

August 2017



Disappeared With 800 Others All At Once

Account of the Disappeared Omar Mahmoud Bakro by Iraqi militias



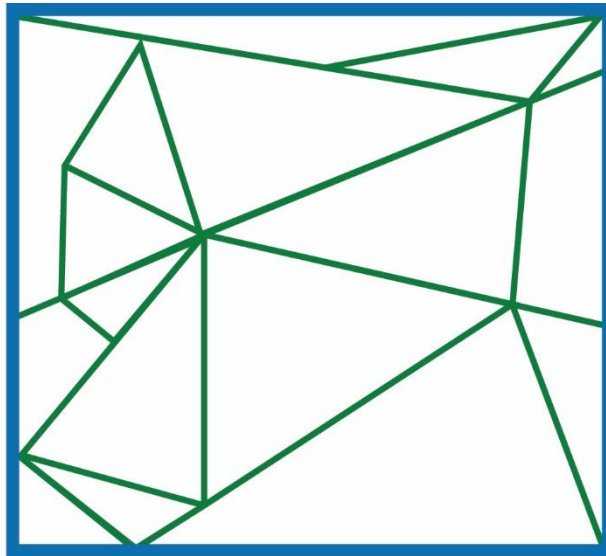
About Syrians for Truth and Justice/STJ

[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.

سوريون
من أجل
الحقيقة
والعدالة

Syrians
For Truth
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Omar Mahmoud Bakro, from al-Shaghour located in Damascus, is married with three children, with dual nationality, Syrian and Russian. He worked in trade and export between Russia and Syria and lived in Babbila town, in the countryside of Damascus.

During March 2014, he and about 800 other people were arrested by a checkpoint in Babbila, according to a member of his family who testified¹ to Syrians for truth and justice/STJ and said that the checkpoint was operated by one of the Iraqi militias who carried out this indiscriminate arrest. He added that the fate of those 800, as well as Omar's is still unknown.

According to Omar's family, one of the officers in Palestine Branch identified as the Colonel Bassam Taleb, asked for the detainees so they were transferred to Palestine Branch 235 for three months. Then, they were transferred to Branch 215 affiliated to the Military Security Service for another three months. After that, they were transported to several military branches when Omar's family lost any trace of him as they were trying to track his transfer among branches through a process of "al-Tafeish" which means the search for the person through his personal data in the databases of the security services, which was very expensive as the cost of the one "al-tafeish" process estimated at approximately \$1000. The family was in constant contact with many families of the 800 disappeared victims who disappeared with Omar at the same time and tried to coordinate among themselves but they reached the same conclusions.

Omar had been the main breadwinner of his family, leaving in his disappearance his children without any other source of livelihood, but according to Omar's family, the financial impact is nothing compared to the psychological impact of his disappearance; they do not know anything about him. One of his family members says in this regard:

"We do not know anything about Omar, we sometimes hope to see him, but soon we get disappointed because we do not know his fate or any information about him, we want to know anything, anything, about him. Is he still alive or dead? Is he being tortured now? Is he okay? or is he ...?"

¹ The interview was conducted on 14 July 2017 via the Internet.