

No less than 389 Cases of Arbitrary Arrest Recorded in January 2017

SNHR

SYRIAN NETWORK FOR HUMAN RIGHTS

الشبكة السورية لحقوق الإنسان

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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. Introduction

The detainees issue hasn't seen any noticeable progress even though it was included in the "Cessation of Hostiles" statement. Regarding that issue in particular, we recommend the following:

- 1- Arbitrary arrests must be ceased immediately as it is still an ongoing concern according to SNHR's monthly report. All detainees' fates must be revealed and their families' right to visit them must be insured immediately as well.
- 2- All detainees who were detained for merely exercising their political and civil rights must be released unconditionally. The use of women and children as war hostages must be stopped and they all must be released.
- 3- Grant the Independent international monitors of the Independent International Commission of Inquiry on the Syrian Arab Republic, which was established by the UN, and the International Committee of the Red Cross access to all official and non-official detention centers without setting up any prior arrangements or any restrictions or conditions.
- 4- A UN committee should be formed to see to the release of the detainees periodically and per a timetable that must be presented by all the detaining parties and mainly Syrian regime forces that are detaining 99% of all the detainees.



Methodology

The ongoing and daily process of documenting detainees comes with additional challenges for SNHR that have been documenting detainees since 2011. One of these most notable challenges is the families' reluctance to cooperate and reveal any information on their family members' arrest even secretly and especially if the arrested individual was a female due to a prevalent notion among the Syrian society that doing so would result in more torture and risks. Instead, the families try to negotiate with security forces that usually blackmail these families and demand a cash payment that can amount to thousands of dollars in some cases. Despite the fact that SNHR possesses lists of more than 117,000 detainees, including children and women, it should be noted that we estimate that the actual number of detainees have exceeded 215,000; 99% of them are being detained mainly by Syrian regime forces.

The international community's and the United Nations', in all of its organs, failure to apply pressure on the Syrian authorities to release even one case (including those whose sentences are over), and even prisoners of conscience, affirmed that convention within the Syrian society which believes that it is useless to cooperate in the documentation process. Most of the releases were part of exchange deals with the armed opposition.

The Syrian government denies that it made any arrests or executed any abductions when asked by the detainees' families. SNHR obtains most of the information from former detainees.

All the documented detainees in January were arrested without a warrant, which has become a norm and a methodology in 99.9% of the arrests made by Syrian regime forces in all of its organs and entities (army, security forces, local militias, foreign militias). In all of the many interviews we conducted with thousands of prisoners since 2011, we have never heard of an arrest warrant or a cause. Most of the arrests are either through breaking doors and arresting people from their homes or at checkpoints in the streets. Apparently, Syrian regime forces follow this method in order to wipe off any evidence that might hold them responsible for these arrests and the torture, physical violence, extrajudicial killing, and the other crimes and violations that follow.

Also, Syrian regime forces don't allow 99.9% of the detainees to contact a lawyer, their families, or anyone. The people who perpetrate these crimes, or other crimes, have never been punished by Syrian regime forces and no case involving that have been recorded. Instead, government authorities, itself, encourage and protect the people who perpetrate these crimes.



SNHR has recorded that no less than 117,000 individuals have been arrested since March 2011 (99% have been arrested by Syrian regime forces) these number don't include prisoners of a criminal background and include arrests cases that are based on the internal armed conflict and mainly due to the opposition activity against the ruling authorities.

The mounting number of arrests is due to a number of reasons:

- Many arrested individuals weren't arrested because of a crime they committed, but because of their relatives' involvement with armed opposition factions or because they provided humanitarian aids.
- Most of the arrests are being conducted randomly and involve people who weren't involved in the popular protests, relief, or even military activity.
- Thousands of detainees are still being detained by the Syrian regime even though a judicial order for their release was issued despite the bureaucracy, corruption, slowness, and limpness that the Syrian judiciary suffers from.
- Syrian regime forces control densely populated cities such as the main central cities and it continue to practice its systematic policies of arbitrary arrests against the civilians of these areas.
- There are many Syrian regime forces-affiliated entities that are authorized to make arrests, many of these entities make arrests without checking with Syrian regime forces or the judicial authorities to which these entities are affiliated. Also, these entities have its own list of detention centers that are not subject to any judicial supervision. The detainees inside these detention centers are not being treated in accordance with the stated Syrian laws.
- A great number of cases are driven by blackmails or sectarian grudges especially in unstable areas that are not held by a specific faction or it is undergoing a power struggle. As a result, many armed militias that have emerged can't be monitored as they don't answer to any particular group.

Details about detainees can be found through the search engine on SNHR website, you may also add the name and details of any detainee and the concerned team will check the data and upload it if proved accurate.



II. Report Details

Arbitrary arrests made in January were notable for Syrian regime forces' almost daily raiding and arrest campaigns that involved civilians in the main neighborhoods of Damascus, Aleppo, and Hama cities. The arrests made in Damascus focused on the age group 18-42 years old for the purpose of conscription, while Syrian regime forces targeted the families of activists and armed opposition fighters in Hama and Aleppo. Also, The Lebanese group Hezbollah's militias made arrests on civilians who fled the military operations in Wadi Barada area.

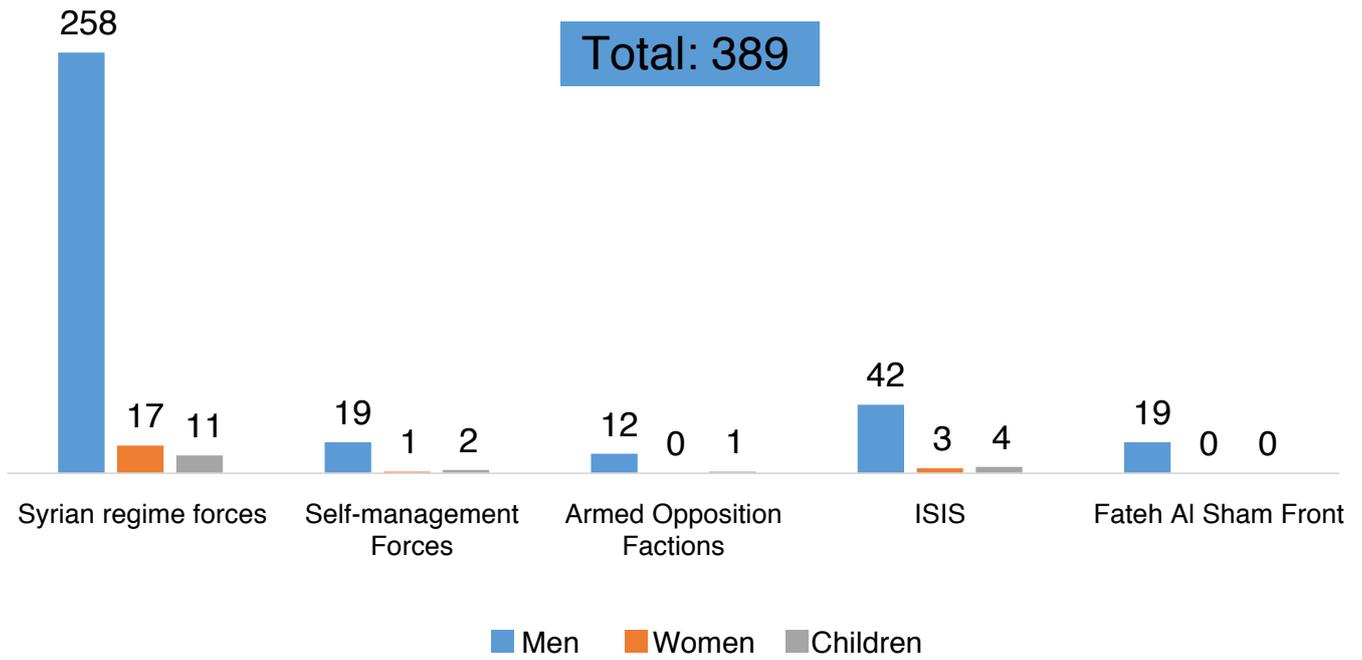
Furthermore, ISIS continues to enforce its policy of arbitrary arrests against civilians in its areas. The arrests included those who violated the organization's forcibly-imposed regulations, owners of phone shops, internet cafes, money exchange shops and civilians who are trying to flee ISIS-held areas to areas under the control of armed opposition.

In contrast, Self-management forces also continue its policy of arbitrary arrests and enforced-disappearance against civilians and political and media activists who oppose its views in its areas. The arrests were concentrated in Al Hasaka city and Ifreen city in the suburbs of Aleppo governorate in addition to expanded arrest campaigns for the purpose of conscription that centered in Al Qamishli, in the suburbs of Al Hasaka governorate, and Ifreen.

Fateh Al Sham Front (Formerly Al Nusra Front) carried out wide arrest campaigns targeting affiliates of armed opposition factions, especially in the areas where the recent conflicts took place between the group and armed opposition factions in the southern suburbs of Idlib governorate.

The following chart illustrates the distribution of arrest cases that we were able to record in January. This what we were able to record which is the minimum, due to security and logistic restriction.

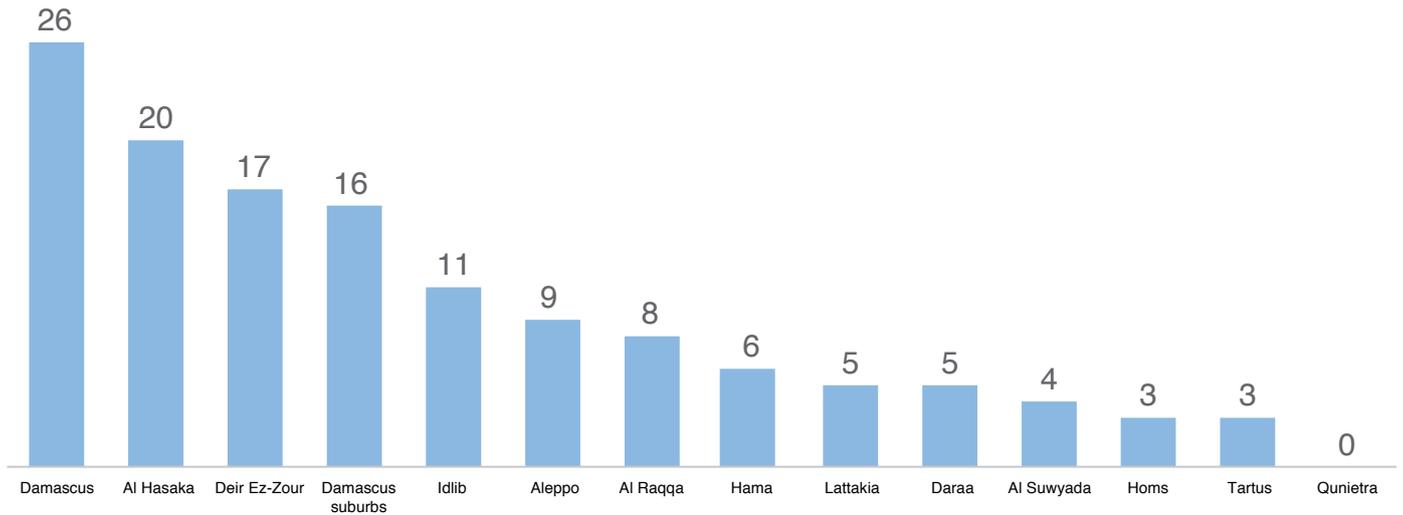




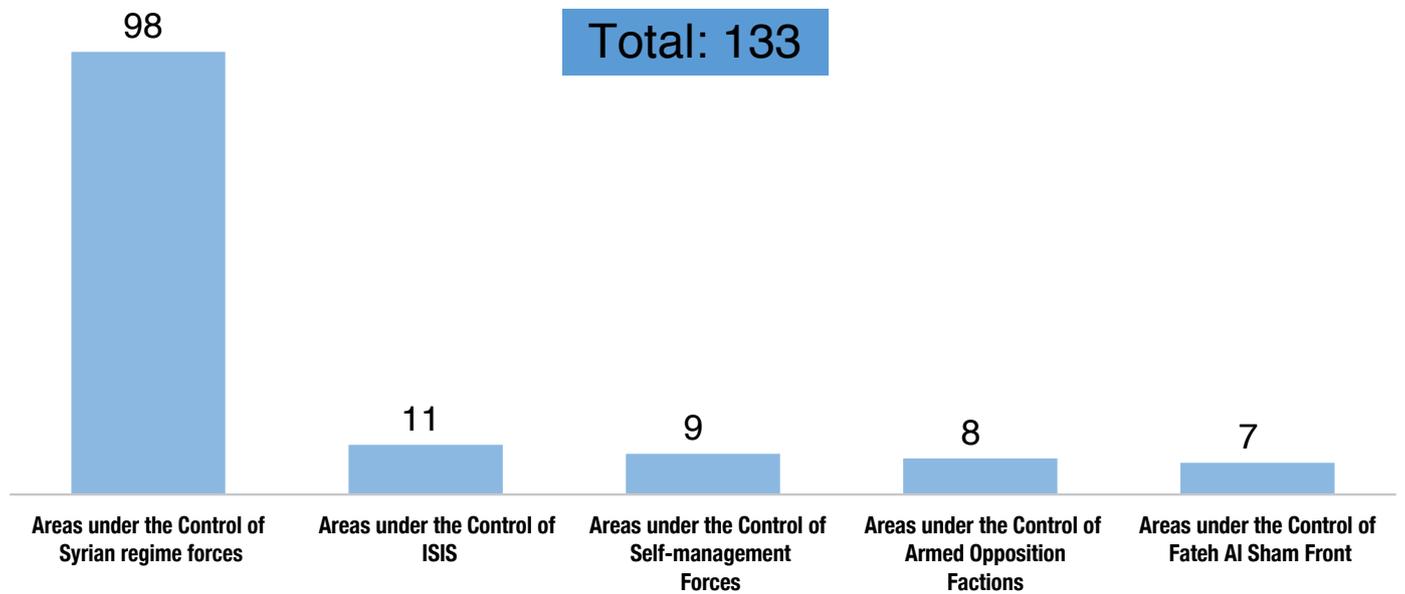
Releases from the various detention centers were as follows:



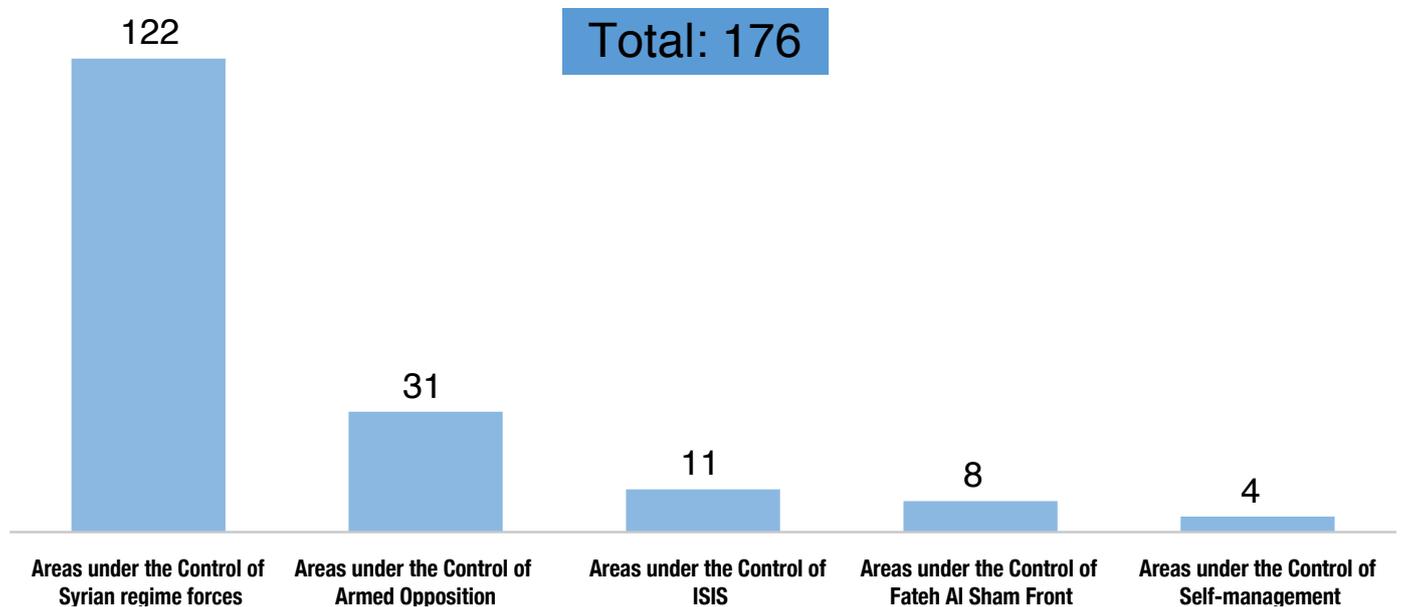
Raids and inspection points that resulted in detention:



Parties responsible for raids:



Abduction cases by other parties:



III. Most Notable Cases of Arbitrary Arrest in January

Syrian regime forces

(Name is undisclosed for security reasons), woman, from Damascus city, 29-year-old. On Wednesday, January 25, 2017, Syrian regime forces raided her place of residence in Naher Eisha neighborhood in Damascus city and arrested her, before taking her to an undisclosed place. Her fate is still unknown to SNHR as well as her family.

Self-management forces (Primarily consisting of Democratic Union Party forces, a branch for the Kurdistan Workers' Party)

AbdulKarim Abu Luqman, from M'abda town in the suburbs of Al Hasaka governorate, a member of the political office of the Kurdistan Democratic Party. On Monday, January 30, 2017, he was arrested by Self-management forces (Primarily consisting of Democratic Union Party forces, a branch for the Kurdistan Workers' Party) from his place of residence in M'abda town in the suburbs of Al Hasaka governorate, before taking him to undisclosed location. His fate is still unknown to SNHR as well as his family.

Fateh Al Sham Front (Formerly Al Nusra Front)

Yaser Al Abd, from Aleppo governorate, the military leader of the Al Fauj Al Awwal, an armed opposition factions. On Sunday, January 29, 2017, he was arrested by armed members from Fateh Al Sham Front in Sarmada town in the northern suburbs of Idlib governorate. His fate is still unknown to SNHR as well as his family.

Armed opposition factions

Media activist Amer Al Hasan, from Al Sfiera city in the suburbs of Aleppo governorate, born in 1989, media activist for the Popular Syrian Movement. On Friday, January 13, 2017, he was arrested by armed members of Al Jabha Al Shamiya, an armed opposition faction, at a checkpoint for the group in the northern suburbs of Aleppo. His fate is still unknown to SNHR as well as his family.



Other parties

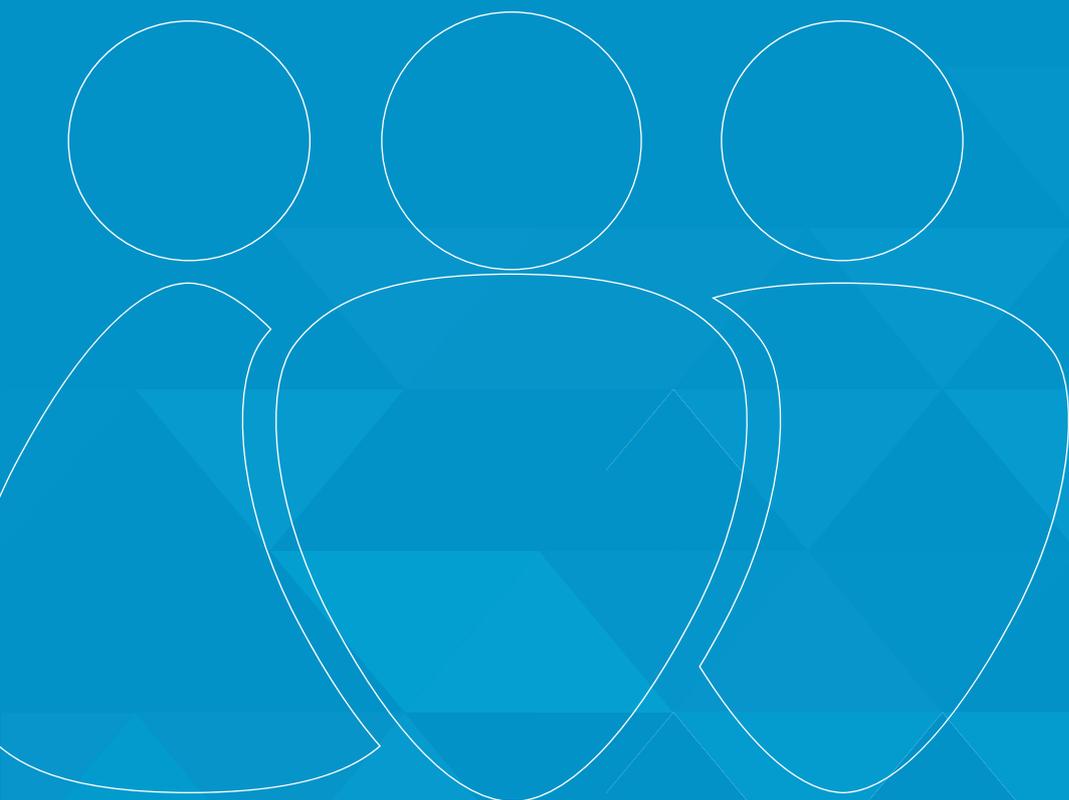
Journalist photographer Shiraz Mohammad, from South Africa, born in 1979, an activist in the humanitarian field and was handling the media coverage for the humanitarian efforts of the organization Gifts of the Givers. On Tuesday, January 10, 2017, he was abducted by unknown men on Al Jamilia village road as he was heading to Htaya border crossing with Turkey in the suburbs of Idlib governorate. His fate is still unknown to his family as well as SNHR.



IV. Recommendations

- 1- Security Council must monitor the implementation of the following resolution: Resolution 2042, adopted on 14 April 2012, Resolution 2043, adopted on 21 April 2012, and Resolution 2139, adopted on 22 February 2014 which states that the crime of enforced-disappearance must be ceased.
- 2- The United Nations and the international community must uphold their responsibilities with respect to hundreds of thousands of detainees and forcibly-disappeared individuals in Syria.





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