

Press release

Brussels: SNHR and Other Syrian Organizations Jointly Organize Two Events in Parallel with Brussels III Conference

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.



Brussels - March 12-13, 2019: The Syrian Network for Human Rights (SNHR), in cooperation with several other Syrian organizations, jointly organized two events on the sidelines of the recent Brussels III Donor Conference, demonstrating the essential nature of the contribution of organizations active in this field to Syrian civil society, with speakers presenting a range of ideas and making various recommendations.

The first event, entitled “Rewarding War Crimes: The Hidden Price Tag of Business in Syria”, which was held at the International Press Center, was jointly organized by SNHR, the Syrian Legal Development Programme, and Baytna Syria. Distinguished speakers at the event included Ibrahim Olabi, Founder of the Syrian Legal Development Programme, along with Fadel Abdul Ghany, Chairman of the Syrian Network for Human Rights, Assaad al Achi, the Executive Director of Baytna Syria, Emma Beals, an independent investigative journalist and researcher, and Wayne Jordash, barrister and managing partner at Global Rights Compliance. The event was also attended by a number of researchers, journalists, politicians and representatives of Syrian civil society organizations.

In his speech at the event, SNHR Chairman Fadel Abdul Ghany spoke about the extent, continuity and accumulation of the violations perpetrated in Syria, pointing out that in many cases these constitute crimes against humanity and war crimes. The SNHR founder explained that the Syrian regime would not have been able to perpetrate such a vast number of crimes without the availability of massive funding for the regime to support its military machine and pay for an enormous arsenal of munitions, as well as for the salaries of regular fighters and local militias. Abdul Ghany further noted out that the Syrian regime has received the largest proportion of this funding from the State of Iran, as well as from wealthy Syrian business-owners loyal to the regime who have used their companies mainly in support of these violations, playing a role similar to that of those directly responsible for perpetrating the violations. The SNHR chief revealed that individuals and companies from outside



Syria are engaged in efforts to help the Syrian regime, and stressed that the SNHR is trying to expose the actions of these individuals and the companies that they own, both inside and outside Syria, stressing that this type of documentation is a difficult and complex process. Finally, Mr. Abdul Ghany emphasized that no-one wants the sanctions merely for the sake of imposing sanctions, but rather to deter the Syrian regime and its allies from committing further violations, and to weaken it to a degree where it will be forced to accept participation in a political process that contributes to transferring Syria from hereditary rule to a democratic pluralist system of governance.



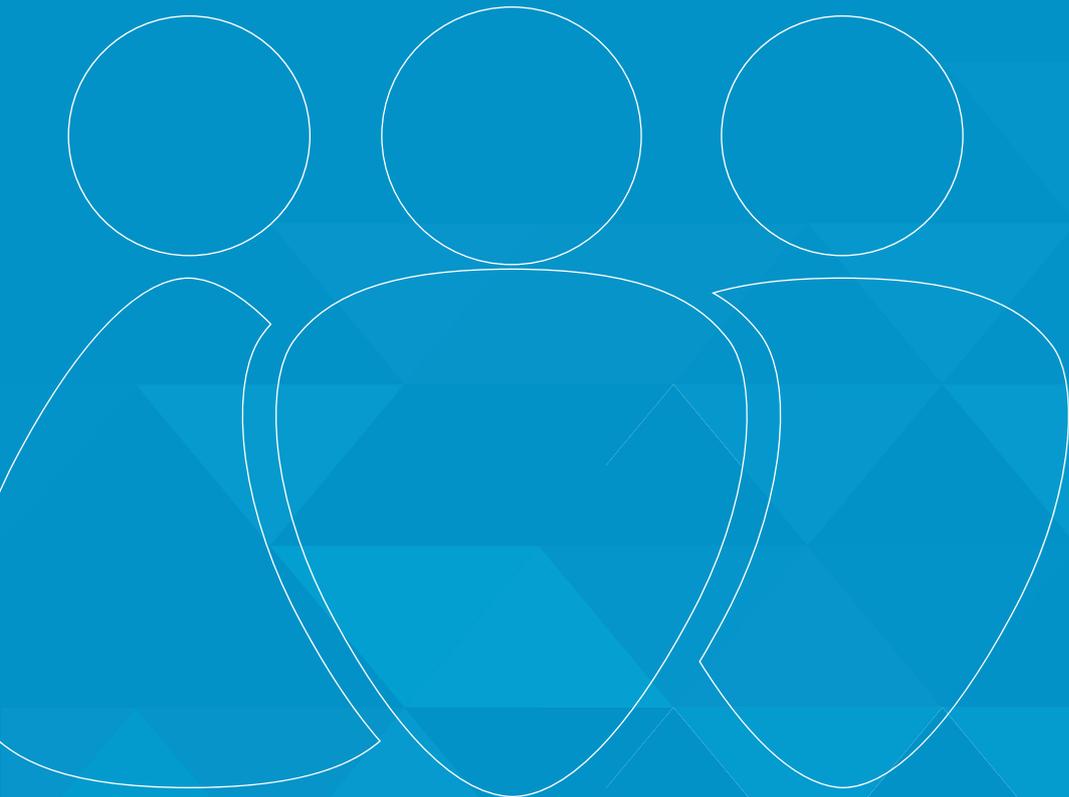
The second event, entitled “Protection of Aid Workers in Syria”, which was also held on March 13 at the International Press Center, was jointly organized by the Syrian Network for Human Rights (SNHR), the Syrian American Medical Society (SAMS), the Syrian Civil Defense, Baytna Syria, and the American Relief Coalition for Syria (ARCS).

Fadel Abdul Ghany, the Chairman of the Syrian Network for Human Rights, was again one of the key speakers, along with Mohamad Katoub, Advocacy Senior Manager at the Syrian American Medical Society, Raed al Saleh, Director of the Syrian Civil Defense, and Lotte Leicht, European Unit Director at Human Rights Watch. The session was moderated by As-saad al Achi, the Executive Director of Baytna Syria. The event was attended by a number of researchers, politicians, journalists and representatives of Syrian civil society organizations.

In his speech at this event, the SNHR Chairman said that the most prominent aspect of the Syrian conflict is the staggering scale of human loss among personnel working in the humanitarian field compared to other conflicts, with almost 1,100 documented killed to date, and nearly 4,000 are still detained. He further revealed that approximately 1,463 humanitarian facilities have been targeted, emphasizing that these figures represent only the minimal number documented. Abdul Ghany stressed that the Syrian regime is responsible for the vast majority of violations, leaving all other perpetrators in the conflict far behind in terms of numbers. He also referred to the severe challenges facing humanitarian workers in Syria, and concluded by underlining the necessity of providing special protection for this sector, and immediate intervention to punish those who perpetrate violations against personnel in this field.

A primary feature characterizing both events was that they were organized, planned and coordinated by Syrian organizations, which were responsible for setting the agenda, deciding on the themes and extending invitations, reflecting the issues that these organizations wish to prioritize for discussion and research.





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