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**Human Rights Council**  
**Working Group on the Universal Periodic Review**  
**Fortieth session**  
24 January–4 February 2022

## **Summary of Stakeholders' submissions on Syrian Arab Republic\***

### **Report of the Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights**

#### **I. Background**

1. The present report was prepared pursuant to Human Rights Council resolutions 5/1 and 16/21, taking into consideration the periodicity of the universal periodic review. It is a summary of 34 stakeholders' submissions<sup>1</sup> to the universal periodic review, presented in a summarized manner owing to word-limit constraints.

#### **II. Information provided by stakeholders**

##### **A. Scope of international obligations<sup>2</sup> and cooperation with international human rights mechanisms and bodies<sup>3</sup>**

2. ICAN recommended that the Syrian Arab Republic (the State) signs and ratifies the Treaty on the Prohibition of Nuclear Weapons.<sup>4</sup>

##### **B. National human rights framework<sup>5</sup>**

3. JS5 noted that the Syrian constitution did not stipulate the supremacy of international law and obligations, such as the ratified human rights conventions, over domestic law. Moreover, Syrian domestic law does not expressly give national courts competence to apply international conventions' rules directly at the domestic level in the event of conflict between national laws and international obligations.<sup>6</sup>

4. JS1 noted that the slight amendment made to the Syrian Constitution in 2012 did not make a real difference at the societal level, since the Constitution refers all rights to the laws, which often prevents exercising such rights. For example, the Constitution stipulates the right to demonstrate but refers this right to the law and the law limits the approval of demonstrations to the Ministry of the Interior, who changed it with the "Ban of Protests" law.<sup>7</sup>

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\* The present document is being issued without formal editing.



5. JS5 urged the State to amend the Syrian Code of Criminal Procedure or the Penal Code in order to add the offenses of mercenarism, recruitment, financial and training of mercenaries.<sup>8</sup>

6. JS12 noted that, in 2020, Law No. 2 was promulgated to repeal Article 548 of the Penal Code and all legal texts that replaced it, which previously allowed perpetrators of femicide to benefit from mitigating circumstances if the murder was based on a so-called “honourable intent”. As such, the article justifying “honour crimes” was abolished in theory. In practice, however, the courts can still use this mitigating factor in accordance with general rules stipulated in other articles of the Penal Code.<sup>9</sup>

## C. Implementation of international human rights obligations, taking into account applicable international humanitarian law

### 1. Cross-cutting issues

#### *Development, the environment, and business and human rights*

7. JAI noted that, as of 2020, more than nine million Syrians were considered food insecure, raising fears of hunger and undernourishment that climate change will likely exacerbate. Food prices in the State have also soared by an average of 38 percent. As of 2017, 90 percent of the State households spent over half of their income on food, and it is possible that climate change’s effects on agriculture will have similar negative effects.<sup>10</sup>

8. Considering the appalling humanitarian situation in the country, ODVV called for immediate lifting the unilateral coercive measures that target the economic and service sectors in the State and exacerbate the human suffering of the Syrian people, especially in light of the continuation of the COVID-19 pandemic and its effect on the Syrian’s rights to life and to health.<sup>11</sup>

#### *Human rights and counter-terrorism<sup>12</sup>*

9. JS13 noted that Law No. 19 of 2012 on Combating Terrorism contained political terms and loose concepts that affected those who exercised their legitimate political rights, including freedom of opinion and expression. The politicization of the law appears in the text of Article 2, which refers to the term “conspiracy” without defining it or explaining its meaning in any of the law’s provisions. The third paragraph of Article 3 also explicitly stipulates an increase in the penalty “if the purpose of the establishment of the terrorist organization is to change the regime in the state or the entity of the state”. Article 8 extends to the non-participants in any material element of the crime, as it punishes “whoever distributes publications or the stored information, regardless of its form, with the intent of promoting terrorist means or terrorist acts, and the same penalty shall be imposed on anyone who runs or uses a website for this purpose”.<sup>13</sup>

10. JS12 recommended the State to amend the Counter-terrorism Law No. 19 of 2012, including its definitions of acts of terrorism, terrorist groups and financing of terrorism, as well as article 2 on plotting terrorism to ensure that its scope is not interpreted to be extended to human rights defenders, and to bring definitions in conformity with international human rights standards. JS12 asked the State to make public the number of women detained on grounds of terrorism and to guarantee the right to a fair trial before the Counter-Terrorism Court.<sup>14</sup>

11. HRW noted that the State had used Decree 66 of 2012 and its overbroad counterterrorism law to confiscate the property of anti-government individuals and their families, without due process or adequate compensation.<sup>15</sup>

### 2. Civil and political rights

#### *Right to life, liberty and security of person<sup>16</sup>*

12. JS4 was concerned by the military offensive carried out by Russian and Syrian troops in the north-western province of Idlib at the start of 2020, which caused the displacement of

nearly one million civilians and the deaths of several hundred. The situation was exacerbated by the refusal of a third country to allow refugees across its borders. Although the offensive has ended, the situation remains highly unstable and unpredictable. International aid organisations have been unable to operate sufficiently in the Idlib region.<sup>17</sup>

13. HRW noted that the Syrian-Russian military alliance launched hundreds of daily attacks since late 2016 to re-take areas in the country from anti-government groups. Syrian and Russian forces used internationally banned cluster munitions, incendiary weapons, and explosive weapons with wide-area effect, including improvised “barrel bombs.” The Syrian government regularly attacked protected civilian infrastructure, including schools, homes, markets and hospitals, destroying essential infrastructure and killing thousands of civilians.<sup>18</sup>

14. SNHR noted that the State forces had expanded their use of cluster munitions, whether dropped from aircraft or fired by ground forces via artillery or missile launchers. At least 71 cluster munition attacks have been documented, killing 132 civilians, including 36 children and 17 women.<sup>19</sup>

15. JS1 noted that the Syrian government had followed a methodology to besiege cities and towns while civilians were inside, to subject them to indiscriminate siege and bombardment, resulting in starvation, deaths and injuries, following which an agreement is conducted, leading to the population’s deportation to areas in northern Syria. Most civilians chose deportation rather than remain and face retaliation. Large populations have been displaced, including residents of Ghouta and its towns, Daraa, eastern Aleppo city, and others.<sup>20</sup>

16. JS10 noted that siege and starvation had been widely used by the Syrian government. On 24 June 2021, the Syrian government forces began to tighten their restrictions on Daraa Al Balad and its surroundings. The siege was accompanied by overflight of warplanes at a low altitude and random gunfire from snipers to intimidate civilians, and was preventing and restricting movements.<sup>21</sup>

17. SCD noted that the continuous and deliberate attacks against humanitarian workers had exacerbated the already dire situation, in which most of the vulnerable Syrian population lived. Together with deliberate attacks against humanitarian actors through airstrikes and arrest campaigns, the government has also been involved in impeding humanitarian access to vulnerable communities. These practices included the politicization of the delivery of humanitarian aid and the imposition of restrictions and obstacles to access it, in parallel with the policy of starvation and siege against communities living in opposition-controlled areas, leading to the starvation of hundreds of thousands of residents and the loss of life of hundreds of them.<sup>22</sup>

18. SWPM noted that women’s bodies and sexual violence against women had been used as a war weapon. Since the beginning of the crisis, Syrian women and girls have been targeted and have become a tool that the government, armed groups and ISIS have used to humiliate their opponents and political enemies and to wipe out an ethnicity or a city.<sup>23</sup>

19. JS8 noted that, throughout the conflict, no warring party had respected the rights of detained persons in line with international law. The Syrian government, other parties to the conflict and its allies in occupied areas of northern Syria, as well as non-state actors, such as ISIS, Hay’at Tahrir al-Sham, the Free Syrian Army, the Syrian National Army and the Syrian Democratic Forces, have arbitrarily detained individuals and committed war crimes and crimes against humanity in this context.<sup>24</sup> JS10 reiterated that data collected showed that arbitrary arrest and detention, abductions, torture, executions and enforced disappearances in the country were carried out namely by military intelligence, air force intelligence, political security and general intelligence, and the armed forces and militias associated with the Syrian Government.<sup>25</sup>

20. JS1 noted that the government had arbitrarily arrested and enforced disappeared thousands of Syrian men and women. The government does not declare their fate and their property is at risk of loss. Families of missing persons cannot defend their properties because there is no evidence that they are alive or dead.<sup>26</sup>

21. TDA noted that the State had used enforced disappearance and arbitrary arrest, as methods to terrorize civilians and to force its opponents to submit. Its main targets were, and

still are, peaceful opponents, demonstrators and political activists, human rights defenders, media professionals, doctors, and humanitarian aid workers. Military personnel and state employees with questionable loyalty, as well as family members of all those mentioned above, are also on the Government radar for arrests, who use the family members as bargaining chips in order for them to surrender themselves, or for conducting exchanges.<sup>27</sup> TDA recommended the State to ensure that those searching for victims of enforced disappearance, in particular family members and relatives of victims, are safe and protected from abuse, reprisal and violations of their fundamental human rights.<sup>28</sup>

22. HRG noted that the issue of enforced disappearance had resulted in the flourishing of a black market as a result of the obstacles posed by the government that made it difficult for families to search for their loved ones or learn something about their fate, which also led to the emergence of brokers and mediators who received bribes in exchange for selling families information about the whereabouts of their loved ones or the health condition of the disappeared, or any other piece of information in exchange for agreed sums of money.<sup>29</sup>

23. JS8 noted that there were no viable channels for Syrians to make missing persons reports or seek information about the missing and disappeared, as any attempt put family members at risk of detention or other abuses. Moreover, families desperate for information about their detained and disappeared loved ones are vulnerable to exploitation and financial extortion by officials, “fixers” or intermediaries who charge expensive fees for information or to help in securing visits or an individual’s release. In many cases, they do not deliver the information or assistance promised.<sup>30</sup>

24. HRW noted that the State had updated civil registries to include death certificates for hundreds of individuals previously detained or disappeared by the government. However, the updates provide no specific details other than date and, occasionally, cause of death. The government has failed to provide the remains to the families. Meanwhile, the Syrian government continues to detain and mistreat individuals in areas under its control.<sup>31</sup>

25. JS11 recommended the State to stop withholding the issuance of death certificates and death statements and to ensure that the family of all Syrians who died in prisons or in hostilities are able to obtain death statements that do not obscure the person’s true cause of death or any human rights violations they may have suffered in relation to their death.<sup>32</sup>

26. JS11 recommended the State to publish a list of all detainees in places under its control, together with information on the grounds for each person’s detention; ensure that any person subject to arrest has transparent and accurate information regarding the legal basis for the arrest; and offer redress to individuals subject to enforced disappearances and arbitrary arrests and detention, and provide relevant remedies to their families as well.<sup>33</sup>

27. FFF.Syria noted that the spread of the COVID-19 pandemic had had the greatest impact on the families of the detainees and the disappeared. As such, their fears for their loved ones are compounded to their fear for themselves, as they are fully aware of the absence of healthcare in prisons and detention centers, and they know that there are a very large number of detainees held in limited and dark places. Some survivors of detention have described how a detainee would prefer to die where they are than be transferred to the military hospital, where detainees and patients are euthanized.<sup>34</sup>

28. ACHRS noted that forced nudity was probably the most widespread form of sexual violence in Syrian detention centers. When detainees arrive at the detention center, they suffer a “welcome party”, during which they are forced to strip naked and wear nothing, not even their underwear, and are beaten. During torture, sexual torture or other forms of torture, detainees are also stripped naked, often in front of other detainees who are not always of the same sex.<sup>35</sup> ACHRS called upon the State to halt and prohibit the use of sexual violence and torture and to establish an independent body to independently and impartially investigate all cases of sexual violence, torture and other human rights violations.<sup>36</sup>

29. ACHRS noted that men, boys and transgender women in regime detention centers were forced to watch other prisoners, be it male or female, being raped or sexually abused, so as to instigate fear among detainees. Forcing survivors to witness rape also happens outside detention. In such scenarios, sexual violence often involves the rape of a loved one, of the mother, father, daughter, son or any other relative.<sup>37</sup>

30. End Violence noted that corporal punishment was lawful in penal institutions since it was not explicitly prohibited in law. Severe beatings and other ill-treatment of detainees, including children, have been documented.<sup>38</sup>

*Administration of justice, including impunity, and the rule of law*<sup>39</sup>

31. JAI noted that Syrian judiciary appeared incapable of preventing the execution and torture of political dissidents and the unlawful seizure of private property. Many irregular courts with little constraints have been empanelled and were often used to target political opponents, illegally confiscate property, and assign criminal sentences without due process.<sup>40</sup>

32. UPR BCU noted that, in the country, the legal distinction between criminal law offences and the death penalty and military judges applying extra-judicial executions had become blurred. This has produced significant opportunities for the State to abuse the defendants' rights, as well as has rendered opportunities for the government to deny the right to a fair trial and access to competent legal representation. There is significant evidence revealing that the State has violated defendant's rights in all of these aspects of the judicial process.<sup>41</sup>

33. SNHR noted that most arrests took place at military checkpoints or after raids carried out without presenting any official arrest warrant, with most detainees referred to field courts, the Counter-Terrorism Court, or the Military Court, all political courts that lacked the most fundamental elements of proper courts and that were more like security branches, where detainees faced charges without any evidence, uses confessions extracted under torture and coercion and denied access to a lawyer.<sup>42</sup>

34. JS9 noted that most of the detention facilities had no official process in place for detainees to submit official complaints. As a result, the Syrian Government has done little to investigate each alleged case of torture and cruel, inhuman, or degrading treatment in detention facilities.<sup>43</sup>

35. JS9 noted that in alleged cases of torture, officials at military hospitals had routinely listed the cause of death on death notices, formal certificates, and medical reports as heart attack or stroke.<sup>44</sup>

*Fundamental freedoms*

36. JS4 noted that, by law, all religious groups must register with the government and meetings beyond regular worship required permits. Registered religious groups recognised by the government are able to receive free utilities and are exempt from real estate taxes on religious buildings and personal property taxes on their official vehicles. However, identifying as a Jehovah's Witness is illegal and membership of an organisation considered by the government to be associated with Sunni fundamentalism can lead to arrest, torture and execution.<sup>45</sup>

37. JS4 noted that the government required citizens to list their religious affiliation, including denomination, on identification documents and when registering births. In areas controlled by the government and Islamists, conversion by Muslims to another religion or belief is prohibited, although conversion to Islam is recognised. This can be problematic when registering the marriage or holding the funeral of someone who has converted from Islam or for couples where one is registered as Muslim. For example, while a Muslim man may marry a Christian woman, a Muslim woman may not legally marry a Christian man. However, in self-administrative areas of the country, conversion and inter-faith marriages are permitted.<sup>46</sup>

38. ADF International recommended the State to guarantee the full enjoyment of the right to freedom of religion and belief, including by strengthening measures aimed at protecting persons belonging to religious minorities from violence and persecution, including violence perpetrated by both domestic and foreign groups.<sup>47</sup>

39. JAI noted that freedom of expression was not tolerated in the country. The internal security service retaliates against activists or journalists with travel bans, arrests and forced disappearances. The government also engages in surveillance of private and online discussions, such that individuals are not free to express their personal views.<sup>48</sup>

40. JAI noted that freedom of assembly was restricted. Civilian protests are often met with violence and mass arrests. The threat of “disappearing” strongly deters freedom of assembly and expression.<sup>49</sup>

41. JAI noted that internet freedom was also restricted. Many websites are blocked, including foreign press services. The telecommunications market is a government monopoly. The domestic press is also tightly regulated by the government and private media outlets are usually owned by government-associated figures.<sup>50</sup>

42. JS14 recommended ending violations of freedom of expression online by state and non-state actors, including against journalists and media workers; refraining from slowing, blocking or shutting down internet and telecommunications services; ceasing to use the cybercrime law to prosecute internet users and suppress the right to freedom of expression and opinion; and reviewing the law for adherence to the State’s commitments to the ICCPR and ICESCR.<sup>51</sup>

43. JS10 noted that murders of journalists remained generally unsolved and their killers had total impunity. It mentioned the cases of seven Syrian journalists who were murdered in 2020 with total impunity. Since then, other journalists have been killed or escaped assassination attempts in 2020 and 2021.<sup>52</sup>

### **3. Economic, social and cultural rights**

#### *Right to an adequate standard of living<sup>53</sup>*

44. HRW noted that Syrian authorities were unlawfully confiscating the homes and lands of Syrians who fled military attacks in Idlib and Hama governorates.<sup>54</sup>

45. JS1 noted that, during 2020 and 2021, the government had seized agricultural lands in the absence of their owners who fled. The government has formed security committees after popular protests erupted calling for reform and more freedoms. These committees have confiscated lands of displaced persons and have rented them to loyalists through public auctions in the governorates of Hama, Homs, Aleppo, Idlib and Damascus countryside.<sup>55</sup>

46. HRW noted that the State had failed to fairly and adequately address a bread crisis, forcing Syrians to go hungry. A deepening economic crisis, coupled with the significant destruction of infrastructure over a decade of conflict primarily by the Syrian government and its allies, have led to severe wheat shortages. Compounding the crisis, the Syrian government has allowed the discriminatory distribution of bread, alongside corruption and restrictions on how much subsidized bread people can buy.<sup>56</sup>

47. JS15 noted that the siege of Eastern Ghouta by the Government between 2013 and 2018 was an example of how civilians were denied access to an adequate standard of living, including through bombardment of civilian areas, the use of chemical weapons, attacks on hospitals, forcible population transfers, and severe restrictions on food and other objects indispensable to the survival of the civilian population.<sup>57</sup>

#### *Right to health<sup>58</sup>*

48. JS2 noted that north eastern Syria remained outside the circle of securing vaccines, except for a small amount that reached the National Hospital in Qamishli, in addition to the lack of medication for treatment and the ongoing displacement of doctors and medical personnel due to threats, kidnapping and targeting of the medical personnel by the government and the terrorist groups.<sup>59</sup>

#### *Right to education<sup>60</sup>*

49. JS5 noted that the conflict had ravaged the Syrian education system, affecting millions of children across the country. Even where the education system has remained, indigenous and other minority groups have been denied the right to learn in their own languages. The residents of displacement camps lack access to education and do not have schools or access to education for their children.<sup>61</sup>

50. SNHR noted that nearly 2.4 million children inside the country had been deprived of education as a result of the armed conflict since March 2011, with thousands of families not sending their children to schools due to deliberate targeting of schools and educational facilities by the forces of the regime.<sup>62</sup>

51. JS5 noted that, in 2021, in the western countryside of Aleppo province, the army of a third country had taken over Syrian school facilities, interrupting education by establishing military posts of over 500 soldiers in at least four schools. One Batabo school teacher confirmed that approximately 760 elementary students had been deprived of their education and faced restricted access to the school building, which was serving as a military post. Despite repeated efforts by school personnel to retrieve school supplies and furniture to continue classes elsewhere, the third country forces denied access. Many students had to travel to neighbouring villages to attend severely overcrowded schools.<sup>63</sup>

#### 4. Rights of specific persons or groups

##### *Women*<sup>64</sup>

52. SWPM noted that with the economic crisis, forced and child marriages and the exploitation of girls had increased. Women and girls are paying the highest price of poverty. The situation has become so extreme that women's bodies are being exchanged for food and money.<sup>65</sup>

53. JS6 noted that the State continued to discriminate against women in their ability to confer their nationality on their children on an equal basis with men. Due to gender discrimination in the law, those without Syrian nationality, often face obstacles to equally accessing education, healthcare, inheritance and property rights, family unity and freedom of movement.<sup>66</sup> WCC-CCIA stressed that there had been many calls to allow Syrian mothers the possibility to pass nationality to their children. This proposal was presented in parliament in 2010. However, following the outbreak of the conflict, the issue has not been discussed further and no changes in the law have been made.<sup>67</sup>

54. JS6 noted that gender discrimination in the nationality law also undermined women's equal citizenship and their equality in the family, while inhibiting women's right to freely choose a spouse and a place of residence.<sup>68</sup>

55. JS10 noted that women who were released suffered social, economic and psychological effects of their detention, including the social stigma that could lead to divorce, ostracism from the family and society, exclusion from education, and dismissal from work.<sup>69</sup>

##### *Children*<sup>70</sup>

56. SNHR noted that the Syrian government affiliated forces had committed numerous violations against Syrian children, including the killing of 1,585 children, arresting at least 602 others, and subjecting thousands of children to torture and cruel treatment.<sup>71</sup>

57. JS16 reported that children had been recruited and used by all parties in the conflict since at least 2013. The United Nations has verified over 4,894 children associated with armed forces or groups. An estimated 82 per cent of children have been used in direct combat roles and 25 percent of children were under the age of 15 years. The brutal and unbaiting use of children directly and indirectly in the conflict will carry a heavy cost for Syria's future.<sup>72</sup>

58. SNHR noted that child labor and child suicide had escalated as a result of extreme poverty, homelessness and massive trauma.<sup>73</sup>

59. End Violence noted that corporal punishment was lawful in schools under the Penal Code of 1949. The Ministry of Education has issued decisions and orders stating that children should not be subjected to physical punishment and encouraging teachers to use dialogue and other methods of discipline, but there is no explicit prohibition of corporal punishment in law.<sup>74</sup>

*Persons with disabilities*<sup>75</sup>

60. HRW noted that the conflict had exacerbated stigma, resulting in extreme practices, including shackling and physical and verbal abuse of people with disabilities.<sup>76</sup>

*Minorities*

61. JS7 noted that minority groups in the country, including Kurds, Armenians, Circassians, Assyrians, Turkmen, Chaldeans and others had been subjected to discriminatory policies. In addition to the imposition of the Arab identity within the Constitution, the Constitution does not recognize any language except Arabic, leading authorities to prevent Kurds and other minorities from speaking their mother tongue. Security forces frequently arrest Kurdish people for teaching the Kurdish language privately and sentence others to long-term imprisonment over charges such as perturbing the nation's concord and attempting to annex a Syrian territory to a foreign country.<sup>77</sup>

62. ADF International noted that the State had not officially recognized the Yazidi as an ethnic and religious minority group and recommended amending the law that requires them to handle personal matters at Islamic Sharia courts.<sup>78</sup>

63. JS15 recommended the State to extend constitutional and legal recognition afforded to Muslims, Christians, Yazidis and other minorities; end the discriminatory ban against Jehovah's Witnesses; end the use of sectarian language to characterize political opposition in official state discourse; and prevent the dissemination of such content in the media.<sup>79</sup>

64. ECLJ noted that Christians and other religious and ethnic minorities in the country had long faced daily threats of violence, in addition to the growing humanitarian crisis. ISIS continues to carry out violence against them.<sup>80</sup>

65. Jubilee noted that, due to "Operation Olive Branch" in 2018, 90% of the Yezidi population in Afrin had either fled the region to avoid militia violence or had been forced out of their homes by gunmen. All remaining Yezidi villages in Afrin have come under Turkish control. Many of the 19 sacred Yezidi shrines and cemeteries have been desecrated or looted. Moreover, there have been no fewer than 47 abductions of Yezidis in Afrin District since 2018.<sup>81</sup>

66. Rerooted noted that Syrian-Armenians did not feel divided or isolated from non-Armenian Syrians before the war. They co-existed peacefully with minimal conflict. However, the war in the country has led to targeted attacks of the Syrian-Armenian community, creating a lack of unity and trust between ethnic groups.<sup>82</sup>

67. Rerooted said that there could be no justice in the country without protecting minority rights and reunifying diverse groups. It considered important to listen to minority groups' voices when thinking of how to rebuild and reunify the country.<sup>83</sup>

68. Rerooted noted efforts to protect minority groups in the country. Rerooted stated that, by investing in Syrian-Armenian communities and priorities, the Syrian government could demonstrate a commitment to welcoming all diverse minority communities back to the country, and could benefit from Armenians as a strong part of the fabric of Syria's diversity.<sup>84</sup>

69. JS4 noted that, while the Syrian civil war had negatively impacted every religious and ethnic community, in areas controlled by Islamist militias, religious communities, including the Bahai, Ahmadiyya, Jews, Yazidis and Christians had suffered particularly appalling treatment. Many have been forced to flee the country due to the hostile environment, rendering some areas 'religiously cleansed'.<sup>85</sup>

70. ECLJ noted that the Islamic State's religious abuses in the country were well-documented, including beheadings, burning victims alive in caskets, and other barbaric "killings, rape, kidnapping, enslavement, theft, destruction of religious sites, sexual slavery, forced conversion, ransom demands, property seizures, and forced business closures". ECLJ was deeply concerned about reports that ISIS was again growing in the region and renewing its persecution of Christians and other religious minorities.<sup>86</sup>



71. JS5 noted that authorities were facilitating the erosion of cultural diversity throughout the country through systematic language erasure, destruction of cultural sites, and forced Turkish language acquisition in the occupied areas.<sup>87</sup>

*Refugees, asylum seekers and internally displaced persons*<sup>88</sup>

72. Jubilee noted that internal displaced people camps and broader regions throughout northwestern and northeastern Syria were fraught with overcrowding, lack of sanitary conditions, malnutrition of children, exposure to extreme weather conditions and flooding, inadequate sewage systems, unemployment, devastation of cropland, heightened criminal activity and extortion/theft, arbitrary detention and interrogation of minorities – sometimes accompanied by denial of aid due to their ethnicity or faith –, vulnerability to attacks by armed groups and more.<sup>89</sup>

73. WCC-CCIA noted that there were approximately 6.3 million Syrian refugees abroad, and those who were affected by statelessness faced additional barriers to return. Many internally displaced persons and refugees' families encounter difficulties accessing registration and documentation, resulting in the lack of proof of identity and nationality. Marriage registration is essential because some host countries require a marriage certificate for birth registration and to establish the identity of the child's (legal) father. In addition, it is customary in the State to get married first in the religious system but the formal marriage in the registry might only take place after a prolonged period. All these factors make the acquisition of nationality difficult.<sup>90</sup>

74. JS3 noted that Syrian citizens returning to their areas of origin, whether from outside or inside the country, faced several structural problems in their enjoyment of their rights, leading to the de facto deprivation and violation of their rights to recognition of the person before the law, as well as their housing, land and property rights. Challenges to claim property remain in government-held areas, including cases of expropriation by the Government, as returnees continue to face challenges in accessing their property, amid incapacitating restrictions, discriminatory laws and property seizing from the Syrian authorities, which are in violation of international standards of adequate housing such as legal protection from forced eviction, due process and non-discriminatory application of the law and legal remedy.<sup>91</sup>

75. JS3 noted that difficulties in accessing and obtaining identification documents for civilians returning to government-held areas were exacerbated by lack of documentation to formally recognize family and property-related developments, which occurred when they lived under the authority of non-state actors. In Deir Ezzor, during the three years in which ISIS controlled most of Deir Ezzor governorate, thousands of transactions and civil status updates were not adequately documented for several reasons, including ISIS preventing civilians from moving to government-held areas of the city of Deir Ezzor to register their transactions and civil status updates.<sup>92</sup>

*Stateless persons*

76. JS6 stressed that gender discrimination in nationality laws was a root cause of statelessness and could perpetuate statelessness across generations, as male children who were rendered stateless will go on to have their own stateless children who cannot access nationality even if their mother is a citizen.<sup>93</sup>

## 5. Specific regions or territories

77. JS5 noted that, after the Turkish-backed Operation Olive Branch in Afrin on 18 March 2018, the erasure of the Kurdish language had intensified as officials had denied indigenous children the right to learn in their mother tongue.<sup>94</sup> All statements, reports and decisions are now issued only in Arabic and Turkish, with none in Kurdish. Traffic signs and other institutional signs have been changed from Kurdish to Arabic or Turkish, and many other official certificates and licenses are printed only in the two languages.<sup>95</sup> In the Turkish occupied areas of Syrian territories, local councils of the Ministry of Local Administration in the Syrian Interim Government replaced the Kurdish curricula with Turkish and Arabic, despite the overwhelming percentage of Kurds in the region. The new curricula include

disproportionate emphasis on Islamic religious education, threatening students' cultural identity. The Syrian government has failed to provide remedies in the occupied regions, camps for internal displaced people and for indigenous and minority education.<sup>96</sup>

### Notes

- <sup>1</sup> The stakeholders listed below have contributed information for this summary; the full texts of all original submissions are available at: [www.ohchr.org](http://www.ohchr.org).

#### *Civil society*

##### *Individual submissions:*

ACHRS	Amman Centre for Human Rights Studies, Amman (Jordan);
ADF International	ADF International, Geneva (Switzerland);
ECLJ	The European Centre for Law and Justice, Strasbourg (France);
End Violence	Global Partnership to End Violence Against Children, New York (United States of America);
FFF, Syria	Families for Freedom, Efrin (Syrian Arab Republic);
HRG	Human Rights Guardians, Antakya (Turkey);
HRW	Human Rights Watch, Geneva (Switzerland);
ICAN	International Campaign to Abolish Nuclear Weapons, Geneva (Switzerland);
JAI	Just Atonement Inc., New York (United States of America);
Jubilee	Jubilee Campaign, Fairfax, VA (United States of America);
ODVV	Organization for Defending Victim of Violence, Tehran (Islamic Republic of Iran);
Rerooted	Rerooted Archive, Philadelphia (United States of America);
SCD	Syria Civil Defense -The White Helmets, Gaziantep (Turkey);
SNHR	Syrian Network for Human Rights, Paris (France);
SWPM	Syrian Women's Political Movement, Brooklyn (United States of America);
TDA	The Day After, Istanbul (Turkey);
UPR BCU	The UPR Project at BCU, Birmingham (United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland);
WCC-CCIA	World Council of Churches Commission of the Churches on International Affairs, Geneva (Switzerland).

##### *Joint submissions:*

JS1	<b>Joint submission 1 submitted by:</b> The Day After (TDA), Association for Peace, Justice and Documentation (APJD), Assembly of Damascus city and countryside IDPs in Azaz, Association of Palestinian Displaced Persons in Northern Syria, and the General Organization for Aleppo and Idlib IDPs in Jarablus, Istanbul (Turkey);
JS2	<b>Joint submission 2 submitted by:</b> Human Rights Organization in Syria (Maf), on behalf of the General Union of Kurdish Writers and Journalists, Organization for the Defense of Prisoners of Conscience in Syria – Rawanke, and Environmental Protection Organization – Kaskayi, Essen (Germany);
JS3	<b>Joint submission 3 submitted by:</b> Justice for Life, Access Center for Human Rights, the Human Rights Guardians, the Day After Lawyers, and Doctors for Human Rights, Berlin (Germany);
JS4	<b>Joint submission 4 by submitted by:</b> Christian Solidarity Worldwide (CSW), CSW-Nigeria and CSW, New Malden (United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland);
JS5	<b>Joint submission 5 submitted by:</b> Advocates for Human Rights and Syrians for Truth and Justice, Minneapolis (United States of America);
JS6	<b>Joint submission 6 submitted by:</b> the Institute on Statelessness and Inclusion (ISI), MENA Statelessness Network (Hawiati), and the Global Campaign for Equal Nationality Rights (GCENR), Eindhoven (Netherlands);
JS7	<b>Joint submission 7 submitted by:</b> the Syrian Legal Development Programme, Release Me, and the Syrian Women Network, London (United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland);
JS8	<b>Joint submission 8 submitted by:</b> Cairo Institute for Human

- Rights Studies (CIHRS), Association of Detainees and Missing Persons in Sednaya Prison (ADMSP), Caesar Families Association, Coalition of Families of Persons Kidnapped by ISIS (Massar), Families for Freedom, and the Ta'afi Initiative, Geneva (Switzerland);
- JS9 **Joint submission 9 submitted by:** World Coalition Against the Death Penalty and the Advocates for Human Rights, Montreuil (France);
- JS10 **Joint submission 10 submitted by:** The Syrian Center for Media and Freedom of Expression (SCM), Gulf Centre for Human Rights (GCHR), International Federation for Human Rights (FIDH), and the World Organisation Against Torture (OMCT), Paris (France);
- JS11 **Joint submission 11 submitted by:** Syrians for Truth and Justice (STJ), Advocates for Human Rights (The Advocates), Hevdestî Association (Synergy) for the Victims of Turkish Military Offensives in Northeastern Syria, Human Rights Organization in Syria – Maf, the Kurdish Organisation for Human Rights in Syria (DAD), PÊL - Civil Waves, GAV for Relief and Development, and Shar for development, Paris (France);
- JS12 **Joint submission 12 submitted by:** Women's International League for Peace and Freedom (WILPF), Umammu for Justice and Human Rights, the Syrian League for Citizenship (SL4C), Women Now for Development, Dawlaty, Badael Foundation, and the Syrian Female Journalists Network (SFJN), Geneva (Switzerland);
- JS13 **Joint submission 13 submitted by:** The Policy Coordination Group for Missing and Disappeared Persons – Syria (PCG), on behalf of EZDINA Nophotozone and the Syrian Women's Political Movement, The Hague (Netherlands);
- JS14 **Joint submission 14 submitted by:** Access Now and Mnemonic, New York (United States of America);
- JS15 **Joint submission 15 submitted by:** Minority Rights Group International (MRG) and the Ceasefire Centre for Civilian Rights, London (United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland);
- JS16 **Joint submission 16 submitted by:** World Vision International and Syria Relief, Geneva (Switzerland).

<sup>2</sup> The following abbreviations are used in UPR documents:

ICESCR International Covenant on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights;

ICCPR International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights.

<sup>3</sup> For the relevant recommendations, see A/HRC/34/5, paras. 109.1-109.13, 109.31-109.63, 109.79-109.83, 110.1-110.3, 110.12-110.14, 110.16, 110.17 and 110.19.

<sup>4</sup> International Campaign to Abolish Nuclear Weapons, p. 1.

<sup>5</sup> For the relevant recommendations, see A/HRC/34/5 paras. 109.14, 109.16-109.24, 109.26-109.30, 109.64-109.78, 109.85 and 109.196.

<sup>6</sup> Joint submission 5, para. 13.

<sup>7</sup> Joint submission 1, para. 12.

<sup>8</sup> Joint submission 5, para. 12.

<sup>9</sup> Joint submission 12, para. 5.

<sup>10</sup> Just Atonement Inc., para 10.

<sup>11</sup> The Organization for Defending Victims of Violence, para. 14.

<sup>12</sup> For relevant recommendations see A/HRC/34/5, paras. 109.199 - 109.203.

<sup>13</sup> Joint submission 13, paras. 37-38.

<sup>14</sup> Joint submission 12, p. 13.

<sup>15</sup> Human Rights Watch, p. 4.

<sup>16</sup> For relevant recommendations see A/HRC/34/5, paras. 109.151-109.166, 109.169, 110.20, 110.21 and 110.26.

<sup>17</sup> Joint submission 4, para. 9.

<sup>18</sup> Human Rights Watch, p. 6.

<sup>19</sup> Syrian Network for Human Rights, para. 6.

<sup>20</sup> Joint submission 1, paras. 24-25.

<sup>21</sup> Joint submission 10, para. 30.

<sup>22</sup> Syria Civil Defense, para. 7.

- 23 Syrian Women's Political Movement, para. 13.  
24 Joint submission 8, para. 22.  
25 Joint submission 10, para. 18.  
26 Joint submission 1, para. 58.  
27 The Day After, para. 9.  
28 The Day After, para. 21.  
29 Human Rights Guardians, para. 9.  
30 Joint submission 8, para 17.  
31 Human Rights Watch, pp. 2-3.  
32 Joint submission 11, p. 11.  
33 Joint submission 11, p. 9.  
34 Families For Freedom, para. 26.  
35 Amman Center for Human Rights Studies, para. 19.  
36 Amman Center for Human Rights Studies, para. 25.  
37 Amman Center for Human Rights Studies, para. 20.  
38 Global Partnership to End Violence Against Children, para. 2.5.  
39 For relevant recommendations see A/HRC/34/5, paras. 109.168, 109.170-109.175 and 110.22-110.24.  
40 Just Atonement Inc., para. 36.  
41 The UPR Project at BCU, para. 8.  
42 Syrian Network for Human Rights, para. 19.  
43 Joint submission 9, para. 30.  
44 Joint submission 9, para. 31.  
45 Joint submission 4, para. 18.  
46 Joint submission 4, para. 19.  
47 ADF International, para. 17/E.  
48 Just Atonement Inc., para. 26.  
49 Just Atonement Inc., para. 27.  
50 Just Atonement Inc., para. 28.  
51 Joint submission 14, para. 46 C.  
52 Joint submission 10, para. 35.  
53 For relevant recommendations see A/HRC/34/5, paras. 109.190 and 109.38.  
54 Human Rights Watch, p. 4.  
55 Joint submission 1, para. 57.  
56 Human Rights Watch, p. 5.  
57 Joint submission 15, para. 22.  
58 For relevant recommendations see A/HRC/34/5, para. 109.120.  
59 Joint submission 2, p. 6.  
60 For relevant recommendations see A/HRC/34/5 paras. 109.191-109.195.  
61 Joint submission 5, paras. 43-44.  
62 Syrian Network for Human Rights, para. 40.  
63 Joint submission 5, para. 45.  
64 For relevant recommendations see A/HRC/34/5 paras. 109.14-109.15, 109.85-109.91 and 109.176-109.181.  
65 Syrian Women's Political Movement, para. 15.  
66 Joint submission 6, para. 22.  
67 World Council of Churches Commission of the Churches on International Affairs, p. 1.  
68 Joint submission 6, para. 22. See also World Council of Churches Commission of the Churches on International Affairs, p. 1.  
69 Joint submission 10, para. 23.  
70 For relevant recommendations see A/HRC/34/5 paras. 109.16, 109.25, 109.90-109.94 and 109.182-109.187.  
71 Syrian Network for Human Rights, para. 39.  
72 Joint submission 16, para. 33.  
73 Syrian Network for Human Rights, para. 40.  
74 Global Partnership to End Violence Against Children, para. 2.4.  
75 For relevant recommendations see A/HRC/34/5 para. 109.92.  
76 Human Rights Watch, p. 7.  
77 Joint submission 7, para. 4.  
78 ADF International, para. 17/C.  
79 Joint submission 15, paras. 33-34.  
80 European Centre for Law and Justice, para. 23.  
81 Jubilee Campaign, para. 17.  
82 Rerooted Archive, para. 32.  
83 Rerooted Archive, para. 33.  
84 Rerooted Archive, para. 40.  
85 Joint submission 4, para. 16.

<sup>86</sup> European Centre for Law and Justice, para. 9.

<sup>87</sup> Joint submission 5, para. 47.

<sup>88</sup> For relevant recommendations see A/HRC/34/5 paras. 109.197-109.198.

<sup>89</sup> Jubilee Campaign, para. 30.

<sup>90</sup> World Council of Churches Commission of the Churches on International Affairs, p. 1.

<sup>91</sup> Joint submission 3, paras. 17-18.

<sup>92</sup> Joint submission 3, para. 24.

<sup>93</sup> Joint submission 6, para. 22. See also World Council of Churches Commission of the Churches on International Affairs, p. 1.

<sup>94</sup> Joint submission 5, para. 46.

<sup>95</sup> Joint submission 5, para. 48.

<sup>96</sup> Joint submission 5, para. 46.

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