

Quneitra Is Not Alone... Southern Syria Is a Shared National Cause



■ Statement Issued By A Group Of Syrian Activists And Civil Society Organizations



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Quneitra Governorate in particular, and southern Syria more broadly, continue to face Israeli attacks that have spared neither the land nor its people, while also undermining national sovereignty. Killings, displacement and abductions have escalated, alongside continued attacks on residents and their property, repeated overflights by Israeli aircraft, expansion within the buffer zones, and an alarming expansion of work associated with the “Sufa 53” project, particularly during September and October. Against this backdrop, we, a group of Syrian activists and civil society organizations, unequivocally condemn these ongoing attacks, express our full solidarity with Quneitra and the south, and call for intensified civic action against these practices.

What is happening in Quneitra and southern Syria is no longer a series of isolated attacks. **It points to a systematic approach pursued by the Israeli occupation authorities to impose new facts on the ground, undermine Syrian sovereignty, and threaten the security, stability and fundamental rights of the population.** The continuation of these practices without a unified national stance and meaningful action risks entrenching a reality with grave consequences for all of us as Syrians and for Syria’s present and future.

Guided by our national, moral and humanitarian responsibilities, and by our conviction that **Quneitra is not a cause for its residents alone, and that defending southern Syria means defending Syria’s sovereignty and the dignity of all its people**, we affirm the following:

First: Full solidarity with the people of Quneitra and southern Syria: We express our unconditional solidarity with residents facing Israeli attacks on a daily basis and affirm that these attacks are directed against all Syrians. Protecting their lives, land and rights is a shared national responsibility that must neither be neglected nor treated as a local or peripheral concern. We also affirm that our failure as Syrians to fulfil this responsibility is no longer acceptable under any circumstances.

Second: Intensifying peaceful popular and civic mobilization: We call on all sectors and communities of Syrian society—individuals and groups, organizations, trade unions, community actors and political forces—to fulfil their national and moral responsibilities and intensify peaceful protest and solidarity across Syria’s governorates, rejecting Israeli attacks and affirming that Syrian sovereignty and citizens’ rights must not be subject to bargaining or exploited for political or electoral purposes by the government of the occupying Power.

Third: Action at the Arab, regional and international levels: We call on all actors, particularly the Syrian Government, to intensify political, human rights and diplomatic efforts to condemn Israeli attacks, mobilize Arab, regional and international support to bring them to an end, hold those responsible to account, and press for respect for Syria’s sovereignty and territorial integrity and the protection of its population.

Fourth: Syrian media must fulfil their national and professional responsibilities: We call on all Syrian media institutions, particularly State media, to give the events in

Quneitra and southern Syria the coverage they deserve through sustained and comprehensive reporting on the attacks, highlighting residents' suffering, conveying their voices and demands, and ensuring that their cause is neither marginalized nor excluded from public debate.

Fifth: Strengthening the role of Syrian civil society organizations. We call on civil society organizations to draw on their expertise and capacities in mobilization, advocacy, documentation and media work to develop national and international campaigns that raise awareness of Israeli attacks, while providing humanitarian and material support to affected communities in Quneitra and southern Syria, strengthening their resilience and protecting their rights.

Sixth: Clarifying the fate of abducted and missing persons: We call on international and United Nations bodies to immediately clarify the fate of the 49 Syrians from southern Syria who have been abducted by the Israeli occupation authorities or remain missing in their custody, work to secure their release, guarantee their rights and safety, and ensure that their suffering and that of their families is not forgotten.

Seventh: Strengthening national solidarity and rejecting the use of the cause of southern Syria for divisive political purposes: We appeal to all Syrian communities, across all governorates and regardless of their affiliations and positions, to rally around Quneitra and southern Syria as a shared national cause that transcends political, social and regional divisions. Our internal differences, however deep, must not prevent us from taking a united stand against attacks on our land, our sovereignty and our citizens' rights.

Call for a National Day of Solidarity and Peaceful Protest – Friday, 23 October 2026

In light of the above, **we call on all Syrian women and men, across Syria's governorates and regions, to participate in large numbers in peaceful demonstrations and protest gatherings on Friday, 23 October 2026, under the slogan "Southern Syria Is Not a Stage for Your Elections",** to reject Israeli attacks and stand in solidarity with the people of Quneitra and southern Syria.

We also call for the display of banners and slogans affirming Syria's territorial integrity and rejecting occupation and attacks, for solidarity campaigns on social media, and for the dissemination of hashtags supporting Quneitra and southern Syria, to help bring the voices of affected residents to the attention of the public locally, across the Arab world and internationally.

Silence over what is happening in Quneitra today opens the door to continued and expanded attacks tomorrow. Defending the south is not the responsibility of its people alone; it is a national duty incumbent upon all Syrians.

Quneitra is not alone, the south is not on the margins of the nation, and Syrian sovereignty is indivisible.

Together for Quneitra, together for the south, together for a free, united and sovereign Syria.

Issued by a group of Syrian activists and civil society organizations.

Date: 20 October 2026

Times and locations of protest gatherings on Friday, 23 October

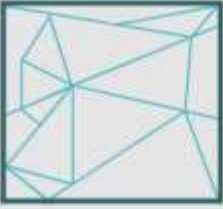
Daraa: 18 March Square, 4 p.m.

Damascus: In front of the United Nations building, Mezzeh Western Villas, 2 p.m.

Homs: Clock Roundabout, 4 p.m.

Masyaf: In front of Masyaf Castle, 4 p.m.

Raqqa: Al Naim Roundabout, 4 p.m.



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 unfailing 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.