



572 Cases of Arbitrary Arrest in September 2016

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I. Introduction

The detainees issue hasn't seen any notable 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 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- To 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 government forces that is 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 up 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 215,000; 99% of them are being detained mainly by government forces.

The international community's and the United Nations', in all of its organs, failure to press on the Syrian authorities to release even one case (including those whose sentences are over), and even prisoners of conscience, was one of the reasons why the Syrian society believe it is useless to cooperate in the documentation process. Most of the releases were part of exchange deals with the armed opposition.

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

All the documented detainees in July were arrested without a warrant, which has become a norm and a methodology in 99.9% of the arrests made by government 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, government forces follow this method in order to wipe off any evidence that might hold it responsible for these arrests and the torture, physical violence, extrajudicial killing, and the other crimes and violations that follow.

Also, government 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 government 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 2011 (99% have been arrested by government 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 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.
- Government 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 government-forces-affiliated entities that are authorized to make arrests, many of these entities make arrests without checking with government 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 specific faction or it is undergoing a power struggle. As a result, many armed militias that have emerged can't be monitored as they are 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

Arbitrary arrests made in September were notable for government forces' 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 18-42 for the purpose of conscription while government forces targeted the families of activists and armed opposition fighters in Hama and Aleppo.

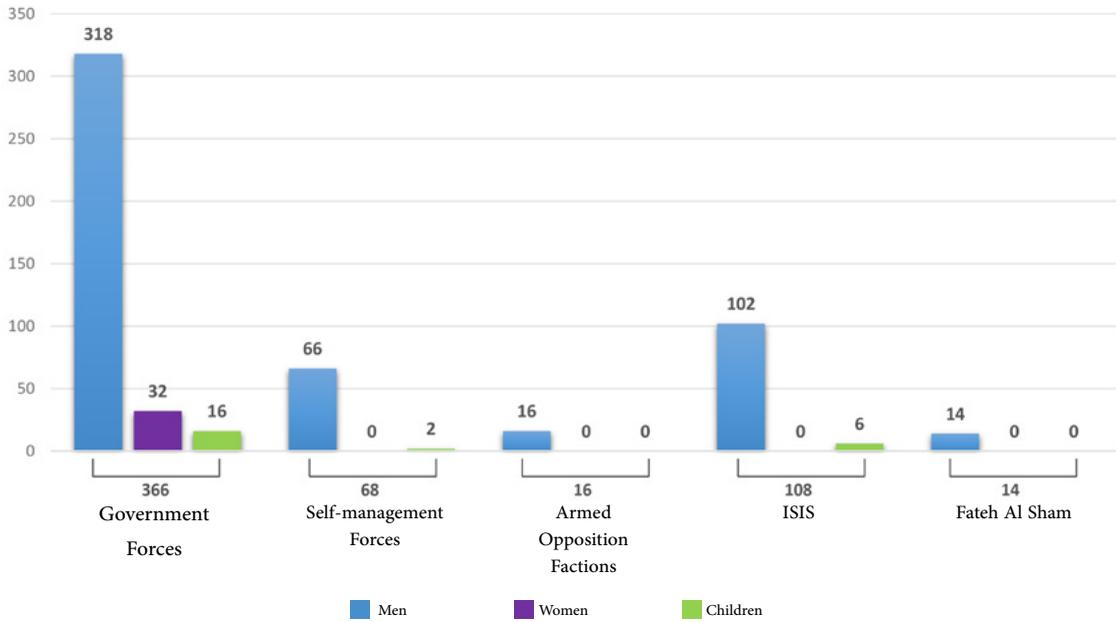
In addition, government carried out widespread arrests that involved civilians fleeing to Lebanon as they are passing the border crossings to Lebanon. These arrests included especially civilians from Damascus suburbs governorate cities that are out of government forces' control such as Al Zabadani, Madaya, Doumda, and Al Mu'damiyea.

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 phone shops, internet cafes, 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 continues its policy of arbitrary arrests and enforced-disappearance against civilians and political and media activists who oppose its views in its areas. The arrests were concentrated in Al Hasakah 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.

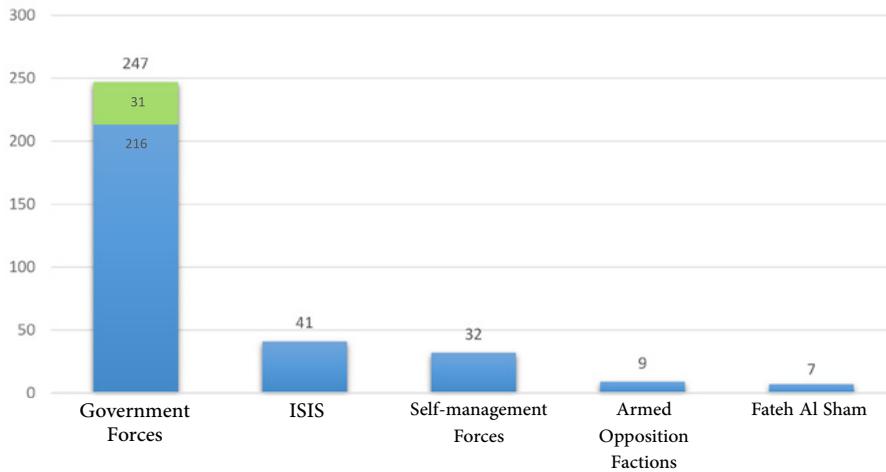
The following table illustrates the distribution of arrest cases that we were able to record in September. This what we were able to record which is the minimum, due to security and logistic restriction.





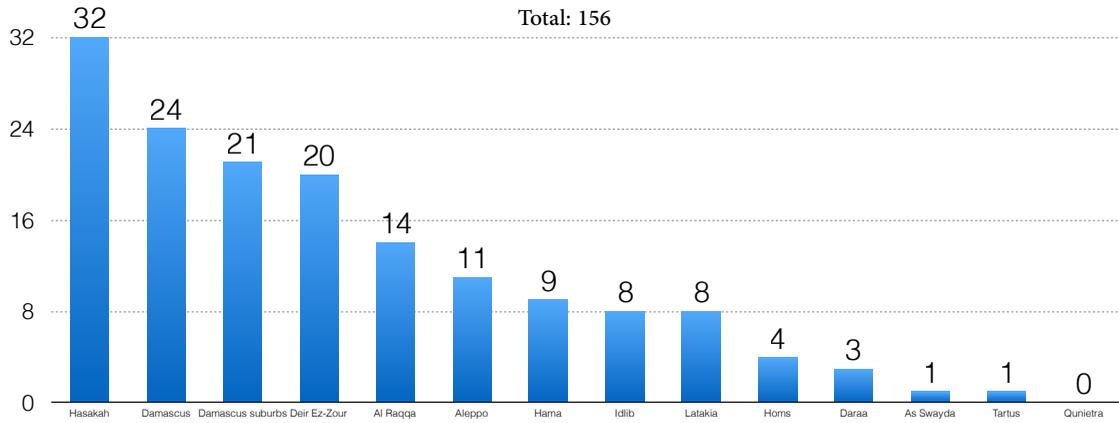
Releases from the various detention centers were as follows:

Total: 336

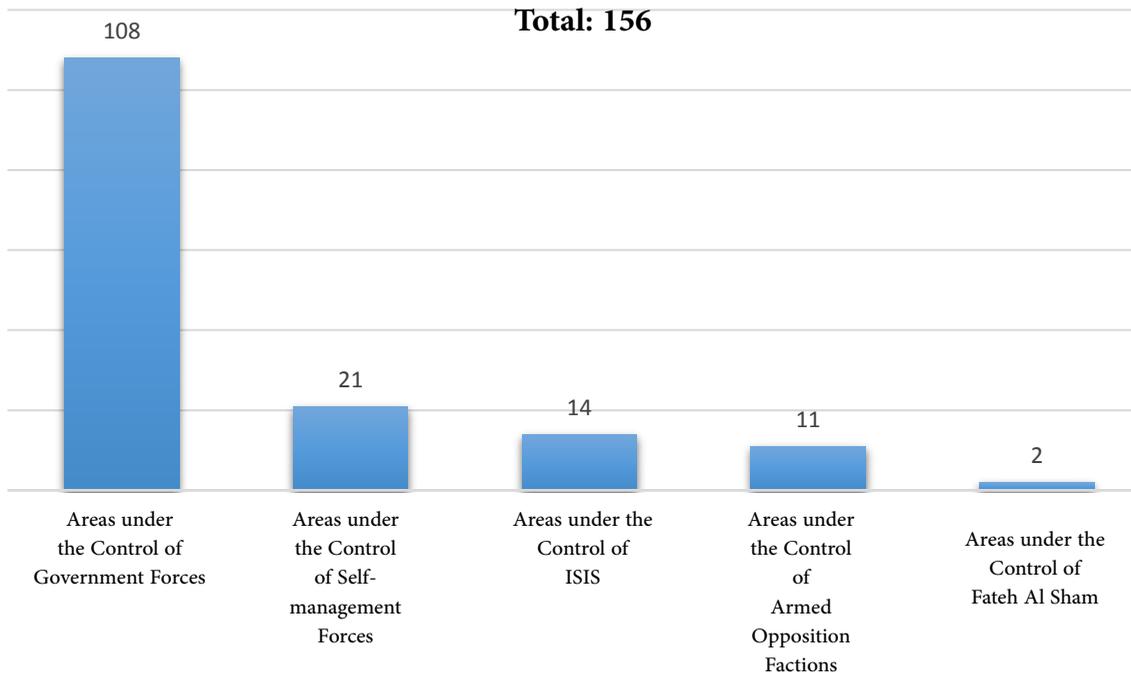




Raids and inspection points that resulted in detention:

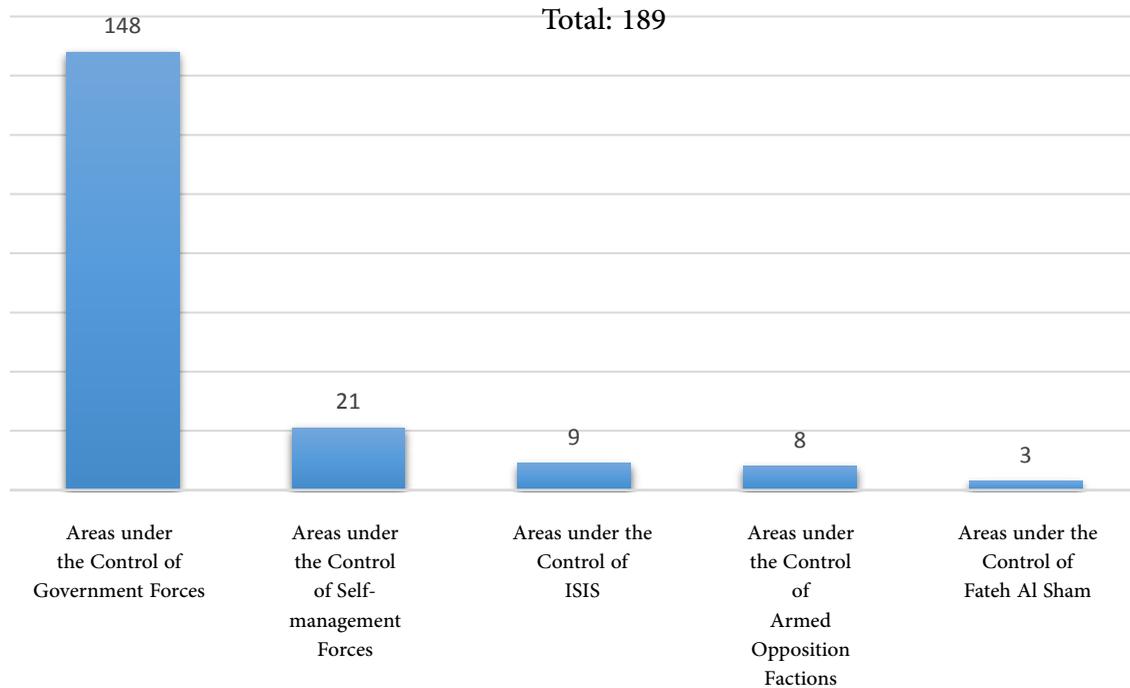


Parties responsible for raids





Abduction cases by unidentified groups:



I. Most Notable Cases of Arbitrary Arrest in September

Government forces

(Name is undisclosed for security reasons), A Palestinian-Syrian woman, from Al Yarmouk camp in Damascus city, 75-year-old. On Monday 26 September 2016, she was arrested by government forces as she was passing a checkpoint affiliated to government forces in Al Qadam neighborhood in Damascus city. Her fate is still unknown to her family as well as SNHR.

Mrs. Eman Naser Al Amouri, from Hama city, 34-year-old. On Sunday 11 September 2016, she was arrested by government forces as she was passing a checkpoint affiliated to government forces in Hama city. Her fate is still unknown to her family as well as SNHR.

University student Emad Kamel Al Sha'ar, from Tartus city, 25-year-old. On Sunday 11 September 2016, government forces raided his place of residence in Tartus city and arbitrarily arrested him where he was taken to an undisclosed place. His fate is still unknown to his family as well as SNHR.

Self-management forces (Primarily consisting of Democratic Union Party forc-





es, a branch for the Kurdistan Workers' Party)

Mr. Aref Mustafa Abdou, from Shitka village in the suburbs of Aleppo governorate, 65-year-old, member of the Kurdistan Democratic Party – branch of Syria. On Sunday 11 September 2016, he was arrested by Self-management forces from his place of residence in Shitka village and was taken to an undisclosed location. His fate is still unknown to his family as well as SNHR.

Ismail Ali, from Al Mailikiya city in the suburbs of Al Hasakah governorate, media activist and a reporter for the Kurdish TV channel Zagros. On Saturday 17 September 2016, he was arrested by armed elements affiliated to Self-management forces in Al Mailkiya city in the suburbs of Al Hasakah governorate and was taken to an undisclosed place. He was released on Tuesday 20 September 2016.

<https://drive.google.com/file/d/0B7O1jbPIaDd0V1VObWx5VEtqR3M/view?usp=sharing>

Unidentified groups

Mrs. Zahra Wael Baslat, from Damascus city, 27-year-old. On Friday 16 September 2016, she was forcibly-disappeared by unknowns while she was in Barzat Al Balad neighborhood in Damascus city. Her fate is still unknown to her family as well as SNHR.

III. 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.

