



## Political Prisoners in Tartous Central Prison on Hunger Strike For their 13th day so far

Political prisoners in Tartous Central Prison have started an open hunger strike since the beginning of March. SNHR fears their health and life amid sectarian threats from other prisoners.

The hunger strike reasons:

1. “The Anti-Terrorism Court” and the “Court of Criminal Terrorism” in Damascus, discussed in earlier reports, issued arbitrary provisions where it issued its verdicts against 36 political prisoners. The sentences ranged between 12 years in prison and life sentences due to confessions taken under torture while the prisoners were in the state security branches before they were transported to Tartous Prison.
2. The prisoners are suffering from discrimination from the prison’s administration first, then from criminal Alawitte prisoners.

After the hunger strike started, a prisoner, relative of Bashar Al Assad, called “Suliman Al Assad”, who is detained under the charge of killing an officer, agreed with several prisoners who support the regime to hit and torture the prisoners-on-strike and used racist speech while the prisons’ administration was watching. This matter triggered more fear and terror which caused some of the prisoners to halt their strike.

### **Detention in Tartous Central Prison:**

SNHR recorded the presence of not less than 247 detainees in Tartous Central Prison. Most of them are from Damascus city and its suburbs, Hama and Banyas cities. The prisoners were detained due to political reasons. It should be noted that SNHR tackles the political detainees and arbitrary arrest cases and not criminal allegations. Since the beginning of the uprising in March 2011, the prison’s administration established a room on the ground floor in to detain individuals who participated in





the uprising and its protests. However, with the increasing number of detainees, the prisons' administration detailed them with other convicted criminals which resulted in heated clashes. However, the prison's administration was completely biased against the political prisoners.

In January 2015, the prisoners' humanitarian condition was worsened since great numbers of detainees in Adra and Hama Central Prisons were transported to Tartous Central Prison.

The prison administration of Tartous Central Prison is directly responsible for the well being of the political prisoners as it is also directly connected to the administration of Damascus Prison. Tartous Central Prison is responsible for many reasons:

- It combined the dangerous criminals with the political activists.
- They were completely biased against the political prisoners and deprived them from food, medication and meeting with their families.
- The prison's administration deliberately did not allow the prisoners to attend their trials in the "Anti-terrorism Court" which delayed their provisions for several months."

#### **- Recommendations:**

To The Office of the High Commissioner for Human Rights:

1. The Red Cross's visit is not enough since the prisons' administration, ordered by the regime, arranges the prison, prohibit and threatens the prisoners from talking to the Red Cross members. Therefore, the Red Cross visits should be periodic and sudden and without the presence of security officers.
  
2. Demand the Syrian government to disclose the detainees' names and publish their provisions, disclose the names of the dead detainees and issue their death certificates especially for those who were killed under torture.
  
3. Pressure the Syrian government to abolish legislation number 14 that was issued on 15 January 1969, and legislation number 69 which grants immunity to the security officers which prohibits their prosecutions.

#### **- To the UN Security Council:**

In reference to several UNSC resolutions about the detainees in Syria, 2041, 2042, 2139 and 2254, the Syrian government should stop using this file as a leverage to stay in power. The political and humanitarian aid detainees should be released.

