



SACD confirms 174 Rukban returnees arrested by Assad regime despite Russian guarantees

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The Syrian Association for Citizens' Dignity can confirm that Syrian security services have arrested 174 people who returned from the Al-Rukban camp to the so-called IDP shelters in Homs and transferred to "terrorism courts" despite having previously received security clearances from the regime.

These returnees were arrested directly from the special isolated "IDP shelters" in Albyada and Der Balba where they have been kept since returning from Rukban in different waves of evacuations which started in March this year.

Those arrested predominantly include men and youth aged from 18-42- who had previously received guarantees from Russia, on behalf of the Assad regime, and can be categorized in two groups:

- Defectors and those who fled compulsory military service in the Assad's military (including reserve forces). This group were handed to Assad's military police in Al-Qaboun.
- Youth who never reported for the compulsory military service. They were sent to prisons in Adra and to the Homs Central Prison.

From among the 174 taken from Abyada and Der Balba, the SACD can confirm the following names, which we have received permission to share: Mosa Alshlel, Mostafa Aldaas, Allaa Alzaal, Fares Alqas, Khaled Alkasab, Nadem Alsalama, Ahmad Alabdlah, Tarek Baejan, Fawaz Alrakad, Ebrahim Alkasham, Rakan Abore , Abd Alhade Alhankat, Fawaz Alshlel, Motlk Almotlk, Fawaz Abd Alkarem, Hasan Alnajm.

Most of those arrested come from Palmyra and the eastern countryside of Homs province. The arrests raise urgent protection concerns and questions which need to be answered before any further returns are facilitated to Homs from Rukban, to ensure returns are safe and dignified, as guaranteed under international law.

It is crucially important to note that all the arrested youth and men received guarantees and commitments from the regime and its Russian allies to receive a "personal settlement" which would protect them from persecution and forced recruitment.

This process has been taking place in 'reconciliations' across Assad-held parts of Syria and returnees from Rukban were forced to check their suitability for this process in the eyes of regime's security services in advance of leaving the camp.



SACD has repeatedly warned about the dangers facing those forced to return from Rukban under Russian guarantees. We issued detailed, documented reports about the targeting of Rukban returnees by Assad's security apparatus.

After the latest wave of arrests and with an additional evacuation of hundreds of IDPs from Rukban currently being debated between the UN, Russia, and the coalition, SACD raises urgent questions that must be addressed to ensure the safety of people in Rukban and all returnees:

- The UN must ensure they have a full and ongoing access to the 'IDP shelters' in Homs to document and report on the status of the people kept there.
- The UN must find out the circumstances of all arrests of returnees from these 'IDP shelters' and promptly report to the all relevant international bodies, as well as provide appropriate information to Rukban residents to inform their decisions.
- Russia must be held accountable to explain why the arrests were possible, despite the security guarantees received by those arrested.
- All parties involved in the agreement to evacuate the Rukban IDP camp must redouble their efforts to bring aid to camp residents, find a third location for evacuation of those that do not wish to return to Homs, and pause evacuations until ongoing access to the IDP shelters and protection guarantees can be confirmed.