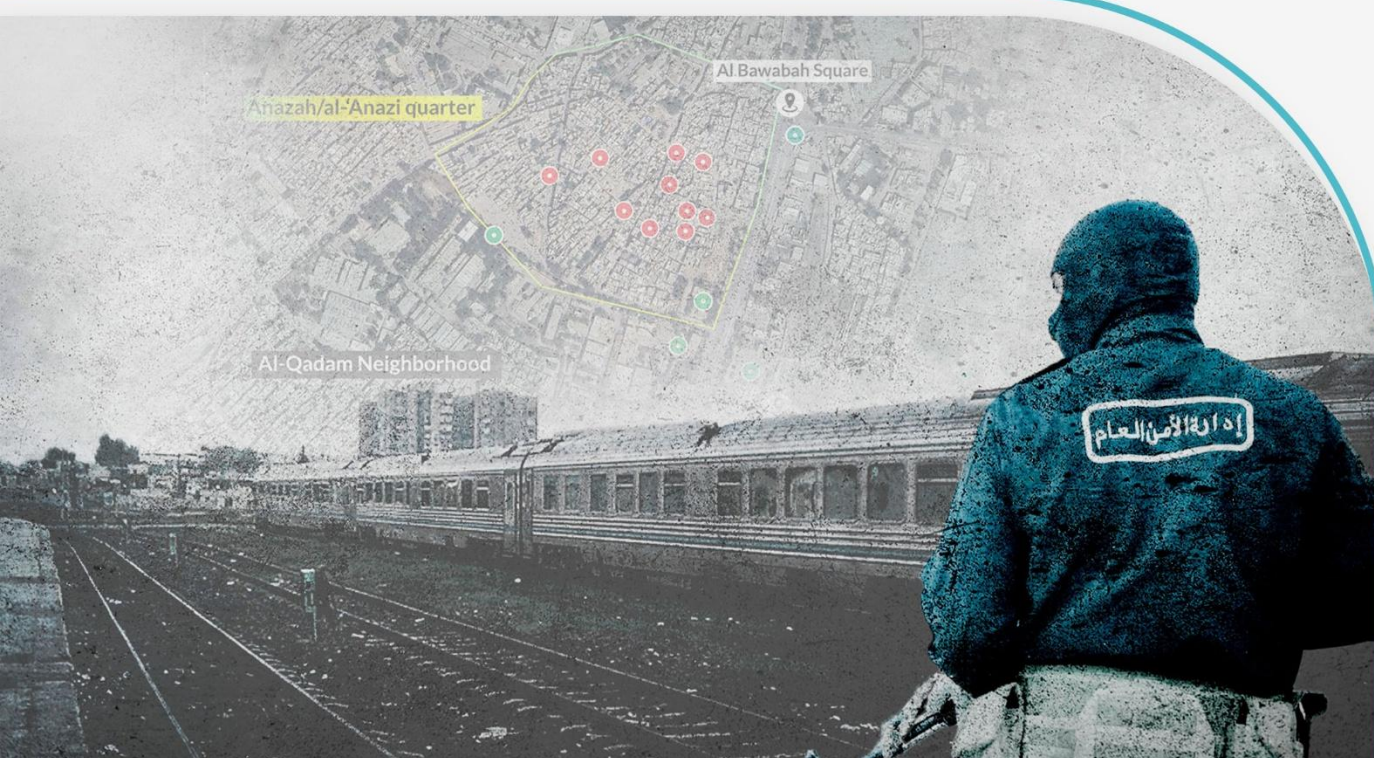


Syria: Documentation of Enforced Disappearances and Arbitrary Arrests in the al-Qadam Neighborhood of Damascus



■ The Syrian Transitional Authorities Should Initiate An Investigation Into The Alleged Violations Detailed In This Report, Which Targeted Individuals From The Alawite Community, Hold Those Responsible Accountable, And Immediately Disclose The Fate Of Those Forcibly Disappeared



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1. Executive Summary

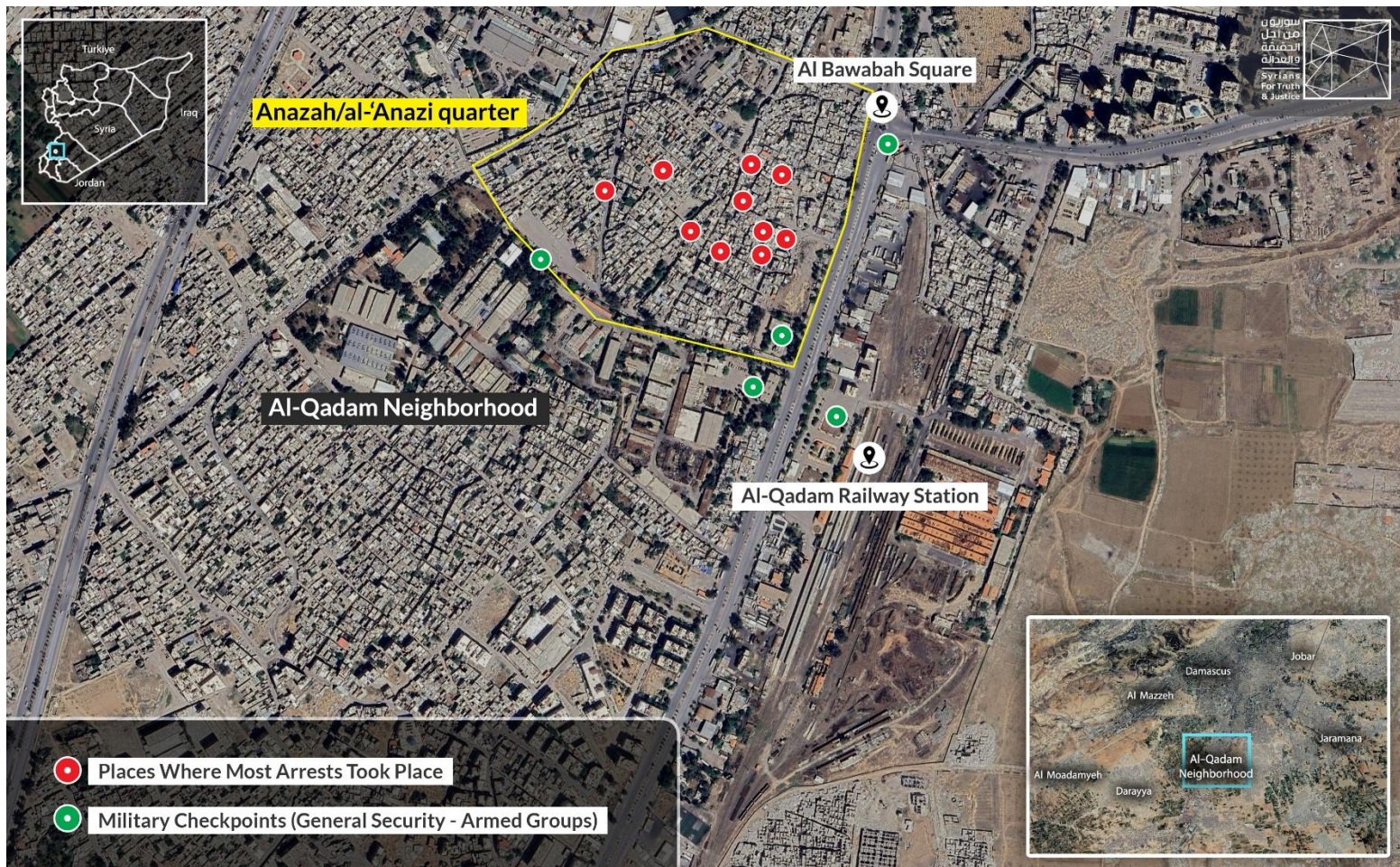
This report presents a series of events and violations documented by Syrians for Truth and Justice (STJ), shedding light on two campaigns that targeted Syrians —most of them from the Alawite community— residing in the al-‘Anazah/al-‘Anazi quarter of the al-Qadam neighborhood in Damascus. The first campaign took place in late December 2024, while the second was carried out on 7 March 2025, coinciding with the onset of escalating violence in Syria’s coastal region. The two campaigns resulted in the disappearance of dozens of residents, amid reports of extrajudicial executions.

In addition to in-depth open-source research and data triangulation to verify accuracy, this report is based on five direct, detailed testimonies collected between January and March 2025 through individual online interviews conducted by STJ’s documentation teams using secure communication tools. Testimonies were gathered in accordance with STJ’s witness protection and data preservation protocols. All sources were informed of the voluntary nature of the interview and the possible uses of the information they shared, including the publication of this report. Out of concern for retaliation, all sources chose to remain anonymous, and pseudonyms are used throughout the report to reference quoted statements.

The testimonies reveal grave human rights violations committed during the two documented campaigns in the al-Qadam neighborhood. These include arbitrary arrests without judicial warrants and deprivation of liberty outside any legal framework. Several cases of enforced disappearance were also documented, whereby authorities denied the detainees’ presence or refused to disclose their fate or place of detention. Some testimonies reported that detainees, including minors, were subjected to physical and psychological torture and ill-treatment. These violations constitute assaults on personal dignity and liberty, in direct contravention of the [Syrian Constitutional Declaration](#) and binding international legal instruments.

The collected testimonies indicate that the violations were not isolated or spontaneous acts but were carried out by members of armed factions, some of which operate under the supervision of the Ministry of Defense within the Syrian transitional government. Certain individuals were repeatedly named in separate accounts, warranting thorough investigations into their possible involvement. Additionally, several forcibly disappeared persons were later located in official detention centers, supporting the hypothesis that some formal entities had prior knowledge or coordination regarding these detentions. In light of the absence of clear accountability mechanisms and the weakness of official discourse against hate speech, there is a pressing need to activate transparent and independent accountability processes that can address the violations, rebuild victims’ and families’ trust in justice, and prevent recurrence.

Given the complex personal backgrounds of some of the individuals documented in this report —some of whom had previously worked in institutions affiliated with the former regime— STJ underscores the legal principles guaranteeing equal protection and the right of every individual to a fair trial based on sufficient evidence. All persons are equal before the law and entitled without discrimination to equal protection under it, and the presumption of innocence remains in effect until a final judicial ruling is issued. This principle is also enshrined in Article 17 of the Syrian Constitutional Declaration.



2. Background

In March 2025, several regions across Syria witnessed a dangerous escalation in sectarian violence, which particularly targeted members of the Alawite community. According to testimonies and reports [documented](#) by Syrians for Truth and Justice (STJ), these incidents were accompanied by an unprecedented wave of [incitement](#) and widespread security and military campaigns in the Syrian coastal region as well as in the rural areas of Homs and Hama, where the majority of Alawite communities are concentrated. These campaigns [resulted in](#) mass killings and forced numerous families to flee, many of them seeking refuge in Lebanon.

In addition to the areas mentioned, Alawite populations are also present in several neighborhoods of the capital, Damascus. Testimonies documented by STJ for the purposes of this report indicate that violations extended to these Damascene neighborhoods as well — particularly al-Qadam— where cases of abduction and violence against civilians were reported.

Against this backdrop, the report focuses on incidents that took place in the al-Qadam neighborhood of Damascus during December 2024 and March 2025, drawing on direct testimonies and local sources. It documents patterns of violations committed against civilians in the neighborhood, including arbitrary detention, enforced disappearance, and ill-treatment. The report further seeks to examine the circumstances under which these violations occurred and identify the potential responsible parties. While it does not claim to provide an exhaustive account of all incidents, it aims to offer a well-documented narrative that contributes to revealing the truth and laying the foundation for serious demands for accountability and guarantees of non-repetition.

3. Observations on Perpetrators and the Responsibility of Syrian Authorities

Several testimonies documented for this report indicate that the armed factions which took control of the al-Qadam neighborhood following the fall of the Assad regime established their base of operations at the local train station. Multiple accounts mention an individual known as “Abu Ibrahim M.” as a participant in the December 2024 campaign, along with another individual, “Naeem F.” (also known as Abu Mowaffaq), who was identified as a member of one of the factions involved not only in the December campaign but also in the one carried out on 7 March 2025. Abu Mowaffaq was named specifically in three separate testimonies documented by STJ. Notably, he published a [statement](#) on Facebook on 11 March 2025 denying his involvement in the events of 7 March, claiming that he had been in Jaramana at the time of the campaign.

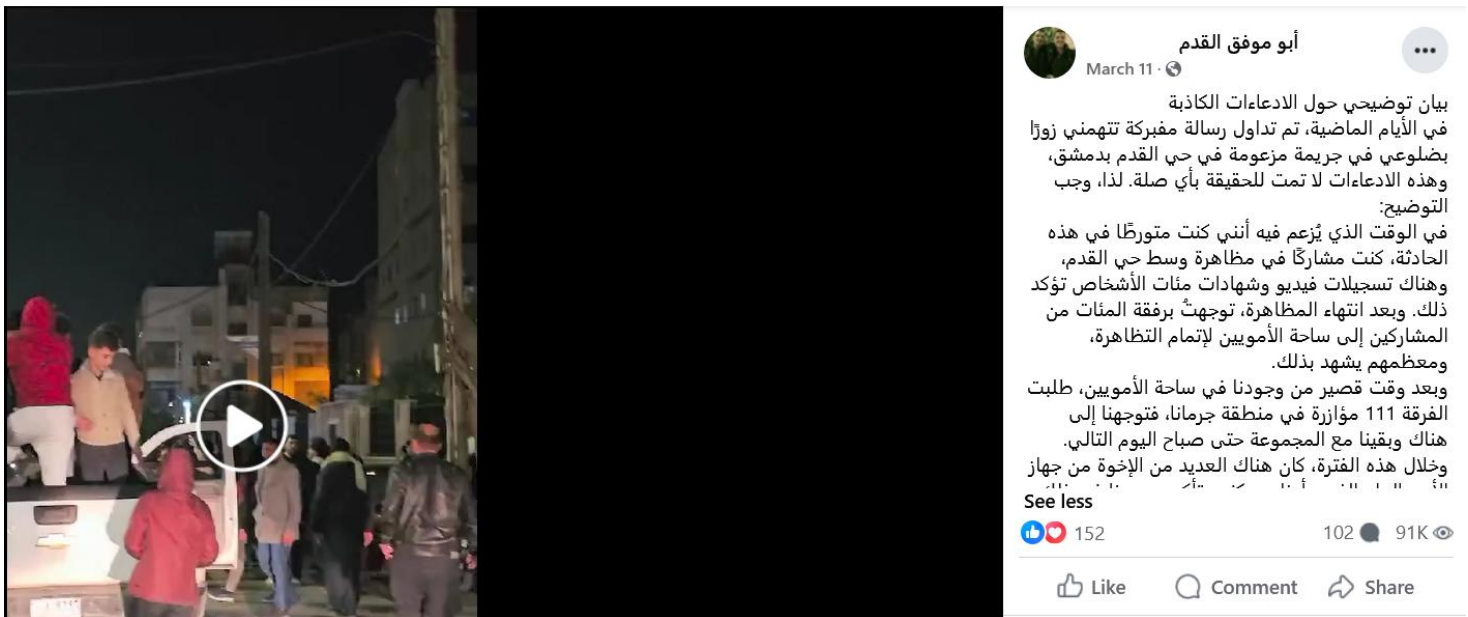


Image 1 – A screenshot of Abu Mowaffaq al-Qadam’s post responding to the allegations. He states that “these false accusations aim solely to sow discord and fuel conflict, and are far from the truth,” accusing “remnants of the regime” of fabricating them.

It is worth noting that several members of Abu Mowaffaq’s family reportedly died under torture in detention facilities run by the former regime.¹ This context may indicate that the absence of a clear and comprehensive vision for transitional justice has contributed to the emergence of retaliatory behavior, particularly in the absence of deterrence or accountability mechanisms.

Meanwhile, this escalation coincided with a rise in sectarian hate speech that was neither condemned nor criminalized by the new authorities. Instead, it intensified and arguably paved the way for repeated violations against specific communities. The testimonies reveal alarming indicators suggesting that members of the General Security Directorate, as well as elements from armed factions operating under the supervision of the Ministry of Defense within the Syrian transitional government, may have been involved in some of these violations.

Multiple accounts confirm that some of the disappeared individuals were later located in official detention centers, suggesting that the abductions and detentions may have occurred with the knowledge or coordination of certain official entities. In such cases, the responsibility of the Syrian government cannot be confined to negligence or failure to act; rather, **there is a need for independent investigations to determine whether direct liability exists –either through prior knowledge, willful disregard, or failure to prevent these violations.**

It is also important to note that information obtained by STJ from the families of victims in al-Qadam indicates that they attempted to contact the [National Commission of Inquiry and Fact-Finding on Coastal Region Events](#) to investigate the violations they endured. However, the Commission responded that Damascus does not fall within its designated geographic mandate.² This reflects a limitation in the Commission’s jurisdiction and likely contributes to the victims’ and their families’ lack of trust in the seriousness of accountability efforts.

¹ See: Facebook [post](#) titled “112 Members of a Single Extended Family [al-Faddu] from al-Qadam Neighborhood in Damascus Died in Detention,” 1 May 2025.

² Although the National Commission of Inquiry [announced](#) its intention to visit Hama and Homs governorates as part of its mandate, Syrians for Truth and Justice was unable to verify whether such visits actually took place or whether the Commission published any related findings or official reports as of the date of this report.



Image 2 – A Facebook [post](#) dated 11 March 2025 by a resident of al-Qadam rejecting the accusation that “youths from the neighborhood were involved in the abduction and killing of Alawite youths,” while simultaneously making threats: “Had we wanted revenge, we would have burned you all to the ground... the plan was to burn you all mercilessly, but thank God the new leadership managed to stop us and hold us back.”

4. Serious Human Rights Violations as Documented by the Testimonies

4.1. Extrajudicial Killings and the Right to Life

The testimonies documented in this report point to alarming indications that detainees may have been summarily executed without being subjected to any form of legal or judicial process –constituting a grave violation of the right to life. In one testimony (Testimony 4), sources reported the arrival of 20 unidentified bodies at al-Mujtahid Hospital in Damascus the day after the arrest campaign, with the families of the detainees denied access to view or identify the bodies. Additionally, Testimony 5 confirms that four of the detainees were later declared dead, with no information disclosed about the circumstances of their deaths or the parties responsible.

If confirmed, such acts would constitute intentional homicide under [Syrian Penal Law](#). According to Article 533, this offense is punishable by hard labor for no less than fifteen years and up to twenty years. The sentence is elevated to life imprisonment with hard labor under Article 534 if the crime is committed against two or more persons, accompanied by acts of torture or brutality, or motivated by a "base motive." Sectarian or religious discrimination is considered a base motive, as such discrimination is explicitly prohibited under Article 10 of the Syrian Constitutional Declaration and relevant international instruments. Moreover, extrajudicial executions contravene Article 12 of the Constitutional Declaration, which obliges the state to protect fundamental rights —chief among them, the right to life.

At the international level, extrajudicial killings represent a gross violation of Article 6 of the [International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights \(ICCPR\)](#), which mandates that states take all necessary measures to protect the right to life and prohibits arbitrary deprivation thereof. This practice is also in direct conflict with the [United Nations Manual on the Effective Prevention and Investigation of Extra-Legal, Arbitrary and Summary Executions](#). That manual obliges states to conduct prompt, impartial, and effective investigations into all suspicious deaths or deaths resulting from excessive or unlawful use of force. It further requires governments to maintain strict oversight —through clear chains of command— over all personnel authorized to arrest, detain, imprison, or use force and firearms.

The lack of judicial procedures, the authorities' refusal to provide information about detainees, and their denial of access to detainees' conditions or remains all contribute to the likelihood that extrajudicial executions have occurred. In such a context, official entities may bear direct responsibility under both national and international law. This necessitates the conduct of independent and serious investigations and ensures effective accountability for all those found to be responsible or negligent in the performance of their duties.

4.2. Arbitrary Arrest and Deprivation of Liberty

The testimonies indicate that the arrest campaigns documented in this report were carried out without judicial warrants and without informing the victims of the reasons for their detention. In multiple cases —such as Testimonies 1 and 2— homes and workplaces were raided at night, and individuals were detained by force without the presentation of any legal documentation. These raids were often accompanied by sectarian insults and threats.

In one case (Testimony 3), a victim was lured into a security interview under the pretext that stolen property belonging to him had been recovered, only to discover that the situation was in fact a premeditated trap for his arrest. This suggests that the arrest methods were not only unlawful, but in some instances, relied on deception.

These incidents reflect a pattern of deprivation of liberty without legal basis, constituting a direct violation of Article 18 of the Syrian Constitutional Declaration, which prohibits arrest or restriction of liberty without a judicial order. They also violate Article 9 of the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights (ICCPR), which guarantees the individual's right to liberty and security, obligates authorities to inform detainees of the reasons for their arrest, and grants them the right to challenge the legality of their detention before a competent authority within a reasonable timeframe.

Additionally, these practices constitute a clear breach of Article **555** of the Syrian Penal Code, which stipulates imprisonment for a period ranging from six months to two years for anyone who unlawfully deprives another person of their liberty. The penalty is increased under Article **556** if the deprivation lasts for more than one month or is accompanied by physical or psychological torture.

4.3.Enforced Disappearance

The testimonies reveal a recurring pattern of authorities denying the presence of detainees in their facilities —many of which were previously used as security centers under the former regime— despite confirmations by family members and released detainees that those individuals were, in fact, held at those locations. In several cases, including Testimonies 1, 2, and 3, families searched through multiple police stations and security branches for their missing relatives, only to be met with denial of their presence or inconsistent and opaque responses.

In one instance (Testimony 3), the source reported that the family of the detainee visited the former military police headquarters in the Qaboun area of Damascus, where they had been told the detainee was being held, only to find the building completely empty. In another case (Testimony 2), the family of a detainee was informed that their relative had been transferred from one branch to an undisclosed location, with no further information provided.

In Testimony 4, the source submitted a list of **25** individuals who had reportedly been forcibly disappeared from al-Qadam following the March 2025 campaign. STJ verified that four of these individuals were later found dead, while one person —who did not belong to the Alawite community— was released. The fate of the remaining individuals remains unknown as of the time of writing.

These incidents do not merely point to administrative dysfunction or lack of coordination; rather, they reflect practices that fall under the legal definition of enforced disappearance. Under international law, this is defined as the detention of a person by state agents or actors operating with state consent, followed by a refusal to acknowledge the deprivation of liberty or a concealment of the individual's fate or whereabouts.

Such acts are in clear violation of the [International Convention for the Protection of All Persons from Enforced Disappearance](#), which absolutely prohibits all forms of enforced disappearance under any circumstances. These practices also constitute a breach of Article **9** of the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights (ICCPR), and a violation of Article **18** of the Syrian Constitutional Declaration, which guarantees the right to personal security and prohibits any restriction of liberty outside the bounds of the law.

4.4.Torture and Ill-Treatment

Testimonies indicate that several detainees, as well as their relatives, were subjected to various forms of physical and psychological abuse during arrest operations and in detention facilities. In Testimony 1, an acquaintance of a detainee reported that the detainee's underage son (aged 16) was released a few hours after his arrest, bearing visible signs of beating and having been threatened with death. Moreover, the source noted that the child's father —the detainee— was

unable to walk due to the severity of the torture he endured. Similarly, Testimony 5 documented that members of the arresting force physically assaulted the sister and the mother of the detainee inside their home while using degrading sectarian slurs during the attack.

These cases reflect the use of violence not only as a means to silence or subdue detainees, but also as a tool to humiliate and degrade them based on their sectarian or social identity. Such conduct violates standards of humane treatment and constitutes torture or cruel, inhuman, or degrading treatment, which is absolutely prohibited under both Syrian and international law.

These acts violate Article 7 of the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights (ICCPR), which prohibits torture and ill-treatment under any circumstances, including states of emergency. The abuse of a minor further contravenes Article 37 of the [Convention on the Rights of the Child](#), which prohibits the torture or cruel, inhuman, or degrading punishment of children, as well as their arbitrary detention. Additionally, the 1984 [Convention Against Torture and Other Cruel, Inhuman or Degrading Treatment or Punishment](#) affirms the absolute prohibition of torture and explicitly states that no exceptional circumstances—including war, threat of war, political instability, or orders from superior officers or public authorities—may be invoked to justify its use.

Article 18 of the Syrian Constitutional Declaration also prohibits both physical and psychological torture and affirms that such crimes are not subject to any statute of limitations. Article 391 of the Syrian Penal Code stipulates a penalty of three months to three years of imprisonment for anyone who inflicts torture or physical pressure on another person. Furthermore, in 2022, [Law No. 16](#) was enacted to criminalize all forms of torture, imposing stricter penalties on perpetrators.

4.5. Denial of the Right to a Fair Trial

The testimonies show that detainees were not afforded any legal guarantees during or after their arrest. None of the cases documented in this report were referred to a competent judicial authority, and the families of the detainees were not officially informed of any specific charges or provided with formal documentation. In some instances—such as Testimonies 2 and 3—relatives were informally told that their loved ones were accused of “collaborating with security entities” or of being “officers,” without any legal context, supporting evidence, or the opportunity to appoint legal counsel or visit the detainees regularly.

The lack of transparency, denial of legal contact, and the use of vague verbal accusations without any formal legal process are all practices that violate the right to a fair trial; a fundamental cornerstone of any legal system that respects basic rights and freedoms.

These violations contravene Article 17 of the Syrian Constitutional Declaration, which guarantees the right of every defendant to a fair trial before an independent judiciary and upholds the presumption of innocence until a final verdict is issued. They also constitute a clear breach of Articles 9 and 14 of the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights (ICCPR), which guarantee the right to be informed of the reasons for arrest, the right to legal representation, and the right to appear before a judge within a reasonable time.

4.6. Discrimination Based on Religious Affiliation

The testimonies indicate that religious affiliation played a decisive role in selecting and targeting victims during the two campaigns documented in this report. The vast majority of those arrested were members of the Alawite community residing in the al-Qadam neighborhood, a fact confirmed consistently across all testimonies. Some accounts contain explicit statements indicating that arrests were carried out based on sectarian identity. For instance, in Testimony 1, the detainees were subjected to slurs such as “Alawite shabbiha,” while in Testimony 5, the detainee’s mother and sister were insulted with phrases like “Nusayriyyah pigs.”

In one case (Testimony 4), a Sunni detainee who had been arrested along with a group of Alawites was released the same day, further reinforcing the hypothesis that sectarian identity played a decisive role in determining whether individuals remained in custody or were released.

Sectarian discrimination —whether in treatment or in targeting— constitutes a fundamental violation of the principle of equality before the law, as enshrined in Article 10 of the Syrian Constitutional Declaration and Article 26 of the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights (ICCPR). It also contradicts Article 2 of the [Universal Declaration of Human Rights](#), which prohibits discrimination on any grounds, including religion or sectarian affiliation. This pattern of violations raises serious concerns that the events may be part of a broader discriminatory policy, amounting to exclusion and collective punishment.

4.7. Violation of the Right to Property and Adequate Housing

The testimonies included in this report describe several violations affecting private property and housing, including forced evictions, confiscation of belongings, and deliberate destruction during raids. In Testimony 1, the detainee’s family was forcibly expelled from their home without a court order and compelled to leave without retrieving any of their possessions. In Testimony 5, the source reported that the detainee’s home was violently raided, with doors broken, mobile phones and money stolen, and a car belonging to one of the detainees taken.

This pattern of property violations —especially when conducted outside any legal framework and without compensation or official documentation— constitutes a breach of the right to private property as protected under both Syrian and international law. Furthermore, the nighttime evictions and raids, accompanied by physical and verbal violence, constitute a violation of the right to safe and adequate housing, a fundamental component of human dignity.

Such practices violate Article 17 of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights, which guarantees the right to own property and not to be arbitrarily deprived of it. They also contravene Articles 13 and 16 of the Syrian Constitutional Declaration, which affirm the protection of private property and the sanctity of private life, as well as Article 19, which prohibits entering or searching homes except in cases defined by law. These actions may also amount to collective punishment when carried out based on sectarian identity, thereby heightening their severity from a human rights perspective.

Additionally, these violations breach several provisions of the [Syrian Civil Code](#): Article 771, which prohibits deprivation of ownership except as prescribed by law and only in exchange for

fair compensation; Article 768, which affirms that the owner has the exclusive right –within the bounds of the law– to use, exploit, and dispose of their property; and Article 770, which grants the owner the right to all the fruits, products, and attachments of their property, unless otherwise stated by law or agreement.

5. Recommendations to the Syrian Transitional Authorities and the Independent Institution on Missing Persons

Based on the testimonies and documented incidents presented in this report, Syrians for Truth and Justice (STJ) urges the Syrian transitional authorities to take urgent measures to ensure accountability and prevent the recurrence of such violations, particularly in light of the documented cases of enforced disappearance and arbitrary detention that occurred after the fall of the regime. The organization emphasizes the need to launch independent and transparent investigations to determine the fate of the victims and hold those responsible to account. The following are recommended key actions:

- **Immediately disclose the fate of those who forcibly disappeared** from the al-Qadam neighborhood and **ensure the safety of those still in custody**. In confirmed cases of death, the authorities must **return the victims' remains to their families**.
- **Release all civilians held in arbitrary detention and guarantee fair trials** for those facing charges, in accordance with clear legal procedures and under the oversight of an independent judiciary.
- **Initiate an independent investigation** into the involvement of security or military entities in the arrest campaigns, **suspend any personnel suspected of involvement** pending the outcome of investigations, and **prosecute those found responsible** in accordance with the law.
- Take urgent measures to **criminalize and prohibit sectarian hate speech** and prevent its use in inciting violence or discrimination.
- **Ensure that the transitional justice process** –including the work of the [National Commission on Transitional Justice](#)– **is comprehensive and non-selective**, covering all violations regardless of the identity of the perpetrators or the background of the victims.
- Call upon the [Independent Institution on Missing Persons in Syria](#) to **investigate the cases of enforced disappearance** documented in this report and take all necessary steps to uncover the fate of the missing, while underscoring the importance of **ensuring that the Syrian government facilitates and supports the institution's work**.

6. Testimonies on Arbitrary Arrest and Enforced Disappearance – Late December 2024

➤ Testimony 1: An Acquaintance of Detainee "A.H."

The source stated that the detainee is around 50 years old, resides in the al-Qadam neighborhood, and is a former soldier who was discharged five years ago. Before that, he had worked as a security guard at the residence of a government official in Damascus. The source recounted:

"A. and his family had rented a house in the al-'Anazi quarter within the al-Qadam neighborhood. On 24 December 2024, the landlord arrived accompanied by a group of armed men in a white Mercedes. They suddenly stormed the house, hurled insults at the residents, and directed sectarian slurs and accusations at them, calling them 'Alawite shabbiha.' They ordered them to vacate the house immediately and leave everything behind. When they tried to object, they beat A. dragged him out by force, and stuffed him into the trunk of the car."

The source continued, confirming that one of the neighbors recognized one of the men involved in the arrest –identified as "Abu Ibrahim M."– who was wearing an olive-green military uniform, while others were dressed in General Security uniforms. The source also reported that detainee's 16-year-old son was arrested at the same time and released a few hours later, showing clear signs of beating and torture. The source added:

"The boy returned at around 9 PM, barefoot, frightened, and in shock. He said they took him to the al-Muhajireen police station in Damascus, asked if he was Alawite or Sunni, and whether he prayed. They beat him with a rifle butt and threatened to kill him."

The source stated that confirmed information indicated that A. was being held at the al-Muhajireen police station, where he was subjected to torture and ill-treatment. Later, the family was told that he had been transferred to another detention facility located in the former Political Security Branch building, though the center denied his presence.

Following escalating threats, the family was forced to relocate to Syria's coastal region. Later, they learned from released detainees who had encountered A. that he was being held in a prison in the Kafar Sousa area. The source confirmed that the last known information about him dates back to January 2025. The source also denied that A. had ever taken part in any combat activity, explaining that he had retired five years earlier and had served as a guard in Damascus through a relative's recommendation.

➤ **Testimony 2: A Neighbor of Detainee "Mohammad Ismandar"**

Mohammad, born in Jableh in 1974, was residing in the al-Qadam neighborhood. He worked as a security guard at a hospital in the al-Midan neighborhood of Damascus. The source stated that Mohammad was arrested on 29 December 2024, at around 11:00 p.m., when a group of armed men arrived at his workplace and took him to an undisclosed location. The source continued:

"His family only learned about his arrest the following morning. When they inquired at the hospital, it turned out that some of those involved in the arrest were from al-Qadam. One of them was identified, and some were wearing General Security uniforms."

According to the source, the family went to the al-Qadam police station, where officers initially denied that Mohammad was in custody. Later, after informal intervention by a sympathetic officer, they were informed that he had indeed been held there but was subsequently transferred to an unknown location.

The source added:

“After extensive efforts, the family learned from a former detainee that Mohammad had been held at the former Political Security Branch building in Mezzeh. When the family visited the center, officials initially denied his presence, but later, after much pleading, admitted that he had been detained there before being transferred to another, unspecified security facility.”

Following further inquiries, the family received informal information indicating that Mohammad was being held at the former State Security Branch in Kafar Sousa. The family also attempted to follow up through the Palace of Justice and contacted several judicial officials, who unofficially informed them that Mohammad was accused of "collaborating with security entities" and "being an officer", even though he had never held any official military rank.

➤ **Testimony 3: An Acquaintance of Detainee “Adel Khuraiba”**

According to the source, Adel was born in 1981 and is originally from the city of Nawa in Daraa Governorate. He was residing in the Barzeh neighborhood of Damascus. Adel had served as a lieutenant colonel in the army of the former regime and had been assigned to several military units before undergoing a “status settlement” process following the fall of the regime. The source recounted:

“On 26 December 2024, Adel’s house was robbed, and he filed an official complaint with the General Security. Shortly thereafter, a security entity contacted him claiming that the stolen items had been recovered and asked him to report to them. It later became clear that this was a trap, and he was arrested as soon as he arrived.”

The source continued:

“About two and a half months later, we learned that he was being held at the former Military Police headquarters in the Qaboun area, through a released detainee from Sweida who had met him there. When we went to the Military Police branch, they initially denied his presence, but later admitted that he was in their custody.”

After multiple attempts by the family, they received information suggesting that Adel had been transferred to the former State Security Branch in Kafar Sousa. When the family visited the facility, one of the officers responded:

"We endured 14 years of detention and displacement. You've only been suffering for a few days."

7. Testimonies on Arbitrary Arrest and Enforced Disappearance – 7 March 2025

➤ **Testimony 4: A Resident of the Neighborhood on the Arrest of "Mohammad Daioub"**

According to the source, the detainee —aged 43 and originally from the city of al-Qardahah— is married and the father of three children. He resides in the al-Midan neighborhood of Damascus and works as an employee at the University of Damascus. According to the source, Mohammad **"never took part in any military activity and does not even know how to use a weapon."**

The source relayed, based on accounts from residents of the neighborhood, the details of the arrest operation that took place on 7 March 2025:

"We learned that day that Mohammad was arrested along with 23 other individuals from the al-Qadam neighborhood, all of whom were from the Alawite community, except for one Sunni individual who was released the same day.³ A group of masked gunmen raided Mohammad's house, some wearing General Security uniforms, others in informal military attire. They broke down the door and shattered the glass. Mohammad didn't resist, for the sake of his children's safety, and they took him to an unknown location. When his wife begged them to release him, they replied, 'If he's innocent, he'll come back to you.'"

The next day, reports emerged that 20 unidentified bodies had been delivered to al-Mujtahid Hospital in Damascus. The source stated:

"A group of us from the neighborhood, together with the families of the detainees, went to the hospital, but we were not allowed to view the bodies. We reached out to all the security agencies: General Security in Kafar Sousa, Criminal Security, State Security, even local religious figures, but we received no information."

He continued:

"The abductions were carried out in three waves: the first around midnight and included three members of the Badran family: Aiham, Fadi, and his father Abu Wael. We later learned they were executed immediately after arrest. The second and third waves took place between 4 and 5 a.m. Among the victims was a man

³A man named "Alaa al-Hafi." See: a widely circulated Facebook [post](#) dated March 10, 2025. See also: another widely circulated [post](#) dated March 10, 2025.



born in 1980, married with three children, a telecommunications engineer who had never been involved in any military activity."

The source concluded his testimony by saying:

"There were about 60 attackers, some of whom spoke with a Damascene accent. General Security was heavily present in the area, so it is inconceivable that such a group could have passed through without the knowledge of checkpoints or security forces."

The source provided the following list of individuals who forcibly disappeared during the security campaign that night. The fate of most remains unknown at the time of this report's publication:

1. Firas Ma'rouf – related by marriage to the deceased members of the Badran family; arrested with them.
2. Rabee' 'Aqel – employee at the electricity company.
3. Mehad Ghanem – bus driver.
4. Firas Mohammad – school janitor.
5. Mounir Raslan (was found killed).
6. Ali Tamim Rostom – university student and employee.
7. Tamim Rostom – mathematics teacher (was found killed).
8. Aws Mayya – university student (was found killed).
9. Ali Mohammad.
10. Samer Asaad – in critical health at the time of arrest (was found killed).
11. Ali Shaddoud – employee.
12. Ali Shaddoud's father – elderly man.
13. Ihsan Zaydan – telecommunications employee.
14. Haidar Salameh – student.
15. Mohammad Daioub – employee.
16. Shadi Shamieh – former soldier with settled status.
17. Majd Suleiman – soldier.
18. Badran Ahmad.
19. Haidar Ahmad.
20. Fateh Saqr – works at a cleaning supplies shop.
21. Mohammad Hourani – employee.
22. Iyad Hourani – vegetable vendor.
23. 'Alaa al-Hafi – released (not from the Alawite community).
24. Dr. Ahmad Saleh – physician.
25. Haitham Saleh – journalist.



➤ **Testimony 5: A Resident of the Neighborhood on the Arrest of “Mohammad Hourani” and “Iyad Hourani”**

According to the source, Mohammad (born in 1995) worked at al-Assad University Hospital, while Iyad (born in 1968) was a vegetable vendor. The source confirmed that neither of them had engaged in any military or combat activity in recent years.

Quoting neighbors, the source described the events of the night of March 7, 2025:

"A group of armed men broke down the house gate, stormed the house, and searched it thoroughly. During the raid, Mohammad's sister and mother were physically assaulted. The attackers were shouting degrading sectarian slurs: 'You Alawite scum, you Nusayriyyah, you pigs.' They spoke in a local Damascene accent. They also stole mobile phones and cash from those presents, then took Mohammad with them without saying where."

The source also reported that Iyad was arrested on the same day, and the raid targeted several other residents of the neighborhood, including Mohammad Daioub, Dr. Ahmad Saleh,⁴ journalist Haitham Saleh, and Fateh Saqr. The source added that Dr. Saleh's car was stolen during the arrest. According to the source, later, information emerged indicating that the bodies of four detainees had been found killed: Tamim Rostom (a mathematics teacher), Samer Asaad (a person with disabilities), Aws Mayya (a university student and employee), and Munir Raslan (a retired officer).

The source continued:

"In March 2025, the families of the two detainees submitted official complaints to the authorities in al-Qadam, and the police station opened an investigation. However, the case was closed after 45 days, with the justification that 'the matter is now in the hands of the General Security.' A lawyer, Manhal S., posted on Facebook that the detainees had been transferred to Kafar Sousa, but he later deleted the post. When the family approached General Security, they were told: 'We have nothing to do with it, and we don't know who the kidnappers are.'"

The source concluded by stating that the area was surrounded by four security checkpoints: the Defense Factories checkpoint, the Military Clinic checkpoint, the Gate checkpoint, and the al-Qadam Station checkpoint. He commented:

"It is impossible for an armed group to carry out an operation of this scale without the knowledge of these security branches."

⁴ STJ documented a widely circulated Facebook [post](#) regarding the abduction of Dr. Ahmad Saleh, dated April 3, 2025.



Batoul Rstom

March 25 · 🌐

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مناشدة من اهالي حي القدم الى الجهات المعنية و لكل من يقدر على المساعدة للتسريع في معرفة اوضاع ذويهم و الافراج عنهم
بتاريخ 7/3/2025 الساعة 12 بالليل بحي القدم بالشام جادة الارناؤوط مقابل محطة القطار اجو شباب مسلحين ادعو انهن من الامن العام فاتو على بيت عمي اخدو ابنو (مدني) خريج جامعي وحيد اهلو عمرو ٢٥ سنة
اسمو : علي تميم رستم
و بعد ٤ ساعات اندق الباب مرة ثانية و قالو لعمي جيب هاتفك و تعال شوف ابنك و راح معهن
و طبعا عمي استاذ رياضيات متقاعد ٦٥ سنة
عمي : تميم علي رستم
عيلتو راحت سالت عنن بمخفر حي القدم قالو ما بيعرفو عنهن شي ابدا ف تم تقديم بلاغ لدى المحامي العام و تحوّل لمخفر القدم
حتى الجيران في عدد منهم مفقود بنفس الطريقة و بنفس اليوم و تم تقديم بلاغات عن جميع المفقودين (اكثر من عشرين شخص بنفس الحارة)
و لحد هاللحظة بعد مرور 18 يوم لم يأتي اي خبر عنهم نرجو المساعدة

Image 3: STJ documented a Facebook [post](#) shared by a relative of two abductees (Tamim Rostom and Ali Tamim Rostom) taken during the March 7, 2025 campaign in al-Qadam. In the post, dated March 25, 2025, the author appeals to the relevant authorities and "anyone who can" to help uncover the fate of the abductees. She states that 18 days had passed without any news, despite the families submitting official complaints to the Public Prosecutor and the al-Qadam Police Station.



ABOUT STJ

Syrians for Truth and Justice (STJ) started as an idea in a co-founder's mind while attending the U.S. Middle-East Partnership Initiative's (MEPI) Leaders for Democracy Fellowship program (LDF) in 2015. The idea became a reality and flourished into an independent, non-profit, impartial, non-governmental human rights organization.



ABOUT Ceasefire

The Ceasefire Centre for Civilian Rights aims to empower civilians in situations of armed conflict or prevailing insecurity to document violations of their rights; to seek justice and accountability for violations of civilian rights; and to develop the practice of civilian rights protection and raise public support for the promotion of civilian rights.

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