

Syrians Talk About Their Suffering Inside Turkish Prisons

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Global Research, October 28, 2020

Region: [Middle East & North Africa](#)

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*The Turkish authorities arbitrary arrests are no longer limited to Turkish opponents of **President Recep Tayyip Erdogan**, inside and outside the country, but also reached Syrians within Turkish territory, whether they are displaced, opponents to the Syrian state or even businessmen.*

A previous Syrian prisoner inside Turkish prison said that the Syrian opponents who are arrested by the Turkish authorities under various fabricated pretexts “are nothing but leverage that Ankara use for its deals.”

Media sources quoted one of the Syrian detainees who was recently released from prison:

“The Turkish authorities’ approach to the Syrian opposition has changed since 2016, after Erdogan had the excuse of (the military coup), so the charges are ready even before choosing the arrested person, which is dealing with external parties, employment for a foreign country and being involved in the 2016 coup.”

He added:

“I did not really know the reason for my detention for 4 years, we have been used as leverage that Ankara exploits for its deals, in addition to violating human rights inside prisons and even outside, such as forced deportation or killing.”

The former detainee explained that after the coup attempt,

“the Turkish authorities allowed themselves to arrest simply any suspected of involvement in the coup attempt or acquired foreign support from a particular party or country, through several legal amendments. As we have seen, large arresting campaigns of Turkish officers and activists appeared, followed by other campaigns targeting Syrians in turn.”

As for the methods of torture and inhuman treatment prisoners are subjected to, he added:

“I was placed in a prison measuring two meters by three meters long with seven people,” indicating that no one interrogated him until 12 passed and after his great urgency. The torture began when he was transferred to the

“Gaziantep” central prison, where a black bag was placed on his head, and upon his arrival to the prison, five security forces hit him severely.”

Another survived Syrian from the Turkish prisons talked about what happened to him of arbitrary detention without any pretext or charge, to stay in prison for 20 days with elements he said were from the terrorist organization “ISIS”, in dormitories he described as “ISIS emirates” controlled by prisoners not jailers. During his trial, the Turkish translators could not understand him well, and instead of bringing another translator, he was detained for all this period without any charge, until he learned that the Turkish authorities had fabricated him the charge of “dealing with foreign entities against Ankara”, to legalise the period he spent imprisoned.

He added:

“One of the most famous forms of torture inside these detention centers is the hammer usually used to strike iron, as I was beaten on the knees with other detainees, causing severe injuries to the foot.”

In the absence of any deterrent against Erdogan and his repressive policy, Syrian opponents in Turkey are living in a state of fear and feelings of great danger, noting that the matter is not limited to coercive crackdowns or arbitrary arrests, but there are other arresting methods which resemble kidnapping and aim to make the detainees’ families ignore where their sons are, and believe that they were indeed kidnapped.

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