

## Statement

### **SNHR Condemns the Syrian Regime Over Arresting Hundreds of Individuals, Including Children, for Military Conscription and Deploying Them to the Frontlines in Northern Syria**



**Thursday 05 December 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 analyzes in Syria.

Since November 29, 2024, the Syrian Network for Human Rights (SNHR) has documented large-scale raids and mass arrests carried out by the Syrian regime's military police, army forces, and security forces. These operations have targeted hundreds of young men and even boys for the purpose of conscripting them and deploying them immediately to the frontlines in northern Syria.

These campaigns coincide with a military escalation by the regime in response to the launch of the large-scale offensive codenamed **Deter Aggression** on November 27, 2024, by armed opposition factions and Hay'at Tahrir al-Sham (HTS). Meanwhile, the Syrian National Army (SNA) launched a separate offensive on November 30, 2024, codenamed **Dawn of Freedom**. Armed opposition factions have since taken control of large swathes of territory in the governorates of Aleppo, Idlib, and Hama.

These arrest campaigns, targeting boys and men aged from 17 to 45, including those with military service exemption or deferral certification, have been conducted in raids on markets, residential neighborhoods, streets and other public places. These arrests also targeted individuals who had agreed to settle their security status, as well as a number of refugees who returned from Lebanon in September 2024 following hostilities between Lebanon and Israel.

According to SNHR's estimates, regime forces have arrested about 1,000 individuals in these campaigns. Those arrested have been immediately deployed to combat zones without undergoing any military training or legal procedures. These practices expose the detainees to immediate and severe danger amidst ongoing military operations.

SNHR condemns these gross violations by the Syrian regime, which blatantly violate international humanitarian law and the victims' human rights. Forcing civilians to participate in military operations against their will constitutes a war crime under the international protocols on the protection of civilians in armed conflicts.

SNHR calls on the international community and the UN to take urgent steps to pressure the Syrian regime to halt these unlawful practices. We also call for the protection of civilians, especially children, from all forms of military exploitation and for ensuring accountability for those responsible for such violations.

## Recommendations to the families to counter the arrest campaigns and conscription

### 1. Avoid public spaces and large gatherings

Families, particularly males aged 17 to 45, are advised to avoid gatherings in markets and public places that could be targeted in raids.

### 2. Hide boys and minors in safe locations

When there is information about impending raids, it is advisable to protect boys and minors by keeping them away from checkpoints and targeted areas.

### **3. Coordinate with the local community**

Establish community networks to alert residents about military movements or nearby arrest campaigns and share information promptly to avoid sudden arrests.

### **4. Document violations**

In the event of arrests, record details, including the detainees' identities and the timing and location of the detentions, and share this information with local or international human rights organizations.

### **5. Seek legal and human rights support**

Contact human rights organizations, such as SNHR, to report arrests and seek legal assistance or international intervention.

### **6. Avoid frontlines and conflict zones**

Refrain from approaching conflict hotspots or frontline areas, where the risk of targeting and arrest is higher.

### **7. Raise awareness among children and young people**

Educate young people on how to behave at checkpoints, remain calm, and avoid providing information that could be used against them.

### **8. Emergency planning**

Prepare contingency plans that include temporary safe locations, and keep essential documents and belongings ready for quick relocation if necessary.



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*No justice without accountability*

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