

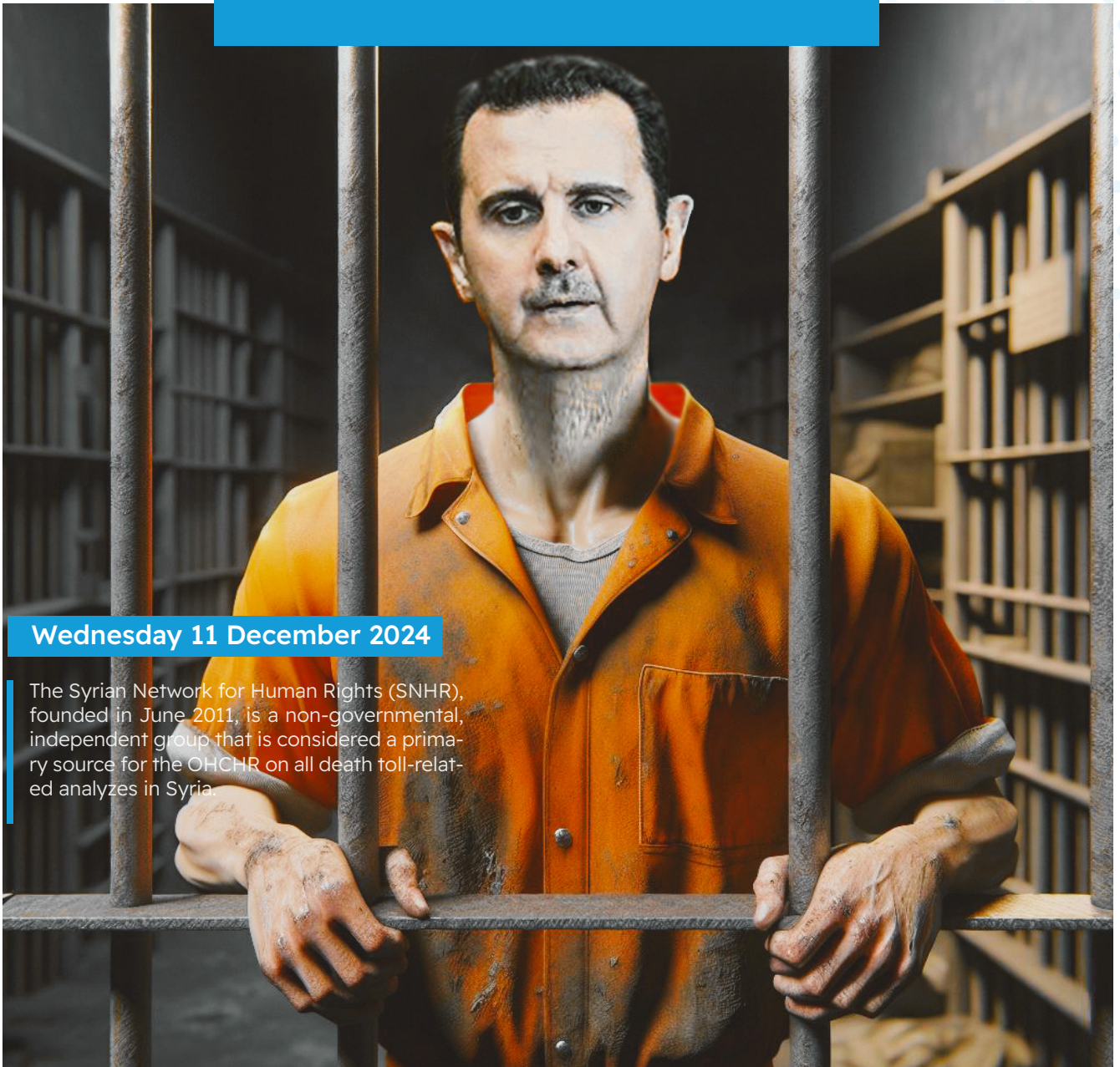
## Statement

# SNHR Calls on Russia to Extradite Bashar Assad for Trial in Syria

Bashar Assad is Accused of Committing Crimes Against Humanity, and is Not Entitled to Seek Asylum

**Wednesday 11 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.



## The Hague – Syrian Network for Human Rights (SNHR)

On Sunday, December 8, 2024, Russia's Channel One reported that the deposed Syrian president Bashar Assad had arrived in Moscow with his family. Kremlin spokesperson Dmitry Peskov announced that President Vladimir Putin had decided to grant Assad and his family asylum in Russia on "humanitarian grounds." However, this decision appears to be based purely on political considerations and does not align with international legal standards.

Bashar Assad has committed crimes against humanity and war crimes against the Syrian people. As the Syrian Network for Human Rights' (SNHR) database shows, the former president is accused of killing at least **202,000** Syrian civilians, including **15,000** who died under torture, of forcibly disappearing **96,000** others, and of displacing approximately **13 million** more citizens, in addition to numerous other heinous violations, including the use of chemical weapons.

## International law does not grant perpetrators of crimes eligibility to seek asylum

Under international law, individuals accused of committing crimes against humanity or war crimes are not entitled to humanitarian asylum. Article 1F of the 1951 Refugee Convention, excludes an individual from refugee protection if there are "serious reasons for considering that:

- **(a)** he has committed crimes against peace, war crimes, or crimes against humanity as defined in international instruments drawn up to make provisions in respect of such crimes;
- **(b)** he has committed a serious non-political crime outside the country of refuge prior to his admission to that country as a refugee;
- **(c)** he has been guilty of acts contrary to the purposes and principles of the United Nations."

This provision aims to ensure that perpetrators of serious and major crimes do not evade justice, while balancing refugee protection, maintaining the integrity of asylum systems, and ensuring justice for victims.

While individuals excluded under Article 1F cannot obtain refugee status, they must not be returned to a country where they face a real risk of torture or other gross human rights violations. In such cases, states may provide temporary or limited forms of protection without granting full refugee status.

As such, should Russia decide to extradite Bashar Assad to Syria, the governing authority in Syria must ensure a fair trial and guarantee that he will not be subjected to torture or cruel treatment.

## **Recommendations**

### **Russian government**

- Reconsider the decision to grant asylum to Bashar Assad, as it contradicts international obligations to hold perpetrators of crimes against humanity accountable.
- Take steps to extradite Bashar Assad to the custody of the new Syrian authorities to face a fair trial in Syria.

### **United Nations and international community**

- Pressure Russia to fulfill its legal and moral obligations and prevent the misuse of humanitarian asylum as political cover for war criminals.

### **Future Syrian government**

- Commit to upholding the principles of transitional justice and ensure a fair trial for Bashar Assad and for all individuals accused of committing gross violations against the Syrian people.
- Fully separate the judiciary from the executive branch of government to ensure accountability for all parties responsible for human rights violations.



SYRIAN NETWORK  
FOR HUMAN RIGHTS



[info@snhr.org](mailto:info@snhr.org)  
[www.snhr.org](http://www.snhr.org)

*No justice without accountability*

© Syrian Network For Human Rights (SNHR),  
December 2024

