

**Press Release**

**Geneva: The Syrian Network for Human Rights Takes Part in a High-level Side Event at the United Nations Headquarters on the Issuing of Death Certificates in Cases of Enforced Disappearances**

**SNHR**

SYRIAN NETWORK FOR HUMAN RIGHTS

الشبكة السورية لحقوق الإنسان

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The Syrian Network for Human Rights (SNHR), founded in June 2011, is a non-governmental, independent group that is considered a primary source for the OHCHR on all death toll-related analyses in Syria.



Geneva, February 25, 2019: The Syrian Network for Human Rights took part in a high-level event at the United Nations headquarters in Geneva entitled “Death Notifications and Negation of Justice in Syria” on the occasion of the fortieth meeting of the Human Rights Council. The event was sponsored by Denmark, Sweden, Belgium, Canada, Liechtenstein, Netherlands, and Finland, with the participation of the Minister for Foreign Affairs of Denmark, and attended by a large number of ambassadors, as well as the High Commissioner for Human Rights and the Independent International Commission of Inquiry, as well as the administration of No Peace Without Justice organization.

The SNHR has already issued two reports on this critically important issue and participated in several international events on the same subject. In addition, 41 nations from around the world addressed a letter to the Secretary-General of the United Nations demanding that the Syrian regime reveal the fate of tens of thousands of forcibly disappeared Syrians. This high-level event was a clear message of the centrality and importance of the issue of detainees, a continuation of ongoing efforts underlining the need to make progress on this sensitive issue, and underlining the international emphasis on the need to ensure accountability and prevent impunity.

Fadel Abdul Ghany, the Chairman of the SNHR, said in his speech that in April 2018, for the first time since the beginning of the popular uprising, the Syrian regime began issuing death certificates in which it acknowledges the fate of dozens of those who were forcibly disappeared, confirming their deaths. Abdul Ghany indicated that the total number of cases documented to date in the SNHR database currently stands at 878 cases. Abdul Ghany asked rhetorically, how the Syrian regime could confirm the deaths of these individuals, of whom it had previously denied any knowledge, adding that this is undeniable evidence of the involvement of the Syrian regime in their deaths. Abdul Ghany also noted that the Syrian regime did not hand over the bodies of any of these individuals to their families, which means that under international law, all these people are still categorized as forcibly disappeared, with the Syrian regime bearing responsibility for this, adding that all of these cases constitute crimes against humanity.



Abdul Ghany stressed that the Syrian regime has consistently used enforced disappearance as a weapon of war, creating a state of terror and panic in Syrian society, with 85 percent of the detainees held by the Syrian regime subsequently categorized as forcibly disappeared. Some 82,000 Syrian citizens, according to the SNHR database, are currently among those forcibly disappeared by the Syrian regime, with some 14,000 victims dying due to torture in the Syrian regime's detention centers.

Abdul Ghany recommended that the High Commissioner for Human Rights issue a statement, and persist in following up this serious issue in a resolute manner, calling for an emergency meeting of the Security Council to determine the fate of approximately 82,000 Syrian citizens, and to discover where the Syrian regime is concealing the bodies of the dead. Abdul Ghany also recommended that one or several of the states whose representatives attended the event should take responsibility for dealing with the issue of detainees and the forcibly disappeared in Syria, provide support to organizations working in this field, coordinate advocacy activities, commemorate the anniversary and provide material and logistical support, in order to contribute to organizing field and public events, parliamentary visits and meetings with decision makers.

The text of the speech can be [found at this link](#).





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