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**Syria: 127 Arrests in Afrin during  
September 2019**

## **Syria: 127 Arrests in Afrin during September 2019**

*The number of female arrests increased markedly this month  
reaching 17*

## Introduction:

The National Army of the Syrian Interim Government, which was formed by the National Coalition for Syrian Revolutionary and Opposition Forces, increased its detentions and arbitrary arrests against civilians in the Kurdish-majority city of Afrin last September.<sup>1</sup> The 127 arrestees were documented-with their full names-, among them were 17 women and children, some of whom were transferred to central prisons, 70 were released, while the fate of 57 detainees remained unknown at the time of writing and publication of this report; the number is the highest in the last four months.

STJ has documented the arrest and detention of 80 people in August 2019,<sup>2</sup> 63 in July 2019,<sup>3</sup> and 56 in June 2019,<sup>4</sup> in Afrin alone.

***90 out of the 190 people who were arrested in August, July and June, are still unaccounted for.***

STJ field researchers confirmed that the arrests made in September were mainly against those served in the ranks of the Self-Defense Forces of the Autonomous Administration. Besides, 17 local women and girl children were also arrested, which can increase tension and raise indignation against the Turkish forces and allied armed groups in control. Witnesses and former detainees said that most of the arrests were made for money. A number of those young men have been re-arrested more than twice and have been asked to pay bail/fine for their release, despite having proofs of at least one previous bail.

According to locals and STJ field researchers distributed on seven areas in the region, Military police and Civilian police are responsible for the bulk of the arrests,<sup>5</sup> while the Military Security Branch, the Levant Front/*al-Jabha al-Shamiah*, the Suleyman Shah Brigade, the Samarkand Brigade, the al Waqqas Brigade, Ahrar al-Sharqiya group and the Hamza Division made the rest of the arrests.

<sup>1</sup> In its report on August 2, 2018, the Amnesty termed the presence of the Kurdish forces in Afrin an 'occupation'. For more info: "Syria: Turkey must stop serious violations by allied groups and its own forces in Afrin", Amnesty, August 2, 2018. (last visit: September 2, 2019)

<https://www.amnesty.org/en/latest/news/2018/08/syria-turkey-must-stop-serious-violations-by-allied-groups-and-its-own-forces-in-afrin/>

<sup>2</sup> "Syria: At Least 80 People Arrested in Afrin during August 2019", STJ, September 3, 2019, (last visit: October 1, 2019) <https://stj-sy.org/en/syria-at-least-80-people-arrested-in-afrin-during-august-2019/>

<sup>3</sup> "63 arrests in Afrin during July 2019", STJ, August 2, 2019, (last visit: October 1, 2019) <https://stj-sy.org/en/63-arrests-in-afrin-during-july-2019/>

<sup>4</sup> "Syria: 56 Persons Arrested by the "National Army" in Afrin", STJ, July 2, 2019, (last visit: October 1, 2019) <https://stj-sy.org/en/syria-56-persons-arrested-by-the-national-army-in-afrin/>

<sup>5</sup> Civil Police, also known as the "National Police" or "the Police and Public Security Forces in Afrin", was formed by the Turkish government who trained its personnel on its territory. The General Command of the body was assigned to the Major General Abdul Razak Aslan Alaz, while Lt. Col. Rami Tlass / Abu Yusuf was appointed as a commander of the Free Police in Afrin. The latter comes from the Rastan area in Homs suburbs and was a member of one of the opposition's military formations, who had fought in Eastern Ghouta before the Syrian regime forces took control of it, supported directly by Russia.



Witnesses met by field researchers expressed fears that the escalation in arrests was intended to be concurrent with the olive harvest to blackmail people by forcing them to pay money and give a share of their harvest in exchange for not being arrested. Field researchers also noted that in September, the region witnessed three bombings, two mortar attacks and several clashes between militias of armed groups affiliated to the National Army, which left casualties among civilians.

STJ field researchers quoted witnesses saying that detentions and arrests were made arbitrarily and did not respect due process. Also, many of those arrested hadn't been informed of charges against them by written notices or orally, contrary to the statements made by the former spokesman of the National Army that the arrests were carried out within the legal framework.<sup>6</sup>

## I. Arrests in Afrin:

51 people, including a woman, were arrested in [Afrin region](#). Locals and field researchers confirmed that the Military Police conducted 48 of those arrests while the Military Security Branch arrested two people and the Northern Brigade/Liwaa al-Shamal arrested one:

- On September 28, a patrol of the Military Police arrested Mohammad Sido Bilal, who hails from the village of Diki, and live in al-Ashrafiyah neighborhood in Afrin and is an employee at the Public Foundation for Water in Afrin, along with his wife Hevein Blo and they were taken to the Military Police prison which is located in the Trade School of the city.
- On September 28, a patrol of the Military Police arrested the Kurdish/Yazidi Saeed Ghareeb Hissou, 58, and his wife Ghalia Hussein, 51, for unknown reasons. They both hail from the village of Jaqli jum/ Çeqelê Cûmê in Jindires district and live in Afrin. It should be noted that Saeed Ghareeb Hissou had been previously detained for ten days by the Ahrar al-Sharqiya group and got out on bail.
- On September 25, a patrol of the Military Security arrested the lady Khalida Suliman along with her husband Abdul Hameed Suliman for unknown reasons. The lady is a member of the Kurdish Democratic Progressive Party in Syria, in the wing led by Abd al-Hamid Darwish.

<sup>6</sup> "The practices of the Syrian armed groups between the jurists and the military" Fi al-Uomq, Watan FM., July 8, 2019 (last visit: October 1, 2019) [https://soundcloud.com/watanfm/08-07-2019fil3omq?fbclid=IwAR0lxzkTXeXuGXzlDEVr4Fkc3HlXhC\\_xx6nvU8BsG8lyPeYwwaY-G7RrmQ](https://soundcloud.com/watanfm/08-07-2019fil3omq?fbclid=IwAR0lxzkTXeXuGXzlDEVr4Fkc3HlXhC_xx6nvU8BsG8lyPeYwwaY-G7RrmQ)



A picture taken from a [statement](#) issued by the political office of the Kurdish Democratic Progressive Party in Syria; Abd al-Hamid Darwish's wing, on the arrest of Khalida Suliman and her husband.

- On September 10, a patrol of the Northern Democratic Brigade detained Mustafa Omar Mustafa, 33, and released him after three days for a bail. Mustafa has a food shop at the Nowruz roundabout in the city and was previously detained twice and bailed out.
- The village of Juwayq of the Afrin district witnessed a wave of arrests by the Military Police and the Hamza Division on the 1 and 3 September, according to a local. The arrests were made on charges of belonging to cells linked to the Autonomous Administration and joining the self-defense duty.

According to the witness- he asked for anonymity- the leader of the Hamza Division, nicknamed Abu al-Yaman, was who ordered the arrests 18 people, who were: Bassel Hassan Moussa, Adib Sobhy Alkhado, Mohammad Qasim, Ismail Mohamed Allawi, Ibo Jameel Ibo, Nihad Gharib, Ismail Hassan Arab, Yehia Hassan Arab, Idris Mohamed Arab, Mohammad Ahmed Arek, Kamal Khalil Said, Bakr Wahid, Mohammad Jamil Othman, Abdo Subhi Esou, Alan Youssef Fayek, Hanif Issa, Mohammad Hussein Rashid and Fathi Amara.

**The witness confirmed that they were all released successively throughout September after paying fines/bail ranging from 150 to 250 thousand Syrian pounds per person equivalent to 300 to 450 US dollars, while Ismail Mohammad Allawi was released immediately without paying any.**

- In the village of Kafr Sheel, a patrol of the Military Police arrested four people on charges of joining the self-defense duty and one another after robbing his house. a local detailed STJ about the arrest of Omar Hamdoush, 24, saying:

**“Omar has vision impairment. He was enlisted during the period of the Autonomous Administration’s control. The night before his arrest, thieves tried to steal a transistor-owned by his grandfather- from his house. He fought with the thieves who fled, and was arrested by Military Police patrol the next morning and released on September 12.”**

The Military Police detained four people from the al-Haji family under accusation of joining the self-defense duty and released them on September 19.

- In the village of Maratah the Military Police conducted 17 detentions against people accused of supporting the People's Protection Units (YPG) on September 2, and released most of them later-from the central prison of Maratah- successively during the same month after, in exchange for fines ranged between SP.150.000 and SP.250.000.

The detainees are: Saeed Khalil al-Ayoubi, Mohammad Ahmed al-Ayoubi, Wali Hanan Genji, Adnan Adnan Genji, Ali Othman Ibrahim (released directly), Ahmed Abdel Rahman Qalig, Negerfan Mohammad Haji, a civilian young man, Rezan Khalil Mohammad, Salah Sheikho, Rukan Haidar Misto, Omar Haidar Misto, Safwan Othman, Sulaiman Othman, Khalil Ahmu Mohammad Abu Idris, Mustafa Rashid Alo (65 years old), Ahmed Abdel Rahman, as well as Ali Hassan (nicknamed Jiqli), who was previously detained and released on September 5, and re-arrested on September 10.

- In the village of Kafr Zeit, on September 6, three wanted young men; Shafan Zouhair Mohammad, Ahmed Mohammad Ali and Najm al-Deen Shamou, surrendered to the

Military Police, which had been prosecuted them. They were bailed out from the central prison of Maratah on September 20.

In the village of Kafr Zeit also, the Military Police arrested Jumaa Asaad Kalo, 35, and took him to a prison in Afrin, for serving as a mayor (mukhtar) of the village during the period of the Autonomous Administration's control.

## II. Arrests in Shaykh al-Hadid:

Al Waqqas Brigade along with the Suleiman Shah Brigade (also known as al-Amshat) raided the town of [Shaykh al-Hadid](#) three times arresting 13 people:

- In the village of Anqala, on September 18, the Waqqas Brigade in control arrested 10 youths on charges of joining the self-defense duty and being members of the local councils established during the Autonomous Administration. The arrestees were taken to the Maratah and al-Marwanyah prisons and still there; they are:

**Hassan Ahmed Ali (Komin), Alloush Mohammad Jarco, 20, Hassan Rashid Jarco, Hanan Mohammad Ahmed, 22, Mustafa Kathiqli, Pankin Ibrahim Abdo (compulsory recruitment), Issam Alloush Attar, Shafiar Mustafa Saadu, 25, (compulsory recruitment), Mohammad Hekmat Abdeen and Hussein Mohamed Krisho (Komin).**

- In the village of Senarê, on September 18, the Waqqas Brigade in control arrested Zeebar Mohammad Alo, 22, (served in the ranks of the Self-Defense Forces), Mohammad Aref Mustafa (was the forestry official under the Autonomous Administration) and Mohammad Aziz Khoja (the village's chief of guard during the Autonomous Administration's control) and they are still in detention, according to a local.
- In the village of Jaqalu, on September 15, the Suleiman Shah Brigade (also known as al-Amshat) detained Ali Aref Hameed Jaafar, 65, who is known to be rich, and released him the next day for an exchange of \$1000.

## III. Arrests in Bulbul district:

The Civil Police arrested five people in the village of Khadraya Bulbul district on 17 and 27 September on accusations of joining the self-defense duty ranks and the affiliation to the YPG, and they haven't been freed yet.

The arrestees are: Rifaat Issa Ajou, arrested on September 17, Ibrahim Hussein Rasho, Salah Zakaria Mohammad, Ziad Horik Rashid, Jalal Mohammad Mahmo and Aras Hanan Muhammad, arrested on September 27, and they all were transferred to the district center.

#### IV. Arrests in Maabatli district:

The Levant Front, the Northern Democratic Brigade and the Civil Police arrested eight people, including a woman and girl child, for unknown reasons and they are haven't released yet.

- In the village of Barka, on September 3, the Levant Front arrested Zakaria Ahmed Suleiman, Kawa Izzat Suleiman and Hanif Hassan Suleiman were released on September 12, after paying bail, but one day after their release, the group re-arrested them for an unknown reason and they still unaccounted for.
- On September 14, the same group arrested Hamid Suleiman along with his wife and daughter, and took them to its security headquarters in the district center. This was the only information provided about the incident.
- In the village of Koliko, on September 29, the Northern Democratic Brigade in control, arrested Ibrahim Mohammad Mustafa without disclosing the reasons.
- In the village of Shekhoutkah, on September 18, the Civil Police arrested Hanan Muhammad Sheikh Sidi for unknown reasons.

#### V. Arrests in Rajo:

The Civil Police arrested 11 people from several villages of the district of [Rajo](#), on different accusations like joining the self-defense duty and being members of the local councils established during the Autonomous Administration's control.

- On September 5, the Civil Police raided the village of Bilelko and arrested Rajab Horo, 62, Behzad Daoud, 33, Ali Hussein, 24, Mohammad Hussein, Mohammad Rashid Hamada, 55, and Mustafa Mohammad Hamada, 24, were transferred to Rajo District Prison.
- In the village of Zarka, on September 6, the Civil Police detained Sheikho Hourik, 31, after he came back from Turkey with his ill father and was released on September 24, for an exchange of a bail of SP.150.000.
- In the village of Sheikh Hamou, on September 8, a patrol of the Civil Police detained Zaem Sheikh Ahmed, 74, who was a head of one of the local councils under the Autonomous Administration. He was released on September 16.
- In the village of Qude, on September 26 a patrol of the Civil Police arrested Mohammad Maamo, 65, and Shukri Hussein Bakeer, 55, on charges of working at



the Autonomous Administration's local councils. They both were released the same evening. It should be noted that Shukri Bakir was arrested in August for the same reason.

- Also, in the village of Qude, on September 8, the Civil Police arrested Foud Bakr and Haifa Bakr and no further information about the incident gained.

## VI. Arrests in Jindires:

The [Jindires](#) district witnessed 16 arrests during September, made by the Military Police, the Ahrar al-Sharqiya and the Samarkand Brigade. Most of the detainees were released.

- On September 7, Military Police raided the home of Haji Abdul Razzaq al-Rahawi (nicknamed Hajiko) on charges of serving in the ranks of the self-defense duty. he was transferred to Afrin Central Prison, according to a friend.

It is noteworthy that the detainee had been arrested by the Ahrar al-Sharqiya for the same charge and then paid the amount of SP.800.000 for his release.

- On September 3, Basil Adam, from the village of Hijke, was arrested by the Ahrar al-Sharqiya group, but no further information gained about the incident.
- On September 11, Abdo Saleh Ali was arrested by Ahrar al-Sharqiya group, and no further information provided about the incident.
- In the village of Kafr Safra, a local told STJ that the Samarkand Brigade has been attempting to arrest from the 'Barmajah' family, for serving in the ranks of the self-defense duty. However, the family members hindered the arrest and tried to confront the members of the group, which prompted the latter to fire live bullets to intimidate the family, and then arrested Khalil Mohammad Barmajah, Khalil Murad, Khurshid Mohammad Mahmoud, Dalshan Kojer, Zaloukh Hussein, Hanan Alloush Shekho and Ali Khalil.

On the same evening, members of the group, accompanied by the Civilian Police, returned to the village, surrounded it and fired live bullets into the air and arrested Abdul Rahman Barmajah, Shaaban Barmajah and Murad Barmajah; they have been released successively, according to a local.

- On September 16, the Civil Police arrested Ahmed Hassan Momad, a former conscript, and ordered his family to pay SP.500.000 as a fine. He was sentenced to one year in prison.
- In the village of Miska, on September 3, members of Ahrar al-Sharqiya group arrested Hanan Khalil Jindo at the village's junction while on his way home, leaving his motorbike on the roadside. And on September 15, the group members arrested his wife Subran Mustafa Rasheed, and they are still unaccounted for.

- In the village of Yalanqoz, on September 17, the Civil Police detained Qahraman Hussein, 24, and transferred him to central prison of Maratah and released him later after paying a fine.
- In the village of Deir Ballut, on September 13, a patrol of the Civil Police arrested Ahmed Waheed Shouke, who was the village's guard, and hold him in Jindires prison and then released him on September 27.

Ahmed was arrested on the same charge a while ago, and his father bailed him out then.

## VII. Arrests in Sharran:

According to eyewitnesses and residents of [Sharran](#) district, Military Police, Civil Police and the Sultan Murad Brigade arrested 23 people in September, including 8 women and a girl, for various reasons, including serving in former Autonomous Administration institutions and performing the self-defense duty.

- In the village of Dayr Sawwan, on September 2, members of the Civil Police arrested Nabiha Khalil Ojaili, 55, Latifa, 35, Moulida Abdel Rahman Khalil, Amira Shehima and Adham Omar Majid with his mother Fahmiya, 50, Hassan Ahmed, 37, with his mother Zainab and also Widad Waqas, on charges of serving in councils of the Autonomous Administration and the performance of self-defense duty. They were all transferred to the center of the district of Sharran and released successively during the same month after they paid fines.
- In the village of Qurtqulaq, on September 24, the Sultan Murad Brigade arrested Mohammad Gomaa Ahmed, Mohammad Ahmed Mosho, Issam Manan Mosho, Hanan Mohammad Muslim, Mustafa Abdelkader Sheikh Ahmed, Omar Shahin Mosho, Mohammad Ahmed Sheikh and Luqman Mohammad Sheikh. No further details gained about the arrests.
- In the village of Gemruk, Abdo Hanan, Hassan Sheikho, Hussein Aref and one of the mukhtar's sons were arrested by the Civilian Police without knowing the charges against them.
- In the village of Mereske, on September 26, the Levant Front along with the Military Police raided the house of Abdullah Mohammad Ali arresting his daughter Sarah on charges of working for the Autonomous Administration.

According to a villager, some of the members who carried out the raid were in civilian clothes and others in military uniforms and they didn't tell the girl's family the direct reason for her arrest. On September 28, the Military Police raided their house again and detained the girl's mother, Ayda, for publishing the news of her daughter's arrest on social media. However, the mother was released several hours later while the fate of the girl remains unknown.

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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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