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**Afrin: 101 Persons, including six  
Women and two Children,  
Arrested in July and August 2020**

## **Afrin: 101 Persons, including six Women and two Children, Arrested in July and August 2020**

*Women detainees, with their families, were transferred to Turkey by  
the Turkish intelligence services. As 65 detainees were released, the  
fate of the 36 others remains unknown*

In July and August 2020, the Kurdish-majority region of Afrin witnessed the arrest of 101 persons, including six women and two children. The arrests, however, were perpetrated by armed opposition groups affiliated with the Syrian Interim Government, an offshoot of the Syrian National Coalition. Syrians for Truth and Justice / STJ documented the personal information of the detainees, the contexts within which the arrests were carried out and also the ensuing releases, including **the release of 65 persons** after fines/ ransoms / bails, at times amounting to 1000 Turkish Liras, were paid either by the detainees themselves or by family members, given that **the fate 36 persons, including four women**, was yet unknown at the date of reporting, namely on 1 September 2020.

For the purposes of this report, STJ communicated with several commanders and officials of the opposition-affiliated National Army/NA and its sub-division, the Military Police, obtaining information confirming that the Turkish forces / intelligence services have transported at least two of the women detained in Afrin, along with their families, to Turkey after they were arrested by factions operating under the NA at the request of the Turkish Intelligence Services.

**It is worth mentioning that no less than 11 women are still held in detention by the al-Hamza Division and the Turkish Intelligence after they were arrested more than a year ago, while none of them were brought before the court. The women continue to endure an arbitrary detention in Syria, waiting to be transferred to Turkey.<sup>1</sup>**

Investigating into the arrests carried out in July and August 2020, STJ managed to document some of the incidents, which occurred in six out of Afrin's districts, chiefly conducted by the Military Police. The remaining arrests were, nevertheless, carried out by either of the following armed groups: The Civil Police, Liwa Samarkand / Samarkand Division, Jaysh al-Islam / Islam Army, Liwa Sultan Murad / Sultan Murad Division, al-Nukhba / Elite Brigade, Liwa Muhammad al-Fateh / Muhammad al-Fateh Brigade, al-Jabha al-Shamia / Levant Front, Faylaq al-Sham / Sham Legion, and Soqour al-Shamal / Falcons of the North.

STJ's observations also stress that the Suleiman Shah / al-Amshat Brigade and the al-Hamza /al-Hamzat Division had a minor part in the reported arrests, carrying out three only. STJ's field researchers stated that most likely the two groups have forced a large proportion of their Afrin-based recruits to fight in Libya, which attains for their minimum presence in the area.<sup>2</sup>

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<sup>1</sup> For further details, refer to the following report: "Afrin: How Eight Women were Forcibly Disappeared by the Hamza Division?" STJ, 3 August 2020, <https://stj-sy.org/en/afrin-how-eight-women-were-forcibly-disappeared-by-the-hamza-division/> (Last visited: 3 September 2020).

<sup>2</sup> "Turkey's Recruitment of Syrian Mercenaries to Fight in Libya: Process and Legal Consequences" STJ, 11 May 2020, <https://stj-sy.org/en/turkeys-recruitment-of-syrian-mercenaries-to-fight-in-libya-process-and-legal-consequences/> (Last visited: 3 September 2020).

Regarding the money paid by the detainees / arrestees in the form of ransom / bail, STJ had interviewed a commander of the Military Police in Jindires district earlier on, who claimed that a person is not arrested on the same charges twice. The released persons might sometimes reconnect with “terrorists”, the source added, the reason why they are arrested again. He said:

**“In general, the mechanism adopted is that a person is arrested and then brought before the court. The judiciary would then look into his / her case and decide to carry on with the trials, offering the detainees the choice of resuming the procedures while in prison or outside after granting them bail, set at 1000 Turkish Liras. When on bail, the people still have to show up for all the trial sessions until the final verdict is stated, after which they can get their bail money back. This procedure is followed by all the branches and centers affiliated with the Military Police.”**

Nonetheless, the testimonies and information documented by STJ in the past a few months prove that these claims are groundless, particularly the repeated arrests of the same persons and the bailouts.

## 1. Arrests in Afrin District

In July and August, 20 persons, including four women and a child, were arrested on varying charges. Nine men and one woman were released, while the fate of the other 10, among whom are the child and three women, continues to be unknown. The arrests were carried out thus:

- **Afrin city center:** On 13 August 2020, a patrol of the Military Police arrested Muhammad Qara / Abu Rinass from his store in the al-Bazzar al-Qadeem Marketplace. He was released on 27 August.

On 5 August, a patrol of the al-Jabha al-Shamia / Levant Front arrested the young man Muhammad Hasko from his textile factory on the Rajo-Afrin road. The young man's fate is still unknown.

On 18 August, recruits of the al-Jabha al-Shamia / Levant Front arrested the young man Fouad Kardanji / Fouad Ali Roz, a resident of the al-Ashrafiya neighborhood. His fate is yet unknown. It is important to mention that Kardanji was arrested for over 11 months before. Back then, he was released in return for a fine.

On 28 July, recruits of the Liwa Sultan Murad / Sultan Murad Brigade arrested the young man Jwan Ali, an owner of a clothes store in the city's marketplace. He was released the next day after paying a fine.

On 14 July, recruits of the al-Jabha al-Shamia/ Levan Front arrested Muhammad Maddo after he mediated the release of several students and teachers who were arrested in the city of Azaz, northern Aleppo. He was arrested after returning from Azaz and released shortly after.



- **On 9 July, the Jaysh al-Islam / Islam Army declared the arrest of two women, accusing them of engaging in and planning to plant explosive devices near one of its posts in the al-Ashrafiya neighborhood. The armed group made a statement, attached to it the photos of the two arrested women.**

STJ investigated into the arrest cases of the two young women — **Sivin Ahmad Sadeq**, 20 years old from the Birkashe village, and **Nisreen Walid**, 23 years old from the al-Ramadana village. STJ contacted a commander of the Jaysh al-Islam / Islam Army, a commander of the Military Police and an Afrin-based activist, who provided the following accounts:

On the condition of anonymity, the local activist said that he reached out to a relative of Sivin Ahmad, who assured him that Sivin was living in the areas of the Autonomous Administration in northern Aleppo and that she returned to their home, which her mother owns, in Afrin city only lately. The mother's house, the source added, is located in a neighborhood held by the Jaysh al-Islam / Islam Arm, and that the army's recruits have attempted to seize the house earlier on. Following the arrest of Sivin and her friend, a patrol of the Military Police raided the house and arrested Sivin's mother and her brother, a child, closing the house then and placing it under seal. Sivin also has a sick/disabled sister, who was abandoned to the care of one of the family's acquaintances.

On the same note, a commander of Jaysh al-Islam / Islam Army stated that the armed group arrested Sivin and Nisreen after they were caught planting an explosive device near one of the army's posts, close to the Kawa roundabout. The cellphones of the two young women were seized, the commander added, in which photos, chats, and voice notes were saved, proving that the women are dealing with the Syrian regime and the Kurdistan Workers' Party and are recruiting other women to carry out blasts.

Furthermore, the commander said that Jaysh al-Islam / Islam Army is preparing a video report, in which it will display the documents and evidence that confirm the charges mentioned above. He also provided STJ with two photos of Sivin and Nisreen, found on their cellphones. STJ, however, refrains from publishing these photos as they fail to attest the charges against the two women, not to mention that there are no further details on the photos, such as the time and place where they were shot.

For his part, a source from the Military Police, interviewed online by STJ's field researchers, said:

**"I have no information regarding the arrest of the two young women Nisreen and Sivin, except for the reports of Jaysh al-Islam /Islam Army. The army stated that it caught them in the act and was following them on cameras. This is what the army said. I know that the Turkish Intelligence has ordered the arrest of the family and transferring them to Turkey. The Military Police, thus, arrested the women and handed them over to the Turkish Intelligence Services."**

القيادة العامة  
بيان

بِسْمِ اللَّهِ الرَّحْمَنِ الرَّحِيمِ

جيش الإسلام

الله أكبر

تمكن إخوانكم في جيش الإسلام - بفضل من الله تعالى وتوفيقه - من إحباط عملية إرهابية ضخمة كانت تُعدّ لاستهداف الأمنيين في منطقة عفرين ، من خلال زرع إحدى العبوات الناسفة الشديدة التفجير في سوق تجاري شعبي مكتظ في مدينة عفرين، وقد تم إلقاء القبض على الإرهابيين المتورطين في هذا العمل الجبان متلبّسين بالجريمة أثناء وضع العبوة بعد ترقّب ومتابعة دقيقة باللباس الظاهر في الصور المرفقة بالبيان، وتم التعرف على هوية الإرهابيتين بعد التحقيق. وقد اعترفنا بكامل الخطة الموضوعة لزعة الأمن ونشر الرعب وترويع الأمنيين وقتلهم، وشرحتا ما وصلنا إليه في الخطة الموضوعة من قبل وكر الإرهاب PKK ، وتم التحقق من طريقة ومكان دخولهما إلى المنطقة بالتفصيل، هذا وقد تم تسليم الإرهابيتين للجهات المختصة أصولاً لينالوا جزاء ما تورطتا به، ونحن إذ نحمد الله أن قدرنا على كشف خيوط هذه الجريمة المروعة الوشيكة، وأعاننا على حماية أهلنا وحقق دمائهم البريئة، نهيب بجميع إخواننا القائمين على الوضع الأمني في المنطقة باتخاذ أقصى درجات الحيطة والحذر ومراقبة تحركات المشتبه بتآمرهم على الشعب السوري وثورته العظيمة.

سلم الله شعبنا السوري الحر من كيد المجرمين، والحمد لله رب العالمين

الواقع في 2020/07/09م  
الموافق لـ 18/ ذي القعدة/ 1441هـ

Photo No. (1) - The statement released by Jaysh al-Islam / Islam Army on 10 July 2020, regarding the arrests of Sivin Ahmad Sadeq and Nisreen Walid.



Photo No. (2).



Photo no. (3) – The two photos are of Sivin Ahmad Sadeq and Nisreen Walid. They were published by the Jaysh al-Islam / Islam Army.

On 25 July, a resident of the **al-Mahmoudiya neighborhood** in Afrin city said that the Military Police arrested attorney Luqman Hannan after he had an argument with a tenant living in a house he owns. Hannan was yet detained at the time of reporting.

On 10 July, the Military Police arrested Abdulrahman Ahmad, a resident of Arndah village, and Ayoub, from Juwayq village, in the **al-Ahrafiya neighborhood** and on the charges of performing the duty of self-defense when the Autonomous Administration was in control of the area. Both men were then transferred to the Military Police's prison on the al-Autostrad al-Gharbi street.

In mid-July, also in the **al-Ashrafiya neighborhood**, a patrol of the Military Police arrested Shairwan Ali, born in the Kafr Janneh village, for unknown reasons.

On 1 July, a patrol of the Military Police arrested Abdulrahman Nu'man for performing the duty of self-defense when the Autonomous Administration was in control of the area. The arrestee was transferred to the Maratah prison. It is noteworthy that Nu'man was arrested twice before on the same charge and was released every time after paying a fine.

On 23 August, a patrol of the Military Police arrested Subhi Jum'an Sido, Walid Jum'an, Ahmad Zaki Aybish, Ahmad Alo, Muhammad Nouri Ja'far and Yasmin Ibrahim Abdo in the village of **Kerzayhel** on the charges of working in the Autonomous Administration's directorates when the latter was in control of the area. They were all released on 25 August after paying a fine.

## 2. Arrests in Jidiyes District

In Jidiyes district, 23 men and two women were arrested. Including the two women, 22 of the detainees were released, while the fate of the remaining three continues to be unknown. The arrests, however, were carried out by the Civil Police, armed groups of the al-Jabha al-Shamia / Levant Front, Liwa Samarkand / Samarkand Brigade, Faylaq al-Sham / Sham Legion and Ahrar al-Sharqiya / Rebels of the East. The arrests were carried out thus:

- **Jidiyes district center:** On 20 August, recruits of the Ahrar al-Sharqiya / Rebels of the East arrested Omar Muhammad Jamil, the owner of a curtains store from Ramadanli village. He was released five days later.

On July 27, Haytham Sido was arrested by the Civil Police on the charge of dealing with the Autonomous Administration.

- On 8 July, the Civil Police of the al-Ma'abatli / Mabeta district arrested the following persons from the Julaqan village: Muhammad Majeed Osman, Abdulrahman Khalil Osman and Muhammad Farid Rashu, for working in the directorates of the Autonomous Administration, when the latter was in control of the area. They were all then transferred to the Ma'abatli prison, to be released after three weeks.



- On 3 July, a resident of the Dala village reported to STJ's field researcher that recruits of the Liwa Samarkand/ Samarkand Brigade arrested six of the village's men for refusing to do forced labour, as they were ordered to help in setting up the armed group's headquarters for free. The armed group had previously seized a house belonging to one of the villagers and decided to turn it into a military post, part of which it intended to transform into a prison /detention facility.

**The six detainees were released two days later, after they were subjected to beating and tortured and were forced to pay fines. The detainees are Shiyar Ali Ahmad, Nizar Shukri Jelou, Ahmad Aziz and his cousin Khaled Aziz, Abdulkarim Hamada and his son Raizan Hamada.**

- On 15 and 18 August, a patrol of the Military Police arrested Muhammad Nouri Shaikho and Abdulrahman Nouri Shaikho in the village of Julaq and led them to the Ma'abatli prison, where they continue to be held captive.
- In the same village, on 20 August, the Military Police carried out a raid and arrest drive, arresting six people: Hussain Abdulrahman Osman, the village's mukhtar / governor, Izzat Muhammad Osman, Khalil Izzat Osman, Mustafa Aloush, Osman Muhammad Rashu, and Mrs. Farida Abdo. They were all transferred to the Ma'abatli district center, where Farida Abdo was released on the same day. The rest, however, were released on 23 August after they paid money.
- On 1 August, the Falyaq al-Sham / Sham Legion arrested three men from the **Shadirahh village** on the charge of working in the directorates of the Autonomous Administration when it was in control of the area. The arrestees were Ali Brimo, his wife Fikrat and Rashid Muhammad Sido. They were all released after paying money.
- On 23 August, a patrol of the Military Police arrested Khalil Muhammad Ali Ibrahim, 21 years old, in the **village of Aghjala** on the charge of performing the duty of self-defense / mandatory military service. He was transferred to the center in the Jidiyes district, from which he was released on 29 August after paying a fine of 500 Turkish Liras.
- On 4 August, a patrol of the al-Hamza / Hamzat Division arrested Ibrahim Osman and his son Siwar in **the village of Kajouma** and released them on the same day.

### 3. Arrests in Shaykh al-Hadid District

In Shaykh al-Hadid district, nine people were arrested, two of them only were released, while the fate of the remaining seven continues to be unknown. The arrests were carried out thus:

- On July 25, the Maratah prison personnel arrested the civilian Ahmad Ahmad Rashid, a resident of Tarmishou village, while on a visit to detained friends. He was arrested on the charges of maintaining contact with the Syrian democratic Forces / SDF.

- On July 22, the Suleiman Shah / al-Aamshat Brigade arrested three people from the Tarmishou village and transferred them to the Marata prison on the charge of maintaining contact with the Syrian Democratic Forces / SDF. The arrestees were Imad Hassan Ali, Abdeen Ahmad Khalil and Fawzi Nouri Hassan, who the previously mentioned detainee was visiting. They all paid a fine / ransom in return for their release.
- On August 15, the Civil Police arrested Malshin Alo and Assad Alo from the Mastako village on the charges of dealing with the Autonomous Administration. They were then transferred to the Public Prosecutors office and released after paying a fine of about 1000 Turkish Liras.
- On 13 August, the Military Police arrested Farid Sido from Tarmishou village, for joining the ranks of the Asayish Forces, when the Autonomous Administration was in control of the area. On the same day, the Military Police arrested Khalil Mannan Sido and his son Kamiran, both born in the village of Tarmishou, after the police raided their home in the Jindires district. The three men were still detained at the time of reporting.

## 4. Arrests in Rajo District

In Rajo district, nine people were arrested, only three were released. The fate of the remaining five continues to be unknown.

- On 6 July, a patrol of the Military Police arrested the young man Lawand Omar Sammou in the **village of Ma'malou** on the charges of performing the duty of self-defense when the Autonomous Administration was still in control of the area. He was then transferred to the Rajo prison till the town's court ordered his release in return for a fine.
- On 9 July, recruits of the Liwa Muhammad al-Fateh / Muhammad al-Fateh Brigade arrested three people from the **Ma'malou village** on the charge of dealing with the Autonomous Administration. The town's court then ordered their release in return for fines / bails. The arrestees are Ali Kaileh, Ali Muhammad Ibrahim and Gigaik Ibrahim Jartu.
- On 14 July, also in the same village, a patrol of the Military Police arrested the young man Sairo Jamil on the charges of affiliation to the People's Protection Units. He was then transferred to the Rajo prison, where he continues to be held captive.
- On 25 August, the Military Police arrested the young man Awad Ahmad Habash, 20 years old, in the Ma'amlou village on the charges of dealing with the Autonomous Administration. He was then transferred to the Rajo prison, where he will be brought before the court.
- In early August, a security patrol of the Faylaq al-Sham / Sham Legion arrested the teacher Radwan Muhammad, principal of the school in **the village of Jaqmak Kabir**, on the charges of apostasy, for he converted to Christianity many years ago.
- On 18 August, a patrol of the Military Police arrested the mukhtar/governor of **the village of Rajah Fouqani**, Khalil Oso for unknown reason. He was transferred to

the Asswad / Black prison, where he was yet detained at the date of reporting.

- On 6 August, a patrol of the Military Police arrested Riyadh Hassan Hamou from his house in the **Kamrash village**, Rajo district on the charges of dealing and maintaining contact with the Kurdistan Workers' Party. Hamou was yet detained at the date of reporting.

## 5. Arrests in Ma'abatli District

In Ma'abatli district, 27 persons were arrested, 24 of whom were released after paying fines / bailouts. The fate of the three other detainees, nevertheless, was yet unknown at the date of reporting.

- On 11 August, a patrol of the military police raided the **Braimjeh village** and arrested six of its residents on the charges of working in the directorates of the Autonomous Administration when it was in control of the area. The arrestees are Muhammad Basheer, Abdo Khalil Abbass, Ass'ad Khalil Murad, Nouri Mustafa Bakr, Fayek Sabri Mousa, and Shaikho Abdo Osso. They were all transferred to the Ma'abatli District Center and released the next the day after paying fines.
- On 15 August, recruits of the al-Nukhba / Elite Division arrested three people, who all belong to the same family, in the **Shikhotkou village**. The arrestees are Muhammad Rashu, 59, Zaki Hannan Rashu, 48, Muhammad Mannan Rashu, 53. They were arrested for working in the directorates of the Autonomous Administration when it controlled the area and released three days later after paying a fine.
- On 15 August, a patrol of the Military Police raided **the village of Arab Shaikho** and arrested six people, who worked as night guards for the village while the Autonomous Administration was in control of it. They were all released after paying a fine of about 500 Turkish Liras each.

**The arrestees are Muhammad Muhammad, Hassan Muhammad Ayoub, Jamal Abdo Aboush, Ali Abdo Aboush, Muhammad Abdo Aboush and Fuad Abdo Muhammad.**

- On 17 August, recruits of the Suqour al-Shamal / Falcons of the North, which controls the **Kamrouk village**, arrested several of its residents for operating as guards when the village was controlled by the Autonomous Administration. The arrestees are Adnan Zakaraya Hassan, Ahmad Zakaraya Hassan, Walid Rusho Abdo, Mahmoud Rashu Abdo, Abdulrahman Ahmou, Luqman Khalil Ahmu, Kamal Hassan Ahmad, Zaki Khouja Ali, and Abdo Hassan Rasoul. They were all released the next day after paying a fine of about 1000 Turkish Liras each.
- On 6 August, a patrol of the Military Police arrested Jwan Issmat Mustafa in the **village of Kourkan Tahtani**. The man is a resident of Afrin and was arrested while driving his car to the city of Azaz. No further details were obtained regarding this arrest incident.

In July, also in Kourkan Tahtani, recruits of the Liwa Muhammad al-Fateh / Muhammad al-Fateh Brigade arrested the teacher Khoushnaf Hassan for working in the schools of the Autonomous Administration when it controlled the area. His fate is yet unknown.

- On 20 August, the Civil Police arrested Fawzi Nashat Hassan in **the village of Kourkan Fouqani** for unknown reasons. His fate is yet unknown.

## 6. Arrests in Sharran District

In the Sharran district, five persons were arrested, including a child. None of the arrestees was yet released at the time of reporting. The arrests were carried out thus:

- On 6 July, in **Darwish village**, the al-Nukhba/ Elite Division, which controls the area, arrested Muhammad Ali Mustafa on the charges of dealing with the Autonomous Administration. No further details were obtained regarding the incident.
- On 26 August, personnel of the Military Police arrested three persons in **the village of Dair Sawan** on the charges of performing the duty of self-defense when the Autonomous Administration was yet in control of the area. They are Muhammad Kaljamou, 24, Hassan Subhi Tobal, 22, and Muhammad Ali Tobal, 17. The three arrestees were transferred to the Sharran District Center, where they will be brought before the court.
- On 3 August, a patrol of the al-Jabha al-Shamia / Levant Front arrested Abdullah Ibrahim Muhammad in **the village of Ma'ar Sekeh** on the charges of working in the directorates of the Autonomous Administration when it was in control of the area. He is detained at the armed group's headquarters near the Kawa roundabout in Afrin city, where he will be brought before the court.

## 7. Arrests in Bulbul District

In the Bulbul district, seven people were arrested, four of whom were released, while the fate of the remaining three continues to be unknown. STJ could not document the arrests carried out in the district in August.

- On 12 July, a resident **of the Hassandairo village** reported to STJ's field researcher that recruits of the Jaysh al-Ahfad / Army of Grandchildren raided one of the houses there, arresting the young man Salim Sayyede Hamza, for possessing a haunting rifle. He was released 20 days later after paying a fine. The witness pointed out that the detainee was subjected to severe beating and torture while in captivity.
- On 11 July, in **the village of Dekeh**, a witness reported to STJ's field researcher that checkpoint of the Civil Police, at the entrance to Afrin city, arrested the young man Raizan Ramzi Bilal while on his way back from the village to the city. An altercation between the young man and one of the checkpoint's recruits developed into a fist

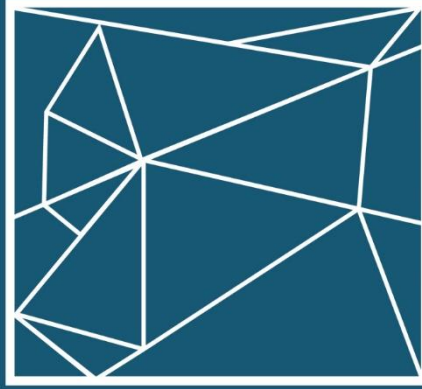


fight, accordingly the checkpoint's recruits arrested Raizan and transferred him to the Maratah Prison. He was released three days later, after he was coerced into paying a fine of 700 Turkish Liras.

**On July 24, a patrol of the Military Police arrested Munther Hussain Alo and Akid Hussain Alo from their home in Afrin city in al-Ashrafiya neighborhood. They were released on 27 August.**

- On 23 July, in the village of Kara Kul, Muhammad Qanbar was arrested at a checkpoint of the Civil Police, set up at the entrance to Afrin city. The man was rushing his son to the hospital and got arrested on the charge of dealing with the Autonomous Administration. His fate is yet unknown.
- On 8 July, a resident of the Qastal Khadaryou village told STJ's field researcher that recruits of the Sultan Murad Brigade arrested a policeman of the Civil Police. Ahmad Abdulaziz Alo, Kurdish, was arrested after an altercation with one of the brigade's recruits. The policeman was handed over to the Military Police and he is yet detained. Related to the same incident is the arrest of an elderly called Ramadan Alo, who protested the policeman's arrest. He was arrested on 24 July, his haunting rifle, licensed by the Bulbul Local Council, was confiscated and he was then handed over to the Military Police in Rajo district, where he continues to be detained.

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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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