

Statement on the Human Rights Situation in Syrian Arab Republic

WILPF

This is a statement by WILPF, supported by Dawlaty and Women Now for Development. We thank the panelists for providing their valuable insights on the dire situation in Syria.

“We are Syrian families demanding freedom for all of the country’s sons and daughters. Our position is against enforced disappearance and arbitrary detention by the Syrian regime and all parties to the conflict.” These are not our words. They are the words of Families for Freedom, a group of Syrian women activists who all have relatives either disappeared or in detention. Some of them are also former detainees themselves.

A couple of weeks ago, during the fourth round of the Geneva peace talks, five Syrian women representing Families for Freedom [organized a vigil in front of the Palais des Nations](#) to mobilise public opinion around the issue of arbitrary detention and enforced disappearances. They came here to convey demands on behalf of all those who have a detained family member in Syria. They asked that negotiating delegations prioritise arbitrary detention, enforced disappearances and those demands in the peace talks. They also shared them with the UN High Commissioner for Human Rights and the Special Envoy to Syria, who conveyed their unyielding support.

In this statement today, we are presenting their forthright list of demands to the Human Rights Council.

They asked that the international community exert pressure on:

- 1) the Syrian government and all warring parties to immediately release a list of names of all detainees, along with their current location and status, and to immediately stop torture. In the case of death of a detainee, a death certificate along with a report on causes of death and burial location must be presented to the families.
- 2) the Syrian government to allow international humanitarian organizations to immediately deliver food and medical aid, and to grant access to international rights groups into detention facilities for a thorough monitoring of living conditions in order to guarantee that civil detention facilities meet healthy living standards.
- 3) the Syrian government to abolish exceptional courts, especially field, war and counter-terrorism courts and guarantee fair trials.

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The campaign of Families for Freedom portrays the agony and struggle of all Syrian families enduring the loss or disappearance of a detained loved one. The campaign will continue their collective effort to include the largest number of families, regardless of their affiliations. Their humanitarian demands are primary asks for this round of talks, taking into consideration the complicated political situation.

WILPF urges Council Members and observer States to ensure to their utmost that negotiating parties prioritise this cause and position it before any political expediency.