

A hand in a striped sleeve points to a map. The map is overlaid with a night vision or thermal imaging effect, showing a city layout with various structures and roads. The overall tone is dark and mysterious.

WALLS HAVE EARS:

An Analysis of Classified Syrian
Security Sector Documents

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An Analysis of Classified Syrian Security Sector Documents



Photo by Lens Young Dimashqi



Photo by Lens Young Homs



Photo by Lens Young Dimashqi

The Syria Justice and Accountability Centre (SJAC) is a Syrian-led, multilaterally supported non-profit that envisions a Syria defined by justice, respect for human rights, and rule of law — where citizens from all components of Syrian society live in peace. SJAC promotes transitional justice and accountability processes in Syria by collecting and preserving documentation, analyzing and cataloging data, and promoting public discourse on transitional justice — within Syria and beyond. Learn more at www.syriaaccountability.org.

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Cover photo provided by Lens Young Homs.

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Syria Justice and Accountability Centre
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Table of Contents

| | |
|---|-----------|
| Forward by the Executive Director | 1 |
| Background | 3 |
| Document Analysis Methodology | 4 |
| Document Extraction from Syria | 4 |
| Sample Set Selection | 5 |
| Structure of Database and Analysis | 6 |
| Relevance of Documents | 7 |
| Relevancy to Accountability Efforts | 7 |
| Relevancy to Transitional Justice Efforts | 8 |
| Syria's Security Sector Agencies | 9 |
| External Assessments of Syria's Security Sector | 13 |
| Findings Derived from the Documents | 15 |
| State Surveillance | 15 |
| Detainees and Wanted Lists | 16 |
| Rules of Engagement | 18 |
| Admission to the Commission of Crimes | 20 |
| Repression of Kurds and other Minority Groups | 22 |
| Predictions and Conspiracies | 23 |
| Gaps in Information | 26 |
| Types of Gaps | 26 |
| Supplementary Data: Videos | 27 |
| Conclusion and Recommendations | 28 |
| Annexes | 30 |

Forward by the Executive Director

Growing up in a country with a massive and complex security apparatus was a unique experience. The average Syrian's relationship to the security agencies was tainted by fear, misconceptions, rumors, horror stories, and sometimes by dark humor. Many Syrians purposefully avoided any contact with security agencies, refrained from working in public affairs or intervening in political issues, and expressed public loyalty to the government. However, that in itself was insufficient to shield anyone from the security agencies, as they control almost every aspect of life in Syria.

In 2005, Syrian President Bashar Al Assad temporarily placated the population by introducing a reform package that eliminated the need for the security sector to approve certain matters in everyday life. The list of 67 reforms suddenly enabled Syrians to open a falafel restaurant or internet café, purchase property, file for a replacement ID or passport, or register their marriage to a foreigner without pre-approval by the security agencies.

In reality, nothing changed. Despite the reform package, Syrians were still required to receive approval for these situations, and the list of situations for which security sector approval was required continued to expand. Though getting approval might sound like a simple bureaucratic task, it was a far more complicated process in Syria. You might receive approval from one security agency only to be punished for failing to receive approval from another. The only way to ensure that you would not be punished would be to seek approval from every security agency, an impossible task considering the number of branches and sub-branches that would often request separate approval.

Getting in trouble required little effort in Syria. As Syrians say, "Walls have ears." The threshold for receiving punishment was low; peacefully voicing dissatisfaction with any of the government's policies was sufficient for one of the security agencies to "talk" with you. Sometimes you would receive a call requesting that you report to a specific security branch, or you would receive a call from an officer inviting you for a "cup of coffee." Sometimes the security agencies would simply send an unmarked car to pick you up with no warning. These "meetings" often resulted in you being disappeared for some time. The security agencies exercised no consistency with regard to punishment – sometimes you would be released the same day with no physical abuse, or you could be jailed for years with no warning.

I grew up in a politically active household. My father was a writer and a political opponent of the government, a "frequent prisoner" as we called him. I grew up and joined the weak human rights movement in the country, along with my brother who was an activist at his university. All of us had our own "experiences" with the security agencies.

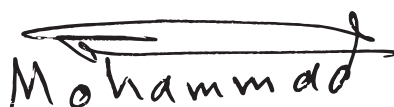
My family was the subject of raids on at least five or six different occasions after 2000 alone, targeting either my father, my brother, or myself. In Syria, we referred to these raids as "midnight visitors." Each raid was conducted by a different branch, comprised of armed agents dressed in civilian clothes. Like many Syrians, my understanding of the various agencies within the security sector was initially shaped by my experiences during these raids.

In 2005, two vehicles filled with armed agents in civilian clothes appeared at my home at midnight to arrest my father. The officers had no arrest warrant, but took my father with them regardless. After two weeks, the court granted my family a visit, but I was required to receive additional approval from the Political Security Division in Damascus as final authorization for the visit. Later, I requested another visit directly through the Political Security Division and was granted it without ever having to go through the court system. Seven months later, my father was included in a presidential amnesty, which should have led to his immediate release. Instead, he was only released from the central prison to the Political Security Division in Damascus, which had to separately approve the process before allowing my father to come home. These events illustrate the reality of the power of the security sector in Syria: the security sector had authority over every component of government functions.

After the 2011 uprising, the security sector played a decisive role in the events that followed; the uprisings escalated quickly because of the bloody, disproportionate response to protesters by the security agencies. From the use of live ammunition against peaceful protesters in 2011, to mass arrest campaigns, torture, and disappearances, the security sector remained an integral part of Bashar al Assad's attempts to suppress dissent as the conflict evolved, and their practices are shown widely in the documents contained in this analysis.

The contents of the documents are unsurprising for anyone who grew up in Syria familiar with the security sector, but the documents expose clear patterns of widespread, systematic human rights violations. The documents also clearly illustrate that the security agencies operate above the law.

In order to achieve a more comprehensive understanding of the Syrian conflict and the level of violations that occurred, it is essential to understand not simply the relationship between agencies and actors as is officially documented, but also the way that these agencies have operated in practice. Security sector reform, including vetting and lustration, will be a key component of any peace agreement with any true promise of achieving long-term peace in Syria. It is my hope that this analysis can serve as an initial step toward meaningful understanding of the role of the security sector in Syria and its involvement in human rights and humanitarian law violations committed during the conflict, and as a step forward in the route to justice for Syrians.

A handwritten signature in black ink, consisting of a stylized 'M' followed by 'ohammad'. Above the signature is a horizontal line with a small arrow pointing to the left.

Mohammad Al Abdallah
May 1, 2019

Background

Accurate and secure record keeping is an essential government function. As has been enshrined in freedom of information legislation in more than 100 countries worldwide, citizens have a general right to access these records (albeit, with some limitations) to ensure greater government integrity, accountability, and transparency. Since government records often reveal the nature of citizens' interactions with official institutions, they serve as important pieces of evidence when a government betrays the good faith of its population. In post-conflict societies, recovered government records have contributed to truth-telling and the creation of a historical record, as well as to prosecutions of government officials.

For decades, the Syrian government has been surveilling political figures, perceived dissidents, ethnic and religious minorities, and journalists, sometimes targeting them for detention, torture, or execution. Security sector officials have methodically documented decisions to monitor and target certain individuals or groups, signing off on orders and storing the documents in intelligence facilities throughout the country. These documents could be used as evidence of human rights violations, crimes against humanity and, since the armed conflict began, possible violations of the laws of war. They also provide a window into the day-to-day operations of security institutions, list the names of officials ultimately responsible for atrocities, and detail the decision-making process behind abuses that have long fueled resentment among Syrians.

In order for records to shed light on such information, however, they must be preserved. Authoritarian governments, like the one in Syria, often keep meticulous records of their abuses, but are quick to destroy them if their abuses are under threat of exposure. In Syria, after retreating from towns and cities captured by rebel groups, government planes have returned to destroy intelligence facilities from the sky. Soldiers have also been ordered to set fire to facilities prior to fleeing a battle, and rebels that have taken over facilities have often not safeguarded the documents, instead using the paper as fuel or leaving facilities unattended. This destruction violates citizens' ability to access information about government decision-making and their *right to truth*, a right the UN High Commissioner for Human Rights has described as "inalienable and autonomous."

As the conflict in Syria intensified, organizations like SJAC and the Commission for International Justice and Accountability (CIJA) salvaged thousands of pages to preserve this invaluable information. High quality scans of the pages have been loaded into SJAC's database. SJAC preserves and holds these documents in trust for the Syrian people, until such time that a transitional justice process is realized and the documents can be made available as a historical record of the conflict. By analyzing the documents, they can be tagged with relevant labels and made searchable and accessible to justice mechanisms, including the International, Impartial and Independent Mechanism (IIIM), prosecutors' offices pursuing universal jurisdiction cases, and future transitional justice mechanisms.

This report is the result of a pilot analysis of a 5,003-page sample set of documents that took place from June 4 to August 17, 2018. The analysis sought to identify patterns in the documents, leading to increased knowledge of how Syria's security sector operated before and after the conflict. The report begins by providing an overview of the methodology for selecting and analyzing the pages. Next, the report describes the relevancy of the documents and how they could be used for transitional justice and accountability purposes. The report then provides a review of other publications related to Syria's security sector, comparing the literature to the analyzed documents. The majority of the report describes the findings, including information on security sector detention and surveillance practices, rules of engagement, confessions to the commission of crimes, and other patterns that could be discerned through analysis. Finally, the report explains how additional information can be linked to the documents to corroborate the findings and provide a more robust understanding of Syria's security sector, concluding by offering recommendations to human rights researchers, policymakers, and justice actors.

This pilot project, including the analysis and associated report, has been funded by the Open Society Foundations.

Document Analysis Methodology

Prior to analysis, SJAC developed a methodology for selecting the sample set and reviewing the documents in the database. This section provides an overview of how the documents were extracted from Syria, the process for the sample set selection, the structure of SJAC's database, and the parameters for analysis.

Document Extraction from Syria

SJAC possesses high quality scans of an estimated 483,000 pages of documents taken from government facilities in several of Syria's governorates. These scans comprise: 1) pages collected by SJAC's team in Syria, and 2) pages collected by CIJA. SJAC has controls and oversight over the former, but cannot directly vouch for how CIJA accessed and extracted documents. Thus, the following description only describes SJAC's documentation extraction process.

To secure documents, SJAC's Documentation Team members inside Syria entered abandoned government facilities, first in 2013 and again in 2015. After the government abandoned facilities in Tabqa and Raqqa in 2013, the SJAC Documentation Team entered the premises. The facilities were open and unprotected. Civilians and fighters were looting the building, primarily for oil barrels, arms, and computers, without due regard to the documents. SJAC's team entered the facilities on several occasions to extract documents. SJAC neither sought permission nor was required to pay money to enter or exit the facilities on any occasion. In 2013, the Turkish-Syrian border was relatively unrestricted, and the Documentation Team members were able to leave Syria and transfer the physical documents to Turkey without hindrance.

Another large set of documents became accessible in 2015 when the government abandoned its positions in the governorate of Idlib. Although the facilities were initially left unprotected, allowing for open looting, after several days, local armed groups secured and protected the buildings. Before armed groups took over, SJAC's Documentation Team member in Idlib managed to enter an intelligence facility to film the premises and remove several sample documents. After SJAC deemed the documents extremely valuable, he sought to re-enter

the building, which had come under rebel control. He requested permission to scan the documents directly inside the facility. Permission was denied for security reasons, and he was instead allowed to take as many documents as he could carry out of the building. SJAC did not offer any services or payments in return. He scanned the documents and transferred the hard drive to Turkey with a trusted contact who had permission to legally cross the border. SJAC did not pay for this service.



Photo taken in April 2015 by a SJAC Documentation Team member depicting the facility where documents were collected.

Thus, at no point did SJAC bribe public officials, fighters, or local security forces to access or transport the documents. The only individuals who received payment throughout this process were the Documentation Team members and trusted and vetted individuals who had contracts through a trusted partner organization. Since it appeared that no one who guarded the facilities understood the importance of the documents, SJAC was never put in a compromising position.

SJAC does not seek to claim ownership over the documents, but instead to safely preserve the integrity of the documents, in trust for the Syrian people, so that they can be used for current and future justice and accountability purposes. Once a legitimate government committed to transparently and securely preserving and archiving these records, including evidence of human

rights abuses, is established, SJAC will transfer the documents back to Syria to be made available as a historical record of the conflict.

Sample Set Selection

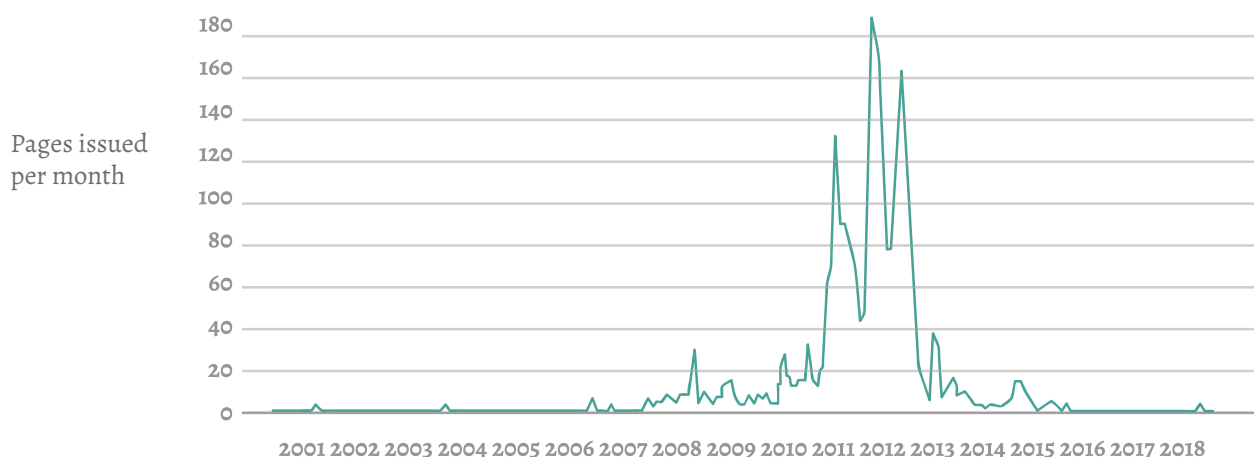
For this pilot analysis, SJAC sought to select a sample set of at least 5,000 pages from its total collection, including documents collected by CIJA. To create the sample set, SJAC first conducted a cursory review of the scanned pages and categorized them as relevant or irrelevant based on date of issuance and content in order to focus on documents related to state practices that fueled resentment prior to 2011 or that depicted orders and practices employed after unrest began in 2011:

1. Pages dated prior to the year 2000 were automatically deemed irrelevant.
2. Pages dated between 2000 and 2010 were deemed irrelevant unless they included information about the surveillance and targeting of political dissidents and/or ethnic/religious groups.
3. Pages dated after 2011 were deemed relevant unless they were publicly available documents (e.g., a new law signed by the president or a police magazine) or were issued by a non-security/intelligence agency (e.g., a procurement document from the department of agriculture).

Due to the large volume of documents, the cursory review inevitably missed relevant documents within folders that contained primarily irrelevant documents and included irrelevant documents in folders that primarily contained relevant documents. The next section of the report will discuss the number of documents in the sample set that were considered relevant following in-depth analysis in greater detail.

After categorizing the total collection of pages according to the above criteria, the dataset was narrowed down to approximately 18,000 pages. Next, SJAC selected folders with pages collected from the governorates of Hassakeh, Deraa, Deir Ezzor, Raqqa, and Idlib so as to cover as many localities as possible in the sample set. It should be noted that the governorate and branch from which documents were collected do not always correspond with the agency that issued the document (e.g., a document faxed from the central government in Damascus to an intelligence branch in Deir Ezzor). The precise issuing agency was only identified through manual analysis.

Finally, in the last stage of sample selection, SJAC enabled Python's "random function" feature to automatically select a specified number of pages from each folder. This process resulted in 5,003 pages that were then prepped to be loaded to SJAC's database. The graph below shows the timeline over which the pages in SJAC's sample set were issued.



In this report, SJAC uses the word “document” to refer to the documents generally, and when specified, to a specific document (series of pages). SJAC uses the word “page” when referring to a single page, which sometimes was part of a string of pages to comprise a document and sometimes was a standalone page. When possible, SJAC included all pages of a document in the sample set, as opposed to selecting only a few pages from the document. However, it is possible that if the pages were not organized chronologically in SJAC’s total collection, some pages could be missing from documents included in the sample set.

Structure of Database and Analysis

Once the selected page files were identified, SJAC uploaded them in bulk to the offline version of SJAC’s database. SJAC’s database is a relational web-based database. It is Syria-specific (locations, affiliations of victims and perpetrators, ethnographic information, etc.) and is structured on international legal principles, employing a system of fields and labels for tagging content of documentation related to violations and allowing for linkages between different types of documentation that are related by actors or a single event. SJAC maintains two versions of the database: a secure, password-protected online system that allows for remote access, and an offline version for all highly sensitive documentation, including the documents from state security facilities.

Database fields and labels can either be automatically populated or manually populated. When pages were transferred to the database, several database fields were automatically populated, including information about the original file path, the entity that collected the documents, the pdf version of the scan, and information related to the document’s metadata.

SJAC then proceeded with manual analysis. Manual analysis enables SJAC to better understand the content of pages and identify patterns, which is not a current capability of automation tools. SJAC methodology guided the analysis to ensure analysts’ work did not differ from each other or change over time, which would make fields difficult to filter and interpret. This included the format for creating page titles, summarizing page de-

scriptions in English, creating “event” fields for each action described in the document (e.g. “document issued,” “document faxed,” or a reported aerial attack), applying locations and dates to the associated event, applying labels related to the metadata and content of the page, and linking any named actors (e.g., officers, detainees, or wanted persons) to the page. If a profile for the actor already existed in the database, the page was linked to an existing actor; otherwise, the analyst created a new actor profile for the named individual. All relevant names that appeared in each page were written in Arabic to avoid spelling discrepancies when transliterated into English. Although the methodology for this project was adapted to accommodate the peculiarities of the security sector documents, the process is generally uniform between the offline and online versions of the database.

Relevance of Documents

In-depth analysis revealed a much more comprehensive understanding of the documents. Using the same definitions described above, each page in the sample set was assessed for relevancy. If a page was deemed relevant, it was assigned a priority-level label. The high priority label was assigned to pages that included information about the state's involvement in violations of international law, demonstrated the state's strategy in the conflict, or included names of specific detained individual(s). All other pages were deemed low priority, such as those that included general information about the conflict, inventory lists, or surveillance without consequential information.

The following chart is an overview of the number of pages labeled as relevant and high priority in the sample set:

| Source | # of Pages in Total Collection | # of Pages in Sample Set | # of Relevant Pages in Sample Set | % of Relevant Pages Analyzed in Sample Set | % of High Priority Pages in Sample Set |
|--------|--------------------------------|--------------------------|-----------------------------------|--|--|
| SJAC | 4,930 | 927 | 861 | 92.9% | 216 |
| CIJA | 477,934 | 4,076 | 2,609 | 64% | 632 |
| Total | 482,864 | 5,003 | 3,470 | 69.4% | 848 |

Relevancy to Accountability Efforts

Government documents have previously been key in securing convictions of high-level perpetrators of war crimes, crimes against humanity, and genocide. The Nuremberg trials provide the clearest example of this application of government records. Nearly 3,000 tons of documents were submitted by prosecutors at Nuremberg. The paper trail left by the Nazis was clear documentation of their actions, in

cluding their intent, and this evidence was key to the conviction of 19 of the 24 German leaders on trial.¹

Prosecutors similarly utilized paper records to supplement their case against Slobodan Milosevic at the International Criminal Tribunal for the former Yugoslavia (ICTY). For example, documents were used to prove that Milosevic restructured the banking system in the Federal Republic of Yugoslavia in the early years of the war to circumvent UN sanctions and use federal funds to support war efforts.² A hearing to determine state responsibility in the Guatemalan case provides a comparable example. A government log brought before the Inter-American Court of Human Rights, which documented the kidnapping, torture, and extra-judicial execution of 183 Guatemalans, resulted in the ruling that the Guatemalan government was responsible for the atrocities.³ Meanwhile, the Cambodian case illustrates the ways in which an independent organization can collect and organize documents to support the work of accountability mechanisms. The Documentation Center of Cambodia collected more than 500,000 pages of documents, which have been used extensively by the Extraordinary Chambers in the Courts of Cambodia, the hybrid UN-Cambodian mechanism to prosecute members of the Khmer Rouge.⁴

The content of the documents extracted from Syria in this sample set have clear relevance to accountability mechanisms and can be used as primary sources of evidence in criminal investigations and prosecutions. Some of the documents include directives to subordinates that implicate the Syrian state for human rights violations or demonstrate the responsibility of specific officials for violations of the laws of war. For example, there are several documents with clear instructions to target minorities or suppress speech and assembly, violating a number of human rights norms. More frequently, the documents do not include direct orders to commit violations but

- 1 *The Nuremberg Trials*, UNITED STATES HOLOCAUST MEMORIAL MUSEUM, <https://www.ushmm.org/collections/bibliography/nuremberg-trials> [last visited Oct. 8, 2018]; International Military Tribunal (Nuremberg): Judgment of 1 October 1946, 26-110, https://crimeofaggression.info/documents/6/1946_Nuremberg_Judgement.pdf.
- 2 *Weighing the Evidence: Lessons from the Slobodan Milosevic Trial*, HUMAN RIGHTS WATCH (Dec. 12, 2018), <https://www.hrw.org/report/2006/12/13/weighing-evidence/lessons-slobodan-milosevic-trial> [last visited Oct. 8, 2018].
- 3 *Truth, Justice, and Historic Memory*, GUATEMALA HUMAN RIGHTS COMMISSION, <http://www.ghrc-usa.org/our-work/themes/truth-justice-and-historic-memory/> [last visited Oct. 8, 2018].
- 4 Barry Wain, *Pol Pot's Paper Trail*, THE WALL STREET JOURNAL (May 9, 1997), <https://www.wsj.com/articles/SB863115270714808000> [last visited Oct. 8, 2018].

are vaguely worded, without clear rules of engagement, thus creating the potential for indiscriminate attacks and other war crimes to occur. The records can be used in conjunction with corroborating evidence to clearly build cases against not only specific components of the Syrian state, but also against specific individuals.

Relevancy to Transitional Justice Efforts

A repository of physical records of participation in human rights violations can be the basis for transitional justice mechanisms, perhaps most importantly for truth and reconciliation processes. According to experts, documentation “provides a basis for discussion and for disputing one-sided interpretations of the past.”⁵ In Chile, the National Commission for Truth and Reconciliation compiled lists of victims of human rights violations based on lists submitted by military and police forces, which were supplemented by information from family members and NGOs.⁶ NGOs and other independent organizations can also take the initiative to compile document archives if a truth commission does not exist or does not have an archiving mandate. Memoria Abierta (Argentina),⁷ Prisons Memory Archive (Northern Ireland),⁸ and The South African History Archive⁹ have compiled government documents, interviews, and videos and photos of human rights violations in their respective locations, which serve as an archive from which the public can draw information. Memorials and museums perform similar roles. For example, the Holocaust Memorial Museum in the United States showcases documents linking the Nazi regime to crimes against humanity and genocide, and also houses a collection of government records, including official lists of names from concentration camps.¹⁰

Using documentation for the purposes of transitional justice can also take the form of institutional reform. Following the peace accords in El Salvador in

1992, UN negotiators appointed three El Salvadorans to an independent commission for military vetting and reform. The commission utilized military service records, in addition to interviews with military officers, to purge individuals accused of corruption and human rights violations from the military. The commission, which operated under the supervision of the UN Mission to El Salvador, created a vetted military force of 32,000 individuals after only nine months.¹¹

The use of government documents for the process of reparations is less common, though it has occurred in a few cases. For example, the United States used official records and lists of individuals shared by NGOs to identify individuals with Japanese ancestry who were detained in camps during World War II. The United States then paid reparations based on the length of time each individual was interned.¹²

There are clear parallels to these previous examples that could occur in the Syrian case and would be strongly aided by government records. Though many NGOs have been compiling lists of names of detainees and other victims, government records of those same names provide the clearest case for reparations. The documents could also be used to strengthen vetting processes and reform of the security sector. The information in the documents includes details of the roles of individual branches within the Syrian security forces. More broadly, in order to achieve institutional reform and ensure non-recurrence of abuses, there must be an understanding of not only how the security sector was structured nominally, but how it worked in reality, a phenomenon that can be understood through analysis of the documents. As such, security sector agencies can be restructured and mechanisms can be created to ensure greater transparency and accountability to prevent the recurrence of repressive and inhumane tactics that have been a hallmark of the Syrian state.

5 Ulrike Lühe, Julia Viebach, Dagmar Hovestädt, Lisa Ott, and Benjamin Thorne, *Atrocity's Archives: The Role of Archives in Transitional Justice*, SWISS PEACE (Jul. 23, 2018), http://www.swisspeace.ch/fileadmin/user_upload/Media/Publications/Journals_Articles/atrocities_archives_guidance_note-23july18.pdf [last visited Oct. 9, 2018].

6 Office of the High Commissioner for Human Rights, “Rule-of-Law Tools for Post-Conflict States,” United Nations 26, HR/PUB/14/4 (2015), https://www.ohchr.org/Documents/Publications/HR_PUB_14_4_Archives_en.pdf [last visited Oct. 9, 2018].

7 MEMORIA ABIERTA, <http://memoriaabierta.org.ar/wp/> [last visited Jan. 9, 2019].

8 PRISONS MEMORY ARCHIVE, <http://prisonsmemoryarchive.com/> [last visited Jan. 9, 2019].

9 SAHA ARCHIVE FOR JUSTICE, <http://www.saha.org.za/> [last visited Jan. 9, 2019].

10 *Search Our Collections*, UNITED STATES HOLOCAUST MEMORIAL MUSEUM, <https://collections.ushmm.org/search/> [last visited Jan. 9, 2019].

11 Michelle Hughes & David Gordon, *Handbook for Military Support to Rule of Law and Security Sector Reform*, Unified Action Handbook Series Book Five C-17 (Jun. 13, 2011), <https://issat.dcaf.ch/download/12165/123482/Handbook%20for%20Military%20Support%20to%20RoL%20and%20SSR.pdf>; Ruben Zamora and David Holiday, “The Struggle for Lasting Reform: Vetting Processes in El Salvador,” in *Justice as Prevention: Vetting Public Employees in Transitional Societies* (Pablo De Greiff, Alexander Mayer-Rieckh, eds.) 91-92 New York: Social Science Research Council (2007).

12 Office of the High Commissioner for Human Rights, “Rule-of-Law Tools for Post-Conflict States,” United Nations 31, HR/PUB/14/4 (2015), https://www.ohchr.org/Documents/Publications/HR_PUB_14_4_Archives_en.pdf [last visited Oct. 9, 2018].

Syria's Security Sector Agencies

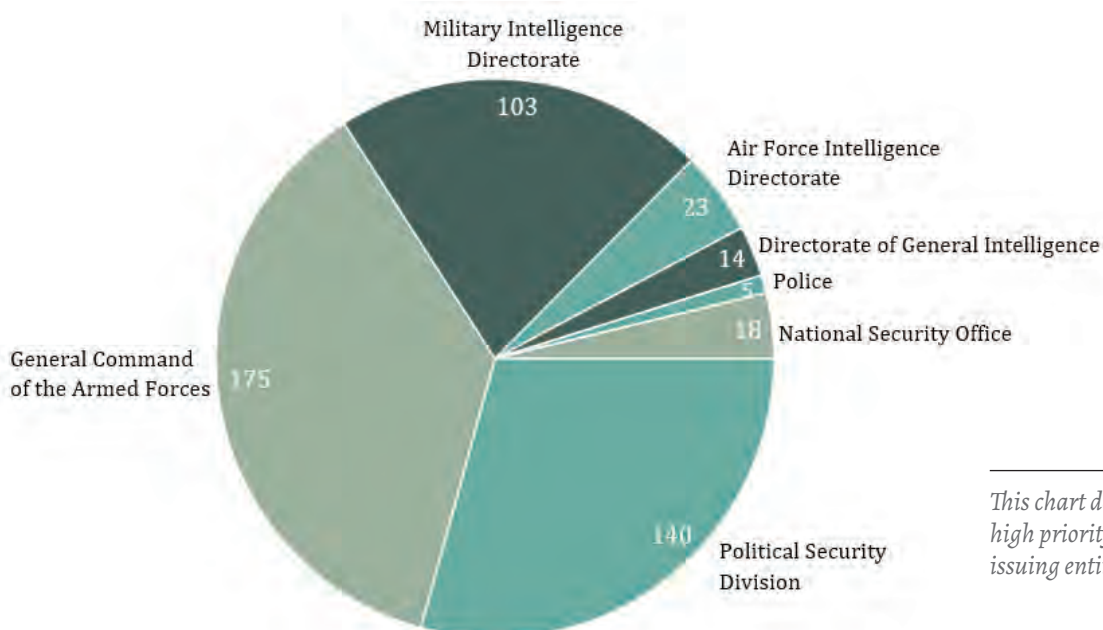
This section includes an overview of the agencies and most common subsidiary branches featured in SJAC's sample set and highlights the most common types of information issued by each. From the 5,003-page sample set alone, SJAC cannot reach any definitive conclusions about the roles of each agency in the Syrian conflict, and descriptions below are supplemented by external research. As a result, this section does not include any claims about chain of command; instead, it seeks to compare public knowledge about agencies with observations from the sample set.

The sample set included 848 pages that were identified to be high priority. Of the 848 pages, 478 high priority pages also clearly identified an issuing entity. The seven state entities responsible for issuing documents in the sample set included the Military Intelligence, the Air Force Intelligence, the National Security Office, the Political Security Division, the Directorate of General Intelligence, the Police, and the General Command of the Armed Forces. The National Security Office, the Police,

and the General Command of the Armed Forces are not officially security agencies but often supported the other agencies' functions, according to the documents, so for the purpose of this report, references to state security will include all seven entities. The following chart describes which agencies were responsible for issuing the high priority pages in the sample set.

General Command of the Armed Forces

The General Command of the Armed Forces is nominally housed under the Ministry of Defense. However, the Minister of Defense has no control over the General Command; it is headed by the President. The General Command has broad responsibilities with regard to the Syrian Army and Air Force and their divisions, and is also involved in outside arms deals. Notably, the General Command of the Armed Forces is the entity responsible for Syria's mandatory military service. The General Command is tasked with distributing new recruits to their respective divisions and has the ultimate authority over military personnel movements within the country.¹³ In



This chart depicts the 478 high priority documents by issuing entity.

¹³ Syria: Compulsory military service, including age of recruitment, length of service; occasions where proof of military service status is required; whether the government can recall individuals who have already completed their compulsory military service; penalties for evasion (2008-July 2014), IMMIGRATION AND REFUGEE BOARD OF CANADA (Aug. 13, 2014), <https://www.refworld.org/docid/54042353a.html> [last visited Jan. 9, 2019].

SJAC's sample set, the General Command of the Armed Forces issued mostly detention orders, general orders, and search orders. However, it did not issue detention or search orders for civilians. Rather, the General Command would provide information to the Military Intelligence Directorate about deserted and defected soldiers, then issue orders based on instructions from Military Intelligence. More often, arrest orders for soldiers came directly from the Military Intelligence rather than the Command headquarters or battalions. The General Command also issued orders related to personnel and weapons inventories, sometimes circulating orders by the President to reassign commanders and officers to different battalions or brigades.

Military Intelligence Directorate

The Military Intelligence Directorate is under the command of the Ministry of Defense, and fulfills the role of the Army's security apparatus. Military Intelligence is bureaucratically organized under the Ministry of Defense, from which it receives funds and arms, but, in reality, reports indicate it exercises significant control over the Minister of Defense.¹⁴ The Directorate's autonomy may be confirmed in the documents as well, given that at least two pages with high-level orders are signed by officials from Military Intelligence with no signature from the Minister of Defense or indication that he had even been notified. Ostensibly, the Directorate's personnel are tasked with surveilling military personnel to maintain loyalty to the governing party and to the military,¹⁵ but it is actually much more powerful: the Directorate not only exercises jurisdiction over military security, but also authorizes and executes interrogations and information raids and runs the information department, which collects intelligence supposedly targeting the military (including foreign intelligence, but primarily focused on loyalty within the military's ranks). The Directorate also exercises civilian functions; the Directorate is authorized to arrest and interrogate civilians, and also controls the sale of property near national borders and/or military bases. In SJAC's sample set, the Military Intelligence Directorate primarily issued pages containing surveillance information, security reports, and surveillance and search orders, with several orders indicating admissions to potential crimes.

Air Force Intelligence Directorate

The Air Force Intelligence Directorate is considered the second-most powerful intelligence branch, behind the Military Intelligence Directorate. The Directorate is categorized as a security component of the Ministry of Defense, but, in reality, neither Military Intelligence nor Air Force Intelligence are controlled by the Minister of Defense.¹⁶ The Air Force Intelligence Directorate is extremely loyal to the Syrian ruling party, and one of its main functions is to provide security for the President's air force.¹⁷ In SJAC's sample set, the Air Force Intelligence Directorate primarily issued pages that included surveillance information, lists of names, security reports, and general orders. The documents also included pages with information supplied to the Army for the purpose of targeting "terrorists."

National Security Office.

The National Security Office is the leadership entity tasked with security policies inside Syria. The National Security Office is known to issue orders to all intelligence divisions (Military Intelligence, Air Force Intelligence, General Intelligence, and Political Security).¹⁸ This guidance is typically broad in nature, regarding how agencies should be conducting their work. This is confirmed in the sample set. Pages from the National Security Office most often included general orders, including orders to all security agencies about how they should address demonstrations and political unrest. The sample set also included a significant number of pages from the National Security Office on surveillance information, without an indication of the source for its intelligence. None of the documents issued by the Office included search or arrest orders, which is likely because the Office does not have its own detention centers or officers to carry out orders. However, search and arrest orders issued by other agencies were sometimes explicitly based on recommendations from the National Security Office.

14 *The Syrian Security Services and the Need for Structural and Functional Change*, OMRAN CENTER FOR STRATEGIC STUDIES (Nov. 18, 2016), <http://omranstudies.org/publications/papers/the-syrian-security-services-and-the-need-for-structural-and-functional-change.html> [last visited Jan. 9, 2019] [hereinafter *The Syrian Security Services and the Need for Structural and Functional Change*].

15 *The Syrian Security Services and the Need for Structural and Functional Change*.

16 *The Syrian Security Services and the Need for Structural and Functional Change*.

17 *Syria Transition Roadmap*, SYRIAN EXPERT HOUSE 159 (2013), <http://syrianexperthouse.org/archives/775> [last visited Jan. 9, 2019] [hereinafter *Syria Transition Roadmap*].

18 *Syria Transition Roadmap*, at 159.

Directorate of General Intelligence

The Directorate of General Intelligence is Syria's oldest security agency. It was previously housed under the Ministry of Interior, but is now directly subordinate to the President as a division of the National Security Office. The Directorate is responsible for interior security (regarding both internal and external threats) and is the official intelligence authority in Syria.¹⁹ In SJAC's sample set, the documents from the Directorate of General Intelligence primarily contained security reports and surveillance information, but they also contained a significant number of reports predicting future events allegedly based on surveillance information or other intelligence.

Political Security Division

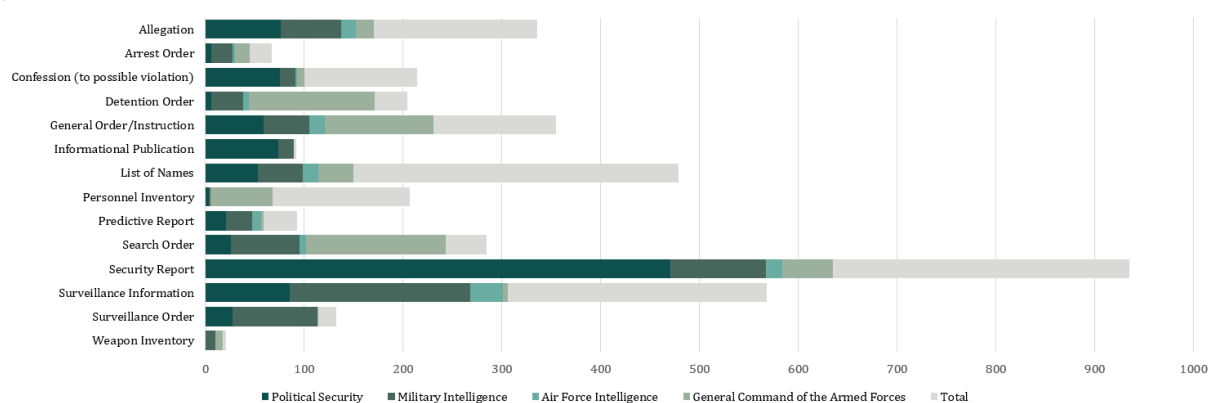
The Political Security Division is a component of the Ministry of Interior, though, for all intents and purposes, it is independent and can communicate directly with the President.²⁰ The Political Security Division is the most visible division to society; it is tasked with managing issues related to daily civilian life, including the vast system of construction and work permits issued throughout Syria.²¹ Unlike the National Security Office and the Command of the Armed Forces, the Division does not rely on other agencies for enforcement of their jurisdiction; rather, the Division runs its own checkpoints and has the power to arrest civilians.²² In SJAC's sample set, documents issued by the Political Security

Division primarily included security reports. Although the security reports contained high priority information, the Division issued a relatively small percentage of arrest, search, and surveillance orders, indicating that it may not be nearly as powerful as the Military and Air Force Intelligence Directorates, which corroborates common understanding in society about the relative powers of each agency.

Police

In each governorate, there is a Police Command that reports to the Ministry of Interior, though each police command can receive orders from any branch of the intelligence sector. Commands often work with the Political Security Division due to being deeply embedded in the civilian population. SJAC's sample set showed that the police receive and execute commands, as opposed to issuing them. In the sample set, documents issued by police commands primarily included security reports and lists of names. As part of their support to other intelligence agencies, police officers would often function as informers, reporting on anti-government graffiti and other political dissidence.

The graph below shows the number of relevant pages containing specific content from the main agencies represented in SJAC's sample set.

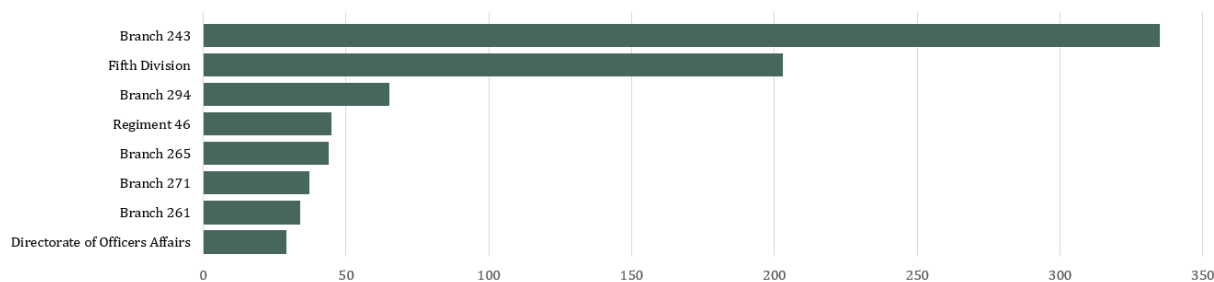


¹⁹ Syria Transition Roadmap, at 161.

²⁰ The Syrian Security Services and the Need for Structural and Functional Change.

²¹ Syria Transition Roadmap, at 161.

²² Syria Intelligence & Security Agencies, GLOBALSECURITY.ORG, <https://www.globalsecurity.org/intell/world/syria/intro.htm> [last visited Jan. 9, 2019].



Security Sector Branches

In many of the documents, SJAC was able to identify the specific branch from which the document was issued. The graph above shows the top eight branches in SJAC's sample set according to number of relevant pages issued. These branches are housed under two agencies: The General Command of the Armed Forces and the Military Intelligence Directorate.

Under the General Command of the Armed Forces, the Fifth Division, Regiment 46, and the Directorate of Officers' Affairs were among the top eight branches that issued pages in the sample set. The Fifth Armored Division is in the First Corps, headquartered in Damascus. It contains the 17th Armored Brigade, the 96th Armored Brigade, the 112th Mechanized Brigade, and the Division Artillery Brigade.²³ Regiment 46 is an independent Special Forces Regiment based in Aleppo. The Directorate of Officers' Affairs deals with all matters relating to leadership in the Syrian Army, including selection and promotion of officers, but also has a significant surveillance component to ensure that officers are maintaining the necessary degree of loyalty to the government.

Under the Military Intelligence Directorate, pages issued by Branch 294, Branch 243, Branch 261, Branch 265, and Branch 271 also appeared frequently in the sample set. Branch 294 is tasked with surveillance of armed divisions in the Syrian Army. It coordinates the logistics of all armed divisions' activities, and has the ultimate authority to authorize movement of an armed division. The other four branches are regional branches. Branch 243 is the military intelligence branch in Deir Ezzor (Branch 243 is likely cited as the branch most frequently issuing

pages due to the location from which many documents were collected); Branch 261 is the military intelligence branch in Homs; Branch 265 is the military intelligence branch in Suwayda and Quneitra; and Branch 271 is the military intelligence branch in Idlib.²⁴

Names of Officials

In many documents, particularly those circulated among many branches, names and signatures of officials, including high-level officials, appear on the pages. Several high priority documents, including those that include admissions to possible crimes, also carry the signatures of high-level officials. Such documentation will be essential for investigators when building evidence about chain of command and superior culpability. However, there are many more documents that do not have names or signatures, or have unintelligible signatures with no names. It is possible to search for information about who was located at which branch and the heads of the branch and local offices, but additional sources of evidence are needed. The documents themselves may shed light on which officers and soldiers were stationed at particular locations during particular time periods, as over two hundred pages issued by agencies included personnel inventory, reassignment lists, and other identifying information. Other documents, particularly general orders, simply note that the order was issued by the head of the agency, with no name or signature attached. It would not be difficult to learn the names of heads of agencies from external research, though, without their signatures, they may attempt to deny knowledge in any court proceeding.

23 Syrian Arab Army – Order of Battle, GLOBALSEcurity.ORG, <https://www.globalsecurity.org/military/world/syria/army-orbat.htm> [last visited Jan. 9, 2019].

24 Syria: Torture Centers Revealed, HUMAN RIGHTS WATCH (Jul. 3, 2012) <https://www.hrw.org/news/2012/07/03/syria-torture-centers-revealed#> [last visited Jan. 9, 2019].

External Assessments of Syria's Security Sector

While this report is the first of its kind to rely on Syrian state intelligence documents, a number of organizations have published analyses of Syria's security sector and its operation since the beginning of the conflict, including the Omran Center for Strategic Studies,²⁵ Chatham House,²⁶ Arab Reform Initiative,²⁷ and Syria Expert House.²⁸ These analyses have reached largely similar conclusions about the structure and flaws of the system and consistently characterize the security sector as an institution that has been carefully designed to protect the interests of the ruling family rather than the Syrian people. Such pieces have been written without access to government documents, but instead rely on a variety of other sources, including media reports, laws, publicly available information about the structures and leadership of agencies, and interviews with current and former government officials. By understanding the broader discussion around the security sector, readers can understand how this analysis fits into, adds to, and, perhaps at times, contradicts, previous discussions about the security sector, and hence the potential for reform. While not comprehensive, the four points below represent the general conclusions often reached by previous analysis. Where relevant, information from the sample set analysis supplements the findings.

Syrian intelligence agencies operate outside of the law.

The ability of Syrian intelligence agencies to operate beyond the law is codified in the Emergency Law of 1962, the State of Emergency declaration of 1963 and the Constitution of 1973.²⁹ When Syria created the State Security Administration in 1969, Decree No. 14 included the following language: "it is impermissible to pursue any workers in the State Security Administrations for crimes they have committed during the execution of the specified duties they were authorized to carry out, except by virtue of an order to pursue issued by the director."³⁰ Even when blatant immunities are not codified, however, agencies operate in ways that often differ

from regulations. For example, each intelligence agency officially reports to a superior department (e.g., the Military Intelligence Directorate reports to the Ministry of Defense), but in reality, analysts contend that these agencies instead report directly to the president and are sometimes responsible for appointing officials within the larger department, giving them considerably more power than the written law allows.³¹

Many of these assertions can be indirectly supported by the documents. For instance, none of the documents reference warrants, regulations, or other legal basis to justify orders. Also, instead of being commanded by the Defense Ministry, the Air Force Intelligence and Military Intelligence Directorates often issued orders to the military, including high-level orders to bomb, destroy, and kill opponents.

The Syrian intelligence agencies have vague and overlapping mandates, so as to be in constant competition with one another.

In order to ensure that Syrian intelligence agencies do not threaten the power of the president or, to borrow a phrase from scholar James T. Quinlivan, to ensure that the ruling family is "coup-proof," the government has created "multiple internal security agencies with overlapping jurisdiction that constantly monitor the loyalty of the military and one another with independent paths of communication to critical leaders."³² This system ensures that the agencies are competitive instead of cooperative, each attempting to ingratiate themselves with the president, better ensuring that he maintains control of the system.

The sample set analysis reveals a more complex relationship among the agencies, however. While it is apparent that the agencies have overlapping mandates (most striking in how detainees become entangled in a web of jurisdictions and transfers from one agency's detention facility to another's) there was clear coordination and cooperation among the agencies since 2011 to

25 *The Syrian Security Services and the Need for Structural and Functional Change.*

26 Lina Khatib & Lina Sinjab, *Syria's Transactional State*, CHATHAM HOUSE (Oct. 10, 2018), <https://reader.chathamhouse.org/syrias-transactional-state-how-conflict-changed-syrian-states-exercise-power#the-origins-and-evolution-of-syria-s-shadow-state> [last visited Jan. 9, 2019].

27 *Reforming Syria's Security Sector in the Post-Assad Era*, ARAB REFORM INITIATIVE (Jul. 31, 2014) <https://www.arab-reform.net/en/node/607> [last visited Jan. 9, 2019].

28 *Syria Transition Roadmap.*

29 *The Syrian Security Services and the Need for Structural and Functional Change.*

30 *Syria Transition Roadmap.*

31 *The Syrian Security Services and the Need for Structural and Functional Change.*

32 James T. Quinlivan, *Coup-Proofing: Its Practice and Consequences in the Middle East*, 24 *INTERNATIONAL SECURITY* 2 131-165 (1999).

suppress political dissidents and armed groups. Instead of competing, the agencies often rely on one another to execute orders and provide security reports and surveillance. The only exception in the sample set is in relation to inter-agency spying. Several surveillance documents included recorded conversations from tapped phones and informant reports about other agencies, particularly more powerful directorates spying on the police and armed forces.

The Syrian intelligence agencies have securitized even the most mundane aspects of daily life.

In addition to directorate headquarters in Damascus and branches in each governorate, the security sector agencies also staffed local offices throughout the country. The intelligence officials at local offices are often responsible for approving transactions, such as property transfers and marriages, with no link to the security sector. Through such close monitoring, the agencies can effectively disrupt the daily lives of individuals who are taking part in political activity that is viewed as suspicious by the government.

The documents show that surveillance into everyday life was extensive. Prior to 2011, documents from the Political Security Division include reports on citizens' daily activities, including those that do not seem threatening, such as a Christian youth group field trip to a historic

church. In 2011, the documents had a clear focus on protests, graffiti, and other acts of political dissidence, but every possible sign of opposition to the government was scrutinized, including spitting near the president's statue or complaining about the government during a family dinner gathering.

Positions in the security sector are granted based on personal loyalty to the ruling family or ethnic and familial ties.

The heads of the intelligence agencies often have close familial or personal ties to the president, while the agencies as a whole are largely staffed by communities that have been historically loyal to the ruling family. The most obvious example of this is the disproportionate number of Alawites represented in the security sector, with the Omran Center noting that the agency it believes to be the most powerful, the Air Force Intelligence Directorate, has the highest percentage of Alawites among its staff.³³

The only indication of this assessment in the sample set can be assumed by the names of high-level officials in powerful agencies. Names that appear in documents issued by the Military and Air Force Intelligence Directorates appear to be popularly known Alawite names. Loyalty and familial ties cannot be discerned from the documents alone and would require additional research.

33 *The Syrian Security Services and the Need for Structural and Functional Change.*

Findings Derived from the Documents

SJAC's analysis of the 5,003 pages resulted in numerous findings with regard to conventional understandings of each agency's role in the workings of the Syrian state. SJAC's findings are grouped thematically below, though there is a substantial degree of overlap between themes. The themes include: state surveillance practices, detainees and wanted lists, rules of engagement, admissions to the commission of possible crimes, repression of Kurds and other minority groups, and predictions and conspiracies.

State Surveillance

Given that the documents were extracted from intelligence facilities, it should be no surprise that 719 pages included surveillance information, representing 14 percent of the sample set. Of these, 135 pages were surveillance orders. It is difficult to draw definitive conclusions based on the material's varied content, but it seems that the source of such material primarily came from phone taps and informants, described below.

Military Intelligence Directorate

Despite the fact that the Military Intelligence Directorate was involved in only 22 percent of all relevant pages, when it came to surveillance, this division was involved 37 percent of the time. In contrast, the political security division appeared in 26 percent of relevant pages, but was only involved in 11 percent of pages related to surveillance. This could indicate that Military Intelligence maintained more responsibility over surveillance than other security divisions, but a larger sample set would be required to draw any statistically significant conclusions.

Phone Surveillance

Approximately 12 percent of the surveillance pages included transcripts or other material based on tapped phone calls. These phone calls sometimes described legitimate security concerns, including the purchasing, selling, or transferring of arms or planned attacks on towns or schools. However, around half of the pages did

not contain any relevant security information, and some phones were seemingly tapped based solely on an individual's participation in non-violent political activities. (See Annex 1 for a document referring to phone surveillance of a journalist). Most importantly, none of the pages referenced a court order or legal procedure authorizing the tapping.

Interagency Surveillance. Interestingly, several pages depicted surveillance of other security or government officials. At least three of the pages SJAC reviewed were tapped phone conversations of state officials. In one instance, a conversation between a police commander and the chief of police about anti-government graffiti was transcribed and discussed even though there was no indication that either officer was sympathetic towards the graffiti. Another tapped phone conversation was between two individuals working for the Directorate of General Intelligence. These pages demonstrate that divisions and branches were spying on one another and sharing transcripts of the conversations internally.

A series of 13 pages in the sample set was an assembled file about the former Director of the Education Directorate in Idlib. One of the first pages in the file was a letter he signed expressing concern about damage to schools in Idlib and warning that families used the schools as shelters. In addition to this letter, his file contained written complaints about him, including from a former employee and a mother whose child did poorly on a written exam. Later pages in the file accuse the director of embezzlement and affiliation with the opposition. Since his letter about the schools is in the same file as these complaints and accusations, it would appear that his earlier concern and request to protect the schools in Idlib raised suspicions within the intelligence agencies and led them to surveil and collect damaging information about him.

Tips and Informants. Seventy-nine pages mentioned the word tip or informant. On the day protests began in Syria, according to the documents, the Military Intelligence Directorate ordered an increase in combat

readiness and an “activation of informants” throughout the country. Another page included an admission that informants were used as plants at protests to break up demonstrations and that the security sector relied on informants to provide names of people who participated in protests.

Several pages were nothing but a record of informants’ names. Others were statements by informants who were reporting on individuals for acts such as insulting the president, inciting protests, or having ties to “armed terrorist groups.” The statements included conscripts informing on fellow conscripts, officers informing on each other, soldiers informing on officers, hospital workers informing on colleagues, doctors informing on patients, and even family members informing on relatives. In some cases, an individual would inform the intelligence agency that they received a suspicious text or phone call, providing the phone number of the sender so that the number could be monitored. When the agency acted in response to the tips, there is no indication from the documents that they first conducted their own investigation. In some cases, they learned during interrogation that the informant lied or planted evidence to incriminate someone, yet their strategy appeared to be to arrest immediately and ask questions later. Even when provided with convoluted, improbable tips, the security sector’s response was almost always an order to take action.

It was immediately obvious from the documents that the state’s strategy of relying heavily upon informants and encouraging spying within state agencies and in Syrian society became a source of grievance during the protests. Documents described graffiti and fliers that outed the names of informants. Anger escalated to direct threats that a certain informant would be murdered or targeted by armed groups, and in one case, a page described that explosives were thrown at a house of an informant. These divisions and anger are reflected in the documentation collected by human rights groups as well.

Detainees and Wanted Lists

In addition to surveillance information, the sample set included a large number of pages that reference detainees, arrests, abductions, and wanted people. In total, 576 pages contained such information, representing 11 per-

cent of the sample. This is likely a reflection of the government’s mass arrest campaigns to suppress dissent since 2011, as many of the pages referred to protesters and reporters, but the pages also included arrest orders for armed fighters and defected officers and conscripts. Moreover, some pages included information about kidnappings of police officers and soldiers; however, this section will not focus on violations alleged by the state against unknown persons.

Wanted Lists. At least 59 pages were lists of names of people wanted for arrest and/or interrogation. They included a mix of orders to arrest named individuals and requests to provide names or other information on wanted people. In some pages, names of wanted people were crossed out or designated with an “X.” Of these, many explained that the individuals have been removed from the list because they were captured, killed in hostilities, reconciled with authorities,³⁴ out of the country, or a mix of these, but not all pages were clear about what the markings meant.

Arrest Practices. A review of 164 high priority pages about detention (not kidnapping by non-state actor) shed considerable light on the government’s arrest practices. The majority of pages related to detention in the sample set were about individuals detained for protesting or for other forms of expression, including, in one case, for simply cursing the President during a dinner gathering. Despite this emphasis, however, it should be noted that the pages often lumped protesters, critical reporters (i.e., “enemy media”), members of armed groups, and terrorists into a single category of “inciting elements.” In some cases, the terms appeared to be used interchangeably. There was an admission in the sample set that women and children are among the detainees; one page issued by the head of the Political Security Division in Damascus requested all names of women and children being held at a local branch (See Annex 2 for full document).

The documents confirm that arrests were made as a result of the following: 1) tips from government informants, acquaintances, or even family members that the individual has or will participate in anti-government speech/actions, 2) a security branch’s order or wanted list, which may be based on a detainee’s appearance in an “enemy media” outlet or surveillance indicating they have or will participate in anti-government speech/actions, 3) known or suspected association with an alleged

34 Reconciliation does not mean the individual was cleared of wrong-doing, but that the individual turned themselves in and promised not to repeat the alleged act in the future. The phrase in Arabic, “تمت تسوية وضعه” (“his situation was resolved”), is used frequently in the documents and in publicly available state-run media sources and government social media accounts and websites.

dissident, including the detention of family members to encourage suspects to turn themselves in, and 4) actual participation in acts of dissidence directly witnessed by a police or intelligence officer.

The documents also showed that private citizens were used to identify individuals for arrest at checkpoints. Following a realization that certain practices, such as holding family members of suspects hostage and using community members to point out suspects at checkpoints, were causing increased resentment, one page showed that a security branch banned the practices and instead ordered the use of other tactics, including increased reliance on secret informants. Similarly, a page from the National Security Office discouraged the practice of openly using civilians from one sect (likely Alawite) to identify suspects at checkpoints in order to decrease resentment among sects. Another page urged that more respectful arrest practices to be used in general, including a prohibition on arresting people in their workplaces or in government buildings. From the sample set alone, it is unclear whether any of these orders were heeded.

When relying on tips from informants and acquaintances, there was no information that the security branches conducted an investigation prior to the arrest. Only after the arrest did they determine whether the information was false. In such instances of false accusations, they nonetheless ran a background check on the individuals and held them in case they found any other information to link them to “incitement.”

As told by former detainees interviewed by SJAC, the documents also showed that the government tended to shuffle detainees from one facility to another. Pages in the sample set included orders to transfer detainees from one prison to another or from the custody of one intelligence directorate to another. Some orders demanded that before a detainee was released, they were to be transferred to the custody of another division for separate charges related to the same or similar incident. Some pages mentioned that the individual was arrested, interrogated, and released, but otherwise, rarely did the pages mention the length of the arrest or what happened to the detainee following their initial arrest.

Arrests to Prevent/Deter Protests. Some pages in the sample set showed that arrests were also used as a tactic to deter protests from occurring in the first place. One page in the sample set was a daily report speculating that an upcoming demonstration would include fewer protesters, as many of them had been arrested. Some

pages also included information about detaining people in order to coerce them to refrain from protesting.

Deaths in Detention. Although the vast majority of pages in the sample set did not provide information on the fates of detainees following their arrests, a small number did indicate that detainees died in custody. A series of seven pages about one individual provided a particularly thorough example of the security sector’s communications about such incidents. After making accusations against the government in “enemy media” outlets, one individual was targeted for surveillance, leading to a detailed report about his social status, family members, and political affiliations. The pages included a report that less than a month later, the individual was shot in the stomach during a military raid on a market and taken to the military hospital in stable condition. The political security headquarters then approved a request to transfer him from the military hospital to the local political security branch. A page dated a week later reported that the individual died due to injuries from the raid. A video posted to YouTube showed the funeral of the individual the same day the transfer was approved. The video of the deceased’s body showed signs of bruising as well as stitches on the stomach several inches long.

The series of pages on this individual are an admission that he died in custody. They also raise questions about whether the political security provided false information about his cause of death or the military hospital provided sub-standard care, since the pages initially reported that he was in stable condition after he sustained injuries during the raid. The YouTube video supports the former conclusion and indicates that he may have experienced torture and other mistreatment in custody.

Torture in Detention. None of the pages in the sample set explicitly admitted to the use of torture, despite widespread and consistent accusations of torture in government detention among former detainees who reported to documentation groups and the media following their release. This likely indicates that, despite the government’s detailed records, certain topics were intentionally omitted or concealed in written communications. At least one page, however, included a handwritten note from a detained individual who confessed to crimes and swore that he was not beaten or tortured during his arrest, raising suspicions that he may have indeed been tortured or mistreated in detention. When referring to detainees, some pages included orders to “handle the situation” or to “do the necessary,” but from the documents alone, the real meaning of such language cannot be fully ascertained.

Discrepancy with Detainee Databases. Several Syrian organizations have created private and public databases of detained and missing people since the conflict began. SJAC has downloaded documentation contained in public databases, most notably that of the Violations Documentation Center (VDC), and processed the information within SJAC's database. Unsurprisingly, the majority of names listed by the government as detained in the documents do not appear in VDC's publicly available data.³⁵ This is not to undermine VDC's efforts, but to say that, for many reasons, no documentation organization is able to compile a complete list of individuals detained during the conflict, a point which SJAC has repeatedly emphasized during UN-sponsored peace negotiations.³⁶ Rather, it is the state's responsibility to transparently provide such lists, as well as the status of the detained individuals. If nothing else, this pilot analysis demonstrates the stark difference between the numbers of detainees in the government's undisclosed lists and the numbers reported by human rights organizations.

Rules of Engagement

The ways in which military and intelligence agencies phrase policies, directives, and rules of engagement shape how subordinates carry out actions on the ground. During the pilot analysis, the issue of discretion emerged as a concerning trend with regard to how the government constrained or did not constrain its use of force. While the documents themselves generally did not describe tactics, the orders were still revealing, primarily for their lack of detail. Given the complexity of the situation in Syria, these broad directives did not ensure sufficient compliance with international humanitarian or human rights law, instead leaving considerable room for abuse. A deeper analysis into relevant training manuals and supplementary material as well as interviews with commanders could help illuminate how orders were expected to be implemented by local branches, but the documents themselves include neither precise instructions for the vast majority of orders nor additional procedures that should be followed in particular instances. They are, therefore, strong indications that high-level officials and commanders did not

take necessary and reasonable measures to prevent the commission of crimes.

Do the Necessary. The phrase “do the necessary” (or “take the necessary measures”) was found frequently in the documents. SJAC analysts noted it on at least 30 pages during the analysis process, but it appeared more often without being recorded.³⁷ The phrase is used in such a routine manner that two of the pages in the sample set – both issued by high-level officials – included only the phrase “do the necessary” with appropriate signatures and headers but with no accompanying information regarding what the order was referencing. The difficulty was in understanding whether the phrase was a relevant indicator of a potential violation or a simple catch-all used in even mundane circumstances.

SJAC was able to determine how an order to “do the necessary” was carried out by subordinates in only one case. After receiving information that “shameful and hostile” graffiti with anti-Assad slogans was sprayed in particular towns, the division ordered the local branch to “do the necessary”, and the local branch reported back that the necessary actions were accomplished; its officers had painted over the graffiti and were looking for the culprits to expose them and “do the necessary” with them. Without the response report from the local branch, no definitive conclusion can be reached about what was being ordered but what is certain is that the local branch was given broad discretion in executing the orders, which could largely explain why crackdown methods, particularly early on in the uprising, varied throughout Syria.³⁸

Evidence arising outside of the context of SJAC's document review supports the conclusion that “do the necessary” could include the use of lethal force in certain circumstances. In 2011, Human Rights Watch interviewed 63 defectors from the military and intelligence agencies who testified as to potential crimes against humanity committed against protesters, finding that “commanders gave them standing orders to stop the protests ‘by all means necessary’ during regular briefings and prior to

35 Given the small sample set, the fact that SJAC is not closely familiar with VDC's methodology, and SJAC's inability to verify the accuracy of the government's detention lists, SJAC will not provide an exact percentage of the discrepancy so as not to mislead readers. However, the discrepancy found in the data set is large enough to be significant.

36 *Memorandum issued by Syrian organizations working in the field of human rights, accountability, and transitional justice on the issue of detainees and detention centers in Syria*, SJAC (Mar. 21, 2016) <https://syriaaccountability.org/updates/2016/03/21/memorandum-issued-by-syrian-organizations-working-in-the-field-of-human-rights-accountability-and-transitional-justice-on-the-issue-of-detainees-and-detention-centers-in-syria/> [last visited Jan. 9, 2019].

37 A lesson from this pilot for future analysis will be to consistently note when the phrases “do the necessary” and “take the necessary” measures are included in orders.

38 The response also varied over time, and could be attributed to other factors as well, including news coverage in international media and the desire to appease external or internal actors. However, these context-specific factors are typically not mentioned in the documents.

deployment.” The report notes that “The defectors said that, even when it was not specified, they universally understood the phrase ‘by all means necessary’ as an authorization to use lethal force, especially given the provision of live ammunition as opposed to other means of crowd control.”³⁹

Further, in a lawsuit brought against the Syrian government in a U.S. court for the wrongful killing of journalist Marie Colvin in Homs in February 2012, the plaintiffs submitted an affidavit from a former Syrian intelligence agent.⁴⁰ The agent affirmed that a Syrian General gave an order to “take all necessary measures” with regard to journalists, including Marie Colvin, who were broadcasting from within Homs. The agent understood the term to mean that the journalists should be captured, but if that was not possible, that lethal force should be used. As criminal prosecutions and civil suits move forward against alleged violators in European and other jurisdictions, additional evidence may come to light that would further elucidate the use of this terminology and if/when lethal force was authorized.

Principle of Distinction. Such documents can be combined with other evidence to explain how discretionary orders led to indiscriminate attacks or targeting of civilians. An example from the documents indicated that, based on intelligence from unknown sources, the government believed armed groups were hanging clothes from the balconies of schools to make it appear that families were sheltering there when, in actuality, armed groups were using the schools as training bases. The order at the end of the page was to do the necessary, without instructions to first inspect the schools to determine if the intelligence was correct or to use precision targeting to avoid civilian casualties in case the schools were being used by both civilians and armed groups. Another page relied on dubious claims that armed groups were using the leather in soccer balls to manufacture landmines, thereby ordering that necessary measures be taken at checkpoints and on patrols. Given the popularity of soccer in Syria, it is likely that the order to do the necessary in this circumstance led to the harassment of a countless number of innocent civilians, perhaps even their arrest, interrogation, or worse, based solely on their possession of sports equipment.

Even when providing more specific orders beyond simply doing the necessary, the government still issued orders that allowed for abuse. In two pages related to reports about armed groups using civilian vehicles to attack government forces, the subsequent orders were to target suspicious vehicles for immediate destruction (See Annex 3 for full document). Once again, the orders did not include recommendations to search vehicles when possible or to avoid civilian casualties. Since much of the war in Syria has been fought in urban and semi-urban areas, particular attention should have been given to the protection of civilians, but the documents did not reflect due consideration of the principle of distinction.



See Annex 3 for full document.

39 “By All Means Necessary!” Individual and Command Responsibility for Crimes against Humanity in Syria, Human Rights Watch, 2011, available at: https://www.hrw.org/sites/default/files/reports/syria1211webwcover_o.pdf

40 See Decl. of “Ulysses”, Cathleen Colvin et. al. v. Syrian Arab Republic, Case 1:16-cv-01423-ABJ (D.D.C. March 22, 2018), 5-Declaration-of-Ulysses-dated-September-28-2017_Redacted.pdf

Principle of Proportionality. One page, in response to intelligence from an unknown source that armed groups were moving to attack Idlib, included an order to handle the situation using “all forms of power.” Like the principle of distinction, the page did not indicate that government forces considered the principle of proportionately when issuing the order.

Unclear Intent. From the documents alone, SJAC cannot determine if phrases like “do the necessary” were used as an attempt to shield officers from culpability by placing a veneer of ignorance between the field operations and branch and division offices. Since, as described in other sections, the documents do occasionally admit to crimes, however, it is more likely that the orders were intentionally phrased in such a way as to give wide discretion to subordinates so that they could take advantage of the situation on the ground as they saw fit. This explanation is reflected in a long-standing practice in Syria whereby publicly available laws, permit registrations, and other routine government-issued documents include vague language, thereby allowing for corrupt practices and other abuse by lower-level officials.

Admission to the Commission of Crimes

SJAC identified 214 pages that included a confession to a possible violation. The largest percentage of pages were related to protests, including surveillance of suspected government dissidents, wanted lists and arrest campaigns, and government security forces’ activities during protests. Another recurring pattern was indirect admissions, such as instructions to cease a certain activity that is a clear violation, meaning there was knowl-

edge the crimes had previously occurred (e.g. orders to cease the use of deadly force during protests and the looting of humanitarian aid convoys). The majority of pages labeled as possible confessions implicated human rights abuses, and a much smaller number of pages implicated violations of international humanitarian law. The following summarizes the types of alleged violations which the Syrian government directly admitted to in the documents.

Conflation of Unarmed Civilians, Armed Groups, and Terrorists. Before describing the types of violations that appear in the documents, it is important to note how the security agencies described individuals suspected of opposing the government. In documents from 2011 and early 2012, there was often reference to protests containing “inciters” and “armed gangs” in blanket statements, without distinguishing them from unarmed civilians. For example, when ordering a protest to be quelled because of gangs, the orders offered no directions on how to protect peaceful protesters or identify criminal elements among the crowds. In mid-2011, the word “terrorist” began appearing in the documents, and as the uprising morphed into an armed conflict through 2012 and 2013, “terrorist” appeared much more frequently to refer to anyone opposing the government, from Free Syrian Army (FSA) forces to those who were not alleged to be carrying arms and were not ascribed a clear affiliation. Since the security agencies viewed any group that opposed the government through the same lens, they did not distinguish between fighting factions, and the differences between the FSA, Jabhat al-Nusra, ISIS, and others appeared be irrelevant. The graph below shows the use of the word “terrorist” in the sample set over time. It should be noted that the largest numbers of pages in the sample set were dated from 2011 to 2013, which can explain the drop-off in the graph.

Pages using the word “terrorist”



Violation of Freedom of Expression and Assembly. A majority of pages classified as evidence of admissions were related to violations of freedom of expression and assembly. The pages frequently used the words “riot inciters” and “violence inciters,” which were likely referring to anyone who participated in a demonstration, including peaceful protesters. Numerous pages included wanted lists of those who had participated in protests, and also included evidence of detention and killing of protesters. Some pages included specific references to disruption of Kurdish protests through regulating the laws of assembly and threatening community leaders.

Violation of Due Process Rights. The documents contained significant evidence that surveillance and detention of anyone suspected of harboring anti-government sentiments was occurring without due process, even after the Syrian government lifted the state of emergency in April 2011, a demand from protesters that was supposed to increase due process rights. Many pages recorded the monitoring of cell phones and messages, often relying on tips from informants, and arrests were frequently made based on the suspicion that an individual would be participating in a protest. More details on arrest practices can be found in the section called “Detainees and Wanted Lists.” Possible violations of due process rights extended to the courtroom. One page explicitly called for harsher charges to be filed against protesters and for judges to bypass “legal loopholes” and issue longer sentences, claiming that the judges have been too lenient. In a two-page document, one local office told the Political Security Raqqa branch to inform the Political Security Headquarters in Damascus about a specific judge, who it accused of releasing protesters on bail. The local office even recommended that the issue be taken all the way to the National Security Office.

Arbitrary Detention and Death of Children. Two pages specifically referenced the arrest of minors for anti-government sentiments. One page documented the arrest of minors for participation in protests; the other page recorded an incident where two minors were arrested for supposedly saying “shame” when passing a photo of Assad. Another page listed names of individuals who were killed in clashes at a protest in Deir Ezzor, which included minors. One page was a telegram request for a list of children being held at security offices, indicating that the security apparatus was aware of such practices.

Abuses of Minorities. The documents include many admissions to violating the freedom of expression of Kurdish populations and Kurdish cultural rights, and included directives to monitor Kurdish property transactions and political activities more broadly. Addition-

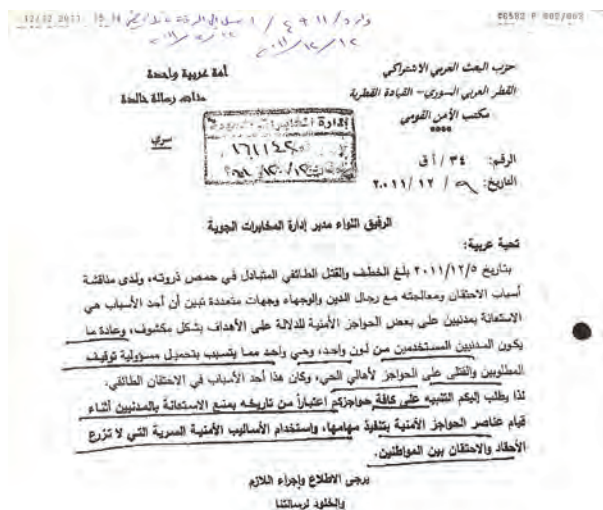
ally, one page was a directive which banned migrant workers who had been visiting their family members who worked at UN sites in Syria from continuing to conduct visits at the UN offices. Many of these abuses are elaborated upon further in the section called Repression of Kurds and Other Minority Groups.

Violations of the Principle of Distinction. The documents record instances of the Syrian government using non-military facilities for military purposes, as well as attacks on non-military facilities in civilian areas. Two pages documented schools occupied by the Syrian military in June 2015 in Idlib and Maarrat al-Nu‘man. More frequent in the pages were patterns of attacks on civilian infrastructure by Syrian government forces. Five pages included information on the presence of armed groups, weapons caches, or “terrorist elements” in schools, a mosque, a hospital, a residential home, and a farm. They either included a statement that the location had been bombed, or contained instructions to map the relevant areas and bomb them as soon as possible. While SJAC is unable to know whether the aforementioned targets were indeed present in those locations when they were bombed, the locations were in or near civilian areas, and none of the pages included instructions to use targeted weaponry or other tactics to avoid civilian casualties.



Photo taken in April 2015 by a SJAC Documentation Team member depicting stashes of humanitarian aid from the Red Crescent and International Committee of the Red Cross in a Political Security branch facility shortly after the government lost its position in the area.

Manipulation of Humanitarian Aid. Many pages suggested that security officials’ control over humanitarian aid access in many parts of the country led to interference with aid shipments. Multiple pages included recognition that state security personnel were enforcing lengthy searches of humanitarian shipments at checkpoints in Hama and Hassakeh. Some pages also stated



See Annex 5 for full document.

that security officers were regularly late, which prevented efficient movement through checkpoints, and that the security officers claimed they were ordered to let no more than 50 trucks through in one day. One of the pages instructed security personnel to stop taking food and other supplies out of shipments, indicating that the security apparatus was aware that it was occurring, but did not prescribe clear enforcement or internal accountability protocols. Another page acknowledged that security personnel at distribution centers in Deraa had been refusing to give supplies to married women, insisting that their husbands come in their place, and had also been arresting individuals with names similar to those on suspect lists. Although the page included instructions to cease such activities, again, there is no further information in the pages to suggest that these instructions were enforced. SJAC also has photos and other documentation of humanitarian aid being stolen or kept from civilians, corroborating the reports described in the documents.

Superior Culpability. Superiors who were aware of such activities had the responsibility to ensure that the violations ceased, and it is unlikely that they took concrete action to do so. Similar to the directives regarding humanitarian aid, the documents included a broader pattern of directives by superiors that indicated awareness of violations. Numerous pages included instructions that soldiers were to cease certain activities, including stealing propane to fuel their personal vehicles, shooting protestors, holding family members of suspects hostage, and using military weapons during protests. One

page also admitted to the use of confiscated motorbikes by security personnel for patrols. While these pages included directions to stop participating in such activities, SJAC found no evidence to suggest that these directives were followed. Additional evidence is needed about whether the abuses described in the directives continued after the issuance of the orders and the extent of any reprimands against violators.

Repression of Kurds and other Minority Groups

SJAC identified at least 25 pages that can be used as direct evidence of persecution against Kurds. SJAC identified a total of 349 pages that mentioned Kurds or Kurdish activities, indicating the government's strong suspicion of Kurds and its intrusion into Kurdish daily life, which is reflected in overt practices of repression that have been well-documented by other groups.⁴¹ SJAC did not identify a significant number of pages that mentioned other ethnic or religious groups in Syria. This may be due to: 1) the locations where the majority of documents were extracted having larger numbers of Kurds than other minorities, and 2) Kurdish political activities in Syria tending to be more organized and long-standing than other groups outside the Baath party rule, meaning the government has likely devoted considerable attention to monitoring and interfering with their activities. The following is a summary of the types of persecution suggested by the documents and a brief explanation of SJAC records on the targeting of other minority groups by the government.

Violation of Freedom of Assembly and Expression.

A number of pages directly ordered the disruption of planned or suspected protests, including protests in response to the death of a Kurdish girl during Nowruz (new year) celebrations in spring 2010, International Workers' Day protests in 2010, and the potential for protests in Kurdish areas following the Arab Spring. Some pages ordered that increased permissions be required specifically for Kurds to publicly gather, explained how Kurds who gathered and played music in cars on the streets were punished, ordered the mobilization of patrols to prevent Kurds from meeting or gathering, and recommended threatening Kurdish leaders to deter them from participating in protests.

41 Group Denial: Repression of Kurdish Political and Cultural Rights in Syria, HUMAN RIGHTS WATCH (Nov. 29, 2009), <https://www.hrw.org/report/2009/11/26/group-denial/repression-kurdish-political-and-cultural-rights-syria> [last visited Jan. 9, 2019].

Violation of Cultural Rights. Two pages conveyed fear that the expression of Kurdish culture and language would threaten Syrian unity, and one page termed Kurdish cultural expression a “treachery” to Syria. In response to increased Kurdish political activities, one page outlined the government’s plan to criminalize all Kurdish “nationalistic” activities.

Monitoring Kurdish Property and Economy. The documents also indicated fear of Kurdish access to land and wealth. Some pages recommended that municipalities take increased precautions when Kurds buy or sell land, that the government first require permissions before Kurds buy or sell land, that security branches closely monitor the purchasing patterns of Kurds, and that Kurds be punished for participating in unsanctioned real estate transactions. One page lamented the government’s decision to allow Kurds access to the public job market and another recommended the government take steps to compete with Kurdish businesses to take from their profits.

Diluting the Ethnic Makeup in Kurdish Areas. One page ordered that Arab tribes be pressured to relocate to Hasakeh, seemingly to dilute the Kurdish majority. Another page specifically recommends preventing Kurds from being the majority ethnic group in any region in order to better control their political activities.

“Persuasion and Intimidation” Approach. One interesting trend in the documents was the government’s carrot and stick approach towards Kurdish leaders. The documents specifically ordered that Kurdish leaders be coopted and that steps be taken to encourage Kurds to identify more strongly as Syrian. One page referred to the use of the “persuasion and intimidation method” to both entice and threaten Kurdish leaders to align with the government. Yet, instead of taking meaningful steps to encourage integration, the same pages also ordered that coercive methods be used, including surveillance, criminalization, threats from security forces and nearby Arab tribes, “closing off” Kurdish towns, and the use of what one page called the “Turkish method for handling the Kurdish situation.” Such language suggests that the government preferred and generated more ideas for using punishment, rather than rewards, to appease the Kurdish population.



This binder was labeled with “Christian Activities,” likely referring to state security records that detail the monitoring of Christians.

Other Ethnic and Religious Groups. As mentioned above, SJAC did not identify documents signaling persecution of Christians, Druze, Turkmen, or other minority groups in Syria within the sample set. This should not be taken to mean that such groups were not specifically targeted. In fact, pages in the sample set included information about the monitoring of Christians in Syria. Moreover, one of SJAC’s Documentation Team members took photographs of the rooms where documents were stored, and one binder (pictured above) was labeled with “Christian Activities,” likely referring to state security records that detail the monitoring of Christians. Thus, it is likely that SJAC’s larger collection of documents contains much more information about such surveillance and possible proof of persecution.

Predictions and Conspiracies

Ninety-three pages were classified as ‘predictive reports,’ meaning that they made predictions about the future, both with regard to specific security threats (such as planned attacks), as well as broader analyses of conflict dynamics (such as the strategy of particular militant groups). Many of these pages were relatively standard descriptions of potential security threats, often including recommendations about how relevant agencies can respond, either by searching for suspects or increasing security at potential targets. In the majority of cases, SJAC was not able to find any information in videos or other documentation to show that the predicted attacks took place. However, there were a few exceptions, one of which is highlighted below.

Additionally, eleven pages in SJAC’s sample set included the word “conspiracy.” While not referencing a particular planned attack, these documents were rather focused on a perceived international conspiracy to undermine the Syrian government.

Unusual Predictions and Conspiracies. Some pages in this category predicted elaborate plots that revealed either a high level of paranoia within the intelligence agencies or the desire to disseminate paranoia within

their ranks. The most extreme example of this phenomenon is a telegram warning that terrorist groups were planning to ship spoiled fish and meat into Syria from southern Turkey for distribution in several districts. The telegram provided no specific instructions as to how this threat should be countered.

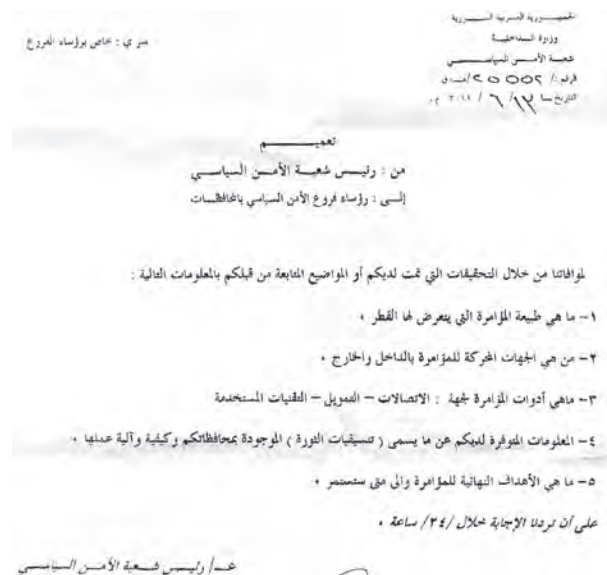
The ‘International Conspiracy Against Syria.’ Documents containing the word conspiracy were primarily focused on educating both the general public and those within the security sector on the broad, international conspiracy to undermine the Syrian government. For example, two pages requested that branches plan meetings with local community leaders to explain the conspiracy against Syria. Branches were asked to provide reports on the success of these meetings and the reactions of participants. It is clear that such outreach was used to spread the government narrative of the conflict, and it is possible that such outreach meetings were also used in order to identify individuals who were not partial to this narrative, though the documents do not provide direct evidence of this.

Other pages focused on spreading a certain narrative among the security branches themselves, such as one that circulated an article entitled ‘The Next Step: The Plan to End Syrian Sovereignty.’ The page requested that the contents of the article be explained to officers. Two other pages urged recipients to educate soldiers on the conspiracy, particularly the conspiracy against the Syrian armed forces. Along with socializing a certain political narrative among the security branches, one page requested that the heads of political security offices answer a series of questions on their individual understanding of the nature of the conspiracy against Syria. This included what the conspiracy is, what its goals are, who is supporting it, and what financial, communications and tech tools are being used to implement it. The page did not make clear how the answers would be used or the purpose of circulating the questions (See Annex 10 for full document).

Two of the pages did not reference the international conspiracy against Syria broadly, but rather, cases of individuals and media stations accused of spreading conspiracies about the government. One page specifically ordered security branches to arrest those who were spreading conspiracies against the Syrian state, while another provided a list of critical media outlets, with no specific information about whether action would be taken.

Predictions to Instill Fear and Distrust. A number of pages predicted that opposition fighters or foreign governments would launch an attack and then frame the Syrian government. While it is possible that some of these documents expressed actual concern within the security sector, it seems the circulation of such conspiracies may have served other purposes. One possibility is that the agencies used such information to encourage loyalty among intelligence workers by spreading fear of large-scale concerted action by anti-government actors and enforcing the belief that accusations against the government were false. This seems particularly likely in the case of pages that included very few details about the attack or relevant security information, and that were circulated widely among all branches instead of to a particular branch that could take preventative action.

In another example, there were two pages that claimed terrorists were intentionally dressing as government forces and undertaking gruesome attacks that would be blamed on the government. For example, one page explained that armed groups planned to attack women and loot homes in Dael. The page specified that perpetrators would film these violations and provide the footage to satellite channels. In both of these cases, no such incident seemed to have taken place. Again, it is possible that the reports were trying to spread concerns about impersonation to fuel distrust of anti-government narratives.



See Annex 10 for full document.

Predictions to Protect the Government. A second possibility is that the government intended to obscure culpability by creating these written records. For example, two pages predicted elaborate plots aimed at framing the Syrian government for the use of chemical weapons. The first, a telegram issued by the Directorate of General Intelligence in 2013, stated that the United States military was planning to drive a truck of phosphorus from the port of Aqaba, through Jordan, and into Syria, where the truck would be confronted by American soldiers. The page alleged that those American soldiers would then claim that it was a Syrian government shipment, and supply footage of the incident to media outlets. In another page, a letter from the President of the National Security Office to the head of the Air Force Intelligence in February 2012 claimed that Libyan terrorists stole chemical weapons from a Libyan stockpile and were planning to bring them into Syria via Turkey. The letter explained that the terrorists would use the weapons in collaboration with ‘provocative channels’ in an effort to escalate and internationalize the crisis in Syria, particularly in the aftermath of failed attempts to address the crisis at the UN Security Council (See Annex 11 for full document). Like other predictive reports, the page included little relevant security information, such as the affiliation of the alleged terrorists, and no recommendations for a security response. While it is difficult to ascertain the real intention behind writing and circulating such reports without additional information, the rhetoric of the Syrian government following chemical weapons attacks suggest that this could have been an additional shield from culpability – documentary evidence to protect the government from accountability and to point the finger at rebel groups, either for internal consumption or for external actors who might review the documents in the future.

Similar to the claims regarding chemical weapons, a number of pages predicted plots by those opposed to the government to frame government forces for their crimes. For example, a letter from Branch 261 stated that during planned protests in Aleppo and Damascus, protesters would distribute pills to participants, leading them to die within 10 minutes. The document explained that this would be done so that if they are captured, protesters would be able to blame their deaths on the government forces.

Linking Predictions to Videos. One page of note is harder to classify. In a standard discussion of ongoing security threats in Deir Ezzor, this report claimed that a local mosque was being used as military headquarters by armed groups with the express purpose of attracting a government attack. SJAC’s database contained multiple videos from the following day showing that the minaret of the mosque was destroyed, and the narrators in the videos claimed that the government was responsible. It is not clear from the footage whether the mosque was, in fact, being used for military purposes or the intent of any armed groups that may have been operating in the area. Therefore, it becomes difficult to know whether the government’s assessment had any basis in reality or served as a written record to provide cover to an already planned attack on a religious heritage site. An investigator must build a much more comprehensive picture of the incident in question and cannot rely solely on the document as sufficient evidence that a war crime occurred.

Gaps in Information

Throughout the findings section, this report has indicated instances in which SJAC analysts were able to link the documents to other information in the database that provided corroborating, conflicting, or inconclusive evidence about a particular violation. When no such evidence was found, the report explained the type of information that investigators would need to research to build a case using the documents as evidence. This section summarizes the assessment about the types of gaps and explains how videos and interviews with victims and former officials could supplement the evidence found in the documents.

Types of Gaps

After reviewing the 5,003 pages in the sample set, SJAC identified notable gaps. For instance, chain of command was difficult to discern from the documents alone, albeit a larger-scale analysis effort may be more telling in this regard. Similarly, the non-representative sample cannot provide reliable conclusions about the types of orders and other activities for which each agency is responsible, although telling theories and observations can be drawn.

SJAC also noted major gaps in information regarding the lists of names of those who were detained. SJAC's sample set included many pages of names, but lacked information on whether those individuals were released, how long they were held, how they were treated, and the charges against them. Similarly, the documents did not include any information on the implementation of orders. Though the sample set included many superior directives, there was no information on whether those directives were carried out or the manner in which they were executed. In particular, the term “do the necessary” was used frequently but had no discernible meaning in the documents. Similarly, orders for subordinates to cease unlawful activities did not include an explanation of enforcement or accountability measures or follow-up information on whether the orders were heeded.

Supplementary Data: Interviews

Interviews could provide important context as both corroborating and supplementary evidence if documents are vague or otherwise inconclusive. For example, the lack of context in the documents for the order “do the necessary” could be supplemented by interviews with individuals who had been involved with Syrian security forces to learn whether there was a collective understanding of “do the necessary” within the culture of the security forces or if verbal communication accompanied the orders to provide further direction. If not, interviews with members of security forces or civilian bystanders could provide context for the results of orders, with which investigators could build a pattern to prove how orders were carried out in reality. As noted above, at least one witness interview of a former Syrian intelligence officer suggests that “do the necessary” was an authorization to use lethal force when necessary. Additional witness interviews might corroborate this statement.

Interviews with formerly detained individuals or family members of those who were detained or disappeared could also be linked to documents that list names of detained and wanted people to provide unique insight into how detention orders were implemented, patterns with regard to detainee treatment and transfers, and the ultimate fate of the people named, whether they were released or killed in detention. Similarly, lists of those targeted for surveillance could be supplemented with first-hand interviews with individuals who were surveilled to better understand the extent to which they knew they were being surveilled and how society coped and resisted the state's surveillance tactics. SJAC already has a store of interviews, including interviews with former detainees in security sector detention facilities. Though it is unlikely to occur often, once the interviews are analyzed, it is possible interviewees could be linked to names in the documents to build evidence for criminal investigations and offer redress through transitional justice mechanisms. Ideally, the government would provide the list of names of detainees and their fates to independent monitors or to the UN Special Envoy as part of the peace process, but it has been unwilling to provide accurate information to date. Thus, without existing interviews or victim reports, investigators will

need to search for the people named in the documents, and if they or their families are found, persuade them to provide testimony. With limited access to Syria and the massive displacement that has resulted from the conflict, investigators, including SJAC's Documentation Team, will face enormous challenges doing so.

Supplementary Data: Videos

Videos, including those posted to YouTube and collected by other Syrian activists and documentation groups, are more easily accessible than interviews and can provide key context to documents that otherwise lack sufficient information. For instance, videos can provide visual evidence of how directives were implemented, particularly in the cases of protest suppression, indiscriminate attacks against civilians, and operations against

opposition and extremist forces. There is significant potential for videos of incidents to be linked to government documents giving the directive for such incidents, which would help to build a strong case for the occurrence of such events. More broadly, videos can provide important background contextual information for the documents. Even if it is impossible to directly link a particular incident captured on video to a document in SJAC's set, videos which show patterns in security sector activity can enable understanding of security sector behavior. Videos are less useful, however, when violations happened "behind closed doors," during home raids and in detention. Footage is rarely available in such scenarios, so investigators would need to rely more heavily on interviews.

Conclusion and Recommendations

Syria's security sector is a complex institution, with considerable overlap of responsibilities and hierarchies that differ from the written law. By design, agencies lack transparency, and high-level officials rarely, if ever, speak about their roles and operations to the public. As a result, examining the documents retrieved from security sector facilities is one of the only ways that justice actors and researchers can understand how these agencies function in practice and the roles they played prior to and during the conflict. Through a full analysis, documents can assist current and future accountability efforts, as well as institutional reform, a missing persons program, memorialization efforts, a reparations commission, and, most notably, the creation of a historical record of the conflict that can contribute to Syrians' right to truth about their government and its practices.

Although few of the documents referenced death in detention or torture, practices that have been widely documented by human rights groups, they did include the names of hundreds of detainees and wanted persons who, if alive, may be able to speak about their treatment. Some of these detentions have been recorded by human rights groups, but many others have not. What the documents do explicitly demonstrate is something many Syrians have long known: the security apparatus is zealously preoccupied with restricting criticism of the President and his government and have gone to great lengths to monitor every aspect of civilian life through the use of phone surveillance and a wide network of informants. Those who are critical, whether peaceful protesters, media reporters, opposition politicians, Kurdish leaders, defected soldiers, armed rebels, or extremist fighters, are viewed through the same lens and can expect to face detention and punishment for their "incitement." The documents also show no reference to clear rules of engagement and a remarkable lack of guidance as to how orders were to be carried out, except when individuals or offices were perceived to be too lenient. Several orders in the sample set clearly allowed for violations of the principles of distinction and proportionality or directly admitted to potential violations of international law. Although documents occasionally included orders for soldiers to cease abusive behavior, there was no indication of how the orders were to be enforced or violators were to be held accountable.

SJAC's pilot analysis of the documents illustrates that practices were not limited to a few individuals, nor simply endorsed by the top of the chain of command. Rather, abuses were systemic and committed at all levels. As a result, simply removing a few key individuals from posts would be insufficient to create true reform within the security sector. Security sector reform is a broad and complex process and this report will not detail recommendations for how such a process should be implemented. Rather, SJAC lays out the following recommendations to governments, the UN Special Envoy, and civil society organizations, with the goal of moving toward a detailed plan for comprehensive security sector reform in post-conflict Syria:

- Organizations that have gathered security sector documents should continue to analyze them, link them to other types of evidence, and make their findings and the original documents available to justice actors. Summary reports about the documents should provide accurate information to the media and public.
- Investigators should utilize the documents as part of in-depth investigations into specific incidents.
- The Special Envoy should prioritize comprehensive reform in negotiations. Any peace agreement should include the creation of a commission of international and Syrian experts to assist with crafting new laws and restructuring the security sector.
- Utilizing the documents and lessons learned from past conflict, the commission of experts should work alongside policymakers to design and implement a series of major reforms that will, among other things, incorporate civilian control over security sector institutions and remove the security sector from daily aspects of civilian life. Increased transparency and accountability within institutions should be paramount.

- Reform should not be limited to those at the top; a vetting and lustration program should rely on human rights documentation to remove individuals who committed or endorsed human rights violations or violations of the laws of war.
- Governments should include genuine security sector reform as a precondition to normalizing relations with the Syrian government and allocating funds for any reconstruction efforts.
- The Syrian government must release lists of names of those detained throughout the conflict, if and when they were released, and the charges against them. For individuals who were not released, an investigation should be conducted to verify the location of those persons.

For every survivor who shares their experience with a documentation group, there are undoubtedly many more who either fear coming forward or do not have access to investigators. Using the lessons from the analysis of the interviews described in this report, SJAC will make adjustments to its interviewing and documentation methodology in order to access survivors and witnesses of SGBV and collect more detailed and targeted information. By doing so, SJAC will collect stronger evidence enabling it to continue analyzing and reporting on SGBV in the Syrian conflict, calling for survivor-centered justice and institutional reform that will put an end to impunity in the interests of both those who have come forward and those who feel they have no choice but to remain silent.

Annexes

| | |
|---|-----------|
| Annex I: State Surveillance | 31 |
| Annex II: Detainees and Wanted Lists | 33 |
| Annex III: Rules of Engagement | 35 |
| Annex IV: Rules of Engagement II | 37 |
| Annex V: Admission to the Comission of Crimes | 39 |
| Annex VI: Repression of Kurds | 41 |
| Annex VII: Repression of Kurds (cont.) | 43 |
| Annex VIII: Repression of Kurds (cont.) | 45 |
| Annex IX: Repression of Kurds (cont.) | 47 |
| Annex X: Predictions and Conspiracies | 49 |
| Annex XI: Predictions and Conspiracies (cont.) | 51 |

[Handwritten]: Sent to Tel Abiad and Raqqa 16/Dec/2011

4942

15/Dec/2011

Al Baath Socialist Arabic Party

Syrian State-National Command

The National Security Office

Stamp: Air Force Intelligence Directorate

149328

18/Nov/2011

One Arab Nation

One Immortal Message

Secret

Number: 8227/7/A K

Date: 18/Nov/2011

To Comrade Director of the Air Force Intelligence Division

Arabic greeting [literal translation of written greeting commonly used in Baath party documents]:

We received the following information:

The Lebanese-French woman named [REDACTED] (Her mother's name is [REDACTED] born in [REDACTED] lives in France, and she works as a correspondent for [REDACTED] and [REDACTED]. She previously visited the area of Jisr Ash-Shoghhour after the Army entered that area, and what she published was offensive. She's working to incite and mobilize the Syrian public to demonstrate. She was the first to call for the destruction of the supreme leader's statue. She uses the following phone numbers (00336 [REDACTED] 00331 [REDACTED] and she also took a picture of herself next to people carrying war rifles (Kalashnikov).

Know that a notification banning her from entering the country was issued by the Intelligence Division, and her two French phone numbers are currently under surveillance.

Please review and do the necessary

And long live our message

Director of the National Security Office

[Hand written]: Comrade General Fuad Al Tawil

To be reviewed and addressed

21/No

[Handwritten instructions] To be circulated to all the branches in the directorate to benefit from, and to monitor, especially at the points of entry, air and land. [signature]

3/Dec

[Handwritten]: To circulate [Signature]

[Handwritten] Archive

[Handwritten]: Dier Ezzor.

Annex II: Detainees and Wanted Lists

الجمهورية العربية السورية

وزارة الداخلية

شعبة الأمن السياسي

فرع الأمن السياسي بإدلب

الرقم : ٢٦٤٦/ب و

التاريخ : ٢٠١٤/٥/١٧

إلى شعبة الأمن السياسي

— فرع التحقيق

— اشارة لبرقيتكم رقم ١٩٨٩٥/هـ ق تاريخ ٢٠١٤/٥/١٧ المتضمنة موافاتكم فوراً وبرقياً بأسماء الموقوفين لدينا من

النساء والاطفال والأحداث دون سن (١٨)

— فيما يلي المطلوب وفق النموذج :

| الاسم مفصلاً | مكان وتاريخ الولادة | تاريخ التوقيف | سبب التوقيف | ملاحظات |
|---------------------------------|----------------------|-----------------|--|---|
| ██████████ والدته ██████████ | ██████████ ١٩٩٨ | ٢٠١٤/██████████ | انتمائه مجموعة إرهابية مسلحة وتلقيه تدريبات على السلاح واطلاق النار على حواجز الجيش واقامة الحواجز المسلحة ومراقبة الأشخاص المؤيدين بمدينة ██████████ | تم تسليم المذكور إلى فرع الأمن السياسي بطرطوس بتاريخ ٢٠١٤/██████████ لسوقه لفرع التحقيق بدمشق |
| ██████████ والدته ██████████ | ██████████ ١٩٩٩ | ٢٠١٤/██████████ | تصوير المظاهرات والحواجز العسكرية ██████████ وانتسابه مجموعة إرهابية مسلحة واطلاق النار على الحواجز الأمنية وتكليفه من قبل قائد مجموعته بتصوير حادثة تفجير بمدينة ██████████ بتاريخ ٢٠١٣/██████████ | تم تسليم المذكور إلى فرع الأمن السياسي بطرطوس بتاريخ ٢٠١٤/██████████ لسوقه لفرع التحقيق بدمشق |
| ██████████ والدته ██████████ | ██████████ ١٩٩٧ قرية | ٢٠١٣/██████████ | انتسابه إلى ما يسمى ██████████ واستلامه ██████████ بارودة روسية وتشكيل حواجز مسلحة واشتراكه بالاعتداء على ██████████ التي يقطنها عناصر | تم تسليم المذكور إلى فرع الأمن السياسي بطرطوس بتاريخ ٢٠١٤/██████████ لسوقه لفرع التحقيق بدمشق |

Syrian Arab Republic

Ministry of Interior

Political Security Division

Political Security branch in Idlib

Number: 2646/ B W

Date: 17/May/2014

To the Political Security Division

Investigation Branch

In reference to your telegram No. 19895/H K dated 17/May/2014 requesting that we immediately provide you the names of detained women, children, and juveniles under the age of (18).

- The following is the requested according to the template you provided:

| Detailed Name | Place and Date of Birth | Date of Arrest | Reason for Arrest | Notes |
|--|---|-----------------|--|---|
| ██████████ Mother's name: ██████████ | ██████████ 1998 | ██████████ 2014 | Belonging to an armed terrorist group, training to use weapons, shooting at army checkpoints, forming armed checkpoints, and monitoring pro-government people in the city of ██████████ | The mentioned detainee was transferred to the Political Security Branch in Tartous on ██████████ 2014 to be taken to the Investigation Branch in Damascus |
| ██████████ Mother's name: ██████████ | ██████████ 1999 | ██████████ 2014 | Filming demonstrations and military checkpoints in ██████████, joining an armed terrorist group, shooting at security checkpoints, being assigned by his commander to film the explosion in ██████████ on ██████████ /2013 | The mentioned detainee was transferred to the Political Security Branch in Tartous on ██████████ 2014 to be taken to the Investigation Branch in Damascus |
| ██████████ Mother's name: ██████████ | ██████████ 1997 the village of ██████████ | ██████████ 2013 | Joining the so-called ██████████, receiving a Kalashnikov, forming armed checkpoints, participating in the attacks on ██████████ in which members reside. | The mentioned detainee was transferred to the Political Security Branch in Tartous on ██████████ 2014 to be taken to the Investigation Branch in Damascus |

Annex III: Rules of Engagement

18/07 2011 14:35

فوري هام جداً

الجمهورية العربية السورية
الجيش والقوات المسلحة
قيادة القوى الجوية والدفاع الجوي
إدارة المخابرات الجوية
فرع المخابرات الجوية بالمنطقة الشمالية
الرقم: ١٤٣٥ / ١٠٠
التاريخ: ١٤٣٥ / ١٠ / ١١
الموافق له: ٢٠١٤ / ١١ / ١٠

السيد اللواء رئيس اللجنة الأمنية والعسكرية بإدلب

- وردتنا معلومات مفادها أن:
- المجموعات الإرهابية في منطقة دارة عزة يطلبون سائقين لإيصال سيارات إلى أول حاجز عسكري وقد تكون باتجاه (حلب أو ادلب أو حماه) لقاء أجر قدره ١٠٠ / ألف ليرة سورية عن كل سيارة وسيكون بانتظارهم عند الحاجز ضابط مع عسكريين لاستلام هذه السيارات و على الأغلب هذه السيارات مفخخة .

يرجى الاطلاع و تنبيه كافة القوات و الحواجز بأخذ الحيطة و الحذر و المتابعة الدقيقة و المراقبة خشية من وجود خونة تنسق مع تلك العصابات و التعامل مع أي هدف مشبوه بالتدمير الفوري

رئيس فرع المخابرات الجوية بالمنطقة الشمالية



صاحب
تعميم على الحواجز

بدرج
١٤٣٥ / ١٠ / ١١

قرار السيد اللواء رئيس اللجنة الأمنية والعسكرية بإدلب

التوقيع: السيد العسكري
الأضلاع: السيد العسكري

Syrian Arab Republic

The Army and the Armed Forces

Air Force Intelligence Directorate

Immediate and Very Important

Air Force Intelligence Branch in the Northern Region

Number: 12390/

Date: 2/Nov/2014

Sir Major General, Head of the Security and Military Committee in Idlib

- **We received information that states:**
- Terrorist groups in the area of Darat Izza [Aleppo] are recruiting drivers to drive cars and leave them near the first military checkpoint. They may be headed to (Aleppo or Idlib or Hama) in exchange for a compensation of /100/ thousand Syrian pounds [600 USD] for each car. At the check point there will be an officer with two soldiers waiting for them to receive these cars, which are most likely rigged with explosives.

Please check and warn all forces and checkpoints to be cautious and accurately track and monitor the situation. There are fears that there are traitors coordinating with those terrorist groups. Engage any suspicious target with immediate destruction.

The head of the Air Force Intelligence branch in the northern region

[Stamp and signature]

[Handwritten]:

Decision of the General, Head of the Security Committee in Idlib:

Military formations

Security branches to check and do the necessary 2/Nov/2014

[Handwritten]: Officers

To be circulated to checkpoints

[Signature]

Annex IV: Rules of Engagement II

حزب البعث العربي الاشتراكي
القطر العربي السوري - القيادة القطرية
مكتب الأمن القومي

الرقم: ٧ / أ ق

التاريخ: ٢٠١٢/١/١٤

تعميم

تحيّة عربية:

ناقشت الخلية المركزية لإدارة الأزمات في اجتماعها بتاريخ ٢٠١١/١/١٨ ضرورة الاستفادة من الدراجات النارية المصممة بتشكيل دوريات متحركة محمولة على التراجعات النارية، بالإضافة إلى تشكيل مجموعات قتالية تستخدم الدراجات النارية لتأمين خفة الحركة والسرعة في أداء المهام القتالية التي تتطلب سرعة التفيذ.

يرجى الاطلاع واتخاذ الاجراءات اللازمة واعلامنا عن بدء تنفيذ هذه المجموعات لأعمالها القتالية في ملاحقة الارهابيين.

والخلود نرى بالتنا

الرقيق رئيس مكتب الأمن القومي

نسخة الى:

الرفيق اللواء مدير إدارة المخابرات الحربية

يرجى الاطلاع واجراء اللازم

الى محاسة امرى واستام بدارة
للتقيد بمشورى التميم وتنفيد ما جاء فيه
والعرض للاقتة عن تنفيذ
١٩٤٤ / ١٢ / ٢٢

الدواقره القوي
مروا به الاربع
الحق

20/10/2020

١٠ ضارة فليس الأمن القومي

— 10 —

Al Baath Socialist Arabic Party
Syrian State-National command
The National Security Office

One Arabian Nation
One Immortal Message
Secret

Number: 7 / A K

Date: 22/Jan/2012

Stamp: Airforce Intelligence Directorate
Received by number 1183
Date 23/Jan/2012

Circular

Arabic greeting: [literal translation of written greeting commonly used in Baath party documents]

The Central Crisis Management Cell discussed in its meeting on 18/Jan/2012 the need to benefit from confiscated motorcycles by forming mobile, motorcycle patrols. In addition to forming combatant groups, they will use these motorcycles to ensure agility and quick movement during the execution of combatant missions that require expedited execution. [It is implied that the Cell would be creating these combatant groups with civilian fighters]

Please review and take the necessary measures and inform us on the starting of these groups to execute their mission of combatting the terrorists.

And long live our message

Director of the National Security Office

[Signature]

Copy to:

Comrade Major Director of Air Force Intelligence Directorate

Please review and do the necessary

[Handwritten] To all the branches of the directorate to comply with, circulate and execute what came in and to present later on the results. 22/1/2012

[Handwritten]: Major Fuad Al Tawil to cooperate with the heads of the branches to implement the directions accurately.
[Signature]

The national security office binder.

Civilian information

Eastern region.

Annex V: Admission to the Commission of Crimes

[illegible]

[Handwritten] Received / 4911 / on 12/Dec/2011 Sent to Raqa and Tel Abiad 12/Dec/2011

Al Baath Socialist Arabic Party

One Arabian Nation

Syrian State-National command

One Immortal Message

The National Security Office

Secret

Stamp: Air Force Intelligence Directorate

161142

12/12/11

Number: 34 / A K

Date: 9/Dec/2011

To Comrade Director of the Air Force Intelligence Division

Arabic greeting: [literal translation of written greeting commonly used in Baath party documents]

On 5/12/2011 reciprocal sectarian kidnappings and killings peaked in Homs, and when discussing the causes of this tension and how to address it with religious and public figures and multiple parties, it was shown that one of the causes was the use of civilians at some checkpoints to openly select targets. Usually the civilians used are from one sectarian group, and one neighborhood which shifts responsibility for detaining the wanted and for killings at checkpoints to the residents of that neighborhood, and this is one of the reasons for the sectarian tension.

So, we request you to warn all of your checkpoints that as of this date it is prohibited to use civilians when the members of security checkpoints are executing their missions, and it is required to use covert security methods that do not incite hatred and tension among the citizens.

Please review and do the necessary

And long live our message

Comrade Director of the National Security Office

[Signature]

Stamp.

[Handwritten]: Circulate to our directorate [air force] branches for rational use of civilians in ways that serve the nation.

[Signature] 11/Dec/2011

Inform officers and circulate and inform all checkpoints.

Noted. [Signature] 12/Dec

Annex VI: Repression of Kurds

22-APR-2010 14:35 From:

218858

To: 022712755

P.6/11

سري للغاية

الجمهورية العربية السورية
القيادة العامة للجيش والقوات المسلحة
شعبة المخابرات - الفرع ٢٤٣
الرقم / ٢٠١١
التاريخ: ٢٠١٠ / ٤ / ١١

مذكرة بإطلاع وقرار السيد اللواء رئيس شعبة المخابرات

الموضوع : الواقع الكردي وكيفية المواجهة.

العرض التفصيلي : تعتبر الإشكالات التي حصلت مؤخراً في مدينة الرقة مع بعض العناصر الكردية المعارضة مثيرة للألتهاب وتدعو للقلق وإلى رفع حالة الاستنفار الأمني وتفعيل العمل في جميع النواحي السياسية والاجتماعية والاقتصادية بما يخدم التوجهات السياسية الهادفة إلى تعزيز ثقافة الانتماء إلى الوطن وقائد الوطن وتعزيز مبدأ الوحدة الوطنية لكامل شرائح المجتمع وذلك عبر إتخاذ العديد من الخطوات أهمها :

أولاً : الناحية الاجتماعية :

- اللقاءات المستمرة مع شيوخ ووجهاء العشائر الكردية وأهمهم :

[REDACTED]

[REDACTED]

[REDACTED]

[REDACTED]

[REDACTED]

[REDACTED]

وهذا يتطلب تعزيز دور شيوخ العشائر وإبرازهم ضمن مجتمعاتهم عن طريق تقديم المساعدات لهم وحل بعض مشاكلهم خصوصاً وأن هؤلاء يعتبرون أن الأحزاب الكردية قد عملت على تهجيرهم وإلغاء دورهم في المجتمع .

Intelligence Division – Branch 243

Number/5211/2

Date: 11/April/2010

Memorandum with notification and decision of Sir General the Director of the Intelligence Division

Subject: The Kurdish situation and how to address it

Detailed presentation: Some of the problems that recently happened in the city of Raqqa with some of the members of the Kurdish opposition are considered of interest and raise concerns. These problems are reasons to raise the security level and activate work in all political, social and economic aspects, in order to serve the political instruction with the purpose to strengthen the culture of belonging to the homeland and the leader of the homeland, and to strengthen the principle of national unity for all segments of society through taking multiple steps, most importantly:

First: Social Aspect:

- Continuous meetings with the Kurdish tribes' leaders and public figures, the important ones are:

[REDACTED]

This requires strengthening the role of the tribal leaders to make them prominent within their communities through aiding them and solving some of their problems, especially because tribal leaders believe that the Kurdish political parties have marginalized them and sidelined their role in society.

Continued-

Annex VII: Repression of Kurds (cont.)

20-APR-2010 14:25 From:

218858

To: 002712755

P.9/11

ثانياً : الناحية السياسية :

- استمرار اللقاء والتواصل مع البارزين من الأحزاب الكردية ومحاورتهم وتعزيز ثقافة الانتماء إلى الوطن وقائد الوطن وأهم البارزين بتلك الأحزاب :
- الإتحاد الديمقراطي الكردي (PYD) ومن أهم قياداته :

- الحزب الديمقراطي التقدمي الكردي في سوريا جماعة [REDACTED] ومن أهم قياداته :

- حزب الوحدة الديمقراطي الكردي (يكي تي) جماعة [REDACTED] ومن أهم قياداته :

- حزب آزادي الكردي جماعة [REDACTED] ومن أهم قياداته :

- حزب الوحدة الديمقراطي (يكي تي) جماعة [REDACTED] ومن أهم قياداته :

- حزب الديمقراطي الكردي السوري [REDACTED]

ويتطلب ذلك :

- ١- توجيه الجهاز الحزبي بالتواصل مع الأكراد وقياداتهم وتعزيز ثقافة الارتباط بالوطن والوفاء له والولاء المطلق لقائد الوطن و علمه وتبلي نهج وفكر سيد الوطن عن طريق دعوتهم لحضور الندوات والمحاضرات بهذا الخصوص .
- ٢- تعزيز ثقافة المشاركة في المناسبات الوطنية والقومية لكي يتعزز الشعور لديهم بأنهم جزء من النسيج الاجتماعي السوري بعيداً عن أي ارتباط أو ولاء خارجي .
- ٣- تفعيل دور الشريحة المثقفة ضمن المجتمع الكردي وخاصة الموظفين في دوائر الدولة والمنظمين في صفوف حزب البعث العربي الاشتراكي أو الأحزاب الأخرى ومحاولة كسبهم لكي يؤدوا دوراً وطنياً ضمن المجتمع الكردي .

Second: Political Aspect:

- Continue meetings and communications with prominent figures from the Kurdish parties, conversing with them, and strengthening the culture of belonging to the homeland and the leader of the homeland. The most prominent in these parties are:
- The Democratic Union Party (PYD) and its prominent leaders such as:
 - [REDACTED]
 - [REDACTED]
- The Democratic Progressive Kurdish Party in Syria, led by [REDACTED] and its prominent leaders such as:
 - [REDACTED] - [REDACTED] - [REDACTED]
- The Democratic Unity Kurdish party (ykiti) led by [REDACTED] and its most prominent leaders such as:
 - [REDACTED] - [REDACTED]
- Azadi Kurdish party led by [REDACTED] and its most prominent leaders such as:
 - [REDACTED] - [REDACTED]
- The Democratic Unity party (Ykiti) led by [REDACTED] and its prominent leaders such as:
 - [REDACTED]
- The Democratic Kurdish Syrian party [REDACTED]

And this requires:

- 1- Directing the Party (Al Baath) to communicate with the Kurds and their leadership and strengthen the culture of belonging to the homeland, faithfulness to it, absolute loyalty to the leader of the homeland, its flag, and adoption of the approach and way of thinking of the homeland leader, through inviting them to attend related seminars and lectures.
- 2- Strengthening the culture of participating in national and pan-national events to develop the feeling that they are a part of the Syrian social fabric away from any foreign links or loyalties.
- 3- Activate the role of the intellectual groups among the Kurdish community, especially those employed in government jobs and members of Al Baath Arabic Socialist party or other parties, and try to convince them to play a nationalistic role within the Kurdish community.

Continued-

Annex VIII: Repression of Kurds (cont.)

20-APR-2010 14:36 From:

218658

To: 002712755

P.10/11

ثالثاً : الناحية الاقتصادية :

- دراسة الواقع الكردي ومعرفة سبل عيشهم وتجمعاتهم ويتطلب ذلك اتخاذ العديد من

الإجراءات وهي :

١- توجيه الجهاز الإداري والتنفيذي بالمحافظة للعمل على تفكيك التجمعات الكردية وتنظيم

المناطق المحيطة بها وإنشاء جمعيات سكنية وظيفية تعطى للموظفين (الأكراد وغير

الأكراد) .

٢- وضع خطة شاملة لمعالجة الأحياء العشوائية ومناطق المخالفات بشق الطرق وإقامة منشآت

بحجة تخديم المنطقة ضمن التجمعات الكردية .

٣- الحد من عمليات شراء الأراضي والعقارات ومحاسبة ضعاف النفوس والمتواطئين من

العاملين في مكتب قمع مخالفات الأبنية التابعين لمجالس المدن والبلدات والعاملين في

مديرية الزراعة - أملاك الدولة والمؤسسة العامة لاستصلاح الأراضي وخاصة في مناطق

الشريط الحدودي التي يبدأ من القامشلي مروراً بالحسكة إلى منطقة تل أبيض وإلى منطقة

عين عرب وأطراف محافظة حلب الموازية للحدود التركية وبعث عدة كيلو مترات ضمن

الأراضي السورية والتخفيف من طغيان اللون الواحد الكردي على هذا الشريط بطريقة

زرع العنصر العربي وبكثافة .

٤- القيام بإجراءات فورية لمنع التوسع ضمن التجمعات الكردية مثل توسيع قنوات السري

المحايدة للمنازل والأحياء الكردية أو تطويقها بطرق معبدة ومراقبة هذه التجمعات لازالة

المخالفة في حينها .

٥- قيام الجهات الحكومية المعنية بمصادرة عدة مواقع زراعية واستثمارها كمزارع إنتاجية

للدولة ووضع عاملين عرب فيها وبناء مساكن لهم ولعائلاتهم ومراقبة المزارع التي يملكها

الأكراد والعمل على منعهم من إقامة ما يشبه المستوطنات وبالتالي تصبح أمراً واقعاً .

٦- متابعة العمال الأكراد الذين يعملون خارج القطر وخاصة الذين عاشوا تجربة قتالية ضمن

الجنزح العسكري لحزب العمال الكردستاني ورصد أوضاعهم المادية وما يطرأ عليها من

تطورات .

Third: Economic Aspect:

- **To study the Kurdish situation and understand their ways of living and gathering, that require multiple measures as follows:**
 - 1- Direct the administrative and executive bodies in the province to work to dismantle the Kurdish communities and to rezone the surrounding areas and develop residential housing complexes for state employees (Kurdish and non-Kurdish).
 - 2- Develop a comprehensive plan to address the unregistered and un-zoned neighborhoods by developing roads and facilities under the pretext of providing services in the Kurdish communities.
 - 3- Limit land and property purchases and hold accountable all those workers who are undisciplined and colluding from within the Office of Countering Illegal Building managed by the councils of the cities and towns, as well as the workers in the Agricultural Directorate's Office of Government Properties and the General Establishment for Land Reclamation, specifically on the border areas that start in Qamishli, going through Hasakah to the areas of Tel Abiad and Ein Arab, the outskirts of Aleppo Governorate parallel to the Turkish border, and several kilometers deep inside the Syrian land. To reduce the over-saturation of the Kurdish sect along this line by embedding a highly dense Arabic component.
 - 4- Take immediate measures to prevent the expansion of the Kurdish communities, for example expanding irrigation channels near Kurdish houses and neighborhoods, or surrounding these places with paved roads, and to monitor these communities to immediately remove any building violation.
 - 5- The relevant governmental agencies should confiscate several agricultural lands and invest them as state-owned development farms and employ Arab workers there and build housing for them and their families and monitor the farms that are owned by Kurds and work to prevent them from establishing what look like settlements that may turn into de facto settlements.
 - 6- Monitor the Kurdish workers outside Syria especially those with combatant experience with the armed wing of the Kurdistan Workers' Party and monitor their financial situation and any changes to it.

[Continued-]

Annex IX: Repression of Kurds (cont.)

22-APR-2010 14:26 From:

218658

To: 022712755

P.11-11

٧- إقامة سوق حرة في منطقة تل أبيض أسوة بباقي البواريات الحدودية ويتم البيع فيها بأسعار مخفضة الأمر الذي يضعف التجار الأكراد أصحاب المحلات التجارية والتي تقدر أرباحهم اليومية بعشرات آلاف الليرات إضافة إلى إنشاء محطات وقود حكومية .

رابعاً. الناحية الأمنية :

١- العمل على زيادة المصادر والمندوبين بتنظيم الإغراءات المادية لهم للعمل ضمن التجمعات والأحزاب الكردية .

٢- رصد المغارل التي يتواجد لديها كثافة سكانية من الأكراد بعناصر تجيد اللغة الكردية والتركية .

٣- إقامة مواقع ونقاط عسكرية على امتداد الشريط الحدودي للحفاظ على أمن وحراسة الحدود وخصوصاً بعد أن تمت الموافقة في البرلمان التركي على نزع الألغام ضمن الحدود التركية مع سوريا الأمر الذي يمنع المتسللين والمهربين من العبور مستقبلاً .

٤- مراقبة الواقع الديني للأكراد من خلال المصادر والمندوبين خشية دخولهم على خط التنظيمات الدينية المتطرفة .

يرجى الاطلاع والقرار

رئيس الفرع ٢٤٣



رأي السيد اللواء - نائب رئيس شعبة المخابرات:

أستدعيه لـ

قرار السيد اللواء رئيس شعبة المخابرات:

مستدعيه

صورة طبق الأصل
شوهة ١٠٠
رقم ٢٧٧



- 7- Establish a duty-free zone in Tel Abiad, like at other points of entry, and sell goods for reduced prices which will weaken the Kurdish merchants and shop owners whose daily profits are estimated at tens of thousands of Syrian pounds. In addition, establish government-owned gas stations.

Fourth- The Security Aspect:

- 1- Work to increase sources and informants by offering financial incentives for them to work within the Kurdish parties and communities.
- 2- Supply the sub-branches that have dense Kurdish populations with members who are fluent in Kurdish and Turkish.
- 3- Establish military zones and points along the border to ensure security and monitor the borders, especially after the Turkish parliament agrees to demine the area on the border between Turkey and Syria. Military zones will prevent smugglers and intruders from crossing in the future.
- 4- Monitor the religious situation of Kurds through sources and informants to prevent them from entering into communication with extremist religious organizations.

Kindly review and decide

Director of branch 243

[Stamp and signature]

Opinion of Sir General Deputy Director of the Intelligence Division

[Handwritten]: I suggest referral to branch 294 [Signature]

The decision of the General the Director of the Intelligence Division:

[Handwritten]: Approved 14/April [Signature]

Exact photocopy

Seen and notarized

Director of branch 277

[Signature]

[Stamp of branch 277]

Annex X: Predictions and Conspiracies

الجمهورية العربية السورية
وزارة الداخلية
شعبة الأمن السياسي
الرقم: / ٢٥٥٥٢ / هـ.ق
التاريخ: ٢٠١١ / ٦ / ١٢

سري : خاص برؤساء الفروع

تعميم

من : رئيس شعبة الأمن السياسي
إلى : رؤساء فروع الأمن السياسي بالمحافظات

لما فاتنا من خلال التحقيقات التي تمت لديكم أو المواضيع المتابعة من قبلكم بالمعلومات التالية :

- ١- ما هي طبيعة المؤامرة التي يتعرض لها القطر .
- ٢- من هي الجهات اخركة للمؤامرة بالداخل والخارج .
- ٣- ماهي أدوات المؤامرة لجهة : الاتصالات - التمويل - التقنيات المستخدمة
- ٤- المعلومات المتوفرة لديكم عن ما يسمى (تنسيقيات الثورة) الموجودة بمحافظاتكم وكيفية وآلية عملها .
- ٥- ما هي الأهداف النهائية للمؤامرة والى متى ستستمر .

على أن تردنا الإجابة خلال / ٢٤ / ساعة .

ع/ رئيس شعبة الأمن السياسي

معلومات
ش. الو.ع

٢٠١١ / ٦ / ١٢
٢٠١٢ / ٦ / ١٢

ع/ ل.ج.ع.ع.ع

Syrian Arab Republic

Ministry of Interior

Political Security Division

Secret: Private to heads of branches

Number: 25552/ H K

Date: 13/June/2011

Circular

From: Director of the Political Security Division

To: The heads of the political security branches in the governorates

To provide to us, through investigations that you conducted or topics you have monitored, the following information:

- 1- What is the nature of the conspiracy the country is facing?
- 2- Who/which entities are responsible for this conspiracy inside and outside the country?
- 3- What are the tools of the conspiracy in relation to: communications – funding –technologies used
- 4- The available information you have about the so-called (Revolutionary coordination committees) present in your governorates and how they operate?
- 5- What are the final goals of the conspiracy and how long will it last?

Provide the answers within 24 hours.

Director of the Political Security Division

[Signature]

[Handwritten]: 2670/E

13/June/2011

[Handwritten]: Answered

Annex XI: Predictions and Conspiracies (cont.)

05/02 2012 22 39 #0115 P.001/008

وردي رقم ١٢٨٧ / ٢٨٤٢

أمة عربية واحدة
مناهضة رسالة خالدة

حزب البعث العربي الاشتراكي
القطر العربي السوري - القيادة القطرية
مكتب الأمن القومي

أرسلت الى الرتبة
٨٨٢٨
المكتب

الرقم: ١٨١ / ٦ / ١
التاريخ: ٢٠١٢ / ٢ / ٢

الرفيق اللواء مدير إدارة المخابرات الجوية

تحية عربية:

وردتنا معلومات تفيد بأن الإرهابيون الليبيون استولوا على أسلحة كيميائية من المخازن الليبية، حيث سيتم نقلها إلى الأراضي التركية لاستخدامها لاحقاً في بعض المحافظات السورية، وخاصة التي تشهد اضطرابات لاثام النظام باستخدامها بالاتفاق مع المحطات المغرضة بقصد تصعيد الأزمة السورية وتحويلها بعد فشل كافة المحاولات في نقل ملف الأزمة السورية إلى مجلس الأمن.

يرجى الاطلاع وإجراء اللازم

والخطوة التالية

رئيس مكتب الأمن القومي

نسب على الزعيم رطل
مأمور الإدارة
٢٨٤٢

٢٠١٢ / ٢ / ٢

[Handwritten] Received by number / 387 /
Dated 5/Feb/2012

Sent to Raqqa 8/Feb/2012. Received by [REDACTED]

Al Baath Socialist Arabic Party

Syrian State-National Command

The National Security Office

One Arabian Nation

One Immortal Message

Secret

Stamp: Airforce Intelligence Directorate
18396
2/Feb/2012

Stamp: Received by number 367
Date [None]
Approved 4/Feb/2012

Number: 181/6/ A K

Date: 2/Feb/2012

To Comrade Director of the Air Force Intelligence Division

Arabic greeting [literal translation of written greeting commonly used in Baath party documents]:

We received information stating that the Libyan terrorists have acquired chemical weapons from the Libyan chemical arsenal. The weapons will be shipped to Turkish territories to be used later in some Syrian governorates, especially the ones that are facing unrest. This will be done in order to accuse the regime, in coordination with biased television channels, of using the chemical weapons, in order to escalate the Syrian crisis and internationalize it after all the failed attempts to move the Syrian crisis dossier to the Security Council.

Please review and do the necessary

And long live our message

[Stamp]

Director of the National Security Office

[Signature and stamp]

[Handwritten instructions]: To circulate to branches, services, and divisions of the directorate [Unclear text] 03/Feb

[Signature]: 5 February 2012

Syria Justice and
Accountability Centre

