

# 108 Individuals Died due to Torture in the First Half of 2017

Including 26 Individuals in June

# SNHR

SYRIAN NETWORK FOR HUMAN RIGHTS

الشبكة السورية لحقوق الإنسان

Sunday, July 2, 2017

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



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## I. Report Methodology

Since 2011, the Syrian regime has been denying executing any arrests and, instead, accuses Al-Qaeda and terrorist groups, such as ISIS, of it. Additionally, the Syrian regime doesn't acknowledge any torture or death-due-to-torture cases. SNHR obtains information from former prisoners or prisoners' families where most of the families get the information they have about their detained relatives through bribing officials in charge.

We, in SNHR, refer to the families' accounts. It should be noted that the Syrian authorities usually don't give back the dead bodies of the prisoners to their families. Also, in most cases, families are scared to go and get the dead bodies of their relatives or even their personal items from military hospitals out of fear of being arrested themselves.

Most of the families we contacted have assured that their relatives were in good health at the time of their arrest and illness couldn't have been the cause of death.

### **Fadel Abdul Ghany, chairman of SNHR, says:**

"The principle of 'Responsibility to Protect' must be implemented in light of the government's failure to protect its people, and the fruitlessness of the diplomatic and peaceful efforts so far. Crimes against humanity and war crimes are being perpetrated every day in Syria and mainly at the hands of the organs of the state itself."



Therefore, SNHR encounters serious difficulties in the documentation process on account of the ban imposed against it and the fact that its members are being pursued by various parties. In light of such circumstances, it might be difficult to fully verify deaths as the process remains subject to ongoing documentation and verification while taking in consideration families' accounts.

To read more about SNHR documentation [methodology](#), please see the following URL:

## II. Executive Summary

The fourth round of negotiations was held in Astana city, Kazakhstan's capital, on 3 and 4 of May 2017. Russian, Turkish, and Iranian representatives attended as the sponsoring states of Ankara Ceasefire Agreement. The three states agreed on establishing four de-escalation zones, wherein the agreement is to commence on May 6, 2017. Nonetheless, breaches didn't stop, mainly by the Syrian regime, who is seemingly the party that would be most affected should the ceasefire go on, and in particular extrajudicial killing crimes and, more horrendously, deaths due to torture, as rates of deaths due to torture didn't see any changes from the month prior to the commencement of the agreement. This strongly asserts that there is a ceasefire of some sort on the table, but the crimes that the international community -especially the Russian, Turkish, and Iranian sponsors- won't see are still going on as nothing had changed

### A. Victims of torture in the first half of 2017



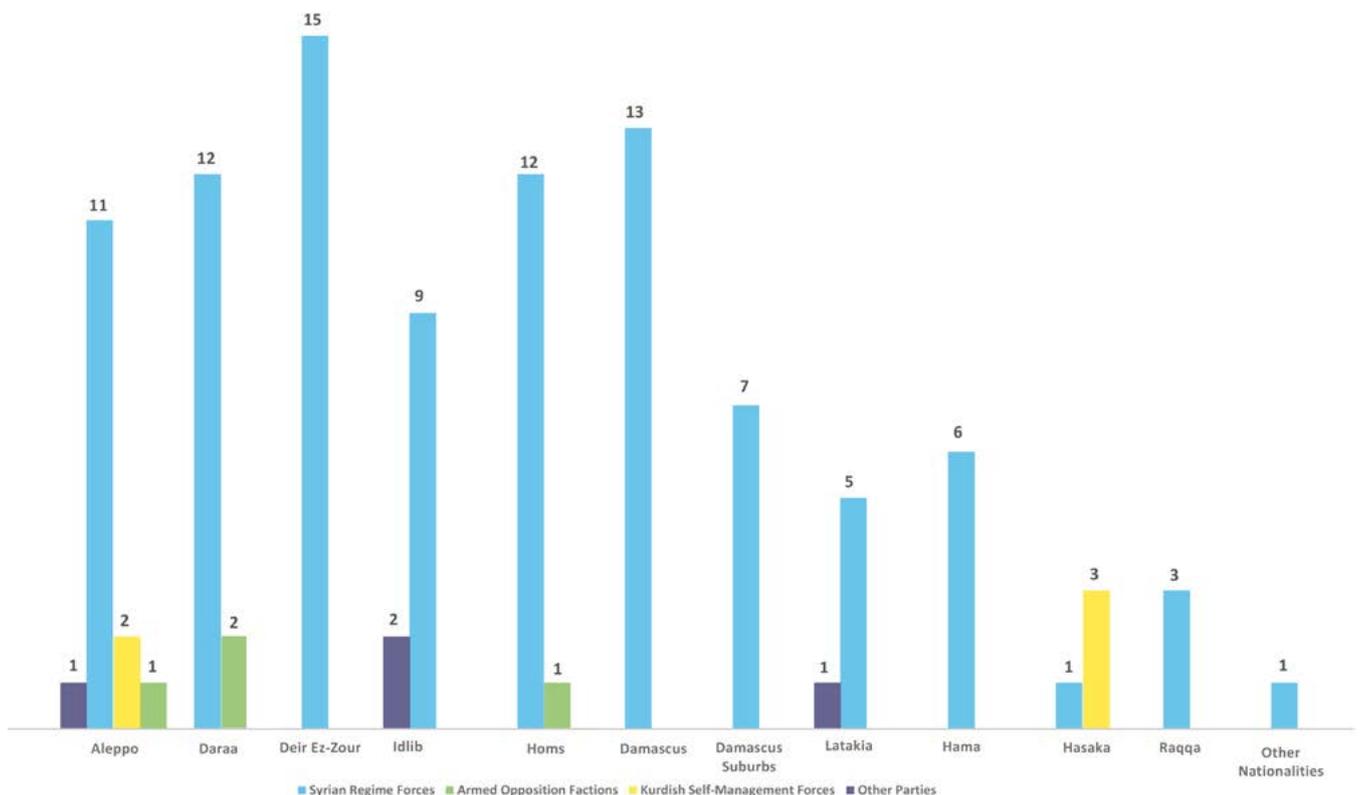
SNHR documented no less than 108 cases of death due to torture at the official and non-official detention centers in the first half of 2017. Victims are distributed as follows:

- A. Syrian regime forces (army, security forces, local militias, Shiite foreign militias): 95
- B. Armed opposition factions: 4
- C. Self-Management forces (consisting primarily of the Democratic Union Party – a branch for the Kurdistan Workers’ Party): 5
- D. Other parties: 4

Aleppo and Deir Ez-Zour governorates saw the highest toll of victims who died due to torture with 15 victims each. The remaining death toll is distributed across Syrian governorates as follows:

14 in Daraa, 11 in Idlib, 13 in Homs, 13 in Damascus, 7 in Damascus suburbs. 6 in Latakia, 6 in Hama, 4 in Hasaka, 3 in Raqqa, 1 of other nationality

Victims are distributed across governorates by the parties to the conflict as follows:



Furthermore, most notable cases of torture:

Three university students, one media activist, one pharmacist, one nurse, one Red Crescent personnel, two athletes, one student, three elders, two cases of kin



## **B. Victims of torture in June 2017**

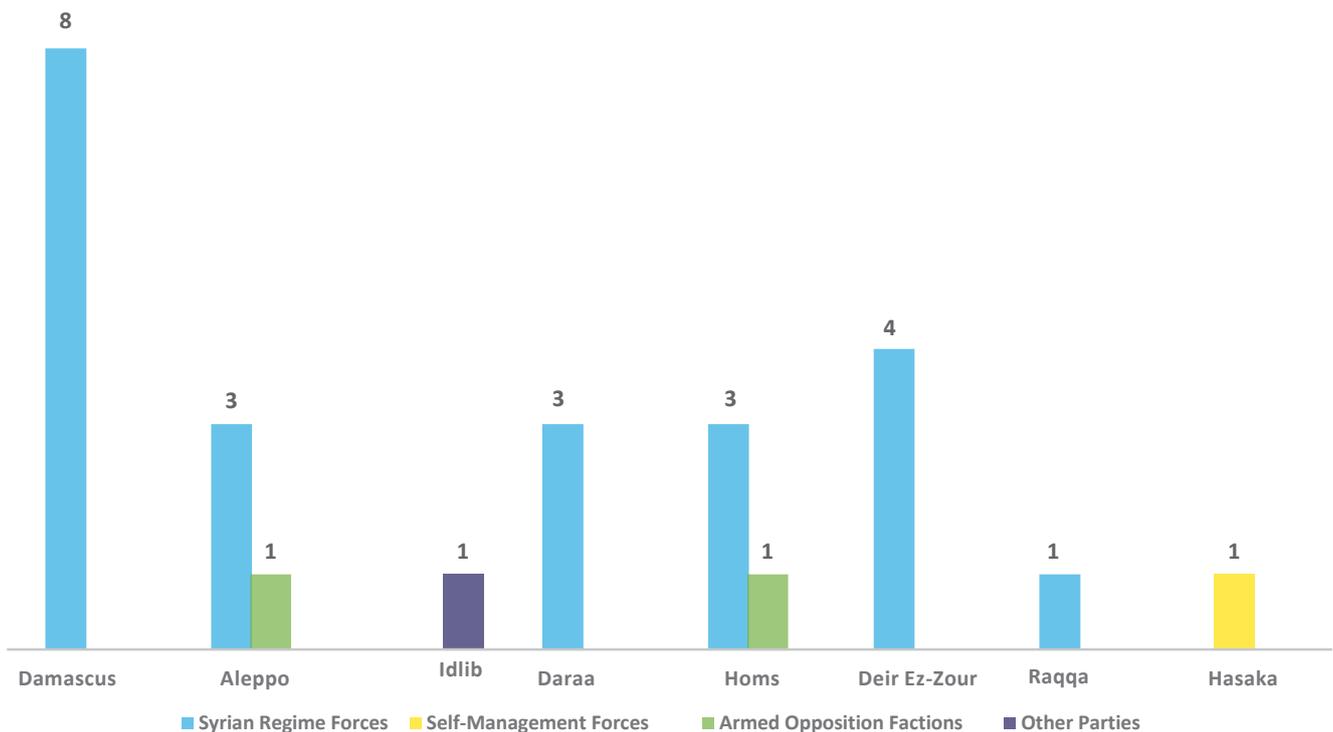
SNHR has documented no less than 26 deaths due to torture inside official and non-official detention centers in June 2017, as follows:

- A. Syrian regime forces (army, security, local militias, Shiite foreign militias): 22
- B. Self-Management forces (primarily consisting of the Democratic Union Party – a branch for the Kurdistan Workers' Party): 1
- C. Armed opposition factions: 2
- D. Other parties: 1

Deaths due to torture have been an ongoing phenomenon since 2011, this is an explicit indicator on the systematic violence and excessive forces used against detainees.

Damascus governorate saw the highest toll of deaths due to torture in June, with eight deaths. The remaining death toll is distributed as follows: 4 in Deir Ez-Zour, 4 in Homs, 4 in Aleppo, 3 in Daraa, 1 in Hasaka, 1 in Idlib, in Raqqa

Deaths due to torture are distributed across governorate as follows:



Most notable cases of deaths due to torture in May are:  
One university student, one nurse, one athlete, one elder



### III. Most Notable Deaths due to Torture

#### University students

Sufian Farhan al Ibeid al Ali, university student, from al Tayyana village, eastern suburbs of Deir Ez-Zour governorate, studies mechanical engineering at Damascus University. He was arrested by Syrian regime forces in 2012. On Sunday, June 4, 2017, we received information confirming his death due to torture inside Sednaya Prison in Damascus suburbs governorate.



Sufian al Ibeid al Ali

#### Medical personnel

Mohammad al Sahli, nurse, from al Yarmouk Camp, southern Damascus city. On Sunday, June 4, 2017, we received information confirming his death due to torture inside Palestine branch which is affiliated to the Military Security forces in Damascus city.

#### Athletes

Ibrahim Khalil al Dkhoul, a footballer for al Futowa Sports Club, from al Bo'amr town, eastern suburbs of Deir Ez-Zour governorate. He was arrested by Syrian regime forces in 2015. On Monday, June 19, 2017, we received information confirming his death due to torture inside a Syrian regime detention center.



Ibrahim Khalil al Dkhoul



## **Elders**

Salim Yassin al Hashish, elder, from Zezoun village, western suburbs of Daraa governorate, 65-year-old. He was arrested by Syrian regime forces in March 2017. On Wednesday, June 21, 2017, we received information confirming his death due to torture inside a Syrian regime detention center.

## **IV. Conclusions and Recommendations**

SNHR can confirm that this considerably huge number of victims who are dying due to torture every month, with taking into consideration that the actual number of deaths is most likely higher, unequivocally indicates a systematized policy that is being adopted by the head of the ruling authorities. All of the state's organs, branches, and figures are fully aware of these policies. Furthermore, these policies were enforced in a widespread manner which constitutes crimes against humanity and war crimes.

Kurdish Self-Management forces, armed opposition factions, and other parties have all carried out practices of torture, which constitutes war crimes.

## **Recommendations**

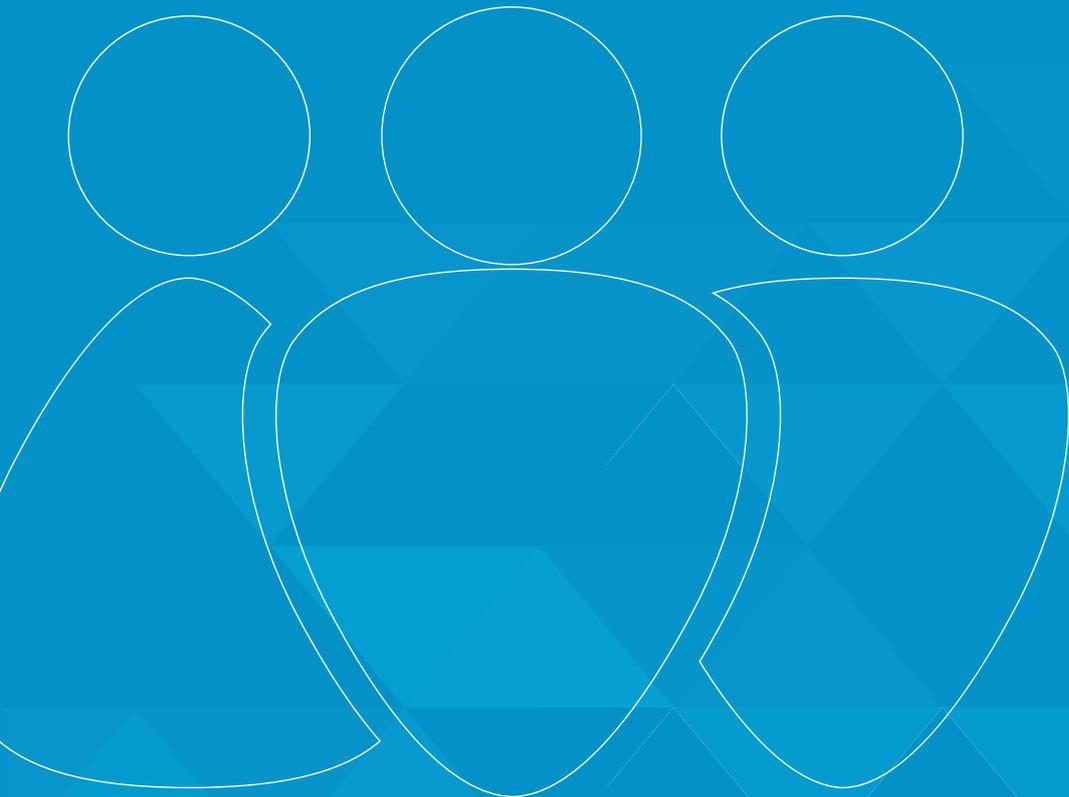
### **Security Council**

1. The Syrian case must be referred to the International Criminal Court.
2. Punishments must be enforced on all the leaders, of any party, who were involved in acts of torture which violates the international humanitarian law and the Resolutions of the Security Council on Syria; particularly Resolutions 2042 and 2139.
3. Bind the Syrian government, and the other parties, to fully cooperate with the Independent International Commission of Inquiry on the Syrian Arab Republic, which was established by the Human Rights Council, in order to investigate torture practices inside detention centers.
4. Allow independent human rights organization to access any place in Syria.

## **Acknowledgment and Condolences**

Our most sincere thanks to all families, eyewitness, and activists who contributed majorly to this report, and our most heartfelt condolences for the victims' families and relatives.





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