



## No Less than 200,000 Civilians Besieged in the City of Manbej in Aleppo Suburbs 94 Civilians have been Killed since the Beginning of the Military Campaign

- I. Introduction
- II. Executive Summary
- III. Details
- IV. Conclusions and Recommendations

### I. Introduction and Methodology

In January 2014, ISIS seized control of Manbej city from the armed opposition. At the time, approximately 450,000 were living in Manbej. Most of them, however, fled to different areas in Aleppo suburbs.

On 28 May 2016, “Syrian Democratic Forces” (consisting mainly of The Democratic Union Party forces, a branch for the Kurdistan Workers’ Party) commenced, with the support of the international coalition forces, a military campaign in Manbej city suburbs and took over about 40 points including towns and villages such as Tal Al-Rafea’ village, Ein Al-Nakhil, located in northeastern Manbej, the villages of Al-Zanqal and Al-Dadat in northern Manbej, and the villages of Um Al-Satih, Madnat Al-Zgheira, Al-Shaikh Yahya in the northern suburbs of Manbej city. As a result of these attacks, about 250,000 people fled the city. Most of these people fled to Jرابلس, Al-Bab, and Maskna areas which are all under ISIS’s control. ISIS evacuated firstly its fighters’ families before the “Syrian Democratic Forces” gripped its siege on the city.

On 10 June 2016, “Syrian Democratic Forces” managed to take over the last villages in the western suburbs to seize full control of Manbej city. The people of the city are trapped between the hammer of ISIS, on one hand, and the anvil of Syrian Democratic Forces, on the other hand, and under the international coalition forces that concentrated its attacks on the city and its suburbs.





This report sheds light on the violations of the international humanitarian law and the international human rights law that took place between 28 May 2016 and 25 June 2016 as a result of the Syrian Democratic Forces' attack on the city, its siege of civilians, and the indiscriminate shelling that was carried out by the Syrian Democratic Forces in addition to the violations perpetrated by the international coalition forces and ISIS during the same period of time.

This report methodology draws upon SNHR archive that have been built throughout that period of time (28 May 2016 – 25 June 2016) through ongoing and daily monitoring and documenting. All statistics included in this report are recorded with names, pictures, place and date of death or arrest, and other details. In light of the exceptional difficulties, the inability to visit the area, and the direct reliance on survivors' and eyewitnesses' accounts, it should be noted that this report only contains the bare minimum of the violations which what we were able to document as the actual magnitude of the violations is certainly greater.

## II. Executive Summary

The report covers the period between 28 May 2016 and 25 June 2016 in which we noticed a rise in the number of various violations against the civilians of Manbej city and its suburbs.

### A. Extrajudicial killing:

SNHR documented the killing of 94 civilians, including 30 children and 11 women, in Manbej city and its suburbs in the period covered in the report. The violations are divided by its perpetrators as follows:

- ISIS: 32 civilians including 11 children, five women, and one media activist. Most of the victims were killed while they were fleeing the city by landmines that were installed by ISIS.
- International coalition forces: 38 civilians including 16 children and six women.
- Syrian Democratic Forces: 24 civilians including three children.

### B. Arrest and arbitrary detention:

SNHR recorded a notable rise in the arbitrary arrests carried out by ISIS in Manbej city and the nearby villages. We recorded 227 arrest cases including eight children and three women.





### **C. Siege:**

On 10 June 2016, Syrian Democratic Forces has imposed a siege on Manbej city where no less than 200,000 are suffering.

## **III. Details**

### **A. Extrajudicial killing:**

#### **- ISIS:**

ISIS have carried out widespread killings of civilians who tried to flee the city. Also, a number of civilians were killed by landmines that were installed by ISIS randomly around the city while ISIS armed men stationed inside the residential neighborhoods of Manbej city.

ISIS killed 32 civilians including 11 children, five women, and one media activist. On Friday 17 June 2016, we documented the killing of a man and his son by a landmine that ISIS installed in Um Al-Satih village, affiliated to Manbej city.

On Wednesday 22 June 2016, ISIS armed men opened fire on civilians who were trying to flee Al-Nawwaja village in Manbej city suburbs to kill Mrs. Mariam Helal.

On Thursday 23 June 2016, we recorded the killing of four individuals including two children by landmines installed by ISIS in Al-Umari neighborhood north of Manbej city.

#### **- International coalition forces:**

International coalition forces launched a number of airstrikes on Manbej city and its suburbs to assist Syrian Democratic Forces as it advanced against ISIS. Some of these airstrikes didn't distinguish between civilians and fighters, while other airstrike didn't respect the principle of proportionality. The international coalition airstrikes resulted in the killing of 38 civilians including 16 children and six women.

On Wednesday 1 June 2016, international coalition forces warplanes bombed, with missiles, residential homes in Al-Hwatma neighborhood in Manbej city killing three individuals including a female child and wounding three others.





On Wednesday 8 June 2016, international coalition forces warplanes bombed a residential home in Al-Shbali village in southern Manbej city. As a result, five civilians were killed (four children and one woman).

**- Syrian Democratic Forces (consisting mainly of the Democratic Union Party forces, a branch for the Kurdistan Workers' Party)**

Syrian Democratic Forces have used mortar shells in a number of attacks which didn't distinguish between civilians and military targets and didn't respect the principle of proportionality. Additionally, its snipers targeted civilians who successfully fled ISIS. All of this led to the killing of 24 civilians including three children. Furthermore, the civilians in the city are now held hostages between ISIS and the Syrian Democratic Forces.

On Monday 13 June 2016, Udai AbdulHalim Shaikh Eissa was killed by a sniper of the Syrian Democratic Forces in Qrata village, located in northeastern Manbej city. On Wednesday 22 June 2016, Syrian Democratic Forces, stationed in the vicinity of Manbej city, fired a number of artillery shells that fell on a house in the east of Jub Hamza village, under the control of ISIS, in southern Manbej city. Two individuals were killed and others were wounded.

**B. Arrest:**

The number of arrests carried out by ISIS saw a rise in Manbej city, where the number of documented cases reached 227 cases including eight children and three women.

On Monday 30 May 2016, we recorded the arrest of an English teacher by armed men affiliated to ISIS from his place of residence in Manbej city on account of him being a relative of an element of the armed opposition. His fate is still unknown to SNHR as well as his family.

On Thursday 2 June 2016, we recorded the arrest of an 11-year-old female child along with her father by ISIS armed men at an ISIS checkpoint located in the western neighborhood of the city as they were trying to fled Manbej city towards the armed opposition areas. She was released on Saturday 4 June 2016.





On Monday 13 June 2016, we recorded the arrest of a gynecologist (S.K), aged 55-year-old, along with his wife (K.N), aged 41-year-old, at an ISIS checkpoint as they were trying to flee the city. Their fate is still unknown to SNHR as well as their family.

### **C. Siege:**

On 10 June 2016, Syrian Democratic Forces took over the villages of the city western suburbs and prohibited civilians from entering and leaving the city. Also, it banned the passage of food, medical supplies, and fuel which deepened the suffering of no less than 200,000 civilians who are living under poor living conditions inside the besieged city. The siege has been ongoing for more than 15 days and their lives are at an increasing risk because of the ongoing siege. Some of the residents told us that bakeries ceased to operate due to the lack of diesel and the power outage in the city which resulted from the international coalition forces bombing the electricity cables connecting the city to Tishreen dome.

To a certain extent, ISIS also contributes to the siege by banning people from leaving the city in some cases. However, even if ISIS permitted civilians to leave or if civilians were able to escape, the Syrian Democratic Forces, particularly snipers, will target the residents who want to fled the city. Also, Syrian Democratic Forces didn't facilitate the passage of aids to the city.

## **V. Conclusions and Recommendations**

- All three forces have perpetrated serious violations of human rights and war crimes that manifested in killings and the targeting of civilians. Indiscriminate and excessive aerial and mortar bombing by the Syrian Democratic Forces and the international coalition killed a great number of civilians and created a state of panic among civilians.
- The forces, mentioned in this report, have all violated the rules of the international humanitarian law through random indiscriminate bombing that resulted in the killing of a number of civilians which constitutes war crimes.
- In addition to the extrajudicial killings, the crime of besieging approximately 200,000 civilians primarily by the Syrian Democratic Forces and then ISIS.
- The violations of human rights and the international humanitarian law pointed in this report is a blatant indicator on the severity of the war crimes. The international community is responsible to end these crimes as soon as possible.





## Recommendations:

- All civilians must insure the effective protection of all civilians, distinguish between civilian and military targets, and abstain from conducting any indiscriminate or disproportionate attacks.
- The Syrian Democratic Forces must respect the civilians' right in securing their basic needs including home, food, water, and health care and allow the passage of aids without any obstructions.
- The Security Council must work on finding a solution that would insure security and peace in Syria in a manner that fulfills the Syrian people's aspirations in freedom and democracy.
- SNHR deeply fears for the lives of about 200,000 who are living under siege in Manbej city. Most of those civilians are children and women. The Syria Support Group must aid the city of Manbej as soon as possible.

