

August 2017



“Lost All the Possessions Searching for the Truth”

Account of the Disappeared Hussein Mustafa al-Khalaf
By the Syrian Army

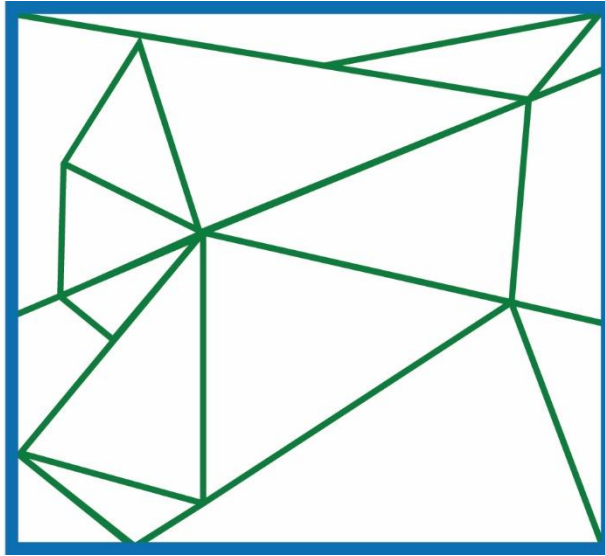
About Syrians for Truth and Justice/STJ

[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 Hussein Mustafa al-Khalaf, born on 1 January 1982 in al-Houla, Homs *province*, his mother is Radiya. He is married with three children; his third child was born while he was disappeared, as his wife was pregnant at the time. Hussein works as a car repairperson besides working in transporting goods by his car to various locations in Syria from his residence place in Kafr Laha /al-Houla.

On 28 April 2012, Hussein was transporting some goods to [As-Suwaida](#) with his uncle when they were halted by elements of al-Bayerli, a Syrian army military checkpoint located in Tell Dahab on [al-Houla Road](#). This coincided that some armed opposition factions attacked the checkpoint at the time of Hussein's presence, and some clashes occurred before the army could repel their attack. After that, the elements of the checkpoint detained Hussein along with his car, and let the uncle go, the elements arrested Hussein after they blindfolded him and put him in a vehicle belonging to them. It should be mentioned that Hussein's car was kept in detention by the checkpoint elements for a week and was subsequently restored by his family, according to a member of the disappeared Hussein's family who testified to Syrians for Truth and Justice/STJ.

After his arrest there was NO NEWS of him, so his family paid hundreds of thousands of Syrian pounds to lawyers and officials acting as mediators in the "tafiash" operation to find out his fate, or to make promises to release him.

The disappearance of Hussein left a significant financial effect on his family. Therefore the family consisting of the wife and children were forced to flee and live with Hussein's parents; they are still suffering of the effects of paying large sums of money to know his fate. Moreover, they had to sell a lot of their belongings in order to survive the loss of their only breadwinner.

A member of Hussein's family describes the psychological effects of his disappearance, saying:

"The psychological impact of Hussein's disappearance was the greatest as we always had different thoughts about the fate of Hussein, is he alive or dead? Is he being tortured now? Is he okay? How did he disappear? Why did he disappear from our lives?"

We hear about many missing persons who were seen in some prisons and whose families learned their whereabouts and their wellbeing, but unfortunately in the case of Hussein and since his disappeared so far, we did not know any information about him except some unconfirmed rumors. For instance, a worker in one of the organizations in Turkey told me that he was sure that he met Hussein outside the prison, but he did not mention other details, the thing that greatly confused us.



Three years after Hussein's disappearance, one of the detainees from our village, who was detained in a military security branch before being transferred to Sednaya Prison and being released later said, being asked about Hussein, that he met him in a military security branch. But the next day, he returned and denied his statement as he was under great psychological and physical trauma and was not in his full mental faculties."