



26 July 2018

Statement of solidarity with civilians in Syria

One year ago, our beloved friend, fellow activist and colleague Malak was killed by an airstrike carried out by the Syrian regime on the then-besieged suburb of Damascus, Eastern Ghouta. We want to remember her commitment to women empowerment, encouraging others to become leaders and her tenacious spirit. She was only 26 years old, when she was taken from this world.



Malak holding a leadership training at a Women Now center in Eastern Ghouta

Sadly, instead of having the time and space to mourn her death, we are overwhelmed by more devastating news. For the past few weeks, the Syrian regime has been releasing lists of [detainees](#) who have died in its detention centers. Detention in Syria is essentially enforced disappearance. When someone is taken to prison, they do not receive a phone call, legal counsel or have access to communication. This in turn means their families are left completely in the dark about the fate of their loved ones.

These newly released lists contain hundreds of names and are being displayed in civil registry offices across Syria. Many families had not heard for years about their loved ones and are now finding out without proper evidence that they have been deceased for years.



These families are not receiving their bodies, they cannot bury their relatives and therefore remain without closure. Most death certificates state heart attacks as the reason of death, which human rights organizations question.



Credit: Families for Freedom

We stand in solidarity with the victims and their families. May the victims rest in Peace and the families find out the truth about what happened in the detention centers. We ask for investigations into these deaths and to provide the families with proof. Most of the family members who survive these detainees are women who must carry on as the head of household and sole breadwinner. Some of these women are brave members of our team, we present our deep condolences to them and to all the families. We commit ourselves again to supporting women and families to know the truth for those who have been announced dead and also for those whose relatives' fate is still unknown.

Our day of mourning Malak is further saddened by more than 200 people who have been killed in a brutal surprise offensive by the Islamic State in [Sweida](#) and nearby towns and villages. There were multiple suicide bombings and simultaneous raids in which militants stormed villages and slaughtered civilians.

These brutal attacks on civilians are another clear indication of who pays the highest price in this war: the families of victims, the families of detainees as well as those whose lives were lost just like Malak's and many others. They should not be forgotten. The violence in Syria continues and threatens lives every day. This violence needs to stop immediately and those responsible should be held accountable.