

**SNHR**

الشبكة السورية لحقوق الإنسان  
SYRIAN NETWORK FOR HUMAN RIGHTS

## Monthly Report on Arrests/Detentions in Syria

At least 658 Cases of Arbitrary  
Arrest and Detention Recorded in  
Syria in the First Half of 2025 in-  
cluding 72 Cases in June

Friday 04 July 2025

658





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.

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## I. SNHR'S MONTHLY REPORT ON ARBITRARY DETENTIONS AND ARRESTS IN SYRIA

On December 8, 2024, Syria witnessed arguably the most seismic political and military event in over 50 years with the fall of the dictatorial Assad regime, which was succeeded by a transitional government. This came after 14 years of a popular uprising that began in March 2011. In those 14 years, the numbers of arbitrary detentions and enforced disappearances reached unprecedented levels, with these being among the most widely practiced systematic violations committed by the former regime against civilians.

Since 2011, the Syrian Network for Human Rights (SNHR) has constantly documented arbitrary detentions and released monthly reports summarizing the detentions in the previous month. As shown on SNHR's database, the fates of at least **160,123** of the people forcibly disappeared by the former Assad regime remain unknown to this day. Indeed, the ramifications of these violations still persist not only in the legal and social sense, but in their families' and all Syrians' collective memory of the victims, illustrating the staggering volume of the human rights atrocities for which the former regime was responsible.

With the transition of power, it's become apparent that there's an urgent need to establish legal regulations that will put a conclusive end to the harrowing era of arbitrary arrests and enforced disappearances along with the end of the regime and ensure respect for the basic human rights of individuals. In order to achieve this, it's essential to establish a legal framework that promotes human rights and consolidates protective laws, while also creating effective control mechanisms to avoid any recurrence of these violations in accordance with international standards.

In this context, we at SNHR continue to release our monthly reports on arbitrary arrests and enforced disappearances in order to document these practices and monitor any violations that may take place during the transitional phase. Documenting these practices is a crucial part of ensuring the non-recurrence of past violations and of supporting all efforts aimed at building a state founded on the rule of law and respect for human rights, enacting reformist policies, and ensuring that Syria's security and legal institutions adhere to the norms of accountability and transparency. In addition, documenting such violations provides a record that enables the transitional government and the relevant domestic and international bodies to identify and address any potential infringements, thus further strengthening the transitional justice process and promoting victims' rights to reparation and accountability. Finally, it should be noted that SNHR will continue to regularly issue these reports in order to keep pace with the latest political and legal developments and events on the ground in Syria so as to continue providing an accurate and up-to-date picture of the situation regarding detentions and enforced disappearances in the country.

## II. REPORT METHODOLOGY

While Syria continues going through the current transitional phase in the wake of the historic ousting of the Assad regime and its downfall on **December 8, 2024**, SNHR will continue to release our statistical/analytical monthly reports monitoring and documenting arbitrary detentions, enforced disappearances, and releases from detention centers. Accordingly, this report summarizes the arbitrary arrests, enforced disappearances, and releases documented by SNHR **in the first half of 2025, including the month of June**. We added a new classification to distinguish between arbitrary arrests and detentions carried out in the context of the efforts by the transitional government to capture those involved in violations under the former Assad regime.

### SNHR's standards for documenting detentions

The methodology adopted by SNHR in our reports follows the internationally recognized standards for documenting human rights violations, including the guidelines established by the UN and the Working Group on Arbitrary Detention. More particularly, we use the five criteria adopted by the UN Working Group on Arbitrary Detention to document such cases. Meanwhile, in cases of enforced disappearance, we use the definition established by the Declaration on the Protection of all Persons from Enforced Disappearance, which was adopted in accordance the UN General Assembly resolution **47/133 on December 18, 1992**, as “a body of principles for all states”. Besides those standards for documenting arbitrary arrests and enforced disappearance, we are recording detentions by the transitional government that target those who committed violations under the Assad regime's rule. We are working on monitoring these cases in accordance with certain procedures.

### Data sources and verification mechanism

In documenting arbitrary arrests, SNHR draws upon several sources, with every item of information provided to us being subjected to rigorous and precise verification mechanisms. These sources include:

- SNHR's own field researchers who are scattered across Syria.
- Direct interviews with victims and their families.
- Eyewitnesses' and local activists' accounts.
- Official information provided by state officials.

SNHR follows strict documentation procedures, as well as ensuring that data is updated whenever new information emerges in order to maintain accuracy. All data is stored on a specially designated database which incorporates professional archiving practices that conveniently allow for monitoring and updating of individual cases. Every report also goes through multiple revision phases before it is issued.

## Classifying cases according to the party responsible

In this report, detentions are classified according to the parties responsible for carrying out the arrests. These parties are:

- **The transitional government** which has governed Syria since December 8, 2024.
- **Syrian Democratic Forces (SDF)** which currently controls the northeastern region of the country.
- **Armed opposition factions/Syrian National Army (SNA)** who are currently in the process of being incorporated into the new Syrian army.

Cases are additionally classified according to the location where each detention took place, rather than by the detainee's governorate of origin. The report also contains a demographic analysis of detainees by sex and age (males, females, children), in addition to classifying releases based on their contexts.

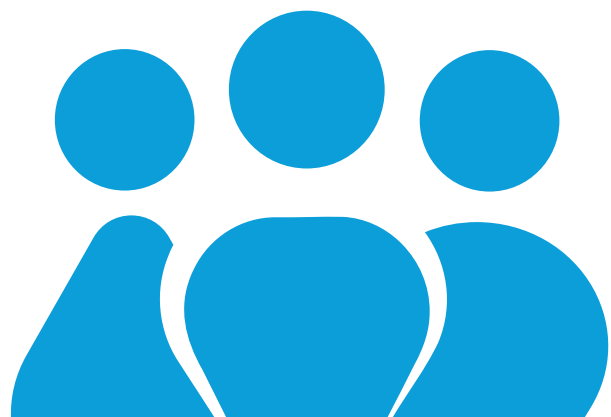
## Analyzing violations' patterns

This report provides an analysis of the patterns of behavior displayed by the parties that perpetrated arbitrary detention and enforced disappearance practices, with focus on the shift in practices in the aftermath of the downfall of the Assad regime. This analysis draws upon SNHR's 13-plus years of expertise in this field. It also includes references to the laws and decrees issued by these parties in relation to these issues, analyzing their effects.

## Challenges

In addition to the usual challenges in documenting arbitrary arrests and enforced disappearances, our team has encountered additional challenges in the period following the fall of the Assad regime, given the rapid and sweeping changes this has brought about on the ground. This has necessitated a redoubling of our efforts to ensure the accuracy of our data and the continuation of our monitoring processes. We will ensure that all information on both legal developments and changes on the ground is regularly updated to reflect how these affect the process of documentation.

In light of the staggering volume of violations and the exceptional difficulties in the documentation process, this report only represents the bare minimum of the actual figures, which may be far higher.



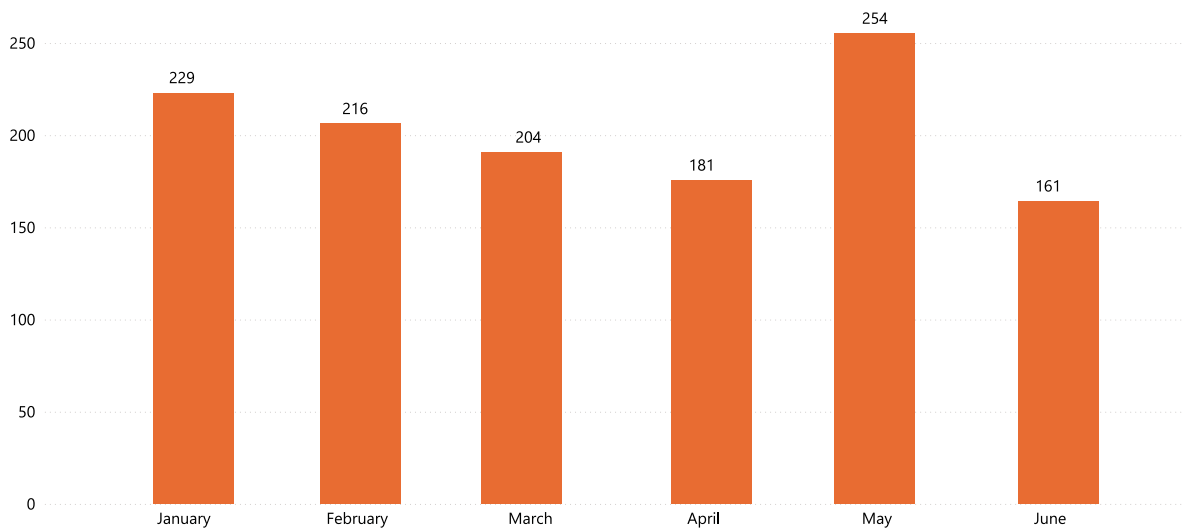
### III. ARBITRARY ARRESTS, DETENTIONS, AND RELEASES IN SYRIA IN JUNE AND THE FIRST HALF OF 2025

#### A. Arbitrary arrests and enforced disappearances since the start of 2025:

SNHR has documented no fewer than **1,245** cases of arbitrary arrest since the beginning of 2025 up until the end of May, with those arrested including 33 children and 16 women (adult female).

Arbitrary arrests/detentions carried out by the parties to the conflict and controlling forces in Syria in 2025 are distributed as follows:

**At least 1,245 arbitrary arrests, and detentions in the context of capturing those involved in violations under the former Assad regime recorded Syria in 2025**

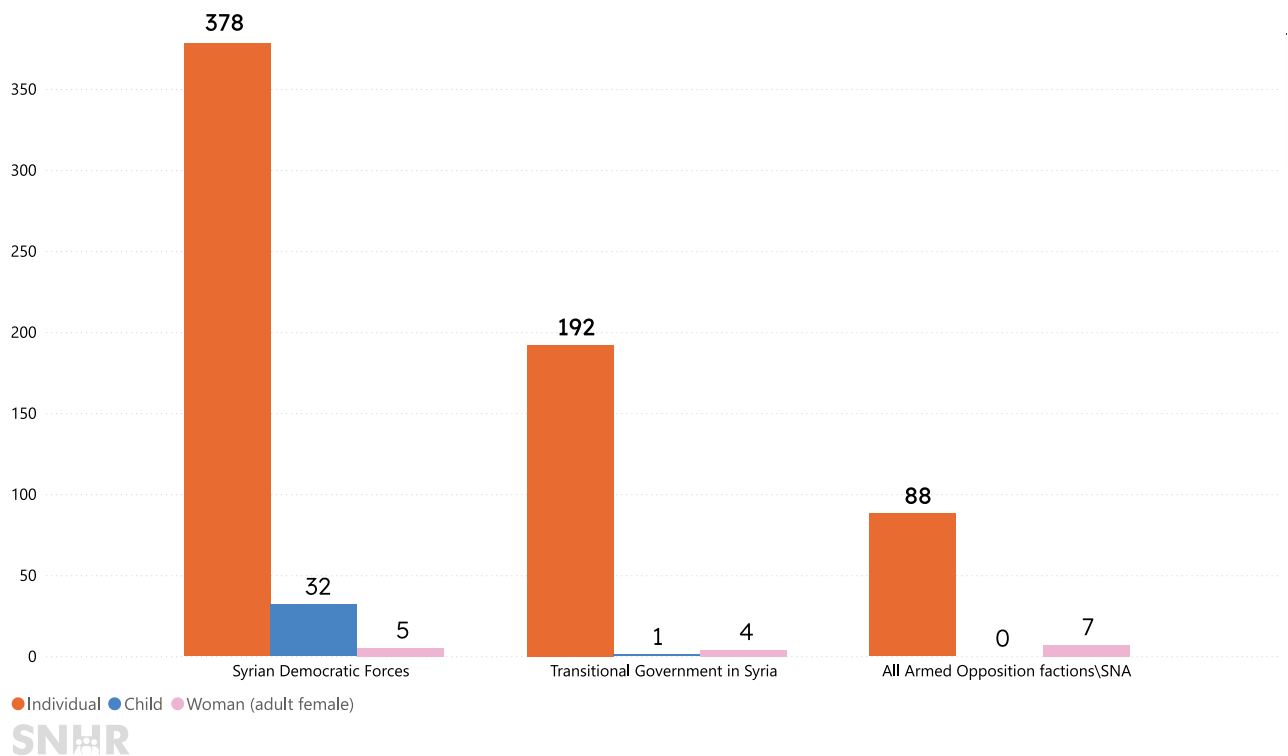


The previous graph shows an increase in the number of detentions in May. This is due to the Internal Security elements of the Ministry of Interior of the Transitional Government carrying out raids and detentions in several areas under its control, especially in the governorates of Latakia, Homs, Hama and Damascus, in order to pursue people suspected of involvement in violations committed during the Assad regime’s rule, in addition to the SDF carrying out arrests of civilians for criticizing the SDF practices in areas under its control.

## Arbitrary detention and enforced disappearance in the first half of 2025:

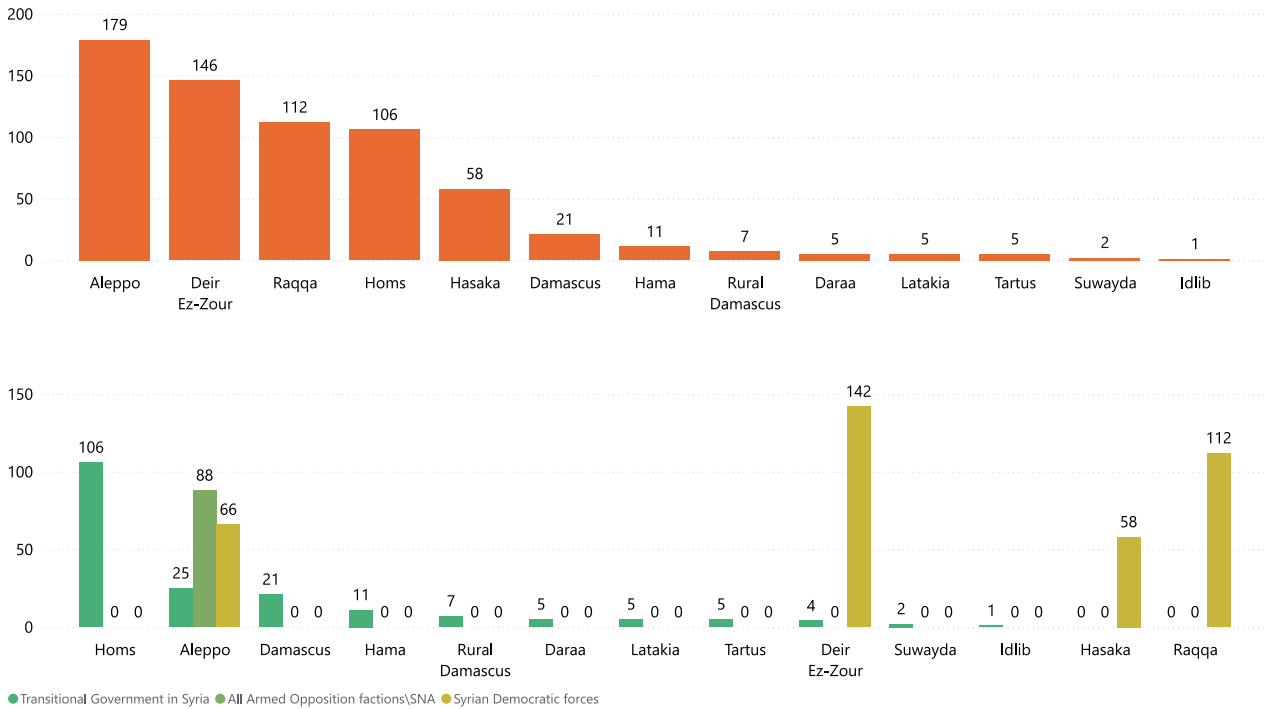
SNHR documented no fewer than **658 cases** of arbitrary arrest/detention, with those detained including 33 children and 16 women.

Arbitrary arrests/detentions documented in the first half of 2025 are distributed according to the parties to the conflict and controlling forces as follows:



- **Transitional government:** 192, including 1 child and 4 women, of whom 135 were released.
- **Syrian Democratic Forces:** 378, including 32 children and 5 women, 52 of whom were released.
- **All armed opposition factions/National Army:** 88, including 7 women, 35 of whom were released.

Arbitrary arrests/detentions documented as having been carried out in the first half of 2025 by the parties to the conflict and the controlling forces in Syria are distributed across Syrian governorates as follows:



As the chart above shows, the highest number of arbitrary arrests/detentions occurred in Aleppo Governorate, followed by Deir Ez-Zour and then Raqqa..

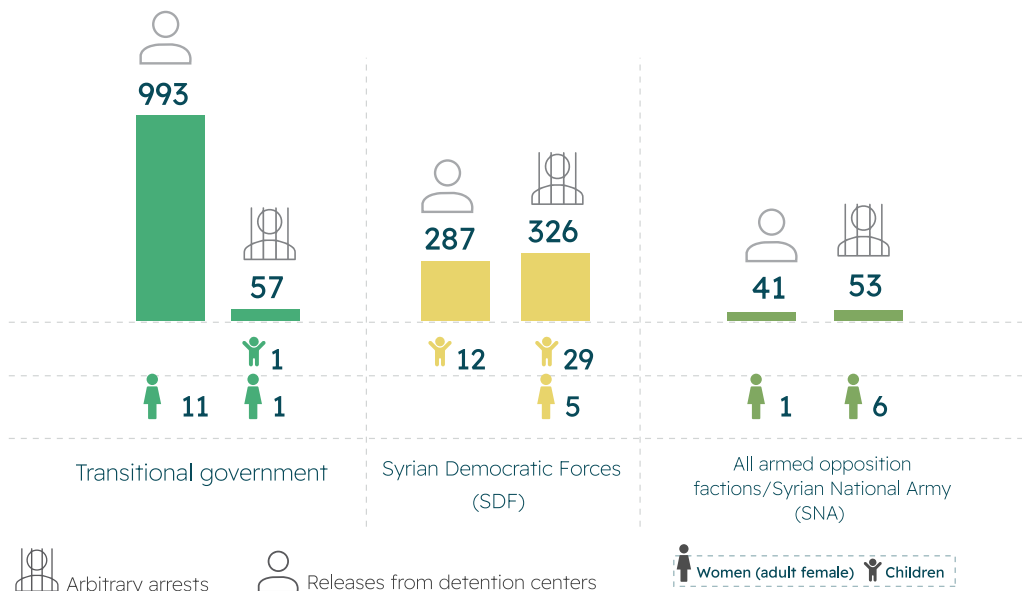
**B. Releases from detention centers in the first half of 2025:**

SNHR documented the release of no fewer than **1,321 people** from the various parties’ detention centers in Syria, including 12 children and 12 women.

The releases by the parties to the conflict and controlling forces in Syria documented in the first half of 2025 are distributed as follows:

- **A. Transitional government:** 993 releases, including 11 women.
- **B. Syrian Democratic Forces (SDF):** 287 releases, including two children.
- **C. All armed opposition factions/National Army:** 41 releases, one of them a woman.

Comparison between arbitrary arrests and releases from detention centers documented in the first half of 2025 for each of the parties to the conflict and controlling forces in Syria:

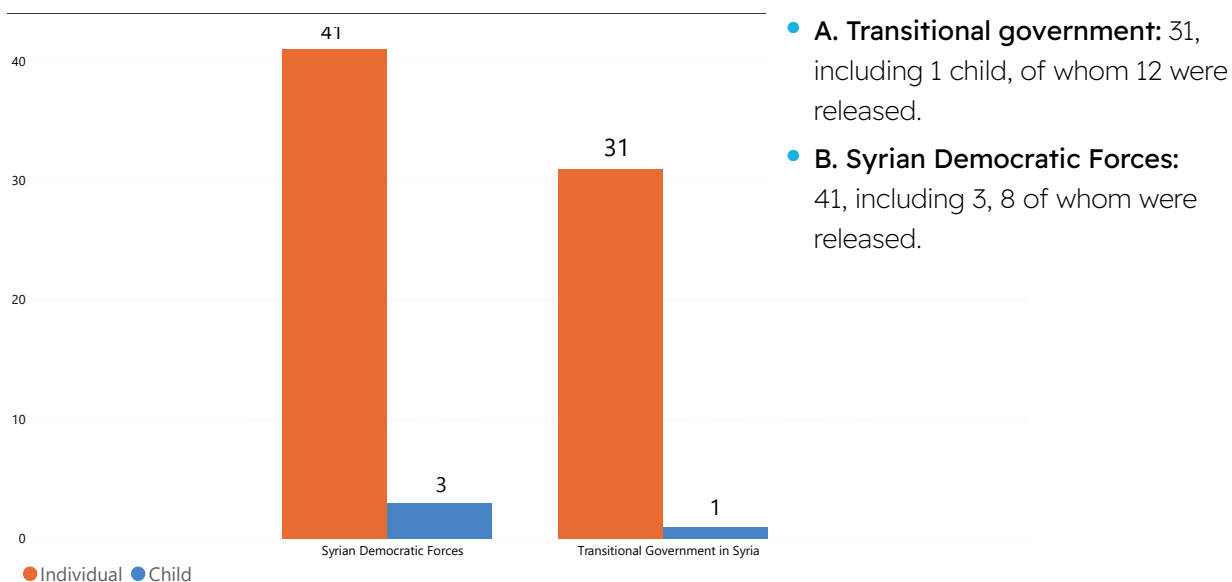


The above comparison shows that the number of releases from detention centers run by the transitional government in Syria exceeds the number of arbitrary detentions. This is primarily due to the transitional government’s release of hundreds of detainees from Homs Central Prison, who were detained for their association with Bashar al-Assad’s regime after its fall on December 8, 2024.

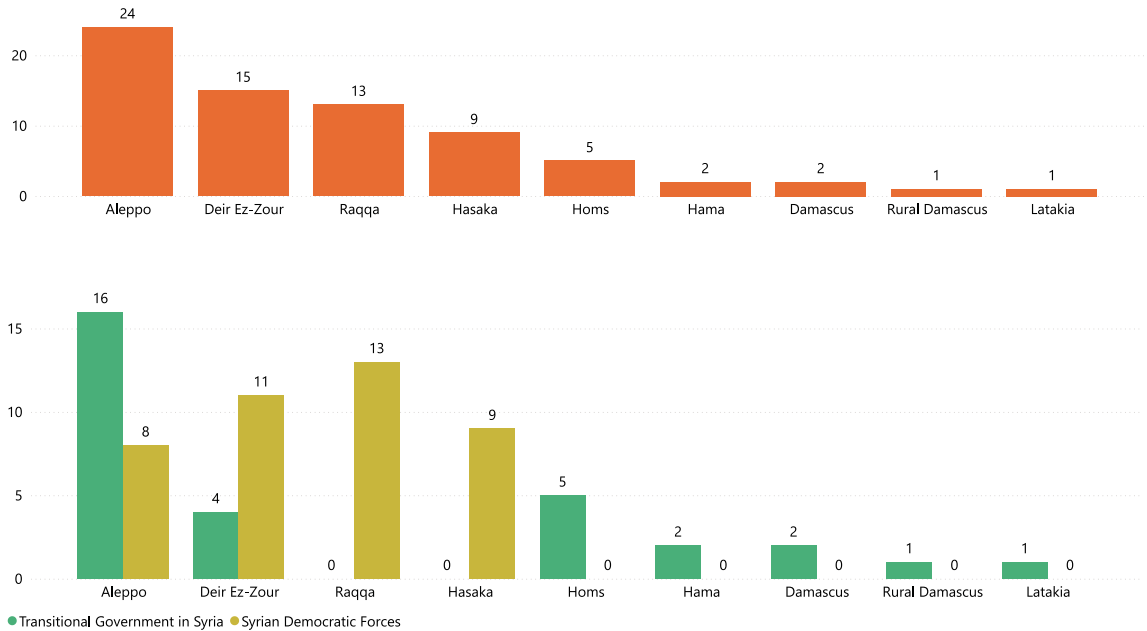
### C. Arbitrary detention and enforced disappearance in the June 2025:

SNHR documented no fewer than **72 cases** of arbitrary arrest/detention, with those detained including four children.

Arbitrary arrests/detentions documented in June 2025 are distributed according to the parties to the conflict and controlling forces as follows:



Arbitrary arrests/detentions documented as having been carried out in June 2025 by the parties to the conflict and the controlling forces in Syria are distributed across Syrian governorates as follows:



As the chart above shows, the highest number of arbitrary arrests/detentions occurred in Aleppo Governorate, followed by Deir Ez-Zour and then Raqqa.

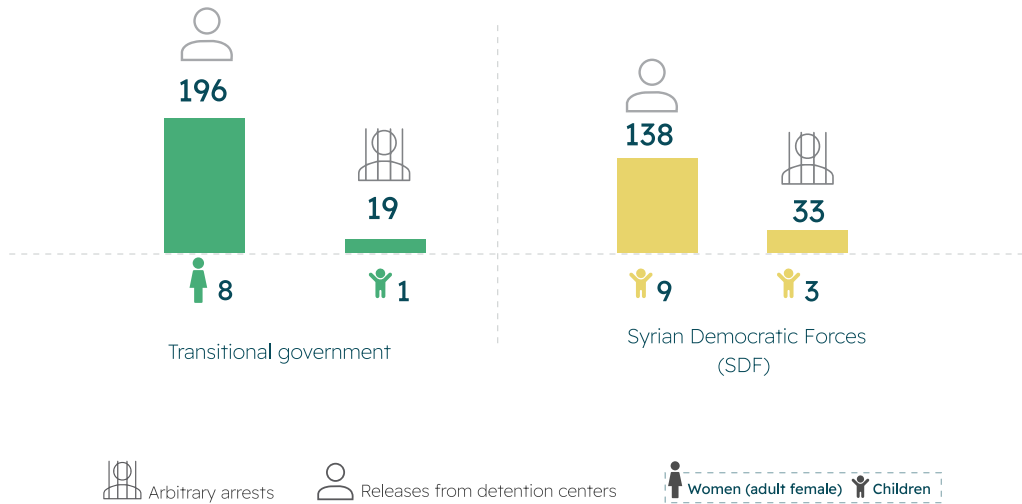
#### D. Releases from detention centers in June 2025:

SNHR documented the release of no fewer than **334 people** from the various parties' detention centers in Syria, including 9 children and 8 women.

The releases by the parties to the conflict and controlling forces in Syria documented in June 2025 are distributed as follows:

- **A. Transitional government:** 196 releases, including 8 women.
- **B. Syrian Democratic Forces (SDF):** 138 releases, including 9 children.

Comparison between arbitrary arrests and releases from detention centers documented in June 2025 for each of the parties to the conflict and controlling forces in Syria:



The above comparison shows that the number of releases from detention centers run by the transitional government in Syria exceeds the number of arbitrary detentions. As part of the stages of the agreement signed on March 10, 2025, which aims to integrate the Syrian Democratic Forces into Syrian state institutions.

## IV. MOST NOTABLE PATTERNS OF ARBITRARY ARRESTS, AND RELEASES BY THE PARTIES TO THE CONFLICT AND CONTROLLING FORCES IN SYRIA IN JUNE AND THE FIRST HALF OF 2025

### 1. In the first half of 2025:

#### A. Transitional government

##### 1. Arbitrary detentions

- Elements of the Internal Security Command affiliated with the Ministry of Interior in the transitional government carried out arrests/detentions targeting individuals accused of criticizing the current transitional government on social media, and arrests/detentions carried out by elements of the Public Security affiliated with the Ministry of Interior targeting civilians to pressure their relatives who were wanted by the security services to surrender to them. These arrests were concentrated in Hama Governorate.
- We also monitored arrests/detentions targeting civilians from the Kurdish component under the pretext of their cooperation with the Syrian Democratic Forces. These arrests were concentrated in Aleppo Governorate. We also recorded arrests/detentions targeting a number of civilians while they were trying to cross into Lebanon through the unofficial border crossings between Lebanon and Syria in Homs Governorate. We then recorded their release after several hours of detention in its detention centers in Damascus Governorate.
- We also observed members of the Internal Security Command arresting/detaining a number of local activists from the Suwayda Governorate as they passed through one of its checkpoints in Homs Governorate, while heading to areas of northeastern Syria under the control of the Syrian Democratic Forces. We then recorded their release after several hours of detention in its detention centers in Idlib Governorate.
- We also recorded arrests/detentions targeting individuals accused of blasphemy/publicly breaking the fast during Ramadan. These arrests were concentrated in the city of Hama.
- We observed members of the Internal Security Command, affiliated with the Ministry of Interior in the transitional government, carrying out detention operations during a security campaign that included several villages in the countryside of the city of Qusayr in Homs Governorate, targeting individuals suspected of involvement in smuggling operations across the Syrian-Lebanese border. The campaign included raids and searches of civilian homes, and violations of their property were recorded. Most of the detainees were released within hours of their arrest.

- Detentions of civilians have also been recorded in a number of Syrian governorates, with no legal grounds for their arrests being clarified. No information was available regarding the charges against them or their place of detention. This constitutes a violation of the procedural safeguards guaranteed by domestic law and international standards relating to human freedom and the right to a fair trial.

The Syrian Network for Human Rights notes that the term “detention” is used to describe most of the above cases. This is due to the lack of clarity surrounding the legal procedures adopted by the security and judicial authorities affiliated with the Syrian transitional government, and the difficulty of verifying their compliance with the legal safeguards guaranteed by domestic law and international standards. These cases are being evaluated in light of further information and testimonies to determine whether they fall within the category of “arbitrary detention” in its strict legal sense.

## **2. Releases**

We documented the transitional government’s release of about **993 individuals**, including 11 women, from its detention centers. The reasons and backgrounds for the release of detainees/prisoners varied and were distributed as follows:

- We recorded the transitional government’s release of approximately **815 individuals**, including three women. Their detention had ranged from several days to months. Most of them were from the governorates of Homs, Hama, Latakia, Damascus, Aleppo, and Deir Ez-Zour. Most of them were released from Hama and Homs Central Prisons, where they had been detained for their association with Bashar al-Assad’s regime since its fall on December 8, 2024.
- We have recorded the transitional government’s release of at least **178 members** of the Syrian Democratic Forces, including eight women, from its detention centers. This release is part of the phases of the agreement signed on March 10, 2025, which aims to integrate the Syrian Democratic Forces into Syrian state institutions.

## B. Syrian Democratic Forces (SDF)

### 1. Arbitrary detentions

- The Syrian Network for Human Rights documented the continued detention of civilians by the Syrian Democratic Forces (SDF) in the context of mass raids carried out under the pretext of pursuing ISIS cells. Cases of detention aimed at transporting individuals to SDF training and recruitment camps were also recorded. These operations were concentrated in areas under their control in northeastern Syria, particularly in the eastern and northern countryside of Deir Ez-Zour, the countryside of Raqqa governorate, and several neighborhoods in Raqqa city. We also monitored arrests/detentions targeting civilians on charges of collaborating with Arab tribal forces and the National Army, and participating in Operation Deterrence of Aggression, which was launched on November 27, 2024.
- In addition, arrests/detentions of civilians were observed [for removing SDF banners and slogans](#) from public places and raising the current Syrian flag (the Syrian Revolution flag) during popular celebrations following the fall of Bashar al-Assad's regime. These arrests were concentrated in the SDF-controlled governorates of Hasaka and Raqqa.
- SNHR also documented [the Syrian Democratic Forces' detention of civilians](#) in dozens of villages in the northern and eastern countryside of Deir Ez-Zour and Raqqa governorates, as well as several neighborhoods in Raqqa city. The detentions were carried out for expressing critical opinions about its policies in areas under its control. These operations also included the detention of relatives of defectors from its ranks, with the aim of pressuring them to surrender. Cases of people injured during raids were also documented, as they were arrested from medical facilities while receiving treatment.
- SNHR also documented instances of physical assault against women during some of the raids, as well as the seizure of personal property belonging to the families of detainees, including sums of money, gold jewelry, and mobile phones.
- We also documented continued cases of children being detained for transfer to Syrian Democratic Forces training camps, without informing their families, preventing them from communicating with them, and without disclosing their fate, indicating a pattern of forced child recruitment

### 2. Releases

We recorded the release of **287 individuals** including 12 children, from its detention centers by the Syrian Democratic Forces. The reasons and backgrounds for the release of detainees/detainees varied and were distributed as follows:

- We recorded the release of **59 individuals**, including three children, from SDF detention centers. They had been held for periods ranging from several days to a month, and most of them were from the provinces of Deir Ez-Zour, Aleppo, and Raqqa.

- We recorded the release by the Syrian Democratic Forces of at least **226 individuals**, including nine children, from its detention centers. This is part of the phases of the agreement signed on March 10, 2025, which aims to integrate the Syrian Democratic Forces into Syrian state institutions.
- We recorded the release of **two individuals** by the Syrian Democratic Forces from its detention centers, as part of a prisoner exchange deal it conducted with the National Army forces on January 7, 2025, in the Deir Hafer area in the eastern countryside of Aleppo Governorate. Their detention period lasted approximately one and a half months.

## C. Armed Opposition factions/National Army:

### 1. Arbitrary detentions

- Armed opposition factions/the National Army carried out arbitrary arrests/detentions and kidnappings, most of which were carried out collectively, targeting those coming from areas controlled by the Syrian Democratic Forces (SDF), including women. We observed cases of arrests/detentions based on ethnicity, concentrated in areas controlled by the National Army in Aleppo Governorate. These operations were carried out without judicial authorization or the involvement of the police, which is the body authorized to carry out arrests and detentions through the judiciary, and without clear charges being brought.
- We documented arrests/detentions carried out by members of the National Army targeting civilians under the pretext of cooperation with the Syrian Democratic Forces. These arrests were concentrated in several villages affiliated with the city of Afrin in Aleppo Governorate. We also observed arrests/detentions carried out by members of the National Army targeting a number of displaced persons after they returned to their homes in areas under the control of the National Army forces. These arrests were concentrated in the city of Afrin.
- We also recorded arrests/detentions carried out by members of the Sultan Suleiman Shah Division, affiliated with the National Army, targeting a number of farmers to pressure them to pay the financial sums (taxes) imposed on them by the Division's members on the olive trees they own. These arrests were concentrated in the village of Mirkan, affiliated with the city of Afrin.
- We note that most opposition factions and the National Army have gradually joined the Ministry of Defense in the transitional government over the past period, during which we documented the factions' detention operations prior to their actual integration.

## **2. Releases**

We recorded the release of approximately **41 individuals**, including one woman, from their detention centers by armed opposition factions/the National Army. The reasons and backgrounds behind the release of detainees/detainees varied **and were distributed as follows:**

- We recorded the release by armed opposition factions/the National Army of **38** individuals, including one woman, from their detention centers. Their detention periods ranged from several days to a month, and most of them were from Aleppo Governorate.
- We recorded the release of **three individuals** by armed opposition factions/the National Army from their detention centers, as part of a prisoner exchange deal conducted with the Syrian Democratic Forces on January 7, 2025, in the Deir Hafer area in the eastern countryside of Aleppo Governorate. Their detention lasted approximately one month.

## **2. In June 2025:**

### **A. Transitional government**

#### **1. Arbitrary detentions**

- Members of the Internal Security Command, affiliated with the Ministry of Interior of the Transitional Government, detained a number of civilians without providing any legal justification for their arrests. No information was available regarding the charges against them or their place of detention. This constitutes a violation of the procedural safeguards guaranteed by domestic law and international standards relating to human rights and the right to a fair trial.
- Cases of detention were also documented in Homs and Deir Ez-Zour governorates, targeting individuals suspected of committing criminal offenses. According to information from witnesses, they were charged without providing clear legal documents or evidence.
- In Aleppo province, a number of truck drivers and their assistants transporting fuel from areas controlled by the Syrian Democratic Forces (SDF) in Hasaka province to the Sheikh Maqsood and Ashrafiyah neighborhoods in Aleppo city were detained. The reasons behind their arrests were not disclosed.

#### **2. Releases**

We recorded the transitional government's release of approximately **196 individuals**, including eight women, from its detention centers. The reasons and backgrounds for the release of detainees/prisoners varied **and were distributed as follows:**

- We recorded the transitional government's release of **18 individuals** from its detention centers. Their detention had ranged from several days to a month. Most of them were from the governorates of Homs, Hama, and Deir Ez-Zour.
- We have recorded the transitional government's release of at least **178 members** of the Syrian Democratic Forces, including eight women, from its detention centers. This release is part of the phases of the agreement signed on March 10, 2025, which aims to integrate the Syrian Democratic Forces into Syrian state institutions.

## B. Syrian Democratic Forces (SDF)

### 1. Arbitrary detentions

- The Syrian Network for Human Rights documented the continued detention of civilians by the Syrian Democratic Forces (SDF) in the context of mass raids carried out under the pretext of pursuing ISIS cells. Cases of detention aimed at transporting individuals to SDF training and recruitment camps were also recorded, with these operations concentrated in the provinces of Aleppo and Deir Ez-Zour. Other cases targeted civilians for expressing critical views of SDF policies in areas under its control.
- We also documented continued cases of children being detained for transfer to Syrian Democratic Forces training camps, without informing their families, preventing them from communicating with them, and without disclosing their fate, indicating a pattern of forced child recruitment.

### 2. Releases

We recorded the release of **138 individuals** including 9 children, from its detention centers by the Syrian Democratic Forces. The reasons and backgrounds for the release of detainees/detainees varied and were distributed as follows:

- We recorded the release by the Syrian Democratic Forces of **nine individuals** from its detention centers. Their detention had ranged from several days to a month. Most of them were from the provinces of Hasaka and Raqqa.
- We recorded the release by the Syrian Democratic Forces of at least **129 individuals**, including nine children, from its detention centers. This is part of the phases of the agreement signed on March 10, 2025, which aims to integrate the Syrian Democratic Forces into Syrian state institutions.

## V. SUMMARY OF THE DETENTIONS AND RELEASES CONCERNING INDIVIDUALS ACCUSED OF BEING INVOLVED IN VIOLATIONS UNDER THE FORMER ASSAD REGIME

### A. Detentions

As part of the prosecution of those accused of committing gross human rights violations during the Assad regime's rule, members of the Internal Security Command, affiliated with the Ministry of Interior in the transitional government, carried out raids and detention campaigns in the first half of 2025, targeting at least **587 individuals**, including one woman, 89 of whom were arrested in June in the governorates of Latakia, Homs, Hama, Aleppo, and Damascus.

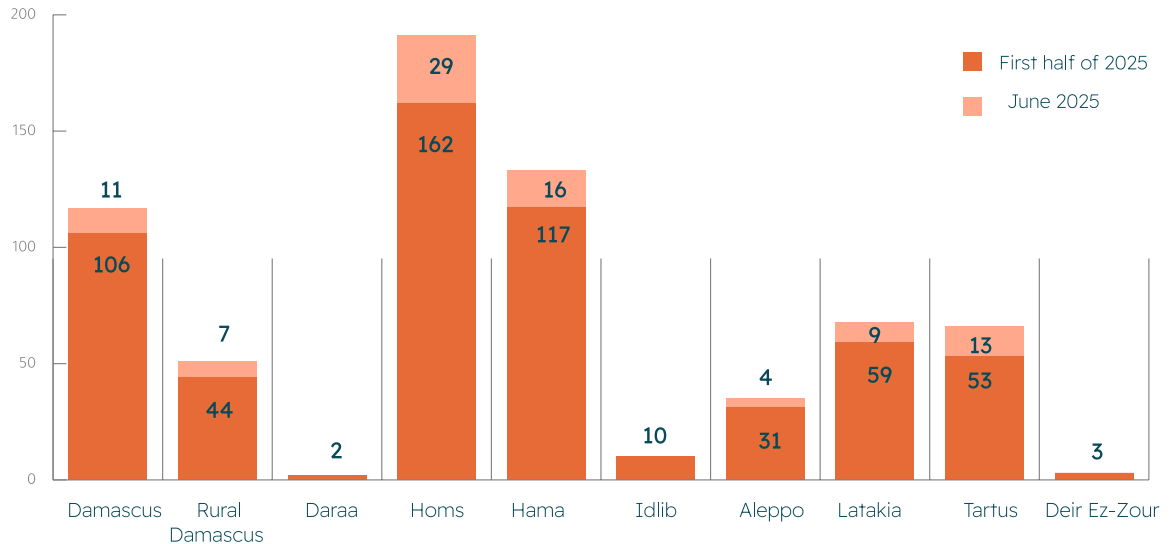
These operations included former military personnel, government employees, and doctors who worked in military hospitals affiliated with the security services. Quantities of weapons and ammunition were confiscated during the operations. The detainees were transferred to central prisons in Homs, Hama, and Adra in the Damascus countryside.

The Network also documented the detention of individuals suspected of being linked to armed groups that launched attacks in March 2025 on security sites belonging to the Ministries of Defense and Interior in the transitional government. These groups are linked to or affiliated with remnants of the former regime. These operations were concentrated in the provinces of Latakia, Tartus, and Hama, and the attacks resulted [in hundreds of extrajudicial killings](#).

Although these operations were carried out as part of security campaigns, it has not been possible to verify whether they were carried out pursuant to legal arrest warrants issued by the Public Prosecutor or the relevant judicial authorities. The Syrian Network for Human Rights emphasizes the importance of adhering to legal procedures and the need to publicly disclose the names of detainees and guarantee their legal rights.

In this context, the Syrian Network for Human Rights has provided [a form for reporting human rights violations](#) that may occur during and after the transitional period in Syria. Families can fill out the form and automatically send it to the network's team, which monitors and records the cases and communicates with families to complete the documentation process.

The detentions of those accused of committing violations under the former Assad Regime by the transitional government were distributed by governorate:



The previous graph shows that the highest number of detentions in the context of accountability carried out by the transitional government was in Homs Governorate, followed by Hama Governorate.

## B. Releases

The Syrian Network for Human Rights documented **375 cases** of release from various detention centers, including 83 releases in June, most of them from the Damascus countryside and Suwayda governorates. The detainees were detained in connection with the security incidents that took place in Jaramana, Ashrafieh Sahnaya, the Damascus-As-Suwayda road, and a number of villages in As-Suwayda governorate between April 29 and May 4, 2025. They were released after investigations were completed and their involvement in these incidents was not proven.

## VI. SNHR'S VISION OF AND APPROACH TO THE ISSUE OF ARBITRARILY ARRESTED DETAINEES AND FORCIBLY DISAPPEARED PERSONS AT THE DOMESTIC AND INTERNATIONAL LEVELS

Since the beginning of the **Syrian popular uprising for democracy in March 2011**, SNHR has placed great emphasis on resolving the issue of **detainees and forcibly disappeared persons** in Syria, bearing in mind **the humanitarian and human rights-related factors** surrounding this matter. To ensure that this immensely sensitive issue is given the appropriate high priority, SNHR has assembled a working team consisting of highly trained and qualified members with **legal and technical expertise**. This team has been working tirelessly **to document and record violations**, beginning by establishing a database to catalogue the details of detainees and forcibly disappeared persons. These documentation efforts are then used as the foundation for periodically released **detailed reports**, which aim to help in **protecting the rights of victims** and their families and to expose **the perpetrators of violations**.

Since the issue of **missing and forcibly disappeared persons** is one of the **most persistent, complex and dangerous issues** that continues to plague Syrian society, SNHR has strived to work in coordination with the **various international and UN entities** to document and combat this harrowing phenomenon. These partners include the **Independent International Commission of Inquiry on the Syrian Arab Republic (COI)**, the **International, Impartial, and Independent Mechanism (IIIM)**, the **UN Human Rights Office (OHCHR)**, and the **UN Independent Institution on Missing Persons in Syria**. SNHR's work in this field involves collecting and analyzing evidence and information on enforced disappearance cases and related violations, and providing the international community with **accurate reports and information** based on these investigations. As such, SNHR's reports have become **a vital instrumental and reputable source** of information on these issues internationally.

### Successes and accomplishments

As mentioned above, thanks to our invaluable expertise and **strict compliance** with international standards, SNHR's data has come to be regarded as a reputable **principal** source of information for many UN bodies, being used and cited in numerous UN statements and resolutions, including a draft resolution on the situation of human rights in Syria ([A/C.3/78/L.43](#)), passed by a majority vote on Wednesday, November 15, 2023, which condemned the **Assad regime's** continued serious violations of international law. This resolution also acknowledged that the documented number of detainees in Syria exceeds **135,000**. Relatedly, the resolution holds the Assad regime responsible for the systematic use of **enforced disappearance**, which, it notes, constitutes a crime against humanity.

Meanwhile, [the case brought against the Assad regime at the Hague-based International Court of Justice \(ICJ\)](#) on the Application of the Convention against Torture and Other Cruel, Inhuman or Degrading Treatment or Punishment (Canada and the Netherlands v. Syrian Arab Republic) draws upon the data and evidence supplied by SNHR. Elsewhere, SNHR, through its many partnerships, has contributed to numerous legal cases brought against individuals responsible for human rights violations in Assad regime detention centers under the principle of universal jurisdiction in Europe and of the Foreign Sovereign Immunities Act in the US, as well as contributing to various other cases, all of them steps on the path to justice and accountability.

## Documenting victims

In the years since its foundation, SNHR has established multiple rigorous **procedures** to document and provide details on victims in detention centers, building on our **ever-expanding wealth of experience** gained through close monitoring of enforced disappearance cases. SNHR has also maintained a longstanding and close working relationship with the UN Working Gr<sup>o</sup>up on Enforced or Involuntary Disappearances, which has required maintaining **constant communication** with the families of ‘missing’ and ‘disappeared’ persons to build **comprehensive files** for every case. Up until the Assad regime’s downfall on December 8, 2025, this data was then sent to the UN special rapporteur who could then contact the relevant regime officials to enquire about some of the cases submitted. Furthermore, SNHR continues to correspond with the two **UN special rapporteurs on torture, counterterrorism, and mental health** to follow up on such cases.

## Facilitating communication with victims

In addition to the above, we created [a special online form](#) on our website which detainees’ families can use to report their loved ones’ cases; once the family members complete this form, it’s then sent automatically to our team working on the issue of detainees and forcibly disappeared persons. SNHR has also always endeavored to ensure that we’re easily accessible for victims’ families, through facilitating various means of communication, including phone numbers, our official channels online, or through our team members who are scattered across Syria, who work to collect information and provide support for the families.

## VII. Conclusions and Recommendations

### Conclusions

- **Failure to comply with fair trial procedures:** The data documented shows that many detentions have been carried out without judicial warrants or legal guarantees, which is an explicit violation of **Article 9 of the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights (ICCPR)** that prohibits arbitrary arrests and affirms detainees' right to know the cause of their detention and to appear before a court as soon as possible.
- **Violating the dignity of detainees and the prohibition of torture:** The report documents physical and psychological abuses against detainees, including torture and degrading treatment, that explicitly contravene the **1984 Convention Against Torture**, which compels all parties to take effective measures to prevent torture and to hold those who carry out torture accountable.
- **More must be done to ensure the legal and organized release of detainees:** While we have documented the release of some detainees, these processes currently lack any clear judicial procedures or transparent investigative processes, which raises concerns about arrests continuing outside the relevant legal frameworks, in violation of the principle of **the arbitrary deprivation of liberty**, as established in **Article 3 of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights**.
- **More must be done to protect victims' rights and their families:** The fact that enforced disappearance persists without the fate of forcibly disappeared persons being revealed or any official information about them being provided to their families is a violation of the **2006 International Convention for the Protection of All Persons from Enforced Disappearance**, which compels states and organizations to reveal detainees' place of detention and to enable families to know their loved ones' fate.
- **Absence of accountability mechanisms and transitional justice:** Despite the political change, insufficient measures have been taken to date to ensure accountability for past violations or to achieve justice for the victims, reflecting an inadequate level of commitment to the requirements of **transitional justice** which necessitates establishing investigation and accountability mechanisms, in addition to ensuring that these violations do not recur in the future.
- Armed opposition factions/SNA have carried out **arrest and torture practices** against some residents in areas under their control.
- The SDF has committed **violations of basic human rights**, including **torture and enforced disappearance** even though it possesses a political structure, which means that it is also **obligated to abide by international human rights law**.

## Recommendations

### UN Security Council and international community

#### 1. Refer crimes to the International Criminal Court (ICC)

- and apply diplomatic pressure on government and international stakeholders, including the Russian government, to ensure the extradition of those responsible for crimes, such as Bashar Assad and his close aides, to the competent international courts for trial.

#### 2. Freeze and seize the funds of the former regime

- Take legal action to freeze and confiscate the funds and assets of the former regime's officials who were involved in violations, and use those resources to support transitional justice programs and compensate victims.

#### 3. Support international efforts to reveal the fate of missing persons and achieve national reconciliation

- Secure the necessary resources to support the efforts of the Independent Institution on Missing Persons in the Syrian Arab Republic (IIMP) and the International Commission on Missing Persons (ICMP), including training local teams on advanced search techniques to identify the missing.
- Fund programs to support national reconciliation, and provide psychological and social support for the families of forcibly disappeared persons.

### UN Human Rights Council

- Continue to focus on the issue of **detainees and forcibly disappeared persons** in Syria and regularly highlight this issue in all annual meetings.
- Promote cooperation and coordination **with active local human rights groups in Syria** to support the efforts of documentation and accountability.

### Independent International Commission of Inquiry on the Syrian Arab Republic (COI)

- Launch **in-depth investigations** into all the arbitrary detention and enforced disappearance cases included in this report and previous reports.
- Focus on the issue of **forcibly disappeared persons** and ensure the monitoring of the status of forcibly disappeared persons following the Assad regime's downfall.
- Cooperate with human rights groups, including SNHR, to secure the necessary evidence.

### **International, Impartial and Independent Mechanism (IIIM)**

- Collect and analyze evidence on the crimes of arbitrary detention, enforced disappearance, and torture included in this report.
- Support the exchange of information and expertise with Syrian organizations working in the field of documenting violations.

### **UN and international community**

- Apply pressure on all parties to compel them to publish lists of detainees' names and reveal the location of these prisoners' detention according to a **fixed timetable**.
- Allow UN and international organizations, particularly the **International Committee of the Red Cross (ICRC)**, to access detention centers to assess the humanitarian conditions there.
- Support organizations working on documenting **violations and torture, and provide sustainable support for victim rehabilitation programs**.

### **UN Working Group on Enforced or Involuntary Disappearances**

- Increase the capacity of the team working on the issue of **forcibly disappeared persons in Syria**, especially in light of the high numbers and extensive scope of enforced disappearance cases in the country.
- Prepare **periodic and more detailed reports** on developments to maintain pressure on involved parties.

### **UN Independent Institution on Missing Persons in Syria (IIMP)**

- Look into all the cases included in this report and cooperate with SNHR to obtain the necessary data.
- Ask the **transitional government** to start operating in Syria and to cooperate with the IIMP to document the cases of the missing and take effective steps to ensure transparency and accountability.

### **Russian government**

- Cooperate with the international community to extradite Bashar Assad and fugitives implicated in war crimes to the custody of the transitional government or the competent international courts.
- Support the efforts aimed at promoting **transitional justice** in Syria to ensure fair reparation for the victims.

## All parties to the conflict and the controlling forces

- **Arbitrary arrests and enforced disappearances** must be ended immediately; **the fate of all detainees and forcibly disappeared persons** must be revealed.
- **Families must be allowed to visit detainees immediately**, and the bodies of detainees who have died as a result of torture must be returned to their families.
- **Ensure the unconditional release of** all arbitrarily arrested detainees, especially those who have been imprisoned merely for exercising their political and civil rights.
- Allow **international monitors**, such as those with the COI and the ICRC, to access **all detention centers** with no restrictions.
- **A UN committee** must be formed to **monitor and periodically assess the release of detainees**
- End the policy of **carrying out arrests without presenting legal warrants**, and ensure that detainees appear before courts within a reasonably short period of time following their arrest.

## Syrian transitional government

### 1. Cooperate with international organizations

- Issue official invitations to independent UN and international agencies, including:
  - **International, Impartial and Independent Mechanism (IIIM)**
  - **Independent International Commission of Inquiry on the Syrian Arab Republic**
  - **International Commission on Missing Persons (ICMP).**
  - **International Committee of the Red Cross (ICRC).**
- Enable these organizations to have unrestricted access to detention centers and crime scenes.

### 2. Protect evidence and crime locations

- **Document burial sites and prisons**, and prevent any interference or evidence tampering.
- Adopt clear measures to preserve all articles of evidence and ensure their use in fair trials.

### 3. Promote transitional justice and accountability

- **Ratify the Rome Statute of the International Criminal Court (ICC)** and grant the ICC retro-active jurisdiction.
- Devise a comprehensive plan to hold those responsible for crimes accountable, compensate victims, and enhance transparency in investigations.

#### 4. Reform Syria's judicial and security system to prevent future violations

- **Enact new legislation** that ensures the autonomy of the judiciary and prohibits all forms of arbitrary arrest.
- Restructure the security apparatus in line with international human rights standards.

#### 5. Ensure the highest standards for detentions carried out within the context of accountability

- Activate judicial oversight over detentions carried out in the context of accountability to ensure compliance with the law and international standards.
- Publish periodic lists of detainees held in the context of accountability along with the reasons for their detention to ensure transparency.
- Develop an independent judicial review mechanism for detentions carried out within the context of accountability to prevent any violations.
- Ensure the right of detainees who were arrested in the context of accountability to access independent legal representation and fair trials.
- Emphasize that all accountability processes follow clear legal procedures while preventing any violations that may constitute human rights violations.
- Establish a human rights monitoring mechanism to ensure that accountability does not become a tool for arbitrary detention.

#### 6. Provide psychological and social support for those affected

- Establish specialist programs to rehabilitate torture and detention survivors, and provide support for victims' families.

#### 7. Enhance monitoring and accountability for the state security services

- Establish **independent monitoring committees** to ensure the non-recurrence of violations during security services' operations.
- Hold those responsible for human rights violations accountable to ensure non-recurrence.

#### 8. Improve communication with families and enhance transparency

- Hold **regular meetings** with local community representatives to clarify security policies and ensure that no groups are specifically targeted.
- Publish **periodic reports** on arrests and releases to ensure transparency.

#### 9. Address misinformation campaigns

- Establish **official platforms** on social media to publish accurate news.
- Cooperate with independent media to ensure professional coverage of events.

## 10. Respect human rights during security operations

- Train security forces in how to treat detainees in a humane way.
- Commit to releasing any suspect who was part of the Assad regime if it's been established that they were uninvolved in perpetrating any violations.

## 11. Expedite settlement procedures for wanted individuals

- Implement a fair process to resolve the situation of wanted individuals, and encourage them to reintegrate in society.

## 12. Involve civil society in decision-making

- Enhance the role of the local community in **decision-making mechanisms** to ensure fair representation for all groups.

# Acknowledgment and Solidarity

We wish to extend our most sincere thanks to survivors and to victims' family members and friends, as well as to eyewitnesses and local activists, for their significant and invaluable contribution to this report. We stand in full solidarity with all detainees and forcibly disappeared persons and their families.



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*No justice without accountability*

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