

Joint Press Statement: Concerns Over the Fate of Hundreds of Detainees After Sheikh Magsoud and Ashrafiyah Clashes in Aleppo



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- The Syrian Transitional Government Must Immediately Reveal The Fate Of Detainees And Missing Persons And Ensure Their Humane Treatment Without Any Discrimination

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Detainees After Sheikh Magsoud and Ashrafieh Clashes in Aleppo**

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Detainees And Missing Persons And Ensure Their Humane Treatment
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Syrians for Truth and Justice (STJ) and the Kurdish Lawyers Union (KLU) express deep concern over reports of the detention of hundreds of people and the loss of contact with them following the deadly violence that occurred in Aleppo in January 2026. These incidents happened amid clashes between forces of the Syrian Ministry of Defense, affiliated with the transitional government, and the Kurdish Internal Security Forces (Asayish), affiliated with the local council of the Sheikh Maqsoud and Ashrafiyah neighborhoods.

Preliminary information collected by STJ and the KLU, based on interviews with victims' families, relatives, released individuals, and people present in the area, indicates that hundreds of detentions occurred, along with dozens of cases of lost contact. These incidents mostly took place between 6 and 12 January 2026, prior and following the start of active military operations in Aleppo and the related forced displacement.

Based on initial testimonies, most of those detained are from the Afrin region and its surrounding areas. They were arrested either while displaced or while present in the Sheikh Maqsoud neighborhood, particularly by military and security personnel at the al-Awarid checkpoint, which has been repeatedly identified as the last place several of the missing individuals were seen or contacted. Additionally, an unknown number of young men were detained while traveling toward Afrin near the A'zaz junction, after which contact with them was lost. Other testimonies confirm that an unknown number of detainees were transferred to a detention facility in Harem, Idlib Governorate, as well as to two detention centers in the al-Muhafaza and al-Jamiliyah areas of Aleppo.

The documented cases so far include the following:

- Loss of contact with immediate family members and first-degree relatives of Kurdish civilians, including siblings, fathers, and sons, based on statements from interviewed sources.
- Among those with whom contact has been lost are children born in 2010 and 2012.
- Loss of contact with wounded civilians, as well as people who attempted to assist the wounded.
- Loss of contact with individuals working in humanitarian, medical, and media sectors, including several staff members of the Kurdish Red Crescent, a photojournalist, and a correspondent for a local Kurdish TV channel.
- Loss of contact with fighters detained during ongoing clashes, especially around Sheikh Maqsoud, Ashrafiyah, and Bani Zaid.
- Reports of insults, beatings, and ill-treatment that detainees endured during their initial arrest at military checkpoints.

On 13 January several release cases were documented, supporting victims 'families 'claims that some of the missing persons are being detained by the transitional authorities in Damascus.

These cases occur amid a lack of any official information regarding detention locations or the legal grounds for such arrests, as of the date this statement was issued. Therefore, STJ and the KLU call on:

First: The Independent International Commission of Inquiry on the Syrian Arab Republic:

1. To initiate prompt and thorough investigations into all allegations of human rights violations committed during the recent fighting in the city of Aleppo, by all parties.

Second: The UN Independent Institution on Missing Persons in the Syrian Arab Republic and the National Commission for the Missing:

2. To start investigations into allegations of enforced disappearance during military operations, clarify the fate of all missing persons, and offer appropriate support to their families.

Third: The Syrian Government / the Syrian Transitional Authorities:

3. To treat all detainees humanely and without any discrimination based on ethnic or racial background.
4. To prevent violations of the right to life and physical integrity, prohibit cruel treatment, and ensure that detainees are not subjected to any form of torture or mistreatment.
5. To ensure that no judgments are issued and no penalties are enforced except after trials before a lawfully established court that guarantees all necessary judicial safeguards recognized by civilized nations.
6. To ensure humane and appropriate treatment of the wounded, in accordance with the Syrian government's obligations under international law.
7. To commit to clarifying and disclosing the fate and whereabouts of missing persons, and to provide their family members with any available information regarding their status and location.
8. To ensure that no retaliatory measures are taken against individuals who worked in civil and service institutions during the local council's administration of the two neighborhoods, to guarantee their safe return, along with all residents, to their homes, and to prevent any seizure of property, as occurred in the Afrin region.

About the Partners



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.

STJ's beginnings were more than humble; initially, it only reported stories of Syrians who experienced arbitrary arrest, enforced disappearance, or torture. Planted in fertile soil, the seed of this project grew into an established human rights organization licensed in the Middle East and the European Union. STJ today undertakes to detect and uncover violations of all types committed in all Syrian parts by the various parties to the conflict.



The Kurdish Lawyers Union (KLU) is an independent, non-governmental Kurdish legal organization established to protect the rights of the Kurdish people, advocate for the restoration of their usurped rights, and seek international recognition of these rights. It also aims to promote justice, human rights, and fundamental freedoms in the Kurdistan regions and around the world.

The KLU plans to become an officially recognized entity by registering as a legal organization with the appropriate authorities in Germany, with its headquarters in Bonn. Additionally, it intends to open branches in the United States, the United Kingdom, Sweden, Denmark, Greece, Switzerland, Belgium, and the Netherlands, with the possibility of establishing more branches in diaspora countries as needed.