

August 2019

سوريون  
من أجل  
الحقيقة  
والعدالة  
Syrians  
For Truth  
& Justice



## Ten 'Honor Killings' in al-Hasakah and As Suwayda Since Early 2019

## Ten 'Honor Killings' in al-Hasakah and As Suwayda Since Early 2019

*Eight of the killing cases took place in al-Hasakah alone, while As Suwayda saw the other two*

At least 10 women and girls fell victims to the so called 'honor killing' in the provinces of al-Hasakah and As Suwayda, controlled respectively by the Autonomous Administration and the Syrian government during the first half of 2019. Further, four killings were reported in the two provinces, during the same period, which claimed to be 'female suicides' in order to conceal honor-related crimes, and the culprit to go unpunished. Knowing that laws differentiated and judicial procedures vary depending on the region and the local commanders. As in As Suwayda, perpetrators haven't been prosecuted whereas in al-Hasakah they were sentenced to imprisonment of up to 20 years.

STJ field researchers have documented eight 'honor killings' in al-Hasakah alone; four in al-Hasakah city and one in each of Qamishli, Tell Koujar, al-Shidadi, Abu Raseen/Zarkan. Besides, four suicides were reported in the cities of al-Hasakah, Ras al-Ayn/Sari Kani, Amuda and Al-Jawadiyah/Çil Axa. While in As Suwayda two 'honor killings' have been documented.

According to STJ field researchers, the judicial authorities / institutions in al-Hasakah refused to disclose official statistics on the actual number of 'honor killings' occurred in the province, and categorically refused to provide any details about those cases, since the 'honor killing' is a highly sensitive issue, which affect families' honor and reputation. However, Sara, a women rights organization, provided our researchers with the number of crimes they counted in al-Hasakah province but refused to tell any details about the identities of the perpetrators or the victims.

STJ has recently prepared a report on a number of 'honor killings' committed in Aleppo province within areas controlled by the Turkish-backed National Army<sup>1</sup>.

## I. Honor Killings in al-Hasakah:

According to STJ field researcher, eight honor killings took place in the province of al-Hasakah, whose perpetrators were arrested and put on trial. STJ talked to a member of the Social Justice Council in the city of Qamishli, who confirmed the arrest and prosecution of the perpetrators and said that they had been tried in accordance with the "Women's Act", article 17, which criminalizes the murder committed under the pretext of honor and considers it a full-fledged crime.<sup>2</sup> The witness, however, refused to disclose details about the cases occurred, including information about the identity of the perpetrators.

Four female suicides took place in the cities of al-Hasakah, Ras al-Ayn/Sari Kani, the town of Amuda and Al-Jawadiyah/Çil Axa village. In this regard, STJ talked to Roken Ahmed, head of the Women's Board of the Autonomous Administration, who said:

<sup>1</sup> "Syria: Girl, Two Women Murdered in Alleged 'Honor Killing'", STJ, July 5, 2019 <https://stj-sy.org/en/syria-girl-two-women-murdered-in-alleged-honor-killing/>.

<sup>2</sup> The 'Women's Act', passed by the Women's Board, was issued by the Legislative Council of the Autonomous Administration on May 22, 2017 and consists of 30 articles.

**“Suicide cases are no longer kept in the archives as before. Today, an investigation committee is formed for each case, in order to clear up the suicide case and find out the reasons behind it. Therefore, the punishment of the criminal is determined according to the results. If it turns out that the victim had been driven to suicide by excreting violence on her, the perpetrator’s sentences would be determined depending on the seriousness of the harm he/she had caused to the victim. The authorities responsible for considering the establishment are the Justice for Women Council (specialized courts dealing with women's issues) and the Organized Crime Task Team (a security body of the Asayish forces, responsible for monitoring women's issues).”**

STJ field researcher in the city of Qamishli, documented an ‘honor killing’ against the 20-year-old woman H. K. T., mother of two children. The researcher talked to a relative of the victim, who said:

**“The victim was staying at the house of her husbands’ aunt, who lives above, in the same building of her, for her husband was on shift at his work. On March 29, 2019 at approximately 8:30am, he returned and told his wife to come down to their house. After half an hour, the husband’s aunt came on to invite them for breakfast and shocked to see members of the Asayish forces crowded in their house, and then arrested the husband. I headed to the hospital, and learned from the forensic doctor, that the victim was stabbed 15 times on every part of her body, mostly in the neck. The investigations revealed that the culprit was a brother of the husband, who committed the crime with the presence of the latter in the same room.”**

He added:

**“We do not know exactly what happened. The husband and brother were arrested, and recently the husband's uncle also, who is suspected of having something to do with the accident or with the victim. The victim's husband was incredibly suspicious and jealous of her wife, he even prevented her from using the phone and many other things. The victim married at the age of 15 and used to always have conflicts with her husband.”**

## **II. Honor killings in As Suwayda:**

The province of As Suwayda witnessed two ‘honor killings’ in the first half of 2019. The culprit of one of them surrendered to the local police while that of the second is still at large.

- **The murder of Nawal A.R., in an ‘honor killing’:**  
on Tuesday, June 18, 2019, the body of the victim, Nawal, a 43-year-old widow and mother of three children, was found on the side of the Al-Raha road in the city of As-Suwayda, and taken to As-Suwayda National Hospital. Report of the forensic doctor

stated that the death was caused by gunshots and denied seeing signs of a recent intercourse on the victim's body. Fadi, the victim's brother, surrendered to the police claiming that he murdered his sister because of tarnishing the family's honor. The victim's three children were placed in an orphanage in the province.

A. H. a resident of the village of Malah, from where the victim hails spoke to STJ saying:

**"The victim was known for her high repute and integrity and she used to work as a housemaid to provide for her children. She, however, had odds with her brother over a land inheritance."**

**- The murder of Abir A.Kh., in an 'honor killing':**

Abir, 30, married with two children, was killed on May 29, 2019, by her brothers who are still fugitive from justice.

STJ field researcher interviewed the victim's neighbor, as her family refused to talk about it

**"That day, in the very early morning, we heard gunshots. At once we rushed toward the sound and found the victim lying dead on the ground with her aghast children standing beside her. It was her brothers who shot her. we heard ululation came from the house of the victim's family. I think it was a scheming, since the victim was very reputable. She was married to her cousin.",** the neighbor said

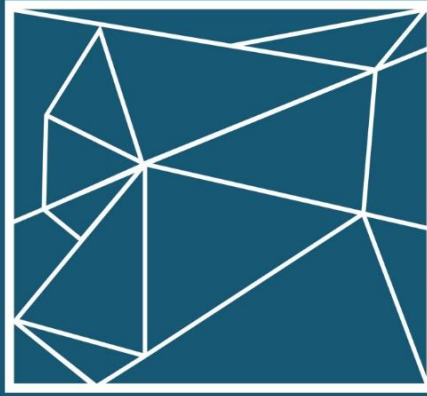
From a legal perspective, STJ legal counsel explained that the Syrian law contains discriminatory articles against women. The Syrian Penal Code protects the murderer and thus don't deter such crimes, as in its Article no.192 it provides for reduced sentence in case the motive is honor, without defining the notion of the 'honorable motive', leaving that question to the absolute discretion of the courts, thus, the perpetrator can go unpunished.<sup>3</sup> The Syrian judiciary often uses the 'honorable motive' to justify cases of homicide against women, and consider them as 'honor killings'. Formerly, Article 548 of the Syrian Penal Code, provided for no punishment for the culprit, however, as amended by Decree 37 of 2009, it prescribed a penalty of six months to two years.

In view of the "Women's Act" approved by the Autonomous administration, lawyer Hanan Rishkou said in an interview with STJ that the law considers the crime under the pretext of honor to be a full-fledged crime, punishable in the same way as a criminal offence, with a penalty ranging from 3 to 20 years in prison. The partner is also sentenced to up to nine years in prison. According to Roken Ahmed, head of the Women's Board, a number of honor killers have already been sentenced to life in prison.

---

<sup>3</sup> (Jurisprudence of the Syrian Court of Cassation No. 1157 dated 30/11/1982 published in the Syrian Lawyers magazine, the second issue of 1983 page 193).

سوريون  
من أجل  
الحقيقة  
والعدالة  
Syrians  
For Truth  
& Justice



## 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.

- 
- 🌐 [www.stj-sy.org](http://www.stj-sy.org)
  - 📘 [syriaSTJ](https://www.facebook.com/syriaSTJ)
  - 🐦 [@STJ\\_SYRIA\\_ENG](https://twitter.com/STJ_SYRIA_ENG)
  - 📷 [Syrians for Truth & Justice](https://www.instagram.com/Syrians_for_Truth_Justice)
  - ✉ [editor@stj-sy.org](mailto:editor@stj-sy.org)