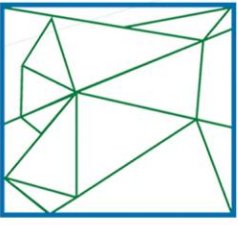


سوريون
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Syrians
For Truth
& Justice



August 2017



They Sold Everything for a Word on their Son...

Account of the Disappeared Ahmad Mustafa Arafat by the Political Security Forces



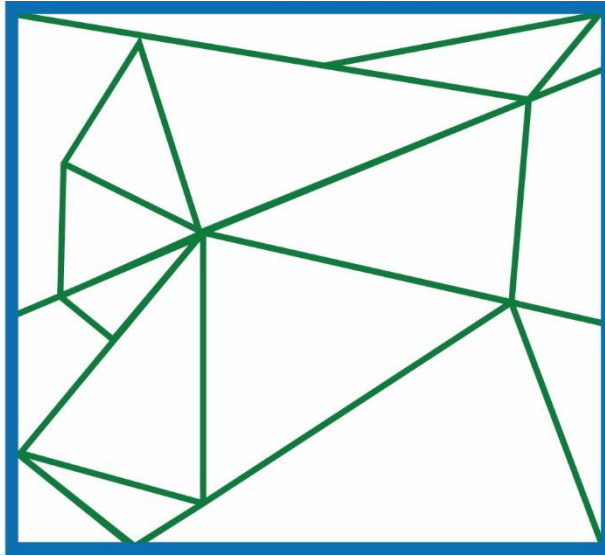
About Syrians for Truth and Justice/STJ

[Syrians for Truth and Justice /STJ](#) is a nonprofit, nongovernmental, independent Syrian organization. STJ includes many defenders and human rights defenders from Syria and from different backgrounds and affiliations, including academics of other nationalities.

The organization works for Syria, where all Syrians, without discrimination, should be accorded dignity, justice and equal human rights.

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The disappeared Ahmed Mustafa Arafat, born in Ma'arat Nu'man in 1979, he studied there and got the preparatory certificate. He used to live in Damascus countryside and worked at a butcher's shop in Assal al-Ward west of Yabrud city. He is married with four children, they are Suad, 13, Khadija who is 10, Alaa is 7, and Ryan is 4 years old.

Mustafa Arafat spoke to Syrians for Truth and Justice/STJ¹ about the story of his son's disappearance. He said that on January 15, 2013, Ahmed travelled to Damascus to buy some meat, but he did not return home until this moment. This led the family to look for him firstly in hospitals, excluding him being arrested, as he did not have any political activities. Subsequently, after the family failed to get any information about Ahmed, they retained a lawyer who found out that he was arrested in the Political Security Branch in Damascus, and that he was arrested on al-Tall checkpoint operated by the Political Security al-Tall city, Damascus countryside, on charges of instigating against the regime.

The lawyer, hired by the family to release Ahmed, asked for a big amount of money, about 4 million Syrian pounds, approximately \$25,000 at the time, but the family did not have this amount, besides they could not trust that lawyer, nor even trust mediators, and other brokers who also offered the same thing. It should be noted that the lawyer's fees exceeded 700 thousand Syrian pounds, approximately \$5000 at the time, which Ahmed's family borrowed most of it.

Ahmed's absence affected his family so much as he was the only breadwinner of his family. Because his father was busy searching for him, he had to stop working, so the two families became without breadwinners, and it was forced to sell all its belongings and return to Ma'arat al-Nu'man in Idlib province north of Syria.

In 2016, almost a year ago, a detainee who was released from one of the detention facilities operated by the Syrian security apparatus, contacted Ahmad's father and told him that he had spent seven months with Ahmed in Sednaya Military Prison. This was the last news they heard about Ahmed, and until this moment, they could not find out any new news. Ahmad's father said.

¹ The interview was conducted on July 20, 2017 at Mustafa Arafat's father's house in Ma'arat Nu'man.

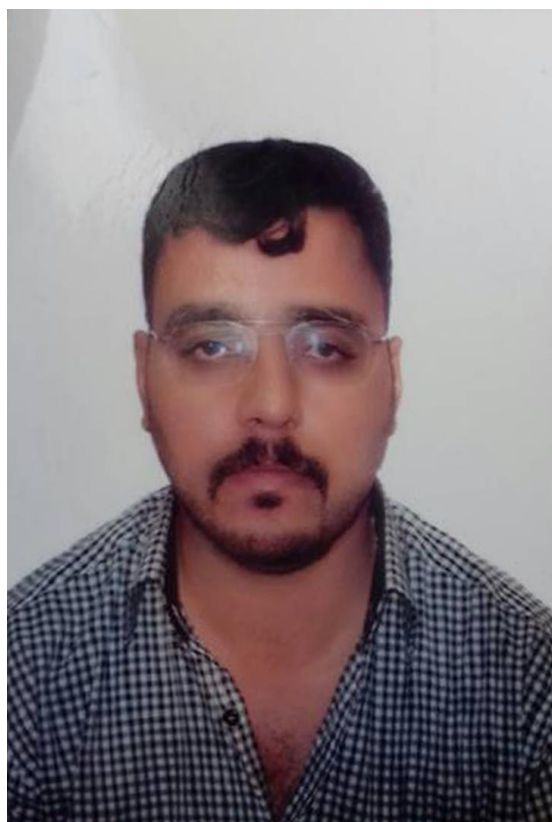


According to the field researcher of STJ, who met Ahmad's father, signs of confusion and calamity were clear on him as a result of the arrest of his son. In this context, Ahmad's father said:

“The absence of Ahmed had a great psychological effect on us, whenever we try to forget, for just a moment, his children reminded us as they said, we want our dad... Where is my dad? Therefore, everyone started crying and wailing once again, as if Ahmed was just arrested. However, we always thought about his fate and wondered if he was been killed, or would he be released soon? Many questions came to our minds, and our calamity renewed every day.”

Ahmed's father was not a well-paid man to get four million Syrian pounds that the lawyer and the intermediaries had asked for to release his son. As for Ahmad's wife, she had no source of income except her husband's family and some charities that met a small part of her family needs. Now they live in extreme poverty, which is reflected on their daily lives, their house is almost out of household items, and the children cannot wear new clothes.

Ahmed's wife and her children still live in Ahmed's house up to now, they hope that he will be released one day and they can return to normal life.



Picture of Ahmad Arafat – Source: his family