



Joint Statement Condemning the Killing of Syrian-American Citizen Jamal Shahin Al-Matni in Assad's Prisons and Initiating Legal Proceedings to Achieve Justice

Following the announcement earlier this month, in May 2024, of the death of Syrian-American detainee Kamal Kam Almaz in Assad's prisons, and the initiation of legal proceedings by the Syrian Emergency Task Force (SETF) to support his case in coordination with his family, today, SETF and Global Justice condemn the killing of Syrian-American citizen Jamal Shahin Al-Matni at the hands of the Assad regime while in prison, after a detention period of three years. Al-Matni, a native of Jabal Al-Arab, was born in 1951. Armed elements affiliated with the Syrian Military Intelligence Branch kidnapped him on Monday, July 5, 2021, following a raid on his home near Al-Thala roundabout in the city of As-Suwayda.

The two organizations announce that they have been in communication and coordination since the first moment of the announcement of Jamal Al-Matni's death, with his grieving family, represented by the Al-Matni family in As-Suwayda and his son Khaled Jamal Al-Matni in the United States, to initiate both civil and criminal cases to ensure that his rights and those of his family are not lost.

The Al-Matni family holds the political authority overseeing the Syrian security apparatus fully accountable, describing it as unrestrained and operating outside the bounds of the law. The family demands the return of their son Jamal's body and calls for an investigation, to be conducted transparently in view of the Syrian public, into the circumstances of his detention, the charges brought against him, and the manner of his death, ultimately seeking accountability and justice for the unjust taking of an innocent human life.

The repeated crimes of Assad against American citizens, his brutality, and his disregard for consequences necessitate practical reactions beyond mere timid condemnation. So that the tragedy of Al-Matni, Kam Almaz, and those who preceded them to death in Assad's dark prisons is not repeated.

Mouaz Mustafa, Executive Director of SETF, stated that Assad's new crime against another American citizen of Syrian descent "should not go unpunished and that opening Al-Matni's case before the American judiciary should support the peaceful movement in As-Suwayda and highlight Assad's serious threats to innocent people in that region."

For his part, Dr. Haytham Albizem, President of Global Justice, stated that his organization "extends heartfelt condolences to all of As-Suwayda, stands with the Al-Matni family, and pledges to support their case in the United States." The two organizations will exert all necessary joint efforts, through their legal teams and their relations with Congress, American institutions, and the media, to achieve justice, hold Assad accountable for his crimes, protect the lives of Syrian and Syrian-American citizens, and pressure President Biden's administration to fulfill its duty regarding this case without any laxity or delay