

Syrian churches shelled by Government Forcers

Prepared by Syrian Network for Human Rights
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(shell33 churches and use some as military barracks).
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1- Introduction :

AS an impact of the great counterfeiting of truths, and spending millions dollars by Syrian regime on huge media organizations ,at first glance it appeared that the armed groups that came to Syria after the revolution turned into armed conflict, that these are the real enemies of Christian, and they shell and destroy churches, but when we have neutral, objective research, we found it's quiet different, and the most important evidence is the conclusion of this report, where Syrian regime targeted 33 churches, and use many of them as military barracks and headquarters to shell the neighboring areas, after he expelled the resident and prevented prayers there, while armed groups targeted two churches.

Syrian regime practiced demagogue depends on lies and counterfeiting and convince Syrian and the world that the aim of the revolution is not to eliminate tyranny and corruption, and to achieve democracy and social justice , but it is sectarian conflict between ethnic components of the Syrian society.

But the clear fact that killing ,shelling and destruction carried out by the Syrian regime does not differentiate between a sect and other, they shelled mosques and churches, Scud missile, artillery ,tanks or snipers didn't recognize among Muslim, Christian or otherwise.

Many churches, mosques and building have been destroyed before 15/7/2013, that's mean even before the conflict turned into non-international armed conflict, where Syrian regime is only possess heavy equipments.

The Report:

First- Violations committed by Government Forces

33 churches have been totally or partially destroyed by government's forces daily shelling on various Syrian governorates and cities since the beginning of Syrian Revolution to the date of issuing this report, according to [SNHR](#).

All documented by photo, video, and the resident's accounts their churches shelled by government troops

SNHR issued an earlier report on 24/12/2012, it has documented the targeting of 19 churches by Government forces to the time of issuing that report

Government 's forces not only targeted churches, shelling, killings, and tyranny do not distinguish between religion and another, Syrian Network for Human Rights targeted 1451 mosques and more than 3700 school and almost 270 private hospital, and the toll of the damaged buildings toll in Syria (houses- school- churches- mosques- hospital) almost 3 million buildings, including more than 850.000 houses entirely destroyed by Scud missiles, TNT, artillery shells, and various types of attacks, all reports available on [SNHR](#) website.

We would like to notify that Churches have been shelled by Government Forces more than one time, it is an evidence of targeting churches and houses of worship, as in Saint Mary Church of the Holy Belt church in Homs and Lady of Peace church: shelled 3 times, and many others.

Churches shelled by government forces deployed in various Syrian Governorates as follow:

Homs governorate: government forces shelled 10 churches

Aleppo governorate: government forces shelled 7 churches

Damascus governorate: government forces shelled 5 churches

DierEz-zor governorate: government forces shelled 5 churches

Lattakia governorate: government forces shelled 3 churches

Idlib governorate: government forces shelled 2 churches

Raqqa governorate: government forces shelled 1 church

Report Details:

Homs governorate:

Government forces shelled 10 churches in Homs governorate, classified by date of shell, and documented by photos and videos:

1- Homs: BustanAldiwan neighborhood

Saint Mary Church of the Holy Belt church (Umaz-Zinnar) shelled 5 times

20/3/2012

<https://docs.google.com/file/d/0B9Bj18tIYYKBNVRMeXFWSUt0MTg/edit>



4/9/2012

<http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=-qN-DdyhzUw>

2- Homs: Al-Qusayr city in the western countryside
Mar Elias Church, shelled 3 times

15/7/2012

<https://docs.google.com/file/d/0B9Bj18tIYYKBTnJIY2NBUmptdG8/edit>

23/9/2012

<http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=U27ErIykEVs>

29/1/2013

<http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=ibiYQhRboZA>

3- Homs: BustanAldiwan neighborhood
Lady of Peace church, shelled 3 times

4/9/2012

<http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=0dj0nty44A>

<http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=bN74A8C6PyM>

6/9/2012

<http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=qmhC7OKJ2OY>

4- Homs: Al-Hamidyah neighborhood
Evangelical Church

shelled once in 16/4/2012

<http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=JtGRRwFI6pw>

<https://docs.google.com/file/d/0B9Bj18tIYYKBRG40UkklWFLJYzg/edit?usp=sharing>

5- Homs: Al-Hamidyah neighborhood
Saint Gerges church

shelled once in 29/5/2012

6- Homs: Bustan Al Dewan neighborhood
Aalrbaeen church

shelled once in 30/5/2012

7- Homs: Hamidiyeh neighborhood

Ancient Holy Spirit church, Syriac Catholic church (Catholic Archeparchy)

shelled once in 11/9/2012

<https://docs.google.com/file/d/0B9Bj18tIYYKBbU9XaGt4M3Y5MFE/edit>

8- Homs: Al-Hamidyeh neighborhood

Alltihad National Evangelical Christian church

shelled once in 11/10/2012

9- Homs: Al-Hamidyeh neighborhood

Greek Catholic Church

shelled once in 18/7/2013



7/8/2012



10- Homs: Du-Vairtown

Date of shelling 30/5/2013

Du-VairChurch, after the church damaged, government troops photo and describe by media campaign that terrorist did that, and they committed a massacre in the village, according to the Christian residents in the village , there was no massacre, and shelled by government troop research conducted by [SNHR](#) about what happened there and the false story of Syrian regime:

<https://docs.google.com/file/d/0B9Bj18tIYYKBbGtJbnVZYjBCMW8/edit>

Du-Vair Church

<https://docs.google.com/file/d/0B9Bj18tIYYKBMWppVm04WVBQSm8/edit?usp=sharing>

<https://docs.google.com/file/d/0B9Bj18tIYYKBa3RaY3Y4dG9Qbjg/edit?usp=sharing>

<https://docs.google.com/file/d/0B9Bj18tIYYKBOE1PQ1hOUzM2aW8/edit?usp=sharing>

Aleppo governorate:

Government forces shelled 7 churches in Aleppoand countryside, they are:

1- Aleppo - Old Aleppo

Date of shelling: 16/1/2012

Ancient Saint George church

2- Aleppo - Dar Izza in the western countryside of Aleppo

Date of shelling: 31/5/2013

Ancient Saint Simeon church:

3- Aleppo - Almidan neighborhood

Date of shelling 23/9/2012

Saint Wartan church

http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=BHOPko6z_38

<https://docs.google.com/file/d/0B9Bj18tIYYKBTm4wTXhxQkM5Zkk/edit>

4- Aleppo - Bab Alnasr

Date of shelling: 12/11/2012

Tishreen Kindergarten, which was an ancient church

5- Aleppo - Aljadida, Alhatab square

Date of shelling: 17/2/2013

Armenian Evangelical Church (which is in the original Jewish Synagogue)

<http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=2a3TZEJM3FQ>

6- Aleppo - Alsulaimaniah

Date of shelling: 11/4/2013

Prophet Elias church

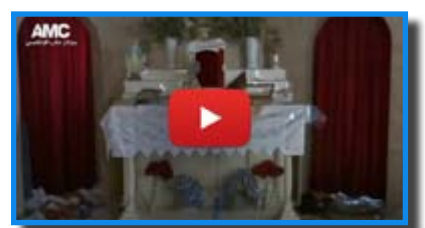
<https://docs.google.com/file/d/0B9Bj18tIYYKBenJMdjNWRGtDU2c/edit?usp=sharing>

7- Aleppo - Al sheikh Maqsoud neighborhood

Date of shelling: 20/4/2013

Sheikh Maqsoud neighborhood's church

<https://docs.google.com/file/d/0B9Bj18tIYYKBMXdBanU0ZHNnTHM/edit>



Damascus countryside governorate:

Government forces shelled 5 churches in Aleppo and countryside, they are:

1- Damascus countryside: Yabroud city

Date of shelling :21/9/2012

Yabroud church

2- Damascus countryside: Zabadani city

Date of shelling :21/11/2012

Zabadani church

<http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=H4EArTUzUX8>

<https://docs.google.com/file/d/0B9Bj18tIYYKBZHhhaS15MTU2Ukk/edit>

3- Damascus countryside: Daria city

Date of shelling :26/11/2012

Ancient Saint Takla church in Daria

<http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=bdaCtwm0HnE>

4- Damascus countryside: Harasta city

Date of shelling :31/12/2012

Virgin Mary church

5- Damascus countryside: Arbine city

Date of shelling :24/3/2012

Saint George church in Arbine

<http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=JGc2S75GRGM>



Dierez-Zoor governorate:

Government forces shelled 5 churches in Dierez-Zoor governorate, they are:

1- Our lady church of Syriac Catholic- near to eastern area police, in the middle of Al-rashidiah neighborhood, on 290 square meter, followed by elementary school known with Special Unit school, the same church which SANA reported on Wednesday 19/6/2013, that armed fighter from Nusra front burned the Alwihda church for Syriac in Dierez-Zoor city shelled many times:

25/9/2012

<http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=JYgtLGcHuAg>

<http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=LN92uYhoxZk>

26/12/2012

the wall of the church and the chapel completely destroy cause it was clause to security branches, and because the explosion of a bombed car was on the way to target military police headquarter , but by mistake explode near the church.

Photos of the church's ruins:

<https://docs.google.com/file/d/0B9Bj18tIYYKBd2hWRThTQz12cVE/edit>



Lattakia governorate:

Government forces shelled 3 churches in Lattakiagovernorate, they are:

1- Lattakia - Ghonaimia

Date of shelling: 14/7/2012

Armenian church of Ghonaimia in Lattakia

<https://docs.google.com/file/d/0B9Bj18tLYYKBeXVXbjRZdjRnQjA/edit>

1- Lattakia - Kansaba

Kansaba is a town of Alhifa, located at the north east of Lattakia, 50 km far from the city, has border with Idlib and Hama, shelled by MIG, artillery, and TNT

Damaged church is Prophet Elias church

at church street, can contain 150 prayer

<https://docs.google.com/file/d/0B9Bj18tLYYKBVGs5bUVrN3ViWVU/edit>

<https://docs.google.com/file/d/0B9Bj18tLYYKBSFIURmYxZnNXeU0/edit>

destroyed cause of continuous shelling by TNT

3- Lattakia: Alqasab

Alqasab is a village in Lattakia coastal plain, it's church shelled from tower known with Alqasabtower, where government forces put heavy artillery and mortars that were daily shells the surrounding areas.

The church known as Prophet Elias, we were not able to get photo after shelled by government forces, but we check the information from more than one source according to SNHR's standards :

<https://docs.google.com/file/d/0B9Bj18tLYYKBRHhLSXhvaXNjMzQ/edit?usp=sharing>

<https://docs.google.com/file/d/0B9Bj18tLYYKBRDczT2d2dVppZjA/edit?usp=sharing>

Idlib governorate:

Government forces shelled 2 churches in Idlibgovernorate, they are:

1- Idlib: JisrAlshaghour - Ghassania village

Date of shell 22/10/2012

Saint George church

2- Idlib: JisrAlshaghour - Yaqobia village

in the North west of Syria, their residents speak Arabic, Armenian, and they are Christian (Armenian Orthodox, Catholic, Latin Catholic)

Date of shell 11/6/2013

Saint Ann church

<http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Vw2HzWyIHiQ>

Raqqa governorate:

Government forces shelled 1 church in Raqqa governorate:

Date of shelling 23/9/2012

Tal Abiad church

Churches used by Government Forces as barracks and military headquarter to shell the surrounding areas :

Government forces used churches as platforms to shell neighboring areas, some of them as military brackets violating the privacy of these sacred religious places for Christian.



These churches are:

1- Cathedral Church Al sherobim in sednaya used to shell many parts in the Qalamoon on 18/5/2013

<http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=kygzF8G2oow>

2- Jidah is a town affiliated to Janodia in JisrAlshagor of Idlib district, contain Jhon the Baptist monastery for Greek Orthodox, located in the main street , and can accommodate for 200 parish

<https://docs.google.com/file/d/0B9Bj18tYYKBNkZKeE5WZTI0LVk/edit?usp=sharing>

<https://docs.google.com/file/d/0B9Bj18tYYKBUzdWelNHMkxyeGM/edit?usp=sharing>

Used by Government forces as a military barracks from which attacks on neighboring areas, opposition forces took over the village of and clashed with Syrian soldiers who were stationed inside and so on 11/12/2012

http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=p2hhLyCvC_8

3- Al Latin church Kaboshia in city centre, ALrashidia neighborhood, behind military police headquarter, established by French in the 1930s
Image and coordinates of monastery by satellite:



Government's soldier broke into this church, positioned and put many snipers in its high floors, where they killed many civilians, We have some documentation in SNHR's archive ,also positioned in the opposite street and build barricades, in 15/4/2013, strong explosion shock the city and destroy the church and CapuchinFranciscan Monastery, it was the last sound church without shelling in DierezZoor

Second: Violations committed by Armed Opposition:

1- Idlib governorate: armed opposition shelled 1 church Ghassania village: west of JisrAlshogor village in 10 km on the road between Lattakia and JisrAlshagor , Saint George church accommodates 300 Parish

<https://docs.google.com/file/d/0B9Bj18tYYKBbUVLbFJ1UUJkZGc/edit?usp=sharing>

<https://docs.google.com/file/d/0B9Bj18tYYKBTUs2Y01iNDU2Mnc/edit?usp=sharing>

The town was subjected to heavy shelling by the security forces in the context of indiscriminate shelling campaigns to various Syrian cities by barrels containing explosive material from the air and also artillery shells from the village of Alqasab tower and this has caused the displacement of a large number of villagers reported the bombing also caused the Church and broke its Windows.

armed opposition, in particularly Nusra front in December 2012, Was Simeon's monastery was attacked by those groups and patron of the monastery father François Murat “ killed during the attack

A video of some of the effects caused by shellington the Church:

http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=s2N43OM_Qfo

2- Lattakia governorate:armed opposition shelled 1 church

Alnoaymiah town 45 km east of Lattakia

Saint Kaifork church, shelled by armed rebel in 17/3/2013 caused damages:

<https://docs.google.com/file/d/0B9Bj18tYYKBb0dmd0ZOOWc4Slk/edit?usp=sharing>

<https://docs.google.com/file/d/0B9Bj18tYYKBNWdaOVdraE82OGc/edit?usp=sharing>

Legal Conclusions:

Note that the Syrian regime has committed a war crime-related property and had all the elements of massive destruction crime over 33 Churches, and is known that the churches are property covered by the 1949 Geneva Convention and this actions committed in non-international armed conflict.

In addition to the violation of paragraph (a) and (b) of rule 40 of customary international humanitarian law, which states:

Rule 40. Each party to the conflict must protect cultural property:

A. All seizure of or destruction or wilful damage done to institutions dedicated to religion, charity, education, the arts and sciences, historic monuments and works of art and science is prohibited.

B. Any form of theft, pillage or misappropriation of, and any acts of vandalism directed against, property of great importance to the cultural heritage of every people is prohibited.

Some of the armed opposition factions committed a war crime in its aggression on churches and the National Coalition for Syrian Revolutionary and Opposition Forces to prosecute the perpetrators and hold them accountable.

Recommendations

Human Rights Council :

Considering attacks that occurred in Syria on the sanctity of the churches as violation of basic human rights that affect his sanctities and dignity

Denounce violations committed by Syrian Government's Armed Forces such as warship houses and churches , and document those attacks
Pressure on the Syrian Government's Armed Troops and formally request to stop its violations on mosques

Hold alias and supporters of the Syrian Government's Armed Troops (support with weapons and gear) to take clear positions on those violations and make diplomatic and political pressure to stop and end these violations.

Arab League :

Denounce violations of warship houses and churches , and document those attacks

- Pressure regionally and internationally to make effective decisions in this regard
- Pressure on the Syrian regime to stop those violations that affect Muslims all around the world

Demand the states that can effect on Alassad regime to make it stop deliberate and widespread violations on churches.

Security Council :

Denounce violations of warship houses and churches , and criminalized those attacks
Issue a binding decision against Syrian regime to stop all violations, specifically warship houses and churches

Warning of the consequences of such violations for social peace and led

for sectarian and religious wars , and hold Syrian Government's full responsibility about it

Announce demand to protect churches and Archeological places and warning of endangerment them