Ten Years of Relentless Violations of Children's Rights Documented by the Syrian Network for Human Rights

Launch Event of SNHR Ninth Annual Report on Violations against Children in Syria

Over the past ten years, children in Syria have been subjected to all sorts of human rights and international humanitarian law violations, with no distinction made by warring parties between adults and children, nor consideration for children’s unique vulnerability and protected status under IHL. There is barely any atrocity that adults were subjected to throughout the Syrian conflict that was not inflicted upon children as well. These appalling violations, which include extrajudicial killings, arbitrary arrest and detention, torture, sexual violence, conscription, displacement, and forced abandonment of education, have had an unspoken impact on boys and girls across Syria, as well as lasting consequences on the future of surviving children, on their communities and on the country as a whole.

According to the information verified by the Syrian Network for Human Rights (SNHR), between March 2011 and January 2021 at least 29,406 children were killed in Syria, including 179 as a result of torture, with at least 4,956 more currently under arrest/detention or forcibly disappeared at the hands of parties to the conflict and their controlling forces. The data gathered by SNHR shows that the Syrian regime and its allies have been by far the most prolific perpetrators of every sort of violations and crimes against children compared to the other warring parties.

In November 2020, SNHR issued its Ninth Annual Report on Violations against Children in Syria (available at: https://sn4hr.org/?p=55655 ). The report concluded that the staggering violations perpetrated against children in Syria – some of which in a widespread manner – amounted to crimes against humanity and war crimes. These violations, SNHR argued, require a firm and urgent response on the part of the international community, as well as a short- and long-term strategy in order to protect Syria’s children.

The event will mark the official launch of SNHR’s report and will focus on the following questions:

- What is the role of grave violations against children in the broader strategy of warring parties in Syria? How to situate these violations in the overall trajectory of the Syrian conflict over the past ten years?
- What type of support can be provided to children and their families?
- What are the overall impact and long-term effects of these violations on Syria’s children and on the Syrian society as a whole? And what are their implications for the political process and the overall stability and security of the country?
- Why has the international community failed to take any action to end violations of children’s rights thus far, despite their appalling scale and gravity?
- In addition to political and economic sanctions, and criminal cases filed under the principle of universal jurisdiction, which other tools are available to pressure the Syrian regime and all parties to the conflict in Syria to end the atrocious violations against children documented in the SNHR report? How to foster effective accountability for these violations? And what is the role Syrian and international organizations can play?