

Appeal for immediate intervention to prevent the summary trial of 90 Syrian detainees in Turkish prisons

41 Organizations call for immediate action to free Syrian detainees from Hilvan Prison in Turkey's Sanliurfa province, Amid fears for their lives after the spread of coronavirus pandemic, and unfair sentences against them.

UN Secretary-General: António Guterres,

UN High Commissioner: Michelle Bachelet,

We, signatory Syrian organizations, are making this appeal to express our concern about the fate of more than 90 Syrian detainees,¹ who were transferred to Turkish prisons in late 2019 after spending various periods in unofficial detention centers of the Turkish-backed "National Army", affiliated with the National Coalition for Syrian Revolution and Opposition Forces.

According to the collected and verified information, the arrests were conducted in rural areas of the two towns of Tal Abyad and Ras al-Ayn (Sere Kanye), and they took place in late October and November 2019, during the period immediately following Operation Peace Spring, which was waged on October 9, 2019, and resulted in the occupation of the region by Turkey.

The detained persons are Syrian citizens of different ethnic backgrounds, including "Arabs and Kurds", and it was verified that some of them were subjected to ill-treatment and extracting confessions from them under pressure and coercion in Syrian territories before being transferred to Turkey.

In addition, certain information was obtained indicating that the detainees were transferred to the Hilvan Prison in the Turkish province of Sanliurfa and they were conveyed to the "AĞIR CEZA MAHKEMESİ" court. The following charges were brought against them:

1. Breaching the unity of the Turkish state.
2. The attempt to divide the country (Turkey).

¹ 70 names were identified with their full information.

3. Joining a “terrorist” force (referring to the Syrian Democratic Forces SDF, the People’s Protection Units YPG, and others).

4. Murder.

Their court appearance had been scheduled in early April 2020, but it was postponed indefinitely, due to the outbreak of the coronavirus pandemic in Turkey.

The transfer of Syrian citizens into Turkish territory to appear before its courts and be tried according to its laws without committing any assault on its territory against its citizens or their property is considered a violation of the international law and norms; only Syrian courts have the right to hold them accountable if found guilty.

Turkey is considered to be an occupying force in Syria, though not declaring it officially yet. Turkey must, therefore, act in accordance with the four Geneva Conventions of 1949 and their additional protocols; Article 49 of the Fourth Geneva Convention states: “The Occupying Power shall not deport or transfer parts of its own civilian population into the territory it occupies.” It also prohibits the “individual or mass forcible transfers, as well as deportations of protected persons from occupied territory”.

Accordingly, we, the signatories of this appeal call:

1. To pressure the Turkish government to prevent it from involving detainees transferred from Syria in arbitrary trials.
2. To give impartial and independent international commissions and organizations full access to detainees and their files.
3. Allow the families and relatives of the detainees to communicate with them.
4. Release the detainees and return them to the Syrian territory.

Signatory organizations:

1. Adel Center For Human Rights
2. Adopt a Revolution
3. Albaghouz hope Development

4. ALHasakah Organization for Reliaf and Development
5. Ataa Development
6. Avarin for Kurdish Women Association
7. DAN for Relief and Development
8. Democratic woman network
9. Documentation Center in North Syria
10. Dream charity
11. Equal Citizenship Center
12. Ezdina Foundation
13. Fraternity Foundation for Human Rights FFHR-Birati
14. Gerke leke charity
15. Hope Smile Organization
16. Human rights organisations afrin-syria
17. Human Rights Organization In Jazeera
18. Human Rights Organization in Syria – MAF
19. Judi charity for development and relief
20. Khanaf Associationfor Relief and Development
21. Kurdish Committee for Human Rights-Based
22. Kurdish Legal committee Violation
23. Lekolin Centre for Studies and Legal Researches
24. NABD Organization
25. Omid center for revive civil society
26. Peace and Freedom Center for Civil Society
27. Peace andcivil society center
28. Peace She-Leaders Network
29. PÊL- Civil Waves
30. Rights Defense Initiative

31. Sanabel Al Furat Humanitarian
32. Sara organization to combat violence against women
33. Share Center for civic Development
34. Shaushka Women Association
35. Ster organization for development
36. Syrian Center for Media and Freedom of Expression (SCM)
37. Syrians for Truth and Justice
38. Tayif Organization
39. Tulip Organization to Support Women and Kid (TSWK)
40. Violation Documentation Center in North Syria
41. Vision Organization