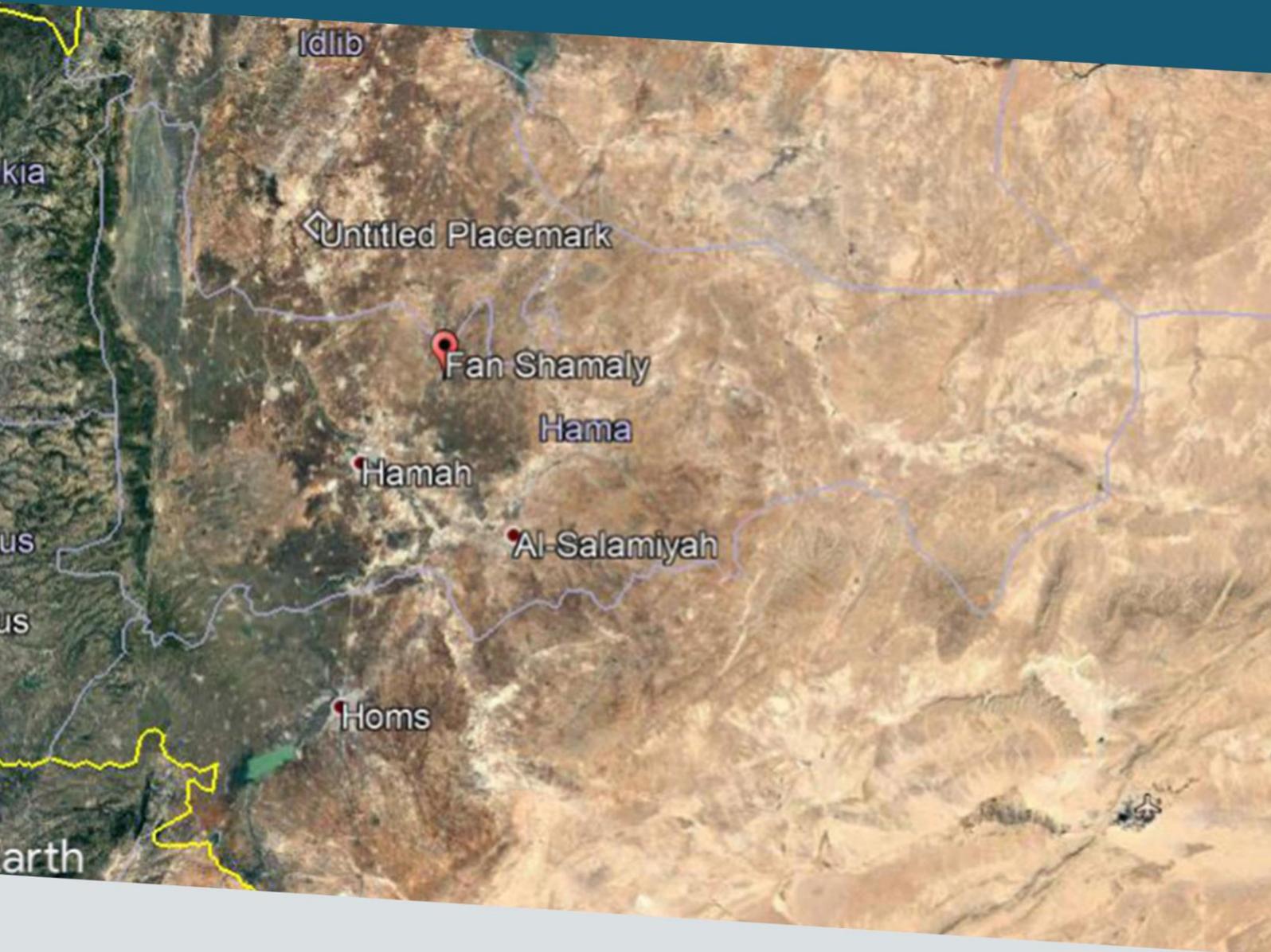
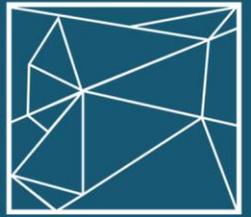


October 25, 2019

سوريون
من أجل
الحقيقة
والعدالة
Syrians
For Truth
& Justice



Seven years later, Justice for Fan Shamaly Massacres Needed

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Government forces and allied militias committed two massacres in the village of Fan Shamaly on 2 and 4 September 2012, killing 29 civilians including a woman and two children

September 2 and 4, 2019, marked the seventh anniversary of two massacres perpetrated by pro-government national defense militias against people of the village of Fan Shamaly, in rural Hama. The massacres claimed the lives of 29 civilians, including two children, and led to the arrest of 17 civilians, who are still unaccounted for.

STJ met survivors of the massacres and the arrest; they confirmed that the two massacres were deliberate, citing that some happenings and events paved the way for them.

[Footages](#) circulated on social media showed [bodies](#) of those fell in the massacres and their funerals. Some other videos also showed [bodies](#) showing signs of torture in addition to shops and houses got [burned](#).

Location: the village of [Fan Shamaly](#) is 30km. from the northeast of Hama. It is administratively under the Suran Subdistrict and has a population of 4200. The village is almost surrounded by checkpoints and military barracks of the Syrian Army. It is bounded to the south by the villages of Fan Wastany and Fan Janoubi, which have quite a number of pro-government irregular militias and military posts, including al-Mujanzarat School Base. It is also adjacent to the Maryoud village, which has many military posts. From the north it is bounded by the villages of Zaghbeh and al-Tulaysiyah, where there is the largest concentration of the Syrian Army and allied militias in the region. While to the east there is the Mujnazarat brigade 66 and the village of Khersan, which contains a number of irregular militia headquarters and an air defense battalion near the village of al-Hazem, both of which are the largest military units in northeast Hama.

I. The first massacre, September 2, 2012

STJ field researcher met a number of survivors, among them was the teacher Mr. Mahmoud Tawfik from the village of Fan Shamaly, who said:

“The massacre had been decided and planned a month ahead for reasons such as the fact that the village’s people are against the regime, which prompted them to take to the streets demanding to overthrow it. That irritated residents of the neighboring villages, which became military stations of the Syrian Army to surround the Fan Shamaly. Fifteen days before the massacre began, the actual preparation and planning of the massacre began with the aim of killing as many young people as possible.”

The witness added:

“The preparation of the massacre started by the stationing of government troops in areas overlooking the village, and monitoring the movements of the villagers, besides identifying all the routes that civilians could take to escape an attack. A week before the massacre, specifically on August 27, 2019, two tanks approached

the village from the al-Mabtán Junction, west of the village, and stopped 1km. away. Soldiers in those tanks then started firing sound bullets and bombs heavily to frighten civilians, in an attempt to detect the escape routes. Indeed, the government forces could identify two routes; a north route links Fan Shamaly with the villages of al-Jninah and al-Tulaysiyah and an east route links Fan Shamaly with the villages of Makhram Qastel, Abo Samira Qastel and Zaghibeh.”

The witness Mahmoud recounted details of the massacre saying:

“On September 2, 2012, at about 5.45 am. I woke up to knocks on my house’s door. It was my brother came up to tell me that the Syrian Army approached the village from the west and asked me to leave the house. However, when I got out, the tanks had already reached the outskirts of the village, so I couldn't escape like the other young men. I entered the house of a neighbor, while my brother was trying to run his car (a Tok Tok) to flee, but they started to shoot at him, so he left the car and rushed to a neighboring house. In seconds, shootings barraged in all directions. I clearly remember that day and the sounds of bullets still ringing in my ears.”

He added:

“The gunfire lasted for 25 minutes and then calmed for moments during which I got out of the house to see what happened. I found my brother and a number of young men hiding behind the wall of the house. The pro-government militias (Shabiha) entered the village from the west and went east without getting to the center of the village. The troops stationed in the east, where there are poultry farms; I saw them when I went up to the roof. There were two tanks and quite a number of vehicles carrying soldiers and other vehicles with heavy machine guns installed on them. That moment shots fired toward us; I couldn’t identify where they came from. However, I came down and heard a young man who was trying to flee from the north saying that the car of Ahmed al-Alloush- who is my uncle- had been shot; indeed, there was smoke rising from the north. Then I went with a young man named Tariq to the middle of the village moving from house to house; we went up on the roof of one of them so we could see where the shabiha stationed. Those in the north, who were in a Hyundai spotted us and headed to the house, which we were on its roof and started shooting at it, wounding a little girl her father named Ahmed Azia. We were able to change our place before they arrived.

Other vehicles entered the village center and started driving around the streets of the village, while people were hiding. We did not yet know what happened in the eastern neighborhood of the village. The vehicles remained roaming the streets for about two hours before they withdrew along with the two tanks and other vehicles carrying Shabiha towards the north. Then I rushed with young men who were with me to the targeted car of my uncle. It was completely burned and almost melted. We started searching for my relatives and found their shoes left

away from the car; I thought they had escaped, but when I approached the car, I saw a charred body; I couldn't identify it, I wondered if it was for my brother, as he was with my uncle in the car with my cousin and a neighbor. I fainted for short and when recovered, I saw a number of young men from the village had arrived. We tried to identify the body, but the Shabiha again fired at us and we returned to the village. When I reached the main road in the middle of the village, I heard a man beside the mosque calling out loudly: "there is a massacre east of the village, all those who went from the eastern road killed by Shabiha."

According to the witness, the Shabiha had ambushed near a house in the eastern edges of the village and killed everyone who fled towards this road.

"After the shooting subsided, people went out of their homes and went to the eastern road to look for their relatives. A few minutes later the bodies began to arrive. Residents found 21 bodies, including two children, aged 8 and 9. The bodies were collected and prepared for burial. Not an easy day to forget!", the witness concluded:

After burials, families of the deceased left the village, fearing similar possible incidents, according to the witness.

STJ field researcher documented names of the victims fell in this massacre. They are: Hassan Ali al-Khileef, Kanaan al- Khileef (a child), Ali al- Khileef (a child), Sarhan al-Khileef, Abdul Qahar al-Khileef, Abdullah al- Khileef, Fadi al-Khileef, Ahmed al-Khileef, Abdul Razzaq al- Khileef, Noor al-Din Obaid al-Ali, Abdullah Obaid al-Ali, Mohammad Ali al-Obaid, Abdul-Karim Ali al-Obaid, Abdul-Mu'ein al-Hussein, Thalji Khalaf al-Obaid, Akram Mahmoud al-Omar, Humam Abdul al-Hadi al-Mohammad, Hussein Abdul Aziz al- Mohammad, Ahmed Hussein al -Mohammad, Mohammad Khalid al- Khalifa and Salloum Jassim al-Khamees.

II. The second massacre, September 4, 2012:

On September 4, 2012, at 6:00am, government forces and allied militias stormed the village from different directions. This coincided with the deliberate disconnection of telephone and the block of all roads leading to the village. According to survivors of the massacre, the attack was carried out simultaneously from the al-Meah checkpoints (also known as Kawkab) in the west and the checkpoints of al-Mabtan and al-Mujanzarat in the south.

Regarding the incident, STJ field researcher talked to a survivor of the massacre called Rakan, nicknamed Abu Yaman, who said:

“The government forces backed by Shabiha, stormed the village at 6:00 am. I was hiding in some house when I heard a lady called Turkia-the wife of Dahham al-Jasem- saying to soldiers “What do you want from us? And why you came?”. Then I heard a gunfire after which her voice disappeared. My cousin, who was with me motioned to me that they killed her; we couldn’t talk as they were too close to us. Then we heard an officer ordering a soldier to check the “Kadeek” (an old room which has walls of black stones), where we were hiding, for anybody hiding inside. Fortunately, he couldn’t see us, since it was too dark. The government forces then withdrew from the village, after they gunned down eight people.”

STJ field researcher documented the names of the victims of this massacre, they are: Turkia al-Hammoud and her two children Hussein and Radan, Riyad al-Jasim, Ahmed al-Jasim, Hawyan al-Khileef, Zakaria al-Hussein and Nasir al-Muheimeed.

Regarding the death of Turkia, her son talked to STJ saying:

“Five members of Shabiha stormed our house, led by Abdo M., nicknamed as Zahlout, a well-known man from the village of Fan al-Wastani, who used to work as a mini-bus driver on Hama road before he turned into Shabih. He shot my 32-year-old brother Hussein, my brother Wardan, 19, and my cousin, Ahmed, 37. While my cousin, Riad was shot dead by the Shabih Yasser H. Then, I got out with my mother; and she started screaming and calling Abdu M. by his name, which prompted him to fire at her. She fell dead in front of my brothers’ eyes.”



Changes occurred in the village’s cemetery between 2012 and 2014.

III. Arrests accompanied the massacre:

Witnesses and survivors of the arrest confirmed that the massacre carried out by government forces in the village of Fan Shamaly on September 4, 2012 was accompanied by the arrest of 17 civilians, 15 of whom were released in turn, while the fate of the two left is still unknown.

STJ field researcher spoke to one of the survivors of the arrest, the pharmacist Ahmed Azia, who gave a detailed account of what happened:

“When the Shabiha and regime forces stormed the village from the south, my entire family was at home; me, my father, Juma’a Azia, and my seven brothers and we could not escape. My father locked the door, but the fighters broke the lock, entered the house and ordered us to present our IDs and military booklets. Wearing masks and military uniforms, they couldn’t be identified. They dragged us to a vehicle and then brought my cousins; Mohammed and Khalid Azia, as well as Haitham Atriyah and Jihad Atriyah; Jihad is with special needs. They also brought two of our neighbors, Arab al-Issa, Majd Ahmad al-Razouq and a number of the village youth and drove us to the village of Maryoud. On the way, we were severely tortured by electric batons. They got us to a detention center and we were placed in separate rooms. Then they started interrogating us individually with severe torture. About two hours later an officer in charge of the Qans checkpoint came and ordered them to transfer us. When they took us to the vehicles, a woman came with a gun and a petrol jerrycan; she wanted to burn us, citing that we killed her family. We reached the Qans checkpoint at 12:00 pm, there they placed us in a warehouse and started interrogating us with our hands tied and blindfolded. My brother, Mahmoud, was a volunteer in the Air Force, he told them that he was on a leave but they didn’t believe him, and accused him of defection. There was also another enlisted detained with us. The torture we suffered that day is indescribable.”

The witness added:

“At about 2:00 pm they told us that they released us and stopped us a mini-bus on the road to get in, they released 12 people, including me while my two brothers and three others stayed in detention for another 18 days, during which they moved between several security branches in Hama and underwent severe torture, which marks still clear on my brother’s body. After four months and 20 days, they released another person, while the fate of Majd Ahmad al-Razzouq and Haitham Suleiman remains unknown.”

IV. Preparators of the two massacres still at large:

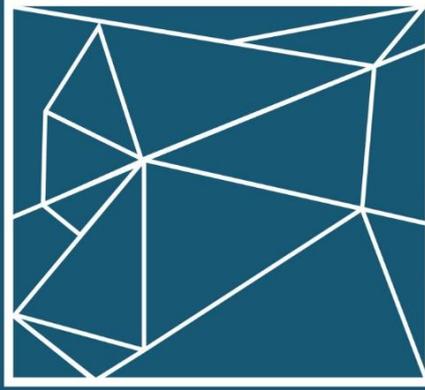
Witnesses and survivors of the massacres confirmed that Captain Yunus A., the head of the al-Mabtán checkpoint, who hails from the city of Masyaf, bears primary responsibility for committing the two massacres. He was later rewarded by the people of the village of al-Tulaysiyah with a medal of honor and one million Syrian pounds. He also got married to a girl from the village.

Survivors of the massacre could identify some of those participated in committing the massacre, they are; Safar Kh. from the village of Zaghbeh, Mohammad Ibn Mukhtar, from the village of al-Shatah, Osama A., from the village of Zaghbeh, Abu Danial, from the village of Fan Janouby and a member of the military intelligence, and Jameel Z., from the village of Fan Janouby.

STJ field researcher indicated that a large number of Fan Shamaly people has displaced (most of them towards the village of al-Hamraa in eastern rural Hama and from there to Idlib province) after the two massacres occurred, fearing similar possible incidents. The village of Fan Shamaly still under the government's control and almost empty of people, as they couldn't return to it yet.

Relatives of the victims said that they were unable to file any complaint or take any action to hold the perpetrators accountable, even those whom they could identify, for fear of being killed or arrested, especially after being displaced from the village. Still, the victims' relatives continue to demand justice and accountability.

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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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