

 INTERNATIONAL MEETING
ON SYRIAN SETTLEMENT
Astana, January 23-24, 2017

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Swap of Combatants Does Not Solve Crisis of Tens of Thousands Detainees and Missing in Syria

Is Astana the Best Place to Solve the Issue of Detainees and Abductees in Syria?

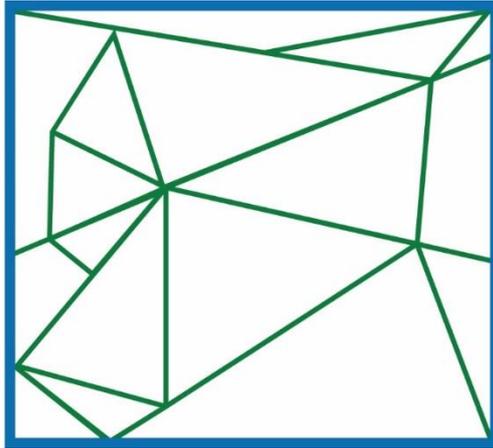
About Syrians for Truth and Justice/STJ

[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
& Justice



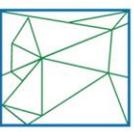
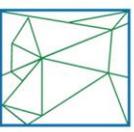


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Introduction:

The first round of the [Astana negotiations](#) sponsored by Russia, Iran and Turkey was held in the Kazakh capital on January 24, 2017. The talks revolved around the establishment of a "trilateral mechanism" to monitor the ceasefire, ensures its strict compliance by parties to the conflict to prevent any provocations and to determine the extent of its application, these areas were subsequently designated as "de-escalation/reducing tension" zones between the military parties.

December 31, 2016, The UN Security Council unanimously adopted [resolution No. 2336](#) on, which was submitted by Russia and Turkey after prolonged talks in the Turkish capital of Ankara with the Syrian opposition, and the resolution was aimed at supporting the efforts by Russia and Turkey to end the violence in Syria, according The United Nations.

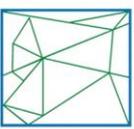
After the first meeting in Astana, Mohamed Alloush, the head of the Syrian opposition delegation to the negotiations, [stated](#) that they had spoken with the Russian to release the female detainees from Syrian prisons, adding that the Russians had promised that they would all be released.

Preface:

Following the agreement on the fourth de-escalation zone¹ in Idlib province in "Astana-6" on September 14, 2017, there is a growing talk on finding a solution to the issue of detainees and missing persons in Syria. The Syrian opposition through Dr. Yahya al-Aridi, the delegation spokesperson to Astana estimated number of the detainees² in Syrian government jails to be 250,000 inmates, and [stated in a press release](#) that two key issues were discussed at the "Astana-6" conference, firstly: the inclusion of Idlib into areas of 'reducing tension/de-escalation" zones and the second: the case of detainees.

¹ Russia, Turkey and Iran, as the guarantor countries for the ceasefire in Syria, issued a joint statement on the mechanism for the process of reducing tension zones. According to the memorandum of 4 May 2017, these zones include Eastern Ghouta, some parts in the north of Homs province, Idlib province, and some Parts of neighboring provinces (Latakia, Hama, and Aleppo) and also some parts of southern Syria.

² There are no precise figures on the actual number of the forcibly disappeared, arbitrarily detained and kidnapped and who have died in the custodies, however, Syrian documentation centers and international organizations estimate the number to be tens of thousands since March 2011.



Alexander Lavrentiev, the head of the Russian delegation to "Astana-6", [vowed](#) following the conference that the Russian side would make further measures to respond to the opposition's demand to prompt the process of "releasing prisoners and handing over dead bodies."

Concerning the main topics on the agenda of the seventh round of the Astana negotiations on Syria scheduled by the end of October 2017, Kazakh Foreign Minister Kairat Abdrakhmanov [declared](#) on 6 October 2017, that representatives of the Syrian armed opposition at Astana-6 had paid special attention to the issue of "captives and hostages", stressing that the opposition hoped to find a solution to these issues with the contribution of the Guarantor Powers.

The Russian side had proposed the formation of a "Working Group" on the exchange of detainees [in the words of](#) Alexander Lavrentyev, the Russian lead delegator to Astana negotiations on Monday, 14 March 2017.

First: The Most Notable Patterns that Characterized the Exchanges that the Civilians were one of its parts:

Syrians for truth and justice-STJ in this report has documented at least 37 outstanding exchange/swap/exchange transactions in Syria from 2012 to the date of preparing this report in October 2017, between all parties to the conflicting in Syria, especially the Syrian government and the armed opposition. This figure includes only the exchanges in which the civilians formed one part of it (i.e. we only mentioned the exchanges that included the presence of civilians). The report-based team has not mentioned hundreds of other exchanges where only combatants or their bodies have been the subject of exchange. The report attempts to explain the sufferings of thousands of civilians who were exchanged and how they were used as a tool for political and military pressure on the one hand and the risk of reducing the issue of detainees and missing persons in Syria by exchanging combatants between the conflicting parties.

Several patterns were observed in the exchanges that had been documented:

1. Most of the exchanges, STJ could document, had been mediated by external States, both regional and Gulf states.
2. It was noted that exchanges involving fighters of the Syrian army, police or security were slow and had a bureaucratic control on the exchange procedures until the process of their release. Whereas all exchanges involving foreign fighters (combatants of all Parties to the conflict, in particular fighters of the Lebanese Hezbollah and Iranian militias) were more rapid than others.



3. Nepotism and mediation have played a significant role in identifying the persons to be exchanged for, for example, when there were talks on a deal or a swap, the "black market" that accompany the process was being active, because people were rushing to pay large sums of money often to put their children's names in the bargain. Besides, kinship and knowledge often played a role in identifying the persons whom must be released. Some names for ordinary civilians were inserted in the lists to cover the names of "others important in the deal", hence, some of the ordinary prisoners were unaware of the exchange process only after their release; they believed that they had been released because of a Presidential Amnesty or something like that.
4. A series of financial extortion to families of detainees and missing persons accompanied many exchanges; particularly of people who always claimed to be able to release their sons and daughters as soon as inserting their names on the exchange lists. Dozens of cases of fraud against the residents occurred.
5. Spread of the "culture of swap" between parties to the conflict has led to an increase in the arbitrary abduction and detention of civilians (in advance), in order to swap them later or take them as hostages and gain military, political and financial benefits through pressuring their relatives.
6. Exact details of most of the exchanges, especially the large, remain unclear, owing to media and political propaganda that usually accompany the exchanges. When exchanges are promoted as a political victory and interest in the release of civilians, the real gains of parties to the conflict reveal after periods. In many cases, high-rank personalities and military commands found to be included in exchanges, as well as substantial sums of money were paid to the kidnapers, and many names of civilians have been inserted to hide the key people in the swap.

Second: Riskis of Transferring the Case of Detainees, Disappeared and Abductees to Astana without Controls and Building on what was Theoretically Accomplished in Geneva:

- The Astana Talks characterized to be talks between military actors and tend to delve into precise military details in order to stabilize and monitor the ceasefire and establish de-escalation zones-areas. Arousing the issue of detainees and missing in this framework/context without controls and clear frameworks may reduce the issue of exchanging combatants, especially as the talks are usually confined to the "exchange of combatants or their bodies" and not finding a real solution to a case involving hundreds of thousands of Syrians. The Geneva negotiations constitute an international framework for



discussing political transition issues along with a number of other issues, including the issue of detainees/prisoners in accordance with UN and international resolutions, for example, in article 12, Security Council resolution [2254](#) (2015) called on parties to the conflict to release each arbitrarily detainee, in particular women and children. In its article 11, Security Council resolution [2139](#) (2014) condemned arbitrary detention and called for the release of detainees, which said:

“Strongly condemns the arbitrary detention and torture of civilians in Syria, notably in prisons and detention facilities, as well as the kidnappings, abductions and forced disappearances, and demands the immediate end of these practices and the release of all arbitrarily detained persons starting with women and children, as well as sick, wounded and elderly people and including UN personnel and journalists”

Security Council resolution [2118](#) (2013) speaks in annex II on the steps and measures identified by the Security Council to the warring parties to ensure full implementation of the six-point plan, and with regard to the subject of detainees, it says:

“Intensification of the pace and scale of release of arbitrarily detained persons, including especially vulnerable categories of persons, and persons involved in peaceful political activities; the provision, without delay and through appropriate channels, of a list of all places in which such persons are being detained; the immediate organization of access to such locations; and the provision, through appropriate channels, of prompt responses to all written requests for information, access or release regarding such persons;

[Geneva Communiqué](#) of 30 June 2012 had confirmed the implementation of the steps and measures identified by the parties to secure the full implementation of the six-point plan and both resolutions of the Security Council, including the immediate cessation of violence in all its forms, including the "release of persons arbitrarily detained".

- STJ, through the declarations and statements that have been circulated since the start of the Astana negotiations on January 24, 2017, have noticed an increased use of terms that reverse the essence of the problem of arbitrary detention and enforced disappearance (the missing persons in general) in Syria. Despite [International Organizations](#), [United Nations Bodies](#) and [local Syrian organizations](#) speak about tens of thousands of detainees, disappeared and kidnapped in Syria, vague and unclear terms are used in the course of talking about those issues in Astana such as (Exchange of detainees – release of captives”, in Military context "exchanging combatants – handing over dead bodies – exchanging hostages... etc). Sometimes the issue of detainees and abductees in Syria is reduced by only releasing female detainees and children (it is important and necessary to release these categories in any case), but are only being demanded on a basis with tradition, without explicitly mentioning tens of thousands of other cases.

- The lack of clarity and transparency in referring to the issue of detainees and disappeared in Syria in accordance with the international laws applicable in Syria and the failure to mention the parties clearly carry out that, all encourage, in one way or another, the occurrence of arbitrary abductions and detentions of civilians in advance to be exchanged for later.

Third: Proposals and Recommendations:

- **To the guarantor states of Astana Talks:**

1. To separate the issue of detainees and missing from the military track.
2. If the issue of detainees and missing is included as a basic item in Astana Talks, it must not be reduced to the exchange of combatants with other combatants, or swaps.
3. To secure that Syrian civil society and the families of the victims are involved when talking about the issue of detainees and missing persons.

- **To the Syrian government, the Syrian opposition and other armed groups:**

- A. To the Syrian government:**

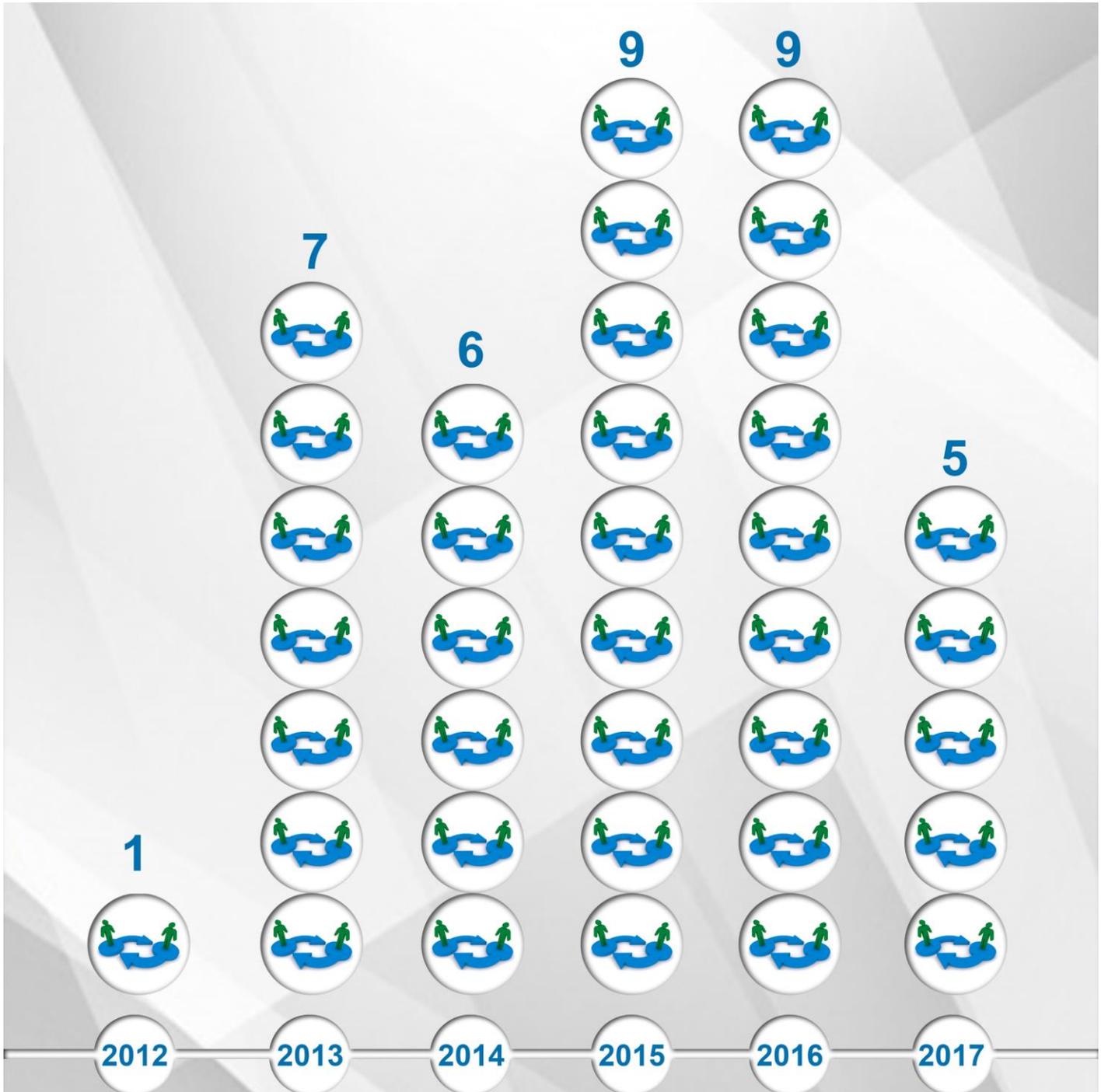
1. To cease all executions of detainees, especially those brought before summary military courts.
2. Cessation the transfer of detainees to the summary military court and Counter-Terrorism Court, the abolition of their sentences, and any other court's sentences that do not observe international standards of fair trial.
3. Not to destroy documents and reports of the forcibly disappeared persons and detainees, ensure that data of all detainees are registered, inform all detainees with the reason of detaining them, periodically, impartially review the motives for their detention and ensure that all detainees have access to the necessary health care.
4. Transfer all detainees to known/recognized places of detention, and allow visits to prisons to the families, the International Committee of the Red Cross and the ad-hoc committees.
5. To allow the Independent International Commission of Inquiry on Syria to conduct investigations into the violations occurring in Syria.

B. To the Syrian oppositions and other armed groups:

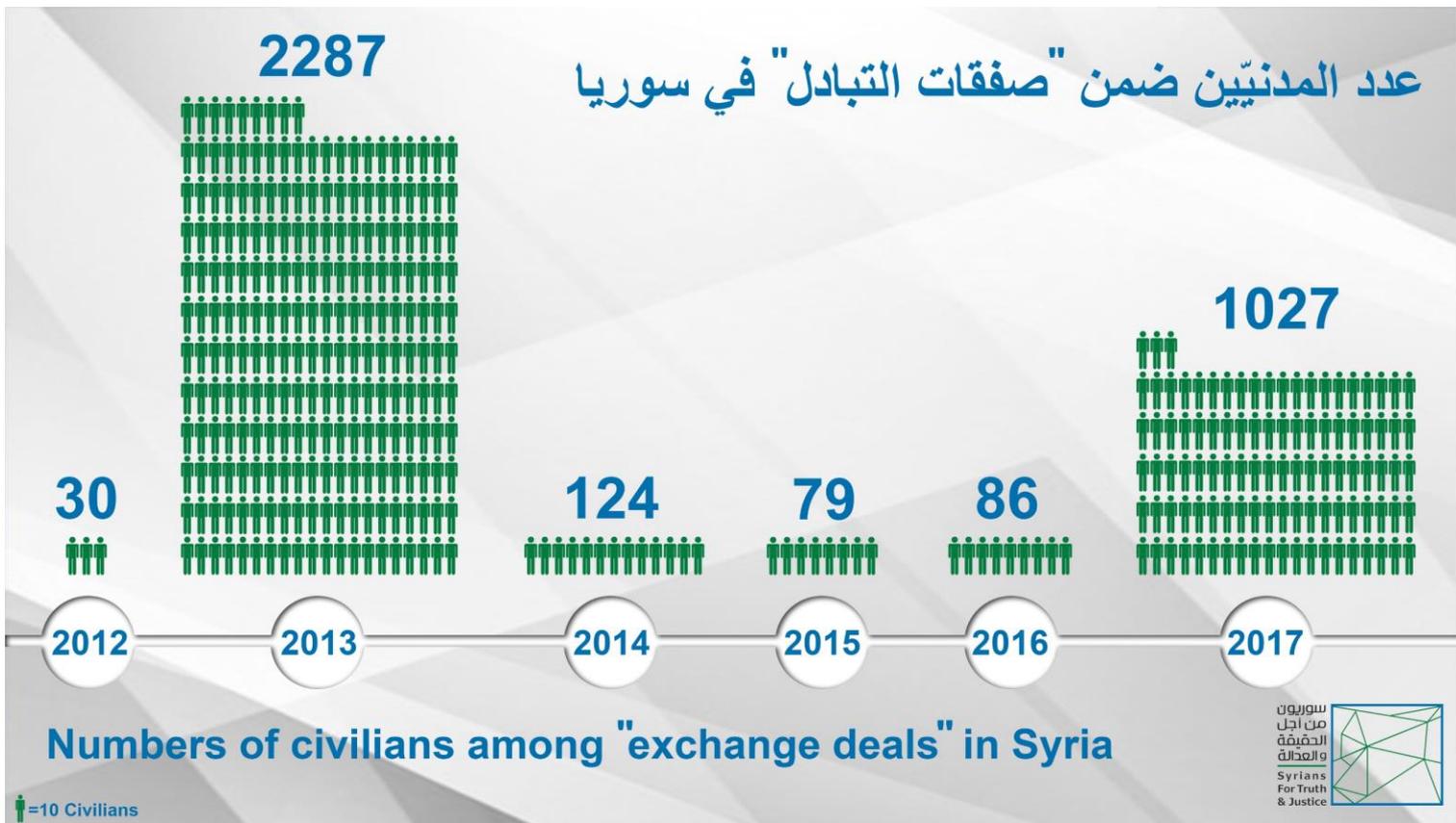
1. The cessation of all abductions, arbitrary arrests and enforced disappearances, and the immediate reveal of the fate of the disappeared.
2. Submit lists of names of abductees and disappeared to relatives of the disappeared and to relevant international organizations.
3. Register names and data of all detainees and transfer them to known/recognized places of detention.
4. Inform detainees of the reasons for their detention as soon as possible, provide them with access to the outside world, ensure that they have the right to defend themselves, and provide the right to challenge the legality of their detention.

• To the Office of the United Nations Special Envoy (Staffan de Mistura):

1. To separate the issue of detainees from the political track, that is, to restore the humanitarian character of the case (outside the political negotiations).
2. To provide a periodic briefing to the Security Council on the issue of detainees and missing persons in Syria in isolation from the political negotiating file.
3. To ensure that the issue of detainees and disappeared persons in Syria is prevented from being transferred to the issue of prisoner exchange, hostages and combatants.



عدد "صفقات التبادل" التي كان من ضمنها مدنيون في سوريا
Number of "exchange deals" which included civilians in Syria





Top "exchange deals" which included civilians in Syria

Year **2012** witnessed the first public exchange deal between the Syrian government and "Omar Al-Faruk" from the armed opposition groups who released a captive fighter of the Syrian governmental forces in **exchange for releasing 30 civilian** detainees from the Syrian security forces, including women and children.

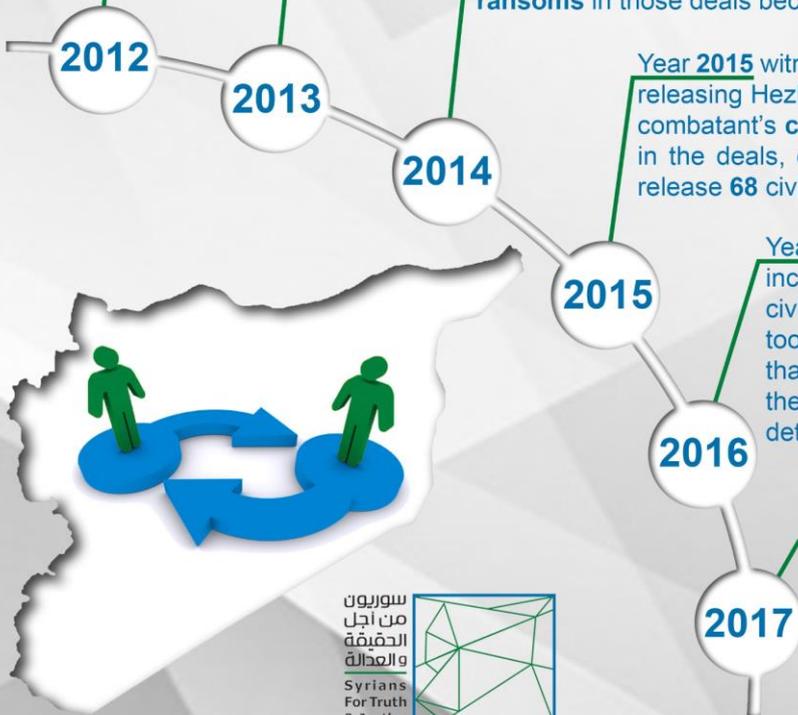
Year **2013** witnessed the **biggest** number of released civilians in exchange deals, and one of the biggest deals in the Syrian conflict, **48** Iranian fighters were released in exchange for releasing **2130** civilian detainees from the Syrian security forces, including **76**. 2013 Also witnessed 6 other deals as well. This year's exchange deals proved the participation of **Iran and Hezbollah** combatants in the Syrian conflict.

Year **2014** witnessed **7** exchange deals, most of the deals included **kidnapped** civilians, **71** kidnapped civilians were freed from the opposition forces, in exchange for releasing **53** civilian detainees from the Syrian security forces, and paying **ransoms** in those deals became more public.

Year **2015** witnessed **9** exchange deals, most of the deals were about releasing Hezbollah **combatants**, and delivering Afghan and Iranian combatant's **corpses**, with the **absence** of any Syrian army soldiers in the deals, on the other hand the opposition forces managed to release **68** civilian detainees from the Syrian security forces.

Year **2016** also witnessed **9** exchange deals, mostly including **fighters** and soldiers, and most of the freed civilians were **women**, most of the Syrian conflict **parties** took parts in those deals, in general on this year not less than **28** kidnapped civilians were freed from the hands of the opposition forces in exchange for releasing **60** civilian detainees from the Syrian security forces.

Year **2017** witnessed **declining** of the pace of exchange deals which included civilians, they were marked by a number of foreign **combatants** included in the deals, in exchange for freeing **56** kidnapped civilians from the opposition forces, and not less than **971** civilian detainees from the Syrian security forces.



Fourth: Most Notable Swaps Documented since 2012:

1. Swap of a Captive Prisoner from Syrian Government Forces with 30 Civilian Detainees, Including Women and Children

In December 2012, specifically in Al-Buwaydah al-Shariqiyah area of Homs province, a swap agreement took place between the Syrian government and Omar Al Farouq Battalion³ affiliated to the armed opposition forces. A combatant captive of Syrian government force held by Omar al-Farouq Battalion was exchanged with 30 civilians held by the Syrian security services, including women and children, a [video footage](#) published by Al-Buwaydah al-Shariqiyah Channel on YouTube showed details of the swap agreement.



Moment of exchanging the captive, Ghassan Tayara, a fighter in the Syrian government forces.

Photo credit: Al-Buwaydah al-Shariqiyah channel on YouTube

³ Omar al-Farouq Battalion, also known as the Independent Omar al-Farouq Battalion, is a battalion of the Syrian armed opposition, established in 2011, following the merger of several military groups in the area of Baba Amro and the southern countryside of Homs. The Shaikh Abu-Barri was the founder and commander-in-Chief of the battalion.

2. Swap of 48 Iranian Combatants with 2130 Detainees, Including 76 Women and 4 Turks

In January 2013, one of the largest exchanges occurred in the history of the conflict in Syria, as 48 Iranian⁴ prisoners were exchanged for releasing 2126 detainees from 13 Syrian provinces, including 76 women and 4 Turks. The exchange took place between the Syrian government and its allies on one hand and al-Baraa Battalion⁵ one of the armed opposition factions on the other hand, it was a Qatar –brokered swap, supervised by a Turkish humanitarian organization.

The released distributed in the Syrian provinces as follows:

Damascus and its countryside: 1240 detainees/male and female. Quneitra province: 16 detainees/male and female. Hama province: 134 detainees/male and female. Aleppo province: 172 detainees/male and female. Deir ez-Zur province: 64 detainees/male and female. Tartous province: 10 detainees/male and female. Al Hasakah/Qamishli province: 3 detainees/male and female, as-Suwayda province: 55 detainees/male and female. Idlib province: 80 detainees/male and female. Lattakia provinces: 7 detainees/male and female. Homs province: 207 detainees/male and female.

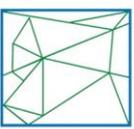
A [video footage](#) published by Al Jazeera News Network showed an interview with "Abdel Nasser Shammeir", the commander of the military junta in Eastern Ghouta and commander of al-Baraa Brigade, detailing the exchange process, another [video footage](#) showed documenting the swap deal by the Turkish IHH organization.



Image of the 48 Iranian captives according to a [video](#) published by al-Baraa Battalion

⁴ Some media sources said the 48 Iranian prisoners were mostly fighters of the Iran's Revolutionary Guards proved by documents, the opposition fighters found with them, while some other sources indicated that they were pilgrims kidnapped Iranian.

⁵ The formation of "al-Baraa Brigade" was announced at the beginning of August 2012, led by a dissident captain "Abdel Nasser Shammeir", to be later the nucleus of forming Filaq al-Rahman at the end of 2013 and is mainly active in Eastern Ghouta in Damascus countryside and several areas of Damascus.



3. Swap of a Syrian Army Combatant Captive and a Civilian for Releasing 5 Detainees

In February 2013, the Syrian government conducted an exchange agreement with Shuhada al-Atareb/Martyrs of Atareb⁶, an armed opposition faction. The swap took place in Mansoura area in the outskirts of the western city of Aleppo, where a fighter of the Syrian army along with a civilian were exchanged for five civilians detained by the Syrian security services. According to the deal, six civilians were supposed to be released, but the sixth detainee was not released because he was dying and could not attend the exchange agreement.

4. Swap of the Father of the Deputy Syrian Foreign Minister with a Bus Full of Civilians

This exchange took place in June 2013, in Daraa province, between the Syrian government and the Syrian armed opposition factions. The deal was to one of the kidnapers of the armed faction, a man 80, father of the Deputy Syrian Minister for Foreign Affairs "Feisal Meqdad" in exchange for releasing a full bus of detainees, including women.

Some armed men abducted Meqdad's father in May 2013, from his house in the village of Ghasem in Horan located in Daraa, and according to opposition sources; the kidnapping was a reaction to arresting women from Horan area, including the girl baby identified as Massa who had not completed 8 months.

A [video footage](#), circulated by activists, showed details of the exchange, and was titled "Our free women are red line"

⁶ Shuhada al-Atareb Brigade, an armed opposition battalion, established on June 3, 2012 under the command of the dissident lieutenant, Ahmed Abdel Rahman al-Faj. The Brigade was composed of four battalions, later merged formally under the name Jaish al-Thwar, in May 2015.



Image of the abductee, Feisal Meqdad's father during the exchange process

5. A Swap of a Syrian Security Agent with 4 Civilians

In July 2013, a swap agreement was conducted between the Syrian government on one hand and Salah al-Din Brigade, an armed opposition faction battalion active in Raqqa on the other hand. At the time, a Syrian security officer was exchanged for the release of four civilians according to [filmed statement](#) published by Salah al-Din Brigade

6. Swap of a Corpse of a Syrian Government Combatant with 13 Detainees, Including one Woman:

In August 2013, an exchange in Damascus, the Syrian capital, was held between the Syrian government on one hand and armed opposition factions, Al-Izz Bin Abd al-Salam Brigade⁷ affiliated to Battalions al-Sahaba, on the other hand. The swap was held in Mokhaiyam Yarmouk area located in Damascus, a corpse of a Syrian government fighter, Lieutenant

⁷ Al-Ezz bin Abdul Salam Brigade was active in Tadamon area in Damascus and follows the "Sahaba Brigades" that operated under the Ansar al-Islam, which was founded in August 2012, but the Tadamon Battalion, al-Ezz bin Abdul Salam Brigade, announced defection from Ansar al-Islam because it pledged allegiance to ISIS.



Raybal Ismail, was exchanged for the release of 13 detainees, including a woman. It should be known that the armed opposition factions called the process “Al-Fajer al- Mutasami” Swap.

A [video footage](#) published on YouTube, showed details of the exchange process and the arrival of the exchanged detainees in batches.



Image of the intermediary medical team pulling body of the exchanged Lieutenant

Photo credit: [video](#) handled by activists



First batch of exchanged detainees

Photo credit: [video](#) handled by activists

7. Providing Food for Besieged Syrian Soldiers in Exchange for Release of a Female Detainee from Syrian Government Jails

In October 2013, the Syrian government, on one side, and the armed opposition forces, on the other side, reached an exchange agreement while armed opposition sieged Gharez prison in Daraa. The deal included providing food to Syrian government soldiers besieged inside Gharez prison in exchange for the release of one female detainee from the Syrian government's jails, the swap brokered by Syrian Red Crescent

8. Swap of Kidnaped Lebanese for Turkish Pilots and Syrian Women Detainees

In October 2013, an exchange agreement took place in Azzaz in Aleppo countryside (Turkish-Qatari mediation on one hand, and Lebanese Public Security on the other hand). The deal included the release of seven Lebanese fighters of Hezbollah whom were captured in Aleppo countryside by Northern Storm Brigade⁸ affiliated to the armed opposition in exchange for the release of two Turks, a pilot and his assistant who were kidnapped earlier in Beirut – Lebanon. In its supplement, the deal included release of 114 detainees, including 80 woman, from Syrian government custodies, but Syrians for Truth and Justice-STJ couldn't verify whether 114 detainees were actually released or not.

9. Swap of 16 Abductees (Nuns) for 28 Detainees, Mostly Women

In March 2014, the Syrian government on one side and al-Nusra Front⁹ on the other, in Qalamon in Damascus countryside, exchanged 13 nuns and 3 of their assistants, who were

⁸ The "Northern Storm Brigade is a Syrian armed opposition group formed in 2011 and based in "Azzaz" in Aleppo countryside, Ammar Ibrahim Dadekhi and Samir Amuri were among its leaders.

⁹ On 24 January 2012, Abu Muhammad al-Julani announced the formation of what he called al-Nusra Front for Ahl al-Sham, at the time, it embraced Salafi and Jihadism thoughts. The United States government had included it on the lists of terrorist organizations in December 2012, and in April 2013, they announced pledging allegiance to al-Qaeda organization led by Ayman al-Zawahiri, parallel with its refusal to integrate with "Islamic State of Iraq". At the end of May 2013, the UN Security Council announced the inclusion of al-Nusra Front on the regulations of terrorist organizations, and a Committee of the Security Council stated that it was under resolution 1267 (1999) and resolution 1989 (2011) concerning Al-Qaida and its individuals and entities, agreed to the amendments specified in a regulation for al-Qaida in Iraq, where it added the name of al-Nusra Front or "al-Nusrah Front for the Ahl al-Sham. On April 2014, International Union of Muslim Scholars/IUMS/ criticized the Front's declaration of its alliance to al-Qaeda. On 28 July 2016, Abu Muhammad al-Julani announced that the organization had been disassociated with al-Qaeda following a mandate from the latter and had changed the name of the organization to Fatah al-Sham Front.



kidnapped at Deir MarTaqla in Damascus countryside when al-Nusra Front stormed the region, for releasing 24 female detainees¹⁰ from Syrian Security Apparatus prisons, alongside two children and two young men. Many sources told STJ that the al-Nusra Front received huge sums of money in accordance with the agreement.

Following the swap agreement, al-Nusra front handed over the nuns to a joint mediation delegation (Lebanese-Qatari) on the Lebanese-Syrian border and specifically in Hermel region; the nuns remained in detention for four months in Qalamon area in Damascus

Media man Hadi al-Abdullah published [video footage](#) documenting the exchange process of the nuns and their assistants, the video shows the process and some civilians who were also exchanged, as well as some women and children.



Some nuns on a car during the exchange process

Photo credit: Hadi al Abdallah video

¹⁰ According to the testimony of several female detainees, the real figure was 24 detainees, two children and two young men, contrary to what some of [the media](#) talked about the release of 143 female detainees or 153 male detainees [at other times](#). [The official spokesperson](#) of al-Nusra Front had refrained from clarifying this confusion and refused to publish the names of the detainees. The Front stated, "**Concerning lists of names, we have a list of names, but their publication in the media is a personal freedom that some sisters may object to.**" The organization denied claims that the Front had received a ransom or a large sum of money for the release of the nuns, saying in the same statement "**it is impossible to get a ransom, as the nuns weren't abductees.**"



The exchange cars that carried the flags of al-Nusra Front and the kidnapped nuns

Photo credit: Hadi al Abdallah video



Image showing some Lebanese Public Security officers holding children to exchange them

Photo credit: Hadi al Abdallah video



Image showing Lebanese Public Security officers accompany a family of a mother, a father and two children

Photo credit: Hadi al Abdallah video

10. Swap of Armed Men Intervened by Release of a Media Man

In March 2014, an exchange was set between the Islamic State, also known as ISIS¹¹, and al-Nusra Front, on one hand, and the Islamic Front¹² on the other hand. The swap took place in Deir ez-Zur province where captive militants from both sides were exchanged, and a civilian, the media man Abu Hadlaa al-Deri was also freed.

¹¹The Islamic State, known as ISIS, appeared for the first time after the 2011 conflict in Syria--under the name of "Islamic State in Iraq and al-Sham" in April 2013, and was promoted as a result of a merger between the organization of the "Islamic State of Iraq" on the one hand and the organization of Al-Nusra Front on the other hand. But the latter refused to do so, and asked Ayman al-Zawahiri, al-Qaeda leader to focus "on Iraq and" leave "Syria to al-Nusra Front.

Prior to this date, the organization was active in Iraq under the name of "Jama'at al-Tawhid Wa'al Jihad" before becoming "al-Qaeda in Mesopotamia" After Abu Musab al-Zarqawi became the leader in 2004 and announced pledging allegiance to the former al-Qaeda leader Osama bin Laden.

After killing Abu Musab al-Zarqawi by US forces in 2006, Abu Hamza al-Muhajer became the leader, and declared a few months later the formation of the "Islamic State of Iraq" but under the leadership of "Abi Omar al-Baghdadi" and Abu Hamza al-Muhajer an assistant leader of the organization.

Abu Bakr al-Baghdadi, "Abdullah Ibrahim", the successor of Abi Omar al-Baghdadi proclaimed on June 29, 2014, forming of the Islamic Caliphate, pointed himself Caliph of the Muslims, and assigned Raqqa, the Syrian city, the capital of the organization.

¹² "Islamic Front" formed on November 22, 2013, a coalition or military union including number of militant opposition groups, Ahrar al-Sham al-Islamiyya, Ansar al Sham Brigades, Suqour al-Sham, Liwaa al-Haqq, Tawhid Brigade, Jaish al-Islam and the Kurdish Islamist front."

11. Swap of a Captive Syrian Army Officer with 8 Female Detainees in Syrian Security Apparatus Prisons

In April 2014, a swap between the Syrian government on one hand and al- Nusra Front on the other, held in Tal al-Hara in Daraa province, as an officer from the Syrian army, who was captured in the battles of Jasim hospital, was exchanged for 8 women detainees of the Syrian security apparatus jails.

Al-Manarah Al-Bayda'a Foundation, loyal to al-Nusra Front, published a video footage showing the swap details and the captive officer as well.



Image of the Syrian army officer detained by al-Nusra Front during the exchange process

Photo credit: video by al-Manarah Al-Bayda'a



Image of arriving the last detainee to the exchange point

Photo credit: video by al-Manarah Al-Bayda'a

12. Swap of Seven Captives from Syrian Army Officers for a Family of Father, a Mother and Two Children

In May 2014, a swap was conducted between the Syrian government on one hand and Jaish al-Islam¹³, an armed opposition faction, on the other hand. Seven Syrian army officers were exchanged for the release of Abu Hasan al-Domani, his wife and his two children who were held by the Syrian intelligence apparatus. The list of the Syrian government captives contained 7 officers from different parts of Syria, most notably the Lieutenant "Ghadir al-Yousef", son of a senior officer in the Republican Palace who was captured for more than year by "Islamic Army" during the siege of the transport regiment in Shifoniyah of Eastern Ghouta located in Damascus countryside.

¹³ Jaish al-Islam: on September 2011, "Zahran Aloush" announced the formation of the opposition Muslim Brigade, which evolved in mid-2012 to "Muslim Brigade" and on September 29, 2013 announced the formation of Jaish al-Islam by uniting dozens of factions and brigades in its own entity, and later in the same year joined to the "Islamic Front" and is currently active in Eastern Ghouta located in Damascus countryside



13. Swap of Kidnapped Families for Detainees in Syrian Security Apparatus Custodies

In May 2014, the Syrian government on one hand and Jaish al-Islam on the other hand exchanged abducted families detained by Jaish al-Islam and its military allies, from Adra al-O'malia, for detainees in Syrian Security Apparatus Prisons.

It is worth mentioning that Islamic militia groups, notably al-Nusra Front, Islamic Front, Jaish al-Islam, and the Islamic State in Iraq and the al-Sham, ISIS, attacked Adra al-O'malia city at 4 a.m. on Wednesday December 11, 2013, which was inhabited by some 100,000 civilians, according to official statistics. They abducted hundreds of civilians from the families and took them to Doma the "stronghold of the Jaish al-Islam because of its sectarian affiliation and at other times on charges of dealing with the regime.

A [video footage](#) published by Syrian Arab News agency SANA showed displacement of thousands of civilians following the attack on Adra al-O'malia, and another [video footage](#) published by activists showed storming Adra al-O'malia and the indiscriminate shelling that accompanied the raid, it also showed some of the suffering of the locals.

The Swap Agreement Supposed to be in two Stages:

First stage: It began when Jaish al-Islam released Sahar Musa family, composed of 8 people, who were kidnapped from Adra al-O'malia, and providing food stuffs to civilians in the town, in addition to release of 7 abductees in Quneitra province in exchange for release of 12 detainees by the Syrian government.

Second Stage: The exchange supposed to involve all the remaining kidnapped families in batches for releasing 1,500 detainees, it supposed to exchange each family¹⁴ for a detainee in the custody of the Syrian government, but it was not done.

After the failure to complete the second phase of the agreement, Jaish al-Islam put hostages in cages, to deter indiscriminate attacks of the regime, in its words. It placed captive soldiers and civilians including women, inside metal cages, about 7 people inside each cage, these cages were distributed to several areas of Douma, especially public places and markets that the Syrian government had shelled earlier.

In a [report](#), Human Rights Watch condemned the crime of placing hostages in cages and got testimonies and photographs of the incident.

¹⁴ STJ couldn't verify the true number of hostages held by Jaish al-Islam, while the sources talked about hundreds, other sources said there were about 1,500 kidnapped families, and sources close to the regime said the number of abductees was 2000 and 4000, including 1,000 woman.



A [video footage](#) published by activists showing prisoners trapped inside the cages while they were being moved around Douma, the video also showed interviews with some of the women hostages, some officers and soldiers



Image of some women abducted from Adra O'malia city, trapped inside metal cages in the city of Douma located in Damascus countryside



Image showing some hostages abducted from Adra O'malia city, trapped inside metal cages in Douma located in Damascus countryside

Photo credit: Sham News Web Site on YouTube



14. Swap of 40 Kidnapped Civilians Parallel to Pull out of Armed Opposition Factions from the Old City of Homs

In May 2014, Syrian government set a swap deal with several armed opposition factions, mainly active in Homs city; the swap resulted in release of 40 civilians who were kidnapped following the Battle of "Aisha Um al-Mu'mineen" by armed opposition factions in Latakia countryside, coinciding with the departure of Syrian armed opposition forces from old city of Homs.

It should be noted that at the dawn of August 4, 2013 (the first day of Eid al-Fitr), fighters from several Islamic armed factions, ISIS, Ahrar al-Sham al-Islamiyya, al-Nusra Front, Jaysh al-Muhjereen wal Ansar, Izz Falcons, Saif Allah al-Masloul Battalion and several other factions, launched an extensive attack on Latakia countryside, and called it Battle of "Aisha Um al-Mu'mineen". Within hours, they could enter more than 10 villages inhabited by Alawites.

According to a [report](#) published by Human Rights Watch-HRW on the details of Battle of "Aisha Um al-Mu'mineen, armed men fired civilians and killed entire families, in addition to detaining more than 200¹⁵ civilians, mostly women and children.

HRW also published a report and [video](#) documenting killing dozens of civilians and taking more than 100 of them as hostages, HRW interviewed some eyewitnesses about the incident.

15. Exchanging 14 Bodies of Fighters in the Syrian Army for 10 Detainees, Including two Women and a Child

In April 2015, an exchange was set between the Syrian government on one hand and Liwaa al-Mouthana Movement, an Islamic militia faction in Daraa, on the other hand. The swap took place in the outskirts of as-Suwayda, where digging was conducted and 14 bodies of fighters of the Syrian Regular Army were exhumed. They were handed over to the mediator in exchange for the Syrian government's release of 10 detainees in Syrian security apparatus prisons, including two women and a child.

Al Jazeera TV channel published a [video footage](#) in its report on the swap and its details and interviewed one of the released.

¹⁵ This number according to HRW, and some sources of Opposition, but according to [Russia Today](#) site the number is 106 kidnapped, three were killed at the spot.



Image showing bodies of the fighters delivered to the broker during the swap.

Photo credit: Al Jazeera



Image shows arriving of 10 detainees, the child appears in the front with some armed fighters of Islamic Mouthana Movement.

Photo credit: Al Jazeera



16. Exchange a Political Security Agent of the Syrian Government for 3 Detainees in Syrian Prisons

In May 2015, the Syrian government on one hand, and Sham Front, a faction of the Syrian opposition, in the north east of Syria, on the other hand exchanged a prisoner, an element of the political security apparatus, held by Sham Front, for the release of three detainees held by Syrian security apparatus.

A [video footage](#) showed the details of the swap and interviews with the detainees after they were set free.

17. Exchange a Captive Prisoner by Syrian Government Forces for Release of two Detainees in Syrian Jails

In May 2015, an exchange took place between the Syrian government on the one hand and the “Mujahid Abu Tareq al-Sabhi Battalion” affiliated to the First Battalion of the Free Army, one of the battalions of the armed opposition in Daraa, on the other hand. Negotiations have taken place between the parties through intermediaries that the battalion hand over the captive who is the lieutenant of Air Intelligence, Malik Naif Balan, for the release of two detainees from the Syrian government jails.

The captive appeared in a [video footage](#) appealing Syrian government to make a swap and the battalion published a [video](#) documenting the exchange and showing the released prisoners and detainees.



Image of the prisoner, the lieutenant "Malik Naif Balan" during the swap,

Photo credit: Battalion video



Image showing the detainees released in the exchange.

Photo credit: Battalion vide



18. Swap of 65 Body of Fighters, mostly Foreign from Afghan and Iranian Nationality, for Release of 24 Syrian Detainees

In June 2015, an exchange took place between the Iranian Revolutionary¹⁶ Guards allied to the Syrian government on one hand and the Amod Horan Division Southern Front¹⁷, a faction of the armed opposition, on the other hand. The exchange carried out in Basrelharir in Daraa. The armed opposition combatants handed over 65 bodies belonging to militants (mostly Iranians and Afghans) in exchange for the release of 24 detainees by the Syrian government, including 11 women

[Video footage](#), handled among activists, detailed the swap process from handing over bodies to release of the detainees.

19. Exchange of Abductees for Release of Detainees/mostly Elderly and Women

In July 2015, the Syrian government and Fatah army¹⁸ set a swap. Fatah Army handed over some of abductees it had already held from Ishtabraq village in Jisr al-Shaghour, Idlib province, in exchange for the release of some detainees by the Syrian government, mostly elderly and women

¹⁶ "Iranian Revolutionary Guards", the "Guards of the Islamic Revolution", one of the most prominent elements of the military force of the Islamic Republic of Iran, was formed in 1979. General Muhammad Ali Ja'afari is the leader. They comprises Quds Failaq, commanded by General Qasim Solemani.

¹⁷ The factions under the formation of the Southern Front are: (Harameen Brigade, Sabreen Brigade, the 99 Infantry Brigade, Boroj al-Islam, al-Maham al-Khasa Brigade, Al Karama Brigades, Shohadaa al-Hara Brigade, Al-Shaheed Raed al-Masri Brigade, the Knights Brigade affiliated to 46 Infantry Brigade and the Al-Walid descendants of the Revolutionary Army. At the beginning of 2014, most of the armed opposition factions (up to 20 factions) in both provinces of Daraa and Quneitra in addition to some factions in Damascus and its southern countryside declared the formation of the so-called Southern Front, which coordinates the military operations in cooperation with the MOC Room" located in Jordan against the Syrian regime forces and ISIS.

¹⁸ Fateh Army a military union compound of Islamic Syrian armed opposition forces in Idlib. It was formed in March 24, 2015 and announced at the first day its first battle, Idlib Invasion, as it wrest the entire Idlib province from government forces after 4 days. those factions are, Ahrar al-Sham, al-Nusra Front, al-Aqsa Army, al-Sunnah Army, Failaq al-Sham, Liwaa al-Haqq, and Ajnad al-Sham.



Some of the elderly kidnapped of Ishtabraq village who were exchanged

Photo credit: Anadolu News Agency [video](#)



Moment of arrival of the first batch of detainees released from Syrian government jails.

Photo credit: Anadolu News Agency [video](#)

20. Swap of 20 Weapons for two Women Detained in Syrian Jails

In July 2015, the Syrian government, on one side, and armed opposition factions, on the other side, conducted a swap in Dae'l, located in Daraa. Two women had been arrested from Dae'l for five months and had been released only after paying money and handing over 20 pieces of arms of the opposition factions in the area to the government. According to a [report](#) published by Wilpf organization on violations against women in Syria and the unjust effects, such incidents were repeated in Tafas and Attman in Daraa province.

21. A Swap of 7 Abductees and Captives with 8 Detainees in Syrian Custodies

In September 2015, the Syrian government, on the one hand, and al-Nusra Front, on the other, conducted a swap agreement under the auspices of the Foundation "[Call of Prisoner](#)" where negotiations for three months had been carried out for its success. At the time, the Syrian government released eight detainees in exchange for the release of seven abductees (4 from Ishtabraq city, and 3 from Egypt), some of them were:

- Mohammed Basem al-Qet, a young man from Maarrat Misrin city located in Idlib. He had been arrested for three years.
- Alaa, another young man, who had been arrested for three years.
- Mohammed Abu Shuqeir, an elderly person abducted from the Ishtabraq village, located in Idlib. He had been kidnapped for five months.

Concerning the detainees, two of them were elderly persons who had been detained for four months and two children who had been detained for five months.

It is worth mentioning that one of the abductees was in a critical health condition, he was suffering from a hole in the stomach, therefore, Call of Prisoner Foundation made a surgical operation prior to his release, according to Abu Issa, director of the foundation, who was interviewed by the media activist Hadi al-Abdullah. The director said in [a video footage](#) that this was the first swap undertaken by this newly established institution at the time.

Hadi al-Abdullah, the media activist, published another [video footage](#) showing interviews he had conducted with some of the kidnapped before the swap was completed.



Image of Mohammed Abu Shuqeir, an abductee from Ishtabraq village. He was held by Islamist groups. He was an elderly and some elderly abductees appeared beside him .

Photo credit: Hadi al-Abdullah video



Image of the Second batch of detainees whom were released from Syrian government jails; one of them is an old man and the other is a child who is not more than 17 years old.

Photo credit: Hadi al-Abdallah Video

22. Swap of 29 Bodies of Syrian Government Forces Combatants with Six Female Detainees from Syrian Prisons

In November 2015, an exchange agreement was set between both Syrian government and Jund al-Aqsa¹⁹ organization in Morek town in Hama countryside, where 29 bodies belonging to fighters of the Syrian government forces, who had been killed when Jund al-Aqsa stormed Morek, were exchanged for the release of six female detainees in Syrian security services detentions. The swap was done under the auspices of the Syrian Red Crescent. The Sergeant "Alaa Hasan Barakat" was one of the dead fighters whose name was identified. The media activist "Hadi al-Abdullah" filmed a [video footage](#) detailing the swap, from recovering of the corpses by the Red Crescent team, interviews with the team and some fighters, to the arrival of the six detainee women.



The Syrian Red Crescent team recovering bodies of the fighters

Photo Credit: video footage by Hadi al-Abdullah

¹⁹ Jund al-Aqsa, an armed Islamist group was active in Idlib and Hama Provinces in January 2014, and was known as Al-Quds Brigades then. It was initially founded as a faction of al-Nusra Front organization but later broke away because of the al-Nusra Front's hostility of ISIS, In October 2016 bloody clashes erupted between "Jund al-Aqsa" and "Harakat Ahrar al-Sham", then "Jund al-Aqsa" pledged allegiance to "Jabhat Fateh al-Sham" so they dissolved the soldiers and fully integrated into the front.



Moment of the arrival of the exchanged detainee women

Photo credit: video footage by Hadi al-Abdullah

23. Swap of Nine Detainees Including Five Women with 16 Lebanese Prisoners

In December 2015, a prisoner swap agreement was set between the Lebanese government on the one hand and "al-Nusra Front" on the other. Under that deal, brokered by Qatar, the Lebanese government handed over nine prisoners, including five women (some of whom were Syrians), in exchange for the handover of 16 Lebanese soldiers held by al-Nusra Front to the Lebanese Red Cross (LRC). The exchange took place in Jurud Aarsal area on the Lebanese-Syrian border. Terms of the deal included opening a permanent safe humanitarian passage for Syrian displaced persons in refugee camps in Aarsal, and some other relief measures.

Ola al-Oqaili and Saja al-Dulaimi, the ex-wife of Islamic State/ISIS leader Abu Bakr al-Baghdadi, were among the released

It is noteworthy that, prior to this swap, al-Nusra Front handed over body of the Lebanese soldier "Muhammad Hamiya", who was executed on August 2014, to the Lebanese authorities

Al Jazeera Channel published a [video footage](#) on YouTube in which it interviewed some Lebanese soldiers prior the swap.



Al-Nusra Front statement following the prisoner swap agreement.



Image of some of the exchanged Lebanese soldiers

Photo credit: Al Jazeera Channel



Image of "Saja al-Dulaimi ", a detainee, along with her three children

Photo credit: [Al Jazeera Channel](#)

24. Swap of Six Detainees Including Four Women with a Foreign Militia Combatants

At the beginning of 2016, a prisoner swap agreement was set between Syrian government and its allies on the one hand and Jaysh al-Islam on the other. A prisoner who was a combatant in sectarian militias in Sayyidah Zaynab area was released in exchange for six detainees, including 4 women. The swap took place at " Babbila-Sayyidi Mukdad" checkpoint, in Damascus countryside.

25. Swap of Two Detainees from Syrian Prisons with Three Abductees, Including one Female

In April 2016, a prisoner swap agreement was set between Syrian government, on the one hand, and "Jaish Al-Fustat and Failaq al-Rahman", armed opposition factions, on the other hand. The swap took place in Qaboun area located in Damascus, where two detainees from Syrian government prisons identified as Ahmad al-Khateeb and Thaer al-Qadi, were exchanged for three abducted/captives, including a woman by the Syrian opposition. Both Ahmad al-Khateeb and Thaer al-Qadi were fighters in the armed opposition and were detained for more than four years, according to Al-Jazeera.



Image of the detainees after their release in Qaboun area located in Damascus.

Photo credit: Al-Jazeera

26. Swap of 25 Detainees Including Civilian, Officers, and 70 Bodies of Syrian Government Fighters for 12 Detainees and Handing over of 11 Corpses of Fighters in the Armed Opposition

In May 2016, a swap agreement was done between Syrian government and some armed opposition factions in Aleppo city, supervised by the Syrian Red Crescent, where the armed opposition handed over 25 prisoners, including civilians and officers, as well as 70 bodies of combatant belonging to Syrian government forces. In return, the Syrian government handed over 12 detainees and 11 bodies belonging to armed opposition fighters who had died in "*al-Rashideen*" battles west of Aleppo city.



Photo of Syrian Red Crescent during the exchange of corpses between the Syrian government and the armed opposition forces.

Photo credit: [Al Jazeera](#)

27. Swap of an Abducted, a Relative of a Senior Officer with Three Female Detainees in Syrian Security Services Detentions

In June 2016, a swap agreement was done between Syrian government, and factions of the armed opposition in "Melihit al-Atash" town in Daraa countryside, where three female detainees from Syrian military security prisons in Daraa were released in return for the release of a relative of a senior officer in the Syrian army.

It is worth mentioning that the three female detainees are from "Izraa" town in Daraa, they are identified as Umaimah az-Zo'ebi, Juhayna al-Bardan and Nada az-Zo'ebi.

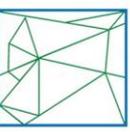


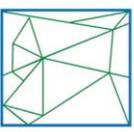
Image taken after the prisoner swap

Photo credit: [Syrian Human Rights Committee](#)



Image shows the arrival of the female detainees after their release

Photo credit: [Syrian Human Rights Committee](#)



28. Swap of Five Abductee Children with Detainees in Syrian Prisons

In August 2016, a swap occurred between armed opposition factions and Syrian government. The opposition factions exchanged five abductee “Alawite” children for two female detainees in the Syrian government; the swap took place in Barzeh neighborhood located in Damascus.

"Ezzaddin Muhammad", a media activist from Barzeh district, said in [his interview](#) with Al- Hal Al-Souri (Syrian independent website):

"Following the arrest of women by Syrian government forces on its checkpoints in Damascus, they had been investigated but no charges had been proved. Therefore, the judiciary released them, but the Syrian government had transferred them to the Air-Force Intelligence Branch to keep them for a prisoner exchange, to make a return from the armed opposition by getting them out. Syrian government forces still arresting three women, seeking new gains in return for their release, while the opposition factions are awaiting the demands of the Regime's forces in exchange for the female captives."

29. Swap of A Female Detainee with a Whole Kidnapped Family

In September 2016, a prisoner swap was set between Syrian government and armed opposition factions in Barzeh neighborhood located in Damascus. An armed opposition faction had kidnapped the director of the Syrian Air Corporation with his family as a response to the arrest of a woman from the neighborhood by the Syrian government without accusing her of any charges, and the kidnapped family was later exchanged for her.

30. A Swap Agreement of Combatants, Including a Civilian

In October 2016, a prisoner swap was done between both Al-shamiya Front²⁰ and the Islamic State, known as ISIS, where 11 ISIS fighters were released by Al-shamiya Front in exchange for 10-armed opposition faction fighters and an elderly kidnapped civilian who was a chairperson of the Civil Council in the city of al-Bab located in Aleppo Province. He said in a [video footage](#) published by Smart news agency, that after the killing of his two sons in al-Bab city, ISIS fighters arrested him from his house telling him that they wanted to take advantage of his arrest in the upcoming exchanges. This old man had been subjected to all sorts of humiliations, "in his words."

²⁰ Al-shamiya Front, a union of the biggest armed factions in Aleppo, they are Nour al-Din al-Zenki Movement, al-Mujahedeen Army, Islamic Front, Fastaqim Kama Umirta group (Be upright as ordered) and hundreds of other armed groups.



Image of the elderly man who was released in the exchange agreement.

Photo credit: Smart News Agency



Image of the ISIS captives held by Al-shamiya front before the swap process

Photo credit: Smart News Agency

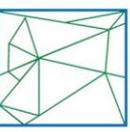
31. Swap of Six Captives with 14 Captives Including Women

In November 2016, a swap was set between Ahrar al-Sham al-Islamiyya Movement²¹ on the one hand and Kurdish People Protection Units (YPG) on the other hand. Fourteen abductees held by YPG were released in exchange for six Kurdish abductees held by Ahrar al-Sham al-Islamiyya Movement.

32. A Prisoner Swap Agreement Where 15 Female Detainees Released from Syrian Government Prisons

In December 2016, a prisoner swap agreement was set between Syrian government and Failaq al-Rahman faction, affiliated to the armed opposition. The deal came after lengthy negotiations in Eastern Ghouta located in Damascus countryside. STJ was unable to access the military details of the deal, but according to Syrian Media Organization (SMO), the swap resulted of the release of 15 detainees from Syrian government prisons. SMO published a [video footage](#) containing photos of the female detainees after their release and an interview with a detainee who has been detained for more than a year.

²¹ Ahrar al-Sham al-Islamiyya Movement was established on 11 November 2011, and the number of its fighters are estimated about 25 thousand. It is one of the Islamic military factions formed after the merger of four Islamic factions; they are (Ahrar al-Sham Brigades, Al-Fajr al-Islamiyya Movement, al-Tali'ah al-Islamiyya Group, and al-Iman al-Muqatela Battalion. The movement active in many areas out of the control of the Syrian government, especially in the provinces of Idlib, Aleppo and Hama. The movement is headed by Hasan Soufan/Abu al-Barra, a former prisoner who was sentenced for 12 year in Sednaya Military Prison. He was born in Lattakia 1979 and was released through a prisoner swap agreement at the end of 2016.



Images of the arrival of the released detainees and meeting with their families

Photos credit: Smart News Agency



33.A Swap of 54 Abductees of Women and Children with 54 Imprisoned (women and children) in Syrian Detentions

In February 2017, the Syrian government, and armed opposition factions, conducted a swap, supervised by the Public Institution for Prisoner Affairs/PIPA. 54 detainees (children and women) held by the Syrian government were released in exchange for the release of 54 abductees, mostly women and children, held by the Syrian armed opposition factions. The process took place in Qalaat Al Madiq city located in Hama countryside. It should be noted that the 54 abductees who were held by the armed factions were abducted more than three years ago, specifically during the Battle of " Aisha Um al-Mu'mineen"; the factions that participated in freeing the captives were Hayat Tahrir al-Sham-HTS/al-Nusra Front, Salma Operations Headquarter, Shabab al-Sahel and Ahrar al-Sham al-Islamiyya Movement. "



Image of the abductees with their children before the swap

Photo credit: [Video footage](#) by Smart News Agency



مكان و تاريخ الم لادة	اسم الام	الاسم الثلاثي	الرقم
ريف دمشق - مضايا 1980	فاطمة	منار مصطفى جابر	1
ريف دمشق - فلسطينية 1977	نصرة	عائشة صلاح سويد	2
1989	غانية	كلدة بنو الدين عامود	3
دمشق قيد الناصرة 1981	نجوى	جمانة ماجد نوحان	4
ريف دمشق - كفرين 1977	فاطمة	سماح عبدالله نذاف	5
ريف دمشق - كفرين 1992	بديعة	عائشة حسين تركوش	6
دمشق كفر سوسة 1982	حورية	فاطمة حسن ثمانية	7
ريف دمشق - الكسوة 1989	صفاء	مزملة محمد سر ابيجة	8
ريف دمشق 1948	حسناه	سلمى طهالب العم	9
داريا 1977	زينب	عائدة احمد اليانبا	10
داريا 1977	منى	ليلى ابد العار	11
داريا 1977	منى	بنان ابد العار	12
داريا 1982	فاطمة	رشا عبدالباسط شو يحيى	13
دمشق 2001	رشا	محمد اوسر اسامة العيار	14
دمشق 2011	رشا	منى اسامة العيار	15
دمشق 2012	رشا	فاطمة البتول العيار	16
دمشق 2012	رشا	صفاء اسامة العيار	17
دمشق 2012	رشا	مروة اسامة العيار	18
حلب 1974	فلك	ولاء احمد احمد	19
1984	وفاء	سلمى منير شاكر	20
حلب - جبل سمعان 1986	صفية	فاطمة جاسم الحمود	22
حلب - السيفرة 1982	فاطمة	منال محمود العلي	23
حلب - اعزاز 1901	امينة	فاطمة محمد اسماعيل	24
حلب 2002	فاطمة	امينة محمد المنظار	25
حلب 1988	فتحية	حسناه جنيده حزدان	26
ريف دمشق 2000	سكينة	رولا جمال الدين بعلبي	27
دوما 1989	سميرة	ولاء بشير عبدالحميد	28
دمشق 1996	عواطف	نوال محمد نعيم اميرة	29
اذلب - اجسم 1989	امل	سها محمد الحمود	30
اذلب - كفر بيل 1971	فاطمة	سميرة احمد العبدو	31
ريف دمشق - بيبلا - قيد كفر بيل - 1988	سميرة	ياسمين احمد السويد	32
دمشق قيد حمص القريتين - 1980	قيومية	ايمان محمد خير الفارس	33
حلب - الكارب 1968	صالحة	حورية علي الحاج عمر	34
حلب - 1972	سامية	اميرة سعيد ستر	35
حلب 2002	زهيدة	بيان عبدالغفور دباغية	36
اذلب - رام حضان قيد معرة مصرين - 1977	هناء	شوي محمد بونين	37
حلب 1992	عسراء	ايمان عبدالعزيز سحاق	38
حمص - جورة الشياح 1992	كفا	فاكن رضوان سريو	39
حلب 1988	دلال	نور نسيم عطار	40
حلب 1990	فاطمة	منال محمد عبدالله	41
حلب - البياض 1988	سهيلا	فاطمة حسين السروحي	42
حلب 1972	فوزية	زهرة صفوق الخليل	43
حلب 1997	بتحسين	نور محمد خصيم	44
الروقة 1980	لطيم	منى حاتم هلال بات حسن	45
اذلب - جسر الشغور 1988	فاطمة	هندى نصر منصور	46
قنسا 1999	لز هة	غرام محي الدين الشعيبي	47
اربعاء 2002	منتهى	مريم مصطفى الصبور	48
اذلب - حارم 1982	وردة	فاطمة عبدالقادر صاري	49
حلب قيد اذلب سمرنا 1902	اسماء	لطوم عدنان حرم فاسم	50
اذلب		مرام الشيخ محمد بنت مصطفى	51
اذلب		صفاء هوالش المنصور	52
اذلب		فتاح حمدو الحمود	53
اذلب		صفاء محمد القاسم	54
اذلب		لؤلؤ حسن بنت حسن	55

A copy of the names of the released following the swap. The seal of the Public Institution for Prisoner Affairs/PIPA appears on the document.



34. A Swap of "The Four Cities" and the Release of Dozens of Detainees

Parallel with the first stage of the "The Four Cities" deal (Kafarya, al-Fu'ah, Madaya and al-Zabadani), hundreds of detainees were released but the final numbers were not known exactly. However, many media sources talked about at least 750 released detainees, it should be noted that most of the detainees who were released, had not been detained for more than a month (from different areas in Syria), which raised questions whether the Syrian government had arrested them for the sole purpose of being exchanged!



Image of some of the detainees released from the Syrian government jails in accordance with the prisoner swap agreement.

Photo credit: [Al Jazeera](#)



Image of many buses that evacuate civilians and militants according to "The Four Cities" deal

Photo credit: [Al Jazeera](#)

35.A Swap of a Man and his Wife with Four Detained Women from Syrian Government Prisons

In May 2017, a prisoner swap was done between Syrian government on one hand and Jaysh al-Islam on the other hand on (Babbila- Sayyidi Mukdad) checkpoint located in Damascus countryside. Jaysh al-Islam released a kidnapped man and his wife accused of "working for the regime", in exchange for the release of four detainee women, from Yalda town, from Syrian security services prisons in addition to the subsequent release of two other men. The detainees were arrested months before the deal on charges related to "dealing with the rebels" in the area. The exchange agreement mediated by the dignitaries of Yalda town.



Image of a woman detainee released in the deal

Photo credit: [The statement](#) of "Jaysh al-Islam" on its website



36.A Swap of 11 Prisoners from Syrian Government Forces for Releasing 28 Civilian Detainees, Including Women and Children from Syrian Security Services Jails

In August 2017, a prisoner swap agreement between the Syrian government and Jaysh al-Islam was set in Eastern Ghouta located in Damascus countryside. Jaysh al-Islam released 11 detainees of Syrian government forces in exchange for 36 detainees including 28 civilians, with 14 children and 10 women, all residents of Barzeh district who were arrested on May 2017. It should be noted that the swap took place under the auspices of Syrian Red Crescent.



Some children detained in Syrian government prisons who were released.

Photo credit: Al Jazeera Channel [report](#)



Image of the captive Colonel,
"Rifa'at Georges Razzouq", from the Military Signals management at
Al-Rahbeh 533, and a Syrian Army officer who was captured in 2012. He was one of those exchanged for in the deal

Photo credit: Al Jazeera channel [report](#)



Syrian Red Crescent agents during their supervision of the swap

Photo credit: Al Jazeera [report](#)

37. A Swap of 3 Captives of Syrian Government-allied Militias and Two Bodies with 135 Detainees Including 30 Women

In August 2017, Syrian government and its allies, on the one hand, and the armed opposition, on the other, conducted a prisoner swap agreement where three prisoners of Syrian government-allied militias in addition to the bodies of two fighters were exchanged for the release of 135 detainees, including 30 women from Syrian Security prisons. The swap took place in coordination with Syrian Red Crescent, which oversaw the handover process from both sides.

STJ points that dozens of prisoner swap agreements have not been mentioned because of the lack of information whether there were civilians in the swap or not, apart from hundreds of secret exchanges that occur routinely in Syria since the beginning of the conflict, which are being accurately documented.



Fifth: Annex of Khitam Bunian’s Testimony, A Former Detainee, about a Swap of 2130 Detainees, Including 76 Women and Four Turks With 48 Iranian Militants:

Khitam Bunian, a former detainee, was arrested on 22 November 2012, following her demonstration in Bab sraijah neighborhood located in Damascus, by thugs “Shabiha” affiliated to the Syrian regime. They placed her in a headquarter of Shabiha gathering in Khaled Ibn Al Walid Street downtown Damascus for Almost two hours until she was transferred into "Palestine Branch-Section 235", where she was detained for less than two months to be released on 9 January 2013 by a prisoner swap agreement.

Concerning details of the exchange deal, Bunian testified saying:

"I had been detained in Palestine Branch for almost 40 days (i.e. 10 days before our release) when we heard the warders speak intentionally aloud about a forthcoming general amnesty to be issued by the president. Two days later, the head of the branch came and chose some girls from every detention room; he chose me and another girl only from the room with other 14 female detainees. The total number of girls released that day from Palestine branch was between 25-30 girls.

The selection was not random, as it was based on specific lists. Me and the other girl were arrested at the same time on the same charge, we were both accused of "not to heed the president's speech" because the time of the demonstration came after the speech. In addition, other simple charges such as "demonstrating without permission" and "supporting the Free Army psychologically", but none of the grave charges of terrorism included.

Two days prior our release, they took a collective photo of us, and told us that the photo would be sent to the President personally because we would go out with an amnesty that would be issued soon.

I noticed, during our release, that most of the girls being released in the day were of "small" cases like mine. I met 10 girls with cases concerning demonstrations, but the rest who were released had been held either in criminal cases unrelated to the revolution movement or were detained wrongly or indiscriminately after a demonstration. I had also met some girls who were supporters of the Syrian government. It should be noted that my parents did not appoint any brokers or payments for me to be released, nor even the family of the girl whom was released with me. All I know is that the branch in its choice only selected persons with simple cases, terminated cases, or unrelated cases to the revolutionary movement. "

As regard to the day of her release and her knowledge that it was a swap agreement, she said:

"on the day of our release, we were transferred to Police Headquarters in Damascus where we stayed for about 6 hours and then we were released in large numbers (3 buses to male detainees, and a minibus for female detainees). We all thought that it was actually a general amnesty issued by the Presidency of the Republic, and even police officers at Police Headquarters kept telling us that our release was by an amnesty. However, when I got home and surfed the net, I was shocked that it was a prisoner swap agreement. Moreover, it was the first time I heard about the deal details."