



Statement

Condemnation of the Syrian Regime's Violation of Cemeteries' Sanctity in Aleppo City; These Graves Contain the Remains of the City's People Killed by the Syrian Regime's Bombardment

On February 23, the Syrian regime-controlled Aleppo city Council issued [a circular](#) requesting that the families of victims buried in the park located next to the Salah al Din Mosque in the city's Salah al Din neighborhood come to the cemetery on March 2 to transfer their loved ones' remains to the modern Islamic cemetery or to their families' chosen cemeteries. If the families fail to do so, the statement warned, the council will exhume their loved ones' bodies and transfer them without their permission.

Syrian Network for Human Rights (SNHR) notes that this park is one of many parks in the city which residents were forced to use as cemeteries to bury their loved ones, whether civilians or fighters, as well as neighbors or other residents, who were killed by the intensive indiscriminate

carpet-bombing by the Syrian regime and its Russian ally of those neighborhoods of Aleppo city that had been liberated from the control of the Syrian regime, with the burial of these victims in these cemeteries taking place over a traumatic period of many months, until the Syrian regime, backed by its Russian and Iranian allies, regained full control of Aleppo city at the end of 2016.

[Photos circulated](#) on the [Internet](#) on March 4 showed that the Syrian regime has already excavated the graves in the park; we at the SNHR would like to emphasize that the decisions issued by the Syrian regime are, in their entirety, solely motivated by political security considerations, with vengeance against those who sought freedom being the key underlying theme, and are being implemented by the security services' force, with the aforementioned decision falling under this context. For the victims' families affected, it is extremely difficult to come to the cemetery and find another resting place for their loved ones' remains, especially at such short notice, with many likely to have been displaced, either as IDPs or refugees, after the Syrian regime took control of Aleppo city, making it impossible for them to return. Most importantly, many or most of the victims' families harbor well-founded fears that the security services will arrest at least some of them simply in retaliation for their relationship of kinship or friendship with victims who opposed the Syrian regime; this is a standard policy adopted by the Syrian regime in retaliation against the relatives of those who opposed it, as we have documented in several previous reports.

The Syrian Network for Human Rights condemns this callous exhumation of graves and the alteration of housing and urban plans according to the Syrian regime's military victories and its political agenda, which increases the suffering of the victims and generates more societal tension. We also affirm that these practices are being used as part of a process of historical revisionism in an effort by the regime to eradicate evidence of its crimes, falsify the narrative of events and erase the impact of the terrible violations committed by the Syrian regime against the city's people. There can be no doubt that the Syrian regime will continue with such brutal and callous operations in the name of security, establishing and maintaining a cycle of oppression, extremism and terrorism.

All friendly, democratic and civilized countries must condemn these practices and accelerate the political transition process.