

20 May 2020

سوريون  
من أجل  
الحقيقة  
والعدالة  
Syrians  
For Truth  
& Justice



**Afrin: 43 Arrested by the  
National Army in April 2020**

## **Afrin: 43 Arrested by the National Army in April 2020**

*Most of the arrests were carried out by the Civil Police on the charge of performing the duty of “self-defense” under the Autonomous Administration, knowing that the destiny of 13 arrestees continues to be unknown*

Syrians for Truth and Justice/STJ documented the arrest of no less than **43 persons**, including **a woman**, in the Syrian Kurdish-majority district of Afrin in April 2020, carried out by the armed groups of the National Army, affiliated with the Syrian Interim Government / the Syrian National Coalition, and its associate services. Arrested on various charges, **30 persons**, including the woman, were released after they and / or their relatives paid money / bails / ransoms, while others were transferred to central prisons and district command centers. However, the fate of **13 detainees remains unknown** to the date this report was published, namely mid-May 2020.

According to the testimonies of the arrestees' families and the observations of STJ's field researchers, the "Civil Police" was responsible for carrying out the largest number of these arrests. The remaining cases, nonetheless, were undertaken by the "Military Police" and the following armed groups: "Ahrar al-Sharqiya/Rebels of the Eastern Area," "Filaq al-Sham/ al-Sham Legion," "Sultan Murad" division, "Liwa al-Shamal/ the North Brigade," "Samarkand Brigade," "Mohammed al-Fatih Brigade," "Brigade 112," "Hamza Squad," "al-Nukhba Group/Elite Group" and "al-Majd Legion."

## 1. Arrests in Afrin District:

In Afrin district, 15 persons were arrested, 11 of whom were released, while the fate of four of the detainees continues to be unknown. According to STJ's field researchers and testimonies of the area's locals, the al-Sham Legion, Military Police, Civil Police, Levant Front and Hamza/Hamzat armed group were the perpetrators of these arrests.

- On 27 April, in Afrin city, fighters of the Levant Front arrested a restaurant owner called **Nassif** in the Sinaa neighborhood for opening his restaurant during the month of Ramadan. The man was released on the same day after he was forced to pledge to "purchase a sheep" for the Front's fighters.

On 8 April, also in Afrin city, **Raizan Sheikh Hassan Ma'mo**, a resident of the al-Mahmoudiya neighborhood, was arrested on the charge of performing the duty of self-defense when the area was yet controlled by the Autonomous Administration. Raizan was released two weeks later after paying a bail/fine at the court.

On 24 April, the Civil Police raided the **Khazyati** household, arresting Saif ad-Din Rifa't Sido and two of his sons, whose names we could not document. Additionally, the police confiscated two of the family's cars, a tractor and a Kalashnikov rifle. The detainees' fate is yet unknown.

- On 22 April, in Juwayq village, the citizen **Jamal Omar Hamdoush**, 48, was arrested by Hamzat armed group while on his way to work in the Qarah Tepeh village, where he is employed as a night guard. He was released four days later.
- On 6 April, also in Juwayq village, **Bashar Manan Amin** was arrested by the Military

Police in Afrin, passing through one of its checkpoints on the Rajo road. Arrested on the charge of operating within the Autonomous Administration-affiliated Asayish, Amin was transferred to the Maratah Central Prison, where he is yet held captive. It is worth mentioning that Amin was arrested before on the same charge and was released after paying a fine.

- On 2 April, in the Burj Haydar village, fighters of al-Sham Legion arrested 7 persons from the village, without informing them of their charges or the reasons to their arrest. The arrestees are Rashid Bakri Hassan, Akid Rashid Hassan, Mohammad Ahmad Hassan, Kheder Khalil Aref, Tariq Ahmad Sulaiman, Sulaiman Bakri Aref and Khalil Hassan Hassan.

The arrestees were all transferred to the legion's post in the closely located village of Iska, to be released about two weeks later.

***According to locals, interviewed by STJ's field researcher, the arrests carried out by the legion aim to impose restrictions on the residents and to force them into abandoning the village, so it manages to seize their houses.***

- On 7 April, in Maratah village, a Civil Police patrol arrested Azad Mustafa Dahou while in the city of Afrin, and then transferred him to the Maratah Central Prison. He was released 18 days later without any charges.

## 2. Arrests in Bulbul District:

In April, Bulbul district was a site to a single arrest, carried out by the Civil Police, where the detainee was released after paying a fine. A villager, Ali Karou, recounted the following to STJ's field researcher:

**"The Civil Police summoned the young man Mohammad Rashid Mohammad, 21, to its center in Bulbul town. There, he was arrested on the charge of performing the duty of self-defense, releasing him three days later after he paid a fine of 250.000 Syrian pound/250 USD. This is the third time Mohammad gets arrested on the same charge."**

## 3. Arrests in Maabatli/ Mabeta District:

In the Maabatli district, six persons were arrested for various reasons, while three were released, the fate of the remaining three detainees continues to be unknown. The arrests were carried out by the Military Police, the Civil Police, al-Nukhba Group and the Mohammad al-Fatih Brigade.



- On 20 April, in Ma'amlou village, a Military Police patrol raided two houses, arresting Mohammad Battal Ahmad on the charge of operating within the ranks of Asayish, affiliated with the Autonomous Administration, while the latter was yet in control of the area, and Anwar Hamkito on the charge of performing the duty of self-defense. The detainees were transferred to the Rajo Central Prison to be released later on.
- On 14 April, in Shaikhotku village, the al-Nukhba Group arrested the village's governor, Abdulraouf Aref Ibrahim, 48, for protesting the group's practices against the locals, for he condemned the arrest of former Autonomous Administration employees. Aref was released on 17 April, after the district's local council intervened.
- On 7 April, in Brimice village, fighters of the Mohammad al-Fatih Brigade arrested Mohammad Abdo Rashid and Kamiran Subhi Qaso, while no further details were reported concerning the incident.
- On 30 April, in Shurbah village, a Civil Police patrol arrested the village's governor. No further details were reported on this incident, as well.

#### 4. Arrests in Rajo District:

In Rajo district, eight persons were arrested, seven of whom got released. The arrests were carried out by Brigade 112, the Civil Police and al-Majd Legion.

- On 7 and 9 April, in Ba'adanli village, Brigade 112 embarked on two arrest raids in the village, arresting six persons on the charge of performing the duty of self-defense while the Autonomous Administration was yet in control of the area. The arrestees were all transferred to the Rajo Central Prison and released at different intervals in April after paying fines.

**The arrestees are Mustafa Mohammad Aibish, Ahmad Mohammad Aref, Mohammad Khalil Sha'aban, Mohammad Bayram Alo, Khalil Sido Hikmatlu and Habash Rashid Habash.**

- On 19 April, in Kolyan village, a Civil Police patrol arrested the young man Damhat Abdeen Sulaiman from his house on the charge of former operation within the ranks of Asayish. He was transferred to the Rajo Central Prison. It is worth mentioning that Sulaiman was arrested twice before on the same charge.
- On 4 April, in Zarka village, Ali Ahmad Shaikhu was arrested by the al-Majd Legion for receiving a greeting message in celebration of Nowruz, after the legion's fighters searched his phone. Shaikho was arrested for three days, during which he was subjected to beating and torture, to be released without paying a fine.

## 5. Arrests in Sharran District:

In Sharran district, six persons were arrested, including a woman, who was released later along with other four detainees. The arrests were carried out by the Political Security and the Civil Police.

- On 7 April, in Kharabt Sharran village, a patrol of the Political Security arrested engineer Fahmi Abdo from his workplace, the Chamber of Engineers at the building of the district's local council. The arrest was conducted for unknown reasons, while his house was raided and searched 10 days into his arrest. The engineer's fate was yet unknown when this report was prepared.
- On 8 April, in Kotanli village, a patrol of the Civil Police embarked on a raid, during which it arrested four men and a woman, after it raided their homes on the charge of former operation under the Autonomous Administration. They were released on the same day after paying a fine of 600 Turkish Liras each.

**The arrestees are Mrs. Samia Alo, Abdulhamid Shaiko, Mustafa Ahmad Ibrahim, Abdulrahman Mustafa Alo and Rashid Mustafa Ibo.**

## 6. Arrests in Shaykh al-Hadid District:

In Shaykh al-Hadid district, three persons were arrested, one was released while the fate of the remaining others continues to be unknown. The arrests were carried out by Sultan Suleyman Shah/ al-Amshat armed group and the Civil Police.

- On 20 April, in Shaykh al-Hadid village, the citizen Fawzi Ahmad Dagbli, 70, was arrested by Sultan Suleyman Shah/ al-Amshat armed group, while no further details were reported on the incident.
- On 15 April, in Qarmutlak village, fighters of Sultan Suleyman Shah/ al-Amshat armed group arrested the folk singer Said Hassan for unknown reasons. He was released two days later as he suffers from chronic diseases, not to mention that he paid the armed group a sum of money.

On 9 April, a person from the same village was arrested while heading to the city of Afrin. Hassan Jamil Qarah was arrested on the charge of performing the duty of self-defense on a Civil Police checkpoint, located at the entrance to Afrin city, leading up to Jindires road. He was transferred to Maratah Central prison.

## 7. Arrests in Jindires District:

In Jindires district, four persons were arrested, only two were released while the fate of the

other two continues to be unknown. The arrests were carried out by the Civil Police and Ahrar al-Shargiya armed group.

- On 18 April, in Yalanqoz village, a patrol of the Civil Police arrested Nihad Haj Hassan from his shop in the Jindires Market for unknown reasons. On 23 April, he was released from the Civil Police's station in Jindires town.
- On 10 April, in Jakali Joumah village, the two young men Zuhair Hassan Abdo and Subhi Jamil Surani were arrested by the Military Police from their homes. As they were transferred to the Jindires Prison, no further details were presented on their conditions.
- On 22 April, in Aghjalah village, fighters of Ahrar al-Sharqiya arrested Abdo Sha'aban from his home and released him on 27 April after he paid them. Concerning the arrest's reasons, one of the villagers told STJ the following:

**"Five years ago, the detainee was at a funeral of a relative, who used to fight within the ranks of the Autonomous Administration. During the funeral ceremony, the detainee made the victory gesture. Apparently, the fighters had seen the video and arrested him for supporting the Syrian Democratic Forces."**

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](#)  
🐦 [@STJ\\_SYRIA\\_ENG](#)  
📷 [Syrians for Truth & Justice](#)  
✉ [editor@stj-sy.org](mailto:editor@stj-sy.org)