



Syrian Women in the Eye of the Storm

**International Day for the Elimination
of Violence against Women...
Violence against Syrian Women is
the Worst in the World**

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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I. Introduction and Methodology:

SNHR issued several reports that documented different violations that were committed against Syrian women since the uprising in March 2011. On the International Day for the Elimination of Violence against Women, Syrian women must be brought to spotlight as they have been subjected to murder, arrest, enforced disappearance, torture to death, sexual abuse and other violations committed against them and their rights, as human beings and as women. They were either arrested, tortured, raped, sexually harassed or abused, lost their children, parents, siblings, houses and even were forced to displace from one city to another or to different countries.

Nonetheless, Syrian women participated since the first moments of the beginning of Syrian Revolution; she was a demonstrator, media activist, paramedic, and a relief aid worker. The impact of the ongoing conflict increased the frequency of the violations that were committed against women.

All conflict parties have committed different violations against women in one way or another. In 2015, SNHR noticed the following:

1. The increase of the number of enforced disappearances in government central prisons.
2. Expelling government employees for arbitrary reasons.
3. Kurdish Self Management forces Kidnapped women with aims to forcibly recruit them.
4. Government militias and some armed opposition groups used women as human shields.
5. Extremist Islamic groups humiliated, stoned, lashed and beat up women in public squares.

Fadel Abdul Ghany, head of SNHR says:

“Due to the lack of any solution right now for the Syrian crisis on its different levels, we believe that there are flagrant failures in the field of welfare. Great numbers of women were displaced, lost their financial supporters, were subjected to torture in prisons, or have been traumatized due to sexual violence or abuse. However, even though there are few civil organizations who are aiding Syrian women, there are no rehabilitation centers that can help them psychologically and economically. Syrian women’s cause should be on top of the priorities’ list for the Syrian people’s supporters.”

The report methodology is based on SNHR’s archive of documented victims, prisoners, and forcibly-disappeared persons who all were documented through the network’s ongoing daily documentation and monitoring program since 2011 in addition to interviews and testimonies made via phone or Skype by survivors. The report highlights 7 testimonies, where some women talk about their experiences as activists then as victims, whilst other women decided to continue struggling and fighting even after they were violated.

However, it should be noted that we were able only to document a simple portion of the terrible suffering of the Syrian women. What this report includes is only the minimum amount of crimes and atrocities given the ban imposed against SNHR by the Syrian government and the extremist factions in addition to Syrian community’s lack of interest in documenting and motorizing as it lost any trust in the international community who haven’t done anything noticeable over the past few years.



II. Executive Summary:

In this report we provide an update about the Syrian women's situation and the most significant violations they were subjected to in 2015 by all main conflict parties; however all statistics that are listed below include all the data since March 2011 till the end of October 2015. To read more about earlier reports, please check "[Erosion of Jasmine](#)" report.

We recorded the killing of not less than 20112 women, detailed as follows:

- 13881 adult females.
- 6231 adolescent females.

The total death toll is detailed as follows according to the main conflict parties:

1. Government forces killed 18,917 women, detailed as follows:

- i. 13,069 adult females
- ii. 5,848 adolescent females

2. Russian Forces killed 72 women, detailed as follows:

- i. 38 adult females
- ii. 34 adolescent females

3. Kurdish Self Management Forces killed 42 women, detailed as follows:

- i. 33 adult females
- ii. 9 adolescent females

4. Extremist Islamic Groups killed the total 300 females, detailed as such:

- i. 208 adult females in total
- ii. 92 adolescent females in total

The victims' death toll according to Al Nusra Front and ISIL (the main extremist Islamic groups):

a. ISIL: killed 233 females of the total number, detailed as such:

- i. 156 adult females
- ii. 77 adolescent females

b. Al Nusra Front killed 67 females of the total number, detailed as follows:

- i. 52 adult females
- ii. 15 adolescent females

5. Armed Opposition Groups killed 711 females, detailed as such:

- i. 494 adult females
- ii. 217 adolescent females

6. International Coalition Forces killed 70 females, detailed as follows:

- i. 39 adult females
- ii. 31 adolescent females



As for arrests, SNHR recorded the arrest of more than 8614 women, detailed as follows:

- i. 8005 adult females
- ii. 609 adolescent females.
- iii. 51 women were tortured to death

The arrests' toll is detailed as follows according to the main conflict parties:

1. Government forces have arrested not less than 7029 women, detailed as follows:
 - i. 6711 adult females
 - ii. 318 adolescent females

1115 of the female detainees are categorized under the list of enforced disappearances and not less than 38 of them were killed under torture.

2. Kurdish Self Management Forces arrested not less than 69 women, detailed as follows:
 - i. 35 adult females
 - ii. 34 adolescent females
3. Extremist Islamic Groups:
 - a. ISIL: arrested 639 women, detailed as such:
 - i. 620 adult females
 - ii. 19 adolescent females

Moreover, not less than 13 women were killed under torture.

3. Armed Opposition Groups have arrested not less than 877 women, detailed as follows:
 - i. 639 adult females
 - ii. 238 adolescent females

This report also documents other violations against women like forcing them to wear certain customs, depriving them from receiving proper education, and forcing them to get married.

III- Violations Committed by Government Forces:

A. Extrajudicial Killing:

Government forces perpetrated daily, widespread and systemized crimes through random artillery and rocket shelling, toxic gasses, barrel bombs and even slaughtering women like what happened in several massacres that had an ethnic dimension. Thus, 18917 women were killed since March 2011 and up till 31 October 2015 including 13069 adult women and 5848 adolescent females documented by name, date and cause of death, video and image. Moreover, not less than 748 women were killed by sniper bullets and the percentage of killed women almost reached 7%; which is a high percentage that indicates the deliberate targeting of civilians. Torture and detention situations resulted in the death of more than 38 women, where we extensively talked about death under torture in the [“Photographed Holocaust.”](#)

Mrs. Mariam Al Dali, born in 1970, from Al Rastan city in Homs governorate, was a relief aid activist who died on 17 October 2015 when government forces shelled the Child and Maternity Care Office in Al Rastan.

[Mrs. Nadwa Hassan Alwan](#), from Al Yarmouk camp in Damascus city, born in 1943, Palestinian, died on 22 January 2015 due to malnourishment and dehydration due to the government siege that was imposed on southern Damascus.



Mrs. Mariam Al Dal

Mrs. Fayza Anis from Al Meliha city in Damascus suburbs was killed due to government sniper bullets in Al Wafdeen camp in Damascus suburbs while she was trying to leave eastern Ghouta in 9 March 2015.

Child Alyaa' Al Omar, from Zaradna town in Idlib, born in 2000, died in 9 August 2015 due to government warplane shelling on her town.

Government forces perpetrated daily, widespread and systemized crimes in all Syrian governorates and thus its crimes amount to war crimes and crimes against humanity.

A. Arbitrary Arrests, Enforced Disappearances and Torture:

According to SNHR's archives, more than 7029 women are still arrested including 6711 adult females and 318 adolescent females. Also, more than 1115 women are categorized under enforced disappearance cases even though government forces deny this fact. However, survivors' testimonies confirm that the enforced-to-disappear women are inside government security detention centers. Furthermore, the residents' testimonies also assert that government forces stormed the detainees' houses and arrested them. However, government released some of the detained women in prisoners' swap deals with armed opposition groups. Also, several pictures which were leaked by Caesar, ([The Photographed Holocaust report](#)) proved the presence of women in detention centers who were arrested then tortured to death.

Government forces arbitrary arrests women from their houses or their checkpoints, mainly because they are related to opposition members, activists or simply because they belong to regions that are not controlled by government forces.

More than 99% of the arrests made by government forces are carried out without a warrant. Also, the authorities do not tell the detainee and his/her family of their charges or where are they will be detained. Furthermore, the families are prohibited to hire a lawyer or visit the detainee. Most of the detainees are subjected to a brutal torture and in many cases the arbitrary arrest becomes enforced-disappearance.

During interrogation, women detainees get insulted, beaten, and systematic torture. Often, the torture and beating is not only to force the women to confess but also to spread fear and panic among the other detainees and also to make the society fear the consequences of arresting women especially that the Syrian society is considered a conservative society.

In addition to the physical torture, women detainees suffer psychologically a lot because of the Syrian society's stigmatization of the women detainees who usually get sexually abused in the prison which threatens their future. We recorded many cases where former women detainees got divorced after they were released. SNHR recorded 7 enforced disappearance cases inside civil government prisons where government forces took these female detainees to unknown locations. All those who were subjected to enforced disappearances had undergone trials in the civilian court that belongs to State Security which is likely that verdicts were issued against them and then executed in unknown places so that this issue will not be raised more broadly to the public or different international human rights groups.

The seven enforced disappearance cases are detailed as follows: 3 in Adra Central Prison in Damascus and 4 in Homs Central Prison.

SNHR met with a released female detainee, Amira Fouad Al Tayyar, born in 1974, from Hama, a housewife and a relief aid worker. She was arrested by government forces after her house was raided by government forces in Wadi Al Hawarni neighborhood. She was taken to security branch number 235 that belongs to the military intelligence in Damascus, which is also known as Palestine Branch. There, she spent 5 months and she witnessed torture against three female detainees and the execution of 3 others in 601 Military Hospital.

Amira gave SNHR her testimony:

"On 29 October 2014, members from government security forces in Hama city raided my house in Wadi Al Hawarna neighborhood in Hama city. They surrounded the house and broke into my house from the main door. They asked about me, used obscene language and insults and threatened to kill everyone who was in the house. They handcuffed me and took me in a violent way to the car; they nearly dragged me on the floor then started to kick my head. I stayed in the military security branch in Hama for 5 days then I was transported to branch 235 which is also known as Palestine branch where I stayed there for almost 5 months in a prison cell with other 11 women who were accused or different charges. I was severely tortured. They wanted to extract confessions from me."

In my second interrogation, the officer started to curse me and asked me about my son who died under torture during the time I was arrested. I had to answers to his questions and that's why he was infuriated and enraged. He told another officer: "Take her from here! Show her how she can talk!"

That officer dragged me out of the interrogation room and started to hit me with a rubber wire then tortured and that was the last thing I remember. When I regained my consciousness, I woke up to find myself handcuffed on a bed in Teshreen Military Hospital. I stayed there for two days and I witnessed the death of three detainees under torture. The officer who killed them was nicknamed as "Ezrael". One of those detainees was brutally killed. The officer, Ezrael, continued to beat him up until he became unconscious then cut his vein using a Catheter and left him to bleed to death. After I returned to branch 235, my family paid huge amounts of money for my release. I left the security branch in 27 January 2015."

SNHR interviewed the released detainee (S.B) from Homs, born in 1990, a university student who was arrested by government forces on their checkpoint in Al Baramika neighborhood in Damascus while she was in a public transportation bus. She spent almost 3 months in Al Khateeb Security Branch in Damascus. She was released after her family paid large amounts of money to a mediator.

S.B. gave SNHR her testimony:

"On 25 March 2015, when I was going to the Student Affairs Office in Damascus University to finalize my graduation documents and I was stopped by members of a government affiliated militia at one of their checkpoints. The bus I took was for public transportation and one the militia members asked the passengers for their ID's. Ten minutes later one of the members came and asked me to get off the bus. I did as I was told but they handcuffed me and said that I was wanted to one of the security branches and they called it. The checkpoint members came and took me to the security branch. During that time I was cursed and poked by their guns. In the security branch, the officers asked me for all my personal data and what I had possessed. They put me in a cell that had 5 other women who were housewives from Al Zabadani city in Damascus suburbs. I stayed there in the cell for three days without any interrogations. On my fourth day, the interrogator summoned after me and the officers took me to the interrogation room and of course they cursed and insulted me on my way there. The officer in charge told me that I have been accused of insulting the State and weakening the feeling of belonging to the nation. I denied everything they accused me of; however, they said that everything is documented and they have people who even count our breaths. The interrogation lasted for three days during which I was humiliated, beaten, and accused of treason and infidelity. Also, they used severe obscene and sectarian language to curse me."

Three days later, I decided to confess to their charges and accusations because I thought that the daily humiliation and torture would come to an end. I remained in the branch for 15 days then I was transported to Adra Female Prison so that later I would be transferred to the Anti-Terrorism Court. I spent three months in Adra Prison then I was released after my family paid huge amounts of money to a mediator."

[Lama Nawaf Al Basha](#), from Al Tal region in Damascus suburbs, born in 1991, was arrested by government forces on 16 November 2014 after an ambush in Al Tal region. She was arrested by the political security branch that belongs to government forces for four months then she was transported to Adra prison. Her fate is still unknown to her family and SNHR up to the moment of making this report.

[Mouneera Mohamad Seryoul](#), from Douma city, married and a mother of four children was displaced to Damascus and was arrested in 15 January 2015. On 1 August 2015, some released detainees said that they saw her in Al Khateeb Security Branch in Damascus. Her fate is still unknown to her family and SNHR up to the moment of making this report.

C. Sexual Violence and Abuse:

Government forces committed acts of sexual violence and abuse towards men, women and children. They used sexual violence as a weapon systematically in various governorates and areas to spread fear and terrorize the Syrian community and stop people from joining the popular movement from the beginning of 2012 until the middle of 2013. During this year we recorded a significant surge in the number of sexual violence cases which was committed by government forces when they stormed different neighborhoods, perpetrated several massacres in Homs, Lattakia and Hama suburbs, Idlib, Homs and other Syrian governorates, sexually attacked women and forced them to strip down naked in the middle of public roads or squares and in the presence of the female's husband, father or children. Therefore, rape or sexual abuse was another reason to be added on the "causes of displacement" as well. Further, some female detainees, especially those who were related to armed opposition members, were subjected to sexual violence, as we documented in a previous report, Sexual Abuse: "[A Scar of a Lifetime](#)".

SNHR estimates the number of sexual violence cases that was committed by government forces to be not less than 7672 cases, (7244 adult females and 428 adolescent females). Amongst the total number of cases, 850 cases of sexual violence happened inside government detention centers.

This policy had a terrible impact on the Syrian community in general and on the victims of these acts specifically and led to many social and psychological breakdowns especially in the event of pregnancy.

Moreover, since the beginning of 2015 and up till the end of October 2015, 82 cases of underage forced marriage were documented for young females who were forced marry members from government forces. The young women and their families were threatened by government forces' members in case they refused or opposed the marriage.

- On 28 February 2015, a video published on youtube depicted several members from government forces in their military uniforms celebrating the marriage of a government militia of leader, called Moueen Dyoub also known as Abu Meezer, to an 18 years old female in one of Aleppo's towns.

- Mona Mohamad, from Hama city, born in 1995, was enforced to marry a member from the military intelligence branch in Hama on 12 September 2015 after he threatened to arrest her family and storm their house every day.



SNHR met at least 65 women who were victims of sexual violence in the Jordanian capital Amman, the border town in Turkey, and in Syria. We included their stories in previous reports. Nevertheless, all of what have been documented is only a small portion considering the estimations, indications, and testimonies that suggest that the number of sexual violence cases is much higher given that many victims refuse to talk about their experience because of the psychological and social context.

SNHR documented several rape crimes that were perpetrated by militias loyal to government forces. Rape usually happened in unofficial government detention centers and often ends with killing the victim by the militia or government forces' members. In some cases, the victims' families would kill them since they believe that they were stigmatized and humiliated.

SNHR recorded three main patterns of sexual violence:

- a. During raids and intrusions
- b. Inside detention centers
- c. After kidnaps

However, after several months, we were able to document new case.

a. Sexual Violence During raids and intrusions:

- On 22 April 2013, security forces affiliated to the military security raided the Salebeya neighborhood in Lattakia city. During the raid, security forces members locked a 21 year old young woman in a separated room and tried to sexually harass her. She and her family started to scream so the security forces members started to beat the entire family then they withdrew from the neighborhood. SNHR documented this incident during an interview with the victim in Antakya city in Turkey.

b. Sexual Violence Inside Detention Centers:

Released detainee Bayan H. born in 1994, a single university student was arrested in Homs city on 7 March 2014 by the military security forces. She was transported to Damascus to branch 215 in Kafrsousa. When she arrived to the security branch a member from the security forces demanded her to strip down naked under the pretext of searching her.

SNHR spoke to Bayan and she told us the following:

“ On 18 March 2014, and after I was transferred to branch 215 in Damascus, one of the security forces who was assigned to search new detainees, nicknamed Abu Sumar, demanded me to strip down naked in order to search me. When I refused he started to beat and curse me and accused me of having sexual relationships with armed opposition members. He took my veil off and searched me in demeaning and humiliating way that is more close to sexual harassment.”

c. Sexual Violence After kidnaps:

On 4 June 2015, an armed group that belonged to the National Defense Militia that is affiliated to government forces kidnapped three female university students from Al Baath University. The girls were in a public transportation bus between Hama and Selmiyi road. The three girls were forced to spend 27 days in a cave in Al Selmiyi region in Hama suburbs. The region is known to be under the control of government forces and its militias. The girls were raped then two of them were released after their families paid huge amounts of money to the kidnappers and the military security branch in Hama was the mediator party. The third girl was killed because her family refused to pay the ransom because she was raped. Her family preferred to say that their daughter's fate is unknown to them rather than acknowledging that she was raped because they will be stigmatized by the society.

SNHR met the father of one of the two survivors (Mr. Kh. S) and he told us the details of what has happened. Government forces committed widespread and deliberate crimes of rape, sexual violence and abuse, and sexual harassment; thus these crimes against humanity and war crimes and form a flagrant violation for the international humanitarian laws.

■ IV- Violations Committed by Russian Forces:

On 30 September 2015, Russian forces commenced air strikes on Syria and announced that it will target extremist Islamic groups; however, their main target was civilians according to our archives. Russian forces killed 72 females, including 38 adult females and 34 adolescent females, in one month which is a strong indicator that the Russian forces are deliberately targeting civilians.

- On 8 October 2015, alleged Russian warplanes shelled Wadi Al Ayoun in the north-west of Khan Shaykoun in Idlib governorate which killed a woman.

- On 15 October 2015, SNHR documented the death of 13 women due to alleged Russian shelling on a residential building in Al Ghanto town in Homs.

■ V- Violations Committed by Kurdish Self Management Forces:

Kurdish forces joined other conflict parties in Syria when YPG forces, (the armed wing of the PYD party), established the Kurdish Self-Management Forces which was announced in January 2014 and seized control over some regions in north and east of Syria. The PYD party constitutes the main core of the movement that was called later on the “Kurdish Self-Management Forces”.

A. Extrajudicial Killing:

SNHR documented the death of 42 women, including 33 adult females and 9 adolescent females, who were killed by KSM forces up to the moment of making this report. Most of the victims died due to random shelling or through direct firing during raiding campaigns or sniping.

- [Nabiha Al Sayah](#), from Say Ghoul town in Aleppo suburbs, born in 1998, married, was found dead on Al Raqqa- Tal Abyad road. A driver buried her in Kurmaza town. The victim was shot with three bullets by KSM forces on 14 August 2015 as her family told us. They exhumed her body then buried her in her town.

- On 2 August 2015, we recorded the death of a woman named Hanaa Ismaeil Al Amouri from Sareen town in Aleppo due to random gun shots by KSM forces after a clash with ISIL. KSM forces gathered the residents in a square then locked them in houses for two consecutive days, then directly shot at those houses to terrorize them.

- Nouwayer Shaher Al Mahal, from Al Arbae'en town in Al Raqqa suburbs died on 10 May 2015 due to land mine that was planted by KSM forces on Aleppo - Tal Tamar road in Raes Al Ein city in Al Hassaka.

- Sabeha Farhan Al Habash, from Al Razzaza town in Al Hassaka died on 13 May 2015 due to KSM artillery shelling on Tal Tamar town.

KSM forces randomly shelled and deliberately terrorized and killed civilians; thus these crimes amount to war crimes and crimes against humanity according to the international humanitarian laws.

A. Arrests and Kidnaps:

SNHR documented a large number of widespread raids and arbitrary arrests by KSM forces after it stormed regions that were under ISIL's control in the suburbs of Al Hassaka governorate.

However, with the beginning of 2014, YPG forces started carrying out raiding and arresting young men in Al-Hassaka, Al-Qameshli, and IFreen in Aleppo suburbs for conscription purposes. The arrest rates increased after the self-protection law or "the conscription" law was issued. The arrests included widely women and girls. The women in the Kurdish areas are in danger of being pursuit, arrested, and forcibly taken to the training camps which are held by YPG.

SNHR documented the arrest of 69 women, including 34 female children under the age of 18 since the beginning of 2014 and up till the end of October 2015. The arrests were aimed to forcibly recruit women.

- On 4 April 2015, KSM forces arrested child Dilber Ahmad Hajji, 16, from Ein Arab region which is also known as Kobani in Aleppo. The aim of the arrest was enforced recruitment.

SNHR interviewed a released detainee, Samar B., from Amouda city in Al Hassaka governorate, born in 1980 and works as a teacher in one of the city's schools. She was arrested by KSM forces in front of her house. She spent 3 days in secret detention centre in Amouda which she have not able to locate. She was released without pressing charges against her.

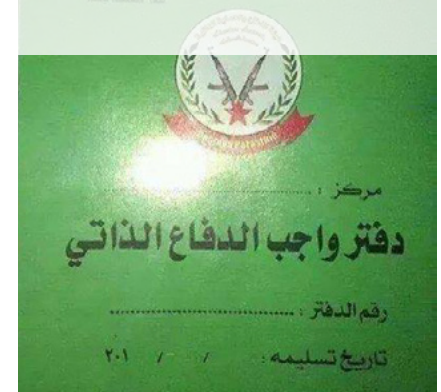
Samar's testimony:

"On 11 October 2015, when I was next to my house with my child getting ready to go to school, we heard heavy gun firing. The gun firing was due to a funeral of one of KSM forces. Their procession hit my car that I parked next to my house and immediately, they their members got out of the cars and started to shoot next to us. Then three of them came to forcibly take me into their car. One of them twisted my arm violently then threw me inside the car. Later, after I arrived to an unknown location where I was held and it looked like a government facility where KSM members transformed the rooms to temporary dentition rooms. They accused me to be the reason why they hit their car and demanded me to pay for the damages. They threatened me not to see Amouda's sun again if I do not pay the amount of money they wanted. I stayed there for three days then they released me after they blindfolded my eyes and put me in a car on the road that leads to my house. During my arrest, I was not hit or beaten but they cursed me and threatened me of slaughtering my child if I do not pay the money they wanted."

Pictures of the statement that was distributed among young men who were included in the conscription resolution:



Picture of the statement that was issued by PYD about what it called "Civil Defense Duty"



■ VI- Violations Committed by Extremist Islamic Groups:

a. ISIL:

Since the foundation of ISIL on 9 April, 2013, it has been expanded and growing starting with the rebel-held areas. It carried out many attacks at the beginning of 2014 against areas and cities in Ar-Raqqa, Der Ezzor, Al-Hasska, and Aleppo suburbs, and eastern Hama suburbs. The faction managed to take over wide areas and also shelled areas under the control of government forces.

The indiscriminate bombing, clashes, and field-executions caused the death of not less than 233 females, including 156 adult females and 77 adolescent females. ISIL field executed 9 women who were shot by firing squad, including one woman who was decapitated because she was accused of treason and sorcery. Also, ISIL stoned 7 women to death because they accused them of committing adultery in Deir Al Zour, Raqqa and eastern Hama suburbs.

- Mrs. Salwa Basheer Haddo, from Al Mufti neighborhood in Al Hassakam married and has 5 children, was killed on 6 May 2015 due to ISIL's mortar missiles on the neighborhood.

- [Mrs. Badeaa' Mohamad Asa'ad](#), from Palmyra in Homs, was killed with her husband, daughter and granddaughter on 18 May 2015 due to land mine that exploded beneath her husband's car when they were fleeing the city. The land mine was planted by ISIL on the international road.

- [Mrs. Maysaa Mohamad Al Da'as](#), a doctor from Palmyra city in Homs died with her mother, father and son on 18 May 2015 due to a land mine that was planted by ISIL on the international road. The victims were trying to flee the city.

- [Mrs. Haneen Othman](#), from Al Tadamoun neighborhood in Damascus, a student in the faculty of Dentistry in Damascus University was killed on 18 July 2015 due a mortar missile that fell on her house. The missile came from ISIL who is centered in Al Hajar Al Aswad.

B. Arbitrary Arrests, Enforced Disappearances and Torture:

The woman in the areas that are under ISIL's control is binded by the rules imposed by the faction. ISIL built special prisons for women that are supervised by other women who worked for the faction most of them are married to the faction fighters. The women branch of ISIL in Al-Raqqa is known as "Al-Khansaa' brigade". It pursuit women and thoroughly search them. There are many acts who considered violation including not wearing Al-Neqab (a veil that covers the face), wearing obscene clothes, disturbing security, or not wearing the appropriate clothes. Duration of detention varies from one violation to another and it might lead to whipping, stoning, or execution.

SNHR has documented since the beginning of 2013 not less than 639 women who were arbitrary arrested by ISIL including many activist women.

- Zaynab Mohamad Al Raji, from Deir Al Zour, 25, married and a mother of 4 children was arrested on 22 March 2015 by ISIL members in Deir Al Zour. They arrested her because they suspected she was contacting members from government forces. Her fate is still unknown up to this moment.

- Fayza Ahmad Methkal, from Akyrebat town in Hama sububrs, 40, was arrested by ISIL on 4 February 2015 when she decided to go back to her house in an ISIL's controlled area.

- Kamelya Bashi, from Al Qaryatayn city in Homs, 50 years old, a retired employee, was arrested on 8 September 2015 by ISIL's members from her house because her son worked for the government forces. Her fate is still unknown.

- The Women Jail in Al Raqqa:

ISIL's women branch in Al Raqqa is called "Al Khansaa Battalion" where they detain women if they violated ISIL's ruling like not wearing certain clothes, going outside the house without their husbands or children. Also this battalion overlooks female war prisoners and the prison is governed by Um Baraa the Tunisian and Um Mohamad Al Ansareya from Aleppo.

Several detained females were subjected to torture by the ISIL's Tunisian members and the detainees are sometimes forced to marry ISIL members if they fail a number of times in the religious courses.

SNHR interviewed the released detainee, Mrs; Fatima D. from Al Mayadeen city in Deir Al Zour, 39, a mother of 5 and a housewife. She was arrested by ISIL while she was in the city's market. She spent two days in the Hisba headquarters in the city and she was released later after pledging to attend the religious courses. Her family and parents paid an amount of money to one of ISIL's members.

Fatima gave SNHR her testimony:

"On 24 February 2015, while I was shopping in Al Mayadeen market, an ISIL force raided the market and started to arrest young men whose ages range between 20 and 25 years old due to several charges like not wearing the religious clothes. When they appraoched me, they arrested a young man who asked them about the reasons of his arrest and he said that he did not do anything that was wrong but they beat him. My mind could not process what was happening to the young man so involuntarily I started to yell at them so they arrested me. They held their riffles towards my face and asked me to go to their car. They took me to Al Hisba where I spent two days with other women in one cell. The women had different charges against them but my charge was obstructing ISIL's duties. They cursed me and told me that I was a slut and that I have been unfaithful to my religion and that I had to repent for my actions. They said they will re-educate. They released me on 26 February 2015 after I signed papers which I do not know what it says and my husband paid an amount of money to one of ISIL's members in the Hisba headquarters."

C. Impeding Women:

The faction enforced rules that violate the woman's rights such as freedom of thought, freedom of belief, privacy, clothing, transportation, work, and education. These rules explicitly discriminate between men and women. SNHR talked to many women who fled from Al-Raqqa. Many of those women told us about how ISIL is trying to forcibly change the nature of the Syrian society's identity by systematic practices. ISIL issued a document, named it (The City's Document), that included 16 points for women to be abided to or else they will be punished and maybe killed.

The City Document that was issued by ISIL:



Some of these points are:

a. Clothing Restrictions:

ISIL forced women in regions under its control to wear a uniform that covers all their bodies and faces. The repercussions of not abiding to this rule will be lasing, arrest and attending religious seminars and courses. If this article is breached by women more than one time, her guardians (parents, husband, uncle, brother, or son) will be held accountable.

b. Restrictions on Jobs:

ISIL prohibited women from work and they even attacked female doctors, phamacits, engineers and employees in the public sector. They were all forced to stop working and women's careers became limited to teaching in ISIL's religious centers and in clothes shops under one condition which is that women should be running these shops.

c. Restrictions on Movement and Transportation:

ISIL prohibited women from transportation or travelling without a father, or brother, son or uncle. Therefore, hundreds of female university students were prohibited from receiving an education or a degree since they cannot go to the university alone.

d. Enforced Marriage:

We recorded not less than 89 cases for enforced marriage where females were forced to marry ISIL members. The residents in ISIL stronghold are forced to agree since they fear ISIL, or because they support it.

e. "Selling Women:"

ISIL established a slave market where women are sold in, in Al Raqqa city. In Dabek, ISIL's newspaper, they admitted to selling Yazeedi women who were kidnapped from Iraq, forced to convert to Islam then sold and married off to ISIL members in north-east Aleppo suburbs, and in Al Raqqa and Al Hassaka suburbs as well.

ISIL and due to its crimes and violations in regions under its control has committed widespread violations to the international humanitarian law and therefore it committed crimes against humanity and war crimes.

II. Al-Nusra Front:

Since the emergence of Al-Nusra Front on 24 December, 2012, SNHR has documented the killing of 67 women either through indiscriminate bombing, raids, random shelling, or field-executions including 52 adult females and 15 adolescent females.

- [Mrs. Hamida Jalad](#), from Al Yarmouk camp, Palestinian, and a holder of the Syrian nationality, married and a mother of 4 children, was killed by Al Nusra front members by firing squad because she insulted the divine-self several times.

- [Child Fadia Abdul Kareem Al Abdullah](#), from Al Khyara town in Idlib, died on 21 September 2015 after Al Nusra front members stormed and chased a wanted individual. The random shelling killed the victim.

- [Child Sara Riyad Sharbo](#), from Nubbel town in Aleppo, died on 18 July 2015 after her town was targeted with rocket missiles by Al Nusra front who were centered in Mayer town.

Extremist Islamic groups through random shelling have committed widespread violations to the international humanitarian law and therefore it committed crimes against humanity and war crimes.

VII- Violations Committed by Armed Opposition Groups:

A. Extrajudicial Killing:

SNHR documented the killing of 711 women including 494 adult females and 217 adolescent females at the hands of different factions that are affiliated to the armed opposition. Most of those women were killed by the armed opposition's indiscriminate bombing of government forces' areas especially by the use of indiscriminate mortar shells.

- [Mrs. Aya Mohamad Khier](#), from Mazyan region in Damascus suburbs was killed with her mother, sister and brother after a Katyousha rocket that fell on Arnouss Square. The rocket came from Al Islam Army battalion, an armed opposition group.

- Mrs. Hanan Moustafa, a computer engineering student, was killed on 1 September 2015 due to a mortar missile that fell on the Mechanical and Electrical Engineering Faculty. The rocket came from Al Islam Army battalion, an armed opposition group.

- [Mrs. May Hassan Akel](#), from Al Moukambo region in Aleppo, was killed on 28 August 2015 after a mortar missile fell on her house. The missile came from Squad 16, an armed opposition group.

b. Arrests and Kidnaps:

Various armed opposition groups arrested not less than 877 females, including 639 adult females and 238 adolescent females, in areas either under government forces' control or under the armed opposition's control. The highest rate of arrests that was documented was in 2014 after they stormed Lattakia suburbs.

Some of the armed opposition factions carry out mass arrests after raiding government forces' areas where they arrest whole families in order to conduct exchange deals with government forces to set women prisoners free.

- On 1 November 2015, an armed opposition group, that controls Al Ghouta region in Damascus suburbs, published a [video](#) that depicted a group of prisoners in iron cages. They spread the cages across the most targeted regions by government warplanes. This action came as an attempt to stop government forces from shelling the region.



- On 4 August 2013, armed opposition groups arrested not less than 150 women whose ages ranged between 20 and 70 years old after the attack on towns in Lattakia suburbs during the battle of "Liberating the Coast". The women are still under arrest up to the moment of making this report.

Armed Opposition Groups and due to random shelling, torture and killing have perpetrated crimes against humanity and war crimes and therefore, they have violated the international humanitarian law and their crimes amount to war crimes and crimes against humanity.

VIII- Violations Committed by International Coalition:

International Coalition Forces commenced its airstrikes against ISIL on 23 September 2014 and conducted several airstrikes on Raqqa, Deir Al Zour and Idlib. According to SNHR, 70 females were killed including 39 adult females and 31 adolescent females.

- On 11 June 2015, SNHR documented the killing of two women due to the international coalition shelling on the international road in Slouk town in Raqqa.

- On 11 August 2015, we recorded the death of a woman due the international coalition shelling on a house next to an armed opposition center in Atema town in Idlib suburbs.

IX- Recommendations:

To the International Community and the UN:

1. SNHR published many reports and studies repeatedly documenting the different types of violations in Syria, and we consider the woman crisis a part of the main crisis which can't be solved without solving the bigger crisis. Thus, every delay in solving the Syrian crisis will radically complicate the woman crisis, which in turn will expand for years.
2. UNRWA should prepare more extensive its reports about violations against women inside Syria, and the specialized experts on human rights in Syria should focus more on enforced-disappearance, torture, kidnapping, and killing of women, and the other violations mentioned in this report. We are fully willing to contribute regarding all the cases included in this report.
3. All the countries helping and supplying the Syrian government with money, weapons, and militias are considered completely responsible for the crimes mentioned in the report, as well as the countries that are supporting the armed factions that were involved in perpetrating war crimes.
4. The International Community should work on bringing about a political solution that stops the ever growing bloodbath and guarantees the accountability of criminals.
5. 1. Many of the mentioned crimes in this report rise to be war crimes and crimes against humanity. SNHR calls for holding all the criminals and suspects accountable. The Syrian case should be referred to the Attorney General of the ICC. It seems that Russia and China insist on letting the criminals escape punishment so UN should take serious steps to form a special court for Syria.
6. Grant women the priority when applying for asylum or who seek refuge.
7. Support the women psychologically and economically due to the large scale of needs they have.

- To All Conflict Parties:

UN Security Resolution 1325 that was issued in 2011 affirmed that all conflict parties must abide to the international humanitarian law especially when it comes to the issue of women and children. Arrested women must be released and the fate of those who are enforced to disappear must be known. All torture cases must be put to an end.

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