



About Twelve Thousand Victims Died due to Torture in Syria International Day in Support of Victims of Torture!

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First: Executive Summary:

Although the right to not being exposed to torture is a certain matter in the International Law and is part of both International Humanitarian Law and Human Rights Law, as it is completely forbidden in the Universal Declaration of Human Rights, International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights, and the Convention against Torture, all of that is described in Istanbul Protocol.

Despite this, torture is practiced in Syria in its worst ways on daily basis since March 2011 in prolonged sessions that might cause death, as we record 3 to 4 deaths due to torture in detention centers on a daily basis.

There is no party that claims to be neutral who can describe the violations by the four main parties in Syria of being on the same level of violence, regardless of the strenuous role by some organizations and news agencies.

However, the verified evidences and statistics remain the most important in the matter, (this doesn't contradict with the fact that any crime by any party is a convicted action). Regarding the subject of torture; according to statistics of names, places of torture, images, and dates of death registered in SNHR files, government forces are the first to commit all the violations and for several months.





Toll of victims of death by torture by the influential parties:

A- Government forces (army, security forces, local militias, foreign Shiite militias): killed no less than 11,358 individuals due to torture including 157 children and 62 women

B- Different factions of the armed opposition: killed 31 individuals (most of them captives from government forces), including 7 children and 2 women

C- Extreme Islamic Organizations:

ISIS (Self-proclaimed Islamic State): killed no less than 29 individuals including 2 children and 2 women

An-Nusra Front: killed 5 individuals due to torture

D- Kurdish self-management forces (mainly Democratic Union Party Forces-Public Protection Units and Asayish Forces): killed no less than 6 individuals including a child

Based on the above, the overall toll of victims who died due to torture is 11,429; government forces are responsible for 99% of the death due to torture incidents.

In some incidents the torture was part of an ethnic or racial cleansing pattern, as we discussed that intensively in the study “Most Notable Sectarian and Ethnic Cleansing Massacre-The Society’s Holocaust”, as we also seen it through many videos that are leaked or confiscated from captured torturers who find pleasure in this sadist actions, such as the video of the under 15 child tortured by forces wearing government army uniform, as they tortured the child and killed him because his mobile contained the song “Yalla Irhal Ya Bashar (a song that calls for Bashar Al Assad resignation)”.

We are certain that this incidents and statistics represent only the minimum magnitude of the violations that happened and are happening in Syria since 2011.





Mr. Fadel Abdul Ghani, chairman of SNHR said:

“The governing authorities uses torture policy to retaliate against its opposition due to an action or a statement against them, and in some cases to forcibly make them admit to things they didn’t commit, the torture effects varies between death, disability, or long term psychological damage, and the governing regime in Syria is extremely central, and therefore decisions are limited to certain group of officials that have complete knowledge of it, furthermore this group is the one that gives orders to apply this methods of torture and they are completely aware of it”

SNHR is committed to issue a monthly report about the victims due to torture that views the most notable incidents and also committed to sending weekly e-mails to the special rapporteur on torture.

Second: The crime of torture by the influential parties:

a- Government forces:

Government forces practiced all methods of torture since the beginning of the popular protests in March 2011 which turned later to armed conflict, we have published several studies and statistics since then. We have discussed in a separate study the Most Notable Methods of Torture practiced in government detention centers that is still ongoing up to this moment, and no one has been questioned about the crimes of torture. Furthermore, the Syrian constitution under Al Ba’ath Party protect those who commit these crimes.

And in most of the arrest cases (according to our records, there has been 118,000 arrest cases and that that is the minimum, as it’s difficult to document the arrest cases). It has become clear to us through the process of daily documentation and observation since 2011 that the people don’t know their sons’ fate or place of existence, therefore most of them become victims of enforced disappearance and that is what the Syrian authorities intentionally do as it creates an atmosphere of great terror in the Syrian community, as it become clear to us that the families of the detainees aren’t informed about the death of their sons, as many families found out about their sons’ death after visiting the security branches several times, and the victim might’ve been dead for a long time.





In addition to the methods of torture mentioned in the previous study that is practiced since the first minute of the arrest, and through the investigation, we would like to point out the spread of the execution by gunshots inside the detention centers as we recorded no less than 2,842 incidents including 1,466 incidents inside the detention centers, as for the 1,376 incidents; they are of killing detained people at the wide-spread security forces checkpoints after a brief investigation, in order to spread fear and terror in the society.

The Syrian authorities and especially its local militias didn't stop the systematic abduction process especially against the well-known opposition figures and in most cases the abduction become an enforced disappearance case.

Since March 2011, the Syrian authorities has been preventing the International Independent Commission of Inquiry on the Syrian Arab Republic from entering Syria. Also, neither the International Red Cross nor even the Syrian Red Crescent managed to visit 98% of the government official detention centers, as for the unofficial detention centers such as pitches, military bases, schools, hospitals, buildings, villas, and others, the governing authorities didn't allow it at all.

Any official who believes these torture crimes are committed must prevent it, and investigate and prosecute those who commit it and punish them, or the country hold full responsibility and all officials are fully responsible as they “approved unauthorized actions”.

Government forces practiced the torture in a widespread manner, indicating a regulated and systematic policy.

This torture action mounts to crimes against humanity and war crimes according to the International Humanitarian Law.

b- **Factions of the armed opposition:**

Some of the armed opposition factions practiced severe hitting using tools like wooden or metal sticks and electrical cables during interrogating detainees for minor criminal infractions , and using the “wheel” and “Al Shabih” (the wheel: is a car wheel in which the detainee is put where his knees are bent then he is battered, Al Shabih: holding the detainees from his hands or legs above the ground and leave him hanging) with those accused of collaborating with the government forces or those who commit crimes as murder or adultery, the armed opposition





factions didn't have a systematic torture methods as the testimonies given to SNHR from released detainees varied regarding the torture of the detainees, and we have talked about it vividly in a special study titled Most Notable Detention Centers of the Armed Opposition after publishing this study some of the factions contacted us and expressed their intentions to collaborate with the investigations and clarify the details of the incidents including Al Islam Army lead by Zahran Aloush.

Groups of the armed opposition tortured detainees, but the actions weren't committed in a widespread manner or systematically, therefore it doesn't mount to crimes against humanity, however it qualifies as war crimes.

Extreme Islamic Organizations:

ISIS:

ISIS arrested no less than 4,127 individuals most of them are Sunnis, and tortured the detainees, but ISIS tortured several towns and villages that are ethnically different such as Alawi and Christian and humiliated based on this reason also the torturing was racial against the Kurd community.

ISIS methods of torture are quite similar to these of the government forces in its detention centers, but they also added other methods of torture such as:

1- Waterboarding: is a form of water torture in which water is poured over a cloth covering the face and breathing passages of an immobilized captive, causing the individual to experience the sensation of drowning and it is especially used on foreign detainees. This form of torture was used by the CIA in questioning the suspected terrorists after the attacks of September 11, 2001.

2-Gas suffocation: expose the detainee while investigating with him to suffocation with gas such as opening a gas cylinder or throwing tear gas bomb or fill the cell with smoke.

3- Fake slaughtering: threaten the detainee that they will slaughter him then take him to the altar and make him see the knife near his neck and repeat this for several times.

4- Gunshots around the detainee body.

5- Force the detainee to watch videos and recordings of beheading and burning former detainees.





6- Torture to death: ISIS practiced several methods of torture under the claim of implementation of Islam Law “Sharia” as stoning to death, or throwing from a cliff then stoning to death.

An-Nusra Front:

An-Nusra Front mainly uses lashing during interrogation with detainees by lashing the detainee with a stick or a cable and using the “wheel” and “Shabih” methods, also they practiced psychological torture systematically through threatening to execute the detainee or accusing him of infidelity and take him to the execution place, and back to the detention several times as we have been told through testimonies of several survivors from An-Nusra Front detention centers.

The Extreme Islamic Organizations practiced torture on a wide range and these actions mount to crimes against humanity and war crimes according to the International Humanitarian Law.

c- “Self-management” forces (mainly Kurd Democratic Union Party Forces- Public Protection Units and Asayish Forces):

“Self-management” forces use harmful battering on the head and breaking bones with Kalashnikov weapons or metal sticks in interrogation with detainees and many survivors from this force detention centers talked about the use of biting, electrical shock, and sexual harassment and blackmailing, some of them talked about racial abuse phrases but the latter wasn’t a systematic policy.

“Self-management” forces used torture but not at in a widespread manner therefore it doesn’t mount to crimes against humanity, yet it qualifies as war crimes.

Third: Recommendations

To Security Council:

Find an effective way to protect the detainees who are hostages of the Syrian authorities that treat those detainees as they please.

The Security Council must continue the implementation of the resolutions: 2042 issued on April 14, 2012, 2043 issued on April 21, 2012, and 2139 issued on February 22, 2014 that put an end to enforced disappearances

Oblige the Syrian authorities and all the other parties to reveal their secret detention centers and allow the independent humanitarian organizations to visit it.

Press on the Syrian authorities and other parties to allow the International Committee of the Red Cross to enter the detention centers and observe the situation of the detainees and their needs.





The High Commissioner for Human Rights:

Issue frequent statements and reports condemning the ongoing systematic torture incidents and shed the light on the suffering of the survivors

Acknowledgment:

All our thanks to the local activists and survivors for their effective contribution through their testimonies, and our sincere condolence to the families of the victims and their friends

