

Statement

**The Executive Director of SNHR
Fadel Abdulghany Meets the President
of France and the French Foreign
Minister in Damascus**

Saturday 11 July 2026



Damascus - The Syrian Network for Human Rights

Upon an invitation from the French Ministry of Foreign Affairs, Fadel Abdulghany, the Executive Director of the Syrian Network for Human Rights (SNHR), participated on Tuesday, July 7, 2026, in a meeting that brought together the French President Emmanuel Macron with a number of representatives of Syrian civil society organizations in Damascus.

During the meeting, Abdulghany presented the vision of SNHR regarding the institutional challenges facing Syria in the transitional phase, stressing that the country is passing through a pivotal stage that requires a sustained international support that helps it rebuild public institutions that are professional, independent, and subject to the rule of law.

He clarified that the current challenges aren't limited to the effects left behind by the years of armed conflict; rather, they are also linked to a long legacy of weakening the state's institutions, undermining their independence and competence, and subjugating them to political loyalty at the expense of the law and the public interest, practices that had begun before 2011 and worsened catastrophically over the subsequent years.

Abdulghany called on France to continue its support for the Syrian people and civil society institutions, and to contribute to long-term programs for the reform of the justice and law enforcement sectors, provided that this support is built on the respect for human rights, institutional independence, transparency, oversight, and accountability.

Abdulghany pointed out that the international support for these institutions shouldn't be limited to the provision of resources and training; rather, it must include a structural reform based on the assessment of competence and integrity, and fair individual vetting procedures that exclude those whose responsibility for gross violations is proven, with respect for legal guarantees and the individuals' right to appeal.

He added that the reform of institutions constitutes a fundamental element of the guarantees of non-recurrence of violations; however, it cannot be a substitute for the rest of the transitional justice paths, including truth-seeking, accountability, reparation, memorialization, and the participation of the victims and their families in the design of the new policies and institutions.

He stressed that the international support programs must be built on national ownership and the effective participation of civil society organizations, victims, and women.

He clarified that the reform of the justice and law enforcement sectors in Syria needs considerable financial and technical resources, as well as long-term programs for training, capacity building, and the restructuring of institutions, noting that the available national capacities aren't sufficient on their own to meet all the requirements of this process without a serious and sustained international cooperation.

France had provided support to a number of Syrian civil society institutions, among them SNHR. Furthermore, the French and German governments granted Fadel Abdulghany the 2023 Franco-German Prize for Human Rights and the Rule of Law, in recognition of his work in the field of documenting violations and defending human rights.

SNHR affirmed that it will continue to provide the data, expertise, and recommendations needed to ensure that the reform of the Syrian state's institutions is built on human rights and the rule of law, and that it forms part of a comprehensive path of transitional justice, accountability, and the guarantee of non-recurrence of violations.



Fadel Abdulghany, director of SNHR, with French President Emmanuel Macron (right) and French Foreign Minister Jean-Noël Barrot (left).



SYRIAN NETWORK FOR HUMAN RIGHTS

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.



info@snhr.org
www.snhr.org

No justice without accountability

*© Syrian Network For Human Rights (SNHR),
July 2026*

