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Different Methods Recently to Inform Detainees' Parents of the Death of their Sons in Syrian Detention Facilities

The Civil Registry Directorates Change Status of Hundreds of
Detainees Without Referring to The Victims' Families

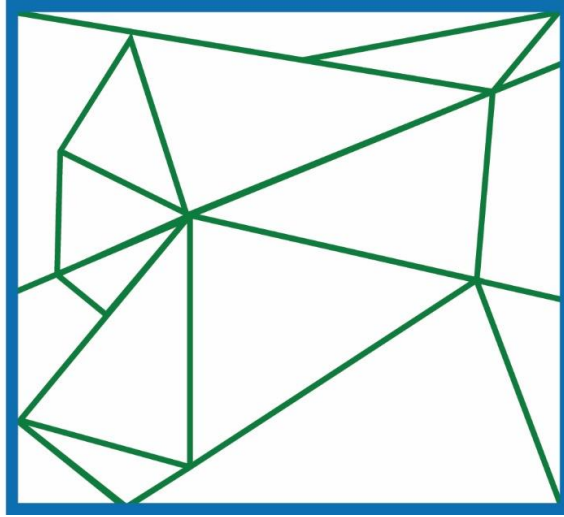
About Syrians for Truth and Justice

[Syrians for Truth and Justice \(STJ\)](#) is an independent, non-governmental and non-profit organization whose members include Syrian human rights defenders, advocates and academics of different backgrounds and nationalities. It also includes members of other nationalities.

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

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Different Methods Recently to Inform Detainees' Parents of the Death of their Sons in Syrian Detention Facilities

*The Civil Registry Directorates Change Status of Hundreds of Detainees
Without Referring to The Victims' Families*



The civil registry directorates of the Syrian Ministry of Interior "update" the documents special to persons proved to have been arrested and detained by Syrian security apparatus and branches affiliated to them and under their custody. The directorates have changed the status of hundreds of persons and recorded them under the category of the deceased parallel with applying several ways to inform relatives of the detainees and the disappeared of the deaths. According to the testimonies came by STJ, these incidents were repeated in several Syrian provinces.

In both cities of Yabroud and Muadamiyat al-Sham located in Damascus countryside, in addition to Hama city, the civil registry directorates have hanged up on the walls handwritten lists including names of inmates, arrested, and enforced disappeared persons who had died inside the security apparatus and secret prisons as well as the public ones affiliated with the Syrian government. In the list, the full name, the birth date, the family civil registration number, and the mother's name were written. According to the information to STJ through interviewing an eyewitness in Hama, to name but a few, these lists were hanged up on the walls of the civil registry directorate building in the city¹ and included 65 names. [Syria local media](#) published lists that included other 120 names in Hama city.

Concerning Yabroud and Muadamiyat al-Sham in Damascus countryside, lists containing 31 names were published in Yabroud, and 165 names in Muadamiyat al-Sham, according to several cross-checked sources in addition to a testimony of one who saw the list in Muadamiyat al-Sham.

In Daraa province, Mohammed al-Share', member of the office documenting the martyrs (Martyrs of Daraa), in an interview with STJ on July 30, 2018, said there are no lists of the names, of those detainees who were killed in the jails, in the civil registry directorates (domicile) or hanged up on their walls, **but four months earlier, the civil registry directorate in the province have changed the status of hundreds of detainees to the category of the deceased without informing their relatives.** now, the parents are issuing personal civil registry documents for the detainees to know their fate.

The way used to inform families of the inmates in the province was through mediators, often the Mukhtars "heads of neighborhoods" who are loyal to the regime, are sent to the civil registry directorates with the help of a security and military committee, and the Mukhtars are given the lists that contain names of the detainees from their villages and towns, whose status have been transferred to the deceased. After that, the Mukhtars inform the residents that theses detainees are dead either directly or through announcing in the mosques. All of the names are not announced all at once to avoid chaos and hugger-mugger among the residents, al-Share' explained.

Al-Share' stressed they could document that 54 detainees had been recorded dead by the civil registry directorates throughout the province. He said they have ascertained that families of the detainees have received the personal civil registry document for the detainee that shows the

¹ The interview was conducted on July 29, 2018. STJ, in cooperation with other partners, will publish a detailed report on the issue.



death date. He noted that the all 54 names were of the newly announced deaths and did not belong to detainees whom their relatives have already learned about their death.

On the other hand, in Homs city, Joudi Arsh, the media person and the activist who is from Homs city but lives in Aleppo countryside, said in an interview with STJ on July 31, 2018, that the civil registry directorate in Homs has not published nor hanged up names of inmates who were killed in the detention centers and Syrian security branches. She added that the parents who want to know the fate of their imprisoned sons are extracting the personal civil registry document for the detainee or the family statement because it includes the phrase "dead" if the detainee was dead, in addition to the death date. About 650 families have issued personal civil registry documents for their sons over the past period, the activist said quoting local sources.

In the north countryside of Homs, Abu al-Baraa al-Homsi, the media person and the activist who hails from the north countryside of Homs but currently lives in Jarabulus located in Aleppo, said in an interview with STJ on July 31, 2018, that the civil registry directorate based in the east of the sugar plant, north of Homs on Hama-Homs Road, has not circulated nor hanged up any lists of the detainees who were murdered in the regime custodies, but the parents are issuing a personal civil registry document or a family statement that illustrates the status of the detainee. He added,

"Some families have received documents and the detainees' belongings showing they have died in prison. But once reviewing the civil registry directorate, they found that it is not registered that the sons are dead, and in this case, the parents have to carry out the procedures for the death case by themselves, since they had received their son's belongings. In another occasion, a personal civil registry document has been issued for a detainee, and it showed that he had died in prison, and when the family asked the military police in Damascus (Qaboun) about their son, they were told that their son was still alive, which made most of the families doubt the veracity of the data on the death of the detainees". The activist quoted families of the detainees who live in the north countryside of Homs.

In Darayya city located in Damascus countryside, the Coordination Committee for the Displaced People of Darayya (Ccdpd) posted news saying that the regime made a list containing close to 1000 names of the detainees from the city who have died in the dungeons. One member of the Ccdpd said in an interview with STJ on July 30, 2018 that,

"Sources told us that the list, which contained names of the detainees, has been shredded immediately after transferring and asserting the deaths in the records. The sources that reported the news from inside the civil registry department was unable to take photos of the list or leak some names. Besides, the civil registry directorate has not circulated any names, but the families know the fate of their sons when they issue a personal civil registry document or the family statement. In other cases, the civil servants took the family book from the references and stamped on the detainee's paper that he was "deceased".

Form his part, an activist from Darayya who preferred anonymity for security purposes, said in an interview with STJ on July 30, 2018, that local sources confirmed there are many detainees whose status has been fixed as deceased in the civil registry in June and July 2018, citing the serial numbers of the data issued by the civil registry directorate, because during the last ten



days of June 2018, a death certificate was issued below no 600 and in the beginning of July 2018, a death certificate was issued higher than no 850.

Updating the civil registration records include detainees who have been already recognized through Caesar photos and they are some 100 detainees, but the regime has recently fixed their deaths. In addition, the update includes detainees whom their relatives were informed that they were dead years ago.

Concerning al-Zabadani city, Nour Burhan, the activist who lives now in Germany, said that "the registry department of civil status" received names of detainees who have been murdered in the regime cells, but the registry department did not announce the names nor informed the parents about the death of their sons, unless the parents go and inquire by themselves. She added that only three families have been informed about the death of their sons so far, and 36 detainees have been killed in the regime's dungeons and their relatives were informed about their death in the past years.

She said "it was different in al-Zabadani city since the regime was informing the detainees' families of their deaths successively over the past years, and this explains why there is no such a long list of names up to now."

In another occasion, Burhan said "that the Syrian regular forces were arresting persons from the city and sent them to non-regular prisons located at Harsh Bloudan and the headquarter of the Air Force Battalion in the Nabi Habel Mountain, where many of them were murdered before even being transferred to the regular prisons and the regime did not confess that it had arrested them at the first place. Eyewitnesses who survived from the checkpoint of Harsh Bloudan said about the death of several prisoners there, plus the families of those whom sons were stopped and arrested by the same checkpoint, inquired about their sons and found them there not."

In al-Hasakah province, the field researcher of STJ said on July 30, 2018, that the civil registry directorate in al-Hasakah have not circulated nor hanged up any lists or names of detainees who died in the regime's confinements, and have not informed the relatives of the detainees about the status of their sons. He continued,

"the civil registry directorate is located within the security box which is held by the Syrian regular forces. The locals fear of entering the security box so that they are not arrested. Any case of informing the families or knowing the fate of the detainees has yet to be recorded, besides there has been no mourn tent for a detainee inside the city."

Regarding Hama province, the lawyer Fahad al-Mousa stated that the method followed in the province was different from the rest of the other provinces. The security services send elements of the military intelligence and administrators of the manatiq (regions) and districts to the parents, and ask them to review "the single military judge" in the region without escorting a lawyer. There, the parents sign several papers and stamp on them in front of the single military judge without reading their contents, after that the single military judge informs them that their son has died and hands over his personal belongings and identity to his parents. The parents

then go to the civil registry directorate and begin to record the death case to extract the death certificate.

"we have concerns that the parents have been intimidated and enforced to sign papers that confirm they have received the body of their sons or the report of the forensic pathologist who falsifies the real cause of the death. The regime is informing the families through the military intelligence to intimidate and terrifies them in order to sign the papers without uttering any questions." He said.

Update

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But on August 3, 2018, some updates/corrections came through some activists in al-Hasakah. One of the lawyers who declined to disclose his identity for security purposes, said in an interview with STJ,

"There are 14 cases when their families went to the civil registries and the authorities told them that the reason of the death is heart failure, knowing that there many names". The source stressed that the families and relatives of the detainees set up mourn tents for their sons in Ghweiran neighborhood.

Citation: STJ will sequentially update all the information, numbers and cases concerning (the issue of updating the data of the detainees by the civil registry directorates). It also notes that the organization's methodology in verifying the information relies mainly on direct testimonies and interviews that come from the residents and information obtained from its field researchers who are trained to adopt the international standards in documentation and collecting information. We apologize to readers in case there are errors, which are certainly unintentional, or sometimes incomplete news from a certain point of view as in the case of the first news about al-Hasakah province.