



United Nations Human Rights Council – 45th Session

Joint Oral Intervention¹ - Dialogue with the Commission of Inquiry on the Syrian Arab Republic – Item 4

Cairo Institute for Human Rights Studies (CIHRS)

22 September 2020

Delivered by: Salma Amer

Thank you, Madam President,

On behalf of the Cairo Institute for Human Rights Studies, in cooperation with the Syria Justice and Accountability Centre (SJAC), and the Shaml Syrian CSOs Coalition, I am delivering this statement.

At SJAC we work with families whose loved ones have been kidnapped by ISIS. Long and difficult years have passed for mothers, fathers, wives, husbands, daughters, and sons without knowing the whereabouts of their loved ones, without hearing their voices or knowing what has happened to them.

Mustafa Khayal was an imam in a mosque when ISIS kidnapped him in 2014. Mustafa's wife was pregnant with their son when he was taken away. His son, Mohammad, is now six years old and has never met his father. He asks his mother everyday "*why am I without a father, while my other friends have their fathers?*".

This family is among hundreds of others who live their lives in agony not knowing the fate of their loved ones.

Commissioners, we thank you for your report and for urging member states to repatriate their citizens who are allegedly associated with ISIS. However, an investigation is urgently needed to uncover what happened to those who were kidnapped by ISIS. To our knowledge, none of the ISIS fighters that have been put on trial to date were questioned about the fate of those who were kidnapped and detained by the terrorist group.

How many years does Mohammad have to wait before he receives an answer to his question?

We request that the Commission of Inquiry focuses, in an upcoming report, on the cases of those disappeared in Syria and provide recommendations to the international community on ways to ensure truth and justice for the families of the disappeared, including those kidnapped by ISIS.

¹ CIHRS Syria Justice & Accountability SJA, Syrian Center for Media and Freedom of Expression and Shaml Syrian CSOs Coalition