforced disappearances, which have been consistently documented in regime detention centers. Evidence and first-person accounts gathered by SNHR suggest that these practices are a core component of the regime's approach to detainees, including returning refugees, and have become a fixed element in the regime policy since March 2011, with no signs of change.

- **International community resolutions to resolve the Syrian conflict ignored**

The Syrian regime continues to disregard UN Security Council and General Assembly resolutions on the Syrian conflict. In this, the regime persists in holding ostensible elections and forming new governments even while continuing with violations against civilians and dissidents. This approach clearly and blatantly violates international resolutions, emphasizing the need for a comprehensive political settlement involving all Syrian stakeholders.

- **Amnesty decrees used as a cover to continue with arbitrary arrest**

The Syrian regime uses legislative amnesty decrees as a means of obscuring its continued detention of thousands of prisoners and forcibly disappeared persons, excluding political prisoners and dissidents. This approach reflects the regime's determination to deny fair legal processes to anyone opposing its oppressive policies.

- **No accountability while impunity continue**

The Syrian regime has taken no meaningful actions to hold perpetrators of violations to account, thus perpetuating a culture of impunity. Those involved in perpetrating these crimes clearly enjoy complete protection from the regime, exacerbating the situation and eliminating opportunities to secure justice for victims.

- **Worsening humanitarian conditions in regime-held areas**

Civilians in areas under regime control are suffering from severe reductions of essential services, in addition to the risk of arbitrary arrest and torture, and constant threats of violence. This reality reflects the regime's lack of any intention to improve civilians' lives or respond to their fundamental needs.

Recommendations

International Court of Justice (ICJ)

- **Improve the ICJ's Role in the Syrian Case**

This case is a genuine test of the credibility and power of the ICJ. As such, the ICJ must take immediate and effective measures to address all these violations, including calling on the UN Security Council to issue a binding resolution calling for ending systematic torture, and condemning the regime's contraventions of the ICJ's decisions.

- **Assess commitment to provisional measures**

The ICJ must issue a statement assessing the Syrian regime's commitment to compliance with the provisional measures indicated by the Court, as one year has now passed since the ICJ Order was issued.

- **More decisive action**

The ICJ must take more decisive action against the Syrian regime in light of mounting evidence of the regime's lack of commitment to compliance with the previous provisional measures.

UN Security Council

- **Impose targeted sanctions**

The UN Security Council must impose targeted sanctions on Syrian officials who have been involved in torture and arbitrary arrest.

- **Refer the situation in Syria to the ICC**

The UN Security Council must refer the situation in Syria to the International Criminal Court (ICC) to initiate proceedings for investigation and potential prosecution of the war crimes and crimes against humanity committed by the regime.

- **Invoke Chapter VII of the Charter of the United Nations**

Action must be taken under Chapter VII of the Charter of the United Nations to prevent and put an end to the nationwide epidemic of enforced disappearance and torture in Syria, as well as to secure the immediate release of detainees.

International community

- **Severe ties with the Syrian regime**

All ICJ members, namely every state in the world, must cut all and any forms of political and military association with the Syrian regime over its blatant breach of the ICJ Order.

- **Intensify sanctions**

Take additional action against the Syrian regime, and intensify sanctions, in order to ensure compensation for victims and the protection of human rights in Syria.

- **Follow up on the implementation of past UN Security Council resolution**

More work must be done to ensure the implementation of UN Security Council resolutions 2042 and 2043 (2012), and 2139 (2014) which call for putting an end to enforced disappearances.

- **Invoke Chapter VII of the Charter of the United Nations**

Support the invocation of Chapter VII of the Charter of the United Nations to protect detainees and end torture in detention centers.

Independent International Commission of Inquiry on the Syrian Arab Republic (COI) and the UN Human Rights Office (OHCHR)

- **Investigate regime practices**

Conduct a thorough and comprehensive investigation into the torture and arbitrary arrest practices carried out by the regime since the issuance of the ICJ Order and issue a detailed report on the regime's compliance with the ICJ order.

- **Officially condemn the Syrian regime**

Call on the UN Human Rights Council to condemn the Syrian regime by name for its failure to comply with the ICJ Order and encourage member states to impose new sanctions on the regime.

UN Special Rapporteur on Torture

- **Monitor the regime's compliance**

Monitor the Syrian regime's compliance with the ICJ Order and release periodic statements stressing the importance of this issue and clarifying the details of the regime's failure to comply.

UN Refugee Agency (UNHCR)

- **Stress that Syria is unsafe**

The UNHCR must issue clear statements highlighting the currently unsafe situation in Syria, while stressing that there are currently no suitable conditions for a safe, dignified, and voluntary return of refugees, especially given the continuing widespread human rights violations by the regime.

- **Improve protection against refoulement for Syrian refugees**

The UNHCR must work more closely with countries hosting Syrian refugees to prevent refoulement and clarify the real risks returnees may face in light of the existing grave violations in regime detention centers.

- **Monitor the situation of returning refugees**

The UNHCR must monitor the situation of Syrian refugees who have returned to Syria, in order to document and assess their exposure to violations. The UN Agency must also issue periodic reports on the verified cases of torture, arbitrary detention, and enforced disappearance, and highlight these reports before the international community to promote international protection.

- **Provide more support for refugee-hosting countries**

The UNHCR must raise its material and logistic support for countries hosting Syrian refugees, in order to improve their conditions, which may limit the pressure that drive some countries to forcibly repatriate refugees back to Syria.

- **Raise awareness on the risks of refoulement in refugee zones**

The UNHCR must hold awareness campaigns for Syrian refugees in camps and host countries on the risks of refoulement, and clarify the violations being committed by the regime against returnees, in order to enable them to take better informed decisions that correspond with the realities of the situation.

International Committee of the Red Cross (ICRC)

- **Expand the scope of access to detention centers**
Engage in serious negotiations to expand the scope of access to detention centers in Syria, in order to conduct regular and unannounced inspections.
- **Facilitate communication between detainees and their families**
Establish a system for communication between detainees and their families.
- **Provide healthcare support for torture survivors**
Provide healthcare and psychological care services for survivors of torture in Syria and in neighboring countries that are hosting Syrian refugees.

Arab League

- **Take a decisive stance against the Syrian regime**
Condemn the Syrian regime's brutal practices and suspend Syria's membership of the Arab League until the regime demonstrates greater compliance with the ICJ Order.

Syrian regime

- **Comply with the ICJ's decisions**
The Syrian regime must comply with the ICJ's decisions and ensure that those detained receive a fair trial.
- **End arbitrary arrest and enforced disappearance**
The Syrian regime must reveal the fate and whereabouts of all detainees and forcibly disappeared persons, allow the families of those still alive to visit them, and return the bodies of those detainees who died due to torture to their families.
- **Release political prisoners**
Release all political prisoners, women, children, persons with special needs, sick people, and elderly people.
- **End manipulation of the data on forcibly disappeared persons**
Stop manipulating the records of forcibly disappeared persons in the civil registry's records and end the misuse of state resources in the service of oppressive policies.

Acknowledgment & Solidarity

SNHR wishes to sincerely thank all the victims, their families, and all local activists from all fields for their invaluable contributions to this report. We stand in solidarity with detained victims, forcibly disappeared persons, and all their families.



SYRIAN NETWORK
FOR HUMAN RIGHTS



info@snhr.org
www.snhr.org

No justice without accountability

© Syrian Network For Human Rights (SNHR).
November 2024

