

“A Long Way to Go* ... Post-Revolution and Post-War ... A Dream that Brings Us Together...”

Today, 9 December 2017, marks four years since the forced disappearance of Razan Zaitouneh, Wael Hamada, Samira Khalil and Nazem Hamadi. After four years, their memories have been and will always be with us as far as our belief in freedom, democracy and human rights has brought us together.

Razan was a Syrian lawyer and human rights activist since her graduation from Damascus University in 1999. She had been a member of the Prisoners of Conscience and Political Prisoners defense team since then. She was also a founding member of the Human Rights Association in Syria and worked there until 2004.

In 2005 Razan founded the first professional rights documentation initiative in Syria, the Syrian Human Rights Information Link to act as a database for the regime’s violations of human rights in the country. She was also active in the Political Prisoners’ Families Support Committee in Syria.

Razan, the human rights advocate, the author, the friend and the partner in weaving the dream of democratic change in Syria, was kidnapped with her political activist husband Wael Hamada, who had been arrested twice in 2011 in an effort by the regime to pressure Razan to surrender, along with their eternal friend Samira Khalil, who was a political prisoner between 1987 and 1991; lawyer and poet Nazem Hamadi, who participated with Razan and other Syrian rights activists in defending Damascus Spring prisoners in 2000 and Damascus Declaration prisoners in 2005.

On this day four years ago, masked men attacked the Local Development and Small Projects Support office and the Violations Documentation Center headquarters, a rights documentation organization founded by Razan and other rights activists in Syria in 2012 to document human rights violations after the start of Syria Spring in March 2011. Four years have passed since Razan Zaitouneh, Samira Khalil, Nazem Hamadi and Wael Hamada were kidnapped in the Eastern Ghouta town of Douma which is controlled by the non-state armed group named *Jaish al-Islam* (Army of Islam).

Requests to the international community have been going on for four years to pressure sides of the Syrian conflict to disclose the fate of the four kidnapped activists, who were vital elements with their peaceful, rights and civil activism, feared by the parties to the conflict over power in Syria. The crime of disappearance and complicity with it is a clear message to change campaigners in Syria that they will only be allowed death or accepting the status quo regardless of any human rights violations that occur in the country.

For the fourth consecutive year we demand the immediate and unconditional disclosure of the fates of Wael Hamada, Samira Khalil, Razan Zaitouneh, and Nazem Hamadi, their release and bringing to justice all those responsible, those who remain silent on the crime, as well as those who hinder investigations.

This kidnap crime will not be time-limited and will never be forgotten; not only because the crime forced disappearance is a crime without a statute of limitations, but also because we are partners and colleagues with Nazem, Samira, Wael and Razan in the dream and we will never forget nor will we forgive. We will keep striving with all means and at all forums to disclose their fate and to hold all perpetrators accountable. We are committed to the dream with Nazem, Samira, Wael and Razan, who once said “peoples’ rights and treating them with justice is not something open to interpretations, nor it is a point of view. The oppressor and the oppressed are all equal in this. Both should feel the massive difference between a regime that legitimizes everything unjust and forbidden, and the people of a revolution who will never accept oppression and indignity after today.”**

Signatories

1. Aleppo Free Lawyers. State of Law.
2. Al-Jumhuria Group.
3. Al-Karamah Foundation.
4. Al-Kawakibi Center for Human Rights and Transitional Justice.
5. Al-Kawakibi Organization for Human Rights.
6. Al-Taakhi Foundation for Human Rights.
7. Arab Organization for Human Rights.
8. Badael Foundation.
9. Baituna Souria.
10. Basmah and Zaitunah.
11. Cairo Center for Human Rights Studies
12. Darna
13. EuroMed Human Rights.
14. Families for Freedom.
15. Initiative for New Syria.
16. Justice for Freedom
17. Justice for Life.
18. Justice for Syrian Women Network.
19. Keshmalek
20. Kurdish Committee for Human Rights- Monitoring.
21. Lebanese Center for Human Rights.
22. Local Councils Unit.
23. Local Développement and Small Projects Support
24. Mouatana for Citizenship
25. Musawa- Women’s Studies for Equality.

26. National Group for Transitional Justice.
27. New Secular Democratic Syria.
28. Omran Center for Studies.
29. Peace Space Organization.
30. Pill Civil Waves.
31. Raqeeb Foundation for Monitoring and Documentation.
32. Sanad for People with Special Needs.
33. Shamel Alliance for Civil Society Organizations.
34. Syrian Activists Monitoring Organization.
35. Syrian Center for Justice and Accountability.
36. Syrian Center for Media and Freedom of Expression.
37. Syrian Feminists Lobby.
38. Syrian Forum.
39. Syrian Journalists Association
40. Syrian League for Citizenship.
41. Syrian Legal Network in Holland.
42. Syrian Network for Human Rights.
43. Syrian Nonviolence Movement.
44. Syrian Press Center.
45. Syrian Program for Legal Development.
46. Syrian Women Network
47. Syrians for Truth and Justice Organization.
48. The Day After.
49. Violations Documentation Center.
50. Women Now for Development.
51. Women Now.
52. Work Group for Detainees.
53. Work Group for Syria.

*The last article written by Razan Zaitouneh and published a few hours before they were kidnapped (Available only in Arabic):

<https://now.mmedia.me/lb/ar/%D8%A3%D8%B1%D8%B4%D9%8A%D9%81/524966-%D9%87%D8%B0%D8%A7-%D9%85%D8%A7-%D9%83%D8%AA%D8%A8%D8%AA%D9%87-%D8%B1%D8%B2%D8%A7%D9%86-%D8%B2%D9%8A%D8%AA%D9%88%D9%86%D8%A9-%D9%84now-%D9%82%D8%A8%D9%84-%D8%AE%D8%B7%D9%81%D9%87%D8%A7>

** From the article **Syria the Revolution: Justice is Not A Point of View**

<https://now.mmedia.me/lb/ar/analysisar/سوريا-الثورة-العدالة-ليست-وجهة-نظر/>