

A COMPREHENSIVE DOCUMENTED REPORT ON TORTURE METHODS PRACTICED BY SYRIAN AUTHORITIES

Documented by SNHR

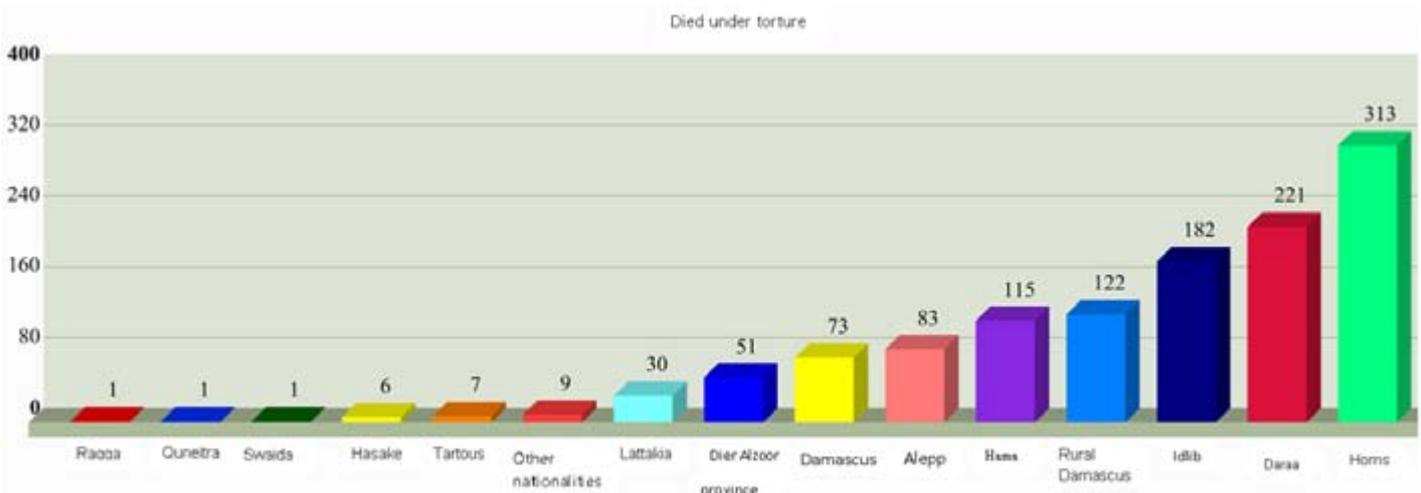
According to the last survey conducted by the Syrian Network for Human Rights, at least 194,000 Syrian citizens were detained by the Syrian regime’s forces. Among the detainees were approximately 9,000 citizens under the age of 18, and 4,500 women including 800 female and 35,000 male university students, Out of the 194,000 detainees, no less than 60,000 people who are deemed cases of “enforced disappearance”. Enforced disappearance occurs when a person is arrested, detained, or abducted by the state or a political organization with the authorization, support, or acquiescence of the state or a political organization or by turning a blind eye to such an act, followed by a refusal to acknowledge denying this person his freedom or to provide information on his fate and whereabouts, with the intent of placing the victim outside the protection of the law for a long period of time.

This applies to approximately 60,000 detainees. The Syrian Network for Human Rights has lists with the names of 37,000 detainees from different Syrian governorates and various professions and specialties.. We have approached the families of hundreds of missing and disappeared people who refused to deal with us or give us any accurate information, fearing for the life of their detained family members.

According to Article 7, Chapter 2, Item 1.i, Rome Statute of the International Criminal Court, when committed as part of a widespread or systematic attack directed at any civilian population, a “forced disappearance” qualifies as a crime against humanity.

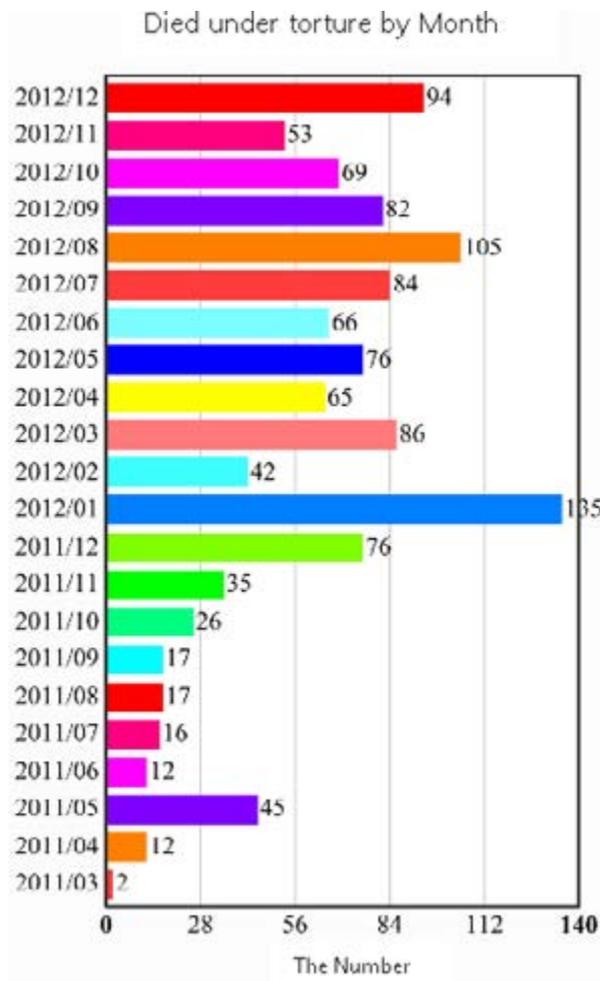
Syrian detainees faced various types of violent torture, claimed the lives of 1215 people, including 34 children and 17 women. [The following link](#) shows the distribution and documentation by names, time, place, images and videos of many of them.

Distribution of victims who died after torture by governorate:



The 34 children died after torture. [The following link](#) shows the children who died after torture by time and place and their distribution by the Syrian governorates.

17 women detainees died after torture, which is a very high figure reflecting the very harsh tactics used against the detained women, they are almost systematic ones. [The following link](#) shows the names, dates and videos of female victims of torture.



All these people, according to the testimonies of their relatives and loved ones, were detained by Syrian government forces, and came out of the jails dead. Parents and relatives of the victims inquire about the crime committed by their loved ones to be punished by death in this way, who killed them without any trial or commitment to the simplest legal and ethical rules, and who brutally tortured them using the methods which will be considered in this report, such ways resemble the applied in the Middle Ages, systematically and continuously.

There are nearly 72 prisons for the detainment, the top four ones, where brutal torture is practiced, are Air Force Intelligence, General Intelligence, military and political security agencies. The most important prisons are Sednaya prison, which is considered the most mysterious, followed by great Mezze prison in the capital, Damascus, all of them witnessed systematic and daily torture.

Syrian Human Rights Network, as it is considered banned organization in Syria, could not freely visit, review and check the treatment of the detained people in any of the prisons without accompanying security forces, like any other world human rights or humanitarian organization. The forces of the Syrian government raided homes, houses and shops, if they did not find the wanted person; they arrest anyone of his/her relatives, and then threaten his/her torture or execution if the wanted person did not surrender.

We will describe the most important methods of torture, show the photos and videos of detainees released and narrate the stories of people we talked to them after being released from prisons, and they are still suffer from the effects of torture on their bodies.

First: Methods of Torture:

The network was able to count 45 torture methods, we will divide them into three types:

- Torture Techniques (8 positions)
- Various Methods of torture (22 cases)
- Psychological torture (12 cases)

First: torture Techniques: we documented 8 positions, the most systematic and widely used one:

Ghost Technique: It occurs through putting handcuffs on the detainee's hands and hanging him/her to the ceiling of the investigation room by a rope while he/she stands on a chair.

The chair is withdrawn to let him/her hardly touch the ground by the big toe.

There is a similar ghost technique in which one foot is tightened together with the hands by the same rope. The detainee many stay for many hours, a day or two days in such position, consequently his/her hands are cut.

2- Tying Up, Kicking and Booting, where the hands are tied with the two feet of the detainee to look like the car boot to be kicked and beaten on all parts of his body.

3- Wind Carpet Technique: it occurs by putting the detainee on a plank in the mid of which exist joints that allow the folding of the board so that the detainee's hands and feet get tied to the front and back of the plank, and his face on the ground of it. Then, the front side of the plank is lifted as to fold it so that the body of the detainee gets folded until the backside of his head touches the heel of his feet. This leads to a dangerous stretch in the ligaments and nerves of the spine, which results the most dreadful kind of pain a person can suffer from. Meanwhile, another person is beating the detainee.

4- Crucify: the hands and legs of the detainee are tightened like a crucified person then they beat him/her specifically on the sex organs.

5- Hanging: the hands are tied behind the back, then the detainee is hanged up and beaten with sticks and wires.

6. Smashing, where a detainee head is placed between the wall and the door of the prison, the door is closed on the head of the detainee.

7. Electric chair, a metal chair, the detainee is seated on it, then they put on the electrical current.

8. German chair, a chair made of metal, its back can be moved backward to pressure on the neck and spine of the detainee.

Second: Different Methods of Torture, we documented 23 methods used in most cases:

- 1- Using all methods of beating on all body parts by different tools such as stake and electric cables, called colloquially Robai, to beat on the soles and tread on the head.
- 2- Completely uprooting fingernails.
- 3- Removing hair from different organs of the body.
- 4- Cutting out flesh by forceps from sensitive organs.
- 5- Rapping detainees; males or females.
- 6- Forcing the detainee to rape his/her mate.
- 7- Cutting out some parts of the detainee body; such as a finger, flesh, or stabbing in the back or stomach.
- 8- burning detainee's skin using chemical acids or smoked cigarettes.
- 9- exposing the detainee after being enforced to take off all clothes to extreme cold.
- 10- depriving the detainee from medical care totally as there is a lack of medical care in large number of prisons.
- 11- Preventing the detainee to use the toilet but once or twice a day, forcing him/her sometimes to urinate on himself/herself. If the detainee is allowed to use toilet, the period may not exceed a minute. The detainee is also prevented from taking shower, going out and breathing fresh air.
- 12- Keeping a large number of detainees in a small cell (keeping 45 detainees in a 15 meter cell, Air Force Intelligence, Aleppo).
- 13- Pouring cold water over the body after being hit and wounded.
- 14- Breaking the ribs.
- 15- Providing insufficient amount of water and food which are not enough for a quarter of detainees.
- 16- Standing up on foot and hung up from hands for successive days.
- 17- Using underground cells without ventilation.
- 18- Detaining women and men in the same cells.
- 19- Pouring boiling oil or water over legs to burn the skin.
- 20- Cutting the ear using the clipper used to trim the trees.
- 21- Stressing ears and nose using mallet.
- 22- Hanging up and then tying something heavy to the penis.
- 23- Electric shocking, specially in breasts, knees, and elbows.

Third: Psychological torture

In SNHR, we managed to document 14 cases, the most used and systematic ones:

- 1- Forcing the detainee to watch his/her mate being raped.
- 2- Threatening the detainee with rapping.
- 3- Enforcing the detainee to watch his/her mates sufferings from torture or dying.
- 4- Threatening the detainee with arresting his wife, mother or sister and rapping or torturing her in front him after allowing him watch naked girls in the prison.
- 5- Threatening the detainee with torture to death or slaughter with knife.
- 6- Offending and assaulting the detainee's religious beliefs.

- 7- Forcing the detainee to undress in front of his/her mates.
- 8- Putting the detainee in a cell, in which somebody is dying.
- 9- keeping the detainee in a cell with a deadbody.
- 10- Assaulting the detainee by obscene insult
- 11- Forcing the detainee to admit crimes he did not commit or they will double the torture.
- 12- Ordering the detainee to prostrate before Assad`s portraite.
- 13- Deluding the detainee that he/she is going to be released and opening the cell`s door, then bringing him/her back for torture.
- 14- Taking the detainee to the prison`s doctor for treatment. The doctor hits him/her on the painful part, then the detainee is taken back to be re-tortured. So that none ask again for doctor.

Secondly: Narrations from survivors and eye witnesses on Torture Methods:

SNHR has dozons of testimonies of eyewitnesses and survivors from torture, we will mention some of them. All witnesses mentioned in this report are still alive, and they are ready to testify before international courts and media.

First Testimony :

The 23-year-old young man, (A) who was arrested for just a month, told us “they were received with random beating commonly called “The Party”. Six Syrian security officers jumped over my back alternatively. We entered toilet for no more than 30 seconds, and they torture who exceeds this period. They provide water twice daily and I suffered from extreme thirst many times after torture and bleeding in particular. They had electrocuted me many times in my knees, elbows and breasts. Once after severe torture, my foot twisted and I asked to go to the doctor. The doctor asked me about the painful place, he hit me on such places severely saying “Now is it better!! the strikes continued for long hours at night. They asked me to stand up, and inserted a stake in my anus”.

Second Testimony :

The story of the detainee (G) is similar to a numerous number of testimonies that look like a scenario repeated in details among different security agencies. The citizen (G) said, “after hanging me up to the ceiling, they hit me for long hours, using iron cable, over all parts of my body while blindfolded. After they stopped hitting me, they unfolded my eyes and I was surprised with two naked girls in a torture room in front of all torturers. Then they took me into another room and said “we will do the same with your mother and sister”.

Third Testimony :

The victim (M) told us that he was arrested in Badya at Tadmer, Investigation Division No. 221, which is one of the largest Divisions in Homs. He said: “they hit us with whips after hanging us with a metal chain laid down in a metal roller by which they lift us up. We slept in squatting position because the room was not large enough and in the same clothes. Unbearable smell emitted from such room. They folded our eyes for very long periods in order not to see the faces of each others. We smelt grilled human flesh from the severity of burning and torture”.

Forth Testimony :

The Surviving detainee, Emad Abdel-Hamid Ibrahim (35 years old) from the village of Abu Houry, Quseer city, told us that he was arrested in the first month of 2012, where he was arrested at a checkpoint Alkonfaa on the road between Homs – Damascus. He said: “I have been taken away to the garage of the checkpoint located nearby, my eyes were blindfolded, my hands were tied and I was placed with a group of youngmen from Baba Amr, who were trying to escape from the bombing of the Syrian army. During my stay in that region, a group of security elements came, including elements of thugs, someone named Abu Jafar, I identified him from his voice, a resident of the Shiite village Zayta near my village.

He identified me and stabbed me in my neck with the knife in his gun.

The weapon penetrated the back of my head and he hit me hard.

I stayed about two hours, I was taken to Homs Military Hospital. When I entered the hospital, the nurses hit and insulted me, they took us to the hospital’s ground floor, in a dark room where several other wounded people kept in such dirty room. Screams were heard from the other rooms on the same floor. I was fully stripped, my hands and feet were tied to the bed, and my eyes were blindfolded, my neck’s wound was bleeding, I asked the nurses to give me painkillers and antibiotics, but they were responding by severe beatings, and kicking. “Abu Aktham”, as called by the nurses, came; he was acting the role of investigator, and tries to get confessions on the places of the affiliates of the free army in Quseer, he continually extinguished cigarettes on my body, hit me with something like a whip, causing intense pain. Sometimes he used pliers to hold my testicles causing me unbearable pain, until sometimes fainted from pain. During my stay in the hospital, my neck’s wound recovered, but left an inflammation. Nurses were hitting the inflammatory place with something like chain and it was bleeding constantly. I stayed in hospital nearly twenty days, and then I was taken to the State Security Agency in Homs. I stayed there for six days. I was released from the branch and received 4 month treatment after that.

Fifth Testimony :

The surviving detainee, Mohammed Hussein Humaidan, from Quseer city - Northern district said: “I was arrested in August 2011 in the first strike of the Syrian army on Quseer city, where I was working in my orchard, west of the city.

When the regime’s armored vehicles opened fire at orchards, I got wounded in my foot and in my back by shrapnel from anti-aviation shells. I was transferred to the National Hospital in Quseer and stayed for about an hour, then I was transferred to the military hospital in the city of Homs, I stayed there for ten days. When I entered the hospital, my right hand and my left foot were tied during my stay in a painful way, some men came to me, in civilian clothes, accompanied by nurses, all severely hit me with batons and electric stakes over my body, including my shrapnel’s injury. They continued to beat me until I fainted from pain, and they refused to give me painkillers.

The room I stayed in was like a garbage dump, and the smell of the room was unbearable, even feces were left in the room. Someone named Dr. Munther was coming frequently to me, acting as investigator, and was asking me about the whereabouts of the Free Syrian Army. He hit me by an iron-made chain all over my body and kicked me by his shoes. Sometimes hospital's nurses were hitting me along with that Doctor. I was released directly from the hospital, because one of my relatives bribed a security officer and paid him five hundred thousand liras. I suffered from severe pains for days.

Sixth Testimony :

We will present a detailed testimony for a person who was tortured in a facility of the Airforce Intelligence agency in Hama City under the leadership of col. Sohil El Hassan.

Morad from Hama told us that he was arrested on 03/07/2012 at one of Hama City checkpoints "I was forced to get off a microbus and was hit by rods and I heard some guys saying: you want freedom scumbag !, they folded my eyes and took me to a car while my head was bended . Once we reached to the agency, they get me out, repeating the same words that they said when they arrested me, then I heard a voice says: (turn your face against the wall...), in the same time I heard screaming and groan, I heard also some of executioners says: shut up dog you are in the airforce intelligence. In this place (either to confess or to die). Later, we were taken to a cell; 4 meters room in length and 3 meters in width included 57 persons. This number incereses or decreases according to arrest campaigns. A suffocating smell was emitting from the room; a blend of blood smell, vomit, rot and sweat. Detainees were from all governorates, one of them was wearing only underwear, he suffered from many bruises and his hands were dislocated, when I asked about his case, I knew that the executioner tortured him for two days. After little time, a jailer entered shouting loudly: (turn your faces against the wall) and insulted us using the worst abuses. He had a prisoner who was responsible for bringing food and cleaning. This prisoner was distributing the dinner meal; a span of uncooked rice, by his dirty hands noting that prisoners were unable to clean their hands even after excretion. As for the breakfast, it was a quarter of bread with one or two seed of olives.

I sat beside the door and started to monitor, I saw men, old men and children under 15 years passing through the hall, some of them with underwear only, others are totally naked, all of them were exhausted from severe torture their bodies were scarred.

Next day, I was called for investigation, I hurried up, one of them said to me take off your clothes, turn your face against the wall, he tightened my hands covered my eyes, took me to the investigation room and ordered me to kneel down saying: welcome, we are listening Speak. I replied: about what?. He replied: about camera, shooting, El Jazera and El Arabia. I replied: I don't know. without repeating the question cried: Ali take and torture him, they hit me for too many hours.

The victim Morad recognized some of jailers and executioners, he mentioned for us one of them (lieutenant colonel Hafez) head of the department and executioner Mousa from Abo Quais village, he told us that dozens of prisoners were killed by him and others had serious injuries and scars. Abo Hidar, an investigator from El Rabia village near Hama, he is aggressive and tough, he was often repeating, while passing through corridor: use flying carpet torture method, remove all their clothes. Abo Ali Ghyath, an investigator usually described as malignant. Abo Ali is a jailer usually abuses prisoners and accuses them with infidelity. Somar, merciless executioner. Abo Ali Habib, a fierce man, usually holds a thick rod with wooden ball at the end to hit prisoners specially on knees and joints, this rod broke a lot of necks, I personally was accidentally and slightly hit by this rod on my left knee and I could not stand on my feet for a week.

In addition to the abovementioned names, other names were mentioned like:

Ali, Ghadir, Said, Feras.

There was a man, sounds from his dialect that he belongs to Syrian coast, he was treating the prisoners mercifully and has a sense of humanity.

I saw some jailers compressed the nose and ears of a prisoner and tortured him in front of his brother; from El Sawaek district east of Hama City, which led his brother to be furious. Nevertheless, Ghadir the jailer hit him with rod until the rod was broken saying: you are acting !. According to Morad testimony for the network, electric shock torture was commonly used for those who are intended to be tortured to death, but Morad didn't see that by his eyes because doors were locked but he heard screams.

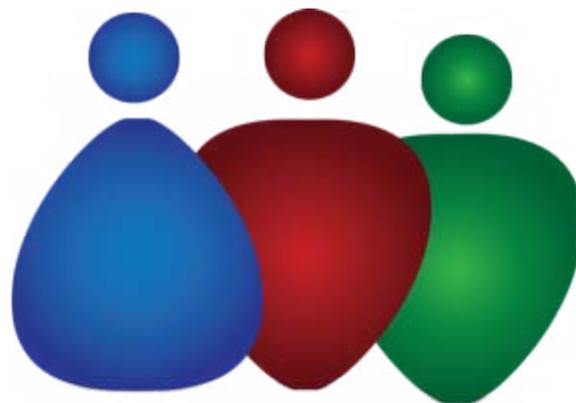
One of the most important things mentioned in the testimony of Morad is that during his detention period, he witnessed 40 cases tortured to death, let alone field executions took place at night, in addition to 20 cases of insanity, hysteria and nervous breakdown as a result of systematic torture. The witness cited that during his detention period he witnessed the killing of **the following names whom he recognized by names amongst 40 cases tortured to death:**

- Prisoner Gehad El Saleh: detained with his brother Ayman, their charge was watching El Arabiya channel. His hands were tightened behind his back to his legs where his abdomen and face were placed against the floor and he was kept like that for several days without food or water until died in front of the eyes of his cell's fellows.
- Ayman Saleh: a brother of Gehad, obtained university degree from faculty of law. He was tortured for 13 hours and was hit all over of his body until he suffered from serious swelling then died as result of torture.
- Dr. Hohamed Salaha: he was tortured by more than 10 methods until his body skin turned to blue then died as a result of torture.
- Ahmed Abbass: a citizen from Homs countryside died because of severe torture after a nervous breakdown.

- Mohamed Asey: a model for sick prisoner died because he didn't receive the necessary treatment. He was a diabetic and didn't take necessary pencilin dosages. He died while writhing in pain.
- Mo'az El Aswad: from Tybaa El Emam in Hama countryside severely tortured by wheeling, tying up, burning and ghost techniques. He died after being tortured for several days.
- Nabiah Warda: he was detained 20 days before Morad , he was a Christian tortured by ghost, wheeling, tying up, beating techniques. His body was fully collapsed then was taken to other place and his fellow prisoners knew nothing about him so he was deemed dead.
- Mohamed Saloom: from Kazo district in Hama City, he was hit by rod, tortured for hours and died along with other 4 youngmen from the same district.

Morad's testimony included other cases that cannot be covered in our report, he himself was tortured until his hands were about to be separated, in addition to different kinds of torture. After getting out of detention, he narrated stories he saw and he is still alive.

The prisoner Abo Mohamed from Homs city told us that he was detained at the military security agency in Homs and was hit, abused and tortured to prostrate to a photo for Bashar El Asad. One of prisoners, now in Jordan and refused to mention his name or even its acronym, narrated that he was raped and sharp tools were inserted into his anus.



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