



المركز السوري للإعلام وحرية التعبير
Navenda Sûriyayî ya Ragihandîné û Azadiya Derbirîné
Syrian Center for Media and Freedom of Expression

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UN Mechanisms Department

Activities Report 2021-2024



image: SCM

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The **Syrian Center for Media and Freedom of Expression (SCM)** is an independent, non-governmental, and non-profit civil society organization registered in France in 2004, focusing on human rights and media development. It is governed by a non-remunerated board and has held a UN ECOSOC special consultative status since 2011.

SCM seeks to build a society that guarantees freedom of expression and belief, human rights, and justice. Since its inception in 2004, SCM has been dedicated to safeguarding human rights defenders, advocating for human rights and fundamental freedoms, empowering civil society and victims' associations, and fostering the growth of an independent and professional media sector.

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Background

The United Nations Mechanisms Department at the Syrian Center for Media and Freedom of Expression was founded in the last third of 2020, a working team was formed from various center departments to build on the center's efforts in this approach since its establishment. Especially after the SCM obtained consultant status at the United Nations Economic and Social Council (UN ECOSOC) in 2011. The establishment of the department coincided with conducting training on United Nations mechanisms for the team, organizing workshops to discuss working methodologies, and selecting the topics and content of the reports.

The department aims to raise the victims' voices, provide reliable information, increase the awareness of international stakeholders on the human rights situation in Syria. and increase the number of contributions related to Syria to various United Nations mechanisms and procedures, in alignment with the center's strategic approach, particularly focusing on issues of combating impunity for crimes such as enforced disappearance, torture, violations against journalists and freedom of expression, arbitrary detention, child recruitment, and other serious human rights violations. This work relies on directly involving victims and their families in claiming their rights.

UN Mechanism Department's work areas:

- * Individual complaints
- * General allegations
- * Shadow reports -Universal Periodic Review
- * Oral interventions during Human Rights Council sessions.
- * Capacity building training

The UN Mechanism Department targeted various rapporteurs and working groups, including:

1. [Special Rapporteur on extrajudicial, summary, or arbitrary executions](#)
2. [Special Rapporteur on torture](#)
3. [Working Group on Arbitrary Detention](#)
4. [Working Group on Enforced or Involuntary Disappearances](#)
5. [Special Rapporteur on the independence of judges and lawyers](#)
6. [Special Rapporteur on freedom of opinion and expression](#)

7. [Special Rapporteur on human rights defenders](#)
8. [Special Rapporteur on freedom of peaceful assembly and of association](#)
9. [Working Group on discrimination against women and girls](#)
10. [Special Rapporteur on the human rights of internally displaced persons](#)
11. [Special Rapporteur on the human rights of migrants](#)
12. [Special Rapporteur on counter-terrorism and human rights](#)
13. [Working Group on Business and Human Rights](#)
14. [Special Rapporteur on violence against women and girls](#)
15. [Working Group on the use of mercenaries](#)
16. [Special Rapporteur on the human right to a healthy environment](#)
17. [Special Rapporteur on the right to development](#)
18. [Special Rapporteur on truth, justice and reparation](#)
19. [Special Rapporteur on the right to adequate housing](#)
20. [Special Rapporteur on the right to health](#)
21. [Special Rapporteur on the right to food](#)
22. [Human Rights Council Complaint Procedure](#)

UN Mechanisms Department- Activities 2021-2024

The Syrian Center for Media and Freedom of Expression has submitted, during the last four years: 134 individual complaints, 17 General allegations, and 9 Universal Periodic Review reports, in addition to 22 oral interventions during HRC sessions, as follows:

Individual Complaints			
Female	Male	Total	Year
7	28	35	2021
6	33	39	2022
6	34	40	2023
8	12	20	2024 Until October

General Allegations and Contributions

Topic	Total	Year
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Submission to the United Nations Human Rights Committee at its 130th Session for its List of Issues Prior to Reporting 	1	2020
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Enforced or Involuntary Disappearances • International Day of the Victims of Enforced Disappearances • Freedom of Peaceful Assembly and Association 	3	2021
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Madia reality in Syria 2019-2021 • General allegations on the rights of returnees to the Syrian Arab Republic • Extrajudicial, summary, or arbitrary executions • Commission on the Status of Women for consideration at its next session (6 to 17 March 2023). • Forcible return of Syrian refugees from Turkey to northern Syria 	5	2022
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The Commission on the Status of Women (CSW) report. • Tadamon Massacre Hidden War Crime in Syria. • Demographic engineering in Syria. • A parallel report to the Human Rights Committee concerning the implementation of the Convention by the Syrian Arab Republic. • General Allegation letter on Legal aspects of the forcible return of Syrian refugees from Bulgaria and Greece to Türkiye. • General Allegation letter stating that Türkiye's deliberate cutting off of water from North and North-Eastern Syria leads to flagrant human rights violations in these areas. • General Allegation Letter on Legal aspects of the forcible return of Syrian refugees from Turkey to northern Syria. 	7	2023
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Targeting of civilian objects and infrastructure in northeastern Syria 	1	2024

Universal Periodic Review		
Topic	Total	Year
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • UPR Syria-Third Cycle 	1	2021
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Submission to the UN Universal Periodic Review 50th Session of the Human Rights Council. • Oral intervention for the pre-session of the Universal Periodic Review of the Syrian Arab Republic 40th Session of the Working Group on the Universal Periodic Review (January-February 2022) 	2	2022
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The Universal Periodic Report (UPR) Committee to shed light on the Russian air strikes on civilians and civilian objectives in Syria since the Russian intervention in the Syrian conflict in 2015. • The Universal Periodic Review of Jordan (fourth Cycle) sheds light on the situation of Syrian refugees in Jordan, focusing on education, health, and working conditions. • The Universal Periodic Review of Cyprus (fourth Cycle) sheds light on the situation of Syrian refugees in the Republic of Cyprus (RoC). 	3	2023
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Mid-term assessment and report - Review of recommendations accepted by the Syrian Arab Republic during the 3rd UPR Cycle in January 2022 • The Universal Periodic Review of Iran (fourth Cycle) • The Universal Periodic Review of Turkey (fourth Cycle) 	3	2024

Oral interventions during Human Rights Council sessions

Human Rights Council session	Date
<p>the Human Rights Council's 49-session</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Oral intervention on item /4/, Col (Syria on Inquiry of Commission International with dialogue Interactive. • Oral intervention on item /7/, which focuses on “the human rights situation in Palestine and other occupied Arab territories. 	<p>February 28, until April 01, 2022</p>
<p>the Human Rights Council's 50-session</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Oral intervention on item /3/ Special Rapporteur on violence against women and girls with dialogue Interactive • Oral intervention on item /6/ of the session's agenda focuses on the “Universal Periodic Review. 	<p>13 June until 08 July 2022.</p>
<p>the Human Rights Council's 51-session</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Oral intervention on item /3/ of the session's agenda, which focuses on the promotion and protection of all human rights, civil, political, economic, social, and cultural rights, including the right to development, delivered by Ms Fadwa MAHMOUD -of the Families for Freedom (FF), • Oral intervention on item /4/ of the session's agenda, which focuses on human rights cases that require the Council's attention 	<p>12 September until 07 October 2022.</p>
<p>the Human Rights Council's 52-session</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Oral intervention on item /6/ of the session's agenda focuses on the “Universal Periodic Review.” The intervention focused on the deterioration of the human rights situation in Syria for the past decades • Oral intervention on item /4/ of the session's agenda, which focuses on human rights cases • Oral intervention on item /5/ on March 24, 2023. During the general discussion session, which focuses on human rights bodies and mechanisms, • Oral intervention on item /7/ of the session's agenda, which focuses on “the human rights situation in Palestine and other occupied Arab territories.” 	<p>27 February until 04 April 2023.</p>

the Human Rights Council's 53-session

- Oral intervention on item /3/ of the session's agenda, which focused on "the promotion and protection of all human rights,
- Oral intervention on item /4/ Interactive dialogue with the International Commission of Inquiry on Syria

19 June until 14 July 2023

the Human Rights Council's 54-session

- Oral intervention on item /3/ Interactive dialogue with the Special Rapporteur on unilateral coercive measures
- Oral intervention on item /4/ Interactive dialogue with the International Commission of Inquiry on Syria.

13, September until 11 October 2023

the Human Rights Council's 55-session

- Oral intervention on item /3/ Interactive dialogue with the Rights Human and Counterterrorism on Rapporteur Special.
- Oral intervention on item /3/ Interactive dialogue with the Defenders Right Human on Rapporteur Special.
- Oral intervention on item /4/, Col (Syria on Inquiry of Commission International) with dialogue Interactive.
- Oral intervention on item /7/, which focuses on "the human rights situation in Palestine and other occupied Arab territories.

26 February, until 05 April 2024

the Human Rights Council's 55-session

- Oral intervention on item /3/ Interactive dialogue with the Special Rapporteur on Extrajudicial, Summary, or Arbitrary Executions.
- Oral intervention on item /3/ Interactive dialogue with the Special Rapporteur on Freedom of Expression.
- Oral intervention on item /4/, Col (Syria on Inquiry of Commission International) with dialogue Interactive.

18 June until 12 July 2024

The UN Mechanism Department prepared a research paper titled [Syria and the International Court of Justice](#). Later On the 12th of June 2023, the International Court of Justice (ICJ) issued [Statement](#) No. 28/2023 of announcing the joint application brought by Canada and the Kingdom of the Netherlands against the Syrian Arab Republic regarding alleged violations of the Convention against Torture and Other Cruel, Inhuman or Degrading Treatment or Punishment. According to the applicants, these violations include torture and other cruel and inhumane treatment, including degrading treatment of detainees, inhumane conditions in detention centers, enforced disappearance, sexual violence, gender-based violence, and violence against children, in addition to the use of chemical weapons with the aim of terrorizing and punishing the civilian population. These attacks led to many deaths and injuries, in addition to adding to the physical and mental suffering of survivors.

Cooperation with Partners and Victims' Associations:

- * SCM submitted 32 individual complaints in cooperation with the Caesar Families Association.
- * SCM submitted a report to the Universal Periodic Review of Mid-term Assessment and Report - Review of recommendations accepted by the Syrian Arab Republic during the 3rd UPR Cycle, in cooperation with Caesar Families Association, Syrians for Truth and Justice (STJ), Taafi Syrian survivors' initiative, and Horan Free League.
- * SCM submitted a report to the Universal Periodic Review of Iran (fourth Cycle) that sheds light on the Iranian-backed militias and Mercenaries violations in Syria, in cooperation with Caesar Families Association and Syrians for Truth and Justice (STJ).
- * Capacity-building training was held for the Caesar Families Association in 2021.
- * Capacity-building training for victims' associations was held as part of the Victims' Associations Support Project in 2024 for Syrian Families, Caesar Families Association, Synergy, and Families for Truth and Justice.
- * Capacity-building training was held for the Families of Missing Asylum Seekers Association, Which is still under construction.

Capacity building training for the SCM's teams:

- * Capacity-building training was held for the documentation team, the data updating team, the advocacy team, the media team, and the Victims' Associations Support team to raise their capacity on the work of the United Nations mechanisms and how to submit individual complaints to them.

The preparation of activities was contributed by:

- * DR. Nizar Ayoub: The UN Mechanisms Consultant
- * Dr. Ayman Menem: The Legal Office Manager
- * Omer Al-Asaad: Policy, Advocacy & Communication Manager
- * Nara Hermit: The Advocacy officer
- * Yara Bader: The Programs Manager
- * Raghda Alshikh Ali: The VDC project coordinator
- * General supervision: Mazen Darwish, The SCM's General Director.

Thanks are due to all who contributed from the Center's team, including current and former employees and collaborators, in all stages of completing the activities.

