



The Killing of 243 individuals due to Torture during the First Half of 2016 Including 32 individuals in June

Report Contents:

- I. Methodology
- II. Executive Summary
- III. Most Notable Deaths due to Torture
- IV. Conclusions and Recommendations
- Acknowledgments

I. Methodology

Since 2011, the Syrian regime has been denying executing any arrests and, instead, accuses Al-Qaeda and terrorist groups such as ISIS. 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 Ghani, 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

A. Deaths due to torture during the first half of 2016

SNHR documented 243 deaths due to torture inside official and non-official detention centers during the first half of 2016. The death toll is distributed as follows:

A. Government forces (army, security, local militias, Shiite foreign militias): 230

B. Extremist Islamic groups:

ISIS (self-proclaimed the Islamic State): seven

Al-Nusra Front: two

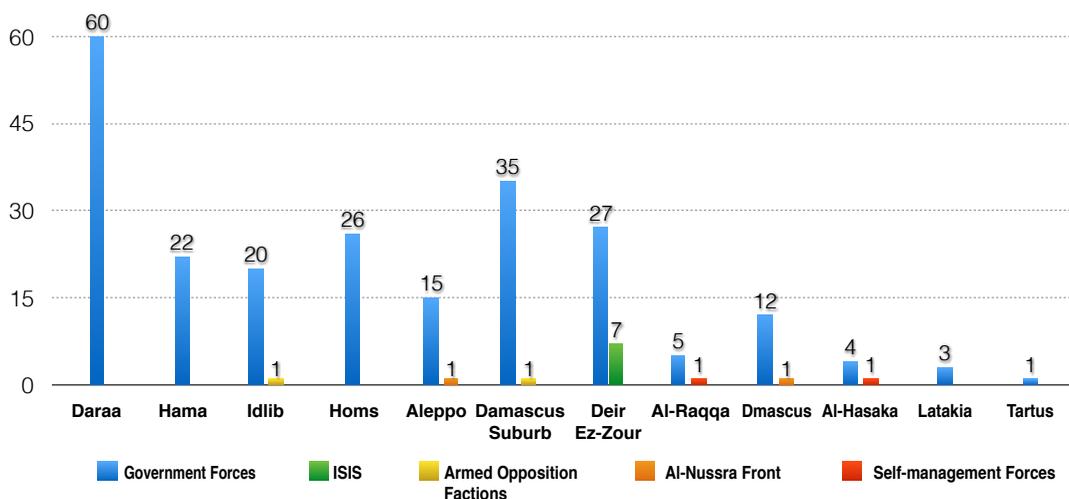
C. Armed opposition factions: two

D. Self-management forces (consisting primarily of the Democratic Union Party forces, a branch for the Kurdistan Workers' Party): two

Daraa governorate saw the highest number of victims who died due to torture during the first half of 2016 which amounted to 60 individuals, whereas the remaining death toll is distributed as follows:

Damascus suburbs: 36, Deir Ez-Zour: 34, Homs: 26, Hama: 22, Idlib: 21, Aleppo: 16, Damascus: 13, Al-Raqqa: 6, Al-Hasaka: 5, Latakia: 3, Tartus: 1.

Distribution of victims by the influential parties:





Most notable deaths due to torture during the first half of 2016 are:

Six university students, six engineers, four media activists, two medics, one teacher, one lawyer, one athletic, four women, three children, one elder, and one case that involved victims from the same family.

B. Deaths due to torture in June 2016

SNHR documented no less than 32 deaths due to torture at the hands of government forces inside official and non-official detention centers in June 2016

Death-due-to-torture cases have been evidently going on non-stop since 2011, which is a clear indicator on the systematic violence and excessive force used against prisoners. Daraa governorate saw the highest number of victims who died due to torture in June 2016 which amounted to eight individuals, whereas the remaining death toll is distributed as follows:

Idlib: 5, Damascus suburbs: 3, Homs: 3, Hama: 3, Damascus: 3, Aleppo: 2, Deir Ez-Zour: 2, Al-Hasaka: 2, Latakia: 1.

Most notable deaths due to torture in June are:

One engineer, one media activist, one lawyer, and one child

III. Most Notable Deaths due to Torture

Engineers:

[Nathir Al-Baqdounsi](#), engineer, from Douma city in Damascus suburbs. He was arrested by government forces in 2014. On Saturday 11 June 2016, we received information confirming his death due to torture inside a government forces detention center.

Media Activists:

[Belal Al-Hussein](#), cameraman, from [Al-Qunaitera](#), works for the Syrian Arab TV channel, aged 32 at the time of the arrest. He was arrested by government forces in 2012 in Damascus city. His family assured that he was in good health at the time of the arrest. On Friday 17 June 2016, we received information confirming his death due to torture inside branch 215, affiliated to the Air Force Intelligence division in Damascus city.

Lawyers:

[Khalaf Al-Ibeid Al-Kurdi](#), lawyer, from [Mohasan city](#) in the eastern suburbs of Deir Ez-Zour governorate, 47-year-old, married and a father of four kids. He was arrested by Air Force Intelligence forces on 15 October 2011 in Deir Ez-Zour gover-





norate, he was in good health at the time of the arrest. On Thursday 16 June 2016, we received information confirming his death due to torture inside Sydnaya prison in Damascus suburbs governorate.

Children:

Mahmoud Eid, child, from Al-Aa'ideen camp in Hama city, aged 13 at the time of the arrest. He was arrested by government forces from his place of residence in Al-Aa'ideen camp in November 2013, he was in good health at the time of the arrest. On Saturday 2016, we received information confirming his death due to torture inside a government forces detention center in Damascus city.

IV. Conclusions and Recommendations

SNHR affirms that this considerably huge number of victims who are dying under torture every month, with taking into consideration that the actual number of deaths is most likely higher, clearly 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- To 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. To allow independent human rights organization to access any place in Syria.

Acknowledgments:

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.

