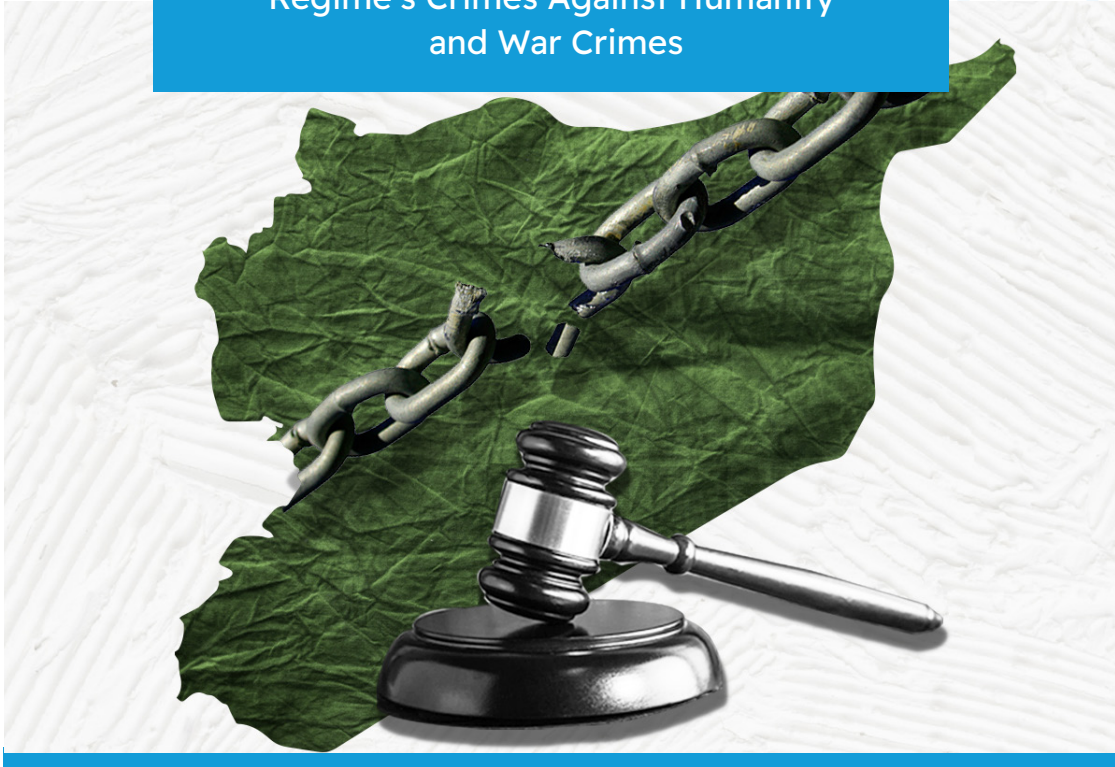


## Statement

# SNHR Calls for Lifting All Sanctions Imposed on Syria Following the Fall of the Assad Regime

The Economic and Political Sanctions Were Associated With the Deposed Assad Regime's Crimes Against Humanity and War Crimes



**Monday 16 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 analyses in Syria.

## **The Hague –Syrian Network for Human Rights:**

From March 2011 up until its recent fall, the Assad regime committed grave violations against the Syrian people; including killing, torture, enforced disappearance, and forced displacement. As the UN Security Council failed to put an end to these violations, a number of countries, including the United States and European Council, unilaterally imposed political and economic sanctions on the regime both as a way to make amends for this failure and as instruments to hold the Assad regime accountable. The US' Caesar Syrian Civilian Protection Act was among the most prominent of these measures aimed at applying pressure on the Assad regime to change its criminal behavior and compel it to agree to a political solution.

The Syrian Network for Human Rights (SNHR) supported the utilization of sanctions as a tool against the Assad regime, especially against those regime-affiliated individuals implicated in grave violations. In fact, we have worked for years to help designate dozens of such criminal individuals for sanctions.

## **MAJOR SHIFT IN THE SYRIAN LANDSCAPE**

On December 8, the Assad regime collapsed. Bashar Assad was deposed and fled to Moscow. The Assad regime's notorious prisons and security branches were opened. Its indiscriminate bombardment and killing were no more. In light of these seminal developments, SNHR sees that there is no longer any justification for sanctions as a means to deter and punish the regime, and enact political change.

## **SANCTIONS BETWEEN ACCOUNTABILITY AND IMPEDING DEVELOPMENT**

SNHR must stress that continuing to impose these sanctions now that the former regime is gone may turn them from instruments for accountability into obstacles standing in the way of Syrian recovery. Syria is now facing momentous challenges that require enormous efforts, to rebuild infrastructure, restore essential services, and stimulate the economy. Retaining the economic sanctions threatens to undermine humanitarian efforts and obstructs the flow of vital resources, making it more difficult for both local and international organizations to provide desperately needed aid and work on essential reconstruction.

In addition to these points, the Assad regime's devastating actions have left immense destruction, with millions of Syrians displaced, millions of houses destroyed, and hundreds of thousands of people suffering permanent, life-changing injuries. The country's vital infrastructure, including hospitals and other medical facilities, has been similarly devastated. In this context, these sanctions are a major obstacle preventing refugees and internally displaced persons (IDPs) from returning to their homes, as well as obstructing the efforts of the UN, civil society organizations, and private companies due to the restrictions placed on financial and monetary transactions which make it more difficult, if not impossible, to secure essential supplies or transfer money to support those affected.

## IMPACT ON THE CENTRAL BANK AND FINANCIAL INSTITUTIONS

The sanctions imposed on the Central Bank of Syria, particularly the block on key international financial transactions, disrupt financial stability in the country, as well as blocking essential access to foreign exchange reserves. As a result, inflation rates have sharply increased, while liquidity has decreased.

## KEEP INDIVIDUAL SANCTIONS

While we urge the lifting of sanctions on institutions and state bodies, SNHR believes that sanctions specifically targeting about 300 senior figures in the former regime, including, inter alia, Bashar Assad, his wife Asma al-Akhras, Maher Assad, Rami Makhlouf, Ayman Jaber, Ali Mamlouk, Jamil Hassan, and Abdul Salam Mahmoud, should be retained to ensure that these individuals are tried and prosecuted for their crimes.

## RECONSIDER SANCTIONS WITH EMPHASIS ON TRANSPARENCY AND COMMITMENT TO HUMAN RIGHTS

SNHR must stress that lifting sanctions on institutions and state bodies must be conditional upon strict and transparent monitoring mechanisms to ensure that funds are not diverted to entities which are corrupt or involved in human rights violations. SNHR also calls on the new Syrian government to adhere to human rights standards and implement reforms that promote justice and equality within Syrian society.

## RECOMMENDATIONS

### 1. International community

- Lift sanctions on Syrian institutions: Work to lift the economic sanctions imposed on Syrian institutions and banks, while ensuring the enactment of political and legal reforms that help to advance the path of human rights and transitional justice.
- Keep individual sanctions: Maintain individual sanctions on those who are involved in grave human rights violations, while implementing strict mechanisms for accountability that prevent impunity.

### 2. Future Syrian government

- Promote transparency and accountability: Develop a transparent system to manage public resources so as to use funds in service of development and reconstruction, and develop trust with both the local and international communities.
- Respect human rights: Enact political and legal reforms that protect human rights and guarantee freedom of expression, peaceful assembly, and public safety.
- Reform financial institutions: Restructure financial institutions to promote fiscal stability, facilitate international transactions, and ensure transparency in managing resources.

### 3. UN and international organization

- Meditate to lift sanctions: Provide technical and advisory support for the new Syrian government and the international community to ensure lifting sanctions in an effective way.
- Monitor the implementation of reforms: Enhance international monitoring mechanisms to track the Syrian government's implementation of required reforms.
- Support reconstruction and political transition: Provide technical and financial assistance to support reconstruction and promote political stability, and tie this assistance to the progress made by the government in maintaining governance and transparency standards.

### 4. Aid and human rights organizations

- Cooperate with the new government: Participate in building sustainable plans to rehabilitate Syria's infrastructure and provide essential services.
- Document and hold accountable: Continue to document past violations to ensure the preservation of evidence for accountability processes, and work to ensure that individuals or entities who were responsible for such violations do not return to power or evade accountability.

### 5. Regional states

- Support economic stability: Provide financial and technical support for the future Syrian government, while ensuring that aid is not being channeled to illicit entities or those involved in corruption.
- Promote regional cooperation: Establish partnerships to enhance trade and rebuild economic relationships in a way that serve the interests of the region as a whole, and promote Syria's long-term stability.



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

