

No less than 549 Cases of Arbitrary Arrest Recorded in August 2017

SNHR

SYRIAN NETWORK FOR HUMAN RIGHTS

الشبكة السورية لحقوق الإنسان

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I. Introduction

The detainees issue hasn't seen any noticeable progress even though it was included in the "Cessation of Hostilities" 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 April 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.

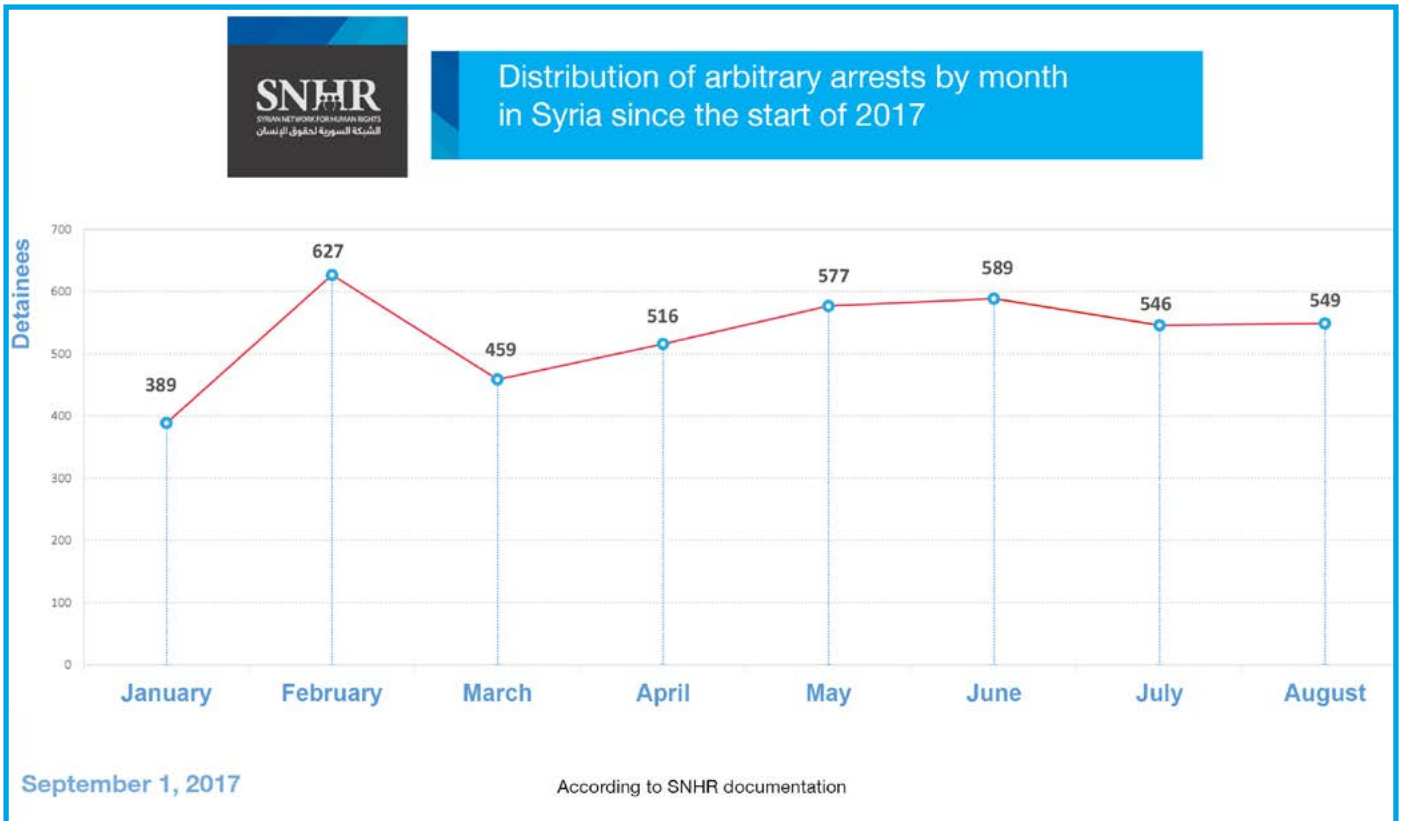
Details about detainees can be found through the [search engine](#) on SNHR website, you may also add the name and details of any detainee and the concerned team will check the data and upload it if proved accurate.



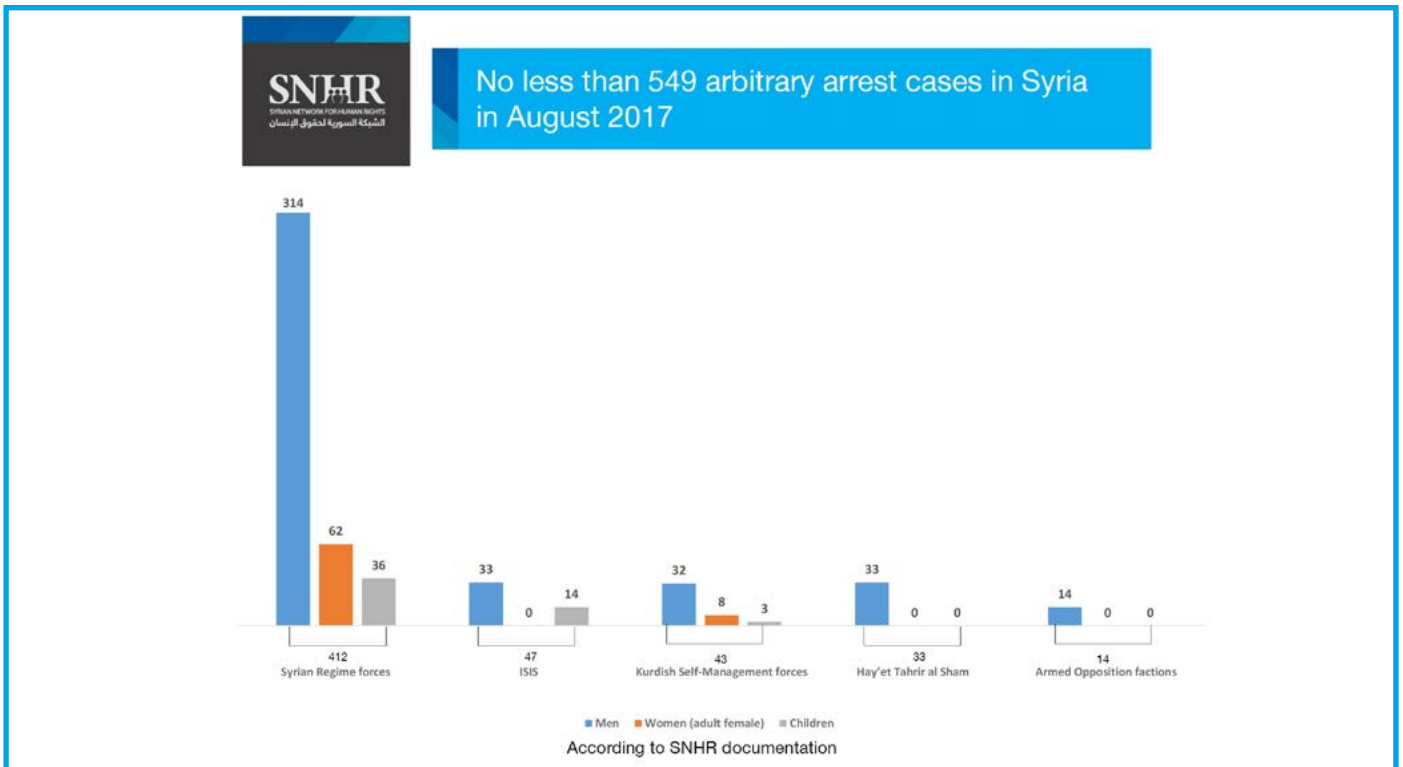
II. Details

A. Arbitrary arrests in 2017

SNHR has documented that 4,252 individuals have been arrested by the parties to the conflict in Syria between the start of 2017 and September of the same year



B. Arbitrary arrests in August 2017



Arbitrary arrests made in August were notable for Syrian regime forces' almost daily raiding and arrest campaigns that involved civilians in the main neighborhoods, city centers and residential areas that are under the regime's control. The arrests made focused on the age group 18-42 years old for the purpose of conscription, while Syrian regime forces targeted also activists' and armed opposition fighters' families who live in their areas of control. Also, a number of areas in Damascus suburbs governorate saw raids and arrest operations for conscription purposes. In addition, Syrian regime forces carried out raid and arrest campaigns in Damascus city neighborhood in which about 62 individuals from eastern suburbs of Deir Ez-Zour governorate were arrested in retaliation of armed opposition factions shooting down a warplane for the Syrian regime and arresting its pilot. Most of those arrested were women and children.

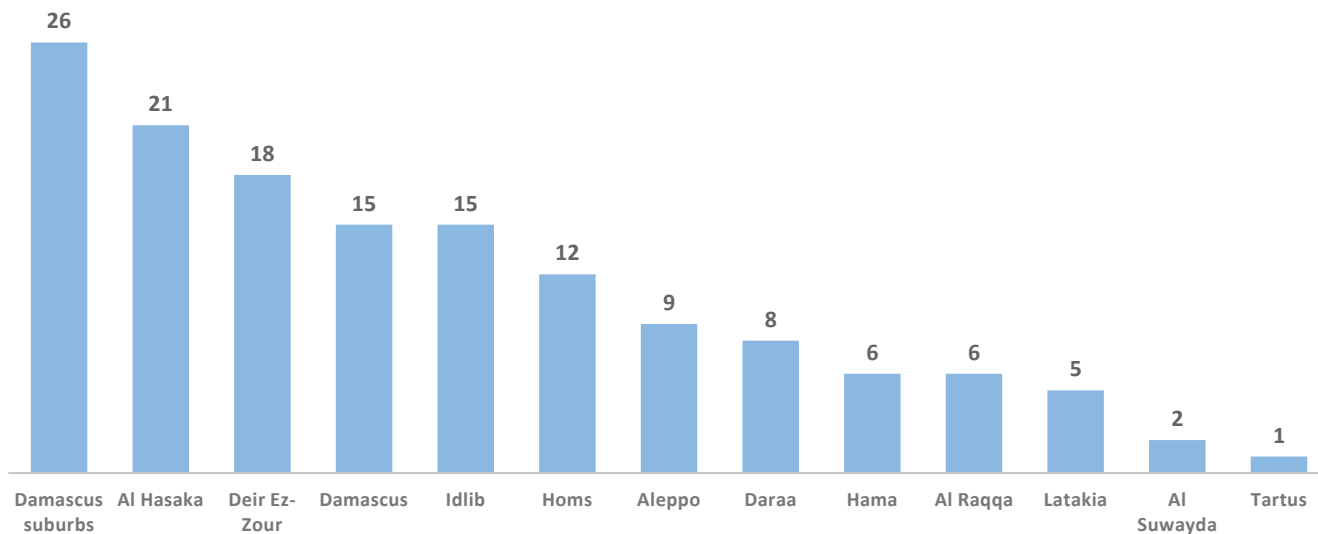
Furthermore, ISIS continues to enforce its policy of arbitrary arrests against civilians in its areas. The arrests included those who violated the organization's forcibly-imposed regulations, owners of phone shops, internet cafes, money exchange shops and civilians who are trying to flee ISIS-held areas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

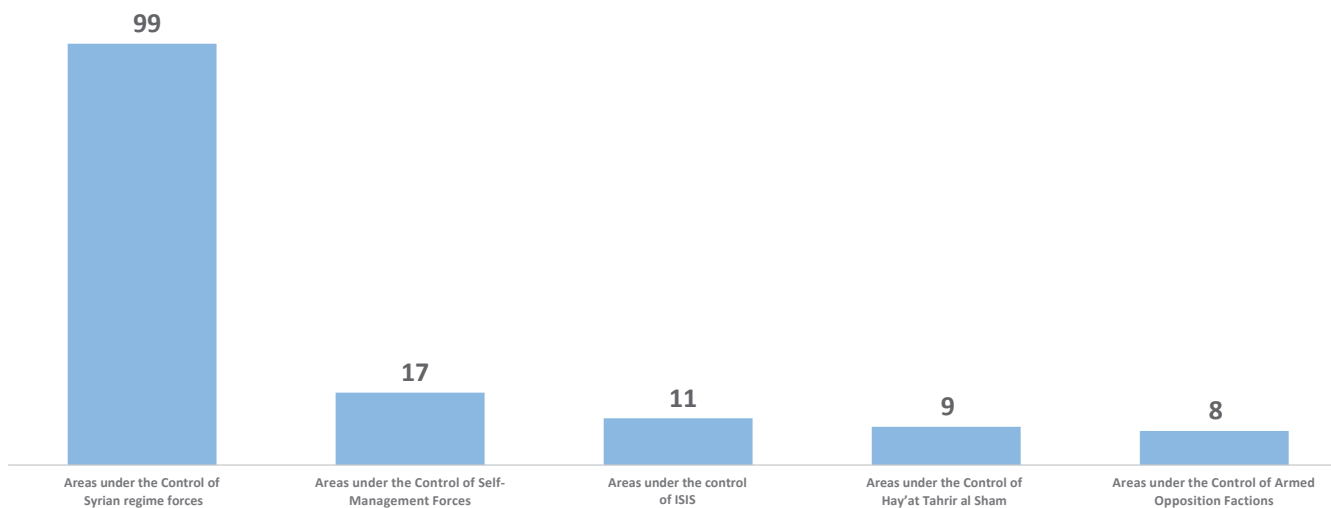
Additionally, Hay'at Tahrir al Sham (an alliance composed of extremist Islamic groups and a number of armed opposition factions) continued its arbitrary arrest and abduction operations against members of armed opposition factions who are affiliated with Euphrates Shield in northern suburbs of Aleppo governorate. These arrests were concentrated in the villages and towns of southern suburbs of Idlib governorate.



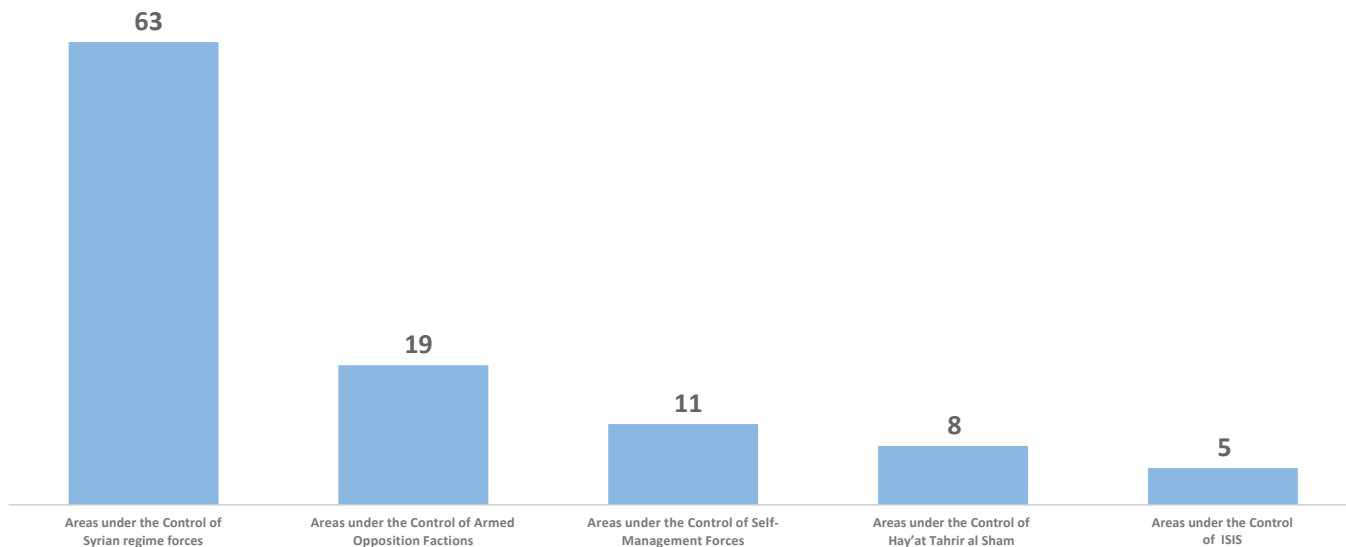
Raids and inspection points that resulted in detention:



Parties responsible for raids



Abduction cases by other parties:



III. Most Notable Cases of Arbitrary Arrest in August

Syrian regime forces

Child Mohammad Adib Fayyad, from al Ashara city, eastern suburbs of Deir Ez-Zour governorate, one-year-old. On Thursday, August 17, 2017, he was arrested by armed members from Syrian regime' Political Security branch along with his family in Jermana city, southeast of Damascus city. He was taken to an undisclosed location. His fate is still unknown to SNHR as well as his family.



Child Mohammad Adib Fayyad

Female child Batool Hamad al Khabour, from al Ashara city, eastern suburbs of Deir Ez-Zour governorate, two-year-old. On Thursday, August 17, 2017, she was arrested by armed members from Syrian regime' Political Security branch along with her family in Jermana city, southeast of Damascus city. She was taken to an undisclosed location. Her fate is still unknown to SNHR as well as his family.



Female child Batool Hamad al Khabour



Self-Management forces (primarily consisting of the Democratic Union Party – a branch for the Kurdistan Workers’ Party)

Ghiath Salah Ismail, from Ain al Khadra village, northern suburbs of Hasaka governorate, member of the political office at the Kurdistan Democratic Party – Syria branch. On Thursday, August 17, 2017, he was arrested by Self-Management forces (primarily consisting of the Democratic Union Party – a branch for the Kurdistan Workers’ Party) in “al Malikiya city” court in al Malikiya city, suburbs of Hasaka governorate, as he was summoned by the court. His fate is still unknown to SNHR as well as his family.



Ghiath Salah Ismail

Extremist Islamic groups

- Hay’at Tahrir al Sham

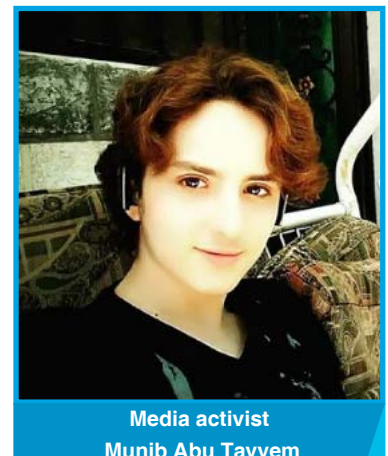
Lawyer Fawwaz Saeed Haj Hussein, from Qalaat al Madyaq, western suburbs of Hama governorate, a former lawyer and judge at “Termalla town” court, southern suburbs of Idlib governorate. On Saturday, August 26, 2017, he was arrested by members affiliated to “Khan Sheikhoun city” court which is affiliated to Hay’at Tahrir al Sham, as he was summoned by the court. He was transferred to an undisclosed location. His fate is still unknown to SNHR as well as his family.



Lawyer Fawwaz Saeed
Haj Hussein

Armed opposition factions

Media activist Munib Abu Tayyem, a reporter for Damascus Media Center, from Douma city, eastern Damascus suburbs governorate, 19-year-old. On Tuesday, August 22, 2017, he was arrested by armed members of Jaish al Islam, an armed opposition faction, who raided his place of residence and confiscated his equipment. He was taken to an undisclosed location. His fate is still unknown to SNHR as well as his family.



Media activist
Munib Abu Tayyem



IV. Recommendations

- 1- Security Council must monitor the implementation of the following resolution: Resolution 2042, adopted on April 14, 2012, Resolution 2043, adopted on April 21, 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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