

Joint Letter from Syrian Organizations to the Security Council After Adopting a Resolution on the Issue of Missing and Disappeared Persons in Armed Conflicts



Tuesday, June 25, 2019

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.

While the tragedy of hundreds of thousands of families who keep looking for any information about their missing loved ones during the ongoing conflict in Syria is still going on, a new glimmer of hope emerged as the Security Council issued its first resolution on the question of missing persons on Tuesday, June 11, 2019. Unanimously, the UNSC reaffirmed the priority of the issue of missing persons in armed conflict in a new international attempt to put an end to the instrumentalization of enforced disappearance in armed conflict.

We, the signatory civil organizations, welcome the advanced step taken by the Security Council and at the initiative of the State of Kuwait, to adopt the unprecedented resolution No. [S/RES/2474](#) on the issue of missing persons and disappeared in armed conflict. We call upon, member-States to the Security Council and States supporting Human Rights and peaceful resolution to armed conflicts, to pressure the parties to the conflict in Syria to take clear and concrete measures in response to the provisions of the international resolution by revealing the fate of thousands of kidnapped and missing persons, and ensuring the establishment of an independent and transparent investigation and accountability mechanism under international supervision and guarantees a fair and transparent accountability and punishments to perpetrators.

Today, undetermined number of Syrians remain unaccounted after being subject to arbitrary arrest and enforced disappearance. Their families are still waiting for any notification or information about the whereabouts and condition of their loved ones. And while the Syrian government is progressively and unofficially cleansing its records through issuing death notices and death certificates for missing persons after years of disappearance while security and judicial authorities in Syria refrain from opening an independent and transparent investigation into the causes of their death, the place and circumstances of the disappearance, or releasing their remains. In this regard, we demand from your respected council to assume its active role on this issue and to exert all possible efforts to put an end to these practices as to the policies of impunity standing against any possibility of sustainable peace in Syria.



As adopting the resolution unanimously reflects an advanced international will to address the issue of the missing persons in Syria and other war torn countries, we, as part of the civil society forces around the world, look forward to an effective role for the United Nations and the Security Council's member States to remain seized of the matter and follow up closely the situation of the missings and detainees, victims of Daesh, the government and armed factions, and to pressure all warring parties and their allies to fully and unconditionally co-operate in revealing the fate of detainees and missing persons and identify perpetrators as a first step to achieving justice and building the State of rule of law in Syria.

As we look forward to the Secretary-General of the United Nations annual briefing on the issue of missing persons around the world and in Syria, we emphasize the need for partnership and cooperation between the civil and independent forces and the relevant UN institutions. We believe that genuine cooperation will have a great impact on resulting more concrete and comprehensive briefings and periodic reports of the secretary general on this subject. Keeping this question of missing persons as the utmost priority to reach and consolidate world peace, as an indispensable prerequisite for sustainable community cohesion and mainstreaming rule of law and fighting impunity as a mean to put an end to the use of enforced disappearance as a weapon of war.

We, as civil organizations engaged in countering the war machine, and the dire situation resulting from the armed conflict and documenting human rights violations in Syria; including arbitrary arrests and forced disappearances in context of military, political and societal polarization, reiterate the need to convene a special session of the Security Council on The issue of missing persons and detainees in the ongoing armed conflict in Syria, calling for a road map that responds to the provisions of the resolution and thus undertakes:

1. Parties to the conflict and de-facto authorities in Syria, especially the government, must disclose the fate of the missing persons and provide the competent international institutions and agencies with detailed official record of all detainees in their official and makeshift detention centers, the place and date of their detention, the reasons and the charges they are facing, followed by the immediate and unconditional release of all detainees and abductees by all parties in Syria on the background of the peaceful exercise of their fundamental rights,
2. To compel de-facto authorities and local and regional and international parties to the conflict to immediately cease all practices of arbitrary detention and enforced disappearances, and to completely halt all orders of executions against detainees and to hand over the remains of victims of torture.



3. Provide international guarantees for the protection of all sites, evidence and mass graves in different parts of the country to ensure the best conditions to assist in the search and identification of victims and to save all relevant evidence for use in accounting efforts.
4. The establishment of a national institution under the supervision and guarantee of the United Nations, aiming to handle the question of missing persons in Syria,
5. Guarantee unhindered access for international inspectors on local and international human rights and humanitarian institutions, to all the secret and public prisons and detention centers run by the Syrian government and its security agencies, national defense groups and popular committees, as well as the detention centers of Daesh and the armed factions and extremist groups. and to grant international and local recognized monitors access to all detention centers, both formal and informal, and without prior notice.
6. Supporting Syrian civil society organizations working in the field of documentation of missing persons, groups of victims, families and community initiatives to carry out their research tasks, document cases of missing persons, identify perpetrators and seek accountability. Including the cases of enforced disappearances and missing persons. We recall in particular the fact-finding committee in Syria and the independent international mechanism for the follow-up of investigations and prosecutions against persons involved in major crimes under international law committed in Syria since 2011.

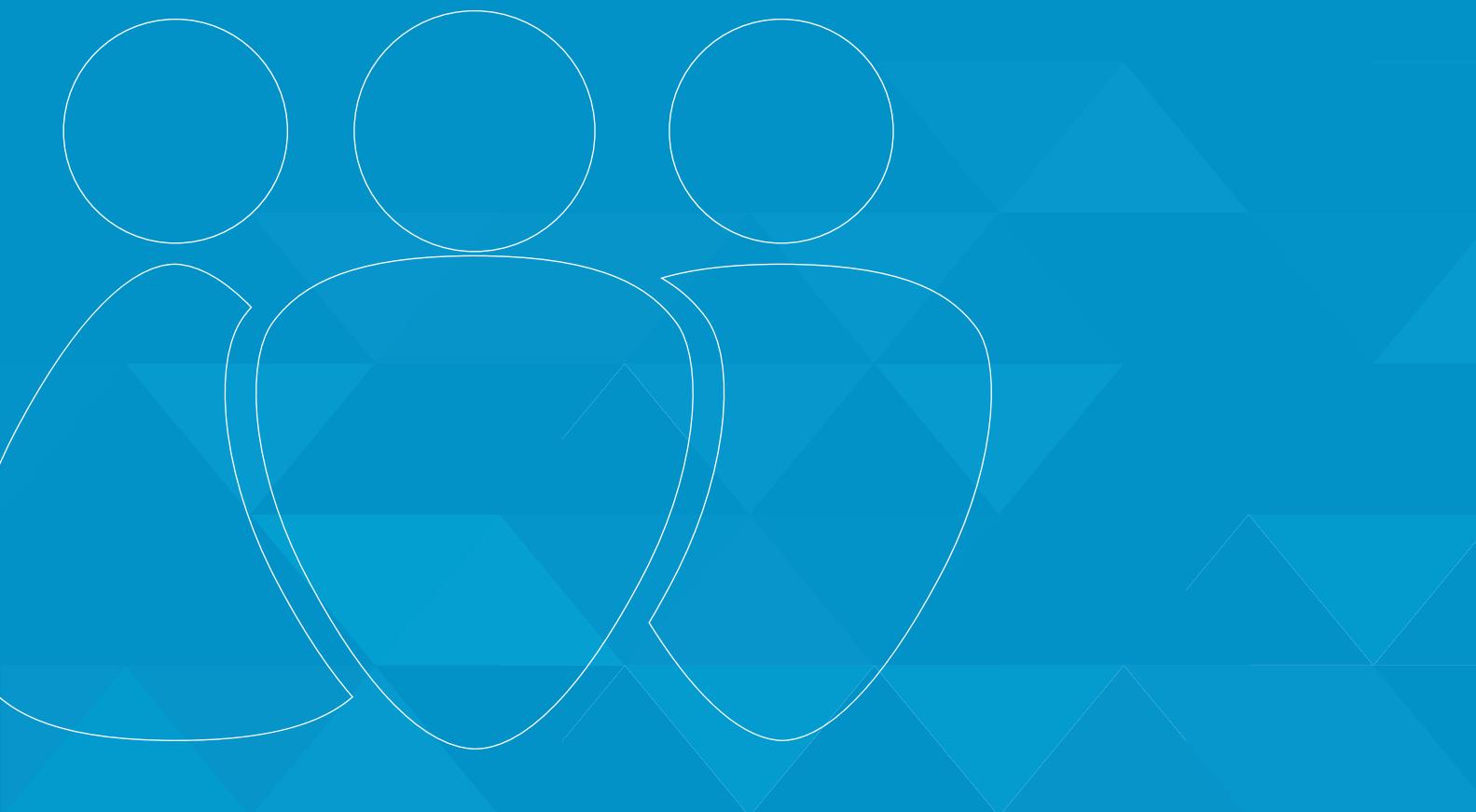
Signatory Organizations:

1. Access Center for Human Rights
2. ADEL Center for Human Rights
3. AlKawakibi Human Rights Organisation
4. AlSouria net
5. Arab Network for Human Rights Information
6. Badael Organisation
7. Baytna Syria
8. BOUSLA for Training and Innovation
9. Caesar Families Association
10. Civil Waves
11. Coalition of Families of Kidnapped by ISIS--Da'esh
12. Dawlaty
13. Democratic Republic Studies Center
14. Detainees 'Voice
15. Families for Freedom
16. FENER for Community Advancement



- 17.Fraternity Foundation for Human Rights
- 18.Hands Up Foundation
- 19.Human RIghts Organisation in Syria - MAF
- 20.Hurras Network
- 21.IHSAN for relief and Development
- 22.Justice for Life
- 23.Kesh Malek
- 24.Khatawat Foundation
- 25.Najda NOW International
- 26.No Photo Zone
- 27.Omran Studies Center - Syrian Forum
- 28.Pro-Justice
- 29.Rethink Rebuild Society
- 30.RIZK for Professional Development
- 31.Save the Rest Campaign
- 32.Shaml - Syrian CSOs Coalition
- 33.Syrian Center for Media and Freedom of Expression
- 34.Syrian Center for Statistics and Research
- 35.Syrian Feminist Lobby
- 36.Syrian Forum
- 37.Syrian League for Citizenship
- 38.Syrian League for Human Rights and Accountability
- 39.Syrian Legal Development Program
- 40.Syrian Legal Network - Netherlands
- 41.Syrian Network for Human RIghts
- 42.Syrian Observer for Human Rights
- 43.Syrians for Truth and Justice
- 44.The Day After
- 45.The Syria Campaign
- 46.Union de Coordination des Syriens a Travers le Monde
- 47.Urnamu for Justice and Human Rights
- 48.Violation Documentation Center
- 49.White Helmets - Syrian Civil Defense
- 50.Women Now For Development





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