

Barrel Bombs Shelled in the North and South of the Country

A Report Prepared by the Syrian Network for Human Rights on February 25, 2014

The specialty of the report: Documenting the shelling of Tafas in Dara'a with Barrel bombs

Abstract

Tafas is a city located to the south of Dara'a. It is part of Mzairib area with a strategic location. A link that shows the location of the city:

The methodology of the report is based on the interviews conducted by the team of SNHR with activists and eye witnesses from Dara'a whose accounts of the incident are documented throughout the report, in addition to the news, pictures and videos that we obtained from activists. The names of activists and eye witnesses have been changed according to their own wills. For more information about the methodology of SNHR see the link below.

http://sn4hr.org/public_html/wp-content/pdf/english/SNHR%20Methodology.pdf

Details

Helicopters of the Syrian government shelled Tafas with barrel bombs on February, 12, 2014. 13 people were killed, 8 of them belong to the same family.

Fadel Abdul Ghani, the head of SNHR said: "Through our work in preparing researches and reports about the government forces' use of barrel bombs we reached the conclusion that these bombs don't serve any military end. Rather, they are a mere punishment for civilians and they hugely damage buildings and infrastructure."

SNHR talked to Mr. Abu Asem, an activist from Tafas, who said:

"At about 9:10 am, helicopters flew the sky of the city and dropped one barrel bomb over residential districts of the city. These districts were crowded with civilians as there were IDPs

from other areas. Most of the martyrs were children and women; 8 of them from the same family. Number of the injured is little as most of those who were affected died. Most of the legs of the injured who didn't die were cut off.”

Abu Hamza is an activist from Tafas. He told SNHR:

“Before the bombing, helicopters were flying over the city. At about 9 am we heard the sound of a massive explosion. I went upstairs to see the place of the explosion. The barrel bomb was dropped over a residential area in the city center. That area was crowded with civilians as there were IDPs from Atman and Nawa in Tafas. I headed to the place of the explosion to take photos. There were bodies buried under the destructed buildings. People were getting them out. Most of them were children. Two of the bodies were without heads. Most of the martyrs were from Al Zubi family. One member of this family disappeared almost completely. We could only find the skin of his head. It was covered with white hair.”

Names of the victims

The team of SNHR could document the killing of 13 people, among them 7 children:

Below is a link that includes the names, photos and all the details of the victims:

https://docs.google.com/filed/0B9dF5VO4iR18WGpsTFhz bGlaRkU/edit?usp=drive_web

Photos and Appendixes

A photo of one of the children who were killed in the massacre of Tafas

<https://drive.google.com/filed/0B5pudHajcbMuc3BPeVZ wMTg2WnM/edit?usp=sharing>

Videos showing the victims and how they were got out from underneath the rubbles

<http://youtu.be/qwPM1mLAIiY>

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=eHXAYu6PB3c>

<http://youtu.be/95oIApaU6k8>

<http://youtu.be/RoFVxWK0zoA>

<http://youtu.be/2jCMbG-Ejkl>

<http://youtu.be/rXpsH30Je2M>

<http://youtu.be/-CeMw1HdRFY>

<http://youtu.be/dwldTT3pI0Q>

A photo that shows the destruction caused by the barrel bomb

A photo showing the search for the bodies under the rubbles

Conclusions

1. SNHR affirms that the shelling on Tafas was arbitrary and directed towards armless civilians. Consequently, the government forces and Shabiha have penetrated the articles of the International Law for Human Rights; above them is the right to life. This bombing happened in an armed struggle that is not international, so all the elements of war crime are present here.
2. SNHR thinks that this is a crime against humanity because it is not the first of its kind; rather, it became a daily practice that includes all the Syrian governorates. It is a comprehensive style used by the Syrian government.
3. Arbitrary attacks by the government forces are considered as a breach to the Human Common Law because the government forces shelled civic areas; not specific military targets.
4. Those acts of shelling caused huge damages in the lives of civilians and civic areas. There are strong indications that the damage caused was far huger than the desired military effect.
5. The extent of this massacre, the nature of the recurred massacres, the huge amount of force used in the attack, the arbitrary nature of the shelling and the coordinating nature of the attacks can't be excused without high instructions by the state.

Recommendations

The United Nations and the Security Council

1. Transferring the Syrian issue to the International Criminal Court and stopping the disrupting of the decisions that must be adopted by the Security Council against the Syrian government. This disruption is a wrong message to all dictatorships in the world and an enhancement to the culture of crime.
2. Posing urgent punishment on those who are involved in the violations of human rights.
3. Obliging the Syrian government to allow all relief and human rights organizations to enter Syria, in addition to the International Investigation Committee and allowing them to work freely.
4. Banning the Syrian government all weapons because they are used in comprehensive attacks against civilians.
5. Security Council must shoulder responsibility in preserving security and civil peace in Syria because the violations of the Syrian government are considered gross threat to international peace and security.
6. Listing the militias that fight with the Syrian government and which committed massacres,

like Hezbollah and the other Shiite brigades, National defense Army and Shabiah militia, on the international list of terrorist organizations. Among these militias is the Islamic State of Iraq and Syria which committed lots of crimes in the areas that are not controlled by the Syrian government.

7. Applying the principle of “protecting civilians” adopted by the General Assembly in Syria now, as the situation there is direly requiring such a principle now.
8. After the crimes against humanity committed by the Syrian government, stopping dealing with this government as an “official side” concerning the relief issues, and stopping supplying the Syrian government with the greatest amounts of financial and humanitarian aid that don't reach those who need them in most cases and go instead to those loyal to the Syrian government.
9. Demanding the Security Council and the involved international institutions to shoulder responsibility concerning the sufferings of the Syrian people which include killing, arrest, rape and displacement.
10. Applying pressure on the Syrian government in order to stop the acts of killing and torture.
11. Holding the allies and supporters of the Syrian government - Russia, Iran and China –as materially and morally responsible for the killing that is happening in Syria.
12. Human Rights Council must be more interested and serious concerning the catastrophic situation of the children, families and relatives of the victims in Syria.

The Arab League

1. Punishin all those who are involved in committing crimes in Syria and urging all the countries of the world to do the same thing.
2. Increasing humanitarian aid, especially on the levels of education and health care and taking care of the Syrian refugees in the Arab countries.
3. Requesting the Security Council to execute the above recommendations.
4. Asking the Human Rights Council and the United Nations to pay more interest to the case of daily killing in Syria.
5. Taking the Syrian issue very seriously and considering it as a priority, and trying to take care of the families of the victims psychologically, materially and educationally.
6. Applying political and diplomatic pressure on the main allies of the Syrian government; Russia, Iran and China in order to prevent them from continuing to provide international and political backing and protection for the crimes committed against the Syrian people, and holding them materially and morally responsible for all the violations of the Syrian

government.

The Syrian Government

1. Instantly stopping all kinds of human rights violations.
2. Respecting its international commitment to protect civilians in the time of war and respecting the articles of the International Human Law as it is one of the sides that endorsed Rome Convention, in addition to respecting the International Law for Human Rights.
3. Allowing instant access to the International Investigation Committee and facilitating its work and cooperating with the United Nations High Commission for Human Rights and national human rights organizations.

The International Investigation Committee

The International Investigation Committee must stop depicting the struggle in Syria as a struggle between two sides equal in crimes, power and the centralization of decisions. It must describe the crimes the same way they happen without belittling their extent for political reasons. The committee must also increase the number of its staff who work on the Syrian issue due to the amount of the crimes committed daily in Syria so that it can do more comprehensive documentation.

