



The New Syria: Awaited Justice and Ongoing Suffering for Families of the Missing

A press release from the Missing Persons’ Families Platform in North and East Syria (MPFP-NES): The fall of the Syrian regime revives hopes of families of the missing persons to uncover the fate of their loved ones. However, it also raises concerns about the fate of evidence and documents that could reveal the truth and bring justice

The Syrian people are entering a new era, fraught with challenges and hopes, after 14 years of suffering that continues to-date. The fall of the Syrian regime and opening of many prisons, including notorious ones, like [Seydnaya Prison](#), have brought the issue of missing persons and the forcibly disappeared to the forefront, calling for a comprehensive and integrated response to ensure the rights of victims and their families and to achieve justice.

Latest Developments: A Window of Hope and Legitimate Concerns:

The [Missing Persons’ Families Platform in North and East Syria](#) (MPFP-NES) is closely and anxiously following up the recent updates, including the capture of armed groups, under the leadership of [Hayat Tahrir al-Sham/HTS](#), areas controlled by the previous regime, and the release of thousands of detainees who have endured years or even decades of imprisonment without any contact with the outside world.

While these developments represent a glimmer of hope for the families of the missing, who have long awaited news of their loved ones, they also raise serious concerns about the safety and fate of the documents and evidence that may hold the key to uncovering the fate of the missing and achieving justice in Syria.

Within this context, Lynn Welchman, Commissioner at the UN [Independent International Commission of Inquiry on the Syrian Arab Republic](#), stated in a [press release](#): **“Throughout the war, families have put themselves in grave danger and paid exorbitant sums in bribes to corrupt State officials for news about their detained loved ones. Now, in videos just released from inside detention facilities, we see rooms with rows of shelves filled with these files. HTS and the other armed groups now taking control of the detention centers must take great care not to disturb evidence of violations and crimes.”**

Violations Go Beyond the Previous Regime:

The issue of the missing and the enforced disappearance remains one of the most pressing humanitarian ones in Syria, and the opening of prisons and the release of prisoners cannot be considered a final solution to this tragedy. This issue exceeds beyond the previous regime, as all parties to the conflict have been involved in committing crimes of arbitrary detention, enforced disappearance, and torture that have claimed the lives of thousands. Moreover, there are dozens of mass graves that require intensive efforts to uncover and ensure justice for the victims and their families.

Cooperation Call:

We call on the international community, including member states and international bodies, in particular [the Independent Institution on Missing Persons in Syria](#) (IIMP), to continue joint efforts through timely and effective plans. We also urge all armed groups and active parties in Syria to cooperate fully and contribute to uncovering the truth and achieving justice.

Urgent Recommendations:

1. Protection of Evidence and Documentation:

- Safeguard all documents and evidence found in prisons, detention facilities, and investigation centers, preventing any tampering or destruction that could obstruct justice.
- Collaborate with local and international human rights organizations to document crimes and collect comprehensive information on released individuals and the missing.

2. Support Survivors and Families of the Missing:

- Provide medical and psychological care for the released individuals and facilitate their reunification with their families.

- Offer comprehensive psychological, social, and legal support to the families of the missing and forcibly disappeared.
- Establish dedicated hotlines for receiving information and facilitate the reporting of missing persons.

3. Strengthen Search and Documentation Efforts:

- Work closely with victims' associations and local and international bodies to identify released individuals, accurately document information and evidence, and securely preserve them to support truth-seeking and justice efforts.
- Collaborate with international investigative teams to collect testimonies and information on potential mass grave sites, identify their locations, and uncover the fate of victims who lost their lives.
- Facilitate the return of victims' remains to their families and ensure dignified burials that honor their humanity.

4. Hold Perpetrators Accountable:

- Investigate all crimes of enforced disappearance and torture, and hold those responsible accountable as an integral part of achieving transitional justice.

5. Raise Awareness and Foster Solidarity:

- Launch media campaigns to highlight the suffering of families of the missing and urge the international community to support truth-seeking and justice efforts.
- Organize solidarity events with the families of the missing to remind the world of its responsibilities toward this humanitarian issue.

6. Warn against Exploitation and Extortion:

- Raise awareness among families about the risks of falling victim to suspicious offers that trade information for money, and ensure that all services are provided freely with full transparency.

Our Message to the Families:

To all families enduring the profound pain of loss or receiving new information about their loved ones, we stand with you during this critical time. We are committed to providing a safe space for sharing information, uncovering the truth, and achieving long-overdue justice.

Together, we can build a Syria where human dignity is honored, and the rights to truth and justice are upheld.

Missing Persons' Families Platform in North and East Syria (MPFP-NES)

For more information about the MPFP-NES, you can visit our [website](#) or contact us through:

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