



## Report on Syrian government violations in al-Suwayda governorate

- Period covered by report: 2018- July 2020
- Judicial frame of report:
  - Syrian constitution
  - Local (national Laws)
  - International covenant on civil and political rights
- Purpose of report:

To keep a record of the violations committed by the Syrian government in the al-Suwayda governorate against civil and political rights in the period between 2018 and July 2020, which summarize as follows:

  1. The violations of Article 25 of the international covenant on civil and political rights during the elections of the Syrian People's Council in 2020, represented in:
    - a- Lack of neutrality in the organizers on supervisors of the elections, as the entire process (running, voting, vote counting) was run by committees formed by an election-participating political party (the Ba'ath Party) and consisting of members of that party, with formal supervision by the Syrian ministries of Justice and Interior.
    - b- Manipulation of election results by declaring false voter numbers. The Syrian Minister of Justice, Judge Hisham al-Shaar, reported to the Syrian Arab News Agency (SANA) on July 21, 2020, that "According to the books of the justice and interior ministries, the total number of entitled voters reached about 19 million citizens, whereas the number of citizens to practice their right to vote reached 6.224.687," setting the rate of participation in voting at about 33.17%.

According to civil activists' observations from several voting centers in al-Suwayda, and interviews made by activists with members of supervision committees from several voting centers, there were an unprecedented refrain from voting by the citizens, including Ba'ath Party members. Therefore, the rate of participation in voting did not exceed 10% of the total number of entitled voters, making the elections illegitimate.
  2. The violation of Article 12 of the international covenant on civil and political rights (Paragraphs 1, 2, 3, 4) regarding the freedom of travelling inside, and leaving country, and the prevention of citizens from entering it. Also, the violation of Article 38 of the Syrian constitution, paragraph (1), which reads, "It is illegal to force citizens out of the country, nor to prevent them from returning to it," and paragraph (3), which reads, "Every citizen has the right to travel freely inside state territory, and is free to leave the country, unless banned by a judicial or a public attorney decision, or by force of public health and safety laws." The violation of these articles was committed through:



- a- Issuing travel bans for several civil activists on grounds of their opinion and activity, not of binding judicial decisions based on actions criminated by the laws. (A list of names can be provided if needed)
  - b- Preventing citizens from entering the country by obligating them to exchange 100\$ per person at the rates of the Central Bank of Syria (half the value of the actual exchange rates) and banning their entry in case of failure to make the exchange. The Syrian Council of Ministers issued decision 46 for the year 2020, which reads, "Syrian citizens, or others treated as such, must exchange a sum of 100\$, or its value in other foreign currency accepted by the Central Bank of Syria, into Syrian pounds in accordance with the rates set in the customs and aviation charts, directly upon entering Syrian territory."
3. The violation of articles 21 and 9 of the international covenant on civil and political rights, and Article 44 of the Syrian constitution, which reads, "Citizens are entitled to the right of gathering, demonstrating, and striking peacefully within the principles of the constitution; these rights are regulated by the laws." This violation was committed against the citizens' right to express opinion through arbitrary detention of peaceful demonstrators. On June 8, 2020, groups and militias affiliated with the Syrian government (Ba'ath Brigades and government's Law Enforcement forces) attacked peaceful demonstrators in al-Suwayda and detained 50 of them who were peacefully demonstrating against the deteriorated living conditions of the Syrian people. The Syrian authorities also violated the detained civilians' rights by transferring them to Damascus by order from high security authorities; this transfer is considered disregardful of the authority of the governorate's public attorney office and disrespectful of its judicial authority. The transfer also violated the laws of territorial speciality, giving the place of the crime and the place of residence of the accused party.
  4. The violations by Syrian government security authorities, supported by Russian militias, against judicial jurisdictions and specialization, as the Russian forces and affiliated militias concluded settlement agreements with a large number of outlaws and gang members that have committed crimes (killings, kidnappings, thefts, civilian property violations, drug distribution) and were wanted to stand in front of a judge, without legally prosecuting them.  
An example of this is what happened in the town of Ariqah on July 2, 2020.
  5. The violation of Article 15 of the Syrian constitution regarding the protection of the citizens' private properties and the illegalization of total confiscation of assets, through:
    - a- Illegally confiscating opposition figures' properties (Faisal al-Qasem, media figure working with *al-Jazeera* -Jabr al-Shoufi, member of the Syrian National Council- Ziad Abu Hamda, member of the National Coalition for Syrian Revolutionary and Opposition Forces- Yehia al-



Qadamani, member of the National Coalition for Syrian Revolutionary and Opposition Forces, and others.)

6. The Syrian government violation of the principle of the right of protection through refraining from protecting civilians in peace times (this shows clearly as the armed groups activates, including kidnappings, thefts, and arbitrary shootings near civilians, increased rapidly) and the failure of the concerned authorities to protect civilians, also during war times (during the ISIS attacks on the eastern villages of the governorate on July 25, 2018)
7. Arbitrary dismissing employees of governmental sector on grounds of their political views or for evading conscription.

The report was prepared by: Balady Organization, And Baite Baitac Organization