

Press Release

Geneva: SNHR Takes Part in a Side-Event on the Sidelines of the 39th Session of the Human Rights Council

The Enforced-Disappearance Issue Should always be Present on the International Stage

SNHR

SYRIAN NETWORK FOR HUMAN RIGHTS

الشبكة السورية لحقوق الإنسان

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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.



GENEVA – September 17, 2018: three Syrian groups, the Syrian Network for Human Rights (SNHR), the Syrian Center for Media and Freedom of Expression (SCM), and With Justice organization, organized a side-event at the Human Rights Council in Geneva. The event was held on the sidelines of the Human Rights Council's 39th session which tackled the issue of the Syrian regime acknowledging that hundreds of forcibly-disappeared Syrian citizens had died, as a number of Syrian and international groups were in attendance, as well as the ambassador of Liechtenstein.

SNHR has released two reports on this sensitive issue where the session was held to shed light on the issue of the Syrian regime revealing the fate of a number of forcibly-disappeared persons and registering them as dead in civil records which started to surface in April 2018. Moderated by Wael Sawwah, head of With Justice organization, the session started with Fadel Abdul Ghany, chairman of SNHR, who focused on three main points. Abdul Ghany noted firstly that the Syrian regime hasn't spared any effort to arrest activists and residents since the very first weeks of the popular uprising, stressing that there are still around 127,000 detainees in the Syrian regime's prisons and detention centers, including approximately 85,000 citizens who have become forcibly-disappeared. Those, Abdul Ghany added, are being subjected to extremely severe and sadistic torture methods. Abdul Ghany also noted that SNHR's database contains the details of approximately 13,000 victims who died due to torture inside detention centers for the Syrian regime. He then proceeded to point out that the Syrian regime has revealed the fate of 836 cases through civil registry offices, stressing that revealing those deaths by the Syrian regime without specifying the cause of death or delivering dead bodies does not constitute a true revelation according to the international law. As such, the fate of those is still considered unknown. Moreover, Abdul Ghany raised the question that if the Syrian regime has always denied having forcibly-disappeared detainees, how could it know that they died?

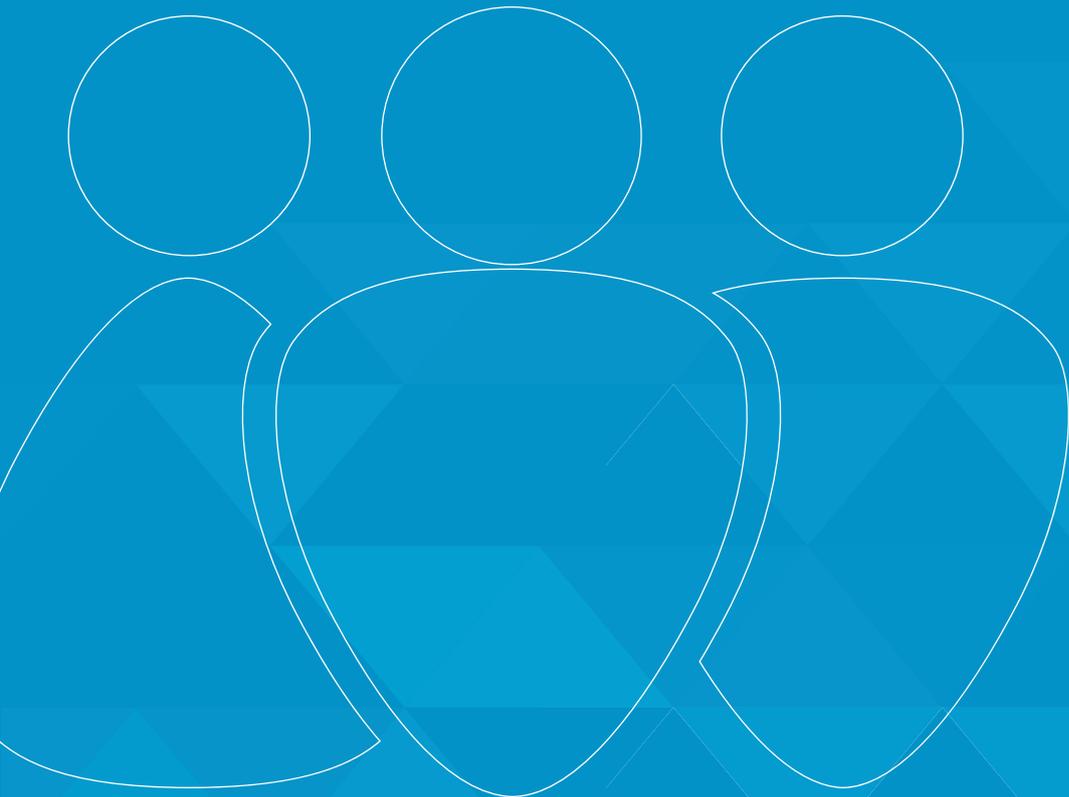


Trying to explain the Syrian regime's decision to reveal the fate forcibly-disappeared persons after denying to have him in the first place, he presented two possible answers, first: the Syrian regime wants to show that it achieved victory on the ground and now all that is left to do is to address the detainees file so residents and society submit again to its rule, accepting that this is their only choice. Second: the Russian regime instructed the Syrian regime to do so in order to end this file which impedes reaching an end to the Syrian catastrophe from Russia's standpoint. Abdul Ghany recommended that the Security Council holds an emergency session to discuss this crucial issue that affects the lives of hundreds of thousands of Syrian citizens.

Yousef Wahbi, head of the Violation Documentation Center, spoke next, emphasizing the necessity to hold those who are involved accountable at this crucial round of violations. Wahbi stressed that a special court should be established by the United Nations General Assembly. Wael Sawwah, head of With Justice organization, was the next and final speaker, where he shed light on the implications the detainees issue has on the political path, noting that no progress in the path of negotiations will be possible without a fair solution to the issue of the forcibly-disappeared.

This pivotal initiative comes as a result of the collaboration and coordination between Syrian groups. SNHR's participation in organizing this event is part of the group's advocacy and connection efforts, as well as shedding light on the indispensable importance of the enforced-disappearance issue to the Syrian people.





@snhr



Info@sn4hr.org

www.sn4hr.org

