

**476 Individuals Killed due to
Torture in 2016
Including 20 in December**

SNHR

SYRIAN NETWORK FOR HUMAN RIGHTS

الشبكة السورية لحقوق الإنسان

Monday, January 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



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 of doing so. 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

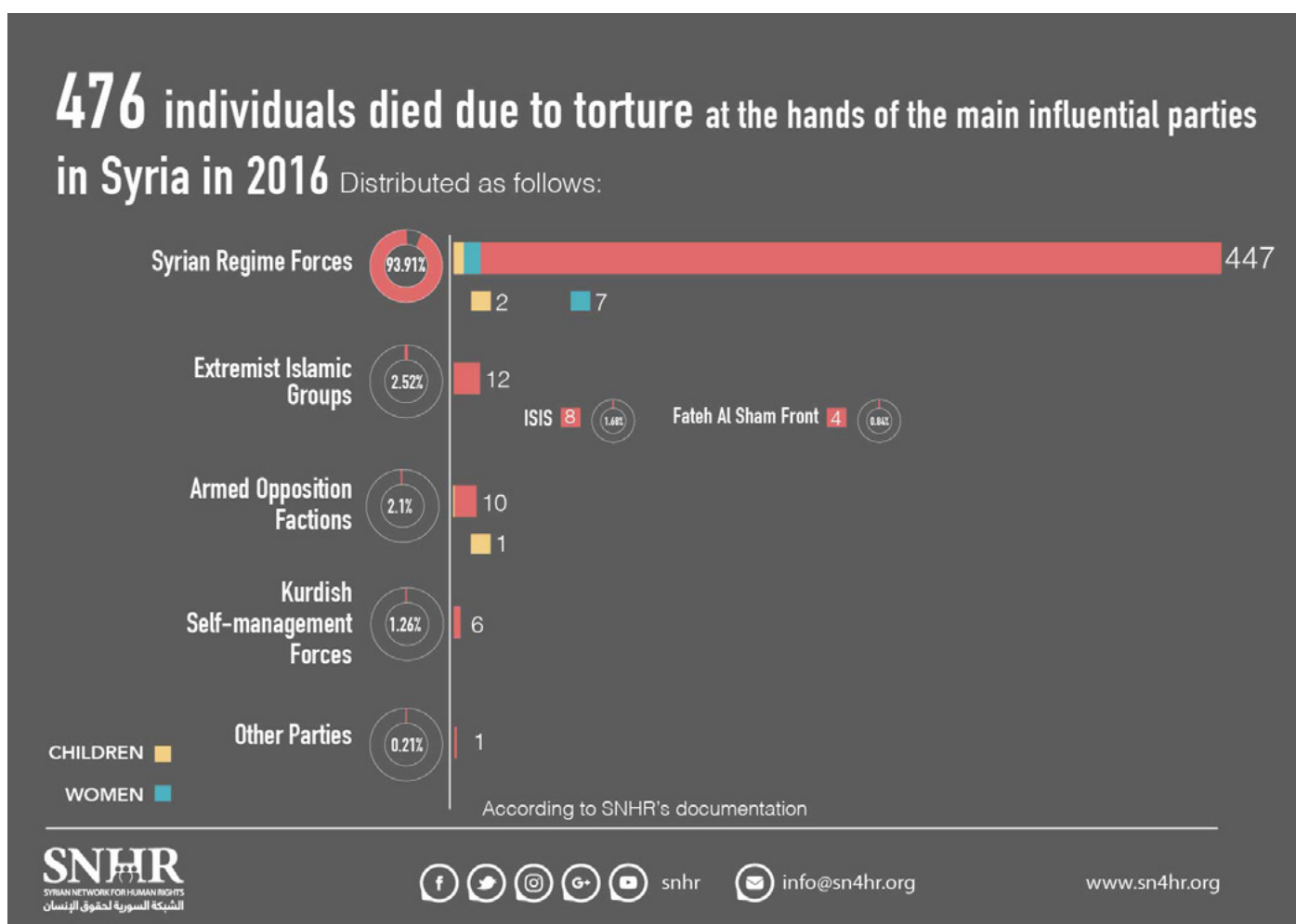


process remains subject to ongoing documentation and verification while taking into consideration families' accounts.

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

II. Executive Summary

A. Toll of victims who died due to torture in 2016



SNHR documented no less than 476 deaths due to torture inside official and non-official detention centers in 2016, distributed as follows:

A. Syrian regime forces (Army, security, local militias, Shiite foreign militias): 447 including two children and seven women.



B. Extremist Islamic groups:

ISIS (Self-proclaimed the Islamic State): 8

Fateh Al Sham Front (Formerly Al Nusra Front): 4

C. Armed opposition factions: 10 including one child

D. Self-management forces (Consisting primarily of the Democratic Union Party – a branch for the Kurdistan Workers' Party): 6 including one woman

E. Other parties: 1

Daraa governorate saw the highest toll of victims who died due to torture in 2016 with 103 individuals. The remaining death toll is distributed as follows:

Homs: 73

Damascus suburbs: 64

Hama: 60

Deir Ez-Zour: 47

Aleppo: 34

Damascus: 31

Idlib: 34

Al Hasaka: 10

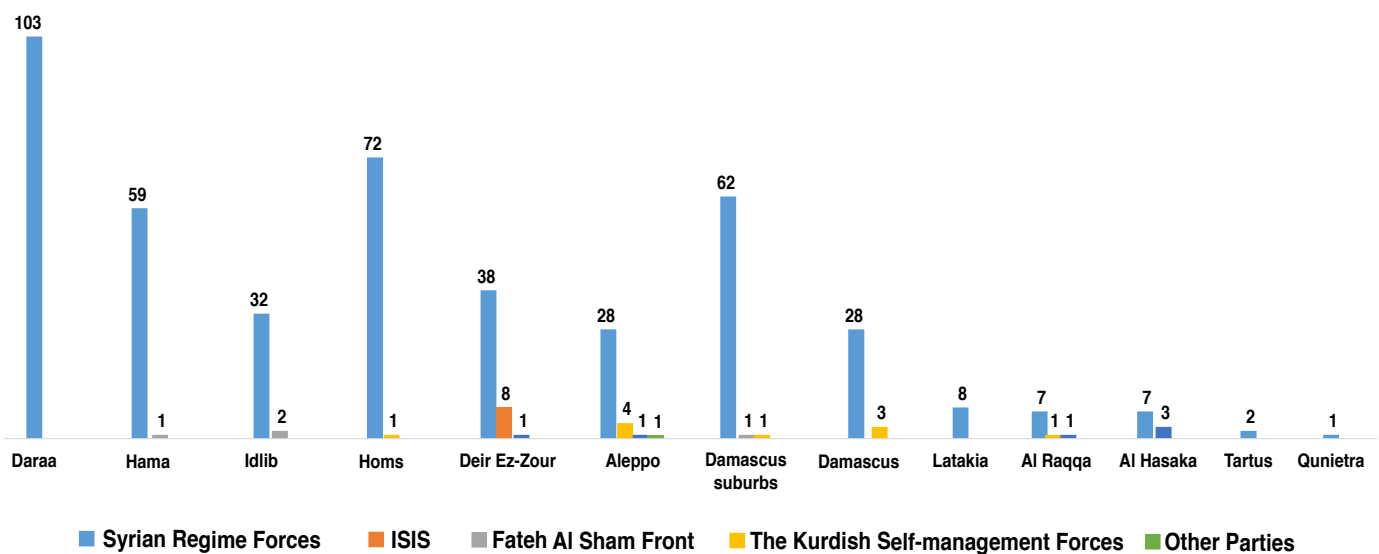
Al Raqqa: 9

Latakia: 8

Tartus: 2

Qunietra: 1

Distribution of Victims who died due to torture across governorate by the influential party



Most notable death-due-to-torture cases in 2016 are:

Eight engineers, seven university students, four media activists, one teacher, one pharmacist, one photographer, two journalists, one nurse, one paramedic, two athletes, one lawyer, one medical personnel, three children, eight women, four elders, three cases that involved victims from the same family

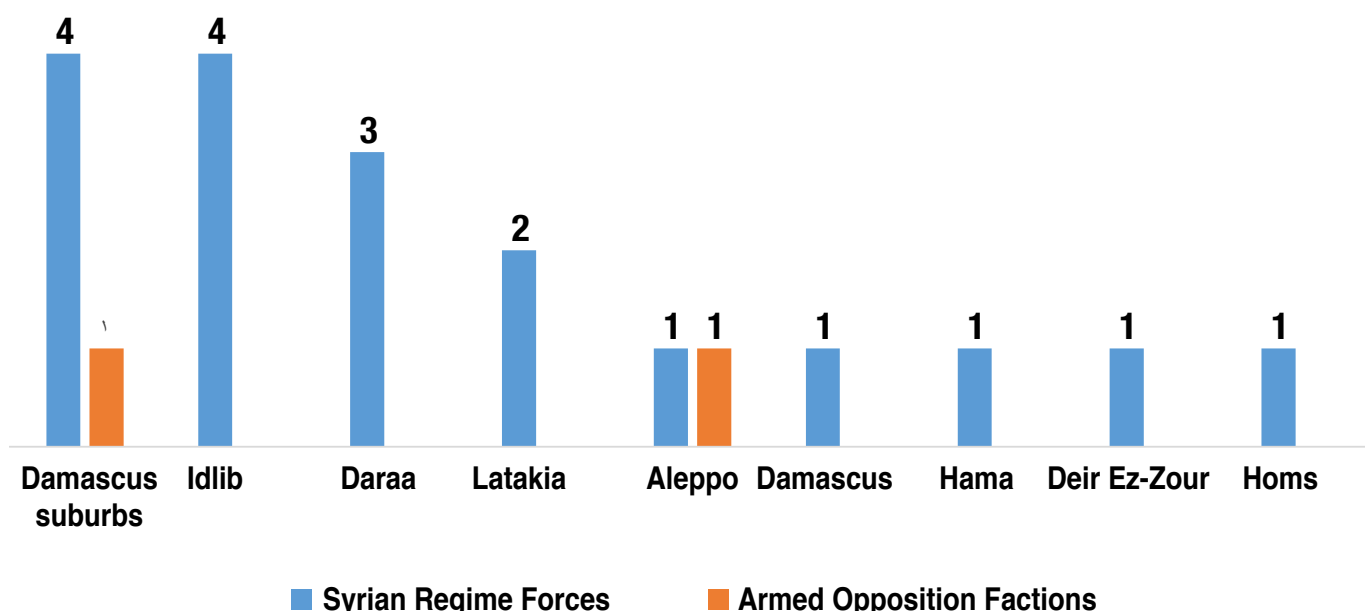
B. Toll of victims who died due to torture in December 2016

SNHR documented no less than 20 deaths due to torture inside official and non-official detention centers in December 2016. The death toll is distributed as follows:

- A. Government forces (Army, security, local militias, Shiite foreign militias): 18
- B. Armed opposition factions: 2

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.

Damascus suburbs governorate saw the highest number of victims who died due to torture with five individuals, while the remaining death toll was distributed across governorates as follows:



Most notable cases of deaths due to torture in December are:
One doctor, one journalist



III. Most Notable Deaths due to Torture

Doctor

[Nabil Omar Salam](#), internal [doctor](#), from Douma city in Damascus suburbs governorate, born in 1979. He was arrested by Syrian regime forces on 2 October 2012. On Tuesday 20 December 2016, we received information confirming his death due to torture inside a detention center.



Journalist

[Nabil Walid Surbaji](#), a [journalist](#) and a blogger, from Darayya city in Damascus suburbs governorate, graduated from the faculty of media at Damascus University. On 26 February 2012, he was arrested by Syrian regime forces at a checkpoint for Air Force Security in Al Thawra neighborhood in Darayya. On Tuesday 27 December, we received information confirming his death due to torture on 25 May 2016 inside a detention center for Syrian regime forces.



IV. Conclusions and Recommendations

SNHR affirms 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.

Extremist Islamic groups, Kurdish Self-management forces, and armed opposition factions have all practiced acts of torture which 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 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

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





@snhr



Info@sn4hr.org

www.sn4hr.org

