

# 18 Individuals Died due to Torture in July 2017

All of them at the Hands of  
Syrian Regime Forces

# SNHR

SYRIAN NETWORK FOR HUMAN RIGHTS

الشبكة السورية لحقوق الإنسان

Wednesday, August 2, 2017

The Syrian Network for Human Rights, founded in June 2011, is a non-governmental, non-profit independent organization that is a primary source for the United Nations on all death toll-related statistics in Syria



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### I. Report Methodology

Since 2011, the Syrian regime has been denying executing any arrests and, instead, accuses Al-Qaeda and terrorist groups, such as ISIS, of it. Additionally, the Syrian regime doesn't acknowledge any torture or death-due-to-torture cases. SNHR obtains information from former prisoners or prisoners' families where most of the families get the information they have about their detained relatives through bribing officials in charge.

We, in SNHR, refer to the families' accounts. It should be noted that the Syrian authorities usually don't give back the dead bodies of the prisoners to their families. Also, in most cases, families are scared to go and get the dead bodies of their relatives or even their personal items from military hospitals out of fear of being arrested themselves.

Most of the families we contacted have assured that their relatives were in good health at the time of their arrest and illness couldn't have been the cause of death.

#### **Fadel Abdul Ghany, chairman of SNHR, says:**

"The principle of 'Responsibility to Protect' must be implemented in light of the government's failure to protect its people, and the fruitlessness of the diplomatic and peaceful efforts so far. Crimes against humanity and war crimes are being perpetrated every day in Syria and mainly at the hands of the organs of the state itself."



Therefore, SNHR encounters serious difficulties in the documentation process on account of the ban imposed against it and the fact that its members are being pursued by various parties. In light of such circumstances, it might be difficult to fully verify deaths as the process remains subject to ongoing documentation and verification while taking in consideration families' accounts.

To read more about SNHR documentation [methodology](#), please see the following URL:

## II. Executive Summary

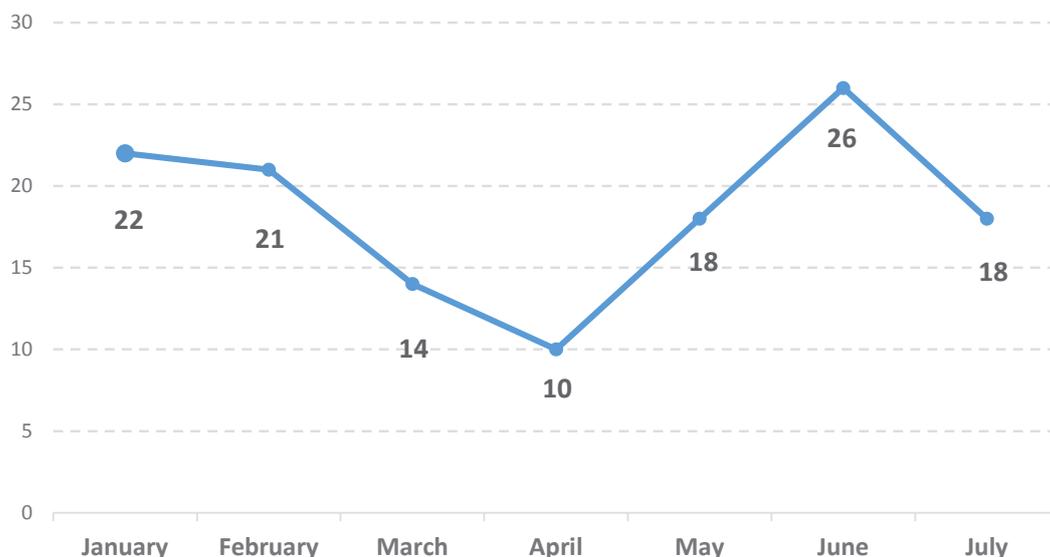
The fourth round of negotiations was held in Astana city, Kazakhstan's capital, on 3 and 4 of May 2017. Russian, Turkish, and Iranian representatives attended as the sponsoring states of Ankara Ceasefire Agreement. The three states agreed on establishing four de-escalation zones, wherein the agreement is to commence on May 6, 2017. And following the 2017 G20 Hamburg summit, the American and Russian presidents announced that a ceasefire agreement has been reached in southwest Syria, governorates of Daraa, Quneitra, and Suwayda. The agreement went into effect on 12:00 of Sunday, July 9, 2017, and it provided for the passage of humanitarian aids in addition to a ceasefire between the conflicting parties (Syrian regime forces and their allies on one side, and armed opposition factions on another side) Nonetheless, breaches didn't stop, mainly by the Syrian regime, who is seemingly the party that would be most affected should the ceasefire go on, and in particular extrajudicial killing crimes and, more horrendously, deaths due to torture, as rates of deaths due to torture weren't affected in light of these agreements. This strongly asserts that there is a ceasefire of some sort on the table, but the crimes that the international community -especially the Russian, Turkish, and Iranian sponsors- won't see are still going on as nothing had changed.



### **A. Victims of torture in the 2017**

SNHR has documented from the start of 2017 until August 2017 the death of 129 individuals due to torture inside official and non-official detention centers at the hands of the parties to the conflict in Syria.

#### **Distribution of Deaths due to Torture in Syria per Month since the Start of 2017**

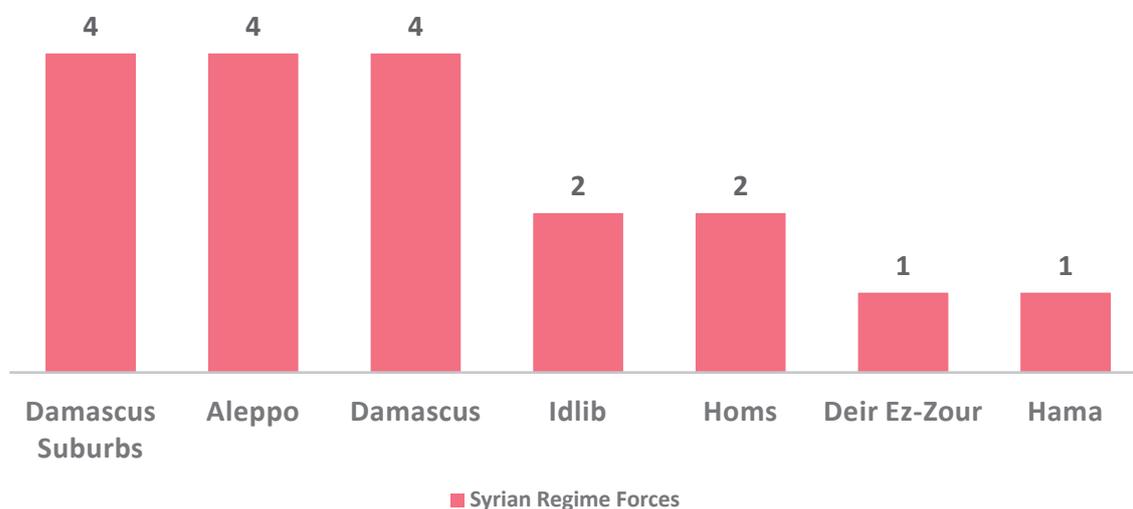


### **B. Victims of torture in July 2017**

SNHR has documented no less than 18 deaths due to torture inside Syrian regime's official and non-official detention centers in July 2017, as follows:

Deaths due to torture have been an ongoing phenomenon since 2011, this is an explicit indicator on the systematic violence and excessive forces used against detainees.

#### **Distribution of Deaths due to Torture across Syrian Governorates**



Most notable cases of deaths due to torture in July are:  
One engineer, one university student, one child

### III. Most Notable Deaths due to Torture

#### **Engineers**

Abdul Hamid al Hajji, agricultural engineer, from al Khafsa town, eastern suburbs of Aleppo governorate, born in 1982. He was arrested in June 2017 in al Shakhir village, eastern suburbs of Aleppo governorate, and he was sound and in good health at the time of arrest. On Saturday, July 15, 2017, we received information confirming his death due to torture inside a detention center.



Abdul Hamid al Hajji

#### **University students**

Taha Hussein, university student, from Hama city, 22-year-old, he was arrested by Syrian regime forces in 2015, and was taken to branch 227, known as al Manteqa Branch, which is affiliated with the Military Security Intelligence in Damascus city. On Tuesday, July 4, 2017, we received information confirming his death due to torture inside branch 227.

#### **Children**

Jaber Othman, a child, from al Mleiha city, Damascus suburbs governorate, 15-year-old, he was arrested by Syrian regime forces and was kept at al Manteqa branch, Damascus city. His family confirmed that he was sound and in good health before the arrest. On Tuesday, July 4, 2017, we received information confirming his death due to torture inside al Manteqa branch.

### IV. Conclusions and Recommendations

SNHR can confirm that this considerably huge number of victims who are dying due to torture every month, with taking into consideration that the actual number of deaths is most likely higher, unequivocally indicates a systematized policy that is being adopted by the head of the ruling authorities. All of the state's organs, branches, and figures are fully aware of these policies. Furthermore, these policies were enforced in a widespread manner which constitutes crimes against humanity and war crimes.



## **Recommendations**

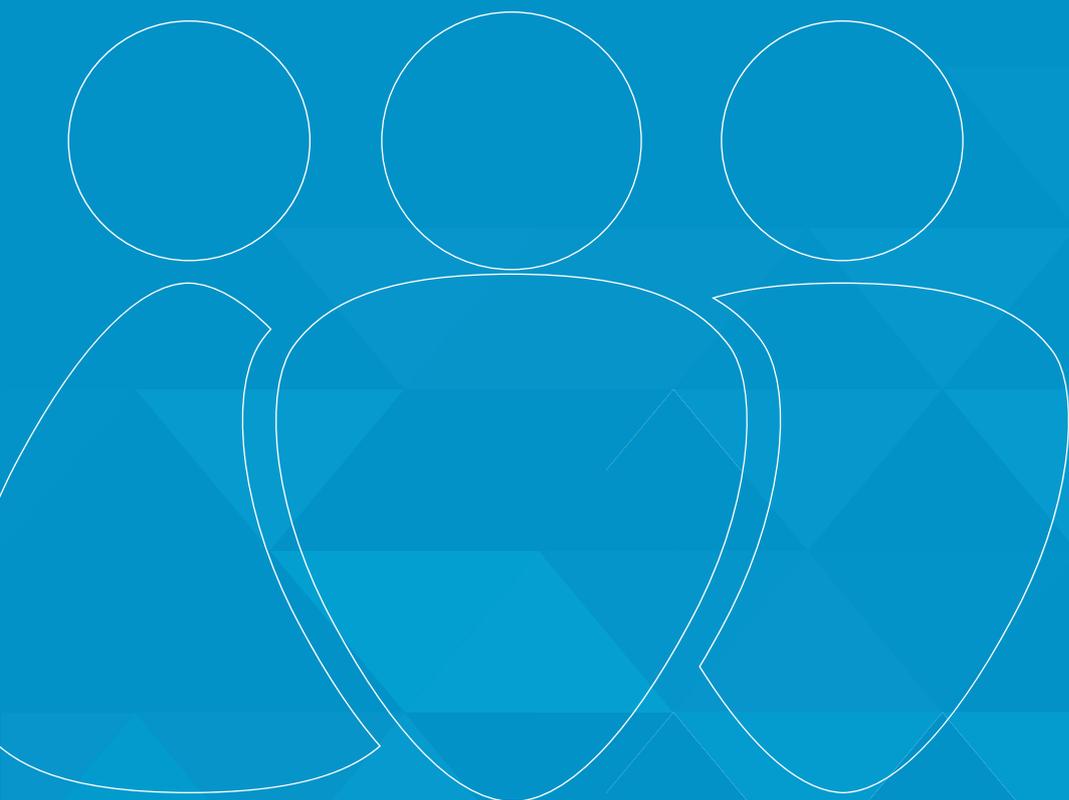
### **Security Council**

1. The Syrian case must be referred to the International Criminal Court.
2. Punishments must be enforced on all the leaders, of any party, who were involved in acts of torture which violates the international humanitarian law and the Resolutions of the Security Council on Syria; particularly Resolutions 2042 and 2139.
3. Bind the Syrian government, and the other parties, to fully cooperate with the Independent International Commission of Inquiry on the Syrian Arab Republic, which was established by the Human Rights Council, in order to investigate torture practices inside detention centers.
4. Allow independent human rights organization to access any place in Syria.

### **Acknowledgment and Condolences**

Our most sincere thanks to all families, eyewitness, and activists who contributed majorly to this report, and our most heartfelt condolences for the victims' families and relatives.





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