

## Statement

# SNHR Signs Memorandum of Understanding with the Government of the United States of America to Contribute to the Investigation and Accountability Processes

**SNHR**

SYRIAN NETWORK FOR HUMAN RIGHTS

الشبكة السورية لحقوق الإنسان

Wednesday, October 9, 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.



In October 2019, the Syrian Network for Human Rights (SNHR) and the Government of the United States of America signed a Memorandum of Understanding providing for the establishment of a coordination and cooperation mechanism to share information and data documented by SNHR on human rights violations in Syria and on those involved in such violations in order to participate in the investigations carried out by the Government of the United States of America into some of these violations, and to place the greatest possible number of those involved in these violations on the lists of economic and political sanctions; this will constitute a major impediment to any effort to rehabilitate the Syrian regime in all its organs, and serve as an important form of accountability that's previously been unavailable. For example, the investigation carried out by the SNHR into the Syrian regime's use of chemical weapons in al Kbaina village in Latakia suburbs has contributed to reinforcing the U.S. Department of State's investigation, which proved the Syrian regime's responsibility for this chemical attack.

This latest MoU comes as a corollary of eight years of continuous cooperation with the U.S. Department of State, primarily with the Bureau of Democracy, Human Rights, and Labor. In all the reports issued by the U.S. Department of State on the human rights situation in Syria, the U.S. Department of State has relied on information and statistics from the SNHR as a primary source, often referencing these dozens of times within a single report.

On February 26, 2019, in Geneva, the SNHR signed another Memorandum of Understanding, this time with the United Nations' International Impartial and Independent Mechanism (IIIM) to assist in the investigation and prosecution of persons responsible, according to international law, for the most serious crimes committed in the Syrian Arab Republic since March 2011. The IIIM, which was established by UN General Assembly resolution 71/248 of December 21, 2016, has received a large quantity of data extracted from the SNHR database.



In addition, the SNHR has signed a wide range of bilateral agreements with a number of research centers for the purpose of data-sharing, with our policy providing that we should not share any data without first co-signing a formal agreement or Memorandum of Understanding detailing the criteria for the use of this data; the general terms for data-sharing can be found on [our website](#).

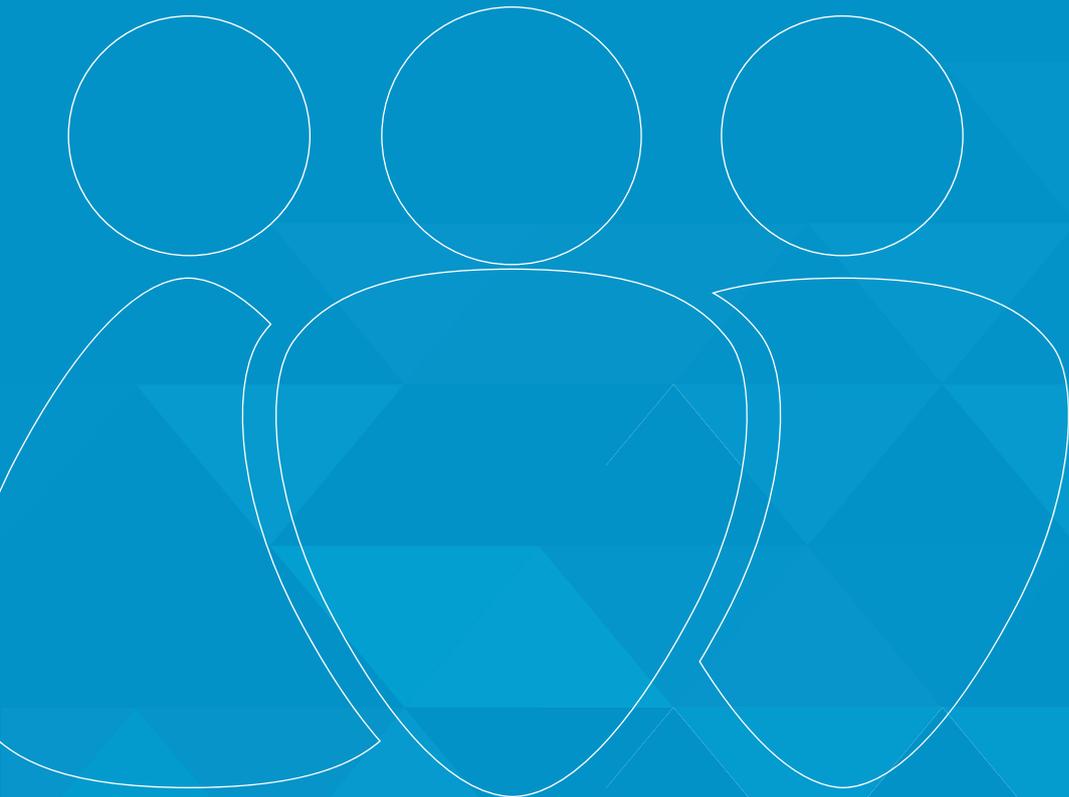
The SNHR has also entered into discussions with several European countries in order to sign similar agreements aimed at sharing data to be used in justice and accountability cases, exposing the perpetrators of violations and obstructing the rehabilitation of the Syrian regime, tens of thousands of whose officials and members are directly involved in committing crimes against humanity and war crimes. Under Common Article I to the Geneva Conventions, all States that have ratified the Geneva Conventions - more than 193 nations in total - should make every effort to ensure respect for the provisions of these agreements by any State which violates them; at present, there is no government on earth violating the Geneva Conventions as horrendously as the Syrian government appointed by the Syrian regime through murder, torture, enforced disappearance, indiscriminate shelling, forced displacement and other types of violations, which are of such a staggering magnitude as to constitute crimes against humanity or war crimes.

Since 2011, the SNHR has provided the United Nations with data on numerous incidents of violations, with the Office of the High Commissioner for Human Rights reliant on this data as one of the most prominent sources of information in all its analyses, including in calculating the death toll of conflict victims in Syria, which continued until its last analysis issued in April 2014. The SNHR has also been actively cooperating with and supporting the work of the Independent International Commission of Inquiry for nearly eight years, with this cooperation continuing up to the present day. In addition, we submit a monthly report on the most notable human rights violations in Syria to the United Nations Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs. The SNHR has also provided the Working Group on Enforced or Involuntary Disappearances with forms on a weekly basis for several years, with this cooperation continuing to the present day, as is shown in the appendix of the working group's annual report on Syria, as well as providing data to a number of special rapporteurs such as the Special Rapporteur on extrajudicial, summary or arbitrary executions and the Special Rapporteur on torture.



The Syrian Network for Human Rights places all its capabilities and data at the disposal of any international, judicial or economic body in order to contribute to the imposition of any form of accountability and punishment against the Syrian regime and its allies, and against all perpetrators of violations in Syria, and calls on all the countries of the world to do everything in their power to ensure that no government or regime violates the Geneva Conventions and that every effort is made to hold those which do so accountable; such efforts would also contribute significantly to deterring any regime from considering following the example of the Syrian regime by allying with Russia or China to protect it in the UN Security Council and thus being granted impunity to continue to commit crimes indefinitely. The Syrian Network for Human Rights will continue to document the violations and expose the perpetrators as much as possible, considering this to be an integral part of its duty to defend human rights in Syria and in order to honor the maxim which it has always upheld: “No Justice without Accountability”.





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