



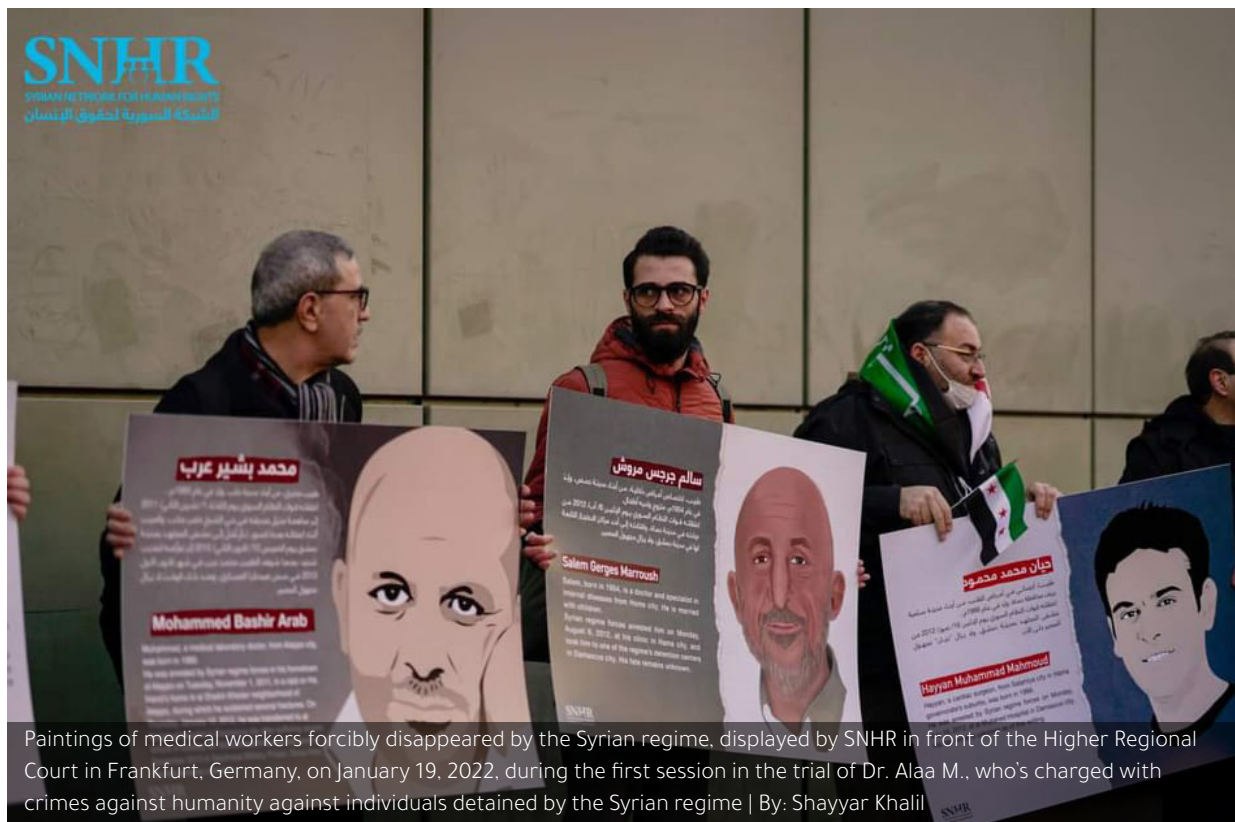
Statement

Displaying Paintings of Doctors Forcibly Disappeared by the Syrian Regime Outside the Court during the First Session of the Trial of Dr. Alaa M., Who's Charged with Crimes against Humanity

On January 19, 2022, the Higher Regional Court in Frankfurt, Germany, began the first session in the trial of the Syrian doctor, Alaa M., on charges amounting to crimes against humanity. The indictment contains 18 charges, including killing, torture, and causing physical and mental harm to detainees arrested by the Syrian regime on the grounds of their political opposition, with the crimes taking place in 2011 and 2012 in military hospitals in Homs and Damascus, in addition to the 261 Military Intelligence Prison in Homs. The German Public Prosecutor had [announced](#) the arrest of Alaa M., on June 22, 2020, in the German state of Hesse, on charges of committing crimes against humanity while working in the Homs Military Hospital before he moved to Germany. On December 16 of the same year, the Federal Public Prosecutor's Office in Germany [issued](#) an expanded arrest warrant against Alaa.

The Syrian Network for Human Rights (SNHR), represented by its director, Fadel Abdul Ghany, attended the first opening session of the trial. Through this participation, SNHR aims to support this trial, which we believe will contribute to revealing more details about the widespread practice of torture in state-military hospitals. We also displayed paintings drawn by SNHR staff of seven of the doctors forcibly disappeared by the Syrian regime, in order to underline the stark contrast between a doctor accused of torturing opposition demonstrators for their just, peaceful demands for a change in the dictatorial regime, and the heroic doctors who risked their own lives to provide medical treatment to demonstrators and provided relief services, and peacefully expressed their opinion on the need to move towards democracy. In response to their courageous and principled actions, however, the Syrian regime arrested and forcibly disappeared them, with one of these doctors being our colleague at SNHR, Dr. Omar Arnous, who has been forcibly disappeared since October 6, 2012.

After the trial's first session concluded, the Public Prosecutor read a statement that included the indictment against the accused, listing crimes including the use of torture methods by setting fire to the genitals of detainees, performing surgical operations (while the victims were fully conscious) without the necessary anesthesia, inflicting severe beatings with various implements, and killing a patient by lethal injection. In her statement, the Public Prosecutor thanked the witnesses, victims and survivors for their courage in participating in and supporting the trial of an individual accused of some of the most heinous crimes committed by the Syrian regime against Syrian citizens. The Syrian Network for Human Rights stresses that it will work, through its partnership with the European Center for Constitutional and Human Rights (ECCHR), to provide all the evidence and data required to the Public Prosecution in order to ensure that Dr. Alaa is subjected to the most severe penalties, emphasizing that criminal conviction, even in individual cases such as that against Alaa's person, constitutes further incontrovertible evidence of the Syrian regime's crimes against humanity given the nature of the widespread and systematic practice of torture in state-military hospitals, and thus constitutes a condemnation of the system in which such brutal torture is the 'norm', which has turned hospitals into horrific torture centers and auxiliary headquarters for the regime's security branches in order to further strengthen their iron fist.



Paintings of medical workers forcibly disappeared by the Syrian regime, displayed by SNHR in front of the Higher Regional Court in Frankfurt, Germany, on January 19, 2022, during the first session in the trial of Dr. Alaa M., who's charged with crimes against humanity against individuals disappeared by the Syrian regime | By: Shayyar Khalil

