

Systematic Intimidation and Liquidation of Activists' Families

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The Syrian government has adopted a policy of systematic intimidation of spouses, relatives, and parents of activists in order to prevent them from seeking their demands and pursuing their struggle. Several despicable methods are used in this context such as threatening an activist that his wife would be raped. Wives of activists have often been abducted to force the activist to turn themselves as they are made to listen to their voices in captivity according to some accounts. There have been recurring such incidents in all Syrian governorates.

The following accounts are a few examples of such incidents:

- Bushra al-Zain, daughter of BurhanGhalioun's cousin, was kidnapped. Three men stormed into a relative's house which the girl and her mother were visiting. The 21-year-old woman was abducted. The mother tried to follow the kidnappers and hanged on to the taxi in which they drove off but she fell on the ground as the car was driven away.
 - WaleedSarout, brother of activist AbdulbasetSarout was assassinated on 11 November 2011. Ahmad al-Atiki, Sarout's uncle, was assassinated on 21 November 2011.
 - On 24 December 2011, Ghazi Zoayb, former secretary general of the Ba'th party was executed along with his wife RajaaBakkar. He refused to declare allegiance to Assad and his sons were actively involved in the Syrian revolution, his farm was stormed and he was executed along with his wife. His house was subsequently burned down to obscure evidence of the crime but the fire was put out before it reached the bodies.
 - [Footage of the bodies of Zoayb and his wife.](#)
 - [Faisal Zoayb, the victim's brother, related his account of the assassination to Arab monitors](#)
 - BurhanGhalioun's bother and nephew were arrested
 - Nephew of HaithamRahima, a member of the National Syrian Council, was arrested
 - Father of activist Noura al-Jezawi was arrested
 - Young women from the Atassi family in Homs, known for their opposition to the regime, were kidnapped. The same pattern of abduction was also used with young women from well known families in Daraa.
 - The latest episode of these policies has occurred with the Syrian activist LubnaJawdatMerei, 21, from Jableh. The striking thing here was that Lubna accused her own father of being complicit in the abduction of her mother, Kinda Ali Mustafa, 50, on August 12th from her house in Jableh. Lubna received a phone call from her mother on 13 August asking her to come home because she was going to undergo a surgery. It was only a pretext to put pressure on Lubna to stop her activity particularly addressing the Alawite sect.
- On 2nd of November 2012, Lubna reported that her father, JawdatKamelMerie, had killed her mother. This remains Lubna's claim as [SNHR](#) has not been able to verify facts.

The Syrian Network for Human Rights strongly condemns the flagrant violations and restrictions on individual liberties with such barbarian methods pursued by the Syrian government. It further calls on international human rights organizations to put pressure on the Syrian government to expose its practices on this particular level which has repressed freedom of expression and freedom of protesting against the Syrian government in fear of persecution of family members and relatives. On the other hand, the reactions that victim families could have cannot be controlled by any means and the Syrian government shall bear the sole and full responsibility for them.

The United Nations and its Security Council has strikingly failed to undertake their responsibility in protecting the basic liberties and rights of the Syrian people as stipulated by the UN Charter and the international law. This sense of abandonment has left deep scars in the collective consciousness of the Syrian people and could potentially produce reactions which only the international community holds responsibility for as the Syrian people have been driven to a state of desperation and frustration with the international law which offered them no support whatsoever so far.

