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سوريون  
من أجل  
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## Afrin: 17 Men, One Woman Arrested in Four Districts during May 2020

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*STJ was able to document the arrests in only four of the seven districts of the Kurdish city of Afrin*

Syrians for Truth and Justice (STJ), documented the arrest of 17 people, among them a woman, during May 2020, in four of the seven districts of the Kurdish-majority city of Afrin. The arrests were made by the opposition's National Army affiliated to the Syrian Interim Government, which operates under the National Coalition for Syrian Revolutionary and Opposition Forces. However, the arrestees, who were charged with various accusations, have all been released in exchange for a sum of SP 200.000, paid for each by his/her family.

According to locals and STJ field researchers, the arrests were made arbitrarily by the military police, the Sham Legion/*Faylaq al-Sham*, the Sultan Murad Division, the Men of War group and al-Waqqas Brigade.

STJ would like to note that it couldn't document the arrests made in Afrin's Shaykh al-Hadid, Sharran and Rajo districts for security reasons related to the researchers' inability to act freely there. However, we will publish all the updates from those areas as soon as we receive them.

**It is important to note that STJ is still collecting information concerning the case of the women found held in a headquarter of the Hamza/Hamzat Division in late May 2020, and we will soon release a report regarding this.**

STJ noticed a decrease in the number of arrests made in May compared to the figures recorded in previous months. Regarding this, we talked to an official in the Military Police of Afrin, he said:<sup>1</sup>

**"Armed groups of the National Army received orders from Turkey to stop the arbitrary arrests they are making, saying that only the Military Police can conduct arrests within specific controls. This order was circulated to all Military Police centers after the regular monthly meeting was held between the Turkish governor and head of the Military Police."**

The official added:

**"Turkey's decision to stop the armed groups from conducting arrests, came following human rights reports citing mass violations committed by those groups against the population here, and assigning blame to Turkey. The Military Police was instructed not to carry out any arrest arbitrarily or under a malicious report and to summon those suspected terrorists and others accused of any charge in accordance with due process."**

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<sup>1</sup> The witness-he asked anonymity- was interviewed online in early June 2020, by an STJ researcher who is based outside Syria.

## 1. Arrests made in Afrin:

Afrin witnessed one arrest made by the Sultan Murad Division, who released that arrestee for a fine the same day. An eyewitness detailed STJ researcher on the incident saying that the man arrested called Abu Sherko and he was arrested following a dispute with a member of the Sultan Murad Division, and he went on to say:

**“That day a member of the Sultan Murad Division wanted to park his car in front of Abu Sherko’s shop, so he asked the latter to remove the parking rope barrier. However, Abu Sherko refused to remove it and started an oral dispute with that member which soon turned to a fistfight. Then the member left and returned a little later with a patrol of the Sultan Murad Division to Abu Sherko, beat and arrested him and then released him same evening for a sum of money.”**

## 2. Arrests in Bulbul district:

The Bulbul district also witnessed one arrest against Farhan Hasan, who was accused of having links with the Autonomous Administration; the arrest was carried by the Men of War group and the arrestee was released three days later. The arrest was conducted specifically in the village of Khalilalco on 17 May 2020 by the Men of War group affiliated with the Sultan Murad Division.

## 3. Arrests in Maabatli district:

Ten people, including a woman, were arrested in the district of Maabatli for various reasons in two separate raids by the Military Police. Nevertheless, they were all released later in succession.

- On 2 May, in the village of Shorabah, Aslan Amin Omar, Esmat Mamo Hussein and Mrs. Rachida -we did not know the nickname- were arrested by the Military Police for unknown reasons and they were released later; no further information obtained about the incident.
- On 10 May, a patrol of the Military Police raided the village of Ma'amilo arresting seven people for performing self-defense duty under the Autonomous Administration. Those arrested were transferred to Rajo Central Prison and were bailed out later successively. The arrestees were; Hasan Jameel Hasan, 25, Kimaho Anwar Kurdi, 31, Ahmed Waheed Mustafa, 24, Duziar Anwar Kurdi, 30, Ahmed Othman, 27, Damkhash Othman Kulilo, 33, and Mohammad Othman, 24.

## 4. Arrests in Jindires:

The Jindires district witnessed the arrest of five people by the Sham Legion and the al-Waqqas Brigade:

- On 10 May, the Sham Legion raided the village of Der Ballout arresting four young men for dealing with the Autonomous Administration. Those arrested were transferred to Esaka prison and released after about ten days after paying a fine of SP.200.000 each. The arrestees were; Abdul Rahman Khalil Habash, Jalal Rashad Bakir, Ibrahim Ezz El Din Haider and Ahmed Ibrahim al-Hasan.
  - On 5 May members of al-Waqqas Brigade arrested Abdu Mohammad Humrush for performing self-defense duty under the Autonomous Administration and he was released after two weeks.
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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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