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**Afrin: 72 People, including 5  
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2019**

## **Afrin: 72 People, including 5 Women, arrested in November 2019**

*The number of arrests increased compared to the 54 recorded in the  
previous October*

Arbitrary arrests/detentions by the Turkish forces and groups affiliated to the National Army against people of the Kurdish-majority city of Afrin,<sup>1</sup> increased in November 2019 compared to the number they made in the previous October; STJ field researchers confirmed the arrest/detention of 72 people including five women and a girl child.

**23 of those arrested were later released, after paying varying ransoms/fines, while the fate of the rest remains unknown as of the date of the publication of this report.**

According to locals and field researchers the Turkish Intelligence Service, the Political Security, the Military Police, the Levant Front/al-Jabha al-Shamiya, the Suleiman Shah Brigade (also known as al-Amshat), al-Hamzah/al-Hamzat Division and the Sham Legion were behind those arrests/detentions.

Most of the witnesses and locals met by STJ confirmed that the majority of arrests were conducted arbitrarily and didn't follow the due process. As 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>2</sup>

## I. Arrests in Afrin:

Afrin district (Afrin city and the administratively attached villages) witnessed house raids led to 22 arrests, including three women and a girl child. The arrests made by the Political Security, the Military Police, al-Hamzah/al-Hamzat Division and the Sham Legion:

- **On November 12, 2019:** a witness from Afrin said that the Political Security arrested Farhad Mohammad Kulin Sheikh Abdi, after being trapped in his store. Farhad is an employee of the current local council of Afrin, and previously was an employee in the municipality during the period of the Autonomous Administration's control.

Also, on the same day, a patrol of the Military Police and the Turkish Intelligence raided the house of Nuri Qara Ali located near the restaurant "Vin" in the city of Afrin, and was arrested with his two daughters, Khadija and Amina on charges of photographing and sending pictures to people outside Syria. Nuri, however, was released because of his old age, while the fate of his two daughters is still unknown.

In a separate incident on the same day, members of the Sham Legion group raided several houses in the village of Kabashin and arrested six people for unknown reasons. The

<sup>1</sup> In a report released on August 2, 2018, Amnesty International described the Turkish presence in the Syria's Afrin as an 'occupation'. See: "Syria: Turkey must stop serious violations by allied groups and its own forces in Afrin", Amnesty International, August 2, 2018. <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> "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=IwAR0lxzkTXeXuGXzIDEVr4Fkc3HlXhC\\_xx6nvU8BsG8lyPeYwwaY-G7RrmQ](https://soundcloud.com/watanfm/08-07-2019fil3omq?fbclid=IwAR0lxzkTXeXuGXzIDEVr4Fkc3HlXhC_xx6nvU8BsG8lyPeYwwaY-G7RrmQ)

detainees were taken to a prison/detention center of the group located in the village of Iskan/ îska. According to the witness, the detainees are: Ismail Jamu Haidar, Husain Abdu Mohammad, Ghassan Louay Esau, Riyad Qushu Esau, Zahir Suleiman Abdu and Mohammad Abdul Qadir Hindi.

- **On November 14, 2019**, Mrs. Sherine Abdel Qader and her son went to the Civil Police headquarters in Afrin and filed a complaint against members who seized the car of Sheren's deceased husband. Sherine and her son were arrested inside the headquarters, and their fate remains unknown.
- **On November 15, 2019**, members of the Sham Legion arrested the young woman Roya in the village of Ghazawiya/ Xezîwê, and released her on November 21 after her family paid a ransom/fine. The girl was beaten and tortured during her detention.

Regarding the incident, a village resident said to the field researcher:

**“Members of the Sham Legion group arrested Roya’s father in early November on charges of insulting the Islam and it was reported that he was beaten and tortured. Thus, Roya along with a number of women protested in front of the group’s headquarters, which obliged the latter to release him then. However, after ten days they detained his daughter and she was bailed out by her family which still being blackmailed and threatened by the group members.”**

- **On November 18, 2019**, the al-Hamzah/al-Hamzat Division arrested four people from the village of Al-Basuta-for unknown reasons- and took them to Afrin Central Prison, the detainees are; (Ali Khalil Khaled, Haidar Samir Walu, Hamza Khalid, Hussein Demso).
- **On November 19, 2019**, a Military Police patrol arrested Abd al-Rahman Ali, 45, - he is in a poor health condition - for unknown reasons. The field researcher said that the Ahrar al-Sharqiya group had previously confiscated Abd al-Rahman's house in the Cultural Centre neighborhood, and thus he was obliged to live in his son’s home.
- **On November 20, 2019**, a patrol from the Political Security arrested the young man Shawqi Jamal from his house, located in the vicinity of Abu Imad bakery -a well-known point in the city of Afrin – for unknown reasons.
- **On November 25, 2019**, members of the Civilian Police at a checkpoint in the village of Ternada/ Turindê arrested Mustafa Ibish Aswad, 55, and Ahmed Nuri Abdu, 50, and confiscated their car while they were heading to the city of Afrin. According to a relative of the detainees, the Civilian Police requested an amount of \$5,000 in exchange for their release.

## II. Arrests in Shaykh Al Hadid district:

[Shaykh Al Hadid](#) district and its administratively affiliated village witnessed three house raid campaigns by the Suleiman Shah Brigade (also known as al-Amshat) and the Turkish Intelligence, led to the arrest of seven men and a woman:

- **On November 13, 2019**, members of the Suleiman Shah Brigade arrested Idris Zaki Qarah, who is the mayor (Mukhtar) of the village of Termicho, and his wife Fatima Manan Koro while heading to the city of Afrin, and confiscated their car. That was due to Idris's protest and his dissatisfaction with the security situation and decisions made and implemented in the area. However, they were released after a short while.
- **On November 17, 2019**, members of the Suleiman Shah Brigade also arrested five young men on charges serving in the ranks of the Self-Defense Forces of the Autonomous Administration, the detainees are: Mohammad Mustafa Sheikho -he was transferred to the central prison of Maratah-, Hanan Mohammad, Ahmed Alow Mohammad Haji Omar and Haji Omar. They were later released after paying ransoms to the Brigade.
- **On November 22, 2019**, the Turkish Intelligence arrested Ahmed Haj Haider, 50, from his home in the village of Arandeh and then transferred him to a Turkish prison.

## III. Arrests in Bulbul/ Bilbile district:

The Bulbul district witnessed only one arrest, which was against Mohammad Rashid Ma'mo, a medical worker in Syria Immunization Group. The arrest conducted by unidentified gunmen on November 21, 2019, when Mohammad was on his way home from work. A man close to Mohammad's family talked to STJ saying:

**"Mohammad was riding a motorbike and on his way home with another person when a silver Sentra car got in their way and the armed men in it showed them a summons stamped with the seal of the Sultan Murad Division. However, at the entrance of the city of Afrin those armed men identified themselves as members of the Ahrar al-Sham group, and after they passed the checkpoint, they released the motorbike driver and kept holding Mohammad, and his fate remains unknown until now."**

Mohammad Rashid Ma'mo had been earlier arrested for a month for serving in the ranks of the Self-Defense Forces and later bailed out and obtained a clearance from the then Military Court.

## IV. Arrests in Maabatli/Mabeta:

The Maabatli district witnessed the arrest of 34 people on charges of performing the Self Defense duty under the Autonomous Administration. The arrests were conducted by the Levant Front, the Suleiman Shah Brigade and al-Hamzah/al-Hamzat Division. Some of those arrested were released on varying fines, while the rest were transferred to central prisons:

- **On November 3, 2019**, the Suleiman Shah Brigade arrested the two young men Abdo Khalil Hasso and Mustafa Hassan Maho from the village of Yakhour on charges of performing the Self-Defense duty, and later they were transferred to the headquarters of the group in the Shih district, and were released after paying \$10,000 each.
- **On November 5, 2019**, the al-Hamzah/al-Hamzat Division conducted a raid in the village of Sanyanli accompanied by shooting in the air for the purpose of intimidation. The raid led to the arrest of five people on charge of serving in the ranks of the Self-Defense Forces; they were transferred to the central prison of Maratah and later released on fines, the detainees were: Imad Zeno, Lazkin Zeno, Ali Zeno, Tawfiq Hussein Qarrah Gul, and Issa Hanan Qarrah Gul.
- **On November 16, 2019**, members of the Suleiman Shah Brigade arrested Muhammad Manan Hasso, 35, from the village of Yakhour, and his fate remains unknown as of the time of publishing this report.
- **On November 26, 2019**, the Levant Front raided the neighboring villages of Maabatli and Qantara, arresting 21 people. STJ field researcher identified only 16 out of those 21, they are: Khalil Hanan Khalil, Abd al-Rahman Sheikh Na`san, Ali Hanan Sheikho, Mohammad Rabi` Yusuf, Ahmed Aslan, Mohammad Ahmad Hanan, Azad Ahmad Hanan, Nabi Khalil Hanan, Khalil Manan Yusuf, Razmi Hanan Othman, Ali Mohammad Murad, Ahmed Kalakhash, Khalil Bakr, Mohammad Ali Bin Bilal and Ramzi Shaabu Ibn Mustafa.

A local of the village said:

**"Officials and former employees of the Autonomous Administration have kept all the records, papers and documents belonging to the people working with them, both the civilians and military. They did not destroy these documents but rather left them in their places, and it seems that groups affiliated to the National Army have found these documents and are searching for the names mentioned in the records to arrest them."**

- **On November 29, 2019**, the Levant Front launched another raid against the same aforementioned two villages, arresting the five people Ahmed Hanan Damerji,

Mustafa Ali Mukhtar, Karim Mamish, Mohammad Omar Akhras and Ahmed Rashid Dalu.

## V. Arrests in Raju district:

The al-Hamzah/al-Hamzat Division and the Military Police arrested four people, including a woman, and released only one of them:

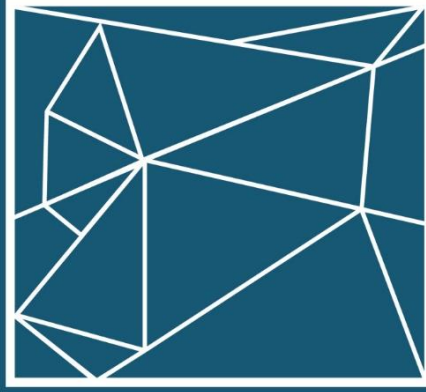
- In the town of Raju, STJ field researcher quoted a relative of Mrs. Siddiqua Kur Naasan, saying that the Military Police summoned her for investigate her about her activities during the period of the Autonomous Administration's control since she had then participated in the municipal councils/Comin elections. However, Siddiqua was arrested, and her fate remains unknown.
- **On November 9, 2019**, the al-Hamzah Division arrested Sa'id Majeed, from the village of Otmano, from the Barbana-Raju road, and still concealing his fate.
- **On November 19, 2019**, the Civilian Police arrested Hamid Saro from the village of Kamarshah, for unknown reasons and he was later released.
- In the village of Juqmaq Kabir, the Military Police arrested Ibrahim Abdul Qadir - the village's mayor - and he was released the next day after his health condition worsened during interrogation. And it's worth mentioning that the mayor was removed from his post.

## VI. Arrests in Sharran/Şera area:

The village of Kafr Janneh witnessed the arrest of three locals and a displaced-called Abu Khaled- by the Levant Front group on November 16, 2019. The three locals were released while the displaced is still unaccounted for, knowing that his charge was sheltering women accused of joining the Islamic State (ISIL) and settling them in a house owned by Sadiq Hamdoush.

After investigating the incident, Sadiq was released with his two friends, while Abu Khaled remained in detention, and the reason of this seems to be that the women confessed having a shelter secured by him in the village of Kafr Janneh, when they were arrested earlier in the city of A'zaz, according to a villager.

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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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