

# No less than 13,029 Individuals Died due to Torture, Including 164 Children

Stopping the Torture Machine  
Should be on Top of every  
Negotiation Agenda



Friday, June 30, 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. Introduction and Methodology
  - II. Executive Summary
  - III. Torture at the Hands of the Parties to the Conflict in Syria
  - IV. Recommendations
- 

### I. Introduction and Methodology

Syria is the world's leading country in terms of deaths due to torture in the modern age, as the toll of people dying due to torture has reached atrociously high levels. Even though the emphasis is on deaths due to torture most of the time, there are terrifying numbers of people who sustained disabilities and distortions because of torture as well. In this yearly report, which SNHR has released periodically over the course of the past six years on the International Day in Support of Victims of Torture (June 26), we will be highlighting the continued torture methodology adopted by the parties to the conflict in Syria, especially by the Syrian regime who is the main and most perpetrator of the crime of torture. In light of the gravity and enormity of the crime of torture, we release a special [monthly report](#) that outlines the toll of victims dying due to torture at the hands of the violations perpetrators.

Torture and ill-treatment and inhumane or degrading treatment are strictly prohibited by the international law, where this is considered a norm that no state can dispute or balance with other rights or values even in times of emergency. Violating the prohibition of torture is deemed an international crime in the international criminal law, and the people who issue orders for torture or didn't work on preventing its occurrence are responsible for these practices. Nonetheless, all the testimonies from people who survived detention centers point that torture is still ongoing as a mechanical pattern in an extremely savage and sadistic manner, and exhibits a sectarian nature in many cases, especially in the Syrian regime's detention centers given that the regime holds the greatest portion of detainees at a percentage of 87% of no less than 106,727 individuals who are still detained according to SNHR's data since March 2011. We can also confirm that we record one or two deaths due to torture on a daily basis inside official and non-official Syrian regime detention centers.



On the other hand, we recorded a noticeable increase in deaths due to torture numbers at the hands of Kurdish Self-Management forces, extremist Islamic groups, and armed opposition factions in 2017, as we recorded 2-3 individuals dying due to torture weekly at the hands of one of those three parties.

These horrendous practices, arrest and torture, lead to a social disintegration and fragmentation. These effects are more apparent on the woman, whether she is the one who was directly arrested or torture or loses her husband or son as victims of arrest and torture, leaving her on her own with no husband or a provider.

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

"The Syrian government's torture-to-death mindset is not being addressed and tackled duly on the international level, and it doesn't even get a mention in the political process in Geneva, Astana, and other international platforms. The states parties to the Convention against Torture are not doing what is asked of them, as per Article 5 of the Convention which binds the states parties to take steps to establish their jurisdiction over crimes of torture, as there are many perpetrators of crimes of torture who are now refugees in countries that signed the Convention. More efforts and finance must be devoted to prosecute and try those people."

Deaths during detention happen under complete secrecy and doesn't receive its due consideration among the international community and political discourse that tackle violence in the Syrian conflict despite the devastating impact it has on the hundreds of thousands of Syrians.

### **Report methodology**

The report primarily draws upon SNHR's archive that has been built through daily and on-going monitoring and documentation since 2011. Most of the statistics we have include names, pictures, place and date of death and arrest. The comprehensiveness of the information varies from one case to other in light of our access capabilities and the extraordinarily challenges in Syria. Surely, this report only represents the bare minimum of the actual severity and magnitude of the violations that are being perpetrated.

We also regularly conduct interviews with torture survivors, families of victims who died due to torture from different Syrian governorates either via Skype, phone, or by visiting them in Syria and abroad. We have selected six accounts that are revealed for the first time after our report



that was released last year on the International Day in Support of Victims of Torture, June 26, 2016. In some cases, we used aliases in order to maintain the eyewitnesses' privacy and spare them security pursuits or harassments. Also, we obtained some pictures that prove that they were torture. We have told everyone we met of the purpose of this report and they gave us permission to use the information they provided. This report outlines the most notable incidents that happened after the release of our report last year which was on the International Day in Support of Victims, namely between June 26, 2016 and June 26, 2017.

## **II. Executive Summary**

We documented that no less than 13,029 individuals have died due to torture, including 164 children and 57 women (adult female), from March 2011 until June 2017. The victims are distributed among the four perpetrator parties as follows:

First:

Syrian regime forces: 12,920 individuals, including 161 children and 41 women.

Second:

Extremist Islamic groups: 47 individuals, including one child and 13 women.

- ISIS: 30 individuals, including one child and 13 women.
- Fateh al Sham Front: 17 individuals, all men.

Third:

Armed opposition factions: 30 individuals, including one child and one woman.

Fourth:

Kurdish Self-Management forces: 26 individuals, including one child and two women.

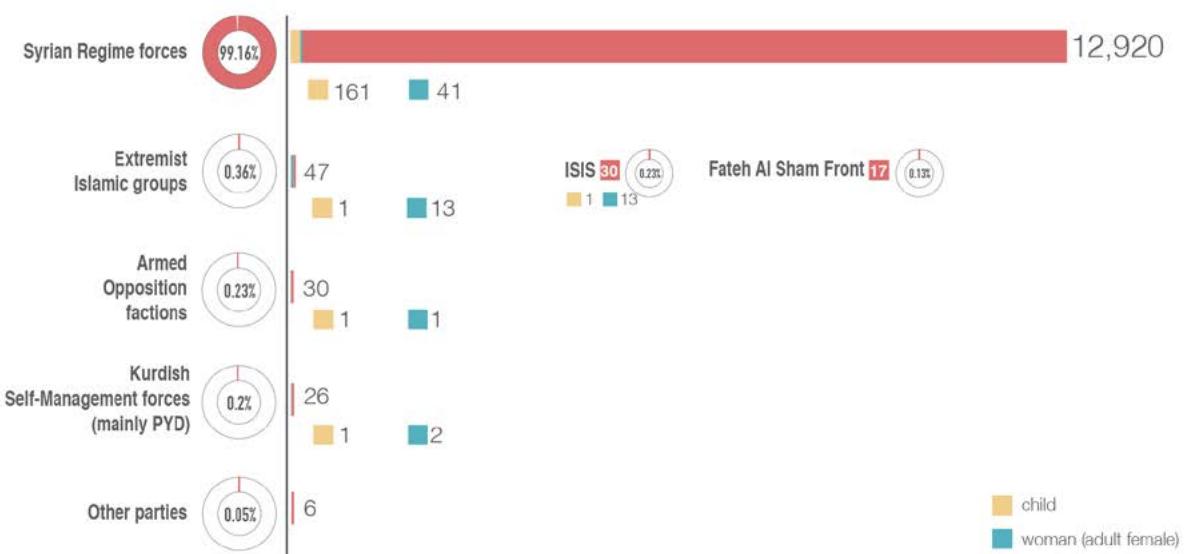
Other parties: six individuals



A total of

## 13,029 individuals died due to torture

in Syria from March 2011 until June 2017, distributed as follow:



According to SNHR documentation

### III.Torture by the four main parties

A. Syrian regime forces (army, security, local militias, Shiite foreign militias)

To avoid repeating what we have said and stressed times and times again and has been included in tens of released yearly and monthly [reports](#) on methods of torture, dying due to torture, and conditions and mechanisms of arrest, the main purpose of this report will focus on the fact that the Syrian regime hasn't changed its (arrest-torture-torture to death-enforced-disappearance) system in the slightest. Even though the Syrian regime has released hundreds of death statements for people who were being arrested by the government itself, let alone the 12,920 that died due to torture at their hands as we documented, we have yet to encounter a case where the Syrian government proves that an individual died of natural reasons rather than due to torture. Furthermore, the Syrian government never stated or revealed any comprehensive records for the death cases of people who died inside the detention centers and military hospitals. Also, the Syrian government don't reveal the place of detention, prohibits detainees from hiring defense, prohibits the detainees' families from visiting them, abstain from delivering the dead body to the victims' family. All of this exposes a deliberate strategy adopted by the Syrian government in each step on the way, which, in turn, exposes the Syrian government's involvement and role in: torture, and impediment



of investigating the death cases, informing the families of the deaths, and returning the corpse, in addition to hiding criminal evidences, and banning regional and international human rights organizations from visiting any prisons or security branches. In light of all that, we are compelled to strongly believe that the Syrian government bears direct responsibility for the victims' death, and for the violations to many treaties and charters, including and most notably: International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights, Convention against Torture, Joint Article 3 of the Four Geneva Conventions, Article 28 of the Syrian constitution. It should be noted that all people who are involved in the torture paradigm within the Syrian regime have no right to justify torture by exceptional conditions or orders from higher officers according to Article 2 of the Convention against Torture.

### **Unrestricted torture**

Syrian regime forces have resorted to systematic torture against their detainees since the very first days of the popular uprising for democracy in March 2011. After a few months, a sectarian and racist nature began to manifest in some of the torture practices. Also, torture practices were carried out against detainees on a daily basis and for long hours in retaliation and as a way to get rid of the dissent detainees and their increasing numbers, and to submit, oppress, demean, dismantle, and terrorize the popular uprising, where government forces used extremely savage methods that we tackled in an [extensive study](#) that was released in 2014, and according to hundreds of testimonies and accounts we have. This applies almost to every detainee. In our [comprehensive study](#) in which we analyzed and identified the identify of nearly 800 individuals from Cesar's leaked pictures, we confirmed that torture is used as a method of warfare by the Syrian regime against its foes.

Abdul Rahman al Nahhas, from Homs city, was 17 years of age at the time of his arrest when a Military Security patrol arrested him from his house in al Insha'at neighborhood on July 6, 2016, over a report om him about a post he wrote on Facebook about his father who died due to torture in Saydnaya Military Prison in 2015. Abdul Rahman spent the majority of his detention in [branch 215](#) in Damascus. He was released in January 2017.



SNHR met Abdul Rahman in Idlib city and he told SNHR about the most horrendous torture methods he experienced during his detention in the Military Branch in Homs city:

"From the very first moments security forces got into my house, they started beating me and pulling me from the hair. I was taken directly to the Military Security branch in Homs, where they had me stand in a corridor and strip of my clothes for inspection. Then they let me wear my pants and got me to an interrogator room who has a captain rank. The captain asked me: are you the son of the terrorist and he swore to keep torturing me until he sends me to my father. He then called for a guy named Zuhair, who pulled me from my neck to the basement, where he started torturing me by tying my legs to a piece of wood that he raised in the air and started beating me all over my legs for half an hour. Afterwards, he took me to a mass cell in the basement. I couldn't move at all until evening when Zuhair took me out again and started torturing me again by tying my hands to a rope and raising me above the floor and whipping me. Every time he got tired, he would extinguish his cigarette in my back and he poured hot tea on my stomach. The torture lasted for a whole hour with no questions except for the insults to me and my father, whom they arrested about a year ago before he died due to torture in Saydnaya, and remarks such as: "are you feeling sad for the terrorist and dare to say we tortured him." So, I was subjected to a daily torture for four days before I was transferred to branch 215 in Damascus and they had me sign some confessions that I knew later that they were about supporting terrorists."

Abdul Rahman tells us about the methods of torture in branch 215:

"When I got to branch 215, I was still not able to move and I started suffering from infections in my back and feet from the wounds. I was inspected and put in a mass grave in a basement again. I didn't experience any torture or interrogation there, but I came down with illnesses because of the wounds and because of the crowded place that are filled with detainees such as scabies, chest infections, diarrhea, and severe fatigue. A Nurse would come and give me some painkillers once or twice every month. Everything stayed as it is until I was transferred to Adra Central Prison in Damascus and then to the Anti-Terrorism Court."



"When I got to Adra Prison, I contacted my family who paid money to some mediators to the government. I remained in prison for 45 days during which I only met the judge twice – the first time was when I was transferred to court, and the second time when he signed my release and told me he felt compassion for me because of my young age and my skinny and pale figure. But I know that he only felt sympathy for me because of the bribe. Most of the detainees were at their worst, and no one felt sorry for them. And Most of them have been in prison for years because they couldn't pay huge sums of money for the government."

### **Most notable victims of torture at the hands of Syrian regime since June 2016**

Dr. Nabil Salam, internist, from Douma city, Damascus suburbs governorate, born in 1979. He was arrested by Syrian regime forces in 2012. On Tuesday, December 20, 2016, we received information confirming his death due to torture inside a Syrian regime detention center.



Dr. Nabil Salam

Alaa Abdul Aal, from Idlib city, a student at the computer school. He was arrested in 2012 by Syrian regime forces from his school in Idlib city. On Friday, May 12, 2017, we received information confirming his death due to torture inside Sydnaya Military Prison which is affiliated to the Syrian regime forces.

Picture showing the student Alaa Abdul Aal



Alaa Abdul Aal



Activist Amer Saffaf, from Janoub al Thakna neighborhood, Hama city, born in 1980, activist in the medical field. He was arrested by Syrian regime forces on Thursday, April 19, 2012 at a checkpoint in Ain al Louza neighborhood, Hama city. On Saturday, January 30, 2016, his family told us that they confirmed that he died due to torture at Saydnaya Military Prison.



the activist Amer Saffaf

SNHR contacted Amer Saffaf's family, via Skype, and they told us about his death due to torture. His wife tells us:

"One of the detainees were released from Saydnaya Prison and he called us at home and asked to meet us. When we met him, he told us that Amer died next to him in prison from starvation and illness and a bleeding in his head after he was hit by the jailer. He told us that Amer's head was bleeding for three days and then he died, and they didn't transfer him to the hospital. We verified this when we went to the Military Prison in Damascus and filed a request for a visit, and they told us that he died after his heart stopped abruptly."

### Legal conclusions

According to this report, and past reports, and in accordance with the aforementioned international treaties and charters, the Syrian regime, via multiple apparatuses, have practiced torture as an institutional policy and a pattern in a widespread manner. This constitutes a blatant violation to the international human rights law and qualifies as crimes against humanity, and resulted, in many cases, in violating the right to life in a heavy manner. Moreover, the crimes that were perpetrated after the start of the non-international armed conflict in a systematic, widespread manner constitute a blatant violation to the international humanitarian law and qualify as war crimes, where it was proven that the Syrian regime was fully aware of these crimes and fully knew that the inhumane detention conditions will undoubtedly lead to death. However, the regime hadn't done anything, hadn't launched any investigations, or held the people involved accountable. On the contrary, the Syrian regime has legalized their crimes and tried to hide and obliterate the criminal evidences.



## B. Extremist Islamic groups

### - ISIS

ISIS maintains a solid organizational structure. Also, its areas of control are relatively the least targeted by the Syrian-Russian alliance, and are barely mentionable when compared to the daily shelling and the huge massacre that are being perpetrated in the Syrian opposition's area of control. The Syrian-Russian alliance aims to let people build institutions so that people can experience living under the rule of ISIS compared to how it was under the rule of Syrian regime, and to support the "ISIS is the alternative to the Assad regime" rhetoric. All of this enabled ISIS to build an arrest and torture apparatus, establishing a number of detention centers which we have talked about in a past report. The group has enforced its authority on the community it controls through its savage torture methods.

The savageness of torture and methods of torture vary based on the charges against the detainees. Detainees who are accused of working against ISIS, activists, such as media activists, human right activists, workers for foreign organizations, and members of armed opposition factions suffer from the most severe types of torture and degradation. More often, ISIS torture those to death or depict them in its video releases as they are being killed savagely. On the other hand, people who are accused of violating the group's regulations experience less severe torture methods.

University student Ali Hamad al Khalaf, from Abu Hamam village, eastern suburbs of Deir Ez-Zour governorate, studies at the faculty of electrical engineering in Aleppo University, born in 1990. He was arrested by ISIS from an internet café on April 20, 2017, and was released on April 29, 2017. SNHR contacted Ali, via Skype, to tell us what he experienced: "I was arrested by the group when I was at an internet café in the village, as ISIS was enforcing heavy restrictions on these cafes. Five members of "al Hesba al Islamiya" (a police apparatus concerned with maintaining moral laws) and arrested me along with 17 young people who were mostly university students. Firstly, we were taken to al Hesba office in the town. They released A large group of those who were arrested after they searched their mobile phones. For me, it was more complicated, where they found conversations with colleagues of mine who live in regime-held areas. They accused me of reporting the news of the Islamic State to the enemy, so I was taken directly to a small prison on the outskirts of the town inside a military base for ISIS. The prison had two rooms for arrest. They welcomed me by beating me with the ends of their shotguns and I was severely beaten that I lost consciousness for nearly an hour. Afterwards, interrogation began and they asked me thoroughly about the contents of each conversation, and if I had any connections to the Syr-



ian regime intelligence in Deir Ez-Zour Airport. I had no connections, but I told them I was willing to confess to whatever they want, and all they had to do is stop beating me. They refused, and started asking about the details of some people who might had connections to the regime. They continued to torture me, as I was whipped, and was the victim of al Shabeh torture method (a torture method in which the detainee's body is hanged from the ceiling in mid-air for hours) and they didn't let me sleep. They would, more than once, come with knives and machetes and tell me that I will be slaughtered like an animal if I didn't confess. I was released nine days later after some mediators and relatives of mine intervened, and after paying a fine of about 500 USD."

### Legal conclusions

ISIS holds image trials for its detainees in accordance with laws that result in sentences such as torturing the detainee to death or field-executions or savage, innovative kills. All of this completely disregard the principles of the international human rights law or the international humanitarian law, which constitutes a war crime.

#### - Fateh al Sham Front (al Nussra Front)

Even though al Nussra Front detached itself from al Qaeda and found Fateh al Sham Front in July 2016, the group didn't change its torture practices and methods that were adopted previously in the detention centers demonstrated by the group. The notorious al Uqab Prison in Idlib is an explicit example of the brutal torture practices. We are working on a detailed report particularly on that matter that should be released soon.

Torture methods a detainee experiences in Fateh al Sham Front detention centers range from whipping (Hitting the detainee on his back with a stick or an electric cable), which is the most common method of torture whether it was during interrogation or as a punishment, to al Shabeh method, al Doulab method, electrical shocks, and lastly psychological torture through threatening the detainee to execute him and take him for execution and sending him back to his cell multiple times.

We noticed an escalation in the use of torture by Fateh al Sham Front on its detainees. In addition, we noticed the use of elevated torture methods and an increase in deaths due to torture inside the group's detention centers between mid-2016 and June 2017. However, these practices don't qualify yet as systematic practices that form patterns.



## **Most notable victims of torture at the hands of Fateh al Sham Front**

Hussein Ali al Mohammad, known as Abu Ali Jbala, born in 1975, born in Hama city and was displaced from it, lives in southern suburbs of Idlib governorate, a leader at Katibat Maghawyer Hama which is affiliated to armed opposition factions. He was arrested by Fateh al Sham Front in a raid on his place of residence in southern suburbs of Idlib governorate. He was taken to “al Uqab” detention center in early-September 2016. On Thursday, September 29, 2016, we received information confirming his death due to torture inside al Uqab detention center. His body was delivered to his family with apparent torture signs.

[Video](#) showing signs of torture on Hussein Ali al Mohammad's dead body (known as Abu Ali Jbala) who was arrested by Fateh al Sham Front – September 2016

SNHR contacted Ahmad Hussein al Mohammad, the victim's son, via phone. Hussein told us about the conditions of his father's arrest and torture:

“Fateh al Sham Front arrested my father over accusations of working with the regime. They raided our house in Ma'aret al Nu'man and took him to a place that we didn't know after some guy claimed that he was in contact with Syrian regime forces in Hama city. A few days later, we learn that he is in al Uqab branch and that he was subjected to severe torture. We tried a lot to reason with them to know his fate and ease his suffering because he was innocent of the charges against him. We were shocked to learn on the fourth day that he died. Fateh al Sham Front claimed that he died of a heart attack even though he was of good health and had no heart problem prior to his arrest. We received the dead body and saw the signs of beating and torture, and especially al Shabeh torture method. He even was suffering from a severe drought as they prohibited him from drinking water and put him under the sun for long hours.”

Mustafa Taha Ajaj, from Balshoun village, southern suburbs of Idlib governorate, civilian. In August 2016, he was arrested by members of Fateh al Sham Front from his place of residence in Balshoun village. He was taken to a detention center for the Front in Idlib suburbs named “al Uqab”. On Monday, August 29, 2016, we received information confirming his death due to torture inside al Uqab prison, which is affiliated to Fateh al Sham Front, where his dead body was delivered to his family with apparent torture signs.



### C. Self-Management forces (mainly the Democratic Union Party – a branch for the Kurdistan Workers' Party)

Before 2016, these forces resorted widely and primarily to harmful beating that resulted in bone fractures during interrogation with detainees and abductees. We recorded an escalation in the severity of torture methods and an increase in the numbers of deaths due to torture from the beginning of 2016 until June 2017, as those forces used torture practices similar to the Syrian regime's such as al Shabeh, al Doulab, electrical shocks, starvation, and denial of health care, especially against those who are accused of aligning themselves with armed opposition factions and their relatives. Also, some of the torture operations exhibited an ethnic trait.

Khalaf Bashir al Ali, from Bouzkij village, west of Jarablus city, northern suburbs of Aleppo governorate. He was forcibly displaced with his wife and kids from Bouzkij village, which is under the control of Self-Management forces, under the pretext that his children are fighters for armed opposition factions. On Sunday, June 18, 2017, he went back from Jarablus to Bouzkij to visit his house, and was detained by members of the Self-Management forces who kept him inside his house and had him watch as they robbed the house.

SNHR contacted Khalaf al Ali, via phone, and he told us about the torture he experienced: "when I arrived at my house in my village, I surprised by five YPG people robbing the contents of my house. When they saw me -they know me and my children- they assaulted me and started beating me with a stick and insulted me and threatened to kill my kids. They kept beating me until I fainted. After about one day, I found myself locked in my house which was empty of everything. I started screaming until the neighbors heard me and they set me free, and I fled towards Jarablus city."

Pictures showing signs of torture on the [Khalaf al Ali's](#) body



Khalaf al Ali's



## **Most notable victims of torture at the hands of Self-Management forces**

Mohammad Khair al Khleif, pharmacist, from Tal Alou al Baylouniya village, northern suburbs of Hasaka governorate, born in 1980. He was arrested by Self-Management forces (mainly the Democratic Union Party – a branch for the Kurdistan Workers' Party) from his place of work in al Qamishli city in December 2016. He died due to torture inside a detention center for the Self-Management forces. His dead body was delivered to his family on Sunday, February 19, 2017.



Mohammad Khair al Khleif

Amer Ali al Shihki, from Amouda city, suburbs of Hasaka governorate, born in 1993, a footballer for Amouda team. He was arrested by Self-Management forces (mainly the Democratic Union Party – a branch for the Kurdistan Workers' Party) as he was in Amouda city market on Thursday, December 29, 2016. He was taken to a detention center for conscripts in Tal Bidar town, suburbs of Hasaka governorate. On Sunday, February 5, 2017, we received information confirming his death due to lack of medical care in "Tal Bidou town" detention center in suburbs of Hasaka governorate.



Amer Ali al Shikhi

Thamer Saleh al Mektef, from al Qamishli city, suburbs of Hasaka governorate, born in 1992. He was arrested by Self-Management forces in June 2016 in a random arrest raid that followed a bombing at al Kendi Park in al Qamishli city. On Wednesday, June 29, 2016, we received information confirming his death due to torture inside a detention center for Self-Management forces in al Qamishli city.



Thamer Saleh al Mektef



Moayed Mousa al Kallah, from al Bheira village, suburbs of Amouda. On Sunday, August 7, 2016, he was arrested by Self-Management forces in Amouda city, suburbs of al Hasaka governorate, where he was accused of planting an IED that detonated in a place near where he was in Amouda city. On Tuesday, August 9, 2016, we received information confirming his death due to torture inside a detention center for Self-Management forces. His body was delivered to his family.



Moayed Mousa al Kallah

#### Legal conclusions

Kurdish Self-Management forces didn't take into consideration the principles of the international human rights law or the international humanitarian law in these matters. These forces' torture practices against their foes as part of the non-international armed conflict constitute a war crime.

#### D. Armed opposition factions

Armed opposition forces have resorted to severe beating using wooden and metal sticks and cables during interrogation over minor criminal charges. Additionally, armed opposition factions use torture positions such as al Doulab and al Shabeh (al Doulab: a torture method in which a detainee's knees are bend and he is put inside a car wheel while he is being beaten) on informants and spies who are accused of cooperating with the Syrian regime, or detainees who are convicted of perpetrating major crimes such as murder and adultery, as we pointed out in a past report that addressed armed opposition factions detention centers: "[Awaiting Justice](#)". These practices haven't reached a level of widespread practices of consistency against civilians.

Mr. (M.S.) from Douma city, Damascus suburbs governorate, an Arabic teacher, born in 1979, and a former leader at Jaish al Umma, a former armed opposition faction that was active in Damascus suburbs governorate, he was tortured and arrested at a detention center for Jaish al Islam - an armed opposition faction



Mr. (M.S.) told us about his arrest when we met him in suburbs of Idlib governorate:

"On Wednesday, December 28, 2016, armed people raided my house in Douma city, and they beat me in front of my wife and my kid. They took me to a military center for them in Douma city. I stayed there for hours before I was transferred to al Tawba Prison which is a prison of bad reputation that is affiliated to Jaish al Islam. In prison, I was greeted with kicks and was beaten with lashes. My accusations were that I previously aligned myself with Jaish al Umma, which Jaish al Islam took over about a year before my arrest. I was interrogated a lot at different times, and mainly at night. After two months and my absolute refusal to confess to the charges they filed against me, I was referred to solitary confinement, which is a small corner that barely fits my body. I couldn't sleep but standing. I stayed there for 12 days, and torture became harsher – psychological torture such as insults and threats to kill me and accusations that I am an infidel and not a Muslim. The physical torture is not very different from the methods adopted by the regime, from al Shabeh and al Doulab to kicking on sensitive areas, and denial of water. I never confessed to my charges. On Sunday, February 12, 2017, I was released after I declared my repentance as I was considered an infidel and that a repentance at their hands will bring me back to the right ways of Islam. I left the detention center with so many illnesses – most notably is that I can't walk properly to this day, and I can't bend my knees at all in addition to a bruise in my pelvis. I managed to flee Ghouta and get to Idlib as I was afraid they'd arrest me again."

We recorded an escalation in the use of torture at armed opposition factions detention centers from October 2016 until June 2017. Some of the torture was against armed opposition members, civilians, and activists, as we recorded in the incident of the killing of the [defected colonel Zidan Nseirat](#).

### **Most notable victims of torture at the hands of armed opposition factions**

[Abdul Rahman Mayyasa](#), Douma city, Damascus suburbs governorate, he was with Kata'eb Jaish al Islam, an armed opposition faction. He was arrested by Lewa' Fajer al Umma, an armed opposition faction, in 2015. On Wednesday, December 21, 2016, we received information confirming his death due to torture inside a detention center for Lewa' Fajer al Umma. His dead body was delivered to his family.



Ra'fat Taleb Abu Halwa, from Ibta' city, suburbs of Daraa governorate, born in 1991. On Monday, December 21, 2015, he was arrested by members of Ferqat Shabab al Sunna, an armed opposition faction that is active in Daraa governorate. He was taken to a detention center in "Bosra al Sham city" prison in suburbs of Daraa governorate. On Tuesday, December 22. 2015, we received information confirming his death due to the severe torture and beating that he was subjected to at the detention center.



Ra'fat Taleb Abu Halwa

Ammar Fakherji, from Joubar neighborhood, Damascus city, a fighter at Lewa' Haroun al Rashid, an armed opposition faction. In February 2015, he surrendered himself to Jaish al Islam's security apparatus, an armed opposition faction, after he escaped their detention center before. On Saturday, July 30, 2016, his dead body was delivered to his family with apparent signs of torture. The medical office at Jaish al Islam issued a report in which he cited the cause of death as an acute asthma attack, while the forensics found apparent torture signs and electrical shock on the body.

Picture of the dead body of Ammar Fakherji



Ammar Fakherji

Child Ramez Salah Aish, from Barza neighborhood, Damascus city, 16-year-old. In February 2016, he was arrested by al Lewa' al Awwal, an armed opposition faction, in Barza neighborhood, Damascus city. On Thursday, March 3, 2016, we received information confirming his death due to sever torture and beating at a detention center for al Lewa' al Awwal.

A copy of the [statement](#) released by al Lewa' al Awwal on the killing of the child Ramez Salah Aish

### Legal conclusions

The torture practices by armed opposition factions constitute an explicit violation to the international human rights law when committed against residents in their areas of control, and to the international humanitarian law when committed against their foes in the non-international armed conflict. These practices constitute a war crime.



## **IV. Recommendations**

The Syrian regime

Launch an immediate investigation into all the death cases inside the detention centers, and cease the practices and patterns of torture which constitute crimes against humanity, as it is carried out by the Syrian regime's apparatuses on a daily basis.

All capital punishment sentences must be suspended, as it is issued on the grounds of confessions that were extracted under brutal torture.

Immediately grant the Commission of Inquiry, the International Committee of the Red Cross and all objective human rights organizations an access.

Take immediate steps to cease all forms of torture, and improve the conditions of the detention centers, and insure the protection of tens of thousands of detainees against torture and ill-treatment.

Release arbitrarily arrested detainees, especially children and women, and reveal the fates of tens of thousands of forcibly-disappeared persons.

The Syrian regime is responsible for deaths due to torture. The Syrian regime has to immediately start compensating all of the victims' families.

Kurdish Self- Management

Respect the standards of the international human rights law, and cease using torture against political or military foes, and launch investigations to identify the people involved in these crimes in order to hold them accountable.

Reveal all the detainees and release lists of their names, and make the locations and places of the secret detention centers known to the public, and allow the residents and human rights organizations to visit them.

Extremist Islamic groups

The international humanitarian law must be respected in the areas and prisons under these groups' control. All forms of torture inside these detention centers must be ceased.



### Armed opposition factions

Respect the rules of the international human rights law, and end all unlawful trials, and cease all torture practices inside detention centers.

Immediately allow the International Committee of the Red Cross and the objective human rights organizations to visit all detention centers, and stop sending detainees to secret detention centers.

Hold all the individuals who were involved in torture operations accountable and terminate them at once.

The factions that aligned themselves with Fateh al Sham Front have to detach themselves as quick as possible.

### United Nations and Security Council

Renew the demands for the Syrian regime to seriously cease torture practices, and immediately reveal the fates of victims of torture, and rescue the remaining detainees as soon as possible.

Apply pressure on the Syrian government to implement Resolutions 2042,2139, and 2254. In case of non-compliance, which has been the case for six years, the seventh chapter must be the course of action in order to save the detainees from dying inside the detention centers.

Russia has to cease its obstruction of referring the case in Syria to the International Criminal Court.

All of the U.N.'s relief organs must work on finding the families that lost their providers or one of their members to torture, and continually insure that aids are being delivered to the people who are in-need, and initiate the rehabilitation process.

Immediately punish all people who are involved in the machine of torture.



## The international community

The states parties to the Convention against Torture have to take steps to establish their jurisdiction over the perpetrators of the crimes of torture, and make every possible and available security and material effort for the sake of achieving this goal.

Impose serious sanctions against the Syrian regime in order to deter it from killing Syrian citizens under torture.

Generate more finance, support, and grants to the local origination that work on rehabilitating and caring for the victims of torture and their families.

Provide more support for the individual activists and local organizations that are concerned with documenting violations without interfering in their work or enforcing political redirections.

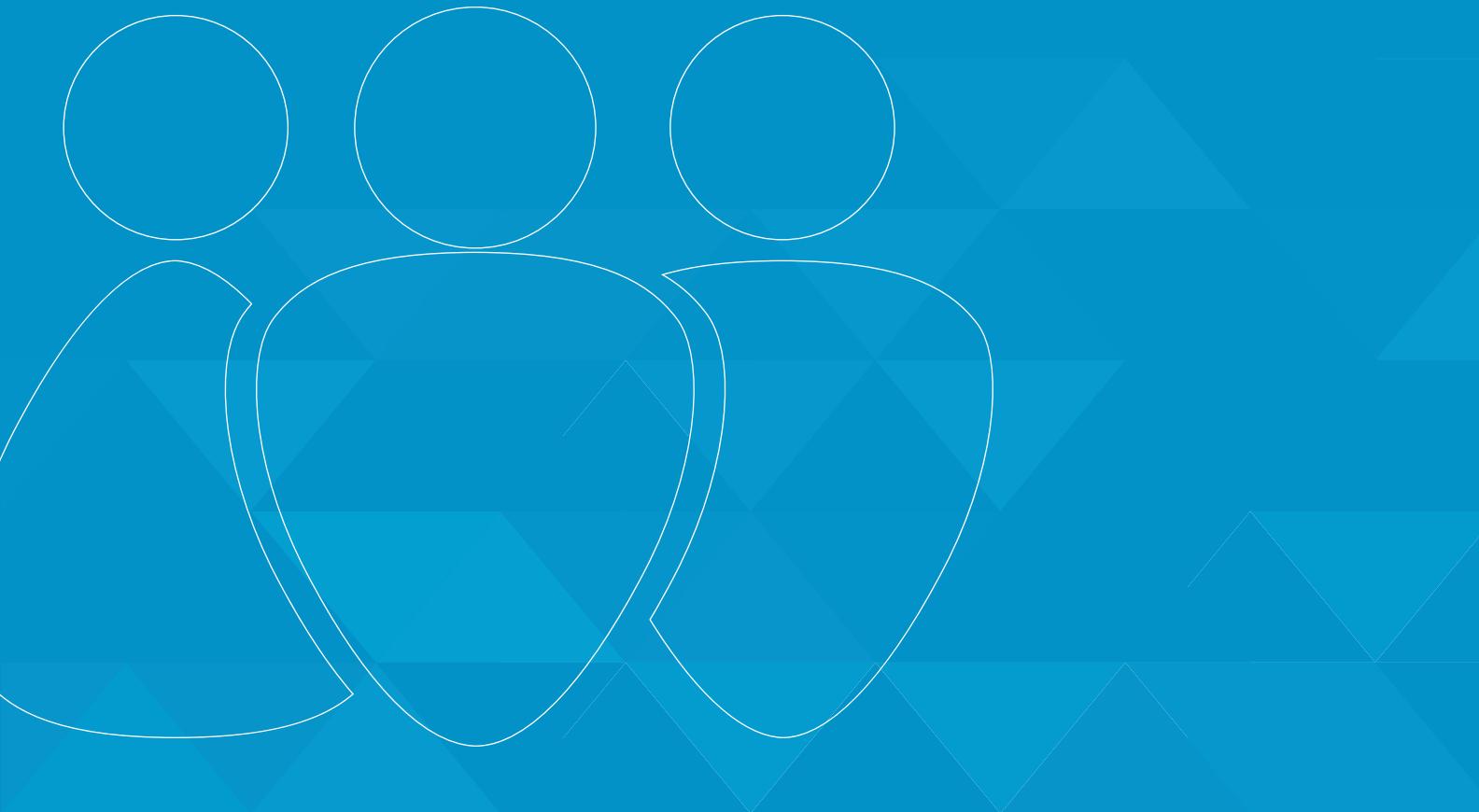
## Joint Investigative Mechanism

Investigate the cases included in this report. SNHR is fully willing to cooperate and provide more details and evidences.

## Acknowledgment

We would like to thank and express our apperception for torture survivors who effectively contributed to this report. Our most heartfelt condolences go out for their families and friends.





@snhr



Info@sn4hr.org

[www.sn4hr.org](http://www.sn4hr.org)

