



# Annual Report

Syrians For Truth and Justice



2025

## Overview

From the perspective of Syrians for Truth and Justice (STJ), the developments of 2025 could not be viewed in isolation from the complexities of the Syrian conflict that has persisted since 2011. At the same time, the year marked a new moment for reflection on pathways toward resolution and on approaches that may help Syrians advance justice, grounded in the experiences, needs, and aspirations of victims and survivors.

Throughout 2025, STJ significantly expanded its geographic coverage and field presence through a broader network of correspondents and researchers across most Syrian cities. This expansion enabled the organization to reach new groups of victims and survivors directly and to strengthen its ability to monitor, document, and report on violations occurring throughout the year at close range.

Throughout 2025, STJ continued to monitor human rights violations across Syria while maintaining its documentation efforts. The organization shared the findings of this work through briefing papers, in-depth investigations, and close engagement with victims, survivors, and local communities. STJ also closely monitored the performance of the transitional authorities through legal analyses of decrees and legislation issued during the year. In parallel, the organization actively contributed to statements and advocacy initiatives calling for the protection of civilians' rights in Syria and, at times, across the wider Arab region.

As an organization rooted in and working for Syria, STJ presents this 2025 Annual Report as a record of key developments and events it engaged with from a human rights and legal perspective. The report reflects the organization's continued commitment to advancing justice, accountability, and respect for human rights.

## Publications in 2025



## How Did We Engage with the Developments of 2025?

The year 2025 saw rapid developments that profoundly shaped the Syrian landscape, including the formation of a transitional government, the issuance of a constitutional declaration, and the establishment of national bodies dedicated to addressing the missing and advancing transitional justice. These developments unfolded alongside the continued escalation of military operations and the spread of incitement and hate speech targeting various regions, communities, and religious groups across the country.

Guided by its belief in the vital role of civil society and human rights organizations working on Syria in advancing justice, STJ published, at the beginning of the year, a position paper titled “[Towards a Transitional Justice Path: Syrian Aspirations for a Transition Based on Rights and Guarantees of Non-Recurrence](#)”. The paper underscored the importance of ensuring justice, accountability, and the protection of human rights for all through fair trials and the strengthening of the rule of law.

In a separate legal paper, “[Syria’s New Constitution: Ten Constitutional Principles for a Just and Inclusive Democratic State](#)”, STJ called for integrating transitional justice principles as a legal and ethical framework to address the legacy of conflict, advance national reconciliation, and ensure accountability for serious human rights violations.

In this context, following the issuance of the Constitutional Declaration on 13 March 2025, STJ published a [legal paper](#) highlighting the extensive powers granted to the transitional president and the risks of entrenching an authoritarian system that could hinder Syria’s transition to democracy. The paper offers a critical analysis of the temporary Syrian Constitutional Declaration issued in March 2025, using a comparative legal and political lens, taking into account Syria’s current transitional context, and drawing on

international constitutional standards as well as Syria’s legal obligations under the international treaties to which it is a party.

In a related development, networks, organizations, and victim-led groups welcomed the issuance of Decree No. 20, promulgated on 17 May 2025 by Syria’s Transitional President, Ahmed al-Sharaa, establishing the National Commission for Transitional Justice. However, in a [joint statement](#) signed by STJ and 20 other organizations, they expressed concern that the Commission’s mandate was limited to investigating crimes committed by only one party to the conflict, arguing that such an approach undermines the principle of equality before the law. The statement called for a comprehensive and non-discriminatory transitional justice framework encompassing truth-seeking, accountability, reparations, and guarantees of non-recurrence.

STJ also joined more than 60 organizations in developing and endorsing the [general principles for justice, truth, and remedy](#) in Syria, reflecting a shared commitment among civil society organizations and victims’ associations to a common set of principles that guide collective efforts to ensure justice for all victims and uphold the dignity and rights of all Syrians without discrimination.

Subsequently, STJ published a critical analysis of Decree No. 20 of 2025 and its role within Syria’s transitional constitutional framework in a paper titled “[Selective and Discriminatory: How Decree No. 20/2025 Failed to Deliver a Comprehensive Approach to Transitional Justice in Syria](#).” The paper examines patterns of violations committed by multiple actors throughout the Syrian conflict and highlights the decree’s principal legal and procedural shortcomings.

At the same time, following the issuance of Decree No. 143, which approved the Temporary Electoral System for the People’s Assembly, STJ, together with several Syrian organizations, published a [joint position paper](#) providing a critical human rights assessment of the decree. The paper sets out a series of recommendations and emphasizes that reforming the electoral framework is a fundamental prerequisite for establishing a People’s Assembly capable of supporting a genuine and inclusive political transition in Syria.

## Continuing Documentation Efforts

The transitional period was marked by identity-based killings, including mass attacks targeting civilians from the Alawite and Druze communities in March and July 2025. Government forces and affiliated armed groups were reportedly implicated in these attacks, raising serious concerns about a resurgence of cycles of violence. At the same time, arbitrary arrests and unlawful property seizures persisted throughout 2025. In response, STJ submitted two formal complaints to the Damascus Governorate regarding property confiscation and the arbitrary eviction of homeowners in [Harasta](#) and [Muadamiyat al-Sham](#). Through these submissions, STJ called on the authorities to facilitate the return of individuals unlawfully deprived of their homes, restore looted property to its rightful owners, end all sectarian-motivated violations of property rights, and investigate allegations of torture and enforced disappearance.

As part of its efforts to document ongoing human rights violations following the fall of the Assad government, STJ verified the [summary execution of 16 individuals in a single day in the village of Fahel in the Homs countryside](#). The killings occurred during a “combing” campaign involving raids and searches in the village on 23 January 2025. According to local residents, the incident appeared to have been carried out “for retaliatory reasons with clear sectarian motives.”

STJ also documented campaigns of arbitrary arrests targeting civilians in the [al-Qadam neighborhood of Damascus](#). Through its reporting, the organization called on the transitional authorities to investigate allegations of violations against members of the Alawite community, hold those responsible accountable, and immediately disclose the fate and whereabouts of individuals subjected to enforced disappearance or arbitrary detention.

On the International Day of the Victims of Enforced Disappearances, STJ published a report based on witness [testimony documenting the persistence of enforced disappearance in post-Assad Syria](#). The report called on the Syrian authorities to ratify the International Convention for the Protection of All Persons from Enforced Disappearance (ICPPED) and to accede to the Rome Statute of the International Criminal Court.

STJ also published a report titled “[Torture Persists: Testimonies and Indicators Reveal Alarming Incidents in Post-Assad Syria](#)”, documenting troubling indicators and testimonies pointing to the continued occurrence of torture and other forms of ill-treatment in Syria. In the report, the organization urged the transitional authorities to launch prompt, transparent, and impartial investigations into allegations of torture committed after the fall of the Assad government, hold all perpetrators accountable without exception, and take concrete steps to end impunity.

STJ also collaborated with Human Rights Watch and the Syrian Archive to publish an extensive thematic investigation into [identity-based killings during Syria’s transition](#). The investigation focuses primarily on crimes against members of the Alawite community in March 2025 and examines early accountability efforts by the transitional authorities in response to the atrocities committed during that period.

The report also reviews the establishment of two official bodies; the Fact-Finding Committee and the Civil Peace Committee, mandated to investigate the violence and address rising communal tensions. In addition, it assesses measures announced by the authorities, including arrests and limited disciplinary actions, the adoption of a Military Code of Conduct, and the creation of a Transitional Justice Commission with a narrowly defined mandate.

In the same context, STJ documented the ongoing commission of [serious violations against members of the Alawite community in the after math of the coastal massacres](#), through an investigation that highlighted a series of grave abuses committed against Alawite civilians between 10 March and the end of June 2025 in the governorates of Latakia, Homs, Hama, Tartous, and Rural Damascus.

STJ also published an extensive investigation documenting [serious violations against members of the Druze community in April and May 2025](#). The report examines recurring patterns of grave human rights abuses, including extrajudicial killings, arbitrary detention, torture and degrading treatment, property looting, sectarian discrimination, and hate speech. These violations were documented in Sahnaya, Ashrafiyat Sahnaya, and Jaramana in Rural Damascus, as well as in al-Sawara al-Kubra village, north of As Suwayda. The abuses occurred amid armed clashes between local Druze factions on one side and General Security forces and allied armed groups on the other.

At the same time, in 2025, STJ published a joint thematic investigation with the Synergy/Hevdestî Association for Victims, based on extensive research conducted between December 2024 and April 2025. The investigation drew on interviews with 18 individuals, including victims, relatives of victims, and witnesses to [violations committed during Operation Dawn of Freedom, led by the Turkish-backed Syrian National Army \(SNA\)](#), as well as in the aftermath of the latter's takeover of the cities of Manbij and Tall Rifaat and the Shahba region in the Aleppo countryside, which were targeted by the operation.

STJ also documented [attacks carried out by the SNA and Türkiye against the Tishreen Dam](#), which resulted in civilian casualties and threatened infrastructure indispensable to the survival of the civilian population. In a separate report, the organization documented two Turkish airstrikes, believed to have been conducted using armed drones, on the city of Ayn al-Arab/Kobanî in northern Syria on 28 January and 16 March 2025. The attacks [killed 22 civilians, half of whom were children](#).

## Hate Speech

STJ found that the widespread dissemination of hate speech and disinformation played a central role in fueling collective and indiscriminate violence. By exaggerating events and promoting reductionist or inflammatory narratives, such content deepened sectarian divisions and intensified hatred and retaliation across segments of the population. This was accompanied by the proliferation of hate speech across social media platforms and religious forums, where narratives that demonized the “other” and justified violence against them became increasingly prevalent. Together, these dynamics significantly contributed to the escalation of tensions and the deterioration of the situation beyond control.

In this context, STJ published a report examining the [role of hate speech in the March 2025 massacres along Syria's coast](#). The report analyzes how hate speech contributed to inciting and escalating the violence, reviews the relevant legal and human rights frameworks, and highlights existing legal gaps. It concludes with practical recommendations to curb incitement and hate speech and to promote social cohesion and civil peace during the transitional period.

In the same vein, STJ, in collaboration with the True Platform and Balgh Violence and Hate Speech Combat Initiative, published an article titled “[How Hateful Narratives Are Produced in the Syrian Context](#)”. The article explores the mechanisms by which hateful narratives are produced and reproduced in Syria: how they can begin with a single word or joke, reduce an entire community to a single characteristic, and transform an isolated individual incident into an existential threat. It also examines how political, social, and cultural elites adopt such narratives and confer symbolic legitimacy on them, contributing to their wider circulation and impact.

# Supporting Victims in Syria and Host Countries

## 1. Supporting Survivors of Torture

As part of its commitment to providing a comprehensive response to the needs of torture survivors in Syria and to delivering integrated interventions that promote recovery and empowerment, STJ continued, for the fifth consecutive year, to implement its Torture Victims Support Project. The project combines documentation with direct support, including medical, psychological, social, and legal assistance. In addition, the project seeks to connect individual support initiatives with international accountability processes, contributing to efforts to combat impunity and advance justice for survivors of torture and other serious human rights violations.

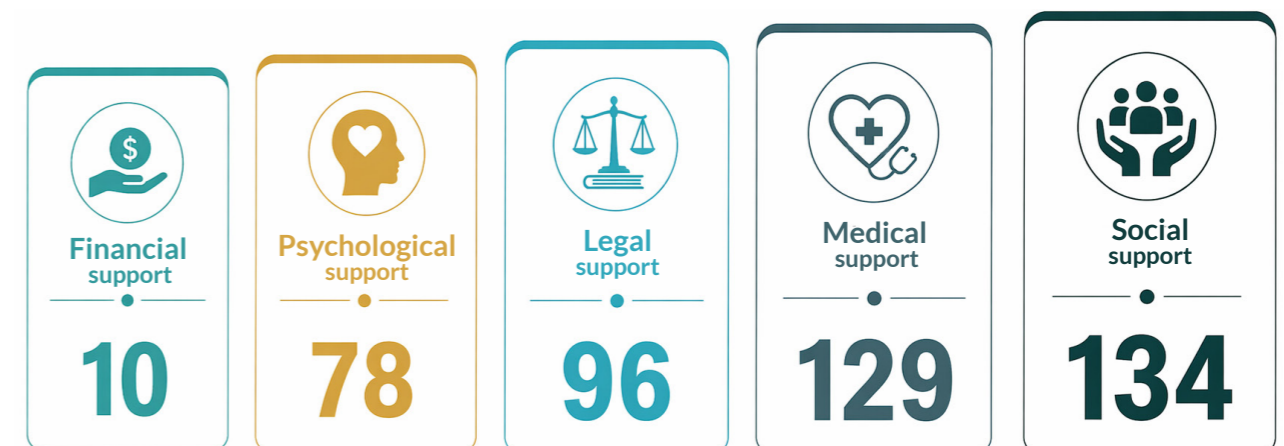
During the implementation period, the project made tangible progress in delivering integrated support services to survivors. Primary healthcare services were provided to numerous beneficiaries, and cases requiring specialized interventions were referred to appropriate providers. Treatment and transportation costs were covered to ensure beneficiaries could access essential services without financial or logistical barriers.

The project also provided psychosocial support through initial assessments and counseling sessions, with more complex cases referred to specialized mental health professionals. These interventions helped strengthen the response to the psychological needs and long-term impacts associated with experiences of torture.

At the socioeconomic level, in-kind assistance and livelihood support were provided, including coverage of basic needs and direct financial grants that enabled some survivors to start small-scale income-generating projects or address urgent needs. These interventions helped strengthen their stability and support their recovery. Legal assistance was also provided to a number of beneficiaries, including help in obtaining missing official documents and in addressing individual legal cases. This component further enhanced their access to basic rights and administrative services.

In parallel, the project continued its documentation efforts, completing a substantial portion of the survivor testimony collection. These testimonies were shared with relevant international accountability mechanisms, including the International, Impartial and Independent Mechanism (IIIM), to support broader efforts to advance international accountability. Capacity-building initiatives were also strengthened through participation in specialized training programs focused on the rehabilitation of torture survivors, thereby improving the quality and effectiveness of service delivery.

One of the project's key achievements this year was directly engaging survivors in implementation activities, including recruiting them as field researchers to document testimonies. This approach improved access to victims, enhanced fieldwork effectiveness, and contributed to survivors' economic and professional empowerment. It also enhanced the overall quality of implementation and reinforced survivors' role as active partners in documentation and justice efforts.



## 2. Empowering Victims and Survivors in Host Countries

To strengthen the participation of Syrian victims and survivors in accountability efforts, particularly given the continued absence of justice mechanisms inside Syria and the reliance of many survivors on international avenues, STJ implemented a project focused on this objective. The project sought to address the data gap on displaced victims in exile and to enhance their capacity to engage effectively in documentation and legal accountability processes, thereby contributing to international justice mechanisms and efforts to combat impunity.

During the implementation period, the organization expanded the project's scope to include victims in Syria as well as those based in Europe, in response to evolving political and field developments. This expansion contributed to a more comprehensive and inclusive approach, enabling engagement with a wider range of beneficiaries, including survivors from diverse regions and backgrounds, among them individuals affected by recent coastal events. The project also adopted an intersectional and gender-sensitive approach, enhancing the representation of the most marginalized groups and ensuring that the diversity of survivors' experiences was more effectively reflected throughout the implementation process.

The project made tangible progress in strengthening the capacities of victims and survivors, with 21 participants selected and trained from diverse geographic and ethnic backgrounds, including women who made up a significant share of the cohort. The training covered advanced topics in international law, universal jurisdiction, ethical documentation, and interview techniques, with a strong emphasis on a survivor-centered and trauma-informed approach. Evaluation results indicated a clear improvement in participants' knowledge and skills, reflecting the effectiveness and overall quality of the training program.

The project also made significant progress in preparing for the documentation phase by developing data collection tools, preliminary assessment templates, and individual researchers' work plans, ensuring a high level of readiness for the upcoming stage. The increase in participants beyond the initial target also contributed to greater diversity and an expanded beneficiary base without incurring additional financial costs, further strengthening the project's resilience and continuity in the event of potential dropouts.

## Share For Justice

To enhance Syrians' access to justice and simplify understanding of available legal pathways, STJ launched the digital platform Share for Justice at the end of 2024 and the beginning of 2025. The initiative seeks to bridge the gap between victim communities and national and international justice mechanisms, given the complexity of the legal landscape and the multiplicity of accountability actors. The platform provides accessible legal and human rights information, enabling victims and survivors to better understand their rights and the available avenues for redress in a clear, practical manner.

The platform offered a diverse range of content on international justice mechanisms, such as universal jurisdiction and the International Criminal Court, and explained legal procedures in the Syrian context, including personal status, property, and litigation issues. This content helped raise legal awareness among users and provided practical tools to navigate conflict-related legal challenges.



متشاركة من أجل العدالة  
SHARE FOR JUSTICE

The platform also played an important role in strengthening communication among victims, organizations, and legal actors by facilitating understanding of how to engage with relevant mechanisms and how to share case files and supporting documentation. It targeted all categories of victims without discrimination, with a strong emphasis on inclusivity and representation of diverse geographic and ethnic backgrounds, reflecting the project's commitment to a justice-for-all approach.

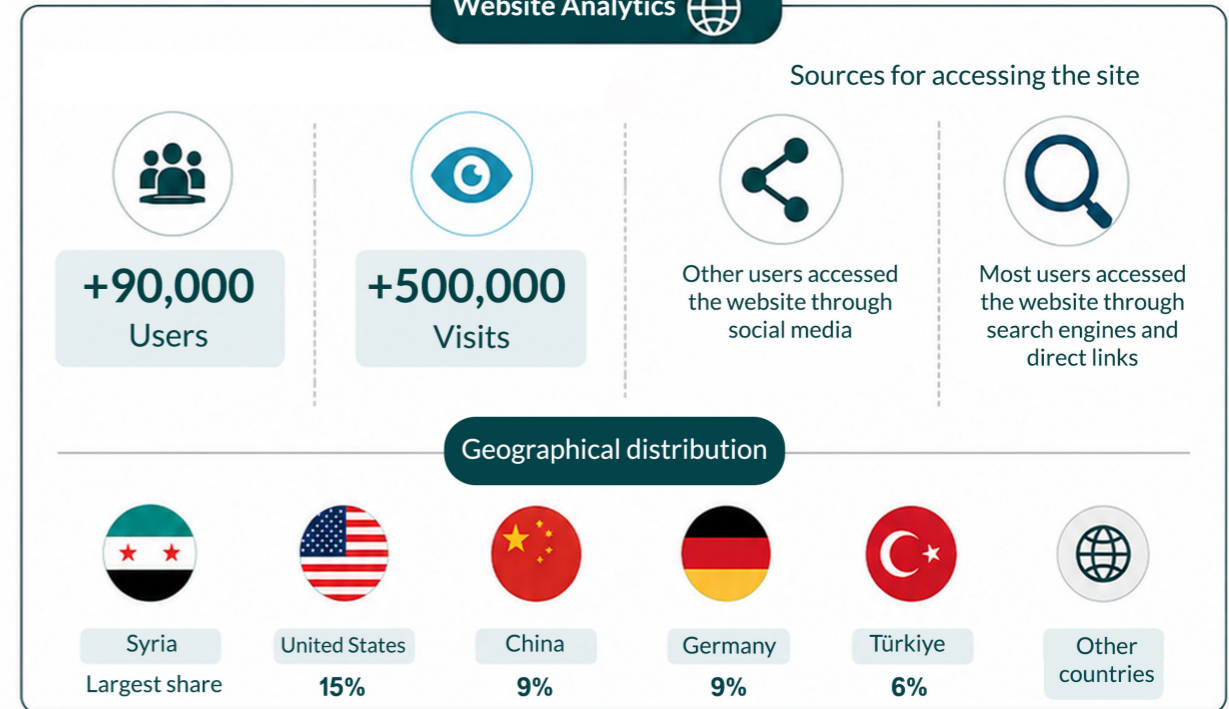
In addition, the platform contributed to monitoring and disseminating updates on justice developments in Syria by providing accessible analyses of legal and political shifts and by highlighting issues related to accountability and human rights violations. This further strengthened its role as an ongoing knowledge resource for victims and justice actors.

The platform team also organized online workshops that brought together civil society organizations and victim communities from across Syria. Each session addressed a distinct human rights topic, including available reporting mechanisms and pathways for legal action.

Furthermore, the platform team won the Code for MENA Hackathon Fellowship with its Data for Justice initiative, which leverages open-source data and STJ's own datasets to support human rights advocacy.

## Visibility and Reach

### Website Analytics



### Media Coverage



### Social Media



## 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.

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.

Convinced that Syria's diversity is a wealth, our researchers and volunteers serve with unflinching dedication to monitor, expose, and document human rights violations that continue unabated in Syria since 2011, regardless of the affiliation of the victims or perpetrators.

Adopting an inclusive and unbiased documentation process, STJ aims to promote the principle of inclusion and ensure the organization is a forum where all Syrians have a space and an opportunity to express and exchange thoughts on the basis of equal citizenship. Our main goal has always been to ensure that everyone enjoys their full rights without any discrimination as to sex, color, caste, religion, ethnicity, geographical region, or other considerations.

Since its legal establishment in 2016, STJ managed to reach thousands of victims, document thousands of violations, and register them in a private database. We also published hundreds of reports on the human rights situation in Syria since then.

STJ believes that systematic documentation and gathering credible evidence allow us to reach new horizons in justice and accountability spaces. By this, we can contribute to strategic litigation and fighting against impunity autonomously or in cooperation with appropriate bodies and organizations.

Driven by a will to empower local communities and activists and promote their roles, STJ implements capacity-building projects in various topics, including documenting human rights violations, collecting evidence, cyber security, social oversight over local authorities, advocacy at the national and international levels, providing legal support for Syrians inside Syria, and contributing to the constitutional dialogue at the local level.

### Our Vision

A Syria in which justice and the rule of law prevail and people equally enjoy all of their human rights.

### Our Mission

STJ is devoted to documenting human rights violations committed anywhere against Syrians and to disseminating a human rights culture with the aim of expanding access to justice, and accountability systems and thus change.

### Our Values

Independence, truth, and justice, through which we seek to defend the rights and freedoms of vulnerable communities and pursue their redress.