



Brief Report

Condemning Syrian Democratic Forces' Forcible Disappearance and Killing by Torture of Amin al Ali

Nearly 3,417 Persons Forcibly Disappeared and at Least 67, Including One Child and Two Women, Killed under Torture in Syrian Democratic Forces' Detention Centers since Its Establishment

Wednesday 30 June 2021

The Syrian Network for Human Rights (SNHR), founded in June 2011, is a non-governmental, independent group that is considered a primary source for the OHCHR on all death toll-related analyses in Syria.

SNHR
SYRIAN NETWORK FOR HUMAN RIGHTS
الشبكة السورية لحقوق الإنسان

Content

I. Arbitrary Arrest, Enforced Disappearance, and Killing under Torture of Amin al Ali by Syrian Democratic Forces.....	2
II. Syrian Democratic Forces Deny the Enforced Disappearance and Torture Confirmed by the Victim's Family.....	3
III. Nearly 3,417 Persons Forcibly Disappeared and at Least 67, Including One Child and Two Women, Killed under Torture in Syrian Democratic Forces' Detention Centers since Its Establishment.....	4
IV. Conclusions and Recommendations.....	4

I. Arbitrary Arrest, Enforced Disappearance, and Killing under Torture of Amin al Ali by Syrian Democratic Forces:

At approximately 4:00 pm on Saturday, May 22, 2021, a patrol of Syrian Democratic Forces personnel (whose mainstay is the forces of the Kurdish Democratic Union Party, which is the Syrian branch of the Kurdistan Workers' Party or PKK) carried out a raid on the home of Amin al Ali, without showing any judicial warrant, and arbitrarily arrested him; his family told us that the forces informed them that the reason for the arrest was to interrogate him in a case involving one of his neighbors in Hasaka city, and that he would be returned to the house after interrogation.

The next day, the family went to the security headquarters of the SDF's 'Asayish' security forces, where they learnt that he had been detained by the party's Military Prosecution division in Hasaka city, with his family members unable to obtain any official information about the charges against him throughout the entire duration of his detention, or to appoint a lawyer or visit him despite their repeated attempts. The family sought to inform those responsible for the arrest that Amin suffered from a chronic thyroid disease and needed to take medication on a regular basis, but could not ascertain whether any medication was delivered to him in his place of detention.

On June 28, 2021, the family of the victim, Amin al Ali, received a call from the Martyr Sariya Military Hospital telling them to come to the hospital. Upon their arrival, Amin's family members learned of his death while in detention. They were able to recover Amin's body that evening from the People's National Hospital in Hasaka, after obtaining approval from the Military Prosecution in Hasaka to do so. According to the victim's relatives, Amin's body clearly showed signs of severe torture.

The victim, Amin Aisa al Ali, born in 1986, from Birek village, which is administratively a part of al Derbasiya city in the northern suburbs of Hasaka, was living in Hasaka city. Amin, a married father of two young children, who was an English language teacher and a member of the subcommittee of the Kurdistan Democratic Party's Syria branch, also had a real estate office in which he worked.



On [his Facebook account](#), Amin al Ali had, on several occasions, criticized the management of the Syrian Democratic Forces and the decisions issued by the Self-Management Authority, sarcastically condemning them over the deterioration of living conditions; it's widely believed that this repeated criticism was probably the real primary motivation behind Syrian Democratic Forces' arresting him and torturing him to death.

The Syrian Network for Human Rights (SNHR) has documented a dangerous escalation in the levels of arrests and enforced disappearances carried out by Syrian Democratic Forces in the areas under their control since the beginning of 2021, especially those areas that have witnessed frequent protests over the group's decisions related to conscription or to the economic life of the population in Hasaka, Deir Ez-Zour, Raqqa and the northeastern suburbs of Aleppo.

II. Syrian Democratic Forces Deny the Enforced Disappearance and Torture Confirmed by the Victim's Family:

The Syrian Democratic Forces' Self-Management of North and East Syria issued [a statement](#) denying the violent torture of the victim, Amin al Ali, claiming that the cause of [his death](#) was [a stroke, and alleging](#) that the photos and videos that were widely shared and showed clear signs of horrendous torture on his body had been altered through use of the photo-editing program, Photoshop. Riad Darar, the co-chairman of Syrian Democratic Council, asserted on [his Facebook page](#) that the photos were fabricated, and [published photos of the body](#) of the victim, Amin al Ali, while he was in Martyr Sariya Hospital; these photos showed the victim's body half-naked, without any regard for his human dignity, and without the permission of his family, with these same photos that Darar published showing the presence of heavy bruising on the top of the victim's shoulders and of a nosebleed.

Amin al Ali's family issued a statement confirming that there were visible signs of torture on his body when they received it, adding that they had brought a doctor to examine his body unofficially and secretly before burial. The doctor confirmed to them the presence of a fracture to the jaw, bleeding in the skull, signs of beating on the knees, and of being struck with a hard object on the neck and the medulla oblongata (part of the brainstem) at the back of the head, as well as burns down the back running from the back of the head to the end of the spine and down both arms from under the armpit to the palm, along with other signs of torture.

Photos showing signs of torture on the body of the victim, Amin al Ali -Photos by Arknews website



In addition, we obtained part of a [report](#) issued by the Central Prison administration in Hasaka, in which it stated that it duly received the prisoner Amin Aisa al Ali on May 22, 2021, and that he was placed in one of the rooms designated for prisoners, while the prison administration did not see any effects of any serious illness on the prisoner, as the prison doctor regularly supervised him, like the rest of the prisoners, with medicine being given to the prisoner according to his needs; on June 27, 2021, Amin Aisa al Ali was seen lying in the room, so the prison administration duly took the necessary procedures.

III. Nearly 3,417 Persons Forcibly Disappeared and at Least 67, Including One Child and Two Women, Killed under Torture in Syrian Democratic Forces' Detention Centers since Its Establishment:

Enforced disappearance and torture have been strategies used by Syrian Democratic Forces since the beginning of 2016 to date, with the goal being to terrorize their opponents and Syrian citizens in areas under the SDF's control. We have documented dozens of torture cases that occurred inside their detention centers or while they were carrying out raids, persecution and arrests. We have also documented a noticeable increase in incidents of torture and in the death toll among the SDF's torture victims. [The SDF has resorted to the use of various methods of torture similar to those practiced in the Syrian regime's detention centers](#), with the most common methods used being the shabeh, severe and injurious beatings, the tire, falqa, drowning, electrocution, and pulling out of fingernails or toenails as a means to extract confessions, with torture often carried out in a vengeful way and based on ethnic bigotry.

The conditions of detention by Syrian Democratic Forces are abysmal, with detainees being crammed into narrow spaces, and routinely subjected to periodic punishments, such as deprivation of food and medicine, or prohibited from going out for fresh air or family visits, in addition to often being held in solitary confinement for many days, running into weeks and months. In addition, practices of torture and neglect of healthcare continue in detention centers to date, as well as in al Hawl Camp, where tens of thousands of detainees are being held.

At least eight deaths due to torture by Syrian Democratic Forces within six months:

Since the beginning of 2021, the Syrian Network for Human Rights (SNHR) has documented the deaths of at least eight people due to torture and neglect of healthcare in Syrian Democratic Forces' detention centers, and at least four incidents of torture of detainees. We have also monitored a steep escalation of arrests, enforced disappearances and the suppression of freedoms in the areas under SDF's control, mainly in Hasaka, Deir Ez-Zour and the northeastern suburbs of Aleppo, in connection with the people's criticisms of its policies in the areas under its control.

IV. Conclusions and Recommendations:

Legal Conclusions:

- International law wholly prohibits torture and other forms of cruel, inhumane, or degrading treatment. This being a customary rule, states are prohibited from dismissing or undermining this rule in favor of other rights or values, even in times of emergency. Violating the laws prohibiting torture is an international crime under international criminal law, with those individuals who issued orders for torture, or assisted in its occurrence defined as being criminals with legal responsibility for these practices.
- Syrian Democratic Forces have practiced the crime of torture in a widespread manner, violating the right to life, with these actions constituting a flagrant violation of international human rights law.
- Syrian Democratic Forces have denied all cases of deaths due to torture by their personnel and failed to open a single investigation or even to acknowledge these cases, or to compensate or apologize to the victims' families; instead, they have launched fierce attacks through their media organs on human rights organizations and activists exposing their violations, slanderously accusing these organizations and activists in order to incite terrorism against and discredit these organizations and activists.

Recommendations:**UN Security Council and the United Nations:**

- Condemn the Syrian Democratic Forces' practices involving the crime of torture and work seriously using all possible means to end them, in order to save thousands of persons forcibly disappeared by Syrian Democratic Forces from death due to torture. Demand that Syrian Democratic Forces reveal the fate of nearly 3,417 forcibly disappeared persons.
- Impose UN sanctions on individuals and entities involved in torture acts and death due to torture.

The International Community, the US-led Coalition against ISIS, and the United States of America:

- Take serious punitive measures against Syrian Democratic Forces to deter the group from continuing with its policies of enforced disappearances, torture and terrorizing of communities.
- Impose sanctions on individuals and entities involved in acts of torture and deaths due to torture.
- Link the various forms of support to respect for basic human rights principles.
- Open a serious investigation into the murder of Amin al Ali and hold those responsible for his execution to account.

The Independent International Commission of Inquiry (COI):

- Study the cases included in this report, with the Syrian Network for Human Rights willing to cooperate and provide more evidence and details.

Syrian Democratic Forces:

- Adhere to the standards of international human rights law, stop the use of torture against political or military opponents, launch investigations into those involved in these crimes, and hold them accountable.
- Allow the International Committee of the Red Cross and human rights organizations to enter detention centers immediately and without any prior coordination.
- Disclose information about all detainees, publish lists of their names, publish sites and places of secret detention centers, and allow detainees' families and human rights organizations to visit them.
- Investigate all torture acts and deaths due to torture, and compensate victims' families and survivors of torture.

Thanks and consolation

We wish to express our sincere thanks to the family of Amin al Ali for their cooperation, and to offer our sincere condolences to them and to all of Amin's loved ones and friends for their great loss.



www.snhr.org - info@sn4hr.org