



## Activities of the Syrian Center for Media and Freedom of Expression at the 50th session of the United Nations Human Rights Council

### Agenda of the session A/HRC/50/1

The 50th session of the Human Rights Council started on June 13 and continued until July 8, 2022. It focused on thematic issues. It dealt with several issues including sexual violence, discrimination against women, and gender issues. Freedom of expression etc. The session also dealt with topics related to the human rights situation in several countries, including Syria.

The Syrian Center For Media and Freedom of Expression's team participated in the 50th session of the Human Rights Council and contributed to the negotiations that took place on the periodic resolution on the situation of human rights in Syria, pushing toward strengthening the language of condemnation, and calling for supporting the role of victims' associations in alternative international accountability tracks, and working to end the state of impunity from punishment.

### The Human Rights Council adopts a new resolution on the human rights situation in Syria

The Syrian Center for Media and Freedom of Expression (SCM) welcomed In a [press release](#), the [resolution](#) adopted by the Human Rights Council on the situation of human rights in Syria within the framework of the work of its 50th session, in which it condemned all acts of sexual or gender-based violence committed by all parties since 2011. It focused on violations against women and girls, as well as children, especially those based on sexual or gender-based violence.

25 countries of the 47 member countries of the Human Rights Council voted in favor of the resolution, with 15 states abstaining, while six countries opposed the resolution: Venezuela, Eritrea, Cuba, China, Bolivia, and Armenia.

HRC 50th session					
A/HRC/50/L.5/Rev.1 - Situation of human rights in the Syrian Arab Republic					
YES	ARGENTINA	YES	HONDURAS	YES	NETHERLANDS
NO	ARMENIA	ABST	INDIA	ABST	PAKISTAN
YES	BENIN	ABST	INDONESIA	YES	PARAGUAY
NO	BOLIVIA (PLURINATIONAL STATE OF)	YES	JAPAN	YES	POLAND
ABST	BRAZIL	ABST	KAZAKHSTAN	YES	QATAR
ABST	CAMEROON		LIBYA	YES	REPUBLIC OF KOREA
NO	CHINA	YES	LITHUANIA	ABST	SENEGAL
YES	COTE D'IVOIRE	YES	LUXEMBOURG	ABST	SOMALIA
NO	CUBA	YES	MALAWI	ABST	SUDAN
YES	CZECH REPUBLIC	ABST	MALAYSIA	YES	UKRAINE
NO	ERITREA	YES	MARSHALL ISLANDS	ABST	UNITED ARAB EMIRATES
YES	FINLAND	ABST	MAURITANIA	YES	UNITED KINGDOM OF GREAT BRITAIN AND NORTHERN IRELAND
YES	FRANCE	YES	MEXICO	YES	UNITED STATES OF AMERICA
YES	GABON	YES	MONTENEGRO	ABST	UZBEKISTAN
YES	GAMBIA	ABST	NAMIBIA	NO	VENEZUELA (BOLIVARIAN REPUBLIC OF)
YES	GERMANY	ABST	NEPAL		
	<b>YES</b>	<b>25</b>	<b>ABST</b>	<b>15</b>	<b>NO</b>
					<b>6</b>

## The Human Rights Council discusses the human rights situation in Syria



An [interactive dialogue session](#) with the International Commission of Inquiry on Syria was held on June 29, where the Commission's Chair, Mr. Paulo Pinheiro, provided an [update](#) on its latest work, **urging states** to take action to support efforts to uncover the fate of missing persons in Syria: "There is a lot of work that can be done to support victims and survivors in Syria, families have waited a long time and this issue seriously affects a wide spectrum of Syrians of all walks of life,"

Danny Al-Baaj, Director of Advocacy and Communication at SCM made an [intervention](#) on behalf of the Center in which he demanded the establishment of an independent international mechanism for the detection of the disappeared and forcibly disappeared in Syria, and asked the committee whether it would share the information about the mechanism and if it has a vision of the nature of coordination and cooperation.



The committee had previously called for the **establishment of a body to unify the claims submitted with a wide range of non-governmental and humanitarian organizations** to track and identify the missing and disappeared in Syria and help their families, stressing the need for the participation of the family, victims, and survivors to be central to its work.

The team of the Syrian Center for Media and Freedom of Expression attended the informal negotiating session on Syria at the 50th session of the Human Rights Council, represented by our colleague Yara Badr, who demanded amendments to the text of the resolution, so that it recognizes that women and girls have been disproportionately affected by the outcome of the violence And that they are still among the most affected for various reasons, and demanded the addition of a paragraph condemning the recruitment of girls by the Syrian Democratic Forces in northeastern Syria, based on the results of the study previously issued by the Syrian Center for Media and Freedom of Expression in this regard.

## Adoption session of Syria's national report of the Universal Periodic Review Mechanism (UPR)

The 50th session of the Council, within the meetings of the Working Group on Mechanism, witnessed; The session to adopt the national report of a group of countries, including Syria;

The Syrian Center for Media and Freedom of Expression (SCM) participated in the Universal Periodic Review session through an [oral intervention](#), which focused on the attempts of the Syrian government to deny its direct responsibility for the crimes committed in Syria, including the use of chemical weapons, torture and enforced disappearance, were refuted, and "the Syrian government is trying through its national report to embellish the bitter reality of the human rights situation. In Syria, the fight against terrorism and the presence of the Israeli, American, French and Turkish occupation are the basis for all the problems."

SCM has previously submitted, within the framework of the Universal Periodic Review mechanism, the so-called "[shadow report](#)", which is submitted by civil society organizations on the human rights situation in the countries under consideration within the mechanism. Where the Center worked, in cooperation with several Syrian civil society organizations, to document and confirm the systematic violations committed by the Syrian authorities against persons under their legal jurisdiction, and to submit the report along with the partners the Gulf Center for Human Rights (GCHR) and the International Federation for Human Rights (FIDH), and the International Organization Against Torture (OMCT).

## Activities held by the Syria Center for Media and Freedom of Expression

In the context of communication and interaction with the countries concerned with the human rights situation in Syria, especially the member states of the Human Rights Council, the Syrian Center for Media and Freedom of Expression team, represented by colleagues Yara Badr, Ibaa Munther, Danny Al-Baaj, and Fares Halabi, and on the sidelines of the session sessions, held several meetings. Bilateral with representatives of missions of member states and non-members of the Council, including the representative of France on the Council, Mr. Pierre Le Gough, and Ms. Alexandra Clerc, representative of the Swiss delegation, and with Ms. Aoife Daly, representative of the delegation of Ireland and the representative of the European Union, Mr. Rocco Pollini, as well as with the representative of Britain, Ms. Anna Pruitt. A meeting was also held with Mr. Kevin Whelan of Amnesty International in Geneva. With Mr. Jeremie Smith from the Cairo Institute for Human Rights Studies and Mr. Michael Khambata from the Gulf Center for Human Rights.

SCM also delivered three interventions in a physical form from inside the United Nations Palace in Geneva, two of whom were presented by colleague Danny Al-Baaj, and colleague Fares Al-Halabi gave one [oral intervention](#) during the interactive dialogue session on the independence of judges and lawyers on July 21, 2022, in which the Center stressed the need to press The Syrian government should release all detained lawyers, clarify the fate of the forcibly disappeared, hold those responsible for violations against judges and lawyers accountable and ensure their independence.



## Cooperation with Syrian civil society organizations

As part of the cooperation and integration policy pursued by the Syrian Center for Media and Freedom of Expression, the team cooperated with several Syrian civil society organizations and provided oral interventions in several sessions during the session.

An [Intervention](#) by “Salma Hassan” from the [Syrian Archive](#) during the interactive dialogue session devoted to the annual report of the High Commissioner for Human Rights Council by a colleague, in which she asked countries about the time that will pass before the perpetrators of crimes in Syria are held accountable, as well as that what happened in Syria is very similar to what is happening in Ukraine.

An [intervention](#) during the interactive dialogue session with the Special Rapporteur on Peaceful Assembly, in cooperation with colleagues at the [Fraternity](#) Foundation for Human Rights, stated:

“We call on the Council to pressure the parties to the Syrian conflict to stop the violations against associations in Syria, and to demand the Syrian government to fulfill its obligations as a state party to the International Covenant on Civil, Political, Economic and Cultural Rights.”

An [Intervention](#) during the interactive dialogue session with the Special Rapporteur on extrajudicial, summary, or arbitrary executions, in cooperation with colleagues in The Association of the Detainees and Missing of the Sednaya Prison (ADMSP), stated:

“Ladies and Gentlemen, Extrajudicial executions still occur in Syria to a large extent. Decrees and laws issued by the authorities in Syria are ink on paper that are not implemented or adhered to, and perhaps the recent amnesty decree is a good example of this, as only a few were released from prisons. It does not exceed 500 people out of an approximate number of 150,000 detainees. This accountability needs the solidarity of society to put an end to it and bring justice to the Syrians.”

SCM facilitated the attendance of fellow lawyer “Yasser Tabara” from the [Syrian Forum](#) at the session’s activities and held several meetings with representatives of diplomatic missions and non-governmental organizations, including Amnesty International, to discuss the possibility of cooperation between international and Syrian organizations.

## Side Events

The Syrian Center for Media and Freedom of Expression organized with [We Exist](#) Coalition, the Syrian Civil Society Networks Platform ([SCNP](#)), the Syrian Displaced Voices Forum ([VDSE](#)), and the Federation of Syrian Media Organizations [VDSH.eV](#), a virtual [webinar](#) on the sidelines of the 50th session of Human Rights on July 05, 2022, entitled “Syrian Refugees Losing Their last resort, how Syrian Refugees are affected by the changes in Europe”, with fellow researcher director of the legal office of the Syrian Center for Media and Freedom of Expression, along with Kinan Diab, General Coordinator of the Voices of the Displaced Syrians Forum, and Ralph Haddad, Director of the Advocacy Department and research at Basma and Zaytouna, and was facilitated by colleague Sahar al-Atrash, advocates of the Middle East Program at Refugees International.

Dr. Ayman Menhem stated in: the [webinar](#):

“The legitimacy of asylum as a human right that is not in dispute according to Article / 14 / of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights, and a briefing on the legal framework for what is considered a forced return and what is considered a voluntary return, and how the principle of forced return is not only limited to expulsion or deportation direct, and that the practices of several countries of indirect measures that surround the refugee with conditions that prevent him from continuing life on their lands are the principle of forcible return according to international humanitarian law and many international conventions,”



In addition to providing an overview of the situation of Syrians in Turkey and the problem of the absence of the legal status of Syrian refugees in Turkey, which puts them at permanent risk of deportation, the agreement under study between the United Kingdom and Rwanda and its violation of international laws, and the significant impact of recent economic migrations on the issue of refugees around the world.

