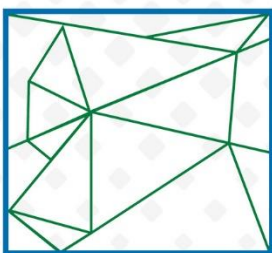


# Northeast Syria: Two Men Die from Torture and Medical Negligence

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سوريون  
من أجل  
الحقيقة  
والعدالة  
Syrians  
For Truth  
& Justice



January 20, 2022

## **Northeast Syria: Two Men Die from Torture and Medical Negligence**

*Hikmat al-Da'ar died of an insulin overdose and torture by the Northern Hawks Brigade in Ras al-Ayn/Serê Kaniyê, and Mohammad al-Jasem was tortured to death while investigating a Military Police prison in Tell Abyad*

On 22 September 2021, activists circulated a video and photos of a young Syrian man bearing severe marks of torture. The images later discovered to be of Hikmat al-Da'ar, who was arbitrarily arrested by members of the Northern Hawks Brigade's 2<sup>nd</sup> Corps in Ras al-Ayn/Serê Kaniyê. Al-Da'ar was reportedly arrested following testimonies from detainees linking him with the Syrian Democratic Forces (SDF); these testimonies were later withdrawn and denied.

The Northern Hawks Brigade operates under the 20<sup>th</sup> Division of the opposition Syrian National Army (SNA) and led by Abu Barazan. The Brigade is supported by Turkey and affiliated with the Syrian Interim Government and the National Coalition for Syrian Revolutionary and Opposition Forces based in Istanbul

In addition to al-Da'ar, STJ received exclusive information and images in the case of another detainee who was killed. Mohammad al-Jasem, also a young man, died of torture in Tell Abyad at the hands of Hassan Abu al-Nour, the leader of the Suqour al-Sunna group, which also operates under the 20<sup>th</sup> Division of the SNA. This incident occurred in May 2021 but has not been made public until this report.

STJ investigated the two incidents and verified that the two men were died of torture and medical negligence in SNA detention centers. STJ obtained testimonies about the two incidents from five sources, including medical workers and fighters of the two groups responsible for the death of al-Da'ar and al-Jasem.

Notably, Hikmat al-Da'ar died only a few days after another young man, [Ali al-Faraj](#), was brutally tortured by a group affiliated with Soqour al-Sunna in Tell Abyad on 6 September 2021.

## The Death of Hikmat al-Da'ar

On 14 September 2021, Hikmat al-Da'ar was arrested from his home, located in the Catholic Church Neighborhood in the city of Ras al-Ayn/Serê Kaniyê, by members of the Northern Hawks Brigade, led by Hasan Khairiya, on charges of having links with the SDF. On 20 September al-Da'ar died in the Brigade's headquarters. News of his death became public two days later when a video showing his tortured body circulated on social media, inciting public outrage.

### Incident Details

STJ spoke to three sources directly connected to al-Da'ar's death. The first source said that the victim, al-Da'ar, 37, lived in the village of Al Tayyana in rural Deir ez-Zor – controlled by the SDF – before he moved to Ras al-Ayn/Serê Kaniyê, where his brother lives. Al-Da'ar worked there as a shepherd and was continually threatened by a member of the SDF. The same source confirmed that al-Da'ar had type 1 diabetes.

Shortly after al-Da'ar moved to Ras al-Ayn/Serê Kaniyê, specifically on 14 September, he was arrested from his home by order of the leader of the Northern Hawks Brigade, Hasan Khairiya. The arrest of al-Da'ar came after three men detained by the brigade accused him of being an agent for the SDF.

A source confirmed that al-Da'ar was taken to the Brigade's security headquarters near al-Hasakah roundabout in Ras al-Ayn/Serê Kaniyê. There, al-Da'ar was investigated by the commander Najeeb Souran and tortured by Abdul Jalil Kairiyah, a man nicknamed al-Rehawi, a man nicknamed Wissam Abu Ahmed, and Mahmoud al-Nimir, Hasan Kairiyah's brother-in-law.

According to the same source, al-Da'ar was subjected to the "shabeh" torture technique –he was suspended by wrists, beaten with a tire, and wounded with hard objects. Importantly, al-Da'ar was also denied insulin for long periods. The Northern Hawks Brigade initially asked al-Da'ar's family for \$100,000 U.S. dollars in exchange for their son's release. After negotiations, the amount was reduced to \$40,000. However, the family still could not secure the amount and thus the Brigade did not release al-Da'ar, despite the attempts of several local community leaders.

Around 11:00 P.M. on 19 September, al-Da'ar was hospitalized in the Military Hospital; however, he'd already died of an insulin overdose in the Brigade's headquarters. Al-Da'ar's body was then transferred to the National Hospital, which recorded that his death occurred on 20 September and informed the 20<sup>th</sup> Division of the incident. Al-Da'ar's family claimed his body and buried him in Al-Tayyana, Deir ez-Zor, as he had wished.

On 21 September, the forensics in the Directorate of Health of Ras al-Ayn/Serê Kaniyê issued a "military judicial incident verification report" in which it was confirmed that al-Da'ar's body bore severe marks of torture. The report was signed by the forensic assistant Orwa al-Qa'ed and stamped with the Directorate's official seal.

Forensic examination revealed that al-Da'ar's body bore severe signs of violence and torture on his back, shoulders, and wrists, as well as a swelling in his right lower limb. These symptoms are common in victims of "shabeh" torture methods.

Emergency and the intensive care department reports in Ras al-Ayn/Serê Kaniyê Hospital, led by Dr. Kana'an al-Ali, described al-Da'ar's health as follows: "The heart stopped repeatedly during CPR for durations ranging between 25 and 30 minutes. His blood sugar is over 500. The cause of death was a diabetic shock which led to a heart attack and the time of death is estimated to be five hours before the examination".

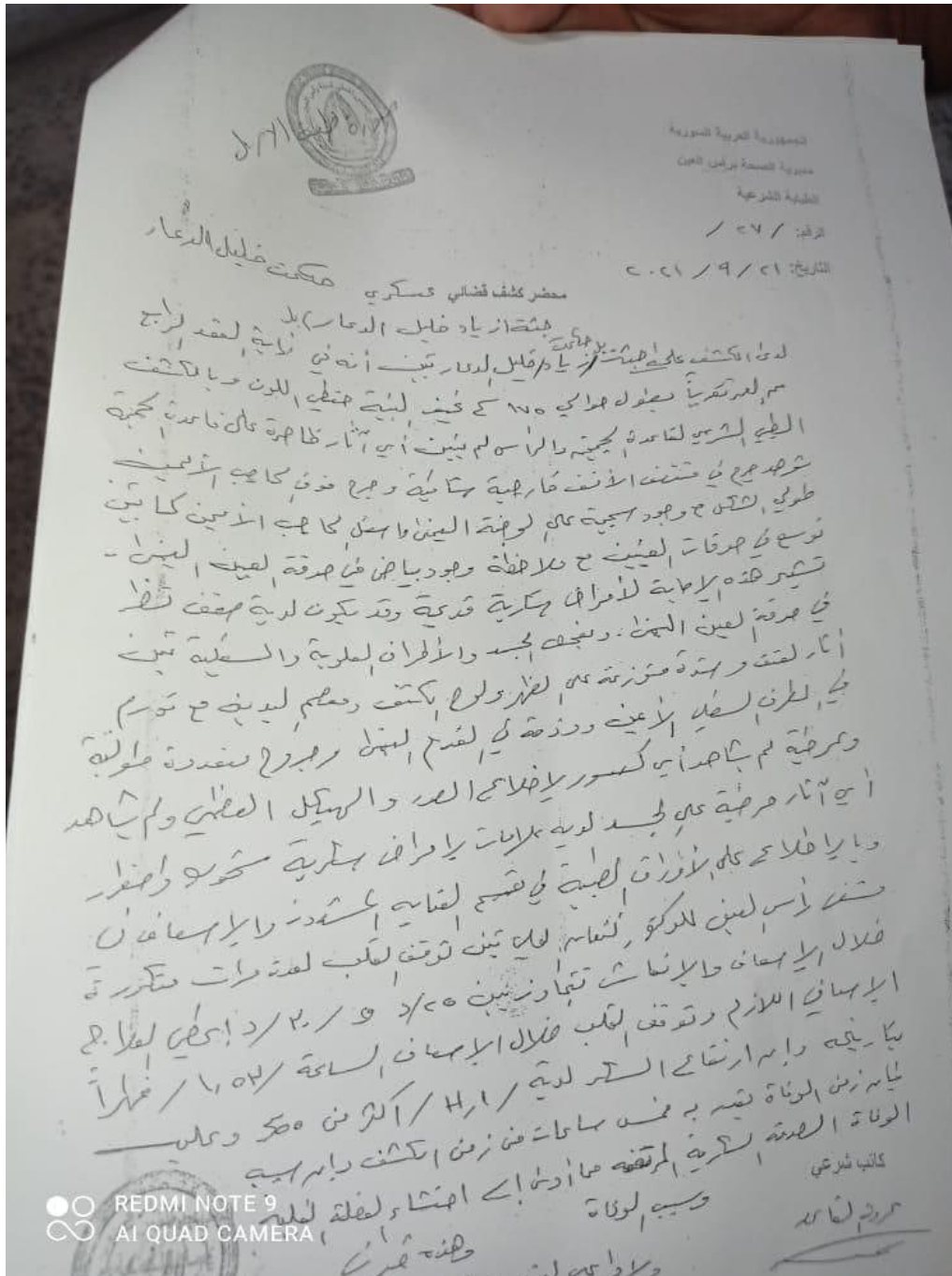


Image (1)- A photograph of a military judicial incident verification report of the medical analyst of Hikmat al-Da'ar's body. This report was issued by forensics in the Directorate of Health of Ras al-Ayn/Serê Kaniyê on 21 September 2021. Credit: Syrian local activists.

On 22 September 2021, the news of al-Da'ar's death went public when activists uploaded photos and a video to social media showing his body clearly bearing marks of torture.



Image (2)- Screenshots from a video showing al-Da'ar's body bearing severe signs of brutality and torture. Credit: local activists.

On 26 September 2021, al-Qura'an clan of al-Uqaydat tribe, to which al-Da'ar belongs, issued a statement demanding the formation of a joint "sharia commission" between it and the Northern Hawks Brigade to consider the accusation made against the victim, al-Da'ar. Indeed, the commission was formed, and, on 9 October 2021, the commission issued a decision clearing al-Da'ar of the allegation of having links with the SDF. The Brigade, however, did not make any comment upon the decision nor initiate an investigation into al-Da'ar's death.



قبيلة العكيدات  
عشيرة القرعان



**((بسم الله الرحمن الرحيم))**

بيان عشيرة القرعان

إن عشيرة القرعان بعد ما جرى من أحداث حول وفاة الشاب "حكمت الدعار"  
أحد أبناء العشيرة في أمنية صقور الشمال أثناء التحقيق.  
وبعد التوافق على تشكيل لجنة شرعية مستقلة عن الطرفين

عشيرة القرعان

وفصيل صقور الشمال

مكونة من كل من :

أبو الحارث الشامي

أبو البراء خلف

أبو أنس حمدان

للتوصل إلى الحقيقة وكشف ملابسات الحادث وتحديد إن كان "حكمت الدعار"

أبو سلطان مدان بالعمالة لجهة معادية

أو عكس ذلك

وإن عشيرة القرعان وإنطلاقاً من الرضوخ الكامل للشرع ملتزمون بالنتيجة التي

سوف تتوصل إليها اللجنة الشرعية وقرارها يكون الفصل بخصوص الادانه او

عدمها فقط

والله ولي التوفيق

الموافق 26/9/2021

Image (3)- A statement by al-Qura'an clan demanding the consideration of the accusation made against Hikmat al-Da'ar.

## بِسْمِ اللَّهِ الرَّحْمَنِ الرَّحِيمِ

٢/ربيع الأول/١٤٤٣ هجري

نحن اللجنة :

٢٠٢١/١٠/٩ ميلادي

الشيخ أبو الحارث الشامي

الشيخ أبو البراء خلفه

الشيخ أبو انس حمدان

### قرار حكم

قضية : حكمته خليل الدعار

موضوع : تخاير مع العدو / حزب ال BKK

بعد النظر والتحري وسماع أقوال الأطراف في القضية المنظورة بحق المقتول ومدى ارتباطه بالجرم المنسوب إليه الذي تم إلقاء القبض عليه بسببه ومن ثم قتل تحت التعذيب تبين لنا ما يلي :

- ١- إن ما نسب إليه من قبل امنية صقور الشمال إنما كان تحت الضغط الشديد مما اضطر الى اعطائهم أسماء لاعلاقة لهم بالتهمة المنسوبة اليهم والاعتراف بما لم يفعل .
- ٢- عدم وجود أي قرينة أو بينة تثبت تورط المغدور بما نسب إليه وعليه قررنا ما يلي .

تبرئة المغدور حكمت خليل الدعار عما نسب له من تم .

### والله ولي التوفيق

Image (4)- A photograph of the decision made by the sharia commission formed to investigate the case of al-Da'ar's alleged affiliation with the SDF. Members of the committee include: Sheikh Abu al-Hareth al-Shami (a sharia commander in the Army of Islam/Jaysh al-Islam) Sheikh Abu al-Bara' Khalaf (a sharia commander in an SNA group with close ties to the Army of Islam/Jaysh al-Islam), Sheikh Abu Anas Hamdan (a member of the sharia board of the Army of Islam/Jaysh al-Islam, headed by Abu Abdulrahman Ka'akeh).



## The Death of Mohammad al-Jasem

On 2 May 2021, members of the Suqour al-Sunna group, led by Hassan Abu al-Nour, arrested Mohammad al-Jasem, a young man from the village of [Ali Bajliyah](#) in Tell Abyad. Al-Jasem was taken to the [Military Police](#) headquarters in Tell Abyad, where he was held for 15 days. On 16 May 2021, al-Jasem was beaten to death.

STJ spoke to two sources closely familiar with the incident. The first source confirmed that Mohammad al-Jasem hails from the town of [Ma'adan](#) in southern rural Raqqa (the same town that Hassan Abu al-Nour hails from). According to the same source, al-Jasem was in his 30s when he was arrested on charges of previous affiliation with the Islamic State (ISIL). Later, it was discovered that al-Jasem had volunteered for ISIL's Islamic Police for only two months in 2014 before fleeing the area.

After al-Jasem was arrested, he was taken to Military Police headquarters and tortured. STJ's source recounted:

“Hassan Abu al-Nour arrested Mohammad al-Jasem and took him to the Military Police headquarters in Tell Abyad. Abu al-Nour asked Captain Ahmed al-Khalf to let him investigate al-Jasem. However, Captain Ahmed al-Khalaf, Captain Moayed al-Ahmed and commander Hassan Abu al-Nour [investigated](#) Mohammad al-Jasem using many torture methods such as the burning with heated objects, pulling out nails, shabeh, beating with cables and plastic tubes, and waterboarding.”

The source added:

“Al-Jasem was tortured for several days which resulted in his deteriorating health condition and thus he was hospitalized. I suppose that al-Jasem's arrest was for money. It is usual for the SNA commanders to arrest former ISIL members to blackmail them; it is not the first time actually”.

The second source informed STJ about the time al-Jasem stayed in the hospital:

“On 16 May 2021, Mohammad al-Jasem was transferred to the [Military Police Hospital](#) in Tell Abyad. Al-Jasem was in a coma caused by internal hemorrhaging which resulted from beatings on heart and chest. He died the same day at 7:00 P.M”.

The source continued:

“Mohammad al-Jasem's death was registered in the hospital records under the fake name, Saleh al-Lahyan, and its cause was listed as a heart attack. This data was forwarded to be registered in the records of the Military Police's central administration in Tell Abyad.”

The same source confirmed that after Mohammad al-Jasem was killed, Hassan Abu al-Nour told Captain Ahmed al-Khalaf that he had offered Mohammad's family to pay them and give them the body in exchange for keeping silent.

STJ has not verified information related to the fate of al-Jasem's body. A source confirmed that al-Jasem's family did not receive his body and were only informed that he was buried in unmarked grave in a cemetery in Tell Abyad.

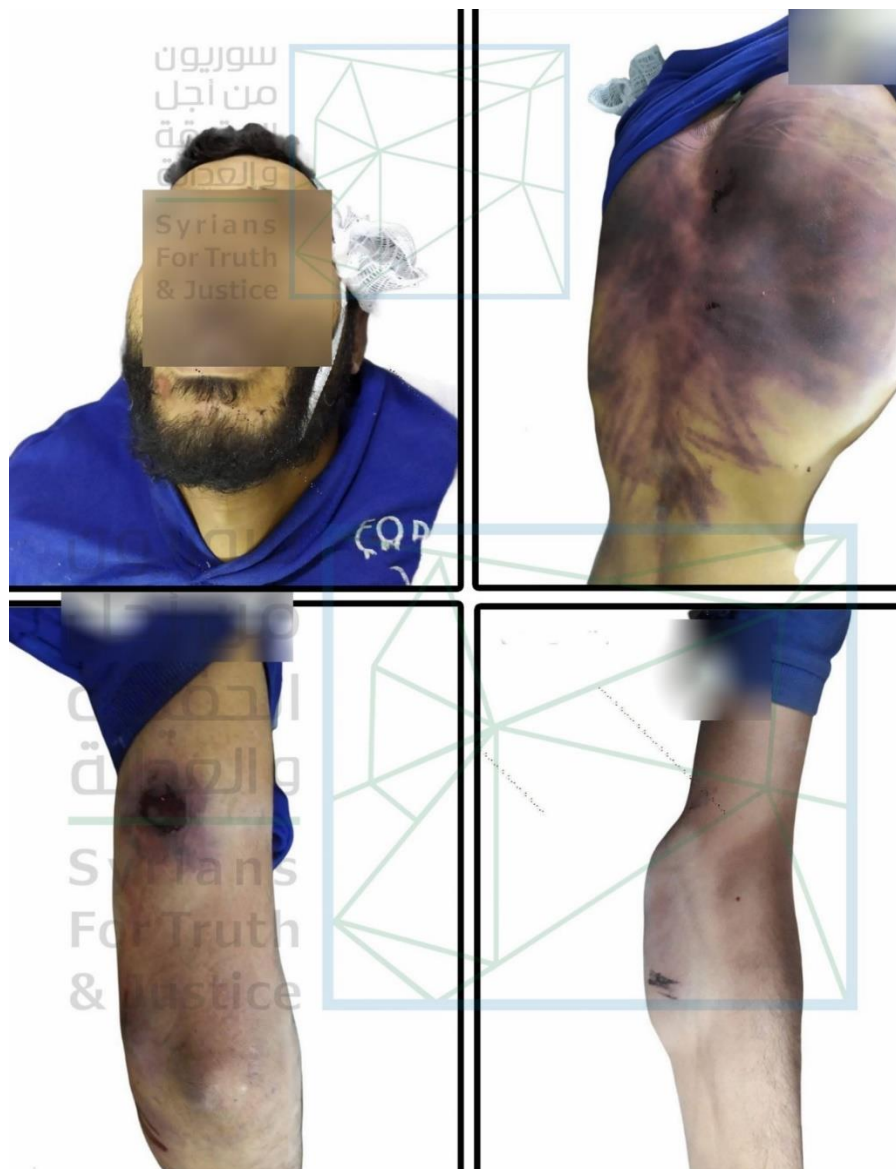
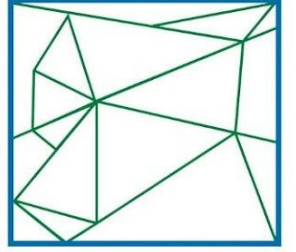


Image (5)- Photos of Mohammad al-Jasem's body with visible signs of torture. Credit: STJ.

It is worth noting that the 20<sup>th</sup> Division, under which the Suqour al-Sunna group operates, has been accused of widespread and ongoing human rights violations following Operation Peace Spring, launched by Turkey into northeastern Syria on 9 October 2019.

In July 2020, a [joint report](#) by the Kurdish Committee for Human Rights-observer and STJ highlighted the Turkish government's illegal transfers of Syrian nationals to Turkish territories. Investigations indicated that the 20<sup>th</sup> Division was involved, arresting and kidnapping Syrians who they later released into Turkish custody. In February 2021 a [report](#) by Human Rights Watch (HRW) said that tens of Syrians who were illegally transferred by Turkey and the SNA to Turkish territories would face trials that could lead to life in prison. The report also emphasized 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 into their territory.



## About Us:

Syrians for Truth and Justice (STJ) is a nonprofit, nongovernmental organization monitoring human rights violations in Syria. Founded in 2015, STJ has been based in France since 2019.

STJ is an impartial and independent Syrian human rights organization operating across Syria. Our network of field researchers monitor and report human rights violations occurring on the ground in Syria, while our international team of human rights experts, lawyers, and journalists gather evidence, examine emerging patterns of violations, and analyze how violations break domestic Syrian and international law.

We are committed to documenting violations of human rights committed by all parties in the Syrian conflict and elevating the voices of all Syrians victimized by human rights violations, regardless of their ethnicity, religion, political affiliation, class, and/or gender. Our commitment to human rights monitoring is founded on the idea that professional human rights documentation meeting international standards is the first step to uncovering the truth and achieving justice in Syria.



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