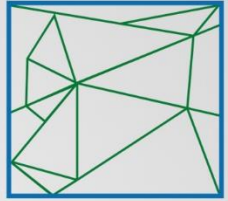


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سوريون
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Syrian Security Services Release White Helmets' Volunteers they Arrested Early on in Rural Homs

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The Syrian security services have released 13 former volunteers in the White Helmets/Syrian Civil Defense, who they arrested on September 10, 2018, in northern rural Homs¹ after they subjected them to a thorough investigation and an overall examination of their former occupation, according to testimonies that Syrians for Truth and Justice/STJ obtained from the released persons' relatives.

A relative to a former White Helmets' volunteer told STJ's field researcher the following:

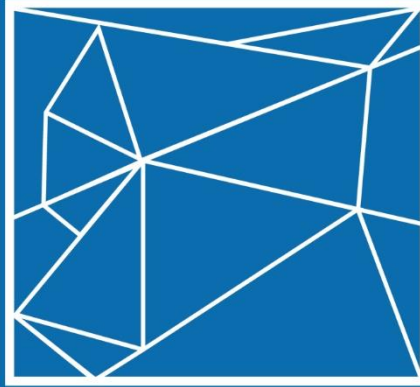
"The former volunteer was arrested from his house in the city of al-Rastan. And then, he was taken with a group of detainees to one of the branches of the Political Security Department in Damascus, known as the al-Faihaa Branch, where they were kept for two months and five days. During their detention, they were not subjected to beating or torture, but they went through extensive investigation sessions about the nature of their works, the source of funding and how it was brought in into the city. Then, their release was decided, on the condition that evaders of and defectors from the compulsory military service and those requested for the reserve join the service within a given period of time and that they legalize their status."

STJ's field researcher in northern rural Homs pointed out that the arrest of former White Helmets' volunteers was conducted only against those who volunteered at the center in the al-Rastan city, for no arrests were undertaken against volunteers in other towns. Several of the al-Rastan city's people think that these security restrictions against them are likely due to the fact that the city of al-Rastan was the last city to agree to the reconciliation with the Syrian government, as all the towns in the northern countryside have had conducted prior and secret reconciliations and deals with the Syrian government.

STJ published several reports on a number of arrest cases against former White Helmet's volunteers in various Syrian areas, though they have conducted a reconciliation/settlement deal with the Syrian government.

¹ "Ongoing Arrests against Former White Helmets in Homs and Daraa", Syrians for Truth and Justice, September 15, 2018, last visit: February 2, 2019. <https://stj-sy.com/en/view/744>.

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About Syrians for Truth and Justice:

STJ is an independent, nongovernmental organization whose members include Syrian human rights defenders, advocates and academics of different backgrounds and nationalities.

The initiative strives for SYRIA, where all Syrian citizens (females and males) have dignity, equality, justice and equal human rights.

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