

Statement

SNHR Is the Primary Source of Information in the Netherlands' Ministry of Foreign Affairs' Report on the General Situation in Syria Issued in June 2021

We Welcome the Report's Findings, Which Consider the Recent Presidential and Parliamentary Elections in Syria Illegitimate and Indicate That Conditions Are Not Suitable for the Return of Refugees



On Monday, June 14, 2021, the Netherlands' Ministry of Foreign Affairs released its general report on the situation in Syria in relation to the evaluation of asylum requests from people coming from Syria in order to reach a decision on the repatriation of rejected Syrian asylum seekers. The points addressed in the report cover several topics, primarily related to the human rights situation in Syria, political developments in the country and the security situation there.

The report relies on several sources, most notably, in order of the number of quotes included:

Syrian Network for Human Rights (SNHR): 96 quotes.

European Asylum Support Office (EASO): 80 quotes.

United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR): 74 quotes.

Independent International Commission of Inquiry (COI): 62 quotes.

The report also cites other sources such as the United Nations Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs, Human Rights Watch, and Amnesty International, in addition to the US Department of State's reports on human rights in Syria, as well as other local and international organizations. We have reviewed the 112-page report, which was published in the Dutch language, and here will briefly summarize the most prominent of its contents.

The report addresses the political, military, security, humanitarian, and economic situation in Syria, and refers to the absence of any significant progress at the level of the political transition process, stressing that the parliamentary elections held on July 19, 2020, and the presidential elections that were held in May 2021, were illegitimate.

In terms of the economic situation, the report notes that the economic collapse resulting from the ongoing ten-year conflict has worsened as a result of the repercussions of the COVID-19 pandemic, indicating a sharp rise in the prices of basic materials, and a steep decrease in job opportunities. According to the report, by the end of 2020, the proportion of the population suffering from extreme poverty reached 80% of the total population of Syria, and 12.4 million Syrian citizens cannot constantly obtain sufficient food. The report also notes that this number has increased by about 4.5 million compared to 2019.

Regarding the security situation, the report adds that the Syrian regime's security services infiltrate every aspect of life for Syrians, and tightly control those areas under the regime's control, further noting the additional presence of security apparatuses responsible for monitoring the activities of refugees and activists outside Syria.

The report expands on the human rights situation in Syria since mid-2020, primarily focusing on the situation of political dissidents, ethnic groups, human rights activists, journalists, medical personnel, women and minors, freedom of expression, religion, movement and legal procedures, in addition to disappearances, kidnapping, arbitrary arrest, torture, execution, and extrajudicial killing. The report further refers to the continuing human rights violations in the areas under the control of Syrian regime forces, explaining that the latter confront any criticism or opposition activity with brutal repressive practices, including arbitrary arrest and torture, and adds that Syrian regime forces continue to confiscate property and to prevent internally displaced persons from some areas from returning to their areas of origin.

The report also refers to violations by other parties in addition to the Syrian regime and its Russian ally, citing violations in areas controlled by factions of the Armed Opposition, including killings, physical assault and arbitrary detention, with the report emphasizing that armed terrorist groups, such as Hay'at Tahrir al Sham, have committed a wide range of violations, including unlawful killings, arbitrary detention, and severe physical assault.

The report also notes violations by Syrian Democratic Forces, including arbitrary arrests and unlawful attacks, which have resulted in civilian casualties, as well as the group's restriction of people's right to free movement, and refers to the involvement of Syrian Democratic Forces in illegal corruption activities and child conscription. and child conscription.

Regarding the return of refugees, the report notes that the conditions for voluntary return set by the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees have not yet been met, and that returnees still face the risk of arrest, enforced disappearance, torture, and forced conscription by the Syrian regime, noting that the name of each individual is verified at the border entrances; if he is wanted for compulsory military service, he is subject to arrest and may be forcibly disappeared or be subject to forced conscription. The report clarifies that the Syrian government does not facilitate the return of refugees and puts many obstacles in the way of their return, including a condition requiring the payment of \$100 per person upon entry to the country, in addition to confiscation of property, and preventing residents from returning to their areas of origin.

We note that this is the second consecutive year in which the Netherlands Ministry of Foreign Affairs has relied mainly on the Syrian Network for Human Rights in its general report on the situation in Syria. The Syrian Network for Human Rights stresses its willingness to contribute to all international reports on the human rights situation in Syria, and will make the greatest possible effort to provide any data and information required of it in this regard, in order to report the ongoing violations and incidents objectively and credibly to achieve the goal of protecting civilians in Syria, holding all perpetrators accountable, and helping to start the country along the path of positive change towards democracy.

To read the full report by the Netherlands Ministry of Foreign Affairs, please download the report via [this link](#)¹:

¹ Note: The report is only available in Dutch.