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سوريون
من أجل
الحقيقة
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Syrians
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& Justice



Suqour al-Sunna Brutally Tortured a Civilian in Suluk, Raqqa

Ali al-Faraj was filmed being tortured while detained by eight members of Suqour al-Sunna for having a dispute with one of its commanders

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On 9 September 2021, footage circulated on social media showing a young Syrian man being tortured by members of the Turkish-backed Syrian National Army (SNA). Later the same day, more footage appeared online in which the same man appeared naked, bearing the marks of torture, and made a forced apology to the people of Deir ez-Zor province.

Syrians for Truth and Justice (STJ) inspected the two circulated videos and investigated the incident. Our researchers discovered that eight members of the 20th Division's Suqour al-Sunna/al-Sunna Hawks group, led by Hassan Abu al-Nour, arrested Ali Sultan al-Faraj, born in 2001 in Suluk district, Raqqa. The members captured Ali from a café and took him to an abandoned house near the village of [Ali Bajliyah](#), northern Raqqa, stripped him, and tortured him for an hour and a half using cables and hoses. This incident occurred on 7 September 2021 — two days before the footage was published.

The first video, which was 12 seconds long, showed Ali al-Faraj, naked, being brutally beaten while screaming and crying for help. In the second video, which was 35 seconds, Ali stood naked and said:

“I am Ali Sultan al-Faraj from the village of Balwa of the Suluk district in Raqqa province. I wronged the people of Deir ez-Zor and so I apologize to them.”

The members of Suqour al-Sunna/al-Sunna Hawks group who arrested Ali threw him on a side road near the village of Hammam al-Turkman after torturing him. A passerby helped Ali and returned him to his home in Balwa village.



Image 1: A screenshot from the first video which shows Ali being tortured.

The leaked videos sparked outrage among the people of Suluk, especially Ali's clan, which responded by mobilizing against the Suqour al-Sunna/al-Sunna Hawks group. On 9 September members of the Naeem and al-Jameel clans demonstrated in front of the Suqour al-Sunna/al-Sunna Hawks group headquarters in [Suluk](#), demanding the group exit the town. In response, members of the Suqour al-Sunna/al-Sunna Hawks group fired live bullets to disperse the protesters.



Image 2: A statement attributable to the Shura Council of the al-Naeem Clan demanding retribution from Suqour al-Sunna/al-Sunna Hawks group of the 20th Division for arresting and torturing Ali.

For its part, the 20th Division, under which the Suqour al-Sunna/al-Sunna Hawks group operates, released a statement on 9 September 2021 denying involvement in Ali's arrest. Meanwhile, the Military Police published a statement confirming the arrest of five people out of the eight who arrested and tortured Ali.



الجمهورية العربية السورية
الجيش الوطني السوري
الفيلق الأول
الفرقة 20



تنويه

انتشر على مواقع التواصل الاجتماعي فيديو لعصابة مسلحة تقوم بتعذيب شخص

أعزل وتم نسبهم إلى الفرقة 20

نؤكد نحن "الفرقة 20" العاملة في صفوف الجيش الوطني بأن جميع الأشخاص

الظاهرين في الفيديو هم ليسوا من مرتباتنا

وليس لدينا أساسا أي تواجد في مدينة "سلوك"

ونطالب الجهات القضائية بتشكيل لجنة تحقيق بهذه الحادثة

ونحن على أتم الاستعداد للتعاون معها في سبيل إلقاء القبض على الجناة وتقديمهم

للعادلة .

الفرقة 20
القيادة العامة
2021 / 09 / 09

First1legion

Image 3: A statement attributed to the 20th Division denying its involvement in Ali's arrest.

Syria Arab Republic
Ministry of Defense - General Staff
Military Police Department

الجمهورية العربية السورية
وزارة الدفاع - هيئة الأركان
إدارة الشرطة العسكرية

بيان

حول حادثة اختطاف الشاب علي ابن سلطان الفرج

بعد انتشار فيديو الاعتداء على الشاب علي بن سلطان الفرج من قبل مجموعة مسلحة في منطقة سلوك.

قامت الشرطة العسكرية في مدينة تل أبيب وبتوجيه من مدير إدارة الشرطة العسكرية وبالتعاون مع قيادة وأمنية الفرقة 20 بمتابعة القضية وملاحقة الجناة المجرمين و تمكننا من إلقاء القبض على خمسة أشخاص.

هذا وقد تابعت الشرطة العسكرية منذ اللحظة الأولى لإنتشار الفيديو على وسائل التواصل الإجتماعي.

وبعد سماعنا لأقوال الشاب علي الفرج بدءنا بالمتابعة والتحري عن الأشخاص المتورطين، ومازالت التحقيقات جارية وسيتم إعتقال كل من يثبت تورطه بهذا العمل الجبان.

وبعد الإنتهاء من تحقيقاتنا سيتم إحالة كافة المتورطين الى القضاء المختص لينالوا جزائهم العادل

إدارة الشرطة العسكرية

MDPoliceSy

Image 4: A statement attributed to the Military Police confirmed the arrest of five of the eight people who arrested Ali, with the help of the security services of the 20th Division.

A security source in the 20th Division told STJ that members of the Suqour al-Sunna/al-Sunna Hawks group were responsible for Ali's arrest. The source cited that a surveillance camera in the café where Ali was arrested caught footage of those who seized Ali — individuals who were identified as members of the Suqour al-Sunna/al-Sunna Hawks group. Moreover, street surveillance cameras captured footage of a vehicle belonging to the Suqour al-Sunna/al-Sunna Hawks group the day of Ali's arrest passing checkpoints on the road to the village of Ali Bajliyah.

The same source confirmed that Ali al-Faraj was arrested following a dispute with a commander in the Suqour al-Sunna/al-Sunna Hawks currently residing in Turkey:

“The commander of the group residing in Turkey¹ told members under him to arrest Ali and film him apologizing to the people of Deir ez-Zor under torture.”

Local activists circulated photos of five members of the Suqour al-Sunna/al-Sunna Hawks group claiming that they were responsible for arresting and torturing Ali al-Faraj. However, STJ has not been able to verify this information. The source in the 20th division claimed:

“Those who arrested Ali were eight members of the Suqour al-Sunna/al-Sunna Hawks group, five of them were arrested while the three others are still at large. Those members have records of thefts, kidnappings, and arrests for money.”

On 10 September, Ali al-Faraj published a 59 second video in which he discussed his arrest and torture and confirmed that the perpetrators were members of the Suqour al-Sunna/al-Sunna Hawks group.



Image 5: A screenshot from a video published by Ali al-Faraj, in which he detailed his arrest incident.

¹ The source withheld the commander's name.

After originally denying its connection to the incident, the Suqour al-Sunna/al-Sunna Hawks group released a statement, also on 10 September, claiming responsibility for Ali's arrest and torture.



الجيش الوطني السوري
لواء صقور السنة

بيان بخصوص حادثة الشاب علي بن سلطان الفرج

الحمد لله رب العالمين، والصلوة والسلام على نبينا محمد وعلى آله وصحبه أجمعين.

لقد عُرف لواء صقور السنة من أولى أيام تشكيله بمشاركته الفاعلة بشكل كبير في تحرير المناطق من العصابات الأسدية والميليشيات الإيرانية أولاً، ومن تنظيم داعش ثانياً بداية من المنطقة الشرقية، نهاية بعملية نبع السلام ضد أحزاب PKK/PYD الإرهابية.

لقد آلمنا ما قامت به المجموعة المنضوية تحت لواء صقور السنة من تعذيب وتشهير بالشاب "علي بن سلطان الفرج".

وإننا على استعداد كامل لمحاسبة المتورطين، والعمل مع الجهات المختصة حتى حل هذه القضية بكل السبل المتاحة، وتقديم أي عنصر يثبت تورطه أيضاً كان موقعه إلى القضاء المختص.

حزب في : 2021/9/10

Image 6: A statement released by Suqour al-Sunna/al-Sunna Hawks group on 10 September, claiming responsibility for arresting and torturing Ali.

On the following day, the Suqour al-Sunna/al-Sunna Hawks group arrested a civilian from the town of Suluk for criticizing the group's actions against Ali al-Faraj.

It should be noted that the 20th Division, under which the Suqour al-Sunna/al-Sunna Hawks group operates, has been involved in widespread human rights violations following Turkey's Operation Peace Spring, launched on 9 October 2019 in northeastern Syria. A [joint report](#) presented by the Kurdish Committee for Human Rights-observer and STJ in July 2020 revealed that Syrian detainees were illegally transferred into Turkey by the Turkish government. Investigations showed that the 20th Division, led by Abu Barazan, arrested and kidnapped civilians in northeast Syria following Operation Peace Spring, and then surrendered them into the custody of the Turkish Army, which put them in Hilvan Prison in the Turkish state of Urfa.

Furthermore, a Human Rights Watch (HRW) [report](#), published February 2021, confirmed that many of the detainees who were forcibly transferred into Turkey were sentenced to life in prison. Additionally, the HRW report stated that the Turkish authorities, as an occupying power, are required to respect people's rights under the law of occupation in northeastern Syria, including the prohibition of arbitrary detention and the transfer of people to their territory.

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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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