



**Joint
Statement**

Syrian civil society organizations condemn the shooting of seven Syrian civilians by Turkish border police on the Syria-Turkey border

We, a group of Syrian civil society organizations, condemn the injudicious shooting committed by the Turkish border police, and as confirmed by witnesses, which caused the death of seven Syrian civilians, including a man, a woman and four children all from the same family on Sunday, June 19. In addition to the death of seven civilians, five additional persons were injured, including two women and three kids. These civilians were shot down by Turkish Border police during their attempt to cross borders from Syria to Turkey on Sunday morning near the Syrian village of Kherbeh al-Jawz.

We deplore the egregious action that was taken against Syrian civilians who were clearly crossing borders to look for shelter and escaping the continuous shelling and bombardment raining down on Syria. We cannot consider this incident as a mere isolated accident or an inconsequential individual action. We believe that a wide range of other options were available to the Turkish border police other than the lethal action that was taken. We call on the Turkish authorities to initiate an investigation into this incident, and to hold the perpetrators accountable. We urge the Turkish authorities to hold a public briefing about the event and to offer compensation to the victims.

We condemn this crime and ask that the perpetrators be brought to justice. We understand and recognize the need of the Turkish State to protect its national security, especially after several recent terrorist attacks which have rocked several Turkish cities, and which we also strongly condemned. However, this should not lend itself to the irresponsible and arbitrary use of lethal force by Turkish border police on Syrian civilians, that are themselves trying to escape violent conflict. Similar incidents have killed a number of Syrian civilians seeking safe haven inside Turkey on more than one occasion. We urge the Turkish government to work with the Turkish border police to find safe ways to patrol the borders and allow a secure and safe passage for Syrian civilians across the border, a right guaranteed by international law.

In the same stride, we believe what happened is directly related to the nefarious deal that was reached between the European Union and Turkey, which includes the systematic re-





turn of refugees from European territories to Turkey. This deal confounds the dangerous and perilous journeys that Syrian refugees are already facing in their plight to escape constant shelling and daily bombardment in hope of reaching safe haven. This treatment of the world's most vulnerable populations is not only deplorable, but also incompatible with the principles of human rights and values that inspired the formation of the European Union. We hold the State of Turkey responsible for this as the main party to this agreement.

We, the undersigned civil society organisations, thus request an urgent meeting between representatives of the Syrian Opposition bodies and the Turkish authorities to work together to find a practical and safe solution to protect Syrian civilians risking their lives to flee deadly conflict and seeking shelter across Turkey's border. We are resolved to find a dignified and just solution that does not further increase Syria's civilian death toll and inflict more harm and injury than is already being done by Assad's brutal 5-year war.

The signatories in alphabetical order:

1. Adala Organization for Human Rights.
2. Al Kawakibi Center for Human Rights.
3. Al Kawakibi Organization for Human Rights.
4. Badael.
5. Basma and Zeitooneh.
6. Baytna Syria.
7. Free Daraa Lawyers Association.
8. Free Syrian Lawyers Association.
9. Kesh Malek.
10. Syrian Center for Statistics and Research.
11. Syrian Center for Studies and Human Rights.
12. Syrian Judicial Council.
13. Syrian Network for Human Rights.
14. The Day After.
15. Violation Documentation Center in Syria.

