

The Syrian Regime Arrests 25 Residents from Darayya City Despite the Settlement Operations

SNHR

SYRIAN NETWORK FOR HUMAN RIGHTS

الشبكة السورية لحقوق الإنسان

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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



Darayya city is affiliated to Damascus suburbs governorate. It is the largest city in the Western Ghouta region and it is less than eight kilometers away from the Damascus capital. The city's location has a strategic significance, as it is close to Al Mazza military airbase, and the headquarters for the Air Force Intelligence which is within the airport building.

As with the rest of the cities and areas that opposed the Syrian regime, Darayya city was the subject of bombardment operations, destruction, raids, arbitrary arrests, torture, and death-due-to-torture. SNHR archives contains many reports that document the most notable violations in the city including, and most notably, The Great Massacre of Darayya between August 20 and August 27 of 2012.

The city suffered from siege and starvation. In mid-November 2012, Syrian regime forces imposed a crippling siege that followed a wide military campaign. The ramifications of siege began to appear gradually such as starvation, and food and medication shortages amid an international failure to lift the siege, or at least deliver aids. Furthermore, aerial bombardment operations didn't stop using all kinds of weapons including barrel bombs, missiles, cluster munition, and chemical weapons.

In the beginning of February 2016, Syrian regime forces managed to isolate Darayya city from Al Mu'damiya. And in May and July 2016, Syrian regime took over wide areas of the agricultural lands that are located in the southern and southwestern parts of Darayya city, and thus, the armed opposition factions' areas of control shrunk to less than 4 km² in August 2016.

SNHR has released a [detailed report](#) documenting the most notable violations, crimes against humanity, and war crimes that were committed by Syrian regime forces between mid-November 2012 and 25 August 2016. We asserted that said violations were systematic and widespread which led the city to reach a complete stage of depletion forcing the residents to agree to the settlement that was proposed by the Syrian armed opposition to armed opposition factions in the city.



Negotiation commenced on August 24, 2016 between the Syrian regime's authorized committee, headed by the media figure Kenana Hwaja -who is an anchorwoman for the official Syrian TV channel- and the committee that represented the opposition entities inside the city which consisted of Darayya city local council and armed opposition factions (Shuhada Al Islam Brigade and Al Meqdad Brigade)

The verbal agreement between the two committees stated that all military men in Darayya city would leave to Idlib city, and all civilians in the city would be evacuated to Syrian regime-affiliated shelter centers in Harjella area which is located in the Syrian regime-held Al Kiswa city before their status should be addressed. In return, the Syrian regime had to release 30 detained women and children from Darayya city from its detention centers, and reveal the fate of the remaining detainees from the city.

Under the supervision of an UN delegation and the Syrian Red Arab Crescent (SARC), the evacuation process took place on August 26-27, 2016, where about 3500 individuals, including military men and civilians, were transferred to Idlib city, while approximately 2000 individuals were transferred to the shelter centers in Harjella.

Like many other local agreements that the regime struck, the Syrian regime betrayed the agreement and arrested no less than nine families who chose to leave to Harjella on the first day of the evacuation.

Also, to this day, the Syrian regime didn't uphold its end of the agreement, where no women and children were released, and it hasn't also revealed the fate of the city's detainees. On the contrary, we recorded in the period December 1-15, 2016, that the Syrian regime arrested no less than 25 individuals including two children and 16 women from Darayya city who were mostly from the families of Al Abbar, Al Hejazi, Khashfa, and Najjar.

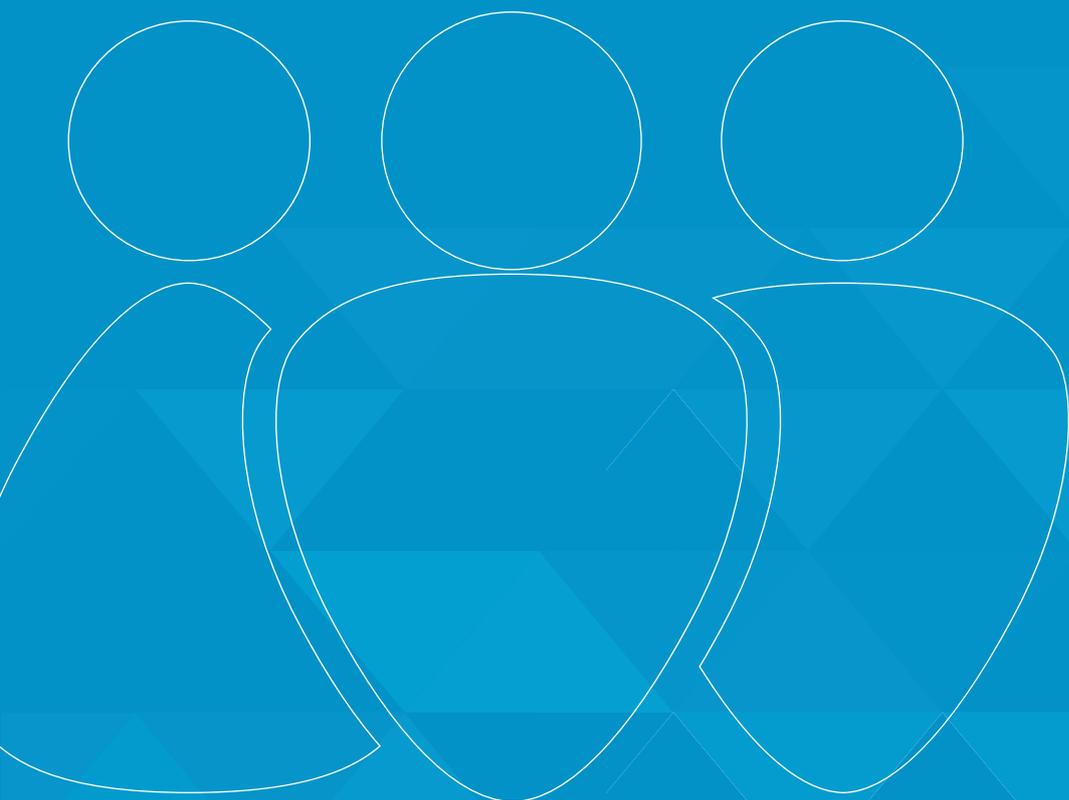
We can confirm that the detainees underwent a security settlement after they left the city. The arrests were made as they were passing Syrian regime inspection points near Damascus city, where the arrests were concentrated in Sahnaya and Al Qteifa areas in Damascus suburbs.

We, at SNHR, recorded many tragic experiences with similar cases. We documented in a [past report](#) what happened during the evacuation operations in Old Homs's neighborhoods. At that time the settlement was between the Syrian regime and armed fighters



inside these neighborhoods and under a UN sponsorship. Nonetheless, the Syrian regime dishonorably betrayed the agreement, as all the residents were arrested and degradingly interrogated. Out of roughly 1000 individuals, the Syrian regime, after interrogation, has only released 250, whereas the remaining 750 are now forcibly-disappeared persons. We have warned of the possibility of this reoccurring during evacuating civilians from Eastern Aleppo's neighborhoods in December 2016, where we documented a number of arrests during the evacuations. Therefore, any domestic agreement must be carried out under an international sponsorship. Otherwise, no one can guarantee the behavior of the Syrian regime, local militias, or the foreign Iranian militias.





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