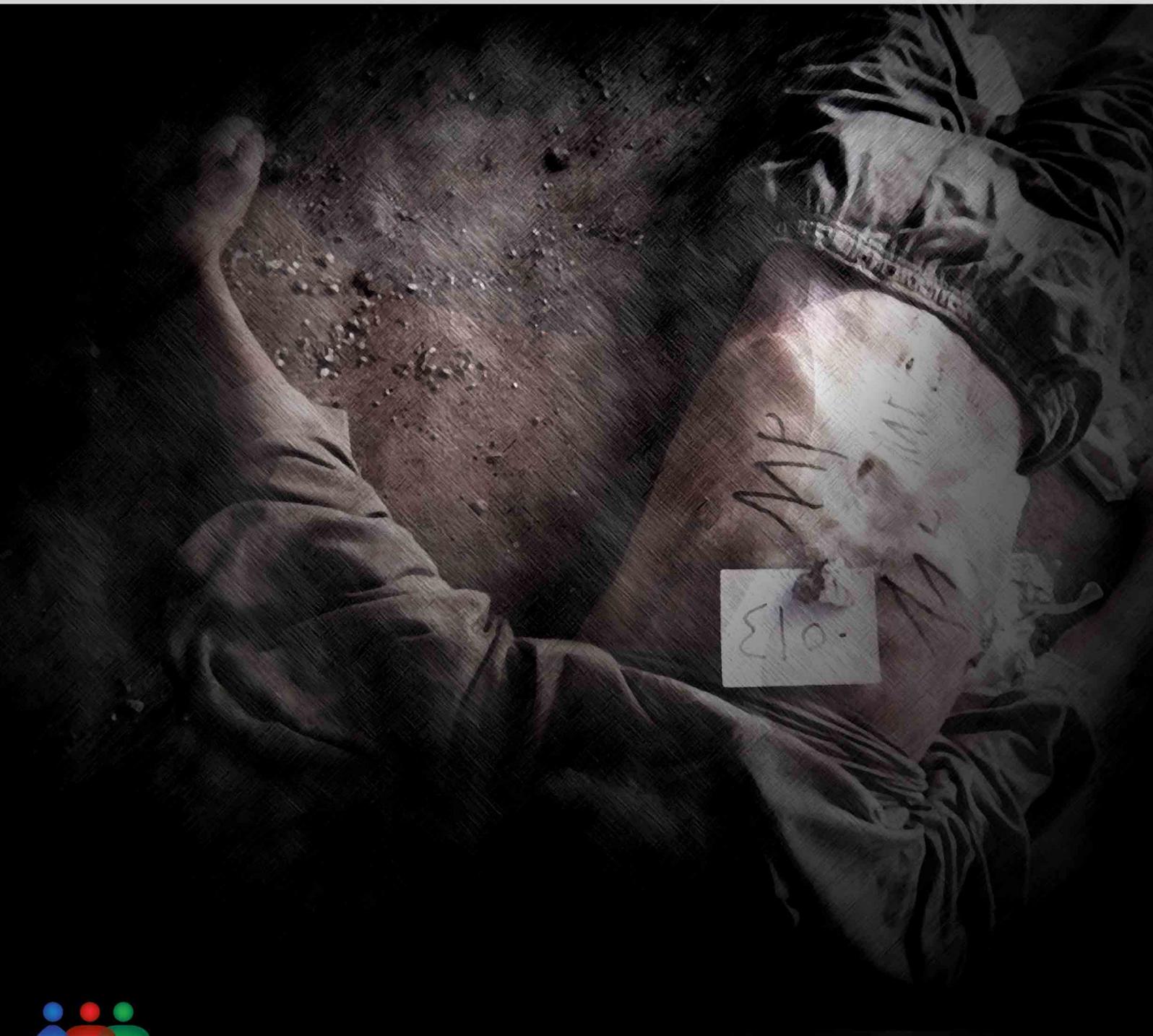


# Analytical Study about the Leaked Pictures of Torture Victims in Syrian Military Hospitals

## “The Photographed Holocaust”



**The Syrian Network for Human Rights** is a independent and non-governmental, non-profit human rights organization that investigates and documents all violations committed by all conflict parties involved in the Syrian conflict since 2011. The network, that does not adopt any ideology, was founded in June 2011 and aims to defend the human rights of the Syrian people. It also includes 27 researchers and human rights activists stationed in Syria and in other neighboring countries.

**SNHR** is committed to all standards and international conventions of Human Rights issued by the United Nations. It aims to ensure that victims' rights are not exploited and perpetrators are held accountable for their crimes.

**SNHR** issues periodic reports concerning the most notable daily violations, eight monthly statistical or specialized reports, annual reports, and reports concerning global human rights events. It also issues significant studies and documentaries on a regular basis in order to contribute to raising awareness in the Syrian community.

**SNHR** is considered to be one of the most distinguished and reliable sources of information and references for all the analytical and statistical studies issued by the United Nations.



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The Syrian Network for Human Rights notes that this study includes a graphic and violent content for Syrian victims who died under torture in government detention centers. It is worth noting that the leaked images have been edited to reduce its graphic nature. We received the images directly from a defector from the Department of Forensic Evidence in the Military Police, known as Caesar and Mr. Sami, the computer technician

## I. Introduction:

Since the beginning of the uprising in March 2011, the Syrian government resorted to arbitrary arrests as a policy to oppress revolting civilians. Syrians have been suffering from a ruthless killing machine which relied on different killing methods that amount to crimes against humanity and war crimes, amidst international silence. By far, torture remains one of the most brutal and ferocious methods of death practiced by the Syrian government.

In its first report on 23 December 2011, SNHR and other international human rights organizations accused the Syrian regime of committing crimes against humanity.

We received a number of images for detainees who were killed under torture in detention centers. Their families confirmed that they were in good health and did not suffer from any diseases or illnesses upon their arrest; however they were killed under torture. It is worth noting that the Syrian regime did not release all victims' bodies, except in certain cases. In SNHR we documented not less than 417 bodies that were received by victims' families and bear signs of torture.

In a number of documented cases, we lack pictures of killed detainees or any official documents that prove their death, since sometimes government forces do not provide the detainees' families with death certificates or their bodies. Therefore, we rely on testimonies of other detainees or we communicate with the detainees' families who inform us that they were contacted by officials from the security branches to inform them of their son or daughter's death. In some cases, detainees' families resort to bribing security officials to receive some information about their detained children or family members. Also, detainees' parents fear being arrested, if they want to claim their children's bodies or their personal belongings.

On 20 January 2014 a number of media outlets circulated the "Caesar Photographs". The photographer, whose pseudonym is "Caesar", also a defector from the Department of Forensic Evidence, leaked a great number of photos of detainees who were tortured to death; which showed clear evidence of war crimes and crimes against humanity.

The bodies showed clear signs of torture, gouged eyes, mutilated genitals, bruises, dried blood from beatings, acid and electric burns, strangulation marks, and starvation signs.

In March 2015, different websites published almost six thousand shocking pictures of detainees' bodies who bear signs of severe torture. We believe that publishing these 6000 images haphazardly constitutes a violation to the detainees' privacy, since a number of families do not approve publishing their pictures this way. Further, publishing all these images at once caused psychological traumas to detainees' families and to the Syrian community. Families of enforced disappeared detainees were forced to examine not less than three thousand and one hundred images hoping that they will not identify their family member's identity. However, it should be noted that the Syrian authorities can easily liquidate all the officials and members who were involved in this crime. Also, some of the detainees' families might wish to revenge their children's deaths who were killed by these officials and soldiers.

On 9 June 2015, SNHR documentation team recorded the arbitrary arrest of two families from Damascus city, whose children's pictures were published among the Caesar images.

After a number of attempts SNHR was able to interview Caesar and his companion, Mr. Sami, who spoke in details about their struggle since their defection, until the images were published.

"Caesar" and "Sami" gave their testimonies to SNHR about thousands of the digital photographs they saved on CDs, which were not arranged in order. The average rate of the images' resolution is 1.2 megabytes which allows doctors of criminal investigation to infer the cause of deaths and the circumstances that led to mutilation of the detainees' bodies, before and after their death and whether their bodies were stored in certain places before they were buried or cremated. Among the images Caesar took from his mobile phone were execution orders and directives to falsify death certificates, dispose detainees' bodies and write-off their civil records in the Syrian government registers.

"Caesar" granted us his approval to record his testimony, as we also informed "Sami" and other witnesses of the purpose of these interviews.

"Most of those victims were killed under torture while others were massacred. These pictures include victims of 6 massacres who were killed in Damascus suburbs (in Douma, Al Douma, and Rankous regions), and in Daraa governorate, where entire families were killed in their houses. Also, some of the victims' bodies belonged to armed opposition groups who were killed or injured during clashes with government forces," said Caesar.

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SNHR recorded the death of 2781 individuals under torture since March 2011 and up till 30 August 2013, including 24 women and 82 children. We always assure that these figures are the bare minimum of our recorded cases, since it is challenging and difficult to document all cases of death under torture.

*About the reason why bodies were photographed, Caesar told us that the regimes aims to photograph the bodies to assure that this person had died since a great number of security forces officers received bribes in order to release a detainee. Depending on the victim’s picture, an official paper would be released attached to a false medical report which is then sent to the military judiciary court, which in turn issues a death certificate for this person. Besides, the regime is fully aware that all perpetrators enjoy full immunity incase their crimes comes out to the public.*

## II. Methodology and Aim of the Study:

“Caesar” photos received widespread coverage and certainly such an amount of brutal violence committed against helpless detainees should receive more attention.

We conducted this study to document and guarantee the human rights of those detainees, even after their death, who were brutally killed and tortured by government forces. However, the importance lies in identifying each picture since not less than 65 thousand individuals are considered to be “enforced disappeared” individuals, according to our latest report, [“Gone without a Trace”](#).

SNHR possesses archives of all the victims it managed to document since 2011 and until now. Those archives include the name, age, date of arrest, location, religion, occupation, date and cause of death and pictures. As stated in the introduction, government forces do not hand over the body to the victims’ families and therefore we do not possess pictures of them after their torture and death. However, here lies the importance of “Caesar’s” photos. Using facial recognition software, we can match the victims’ pictures before and after their death. If the match is found, then we will be able to identify the detainees’ name, how they were arrested and why, in addition to other relevant details and the detainees’ families will have the closure they have been seeking.

**Fadel Abdul Ghany, head of SNHR says:**

**“Matching the victims’ pictures “Caesar” took with our data will identify the identity and the fate of the enforced disappeared individuals and will enrich the value of our legal case. We hope that “Caesar” will provide us with all the photos he has as soon as possible.”**

Amongst the 6000 photos we received from “Caesar”, we were able to identify 772 victims’ identities by communicating with their families or by our local activists. We faced a number of challenges during this process characterized by a number of families who claimed that the pictures belonged to their family members. However, the facial recognition software has not been finalized yet, therefore, the identification we received from the victims’ families will remain subject to ongoing scrutiny and review.

Upon matching the 772 identities with SNHR archives, we found that only 123 victims were recorded in our database (16%); which means that there are 650 new cases that were not recorded (84%). It is a strong indicator that what we recorded is indeed the bare minimum of the torture and enforced disappearances cases.

The following study includes nine major testimonies, detailed as follows:

- Two testimonies for “Caesar” and “Sami” his companion
  - Four testimonies for individuals who were treated in 601 Military Hospital in Damascus, which is where most of the victims’ photographs were taken.
  - Two testimonies for two workers at 601 Military Hospital, one of them is a defected officer and the other is a doctor who worked in the hospital until the mid of 2011.
- All witnesses were informed with the testimonies aim and some of them requested a change in their real names due to security concerns.

It took us almost five months to conduct this study for several reasons:

The matching process between the victims’ pictures and our archives was time consuming. Also, upon trying to gather information about each picture we faced a number of cases where families claimed that the victim’s picture is their son due to the bodies’ mutilation that resulted from torture and starvation.

Most of the families we communicated with stated that their children were in good health when they were arrested. They also affirmed that they did not possess any kind of information about their children since they were arrested or abducted by government forces, therefore, considered forcibly disappeared individuals.

### III. 601 Military Hospital: Location of the Photographed Bodies

601 Military Hospital (also known as Martyr Youssef Al Azama Hospital) is located in Al Mazza City in western Damascus. It is considered to be one of the most notable hospitals in Damascus since it receives torture victims' and gun-shot bodies from different detention centers and prisons. However, [Teshreen Military Hospital](#) also receives the same kind of bodies but to a lesser extent.

In these two hospitals, "Caesar's" job was to take pictures of the victims' bodies.

"Caesar's" Testimony:

*"Most of the pictures I took were in the morgue of the 601 Military Hospital in Damascus and the rest were taken in Teshreen Military Hospital. I took the pictures on separate times, as requested by the Military Prosecution Department from the photography division where I worked.*

*Most of the victims' were detainees in the following security branches: Branch 215, Branch 227, Branch 235, Air-Force Intelligence Branch and in some military units. However, we must not lose sight of an important issue. Frequently, some detainees died in the Trauma Department while they were being treated, then their bodies were moved to the morgue. While other detainees died in the vehicles' garage in 601 Hospital. In that case, it was said that they came from the trauma department. Bodies piled up in the garage for a number of days. That place is not valid for storage purposes, how come to human bodies."*

An [image](#) that depicts the where the bodies were compiled in the garage of 601 Military Hospital

601 Military Hospital is composed of at least ten buildings. Two of the buildings were old, and one of them (indicated by number 2 in the picture) was a one story building designated for trauma patients. Two new buildings were used to treat injured government forces and militia members that supported it.

The Trauma Department is a one story building that was built during the French Colonization period and was abandoned until 2011. When government forces tried to quell the uprising, they transformed the Trauma Department to a detention center specialized for treating detainees. Government forces equipped the hospital with iron doors and windows and the building constituted from three detainee dormitories in addition to a warehouse and a kitchen. Government forces allocated the dormitories as follows:

The first dormitory was for detainees from the Military Security Branches, the second dormitory was for detainees from the Air-Force Intelligence Branch, the third dormitory was for detainees who were referred to judiciary courts. All dormitories were supervised by members of security forces.

According to survivors' testimonies who were treated in the Trauma Department in 601 Military Hospital, the department's manager was an Officer Assistant and there were both military and civilian doctors and nurses. Also, the guards were security forces members and even though doctors performed periodic visits, there is no actual medical supervision. The doctors' tasks are restricted to examining the detainees, diagnosing their cases, and prescribing medicine. In order to increase the detainees' torment, members of security forces, who are medically unqualified, are responsible for installing catheters, injecting patients with their medicine, and changing wound dressings. Therefore, detainees died in the Trauma Department due to medical negligence. The cleaning staffers, who are civilians, were requested to clean the department, distribute food for detainees, and transport detainees. They would untangle the detainee from the metal chains and then drop his body in the bathroom or in the hallway, and then security forces would transport the detainees' bodies using ambulances or closed vehicles from the Trauma Department to the car-repair garage in 601 Hospital.

An illustrative image using google maps for 601 Military Hospital. The locations were identified by a defected officer who worked in the hospital. SNHR recorded his testimony.

An illustrative scheme via google maps about the buildings of 601 Military Hospital



The building schemes of 601 Military Hospital  
(Locations have been pinpointed by one of the defected soldiers)

	Hospital's Main Entrance
1 - 2	The old hospital
1	The building consists of two floors: <b>A. The ground floor:</b> Administration Offices (office of the administration officer, officer of the officer on duty, Al Thateya Office, other officers, the financial department) <b>B. The first floor:</b> Patients' Dormitories Doctors and staff rooms
2	The Trauma Department and Maxillofacial Surgery
3	<b>The New Hospital:</b> In the basement: Ambulatory Department and Ambulatory Operation Rooms On the ground floor: The General Manager's Office and Radiology Department On the second floor: Operations Department The rest three floors consist of patients' rooms, doctors' offices and the intensive care unit.
4	A new building, which is an expansion to the old ones, expected to be opened in late 2011.
5	A square surrounded by the Outpatient Department. Also, it has an entrance from the main street. A door joins it to the square that leads to building number 3. The square between building 3 and 5 is the ambulatory square.
	The main street
6	The Military Obstetrics Hospital (602 Hospital)
7	An under construction building, within which was the Laboratory Department
8	Housings for resident doctors
9 - 10	Soldiers' dorms and garages
11	Garages that included military transportation vehicles, ambulances, and warehouses where the victims' bodies were gathered.
The Yellow line	Mazze Military Prison

“Caesar” Testimony:

*“My officer in the Military Police in Damascus ordered me to visit the 601 Hospital periodically at 10 a.m. A forensic doctor always accompanied me from Teshreen Medical Hospital to write the medical reports and the cause of death.”*

Before the uprising, Caesar used to examine crime scenes related to army personnel. However, since the second week of the uprising in March 2011, Caesar’s task was to photograph any criminal incident related to military personnel, then send it to the judiciary court. On 20 August 2013, Caesar decided to defect and leave Syria after he felt threatened if government forces discover that he had copies of the images he took. He also felt threatened by armed opposition groups who were not informed of his undercover work.

In September 2011, Caesar stopped taking photos of the victims’ bodies, but the rest of the photographers in the Department of Forensic Evidence continued to do so.

Caesar told SNHR:

*My task was based on photographing detainees’ bodies; I took 3 to 9 images for one body, organizing judicial statements attached to victims’ pictures and forensic medical reports from the assigned doctor at 601 and Teshreen Military Hospitals. Then, the medical report from the military judiciary court or Teshreen Military Hospital is issued and determines the cause of death as a respiratory failure or a cardiac arrest, even though the victims’ bodies show clear signs of unimaginable torture. The procedures end by preparing a file with the victims’ number, his picture and a printed statement that says that the victim died in 601 Hospital due to a cardiac arrest and respiratory failure, then signed by the head of the security branch who detained the victim.”*



Image of a medical report from Teshreen Military Hospital clarify the cause of death of a victim in a government detention center according to what the government forces told the family of the victim

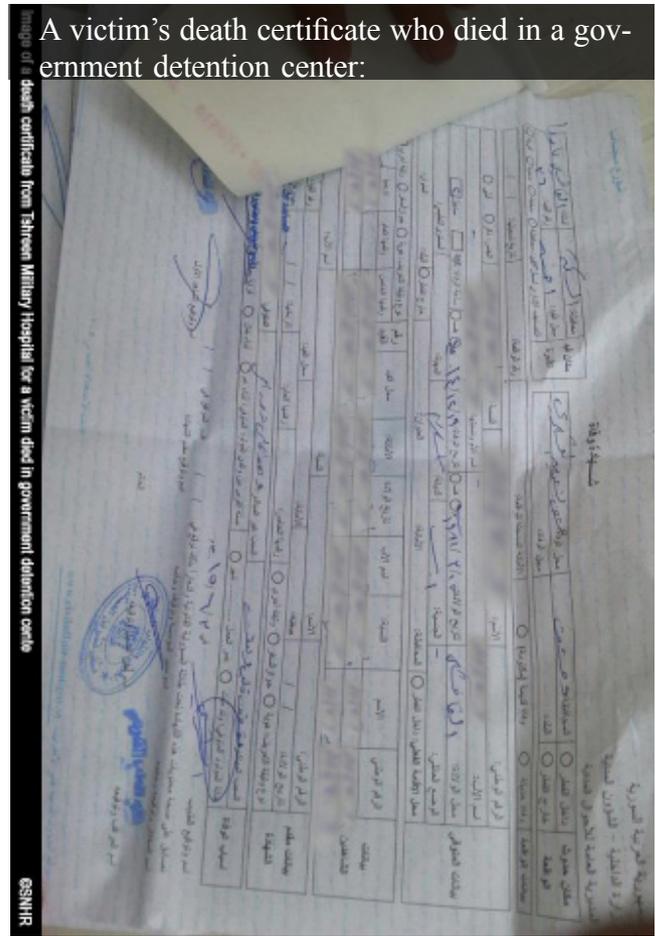


Image of a death certificate from Teshreen Military Hospital for a victim died in government detention center

## IV. Cross-referencing results between SNHR archive and Caesar's photos:

SNHR cross-referenced its archive and reports about detainees and torture victims with the information gathered from the victims' families and friends who identified the bodies. This process was time consuming and psychologically stressful due to the graphic nature of the images and the need of separately reviewing it.

### *The preliminary results are detailed as follows:*

- We were able to identify the identity of 772 victims including a woman; amongst which 123 victims were recorded in our database before Caesar's photos were published. We were able to identify some of the most distinguished victims, and the results are detailed as follows:

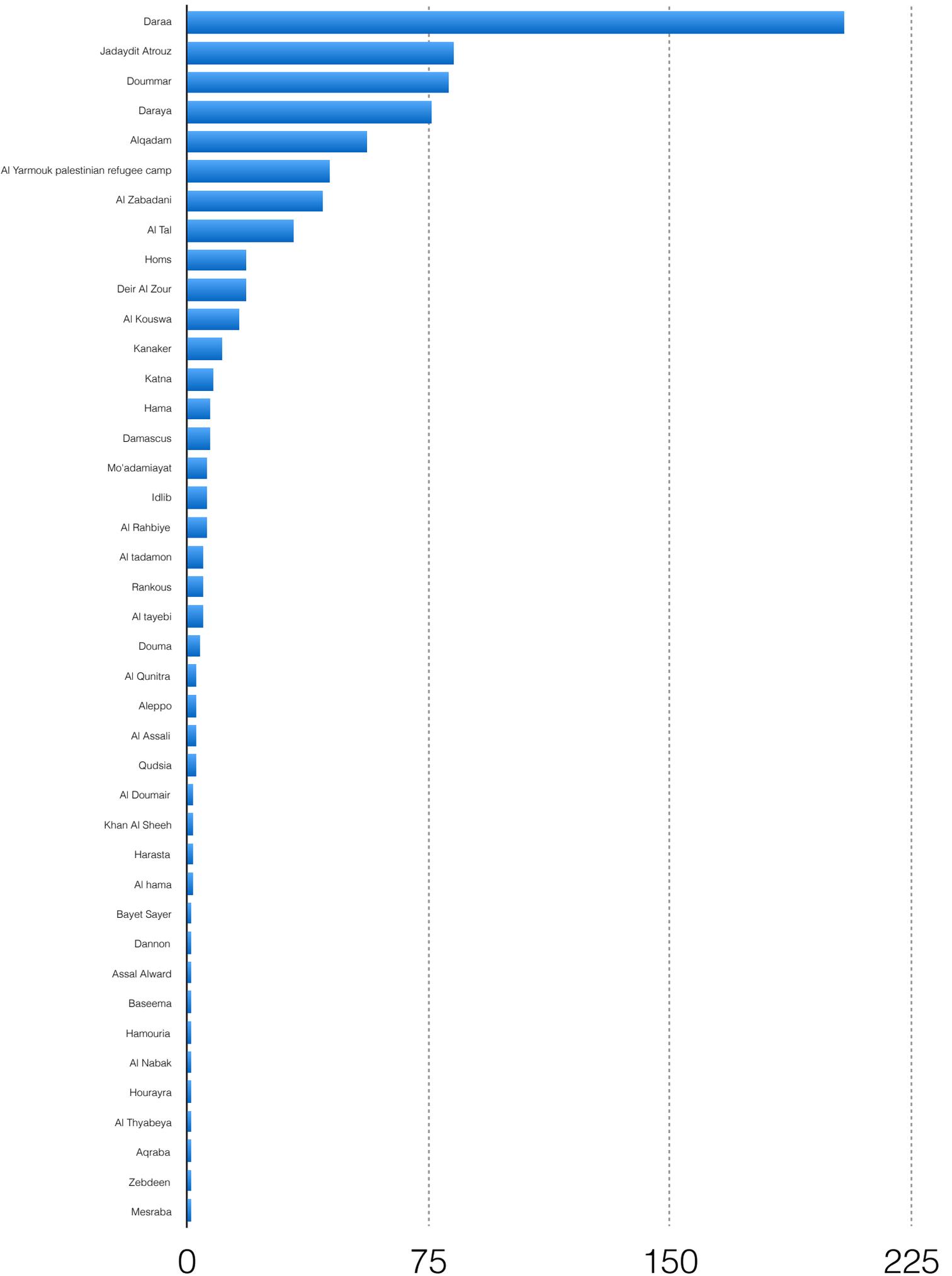
- A doctor, an athlete, a university lecturer, a civil engineer, two clerks, one media activist, two activists in the uprising and a female.

- It is worth noting that 49 victims were Palestinians who lived in Syria and a Jordanian resident.

### **The identified victims' details according to the Syrian governorates and regions:**

Daraa:	204 victims, amongst which 21 victims are recorded in SNHR victims' archive.
Jadaydit Atrouz:	83 victims
Doummour:	81 victims, amongst which 13 victims are recorded in SNHR victims' archive.
Daraya:	76 victims, amongst which 43 victims were identified by their families, and 33 victims were identified by victims' friends and local activists. Nine victims out of 76 are recorded in SNHR victims' archive.
Al Qadam:	56 victims, amongst which 40 victims are recorded in SNHR victims' archive.
Al Yarmouk Palestinian Refugee Camp:	44 victims, amongst which 3 victims are recorded in SNHR victims' archive.
Al Zabadani:	42 victims, including a doctor, amongst which 7 victims are recorded in SNHR victims' archive.
Al Tal:	33 victims, including a doctor, amongst which 9 victims are recorded in SNHR victims' archive.
Homs:	18 victims
Deir Al Zour:	18 victims, amongst which 3 victims are recorded in SNHR victims' archive.
Al Kouswa:	16 victims, amongst which 5 victims are recorded in SNHR victims' archive.
Kanaker:	11 victims
Katna:	8 victims, amongst which 3 victims are recorded in SNHR victims' archive.
Hama:	7 victims, amongst which 1 victim is recorded in SNHR victims' archive.

Damascus City:	7 victims, including 3 victims are recorded in SNHR victims' archive.
Mo'adamiyat Al Sham:	6 victims
Idlib:	6 victims, amongst which 1 victim is recorded in SNHR victims' archive.
Al Rahbiye:	6 victims
Al Tadamon:	5 victims
Rankous:	5 victims, amongst which 3 victims are recorded in SNHR victims' archive.
Al Tayebi:	5 victims
Douma:	4 victims
Al Qunaitra:	3 victims, amongst which a Judo athlete
Aleppo:	3 victims, amongst which 1 victim is recorded in SNHR victims' archive.
Al Assali:	3 victims
Kudsaya:	3 victims
Al Doumair:	2 victims
Khan Al Sheeh:	2 victims
Harasta:	2 victims
Al Hamma:	2 victims
Beir Sayer:	1 victim
Danoun:	1 victim
Assal Al Ward:	1 victim
Baseema:	1 victim
Hamouriya:	1 victim
Al Nabak:	1 victim, recorded in SNHR victims' archive.
Hourayra:	1 victim
Al Thyabeya:	1 victim
Akraba:	1 victim
Zebdeen:	1 victim
Mesraba:	1 victim



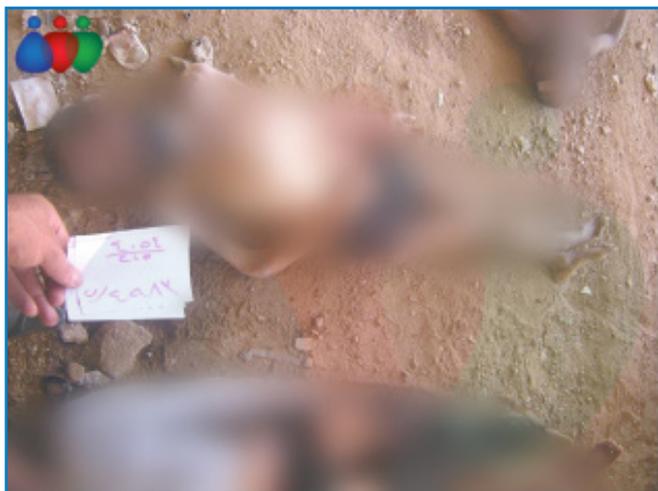
## V. Analysis of the Leaked Images:

Upon analyzing almost six thousand one hundred images Caesar took, the following results were obtained:

### 1 The numbers written on the victims' bodies and cards represented the following:

- The victims' number on 601 Military Hospital, followed by the number of the security branch where the victim was detained, then the number of the report written by the forensic doctor

In the following [image](#), 4054 is the detainee's number in the security branch (before his death), 215 is the number of the security forces' branch he was detained in, /4983 is the number of the forensic report after the detainee's death.



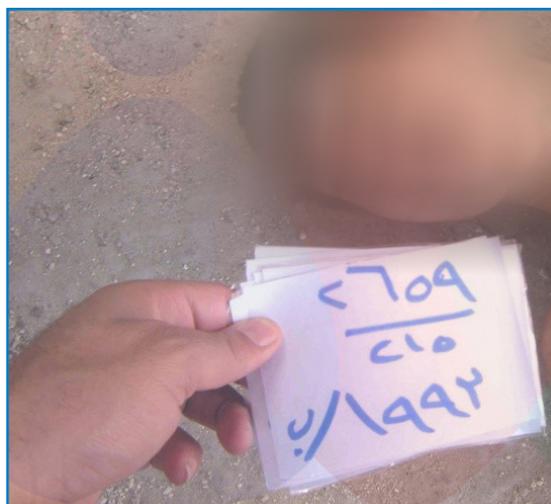
- Victims' numbers – [precisely the detainee's number after his death under torture](#) in the security forces' branch – are either sequential or disordered. Nonetheless, we could not analyze or identify the purpose behind it.

2 90% of the examined images depicted victims' naked bodies or tattered clothes. Handcuff marks on wrists and strangulation marks on victims' necks were observed. Wires or ropes were used as strangulation means; and other bodies exhibited the use of burning substances like acids. Some victims also had their eyes gouged, fingers cut and genitals mutilated; also other images depicted direct torture signs. However, some bodies showed clear signs of starvation (which is a torturing technique). To read more about the torturing techniques practiced by government forces, please read the following report "The Most Notable 46 Torturing Techniques" that was issued in 2011.

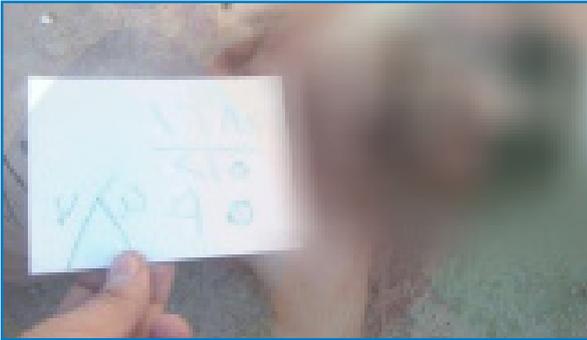
3 Some of the victims' bodies were from different security branches but all the bodies were gathered in one place, whether it came from major or secondary branches.

A [picture](#) that depicts two bodies numbered: 2076 and 2075 from security forces' branch 227. The victim's body number 3194 came from security forces' branch 215 in Damascus, also victim's body number 245 came from branch 216 in Damascus.

4 Victims' bodies that appears to be for [young men](#) who are less than 18 years, which confirms that children or adolescents were detained. The bodies depict torture signs and strangulation marks.



5 *Bodies of elderly victims*



6 *Women's bodies among the victims which proves the arrest of women .*

7 *Some bodies that were gathered from Al Mazze Military Hospital beard clear signs of torture and fresh blood which means that the victim was probably alive after he was brought to the hospital's garage.*

8 *Some of the images showed blood spatter around the eye socket which indicates the use of a sharp tool that was used.*

9 *Some victims' bodies showed black charcoaling marks which indicate the use of electrocution.*

10 *Most of the victims' bodies showed starvation signs. This is evident in the emergence of the skeleton at the pelvis, thin limbs, sunken eye sockets, the collar bone, chest bone and ribs are quite pronounced, leaving no doubt that the detainees were starved.*

11 *Some of the victims' bodies beard signs of odd punctures which indicate the use of sharp objects that might be caused by an electric drill or a similar instrument.*

12 *Upon examining some documents, and testimonies from defected officers in 601 Military Hospital, we realized that government forces wrapped the bodies in plastic bags aiming to incinerate or bury it in mass graves.*

13 *We noticed the presence of insects and dried wastes that appear to be bird wastes, in the victims' eye sockets and mouths, which prove that the bodies were abandoned for long periods of time after it were gathered for photography.*

14 *A number of images showed severe ulcers on the detainees' feet and legs. Some images showed exposed bones in the legs, feet or insteps.*

15 *Some bodies showed signs of decomposition and disintegration which indicates that the bodies were kept in poor storage places that lasted for long periods of time.*

16 *Some bodies showed brutal burning signs on the face and neck to the extent that it exposed the bones.*

17 *Some bodies still had medical tubes attached to it which indicates that the victims were arrested while receiving treatment in a hospital.*

18 *Some victims suffered from congenital or mental disorders which prove that the arrests were brutal, arbitrary and illogical.*

19 *Some victims' bodies had Palestine tattoos which meant they were likely Palestinians who resided in Syria.*

## VI. The Bodies' Fate

Government forces either bury the bodies in mass graves or incinerate it in Al Tal incinerator or in Harasta Military Hospital in Damascus suburbs.

According to Caesar's documents, the burial office was an accomplice in crime since the process of receiving the bodies was made between them and the military police.

After almost 150 bodies pile-up in 601 Military Hospital, a military vehicle loads the bodies and takes it to unknown locations. Caesar told us that he does not know anything about the bodies' fate, but another defected officer assured that the bodies were taken to be buried in mass graves.

*The most significant cemeteries where the bodies were buried:*

### **Najha Cemetery:**

Najha Cemetery is located in Damascus suburbs in Al Housyniya region and is almost 750 acres. However, it is worth noting that the cemetery's area before March 2011 was 150 acre, according the region's residents. When observing the cemetery location, we noticed a significant expansion in digging trenches between 2012 and up till the end of 2014.

An image that depicts the expansion in digging trenches in Najha Cemetery on 15 August 2014

### **Taboukiye Cemetery:**

Taboukiye Cemetery is located next to the Third Squad military headquarters, affiliated to government forces, in Al Qalamoun Mountains in Damascus northern suburbs. Its area is estimated by 15 thousand meters<sup>2</sup> as it is also difficult to pinpoint its location since it is a government military region where civilians are prohibited from entering it. The residents of that region told us that they saw freight vehicles that had blood signs on it and headed to the cemetery. We were not able to verify these details; however this account is an indicator that government forces are using new mass graves in remote areas.

### **Al Bahdaleyi Cemetery:**

This cemetery is located in Damascus suburbs in Al Housyniya region and is called the southern cemetery as well. Residents of that region told us that they repeatedly saw digging works and government forces during 2013.



## VII. 601 Military Hospital Survivors' Testimonies:

SNHR was able to communicate with Ahmad H. who performed maintenance works throughout his obligatory military service in 601 Military Hospital. His service lasted two years and three months until he defected in June 2013.

*Ahmad told us his testimony:*

*"Detainees' bodies were discarded in the garage since there was not enough space in the hospital's morgue that is specified for military personnel. Al Rehba is a large dusty land."*

During his obligatory service, Ahmad participated twice in transporting and loading the detainees' bodies, that was performed periodically.

*Ahmad said:*

*"The recruits from security forces transported between 250 to 350 bodies every three or four days; most of them came from different security branches. However, we transported two or three victims from the Trauma Department daily. Each detainee had a number which he was called by, however, when he dies, security forces' officials would write that number on his forehead, but on his body they would write the place of his death according to the branch he was in. If the word "trauma" was written on a detainee's body, it meant that he was in the Trauma Department when he was killed.*

*The forensic doctor would go to the Al Rahba during office hours and record the information that was on the bodies. When he finishes his job, he would tell the officer that he was "done", thus officers will wrap the body in nylon bags; they continue to do that until all the bodies are wrapped. This process was repeated three or four times daily. Officers would gather next to the hospital when vehicles that belonged to the intelligence systems arrive and take away the bodies. One time I heard the officers saying that the bodies are either going to be incinerated or buried in mass graves in Najha or Al Qalamoun."*

SNHR spoke to Mohsen Al Masri, born on 1980, from Al Mohajereen neighborhood in Damascus, an IT engineer, and one of the activists in the peaceful uprising in Damascus. He was arrested by government forces for the second time in 2 March 2012 on the Syrian-Lebanese borders while he was leaving Syria. He was transferred to 215 security forces branch in Damascus then to 291 Branch in the Military Security Department where he was detained for seven months. Then he was trialed at the civil court, and then Mohsen was transferred to Saydnaya Military Prison on 10 October 2012 where he was detained until 25 April 2013. Afterwards, he was transferred to the Air-Force Security Branch for re-investigations. On 19 May 2014, his health condition deteriorated due to poor conditions of his arrest in Saydana prison, which became worse in the Air-Force security branch in Damascus where he suffered from emaciation.

*Mohsen told SNHR:*

*"When I was transferred from Saydnaya prison to the Air-Force security branch, I suffered from emaciation and my situation deteriorated and I suffered from severe diarrhea, along with 16 other detainees, after they fed us rotten food. Due to the lack of hygiene, and since we were prevented from going to the toilets, wastes remained on our bodies. The dungeon's area was 90 cm by 2 m<sup>2</sup>, I suffered from shortness of breath and the next day, my health deteriorated so one of the detainees called the security officer then they called me and took me to a medical room inside the security branch in Al Mazze Airport in the new prison."*

Government forces transferred the detainees who are at the risk of dying to the medical room so that the doctor will examine them and write a medical report in preparation for transferring them to 601 Military Hospital.

*"After the doctor examined me, I was taken back to the cell. At night I was called again and taken to a corridor with five other detainees. Some of them suffered from severe diarrhea, hepatitis, skin ulcers. We were asked to get dressed since we were naked."*

Before Mohsen and the five detainees were taken to 601 Military Hospital, a number of government forces put an adhesive tape on detainees' foreheads and wrote a four-digit number and said it was their medical number. They threatened them in case they said their names during their treatment in 601 Hospital, and then transported them with a closed Hyundai car to the hospital.

*Mohsen said:*

*"When we arrived to 601 Hospital and after the vehicle stopped, a security officer climbed it, cursed us and asked us to stretch our arms to take blood samples without any sterilization. Then the car drove us to the detainees' department or what is also known as the Trauma Department."*

In each dorm, there were ten beds distributed to three groups. Each bed was designated to six detainees. All the detainees, who were naked, were restrained together with a metal chain on their legs. The detainees were put together with the detainees who suffered from contagious diseases. In each dorm, two bowls were put, one for water and the other for urination.

*Mohsen said:*

*"We used one bowl to urinate in which caused us urinary infections. We were prohibited from going to the toilet; thus the beds were full of wastes. "Al Sukhra" members, who were detainees were hired to clean the floor; cleaned the rooms however, it soon got dirty again due to the lack of hygiene, and since we were prevented from going to the bathrooms and ate on beds."*

The doctors who worked in 601 Hospital periodically checked on the sick detainees every three or five days without performing any medical tests to them. The doctors gave anti-inflammatory medications to all the patients without taking into account the patient's illness or disease. Government forces, who were not medically trained, stuck needles into the patients' veins out of entertainment, as they also stole the detained patients' food. Most of the detainees who had renal failure, died few days later after they were taken to 601 Hospital since the dialysis machine were not sterilized and since their therapy sessions were neglected. Detainees who were admitted to 601 Military Hospital upon medical emergency were neglected for three or five days until the doctor made his periodic tour.

*Mohsen said:*

*"When the colonel-doctor came to visit the department, he would call on one of the numbers, and we would tell him that he died. He would say: "Good" then he would call the "Sukhra" members to come and take the body away. When a patient dies, his body would be left for a day or two before they came and took it out because we were punished if we call on help outside their round times."*

Mohsen told SNHR that he saw a number of detainees who died to the medical negligence, as he also witnessed a killing incident in the hospital:

*"There was a young detained man with me in the dormitory from Jabal Al Zawiyah. His name was Mohanad, 24, and he suffered from diabetes. The colonel-doctor deprived him of his insulin intakes and put him in an isolated room where he stayed there for a number of days. When he was brought back to our dormitory, he was in a much deteriorated health state and he died two days later. Detainees' death happened every day. I remember once they brought one of the injured detainees from Al Doumair region and he bled right before our eyes as he died the other day."*

One of the detainees from Al Sukhra members told Mohsen that executions happened on a daily basis in 601 Hospital.

*Mohsen said:*

*"Executions in the Trauma Department happened at night after dinner was served to detained patients. We heard the battering sounds of the batons and the metal on their bodies until they died. Al Sukhra members took the bodies and gathered it in the bathroom. Then security forces took the bodies to the warehouse where they wrapped it with nylon bags then a car would come and transport the bodies to unknown locations."*

Nonetheless, it is worth noting that the Al Sukhra members (who are detainees but forced to work as cleaners) are usually killed according to eyewitness testimonies, then other detainees will be forced to perform the same tasks.

SNHR was able to communicate with a former detainee who survived his arrest. Mr. Marwan Abdul Wahab, from Homs, was arrested on 23 May 2012 then transferred to the Air-Force Intelligence Branch in Al Mazze in Damascus. He was severely tortured, electrocuted then charged with weapons possessions. After 45 days of his arrest, his health state deteriorated. He suffered from severe diarrhea, vomiting and fainting. A week later, he was transferred to the air-force intelligence branch in Teshreen Military Hospital after he was given 1958 as a number.

*Marwan said:*

*“They put me on a stretcher and handcuffed me. When I arrived to the hospital, they started to curse me and did not take my medical situation into account. They brutally picked me up and one of the nurses hit me and accused me of treason. Then they dragged me to a room on the second floor that contained 12 other detainees, where one of them was unconscious. The beds were dirty and close to each other. The bed sheets were dirty, smelly and bloody as well. All the detainees were restrained to their beds and I was not able to talk to any of them out of fear from security officers because it will be collective punishment. They threatened us that they would cut off our treatment and take us back to the former security branch. In most of the cases, they did not administer the full medication dosage to us, or in its proper time. On the third day I was in the hospital, a colonel-doctor entered our room and hit an injured detainee. He broke his cast on his arm and asked him to name the individuals who he worked with. He continued to beat him until he was unconscious, then he ordered the nurses not give him any medication and to keep him conscious to endure the pain and confess.”*

Two days later, he was discharged from the hospital without full recovery and he was transferred back to the Air-Force intelligence branch until he was released two months later on 3 September 2012.

Survivor Mr. Zayd Naddaf, from Al Mo’adamiya city in Damascus suburbs was arrested on 28 July 2012 after he was gun shot in his right thigh when he was participating in a protest in his city. Government forces transferred him to Teshreen Military Hospital and interrogated him. He stayed in the hospital for hours

before he was transferred to Air-Force security branch in Al Mazze in Damascus.

*Zayd told us:*

*“I was taken to Teshreen Military Hospital and before I received any treatment, I was interrogated. An officer conducted the interrogations and hit me with the soles of a Kalashnikov weapon on my injury. Then he said that they will continue the interrogations in the branch. A nurse came and sewed my wound without any anesthesia or sterilization while he cursed me. Then, he dragged me to a room in the first floor. I was not able to walk and stayed in the hospital for six hours and all the detainees there were in dire states. The detainees were gathered in a crowded room that lacks basic life necessities. Injured detainees were left without a treatment; the room was smelly and lacks any hygiene. A great number of injured detainees had either their hands or legs amputated and they were severely beaten on their wounds. Then I was transferred to the Air-Force military branch in Al Mazze airport.”*

We were able to communicate with one of the doctors who worked in 601 Military Hospital, Dr. (T.K.). He worked in the hospital until the end of June 2011.

*He told SNHR his testimony:*

*“On 30 April 2011, between 1 and 3 a.m. a Honda vehicle and a bus arrived to the hospital. It were loaded with bodies piled on each other and 30 injured individuals. Later I learned that the bodies were for victims of the massacre that was committed in Saida city in Daraa governorate.*

*Also later I learned that the massacre was committed by members of the air-force intelligence branch and the Head of military security department in 601 Hospital hit a man with the soles of a gun which caused his death the day after.”*

## VIII. The most significant officers and workers in 601 Hospital who were involved in the crimes

SNHR was able to identify the identity of 60 officers and employees who worked in 601 Military Hospital and contributed to this heinous and sadist crime that starts upon arrest, then torture and ends in 601 Hospital.

### Their names are:

Brigadier General	Dr. Ghassan Haddad, a gastroenterologist, manager of 601 Military Hospital
Colonel Houssien	Malouk – management officer
Security officer	Dr. Taha Assa'ad, a dermatologist, and manager of the outpatient clinics.
Officer	Shadi Rezk Zawda, director of the department of clinics who is the officer in charge of victims' numbers. He took the victims' names from the forensic doctor then enters it to the computer in the forensic medical office at the hospital.
Recruiter	Ali Brazi from Hama, from the 104 session. He was responsible for gathering soldiers, inspecting them then transporting them to the hospital to wrap the bodies and loaded into cars.
Major	Iyad Suliman, the officer responsible for the financial issues in Teshreen Military Hospital.
Assistant	Ammar Assa'ad – from the maintained department
Officer and doctor	Ammar Slayten
Colonel	Dr. Azam Ismaeil
Colonel	Akram Abbas
Officer and doctor	Mazen Al Assad
doctor	Ammar Suliman from Teshreen Military Hospital
doctor	Ahmad Homsiyi – a doctor in Teshreen Military Hospital
Colonel and doctor	Moufeed Darweeh – head of the ambulatory department
Colonel and doctor	Ma'an Saleem – an orthopedic surgeon
Colonel and doctor	Mohannad Zayoud – an orthopedic surgeon
Colonel and doctor	Ahmad Esmandar – an orthopedic surgeon
Colonel and doctor	Ismaeil Kiwan – a forensic doctor
Colonel and doctor	Akram Issa – a Genito- urinary surgeon

Captain and Doctor	Ahmad Al Hassan – a resident doctor and an orthopedic surgeon
Doctor	Abdul Raheem Al Hassan – a resident doctor and an orthopedic surgeon
Doctor	Mohamad Fandi – a resident doctor and a general surgeon
Captain and doctor	Rami Shameyi – a resident doctor and a general surgeon
Doctor	Khaldoon Shhade – a resident doctor and a Genito- urinary surgeon
Doctor	Bassel Khaddam – a resident doctor and a Genito- urinary surgeon
Captain and Doctor	Kousay Darweesh – a resident doctor and a Genito- urinary surgeon
Doctor	Alaa Ahmad– a resident doctor and a Genito- urinary surgeon
Captain and doctor	Mohannad Hassan – a resident doctor and a Genito- urinary surgeon
First Lieutenant and doctor	Mohannad Akal Moussa – a resident doctor and a Thoracic Surgeon
Doctor	Houssein Habeeb – a resident gynecologist
Major and Doctor	Hassan Mereei’ – an anesthesia doctor. Once he broke his hand when he was hitting injured detainees.
Captain and doctor	Iyad Saleh – a resident neurosurgeon
Forensic doctor,	head of the department of forensic medicine, Colonel and doctor Akram Al Shaar, who wrote the forensic report for child Hamza Al Khateeb

### The Nursing Staff:

Yehya Zareefa	head of the ambulatory nursing
Sha’aban Najma	
Adham Al Arabi	
Ali Zahra	
Ameer Madi	
Khayrat Salhab	
Imad Haydar	
Jaafar Omran	
Salem Mohamad	

Ghayath Ibrahim	
Nurse Fadi	from the ambulatory department
Issa Nasser	from the ambulatory department
Salem Iss	from the ambulatory department
Ali Al Raei'	
Fadi Zahra	
Ahmad Khadour	
Moharam Shahoud	
Youshaa' Hammad	
Thaer Dala	

#### Recruited Soldiers:

Jaykar Hassan	from Efreem in Aleppo suburbs
Khodor Abboud,	from Al Hassaka
Khaled Hourani,	from Al Hassaka
Rakan Sebssi	from Al Khaledya neighborhood in Homs
Mohamad Tafkanji	from Aleppo, a soldier who worked in the kitchen
Sameeh Salebi	from Al Selmeya in Hama governorate. He used to hit the bodies and jump on them. He was discharged because visual impairment. Now he works as a volunteer in the National Defense in Al Selmeya City.

## IX. Some of the Identified Victims

#### A media activist:

Yaman Al Rashyd Al Abazeab, from Daraa city, was S.N.N reporter. He was arrested on 10 October 2012 and died under torture in one of the security branches in Damascus. His family identified his body on 17 March 2015 through Caesar's published images.



#### An Athlete:

Mohamad Abdul Rahman Zareefa, from Saber town in Al Qunaitra governorate, was a champion in the Judo sports. He died under torture in one of the security branches in Damascus. His family identified his body on 17 March 2015 through Caesar's published images.

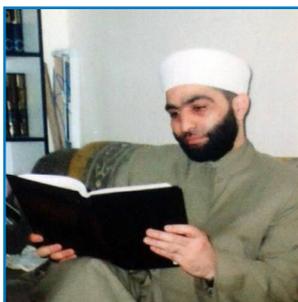


**A Relief aid activist:**

Ahmad Abbas Jouneid Al Hajjar, from Hama city, 34, was arrested on 14 May 2012 by government forces from his residence in Al Tadamoun neighborhood in Damascus. He died under torture in Branch 215. His family identified his body on 8 March 2015 through Caesar's published images.

**Clerks:**

Abdul Hadi Kanaan from Al Zabadani in Damascus suburbs, 32, was a clerk and an Imam in Al Jisr Mosque in Al Zabadani. On 15 February 2012 he was arrested by government forces and died under torture in one of the security branches in Damascus. His family identified his identity through the leaked images that were published on 8 March 2015.



Nabeel Al Ahmar, from Daraya city in Damascus suburbs, 45, a clerk and an Imam in Anas Bin Malek Mosque in Daraya city. He died under torture in one of the security branches in Damascus. His family identified him through the leaked images that were published on 8 March 2015.

**Peaceful Activists:**

Tarek Al Mo'adamani, from Daraya city in Damascus suburbs, 29, an activist in the peaceful uprising. He died under torture in one of the security forces branches in Damascus. His



family identified his identity through the leaked images that were published on 8 March 2015.

Abdulla A'asran Al Hariri, from Namer town in Daraa governorate, 36, died under torture in one of the security forces branches in Damascus suburbs. His family identified his identity through the leaked images that were published on 8 March 2015.

**Teachers:**

Ahmad Alyan from Dayara in Damascus suburbs was a teacher and Al Fares nursery principle in Daraya. He died under torture in one of the security branches in Damascus. His family identified his identity through the leaked images that were published on 8 March 2015.

**University Professors:**

Mohamad Zakareya Al Naddaf, from Damascus city, 42, was a university professor in Al Share'ea Faculty in Damascus University. On 6 April 2013, he was arrested with his wife by government forces. His wife was released later but he died under torture in one of the security branches in Damascus city. His family identified his identity through the Caesar leaked images.



**Engineers:**

Nidal Abdul Azeez Al Hajj Ali, from Khirbit Ghazali town in Daraa, 37, a holder of a Ph.D of Civil Engineering from Damascus University. He was arrested by government forces on 2 July 2013 on Al Masmeya checkpoint on Damascus-Al Swaida road. He died under torture in one of the security forces branches in Damascus. His family identified his identity through the Caesar leaked images that were published on 8 March 2015.

**Students:**

Ahmad Mahmoud Al Ahmad Al Sheikh, from Al Mouhassan city in Deir Al Zour, 24, a student in the Faculty of Electrical Engineering in Damascus University. He was arrested on 5 June 2013 by government forces in Damascus city, and died under torture in one of the government security branches in Damascus. His family identified his identity through the leaked Caesar images that were published on 8 March 2015.

**Doctors:**

Mohamad Nour Zaatar, from Al Tal city in Damascus suburbs, 31, a general physician, was arrested by government forces on 30 January 2012 from his residence in Al Tal city. He was killed under torture in one of the government detention centers and his family identified his identity through the leaked images that were published on 8 March 2015.

**A Female:**

Raha Ba'wlawi, a female, from Al Mouhassan city in Deir Al Zour governorate, 23, was an activist in relief aid. She was a student in the Faculty of Engineering in Damascus University, was arrested on 17 January 2013 and died under torture in 215 Branch in Damascus. Her family identified her identity through the leaked images on 17 March 2015.



## X. Conclusions and Recommendations:

**Conclusions:**

Even though torturing detainees is prohibited in all international laws, however it is being practiced by the Syrian government in its most heinous ways on a daily basis since March 2011; where we record the death of three to four cases of death under torture every day. Government forces practiced torture on its detainees systematically aiming to quell and suppress all civilians, especially the ones involved in the uprising. These crimes amount to crimes against humanity according to the Rome Statute.

## Recommendations:

### To the Security Council:

An effective method should be enacted to protect prisoners in government prisons.

The Security Council must continue to execute the following:

Resolution 2042 issued on 14 April 2012, resolution 2012, 2043 issued on 21 April 2012, and 2139 issued on 22 February 2014, to prevent enforced disappearances.

Syrian authorities should be pressured to allow the International Committee of the Red Cross to enter the prisons and investigate the prisoners' status and their needs.

Syrian authorities, and all other conflict parties, should be obligated to reveal the prisoners' whereabouts and their secret detention centers.

Even though the ruling government announced that it will commit to executing to the six point proposal of the joint special envoy that was issued on 25 March 2012, which stated:

*“intensify the pace and scale of release of arbitrarily detained persons, including especially vulnerable categories of persons, and persons involved in peaceful political activities, provide without delay through appropriate channels a list of all places in which such persons are being detained, immediately begin organizing access to such locations and through appropriate channels respond promptly to all written requests for information, access or release regarding such persons”*

However, the Syrian government denounced its commitment and breached all Security Council resolutions.

To the office of the High commissioner for human rights:

Frequent reports, that convict the ongoing systematic torture, should be issued. Survivors should be honored by highlighting their stories and holding the perpetrators accountable for their violations.

### To the Human Rights Council:

Attend with more seriousness to the issue of death under torture.

Demand the Security Council and International Organizations to shoulder its responsibilities towards this issue.

Pressure the Syrian government to cease its torturing techniques and allow humanitarian organizations to inspect the detainees' dire living situations.

Uphold the Syrian government allies, Russia, China and Iran, the material and moral responsibility of the regime's violations

### To the Arab League:

Demand the Security Council to devote its serious attention to the human rights case in Syria.

Pressure the Syrian government allies, Russia, Iran and China to halt their support to the ruling regime who has been massacring the Syrian people since 2011.

## Acknowledgment and Condolences

We would like to thank everyone who helped to deliver data to SNHR and specifically the activists who cooperated with us. Furthermore, our most heartfelt condolences go out for the victims' families and relatives who agreed to cooperate with us despite their grave losses.



Syrian Network For Human Rights  
الشبكة السورية لحقوق الإنسان

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