



Syria/ Afrin: Syrian Figures Demand Accountability For Murderers of 4 Kurds on Newroz Eve



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*Signatories call on the UN to issue a report on the human rights
situation in the areas under Turkish control*

Ninety-two Syrian, Arab, and foreign figures released this statement to revive the case of the Newroz Eve murder in Jindires after 40 days of its occurrence. This statement calls on the United Nations (UN) to issue a report on the human rights situation in the areas under Turkish control, including Afrin, Ras al-Ayn/Serê Kaniyê, Tell Abyad, A'zaz, and al-Bab, with an emphasis on the violations, particularly those targeting women, races, religious and ethnic groups.

A statement in the fortieth of the Newroz torch martyrs in Jindires

Calls for accountability and promises to achieve it diminished, as if nothing had happened

On 20 March 2023, members of the Eastern Army/Jaysh al-Sharqiya and Harakat al-Tahrir wa-l-Binaa/Liberation and Construction Movement (LCM) of the Turkish-backed Syrian National Army (SNA) opened fire on four Kurds of one family in the northern Syrian town of Jindires of Afrin district on 20 March 2023, as they lit a torch during celebrating Newroz eve.

The men killed were identified as;

- Nazmi Othman, 38;
- Farah al-Din Othman, 43;
- Mohammed Othman, 42;
- Mohammed Farah al-Din Othman, 18.

This heinous crime is yet another in the long list of systematic abuses perpetrated by SNA factions against the original civilians of Afrin during the five years of the Turkish occupation. The abuses included murder, arbitrary arrest, torture, sexual assault, kidnapping for ransom, forced marriages, harassment of the Kurdish and Yazidi populations, especially women, widespread appropriation of property and crops, denying return to IDPs, settlement expansion, and demographic changes. Throughout the last five years, these abuses have been documented periodically by several independent local and international human rights entities including the United Nations (UN), Amnesty International, and the Independent International Commission of Inquiry on Syria. The occupation and the involved abuses led to an unprecedented decrease in the Kurdish population in Afrin. Notably, the Newroz crime came at a time when Jindires was mired in ruin and destruction by the 6 February devastating Syria-Türkiye earthquake, as it was the worst affected. That said, the Turkish Army and allied SNA factions politicalized the humanitarian response to the quake in Jindires by discriminating against its original population; they went so far as to deny the Kurds and civilians who do not have links with military groups access to humanitarian assistance.

It has been forty days since the Newroz crime, during which people took out to the street in big protests, which are the first since 2018 in Jindires and Afrin. The protests denounced the

murder and demanded that the perpetrators of this heinous crime be held accountable and the SNA faction be expelled from their areas. Several parties offered protesters promises of meeting their demands but without taking further practical steps at the date of this statement. The perpetrators are still at large and the SNA factions are still in their ruling positions with their fullest powers. Things calmed down and silence on the case has reigned as if nothing had happened.

The Turkish Government

1. To take immediate action to pressure its forces, the SNA factions, as well as the military and civilian police in Jindires and Afrin, to bring to justice the perpetrators of this crime and all of those responsible for the violations committed against the population while ensuring transparent and public trials before impartial courts that follow international standards.
2. To take all necessary measures to protect the civilians in Afrin and all of Syria along with assuming its responsibilities as an occupying power in maintaining order, public safety, and the rule of law.
3. To expel the SNA factions from the area and close their secret and public detention centers, and to stop arbitrary arrests, torture, forced displacement, and demographic change along with ensuring the commitment to the provisions of the 1907 Hague Agreement.
4. To hand over the management of those areas to a civil administration elected by Afrin's original population and to fully support its work to help it return expropriated property, stop seizures, abolish royalties imposed on civilians, and create conditions for the dignified and safe return of all those forcibly displaced from the region.
5. To take effective measures to stop the advancement of the terrorist-classified Hay'at Tahrir al-Sham (HTS), formerly al-Nusra Front, in Afrin and other northern Syria regions. Notably, the HTS used the crime as a pretext to advance in Jindires and its surroundings.

The National Coalition of Syrian Revolutionary and Opposition Forces, the Syrian Interim Government, and all political bodies within it

1. To fulfill their pledges to hold the crime's perpetrators accountable and bring justice to the families of the dead.
2. To publicly apologize to victims for their participation in and support of Operation Olive Branch in 2018.
3. To assume legal, political, and moral responsibilities regarding the crimes committed in Afrin, to intervene to stop the violations of the armed groups, and to support the demands of the local population.

The United Nations and the Independent International Commission of Inquiry on Syria

1. To end the Turkish occupation and place Afrin under international observation.
2. To release a briefing on the human rights situation in northern Syria, particularly in the areas under the effective control of Turkey, including Afrin, Ras al-Ayn/Serê Kaniyê, Tell Abyad, A'zaz, and al-Bab, with an emphasis on the violations, particularly those targeting women, races, religious and ethnic groups.

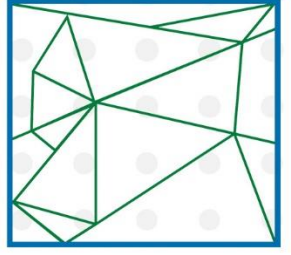
Signatories:

1. Jad al-Karim al-Jabai, Syrian thinker, researcher, and writer;
2. Sherine Shaker Arizanti, Syrian-Swedish journalist;
3. Majid Kayali, Palestinian political writer;
4. Tariq Aziza, Syrian writer;
5. Omar Kaddour, Syrian writer;
6. Fares al-Helou, Syrian artist;
7. Samih Choukaer, Syrian artist;
8. Yasser Khanjar, Syrian poet;
9. Farouk Mardam Bey, Syrian publisher;
10. Hazem al-Azmeh, Syrian poet;
11. Michel Shammas, Syrian lawyer;
12. Mohammed Sami al-Kayyal, Syrian writer;
13. Khaled Khalifa, Syrian writer;
14. Ola Ramadan, Syrian human rights and feminist activist;
15. Joseph Daher, Syrian-Swiss researcher;
16. Ghiath Naisa, writer and leftist politician;
17. Karim Shafiq, Egyptian writer and researcher;
18. Abdel Nasser al-Ayed, Syrian writer;
19. Sawsan Zakzak, Syrian researcher;
20. Khalil Harb, Lebanese journalist, a former editor-in-chief of As-Safir newspaper;
21. Michael Arizanti, Norwegian journalist and human rights defender;
22. Michael Morgan, American researcher at London Center for Political and Strategic Studies;
23. Al-Moatasem al-Kilani, human rights and international criminal law specialist;
24. Sameh Ismail, Egyptian researcher in the philosophy of history/ Editor-in-Chief of Excavations Website;
25. Ayman Salameh, Dr./retired colonel/former legal advisor to the International Committee of the Red Cross in Geneva;
26. Sadiq al-Saar, President of the Peace for Yemen Association;
27. Zaid al-Ayoubi, advisor/leader in the Palestinian Fatah movement;
28. Mona Al-Dahdah, Lebanese human rights, politician, and a law professor;
29. Thaer Abdel Aziz al-Hajji, Syrian journalist/Director of the Levant Media Foundation;
30. Mohammed Ali al-Hajj al-Amili, scholar/director of the Imam al-Sajjad Seminary and an opponent of the Iranian regime;
31. Shams al-Din Hamo, Syrian politician/president of the National Democratic Front-Joud;
32. Sameh Fayez, Egyptian journalist, and writer;

33. Alia Ahmed, Syrian feminist researcher;
34. Mazen Darwish, Secretary General of the International Federation for Human Rights;
35. Hussein Gharir, Syrian engineer and human rights blogger;
36. Aram Shakib, Syrian journalist;
37. Malik al-Athamneh, Jordanian journalist;
38. Shiyar Khalil, Syrian journalist;
39. Maxim al-Issa, Syrian journalist;
40. Faraj Bayrakdar, Syrian poet;
41. Humbervan Koussa, Syrian Kurdish journalist;
42. Shores Darwish, Syrian writer;
43. Kamiran Haj Abdo, Dr/ Politician;
44. Alain Jean Amouni, Syrian doctor;
45. Jalal Mulla Ali, Syrian Kurdish politician;
46. Hussein Jamo, writer and journalist;
47. Dilshad Othman, Syrian technician;
48. Kamal Sido, Dr/Human Rights Defender/Association for the Defense of Threatened Peoples;
49. Bassam Al-Ahmad, Syrian human rights defender/Executive Director of Syrians for Truth and Justice;
50. Majid Dawi, political advisor/member of the board of directors of the ASO Center for Consultations and Strategic Studies;
51. Ezz El-Din Saleh, human rights defender/Executive Director of the Association of Solidarity for Victims;
52. Alan Jewish, MD;
53. Jihan Khan, Syrian artist;
54. Abdel Nasser Mohamed, Director of Haqiqa Media Network;
55. Badr Mansour, Syrian political activist;
56. Thomas McGee, legal researcher;
57. Nawaf Khalil, Director of the Kurdish Center for Studies;
58. Kadar Peri, Director of the Kurds Without Borders Foundation;
59. Samiha Nader, activist, and human rights defender;
60. Farhad Hami, writer and journalist;
61. Zardasht Muhammad, lawyer, and politician;
62. Zainab Jamo, political activist;
63. Habib Ibrahim, Syrian Kurdish politician and former detainee;
64. Jean Alou, activist in human development;
65. Khulusi Omar, General Coordinator of the Afrin Platform;
66. Baran Dara, humanitarian activist;
67. Hussein Naso, Kurdish human rights activist and politician;
68. Sawsan Rashid, Syrian lawyer;
69. Abdul Rahman Korjo, Syrian politician;
70. Simaf Hassan, Syrian journalist;
71. Ahmed Koussa, plastic artist;
72. Khemkin Abdullah Karaman, Syrian photojournalist;
73. Farhad Habash, Rashid Hamo Cultural Center;
74. Bahgat Sheikho, Syrian politician;
75. Muhammad Bello, Syrian Kurdish journalist;
76. Muhammad Ezzo, Syrian Kurdish Director;
77. Ahmed Abdul Karim Rustom, political activist;
78. Salan Mustafa, journalist and political activist;
79. Asaad Abdel Qader Antar, human rights defender;

80. Masoud Hamed, University Doctor/Director of the Nodem Media Foundation;
81. Longine Abdo, human rights defender/Executive Director of the Lelun association;
82. Ali Al-Amin Al-Suwaid, Writer and opposition politician;
83. Nizar Agri, Syrian Kurdish writer;
84. Delsha Ayo, Syrian lawyer;
85. Jawad Murad, Cartoonist;
86. Siwar Ahmed, Syrian journalist;
87. Tawfiq al-Hallaq, Syrian journalist;
88. Mohamed Hassan, Syrian/French researcher and academic;
89. Ali Nemer, Syrian journalist;
90. Mitra Youssef, Syrian singer;
91. Adnan Horo, human rights defender;
92. Ronahi Hassan, Syrian-British journalist.

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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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EDITOR@STJ-SY.ORG