

No less than 10,047 Cases of Arbitrary Arrest Recorded in 2016

Including 2564 Cases at least in
December

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

Report Contents

I. Introduction and Methodology

II. Details

A. Toll of Detainees in 2016

B. Toll of Detainees in December 2016

- Arbitrary Arrests by Syrian regime forces (Army, Security, Local Militias, Foreign Shiite Militias)
- Arbitrary Arrests by Self-management Forces (Consisting Primarily of the Democratic Union Party forces – a branch for the Kurdistan Workers' Party)
- Arbitrary Arrests by Extremist Islamic Groups
- Arbitrary Arrests by Armed Opposition Factions
- Releases from the Different Detention Centers
- Raids and Inspection Points that Resulted in Detention
- Abductions by Unidentified Parties

III. Most Notable Cases of Arbitrary Arrest in December

IV. Recommendations

I. Introduction

The detainees issue hasn't seen any noticeable progress even though it was included in the "Cessation of Hostiles" statement. Regarding that issue in particular, we recommend the following:

- 1 Arbitrary arrests must be ceased immediately as it is still an ongoing concern according to SNHR's monthly report. All detainees' fates must be revealed and their families' right to visit them must be insured immediately as well.
- 2 All detainees who were detained for merely exercising their political and civil rights must be released unconditionally. The use of women and children as war hostages must be stopped and they all must be released.
- 3 Grant the Independent international monitors of the Independent International Commission of Inquiry on the Syrian Arab Republic, which was established by the UN, and the International Committee of the Red Cross access to all official and non-official detention centers without setting up any prior arrangements or any restrictions or conditions.
- 4 A UN committee should be formed to see to the release of the detainees periodically and per a timetable that must be presented by all the detaining parties and mainly Syrian regime forces that are detaining %99 of all the detainees.



Methodology

The ongoing and daily process of documenting detainees comes with additional challenges for SNHR that have been documenting detainees since 2011. One of these most notable challenges is the families' reluctance to cooperate and reveal any information on their family members' arrest even secretly and especially if the arrested individual was a female due to a prevalent notion among the Syrian society that doing so would result in more torture and risks. Instead, the families try to negotiate with security forces that usually blackmail these families and demand a cash payment that can amount to thousands of dollars in some cases. Despite the fact that SNHR possesses lists of more than 117,000 detainees, including children and women, it should be noted that we estimate that the actual number of detainees have exceeded %99 ;215,000 of them are being detained mainly by Syrian regime forces.

The international community's and the United Nations', in all of its organs, failure to apply pressure on the Syrian authorities to release even one case (including those whose sentences are over), and even prisoners of conscience, affirmed that convention within the Syrian society which believes that it is useless to cooperate in the documentation process. Most of the releases were part of exchange deals with factions from the armed opposition.

The Syrian government denies that it made any arrests or executed any abductions when asked by the detainees' families. SNHR obtains most of the information from former detainees.

All the documented detainees in December were arrested without a warrant, which has become a norm and a methodology in %99.9 of the arrests made by Syrian regime forces in all of its organs and entities (army, security forces, local militias, foreign militias). In all of the many interviews we conducted with thousands of prisoners since 2011, we have never heard of an arrest warrant or a cause. Most of the arrests are either through breaking doors and arresting people from their homes or at checkpoints in the streets. Apparently, Syrian regime forces follow this method in order to wipe off any evidence that might hold them responsible for these arrests and the torture, physical violence, extrajudicial killing, and the other crimes and violations that follow.

Also, Syrian regime forces don't allow %99.9 of the detainees to contact a lawyer, their families, or anyone. The people who perpetrate these crimes, or other crimes, have never been punished by Syrian regime forces and no case involving that have been recorded. Instead, government authorities, itself, encourage and protect the people who perpetrate these crimes.



SNHR has recorded that no less than 117,000 individuals have been arrested since March %99) 2011 have been arrested by Syrian regime forces) these number don't include prisoners of a criminal background and include arrests cases that are based on the internal armed conflict and mainly due to the opposition activity against the ruling authorities.

The mounting number of arrests is due to a number of reasons:

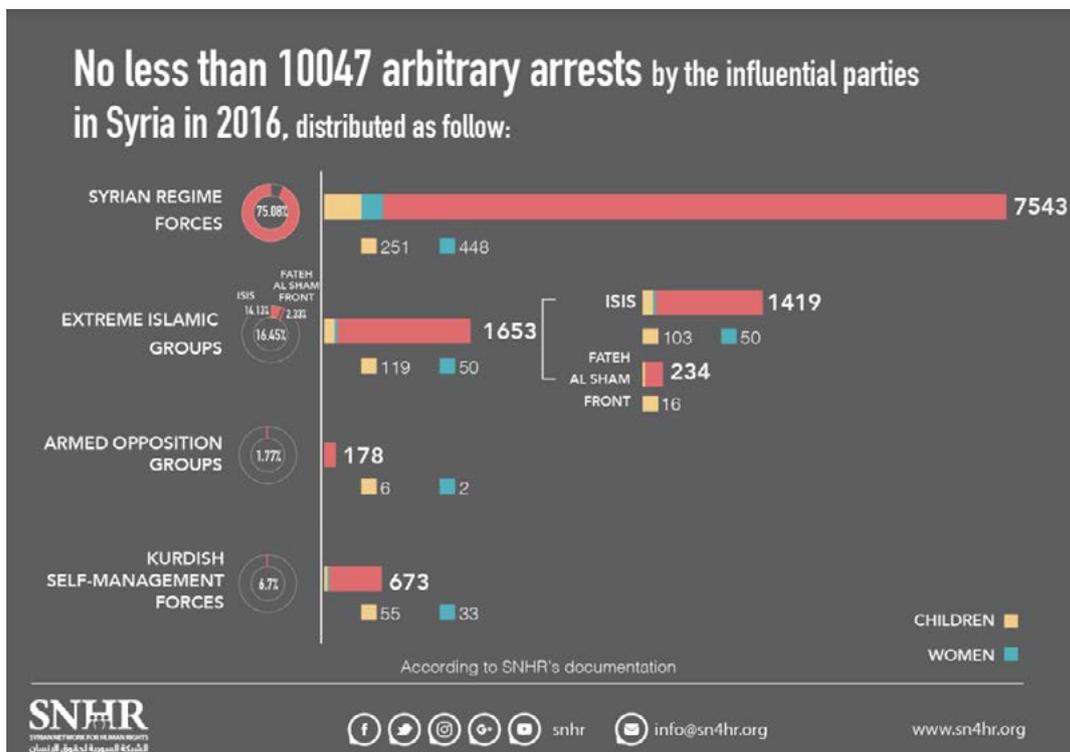
- Many arrested individuals weren't arrested because of a crime they committed, but because of their relatives' involvement with armed opposition factions or because they provided humanitarian aids.
- Most of the arrests are being conducted randomly and involve people who weren't involved in the popular protests, relief, or even military activity.
- Thousands of detainees are still being detained by the Syrian regime even though a judicial order for their release was issued despite the bureaucracy, corruption, slowness, and limpness that the Syrian judiciary suffers from.
- Syrian regime forces control densely populated cities such as the main central cities and it continue to practice its systematic policies of arbitrary arrests against the civilians of these areas.
- There are many Syrian regime forces-affiliated entities that are authorized to make arrests, many of these entities make arrests without checking with Syrian regime forces or the judicial authorities to which these entities are affiliated. Also, these entities have its own list of detention centers that are not subject to any judicial supervision. The detainees inside these detention centers are not being treated in accordance with the stated Syrian laws.
- A great number of cases are driven by blackmails or sectarian grudges especially in unstable areas that are not held by a specific faction or it is undergoing a power struggle. As a result, many armed militias that have emerged can't be monitored as they don't answer to any particular group.

Details about detainees can be found through the search engine on SNHR website, you may also add the name and details of any detainee and the concerned team will check the data and upload it if proved accurate.



II. Report Details

A. Toll of detainees in 2016



SNHR documented no less than 10,047 cases of arbitrary arrest in 2016 including 431 children and 539 women as follows:

A. Syrian regime forces (Army, security, local militias, Shiite foreign militias): 7543 individuals including 251 children and 448 women.

B. Extremist Islamic groups:

ISIS (Self-proclaimed the Islamic State): 1419 individuals including 103 children and 50 women.

Fateh Al Sham Front (Formerly Al Nusra Front): 234 individuals including 16 children.

C. Armed opposition factions: 178 individuals including six children and two women.

D. Self-management forces (Primarily consisting of the Democratic Union Party – a branch for the Kurdistan Workers' Party): 673 individuals including 55 children and 33 women.



B. Toll of detainees in December 2016

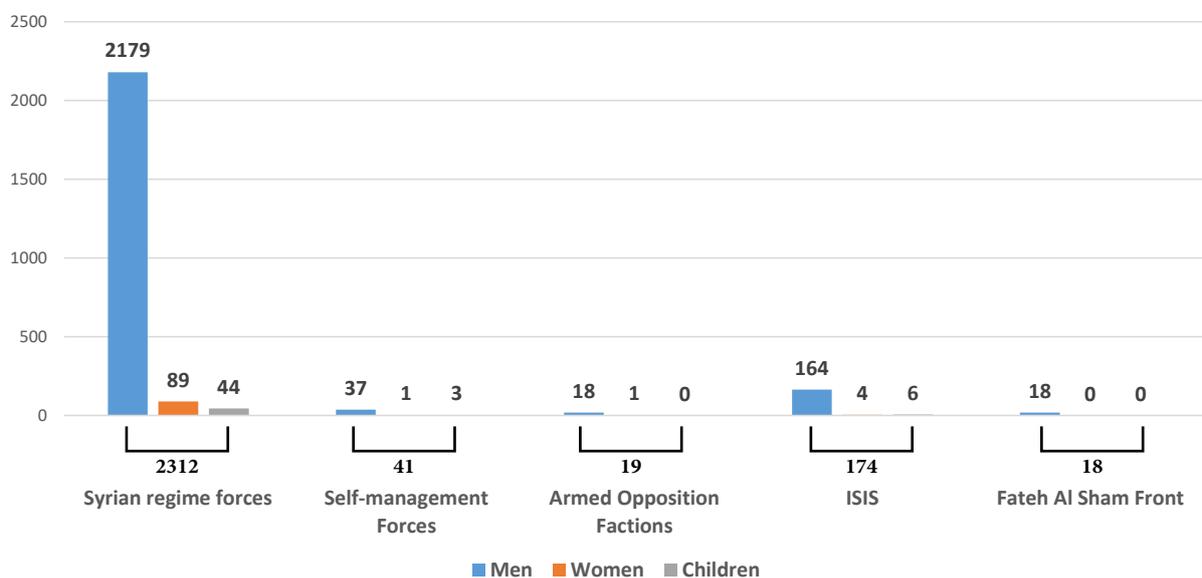
Arbitrary arrests made in December were notable for Syrian regime forces carrying out wide arrests that involved the civilians fleeing Aleppo city’s eastern neighborhoods to the Syrian regime forces’ area of control. Also, Syrian regime forces carried out almost daily raiding and arrest campaigns that involved civilians in the main neighborhoods of Damascus, Aleppo, and Hama cities. The arrests made in Damascus focused on the age group 42-18 years old for the purpose of conscription while Syrian regime forces targeted the families of activists and armed opposition fighters in Hama and Aleppo.

Furthermore, ISIS continues to enforce its policy of arbitrary arrests against civilians in its areas. The arrests included those who violated the organization’s forcibly-imposed regulations, owners of mobile phone shops, internet cafes, money exchange shops and civilians who are trying to flee ISIS-held areas to areas under the control of armed opposition.

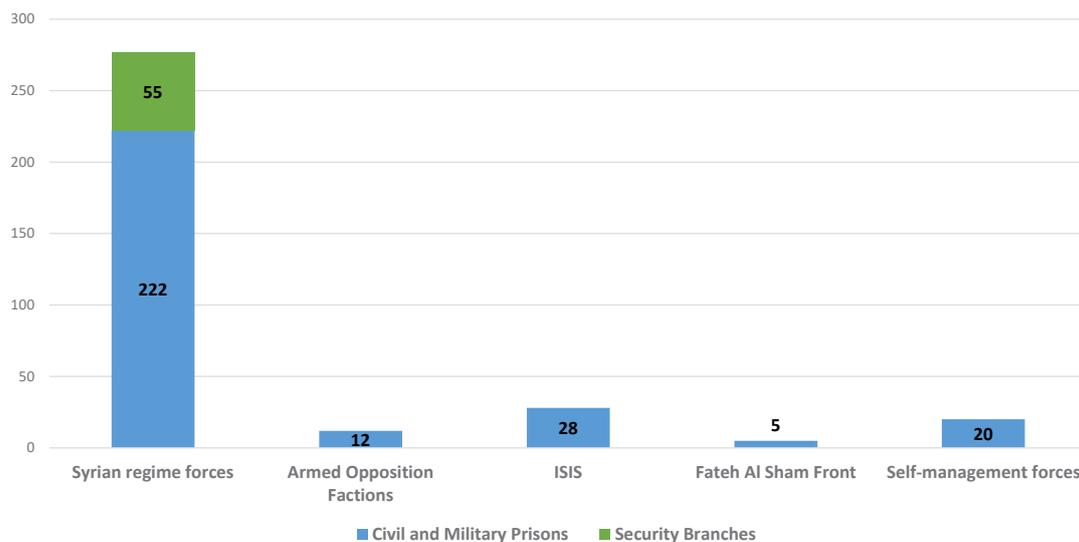
In contrast, Self-management forces also continue its policy of arbitrary arrests and enforced-disappearance against civilians, and political and media activists who oppose their views in its areas. The arrests were concentrated in Al Hasaka city and Ifreen city in the suburbs of Aleppo governorate in addition to expanded arrest campaigns for the purpose of conscription that centered in Al Qamishli, in the suburbs of Al Hasaka governorate, and Ifreen.

The following table illustrates the distribution of arrest cases that we were able to record in December. This what we were able to record which is the minimum, due to security and logistic restriction.

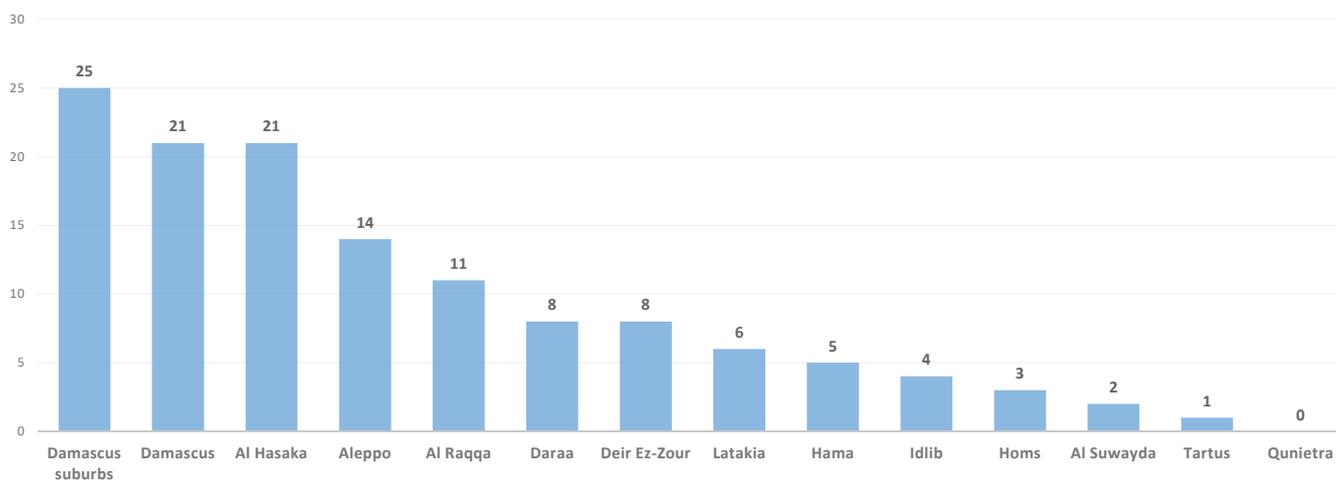
Toll of arrests of December are distributed as follows:



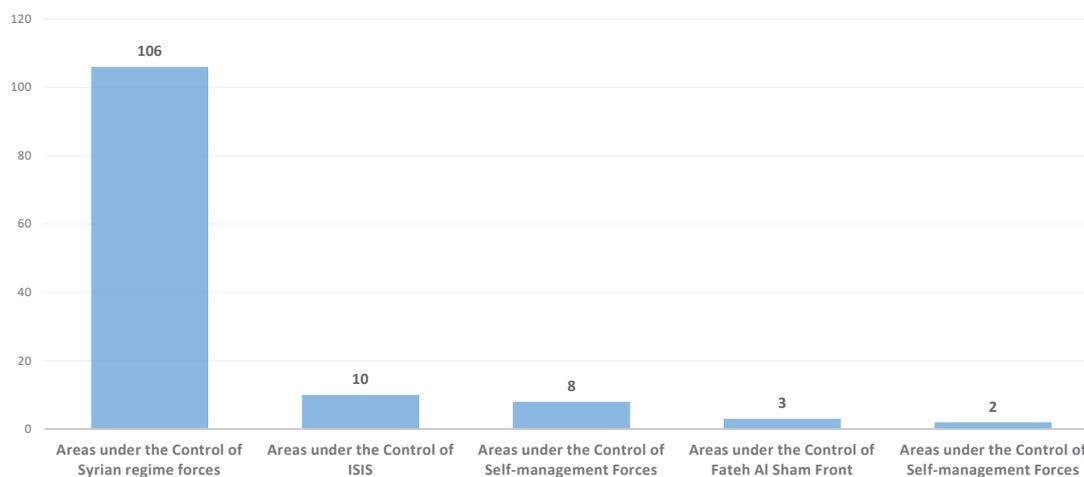
Releases from the various detention centers were as follows:



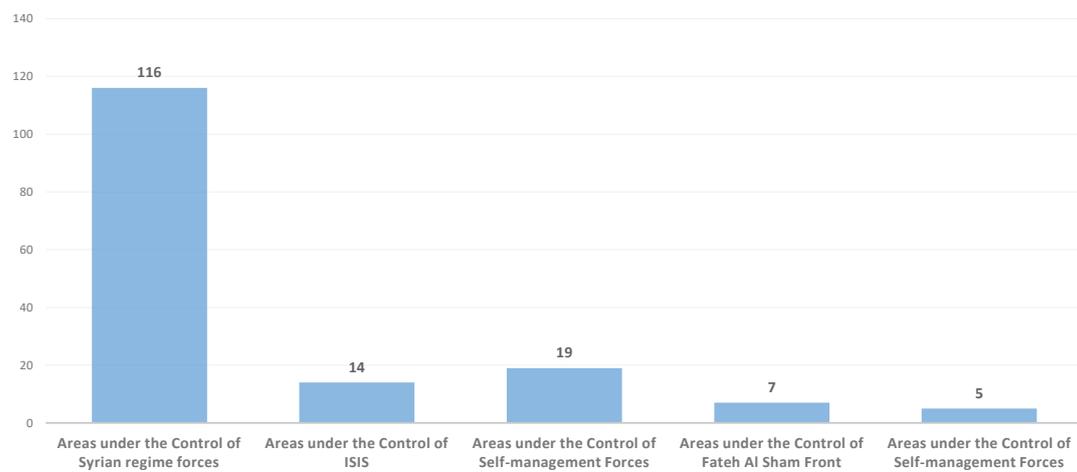
Raids and inspection points that resulted in detention:



Parties responsible for raids:



Abduction cases by unidentified groups:



III. Most Notable Cases of Arbitrary Arrest in December

Syrian regime forces

Dr. Moahmoud Satou, from Al Sukkari neighborhood in Aleppo city, a human doctor who works in the opposition factions-held neighborhoods of Aleppo city. He was arrested by the Syrian regime forces on 14 December 2016 along with his wife as they were passing an inspection point for Syrian regime forces. The two were taken to the Military Security branch in Aleppo city on Wednesday 14 December 2016. His fate is still unknown to SNHR as well as his family.



(Name undisclosed for security concerns), from Deir Ez-Zour, doctor, -36year-old. On Friday 9 December 2016, he was arrested at a Syrian regime forces checkpoint on Salamiya – Hama road. His fate is still unknown to SNHR as well as his family.

Other groups

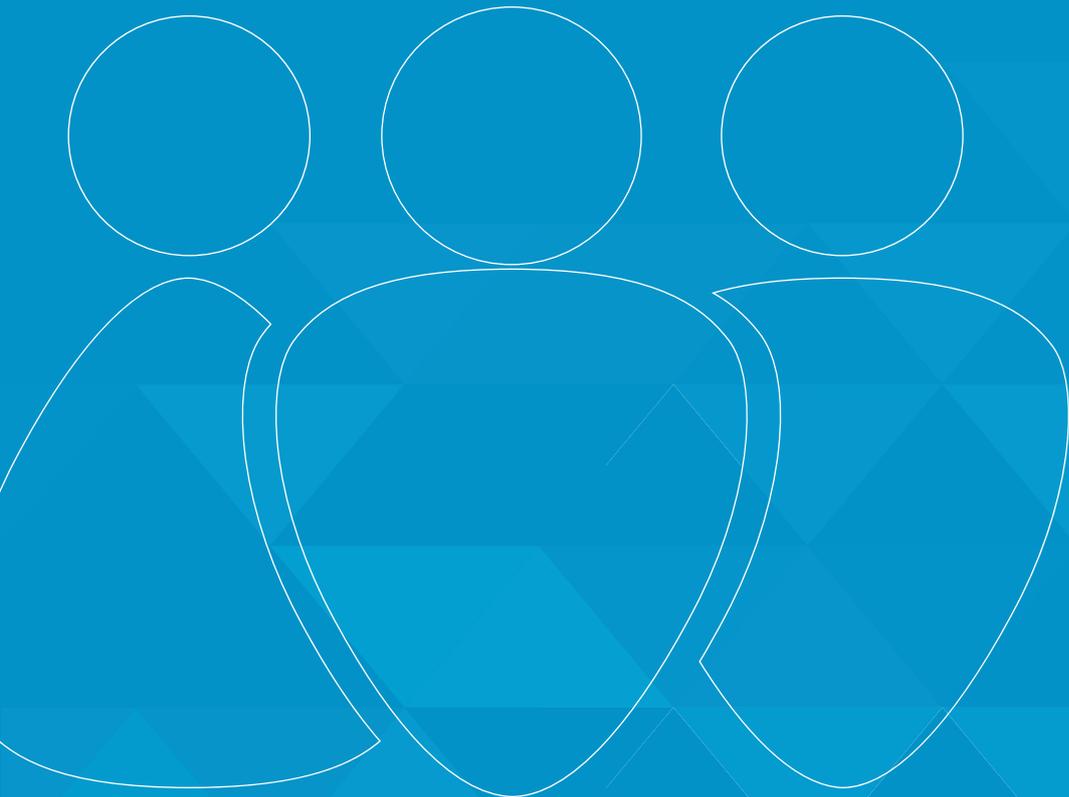
Media activist Awad Al Seh Al Sheikh, from Souran city in the suburbs of Hama governorate. A media activist in Souran city and a member of Elat relief organization. On Thursday 8 December 2016, he was abducted by unknown men from his place of residence in Souran city in the suburbs of Hama governorate, and was taken to an undisclosed location. He was released on Sunday 11 December 2016. The identity of his abductors hasn't been revealed.



IV. Recommendations

1. Security Council must monitor the implementation of the following resolution: Resolution 2042, adopted on 14 April 2012, Resolution 2043, adopted on 21 April 2012, and Resolution 2139, adopted on 22 February 2014 which states that the crime of enforced-disappearance must be ceased.
2. The United Nations and the international community must uphold their responsibilities with respect to hundreds of thousands of detainees and forcibly-disappeared individuals in Syria.





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