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Syria: Girl, Two Women Murdered in Alleged Honor Killing

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*The three victims are from Idlib and were killed in separate incidents
in the cities of Adana, Al Bab and Afrin*

'Honor killings' continue to threaten the Syrian women wherever they may be on the Syrian territories, controlled by various actors. At least, ten honor killings recorded during the first half of 2019, the last of which occurred in Turkey on June 23, 2019, against a refugee girl. This crime was preceded by two other similar killings in northern rural Aleppo, under the opposition's Syrian Nation Army.

STJ will shortly publish two separate reports about 'honor killings' in the provinces of Al-Hasakah and As Swaida'a.

The three victims whose stories will be recited in this report, are originally from Idlib but were residing respectively in the cities of Adana in Turkey, Afrin and Al Bab in eastern rural Aleppo.

I. The murder of a Syrian refugee girl in Turkey:

In the city of Adana, Turkey, on June 23, 2019 the Syrian youth Basel D., 20, fatally stabbed his 14-year-old sister Baghdad D. in a so-called "honor killing". Right after the incident, the murderer was arrested with his father by the Turkish police.

Details of the incident: STJ field researcher interviewed a relative of the victim-he asked not to be identified. He said:

"The teen Baghdad D. belongs to a clan based in the village of Al-Qahirah, southeastern Idlib, from where she fled with her family in March 2017 to a makeshift camp near al-Sheikh Bahar village in Harem district. In June 2018, Baghdad was forced to get engaged to her cousin, but she, however, ran away with a guy from al-Sheikh Bahar village called A.N. the day before her wedding. When their escape discovered after three hours, gunfight erupted between the two families and lasted for several hours. That led the girl's family to leave the camp towards the city of Afrin. However, after a week Baghdad and the guy were caught by agents of The Sham Legion and been handed over to the House of Justice court in Harem."

The witness added:

"The girl was imprisoned in the city of Idlib for three months until one of her relatives bailed her out and pledged to protect her. He smuggled her into Turkey with her mother, while the guy A.N. is still under arrest, as of the date of issuance of this report. He also hasn't been brought before a judge yet. The reason of his incarceration is to keep him from the girl's relatives who are threatening to kill him. As they have already killed his brother and cousin after chasing them in the area of Sahel Al-Rouj west of Idlib in July 2018."

A year after the incident, the girl's father and her 20-year-old brother managed to enter Turkey illegally to find her. Indeed, they reached the house where she was staying, and her brother stabbed her to death in its bathroom. The Turkish police apprehended the murderer and he is currently under investigation, as reported by the New Turk Post news website quoting the Turkish-speaking Ikhlas News Agency.¹

II. The Kill of a woman in Afrin:

On March 1, 2019 a displaced woman from the city of Saraqib, was shot dead by her husband in Afrin city's public park for mysterious reasons. The details of the case are still under investigation by the Sultan Suleyman Shah Brigade.

Details of the incident: STJ field researcher talked to a police officer -he preferred anonymity- from Afrin, familiar with the case. He said:

"The victim was in a public park in Afrin with her 7- and 12-years sons and 15-year-old daughter when her husband came. A controversy arose between the spouses over the children's place of residence and the husband ended up shooting dead his wife with his rifle. The surveillance camera in the park caught the full crime."



A screenshot taken from the surveillance footage shows the victim before being shot. (STJ has a copy of the full video in its archive).

¹ "Adana, Turkey: A Syrian Man Executes his young Sister for Refusing Arranged Marriage", NewTurk Post, June 24, 2019 <https://www.newturkpost.com/Details/49258>.

The witness added:

“the victim’s daughter, 15, said that her father came from Aleppo to take them live there, but the mother refused and thus killed. The children’s accounts clearly prove that the victim wasn’t married to another man which means that the killing was not for honor as claimed the Sultan Suleyman Shah Brigade”

The rapid response unit of the Civil Police arrested the husband right after the murder and handed him over to the military police. Whereas the victim was taken to Afrin Hospital, from where her brothers, who are Free Syrian Army fighters, collect her body.

The Sultan Suleyman Shah Brigade commanders alleged that the culprit is a member of the Brigade and would be tried in the military court for his crime, which he has committed for honor. As he discovered that his wife got married to someone else during his incarceration in the Syrian regime prisons.

The Civil Police doubted the Brigade’s statement, as one of its members explained:

“The Brigade’s reporting is inaccurate. The victim didn’t get married during her husband’s absence. The police inferred from the relevant facts and circumstances that the perpetrator wasn’t been held by the regime and not affiliated to the Brigade. It is not possible to be released from prison and promptly join an armed group in less than a month. The culprit was residing in Aleppo and refusing to leave it, as his daughter’s account confirms. However, the investigation into this crime led to a dispute between the Military and Civil Police, as the former accused the latter of stealing the perpetrator’s gun store.”

The witness confirmed that the Civil Police is no longer empowered to pursue the case and doesn’t know where the perpetrator is. However, the Military Police said that the murderer will be prosecuted.



The statement by Sultan Suleyman Shah Brigade on the crime committed by one of its members on March 2, 2019.

III. The slaughter of a woman in Al Bab:

On January 8, 2019 S.M.H slaughtered his sister in her marital home in the city of Al Bab, rural Aleppo. That was because she got married without her family's consent, though under a legal marriage contract according to the Islamic (Shariah) Law.

Details of the incident: STJ field researcher interviewed an official at the Sharia court in Al Bab city, who is familiar with this case. He said:

"The victim S.M.H, from Idlib, got married to a fighter in an armed group-I prefer not to mention- under an Islamic marriage contract issued by a Sheikh on September 11, 2017 without her family's knowledge. She ran away with him and reside in the city of Al Bab, knowing that he made several proposals, but her family maintained its rejection. On January 8, 2019 while the husband was on guard duty, brother of the victim came, slaughtered her and fled. When a neighbor heard the victim's baby crying non-stop, she went over to her house. The door was open, she got in and found the victim covered with blood in the yard."

The witness confirmed that the police were able to apprehend the perpetrator, and he is now in the slammer waiting on prosecution. He also asserted that the judge determined the crime to be a homicide and not for honor, since the victim has a legal and correct marriage contract.



History

Syrians for Truth and Justice was conceived during the participation of its co-founder in the Middle-East Partnership Initiative (MEPI) Leaders for Democracy Fellowship program, who was driven by a will to contribute to Syria's future. Starting as a humble project to tell the stories of Syrians experiencing enforced disappearances and torture, it grew into an established organisation committed to unveiling human rights violations of all sorts.

Convinced that the diversity that has historically defined Syria is a wealth, our team of researchers and volunteers works with dedication at uncovering human rights violations committed in Syria, in order to promote inclusiveness and ensure that all Syrians are represented, and their rights fulfilled.

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