

Brief Report

On International Women's Day ... Continuous Nullification of Women's Fundamental Rights in Syria

At Least 27,464 Females Have Been
Killed and at Least 10,026 Females Are
Still Detained or Forcibly Disappeared

SNHR

SYRIAN NETWORK FOR HUMAN RIGHTS

الشبكة السورية لحقوق الإنسان

Friday, March 8, 2019

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.



Syrian women's fundamental rights – whether social, security-related, economic, health or psychological - have deteriorated severely at every level following the Syrian regime's brutal retaliation against Syrian society in response to the outbreak of the popular uprising for democracy in Syria in March 2011. Whilst it's true that all parts of Syrian society have been affected by the repercussions of the conflict, women have been the worst affected due to their responsibilities and their social and health status. Women have also been subjected to various types of violations, including extrajudicial killings, arbitrary arrest, torture, executions, enforced disappearances, sexual violence, enforced displacement, siege and denial of health care and basic services. Many of these violations, especially killing, torture and enforced disappearance, are of such a vast magnitude that the country now suffers the worst rates globally.

Syrian women and girls have not been the victims of the conflict in any indirect way, but have been directly and systematically targeted by all parties to the conflict, primarily the Syrian regime, whose crimes are on such a massive scale that it is far ahead of any other perpetrator in the conflict by a massive margin. Women have been targeted for many reasons, including their effective contribution to social, humanitarian, political, human rights, relief, medical and media work, or simply because they are females, with the objective of marginalizing and breaking them, and to suppress society and intimidate them through the horrendous consequences of opposing the state authorities. Women are a particular target due to the fundamental role of women in the Syrian society linked to societal norms and beliefs. In addition, women have suffered other types of violations, including constraints and restrictions on work, education and clothing, as well as access to appropriate health care in areas controlled by ISIS and Hay'at Tahrir al Sham. They have also suffered from forced conscription in areas controlled by the Syrian Democratic Forces, as well as persecution, intimidation, and blackmail in areas under the control of factions of the Armed Opposition. Many women have also suffered from the loss of the main breadwinners in their families, as well as living in dreadful living conditions in light of displacement, and from early and forced marriage.



Fadel Abdul Ghani, Chairman of the Syrian Network for Human Rights, states:

“Syrian women have played a pivotal role in monitoring and documenting human rights violations in Syria, bearing the arduous, long and consecutive hours of work, seeing the bodies and details of the victims and speaking with hundreds of survivors. The accuracy of women’s work and research, as well as their extraordinary patience have been evident in the SNHR’s database, which would not have been of this quality without their efforts.”

The worst aspect of the Syrian women’s suffering has been the failure of the international community to protect them, to stop the killings, torture and detention, and to end the targeting of the health and service facilities that provide basic services and the foundations of a decent life. The flagrant violations against women and girls in Syria call for both the United Nations member states and the Security Council to implement prevention and protection measures to shield women from the consequences of the conflict. It is essential that these bodies assume their responsibilities towards Syria’s women and put an end to the impunity enjoyed by the perpetrators of multiple crimes and force them to abide by the rules of international law, which clearly provide for giving women particular protection and care. In Syria’s case, however, these rules have been completely disregarded amid the relentless, flagrant violence and brutality of the Syrian regime.

Record of the most prominent violations against Syrian women according to the SNHR’s database:

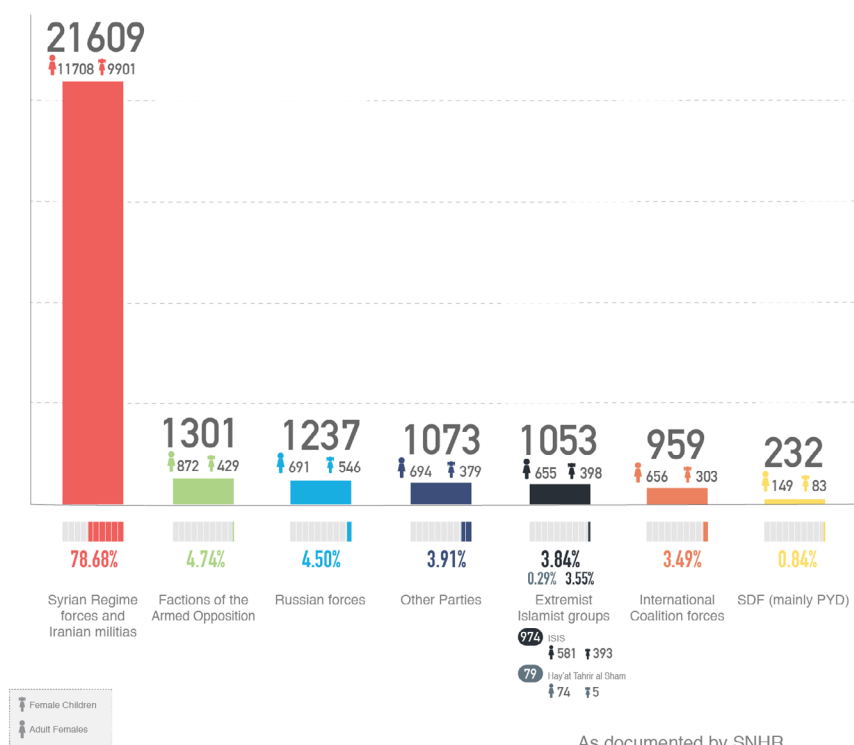
In this brief report, issued to mark the occasion of International Women’s Day, which falls on March 8th each year, we update our records of the most prominent violations against Syrian women, as documented in the SNHR’s database from March 2011 until March 2019. This record notes that the violations against women continue, and that the suffering of Syrian women remains the cruelest and most severe in the world in many respects. In addition, it should be emphasized that this data represents the bare minimum of the violations perpetrated in light of the difficulties encountered in the documentation processes.

A. Extrajudicial killings:

The SNHR documented the deaths of at least 27,464 females at the hands of the main perpetrator parties to the conflict in Syria from March 2011 until March 2019, distributed according to the main perpetrator parties as follows:



Distributed as follows:



27464
females
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at the hands of
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the conflict in Syria
from March 2011 to March 2019

- **Syrian Regime forces (army, security, local militias, and Shiite foreign militias):** At least 21,609 females, divided into 9,901 female children and 11,708 adult females.
- **Russian forces:** At least 1,237 females, divided into 564 female children and 691 adult females.
- **Extremist Islamist groups:** 1,053 females, divided into 398 female children and 655 adult females, according to the responsible parties:
 - o ISIS (the self-proclaimed 'Islamic State'): 974 females, divided into 393 female children and 581 adult females.
 - o Hay'at Tahrir al Sham (an alliance composed of the Fateh al Sham Front and a number of factions of the Armed Opposition): 79 females, divided into five female children and 74 adult females.
- **Factions of the Armed Opposition:** 1,301 females, divided into 429 female children and 872 adult females.
- **Kurdish-led Syrian Democratic Forces (the Democratic Union Party):** 232 females, divided into 83 female children and 149 adult females.
- **International Coalition forces:** 959 females, divided into 303 female children and 656 adult females.
- **Other parties:** 1,073 females, divided into 379 female children and 694 adult females.



B. Arbitrary arrest and enforced disappearance:

The SNHR documented at least 10,026 females who are still detained or forcibly disappeared at the hands of the main perpetrator parties in Syria from March 2011 until March 2019, distributed according to the main perpetrator parties as follows:

- **Syrian Regime forces:** 8,160 females, divided into 439 female children and 7,721 adult females.
- **Syrian Democratic Forces:** 471 females, divided into 309 female children and 162 adult females.
- **Extremist Islamist groups:** 489 females, including 24 female children and 465 adult females, divided between:
 - o ISIS: 426 females, divided into 24 female children and 402 adult females.
 - o Hay'at Tahrir al Sham: 63 adult females.
- **Factions of the Armed Opposition:** 906 females, divided into 65 female children and 841 adult females.

C. Torture:

The SNHR documented the deaths of at least 89 females who died due to torture at the hands of the main perpetrator parties in Syria from March 2011 until March 2019, distributed according to the main perpetrator parties as follows:

- **Syrian Regime forces:** 72 females, divided into 27 female children and 45 adult females.
- **Syrian Democratic Forces:** Two adult females.
- **Extremist Islamist groups:**
 - o ISIS: 14 adult females.
- **Factions of the Armed Opposition:** One adult female.

D. Sexual violence:

The SNHR's estimates indicate that at least 8,032 incidents of sexual violence were committed by the main perpetrator parties to the conflict in Syria from March 2011 until March 2019. The Syrian Regime forces and its affiliated militias were responsible for 8,016 incidents, including approximately 876 incidents which took place in detention centers, and nearly 443 incidents involving girls under the age of 18, while Kurdish-led Syrian Democratic Forces committed at least nine incidents of sexual violence. We also documented around seven incidents committed by factions of the Armed Opposition.



Conclusions and recommendations:

The Geneva Conventions of 1949 - ratified by the Syrian regime - and the Additional Protocols thereto of 1977 clearly provide for the protection of women from attacks on their honor, personal dignity and from degrading and humiliating treatment. The practices of the Syrian regime and other parties to the conflict constitute a flagrant violation of the Geneva Conventions and the provisions of international law.

Recommendations:

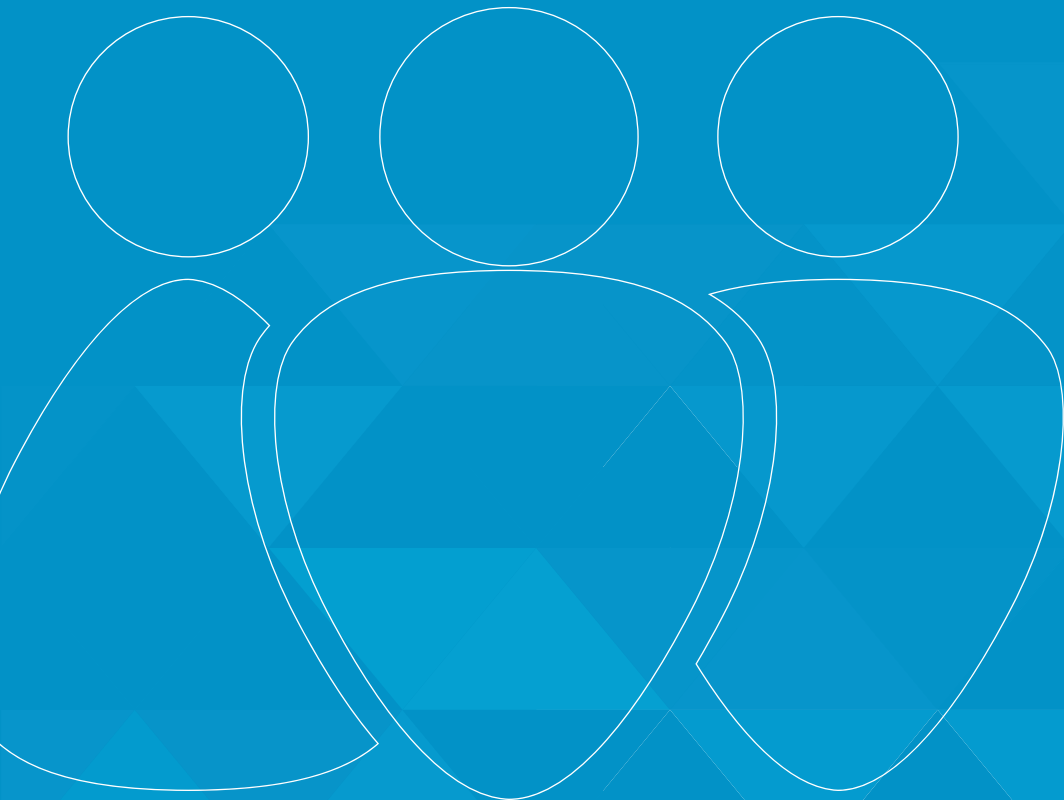
The UN Security Council must adopt a binding resolution on the fundamental rights of women, providing absolute protection for women from indiscriminate killings and any attacks on their honor, in particular against rape, forced prostitution and any defilement of women, and must demand urgent assistance for forcibly displaced females, in addition to demanding the immediate release of female detainees and taking real action against the horrendous amount of violations perpetrated against them, which threaten to severely undermine the security and stability of Syria and the region for decades.

Donors parties and relief organizations must provide medical, psychological, rehabilitation and other multisectoral services to adult and juvenile female victims, giving priority especially to pregnant women and to nursing and lactating mothers.

The parties to the conflict must spare women from the scourge of war by taking all necessary steps to ensure that all forms of violations against women are stopped, and to ensure that women deprived of their liberty are placed in separate detention facilities from men.

The Special Rapporteur on violence against women, its causes and consequences should intensify their efforts in Syria, given the horrendous level of violence committed against Syrian women, in particular by the Syrian government itself, which exceeds that shown by any other government in the world, most especially women in the detention centers of the Syrian regime and its security services.





@snhr



Info@sn4hr.org

www.sn4hr.org

