



42 Individuals Killed due to Torture in July 2016 Including 41 at the Hands of Government Forces

Report Contents:

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

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. 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

SNHR documented no less than 42 deaths due to torture inside official and non-official detention centers in July 2016 distributed as follows:

A. Government forces (Army, security, local militias, Shiite foreign militias): 41

B. Armed opposition factions: 1

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

Daraa governorate saw the highest number of victims who died due to torture with 15 individuals, the remaining toll is as follows:

Damascus suburbs: 9

Homs: 5

Hama: 4

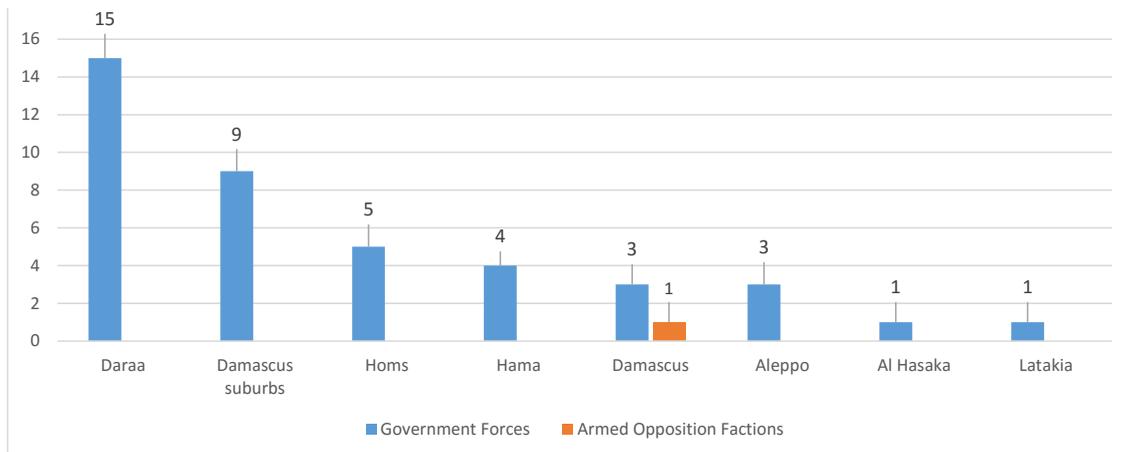
Damascus: 4

Aleppo: 3

Latakia: 1

Al Hasaka: 1

Distribution of victims who died due to torture by influential parties across governorates:



Most notable cases of deaths due to torture in July is as follows:

One nurse, one journalist, one case that involved victims from the same family





III. Most Notable Deaths due to Torture

Medical personnel

Ali AbdulAziz Al-Sabboah, nurse, from Al Yadoda town in the suburbs of Daraa governorate, aged 35-year-old at the time of the arrest. He was arrested by government forces at the beginning of 2014. On Tuesday 12 July 2016, we received information confirming his death due to torture at a government forces detention center.

Journalists

Mohammad Amer Barakat Al Zou'bi, from Al Yadoda town in the suburbs of Daraa governorate, born in 1981. On 20 December 2011, government forces arrested him from his home in Al Mzerieb town in Daraa governorate. On Monday 22 July 2011, we received information confirming his death in Sydnaya military prison in Damascus which is affiliated to government forces.

Cases that involved victims from the same family

Fayez, Bahaa, and Fadi Bahjat Al Zamel, three brothers, from Inkhil city in the suburbs of Dara governorate. They were arrested by government forces in 2013. On Sunday 22 July 2016, we received information confirming their death due to torture in Sydnaya military prison in Damascus.

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, 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. Armed opposition factions practiced acts of torture that constitute 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.

Acknowledgment:

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.

