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***Violence and Assassinations
Mark a Sharp Increase since
the Settlement Agreement –
Daraa***

Violence and Assassinations Mark a Sharp Increase since the Settlement Agreement – Daraa

No less than 72 assassinations were recorded, mostly targeting personalities of the Syrian Government and its affiliated forces

Background:

In 2019, throughout August, October and November, Daraa Province bore witness to rampant insecurity that effected a sharp and marked rise in assassinations, killings and attacks against security facilities affiliated with the Syrian Government, likely the most violent since the settlement agreement was sealed by the forces of the Syrian Government and the armed opposition groups in July 2018.

This report documents the killings and assassinations that took place between August and late November 2019, which made a target of military and civil personalities, some of whom were connected or/and affiliated with the Syrian Government, including members of reconciliation delegations, directors of municipalities and town mukhtars,¹ in addition to a number of former opposition fighters or militants who are reportedly related to Iran and its militias.

Covering the above-reported period, Syrians for Truth and Justice/STJ has documented the death of no less than 94 persons and the injury of more than 91 others as the casualties of the assassinations and the attacks that targeted different areas in Daraa, mostly in its western suburbs, where large numbers of former opposition fighters are known to exist, along with their light weapons, in addition to opposition armed groups, most notably the Popular Resistance in Southern Syria,² particularly in the cities and towns of Tal Shihab, Muzayrib, Tafas, Jasim, Inkhil, al-Shajarah, al-Sanamayn, Nawa and Tasil, among others.³

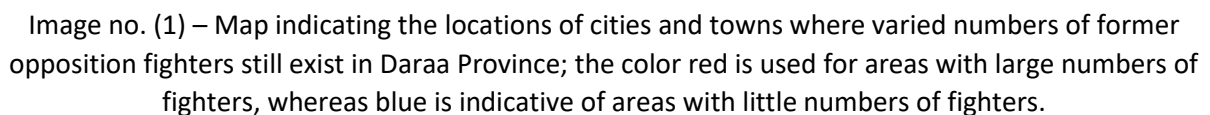
STJ's field researcher pointed out that the majority of the persons targeted then belonged to the Syrian regular forces or operated within the ranks of the Iranian forces or the Lebanese Hezbollah, for over 70% of the documented attacks fixed on the Syrian regular forces and their allies. The reconciled opposition-affiliated militants and personalities were, however, a target for more than 20% of the security-related assaults.

The assassinations, STJ's field researcher added, have markedly increased in the al-Sanamayn City, which suffered the most during the three reported months, followed by Jasim, Tafas, Muzayrib, Daraa al-Balad, Tal Shihab, al-Yadoudah and Nawa — towns and cities where a large number of former opposition fighters, with their light weapons, is still present.

¹ A governor of a town or a neighborhood.

² On November 15, 2018, an armed group in Daraa announced the formation of a military movement, referring to itself as the Popular Resistance. In addition to raising the Syrian opposition's flag —the green flag— the movement has adopted a number of operations that aimed at posts of the Syrian Government and regular army.

³ Even though the July 2018 settlement agreement allowed for the Syrian regular forces' control over Daraa Province, former opposition fighters, along with their light weapons, still reside in several areas there, particularly in the province's western suburbs, in addition to active anti-government armed groups, including the Popular Resistance.



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Interviewed by STJ, a major portion of the locals attributed the security chaos and the deteriorating living reality to the political tensions endured by the country in general and the area in particular, where the Syrian Government continues to tighten the noose, as it set up several checkpoints in different areas of the province's southern part backed by the Iranian invasion and spread of its affiliated militias,⁴ especially in Daraa's west.

This is not the first time that Daraa Province bears witness to rampant insecurity and increasing assassinations, for STJ has published a report recording the assassinations that corresponded to the onset of 2019, which made a target of civil and military personalities associated with the Syrian Government.⁵

1. The Situation Would Swirl Out of Control due to Security Chaos, Locals Fear:

A number of Daraa-based locals and media activists reported to STJ that the situation is ominous, as it clearly indicates a security chaos. In the past a few years, the people of Daraa have lost several of their relatives, who got either killed, detained or went missing; others' loss was material, including belongings only. It is also loss that is inspiring fear in many of them, who worry that the situation would swirl out of control due to the rampant insecurity and mounting assassinations in the province, as well as the Syrian Government's failure to impose a sense of order on the security situation.

The interval between August and November 2019 is of the bloodiest phases that Southern Syria had to endure since the settlement agreement was signed in July 2018, for several attacks and acts of violence were documented, which caused the death of an estimated 94 persons and the injury of more than 91 others. It was noted that the majority of the persons targeted then were militants of the Syrian regular forces or those operating within the ranks of the Iranian forces and the Lebanese Hezbollah.

The assaults included assassinations, kidnappings, planting improvised explosive devices and attacks on military and security posts, among others. None of these attacks was adopted by any side, and it is practically difficult to accurately determine/verify the perpetrators, especially since former opposition fighters, with their light weapons, and armed opposition groups, including the Popular Resistance, continue to be present in several of the province's areas, particularly in its western suburbs, such as the Yarmouk Basin, which incubates towns

⁴ STJ published a former report covering the Syrian Government's spread of checkpoints throughout the al-Qunaitra Province, the militants at which have blackmailed the locals on different occasions, thus giving rise to popular contempt. "Contempt Rises among Locals as They Get Blackmailed by Syrian Regular Forces at Checkpoints in al-Qunaitra." STJ, November 1, 2019. Last visited: January 11, 2020. <https://stj-sy.org/ar/%d8%ba%d8%b6%d8%a8-%d8%b4%d8%b9%d8%a8%d9%8a-%d8%b9%d9%82%d8%a8-%d8%ad%d8%a7%d9%84%d8%a7%d8%aa-%d8%a7%d8%a8%d8%aa%d8%b2%d8%a7%d8%b2-%d8%b9%d9%84%d9%89-%d8%ad%d9%88%d8%a7%d8%ac%d8%b2-%d8%a3%d9%85%d9%86/>.

⁵ "Controlled by the Syrian Army, Daraa is a Scene to Rampant Insecurity and Mass Assassinations." STJ, February 5, 2019. Last visited: January 10, 2020. <https://stj-sy.org/en/1194/>.

including Tasil, Koya, Bait Irah, Nafa`ah, Sahem el-Golan, al-Shabraq, Jilin, Hayt, al-Jumlah, Ain Thakar, al-Shajara and al-Qusayr, and the area of al- Jaidour, which incubates towns including Nawa, Jasim, Inkhil, al-Harah and Nimr, as well as the towns of Tafas, Muzayrib and Tal Shihab. The fighters and the armed groups are also based in Daraa City, however, to a lesser extent. For instance, the town of Tafas is almost out of the Syrian regular forces' control, as it is yet ruled by a former commander of the armed opposition, Mahmoud Al-Bardan, known as "Abu Murshid al-Bardan"— one of the most prominent leaders of the reconciled armed groups.⁶ Also during the reported period, armed opposition-affiliated groups have embarked on attacks in the areas listed above. The groups have expelled the military checkpoints of the Air Force Intelligence and the Military Security and arrested persons close to the security forces to coerce the Syrian Government into releasing armed opposition-related detainees.

Former opposition fighters have a lesser presence in the areas of Daraa's eastern suburbs, including al-Sheikh Miskin, Izraa, Qarfa, Nahteh, al-Yadoudeh, Busra al-Sham, al-Faqie, al-Mlaihah al-Sharqiyeh, al-Mlaihah al-Gharbiyeh, Kuhail and al-Musayfrah, in addition to a few areas in Daraa's east.

2. No Less than 72 Assassination Recorded in Daraa Province:

From early August to late November 2019, STJ's field researcher has recorded no less than (72) assassinations in Daraa, pointing out that the assassinations were mostly aimed at personalities affiliated with the Syrian Government and its loyalist forces, including heads of municipalities, mukhtars, reconciliation mediators, informants, former and current members of the Arab Socialist Ba'ath Party and militants of the 4th Division, adding that several of these attacks targeted former commanders of armed opposition groups, who sealed the settlement agreement with the Syrian Government. The researcher reported the incidents as follows:

A. Heads of Municipalities and Persons Affiliated with the Syrian Government:

The most notable of these incidents were:

- On November 27, 2019, unidentified gunmen in Muzayrib Town— where a massive number of former opposition fighters, with their light weapons, are yet present in Daraa's western suburbs- assassinated Lieutenant Riyadh Abdullah al-Talib, who was shot dead on the spot. While no side claimed responsibility for the assassination, the perpetrators remained unidentified according to STJ's field researcher. Al-Talib ranked

⁶ According to STJ's field researcher, al-Bardan was a target to a failed assassination in November 2018, the perpetrators of which are yet unknown.

a lieutenant under the National Defense Forces in Daraa, a semi-regular militia affiliated with the Syrian Government.

- On the same day, namely November 27, 2019, unknown persons shot dead the Chief Warrant Officer Ezz ed-Din Rajab in the town of Buser al-Harir in Daraa's eastern suburbs- where former opposition fighters are present to a lesser extent. The perpetrators were recorded as unknown and were never identified. Rajab was the head of the Air Force Intelligence Detachment in Buser al-Harir. In retaliation, the Syrian regular forces set up three new checkpoints, increasing further the security restrictions already imposed on the area's residents.
- On August 1, 2019, unidentified gunmen shot dead the head of Jilin's Municipality, Daraa's western suburbs, Muhammad Mousa Omran. The assassination was not adopted by any side. It is worth noting that the town of Jilin is located in the Yarmouk Basin area, which was a stronghold for the former Khalid ibn al-Walid Army, that pledged alliance to ISIS/Daesh. The town is yet a location to a large number of former opposition fighters, who still own their light weapons.
- On August 3, 2019, unidentified gunmen shot dead Uqla Sa'du al-Hassan in al-Hrak City. The persons behind the assassination are yet unknown. Al-Hassan used to operate within the ranks of the Lebanese Hezbollah, recruited by the party itself according to activists. Al-Hassan was in direct contact with leaders of Lebanese militias and the Iranian Revolutionary Guard. The town of al-Hrak, however, is reputed for being among the towns where the forces of the Lebanese Hezbollah and the Iranian Guard are deployed, most notably the 32nd Brigade, located in al-Hrak City.
- In mid-August 2019, unknown persons shot to death sheikh Mahmoud al-Dagher, an imam and a preacher of a mosque in Alma Town, east of Daraa, where lesser numbers of former opposition fighters are present. The perpetrators of the assassination were unidentified, while the residents of Alma Town consider al-Dagher one of the reconciliation mediators and the persons most loyal to the Syrian Government. Before he was targeted, al-Dhager received several death threats, which triggered him to hire bodyguards.
- On September 13, 2019, unknown persons assassinated a member of the Yarmouk Division's Command of the Arab Socialist Ba'ath Party, Madeen Khalid al-Jamous (50 years old), who was also a member of the National Reconciliation Committee. Al-Jamous was shot dead in Dael City, where only a few former opposition fighters continue to exist. The perpetrators of the incident were recorded as unidentified. Dael city, nonetheless, is located to the north of Daraa and was the first city to witness the return of the Syrian regular forces following a separate settlement agreement they signed with the city's armed opposition groups.

- On October 17, unidentified gunmen used silencer-equipped guns to shoot dead Qusai Nader al-Halqi, the brother of the former Prime Minister Wael al-Halqi, inside his clinic in the center of Jasim City, west of Daraa, which is still densely populated by former opposition fighters. Al-Halqi was known for having played a fundamental role in reaching a settlement agreement with the Syrian Government and also for enjoying a good reputation among the locals. Following his death, loyalists of the opposition and others of the Syrian Government exchanged accusations of being the side behind the assassination.



Image no. (2) – Map indicating towns and cities in Daraa Province, where assassinations registered a marked increase since August to November 2019.

B. Commanders of Former Armed Opposition Groups:

The most notable of these incidents were:

- On November 28, 2019, two unknown motorists assassinated Wassim al-Rawashdeh, known as “Abu Saad,” a former commander of the armed opposition, who got involved in the settlement agreement. Abu Saad was assassinated in Tafas City, where a large number of former opposition fighters are still present with their light weapons. According to STJ’s field researcher, more than 150 gunmen gathered to protect the funeral ceremony which turned into a large demonstration while the perpetrators of the assassination were not identified.
- On October 5, 2019, unknown persons shot to death Hussein Awad al-Masa’id, known as “Abu Hatim Ashayer”, on the al-Taibah-Khail road in the Lajat area, east of Daraa. The perpetrators of the assassination, STJ’s field researcher reported, were not identified, adding that al-Masa’id had previously been the commander of what was called the Army of Tribes/Jaysh al-Ashayer, which operated under the armed opposition, before he joined the other reconciled armed groups in Southern Syria accompanied by his faction. Information indicates the proliferation of Hezbollah and Iranian forces in the Lajat area, for Hezbollah started offices in that area according to activists, which are led by Hajj Iyad al-Qasim. Additionally, following its control of the Lajat area, the Syrian Government announced it a military zone.
- On August 8, 2019, unidentified gunmen shot to death Nassif Marwan Lucy, a former commander of the Mu'tazz Billah Army, operating under the armed opposition in the Yarmouk Basin area while no one claimed responsibility for this assassination, knowing that the area still incubates large numbers of former opposition fighters with their light weapons. The basin was a former ISIS stronghold, from where the first military formations of the armed opposition emerged. On the heels of the settlement agreement, a significant number of these formations’ fighters joined the ranks of the 4th Division of the Syrian Government, sharing control over the area with the Air Force Intelligence Service, which the locals know as being managed by Iran and Hezbollah.

3. Failed Assassinations:

STJ’s field researcher documented no less than 32 failed assassinations within the reported period, which targeted well-known personalities in Daraa, some of whom are loyal to the Syrian Government, others are opponents.

The most prominent of these incidents are:

- On November 29, 2019, unknown assailants attempted to assassinate the mukhtar of al-Karak al-Sharqi Town, Jihad Sultan al-Nima. They threw a hand grenade at his house, which caused material damage only. It is worth mentioning that al-Karak al-Sharqi Town still incubates a limited number of former opposition fighters.
- On November 22, 2019, unknown persons attempted to assassinate the Head of the Municipal Council Hassan al-Abdullah in al-Shajarah Town, the Yarmouk Basin, where a large number of former opposition fighters is still present. The assailants attacked al-Abdullah's house with machineguns, but they caused no casualties. While the perpetrators of the assassination continue to be unidentified, this incident is not the first that al-Abdullah suffers, for he has been a frequent target for attempted assassinations.
- On August 24, 2019, unknown persons in the town of Tasil, west of Daraa, where many former opposition fighters along with their light weapons are present, attempted to assassinate Mohammed Arsan al-Khalaf (62 years old), shooting him in several places and causing him critical injuries, after which he was immediately rushed to the Daraa National Hospital. Al-Khalaf is known as "Mohamed Al-Rayya" (Abu lyad) and works as a consultant for the Arab Quality Makers Foundation and a consultant at the International and Diplomatic Relations Department of the Syrian Ministry of Foreign Affairs. He also previously worked at the Embassy of Damascus in Lebanon, and it is said that he enjoyed a strong bond with Hezbollah in Lebanon. Al-Khalaf was a target to several assassinations, the last of which happened a week before the incident reported here, when an explosive device detonated inside his car. While he barely escaped the car blast, al-Khalaf is classified as the Syrian Government and Hezbollah's front man in Daraa.
- On August 12, 2019, the former commander of the armed opposition, Adham al-Krad, was a target for an assassination attempt in Daraa City, where former opposition fighters are present to a lesser extent compared to other areas. Back then, unknown persons planted an explosive device in his car, which exploded after he got off in a neighborhood on al-Sad road in Daraa Al-Mahatta. Al-Krad was a member of the committee responsible for negotiations in Southern Syria, which later on led to reconciliations and settlement agreements in Daraa Province. According to STJ's field researcher, no side claimed responsibility for the attempted assassination, adding that a few days before the assassination, al-Krad was complaining about the tightening security grip, the summoning of Daraa youths to compulsory service and the general state of affairs in Daraa Province.

4. Attacks against Security and Military Facilities and Posts:

STJ's field researcher recorded no less than 20 attacks on security posts and facilities in Daraa Province in the reported period, during which most of these attacks were carried out at night and in the form of hit and run assaults, where bombs, machine guns and RPG launchers were deployed, given that most of these attacks were aimed at checkpoints or barriers of the Syrian regular army, the Air Intelligence, the Military Security or the 4th Division.

The most notable of these attacks were:

- On November 4, 2019, unknown persons attacked the Qiytaḥ checkpoint near the al-Sanamayn City, where former opposition fighters are still based. The attack rendered dead a Syrian regular army conscript while the perpetrators of the incident were unidentified according to STJ's field researcher.
- On September 26, 2019, armed groups in al-Sanamayn City, where former opposition fighters continue to live, attacked the Qiytaḥ junction and the al-Souq checkpoints, in addition to the medical complex's building with machine guns. The groups also attacked checkpoints affiliated with the Military Security and local militias, known as the Thaer al-Abbass Militias.⁷ The incident resulted in the death of three militants of the Military Security forces, Muhammad Fouad al-Falah, Ibrahim Abd al-Ghaziyyeh and Mustafa Muhammad al-Abbass, each receiving a bullet in the head, in addition to a number of other wounded persons. Following three days of clashes between the two sides, the armed group announced itself, and later on it became clear that it was affiliated with Walid al-Qasen, nicknamed "Walid Zahrah", a former commander of the Ahrar al-Sham Movement, who signed the settlement agreement with the Syrian Government. The attacker group also managed to seize a number of houses and set fire to some of them, due to which reinforcements, including tanks and heavy vehicles, were brought into the city towards the Police Station from the 9th Division. The attack, STJ's field researcher reported, followed the assassination of the anti-government young man Bilal Ali Farid al-Labbad, who unidentified persons shot dead and escaped earlier on. The finger of blame was then pointed at al-Abbass militias. Following the incident, life as the locals knew it was brought to an end in the al-Sanamayn City, for shops and pharmacies were closed down, and the streets were empty of any traffic. Parents, for their part, refrained from sending their children to schools.

⁷ One of the Military Security-affiliated armed groups in the al-Sanamayn City.

- On August 16, 2019, gunmen threw a hand grenade at a military checkpoint near the government compound in Daraa City, where former opposition fighters are still based. While the Syrian regular forces managed to arrest the perpetrators, STJ's field researcher pointed out that no further information was made available as to who the attackers are. On the same day, unidentified persons targeted a checkpoint of the Air Force Intelligence Service in the town of Umm Walad, east of Daraa, where former opposition fighters are also located, resulting in a slight injury of one of the checkpoint's militants. The perpetrators' identity, however, was unknown.

5. Attacks Aimed at Security Facilities:

STJ's field researcher recorded no less than 6 attacks that made a target of security personnel posts in Daraa Province, where the attackers either planted explosive devices or embarked on clashes with the regular forces.

The most notable of these attacks were:

- On October 13, 2019, an armed group, identifying itself as the Revolutionaries of al-Sanamayn,⁸ targeted the Criminal Security Branch and the Souq checkpoint in al-Sanamayn City, north of Daraa. During this attack, the armed group deployed light weapons and RPGs, according to the Horan Free League/Tajamou Ahrar Horan. The clashes between the two sides continued for an hour and a half, the League reported, rendering a number of the Syrian regular forces' militants either dead or wounded. The League also attributed the attack to "the continuing provocative violations on the part of the Syrian regular forces and their assassination of the city's residents as to ignite a sedition among its people, in addition to the raids carried out by the State Security Branch, which stormed civilians' houses in Jasim City and arrested two men."
- On October 11, 2019, a joint Russian-Syrian patrol was attacked by two explosive devices on the road between the cities of Jasim and Inkhil in al-Jaidour area, Daraa's northern suburbs, where Iranian forces are deployed and former opposition fighters are yet located. The attack rendered a Russian military police trooper wounded. In the wake of the attack, a Russian delegation led by a Russian military officer from the Khmeimim Air Base was quickly to pay Daraa a visit, during which the delegation met

⁸ Sources and obtained information indicate that the armed group, referring to itself as the Revolutionaries of al-Sanamayn or the Revolutionaries of Horan, is likely one of the armed groups run by Walid al-Qasem, the former commander of the Harakat Ahrar al-Sham al-Islamiyya.

the heads of the Military Security and Air Force Intelligence branches, along with the head of the Security Committee and Russian officers present in Daraa Province. Back then, the head of the delegation warned the Syrian Government's officers against the continued security chaos in the province, after receiving unconfirmed information about Hezbollah's involvement in targeting the patrol.

- On September 4, 2019, an explosive device blasted at the entrance of Zayzoun Military Camp (west of Daraa), injuring five militants, including an officer. The wounded were Colonel Samir Suleiman, Nawaf Rashrash Junaid, Shadi Younes al-Mbasbas, Muhammad Qasim Azzam and Bassam Muhammad Hraithin, who are former fighters of the armed opposition that agreed to reconcile with the Syrian Government and joined the ranks of the 4th Division. No side adopted responsibility to the attack; however, local sources inside the camp informed STJ's field researcher that the 4th Division's Security Department managed to capture a cell of nine persons, 6 from Daraa and the remaining 3 from Qunaitra, all of whom agreed to conducted a settlement and started operating under the Division. The cell adopted several of the assassinations in Daraa, the last of which was the detonation of an explosive device at the Zayzoun Military Camp. The cell, witnesses reported, also admitted attacking a bus of the 4th Division in the al-Yadoudah Town, Daraa, rendering about 14 of the Division's militants dead, among other attacks.

6. Reasons for the Mounting Security Disorder:

A large portion of Daraa's population considers that the settlement agreement signed with the Syrian Government is both humiliating and unjust, especially a year into its conclusion, during which none of the basic demands of Southern Syria's residents were met, including the release of all the province's detainees and commitment to a refrain from harassing anyone who has conducted a settlement, in addition to providing guarantees that no reprisals on the part of the Syrian Government or its security branches will occur.

During the reported year, the security restrictions increased and arms of Iran and Hezbollah were consolidating their presence in Southern Syria, not to mention the security services' continuing extortion of citizens at checkpoints and cooperation with informants.

The matters were further worsened by the persistent efforts at detaining civilians, for the arrest of more than 34 persons and the death of more than 6 persons under torture was

document,⁹ given that most of these casualties were among the people who conducted a legalization of status a year ago.

Among the reasons that led to the increasing resentment of the population is the high number of deaths among the province's residents who were forcibly summoned to perform compulsory and reserve military service and were then taken to fight on the fronts in Northern Syria.

In addition to the militarization-related reasons, the deterioration of the living conditions, lack of employment opportunities, low income levels and price inflation have all given rise to social problems other than the phenomenon of theft and organized crime, for the crisis affected the very departments of the government, where bribery developed into a large scale and overt challenge that has greatly exhausted the citizens.

These reasons catalyzed a state of general unrest among the province's population, which resulted in the following consequences:

- **First:** The largest wave of emigration in years, where a massive number of young men chose to leave the country to Lebanon first and then to the United Arab Emirates. Others, however, headed to Idlib and then to Turkey.¹⁰
- **Second:** Acts of violence, manifested in rampant insecurity, directly aimed at the Syrian Government, targeting its civil, political and military representatives. This rebellion triggered the Syrian Government into experimenting with several means as to ease tension and impose further control on the area, for areas in Daraa Province have borne witness to a remarkable service activity in the past months, where more than 54 activities have been recorded in different areas throughout the province, including al-Sanamayn, Inkhil, al-Sabil Neighborhood, Mulaihet al-Attash, Tafas, al-Harah and Jbab among others. The service-related activities, nonetheless, included the rehabilitation of the pavement of the entrance to the al-Sanamayn's Arab Cultural Center and the restoration of the al-Basil Stadium in Daraa City.

⁹ STJ's field researcher documented the death of a number of detainees from Daraa under torture, including Abdulsattar Mousa al-Awad from the Sheikh Maskin Town, Hafeez Muhammad al-Najim from Ghabagheb Town, Alaa Al-Satti from Tasil Town, and Ahmed Abdul Hameed al-Majarish from Mahja Town, Suhaib Al-Khabee from the Nawa Town, Mahmoud Mousa al-Aboud from the al-Nuaymeh Town, and doctor Osama al-Khaled (64 years old) from the al-Shajarah Town, al-Yarmouk Basin area, after being arrested on August 3, 2018 for more than a year by the Military Intelligence Service's militants of the Syrian regular forces, who detained him on charges of terrorism. The doctor died in Damascus Central Prison after his health deteriorated on November 25, 2019.

¹⁰ "Syria: Thousands Forced to Flee Qunaitra and Daraa 'Silently'". STJ, August 9, 2019. Last visited: January 11, 2020. <https://stj-sy.org/en/syria-thousands-forced-to-flee-qunaitra-and-daraa-silently/>.

Several initiatives have also been carried out, such as the one titled “Illuminating Inkhil City”, which was implemented by the Syrian Society for Social Development in cooperation with the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees/UNHCR, in addition to working on the initiation of the Citizen Service Center in al-Sanamayn City.

The activities indicated above also included the restoration and maintenance of roads in more than 14 areas in Daraa, such as Tafas, Daraa City, al-Kashif and al-Sahari neighborhoods, among others. The services covered rehabilitating, paving and asphaltting roads.

Similar road-related services were recorded in Qunaitra Province; however, they were limited to patching roads in the towns of Koudna, Ghadeer al-Bustan, Nabe al-Sakher, Jaba and Mumtaneh.

STJ’s field researcher also pointed out that the administration of the Air Force Intelligence Service has replaced a number of the apparatus’ ill-reputed militants based on the several complaints filed to the administration in Daraa, where the substituted militants were accused of perpetuating the assassinations and the kidnappings there. As a result, each of the security detachments conducted several replacements of militants and commanders. These measures were monitored as having taken place in about 9 detachments throughout the province.

In the past three months, STJ’s field researcher reported, more than 17 protests and sit ins were organized by oppositionist activists in several cities and towns in Daraa’s suburbs, targeting the Syrian Government and its security services. The last of these protests was held on November 16, 2019, and it condemned the increasing assassinations and detentions, demanding the release of the detainees and the withdrawal of Hezbollah’s forces and Iranian militias from Daraa Province. As an answer, the Syrian authorities have granted a special amnesty on October 20, 2019 to 118 detainees who have been arrested earlier on and held captive at the Military Security Branch. A number of the released detainees informed STJ that they were notified that another batch of detainees is to be released soon.

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.

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