STJ Submissions to the Fourth Cycle of the Universal Periodic Review



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Following the fall of Syria's former government, Syrians for Truth and Justice (STJ) contributed to the fourth cycle of the Universal Periodic Review (UPR), both independently and in partnership with Syrian and international organizations. The UPR is a United Nations mechanism through which Member States periodically review one another's human rights records. STJ contributed to five submissions to the Working Group on the Universal Periodic Review, which is scheduled to review Syria at its 54th session in January 2027.

The submissions cover the period since Syria's previous review in 2022, with a focus on the transition following December 2024. They draw on the principle of State continuity, under which the transitional authorities remain bound by Syria's international obligations. Many of the recommendations Syria supported during the third cycle remain unimplemented.

Minorities Face Identity-Based Violence and Institutional Exclusion

In its individual submission, STJ documented recurring patterns of violations affecting members of Alawite, Druze, Kurdish and Christian communities, including killings, arbitrary detention, forced displacement and discriminatory exclusion from public employment. STJ recommended adopting comprehensive equality and non-discrimination legislation, vetting individual members of military and security formations integrated into State institutions, and placing those formations under independent civilian oversight.

From Arbitrary Detention to Economic Rights

A joint submission by 12 organizations, including STJ, addressed arbitrary detention and displacement, as well as judicial independence, transitional justice and economic rights. It called for amendments to the 1961 Judicial Authority Law to guarantee the independence of the judiciary.

Enforced Disappearance and Tens of Thousands of Unresolved Cases

STJ, the Euro-Mediterranean Federation against Enforced Disappearances (FEMED) and the Committee for the Defense of Democratic Freedoms and Human Rights (CDF) in Syria presented a joint submission citing figures that put the number of people who remained arbitrarily detained or forcibly disappeared in Syria as of August 2025 at no fewer than 181,312. The submission recommended that Syria become a party to the International Convention for the Protection of All Persons from Enforced Disappearance and criminalize enforced disappearance as a distinct offense.

Death Penalty and the Call for a Moratorium

In a joint submission by The Advocates for Human Rights, the World Coalition Against the Death Penalty and Syrians for Truth and Justice (STJ), the organizations stated that the Syrian government had neither abolished the death penalty nor amended the laws authorizing it. They also stated that Syria had taken no steps toward becoming a party to the Second Optional Protocol to the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights, aiming at the abolition of the death penalty. The organizations called for a formal moratorium on executions and a comprehensive review of legislation authorizing the death penalty.

Statelessness and Internal Displacement

In a joint submission, STJ and other Syrian organizations called for a comprehensive review of the nationality law to eliminate discrimination against mothers in conferring nationality on their children and address the consequences of the 1962 census in Hasakah. They also called on Syria to accede to the 1954 Convention relating to the Status of Stateless Persons and the 1961 Convention on the Reduction of Statelessness, and to establish a national framework guaranteeing the voluntary return of internally displaced persons in safety and dignity.

Through these submissions, STJ seeks to provide UN Member States and mechanisms with documented findings and actionable recommendations. The upcoming review offers an opportunity to assess how far the transitional authorities have fulfilled Syria's international human rights obligations and to press for concrete measures to protect the rights of all victims without discrimination.

سوريون من أجل الحقيقة والعدالة

Syrians For Truth & Justice

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.