

CONCEPT NOTE

**Transforming the lives of Syrian survivors of detention through reparation
- Together We Can**

Side event organised during the 8th Brussels Conference on
'Supporting the future of Syria and the Region'

27 May 2024 12:00-13:00 CEST
followed by a light lunch reception from 13:00 – 14:00

Thon Hotel EU, Wetstraat/Rue de la loi 75, 1040 Brussels (and online)

The importance of reparation for Syrian survivors

“The whole world is responsible. The whole world has had a hand in the Syria situation”

Syrian survivor of conflict-related sexual violence

In a recently published study by the Global Survivors Fund (GSF), titled [Syria Study on Opportunities for Reparations for Survivors of Conflict-Related Sexual Violence](#), survivors and Syrian civil society groups urged the international community to recognise and address the devastating harms they have experienced, calling for the establishment of an international fund for victims. Among the findings of the study is the systematic use of sexual torture in detention centres, which motivated GSF to collaborate with the Association Detainees and the Missing in Sednaya Prison (ADMSP) and the Center for Victims of Torture (CVT) in implementing an interim reparative measures project for Syrian survivors living in south Türkiye. True reparations remain elusive for the thousands of Syrian survivors of detention, and the government of Syria is unlikely to set up a State-led reparation programme. But it remains critical to address the harms faced by survivors now through an international fund. Implementation of co-created interim reparation, that is designed to address the harms and urgent needs of survivors, must now become a priority for the international community.

This 'Supporting the future of Syria and the Region' Conference side event is an opportunity to highlight the right of survivors to reparation – which must be provided urgently – and showcase the transformative impact that reparative measures that are co-created *with* survivors can have on their lives. Options for the scaling up and financing of such measures – including through the repurposing of seized, frozen, and confiscated assets from the perpetrators of the violations and/or fines for breach of sanctions regimes imposed on their associates – will be discussed.

Event format and draft outline agenda

The hybrid event will consist of a one-hour, multi-stakeholder dialogue including survivors of detention, civil society and EU and US representatives. Simultaneous interpretation will be offered in English and Arabic. The discussion will be followed by a light lunch reception to encourage networking amongst participants.

12:00 – 12:03	Welcome remarks
12:03 – 12:08	Keynote remarks
12:08 – 12:12	Reading: <i>"They Took Sara!" Memories from the prisons of the Syrian regime</i>
12:12 – 12:14	Global Survivors Fund film clip: <i>Reparations are Affordable</i>
12:14 – 12:38	Panel Discussion
12:38 – 12:52	Audience Q&A
12:52 – 12:55	Poetry reading
12:55 – 13:00	Closing remarks
13:00 – 14:00	Light lunch and networking

Speakers

- **Minister Caroline Gennez**, Minister of Development Cooperation and Major Cities Policy, Belgium
- **Mr. Tarek Matarmawi**, Association of Detainees and Missing Persons of Sednaya Prison, Interim Reparative Measures Project Manager and survivor of detention
- **Ms. Samar Kokash**, Syrian actress, with various roles in television, theatre, cinema, and dubbing. Dedicated humanitarian activist and survivor of detention.
- **Mr. Robert Petit**, Head, International, Impartial and Independent Mechanism to assist in the investigation and prosecution of persons responsible for the most serious crimes under International Law committed in the Syrian Arab Republic since March 2011 (IIIM)
- **Ms. Laila Baker**, Regional Director for Arab States, United Nations Population Fund (UNFPA)
- **Ms. Maya Shah**, Director of Operations, Global Survivors Fund (Chair)

Event objectives

1. Raising awareness of survivors' right to reparation and the need to create and finance a fund which addresses survivors' harms and urgent needs.
2. Demonstrating the transformative impact of GSF's interim reparative measures project, which serves as proof of concept for scaling up of these measures.
3. Identifying, articulating, and galvanising support for a survivor-centred, evidence-based approach to the establishment of a fund for Syrian survivors and victims.
4. Promoting the repurposing of perpetrators' (and their enablers') assets as a funding source for reparation.

RSVP

Please RSVP to Mr. Omar Camara ocamara@globalsurvivorsfund.org, copying Ms. Ruth Quinn rquinn@globalsurvivorsfund.org.

Please confirm if you plan to attend the event in person or online. The in-person event will take place in the Thon Hotel EU, Wetstraat/Rue de la loi 75, 1040 Brussels. Online participation can be registered through Eventbrite: https://www.eventbrite.com/e/transforming-the-lives-of-syrian-survivors-through-reparation-tickets-905979778907?aff=ebdsoporgprofile&keep_tld=1

Background on GSF

The Global Survivors Fund (GSF) was founded in October 2019 by Dr Denis Mukwege and Ms. Nadia Murad, the 2018 Nobel Peace Prize laureates. Its mission is to enhance access to reparations for survivors of conflict-related sexual violence around the globe, thus seeking to fill a gap long identified by survivors. GSF acts to provide interim reparative measures in situations where States or other parties are unable or unwilling to meet their responsibilities. GSF advocates also for duty bearers, as well as the international community, to develop reparations programmes, and provides expertise and technical support to guide States and civil society in the design of reparations programmes. GSF's unique co-creation model and survivor-centric approach is the cornerstone of its work.

For more information:

www.globalsurvivorsfund.org

<https://www.un.org/sexualviolenceinconflict/>

Also find us on social media:



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