

United Nations Human Rights Council's Universal Periodic Review of Syria 2022 Joint Report



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*Seven human rights organization submit evidence of numerous
human rights violations committed by the Syrian government*

Executive Summary

This report addresses ongoing human rights violations in the Syrian Arab Republic since the previous Universal Periodic Review in 2016. The report focuses on issues related to citizenship, property and inheritance rights, arbitrary detentions and forced disappearances, and cultural rights.

Syria has been faced with an intense civil conflict that is now in its tenth year. According to the Syrian government, nearly 90% of voters and 7.5 million Syrians approved the Constitution in 2012 (although many people boycotted the referendum), but the civil war has continued to devastate Syrian society and claim lives. Many positive outcomes that could theoretically arise from the new constitution have not materialized.ⁱ Despite the existence of the Constitution and a number of national laws seeking to legislate in these areas, many Syrian people still face violations of their basic rights due to state practice throughout the past decades and the situation has only been exacerbated by the more recent ongoing armed conflicts in the country. *This report illustrates how the Syrian government's response to the 2016 UPR has not manifested in improved lives for Syrians but rather, has continued to cause injustices in Syrian society.*

Since the previous UPR, the civilian death toll has increased by almost 200,000.ⁱⁱ By the end of 2020, over 80% of the country's population was below the poverty line and over 11.1 million people still required humanitarian aid.ⁱⁱⁱ Syrian security forces also continue to arbitrarily detain innocent individuals, with at least 100,000 Syrians remaining forcibly disappeared.^{iv} Other widespread discrimination has also been faced by minority ethnic groups in Syria, extending to the deprivation of rights to citizenship, property ownership and even use of language.

The report concludes with a set of suggested recommendations to improve Syria's respect for human rights.

Background and Framework

2016 Universal Periodic Review of the Syrian Arab Republic

The Syrian government accepted several relevant recommendations in the previous UPR but has failed to implement them.

1. *Enforced disappearances and arbitrary arrests / detentions*

Status of Implementation: Accepted in Part, Not Implemented

The Syrian government accepted or accepted in part a number of recommendations to release unfairly detained prisoners (such as prisoners of conscience or those participating in peaceful protests), and to respect international conventions by preventing the use of torture and ensuring humane conditions for prisoners.^v The government noted several recommendations on similar topics.^{vi} Syria has not implemented these recommendations.

2. *Rights related to name, identity, nationality, cultural rights and members of minorities*

Status of Implementation: Accepted, Not Implemented

The Syrian government also accepted a recommendation to preserve peaceful coexistence of different religious faiths and cultural identities.^{vii} Syria has not implemented this recommendation.

3. *Citizenship and the rights of vulnerable groups*

Status of Implementation: Accepted, Not Implemented

The Syrian government also accepted a number of recommendations to amend its laws so as to allow women to pass citizenship to their children and to remove other discriminatory legal provisions against women, as well as recommendations supporting the rights of other vulnerable social groups, such as children and persons with disabilities.^{viii} Syria has not implemented these recommendations.

Domestic Legal Framework

The Constitution includes fundamental principles of national unity, cultural diversity, human rights, and the rule of law. The Supreme Constitutional Court as well as other National Committees, are tasked with upholding human rights and documenting violations of such rights.^{ix} Other provisions of national law purport to protect fundamental rights such as the right to political affiliation, the right to protest, and the right to a free and independent press.^x

Article 3(a) of the Syrian Nationality Law (*Law No. 276 of 1969*), does not allow women to pass on their nationality to their children, but provides that "anyone born inside or outside the country to a Syrian father" shall be considered Syrian (emphasis added). Pursuant to Article 3(b) of the same law, women can only pass on their citizenship to their children where the father is unknown or stateless and the child is born inside Syria.^{xi}

The Constitution prohibits arbitrary arrest and detention, but Legislative Decree 55 enacted on 21 April 2011 allows authorities to detain suspects for up to 60 days without charge if suspected of "terrorism" and related offenses.

Article 15 of the Constitution protects collective and individual ownership of property by the Syrian people. It prohibits general confiscation of funds, removal of private ownership except in the public interest by a decree and with fair compensation (real value of the property) according to the law, and confiscation of private property unless imposed by a final court ruling. Although it permits the confiscation of private property in the necessities of war, fair compensation is required.^{xii}

Implementation of International Human Rights Obligations

The Syrian legal regime produces systematic violations of many of the basic human rights of people in Syria. These violations range from the right to pass citizenship to a child and be granted the right to a fair and impartial trial, to the right to maintain one's cultural identity by means of language and culture. Human rights violations also include the violation of the right to personal security by means of arbitrary arrests, detentions and enforced disappearances. Individuals also frequently face arbitrary and unjustified seizures of personal property.

Right or area 13.2. Enforced disappearances

1. Syria is not a party to the International Convention for the Protection of All Persons from Enforced Disappearance and, despite being a party to the Convention Against Torture, has declared that it does not recognize the Committee that monitors implementation of such Convention. In practice, enforced disappearances in Syria continue to be widespread, illustrating that Syrian authorities are not upholding their obligations under international law.
2. On 30 August 2017, to mark the International Day of the Victims of Enforced Disappearances, a coalition of 26 NGOs, including Syrians for Truth and Justice (STJ), signed a letter urging the international community to support their demand to ensure justice, truth, and reparations and the immediate release of all those enforcedly held in secret detention. The letter highlighted that many families remain unaware of the fate of victims for prolonged periods, citing the case of Bassel Khartabil, a Syrian-Palestinian software engineer and free speech activist, who was subjected to extrajudicial execution by a military field court in October 2015 and whose fate had become known only in August 2017.^{xiii}
3. According to one report, in 2020 "There were numerous reports of forced disappearances by or on behalf of regime authorities, and the vast majority of those disappeared since the start of the conflict remained missing."^{xiv} The UN Working Group on Enforced or Involuntary Disappearances reported in August 2020 that it had requested information from the regime on 113 individuals whom the regime had reportedly subjected to enforced disappearance between May 2019 and May 2020, but it had received no response.
4. A December 2020 report by the Association of Detainees and the Missing in Sednaya Prison recognizes that "forced disappearance is a major strategy of the Syrian state to control and intimidate society."^{xv} The report also looked at the level of financial extortion arising as a result of widespread forced disappearances, concluding that more than 40% of respondents surveyed paid between 500 and 1500 US Dollars just to obtain information about the forcibly disappeared person.^{xvi} Officials in one jail reportedly extorted a total of 2.7 million USD in bribes through systematic corruption.^{xvii}

Right or area 13.3. Arbitrary arrest and detention

1. There are reports of arbitrary arrests, lengthy pretrial detention without charge (sometimes running into months or years), and the denial of the right of detained persons to challenge the lawfulness of their detention before a court.
2. As described above, authorities may detain terrorism suspects for up to 60 days without charge. Even though the law provides for the right of any person to challenge the lawfulness of his or her arrest or detention in court, reports confirm that Syrian authorities do not observe this requirement in practice. Arbitrary arrests continued during 2020, according to the Commission of Inquiry, local news sources, and various human rights organizations.^{xviii}

3. Moreover, there is credible information showing that authorities often do not follow prescribed arrest procedures. “The law generally requires a warrant for arrest in criminal cases, [but] police often cited emergency or national security justifications for acting without a warrant, which was permitted under the law.” One report observed that “the ICTJ reported the accused were generally tried without a lawyer and denied the right to present a defense. Judges usually followed the intelligence director’s sentence recommendations, even though it was widely known many confessions were made under torture.”^{xxix} That report added that “[i]n June, Amnesty International reported regime security forces arrested 11 men for participating in peaceful protests in Sweida. The regime threatened to send eight of them to the ‘antiterrorism’ court in Damascus if protests in Sweida continued. The regime reportedly carried out a campaign of raids and arrests in Douma, arresting 12 civilians in June and taking them to an undisclosed location.”^{xxx}
4. STJ reported on the arrest of over one hundred detainees from Daraa who had been arrested despite having signed a settlement agreement with the Government in 2018. The detainees were charged with, among other alleged offenses, working for education and relief organizations. Eyewitnesses told STJ that many more detainees had been released without trial but had nonetheless spent many months in pretrial detention.^{xxxi}
5. STJ noted that arbitrary detention has led to hunger strikes. In 2018, detainees at Hama Central Prison went on a hunger strike to protest verdicts made against them in military courts.^{xxxii}

Right or area 15.1. Administration of justice & fair trial

1. The Constitution provides for an independent judiciary, but courts regularly face political influence, and prosecutors and defense attorneys are often face intimidation and obstruction. The outcomes of political cases are often predetermined, and in other cases defendants can bribe judicial officials and prosecutors.^{xxxiii}
2. In 2021, two separate Decrees (No. 13 and 14 of 2021) were issued to dismiss Judge Muhammad bin Ali Youssef, of the First Court of Appeal in Jableh city, affiliated with the Latakia Judicial Department, and Judge Rakan Muhammad Wahibeh, of the Seventh Court of Minor Offenses Appeal, affiliated with the Aleppo Judicial Department. In both cases, the decrees did not disclose the type of violations or misconduct the judges allegedly committed.^{xxxiv}
3. In the majority of cases involving individuals arrested by Syrian intelligence branches, defendants were reportedly held incommunicado throughout their detention and denied access to counsel.^{xxxv}
4. Practices in Syrian military courts also present grave concerns. Military courts have jurisdiction over civilians in cases regarding alleged “state security offences,” usually involving activists or demonstrators. Military prosecutors allegedly have more power than the judges, who “could not stop [a] trial, even if they are convinced that the accused is innocent.” Although defendants are represented by defense lawyers in such courts, the lawyers are nothing more than “decorations.” Prosecutors are not required to present any evidence, and courts routinely rely on secret military intelligence reports as evidence.^{xxxvi} Moreover, military courts often do not respect the presumption of innocence, despite the Constitution’s recognition of that right.^{xxxvii}

Right or area 17. Rights related to name, identity, nationality

1. As previously discussed, the Syrian Nationality Law prohibits most women from passing on their nationality to their children. Even though Article 3(b) affords exceptions when the father is unknown or stateless and the child is born inside Syria, in practice, social norms and the stigma attached to having a child in such circumstances often means women are still unable to confer Syrian nationality to their children even in the most extreme of cases.^{xxviii}
2. Many groups have repeatedly sought to amend this law, most recently in 2015, but with no success.^{xxix}
3. In practice, the lack of common citizenship between mother and child has meant some Syrian women seeking asylum have been forced to do so without their children. For example, if the father is missing, refugee women cannot resettle their children, because they need either proof that the father is dead or the father's approval to let the children be resettled.^{xxx}
4. Many children are left stateless as a result of the Syrian Nationality Law, and they face serious impediments in accessing fundamental rights.^{xxxi} Given the substantially high numbers of Syrian children born in exile (approximately one million by mid-2019, including an estimated 415,000 in Turkey, 188,000 in Lebanon, and 125,000 in Jordan), the potential for statelessness is widespread.^{xxxii}
5. Evidence suggests limited access to birth registration. Although a child automatically acquires a nationality at birth and the lack of birth registration technically has no effect on nationality,^{xxxiii} birth registration is often required before the Syrian government will recognize a person's nationality.
6. Obtaining birth registration is often challenging in situations of forced displacement. Nearly 9 million Syrians are either internally displaced or are refugees, and numbers continue to rise. The displaced Syrian population, particularly newborns, are at great risk of statelessness.^{xxxiv} Births are not registered either because parents are unable to act or because the state imposes stringent administrative practices. Syrian refugees are also "de-nationalized."
7. Obstacles to obtaining a death certificate pose additional hardships. Failure to obtain a death certificate within one month of a death can lead to fines of 3,000 to 10,000 Syrian Pounds—a significant sum for a refugee. It is practically impossible for refugees and internally displaced persons (IDPs) to obtain the necessary paperwork with the remits of the law.^{xxxv}
8. Before 2011, al-Assad's government operated civil registry offices all over the country, collecting millions of files in paper dossiers across decentralized regional archives. A UN-backed project to digitize Syria's records began before the war remains incomplete, and fighting has led to the closure or destruction of many state registry offices and archives in areas that are or were outside government control. Although the civil registry system still operates in government-held areas, Syrians' ability to access it is limited. Some Syrians also deliberately avoid contact with the state's bureaucracy, fearing it could lead to arrest or forced conscription.^{xxxvi}
9. Refugees attempting to return to Syria without sufficient paperwork suffer greatly as a result. Without proper "papers," returning refugees and other displaced Syrians cannot be legally employed, pass through checkpoints, enroll their children in school, reclaim their old homes, or rent new properties.^{xxxvii}

Right or area 22.4. Right to social security

1. As described above, the Constitution purports to protect the right to own property. In practice, however, arbitrary confiscation of property is common. In 2012, amendments under Decree No. 63 gave the Ministry of Finance the power to impose cautionary seizure of properties owned by perpetrators of crimes relating to national security, a power that traditionally belonged to the judiciary.^{xxxviii} Between 2016 and 2017, the Ministry used this authority to issue more than 27,000 orders of cautionary seizures, with the seized properties amounting to about 13 billion Syrian Pounds.^{xxxix}
2. STJ documented cases of such seizures in 2018 in different regions including Daraa province, the Wadi Barada valley region, and Douma city. The targets were mostly political dissidents and opposition militants, doctors, care providers, and media activists with ties to civil society organizations. The Ministry justified these seizures by labeling the property-owners as terrorists, but such justifications appeared to be pretextual. Properties seized included real estate, cars, and money. In most cases, authorities did not even notify property owners of the seizures.^{xl}
3. Additionally, a series of internal government circulars between 2015 and 2018 subjected all real estate transactions to security clearance by the Political Security Department (PSD), giving it complete discretion. The rationale was to prevent fraud and funding of terrorism, but in practice, the PSD mainly denied clearance for transactions involving dissidents. The PSD lacks due process provisions, providing neither criteria nor reasoning for its decisions. In some cases, lack of clearance has enabled government security forces to arbitrarily confiscate property. The property is then given to security force officers, families loyal to the government, and the like.^{xli} STJ has documented at least 25 such cases in Hama city alone.^{xlii}
4. A recent amendment to Syria's Military Conscription Law further allows the government to seize property of "military evaders" and their relatives who fail to pay egregious fines (currently 8000 USD). This rule violates the Constitution by eliminating the requirement of court approval for such seizures.^{xliii}
5. STJ also observed that in East Ghouta, residents who purchased real property during the opposition's 2012-2018 control faced difficulties establishing title after the government regained control. The relevant institutions refused to acknowledge ownership documents issued during the opposition's control. Especially for people who have escaped to the country's north, disposing of property purchased during that six-year period requires the security clearance above. Fearing that security clearance could result in persecution or confiscation of property, many were left with no other choice but to bribe local officials.^{xliv}
6. Inheritance rights are also threatened. Violations of such rights usually derive from unregistered early marriages and the government's failure to issue death statements.
7. According to a UN Population Fund report, registered marriages involving girls under the age of 18 rose from 12% in 2011 to 32% in 2014 and has remained relatively constant since.^{xlv} Including unregistered early marriages, the number could exceed 46% nationally and even 60% in certain regions like northern rural Aleppo.^{xlvi} Unregistered early marriages deprive women of their inheritance rights, and in turn risk their children's rights to a birth certificate and to inheritance.^{xlvii}
8. Death statements are legal confirmations of a person's death (different from death certificates, which are factual confirmations). According to the Syrian Law of Personal Status of 1953, the relatives of a deceased person cannot initiate the "determinate of heirship" procedure without obtaining a death statement. STJ documented Syrian government institutions arbitrarily withholding death statements of persons who were killed by the regime, died in its prisons, or perished in opposition-held areas.^{xlviii} As a result, relatives of the deceased persons were denied access to the deceased persons'

money, real estate, vehicles, and pension. Widows without a death statement are also unable to remarry, often leaving them in precarious situations.^{xlix}

Right or area 27. Cultural rights

1. In December 2020, STJ reported on the need to eliminate racial discrimination within the Constitution. STJ noted that the Constitution discriminates against non-Arab Syrians,ⁱ given the references to an “*Arab nation*” in Article 1 and recognition of the official state language as Arabic only in Article 4. Even the formal name of the country as the “Syrian Arab Republic” denotes a specific ethnicity at the core of the state. In February 2021, STJ again reported on the Syrian state’s responsibility to support and promote the conditions necessary to maintain minorities’ languages, culture, and identity.ⁱⁱ
2. UNESCO has noted that language plays a vital role in human lives.ⁱⁱⁱ However, Syrian state practice has put the existence of minority languages, especially the Kurdish language, in grave danger. Authorities have historically tried to prevent Kurds from speaking the Kurdish language. Government forces have arrested Kurdish people on occasion for teaching the Kurdish language privately, and authorities have sentenced people to prison for offenses such as “perturbing the nation’s concord” and “attempting to annex a Syrian territory to a foreign country.”ⁱⁱⁱⁱ If the language becomes extinct, the cultural diversity in communities speaking them will decrease as a result of the loss of traditions, memories, and unique patterns of thinking and expression associated with the language.^{iv}
3. Kurdish people have also been prevented from celebrating Kurdish holidays such as Nowruz, and they have been forced to change Kurdish shop names to Arabic ones. Specific laws have also been enacted to discriminate against Kurds, such as the Minister of Interior’s order No. 122 issued in 1992, which banned giving Kurdish children Kurdish names, and which linked the child’s birth registration to security services.^{lv} In its December 2020 report, STJ notes that overall, “[such] discriminatory policies made non-Arab minorities overwhelmed with the feeling of not belonging to Syria, prompting many of them to emigrate, including highly skilled workers and professionals. What is more, this racist ideology generated great cracks in the Syrian society and we, Syrians, are still suffering its devastating effects to this very day.”^{lvi}

Right or area 32. Members of minorities

1. Approximately 46,000 Syrian Kurds are denied citizenship and deprived of associated rights.^{lvii}
2. In 1962, the Syrian government launched an exclusive census in al-Hasakah province, northeastern Syria, where ethnic minorities, especially Kurds, predominantly resided. The census was carried out in a single day with confusing instructions. Residents needed to provide sufficient document showing residence in the region since at least 1945 to establish citizenship. Those without “sufficient evidence” were labeled *ajanib*, while those who failed to show up were labeled *maktumeen*. By 2011 the total number of stateless Syria Kurds was estimated to be more than 517,000.^{lviii}
3. In 2011, the government issued Decree No. 49, permitting *ajanib* to obtain citizenship, but still leaving out *maktumeen*. As of 2018, approximately 20,000 *ajanib* and 41,000 *maktumeen* were still without citizenship.^{lix}
4. Deprivation of citizenship has meant that the stateless *ajanib* and *maktumeen* face abysmal living situations. STJ reported that these people are denied the right to study at universities. Even if they manage to take courses, they cannot obtain certificates of completion, without which they cannot find formal employment. Further, they

cannot register their marriage, property, or even children, under their own names. Their children face the risk of being stateless. They cannot obtain a passport to travel abroad. They cannot go through formal procedures to carry out trade with foreign entities. They can even be denied treatment at general hospitals.^{lx} One *maktum* lamented: "I am not even considered to exist in this country."^{lxi}

5. Attempts to obtain citizenship are costly and often futile. All STJ interviewees reported that they had spent large sums of money trying to obtain citizenship.^{lxii} Local authorities rejected many applicants, offering reasons such as, "there is an issue with your documents." One interviewee came to realize that the authorities simply did not want to resolve their legal status.^{lxiii} Another reported that the only way to obtain citizenship is through bribery.^{lxiv}
6. This systematic discrimination has been long-standing, particularly since the Syrian government's 1974 "Arab Belt" project.^{lxv} The project involved the arbitrary seizure of lands historically inhabited by Kurds and the relocation of 4,000 families from Arab tribes in Raqqa and Aleppo to settle in model villages within such lands. The aim of the project was clear; as STJ reported in 2020, the focus was "the promotion of Arab nationalism at the expense of Kurdish identity in Syria,"^{lxvi} with a goal to effectively empty the region of the indigenous Kurdish population and populate it with Arab families. Other commentators have noted that the project "is only a part of a larger project aimed at changing the demography of the Kurdish region in Al-Hasakah Governate. At one of its regional conferences, the Ba'ath Party defined the project as forcible dispossession of the Kurds' lands along the borderline with Turkey, 375 km long and 10-15 km wide, starting from the borders of Al-Hasakah with Raqqa in the west to down to the Tigris River in the east. The conference also decided that the Kurds were to be evacuated from this region without compensation."^{lxvii}

Recommendations

This stakeholder report suggests the following recommendations for the Government of Syria:

1. Regarding Enforced Disappearances, Arbitrary Arrest and Detention, and Absence of Fair Trials:

- a) Terminate the practice of engaging in enforced disappearances, arbitrary arrest and detention, and all forms of torture.
- b) Maintain transparency and respond to the enquiries of international bodies and individual families alike on specific cases of enforced disappearance.
- c) Publish a list of all detainees in places under its control, together with information on the grounds for each person's detention.
- d) Terminate the practice of arbitrarily arresting and detaining peaceful protesters.
- e) Uphold an individual's right of defense, including the right to legal counsel and representation, from the moment of arrest through and including trial.
- f) Ensure that any person subject to arrest has transparent and accurate information regarding the legal basis for the arrest.
- g) Offer redress to individuals subject to enforced disappearances and arbitrary arrests and detention, and provide relevant remedies to their families as well.
- h) Stop conducting "security checks" when selecting military court judges, in order to reduce the security services' influence in such courts.
- i) Guarantee proper public hearings, the right to a defense attorney, and the maintenance of the presumption of innocence in military courts and all other courts, in accordance with the Syrian Constitution.
- j) Open prisons and detention centers to the UN as well as other concerned international human rights and humanitarian organizations to properly identify detainees, identify and prevent torture and extrajudicial executions, and end enforced disappearances.
- k) Ratify the Optional Protocol to the Convention against Torture.
- l) Ratify the International Convention for the Protection of All Persons from Enforced Disappearance.

2. Regarding Rights Related to Name, Identity and Nationality:

- a) Establish special registries in areas out of regime control and archive all civil transactions and documents.
- b) Remove the imposition of penalty payments for non-compliance with formal registration rules.
- c) Issue a law to facilitate the process of citizenship registration and grant more time for refugees and other displaced individuals to complete such registration if they wish to return to Syria.
- d) Officially instruct Syrian embassies abroad to provide citizenship registration services to all citizens without discrimination.

3. *Regarding Property and Inheritance Rights:*

- a) Revoke the decree allowing the imposition of cautionary seizures of properties under the Syrian Military Conscription Law.
- b) Remove the requirement of security clearances in real property transactions, or at least, establish clear criteria for securing such clearances to the public, provide reasoning whenever applications are denied, and allow judicial appeals of such decisions.
- c) Terminate the arbitrary seizure of property on the basis of alleged political dissent.
- d) Recognize transfer of property in occupied territory only if the person alleged to have acquired title to such property can produce documentary evidence to validly prove the legitimacy of such title transfer.
- e) Prohibit any person under the age of 18 from marrying.
- f) Stop withholding the issuance of death certificates and death statements and ensure that the family of all Syrians who died in prisons or in hostilities are able to obtain death statements that do not obscure the person's true cause of death or any human rights violations they may have suffered in relation to their death.
- g) Repeal Law No. 41 of 2004 and its amendments (Decrees No. 43 and No. 49) and address their negative effects as much as possible.
- h) Form a neutral, independent, and impartial Syrian national committee to study how to end the so called the "Arab Belt" project and other similar discriminatory projects which resulted in the seizure of people's property, and also to study the ownership documents submitted by claimants, and to decide their cases fairly and expeditiously, provided that the committee's decisions are subject to appeal before the competent courts in accordance with Syrian law, and ensure that all results are published in full transparency in public and in official newspapers.

4. *Regarding Cultural Rights and Members of Minorities:*

- a) Educate children about the diversity of cultures in Syria as part of the school curriculum.
- b) Officially recognize the diversity of languages in Syria within the Constitution, noting these as official state languages and not limiting such recognition to the Arabic language alone.
- c) Recognize the equality of all Syrians, regardless of ethnicity, in compliance with the International Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Racial Discrimination.
- d) Conduct a review of national laws and repeal any provisions that directly or indirectly discriminate against Kurds and other ethnic minorities. Remove the reservations included in Syria's ratification of the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women.

5. *Regarding Citizenship:*

- a) Amend Article 3(a) of the Syrian Nationality Law and allow mothers to pass on their citizenship to their children.
- b) Accede to the 1961 Convention on the Reduction of Statelessness.
- c) Take immediate and effective action to fully implement the 2011 No. 49 decree and restore citizenship to all *ajanib* and amend the decree to include all *maktumeen* and their descendants who are still without citizenship.
- d) Implement effective supervisory measures to ensure that local authorities do not arbitrarily deny or prolong citizenship application processes.

ⁱ Neil MacFarquhar and Alan Cowell, *Syrians said to approve charter as battles go on* (27 February 2012). Also available online at: <https://www.nytimes.com/2012/02/28/world/middleeast/syrian-violence-continues-as-west-dismisses-new-charter.html>

ⁱⁱ Alia Chughtai, *Syria's war: Ten years – and counting*, Al Jazeera (15 March 2021). Also available online at <https://www.aljazeera.com/news/2021/3/15/syria-ten-years-of-war>

ⁱⁱⁱ Human Rights Watch, *Syria: Events of 2020*. Also available online at <https://www.hrw.org/world-report/2021/country-chapters/syria>

^{iv} Human Rights Watch, *Syria: Events of 2020*. Also available online at <https://www.hrw.org/world-report/2021/country-chapters/syria>

^v *Report of the Working Group on the Universal Periodic Review: Syrian Arab Republic*, (December 27, 2016), U.N. Doc. A/HRC/34/5. ¶ 109.166 Make every effort to impede the use of torture, to assure humane conditions for prisoners in conformity with international standards and to abide by international humanitarian law (Holy See); ¶ 109.167 Immediately release human rights defenders and other prisoners of conscience, particularly those detained and imprisoned for participating in peaceful demonstrations since March 2011 (Canada); ¶ 109.173 Release all those found to be unduly or arbitrarily detained (Brazil); (accepted with reservations)]

^{vi} *Report of the Working Group on the Universal Periodic Review: Syrian Arab Republic*, (December 27, 2016), U.N. Doc. A/HRC/34/5. ¶ 110.21 Release all those who are arbitrarily detained and put an end to torture and other cruel, inhuman or degrading treatment of detainees, including those belonging to the moderate opposition that started the non-violent protest against the Government (Netherlands); ¶ 109.161 Cease the unacceptable practices of unlawful detention and torture, allow in independent observers and immediately release all prisoners of conscience (Australia)]

^{vii} *Report of the Working Group on the Universal Periodic Review: Syrian Arab Republic*, (December 27, 2016), U.N. Doc. A/HRC/34/5. ¶ 109.34 Preserve its model of peaceful coexistence of different religious faiths and cultural identities, which was working so well in the Syrian Arab Republic until a few years ago; Continue raising awareness about the dangers of excluding ideologies (Nicaragua)

^{viii} *Report of the Working Group on the Universal Periodic Review: Syrian Arab Republic*, (December 27, 2016), U.N. Doc. A/HRC/34/5. ¶ 109.90 Amend the citizenship law of 1969, which prevents women from granting citizenship to their children, to ensure women's right to grant citizenship to their children (Namibia); ¶ 109.91 Conduct a review of the personal status law and other relevant laws, which will remove the provisions that are discriminatory towards women, such as those not granting them guardianship of their children, disabling them from travelling on their own with their children or not allowing them to transfer their citizenship to their children (Czechia); ¶ 109.84 Strengthen the deployment of specific measures to foster the rights of vulnerable social groups, including children, adolescents, women, refugees and internally displaced people, as well as persons with disabilities (Ecuador)

^{ix} See for example Law No. 7 of 2014 which re-established the Supreme Constitutional Court, the National Committee for International Humanitarian Law established by Decision No. 2989 of the President of the Council of Ministers of 2 January 2004, and the Syrian Commission for Family Affairs and Population established by Law No. 42 of 20 December 2003, which was amended by Law No. 6 of 2014

^x See Law No. 100 of 3 August 2011 on Political Parties, Law No. 54 of 2011 on the Organization of Demonstrations and Law No. 108 of 2011 on Information Media

^{xi} Women's International League for Peace & Freedom, *The human rights of women in Syria: Between discriminatory law, patriarchal culture, and the exclusionary politics of the regime* (2020), page 8 / footnote 10. Also available online at <https://www.wilpf.org/wp-content/uploads/2021/02/The-human-rights-of-women-in-Syria-single-pages.pdf>

^{xii} *Syrian Arab Republic's Constitution of 2012*, constituteproject. Org (May 12, 2021), 6. Also available online at https://www.constituteproject.org/constitution/Syria_2012.pdf.

^{xiii} Syrians for Truth and Justice, *Joint Statement: Syria – Justice for the thousands of victims of enforced disappearances*, (Aug. 30, 2017). Also available online at: <https://stj-sy.org/en/239/>

- ^{xiv} United States Department of State, *Country Reports on Human Rights Practices for 2020: Syria*, Bureau of Democracy, Human Rights and Labor (2020). Also available online at: [SYRIA 2020 HUMAN RIGHTS REPORT \(state.gov\)](https://www.state.gov/reports/2020-country-reports-on-human-rights-practices/syria/)
- ^{xv} Association of Detainees and the Missing in Sednaya Prison, *Forcibly Disappeared in Syrian Detention Centers: Research about the Details of the Process of Forced Disappearance and the Fate of the Victims*, (2020) page 10. Also available online at: <https://www.admsp.org/wp-content/uploads/2021/07/Forcibly-Disappeared-in-Syrian-EN.pdf>.
- ^{xvi} Association of Detainees and the Missing in Sednaya Prison, *Forcibly Disappeared in Syrian Detention Centers: Research about the Details of the Process of Forced Disappearance and the Fate of the Victims*, (2020) page 41. Also available online at: <https://www.admsp.org/wp-content/uploads/2021/07/Forcibly-Disappeared-in-Syrian-EN.pdf>.
- ^{xvii} The Guardian, *Syrian detainees' families forced to pay huge bribes to corrupt officials – report* (2021). Also available online at: <https://www.theguardian.com/world/2021/jan/04/how-syria-uses-prison-to-extort-money-report-arrest-funding-assad-regime>
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