

Cluster Weapons must be destroyed as well, after it was used to shell Aleppo city rapidly

The Scope of the Report: documenting the Syrian regime attacks using cluster bombs against Aleppo since the beginning of 2014

Executive Summary

With the beginning of 2014, the Syrian regime has escalated unprecedentedly its use of the internationally-prohibited cluster bombs as if the Syrian regime was substitutes it for the chemical weapons, in the first three months it targeted different areas of Syria to leave thousands of tiny bombs that didn't detonate yet which will represent serious dangers for decades to come. At any rate the percentage of the civilians of the total number of victims has exceeded 90%.

In February, 17, 2014 the Syrian government forces targeted Aqrabyat town in Hama northern countryside as we documented in a previous report.

In 18-19 February Kafr Zya town was targeted as we documented in a previous report.

Also in February Yabroud, where ongoing clashes were taking place, was targeted more than 6 times with cluster bombs.

In 23 and 25 March, 2014 Khan Shikhoun in Idlib countryside was attacked several times with cluster bombs.

In 25 March the Syrian government attacked Kafr Zya again with cluster bombs.

Fadel Abdulghani, head of SNHR, says:

“The Security Council must issue a resolution to destroy the Syrian regime’s arsenal of cluster bombs similar to the chemical weapons case. The Syrian regime have been using cluster bombs frequently in the past months in defiance to a 112 state that condemned these acts in the UN General Assembly.”

The Syrian regime used cluster bombs to attack 9 Syrian governorates including tens of areas, these attack killed 139 at least including 58 children at a rate of 48% and 14 women at a rate of 12%, in total the women and children victims represented 60% of the total number of victims who was killed by cluster bombs. Additionally the civilian men victims were 67; only four of them were rebels at a rate of 2.5%. This concludes that the percentage of civilian victims who was killed by cluster bombs is 97%.

This report documents the use of cluster bombs by the Syrian regime against several residential neighborhoods in Aleppo which would represent a serious threat to the lives of thousands of residents if the situation wasn't addressed anytime soon and a committee of highly-experienced individuals was formed to remove the what left of the cluster bombs. The methodology of this report is based on a field-visit to one site that we were able to reach, we used for the other sites the pictures and videos that we received from cooperating activists in addition to some of the residents' testimonies. Please note that the names of the witnesses were changed as per their request.

For more details about the methodology we [follow in documenting](#) the victims.

Details

Since the beginning of 2014 Aleppo was targeted with more than 23 cluster bombs that were dropped on 11 rebel-held neighborhoods approximately in addition to targeting the surroundings of Aleppo central prison as well as Al-Handrat camp.

The investigations conducted by the SNHR's team showed that the targeted areas is residential and there is no known proof of the presence of the rebels in these areas. These cluster bombs has spread inside the neighborhoods among the houses, schools, and parks, and it needs an expert team to disarm it as fast as possible, the U.N. should send a specialized committee for the sake of this matter specifically, and give it enough consideration. Also the Syrian opposition should work on assigning a team of experts to disarm the cluster bombs.

The most significant neighborhood targeted by the Syrian regime forces:

1- Al-Ma'saraniya and Tareaq Al-Bab neighborhoods on Saturday 25/1/2014

[The following link](#) shows the approximate location of the targeted site in Tareaq Al-Bab neighborhood.

[The following link](#) shows the approximate location of the targeted site in Al-Ma'saraniya neighborhood.

2- Jubbalqubba on Thursday 30/1/2014

[The following link](#) shows the approximate location of the targeted site in Jubbalqubba.

3- Jabal Didrou neighborhood on Sunday 2/2/2014

[The following link](#) shows the approximate location of the targeted site on Jabal Bidrou neighborhood.

4- As-Sakhour on Tuesday 25/2/2014

[The following link](#) shows the approximate location of the targeted site in As-Sakhour neighborhood

5- Jissr Al-Haj on Tuesday 4/3/2014

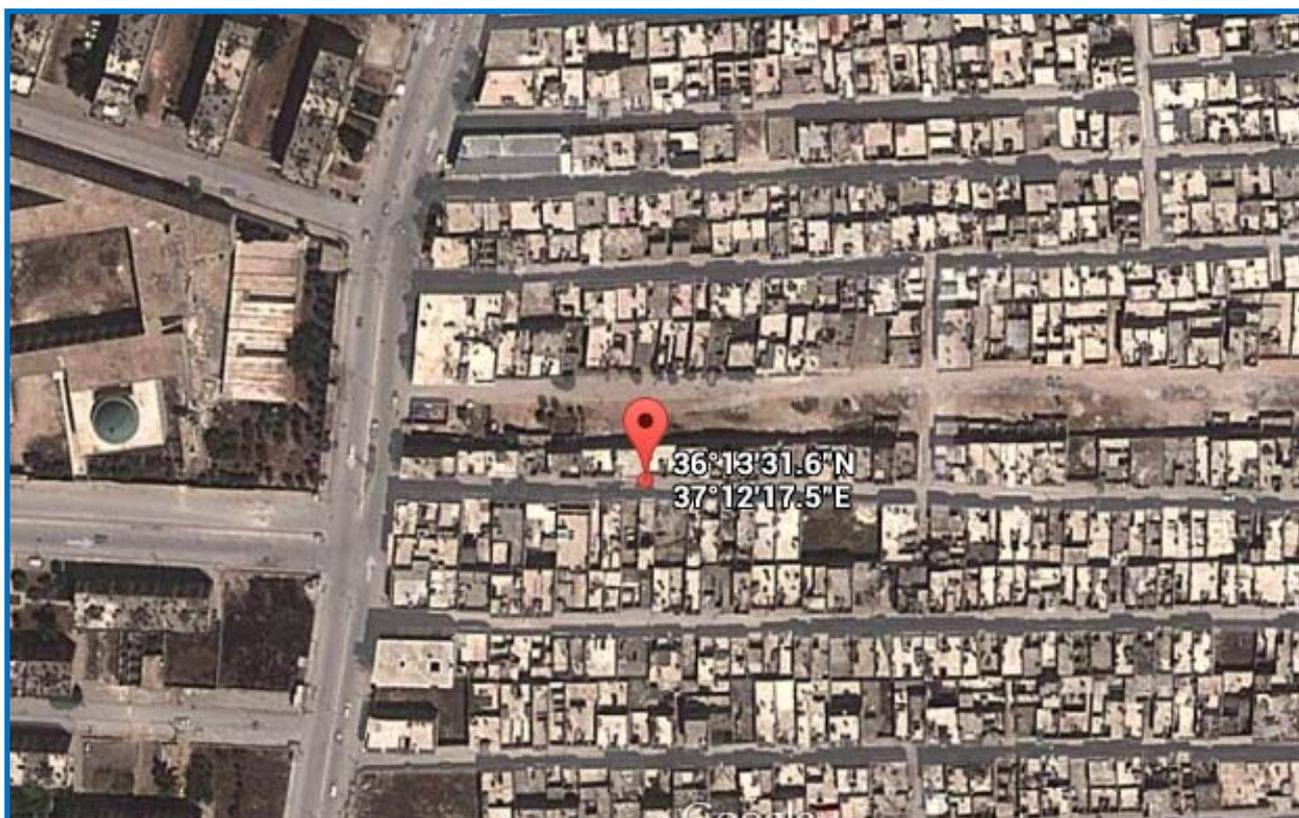
The following link shows the approximate location of the targeted site in Jissr Al-Haj.

6- Al-Jalloum on Sunday 7/3/2014

The following link shows the approximate location of the targeted site.

7- Hananou neighborhood on Monday 17/3/2014

The following link shows the approximate location of the targeted site in Hananou neighborhood:



SNHR noticed the increase in the cluster bombs raid by the Syrian regime using artillery for instance we detected that the regime targeted four neighborhoods on 18 March, 2014, namely Ash-Shaikh Khadr, Ash-Shaikh Fares, Bostan Al-Basha, and B'iedien.

The Syrian regime forces have dropped on the next day no less than 12 cluster bombs on the surroundings of Aleppo central prison, Al-Handrat on 19 March, 2014.

A number of those neighbourhoods residents were wounded after some of those bombs detonated as they were passing by it or trying to disarm it. We received multiple messages in which the residents asked the international community to send a team of experts to disarm those cluster bombs.

Mr. Ibrahim Sayyoufi, a resident at Bostan Al-Basha neighborhood, offered us his testimony regarding the cluster bombs issue:

“on 18/3/2014 I was at Bostan Al-Basha neighborhood around 11:00 AM near As-Sabbagh school when I heard sounds of fireworks explosions in the sky followed by four or five explosions that preceded each other very quickly, I ran about 200 Meter to see a man screaming: “we are being attacked with cluster bombs” and pointing at a bomb on the sidewalk, the bomb was small, slightly smaller than a hand, it was cylindrical and there was a piece of white-colored cloth attached to it, at first I thought it was a gas bomb because it look like one.

Afterwards some rebels arrived to the site and told us it was a cluster bomb and that we should be careful and not to touch at all, the residents told the rebels about the location of other bombs, the rebels tried to collect the bombs in order to detonate them safely, then they collected the fragments caused by the detonation of the five first bombs.

I watched them as they collected 15 bombs that didn't detonate it, however there were some of the bombs that detonated immediately to kill a 7-year-old kid named Hamza and injure nine other people with mild and light injuries”.

The SNHR was able to contact Mr. Baraa, who is one of the eyewitnesses, and he told us: “Around 1:00 PM I was riding a car with a friend on the highway the connects B'iden circle with Al-Jandoul circle, there was a major state of panic in the neighborhood, there were some wounded being aided, we got out of the car to help, we found a forty-something resident who had his leg injured heavily, the residents of the neighborhood told us to be careful because of the cluster bombs that were everywhere in the neighborhood that was targeted with a rocket carrying these bombs, at the moment of the shelling there was no plane in the sky, the total number of injuries that I watched being aided was five in addition to three wounded whom the residents told me that they were hit before we arrived”.

Yassin Belal, one of the residents, offered us his testimony:

“While I was in Ash-Shaikh Khadr neighborhood, I heard some screams asking for help from a near street, I went there along with some of the neighbors to see what happened, the people was in panic, but there is no signs of any destruction anywhere, people were asking for help, they got two wounded out of a house; one of them was injured in his leg while the other was injured in his hand and belly, we saw some fragments of tiny cylindrical bombs which we knew later that it were from cluster bombs, some soldiers of As-Salajeqa battalion have arrived and tried to disarm one of the bombs, it looked to me that they had no experience dealing with such a thing, however one of them disarmed two cluster bombs successfully but the third one detonated as he was trying to reach it, six soldiers were injured in the detonation, and we aided them”.

Mr. Hassaan witnessed the attack on Ash-Shaikh Farres:

“Around 9:30 I was at my store in Al-Basha Street in, Ash-Shaikh Farees neighborhood, I heard some sounds similar to the sound of fireworks, I went into the street and saw some explosions in the air, from each one of those explosions a smoke cloud was formed, the bombs started to scatter from these clouds; two of which fell in front of me. At first we thought that these bombs were gas bombs because of its cylindrical shape, but we knew later that they are cluster bombs, after half an hour some rebel groups arrived and collected these bombs to disarm some while they detonated the others on the spot. These bombs injured ten people in the neighborhood with mild and slight injuries; all of them were civilians”.

Appendixes and Attachments

First: the names and pictures of the victims

SNHR’s team [documented the killing](#) of nine people including three children; all of them were civilians in addition to one rebel that was killed while he was trying to disarm a cluster bomb. The following link contains all the names and pictures of the victims.

Second: wounded

[A video footage](#) of the injured in Ash-Shaikh Farres neighborhood after it was shelled with cluster bombs on 18/3/2014.

[A video footage](#) of the wounded receiving treatment at Bustan Al-Basha neighborhood after it was targeted with cluster bombs.

Third: pictures of the sub-munitions that were ejected by the cluster bombs

[The sub-munitions](#) of a cluster bomb in Masaken Hnanou neighborhood on Monday 17/3/2014.



The sub-munitions of a cluster bomb in Masaken Hnanou neighborhood that was found on Thursday 20/3/2014.

The sub-munitions of a cluster bomb in Ash-Shaikh Farres neighborhood.

The sub-munitions of a cluster bomb in Ash-Shaikh Khadr neighborhood.

The sub-munitions of a cluster bomb in Bostan Al-Basha neighborhood.

A pictures shows the signs of destruction that the cluster sub-munitions caused in Masaken Hnanou on 17/3/2014.

A video footage of the shelling against Al-Handrat camp on Wednesday 19/3/2014



Conclusions and Recommendations

The use of cluster bombs by the Syrian regime is a violation of both the principle of distinction and the principle of proportionality, and is considered a war crime.

The Security Council should issue a resolution to destroy all of the Syrian regime's cluster bombs arsenal.

The Russian government and other governments should stop providing the Syrian regime with weapons as it was proven that the Syrian regime is using these weapons in crimes against humanity and war crimes against civilians, on the other hand the friend of the Syrian people should apply real pressure, at the various economic and political level, on the Russian government for that matter.

The European Union should apply greater pressure on the Security Council in order to transfer the Syrian issue to the International Criminal Court.

The United Nations should begin from now preparing comprehensive studies about the sites that were targeted by the Syrian regime with cluster bombs in order to warn the residents of these areas and working faster on disarming the bombs that didn't detonate yet.

Acknowledgments

SNHR thanks the victims' families, eyewitnesses, journalists, and the activists that we would not have been able to finish this report at this level without their efforts.