



Syrian Organizations Reiterate Support for a Missing Persons Mechanism



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The undersigned organizations renew their demand for an international, independent and central mechanism in order to coordinate and support the release of detainees and the search for the missing

The undersigned organizations, representing a diverse collection of Syrian civil society, want to reiterate our unified support for an independent, international, inclusive missing persons mechanism, in line with prior requests made by families of the missing. The crisis of missing persons touches on all our efforts, as it touches the lives of all Syrians. The events of the past month have only strengthened our resolve and emphasized the urgency of this matter, as the fates tens of thousands of detained persons hang in the balance.

On April 28, researchers published evidence of a massacre in the Damascus suburb of Tadamon, leading thousands of families to search the graphic footage, praying that they will not see their loved ones on screen. Some families were able to identify their loved ones in the video only to learn after nine years of waiting that they were killed in 2013. For many Syrian families such events have played out repeatedly over the past decade, as the search for the missing has fallen on their shoulders. This burden should not fall on families who are suffering with this immense loss. Not only is the search upsetting, causing secondary trauma, time consuming, and complex, but it also makes families a target for extortion by those claiming to have information on their loved ones.

Two days after Tadamon report, on April 30, many families received a glimpse of hope when the Syrian government issued an amnesty decree for those accused of acts of terrorism. In the weeks since, approximately 500 detainees have been released, some of whom had been disappeared in government prisons for more than a decade. While these releases were welcomed, the way in which they were conducted led to even more confusion and pain for many families. The government failed to release any information about those receiving amnesty or inform families ahead of time, instead unceremoniously dropping detainees in the middle of Damascus, with no money and no knowledge of how to contact their families. Those released were left to rely on the kindness of strangers while families, desperate to receive any news, gathered in thousands in the streets awaiting more releases and clutching photos of their loved ones. Meanwhile families living outside government-controlled territories and attempting to follow the news online have been faced with rampant disinformation. We have seen this first hand, as our organizations have received hundreds of requests in the past two weeks from families desperate for news and support.

In short, families were once again left to fend for themselves. The need for support in coordinating humane releases, communicating accurate and timely information, and ascertaining the fates of those still unaccounted for is clear. The responsibility of searching for the missing

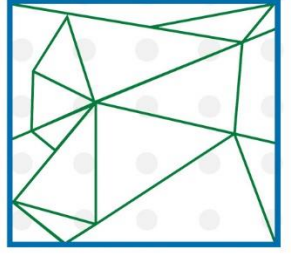
mandate one, centralized and inclusive mechanism to coordinate these efforts. The current status quo regarding the detainees and missing persons is not acceptable, and it further complicating the situation and causes further suffering to the families.

In light of these recent events, the undersigned organizations renew our demand for an international, independent and central mechanism in order to coordinate and support the release of detainees and the search for the missing and renew our commitment to support

such a mechanism's efforts as we all work to secure the release of those forcibly disappeared and bring peace to their families.

Signatories organized alphabetically:

1. Adra Detainees Association
2. Association of Detainees and the Missing in Sednaya Prison
3. Caesar Families Association
4. Families for Freedom
5. Hevdestî – Synergy
6. No Photo Zone
7. Release Me
8. Syria Justice and Accountability Centre (SJAC)
9. Syrian Center for Media and Freedom of Expression (SCM)
10. Syrian Legal Development Programmer
11. Syrian Network for Human Rights
12. Syrians for Truth and Justice – STJ
13. Ta'afi Initiative
14. The Coalition of Families of Persons Kidnapped by ISIS- MASSAR
15. The Day After
16. The Syria Campaign
17. Women Now for Development



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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