

**Response to the Questionnaire of the Special Rapporteur on Torture
"The duty to investigate crimes of torture in national law and practice"
Submitted by the Syrian Legal Development Programme (SLDP); Lawyers and Doctors for Human Rights (LDHR); The Coalition of Families of Persons kidnapped by ISIS (MASSAR); Release Me; Justice for Life organization (JFL); Ta'afi Initiative; The Syrian Women's Network (Shams); Syrians for Truth and Justice (STJ); Hurras Network for the Protection and Care of Syrian Children; Caesar Families Association (CFA); The Day After (TDA); Free Syrian Lawyers Association (FSLA); Access Center for Human Rights (ACHR)**

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This paper serves as a response to the Special Rapporteur's Questionnaire on "the duty to investigate crimes of torture in national law and practice". The submitting NGOs address the topic in question in the context of the applicable legal framework in Syria and victims' rights, mainly through the lens of the recently enacted [Anti-torture Law No.16/2022](#),¹ and the interlinked legislation.

¹ Law No. 16 of 2022, available in Arabic at: <http://parliament.gov.sy/arabic/index.php?node=5516&cat=22943&>

Background

In 1979, an Amnesty International report referred to the terrifying situation in Syrian prisons and detention centres involving various forms of torture and other cruel, inhuman, or degrading treatment or punishment (hereafter "ill-treatment") that were used to extract confessions or punish opponents of the ruling regime.² Since the outbreak of demonstrations in early 2011, the reports of the Independent International Commission of Inquiry on the Syrian Arab Republic (CoI) have indicated a consistent pattern of torture and other violations, primarily committed by government forces.³

Syria has indicated in its previous reports to the Committee against Torture (the Committee) and the Human Rights Council (HRC) that the Syrian constitution and national law criminalise the infringement of freedoms, the ill-treatment of persons during interrogations and the use of force and violence against detainees by law enforcement officials, although there was no specific definition of torture at the time.⁴ Remarkably, on 29 March 2022, Syria issued a new anti-torture law No.16/2022, which defines torture, criminalises it, and increases its punishment.⁵

This submission argues that ***Syrian domestic law does not ensure effective accountability and justice for victims and survivors for the following reasons:***

- A. The law does not criminalise all forms of ill-treatment known to take place in detention centres in Syria;***
- B. The law does not guarantee justice and comprehensive reparation for the victims;***
- C. The new anti-torture law, like any new aggravated criminal law, will not apply retroactively to acts that occurred before the date of its issuance;***
- D. The law does not put an end to the impunity provided to members of the military, internal security forces and general intelligence.***

² Amnesty International, 'Amnesty International Briefing: Syria' (1979) MDE 24/004/1979, 12-13; *You can also view* Amnesty International, 'Syria: Torture, Despair and Dehumanisation in Tadmur Military Prison' (Amnesty International 2001) MDE 24/014/2001.

³ UNGA, Human Rights Council, Report of the Independent International Commission of Inquiry on the Syrian Arab Republic (February 2022), UN Doc A/HRC/49/77, para 42-43.

⁴ Committee against Torture, Consideration of reports submitted by States parties under article 19 of the Convention, Initial report of Syrian Arab Republic due in 2005, submitted on 16 July 2009, UN doc CAT/C/SYR/1, para 84.

⁵ Law No. 16 of 2022, art 1,2.

1 The Regulatory Framework of Torture and Ill-treatment in Syrian Law

1. Before issuing the new anti-torture law in Syria, the Syrian government referred to two provisions in its national legislation that criminalise torture (both are still in force): Article 116 of the [Military Penal Code](#) (MPC) promulgated by Legislative Decree 61 of 1950, and Article 391 of the [General Penal Code](#) (GPC) No.148 of 1949.⁶ However, these articles do not explicitly criminalise torture and ill-treatment.
2. Article 116 of [MPC](#) does not criminalise acts of torture in general but is limited to "acts of hardship or threat" that the *soldiers perform against their commanders* or higher-rank officers or the soldiers assigned to protect them. Therefore, the scope of this provision cannot be claimed to be valid national legislation to criminalise torture and/or redress the victims.
3. Article 391 of [GPC](#) states that "whoever commits forms of **hardship** that is **not permitted by law** against a person, to obtain a confession about a crime or information about it, shall be punished by jail from three months to three years. If the acts of hardship against someone result in illness or injury, the minimum punishment is jail for one year". It is noteworthy that the meaning of the phrase "forms of hardship" is loose and does not explicitly state what is meant by *hardship*. Moreover, this text calls into question whether there are forms of hardship "permitted by law" to obtain a confession.
4. Additionally, the act addressed in Article 391 is considered a misdemeanour, not a felony.⁷ The Syrian Government explained that the punishment stipulated in Article 391 relates to torture that "does not leave the victim with any injuries". However, the law provides for an increased penalty if the torture results in permanent disability or bodily harm.⁸ This shows that the Syrian authorities neither consider the act of torture as a serious crime nor recognise the psycho-social harm of it.
5. Notably, the definition of torture in the new anti-torture [Law No. 16 of 2022](#) is almost identical to the definition of torture contained in the CAT. However, the new law includes acts committed by non-State actors. It is noteworthy that the minimum penalty threshold for acts of torture committed by non-State actors is higher than those imposed on perpetrators of the same actions by State officials.⁹ This goes against the logic of law and justice. It is normal for law enforcement officials to bear a higher responsibility than individuals to ensure that they do not abuse their power.

⁶ Human Rights Committee, Fourth periodic report submitted by the Syrian Arab Republic under article 40 of the Covenant, due in 2009, 30 May 2022, UN Doc CCPR/C/SYR/4, para 38.

⁷ The perpetrator according to article 391 is liable to jail, and the penalty of jail in Syrian Penal Code is a misdemeanour penalty, see article 39 of Syrian Penal Code No.148 1949.

⁸ Committee against Torture, Consideration of reports submitted by states parties under Article 19 of the Convention, Comments of the Syrian Arab Republic and follow-up responses to the concluding observations of the Committee against Torture (CAT/C/SYR/CO/1) (2011), UN Doc CAT/C/SYR/CO/1/Add.1, para 6.

⁹ Law No. 16 of 2022, art 2 (b,c).

Accordingly, their punishment for the actions they commit in abusing their power should be greater or at least equal.

6. Furthermore, the new law does not explicitly criminalise ill-treatment, which contravenes the obligation under Article 16 of CAT. Ill-treatment committed by State agents does not fall under the framework of the new law if it does not result in severe physical or mental pain or suffering. Not only ill-treatment is not criminalised, but the law defines torture as "every act or omission that results in severe pain or suffering, whether physical or mental, inflicted on a person". In the absence of a clear definition of "severe pain and suffering", it would be easy for perpetrators to commit many forms of ill-treatment under the pretext that they did not reach the threshold of severe pain and suffering, therefore creating a loophole that the authorities might exploit to justify their actions and manipulate their international obligations.
7. As the act of ill-treatment should be explicitly criminalised, any potential argument that ill-treatment is criminalised under Article 391 of the [GPC](#) is invalid. The term "hardship" in this Article is unclear and does not refer precisely to the prohibition of ill-treatment, and it also maintains a margin of discretion by limiting the prohibited forms of hardship to those not permitted by law. Additionally, the Article specifies this prohibition in the context of obtaining a confession about a crime or information about it. Therefore, any acts of ill-treatment that are not necessarily related to interrogations could be permitted. This ambiguity in Article 391 might also be exploited by authorities to turn around what constitutes "hardship" and therefore justify their acts.
8. It should be noted that the Prison System Law No. 1222 of 1929 prohibits all prison guards from using force against detainees, calling them derogatory nicknames, or addressing them with obscene foul language.¹⁰ However, a comprehensive and explicit definition and referral to ill-treatment are lacking in this law, and the practice has clearly proved that it is not optimally applied in security centres.¹¹ Moreover, the published laws regulating the internal security forces or the military do not contain texts that explicitly prohibit ill-treatment, and this contravenes Syria's obligation to absolutely prohibit such acts and punish them with penalties commensurate with their gravity.¹²

¹⁰ Prison System Law No. 1222 of 1929, art 30.

¹¹ OHCHR, Open wounds: torture and ill-treatment in Syria, May 2014, available at: <https://www.ohchr.org/en/stories/2014/05/open-wounds-torture-and-ill-treatment-syria>; HRC, "I lost my dignity": Sexual and gender-based violence in the Syrian Arab Republic, Conference room paper of the Independent International Commission of Inquiry on the Syrian Arab Republic, March 2018, UN Doc A/HRC/37/CRP.3, para 27-50; Amnesty International, 'It Breaks the Human: Torture, Disease and Death in Syria's Prisons' (2016) MDE 24/4508/2016.

¹² The Internal Security Forces Service Law ([Legislative Decree No.1 of 2012](#)) does not prohibit ill-treatment whatsoever even in section 12 of the (obligations, prohibitions, and punishments) of the Security Forces. Similarly, the Military Penal Code ([Legislative Decree No. 61 of 1950](#)) only prohibits the use of "severity or threat" against superiors and their guards but not against subordinates, according to article 116.

2 Elements of Human Rights-Compliant Investigations and Prosecutions, its Challenges, Impediments and Obstacles

9. The CAT Committee emphasises that fulfilling the right to redress for victims of torture and ill-treatment requires States parties to comply with two obligations, procedural and substantive.¹³ However, the subsections below show how Syria fails to comply with these obligations as Syrian law does not ensure that investigations and prosecutions are accessible for victims, nor does it provide victims with full and comprehensive reparation.

2.1 The Procedural Obligation to Redress Victims

2.1.1 *The Immunity of perpetrators*

10. The new anti-torture law No. 16 of 2022 indicates that measures must be taken to guarantee the right to file complaints or report acts of torture, as well as to protect the complainant, witnesses, experts, and members of their families.¹⁴ However, if the acts of torture were committed by members of the army or the Military Intelligence Division and its branches,¹⁵ investigations and prosecutions will not be initiated except under a prosecution order issued by the Commander-in-Chief of the Army and Armed Forces (the President himself) or the Chief of Staff, depending on the rank of the person to be prosecuted.¹⁶
11. Therefore, the General Prosecution cannot act on its own or based on the complaint of the injured but exclusively under that prosecution order. Even if this is done, the case will be within the jurisdiction of the military judiciary.¹⁷ Here, it should be noted that the military judiciary is separate from the ordinary judiciary. It is formed and affiliated with the Ministry of Defence. Its military judges are also appointed by a decree based on the proposal of the Commander-in-Chief of the Army and Armed Forces,¹⁸ and those military judges can decide cases in which one of the parties is a military person, even if the other party is a civilian.¹⁹

¹³ The CAT Committee emphasises that fulfilling the right to redress for victims of torture and ill-treatment requires States parties to the CAT to comply with two obligations, procedural and substantive. The procedural obligation requires the state to enact appropriate legislation and provide the means for submitting complaints through independent and impartial judicial bodies capable of determining the right to and awarding redress for victims, as well as providing victims with access to these bodies. The objective obligation is to ensure that victims receive full and effective redress and reparation, including compensation and the means for as full rehabilitation as possible. See, Committee against Torture, General Comment No.3 (2012), UNDoc CAT/C/GC/3, para5.

¹⁴ Law No. 16 of 2022, art 7.

¹⁵ E.g., the Palestine Branch and Air Force Intelligence Service.

¹⁶ Legislative Decree No. 61 of 1950, Military Penal Code, Article 53.

¹⁷ Legislative Decree No. 61 of 1950, Military Penal Code, Article 50.

¹⁸ Legislative Decree No. 61 of 1950, Military Penal Code, Articles 34, 35, and 39.

¹⁹ Legislative Decree No. 61 of 1950, Military Penal Code, art 50. To read more about the military judiciary in Syria see, Fallacies not Facts: A critical legal study of the national report submitted by the Syrian Arab Republic in the third cycle of the universal periodic review in 2022, The Syrian Legal Development Programme (SLDP) in coordination with We Exist Alliance (2022), p 20-22. Available [here](#).

12. Similarly, if the perpetrator is a member of the police or the Internal Security Forces (ISF) and their branches,²⁰ the act does not automatically fall under the jurisdiction of the criminal court. Instead, the Police Disciplinary Court decides so upon referral, except for the cases of *flagrante delicto* and economic crimes.²¹ However, if the Police Disciplinary Court does not agree to refer the case to the criminal judiciary, it is not possible to initiate the criminal case, and the perpetrator's punishment is limited to "disciplinary" penalties that range between delaying promotion and, in the most extreme cases, dismissal.²²
13. It is worth mentioning here that the Police Disciplinary Court is not an independent judicial body. Rather, it is considered one of the organs of the executive authority. It is formed based on a decision of the Presidency of the Council of Ministers, and its judges are police officers appointed by a decree based on the proposal of the Minister of Interior.²³ In other words, it can be said that anyone who has been subjected to torture by members of the military, its intelligence services or ISF will bring the case before courts that are composed of the same organs that the alleged perpetrators are affiliated with, raising questions on the integrity and independence of these courts.
14. Furthermore, Legislative Decree No. 14 of 1969 establishing the General Intelligence Department stipulates in Article 16 that it is not permissible to prosecute members of the General Intelligence for crimes they commit while carrying out the tasks entrusted to them, except with the approval of their superiors.²⁴ Practically, this would be very difficult, as the prosecution of agents may lead to the prosecution of their superiors if they are suspected of being involved by commission or omission in the crime.

2.1.2 *The statute of limitations*

15. According to the rule of non-retroactivity of criminalisation and punishment except for what is best for the accused, the new anti-torture law will only apply to acts committed after its entry into force. As for acts of torture that were committed before 29 March 2022, the old law will apply, including Article 391 of the [GPC](#). This undermines the interests of the victims because committing "hardship" acts is a misdemeanour with a lenient penalty.²⁵ Consequently, the right to prosecute these acts may be forfeited by the statute of limitations after the lapse of three years from the date on which the act was committed if no prosecutions were conducted.²⁶ As long as the prosecutions against State agents are restricted, the victims of torture and

²⁰ E, g., the Political Security Division, Criminal Security and the Prison Administration.

²¹ Legislative Decree No.1 of 2012, The Internal Security Forces Service Law, art 23 (1-a).

²² Legislative Decree No.1 of 2012, The Internal Security Forces Service Law, art 23 (1-b), 120.

²³ Legislative Decree No.1 of 2012, The Internal Security Forces Service Law, art 23 (1,2).

²⁴ Article 30 of Legislative Decree 14/1969 states that "This law shall not be published and goes into effect on the day of issuance." However, you can find the analysis of the decree in: "Alternative Report to the Syrian Government's Initial Report on Measures taken to Fulfil its Commitments under the Convention Against Torture and Other Cruel, Inhuman or Degrading Treatment or Punishment", Damascus Center for Human Rights Studies, available online at https://tbinternet.ohchr.org/Treaties/CAT/Shared%20Documents/SYR/INT_CAT_NGO_SYR_48_10106_E.pdf Page 5-6.

²⁵ The penalty of jail in Syrian law is a misdemeanour penalty, see Syrian Penal Code No.148 1949, Art 39.

²⁶ Syrian Code of Criminal Procedure No. 112 of 1950, art 437, 438.

ill-treatment will lose the right to prosecute and claim compensation for acts of torture committed against them if the statute of limitations period has expired.

2.1.3 *Pardoning the perpetrators*

16. Between 2011 and 2022, the Syrian authorities issued eight amnesty laws that pardon the entire penalty for misdemeanours, except for those excluded by a special provision in the law. It is worth noting that the crime of torture that the government referred to under Article 391 of [GPC](#), which is a misdemeanour, is not excluded from the eight amnesty laws.²⁷ In other words, the crime of torture in Syria has been pardoned by eight amnesty laws in the past decade prior to the issuance of the new anti-torture law.

2.2 The Substantive Obligation to Redress Victims

17. As for the substantive obligation to ensure that victims receive comprehensive reparation, the new anti-torture law indicates that the person who has been subjected to an act of torture receives appropriate compensation for the material and moral damage and losses incurred by them.²⁸ According to the [GPC](#), the civil aspects that a criminal judge can rule on are restitution, compensation for breakdown and damage, confiscation, publishing the verdict, and bearing the expenses.²⁹
18. Regarding the obligation of restitution, the [GPC](#) stipulates in Article 130 that restitution constitutes the return to the situation before the crime occurred. The criminal judges must also rule on this independently, whenever possible.³⁰ However, neither the text nor the courts' practices refer to addressing the structural causes of the violations referred to by the Committee,³¹ leaving this measure deficient in terms of its effectiveness in addressing the root causes of the violations.
19. As for compensation, it should be noted that it is only possible to claim before ordinary criminal or civil courts. In contrast, the military judiciary and the Police Disciplinary Court in Syria do not rule on compensation. In such cases, the injured person must file a civil lawsuit before the competent civil court. As the plaintiff bears the burden of proof,³² if the plaintiff obtains a criminal judgement against the defendant, they can invoke it as an official document before the civil judge to award compensation. If the defendant is not criminally convicted, the plaintiff must prove before the civil judge the harm inflicted on them by the defendant to obtain compensation. This will be very difficult if there are no criminal verdicts or official documents, such as official medical reports or witnesses. The victims may also fear resulting from their complaints.

²⁷ See amnesty decrees [No.34 of 2011, Art 1,2](#); [No.61 of 2011, Art 1,2](#); [No.71 of 2012 Art 6,13](#); [No. 23 of 2013](#), Art 10, 15; [No.22 of 2014](#), Art 12, 18; [No.20 of 2019](#), Art 10, 14; [No. 6 of 2020](#), Art 10, 13; [No.13 of 2021](#), Art 2, 17.

²⁸ Law No. 16 of 2022, art 5.

²⁹ Syrian Penal Code No.148 (1949),art 129.

³⁰ Syrian Penal Code No.148 (1949),art130 (1,2).

³¹ Committee against Torture, General Comment No.3 (2012), UN Doc CAT/C/GC/3, para 8.

³² Amal Sharba, Evidentiary Law, publications of AL-Sham Private University (2019-2020), ch3, p 27.

20. Regarding the obligation to ensure satisfaction, this measure is reduced in Syrian law to publishing the verdict only as a form of acknowledgement of the responsibility of the perpetrators. This, for sure, requires the existence of a criminal verdict against them. Accordingly, the legal obstacles of investigating and prosecuting the military personnel and members of the General Intelligence and limiting the trial of the ISF to a disciplinary court limit the possibility of obtaining a verdict against them. As for the rest of the aspects of satisfaction as detailed by the Committee,³³ such as memorialisation, revealing the whereabouts of the victims and their remains, offering public apologies, and other measures, these are not observed at all in Syrian law.
21. Additionally, the new anti-torture law does not address rehabilitation, nor does Syrian law in general. As for Syria's strategic plans, which the government presented in the last UPR session, the Syrian government indicated the existence of care and assistance plans for victims of physical, sexual and gender-based violence and victims of trafficking of women and children.³⁴ In addition, there are plans for rehabilitation programs for child soldiers and protection programs for the "wounded and the families of the martyrs".³⁵ However, no plan to rehabilitate torture and ill-treatment victims was explicitly addressed.
22. Finally, the State must provide guarantees of non-recurrence.³⁶ The above-mentioned analysis shows that prosecutions may succeed in Syria only if the perpetrators are non-State actors. In the case of State actors, prosecutions are obstructed by immunity provisions, and the courts lack independence and impartiality, let alone the eight amnesty laws that pardoned perpetrators in the last decade. Therefore, not only perpetrators are enjoying impunity, but the victims are left without any guarantee of non-repetition.

³³ Committee against Torture, General Comment No.3 (2012), UN Doc CAT/C/GC/3, para 16.

³⁴ Annexes to the national report of the Syrian Arab Republic to third cycle of the Universal Periodic review, Annex 9: Proposal to prepare a national plan to implement programs in line with Security Council Resolution No. 1325, p 32 *et seq*; Annex 10: The National Program to Support Women in the Syrian Arab Republic (2018), Chapter 7. Available at: https://lib.ohchr.org/HRBodies/UPR/Documents/Session40/SY/A_HRC_WG.6_WG.6_40_SYR_1_Syrian%20Arab%20Republic_Annexes_AE.pdf.

³⁵ Annexes to the national report of the Syrian Arab Republic to third cycle of the Universal Periodic review, Annex 3: The National Development Program for Syria in the Post-War, p 200; Annex 14: The National Plan for Dealing with Child Victims of Recruitment. Available at: https://lib.ohchr.org/HRBodies/UPR/Documents/Session40/SY/A_HRC_WG.6_WG.6_40_SYR_1_Syrian%20Arab%20Republic_Annexes_AE.pdf.

³⁶ Committee against Torture, General Comment No.3 (2012), UN Doc CAT/C/GC/3, para 18.

Annexes: (Copies of the relevant laws in Arabic are attached separately)

1. [Anti-torture Law No.16/2022](#)
2. [Military Penal Code](#) (MPC) promulgated by Legislative Decree 61 of 1950
3. [General Penal Code](#) (GPC) No.148 of 1949
4. Prison System Law No. 1222 of 1929
5. [The Internal Security Forces Service Law](#) promulgated by Legislative Decree No.1 of 2012
6. [Syrian Code of Criminal Procedure](#) No. 112 of 1950

Submitting Organisations



[The Syrian Legal Development Programme \(SLDP\)](#)

SLDP is a UK-based Syrian organisation established in 2013 in response to the Syrian conflict after realising the importance of addressing complex legal needs triggered by it. SLDP's scope of work embraces various services, projects and activities that are implemented either in Syria itself, neighbouring countries and other states that are involved or have a stake in the conflict. These services include but are not limited to legal consultations, training and workshops, policy recommendations, legal assessments and advocacy campaigns tailored specifically for Syrian NGOs and victims and families' groups to help them with their work on the ground and their documentation and legal advocacy efforts.



[Lawyers and Doctors for Human Rights \(LDHR\)](#)

LDHR is a human rights organisation that conducts expert medical documentation for legal proceedings relating to patients reporting torture, cruel and inhumane treatment and sexual violence, in accordance with the Istanbul Protocol. LDHR believes in the practical application of science and medicine as evidence to assist in the adjudication of criminal and human rights legal proceedings relating to atrocity crimes. Since 2016, LDHR has been primarily supporting investigation and prosecution of international crimes in Syria, pursued through the use of extra-territorial criminal jurisdiction in Europe and elsewhere. LDHR's medical experts can provide expert testimonies in judicial proceedings. LDHR's medical expert reports have also been used to compile factual human rights reports about different types of human rights violations against different groups of victims.



[MASSAR - The Coalition of Families of Persons kidnapped by ISIS](#)

Massar (The Coalition of Families of Persons Kidnapped by ISIS) is an association of families of victims, established by a group of families of missing persons held by the Islamic State "ISIS". Our vision is the truth and justice for those kidnapped by ISIS and their families. We are working to reveal the fate and whereabouts of the abducted, missing and forcibly disappeared, and to bring those responsible for their abduction and disappearance to justice, to hold them accountable, also to try to mitigate the psychological, economic and social effects on the families of the victims.



[Release Me](#)

A non-profit civil organization, established in Syria in 2017, aims to advance and develop women's work to achieve women's access to decision-making positions at all levels. The organization works to rehabilitate survivors of detention, women survivors of physical, psychological, and sexual violence, and those affected by it and provides a range of psychological support programs for the children of these women. It also works on civil peace and community integration programs. The organization believes in the importance

of diversity and difference, and that is why it works to promote diversity at all levels of its work, starting from the cadre, which includes a group of diverse cultural, ethnic, and national backgrounds, to the target groups.



[Justice for Life organization JFL](#)

The Justice for Life organization (JFL) is an independent, non-governmental, and non-profit Syrian organization concerned with strengthening and promoting the culture of human rights in Syria. The organization was a culmination of individual and collective efforts to defend human rights in their society, in addition to documentation of the human rights violations by the various parties to the conflict in the province since 2011. JFL acts so these violations and events don't go without fair accountability.



[Ta'afi Initiative](#)

Ta'afi is a Syrian survivors' led, survivors' centred initiative that aims to support and protect victims of detention, torture, and enforced disappearance upon their release and settlement at a secure location, so that they may continue to peacefully support human rights change in Syria and pursue justice and accountability.



[The Syrian Women's Network / Shams](#)

An independent non-profit organization licensed in Turkey and Sweden. It works in the field of training and building women's capacities, defending their rights, empowerment, and advocacy. It aims to build a democratic society based on freedom, justice, gender equality, and women's access to decision-making positions by no less than 30% up to parity.



[Syrians for Truth and Justice STJ](#)

STJ envisions equal human rights for all Syrians; it documents human rights violations perpetrated against Syrians and in Syria and works towards justice and change. Since its establishment, STJ has had access to thousands of victims, documented hundreds of violations, and trained dozens of human rights activists. Its private database reflects this engagement and aims to contribute to the prospects for justice.



[Hurras Network for the Protection and Care of Syrian Children](#)

Hurras is the primary Syrian non-governmental organization specialising in child protection. Hurras Network is a member of the steering committee of the Child Protection Alliance and is part of several working groups of the UNOCHA Protection Cluster related to the Syrian conflict. The Hurras Network monitors and documents violations against children, which feeds into Hurras Network's urgent intervention case management. It provides capacity-building and raising awareness initiatives to Syrian communities to advance child protection concerning child recruitment, protection from child and early marriage, child labour and access to education, in addition to empowering society to guarantee equal opportunities for both boys and girls.



[Caesar Families Association \(CFA\)](#)

The Caesar Families Association (CFA) is a victim- led association that was established in Germany in 2019. CFA is formed of 55 members who have lost loved ones under torture in the Syrian regime's prisons and have recognized one or more of their relatives

within the so-called "Caesar photos" (CPs). The families are based in many countries and are of different backgrounds and origins. The association's Managing Board consists of 5 families (3 female and 2 male). The Board's Chairwoman is Mrs. Mariam Alhallak. CFA aspires to contribute to the creation of a sustainable peace in Syria, based on justice, citizenship and human rights. CFA strives to stop the torture and killing of detainees, fight for their release, have their fate revealed, guarantee their rights and make sure that those who committed crimes against them will not go unpunished.



[The Day After TDA](#)

The Day After (TDA) is a Syrian non-profit organization that aims at a democratic, free, and just Syria with a system of government built by the Syrian people. TDA's mission is to lay the foundation for democratic transition and durable peace in Syria. We aim to do this by empowering Syrian civil society to influence, shape, and help bring about the above. TDA works with its partners - Syrian CSOs and international human rights organizations - to influence Syrian and non-Syrian stakeholders towards the political change described above and towards keeping transitional justice and accountability a high priority during any political transition work.



Free Syrian Lawyers Association
رابطة المحامين السوريين الأحرار

[Free Syrian Lawyers Association \(FSLA\)](#)

A Syrian non-governmental association, which was officially announced and registered in 2012 in Turkey. FSLA's main goals are to promote human rights and the rule of law in Syria, to achieve justice and peace, to document human rights violations, to contribute to preserving the rights of victims, and to verify and detect the perpetrators of violations in preparation for holding them accountable. The association also seeks to strengthen the alternative institutions that emerged during the Syrian uprising by providing them with the necessary legal and administrative expertise. It educates Syrian society about its civil and political rights to achieve transitional justice, support democratic change, and achieve sustainable peace in Syria.



[Access Center for Human Rights \(ACHR\)](#)

Access Center for Human Rights ACHR is a non-profit and non-governmental human rights organization founded in Lebanon in 2017 and was re-established in France in 2020. It consists of a group of human rights defenders with experience in law and local and international advocacy. ACHR launched its activities in Lebanon due to its belief in supporting refugee rights, at a time of a rise in serious violations against them. ACHR is specialized in monitoring and documenting the refugees' human rights situation and publishes periodic publications with the aim of raising awareness and contributing to national and international advocacy efforts to ensure the refugees' rights in the countries of asylum until their voluntary, dignified, and safe return to their country of origin.