



25 June 2019

**Subject:** Missing Persons of Syria

While the tragedy of hundreds of thousands of families who keep looking for any information about their missing loved ones during the ongoing conflict in Syria is still going on, a new glimmer of hope emerged as the Security Council issued its first resolution on the question of missing persons on Tuesday, June 11, 2019. Unanimously, the UNSC reaffirmed the priority of the issue of missing persons in armed conflict in a new international attempt to put an end to the instrumentalization of enforced disappearance in armed conflict.

We, the signatory civil organizations, welcome the advanced step taken by the Security Council and at the initiative of the State of Kuwait, to adopt the unprecedented resolution No. S/RES/2474 on the issue of missing persons and disappeared in armed conflict. We call upon, member-States to the Security Council and States supporting Human Rights and peaceful resolution to armed conflicts, to pressure the parties to the conflict in Syria to take clear and concrete measures in response to the provisions of the international resolution by revealing the fate of thousands of kidnapped and missing persons, and ensuring the establishment of an independent and transparent investigation and accountability mechanism under international supervision and guarantees a fair and transparent accountability and punishments to perpetrators.

Today, undetermined number of Syrians remain unaccounted after being subject to arbitrary arrest and enforced disappearance. Their families are still waiting for any notification or information about

the whereabouts and condition of their loved ones. And while the Syrian government is progressively and unofficially cleansing its records through issuing death notices and death certificates for missing persons after years of disappearance while security and judicial authorities in Syria refrain from opening an independent and transparent investigation into the causes of their death, the place and circumstances of the disappearance, or releasing their remains. In this regard, we demand from your respected council to assume its active role on this issue and to exert all possible efforts to put an end to these practices as to the policies of impunity standing against any possibility of sustainable peace in Syria.

As adopting the resolution unanimously reflects an advanced international will to address the issue of the missing persons in Syria and other war torn countries, we, as part of the civil society forces around the world, look forward to an effective role for the United Nations and the Security Council's member States to remain seized of the matter and follow up closely the situation of the missings and detainees, victims of Daesh, the government and armed factions, and to pressure all warring parties and their allies to fully and unconditionally cooperate in revealing the fate of detainees and missing persons and identify perpetrators as a first step to achieving justice and building the State of rule of law in Syria.

As we look forward to the Secretary-General of the United Nations annual briefing on the issue of missing persons around the world and in Syria, we emphasize the need for partnership and cooperation between the civil and independent forces and the relevant UN institutions. We believe that genuine cooperation will have a great impact on resulting more concrete and comprehensive briefings and periodic reports of the secretary general on this subject. Keeping this question of missing persons as the utmost priority to reach and consolidate world peace, as an indispensable prerequisite for sustainable community cohesion and mainstreaming rule of law and fighting impunity as a mean to put an end to the use of enforced disappearance as a weapon of war.

We, as civil organizations engaged in countering the war machine, and the dire situation resulting from the armed conflict and documenting human rights violations in Syria; including arbitrary arrests and forced disappearances in context of military, political and societal polarization, reiterate the need to convene a special session of the Security Council on The issue of missing persons and detainees in the ongoing armed conflict in Syria, calling for a road map that responds to the provisions of the resolution and thus undertakes:

- 1- Parties to the conflict and de-facto authorities in Syria, especially the government, must disclose the fate of the missing persons and provide the competent international institutions and agencies with detailed official record of all detainees in their official and makeshift detention centers, the place and date of their detention, the reasons and the charges they are facing, followed by the immediate and unconditional release of all detainees and abductees by all parties in Syria on the background of the peaceful exercise of their fundamental rights,
- 2- To compel de-facto authorities and local and regional and international parties to the conflict to immediately cease all practices of arbitrary detention and enforced disappearances, and to completely halt all orders of executions against detainees and to hand over the remains of victims of torture.
- 3- Provide international guarantees for the protection of all sites, evidence and mass graves in different parts of the country to ensure the best conditions to assist in the search and identification of victims and to save all relevant evidence for use in accounting efforts.
- 4- The establishment of a national institution under the supervision and guarantee of the United Nations, aiming to handle the question of missing persons in Syria,

5- Guarantee unhindered access for international inspectors on local and international human rights and humanitarian institutions, to all the secret and public prisons and detention centers run by the Syrian government and its security agencies, national defense groups and popular committees, as well as the detention centers of Daesh and the armed factions and extremist groups. and to grant international and local recognized monitors access to all detention centers, both formal and informal, and without prior notice.

6- Supporting Syrian civil society organizations working in the field of documentation of missing persons, groups of victims, families and community initiatives to carry out their research tasks, document cases of missing persons, identify perpetrators and seek accountability. Including the cases of enforced disappearances and missing persons. We recall in particular the fact-finding committee in Syria and the independent international mechanism for the follow-up of investigations and prosecutions against persons involved in major crimes under international law committed in Syria since 2011.

### Signatory Organizations:

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| 1- Access Center for Human Rights                      | 26- No Photo Zone  |
| 2- ADEL Center for Human Rights                        | 27- Omran Studies Center - Syrian Forum                  |
| 3- AlKawakibi Human Rights Organisation                | 28- Pro-Justice  |
| 4- ALSouria net  | 29- Rethink Rebuild Society                              |
| 5- Arab Network for Human Rights Information           | 30- RIZK for Professional Development                    |
| 6- Badael Organisation                                 | 31- Save the Rest Campaign                               |
| 7- Baytna Syria  | 32- Shaml - Syrian CSOs Coalition                        |
| 8- BOUSLA for Training and Innovation                  | 33- Syrian Center for Media and Freedom of Expression    |
| 9- Caesar Families Association                         | 34- Syrian Center for Statistics and Research            |
| 10- Civil Waves  | 35- Syrian Feminist Lobby                                |
| 11- Coalition of Families of Kidnapped by ISIS--Da'esh | 36- Syrian Forum   |
| 12- Dawlaty  | 37- Syrian League for Citizenship                        |
| 13- Democratic Republic Studies Center                 | 38- Syrian League for Human Rights and Accountability    |
| 14- Detainees 'Voice                                   | 39- Syrian Legal Development Program                     |
| 15- Families for Freedom                               | 40- Syrian Legal Network - Netherlands                   |
| 16- FENER for Community Advancement                    | 41- Syrian Network for Human Rights                      |
| 17- Fraternity Foundation for Human Rights             | 42- Syrian Observer for Human Rights                     |
| 18- Hands Up Foundation                                | 43- Syrians for Truth and Justice                        |
| 19- Human Rights Organisation in Syria - MAF           | 44- The Day After  |
| 20- Hurras Network                                     | 45- The Syria Campaign                                   |
| 21- IHSAN for relief and Development                   | 46- Union de Coordination des Syriens a Travers le Monde |
| 22- Justice for Life                                   | 47- Urnamu for Justice and Human Rights                  |
| 23- Kesh Malek   | 48- Violation Documentation Center                       |
| 24- Khatawat Foundation                                | 49- White Helmets - Syrian Civil Defense                 |
| 25- Najda NOW International                            | 50- Women Now For Development                            |