



The Killing of 45 Individuals under Torture, 42 amongst which were killed by Government Forces Death under Torture Is More than It was before the Cease-fire Agreement

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I. Report Methodology:

Since 2011, the Syrian regime has refused to recognize any arrests it had made as it accused Al-Qaeda and the terrorist groups of committing these crimes. Also, the Syrian regime doesn't recognize any torture cases or torturing to death. SNHR acquire its information from former prisoners and prisoners' families where most of the families get information about their beloved ones who are in prison by bribing the officials in charge.

At SNHR, we rely on the families' testimonies we get. However, it should be noted that there are many cases where the Syrian authorities don't give the families the dead bodies. Also, many families abstain from going to the military hospitals to bring the dead bodies of their beloved ones or even their belongings out of fear that they might themselves get arrested.

Also, most of the families assure use that their relatives were in good health when the arrest was made and it is highly unlikely that they died of an illness.

Fadel Abdul Ghani, head of SNHR, says:

“The principle of “Responsibility to Protect” must be implemented as the state has failed to protect its people and all the diplomatic and peaceful efforts have failed as well. Crimes against humanity are still being perpetrated on a daily basis in Syria mainly at the hands of the state authorities.”





Therefore, SNHR faces serious difficulties in the documentation process because it is banned and pursued. In light of such circumstances, it is difficult to completely verify the number of victims as the process remains mainly based on ongoing documentation and investigation even with taking into consideration families' testimonies

Please visit the following [URL](#) for more information on our methodology in documenting victims

II. Executive Summary:

Different Syrian governorates, especially regions under the control of armed opposition, witnessed a significant decline in the shelling and extrajudicial killings, the number of victims who were killed under torture increased comparing to previous months before the ceasefire agreement started. However, the Syrian regime continued to breach the ceasefire in several ways as it is one of the most affected parties regarding this agreement and unpublicized violations have been continuous like torturing detainees.

SNHR documented the killing of not less than 45 deaths under torture in government official and non-official detention centers in March 2016, detailed as follows:

A. Government Forces (army, security forces, local and foreign militias) killed not less than 42 individuals under torture.

B. Extremist Islamic Groups:

i. ISIL: killed 2 individuals under torture

C. Armed Opposition Groups: killed 1 individual under torture

Cases of victims being tortured to death have been recorded ceaselessly since 2011 which clearly reflects the excessive and systematic force that is being used against detainees.

Deir Al Zour governorate had the highest number of victims who were tortured to death with 12 individuals. Moreover, 9 individuals were killed under torture in Daraa, 5 in Damascus suburbs, 5 in Homs, 5 in Damascus, 4 in Idlib, 3 in Aleppo, and 2 in Hama.





Torture victims' distribution according to the Syrian governorates and the major conflict parties in Syria:

The most significant death under torture cases in March 2016 are:

A teacher, an engineer, a photographer, an adolescent and two elderly people

III. The Most Significant Cases of Death Under Torture:

Engineers:

[Mohamad Basheer Al Ani](#), an engineer from Deir Al Zour, was arrested by ISIL almost 6 months ago when he was trying to leave the besieged neighborhoods. On 10 March 2016 ISIL informed his family of his death under torture along with his son, Iyas. ISIL charged them with apostasy.

Photographers:

[Hazem Abo Ajaaj](#), Palestinian, a photographer from Al Yarmouk Camp for Palestinian refugees in Damascus, was arrested by government forces almost three years ago. On 29 March 2016 we received information that confirmed his death under torture in one of the government detention centers.



Teaching Staff:

[Mohamad Assa'd Kattan](#), a counselor of Islamic Education in Aleppo Educational Directorate, was arrested by government forces two years ago. On 18 March 2016 we received information that confirmed his death under torture in one of the government detention centers.



Adolescents:

[Ramez Salah Eish](#), an adolescent from Barzeh neighborhood in Damascus suburbs, 17 years old, was arrested by the First Brigade, an armed opposition group. He was accused of stealing. On 3 March 2016 his body was delivered to his parents bearing clear signs of torture.





Elderly:

Waleed Ataya, an elderly from Damascus city, 65 years old, was arrested by government forces almost a year ago. On 2 March 2016 we received information that confirmed his death under torture in Palestine Security Branch 235 that belongs to government forces.

Obeyd Suliman Al Hassouni, an elderly, from Nahiyat Al Akrabeyat in Hama. He was also a resident in Palmyra city in Homs, 70 years old, was arrested by government forces almost 10 months ago. On 21 March 2016 we received information that confirmed his death under torture in one of the government security branches.

IV. Conclusions and Recommendations:

SNHR notes that this huge number of torture victims who are falling on a monthly basis, with taking into consideration that this number is the minimum we were able to get information about, indicates clearly that this is a systemized policy adopted by the head of the ruling regime and all its parties and branches. This policy was carried out in a widespread manner which is a crime against humanity and also a war crime.

Some of the extremist groups have practiced torture acts that can be classified as war crimes as well as some of the armed opposition factions.

Recommendations

Security Council

- To transfer the Syrian case to the International Criminal Court.
- To impose sanctions on all the commanders that were involved in torture practices which violate the international criminal law and security council resolutions on Syria especially resolutions 2042 and 2139.
- To bind the Syrian government and the various influential parties to fully cooperate with the Human Rights Council investigation committee in order to conduct a thorough investigation on torture inside detention centers.
- To grant human rights organization access to any location in Syria.

Acknowledgment

We would like to thank everyone who helped to deliver data to SNHR and specifically the activists who cooperated with us. Furthermore, our most heartfelt condolences go out for the victims' families and relatives who agreed to cooperate with us despite their grave losses.

